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Informacja dla czytelnika

Publikacja niniejsza zawiera pytania pisemne skierowane przez posłów do Parlamentu Europejskiego i odpowiedzi na te pytania udzielone przez instytucję Unii Europejskiej.

Przed ich ewentualnym tłumaczeniem wszystkie pytania i odpowiedzi są podane w oryginalnej wersji językowej.

W niektórych przypadkach jest możliwe, że odpowiedzi udzielono w języku innym niż oryginalny język pytania. Zależy to od języka roboczego komisji, do której zwrócono się o udzielenie odpowiedzi.

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IV

(Informacje)

INFORMACJE INSTYTUCJI, ORGANÓW I JEDNOSTEK ORGANIZACYJNYCH UNII EUROPEJSKIEJ

PARLAMENT EUROPEJSKI

PYTANIA PISEMNE Z ODPOWIEDZIĄ

Pytania pisemne skierowane przez posłów do Parlamentu Europejskiego i odpowiedzi na te pytania udzielone przez instytucję Unii Europejskiej

(2013/C 203 E/01)

Treść **Strona**

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006427/12
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Pesticides Directive (2009/128/EC)

What is the nature of, and the current situation with regard to, the Commission's infringement proceedings against Ireland in relation to Directive 2009/128/EC on pesticides (Commission infringement procedure 2012/0194)?

Answer given by Mr Dalli on behalf of the Commission
(13 August 2012)

The infringement procedure referred to (Ref.: 2012/0194) relates to Ireland's failure to notify the national implementing measures as required by Directive 2009/128/EC ([1]). All Member States were obliged to implement this directive by 26 November 2011.

Following the launch by the Commission of the infringement procedure, in May 2012 Ireland communicated to the Commission the act 'European Communities (Sustainable Use of Pesticides) Regulations 2012 — S.I. No.155 of 2012', which the Irish Government adopted to address the issue. The Commission is assessing this measure and its relevance to the infringement procedure 2012/0194.

([1]) Directive 2009/128/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 establishing a framework for Community action to achieve the sustainable use of pesticides, OJ L 309, 24.11.2009, p. 71-86.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006428/12
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Plastic infant feeding bottles

What is the nature of and the current situation with regard to the Commission's infringement proceedings against Ireland in relation to Directive 2011/8/EU on the use of Bisphenol A in plastic infant feeding bottles (Commission infringement procedure 2011/0472)?

Answer given by Mr Dalli on behalf of the Commission
(3 August 2012)

Commission infringement procedure 2011/0472 against Ireland concerned the non-communication of the national measures to transpose Directive 2011/8/EU on the use of Bisphenol A in plastic infant feeding bottles ([1]). Ireland has notified the transposition measures and the infringement procedure was closed on 19 May 2011.

([1]) Commission Directive 2011/8/EU of 28 January 2011 amending Directive 2002/72/EC as regards the restriction of use of Bisphenol A in plastic infant feeding bottles, OJ L 26, 29.1.2011, p. 11.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006429/12
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Possible discriminatory tax exemption of termination payments

What is the nature of and the current situation with regard to the Commission's infringement proceedings against Ireland in relation to possible discriminatory tax exemption of termination payments (Commission infringement 2011/4124)?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(1 August 2012)

The infringement procedure 2011/4124 concerns alleged discriminatory treatment of termination payments in Ireland.

On 1 June 2012 a letter of formal notice, which is the first stage of the infringement procedure, was addressed to Ireland.

In case the Commission decides to proceed to the next stage of the infringement procedure by sending a reasoned opinion to the Irish authorities, a press release will be published.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006430/12
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Problems in switching bank accounts

In December 2008, the European Banking Industry Committee (EBIC) adopted a self-regulation initiative on bank switching with the intention of facilitating the transfer of an account between banks in the same Member State.

On 24 February 2012, the Commission issued the results of an EU-wide consumer market survey indicating that 81% of consumers who attempted to open a bank account with a new bank and switch a standing order experienced problems of one form or another.

Does the Commission believe that the EBIC's self-regulation approach has worked and will it consider issuing proposals for binding EU legislation in this area?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(20 August 2012)

In order to assess the effectiveness of the European Banking Industry Committee's (EBIC) Common Principles for bank account switching, the Commission has performed an EU-wide mystery shopping exercise, the results of which were published early 2012 ([1]). The study identified significant non-compliance with the Common Principles as well as general shortcomings as regards the possibility of account switching in Europe.

The Commission is reflecting on how to deal with this matter. A public consultation was held between March and June 2012 in order to collect stakeholders' views on a number of issues relating to bank accounts, including problems with switching of accounts ([2]). On the basis of the analysis of all relevant information available, the Commission will decide on the most appropriate course of action.

([1]) See Consumer Market Study on the consumers' experiences with bank account switching with reference to the Common Principles on Bank Account Switching, GfK, January 2012.

([2]) See 'Summary of responses to the Public Consultation on Bank Accounts' at:
http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/finservices-retail/policy_en.htm #consultation and
http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consultations/bank_accounts_consultation-2012_03_20_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006431/12
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Promotion of clean and energy-efficient road transport vehicles (Directive 2009/33/EC)

What is the nature of and the current situation with regard to the Commission's infringement proceedings against Ireland in relation to Directive 2009/33/EC concerning the promotion of clean and energy-efficient road transport vehicles (Commission infringement 2011/0203)?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(7 August 2012)

The Irish authorities notified by letter dated 8 July 2011 that the transposing Regulations 'SI 339 of 2011 European Communities (Clean and Energy Efficient Road Transport Vehicles) Regulations, 2011' of Directive 2009/33/EC ([1]) in Ireland came into force on 30 June 2011.

Subsequently, the infringement procedure 2011/0203 was closed by the European Commission on 29 September 2011.

([1]) Directive 2009/33/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2009 on the promotion of clean and energy-efficient road transport vehicles , OJ L 120, 15.5.2009, p. 5-12.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006432/12
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Public participation — access to justice requirements in Ireland

What is the nature of and the current situation with regard to the Commission's infringement proceedings against Ireland in relation to the implementation of access to justice requirements in Ireland (Commission infringement procedure 2012/4028)?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(13 August 2012)

Following exchanges with the Irish authorities based mainly on complaints received on this topic, the Commission has sent Ireland, on 1 June 2012, a Letter of Formal Notice questioning both transposition and implementation of requirements to ensure the effective judicial protection of the rights of citizens and their associations under the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive, 2011/92/EU ([1]) and the Industrial Emissions Directive, 2008/1/EC ([2]).

([1]) Directive 2011/92/EU of the 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 2008/1/EC of the Parliament and of the Council of 15 January 2008 concerning integrated pollution prevention and control, OJ L 24, 29.1.2008.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006433/12
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Rail interoperability directive (Directive 2009/131/EC)

Can the Commission provide information on the nature and current state of its infringement proceedings taken out against Ireland in relation to Directive 2009/131/EC concerning rail interoperability (Commission infringement procedure No 2010/0675)?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(27 July 2012)

Infringement case No 2010/0675 against Ireland was started because of failure to notify national measures transposing Directive 2009/131/EC amending Annex VII to Directive 2008/57/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the interoperability of the rail system within the Community.

The case was closed on 27 October 2011 once Ireland had notified the relevant text.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006434/12
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Revision of the Tobacco Products Directive

When will the Commission be coming forward with its proposal to revise the Tobacco Products Directive (2001/37/EC) as announced in mid-2009 and, also, as requested by the European Parliament in its resolution of 26 November 2009 on smoke-free environments (P7_TA(2009)0100? What are the principal reasons for the delay in issuing this proposal which was originally promised by the end of 2011?

Answer given by Mr Dalli on behalf of the Commission
(17 August 2012)

The Commission plans to adopt the legislative proposal for the revision of the Tobacco Products Directive 2001/37/EC ([1]) in the fourth quarter of 2012 as indicated in the Commission Work Programme 2012 ([2]).

The preparation of the legislative proposal has required the collection and analysis of complex and comprehensive information necessary for the assessment of the economic, social and health impacts of the various options under consideration.

([1]) Directive 2001/37/EC of Parliament and of the Council of 5 June 2001 on the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States concerning the manufacture, presentation and sale of tobacco products — Commission statement, OJ L 194, 18.7.2001.

([2]) COM(2011)777 final 15.11.2011.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006435/12
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Taxation of imported vehicles

What is the nature of and current situation with regard to the Commission's long-standing infringement proceedings taken out against Ireland in relation to the taxation of vehicles leased from other Member States (Commission infringement procedure 2010/2144)?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(31 July 2012)

The infringement procedure IN/2010/2144 against Ireland in relation to the taxation of vehicles leased or rented from other Member States is awaiting, by the second half of 2012, Ireland's adoption of legislation which should end the infringement in question.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006436/12
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: UCITS Directive (Directive 2009/38/EC)

What is the nature of and the current situation with regard to the Commission's infringement proceedings against Ireland in relation to Directive 2009/65/EC concerning the coordination of laws, regulations and administrative provisions relating to undertakings for collective investment in transferable securities (UCITS) (Commission infringement procedure 2011/0836)?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(10 August 2012)

The Republic of Ireland notified to the Commission services the national acts transposing Directive 2009/65/EC into national law on 14 July 2011. Case 2011/0836 concerning non-communication of national legislation was subsequently closed on 29 September 2011. The related case 2011/0838 concerning the non-communication of national transposition measures regarding Directive 2010/44/EU, implementing Directive 2009/65/EC, was also closed on 29 September 2011. There are no open infringement proceedings against the Republic of Ireland in relation to the transposition of Directive 2009/65/EC and its implementing directives.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006437/12
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Vehicle registration tax in Ireland

What is the current situation with regard to the Commission's long-standing infringement proceedings against Ireland in relation to vehicle registration tax in Ireland (Commission infringement 1999/5321)?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(26 July 2012)

Following the intervention of the Commission, the Irish authorities have recently modified their national legislation. The Commission is currently examining the amendments introduced in order to check whether they are in proper compliance with EC law.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006438/12
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: VHI and non-life insurance legislation

What is the current situation with regard to the Commission's long-standing infringement proceedings against Ireland in relation to the alleged unlawful continued exemption of the VHI from EU non-life insurance legislation (Commission infringement procedure 2006/5023)?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(6 August 2012)

On 29 September 2011, in the Case C-82/10 Commission v Ireland, the Court of Justice held that Ireland had failed to fulfil its obligations under the First and Third Non-life Insurance Directives ([1]).

The Commission immediately contacted the Irish Government to seek swift compliance with the Court's ruling. Given the failure to comply with the Court's judgment, a Letter of formal notice was sent to Ireland on 28 February 2012 under Article 260 TFEU, to which the Irish authorities have replied. Contacts are ongoing between the Commission and the Irish authorities in order to ensure full compliance with the Court's ruling.

([1]) OJ L 228, 16.8.1973, p. 3-19, OJ L 228, 11.8.1992, p. 1-23.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006439/12
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Waste Directive

What is the current situation with regard to the Commission's infringement proceedings against Ireland in relation to Directive 2008/98/EC on waste (Commission infringement procedure No 2011/0197)?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(31 July 2012)

The Commission closed infringement 2011/0197 on 16 June 2011 on the basis that Ireland had notified legislation transposing Directive 2008/98/EC ([1]).

([1]) OJ L 312, 22.11.2008.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006440/12
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Water framework directive (2000/60/EC)

What is the current situation with regard to the Commission's long-standing infringement proceedings taken out against Ireland in relation to the water framework directive (Directive 2000/60/EC — Commission infringement procedure 2007/2238)?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(14 September 2012)

Infringement case 2007/2238 concerns the conformity of the Irish legislation used to implement Directive 2000/60/EC ([1]). The case is still open at the 'Reasoned Opinion' stage. Progress has been made in resolving some of the issues covered by this case, but discussions with the Irish authorities with a view to resolving all the aspects of the case are ongoing.

([1]) OJ L 327, 22.12.2000.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006443/12
to the Commission
William (The Earl of) Dartmouth (EFD)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Wheelchair users on airlines in the UK

BBC Somerset News has been investigating the conditions affecting wheelchair users on airlines in the UK. Many horror stories have come into public light. For example, many wheelchair users are not permitted to use the toilet on planes and must either wear incontinence pads or urinate in bottles.

Will the Commission consider looking into this serious matter?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(31 July 2012)

Since its date of application on 26 July 2008, Regulation (EC) No 1107/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 concerning the rights of disabled persons and passengers with reduced mobility when travelling by air ([1]) has considerably improved travel for these persons. Following this regulation, airports and air carriers have to provide assistance to disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility in order to enable them to fly on an equal footing with other passengers. In accordance with Annex II of the regulation assistance in moving to toilet facilities must be provided by the airline if required. Also, according to Article 4(3) of the regulation, air carriers must provide transparent and accessible information on their safety rules and on-board equipment to enable passengers to make a learned choice among air carriers.

In addition, in order to improve the application of the regulation and to address unclear issues for assistance providers and national authorities in charge of the enforcement of the regulation, the Commission has, on 14 June 2012, published guidelines on the application of Regulation 1107/2006 ([2]). The guidelines make it clear that disabled persons are entitled to assistance on-board aircraft, subject only to safety requirements. A distinction has to be made between requirements based on safety and those relating to the passengers' comfort. On-board assistance includes help with accessing the toilets, where this is possible for crew members without risk to their own health and safety (where available e.g. by use of an on-board wheelchair ([3])). No assistance must however be provided to use the toilets ([4]).

([1]) OJ L 204, 26.7.2006, p. 1.
([2]) SWD(2012)171 final.
([3]) According to the regulation air carriers are not obliged to carry on-board wheelchairs.
([4]) For more details, see in particular under Q3(c) and (d) and Q22 of the guidelines.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-006444/12
à la Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(27 juin 2012)

Objet: Nœuds ferroviaires et unimodaux d'envergure européenne

Dans ses propositions concernant le développement des réseaux transeuropéens de transport (RTE-T) datant du mois d'octobre 2011, la Commission a publié des cartes explicatives. Ce sont de simples projections qui n'ont aucune valeur juridique, mais la Commission a mis sur le papier les critères qu'elles appliquent dans ses priorités.

Elle y fait figurer les nœuds multimodaux d'envergure européenne (train/route, route/rail, rail/air, etc.). Je constate toutefois avec étonnement qu'elle ne mentionne pas les futurs nœuds d'envergure européenne ne faisant appel qu'à un seul moyen de communication (plateformes ferroviaires, portuaires et aéroportuaires). Dans le cas extrême où ils seraient isolés des RTE-T, ils n'en restent pas moins des éléments clés pour la structuration des déplacements des marchandises et des personnes au niveau national, européen et même mondial. Car c'est bien cet objectif qui doit être au cœur de tous les raisonnements en la matière.

1. D'une manière générale, pourquoi la Commission a-t-elle fait le choix d'exclure ces nœuds de sa cartographie des RTE-T?

2. Comment les considère-t-elle dans ses actions et ses initiatives?

3. Dans le cas particulier des plateformes ferroviaires, la Commission peut-elle préciser si sa législation actuelle ou ses futures propositions auront une influence sur les flux de passagers ferroviaires et l'organisation de ces mêmes nœuds?

Réponse donnée par M. Kallas au nom de la Commission
(7 août 2012)

1. La proposition de la Commission sur les orientations de l'Union pour le développement du réseau transeuropéen de transport ([1]) met fortement l'accent sur l'intégration et l'interconnexion des différents modes de transport, y compris dans les aéroports et les ports, afin de permettre et de garantir l'efficacité des transports. Le manque d'intégration constitue l'une des principales faiblesses des infrastructures de transport de l'UE telles qu'elles existent actuellement. La proposition de la Commission ne fait toutefois pas abstraction des gares ferroviaires de voyageurs. Comme dans les actuelles orientations relatives au RTE-T ([2]), ces gares ne sont pas indiquées séparément sur les cartes figurant en annexe de la proposition, mais font clairement partie de l'infrastructure ferroviaire [voir l'article 12, paragraphe 1, point c), de la proposition de la Commission sur les orientations de l'Union pour le développement du réseau transeuropéen de transport].

2. Outre l'inclusion des gares du réseau ferroviaire et leur connexion à d'autres modes de transport, la proposition contient également des dispositions relatives à la connexion entre différentes gares ferroviaires au sein d'un nœud urbain [article 36, point c), de la proposition de la Commission sur les orientations de l'Union pour le développement du réseau transeuropéen de transport]. Cela pourrait concerner notamment Paris, Bruxelles ou Londres.

3. Par une meilleure connexion entre le transport ferroviaire et les autres modes de transport (notamment routier ou aérien), la proposition de la Commission vise à augmenter les flux de voyageurs dans le secteur ferroviaire et à organiser les chemins de fer d'une manière plus efficace.

([1]) COM(2011) 650.
([2]) Décision n° 661/2010/UE du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 7 juillet 2010 sur les orientations de l'Union pour le développement du réseau transeuropéen de transport (JO L 204 du 5.8.2010, p. 1).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006444/12
to the Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: EU-wide unimodal railway nodes

The Commission has published explanatory memoranda in its proposals on the development of the trans-European transport networks (TEN-T) dating from October 2011. These are no more than forecasts which have no legal force, but the Commission has laid down the criteria to be applied in its priorities.

These include EU-wide multimodal nodes (train/road, road/rail, rail/air, etc.). However, I am surprised to see that it does not mention the future EU-wide nodes which use only one means of communication (railway, port and airport facilities). In extreme cases of TEN-T networks becoming isolated, key elements should be put in place to organise the transport of goods and people on a national, EU and even global scale. This objective should be at the core of all developments in this area.

1. Why did the Commission decide to exclude these nodes from the TEN-T maps?

2. How does the Commission take these nodes into account in its actions and initiatives?

3. In the specific case of railway facilities, can the Commission say whether current legislation or future proposals will influence the flow of railway passengers and the organisation of these nodes?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(7 August 2012)

1. The Commission proposal on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network ([1]) puts strong emphasis on the integration and interconnection of the different transport modes, including in airports and ports, in order to allow and ensure efficient transport operations. This lack of integration is one of the main weaknesses of the currently existing transport infrastructures in the EU. However, the Commission proposal does not exclude passenger train stations. Like in the current TEN-T guidelines ([2]), they are not indicated separately in the maps contained in the annex to the proposal but are clearly part of the railway infrastructure (see Article 12(1)(c) of the Commission proposal on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network).

2. Beyond the inclusion of the stations along the lines of the railway network and their connection to other modes, the proposal comprises provisions on the connection of different railway stations within an urban node (Article 36(c) Commission proposal on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network). This could apply for instance in Paris, Brussels or London.

3. Through the better connection between rail and the other modes of transport (in particular road and air transport), the Commission proposal aims at increasing passenger flows on railways and make them more efficient.

([1]) COM(2011)650.
([2]) Decision No 661/2010/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2010 on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network, OJ L 204, 5.8.2010, p. 1-129.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-006445/12
à la Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(27 juin 2012)

Objet: Lutter contre le décrochage scolaire au sein de l'Union européenne

Dans certains pays, le décrochage scolaire atteint 10 % des enfants scolarisés de l'Union européenne. Certains élus locaux ont compris le phénomène et se mobilisent afin de trouver des solutions efficaces. Mais les difficultés persistent. Des milliers de jeunes sortent du système scolaire sans aucun bagage. La stratégie Europe 2020 insiste tout particulièrement cohésion sociale, la croissance et la compétitivité. L'Union est en capacité de jouer un rôle important dans la lutte contre le décrochage scolaire.

1. De quelle façon la Commission peut-elle actuellement aider ces jeunes déscolarisés à se construire un avenir dans la société (FSE)? Peut-elle donner des exemples concrets?

2. Concrètement, quelle est la marge de manœuvre politique de la Commission en la matière?

3. Quelles initiatives a-t-elle prises ou va-t-elle prendre?

Réponse donnée par Mme Vassiliou au nom de la Commission
(7 août 2012)

La lutte contre le décrochage scolaire est l'un des objectifs phare de la stratégie Europe 2020. Bien que l'organisation des systèmes éducatifs incombe aux seuls États membres, la Commission européenne concourt à l'application de politiques de lutte contre le décrochage scolaire, politiques qui comprennent des mesures de prévention, d'intervention et de compensation. En janvier 2011, elle a adopté une communication dans laquelle elle esquisse des solutions pour atteindre cet objectif ([1]). Elle a également proposé une recommandation du Conseil sur les politiques de réduction de l'abandon scolaire, adoptée par le Conseil «Éducation» en juin 2011 ([2]).

À la suite de l'adoption de cette recommandation, un groupe thématique sur le décrochage scolaire a été mis en place pour favoriser l'échange d'enseignements et de bonnes pratiques à l'échelle de l'Union européenne.

La surveillance du décrochage scolaire dans l'Union fait partie intégrante de la stratégie Europe 2020. Cette année, la Commission a proposé à cinq pays des recommandations sur la lutte contre le décrochage scolaire ([3]). En outre, elle défend une mise en œuvre plus ciblée des Fonds structurels européens, de manière à investir dans des mesures de lutte contre le décrochage scolaire et à aider les jeunes à obtenir les qualifications nécessaires et à accroître leur aptitude à l'emploi.

Les programmes de financement européens, tels que le programme pour l'éducation et la formation tout au long de la vie, le 7e programme-cadre de recherche et ses successeurs, continueront de soutenir la coopération et la recherche dans ce domaine.

([1]) COM(2011) 18.
([2]) JO C 191 du 1.7.2011, p. 1.
([3]) Danemark, Espagne, Italie, Lettonie et Malte.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006445/12
to the Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Reducing the school dropout rate in the European Union

In some countries the school dropout rate is 10% of school children in the European Union. Some local politicians recognise the problem and are rallying to try to find effective solutions. However, there are still challenges to overcome. Thousands of young people leave school with no qualifications. The Europe 2020 strategy places particular emphasis on social cohesion, growth and competitiveness. The Union is able to play an important role in the fight against school dropouts.

1. How is the Commission currently able to help these young school dropouts to build a future in society(FSE, Fédération syndicale étudiante)? Can it provide specific examples?

2. More specifically, how much political flexibility does the Commission have in this matter?

3. What steps has it taken or will it take?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(7 August 2012)

Reducing early school leaving is one of the headline targets of the Europe 2020 strategy. While Member States are solely responsible for the organisation of their education systems, the Commission supports the implementation of policies to reduce early school leaving, encompassing prevention, intervention, and compensation measures. In January 2011, the European Commission adopted a communication outlining approaches to achieve this target ([1]). It also proposed a Council recommendation on policies to reduce early school leaving which was adopted by the Education Council in June 2011 ([2]).

Following adoption of the Council recommendation, an EU-level Thematic Working Group on early school leaving is promoting the exchange of experiences and good practices at EU level.

Monitoring early school leaving in the European Union is part of the Europe 2020 strategy. The European Commission proposed this year Country Specific Recommendation on reducing early school leaving to five countries ([3]). In addition, it advocates a better targeted use of European Structural Funds to invest in policies against early school leaving and to support young people in achieving necessary qualifications and increasing their employability.

European funding programmes such as the Lifelong Learning Programme, the 7th Framework Programme for Research and its successor programmes will continue to support cooperation and research in this area.

([1]) COM(2011) 18.
([2]) OJ 2011 C191.
([3]) DK, ES, IT, LV, MT.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-006446/12
à la Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(27 juin 2012)

Objet: Alimentation: promotion des circuits courts

Dans ce monde de plus en plus ouvert, le consommateur est de plus en plus demandeur de sécurité. Je le remarque souvent lors de mes déplacements dans ma circonscription. Mais paradoxalement, en matière d'alimentation, la priorité pour le consommateur n'est plus de s'assurer d'un haut niveau de qualité et d'hygiène. Il revient sur la politique du tout normatif. Ce que demande aujourd'hui le consommateur, c'est de mieux connaître l'origine de ce qui le nourrit au quotidien. Et il souhaite, de préférence, que cela vienne d'un territoire qu'il connaît: le sien. Il y en tout cas une forte demande en ce sens.

Les circuits courts de distribution entre le producteur et le consommateur sont en plein essor.

1. Quels sont les moyens qu'offre l'Union européenne pour promouvoir et soutenir ces activités, notamment à travers le Feader?

2. Quelle place pour cette question dans la réforme de la politique agricole commune proposée par la Commission en octobre dernier?

Réponse donnée par M. Cioloş au nom de la Commission
(7 août 2012)

Une chaîne d'approvisionnement alimentaire plus performante, tel est l'un des piliers de la proposition de réforme de la PAC, qui vise à assurer une augmentation de l'efficacité, une meilleure productivité et une meilleure utilisation des ressources rares. Les programmes de qualité existants de l'Union européenne (agriculture biologique, indications géographiques et spécialités traditionnelles), dans le cadre du Pilier I, ont clairement démontré l'utilité d'une intervention au niveau de l'UE, bien qu'ils ne concernent pas spécifiquement la commercialisation directe. Le Pilier II apporte un soutien complémentaire permettant aux États membres d'offrir un soutien ciblé répondant aux besoins locaux.

Dans le contexte de la demande croissante des consommateurs pour des denrées alimentaires produites localement et pour plus de transparence, de traçabilité, la nécessité de diminuer l'empreinte carbonique du transport de denrées alimentaires et une répartition plus équitable de la valeur ajoutée, la Commission a proposé un éventail de mesures destinées à encourager la coopération et l'action collective parmi les producteurs et à promouvoir une plus large coopération au sein de la chaîne alimentaire. Après 2013, le développement rural continuera d'offrir un soutien aux agriculteurs afin de faire face aux coûts initiaux liés à leur participation aux différents régimes de qualité. Ces régimes pourraient être établis par la législation européenne ou par les États membres, ou il pourrait y avoir d'autres régimes volontaires reconnus par les États membres respectant les lignes directrices de l'UE. Ceux-ci pourraient couvrir une gamme de caractéristiques du produit, y compris le lieu de production. La politique de développement rural offrira également un soutien spécifique (à travers la mesure relative à la coopération) au développement de chaînes d'approvisionnement alimentaire courtes et de marchés locaux, et notamment au moyen d'activités de promotion dans un contexte local. Enfin, l'approche Leader continuera de présenter un grand intérêt pour le développement de chaînes d'approvisionnement courtes.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006446/12
to the Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Reducing food miles

In this increasingly open world consumers are becoming more demanding when it comes to safety. I often notice this when out and about in my constituency. However, when it comes to food, paradoxically, the consumer's priority is no longer one of high quality and hygiene. The consumer is making a stand against the policy of regulating everything. What the consumer wants today is a clearer understanding of where the food he eats on a daily basis comes from. And what he wants, preferably, is for it to come from a region he knows: his own. There is certainly a demand for this.

Demand for short supply chains between the producer and the consumer is soaring.

1. What resources does the European Union offer to promote and support these activities, particularly through the EAFRD?

2. How important is this issue in the reform of the common agricultural policy proposed by the Commission last October?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(7 August 2012)

A better functioning food supply chain is one of the cornerstones of the proposed CAP reform, aimed at achieving increased efficiencies, enhanced productivity and a better use of scarce resources. Existing EU quality schemes (organic, geographical indications and traditional specialities) within Pillar I have clearly proven the usefulness of action at EU level, though they do not specifically address direct marketing. Pillar II provides complementary support which enables Member States to offer targeted support which responds to local needs.

Against the background of growing consumer demand for locally produced food and greater transparency and traceability, the need to lower the carbon footprint of food transportation and a more equitable distribution of added value, the Commission has proposed a range of measures to encourage cooperation and collective action among producers and to promote wider cooperation in the food chain. After 2013 rural development will continue to offer support for farmers to cover the initial costs of becoming involved in various types of quality schemes. These schemes could be established by EU legislation or by Member States, or they could be other voluntary schemes recognised by Member States and meeting EU guidelines. They could cover a range of product characteristics — including place of production. Rural development policy will also offer support (through the proposed 'cooperation' measure) specifically for the development of short supply chains and local markets, including through promotion activities in a local context. Finally, the 'Leader' approach will continue to be highly relevant to the development of short supply chains.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006447/12
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(27 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Lobby gay ottiene centinaia di migliaia di soldi pubblici europei per finanziare sondaggio non scientificamente attendibile su discriminazioni verso LGBT

Una sovvenzione di 370 000 euro di fondi europei è stata elargita dall'Agenzia dei diritti fondamentali dell'Unione Europea in favore della lobby gay ILGA per l'elaborazione di statistiche riguardo la situazione attuale delle discriminazioni verso gli LGBT (Lesbiche, Gay, Bisessuali, Transessuali) in Europa. Come sottolineato dall'European Dignity Watch questa indagine online non soddisfa i requisiti di scientificità basilari propri di un sondaggio d'opinione. In primo luogo, l'ILGA non sembrerebbe attendibile come ente promotore del sondaggio, in quanto non è un Istituto di Ricerca accreditato bensì un'associazione riconosciuta a tutela dei LGBT.

In secondo luogo sorgono dubbi circa l'affidabilità del sondaggio poiché, contro le regole base del campionamento statistico, viene offerta la possibilità ad uno stesso soggetto di compilarlo più volte falsandone, di fatto, la correttezza. In terzo luogo, il sondaggio sembrerebbe creato ad hoc per produrre un esito scontato: la maggior parte delle domande verte infatti insistentemente, senza neutralità, sull'esistenza di una reale discriminazione nei confronti dei LGBT. In quarto luogo, i destinatari del sondaggio sono soltanto gli LGBT.

Può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

1. Ritiene che sondaggi elaborati secondo le modalità suesposte siano pregiudizievoli nei confronti dei cittadini non-gay?

2. Non reputa sia spropositato l'impiego di una tale cifra di fondi europei provenienti da tutti i contribuenti europei, LGBT e non, per finanziare sondaggi online, a cui gli eterosessuali non possono partecipare?

3. Non esiste il rischio che sondaggi di questo tipo possano fornire dati inesatti e strumentalizzabili da parte di enti che mirano a chiedere fondi all'Unione Europea?

Risposta di Viviane Reding a nome della Commissione
(1º agosto 2012)

La raccolta di dati sulla discriminazione, l'incitamento all'odio e i reati generati dall'odio in base all'orientamento sessuale e all'identità di genere è necessaria per esaminare la portata di questi problemi in tutta l'UE. Questi dati sono poi utilizzati per elaborare le politiche attuate dall'Unione per lottare contro l'omofobia.

La Commissione ritiene che l'operato dell'Agenzia dei diritti fondamentali (FRA) in materia di orientamento sessuale e identità di genere sia essenziale per ottenere i dati mancanti su discorsi, reati e altre forme di violenza omofobi e di genere. Per sua stessa natura, questo lavoro richiede competenze specifiche e per definizione si rivolge ai gruppi più interessati da tali fenomeni.

Va sottolineato che la FRA è un'agenzia indipendente istituita da un regolamento del Consiglio del 2007 ([1]), il quale stipula che essa deve rispettare numerose norme scientifiche e finanziarie, come prevedono in particolare i suoi articoli 14 e 21. La FRA è interamente responsabile del suo bilancio e dell'attuazione del suo programma di lavoro annuale, verificata annualmente dalla Corte dei conti. In qualità di membro del consiglio di amministrazione dell'Agenzia, la Commissione s'impegna a garantire l'osservanza delle norme finanziarie e scientifiche, rispettando nel contempo l'indipendenza della FRA.

([1]) Regolamento (CE) n. 168/2007 del Consiglio, del 15 febbraio 2007, che istituisce l'Agenzia dell'Unione europea per i diritti fondamentali, Gazzetta ufficiale dell'Unione europea L 53 del 22.2.2007, pag. 1.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006447/12
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Gay lobby obtains hundreds of thousands of euros of public money to finance scientifically unreliable survey into discrimination against LGBT citizens

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights has granted EUR 370 000 from EU funds to the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA) lobby group to process statistics regarding the current situation on discrimination against Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, and Transsexuals (LGBT citizens) in Europe. As European Dignity Watch has pointed out, this online survey does not satisfy the basic scientific requirements for an opinion poll. Firstly, ILGA does not seem a reliable body to promote the survey since it is not an accredited research institute but a recognised association for the protection of LGBT citizens.

Secondly, there are doubts about the reliability of the survey since, contrary to the basic rules of statistical sampling, it is possible for the same person to complete the survey several times, effectively undermining its validity. Thirdly, the survey seems to have been created ad hoc to produce a given outcome: most of the questions subjectively insist on the existence of real discrimination against LGBT citizens. Lastly, the recipients of the survey are exclusively members of the LGBT community.

1. Does it believe that surveys drawn up as described above are prejudicial to non-gay citizens?

2. Does it not believe that the use of such extensive EU funds which come from all EU taxpayers, LGBT citizens and otherwise, is disproportionate for the financing of online surveys in which heterosexuals cannot participate?

3. Is there not a risk that surveys of this kind provide imprecise data which can be used by bodies aiming to seek funds from the European Union?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(1 August 2012)

Data collection on discrimination, hate speech and hate crime based on sexual orientation and gender identity is necessary in order to examine the extent of these problems throughout the EU, which will feed into EU policy to fight against homophobia.

The Commission believes that the work of the Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) as regards sexual orientation and gender identity is essential to obtain missing data on homophobic and gender related speech, crime and other forms of violence. By its very nature, such work requires a specific expertise and will by definition target the groups most concerned by these phenomena.

It should be underlined that FRA is an independent agency established under a 2007 Council Regulation ([1]) which provides that FRA should respect a number of scientific and financial standards, as laid down in particular in Articles 14 and 21 of the regulation. FRA is fully responsible for its budget and the annual work programme implementation which falls under the annual scrutiny of the Court of Auditors. As member of the FRA Management Board, the Commission is committed to ensure that financial and scientific standards are respected, while respecting FRA's independence.

([1]) Council Regulation (EC) No 168/2007 of 15 February 2007 establishing a European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, OJ L 53/1, 22.2.2007.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006448/12
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(27 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Implementazione urgente della direttiva 2011/83/UE per tutela cittadini contro pratiche scorrette di vendita beni e servizi a fronte delle continue frodi ai danni dei consumatori

La vendita di beni e servizi a distanza e fuori dai locali commerciali, ad esempio via telefono o tramite l'utilizzo delle nuove tecnologie digitali quali l'e-commerce, è a tutt'oggi in Italia un «far west» in materia di consumi. Ciò causa un numero elevatissimo di reclami da parte di cittadini italiani, costretti a spendere ingenti quantità di tempo e denaro per cercare di concludere contratti rivelatisi difformi dall'accordo iniziale, o, addirittura, non voluti ma ugualmente stipulati dalla società erogatrice, perciò in piena violazione dei diritti del consumatore europeo.

Le Associazioni dei consumatori italiani hanno pertanto chiesto, a mezzo di una lettera inviata al Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri Mario Monti, l'immediato recepimento della direttiva 2011/83/UE che costituisce la normativa più recente in materia di tutela del consumatore.

Alla mancanza di una normativa completa si aggiunge il malfunzionamento del Registro delle Opposizioni già denunciato da diverse associazioni dei consumatori. Tale Registro è gestito dalla Fondazione Bordoni, legata al Ministero dello Sviluppo economico italiano e perciò in palese conflitto d'interessi.

Può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

1. È a conoscenza del problema suesposto? Intende adottare misure per sollecitare il governo italiano a recepire la direttiva in tempi brevi, al fine di garantire ai cittadini la tutela cui spetta loro?

2. È a conoscenza della consuetudine da parte delle Autorità Indipendenti di approvare regolamenti di settore che riducono di fatto le garanzie di tutela previste dal Codice del Consumo?

3. Può fornire informazioni in merito allo stato di avanzamento del recepimento della direttiva negli altri Stati membri?

Risposta di Viviane Reding a nome della Commissione
(6 agosto 2012)

Entro il 13 dicembre 2013 gli Stati membri devono adottare e pubblicare le disposizioni legislative, regolamentari e amministrative necessarie per conformarsi alla direttiva 2011/83/UE, del 25 ottobre 2011, sui diritti dei consumatori. Tali disposizioni si applicheranno a partire dal 13 giugno 2014 ai contratti conclusi dopo tale data.

La Commissione europea non ha il potere di costringere gli Stati membri ad attuare le direttive prima del termine stabilito per il loro recepimento. Tuttavia, fornisce assistenza nell'ambito del processo di attuazione, come nel caso della direttiva in questione. A tal fine, è prevista una riunione di esperti per quest'autunno. Come dichiarato nella recente agenda europea dei consumatori, è infatti essenziale che queste nuove norme siano applicate in modo rapido ed efficace.

La Commissione sta esaminando la conformità delle norme italiane applicabili a settori specifici (come quello delle telecomunicazioni) con le norme UE che garantiscono un livello elevato di protezione dei consumatori, in particolare quelle previste dalla direttiva 2005/29/CE relativa alle pratiche commerciali sleali. La Commissione invita l'onorevole parlamentare a fornirle ogni ulteriore informazione dettagliata al riguardo a Sua disposizione.

Per quanto concerne il recepimento della direttiva sui diritti dei consumatori, la situazione varia a seconda degli Stati membri: in alcuni si stanno già discutendo veri e propri disegni di legge mentre in altri il processo di recepimento è appena agli inizi.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006448/12
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Urgent transposition of Directive 2011/83/EU for the protection of citizens against unfair practices in the sale of goods and services given the continuing cases of fraud committed against consumers

The distance and off-premises selling of goods and services, for example by telephone or through the use of new digital technologies such as e-commerce, is still a shambles in Italy as far as consumers are concerned. This results in a great many complaints from Italian citizens who are forced to spend huge amounts of time and money trying to conclude contracts that prove to be different from the initial agreement or which they did not even want but which were signed all the same by the supply company, and are therefore in complete violation of the rights of EU consumers.

Italian consumer associations have therefore asked, in a letter to Prime Minister Mario Monti, for the immediate transposition of Directive 2011/83/EU which is the most recent consumer protection law.

Besides the lack complete legislation, there is also the malfunctioning of the *Registro delle Opposizioni* [Call Prevention Registry] which has already been reported by various consumer associations. This Register is managed by the *Fondazione Bordoni*, which is linked to the Italian Ministry of Economic Development and is therefore subject to a clear conflict of interest.

Can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Is it aware of the aforementioned problem? Will it adopt measures to urge the Italian Government to transpose the directive quickly to guarantee citizens the protection they are due?

2. Is it aware of the independent authorities' tendency to approve sector regulations which effectively reduce the guarantees of protection envisaged by the Consumer Code?

3. Can it provide any information regarding the progress of the transposition of the directive in other Member States?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(6 August 2012)

Member States shall adopt and publish, by 13 December 2013, the laws, regulations and administrative provisions necessary to comply with Directive 2011/83/EU of 25 October 2011 on consumer rights and those measures shall be applied from 13 June 2014. The national provisions shall apply to contracts concluded after 13 June 2014.

The European Commission does not have the power to force Member States to implement directives before the deadline agreed for transposition. However, the Commission does provide help and assistance in the process towards implementation, as it is also the case for this directive. For this purpose, a meeting at expert level is being organised for this Autumn. Indeed, as it is also stated in the recently adopted European Consumer Agenda, the timely and efficient implementation and enforcement of these new rules is essential.

The Commission is currently assessing whether, in Italy, national rules applicable to specific sectors (such as the telecoms sector) are in line with the standards of high level of consumer protection provided by EU legislation, in particular with Directive 2005/29/EC on unfair commercial practices. The Commission would invite the Honourable Member to provide any further detailed information at her disposal related to this issue.

As to the progress of transposition of the Consumer Rights Directive in the different Member States, it varies across the Member States: in some Member States fully fledged legislative drafts are already under discussions whereas in others the transposition process has only just started.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006449/12
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(27 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Acrilammide: alto rischio per la salute derivante dalla cottura di alimenti comuni

Due tra gli alimenti più comuni sulle tavole dei consumatori europei, le patate e i cereali, se fritti ad alte temperature possono rivelarsi cancerogeni e tossici. Infatti, dalla loro cottura si forma l'acrilammide, una sostanza che tende a sedimentarsi nei tessuti muscolari e che rappresenta un pericolo per la salute, soprattutto nei bambini. Studi autorevoli condotti dal JECFA e dall'EFSA definiscono come dose giornaliera accettabile 5 microgrammi per kg di peso corporeo. Questa dose indicativa viene regolarmente superata dal consumo giornaliero di patate e cereali del cittadino medio europeo.

1. Secondo la raccomandazione 2010/307/UE gli Stati membri sono tenuti a richiedere l'analisi dei metodi di lavorazione degli alimenti, dalla cui cottura in olio può formarsi l'acrilammide. Può la Commissione fornire dati in merito alla situazione italiana e a quella degli altri Stati membri?

2. È la Commissione a conoscenza di possibili misure che possano ridurre l'impatto dell'acrilammide sulla salute dei cittadini europei?

3. La Commissione ha promosso una campagna di divulgazione capillare per far conoscere questa problematica in tutti gli Stati membri? Non ritiene necessaria un'azione di sensibilizzazione, che inizi nel contesto scolastico, al fine di rendere consapevoli i giovanissimi cittadini europei dei rischi legati al consumo di cibi fritti?

Risposta di J. Dalli a nome della Commissione
(31 agosto 2012)

Dal 2007 gli Stati membri sono tenuti a monitorare i livelli di acrilammide nei gruppi di alimenti pertinenti, nel rispetto di specifiche raccomandazioni di monitoraggio dell'UE ([1]). I risultati del monitoraggio sono presentati ogni anno in una relazione pubblicata dall'Autorità europea per la sicurezza alimentare (AESA). L'ultima relazione è stata pubblicata nel marzo 2011 ([2]). All'inizio dell'autunno 2012 sarà pubblicata una relazione aggiornata.

Gli Stati membri sono inoltre tenuti ad effettuare indagini in loco qualora siano rilevati livelli elevati di acrilammide ([3]). Tali indagini perseguono l'obiettivo di sensibilizzare gli operatori del settore alimentare e di stabilire in che modo sono applicate le misure attualmente disponibili per ridurre il tenore di acrilammide negli alimenti. Le misure di attenuazione esistenti sono quelle del codice di condotta del Codex per l'acrilammide ([4]), nonché quelle elaborate dall'industria (la «toolbox» FDE per l'acrilammide ([5])).

La Commissione sta raccogliendo presso gli Stati membri le informazioni preliminari sui risultati delle indagini. Entro la fine del 2012 la Commissione avrà valutato i risultati delle indagini nonché quelli del monitoraggio dell'acrilammide.

Per informare i consumatori e gli operatori del settore alimentare in merito ai rischi e alle misure di attenuazione relative all'acrilammide sono state elaborati unitamente all'industria alimentare appositi opuscoli da distribuire ai cittadini e agli operatori del settore alimentare attraverso le autorità nazionali. Tali opuscoli sono disponibili anche sul sito web della DG Salute e consumatori ([6]).

([1]) Raccomandazione 2007/331/CE della Commissione, del 3 maggio 2007 e raccomandazione 2010/307/UE della Commissione, del 2 giugno 2010.

([2]) Relazione «Results of acrylamide levels in food from monitoring years 2007-2009 and exposure assessment» (Risultati del monitoraggio relativo ai livelli di acrilammide negli alimenti negli anni 2007-2009 e valutazione dell'esposizione), pubblicata il 22 marzo 2011, EFSA Journal 2011;9(4):2133.

([3]) Raccomandazione della Commissione sulle analisi dei tenori di acrilammide negli alimenti (Documento C(2010)9681 final del 10.1.2011).

([4]) Codice di condotta del Codex per la riduzione dell'acrilammide negli alimenti (CAC/RCP 67-2009).

([5]) La toolbox si può consultare al seguente indirizzo: http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/chemicalsafety/contaminants/ciaa_acrylamide_toolbox09.pdf

([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/chemicalsafety/contaminants/acrylamide_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006449/12
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Acrylamide: high health risk from cooking common foods

Two of the most common foods on the tables of European consumers, potatoes and cereals, if fried at high temperatures, can prove carcinogenic and toxic. In fact, cooking them produces acrylamide, a substance which tends to settle in muscular tissue and which represents a health risk, especially for children. Authoritative studies conducted by the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) define an acceptable daily dose as 5 micrograms per kilo of body weight. This suggested dose is regularly exceeded by the daily consumption of potatoes and cereals by the average European citizen.

1. According to Recommendation 2010/307/EU, Member States are required to ask for an analysis of the methods of preparing foods, which if cooked in oil can lead to the formation of acrylamide. Can the Commission provide data on the situation in Italy and in other Member States?

2. Is the Commission aware of possible measures that may reduce the impact of acrylamide on the health of European citizens?

3. Has the Commission undertaken a wide-ranging information campaign to bring this problem to public attention in all Member States? Does it not consider that there is a need for an awareness-raising initiative, starting in schools, to make Europe's youngest citizens aware of the risks linked to the consumption of fried food?

Answer given by Mr Dalli on behalf of the Commission
(31 August 2012)

Since 2007 the Member States are requested to monitor acrylamide levels in relevant food groups under specific EU monitoring recommendations ([1]). The results are annually compiled in a report and published by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). The most recent report was issued in March 2011 ([2]). An updated report is expected to be issued in early autumn 2012.

Furthermore, Member States are requested to carry out on-the-spot investigations in cases where high acrylamide levels have been found ([3]). The investigations serve to raise awareness among food business operators and to find out how the currently available mitigation measures for reducing acrylamide in food are implemented. Existing mitigation measures are those laid down in the Codex Code of Practice for acrylamide ([4]), as well as those developed by industry (the FDE acrylamide 'toolbox' ([5])).

The Commission is currently in the process of collecting preliminary information from the Member States on the outcome of the investigations. By the end of 2012 the Commission will evaluate the results of these investigations as well as the results from the acrylamide monitoring exercise.

To inform consumers and food business operators about the risks and mitigation measures linked to acrylamide, specific brochures have been elaborated together with the food industry and are distributed to citizens and food business operators via national authorities. They are also available on the DG Health and Consumers webpage ([6]).

([1]) Commission Recommendation 2007/331/EC of 3 May 2007 and Commission Recommendation 2010/307/EU of 2 June 2010.
([2]) Report on 'Results of acrylamide levels in food from monitoring years 2007 — 2009 and exposure assessment', issued on 22 March 2011, EFSA Journal 2011;9(4):2133.
([3]) Commission Recommendation on investigations into the levels of acrylamide in food (Document C(2010) 9681 final of 10.1.2011).
([4]) Codex Code of Practice for the reduction of acrylamide in foods (CAC/RCP 67-2009).
([5]) The toolbox can be found at the following link: http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/chemicalsafety/contaminants/ciaa_acrylamide_toolbox09.pdf
([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/chemicalsafety/contaminants/acrylamide_en.htm

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006450/12
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(27 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Consultazione on-line della Commissione per le politiche UE

Fra i diritti dei cittadini europei vi è quello di partecipare a consultazioni on-line sulle politiche dell'UE, pubblicate sul sito della Commissione nella pagina «La vostra voce in Europa». Tali consultazioni prevedono la compilazione di un questionario inerente alla materia in oggetto entro una data indicata, di cui la Commissione dovrebbe tener conto nella formulazione delle future politiche europee. Scorrendo i dati di alcune consultazioni si rilevano tassi di partecipazione estremamente bassi, soprattutto da parte dei privati cittadini, solitamente nell'ordine di poche decine.

Ad esempio, la consultazione sul «Libro verde sul futuro dell'IVA» (Green Paper on the future of VAT — Towards a simpler, more robust and efficient VAT system), aperta dal 1.12.2010 al 31.5.2011 ha ricevuto 1726 risposte, 1115 da associazioni no-profit, e 611 da altri, dei quali solo 55 privati cittadini.

Oppure alla consultazione sulla «Strategia per le energie rinnovabili», con periodo consultivo che andava dal 6.12.2011 al 7.2.2012, sono pervenute 381 risposte, di cui solo 80 privati cittadini.

1. La Commissione reputa che a fronte di questi scarsi risultati la «Consultazione Pubblica» possa essere ritenuta un efficace strumento democratico di dialogo con i cittadini dell'UE?

2. Ritiene la Commissione di dover potenziare l'informazione su questo strumento che è evidentemente sconosciuto ai cittadini europei o quantomeno percepito come poco utile da essi?

Risposta di José Manuel Barroso a nome della Commissione
(25 luglio 2012)

Il numero di risposte è soltanto uno dei fattori utilizzati per valutare l'efficacia delle consultazioni pubbliche. I numeri variano a seconda dell'importanza dell'argomento per le parti interessate e per i cittadini. Le risposte sono spesso trasmesse anche attraverso canali paralleli o tramite le associazioni di parti interessate. Ciò premesso, la Commissione è attenta al basso tasso di risposta e gli orientamenti in materia di valutazione d'impatto mettono in guardia i servizi dal trarre conclusioni definitive quando le risposte sono poche o rappresentano uno spettro ristretto d'interessi.

La Commissione consulta sistematicamente le parti interessate su tutte le principali iniziative e s'impegna a raggiungere tutte le categorie di destinatari interessati, compresi i cittadini. Il portale «la vostra voce in Europa», punto d'accesso unico per tutte le consultazioni pubbliche della Commissione, consente alle parti interessate di monitorare le consultazioni e di rispondervi.

Dal 2010, al fine di assicurare una vasta ed efficace partecipazione alle consultazioni, la Commissione pubblica le tabelle di marcia di tutte le principali proposte e mette i cittadini al corrente delle consultazioni previste e delle valutazioni d'impatto. Le parti interessate iscritte al «Registro della trasparenza» comune vengono automaticamente avvisate non appena una nuova consultazione e la relativa tabella di marcia sono pubblicate. Queste misure dovrebbero permettere ai cittadini e alle altre parti interessate di pianificare i contributi ed esprimere la propria opinione in una fase molto più precoce che in passato. Per favorire ulteriormente le risposte dei cittadini, dall'inizio del 2012 la Commissione ha inoltre esteso la durata delle consultazioni pubbliche da 8 a 12 settimane. Infine è attualmente in corso un riesame delle politiche di consultazione pubblica per valutare la necessità di ampliare la portata delle consultazioni e il modo in cui effettuare tale ampliamento.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006450/12
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Online consultation by the Commission on EU policies

Each European citizen has the right to take part in online consultations regarding EU policies. These consultations are published on the Commission's website on the 'Your voice in Europe' page. They involve a questionnaire on the issue in question to be filled in by a specified date, and which the Commission should take into account when formulating future European policies. Scrolling through the data relating to some consultations we can see extremely low participation rates, above all by private citizens, usually no more than a few dozen.

For example, the consultation on the 'Green Paper on the future of VAT — Towards a simpler, more robust and efficient VAT system', which ran from 1 December 2010 to 31 May 2011, received 1 726 responses, 1 115 from non-profit associations and 611 from others, of which only 55 were from private citizens.

Another example is the consultation on the 'Strategy for renewable energy', whose consultation period ran from 6 December 2011 to 7 February 2012 and which received 381 responses, with just 80 from private citizens.

1. Does the Commission believe that, given these poor results, public consultation can be considered an effective democratic tool for dialogue with EU citizens?

2. Does the Commission consider that it should improve the information available on this platform, which is clearly unknown to European citizens or at least perceived by them as being of little use?

Answer given by Mr Barroso on behalf of the Commission
(25 July 2012)

The number of responses is only one factor in assessing the effectiveness of a public consultation. Numbers vary depending on the relevance of the topic for stakeholders and citizens. Responses are often also transmitted through parallel channels or through stakeholders' associations. That being said, the Commission is attentive to low response rates and its impact assessment guidelines warn services against drawing firm conclusions when responses are few or represent a narrow range of interests.

The Commission systematically consults stakeholders on all major initiatives and strives to reach all target audiences including citizens. By offering a 'single access point' to all Commission public consultations, the 'Your voice in Europe' website helps stakeholders monitor and respond to consultations.

Starting in 2010, so as to ensure wide and effective participation in its consultations, the Commission publishes roadmaps for all its major proposals, informing about planned consultation and impact assessment work. Stakeholders registered in the joint Transparency Register benefit from an automatic alert service for newly published consultations and roadmaps. These measures should allow citizens and other stakeholders to plan their inputs and express their views at a much earlier stage than before. To further facilitate citizens' responses, the Commission has also extended the public consultation period from 8 to 12 weeks as of the beginning of 2012. Finally, a review of public consultation policy is currently ongoing and will look at the need for, and ways to, extend the reach of consultations.

(České znění)

Otázka k písemnému zodpovězení P-006453/12
Komisi
Olga Sehnalová (S&D)
(27. června 2012)

Předmět: Provádění nástroje Calypso (Sociální cestovní ruch) v členských státech Evropské unie

Nástroj Evropské komise Calypso, který se soustředí na podporu sociálního cestovního ruchu, ukončil koncem roku 2011 svou tříletou přípravnou fázi, na kterou bylo z rozpočtu Evropské unie vyčleněno celkem 3,5 milionů eur.

Rok 2012 je podle Evropské komise rokem provádění výzev a projektů, které byly v rámci tohoto nástroje schváleny, v jednotlivých členských státech Evropské unie, a to ve spolupráci se sociálními partnery, veřejným i soukromým sektorem.

1. Disponuje Komise vyhodnocením dosavadní úspěšnosti nástroje Calypso v členských státech EU?

2. Jaké mechanismy má Komise k dispozici pro kontrolu správného provádění Calypso a jaké kroky podniká/ je připravena podniknout v případě porušení základních principů tohoto programu?

3. Na jaké kontaktní místo je v případě stížností na nesprávné provádění tohoto programu možno se obrátit?

4. Byla již Komise nucena zasáhnout z důvodu nesprávného provádění nástroje Calypso?

Odpověď Antonia Tajaniho jménem Komise
(3. srpna 2012)

1. Dvacet jedna členských států se zúčastnilo studie Calypso, zatímco 14 členských států se účastní sedmi spolufinancovaných projektů Calypso ([1]) v rámci dvou výzev k předkládání návrhů zveřejněných v letech 2010 a 2011 ([2]), jež sdružují různé země/regiony z různých částí Evropy a nyní pokračují prostřednictvím financování z rámcového programu pro konkurenceschopnost a inovace, který je otevřen pro země, které nejsou členy EU ([3]). Komise hodnotí konečné a průběžné zprávy o provádění vítězných projektů a provede podrobné posouzení, aby se zjistily možné způsoby provádění dalších akcí v budoucnu. Lze uvést některé pozitivní výsledky: definice mnohostranného mezinárodního modelu výměn zaměřeného na segment seniorů, vypracování návrhu desatera osvědčených postupů pro řízení cestovního systému, příručka požadavků pro hotely a tematické balíčky nabídek mimo hlavní sezónu určené lidem s postižením.

2. Dosud je iniciativa Calypso prováděna prostřednictvím výzev k předkládání návrhů a nabídkových řízení. Ustanovení finančního nařízení o zadávání veřejných zakázek a grantech (hlavy V a VI) se použijí v celém rozsahu, zejména prostřednictvím posuzování zpráv o provádění a finančních výkazů.

3. Dosud nebyly obdrženy žádné stížnosti, jelikož Calypso ještě není program. Oddělení pro rozvoj politiky v oblasti cestovního ruchu Generálního ředitelství pro podniky a průmysl je kontaktním místem, které podléhá členu Komise zodpovědnému za průmysl a podnikání.

4. V této fázi Komise nepodnikla žádné kroky z důvodu neprovádění iniciativy Calypso.

([1]) Cílem přípravné akce Calypso bylo hlavně podpořit sociální cestovní ruch, usnadnit mezinárodní cestovní ruch mimo hlavní sezónu v rámci Evropy a evropskou integraci a bojovat proti sezónnosti. http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/calypso/index_en.htm

([2]) Rozpočet se zvyšoval z 1 milionu EUR v prvním roce až do výše 1,5 milionu EUR v roce 2011.

([3]) Chorvatsko, Bývalá jugoslávská republika Makedonie, Albánie, Černá Hora, Turecko, Srbsko a Izrael.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-006453/12
to the Commission
Olga Sehnalová (S&D)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Implementation of the Calypso instrument (social tourism) in EU Member States

At the end of 2011, the Commission's Calypso instrument, which aims to promote social tourism, reached the end of its three-year preparatory phase, to which a total of EUR 3.5 million had been allocated from the EU budget.

According to the Commission, 2012 is the year in which the calls for proposals and the projects approved in the framework of this instrument are to be implemented in the EU Member States, in collaboration with the social partners, the public sector and the private sector.

1. Does the Commission have an evaluation of the success so far of the Calypso instrument in the EU Member States?

2. What mechanisms are available to the Commission to check that Calypso is being correctly implemented and what steps is it taking or is it prepared to take in the event of any breach of the basic principles of the programme?

3. What contact point is provided should there be any complaints about failure to correctly implement the programme?

4. Has the Commission already been obliged to take action in respect of failure to correctly implement the Calypso instrument?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(3 August 2012)

1. 21 Member States (MS) participated in the Calypso Study, while 14 MS are participating in the seven co-funded Calypso projects ([1]) within the two Calls for Proposals launched in 2010 and 2011 ([2]), bringing together different countries/regions from different parts of Europe and now continuing through Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) funding, open to non-EU countries ([3]). The Commission is evaluating the final and interim implementation reports of the winner projects and will carry out a detailed assessment, in order to identify possible ways of implementing additional actions in the future. Some positive outcomes can be mentioned: the definition of a multilateral transnational exchange model targeted to the senior segment, the drafting of a Decalogue of good practices for the management of the travel system, a Manual of Requirements for hotels and thematic packages offers in low season for people with disabilities.

2. So far the Calypso initiative is implemented through calls for proposals and calls for tenders. The provisions of the Financial Regulation about procurement and grants (title V and VI) are fully applicable, notably through the assessment of implementation reports and financial statements.

3. No complaints have been received so far as Calypso is not yet a programme. The Tourism Policy Development Unit of Directorate-General Enterprise and Industry is the contact point under the authority of the Member of the Commission responsible for Industry and Entrepreneurship.

4. No action has been taken by the Commission at this stage in respect of failure implementing the Calypso initiative.

([1]) The aim of Calypso preparatory action was mainly to encourage social tourism, to facilitate transnational low season tourism exchange within Europe and European integration, to combat seasonality. http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/calypso/index_en.htm
([2]) The budget was increasing from EUR 1 million the first year, up to 1.5 million euro in 2011.
([3]) Croatia, Macedonia, Albania, Montenegro, Turkey, Serbia and Israel.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-006454/12
to the Commission
Catherine Stihler (S&D)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Studies on software longevity

In response to Question E-000125/2012 relating to software longevity, the Commission stated that it had not conducted any research to understand the consequences of perfectly good hardware being made redundant by software updates.

1. Will the Commission commit to undertaking this research and taking appropriate action once the research findings are known?

2. Besides environmental factors, will the Commission take other factors into account, such as the cost to consumers?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(24 July 2012)

The problem posed by the question is part of the larger problem of interoperability. While the Commission does not plan specific research on the precise issue raised by the question, it actively addresses the larger problem of interoperability and upgradability of software and hardware by encouraging and supporting the use of open standards whenever possible, because open standards can guarantee interoperability of hardware and software solutions from different vendors. In that respect the Commission is carefully monitoring these developments, especially from the point of view of consumer protection and software interoperability.

Ongoing work by the European Commission is fully in line with this direction (see e.g. Digital Agenda for Europe (DAE) ([1]) Actions on: the reform of the ICT standardisation regime in Europe (DAE action 21); the provision of guidance on public procurement of ICT (DAE action 23); and the feasibility of measures that could lead to the licensing of interoperability information (DAE action 25)).

([1]) COM(2010) 245 final/2, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0245:FIN:EN:PDF.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-006456/12
til Kommissionen
Christel Schaldemose (S&D)
(27. juni 2012)

Om: Regler vedrørende lægelig udlevering af antibiotika

Debatten om brugen af antibiotika til mennesker og dyr kommer med jævne mellemrum frem i de danske medier og blandt fagfolk. I den forbindelse er jeg interesseret i at få et svar på, hvilke regler der gør sig gældende for salg af antibiotika, når læger udleverer antibiotika. Mit spørgsmål lyder som følgende:

— I hvor mange EU-lande er det kun muligt at købe antibiotika til mennesker/dyr, hvis man har en recept udskrevet af en læge/dyrlæge?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af John Dalli
(21. august 2012)

I henhold til direktiv 2001/83 ([1]) træffes der afgørelse om, hvorvidt udlevering af humanmedicinske lægemidler er receptpligtig eller ej, når der gives tilladelse til markedsføring. Der kræves recept for lægemidler, når de ofte og i meget vid udstrækning bliver anvendt under unormale omstændigheder, og dette direkte eller indirekte kan være til fare for sundheden ([2]). Tilladelse til markedsføring af antibiotika til mennesker er hovedsagelig blevet givet af medlemsstaterne. Kommissionen råder ikke over oplysninger om, i hvilke medlemsstater det kun er muligt at købe antibiotika på recept.

For at sikre en hensigtsmæssig anvendelse af antimikrobielle stoffer i humanmedicin sigtes der i Kommissionens handlingsplan for den voksende trussel fra antimikrobiel resistens ([3]) fra 2011 bl.a. imod »*at forbedre gennemførelsen i alle medlemsstater af receptpligt for antimikrobielle stoffer*«.

I direktiv 2001/82/EF ([4]) fastsættes bestemmelser for besiddelse, forhandling og udlevering af veterinærlægemidler, herunder antibiotika. Der kræves dyrlægerecept, for at der kan udleveres lægemidler, som er beregnet til behandling af sygdomsforløb, som forudsætter en nøjagtig forudgående diagnose, eller hvis brug kan give virkninger, som vanskeliggør eller griber ind i senere diagnoser eller behandlinger. Endvidere er det kun personer, der er bemyndiget dertil i henhold til deres nationale lovgivning, som må være i besiddelse af eller råde over veterinærlægemidler eller stoffer, der kan anvendes som veterinærlægemidler, og som frembyder antiinfektiøse egenskaber.

([1]) Europa-Parlamentets og Rådets direktiv 2001/83/EF om oprettelse af en fællesskabskodeks for humanmedicinske lægemidler.
([2]) Artikel 71 i direktiv 2001/83/EF.
([3]) Meddelelse fra Kommissionen til Europa-Parlamentet og Rådet — Handlingsplan for den voksende trussel fra antimikrobiel resistens (KOM(2011)0748) http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/docs/communication_amr_2011_748_da.pdf
([4]) Europa-Parlamentets og Rådets direktiv 2001/82/EF om oprettelse af en fællesskabskodeks for veterinærmedicinske lægemidler med senere ændringer.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006456/12
to the Commission
Christel Schaldemose (S&D)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Regulations governing the supply of antibiotics by doctors

The debate surrounding the use of antibiotics for human beings and animals appears regularly in the Danish media and amongst professionals. In this regard, I would be interested to know which regulations apply to the sale of antibiotics supplied by doctors. My question is as follows:

— In how many EU countries is it possible to buy antibiotics for human beings/animals on the basis of a prescription from a doctor/veterinary surgeon?

Answer given by Mr Dalli on behalf of the Commission
(21 August 2012)

According to Directive 2001/83 ([1]) a decision on supply of a human medicinal product with or without a prescription is taken when a marketing authorisation is granted. Medicinal products shall be subject to medical prescription where they are frequently and to a very wide extent used incorrectly, and as a result are likely to present a direct or indirect danger to human health ([2]). Marketing authorisations for antibiotics for human use have been granted mostly by the Member States. The Commission does not possess information in which Member States it is possible to buy antibiotics only on medical prescription.

To ensure a prudent use of antimicrobials in human medicines, the Commission's 2011 action plan against the rising threats from antimicrobial resistance ([3]) among other actions aims at '*Improving the implementation by all Member States of the prescription only requirements for antimicrobial agents*'.

Directive 2001/82/EC ([4]) sets out provisions on the possession, distribution and dispensing of veterinary medicines, including antibiotics. A veterinary prescription is required for the dispensing of medicines which are intended for the treatment of conditions that require a precise diagnosis or their use may cause effects which impede or interfere with subsequent diagnostic or therapeutic measures. Additionally, only persons empowered by the national legislation may possess veterinary medicines or substances that have anti-infectious effects.

([1]) Directive 2001/83/EC of the European Parliament and Council on the Community code relating to medicinal products for human use as amended.
([2]) Directive 2001/83/EC, Article 71.
([3]) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council Action plan against the rising threats from Antimicrobial Resistance, 2011, COM(2011)748, http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/docs/communication_amr_2011_748_en.pdf
([4]) Directive 2001/82/EC of the European Parliament and Council on the Community code relating to veterinary medicinal products as amended.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-006457/12
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (NI)
(27. Juni 2012)

Betrifft: „Start-up Centers“ im wirtschaftlich gebeutelten Süden Europas

Angesichts der schwierigen Lage in den südlichen Ländern stellt sich die Frage, ob die Kommission in ihren projektbezogenen Plänen im Zuge des wirtschaftlichen Wiederaufbaus auch an die Gründung sogenannter „Start-up Centers“ denkt. (Bitte um ausführliche Erläuterung).

Antwort von Herrn Tajani im Namen der Kommission
(13. August 2012)

Die Kommission überwacht seit 2007 die Fortschritte der Mitgliedstaaten bei der Einrichtung von Unternehmensgründungszentren entsprechend den Schlussfolgerungen der Frühjahrstagung des Europäischen Rates 2006. Die Mitgliedstaaten sollen die Verwaltungsvorgänge zur Unternehmensgründung schneller und kostengünstiger gestalten und zentrale Anlaufstellen schaffen, bei denen sämtliche Verfahren erledigt werden können. Hierbei wurden erhebliche Fortschritte erzielt. Während eine Unternehmensgründung im Jahr 2007 durchschnittlich 12 Tage in Anspruch nahm und Kosten von 485 EUR verursachte, lag der Aufwand 2012 bei 6,5 Tagen und 397 EUR. Die meisten Mitgliedstaaten haben auch effiziente zentrale Anlaufstellen eingerichtet.

Sämtliche Informationen zu diesem Thema sowie die erzielten Fortschritte können, geordnet nach Jahren und Ländern, unter folgendem Link abgerufen werden:
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/business-environment/start-up-procedures/index_en.htm

Was die direkte Unterstützung von Unternehmensgründungen über die Verringerung des Verwaltungsaufwandes hinaus, etwa durch Gründerzentren (*business incubators*) oder sogenannte Unternehmensbeschleuniger (*business accelerators*), betrifft, so ist die Kommission an das Subsidiaritätsprinzip gebunden. Die Einrichtung von Unternehmensgründungszentren in Europa fällt somit nicht in ihre Zuständigkeit. In einigen Ländern existieren hierfür nationale Strategien, in anderen (nämlich in Italien und Spanien) werden entsprechende Maßnahmen auf regionaler und gelegentlich sogar kommunaler Ebene getroffen. Die Mitgliedstaaten und die Regionen werden hierbei von der Kommission sowohl über die Strukturfonds als auch durch die Verbreitung bewährter Praktiken unterstützt. In diesem Zusammenhang wurde *Barcelona Activa*, das Zentrum der Stadt Barcelona zur Förderung der unternehmerischen Tätigkeit, bei der Verleihung des Europäischen Unternehmerpreises 2011 mit dem Großen Preis der Jury für vorbildliche Förderung und Unterstützung der unternehmerischen Tätigkeit ausgezeichnet.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006457/12
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (NI)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: 'Start-up centres' in economically stricken southern Europe

In view of the difficult situation in southern Member States, is the Commission considering establishing 'start-up centres' as part of its project-based plans for economic recovery? (Please provide a detailed explanation.)

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(13 August 2012)

The Commission has been monitoring Member State progress in the implementation of start-up centres since 2007 following the Spring Council conclusions of 2006. The target for Member States is to reduce the costs and times for administrative procedures to start up a company and to create one-stop shops where all procedures can be carried out. Substantial progress has been achieved. Whereas in 2007 it took an average of 12 days and a cost of EUR 485 to start up a company, in 2012 those figures are 6.5 days and EUR 397. Most Member States have also established effective one-stop shops.

All information on this issue and year on year progress for each country can be found in:
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/business-environment/start-up-procedures/index_en.htm

Beyond administrative simplification and regarding direct support for the creation of enterprises (incubators, accelerators, etc) the Commission is subject to the rule of subsidiarity and is not competent to establish start-up centres in Europe. In some countries this is a national strategy; in others (namely Italy and Spain) it is a regional and sometimes even local matter. In this area Member States and Regions are supported by the Commission via the Structural Funds and also via the dissemination of good practices. In this respect *Barcelona Activa,* the entrepreneurship support centre of the city of Barcelona, was awarded the 2011 European Entrepreneurship Award as a model of entrepreneurship promotion and support.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-006458/12
an die Kommission
Franz Obermayr (NI)
(27. Juni 2012)

Betrifft: Vielfältige Straßenbenützungsgebühren in der EU — Konsumentenschutz

Wer mit dem Auto in Urlaub fährt, muss viele Bestimmungen beachten, die teilweise stark von den Usancen im Heimatland abweichen. Die Straßenbenützungsgebühren und die Einhebung von Vignetten-, Maut- und Sondergebühren werden von den Ländern zum Teil sehr unterschiedlich geregelt. Einige Länder haben ein elektronisches Vignettensystem, andere heben die Gebühren an extra Mautstellen ein. So erleben die Urlauber, dass neben den teuren Spritkosten noch zusätzliche Ausgaben und oft auch „streckenbezogene" Gebühren oder Sondermauten anfallen können, davor warnen gerade in den Urlaubszeiten die Autofahrerklubs und Konsumentenschützer.

Ab der österreichisch-italienischen Grenze bei Thörl-Maglern zahlt man beispielweise für eine Fahrt nach Rimini eine zusätzliche Streckenmaut von ca. 38 EUR pro Richtung. Auch Fahrten nach Split in Kroatien werden für die Konsumenten teuer. Im Vorjahr kostete die Autofahrt noch 28 EUR, mittlerweile wurden die Gebühren auf 30 EUR pro Strecke erhöht Auch die Zahlungsmodalitäten könnten unterschiedlicher nicht sein — nicht immer werden neben Bargeld auch Kreditkarten akzeptiert. In Frankreich muss bei einigen Stationen die Gebühr sogar bar in einen Behälter geworfen werden, das Wechselgeld bekommt man aber dort nicht zurück. Auch ist in manchen Städten, beispielsweise in London, die Einfahrt ins Zentrum gebührenpflichtig oder es gibt in großen deutschen Städten Umweltzonen. Daraus resultieren folgende Fragen:

1. Wie beurteilt die Kommission diese unterschiedlichen Vignetten- bzw. Sondergebühren und unterschiedlichen Zahlungsmodalitäten bzw. Einhebungsregelungen in den einzelnen EU-Staaten?

2. Wie kann man nach Meinung der Kommission die Autofahrer vor unliebsamen Überraschungen durch immer höher werdende zusätzliche Gebühren schützen?

3. Was hält die Kommission von den unterschiedlichen — und zum Teil sehr hohen — Strafen, die in den einzelnen EU-Ländern für das Mautprellen oder das Fahren ohne Vignette eingehoben werden?

Antwort von Herrn Kallas im Namen der Kommission
(27. Juli 2012)

1. Im EU-Recht sind keine Vorschriften für die Erhebung von Straßenbenutzungsentgelten für Personenkraftwagen vorgesehen. Damit steht es den Mitgliedstaaten frei, Regelungen für die Erhebung von Straßenbenutzungsentgelten einzuführen, sofern diese den Vertragsgrundsätzen der Nichtdiskriminierung und der Verhältnismäßigkeit genügen. Die Kommission möchte den Herrn Abgeordneten darauf hinweisen, dass sie in einer am 14. Mai angenommenen Mitteilung (KOM(2012)199) dargelegt hat, wie diese Grundsätze bei Vignettensystemen für leichte Personenkraftwagen anzuwenden sind. Zudem möchte sie den Herrn Abgeordneten auf die bevorstehende öffentliche Konsultation im Zusammenhang mit der Vorbereitung einer möglichen Initiative zu Straßenbenutzungsentgelten aufmerksam machen. Die Konsultation wird uns zu einer besseren Einschätzung verhelfen, wie sich nichtharmonisierte Regelungen für Straßenbenutzungsentgelte auf Verkehrsteilnehmer auswirken.

2. Wie von dem Herrn Abgeordneten erwähnt, stellen Kraftfahrerverbände Informationen über die Regelungen für Straßenbenutzungsentgelte in verschiedenen Ländern bereit. Kraftfahrer können Mauttarife auch direkt auf den Internetseiten der für die Mauterhebung zuständigen Stellen einsehen; oft werden die fälligen Straßenbenutzungsentgelte (Maut und Vignetten) zudem von Online-Routenplanern automatisch errechnet.

3. Im EU-Recht sind keine Vorschriften für Bußgelder vorgesehen, die in einzelnen Mitgliedstaaten für das Mautprellen oder das Fahren ohne Vignette verhängt werden. Derartige Bußgelder sollten den Vertragsgrundsätzen der Verhältnismäßigkeit und der Nichtdiskriminierung genügen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006458/12
to the Commission
Franz Obermayr (NI)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Numerous road usage charges in the EU — consumer protection

Anyone travelling on holiday by car needs to comply with a large number of rules and regulations, some of which differ significantly from the norms in their home country. Road usage charges and the levying of vignette fees, tolls and special charges are dealt with by the different Member States in widely different ways. Some countries operate an electronic vignette system, while others collect the fees at separate toll booths. This means that holidaymakers find that, on top of expensive fuel costs, they also need to pay additional fees and that 'route-specific' charges or special tolls may also arise; drivers' associations and consumer protection agencies issue warnings about this, particularly around holiday times.

For example, from the border between Austria and Italy at Thörl-Maglern, an additional toll of approximately EUR 38 is payable each way on a car journey to Rimini. Driving to Split in Croatia is also an expensive business for the consumer. Last year this journey cost EUR 28. However, the charges on this route have now been increased to EUR 30 each way. Likewise, the payment arrangements differ greatly, as credit cards are not always accepted alongside cash. In France, some toll booths require the driver to throw the fee into a basket. However, no change is given. Also, in some cities, such as London, charges are payable before entering the city centre, while low-emission zones exist in large German cities. I ask the Commission:

1. How does it assess the different vignettes and special fees and the different payment arrangements and levy regulations in the various EU Member States?

2. In the Commission's opinion, how can drivers be protected from unpleasant surprises due to ever-increasing additional charges?

3. What is the Commission's view of the different fines imposed in individual EU Member States for toll dodging or driving without a vignette — some of which can be very high?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(27 July 2012)

1. There is no EU legislation that specifies rules for charging passenger cars. Consequently, Member States are free to put in place road charging arrangements as long as the Treaty principles of non-discrimination and proportionality are respected. The Commission would like to inform the Honourable Member that it has explained how these principles apply in the case of vignettes for light passenger vehicles in a communication adopted on 14 May (COM(2012)199). The Commission would also like to draw the attention of the Honourable Member on the upcoming public consultation in the context of the preparation of a possible initiative on road charging. This consultation will help to better appreciate the impact of non-harmonised road charging schemes on road users.

2. As mentioned by the Honourable Member, drivers' associations provide information on road charging arrangements in different countries. Drivers can also check toll rates directly on the websites of toll chargers; the amounts of road charges (tolls and vignettes) are also often automatically calculated by the online route planning tools.

3. There is no EU legislation regulating the fines imposed in individual EU Member States for toll dodging or driving without a vignette. Such fines should respect the Treaty principles of proportionality and non-discrimination.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-006459/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papastamkos (PPE)
(27 Ιουνίου 2012)

Θέμα: Χρηματοδότηση των ελληνικών τραπεζών από την Ευρωπαϊκή Τράπεζα Επενδύσεων

Δύναται να με πληροφορήσει η Επιτροπή:

1. Σε ποιο στάδιο βρίσκεται η δανειοδότηση των ελληνικών τραπεζών με κεφάλαια της Ευρωπαϊκής Τράπεζας Επενδύσεων;

2. Επιβεβαιώνει ότι η σχετική διαδικασία έχει σταματήσει εξαιτίας της υποβάθμισης των ελληνικών τραπεζών από τους διεθνείς οίκους πιστοληπτικής αξιολόγησης, γεγονός που συνιστά τυπικό κώλυμα για τη χορήγηση δανείων της ΕΤΕπ;

3. Δεδομένου ότι τα εν λόγω κεφάλαια πρόκειται να διοχετευθούν μέσω των ελληνικών τραπεζών σε μικρομεσαίες επιχειρήσεις για την τόνωση της ανάπτυξης και της απασχόλησης στην Ελλάδα, ποιες εναλλακτικές λύσεις έχει επεξεργαστεί;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(13 Αυγούστου 2012)

Τα υφιστάμενα δάνεια της ΕΤΕπ για ΜΜΕ που έχουν ήδη υπογραφεί και εκταμιευθεί στην Ελλάδα έχουν διατεθεί πλήρως (δηλαδή τα χρήματα έχουν δοθεί στους τελικούς δικαιούχους/στις ΜΜΕ). Προκειμένου να ενισχυθεί η παροχή δανείων της ΕΤΕπ στην Ελλάδα, στα τέλη Μαΐου 2012 συγκροτήθηκε ταμείο εγγυήσεων ύψους 500 εκατομμυρίων ευρώ, με χρηματοδότηση από τα Διαρθρωτικά Ταμεία, το οποίο διατίθενται στην Ελλάδα με σκοπό να διευκολυνθεί η παροχή δανείων της ΕΤΕπ ύψους έως 1 δις ευρώ προς ελληνικές τράπεζες για τις ΜΜΕ, στο πλαίσιο του οποίου η πρώτη δόση των 500 εκατομμυρίων ευρώ εγκρίθηκε τον Ιούνιο από το Διοικητικό Συμβούλιο της ΕΤΕπ. Σύμφωνα με την απόφαση που έλαβαν οι εθνικές και διεθνείς αρχές, πριν από την υπογραφή δανείων με δικαιούχους τράπεζες, οι τελευταίες οφείλουν να έχουν την ενδεδειγμένη κεφαλαιοποίηση σύμφωνα με τις απαιτήσεις της Τράπεζας της Ελλάδας και του Ελληνικού Ταμείου Χρηματοπιστωτικής Σταθερότητας.

Επιπλέον, την περίοδο 2011-12 εγκρίθηκαν/υπεγράφησαν δάνεια της ΕΤΕπ συνολικού ύψους 440 εκατομμυρίων ευρώ υπό την εγγύηση του Ελληνικού Δημοσίου, τα οποία όμως δεν έχουν εκταμιευθεί, επειδή εκκρεμεί η συμφωνία για ορισμένους όρους μεταξύ της ΕΤΕπ και των ελληνικών αρχών. Ειδικότερα, η ΕΤΕπ υπέγραψε τον Δεκέμβριο 2011 δύο συμβάσεις με την Εθνική Τράπεζα και την PCB για συνολικό ποσό 300 εκατομμυρίων ευρώ, για τις οποίες δεν έχουν ακόμη πραγματοποιηθεί οι εκταμιεύσεις, επειδή τελεί ακόμη υπό διαπραγμάτευση η συμφωνία εγγύησης του Δημοσίου.

Πέραν των ανωτέρω, η Επιτροπή συνεργάζεται στενά με την ΕΤΕπ για να αποδεσμεύσει μια σειρά άλλων χρηματοπιστωτικών μέσων που στηρίζονται από τα Διαρθρωτικά Ταμεία, τα οποία έχουν ως στόχο να προσφέρουν άκρως αναγκαίες πιστώσεις σε ελληνικές ΜΜΕ, συμπεριλαμβανομένου του JEREMIE, του Ταμείου Επιχειρηματικότητα ΕΤΕΑΝ, και του ευρωπαϊκού μηχανισμού μικροχρηματοδοτήσεων Progress.

Συνολικά, η Επιτροπή, η ΕΤΕπ και οι ελληνικές αρχές εργάζονται από κοινού με εποικοδομητικό πνεύμα ώστε να πραγματοποιήσουν απτά βήματα προόδου σε όλα τα ανοικτά μέτωπα.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006459/12
to the Commission
Georgios Papastamkos (PPE)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Financing of Greek banks by the European Investment Bank

Can the Commission tell me:

1. What is happening with regard to Greek banks' borrowing capital from the European Investment Bank?

2. Will the Commission confirm that the relevant procedure has stalled, due to Greek banks' downgrading by the international credit rating agencies — a formal obstacle to the EIB's lending?

3. Given that the capital in question is to be channelled via Greek banks to SMEs to boost growth and employment in Greece, what alternative solutions have been proposed?

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

Existing EIB loans for SMEs already signed and disbursed in Greece have been fully allocated (i.e. the money has reached the final beneficiaries/SMEs). In order to strengthen EIB lending in Greece, a EUR 500 million guarantee fund was established at the end of May 2012 through funding from Structural Funds allocated to Greece with a view to facilitating EIB lending of up to EUR 1 billion to Greek Banks for SMEs, with the first tranche of EUR 500 million approved in June by EIB's Board of Directors. In line with the decision taken by national and international authorities, before signing loans with beneficiary banks, the latter must be appropriately capitalised in accordance with the requirements of the Bank of Greece and the Hellenic Financial Stability Fund.

In addition, EIB loans totalling EUR 440 million were approved/signed in 2011-12 under the Greek State guarantee but await disbursal, pending agreement of certain conditions between the EIB and the Greek authorities. In particular, EIB signed two contracts with NBG and PCB in December 2011 for a total of EUR 300 million, for which disbursements have not yet taken place, as the State Guarantee Agreement is still under negotiation

Further to the above, the Commission is working closely with the EIB to unblock a number of other financial instruments supported by Structural Funds, which aim to provide much needed credit to Greek SMEs, including JEREMIE, the ETEAN Entrepreneurship Fund, and the European Progress Microfinance Facility.

Overall, the Commission, the EIB and the Greek authorities are working together in a constructive spirit in order to make tangible progress on all open fronts.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-006460/12
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (NI)
(27. Juni 2012)

Betrifft: Zugang zu Büchern für Menschen mit Sehbehinderungen

Kommissionsmitglied Barnier hat am 15. Februar 2012 versprochen, sich um ein Mandat zur Aushandlung eines rechtlich bindenden Vertrages mit der Weltorganisation für geistiges Eigentum zu bemühen, um den Zugang für Blinde und andere lesebehinderte Personen zu Büchern zu verbessern.

1. Die Kommission wird gebeten, aktuelle Informationen zum Stand der Diskussionen mit den Mitgliedstaaten zu geben.

2. Ist die Kommission inzwischen zu einer Einigung mit dem Rat über ein Mandat für die Aushandlung eines Vertrages gelangt?

Antwort von Herrn Barnier im Namen der Kommission
(14. August 2012)

Entsprechend der im Europäischen Parlament im Februar 2012 gegebenen Zusage nahm die Kommission am 8. Juni 2012 eine Empfehlung für einen Beschluss des Rates an, durch den die Kommission ermächtigt wird, im Rahmen der Weltorganisation für geistiges Eigentum ein internationales Übereinkommen über einen besseren Zugang zu Büchern für Menschen mit Lesebehinderung auszuhandeln.

Die Verhandlungen in den zuständigen Gremien des Rates werden im Herbst fortgesetzt. Die Kommission wird selbstverständlich alle erforderlichen Anstrengungen unternehmen, um eine Einigung zwischen den Mitgliedstaaten zu erleichtern.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006460/12
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (NI)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Access to books for visually impaired people

Commissioner Barnier promised on 15 February 2012 to seek a mandate to negotiate a binding treaty at the World Intellectual Property Organisation in order to improve access to books for blind and other print-disabled people.

1. Can the Commission give a detailed update on the discussions with the Member States?

2. Has the Commission finally reached an agreement with the Council for a mandate for a treaty?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(14 August 2012)

In accordance with the commitment made at the European Parliament in February 2012, the Commission adopted a recommendation for a Council decision authorising the Commission to negotiate and international agreement within the World Intellectual Property Organisation on improved access to books for print impaired persons on 8 June 2012.

The negotiations in the relevant Council bodies are to continue in the autumn. The Commission will of course make all efforts necessary to facilitate an agreement between the Member States.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-006462/12
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (NI)
(27. Juni 2012)

Betrifft: Sprunghafter Anstieg der Arbeitslosenquote in Griechenland

Die Arbeitslosenquote in Griechenland hat eine Rekordhöhe erreicht. Offiziellen Angaben zufolge waren im ersten Quartal 2012 22,6 % arbeitslos. Wie das statistische Amt des Landes mitteilte, stieg die Quote infolge des starken Rückgangs der wirtschaftlichen Tätigkeit gegenüber dem vorangegangenen Dreimonatszeitraum um 22,6 %.

Seit Beginn der Arbeitslosenstatistik im Jahr 1998 ist dies der höchste Anstieg der Arbeitslosenquote in nur einem Quartal. Im ersten Quartal 2011 lag die Arbeitslosenquote noch bei 15,9 %.

1. Erwägt die Kommission, gezielte Maßnahmen einzuleiten, die für eine effizientere Nutzung der EU-Strukturfonds sorgen sollen und mit denen eine Taskforce für Griechenland eingesetzt werden soll?

2. Wie kann die Kommission die griechischen Behörden bei der Umsetzung umfassender Reformprogramme, mit denen erneut wirtschaftliches Wachstum ermöglicht werden soll, unterstützen?

3. Was kann die Kommission unternehmen, um die haushaltspolitische und finanzielle Stabilität zu unterstützen, Arbeitsplätze zu schaffen und die sozialen Folgen der Krise abzufedern?

4. Mit welchen Maßnahmen kann die Kommission die für die Schaffung von Arbeitsplätzen, auch für junge Menschen, entscheidenden Anreize geben?

Antwort von Herrn Andor im Namen der Kommission
(14. August 2012)

1 & 2. Im Juli 2011 hat Präsident Barroso die Taskforce für Griechenland eingesetzt, um die Unterstützung der Kommission für Griechenland dadurch auszubauen, dass die für die Schaffung von Beschäftigungsmöglichkeiten unerlässlichen Mittel aus dem EU-Fonds im Bereich der Kohäsionspolitik wirksamer genutzt werden. Die Mitteilung der Kommission „Wachstum für Griechenland“ ([1]) enthält eine umfassende Agenda zur Ankurbelung des Wachstums und zum Abbau der Arbeitslosigkeit in diesem Land. Zielvorgaben sind etwa die Kontrolle über die öffentlichen Finanzen, die Verbesserung der Vergabe von Krediten an die Realwirtschaft durch Rekapitalisierung der Banken und Durchführung von Programmen zur Unterstützung von KMU, die Modernisierung der öffentlichen Verwaltung und die Verbesserung des Unternehmensumfelds sowie die Milderung der sozialen Auswirkungen der Krise.

3. Die EU-Mitgliedstaaten und die Kommission unterstützen Griechenland in einer sehr schwierigen Zeit auf beispiellose Art und Weise. Im Rahmen des Programms zur wirtschaftlichen Anpassung erhält Griechenland Finanzmittel, die es ihm erlauben, die notwendige Steuerkonsolidierung in einem Mehrjahreszeitraum vorzunehmen. Ferner stehen Mittel aus dem Europäischen Sozialfonds bereit, um aktive Arbeitsmarktmaßnahmen zu unterstützen, Investitionen in die allgemeine und berufliche Bildung zu tätigen, die Sozialwirtschaft zu entwickeln und der Marginalisierung sozial Schwacher vorzubeugen.

4. Im Zusammenhang mit der Initiative „Chancen für junge Menschen“ hat die Kommission für die acht Mitgliedstaaten mit der höchsten Jugendarbeitslosigkeit, so auch für Griechenland, Aktionsteams eingerichtet. Sie haben gemeinsam mit den nationalen Behörden Möglichkeiten erarbeitet, um die bereitgestellten Mittel schneller und besser zu nutzen ([2]). Das „Beschäftigungspaket“ ([3]) der Kommission enthält ferner eine Reihe von Maßnahmen, die zur Schaffung von Arbeitsplätzen beitragen sollen.

([1]) KOM(2012)183 endg. vom 18. April 2012.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/themes/17_youth_action_team_en.pdf
([3]) KOM(2012)173 vom 18. April 2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006462/12
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (NI)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Greece jobless rate soars

Greece's jobless rate has soared to record figures. Data showed that 22.6% were out of work in the first quarter of 2012. That is a rise from 20.7% in the previous three-month period as economic activity slumped, the country's statistics service announced.

It is the highest quarterly unemployment rate since figures were first published back in 1998. The jobless rate for the first quarter of 2011 was 15.9%.

1. Is the Commission considering setting targeted measures, making more effective use of EU structural funds and setting up a dedicated taskforce for Greece?

2. How can the Commission support Greek authorities implementing comprehensive reform programmes aimed at unblocking economic growth?

3. How can the Commission support fiscal and financial stability, create jobs and mitigate the social impact of the crisis?

4. What are the efforts that the Commission can make and are essential to spur job opportunities, also for young people?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(14 August 2012)

1 and 2. The Task Force for Greece was launched by President Barroso in July 2011, stepping up the Commission's support to Greece in making more effective use of EU cohesion policy funds, essential for the creation of job opportunities. The Commission's Communication 'Growth for Greece' ([1]) sets out a comprehensive agenda for restoring growth and reducing unemployment in Greece. This includes controlling public finances, improving credit flows to the real economy by recapitalising banks and implementing SME support schemes, modernising public administration and improving the business environment, as well as tackling the social consequences of the crisis.

3. EU Member States and the Commission are providing unprecedented support to Greece at a very difficult time. With the Economic Adjustment Programme, Greece has at its disposal financial resources that allow it to implement the needed fiscal consolidation over a number of years. In addition, European Social Fund resources are available to support active labour market policies, invest in education and training, develop social economy or prevent the marginalisation of vulnerable people.

4. In the context of the Youth Opportunities Initiative the Commission set up Action Teams for eight Member States with the highest youth unemployment rates, including Greece. These have worked with national authorities to identify ways of accelerating and improving the use of available funding ([2]). A number of measures for spurring job creation are also set out in the Commission's 'Employment Package' ([3]).

([1]) COM(2012)183 final, 18 April 2012.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/themes/17_youth_action_team_en.pdf
([3]) COM(2012)173, 18 April 2012.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-006463/12
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (NI)
(27. Juni 2012)

Betrifft: Reform der EURES-Aktivitäten

In ihrem „Beschäftigungspaket" schlägt die Kommission vor, EURES dahin gehend zu reformieren, dass auch die Privatwirtschaft einbezogen wird, und Anreize dafür zu schaffen, dass die im Rahmen öffentlich-privater Partnerschaften erbrachten Dienstleistungen besser werden. Diese Reform, die 2014 in Kraft treten wird, sieht auch vor, dass ein großer Teil der EURES-Aktivitäten durch ESF-Programme in den Mitgliedstaaten finanziert wird, wodurch sie gezielt auf die Bedürfnisse der einzelstaatlichen Arbeitsmärkte ausgerichtet werden können.

— Wie kann die Kommission für einen besseren Zugang zur Beschäftigung sorgen, insbesondere im Zusammenhang mit Mobilität, und die Schwierigkeiten angehen, die bei der Besetzung von Stellen aufgrund der Mangels an geeigneten Bewerbern auftreten?

Antwort von Herrn Andor im Namen der Kommission
(17. August 2012)

Eines der Ziele der EURES-Reform ist es, das strukturelle Missverhältnis zwischen Arbeitskräfteangebot und -nachfrage durch Steigerung der Mobilität innerhalb der EU anzugehen. Aus diesem Grund wird EURES so umgestaltet, dass bestimmte Gruppen von Arbeitskräften mit hoher Bereitschaft zur Mobilität sowie Arbeitgeber unterstützt werden, die in ihrem Niederlassungsstaat nicht die von ihnen benötigten Arbeitskräfte finden. Das EURES-Netz wird auf neue Dienstleister ausgedehnt; damit erweitert es seine Zugriffsmöglichkeiten in Bezug auf den Stellenmarkt wie auch seinen Pool an geeigneten Kandidaten. Dadurch dürften mehr Beschäftigungsmöglichkeiten leichter zugänglich werden, und die Arbeitgeber dürften mehr Unterstützung bei der Suche nach Arbeitskräften mit den geforderten Befähigungen und Qualifikationen erfahren.

Die Stärkung der Arbeitskräftemobilität innerhalb der EU im Rahmen von EURES reicht aber allein nicht aus, um einen besseren Abgleich von Angebot und Nachfrage auf dem Arbeitsmarkt zu erzielen. Aus-, Weiterbildungs- und Umschulungsmaßnahmen, die den Anforderungen des Arbeitsmarktes Rechnung tragen, sowie effiziente Arbeitsvermittlungen, die auch innerhalb der einzelnen Mitgliedstaaten dazu beitragen, dass Arbeitsuchende auf passende freie Stellen vermittelt werden, spielen hierbei eine sehr wichtige Rolle. Diese Investitionen in der gesamten EU werden aus dem Europäischen Sozialfonds (ESF) unterstützt.

Die Kommission hat für den Zeitraum 2014-2020 ein Gesamtmaßnahmenpaket für die künftige Kohäsionspolitik der Europäischen Union einschließlich einer neuen Verordnung über den Europäischen Sozialfonds ([1]) vorgeschlagen. Im Rahmen dieses Verordnungsvorschlags können aus dem ESF verschiedene Maßnahmen zur Beschäftigungsförderung und zur Steigerung der Arbeitskräftemobilität unterstützt werden, darunter lokale Beschäftigungsinitiativen und die Förderung der Mobilität der Arbeitskräfte, die Arbeitsuchenden und Nichterwerbstätigen einen besseren Zugang zur Beschäftigung bieten.

([1]) KOM(2011)607 vom 14. März 2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006463/12
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (NI)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Reform of EURES activities

In its 'employment package', the Commission proposes to reform EURES to include private operators and encourage a higher level of service delivery through public-private partnerships. This reform, which will come into effect in 2014, also provides for a large proportion of EURES activities to be financed through the ESF programmes in the Member States, thereby enabling them to be tailored to national labour market needs.

— How can the Commission facilitate more effective access to employment, in particular in connection with mobility, and address difficulties in filling job vacancies owing to the lack of suitable candidates?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(17 August 2012)

One of the objectives of the EURES reform is to address the structural mismatch between the supply of and demand for labour by increasing intra-EU mobility. EURES will therefore be transformed to support both specific groups of workers with a high propensity for mobility and employers experiencing recruitment difficulties in their home territory. The EURES network will be opened to new providers, thereby increasing its outreach capacity on the job vacancy market and expanding the pool of suitable candidates. This should provide easier access to more employment opportunities and support employers in recruiting the talented and skilled workers they need.

However, greater intra-EU mobility facilitated by EURES is not the only measure to improve the matching process on the labour market. Education, training and re-skilling in line with the labour market needs, and well-functioning employment services that support the matching of jobseekers with vacancies also within Member States are all crucial in this respect. The European Social Fund (ESF) supports these investments across the EU.

For the period 2014-2020, the Commission proposed an overall legislative package for the Union's future cohesion policy, including a new ESF Regulation ([1]). Under the proposed regulation, the ESF can contribute to promoting employment and supporting labour mobility by several means, including local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility which will improve the access to employment of job-seekers and inactive people.

([1]) COM(2011)607 of the 14 March 2012.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006464/12
al Consiglio
Fiorello Provera (EFD)
(27 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Al-Qaeda addestra convertiti all'Islam per compiere nuovi attentati

Nel tardo giugno 2012 Associated Press ha riferito che, secondo almeno tre agenzie di sicurezza europee, un cittadino norvegese, convertitosi all'Islam e addestrato da al-Qaeda, starebbe aspettando ordini per compiere un attentato in occidente.

Le agenzie ritengono che l'uomo sia «operativo», il che significa che ha completato l'addestramento e che è in attesa di ricevere istruzioni sull'obiettivo da colpire. Associated Press ha affermato che tutte le agenzie hanno dato la notizia a condizione dell'anonimato, perché non erano autorizzate a trattare il caso pubblicamente. Il nome dell'interessato non è stato reso pubblico, non essendo stato accusato di alcun reato. L'uomo, sui trent'anni, non è un immigrante. Dopo essersi convertito all'Islam nel 2008 ed essere entrato a far parte delle frange più estremiste, si è recato in Yemen per essere addestrato come terrorista, dove sembra trovarsi tuttora. Gli ufficiali militari yemeniti hanno affermato che al-Qaeda starebbe addestrando cittadini europei nelle zone meridionali del paese.

Un portavoce del servizio di sicurezza norvegese PST ha dichiarato che, in base alle sue valutazioni, sarebbero «parecchi» gli estremisti islamici a essersi spostati dalla Norvegia in varie zone di conflitto per partecipare ai campi di addestramento. Ha inoltre affermato che i convertiti «possono godere di un livello di copertura diverso, soprattutto se non hanno nessun precedente penale».

1. È a conoscenza il Consiglio di queste ultime notizie relative a un militante norvegese di al-Qaeda, che sarebbe pronto a compiere un attentato terroristico?

2. Intende discutere la questione con le autorità norvegesi?

3. È disposto a coordinare gli sforzi degli Stati membri affinché siano tutti informati della natura di questa minaccia?

Risposta
(8 ottobre 2012)

Non spetta al Consiglio pronunciarsi su articoli pubblicati dalla stampa.

Gli Stati membri e il Consiglio mantengono contatti regolari con gli altri partner per quanto riguarda la minaccia terroristica. Ad esempio, in seguito agli attacchi di Oslo del luglio dello scorso anno, i rappresentanti delle autorità norvegesi sono stati invitati ad assistere alle riunioni del Gruppo «Terrorismo» del Consiglio.

Il coordinamento tra gli Stati membri sulle questioni in materia di terrorismo viene effettuato nell'ambito dei competenti organi del Consiglio nonché nelle sedi bilaterali e multilaterali.

Per quanto riguarda la domanda dell'onorevole parlamentare relativa allo scambio d'informazioni tra Stati membri, il 2 dicembre 2010 il Consiglio ha adottato le conclusioni relative al meccanismo di condivisione delle informazioni sulle modifiche dei livelli nazionali di minaccia ([1]), invitando gli Stati membri a tenersi reciprocamente informati su qualunque modifica dei rispettivi livelli nazionali di minaccia, corrispondenti in caso ai livelli nazionali di allerta, con la massima sollecitudine, ricorrendo all'INTCEN come canale di comunicazione per divulgare ulteriormente tali informazioni agli altri 26 Stati membri dell'UE e ai pertinenti organi dell'UE.

Il 26 e 27 aprile 2012 il Consiglio ha adottato le conclusioni ([2]) sulla deradicalizzazione e sul disimpegno da attività terroristiche, invitando in particolare gli Stati membri ad adottare iniziative tese a rafforzare ulteriormente la cooperazione intersettoriale tra le autorità pubbliche a livello nazionale, regionale e locale affinché si promuovano strategie e azioni per dissuadere gli elementi radicalizzati dall'adottare la violenza e per incoraggiarli ad abbandonare le attività terroristiche; ad intensificare la cooperazione tra autorità pubbliche e soggetti privati in modo da sensibilizzare maggiormente all'interno dei gruppi radicalizzati le persone che hanno subito condanne per terrorismo o sono influenzate da elementi radicali; e a sviluppare metodi intesi ad aiutare le persone ad uscire da gruppi radicalizzati.

([1]) 17303/1/10.
([2]) 8624/12.

Gli Stati membri discutono regolarmente della minaccia terroristica nell'ambito dei competenti organi del Consiglio. Il problema degli europei che si recano nei «punti caldi» del terrorismo per esservi addestrati come terroristi è stato discusso in diverse occasioni e viene affrontato mediante i progetti e la cooperazione nel quadro della strategia antiterrorismo dell'Unione europea ([3]) la cui attuazione è oggetto di periodiche relazioni del coordinatore antiterrorismo dell'UE ([4]).

([3]) 14469/4/05.
([4]) 17594/1/11.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006464/12
to the Council
Fiorello Provera (EFD)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Al-Qaeda training Muslim convert to launch attacks

In late June 2012, the Associated Press reported that at least three European security agencies believed that a Norwegian man, who had converted to Islam and been trained by al-Qaeda, was awaiting orders to carry out an attack in the West.

The agencies believe that the individual is 'operational', i.e. that he has completed training and is waiting to hear what his target will be. The AP said that all the agencies had spoken on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to discuss the case publicly. The man's name has not been disclosed, since he has not been accused of a crime. He is in his 30s and does not come from an immigrant background. He converted to Islam in 2008 and subsequently became radicalised and travelled to Yemen to receive terrorist training. He is believed still to be there. Yemeni military officials say they have information on Europeans training with al-Qaeda in the southern part of the country.

A spokesman for the Norwegian PST security service said that, according to its own assessment, 'several' Islamic extremists had travelled from Norway to various conflict zones to attend training camps. He said that converts 'will have a different level of cover, especially if they have no criminal record'.

1. Is the Council aware of these latest reports of a Norwegian al-Qaeda operative who is prepared to carry out a terror plot?

2. Will the Council discuss this issue with the Norwegian authorities?

3. Is the Council prepared to coordinate efforts among the Member States in order to ensure that they are all informed of the nature of this threat?

Reply
(8 October 2012)

It is not for the Council to comment on articles appearing in the press.

Member States and the Council are in regular contact with other partners on the terrorist threat. For example, representatives from the Norwegian authorities were invited to the Council's Terrorism Working Party in the aftermath of the Oslo attacks in July last year.

The coordination between Member States on terrorism issues is carried out within the competent Council bodies as well as in bilateral and multilateral fora.

As regards the question of the Honourable Member concerning information exchange between Member States, the Council adopted conclusions on 2 December 2010 on the information-sharing mechanism on changes in the national threat level ([1]), requesting Member States to inform each other as soon as possible of any change in their national terrorism threat level, as reflected, where appropriate, by the national alert level, using as a communication channel IntCen, which would further disseminate this information to the other 26 EU Member States and relevant EU bodies.

On 26-27 April 2012, the Council adopted conclusions ([2]) on de-radicalisation and disengagement from terrorist activities, in particular inviting the Member States to take steps to further strengthen cross-sectoral cooperation among public authorities at the national, regional and local levels in order to promote strategies or efforts dissuading radicalised individuals from violence and encouraging them to abandon terrorist activities; to intensify cooperation between public authorities and private actors in order to increase awareness of individuals within radicalised groups who have been either convicted of terrorism or are being influenced by radicals; and to develop methods aimed at helping individuals exit radicalised groups.

([1]) 17303/1/10.
([2]) 8624/12.

Member States discuss the terrorist threat regularly in the competent Council bodies. The issue of Europeans travelling to terrorist hotspots to receive training has been discussed on several occasions and is addressed through projects and cooperation in the framework of the EU Counter-Terrorism Strategy ([3]) the implementation of which is the subject of regular reports by the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator ([4]).

([3]) 14469/4/05.
([4]) 17594/1/11.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006465/12
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Fiorello Provera (EFD)
(27 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Fusione di gruppi militanti in Africa

Il 25 giugno 2012 il capo del Comando militare americano in Africa, il generale dell'esercito Carter Ham, ha affermato che gruppi militanti stanno cercando di «coordinare e sincronizzare» le loro operazioni in Africa. Secondo il generale Ham, i gruppi più pericolosi attivi nel continente africano sono: al-Qaeda nel Maghreb islamico (AQMI), Boko Haram in Nigeria e al-Shabab in Somalia e nell'Africa orientale. Il loro obiettivo è di creare stati islamici nell'Africa settentrionale. Un analista della sicurezza operante a Washington ha osservato che la capacità di al-Qaeda nel Maghreb islamico di convogliare armi e addestrare gruppi locali come Boko Haram «rappresenta un'opportunità imperdibile per i gruppi terroristi locali».

In passato si è molto parlato dei legami tra al-Qaeda e gruppi jihadisti africani, senza però appurare con certezza se esisteva un collegamento diretto e operativo. Tuttavia, il capo di Boko Haram, Abubaker Shekau, ha di recente dichiarato che tali supposizioni sono vere e anche il governo nigeriano le condivide. Il generale Ham ritiene inoltre che AQMI stia condividendo esplosivi e denaro con Boko Haram.

1. Secondo il Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante, qual è la gravità degli sforzi di coordinamento tra al-Qaeda nel Maghreb islamico (AQMI), Boko Haram e al-Shabab?

2. Quali provvedimenti intende adottare l'UE per limitare la capacità di coordinamento delle operazioni da parte di tali gruppi?

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

L'eventualità che tra AQIM, Boko Haram e al-Shabab si instauri un rapporto di coordinamento e cooperazione desta serie preoccupazioni e richiede un'attenzione costante. Benché distinti per piani e obiettivi, i tre gruppi potrebbero trarre reciproco vantaggio da tale cooperazione. Inoltre, la situazione ha acquisito una dimensione nuova e pericolosa poiché, in seguito alla perdita di controllo del governo malese sul Nord del paese, la regione settentrionale del Mali è divenuta un rifugio per estremisti e organizzazioni criminali.

L'UE lavora con le autorità di tutti i paesi coinvolti, sia intrattenendo un dialogo politico e sulla sicurezza che fornendo un sostegno concreto ed effettivo attraverso il FES e lo strumento per la stabilità. In qualità di copresidente del gruppo di lavoro sul Corno d'Africa del forum globale antiterrorismo, l'UE apporterà inoltre il proprio sostegno per la creazione di strutture regionali di lotta al terrorismo, concentrandosi principalmente sulla questione del finanziamento ai gruppi terroristici e sulla cooperazione in materia di applicazione della legge. La strategia dell'UE per la sicurezza e lo sviluppo nel Sahel, che mira a sostenere le iniziative intraprese dal paese, è ora in piena attuazione operativa, ivi comprese importanti misure concrete per affrontare le problematiche della sicurezza e dello sviluppo regionali. Sono altresì in corso due missioni PSDC dell'UE nel Corno d'Africa e nel Sahel ([1]).

Con l'attuazione e l'ulteriore sviluppo della strategia globale per il Sahel e del quadro strategico per il Corno d'Africa, l'UE porta avanti i lavori in materia di sviluppo e sicurezza e sostiene le iniziative intraprese dall'Africa per affrontare alla radice le cause dell'instabilità e dell'insicurezza in entrambe le regioni. Con quest'impostazione di ampio respiro, l'UE appoggia le attività svolte dalle organizzazioni regionali pertinenti e dell'Unione Africana al riguardo.

([1]) L'EUTM Somalia contribuisce all'addestramento delle forze di sicurezza somale, mentre EUCAP SAHEL Niger offre sostegno per il miglioramento delle capacità delle forze di sicurezza nigeriane nella lotta al terrorismo e alla criminalità organizzata.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006465/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Fiorello Provera (EFD)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Merging of militant groups in Africa

On June 25 2012, the head of the United States Africa Command, Army General Carter Ham, said that militant groups in Africa are seeking to 'coordinate and synchronise' their operations. He believes that the three most dangerous groups operating in Africa are: al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Boko Haram in Nigeria and al-Shabab in Somalia and East Africa. The three groups are intent on creating Islamic states across North Africa. One Washington-based security analyst noted that the ability of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb to funnel weapons and training to local militant groups such as Boko Haram has 'created a witch's brew of opportunities for local terrorist groups'.

In the past there were questions over the connections between al-Qaeda and African-based jihadist groups, but there was always uncertainty over whether there was a direct, operational link. However, the head of Boko Haram, Abubakar Shekau has now declared that this is true, and the Nigerian Government supports the notion. In particular, General Ham believes that AQIM is probably sharing explosives and funds with Boko Haram.

1. How serious does the Vice-President/High Representative consider the extent of coordination efforts to be between al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Boko Haram and al-Shabab?

2. What steps is the EU prepared to take to work towards curtailing the ability of these groups to coordinate operations?

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

Possible coordination and cooperation between AQIM, Boko Haram and al-Shabab is a matter of serious concern in need of continued attention. The three groups' agendas and objectives are distinct but they all stand to gain from such cooperation. Following the Malian government's loss of control over the north of the country, the existence of a safe haven for extremists and organised criminals in the north of Mali adds a new and dangerous dimension to the situation.

The EU is working with the authorities in all the countries concerned, both in terms of political and security dialogue as well as concrete practical support through the EDF and the Instrument for Stability. In its capacity as co-chair of the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum working group for the Horn of Africa, the EU will also help build regional counter-terrorism capacities, focusing on terrorist financing and law enforcement cooperation. The EU Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel, aiming at supporting the countries' efforts, is now fully in the process of operational implementation, including significant concrete measures to address regional security and development challenges. Moreover, there are two ongoing EU CSDP missions in the Horn of Africa and in the Sahel ([1]).

In implementing and further developing its comprehensive Sahel strategy and its Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa, the EU is taking forward work spanning development and security challenges and supporting African efforts towards tackling the root causes of instability and insecurity in both regions. Through this comprehensive approach, the EU supports the efforts of the relevant regional organisations and the African Union.

([1]) EUTM Somalia is contributing to the training of Somali security forces, while EUCAP SAHEL Niger is helping to improve the capacities of the Nigerien security forces to fight terrorism and organised crime.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-006468/12
to the Commission
Claude Moraes (S&D)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Safety at sporting events

In its communication entitled 'Developing the European Dimension in Sport' (COM(2011)0012), the Commission states that sport has an 'overriding social dimension which greatly affects the EU's overall interests'. It recognises the competences of the Member States in the area of the organisation of sports but also states that action at EU level can address challenges such as violence and intolerance linked to sporting events.

Given the outbreaks of violence that took place in Poland on 13 June during the Euro 2012 competition, can the Commission tell me and my constituents whether it intends to provide guidance or introduce measures in the area of the organisation of sport? Is the Commission intending to introduce measures to ensure that the organisation and promotion of major sporting events will henceforth be subject to safety inspections?

— Is the Commission taking violence at sporting events and expected safety standards into account where candidate countries for EU membership are concerned? There have been reports of violent outbreaks at sporting events in some candidate countries such as Turkey, which indicate that that they may not have the same standards as the EU countries to which European citizens travel.

Answer given by Mme Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(7 August 2012)

The Commission has described the measures taken to ensure safety at sporting events in its reply to Written Questions E-6284/2011 by Mr Nikolaos Salavrakos, E-000591/2012 by Mr Bernd Lange and E-009229/2011 by Ms Mara Bizzotto ([1]).

The Commission does not intend to introduce new measures to ensure that the organisation of major sporting events is subject to safety inspection. Member States and sport organisations like UEFA, in the case of EURO 2012, are responsible for safety inspections. In the frame of the Council of Europe 'Convention on Spectator violence and misbehaviour at sport events' safety and security arrangements are monitored by experts in Europe including non-EU Member States.

Regarding safety and security standards in candidate countries for EU membership, the Commission would draw attention to the adoption of the 2012 Action plan implementing the 2011-2013 EU Work Programme on further measures designed to maximise safety and security in connection with sport events in April 2012. This plan includes an additional action on strengthening police cooperation with non-EU countries in the area of sport events safety and security.

Finally, to develop cooperation with third countries, the Council adopted on 14 December 2011 Conclusions on strengthening police cooperation in the area of sport events and security.

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

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-006469/12
a la Comisión
Francisco José Millán Mon (PPE)
(27 de junio de 2012)

Asunto: Negociaciones de adhesión Turquía-Unión Europea en el segundo semestre de 2012

Dada la actitud de las autoridades de Turquía de no reconocimiento de Chipre y teniendo en cuenta que este Estado Miembro ostentará la Presidencia del Consejo de la Unión Europea a partir del próximo 1 de julio, ¿cuáles serán, a juicio de la Comisión, las repercusiones de estos hechos en el desarrollo de las negociaciones de adhesión de Turquía a la Unión Europea y en la evolución de la llamada «nueva agenda positiva» durante el segundo semestre de 2012?

Respuesta del Sr. Füle en nombre de la Comisión
(13 de agosto de 2012)

La Comisión se propone seguir aplicando la agenda positiva con Turquía de la manera más constructiva posible, teniendo al mismo tiempo debidamente en cuenta las preocupaciones de los Estados miembros. Por otra parte, la Comisión remite a Su Señoría a su respuesta a las preguntas escritas E-005033/2012, P-006009/2012, E-006140/2012, E-005956/2012 y E-006223/2012 ([1]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006469/12
to the Commission
Francisco José Millán Mon (PPE)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Turkey-European Union accession negotiations in the second half of 2012

Given the Turkish authorities' stance on non-recognition of Cyprus and considering that Cyprus will hold the Presidency of the Council of the European Union beginning 1 July, what does the Commission think will be the impact of these events during the course of negotiations over Turkey's accession to the European Union and during the development of the so-called 'new positive agenda' in the second half of 2012?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(13 August 2012)

The Commission intends to continue to implement the Positive Agenda with Turkey in the most constructive way possible, while taking due account of the concerns of the Member States. The Commission furthermore refers the Honourable Member to its answer to previous written questions E-005033/2012, P-006009/2012, E-006140/2012, E-005956/2012 and E-006223/2012 ([1]).

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

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-006470/12
al Consejo
Francisco José Millán Mon (PPE)
(27 de junio de 2012)

Asunto: Evolución de las relaciones Unión Europea-Turquía en el segundo semestre de 2012

A la vista de la actitud de las autoridades de Turquía de no reconocimiento de Chipre y teniendo en cuenta el hecho de que el citado Estado Miembro ostentará la Presidencia del Consejo de la Unión Europea a partir del próximo 1 de julio, ¿qué espera el Consejo de la evolución de las relaciones UE-Turquía durante el segundo semestre de este año?

Respuesta
(8 de octubre de 2012)

En lo que se refiere a las declaraciones de Turquía según las cuales va a congelar sus relaciones con la Presidencia del Consejo de la UE durante el segundo semestre de este año, se ruega a Su Señoría que se remita a la respuesta del Consejo a la pregunta escrita E-006139/2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006470/12
to the Council
Francisco José Millán Mon (PPE)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Developments in EU-Turkey relations in the second half of 2012

Given the Turkish authorities' stance on non-recognition of Cyprus and considering the fact that Cyprus will hold the Presidency of the Council of the European Union with effect from 1 July, what are the Council's hopes for the trend in EU-Turkey relations in the second half of this year?

Reply
(8 October 2012)

As regards Turkey's statements to the effect that it will freeze its relations with the Presidency of the Council of the EU during the second half of this year, the Honourable Member is invited to refer to the Council's reply to Written Question E-006139/2012.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-006471/12
til Kommissionen
Dan Jørgensen (S&D)
(27. juni 2012)

Om: Fremskydning af arbejdet med definition af hormonforstyrrende stoffer

Ny forskning fra Syddansk Universitet viser, at børn af kvindelige gartnere, som har været i kontakt med pesticider, der indeholder hormonforstyrrende stoffer, bliver påvirket af disse stoffer, på trods af at kvinderne er stoppet med at arbejde med pesticiderne tidligt i deres graviditet. Børnene bliver blandt andet påvirket på centralnervesystemet, mens nogle børn oplever højere fedtprocent og højere blodtryk som følge af giftstofferne.

EU-kommissionen er forpligtet til senest ved udgangen af 2013 at præsentere en definition af »hormonforstyrrende stoffer«. Før denne definition er udarbejdet, er det ikke muligt for nationale myndigheder at forbyde pesticider på grund af deres hormonforstyrrende egenskaber.

I lyset af den nye viden fra Syddansk Universitet synes det hensigtsmæssigt, at EU-kommissionen fremskynder sit arbejde med definitionen af hormonforstyrrende stoffer, så det bliver muligt at forbyde pesticider, der indeholder disse stoffer.

1. Vil EU-kommissionen tage forskningen fra Syddansk Universitet med i sit arbejde med definitionen af hormonforstyrrende stoffer, og ser Kommissionen nogen mulighed for at fremskynde processen med definitionen?

2. Vil Kommissionen, i tilfælde af, at den først færdiggør arbejdet med definitionen i 2013, tillade, at de danske myndigheder iværksætter et forbud mod de pesticider, som ifølge forskningen fra Syddansk universitet har hormonforstyrrende egenskaber, der påvirker børnene af kvinder, som under graviditeten har været i kontakt med pesticiderne?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Janez Potočnik
(8. august 2012)

Kommissionen agter at medtage al relevant forskning vedrørende hormonforstyrrende stoffer i sit arbejde med at fastsætte en egnet definition af hormonforstyrrende stoffer.

Kommissionen vil snarest fastlægge en passende proces for definitionen. Processen vil blive drøftet med de relevante ad-hoc-grupper og inddrage medlemsstaterne og andre relevante parter.

Kommissionen agter at overholde sine retlige forpligtelser i henhold til forordning (EF) nr. 1107/2009 ([1]) (markedsføring af plantebeskyttelsesmidler) og inden udgangen af 2013 at forelægge foranstaltninger om specifikke kriterier til bestemmelse af hormonforstyrrende egenskaber. Spørgsmålet om et eventuelt dansk forbud er derfor ikke relevant.

([1]) EUT L 209 af 24.11.2009.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006471/12
to the Commission
Dan Jørgensen (S&D)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Developments in defining endocrine-disrupting chemicals

New research from the University of Southern Denmark shows that the children of female gardeners who have been in contact with pesticides containing endocrine-disrupting chemicals are being affected by these substances, despite the women having stopped working with the pesticides early in their pregnancy. Amongst other things, the children's central nervous systems are being affected and some children have a higher body fat percentage and higher blood pressure due to the toxins.

The European Commission is due to present a definition of 'endocrine-disrupting chemicals' by the end of 2013 at the latest. Before this definition is presented, national authorities are unable to ban pesticides on the basis of their endocrine-disrupting properties.

In view of the new findings from the University of Southern Denmark, it is appropriate for the European Commission to develop its work to define endocrine-disrupting chemicals to make it possible to ban pesticides containing these substances.

1. Will the European Commission take the research from the University of Southern Denmark into consideration when working to define endocrine-disrupting chemicals, and does the Commission think that the definition process can be developed?

2. If its work to produce a definition will not be completed until 2013, will the Commission allow the Danish authorities to introduce a ban on those pesticides which, according to the research from the University of Southern Denmark, have endocrine-disrupting properties affecting the children of women who have been in contact with the pesticides during pregnancy?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(8 August 2012)

The Commission intends to take into account all relevant research on endocrine disruptors in an effort to arrive at a suitable definition of endocrine-disrupting chemicals.

The Commission will determine in due course the definition process required. This process will be discussed with the relevant ad-hoc groups, involving the Member States and other relevant partners.

The Commission intends to fulfil its legal obligation under Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 ([1]) (Placing of Plant Protection Products on the Market) and to present by the end of 2013 measures concerning specific criteria for the determination of endocrine disrupting properties. The question of a possible Danish ban is therefore not relevant.

([1]) OJ L 209, 24.11.2009.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-006472/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(27 Ιουνίου 2012)

Θέμα: Ευρωπαϊκή Κάρτα ασφάλισης ασθενείας για φοιτητές

Οι ευρωπαίοι πολίτες επωφελούνται από την ΕΚΑΑ με την οποία παρέχεται πρόσβαση σε ιατρικά αναγκαία κρατική περίθαλψη κατά την προσωρινή διαμονή τους σε ένα από τα 27 κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ, την Ισλανδία, το Λιχτενστάιν, τη Νορβηγία και την Ελβετία.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Καθώς η ΕΕ, μεταξύ άλλων, στοχεύει στην ενθάρρυνση της κινητικότητας των σπουδαστών και καθώς οι σπουδές μπορούν να διαρκέσουν ορισμένα χρόνια, προτίθεται η Επιτροπή να αναλάβει πρωτοβουλία για μία Ευρωπαϊκή Κάρτα ασφάλισης ασθενείας για φοιτητές που σπουδάζουν σε άλλο κράτος μέλος από αυτό που κατάγονται;

— Με ποιο τρόπο η Επιτροπή προτίθεται να συμβάλει στην υπέρβαση γραφειοκρατικών προβλημάτων σχετικά με ζητήματα ασφάλισης ασθενείας για φοιτητές που επιθυμούν να σπουδάσουν σε άλλο κράτος μέλος

Απάντηση του κ. Andor εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(9 Αυγούστου 2012)

Κατ' αρχήν, οι φοιτητές οι οποίοι διαμένουν προσωρινά στη χώρα στην οποία σπουδάζουν θεωρείται ότι εξακολουθούν να διαμένουν και να είναι ασφαλισμένοι στη χώρα καταγωγής τους. Κατά συνέπεια, έχουν δικαίωμα στην αναγκαία ιατροφαρμακευτική περίθαλψη στην χώρα στην οποία σπουδάζουν υπό τις ίδιες προϋποθέσεις με τα άτομα που είναι ασφαλισμένα στην εν λόγω χώρα. Αυτό δεν σημαίνει μόνον ότι θα πρέπει να λαμβάνουν περίθαλψη με τους ίδιους όρους, αλλά και ότι θα πρέπει να καταβάλουν τυχόν έξοδα περίθαλψης που επιβαρύνουν τους ασθενείς. Η ευρωπαϊκή κάρτα ασφάλισης ασθένειας επιβεβαιώνει το δικαίωμα αυτό στην αναγκαία ιατροφαρμακευτική περίθαλψη στο πλαίσιο του δημόσιου συστήματος υγείας. Οι φοιτητές μπορούν να αποκτήσουν την εν λόγω κάρτα επικοινωνώντας με την αρμόδια αρχή στη χώρα καταγωγής όπου είναι ασφαλισμένοι.

Οι φοιτητές που δεν είναι ασφαλισμένοι στη χώρα καταγωγής τους θα πρέπει να επικοινωνήσουν με τον φορέα κοινωνικής ασφάλισης της χώρας στην οποία σπουδάζουν, ο οποίος θα αξιολογήσει την κατάσταση και θα αποφασίσει εάν οι φοιτητές μπορεί να θεωρηθεί ότι διαμένουν και είναι ασφαλισμένοι στη χώρα στην οποία σπουδάζουν.

Οι φοιτητές που εργάζονται κατά τη διάρκεια των σπουδών τους θεωρείται ότι είναι ασφαλισμένοι στη χώρα απασχόλησης. Αυτοί θα πρέπει συνεπώς να επικοινωνούν με τον φορέα κοινωνικής ασφάλισης της χώρας στην οποία είναι ασφαλισμένοι για να λάβουν περισσότερες πληροφορίες σχετικά με το δικαίωμά τους σε ιατροφαρμακευτική περίθαλψη.

Στην περίπτωση φοιτητών που διακινούνται στο πλαίσιο του προγράμματος Erasmus, το τριτοβάθμιο ίδρυμα αποστολής έχει την υποχρέωση να ενημερώνει τους εξερχόμενους φοιτητές σχετικά με τις ρυθμίσεις όσον αφορά την ασφάλιση στην χώρα υποδοχής και να εξακριβώνει ότι έχουν επαρκή ασφαλιστική κάλυψη.

Η Επιτροπή παρακολουθεί συνεχώς την εφαρμογή του κανονισμού (ΕΚ) αριθ. 883/2004 ([1]) και του κανονισμού (ΕΚ) αριθ. 987/2009 ([2]).

([1]) Κανονισμός (ΕΚ) αριθ. 883/2004 του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου και του Συμβουλίου, της 29ης Απριλίου 2004, για τον συντονισμό των συστημάτων κοινωνικής ασφάλισης, ΕΕ L 166 της 30.4.2004 σ. 1.

([2]) Κανονισμός (ΕΚ) αριθ. 987/2009 του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου και του Συμβουλίου της 16ης Σεπτεμβρίου 2009 για καθορισμό της διαδικασίας εφαρμογής του κανονισμού (ΕΚ) αριθ. 883/2004 για τον συντονισμό των συστημάτων κοινωνικής ασφάλειας, ΕΕ L 284 της 30.10.2009 σ. 1.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006472/12
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: European Health Insurance Card for students

European citizens have EHIC cards which give them access to required medical attention, provided that they are residents of one of the 27 Member States of the EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

Will the Commission answer the following:

— Since the EU, amongst other things, aims to promote the migration of students, and since studies can last several years, does the Commission intend to establish an initiative for an EHIC for students who study in a Member State other than their State of origin?

— How does the Commission intend to overcome bureaucratic problems regarding health insurance issues for students who want to study in another Member State?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(9 August 2012)

As a matter of principle, students staying temporarily in the country where they pursue their studies are regarded as still residing and insured in their home country. They are therefore entitled to necessary healthcare in the country where they are studying on the same conditions as persons insured in that country. This not only means that they should be treated under the same conditions, but also that they will have to pay any patient fees that might apply. The European Health Insurance Card confirms this entitlement to necessary healthcare within the public healthcare system. A student can obtain the card by contacting the competent institution in the home country where they are insured.

A student who is not insured in their home country should contact the social security institution of the country where they are studying. The institution will then assess the situation and determine whether the student can be considered as residing and insured in the country where they are studying.

A student who is employed during their studies is regarded as insured in the country of employment. They should therefore contact the social security institution of the country where they are employed to find out more about their right to healthcare.

In the case of student mobility in the framework of the Erasmus programme, the sending higher education institution has the obligation to inform outgoing students about the arrangements regarding insurance in the host country and to verify that they have sufficient coverage.

The Commission is continuously monitoring the implementation of Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 ([1]) and Regulation (EC) No 987/2009 ([2]).

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the coordination of social security systems, OJ L 166, 30.4.2004, p. 1.

([2]) Regulation (EC) No 987/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 September 2009 laying down the procedure for implementing Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 on the coordination of social security systems, OJ L 284, 30.10.2009, p. 1.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-006473/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(27 Ιουνίου 2012)

Θέμα: Παράνομη διακίνηση πληροφοριών πιστωτικών καρτών στην ΕΕ

Το φαινόμενο διακίνησης πληροφοριών πιστωτικών καρτών λαμβάνει σταδιακά μεγάλες διαστάσεις τόσο στις ΗΠΑ όσο και στην ΕΕ. Είναι χαρακτηριστικό πως στις ΗΠΑ, προκειμένου να συλληφθούν πρόσωπα που διακινούσαν σχετικές πληροφορίες, το FBI δημιούργησε ένα διαδικτυακό φόρουμ, στο οποίο οι χρήστες μπορούσαν να ανταλλάσσουν κλεμμένα στοιχεία για λογαριασμούς και πιστωτικές κάρτες. Αποκαλύφθηκαν δεκάδες πρόσωπα που παρανομούσαν αφαιρώντας ποσά εκατοντάδων εκατομμυρίων δολαρίων.

— Γνωρίζει η Επιτροπή την έκταση του φαινομένου στην ΕΕ;

— Σε επίπεδο συνεργασίας των αστυνομικών αρχών των κρατών μελών και της Europol επιχειρείται προσπάθεια αντιμετώπισης τους φαινομένου της παράνομης διακίνησης πιστωτικών καρτών;

— Υπάρχουν σε γνώση της Επιτροπής ενδεικτικά στοιχεία σχετικά με το ύψος των χρημάτων που διακινούνται από την σχετική παράνομη δράση στην ΕΕ;

Απάντηση της κας Malmström εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(29 Αυγούστου 2012)

Η Επιτροπή είναι ενήμερη για την αύξηση της απειλής κλοπής ταυτότητας ως εγκλήματος, του οποίου η παράνομη διακίνηση πληροφοριών πιστωτικών καρτών αποτελεί μόνο μια πτυχή. Όσον αφορά την ηλεκτρονική μόνο κλοπή ταυτότητας, μια πρόσφατη έρευνα του Ευρωβαρομέτρου ([1]) κατέδειξε ότι σε ολόκληρη την ΕΕ ποσοστό 8 % των χρηστών του Διαδικτύου έχει σχετική εμπειρία ή έχει υπάρξει θύμα κλοπής ταυτότητας. Αυτό έχει σημαντικό αντίκτυπο στις αντιλήψεις και τη συμπεριφορά των πολιτών, με αποτέλεσμα ποσοστό 61 % των χρηστών του Διαδικτύου να ανησυχεί για το φαινόμενο αυτό και ποσοστό 18 % να θεωρεί λιγότερο πιθανή την ηλεκτρονική αγορά αγαθών λόγω του φαινομένου αυτού.

Επίσης, στις 28 Μαρτίου 2012, η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή εξέδωσε ανακοίνωση για το Ευρωπαϊκό Κέντρο για εγκλήματα στον κυβερνοχώρο (EC3), που θα ιδρυθεί στο πλαίσιο της Europol. Η λειτουργία του EC3 θα εξυπηρετεί τον καλύτερο συντονισμό της ροής πληροφοριών και της συνεργασίας και επομένως θα επιτρέπει την αποτελεσματικότερη απάντηση στις απειλές για εγκλήματα στον κυβερνοχώρο, συμπεριλαμβανομένων των απειλών σχετικά με την απάτη που αφορά κάρτες πληρωμής, το ηλεκτρονικό «ψάρεμα» και την κλοπή ταυτότητας.

Επιπλέον, η Επιτροπή συμμετέχει στο φόρουμ «SecuRe Pay» (που αφορά την ασφάλεια των διανικών πληρωμών) το οποίο δημιουργήθηκε από το «Ευρωσύστημα». Πρόκειται για εθελούσια συνεργασία μεταξύ των εποπτών και εποπτικών αρχών της ΕΕ για να αντιμετωπιστούν οι αδυναμίες και οι ελλείψεις στον τομέα της ασφάλειας πληρωμών. Η Επιτροπή και η Europol συμμετέχουν ως παρατηρητές.

Η οδηγία 2002/58/ΕΚ ([2]) υποχρεώνει τα κράτη μέλη να κατοχυρώνουν, μέσω της εθνικής νομοθεσίας, το απόρρητο των επικοινωνιών καθώς και των συναφών δεδομένων κίνησης και απαγορεύει τις αυτόκλητες εμπορικές κλήσεις (spam), που αποτελούν μία από τις κύριες μεθόδους του ηλεκτρονικού «ψαρέματος» και της επακόλουθης κλοπής πληροφοριών των καρτών πληρωμής. Επί του παρόντος, η Επιτροπή εκπονεί μελέτη για την κλοπή ταυτότητας και για τα πιθανά μέτρα αντιμετώπισης αυτού του ζητήματος.

([1]) Βλέπε Ειδικό Ευρωβαρόμετρο 390, CYBER SECURITY, στην ακόλουθη διεύθυνση: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_390_en.pdf

([2]) Οδηγία 2002/58/ΕΚ του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου και του Συμβουλίου, της 12ης Ιουλίου 2002, σχετικά με την επεξεργασία των δεδομένων προσωπικού χαρακτήρα και την προστασία της ιδιωτικής ζωής στον τομέα των ηλεκτρονικών επικοινωνιών (οδηγία για την προστασία ιδιωτικής ζωής στις ηλεκτρονικές επικοινωνίες), ΕΕ L 201 της 31.07.2002, σ. 37.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006473/12
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Illegal trafficking in credit card information in the EU

The phenomenon of trafficking in credit card information is gradually assuming major proportions in the USA and the EU. In the USA, in order to arrest people trafficking in this type of information, the FBI created an online forum where users could exchange stolen information on accounts and credit cards. This brought to light dozens of persons who were stealing hundreds of millions of dollars.

— Is the Commission aware of the extent of this phenomenon in the EU?

— In terms of cooperation between Member States' police authorities and Europol, are attempts being made to combat the phenomenon of the illegal trafficking in credit card information?

— To the Commission's knowledge, are data available on the amount of money being stolen through this kind of illegal activity in the EU?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(29 August 2012)

The Commission is aware of the growing threat of identity theft as a crime, of which trafficking in credit card information is but one form. Considering solely identity theft online, a recent Eurobarometer survey ([1]) showed that across the EU 8% of Internet users have experienced or have been victims of identity theft. This has a considerable impact on citizen's perceptions and behaviour, with 61% of Internet users being concerned about it and 18% being less likely to buy goods online because of that.

On 28 March 2012, the European Commission also adopted a communication on a European Cybercrime Centre (EC3), to be established within Europol. EC3 will serve to better coordinate information flows and cooperation and thus to enable a more effective response to cybercrime threats, including those related to payment card fraud, phishing and identity theft.

Furthermore, the Commission is participating in the SecuRe Pay Forum (dealing with the security of retail payments) that has been set up by the Eurosystem. It is a voluntary cooperation between EU overseers and supervisors to address weaknesses and vulnerabilities in the field of payments security. The Commission and Europol participate as observers.

Directive 2002/58/EC ([2]) obliges EU Member States to ensure confidentiality of the communications and the related traffic data through national legislation and prohibits unsolicited commercial communications (spam), one of the main avenues for phishing and subsequent payment card information theft. The Commission is currently conducting a study on identity theft and on possible measures to address this issue.

([1]) Special Eurobarometer 390, CYBER SECURITY, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_390_en.pdf
([2]) Directive 2002/58/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 July 2002 concerning the processing of personal data and the protection of privacy in the electronic communications sector (Directive on privacy and electronic communications), OJ L 201, 31.7.2002 p. 37.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-006474/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(27 Ιουνίου 2012)

Θέμα: Νοικοκυριά που αντιμετωπίζουν πρόβλημα πρόσβασης σε ρεύμα στην ΕΕ

Η οικονομική κρίση και η απώλεια θέσεων εργασίας έχει θέσει σε κίνδυνο αυτονόητες άλλοτε υπηρεσίες που απολαμβάνουν οι ευρωπαίοι πολίτες. Είναι χαρακτηριστικό πως στην Ελλάδα εκατοντάδες νοικοκυριά — λόγω οικονομικών δυσχερειών — δεν μπόρεσαν να ανταποκριθούν στην έκτακτη φορολόγηση ηλεκτροδοτούμενων επιφανειών, με αποτέλεσμα να κινδυνεύει να διακοπεί το ρεύμα στις οικίες τους. Από την άλλη πλευρά, η δραματική μείωση των οικογενειακών προϋπολογισμών καθιστά σε ορισμένες περιπτώσεις σχεδόν αδύνατη την εξόφληση λογαριασμών για την παροχή ηλεκτρικής ενέργειας.

Είναι σε θέση να με ενημερώσει η Επιτροπή για το αν συλλέγει στοιχεία σχετικά με το ποσοστό των ευρωπαίων πολιτών που αντιμετωπίζουν προβλήματα για την κάλυψη των αναγκών τους στο στοιχειώδες αγαθό της ηλεκτρικής ενέργειας; Κατά πόσον διαπιστώνει επιδείνωση του ποσοστού αυτού στα κράτη μέλη που πλήττονται ιδιαίτερα από την οικονομική κρίση; Προβλέπεται να αναλάβει συγκεκριμένες πρωτοβουλίες και να υποβάλει συγκεκριμένες προτάσεις σε κράτη μέλη που τελούν υπό πρόγραμμα και έχουν ενταχθεί στο EFSF, προκειμένου να περιοριστεί ο αυξανόμενος αριθμός των νοικοκυριών που δεν έχουν πρόσβαση στο ηλεκτρικό ρεύμα;

Απάντηση του κ. Andor εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(16 Αυγούστου 2012)

Η Επιτροπή συλλέγει στοιχεία όσον αφορά τόσο το ποσοστό των νοικοκυριών που δεν μπορούν να θερμάνουν επαρκώς την οικία τους, όσο και το ποσοστό των νοικοκυριών που καθυστερούν να εξοφλήσουν λογαριασμούς επιχειρήσεων κοινής ωφέλειας ([1]).

Σύμφωνα με τα αριθμητικά αυτά στοιχεία, το ποσοστό των νοικοκυριών που δεν μπορούν να θερμάνουν επαρκώς την οικία τους αυξήθηκε, μεταξύ 2008 και 2010, στα ακόλουθα κράτη μέλη: Ιρλανδία, Εσθονία, Ισπανία, Λετονία, Λιθουανία και Μάλτα. Στην Ελλάδα, το ποσοστό έχει αυξηθεί σημαντικά όσον αφορά τον πληθυσμό που διαβιώνει με εισόδημα χαμηλότερο από το όριο της φτώχειας (από 29,9 % το 2008 σε 38,4 % το 2010), αλλά παρέμεινε σταθερό όσον αφορά τον πληθυσμό στο σύνολό του (15,4 %).

Το ποσοστό των ατόμων που καθυστερούν να εξοφλήσουν λογαριασμούς επιχειρήσεων κοινής ωφέλειας αυξήθηκε, μεταξύ 2008 και 2010, στα ακόλουθα κράτη μέλη: Κύπρος, Λετονία, Ουγγαρία, Σλοβενία, Σλοβακία, Ιρλανδία, Πολωνία, Εσθονία, Ισπανία και Πορτογαλία. Τα αριθμητικά στοιχεία για το 2011 αναμένεται να είναι διαθέσιμα εντός των προσεχών μηνών.

([1]) Eurostat, έρευνα EE-SILC, δείκτες ilc_mdes01 και ilc_mdes07.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006474/12
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Households having problems accessing electricity in the EU

The economic crisis and job losses have put services previously taken for granted by European citizens at risk. A factor of this phenomenon in Greece is that hundreds of households — due to economic difficulties — cannot pay the emergency tax on areas with access to electricity, with the result that the electricity supply to their homes may be cut off. Furthermore, the dramatic reduction in household incomes means that in some cases it is almost impossible for households to pay their electricity bills.

Can the Commission tell me whether it is collecting data on the percentage of European citizens with problems meeting their basic electricity needs? To what extent is the increase in this percentage in Member States badly affected by the economic crisis? Does it intend to take specific initiatives and make specific proposals to Member States that are implementing programmes and that have been included in the EFSF, in order to determine the increased number of households without electricity?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(16 August 2012)

The Commission collects data on both the percentage of households unable to keep their home adequately warm and the percentage of households with arrears on utility bills ([1]).

According to these figures, the percentage of households unable to keep their home adequately warm between 2008 and 2010 has increased in the following Member States: Ireland, Estonia, Spain, Latvia, Lithuania and Malta. In Greece, the percentage has increased considerably among the population living with an income below the poverty threshold (from 29.9% in 2008 to 38.4% in 2010), but remained stable among the population as a whole (15.4%).

The percentage of people with arrears on utility bills between 2008 and 2010 has risen in the following Member States: Cyprus, Latvia, Hungary, Slovenia, Slovakia, Ireland, Poland, Estonia, Spain and Portugal. Figures for 2011 should be available within the coming months.

([1]) Eurostat, EU-SILC survey, indicators ilc_mdes01 and ilc_mdes07.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-006475/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(27 Ιουνίου 2012)

Θέμα: Δημιουργία θέσεων εργασίας βασισμένων στις νέες τεχνολογίες

Με ανακοίνωσή της (Reference: IP/12/685) στις 26.6.2012, η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή έκανε έκκληση για μια ευρωπαϊκή προσπάθεια προώθησης των βασικών τεχνολογιών γενικής εφαρμογής. Στην ανακοίνωση σημειώνεται πως η παγκόσμια αγορά βασικών τεχνολογιών γενικής εφαρμογής προβλέπεται να αυξηθεί από 646 δισεκατομμύρια ευρώ σε περισσότερα από 1 τρισεκατομμύριο ευρώ μεταξύ 2008 και 2015 (αξία μεγαλύτερη του 8 % του ΑΕγχΠ της ΕΕ), η οποία θα συνοδευτεί από ταχεία αύξηση των θέσεων εργασίας.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Διαθέτει δέσμη προτάσεων και σχεδιασμό με τον οποίο τα κράτη μέλη που πλήττονται με δριμύτητα από την οικονομική κρίση θα μπορούν να εφαρμόσουν, αξιοποιώντας πόρους προς αυτή την κατεύθυνση; Διαπιστώνει η Επιτροπή κίνδυνο ορισμένα κράτη μέλη, ακριβώς εξαιτίας της κρίσης, να βρεθούν πίσω στη προσπάθεια της επένδυσης της ΕΕ στις νέες τεχνολογίες;

— Σύμφωνα με την Επιτροπή, η ΕΕ δεν μεταφράζει την κυριαρχική της θέση όσον αφορά τη βασική Ε&Α σε παραγωγή προϊόντων και υπηρεσιών που απαιτούνται για την τόνωση της ανάπτυξης και της απασχόλησης. Ποιές είναι οι προτάσεις της προς τα κράτη μέλη για την αντιστροφή αυτής της πραγματικότητας;

Απάντηση του κ. Tajani εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(28 Αυγούστου 2012)

Η Επιτροπή έχει προσδιορίσει τις βασικές τεχνολογίες γενικής εφαρμογής (ΒΤΓΕ) ως μία από τις προτεραιότητες επενδύσεων για τη χρηματοδότηση της περιφερειακής καινοτομίας. Οι λιγότερο αναπτυγμένες περιφέρειες και εκείνες που πλήττονται από την κρίση μπορούν να χρησιμοποιήσουν τις ΒΤΓΕ για τον εκσυγχρονισμό της βιομηχανικής τους βάσης και για τη βελτίωση της ανταγωνιστικότητας για την επίτευξη ανάπτυξης και δημιουργίας νέων θέσεων απασχόλησης.

Η πολιτική για τις ΒΤΓΕ αποσκοπεί στην ενίσχυση της τεχνολογικής αριστείας στην Ευρώπη. Οι ΒΤΓΕ επελέγησαν ως προτεραιότητα στο ΕΤΠΑ ([1]). Οι ΒΤΓΕ θα συμπεριληφθούν επίσης στις στρατηγικές για έξυπνη εξειδίκευση, ώστε να εντοπιστεί εκείνο το κομμάτι της αγοράς στις περιφέρειες της ΕΕ που είναι πρόσφορο σε αλυσίδες αξίας και να κατανεμηθεί ανάλογα η χρηματοδότηση. Η έξυπνη εξειδίκευση είναι η εκ των προτέρων προϋπόθεση για το ΕΤΠΑ.

Λόγω του υψηλού επενδυτικού κόστους των σχεδίων ΒΤΓΕ, είναι σημαντικό να χρησιμοποιηθούν συνέργειες μεταξύ των κονδυλίων. Τα σχέδια μπορούν πλέον να χρηματοδοτούνται σε περισσότερα στάδια ([2]), από τα κονδύλια της ΕΕ ([3]) και τα εθνικά/ περιφερειακά κονδύλια.

Η Επιτροπή, προκειμένου να μετατρέψει το προβάδισμα της ΕΕ στη βασική Ε&Α σε αγαθά και υπηρεσίες, πρότεινε να προσανατολίσει τα χρηματοδοτικά μέσα της και το πρόγραμμα Horizon 2020 προς τις δραστηριότητες που σχετίζονται περισσότερο με την καινοτομία, συμπεριλαμβανομένης της υποστήριξης δοκιμαστικών γραμμών παραγωγής και σχεδίων επίδειξης. Τα κράτη μέλη και οι περιφέρειες θα πρέπει να πράξουν παρομοίως με την υλοποίηση στρατηγικών έξυπνης εξειδίκευσης και με ειδικές ενέργειες συνεργατικών σχηματισμών σχετικά με τις ΚΕΤ.

([1]) Ευρωπαϊκό Ταμείο Περιφερειακής Ανάπτυξης — άρθρο 5.

([2]) Από την εφαρμοσμένη έρευνα μέχρι την απόδειξη υλοποίησης της ιδέας έως τη δοκιμαστική παραγωγή κατά την ανάπτυξη προϊόντων ΒΤΓΕ. Η πρόταση γενικών κανονισμών για τα διαρθρωτικά ταμεία αναφέρει ότι «μια πράξη μπορεί να χρηματοδοτηθεί από ένα ή περισσότερα (…) χρηματοδοτικά μέσα της Ένωσης, υπό τον όρο ότι τηρούνται οι γενικοί κανόνες περί κρατικών ενισχύσεων» (άρθρο 55 παράγραφος 8).

([3]) Π.χ. Horizon 2020, ΕΤΠΑ ή ΕΤΕπ.

Στη συγκριτική μελέτη της Επιτροπής για την εθνική χρηματοδότηση σχεδίων στον τομέα των ΒΤΓΕ ([4]) τονίζεται ότι οι πολιτικές των κρατών μελών δεν υποστηρίζουν επαρκώς την ανάπτυξη της έρευνας και της τεχνολογίας σύμφωνα με τις ανάγκες της αγοράς. Οφείλουν να εξισορροπήσουν τη χρηματοδότηση δοκιμαστικών γραμμών παραγωγής/σχεδίων επίδειξης, ώστε να καταστεί δυνατή η μετατροπή της έρευνας σε προϊόντα. Οι ΒΤΓΕ τροφοδοτούν πολλές αλυσίδες αξίας. Τα προϊόντα που βασίζονται στις ΒΤΓΕ προσφέρουν συχνά μεγάλη προστιθέμενη αξία όταν ενσωματώνονται σε σύνθετα συστήματα. Αυτές οι παρεπόμενες εφαρμογές αποφέρουν μεγαλύτερη οικονομική ανάπτυξη και ανταγωνιστικότητα.

([4]) «Exchange of good policy practices promoting the industrial uptake and deployment of Key Enabling Technologies» (Ανταλλαγή ορθής πολιτικής πρακτικής για την προώθηση της βιομηχανικής εφαρμογής και της ανάπτυξης των βασικών τεχνολογιών γενικής εφαρμογής). Έκθεση από την εταιρεία Idea consult και ZEW, 29 Ιουνίου 2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006475/12
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Job creation through new technologies

In its communication (Reference: IP/12/685) of 26 June 2012, the European Commission made an appeal for a European effort to boost key enabling technologies (KETs). The communication notes that the international market for KETs is expected to increase from EUR 646 billion to over EUR 1 trillion between 2008 and 2015 (more than 8% of the EU's GDP), which will be accompanied by rapid job growth.

— Is there a group of proposals and plans that Member States which are badly affected by the economic crisis can use, with resources available for this purpose? Can the Commission see the danger that, due to the crisis, some Member States are falling behind in the effort to obtain EU investment in new technologies?

— According to the Commission, the EU is not translating its dominant position in basic R & D into the production of products and services required to boost growth and employment. What are its proposals for Member States to reverse this situation?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(28 August 2012)

The Commission has identified Key Enabling Technologies (KETs) as one of the investment priorities for regional innovation financing. Less developed regions and those affected by the crisis may use KETs to modernise the industrial base and improve competitiveness resulting in growth and jobs.

The KETs policy aims to reinforce technological excellence in Europe. KETs were singled out as a priority in the ERDF ([1]). KETs will also be included in the context of strategies for smart specialisation to identify a regions' niche in EU value chains and allocate funding. Smart specialisation is an *ex-ante* conditionality for the ERDF.

Given the high investment costs of KETs projects, it is essential to use synergies between funds. Projects can now be financed at more stages ([2]), from EU ([3]) and national/regional funds.

To translate the EU's lead in basic R & D into goods and services, the Commission proposed to adapt its instruments and Horizon 2020 towards more innovation related activities, including support for product pilot lines and demonstration projects. Member States and regions should proceed similarly with the implementation of smart specialisation strategies and the KETs cluster-specific actions.

The Commission benchmarking study for national funding KETs-related projects ([4]) highlighted that Member States in their policy measures did not sufficiently support research and technology development close to the market. They should rebalance funding to pilot lines/demonstrator projects to allow translation of research into products. KETs feed many value chains. KETs based products often provide great added value when integrated into complex systems. These subsequent applications result in greater economic growth and competitiveness.

([1]) European Regional Development Fund — Article 5.
([2]) From applied research to proof of concept to pilot lines of KETs product development. The proposal for the General Regulations on structural funds states that 'an operation may receive support from one or more (…) Union instrument provided that general state aid rules are obeyed' (Article 55 (8)).
([3]) e.g. Horizon 2020, ERDF or EIB.
([4]) 'Exchange of good policy practices promoting the industrial uptake and deployment of Key Enabling Technologies' Report by Idea consult and ZEW, 29 June 2012.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-006476/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(27 Ιουνίου 2012)

Θέμα: Επιπτώσεις της κρίσης στις εργασίες μερικής απασχόλησης όπου εργάζονται οι νέοι

Σύμφωνα με στοιχεία της υπηρεσίας Cedefop, η οικονομική κρίση σε πολλά κράτη μέλη έχει επιτείνει το φαινόμενο της μερικής απασχόλησης και της υποαπασχόλησης στις νεαρές ηλικίες. Σημαντικότερο όμως στοιχείο αποτελεί το γεγονός, ότι οι περισσότεροι νέοι που υποαπασχολούνται δηλώνουν ότι επιθυμούν και είναι έτοιμοι ανά πάσα στιγμή να εργαστούν ως πλήρως απασχολούμενοι.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Διαπιστώνει σημαντική αύξηση της υποαπασχόλησης και της δημιουργίας θέσεων εργασίας μερικής αντί πλήρους απασχόλησης για τους νέους στην ΕΕ; Σε ποιες χώρες παρατηρείται κυρίως το φαινόμενο;

— Διασφαλίζει η ΕΕ ότι οι θέσεις εργασίας που δημιουργούνται για τους νέους στα κράτη μέλη από τα διαρθρωτικά ταμεία και ιδίως από το ΕΚΤ είναι θέσεις πλήρους και όχι μερικής απασχόλησης ή υποαπασχόλησης;

— Διαθέτει στοιχεία η Επιτροπή που να αποδεικνύουν ότι οι κοινοτικοί πόροι διατίθενται κυρίως για τη δημιουργία θέσεων εργασίας πλήρους απασχόλησης για τους νέους;

Απάντηση του κ. Andor εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(16 Αυγούστου 2012)

Παρ' ό,τι, ως αποτέλεσμα της παρούσας κρίσης, ο αριθμός των ατόμων ηλικίας 15-24 ετών με μερική απασχόληση στην ΕΕ των 27 έχει μειωθεί ([1]), το ποσοστό της εργασίας μερικής απασχόλησης μεταξύ των νέων έχει στην πραγματικότητα αυξηθεί από 26,3 % το 2008 σε 29,7 % το 2011 ([2]).

Η υποαπασχόληση αφορά άτομα με μερική απασχόληση που επιθυμούν και είναι διαθέσιμα να εργαστούν περισσότερες ώρες. Η υποαπασχόληση σε άτομα 15-24 ετών στην ΕΕ των 27 αυξήθηκε από 1,324 εκατομμύρια άτομα το 2008 σε 1,504 εκατομμύρια το 2011. Η μεγαλύτερη αύξηση σημειώθηκε στο ΗΒ ([3]), την Ισπανία ([4]), την Πολωνία και την Ιρλανδία ([5]), ενώ η μεγαλύτερη μείωση σημειώθηκε στη Γερμανία ([6]).

Η ανακοίνωση της Επιτροπής σχετικά με την πρωτοβουλία «Ευκαιρίες για τους νέους» ([7]) καλεί τα κράτη μέλη να αντιμετωπίσουν τα υψηλά ποσοστά ανεργίας των νέων με την αποτελεσματικότερη αξιοποίηση των διαρθρωτικών ταμείων της ΕΕ, ιδίως του ΕΚΤ. Σε αυτό περιλαμβάνεται και η αναδιάταξη των πόρων από τομείς χαμηλής απορρόφησης πόρων υπέρ μέτρων υποστήριξης της μετάβασης των νέων από την εκπαίδευση στην απασχόληση και των προσπαθειών τους για την εξεύρεση συμβάσεων αορίστου χρόνου. Ωστόσο, η ΕΕ δεν μπορεί να εξασφαλίσει ότι οι θέσεις εργασίας που δημιουργούνται χάρη στις επενδύσεις των διαρθρωτικών ταμείων είναι θέσεις εργασίας πλήρους πασχόλησης: αυτό δεν εξαρτάται μόνο από την επένδυση αλλά και από άλλους παράγοντες της αγοράς εργασίας.

Σε μια σειρά ειδικών ανά χώρα συστάσεων που εξέδωσε το Συμβούλιο τον Ιούλιο του 2012, ζητείται η τροποποίηση της εθνικής νομοθεσίας περί των συμβάσεων απασχόλησης, σε ορισμένα κράτη μέλη ([8]), με στόχο τη μείωση του κατακερματισμού της αγοράς εργασίας και, έτσι, τη μείωση των φραγμών όσον αφορά την πρόσβαση των νέων στην αγορά εργασίας.

Στο πλαίσιο αυτό, η Επιτροπή δημοσίευσε επίσης μια πρώτη επισκόπηση των αποτελεσμάτων των εργασιών των «ομάδων δράσης» που έχουν σταλεί στα οκτώ κράτη μέλη με τα υψηλότερα ποσοστά ανεργίας στους νέους σύμφωνα με την πρωτοβουλία «Ευκαιρίες για τους νέους» ([9]).

([1]) Μείωση από 5,901 εκατ. άτομα το 2008 σε 5,771 εκατ. το 2011.
([2]) Στοιχεία από την Έρευνα εργατικού δυναμικού της ΕΕ.
([3]) +113 χιλιάδες άτομα.
([4]) +26 χιλιάδες άτομα.
([5]) +21 χιλιάδες άτομα σε κάθε μία.
([6]) -67 χιλιάδες άτομα.
([7]) COM(2011)933 τελικό της 20.12.2011.
([8]) Για τη Βουλγαρία, την Εσθονία, την Ισπανία, τη Γαλλία, την Ιταλία, την Κύπρο, τη Λετονία, τη Λιθουανία, το Λουξεμβούργο, τη Μάλτα, την Πολωνία, τη Σλοβακία, τη Φινλανδία και το Ηνωμένο Βασίλειο.
([9]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/themes/17_youth_action_team_en.pdf.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006476/12
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Impact of the crisis on the part-time employment of youth

According to Cedefop data, the economic crisis has aggravated the phenomenon of part-time employment or underemployment of the youth in many Member States. The most telling fact of all is that most young people who are underemployed say that they want to and are ready at any time to take up full-time work.

Will the Commission answer the following:

— Has it discovered a significant increase in underemployment and the creation of part-time jobs compared to full-time ones for the youth in the EU? In which countries is the phenomenon most apparent?

— Is the EU ensuring that jobs created for the youth in Member States from the structural funds, especially from the ESF, are full-time jobs rather than part-time ones or underemployment jobs?

— Does the Commission have data showing that Community resources are mainly being used to create full-time jobs for the youth?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(16 August 2012)

Although, as a result of the present crisis, the number of persons aged 15-24 who are employed part-time in the EU-27 has decreased ([1]), the share of part-time work among young persons has actually increased from 26.3% in 2008 to 29.7% in 2011 ([2]).

Underemployment concerns people who are employed part-time, but who wish and are available to work more hours. Underemployment of people aged 15-24 has increased in the EU-27 from 1 324 million persons in 2008 to 1 504 in 2011. This number increased the most in the UK ([3]), Spain ([4]), Poland and Ireland ([5]), and decreased the most in Germany ([6]).

The Commission's communication on the Youth Opportunities Initiative ([7]) urges the Member States to address high youth unemployment rates by making more effective use of the EU Structural Funds, and in particular the ESF. This includes rechanneling funds from areas with lower uptake of funding to measures which support the transition of young people from education to employment and their efforts to find an open-ended contract. The EU cannot, however, ensure that jobs created thanks to structural funds' investments are full-time: this does not depend only on the investment but also on other labour market factors.

A number of country-specific recommendations adopted by the Council in July 2012 call for amendments to national legislation on employment contracts in some of the Member States ([8]), the aim being to reduce labour market segmentation and by this means also to reduce the barriers to young peoples' labour market access.

In this context the Commission has also published a first overview of the results of the work of the 'action teams' sent to the eight Member States with the highest youth unemployment rates pursuant to the Youth Opportunities Initiative. ([9])

([1]) Decreasing from 5,901 million persons in 2008 to 5,771 million in 2011.
([2]) Figures from EU Labour Force Survey.
([3]) +113 thousand persons.
([4]) +26 thousand persons.
([5]) +21 thousand persons each.
([6]) -67 thousand persons.
([7]) COM(2011)933 final, 20.12.2011.
([8]) For Bulgaria, Estonia, Spain, France, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Finland and the United Kingdom.
([9]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/themes/17_youth_action_team_en.pdf

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-006477/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(27 Ιουνίου 2012)

Θέμα: Κατασκευή κοινωνικών κατοικιών στην Ελλάδα

Το πρόβλημα των αστέγων καθώς και των πολιτών που χρήζουν κοινωνικής προστασίας διογκώνεται σε πολλές ευρωπαϊκές χώρες που βρίσκονται αντιμέτωπες με πρωτοφανείς οικονομικές συνθήκες. Το Ευρωπαϊκό Ταμείο Περιφερειακής Ανάπτυξης (ΕΤΠΑ) και το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινωνικό Ταμείο (ΕΚΤ) υποστηρίζουν δραστηριότητες για την προώθηση της κοινωνικής ενσωμάτωσης και της ένταξης των αστέγων στην αγορά εργασίας, ενώ το ΕΤΠΑ μπορεί να επενδύσει στην κατασκευή κοινωνικών κατοικιών.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Έχει τεθεί υπόψη της Επιτροπής από την Ελλάδα ζήτημα χρηματοδότησης από τα διαρθρωτικά ταμεία για κατασκευή κοινωνικών κατοικιών; Είναι σε θέση να με ενημερώσει αν άλλα κράτη μέλη έχουν αξιοποιήσει πόρους προς αυτήν την κατεύθυνση;

Απάντηση του κ. Hahn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(3 Αυγούστου 2012)

Η έλλειψη στέγης ως κοινωνικό πρόβλημα εξετάζεται από την Επιτροπή στο πλαίσιο της ευρωπαϊκής πλατφόρμας για την καταπολέμηση της φτώχειας.

Το Ευρωπαϊκό Ταμείο Περιφερειακής Ανάπτυξης συγχρηματοδοτεί στεγαστικές παρεμβάσεις υπέρ των περιθωριοποιημένων ομάδων του πληθυσμού στο πλαίσιο μιας ολοκληρωμένης προσέγγισης, η οποία περιλαμβάνει κυρίως ενέργειες στους τομείς της παιδείας, της υγείας, των κοινωνικών υποθέσεων, της απασχόλησης και της ασφάλειας και μέτρα εξάλειψης του διαχωρισμού. Οι ενέργειες αυτές μπορούν να συγχρηματοδοτηθούν και από άλλες πηγές χρηματοδότησης, συμπεριλαμβανομένου του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινωνικού Ταμείου για την προώθηση της ένταξης στην αγορά εργασίας των περιθωριοποιημένων ομάδων.

Ορισμένες χώρες, όπως η Βουλγαρία, η Ισπανία, η Ρουμανία, η Ελλάδα και η Ουγγαρία, διερευνούν τη δυνατότητα να αναπτύξουν δραστηριότητες και να χρηματοδοτήσουν μια σειρά πιλοτικών ολοκληρωμένων στεγαστικών παρεμβάσεων σε τοπικό ή περιφερειακό επίπεδο. Η Γαλλία προέβη σε τροποποίηση επιχειρησιακών προγραμμάτων έτσι ώστε να επιτραπούν παρεμβάσεις στον τομέα αυτό. Οι παρεμβάσεις αυτές απευθύνονται κατά κύριο λόγο, αλλά όχι αποκλειστικά, σε περιθωριοποιημένες κοινότητες Ρομά.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006477/12
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Construction of social housing in Greece

The problem of homelessness, together with that of citizens in need of social protection, is growing in many European countries faced with unprecedented economic difficulties. The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF) support initiatives to promote social inclusion and the integration of homeless people into the employment market, while the ERDF can invest in the construction of social housing.

— Has Greece made the Commission aware of the funding issue for social housing construction from structural funds? Have other Member States have made use of resources for this purpose?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(3 August 2012)

Homelessness is examined by the Commission in the framework of the European Platform against Poverty.

The European Regional Development Fund co-funds housing interventions in favour of marginalised groups of the population and as part of an integrated approach which includes, in particular actions in the fields of education, health, social affairs, employment and security and desegregation measures. These actions may be co-funded with other sources of funding, including the European Social Fund to promote labour market integration of marginalised groups.

A number of countries, including Bulgaria, Spain, Romania, Greece and Hungary, are exploring the possibility to set up operations and fund a number of local or regional pilot integrated housing interventions. France has proceeded to modify operational programmes to allow interventions in this field. These interventions are targeting principally, but not exclusively, Roma marginalised communities.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-006478/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(27 Ιουνίου 2012)

Θέμα: Δια Βίου Μάθηση: Αρνητικές επιδόσεις στην προσπάθεια αύξησης της συμμετοχής του ποσοστού ενηλίκων με χαμηλό επίπεδο εκπαίδευσης

Σύμφωνα με τα στοιχεία της υπηρεσίας Cedefop, οι ηλικίες 25-64 ετών, πολιτών με χαμηλές δεξιότητες, είναι δυσκολότερο να συμμετέχουν σε προγράμματα δια βίου μάθησης. Το ποσοστό μάλιστα παραμένει στο 3,8 %, παρουσιάζοντας μηδενική μεταβολή από το 2008 και παρά τις προσπάθειες της Επιτροπής και των κρατών μελών να ενθαρρύνουν δράσεις σχετικές με την διά βίου μάθηση.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Για ποιόν λόγο οι πρωτοβουλίες τόσο της ίδιας όσο και των κρατών δεν απέφεραν αποτελέσματα για την συγκεκριμένη ομάδα πολιτών;

— Ποιες προσαρμογές εκτιμά η Επιτροπή πως είναι αναγκαίες να γίνουν στην στρατηγική της προκειμένου να ανατραπεί η σημερινή εικόνα;

— Είναι σε θέση να μου παραθέσει στοιχεία σχετικά με την εικόνα που παρουσιάζει στον τομέα αυτόν η Ελλάδα σε σύγκριση με τα άλλα κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ;

Απάντηση της κας Βασιλείου εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(3 Αυγούστου 2012)

Το έτος 2008 συμπίπτει με την έναρξη της χρηματοπιστωτικής κρίσης, εξ αιτίας της οποίας φυσικά πρόσωπα και εταιρείες είχαν λιγότερα κεφάλαια στη διάθεσή τους για την εκπαίδευση και την κατάρτιση. Το οξύ πρόβλημα της ανεργίας των νέων ανάγκασε την Ένωση και τα κράτη μέλη να επικεντρώσουν την προσοχή τους σ' αυτό το τμήμα του πληθυσμού.

Η συμμετοχή ατόμων με χαμηλή ειδίκευση σε δράσεις δια βίου μάθησης εξακολουθεί να αποτελεί προτεραιότητα. Τον Νοέμβριο του 2011, το Συμβούλιο Υπουργών εξέδωσε ψήφισμα για μια ανανεωμένη ευρωπαϊκή αντζέντα για τη μάθηση ενηλίκων, στο οποίο καλούσε τα κράτη μέλη να δώσουν, με τη βοήθεια της Επιτροπής, ιδιαίτερη βαρύτητα στη βελτίωση της παροχής κύκλων μαθημάτων στους πολυάριθμους ευρωπαίους με χαμηλή ειδίκευση, ξεκινώντας από τις βασικές δεξιότητες και προχωρώντας σε μεγαλύτερη εξειδίκευση για την απασχόληση και τη ζωή εν γένει. Οι προτεραιότητες για την περίδο 2012-14 εναρμονίστηκαν με τους στρατηγικούς στόχους στον τομέα της εκπαίδευσης και κατάρτισης «ΕΤ2020».

Από την ετήσια έρευνα ανθρώπινου δυναμικού αντλούνται στοιχεία για τη συμμετοχή στη διά βίου μάθηση. Τα τελευταία αριθμητικά στοιχεία για το 2011, που δημοσίευσε η Eurostat στις 7 Ιουνίου 2012, δείχνουν ότι ενώ ο μέσος όρος της ΕΕ ήταν 8,9 %, στην Ελλάδα ήταν 2,4 %, βλέπε συνημμένο πίνακα στον οποίο διαπιστώνονται μεγάλες διακυμάνσεις μεταξύ χωρών ([1]).

([1]) Eurostat: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/education/data/database.

2011 — Συμμετοχή στη διά βίου μάθηση στην ΕΕ-27, ηλικιακή ομάδα 25-64	
EU-27	8,9%
AT	13,4%
BE	7,1%
BG	1,2%
CY	7,5%
CZ	11,4%
DE	7,8%
DK	32,3%
EE	12,0%
ES	10,8%
FI	23,8%
FR	5,5%
GR	2,4%
HU	2,7%
IE	6,8%
IT	5,7%
LT	5,9%
LU	13,6%
LV	5,0%
MT	6,6%
NL	16,7%
PL	4,5%
PT	11,6%
RO	1,6%
SE	25,0%
SI	15,9%
SK	3,0%
UK	15,8%

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006478/12
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Lifelong learning: poor results of attempts to increase the percentage of adults with a low level of education participating in lifelong learning

According to data from Cedefop, it is more difficult for low-skilled persons aged 25-64 to participate in lifelong learning programmes. The percentage remains at 3.8%, unchanged since 2008, despite efforts by the Commission and the Member States to promote initiatives connected with lifelong learning.

— Why have Commission initiatives, and those of the Member States, not produced results for this section of the population?

— What changes to its strategy does the Commission think are necessary to reverse the trend?

— Is it in a position to provide data on Greece's situation in this matter compared to the other Member States?

Answer given by Mrs Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(3 August 2012)

2008 coincides with the start of the financial and economic crises, as a result of which individuals and companies have less funding at their disposal for education and training. The acute situation with regard to youth unemployment has meant that both at EU and national levels much attention has been concentrated on this segment of the population.

Participation of the low-skilled in lifelong training remains a priority. In November 2011, Ministers adopted a Council resolution on a renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning, asking Member States with the help of the Commission to pay particular attention to improving provision for the high number of low-skilled Europeans, starting with basic skills as a precursor to up-skilling for work and life in general. Priorities for 2012-14 are set in line with the strategic objectives of ET2020.

The annual Labour Force Survey is the source of data on participation in lifelong learning. The latest figues for 2011, released by Eurostat on 7 June 2012, show that while the EU average was 8.9%, in Greece it was 2.4%, see attached table showing large country variations ([1]).

([1]) Eurostat: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/education/data/database.

2011 Participation in lifelong learning in EU-27, age group 25-64	
EU-27	8.9%
AT	13.4%
BE	7.1%
BG	1.2%
CY	7.5%
CZ	11.4%
DE	7.8%
DK	32.3%
EE	12.0%
ES	10.8%
FI	23.8%
FR	5.5%
GR	2.4%
HU	2.7%
IE	6.8%
IT	5.7%
LT	5.9%
LU	13.6%
LV	5.0%
MT	6.6%
NL	16.7%
PL	4.5%
PT	11.6%
RO	1.6%
SE	25.0%
SI	15.9%
SK	3.9%
UK	15.8%

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-006480/12
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (NI)
(27. Juni 2012)

Betrifft: Zunahme des Menschenhandels zum Zweck der sexuellen Ausbeutung

Menschenhandel ist ein Verbrechen gegen die Menschlichkeit, und doch nimmt er weltweit zu, nicht zuletzt in Europa. Die Opfer dieses furchtbaren Verbrechens sind in erster Linie junge Frauen und Mädchen, die zu sexuellen Zwecken wie Sklaven behandelt und ausgebeutet werden.

1. Warum stellt der Menschenhandel nach Auffassung der Kommission auch im 21. Jahrhundert noch immer ein solches unermessliches Problem dar?

2. Kann die Kommission erklären, wer die Opfer des Menschenhandels sind? Woher kommen sie?

3. Was kann die Kommission zur Lösung dieses Problems unternehmen?

4. Wie kann die Kommission die Opfer ermutigen, auszusagen?

Antwort von Frau Malmström im Namen der Kommission
(8. August 2012)

In der kürzlich verabschiedeten Strategie der EU zur Beseitigung des Menschenhandels 2012-2016 wird herausgestellt, dass der Menschenhandel die moderne Sklaverei ist. Menschenhändler passen ihre Methoden fortwährend an. Daher ist es wichtig, koordiniert und umfassend gegen den Menschenhandel vorzugehen. In der EU-Strategie verweist die Kommission auf den sich wandelnden Charakter dieses Problems, das bereichsübergreifend und unter Berücksichtigung der Geschlechterperspektive angegangen werden muss. Vorrang werden der Verbrechensprävention, der Strafverfolgung von Menschenhändlern, dem Schutz der Opfer sowie der Zusammenarbeit und der Koordinierung eingeräumt.

Aufgrund der Komplexität des Menschenhandels ist das gesamte Ausmaß dieses Phänomens schwer einzuschätzen. Vergleichbare und zuverlässige Daten sind jedoch sehr wichtig. Deshalb sieht die EU-Strategie konkrete Maßnahmen zur Erhebung von Daten vor. Im Herbst 2012 wird die Kommission in Zusammenarbeit mit Eurostat detaillierte Ergebnisse veröffentlichen.

Für die Kommission sind Schutz und Unterstützung der Opfer ein vorrangiges Anliegen. Dies spiegelt sich nicht nur in der kürzlich verabschiedeten Strategie wider, sondern auch in den Rechtsvorschriften, die der Kommission als Grundlage für die EU-Strategie dienten.

Die Richtlinie 2011/36/EU zur Verhütung und Bekämpfung des Menschenhandels ist vor allem auf den Schutz und die Unterstützung der Opfer ausgerichtet. Sie soll sicherstellen, dass die Menschenrechte der Opfer gewahrt und ihnen ein wirksamer Schutz und eine effiziente Unterstützung geboten werden; darüber hinaus ist eine breite Palette von Maßnahmen vorgesehen, die von der Rechtsberatung bis hin zur Vermeidung einer erneuten Traumatisierung, insbesondere in Gerichtsverfahren, reichen. Im Einzelnen tragen die Mitgliedstaaten dafür Sorge, dass die Opfer Zugang zu Zeugenschutzprogrammen oder vergleichbaren Maßnahmen haben sowie eine besondere Behandlung zur Verhinderung sekundärer Viktimisierung erhalten ([1]) ([2]).

([1]) Artikel 12: Schutz der Opfer von Menschenhandel bei Strafermittlungen und Strafverfahren.
([2]) Unter anderem sollen nicht erforderliche Wiederholungen von Vernehmungen, Sichtkontakt zwischen Opfer und Beschuldigten, auch während der Beweisaufnahme, sowie nicht erforderliche Fragen zum Privatleben des Opfers vermieden werden.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006480/12
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (NI)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Sex trafficking on the rise

Human trafficking is a crime against humanity, yet it is on the rise globally, not least in Europe. The main victims of this appalling crime are young women and girls, enslaved and exploited for sex.

1. Why, in the Commission's view, does human trafficking continue to be such a huge problem in the 21st century?

2. Could the Commission say who the victims of human trafficking are? From where do these victims come?

3. What can the Commission do to beat this problem?

4. How can the Commission encourage the victims to testify?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(8 August 2012)

The recently adopted EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings 2012-2016 stresses that it is the slavery of our times. Traffickers constantly adapt their methods. Therefore, it is important to address human trafficking in a coordinated and comprehensive manner. In the EU Strategy, the Commission recognises the evolving character of this phenomenon and the need to address it in a multidisciplinary way, underpinned by a gender perspective. It prioritises the prevention of the crime, the prosecution of traffickers, the protection of the victims, cooperation and coordination.

Due to the complexity of trafficking in human beings, it is difficult to gauge its full extent. Comparable and reliable data is however very important. Hence, the EU Strategy foresees specific actions on data collection. In the autumn of 2012, the Commission, in cooperation with Eurostat, will publish detailed results.

The Commission views protection and assistance of victims as a priority. This is not only reflected in the recently adopted Strategy but also in legislation upon which the Commission based the EU Strategy.

The directive 2011/36/EU on trafficking has a strong focus on victim protection and support. In addition to guaranteeing the victim's human rights, effective protection and assistance, measures are stipulated covering a wide spectrum: from legal advice to avoidance of re-traumatisation, especially in court proceedings. More specifically, MS shall ensure amongst others that the victims receive access to witness protection programmes or other similar measures, as well as specific treatment aimed at preventing secondary victimisation ([1]) ([2]).

([1]) Article 12 Protection of victims of trafficking in human beings in criminal investigations and proceedings.
([2]) by avoiding *inter alia* unnecessary repetition of interviews, visual contact between the victims and defendants including during the giving of evidence, as well as unnecessary questioning concerning the victim's private life.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-006481/12
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (NI)
(27. Juni 2012)

Betrifft: Schulabbruch

Laut kürzlich von der Kommission veröffentlichten Zahlen verlassen in Griechenland 13,1 % der Schüler die Schule vorzeitig ohne Abschluss. Es ist darauf hinzuweisen, dass Griechenland im Rahmen der Strategie Europa 2020 dazu verpflichtet ist, diese Quote auf 10 % zu senken. In der Erklärung von Lissabon heißt es, dass die Schulabbrecherquote in allen bzw. den meisten Mitgliedstaaten der EU zu hoch ist; der EU-Durchschnitt beträgt 13,5 %.

1. Welche Maßnahmen muss die Kommission ergreifen, um die Schulabbrecherquote zu senken?

2. Wie kann die Kommission dazu beitragen, Reformen des Bildungswesens im Bereich Vorschul- und Schulbildung voranzubringen? Welche Strategien müssen verfolgt werden? Welche Schritte müssen unternommen werden, um die Bildungsergebnisse zu verbessern und auf diese Weise die Schulabbrecherquoten zu verringern?

3. Zu welchen Ergebnissen kam die thematische Arbeitsgruppe zum Thema Schulabbruch, die im Dezember 2011 im Rahmen der offenen Koordinierungsmethode eingesetzt wurde?

4. Zieht die Kommission in Betracht, eine Analyse im Hinblick auf eine Verbesserung der Daten zum vorzeitigen Abbruch der beruflichen Aus- oder Weiterbildung durchzuführen?

Antwort von Frau Vassiliou im Namen der Kommission
(13. August 2012)

Die Europäische Kommission hat im Januar 2011 die Mitteilung „Bekämpfung des Schulabbruchs“ KOM(2011)18 angenommen, in der sie darlegt, wie sie die Ausarbeitung der Politikmaßnahmen in den Mitgliedstaaten unterstützen und einen gezielten Einsatz der EU-Mittel bei der Eindämmung vorzeitiger Schulabgänge gewährleisten will. Im Juni 2011 hat der Rat eine Empfehlung für politische Strategien zur Senkung der Schulabbrecherquote ([1]) angenommen, die die Grundlage für die Maßnahmen auf europäischer Ebene bildet. Darin wird betont, dass in umfassende, faktengestützte Politikmaßnahmen und insbesondere Präventions- und Interventionsmaßnahmen investiert werden muss. Im Anhang der Empfehlung ist der Rahmen für die Politikmaßnahmen abgesteckt; dort werden die wichtigsten und erfolgversprechendsten Maßnahmen zur Verringerung der Schulabbrecherquoten im Einzelnen beschrieben.

Zwar liegt die Verantwortung für die Gestaltung des Bildungssystems ausschließlich beim jeweiligen Mitgliedstaat, doch gewährt die Kommission den Mitgliedstaaten ihre Unterstützung, indem sie den Austausch von Erfahrungen und bewährten Verfahren auf EU-Ebene fördert. Die seit Dezember 2011 bestehende thematische Arbeitsgruppe zum Thema Schulabbruch erarbeitet Leitlinien, die Hilfestellung bei Folgendem geben sollen: Ausarbeitung und Umsetzung umfassender, faktengestützter Politikmaßnahmen zur Eindämmung des Schulabbruchs, Bekämpfung vorzeitiger Abgänge in der beruflichen Aus- und Weiterbildung, bessere Unterstützung von Lehrern und anderen Ausbildern, die gefährdete junge Menschen unterrichten, sowie wirksamere Einbindung von kommunalen Einrichtungen, Eltern und sonstigen Interessengruppen. Die ersten Ergebnisse soll die Gruppe Ende 2013 vorlegen. Griechenland wirkt an den Arbeiten dieser Gruppe mit.

Die Kommission beabsichtigt ferner, die Datenlage zum Schulabbruch in Europa zu verbessern, insbesondere im Bereich der beruflichen Aus- und Weiterbildung. Hierzu bewertet sie derzeit Qualität und Verfügbarkeit der vorhandenen Daten und Angaben. Gegebenenfalls werden zu einem späteren Zeitpunkt zielgerichtete Untersuchungen eingeleitet.

([1]) ABl. C 191 vom 1.7.2011.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006481/12
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (NI)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Early school leaving

According to recent figures published by the Commission, 13.1% of students in Greece leave school before completing their studies. It should be noted that under the Europe 2020 strategy, Greece is committed to reducing this figure to 10%. The Lisbon Declaration states that there are too many early school leavers in all or most Member States of the EU; the European average is 13.5%.

1. What measures does the Commission need to take to reduce early school-leaving?

2. How can the Commission contribute to advancing educational reform on pre-school and school education? What policies have to be adopted? What steps need to be taken to improve educational outcomes, thus helping reduce school drop-out rates?

3. What were the results of the work of the Thematic Working Group on early school leaving that was set up in December 2011 in the framework of the Open Method of Coordination?

4. Will the Commission consider launching an analysis with a view to improving data on early school leaving in vocational education and training?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(13 August 2012)

In January 2011, the European Commission adopted a communication on 'Tackling Early School Leaving' [COM(2011)18] outlining how the Commission intends to support policy developments in Member States and to ensure the targeted use of EU funding to combat early school leaving. The Council adopted in June 2011 a Council Recommendation on policies to reduce early school leaving ([1]) which forms the basis of activities at European level. It underlines the need to invest in evidence-based and comprehensive policies and especially in prevention and intervention measures; a policy framework annexed to the recommendation provides further detail on the most relevant and successful measures to reduce ESL.

While Member States are solely responsible for the organisation of their education systems, the Commission supports them by promoting the exchange of experiences and good practices at EU level. The Thematic Working Group on early school leaving, set up in December 2011, is working on policy guidelines for developing and implementing evidence-based and comprehensive policies to tackle early school leaving, addressing early school leaving in vocational education and training, improving support for teachers and other professionals dealing with young people at risk, and involving local communities, parents and other stakeholders more effectively. First results will be available by end 2013; Greece is represented in this group.

The Commission also intends to improve the knowledge base on early school leaving processes in Europe, especially in the area of vocational education and training. Currently the Commission is assessing the quality and availability of existing data and information; targeted studies in this area might follow.

([1]) OJ C 191 2011.

(Leagan Gaeilge)

Ceist i gcomhair freagra scríofa E-006482/12
chuig an gCoimisiún
Liam Aylward (ALDE)
(27 Meitheamh 2012)

Ábhar: Staitisticí ar Bhochtaineacht Leanaí

Dé réir 'cárta tuairisce' a d'fhoilsigh Unicef le déanaí, tá 13 mhilliún páiste san Aontas Eorpach, san Iorua agus san Íoslainn nach bhfuil bunábhair na forbartha ar fáil dóibh. Bronnadh an 'drochthuairisc' sin tamall gairid roimh fhoilsiú mholadh deiridh an Choimisiúin Eorpaigh maidir le bochtaineacht leanaí agus le leas leanaí.

Meastar nach bhfuil a dhóthain eolais nó a dhóthain staitisticí á mbailiú le scrúdú ceart a dhéanamh ar cheist na bochtaineachta leanaí. Ní mór go mbeadh eolas suas chun dáta ar bhochtaineacht leanaí ar fáil chun bearta cuí a chur i bhfeidhm le leanaí a chosaint.

1. An bhféadfadh an Coimisiún míniú a thabhairt ar an easpa atá ann ó thaobh eolas staitistiúil suas chun dáta ar bhochtaineacht leanaí agus tuarascálacha den chineál seo á n-ullmhú?

2. An bhfuil sé i gceist ag an gCoimisiún acmhainní a chur ar fáil ionas go mbeadh bailiú staitisticí ar bhochtaineacht leanaí san Aontas Eorpach mar ghné bhuan de Shuirbhé an Aontais Eorpaigh um Ioncam agus Dálaí Maireachtála?

3. An bhféadfadh an Coimisiún breis eolais a thabhairt maidir leis an maoiniú atá ar fáil faoi láthair do bhailiú staitisticí ar bhochtaineacht leanaí san AE?

Freagra ón gCoimisinéir Šemeta thar ceann an Choimisiúin
(16 Lúnasa 2012)

Tá an Coimisiún (Eurostat) ag cur sonraí ar fáil maidir le bochtaineacht leanaí, sonraí atáthar a bhaint as na Staitisticí maidir le hIoncam agus Dálaí Maireachtála (EU-SILC). De réir Airteagal 10(2) de Rialachán (CE) Uimh. 1117/2003 ó Pharlaimint na hEorpa agus ón gComhairle maidir le EU-SILC, ní mór na micreashonraí a bhaineann leis an gcomhpháirt thrasghearrthach a chur chuig an gCoimisiún (Eurostat) faoin 30 Samhain de bhliain N + 1 ar a dhéanaí. Dá thoradh sin bíonn sonraí SILC a thagraíonn do bhliain tagartha N (ioncam bhliain N — 1) ar fáil agus craobhscaoileann an Coimisiún (Eurostat) iad roimh dheireadh bhliain N + 1.

I gcomhthéacs an athbhreithnithe lár téarma ar an mórsprioc AE 2020 maidir le cuimsiú sóisialta in 2015, táthar ag díriú ar na bearta maidir le díth ábhartha a fheabhsú. Chuige sin, leis an dréachtmhodúl *ad hoc* SILC, 2014, atá á ullmhú faoi láthair ag Eurostat, táthar ag súil go mbaileofar trí cinn déag d'athróga díthe ábhartha a bhaineann le leanaí. Tá sé beartaithe freisin go bhféadfadh na Ballstáit na hathróga sin de chuid SILC a bhailiú in 2013 ar bhonn deonach. Ba cheart a thabhairt faoi deara nach gcuirtear agallamh ar na leanaí féin sa suirbhé a bhaineann le Staitisticí maidir le hIoncam agus Dálaí Maireachtála; bailítear an fhaisnéis ar a ndálaí trí cheisteanna sainiúla a chur ar na daoine fásta sa teaghlach.

De réir Airteagal 13(1) den Rialachán thuasluaite, gheobhaidh gach Ballstát ranníocaíocht airgeadais ón AE le linn na gceithre bliana tosaigh den bhailiú sonraí chun cuid de chostas na hoibre a íoc. Ní dhearnadh foráil maidir le haon mhaoiniú eile ar leibhéal an AE le haghaidh bailiú staitisticí maidir le bochtaineacht agus eisiamh sóisialta go ginearálta, ná maidir le bochtaineacht leanaí go háirithe.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006482/12
to the Commission
Liam Aylward (ALDE)
(27 June 2012)

Subject: Statistics on child poverty

According to a report card published recently by Unicef, 13 million children in the European Union, Norway and Iceland are without the basic items necessary for their development. That unfavourable report was submitted shortly before the publication of the last European Commission report on child poverty and child welfare.

It is thought that not enough information or enough statistics are being collected to properly examine the issue of child poverty. Up-to-date information on child poverty must be made available to put in place appropriate measures for child protection.

1. Could the Commission explain the lack of up-to-date statistical information when such reports are being prepared?

2. Does the Commission intend to make resources available so that the collection of statistics on child poverty would be a permanent part of the European Union's survey on income and living conditions?

3. Could the Commission give more information about the current available funding for the collection of statistics on child poverty in the EU?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(16 August 2012)

The Commission (Eurostat) is providing data on child poverty from the Statistics on Income and Living Condition (EU-SILC). According to Article 10(2) of Regulation (EC) No 1177/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the EU-SILC, micro-data for the cross-sectional component referring to reference year N shall be transmitted to the Commission (Eurostat) by the 30 November N+1 at the latest. As a consequence, SILC data referring to reference year N (income of year N-1) are available and disseminated by the Commission (Eurostat) before the end of year N+1.

In the context of the mid-term review of the EU2020 headline target on social inclusion in 2015, improved measures of material deprivation are aimed at. For this purpose, the draft 2014 SILC ad hoc module currently being prepared by Eurostat is expected to collect, *inter alia*, 13 material deprivation variables dedicated to children. It is also envisaged that Member States could collect these variables in SILC in 2013 on a voluntary basis. It should be noted that in the SILC survey children are not directly interviewed but the information on their situation is gathered by dedicated questions to the adults of their household.

According to Article 13(1) of the above Regulation, for the first four years of data collection each Member State receives a financial contribution from the EU towards the cost of the work involved. No other funding is foreseen at EU level for the collection of statistics on poverty and social exclusion in general and child poverty in particular.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-006483/12
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(28 de junio de 2012)

Asunto: Igualdad y no discriminación en la Unión Europea

Diversos estudios realizados en el Estado español y documentación publicada en todo el mundo ([1]) sobre el respeto a la diversidad de las personas, ponen de manifiesto que el comportamiento social en el Estado español y en Europa (extendido también más allá de la UE) suele estar cargado de prejuicios hacia la diversidad que se refleja en actitudes como el racismo, la xenofobia, el machismo, la violencia de género, el *bullying*, la homofobia, etc., que llevan a actitudes de menosprecio hacia la persona. Tanto desde las instituciones, como desde la sociedad y los centros educativos ([2]), se reclama la revisión de este tipo de actitudes para favorecer el cambio social hacia la aceptación plena de la diversidad de las personas. Todos los expertos en estos temas coinciden en que la solución pasa por tratar estos temas desde las escuelas y las familias.

1. ¿Coincide la Comisión con el análisis de que el comportamiento social en Europa suele estar cargado de prejuicios hacia la diversidad, que se reflejan en actitudes como las mencionadas y que llevan a actitudes de menosprecio hacia la persona con consecuencias, algunas veces, muy graves?

2. ¿Estaría de acuerdo la Comisión que combatiendo estas actitudes desde edades tempranas se mejorarían los índices de aceptación a la diversidad?

3. ¿Estaría de acuerdo la Comisión en apoyar iniciativas en los centros educativos europeos dirigidas a alumnos, profesores y familias, cuya finalidad fuera la revisión de este tipo de actitudes y trabajar en el desarrollo de estrategias y acciones, cuyo objetivo sea favorecer el cambio social para la aceptación plena de la diversidad de las personas, y la aceptación, la integración y la normalización de la diversidad (de género, cultural, religiosa, etc.) como valor fundamental de convivencia y riqueza social?

Respuesta de la Sra. Reding en nombre de la Comisión
(17 de agosto de 2012)

La Comisión Europea es consciente de que el comportamiento social tiende a estar cargado de prejuicios contra la diversidad y condena firmemente todas las manifestaciones de discriminación, racismo, homofobia, sexismo y xenofobia, ya que estos fenómenos son incompatibles con los valores y principios en los que se basa la Unión Europea y con el artículo 21 de la Carta de los Derechos Fundamentales de la Unión Europea.

Dentro de los límites de sus competencias, la Comisión está plenamente comprometida con este esfuerzo mediante la integración de la no discriminación en todas sus políticas, incluida la educación, y a través de campañas de sensibilización para luchar contra los estereotipos ([3]). Resultan indispensables políticas nacionales adecuadas de lucha contra los prejuicios, tanto en las escuelas como a todos los niveles de la sociedad, con el fin de mejorar la aceptación de la diversidad por los ciudadanos.

La Comisión ayuda financieramente a las autoridades nacionales y a la sociedad civil para luchar contra la discriminación a través del programa Progress y apoya distintas iniciativas para fomentar la diversidad y los valores europeos en los centros de enseñanza ([4]).

([1]) «Homosexualidad y familia» del Profesor Félix López Sánchez de la Univ. de Salamanca; «Entender la diversidad familiar» de José Ignacio Pichardo Galán publicado en ediciones Bellaterra; «Homosexualidad al inicio del Siglo XXI» del Dr. Antoni Mirabet i Mullol y 48 colaboradores; «Conferencia Europea Family Matters» celebrada en Florencia, 20-21 de junio de 2008.

([2]) Llamamiento de la ONU para terminar con la violencia y la discriminación en contra minorías sexuales (http://www.un.org/es/multimedia/_vidout/video631.shtml), «La nueva homosexualidad» de Marina Castañeda (Editorial Paidós), Profesorado, http://www.ugr.es/~recfpro/rev41ART2.pdf; Escuela y diversidad: realidades mal avenidas. Carta de Naciones Unidas; Declaración de los Derechos Humanos.

([3]) La campaña «Por la diversidad y contra la discriminación» (http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fdad) funciona desde 2003.

([4]) Véase, por ejemplo, la iniciativa de agenda escolar «Agenda s'cool 2012-2013» de la Agencia de Derechos Fundamentales, en http://fra.europa.eu o la iniciativa «Regreso a la escuela». http://ec.europa.eu/news/eu_explained/110117_es.htm.

El Marco Europeo de Competencias Clave ([5]) describe las ocho competencias imprescindibles que todos los ciudadanos europeos necesitan para su realización y desarrollo personales, así como para una ciudadanía activa, la integración social y el empleo. Entre las «competencias sociales y cívicas» se incluyen las personales, interpersonales e interculturales que permiten a las personas participar plenamente en la vida cívica en sociedades cada vez más diversificadas, lo que comprende la igualdad de sexos, la no discriminación y la tolerancia. Para contribuir a promover el aprendizaje de estas competencias, la Comisión financia la Red europea sobre competencias clave en la enseñanza escolar (*KeyCoNet* en sus siglas inglesas) ([6]).

([5]) Recomendación 2006/962/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 18 de diciembre, sobre las competencias clave para el aprendizaje permanente, DO L 394 de 30.12.2006.

([6]) http://keyconet.eun.org/.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006483/12
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(28 June 2012)

Subject: Equality and non-discrimination in the European Union

Various studies carried out in Spain and documentation published throughout the world ([1]) on respect for human diversity show that social behaviour in Spain and in Europe (and beyond the EU) tends to be laden with prejudices against diversity. This is reflected in attitudes such as racism, xenophobia, sexism, gender violence, bullying, homophobia, etc., which lead to contempt towards others. Institutions, society and educational centres ([2]) are all calling for a shift in attitudes to make way for social changes leading to full acceptance of human diversity. All the experts in these fields agree that the solution is to address these issues within schools and families.

1. Does the Commission agree with the analysis that social behaviour in Europe tends to be laden with prejudices against diversity, which are reflected in attitudes such as those mentioned above, and which lead to contempt towards others, with sometimes very serious consequences?

2. Would the Commission agree that tackling these attitudes from an early age would improve diversity acceptance rates?

3. Would the Commission support initiatives in European schools, directed at students, teachers and families, with the aim of changing such attitudes and developing strategies and actions to promote social change leading to full acceptance of human diversity and the acceptance, integration and normalisation of diversity (in terms of gender, culture, religion, etc.) as a fundamental tenet of coexistence and social wealth?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(17 August 2012)

The European Commission is aware that social behaviour tends to be laden with prejudices against diversity and strongly condemns all manifestations of discrimination, racism, homophobia, sexism and xenophobia, as these phenomena are incompatible with the values and principles on which the European Union is based and with Article 21 of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights.

The Commission is fully committed within the boundaries of its competences to this endeavour by mainstreaming non-discrimination in all its policies, including education, and through awareness raising campaigns to fight against stereotypes ([3]). Adequate policies at national level combating prejudices both at schools and at all levels of society are key to improve diversity acceptance rates of citizens.

The Commission provides financial support to national authorities and civil society to combat discrimination through PROGRESS programme and supports several initiatives to foster diversity and promote European values at schools ([4]).

The European Framework of Key Competences ([5]) describes the eight key competences that all European citizens need for personal fulfilment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment. The 'social and civic competence' includes the personal, interpersonal and intercultural competences that enable individuals to participate fully in civic life in increasingly diverse societies, including gender equality, non-discrimination and tolerance. To help promote the learning of these competences, the Commission funds the European policy network on key competences in school education (KeyCoNet) ([6]).

([1]) 'Homosexualidad y familia' by Professor Félix López Sánchez, University of Salamanca; 'Entender la diversidad familiar' by José Ignacio Pichardo Galán published in Bellaterra editions; 'Homosexualidad al inicio del Siglo XXI' by Dr Antoni Mirabet I Mullol and 48 contributors; European Conference on Family Matters, Florence, 20-21 June 2008.

([2]) UN call to end violence and discrimination against sexual minorities (http://www.un.org/es/multimedia/_vidout/video631.shtml); 'La nueva homosexualidad' by Marina Castañeda (Editoral Paidós); teaching staff, http://www.ugr.es/~recfpro/rev41ART2.pdf; 'Escuela y diversidad: realidades mal avenidas'; United Nations Charter; Declaration of Human Rights.

([3]) The 'For Diversity, Against Discrimination' campaign (http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fdad) has been running since 2003.

([4]) See for example Fundamental Right's Agency S'cool Agenda 2012-2013 initiative at http://fra.europa.eu or the 'Back to school' initiative, http://ec.europa.eu/news/eu_explained/110117_en.htm

([5]) Recommendation 2006/962/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December on key competences for lifelong learning, OJ L 394, 30.12.2006.

([6]) http://keyconet.eun.org/.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-006484/12
προς το Συμβούλιο
Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE)
(28 Ιουνίου 2012)

Θέμα: Άμβλυνση των μακροοικονομικών ανισορροπιών στην Ευρώπη

Στις 18.6.2012, το Διεθνές Νομισματικό Ταμείο δημοσίευσε «Σημείωμα για Συζήτηση» ([1]) με θέμα «Ενθάρρυνση της ανάπτυξης στην Ευρώπη τώρα», στο οποίο και αναφέρεται πως τα κράτη-μέλη της νότιας Ευρώπης χρειάζονται περιορισμό των ονομαστικών μισθών, ενώ τα κράτη της βόρειας Ευρώπης θα πρέπει να επιτρέψουν την αύξηση των μισθών σύμφωνα με την παραγωγικότητα και τις εξελίξεις στην αγορά. Παράλληλα τονίζεται πως το μοντέλο ανάλυσης του ΔΝΤ για τη νομισματική και δημοσιονομική πολιτική (GIMF) αποδεικνύει πως τα νότια κράτη θα επωφελούνταν περισσότερο από την υλοποίηση μεταρρυθμίσεων στα βόρεια κράτη-μέλη από ό,τι αντιστρόφως. Επιπρόσθετα, ο Αντιπρόεδρος της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής κ. Ρεν, σε ομιλία ([2]) του στις 15.6.2012, δήλωσε πως οι πλεονασματικές οικονομίες μπορούν να συμβάλουν στην άμβλυνση των ανισορροπιών μέσω της κατάργησης μη αναγκαίων ρυθμιστικών περιορισμών για την εσωτερική ζήτηση και, φέροντας ως παράδειγμα τη Γερμανία, ενθάρρυνε την αύξηση μισθών σύμφωνα με την παραγωγικότητα, η οποία και θα βοηθούσε την εσωτερική ζήτηση.

Δεδομένων των παραπάνω θέσεων ερωτάται το Συμβούλιο:

1. Πώς αξιολογεί τις προαναφερόμενες συστάσεις για την υλοποίηση πολιτικών άμβλυνσης των ανισορροπιών από την πλευρά των πλεονασματικών κρατών; Συμφωνεί;

2. Αν ναι, με ποιο τρόπο σκοπεύει να ενθαρρύνει την ανάληψη τέτοιων πολιτικών;

3. Διαθέτει ποσοτικές εκτιμήσεις για το πως πολιτικές προσανατολισμένες στην άμβλυνση των ανισορροπιών θα ωφελήσουν την ΕΕ συνολικά; Αν ναι ποιες πολιτικές έχουν αναδείξει οι εκτιμήσεις αυτές;

Απάντηση
(8 Οκτωβρίου 2012)

Σύμφωνα με τον κανονισμό (ΕΕ) αριθ. 1176/2011 του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου και του Συμβουλίου της 16ης Νοεμβρίου 2011, σχετικά με την πρόληψη και τη διόρθωση των μακροοικονομικών ανισορροπιών ([3]) και βασιζόμενη σε πίνακες αποτελεσμάτων, η Επιτροπή δημοσιεύει ετήσια έκθεση με θέμα το μηχανισμό επαγρύπνησης.

Στην έκθεση με θέμα το μηχανισμό επαγρύπνησης που δημοσιεύθηκε στις 14 Φεβρουαρίου 2012, η Επιτροπή αναφέρει ότι σε 12 κράτη έχουν ενδεχομένως σημειωθεί μακροοικονομικές ανισορροπίες.

Στα πλαίσια του Ευρωπαϊκού Εξαμήνου, η Επιτροπή πραγματοποίησε εις βάθος ανάλυση σχετικά με τα κράτη που αναφέρονται στην έκθεση και, σύμφωνα με το προληπτικό σκέλος της διαδικασίας, συνέταξε συστάσεις για τη διόρθωση των εντοπισθεισών ανισορροπιών. Οι ανισορροπίες εντοπίσθηκαν στους τομείς της εξωτερικής ανταγωνιστικότητας, του χρέους (χρέος των νοικοκυριών, χρέος του ιδιωτικού τομέα ή δημόσιο χρέος) και στη σταθερότητα του χρηματοπιστωτικού τομέα.

Στις 10 Ιουλίου 2012, το Συμβούλιο ενέκρινε συστάσεις προς κάθε κράτος μέλος σχετικά με τις οικονομικές πολιτικές που καθορίζονται στα εθνικά μεταρρυθμιστικά τους προγράμματα, γνώμες σχετικά με τις φορολογικές πολιτικές που καθορίζονται στα προγράμματα σταθερότητας και σύγκλισης των κρατών μελών, καθώς και ειδική σύσταση σχετικά με τις οικονομικές πολιτικές των κρατών μελών της ευρωζώνης. Οι δώδεκα από τις 27 ανά χώρα συστάσεις καταγράφουν τους κίνδυνους που απορρέουν από τις υπερβολικές μακροοικονομικές ανισορροπίες και προτείνουν δράσεις για τον έγκαιρο εντοπισμό και την πρόληψή τους. Οι υπηρεσίες της Επιτροπής θα παρακολουθούν εκ του σύνεγγυς και σε συνεχή βάση την εφαρμογή των συστάσεων

Όσον αφορά τις ποσοτικές εκτιμήσεις, η Επιτροπή διεξάγει οικονομικές αναλύσεις, τόσο για τα κράτη μέλη όσο και για την ΕΕ συνολικά, προκειμένου οι πολιτικές για την αποκατάσταση της ισορροπίας να αποβούν προς όφελος ολόκληρης της ΕΕ. Κατόπιν της υποβολής τους από την Επιτροπή, το Συμβούλιο είναι πρόθυμο να τις θέσει υπό συζήτηση.

([1]) http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/sdn/2012/sdn1207.pdf
([2]) http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/12/454&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en.
([3]) ΕΕ L 306 της 23.11.2011, σ. 25.

Το Συμβούλιο δεν έχει συζητήσει ειδικότερα συστάσεις εκδοθείσες από το Διεθνές Νομισματικό Ταμείο αλλά μπορεί να λάβει υπόψη τις απόψεις και τα συμπεράσματά του. Πρέπει επίσης να σημειωθεί ότι το προαναφερόμενο υπηρεσιακό σημείωμα του ΔΝΤ για συζήτηση αντιπροσωπεύει τις απόψεις των συντακτών του και όχι αναγκαστικά τις απόψεις του ΔΝΤ ή την πολιτική του ΔΝΤ. Τα υπηρεσιακά σημειώματα του ΔΝΤ για συζήτηση δημοσιεύονται με σκοπό να προκαλέσουν σχόλια και περαιτέρω συζητήσεις.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006484/12
to the Council
Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE)
(28 June 2012)

Subject: Macroeconomic rebalancing in Europe

On 18 June 2012 the International Monetary Fund published a 'Discussion Note' ([1]) on 'Fostering Growth in Europe Now', which states that the southern European Member States need nominal wage restraint, while northern European Member States should let wages rise in line with productivity and market developments. It also highlights that the IMF's Global Integrated Monetary and Fiscal Model shows that the southern Member States would gain more from reforms in the northern countries than vice-versa. Moreover, in a speech ([2]) given on 15 June 2012, Mr Rehn, the Vice-President of the European Commission, stated that surplus economies can contribute to rebalancing by removing unnecessary regulatory constraints on domestic demand and, citing the example of Germany, encouraged wage increases in line with productivity which would help domestic demand.

In view of this:

1. How does the Council assess the abovementioned recommendations for surplus countries to implement policies on rebalancing? Does it agree with these recommendations?

2. If so, how does it intend to encourage the adoption of this type of policy?

3. Is it conducting quantitative assessments on how rebalancing policies will benefit the EU as a whole? If so, what policies were indicated by the results of these assessments?

Reply
(8 October 2012)

Pursuant to Regulation (EU) No 1176/2011, of the European Parliament and Council, of 16 November 2011, on the prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances ([3]), the Commission publishes an annual Alert Mechanism Report, based on scoreboard indicators.

On 14 February 2012, the Commission published the Alert Mechanism Report, which identified 12 countries that may have been affected by macroeconomic imbalances.

In the context of the European Semester, the Commission subsequently conducted an in-depth analysis of the countries specified in the report, which gave rise to recommendations to correct the identified imbalances under the preventive arm of the procedure. The imbalances were identified in the areas of external competitiveness, indebtedness (households' indebtedness, private sector's or public debt) and stability of financial sector.

On 10 July 2012, the Council adopted recommendations to each Member State on the economic policies set out in their national reform programmes, opinions on the fiscal policies set out in the member states' stability and convergence programmes and a specific recommendation on the economic policies of the Member States of the eurozone. Among the 27 country-specific recommendations, twelve identified risks related to excessive macroeconomic imbalances and proposed actions to be taken to allow early identification and prevention of excessive imbalances. The implementation of the recommendations will be monitored closely and on an ongoing basis by the Commission services.

As regards quantitative assessments, the Commission carries out economic analyses of Member States and the EU as a whole regarding how rebalancing policies will benefit the EU as a whole. The Council is open to discussing them, whenever they are submitted to it by the Commission.

([1]) http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/sdn/2012/sdn1207.pdf
([2]) http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/12/454&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en.
([3]) OJ L 306, 23.11.2011, p. 25.

The Council has not discussed specifically recommendations made by the International Monetary Fund but it may take its views and conclusions into consideration. It should be also noted that the aforementioned IMF's Staff Discussion Note represents the views of its authors and does not necessarily represent IMF views or IMF policy. IMF's Staff Discussion Notes are published to elicit comments and to further debate.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-006485/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE)
(28 Ιουνίου 2012)

Θέμα: Άμβλυνση των μακροοικονομικών ανισορροπιών στην Ευρώπη

Στις 18.6.2012, το Διεθνές Νομισματικό Ταμείο δημοσίευσε «Σημείωμα για Συζήτηση» ([1]) με θέμα «Ενθάρρυνση της ανάπτυξης στην Ευρώπη τώρα», στο οποίο και αναφέρεται πως τα κράτη-μέλη της νότιας Ευρώπης χρειάζονται περιορισμό των ονομαστικών μισθών, ενώ τα κράτη της βόρειας Ευρώπης θα πρέπει να επιτρέψουν την αύξηση των μισθών σύμφωνα με την παραγωγικότητα και τις εξελίξεις στην αγορά. Παράλληλα τονίζεται πως το μοντέλο ανάλυσης του ΔΝΤ για τη νομισματική και δημοσιονομική πολιτική (GIMF) αποδεικνύει πως τα νότια κράτη θα επωφελούνταν περισσότερο από την υλοποίηση μεταρρυθμίσεων στα βόρεια κράτη-μέλη από ό,τι αντιστρόφως. Επιπρόσθετα, ο Αντιπρόεδρος της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής κ. Ρεν, σε ομιλία ([2]) του στις 15.6.2012, δήλωσε πως οι πλεονασματικές οικονομίες μπορούν να συμβάλουν στην άμβλυνση των ανισορροπιών μέσω της κατάργησης μη αναγκαίων ρυθμιστικών περιορισμών για την εσωτερική ζήτηση και, φέροντας ως παράδειγμα τη Γερμανία, ενθάρρυνε την αύξηση μισθών σύμφωνα με την παραγωγικότητα, η οποία και θα βοηθούσε την εσωτερική ζήτηση.

Δεδομένων των παραπάνω θέσεων ερωτάται το Συμβούλιο:

1. Πώς αξιολογεί τις προαναφερόμενες συστάσεις για την υλοποίηση πολιτικών άμβλυνσης των ανισορροπιών από την πλευρά των πλεονασματικών κρατών; Συμφωνεί;

2. Αν ναι, με ποιο τρόπο σκοπεύει να ενθαρρύνει την ανάληψη τέτοιων πολιτικών;

3. Διαθέτει ποσοτικές εκτιμήσεις για το πως πολιτικές προσανατολισμένες στην άμβλυνση των ανισορροπιών θα ωφελήσουν την ΕΕ συνολικά; Αν ναι ποιες πολιτικές έχουν αναδείξει οι εκτιμήσεις αυτές;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(31 Ιουλίου 2012)

Η Επιτροπή συμφωνεί με τα συμπεράσματα του Διεθνούς Νομισματικού Ταμείου στα οποία αναφέρεται το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου στην ερώτησή της σχετικά με την ανάγκη προσαρμογής της αύξησης των ονομαστικών μισθών στις συγκεκριμένες συνθήκες των κρατών μελών, ιδίως στα επίπεδα παραγωγικότητάς τους, καθώς και με την ανάγκη αποκατάστασης της ανταγωνιστικότητας. Όπως δήλωσε ο αρμόδιος Επίτροπος Οικονομικών και Νομισματικών Υποθέσεων, δήλωση στην οποία γίνεται αναφορά στην ερώτηση, η Επιτροπή συμφωνεί ότι οι χώρες με σημαντικό πλεόνασμα ισοζυγίου τρεχουσών συναλλαγών μπορούν να συμβάλουν στην άμβλυνση των μακροοικονομικών ανισορροπιών καταργώντας τους περιττούς περιορισμούς στην εγχώρια ζήτηση και ενθαρρύνει την παροχή κινήτρων για την τόνωση της εγχώριας ζήτησης μέσω της αύξησης μισθών με βάση την παραγωγικότητα στις εν λόγω χώρες.

Συνεπώς, στις ειδικές ανά χώρα συστάσεις (ΕΑΧΣ) και στις συστάσεις για τα κράτη μέλη της ευρωζώνης που πρότεινε η Επιτροπή στο πλαίσιο του Ευρωπαϊκού Εξαμήνου, στις 30 Μαΐου 2012, οι οποίες εγκρίθηκαν από το Συμβούλιο στις 10 Ιουλίου 2012, αναφέρεται ότι οι χώρες με πλεόνασμα μπορούν να συμβάλουν στην άμβλυνση των μακροοικονομικών ανισορροπιών με την εξάλειψη περιττών ρυθμιστικών και άλλων περιορισμών στην εγχώρια ζήτηση, στις υπηρεσίες και στις επενδυτικές ευκαιρίες. Επιπροσθέτως, σε ορισμένες περιπτώσεις με τις ΕΑΧΣ ενθαρρύνονται μεμονωμένα κράτη μέλη να ενισχύσουν τη σχέση μεταξύ μισθών και επιπέδων παραγωγικότητας.

Η Επιτροπή διεξάγει επί του παρόντος μελέτη σχετικά με τις πλεονασματικές οικονομίες, η οποία θα είναι διαθέσιμη τους προσεχείς μήνες.

([1]) http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/sdn/2012/sdn1207.pdf
([2]) http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/12/454&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006485/12
to the Commission
Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE)
(28 June 2012)

Subject: Macroeconomic rebalancing in Europe

On 18 June 2012 the International Monetary Fund published a 'Discussion Note' ([1]) on 'Fostering Growth in Europe Now', which states that the southern European Member States need nominal wage restraint, while northern European Member States should let wages rise in line with productivity and market developments. It also highlights that the IMF's Global Integrated Monetary and Fiscal Model shows that the southern Member States would gain more from reforms in the northern countries than vice-versa. Moreover, in a speech ([2]) given on 15 June 2012, Mr Rehn, the Vice-President of the European Commission, stated that surplus economies can contribute to rebalancing by removing unnecessary regulatory constraints on domestic demand and, citing the example of Germany, encouraged wage increases in line with productivity which would help domestic demand.

In view of the this:

1. How does the Commission assess the abovementioned recommendations for surplus countries to implement policies on rebalancing? Does it agree with these recommendations?

2. If so, how does it intend to encourage the adoption of this type of policy?

3. Is it conducting quantitative assessments on how rebalancing policies will benefit the EU as a whole? If so, what policies were indicated by the results of these assessments?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(31 July 2012)

The Commission concurs with the International Monetary Fund conclusions mentioned by the Honourable Member in her question on the need to adjust nominal wage growth to the specific conditions of Member States, in particular their productivity levels and the need to restore competitiveness. As stated by the Commissioner in charge for Economic and Monetary affairs and quoted in the question, the Commission agrees that countries with a significant current account surplus can contribute to rebalancing by removing unneccessary constraints on domestic demand and it encourages incentives to the latter via wage increases in line with productivity in these countries.

Accordingly, the country-specific recommendations (CSRs) and the recommendations for the euro-area Member States proposed by the Commisison under the European Semester, on 30 May 2012, and adopted by the Council on 10 July 2012, indicate that surplus countries can contribute to rebalancing by removing unnecessary regulatory and other constraints on domestic demand, services and on investment opportunities. Moreover, in a number of cases the CSRs encouraged individual Member States to strenghten the link between wages and productivity levels.

The Commission is currently undertaking a study regarding surplus economies which will become available in the following months.

([1]) http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/sdn/2012/sdn1207.pdf
([2]) http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/12/454&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006486/12
to the Commission
James Nicholson (ECR)
(28 June 2012)

Subject: Nature of scientific evidence used in drafting Council Directive 2007/43/EC on minimum rules for the protection of chickens kept for meat production

Pursuant to the answer to Question E-002254/2012, can the Commission detail the exact nature of the scientific trials and evidence relied on as indication for the inclusion of the specific level of lighting as contained within Annex A of Council Directive 2007/43/EC? In particular, can it supply details regarding the following: breed, age-range, diet and numbers of chickens used, duration of the trials, and management system employed in them?

Answer given by Mr Dalli on behalf of the Commission
(21 August 2012)

As mentioned in its previous reply to the Written Question E-002254/2012, the requirements regarding light of Directive 2007/43/EC on the protection of chickens kept for meat production ([1]) were based on the conclusions of the report of the Scientific Committee on Animal Health and Animal Welfare on the Welfare of Chickens Kept for Meat Production adopted in March 2000 ([2]).

The experts of the Committee analysed scientific articles as well as publications from the industry available at that time. They took into account references covering breeds such as Ross and Cobb broilers, different age ranges (0-3 days, 3-5 days, 5-days-end of production, 3-14 days, 3-21 days, whole production cycle), different management systems (conventional broilers, Freedom Food Standards), and various numbers of chickens (limited numbers in scientific papers, larger numbers in publications from the industry). Regarding diet, the main aspect quoted in the report is the impact of different lighting regimes on feed conversion rates. Further detailed information can be found in the references provided at the end of the report.

Finally additional and recent scientific references on lighting regimes for broilers can be found in the scientific opinions on the influence of genetic parameters on the welfare and the resistance to stress of commercial broilers ([3]) and on the use of animal-based measures to assess welfare of broilers ([4]) published in 2010 and 2012 by the European Food Safety Authority.

([1]) OJ L 182, 12.7.2007, p. 19.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/food/fs/sc/scah/out39_en.pdf
([3]) http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/1666.htm
([4]) http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/doc/2774.pdf

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-006487/12
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente / Alta Representante)
Ana Gomes (S&D)
(28 de junho de 2012)

Assunto: VP/HR — Transparência e participação das organizações da sociedade civil (OSC) no Egito

Após a realização da primeira volta das eleições presidenciais no Egito, espera-se que o diálogo político e económico entre aquele país e a UE venha a intensificar-se, logo que tome posse um governo com características civis, em especial no que se refere às negociações tendentes à celebração de um acordo de comércio livre aprofundado e abrangente. Como tenciona a União certificar-se de que os futuros acordos de comércio e de investimento com o Egito estejam em consonância com as obrigações da UE em matéria de Direitos Humanos e de política de desenvolvimento? Em relação aos acordos comerciais propostos, para quando se espera o anúncio dos resultados das avaliações de impacto (incluindo os estudos de impacto nos domínios do ambiente, da sustentabilidade e dos Direitos Humanos)? Garantirá a UE que as avaliações de impacto sejam transparentes e prevejam a participação das organizações da sociedade civil (OSC) antes, durante e após a assinatura de qualquer acordo comercial? Como tenciona a UE garantir a possibilidade da ocorrência de um debate público informado, inclusivo e transparente sobre as negociações comerciais no Egito?

Dado que o diálogo entre a UE e o Egito será regido pelo princípio da responsabilidade mútua, a transparência e a participação deveriam ser duas das componentes fulcrais deste processo. Por conseguinte, quando irão ser tornados públicos os imprescindíveis documentos políticos relacionados com a implementação da política de «mais por mais», designadamente aqueles que são passíveis de influenciar o financiamento atribuído a países ao abrigo da rubrica orçamental do programa de apoio à parceria, às reformas e ao crescimento inclusivo (Spring)? Como pretende a UE garantir a congruência, a transparência e a equidade processual através da aplicação de critérios transparentes e de padrões de referência atinentes ao respeito dos Direitos Humanos, incluindo quaisquer recomendações específicas para que se verifiquem melhorias, sempre que isso seja necessário? Que efeito produziria uma avaliação negativa feita pelas organizações da sociedade civil (OSC) da situação dos Direitos Humanos e da Democracia no Egito no plano dos acordos de comércio e de investimento? Como tenciona a UE garantir que sejam realizadas consultas com significado e em tempo útil com todas as partes interessadas (incluindo as que é provável que se oponham aos acordos) sobre as futuras atividades do BERD e do BEI?

Resposta dada por Štefan Füle em nome da Comissão
(16 de agosto de 2012)

As futuras Zonas de Comércio Livre Aprofundadas e Abrangentes farão parte integrante dos Acordos de Associação em vigor. As cláusulas destes acordos relativas aos direitos humanos continuarão, por conseguinte, a ser aplicáveis. Será realizada uma avaliação de impacto da sustentabilidade do comércio a fim de analisar a forma como as disposições relativas ao comércio e matérias conexas a negociar/em negociação são suscetíveis de afetar as questões económicas, sociais, ambientais e relativas aos direitos humanos no Egito (e outros países relevantes). Poderiam igualmente ser propostas disposições (relativas ao comércio e matérias conexas) destinadas a maximizar os benefícios das Zonas de Comércio Livre Aprofundadas e Abrangentes e a prevenir ou minimizar potenciais efeitos negativos. Esta avaliação será realizada em estreita consulta com as organizações da sociedade civil locais.

Os princípios da política «Mais por Mais» foram estabelecidos publicamente na comunicação conjunta da Comissão/AR/VP «Uma nova estratégia para uma vizinhança em mutação» ([1]) de maio de 2011 e posteriormente aprofundados em várias declarações e discursos públicos. Estes princípios estão já ser aplicados em decisões relativas às dotações do orçamento Spring. Espera-se que a política «Mais por Mais» seja melhor definida no Regulamento relativo ao novo Instrumento Europeu de Vizinhança (IEV), que se encontra atualmente em debate interinstitucional. Após a adoção do regulamento relativo ao novo IEV, devem ser desenvolvidas disposições mais pormenorizadas para a aplicação da política «Mais por Mais», tomando em consideração a experiência adquirida com o SPRING e o Programa de Integração e de Cooperação implementado no âmbito da Parceria Oriental. Deste modo, haverá uma ligação mais forte entre os relatórios anuais de acompanhamento da PEV no Egito e as decisões relativas às dotações da política «Mais por Mais». Os pareceres da sociedade civil, nomeadamente no que diz respeito às reformas democráticas e sociais, continuarão a ser integralmente tomados em consideração na avaliação dos progressos realizados pelos países parceiros.

([1]) COM(2011)303 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006487/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Ana Gomes (S&D)
(28 June 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Transparency and CSOs' participation in Egypt

Following the first round of the presidential elections in Egypt, it is expected that political and economic dialogue between that country and the EU will intensify once a civilian government is in place, especially on the negotiations for a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement. How will the Union ensure that upcoming trade and investment agreements with Egypt are consistent with human rights obligations and EU development policy? In relation to proposed trade agreements, when can outcomes of impact assessments be expected (including environmental, sustainability and human rights impact assessments)? Will the EU ensure that impact assessments are transparent and provide for the participation of civil society organisations (CSOs) before, during and after any trade agreement? How will it ensure that informed, inclusive and transparent public debate can take place in Egypt on trade negotiations?

Given that the dialogue between the EU and Egypt will be governed by the principle of mutual accountability, transparency and participation should be two key components of this process. When, therefore, will key policy documents related to the implementation of the 'More for More' policy be made public, especially those liable to influence the funding allocated to countries under the SPRING budget line? How will the EU ensure consistency, transparency and procedural fairness by applying transparent criteria and benchmarks concerning human rights compliance, including any specific recommendations for improvements where necessary? When consulting with CSOs, what bearing would a negative assessment on the CSOs' part of the human rights and democracy situation in Egypt have on trade and investment agreements? How will the EU ensure that meaningful and timely consultations are conducted with all relevant stakeholders (including those likely to oppose agreements) on the future activities of the EBRD and the EIB?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(16 August 2012)

The future deep and comprehensive free trade areas (DCFTAs) will be an integral part of existing Association Agreements. The human rights' clauses of these agreements will therefore continue to apply. A Trade Sustainability Impact Assessment will be conducted to analyse how trade and trade-related provisions to be negotiated/under negotiation could affect economic, social, environmental, and human rights issues in Egypt (and other relevant countries). Measures (trade or non-trade) could also be proposed to maximise the benefits of the DCFTAs and to prevent or minimise potential negative impacts. This assessment will be carried out in close consultation with local CSOs.

The principles of the 'More for More' policy were publicly set out in the joint Commission/HRVP Communication 'A new response to a changing neighbourhood' ([1]) issued in May 2011 and have been further elaborated in several public statements and speeches. These principles are already being applied in decisions on the allocation of the SPRING budget. The 'More for More' policy is expected to be further defined in the new European Neighbourhood Instrument Regulation (ENI) currently under interinstitutional discussion. Once the new ENI Regulation is adopted, more detailed arrangements for the application of the 'More for More' policy should be developed taking into account the experience acquired with SPRING and EaPIC. Thus, there will be a stronger linkage between the annual ENP in Egypt Progress Reports and the 'More for More' allocation decisions. The views of Civil Society, in particular as regards democratic and social reforms, will continue to be fully taken into account in the assessment of the progress achieved by the partner countries.

([1]) COM(2011)303 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006488/12
to the Commission
Nicole Sinclaire (NI)
(28 June 2012)

Subject: Off-budget lines

Could the Commission advise me as to what funds from the 2013 budget are to be considered 'off budget'?

Could the Commission also advise as to who will have scrutiny over 'off-budget' funds?

Answer given by Mr Lewandowski on behalf of the Commission
(21 August 2012)

According to Articles 310(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) and 4(1) of the Financial Regulation, the EU budget covers all revenue and expenditure of the European Union.

As a result, all the funds managed by Commission are coming from the EU budget. As the budget is cash based however, and the accounts are accrual based, a number of accounts are held 'off budget', corresponding to cash outflows, but representing transfer of assets rather than expenses. These are entirely regular and legal, and form part of the EU accounts, deemed as reliable for four years by the Court of auditors.

The attached Annex includes some details, primarily based on the 2011 EU annual accounts, on 3 categories of items sometimes colloquially referred to as 'off budget'.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006490/12
to the Commission
James Nicholson (ECR)
(28 June 2012)

Subject: Cross-border cooperation on human trafficking

Directive 2011/36/EU ([1]) encourages cross-border cooperation between law enforcement agencies in the fight against trafficking in human beings. This is undoubtedly a particularly important step towards the eradication of human trafficking across the Member States. This is a particularly pertinent issue in Northern Ireland which has recently become a thoroughfare for traffickers into both England and the Republic of Ireland. Joint investigation teams have been proposed as a means to facilitate this cooperation:

1. How does the Commission propose to fund such teams?

2. On what criteria would such funding be allocated?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(1 August 2012)

The Commission has recently adopted the EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings 2012-2016 ([2]). Following from Directive 2011/36/EU ([3]), the strategy recognises the importance of Joint Investigation Teams (JITs) and encourages Member States to create, where relevant, such teams and involve Europol and Eurojust in all cross-border trafficking cases.

Due to a grant by the Commission, Eurojust has established a JIT Funding Project. Through this project, which is currently ongoing and will last for a total of 36 months, Eurojust supports JITs by, for example, reimbursing their costs related to travel, accommodation, translation and interpretation and by lending equipment. Criteria for allocation of funds are determined by Eurojust ([4]).

The Commission also funds projects related to the establishment of JITs. So for example, a project which is currently funded is on *Requirements for Establishing Joint Investigation Teams* aiming to exchange best practices, develop common training curricula and establish a network for contact points for JITs on trafficking in human beings ([5]). The Commission regularly funds such projects through the General funding Programme on Security and Safeguarding Liberties and the Specific Programme Prevention of and Fight against Crime. The criteria, according to which projects are to be funded, are specific to each call for proposals.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:101:0001:0011:EN:PDF.
([2]) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, COM(2012) 286 final.
([3]) Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, and replacing Council Decision 2002/629/JHA (OJ L 101,1 15.4.2011).
([4]) http://eurojust.europa.eu/doclibrary/Eurojust-framework/jitsfunding/Guide%20-%20How%20to%20apply%20for%20funding/EN_JIT_Funding_Project_Guide_update.pdf
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/entity.action?id=aa68083a-c918-417b-8ab6-08f9eefbbf36.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006491/12
to the Commission
James Nicholson (ECR)
(28 June 2012)

Subject: Commission report on minor use pesticides

The Commission report on minor use pesticides has been long promised. Can the Commission provide an exact date when Parliament might expect to receive this report?

Answer given by Mr Dalli on behalf of the Commission
(26 July 2012)

The Commission report on the establishment of a European fund for minor uses as requested in Article 51(9) of Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 [1] concerning the placing on the market of plant protection products is under preparation. It is now foreseen to submit the report to the European Parliament and to the Council by the end of 2012.

[1] OJ L 309, 24.11.2009.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006492/12
alla Commissione
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(28 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Possibile violazione delle norme a tutela della salute dei lavoratori della Pubblica Amministrazione e disparità di trattamento tra dipendenti pubblici e privati

L'articolo 71 del decreto-legge 25 giugno 2008, n. 112 (Disposizioni urgenti per lo sviluppo economico, la semplificazione, la competitività, la stabilizzazione della finanza pubblica e la perequazione tributaria), convertito con la legge n. 133 del 6 agosto 2008, prevede che per i periodi di assenza per malattia ai dipendenti di alcune pubbliche amministrazioni italiane nei primi dieci giorni di assenza è corrisposto il trattamento economico fondamentale con esclusione di ogni indennità o emolumento, comunque denominati, aventi carattere fisso e continuativo, nonché di ogni altro trattamento accessorio. Resta fermo il trattamento più favorevole eventualmente previsto dai contratti collettivi o dalle specifiche normative di settore per le assenze per malattia dovute ad infortunio sul lavoro o a causa di servizio, oppure a ricovero ospedaliero, nonché per le assenze relative a patologie gravi che richiedano terapie salvavita. Tale principio sarebbe stato inserito per un maggiore risparmio per le Amministrazioni dello Stato e per un miglioramento dei saldi di bilancio. Tuttavia, le disposizioni contenute nella presente legge determinerebbero un'illegittima disparità di trattamento nel rapporto di lavoro tra dipendenti del settore pubblico e dipendenti del settore privato. Infatti, nel settore privato italiano, si giunge al massimo, in alcuni contratti collettivi, alla previsione dell'omesso pagamento dei primi tre giorni di malattia, subentrando dal quarto giorno l'Istituto nazionale per la previdenza sociale (INPS); inoltre, nessun contratto priva il lavoratore della retribuzione o di una parte sostanziale di essa oltre il terzo giorno.

Tutto ciò premesso, si interroga la Commissione per sapere:

1. se tale comportamento non sia contrario agli artt. 6, lett. a; 9; 153; 156; 157 e 168 del TFUE in materia di politica sociale e di sanità pubblica;

2. se non siano state violate le disposizioni delle direttive 89/654/CEE; 91/383/CEE; 93/104/CE; 2003/88/CE e dei Regolamenti CE 883/2004 e 987/2009 in materia di tutela della salute dei lavoratori durante il lavoro;

3. se non siano state violate le disposizioni delle direttive 2006/54/CE; 1999/70/CE; 2000/78/CE; 2010/41/CE in materia di parità di trattamento dei lavoratori;

4. un quadro generale della situazione.

Risposta di László Andor a nome della Commissione
(28 agosto 2012)

La normativa nazionale descritta dall'onorevole parlamentare riguarda il trattamento economico per i periodi di malattia dei dipendenti pubblici italiani. Nessuna delle leggi sul lavoro o delle direttive in fatto di salute e sicurezza citate dall'onorevole parlamentare riguarda però il trattamento di malattia, che è di competenza degli Stati membri. Tali disposizioni inoltre non contemplano il caso di condizioni lavorative differenti tra dipendenti del settore pubblico e dipendenti del settore privato.

Le normative citate si riferiscono al coordinamento dei sistemi di sicurezza sociale per i lavoratori che si spostano tra gli Stati membri dell'UE. Esse quindi non riguardano in alcun modo il trattamento di malattia. Gli articoli del Trattato citati dall'onorevole parlamentare riguardano peraltro politiche e iniziative dell'Unione di portata generale e di conseguenza non sono applicabili ai provvedimenti nazionali degli Stati membri.

La legislazione europea contro le discriminazioni contempla unicamente cause specifiche di discriminazione. In particolare la direttiva 2006/54/CE ([1]) stabilisce un quadro normativo generale per l'attuazione del principio delle pari opportunità e della parità di trattamento fra i generi in rapporto a occupazione e impiego. La direttiva 2000/78/CE ([2]) vieta le discriminazioni fondate sulla religione o le convinzioni personali, la disabilità, l'età o l'orientamento sessuale in fatto di occupazione e condizioni di lavoro. La direttiva 2000/43/CE ([3]) infine vieta le discriminazioni fondate sulla razza o l'origine etnica.

La legislazione europea contro le discriminazioni non contempla la discriminazione tra diversi settori di occupazione o diverse mansioni lavorative. Ne consegue che qualsiasi domanda relativa alla legittimità di un trattamento differenziato tra lavoratori del settore pubblico e del settore privato deve ricevere risposta dalla normativa nazionale.

([1]) Direttiva 2006/54/CE del 5 luglio 2006 riguardante l'attuazione del principio delle pari opportunità e della parità di trattamento fra uomini e donne in materia di occupazione e impiego (rifusione) (GU L 204 del 26 luglio 2006, pag. 23).

([2]) Direttiva 2000/78/CE del Consiglio del 27 novembre 2000 che stabilisce un quadro generale per la parità di trattamento in materia di occupazione e di condizioni di lavoro (GU L 303 del 2.12.2000, pag. 16).

([3]) Direttiva 2000/43/CE del Consiglio del 29 giugno 2000 che attua il principio della parità di trattamento tra le persone indipendentemente dalla razza e dall'origine etnica (GU L 180 del 19 luglio 2000, pag. 22).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006492/12
to the Commission
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(28 June 2012)

Subject: Possible breach of rules on health and safety at work by government departments and disparity of treatment between public and private employees

Under Article 71 of Decree-Law No 112 of 25 June 2008 (Urgent measures to promote economic development, simplification, and competitiveness, the stabilisation of public finances and tax equalisation), as converted into Law No 133 of 6 August 2008, during periods of absence due to illness the employees of certain Italian Government departments are paid the basic salary for the first 10 days of absence, exclusive of any fixed and ongoing allowances of whatever kind and of any other ancillary payments. This is without prejudice to any more favourable treatment to which they may be entitled under collective agreements or sector-specific rules on absences resulting from accidents at work or work-related illnesses or hospitalisation, or on absences due to serious illnesses that require life-saving treatment. This provision was apparently included in order to save the government money and improve the state of public finances. However, the provisions of this law appear to result in an unlawful disparity in treatment between employees in the public sector and those in the private sector. In the Italian private sector, under the least favourable collective agreements, pay is stopped for the first three days of absence, with the *Istituto Nazionale per la Previdenza Sociale* (the national welfare body for the private sector) taking over from the fourth day; furthermore, under no collective agreement are workers deprived of their pay, or a substantial portion of it, beyond the third day.

1. Is this practice not contrary to the social policy and public health provisions contained in Articles 6(a), 9, 153, 156, 157 and 168 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)?

2. Is it not in breach of the provisions of Directives 89/654/EEC, 91/383/EEC, 93/104/EC and 2003/88/EC, as well as Regulations (EC) No 883/2004 and (EC) No 987/2009, on safety and health at work?

3. Is it not in breach of the provisions of Directives 2006/54/EC, 1999/70/EC, 2000/78/EC and 2010/41/EU on equal treatment in employment?

4. Can the Commission give a general summary of the situation?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(28 August 2012)

The national measures described by the Honourable Member relate to rates of sick pay within the Italian public service. However, none of the labour law or health and safety directives referred to by the Honourable Member relate to sick pay, which is a competence of the Member States. Furthermore, this legislation does not address any differences in working conditions between workers in the public sector and workers in the private sector.

The regulations mentioned relate to the coordination of social security systems for workers moving between the EU Member States. They therefore, bear no relevance to sick pay. Moreover, the Treaty articles mentioned by the Honourable Member generally relate to EU policies and actions and, as such, are not applicable to national measures of the Member States.

EU anti-discrimination legislation only covers specific grounds of discrimination. In particular, Directive 2006/54/EC ([1]) lays down a general framework on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation. Directive 2000/78/EC ([2]) prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion or belief, disability, age, or sexual orientation in employment and occupation. Finally, Directive 2000/43/EC ([3]) prohibits discrimination on grounds of race or ethnic origin.

([1]) Directive 2006/54/EC 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 of 26 July 2006, p. 23).
([2]) Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation, OJ L 303, 2.12.2000, p. 16.
([3]) Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin (OJ L 180, 19.7.2000, p. 22).

EU anti-discrimination legislation does not cover discrimination between different sectors of employment or different working positions. Therefore, any question regarding the legitimacy of a differential treatment between workers of the public sector and workers of the private sector has to be solved under national law.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006496/12
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Pino Arlacchi (S&D)
(28 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Indagini EULEX sulla gestione delle risorse finanziarie da parte dell'UNMIK

Tra il 1999 e il 2008 l'UE ha versato alla missione delle Nazioni Unite in Kosovo (UNMIK) aiuti record — più di due miliardi di euro — per la ripresa postbellica e l'opera di costruzione dello Stato. La mancanza di risultati tangibili ha portato all'apertura di un'indagine condotta da una task force composta dall'Ufficio dei servizi di controllo interno dell'ONU, dall'Unità investigazioni finanziarie (insieme a funzionari della Guardia di Finanza) e dall'Ufficio europeo per la lotta antifrode (OLAF).

La task force ha scoperto che la vaga architettura giuridica istituita in Kosovo dall'UE e dall'UNMIK si era tradotta in una mancanza di trasparenza quanto al modo in cui erano spesi i fondi dei donatori. In effetti, tra il 2003 e il 2008 la stessa task force ha coordinato 50 inchieste sulla gestione dei flussi di denaro da parte dell'UNMIK, delle quali la maggior parte si è conclusa con un nulla di fatto. La task force ha infine individuato 11 casi con rilevanza penale accertata per una somma di oltre 60 milioni di EUR, che sono stati presentati al capo dell'UNMIK perché fossero poi deferiti al relativo dipartimento di giustizia.

Tuttavia, sulla scia della dichiarazione di indipendenza del Kosovo del 2008, il dipartimento di giustizia dell'UNMIK è stato molto rapidamente chiuso e tutti i casi sensibili riguardanti abusi e malversazioni commessi da personale internazionale e locale delle Nazioni Unite non sono arrivati in giudizio. Secondo gli accordi tra l'ONU e l'UE relativi al passaggio da UNMIK a EULEX, gli 11 casi sono stati trasferiti da UNMIK alla magistratura locale in Kosovo ma, stando a fonti locali, EULEX non ha mai dichiarato ufficialmente se abbia o meno richiesto i fascicoli ai giudici locali o se siano in corso le indagini che UNMIK aveva lasciato dietro di sé.

1. È la Commissione a conoscenza di questi 11 fascicoli?

2. Sa la Commissione se EULEX sta svolgendo le indagini in questione?

3. Potrebbe la Commissione sollecitare l'OLAF a pubblicare il contenuto degli 11 fascicoli? La loro divulgazione è nel pubblico interesse, dato che i contribuenti hanno il diritto di sapere come viene speso il denaro dell'UE.

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

1. Come già comunicato dal Commissario Rehn alla commissione CONT nel dicembre 2008, la Commissione sa che 11 dei 50 fascicoli trattati dalla task force investigativa dell'UNMIK sono stati oggetto di procedimenti giudiziari e trasmessi al rappresentante speciale del segretario generale, capo della missione ad interim delle Nazioni Unite per il Kosovo (UNMIK), perché fossero deferiti alla magistratura del Kosovo.

2. Nel luglio 2009 EULEX ha confermato alla Commissione che tutti i casi chiusi erano stati archiviati dalle autorità locali e che quando EULEX è subentrata all'UNMIK in Kosovo la task force non si stava occupando di nessun caso. In occasione di una successiva verifica, i procuratori di EULEX hanno comunicato alla sede centrale presso il SEAE di essersi occupati di 3 casi penali sugli 11 fascicoli citati nell'interrogazione. 2 di questi casi sono stati archiviati per mancanza di prove, mentre il terzo è ancora all'esame. Poiché gli altri 8 fascicoli sono stati chiusi dall'UNMIK, EULEX non può formulare altre osservazioni al riguardo.

3. L'OLAF ha svolto indagini in Kosovo dal 2003 al 2008 attraverso la task force investigativa (ITF) ([1]), che ha condotto inchieste amministrative conformemente alle procedure stabilite negli orientamenti uniformi per le indagini (Uniform Guidelines for Investigation) ed era tenuta a garantire la massima riservatezza delle proprie conclusioni (punto 6 della decisione esecutiva). L'ITF ha comunicato le proprie conclusioni e raccomandazioni al rappresentante speciale del segretario generale, che è l'unica autorità abilitata a divulgare i documenti riguardanti le inchieste amministrative dell'ITF in Kosovo. La Commissione invita pertanto l'onorevole parlamentare a rivolgersi al rappresentante speciale del segretario generale.

([1]) L'ITF è stata istituita dalla decisione esecutiva del 21 ottobre 2003 della missione ad interim delle Nazioni Unite per il Kosovo (UNMIK).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006496/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Pino Arlacchi (S&D)
(28 June 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — EULEX investigations into UNMIK money management

Between 1999 and 2008, the EU injected a record amount of aid — more than two billion euros — into the post-war recovery and state-building operation led by the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). The lack of visible results led to the establishment of an investigation task force by the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services, the Financial Investigation Unit (comprising Italian *Guardia di Finanza* officials) and the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF).

The task force found out that the vague legal architecture set up in Kosovo by the EU and UNMIK resulted in a lack of accountability as to how donor money was spent. In fact, between 2003 and 2008, the same task force coordinated 50 investigations into UNMIK-managed money flows, most of which came up with nothing. Eventually, the task force shortlisted 11 cases containing evidence of criminal conduct and involving over EUR 60 million. All 11 cases were submitted to the head of UNMIK for further referral to its Department of Justice.

However, in the wake of Kosovo's declaration of independence in 2008, UNMIK's Department of Justice closed in a rush, and all sensitive cases involving alleged abuses and misappropriations by international and local UN staff did not come to trial. Under the UN-EU agreements governing the handover from UNMIK to EULEX, the 11 files were transferred from UNMIK to local judges in Kosovo, but according to local sources, EULEX has never officially stated whether or not it has asked the local judges for these files and whether the investigations that UNMIK left behind are being carried out.

1. Is the Commission aware of the existence of these 11 files?

2. Does the Commission know if EULEX is carrying out these investigations?

3. Could the Commission urge OLAF to publish the content of the 11 files? It is clearly in the public interest to disclose them, as taxpayers have a right to know how EU money has been spent.

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

1. As Commissioner Rehn already informed the CONT Committee in December 2008, the Commission is aware that of the 50 files treated by UNMIK's Investigation Task Force, 11 were the subject of legal prosecution and were referred to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), Head of the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) for forwarding to the legal authorities in Kosovo.

2. In July 2009, EULEX confirmed to the Commission that all closed cases had been archived with the local authorities and that there were no active ITF cases the moment EULEX took over from UNMIK in Kosovo. At a follow-up check, subsequent to this current inquiry, EULEX' prosecutors informed their Headquarters in EEAS, that out of the alleged 11 files referred to in the question, they had handled 3 criminal cases of such a nature. Out of those 3 criminal cases investigated by EULEX prosecutors, 2 criminal cases have been terminated due to the lack of evidence, while 1 case is still under review. The other 8 files were terminated by UNMIK, hence EULEX is not in a position to comment further on those 8 files.

3. OLAF conducted investigations in Kosovo from 2003 to 2008 as a part of the Investigation Task Force (ITF) ([1]) which conducted administrative investigations in conformity with the procedures established by the Uniform Guidelines for Investigation and had a duty to treat its findings with full confidentiality (Point 6 of the Executive decision). The ITF reported its findings and made recommendations to the SRSG which is the only Authority in the position to disclose the documents related to ITF administrative investigations in Kosovo. The Commission would therefore invite the Honourable Member to contact the SRSG.

([1]) The ITF was established by the Executive decision of 21 October 2003 of United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK).

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006500/12
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Fiorello Provera (EFD) e Charles Tannock (ECR)
(28 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Sostegno dei Fratelli musulmani a favore della mutilazione genitale femminile

Il 24 maggio 2012 l'organizzazione *Open Democracy* ha segnalato che i Fratelli musulmani d'Egitto hanno offerto l'esecuzione di circoncisioni femminili in alcuni villaggi, dietro pagamento di un corrispettivo simbolico, nel quadro dei loro programmi di assistenza alla comunità. Ad esempio, nel villaggio egiziano di Abou Aziz, nella regione di Minya, alcuni residenti sostengono che i Fratelli musulmani abbiano allestito cliniche sanitarie mobili atte a eseguire l'intervento. Il governatore di Minya ha avvertito che, secondo la legge sui diritti dei minori, la mutilazione genitale femminile è reato. Il partito della Libertà e della giustizia dei Fratelli musulmani nega di aver offerto il servizio ad Abou Aziz. Tuttavia l'autore della relazione di *Open Democracy* ha trovato ivi affisso un volantino del partito della Libertà e della giustizia ove erano elencati i servizi medici specialistici disponibili. In calce all'elenco vi era la seguente frase: «Si eseguono circoncisioni maschili e femminili per 30 LE (lira sterlina egiziana) a persona».

In Egitto era stata precedentemente condotta una campagna a livello nazionale finalizzata a dimostrare che questa usanza non è imposta dalla religione. I Fratelli musulmani hanno però sviluppato una strategia volta a minare gli sforzi tesi a debellare questa pratica. Innanzitutto, numerosi membri dell'organizzazione sostengono che la circoncisione femminile serva a compiacere Dio, e che secondo la Sunna (pratica di vita del Profeta Mohammed) tale pratica debba comportare il «taglio, benché superficiale». In secondo luogo, i Fratelli musulmani cercano di presentare la circoncisione femminile come un intervento medico che può essere eseguito in anestesia, sebbene non sia menzionato in nessun testo medico. La terza strategia consiste nel propugnare la depenalizzazione di tale pratica, con il pretesto che dovrebbe trattarsi di una scelta personale del tutore della ragazza interessata. In parlamento i Fratelli musulmani hanno obiettato alla penalizzazione di tale pratica nel quadro della legge sui minori, approvata nel 2008, sostenendo che secondo la Sharia è accettabile circoncidere la propria figlia.

La pratica delle circoncisione femminile è giustificata in alcuni paesi africani e in parte del mondo musulmano, poiché si crede che protegga la castità delle ragazze impedendo loro di commettere atti peccaminosi. Attualmente sia l'UE che l'UNICEF sono impegnate in uno sforzo congiunto per debellare il problema in paesi quali l'Egitto, l'Eritrea, l'Etiopia, il Senegal, il Sudan e l'India. L'approccio utilizzato si propone di modificare le norme sociali e gli atteggiamenti a livello della popolazione locale.

1. È a conoscenza il Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante dell'esistenza di unità mediche mobili allestite dai Fratelli musulmani in villaggi egiziani come Abou Aziz, che si offrono di eseguire circoncisioni femminili?

2. Come prevede di affrontare la questione della mutilazione genitale femminile in Egitto, posto che i Fratelli musulmani si sono dimostrati favorevoli a questa pratica?

3. Quali iniziative intende adottare al fine di sensibilizzare il Presidente egiziano neoeletto, Mohammed Morsi, alle conseguenze della mutilazione genitale femminile?

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

La situazione precaria delle donne in Egitto desta serie preoccupazioni e deve essere affrontata con prontezza, adottando e attuando misure giuridiche adeguate, necessarie per lottare con efficacia contro la violenza e la discriminazione nei confronti delle donne e per garantire la parità di genere. Particolare attenzione va dedicata all'obiettivo di eliminare la mutilazione femminile, poiché tale pratica viola sia i diritti umani fondamentali che le convenzioni internazionali. L'UE sostiene la lotta delle autorità egiziane (Consiglio nazionale per la popolazione) contro le pratiche di mutilazione genitale femminile, concedendo una sovvenzione di 3 milioni di euro attraverso l'UNDP.

Promuovere la parità tra uomini e donne rappresenta da tempo una priorità nelle attività condotte in Egitto dall'UE, che intende favorire l'uguaglianza di genere nel paese sostenendo l'impegno delle autorità egiziane nella promozione dei diritti delle donne, integrando la questione di genere nel dialogo politico con le autorità egiziane e appoggiando in modo attivo le iniziative della società civile in tal senso. Nonostante l'evoluzione della situazione nel paese e il recente scioglimento della camera bassa del parlamento, il SEAE seguirà da vicino gli sviluppi di questa questione fondamentale tramite la delegazione dell'UE. L'Unione europea continuerà a esprimere le proprie preoccupazioni in merito ai diritti delle donne nel paese, ivi compresa la pratica della mutilazione genitale femminile, ai più alti livelli.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006500/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Fiorello Provera (EFD) and Charles Tannock (ECR)
(28 June 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Muslim Brotherhood support for female genital mutilation

On May 24 2012, the organisation Open Democracy reported that Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood has offered to perform female circumcisions in villages for a nominal fee, as part of its community outreach schemes. For example, in the Egyptian village of Abou Aziz in the region of al-Minya, some residents allege that the Muslim Brotherhood operates mobile health clinics which carry out the procedure. The governor of Minya has warned that the Child Rights Law criminalises female genital mutilation (FGM). The Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party denies that it offered the service in Abou Aziz. However, the writer of the Open Democracy report discovered a flyer from the Freedom and Justice Party posted in Abou Aziz which listed its medical specialities. At the bottom of the list, it read: 'We receive cases for circumcision for males and females for LE30 [Egyptian Pounds] a case'.

A nationwide campaign had previously been mounted in Egypt to show that the custom is not religiously prescribed. However, the Muslim Brotherhood has developed a strategy to undermine efforts to stamp out the practice. First of all, many of its members argue that female circumcision is pleasing in the eyes of God, and according to the Sunnah, or words and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad, it stipulates that FGM should involve 'cutting, but only lightly'. Secondly, the Muslim Brotherhood is working to present FGM as a medical procedure, which can be done under anaesthesia. Yet FGM is not mentioned in any medical textbooks. The third strategy is to push for the decriminalisation of the practice, under the pretext that it should be left as a personal choice for the guardian of the girl concerned. In the parliament, the Muslim Brotherhood had objected to the criminalisation of the practice under the Child Law passed in 2008. It argued that, under the Shari'a, it is acceptable to circumcise one's daughter.

The practice of female circumcision is justified in countries in Africa, and parts of the Muslim word, as it is believed to protect a girl's chastity and it will prevent a girl from committing sinful acts. At present, both the EU and Unicef are involved in a joint effort to tackle the problem of FGM in countries such as Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Senegal, Sudan and India. The approach is aimed at changing social norms and attitudes at grass-roots level.

1. Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware of Muslim Brotherhood mobile medical units operating in Egyptian villages such as Abou Aziz, which offer to perform female circumcisions?

2. How does the VP/HR expect to tackle the issue of female genital mutilation in Egypt, given that the Muslim Brotherhood has shown its support for the practice?

3. What steps is the VP/HR prepared to take to raise concerns over the consequences of female genital mutilation with Egypt's newly elected President, Mohammed Morsi?

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

The precarious situation of women in Egypt is worrying and needs to be addressed swiflty with the adoption and implementation of appropriate legal measures which are required to fight efficiently violence and discrimination against women and to ensure gender equality. The eradication of the practice of female genital mutilation deserves particular attention being contrary to fundamental human rights and international conventions. The EU is providing a EUR 3 million grant — through UNDP- to support the Egyptian Authorities efforts (National Council for Population) in combating female genital mutilation practices.

Promoting gender equality has been a longstanding priority of the EU's action in Egypt. The EU seeks to promote gender equality in Egypt by supporting Egyptian authorities' efforts to promote women's rights, by mainstreaming gender equality in its political dialogue with the Egyptian authorities and by proactively supporting civil society initiatives that promote women's rights. Despite the fluid situation in the country and the recent dissolution of the lower house of the parliament the EEAS will follow this important issue closely through the EU Delegation. The EU will continue to raise its concerns on women's rights in the country, including on the FGM practice, at the highest possible level.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-006501/12
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(28 ta' Ġunju 2012)

Suġġett: Robotics

L-industrija robotika hija settur li qed igawdi suċċess u l-użu tar-robots mistenna li jikber b'mod sinifikattiv fis-snin li ġejjin. L-Unjoni Ewropea rrikonoxxiet il-potenzjal tar-robotika fil-futur u b'konsegwenza tappoġġja aktar minn 100 proġett fil-qasam tar-robotika u s-sistemi konjittivi, u tat 400 miljun Euro ta' finanzjament bejn l-2007 u l-2011. B'danakollu, l-użu li kulma jmur qed jikber tar-robotika jista' wkoll jwassal għal kwestjonijiet etiċi mingħajr preċedent.

B'liema mod beħsiebha l-Kummissjoni tindirizza t-tħassib li jista' jkun hemm ta' natura etika f'dak li għandu x'jaqsam mal-użu tar-robotika?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sinjura Kroes f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(6 ta' Awwissu 2012)

Il-Kummissjoni hija konxja dwar kwistjonijiet etiċi, legali u tas-soċjetà relatati mar-robotika. Il-pjan biex jiġu indirizzati kwistjonijiet etiċi huwa kif ġej:

Proġetti ta' riċerka ffinanzjati mill-UE jeħtieġu jindirizzaw kwistjonijiet etiċi b'mod konvinċenti meta, pereżempju, dawn ikunu jirrikjedu l-ġbir ta' dejta personali. Il-Kummissjoni tagħmel enfasi fuq kwistjonijiet etiċi, biex jiġi żgurat li l-proġetti jagħtuhom l-attenzjoni dovuta.

Il-Kummissjoni tinvesti fir-riċerka biex tindirizza kwistjonijiet etiċi u legali ulterjuri. Pereżempju, il-proġett Robolaw iffinanzjat taħt is-Seba' Programm Kwadru għar-Riċerka, l-Iżvilupp Teknoloġiku u l-Attivitajiet ta' Dimostrazzjoni (www.robolaw.eu) jinvestiga l-implikazzjonijiet legali tar-robotika u l-pjanijiet ta' rapportar dwar dawn lejn tmiem il-proġett. Nixtiequ niġbdu l-attenzjoni tal-Onorevoli Membru li dan il-qasam għadu wieħed emerġenti u jonqsu s-soluzzjonijiet fattibbli.

Il-Kummissjoni ser tidħol fi djalogu strutturat mas-soċjetà ċivili u l-partijiet interessati l-oħrajn sabiex tiddiskuti kwistjonijiet etiċi u legali tar-robotika u ser tippjana sessjonijiet ta' ħidma mal-istituzzjonijiet bħall-Konfederazzjoni Ewropea tat-Trade Unions u l-Organizzazzjoni Ewropea tal-Konsumaturi, il-BEUC.

L-istħarriġ riċenti tal-Eurobarometer jiżvela wkoll li dawk iċ-ċittadini tal-UE li għandhom esperjenza personali fl-użu tar-robots wisq probabbli jkollhom opinjoni pożittiva dwarhom (88 %). Din hija r-raġuni għaliex il-Kummissjoni tappoġġa avvenimenti bħall-ġimgħa Ewropea dwar ir-Robotika u tikkomunika dwar kwistjonijiet relatati mar-robotika sabiex tkompli żżid l-għarfien pubblika dwar ir-riċerka researchrobotic iffinanzjata mill-UE. Il-komunità Ewropea tar-robotika għandha l-intenzjoni li tindirizza kwistjonijiet etiċi, legali u tas-soċjetà dwar ir-robotika u tinkludi l-partijiet interessati tas-soċjetà ċivili fil-prijoritajiet strateġiċi tar-riċerka tagħha li qed tippjana li twettaq bħala Shubija Pubblika-Privata possibbli fir-Robotika. Il-Kummissjoni qed timmonitorja l-iżvilupp ta' dawn il-prijoritajiet.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006501/12
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(28 June 2012)

Subject: Robotics

The robotics industry is a thriving sector of the economy, and the use of robots is expected to increase significantly in the upcoming years. The European Union has recognised the potential of robotics in the future and is consequently supporting more than 100 projects in the areas of robotics and cognitive systems, providing EUR 400 million in funding between 2007 and 2011. However, the increasing use of robotics may also raise unprecedented ethical issues.

How does the Commission intend to address any ethical concerns that may arise in relation to the use of robotics?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(6 August 2012)

The Commission is aware of ethical, legal and societal issues related to robotics. The plan to address ethical issues is as follows:

EU-funded research projects need to address ethical issues in a convincing manner when, for example, they require collection of personal data. The Commission puts emphasis on ethical issues, ensuring that projects pay attention to them.

The Commission invests into research addressing ethical and legal issues further. For example, the Robolaw project funded under the 7th Framework Programme (www.robolaw.eu) investigates legal implications of robotics and plans reporting on these towards the end of the project. We draw the attention of the Honourable Member that this area is still emerging and lacks workable solutions.

The Commission is entering into a structured dialogue with civil society and other stakeholders to discuss ethical and legal issues of robotics and plans workshops with institutions such as the European Trade Union Confederation and the European Consumers' Organisation, BEUC.

The recent Eurobarometer also reveals that those EU citizens with personal experience of using robots are more likely to have a positive view of them (88%). This is why the Commission supports events such as European Ropotics week and communicates on robotics-related issues to increase public awareness of EU-funded researchrobotic research. The European robotics community intends to address ethical, legal and societal issues of robotics and the inclusion of civil society stakeholders their strategic research priorities which they plan to carry as a possible Public-Private Partnership in Robotics. The Commission monitors the development of these priorities.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-006502/12
lill-Kummissjoni (Viċi President / Rappreżentant Għoli)
David Casa (PPE)
(28 ta' Ġunju 2012)

Suġġett: VP/HR — Armenia

Wara żjara fi Brussell, il-Prim Ministru tal-Armenja Tigran Sargsyan, li reġa' nħatar mill-ġdid dan l-aħħar, stieden lill-Unjoni Ewropea tfassal dikjarazzjoni għal riżoluzzjoni paċifika tat-tilwima dwar l-istatus ta' Nagorno-Karabakh, u dan minħabba fit-tensjonijiet li kulma jmur qed jikbru. Il-Prim Ministru, barra minn hekk, stieden lill-Unjoni Ewropea thedded is-sanzjonijiet fil-każ li tintuża l-forza.

X'inhu l-pożizzjoni tar-Rappreżentant Għoli għar-rigward ta' dawn it-talbiet u x'inhi n-natura tas-sanzjonijiet li kieku jiġu kkontemplati f'dan il-każ partikolari?

Tweġiba mogħtija mir-Rappreżentanta Għolja/il-Viċi President Ashton f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(8 ta' Awwissu 2012)

Ir-RGħ/il-VP hija konxja ta' dawn it-talbiet.

Ir-RGħ/il-VP ripetutament sejħet għar-riżoluzzjoni paċifika tal-kunflitt tan-Nagorno-Karabakh. Fit-8 ta' Ġunju 2012 il-kelliem tar-RGħ/il-VP fi stqarrija esprima t-tħassib tar-RGħ/il-VP dwar l-inċidenti serji li ġew irrappurtati fl-4, il-5 u s-6 ta' Ġunju 2012 u appella liż-żewġ naħat sabiex jirrispettaw strettament il-waqfien mill-ġlied u biex jeżerċitaw il-galbu sew fil-konkret kif ukoll fid-dikjarazzjonijiet pubbliċi, sabiex ma jkunx hemm eskalazzjoni ulterjuri tas-sitwazzjoni. L-istqarrija kompliet tfakkar li t-theddid jew l-użu tal-forza ma jikkontribwix għal riżoluzzjoni tal-kunflitt.

Dawn l-inċidenti huma sinjal ċar tal-importanza li jiġi stabbilit mekkaniżmu funzjonanti tal-investigazzjoni tal-inċidenti kif propost mill-OSCE. Barra minn dan, huma jsaħħu l-ħtieġa li jsir progress fil-proċess ta' negozjazzjoni. Għaldaqstant, ir-RGħ/il-VP appellat lill-Armenja u lill-Ażerbajġan, bħala pajjiżi sħab, biex ikabbru l-isforzi tagħhom biex jaslu għal ftehim fuq il-prinċipji ta' Madrid, bħala bażi għall-paċi, u biex jimplimentaw bis-sħiħ l-impenji li saru mill-Presidenti tagħhom fil-qafas tal-Grupp ta' Minsk tal-OSCE. L-UE tappoġġja bis-sħiħ il-Grupp ta' Minsk tal-OSCE u l-isforzi tal-kopresidenti tiegħu bil-għan li jkun hemm riżoluzzjoni paċifika tal-kunflitt.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006502/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
David Casa (PPE)
(28 June 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Armenia

After a visit to Brussels, Armenia's newly re-appointed Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan called on the European Union to draw up a declaration for a peaceful resolution of the dispute over the status of Nagorno-Karabakh, in view of the increasing tensions. The Prime Minister further called upon the European Union to threaten sanctions in the event of a use of force.

What is the position of the High Representative with regard to these requests and what is the nature of the sanctions that would be envisaged in this particular case?

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

The HR/VP is aware of these requests.

The HR/VP has repeatedly called for the peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. On 8 June 2012, a statement of the HR/VP's spokesperson expressed the HR/VP's concern about the reported serious armed incidents on 4, 5 and 6 June 2012, and called on both sides strictly to respect the ceasefire and to exercise restraint both on the ground and in public statements, in order to prevent a further escalation of the situation. The statement further recalled that the threat or use of force does not contribute to a resolution of the conflict.

These incidents highlight the importance of a functioning incident investigation mechanism as proposed by the OSCE. Moreover, they reinforce the need for progress in the negotiation process. Consequently, the HR/VP has urged Armenia and Azerbaijan, as partner countries, to step up their efforts to reach agreement on the Madrid principles, as a basis for peace, and to fully implement the commitments made by their Presidents in the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group. The EU fully supports the OSCE Minsk Group and the efforts of its co-chairs aimed at a peaceful conflict resolution.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-006503/12
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(28 ta' Ġunju 2012)

Suġġett: Il-Miri għall-Effiċjenza Enerġetika

L-Unjoni Ewropea għandha t-tir li tnaqqas l-użu tagħha tal-enerġija primarja b'20% sal-2020. Jekk il-progress jissokta bir-rata ta' bħalissa, hemm probabilità kbira li din il-mira mhix se tintlaħaq, billi r-rata ta' tnaqqis s'issa hija biss ta' 9%.

Id-Direttiva tal-2011 dwar l-effiċjenza enerġetika, proposta mill-Kummissjoni Ewropea, tidher li hi għodda ewlenija fil-ksib tal-mira mixtieqa. B'danakollu, l-Istati Membri kienu riluttanti li jissottoskrivu għad-dispożizzjonijiet tagħha u għalhekk qed jipperikolaw il-probabilità li l-UE tilħaq il-miri tal-2020.

B'mod differenti minn miri oħrajn tal-2020, il-mira tal-effiċjenza enerġetika ma hijiex legalment vinkolanti. Fid-dawl tar-reżistenza tal-Istati Membri għaliha, il-Kummissjoni tqis li hu possibbli li jitwaqqfu miri vinkolanti fil-futur? Liema miżuri alternattivi beħsiebha tipproponi l-Kummissjoni ħalli tiżgura li l-mira tal-2020 tintlaħaq?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Oettinger f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(1 ta' Awwissu 2012)

L-ammont totali mistenni tal-iffrankar li jirriżulta mit-test finali miftiehem tad-Direttiva dwar l-Effiċjenza Enerġetika ([1]), suġġett għall-approvazzjoni finali tal-koleġiżlaturi, huwa ta' madwar 100 Mtoe (jew 66% tal-proposta oriġinali tal-Kummissjoni). Meta dan in-numru jiżdied ma' politiki kurrenti (li huma stmati li se jiffrankaw bejn 164 u 166 Mtoe) u ma' miżuri tal-White Paper dwar it-Trasport ([2]) (iffrankar stmat ta' madwar 50 Mtoe), fl-2020 l-użu tal-enerġija primarja jkun 17% inqas minn tal-projezzjonijiet għal xenarju fejn kollox jibqa' kif inhu. Għalhekk, ikun għad baqa' diskrepanza ta' 3% sabiex tintlaħaq il-mira ta' 20%.

Waħda mill-azzjonijiet diġà previsti sabiex tingħalaq din id-diskrepanza hija r-reviżjoni ppjanata tal-11-il miżura ta' implimentazzjoni eżistenti dwar l-ekodisinn u t-tikkettar tal-enerġija li mistennija jikkontribwixxu 1% aktar ta' ffrankar tal-enerġija u li ma tqisux fil-valutazzjoni tal-politiki attwali.

Skont id-dispożizzjonijiet ġodda tad-Direttiva dwar l-Effiċjenza Enerġetika, jekk jiġu approvati mill-koleġiżlaturi, l-Istati Membri huma mitluba jistabbilixxu miri nazzjonali mhux vinkolanti għall-effiċjenza enerġetika. Il-Kummissjoni se tevalwa l-progress sat-30 ta'Ġunju 2014 u tista' tipproponi iktar miżuri, jekk ikun hemm bżonn. Dawn jistgħu jinkludu proposta għal miri nazzjonali vinkolanti għall-effiċjenza enerġetika.

([1]) www.europarl.europa.eu/document/activities/cont/201207/20120705ATT48389/20120705ATT48389EN.pdf
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/transport/strategies/2011_white_paper_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006503/12
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(28 June 2012)

Subject: Energy efficiency targets

The European Union aims to reduce its primary energy use by 20% by 2020. If progress continues at the current rate, this target is most probably not going to be met, given that the rate of reduction to date is only 9%.

The energy efficiency directive proposed by the Commission in 2011 is regarded as a major tool for achieving the desired target. However, Member States have been reluctant to sign up to its provisions and are consequently jeopardising the EU's likelihood of reaching the 2020 targets.

Unlike other 2020 targets, the energy efficiency target is not legally binding. In the light of Member States' resistance, does the Commission consider it possible to establish binding targets in the future? What alternative measures does the Commission intend to propose in order to ensure that the 2020 target is met?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(1 August 2012)

The expected total amount of savings resulting from the agreed final text of Energy Efficiency Directive ([1]), subject to the final approval of the co-legislators, is around 100 Mtoe (or 66% of the Commission's original proposal). When this number is added to current policies (which are estimated to deliver savings of 164 to 166 Mtoe) and to measures from the Transport White paper ([2]) (estimated savings of about 50 Mtoe), then in 2020 primary energy use would be 17% less than in the business-as-usual projections. Therefore, there would be a remaining gap of 3% to the 20% target.

One of the already foreseen actions for closing of this gap is the planned review of 11 existing ecodesign and energy labelling implementing measures which is expected to contribute with an additional 1% of energy savings and was not taken into account in the assessment of current policies.

According to the provisions of the new Energy Efficiency Directive, if approved by the co-legislators, Member States are required to set national non-binding energy efficiency targets. The Commission will evaluate progress by 30 June 2014 and could propose further measures, if necessary. This could include a proposal for binding national energy efficiency targets.

([1]) www.europarl.europa.eu/document/activities/cont/201207/20120705ATT48389/20120705ATT48389EN.pdf
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/transport/strategies/2011_white_paper_en.htm

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-006505/12
lill-Kummissjoni (Viċi President / Rappreżentant Għoli)
David Casa (PPE)
(28 ta' Ġunju 2012)

Suġġett: VP/HR — Kunsill Arktiku

Bil-Komunikazzjoni tagħha tal-2008 "L-Unjoni Ewropea u r-reġjun tal-Artiku" (COM(2008)0763), il-Kummissjoni Ewropea ħadet l-ewwel pass lejn l-iżvilupp tal-politika tal-UE dwar kwestjonijiet tal-Arktiku. Fil-kuntest ta' dan l-iżvilupp fil-politika, l-Unjoni Ewropea timmira li tingħata status ta' osservatur fil-Kunsill tal-Arktiku.

Billi l-ewwel talba tal-UE kien riġettata mill-Kunsill tal-Arktiku fl-2009, b'liema mod beħsiebha r-Rappreżentant Għoli żżid il-probabilità li jinkiseb status ta' osservatur fil-futur qrib?

Tweġiba mogħtija mir-Rappreżentanta Għolja/il-Viċi President Ashton f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(8 ta' Awwissu 2012)

Il-Kummissjoni applikat, f'isem l-UE, biex tkun osservatur permanenti fil-Kunsill tal-Artiku fl-1 ta' Diċembru 2008. Il-Ministri tal-Affarijiet Barranin tal-Kunsill tal-Artiku ddeċidew darbtejn (2009 u 2011) biex jipposponu d-deċiżjoni finali tagħhom li jaċċettaw osservaturi ġodda inkluż l-UE, iċ-Ċina, l-Italja, il-Ġappun, Singapur u l-Korea t'Isfel. Peress li ġew adottati kriterji għall-ammissjoni ta' osservaturi f'Mejju 2011, f'Diċembru 2011 tressqet informazzjoni aġġornata mill-Kummissjoni f'ittra ffirmata kemm mir-RGħ/il-VP kif ukoll mill-Kummissarju responsabbli għas-Sajd u għall-Affarijiet Marittimi lill-President tal-Kunsill tal-Artiku, il-Ministru tal-Affarijiet Barranin Svediż Carl Bildt. Il-Kunsill tal-Artiku mistenni jiddeċiedi dwar applikazzjonijiet għall-istatus ta' osservatur fil-laqgħa Ministerjali tiegħu li jmiss f'Kiruna, l-Isvezja, f'Mejju 2011. L-istatus ta' osservatur, kif iddefinit mill-Kunsill tal-Artiku nnifsu, jippermetti lill-UE li tintensifika l-kooperazjoni u tkompli tkun ta' kontribut pożittiv għax-xogħol tal-Kunsill u tar-reġjun tal-Artiku b'mod ġenerali.

Kif ġie riaffermat fil-Komunikazzjoni tal-2012 ([1]), l-UE tqis il-Kunsill tal-Artiku bħala forum importanti għall-kooperazzjoni internazzjonali fir-reġjun. Sa mill-2008, l-UE żiedet sostanzjalment l-involviment tagħha fil-kooperazzjoni tal-Artiku b'mod partikolari bl-impenn tagħha mal-Kunsill tal-Artiku, mal-membri tal-Kunsill tal-Artiku u mal-Parteċipanti Permanenti. Is-servizzi tal-Kummissjoni, is-Servizz Ewropew għall-Azzjoni Esterna (SEAS) u l-aġenziji tal-UE pparteċipaw bħala osservaturi ad hoc fil-laqgħat tal-Kunsill tal-Artiku u involvew ruħhom b'mod attiv fil-laqgħat u l-gruppi ta' ħidma tiegħu. Il-kuntatti u d-djalogu mal-presidenzi konsekuttivi Norveġiża, Daniża u Svediża kienu frekwenti u kostruttivi.

([1]) JOIN (2012)19.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006505/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
David Casa (PPE)
(28 June 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Arctic Council

With its 2008 Communication entitled 'The European Union and the Arctic Region' (COM(2008)0763), the Commission took a first step towards developing an EU policy on Arctic issues. In the context of this policy development, the European Union aims to be granted permanent observer status in the Arctic Council.

Given that the EU's first bid was rejected by the Arctic Council in 2009, how does the Vice-President/High Representative intend to increase the likelihood of obtaining permanent observer status in the near future?

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

The Commission applied, on behalf of the EU, to become a permanent observer to the Arctic Council on 1 December 2008. The Arctic Council Foreign Ministers have decided twice (2009 and 2011) to postpone their final decision on accepting new observers including the EU, China, Italy, Japan, Singapore and South Korea. Since criteria for the admission of observers were adopted in May 2011, updated information was submitted in a letter co-signed by the HR/VP and Commissioner responsible for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs to the Chair of the Arctic Council, Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt in December 2011. The Arctic Council is expected to decide on applications for observer status at its next Ministerial meeting in Kiruna, Sweden in May 2013. Observer status, as defined by the Arctic Council itself, would allow the EU to intensify cooperation and continue to make a positive contribution to the work of the Council and Arctic region in general.

As reaffirmed in the 2012 Communication ([1]), the EU considers the Arctic Council to be an important forum for international cooperation in the region. Since 2008, the EU has substantially increased its involvement in Arctic cooperation, notably through its engagement with the Arctic Council, Arctic Council members and Permanent Participants. The Commission, the European External Action Service and EU agencies have participated as ad hoc observers in Arctic Council meetings and engaged actively in its working groups. Contacts and dialogue with the consecutive Norwegian, Danish and Swedish chairmanships have been frequent and constructive.

([1]) JOIN (2012)19.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-006507/12
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(28 ta' Ġunju 2012)

Suġġett: L-investiment Ċiniż

Bil-kwestjonijiet kollha li ż-Żona tal-Euro għandha bil-munita tagħha u d-dejn sovran, ir-reġjun dar lejn iċ-Ċina bħala soluzzjoni. Filwaqt li ċ-Ċina ma għamlet l-ebda offerti uffiċjali ta' finanzjament, l-Ewropa kienet l-akbar reċevent ta' investiment barrani dirett is-sena l-oħra, li fisser 34% ta' mergers u akwiżizzjonijiet. B'dana kollu, l-industrija Ewropea wriet li hi pjuttost suspettuża dwar l-involviment Ċiniż u tilmenta li qed tħabbat wiċċha ma' konkorrenza inġusta minn kumpaniji barranin fis-suq tal-UE. Min-naħa l-oħra, il-kriżi wasslet li l-industriji Ewropej ikunu anqas kompetittivi, b'detriment għall-isforzi favur it-tkabbir, u l-involviment barrani hu ta' ġid għall-Ewropa.

Dan l-aħħar bosta kumpaniji Ċiniżi li ttantaw mergers jew akwiżizzjonijiet fl-Ewropa sabu ħafna reżistenza. Il-Kummissjoni fasslet Inizjattiva ta' Akkwist Pubbliku Estern f'Marzu li għadda li se tillimita l-aċċess għas-suq tal-akkwist pubbliku għall-barranin, inkluża ċ-Ċina.

Billi l-investiment Ċiniż huwa kritiku għat-tiswija taż-Żona tal-Euro, kif tipproponi l-Kummissjoni li żżomm l-interess barrani fil-futur filwaqt li tippersegwi tali miżuri għall-protezzjoni tal-industrija Ewropea?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur De Gucht f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(8 ta' Awwissu 2012)

It-Trattat dwar l-Unjoni Ewropea jistipula biċ-ċar l-impenn tal-UE għat-trasparenza lejn l-investiment dirett barrani (IDB). Huwa jistabbilixxi l-kompetenza esklussiva tal-UE għal IDB skont il-Politika Kummerċjali Komuni bil-għan li progressivament tabolixxi r-restrizzjonijiet għall-IDB.

Bħala l-akbar sors tad-dinja kif ukoll destinazzjoni tal-IDB, l-UE hija benefiċjarju ewlieni minn sistema ekonomika dinjija miftuħa u hija impenjata li tiżgura li s-swieq tagħha jibqgħu miftuħin għall-IDB. Madankollu, kwalunkwe kumpanija barranija li takkwista kumpanija Ewropea jew sehem fiha jkollha taġixxi skont ir-regoli eżistenti dwar il-kompetizzjoni u t-trasparenza applikabbli fl-UE u l-Istat Membru in kwistjoni.

Il-Komunikazzjoni tal-Kummissjoni dwar il-futur tal-Politika Ewropew tal-Investiment ([1]) identifikat liċ-Ċina bħala sieħeb potenzjali ma' min se tmexxi ftehim ta' investiment waħdieni. Sabiex tivvaluta bis-sħiħ ix-xewqa u l-fattibilità ta' dawn in-negozjati u l-impatt ekonomiku, soċjali, u ambjentali ta' ftehim potenzjali, il-Kummissjoni qed twettaq valutazzjoni tal-impatt li tabilħaqq timmira lejn il-benefiċċji ta' ftehim ambizzjuż u bbilanċjat tal-investiment bejn l-UE u ċ-Ċina għar-relazzjoni ma' investiment bilaterali tagħha. Fl-14-il Summit bejn l-UE u ċ-Ċina li sar fi Frar 2012, il-mexxejja qablu li jimxu lejn in-negozjati ta' ftehim ta' investiment li jkopri l-kwistjonijiet kollha ta' interess għaż-żewġ naħat. Fi żmien debitu, il-Kummissjoni se tressaq rakkomandazzjoni lill-Kunsill għall-ftuħ tan-negozjati.

([1]) COM(2010)343 finali.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006507/12
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(28 June 2012)

Subject: Chinese investment

With the eurozone's ongoing issues with its currency and sovereign debt, the region has looked to China as a solution. While China has made no official offers of funding, Europe was its biggest recipient of foreign direct investment last year, accounting for 34% of mergers and acquisitions. However, European industry has shown itself to be rather suspicious of Chinese involvement and complains that it faces unfair competition from foreign companies in the EU market. On the other hand, the crisis has rendered European industries less competitive, which is detrimental to efforts to boost growth, and foreign involvement is beneficial to Europe.

Recently many Chinese companies attempting mergers or acquisitions in Europe have found themselves encountering resistance. The Commission drafted an external public procurement initiative in March which will limit access to the public procurement market to outsiders, including China.

Given that Chinese investment is critical to economic recovery in the eurozone, how does the Commission propose to maintain foreign interest in the future while pursuing such measures to protect European industry?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(8 August 2012)

The Treaty on the European Union sets out clearly the EU's commitment to openness towards foreign direct investment (FDI). It establishes the EU's exclusive competence for FDI under the Common Commercial Policy with the aim of progressively abolishing restrictions to FDI.

As the world's largest source as well as destination of FDI, the EU is a major beneficiary of an open world economic system and is committed to ensuring that its markets remain open for FDI. Nevertheless, any foreign company that acquires a European company or a stake in it will have to act in accordance with the existing rules on competition and transparency applicable in the EU and the Member State in question.

The Commission Communication on the future European investment policy ([1]) identified China as a potential partner with whom to pursue a stand-alone investment agreement. In order to fully assess the desirability and feasibility of such negotiations and the economic, social, and environmental impact of a potential agreement, the Commission has been conducting an impact assessment which indeed points towards the benefits of an ambitious and balanced EU-China investment agreement for its bilateral investment relationship. At the 14th EU-China Summit in February 2012, leaders agreed to move towards negotiations of an investment agreement covering all issues of interest to either side. The Commission will in due time come forward with a recommendation to the Council for opening negotiations.

([1]) COM(2010)343 final.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-006509/12
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(28 ta' Ġunju 2012)

Suġġett: Ħaddiema bil-ħiliet

Fl-2010, il-Kummissjoni pproponiet "Aġenda għall-ħiliet u Impjiegi ġodda" biex tappoġġja l-istati membri fit-tnaqqis tal-qgħad. L-Ewropa qed issofri rati għoljin bla preċedent ta' qgħad, imma wkoll nuqqas ta' ħaddiema b'ħiliet għoljin, l-aktar fl-oqsma tax-xjenza, it-teknoloġija u l-inġinerija. Din l-ħekk-imsejħa "brain drain" ħalliet lill-Ewropa b'qabża bejn it-talba għal impjiegat b'ħiliet għoljin u l-għadd ta' ħaddiema kkwalifikati. L-istatistika turi li, f'termini ta' immigrazzjoni, il-massa tal-impjegati b'ħiliet tmur lejn l-Istati Uniti, filwaqt li l-impjegati mingħajr ħiliet għandhom tendenza li jmorru fl-UE. Il-programmi appoġġjati mill-Aġenda jiffokalizzaw fuq l-investiment fl-edukazzjoni u l-programmi ta' taħrig, imma ż-żamma ta' individwi b'ħiliet għoljin l-UE wkoll għandha tkun prijorità.

X'se tagħmel il-Kummissjoni ħalli timmiitiga l-livelli ta' ħaddiema b'ħiliet għoljin li qed jitilqu mill-UE?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Andor f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(14 ta' Awwissu 2012)

Fi żmien qasir, il-mobbiltà fl-UE tista' tikkostitwixxi alternattiva mixtieqa u, fl-istess ħin tgħin biex jittaffew skarsezzi f'xogħlijiet speċifiċi u/jew inkonsistenzi fl-UE-27. Il-Kummissjoni qed tipproponi li tittrasforma lill-EURES ([1]) fi strument immexxi mid-domanda biex tappoġġa tqabbil effettiv bejn id-domanda u l-provvista tax-xogħol, filwaqt li tissodisfa l-obbligi ġuridiċi biex tiġi żgurata t-trasparenza tal-postijiet tax-xogħol battala b'iktar għodod onlajn innovattivi u awtoservizzi.

Il-Kummissjoni se tippreżenta proposta leġiżlattiva sal-aħħar tal-2012 biex tappoġġa lill-ħaddiema mobbli, tkompli ttejjeb il-portal "L-Ewropa Tiegħek" ([2]) u teżamina l-possibilitajiet għal miżuri li jneħħu l-ostakli fiskali għall-ħaddiema transkonfinali. L-adozzjoni tad-Direttiva dwar il-Kwalifiki Professjonali se tkompli tiffaċilita r-rikonoxximent tant meħtieġ tal-kwalifiki professjonali.

Il-Komunikazzjoni dwar l-ERA għandha fost l-oħrajn l-għan li jitnaqqas l-esodu ta' mħuh billi jitlesta suq tax-xogħol miftuħ għar-riċerkaturi. Qed jiġu proposti azzjonijiet biex ir-reklutaġġ tar-riċerkaturi jkun miftuħ, trasparenti u msejjes fuq il-mertu , għall-portabilità u l-aċċess transkonfinali għall-għotjiet, u għat-twaqqif ta' programmi dottorali, innovattivi u strutturati.

Il-Kummissjoni qed tirrevedi d-Direttivi tal-Istudenti u tar-Riċerkaturi sabiex jiġi ffaċilitat id-dħul ta' riċerkaturi u studenti minn pajjiżi terzi u b'ħekk jiżdied l-għadd ta' individwi b'ħila għolja fl-UE.

Il-Panorama tal-Ħiliet se tindirizza l-inkonsistenzi bejn il-postijiet battala u l-ħiliet biex issir aħfef biex individwi jsibu impjieg fl-Ewropa.

L-Aġenda tal-Modernizzazzjoni tal-Edukazzjoni Għolja ([3]) għandha l-għan ta' negozji aktar innovattivi u edukazzjoni orjentati internazzjonalment, li jaffettwaw l-"esodu ta' mħuh". Żewġ azzjonijiet speċifiċi inklużi huma l-Istitut Ewropew tal-Innovazzjoni u t-Teknoloġija ([4]) u l-Alleanzi ta' Għarfien ([5]).

([1]) Servizzi Ewropej tal-Impjiegi.
([2]) http://europa.eu/youreurope/index.htm
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/education/higher-education/agenda_en.htm#doc.
([4]) http://eit.europa.eu/.
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/education/higher-education/business_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006509/12
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(28 June 2012)

Subject: Skilled workers

In 2010 the Commission proposed an 'Agenda for New Skills and Jobs' to support Member States in reducing unemployment. Europe is suffering from record rates of unemployment, but also from a shortage of highly skilled workers, particularly in the fields of science, technology and engineering. This 'brain drain' has left Europe with a gap between the demand for highly skilled labour and the numbers of qualified workers. Statistics show that, in terms of immigration, the bulk of skilled labour goes to the US, whereas unskilled labour tends to go to the EU. Programmes supported by the Agenda focus on investment in education and training programmes, but the retention of highly skilled individuals within the EU should also be a priority.

What is the Commission doing to reduce the numbers of highly skilled workers leaving the EU?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(14 August 2012)

In the short term, mobility within the EU could constitute a desirable alternative and, at the same time help alleviate specific labour shortages and/or mismatches in EU-27. The Commission is proposing to transform EURES ([1]) into a demand-driven instrument to support effective matching between labour demand and supply, while fulfilling the legal obligation of ensuring transparency of job vacancies with more innovative online tools and self-services.

The Commission will present a legislative proposal end 2012 to support mobile workers, continue to improve the 'Your Europe' ([2]) portal and examine options for measures removing tax obstacles for cross-border workers. Adoption of the Professional Qualifications Directive would further facilitate the much needed recognition of professional qualifications.

The communication on ERA aims *inter alia* to reduce brain drain by completing an open labour market for researchers. Actions are proposed on the open, transparent and merit-based recruitment of researchers, cross-border access to and portability of grants, and setting up structured innovative doctoral programmes.

The Commission is revising the Students' and Researchers' Directives to facilitate the entry of third country students and researchers thus increasing the number of highly skilled individuals in EU.

The Skills Panorama will address vacancies/skills mismatches to facilitate individuals to find employment in Europe.

The Higher Education Modernisation Agenda ([3]) aims at a more innovative business and internationally oriented education, affecting 'brain drain'. Two specific actions included are the European Institute of Innovation and Technology ([4]) and the Knowledge Alliances ([5]).

([1]) European Employment Services.
([2]) http://europa.eu/youreurope/index.htm
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/education/higher-education/agenda_en.htm#doc.
([4]) http://eit.europa.eu/.
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/education/higher-education/business_en.htm

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-006510/12
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(28 ta' Ġunju 2012)

Suġġett: Eurodac

L-Eurodac twaqqaf fl-2000 (Regolament (KE) Nru 2725/2000) biex joħloq sistema Ewropea komuni u komprensiva għar-reġistrazzjoni tal-marki tas-swaba'. Din id-dejtabejż tintuża għall-monitoraġġ tal-applikanti għall-ażil kif ukoll għall-immigranti illegali interċettati fl-UE. Ir-Regolament (KE) Nru 2725/2000 iħeġġeġ is-sanzjonijiet mill-Istati Membri fil-każ ta' abbuż informazzjonali marbut mad-dejtbejż Eurodac, ħalli jkunu protetti l-privatezza u s-sigurtà tal-individwi. Għall-2012, il-Kummissjoni ddiskutiet il-possibilità li jitwessa' l-aċċess Eurodac għall-awtoritajiet nazzjonali tal-eżekuzzjoni tal-liġi, ħalli jkunu kkombattuti t-terroriżmu u l-kriminalità gravi.

Fl-opinjoni tal-Kummissjoni, dan it-tkabbir fil-kamp tal-aċċess se jwassal li l-protezzjoni tal-informazzjoni Eurodac tkun aktar diffiċli biex tiġi ġestita? X'inhi l-valutazzjoni tal-użu ħażin tad-data s'issa?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sra Malmström f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(16 ta' Awwissu 2012)

Ir-Regolament (KE) Nru 2725/2000 stabbilixxa l-EURODAC bħala strument għall-ażil li jiġbor, jittrażmetti jew jirreġistra l-marki tas-swaba' tal-applikanti għall-ażil u ċ-ċittadini ta' pajjiżi terzi maqbuda jaqsmu fruntiera esterna b'mod irregolari jew b'soġġorn illegali, bl-iskop li jiġi applikat ir-Regolament (KE) 343/2003.

Fil-Memorandum ta' Spjegazzjoni tal-proposta Riformulata tal-EURODAC 2012 ([1]) il-Kummissjoni ddikjarat li l-użu tad-dejta tal-EURODAC għal raġunijiet ta' infurzar tal-liġi jimplika bidla fl-iskop tad-dejta pproċessata u tikkostitwixxi "interferenza" għad-dritt tal-protezzjoni tad-dejta ([2]). Madankollu, dawn il-bidliet mhux se jagħmlu l-protezzjoni tal-informazzjoni li hemm fil-bażi ta' dejta tal-EURODAC aktar diffiċli biex tiġi ġestita peress li hemm salvagwardji ċari li jiddelinjaw min ikun jista' jaċċedi d-dejta tal-EURODAC u f'liema ċirkostanzi.

Il-KEPD jipproduċi rapporti dwar l-użu tad-dejta tal-EURODAC ([3]). Il-proposta l-ġdida tal-EURODAC tirrifletti xi whud mir-rakkomandazzjonijiet tal-KEPD (pereżempju, dwar l-għoti ta' informazzjoni lis-suġġetti tad-dejta u l-bidliet fir-regoli dwar thassir ta' dejta). Barra minn hekk, għal darba oħra fuq ir-rakkomandazzjoni tal-KEPD, il-possibilità eżistenti fl-Artikolu 18(2) tar-Regolament EURODAC biex suġġett tad-dejta jikseb komunikazzjoni tad-dejta relatata miegħu li tkun irreġistrata fil-bażi ta' dejta ċentrali se tiġi alterata. Fil-futur l-Istati Membri se jkollhom jibagħtu kopja tat-talba tas-suġġett tad-dejta għal aċċess lill-awtorità ta' sorveljanza nazzjonali kompetenti. Dan sabiex ikun ippruvat li t-talba tkun fil-fatt ġejja mis-suġġett tad-dejta u li dawn it-tfittxijiet ma jkunux qed jitwettqu b'mod mhux xieraq.

([1]) COM (2012) 254 finali.
([2]) Ara r-referenza għal "interferenza" fis-Sentenza tal-QEĠ tal-20 ta' Mejju 2003, Österreichischer Rundfunk u Oħrajn. Kawżi Konġunti C-465/2000, C-138/01 u C-139/01, ECR [2003], p. i-4989, il-paragrafu 83.
([3]) Ir-rapporti tal-KEPD huma disponibbli kollha hawnhekk: http://www.edps.europa.eu/EDPSWEB/edps/Supervision/Eurodac.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006510/12
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(28 June 2012)

Subject: Eurodac

Eurodac was established in 2000 (Regulation (EC) No 2725/2000) as a common and comprehensive European system for recording fingerprints. The Eurodac database is used to monitor asylum applicants as well as illegal immigrants intercepted in the EU. Regulation (EC) No 2725/2000 encourages the Member States to impose sanctions in the event of information contained in the Eurodac database being abused, so as to protect the privacy and security of individuals. The Commission has discussed the possibility of giving national law enforcement authorities access to Eurodac from 2012, in order to combat terrorism and serious crime.

In the Commission's opinion, will this widened access make the protection of information contained in the Eurodac database more difficult to manage? What is the assessment of the misuse of Eurodac data to date?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(16 August 2012)

Regulation (EC) No 2725/2000 set up Eurodac as an asylum instrument that collects, transmits or records fingerprints of asylum applicants and third-country nationals apprehended with an irregular crossing of an external border or with illegal stay, for the purpose of applying Regulation (EC) 343/2003.

In the Explanatory Memorandum to the 2012 Eurodac Recast proposal ([1]) the Commission stated that the use of Eurodac data for law enforcement purposes implies a change of purpose of the data processed and constitutes an 'interference' with the right to data protection ([2]). However, these changes will not make the protection of information contained in the Eurodac database more difficult to manage as there are clear safeguards delineating who may access Eurodac data and under what circumstances.

The EDPS produces reports concerning the use of Eurodac data ([3]). The new Eurodac proposal reflects some of the EDPS's recommendations (for example, on the provision of information to data subjects and changes to the rules on erasure of data). In addition, again on recommendation of the EDPS, the existing possibility in Article 18(2) of the Eurodac Regulation for a data subject to obtain communication of the data relating to him/her recorded in the central database will be altered. In future Member States will have to send a copy of the data subject's request for access to the competent national supervisory authority. This in order to prove that the request did in fact come from the data subject and that such searches are not being carried out inappropriately.

([1]) COM(2012)254 final.
([2]) See the reference to 'interference' in Judgment of the ECJ of 20 May 2003, Österreichischer Rundfunk and Others. Joined Cases C-465/2000, C-138/01 and C-139/01, ECR [2003], p. I-4989, paragraph 83.
([3]) EDPS reports are all available here: http://www.edps.europa.eu/EDPSWEB/edps/Supervision/Eurodac

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-006511/12
aan de Commissie
Philip Claeys (NI)
(28 juni 2012)

Betreft: Subsidies voor France Terre d'Asile

De organisatie „France Terre d'Asile" steunde tijdens de campagne voor de presidentsverkiezingen in Frankrijk openlijk de kandidatuur van François Hollande. Dat gebeurde onder meer via een persmededeling op 24 april 2012, getiteld „François Hollande sans hésitation!". Aangezien in het logo van de organisatie het logo van de Europese Unie verwerkt is, kon de indruk gewekt worden dat de Europese Unie zelf achter deze kandidaat stond.

Ontvangt „France Terre d'Asile" subsidies van de Europese Unie? Zo ja, hoeveel bedroeg dat in 2010 en 2011?

Acht de Commissie het geoorloofd dat EU-subsidies deels gebruikt worden om bepaalde personen en/of politieke partijen electoraal te steunen? Welke regels gelden terzake?

Antwoord van mevrouw Malmström namens de Commissie
(9 augustus 2012)

„France Terre d'Asile" heeft van de Commissie slechts financiële steun ontvangen voor de uitvoering van projecten.

Binnen het Europees Vluchtelingenfonds (EVF) heeft „France Terre d'Asile" diverse projecten uitgevoerd die door de EU mede waren gefinancierd in het kader van het nationale programma van Frankrijk dat in gezamenlijk beheer wordt uitgevoerd. De projecten werden op nationaal niveau geselecteerd door de nationale, voor het fonds verantwoordelijke autoriteit (in dit geval het Franse ministerie van Binnenlandse zaken). De nationale programma's van Frankrijk en de lijst van door de nationale verantwoordelijke autoriteit geselecteerde en gefinancierde projecten staan beschreven op internet ([1]).

Binnen de communautaire acties van het Europees Vluchtelingenfonds heeft de Commissie na een oproep tot het indienen van voorstellen in 2010 en 2011 diverse projecten gefinancierd, onder meer drie projecten waarbij „France Terre d'Asile" partner was. Binnen het proefproject voor hervestiging werden na een oproep tot het indienen van voorstellen in 2011 twee projecten geselecteerd, onder meer één project waarbij „France Terre d'Asile" partner was. Het totale bedrag dat in het kader van deze vier projecten per ondertekende subsidieovereenkomst werd vastgelegd en toegewezen aan „France Terre d'Asile", bedraagt 233.150,30 euro.

Er gelden bepaalde voorschriften voor het gebruik van de EU-vlag. De Commissie is er zich echter niet van bewust dat „France Terre d'Asile" in het persbericht dat door het geachte Parlementslid wordt vermeld, de EU-vlag heeft gebruikt ([2]).

([1]) http://www.immigration.gouv.fr/spip.php?page=dossiers_det_org & numrubrique=344&numarticle=1685.
([2]) http://www.france-terre-asile.org/tout-lespace-presse/communiques-de-presse/item/7001-cpfrancois-hollande-sans-hesitation-.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006511/12
to the Commission
Philip Claeys (NI)
(28 June 2012)

Subject: Subsidies for France terre d'asile

The France Terre d'Asile organisation openly supported François Hollande during the French presidential election campaign. This support was expressed, for example, through a press release on 24 April 2012 under the headline 'François Hollande sans hésitation!' Since the organisation's logo incorporates that of the European Union, this could give the impression that the European Union was also behind this candidate.

Is France Terre d'Asile receiving subsidies from the EU? If so, how much did it receive in 2010 and 2011?

Is it appropriate, in the Commission's view, that EU subsidies should be partially used to support certain persons and/or political parties during elections? What rules apply in this situation?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(9 August 2012)

France Terre d'Asile has only received finance from the Commission to implement projects.

Within the European Refugee Fund (ERF), France Terre d'Asile has implemented several projects co-financed by the EU under the national programme of France, which is implemented in shared management. The projects have been selected at national level by the national Responsible Authority in charge of the Fund (in this case the French Ministry of Interior). The national programmes of France and the list of projects selected and funded by the national Responsible Authority are available on the Internet ([1])

Within the Community Actions of the ERF, several projects were awarded by the Commission following a call for proposals in 2010 and 2011, among which three projects had France Terre d'Asile as a partner. Within the Pilot project on Resettlement, following a call for proposals in 2011, two projects were selected, among which one has France Terre d'Asile as a partner. The total amount committed and allocated to France Terre d'Asile under these four projects as per the signed grant agreement is of EUR 233 150.30.

There are rules applicable for the authorisation of the use of the EU flag. However, the Commission is not aware that France Terre d'Asile has used the EU flag within the press release mentioned by the Honourable Member ([2]).

([1]) http://www.immigration.gouv.fr/spip.php?page=dossiers_det_org&numrubrique=344&numarticle=1685.
([2]) http://www.france-terre-asile.org/tout-lespace-presse/communiques-de-presse/item/7001-cpfrancois-hollande-sans-hesitation-.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-006512/12
aan de Commissie
Philip Claeys (NI)
(28 juni 2012)

Betreft: Subsidies „Coalition Internationale des Sans Papiers et Migrants" (CISPM)

Ontvangt de organisatie „Coalition Internationale des Sans Papiers et Migrants" (CISPM) subsidies of enige andere steun van de EU? Zo ja, hoeveel bedraagt deze steun?

Tussen 2 juni en 2 juli organiseert deze vereniging een „Marche européen des sans papiers et migrants". Ontving dat initiatief enige steun van de Europese Unie? Zo ja, welke, en voor welk bedrag?

Antwoord van mevrouw Malmström namens de Commissie
(29 augustus 2012)

De „Coalition Internationale des Sans Papiers et Migrants" ontvangt geen subsidie of andere financiële steun van de Europese Commissie.

De Europese Commissie was niet betrokken bij de organisatie van dit initiatief.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006512/12
to the Commission
Philip Claeys (NI)
(28 June 2012)

Subject: Subsidies for the 'Coalition Internationale des Sans Papiers et Migrants'

Is the 'Coalition Internationale des Sans Papiers et Migrants' organisation receiving subsidies or any other support from the EU? If so, how much support is being provided?

Between 2 June and 2 July 2012, this association is organising a 'Marche européen des sans papiers et migrants'. Is this initiative supported by the European Union? If so, in what way and by what amount?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(29 August 2012)

The 'Coalition Internationale des Sans Papiers et Migrants' does not receive subsidies or financial support from the European Commission.

The European Commission was not involved in the organisation of this initiative.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-006515/12
til Kommissionen
Anne E. Jensen (ALDE)
(28. juni 2012)

Om: Implementering af forordning (EU) nr. 720/2011

Kommissionens forordning (EU) nr. 720/2011 vil tillade væsker i håndbagagen efter en scanningsprocedure i sikkerhedstjekket per 29. april 2013.

Men ifølge konsulenthuset BOOZ & Co, der udarbejdede en rapport til Kommissionen om en implementering af dette på baggrund af en række test med scanningsteknologien i 14 lufthavne, var teknologien til scanningsproceduren dog af manglefuld kvalitet. Det resulterede i op til 30 procent fejlindikationer og hyppigere eftersyn af håndbagage, hvilket konkret medførte øget ventetid og forværret serviceniveau for passagerne.

De operationelle vanskeligheder med den nuværende teknologi er både bekræftet af BOOZ & Co, samt af BAA, Schipol Group og Aéroports de Paris. De understreger alle, at en implementering, både fuldstændig eller delvis, vil medføre flere gener og negative konsekvenser for passagerne, da en stor andel af deres væsker, herunder parfumer eller spiritus, vil blive beslaglagt som følge af fejlregistrering fra scanningsproceduren.

1. Hvorfor er BOOZ & Co's rapport ikke blevet offentliggjort på trods af, at Kommissionen modtog den 22. maj?

2. Hvordan forholder Kommissionens sig til rapportens konklusion, at teknologien på nuværende tidspunkt er mangelfuld og ikke egner til sig til implementering?

3. Har Kommissionen stadig tænkt sig, på trods af tilbagemeldingerne fra branchen, at forsætter planerne med implementering per 29. april 2013? Og i så fald, hvad ligger til grund for dette?

4. Såfremt Kommissionen måtte vælge at udsætte implementeringen, hvad vil tidsrammen så blive for implementering, og hvordan tilsikrer Kommissionen, at vi ikke havner i samme situation igen?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Siim Kallas
(24. august 2012)

Med hensyn til det ærede medlems første spørgsmål har Kommissionen i samarbejde med eksperter fra medlemsstaterne og interessenter fra luftfartssikkerhedsindustrien gennemført en række test i EU-lufthavne og analyseret resultaterne heraf sammen med anden relevant information om screening af væsker. Konsulenthuset Booz & Co. assisterede Kommissionen i forbindelse med denne undersøgelse.

Konsulentrapporten er stemplet »EU restricted«, eftersom den indeholder forretningsmæssigt følsomme oplysninger og oplysninger vedrørende luftfartssikkerhed. Adgangen til den vil derfor være begrænset til de eksperter, der arbejder direkte med spørgsmålet.

På baggrund af testresultaterne, en analyse af anden relevant information og konsulenternes rapport har Kommissionen vedtaget en rapport om screening af væsker, spray og gelé (LAGs) i EU-lufthavne ([1]).

I denne rapport konkluderer Kommissionen, at flydende sprængstoffer stadig udgør en betydelig risiko for civil luftfart, og at producenterne systemer til sporing af flydende sprængstoffer har gjort betydelige fremskridt i arbejdet med at udvikle teknologi, der på tilfredsstillende vis kan mindske denne risiko. Rapporten anerkender imidlertid, at en ophævelse af begrænsningerne på LAGs pr. 29. april 2013, som påtænkt i EU's lovgivning, udgør en stor operationel udfordring for branchen, hovedsagelig som følge af omfanget af ændringen, der indebærer, at alle LAGs skal screenes. Derfor finder Kommissionen, at det er bedst at udsætte ophævelsen af begrænsningerne og indføre obligatorisk screening trinvis fra januar 2014, omend Kommissionen samtidig står ved sin plan om at tillade flypassagererne at medbringe LAGs i håndbagagen i fremtiden.

Inden for de nærmeste par måneder vil Kommissionen indføre de nødvendige ændringer af EU-lovgivningen om LAGs efter aftale med medlemsstaterne og Europa-Parlamentet.

([1]) Rapport fra Kommissionen til Europa-Parlamentet og Rådet om en vurdering af situationen vedrørende screening af væsker, spray og gelé (LAGs) i EU-lufthavne (18. juli 2012).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006515/12
to the Commission
Anne E. Jensen (ALDE)
(28 June 2012)

Subject: Implementation of Regulation (EU) No 720/2011

With effect from 29 April 2013, Commission Regulation (EU) No 720/2011 will permit liquids in hand luggage after a scanning procedure in the security check.

However, according to an implementation report prepared for the Commission by the consultancy firm BOOZ & Co, there are shortcomings in the technology for the scanning procedure. This report was based on a series of tests carried out on scanning technology at 14 airports. The results indicate an error rate of up to 30% and more frequent inspection of hand luggage, which leads to increased waiting times and a poorer level of service for passengers.

The operational difficulties experienced with the current technology have been confirmed by BOOZ & Co and by BAA, Schipol Group and Aéroports de Paris. They all stress that any implementation, whether full or partial, will cause more inconvenience and have greater consequences for passengers. A large proportion of their liquids, including perfumes and spirits, will be seized as a result of errors in the scanning procedure.

1. Why has the report by BOOZ & Co not been published despite the Commission having received it on 22 May 2012?

2. What is the position of the Commission on the report's conclusion that technology as it stands is deficient and not suitable for implementation?

3. Does the Commission still intend to continue plans for implementation by 29 April 2013 despite the feedback from the sector? If so, on what basis?

4. If the Commission does decide to implement this regulation, what will the time frame for implementation be? How will the Commission ensure that the same situation will not be repeated?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(24 August 2012)

With respect to the first question of the Honourable member, the Commission together with Member States' experts and industry stakeholders in the field of aviation security organised trials at EU airports and analysed this and other relevant information in respect of liquid screening. In the carrying out of this work, the Commission was assisted by the consultant, Booz & Co.

Their report is classified 'EU restricted' as it contains security and commercial sensitive information. Its accessibility will therefore be restricted to the experts directly working on the file.

Based on trial results, the analysis of other information and the consultant's report, the Commission adopted a report on the screening of liquids, aerosols and gels (LAGs) at EU airports ([1]).

Therein the Commission concludes that the risk posed by liquid explosives to civil aviation is still significant and LEDS manufacturers have made substantial progress to develop instruments which can adequately address this risk. However, the report acknowledges that the removal of the LAGS restrictions by 29 April 2013, as currently envisaged in EC law, presents a considerable operational challenge to the industry mainly due to the scale of the change stemming from the obligation to screen all LAGs. Therefore, while reiterating its commitment to allow future air travellers to carry LAGs in their cabin baggage, the Commission considers it appropriate to delay the removal of the restrictions and to introduce the obligation to screen step by step starting in January 2014.

Within the coming months the Commission will introduce the necessary revision to the EU legislation on LAGs with the agreement of the Member States and the European Parliament.

([1]) Report from the Commission to the EP and to the Council on the Assessment of the situation in respect of the security screening of liquids, aerosols and gels (LAGs) at EU airports (18 July 2012).

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-006517/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)
(28 Ιουνίου 2012)

Θέμα: Οι κοινωνικό-οικονομικές συνθήκες στον ευρωπαϊκό νότο

Σοκάρουν τα στοιχεία της νέας έκθεσης της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής για την κοινωνική κατάσταση στην Ευρώπη το πρώτο τρίμηνο του 2012, που αφορούν την ανεργία, τη φτώχεια και την έλλειψη στέγης στα κράτη-μέλη της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης. Ιδιαίτερα για την Ελλάδα, την Ισπανία, την Ιταλία και την Πορτογαλία, η Επιτροπή περιγράφει με μελανά χρώματα τις κοινωνικό-οικονομικές συνθήκες στις χώρες αυτές. Σύμφωνα με την μελέτη, το 68 % των Ελλήνων ζει κάτω από το όριο της φτώχειας, (σ.σ. δηλαδή με εισόδημα κάτω από το 60 % του μέσου εθνικού εισοδήματος) και διαθέτει πάνω από το 40 % του εισοδήματός του για το ενοίκιο ή την αποπληρωμή στεγαστικού δανείου. Αξίζει να σημειωθεί ότι η απασχόληση στην Ελλάδα έχει μειωθεί κατά 400 000 θέσεις εργασίας το πρώτο τρίμηνο του 2012 σε σχέση με την αντίστοιχη περίοδο του 2011, ενώ την ίδια στιγμή στην Ισπανία χάθηκαν 660 000 θέσεις εργασίας, στην Πορτογαλία 210 000 και στην Ιταλία 180 000. Οι άστεγοι στην Ελλάδα αυξήθηκαν κατά 25 % το 2011 σε σχέση με το 2009, φθάνοντας τους 20 000 συνολικά. Παράλληλα, χιλιάδες Έλληνες και Ισπανοί εγκαταλείπουν της πατρίδες τους, μεταναστεύοντας σε χώρες που δεν έχουν επηρεαστεί σημαντικά από την κρίση, όπως η Γερμάνια, η Αυστραλία, και ο Καναδάς.

Η μελέτη αυτή αποτυπώνει τη ζοφερή κατάσταση στην οποία βρίσκεται ο ευρωπαϊκός νότος, και κάποια ισότιμα κράτη μελή της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης. Λαμβάνοντας αυτά τα στοιχεία υπόψη,

Ερωτάται ο Επίτροπος Ολι Ρεν:

1. Πιστεύετε ότι η δημοσιονομική και οικονομική πολιτική που εφαρμόζεται, βάσει των αποτελεσμάτων, είναι η πλέον κατάλληλη; Πως νοείται μια ενοποιημένη Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση να παράγει τέτοιες ανισότητες και ζοφερές καταστάσεις για κάποια ισότιμα κατά τα άλλα μελή της;

2. Με ποια μέτρα σκοπεύετε να αντιστρέψετε αυτήν την κατάσταση ώστε να μπορέσει σύσσωμη η ΕΕ να αναπτυχθεί και να καλυτερεύσει το βιοτικό επίπεδο των Ευρωπαίων πολιτών;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(6 Αυγούστου 2012)

Η οικονομική κρίση είναι επίσης κοινωνική κρίση για την Ευρώπη, με ολέθριες συνέπειες για πολλούς πολίτες της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης. Από την πρώτη στιγμή η Επιτροπή εργάζεται αόκνως για να ελαχιστοποιηθούν οι επιπτώσεις της κρίσης πρωτίστως στις ευάλωτες ομάδες. Η δημοσιονομική εξυγίανση πρέπει να πραγματοποιηθεί κατά τρόπο που να ευνοεί την ανάπτυξη, δεδομένου ότι η ανάπτυξη αποτελεί βασική προϋπόθεση για τη δημιουργία απασχόλησης. Οι δαπάνες κοινωνικής προστασίας εξακολουθούν να είναι απαραίτητες, καθότι αποτελούν δείκτη ασφαλείας σε εκείνους που πλήττονται περισσότερο από την κρίση και στις ευάλωτες κοινωνικές ομάδες.

Ως εκ τούτου, σύμφωνα με το ευρωπαϊκό εξάμηνο 2012, πολλά κράτη μέλη έλαβαν συστάσεις για να εκσυγχρονίσουν το κράτος πρόνοιας ώστε να βελτιωθεί η αποτελεσματικότητακαι να μειωθεί το κόστοςτων σχετικών μέτρων, να ενισχυθεί η απασχόληση και οι πολιτικές υπερ των ευάλωτων κοινωνικών ομάδων και να μειωθεί η φτώχεια και ο αριθμός των εργαζομένων με χαμηλές αμοιβές.

Τον Ιούνιο του 2012 το Ευρωπαϊκό Συμβούλιο έλαβε αποφάσεις για μέτρα υπέρ της ανάπτυξης τα οποία αναμένεται να βελτιώσουν τις οικονομικές προοπτικές. Σημαντικές αποφάσεις ελήφθησαν επίσης για να επισπευσθεί η ένωση των τραπεζών και να διαραγεί η αρνητική σχέση μεταξύ των τραπεζών και δημόσιου χρέους. Η συνδυασμένη εφαρμογή των προγραμμάτων και των ειδικών ανά χώρα συστάσεων στο πλαίσιο του ευρωπαϊκού εξαμήνου ελπίζεται ότι θα βελτιώσει με την πάροδο του χρόνου την κατάσταση όλων των πολιτών της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006517/12
to the Commission
Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)
(28 June 2012)

Subject: Socioeconomic conditions in Southern Europe

The EU Employment and Social Situation Quarterly Review — June 2012 concerning unemployment, poverty and homelessness in the EU Member States contains shocking statistics. The Commission describes the socioeconomic conditions in Greece, Spain, Italy and Portugal as particularly worrying. According to the study, 68% of Greek citizens are living below the poverty line (with an income of less than 60% of the average national income) and more than 40% of their income goes on rent or mortgage payments. Employment fell notably in Greece by 400 000 jobs in the first quarter of 2012 compared to the same period in 2011, while 660 000 jobs were lost in Spain, 210 000 in Portugal and 180 000 in Italy. The number of homeless people in Greece rose by 25% in 2011 compared to 2009, bringing the total to 20 000. At the same time, thousands of Greek and Spanish citizens are leaving their countries, migrating to countries such as Germany, Australia and Canada which have not been significantly affected by the crisis.

This study shows the dismal situation in Southern Europe and some other EU Member States. Given these statistics, will Commissioner Olli Rehn answer the following:

1. In view of the results of this report, do you believe that the current financial and economic policy is still appropriate? How can a united Europe bring about such inequalities and dismal conditions for some of its otherwise similar Members?

2. What measures do you intend to take to reverse this situation so that the EU can improve the standard of living for all European citizens?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(6 August 2012)

The economic crisis is also a social crisis for Europe with dire consequences for many EU citizens. From the outset the Commission has worked tirelessly to minimise the impact of the crisis above all on the vulnerable. The ongoing necessary fiscal consolidation needs to take place in as growth-friendly manner as possible, since growth is a key pre-requisite for employment creation. Social protection expenditure remains indispensable to provide a safety net for those most hit by the crisis and the vulnerable.

Therefore, under 2012 European Semester, many Member States received recommendations to modernise welfare states to improve their targeting and cost-effectiveness, to improve employment support and activation policies for vulnerable groups and also to alleviate poverty, including in-work poverty.

The June 2012 European Council has now taken decisions on growth-enhancing measures that should bring additional support and improve economic prospects. Important decisions were also taken to bring forward the banking union to break the negative nexus between the bankes and the sovereign. In combination with the implementation of programmes and country-specific recommendations under the European Semester, this should over time restore the situation for EU citizens everywhere.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-006518/12
an die Kommission
Alexander Alvaro (ALDE)
(28. Juni 2012)

Betrifft: Indect-Projekt

Die Kommission hat 15 Mio. EUR für das Indect-Projekt zur Verfügung gestellt.

1. Kann die Kommission mitteilen, wann das Forschungsprojekt Indect abgeschlossen ist und in welcher Projektphase es sich derzeit befindet?

2. Wie viel der für das Forschungsprojekt Indect eingeplanten und bereitgestellten Mittel sind zum Zeitpunkt dieser Anfrage schon ausgegeben worden?

3. Inwieweit sind die Ziele und Anwendungen mit geltendem EU-Recht vereinbar, vor allem in Bezug auf Persönlichkeitsrechte?

Antwort von Herrn Tajani im Namen der Kommission
(1. August 2012)

Die Kommission teilt dem Herrn Abgeordneten mit, dass das Projekt Indect bis zum 31. Dezember 2013 abgeschlossen sein soll.

Was den Beitrag der Kommission sowie den Status und die Vereinbarkeit von Indect mit EU-Recht betrifft, verweist die Kommission den Herrn Abgeordneten auf die Antworten auf die schriftlichen Anfragen E-005371/2012 von Herrn Filip Kaczmarek und E-005080/2012 von Herrn Franz Obermayr ([1]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006518/12
to the Commission
Alexander Alvaro (ALDE)
(28 June 2012)

Subject: Indect (Intelligent information system supporting observation, searching and detection for security of citizens in urban environment) project

The Commission has made EUR 15 million available for the Indect project.

1. Can the Commission indicate when the Indect research project will be completed and what stage the project is currently at?

2. How much of the funding planned for and allocated to the Indect research project has already been distributed at the time this question was tabled?

3. To what extent can the project's objectives and applications be reconciled with EC law, in particular with regard to privacy rights?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(1 August 2012)

The Commission would like to inform the Honourable Member that the Indect project is due to be completed by 31 December 2013.

Concerning the EC contribution, the status and the conformity of Indect with EC law, the Commission would like to refer the Honourable Member to the answers provided in the Written Questions E-005371/2012 by Mr Filip Kaczmarek and E-005080/2012 by Mr Franz Obermayr ([1]).

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

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-006520/12
aan de Commissie
Philip Claeys (NI)
(28 juni 2012)

Betreft: Aanwezigheid van commissarissen op Bilderberg-bijeenkomst

Van 31 mei tot 3 juni 2012 vond de jaarlijkse bijeenkomst plaats van de Bilderberg-groep, in Chantilly, Virgina (VS). Verschillende leden van de Europese Commissie namen deel aan deze conferentie.

Welke commissarissen waren aanwezig? Hoeveel medewerkers waren erbij?

In welke hoedanigheid waren zij daar aanwezig? Vertegenwoordigden zij officieel de Commissie?

Brachten zij binnen de Commissie verslag uit over de besprekingen die tijdens de bijeenkomst werden gehouden? Is deze informatie, in het kader van de openbaarheid van bestuur, toegankelijk voor het publiek? Zo neen, waarom niet?

Werden hun reis- en verblijfskosten door de Commissie betaald? Zo ja, hoeveel bedragen deze kosten?

Antwoord van de heer Barroso namens de Commissie
(16 augustus 2012)

De officiële lijst van deelnemers aan de jaarvergadering voor 2012 van de Bilderberg Groep, gehouden in Virginia (VS) van 31 mei tot 3 juni 2012, kan op internet worden geraadpleegd: http://www.infowars.com/bilderberg-2012-the-official-list-of-participants/. Vicevoorzitter Joaquín Almunia, vicevoorzitter Neelie Kroes en commissaris Karel De Gucht namen aan de vergadering deel. De heer Pierre Vimont, uitvoerend secretaris-generaal van de Europese dienst voor extern optreden, nam eveneens deel. Aan de vergadering nam geen ambtenaar van de Europese Commissie deel.

De genoemde leden van de Europese Commissie namen aan de vergadering deel op grond van een persoonlijke uitnodiging. De Commissie verwijst het geachte Parlementslid naar haar antwoord op vraag E-7306/2011 van de heer Batten ([1]).

Vicevoorzitter Almunia nam deel aan de zittingen inzake concurrentiebeleid, de economische situatie en de euro. Vicevoorzitter Neelie Kroes nam deel aan de zittingen over het Europese politieke landschap, de conomische groei en de samenwerking van souveraine landen in cyberspace. De deelname van commissaris De Gucht betrof met name de zittingen inzake de economische en politieke vooruitzichten voor China, de stand van de Trans-Atlantische betrekkingen en de toekomst van de democratie in de geïndustrialiseerde wereld.

De reiskosten werden door de Commissie betaald, zoals voor elke dienstreis. De kosten bedroegen 4 322,43 euro voor vicevoorzitter Almunia, 4 167,98 euro voor vicevoorzitter Kroes en ongeveer 980 euro voor commissaris De Gucht die zijn deelname aan de Bilderberg-vergadering combineerde met een dienstreis naar Washington in zijn hoedanigheid van Europese vicevoorzitter van de EU-VS-Werkgroep op hoog niveau Banen en Groei en van de Trans-Atlantische Economische Raad.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006520/12
to the Commission
Philip Claeys (NI)
(28 June 2012)

Subject: Commissioners attending Bilderberg meetings

The Bilderberg Group held its annual meeting in Chantilly, Virginia, USA from 31 May to 3 June 2012. Various members of the European Commission took part in this conference.

Which commissioners were present? How many officials were there?

In what capacity were they present? Were they officially representing the Commission?

Did they report to the Commission on the discussions held during the meeting? Is this information available to the public, in accordance with transparency of administration? If not, why not?

Were their travel and subsistence expenses paid by the Commission? If so, how much did these expenses amount to?

Answer given by Mr Barroso on behalf of the Commission
(16 August 2012)

The official list of participants to the Bilderberg Group 2012 annual meeting, held in Virginia (USA) from 31 May to 3 June 2012, can be consulted via the Internet site http://www.infowars.com/bilderberg-2012-the-official-list-of-participants/. Vice-President Joaquin Almunia, Vice-President Neelie Kroes and Commissioner Karel de Gucht attended the meeting. Mr Pierre Vimont, Executive Secretary-General of the European External Action Service also attended. The meeting was not attended by any official of the European Commission.

The abovementioned Members of the European Commission attended the meeting as participants on a personal invitation. The Commission refers the Honourable Member to its answer to the Question E-7306/2011 by Mr Batten ([1]).

Vice-President Almunia participated in sessions on competition policy, on the economic situation and the euro. Vice-President Neelie Kroes participated in sessions on the European political landscape, economic growth and the cooperation of sovereign states in cyberspace. Commissioner De Gucht's participation was focused in sessions on the economic and political outlook for China, the state of Trans-Atlantic relations and the future of democracy in the developped world.

The travel expenses incurred were paid by the Commission, as for any mission. The expenses involved amount to EUR 4 322.43 as concerns Vice-President Almunia, EUR 4 167.98 as concerns Vice-President Kroes and approximately EUR 980 as concerns Commissioner de Gucht who combined attendance at the Bilderberg meeting with a mission to Washington as European Co-chair of the High Level Group on Growth and Jobs and of the Transatlantic Economic Council.

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

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-006521/12
do Komisji
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD) oraz Tadeusz Cymański (EFD)
(28 czerwca 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Inwigilowanie obywateli w Polsce

W kwietniu 2012 r. krajowe media podnosiły temat inwigilowania polskich obywateli. Szerokie komentarze związane były z raportem Fundacji Panoptykon, zajmującej się problemem kontroli państwa nad społeczeństwem. Prawnicy z Panoptykon wskazali, powołując się na dane Urzędu Komunikacji Elektronicznej, że uprawnione do tego polskie służby w 2011 r. ponad 1 mln 850 tys. razy sięgały po informacje polskich obywateli wynikające z ich połączeń telefonicznych. Stanowi to prawie pół miliona więcej wniosków w stosunku do roku 2010 i aż 800 tysięcy więcej w stosunku do roku 2009.

Według Fundacji już dane z 2009 r. stanowiły niechlubny rekord polskich służb w inwigilowaniu swoich obywateli. W roku 2011 ten niechlubny w Unii Europejskiej rekord został niestety przez polskie służby pobity ([1]), ([2]), ([3]).

Wobec tego pragnę zapytać, jak Komisja ocenia te niepokojące statystyki dotyczące inwigilowania polskich obywateli?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarz Cecilię Malmström w imieniu Komisji
(16 sierpnia 2012 r.)

Dyrektywa w sprawie zatrzymywania danych ([4]) przewiduje zatrzymywanie przez dostawców usług niektórych danych, nieobejmujących danych o treści przekazywanych informacji. Dane te mogą zostać udostępnione z uzasadnionych powodów właściwym organom na warunkach i przy zachowaniu procedur prawnych określonych w prawie krajowym zgodnie z Kartą praw podstawowych.

Komisja jest świadoma obaw wyrażonych przez liczne zainteresowane strony w odniesieniu do tej dyrektywy. Komisja rozważa zaproponowanie przeglądu tej dyrektywy równocześnie z przeglądem dyrektywy o prywatności i łączności elektronicznej (dyrektywy 2002/58/WE). Komisja popiera mechanizm umożliwiający przejrzyste i rzeczowe monitorowanie zatrzymywania i udostępniania danych dotyczących połączeń oraz korzystania z takich danych, zauważając, że w wielu państwach członkowskich (włączając Polskę) właściwe organy często zwracają się do różnych dostawców usług z tą samą prośbą o udostępnienie danych z telefonów komórkowych, co powoduje przekłamania w statystykach. W związku z tym Komisja przedstawiła państwom członkowskim wytyczne określające, w jaki sposób powinny być zestawiane statystyki i informacje jakościowe oraz analizuje otrzymane odpowiedzi.

([1]) http://www.tvn24.pl/wiadomosci-z-kraju,3/polska-znow-bije-wlasny-rekord-inwigilacji,205579.html
([2]) http://www.wprost.pl/ar/314264/Permanentna-inwigilacja-Polska-rekordzista-Europy-w-szpiegowaniu-obywateli/.
([3]) http://wiadomosci.wp.pl/kat,1342,title,Polska-bije-rekordy-w-inwigilowaniu-swoich obywateli,wid,14337055,wiadomosc.html?ticaid=1eb4a.
([4]) Dyrektywa 2006/24/WE z dnia 15 marca 2006 r. Dz.U. L 105 z 13.4.2006.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006521/12
to the Commission
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD) and Tadeusz Cymański (EFD)
(28 June 2012)

Subject: Surveillance of citizens in Poland

In April 2012, the Polish media raised the issue of the surveillance of Polish citizens. The wide-ranging commentaries were linked to a report by the Panoptykon Foundation, a body which deals with the state surveillance of society. On the basis of data from the Office of Electronic Communications (UKE), the Panoptykon lawyers reported that the authorised Polish services accessed information from telephone calls made by Polish citizens over 1 850 000 times in 2011. This represents almost half a million more cases than in 2010 and as many as 800 000 more than in 2009.

According to the Foundation, the 2009 figure was already a disgraceful record set by the Polish services in the surveillance of the country's citizens. In 2011, this record, considered a disgrace in the European Union, was regrettably beaten by the Polish services. ([1]) ([2]) ([3])

In view of this, what is the Commission's opinion on these worrying statistics on the surveillance of Polish citizens?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(16 August 2012)

The Data Retention Directive ([4]) provides for the retention of certain data, which do not include data on the content of communications, by service providers. These data may be accessed for legitimate reasons by competent authorities, on conditions and in compliance with legal procedures set out in national law in compliance with the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

The Commission is aware of the concerns expressed by a number of stakeholders regarding the directive. The Commission is considering proposing a revision at the same time as proposing the revision of the E-Privacy Directive (Directive 2002/58/EC). The Commission is in favour of a mechanism for transparent and meaningful monitoring of the retention of, access to and use of communications data, noting that in a number of Member States (including Poland) competent authorities usually submit the same request for mobile telephone data to multiple service providers, thus distorting the statistics. The Commission therefore earlier this year wrote to the Member States with guidance on how statistics and qualitative information should be collated and it is examining the responses which have been received.

([1]) http://www.tvn24.pl/wiadomosci-z-kraju,3/polska-znow-bije-wlasny-rekord-inwigilacji,205579.html
([2]) http://www.wprost.pl/ar/314264/Permanentna-inwigilacja-Polska-rekordzista-Europy-w-szpiegowaniu-obywateli/.
([3]) http://wiadomosci.wp.pl/kat,1342,title,Polska-bije-rekordy-w-inwigilowaniu-swoich obywateli,wid,14337055,wiadomosc.html?ticaid=1eb4a.
([4]) Directive 2006/24/EC of 15 March 2006. OJ L 105, 13.4.2006.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-006523/12
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(29 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Riesame dell'elenco delle sostanze prioritarie nel settore della politica delle acque

Il Parlamento è attualmente impegnato nell'esame della proposta della Commissione, del 31 gennaio 2012, recante modifica delle direttive 2000/60/CE e 2008/105/CE per quanto riguarda le sostanze prioritarie nel settore della politica delle acque.

Recentemente sono stati presentati dati nuovi che sollevano dubbi in merito all'inclusione di determinate sostanze nell'elenco di sostanze prioritarie proposto. La Commissione aveva proceduto all'inserimento di tali sostanze nell'elenco a seguito dell'analisi di studi precedentemente condotti dal Comitato scientifico dei rischi sanitari e ambientali (CSRSA).

Considerando che, secondo i dati più recenti e completi, l'inclusione delle sostanze in questione nell'elenco delle sostanze prioritarie potrebbe risultare ingiustificata e che, in base all'articolo 16, paragrafo 4, della direttiva quadro in materia di acque, il prossimo riesame dell'elenco potrà essere realizzato soltanto fra quattro anni, l'interrogante chiede alla Commissione di rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

1. Quali iniziative ha adottato per dare attuazione all'articolo 191, paragrafo 3, del TFUE, in base al quale «nel predisporre la sua politica in materia ambientale l'Unione tiene conto dei dati scientifici e tecnici disponibili»?

2. Quali azioni ha intrapreso per evitare l'avvio, da parte degli Stati membri, di inutili e onerose iniziative finalizzate alla limitazione e al monitoraggio delle sostanze in questione?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(23 luglio 2012)

La proposta della Commissione concernente una direttiva del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio recante modifica delle direttive 2000/60/CE ([1]) e 2008/105/CE ([2]), per quanto riguarda le sostanze prioritarie nel settore della politica delle acque ([3]) è pienamente conforme all'articolo 191, paragrafo 3, del TFUE, poiché si basa sui dati scientifici e tecnici disponibili al momento in cui è stata presentata.

Le motivazioni scientifiche e tecniche che hanno giustificato la selezione delle sostanze prioritarie proposte in base al rischio significativo che costituiscono per o tramite l'ambiente acquatico, sono fondate su una procedura approfondita e completa nell'ambito della quale sono state passate in rassegna migliaia di sostanze chimiche e sono state individuate 15 nuove sostanze da inserire nell'elenco. Questa procedura ha coinvolto esperti degli Stati membri e delle parti interessate. Il comitato scientifico dei rischi sanitari e ambientali ha ricontrollato con esito positivo che le sostanze proposte rispettassero le norme di qualità ambientale.

I costi di monitoraggio connessi alla proposta della Commissione sono limitati e in parte compensati dalla riduzione della frequenza dei controlli per alcune sostanze indicate nella proposta. La Commissione, nella valutazione d'impatto che accompagna la proposta ([4]), ha anche individuato misure efficaci sotto il profilo dei costi che gli Stati membri potrebbero attuare per soddisfare le pertinenti norme di qualità ambientale. Conformemente al principio di sussidiarietà, spetta agli Stati membri scegliere le misure più idonee da attuare a livello di bacino idrografico.

([1]) GU L 327 del 22.12.2000.
([2]) GU L 348 del 24.12.2008.
([3]) COM(2011)876 final.
([4]) Documento di lavoro dei servizi della Commissione, SEC(2011)1547.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-006523/12
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Review of the list of priority substances in the field of water policy

Parliament is currently working on the Commission proposal of 31 January 2012 amending Directives 2000/60/EC and 2008/105/EC as regards priority substances in the field of water policy.

New data has recently been presented that raises questions about the inclusion of some substances on the proposed list of priority substances. These substances had been placed on the list by the Commission following a review of earlier studies conducted by the Scientific Committee on Health and Environmental Risks (SCHER).

Given that the most recent and comprehensive data indicates that the inclusion of these substances on the list of priority substances may be unjustified, and given that the next review of the list can, according to Article 16(4) of Water Framework Directive, only take place in four years' time, the Commission is asked to answer the following:

1. What has the Commission done to implement Article 191 (3) TFEU, which states that 'in preparing its policy on the environment, the Union shall take account of […] available scientific and technical data'?

2. What has the Commission done to avoid Member States initiating unnecessary and costly efforts to limit and monitor these substances?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(23 July 2012)

The Commission proposal for a directive of the Parliament and of the Council amending Directives 2000/60/EC ([1]) and 2008/105/EC ([2]) as regards priority substances in the field of water policy ([3]) is fully in line with Article 191 (3) of the TFEU as it is based on scientific and technical data available at the time it was proposed.

The scientific and technical justification for selecting the proposed priority substances, according to the significant risk they pose to or via the aquatic environment, is based on a solid and thorough process that has screened thousands of chemicals and identified 15 new substances for listing. This process involved Member States and stakeholders' experts. The environmental quality standards to be respected for the proposed substances have been favourably reviewed by the Scientific Committee on Health and Environmental Risks.

The monitoring costs attached to the Commission proposal are limited and partly offset by the reduced monitoring frequency for some substances specified in the proposal. The Commission has also identified in the impact assessment accompanying the proposal ([4]) cost-effective measures that Member States could implement to achieve the relevant environmental quality standards. In line with the principle of subsidiarity, it is for the Member States to choose the most suitable measures they wish to implement at river basin level.

([1]) OJ L 327, 22.12.2000.
([2]) OJ L 348, 24.12.2008.
([3]) COM(2011) 876 final.
([4]) Commission Staff Working Paper SEC(2011) 1547.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-006524/12
a la Comisión
Josefa Andrés Barea (S&D)
(29 de junio de 2012)

Asunto: Acciones contra la plaga de picudo rojo en zonas del Mediterráneo

Desde el punto de vista histórico y cultural, el valor del Palmeral de Elche es importantísimo como un ejemplo único de las técnicas agrícolas árabes en el continente europeo. El paisaje formado por los huertos de palmeras de Elche, con sus complejos sistemas de riego, fue estructurado en el siglo VIII d.C., cuando una gran parte de la península Ibérica estaba bajo la dominación musulmana. Pero hay buenos motivos para pensar que quizá su origen sea más antiguo todavía y se remonte a la época del asentamiento de los fenicios y los romanos en la región. En el año 2000, el Palmeral fue declarado por la Unesco parte del Patrimonio Histórico Mundial.

Hoy el Palmeral de Elche sufre las consecuencias de una plaga provocada por un insecto llamado «picudo rojo» (*Rhynchophorus ferrugineus*), que ataca a las palmeras y se expande incontroladamente por la Península Ibérica, en particular por Cataluña, Andalucía, la Comunidad Valenciana, Murcia y Canarias.

Esta plaga, que parece proceder de Egipto, se ha propagado por toda la costa mediterránea afectando a gran número de países del sur de Europa. Sin tratamiento o sin una detección precoz, el ataque de este insecto conduce a la muerte de las palmeras afectadas. Las larvas del picudo se alojan en el interior del tronco donde se alimentan del tejido tierno. La propagación es muy rápida puesto que el insecto puede volar entre palmeras vecinas.

En la región de Valencia, la asociación de viveristas de la provincia estima que los gastos adicionales que supone a los productores los tratamientos para luchar contra la plaga se elevan a 500 000 euros anuales. Entre otros perjuicios económicos, esta plaga afecta sobre todo a los productores de palmeras, en su mayoría pequeñas y medianas empresas que han visto sus cultivos destrozados, con las consecuentes pérdidas económicas. Teniendo en cuenta la crisis económica que afecta al país, el efecto de la plaga no hace más que empeorar la situación de estos productores.

¿Qué medidas prevé tomar la Comisión para tratar de controlar la plaga de picudo rojo que afecta a los cultivos de palmeras?

¿Se han revisado las medidas de control fitosanitario para evitar que siga propagándose la plaga, aumentando, en particular, los controles de las importaciones de palmeras del norte de África?

Dentro del marco de la Política Agrícola Común ¿se contempla algún tipo de indemnización para los productores afectados por plagas procedentes de terceros países?

Respuesta del Sr. Dalli en nombre de la Comisión
(22 de agosto de 2012)

En 2007, la Comisión adoptó medidas de emergencia para controlar la introducción y propagación en la UE del picudo rojo (Decisión 2007/365/CE ([1])). En 2010, la Comisión modificó esta Decisión para introducir medidas más estrictas.

Según la Decisión, las plantas sensibles originarias de terceros países donde se conoce la presencia del organismo deben haber sido cultivadas en determinadas condiciones durante un período de al menos un año antes de la exportación, con el fin de garantizar que no se hayan detectado signos de picudo rojo. Además, durante un período de al menos un año antes de su traslado dentro de la UE, las plantas sensibles deben haber sido colocadas en un sitio con completa protección física frente a la introducción del picudo rojo en un lugar de producción situado en un Estado miembro. Las inspecciones oficiales en dicho sitio deben realizarse al menos cada tres meses. También hay un proyecto de investigación destinado a la detección precoz, erradicación, control y contención del picudo rojo, financiado con cargo al séptimo Programa Marco.

Por lo que se refiere a la ayuda económica, hasta la fecha no se ha aplicado ninguna medida legislativa para indemnizar a los productores afectados por organismos nocivos para los vegetales con arreglo al régimen fitosanitario de la Unión, establecido por la Directiva 2000/29/CE del Consejo ([2]).

([1]) DO L 139 de 31.5.2007, p. 24.
([2]) DO L 169 de 10.7.2000, p. 1.

En el Reglamento (CE) n° 1698/2005 del Consejo ([3]) se prevén ayudas para reconstituir el potencial de producción agrícola dañado por catástrofes naturales, aunque esta medida no está incluida actualmente en el programa de desarrollo rural de Valencia.

Cuando se cultivan plantas de palma como actividad agrícola, la legislación de la PAC sobre pagos directos permite que los Estados miembros financien medidas de gestión de riesgos a través de un seguro o de fondos mutuales (artículo 68 del Reglamento (CE) n° 73/2009 ([4])). En España no se han aplicado estas medidas.

([3]) DO L 277 de 21.10.2005, p. 1.
([4]) DO L 30 de 31.1.2009, p. 16.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006524/12
to the Commission
Josefa Andrés Barea (S&D)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Action against the red palm weevil pest in Mediterranean areas

The Palmeral of Elche is of major importance from a cultural and historical point of view as a unique example of Arab agricultural techniques in Europe. The landscape formed by the palm tree gardens of Elche, with their complex irrigation systems, was created in the 8th century when much of the Iberian Peninsula was under Muslim rule. However, there are sound reasons for believing that its origins may be even more ancient and could date back to the time of Phoenician and Roman settlement in the region. In 2000, Unesco declared the Palmeral a World Heritage Site.

Today the Palmeral of Elche is suffering the effects of an insect pest known as 'red palm weevil' (*Rhynchophorus ferrugineus*), which attacks palm trees and is spreading uncontrollably throughout the Iberian Peninsula, particularly through Catalonia, Andalusia, Valencia, Murcia and the Canary Islands.

This pest, which appears to have originated in Egypt, has spread along the entire Mediterranean coast and has affected a large number of southern European countries. Without treatment or early detection, an attack by these insects leads to the death of the affected palm trees. The larvae of the weevil burrow into the middle of the trunk where they feed on the soft tissue. The spread is rapid as the insect can fly from tree to tree.

In the Valencia region, the nursery business association in the province has estimated the additional cost to producers of treatments to combat the pest at EUR 500 000 a year. In terms of economic damage, amongst other things, this pest particularly affects palm tree growers, mainly small and medium-sized enterprises which have seen their plantations destroyed, with the associated economic losses. Given Spain's economic crisis, the impact of the pest can only worsen the producers' situation.

What measures will the Commission take to try to control the red palm weevil pest affecting palm tree growers?

Has it revised pest-control measures to stop the pest's relentless spread, particularly by increasing checks on palm imports from north Africa?

In the context of the common agricultural policy, are there any plans for compensating producers affected by insect pests from third countries?

Answer given by Mr Dalli on behalf of the Commission
(22 August 2012)

In 2007, the Commission issued emergency measures to control the entry and spread in the EU of red palm weevil (RPW). (Decision 2007/365/EC ([1])). In 2010 the Commission amended this decision, providing stricter measures.

According to this legislation, susceptible plants originating in third countries where the organism is known to occur, shall have been growing under specific conditions, during a period of at least one year prior to export, to ensure that no signs of RPW have been observed. In addition, during a period of at least one year prior to the movement within the EU, susceptible plants are placed within a Member State in a site with complete physical protection against the introduction of RPW. Official inspections are carried out at least every three months within this site. Furthermore, a dedicated research project is funded from Framework Programme 7, for early detection, eradication, control and containment of RPW.

As regards financial support, under the Union plant-health regime established by Council Directive 2000/29/EC ([2]), there is currently no legislation implemented to compensate producers affected by plant harmful organisms.

Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 ([3]) foresees support for restoring the agricultural production potential damaged by natural disasters, although this measure is currently not included in the Rural Development Program of Valencia.

([1]) OJ L 139, 31.5.2007, p. 24.
([2]) OJ L 169, 10.7.2000, p. 1.
([3]) OJ L 277, 21.10.2005, p. 1.

When palm plants are grown within an agricultural activity, the CAP legislation on direct payments allows Member States to finance risk management measures through insurance or mutual funds (Article 68 of Regulation (EC) No 73/2009 ([4])). Such measures are not implemented in Spain.

([4]) OJ L 30, 31.1.2009, p. 16.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-006525/12
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(29 de junio de 2012)

Asunto: Regulación de las «terapias naturales»

Las llamadas «terapias naturales» son reconocidas por un sector de la población europea, pero apenas por la ciencia. «Esta ausencia de demostración de su eficacia no debe ser considerada como sinónimo de ineficiencia», dice un informe elaborado por el Ministerio de Sanidad español ([1]). Y sigue: «Muchos pacientes refieren cierto grado de satisfacción asociado a una percepción de mejoría de los síntomas o en su bienestar con el uso de distintas terapias naturales».

El principal problema que motivó el informe fue la necesidad de aclarar el mapa de las «terapias naturales», regular la actividad, la formación de quienes la ejercen y los centros donde se da asistencia a los pacientes.

El informe detalla que quienes aplican estas terapias pertenecen a cinco grandes grupos: médicos titulados, otros titulados en Ciencias de la Salud o en Psicología, personas sin titulación oficial en Ciencias de la Salud, vendedores de herboristerías o de productos utilizados para las medicinas no convencionales y los sanadores que se atribuyen poderes. Únicamente los centros donde trabajen médicos están legalmente reconocidos.

También existen programas de homeopatía y otros estudios medios o superiores que no están reglamentados, como la quiropráctica, la naturopatía, la osteopatía, etc., y que carecen de una titulación sanitaria homologada.

¿Qué opinión tiene la Comisión de lo que se acaba de exponer?

¿Tiene previsto la Comisión regular en la EU este tipo de «terapias naturales», los centros donde se ejercen y la formación de quienes la ejercen?

Respuesta del Sr. Barnier en nombre de la Comisión
(17 de agosto de 2012)

Una profesión regulada es una actividad profesional cuyo acceso y ejercicio está supeditado de manera directa o indirecta a la posesión de una cualificación profesional.

La Directiva 2005/36/CE constituye el marco jurídico europeo para el reconocimiento mutuo de las cualificaciones profesionales. La Directiva se aplica a todos los ciudadanos de un Estado miembro que deseen acceder a una profesión regulada o ejercerla en un Estado miembro, pero compete a cada Estado miembro regular la profesión.

La Comisión conoce la disparidad de las legislaciones de los Estados miembros relativas a las profesiones reguladas y, concretamente, a la relacionada con las «terapias naturales». La Comisión ha introducido por ello, en su propuesta de modernización de la Directiva sobre las cualificaciones profesionales, un mecanismo de evaluación recíproca de las profesiones reguladas. Si se adopta, los Estados miembros deberán notificar la lista de profesiones para las que se exige una cualificación específica, justificar la necesidad de regular esas profesiones y evaluarlas de forma recíproca.

Según los datos disponibles en la base de datos de las profesiones reguladas, la naturopatía (medicina naturista) está regulada en Suiza, Hungría, Islandia y Liechtenstein. Otros Estados miembros del EEE no la han notificado como profesión regulada.

Por consiguiente, en los Estados miembros donde la profesión no esté regulada, no existen, que sepa la Comisión, cualificaciones profesionales específicas que limiten el acceso a dicha profesión o su ejercicio.

([1]) http://www.lavanguardia.com/salud/20120107/54244111238/informe-sanidad-urge-regular-terapias-naturales.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006525/12
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Regulation of 'natural therapies'

'Natural therapies' are recognised by some sections of the European population, but barely so by science. A report published by the Spanish Health Ministry states that the lack of evidence surrounding their efficacy should not be deemed proof of their inefficacy ([1]). It goes on to say that many patients derive some comfort from the perception that their symptoms or their wellbeing are improved through the use of various natural therapies.

The main issue addressed by the report is the need to bring some clarity to the array of 'natural therapies' and to regulate their practice, the training of their practitioners and the centres where patients are treated.

The report states that the practitioners of these therapies fall into five main groups: qualified doctors, those with qualifications in Health Sciences or Psychology, those without qualifications in Health Sciences, those selling herbal medicines or ingredients for non-conventional medicines and healers who claim to have healing powers. Only centres staffed by qualified doctors are legally recognised.

There are also study courses in homeopathy and other unregulated mid-level and higher courses, such as chiropractic treatments, naturopathy and osteopathy, which do not lead to a universally recognised health qualification.

What is the Commission's view of the above?

Does the Commission intend to bring in EU regulations on these kinds of 'natural therapies', the centres where they are practised and the training of their practitioners?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(17 August 2012)

A regulated profession is a professional activity access to which, and the pursuit of which is subject directly or indirectly to the possession of a professional qualification.

Directive 2005/36/EC constitutes the European legal framework for the mutual recognition of professional qualifications. The directive shall be applied to all nationals of a Member State wishing to access or pursue a regulated profession in a Member State. It is however within the competence of the individual Member States to regulate a profession.

The Commission is aware of the disparity of the legislations concerning regulated professions, notably the profession of 'natural therapists' in the Member States. For this reason, in its proposal for modernising the Professional Qualifications Directive, the Commission introduces a mutual evaluation mechanism on regulated professions. If adopted, Member States will have to notify the list of professions for which they require a specific qualification, justify the need for regulating these professions and evaluate them on a mutual basis.

According to the data available in the regulated professions database, naturopathy (natural health medicine) is regulated, in Switzerland, Hungary, Iceland and in Lichtenstein. Other EEA Member States have not notified it as a regulated profession.

Accordingly, in Member States where the profession is not regulated, there is to the knowledge of the Commission, no specific professional qualifications restricting access to or pursuit of such a profession.

([1]) http://www.lavanguardia.com/salud/20120107/54244111238/informe-sanidad-urge-regular-terapias-naturales.html

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-006526/12
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(29 de junio de 2012)

Asunto: Mención de la radiación acumulada en el historial clínico

Las rodillas y la columna vertebral son las partes del cuerpo más radiografiadas, aunque algunos especialistas opinan que a veces hay «un abuso innecesario» ([1]). Se calcula que en el Estado español se hace una radiografía por persona y por año y que en EE.UU., entre el 20 % y el 50 % de las TAC no están plenamente justificadas.

Por eso, radiólogos europeos han propuesto que en el historial clínico de cada paciente conste la dosis de radiación que va acumulando a lo largo de su vida, de modo que, aunque el médico no sea el mismo, esta información siga presente.

Al parecer, la acumulación de la radiación aumenta el riesgo de padecer algún tumor, «aunque no está demostrada la relación directa entre la radiación acumulada y la aparición de tumores, es solamente estadísticas». Tratándose de menores de diez años, el riesgo de tener leucemia o tumores cerebrales es superior a medida que aumentan el número de dosis recibidas, según publica la revista The Lancet.

La realidad radiológica actual es mucho menos agresiva que hace unos años, sobre todo porque se utiliza con más frecuencia la resonancia magnética, pero igualmente los médicos insisten en evitar las radiografías y las TAC que no sean estrictamente necesarias.

¿Qué opinión tiene la Comisión sobre este tema?

¿Cree que es positivo que estos datos aparezcan en el historial clínico de cada ciudadano europeo?

¿No cree la Comisión que estos datos permitirían estudiar la relación entre las dosis de radiación recibidas, los problemas médicos y la edad en que aparecen?

Respuesta del Sr. Oettinger en nombre de la Comisión
(16 de agosto de 2012)

La Comisión está de acuerdo en la necesidad de justificar y optimizar algunos procedimientos radiológicos y, puesto que comparte la creciente preocupación en este tema, ha emprendido ya una serie de iniciativas para responder a esa necesidad.

Así, en 2010, adoptó una Comunicación sobre las aplicaciones médicas de las radiaciones ionizantes ([2]). En ella se exponen las principales medidas para mejorar la protección de los pacientes y del personal médico frente a las radiaciones.

Dos años más tarde, el 30 de mayo de 2012, la Comisión adoptó una propuesta de Directiva sobre normas de seguridad básicas ([3]) cuyo objeto es reforzar algunos requisitos para dar respuesta a las preocupaciones expuestas en la Comunicación arriba citada. Aunque no utilice el término historial clínico, la propuesta de la Comisión dispone que las dosis de radiación recibidas durante un examen médico deben figurar en el informe de ese examen. La propuesta establece también que los Estados miembros han de determinar la distribución de estimaciones de dosis individuales debidas a la exposición médica, teniendo en cuenta la distribución de edades y el género de la población expuesta.

([1]) http://www.lavanguardia.com/encatala/20120625/54316504915/radiografies-justes.html
([2]) Comunicación de la Comisión al Parlamento Europeo y al Consejo, de 6 de agosto de 2010, relativa a las aplicaciones médicas de las radiaciones ionizantes y a la seguridad del abastecimiento de radioisótopos para la medicina nuclear [COM(2010) 423].
([3]) Propuesta de Directiva del Consejo, de 30 de mayo de 2012, por la que se establecen las normas de seguridad básicas para la protección contra los peligros derivados de la exposición a radiaciones ionizantes [COM(2012) 242].

Además, la Comisión ha publicado unas directrices sobre la estimación de las dosis recibidas por la población en procesos médicos ([4]). El objetivo es apoyar la aplicación de la Directiva 97/43/Euratom, relativa a la protección de la salud frente a los riesgos derivados de las radiaciones ionizantes en exposiciones médicas ([5]). Para 2013 está previsto un nuevo informe sobre las dosis recibidas por la población europea a partir de procedimientos de radiodiagnóstico ([6]).

([4]) Directiva 97/43/Euratom del Consejo, de 30 de junio de 1997, relativa a la protección de la salud frente a los riesgos derivados de las radiaciones ionizantes en exposiciones médicas, por la que se deroga la Directiva 84/466/Euratom (DO L 180 de 9.7.1997).
([5]) Véase http://ec.europa.eu/energy/nuclear/radiation_protection/doc/publication/154.zip.
([6]) Véase http://ddmed.eu/.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006526/12
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Reference to accumulated radiation in clinical notes

Ankles and the spinal column are the most X-rayed parts of the body, even though some specialists believe that sometimes there is an unnecessary abuse ([1]). It has been calculated that every person in Spain is X-rayed once a year and that in the United States between 20% and 50% of CT scans are not fully justified.

European radiologists have therefore suggested that all patients' clinical notes should state the dose of radiation accumulated over the course of their lives, so that this information is available even if different doctors are involved.

It appears that accumulated radiation increases the risk of developing a tumour, although no direct relationship between accumulated radiation and the emergence of tumours has been shown, the relationship is only statistical. According to a report in *The Lancet*, the risk of children under 10 developing leukaemia or brain tumours is higher the greater the number of doses received.

Modern radiological practices are far less aggressive than they were a few years ago, particularly due to the more frequent use of magnetic resonance imaging, but also because doctors insist on avoiding radiography and CT scans that are not strictly necessary.

What is the Commission's view on this issue?

Does it think it would be a positive for this data to feature in the clinical notes of every European citizen?

Does the Commission not think that this data would make it easier to study the relationship between the doses of radiation received, medical problems and the age at which they appear?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(16 August 2012)

The Commission shares the growing concerns regarding the justification and optimization of some radiological procedures and has undertaken a series of initiatives to address them.

In 2010 the Commission adopted a communication on medical applications of ionizing radiation ([2]) which identified key issues to improve radiation protection of patients and medical staff.

The Commission also adopted on 30 May 2012 a proposal for a new Directive on Basic Safety Standards ([3]) (BSS) which aims at strengthening some requirements to meet the concerns highlighted in the communication. While the BSS Directive does not use the term 'clinical notes', the Commission proposal stipulates that the radiation dose which is delivered during a medical examination shall form part of the report on this examination. The proposal also specifies that Member States shall determine the distribution of individual dose estimates from medical exposure taking into account the age distribution and the gender of the exposed population.

In addition, the Commission has published guidelines on estimating population doses from medical procedures ([4]) with the view to support the implementation of Directive 97/43/Euratom on Medical Exposure ([5]). A new summary report on European population doses from radiodiagnostic procedures ([6]) is also planned for 2013.

([1]) http://www.lavanguardia.com/encatala/20120625/54316504915/radiografies-justes.html
([2]) Communication of the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on medical applications of ionizing radiation and security of supply of radioisotopes for nuclear medicine, 6 August 2010, COM(2010)423;.
([3]) Proposal for a Council Directive laying down basic safety standards for protection against the dangers arising from exposure to ionising radiation, 30 May 2012, COM(2012)242;.
([4]) See http://ec.europa.eu/energy/nuclear/radiation_protection/doc/publication/154.zip.
([5]) Council Directive 97/43/Euratom of 30 June 1997 on health protection of individuals against the dangers of ionizing radiation in relation to medical exposure, and repealing Directive 84/466/Euratom, OJ L 180, 9.7.1997;.
([6]) See http://ddmed.eu/.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-006527/12
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(29 de junio de 2012)

Asunto: Demanda de biomasa forestal a medio plazo, en relación con la producción potencial de Cataluña

La central de producción eléctrica con biomasa que la empresa Nufri pretende instalar en El Palau d'Anglesola (Lleida, España) quemará anualmente decenas de millones de Kg. de biomasa procedente de aprovechamientos forestales, biomasa procedente de cultivos energéticos, subproductos agrícolas y biomasa de árboles frutales ([1]).

Según científicos del CREAF, en Cataluña la producción potencial de productos forestales susceptibles de ser utilizados para producir energía es de 300 millones de Kg. Por lo tanto, la central proyectada quemaría el 21 % de la producción total anual de Cataluña.

Si tenemos en cuenta el hecho de que actualmente (según el propio gobierno autonómico catalán) se encuentran en distintas fases de tramitación en Cataluña entre 30 y 40 centrales eléctricas con uso de biomasa forestal, muchas de ellas de gran capacidad, fácilmente llegamos a la conclusión de que no habrá combustible (biomasa forestal) suficiente para abastecerlas, incluso aunque se doblara la producción potencial de biomasa forestal aprovechable. Muchos ciudadanos temen que se quemen residuos de variada procedencia, con serias consecuencias medioambientales y de salud pública.

Por ello, y en vista de la respuesta a la pregunta escrita E-004249/2012,

¿Qué opina la Comisión sobre este asunto? ¿No cree la Comisión que nos encontramos ante una evidente falta de previsión que tendrá consecuencias muy negativas en el futuro?

Respuesta del Sr. Oettinger en nombre de la Comisión
(16 de agosto de 2012)

Además de la respuesta a la pregunta planteada por Su Señoría, la Comisión cree que no se puede llegar a una conclusión sobre la disponibilidad de biomasa forestal para abastecer las centrales eléctricas de Cataluña que utilizan este tipo de combustible. De hecho, deben tenerse en cuenta el número de centrales y su capacidad, además de la cuota de la biomasa forestal. Esta última es del 45 % en la central mencionada en la pregunta, pero podría ser muy inferior en las demás. También se debe tener en cuenta el suministro procedente de fuera de Cataluña.

En lo relativo al uso de los recursos forestales en Cataluña según datos recientes, mientras que se tala una media del 63 % del incremento forestal en la UE, esta cifra es de alrededor del 20 % en Cataluña. Por lo tanto, parece haber grandes posibilidades de mejorar la movilización sostenible de la madera para fines de bioenergía y otros en esa región. Esto también podría contribuir a la prevención de los incendios forestales. La Dirección General de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural publicó, en colaboración con la CEPE-FAO y Forest Europe, una «Guía de buenas prácticas para la movilización sostenible de madera en Europa» (*Good practice guidance on the sustainable mobilisation of wood in Europe* ([2])) que puede tenerse en cuenta a la hora de movilizar los recursos forestales.

A esto se añade que también se debe tener en cuenta el suministro procedente de fuera de Cataluña.

Además, su Señoría expresa el temor de los ciudadanos a que se usen otros combustibles derivados de residuos en esas instalaciones. Sin embargo, cabe recordar que un cambio a otros combustibles no puede realizarse fácilmente por razones técnicas y de autorización. Aun en las situaciones en las que pudiera darse el caso, y como se explica en la respuesta anterior de la Comisión, las emisiones están reguladas y no deberían dar lugar a un aumento de los riesgos para el medio ambiente o la salud pública.

Por último, como se indica en la respuesta a la pregunta E-004249/2012 de Su Señoría ([3]), la Comisión está estudiando en este momento si se ha examinado de manera suficiente la sostenibilidad de la biomasa.

([1]) http://www.creaf.uab.es/cat/organitzacio/index.htm
([2]) Se encuentra en: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/fore/publi/forest_brochure_en.pdf
([3]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006527/12
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Medium-term demand for forest biomass with regard to potential production in Catalonia

The biomass power plant that the Nufri company intends to build in El Palau d'Anglesola (Lleida, Spain) will burn tens of millions of kilograms per year of biomass from logging operations, energy crops, agricultural by-products and fruit trees ([1]).

According to scientists from the Centre for Ecological Research and Forestry Applications (CREAF), in Catalonia the potential production of forestry products that could be used to produce energy is estimated at 300 million kg. The planned plant would therefore burn 21% of Catalonia's total annual produce.

According to Catalonia's own regional government, 30 to 40 power plants using forest biomass, many of which have a high capacity, are now in various stages of operation in Catalonia. Taking this into account, we could easily conclude that there will not be enough fuel (forest biomass) to supply them even if the potential production of biomass from logging operations were to double. Many citizens fear that they are burning waste from various sources with serious consequences for the environment and public health.

Therefore, and in view of the answer to Written Question E-004249/2012:

What is the Commission's view on this matter? Does it not believe that this shows a clear lack of foresight which will have very negative consequences in the future?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(16 August 2012)

In addition to the reply to the question referred to by the Honourable Member the Commission is of the view that it is not possible to conclude on the availability of forest biomass to supply the power plants of Catalonia using this type of fuel. Indeed the number of plants, their capacity but also the share of forest biomass has to be taken into account. The latter is 45% in the power plant mentioned in the question but could be much lower in the other plants.

On the use of forest resources in Cataluña, according to recent data, while in the EU, on average 63% of the increment is felled, in Cataluña this figure is around 20%. Therefore, there seems to be great potential to further improve the sustainable mobilisation of wood in Cataluña for bioenergy and/or other purposes. This could also contribute to forest fire prevention. DG Agriculture and Rural development together with UNECE-FAO and Forest Europe published a 'Good practice guidance on the sustainable mobilisation of wood in Europe' ([2]) that might be considered when mobilising wood resources.

Additionally, one also needs to consider supply from outside Catalonia.

Furthermore, the Honourable Member expresses citizens' fear of other waste derived fuels being used in these plants. It is to be noted however that a shift to other fuels cannot take place that easily for technical and authorisation reasons. Even in situations where this could be the case and as explained in previous reply, emissions are regulated and should not lead to higher risks for the environment and public health.

Finally, as stated in the reply to E-4249/2012 ([3]) by the Honourable Member, the Commission is currently assessing whether or not the sustainability of biomass is sufficiently addressed.

([1]) http://www.creaf.uab.es/cat/organitzacio/index.htm
([2]) Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/fore/publi/forest_brochure_en.pdf
([3]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-006528/12
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(29 de junio de 2012)

Asunto: Consecuencias que tendrá la utilización de biomasa para uso eléctrico sobre el uso térmico

La elevada demanda de biomasa forestal para la obtención de electricidad competirá con la utilización de esta biomasa para uso térmico.

El uso de la biomasa para obtener electricidad es una novedad en Cataluña. De momento están funcionando solamente tres plantas de dimensiones moderadas. Para el uso térmico, en cambio, existen ya más de mil pequeñas instalaciones funcionando en escuelas, instalaciones deportivas y comunidades de vecinos.

En vista de la respuesta de la Comisión a la pregunta E-004249/2012, y teniendo en cuenta que:

— el uso térmico de la biomasa es mucho mas eficiente que el uso eléctrico;

— el uso térmico es rentable por si mismo y no necesita primas ni ayudas, mientras que el uso eléctrico no es rentable sin primas;

— el uso térmico evita directamente el consumo de combustibles fósiles, en tanto que el uso eléctrico produce una electricidad que puede igualmente obtenerse de fuentes renovables, de la que España es exportadora neta a todos los países vecinos. Es bien conocido que el parque español de generación eléctrica está muy sobredimensionado;

— el uso térmico crea una mayor cantidad de puestos de trabajo en relación a la biomasa consumida;

— en usos térmicos las emisiones están dispersas en muchos focos pequeños, por lo que inciden muy poco en el nivel de contaminación y en la salud de la población. En usos eléctricos, las grandes plantas (como la de Palau d'Anglesola, de 14 Mw.) producen un elevado nivel de emisiones en un solo foco, elevando los niveles locales de contaminación a valores potencialmente perjudiciales para el medio ambiente y la salud. En el caso de la planta de la empresa Nufri, el 90 % de los médicos y el 100 % de los pediatras de la comarca se han declarado en contra del emplazamiento previsto, por las consecuencias que prevén sobre la salud de la población;

— el uso térmico está ya implantado y en crecimiento; así, el Gobierno catalán ha subvencionado las calderas de calefacción con biomasa, en el marco de varios Planes de Energías Renovables. Si ahora se crea una gran demanda de centrales eléctricas, el uso térmico no podrá competir al no disfrutar de primas, y los equipos ya en funcionamiento quedarán en desuso;

¿qué opina la Comisión sobre los efectos de la substitución del uso térmico de la biomasa por el uso eléctrico?

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-006529/12
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(29 de junio de 2012)

Asunto: Impacto de las centrales de producción eléctrica con biomasa

Existe una diferencia entre el impacto producido por las plantas de uso térmico de la biomasa y las de uso eléctrico. Además de lo ya expuesto en la pregunta anterior (E-006528/2012), hay otros aspectos de este tema que se han de tener en cuenta.

Las centrales eléctricas de biomasa necesitan el suministro constante de gran cantidad de agua. La proyectada central de 14 Mw. en El Palau d'Anglesola, por ejemplo, necesita 60 000 litros/hora. Las centrales de uso térmico, sin embargo, consumen agua en pequeñas cantidades. El agua es un recurso escaso, especialmente en países como España.

Las centrales eléctricas de biomasa necesitan ocupar una gran superficie de suelo, porque deben almacenar combustible para varios días de funcionamiento. En el caso de la planta que proyecta la empresa Nufri, la ocupación prevista es de 60 000 m^2, con el problema añadido de que se trata de una zona agrícola de regadío con una calidad del suelo excepcional. La Unión Europea ha alertado frecuentemente sobre la pérdida de suelos agrícolas productivos. El uso térmico de la biomasa no requiere una ocupación específica del suelo, puesto que se trata de pequeñas calderas.

Para las centrales eléctricas de biomasa frecuentemente hay que construir líneas eléctricas para transportar la electricidad producida. El proyecto de planta de la empresa Nufri incluye una línea eléctrica de 21,89 Km. con 159 torres que discurre por terrenos agrícolas, con el consiguiente impacto visual y las molestias y servidumbres en las parcelas afectadas. Por el contrario, para el uso térmico no se necesita ninguna infraestructura específica.

Teniendo en cuenta estas consideraciones, así como lo limitado de la cantidad de biomasa disponible, y la respuesta recibida a la pregunta escrita E-004249/2012,

¿Qué opina la Comisión sobre el uso eléctrico de la biomasa, pudiendo destinarse a uso térmico que prácticamente no tiene impacto en el uso del suelo, los recursos y el paisaje? ¿No piensa la Comisión que es mejor desde diversos puntos de vista destinar la biomasa disponible a uso térmico?

Respuesta conjunta del Sr. Oettinger en nombre de la Comisión

(6 de agosto de 2012)

La generación de electricidad a partir de fuentes renovables, como mediante la combustión de biomasa, es una de las soluciones identificadas por los Estados miembros para cumplir los requisitos y objetivos de la Directiva sobre energías renovables ([1]). Atendiendo a las proyecciones presentadas por los Estados miembros en sus planes de acción nacionales en materia de energía renovable ([2]), en 2020, el sector de la calefacción y refrigeración seguirá siendo el sector energético más importante en términos de consumo final de energía a partir de la biomasa (90 Mtep) en comparación con el sector eléctrico (20 Mtep). Globalmente, más del 50 % del incremento del consumo final de energía a partir de la biomasa previsto por los Estados miembros entre 2010 y 2020 se dirigirá hacia el sector de la calefacción y refrigeración.

En su informe de 2010 sobre la sostenibilidad de la biomasa ([3]), la Comisión formuló recomendaciones a los Estados miembros sobre los criterios de sostenibilidad de la biomasa sólida usada para la producción de electricidad y para calefacción y refrigeración. En la actualidad, la Comisión está evaluando los planes nacionales para comprobar si tienen en cuenta suficientemente la sostenibilidad de la biomasa y está estudiando la posible oportunidad de medidas adicionales. La Comisión tiene previsto informar sobre este asunto en breve plazo.

([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]) http://ec.europa.eu/energy/renewables/action_plan_en.htm

([3]) COM(2010)11 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006528/12
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Consequences of using biomass to generate electricity rather than heat

The high demand for forest biomass for electricity generation will compete with the use of such biomass for producing heat.

The use of biomass to produce electricity is something of a novelty in Catalonia. At the moment there are only three medium-sized plants in operation. However, in the case of heat generation there are already more than 1 000 small installations operating in schools, sports facilities and residential communities.

Please consider the following:

— the use of biomass is much more efficient for producing heat than electricity;

— the thermal use of biomass is economically self-sufficient and does not need any grantsor aid, whereas using it for electricity is only profitable with grants;

— thermal use directly avoids the consumption of fossil fuels, whereas using biomass for electricity production generates electricity that can just as easily come from renewable sources, of which Spain is a net exporter to all its neighbouring countries. It is well-known that Spain's electricity generating sector is considerably oversized;

— thermal use creates more jobs in relation to the amount of biomass consumed;

— when used for heating, the emissions are dispersed among a number of small outlets and therefore have far less impact on contamination levels and public health. When using it for electricity, large plants like the 14-megawatt plant at Palau d'Anglesola produce high levels of emissions in one place, increasing local contamination to levels that are potentially harmful to the environment and to health. In the case of the plant that the company Nufri is planning, 90% of doctors and 100% of paediatricians in the region have spoken out against the planned installation because of the consequences they foresee for public health;

— thermal use is already established and is increasing; thus, the Catalan Government has subsidised biomass heating boilers as part of various plans for renewable energy. If there is currently high demand for electricity generating plants, thermal use will not be able to compete as it is not supported by grants, and the facilities already in operation will fall into disuse.

In view of the above and the Commission's reply to Question E-004249/2012, what is the Commission's opinion of the effects of replacing the thermal use of biomass with using it for electricity production?

Question for written answer E-006529/12
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Impact of biomass electricity power plants

There is a difference between the impact of biomass thermal power plants and biomass electricity power plants. In addition to what was stated in the previous Question (E-006528/2012), there are other aspects of this matter that need to be taken into account.

Biomass electricity power plants need a constant supply of large amounts of water. The planned 14 megawatt power plant in El Palau d'Anglesola, for example, needs 60 000 litres per hour. Water is a scarce resource, especially in countries like Spain.

Biomass electricity power plants take up a great deal of space as they have to store sufficient fuel for several days of operation. In the case of the plant that the company Nufri is planning, the proposed area is 60 000 m^2. In addition, this is an irrigated agricultural area where the soil is exceptionally good. The European Union has often warned of the loss of productive agricultural land. The use of biomass for heat generation does not require such large areas of land as the boilers are small.

Biomass electricity power plants often require the building of electric power lines to transport the electricity produced. The plan for the Nufri plant includes a 21.89-kilometre electricity power line with 159 pylons passing through agricultural land. This has a visual and disruptive impact and would affect the rights of way on the farmland involved. On the other hand, no specific infrastructure is needed for thermal use.

Taking these considerations into account, as well as the limited amount of available biomass, and the reply given to Written Question E-004249/2012:

What is the Commission's view on using biomass for electricity, when it could be used for producing heat which involves almost no impact on land use, resources and the landscape? Does it not think it better from several viewpoints to use the available biomass to generate heat?

Joint answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(6 August 2012)

Renewable electricity generation, including through biomass combustion, is one of the solutions identified by Member States to meet the requirements and objectives of the Renewable Energy Directive ([1]). According to projections provided by Member States in their National Renewable Energy Action Plans ([2]), in 2020, the heating and cooling sector would remain the most important energy sector in terms of final energy consumption from biomass (90 Mtoe) compared to the electricity sector (20 Mtoe). Overall, more than 50% of the increase of final energy consumption from biomass planned by Member States between 2010 and 2020 would be directed towards the heating and cooling sector.

In its 2010 Report on biomass sustainability ([3]), the Commission made recommendations to Member States on sustainability criteria for solid biomass used in electricity and heating and cooling. The Commission is currently assessing whether national schemes have sufficiently addressed the sustainability of biomass and is considering whether additional measures would be appropriate. The Commission is planning to report on this shortly.

([1]) Directive 2009/28/EC of the 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]) http://ec.europa.eu/energy/renewables/action_plan_en.htm
([3]) COM(2010)11 final.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-006530/12
an die Kommission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(29. Juni 2012)

Betrifft: EU-Handelskammer in Südkorea

Medienberichten zufolge stellt die EU-Handelskammer in Südkorea wegen eines Streits um Steuerforderungen und Steuerstrafen in Millionenhöhe ihre Arbeit ein. Der EU-Handelskammer wird unter anderem vorgeworfen, keine Mehrwertsteuer auf ihre Umsätze gezahlt zu haben. Die EU-Handelskammer wiederum weist darauf hin, dass sie wie andere ausländische Handelskammern in Südkorea den Status einer gemeinnützigen Organisation hat und daher keine Mehrwertsteuer entrichten muss. Zudem wurde anscheinend keine der anderen ausländischen Kammern jemals geprüft.

1. Wie steht die Kommission zu dem Streit um die EU-Handelskammer?

2. Sieht sie eine politische Motivation hinter den Prüfungen?

3. Was wird auf EU-Ebene unternommen, um während der Dauer des Streits in Südkorea tätige europäische Unternehmen weiter zu unterstützen?

Antwort von Karel De Gucht im Namen der Kommission
(8. August 2012)

Der Kommission ist bekannt, dass die koreanischen Steuerbehörden die Europäische Handelskammer in Korea (EUCCK) überprüft hat. Die EUCCK ist eine privatrechtliche Organisation, die vor mehr als 20 Jahren in Korea als unabhängige Vereinigung nach koreanischem Recht gegründet wurde und europäische Unternehmen in Korea vertreten. Der EUCCK kommt zusammen mit anderen Handelskammern eine wertvolle Rolle zu, da sie Input und Ansichten der Privatwirtschaft zu Handels- und Investitionsfragen liefern, die u. a. während der Verhandlungen und der Umsetzung des Freihandelsabkommens zwischen der EU und Korea einflossen.

Da die EUCCK dem koreanischen Steuerrecht unterliegt, muss sie dieses beachten. Die Kommission sieht sich nicht in der Lage, zu den Gründen für die Steuerprüfung in Korea Stellung zu nehmen. Soweit der Kommission bekannt, hat die Geschäftsführung der EUCCK die Entscheidung der Steuerbehörde angefochten. Die Kommission erwartet, dass das koreanische Rechtssystem eine faire, unvoreingenommene und ausgewogene Behandlung der EUCCK gewährleistet, wie sie jede andere derartige Organisation in Korea erhalten würde, und dass ihr alle rechtlich zulässigen Verteidigungsmöglichkeiten gewährt werden. Dies betrifft auch die mögliche Einlegung von Rechtsmitteln.

Da die EUCCK nicht über ausreichende Mittel verfügt, die Steuernachzahlung sowie die auferlegte Strafe zu begleichen, befindet sie sich nach Kenntnis der Kommission in einem Umstrukturierungsprozess. Es ist im Interesse der EU, dass die europäischen Unternehmen in Korea über eine angemessene Vertretung verfügen. Die Kommission wird die einschlägigen Anstrengungen der europäischen Unternehmen in Korea in geeigneter Weise unterstützen. Allerdings müssen sich die europäischen Unternehmen in Korea entscheiden, wie sie eine angemessene Vertretung am besten sicherstellen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006530/12
to the Commission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: European Union Chamber of Commerce in South Korea

According to media reports, the European Union Chamber of Commerce in South Korea is to cease its activities over a dispute in relation to tax demands and tax penalties of several million. Among the accusations levelled at the European Union Chamber of Commerce is the claim that it had not paid value added tax (VAT) on its turnover. In turn, the European Union Chamber of Commerce points out that, like other foreign chambers of commerce in South Korea, it is a non-profit-making organisation and is therefore exempt from paying VAT. Furthermore, it would appear that none of the other foreign chambers have ever been audited.

1. What is the Commission's view of the dispute in relation to the European Union Chamber of Commerce?

2. Does it believe that the audits are politically motivated?

3. What steps are being taken at European Union level to continue to support European businesses operating in South Korea for the duration of the dispute?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(8 August 2012)

The Commission is aware of the investigation which has been conducted by the Korean Tax Authorities on the EU Chamber of Commerce in Korea (EUCCK). The EUCCK is a private association independently established in Korea more than 20 years ago, under Korean law, and representing European businesses in Korea. The EUCCK, together with other Chambers of Commerce, has played a valuable role in providing input and views from the private sector on trade and investment issues, including in the process of the negotiation and implementation of the EU-Korea Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

Being subject to Korean tax laws, the EUCCK must abide by them. The Commission is not in a position to comment on the motivation of the tax audits in Korea. The Commission understands that the EUCCK management is legally contesting the legal determination made by the Tax Office. The Commission expects that the Korean legal system will ensure that the EUCCK is treated in a fair, non-discriminatory and balanced way as any other organisation of this kind would be treated in Korea and is granted every possibility to defend itself according to the law; including through an appeal process.

The Commission has been informed that, due to the lack of financial means to pay for the tax recovery and penalty imposed on them, the EUCCK is in the process of restructuring. It is in the interest of the EU to have a proper representation of the European business community in Korea and the Commission will support as appropriate the efforts by the EU businesses in Korea towards this goal. However, it is for the European business in Korea to decide on the best way to ensure their proper representation.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-006531/12
an die Kommission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(29. Juni 2012)

Betrifft: Schuldzuweisung Eurokrise

Deutschland wird vorgeworfen, es habe mit zu niedrigen Löhnen den anderen Staaten Europas unnötig Konkurrenz gemacht und die Eurokrise entfacht. Dies hätte die deutsche Nachfrage (etwa nach italienischer Pasta und griechischem Olivenöl) einerseits geschwächt, andererseits die deutschen Exporte so stark verbilligt, dass die Industrien in den südlichen Euroländern keine Chance mehr gehabt hätten, am Heimmarkt zu bestehen. Der Internationale Währungsfonds fordert gar in seinem jüngsten Bericht, Deutschland solle sein Lohnniveau an das von Frankreich und Italien anpassen.

Das Deutsche Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung (DIW) wiederum kommt in einer Studie zu dem Schluss, dass sich die Lohnstückkosten nicht langsamer als im Schnitt der Eurozone entwickelt haben und Deutschlands Exporte in die Eurozone sich seit Einführung des Euros kaum geändert haben. Nach einer Stagnation zwischen 2001 und 2007 konnten die deutschen Unternehmen erst in den Jahren nach dem Ausbruch der Krise etwas mehr in Europa absetzen. Lediglich außerhalb des Kontinents fand das deutsche Exportwunder statt. Und an diesem Boom der Deutschen naschten die anderen Euroländer mit. Es wird der Schluss gezogen, dass Deutschland von der Euro-Einführung de facto gar nicht profitiert hat und dass die deutsche Industrie die Unternehmen der anderen Euroländer gar nicht verdrängen konnte, da sie nicht stärker vertreten war als vorher.

1. Wie steht die Kommission zu den Vorwürfen?

2. Wie ist die Haltung der Kommission zu den Forderungen des Internationalen Währungsfonds nach Anpassung des deutschen Lohnniveaus?

Antwort von Herrn Rehn im Namen der Kommission
(7. August 2012)

Nach Auffassung der Kommission sollten alle Mitgliedstaaten in angemessener Weise zum Abbau von Zahlungsbilanzungleichgewichten im Euroraum beitragen. Der Abbau von Ungleichgewichten in Ländern, die einen Überschuss ausweisen, dürfte Länder mit einem Defizit in den von ihnen unternommenen beträchtlichen Anpassungsanstrengungen unterstützen.

In Bezug auf Deutschland stimmen wir der Schlussfolgerung des jüngsten Berichts der Dienststellen des Internationalen Währungsfonds zu den Artikel-IV-Konsultationen 2012 zu, dass man den marktgetriebenen Prozess des Abbaus von Ungleichgewichten, der bereits eingesetzt hat, voranschreiten lassen sollte. Die aufgrund des starken Arbeitsmarkts und der gesunden Bilanzen steigenden Einkommen dürften Konsum und Investitionen ankurbeln und so dazu beitragen, dass sich das Wachstum wieder stärker hin zur Binnennachfrage verlagert. Laut Frühjahrsprognose 2012 der Kommission werden im laufenden und im kommenden Jahr Lohnzuwächse in einer Größenordnung von etwa 3 % erwartet.

Abgesehen von dem Vorschlag, die Voraussetzungen für eine dem Produktivitätswachstum entsprechende Lohnentwicklung zu schaffen, hat die Kommission in ihren im Rahmen des Europäischen Semesters 2012 ausgegebenen länderspezifischen Empfehlungen verschiedene Bereiche genannt, in denen Deutschland seine Anstrengungen zur Steigerung der Produktivität fortsetzen bzw. verstärken sollte: Erhöhung der Effizienz der öffentlichen Ausgaben und des Steuersystems, Angehen der verbleibenden strukturellen Schwächen im Finanzsektor, Verbesserung der Arbeitsmarktbeteiligung bestimmter Personengruppen und Förderung des Wettbewerbs im Dienstleistungssektor und in den Netzindustrien. Durch Umsetzung dieser Empfehlungen würde Deutschland sein Potenzialwachstum steigern und seine Wachstumsquellen diversifizieren und damit auch zum Abbau der Zahlungsbilanzungleichgewichte innerhalb des Euroraums beitragen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006531/12
to the Commission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Finger-pointing and the euro crisis

Germany stands accused of unnecessarily competing with other European states through excessively low wage levels, thus fuelling the euro crisis. It is claimed that this has weakened German demand (for Italian pasta and Greek olive oil, for example) while making German exports so cheap that the industrial sector in the southern states of the euro area could not possibly survive in the domestic market. In its latest report, the International Monetary Fund has even called on Germany to bring its wage levels into line with those of France and Italy.

However, a study carried out by the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW) comes to the conclusion that the unit cost of labour has not developed more slowly than the euro area average and that Germany's exports to the euro area have hardly changed since the introduction of the euro. Following stagnation between 2001 and 2007, German businesses only started to sell more to Europe in the years following the outbreak of the crisis. The German export miracle took place exclusively beyond Europe's borders. The other members of the euro area have also enjoyed the benefits of the German boom. The conclusion drawn is that Germany has not in fact profited from the introduction of the euro at all and that German industry could not possibly drive undertakings in other euro area Member States out of business, as it was in no stronger position in the past.

1. What is the Commission's view of these accusations?

2. What is the Commission's attitude regarding the International Monetary Fund's call for an adjustment in German wage levels?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(7 August 2012)

The Commission is of the view that all Member States should contribute in an appropriate manner to reducing external imbalances within the euro area. Rebalancing in surplus countries should support the considerable ongoing adjustment efforts in deficit countries.

As regards Germany, we share the conclusion of the latest International Monetary Fund Staff Report on the 2012 Article IV consultation to let take place the market-driven process of rebalancing, which can already be observed. Rising incomes on the back of the strong labour market and healthy balance sheets should bolster consumption and investment, contributing to rebalancing growth towards domestic demand. Indeed, according to the Commission's spring 2012 forecast, wage growth of around 3% is expected this year and next.

Besides suggesting to create conditions for wages to grow in line with productivity, the Commission has identified in its country-specific recommendations under the 2012 European Semester various areas where Germany should continue or step up efforts to raise productivity. These include increasing the efficiency of public spending and of the tax system, addressing the remaining structural weaknesses of the financial sector, increasing labour market participation of certain groups, and enhancing competition in the services sectors and network industries. By implementing these recommendations Germany would increase potential growth and diversify its sources, and hence also contribute to reducing external imbalances within the euro area.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-006533/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Niki Tzavela (EFD)
(29 Ιουνίου 2012)

Θέμα: Ευρωπαϊκή απαγόρευση εισαγωγών ιρανικού πετρελαίου

Η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση, βασιζόμενη σε στοιχεία σχετικά με το πυρηνικό πρόγραμμα του Ιράν, αποφάσισε να απαγορεύσει τις εισαγωγές ιρανικού πετρελαίου στην ΕΕ. Η Ελλάδα εισήγαγε πετρέλαιο από το Ιράν υπό ευνοϊκούς όρους, όπως για παράδειγμα την αγορά με πίστωση. Ενόψει της απαγόρευσης εισαγωγών, η Ελλάδα απήυθυνε έκκληση για ειδική μεταχείριση που θα της επιτρέψει να συνεχίσει τις εισαγωγές πετρελαίου από το Ιράν υπό ευνοϊκούς όρους, με σκοπό τη μείωση της οικονομικής επιβάρυνσης που προκύπτει λόγω της εξάρτησης από εισαγόμενο πετρέλαιο. Ωστόσο, η ΕΕ απέρριψε την έκκληση της Ελλάδας για ειδική μεταχείριση και η έναρξη απαγόρευσης εισαγωγών αναμένεται στο σύνολο της ΕΕ για την 1η Ιουλίου 2012.

Με το ενδεχόμενο της οικονομικής κατάρρευσης της Ελλάδας λόγω της κρίσης καθώς και των πιθανών επιπτώσεών της στην Ευρωζώνη, λαμβάνοντας υπόψη τούς λόγους της απαγόρευσης και κατανοώντας την ανάγκη για μια ολιστική ευρωπαϊκή αντιμετώπιση του πυρηνικού προγράμματος του Ιράν, θα θέλαμε να ρωτήσουμε την Επιτροπή:

1. Ποια είναι η άποψη της Επιτροπής σχετικά με την άρνηση της απαλλαγής της Ελλάδας από την απαγόρευση εισαγωγών;

2. Πιστεύει η Επιτροπή πως αυτή η απόφαση μπορεί να βοηθήσει την ελληνική κρίση; Αν ναι, με ποιον τρόπο;

Απάντηση της Ύπατης Εκπροσώπου/Αντιπροέδρου κας Ashton εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(13 Αυγούστου 2012)

1. Οι αποφάσεις σχετικά με την επιβολή κυρώσεων, συμπεριλαμβανομένων ενδεχόμενων παρεκκλίσεων, εξαιρέσεων και άλλων τέτοιων στοιχείων, βασίζονται πάντοτε σε απόφαση του Συμβουλίου, η οποία λαμβάνεται σύμφωνα με τις διαδικασίες που ισχύουν για την κοινή εξωτερική πολιτική και πολιτική ασφάλειας (ΚΕΠΠΑ). Η Ελλάδα, ως μέρος του Συμβουλίου, έχει συμφωνήσει πλήρως με το μέτρο.

2. Όσον αφορά την απαγόρευση εισαγωγών ιρανικού πετρελαίου στην ΕΕ, επισημαίνεται ότι το Συμβούλιο θέσπισε το μέτρο τον Ιανουάριο, αλλά ταυτόχρονα συμφώνησε για μια μεταβατική περίοδο μέχρι την 1η Ιουλίου 2012 με χορήγηση εξαιρέσεων για ήδη συναφθείσες συμβάσεις. Έτσι δόθηκε χρόνος στην Ελλάδα να προετοιμαστεί για την πλήρη εφαρμογή του μέτρου με ελαχιστοποίηση των ενδεχόμενων αρνητικών επιπτώσεων σε αυτή.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006533/12
to the Commission
Niki Tzavela (EFD)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: European embargo on Iran's oil exports

The European Union, on the basis of evidence regarding Iran's nuclear programme, has decided to enforce an embargo on the import of Iranian oil into the EU. Greece had been importing oil from Iran under favourable conditions, such as buying on credit. Under the embargo scheme, Greece had pleaded for special treatment that would allow her to continue to import oil from Iran under favourable conditions, in order to ease the financial burden that comes from dependence on imported oil. However, the EU rejected the Greek calls for special treatment and the embargo was scheduled to come into force for the whole of the EU on 1 July, 2012.

In the light of the severe Greek financial crisis and the possible side effects on the eurozone in the event of a Greek meltdown, and considering the reasons for the embargo as well as understanding the need for a holistic European action towards Iran's nuclear programme, I would like to ask the Commission:

1. What is the Commission's opinion on the refusal to grant Greece exemption from the embargo?

2. Does the Commission believe that such a decision will aid the Greek crisis in some way? If so, in what way?

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

1. Decisions regarding the adoption of sanctions, including possible derogations, exemptions and other such elements, are always based on a decision by the Council, taken in accordance with the procedures applicable to the common foreign and security policy (CFSP). Greece, as part of the Council, has fully agreed to the measure.

2. As regards the prohibition on the import of Iranian oil into the EU, it is noted that the Council agreed to adopt the measure in January, but at the same time allowed for a transition period until 1 July 2012 granting exemptions for contracts already concluded.. This has given Greece time to prepare for the full application of the measure with a view to minimising any possible negative effect on Greece.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-006535/12
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(29 ta' Ġunju 2012)

Suġġett: L-enerġija rurali

Studju reċenti juri li 40 miljun ċittadin Ewropew, li l-parti l-kbira tagħhom jgħixu f'żoni rurali, mhumiex konnessi mal-grilja enerġetika. Iż-żoni rurali jaffaċċaw problema unika f'dak li għandu x'jaqsam mal-enerġija rinnovabbli: apparagun tad-djar fil-bliet, dawn id-djar għandhom tendenza li jkunu kemm eqdem, u dan jagħmilhom inkompatibbli mat-teknoloġija enerġetika effiċjenti, kif ukoll iktar imbiegħda minn xulxin, fattur li jwassal għal konnettività tal-grilja skarsa. Minkejja dawn il-fatturi, l-isforzi biex tiżdied l-effiċjenza enerġetika, bħalma hi d-Direttiva dwar l-Enerġija Rinnovabbli (2002/28/KE), għandhom tendenza li jikkonċentraw primarjament fuq iż-żoni urbani.

Fid-dawl tal-fatt li ż-żoni rurali jammontaw għal 90 % tat-territorju tal-UE u għal 56 % tal-popolazzjoni tagħha, il-Kummissjoni qed tippjana li timmodifika l-istrateġiji eżistenti jew tfassal direttivi biex jiġu indirizzati aħjar il-bżonnijiet partikolari ta' dawn ir-reġjuni, sabiex l-Ewropa kollha kemm tkun iktar viċin li tissodisfa l-objettivi ta' enerġija rinnovabbli tagħha?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Oettinger f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(1 ta' Awwissu 2012)

Id-Direttiva dwar l-Enerġija Rinnovabbli ([1]) tistabbilixxi objettiv ta' sehem ta' 20% ta' enerġija rinnovabbli tal-konsum totali tal-enerġija fl-UE sal-2020, permezz tat-twaqqif ta' miri nazzjonali legalment vinkolanti. Id-Direttiva ma tiffokax b'mod partikolari fuq żoni urbani billi tħalli r-responsabbiltà f'idejn l-Istati Membri biex jiddeċiedu kif għandha tintlaħaq il-mira nazzjonali tagħhom.

Safejn huma kkonċernati ż-żoni rurali, il-Kummissjoni hija tal-opinjoni li dawn għandhom rwol importanti fl-iżvilupp tal-enerġija rinnovabbli fil-perspettiva li twassal għas-sena 2020. It-teknoloġiji tal-enerġija rinnovabbli jistgħu wkoll jipprovdu l-enerġija għal żoni li ma għandhomx aċċess għas-sistema tal-elettriku. Din hija r-raġuni għaliex l-appoġġ għall-bidla lejn ekonomija b'emissjonijiet baxxi tal-karbonju u li hija reżistenti għat-tibdil fil-klima (b'attenzjoni, fost l-oħrajn, fuq l-iffaċilitar tal-provvista u l-użu ta' sorsi rinnovabbli tal-enerġija) hija waħda mill-prijoritajiet identifikati mill-Kummissjoni fil-proposta tagħha tar-Regolament dwar l-iżvilupp rurali għall-perjodu 2013-2020 ([2]). Il-Kummissjoni riċentament ikkummissjonat ukoll studju dwar l-impatti tal-enerġija rinnovabbli fuq il-bdiewa Ewropej. Dan l-istudju se jiġi ppubblikat dalwaqt mill-Kummissjoni.

([1]) Id-Direttiva 2009/28/KE tal-Parlament Ewropew u tal-Kunsill tat-23 ta' April 2009 dwar il-promozzjoni tal-użu tal-enerġija minn sorsi rinnovabbli u li temenda u sussegwentement tħassar id-Direttivi 2001/77/KE u 2003/30/KE, ĠU L 140, 5.6.2009.

([2]) COM (2011) 627 finali.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006535/12
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Rural energy

A recent study reveals that 40 million European citizens, mostly living in rural areas, are not connected to the energy grid. Rural areas face a unique problem when it comes to renewable energy: compared with city housing, homes tend to be both older, making them incompatible with energy-efficient technology, and further apart from one another, making for poor grid connectivity. Such factors notwithstanding, efforts to increase energy efficiency, such as the Renewable Energy Directive (2009/28/EC), tend to focus primarily on urban areas.

Given that rural areas make up 90% of the EU's territory and account for 56% of its population, does the Commission plan to modify existing strategies or draw up directives to better address the particular needs of these regions, in order to bring Europe as a whole closer to meeting its renewable energy goals?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(1 August 2012)

The Renewable Energy Directive ([1]) establishes an objective of a 20% renewable energy share in total EU energy consumption by 2020, through the establishment of national legally binding targets. It does not focus in particular on urban areas as it leaves the responsibility to Member States to decide how their national target should be reached.

As far as rural areas are concerned, the Commission is of the view that these have an important role to play in renewable energy development towards 2020. Renewable energy technologies can also provide energy to areas that do not have access to the grid. This is why the support of the shift towards a low-carbon and climate resilient economy (with a focus, among other things, on facilitating the supply and use of renewable sources of energy) is one of the priorities identified by the Commission in its proposal of Regulation on rural development for the period 2013-2020 ([2]). Also, the Commission has recently commissioned a study on the impacts of renewable energy on European farmers. This study will be published shortly by the Commission.

([1]) Directive 2009/28/EC of the 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]) COM(2011) 627 final.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-006536/12
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(29 ta' Ġunju 2012)

Suġġett: Iż-Żona Ewropea ta' Edukazzjoni Għolja u l-Istitut Ewropew tal-Innovazzjoni u t-Teknoloġija

Tul is-snin, l-Unjoni Ewropea appoġġat iż-Żona Ewropea ta' Edukazzjoni Għolja, li tinvolvi 46 pajjiż u tfittex li jkollha effett rivoluzzjonarju fl-edukazzjoni għolja. Iż-Żona Ewropea ta' Edukazzjoni Għolja hija kompatibbli mal-għanijiet tal-UE stess ta' sistemi tal-edukazzjoni aħjar u iktar koerenti fl-Ewropa. Fil-passat, l-UE tat kontribut liż-Żona Ewropea ta' Edukazzjoni Għolja permezz tal-Programmi Qafas dwar ir-Riċerka u l-Iżvilupp Teknoloġiku tagħha, li, għal deċennju, ipprovdew aġenda ta' modernizzar għall-finanzjament tar-riċerka, żieda fil-kompetittività tal-edukazzjoni, u trawwim tal-mobilità u l-impjegabilità tal-ħaddiema Ewropej. L-iktar wieħed riċenti minn dawn il-programmi, l-FP7, se jiskadi fl-aħħar tal-2013, u r-rwol tiegħu se jitwettaq bħala parti mill-inizjattiva Orizzont 2020 tal-UE.

L-inizjattiva Orizzont 2020 tpoġġi ż-Żona Ewropea ta' Edukazzjoni Għolja taħt l-awspiċi tal-Istitut Ewropew tal-Innovazzjoni u t-Teknoloġija (EIT), aġenzija li ġiet stabbilita fl-2008 sabiex iżżid il-kompetittività u t-tkabbir sostenibbli fl-Ewropa. Tradizzjonalment, l-EIT iffoka fuq l-innovazzjoni u l-intraprenditorjat, u minkejja li s-sistema ta' edukazzjoni għolja hija parti minn dan, ma kienx hemm kollaborazzjoni uffiċjali maż-Żona Ewropea ta' Edukazzjoni Għolja.

Il-Kummissjoni tqis li ż-Żona Ewropea ta' Edukazzjoni Għolja hija ta' prijorità għolja għall-inizjattiva Orizzont 2020 bħalma kienet għall-programmi preċedenti, meta wieħed jikkunsidra li din testendi lil hinn mis-27 Stat Membru tal-UE? Ir-rwol tal-EIT fir-rigward taż-Żona Ewropea ta' Edukazzjoni Għolja kif se jkun differenti minn dak tal-FP7, u l-Kummissjoni x'garanziji tista' tagħti li l-EIT se jkun effikaċi biex jieħu f'idejh dan ir-rwol ġdid u jtejjeb l-edukazzjoni għolja?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sinjura Vassiliou f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(3 ta' Awwissu 2012)

L-Unjoni Ewropea ssostni l-iżvilupp taż-Żona Ewropea ta' Edukazzjoni Għolja (EHEA) kemm permezz tal-parteċipazzjoni attiva tal-Kummissjoni Ewropea fid-diversi fora ta' politika stabbiliti bħala parti mill-Proċess ta' Bolonja, kif ukoll billi tikkontribwixxi finanzjarjament, permezz ta' programmi ta' edukazzjoni u taħriġ ġestiti mill-Kummissjoni, għat-tmexxija tas-Segretarjat ta' Bolonja, tal-Konferenzi Ministerjali, u tan-netwerk ta' esperti dwar il-Proċess ta' Bolonja u dwar ir-riforma tal-edukazzjoni ogħla li joperaw fil-pajjiżi tal-UE u dawk lil hinn minnha, li jipparteċipaw fil-Proċess ta' Bolonja. Il-Programmi ta' Qafas dwar ir-Riċerka, min-naħa l-oħra, ikkontribwew bil-kbir għat-tisħiħ taż-Żona Ewropea tar-Riċerka (ŻER), li l-kopertura ġeografika tagħha hi differenti minn dik tas-47 pajjiż tal-EHEA.

L-Istitut Ewropew tal-Innovazzjoni u t-Teknoloġija (EIT) huwa parti integrali tal-inizjattiva Orizzont 2020. Il-missjoni tiegħu hi li jintegra t-trijangolu tal-għarfien: l-edukazzjoni ogħla, ir-riċerka u l-innovazzjoni. Dan jagħmlu prinċipalment permezz tal-Komunitajiet ta' Konoxxenza u Innovazzjoni (KKI). Dawn tal-aħħar jinkludu għadd ta' attivitajiet fl-edukazzjoni b'komponent intraprenditorjali qawwi. Għalkemm l-EIT jista' jagħixxi wkoll bħala mudell għal eżempji oħra ta' kooperazzjoni bejn l-edukazzjoni, ir-riċerka u l-innovazzjoni tul l-EHEA u lil hinn minnha, l-inizjattiva Orizzont 2020 ma tpoġġix speċifikament l-EHEA taħt l-awspiċi tal-EIT u lanqas ma tipproponi li għandu jkollha xi rwol partikolari b'rabta mal-iżvilupp tal-EHEA nnfisha.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006536/12
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: EHEA — EIT

Over the years, the European Union has supported the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), which involves 46 countries and seeks to revolutionise higher education. The EHEA is compatible with the EU's own goals of better and more coherent education systems in Europe. In the past, the EU has contributed to the EHEA by means of its Framework Programmes for Research and Technological Development, which, for a decade, have provided a modernisation agenda for funding research, increasing competitiveness in education, and fostering mobility and employability among European workers. The latest of these programmes, FP7, expires at the end of 2013, and its role will be taken over as part of the EU's Horizon 2020.

Horizon 2020 places the EHEA under the auspices of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), an agency established in 2008 to increase sustainable growth and competitiveness in Europe. The EIT has traditionally focused on innovation and entrepreneurship, and although the higher education system is a part of this, it has not officially collaborated with the EHEA.

Does the Commission consider the EHEA to be as high a priority for Horizon 2020 as it was for past programmes, given that it extends beyond the immediate 27 Member States of the EU? How will the role of EIT in relation to the EHEA differ from that of FP7, and what assurances can the Commission provide that it will be effective in assuming its new role and improving higher education?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(3 August 2012)

The European Union supports the development of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) both through the active participation of the European Commission in the various policy fora established as part of the Bologna Process, and by financially contributing, through the education and training programmes managed by the Commission, to the running of the Bologna Secretariat, the Ministerial Conferences, and the network of experts on the Bologna Process and on higher education reform operating in EU and non-EU Bologna countries. The Research Framework Programmes have on the other hand largely contributed to the strengthening of the European Research Area (ERA), of which the geographical coverage differs from that of the 47 countries of the EHEA.

The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) is an integral part of Horizon 2020. Its mission is to integrate the knowledge triangle: higher education, research and innovation. It does this primarily through the Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs). The latter include a number of activities in education with a strong entrepreneurial component. Although the EIT can also act as a model for other examples of education-research-innovation cooperation throughout the EHEA and beyond, Horizon 2020 does not specifically place the EHEA under the auspices of the EIT nor propose that it should have any particular role in relation to the development of the EHEA itself.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-006537/12
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(29 ta' Ġunju 2012)

Suġġett: Politika tas-sajd

Il-politika komuni tas-sajd (PKS) tal-Unjoni Ewropea bniet is-sisien għall-monitoraġġ tal-istokkijiet tal-ispeċijiet differenti u għall-istabbiliment ta' prattiki tas-sajd sostenibbli. Maż-żmien, iżda, ġiet espressa kritika dwar in-nuqqasijiet tal-PKS li rriżultat fi proposti għal riformi li se jiġu nnegozjati din is-sena biex jidħlu fis-seħħ fis-snin li ġejjin. Fost dawn ir-riformi nsibu projbizzjoni fuq ir-rimi, ir-reġjonalizzazzjoni tal-prattiki tas-sajd u d-determinazzjoni tar-rendiment massimu sostenibbli.

L-adegwamenti politiċi se jissarrfu f'aktar restrizzjonijiet fuq l-industrija tas-sajd li diġà tinsab taħt pressjoni qawwija. Billi l-konformità min-naħa tal-Istati Membri kienet problema fl-imgħoddi u li ċerti pajjiżi huma sproporzjonatament dipendenti fuq id-dħul mis-sajd, il-Kummissjoni għandha pjanijiet biex fir-riformi tagħha tinkludi dispożizzjonijiet li se jgħinu lill-pajjiżi dipendenti bil-qawwi fuq din l-industrija, bil-għan li jkunu jistgħu jikkooperaw aħjar mal-proċess ta' implimentazzjoni?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sna Damanaki f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(7 ta' Awwissu 2012)

Il-Kummissjoni qed tipproponi li l-Fond Ewropew Marittimu u tas-Sajd (FEMS) se jgħin lis-settur tas-sajd fl-UE kollha fl-implimentazzjoni tar-riforma tal-Politika Komuni tas-Sajd u fit-tranżizzjoni għal sajd sostenibbli. Wieħed mill-għanijiet ewlenin tar-riforma huwa li s-settur tas-sajd isir ekonomikament vijabbli u reżiljenti għax-xokkijiet esterni u għall-kompetizzjoni minn pajjiżi terzi.

B'mod partikolari, il-FEMS propost jinkludi appoġġ għat-tranżizzjoni lejn Rendiment Massimu Sostenibbli (Maximum Sustainable Yield — MSY) u l-iffaċilitar tal-introduzzjoni gradwali ta' projbizzjoni fuq ħut skartat, li tinvolvi miżuri bħal appoġġ għal irkaptu u għal tekniki tas-sajd aktar selettivi, investiment f'tagħmir abbord u f'faċilitajiet tal-port meħtieġa għall-użu ta' qabdiet mhux mixtieqa, miżuri ta' kummerċjalizzazzjoni u pproċessar.

Fl-aħħar nett, il-FEMS jiffoka b'mod speċjali fuq komunitajiet kostali u interni li jiddependu fuq is-sajd u se jappoġġa t-tkabbir ekonomiku u l-ħolqien tal-impjiegi permezz ta' proġetti li jżidu l-valur tas-sajd u tal-attivitajiet relatati mas-sajd u permezz ta' diversifikazzjoni favur setturi oħra tal-ekonomija marittima.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006537/12
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Fishing policy

The European Union's Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) has laid the groundwork for monitoring stocks of different species and establishing sustainable fishing practices. Over the years, however, criticism has been expressed regarding the shortcomings of the CFP, leading to reform proposals, which are to be negotiated this year and to enter into force in the following years. These reforms include a discard ban, regionalisation of fishing practices, and the determination of maximum sustainable yield.

The policy adjustments will mean further restrictions on the already hard-pressed fishing industry. Given that compliance by the Member States has been a problem in the past and that certain countries are disproportionately dependent on revenue from fishing, does the Commission have any plans to include provisions in its reforms that will aid countries heavily reliant on this industry, so that they can better cooperate in the implementation process?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(7 August 2012)

The Commission proposes that the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) will assist the fisheries sector across the EU in the implementation of the common fisheries policy reform and in the transition to sustainable fishing. One of the main aims of the reform is to make the fisheries sector economically viable and resilient to external shocks and to competition from third countries.

In particular, the proposed EMFF includes support for the transition to Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) and facilitate the gradual introduction of a discard ban, involving measures such as support for more selective gears and fishing techniques, investment in equipment on board and in port facilities necessary for the use of unwanted catches, marketing measures and processing.

Finally, the EMFF has a special focus on coastal and inland communities dependent on fishing and will support the creation of growth and jobs through projects adding value to fishing and fishing-related activities and through diversification to other sectors of the maritime economy.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-006538/12
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(29 ta' Ġunju 2012)

Suġġett: Testijet tal-istress

L-Unjoni Ewropea bdiet l-prattika ta' testijiet tal-istress bħala konsegwenza tal-kriżi finanzjarja globali, sabiex tittestja r-reżistenza tal-banek Ewropej u tevalwa r-riskju sistemiku ġenerali tas-swieq finanzjarji. It-testijiet tal-istress għandhom jitweqqu fuq bażi annwali u jinvolvu taħlita ta' 90 bank minn Stati Membri differenti. Madankollu, l-Awtorità Bankarja Ewropea (ABE) mhux se twettaq il-proċess din is-sena u mistennija li twettaq ir-ronda li jmiss fl-2013.

In-nuqqasijiet fir-rigward tat-testijiet tal-istress huma magħrufa sew, bħat-tendenza tagħhom li jissottovalutaw in-nuqqas tal-kapital reali. Il-kritiċi għamlu sejħa lill-ABE biex teżerċita prudenza sistemika u tiffoka aktar fuq l-identifikazzjoni tal-kundizzjonijiet li jistgħu jirriżultaw f'instabbiltà finanzjarja u fuq l-evalwazzjoni tal-ħtiġijiet kapitali fuq il-bażi tal-istat tas-sistema finanzjarja inġenerali, filwaqt li tqis ir-responsabbilitajiet legali li huma vulnerabbli għal ġbid ta' flus mill-bank minn ħafna nies f'daqqa.

Il-Kummissjoni għandha xi kumment dwar il-kritika tal-effikaċja tat-test tal-istress? Fid-dawl tal-fatt li falliment ieħor ikun ta' detriment għall-konsensus ġenerali dwar l-isforzi politiċi mmirati lejn it-trazzin tal-kriżi u jista' jwassal għal ġbid ta' flus f'daqqa minn banek Ewropej aktar dgħajfa, għandha xi rakkomandazzjonijiet għall-ABE bil-ħsieb li tiżgura evalwazzjoni preċiża u ta' suċċess is-sena d-dieħla?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Rehn f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(17 ta' Awwissu 2012)

It-testijiet tal-istress organizzati mill-Awtorità Bankarja Ewropea (ABE) ikkontribwixxew biex jitjiebu l-pożizzjonijiet kapitali tal-banek u tiżdied it-trasparenza (inkluż dwar id-dejn sovran).

It-test tal-istress madwar l-UE kollha l-aktar riċenti, organizzat fl-2011, identifika nuqqas kapitali ta' EUR 26.8bn u wassal għal żieda kapitali ta' prevenzjoni ta' EUR 50 biljun. L-ABE sussegwentement irrakkomandat tishih tal-kapital għall-banek li jgħaddu mit-test tal-istress b'marġni żgħir iżda li jkollhom ammonti sinifikanti ta' dejn sovran taħt stress u mexxiet pjan ta' rikapitalizzazzjoni sinifikattiv ħafna li talab lil 71 bank fl-UE biex iżidu l-kapital ta' kwalità għolja tagħhom għal 9%, wara li jiġi kkalkulat bafer addizzjonali kontra l-pussess ta' sovrani taħt stress. Is-27 bank li kellhom nuqqas kapitali rnexxielhom iżidu l-kapital tagħhom b'total ta' EUR 94.4bn.

B'eżerċizzju ta' rikapitalizzazzjoni sinifikanti li diġà qed jitwettaq fl-2011-2012, l-ABE iddeċidiet li tipposponi t-testijiet tal-istress madwar l-UE kolha li jmiss għall-2013.

Il-Kummissjoni se tikkoopera mal-partijiet kollha involuti bil-għan li tikkontribwixxi għat-titjib kontinwu tat-testijiet tal-istress.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006538/12
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Stress tests

The European Union began the practice of 'stress tests' in the aftermath of the global financial crisis, in order to test the resilience of European banks and asses the overall systemic risk of financial markets. Stress tests are to be carried out on a yearly basis and involve an assortment of 90 banks from different Member States. However, the European Banking Authority (EBA) is forgoing the process this year and is expected to hold the next round in 2013 instead.

There is wide awareness of the shortcomings of stress tests, such as their tendency to underestimate real capital shortfall. Critics call for the EBA to exercise systemic prudence and focus more on identifying conditions which can result in financial instability and on assessing capital needs on the basis of the state of the financial system as a whole, taking account of liabilities that are vulnerable to runs.

Does the Commission have any comment to make about the criticism of stress test effectiveness? Given that another failure would be detrimental to the general consensus on policy efforts geared toward containing the crisis and could lead to a run on Europe's weaker banks, does it have any recommendations to make to the EBA with a view to ensuring an accurate and successful assessment next year?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(17 August 2012)

The stress tests organised by the European Banking Authority (EBA) have contributed to improving banks capital positions and increasing transparency (including on sovereign debt).

The most recent EU-wide stress test, organised in 2011, identified a capital shortfall of EUR 26.8 bn and prompted pre-emptive capital-raising of EUR 50 bn. EBA subsequently recommended a capital strengthening for banks passing the stress with a small margin but holding significant amounts of stressed sovereign debt and steered a very significant recapitalization plan requesting some 71 EU banks to raise their high quality capital to 9%, after accounting for an additional buffer against stressed sovereign holdings. The 27 banks with a shortfall managed to increase their capital by a total of EUR 94.4 bn.

With a significant recapitalization exercise already taking place in 2011-2012, the EBA has decided to postpone the next EU-wide stress tests to 2013.

The Commission will cooperate with all parties involved with a view to contributing to the continuous improvement of the stress tests.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-006539/12
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(29 ta' Ġunju 2012)

Suġġett: Il-flessigurtà

Il-mudell ta' "flessigurtà" — flessibilità ta' ingaġġ u tkeċċija għall-impjegaturi kkombinata ma' benefiċċji u sigurtà għall-impjegati — huwa rikonoxxut bħala mezz biex jittejbu l-kwalità tal-impjiegi u l-opportunitajiet ta' impjieg fl-Ewropa. Il-Kummissjoni introduċiet bosta oqfsa u linji gwida mmirati lejn l-implementazzjoni tal-flessigurtà fis-sistemi nazzjonali, fosthom il-Komunikazzjoni COM(2007)0359, li tipprovdi rakkomandazzjonijiet biex jiġu aġġustati l-kuntratti tax-xogħol, il-politiki tax-xogħol u s-sistemi tas-sigurtà soċjali.

Minkejja dan, l-isforzi ta' flessigurtà kienu mxekkla wara li faqqgħet il-kriżi, u minħabba d-differenzi kbar bejn l-Istati Membri fir-rigward tal-kwistjonijiet soċjali. Il-problemi ekonomiċi wasslu biex il-pajjiżi naqqsu l-programmi ta' assistenza soċjali sabiex jissodisfaw l-objettivi ta' awsterità, u r-riġidità ta' ċerti swieq tax-xogħol Ewropej tfisser li l-flessigurtà mhijiex qed tiġi implementata fil-livell nazzjonali, kif kien mixtieq. Il-Kummissjoni tiddikjara li se teżamina mill-ġdid il-prinċipji ta' flessigurtà u se tirriforma l-proċess ta' implementazzjoni sabiex trawwem il-mobilità u l-holqien tal-impjiegi.

Il-Kummissjoni kif qed tippjana li ttejjeb il-metodi tal-implementazzjoni tal-flessigurtà, fid-dawl tal-fatt li l-kriżi kellha impatt varjat fuq is-swieq tax-xogħol tal-Istati Membri u l-fatt li ma hemmx soluzzjoni unika valida għall-kull pajjiż? F'kuntest fejn il-pajjiżi huma kkonċentrati fuq iż-żieda tal-miżuri ta' awsterità iktar mill fuq iż-żieda tal-programmi ta' assistenza soċjali, il-Kummissjoni xi prospetti għandha biex tkompli tippromwovi riforma ta' flessigurtà kontinwa fis-snin li ġejjin?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Andor f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(14 ta' Awwissu 2012)

Fil-komunikazzjoni tagħha tal-2010, "Aġenda għal ħiliet u impjiegi ġodda: Kontribut Ewropew lejn impjieg għal kulħadd" ([1]), il-Kummissjoni saħqet li momentum ġdid għall-flessigurtà għandu jkun imsejjes fuq approċċ komuni. F'Novembru 2011 il-Kummissjoni organizzat Konferenza tal-Partijiet Interessati dwar il-Flessigurtà li laqgħet rappreżentanti mill-Istati Membri, l-imsieħba soċjali u l-istituzzjonijiet Ewropej għal diskussjoni komprensiva dwar il-komponenti tal-flessigurtà, u notevolment dwar kif il-kunċett jista' jitwessa' aktar biex ikun ta' appoġġ għall-holqien ta' impjiegi u dwar kif dan għandu jiġi adattat għall-bidliet fil-kuntest soċjoekonomiku.

Il-Kummissjoni tirreferi lill-Onorevoli Membru għall-komunikazzjoni dwar il-Pakkett tal-Impjiegi ([2]), li tispjega aktar passi fir-riformi strutturali fis-suq tax-xogħol biex tiżgura t-tranżizzjonijiet tas-suq tax-xogħol u swieq tax-xogħol inklużivi. Dawn ikopru punti bħal pereżempju l-bżonn għal pagi deċenti u sostenibbli, biex it-tranżazzjonijiet irendu, biex ikun żgurat li jkun hemm arranġamenti kuntrattwali xierqa u għal sistemi ta' benefiċċji li jinvolvu r-responsabbiltajiet reċiproċi. Il-Kummissjoni tinnota wkoll li l-prinċipji tal-flessigurtà ma jinvolvux miżuri "uniformi għal kulħadd". Id-dokument ta' Ħidma tal-Persunal tal-Kummissjoni ([3]) li jakkompanja l-komunikazzjoni dwar il-Pakkett tal-Impjiegi jispjega fil-qosor il-miżuri ta' politika li l-Istati Membri adottaw matul il-kriżi fil-qasam tal-flessigurtà u tidentifika n-nuqqasijiet ewlenin tagħhom.

([1]) COM(2010) 682 finali tat-26 ta' Novembru 2010.
([2]) Il-Komunikazzjoni tal-Kummissjoni "Lejn irkupru għani fl-impjiegi" (COM (2012) 173 finali tat-18 ta" April 2012).
([3]) Swieq tax-xogħol miftuħa, dinamiċi u inklużivi " (SWD (2012) 97 finali tat-18 ta' April 2012).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006539/12
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Flexicurity

The model of 'flexicurity' — hiring and firing flexibility for employers combined with benefits and security for employees — is acknowledged as a means of improving job quality and employment opportunities in Europe. The Commission has introduced multiple frameworks and guidelines geared towards implementing flexicurity in national systems, including COM(2007)0359, which provides recommendations for adjusting work contracts, labour policies and social security systems.

However, flexicurity efforts have been hindered in the wake of the crisis, and by acute differences between Member States over social issues. Economic problems have led countries to scale back welfare programmes to meet austerity targets, and the rigidity of certain European labour markets means that flexicurity is not being implemented at national level, as had been hoped. The Commission states that it will review flexicurity principles and reform the process of implementation as a means of fostering job creation and mobility.

How does the Commission plan to improve the methods for implementing flexicurity, taking in to account the fact that the crisis has had a varied impact on Member States' labour markets and that no single solution works for every country? In a context in which countries are focused on increasing austerity measures rather than welfare programmes, what are the Commission's prospects for pushing for continued flexicurity reform in the coming years?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(14 August 2012)

In its 2010 communication 'An Agenda for new skills and jobs: A European contribution towards full employment' ([1]), the Commission stressed that a new momentum for flexicurity must be based on a common approach. In November 2011 the Commission held a Stakeholder Conference on Flexicurity that brought together representatives of the Member States, the social partners and the European institutions for a comprehensive discussion of the components of flexicurity, and notably on how the concept could be taken further to support job creation and on how to adapt it to the changing socioeconomic context.

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to the communication on the Employment Package ([2]), which outlines further steps in structural labour market reforms to secure labour market transitions and inclusive labour markets. These cover such points as the need for decent, sustainable wages, to make transitions pay, to ensure there are suitable contractual arrangements and for benefit systems to involve reciprocal responsibilities. The Commission would also point out that the principles of flexicurity do not involve 'one-size-fits-all' measures. The Commission Staff Working Document ([3]) accompanying the Employment Package communication outlines the policy measures that the Member States have adopted during the crisis in the field of flexicurity and identifies their main shortcomings.

([1]) COM(2010) 682 final of 26 November 2010.
([2]) Commission communication 'Towards a job-rich recovery' (COM(2012) 173 final of 18 April 2012).
([3]) 'Open, dynamic and inclusive labour markets' (SWD(2012) 97 final of 18 April 2012).

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-006540/12
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(29 ta' Ġunju 2012)

Suġġett: CETA

L-UE u l-Kanada għandhom jiffinalizzaw ftehim ta' kummerċ ħieles sa tmiem din is-sena. Il-Ftehim Ekonomiku u Kummerċjali Komprensiv (CETA) se jipprevedi aktar moviment ta' merkanzija, servizzi u investimenti bejn iż-żewġ reġjuni. Madankollu, nibtu ċerti ostakli li qegħdin jheddu l-ftehim, billi whud mill-Istati Membri mhumiex sodisfatti bil-kwisjonijiet pendenti fil-qasam tal-viżi. Il-problemi fl-immigrazzjoni wasslu biex il-Gvern Kanadiż jirrikjedi liċ-ċittadini ta' ċerti pajjiżi, fosthom ir-Repubblika Ċeka, il-Bulgarija u r-Rumanija, jiksbu viża biex jivvjaġġaw lejn il-Kanada. Il-pajjiżi kkonċernati pprotestaw mhux ftit għal dan ir-rekwiżit u qegħdin jheddu li jimblokkaw is-CETA sakemm jiġu revokati r-rekwiżiti ta' viża.

Billi l-Kanada huwa sieħeb kummerċjali importanti tal-UE u li kollaborazzjoni aktar mill-qrib se toħloq impjiegi li tant hemm bżonnhom kif anki tagħti spinta sinifikattiva lill-ekonomija tal-UE, waqt li fl-istess ħin jiġi rispettat id-dritt sovran tal-Gvern Kanadiż li jiġġestixxi l-fruntieri tiegħu, kif tipproponi r-Rappreżentant Għoli/Viċi President li tagħmilha ta' medjatur bejn iż-żewġ partijiet biex tiggarantixxi s-suċċess ta' ftehim reċiprokament vantaġġjuż?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur De Gucht f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(14 ta' Awwissu 2012)

Il-kwistjoni tan-nonreċiproċità tal-viża tibqa' fattur negattiv sinifikanti u kumpless fir-relazzjonijiet UE-Kanada. Il-Kummissjoni tqis li l-ivvjaġġar mingħajr viża lejn il-Kanada għall-Istati Membri kollha tal-UE jeħtieġ li jinkiseb mill-aktar fis possibbli u mingħajr prekondizzjonijiet addizzjonali.

L-UE hija r-reġjun minn fejn joriġinaw l-aktar l-applikazzjonijiet għall-ażil fil-Kanada. Dan huwa ta' ħassib serju, u potenzjalment jista' jkollu effetti negattivi fuq l-eżitu pożittiv u r-ratifika ta' diversi ftehimiet importanti mal-Kanada inkluż il-Ftehim Ekonomiku u Kummerċjali Komprensiv (CETA). L-ivvjaġġar mingħajr viża bejn l-UE u l-Kanada huwa ta' importanza kbira għall-Kummissjoni, għalkemm mhuwiex parti mill-ambitu tan-negozjati taċ-CETA u ċ-CETA ma ntużax direttament bħala mod biex issir pressjoni fuq il-Kanada.

Madankollu, in-negozjaturi tal-UE ripetutament, fil-marġini tan-negozjati, għamluha ċara lill-kontropartijiet Kanadiżi tagħhom li din hija kwistjoni importanti għall-UE u anke deċiżiva għall-Istati Membri kkonċernati. Inġibdet l-attenzjoni tan-negozjaturi Kanadiżi li miżuri li jimmiraw li jintroduċu jew iżommu r-rekwiżiti tal-viża huma f'kontradizzjoni mal-ispirtu ta' ftehim bħaċ-CETA li jfittex li jressaq lill-UE u l-Kanada eqreb lejn xulxin.

Il-Kummissjoni hija lesta li tkompli tesplora mal-Kanada, f'kooperazzjoni mill-qrib mal-Istati Membri kkonċernati, miżuri addizzjonali possibbli li jgħinu fit-tnaqqis tal-għadd kbir ta' applikazzjonijiet għall-ażil mingħajr bażi jew li ġew irtirati. Saru laqgħat fuq il-livell tal-esperti biex jiġu spjegati aħjar il-kwistjonijiet involuti. Il-Kummissjoni tilqa' r-riforma tal-ażil mill-Kanada. Ladarba tkun fis-seħħ, tista' taġixxi bħala deterrent għall-applikazzjonijiet mhux iġġustifikati u twassal biex il-Kanada tneħħi r-rekwiżit tal-viża għaċ-ċittadini Ċeki, Bulgari u Rumeni.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006540/12
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: CETA

The EU and Canada are set to finalise a free trade deal by the end of this year. CETA, the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, will provide for greater movement of goods, services and investments between the two regions. However, certain obstacles have surfaced that threaten the agreement, as some Member States are upset over outstanding visa issues. Problems with immigration have led the Canadian Government to require citizens of certain countries, including the Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Romania, to obtain visas in order to travel to Canada. This has been met with much protest from the countries concerned, who are threatening to block CETA unless the visa requirements are revoked.

Given that Canada is a significant trading partner of the EU and that closer collaboration will create much-needed jobs and provide a significant boost to the EU economy, while at the same time respecting the Canadian Government's sovereign right to manage its borders, how does the Vice-President/High Representative propose to mediate between the two sides to ensure the success of a mutually beneficial deal?

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

The issue of visa non-reciprocity remains a significant negative and complex factor in EU-Canada relations. The Commission considers that visa free travel to Canada for all EU Member States needs to be achieved as soon as possible and without additional preconditions.

The EU is the number one source-region for asylum applications in Canada. This is a serious concern, and could potentially have negative effects on the successful conclusion and ratification of several important agreements with Canada including the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). Visa-free travel between the EU and Canada is of utmost importance to the Commission, although it is not part of the scope of the CETA negotiations and the CETA has not been directly used as a way to put pressure on Canada.

However, the EU negotiators have repeatedly, in the margins of the negotiations, made it clear to their Canadian counterparts that this is an important question for the EU and even decisive for the Member States concerned. It has been pointed out to the Canadian negotiators that measures which aim at introducing or maintaining visa requirements are in contradiction with the spirit of an agreement like the CETA which tries to bring the EU and Canada closer together.

The Commission is ready to further explore with Canada, in close cooperation with the Member States concerned, possible additional measures to help reduce the high numbers of unfounded or withdrawn asylum applications. Meetings at expert level took place to further explain the issues at stake. The Commission welcomes the asylum reform by Canada. Once in force, it could act as a deterrent to unfounded applications and lead Canada to lift the visa requirement for Czech, Bulgarian and Romanian citizens.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-006542/12
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(29 ta' Ġunju 2012)

Suġġett: Unjoni tal-Innovazzjoni

L-innovazzjoni hija ġeneralment meqjusa bħala mutur għat-tkabbir u bħala mezz biex l-ekonomija Ewropea terġa' lura fit-triq it-tajba. F'rapport reċenti dwar il-progress bit-titolu "l-istat tal-Unjoni tal-Innovazzjoni 2011", il-Kummissjoni tenfasizza distakki fl-innovazzjoni li jeżistu bejn il-prestazzjoni tal-innovazzjoni fl-Ewropa vis-à-vis l-Istati Uniti u l-Ġappun, fejn tenfasizza l-ħtieġa li l-Unjoni Ewropea tintensifika l-mpenn tagħha fir-rigward tal-innovazzjoni. Madankollu, ir-rapport jindika wkoll li hemm r-riskju li d-distakki fl-innovazzjoni jistgħu jkolmpu jitwessgħu fi ħdan l-UE nnifisha, hekk kif l-Istati Membri qegħdin jinvestu f'miri ta' innovazzjoni fi gradi differenti.

Sabiex l-Ewropa tilħaq il-miri tagħha fir-riċerka u l-innovazzjoni, u biex tippromwovi investimenti fl-innovazzjoni aktar omoġenji fl-Istati Membri kollha u biex tiżgura li l-Istati Membri jallokaw biżżejjed fondi għal dan l-objettiv, l-impenn li "jitwarrbu baġits dedikata nazzjonali għall-akkwist fir-rigward tal-innovazzjoni" jidher relevanti ferm. Madankollu r-rapport jindika li dan l-impenn ma sarx. Il-Kummissjoni tista' tipprovdi xi informazzjoni dwar ir-raġuni għaliex dan il-għan ma ġiex segwit u jekk bihsiebha tieħu l-impenn f'idejha fil-futur qarib? Dan il-għan għandu jiġu sospiż, il-Kummissjoni qiegħda tippjana li tintroduċi xi miżuri alternattiva li għandhom l-istess mira?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sinjura Geoghegan-Quinn f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(21 ta' Awwissu 2012)

Użu iktar strateġiku tal-akkwist pubbliku ta' prodotti u servizzi innovattivi jibqa' fil-mira tal-politika tal-innovazzjoni tal-UE. Il-komunikazzjoni dwar l-Unjoni tal-Innovazzjoni proponiet li l-Istati Membri u r-Reġjuni jwarrbu baġits allokati għall-akkwist pubbliku ta' prodotti u servizzi innovattivi sabiex toħloq swieq tal-akkwist li jibda minn EUR 10 biljun kull sena. Waqt li l-mira ma ġietx aċċettata mill-Kunsill, il-Kunsill stieden lill-Istati Membri biex iżidu u jtejbu l-użu tagħhom tal-baġits għall-akkwist tal-innovazzjoni fuq bażi volontarja. Diversi Stati Membri stabbilixxew oqfsa ta' appoġġ li jintegraw l-akkwist pubbliku ta' prodotti u servizzi innovattivi fl-istrateġiji tal-innovazzjoni tagħhom.

Fl-2011 il-Kummissjoni pproponiet li l-leġiżlazzjoni tal-akkwist pubbliku tal-UE tiġi mmodernizzata. Din il-proposta tinkludi diversi miżuri biex titħeġġeġ l-innovazzjoni, bħal sħubija ġdida għall-innovazzjoni, il-faċilitazzjoni ta' proċedura tal-akkwist konġunt transfruntier, l-introduzzjoni tal-element tal-innovazzjoni bħala parti mill-kriterji tal-għoti ta' kuntratti u r-rekwiżit ta' rappurtar annwali dwar l-implimentazzjoni ta' politiki tal-akkwist sostenibbli, inkluż it-trawwim tal-innovazzjoni.

Fl-istess waqt, il-Kummissjoni qiegħda tappoġġja proġetti pilota li jgħinu lill-awtoritajiet kontraenti jiġbru flimkien ir-riżorsi tagħhom biex jintuża l-potenzjal tad-domanda pubblika għal soluzzjonijiet innovattivi. L-inizjattiva Orizzont 2020, il-Programm Qafas tal-UE li jmiss għar-riċerka u l-innovazzjoni, ipproponiet appoġġ akbar għal proġetti bħal dawn. Barra minn hekk, il-proposta tal-Kummissjoni għar-Regolament Ġenerali tal-Fondi Strutturali tintroduċi kondizzjonalità *ex-ante* għall-investiment fir-riċerka u l-innovazzjoni msejsa fuq l-eżistenza ta' Strateġiji Intelliġenti ta' Speċjalizzazzjoni, inkluż l-użu attiv tal-akkwist pubbliku ta' prodotti u servizzi innovattivi.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006542/12
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Innovation Union

Innovation is widely regarded as a driver for growth and as a means to put the European economy back on track. In a recent progress report entitled 'State of the Innovation Union 2011', the Commission points to innovation gaps that exist between innovation performance in Europe vis-à-vis the USA and Japan, highlighting the need for the European Union to step up its commitment to innovation. However, the report also points to a risk of innovation gaps widening within the EU itself, as Member States are investing in innovation goals to differing degrees.

In order to allow Europe to meet its research and innovation targets, to promote more homogenous investments in innovation across Member States and to ensure that Member States allocate sufficient funds to this objective, the commitment to 'set aside dedicated national procurement budgets for innovation' seems highly relevant. Yet the report indicates that this commitment has not been taken up. Could the Commission provide any information as to why this particular goal has not been followed through and whether it intends to take it up in the near future? Should this goal be suspended, is the Commission planning to introduce any alternative measures that point in the same direction?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(21 August 2012)

A more strategic use of public procurement of innovative products and services remains a goal of EU innovation policy. The Innovation Union communication proposed that Member States and Regions set aside dedicated budgets for public procurement of innovative products and services in order to create procurement markets starting from EUR 10 billion per year. While the target was not taken up by the Council, the Council invited Member States to increase and improve their use of procurement budgets for innovation on a voluntary basis. Several Member States established support frameworks embedding public procurement of innovative products and services in their innovation strategies.

In 2011 the Commission proposed to modernise the EU public procurement legislation. This proposal includes several measures to encourage innovation, such as a new innovation partnership procedure, facilitation of cross-border joint procurement, introducing the innovative character as part of award criteria and requiring annual reporting on the implementation of sustainable procurement policies, including fostering innovation.

In parallel, the Commission has been supporting pilot projects to help contracting authorities to pool their resources to unleash the potential of public demand for innovative solutions. Stronger support to such projects has been proposed under Horizon 2020, the next EU Framework Programme for research and innovation. In addition, the Commission proposal for the General Regulation of the Structural Funds introduces *ex-ante* conditionality for research and innovation investment based on the existence of Smart Specialisation Strategies, including active use of public procurement of innovative products and services.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-006543/12
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(29 ta' Ġunju 2012)

Suġġett: Ittikkettar tal-Ikel

Fil-proposta tagħha għal regolament tal-Parlament Ewropew u tal-Kunsill dwar l-għoti ta' informazzjoni fuq l-ikel lill-konsumaturi (COM (2008) 0040), il-Kummissjoni tenfasizza l-fatt li "l-ittikkettar nutrittiv huwa mod stabbilit kif wieħed jista' jagħti informazzjoni lill-konsumaturi li tgħin l-għażla ta' ikel tajjeb għas-saħħa". Għalhekk, il-proposta tagħmilha obbligatorja li l-livelli tal-enerġija, tax-xaħam, tas-saturati, tal-karboidrati, taz-zokkor u tal-melħ jintwerew fuq it-tikketti tal-ikel.

Filwaqt li x'akatarx il-konsumaturi adulti se jkollhom biżżejjed informazzjoni biex jagħmlu għażliet bnini fl-ikel, dan it-tip ta' informazzjoni jista' ma jinftiehemx tajjeb minn gruppi ta' konsumaturi żgħażagħ.

Madanakollu tendenzi fl-għażla tal-ikel fost it-tfal u ż-żgħażagħ qegħdin iwasslu għal thassib dejjem akbar, fid-dawl tal-fatt li l-obesità fost it-tfal qiegħda tiżdied u t-tendenzi fl-ikel stabbiliti f'età żgħira x'katarx li jibqgħu jippersisitu tul il-ħajja. Fid-dawl ta' dawn l-iżviluppi, il-Kummissjoni introduċiet, jew ikkunsidrat li tintroduċi, xi miżuri li jippreskrivu tipi ta' ttikkettar li jinfthemu aktar faċilment mit-tfal, pereżempju tikketti aktar viżwali u ssimplifikati fuq il-prodotti tal-ikel li huma mmirati speċifikament lejn gruppi ta' konsumaturi żgħażagħ?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Dalli f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(7 ta' Awwissu 2012)

Il-Kummissjoni mhix beħsiebha tintroduċi miżuri li jippreskrivu tikketti ssimplifikati għall-ikel immirat speċifikament lejn gruppi ta' konsumaturi żgħażagħ.

Ir-Regolament (UE) 1169/2011 ([1]) jintroduċi tikkettar nutrittiv obbligatorju u jippreskrivi regoli dwar kif din l-informazzjoni għandha tkun preżentata fuq ikel ippakkjat minn qabel. Filwaqt li l-ittikkettar nutrittiv u l-mod bażiku ta' kif jiġi ppreżentat huma armonizzati f'livell tal-Unjoni, l-iżvilupp ta' modi oħra ta' espressjoni u preżentazzjoni, inklużi modi simplifikati u aktar viżwali, huwa possibbli. Skont l-Artikolu 35 tar-Regolament, modi addizzjonali għall-espressjoni u l-preżentazzjoni tad-dikjarazzjoni nutrittiva jistgħu jiġu żviluppati bl-użu ta' forom jew simboli grafiċi, sakemm dawn ikunu konformi mar-rekwiżiti speċifiċi deskritti f'dan l-Artikolu. F'din il-flessibbiltà, prevista fir-Regolament (UE) 1169/2011, għall-Istati Membri individwali u għall-operaturi tan-negozji tal-ikel, hija r-responsabbiltà ta' dawn l-atturi li jintroduċu modi aktar simplifikati u li jinfurmaw lill-Kummissjoni kif xieraq.

([1]) ĠU L 304, 22.11.2011, p. 18.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006543/12
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Food labelling

In its proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the provision of food information to consumers (COM(2008)0040), the Commission highlights the fact that 'nutrition labelling is an established way for providing information to consumers to support health conscious food choices'. The proposal therefore makes it mandatory for the levels of energy, fat, saturates, carbohydrates, sugar and salt to be shown on food labels.

Whilst this is likely to provide adult consumers with sufficient information to make healthy food choices, this type of information may not be understood by younger consumer groups.

Yet eating habits amongst children and young people are causing growing concern, given that childhood obesity is on the rise and that eating habits established at an early age are likely to persist throughout life. In view of these developments, has the Commission introduced, or considered introducing, any measures that would prescribe more child-friendly labelling types, for instance simplified and more visual labels on products that are targeted specifically at young consumer groups?

Answer given by Mr Dalli on behalf of the Commission
(7 August 2012)

The Commission does not intend to introduce measures prescribing simplified labels for foods targeting specifically young consumer groups.

Regulation (EU) 1169/2011 ([1]) introduces mandatory nutrition labelling and prescribes rules on how this information has to be presented on pre-packed foods. While nutrition labelling and its basic form of presentation is harmonised at Union level, the development of other forms of expression and presentation, including simplified and more visual forms, is possible. According to Article 35 of the regulation, additional forms of expression and presentation of the nutrition declaration can be developed using graphical forms or symbols provided they comply with specific requirements described in this Article. Within this flexibility provided by Regulation (EU) 1169/2011 for individual Member States and food business operators it is left for those actors to introduce more simplified forms and inform the Commission accordingly.

([1]) OJ L 304, 22.11.2011, p. 18.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-006544/12
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(29 ta' Ġunju 2012)

Suġġett: Persuni b'diżabbiltà

Persuna minn kull sitt persuni fiż-żona tal-Unjoni Ewropea hija kklassifikata bħala persuna b'diżabbiltà, grupp li jħabbat wiċċu ma' diskriminazzjoni kontinwa f'oqsma bħas-servizzi, l-akkomodazzjoni u l-edukazzjoni. Il-ġlieda kontra din id-diskriminazzjoni qiegħda titwettaq permezz ta' Artikoli fil-Karta tad-Drittijiet Fundamentali tal-Unjoni Ewropea u l-Komunikazzjoni tal-Kummissjoni dwar l-Istrateġija Ewropea tad-Diżabbiltà 2010-2020 (COM (2010) 0636), li tikkunsidra l-għanijiet ta' Horizon 2020. Problemi relatati ma' direttivi preċedenti jinkludu l-enfasi fuq l-iffinanzjar ta' istituzzjonijiet paternalistiċi u forom oħra ta' kura, mingħajr ma ssir biżżejjed enfasi fuq l-aspetti għar-riforma sabiex dawk il-persuni b'diżabbiltà jkunu jistgħu jgħixu u jiffunzjonaw b'mod indipendenti fil-komunitajiet tagħhom. Il-COM (2010) 0636 ifittex li jbiddel dan, u jagħmel impenn akbar lejn l-inklużjoni soċjali.

Il-miżuri li qegħdin jiġu implimentati mill-Kummissjoni jindirizzaw lil dawk li bħalissa jinsabu istituzzjonalizzati (li bihom ma jibqgħux dipendenti fuq forom attwali ta' kura) jew ifittxu li jipprevjenu l-istituzzjonalizzazzjoni ta' persuni b'diżabbiltà fil-futur? Fil-każ tal-ewwel, il-Kummissjoni fasslet xi strateġiji biex tingħata l-għajnuna lill-persuni b'diżabbiltà mdorrija għall-kura paternalistika sabiex it-tranżizzjoni tagħhom tkun ta' suċċess u jkunu kapaċi jgħixu u jaħdmu b'mod indipendenti?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sinjura Reding f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(23 ta' Awwissu 2012)

Permezz tal-istrateġija tal-UE dwar id-Diżabilità 2010-2020, il-Kummissjoni timmira li tappoġġja lill-Istati Membri fil-promozzjoni tal-inklużjoni soċjali u l-ħajja indipendenti għall-persuni kollha b'diżabilità. Dan l-għan huwa konformi mal-Konvenzjoni tan-Nazzjonijiet Uniti dwar id-Drittijiet tal-Persuni b'Diżabbiltà (NU CRPD) ([1]), li l-UE saret parti għaliha f'Jannar 2011.

L-Istati Membri tal-UE jibqgħu madankollu responsabbli għat-tfassil, il-ġestjoni u l-implimentazzjoni tas-servizzi soċjali u tas-saħħa u l-UE ma għandha ebda kompetenza li tintervjeni direttament f'dan il-qasam. Ir-rapport tal-FRA ([2]) li ġie ppubblikat riċentement identifika inizjattivi ewlenin fil-politika, il-liġi u l-prattika li jistgħu jiffaċilitaw il-progress lejn it-twettiq tad-dritt ta' ħajja indipendenti għall-persuni b'diżabilitajiet.

Biex jikkonformaw mal-obbligi li joriġinaw mis-CPRD tan-NU, l-Istati Membri tal-UE jeħtieġu jirriformaw il-kura istituzzjonali u s-servizzi tal-kura fit-tul tagħhom biex jiżguraw li persuni diġà fl-istituzzjonijiet jew f'riskju li jiġu mqiegħda fl-istituzzjonijiet ikunu jistgħu jeżerċitaw id-dritt tagħhom li jagħżlu l-arranġamenti tal-għajxien li jippreferu huma stess, billi jkollhom aċċess għas-servizzi u l-faċilitajiet li jissodisfaw il-ħtiġijiet tagħhom u billi jingħataw il-possibilità li jiġu inklużi fil-komunità.

Il-Fondi Strutturali tal-UE, b'mod partikolari l-FSE u l-FEŻR, jistgħu jappoġġjaw l-isforzi tal-Istati Membri f'dan il-qasam. Il-Kummissjoni tħeġġeġ lill-Istati Membri biex jużaw il-fondi tal-UE għal riformi ta' deistituzzjonalizzazzjoni, pereżempju billi jappoġġaw it-taħriġ tal-persunal, l-investimenti fl-infrastruttura soċjali u l-aċċessibbiltà, u l-iżvilupp ta' mudelli ta' kura mibnija madwar il-persuni u mfassla biex jissodisfaw il-ħtiġijiet inklużi servizzi ta' kwalità bbażati fil-komunità u aċċess għal għajnuna personali. Dawn l-għanijiet jinsabu fil-proposti tal-Kummissjoni għall-Politika ta' Koeżjoni futura 2014-2020 ([3]) li bħalissa qed jiġu eżaminati mill-Parlament Ewropew u mill-Kunsill.

([1]) http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convoptprot-e.pdf
([2]) Għażla u kontroll: id-dritt għal ħajja indipendenti, http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/research/publications/publications_per_year/2012 /pub_choice-and-control_en.htm
([3]) Ara b'mod partikolari COM(2011) 614 final, Proposta għal REGOLAMENT TAL-PARLAMENT EWROPEW U TAL-KUNSILL dwar dispożizzjonijiet speċifiċi li jikkonċernaw il-Fond Ewropew għall-Iżvilupp Reġjonali, u l-Investiment li għandu fil-mira t-tkabbir ekonomiku u l-impjiegi, u jirrevoka r-Regolament (EC) No 1080/2006; COM(2011) 607 final /2, Proposta għal REGOLAMENT TAL-PARLAMENT EWROPEW U TAL-KUNSILL dwar il-Fond Soċjali Ewropew u li jħassar ir-Regolament (KE) Nru 1081/2006.
u d-dokument ta' ħidma tal-persunal tal-Kummissjoni dwar il-Qafas Strateġiku Komuni, SWD(2012) 61 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006544/12
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Disabled persons

One in six people in the European Union area is classified as disabled, a group which has faced continuous discrimination in fields such as services, housing and education. Such discrimination is combated through various articles in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the Commission Communication on the European Disability Strategy for 2010-2020 (COM(2010)0636), which considers the goals of Horizon 2020. Problems with past directives include the emphasis on funding paternalistic institutions and other forms of care, without enough of a focus on reforming aspects of society to enable those with disabilities to live and function independently in their communities. COM(2010)0636 seeks to alter this, making more of a commitment to social inclusion.

Do the measures that the Commission is implementing cater to those who are currently institutionalised (removing them from dependence on current forms of care) or do they seek to prevent the institutionalisation of disabled persons in the future? In the case of the former, does the Commission have any strategies for assisting disabled persons who have grown accustomed to paternalistic care so their transition is successful and they are able to live and function independently?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(23 August 2012)

With the EU Disability Strategy 2010-2020, the Commission aims to support the Member States in promoting social inclusion and independent living for all persons with disabilities. This objective is in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) ([1]), to which the EU has become a party in January 2011.

The EU Member States remain however responsible for the design, management and delivery of social and health services and the EU has no competence to intervene directly in this field. The recently published FRA's report ([2]) identified key initiatives in policy, law and practice that can facilitate progress towards realising the right to independent living of persons with disabilities.

To comply with the obligations stemming from the UN CRPD, EU Member States need to reform their institutional care and long-term care services to ensure that persons already in institutions or at risk of being placed in such institutions are enabled to exercise their right to choose their own preferred living arrangements, by having access to services and facilities meeting their needs and allowing them to be included in the community.

EU Structural Funds, in particular the ESF and ERDF, can support Member States' efforts in this area. The Commission encourages the Member States to use EU funds for de-institutionalisation reforms, for instance by supporting training of staff, investments in social infrastructure and accessibility, and the development of person-centred, needs-tailored models of care, including quality community-based services and access to personal assistance. These objectives are in the Commission's proposals for the future Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 ([3]) that are currently being examined by the European Parliament and the Council.

([1]) http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convoptprot-e.pdf

([2]) Choice and control: the right to independent living: http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/research/publications/publications_per_year/2012/pub_choice-and-control_en.htm

([3]) See in particular COM(2011) 614 final, Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on specific provisions concerning the European Regional Development Fund and the Investment for Growth and Jobs goal and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006; COM(2011) 607 final /2, Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Social Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006; and the Staff Working document on the Common Strategic Framework, SWD(2012) 61 final.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-006545/12
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(29 ta' Ġunju 2012)

Suġġett: "Small Business Act" għall-Ewropa

Impriżi żgħar u medji (SMEs) jimpjegaw aktar minn żewġ terzi tal-forza tax-xogħol Ewropea. Madankollu, l-SMEs intlaqtu ħażin mir-riċessjoni u mill-kriżi tal-kreditu, kwistjoni li teħtieġ l-akbar attenzjoni tal-UE. "Is-Small Business Act" għall-Ewropa li nbeda fl-2008 jindirizza din il-problema u jsostni l-iżvilupp tal-SMEs f'ambjent instabbli. Huwa jsostni t-titjib tal-aċċess għall-iffinanzjar u t-titjib tal-ħiliet, u jħeġġeġ il-gvernijiet biex ifasslu limitu ta' żmien massimu għall-kwittanza u l-ħlas ta' dejn marbut mall-falliment finanzjarju.

Uħud jargumentaw li inizjattivi SBA, inklużi dawk imsemmija hawn fuq, huma ta' benefiċċju biex titħeġġeġ l-intraprenditorija u tingħata assistenza lil negozji matul il-fażi tal-bidu, iżda li mhumiex effettivi biex jindirizzaw l-istadju ta' żvilupp, li huwa ugwalment importanti għas-sostenn tan-negozji u s-saħħa tal-ekonomija. Il-Kummissjoni thoss li dawn l-affermazzjonijiet huma ġustifikati? Wara li saret reviżjoni, il-Kummissjoni għandha miżuri ġodda x'tissuġġerixxi, bħal servizzi ta' sostenn jew strumenti finanzjarji speċifiċi, li huma diretti lejn l-istadju ta' żvilupp tal-SMEs?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Tajani f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(13 ta' Awwissu 2012)

Il-Kummissjoni hija konxja sew li l-SMEs intlaqtu ħażin mill-kriżi, u għalhekk hija ħaffet l-implimentazzjoni kemm tal-SBA kif ukoll tar-Reviżjoni tal-SBA (adottati fi Frar 2011). Fir-rigward tal-aċċess għall-finanzjament, il-miżuri proposti u, f'xi każijiet dawk li tnedew diġà, jindirizzaw il-ħtiġijiet tal-SMEs fl-istadji kollha taċ-ċiklu tal-ħajja tagħhom, inkluż il-fażi tal-iżvilupp.

F'Diċembru 2011 ġie adottat Pjan ta' Azzjoni biex jitjieb l-aċċess għall-finanzi għall-SMEs ([1]) u l-informazzjoni dwar l-aċċess għall-fondi hija disponibbli fuq il-websajt Europa ([2]). Il-programm CIP ([3]) jipprovdi strumenti finanzjarji li jżidu l-provvista ta' kapital tar-riskju, self u kiri lill-SMEs, kif ukoll servizzi ta' appoġġ għan-negozju fil-livell lokali permezz tal-Enterprise Europe Network. Barra minn hekk, l-RSI l-ġdida ([4]), il-proġett pilota tal-FP7 ([5]) RSFF ([6]), jinkoraġġixxi lill-banek biex jipprovdu self lill-SMEs innovattivi u impriżi żgħar ta' daqs medju li jinvestu fir-RDI ([7]).

Il-Kummissjoni beħsiebha tkompli dan l-approċċ u ssaħħu permezz tal-programmi proposti COSME ([8]) u Orizzont 2020 ([9]). COSME se jtejjeb l-aċċess għal kemm il-finanzjament kif ukoll għas-swieq, se jippromwovi l-intraprenditorija u se jtejjeb il-kundizzjonijiet qafas, b'mod partikolari għall-SMEs. Huwa se jappoġġja t-twaqqif, l-iżvilupp u t-tkabbir tan-negozji. Il-programm Orizzont 2020 se jipprovdi aktar appoġġ għad-dejn u l-finanzjament tal-ekwità għall-entitajiet motivati mir-RDI, b'mod partikolari l-SMEs, permezz tal-programm dedikat tiegħu "L-Aċċess għall-Finanzjament tar-Riskju" u Strument ġdid tal-SMEs iffukat fuq id-dimostrazzjoni u l-iżvilupp, li se jindirizza t-tipi kollha ta' SMEs li huma innovattivi sew u (kemm dawk l-SMEs li jiffokaw fuq it-teknoloġija avvanzata u r-riċerka, kif ukoll dawk li ma jiffokawx fuq ir-riċerka, li huma ta' natura soċjali jew joffru servizz).

Fl-aħħar nett, huwa ppjanat li l-Pjan ta' Azzjoni tal-Intraprenditorija 2020 jiġi adottat sal-aħħar ta' din is-sena b'azzjonijiet għat-titjib tal-ambjent tan-negozju għal kemm l-intraprendituri ġodda kif ukoll dawk stabbiliti.

([1]) Il-Komunikazzjoni tal-Kummissjoni, "Pjan ta' Azzjoni biex jitjieb l-aċċess għall-finanzi għall-SMEs" COM(2011) 870 finali, 7.12.2011.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/finance/guide-to-funding/indirect-funding/index_en.htm u http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/finance/guide-to-funding/direct-funding/index_en.htm
([3]) Programm Kwadru għall-Kompetittività u l-Innovazzjoni b'seħħ mill-2007 sal-2013.
([4]) Strument għall-Kondiviżjoni tar-Riskju: http://www.eif.org/what_we_do/guarantees/RSI/index.htm
([5]) Is-seba' Programm Kwadru tal-Unjoni Ewropea għar-Riċerka, l-Iżvilupp Teknoloġiku u Dimostrazzjoni (2007-2013).
([6]) Faċilità Finanzjarja għall-Kondiviżjoni tar-Riskju: http://www.eib.org/products/rsff/index.htm?lang=en&
([7]) Ir-Riċerka, l-Iżvilupp u l-Innovazzjoni.
([8]) Il-Programm għall-Kompetittività tal-intrapriżi u tal-SMEs, b'seħħ mill-2014 sal-2020.
([9]) Orizzont 2020 — Il-Programm Qafas għar-Riċerka u l-Innovazzjoni (2014-2020) http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index_en.cfm?pg=h2020-documents

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006545/12
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Small Business Act

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are responsible for employing more than two-thirds of the European labour force. However, SMEs have been hit hard by the recession and credit crunch, a matter that requires the EU's utmost attention. The Small Business Act (SBA) initiated in 2008 addresses this problem and supports the development of SMEs in an unstable environment. It supports improving access to finance and upgrading skills, and encourages governments to set a maximum time limit for the discharging and settling of bankruptcy debts.

Some argue that SBA initiatives, including those mentioned above, are beneficial in encouraging entrepreneurship and assisting businesses during the start-up phase, but are not as effective in addressing the development stage, which is equally important for sustaining businesses and the health of the economy. Does the Commission feel that these claims are justified? Following a review, does the Commission have any new measures to suggest, such as specific support services or financial instruments, that are directed at the development stage of SMEs?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(13 August 2012)

The Commission is fully aware that SMEs have been hit hard by the crisis, so it has accelerated implementation of both the SBA and the SBA Review (adopted in February 2011). As regards access to finance, the measures proposed and, in some cases, already launched address the needs of SMEs at all stages of their life cycle, including the development phase.

An Action Plan to improve SME access to finance was adopted in December 2011 ([1]) and information on access to funding is available on the Europa website ([2]). The CIP programme ([3]) provides financial instruments that increase the supply of venture capital, loans and leasing to SMEs, as well as business support services at local level via the Enterprise Europe Network. In addition, the new RSI ([4]) pilot scheme of the FP7 ([5]) RSFF ([6]) encourages banks to provide loans to innovative SMEs and small mid-sized firms investing in RDI ([7]).

The Commission intends to continue and strengthen this approach with the proposed COSME ([8]) and Horizon 2020 ([9]) programmes. COSME will improve access to both finance and markets, promote entrepreneurship and improve framework conditions, in particular for SMEs. It will support the setting-up, development and growth of businesses. Horizon 2020 will provide increased support to debt and equity financing for RDI-driven entities, in particular SMEs, via its dedicated 'Access to Risk Finance' programme and a new SME Instrument focused on demonstration and development, which will target all types of highly innovative SMEs (both high-tech and research-driven, as well as non-research-focused, social or service SMEs).

Finally, it is planned to adopt the Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan by the end of this year, with actions to improve the business environment for both new and established entrepreneurs.

([1]) Commission comunication, 'An action plan to improve access to finance for SMEs' COM(2011)870 final, 7.12.2011.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/finance/guide-to-funding/indirect-funding/index_en.htm and http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/finance/guide-to-funding/direct-funding/index_en.htm
([3]) Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme running from 2007 to 2013.
([4]) Risk-Sharing Instrument: http://www.eif.org/what_we_do/guarantees/RSI/index.htm
([5]) 7th Framework Programme of the European Union for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration (2007-13).
([6]) Risk-Sharing Finance Facility: http://www.eib.org/products/rsff/index.htm?lang=en&
([7]) Research, Development and Innovation.
([8]) Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs, running from 2014-20.
([9]) Horizon 2020 — the framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-20). http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index_en.cfm?pg=h2020-documents

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-006548/12
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(29 ta' Ġunju 2012)

Suġġett: Ċipru

Fl-1 ta' Lulju 2012, ir-Repubblika ta' Ċipru se tieħu f'idejha l-Presidenza tal-UE għall-ewwel darba mill-adeżjoni tagħha fl-2004. Madankollu hemm riskju perċettibbli tal-iffriżar tar-relazzjonijiet bejn l-awtoritajiet Ċiprijotti Griegi u Torok, u dawn tal-aħħar diġà appellaw sabiex il-problema ta' Ċipru tissolva qabel il-bidu tal-Presidenza. Fil-perspettiva ta' dawn l-iżviluppi, kif biħsiebha l-Kummissjoni tistenna mill-Presidenza Ċiprijotta li tagħmel negozjati ta' riunifikazzjoni bejn iż-żewġ naħat u x'impatt qed tipprevedi għan-negozjati tal-adeżjoni tat-Turkija mal-UE? Kif biħsiebha l-Kummissjoni tevita ostakoli eventwali għall-progress li sar fin-negozjati ta' riunifikazzjoni s'issa u x'miżuri se tieħu biex tippromwovi l-progress f'dan il-qasam?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Füle f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(4 ta' Settembru 2012)

Il-Kummissjoni tagħti l-appoġġ qawwi tagħha għat-taħdidiet dwar ftehim biex tinstab soluzzjoni komprensiva tal-problema ta' Ċipru. Il-Kummissjoni kemm-il darba saħqet li n-negozjati dwar ftehim għandhom ikomplu, b'xi mod jew ieħor, matul il-Presidenza Ċiprijotta tal-Kunsill tal-UE. L-Onorevoli Membru jista' jkun konxju tal-fatt li fil-bidu ta' Lulju, il-President Barroso ħatar rappreżentant personali ġdid għall-Bon Offiċji tan-NU, sinjal ċar tal-appoġġ qawwi tal-Kummissjoni lill-proċess ta' ftehim.

Barra l-appoġġ lill-Bon Offiċji tan-NU, il-Kummissjoni tipprovdi assistenza lill-komunità Ċiprijotta Torka abbażi tar-Regolament tal-Kunsill (KE) Nru 389/2006 tas-27 ta' Frar 2006. L-għan tal-programm huwa li tingħata assistenza liċ-Ċiprijotti Torok biex iħejju għar-riunifikazzjoni ta' Ċipru, li se ssegwi l-ftehim politiku li ilu mistenni tal-kwistjoni ta' Ċipru. Il-programm jiffoka fuq l-iżvilupp soċjali u ekonomiku tal-komunità Ċiprijotta Torka.

Il-Kummissjoni tirreferi għall-pożizzjoni tal-Unjoni Ewropea fl-aktar Kunsill ta' Assoċjazzjoni reċenti mat-Turkija, li sar fit-22 ta' Ġunju 2012, li matulu hija saħqet li l-impenn u l-kontribut tat-Turkija f'termini konkreti lejn soluzzjoni komprensiva tal-problema ta' Ċipru huma kruċjali. Filwaqt li fakkret fil-konklużjonijiet tal-Kunsill Ewropew tad-9 ta' Diċembru 2011 rigward dikjarazzjonijiet u theddid mit-Turkija, l-UE esprimiet tħassib serju u tappella għal rispett sħiħ tar-rwol tal-Presidenza tal-Kunsill, li hija karatterstika istituzzjonali fundamentali tal-UE, stipulata fit-Trattat.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006548/12
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Cyprus

On 1 July 2012, the Republic of Cyprus will take over the EU Presidency for the first time since its accession in 2004. Yet there is a perceivable risk of a freezing of relations between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish authorities, the latter having called for the Cyprus problem to be resolved before the start of the Presidency. In view of these developments, how does the Commission expect the Cypriot Presidency to affect reunification talks between the two parties and what impacts does it foresee for Turkey's accession talks with the EU? In what way does the Commission intend to prevent any setbacks to the progress made in reunification talks thus far and what measures will it take to promote progress in this area?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(4 September 2012)

The Commission strongly supports the settlement talks for a comprehensive solution of the Cyprus problem. The Commission has stressed repeatedly that the settlement negotations should continue in one way or another during the Cypriot EU Council Presidency. The Honourable Member may be aware that at the beginning of July, President Barroso appointed a new personal representative to the UN Good Offices, a clear sign of the Commission's strong support to the settlement process.

Next to the support to the UN Good Offices, the Commission provides assistance to the Turkish Cypriot community based on Council Regulation (EC) No 389/2006 of 27 February 2006. The aim of the programme is to assist the Turkish Cypriots to prepare for the reunification of Cyprus, which will follow the long-awaited political settlement of the Cyprus issue. The programme focuses on the social and economic development of the Turkish Cypriot community.

The Commission refers to the position of the European Union at the latest Association Council with Turkey which took place on 22 June 2012, at which it underlined that Turkey's commitment and contribution in concrete terms to a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem is crucial. Recalling the European Council conclusions of 9 December 2011, with regard to Turkish statements and threats, the EU expressed serious concern and calls for full respect of the role of the Presidency of the Council, which is a fundamental institutional feature of the EU provided for in the Treaty.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-006551/12
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(29 ta' Ġunju 2012)

Suġġett: Ir-responsabbiltà soċjali tal-kumpanniji

L-istrateġija mġedda tal-UE għar-responsabbiltà soċjali tal-kumpanniji (CSR) għall-2011-14 tappoġġja l-kunċett li l-kumpanniji għandhom jikkunsidraw l-interessi tas-soċjetà u l-ambjent, aktar milli sempliċement il-profitabilità u t-tkabbir. Din l-istrateġija timmodifika approċċi preċedenti mmirati lejn l-iżvilupp sostenibbli. Sa minn mindu kien varat dan il-kunċett, kien hemm dibattitu dwar jekk il-miżuri tas-CSR għandhomx ikunu mandatorji jew volontarji għan-negozji tal-pajjiżi tal-UE. Dan wassal għal problemi fil-passat bejn l-UE u l-NGOs, li jemmnu li prattiki bħal dawn għandhom ikunu obbligatorji. L-Alleanza għas-CSR tal-Kummissjoni fl-2006 wasslet biex l-NGOs waqqfu l-parteċipazzjoni tagħhom u jibdew koalizzjoni għalihom.

L-għanijiet tal-politika tas-CSR tal-UE huma konsistenti mal-aġendi tal-NGOs, pereżempju iktar trasparenza dwar kwistjonijiet soċjali u ambjentali, attenzjoni ikbar għad-drittijiet tal-bniedem, il-ġlieda kontra t-tixħim u korruzzjoni, u t-titjib tal-prattiki tax-xogħol u l-impjieg. Barra minn hekk, il-Kummissjoni ddikjarat li biħsiebha taħdem mal-intrapriżi favur l-iżvilupp tad-drittijiet tal-bniedem f'ċertu setturi industrijali fuq il-bażi tal-Prinċipji ta' Gwida tan-NU.

Madankollu, l-Aġenda 2011-14 ma tistipulax miżuri ġodda li jistgħu jkunu infurzati legalment u għadha tqiegħed ir-responsabbiltà għall-implimentazzjoni — b'mod li jagħżluh huma — fuq l-Istati Membri u n-negozji individwali. Il-Kummissjoni tinsab imħassba li dan il-qafas ġdid se jkompli jaljena l-NGOs u qiegħda tippjana li tinkludi l-NGOs fil-proċessi ta' konsultazzjoni jew reviżjonijiet futuri?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Tajani f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(13 ta' Awwissu 2012)

Il-Kummissjoni dejjem segwiet approċċ b'ħafna partijiet interessati fit-tfassil tal-politika tagħha dwar ir-Responsabbiltà Soċjali Korporattiva (CSR). L-istrateġija tas-CSR il-ġdida tal-Kummissjoni tikkonsolida approċċ aktar kostruttiv u inklussiv f'kooperazzjoni mal-partijiet interessati kollha, inklużi l-Istati Membri, in-negozji, it-trejdjunjins u l-NGOs. L-NGOs, flimkien ma' partijiet interessati oħra, jipparteċipaw f'forum tal-UE b'ħafna partijiet interessati dwar is-CSR, korp li se jgħin fir-reviżjoni tal-implimentazzjoni tal-istrateġija l-ġdida tal-Kummissjoni.

Id-definizzjoni ta' CSR tal-Kummissjoni fl-aħħar Komunikazzjoni tagħha dwar dan is-suġġett ma teskludix l-użu ta' leġiżlazzjoni komplementari, meta jkun meħtieġ u xieraq. Leġiżlazzjoni eżistenti fil-livell nazzjonali tal-UE diġà hija rilevanti għall-mod li bih l-intrapriżi jissodisfaw ir-responsabbiltà soċjali tagħhom. Il-Komunikazzjoni tas-CSR tal-Kummissjoni tirreferi għall-akkwist pubbliku, li l-Kummissjoni għamlet proposti leġiżlattivi ġodda għalih fi tmiem l-2011. Hija tirreferi wkoll għal proposta leġiżlattiva pendenti biex ittejjeb l-iżvelar ta' informazzjoni ambjentali u soċjali tal-kumpaniji.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006551/12
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Corporate social responsibility

The EU's 2011-14 renewed strategy for corporate social responsibility (CSR) supports the concept that companies should consider the interests of society and the environment, rather than just profitability and growth. This strategy modifies previous approaches geared towards sustainable development. Since the concept's outset, there has been debate over whether CSR measures should be mandatory or voluntary for businesses in EU countries. This has led to problems in the past between the EU and NGOs, which believe that such practices should be obligatory. The Commission's Alliance for CSR in 2006 resulted in NGOs reining in their participation and starting their own coalition.

The goals of the EU's CSR policy are consistent with the agendas of NGOs, for example increasing transparency on social and environmental issues, bringing greater attention to human rights, combating bribery and corruption, and improving labour and employment practices. Furthermore, the Commission has stated that it intends to work with enterprises to develop human rights in certain industrial sectors on the basis of the UN Guiding Principles.

However, the 2011-14 Agenda does not lay down any new legally enforceable measures and still places the responsibility for implementation — in a manner of their choosing — on Member States and individual businesses. Is the Commission concerned that the new framework will further alienate NGOs and does the Commission plan to include NGOs in future consultation processes or reviews?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(13 August 2012)

The Commission has always pursued a multistakholder approach in designing its policy on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The Commission's new CSR strategy consolidates a more constructive and inclusive approach in cooperation with all stakeholders including Member States, business, trade unions and NGOs. NGOs, together with other stakeholders, participate in the EU Multistakeholder Forum on CSR, a body that will help to review implementation of the Commission's new strategy.

The Commission's definition of CSR in its latest Communication on this subject does not rule out the use of complementary legislation, when necessary and appropriate. Existing legislation at national EU level is already relevant to the way in which enterprises meet their social responsibility. The Commission's CSR Communication refers to public procurement, for which the Commission made new legislative proposals at the end of 2011. It also refers to a pending legislative proposal to improve company disclosure of social and environmental information.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-006553/12
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(29 ta' Ġunju 2012)

Suġġett: Traffikar tal-bnedmin fl-Ewropa

Il-Komunikazzjoni mill-Kummissjoni bit-titolu "L-istrateġija tal-UE lejn il-Qerda tat-Traffikar tal-Bnedmin 2012 — 2016" (COM(2012)0286) tiddefinixxi tali strateġija bil-għan li jingħata aktar sostenn lill-vittmi tat-traffikar u li l-awturi tar-reat jiġu affrontati b'mod aktar effikaċi.

Fil-Valutazzjoni ta' Theddid mill-Kriminalità Organizzata li l-Europol wettaq fl-2011, huwa jindika l-fatt li l-gruppi tal-kriminalità organizzata siltu benefiċċju miż-żieda tal-miżuri ta' kontroll tal-immigrazzjoni fl-UE, meta dak li jkun iqis li l-immigrazzjoni klandestina saret aktar diffiċli għall-migranti irregolari li, b'konsegwenza ta' dan, qegħdin jirrikorru għall-gruppi tal-kriminalità organizzata. Dan il-fenomenu qiegħed jagħmilha aktar diffiċli biex issir distinzjoni bejn il-migranti volontarji u l-vittmi reali tat-traffikar.

Fid-dawl ta' dawn l-iżviluppi, b'liema mod bihsiebha l-Kummissjoni tiffaċilita l-identifikazzjoni tal-vittmi tat-traffikar tal-bnedmin, u tipprevedi l-introduzzjoni ta' miżuri eventwali intiżi li jipprevjenu li l-kontrolli aktar rigoruż tal-immigrazzjoni jrewħu l-kriminalità organizzata?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sinjura Malmström f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(9 ta' Awwissu 2012)

Fl-istrateġija tal-UE adottata dan l-aħħar għall-Qerda tat-Traffikar tal-Bnedmin 2012-2016, il-Kummissjoni Ewropea tagħti prijorità, *inter alia*, lill-identifikazzjoni tal-vittmi tat-traffikar, il-protezzjoni tagħhom u l-għajnuna għalihom. Hija tirrikonoxxi li l-identifikazzjoni tal-vittmi hija diffiċli iżda tenfasizza l-importanza tagħha, u tkompli tiddefinixxi sett ta' miżuri konkreti għal identifikazzjoni aħjar tagħhom.

Speċifikament, sa tmiem l-2012, il-Kummissjoni se tiżviluppa linji gwida għall-gwardji tal-fruntieri u għas-servizzi konsolari dwar l-identifikazzjoni tal-vittmi. Il-Kummissjoni qed tiffinanzja wkoll proġett għall-iżvilupp ta' linji gwida biex jiġu identifikati aħjar il-vittmi. Dawn il-linji gwida se jiffaċilitaw strateġija aktar armonizzata u ser itejbu l-identifikazzjoni u għandhom ikunu ta' għajnuna għall-prattikanti f'dan il-qasam.

L-istrateġija tenfasizza li l-Istati Membri għandhom jiżguraw li jiġu stabbiliti mekkaniżmi ta' riferiment nazzjonali formali u funzjonali ([1]). Dawn il-mekkaniżmi għandhom jiddeskrivu l-proċeduri għal identifikazzjoni, protezzjoni u assistenza aħjar u jinkludu lill-awtoritajiet pubbliċi rilevanti kollha u lis-soċjetà ċivili. F'dan ir-rigward, sal-2015, il-Kummissjoni għandha l-għan li tiżviluppa mudell għal mekkaniżmu ta' riferiment tranżnazzjonali tal-UE li jgħaqqad il-mekkaniżmi ta' riferiment nazzjonali biex jiġu identifikati, riferuti, mħarsa u megħjuna aħjar il-vittmi.

Ir-rabtiet bejn il-migrazzjoni irregolari u t-traffikar tal-bnedmin ġew indirizzati fil-qafas tad-Dokument Orjentat lejn l-Azzjoni dwar it-tisħiħ tad-dimensjoni esterna tal-UE kontra t-traffikar tal-bnedmin u l-Approċċ Globali lejn il-Migrazzjoni u l-Mobbiltà, fejn waħda mill-prijoritajiet hija li jiġu evitati u jitnaqqsu l-migrazzjoni irregolari u t-traffikar tal-bnedmin, biex titnaqqas il-vulnerabbiltà tan-nies.

([1]) Impenn li l-Istati Membri ħadu wkoll fil-kuntest taċ-Ċiklu ta' Politika tal-UE biex jiġġieldu l-kriminalità serja u organizzata.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006553/12
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Human trafficking in Europe

The Commission Communication entitled 'The EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings 2012-2016' (COM(2012)0286) sets out such a strategy in order to provide increased support for victims of trafficking and to target perpetrators more effectively.

In its 2011 Organised Crime Threat Assessment, Europol points to the fact that organised crime groups have benefited from the increased immigration control measures in the EU, given that illegal immigration has become more difficult for irregular migrants, who as a result are resorting to organised crime groups. This phenomenon is making it more difficult to distinguish between voluntary migrants and actual trafficking victims.

In light of these developments, in what way does the Commission intend to facilitate the identification of victims of human trafficking, and does it envisage the introduction of any measures to prevent tougher immigration controls from fuelling organised crime?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(9 August 2012)

In the recently adopted EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings 2012-2016 the European Commission prioritises, *inter alia*, the identification, protection and assistance to victims of trafficking. It acknowledges that the identification of victims is difficult but underlines its importance, and further outlines a set of concrete measures for their better identification.

Specifically, by the end of 2012, the Commission will develop guidelines for border guards and consular services on victims' identification. The Commission is also funding a project for the development of guidelines to better identify victims. These guidelines will facilitate a more harmonised approach and will improve identification and should assist practitioners.

The strategy underlines that Member States should ensure that formal, functional national referral mechanisms are established ([1]). These mechanisms should describe procedures to better identify, refer, protect and assist victims and include all relevant public authorities and civil society. In this respect, by 2015 the Commission aims to develop a model for an EU Transnational Referral Mechanism which links national referral mechanisms to better identify, refer, protect and assist victims.

The links between irregular migration and trafficking in human beings have been addressed within the framework of the Action Oriented Paper on strengthening the EU external dimension against trafficking in human beings and the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility, whereby one of the priorities is to prevent and reduce irregular migration and trafficking in human beings, in order to decrease people's vulnerability.

([1]) A commitment Member States also took in the context of the EU Policy Cycle to fight serious and organised crime.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-006556/12
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(29 ta' Ġunju 2012)

Suġġett: Il-malnutrizzjoni

Il-malnutrizzjoni għadha kawża ewlenija ta' tħassib fil-pajjiżi li qed jiżviluppaw. Huwa stmat li l-malnutrizzjoni għadha l-kawża ta' terz tal-imwiet kollha fost it-tfal taħt l-età ta' ħames snin. Barra minn hekk, il-malnutrizzjoni matul il-fażijiet bikrija tat-tfulija għandha konsegwenzi fit-tul għal-livell ta' produttività li persuna tista' tikseb fil-futur, u b'hekk għandha impatt fuq it-tkabbir ekonomiku ta' pajjiż.

L-importanza tan-nutrizzjoni ġiet rikonoxxuta fl-Għanijiet ta' Żvilupp tal-Millennju. Minkejja dan, il-progress fir-rigward tal-ewwel Għan ta' Żvilupp tal-Millenju, li għandu bħala objettiv il-qerda tal-ġuħ u l-faqar estrem, ilu staġnat sa mill-perjodu 2000-2002.

Il-Kummissjoni kif tista' tgħin biex tħaffef il-progress fir-rigward ta' dan l-għan ta' żvilupp partikulari?

Il-Kummissjon kif biħsiebha tintroduċi xi bidliet biex tindirizza l-kwistjoni tal-malnutrizzjoni barra mill-ambitu tal-Għanijiet ta' Żvilupp tal-Millenju, u qiegħda tikkunsidra li tevalwa l-politiki eżistenti tal-UE fir-rigward tal-impatt tagħhom fuq il-malnutrizzjoni?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Piebalgs f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(21 ta' Awwissu 2012)

Il-Kummissjoni għandha rwol ewlieni fil-ġlieda kontra l-ġuħ u l-malnutrizzjoni, u l-UE hija l-akbar donatur fid-dinja għas-sigurtà tal-ikel.

Jinsab fis-seħħ qafas ta' politika li jiżgura li s-sigurtà tal-ikel u n-nutriment jżommu pożizzjoni għolja fuq l-aġenda politika. Għaddejja ħidma dwar "Il-Pjan ta' Implimentazzjoni tal-UE għall-għajnuna għall-pajjiżi li qegħdin jiżviluppaw sabiex jindirizzaw l-isfidi tas-sigurtà tal-ikel u n-nutrizzjoni" li jenfasizza r-rwol tan-nutrizzjoni fl-assistenza esterna u jqis ir-rwol tas-settur privat.

Filwaqt li rrikonoxxiet l-effetti qerrieda tal-malnutrizzjoni u n-nuqqas ta' nutrizzjoni, u l-effetti negattivi fil-potenzjal tat-tkabbir tal-pajjiżi li qed jiżviluppaw, il-Kummissjoni żiedet l-isforzi tagħha biex tiġġieled in-nuqqas ta' nutrizzjoni, u żiedet l-iskala tal-appoġġ tal-UE f'dan il-qasam permezz ta' serje ta' inizjattivi speċifiċi għan-nutrizzjoni, li jinkludu enfasi aktar b'saħħtu fuq in-nutrizzjoni fl-Istrument tal-Programm Tematiku tas-Sigurtà tal-Ikel (FSTP) tagħha, il-Faċilità għall-Ikel u l-istrumenti ġeografiċi. Is-sigurtà tal-ikel, inkluż in-nutriment, hija mistennija wkoll li tkun prijorità fl-ipprogrammar tal-għajnuna għall-iżvilupp tal-UE għall-2014-2020.

Il-Kummissjoni tat appoġġ qawwi fl-iScaling-up Nutrition Movement (SUN) ([1]), u pprovdiet appoġġ finanzjarju tal-UE lis-Segretarjat tiegħu. Il-Membru tal-Kummissjoni responsabbli għall-Iżvilupp huwa membru tal-Grupp ta' Tmexxija tal-SUN, li jipprovdi gwida strateġika għall-Moviment.

Il-Kummissjoni, flimkien ma' membri oħra tal-G8, poġġiet in-nutrizzjoni bħala waħda mill-prijoritajiet tas-Samit tal-G8 ta' din is-sena u tal-laqgħa reċenti tal-G20 f'Los Cabos.

Dawn il-miżuri kollha se jgħinu biex jitħaffef il-progress fuq l-Għan ta' Żvilupp tal-Millennju 1 (MDG 1) u li jittejjeb in-nutriment.

([1]) http://www.scalingupnutrition.org/.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006556/12
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Malnutrition

Malnutrition continues to be a major cause for concern across the developing world. It is estimated that malnutrition is still the cause of one third of all deaths amongst children under the age of five. In addition, malnutrition during the early phases of childhood can have long-term consequences for the level of productivity that a person can achieve in the future, thereby having an impact upon a country's economic growth.

The importance of nutrition was recognised in the Millennium Development Goals. However, progress on the first Millennium Development Goal, which aims to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, has stalled since 2000-2002.

In what way can the Commission help speed up progress on this particular development goal?

Does the Commission intend to introduce any measures to tackle the issue of malnutrition outside the scope of the Millennium Development Goals, and is it considering assessing existing EU policies with regard to their impact on malnutrition?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(21 August 2012)

The Commission plays a leading role in tackling hunger and malnutrition, and the EU is the world's largest donor to food security.

A policy framework is in place to ensure that food and nutrition security (FNS) remain high on the political agenda. Work is under way on an 'EU Implementation plan to assist developing countries in addressing food and nutrition security challenges' which emphasises the role of nutrition in external assistance and takes into account the role of the private sector.

Recognising the devastating effects of malnutrition and under-nutrition, and the negative effects in the potential for growth of developing countries, the Commission has stepped up its efforts to combat under-nutrition, scaling-up EU support in this area through a series of nutrition-specific initiatives, which include placing a stronger focus on nutrition in its Food Security Thematic Programme Instrument (FSTP), the Food Facility and the geographical instruments. Food security, including nutrition, is also expected to be a priority in EU development assistance programming for 2014-2020.

The Commission has been very supportive of the Scaling-up Nutrition Movement (SUN) ([1]), providing EU financial support to its Secretariat. The Member of the Commission responsible for Development is a member of the SUN Lead Group, which provides strategic guidance to the Movement.

The Commission, with other G8 members, placed nutrition as one of the priorities of this year's G8 Summit and during the recent G20 meeting in Los Cabos.

All these measures will help to speed up progress on Millennium Development Goal 1 (MDG 1) and to improve nutrition.

([1]) http://www.scalingupnutrition.org/.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-006557/12
à la Commission
Constance Le Grip (PPE)
(29 juin 2012)

Objet: Répercussions des normes «Bâle III» sur le financement de l'économie réelle

La crise des «subprimes» de 2007 a déclenché une succession de crises dont l'économie européenne peine à sortir.

Les normes internationales «Bâle III» en matière de fonds propres bancaires, adoptées par le G20 en novembre 2010, visent à renforcer le système financier pour éviter aux établissements bancaires une nouvelle crise de liquidité.

Avec l'adoption des règles «Bâle III», des contraintes supplémentaires vont peser sur les actifs des banques, qui vont, de ce fait, se répercuter sur le financement de l'économie réelle et en particulier sur les activités à l'exportation des entreprises européennes.

À l'heure des discussions relatives à la transposition de la réforme «Bâle III» dans le droit européen, comment la Commission envisage-t-elle de limiter le risque d'un assèchement des crédits à l'exportation pour les entreprises européennes qui souhaitent partir à la conquête des marchés étrangers?

Réponse donnée par M. Barnier au nom de la Commission
(21 août 2012)

Les propositions législatives de révision de la directive sur les exigences de fonds propres ([1]) présentées par la Commission visent à améliorer la résilience du système bancaire de l'UE pour tenir compte de la crise financière de 2008 et de l'accord de Bâle III. Le renforcement de la stabilité financière implique effectivement des coûts à court terme, et les éventuels effets indésirables sur la croissance économique et la création d'emplois doivent être évalués, en particulier dans le contexte actuel, économiquement fragile. Cependant, il apparaît clairement qu'un système bancaire plus solide et plus résilient est source de bénéfices à long terme pour les citoyens et les entreprises, et pour l'économie réelle de manière plus générale.

Les propositions CRD IV ont reconnu le rôle essentiel des crédits commerciaux dans la croissance économique de l'UE, et mentionnent expressément que les conséquences pouvant les affecter doivent être examinées avant toute prise de décision définitive concernant le ratio de levier et les coussins de liquidités.

Étant donné l'importance de ce sujet, la Commission examine avec grand intérêt les modifications se rapportant aux crédits commerciaux suggérées par les colégislateurs, notamment la définition proposée des instruments y afférant. La Commission prend acte des amendements envisagés à la fois par le Conseil et par le Parlement, en vertu desquels les banques seraient autorisées à utiliser, dans le calcul du ratio de levier, des facteurs de conversion plus faibles ([2]) pour les transactions relatives aux crédits commerciaux. Le ratio pour ces transactions serait alors moins restrictif.

La Commission peut adhérer à l'objectif visé par ces modifications dans la mesure où celles-ci restent en adéquation avec les objectifs de stabilité financière fondamentaux du dispositif sur les exigences de fonds propres. La Commission constate également que le ratio de levier n'est destiné à être imposé comme exigence contraignante qu'en 2018, au terme d'une période d'observation préalable à sa mise en œuvre et permettant son calibrage adéquat. De cette manière, les instruments de crédits commerciaux devraient être soumis à des mesures appropriées.

([1]) Propositions sur les exigences de fonds propres (CRD IV) disponibles à l'adresse: http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/bank/regcapital/new_proposals_en.htm

([2]) Fixés à 20 % ou à 50 % en fonction de la transaction concernée, par rapport aux 100 % prévus dans la proposition de la Commission.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006557/12
to the Commission
Constance Le Grip (PPE)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Repercussions of the 'Basel III' standards on the financing of the real economy

The 'subprime' crisis of 2007 triggered a series of crises from which the European economy is struggling to emerge.

The 'Basel III' international standards regarding bank capital, adopted by the G20 in November 2010, are aimed at reinforcing the financial system to protect banking institutions against another liquidity crisis.

With the adoption of the 'Basel III' rules, additional constraints will apply to bank assets, which will have an effect on the financing of the real economy and, in particular, on the export operations of European businesses.

At a time when discussions are taking place on the transposition of the 'Basel III' reforms into European law, how does the Commission plan to limit the risk that export credits may dry up for European businesses that wish to conquer global markets?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(21 August 2012)

The Commission legislative proposals revising the Capital requirements directive ([1]) aim at enhancing resilience of the EU banking system in light of the 2008 financial crisis and the Basel III agreement. Enhancing financial stability indeed carries short-term costs, which must be weighed against potential adverse impacts on economic growth and job creations, particularly in the current fragile economic context. On the other hand, it is clear that a more resilient and solid banking system brings long-term benefits to citizens and companies and more generally to the real economy.

The importance of trade finance for the EU economic growth was acknowledged in the CRD IV proposal, which mentions specifically that the effect on trade finance must be considered before taking any final decisions on the leverage ratio and the liquidity buffers.

Given the importance of the matter, the Commission is considering with great interest the modifications suggested by the co-legislators on trade finance, notably the proposed definition of trade instruments. The Commission notes that both the Council and the Parliament are considering amendments which would allow banks using lower conversion factors ([2]) for trade finance transactions in the leverage ratio, making it less restrictive for such transactions.

The Commission can support the objective of such modifications to the extent they remained consistent with the core financial stability objectives of the capital framework. The Commission also notes that the leverage ratio is expected to be implemented as a binding measure only in 2018, after a review period allowing for a proper calibration of the ratio before its implementation. This should confer an appropriate treatment of trade finance instruments.

([1]) The CRD IV/CRR proposals, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/bank/regcapital/new_proposals_en.htm

([2]) 50% or 20% depending on the transactions, compared to 100%, as foreseen in the Commission proposal.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006558/12
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(29 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Disparità di genere e discriminazioni indirette: nella Banca d'Italia, non c'è posto per le donne

Uno studio pubblicato in Italia rivela che, nell'aprile del 2012, i dipendenti della Banca d'Italia sull'intero territorio nazionale erano 6 970; delle donne, il 35 % del totale, solo il 22 % ricopriva posizioni dirigenziali. Un miglioramento rispetto al 2002, in cui le donne rappresentavano il 28 % degli 8 447 dipendenti e il 15 % dei dirigenti. Ancora oggi tuttavia le donne sono meno della metà dei neoassunti laureati. Le statistiche Eurostat confermano questa tendenza: la presenza di donne nei gradi superiori risente di fattori socio-demografici. Oltre l'80 % dei dirigenti della Banca è nella fascia di età tra i 50 e i 65 anni e in possesso di istruzione universitaria. In questa classe di età ci sono poche donne laureate e ancor meno specializzate in materie rilevanti per le funzioni istituzionali di una banca centrale.

Tra il 1998 e il 2009 si sono svolte 7 selezioni destinate al profilo «economico» e 6 destinate a «giuristi»; in totale si sono presentati 13 397 candidati, di cui 423 sono stati dichiarati idonei. Le donne erano il 61,5 % dei partecipanti e solo il 35,5 % degli idonei. Al processo di preselezione parteciperebbero i candidati maschi più abili, mentre questo non sarebbe il caso per le donne. A questi elementi di eterogeneità è riconducibile il 40 % della disparità di genere nei risultati dei concorsi. Un 34 % è attribuibile a effetti delle stesse variabili: ad esempio, avere un figlio di età inferiore ai 14 anni svantaggia le donne, ma non gli uomini. Il risultato riflette l'asimmetria nel lavoro domestico e di cura della famiglia, che nel nostro paese è particolarmente pronunciata.

Circa un quarto del divario rimane non spiegato. Potrebbe segnalare l'esistenza della c.d. «discriminazione implicita» e «indiretta» enunciata dalla CGUE; tale fattispecie ricorre quando un datore di lavoro accorda involontariamente una preferenza a candidati appartenenti a un certo gruppo, in assenza di elementi che ne dimostrino la migliore qualità rispetto agli altri.

Considerando:

— gli obiettivi dell'UE in materia di parità fra uomini e donne che consistono, da un lato, nel garantire la parità di opportunità e di trattamento fra donne e uomini e, dall'altro, nella lotta contro qualsiasi discriminazione fondata sul sesso;

— l'integrazione della dimensione di genere che costituisce uno dei principi fondamentali del diritto comunitario, sancito espressamente dagli artt. 2 e 3 TUE, l'art. 8 TFUE, nonché della Carta delle donne;

— la normativa comunitaria in materia (tra l'altro: direttiva 2002/73/CE e direttiva 2006/54/CE).

— Potrebbe la Commissione indicare dati e statistiche di raffronto con la BCE, valutando una media delle altre banche centrali europee;

e chiarire se intenda procedere a una verifica del corretto recepimento degli obblighi nella normativa italiana, alla luce dell'interpretazione consolidata della CGUE — dal «caso Defrenne II» ad oggi — sulla nozione di «discriminazione indiretta o implicita»?

Risposta di Viviane Reding a nome della Commissione
(17 agosto 2012)

1. La Commissione rinvia l'onorevole parlamentare alla banca dati sulla presenza di genere nelle posizioni di responsabilità, che contiene dati sulle posizioni di alto livello occupate da uomini e donne nelle banche centrali nazionali e nelle istituzioni finanziarie europee: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/business-finance/index_en.htm.

2. Nella sua qualità di custode dei trattati, la Commissione ha la responsabilità di garantire il rispetto del diritto dell'Unione europea, verificando che gli Stati membri osservino le norme dei trattati e la legislazione dell'UE.

La Commissione sta attualmente monitorando l'attuazione della direttiva 2006/54/CE ([1]), recante il concetto di discriminazione indiretta.

([1]) Direttiva 2006/54/CE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 5 luglio 2006, riguardante l'attuazione del principio delle pari opportunità e della parità di trattamento fra uomini e donne in materia di occupazione e impiego (rifusione) (GU L 204 del 26.7.2006, pag. 23).

In caso di mancato o non corretto recepimento di tale direttiva da parte di uno Stato membro, la Commissione, nel suo ruolo di custode dei trattati, intraprenderà le azioni legali opportune a garantire la piena conformità alla normativa dell'UE, fino a portare il caso, se necessario, dinanzi alla Corte di giustizia dell'Unione europea.

Una volta che la legislazione dell'UE è stata recepita nell'ordinamento giuridico nazionale, la verifica della sua applicazione nei casi specifici è in linea di principio di competenza delle giurisdizioni nazionali. Spetta quindi ai singoli cittadini promuovere il procedimento giudiziario e denunciare la violazione del diritto dell'UE dinanzi alle giurisdizioni nazionali.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006558/12
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Gender disparity and indirect discrimination: at the Bank of Italy there is no place for women

In April 2012, a study published in Italy reveals that the Bank of Italy employed 6 970 people across the country. 35% of them were women and 22% of these held executive positions. This is an improvement from 2002, when women represented 28% of the 8 447 employees and 15% of executives. However, women still account for fewer than half of the newly recruited graduates. Eurostat statistics confirm this trend: the presence of women at higher levels is affected by socio-demographic factors. Over 80% of the Bank's executives are in the 50 to 65 age range and are university educated. In this age range, there are few female graduates and even fewer with specialisations in subjects that are relevant to the institutional functions of a central bank.

Between 1998 and 2009, seven selection procedures were held for 'economic' positions and six for 'lawyers'; in total there were 13 397 candidates, 423 of whom were declared suitable. Women accounted for 61.5% of the candidates and only 35.5% of those declared suitable. The most able male candidates seem to take part in the pre-selection process, but this is not the case for women. These differences are responsible for 40% of the gender disparity in the competitions' results, while 34% are attributable to the effects of the same variables: for example, having a child aged under 14 is a disadvantage for women, but not for men. The result reflects the asymmetry in domestic and family care work, which is particularly marked in Italy.

Around a quarter of the gap remains unexplained. This might signal the existence of the so-called 'implicit' and 'indirect discrimination' defined by the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU), in which an employer involuntarily favours candidates belonging to a certain group despite the absence of any evidence showing they are better than others.

Considering:

— the EU's objectives regarding equality between men and women, which involve guaranteeing equal opportunity and equal pay for men and women and opposing any gender-based discrimination;

— the integration of the gender dimension which is one of the essential principles of EC law, expressly approved by Articles 2 and 3 TEU, Article 8 TFEU, as well as the Women's Charter;

— relevant EC law (Directive 2002/73/EC and Directive 2006/54/EC among others).

Could the Commission:

— supply comparative data and statistics for the ECB, providing an average for the other European central banks;

— clarify if it intends to verify the correct transposition of the obligations into Italian law, in view of the well-established interpretation by the CJEU — from the 'Defrenne II case' to today — of the notion of 'indirect or implicit discrimination'?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(17 August 2012)

1. The Commission invites the Honourable Member to refer to the Commission's database on women and men in decision-making, which includes information on the participation of women and men in the top positions of national central banks and in European financial institutions: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/business-finance/index_en.htm

2. As guardian of the Treaties, the Commission has the responsibility to ensure respect for EC laws, verifying that Member States abide by Treaty rules and EU legislation.

The Commission is currently monitoring the implementation of Directive 2006/54/EC ([1]), including the notion of indirect discrimination, which is provided by the abovementioned Directive.

In case of lack of or incorrect transposition of the directive by a Member State, the Commission, in its role as guardian of the Treaties, would take the appropriate legal steps to ensure full compliance with EC law, including, where necessary, by bringing the matter before the Court of Justice of the European Union.

When the EU legislation has been correctly implemented in the national legal system, the monitoring of its application in a particular case is in principle the competence of national courts. It is therefore up to individuals to initiate judicial proceedings and claim any breach of EC law before the national courts.

([1]) Directive 2006/54/EC 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).

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006559/12
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(29 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Criminalità organizzata in America Latina: un enorme danno ecologico

Poiché la conferenza di Rio+ 20 sulla sostenibilità ambientale si è appena conclusa in Brasile, sembra doveroso riflettere sull'incidenza negativa della criminalità organizzata sull'ambiente naturale in America Latina. La produzione e la lavorazione di cocaina, ad esempio, una delle principali fonti di reddito per molte organizzazioni criminali latinoamericane, provoca in tutte le sue fasi danni all'ambiente, soprattutto a causa del deflusso dei prodotti chimici utilizzati per elaborare la polvere.

Il traffico di cocaina è solo una delle tante attività in mano alla criminalità che provocano danni molto gravi all'ambiente e agli habitat naturali. In Brasile, infatti, è stato documentato un traffico di specie animali rare che permetteva ai clan di vendere circa 38 milioni di esemplari selvatici all'anno, con un giro di affari enorme. In Messico, a Cosoleacaque, lo scorso dicembre si è verificata una fuoriuscita di greggio di 1 500 litri a causa di una tubatura creata illegalmente. I cartelli messicani degli Zetas, Sinaloa e Familia Michoacana si sono ormai inseriti nel giro di affari legato al petrolio, a danno dell'ambiente e della popolazione locale.

In Colombia si stima che le miniere illegali di oro producano circa 23 tonnellate del metallo prezioso ogni anno. Poiché la criminalità organizzata (Farc, Urabenos, Paisas) utilizza il mercurio nel processo di estrazione dell'oro, la Colombia è diventato il Paese che ha il più elevato tasso di inquinamento da mercurio pro capita.

— In considerazione del fatto che il crimine organizzato, a causa di attività illecite, danneggia notevolmente le risorse naturali dei paesi latinoamericani, potrebbe la Commissione chiarire se stia monitorando tali danni ambientali e se intenda prevedere misure per contrastare lo sfruttamento indiscriminato delle risorse da parte dei clan?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(8 agosto 2012)

Oltre a recare danni all'ambiente, lo sfruttamento illegale delle ricchezze naturali dell'America latina ad opera della criminalità organizzata compromette — sul piano generale — lo stato di diritto e ha un impatto negativo sotto il profilo socioeconomico.

La Commissione è consapevole di questo grave problema grazie alle sue delegazioni presenti nella regione e ai contatti con le autorità ambientali e di applicazione della legge, con le ONG e con altri soggetti. Ciononostante, non è in grado di monitorare su base sistematica il danno ambientale che le attività criminali procurano alle risorse naturali dell'America latina, dato che compete ai paesi stessi determinare quali attività sono legali e quali illegali.

Per contrastare tali attività l'UE dispone di diversi strumenti, quali ad esempio lo sviluppo delle capacità necessarie delle autorità nazionali grazie alla cooperazione allo sviluppo, il sostegno alla Convenzione sul commercio internazionale delle specie di flora e di fauna selvatiche minacciate di estinzione (CITES) e il piano d'azione dell'UE per l'applicazione delle normative, la governance e il commercio nel settore forestale (FLEGT).

Per quanto riguarda quest'ultimo strumento, Honduras e Guyana hanno recentemente annunciato l'intenzione di negoziare con l'UE accordi di partenariato FLEGT su base volontaria, in modo da garantire che il legname e i suoi derivati che questi paesi esportano nell'UE siano soggetti a una verifica che attesti che il legname sia stato tagliato legalmente.

La Commissione europea finanzia inoltre diversi programmi di cooperazione allo sviluppo destinati ad affrontare il problema della produzione di droghe e il danno ambientale ad essa legato, quali ad esempio il programma Laboratorios de Paz in Colombia e il programma FONADAL-YUNGAS in Bolivia.

La Commissione continuerà a lavorare con i paesi della regione per combattere lo sfruttamento illegale delle risorse naturali.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006559/12
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: The enormous ecological damage caused by organised crime in Latin America

Since the recent end of the Rio+20 conference on sustainable development in Brazil, it seems appropriate to reflect on the negative impact of organised crime on the natural environment in Latin America. For example, every stage in the production and processing of cocaine, one of the main sources of revenue for many Latin American criminal organisations, is damaging to the environment, mainly due to run-off of the chemicals used for processing the powder.

Cocaine trafficking is just one of the many criminal activities that cause serious damage to the environment and natural habitats. In Brazil, there is evidence of rare-animal trafficking which has enabled gangs to sell around 39 million wild animals a year, producing huge revenues. Last year in Mexico, at Cosoleacaque, an illegally constructed pipeline caused an oil spill of 1 500 litres. Mexico's Zeta, Sinaloa and Familia Michoacana cartels have now tapped into the oil business, to the detriment of the environment and local people.

In Colombia, it is estimated that illegal gold mines produce an estimated 23 tonnes of the precious metal every year. As organised criminal gangs (FARC, Urabenos, Paisas) use mercury in the gold extraction process, Colombia has become the country with the highest level of mercury pollution per capita.

— Since organised criminal activities are causing serious damage to the natural resources of Latin American countries, can the Commission state if it is monitoring this environmental damage? Does it intend to take measures to combat the indiscriminate use of resources by gangs?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(8 August 2012)

Illegal exploitation by organised crime of Latin America's rich natural resources is not only damaging to the environment but also undermines the rule of law generally and has negative social and economic effects.

The Commission is aware of this important issue through its Delegations in the region and contacts with environmental and law enforcement authorities, NGOs and other actors. However, it is not able to monitor on a systematic basis the environmental damage to natural resources in Latin America caused by criminal activities, since it is for the countries themselves to determine whether activities are legal or illegal.

The EU has a number of instruments to combat such activities, such as capacity-building with national authorities through development cooperation, support to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) as well as the EU Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade — FLEGT) Action Plan.

Concerning the latter Honduras and Guyana have recently announced their intention to negotiate FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreements with the EU so as to ensure that timber and timber products exported from these countries to the EU are verified as legally harvested.

In addition the European Commission funds several development cooperation programmes aimed at addressing drug production and associated environmental damage such as the Laboratorios de Paz programme in Colombia and the FONADAL-YUNGAS programme in Bolivia.

The Commission will continue to work with the countries of the region to combat the illegal exploitation of natural resources.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006560/12
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(29 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: «Science: it's a girl thing» — video promozionale

Vista la campagna lanciata dalla Commissione europea lo scorso 21 giugno con lo slogan «Science: it's a girl thing»;

Considerato che:

— il video di promozione scelto per la campagna risulta essere inadeguato in quanto fornisce un'immagine della donna che di certo non si addice alla professione di ricercatrice e, anzi, alimenta una concezione sessista del ruolo della donna;

— l'Unione europea sostiene fermamente le pari opportunità tra uomo e donna sancite anche nella Carta dei diritti fondamentali dell'Unione europea all'articolo 23, che recita: «la parità tra uomini e donne deve essere assicurata in tutti i campi, compreso in materia di occupazione, di lavoro e di retribuzione»;

Chiedo alla Commissione:

1. i criteri con cui è stato scelto il video;

2. il costo che i cittadini europei hanno sostenuto in maniera indiretta per la realizzazione del suddetto video;

3. se intenda ritirare il video che ha già suscitato molte polemiche;

4. se e in che modo intenda rimediare all'immagine negativa e offensiva per le donne che è emersa dal video promozionale.

Risposta di Máire Geoghegan-Quinn a nome della Commissione
(21 agosto 2012)

Il video promozionale era inteso a richiamare l'attenzione delle ragazze dai 13 ai 18 anni, un *target* molto difficile da raggiungere con comunicazioni di taglio scientifico, indirizzandole alle pagine web che riportano una grande quantità di informazioni sul mondo della scienza e sulle possibilità di carriera nella ricerca, compresi dei video-testimonianza di modelli di riferimento.

Da diversi gruppi di riflessione è emerso che le *teenager* pensano che lavorare in ambito scientifico equivalga ad isolarsi in un laboratorio: sono convinte di non avere le competenze per dedicarsi a tali attività e preferiscono lavori più creativi o che prevedono contatti sociali.

Il senso del video era di mostrare alle ragazze di questa fascia d'età che l'ambito scientifico può essere alla loro portata, combinando immagini di natura scientifica con immagini della loro vita quotidiana.

Il video è costato 102 000 EUR.

Il video è stato ritirato venerdì, 22 giugno. La Commissione si rammarica del fatto che il video possa essere stato ritenuto offensivo e ha pubblicato le sue scuse sia su Twitter, sia sul sito Facebook ([1]) (motivando la propria posizione). Le copie in versione *mirror* condivise in Internet non possono essere rimosse.

Il video era soltanto uno dei tanti elementi di una campagna basata sul concetto più ampio delle ricercatrici viste come modelli di riferimento che condividono la loro passione e le loro esperienze. La Commissione invita attivamente le donne che operano in ambito scientifico a partecipare alla campagna e ha inserito oltre 600 nominativi nell'elenco di *Twitter realwomeninscience*. Le *teenager* possono visualizzare i video delle ricercatrici sul sito ([2]) e interagire via *Facebook* nonché nel quadro degli eventi nazionali previsti per il 2012 e il 2013.

([1]) www.facebook.com/sciencegirlthing.
([2]) www.ec.europa.eu/science-girl-thing.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006560/12
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: 'Science: It's a Girl Thing!' promotional video

In view of the campaign launched by the European Commission on 21 June 2012 with the slogan 'Science: It's a Girl Thing!' and given that:

— the promotional video chosen for the campaign is inappropriate insofar as it offers an image of women that certainly does not befit the profession of researcher; on the contrary, it reinforces a sexist concept of the role of women;

— the EU strongly supports equal opportunities between men and women, something which is also enshrined in Article 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union which specifies that 'equality between men and women must be ensured in all areas, including employment, work and pay';

Can the Commission state:

1. What criteria were used to choose the video?

2. How much did it cost EU citizens, albeit indirectly, to produce the video?

3. Does it intend to withdraw this video which has caused a lot of controversy?

4. Does it intend to reverse the negative image projected by the promotional video that is offensive to women and how does it intend to do this?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(21 August 2012)

1. The promotional video was meant to grab the attention of teenage girls aged 13 to 18, who are very hard to reach with messages about science, and direct them to the website where there is lots of information on science and careers in research, including video-profiles of role models.

According to focus groups, many teenage girls associate science with being isolated in a laboratory: they think they lack the ability to do science and prefer the idea of creative or social work.

The concept of the video was to show teenage girls that science can be for them by combining images of science with images of their everyday life.

2. The video cost EUR 102 000.

3. It was withdrawn on Friday 22 June. The Commission regrets any offence caused and has posted an apology on Twitter and the Facebook ([1]) site (with an explanation). The mirror version copies that people are sharing on the Internet cannot be removed.

4. The video was only a minor component of the campaign which is largely based on women scientists as role models who share their passion and experience. The Commission is actively inviting women scientists to take part in the campaign and has collected over 600 names on the Twitter list realwomeninscience. Teenage girls can view videos of women scientists on the website ([2]) and interact on Facebook and during the planned national events in 2012 and 2013.

([1]) www.facebook.com/sciencegirlthing.
([2]) www.ec.europa.eu/science-girl-thing.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006561/12
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(29 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Traffico internazionale di bambini: la lotta contro la tratta e la riduzione in schiavitù — nuove prospettive e tutela giuridica

Secondo i dati forniti dall'Organizzazione Internazionale del Lavoro (OIL), ogni anno sono 20,9 milioni le vittime di sfruttamento relativo al lavoro forzato e sessuale. Ancor più allarmanti sono le statistiche Europol, secondo cui si contano 5 milioni e mezzo di minori, usati per l'accattonaggio organizzato e letteralmente venduti in veri e propri mercati di esseri umani: 20 000 EUR per acquistarli e addestrarli alle attività illegali. Ogni anno, secondo quanto riferito dalla Commissione, la tratta di essere umani frutta alle organizzazioni criminali internazionali 25 miliardi di EUR. Molte delle vittime provengono dai Paesi terzi, ma la tratta di cittadini europei all'interno dell'UE è in continua crescita. I Paesi dai quali arriva il maggior numero di donne, bambini e uomini destinati a finire sui mercati sono la Bulgaria e la Romania. I dati raccolti a livello europeo sono coerenti con quelli forniti dall'UNODC e mostrano come la criminalità organizzata continui a investire capitali, mezzi e risorse umane, agendo come un'impresa e diversificando i propri investimenti, dal traffico di droga all'immigrazione clandestina.

Il nodo cruciale del fenomeno viene in rilievo però dall'analisi di ulteriori dati: dal 2008 al 2010 le condanne nei confronti dei responsabili dei traffici umani sono scese da 1500 a solo 1250; ciò significa che sono ancora migliaia i casi legati allo sfruttamento che restano impuniti. La lacuna principale viene dal tessuto normativo e dalla scarsa reattività del sistema di sanzioni predisposto a livello europeo, poiché l'UE non è ancora sufficientemente chiara e «blindata» su una definizione comune della fattispecie di reato e sull'inquadramento giuridico delle fattispecie correlate che alimentano la tratta di essere umani.

Considerando che la base giuridica per la lotta contro il traffico di essere umani è costituita in primis dagli articoli 3 e 67 del TFUE, che le donne e le ragazze immigrate sono più vulnerabili rispetto alle donne e alle ragazze cittadine dell'UE di fronte al crimine organizzato, ad esempio attraverso la prostituzione e il traffico di essere umani:

1. Può la Commissione indicare (nella proposta di direttiva al vaglio) le misure concrete che possono portare al riconoscimento reciproco delle decisioni giudiziarie penali e al necessario ravvicinamento delle legislazioni penali? Può inoltre verificare se l'attuale doppio approccio (che criminalizza sia la partecipazione sia la cospirazione) e la previsione di reati tipici «satellite», per i quali vi è un sistema sanzionatorio differente negli Stati membri, sia di ostacolo alla lotta per contrastare il profondo radicamento della criminalità organizzata di stampo mafioso nell'UE?

2. Può la Commissione altresì indicare specificamente quali misure a tutela delle vittime della tratta intende predisporre, al fine di garantire un canale d'informazione chiaro e trasparente sui diritti di cui godono, in particolare sul diritto all'assistenza e alle prestazioni sanitarie, e sui diritti al reinserimento nella vita sociale e lavorativa?

Risposta di Cecilia Malmström a nome della Commissione
(17 agosto 2012)

Il quadro legislativo dell'Unione europea in materia di lotta contro la tratta degli esseri umani attribuisce particolare importanza alle vittime minori. Tale aspetto si riflette nella direttiva 2011/36/EU ([1]) e nella strategia ([2]) recentemente adottata dall'UE. La direttiva individua nei minori la categoria più vulnerabile e adotta un approccio di «tolleranza zero» nei confronti dei trafficanti, anche inasprendo le pene massime previste. La strategia dell'UE si incentra sulle vittime ed evidenzia l'aspetto della protezione dei minori, delineando iniziative concrete e incoraggiando gli Stati membri ad istituire meccanismi nazionali di riferimento ufficiali e funzionali, che consentano di individuare, indirizzare, proteggere e assistere meglio le vittime, per il loro recupero e il loro reinserimento. È anche prevista l'elaborazione di orientamenti su sistemi per la protezione dei minori, che gli Stati membri dovranno rafforzare. Per giunta, nel 2013 la Commissione fornirà informazioni precise alle autorità nazionali sui diritti di cui godono, in forza delle norme dell'UE, le vittime della tratta negli ambiti sociale e del lavoro e in qualità di vittime e di migranti.

([1]) Direttiva 2011/36/UE concernente la prevenzione e la repressione della tratta di esseri umani e la protezione delle vittime, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:101:0001:0011:IT:PDF.
([2]) Strategia dell'UE per l'eradicazione della tratta degli esseri umani 2012-2016, COM(2012)286 final del 19.6.2012.

Alcuni aspetti riguardanti il reciproco riconoscimento delle sentenze definitive sono già trattati nella decisione quadro 2008/675/GAI ([3]).

Si osservi poi che la Commissione ha presentato una proposta di direttiva orizzontale che istituisce standard minimi per i diritti, l'assistenza e la protezione delle vittime di reato, che i colegislatori dovrebbero adottare nel settembre del 2012. Tale proposta introduce un ampio ventaglio di diritti delle vittime nel procedimento penale, compresi il diritto all'informazione e il diritto a fruire dei servizi di assistenza alle vittime.

La Commissione si occupa infine della protezione e dell'assistenza alle vittime anche predisponendo fondi ad hoc. Per progetti in questo campo si rinvia al sito web della UE contro la tratta degli esseri umani ([4]).

([3]) Decisione quadro 2009/315/GAI relativa alla considerazione delle decisioni di condanna tra Stati membri dell'Unione europea in occasione di un nuovo procedimento penale.

([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/entity.action?id=0bb8db83-ea50-4217-b44a-3056297e1e70.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006561/12
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: New prospects and legal protection in the fight against international trafficking and enslavement of children

Figures from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) show that 20.9 million people are subjected to forced labour or sexual exploitation every year. Even more alarming are the Europol statistics, which show that 5.5 million minors are used for organised begging and literally sold in human markets, where EUR 20 000 is enough to buy a child and train him or her to perform illegal activities. According to information provided by the Commission, international criminal organisations earn EUR 25 billion a year from human trafficking. Many of the victims are from third countries, but trading in European citizens within the EU is growing steadily. The countries with the highest number of women, children and men ending up on this market are Bulgaria and Romania. Figures gathered at European level are consistent with those of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and show that organised crime is continuing to invest capital, equipment and human resources, acting as a business and diversifying its investments, from drug smuggling to illegal immigration.

The crucial problem in this respect is revealed, however, by analysing other data: between 2008 and 2010, the number of convictions for human trafficking fell from 1 500 to just 1 250, which means that thousands of cases of exploitation go unpunished. This is due, for the most part, to the legislative framework and poor responsiveness of the system of sanctions set up at European level, given that the EU still lacks a sufficiently clear and firm common definition of the offence or of the related offences that fuel human trafficking.

Given that the main legal basis for the fight against human trafficking is established by Articles 3 and 67 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and that immigrant women and children are more vulnerable to organised crime, for example through prostitution and human trafficking, than those of EU countries,

1. Can the Commission state (in the proposal for a directive under consideration) what concrete measures might lead to reciprocal recognition of legal judgments and the necessary harmonisation of criminal laws? Can it also say whether the current twofold approach (which criminalises both participation and conspiracy) and the profiling of typical 'satellite' crimes, for which the Member States have different sanctioning systems, is an obstacle to the fight against the deep entrenchment of Mafia-style organised crime in the EU?

2. Can the Commission also say specifically what measures it intends to take to protect the victims of trafficking, in order to ensure a clear and transparent channel of information on the rights they enjoy, particularly with regard to social security and health services, and on the right to reintegration into social and working life?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(17 August 2012)

The EU framework for addressing trafficking in human beings, attaches special importance to children victims. This is reflected in Directive 2011/36/EU ([1]) and the recently adopted EU Strategy ([2]). The directive recognises children as the most vulnerable and takes a zero-tolerance approach towards the traffickers by, *inter alia*, increasing maximum penalties. The EU Strategy is victim centred and, highlights children protection. Concrete actions are outlined and Member States are encouraged to establish formal and functional national referral mechanisms, which would allow for better identification system, referral, protection and assistance of victims, for their recovery and reintegration. Foreseen is also the development of guidelines on child protection systems, and their enhancement by Member States. Furthermore, in 2013 the Commission will provide clear information to national authorities on the labour, social, victim and migrant rights that victims of trafficking have under EC law.

Some aspects of mutual recognition of final judgments have already been addressed in Framework Decision 2008/675/JHA ([3]).

([1]) Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:101:0001:0011:EN:PDF.
([2]) EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings 2012-2016, COM(2012) 286 final, 19.6.2012.
([3]) Framework Decision 2008/675/JHA on taking account of convictions in the Member States of the European Union in the course of new criminal proceedings.

Of note, the Commission tabled a proposal for a horizontal Directive establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, expected to be formally adopted by the co-legislators in September 2012. This proposal introduces a broad set of victims' rights in the criminal proceedings, including the right to information and right to access the victim support services.

Finally, the Commission addresses victim protection and assistance also through funding opportunities. Relevant projects can be found at the EU Anti-Trafficking website ([4]).

([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/entity.action?id=0bb8db83-ea50-4217-b44a-3056297e1e70.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006562/12
alla Commissione
Matteo Salvini (EFD)
(29 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Libertà di circolazione

La libera circolazione dei lavoratori è un principio fondamentale dell'UE, sancito dall'articolo 45 del TFUE e ulteriormente precisato dal diritto derivato e dalla giurisprudenza del giudice lussemburghese.

Diverse sentenze della Corte di giustizia hanno precisato che l'obiettivo della normativa europea in merito alla libertà di circolazione sarebbe pregiudicato ove il lavoratore che abbia usufruito di tale diritto goda in seguito di un trattamento (ad esempio previdenziale) inferiore a quello del lavoratore rimasto a lavorare nello Stato membro d'origine (tra le altre, CG in causa C-24/75, 21 ottobre 1975, Petroni; CG in causa C-807/90, 9 luglio 1980, Gravina; CG in causa C-293/88, 2 maggio 1990, Winter-Lutzins).

In Italia, nei confronti del personale, anche navigante, dei vettori aerei e delle società da questi derivanti a seguito di processi di riorganizzazione o trasformazioni societarie sono state adottate le leggi 291/2004 e 166/2008.

Tali leggi dispongono in merito alla cassa integrazione guadagni straordinaria e mobilità e dispongono che l'INPS (Istituto nazionale della previdenza sociale) sia il responsabile del monitoraggio dei provvedimenti autorizzativi d'integrazione salariale, delle domande di mobilità e dei benefici contributivi.

Tale Istituto ha emanato la circolare n. 94, datata 8 luglio 2011, che dispone che «il trattamento di mobilità [giustamente sospeso nel periodo d'impiego a tempo determinato] non è più erogabile se il beneficiario si trasferisca o si rioccupi all'estero durante il periodo di godimento dell'indennità». Si crea in tal senso una forte discriminazione tra lavoratori che decidano di impiegarsi temporaneamente all'estero e lavoratori temporaneamente impiegati nel territorio nazionale, cui è concesso il rientro in mobilità.

Tale normativa non rappresenta un certo e immotivato ostacolo alla libertà di circolazione del lavoratore nel mercato interno?

Risposta di Laszlo Andor a nome della Commissione
(14 agosto 2012)

Secondo la Commissione la regola menzionata non ostacola la libera circolazione dei lavoratori. In linea di principio, cambiare il proprio paese di attività significa che cambia anche lo Stato membro responsabile di erogare le prestazioni di disoccupazione.

I cittadini sono di norma assoggettati alla legislazione dello Stato membro in cui lavorano. Di conseguenza, il paese in cui la persona ha lavorato da ultimo è responsabile delle prestazioni di disoccupazione. Regole speciali si applicano alle persone che sono abitualmente residenti in uno Stato membro diverso dal paese in cui lavorano.

Per tale motivo quando una persona che ha titolo a prestazioni di disoccupazione in Italia va ad occupare un posto di lavoro all'estero, lo Stato membro in cui lavora è competente per l'erogazione delle prestazioni di disoccupazione a detta persona a meno che questa non sia abitualmente residente in Italia. In quest'ultimo caso, piuttosto che riprendere il pagamento delle prestazioni di disoccupazione precedentemente garantite, la autorità italiane dovrebbero tener conto dei periodi di assicurazione, occupazione o lavoro autonomo completati all'estero e calcolare le prestazioni di disoccupazione sulla base della retribuzione più recente. Tale procedura sarebbe conforme al disposto dell'articolo 62, paragrafo 3, del regolamento (CE) n. 883/2004 ([1]).

Per ora la Commissione non ha ricevuto denunce di lavoratori migranti i quali affermino che i loro diritti in forza della normativa UE ad accedere alle prestazioni di disoccupazione non siano stati rispettati dalle autorità italiane.

([1]) GU L 166 del 30 marzo 2004, pag. 1.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006562/12
to the Commission
Matteo Salvini (EFD)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Freedom of movement

Freedom of movement for workers is a fundamental principle of the EU, enshrined in Article 45 of the TFEU and confirmed by its derivative legislation and by Luxembourg case law.

Various rulings by the Court of Justice have stated that the objective of European legislation on freedom of movement would be compromised if a worker who had taken advantage of this right then received a lower payment (e.g. social security) than a worker who had remained in the Member State of origin (see, among others, Case C-24/75 *Petroni* v *ONPTS* [1975] ECR I-1149; Case C-807/90 *Gravina* v *Landesversicherungsanstalt Schwaben* [1980] ERC I-2205; Case C-293/88 *Winter-Lutzins* v *Bestuur Van de Sociale Verzekeringsbank* [1990] ERC I-1623).

In Italy, Laws 291/2004 and 166/2008 have been adopted in respect of staff (including flight crew) employed by airlines and spin-off companies created as a result of corporate reorganisation or transformation processes.

These laws contain provisions relating to the extraordinary Earnings Supplement Fund and unemployment benefits, and make the National Institute of Social Security (INPS) responsible for monitoring earnings supplement authorisations and applications for unemployment or social security benefits.

On 8 July 2011, the INPS issued Circular No 94, which states that 'unemployment benefit [appropriately suspended during any period of fixed-term employment] is no longer payable if the beneficiary relocates to or is re-employed in another country during the period of eligibility for the benefit'. This produces serious discrimination against workers who decide to take up temporary employment abroad compared with those working on a temporary basis in Italy, who can claim the benefit again when their employment ends.

Does the Commission not think that this rule is a real and unreasonable hindrance to freedom of movement for workers in the internal market?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(14 August 2012)

In the view of the Commission, the described rule does not hinder the free movement of workers. In principle, to change ones country of work means that the Member State responsible for providing unemployment benefits also changes.

Citizens are normally subject to the legislation of the Member State in which they work. As a consequence,, the country in which the person was last employed is responsible for the granting of unemployment benefits. Special rules apply to individuals who are habitually resident in a Member State other than their country of employment.

Therefore, when a person, who is entitled to unemployment benefits in Italy, takes up employment abroad, the Member State of employment is competent for the provision of unemployment benefits to that person, unless he/she is habitually resident in Italy. If the latter is the case, rather than resuming the payment of the previously granted unemployment benefits, the Italian authorities should take into account the periods of insurance, employment or self-employment completed abroad and calculate unemployment benefits on the basis of the most recent salary. This procedure would be in accordance with Article 62(3) of Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 ([1]).

At present, the Commission has not received any complaints from migrant workers in which it is claimed that rights under EC law regarding access to unemployment benefits are not being respected by the Italian authorities.

([1]) OJ L 166, 30.3.2004, p. 1.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006563/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(29 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: «Applications Helpdesk»

L'Autorità europea per la sicurezza alimentare (EFSA) ha istituito un'unità di assistenza dedicata alle richieste di valutazione inoltrate da imprese e addetti ai lavori. Il nuovo servizio si pone l'obiettivo di affinare la comprensione delle attività di valutazione del rischio e dei requisiti necessari per l'immissione di nuovi prodotti nella catena alimentare europea. L'EFSA si è inoltre impegnata nella semplificazione delle procedure da seguire per ottenere la valutazione delle sostanze, dei prodotti e delle diciture relative alla salute da riportare sulle etichette.

Considerando l'impatto economico del settore agroalimentare nell'UE (900 miliardi di euro annui e 4,4 milioni di persone impiegate) non stupisce la considerevole crescita del numero di richieste ricevute dall'EFSA per conoscere valutazioni relative alle autorizzazioni. Secondo stime dell'Agenzia, oggi questo settore assorbe il 40 % delle risorse (il doppio rispetto al 2008) e coinvolge i due terzi della produzione scientifica.

Nei prossimi anni la valutazione di alcune richieste diventerà più complessa e ci si aspetta un aumento delle domande su additivi per mangimi, enzimi e aromi. Per affrontare questa situazione in maniera efficiente, l'EFSA ha istituito l'«Applications Helpdesk», un servizio di supporto che deve fornire informazioni e assistenza ai richiedenti, agli Stati membri, alle parti interessate e agli altri soggetti coinvolti. È prevista anche la possibilità di inviare domande specifiche sui requisiti legali e tecnici per le valutazioni.

Può la Commissione fornire maggiori informazioni su come tale misura possa effettivamente offrire vantaggi alle imprese?

Risposta di John Dalli a nome della Commissione
(17 agosto 2012)

L'Agenzia europea per la sicurezza alimentare (EFSA) è indipendente dalla Commissione e gestisce in autonomia la propria organizzazione.

La Commissione ha pertanto invitato l'agenzia a rispondere direttamente all'interrogazione dell'onorevole parlamentare. La risposta dell'EFSA verrà inoltrata dalla Commissione all'onorevole parlamentare nel più breve tempo possibile.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006563/12
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Applications helpdesk

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has established a helpdesk unit to deal with applications made by companies and industry professionals. The new service aims to improve understanding of its risk assessment work and the requirements necessary to place new products in the EU food chain. The EFSA is also streamlining the procedures to follow in order to obtain an evaluation of substances, products and health claims intended for labelling.

Considering the economic impact of the EU agrofood sector (EUR 900 billion annually with 4.4 million people employed), it is not surprising that there has been a substantial increase in the number of requests received by the EFSA for applications-related evaluations. According to the agency's estimates, this sector now accounts for 40% of its resources (twice the 2008 level), and two thirds of its scientific outputs.

Over the coming years, the assessment of certain applications will become more complex and an increase in applications for feed additives, enzymes and flavourings is expected. To deal with this situation efficiently, the EFSA has established an 'Applications helpdesk', a service intended to provide information and support to applicants, Member States, stakeholders and other interested parties. It is also possible to submit specific questions related to legal and technical requirements for evaluations.

Can the Commission provide further information as to how this measure can effectively benefit companies?

Answer given by Mr Dalli on behalf of the Commission
(17 August 2012)

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) is independent from the Commission and is responsible for its own organisation.

The Commission has therefore asked EFSA to provide a response to the question raised by the Honourable Member. EFSA's reply will be sent by the Commission to the Honourable Member as soon as possible.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006565/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(29 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Droga, i «poliassuntori»

Attualmente si consumano più droghe allo stesso tempo e molti le fabbricano in casa. Si parla di «laboratory kitchen». Persino la marijuana oggi è artificiale. In rete si possono trovare e comprare centinaia di tipi di semi che agiscono sulla mente o che stimolano il fisico. La biotecnologia ha alterato anche il mondo degli stupefacenti.

In queste settimane si è parlato molto dei «sali da bagno», una droga che stimola aggressività e scatena forme di cannibalismo. Ma non è la sola droga di questo tipo. In Russia è apparsa quella che in gergo chiamano «coccodrillo», basata sulla desomorfina, un oppiaceo sintetico. È una sostanza micidiale per chi ne fa uso e comporta il rischio di morire nel giro di un anno. Si inietta e finisce per distruggere la pelle e le vene.

Il fatturato, che sfiora ormai i 300 miliardi di dollari, colloca il traffico clandestino di stupefacenti al secondo posto, dopo il turismo sessuale, nella scala dei grandi business mondiali. Più delle armi e del petrolio.

Alla luce di quanto precede, e considerando che oggi affrontare il grande tema della droga vuol dire anche registrare cambiamenti e umori e segnalare tendenze con cui il pianeta deve fare i conti, e che la stessa guerra al traffico degli stupefacenti, che impegna da mezzo secolo la comunità internazionale con ingenti quantità di denaro e migliaia di agenti e soldati, sta mostrando le sue crepe e solleva un ampio dibattito, può la Commissione far sapere:

1. se l'UE non ritiene di dover rivedere la politica antidroga;

2. se non intende investire ulteriori fondi per potenziare la comprensione del problema della droga nell'UE, attraverso campagne di sensibilizzazione su tutti i media nazionali;

3. quali sono i progressi dell'attuazione della strategia antidroga UE 2005-2012 e se è pronto il nuovo piano d'azione o eventuali azioni successive?

Risposta di Viviane Reding a nome della Commissione
(3 agosto 2012)

Come annunciato nella sua comunicazione «Verso un'azione europea più incisiva nella lotta alla droga» ([1]), la Commissione intende presentare proposte per consentire di far fronte in modo più efficace e sostenibile alla comparsa e alla diffusione in tutta l'UE di nuove sostanze psicoattive nocive. L'obiettivo è migliorare il monitoraggio e la valutazione scientifica dei rischi connessi alle nuove sostanze al fine di informare i responsabili politici e consentire risposte rapide.

Gli Stati membri sono competenti per la definizione e la messa in atto di politiche volte a prevenire l'uso della droga adatte ai loro contesti socioeconomici e culturali. Possono avviare campagne di prevenzione per informare i cittadini dei potenziali rischi e scoraggiare l'uso di sostanze psicoattive. La Commissione sostiene e completa le attività degli Stati membri volte a ridurre la domanda di droghe promuovendo lo sviluppo di approcci efficaci e innovativi e la condivisione delle migliori pratiche, attraverso i programmi finanziari dell'UE, il programma Prevenzione e informazione in materia di droga ([2]) e il Programma in materia di salute pubblica ([3]).

La Commissione invita l'onorevole parlamentare a prendere visione di una recente valutazione esterna, effettuata su sua iniziativa, riguardante la messa in atto della strategia UE contro la droga 2005-2012 e dei suoi piani d'azione ([4]). Ha inviato il rapporto della valutazione ai segretariati delle commissioni Ambiente, sanità pubblica e sicurezza alimentare e Libertà civili, giustizia e affari interni. Gli Stati membri stanno discutendo la nuova strategia antidroga dell'UE (2013-2020) in base a un progetto presentato dalla Presidenza cipriota, con l'obiettivo di adottarla entro dicembre 2012.

([1]) COM(2011)689 del 25.10.2011.
([2]) Decisione n. 1150/2007/CE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 25 settembre 2007, che istituisce per il periodo 2007-2013 il programma specifico Prevenzione e informazione in materia di droga nell'ambito del programma generale Diritti fondamentali e giustizia, GU L 257 del 3.10.2007, pag. 23.
([3]) Decisione n. 1350/2007/CE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 23 ottobre 2007, che istituisce un secondo programma d'azione comunitaria in materia di salute (2008-2013), GU L 301 del 20.11.2007.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/anti-drugs/files/rand_final_report_eu_drug_strategy_2005-2012_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006565/12
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Drugs: polydrug users

Nowadays, people consume several drugs at once, many of which are made at home in 'laboratory kitchens'. Even marijuana is now artificial. On the Internet, you can find and buy hundreds of types of seeds that affect the mind or stimulate the body. Biotechnology has even changed the world of drugs.

In recent weeks, there has been much discussion about 'bath salts', a drug that stimulates aggressive behaviour and triggers forms of cannibalism. However, it is not the only drug of its kind. In Russia, a drug has emerged with the street name 'krokodil', made from desomorphine, a synthetic opiate. It is lethal for users, who run the risk of dying within a year. It is injected and ends up destroying the skin and veins.

The turnover generated, now almost USD 300 billion, puts illegal drugs trafficking in second place, behind sex tourism, on the scale of major global businesses: a turnover higher than that of weapons and oil.

Given the above, and considering that today tackling the major issue of drugs also entails recording changes and moods and indicating trends with which the planet must get to grips, and considering that the war on drugs trafficking, which the international community has been fighting for half a century with sizeable sums of money and thousands of officers and soldiers, is showing some cracks and has sparked wide debate, can the Commission state:

1. Does the EU believe it necessary to review drugs policy?

2. Does it intend to invest further funds in order to enhance understanding of the drugs issue in the EU, through awareness campaigns in all national media?

3. What progress has been made in implementing the EU drugs strategy for 2005-2012, and are the new action plan or any follow-up actions ready?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(3 August 2012)

As announced in its communication 'Towards a stronger European response to drugs' ([1]), the Commission is planning to present legislative proposals to enable a more effective and sustainable response to the emergence and spread of harmful new psychoactive substances across the EU. Those proposals will seek to enhance monitoring and scientific risk assessment of new substances with an aim to inform policy-makers and enable rapid responses.

Member States are competent for developing and implementing policies on drug prevention that work best in their socioeconomic and cultural contexts. They can deploy prevention campaigns to inform citizens of potential risks and to discourage the use of psychoactive substances. The Commission supports and complements Member States' action on drug-demand reduction, by promoting the development of effective and innovative approaches and the sharing of best-practice, through the EU financial programmes, the Drug Prevention and Information Programme ([2]) and the Public Health Programme ([3]).

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to a recent external evaluation of the implementation of the EU Drug Strategy 2005-2012 and its Action Plans, which was initiated by the Commission ([4]). The Commission sent the evaluation report to the secretariats of the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committees. Member States are in the process of discussing the new EU Drugs Strategy (2013-2020) based on a draft presented by the Cypriot Presidency, with the aim to adopt it by December 2012.

([1]) COM(2011) 689, 25.10.2011.
([2]) Decision No 1150/2007/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 September 2007 establishing for the period 2007-13 the Specific Programme Drug prevention and information as part of the General Programme Fundamental Rights and Justice, OJ L 257, 3.10.2007, pp. 23-29.
([3]) Decision No 1350/2007/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2007 establishing a second programme of Community action in the field of health (2008-13), OJ L 301, 20.11.2007.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/anti-drugs/files/rand_final_report_eu_drug_strategy_2005-2012_en.pdf

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006567/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(29 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Inquinamento indoor

L'inquinamento dell'aria degli ambienti indoor rappresenta un importante problema di sanità pubblica, con grandi implicazioni sociali ed economiche. In generale, negli ambienti confinati gli agenti inquinanti (ossido nitrico, ossidi di azoto, monossido di carbonio, anidride carbonica, anidride solforosa, formaldeide e sostanze di natura biologica come le endotossine) sono presenti in concentrazioni tali che, pur non determinando effetti acuti, sono tuttavia causa di effetti negativi sul benessere e sulla salute dell'uomo, soprattutto se legati a un elevato tempo di esposizione.

All'inquinamento atmosferico contribuiscono sia gli inquinanti degli ambienti esterni sia quelli degli ambienti interni; poiché i residenti dei paesi industrializzati trascorrono il 90-95 % del tempo in ambienti chiusi, è fondamentale considerare tale tipo di inquinamento. Studi recenti sembrano anzi indicare che, se l'inquinamento esterno è correlato ad esacerbazioni asmatiche, quello interno potrebbe essere implicato anche nell'aumento dell'incidenza della patologia.

Un aiuto insperato può arrivare dalle piante, alcune capaci di svolgere una funzione di purificazione dell'aria: sono le cosiddette piante «mangiaveleni». Come la felce di Boston, lo spatifillum o il ficus benjamina, capaci di contrastare le emissioni di formaldeide ed altri inquinanti, ad esempio, o l'anthurium efficace contro l'ammoniaca.

Alla luce di quanto precede, si interroga la Commissione per sapere:

1. se l'UE non ritiene di dover approfondire gli studi sull'inquinamento indoor per garantire una maggiore tutela della salute dei cittadini;

2. se esistono studi finanziati dall'UE sulle cosiddette piante mangiaveleni.

Risposta di John Dalli a nome della Commissione
(22 agosto 2012)

La Commissione richiama l'attenzione dell'onorevole parlamentare sulla risposta da essa data all'interrogazione scritta E-006227/2012 ([1]) relativa alla prima domanda sulla qualità dell'aria negli ambienti indoor.

Riguardo alla domanda sulle «piante mangiaveleni», la Commissione non sta attualmente finanziando alcun progetto finalizzato alla valutazione delle capacità di alcune piante di ridurre l'inquinamento dell'aria in ambienti indoor.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006567/12
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Indoor pollution

Indoor air pollution is a serious public health problem, with major social and economic implications. In confined spaces, pollutants (nitric oxide, nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, sulphur dioxide, formaldehyde and biological substances such as endotoxins) are generally present in concentrations which, while not producing any acute effects, nevertheless have a negative impact on human wellbeing and health, particularly with long exposure times.

Air pollution is fuelled by contaminants from both external and internal environments; since people in industrialised countries spend 90-95% of their time indoors, it is essential to consider this type of pollution. Indeed, recent studies suggest that while outdoor pollution is linked to a worsening of asthmatic conditions, indoor pollution may also be implicated in the increased incidence of this disease.

Unexpected help may come from plants, some of which can serve as air purifiers. These are the so-called 'poison-eating' plants, such as Boston fern, Spathiphyllum and Ficus benjamina, which are capable of countering emissions of formaldehyde and other pollutants, or Anthurium, which is effective against ammonia.

In view of the above, can the Commission answer the following:

1. Does the EU not believe it should carry out more detailed studies on indoor pollution to ensure better protection for citizens' health?

2. Are there any studies funded by the EU on so-called poison-eating plants?

Answer given by Mr Dalli on behalf of the Commission
(22 August 2012)

The Commission would like to draw the Honourable Member's attention to its answer to Written Question E-006227/2012 ([1]) regarding the first sub question on indoor air quality.

Regarding your second question on 'poison-eating plants', the Commission is currently not funding any projects that assess the potential of plants to reduce in-door air pollution.

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

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006568/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(29 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Nuova minaccia terroristica

Un uomo norvegese ha ricevuto un addestramento terroristico in un campo di al-Qaeda in Yemen e sta aspettando l'ordine di attaccare un obiettivo occidentale. I funzionari di tre agenzie di sicurezza europee hanno confermato oggi che il sospettato è «operativo», il che significa che ha completato il suo addestramento e sta per ricevere il suo obiettivo. Una fonte ha dichiarato che l'uomo è un norvegese intorno ai 30 anni divenuto un fondamentalista nel 2008 dopo la conversione all'islam.

Le agenzie di intelligence occidentali hanno temuto a lungo uno scenario simile: un convertito all'islam addestrato con metodi terroristici che può passare inosservato facilmente in Europa e negli Stati Uniti e viaggiare senza restrizioni sui visti.

Le autorità militari yemenite hanno dichiarato di sapere che alcuni europei si addestrano con al-Qaeda nelle zone meridionali del paese, ma hanno aggiunto di non avere notizie di norvegesi tra loro. Hanno però citato un rapporto sulla sicurezza risalente a febbraio, in cui si evidenzia che «diversi» estremisti islamici sono partiti dalla Norvegia per andare in zone di conflitto per addestrarsi in campi di addestramento.

Alla luce di quanto precede, e considerando che i convertiti che abbracciano l'estremismo violento rappresentano una particolare sfida, in quanto godono di un diverso tipo di coperture, specialmente se hanno la fedina penale pulita, può la Commissione far sapere:

1. come intende affrontare la questione;

2. se l'UE non intende potenziare il contributo di Frontex alle frontiere esterne, perfezionare la cooperazione interservizi a livello nazionale e rafforzare l'Ufficio europeo di polizia (Europol)?

Risposta di Cecilia Malmström a nome della Commissione
(17 agosto 2012)

Come spiegato nella risposta alle interrogazioni scritte E-5469/2012, E-4276/12, E-3833/12, E-3294/12, E-11087/11 e E-9410/11 ([1]), l'Unione europea non dispone delle competenze né delle capacità operative per monitorare le attività di individui o gruppi specifici (ad esempio cellule terroristiche o «lupi solitari») sul suo territorio o al di fuori di esso. La Commissione non è dunque in grado di pronunciarsi sul sospetto terrorista cui fa riferimento l'onorevole parlamentare.

Parimenti, controllare le frontiere esterne degli Stati membri dell'Unione europea è competenza nazionale. Il mandato dell'Agenzia Frontex è limitato al coordinamento delle attività operative alle frontiere esterne. La recente revisione del quadro giuridico di Frontex (regolamento (UE) n. 1168/2011 del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio del 25 ottobre 2011) ne ha rafforzato le capacità operative, disciplinandone per giunta (articolo 13) le modalità di cooperazione con agenzie, organi e organismi dell'Unione.

La Commissione, conformemente all'articolo 88 del TFUE, sta preparando una proposta di regolamento relativa a Europol che sostituirà la decisione 2009/371/GAI del Consiglio che istituisce Europol come agenzia dell'UE.

Obiettivo principale della revisione della base giuridica di Europol è migliorarne l'efficacia, l'efficienza e la capacità di rendere conto, al fine di dotare l'Ufficio di strumenti ancora migliori per coadiuvare gli Stati membri, nell'ambito della cooperazione transfrontaliera, nella prevenzione e lotta contro la criminalità organizzata e il terrorismo.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006568/12
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: New terrorist threat

A Norwegian man has received terrorist training in an al-Qaeda camp in Yemen, and is awaiting orders to carry out an attack on a Western target. Officials from three European security agencies confirmed today that the suspect is 'operational', meaning that he has completed his training and is about to receive his target. A source said that the Norwegian man, who is approximately 30 years old, became a fundamentalist in 2008 after converting to Islam.

Western intelligence agencies have long feared such a scenario: a convert to Islam who is trained in terrorist methods and can blend in easily in Europe and the United States, travelling without visa restrictions.

Yemeni military officials said that they knew that some Europeans were training with al-Qaeda in the southern part of the country, but that they were not aware of any Norwegians among them. They did, however, refer to a security report written in February which highlighted that 'several' Islamic extremists had travelled from Norway to conflict zones to attend training camps.

Given the above, and in view of the fact that converts who turn to violent extremism pose a particular challenge since they have a different level of cover, especially if they have no criminal record, can the Commission state:

1. How does it intend to deal with this issue?

2. Does the EU intend to enhance the contribution of Frontex at external borders, to improve interagency cooperation at national level and to strengthen the European Police Office?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(17 August 2012)

As explained in response to Written Questions E-5469/2012, E-4276/12, E-3833/12, E-3294/12, E-11087/11, and E-9410/11 ([1]), the European Union has neither the competence nor the operational capacities to monitor the activities of specific groups or individuals (e.g. terrorist cells or 'lone actors') on its territory and beyond. Therefore, the Commission is not in the position to comment on the terrorist suspect mentioned by Honourable Member.

Equally, border control at the external borders of the Member States of the Union is a national competence. The Frontex mandate is confined to the coordination of the operational activities at the external borders. The activities of the Agency have been recently strengthened by the revision of its legal framework (Regulation (EU) No 1168/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011). The aforementioned Regulation also includes modalities for cooperation with Union Agencies and bodies in its Article 13.

The Commission, in accordance with Article 88 of the TFEU, is working on the preparation of a proposal for a regulation governing Europol that will replace Council Decision 2009/371 /JHA establishing Europol as an EU Agency.

The main goal of the revision of this agency's legal basis is to enhance its efficiency, effectiveness and accountability in order for Europol to be even better equipped to support Member States' in their cross-border cooperation in the prevention and fight against organised crime and terrorism.

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

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006570/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(29 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Tumore polmonare, una spia nel sangue predice lo sviluppo

Analizzare la quantità di DNA «libero» nel sangue per diagnosticare il grado di sviluppo del cancro ai polmoni. È questo l'obiettivo degli esperti di un'università di Valencia, in Spagna, che in uno studio hanno rilevato il legame tra l'avanzare della malattia e la presenza di acido desossiribonucleico nel flusso sanguigno.

Nel corso dell'esperimento, condotto su 446 soggetti affetti da tumore al polmone, gli studiosi hanno esaminato i livelli di trascrittasi inversa telomerica (hTERT) libera nel sangue — come indicatore del DNA circolante — prima e dopo la chemioterapia. Al termine, gli esperti hanno constatato l'esistenza di un'associazione tra la presenza dell'acido desossiribonucleico nel flusso sanguigno e la velocità di progressione del cancro polmonare, indicativa, inoltre, delle possibilità di sopravvivenza dei pazienti.

Dal momento che l'hTERT può essere misurato con una procedura semplice, non invasiva ed economica, esso potrebbe rappresentare un valido aiuto per diagnosticare e monitorare lo sviluppo del tumore ai polmoni.

Alla luce di quanto precede, si interroga la Commissione per sapere:

1. se l'UE è a conoscenza del nuovo studio dei ricercatori spagnoli;

2. se, vista l'importanza della ricerca e la necessità di svilupparla, non ritiene che essa debba essere finanziata tramite il Settimo programma quadro (7° PQ) oppure il Programma quadro per la competitività e l'innovazione.

Risposta di Máire Geoghegan-Quinn a nome della Commissione
(21 agosto 2012)

La Commissione è a conoscenza dello studio citato dall'onorevole parlamentare, che è stato coordinato dall'Università di Valencia ([1]), ([2]).

La ricerca sul cancro ai polmoni è stata finanziata nell'ambito del Settimo programma quadro per la ricerca e lo sviluppo tecnologico (PQ7, 2007-2013). Ad oggi sono stati destinati 41 milioni di EUR alla ricerca di frontiera e translazionale sulla comprensione, la diagnosi, la prognosi e il trattamento del cancro ai polmoni. Le aree esaminate comprendono, ad esempio, la correlazione tra cancro ai polmoni e cellule ospiti, la diagnosi precoce, l'individuazione di farmaci, la resistenza ai farmaci e la pianificazione della sperimentazione clinica finalizzata a una maggiore efficacia delle terapie per il cancro ai polmoni.

Ulteriori opportunità di ricerca collaborative sul cancro ai polmoni sono date nell'ambito del bando per il PQ7 2013, tra l'altro nel contesto dei programmi di lavoro per la ricerca «FP7-HEALTH-2013-INNOVATION», pubblicati il 10 luglio 2012 ([3]). Le domande di ricerca collaborativa presentate in risposta ai suddetti inviti saranno selezionate attraverso una procedura di valutazione *inter pares,* in cui l'eccellenza scientifica sarà il criterio di selezione principale. Il finanziamento sarà concesso alle ricerche più valide.

([1]) http://journals.lww.com/jto/Fulltext/2011/02000/Circulating_DNA_is_a_Useful_Prognostic_Factor_in.5.aspx?WT.mc_id=HPxADx20100319xMP
([2]) http://phys.org/news/2011-02-high-circulating-dna-faster-lung.html
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/page/searchcalls;efp7_SESSION_ID=yWhpP9qTS7fTtKDg6K6LkDwswtZkTlPy7vYT8mJ1VPhqcGx0gN2v!-204796060?state=open&theme=health

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006570/12
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: An indicator in the blood predicts the development of lung cancer

Experts at a university in Valencia, Spain are promoting the analysis of the amount of 'free' DNA in the blood to determine how far lung cancer has developed. They have published a study showing a link between the advancement of the disease and the presence of circulating deoxyribonucleic acid in the blood.

The study involved 446 patients with lung cancer and examined the levels of free human telomerase reverse transcriptase (hTERT) in the blood — as an indicator of circulating DNA — before and after chemotherapy. The researchers identified a link between the presence of circulating DNA in the blood and the rate of progression of lung cancer, which also indicates the patient's chances of survival.

Since hTERT can be measured by a simple, non-invasive and inexpensive procedure, this could be a useful aid for diagnosing and monitoring the progression of lung cancer.

1. Is the Commission aware of the new study by Spanish researchers?

2. Given the importance of the research and the need for further development, does the Commission agree that it should be financed through the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) or the framework Programme for Research and Innovation (Horizon 2020)?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(21 August 2012)

The Commission is aware of the publication mentioned by the Honourable Member, performed by the University of Valencia ([1]) ([2]).

Research on lung cancer has been funded across the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7, 2007-2013). So far, EUR 41 million have been devoted to frontier and translational research on the understanding, diagnosis, prognosis and treatment of lung cancer. Areas addressed include for instance interactions between lung cancer and host cells, early detection, drug discovery, drug resistance and the design of clinical trials to improve lung cancer therapies.

Further opportunities for collaborative research on lung cancer may be found in the FP7 2013 calls for proposals, amongst others under the FP7-HEALTH-2013-INNOVATION Research Work Programmes, published on 10 July 2012 ([3]). Collaborative research applications submitted to these calls are selected through a peer-review evaluation procedure with scientific excellence as the overriding criterion and financial support awarded to the best applications.

([1]) http://journals.lww.com/jto/Fulltext/2011/02000/Circulating_DNA_is_a_Useful_Prognostic_Factor_in.5.aspx?WT.mc_id=HPxADx20100319xMP.
([2]) http://phys.org/news/2011-02-high-circulating-dna-faster-lung.html
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/page/searchcalls;efp7_SESSION_ID=yWhpP9qTS7fTtKDg6K6LkDwswtZkTlPy7vYT8mJ1VPhqcGx0gN2v!-204796060?state=open&theme=health.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006571/12
alla Commissione
Aldo Patriciello (PPE)
(29 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Riapertura delle indagini sulla malversazione dei fondi europei in Kosovo

Premesso che:

Il mandato di EULEX, la missione dell'Unione europea di assistenza alle istituzioni del Kosovo intrapresa nel 2008, è appena stato rinnovato di un anno con un nuovo stanziamento di 111 milioni di euro. La missione EULEX conta circa tremila impiegati, ma a distanza di quattro anni i progressi compiuti in tema di governance e di sicurezza non sono affatto soddisfacenti.

Soprattutto, non si è ancora fatta chiarezza sulla malversazione dei fondi europei elargiti per la ristrutturazione degli enti statali serbi, inizialmente gestiti dall'UNMIK, la missione speciale dell'Onu che ha amministrato il Kosovo fino al 2008.

Tra il 2002 e il 2006 l'OLAF, l'Ufficio europeo per la lotta antifrode, ha intrapreso 11 indagini che hanno coinvolto la Società elettrica del Kosovo e l'Aeroporto internazionale della capitale Pristina, i principali beneficiari dei fondi europei. Tuttavia, è risultata evidente la mancata collaborazione delle Nazioni Unite di fronte alle ripetute richieste di informazioni sul lavoro svolto dall'UNMIK.

Considerando i deludenti risultati della missione EULEX e le difficoltà riscontrate nel portare avanti le indagini sui casi di malversazione dei fondi europei ereditati dalla procura UNMIK, è necessario fare luce sull'indagine insabbiata.

Alla luce di quanto precede può la Commissione rispondere al seguente quesito:

— considerando gli scarsi risultati della missione EULEX, la Commissione non ritiene opportuno richiedere maggiori garanzie prima di procedere con la spesa degli ulteriori 111 milioni stanziati per il rinnovo del suo mandato?

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

La missione EULEX Kosovo, che ha avuto inizio nel dicembre 2008, opera nel quadro generale della risoluzione 1244 del Consiglio di Sicurezza della Nazioni Unite.

La missione ha il compito di occuparsi soltanto dei casi più gravi di corruzione, della criminalità organizzata, dei crimini di guerra e di alcune controversie in materia di proprietà legate al conflitto. Il ruolo della missione non è quello di sostituirsi alle autorità del Kosovo, ma di rafforzarle. Le indagini e le decisioni su casi di questa gravità richiedono tempo, anche per garantire lo svolgimento delle procedure giudiziarie.

Dall'avvio della missione, i giudici EULEX hanno emesso più di 350 sentenze, e attualmente ci sono circa 320 indagini in corso condotte dai magistrati e dagli ufficiali di polizia EULEX. Sotto l'autorità esecutiva EULEX, più di 23 000 controversie in materia di proprietà sono state gestite dalla commissione per le controversie in tale materia. Inoltre, gli esperti forensi EULEX hanno identificato i resti di 308 vittime del conflitto e li hanno restituiti alle famiglie. L'operato di EULEX è stato fondamentale nella localizzazione di possibili siti di fosse comuni e nella raccolta di prove per ulteriori procedimenti. L'attività di EULEX Kosovo è ampiamente sostenuta dalla popolazione kosovara, come le campagne di opinione pubblica hanno confermato. Eventuali delusioni in connessione con le attività di EULEX Kosovo sono dovute ad aspettative troppo elevate e quindi irrealistiche: durante il suo mandato, la missione avrebbe dovuto risolvere la totalità o la maggior parte dei problemi legati a corruzione e criminalità organizzata. Il mandato esecutivo di EULEX Kosovo e i suoi compiti di monitoraggio, tutoraggio e consulenza contribuiscono significativamente agli sforzi globali messi in atto in Kosovo per combattere la corruzione, la criminalità organizzata, i crimini di guerra e le controversie in materia di proprietà legate al conflitto.

Riguardo al ruolo dell'OLAF nelle indagini menzionate, la Commissione rimanda alla sua risposta all'Interrogazione E-6496/12 ([1]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006571/12
to the Commission
Aldo Patriciello (PPE)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Reopening investigations into the misappropriation of EU funds in Kosovo

EULEX, the EU mission to support Kosovan institutions launched in 2008, has just had its mandate renewed for one year with a new appropriation of EUR 111 million. The EULEX mission has around 3 000 employees but, four years on, the progress made in the areas of governance and security is not satisfactory by any means.

One particular question that remains to be clarified is the misappropriation of European funds paid out to rebuild Serbian state entities. These funds were initially managed by UNMIK, the United Nation's special mission which administered Kosovo until 2008.

The European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) carried out 11 investigations between 2002 and 2006 involving the main beneficiaries of EU funds: Kosovo Electricity Company and the international airport of Pristina, the capital city. Nevertheless, the UN failed to cooperate regarding repeated requests for information about the work carried out by UNMIK.

Considering the disappointing results of the EULEX mission and the difficulties experienced in conducting investigations into the cases of misappropriation of EU funds inherited from UNMIK prosecutors, we need to shed light on the shelved investigation.

Given the above, can the Commission state:

— In view of the poor results of the EULEX mission, does it think it advisable to seek greater guarantees before spending the further EUR 111 million earmarked to renew EULEX's mandate?

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

EULEX Kosovo was launched in December 2008 and operates under the general framework of the UN Security Council Resolution 1244.

The Mission is mandated to handle only the most serious cases of corruption, organised crime and war crimes as well as certain conflict related property disputes. The Mission's role is not to substitute for the Kosovo authorities; but to strengthen them. Investigation and adjudication of such serious cases take time, not least also to ensure due judicial process.

Since the inception of the Mission, EULEX judges have delivered more than 350 verdicts; there are around 320 ongoing investigations conducted by EULEX prosecutors and police officers. Under EULEX executive authority more than 23 000 conflict related property claims have been dealt with by the Property Claims Commission. Besides, EULEX forensic experts have identified the remains of 308 victims of the conflict and returned them to their families. Work by EULEX has been fundamental in locating possible mass grave sites and securing evidence for further proceedings. The work of EULEX Kosovo is widely supported by the population in Kosovo, as has been confirmed in public opinion campaigns. Any disappointment with EULEX Kosovo is largely due to unrealistically high expectations; it was expected to solve all or most corruption and organised crime during its mandate. EULEX Kosovo's executive mandate and the mandate to monitor, mentor and advise, do significantly contribute to the overall efforts made in Kosovo in the fight against corruption and organised crime, as well as to addressing sensitive war crimes and conflict related property cases.

As regards the role of OLAF in the investigations mentioned, the Commission would refer to its reply to Question E-6496/12 ([1]).

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

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-006572/12
do Komisji
Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)
(29 czerwca 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Konfiskata sprzętu Polaków na Białorusi

27 czerwca białoruska milicja przeprowadziła rewizję w grodzieńskiej siedzibie spółki Kresowia, stanowiącej zaplecze finansowe i organizacyjne nieuznawanego przez Mińsk Związku Polaków na Białorusi. Funkcjonariusze skonfiskowali wszystkie dziewięć komputerów, stanowiących własność Ambasady RP na Białorusi, drzwi spółki zostały zapieczętowane. Wcześniej skonfiskowano z sali wynajmowanej przez Andrzeja Poczobuta numery „Głosu znad Niemna na uchodźstwie".

Konfiskata ma związek ze śledztwem prowadzonym w sprawie działacza ZPB i dziennikarza polskiej gazety, Andrzeja Poczobuta, który 21 czerwca został zatrzymany w związku z podejrzeniem o zniesławienie prezydenta Alaksandra Łukaszenki. Związek Polaków na Białorusi został pozbawiony sprzętu komputerowego, utrudniona została możliwość dalszej działalności organizacji.

Działanie białoruskich władz to kolejny przypadek prześladowania i represji wobec działaczy ZPB i próba uniemożliwienia organizacji prowadzenia dalszej działalności. Aktywiści ZPB są tłamszeni przez władze w Mińsku, wszczynane są przeciwko nim sprawy karne, często dochodzi do aresztowań członków tej polonijnej organizacji, nakłada się na nich kary finansowe, a pikiety organizacji są brutalnie rozgramiane przez milicję.

W związku z tym pragnę zapytać, czy Komisja ma zamiar podjąć interwencję w sprawie konfiskaty sprzętu komputerowego, będącego własnością Ambasady RP na Białorusi i wyrazić sprzeciw wobec oczywistych represji i prześladowań ZPB przez białoruskie władze?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wysoką Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodniczącą Catherine Ashton w imieniu Komisji
(8 sierpnia 2012 r.)

UE jest nadal głęboko zaniepokojona sytuacją w zakresie poszanowania praw człowieka, praworządności i zasad demokratycznych na Białorusi.

UE posiada informacje, o których wspomina Szanowny Pan Poseł, dotyczące rewizji pomieszczeń i konfiskaty urządzeń, należących według doniesień do Związku Polaków na Białorusi.

Jak już wspomniano w odpowiedzi Komisji na pytanie pisemne Szanownego Pana Posła P-006206/2012 ([1]), w kontekście rosnącej w ostatnim czasie liczby doniesień o prześladowaniu przedstawicieli społeczeństwa obywatelskiego, opozycji politycznej i niezależnych mediów w dniu 28 czerwca 2012 r. rzecznik Wysokiej Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodniczącej Komisji wyraził w jej imieniu głębokie zaniepokojenie istniejącą sytuacją, jak również oskarżeniami wniesionymi przeciwko dziennikarzowi Andrzejowi Poczobutowi w związku z domniemanym zniesławieniem prezydenta.

Unia Europejska wykorzystywała i będzie nadal wykorzystywać wszystkie możliwości, aby przedstawiać w rozmowach z władzami białoruskimi swoje zastrzeżenia dotyczące aktów prześladowania przedstawicieli społeczeństwa obywatelskiego, opozycji politycznej i niezależnych mediów, również w odniesieniu do kwestii, takich jak prawa mniejszości i wolność prasy.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006572/12
to the Commission
Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Confiscation of Poles' equipment in Belarus

On 27 June 2012, the Belarusian militia raided the Grodno headquarters of the company Kresovia, which provides financial and organisational backing for the Union of Poles in Belarus (ZPB), an organisation which is not recognised by the Minsk government. The officials confiscated all nine computers, which were the property of the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Belarus, and the company's doors were sealed. Previously, copies of the newspaper *Głos znad Niemna na uchodźstwie* ('Voice from Over the Niemen in Exile') were seized from a room rented by Andrzej Poczobut.

The seizure is linked to the investigation in the case against Andrzej Poczobut, a ZPB activist and journalist at a Polish newspaper, who was arrested on 21 June on suspicion of defaming President Alexander Lukashenko. The Union of Poles in Belarus has been deprived of its IT equipment, which will make it hard for the organisation to continue its activities.

The actions by the Belarusian authorities are a further example of persecution and repression against ZPB activists and an attempt to prevent the organisation from continuing its activities. ZPB activists are repressed by the Minsk authorities, criminal cases are opened against them, members of this Polish organisation are often arrested and have fines imposed on them, and the organisation's picket lines are brutally broken up by the militia.

In view of this, will the Commission intervene in the confiscation of IT equipment owned by the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Belarus, and will it voice its opposition to the obvious repression and persecution of the ZPB by the Belarusian authorities?

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

The EU remains deeply concerned about the respect for human rights, the rule of law and democratic principles in Belarus.

The EU is well aware of the reports referred to by the Honourable Member regarding the search and confiscation of equipment at facilities reportedly belonging to the Union of Poles in Belarus.

As already indicated in the Commission's answer to the Honourable Member's Written Question P-006206/2012 ([1]), the Spokesperson of High Representatative Ashton, against the background of an increasing amount of recent reports of acts of harassement of representatives of civil society, the political opposition and independent media, on 28 June 2012 expressed the High Representative's deep concern, including as regards the charges brought against journalist Andrzej Poczobut for alleged libel against the President.

The EU has used, and will continue to use, all available opportunities to raise its concerns as regards acts of harassment of representatives of civil society, the political opposition and the independent media, including the rights of minorities, with the Belarusian authorities.

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

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-006573/12
do Komisji
Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)
(29 czerwca 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Mykoła Statkiewicz przeniesiony do karceru

27 czerwca więzień polityczny i były kandydat na prezydenta Białorusi, Mykoła Statkiewicz został przeniesiony do karceru w mohylewskim więzieniu nr 4, gdzie odsiaduje karę 6 lat pozbawienia wolności.

Przypominam, że to nie pierwszy przypadek prześladowania tego więźnia politycznego przez władze kolonii. Na początku stycznia tego roku Statkiewicz został przeniesiony na 3 lata do więzienia o jeszcze bardziej zaostrzonym rygorze. Opozycjoniście zarzucono wtedy, że „nie poddaje się resocjalizacji w kolonii" i dopuszcza się „złośliwych wykroczeń". Media informowały również, że do celi Statkiewicza przeniesiono więźnia chorego na gruźlicę, a tydzień temu żona Statkiewicza, Marina Adamowicz oświadczyła, że współwięźniem jej męża został mężczyzna chory na AIDS.

Władze kolonii starają się wymóc na Statkiewiczu podpisanie prośby o ułaskawienie, wywierają na niego ogromną presję i prześladują go. Żona Statkiewicza obawia się, że władze starają się nadać jej mężowi status „więźnia złośliwie naruszającego reżim kolonii" i zwiększyć karę pozbawienia wolności o dodatkowy rok.

— W związku z tym zwracam się z zapytaniem, czy Komisja posiada informacje na temat represji stosowanych przez władze kolonii w stosunku do Mykoły Statkiewicza i ma zamiar podjąć interwencję w tej sprawie?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Štefana Füleго w imieniu Komisji
(8 sierpnia 2012 r.)

Unia Europejska jest nadal poważnie zaniepokojona ciągłym brakiem poszanowania praw człowieka, demokracji i praworządności na Białorusi.

UE zna doniesienia na temat niemożliwych do przyjęcia warunków przetrzymywania w więzieniu byłego kandydata na prezydenta Mikałaja Statkiewicza. UE wielokrotnie, zarówno w sferze publicznej, jak i przy okazji kontaktów z władzami Białorusi, wyrażała swoje głębokie zaniepokojenie doniesieniami o stosowaniu tortur i nieludzkich warunkach przetrzymywania więźniów politycznych, w tym Mikałaja Statkiewicza, i przypominała władzom Białorusi o ich zobowiązaniach na mocy prawa międzynarodowego dotyczących zagwarantowania przestrzegania zakazu stosowania tortur i okrutnego, nieludzkiego i poniżającego traktowania, oraz o ich obowiązku badania doniesień o takich przypadkach. Na niedawnym posiedzeniu ministrów Partnerstwa Wschodniego w dniu 23 lipca 2012 r. Wysoka Przedstawiciel i Wiceprzewodnicząca ponownie podkreśliła znaczenie natychmiastowego uwolnienia i rehabilitacji więźniów politycznych na Białorusi.

UE nie ma dostępu do białoruskich więzień, aby monitorować warunki przetrzymywania więźniów. Delegatura UE w Mińsku wielokrotnie zwracała się o prawo do odwiedzenia więźniów politycznych w miejscu ich przetrzymywania, ale jak dotąd bezskutecznie. Delegatura UE w Mińsku pozostaje w bliskim kontakcie z członkami rodzin więźniów politycznych.

UE będzie nadal dokładnie śledzić doniesienia na temat miejsc pobytu więźniów politycznych i dołoży wszelkich starań, aby doprowadzić do ich uwolnienia i rehabilitacji.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006573/12
to the Commission
Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Mykola Statkevich moved to solitary confinement

On 27 June 2012, the political prisoner and former presidential candidate in Belarus, Mykola Statkevich, was moved to solitary confinement in Prison No.4 in Mogilev, where he is serving a six year sentence.

I would remind you that this is not the first time that this political prisoner has been persecuted by the prison authorities. In early January 2012, Statkevich was transferred to serve three years in a prison with an even harsher regime. The dissident was then accused of 'not submitting to rehabilitation at the prison' and 'malicious misconduct'. The media also reported that a prisoner suffering from tuberculosis was transferred to Statkevich's cell, and a week ago Statkevich's wife, Marina Adamovich, stated that her husband's fellow prisoner was a man suffering from AIDS.

The prison authorities are trying to force Statkevich to sign a request for a pardon, they are exerting enormous pressure on him and are persecuting him. Statkevich's wife is concerned that the authorities are trying to impose on her husband the status of a 'prisoner who is maliciously violating the prison regime' and then increase the prison sentence by an additional year.

— I would therefore ask whether the Commission knows about the repressive measures taken by the prison authorities against Mykola Statkevich and whether it intends to intervene in this matter?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(8 August 2012)

The EU remains gravely concerned about the continued lack of respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Belarus.

The EU is aware of reports regarding the inacceptable prison conditions of former presidential candidate Statkevich. The EU has, on numerous occasions, both in public and in contacts with the Belarusian authorities, expressed deep concern about reports of torture and inhumane prison conditions of political prisoners, including of Mikalay Statkevich, and have reminded the Belarusian authorities of their obligation under international law to ensure the respect of the prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, and of their responsibility to investigate reports thereof. At the recent Eastern Partnership Ministerial on 23 July 2012, the HR/VP stressed again the importance of the immediate release and rehabilitation of the political prisoners in Belarus.

The EU has no access to Belarusian prisons to monitor the conditions of imprisonment. The EU Delegation in Minsk has on numerous occasions requested to visit political prisoners at their place of detention, so far to no avail. The EU Delegation in Minsk remains in close contact with family members of the political prisoners.

The EU will continue to follow reports about their whereabouts closely, and will make every possible effort to obtain their release and rehabilitation.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-006574/12
do Komisji
Zbigniew Ziobro (EFD)
(29 czerwca 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Organizacja rynku cukru w Europie

W Polsce popyt na cukier przewyższył podaż, co przy jednoczesnym spadku produkcji z 2 mln ton do 1,5 mln ton doprowadziło do drastycznego wzrostu cen. Problem ten jest pochodną złej organizacji rynku cukru w Europie oraz limitacji produkcji poprzez decyzję Komisji Europejskiej z 2006 r. W Polsce, producenci mają obowiązek eksportować cukier z nadwyżek produkcyjnych do innych krajów, a krajowy niedobór cukru jest rekompensowany poprzez import z innych państw np. Niemiec. Mimo to cena cukru w Polsce jest o 60 % wyższa niż w Niemczech.

W związku z powyższym proszę o odpowiedź na następujące pytania:

1. Jakie zmiany planuje Komisja na rynku cukru, aby doprowadzić do spadku cen oraz zwiększenia produkcji w Europie?

2. Jakie zmiany Komisja zamierza wprowadzić w istniejącym systemie limitacji produkcji cukru?

3. Czy Komisja rozważa czasowe lub całkowite zniesienie limitów produkcji?

4. Czy Komisja planuje dalsze podtrzymanie swojej decyzji z dnia 31 sierpnia 2011 r. dotyczącej zniesienia należności celnych przywozowych na cukier?

5. Proszę o dane pokazujące zmiany w produkcji cukru w latach 2004-2012 z podziałem na unijne państwa?

6. W jakich państwach unijnych ceny cukru są najwyższe? Czy Komisja zamierza interweniować, aby wyrównać ceny wewnątrz Wspólnoty?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Daciana Cioloşa w imieniu Komisji
(1 sierpnia 2012 r.)

Unijna produkcja cukru objętego kwotami pokrywa około 85 % zapotrzebowania UE na cukier. Przywóz w ramach różnych preferencyjnych umów handlowych pokrywa średnio 25 % tego zapotrzebowania. Jeżeli istnieje ryzyko niedoboru Komisja podejmuje działania, by zwiększyć dostępność cukru i zapobiec wzrostowi cen.

1. W roku gospodarczym 2010/2011 środki podjęte przez Komisję zwiększyły podaż cukru o prawie 1,4 Mt, a w roku 2011/2012 o 1,1 Mt, między innymi udostępniono cukier pozakwotowy na rynku unijnym (500 000 t w roku 2010/11 i 650 000 t w roku 2011/12), co było korzystne zarówno dla polskiego przemysłu cukrowniczego, jak i dla konsumentów cukru.

2-3. W kontekście reformy wspólnej polityki rolnej ogłoszonej dnia 12 października 2011 r., Komisja nie zaproponowała przedłużenia kwot produkcyjnych po dniu 1 października 2015 r.

4. Komisja nie posiada wiedzy na temat istnienia decyzji z dnia 31 sierpnia 2011 r. dotyczącej zniesienia należności celnych przywozowych na cukier.

5. Załącznik VI do rozporządzenia (WE) nr 1234/2007 ([1]) reguluje przydzielanie unijnych kwot cukru przez państwa członkowskie produkujące cukier. Dane za wcześniejsze lata znajdują się w załączniku III do rozporządzenia (WE) nr 318/2006 ([2]) i w art. 11 rozporządzenia (WE) nr 1260/2001 ([3]).

6. Komisja publikuje informacje dotyczące średnich miesięcznych cen cukru na rynku unijnym. Ze względu na poufny charakter informacji nie jest możliwe dostarczenie informacji na temat cen zgłaszanych przez poszczególne państwa członkowskie.

W maju 2012 r. średnia cena cukru w Unii zmniejszyła się o 4 EUR do 711 EUR/t, co odzwierciedla skutki działań podjętych przez Komisję.

([1]) Dz.U. L 299 z 16.11.2007, s. 1-149.
([2]) Dz.U. L 58 z 28.2.2006, s. 1-31.
([3]) Dz.U. L 178 z 30.6.2001, s. 1-45.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006574/12
to the Commission
Zbigniew Ziobro (EFD)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Organisation of the sugar market in Europe

In Poland, demand for sugar has outstripped supply which, combined with a decrease in sugar production from 2 million to 1.5 million tonnes, has led to a drastic increase in prices. This problem is the result of both the poor organisation of the sugar market in Europe and the 2006 decision by the European Commission to limit production. In Poland, sugar manufacturers are obliged to export surplus sugar production to other countries and the domestic sugar shortage is offset by imports from other countries, such as Germany. Despite this, the price of sugar in Poland is 60% higher than in Germany.

Therefore, I would ask the Commission:

1. What changes does it intend to introduce in the sugar market that would lead to lower prices and increased production in Europe?

2. What changes does it intend to introduce in the existing system of limiting sugar production?

3. Is it considering either temporary or permanent elimination of production quotas?

4. Does it intend to continue to uphold its decision of 31 August 2011 concerning the elimination of import duties on sugar?

5. Can it provide data showing changes in sugar production in the years 2004-2012 broken down by EU Member States?

6. Which EU Member States have the highest sugar prices? Does the Commission intend to intervene in order to reduce price inequalities within the Union?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(1 August 2012)

Union production under sugar quotas covers about 85% of the EU sugar demand. Imports under various preferential trade agreements represent on average 25% of this demand. If there is a risk of undersupply the Commission takes measures to improve availability and prevent price hikes.

1. In marketing year 2010/11 the measures taken by the Commission increased the sugar supply by nearly 1.4 Mt and by 1.1 Mt in 2011/12, including the release of out-of-quota sugar on the Union market (500,000 t in 2010/11 and 650,000 t in 2011/12) which were beneficial for the Polish sugar industry and the sugar users as well.

2-3. In the context of the Common Agricultural Policy reform announced on 12 October 2011, the Commission has not proposed the prolongation of the production quotas beyond 1 October 2015.

4. The Commission is not aware of any decision on 31 August 2011 to eliminate import duties on sugar

5. Annex VI to Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007 ([1]) provides for the allocation of the Union sugar quotas by producing Member States. For the preceding years please consult Annex III to Regulation (EC) No 318/2006 ([2]) and Article 11 of Regulation (EC) No 1260/2001 ([3]).

6. The Commission publishes the average monthly price of sugar on the Union market. For reasons of confidentiality it is not possible to provide any information on the prices reported by individual Member States.

In May 2012 the average Union sugar price decreased by EUR4 to 711 EUR/t, which reflects the effects of the measures taken by the Commission.

([1]) OJ L 299, 16.11.2007, p. 1-149.
([2]) OJ L 58, 28.2.2006, p. 1-31.
([3]) OJ L 178, 30.6.2001, p. 1-45.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-006575/12
do Komisji
Zbigniew Ziobro (EFD)
(29 czerwca 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Budowa niezależności energetycznej poprzez wsparcie dla gazu łupkowego

Według specjalistów zajmujących się rynkiem energii gaz łupkowy będzie w 2035 r. pokrywał 49 % światowego zapotrzebowania na gaz. Szacuje się, że europejskie złoża gazu łupkowego zapewnią niezależność energetyczną dla państw Unii Europejskiej na 60 lat.

1. Co Komisja zamierza zrobić, aby wspomóc poszukiwania oraz wydobycie gazu łupkowego w Europie?

2. Czy Komisja dokonała już oceny wpływu na środowisko poszukiwań i wydobycia gazu łupkowego?

3. Czy Komisja zwróci się do Europejskiego Banku Inwestycyjnego o przygotowanie i otworzenie linii finansowej zapewniającej preferencyjne rozwiązania dla europejskich firm zajmujących się poszukiwaniem oraz wydobyciem gazu łupkowego w Europie?

4. Czy Komisja zamierza poszerzyć program „Horyzont 2020" tak, aby obejmował swoim zasięgiem wsparcie dla nowych technik poszukiwania i eksploatacji złóż energetycznych w Europie, w tym wydobycia gazu łupkowego?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Günthera Oettingera w imieniu Komisji
(13 sierpnia 2012 r.)

1. W chwili obecnej prace Komisji koncentrują się na zapewnieniu integralności środowiskowej sposobów poszukiwania i wydobycia gazu ziemnego, jak i na dalszej poprawie infrastruktury oraz warunków panujących na rynku gazowym, co powinno ułatwić ewentualną komercyjną eksploatację złóż gazu łupkowego.

2. Poszczególne projekty w zakresie poszukiwania i wydobycia gazu łupkowego podlegają przepisom dyrektywy 2011/92/UE ([1]), zgodnie z wyjaśnieniami zamieszczonymi w specjalnych wytycznych ([2]). Co się tyczy ogólnej oceny potencjalnego zagrożenia dla zdrowia i środowiska związanego z rozwojem rynku gazu łupkowego w Europie, w nadchodzącym czasie zostanie opublikowane badanie przeprowadzone na zlecenie Komisji, które wprowadzi większą jasność co do charakteru potencjalnych zagrożeń.

3. Z uwagi na to, że poszukiwania gazu łupkowego rozpoczęto dopiero niedawno i nie zgromadzono dotychczas wystarczających danych na temat lokalizacji oraz wielkości zasobów wydobywalnych tego surowca, na obecnym etapie Komisja nie widzi potrzeby zwracania się do Europejskiego Banku Inwestycyjnego o szczególne finansowanie dla firm zajmujących się jego pozyskiwaniem.

4. Wniosek Komisji w sprawie programu „Horyzont 2020" ([3]) jest obecnie negocjowany między instytucjami UE. Dokument ten nie uwzględnia technik poszukiwania i wydobycia gazu łupkowego.

([1]) Dyrektywa 2011/92/UE w sprawie oceny skutków wywieranych przez niektóre przedsięwzięcia publiczne i prywatne na środowisko, Dz.U. L 26 z 28.1.12.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/integration/energy/pdf/guidance_note.pdf
([3]) COM(2011)809, 810 oraz 811 wersja ostateczna.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006575/12
to the Commission
Zbigniew Ziobro (EFD)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Building energy independence through support for shale gas

According to experts on the shale gas energy market, by 2035 shale gas will meet 49% of global demand for gas. It is estimated that European deposits of shale gas will provide 60 years of energy independence for the EU Member States.

1. What will the Commission do to support shale gas exploration and extraction in Europe?

2. Has it already carried out an environmental impact assessment for shale gas exploration and extraction?

3. Will it ask the European Investment Bank to prepare and make available a funding line ensuring preferential solutions for European companies engaged in shale gas exploration and extraction in Europe?

4. Will it expand the scope of the Horizon 2020 programme to include support for new exploration and exploitation techniques for energy deposits in Europe, including shale gas extraction?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(13 August 2012)

1. For the time being, the Commission is focusing its work on ensuring the environmental integrity of exploration and production practices for natural gas as well as on further improving gas market conditions and infrastructure, which would also facilitate the possible commercialisation of shale gas.

2. Individual shale gas exploration and extraction projects are subject to provisions under Directive 2011/92/EU ([1]), as further explained in a guidance note ([2]). As regards the overall assessment of potential health and environmental risks associated with shale gas developments in Europe, a study carried out on behalf of the Commission, and due for publication in the coming months, will provide more clarity on such potential risks.

3. With explorations having started only recently, and without sufficient knowledge where and to which extent the available shale gas resources may be economically recoverable, the Commission does not see, at this stage, the need for specific funding provided by the European Investment Bank.

4. The Commission's proposal for Horizon 2020 ([3]) is currently being negotiated between the EU institutions. Exploration or extraction techniques for shale gas are not included in the proposal.

([1]) Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment, OJ L 26, 28.1.2012.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/integration/energy/pdf/guidance_note.pdf
([3]) COM(2011)809, 810 and 811 final.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-006578/12
a la Comisión
Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo (S&D)
(29 de junio de 2012)

Asunto: Instalación de plantas de energía eólica marina

En diferentes países miembros de la UE se están programando o instalando plantas de energía eólica marina, siendo esta razón especial motivo de preocupación para el sector de la pesca costera y artesanal, y las pesquerías afectadas en las diferentes regiones de la UE, por su posible impacto negativo en las diversas especies marinas. En este sentido hay dudas científicas que avalan la no idoneidad de instalar este tipo de plantas de energía.

¿Tiene conocimiento de ello? ¿Cuántas plantas energía eólica se han instalado con el preceptivo estudio de impacto ambiental y económico? ¿En qué lugares? ¿Cuáles son las previsiones para 2012-2014?

¿Cuál es su opinión respecto a los «posibles» efectos negativos que pueden generar al medio marino y al sector pesquero?

Respuesta del Sr. Oettinger en nombre de la Comisión
(27 de agosto de 2012)

La Comisión considera que es posible construir esos parques evitando efectos negativos importantes en la biodiversidad y en los hábitats locales. Los permisos para la construcción de parques eólicos solo se conceden atendiendo a las evaluaciones de impacto ambiental realizadas de conformidad con las disposiciones de la normativa de la UE y de las legislaciones nacionales vigentes ([1]). Es responsabilidad principal de las autoridades nacionales competentes garantizar que se cumplan esas disposiciones. La Comisión, no obstante, puede emprender acciones si se le aportan pruebas de que aquellas se han incumplido en casos concretos. La Comisión, además, ha publicado unas directrices en las que se explica la forma de desarrollar los proyectos de energía eólica de acuerdo con la normativa medioambiental de la Unión ([2]).

Los planes de acción nacionales en materia de energía renovable —que son obligatorios en virtud del artículo 4 de la Directiva 2009/28/CE ([3])— contienen información sobre los planes adoptados por cada Estado miembro para el desarrollo de proyectos de energía eólica marina. Los planes de acción, y los documentos que los resumen, se encuentran disponibles en la Plataforma de Transparencia de la Comisión ([4]). En lo que atañe a las instalaciones eólicas marinas, dichos planes proyectan un aumento total de la capacidad instalada que permita pasar de 0,7 GW en 2005 a 14,3 en 2015 y a 41,3 en 2020. En 2010, la potencia total instalada en la UE era de 2,9 GW.

La Comisión, además, está preparando una propuesta de Directiva por la que se establece un marco para que tengan efectividad en los Estados miembros la ordenación del espacio marítimo y la gestión integrada de las zonas costeras.

([1]) Directiva 2001/42/CE del Parlamento y del Consejo, de 27 de junio de 2001, relativa a la evaluación de los efectos de determinados planes y programas en el medio ambiente, DO L 197 de 21.7.2001, y Directiva 85/337/CEE del Consejo, de 27 de junio de 1985, relativa a la evaluación de las repercusiones de determinados proyectos públicos y privados sobre el medio ambiente, DO L 175 de 5.7.1985.

([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/Wind_farms.pdf

([3]) Directiva 2009/28/CE del Parlamento 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.

([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/energy/renewables/action_plan_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006578/12
to the Commission
Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo (S&D)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Installation of offshore wind farms

Offshore wind farms are being planned or installed in various EU Member States. This is a particular cause for concern for the coastal and small-scale fishing sector and the fishermen affected in various regions of the EU because of the possible negative impact it could have on various marine species. In this respect, there are scientific doubts which support the unsuitability of installing this kind of wind farm.

Is the Commission aware of this? How many wind farms have been installed with the compulsory environmental and economic impact assessment? Where have they been installed? What is the forecast for 2012-2014?

What is the Commission's opinion with regard to the 'possible' negative effects they could have on marine life and the fishing sector?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(27 August 2012)

The Commission considers that it is possible to construct wind farms in a way that does not have a significantly negative impact on local biodiversity and habitats. Permits for wind farms are delivered on the basis of environmental impact assessments in accordance with EU and national regulations in force ([1]). It is the primary responsibility of the national authorities in charge to ensure compliance with the aforementioned provisions. However, the Commission can take action if evidence is brought to its attention indicating that these provisions have not been respected in individual cases. Morover, the Commission has issued guidelines explaining how wind energy projects can be developed in accordance with EU environmental legislation ([2]).

Information concerning individual Member States' plans for the further development of offshore wind projects, is provided in the National Renewable Energy Action Plans that are obligatory under Article 4 of Directive 2009/28/EC ([3]). The action plans as well as summary documents are available via the Commission's Transparency Platform ([4]). For offshore wind installations, the action plans envisage a total growth in installed capacity from 0.7 GW in 2005 to 14.3 GW in 2015 and 41.3 GW in 2020. The entire installed capacity in the EU in 2010 amounted to 2.9 GW.

Furthermore, the Commission is drafting a proposal for a directive establishing a framework for an effective application of Maritime Spatial Planning and Integrated Coastal Zone Management in Member States.

([1]) 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 and Council Directive 85/337/EEC of 27 June 1985 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment, OJ L 175, 5.7.1985.

([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/Wind_farms.pdf

([3]) 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.

([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/energy/renewables/action_plan_en.htm

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-006579/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(29 Ιουνίου 2012)

Θέμα: Προγράμματα χορήγησης μεθαδόνης στην Ελλάδα και την ΕΕ

Ο εθισμός στα ναρκωτικά είναι μια πάθηση και μπορεί να θεραπευθεί με διάφορες μεθόδους. Μία από τις πλέον επιτυχημένες βασίζεται στη λήψη φαρμάκων κατά τη θεραπευτική αγωγή και την παράλληλη παροχή ψυχολογικής υποστήριξης και φροντίδας. Οι έρευνες, μάλιστα, δείχνουν ότι η θεραπεία για τον εθισμό στην ηρωίνη με τη βοήθεια της μεθαδόνης σε κατάλληλες δόσεις και σε συνδυασμό με συμπεριφορική θεραπεία μειώνει τη συχνότητα θανάτων και πολλών άλλων προβλημάτων υγείας που σχετίζονται με την ηρωίνη. Στο πλαίσιο καταπολέμησης του κοινωνικού αποκλεισμού και διαφύλαξης της ανθρώπινης ζωής είναι εξαιρετικά σημαντικό να αντιμετωπίζεται με υπευθυνότητα και συνέχεια η πολιτική για την θεραπεία και την ένταξη των ατόμων που είναι εθισμένα στα ναρκωτικά· άλλωστε σύμφωνα με σχετικές μελέτες μια αποτελεσματική προσέγγιση αναφορικά με τη θεραπευτική αγωγή συμβάλλει στην οριστική απεξάρτηση και παράλληλα στη μείωση της εγκληματικότητας, ενώ ενισχύει την ενσωμάτωση στην αγορά εργασίας. Σε αυτό πλαίσιο ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Σε ποιες ευρωπαϊκές χώρες λειτουργούν προγράμματα χορήγησης μεθαδόνης; Πόσα άτομα συμμετέχουν σε αυτά τα προγράμματα; Ποιος ο χρόνος αναμονής ένταξης σε ένα τέτοιο πρόγραμμα και ποιά θέση κατέχει η Ελλάδα;

2. Σύμφωνα με τις βέλτιστες πρακτικές τα προγράμματα μεθαδόνης έχουν ενσωματωθεί στα εθνικά συστήματα υγείας (π.χ. χορηγείται η μεθαδόνη στα νοσοκομεία);

3. Σε ποιες χώρες υπάρχουν συγκεκριμένα προγράμματα ένταξης συμμετεχόντων σε προγράμματα μεθαδόνης στην αγορά εργασίας ή στην εκπαίδευση και την κατάρτιση; Ποια τα ποσοστά επανένταξης στις χώρες της Ένωσης;

4. Η ύπαρξη επιτυχημένων προγραμμάτων μεθαδόνης έχει επίδραση στα ποσοστά εγκληματικότητας; έχουν καταγραφεί συγκεκριμένα ποσοστά;

Απάντηση της κας Reding εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(13 Αυγούστου 2012)

Περίπου το 50 % προβληματικών χρηστών οπιούχων, ήτοι 690 000 ([1]) άτομα στην ΕΕ υποβάλλονται σε θεραπεία με υποκατάστατα οπιοειδών (OST). Από αυτά τα άτομα, 328 500 υποβάλλονται σε θεραπευτική αγωγή με μεθαδόνη ([2]). Η θεραπεία υποκατάστασης με μεθαδόνη παρέχεται σε όλα τα κράτη μέλη. Η παροχή αγωγής και ο χρόνος αναμονής ποικίλλουν από το ένα κράτος της ΕΕ στο άλλο, με μεγάλες διαφορές μεταξύ δυτικής και ανατολικής Ευρώπης, καθώς και μεταξύ πόλεων και αγροτικών περιοχών ([3]). Μολονότι ο αριθμός των ασθενών OST στην Ελλάδα αυξήθηκε τελευταία, η παροχή αγωγής καλύπτει μόνο το 28 %.

Τα διαθέσιμα στοιχεία ([4]) υποδηλώνουν ότι η εγκληματικότητα κατά τη διάρκεια της θεραπευτικής αγωγής με μεθαδόνη είναι σημαντικά χαμηλότερη από ό,τι κατά τη διάρκεια της φάσης εξάρτησης.

Η θεραπεία με υποκατάστατα διεξάγεται κυρίως σε κέντρα αποτοξίνωσης εξωτερικής παραμονής στην ΕΕ, στα οποία συμπεριλαμβάνονται πτέρυγες δημοσίων νοσοκομείων, ιατρεία γενικής ιατρικής και υπηρεσίες εύκολης πρόσβασης. Σε ορισμένες χώρες, η ένταξη ή η συνέχιση της θεραπείας περιορίζεται σε ειδικά κέντρα απεξάρτησης από τα ναρκωτικά.

([1]) Ευρωπαϊκό Κέντρο Παρακολούθησης Ναρκωτικών και Τοξικομανίας (ΕΚΠΝΤ), Ετήσια έκθεση για την κατάσταση του προβλήματος των ναρκωτικών στην Ευρώπη για το 2011, ΕΚΠΝΤ, Λισαβόνα. http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/attachements.cfm/att_143743_EN_EMCDDA_AR2011_EN.pdf.

([2]) http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/stats12#display:/stats12/hsrtab3b.

([3]) Σύμφωνα με την ετήσια έκθεση για την κατάσταση του προβλήματος των ναρκωτικών στην Ευρώπη για το 2012 (υπό εκτύπωση), ΕΚΠΝΤ, Λισαβόνα: σε 6 κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ η ένταξη σε OST είναι άμεση (IT, LV, LU, SI, SK και UK). Σε 10 κράτη μέλη η περίοδος αναμονής είναι σύντομη: σε 4 χώρες λιγότερο από 2 εβδομάδες (CR, DK, CY και NL) και σε 6 χώρες μεταξύ 2 εβδομάδων και ενός μηνός (DE, IE, MT, AT, PL, PT). Περίοδοι αναμονής άνω του ενός μηνός και κάτω των έξι μηνών αναφέρθηκαν από LT, HU, RO και FI. Περίοδοι αναμονής άνω των έξι μηνών αναφέρθηκαν από τη Βουλγαρία και την Ελλάδα. Για την αντιμετώπιση της έξαρσης του HIV στην Ελλάδα το 2011, οι αρχές αύξησαν την πρόσβαση στη θεραπευτική αγωγή. Η εκτιμώμενη περίοδος αναμονής στην Αθήνα μειώθηκε από 7 έτη το 2010 σε 3 έτη. Η περίοδος αναμονής είναι πολύ συντομότερη σε άλλες περιοχές της Ελλάδας. Δεν υπάρχουν διαθέσιμα στοιχεία για το BE, την EE και τη FR.

([4]) Clinical trails — Dole et al., 1969; Gunne and Gronbladh, 1981; Yankowitz, 1991 and studies —DTORS & TOPS in the UK; Blutken et al., 2012.

19 κράτη μέλη αναφέρουν ότι τα μέτρα παρεμβάσεως στην αγορά εργασίας που είναι διαθέσιμα για κοινωνικά ευάλωτες ομάδες είναι επίσης προσβάσιμα και για άτομα υπό θεραπευτική αγωγή απεξάρτησης από τα ναρκωτικά. Σε 10 κράτη μέλη υφίστανται ειδικά μέτρα για άτομα υπό θεραπευτική αγωγή απεξάρτησης από τα ναρκωτικά. 14 κράτη μέλη έχουν προγράμματα για διευκόλυνση της πρόσβασης στη γενική εκπαίδευση για κοινωνικά ευάλωτες ομάδες, συμπεριλαμβανομένων ατόμων υπό θεραπευτική αγωγή απεξάρτησης από τα ναρκωτικά, ενώ 10 κράτη μέλη έχουν τέτοια προγράμματα ειδικά για άτομα υπό θεραπευτική αγωγή απεξάρτησης από τα ναρκωτικά ([5]). Η ικανότητα και η αποτελεσματικότητα της θεραπευτικής αγωγής, καθώς και των συστημάτων αποκατάστασης στην ΕΕ είναι ακόμη ανεπαρκείς, όμως δεν υπάρχουν διαθέσιμα ολοκληρωμένα στοιχεία για την ΕΕ ([6]).

([5]) Βλ. υποσημείωση 1.

([6]) Μια επισκόπηση των αποδεικτικών στοιχείων, της διαθεσιμότητας και των πολιτικών παρεμβάσεων για την κοινωνική επανένταξη των χρηστών ναρκωτικών υπό θεραπευτική αγωγή θα είναι διαθέσιμη στην επικείμενη δημοσίευση του ΕΚΠΝΤ (Οκτώβριος 2012) «Κοινωνική επανένταξη και μείωση του κοινωνικού αποκλεισμού των χρηστών ναρκωτικών — Βελτίωση της συμμετοχής στην αγορά εργασίας των χρηστών ναρκωτικών υπό θεραπευτική αγωγή». Επιπλέον, μια αξιολόγηση της εφαρμογής της σύστασης του Συμβουλίου, της 18ης Ιουνίου 2003, σχετικά με την πρόληψη και τη μείωση των επιβλαβών συνεπειών για την υγεία που συνδέονται με την τοξικομανία (E L 165 της 3.7.2003, σσ.31-33) είναι σε εξέλιξη.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006579/12
to the Commission
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Programmes for administering methadone in Greece and the EU

Drug addiction is an illness which can be cured through a variety of methods. One of the most successful is based on administering other substances during treatment, with the parallel provision of psychological support and care. Research indicates that treatment for heroin addiction, with the assistance of methadone in suitable doses and in conjunction with behavioural therapy, reduces the incidence of deaths and many other health problems associated with heroin. In the context of combating social exclusion and preserving human life, it is extremely important that policies for the treatment and reintegration of individuals addicted to drugs be pursued responsibly and on a continuous basis. According to relevant studies, an effective approach to treatment helps to definitively overcome dependence and to reduce criminality, at the same time strengthening integration into the labour market.

In view of this, can the Commission state:

1. In which EU countries are programmes for administering methadone in operation? How many people are participating in these programmes? What is the waiting time for admission into such a programme and what is Greece's position?

2. Have methadone programmes been incorporated into national health systems in accordance with best practices (e.g. is methadone available in hospitals)?

3. In which countries are there specific programmes for the reintegration of participants in methadone programmes into the labour market or into education and training? What are the figures and percentages for this reintegration in the EU countries?

4. Do successful methadone programmes have any effect on figures for criminality? Have specific percentages been recorded?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(13 August 2012)

Approximately 50% of problem opioid users, around 690 000 ([1]) people receive opioid substitution treatment (OST) in the EU. Of these, 328 500 are treated with methadone ([2]). Methadone substitution treatment is provided in all Member States. Coverage and waiting times for treatment vary across the EU, with strong differences between Western and Eastern Europe, and between cities and rural areas ([3]). Although the number of OST patients in Greece has increased recently, coverage only equals 28%.

Available evidence ([4]) suggests that crime during methadone treatment is substantially lower than during street addiction phase.

Substitution treatment is conducted mostly in outpatient settings in the EU, including public hospital wards, general practitioners' surgeries and low-threshold facilities. In certain countries, the initiation or continuation of treatment is limited to specialist drug treatment centres.

([1]) The European Monitoring Centre for Drug and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) Annual Report 2011 — The state of the drugs problem in Europe, EMCDDA, Lisbon: http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/attachements.cfm/att_143743_EN_EMCDDA_AR2011_EN.pdf

([2]) http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/stats12#display:/stats12/hsrtab3b

([3]) According to the EMCDDA 2012 Annual Report (in press) — The state of the drugs problem in Europe, EMCDDA, Lisbon: in 6 EU Member States there is no waiting time before entering OST (IT, LV, LU, SI, SK and UK). In 10 Member States waiting periods are short: in four countries lesAs than two weeks (CR, DK, CY and NL) and in six countries between two weeks and 1 month (DE, IE, MT, AT, PL, PT). Waiting periods of more than one month and up to six months were reported from LT, HU, RO and FI. Waiting times of more than six months were reported by Bulgaria and Greece. In response to HIV outbreaks in Greece in 2011, authorities expanded treatment. The estimated waiting time in Athens decreased from 7 years in 2010 to 3 years. Waiting times are much shorter in other regions of Greece. No data are available for BE, EE and FR.

([4]) Clinical trails — Dole et al., 1969; Gunne and Gronbladh, 1981; Yankowitz, 1991 and studies -DTORS & TOPS in the UK; Blutken et al., 2012.

19 Member States report that labour market intervention measures available to socially vulnerable groups are also accessible to people in drug treatment. In 10 Member States, specific measures exist for drug treatment clients. 14 Member States have programmes to facilitate access to mainstream education for socially vulnerable groups, including drug treatment clients, and 10 have such programmes specifically for drug treatment clients ([5]). The capacity and effectiveness of treatment and rehabilitation systems in the EU are still inadequate, but comprehensive EU data is not available ([6]).

([5]) See footnote 1.

([6]) An overview of the evidence, availability and policies of social reintegration interventions of drug users in treatment will be available in the upcoming EMCDDA publication (October 2012) 'Social reintegration and reduction of social exclusion of drug users — Improving labour market participation of drug users in treatment'. In addition, an evaluation of the implementation of the Council recommendation of 18 June 2003 on the prevention and reduction of health-related harm associated with drug dependence (OJ L 165 3.7.2003, p. 31-33 is ongoing.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-006580/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(29 Ιουνίου 2012)

Θέμα: Αναγκαία η αντιμετώπιση της έκρυθμης κοινωνικής κατάστασης στην Ελλάδα

Η πρόσφατα δημοσιευμένη τριμηνιαία έκθεση της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής αναφορικά με την κοινωνική κατάσταση στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση σκιαγραφεί μια ιδιαίτερα ανησυχητική κατάσταση αναφορικά με τις κοινωνικές συνθήκες στην Ευρώπη. Πιο συγκεκριμένα η κρίση φαίνεται να έχει πλήξει ιδιαίτερα τόσο τη βιωσιμότητα της οικονομίας όσο και την κοινωνική συνοχή, θέτοντας εν αμφιβόλω τον ευρωπαϊκά διακηρυγμένο στόχο της κοινωνικής επάρκειας. Στην περίπτωση της Ελλάδας, μάλιστα, συναντάμε μια κοινωνία κατακερματισμένη με ιδιαίτερα αυξημένα ποσοστά φτώχειας (64 % του πληθυσμού ζει κάτω από το όριο φτώχειας), καλπάζουσα ανεργία (23 %), αύξηση του κοινωνικού αποκλεισμού (25 % αύξηση του αριθμού των αστέγων — ανέρχονται σε 20 000) και αποδόμηση της αγοράς εργασίας με παράλληλες αλλεπάλληλες περικοπές στις κρατικές κοινωνικές πολιτικές. Σε αυτό το πλαίσιο ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Με βάση την κατάσταση της ελληνικής κοινωνίας — όπως καταγράφεται από την Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή — αλλά και τις δυσοίωνες προβλέψεις για την απασχόληση στο δεύτερο εξάμηνο του 2012, πώς κρίνει την αντίστοιχη προσαρμογή κάποιων επιμέρους μέτρων του Μνημονίου, προκειμένου η δημοσιονομική εξυγίανση να συνοδεύεται από τη διασφάλιση ενός ελάχιστου επιπέδου κοινωνικής επάρκειας, δεδομένου, μάλιστα, ότι οι στόχοι ετέθησαν σύμφωνα με προβλέψεις οι οποίες σε καμία περίπτωση δεν επαληθεύτηκαν;

2. Εντοπίζει σχέση ανάμεσα στην αύξηση της φτώχειας και της αποτελεσματικότητας των επιβαλλόμενων φορολογικών μέτρων στην Ελλάδα (ως μέλος της Τρόικα);

3. Προτίθεται να προχωρήσει σε συγκεκριμένες συστάσεις προς την Ελλάδα για την αντιμετώπιση της έκρυθμης αυτής κοινωνικής κατάστασης που απομακρύνει τη χώρα από τους στόχους της Στρατηγικής ΕΕ2020;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(6 Σεπτεμβρίου 2012)

1. Η Επιτροπή ανησυχεί για το υψηλό ποσοστό ανεργίας. Είναι σημαντικό όχι μόνο να μην αποκτήσει η ανεργία διαρθρωτικό χαρακτήρα αλλά επίσης να μειωθούν οι περιπτώσεις οικονομικής ένδειας λόγω έλλειψης εισοδήματος που προέρχεται από εργασία. Η Επιτροπή θα ήθελε να παραπέμψει το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου στην απάντησή της σε πρόσφατη παρόμοια ερώτηση (E-6237/12 ([1])). Πράγματι, η Επιτροπή θα θεωρούσε σκόπιμη τη λήψη μέτρων με στόχο την παροχή εισοδήματος σε αυτούς που πλήττονται σοβαρότερα από την ανεργία και δεν καλύπτονται από τα υφιστάμενα μέσα, εφόσον τα μέτρα αυτά είναι συμβατά με τους ευρύτερους στόχους του προγράμματος. Στο ίδιο διάστημα, μέσω της χρησιμοποίησης των πόρων της ΕΕ, η ΕΕ συνεχίζει να στηρίζει διάφορες πρωτοβουλίες για την ενίσχυση της διασύνδεσης της αγοράς εργασίας στην Ελλάδα, μαζί με τις ελληνικές αρχές. Οι προσπάθειες αυτές ανέρχονται σε περίπου 4 δισ. ευρώ για την περίοδο 2007-2013 ([2]).

2. Η Επιτροπή πιστεύει ότι η αύξηση της αποτελεσματικότητας είσπραξης φόρων είναι αναγκαία για την κοινωνική ισότητα. Η μη αντιμετώπιση της φοροδιαφυγής θα έχει ως αποτέλεσμα τη μη δίκαιη κατανομή των προσπαθειών αναπροσαρμογής.

3. Το Συμβούλιο εξέδωσε σύσταση προς την Ελλάδα στις 10 Ιουλίου 2012 σύμφωνα με την οποία η Ελλάδα θα πρέπει «να εφαρμόσει τα μέτρα που προβλέπονται στην απόφαση 2011/734/ΕΕ, όπως τροποποιήθηκε στις 8 Νοεμβρίου 2011 και στις 13 Μαρτίου 2012, και το ΜΣ ([3]) για τους Ειδικούς Όρους της Οικονομικής Πολιτικής, που υπογράφηκε στις 14 Μαρτίου 2012». Τα βασικά μέτρα στο πλαίσιο του ΜΣ έχουν ως στόχο την επίτευξη οικονομικής και δημοσιονομικής σταθερότητας που είναι αναγκαίες για την ανάπτυξη και την απασχόληση, την προώθηση της αποτελεσματικότερης λειτουργίας της αγοράς εργασίας και την αντιμετώπιση των κοινωνικών επιπτώσεων της τρέχουσας προσαρμογής που είναι αναγκαία για να ξεπεραστούν οι δυσκολίες τις οποίες αντιμετωπίζει η ελληνική οικονομία.

Το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου παρακαλείται να ανατρέξει στη λεπτομερή ανάλυση σχετικά με την πρόοδο για την επίτευξη των στόχων της Ευρώπης του 2020 ([4]).

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) Ο αριθμός αυτός αφορά όλα τα μέτρα που έχουν ως στόχο τη στήριξη της απασχόλησης.
([3]) Μνημόνιο συμφωνίας.
([4]) Βλέπε http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/europe-2020-in-your-country/ellada/index_en.htm.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006580/12
to the Commission
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: The need to deal with the anomalous social situation in Greece

The Commission's recently published EU Employment and Social Situation Quarterly Review presents an exceptionally disturbing picture of social conditions in Europe. The crisis appears to have had particularly serious repercussions both on the viability of the economy and on social cohesion, casting doubt on the objective of social adequacy proclaimed throughout Europe. In Greece's case we encounter a fragmented society with particularly high levels of poverty (64% of the population living below the poverty line), increasing social exclusion (a 25% increase in the number of homeless people, now at 20 000), spiralling unemployment (23%), and dismantling of the labour market with parallel successive cuts in state social provisions.

In view of this, can the Commission state:

1. Given the social situation in Greece — as recorded by the Commission — and the unfavourable predictions for employment in the second half of 2012 and given that the related goals were set in accordance with predictions that have not been confirmed in any way, how does it view the corresponding adaptation of some of the individual measures of the Memorandum so that fiscal consolidation can be accompanied by provisions ensuring a minimum level of social adequacy?

2. Does it (as a member of the Troika) detect any connection between the increase in poverty and the effectiveness of the taxation measures imposed on Greece?

3. Will it proceed with specific recommendations to Greece on ways of handling this anomalous social situation which is steering the country away from the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(6 September 2012)

1. High unemployment is a concern for the Commission. It is important not only to prevent it from becoming structural but also to diminish cases of hardship due to lack of labour income. The Commission would kindly refer the Honourable Member to the answer it provided to a recent similar question (E-6237/12 ([1])). Indeed, the Commission would welcome measures aimed at providing income to those hardest hit from joblessness and not covered by existing instruments, as far as they are consistent with the broader programme objectives. Meanwhile, through the use of EU funds, the EU continues supporting various initiatives to foster labour market attachment in Greece in tandem with the Greek authorities. Those efforts amount to close to EUR 4 billion over the period 2007-2013 ([2]).

2. The Commission is of the view that increasing high effectiveness of tax collection is necessary for social equity. Leaving tax evasion unaddressed would lead to an unfair distribution of the adjustment efforts.

3. The Council issued a recommendation to Greece on 10 July 2012 according to which Greece should 'implement the measures laid down in Decision 2011/734/EU, as amended on 8 November 2011 and 13 March 2012, and the MoU ([3]) on Specific Economic Policy Conditionality, which was signed on 14 March 2012'. Key measures within the MoU, aim at regaining economic and budgetary stability which are preconditions for growth and employment, at fostering a more effective functioning of the labour market, and at addressing the social consequences of the ongoing adjustment necessary to overcome the difficulties which the Greek economy is facing.

The Honourable Member is kindly referred to the detailed analysis on progress towards Europe 2020 goals ([4]).

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) This figure refers to all measures which aim to support employment.
([3]) Memorandum of Understanding.
([4]) See http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/europe-2020-in-your-country/ellada/index_en.htm

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-006581/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(29 Ιουνίου 2012)

Θέμα: Επιπλέον αυξήσεις στους λογαριασμούς παροχής ρεύματος

Την ώρα που χιλιάδες ελληνικά νοικοκυριά και ευπαθείς ομάδες πλήττονται από την κρίση, αδυνατούν για αντικειμενικούς λόγους να ανταποκριθούν ακόμα και στις τρέχουσες ανάγκες πληρωμής του λογαριασμού της Δημόσιας Επιχείρησης Ηλεκτρισμού (ΔΕΗ) και κινδυνεύουν με διακοπή της ηλεκτροδότησης τους, ο Οργανισμός αναφέρθηκε στο ενδεχόμενο περαιτέρω αύξησης στα τιμολόγια ρεύματος μέσα στο 2012. Σημειώνεται δε, ότι ανατιμήσεις είχαν ήδη γίνει και στις αρχές του έτους. Πρόκειται δηλαδή για νέες αυξήσεις που εάν επιβληθούν θα επιβαρύνουν εκ νέου τους πολίτες που ουσιαστικά καλούνται να «πληρώσουν» τη διόγκωση του ελλείμματος της Επιχείρησης.

Δεδομένου ότι:

— αυξάνονται δραματικά τα νοικοκυριά που για αντικειμενικούς λόγους δεν μπορούν να πληρώσουν την ηλεκτροδότησή τους πόσο μάλλον το έκτακτο τέλος και επομένως καμία περαιτέρω αύξηση με κίνδυνο διακοπής της ηλεκτροδότησης τους που θα θέσει σοβαρά κοινωνικά ζητήματα·

— αυτή τη στιγμή οι ανεξόφλητοι λογαριασμοί φτάνουν τα 1,2 δισ. ευρώ·

— η κατάσταση επιδεινώνεται από την αποτυχία της είσπραξης του τέλους ακίνητης περιουσίας μέσα από τους λογαριασμούς της ΔΕΗ

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Στο πλαίσιο της οδηγίας 2009/72/ΕΚ, πώς μπορούν χιλιάδες πολίτες να προστατευθούν από τον κίνδυνο διακοπής παροχής ρεύματος επειδή δεν μπορούν να πληρώσουν τους λογαριασμούς στους οποίους έχει ενσωματωθεί και το τέλος ακίνητης περιουσίας;

2. Πώς κρίνει το γεγονός ότι, σε μια περίοδο βαθιάς ύφεσης, οι καταναλωτές καλούνται να καλύψουν τις οικονομικές ανάγκες της επιχείρησης με αλλεπάλληλες αυξήσεις;

3. Ποιες κατευθύνσεις ή καλές πρακτικές μπορεί να δώσει η Επιτροπή σε σχέση με ειδικές ρυθμίσεις κοινωνικού χαρακτήρα ώστε να αντιμετωπιστεί άμεσα το πρόβλημα;

4. Σε συνέχεια της απάντησης που λάβαμε σε παλαιότερη ερώτησή μας [E-4659/2010], ποια ήταν τα αποτελέσματα του ενεργειακού φόρουμ των πολιτών (London Forum) και οι βέλτιστες πρακτικές για την προστασία των ευάλωτων πελατών; Πρόκειται να θεσπίσει η Επιτροπή περαιτέρω κατευθυντήριες γραμμές;

5. Υπάρχουν διαθέσιμα στοιχεία ανά κράτος μέλος αναφορικά με τον αριθμό των νοικοκυριών που εν έτει 2012 δεν απολαμβάνουν το κοινωνικό αγαθό της ηλεκτροδότησης;

Απάντηση του κ. Oettinger εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(13 Αυγούστου 2012)

Η νομοθεσία της ΕΕ, ιδίως η οδηγία 2009/72/ΕΚ για την ηλεκτρική ενέργεια ([1]), επέβαλε στα κράτη μέλη υποχρεώσεις να διασφαλίσουν καθολική υπηρεσία σε όλα τα νοικοκυριά και να προστατεύσουν τους καταναλωτές, αλλά δεν έθεσε υπό αμφισβήτηση τη συνήθη υποχρέωση για εξόφληση των λογαριασμών.

Στην Ελλάδα, οι τιμές για τους πελάτες χαμηλής τάσης καθορίζονται σε υπουργική απόφαση μετά από πρόταση της ρυθμιστικής αρχής με βάση το μέσο, αντιπροσωπευτικό του κόστους, επιτρεπτό έσοδο. Οι τιμές θα πρέπει να διασφαλίζουν την οικονομική βιωσιμότητα της ΔΕΗ, μεταξύ άλλων σε περιόδους γενικής οικονομικής δυσπραγίας, ειδάλλως οι οικονομικές δυσκολίες του κράτους θα μπορούσαν να επιδεινωθούν περαιτέρω, με σοβαρές αρνητικές συνέπειες για όλους τους πολίτες. Ωστόσο, είναι ουσιαστικής σημασίας, παράλληλα, να προβλέπονται ειδικά τιμολόγια για συγκεκριμένες και σαφώς οριοθετημένες ευάλωτες ομάδες καταναλωτών. Θα μπορούσαν επίσης να διερευνηθούν σε πιο μακροπρόθεσμη βάση συμβουλές, ειδικώς σε μη ενεργοβόρα νοικοκυριά, σχετικά με τη διαχείριση και την εξοικονόμηση της κατανάλωσης, επιπλέον των περαιτέρω βελτιώσεων του βαθμού απόδοσης της τελικής χρήσης, που θα πρέπει να συνεχιστούν δυναμικά.

([1]) Οδηγία 2009/72/ΕΚ του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου και του Συμβουλίου, της 13ης Ιουλίου 2009, σχετικά με τους κοινούς κανόνες για την εσωτερική αγορά ηλεκτρικής ενεργείας και για την κατάργηση της οδηγίας 2003/54/ΕΚ, ΕΕ L 211 της 14.8.2009.

Το Ενεργειακό Φόρουμ των πολιτών επιβεβαίωσε τον κεντρικό ρόλο που θα πρέπει να διαδραματίζουν οι καταναλωτές στις αγορές λιανικής, και την ανάγκη να αντιμετωπισθεί η ευπάθεια και ενεργειακή ένδεια των καταναλωτών. Μια ομάδα εργασίας του φόρουμ, που συγκροτήθηκε το 2012, εξετάζει τις κινητήριες δυνάμεις της ενεργειακής ευπάθειας και διερευνά πιθανές κατευθυντήριες γραμμές για τα κράτη μέλη. Μια πρώτη έκθεση θα παρουσιαστεί στο φετινό φόρουμ.

Επί του παρόντος η Επιτροπή δεν έχει στη διάθεσή της το αιτούμενο είδος στοιχείων.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006581/12
to the Commission
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Further increases in electricity bills

The Public Power Corporation (DEI) has mentioned the likelihood of further increases in electricity bills in 2012. This comes at a time when thousands of Greek households and vulnerable social groups are being hit by the crisis, are unable to meet even the current payment requirements for bills from the DEI and are threatened with having their electricity supplies cut off. It should be noted that there have already been increases which were implemented at the beginning of this year. New increases, if passed, will impose further burdens on citizens, who are in effect being called upon to cover the Corporation's spiralling deficit.

— There has been a dramatic increase in the number of households unable to pay for electricity, let alone the special tax. A further increase is unfeasible and would leave many with the threat of their electricity being cut off and the serious social problems that would entail.

— Unpaid electricity bills currently amount to EUR 1.2 billion.

— The situation has been exacerbated through a failure to collect special property tax through Public Power Corporation bills.

Given the above, can the Commission state:

1. In the context of Directive 2009/72/EC, how can thousands of citizens be protected from having their electricity cut off due to unpaid bills which also incorporate special property tax?

2. How does it view the fact that consumers are being called upon to cover the Corporation's financial needs through repeated increases in a period of deep recession?

3. What directions or best practice guidelines can it offer as to special social provisions that might provide an immediate response to the problem?

4. Further to the answer to Written Question [E-4659/2010], what were the results of the citizens' Energy Forum (London Forum) and the best practices proposed for the protection of vulnerable customers? Does the Commission intend to introduce further guidelines?

5. Is any data available on a state-by-state basis on the number of households in 2012 without access to electricity?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(13 August 2012)

While EC law, notably the Electricity Directive 2009/72/EC ([1]), put obligations on Member States to ensure universal service to all households and to protect consumers, it does not put into question the usual obligation for bills to be paid.

In Greece, prices for low voltage customers are set in a Ministerial Decision following a proposal by the regulator based on the average, cost-reflective, allowable revenue. The prices should ensure economic viability of DEI, including at times of general economic hardship, otherwise financial difficulties of the state could further exacerbate, with serious negative consequences for all citizens. However, it is essential that, in parallel, special tariffs for specific and clearly delimited vulnerable consumers groups are foreseen. Advice, in particular to energy poor households, on consumption management and savings could also be explored in the longer term, in addition to further end-user efficiency improvements, which should be vigorously pursued.

([1]) Directive 2009/72/EC of the Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 concerning common rules for the internal market in electricity and repealing Directive 2003/54/EC, OJ L 211, 14.8.2009.

The Citizens' Energy Forum confirmed the central role that consumers should play in retail markets and the need to address consumer vulnerability and energy poverty. A Working Group of the Forum, established in 2012, is looking at the energy vulnerability drivers and exploring possible guidelines for Member States. An initial report will be presented at this year's Forum.

At the moment, the Commission does not have at its disposal data of the requested kind.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006582/12
to the Commission
David Martin (S&D)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Situation regarding lecturers at the University of Cassino and Southern Lazio

Is the Commission aware of the situation at the University of Cassino and Southern Lazio in Italy with regard to 18 foreign language lecturers ('lettori') who have been teaching with permanent contracts for between 12 and 20 years?

After a legal battle to end discrimination was won in Italy's Supreme Court and the plaintiffs were given back-pay up to the date of the decision, the court decision regarding adequate salaries appears not to have been applied. As a consequence, a second case has been brought and is now pending before an employment tribunal in Cassino.

The lecturers concerned are now facing proceedings brought by the University to dismiss them and replace their services with 'less costly means' in disregard of both Italian and European legislation.

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(16 August 2012)

The Commission is monitoring the employment conditions of foreign language lecturers (lettori) and 'collaboratori e esperti linguistici' (CELs) in Italy. However, it is not aware of the court proceedings to which the Honourable Member refers.

Regarding the choice by the University of Cassino to replace its lecturers with 'less costly means', the Commission would reiterate that EC law does not prohibit individual dismissals which are made on these grounds.

However, Article 30 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU gives every worker the right to protection against unjustified dismissal. EC law also requires that, with regard to dismissal, migrant workers are treated in the same way as national workers ([1]). In the case of collective dismissals, Directive 98/59/EC ([2]) imposes a procedure which includes the information and consultation of staff. This directive has been transposed in Italy by law N°223/1991 and it is for the competent national authorities to ensure that it is correctly and effectively applied by employers.

Under the principle of subsidiarity, the Commission cannot interfere with university decisions on teaching structures and the means of teaching. Instead, if there is an abuse of power, then it is for the competent national supervisory bodies to address the matter.

([1]) Article 45 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and Article 7(1) of Regulation (EU) No 492/2011 of 5 April 2011 on freedom of movement for workers within the Union, OJ L 141, 27.5.2011 p. 1.

([2]) On the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to collective redundancies, OJ L 225, 12.8.1998 p. 16.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-006583/12
au Conseil
Tokia Saïfi (PPE)
(29 juin 2012)

Objet: Possible suspension de l'accord de coopération UE-Syrie

La situation en Syrie ne cesse de se dégrader. Les pressions de la communauté internationale, le plan de paix proposé par le Secrétaire général des Nations unies, les mesures de sanction déjà adoptées par l'Union européenne, n'ont jusqu'à présent pas eu d'impact tangible sur le régime de Bachar Al-Assad.

1. Dans la mesure où l'Union européenne et la Syrie sont liées, depuis 1978, par un accord de coopération, le Conseil a-t-il envisagé la possibilité de suspendre intégralement l'application de cet accord? Dans l'affirmative, a-t-il évalué les possibles conséquences d'une telle suspension, tant sur le régime que sur les populations civiles syriennes? Si oui, peut-il nous communiquer ses conclusions?

2. Dans l'hypothèse où la suspension serait décidée, la Syrie continuerait toutefois de bénéficier des préférences tarifaires de l'actuel schéma de préférences généralisées (SPG). Ce SPG sera probablement remplacé par une version révisée d'ici la fin de l'année. Le Conseil peut-il indiquer si la Syrie continuera de bénéficier des préférences sous le nouveau régime du SPG? Ne considère-t-il pas que cette situation pourrait être source d'incohérence avec une éventuelle décision de suspension de l'accord de partenariat? Sera-t-il possible d'envisager le recours au mécanisme de retrait dans le cadre du SPG?

3. Le Conseil a-t-il envisagé d'autres mesures de sanctions économiques ou commerciales? Si oui, lesquelles? Si non, pour quelle(s) raison(s)?

Réponse
(1er octobre 2012)

Une proposition de la Commission est nécessaire pour suspendre l'accord de coopération UE-Syrie et, pour le moment, la Commission n'a pas présenté une telle proposition.

Le Conseil n'est pas en mesure de répondre à des questions de nature hypothétique. Le nouveau règlement SPG devant entrer en vigueur le 1er janvier 2013 n'a pas encore été adopté par le Parlement européen et le Conseil.

Le Conseil a adopté un ensemble complet de mesures restrictives ciblant le régime, et non la population civile. Ces sanctions comportent entre autres l'interdiction d'exporter des armes et du matériel connexe, l'interdiction d'importer du pétrole brut et des produits pétroliers, l'interdiction d'investir dans l'industrie pétrolière syrienne, le gel des avoirs de la banque centrale syrienne dans l'UE, le gel des avoirs d'un certain nombre d'entités et de personnes associées à la répression violente exercée à l'encontre de la population civile et l'interdiction de délivrer des visas à un certain nombre de personnes responsables de cette répression.

Le Conseil réexamine en permanence ces mesures restrictives et prendra de nouvelles mesures si nécessaire.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006583/12
to the Council
Tokia Saïfi (PPE)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Possible suspension of EU-Syria cooperation agreement

The situation in Syria is continuing to deteriorate. Pressure from the international community, the peace plan proposed by the UN Secretary General and the sanctions already adopted by the EU have so far had no tangible impact on the regime of Bashar al-Assad.

1. Insofar as the EU and Syria have been linked by a cooperation agreement since 1978, has the Council considered the possibility of totally suspending the implementation of this Agreement? If so, has it assessed the possible consequences of such a measure, both for the regime and for the Syrian civilian population? If so, can it announce its conclusions?

2. In the event that it decided to suspend the Agreement, Syria would nonetheless continue to benefit from tariff preferences under the current generalised system of preferences (GSP). This GSP will likely be replaced by a revised version by the end of the year. Will the Council say whether Syria will continue to benefit from preferences under the new GSP scheme? Does it not agree that this could be a source of inconsistency with a possible decision to suspend the Agreement? Would it be possible to consider using the withdrawal mechanism under the GSP?

3. Has the Council considered other economic or trade sanctions? If so, what are they? If not, why not?

Reply
(1 October 2012)

In order to suspend the EU-Syria cooperation agreement a proposal by the Commission is required and for the time being the Commission has not put forward such a proposal.

The Council is not in a position to answer questions of a hypothetical nature. The new GSP Regulation due to enter into force on 1 January 2013 has not yet been adopted by the European Parliament and the Council.

The Council has adopted a comprehensive set of restrictive measures targeting the regime, not the civilian population. These sanctions consist of, *inter alia*, an export ban on arms and related material, an import ban on crude oil and petroleum products, a ban on investment in the Syrian oil industry, a freeze of assets of the Syrian central bank within the EU, an asset freeze on a number of entities and persons associated with the violent repression of the civilian population and a visa ban on a number of persons responsible for this repression.

The Council keeps these restrictive measures under continuous review and will take further action as required.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-006584/12
à la Commission
Tokia Saïfi (PPE)
(29 juin 2012)

Objet: Possible suspension de l'accord de coopération UE-Syrie

La situation en Syrie ne cesse de se dégrader. Les pressions de la communauté internationale, le plan de paix proposé par le Secrétaire général des Nations unies, les mesures de sanction déjà adoptées par l'Union européenne, n'ont jusqu'à présent pas eu d'impact tangible sur le régime de Bachar Al-Assad.

1. Dans la mesure où l'Union européenne et la Syrie sont liées, depuis 1978, par un accord de coopération, la Commission a-t-elle envisagé la possibilité de suspendre intégralement l'application de cet accord? Dans l'affirmative, a-t-elle évalué les possibles conséquences d'une telle suspension, tant sur le régime que sur les populations civiles syriennes? Si oui, peut-elle nous communiquer ses conclusions?

2. Dans l'hypothèse où la suspension serait décidée, la Syrie continuerait toutefois à bénéficier des préférences tarifaires de l'actuel schéma de préférences généralisées (SPG). Ce SPG sera probablement remplacé par une version révisée d'ici la fin de l'année. La Commission peut-elle indiquer si la Syrie continuera de bénéficier des préférences sous le nouveau régime du SPG? Ne considère-t-elle pas que cette situation pourrait être source d'incohérence avec une éventuelle décision de suspension de l'accord de partenariat? Sera-t-il possible d'envisager le recours au mécanisme de retrait dans le cadre du SPG?

3. La Commission a-t-elle envisagé d'autres mesures de sanctions économiques ou commerciales? Si oui, lesquelles? Si non, pour quelle(s) raison(s)?

Réponse donnée par M. Füle au nom de la Commission
(31 août 2012)

1. L'Union européenne a suspendu tous les projets de coopérations bilatérales avec le gouvernement syrien en mai 2011. Le SEAE et les services compétents de la Commission ont évalué l'impact d'une suspension totale de l'accord de coopération, concluant que les projets menés en collaboration avec les organisations de la société civile et les ONG internationales pourraient être mis à mal et que cela pourrait compliquer la reprise de la coopération, une fois la situation rétablie. Au sein du Conseil, aucun consensus n'a été dégagé entre les États membres afin de suspendre l'accord.

2. L'accord de coopération et le SPG sont deux instruments différents — le premier est un outil bilatéral —, tandis que le second relève de la clause d'habilitation de l'OMC. Dès lors, ils obéissent à des règles différentes et, par conséquent, l'application de leurs règles respectives n'est pas incohérente. Alors que le retrait du SPG sera proposé si les critères pertinents sont remplis, dans le cas de la Syrie la question du SPG est très théorique étant donné que l'utilisation par la Syrie du SPG dans ses échanges commerciaux avec l'UE est marginale (0,4 % des exportations vers l'UE et 0,1 % du total des exportations syriennes). La Syrie est un bénéficiaire potentiel du nouveau régime du SPG (dont les préférences doivent entrer en vigueur au 1er janvier 2014).

3. L'UE a adopté 17 séries de sanctions, visant le régime et non la population. 155 personnes et 52 entités liées au régime font actuellement l'objet de mesures restrictives ciblées. Les sanctions supplémentaires comprennent un embargo sur les armes aussi bien qu'une interdiction de l'exportation de logiciels et d'équipements de télécommunications et de TI susceptibles d'être utilisés à des fins de répression par le régime. Le 23 juillet 2012, les ministres des affaires étrangères de l'UE ont approuvé les mesures de l'UE visant à renforcer davantage l'application de l'embargo sur les armes.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006584/12
to the Commission
Tokia Saïfi (PPE)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Possible suspension of EU-Syria cooperation agreement

The situation in Syria is continuing to deteriorate. Pressure from the international community, the peace plan proposed by the UN Secretary General and the sanctions already adopted by the EU have so far had no tangible impact on the regime of Bashar al-Assad.

1. Insofar as the EU and Syria have been linked by a cooperation agreement since 1978, has the Commission considered the possibility of totally suspending the implementation of this Agreement? If so, has it assessed the possible consequences of such a measure, both for the regime and for the Syrian civilian population? If so, can it announce its conclusions?

2. In the event that it was decided to suspend the Agreement, Syria would nonetheless continue to benefit from tariff preferences under the current generalised system of preferences (GSP). This GSP will likely be replaced by a revised version by the end of the year. Will the Commission say whether Syria will continue to benefit from preferences under the new GSP scheme? Does it not agree that this could be a source of inconsistency with a possible decision to suspend the Agreement? Would it be possible to consider using the withdrawal mechanism under the GSP?

3. Has the Commission considered other economic or trade sanctions? If so, what are they? If not, why not?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(31 August 2012)

1. The EU suspended all bilateral cooperation projects with the Syrian government in May 2011. The EEAS and the relevant Commission services assessed the impact of a full suspension of the cooperation agreement, concluding that projects with Civil Society Organisations and International NGOs could be endangered and the resumption of cooperation, once the situation improves, complicated. In the Council there was no consensus among Member States to suspend the agreement.

2. The Cooperation Agreement and GSP are two different instruments — the former is a bilateral tool, while the latter falls under the umbrella of the WTO's Enabling Clause. As a result, they are governed by different rules, and therefore the application of these respective rules is not an inconsistency. While the withdrawal of GSP will be proposed if the relevant criteria are met, in Syria's case the GSP issue is highly academic, as Syria's use of GSP in its trade with the EU is marginal (0.4% of exports to the EU and 0.1% of total Syrian exports). Syria is a potential beneficiary of the new GSP scheme (whose preferences are due to enter into force on 1 January 2014).

3. The EU has adopted 17 rounds of sanctions, targeting the regime not the population; 155 persons and 52 entities associated with the regime are now subject to targeted restrictive measures. Further sanctions include an arms embargo as well a ban on the export of software, telecommunications and IT equipment that may be used for repression by the regime. On 23 July 2012, EU Foreign Ministers approved measures to further strengthen the enforcement of the EU arms embargo.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-006585/12
à la Commission (Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante)
Tokia Saïfi (PPE)
(29 juin 2012)

Objet: VP/HR — Possible suspension de l'accord de coopération UE-Syrie

La situation en Syrie ne cesse de se dégrader. Les pressions de la communauté internationale, le plan de paix proposé par le Secrétaire général des Nations unies, les mesures de sanction déjà adoptées par l'Union européenne, n'ont jusqu'à présent pas eu d'impact tangible sur le régime de Bachar Al-Assad.

1. Dans la mesure où l'Union européenne et la Syrie sont liées, depuis 1978, par un accord de coopération la Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante a-t-elle envisagé la possibilité de suspendre intégralement l'application de cet accord? Dans l'affirmative, a-t-elle évalué les possibles conséquences d'une telle suspension, tant sur le régime que sur les populations civiles syriennes? Si oui, peut-elle nous communiquer ses conclusions?

2. Dans l'hypothèse où la suspension serait décidée, la Syrie continuerait toutefois de bénéficier des préférences tarifaires de l'actuel schéma de préférences généralisées (SPG). Ce SPG sera probablement remplacé par une version révisée d'ici la fin de l'année. La Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante peut-elle indiquer si la Syrie continuera de bénéficier des préférences sous le nouveau régime du SPG? Ne considère-t-elle pas que cette situation pourrait être source d'incohérence avec une éventuelle décision de suspension de l'accord de partenariat? Sera-t-il possible d'envisager le recours au mécanisme de retrait dans le cadre du SPG?

3. La vice-présidente/haute représentante a-t-elle envisagé d'autres mesures de sanctions économiques ou commerciales? Si oui, lesquelles? Si non, pour quelle(s) raison(s)?

Réponse donnée par Mme Ashton, Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante au nom de la Commission
(20 août 2012)

1. L'Union européenne a suspendu tous les projets de coopérations bilatérales avec le gouvernement syrien en mai 2011. Le Service européen pour l'action extérieure (SEAE) et les services compétents de la Commission ont évalué l'impact d'une suspension totale de l'accord de coopération, concluant que les projets menés en collaboration avec les organisations de la société civile et les organisations non gouvernementales (les ONG) internationales pourraient être mis à mal et que cela pourrait compliquer la reprise de la coopération, une fois la situation rétablie. Au sein du Conseil, aucun consensus n'a été dégagé entre les États membres afin de suspendre l'accord.

2. L'accord de coopération et le SPG sont deux instruments différents, le premier est un outil bilatéral, tandis que le second relève de la clause d'habilitation de l'Organisation mondiale du commerce (OMC). Dès lors, ils obéissent à des règles différentes et, par conséquent, l'application de leurs règles respectives n'est pas incohérente. Alors que le retrait du SPG sera proposé si les critères pertinents sont remplis, dans le cas de la Syrie la question du SPG est très théorique étant donné que l'utilisation par la Syrie du SPG dans ses échanges commerciaux avec l'UE est marginale (0,4 % des exportations vers l'UE et 0,1 % du total des exportations syriennes). La Syrie est un bénéficiaire potentiel du nouveau régime du SPG (dont les préférences doivent entrer en vigueur au 1er janvier 2014).

3. L'UE a adopté 17 séries de sanctions, visant le régime et non la population. 155 personnes et 52 entités liées au régime font actuellement l'objet de mesures restrictives ciblées. Les sanctions supplémentaires comprennent un embargo sur les armes aussi bien qu'une interdiction de l'exportation de logiciels et d'équipements de télécommunications et de technologies de l'information succeptibles d'être utilisés à des fins de répression par le régime. Le 23 juillet 2012, les ministres des affaires étrangères de l'UE ont approuvé les mesures de l'UE visant à renforcer davantage l'application de l'embargo sur les armes.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006585/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Tokia Saïfi (PPE)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Possible suspension of EU-Syria cooperation agreement

The situation in Syria is continuing to deteriorate. Pressure from the international community, the peace plan proposed by the UN Secretary General and the sanctions already adopted by the EU have so far had no tangible impact on the regime of Bashar al-Assad.

1. Insofar as the EU and Syria have been linked by a cooperation agreement since 1978, has the Vice-President/High Representative considered the possibility of totally suspending the implementation of this Agreement? If so, has she assessed the possible consequences of such a measure, both for the regime and for the Syrian civilian population? If so, can she announce her conclusions?

2. In the event that it was decided to suspend the Agreement, Syria would nonetheless continue to benefit from tariff preferences under the current generalised system of preferences (GSP). This GSP will likely be replaced by a revised version by the end of the year. Will the Vice-President/High Representative say whether Syria will continue to benefit from preferences under the new GSP scheme? Does she not agree that this could be a source of inconsistency with a possible decision to suspend the Agreement? Would it be possible to consider using the withdrawal mechanism under the GSP?

3. Has the Vice-President/High Representative considered other economic or trade sanctions? If so, what are they? If not, why not?

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

1. The EU suspended all bilateral cooperation projects with the Syrian Government in May 2011. The European External Action Service (EEAS) and the relevant Commission services assessed the impact of a full suspension of the cooperation agreement, concluding that projects with Civil Society Organisations and International non-governmental organisations (NGOs) could be endangered and the resumption of cooperation, once the situation improves, complicated. In the Council there was no consensus among Member States to suspend the agreement.

2. The Cooperation Agreement and GSP are two different instruments-the former is a bilateral tool, while the latter falls under the umbrella of the World Trade Organisation's (WTO) Enabling Clause. As a result, they are governed by different rules, and therefore the application of these respective rules is not an inconsistency. While the withdrawal of GSP will be proposed if the relevant criteria are met, in Syria's case the GSP issue is highly academic, as Syria's use of GSP in its trade with the EU is marginal (0.4% of exports to the EU and 0.1% of total Syrian exports). Syria is a potential beneficiary of the new GSP scheme (whose preferences are due to enter into force on 1 January 2014).

3. The EU has adopted 17 rounds of sanctions, targeting the regime not the population. 155 persons and 52 entities associated with the regime are now subject to targeted restrictive measures. Further sanctions include an arms embargo as well as a ban on the export of software, telecommunications and Information Technology equipment that may be used for repression by the regime. On 23 July 2012, EU Foreign Ministers approved measures to further strenghten the enforcement of the EU arms embargo.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-006586/12
to the Commission
Chris Davies (ALDE)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Mobile air conditioning in motor vehicles

Commissioner Tajani informed Parliament's Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety on 20 June 2012 that infringement proceedings will be commenced against any Member State that, from 1 January 2013, permits a new type of vehicle to be placed on the market if it makes use of an air conditioning coolant with a global warming potential in excess of 150 times that of carbon dioxide.

Given that this legislative requirement was due to come into force with effect from 1 January 2011 (a fact previously and repeatedly emphasised by Commissioners Verheugen and Tajani in response to parliamentary questions), and that its implementation has been delayed for wholly exceptional reasons (*force majeure*), will the Commission confirm that it is writing to every Member State government, and every vehicle producer or importer, to inform them of its intention strictly to enforce the law from 1 January 2013, and will it state what other measures it is taking to publicise the requirement and the fact that it must be fulfilled?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(1 August 2012)

Following the letter from the Member of Commission responsible for Industry and Entrepreneurship to the European Parliament informing about the relevant decision of the Commission of 30 March 2012, the Commission addressed on 18 April 2012 a letter explaining this decision to Member States' representatives (Technical Committee — Motor Vehicles/TCMV). In parallel, the Commission wrote similar letters to the associations representing vehicle producers and importers (namely ACEA, JAMA and Hyundai). The letter addressed to Member States, which has been largely publicised, is available on the Commission's website ([1]). It states that:

'The Commission has decided on 30 March 2012 that, in light of the exceptional circumstances, solely with respect to the shortage of the refrigerant, and for a limited period of time (until December 2012), it will refrain from launching infringement procedures on its own initiative or when receiving complaints regarding non-conformity of vehicles manufactured before 31 December 2012 with the approval requirements. (…) The authorities in the Member States that are responsible for the certification of production (technical services), are responsible for verifying that production conforms to the directive after 31 December 2012, or as soon as the situation of shortage is solved, if before that date.'

([1]) (http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/automotive/environment/macs/index_en.htm).

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-006587/12
a la Comisión
Santiago Fisas Ayxela (PPE) y Marie-Thérèse Sanchez-Schmid (PPE)
(29 de junio de 2012)

Asunto: Autovía E-9 o corredor del Llobregat

Ante la difícil situación económica que estamos viviendo en Europa es importante invertir en infraestructuras que doten a las economías de mayor competitividad y que ahorren costes de transporte y tiempo a nuestras empresas y ciudadanos.

En este sentido, Cataluña está desarrollando la autovía E-9, también llamada Corredor del Llobregat, que en su totalidad irá desde Barcelona a Toulouse.

La autovía, que forma parte de la red transeuropea, está incluida en el Plan de Infraestructuras de Transporte de Cataluña, aprobado en el 2006. Actualmente el tramo de carretera que va de Barcelona a Berga ya está desdoblado y se está trabajando en el resto de carreteras e infraestructuras, tanto en el tramo español como en el tramo francés.

La autovía E-9, además de ser un activo importante para las relaciones comerciales entre Cataluña y el sur de Francia, es también un eje importante para las relaciones Francia-España y para la Euroregión. El eje también podrá utilizarse como una vía de salida de vehículos del área metropolitana de Barcelona que ayudará a facilitar los accesos por carretera a la ciudad.

1. ¿Piensa la Comisión impulsar este eje de vital importancia para Cataluña y el sur de Francia?

2. ¿Ha financiado o piensa financiar la Comisión parte de la autovía y en ese caso en qué cantidad?

3. ¿Ha incluido la Comisión la autovía E-9 entre sus prioridades?

Respuesta del Sr. Kallas en nombre de la Comisión
(7 de agosto de 2012)

La Comisión incluyó este eje en la red transeuropea de transporte junto con otros cuatro enlaces por carretera entre Francia y España.

En lo que se refiere a la financiación de infraestructuras viarias, la Comisión está fomentando una serie de instrumentos de ingeniería financiera adecuados para las infraestructuras de la red transeuropea de transporte que van desde garantías de préstamos hasta obligaciones privadas para la financiación de proyectos con objeto de complementar la intervención del Banco Europeo de Inversiones en este campo.

La Comisión no ha financiado la construcción de la autovía E9, ni a través de subvenciones de la línea presupuestaria de la RTE-T, ni a través del Fondo Europeo de Desarrollo Regional (FEDER), durante el período 2007-2013 en España y Francia..

Esta infraestructura forma parte de la red global y por consiguiente es susceptible de ayuda a través de instrumentos financieros; no obstante, no es una prioridad de la Comisión para la asignación de una subvención.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-006587/12
à la Commission
Santiago Fisas Ayxela (PPE) et Marie-Thérèse Sanchez-Schmid (PPE)
(29 juin 2012)

Objet: Autoroute E-9 ou couloir de Llobregat

Face à la situation économique difficile que nous vivons en Europe, il importe d'investir dans des infrastructures susceptibles d'accroître la compétitivité des économies, de réduire les coûts de transport pour les entreprises et les citoyens, et de leur faire gagner du temps.

À cet égard, la Catalogne met en place l'autoroute E-9, également appelée «couloir de Llobregat», qui reliera Barcelone à Toulouse.

Cette autoroute, qui est intégrée au réseau transeuropéen, fait partie du plan des infrastructures de transport de Catalogne, approuvé en 2006. Le nombre de bandes a désormais été doublé sur la portion d'autoroute reliant Barcelone à Berga et des travaux sont en cours sur les autres routes et infrastructures, tant sur le tronçon espagnol que sur le tronçon français.

L'autoroute E-9 représente non seulement un atout majeur pour les relations commerciales entre la Catalogne et le Sud de la France, mais elle constitue également un axe important pour les relations entre la France et l'Espagne, ainsi que pour l'Eurorégion. Cet axe pourra aussi servir de voie de sortie pour les véhicules quittant la région métropolitaine de Barcelone, ce qui permettra de désengorger l'accès à la ville par les routes.

1. La Commission envisage-t-elle de soutenir le développement de cet axe, qui est d'une importance capitale pour la Catalogne et le Sud de la France?

2. La Commission a-t-elle financé ou prévoit-elle de financer une partie de la construction de cette autoroute et, le cas échéant, à hauteur de quel montant?

3. La Commission a-t-elle ajouté l'autoroute E-9 à ses priorités?

Réponse donnée par M. Kallas au nom de la Commission
(7 août 2012)

La Commission a inclus cet axe dans le réseau transeuropéen de transport, ainsi que quatre autres liaisons routières entre la France et l'Espagne.

En ce qui concerne le financement des infrastructures routières, la Commission s'attache à promouvoir une gamme d'instruments d'ingénierie financière s'appliquant aux infrastructures appartenant au réseau transeuropéen de transport, qui va des garanties de prêts aux emprunts obligataires pour le financement de projets, afin de compléter l'action de la Banque européenne d'investissement dans ce domaine.

La Commission n'a pas soutenu le développement de l'autoroute E9 ni par des subventions de la ligne budgétaire consacrée au RTE-T ni par l'intermédiaire du Fonds européen de développement régional (FEDER) pour la période 2007-2013 en Espagne et en France.

L'infrastructure concernée appartient au réseau global et peut dès lors être soutenue par des instruments financiers; ce n'est cependant pas la priorité de la Commission dans l'attribution des subventions.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006587/12
to the Commission
Santiago Fisas Ayxela (PPE) and Marie-Thérèse Sanchez-Schmid (PPE)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: E-9 motorway or Llobregat corridor

Faced with the difficult economic situation we are experiencing in Spain, it is important to invest in infrastructures which make economies more competitive and which save both transport costs and time for our companies and citizens.

Accordingly, Catalonia is developing the E-9 motorway, also known as the 'Llobregat Corridor', which will run all the way from Barcelona to Toulouse.

The motorway, which forms part of the trans-European network, is included in the Transport Infrastructure Plan of Catalonia, approved in 2006. The stretch of road that runs from Barcelona to Berga is currently being converted into a dual carriageway and work is being carried out on the rest of the roads and infrastructures, both on the Spanish section and on the French section.

Aside from being an important asset for trade relations between Catalonia and the south of France, the E-9 motorway is also an important axis for Franco-Spanish relations and for the Euroregion. This axis could also be used as an exit route for vehicles from the metropolitan area of Barcelona, which would help to facilitate road access to the city.

1. Does the Commission intend to promote this axis, which is vitally important for Catalonia and for the south of France?

2. Has it financed, or does it intend to finance, part of the motorway and, if so, how much does it intend to contribute?

3. Has it included the E-9 motorway in its priorities?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(7 August 2012)

The Commission included this axis in the trans-European transport network, together with four other road connections between France and Spain.

As far as the financing of road infrastructures is concerned, the Commission is promoting a range of financial engineering tools which apply to infrastructures belonging to the trans-European transport network, ranging from loan guarantees to project bonds, to complement the European Investment Bank action in this field.

The Commission has not supported the development of the E9 motorways neither through grants from the TEN-T budget line nor through the European Fund for regional development (ERDF) during the 20007-2013 period in Spain and in France.

The infrastructure belongs to the comprehensive network and therefore it can be supported through financial instruments; however, it is not the Commission's main priority for grants allocation.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006588/12
to the Commission
David Martin (S&D)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: 'Ukraine's Forgotten Children'

A recent BBC documentary entitled 'Ukraine's Forgotten Children' investigated the plight of children in Ukraine with additional support needs who are in state care. Those caring for the children do the best that they can, but lack of appropriate funding, poor infrastructure and an apparent lack of interest by the government impede their efforts. As Ukraine is a priority partner country within the European Neighbourhood Policy, can the Commission:

1. Confirm whether this issue has been raised with the Ukrainian Government by the EU delegation to Ukraine?

2. Make clear in any future negotiations with the Ukrainian Government towards deeper integration with the EU that a proper level of funding must be provided to any institutions caring for children with additional support needs?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(7 August 2012)

Aspects related to the social protection of children are regularly addressed in political dialogue meetings with Ukraine. Most recently, this matter was on the agenda of the Human Rights dedicated session of the Justice and Home Affairs Subcommittee in Kyiv on 1 June 2012.

While a few positive policy actions have taken place in recent years (the adoption of a National Action Plan for Children 2010-16; the establishment of a Special Representative of the Ombudsperson for Children and of a Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights in order to strengthen the function of rights monitoring; the adoption of about 15 laws related or connected to children's rights), there remains a need for a structural reform to build a system that discourages the institutionalization of children and which provides appropriate resources for this important matter.

It is encouraging that an increasing number of alternative care options such as foster care and family-like childcare facilities are being implemented. The EU is financially supporting several projects related to the rights of children, such as: The Development of gate-keeping policies and systems for institutionalised and other vulnerable children (implemented by Unicef, a project which introduces a gate-keeping system in the pilot Khmelnitsky oblast as one of the main elements of a new childcare policy; the project's results are meant to be replicated at the national level).

In keeping with the provisions of the Human Rights Strategic Framework and Action Plan adopted last month by Council, the EU plans to intensify efforts to advance the rights of child, including in Ukraine.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-006589/12
à la Commission
Sylvie Guillaume (S&D), Claude Moraes (S&D), Tanja Fajon (S&D), Rita Borsellino (S&D) et Silvia Costa (S&D)
(29 juin 2012)

Objet: Accord relatif au contrôle des flux migratoires conclu entre l'Italie et la Libye

L'Italie et la Libye ont signé, en avril dernier, un accord relatif au contrôle des flux migratoires qui ne garantit pas une protection internationale aux personnes susceptibles d'en avoir besoin, alors que la présence en Libye de nombreux réfugiés d'Afrique subsaharienne est dûment établie.

Étant donné que la Libye n'est pas signataire de la convention de 1951 sur les réfugiés, que le HCR des Nations unies est encore dans l'attente d'un nouvel accord avec les autorités libyennes au sujet de sa délégation à Tripoli et qu'un dispositif satisfaisant d'instruction et d'admission des demandes de protection internationale fait toujours défaut en Libye, nous craignons que cet accord soit contraire à l'engagement de ne pas reconduire des migrants en Libye à la suite de l'arrêt rendu par la Cour européenne des Droits de l'homme dans l'affaire «Hirsi Jamaa et autres».

1. La Commission a-t-elle connaissance du contenu de l'accord bilatéral conclu par l'Italie et la Libye, qui comporte des dispositions sur le contrôle des frontières méridionales de l'Union européenne? Sinon, a-t-elle l'intention de demander au gouvernement italien une copie de cet accord?

2. La Commission envisage-t-elle de prendre des initiatives afin de vérifier que l'Italie ne contrevient pas, par cet accord, aux obligations qui lui incombent en vertu de la Charte des droits fondamentaux de l'Union européenne?

3. La Commission prévoit-elle de financer l'ouverture en Libye d'un «centre d'accueil» des migrants en situation irrégulière, comme la demande en est faite par les autorités italiennes et libyennes, alors que de tels centres ne seraient sans doute guère différents de centres de détention fermés imposant aux migrants de mauvaises conditions qui risquent grandement de les exposer à des violations des droits humains?

4. La Commission a-t-elle l'intention de renouer en quelque façon les négociations avec la Libye, en particulier dans le domaine des migrations?

5. Comme l'Union européenne a antérieurement exercé sur la Libye des pressions de plus en plus fortes pour qu'elle fasse obstacle aux flux migratoires vers le nord, quelles initiatives la Commission compte-t-elle prendre afin de garantir que le dossier de l'émigration ne soit pas un simple outil politique dans les relations UE-Libye, eu égard notamment au devoir de respecter le principe de non-refoulement?

Réponse donnée par Mme Malmström au nom de la Commission
(3 septembre 2012)

La Commission a connaissance du protocole d'accord sur la coopération bilatérale dans le domaine des migrations qui a été convenu par les ministres de l'intérieur italien et libyen le 3 avril 2012, à Tripoli. Il convient de rappeler que lorsque les États membres mettent en œuvre des accords avec des pays tiers dans les domaines relevant de la compétence de l'UE, ils doivent respecter le droit de l'UE et la Charte des droits fondamentaux.

La Commission soutient en Libye les projets portant assistance aux migrants et contribuant à la mise en place d'un système de gestion des frontières et des migrations plus solide et plus équitable. Elle a également alloué des fonds qui permettront au HCR de s'acquitter de son mandat de protection dès que les autorités libyennes en donneront l'autorisation. La Commission s'apprête également à financer de nouvelles actions visant à la protection des groupes vulnérables, y compris des minorités et des migrants, et au déminage de débris de guerre explosifs.

La Commission compte engager un dialogue sur les migrations, la mobilité et la sécurité avec les autorités libyennes dès que les conditions en Libye le permettront. Les négociations portant sur une éventuelle coopération dans le domaine des migrations dépendront du résultat de ce dialogue.

Parallèlement, la Commission a l'intention d'encourager la Libye à mettre aux normes internationales non seulement sa législation mais aussi ses capacités et ses pratiques administratives en matière de migrations, d'asile, de mobilité et de gestion des frontières, tout en coopérant avec l'Union européenne et la communauté internationale dans l'ensemble de ces domaines. Les progrès réalisés par la Libye dans ces deux axes seront déterminants pour la justification du renforcement de ses relations institutionnelles et politiques avec l'UE, conformément au principe du «more for more» qui consiste à donner plus pour recevoir plus.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006589/12
alla Commissione
Sylvie Guillaume (S&D), Claude Moraes (S&D), Tanja Fajon (S&D), Rita Borsellino (S&D) e Silvia Costa (S&D)
(29 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Accordo per il controllo della migrazione tra Italia e Libia

Lo scorso aprile l'Italia e la Libia hanno firmato un accordo per il controllo della migrazione, il quale non fornisce tuttavia alcuna garanzia di protezione internazionale a chi potrebbe averne bisogno, nonostante esistano prove evidenti del fatto che in Libia sia presente un elevato numero di rifugiati provenienti dall'Africa subsahariana.

Dato che la Libia non è un paese firmatario della convenzione del 1951 delle Nazioni Unite sui rifugiati, che l'alto commissariato delle Nazioni Unite per i rifugiati (UNHCR) è ancora in attesa della conclusione di un nuovo accordo con le autorità libiche concernente la sua delegazione a Tripoli e che in Libia deve ancora essere istituito un sistema soddisfacente per la valutazione e il riconoscimento delle domande di protezione internazionale, sorge la preoccupazione che tale accordo possa violare l'impegno di non rimpatriare in Libia i migranti, assunto in seguito alla sentenza della Corte europea dei diritti dell'uomo nella causa Hirsi Jamaa e altri contro Italia.

1. È la Commissione al corrente del contenuto dell'accordo bilaterale tra Italia e Libia, che include disposizioni per il controllo delle frontiere meridionali dell'UE? In caso contrario, ha la Commissione intenzione di chiedere al governo italiano una copia dell'accordo?

2. Sta valutando la Commissione eventuali azioni volte a garantire che tale accordo non violi gli obblighi assunti dall'Italia nel quadro della Carta dei diritti fondamentali dell'UE?

3. Intende la Commissione finanziare «centri di accoglienza» in Libia per migranti irregolari, come richiesto sia dalle autorità italiane che da quelle libiche, sebbene tali centri possano rivelarsi simili ai centri di detenzione chiusi, caratterizzati da condizioni inadeguate e nei quali i migranti sono esposti a seri rischi di violazione dei diritti umani?

4. Intende la Commissione riprendere qualsiasi tipo di negoziazione con la Libia, in particolare nel settore della migrazione?

5. Alla luce del contesto precedente, che vedeva l'UE esercitare una pressione crescente sulla Libia per arrestare i flussi di migrazione verso nord, cosa intende fare la Commissione per garantire che la migrazione non sia ridotta a uno strumento politico nelle relazioni tra UE e Libia, tenendo conto anche della necessità di rispettare il principio di non respingimento?

Risposta di Cecilia Malmström a nome della Commissione
(3 settembre 2012)

La Commissione è a conoscenza del memorandum d'intesa sulla cooperazione bilaterale in materia di migrazione, firmato a Tripoli il 3 aprile 2012 dai ministri degli Affari interni di Italia e Libia. È opportuno ricordare che quando gli Stati membri attuano accordi con paesi terzi che rientrano negli ambiti di competenza dell'UE, essi sono tenuti a rispettare la legislazione dell'UE e la Carta dei diritti fondamentali.

In Libia la Commissione sostiene progetti che forniscono assistenza ai migranti e che contribuiscono a costruire un sistema di gestione dei confini e della migrazione più solido ed equo. La Commissione ha inoltre stanziato dei fondi a favore dell'UNHCR per aiutarlo ad adempiere al suo mandato di protezione, non appena riceverà l'autorizzazione delle autorità libiche. La Commissione si sta inoltre preparando a finanziare nuove azioni tese a proteggere i gruppi vulnerabili, tra cui le minoranze e i migranti, e a rimuovere residuati bellici esplosivi.

La Commissione intende avviare un dialogo sulla migrazione, la mobilità e la sicurezza con le autorità libiche non appena le condizioni nel paese lo permetteranno. I negoziati su un'eventuale cooperazione nel settore della migrazione dipenderanno dall'esito del dialogo.

Parallelamente, la Commissione esorterà la Libia ad adeguare le sue leggi, le sue capacità e pratiche amministrative in materia di migrazione, asilo, mobilità e gestione delle frontiere agli standard internazionali, nonché a cooperare con l'UE e la comunità internazionale in tutti questi settori. I progressi compiuti dalla Libia in questi due ambiti saranno fondamentali per giustificare il miglioramento delle relazioni politiche e istituzionali con l'UE, in linea con il principio del «more for more».

(Slovenska različica)

Vprašanje za pisni odgovor E-006589/12
za Komisijo
Sylvie Guillaume (S&D), Claude Moraes (S&D), Tanja Fajon (S&D), Rita Borsellino (S&D) in Silvia Costa (S&D)
(29. junij 2012)

Zadeva: Sporazum o nadzorovanju migracij med Italijo in Libijo

Aprila sta Italija in Libija podpisali sporazum o nadzorovanju migracij, ki pa kljub dokazom, da v Libiji biva precejšnje število beguncev iz podsaharske Afrike, ne zagotavlja mednarodne zaščite tistim, ki bi jo utegnili potrebovati.

Ker Libija ni podpisnica konvencije ZN o beguncih iz leta 1951, visoki komisar Združenih narodov za begunce (UNHCR) še vedno čaka na sklenitev novega sporazuma z Libijo o njegovi delegaciji v Tripoliju ter ta država še vedno ni vzpostavila ustreznega sistema za obravnavanje in sprejemanje prošenj za mednarodno zaščito, smo zaskrbljeni, da bi lahko ta sporazum kršil zaveze v skladu z zadevo Evropskega sodišča človekovih pravic „Hirsi Jamaa in drugi proti Italiji“ o nevračanju beguncev v Libijo.

1. Ali je Komisija seznanjena z vsebino dvostranskega sporazuma med Italijo in Libijo, ki vsebuje določbe o nadzorovanju južnih meja EU? Če ne, ali namerava od italijanske vlade zahtevati kopijo tega sporazuma?

2. Ali Komisija razmišlja o morebitnih ukrepih, s katerimi bi zagotovila, da ta sporazum ne bo kršil obvez Italije v skladu z Listino EU o temeljnih pravicah?

3. Ali namerava v skladu s pozivi tako italijanskih kot libijskih oblasti financirati sprejemne centre za migrante v Libiji z neurejenim statusom, čeprav so lahko ti centri podobni zaprtim centrom za pridržanje s slabimi razmerami, v katerih so migranti močno izpostavljeni kršitvam človekovih pravic?

4. Ali namerava ponovno vzpostaviti kakršna koli pogajanja z Libijo, zlasti na področju migracijske politike?

5. Glede na to, da je EU v preteklosti izvajala čedalje večji pritisk na Libijo, naj zaustavi migracijske tokove proti severu, nas zanima, kaj namerava Komisija storiti za zagotovitev, da migracije ne bodo zgolj politično orodje v odnosih med EU in Libijo, saj je treba med drugim upoštevati načelo nevračanja?

Odgovor komisarke Margot Wallström v imenu Komisije
(3. september 2012)

Komisija je seznanjena z memorandumom o soglasju o dvostranskem sodelovanju na področju migracij, ki sta ga 3. aprila 2012 podpisala ministra za notranje zadeve Italije in Libije. Opozoriti je treba, da morajo države članice pri izvajanju sporazumov s tretjimi državami na področjih, ki so v pristojnosti EU, ravnati v skladu s pravom EU in Listino EU o temeljnih pravicah.

Komisija v Libiji podpira projekte, ki zagotavljajo pomoč migrantom, ter sodeluje pri vzpostavljanju zanesljivejšega in bolj poštenega sistema za upravljanje mej in migracij. Prav tako je zagotovila sredstva, ki bodo UNHCR omogočila izvajanje nalog zaščite, takoj ko jih bodo libijski organi odobrili. Komisija načrtuje tudi financiranje novih ukrepov, namenjenih zaščiti ranljivih skupin, na primer manjšin in migrantov, ter odstranjevanju eksplozivnih ostankov vojne.

Komisija bo takoj, ko bodo to dopuščale razmere v Libiji, z libijskimi organi pričela dialog o migracijah, mobilnosti in varnosti. Od izidov tega dialoga bodo odvisna tudi pogajanja o morebitnem sodelovanju na področju migracij.

Hkrati bo Komisija Libijo spodbujala, da svoje standarde, upravne zmogljivosti ter postopke na področju migracij, azilne politike, mobilnosti in upravljanja mej uskladi z mednarodnimi standardi ter na teh področjih sodeluje z EU in mednarodno skupnostjo. Napredek Libije na obeh področjih bo v skladu z načelom „več za več“ poglavitnega pomena za nadaljnji razvoj njenih političnih in institucionalnih odnosov z EU.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006589/12
to the Commission
Sylvie Guillaume (S&D), Claude Moraes (S&D), Tanja Fajon (S&D), Rita Borsellino (S&D) and Silvia Costa (S&D)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Migration control agreement between Italy and Libya

Last April Italy and Libya signed a migration control agreement which, however, fails to provide the assurance of international protection for those who may need it, despite the proven evidence that a large number of refugees from sub-Saharan Africa are present in Libya.

Given that Libya is not a signatory to the 1951 UN Refugees Convention, that UNHCR is still waiting for a new agreement to be concluded with the Libyan authorities concerning its delegation in Tripoli, and that a satisfactory system for assessing and recognising claims for international protection still needs to be put in place in Libya, we are concerned that this agreement may be in breach of the commitment not to return migrants to Libya following the European Court of Human Rights case, 'Hirsi Jamaa and Others v. Italy'.

1. Is the Commission aware of the content of the bilateral agreement between Italy and Libya, which includes provisions on the control of the EU's southern borders? If not, will it ask the Italian Government for a copy?

2. Is the Commission considering possible action to ensure that this agreement does not violate Italy's obligations under the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights?

3. Is the Commission envisaging financing any 'reception centre' for irregular migrants in Libya, as asked for by both the Italian and the Libyan authorities, despite the fact that such centres may prove similar to closed detention centres in poor conditions that put migrants at substantial risk of human rights violations?

4. Is the Commission intending to resume any kind of negotiation with Libya, in particular in the migration field?

5. Considering the previous context of the EU exerting increased pressure on Libya to halt migration flows towards the north, what does the Commission intend to do in order to ensure that migration is not reduced to a policy tool in EU-Libyan relations, given also the need to respect the principle of non-refoulement?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(3 September 2012)

The Commission is aware of the memorandum of understanding on bilateral cooperation in the field of migration, agreed upon by Italy's and Libya's respective Ministers for Home Affairs on 3 April 2012, in Tripoli. It should be recalled that when Member States implement agreements with third countries in areas within EU competence, they are bound to comply with EC law and the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

In Libya, the Commission supports projects providing assistance to migrants and contributing to building up a sounder and fairer border and migration management system. It has also allocated funds which will help the UNHCR to fulfil its protection mandate, as soon as this is authorised by the Libyan authorities. The Commission is also preparing to finance new actions aimed at protecting vulnerable groups, including minorities and migrants, and at demining explosive remnants of war.

The Commission intends to start a Dialogue on migration, mobility and security with the Libyan authorities as soon as the conditions in Libya allow it. Negotiations on possible cooperation in the area of migration will depend on the outcome of that Dialogue.

In parallel, the Commission intends to encourage Libya to bring its norms, administrative capacities and practices in the areas of migration, asylum, mobility and border management up to international standards, as well as to cooperate with the EU and the international community in all these areas. Libya's progress in both these tracks will be key to justifying the upgrading of its political and institutional relations with the EU, in line with the 'more for more' principle.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-006590/12
à la Commission
Véronique Mathieu (PPE)
(29 juin 2012)

Objet: Campagne de communication «Science: it's a Girl Thing»

La Commission a développé une campagne de communication et notamment un court clip afin d'encourager les jeunes filles à choisir des études scientifiques.

Il est capital d'inciter à la féminisation du monde scientifique et d'encourager les jeunes filles à oser faire le choix de carrières scientifiques. Cependant, le clip de communication de la Commission manque son objectif en se basant sur des images caricaturales de jeunes filles. Les associations sont exagérées et contre-productives: le clip montre uniquement des jeunes filles en talons aiguilles séductrices et associe constamment la science au maquillage. Il dénigre par là-même les femmes scientifiques en véhiculant une impression de superficialité, et sans insister sur le sérieux et les compétences des femmes scientifiques.

La Commission peut-elle répondre aux questions suivantes:

— Comment la Commission a-t-elle développé ce clip de communication?

— Quelle méthodologie a été suivie afin d'élaborer ce clip? Le clip a-t-il été soumis à un échantillon test de jeunes filles? Quels en ont été les retours?

— La Commission envisage-t-elle une nouvelle campagne plus valorisante et a-t-elle prévu de revoir le concept des expositions itinérantes prévues en ce sens?

Réponse donnée par Mme Geoghegan-Quinn au nom de la Commission
(21 août 2012)

1. La Commission a fait appel à un contractant externe pour produire la vidéo.

2. La Commission a retiré cette vidéo le vendredi 22 juin. Elle déplore le tort ayant pu être occasionné, et a présenté ses excuses (accompagnées d'une explication) sur Twitter et sur Facebook. Les copies en miroir partagées en ligne par les internautes ne peuvent pas être supprimées.

3. La vidéo promotionnelle avait pour but de susciter l'intérêt des adolescentes de 13 à 18 ans, très peu réceptives aux messages traitant des sciences, et de les amener à se rendre sur le site internet de la campagne. Élaborée sur la base des conclusions de groupes de réflexion constitués par le principal contractant chargé de la campagne, la vidéo n'avait cependant fait l'objet d'aucun test auprès des adolescentes concernées. Selon les groupes de réflexion, nombre d'entre elles associent les sciences au fait de se retrouver isolées dans un laboratoire; elles pensent ne pas disposer des capacités requises pour réussir dans ces domaines et sont davantage attirées par un travail social ou créatif. Le concept de la vidéo était d'associer des images scientifiques à des images de leur vie quotidienne afin de leur montrer qu'une orientation scientifique est susceptible de leur convenir.

4. La vidéo ne représentait qu'une petite partie de la campagne, et ne reflète ni son ton général, ni le contenu des autres activités, qui reposent principalement sur des échanges avec des femmes scientifiques représentant des modèles d'identification. Le site internet, interactif, sera traduit dans toutes les langues ([1]) de l'UE. Une page Facebook ([2]) permettra aux adolescentes de discuter avec ces scientifiques «modèles». Des événements organisés au niveau national dans les pays de l'UE compléteront cette campagne. La phase pilote débutera en automne en Allemagne, en Autriche, en Italie, aux Pays-Bas et en Pologne.

([1]) www.ec.europa.eu/science-girl-thing
([2]) www.facebook.com/sciencegirlthing

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006590/12
to the Commission
Véronique Mathieu (PPE)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Communication campaign: 'Science: it's a Girl Thing'

The Commission has produced a communication campaign and, in particular, a short video aimed at encouraging young girls to choose to study science.

It is essential to promote the feminisation of the world of science and to encourage young girls to have the courage to opt for scientific careers. However, the Commission's communication video fails to achieve its goal, since it is based on caricatured images of young girls. The images that it portrays are exaggerated and counterproductive: the video only shows seductive young women in high heels and constantly associates science with makeup. This denigrates female scientists, giving the impression that they are superficial and fails to emphasise their seriousness and scientific capability.

I would therefore ask the Commission:

— How did it produce this communication video?

— What methodology did it use to produce this video? Was the video shown to a test audience of young girls? If so, what were the results?

— Is it planning another more worthwhile campaign, and has it planned to review the concept of travelling exhibitions in this regard?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(21 August 2012)

1. The Commission used an external contractor to produce the video.

2. The Commission withdrew this video on Friday 22 June. It regrets any offence caused and has posted an apology on Twitter and the Facebook site (with an explanation). The mirror version copies that people are sharing on the Internet cannot be removed.

3. The promotional video was meant to grab the attention of teenage girls aged 13 to 18, who are very hard to reach with messages about science, and direct them to the campaign website. It was based on the findings of the focus groups organised by the main campaign contractor but it was not tested on them. According to the focus groups, many teenage girls associate science with being isolated in a laboratory: they think they lack the ability to do science and prefer the idea of creative or social work. The concept of the video was to show teenage girls that science can be for them by combining images of science with images of their everyday life.

4. The video was a small part of the campaign and does not reflect the overall tone and content of the other activities which are largely focused on the interaction with women scientists acting as role models. The interactive website will be translated in all EU languages ([1]). A Facebook page ([2]) will enable girls to chat with role models. This will be complemented by national events in EU countries. The pilot phase will start in the autumn in Austria, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, and Poland.

([1]) www.ec.europa.eu/science-girl-thing.
([2]) www.facebook.com/sciencegirlthing.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006591/12
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(29 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Uso di Twitter per controllare l'opinione pubblica in Cina

Il governo cinese punta sui social network per estendere il proprio controllo sull'opinione pubblica. L'ultimo sistema elaborato a tal fine è l'attribuzione di un certo numero di punti a ogni utente che voglia utilizzare Twitter, il più diffuso servizio di microblogging a livello mondiale. Partendo da una base di ottanta punti, ogni utente può guadagnarne o perderne secondo il tipo di commenti che scrive in rete e i dati personali che decide di rendere noti in Twitter.

Secondo stime recenti gli iscritti a Sina Weibo, la versione cinese di Twitter, sono circa 300 milioni di cittadini cinesi. Inoltre, pare che Sina Weibo abbia assunto qualche migliaio di persone per filtrare i commenti degli utenti in tempo reale, al fine di evitare la pubblicazione e la circolazione di opinioni sulla politica e sui temi sociali che siano divergenti dalle posizioni ufficiali di Pechino in merito. Quindi, sembra che la Cina sia intenzionata a attuare una censura preventiva sulla libertà di opinione, base dei diritti inalienabili dell'uomo e caratteristica principale dei social network in uso in tutto il mondo.

1. È la Commissione a conoscenza di questo nuovo sistema di controllo dell'opinione pubblica cinese?

2. Ritiene che questa pratica sia in contrasto con i principi di libertà di pensiero e opinione sanciti nella Dichiarazione universale dei diritti dell'Uomo?

3. Come intende tutelare i cittadini europei residenti in Cina, i cui diritti sono lesi e la cui loro libertà di comunicare con l'Europa è limitata?

4. Prevede di poter tollerare questo tipo di interferenza governativa da parte di Pechino nell'utilizzo dei social network?

Risposta dell'Alto Rappresentante/Vicepresidente Catherine Ashton a nome della Commissione
(8 agosto 2012)

L'UE è a conoscenza delle nuove condizioni di utilizzo del sito di microblog Sina Weibo, in vigore dal 28 maggio 2012, che prevedono un sistema a punti. I dettagli dell'attuazione non sono tuttavia stati chiariti.

L'UE esprime preoccupazione per le crescenti limitazioni alla libertà di espressione in Cina, clima nel quale sono state adottate queste misure.

Nel dialogo sui diritti umani e in altre occasioni l'UE segnala puntualmente alle autorità cinesi i vantaggi della libertà di espressione e comunicazione.

Nell'ultima sessione del dialogo sui diritti umani, tenutasi a Bruxelles il 29 maggio 2012, l'UE ha espresso preoccupazione per le recenti pesanti condanne in casi riguardanti la libertà di espressione e per il numero crescente di condanne e sentenze per minacce alla sicurezza nazionale. La delegazione cinese ha risposto ricordando che la costituzione della Repubblica popolare cinese garantisce la libertà di espressione, ma che si possono applicare determinate restrizioni, come previsto dal Patto internazionale sui diritti civili e politici.

Il nuovo sistema è limitato al sito di microblog weibo.com. Non inciderà in misura significativa sui diritti o le possibilità dei cittadini europei di comunicare con l'Europa per e-mail o altri mezzi di comunicazione, anche se la pubblicazione di messaggi sul sito potrebbe essere sottoposta a restrizioni.

L'UE monitorerà costantemente la situazione dei diritti umani in relazione all'utilizzo di Internet in Cina e manifesterà le proprie preoccupazioni alle autorità cinesi, anche nell'ambito del dialogo UE-Cina sui diritti umani.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006591/12
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Use of Twitter to control public opinion in China

The Chinese Government is targeting social networks to extend its control over public opinion. The latest system adopted for this purpose is to assign a certain number of points to every user who wants to use Twitter, the most widespread international micro-blogging service. Beginning with a score of 80, every user can earn or lose points according to the kind of comments they post online and the personal data they decide to reveal on Twitter.

According to recent estimates there are around 300 million Chinese citizens registered with Sina Weibo, the Chinese version of Twitter. It seems that Sina Weibo has employed several thousand people to filter users' comments in real time, in order to avoid the publication and circulation of opinions on politics and on social issues which diverge from Beijing's official positions. Therefore, it seems that China intends to implement preventive censorship on freedom of opinion, the basis of man's inalienable rights and the main characteristic of social networks used around the world.

1. Is the Commission aware of this new system to control Chinese public opinion?

2. Does it believe that this practice contradicts the principles of freedom of thought and opinion as ratified in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?

3. How does it intend to protect European citizens living in China, whose rights are harmed and whose freedom to communicate with Europe is limited?

4. Does it believe it should tolerate this kind of governmental interference by Beijing in the use of social networks?

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

The EU is aware of the new user conditions which took effect on 28 May 2012 on the Sina Weibo microblogging website based on a points system, although the detail of how they will be implemented has not been made clear.

The EU is concerned by the increased restrictions to the freedom of expression in China in which context these measures have been adopted.

In its Human Rights dialogue and through other contacts, the EU consistently emphasises to the Chinese authorities the benefits of freedom of expression and communication.

At the last session of the human rights dialogue which took place on 29 May 2012 in Brussels, the EU raised its concerns at recent extremely long sentences imposed in freedom of expression cases and at the increasing number of endangering state security indictments and convictions. In reply, the Chinese delegation noted that the Constitution of the People's Republic of China guaranteed freedom of expression but that certain limitations were permissible, as envisaged in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

The new system is limited to Sina microblog service weibo.com. It will not significantly affect the rights or ability of European citizens to communicate with Europe through email or other media, although postings on the Sina website might be restricted.

The EU will continue to monitor the human rights situation in relation with the use of Internet in China and to raise its concerns with the Chinese authorities, including in the framework of the EU-China Human rights dialogue.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006592/12
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(29 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Legge-bavaglio alla libertà di stampa provoca chiusura di decine di agenzie locali e internazionali in Iraq

Una legge-bavaglio emanata dal Parlamento iracheno lo scorso novembre ha autorizzato la polizia a chiudere 44 agenzie di informazione locali e internazionali; tra cui la BBC e la Voice of America. In una dichiarazione ufficiale il vice-ministro dell'Interno ha sostenuto questa decisione della Commissione irachena per i Media e le Comunicazioni, sottolineando come la libertà di stampa possa diventare un rischio per la sicurezza del Paese.

La suddetta legge, denominata «Legge per i diritti del giornalista», sembra intesa a limitare le pubblicazioni giornalistiche di materiale che ostacoli gli interessi nazionali e che sia in contrasto con la legge. Non vi è cenno però ai parametri di liceità cui devono attenersi i giornalisti nelle loro indagini. Contro questa presa di posizione del governo, l'organizzazione «Iraq's Society for Defence of Press Freedom» ha raccolto le firme di giornalisti iracheni e stranieri e ha presentato una querela contro il governo iracheno, sottolineando come questa nuova legge-bavaglio violi in primis la Costituzione, la Dichiarazione universale dei Diritti dell'Uomo e altre convenzioni e impegni internazionali dell'Iraq.

1. È il Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante a conoscenza della situazione della libertà di opinione e stampa in Iraq?

2. Come considera l'applicazione della censura preventiva da parte del governo per presunti fini di sicurezza nazionale?

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

L'UE segue con la massima attenzione la situazione dei diritti umani in Iraq e nel dialogo con il paese ha costantemente espresso la propria preoccupazione in materia. La delegazione dell'UE a Baghdad è regolarmente in contatto con le autorità e i rappresentanti della società civile ed ha continuato, insieme alle missioni diplomatiche dell'UE, a sollevare la questione dei diritti umani durante le riunioni periodiche a livello di esperti.

Ciò include la libertà di espressione e pertanto la Legge sulla protezione dei giornalisti del 2011. L'UE è consapevole delle preoccupazioni espresse dalla società civile irachena. La delegazione dell'UE ha discusso la questione anche con la Società per la difesa della libertà di stampa, a cui fa riferimento l'onorevole parlamentare. L'UE è in stretto contatto con la missione d'assistenza delle Nazioni Unite la quale, nel suo ultimo rapporto sui diritti umani, ha affermato che, pur essendo migliorata rispetto alle versioni precedenti, la legge continua a non rispettare le norme accettate a livello internazionale.

L'UE è a conoscenza della decisione della Commissione per i media e le comunicazioni del 24 giugno 2012 di chiudere 44 agenzie d'informazione, che hanno avuto 45 giorni per risolvere quelli che le autorità definiscono problemi tecnici di licenza e hanno continuato a operare normalmente. Questo tema non sembra collegato con la legge sulla protezione dei giornalisti.

Durante il riesame periodico universale del 2010 del Consiglio ONU dei diritti umani, l'Iraq si è impegnato a fare in modo che la libertà di espressione sia garantita e tutelata dalla legge. I diritti umani saranno un elemento importante dell'accordo di partenariato e cooperazione, la cui attuazione permetterà all'UE di migliorare il dialogo con le autorità irachene adoperandosi per esprimere le proprie preoccupazioni e ricordare a tali autorità gli obblighi internazionali e gli altri impegni assunti durante il riesame periodico universale.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006592/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: VP/HR —'Gagging' law on press freedom causes dozens of local and international press agencies to close in Iraq

In November 2011, the Iraqi Parliament issued a gagging law authorising the police to close 44 local and international information agencies, including the BBC and the Voice of America. In an official statement, the Deputy Interior Minister supported this decision by the Iraqi Communications and Media Commission, stressing that press freedom could become a risk for the country's security.

The aforementioned law, called the 'Law on the rights of the journalist', seems aimed at restricting publication in the newspapers of material which is against the law and national interests. However, there is no reference to the legal parameters which journalists must adhere to in their investigations. In opposition to the Government's position, the organisation 'Iraq's Society for Defence of Press Freedom' has collected the signatures of Iraqi and foreign journalists and has taken legal action against the Iraqi Government, stressing that this new gagging law violates the Constitution, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Iraq's other international agreements and commitments.

1. Is the VP/HR aware of the situation regarding public opinion and press freedom in Iraq?

2. What is the VP/HR's opinion regarding the application of preventive censorship by the Government for alleged national security purposes?

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

The EU follows the human rights situation in Iraq very closely and has consistently voiced its human rights concerns in its dialogue with Iraq. The EU Delegation in Baghdad maintains regular contacts with the authorities as well as representatives of civil society and has continued, together with the EU diplomatic missions, to raise human rights issues at regular expert level meetings.

This includes freedom of expression and in this context the Law on the Protection of Journalists of 2011. The EU is aware of the concerns expressed by the Iraqi civil society. The EU Delegation discussed this also with the Society for Defending Press Freedoms, which the honorable member refers to. The EU is in close contact with the United Nations Assistance Mission, which in its latest human rights report stated that 'while the law was an improvement on earlier drafts', it 'still fails to adhere to internationally accepted standards'.

The EU is aware of the decision by the communications and Media Commission of 24 June 2012 to shut down 44 media outlets. These have now been given 45 days to settle what the authorities see as technical licensing issues, and have so far have continued to operate as normal. This issue seems to be unrelated to the Law on the Protection of Journalists.

During the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review of 2010, Iraq committed itself to guaranteeing freedom of expression protected by laws. Human rights will be an important element of the partnership and cooperation agreement. With its implementation, the EU is able to enhance its dialogue with the Iraqi authorities and will spare no efforts to raise its concerns, and to remind them of their international obligations and further commitments made during the Universal Periodic Review.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006594/12
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(29 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Continente africano a rischio disastro idrogeologico e crisi umanitaria

Il continente africano sta rischiando un disastro idrogeologico senza precedenti e una conseguente crisi umanitaria. Le condizioni di milioni di africani sono al limite della sopravvivenza a causa del difficilissimo accesso alle risorse idriche e di tutte le drammatiche conseguenze che ne derivano. L'ONG ambientalista «Grain» denuncia in una relazione dal titolo «Squeezing Africa Dry. Behind every land grab is a water grab», gli effetti devastanti del cosiddetto «land grabbing» (accaparramento di terreni), la pratica comune di grandi società e investitori esteri di prendere in affitto vaste porzioni di territori africani per lunghi periodi di tempo a prezzi irrisori. Questo processo sta compromettendo l'esistenza di intere comunità, la cui sopravvivenza si basa su forme di sfruttamento agricolo legate alla disponibilità di risorse idriche, quali fiumi e laghi, per irrigare le colture. Questo sistema millenario di sussistenza è destabilizzato e milioni di africani sono privati del bene primario dell'acqua dal fatto che proprietari miliardari dispongono di enormi appezzamenti e le società estere hanno avviato coltivazioni a elevato consumo di acqua.

Ad esempio, la Al-Amoudi's Saudi Star Development Company utilizza la maggior parte delle risorse idriche del fiume Alwero, privando di fatto la popolazione degli Anuak della loro unica fonte di approvvigionamento. Sembra, perciò, che con il «land grabbing» le grandi società agricole a elevato fatturato vogliano appropriarsi delle risorse idriche disponibili e, di conseguenza, privatizzare l'accesso all'acqua potabile. Inoltre, secondo 17 studi pubblicati nella rivista «Journal of Peasant Studies» sarebbe già sorto un nuovo fenomeno di «green grabbing», un nuovo «land grabbing», che con supposti fini di mercato «verde» sta a poco a poco espropriando gli africani dell'accesso all'acqua.

— È la Commissione a conoscenza degli effetti negativi dei fenomeni di «land grabbing» e «green grabbing»?

— Può fornire dati circa lo stato di avanzamento delle politiche di sostenibilità ambientale condotte nel continente africano?

— L'accesso alle risorse idriche è un diritto imprescindibile di ogni essere umano. In che misura considera lecite le operazioni di «land grabbing» in Africa, che mirano a privatizzare l'acqua?

Risposta di Andris Piebalgs a nome della Commissione
(14 agosto 2012)

Si rinvia l'onorevole parlamentare alle risposte date a interrogazioni scritte precedenti ([1]), in cui si afferma che la Commissione è pienamente consapevole della portata delle acquisizioni territoriali su larga scala nei paesi in via di sviluppo, e sostiene meccanismi globali volti a controllare le transazioni di terreni di tale entità. La Commissione è al corrente anche delle implicazioni in termini di accesso alle risorse idriche per le comunità locali, e del fatto sempre più evidente che l'acqua è un motore fondamentale nelle grandi acquisizioni internazionali di terre.

L'ultimo Rapporto europeo sullo sviluppo ([2]) raccomanda un approccio in base al nesso tra l'acqua, l'energia e il suolo che porti ad una crescita inclusiva e ad uno sviluppo sostenibile, come contributo al miglioramento delle politiche di sostenibilità ambientale.

A livello mondiale, il programma delle Nazioni Unite per l'ambiente (UNEP) ([3]) controlla i progressi realizzati nelle politiche di sostenibilità ambientale condotte in Africa. In Africa l'UE finanza un programma di rafforzamento delle capacità inteso a sostenere e potenziare le istituzioni regionali nell'assolvimento degli obblighi imposti dagli accordi multilaterali sull'ambiente (AMA). Sempre per l'Africa, il programma africano di controllo dell'ambiente per lo sviluppo sostenibile, un partenariato tra la commissione dell'Unione africana e l'UE, si occupa di migliorare i controlli ambientali per arrivare a una gestione sostenibile delle risorse naturali in cinque regioni dell'Africa subsahariana.

([1]) E-005839/2012 and E-005522/2012,(http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/it/parliamentary-questions.html).
([2]) (http://www.erd-report.eu/erd/report_2011/report.html).
([3]) L'UNEP ha pubblicato la quinta edizione del Global Environmental Outlook nel giugno 2012 (http://www.unep.org/geo/Index.asp).

La recente dichiarazione del vertice di Rio+20 e la posizione dell'UE concordata riaffermano gli impegni internazionali assunti per quanto riguarda il diritto di ogni essere umano all'acqua e all'assistenza. Occorre dunque tener conto di un approccio basato sui diritti nel gestire le acquisizioni di terre e risorse idriche. La politica e la normativa dell'UE sono neutre sulla questione della privatizzazione dell'acqua, che per ragioni di sussidiarietà rientra nella competenza degli Stati membri dell'UE e dei paesi partner in via di sviluppo.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006594/12
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: African continent at risk of hydro-geological disaster and humanitarian crisis

The African continent is risking an unprecedented hydro-geological disaster and an ensuing humanitarian crisis. Millions of Africans are struggling to survive due to the great difficulty they have accessing water and to all the resulting dramatic consequences. In a report entitled 'Squeezing Africa dry: behind every land grab is a water grab', environmentalist NGO Grain describes the devastating effects of so-called land grabbing, the widespread practice among major companies and foreign investors of renting vast tracts of African land for long periods at negligible prices. This process is compromising the existence of entire communities, whose survival is based on forms of agriculture linked to the availability of water resources, such as rivers and lakes, in order to irrigate crops. This age-old subsistence system is being destabilised and millions of Africans are being deprived of the primary resource of water by billionaire owners controlling enormous plots of land and foreign companies growing highly water-intensive crops.

Al-Amoudi's Saudi Star Development Company, for example, uses most of the water resources of the Alwero river, thus depriving the Anuak population of their sole source of supply. Large agricultural companies with high turnovers therefore seem intent on grabbing land in order to appropriate the available water resources and consequently privatise access to drinking water. Furthermore, according to 17 studies published in the 'Journal of Peasant Studies', a new phenomenon of 'green grabbing' has already started. This is a new form of land grabbing, which, while claiming to establish a 'green' market, is slowly depriving Africans of their access to water.

— Is the Commission aware of the negative effects of 'land grabbing' and 'green grabbing'?

— Can it provide data regarding progress on environmental sustainability policies conducted in Africa?

— Access to water is an essential right of every human being. To what extent does it consider the land grabbing operations in Africa, which seek to privatise water, to be legal?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(14 August 2012)

The Honourable Member is referred to the answers to previous written questions ([1]), where it is indicated that the Commission is fully aware of the extent of large scale land acquisitions in developing countries, and supports global mechanisms to monitor large scale land transactions. The Commission is also aware of the implications in terms of access to water resources for local users, with growing evidence that water is a key driver of international land deals.

The latest European Report on Development ([2]) recommends a 'nexus approach' between water, energy and land towards inclusive growth and sustainable development, as a contribution to improving environmental sustainability policies.

Globally, UNEP ([3]) monitors 'progress on environmental sustainability policies conducted in Africa'. In Africa, the EU is financing a capacity enhancement programme to support and strengthen existing regional institutions in implementing their obligations under Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs). For Africa, the African Monitoring of the Environment for Sustainable Development (AMESD) programme, a partnership between the AU Commission and the EU, addresses the need for improved environmental monitoring towards sustainable management of natural resources in 5 regions of sub-Saharan Africa.

The recent Declaration of the Rio+20 Summit, and the agreed EU position, reaffirm international commitments regarding the human right to water and sanitation. A rights-based approach must therefore be taken into account in the regulation of land and water deals. EU policy and legislation is neutral on the issue of the privatisation of water, which is within the competence of EU Member States and partner developing countries, on the basis of subsidiarity.

([1]) E-005839/2012 and E-005522/2012, (http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html).
([2]) (http://www.erd-report.eu/erd/report_2011/report.html).
([3]) UNEP published the 5th Global Environmental Outlook Report in June 2012 (http://www.unep.org/geo/Index.asp).

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006595/12
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(29 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Mortalità materna in Italia

Uno studio del Cnesps-Iss riguardante 5 regioni italiane (Piemonte, Emilia Romagna, Toscana, Lazio, Sicilia) che analizza dati per il periodo 2000-2007 sulla mortalità materna, rileva un tasso di mortalità di 11,8 donne ogni 100 000 parti, mentre uno precedente della rivista scientifica Lancet, pubblicato nel 2010, riscontrava un tasso di mortalità di 4 donne ogni 100 000 parti.

Tali risultati derivano dall'analisi non solo dei certificati di decesso, ma del percorso della paziente anche nel periodo post-dimissione.

Il rischio di morte per parto si eleva a 17,7 decessi su 100 000 nati nel caso in cui la donna abbia più di 35 anni (le partorienti in questa fascia di età sono passate dal 9 % nel 1981 al 29 % del 2007), e triplica in caso di cesareo (12,8 decessi rispetto ai 4,2 dei parti naturali). Se è vero che tale dato è in linea con la media generale europea, non è però in linea con quella dell'Europa occidentale, che vede l'Inghilterra quasi appaiata all'Italia con 11,4 decessi, mentre ben diversi sono i dati di Danimarca e Finlandia, per esempio, rispettivamente con 8 e 5,8 decessi per 100 000 parti.

— La Commissione è a conoscenza di questo studio?

— Alla luce delle discrepanze fra i 2 studi nel caso specifico dell'Italia, ritiene che lo stesso problema possa riscontrarsi anche riguardo ad altri paesi membri?

— La Commissione stima necessario promuovere uno studio a livello europeo che risponda a parametri univoci per i 27 Paesi?

Risposta di John Dalli a nome della Commissione
(22 agosto 2012)

La Commissione è consapevole della situazione della mortalità materna e dei rischi connessi alla gravidanza e al parto.

Data la complessità delle questioni legate alla mortalità materna, la Commissione aiuta gli esperti specializzati nella salute perinatale e materna per sorvegliare i problemi che insorgono in questo campo e individuare pratiche esemplari che permettano ai responsabili politici e agli esperti di imparare gli uni dagli altri.

«Europeristat» è una rete di esperti che ha definito indicatori comuni e ha raccolto dati riguardanti tutti gli Stati membri nel campo della salute materna e perinatale. Non esistendo alcun obbligo di raccolta di dati in questo campo, quanto racolto non è armonizzato e ciò rende difficile interpretare tendenze, comparazioni e dati in generale. Nel dicembre 2008, «Europeristat» ha pubblicato il «Rapporto sulla salute perinatale in Europa» (*European Perinatal Health Report)* ([1]), il cui aggiornamento è atteso tra la fine del 2012 e l'inizio del 2013.

([1]) http://www.europeristat.com/images/doc/EPHR/european-perinatal-health-report.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006595/12
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Maternal mortality in Italy

A study by Cnesps-Iss on five Italian regions (Piedmont, Emilia Romagna, Tuscany, Lazio, Sicily) analysing data on maternal mortality for 2000-2007 records a mortality rate of 11.8 women for every 100 000 births. A previous study in the scientific magazine *The Lancet*, published in 2010, recorded a mortality rate of 4 women for every 100 000 births.

These results arise from an analysis of death certificates and medical histories following discharge.

The risk of death at birth rises to 17.7 deaths per 100 000 births if the woman is over 35 (pregnant women in this age range rose from 9% in 1981 to 29% in 2007), and triples in the case of Caesarean births (12.8 deaths compared to 4.2 for natural births). While it is true that this figure is in line with the general European average, it is not in line with that of Western Europe, which sees the United Kingdom almost level with Italy at 11.4 deaths, while the figures for Denmark and Finland are very different, with 8 and 5.8 deaths per 100 000 births.

— Is the Commission aware of this study?

— In view of the discrepancies between the two studies in the specific case of Italy, does it believe that the same problem may also be found in other Member States?

— Does the Commission consider it necessary to promote a European-wide study based on a single set of parameters for the 27 countries?

Answer given by Mr Dalli on behalf of the Commission
(22 August 2012)

The Commission is aware of the situation of maternal mortality and risks during pregnancy and delivery.

As maternal mortality is quite a complex topic, the Commission is supporting expert groups in the area of perinatal and maternal health to monitor the development in these areas and to identify best practice to help decision-makers and experts to learn from each other.

'Europeristat' is a network of experts which defined common indicators and collected data for all Member States in the area of maternal and perinatal health. As there is no legal basis for mandatory data collection in this area, collected data are not harmonised, which led to difficulties for interpreting trends, comparisons and data in general. 'Europeristat' published in December 2008 the 'European Perinatal Health Report' ([1]), an update of which is expected by the end of 2012/beginning of 2013.

([1]) http://www.europeristat.com/images/doc/EPHR/european-perinatal-health-report.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006597/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Baroness Sarah Ludford (ALDE)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Security threats to Europe from the Gaddafi regime

1. What security threats to the EU or its Member States were identified as stemming from the Gaddafi regime's violent response to the citizen uprising in Libya? It has been reported that a chemical weapons stockpile and unattended surface-to-air missiles were discovered and also that flows of migrants fleeing Libya into Europe offered a potential gateway for terrorists.

2. Were any such threats documented? If so, have those documents been made available to the public and where can they be found?

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

1. The risks associated with stockpiles of chemical weapons and migrant flows are being met in a variety of ways by the United Nations (UN), the EU and bilateral action in the security and disarmament sectors in close cooperation with the Libyan Government.

2. In the long run the best mitigation for these risks is strong democratic central government able to secure Libya's borders and weapons stockpiles. Among other actions, the EU is currently considering the findings of a border management needs assessment mission concluded in June 2012 to see how best to support border security and complement the actions of other donors.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-006598/12
an die Kommission (Vizepräsidentin/Hohe Vertreterin)
Franziska Katharina Brantner (Verts/ALE)
(29. Juni 2012)

Betrifft: VP/HR — Personalstruktur des Europäischen Auswärtigen Dienstes

2012 waren 74,4 % aller AD-Posten im Europäischen Auswärtigen Dienst AD 10 oder höher (699 von 940). Somit scheint die Personalstruktur des EAD unausgewogen zu sein und außergewöhnlich viele höhere Dienstgrade aufzuweisen, und das zu beträchtlichen Kosten, die von den EU-Steuerzahlern zu tragen sind.

Kann die Vizepräsidentin/Hohe Vertreterin bitte mit Blick darauf für jeden Grad AD 10 oder höher (nach Tätigkeitsfeld, wie z. B. Delegationsleiter, stellvertretender Delegationsleiter, Abteilungsleiter, stellvertretender Abteilungsleiter, politischer Referent usw.) auflisten, welche Funktionen genau von den betroffenen Mitgliedern ausgeübt werden, also

zum Beispiel:

— AD 10: x Abteilungsleiter, y stellvertretende Abteilungsleiter, z politische Referenten,
— AD 11: xx Abteilungsleiter, yy stellvertretende Abteilungsleiter, zz politische Referenten?

Antwort von Frau Catherine Ashton — Hohe Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin im Namen der Kommission
(21. August 2012)

Die Frau Abgeordnete wird auf die beigefügte Tabelle verwiesen, die ihr und dem Sekretariat des Parlaments direkt übermittelt wurde und eine aktuelle Übersicht der Stellen des EAD im Dienstgrad AD 10 oder höher in der Zentrale und den EU-Delegationen bietet.

Die gegenwärtige Personalstruktur des EAD wird größtenteils durch die Dienstgrade des Personals bestimmt, das „en bloc“ aus den Dienststellen der Kommission und des Rates zum EAD versetzt wurde.

Seit der Einrichtung des EAD wurden AD-Posten aller Ebenen für die drei im Vertrag erwähnten Dienste (Kommission, Generalsekretariat des Rates und diplomatische Dienste der Mitgliedstaaten) ausgeschrieben. Dazu zählen natürlich auch einige Führungspositionen sowohl in der Zentrale als auch in den Delegationen.

Die meisten AD-Posten unterhalb der Führungsebene wurden für die Dienstgrade AD 5 oder AD 7 ausgeschrieben.

Der EAD wird mit der Zeit Personal- und Einstellungsleitlinien festlegen, die für eine ausgewogenere Personalstruktur sorgen werden.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006598/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Franziska Katharina Brantner (Verts/ALE)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Staff structure of the European External Action Service

In 2012, 74.4% of all EEAS AD posts were at grade AD 10 or higher (699 of 940). It therefore seems that the EEAS's staff structure is unbalanced and excessively tilted towards the upper ranks, with significant cost implications for EU taxpayers.

With this in mind, could the Vice-President/High Representative please list, for each grade level of AD 10 or higher, which functions (by category, such as head of delegation, deputy head of delegation, head of division, deputy head of division, policy officer, etc.) are held by the staff members concerned.

For example:

— AD 10: x heads of division, y deputy heads of division, z policy officers, …

— AD 11: xx heads of division, yy deputy heads of division, zz policy officers, …

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

The Honourable Member is referred to the table in annex, sent directly to the Honourable Member and to Parliament's Secretariat, which shows the current picture of EEAS staff at AD10 or above level, posted in Headquarters and in EU Delegations.

The current EEAS staff structure is to a large extent determined by the grades of the staff who were en bloc transferred from Commission and Council services to EEAS.

Since the creation of the EEAS, AD posts at all levels have been published for applications from the three sources indicated in the treaty (Commission, Council General Secretariat and Member States Diplomatic services). This has naturally included a number of management positions both in headquarters and delegations.

Most AD non-management posts have been published at AD5 or AD7 level.

Over time, the EEAS will continue to put in place personnel and recruitment policies that will promote a more balanced structure of staff.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-006599/12
a la Comisión
Ana Miranda (Verts/ALE)
(29 de junio de 2012)

Asunto: Incumplimiento de la Directiva Marco del Agua en Ourense (Galicia)

El embalse de As Conchas está situado entre los municipios de Lobeira, Muiños y Bande (Ourense, Galicia), cerca del Parque Natural Baixa Limia — Serra do Xurés, así como del Lugar de Interés Comunitario ES1130001, de Baixa Limia, incluido en la Red Natura 2000.

Además de su uso energético, desde su construcción en el año 1949 este embalse ha tenido usos diversos, como el baño o el almacenamiento de agua para combatir los incendios que periódicamente surgen en la comarca. Desde el pasado verano de 2011, las aguas del embalse manifestaban un insalubre y sospechoso color verde. Este cambio de color se debía a las algas en descomposición que contenía. Las autoridades competentes respondieron de forma tardía declarando la zona «no apta» para el baño. Aún así, no se establecieron garantías suficientes para prohibir el baño, y de esa circunstancia se hicieron eco los medios de comunicación.

La Confederación Hidrográfica Miño — Sil realizó diversas investigaciones, llegando a la conclusión de que en las aguas de As Conchas se hallaban cianobacterias producidas por la existencia de algas tóxicas en el embalse. La Sociedad Gallega de Historia Natural y diversos estudios afirman que el nivel de contaminación es excesivo y que podrían contravenir la normativa comunitaria al respecto, debiéndose presuntamente a un exceso de vertidos de purines y otras substancias procedentes de la actividad agrícola.

¿Conoce la Comisión esta situación?

¿Entiende la Comisión que se contraviene la Directiva 2000/60/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 23 de octubre de 2000, por la que se establece un marco comunitario de actuación en el ámbito de la política de aguas?

¿Qué medidas adoptará la Comisión a fin de promover el saneamiento de las aguas y evitar contaminar enclaves de indudable valor natural, como los ya citados o los fronterizos del Parque Nacional Geres-A Peneda, en Portugal?

¿Valora la Comisión instar a las autoridades competentes a tomar medidas urgentes al respecto, teniendo en cuenta que el aumento de las temperaturas puede empeorar la situación de saneamiento del embalse?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(23 de agosto de 2012)

Según la información recogida de cara a la elaboración del informe «Calidad de las aguas de baño europeas en 2011» ([1]), la calidad de las aguas de baño del lugar indicado por Su Señoría era insuficiente. Las autoridades españolas deben adoptar las medidas adecuadas para poner remedio a esta situación, tal como dispone la Directiva sobre la calidad de las aguas de baño de la Unión Europea (2006/7/CE) ([2]).

Esta situación no significa necesariamente que no se cumplen las disposiciones de la Directiva Marco del Agua (DMA, 2000/60/CE ([3])), ya que las dos Directivas tienen objetivos diferentes.

Las medidas al amparo de la Directiva sobre las aguas de baño han de integrarse en los distintos planes hidrológicos de cuenca (PHC) elaborados en virtud de la DMA.

España todavía no ha presentado sus planes hidrológicos de cuenca, excepto el correspondiente a Cataluña. Por lo tanto, la Comisión no puede evaluar en este momento si se cumplen los requisitos de la DMA. Una vez aprobado y notificado el RHC de Miño-Sil, la cuenca en que está situado el lugar mencionado, la Comisión analizará si se han observado los requisitos de la DMA.

([1]) http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/european-bathing-water-quality-in-2011.
([2]) DO L 64 de 4.3.2006, p. 37.
([3]) DO L 327 de 22.12.2000, p. 1.

Según la información que obra en poder de la Comisión, el proyecto de plan hidrológico de cuenca del Miño-Sil se encuentra en la fase de aprobación por las autoridades españolas, ya que ha concluido el procedimiento de consulta.

Debe recordarse que existe actualmente un asunto judicial contra España (asunto 2010/2083) por no haber adoptado y notificado a la Comisión sus planes hidrológicos de cuenca.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006599/12
to the Commission
Ana Miranda (Verts/ALE)
(29 June 2012)

Subject: Breach of the Water Framework Directive in Ourense (Galicia)

The As Conchas reservoir lies between the municipalities of Lobeira, Muiños and Bande (Ourense, Galicia), near the Baixa Limia — Serra do Xurés Natural Park and the site of Community importance ES1130001 at Baixa Limia, which forms part of the Natura 2000 network.

As well as being used for energy production, this reservoir has had a range of other uses since its construction in 1949, including bathing and the storage of water to fight the fires that periodically break out in the area. Since summer 2011 the water in the reservoir has been an unhealthy and suspicious-looking green colour. This change of colour was caused by decomposing algae in the water. The competent authorities were late to respond and designate the area as 'not suitable' for bathing. Even then, as reported in the media, insufficient action was taken to prohibit bathing.

The Miño — Sil Hydrographic Confederation carried out a series of studies and concluded that the water in As Conchas contained cyanobacteria produced by toxic algae in the reservoir. The Galician Natural History Society and various studies have found that the level of contamination is excessive and could contravene the relevant Community legislation. It is thought to be caused by excessive amounts of slurry and other substances from farms.

Is the Commission aware of this situation?

Does it believe that this situation is in breach of Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy?

What steps will the Commission take to promote the restoration of the water to a healthy status and prevent pollution in areas of undoubted natural value, such as those referred to above and areas bordering on the Geres — A Peneda National Park in Portugal?

Is the Commission considering urging the competent authorities to take emergency measures, bearing in mind that rising temperatures may further worsen the status of the water in the reservoir?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(23 August 2012)

According to the information collected for the preparation of the report 'European bathing quality in 2011' ([1]), the bathing quality in the site indicated by the Honourable member was insufficient. Spanish authorities should take appropriate measures to correct that situation, as requested by the EU Bathing Water Directive (2006/7/EC) ([2]).

This situation does not necessarily mean that the provisions laid down by the Water Framework Directive (WFD 2000/60/EC ([3])) are not complied with, since the 2 directives have different objectives.

Measures under the Bathing Water Directive have to be integrated into the different River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) developed under the WFD.

Spain has not yet submitted its RBMPs (except for the region of Cataluña). At this stage, the Commission cannot therefore assess whether the requirements of the WFD are being met. Once the RBMP for Miño-Sil, the basin where the site mentioned is located, is approved and reported, the Commission will analyse whether the requirements of the WFD have been respected.

According to the information available to the Commission, the draft RBMP of the Miño-Sil River Basin District is in the process of being approved by the Spanish authorities because the consultation procedure has been completed.

It should be noted that there is an ongoing Court case against Spain (Case 2010/2083) for failing to adopt and report its RBMPs to the Commission.

([1]) http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/european-bathing-water-quality-in-2011
([2]) OJ L 64, 4.3.2006, p. 37.
([3]) OJ L 327, 22.12.2000, p. 1.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse P-006600/12
til Kommissionen
Søren Bo Søndergaard (GUE/NGL)
(2. juli 2012)

Om: Beregningen af det strukturelle underskud

Vil Kommissionen oversende en komplet liste over de notater, breve, oplæg m.v. om beregningen af det strukturelle underskud, som den i forbindelse med vedtagelsen af finanspagten har videreformidlet til Rådet/medlemsstaterne? Kan Kommissionen samtidig oplyse, hvilke af disse papirer der er offentligt tilgængelige, og hvilke der er klassificeret som interne?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Olli Rehn
(30. juli 2012)

Kommissionens tjenestegrene har sendt et brev til de irske myndigheder og et brev til de danske myndigheder vedrørende den metode, der anvendes til at anslå den strukturelle budgetsaldo i forbindelse med traktaten om stabilitet, samordning og styring i Den Økonomiske og Monetære Union, og særlig i forbindelse med finanspagten. Brevene er vedlagt.

De fremgangsmåder og koncepter, der er blevet vedtaget i fællesskab for, hvordan den strukturelle budgetsaldo skal beregnes i forbindelse med stabilitets- og vækstpagten og dens gennemførelse, er offentligt tilgængelige på nedenstående link: http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/economic_governance/sgp/data_methods/index_en.htm.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-006600/12
to the Commission
Søren Bo Søndergaard (GUE/NGL)
(2 July 2012)

Subject: Calculation of the structural deficit

Will the Commission provide a full list of the notes, letters, working documents, etc. on calculation of the structural deficit which it forwarded to the Council/Member States in connection with the adoption of the fiscal pact? Can it also say which of these papers are publicly accessible and which are classified as internal?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(30 July 2012)

The Commission services sent one letter to the Irish authorities and one letter to the Danish authorities concerning the methodology to be used to estimate the structural budget balance in the context of the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union (TSCG) and, in particular, in the context of the operationalisation of the Fiscal Compact. The letters are attached.

The commonly agreed operational modalities and concepts as to how calculate structural budget balances in the context of the Stability Growth Pact and its implementation are publicly accessible at the link below:
http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/economic_governance/sgp/data_methods/index_en.htm

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-006602/12
an die Kommission
Barbara Lochbihler (Verts/ALE)
(2. Juli 2012)

Betrifft: Zerstörung des FFH-Gebiets „Flughafen Fürstenfeldbruck"

In Bayern führt die Gemeinde Maisach zur Umsetzung des Konzepts der nichtfliegerischen Nachnutzung des Flughafens Fürstenfeldbruck ein Bebauungsplanverfahren durch. Es sollen ein Zentrum für Fahrsicherheitstraining, eine Trabrennbahn, ein Sportzentrum und Ähnliches entstehen. Auch soll der ehemalige „Taxyway" zur Ortsumfahrung ausgebaut werden. Dabei würden nach aktuellen Unterlagen vom prioritären Lebensraumtyp 6210 des FFH-Gebiets DE 7733-371 „Flughafen Fürstenfeldbruck" mit 3,8 ha 60 %, vom Lebensraumtyp 6510 mit 70,1 ha 47 % zerstört und mit 10 ha 7 % gestört werden. Eigentümerin der Fläche ist die Bundesrepublik Deutschland, vertreten durch die Bundesanstalt für Immobilienaufgaben. Die naturschutzfachlich erforderliche Kohärenz soll in dem 26 km entfernten FFH-Gebiet DE 7735-302 geschaffen werden.

1. Ist nach Auffassung der Kommission die Zerstörung von mehr als der Hälfte der Lebensraumtypen eines FFH-Gebiets mit der Richtlinie 92/43/EWG vereinbar?

2. Hält die Kommission kohärenzsichernde Maßnahmen für Arten von Wiesenlebensräumen in dem 26 km entfernten FFH-Gebiet DE 7735-302 für zielführend, oder hält sie diese 26 km für eine oft unüberbrückbare Entfernung? Wie beurteilt die Kommission den Plan, im FFH-Gebiet DE 7735-371 Ausgleichsmaßnahmen für die Zerstörungen im Gebiet DE 7733-371 anzulegen?

3. Ist die Aufwertung von Lebensraumtypen in schlechtem Zustand als Ausgleich für die Zerstörung von Lebensräumen an anderer Stelle geeignet, obwohl die Fläche des Lebensraumtyps dadurch abnimmt?

4. Hält es die Kommission für sinnvoll, dass ausgewiesene FFH- und Natura-2000-Gebiete dem Ausgleich anderer FFH-Flächen und häufig sogar dem gleichzeitigen Ausgleich nach dem Bundesnaturschutzgesetz dienen sollen?

5. Hält die Kommission Flächen in einem Naturschutzgebiet überhaupt für aufwertungsfähig und aufwertungsbedürftig, und hält sie die Inanspruchnahme dieser Flächen für naturschutzrechtliche Ausgleichs- und Ersatzmaßnahmen für zulässig und sinnvoll?

6. Hält die Kommission zwingende Gründe des überwiegenden öffentlichen Interesses entsprechend Artikel 6 Absatz 4 92/43/EWG im Falle der beabsichtigten Nutzung des FFH-Gebiets DE 7733-371 für gegeben?

Antwort von Herrn Potočnik im Namen der Kommission
(16. August 2012)

Die Kommission möchte darauf hinweisen, dass es sich bei den beiden Grasland-Lebensraumtypen, wegen deren das Gebiet DE7733-371 im Rahmen der FFH-Richtlinie ([1]) als Gebiet von gemeinschaftlicher Bedeutung ausgewiesen wurde, nicht um prioritäre Lebensraumtypen im Sinne von Anhang I dieser Richtlinie handelt. Deshalb muss Deutschland gemäß Artikel 6 Absatz 4 dieser Richtlinie nach Erteilung der Genehmigung die Kommission lediglich über die Maßnahmen unterrichten, die zum Ausgleich der negativen Auswirkungen eines Plans oder Projekts auf dieses Gebiet getroffen wurden.

Bezüglich der Fragen 4 und 6 der Frau Abgeordneten teilt die Kommission mit, dass diese eher in die Zuständigkeit der nationalen Behörden fallen und daher nicht von der Kommission beantwortet werden können.

([1]) Richtlinie 92/43/EWG des Rates zur Erhaltung der natürlichen Lebensräume und Arten sowie der wildlebenden Tiere und Pflanzen, ABl. L 206 vom 22.7.1992.

In Artikel 6 Absätze 3 und 4 der FFH-Richtlinie, in der die Umstände festgelegt sind, unter denen Pläne und Projekte mit negativen Auswirkungen auf Natura-2000-Gebiete genehmigt werden können, sind keine Schwellenwerte für den Anteil eines Lebensraumtyps vorgesehen, der in einem bestimmten Schutzgebiet beeinträchtigt werden darf (Frage 1). Außerdem wird in den methodischen Auslegungsleitfäden der Kommission ([2]) nicht ausgeschlossen, dass die betreffenden Ausgleichsmaßnahmen in einem anderen Natura-2000-Gebiet getroffen werden können als in dem, das von einem Vorhaben beeinträchtigt wird (Frage 2). Solche Ausgleichsmaßnahmen können auch Maßnahmen enthalten, die den Erhaltungswert eines Lebensraumtyps in Gebieten verbessern, in denen sich dieser derzeit in schlechtem Zustand befindet (Frage 3). Die Auslegungsleitfäden sehen jedoch auch vor, dass etwaige Ausgleichsmaßnahmen über die Anforderungen von Artikel 6 Absätze 1 und 2 der FFH-Richtlinie hinausgehen müssen, um Nettoverluste bei einem Lebensraumtyp auf der biogeografischen Ebene des Natura-2000-Netzes zu vermeiden (Fragen 3 und 5).

([2]) Abrufbar unter: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/guidance_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006602/12
to the Commission
Barbara Lochbihler (Verts/ALE)
(2 July 2012)

Subject: Destruction of the FFH area 'Fürstenfeldbruck airport'

The municipality of Maisach in Bavaria is conducting a construction planning procedure to implement the plans for the non-aviation use of Fürstenfeldbruck airport. A road safety training centre, a trotting track, a sports centre and the like are planned. The former taxiway is to be converted into a by-pass for the settlement. According to the documents currently available, this would involve the destruction of 3.8 ha (60%) of Priority Habitat Type 6210 in FFH Area DE 7733-371 Fürstenfeldbruck airport and 70.1 ha (47%) of Priority Habitat Type 6510, while an additional 10 ha (7%) of the latter habitat would suffer disturbance. The owner of the land is the Federal Republic of Germany, represented by the Institute for Federal Real Estate. It is proposed that the required nature conservation coherence should be achieved in FFH Area DE 7735-302, which is 26 km away.

1. Does the Commission consider the destruction of more than half the habitat types of an FFH area to be compatible with Directive 92/43/EEC?

2. Does the Commission believe that coherence measures for meadowland habitat species in the FFH Area DE 7735-302, which is 26 km away, will be effective, or does it consider 26 km in many cases to be an unbridgeable distance? What view does the Commission take of the plan to take measures in FFH Area DE 7735-371 to compensate for the destruction in Area DE 7733-371?

3. Does the upgrading of habitat types in poor condition constitute compensation for the destruction of habitats elsewhere despite the fact that the total area of habitat of the type in question is reduced as a result?

4. Does the Commission consider it worthwhile for designated FFH and Natura 2000 areas to be used to compensate for other FFH areas and often even simultaneously to provide compensation under the Federal Nature Conservation Law?

5. Does the Commission believe that areas within a nature conservation area can even be upgraded, and require upgrading, and does it consider it permissible and worthwhile to use these areas for compensatory and replacement measures under nature conservation legislation?

6. Does the Commission consider that there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest pursuant to Article 6(4) of Directive 92/43/EEC in the case of the intended use of FFH Area DE 7733-371?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(16 August 2012)

The Commission would like to clarify that the two grassland habitat types for which the site DE7733-371 has been designated as a site of Community importance under the Habitats Directive ([1]), are not priority habitat types in the meaning of Annex I of that directive. Therefore, in line with Article 6(4) of that directive, Germany is only required to inform the Commission about any measures foreseen to compensate for the negative impact of a plan or project affecting that site, once the permit has been delivered.

With regard to questions 4 and 6 raised by the Honourable Member, the Commission would like to clarify that they are rather in the competence of the national authorities, and can thus not be answered by the Commission itself.

([1]) Council Directive on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, OJ L 206, 22.7.1992.

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, which set out the circumstances within which plans and projects with negative effects on individual Natura 2000 sites may or may not be allowed, do not provide a threshold for the proportion of a habitat type that may be allowed to be affected in an individual site (question 1). Furthermore, the methodological guidance documents produced by the Commission ([2]) do not exclude that the related compensatory measures may take place in another Natura 2000 site than the one affected by the project (question 2). Such compensatory measures may also include measures to improve the conservation status of a habitat type in areas where it is currently in a poor condition (question 3). However, these guidance documents also specify that any compensatory measures must go beyond the requirements of Article 6(1) and (2) of the Habitats Directive, so as to avoid any net loss of area for a habitat type at the biogeographical level of the Natura 2000 network (questions 3 and 5).

([2]) Available under: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/guidance_en.htm

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-006603/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE)
(2 Ιουλίου 2012)

Θέμα: Νέα stress tests σε ασφαλιστικές εταιρείες και πιθανές συγχωνεύσεις στην Ελλάδα

Σύμφωνα με πληροφορίες, στην Ελλάδα αναμένεται να διενεργηθούν κανονικά και φέτος κατά τη διάρκεια του β' εξαμήνου, τα stress tests των ασφαλιστικών εταιρειών, έναντι ενδεχόμενων αρνητικών εξελίξεων στις κεφαλαιαγορές αλλά και σε καταστροφικά ή αρνητικά ασφαλιστικά γεγονότα, παρά την μεταβατική περίοδο που δόθηκε από την Τράπεζα της Ελλάδος στις εταιρείες για την αντιμετώπιση των ζημιών που προέκυψαν από το PSI+. Αναμένεται να καθοριστούν τα σενάρια (βασικό και ακραίο) που θα περιλαμβάνει το φετινό τεστ αντοχής για τα ομόλογα, με δεδομένο ότι έπειτα από την ολοκλήρωση του κουρέματος (53,5 %) και της ανταλλαγής των νέων ομολόγων, έχουν καταγραφεί σημαντικές ζημιές στο συγκεκριμένο κλάδο.

Η Επιτροπή ερωτάται:

1. Με νέο δεδομένο την ολοκλήρωση του PSI+, πώς κρίνει την κατάσταση στην ελληνική ασφαλιστική αγορά;

2. Ποιες οι επιπτώσεις της δυσμενούς οικονομικής συγκυρίας στις μικρές ασφαλιστικές εταιρείες; Πώς αντιμετωπίζει τις εκτιμήσεις για πιθανές συγχωνεύσεις, αναδιαρθρώσεις ή απορροφήσεις προκειμένου οι εταιρείες αυτές να ανταποκριθούν στις υποχρεώσεις τους και να εξασφαλίσουν ρευστότητα;

3. Πώς αξιολογεί και πώς προτίθεται να αντιμετωπίσει ενδεχόμενους κινδύνους ανατίμησης των ασφαλιστικών προϊόντων ενόψει και της εφαρμογής του *Solvency II* με δεδομένες τις επιπτώσεις μίας τέτοιας εξέλιξης στους ασφαλισμένους και τους καταναλωτές;

Απάντηση του κ. Barnier εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(20 Αυγούστου 2012)

Είναι σαφές ότι το PSI είχε επιπτώσεις στο περιθώριο φερεγγυότητας των ασφαλιστικών επιχειρήσεων στην Ελλάδα. Ωστόσο, από τότε που ανέλαβε τις εποπτικές ευθύνες για τις ασφαλιστικές επιχειρήσεις στα τέλη 2010, η ΤτΕ ([1]) έχει επιδιώξει μια συνολική στρατηγική για τον ελληνικό ασφαλιστικό κλάδο. Η ΤτΕ θα προβεί σε νέα αξιολόγηση φερεγγυότητας του κλάδου με βάση τα αποτελέσματα του 3ου τριμήνου 2012 ([2]).

Πέραν των ζημιών λόγω PSI, οι μικρότερες ασφαλιστικές εταιρείες έχουν επηρεαστεί από το γενικό οικονομικό κλίμα. Το 2011, τα έσοδα από ασφάλιστρα συρρικνώθηκαν κατά σχεδόν 7 % σε αμφότερους τους κλάδους ασφαλειών, ζωής και ζημιών-εκτός ζωής ([3]). Στον κλάδο των ασφαλειών ζωής, έχει αυξηθεί ο αριθμός των ακυρώσεων ασφαλιστικών συμβολαίων, πιθανότατα λόγω των αυξημένων ταμειακών αναγκών των πελατών. Από την άλλη πλευρά, η κρίση θα μπορούσε επίσης να έχει συμβάλει στην ανακοινωθείσα μείωση των τροχαίων δυστυχημάτων, η οποία έχει στηρίξει την κερδοφορία του ασφαλιστικού κλάδου εκτός ζωής. Ανεξάρτητα από την τρέχουσα δυσμενή οικονομική συγκυρία, οι μελλοντικές απαιτήσεις φερεγγυότητας στο πλαίσιο του Solvency II αναμένεται να οδηγήσουν σε μια ορισμένη σταθεροποίηση του κλάδου.

Η υποτίμηση της αξίας των ομολόγων στο πλαίσιο της συμφωνίας για το PSI θα πρέπει να έχει ήδη συνυπολογισθεί στις οικονομικές καταστάσεις των ασφαλιστικών εταιρειών και μπορεί επίσης να αντικατοπτρίζεται στους υπολογισμούς φερεγγυότητας. Στο πλαίσιο του Solvency II, οι ασφαλιστικές εταιρείες θα χρησιμοποιήσουν αποτιμήσεις ανταποκρινόμενες· στις αγοραίες τιμές για όλα τα στοιχεία του ισολογισμού ([4]). Αυτό δεν αναμένεται να έχει καμία άμεση επίπτωση στους κατόχους ασφαλιστηρίων συμβολαίων και στους καταναλωτές. Οι ασφαλιστικές εταιρείες θα εξακολουθούν να υποχρεούνται να συμμορφώνονται με σειρά απαιτήσεων ([5]) που διασφαλίζουν την προστασία των κατόχων ασφαλιστηρίων συμβολαίων ([6]). Σε περίπτωση οικονομικών δυσχερειών ([7]), οι εποπτικές αρχές θα έχουν στη διάθεσή τους αυξημένο αριθμό μέτρων ([8]).

([1]) Τράπεζα της Ελλάδος.
([2]) Η ΤτΕ θα εργαστεί επίσης για την ενίσχυση της λειτουργίας των ελληνικών συστημάτων ασφαλιστικής εγγύησης και της ικανότητας του ασφαλιστικού τομέα να αναλάβει τα συνταξιοδοτικά συστήματα ως μέρος μιας ευρύτερης μεταρρύθμισης του συστήματος κοινωνικής ασφάλισης.
([3]) Στοιχεία της ΤτΕ.
([4]) Συμπεριλαμβανομένων των ομολόγων του Ελληνικού Δημοσίου στο πλαίσιο του PSI.
([5]) Π.χ. για κεφάλαια, διαχείριση κινδύνων.
([6]) Ο κύριος στόχος του Solvency II.
([7]) Παραβίαση των απαιτήσεων για κεφαλαιακή κάλυψη.
([8]) Π.χ. καθεστώτα χρηματοδότησης, σχέδιο ανάκαμψης και παρατεταμένη περίοδος ανάκαμψης.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006603/12
to the Commission
Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE)
(2 July 2012)

Subject: New stress tests for insurance companies and possible mergers in Greece

It is reported that, despite the transitional period accorded by the Bank of Greece for recovery from losses occasioned by PSI+, regular stress tests for insurance companies in Greece are expected to continue in the second half of 2012 in response to anticipated difficulties on the capital markets and to adverse or disastrous insurance events. It is expected that (base line and extreme) scenarios will be included in this year's stress tests for bonds in view of the substantial losses recorded following the (53.5%) write-down and the new bond substitution.

In view of this:

1. What view does the Commission take of the new situation emerging on the Greek insurance market following the completion of PSI+?

2. What has been the impact of the economic downturn on small insurance companies? What view does it take of reports of possible mergers, restructuring or takeovers in a bid by these companies to meet their obligations and ensure liquidity?

3. What view does it take of the possible devaluation of insurance products following the implementation of *Solvency II* and the impact thereof on policyholders and consumers and what course of action will it adopt?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(20 August 2012)

It is clear that the PSI impacted the solvency margin of insurance undertakings in Greece. However, since taking over the supervisory responsibilities for insurance undertakings at the end of 2010, the BoG ([1]) has pursued a comprehensive strategy for the Greek insurance sector. It will carry out a new solvency evaluation of the sector on the basis of the results of the 3rd quarter of 2012 ([2]).

In addition to the PSI losses, smaller insurance companies have been affected by the general financial climate. In 2011, written premiums shrank by nearly 7% in both the life and non-life insurance sectors ([3]). In the life sector, the number of policy surrenders has been increasing, most likely due to customers' increased cash needs. On the other hand, the crisis might also have contributed to the reported reduction of motor accidents, which has supported the profitability of the non-life sector. Irrespective of the current adverse economic environment, the future Solvency II requirements are expected to lead to a certain consolidation of the sector.

The depreciation of the bond value under the PSI agreement should already be accounted for in the concerned insurance undertakings' financial statements insurers and may also be reflected in the solvency calculations. Under Solvency II, insurers will use market consistent valuation for all balance sheet items ([4]). This should not have any immediate impact on policyholders and consumers. Insurers will still be required to comply with a number of requirements ([5]) ensuring the protection of policyholders ([6]). In case of financial difficulties ([7]), supervisors will have an increased number of measures at their disposal ([8]).

([1]) Bank of Greece.
([2]) The BoG will also work on strengthening the functioning of the Greek insurance guarantee schemes and the capacity of the insurance sector to assume pension schemes as a part of a wider social security system reform.
([3]) BoG data.
([4]) Including Greek bonds under the PSI.
([5]) E.g. on capital, risk management.
([6]) The main aim of Solvency II.
([7]) Breach of the capital requirements.
([8]) E.g. finance schemes, recovery plan and an extended recovery period.

(Tekstas lietuvių kalba)

Klausimas, į kurį atsakoma raštu, Nr. E-006604/12
Komisijai
Justas Vincas Paleckis (S&D)
(2012 m. liepos 2 d.)

Tema: Klimato reiškinių sukeliamos gaivalinės nelaimės ir sienų valdymas

Per Arabų pavasarį išryškėjo keli Šengeno erdvės trūkumai. Nepaisant įvairių ES iniciatyvų ir susitarimų, įskaitant Šengeno ir prieglobsčio *acquis*, kuriais siekiama apsaugoti pabėgėlius, daugiau kaip 25 000 migrantų iš Tuniso buvo leista atvykti į Italiją, tačiau į Prancūziją jiems nebuvo leista atvykti. Be to, daugiau kaip šimtas pabėgėlių turėjo pasilikti laive, kadangi valstybės narės negalėjo nuspręsti, kuris uostas yra arčiausiai. Valstybės narės turėjo teisę taip elgtis, nes jos pareiškė, kad migrantai kelia grėsmę jų nacionaliniam saugumui. Tačiau atsisakymas tokiomis aplinkybėmis priimti pabėgėlius prieštarauja JT konvencijai dėl pareigos juos apsaugoti. Nors Arabų pavasaris buvo žmonių sukelta suirutė, masinė migracija taip pat neišvengiama per klimato reiškinių sukeliamas gaivalines nelaimes. Prieš ketverius metus buvęs vyriausiasis įgaliotinis bendrai užsienio ir saugumo politikai Javier Solana yra pasakęs, kad klimato kaita tapo didžiausia saugumo problema pasaulyje. Kaip ir pastaraisiais metais, šiuo metu kyla kita didelė ir ne mažiau svarbesnė ekonominė ir finansinė grėsme. Ekspertų pranešimuose tvirtinama, kad klimato reiškinių sukeliamų gaivalinių nelaimių padaugėjo ir jos pasunkėjo, o kylant pasaulio temperatūrai jų ir toliau daugės ir jos taps vis sunkesnės.

Kokių veiksmų imsis Komisija, jei dėl klimato reiškinių sukeliamų gaivalinių nelaimių didės migracija prie Šengeno sienų?

C. Malmström atsakymas Komisijos vardu
(2012 m. rugpjūčio 24 d.)

Klimato kaitos poveikio migracijos srautams klausimas susilaukia vis daugiau politikų dėmesio. Dokumente dėl klimato kaitos ir tarptautinio saugumo ([1]) pažymėta, kad dėl klimato kaitos gali daugėti grėsmių – išaugti tendencijų mastas, įtampa ir nestabilumas, kurie jau ir dabar turi įtakos migracijos modeliams.

Vis dėlto, kaip nurodoma ir neseniai Europos Parlamento atliktame tyrime ([2]), sunku nustatyti tiesioginį klimato kaitos ir migracijos ryšį. Kol kas nėra moksliškai patvirtintų metodų, pagal kuriuos būtų galima nustatyti dėl klimato kaitos perkeltų arba persikėlusių asmenų skaičių, be to, nėra susitarta dėl tokios migracijos apibrėžties. Tačiau daugelis specialistų sutaria, kad dauguma dėl klimato kaitos kenčiančių žmonių pasiliks savo kilmės šalyse ir regionuose ([3]).

Komisija jau prisidėjo prie problemos nagrinėjimo, pavyzdžiui, dalyvaudama projekte Aplinkos pokyčiai ir priverstinės migracijos scenarijai ([4]). Komisija ketina pateikti Komisijos tarnybų darbinį dokumentą šiuo klausimu, kuriame daugiausia dėmesio būtų skirta klimato kaitos, migracijos ir vystymosi ryšiui. Šis dokumentas būtų Prisitaikymo prie klimato kaitos strategijos dokumentų rinkinio, kuris bus priimtas 2013 m. pavasarį, dalis.

([1]) Vyriausiojo įgaliotinio ir Europos Komisijos parengtas bendras dokumentas 2008 m. kovo mėn. buvo pateiktas Europos Vadovų Tarybai ir Europos Parlamento pakomitečiui, atsakingam už saugumą ir gynybą. Šį dokumentą galima rasti adresu http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/cfsp/doc/climate_change_international_security_2008_en.pdf

([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/de/studiesdownload.html?languageDocument=EN&file=60931

([3]) Pvz., žr. Žvilgsnis į ateitį. Migracija ir visuotiniai aplinkos pokyčiai (2011 m.), galutinė projekto ataskaita. Valstybės mokslo įstaiga, Londonas.

([4]) http://www.each-for.eu/index.php?module=main

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006604/12
to the Commission
Justas Vincas Paleckis (S&D)
(2 July 2012)

Subject: Climate-driven disasters and border management

The Arab Spring highlighted several weaknesses of the Schengen area. Despite various EU initiatives and agreements to protect refugees, including the Schengen and asylum acquis, more than 25 000 Tunisian migrants were allowed to enter Italy, but not France. Furthermore, more than a hundred refugees had to remain on board a ship, as Member States could not decide which harbour was the closest. Member States had the right to take such a line, as they claimed that the migrants infringed their national security. At the same time, however, not admitting refugees during such situations conflicts with the UN convention on the responsibility to protect them. While the Arab Spring was a case of human-made turmoil, mass migration is inevitable during massive climate-driven disasters. Four years ago Javier Solana, the former High Representative for the common foreign and security policy, said that climate change had became a major security challenge for the world. As of recent years, there is now another major economic and financial threat rivalling this issue. Expert reports state that climate-driven disasters have increased in number and severity, and are likely to go on doing so as global temperatures rise.

What action would the Commission take should migration at the Schengen borders intensify as a result of a climate-driven natural disaster?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(24 August 2012)

The impact of climate change on migration movements is a topic of growing political interest. As the paper on Climate Change and International Security ([1]) pointed out, climate change may act as a 'threat-multiplier', exacerbating trends, tensions and instabilities which already have an influence on migration patterns.

However, as also stated in the recent study conducted by the European Parliament ([2]), it is difficult to establish a direct link between climate change and migration. To date, there is neither a scientifically-agreed methodology to determine the number of displaced people due to climate change, nor an agreed definition for such migration. However, what most experts agree on is that most of those affected will stay in their countries and regions of origin ([3]).

The Commission has already contributed to the examination of the problem, for example through the project on Environmental Change and Forced Migration Scenarios ([4]). The Commission intends to present a Commission Staff Working Paper on this issue, focusing on the link between climate change, migration and development, as part of the Adaptation Strategy package that will be adopted during spring 2013.

([1]) The joint paper prepared by the High Representative and the European Commission was presented to the European Council and to the European Parliament's Sub-Committee on Security and Defence in March 2008 and is available at: http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/cfsp/doc/climate _change_international_security_2008_en.pdf
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/de/studiesdownload.html?languageDocument=EN&file=60931
([3]) See e.g. Foresight: Migration and Global Environmental Change (2011) Final Project Report. The Government Office for Science, London.
([4]) http://www.each-for.eu/index.php?module=main

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006605/12
to the Commission
Chris Davies (ALDE)
(2 July 2012)

Subject: NER 300 — Unspent allocations

The monetisation by the European Investment Bank of the first tranche of 200 million EU carbon allowances (EUAs), which is intended to provide financial support for carbon capture and storage (CCS) and innovative renewable projects, is currently taking place.

Can the Commission confirm that any unspent or unallocated monies from this stage of the NER 300 process will be added to the budget that will become available from the second tranche sale of the remaining 100 millions EUAs?

Has any procedure been determined for the use of any monies that then remain unspent or unallocated, or can the Commission indicate how a procedure for the use of such monies may be determined?

Answer given by Ms Hedegaard on behalf of the Commission
(23 August 2012)

Yes, the Commission confirms that money unspent in the first call will be added to the funds available for the second call. No specific procedure is needed for this, as it is already provided for in the NER300 Decision.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-006606/12
an die Kommission
Barbara Lochbihler (Verts/ALE)
(2. Juli 2012)

Betrifft: Verwendung von Propofol bei Hinrichtungen in Missouri

Am 17. Mai kündigte der US-Bundesstaat Missouri an, dass er zur Durchführung der Hinrichtung von zum Tode verurteilten Gefangenen auf Propofol umsteigen wird. Verschiedenen Quellen zufolge erwägen weitere US-Bundesstaaten, dem Beispiel Missouris zu folgen. Seit der Einführung von Ausfuhrverboten und Kontrollmechanismen durch die EU, die Auswirkungen auf Unternehmen wie Lundbeck haben, sind nämlich mehrere bisher für tödliche Injektionen genutzte Präparate wie Thiopental und Pentobarbital in den USA knapp geworden.

Einer der wichtigsten Exporteure von Propofol ist das deutsche Unternehmen Fresenius Kabi. Angesichts des Beschlusses des US-Bundesstaates Missouri könnte Fresenius Kabi im Hinblick auf Pharmaka zu Hinrichtungszwecken zum Hauptlieferanten der Todestrakte in den USA werden. Ich habe mich bereits an das Unternehmen gewendet und vorgeschlagen, dass es interne Kontrollmechanismen und vertragliche Schutzklauseln einführen sollte, um sicherzustellen, dass sich der Vertrieb von Propofol ausschließlich an medizinische und pharmazeutische Einrichtungen richtet und Gefängnisapotheken davon ausgeschlossen sind. Die Kommission kann diese Bemühungen allerdings unterstützen, wie die Beispiele Thiopental und Pentobarbital zeigen.

Durch die Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1236/2005 des Rates vom 27. Juni 2005 ist der internationale Handel mit Ausrüstungsgegenständen, die keinen anderen praktischen Nutzen haben als die Verwendung zur Vollstreckung der Todesstrafe, zu Folter oder zu anderen grausamen, unmenschlichen oder erniedrigenden Formen von Behandlung oder Strafe, untersagt.

Teilt die Kommission die Auffassung, dass die unmittelbare oder mittelbare Ausfuhr von Propofol oder einem anderen gleichwertigen Arzneimittel, das zur Hinrichtung von zum Tode verurteilten Gefangenen verwendet werden soll, durch ein europäisches Pharmaunternehmen in die USA gegen die genannte Verordnung verstößt?

Beabsichtigt die Kommission, Propofol in Anhang II der genannten Verordnung aufzunehmen, damit jedem Mitgliedstaat Ausfuhren dieses Medikaments generell untersagt sind, sofern die ausschließliche Nutzung für medizinische Zwecke nicht nachgewiesen werden kann? Falls ja: Wann beabsichtigt sie, aktiv zu werden? Falls nicht: weshalb nicht?

Antwort von Frau Catherine Ashton — Hohe Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin im Namen der Kommission
(28. August 2012)

Die Kommission hat am 20. Dezember 2011 die Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1236/2005 des Rates betreffend den Handel mit bestimmten Gütern, die zur Vollstreckung der Todesstrafe, zu Folter oder zu anderer grausamer, unmenschlicher oder erniedrigender Behandlung oder Strafe verwendet werden könnten ([1]), geändert ([2]). Damit wird die Ausfuhr von kurz- und mittelfristig wirkenden Barbiturat-Anästhetika, die für die Hinrichtung von Menschen durch die Verabreichung letaler Injektionen eingesetzt werden könnten, nun kontrolliert.

Mit der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1236/2005 soll sichergestellt werden, dass Wirtschaftsakteure der EU nicht von einem Handel profitieren, der Praktiken fördert bzw. erleichtert, die mit den einschlägigen Leitlinien und der Charta der Grundrechte der Europäischen Union unvereinbar sind. Da ein solcher Handel gegen die öffentliche Moral verstößt, sollten die Arzneimittelhersteller der EU diesen unterlassen.

US-Medienberichten vom Mai 2012 zufolge beabsichtigt ein US-Bundesstaat, in Zukunft Propofol, ein Arzneimittelprodukt, das derzeit nicht der EU-Ausfuhrkontrolle unterliegt, für Hinrichtungen einzusetzen. Die Kommission wird die Entwicklung in Bezug auf die tatsächliche Lieferung von Propofol durch Hersteller oder Händler der EU an ausländische Behörden, die mit Hinrichtungen beauftragt sind, aufmerksam verfolgen und eine Änderung von Anhang III vorschlagen, um alle Ausfuhren von Propofol kontrollieren zu können, sollte sich die Verwendung des Arzneimittels für Hinrichtungszwecke bestätigen.

Darüber hinaus wird die Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1236/2005 derzeit daraufhin überprüft, ob möglicherweise zusätzliche Maßnahmen erforderlich sind, um sicherzustellen, dass die Wirtschaftsakteure der EU von jeglichem Handel, der die Todesstrafe in anderen Ländern fördert bzw. erleichtert, absehen.

([1]) ABl. L 200 vom 30.7.2005, S. 1.
([2]) Durchführungsverordnung (EU) Nr. 1352/2011 der Kommission, ABl. L 338 vom 21.12.2011.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006606/12
to the Commission
Barbara Lochbihler (Verts/ALE)
(2 July 2012)

Subject: Use of propofol for executions in Missouri

On 17 May, the American state of Missouri announced that it would switch to propofol for the execution of prisoners on death row. According to various sources, other states in the US may follow Missouri's decision. Indeed, several products hitherto used for lethal injections — such as thiopental and pentobarbital — have become scarce in the US, following the establishment of export bans and control mechanisms by the EU, affecting companies such as Lundbeck.

One of the most important exporters of propofol is the German company Fresenius Kabi. Given Missouri's decision, Fresenius Kabi risks becoming the prime supplier of execution drugs to US death rows. I have already contacted the company and suggested it should introduce internal control mechanisms and contractual safeguard clauses to ensure that propofol is sold exclusively to medical and pharmaceutical institutions, not including prison pharmacies. Nevertheless, as the examples of thiopental and pentobarbital demonstrate, the Commission can support these endeavours.

Council Regulation (EC) No 1236/2005 of 27 June 2005 prohibits international trade in equipment that has no other practical purpose than its use for capital punishment, torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading forms of treatment or punishment.

In view of the above:

Does the Commission agree that the direct or indirect export by a European pharmaceutical company of propofol or an equivalent drug to the US for purposes of use in the execution of prisoners sentenced to death violates the above regulation?

Is the Commission planning to add propofol to Annex II of the above regulation, with a view to prohibiting all exports of that drug by any Member State where purely medical use cannot be proved? If so, when does it plan to act? If not, why?

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

On 20 December 2011 the Commission amended ([1]) Council Regulation (EC) No 1236/2005 concerning trade in certain goods which could be used for capital punishment, torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment ([2]). As a result export controls are now applied to short and intermediate acting barbiturate anaesthetic agents, which could be used for the execution of human beings by means of lethal injection.

Regulation (EC) No 1236/2005 is intended to ensure that EU economic operators do not derive any benefits from trade which either promotes or facilitates practises which are not compatible with the relevant EU Guidelines and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU. Since such trade is in breach of public morals, EU manufacturers of pharmaceuticals ought to refrain from it

In May 2012 US media reported that one US State plans to start using propofol, a pharmaceutical product which is currently not subject to EU export controls, for executions. The Commission will closely follow developments in relation to actual supplies of propofol by EU manufacturers or traders to foreign authorities in charge of executions and shall propose to amend Annex III in order to control all exports of propofol, if the use of such drug for executions purposes was to be confirmed.

Furthermore, Regulation (EC) No 1236/2005 is currently being reviewed to assess whether additional measures might be necessary to ensure that EU economic operators refrain from trade which either promotes or otherwise facilitates capital punishment in foreign countries.

([1]) Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1352/2011, OJ L 338, 21.12.2011.
([2]) OJ L 200, 30.7.2005, p. 1.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-006607/12
à la Commission
Catherine Grèze (Verts/ALE)
(2 juillet 2012)

Objet: Stockage de gaz à Pouillon dans les Landes (France)

À Pouillon, dans le département français des Landes, EDF, la principale entreprise de production et de fourniture d'électricité en France, porte le projet dit «Salins des Landes». Il s'agit du stockage de gaz naturel (600 millions de m^3) dans des cavités creusées dans le sel à plus de 1 000 mètres de profondeur. Pour être formées, ces cavités sont amenées à être lessivées par d'importantes quantités d'eau de mer acheminées par une conduite depuis l'océan, puis évacuées vers celui-ci via un «saumoduc» construit en parallèle. Ce projet, chiffré à 650 millions d'euros, a pour but d'alimenter les centrales thermiques produisant de l'électricité grâce à du gaz importé, acheté à bas coût en été et revendu en hiver.

Ces énormes tuyaux traverseront une région essentiellement agricole et forestière ainsi que de nombreux sites classés Natura 2000 (FR7200720, FR7200727, FR7200717, FR7200711, FR7200718 et FR7200712). À l'arrivée, la saumure rejetée en importantes quantités (1 000 m^3/h) dans l'océan menacera la biodiversité marine locale, d'autant plus qu'il ne s'agira pas à 100 % de chlorure de sodium et que nous n'avons pas de données précises sur la composition des rejets envisagés. Enfin, le chantier en cours, notamment les forages d'exploration, n'est pas non plus sans impact: il affecte le site Natura 2000 FR7212020 «Plateau aquitain et landais».

Les citoyens, les élus, les associations, les pêcheurs et la chambre de commerce et d'industrie (CCI) ont exprimé leurs oppositions et leurs vives inquiétudes lors d'un débat public tendu qui s'est achevé dans un manque évident de transparence. Pourtant, le 11 juin dernier, EDF a annoncé la poursuite de la phase d'analyse de son projet.

De toute évidence, celui-ci va à l'encontre de la directive-cadre «Stratégie pour le milieu marin» (2008/56/CE) qui demande impérativement le maintien du bon état écologique des fonds marins de la façade maritime, mais aussi des textes européens concernant les sites Natura 2000, à savoir les directives «Habitats» (92/43/CEE) et «Oiseaux» (79/409/CEE), puisqu'il y a un risque de «détérioration et d'élimination de la faune et de la flore présentes» sur ces sites.

Eu égard à ce qui précède, la Commission est invitée à répondre aux questions suivantes:

1. Est-elle informée de l'existence de ce projet et de ses impacts sur l'environnement?

2. Qu'entend-elle faire pour que les directives précitées soient respectées?

Réponse donnée par M. Potočnik au nom de la Commission
(23 août 2012)

La Commission a été informée du projet à travers la presse. En vertu de l'article 6 de la directive «Habitats» (92/43/CEE) ([1]), tout projet susceptible d'avoir une incidence significative sur un site désigné au titre de la directive «Habitats» ou de la directive «Oiseaux» (2009/147/CE) ([2]) fait obligatoirement l'objet d'une évaluation appropriée de ses incidences sur le site au regard des objectifs de conservation de ce dernier. Si les conclusions de l'évaluation sont négatives, le projet ne peut être mené à bien, sauf si, en l'absence de solutions alternatives, il doit être réalisé pour des raisons impératives d'intérêt public majeur. Il appartient à la France de veiller à ce que le projet respecte pleinement ces dispositions de la directive «Habitats». La Commission va demander davantage d'informations sur ce projet. Elle ne peut intervenir que si l'existence d'une infraction est clairement démontrée.

L'objectif premier de la directive-cadre «Stratégie pour le milieu marin» (MSFD) ([3]) consiste à garantir un bon état écologique des eaux marines de l'UE d'ici à 2020. Le «bon état écologique» est défini par les États membres sur la base de l'évaluation initiale qu'ils réalisent concernant l'état de leurs eaux marines, en répertoriant les principales pressions qui s'exercent sur le milieu marin, y compris celles dues aux activités humaines telles que l'installation mentionnée par l'Honorable Parlementaire. Cette définition ne s'applique pas à proprement parler aux différentes installations, même si les États membres peuvent prévoir des mesures visant à en atténuer l'incidence dans le cadre des programmes de mesures qu'ils sont tenus d'élaborer pour 2016 en vertu de la MSFD.

([1]) JO L 206 du 22.7.1992.
([2]) JO L 20 du 26.1.2010.
([3]) JO L 164 du 25.6.08.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006607/12
to the Commission
Catherine Grèze (Verts/ALE)
(2 July 2012)

Subject: Gas storage at Pouillon in the Landes (France)

At Pouillon, in the French department of the Landes, EDF, France's leading electricity producer and supplier, is carrying out a project called 'Salins des Landes'. It involves the storage of natural gas (600 million m3) in cavities hollowed out in the salt over 1000 metres below the surface. In order to form these cavities, they are washed out by large quantities of seawater transported through a pipeline from the Atlantic, and then evacuated via a 'brine pipeline' built alongside the first pipeline. This project, which will cost an estimated EUR 650 million, is intended to feed power plants that generate electricity, using imported gas which is purchased at low cost in summer and sold again in the winter.

These huge pipelines will pass through a predominantly agricultural and forest region and several Natura 2000-designated sites (FR7200720, FR7200727, FR7200717, FR7200711, FR7200718 and FR7200712). When the large quantities of brine (1 000 m3/h) are discharged into the Atlantic, this will threaten local marine biodiversity, especially since it will not be 100% sodium chloride — no precise data is available on the composition of planned discharge. Finally, the work currently under way, in particular exploratory drilling, is also having an impact: it is affecting the Natura 2000 site FR7212020 'the Aquitaine and Landes Plateau'.

Citizens, elected officials, associations, fishermen and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) voiced their objections and their strong concerns about these developments at tense public debate which ended in a clear lack of transparency. Nevertheless, on 11 June, EDF announced that the analysis phase of the project was continuing.

The project is clearly at odds with the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC) which requires that the good ecological status of the seabed be preserved, and also with European texts on Natura 2000 sites, namely the 'Habitats' (92/43/EEC) and 'Birds' (79/409/EEC) Directives, since there is a risk of a 'deterioration and elimination of fauna and flora present' on these sites.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Is it aware of the existence of this project and its impact on the environment?

2. What will it do to ensure that the above Directives are respected?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(23 August 2012)

The Commission has been informed about the project via the press. Under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC ([1])), any project likely to have a significant impact on a site designated under the Habitats or the Birds Directives (2009/147/EC ([2])) shall be subject to an appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. If the conclusions of the assessment are negative, the project cannot be carried out unless, in the absence of alternative solutions, it is motivated by imperative reasons of overriding public interest. It is up to France to ensure that the project fully complies with these provisions of the Habitats Directive. The Commission will seek further information on the project. It can only intervene if it is provided clear evidence of breach of law.

The overarching goal of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD ([3])) is to ensure good environmental status of EU marine waters by 2020. Good Environmental Status is defined by Member States, based on their initial assessment of the state of their marine waters, identifying the main pressures on the marine environment, including pressures arising from human activities, such as the installation mentioned by the Honourable Member. It does not as such apply to individual installations, though Member States may want to consider actions to address their impact in the programmes of measures to be developed in the framework of the MSFD by 2016.

([1]) OJ L 206, 22.7.1992.
([2]) OJ L 20, 26.1.2010.
([3]) OJ L 164, 25.6.2008.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-006608/12
à la Commission
Catherine Grèze (Verts/ALE)
(2 juillet 2012)

Objet: Artificialisation des terres dans le Lot-et-Garonne

En prévision de l'arrivée hypothétique de la ligne à grande vitesse (LGV) Bordeaux-Toulouse et de la gare «exurbanisée» d'Agen (comme l'atteste le SCOT Lot-et-Garonne), les communautés d'Agglomération d'Agen et de Communes de Laplume en Bruilhois ont décidé de créer une zone d'aménagement différé (ZAD). Le but affiché est de maîtriser la pression foncière actuelle sur la zone dans l'optique d'ouvrir la voie à un futur développement économique de ladite zone.

Ce projet pose un problème majeur: il nécessiterait de mobiliser pas moins de 210 hectares de terres agricoles entre l'autoroute A62 et le hameau de Goulard: autant de sols très riches, jusque-là utilisés pour les cultures, qui seraient artificialisés. Pourtant, la lutte contre l'artificialisation (ou imperméabilisation) des sols est l'un des objectifs de l'Union européenne. Le 12 avril dernier, la Commission européenne a publié de nouvelles lignes directrices afin de limiter l'imperméabilisation des sols. Comme le souligne la Commission, ce phénomène «affecte souvent les terres agricoles fertiles, menace la diversité biologique, accroît le risque d'inondation et de raréfaction des ressources en eau et contribue au réchauffement climatique».

Par ailleurs, cette future zone économique ne correspond nullement aux besoins, puisque le Schéma de Cohérence Territoriale (SCOT) du Pays de l'Agenais recense au minimum 240 hectares disponibles de surfaces à vocation industrielle. Pire, l'Agropole, qui est le site économique phare de la région, peut encore compter sur une vingtaine d'hectares, qui seront disponibles avec l'achat d'un terrain militaire adjacent. Une fois encore, la Commission s'est prononcée sur le sujet: les 10 et 11 mai 2012, elle a organisé, à Bruxelles, une conférence sur l'imperméabilisation et la remise en état des sols. Pour limiter le grignotage des terres agricoles par l'urbanisation, les services de la Commission recommandent notamment la réutilisation des zones déjà bâties.

1. La Commission est-elle informée de ce projet?

2. Comment compte-t-elle s'assurer que les objectifs européens précités sont respectés?

3. Entend-t-elle recommander une étude sur les incidences socioéconomiques du projet ainsi qu'un gel immédiat de ce dernier en attendant les résultats?

Réponse donnée par M. Potočnik au nom de la Commission
(16 août 2012)

1. La Commission n'a pas connaissance du projet mentionné par l'Honorable Parlementaire.

2. Les taux actuels d'artificialisation des sols dans l'UE ne sont pas tenables. Aussi l'accent a-t-il été mis sur cette question dans la «feuille de route pour une Europe efficace dans l'utilisation des ressources» ([1]), qui a abouti cette année à la publication d'un document de travail des services de la Commission définissant des lignes directrices sur les meilleures pratiques pour limiter, atténuer ou compenser l'imperméabilisation des sols ([2]). Par ailleurs, les plans et les programmes élaborés pour l'aménagement du territoire urbain et rural ou l'affectation des sols sont couverts par la directive 2001/42/EC ([3]) relative à l'évaluation des incidences de certains plans et programmes sur l'environnement (la «directive EES»). La directive EES a pour objectif de contribuer à l'intégration des considérations en matière de protection de l'environnement dans l'élaboration et l'adoption de plans et de programmes susceptibles d'avoir des incidences notables sur l'environnement.

3. La Commission ne peut s'appuyer sur aucune base juridique existante pour recommander qu'une étude soit menée sur les incidences socioéconomiques de la future zone économique ou que le projet soit immédiatement suspendu. Cependant, dans le cas où le projet mentionné par l'Honorable Parlementaire relèverait de la directive EES, la procédure EES comprend l'élaboration d'un rapport sur l'environnement décrivant et évaluant les incidences notables probables sur l'environnement et d'autres solutions réalistes, l'organisation de consultations du public et des autorités environnementales, et enfin, la communication d'informations sur la décision une fois que le plan ou le programme est adopté.

([1]) COM(2011) 571 final.
([2]) SWD(2012) 101.
([3]) JO L 197 du 21.7.2001.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006608/12
to the Commission
Catherine Grèze (Verts/ALE)
(2 July 2012)

Subject: Land development in Lot-et-Garonne

In anticipation of the possible construction of the Bordeaux-Toulouse high-speed line (HSL) and of a station outside the urban centre of Agen (as evidenced by the SCOT [Regional Planning Consistency Plan] for the Lot-et-Garonne), communities of the agglomeration of Agen and the Communes of Laplume in Bruilhois have decided to create a ZAD (Designated Development Area). The declared aim is to manage the current real estate pressure on the area in order to allow its future economic development.

This project poses a major problem: it would need no less than 210 hectares of farmland between the A62 motorway and the hamlet of Goulard where the soil is very rich and has so far been used for growing for crops. However, combating land development (or soil sealing) is one of the objectives of the European Union. On April 12, the European Commission issued new guidelines to limit soil sealing. As it points out, this phenomenon 'often affects fertile agricultural land, puts biodiversity at risk, increases the risk of flooding and water scarcity and contributes to global warming.'

Moreover, this future economic zone in no way meets requirements, since the SCOT for the Agen region has identified at least 240 hectares of industrial land available. Furthermore, the Agropole, which is the flagship business location in the region, can still count on twenty hectares, which will become available with the purchase of an adjacent military site. Here too the Commission has expressed its views on the subject: on 10 and 11 May 2012, it organised a conference in Brussels on soil remediation and soil sealing. To limit the encroachment on farmland by urban development, the Commission services have recommend in particular the reuse of areas that have already been built on.

1. Is the Commission aware of this project?

2. How will it ensure that the abovementioned European objectives are respected?

3. Does it intend to recommend a drawing up a study on the socioeconomic impact of the project and an immediate suspension of the project until the findings of this study are made available?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(16 August 2012)

1. The Commission is not aware of the plan mentioned by the Honourable Member.

2. Current land take rates in the EU are unsustainable. Hence, the focus on land take in the Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe ([1]), leading this year to the publication of a Commission Staff Working Document containing guidelines on best practice to limit, mitigate or compensate soil sealing ([2]). Moreover, plans and programmes which are prepared for town and country planning or land use are covered by Directive 2001/42/EC ([3]) on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (the SEA Directive). The objective of the SEA Directive is to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes likely to have significant effects on environment.

3. There is no legal basis for the Commission to recommend drawing up a study on the socioeconomic impact of the future economic zone or an immediate suspension of the project. However, should the plan mentioned by the Honourable Member be subject to the SEA Directive, the SEA procedure includes the preparation of an environmental report in which the likely significant effects on the environment and reasonable alternatives are identified and evaluated, the organisation of consultations of the public and of the environmental authorities, and finally information on the decision once the plan or programme is adopted.

([1]) COM(2011) 571 final.
([2]) SWD(2012) 101.
([3]) OJ L 197, 21.7.2001.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006609/12
alla Commissione
Matteo Salvini (EFD)
(2 luglio 2012)

Oggetto: Concorrenza nel settore della certificazione linguistica

Col decreto Profumo, del 7 marzo 2012, il Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca (MIUR) ha previsto che saranno solo i governi dei paesi dove la lingua straniera è la lingua ufficiale a indicare gli enti certificatori. In pratica, nessun istituto italiano potrà riconoscere alcun ente di certificazione di lingua inglese, sebbene operante da tempo.

Considerato che la lingua inglese è quella più diffusa a livello europeo e mondiale, il governo italiano ha determinato un monopolio a favore del governo inglese, il quale probabilmente riconoscerà esclusivamente gli istituti inglesi.

Inoltre, il 28 febbraio 2012, il MIUR ha firmato un protocollo d'intesa esclusivamente con un ente straniero, l'Università di Cambridge, nonostante l'Autorità garante della concorrenza e del mercato avesse espresso, col parere n. 633 del 2005, il carattere anticoncorrenziale di tali protocolli.

Ciò premesso, può la Commissione verificare se, in questo caso, il MIUR ha rispettato il principio di libera concorrenza dell'UE, tenendo in considerazione il fatto che l'esclusione dalla lista di istituti quali ad esempio il British Institutes porterà alla perdita di posti di lavoro che, solo per il citato esempio del British Institutes, sono stimati a circa 1 000?

Risposta di Joaquín Almunia a nome della Commissione
(8 agosto 2012)

Il governo italiano ha facoltà di riconoscere diritti speciali o esclusivi a enti di sua scelta nel settore della certificazione linguistica. Gli enti devono rispettare le norme dell'UE in materia di concorrenza nella misura in cui l'applicazione delle regole non ostacoli l'esecuzione dei loro compiti specifici.

Considerando che il protocollo d'intesa concluso fra il MIUR e l'Università di Cambridge riguarda il mercato italiano delle certificazioni linguistiche, l'Autorità garante della concorrenza e del mercato sembra la più adatta a trattare eventuali casi di violazione della normativa dell'UE in materia di concorrenza, soprattutto visto che si è già pronunciata su un caso simile.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006609/12
to the Commission
Matteo Salvini (EFD)
(2 July 2012)

Subject: Competition in the linguistic certification sector

Under the Profumo decree, issued on 7 March 2012 (by the Minister, Francesco Profumo), the Italian Ministry for Education, Universities, and Research (MIUR) has laid down a rule to the effect that the power to specify certifying bodies lies solely with the government of the country where a given foreign language (i.e. not Italian) is the official language. This means in practice that no Italian institute will be able to recognise an English-language certifying body, not even one that has been operating for a long time.

Given that English is the most widely used language in Europe and the world, the Italian Government has created a monopoly in favour of the British Government, which is likely to recognise British institutes only.

Furthermore, on 28 February 2012 the MIUR signed a memorandum of understanding with just one foreign institution, the University of Cambridge, even though the Italian competition authority had previously ruled, in an opinion (No 633) delivered in 2005, that arrangements of that kind are anti-competitive.

Can the Commission ascertain whether the MIUR has, in this instance, observed the principle of free competition, bearing in mind that exclusion from the list will entail job losses, which, in the case of, say, 'British Institutes' — to name but one example — will involve an estimated 1 000 jobs?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(8 August 2012)

The Italian Government may grant special or exclusive rights to language certification bodies of its choice. Such bodies are subject to EU competition rules in so far as the application of such rules does not obstruct the performance of the particular tasks assigned to them.

Considering that the memorandum of understanding between the MIUR and the University of Cambridge concerns the Italian market for language certification, the Italian competition authority (L'Autorità Garante della Concorrenza e del Mercato) seems well placed to deal with possible infringements of EU competition rules, in particular since the Autorità has previously ruled on a similar case.

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