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OTÁZKY NA PÍSOMNÉ ZODPOVEDANIE

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(Pozri poznámku pre čitateľa)

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(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-000163/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(9 janvier 2013)

Objet: Accord sur les nouvelles règles de liquidité bancaire

Le Comité de Bâle vient d'accorder aux banques quatre années supplémentaires pour mettre en place un filet de sécurité contre les troubles financiers à venir et a permis d'élargir la liste des produits financiers, dont des actions, des titres adossés à des créances hypothécaires et des obligations d'entreprise à des taux moins élevés.

La règle en matière de liquidité fait partie du cadre réglementaire de Bâle III qui imposera aux banques de lever jusqu'à trois fois plus de fonds propres qu'avant la crise en vue d'éviter que les contribuables ne doivent les renflouer.

En vertu de cet accord, considéré comme une victoire du secteur financier, les banques doivent se conformer à cette règle avant 2019 et peuvent dorénavant inclure une plus grande palette d'actifs à risque dans les réserves.

Les banques se sont plaintes qu'elles ne pouvaient pas respecter la date butoir de janvier 2015 pour mettre en œuvre la nouvelle règle. Celle-ci consiste à la fois en la mise en place d'un nombre minimum d'actifs faciles à vendre, connu sous le nom de ratio de couverture de liquidités et en l'apport de crédit aux entreprises et aux consommateurs.

1. Seulement 11 des pays membres du G20 ont respecté les délais d'application des accords de Bâle III fixés au mois de décembre. Les États-Unis et l'Union européenne ne sont pas parvenus à les mettre en œuvre. Qu'est ce que la Commission compte mettre en place pour pallier cette situation?

2. Les négociations sur une législation de l'UE relative à la mise en œuvre des accords de Bâle III ont repris. Affaiblir davantage les règles en matière de liquidité, comme le plaident certains législateurs, en permettant aux banques d'inclure tout actif accepté comme garantie par les banques centrales comporte quels avantages et quels risques?

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-000502/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(18 janvier 2013)

Objet: Accord sur les nouvelles règles de liquidité bancaire

Le Comité de Bâle vient d'accorder aux banques quatre années supplémentaires pour mettre en place un filet de sécurité contre les troubles financiers à venir et a permis d'élargir la liste des produits financiers, dont des actions, des titres adossés à des créances hypothécaires et des obligations d'entreprise à des taux moins élevés.

La règle en matière de liquidité fait partie du cadre réglementaire de Bâle III qui imposera aux banques de lever jusqu'à trois fois plus de fonds propres qu'avant la crise en vue d'éviter que les contribuables ne doivent les renflouer.

En vertu de cet accord, considéré comme une victoire du secteur financier, les banques doivent se conformer à cette règle avant 2019 et peuvent dorénavant inclure une plus grande palette d'actifs à risque dans les réserves.

Les banques se sont plaintes qu'elles ne pouvaient pas respecter la date butoir de janvier 2015 pour mettre en œuvre la nouvelle règle. Celle-ci consiste à la fois en la mise en place d'un nombre minimum d'actifs faciles à vendre, connu sous le nom de ratio de couverture de liquidités et en l'apport de crédit aux entreprises et aux consommateurs.

1. Seulement 11 des pays membres du G20 ont respecté les délais d'application des accords de Bâle III fixés au mois de décembre. Les États-Unis et l'Union européenne ne sont pas parvenus à les mettre en œuvre. Qu'est ce que la Commission compte mettre en place pour pallier à cette situation?

2. Les négociations sur une législation de l'UE relative à la mise en œuvre des accords de Bâle III ont repris. Quels sont les avantages et les risques liés à un nouvel affaiblissement des règles en matière de liquidité, comme le plaident certains législateurs, en permettant aux banques d'inclure tout actif accepté comme garantie par les banques centrales?

Réponse commune donnée par M. Barnier au nom de la Commission
(1er mars 2013)

La mise en œuvre de l'accord de Bâle III est essentielle pour renforcer la résilience du système financier au niveau mondial. La Commission estime qu'il est de la plus haute importance que l'UE et les États-Unis déploient tous les efforts nécessaires pour que le nouveau cadre soit correctement mis en œuvre en parallèle sur leurs territoires respectifs, afin de garantir aux établissements de crédit européens et américains des conditions équivalentes. Dans l'UE, le processus de mise en œuvre entre dans sa phase finale; en ce qui concerne les États-Unis, la Commission va continuer à insister pour que la mise en œuvre au niveau mondial soit réalisée correctement et dans les délais prévus.

Les avis divergent en ce qui concerne les actifs pouvant être acceptés en tant que garantie par les banques centrales en application des nouvelles règles en matière de liquidité prévues par l'accord de Bâle. Ces dernières visent à encourager un recours accru aux marchés privés lorsque les banques centrales sont des prêteurs en dernier ressort et non en premier ressort. Toutefois, certains observateurs considèrent qu'en Europe, les marchés financiers privés disposant de suffisamment d'actifs liquides ne sont pas aussi développés que dans d'autres régions et que cette différence structurelle crée un handicap concurrentiel. Une baisse de la liquidité du marché des capitaux pourrait avoir une incidence sur la position de liquidité des banques et amener ces dernières à réduire leur ratio d'endettement et leur activité de prêt à l'économie réelle. De la même manière, d'autres observateurs redoutent que les nouvelles règles ne portent atteinte à la transmission efficace de la politique monétaire des banques centrales. Enfin, en dernière analyse, seules les banques centrales peuvent garantir la liquidité. Par conséquent, l'éligibilité des actifs pouvant être acceptés en tant que garantie est un problème complexe qui sera examiné cette année par un groupe de travail ad hoc du Comité de Bâle.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000163/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(9 January 2013)

Subject: Agreement on new liquidity rules for banks

The Basel Committee on Banking Supervision recently gave banks a further four years in which to introduce a safety net designed to make them less vulnerable to future economic crises. It has also said that new types of easy-to-sell assets, including shares, mortgage-backed securities and corporate bonds, will be counted towards liquidity funds.

These liquidity rules are part of the Basel III guidelines, which require banks to hold up to three times more liquid funds than was the case prior to the economic crisis, in an effort to ensure that taxpayers do not have to bail them out again in future.

Regarded as a triumph for the financial sector, the agreement means that banks now have until 2019 to comply with the liquidity rules. In addition, they can already start including a wider range of high-risk assets in their liquid funds.

Under the liquidity rules, which banks had complained they would not be able to introduce by the original deadline of January 2015, banks have to hold a minimum volume of easy-to-sell assets (known as the liquidity coverage ratio) and increase lending to businesses and individuals.

1. Only 11 G20 Member States implemented the Basel III agreement by the December 2012 deadline. The United States and the EU failed to do so. What is the Commission going to do to remedy this state of affairs?

2. Negotiations on drafting EU legislation on the implementation of the Basel III agreement have resumed. Some lawmakers are calling for the liquidity rules to be further relaxed by allowing banks to count towards their liquid funds any assets that are accepted as collateral by central banks. What are the benefits and risks of this strategy?

Question for written answer E-000502/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(18 January 2013)

Subject: Agreement on new liquidity rules for banks

The Basel Committee on Banking Supervision recently gave banks a further four years to introduce a safety net designed to make them less vulnerable to future economic crises. It has also said that new types of easy-to-sell assets, including shares, mortgage-backed securities and corporate bonds, will be counted towards liquidity funds.

These liquidity rules are part of the Basel III guidelines, which require banks to hold up to three times more liquid funds than was the case prior to the economic crisis, in an effort to ensure that taxpayers do not have to bail them out again in future.

Regarded as a triumph for the financial sector, the agreement means that banks now have until 2019 to comply with the liquidity rules. In addition, they can already start including a wider range of high-risk assets in their liquidity funds.

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1. Only 11 G20 Member States implemented the Basel III agreement by the December 2012 deadline. The United States and the EU failed to do so. What is the Commission going to do to remedy this state of affairs?

2. Negotiations on drafting EU legislation on the implementation of the Basel III agreement have resumed. What are the benefits and risks of further watering down the liquidity rules, as some parliamentarians are arguing for, by allowing banks to include any asset accepted as a guarantee by central banks?

Joint answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(1 March 2013)

The implementation of the Basel III agreement is essential to strengthening the resilience of the financial system at global level. The Commission considers of critical importance that both EU and US jurisdictions do all the efforts necessary to properly implement the new framework in parallel in order to ensure a level playing field for EU and US credit institutions. The EU implementation is reaching the final stage; as regards the US, the Commission will continue calling for a proper and timely implementation at global level.

Views differ on asset eligibility accepted as collateral by central banks under the new Basel liquidity rules. These aim at encouraging greater reliance on private markets where central banks are lenders of last and not first resort. However, some observers consider that Europe does not have as extensively developed private financial markets with sufficient liquid assets as other jurisdictions and that this structural difference causes competitive disadvantage. Falling capital market liquidity could impact banks liquidity positions leading them to deleverage and reduce lending to the real economy. Similarly, other observers worry that the new rules may impinge on the efficient transmission of monetary policy by central banks. Finally, in extremis only the central bank can guarantee liquidity. Therefore, central bank collateral eligibility is a complicated issue which will be examined this year by a dedicated Basel Committee task force.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000315/13
à Comissão
Elisa Ferreira (S&D)
(14 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: Participação do Estado português na operação de recapitalização do BANIF — Banco Internacional do Funchal, S.A.

Considerando:

— a apresentação pela Comissão Europeia, em 6 de junho de 2012, da proposta de *Diretiva do Parlamento Europeu e do Conselho que estabelece um regime para a recuperação e resolução das instituições de crédito e empresas de investimento* , propondo a Comissão Europeia que os Estados-Membros tenham de aplicar as respetivas normas de transposição a partir de 1 de janeiro de 2015; e

— o comunicado do Ministério das Finanças português de 31 de dezembro de 2012, em que é apresentado o plano de recapitalização do BANIF — Banco Internacional do Funchal, S.A., com os seguintes pontos principais:

«(…) A injeção de fundos públicos no Banif ascende a 1,1 mil milhões de euros e será realizada através do recurso à linha de recapitalização disponível ao abrigo do Programa de Assistência Económica e Financeira a Portugal. Após esta injeção de capital, um total de 5,6 mil milhões de euros terá sido injetado no sistema bancário privado português através da referida linha de recapitalização, com o objetivo de assegurar o acesso continuado das empresas e dos cidadãos ao crédito e, desse modo, apoiar a economia Portuguesa. (…)»;

Sendo objetivo da Comissão Europeia, ao propor a referida Diretiva, dotar os Estados-Membros de instrumentos harmonizados para fazer face a situações de fragilidade das instituições de crédito, em ordem a minimizar a utilização do dinheiro dos contribuintes para suportar perdas do setor bancário,

Pode a Comissão clarificar se, com o início de vigência das normas de transposição da Diretiva sobre recuperação e resolução:

— Continuarão a ser possíveis situações análogas à supramencionada participação do Estado português na operação de recapitalização do BANIF — Banco Internacional do Funchal, S.A.?

— Em caso de resposta afirmativa à questão anterior, em que medida e com que condições serão tais situações possíveis?

Resposta dada por Michel Barnier em nome da Comissão
(8 de março de 2013)

O artigo 31.° da DRRB ([1]) prevê um conjunto mínimo de instrumentos de resolução aos quais os Estados-Membros podem recorrer e que incluem o instrumento de venda, a utilização de uma instituição de transição, o instrumento de segregação de ativos e o instrumento de resgate interno (*bail-in*). A DRRB não impede que os Estados-Membros utilizem outros instrumentos de resolução, incluindo injeções de capital, desde que cumpram os princípios e as condições da diretiva. Em particular, e antes que possa haver uma injeção de dinheiros públicos, a DRRB impõe que:

— Uma instituição que recorra a apoio financeiro público seja declarada como uma instituição em situação ou em risco de colapso. Desta forma, fica assegurado que não será prestado qualquer apoio financeiro sem que seja lançado o processo de reestruturação previsto no enquadramento em causa.

— Os acionistas e credores deverão estar em primeiro lugar na fila para assumirem os encargos da resolução, como aconteceria de qualquer forma se a instituição fosse liquidada.

Além disso, a DRRB prevê uma série de poderes de intervenção precoce que permitirão às autoridades públicas evitar o colapso das instituições de crédito ou, no mínimo, minimizar a exposição dos fundos públicos.

([1]) Enquadramento para a recuperação e resolução de instituições de crédito e empresas de investimento, COM(2012) 280 final — 2012/0150 (COD).

Assim, a probabilidade de operações como aquela que refere, em que foram injetados capitais públicos para a resolução de uma instituição de crédito, diminuirá significativamente em resultado da reforma.

As regras da UE sobre os auxílios estatais continuam, contudo, a ser integralmente aplicáveis e a reger qualquer apoio financeiro a instituições de crédito que os Estados-Membros possam vir a equacionar no futuro.

A proposta de DRRB apresentada pela Comissão encontra-se atualmente em negociação no Parlamento Europeu e no Conselho.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000315/13
to the Commission
Elisa Ferreira (S&D)
(14 January 2013)

Subject: Portuguese state participation in recapitalising Banif — Banco Internacional do Funchal S.A.

On 6 June 2012 the Commission submitted its proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework for the recovery and resolution of credit institutions and investment firms, proposing that Member States should apply the relevant provisions transposing the directive from 1 January 2015.

The statement presenting the recapitalisation plan for Banif — Banco Internacional do Funchal, issued by the Portuguese Finance Ministry on 31 December 2012, contained the following main points:

'(…) The injection of public funds into Banif amounts to EUR 1.1 billion and will be carried out using the recapitalisation line available under the Economic and Financial Assistance Programme for Portugal. Following this injection of capital, a total of EUR 5.6 billion will have been injected into the Portuguese private banking system using this recapitalisation line, with the aim of ensuring continued access to credit for businesses and citizens and thereby supporting the Portuguese economy. (…).'

The Commission's objective in proposing the above directive is to provide the Member States with harmonised tools to tackle weaknesses in credit institutions, in order to minimise the use of taxpayers' money to support losses in the banking sector.

Can the Commission clarify whether operations such as the above Portuguese state participation in recapitalising Banif — Banco Internacional do Funchal S.A will still be possible when the provisions transposing the directive on recovery and resolution come into force?

If so, to what extent and under what conditions will such operations be possible?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(8 March 2013)

Article 31 of the proposal for the BRRD ([1]) foresees a minimum resolution toolbox for Member States, including the sale of business, the use of a bridge institution, the asset separation and the bail-in tool. The BRRD does not preclude Member States from using other resolution tools, including capital injections, as long as they comply with the principles and conditions of the BRRD. In particular, before any public money is engaged, the BRRD imposes that:

— An institution that requires extraordinary public financial support should be deemed failing or likely to fail. This will ensure that no financial support is provided without engaging into the restructuring process foreseen in the framework.

— Shareholders and creditors should be the very first in line to assume the burden of resolution, as they would anyway if that institution were to be liquidated.

Furthermore, the BRRD foresees a series of early intervention powers that would enable public authorities to prevent failure of credit institutions or, at the very least, minimise the exposure of public funds.

Therefore the likelihood of operations such as the one referred to, whereby public capital is injected for the resolution of a credit institution, should be significantly reduced as a result of the reform.

However, EU rules on state aid would remain entirely applicable, and they would continue to govern any financial support to credit institutions which Member States might contemplate in the future.

The BRRD Commission proposal is currently being negotiated in the European Parliament and in the Council.

([1]) Framework for the recovery and resolution of credit institutions and investment firms, COM/2012/0280 final — 2012/0150 (COD).

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000316/13
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Barbara Matera (PPE)
(14 gennaio 2013)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Azioni dell'Unione europea contro la violenza sulle donne in India

La condizione della donna è uno dei paradossi della cultura indiana. La società è maschilista e, mentre da un lato ci sono figure femminili, come Sonia Gandhi, presidente del Congresso nazionale indiano, che si stanno distinguendo, dall'altro molte sono le mamme e le figlie di questo paese che vivono in una condizione disperata.

C'è diversità e poca uguaglianza tra uomo e donna non per le leggi, ma a causa delle tradizioni che subordinano la giurisprudenza che nella stragrande maggioranza dei casi non ha alcun valore.

L'India continua ad essere al centro di raccapriccianti episodi di violenza sessuale che hanno provocato una vera e propria emergenza a livello politico e sociale. Manifestazioni di protesta si sono svolte in tutto il paese per settimane dopo il mortale stupro subito da una ragazza di 23 anni su un autobus a Nuova Delhi il 28 dicembre 2012. Ancor più recente è la notizia, del 1° gennaio 2013, relativa allo stupro di una bambina di soli 7 anni, violentata da un uomo che sosteneva di essere un amico di famiglia, ritrovata sul ciglio della strada piangente e dolorante; sempre lo stesso giorno a Nuova Delhi un'altra ragazza di 17 anni è stata aggredita da due ragazzi durante la festa del capodanno. Per contrastare l'ondata di violenze sessuali che ha colpito tutta l'India, il governo dell'ex territorio francese di Pondicherry ha deciso di introdurre anche l'uso obbligatorio per le studentesse di un soprabito. Il ministro dell'Istruzione, T. Thiagarajan, ha dichiarato il massimo impegno per proteggere la sicurezza delle donne indiane, proibendo persino l'utilizzo dei cellulari.

A tale proposito, chiedo al Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante:

1. L'Unione europea ha intenzione di collaborare con il governo indiano per identificare possibili soluzioni alle violazioni dei diritti delle donne, creando un organo ad hoc che abbia il compito di intervenire qualora accadessero situazioni critiche come quella in India?

2. La delegazione dell'Unione europea in India sta monitorando il deterioramento dei diritti delle donne e cercando di far attuare un inasprimento delle pene per chi commette il reato?

3. Ritiene che l'Unione europea possa organizzare in India corsi di formazione per gli agenti di polizia e di sicurezza al fine di evitare la diffusione di tali atti violenti nei confronti delle donne?

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

Già da tempo l'Unione europea coinvolge le autorità indiane e la società civile nel dibattito sulla violenza e la discriminazione nei confronti delle donne e sulle questioni di genere, in particolar modo nel quadro delle riunioni del dialogo regolare sui diritti umani tra l'UE e l'India, che si svolgono a livello locale e a cui partecipa la delegazione dell'UE, che le presiede insieme alle autorità del paese. L'Unione ha inoltre avuto contatti con le autorità indiane nella sua azione di sensibilizzazione in vista della 57ª sessione della Commissione delle Nazioni Unite sulla condizione delle donne, il cui tema prioritario è l'eliminazione e la prevenzione di ogni forma di violenza nei confronti di donne e ragazze.

Le questioni legate alle donne sono parte integrante anche delle attività di cooperazione allo sviluppo dell'UE: il benessere delle donne e delle ragazze è al centro dei programmi in materia di istruzione e di sanità, mentre numerosi progetti hanno aiutato le organizzazioni della società civile ad affrontare questioni quali la violenza contro le donne, compresi fenomeni quali la tratta di minori, i matrimoni infantili, la violenza domestica e l'HIV/AIDS. Un progetto in atto ha in particolare l'obiettivo di conferire maggiore responsabilità alle donne che occupano posti di rilievo in organismi di governance locali affinché promuovano i diritti delle donne.

Nel 1997 l'UE ha contribuito con un 1 milione di euro alla creazione di un istituto di formazione sulle questioni di genere a Delhi che permette alle donne in posizione di responsabilità di consolidare le loro capacità e offre formazioni in materia di questioni di genere a una vasta gamma di professionisti, tra cui funzionari governativi e delle forze dell'ordine. L'istituto svolge un ruolo importante nell'azione di sensibilizzazione e mobilitazione delle comunità locali per contribuire a ridurre ed eliminare la violenza in India.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000316/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Barbara Matera (PPE)
(14 January 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — European Union action against violence towards women in India

The situation of women is one of the paradoxical aspects of Indian culture. India is a male-dominated society and while there are female figures, such as Sonia Gandhi, President of the Indian National Congress Party, who stand out, there are also many mothers and daughters in India living in desperate conditions.

This difference and lack of equality between men and women is not due to regulations. It is due to traditions that take precedence over legislation which, in the overwhelming majority of cases, has no value.

India continues to be at the centre of atrocious episodes of sexual violence which have sparked a veritable political and social crisis.

Protests and demonstrations took place throughout India for weeks following the fatal rape of a 23-year old girl on a bus in New Delhi on 28 December 2012. More recently, on 1 January 2013, a young girl of only seven years was raped and beaten by a man who purported to be a family friend. She was found on the side of the road, crying and in pain.

On the same day, another girl of 17 years was attacked by two young men during New Year celebrations in New Delhi. To tackle the wave of sexual violence that has shocked the whole of India, the government of the former French territory of Puducherry decided to make overcoats compulsory for female students. The Education Minister T. Thiagarajan said that he was fully committed to protecting the safety of Indian women, even banning the use of mobile phones.

Can the Vice-President/High Representative therefore state:

1. whether the European Union intends to work with the Indian Government to identify possible solutions to the breaches of women's rights, setting up an ad-hoc body that would be charged with intervening whenever critical situations occur such as that in India?

2. whether the EU delegation in India is monitoring the deterioration of women's rights and is seeking to have harsher penalties imposed on those who commit crime?

3. whether she believes that the European Union could organise training courses in India for police and security officers in order to stop the spread of these acts of violence towards women?

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

The EU has engaged the Indian authorities and civil society for some time already on violence and discrimination against women and gender issues. This topic features prominently, in the meetings of the regular Human Rights Dialogue between the EU and India, conducted locally with the active participation of the EU Delegation as co-chair. The EU has been in contact with the Indian authorities in its outreach for the 57th Session of the UN Commission of the Status of Women. The session's priority theme is 'Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls'

Women's issues are also mainstreamed into EU's development cooperation activities: education and health-related programmes have a strong focus on women and girls' welfare, while numerous projects have helped civil society organisations to address issues such as violence against women, including trafficking and child marriage, domestic violence and HIV/AIDS. An ongoing project aims at empowering women leaders from local governance institutions to promote women's rights.

In 1997 the EU contributed EUR 1 million to the establishment of a Gender Training Institute in Delhi which provides capacity building for women leaders and gender training for a wide range of professionals, including government and law enforcement officials. This Institute plays an important role in the sensitisation and mobilisation of grassroots communities to help abate reduce and end -based violence in India.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000317/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(14 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Inspectores del Banco de España

La prensa española ([1]) e internacional ([2]) se ha hecho eco de las denuncias de los inspectores del Banco de España contra su dirección por la gestión que esta hizo de la crisis del sector financiero en España. A pesar de ello, las denuncias del cuerpo de inspectores sobre la pasividad del Banco de España para abordar la entonces incipiente burbuja inmobiliaria ya empezaron en 2006 ([3]).

En el Memorando de Entendimiento relativo a la ayuda europea para el sector financiero, no se incluía ninguna condición que tuviera como objetivo relevar a aquellos cargos directivos del Banco de España que tuvieron una actitud negligente en la gestación de la burbuja inmobiliaria.

En estos momentos está a punto de concluir la negociación del Reglamento propuesto por la Comisión que convertirá el Banco Central Europeo en supervisor europeo para el sector bancario.

A la luz de lo anterior:

— ¿Por qué la Comisión no incluyó en el Memorando de Entendimiento ningún tipo de condicionalidad respecto a la estructura interna del Banco de España para dar más autonomía a los inspectores?

— ¿Por qué la Comisión no incluyó en el Memorando de Entendimiento ninguna condicionalidad relativa a la sustitución inmediata de aquellos cargos directivos del Banco de España que, como se demuestra ahora, tuvieron una actitud negligente ante la gestación de la crisis en España?

— ¿Qué artículo y que párrafo del Reglamento propuesto por la Comisión para convertir el BCE en supervisor de toda la banca europea propone medidas para que situaciones como esta no vuelvan a ocurrir?

Respuesta del Sr. Rehn en nombre de la Comisión
(28 de febrero de 2013)

La Comisión cree que uno de los elementos más importantes de un sistema bancario estable es el refuerzo de la red de seguridad financiera, lo que incluye no solo la mejora de determinados aspectos del Reglamento, sino también el compromiso de reforzar la supervisión.

El Memorando de Entendimiento, firmado en julio de 2012 por las autoridades españolas y la Comisión en nombre de los Estados miembros acreedores, impone una serie de condiciones destinadas a mejorar la normativa y la supervisión, las cuales son fundamentales para reforzar la robustez del sector bancario en el futuro.

Una de esas condiciones establece que las autoridades españolas deben proceder a una evaluación interna de los procesos de toma de decisiones y supervisión del Banco de España, a fin de garantizar la oportuna adopción de medidas correctoras para solucionar los problemas detectados en una fase temprana mediante inspecciones sobre el terreno. La Comisión está también al corriente de las críticas de los inspectores.

En consonancia con los compromisos del Memorando de Entendimiento, las autoridades españolas presentaron en octubre de 2012 un informe con los resultados de la evaluación interna de los procedimientos de supervisión del Banco de España y recomendaciones con vistas a reforzar tales procedimientos. La Comisión está debatiendo ahora con las autoridades españolas ese informe y su posible seguimiento.

Paralelamente, la Comisión está trabajando en la futura aplicación de un único mecanismo de supervisión, lo que constituye un elemento clave de la unión bancaria de la UE.

([1]) http://economia.elpais.com/economia/2013/01/06/actualidad/1357509251_871941.html
([2]) http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/1c89626a-5b4e-11e2-8ccc-00144feab49a.html#axzz1Xj5CrXjU
([3]) http://www.fluzo.org/media/resources/1295/files/inspectores_banco_espana_caruana.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000317/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(14 January 2013)

Subject: Bank of Spain inspectors

The Bank of Spain's own inspectors' criticism of its executives' handling of the crisis in Spain's financial sector has received coverage in the Spanish ([1]) and international press ([2]). In as early as 2006, the Bank of Spain's inspectorate started to accuse the bank of taking no action as the property bubble grew at an unsustainable rate ([3]).

In the memorandum of understanding concerning European aid for the financial sector, there was no requirement to replace Bank of Spain executives who had been negligent in their handling of the housing bubble.

Negotiations on the Commission's proposal for a regulation to give the European Central Bank new supervisory powers over the European banking sector are now in their final stages.

Why did the Commission not impose any conditions in the memorandum of understanding concerning the internal structure of the Bank of Spain, with a view to granting the inspectors further autonomy?

Why did the Commission not lay down a requirement in the memorandum of understanding for the immediate replacement of Bank of Spain executives who acted negligently in the lead-up to the crisis in Spain?

Which article and paragraph of the Commission's proposal for a regulation to make the ECB the chief supervisor of eurozone banks includes measures to prevent similar situations from recurring?

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

The Commission believes that one of the most important elements of a stable banking system is the strengthening of the financial safety net. That includes not only the enhancement of certain areas of the regulation but also the commitment to reinforce the supervision.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in July 2012 by the Spanish authorities and the Commission on behalf of the lending Member States imposes a number of conditions aiming at improving the regulatory and supervisory framework which is critical to enhance the resilience of the banking sector in the future.

One of these conditions establishes that the Spanish authorities must conduct an internal review of supervisory and decision-making processes of the Banco de España in order to ensure timely adoption of remedial actions for addressing problems detected at an early stage by on-site inspections. The Commission is also aware of inspectors' criticism.

In line with the MoU commitments, the Spanish authorities submitted in October 2012 a report with the results of the internal review of the supervisory procedures of the Banco de España and recommendations to further enhance these procedures. The Commission is currently discussing with the Spanish authorities this report and possible follow-up.

In parallel, the Commission is working on the future implementation of a single supervisory mechanism which is a key element of the EU banking union.

([1]) http://economia.elpais.com/economia/2013/01/06/actualidad/1357509251_871941.html
([2]) http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/1c89626a-5b4e-11e2-8ccc-00144feab49a.html#axzz1Xj5CrXjU.
([3]) http://www.fluzo.org/media/resources/1295/files/inspectores_banco_espana_caruana.pdf

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000318/13
an die Kommission
Othmar Karas (PPE)
(14. Januar 2013)

Betrifft: Einführung eines vorläufigen Antidumpingzolls auf Importe von Geschirr und anderen Keramik-Artikeln für den Tisch- und Küchengebrauch mit Ursprung in der Volksrepublik China (Verordnung (EU) Nr. 1072/2012)

Die Kommissionsverordnung (EU) Nr. 1072/2012 führt Antidumpingzölle auf die Importe von Geschirr und anderen Keramik-Artikeln für den Tisch- und Küchengebrauch mit Ursprung in der Volksrepublik China in Höhe von 17,6 % bis 58,8 % ein.

Durch diese Zölle werden die Preise dieser Produkte beträchtlich ansteigen, was eine zusätzliche Belastung für die von der Rezession in der Eurozone bereits hart geprüften Verbraucher darstellt. Auch ist sehr wohl bekannt, dass die EU-Industrie nicht die Kapazitäten hat, um mehr als nur einen kleinen Teil der EU-Nachfrage nach diesen Produkten zu decken.

1. Eine Mehrheit der Mitgliedstaaten im Anti-Dumping-Ausschuss stimmte demokratisch gegen die Einführung dieser vorläufigen Antidumpingmaßnahmen. Kann die Kommission mitteilen, warum sie sich zu dem ungewöhnlichen Schritt entschlossen hat, diese Abstimmungsergebnisse zu ignorieren?

2. Das Deutsche Bundeskartellamt prüft derzeit „abgestimmte Verhaltensweisen" auf dem EU-Keramik- und Porzellanmarkt. Kann die Kommission erläutern, warum sie dieses Vorkommen von Preisabsprachen auf dem EU-Markt nicht geprüft hat, bevor sie provisorische Maßnahmen erließ?

3. Stimmt die Kommission dem zu, dass die EU-Verbraucher die Haupt-Leidtragenden dieser Antidumpingzölle sein werden, da die chinesischen Keramik-Importe in die EU dadurch sehr teuer oder gar ganz vom Markt verschwinden werden, wodurch es den EU-Erzeugern ermöglicht wird, die Preise so stark anzuheben, dass — wie in der Vergangenheit schon geschehen — ernsthafte Besorgnisse darüber laut werden könnten, ob diese wohl mit den EU- und den nationalen Kartellvorschriften vereinbar sind?

4. Während die Kommission geltend macht, dass nur 350 Beschäftigte in den fünf an der Erhebung beteiligten nicht einschlägigen Einzelhandels- und Exportbetrieben an der Erzeugung der betreffenden Waren beteiligt sind, liegen uns Informationen vor, wonach in diesen 5 Firmen alleine um die 5 000 Menschen in der hier relevanten Produktionsabteilung beschäftigt sind. Kann die Kommission diese eklatanten Abweichungen im Informationsstand erklären?

Antwort von Herrn De Gucht im Namen der Kommission
(11. März 2013)

Nach Artikel 7 Absatz 4 der Antidumpinggrundverordnung kann die Kommission nach Konsultation der Mitgliedstaaten vorläufige Maßnahmen ergreifen. Im Falle der Einfuhr von Geschirr und anderen Keramikartikeln hat die Untersuchung ergeben, dass Dumping seitens chinesischer Hersteller die EU-Wirtschaft geschädigt hat. Diese Maßnahmen liefen also dem Interesse der EU nicht zuwider. Die Tatsache, dass sich nach Konsultation der Mitgliedstaaten die Mehrheit gegen den Vorschlag der Kommission zur Einführung vorläufiger Maßnahmen aussprach, ändert nichts daran, dass der Fall technisch solide war.

Keine der die Verbraucherinteressen vertretenden Parteien gab an, von den Antidumpingmaßnahmen betroffen zu sein. Für den unwahrscheinlichen Fall, dass der Zoll in vollem Umfang an die Verbraucher weitergegeben werden sollte, wird geschätzt, dass die Antidumpingzölle, in ihrer vorläufig festgesetzten Höhe zu jährlichen Zusatzkosten pro EU-Haushalt von etwas mehr als einem Euro führen würden.

Es ist nicht zu erwarten, dass aufgrund dieser Maßnahmen chinesische Produkte vom Markt verschwinden werden. Zweck der Maßnahmen ist es, gleiche Voraussetzungen für alle betroffenen Wirtschaftsbeteiligten zu schaffen und wieder einen fairen Wettbewerb herzustellen.

Es gibt derzeit keine Anzeichen dafür, dass diese Maßnahmen zu wettbewerbswidrigen Praktiken seitens der EU-Hersteller führen werden. Die Anzahl der EU-Hersteller ist groß, und bisher ist keine Behörde zu dem Ergebnis gekommen, dass es im betreffenden Zeitraum abgestimmte Verhaltensweisen auf dem EU-Keramik- und Porzellanmarkt gab.

Die Untersuchung hat ergeben, dass die fünf in die Stichprobe einbezogenen Importeure 350 Mitarbeiter im Bereich Einfuhr und Wiederverkauf von Keramik für den Tisch- oder Küchengebrauch beschäftigten. Diese Zahl schließt nicht die Beschäftigten mit ein, die für die Herstellung von Waren eingesetzt wurden, die nicht Teil der Untersuchung waren, oder die andere Tätigkeiten, zum Beispiel im Einzelhandelsverkauf, verrichteten.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000318/13
to the Commission
Othmar Karas (PPE)
(14 January 2013)

Subject: Provisional anti-dumping duties imposed on imports of ceramic tableware and kitchenware from China (Commission Regulation (EU) No 1072/2012)

Commission Regulation (EU) No 1072/2012 imposes provisional anti-dumping duties on imports of ceramic tableware originating in the People's Republic of China (PRC) ranging from 17.6 % to 58.8 %.

The imposition of these duties will raise the prices for these products considerably, placing an additional burden on European consumers already hard-pressed by the ongoing eurozone recession. It is also a well known fact that EU industry does not have the capacity to supply more than a small part of the EU's demand for these products.

1. A majority of the Member States on the Anti-Dumping Committee voted democratically against the imposition of these provisional anti-dumping measures. Can the Commission explain why it took the unusual step of disregarding this vote?

2. The German Anti-Trust Authority is currently investigating collusive practices in the EU ceramics and porcelain market. Can the Commission clarify why it did not examine evidence of price collusion on the EU market before it imposed the provisional measures?

3. Would the Commission agree that EU consumers will be the main victims of the imposition of these antidumping duties, as Chinese ceramic-ware imports into the EU will become very expensive or disappear from the market altogether, thereby allowing EU producers to increase prices to an extent that may — as has happened in the past — raise serious concerns as to whether they are in keeping with EU and national anti-trust laws?

4. While the Commission claims that only 350 employees at the five unrelated retailers/importers sampled are involved in the production of the wares concerned, we have information that of these five firms, one alone employs some 5 000 people in the relevant product division. Can the Commission comment on this blatant information discrepancy?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(11 March 2013)

Under Article 7(4) of the basic anti-dumping regulation the Commission is competent to take provisional measures after consultations with the Member States. In the tableware case, the investigation showed dumping by Chinese manufacturers caused damage to EU industry. These measures are not against EU interests. The fact that a majority of Member States, upon consultation, opposed the Commission proposal to impose provisional measures does not undermine the fact that the case was technically solid.

No parties directly representing the interests of consumers claimed that they would be affected by the anti-dumping measures. In the unlikely event that the duty is fully passed on to consumers, it is estimated that the anti-dumping duties as provisionally set would, on average, mean a yearly extra cost per household in the EU of slightly more than EUR 1.

It is not expected that measures make Chinese products disappear from the EU market. Measures are intended to create a level playing field for all economic operators concerned and restore fair competition.

There are no indications that measures will lead to anti-competitive practices by EU manufacturers. The number of EU producers is high and to date no authority has come to a conclusion that there were collusive practices in the EU ceramics and porcelain market in the period concerned.

The investigation revealed that the five sampled importers employed 350 people in the importation and resale of ceramic table and kitchenware products. This figure does not include people employed for the production of goods that were not part of the investigation or for other activities, like retailing.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000319/13
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(14 January 2013)

Subject: Bus competition and access to publicly funded bus stations and transport infrastructure in the Republic of Ireland

In relation to Written Question E-007616/2012 and the Commission's answer thereto, has the Irish Government provided the necessary information? What information is missing? What does the Commission mean when it refers to the 'Irish Authorities'? Does it mean the Irish Government, the CIE group, or another party? If it is another party, what organisation is the Commission referring to?

When does the Commission intend to publish a final report on competition in the Irish bus market, given that the 2012 date given for publication has now passed? Can the Commission state whether or not it is aware of the looming 2014 deadline in Ireland, when the National Transport Authority will issue a new five-year contract to a bus operator?

Is the Commission aware that if it does not act promptly, the five-year contract to provide state subsidised transport in towns and cities such as Athlone, Galway, Sligo, Letterkenny and Limerick during the period 2014-2019 could be awarded to Bus Eireann, and that this would not have to be put out to tender? Would this comply with EC law?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(4 March 2013)

The Commission is not waiting for any further information from the Irish Authorities related to case C31/2007. The information most recently provided is being analysed to decide on the next steps. The 'Irish Authorities' means the Irish Government; however, the government may forward responses from other entities and agencies.

A final decision is expected in the first half of 2013. The Commission is aware that the current public service contracts between the National Transport Authority and both Bus Eireann and Dublin Bus expire in December 2014, but no definite plan as to new contracts post-2014 has yet been communicated to the Commission.

The award of any new public service contract for bus passenger transport is governed by public procurement Directives 2004/17/EC and 2004/18/EC ([1]), except when these contracts take the form of service concessions within the meaning of those directives, in which case the award of service concessions for transport services by bus is governed by the provisions of Regulation 1370/2007 ([2]). Article 5 of that regulation states that any competent authority which has recourse to a third party shall award public service contracts on the basis of a competitive tendering procedure. However, direct awards are also possible under certain circumstances, notably where the average annual value of the public service contracts is estimated to be below certain thresholds or in the event of disruption of services or the immediate risk of such a situation, where the competent authority may take an emergency measure. A local competent authority may also directly award the contract to an internal operator under certain conditions.

The Commission will ensure that the provisions of Regulation 1370/2007 as applicable ([3]) are respected.

([1]) Directive 2004/17/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 31 March 2004 coordinating the procurement procedures of entities operating in the water, energy, transport and postal services sectors, OJ L 134, 30.4.2004, p. 1, and Directive 2004/18/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 31 March 2004 on the coordination of procedures for the award of public works contracts, public supply contracts and public service contracts, OJ L 134, 30.4.2004, p. 114.

([2]) Regulation (EC) No 1370/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2007 on public passenger transport services by rail and by road and repealing Council Regulations (EEC) Nos 1191/69 and 1107/70, OJ L 315, 03.12.2007, p. 1.

([3]) The provisions of Art 5 on award and in particular Art 5(3) are applicable only as from 3 December 2019. During this transitional period Member States shall take measures to gradually comply with Art 5.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-002552/13
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Fiorello Provera (EFD) e Charles Tannock (ECR)
(5 marzo 2013)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Aiuti finanziari all'Egitto da parte dell'Unione Europea

Alla fine di febbraio 2013, presso la sottocommissione per le relazioni esterne del Congresso degli Stati Uniti, si è tenuta un'audizione sul Medio Oriente e il Nordafrica per discutere della politica statunitense con l'Egitto.

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, presidente della sottocommissione, ha presentato la risoluzione n. 416 della Camera, un disegno di legge che limita gli aiuti militari ed economici all'Egitto qualora il governo del presidente Mohammed Morsi non rispetti determinati requisiti. Ciò implica che gli aiuti verrebbero erogati solo se in linea con gli interessi della sicurezza nazionale statunitense in Egitto e se a sostegno della promozione della democrazia.

Ros-Lehtinen ha osservato: «Non dovremmo erogare incondizionatamente fondi al governo guidato dai Fratelli musulmani, che non si conforma ai principi democratici e non è sulla buona strada per l'adempimento dei suoi obblighi nei confronti della comunità internazionale e dei propri cittadini».

Si ritiene che la risoluzione n. 416 sia un'indicazione del fatto che gli Stati Uniti riconsidereranno l'erogazione di aiuti all'Egitto. Vi sono infatti richieste di una maggiore condizionalità, che tenga in considerazione le azioni del governo egiziano dei Fratelli musulmani.

Può la Commissione rispondere alle seguenti domande:

1. Alla luce della decisione del Congresso degli Stati Uniti di rivedere gli aiuti all'Egitto, è il Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante disposto a esaminare la questione della condizionalità con riguardo agli aiuti dell'Unione europea all'Egitto?

2. Nel novembre 2012 l'Unione europea ha convenuto di stanziare a favore dell'Egitto un pacchetto di aiuti da 5 miliardi di euro. Quali misure sono state adottate al fine di garantire che tali aiuti siano stati impiegati in maniera efficace?

3. Quali azioni sono state inoltre intraprese per indirizzare gli aiuti a favore dellapromozione della democrazia, del rafforzamento dei diritti delle donne edell'incoraggiamento del dialogo tra diversi gruppi religiosi ed etnici?

Risposta congiunta dell'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente Catherine Ashton a nome della Commissione
(2 maggio 2013)

L'UE segue gli sviluppi in Egitto ed esprime preoccupazione per la profonda polarizzazione politica che si è creata fra il governo e l'opposizione, accompagnata dal peggioramento della situazione economica. L'UE è in contatto con tutti i leader politici e insiste sulla necessità di una riconciliazione.

Il pacchetto di 5 miliardi di euro annunciato il 14 novembre 2012 nell'ambito della task force UE-Egitto, è costituito dagli impegni combinati per il 2012-2013 a titolo del finanziamento bilaterale SEVP dell'UE, dall'assistenza macrofinanziaria dell'UE — per cui un accordo fra l'Egitto e l'FMI è un requisito fondamentale — ma soprattutto da possibili prestiti dalla BEI e della BERS. I fondi sono soggetti a diversi tipi di condizioni. I prestiti della BEI e della BERS dipendono anche dalle condizioni di mercato e dalle possibilità di investimento.

I programmi di cooperazione dell'UE possono essere sospesi se il paese beneficiario contravviene agli obblighi in materia di rispetto dei diritti umani, lede i principi democratici e lo Stato di diritto e qualora si verifichino gravi casi di corruzione. L'UE segue la situazione sul terreno in stretta collaborazione con il governo, l'opposizione, i rappresentanti della società civile e gli altri soggetti interessati.

Per costruire la democrazia occorrono duro lavoro, impegno e pazienza, a livello sia nazionale che internazionale. Dopo la rivoluzione la strada percorsa dall'Egitto verso la democrazia è stata difficile e complessa. Nonostante tutto, si sono registrati sviluppi fondamentali, quali elezioni trasparenti e credibili, il passaggio alla governance civile, la formazione di partiti politici e l'istituzione di un'opposizione politica. L'Europa, in quanto paese vicino e partner, deve impegnarsi a sostenere la transizione dell'Egitto, sottolineando al tempo stesso l'importanza dello Stato di diritto e del rispetto dei diritti umani riconosciuti a livello internazionale.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-000328/13
aan de Commissie
Laurence J. A. J. Stassen (NI)
(14 januari 2013)

Betreft: Donatie van 5 miljard euro aan Egypte

De EU heeft met andere organisaties gezamenlijk 5 miljard euro toegezegd aan leningen en giften aan Egypte, zogezegd om het „democratiseringsproces" aldaar te ondersteunen.

1. Is de Commissie zich ervan bewust dat „democratisering" in Egypte inhoudt dat de islamitische sharia wordt ingevoerd, wat in de praktijk betekent dat vrouwen, christelijke kopten en minderheden worden onderdrukt en er van vrijheid van meningsuiting geen sprake kan zijn?

2. Kan de Commissie aangeven of zij deze zogenaamde „democratisering" ook steunt als dit in de praktijk betekent dat de islamitische sharia verder wordt ingevoerd, met alle verschrikkelijke gevolgen van dien?

3. Is de Commissie met de PVV van mening dat de beslissing om 5 miljard euro weg te geven aan Egypte volstrekt immoreel is, omdat burgers in Europa hard worden getroffen door de eurocrisis en de vele bezuinigingen, maar de EU desondanks wel geld weet vrij te maken voor een islamitisch regime in Egypte? Zo neen, waarom niet?

4. Is de Commissie het met de PVV eens dat dit bij voorbaat weggegooid geld is, omdat Egypte zich — zolang de islam er domineert — nooit zal kunnen ontwikkelen tot een liberale democratie, inclusief daarbij horende principes zoals vrijheid van meningsuiting en mensenrechten? Zo neen, waarom niet?

5. Kan de Commissie aangeven of zij soms van mening is dat democratie met geld te koop is, en zo niet, waarom dan deze gift voor „democratisering"?

6. Is de Commissie het met de PVV eens dat de ontwikkelingen in Egypte geen steun of geld verdienen, maar juist keiharde woorden van afkeuring? Zo neen, waarom niet?

7. Kan de Commissie aangeven of zij bereid is terug te komen op de beslissing om 5 miljard euro aan Egypte te doneren?

Antwoord van hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter Ashton namens de Commissie
(2 mei 2013)

De EU volgt de ontwikkelingen in Egypte en maakt zich zorgen om de diepe politieke polarisatie tussen de overheid en de oppositie die gepaard gaat met een verslechterende economische situatie. De EU onderhoudt contacten met alle politieke hoofdrolspelers en dringt daarbij aan op verzoening.

De bijstand van 5 miljard euro die op 14 november 2012 in het kader van de taskforce EU-Egypte is toegezegd, bestaat uit gezamenlijke verbintenissen voor 2012-2013 uit bilaterale ENPI-middelen van de EU, macrofinanciële bijstand van de EU — waarvoor een overeenkomst tussen Egypte en het IMF een eerste voorwaarde is — maar voornamelijk uit mogelijke leningen van de EIB en de EBWO. Aan deze financiering zijn verschillende soorten voorwaarden verbonden. Leningen van de EIB en de EBWO zijn eveneens afhankelijk van de marktsituatie en de investeringsmogelijkheden.

Alle EU-samenwerkingprogramma's kunnen worden opgeschort als het begunstigde land zijn verplichtingen inzake eerbiediging van de mensenrechten, de democratische beginselen en de rechtsstaat, niet nakomt en bij ernstige corruptie. De EU volgt de situatie ter plaatse. Zij onderhoudt nauw contact en voert dialoog met de regering, de oppositie, vertegenwoordigers van de civiele samenleving en andere belangrijke actoren.

De opbouw van democratie vergt veel werk, inzet en geduld, zowel van het land in kwestie als van de internationale gemeenschap. Sinds de opstand is de weg naar democratie van Egypte zwaar en complex geweest. Toch is er reeds een belangrijke vooruitgang geboekt, zoals transparante en geloofwaardige verkiezingen, de overgang naar burgerlijk bestuur, de vorming van politieke partijen van een politieke oppositie. Als buur en partner is het de taak van Europa om de overgang in Egypte te ondersteunen en tegelijkertijd het belang van de rechtsstaat en van de naleving van internationaal overeengekomen mensenrechtenprincipes te benadrukken.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000328/13
to the Commission
Laurence J.A.J. Stassen (NI)
(14 January 2013)

Subject: EUR 5 billion donation to Egypt

The EU has pledged, together with other organisations, EUR 5 billion in loans and grants to Egypt, supposedly to support the 'democratisation process' there.

1. Is the Commission aware that in Egypt 'democratisation' involves the introduction of Sharia law, which in practice means the oppression of women, Christian Copts and minorities and rules out freedom of expression?

2. Does it also support this so-called 'democratisation' even when in practice it means further implementation of Sharia law, with all the terrible consequences thereof?

3. Does it agree with the Party for Freedom (PVV) that the decision to give away EUR 5 billion to Egypt is utterly immoral because the EU is able to make money available to an Islamic regime in Egypt despite European citizens being hit hard by the euro crisis and numerous spending cuts? If not, why not?

4. Does it agree with the PVV that this is money thrown away in advance because — for as long as Islam plays a dominant role there — Egypt will never be able to develop into a liberal democracy, with associated principles such as freedom of expression and human rights? If not, why not?

5. Can it indicate whether it believes that democracy can be bought with money, and if not, why this gift is being made for 'democratisation'?

6. Does the Commission agree with the PVV that the developments in Egypt do not deserve support or money but rather scathing words of disapproval? If not, why not?

7. Can it indicate whether it is prepared to reconsider the decision to donate EUR 5 billion to Egypt?

Question for written answer E-002552/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Fiorello Provera (EFD) and Charles Tannock (ECR)
(5 March 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — EU financial aid to Egypt

In late February 2013, a hearing was held in the US Congress' Foreign Relations Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa in order to discuss US policy with Egypt.

The Chairwoman of the Subcommittee, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, introduced House Resolution 416, a bill which would limit military and economic aid to Egypt if certain standards are not met by the government of President Mohammed Morsi. This would entail that aid would only be given if it is in line with US national security interests inside Egypt and supports the promotion of democracy.

Ros-Lehtinen noted: 'We should not be providing funds without condition to the Muslim Brotherhood-led government that is not conforming to democratic principles, and is not on the right path to fulfil its obligations to the international community and to its own citizens'.

Resolution 416 is believed to be an indication that the US will reconsider aid delivery to Egypt. There are calls for more conditionality, which takes into consideration the actions of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood government.

1. In light of the US Congress decision to review US aid to Egypt, is the Vice-President/High Representative prepared to look into the question of conditionality regarding EU aid to Egypt?

2. In November 2012, the EU agreed to deliver an EUR 5 billion aid package to Egypt. What steps have been taken to ensure that the aid was used effectively?

3. What steps have been taken to target aid for the purpose of promoting democracy, strengthening women's rights and encouraging dialogue between different religious and ethnic groups?

Joint answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(2 May 2013)

The EU is following the developments in Egypt and is worried by a deep political polarisation between the government and the opposition coupled with a deteriorating economic situation. The EU is in touch with all political protagonists insisting on the need for conciliation.

Regarding the EUR 5 billion package announced in the framework of the EU-Egypt Task Force on 14 November 2012, it consists of the combined commitments for 2012-13 from the EU bilateral ENPI funding, EU Macro-Financial Assistance — for which an EGY-IMF arrangement is a precondition — but mostly from possible loans from the EIB and the EBRD. Different kinds of conditionalities are attached to these funds. Loans from the EIB and EBRD also depend on market conditions and investment opportunities.

EU cooperation programmes can be suspended if the beneficiary country breaches an obligation relating to the respect for human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law and in serious cases of corruption. The EU is monitoring the situation on the ground in close contact and dialogue with the government, opposition, civil society representatives and other key stakeholders.

Democracy building requires hard work, commitment and patience, domestically and internationally. Since the uprising Egypt's road to democracy has been difficult and complex; nonetheless there have been key developments such as transparent and credible elections, hand-over to civilian governance, the formation of political parties and the establishment of a political opposition. Europe as a neighbour and a partner has to engage and support Egypt's transition while strongly emphasising the importance of the rule of law and of compliance with internationally agreed human rights principles.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000365/13
to the Commission
Sir Graham Watson (ALDE)
(15 January 2013)

Subject: Spanish customs checks

In response to Question E-009971/2011, the Commission stated that it does not routinely monitor the customs checks performed by the national authorities. However, it suggested that Member States should select custom controls based on 'risk management' factors as provided for in the customs legislation.

Gibraltar remains outside the customs union, and therefore alcohol and tobacco may be available at lower cost than in Spain. The Spanish authorities have implemented thorough checks on individuals and vehicles at the La Línea frontier. On some days every vehicle will be checked and inspected for contraband, and such an approach can lead to severe delays at the border — sometimes of up to six hours.

The Agreement between the European Economic Community and the Principality of Andorra which entered into force on 1 July 1991 establishes a customs union with most-favoured nation status between the Principality and the EU. However, VAT and duty on alcohol and tobacco are far lower in Andorra than in Spain.

Melilla and Ceuta benefit from an autonomous preferential agreement with the EU, but neither is part of the EU's customs territory. Citizens travelling from these territories must also abide by customs and tax allowances for travellers similar to those applying to people travelling from outside the EU, just as is the case for those crossing from Gibraltar into Spain.

1. Is the Commission satisfied that the Spanish authorities have the appropriate customs provision in place for citizens travelling between:

— Andorra and Spain, and

— the autonomous cities of Melilla and Ceuta onwards to Spain?

2. With VAT and duty being lower in Andorra as well as Melilla and Ceuta, these territories represent a threat to customs revenue similar to that posed by those entering Spain from Gibraltar. In light of this, does the Commission consider that a consistent, fair and non-discriminatory approach would see similar thorough checks also being required at the frontiers with Andorra as well as with Melilla and Ceuta?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(1 March 2013)

Although all three territories are indeed not part of the customs territory of the European Union, special and different arrangements between these territories and the EU apply.

An agreement for a customs union between the EU and Andorra has been in force since 1 July 1991 ([1]) covering some products, but not alcohol or tobacco. This agreement ensures that some Andorra goods enter in the entire Union free of customs duty, or benefit from preferential rates.

The territorial status of Ceuta and Melilla is contained in Protocol No2 concerning the accession of the Kingdom of Spain to the EU. Melilla and Ceuta have certain preferential arrangements with the Union as a whole, as well as additional preference arrangements with peninsular Spain whereby goods of Ceuta or Melilla origin qualify for exemption from duty. In addition, under Spanish law, these territories have been designated as exempted areas for custom purposes.

Gibraltar is treated as a third country for customs purposes by virtue of Section 4 of Annex I to the Act of Accession of the United Kingdom of 1972 and, in the absence of any specific preferential arrangements such as the ones mentioned above, exports of goods of local origin to the EU are treated under the usual terms of the Generalised system of preferences .

([1]) Council Decision No 90/680/EEC of 26 November 1990.

For excise and VAT purposes all of these territories are treated as Third Countries. Duty and tax free allowances are restricted to travellers ([2]). In this particular regard, the Honourable Member is referred to Question E-000427/2013.

As the rules in force in respect of the above three territories are different, different customs checks may appear necessary to ensure the correct application of the relevant legislation.

([2]) The allowances are set out in Regulation (EC) 1186/2009 and Directive 2007/74/EC.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-000366/13
aan de Commissie
Ivo Belet (PPE)
(15 januari 2013)

Betreft: Leningen EIB en duurzame energie

Uit een studie van Bankwatch ([1]) blijkt dat de Europese Investeringsbank in de periode 2007-2010, op het vlak van energie, leningen heeft toegekend aan projecten met fossiele brandstoffen (33 % van de leningen in de energiesector).

1. Hoe kijkt de Commissie hier tegenaan?

2. Kan de Commissie, via haar vertegenwoordiger in de Raad van Bewind van de Europese Investeringsbank, erop toezien dat deze leningen in de toekomst voornamelijk zullen worden toegekend aan projecten ter bevordering van duurzame energie en energie-efficiëntie?

Antwoord van de heer Rehn namens de Commissie
(13 mei 2013)

In het kader van het in 2007 aangenomen beleid inzake energiekredietverstrekking van de EIB zijn de inspanningen op concurrerende, duurzame en zekere energie gericht. De activiteit van de EIB is afgestemd op de prioriteiten van het energiebeleid van de EU door steun aan hernieuwbare energie, energie-efficiëntie en onderzoek, ontwikkeling en innovatie en zekerheid en diversificatie van de voorziening, inclusief TEN-E.

Steenkool/bruinkoolcentrales blijven uit overwegingen van voorzieningszekerheid in aanmerking komen voor EIB-steun, hoewel zeer restrictieve doorlichtingscriteria gelden: vervanging van oudere en ineffectieve installaties en verlaging van de koolstofintensiteit met ten minste 20 % door middel van state-of-the-art en CCS-klare technologieën. De EIB beoordeelt broeikasgasemissies en betrekt de koolstofkosten bij projectbeoordelingen. Koolstofintensieve projecten kunnen worden afgewezen.

Tussen 2007-10 maakte kredietverstrekking aan steenkool/bruinkoolcentrales 3 % van de energiekredietverstrekking van de EIB uit, terwijl kredietverstrekking voor thermische, d.w.z. steenkool-, olie- en gascentrales, 11,9 % bedroeg en vooral gericht was op efficiënte gasgestookte gecombineerde warmte- en krachtcentrales. Het cijfer van Bankwatch omvatte ook gasnetinfrastructuren, inclusief TEN-E, en financiering van raffinaderijen.

Tijdens dezelfde periode maakte het aandeel van de EIB in de energiefinanciering ter ondersteuning van hernieuwbare energie en energie-efficiëntie meer dan 40 % van de kredietverstrekking voor energie van de EIB uit en bereikte het 48 % in 2011-12.

In de zomer van 2013, na een publieke raadpleging, zal de EIB haar beleid inzake kredietverstrekking voor energie naar verwachting toetsen. De Commissie zal met de EIB samenwerken om ervoor te zorgen dat de voornaamste EU-energieprioriteiten tot uitdrukking komen zoals mede vastgesteld in het kader van de Europa 2020-strategie, het Pakket energie-instrastructuur, de mededeling betreffende de interne energiemarkt en het Energiestappenplan 2050, inclusief de bevordering van hernieuwbare energiebronnen en energie-efficiëntie en de uitfasering van de steun voor fossiele brandstoffen.

([1]) http://bankwatch.org/sites/default/files/EIB-carbon-rising.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000366/13
to the Commission
Ivo Belet (PPE)
(15 January 2013)

Subject: EIB loans and renewable energy

According to Bankwatch research, between 2007 and 2010, in the field of energy the European Investment Bank granted loans for fossil fuel projects (33 % of the loans in the energy sector) ([1]).

1. What is the Commission's view of this?

2. Can the Commission, through its representative on the European Investment Bank's Board of Directors, ensure that these loans will in future be mainly granted for projects promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(13 May 2013)

EIB's energy lending policy adopted in 2007 focuses on competitive, sustainable and secure energy. The EIB activity is aligned to the EU energy policy priorities by supporting renewable energy, energy efficiency and research, development and innovation, security and diversification of supply, including TEN-E.

Coal/lignite fuelled power stations remain eligible for EIB support for security of supply considerations, though very restrictive screening criteria are applied: replacing older and ineffective plants while decreasing carbon intensity by at least 20% with state-of-the-art and CCS-ready technologies. The EIB assesses greenhouse gas emissions and integrates carbon cost into project appraisals. Carbon-intensive projects can be screened out.

Between 2007-10, lending to coal/lignite power stations represented 3% of EIB energy lending; while lending for thermal (i.e. coal, oil and gas fired) power plants was 11.9%, mostly directed towards efficient gas fired combined cycle power plants. The Bankwatch figure included also gas grids infrastructure, including TEN-E, and refinery financing.

Over the same period, the EIB's share of energy financing in support of renewable energy and energy efficiency accounted for more than 40% of EIB energy lending and reached 48% in 2011-12.

In summer 2013, following a public consultation, the EIB is expected to review its energy lending policy. The Commission will cooperate with the EIB to ensure that the main EU energy policy priorities are reflected as identified also in the Europe 2020 strategy, the Energy Infrastructure Package, the internal energy market communication and the Energy 2050 Roadmap, including the promotion of renewables and energy efficiency and phasing out of support for fossil fuels.

([1]) http://bankwatch.org/sites/default/files/EIB-carbon-rising.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000367/13
to the Commission
Sir Graham Watson (ALDE)
(15 January 2013)

Subject: EU-South Korea Free Trade Agreement and intellectual property

The EU-South Korea Free Trade Agreement (FTA) entered into force on 1 July 2011; it could create new trade in goods and services worth EUR 19.1 billion for the EU and save EU exporters EUR 1.6 billion a year.

With regard to intellectual property (IP), the FTA should provide operators with legal certainty and allow effective action against infringement. The FTA obliges the EU and South Korea to provide for measures, procedures and remedies permitting effective action against any infringements of IP rights.

1. What specific monitoring measures does the Commission have in place to ensure that EU businesses' IP rights are being upheld?

2. Is the Commission aware of how many EU IP rights-holders have sought to enforce their IP rights through South Korea's legal framework since the implementation of the FTA? If so, what percentage of the rulings on these legal cases have found in favour of EU businesses?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(1 March 2013)

The role of the Commission is to ensure a proper implementation of the EU-South Korea Free Trade Agreement (FTA) so that operators can fully benefit from the agreement. This role complements the necessary actions the private entities may have to undertake in the legal systems in place in Europe or in Korea to enforce their rights.

Under the FTA, the EU and Korea agreed to maintain an effective dialogue on intellectual property issues (IP Dialogue) to address topics relevant to the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights covered by the IP chapter of the FTA. The IP dialogue provides a forum for *inter alia* monitoring the implementation of the FTA provisions on IP.

In addition, periodical public IP surveys carried out by the Commission provide useful information about the state of IP protection and enforcement in third countries, including Korea.

The Commission currently does not have precise statistics concerning legal actions undertaken by EU IP-holders in the Korean legal system since the implementation of the FTA. However, the Commission took the opportunity of the latest EU-Korea IP Dialogue (September 2012) to raise the concerns that had been expressed to it about the ability of foreign right holders to enforce their rights through the South Korean legal framework, and asked the Korean authorities whether any data existed on the success rate of cases brought by right holders. The Korean authorities undertook to check whether such data existed.

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande E-000368/13
till kommissionen
Carl Schlyter (Verts/ALE)
(15 januari 2013)

Angående: Tillgång till vatten för svin under långväga transporter (uppföljningsfråga till fråga E-004881/2012)

Fråga E-004881/2012 avsåg verkställandet av förordning (EG) nr 1/2005, med avseende på tillgång till vatten för svin under långväga transporter (svin får transporteras under en period av maximalt 24 timmar, under förutsättning att de hela tiden har tillgång till vatten). Kommissionen uppgav i sitt svar att den inte har fått någon information från de behöriga myndigheterna i medlemsstaterna som skulle visa på att verkställandet av denna del av lagstiftningen skulle ha medfört några större svårigheter.

Kommissionen ombes att svara på följande frågor:

1. På vilket sätt kontrolleras det i praktiken att medlemsstaterna uppfyller kravet på att svin hela tiden ska ha tillgång till vatten under långväga transporter?

2. Anser kommissionen att det på ett mätbart sätt går att kontrollera att svin hela tiden har tillgång till vatten under långväga transporter, med tanke på att detta skulle kräva att en inspektör finns med under samtliga transporter?

3. Har kommissionen, med beaktande av att den inte har fått någon information från de behöriga myndigheterna i medlemsstaterna som skulle visa på att verkställandet av denna del av lagstiftningen skulle ha medfört några större svårigheter, mottagit några uppgifter som motsäger detta från någon medlemsstat, det vill säga information om huruvida, och i så fall hur och i vilken omfattning, denna del av förordningen kontrolleras och verkställs?

Svar från Tonio Borg på kommissionens vägnar
(21 februari 2013)

1. Det är medlemsstaterna som ansvarar för att kontrollera att kraven i förordning (EG) nr 1/2005 om skydd av djur under transport ([1]) följs. Att kravet på att svin ska ha tillgång till vatten uppfylls skulle kunna övervakas genom kontroller av transporterna längs vägen för att se om vattensystemet fungerar och om det finns tillräckligt med vatten i vattentanken, med tanke på transportsträckan. Det är dock de behöriga myndigheterna i medlemsstaterna som beslutar om vilka kontroller som är nödvändiga.

2. Kommissionen håller inte med om att det enda sättet att kontrollera detta skulle vara att låta en inspektör finnas med under samtliga transporter. I enlighet med artikel 3 i förordning (EG) nr 882/2004 om offentlig kontroll ([2]) är det medlemsstaterna som ska avgöra hur ofta dessa kontroller ska utföras, med hänsyn till riskerna och andra faktorer som t.ex. företagens tidigare resultat i fråga om efterlevnad av djurskyddsbestämmelserna.

3. Kommissionen har inte fått några sådana uppgifter från medlemsstaterna.

([1]) Rådets förordning (EG) nr 1/2005 av den 22 december 2004 om skydd av djur under transport och därmed sammanhängande förfaranden och om ändring av direktiven 64/432/EEG och 93/119/EG och förordning (EG) nr 1255/97, (EUT L 3, 5.1.2005, s. 1).

([2]) Europaparlamentets och rådets förordning (EG) nr 882/2004 om offentlig kontroll för att säkerställa kontrollen av efterlevnaden av foder- och livsmedelslagstiftningen samt bestämmelserna om djurhälsa och djurskydd, (EUT L 165, 30.4.2004, s. 1).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000368/13
to the Commission
Carl Schlyter (Verts/ALE)
(15 January 2013)

Subject: Water supply for pigs during long-distance transport (follow-up question to Question E-004881/2012)

Question E-004881/2012 referred to the enforcement of Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 with regard to water supply for pigs during long-distance transport (pigs may be transported for a maximum of 24 hours, on condition they have continuous access to water during the journey). In reply, the Commission said that it 'has not received any information from the competent authorities of the Member States pointing to major difficulties in enforcing this part of the legislation'.

The Commission is asked to respond to the following questions:

1. How is compliance with the requirement to provide constant access to water for pigs during long-distance transport verified in practice in the Member States?

2. Is the Commission of the opinion that verification of constant access to water during long-distance transport of pigs is achievable on a measurable basis, given that this would require every instance of transport to be accompanied by an inspector?

3. Given that the Commission 'has not received any information from the competent authorities of the Member States pointing to major difficulties in enforcing this part of the legislation', has it received any information of a contrary nature from the Member States, i.e. information as to whether, and if so how and to what extent, this part of the regulation is being verified and enforced?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(21 February 2013)

1. Member States are responsible for controlling compliance with the requirements of Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport ([1]). This rule could be controlled during roadside checks of means of transport, where it could be confirmed whether the water system is turned on and whether there is enough water in the water tanks, considering the intended journey. Nevertheless, it is for the competent authorities of the Member States to decide on which controls would be necessary.

2. The Commission does not agree that this rule could only be verified if every transport were accompanied by an inspector. In accordance with Article 3 of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 on official controls ([2]), the intensity and frequency of such controls shall be decided by the national enforcers on a risk basis, taking account of various factors, including operators' past records as regards compliance with animal welfare rules.

3. The Commission has not received such information from Member States.

([1]) Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 of 22 December 2004 on the protection of animals during transport and related operations and amending Directives 64/432/EEC and 93/119/EC and Regulation (EC) No 1255/97. OJ L 3, 5.1.2005, p. 1.

([2]) Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules. OJ L 165, 30.4.2004, p. 1.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000369/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(15 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Barreras al mercado único en el Estado español

Los ciudadanos y las empresas no españoles que desean realizar actos o negocios jurídicos en España tales como comprar un bien inmueble, tramitar una herencia, constituir una filial o ejecutar una sentencia extranjera se encuentran con que el Estado español no les permite efectuarlo inmediatamente. El origen de esta situación es que España no reconoce, en las actuaciones ordinarias, los números de identificación expedidos en los Estados de origen, aunque se trate de Estados miembros.

España no permite a los no españoles realizar actuaciones hasta que hayan obtenido unos números de identificación que solamente pueden ser expedidos por las propias autoridades españolas, quedando entre tanto bloqueados sus actos y negocios jurídicos. En el caso de las personas físicas, se les exige concretamente la obtención de un «NIE» (número de identidad de extranjero) ante las comisarías de policía en España o ante los consulados españoles en el extranjero. El procedimiento correspondiente exige la presentación de una solicitud con numerosos datos personales, el motivo por el cual se solicita el NIE, documentación y el desplazamiento del interesado a España o hasta una representación consular española en su país de origen (aunque sea ciudadano/a comunitario/a), o bien, en caso de desear realizar la tramitación mediante un tercero en España, el otorgamiento de un poder especial ante notario, con apostilla y traducción jurada, o el otorgamiento de poder por la vía consular. Una vez obtenido el NIE, si corresponde, se deben efectuar adicionalmente los trámites oportunos ante la Hacienda española para que al interesado, ya identificado policialmente mediante el NIE, le sea otorgado un «NIF» (número de identificación fiscal) español. Los notarios españoles rechazan el otorgamiento de escrituras públicas cuando alguna de las personas comparecientes sea no española y carezca de NIE otorgado por las autoridades españolas, aunque se trate de ciudadanos/as de un Estado miembro de la UE provistos de su correspondiente documento nacional de identidad o pasaporte.

A la luz de lo anterior,

¿No cree la Comisión que esta es una discriminación en el trato por motivo de la nacionalidad tal y como se prohíbe en el artículo 18 del TFUE?

¿No cree la Comisión que el Estado español vulnera el artículo 49 del TFUE que prohíbe poner restricciones a la libertad de los nacionales de un Estado miembro de establecerse y establecer filiales en otro Estado miembro?

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000370/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(15 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Barreras al mercado único en el Estado español para personas jurídicas

Los ciudadanos y las empresas no españoles que desean realizar actos o negocios jurídicos en España tales como comprar un bien inmueble, tramitar una herencia, constituir una filial o ejecutar una sentencia extranjera se encuentran con que el Estado español no les permite efectuarlo inmediatamente. El origen de esta situación es que España no reconoce, en las actuaciones ordinarias, los números de identificación expedidos en los Estados de origen, aunque se trate de Estados miembros.

A las sociedades mercantiles francesas, alemanas, etc. se les exige, para cualquier actuación en España, la previa obtención de un «NIF» (número de identificación fiscal) de sociedad no residente expedido por las autoridades españolas. Para la obtención de tal NIF, es necesario presentar ante la Hacienda española una solicitud acompañada de documentación del país de origen, con apostilla y traducción jurada, así como, en caso de tramitarse en España mediante un tercero, el correspondiente apoderamiento. Todo ello aunque la sociedad en cuestión carezca de actividad alguna en España y desee simplemente comprar un bien inmueble en España o inscribir en un registro de la propiedad español el embargo de una finca de un deudor moroso condenado mediante sentencia firme en un procedimiento judicial celebrado ante los tribunales franceses, alemanes, etc. Lo mismo sucede cuando la sociedad desea constituir una filial en España: no puede hacerlo mientras no tenga NIF.

Todo ello, además de gastos y molestias, tiene como consecuencia que durante semanas y meses los interesados se hallan impedidos de realizar con inmediatez y normalidad actuaciones ordinarias en el ámbito civil y mercantil intracomunitario cuando se trata de España. Todo ello infringe el derecho a la libre circulación y resulta contrario al principio de no discriminación, ya que, mientras las personas físicas y jurídicas españolas pueden actuar sin obstáculo, los ciudadanos y sociedades de la Unión Europea no pueden actuar en España mientras no dispongan de números de identificación expedidos exclusivamente por las autoridades españolas.

A la luz de lo anterior,

¿No cree la Comisión que esta es una discriminación en el trato por motivo de la nacionalidad tal y como se prohíbe en el artículo 18 del TFUE?

¿Hará uso la Comisión del artículo 50, apartado 2, letra c), del TFUE para parar estas prácticas negativas para la libertad de establecimiento?

Respuesta conjunta del Sr. Šemeta en nombre de la Comisión
(26 de febrero de 2013)

Según la información a disposición de la Comisión, la obligación de estar en posesión de un NIF (número de identificación fiscal) incumbe a todos los ciudadanos, tanto españoles como extranjeros, que intervengan en operaciones que impliquen consecuencias fiscales en España. Las normas del NIF, modificadas en 2007, implican, a la vista de esa información, que:

— la obligación de disponer de un NIF atañe por igual a ciudadanos españoles y extranjeros;

— el NIF se concede casi de forma instantánea, por lo que los retrasos son poco probables y, en cualquier caso, no son la norma general en este ámbito;

— si, excepcionalmente, la obtención del NIF requiriera más tiempo y si, en consecuencia, el sujeto pasivo no pudiera cumplir sus obligaciones fiscales en el plazo pertinente, no se le impondría ningún interés de demora ni ninguna penalización;

— los trámites del NIF tienen como objetivo determinar la identidad de la persona que lo solicita y son proporcionales a este fin.

En vista de lo anterior, y teniendo en cuenta que no se ha conseguido ninguna armonización de las obligaciones fiscales en la EU, la Comisión opina que no puede considerarse que las normas del NIF den lugar a discriminación por motivos de nacionalidad ni que sean contrarias a la libertad de establecimiento.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000369/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(15 January 2013)

Subject: Barriers to the single market in Spain

Non-Spanish nationals and companies wishing to undertake legal acts or business in Spain, such as buying a property, processing an inheritance, constituting a subsidiary or executing a foreign judgment, find that the Spanish State does not allow them to do so immediately. This situation arises from the fact that Spain does not recognise, for ordinary activities, identification numbers issued in States of origin, even if they are Member States.

Spain does not permit non-Spanish citizens and companies to act until they have obtained identification numbers issued only by Spain's own authorities, their legal acts and businesses being blocked in the meantime. In the case of natural persons, they are specifically required to obtain an 'NIE' (foreign national identification number) from a Spanish police station or from the Spanish consulate abroad. The relevant procedure requires an application to be made with numerous personal details, the reason for requesting the NIE and documentation, and the person concerned must travel to Spain or visit a Spanish consular representation in the country of origin (even if he/she is a Community citizen). If a third party in Spain is to handle the process, the granting of a special empowerment, made before notary, with apostille and certified translation, or empowerment via a consulate, is required. Once the NIE is obtained, it is also necessary, if applicable, to complete administrative procedures with the Spanish Ministry of Finance so that the person concerned — now identified by the police with an NIE — can be provided with a Spanish 'NIF' (tax identification number). Spanish notaries refuse issuance of public deeds if any of the persons appearing are non-Spanish without an NIE issued by the Spanish authorities, even if they are citizens of an EU Member State and are in possession of their own corresponding national identity or passport.

In view of the above:

Does the Commission not believe that this is discriminatory treatment on grounds of nationality, as prohibited by Article 18 of the TFEU?

Does the Commission not believe that the Spanish State is in infringement of Article 49 of the TFEU, which prohibits placing restrictions on the freedom of establishment of nationals of a Member State and on their setting-up subsidiaries in another Member State?

Question for written answer E-000370/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(15 January 2013)

Subject: Barriers to the single market in Spain for legal persons

Non-Spanish citizens and companies wishing to undertake legal acts or business in Spain, such as buying a property, processing an inheritance, constituting a subsidiary or executing a foreign judgment, find that the Spanish State does not allow them to do so immediately. This situation arises from the fact that Spain does not recognise, for ordinary activities, identification numbers issued in States of origin, even if they are Member States.

Commercial companies from France, Germany, etc., must obtain a non-resident company 'NIF' (tax identification number) from the Spanish authorities, prior to carrying out any activity in Spain. Obtaining this NIF requires an application to be made to the Spanish Ministry of Finance, with accompanying documentation from the country of origin, an apostille and a certified translation and — if handled in Spain by a third party — the corresponding authorisation. All of this is required even if the company in question does not undertake any activity in Spain, but simply wishes to buy a property there, or to record in the Spanish property registry the embargo of a defaulting debtor's property as imposed by final judgment in judicial proceedings held in the courts of France, Germany, etc. The same occurs when a company wishes to establish a subsidiary in Spain: it cannot do so without a NIF.

Apart from the expense and inconvenience, all of the above prevents stakeholders from performing ordinary civil and commercial activities with immediacy and normality in Spain for weeks and months. This violates the right of freedom of movement and is contrary to the principle of non-discrimination, since Spanish legal and natural persons may act without hindrance, while citizens and companies of the European Union cannot act in Spain without identification numbers issued exclusively by the Spanish authorities.

In view of the above:

Does the Commission not believe that this is discriminatory treatment on grounds of nationality, as prohibited by Article 18 of the TFEU?

Will the Commission use Article 50, paragraph 2(c) of the TFEU to stop these negative practices on freedom of establishment?

Joint answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(26 February 2013)

According to the information at the disposal of the Commission, the obligation to hold a NIF (tax identification number) falls on all citizens, Spanish or foreign alike, who are a party to transactions entailing tax consequences in Spain. The NIF rules, modified in 2007 imply, in light of that information, that:

— the NIF obligation bears equally on Spanish and non-Spanish citizens;

— the NIF is granted almost instantaneously, so that delays are unlikely, and in any case are not the general rule in this field;

— if, exceptionally, obtaining the NIF takes longer, and if, as a consequence, the taxable person is prevented from complying with his tax obligations within the relevant deadline, neither a late interest payment nor any penalty would be imposed on the taxable person;

— the NIF procedure is targeted towards ascertaining the identity of the person requesting the NIF and is proportionate to this end.

In view of the above, and taking into account that no harmonisation of tax obligations has been achieved in the EU, the Commission is of the view that the NIF rules cannot be considered as leading to discrimination on grounds of nationality, nor are they contrary to the freedom of establishment.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000371/13

an die Kommission

Ingeborg Gräßle (PPE)

(15. Januar 2013)

Betrifft: Unregelmäßigkeiten bei OLAF-Untersuchungen

Der Überwachungsausschuss des Europäischen Amtes für Betrugsbekämpfung (OLAF) teilte dem Parlament in seinem Schreiben vom 11. Dezember 2012 mit, dass er eine Reihe möglicher Probleme festgestellt und diesbezüglich Empfehlungen an den Generaldirektor von OLAF gerichtet habe, die eine Aussprache mit dem Generaldirektor über einen systematischeren Ansatz, wie die Untersuchungen von OLAF durchgeführt werden, erforderlich machen.

1. Im Hinblick auf die rechtliche Auslegung der Kommission stellt sich die folgende Frage: Sind derartige mögliche Probleme systematischer Natur und/oder unterliegen die aufgedeckten Unregelmäßigkeiten der Vertraulichkeit der Untersuchungen oder sonstigen Datenschutzbestimmungen, die die Kommission daran hindern, das Parlament in Kenntnis zu setzen?

2. Wann und wie gedenkt die Kommission, das Parlament über die aufgedeckten möglichen Probleme und Unregelmäßigkeiten in Kenntnis zu setzen?

3. Welches sind die Konsequenzen dieser Unregelmäßigkeiten und Probleme?

In dem Fall um den Rücktritt des früheren Kommissionsmitglieds Dalli teilte die Leiterin der Abteilung für Innenrevision und Ermittlungen des maltesischen Premierministers und Leiterin des maltesischen Dienstes für die Koordinierung der Betrugsbekämpfung (AFCOS) in einer öffentlichen Sitzung des Haushaltskontrollausschusses vom 6. November 2012 mit, dass sie durch OLAF über mögliche verdeckte Hinweise auf eine mangelhafte Verwaltung der Strukturfonds durch einen Wirtschaftsakteur in Malta in Kenntnis gesetzt worden sei.

4. Wie bewertet die Kommission die Rechtmäßigkeit des Ansatzes von OLAF und die Informationen, die ihr durch die Leiterin des maltesischen AFCOS mitgeteilt wurden?

5. Welche Bestimmungen regeln das Verhältnis zwischen OLAF und den nationalen AFCOS? Ist die mögliche Fehlinformation eines einzelstaatlichen AFCOS mit den Bestimmungen vereinbar?

Antwort von Herrn Šemeta im Namen der Kommission

(20. Juni 2013)

Die Kommission erinnert daran, dass auf das von der Frau Abgeordneten angeführte Schreiben hin die Stellungnahme 02/2012 des OLAF-Überwachungsausschusses sowie anschließend der Tätigkeitsbericht 2012 des Überwachungsausschusses an die Präsidenten aller drei Organe übermittelt wurde. In diesen Dokumenten weist der Überwachungsausschuss auf eine Reihe positiver Entwicklungen im Hinblick auf die Untersuchungstätigkeiten des OLAF sowie auf weitere Problembereiche hin, bei denen seiner Ansicht nach Maßnahmen durch das OLAF-Management erforderlich sind. Die angesprochenen Fragen wurden bereits bei den Sitzungen des Haushaltskontrollausschusses des EP vom 23. April sowie vom 28. und 29. Mai 2013 mit dem Überwachungsausschuss, Kommissar Šemeta und dem OLAF erörtert.

In diesem Zusammenhang möchte die Kommission auch darauf hinweisen, dass es dringend notwendig ist, die Reform des Rechtsrahmens des OLAF abzuschließen, um eine Reihe von Mängeln zu beheben, die der Überwachungsausschuss festgestellt hat. Die Annahme der geänderten OLAF-Verordnung würde unter anderem die Einrichtung eines interinstitutionellen Dialogs ermöglichen.

Die Kommission fordert sowohl das OLAF als auch den Überwachungsausschuss dazu auf, gemäß ihrer jeweiligen Befugnisse einen konstruktiven Dialog zu entwickeln, so dass beide ihre Rolle beim Schutz der finanziellen Interessen und bei der Optimierung der Funktionsweise und Effizienz des Amtes wirksam wahrnehmen können.

Die Bewertung der Rechtmäßigkeit der Untersuchungen durch das OLAF ist Sache der zuständigen Justizbehörden. Der Rahmen für die Zusammenarbeit zwischen dem OLAF und den Behörden der Mitgliedstaaten, einschließlich des AFCOS, ist in Artikel 7 der Verordnung Nr. 1073/1999 vorgegeben. Die Beziehung zwischen dem OLAF und dem AFCOS kann auch durch eine gemeinsame Vereinbarung ergänzt werden, die zwar rechtlich nicht bindend ist, in der aber die praktischen Aspekte der Zusammenarbeit festgelegt werden, zu deren Einhaltung sich die unterzeichnenden Parteien verpflichten.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000371/13
to the Commission
Ingeborg Gräßle (PPE)
(15 January 2013)

Subject: Irregularities within OLAF investigations

In its letter to Parliament of 11 December 2012, the Supervisory Committee of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) stated that it had discovered 'a number of potential problems and issued recommendations to the Director General of OLAF in that regard which require a discussion with him on a more systemic level about the ways in which OLAF is conducting its investigations'.

1. Concerning the Commission's legal interpretation, are such potential problems of systemic nature and/or found irregularities covered by the confidentiality of the investigations or any data protection provisions that prevent the Commission from informing Parliament?

2. When and how does the Commission plan to inform Parliament about the potential problems and irregularities discovered?

3. What are the consequences of these irregularities and problems?

In the case surrounding the resignation of former commissioner Dalli, the head of the Maltese Prime Minister's internal audit and investigation department and head of the Maltese Antifraud Coordinating Structure (AFCOS) said at the public meeting of the Committee on Budgetary Control on 6 November 2012 that she had been informed by OLAF of 'possible insinuations about the mismanagement of structural funds by an economic operator in Malta'.

4. How does the Commission assess the legality of OLAF's approach and the information provided by the head of the Maltese AFCOS?

5. What are the rules governing the relations between OLAF and the national AFCOS? Is the possible misinformation of a national AFCOS in line with their provisions?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(20 June 2013)

The Commission recalls that the letter referred to by the Honourable Member was followed by the transmission of the opinion 02/2012 of OLAF's Supervisory Committee (SC) to the Presidents of the three Institutions, as well as, later, by the transmission of the SC's 2012 activity report. In these documents, the SC highlights a number of recent positive developments as regards the investigative activities of OLAF and a number of issues which it considers require further actions by OLAF management. The questions raised have already been the subject of discussions and exchange of views during the meetings of the EP Budgetary Control Committee on 23 April, 28 and 29 May 2013 with the SC, Commissioner Šemeta and OLAF.

In this context, the Commission would also underline the necessity and urgency to complete the reform on OLAF's legal framework to address a number of shortcomings identified by the SC. The adoption of the revised OLAF Regulation would *inter alia* enable the setting up of an interinstitutional dialogue.

The Commission invites both OLAF and the SC to develop a constructive dialogue in accordance with their respective prerogatives, so that both can play their role effectively in view of the protection of the financial interests and optimising the functioning and the efficiency of the Office.

It is up to the competent judicial authorities to assess the legality of OLAF's investigations. Article 7 of Reg. 1073/1999 gives the framework for cooperation between OLAF and the Member States authorities, including with the AFCOS. The relationship between OLAF and the AFCOS may also be completed by a memorandum of understanding which, although not legally binding, sets the practical aspects of cooperation to which the subscribing parties are committed.

(Slovenska različica)

Vprašanje za pisni odgovor E-000372/13
za Komisijo
Milan Zver (PPE)
(15. januar 2013)

Zadeva: Višina kazni za kršitve Uredbe (ES) št. 1/2005

Člen 25 Uredbe Sveta (ES) št. 1/2005 o zaščiti živali med prevozom navaja, da morajo države članice določiti predpise o kaznih, ki se uporabljajo za kršitve določb te uredbe, in da morajo sprejeti vse potrebne ukrepe za zagotovitev njihovega izvajanja. Člen 25 določa tudi, da morajo biti predpisane kazni učinkovite, sorazmerne in odvračilne.

1. Ali ima Komisija podatke o višini kazni za kršitve Uredbe (ES) št. 1/2005 v vseh 27 državah članicah?

2. Če jih ima, ali bo zagotovila podatke o višini kazni v Franciji, Španiji, Nemčiji, Bolgariji, Belgiji in na Madžarskem za naslednje kršitve Uredbe (ES) št. 1/2005, in sicer za:

a) prevoz goveda na dolge razdalje na tovornjakih s pokvarjenimi napravami za napajanje (kar je kršitev Priloge I, poglavja VI, točke 2);

b) prevoz živali, ki med prevozom na dolge razdalje resno zbolijo in zato niso primerne za prevoz (kar je kršitev Priloge I, poglavja I);

c) prevoz prašičev na dolge razdalje v zabojnikih pri temperaturah, ki presegajo 35 °C (kar je kršitev Priloge I, poglavja VI, točke 3.1)?

Odgovor g. Borga v imenu Komisije
(20. februar 2013)

1. Vse države članice so predložile informacije o kaznih v skladu s členom 25 Uredbe (ES) št. 1/2005 ([1]) o zaščiti živali med prevozom. Države članice pa niso obvezane predložiti natančnih informacij o tem, kakšne sankcije izrečejo za kršitev ali kaznivo dejanje. Kazni so lahko denarne kazni, zaporna kazen, odvzem potrdila o usposobljenosti za voznike ali spremne osebe ter odredbe o začasnem prenehanju izvajanja dejavnosti, kar je med drugim odvisno od resnosti in narave zadevne kršitve. V nekaterih državah članicah se lahko v primeru ponavljajočih se kršitev izrečejo strožje kazni.

2. Posledično Komisija ne more predložiti zahtevanih informacij o višini denarnih kazni.

([1]) UL L 3, 5.1.2005, str. 1.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000372/13
to the Commission
Milan Zver (PPE)
(15 January 2013)

Subject: Size of fines for infringements of Regulation (EC) No 1/2005

Article 25 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport states that the Member States must lay down the rules for penalties applicable to infringements of the provisions of the regulation and must take all measures necessary to ensure that they are implemented. Furthermore, Article 25 stipulates that the penalties provided for must be effective, proportionate and dissuasive.

1. Does the Commission have information on the level of fines for infringements of Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 in each of the 27 Member States?

2. If so, will the Commission provide information on the size of fines laid down in France, Spain, Germany, Bulgaria, Belgium and Hungary for the following violations of Regulation (EC) No 1/2005:

a) long-distance transport of bovine animals on a lorry with a non-functioning water system (which is a violation of Annex I, Chapter VI, point 2)?

b) transport of an animal which falls seriously ill during a long-distance journey, i.e. an animal not fit for transport (which is a violation of Annex I, Chapter I)?

c) long-distance transport of pigs at temperatures above 35°C inside animal compartments (which is a violation of Annex I, Chapter VI, point 3.1)?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(20 February 2013)

1. All Member States have provided information on penalties according to Article 25 of Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 ([1]) on the protection of animals during transport. Member States are not, however, obliged to provide precise information on how an infringement or offence is sanctioned. The penalties can consist of fines, imprisonment, withdrawal of certificates of competence for drivers or attendants, and orders to temporarily cease activity depending, amongst other things, on the severity and nature of the breach in question. In some Member States the penalty may be increased in severity in case of repeated infringements.

2. As a consequence, the requested information concerning size of fines cannot be provided by the Commission.

([1]) OJ L 3, 5.1.2005, p. 1.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-000373/13
aan de Commissie
Lucas Hartong (NI)
(15 januari 2013)

Betreft: Rekenkamer rapport energiezuinigheid projecten

Vandaag kwam het rapport van de Europese Rekenkamer uit inzake „Cost effectiveness of Cohesion Policy investments in energy effeciency". De conclusie van de Rekenkamer luidt: „The right conditions in programming and financing have not been set to enable cost-effective energy efficiency investments". Tevens concludeerde de Rekenkamer dat „cost-effectiveness concept was not a determining factor… neither was it part of the Commission's assesment prior to approval of operational programmes". In dat kader de volgende vragen.

1. Hoe kan het dat de Commissie op geen enkele wijze, noch vooraf noch tijdens uitvoering, kosteneffectiviteit als factor in aanmerking heeft genomen?

2. Hoe kan het dat de Commissie geen „monitoring guidelines" heeft opgesteld waardoor projecten op hun effectiviteit en nut konden worden beoordeeld?

3. Is de Commissie met de PVV van mening dat per direct alle subsidieverlening uit toepasselijke begrotingslijnen zoals het Regionaal Europees Ontwikkelingsfonds dient te worden stopgezet?

4. Wat gaat de Commissie doen om ten onrechte verleende subsidie bij de ontvangende lidstaten terug te vorderen namens de belastingbetalende burgers?

Antwoord van de heer Hahn namens de Commissie
(20 maart 2013)

1. De cohesiebeleidsprogramma's dienen diverse beleidsdoelstellingen, waarvan energie-efficiëntie er slechts één is. De kosteneffectiviteit kan alleen geëvalueerd worden op het niveau van het project en niet op dat van het programma. De verantwoordelijkheid voor de selectie van projecten ligt bij de lidstaten; zij kunnen kostenefficiëntie opnemen in de selectiecriteria, naast andere criteria zoals het scheppen van werkgelegenheid en de mogelijkheden voor lokale economische groei. Investeringen in isolatie van gebouwen betreffen de langere termijn, waarbij het terugverdieneffect in verhouding staat tot de mate van renovatie. Om te voldoen aan de energiedoelstellingen van de EU voor 2020 en daarna, zullen grootschalige renovaties nodig zijn, met verbeteringen van de energie-efficiëntie die verder gaan dan de kostenoptimale niveaus. Die zullen nuttig zijn op de langere termijn om verdere besparingen te creëren en te vermijden dat er over vijf tot vijftien jaar lock-in-effecten optreden of extra werk nodig is, waardoor de totale investeringskosten zelfs nog hoger zouden oplopen. Bij de renovatie van woningen zouden alle beschikbare technologieën voor energiebesparing moeten worden gebruikt. Voor openbare gebouwen is het eveneens van belang bij de renovatie een geïntegreerde aanpak te hanteren om het gebouw in zijn geheel te verbeteren; dit leidt gewoonlijk tot meer kosteneffectieve projecten.

2. De nationale autoriteiten sturen de uitvoering van de programma's. Zij selecteren projecten en houden toezicht op de uitvoering. Projectfinanciering is onderworpen aan regels en voorwaarden die zijn vastgelegd op het niveau van de EU en van de lidstaten. De EU-wetgeving legt strenge criteria vast aan de hand van de richtlijn betreffende de energieprestatie van gebouwen en de nieuwe richtlijn inzake energie-efficiëntie. Die zullen van belang zijn voor investeringen op dit gebied en dan vooral in de komende periode, waarin een grotere klemtoon zal liggen op toezicht.

3. Nee.

4. De Rekenkamer heeft voor geen enkel van de 24 gecontroleerde projecten geoordeeld dat er onterecht subsidies waren toegekend.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000373/13
to the Commission
Lucas Hartong (NI)
(15 January 2013)

Subject: Court of Auditors report on energy efficiency projects

The Court of Auditors recently published a report on the 'Cost effectiveness of Cohesion Policy investments in energy efficiency'. The Court concluded that 'the right conditions in programming and financing have not been set to enable cost-effective energy efficiency investments'. It also concluded that the 'cost-effectiveness concept […] was not a determining factor […] Neither was [it] part of the Commission's assessment prior to approval of operational programmes'.

1. How is it possible that the Commission has in no way, either before or during implementation, taken cost effectiveness into consideration as a factor?

2. How is it possible that the Commission did not draw up any monitoring guidelines in order to be able to assess the effectiveness and usefulness of projects?

3. Does the Commission agree with the PVV that all subsidies from relevant budget lines such as the European Regional Development Fund should be stopped immediately?

4. What will the Commission do to recover improperly provided subsidies from the recipient Member States on behalf of tax-paying citizens?

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

1. It has been stated that cohesion policy programmes cover several policy objectives, only one of them being energy efficiency. Assessing cost-effectiveness is only possible at project, not programme level. Member States are in charge of project selection, where cost-effectiveness may be defined in selection criteria, along with other criteria such as job creation and potential for local economic growth. Investments in insulation of buildings are longer-term, with paybacks proportionate to the degree of renovation. Large-scale renovations will be needed in order to meet the EU energy targets for 2020 and beyond, with energy efficiency improvements that go beyond cost-optimal levels. They will be valuable in a longer-term perspective, in order to generate higher savings and avoid lock-ins and additional work in 5-15 years, which would make the total investment costs even higher. For building renovation, all available energy saving technologies should be used. For public buildings, it is also important to take an integrated approach towards general refurbishment to improve the building overall, resulting typically in more cost-effective projects.

2. The national authorities manage programme implementation. They select projects and monitor implementation. Project funding is subject to rules and conditions laid down at EU and Member State level. Stringent criteria are being set in EU legislation, under the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive and the new Energy Efficiency Directive, which will be important for investments in this area, in particular in the next period, when monitoring will be increased.

3. No.

4. The Court of Auditors did not conclude that subsidies had been improperly provided for any of the 24 audited projects.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000374/13
a la Comisión
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(15 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Preocupante disminución de árboles centenarios

Varios investigadores han llamado la atención sobre el grave deterioro de los árboles centenarios en todo el mundo, el incremento de los riesgos que padecen, así como su falta de adecuada protección (por ejemplo, puede verse en este sentido el número de diciembre de la revista *Science*). Diversos países de la Unión Europea están elaborando catálogos sobre esta riqueza forestal.

La Directiva de hábitats 92/43/CEE, de 21 de mayo, no ha establecido una lista de especies amenazadas o en peligro de extinción, tal como han denunciado los expertos.

Por todo ello, pregunto a la Comisión:

1. ¿No cree que la iniciativa de difundir un catálogo con los árboles centenarios de los países miembros de la Unión podría ayudar a conocer más el patrimonio forestal europeo?

2. ¿No cree que deben incrementarse los fondos y las medidas de protección de esos «monumentos forestales», con el objeto de que también otras especies consigan la adecuada longevidad? ¿No sería conveniente incorporar, como ocurre en tantas legislaciones de los Estados miembros, la obligación de que una cantidad similar a un pequeño porcentaje de los presupuestos de las obras públicas comunitarias (por ejemplo, el 0,5 %) se destinara a proyectos de restauración forestal?

3. ¿No considera que debe promoverse un catálogo o lista de especies en peligro como anexo de la Directiva de hábitats?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(27 de febrero de 2013)

La Comisión recuerda que las cuestiones relacionadas con los bosques y la silvicultura son principalmente cuestiones de competencia nacional. Pueden establecerse disposiciones de protección de las agrupaciones de árboles centenarios vinculadas al paisaje al amparo de la legislación nacional o regional. La Comisión no tiene previsto elaborar un catálogo de grandes árboles centenarios.

La Comisión no tiene intención de influir en las decisiones que adopten los Estados miembros en materia de gestión de obras públicas. El Reglamento (CE) n° 1698/2005 relativo a la ayuda al desarrollo rural ([1]) prevé pagos Natura 2000 y en favor del medio forestal, así como medidas de ayuda a las inversiones no productivas con el fin de apoyar a los Estados miembros que deseen mejorar sus ecosistemas forestales.

De conformidad con la Directiva sobre hábitats ([2]), se consideran especies de interés de la Unión las que estén en peligro, sean vulnerables, raras o endémicas. Los anexos de la Directiva incluyen varias especies forestales, así como otras especies que dependen de la presencia de árboles centenarios para mantener un estado de conservación favorable. Este es el caso, por ejemplo, de varias especies de aves protegidas en virtud de la Directiva sobre aves de la UE ([3]). Por otra parte, una serie de hábitats forestales están incluidos en el anexo I de la Directiva sobre hábitats y, por tanto, en los espacios Natura 2000. El mantenimiento o restauración de especies autóctonas de árboles centenarios figura con frecuencia entre los objetivos o las medidas de conservación de los Estados miembros en relación con los espacios Natura 2000. Por consiguiente, se espera que la plena aplicación de la legislación de la UE sobre protección de la naturaleza contribuya a la conservación de los árboles centenarios de Europa.

([1]) Reglamento (CE) n° 1698/2005 del Consejo, de 20 de septiembre de 2005, relativo a la ayuda al desarrollo rural a través del Fondo Europeo Agrícola de Desarrollo Rural (FEADER), (DO l 277 de 21.10.2005, p.1).
([2]) Directiva 92/43/CEE (DO L 206 de 22.7.1992).
([3]) Directiva 2009/147/CE (DO L 20 de 26.1.2010).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000374/13
to the Commission
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(15 January 2013)

Subject: Alarming decline in the number of large old trees

A number of researchers have drawn attention to the rapid global decline in large old trees, the increase of threats to trees and a lack of adequate tree protection (a report on this issue was published in the December issue of the *Science* magazine). Several EU countries are putting together catalogues containing information on these tree resources.

As experts have criticised, the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 does not set up a list of endangered species.

1. Does the Commission not consider that distributing a catalogue of large old trees found in EU Member States would increase knowledge about the European forest heritage?

2. Does the Commission not agree that more money should be spent and further measures introduced to protect these 'forest monuments', with the aim that other species will also live as long as they should? Does the Commission not consider it appropriate to impose an obligation to allocate a small amount of money, roughly equal to 0.5 % of the budget for EU public works, for example, to forest restoration projects, as provided for in the legislation of many Member States?

3. Does the Commission not think that a catalogue or list of species in danger of extinction should be included as an annex to the Habitats Directive?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(27 February 2013)

The Commission recalls that issues related to forests and forestry are mainly matters of national competence. Protective provisions for groupings of old trees in the landscape may be set up under national or regional legislation. The Commission is not planning to establish a catalogue of large old trees.

The Commission does not intend to influence Member States in their choice of managing public works. Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 on support for rural development ([1]) does include forest-environment and Natura 2000 payment measures as well as non-productive investments measure to support Member States willing to improve forest ecosystems.

According to the EU Habitats Directive ([2]), species are considered of Union interest if they are endangered, vulnerable, rare or endemic. The relevant annexes of the directive include several tree species. They also include several other species which depend on the presence of old trees to have a favourable conservation status. This is for instance the case for several Bird Species protected under the EU Birds Directive ([3]). Moreover, a number of forest habitats are included in Annex I of the Habitats Directive and are therefore included in Natura 2000 sites. The maintenance or restoration of old native tree species is often a conservation objective or conservation measure developed by the Member States for Natura 2000 sites. The full implementation of the EU nature legislation is therefore expected to contribute to the maintenance of old trees in Europe.

([1]) Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 of 20 September 2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), OJ L 277 of 21.10.2005, p. 1.
([2]) 92/43/EEC (OJ L 206, 22.7.1992).
([3]) 2009/147/EC (OJ L 20, 26.1.2010).

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000375/13
a la Comisión
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(15 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Determinación del índice Euríbor

Hace seis meses que me interesé por la investigación abierta por la Comisión Europea sobre las denuncias de manipulación del índice de referencia interbancario conocido como Euríbor (referencia E-006921/2012). En su respuesta, la Comisión afirmó que todavía era demasiado pronto para revelar su contenido porque las investigaciones, que se habían iniciado hacía más de un año, no habían concluido.

Han pasado seis meses y, como es bien conocido, se han sucedido relevantes acontecimientos en este ámbito: las autoridades financieras británicas, estadounidenses y helvéticas confirmaron la manipulación de otro índice de referencia, el Líbor, lo que condujo a la imposición de sanciones económicas y la dimisión de directivos de entidades financieras; varios bancos europeos se han dado de baja del grupo que remite la información para fijar el Euríbor; el pasado viernes 11 de enero las autoridades europeas de supervisión bancaria y de supervisión del mercado de valores publicaron un informe muy crítico sobre la determinación del índice Euríbor. Entre otras consideraciones, subrayaron la falta de transparencia y la inexistencia de controles sobre las decisiones adoptadas.

Por todo ello, pregunto de nuevo a la Comisión:

1. ¿En qué estado se encuentra la investigación sobre la fijación del índice Euríbor?

2. ¿Ha valorado la Comisión la posibilidad de elaborar un mecanismo transparente en el que los índices se cotejen con los datos reales de las transferencias interbancarias?

Respuesta del Sr. Almunia en nombre de la Comisión
(25 de marzo de 2013)

1. La Comisión sigue investigando el asunto relativo a la manipulación de determinados índices de referencia, tales como el LIBOR, el TIBOR y el Euribor. Como ya ha señalado el Vicepresidente y Miembro de la Comisión responsable de la Competencia, la Comisión está dando gran prioridad a estos asuntos. En esta fase de las investigaciones, la Comisión no puede pronunciarse sobre su duración exacta, pero puede indicar que están alcanzando una fase avanzada.

El procedimiento de la Comisión en virtud del artículo 101 del TFUE se diferencia de los de otras autoridades de defensa de la competencia y reguladores financieros por el hecho de que se actúa a la vez contra todos los participantes en un cártel y no solo contra una de las partes. Por último, la Comisión adoptará las medidas necesarias para sancionar las supuestas prácticas con arreglo a las normas de competencia de la UE si se confirman sus sospechas. Esto debería incitar también un cambio de prácticas en el sector bancario.

2. Los servicios de la Comisión pusieron en marcha en septiembre de 2012 una consulta pública que abordó los problemas de la transparencia de los métodos de los índices de referencia y de la información en la que se basan y la manera en que deben validarse los índices de referencia y sus datos, por ejemplo, mediante comparaciones con los datos de las operaciones reales. La consulta finalizó el 29 de noviembre de 2012 y la Comisión está estudiando ahora las respuestas con vistas a presentar una propuesta legislativa en el segundo trimestre de 2013. Además, la ABE y la AEVM remitieron el 11 de enero de 2013 una carta conjunta a EBF-Euribor que recomendaba, entre otras cosas, que los datos debían comprobarse retrospectivamente. Una recomendación de la ABE emitida el 11 de enero, sobre la supervisión de los bancos del comité Euribor aconsejó que «los controles realizados en los datos que se presenten deben incluir comparaciones con datos reales, comprobables y basados en las operaciones» ([1]).

([1]) http://www.esma.europa.eu/content/EBA-Recommendations-supervisory-oversight-activities-related-banks'-participation-Euribor-pa

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000375/13
to the Commission
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(15 January 2013)

Subject: Setting the Euribor rate

Six months ago, I enquired about the Commission's investigation into allegations of manipulation of the Euribor, the interbank reference interest rate (Written Question E-006921/2012). The Commission replied stating that it was too early to reveal the content of the investigations, which had started more than a year earlier, since they were still ongoing.

Six months have now elapsed and it is well known that significant developments have occurred: the British, American and Swiss financial regulators confirmed that another inter-bank lending reference rate, the Libor, had also been rigged, which led to fines and the resignation of bank executives; a number of European banks have left the panel that submits the data used to set the Euribor rate and on 11 January, the European Banking Authority and the European Securities and Markets Authority published a very critical report on the Euribor setting process. Among other issues, the report emphasised a lack of transparency and the absence of checks on the accuracy of data on which decisions are based.

In light of the above, I shall repeat my questions to the Commission:

1. Can the Commission say how far advanced the investigation into Euribor rate-fixing is?

2. Has the Commission considered setting up a transparent mechanism to check rates against real data from inter-bank transfers?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(25 March 2013)

1. The Commission continues to investigate the subject matter relating to the manipulation of certain benchmarks including the LIBOR, TIBOR and EURIBOR. As the Vice-President and Member of the Commission responsible for Competition has already emphasised, the Commission is giving high priority to these cases. At this stage of the investigations, the Commission cannot comment on their exact duration, but can however indicate that they are now reaching an advanced stage.

The Commission's proceedings under Article 101 TFEU differ from those of other antitrust authorities and financial regulators in that action is taken against all participants of a cartel in one go and not only against one party. Last but not least, if the Commission's concerns are confirmed, it will take the necessary actions to sanction the alleged practices under EU competition rules. This should also prompt a change of culture in the banking sector.

2. The Commission services launched a public consultation in September 2012 that considered the issues of transparency in benchmarks' methodologies and underlying data and how benchmarks and their input data should be validated — for example through comparisons with actual transactions data. The consultation closed on 29 November 2012 and the Commission is now considering the responses with a view to launching a legislative proposal in the second quarter of 2013. In addition on 11 January 2013 the EBA and ESMA issued a joint letter to EBF-Euribor recommending, amongst other things, that data should be back tested. An EBA recommendation of the 11 January on supervisory oversight of banks in the Euribor panel recommended that 'controls performed on the data submitted should include comparisons with actual, transaction-based, verifiable data' ([1]).

([1]) http://www.esma.europa.eu/content/EBA-Recommendations-supervisory-oversight-activities-related-banks'-participation-Euribor-pa.

(Tekstas lietuvių kalba)

Klausimas, į kurį atsakoma raštu, Nr. E-000377/13
Tarybai
Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D)
(2013 m. sausio 15 d.)

Tema: Darbuotojų teisių apsauga ir kova su jų diskriminacija

Džiugu, jog šį pusmetį Europos Sąjungos Tarybai pirmininkaujanti Airija savo darbo programoje užsimena apie darbuotojų teisių apsaugą ir kovą su jų diskriminacija. Tai ypač aktualu, kadangi šie metai paskelbti Europos piliečių metais.

Taigi kokių konkrečių veiksmų imsis pirmininkaujančioji šalis, siekdama pagerinti darbuotojų, ypač judančių Europos Sąjungoje, padėtį?

Atsakymas
(2013 m. kovo 11 d.)

Taryba norėtų atkreipti gerbiamosios narės dėmesį į tai, kad Taryba kartu su Europos Parlamentu jau priėmė teisės aktus, skirtus kovai su diskriminacija užimtumo srityje. Šie teisės aktai apima kovos su diskriminacija dėl lyties ([1]), rasinės arba etninės kilmės ([2]) ir dėl religijos arba įsitikinimų, negalios, amžiaus arba lytinės orientacijos ([3]) klausimą.

Taip pat būtų galima priminti, kad už ES teisės aktų įgyvendinimą nacionaliniu lygiu yra atsakingos valstybės narės. Komisija yra atsakinga už galiojančių ES teisės aktų perkėlimo į nacionalinę teisę stebėseną ir turi įgaliojimus pradėti pažeidimo nagrinėjimo procedūrą.

Kalbant apie galimybę priimti šios srities teisės aktų ateityje, kaip gerbiamoji narė žino, Taryba gali veikti kaip teisės aktų leidėja tik remdamasi Komisijos pateiktu pasiūlymu. Manoma, kad Komisija ketina tinkamu laiku priimti pasiūlymą dėl mobiliųjų darbuotojų judėjimo laisvės įgyvendinimo užtikrinimo. Taryba šį pasiūlymą tinkamai apsvarstys, vadovaudamasi įprastomis procedūromis.

([1]) 2006 m. liepos 5 d. Europos Parlamento ir Tarybos direktyva 2006/54/EB dėl moterų ir vyrų lygių galimybių ir vienodo požiūrio į moteris ir vyrus užimtumo bei profesinės veiklos srityje principo įgyvendinimo (nauja redakcija), OL L 204, 2006 7 26, p. 23.

([2]) 2000 m. birželio 29 d. Tarybos direktyva 2000/43/EB, įgyvendinanti vienodo požiūrio principą asmenims nepriklausomai nuo jų rasės arba etninės priklausomybės, OL L 180, 2000 7 19, p. 22.

([3]) 2000 m. lapkričio 27 d. Tarybos direktyva 2000/78/EB, nustatanti vienodo požiūrio užimtumo ir profesinėje srityje bendruosius pagrindus, OL L 303, 2000 12 2, p. 16.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000377/13
to the Council
Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D)
(15 January 2013)

Subject: Protection of workers' rights and combating discrimination

I am pleased that Ireland, which holds the Council Presidency in the first half of 2013, mentions the protection of workers' rights and combating discrimination in its work programme. This is particularly relevant as this year has been designated as the European Year of Citizens.

What specific actions will the Presidency take to improve the situation for workers, particularly workers who are mobile within the European Union?

Reply
(11 March 2013)

The Council would draw the Honourable Member's attention to the fact that the Council, together with the European Parliament, has already adopted legislation aimed at combating discrimination in the field of employment. This legislation covers the issue of the fight against discrimination on the grounds of sex ([1]), of racial or ethnic origin ([2]) and of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation ([3]).

It could be also recalled that the Member States are responsible for implementing EU legislation at national level. The Commission is responsible for monitoring the transposition of existing EU legislation and has the power to launch infringement proceedings.

As regards the possibility of future legislation in this area, as the Honourable Member is aware, the Council can only act in a legislative capacity on the basis of a proposal from the Commission. It is understood that the Commission intends to adopt a proposal in due course concerning the enforcement of the freedom of movement of mobile workers. This proposal will be duly examined by the Council in accordance with the usual procedures.

([1]) Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast), OJ L 204, 26.7.2006, p. 23.

([2]) 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.

([3]) 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.

(Tekstas lietuvių kalba)

Klausimas, į kurį atsakoma raštu, Nr. E-000378/13
Tarybai
Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D)
(2013 m. sausio 15 d.)

Tema: Kovos su diskriminacija direktyva ir derybų perspektyvos

Nors 2010 m. gruodžio 23 d. Europos Sąjunga oficialiai ratifikavo Jungtinių Tautų neįgaliųjų teisių konvenciją, kai kurios Europos Sąjungos valstybės narės vis dar nepritaria Tarybos direktyvai, kuria įgyvendinamas vienodo požiūrio į asmenis, nepaisant jų religijos ar tikėjimo, negalios, amžiaus arba seksualinės orientacijos, principas (KOM(2008)0426) (Kovos su diskriminacija direktyva), ir vis nepavyksta rasti bendro susitarimo.

1. Kokių konkrečių veiksmų planuoja imtis Europos Sąjungos Tarybai šį pusmetį pirmininkaujanti Airija dėl šios direktyvos priėmimo?

2. Kaip Taryba planuoja tęsti derybas su valstybėmis narėmis, kad pagaliau būtų pasiekta konkrečių derybų rezultatų šioje srityje?

Atsakymas
(2013 m. kovo 11 d.)

Pirmininkaujanti Airija yra pasiryžusi tęsti darbą dėl siūlomos Tarybos direktyvos, kuria įgyvendinamas vienodo požiūrio į asmenis, nepaisant jų religijos ar tikėjimo, negalios, amžiaus arba seksualinės orientacijos, principas ([1]). Pirmas už šį dokumentą atsakingos Tarybos darbo grupės posėdis įvyko 2013 m. sausio 14 d.

Atėjus laikui vyks kiti posėdžiai, o pirmininkaujanti valstybė narė 2013 m. birželio 20 d. ketina Tarybai pateikti pažangos ataskaitą.

Taryba negali numatyti dėl šios direktyvos projekto vykstančių derybų trukmės ar rezultatų. Kad Direktyva būtų priimta, ji turi būti vieningai patvirtinta Taryboje.

([1]) Dok. 11531/08.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000378/13
to the Council
Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D)
(15 January 2013)

Subject: Anti-discrimination Directive and the future of negotiations

Although the European Union formally ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on 23 December 2010, some European Union Member States are still opposed to the Council Directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation (COM(2008)0426) (Anti-discrimination Directive) and still cannot come to a mutual agreement.

1. What specific actions does Ireland, which holds the Council Presidency in the first half of 2013, plan to take as regards the adoption of this directive?

2. How does the Council plan to continue negotiations with the Member States so that the negotiations produce concrete results in this area?

Reply
(11 March 2013)

The Irish Presidency is determined to continue working on the proposed Council Directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation ([1]). A first meeting of the Council working party in charge of this dossier took place on 14 January 2013.

Further meetings will take place in due course, and the Presidency intends to present a progress report to the Council on 20 June 2013.

The Council is not in a position to anticipate the duration or the outcome of the ongoing negotiations on the draft Directive, which must be approved unanimously by the Council in order to be adopted.

([1]) 11531/08.

(Tekstas lietuvių kalba)

Klausimas, į kurį atsakoma raštu, Nr. E-000379/13
Komisijai
Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D)
(2013 m. sausio 15 d.)

Tema: Darbuotojų teisių apsauga ir kova su jų diskriminacija

Taryba per šiuos Europos piliečių metus planuoja kuo daugiau dėmesio skirti darbuotojų teisių apsaugai ir kovai su jų diskriminacija.

1. Ar Komisija planuoja imtis veiksmų šioje srityje, siekdama pagerinti judančių darbuotojų padėtį Europos Sąjungoje?

2. Kokie artimiausi Komisijos planai teisėkūros srityje, kovojant su darbuotojų diskriminacija?

L. Andoro atsakymas Komisijos vardu
(2013 m. kovo 13 d.)

2013 m. pirmą ketvirtį Komisija ketina pateikti naują iniciatyvą, kad sudarytų palankesnes sąlygas darbuotojams ir jų šeimos nariams naudotis laisvo judėjimo teise pagal ES teisę. Pagal iniciatyvą turėtų būti nustatytos konkrečios priemonės, kurios valstybėms narėms suteiktų galimybę užtikrinti didesnę paramą ES darbuotojams migrantams ir geriau informuoti šiuos darbuotojus apie jų teises.

Ši iniciatyva turėtų padėti kovoti su diskriminacija dėl pilietybės ir užtikrinti, kad būtų veiksmingai taikoma ES teisė laisvo darbuotojų judėjimo srityje. Iniciatyva taip pat turėtų padėti padidinti teisinį tikrumą: bus aiškiai nustatyta apsauga būtent nuo diskriminacijos dėl pilietybės ir padidintas informuotumas apie ją. Minėta iniciatyva šiam klausimui bus suteikta daugiau matomumo, taigi ji turėtų padidinti nacionalinių institucijų, taip pat viešojo ir privačiojo sektoriaus darbdavių, nevyriausybinių organizacijų bei socialinių partnerių suinteresuotumą ir paskatinti juos imtis veiksmų.

Pagal Europos piliečių metų informavimo kampaniją teikiama informacija apie ES teises ir galimybes plačiąja prasme, piliečiai skatinami prisidėti ir dalyvauti formuojant ES ateitį. Per šią kampaniją bus visapusiškai naudojamasi ES institucijų sukurtomis priemonėmis ir medžiaga ([1]), taip pat bus siekiama pasinaudoti visomis jų teikiamomis galimybėmis informuojant piliečius, įskaitant darbuotojus migrantus, ir sudarant jiems dalyvavimo ES sąlygas ([2]).

Pagal kampaniją, siekiant spręsti piliečiams susirūpinimą keliančius klausimus ir užtikrinti, kad jie iš tiesų galėtų naudotis savo teisėmis, visų pirma bus didinamas informuotumas apie dabartines daugiakalbes informavimo ir dalyvavimo priemones, kaip antai apie „Europe Direct“, „YourEurope“, SOLVIT, sąveikiojo politikos formavimo iniciatyvą, Europos piliečių iniciatyvą, peticijas ir Europos ombudsmeną, taip pat bus skatinama naudotis šiomis priemonėmis.

([1]) Pvz., interneto svetainėmis, portalais, vaizdo medžiaga, lankstinukais, taip pat bus organizuojami renginiai ir pan.
([2]) www.europa.eu/citizens-2013/lt.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000379/13
to the Commission
Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D)
(15 January 2013)

Subject: Protection of workers' rights and combating discrimination

In this Year of European Citizens, the Council plans to pay as much attention as possible to the protection of workers' rights and combating discrimination.

1. Does the Commission plan to take action in this field to improve the situation for workers who are mobile within the European Union?

2. What immediate plans does the Commission have in the field of legislation for combating discrimination against workers?

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

The Commission intends to present a new initiative during the first quarter of 2013 to facilitate the exercise by workers and members of their families of their right of free movement under EC law. This should introduce specific measures to enable the Member States to provide EU migrant workers with more support and better information on their rights.

The initiative should contribute to combating discrimination on the basis of nationality and to guaranteeing the effective application of EC law on free movement of workers. It should also improve legal certainty by providing explicitly for protection from, and awareness of, discrimination based specifically on nationality. By giving the issue greater visibility, it should also increase interest in it among the national authorities, as well as among public and private employers, NGOs, social partners, and stimulate action by them.

The communication campaign for the European Year of Citizens builds on providing information on EU rights and opportunities in a wide sense and on encouraging citizens to engage and participate in shaping the way forward for the EU. In doing so, the campaign will make the most of existing tools and materials ([1]) created by the EU institutions and will seek to fully exploit their potential, informing citizens, including migrant workers, and enabling their participation in the EU ([2]).

The campaign will primarily raise awareness about, and promote the use of, existing multilingual information and participatory tools such as 'Europe Direct', 'YourEurope', 'Solvit', the 'Interactive Policy Making' (IPM) initiative, the 'European Citizens' Initiatives', Petitions, and the European Ombudsman to address citizens' concerns and to bring tangible effect to their rights.

([1]) such as websites, portals, videos, brochures, events, etc.
([2]) www.europa.eu/citizens-2013

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-000380/13
til Kommissionen
Christel Schaldemose (S&D)
(15. januar 2013)

Om: Gebyrer i forbindelse med basale bankkonti

Indenfor de sidste måneder har en række danske banker varslet indførslen af oprettelsesgebyrer på bankkonti. Disse oprettelsesgebyrer er bl.a. pålagt kunder, der ønsker at oprette bankernes mest basale bankkonti. Oprettelsesgebyrerne befinder sig i størrelsesorden af 300-400 DKK, hvilket er et betragteligt beløb for personer uden indtægt.

I Danmark er en bankkonto en forudsætning for at kunne modtage socialsikring, eksempelvis i tilfælde af sygdom, alderdom eller arbejdsløshed. Bankernes oprettelsesgebyrer risikerer dermed at forhindre personer med lille eller ingen indkomst i at modtage social understøttelse fra den danske stat. Dette sker på trods af, at Danmarks lovgivning giver disse personer ret til social understøttelse.

Bankernes indførsel af oprettelsesgebyrer på deres mest basale bankkonti kan stride mod Den Europæiske Unions Charter om grundlæggende rettigheder, der i artikel 34 foreskriver, at personer beboende inden for EU har ret til sociale sikringsydelser i henhold til den relevante medlemsstats lovgivning. Under den nuværende lovgivning har bankerne mulighed for at forhindre dette.

Dette problem knytter sig ikke kun til oprettelsesgebyrer, men også periodiske gebyrer for opretholdelse af en basal bankkonto igennem længere tid.

På denne baggrund vil jeg gerne spørge Kommissionen om følgende:

Har Kommissionen planer om at forbyde banker i at opkræve oprettelsesgebyrer eller periodiske gebyrer i forbindelse med besiddelse af en basal bankkonto af hensyn til EU-borgeres ret til social understøttelse?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Michel Barnier
(13. marts 2013)

Adgangen til betalingskonti og basale banktjenester er blevet altafgørende for forbrugernes integration og deltagelse i det økonomiske og sociale liv, men forskelsbehandling, f.eks. på grundlag af bopæl, nationalitet eller et lavt indkomstniveau, kan stadig forekomme. Der er derfor behov for at bistå de borgere, som måtte have problemer med at åbne en bankkonto, for at fremme den sociale og territoriale samhørighed og mobilitet.

Adgang til en bankkonto er en forudsætning for, at alle borgere i EU skal kunne udnytte alle de fremskridt, der er opnået inden for det fælles europæiske betalingsområde, navnlig med direktiv 2007/64/EF ([1]) og senere med forordning 260/2012 ([2]). Parallelt med revisionen af direktiv 2007/64/EF er Kommissionen derfor ved at udarbejde et lovgivningsinitiativ om bankkonti, som forventes vedtaget i første kvartal af 2013, og som skal behandle dette spørgsmål vedrørende adgang til en bankkonto. Forslaget vil også gøre oplysninger om bankgebyrer mere gennemsigtigt for forbrugerne og gøre det lettere at skifte mellem banker.

([1]) Europa-Parlamentets og Rådets direktiv 2007/64/EF af 13. november 2007 om betalingstjenester i det indre marked og om ændring af direktiv 97/7/EF, 2002/65/EF, 2005/60/EF og 2006/48/EF og om ophævelse af direktiv 97/5/EF, EUT L 319 af 5.12.2007, s. 1-36.

([2]) Europa-Parlamentets og Rådets forordning (EU) nr. 260/2012 af 14. marts 2012 om tekniske og forretningsmæssige krav til kreditoverførsler og direkte debiteringer i euro og om ændring af forordning (EF) nr. 924/2009, EUT L 94 af 30.3.2012, s. 22-37.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000380/13
to the Commission
Christel Schaldemose (S&D)
(15 January 2013)

Subject: Fees for basic bank accounts

Over the last few months, a number of Danish banks have announced the introduction of fees for setting up bank accounts. These fees are imposed, *inter alia,* on customers who want to set up the most basic of bank accounts. The start-up fees range from 300-400 Danish kroner, which is a considerable amount for people without any income.

In Denmark, a bank account is required in order to receive social security payments, such as for illness, old age or unemployment. These start-up fees could therefore prevent people with little or no income from receiving social assistance from the Danish state, despite the fact that Danish legislation gives these people the right to receive State support.

The introduction of start-up fees by the banks on their most basic bank accounts may be contrary to the European Charter of Fundamental Rights which lays down in Article 34 that persons residing within the EU are entitled to social security benefits in accordance with relevant national laws. Under current legislation, it is possible for banks to prevent this.

This problem relates not only to start-up fees, but also to fees charged periodically for keeping open a basic bank account over a long period of time.

Does the Commission intend to stop banks demanding start-up fees or imposing periodic charges for having a basic bank account, with respect to the right of EU citizens to receive social assistance?

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

Access to payment accounts and basic banking services has become essential for the integration and participation of consumers in economic and social life, but discrimination, for instance on grounds of residence, nationality or low level of income, does still occur. There is therefore a need to assist citizens who may experience difficulties in opening a bank account to facilitate social and territorial cohesion and mobility.

Accessing to a bank account is a necessary condition for every EU citizen to be able to benefit from all the progresses achieved within the single European payment area, notably with Directive 2007/64/EC ([1]) and more recently Regulation (EU) No 260/2012 ([2]). That's why, in parallel with the revision of Directive 2007/64/EC, the Commission is preparing a legislative initiative on bank accounts which is planned for adoption in the first quarter of 2013, where this issue of access to a bank account should be tackled. The proposal would also make the information on bank fees more transparent for consumers and facilitate the process of switching of accounts between banks.

([1]) Directive 2007/64/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 November 2007 on payment services in the internal market amending Directives 97/7/EC, 2002/65/EC, 2005/60/EC and 2006/48/EC and repealing Directive 97/5/, OJ L 319, 5.12.2007, p. 1-36.

([2]) Regulation on establishing technical and business requirements for credit transfers and direct debits in euro and amending Regulation (EC) No 924/2009, OJ L 94, 30.3.2012, pp. 22-37.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord P-000381/13
aan de Raad
Lucas Hartong (NI)
(16 januari 2013)

Betreft: Bezoeken voormalig Nederlands topambtenaar aan Turkije

Eind vorig jaar ontving de voorzitter van de VS Delegatie in het Europees Parlement, de heer Ehler, een brief van de zijde van drie VS Congresleden, te weten de heren Joseph Pitts, Frank Wolf en Christopher Smith, inzake de voormalig Nederlands topambtenaar Demmink. Onlangs kwam daar een brief bij van de zijde van Congreslid Ted Poe gericht aan premier Erdogan van Turkije om opening van zaken te geven in deze slepende kwestie. In dat kader de volgende vragen aan de Raad:

1. Kan de Raad aangeven wie de deelnemers waren aan de officiële K4-delegatie naar Ankara en Istanbul op 9 en 10 maart 1998?

2. Kan de Raad aangeven of meer K4-delegaties in Turkije zijn geweest tussen 1990 en 1999, waarbij de heer Demmink al dan niet aanwezig was? Welke data en locaties betroffen deze reizen?

3. Kan de Raad aangeven of de heer Demmink mogelijk deel heeft uitgemaakt van nog andere delegaties naar Turkije tussen 1990 en 1999, niet zijnde in het kader van K4?

Antwoord
(15 april 2013)

De Raad beschikt over de volgende informatie betreffende het bezoek door het Comité K.4 aan Turkije op 9-10 maart 1998. Volgens het verslag van dit bezoek omvatte de groep op hoog niveau van functionarissen die Istanbul en Ankara bezochten, de voorzitter van het Comité K.4, de voorzitter van de groep migratie en vertegenwoordigers van de Commissie en het secretariaat-generaal van de Raad. De Raad heeft geen informatie over de namen van de deelnemers. De heer Demming was evenwel niet de (waarnemend) voorzitter van het Comité K.4 in maart 1998, aangezien het Nederlandse voorzitterschap reeds op 1 juli 1997 afliep.

De Raad heeft informatie over twee bezoeken van het Comité K.4 aan Turkije tussen 1990 en 1999: het hierboven aangegeven bezoek van 9-10 maart 1998 alsmede een bezoek aan Ankara op 10 december 1998. De Raad heeft, evenmin als voor het bezoek van 9-10 maart, informatie over de namen van de deelnemers aan het tweede bezoek.

De Raad heeft geen informatie als bedoeld in vraag nr. 3.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-000381/13
to the Council
Lucas Hartong (NI)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Visits by former top Netherlands official to Turkey

At the end of last year, Mr Ehler, chairman of the European Parliament's Delegation for relations with the United States, received a letter from three US congressmen, namely Messrs. Joseph Pitts, Frank Wolf and Christopher Smith, concerning former Netherlands top official Demmink. Congressman Ted Poe has also recently sent a letter to Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan of Turkey urging him to disclose the state of affairs of this long-standing issue. I would like to ask the following questions in this connection:

1. Can the Council indicate who took part in the K4 official delegation to Ankara and Istanbul on 9-10 March 1998?

2. Can the Council indicate whether more K4 delegations visited Turkey between 1990 and 1999 and whether or not Mr Demmink was part of them? What were the dates and the locations of those trips?

3. Can the Council indicate whether Mr Demmink may have been part of other delegations to Turkey between 1990 and 1999, other than in the context of K4?

Reply
(15 April 2013)

The Council has the following information on the visit by the K4 Committee to Turkey on 9-10 March 1998. According to the report of this visit, the EU high-level group of officials visiting Istanbul and Ankara included the chair of the K4 Committee, the Chair of the Migration Working Group and representatives from the Commission and the General Secretariat of the Council. The Council has no information on the names of the participants. However, Mr Demmink was not the (acting) chair of the K4 Committee in March 1998, as the Netherlands Presidency already ended as at 1 July 1997.

The Council has information on two visits by the K4 Committee to Turkey between 1990-1999: as indicated above, a visit on 9-10 March 1998 and also a visit on 10 December 1998 to Ankara. As in the case of the 9-10 March visit, the Council has no information on the names of the participants during the second visit.

The Council has no information as referred to in question number 3.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-000382/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)
(16 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Συρρίκνωση Προγράμματος Δημοσίων Επενδύσεων

Από το 2010 ο προϋπολογισμός του Προγράμματος Δημοσίων Επενδύσεων (ΠΔΕ) μειώνεται σημαντικά, συμβάλλοντας στον περιορισμό των δαπανών αλλά και στην ύφεση και την ανεργία. Για το 2013, βάσει του ψηφισμένου Κρατικού Προϋπολογισμού ([1]), το ΠΔΕ προβλέπεται να μην ξεπεράσει τα 6,85 δις ευρώ ή το 3,5% του ΑΕΠ. Την πενταετία 2005-2009 ανερχόταν σε 4% του ΑΕΠ. Στην πραγματικότητα η μείωση είναι μεγαλύτερη, με δεδομένη τη συρρίκνωση του ΑΕΠ λόγω της παρατεταμένης ύφεσης. Παράλληλα, έχει συρρικνωθεί σημαντικά και ο προϋπολογισμός του εθνικού υποπρογράμματος του ΠΔΕ (το 2013 θα ανέλθει σε 850 εκ. ευρώ ([2])). Τα τελευταία χρόνια το ΠΔΕ σε μεγάλο ποσοστό ταυτίζεται με τη χρηματοδότηση συγχρηματοδοτούμενων δράσεων, πράγμα που εμποδίζει την εκπλήρωση του ρόλου του στην άσκηση ολοκληρωμένης οικονομικής πολιτικής της χώρας και στην επίτευξη σύγκλισης των ελληνικών περιφερειών τόσο με τις ευρωπαϊκές όσο και μεταξύ τους αλλά και στο εσωτερικό κάθε περιφέρειας ([3]). Σημειώνεται επίσης ότι οι ανάγκες συγχρηματοδότησης των δράσεων που έχουν ενταχθεί στα Επιχειρησιακά Προγράμματα της 4ης Προγραμματικής Περιόδου 2007-2013 ανέρχονται σε 16-20 δισ. ευρώ μέχρι το 2015 ([4]), ενώ βρίσκονται σε φάση υλοποίησης χιλιάδες επενδυτικά σχέδια που έχουν ενταχθεί στους αναπτυξιακούς νόμους καθώς και άλλες ανάγκες. Ερωτάται η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή:

1. Λαμβάνοντας υπόψη τις ανάγκες για συγχρηματοδότηση των έργων της προγραμματικής περιόδου 2007-2013 και του αναπτυξιακού νόμου, θεωρεί πως οι προβλεπόμενες πιστώσεις του ΠΔΕ για το έτος 2013 και αντίστοιχα για τα έτη 2014 και 2015 αρκούν ή θα υπάρξουν καθυστερήσεις στις πληρωμές έργων και κενά χρηματοδότησης;

2. Γνωρίζει το ύψος των εκκρεμών χρηματοδοτήσεων του εθνικού υποπρογράμματος του ΠΔΕ καθώς και κατηγορίες έργων που πιθανώς θα μείνουν ημιτελή εξαιτίας της σημαντικής μείωσης του προϋπολογισμού;

3. Προτίθεται να συνεργαστεί με τις ελληνικές αρχές για τον επανασχεδιασμό του ΠΔΕ εξ ολοκλήρου στη βάση πολυετούς ολοκληρωμένου εθνικού σχεδίου ανασυγκρότησης της οικονομίας, της παραγωγής και της αγοράς εργασίας;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(8 Μαρτίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή αποδίδει πολύ μεγάλη σημασία στις συζητήσεις που διεξάγονται με τις ελληνικές αρχές στο πλαίσιο των προσπαθειών για την εξασφάλιση επαρκών κεφαλαίων που θα επιτρέψουν την τήρηση των απαιτήσεων συγχρηματοδότησης σχετικά με τα σχέδια που χρηματοδοτούνται από διαρθρωτικά ταμεία της ΕΕ, τόσο κατά τη διάρκεια του προγράμματος όσο και τα επόμενα έτη. Ο προϋπολογισμός των επενδύσεων έχει προστατευτεί στο μεγαλύτερο δυνατό βαθμό από περικοπές του προϋπολογισμού. Στην τελευταία δέσμη δημοσιονομικών μέτρων που εγκρίθηκε τον Νοέμβριο, μόνο περίπου 450 εκατ. ευρώ προήλθαν από μειώσεις του προϋπολογισμού επενδύσεων. Είμαστε πεπεισμένοι ότι υπάρχουν επαρκείς πιστώσεις του προϋπολογισμού για να αποφεύγονται καθυστερήσεις στην εκτέλεση των έργων.

Η Επιτροπή δεν διαθέτει συγκεκριμένες πληροφορίες σχετικά με έργα που έχουν καθυστερήσει λόγω περικοπών του προϋπολογισμού. Ο προϋπολογισμός δημοσίων επενδύσεων μπορεί να διαδραματίσει πολύ σημαντικό ρόλο στην αναθέρμανση της οικονομικής ανάπτυξης και της ευημερίας στην Ελλάδα. Κατά συνέπεια, το πρόγραμμα έχει εστιαστεί σαφώς στην επιτάχυνση της απορρόφησης των πόρων των διαρθρωτικών ταμείων με την απλοποίηση των διαδικασιών και την ενίσχυση των μηχανισμών παρακολούθησης. Η Επιτροπή θα εξακολουθήσει να συνεργάζεται στενά με τις ελληνικές αρχές στο πλαίσιο της μεσοπρόθεσμης δημοσιονομικής στρατηγικής (ΜΔΣ) για να διασφαλίσει ότι διατίθενται επαρκείς πόροι στο ΠΔΕ και να μεγιστοποιηθεί ο αντίκτυπός του στην ελληνική οικονομία.

([1]) http://www.hellenicparliament.gr/UserFiles/bcc26661-143b-4f2d-8916-0e0e66ba4c50/proup2013.pdf
([2]) http://www.minfin.gr/content-api/f/binaryChannel/minfin/datastore/5c/12/e9/5c12e969acb027b298bc732a8e320ac774cb53e7/application/pdf/PROSXEDIO_2013.pdf, σ. 24.
([3]) http://www.ggea.gr/geniki_grammateia/ypiresies11.htm «Το ΠΔΕ αποτελεί το σημαντικότερο μέσο άσκησης αναπτυξιακής πολιτικής της χώρας και καλείται να συμβάλλει στην περαιτέρω σύγκλιση των περιφερειών, την ενίσχυση της κοινωνικής συνοχής με στοχευόμενες δράσεις και παρεμβάσεις για την τόνωση της ενεργού ζήτησης, την προώθηση της βιώσιμης ανάπτυξης, την ενίσχυση της απασχόλησης, την ενίσχυση της οικονομικής και κοινωνικής δικαιοσύνης και τη στήριξη της ανταγωνιστικότητας».
([4]) http://www.espa.gr/Lists/Custom_Announcements/Attachments/450/121011_Proodos_ESPA_Syn_YPAnY.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000382/13
to the Commission
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Contraction of Public Investment Programme

Since 2010, the budget for the Public Investment Programme (PIP) has fallen sharply, thereby helping to reduce costs, but by the same token aggravating the recession and unemployment. According to the state budget ([1]) that has been adopted, for 2013 the PIP is not expected to exceed EUR 6.85 billion or 3.5% of GDP. During the five years 2005-2009, it stood at 4% of GDP. In reality the reduction is even greater, given the contraction in GDP due to the prolonged recession. At the same time, the budget of the national PIP sub-programme has also shrunk significantly (in 2013 it will amount to EUR 850 million ([2])). In recent years, the PIP has largely been identified with funding the co-funding actions, which has prevented it fulfilling its role in pursuing an integrated national economic policy and bringing about the convergence of Greek regions both with European regions and with each other and within each region ([3]). It should also be noted that the co-funding needs for the actions included in the Operational Programmes of the 4th Programming Period 2007-2013 amount to EUR 16 to 20 billion up to 2015 ([4]) and thousands of investment projects are being implemented that have been included in the development legislation, together with other needs. In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Taking into account the co-funding needs of projects for the programming period 2007-2013 and the development legislation, does it take the view that the proposed PIP appropriations for 2013 and for the years 2014 and 2015, respectively, are sufficient or will there be delays in payments for projects and funding gaps?

2. Does it know the amount of outstanding funding for the national PIP sub-programme and categories of project that will probably remain unfinished due to the swingeing budget cuts?

3. Will it work together with the Greek authorities to redesign the PIP based completely on an integrated multiannual national plan for the reconstruction of the economy, of production and of the labour market?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(8 March 2013)

The Commission is very concerned in the discussion with the Greek authorities to ensure that adequate funds are in place to meet the co-financing requirements relating to the projects funded by EU structural funds both during the programme and going forward. The investment budget has to the greatest extent possible been shielded from budgetary cuts. In latest fiscal package adopted in November, only about EUR 450 million came from cuts to the investment budget. It is our clear view that there are sufficient budget appropriations to avoid any delays in implementing the projects.

The Commission does not have specific information about any projects that have been delayed by budget cuts. The Public Investment Budget can play a very important role in fostering renewed economic growth and prosperity in Greece. As a result, the programme has explicitly focused on accelerating the absorption of structural funds by simplifying procedures and enhancing monitoring mechanisms. The Commission will continue to work closely with the Greek authorities in the context of the Medium Term Fiscal Strategy (MTFS) to ensure that adequate resources are devoted to the PIB and its impact on the Greek economy is maximised.

([1]) http://www.hellenicparliament.gr/UserFiles/bcc26661-143b-4f2d-8916-0e0e66ba4c50/proup2013.pdf
([2]) http://www.minfin.gr/content-api/f/binaryChannel/minfin/datastore/5c/12/e9/5c12e969acb027b298bc732a8e320ac774cb53e7/application/pdf/PROSXEDIO_2013.pdf, p. 24.
([3]) http://www.ggea.gr/geniki_grammateia/ypiresies11.htm 'The PIP is the most important tool of development policy of the country and has the task of contributing to the further convergence of the regions, strengthening social cohesion through targeted actions and interventions to stimulate active demand, the promotion of sustainable development, increasing employment, strengthening economic and social justice and boosting competitiveness.'
([4]) http://www.espa.gr/Lists/Custom_Announcements/Attachments/450/121011_Proodos_ESPA_Syn_YPAnY.pdf

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-000383/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)
(16 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Μόλυνση των Ελληνικών πόλεων από την αιθαλομίχλη

Η ελληνική κυβέρνηση καθιέρωσε την εξίσωση της τιμής του πετρελαίου κίνησης και θέρμανσης, με αποτέλεσμα η τιμή του τελευταίου να ανέβει από 0,9 ευρώ/λίτρο πέρυσι τον Φεβρουάριο πάνω από 1,3 ευρώ/λίτρο. Αποτέλεσμα ήταν να πέσουν κατακόρυφα οι παραγγελίες πετρελαίου θέρμανσης, κάτι που είχε ως συνέπεια την μείωση των κρατικών εσόδων αλλά και την δημιουργία μιας απίστευτης κατάστασης στις ελληνικές πόλεις: οι Έλληνες καταναλωτές αναγκάζονται πλέον να καίνε σε τζάκια και ξυλόσομπες κάθε είδους ξύλο, χαρτί και ακατάλληλο υλικό, κάτι που έχει δημιουργήσει νέφη από αιθαλομίχλη πάνω από την Αθήνα και άλλες ελληνικές πόλεις.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή

1. Ετέθη στις ελληνικές αρχές το ερώτημα πότε θα λάβουν σοβαρά και συγκεκριμένα μέτρα ώστε να σταματήσει η πρωτοφανής υποβάθμιση του περιβάλλοντος των ελληνικών πόλεων;

2. Προτάθηκε στις ελληνικές αρχές ο εξορθολογισμός της τιμής του πετρελαίου θέρμανσης ώστε να ομαλοποιηθεί η αγορά, να υπάρξουν κρατικά έσοδα και να εκλείψουν τα επικίνδυνα νέφη αιθαλομίχλης στις ελληνικές πόλεις;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(8 Μαρτίου 2013)

1. Η Επιτροπή έχει σε εξέλιξη μια νομική διαδικασία για παράβαση σχετικά με τα αιωρούμενα σωματίδια (PM10), με σκοπό να παροτρύνει την Ελλάδα να επισπεύσει κατά το δυνατόν το χρονικό διάστημα της μη συμμόρφωσης ([1]). Οι ελληνικές αρχές θα κληθούν στο άμεσο μέλλον να τοποθετηθούν όσον αφορά τα μέτρα που σκοπεύουν να λάβουν στο πλαίσιο της διαδικασίας επί παραβάσει για τα PM10.

2. Μολονότι ο Τύπος έχει πρόσφατα αναφερθεί σε επικείμενες πρωτοβουλίες της ελληνικής κυβέρνησης για τη μείωση της φορολογίας στα καύσιμα, η Επιτροπή δεν είναι ενήμερη για οποιαδήποτε πρωτοβουλία στο θέμα αυτό. Η τιμολογιακή εξίσωση του πετρελαίου θέρμανσης (με το πετρέλαιο κίνησης) έχει αποφασιστεί από την ελληνική κυβέρνηση, κατόπιν διαβουλεύσεων με την ΕΕ, την ΕΚΤ και το ΔΝΤ, αποσκοπεί δε τόσο στον περιορισμό των κινήτρων για λαθρεμπόριο όσο και στην αντιμετώπιση δημοσιονομικών αναγκών.

([1]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-47_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000383/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Smog pollution in Greek cities

The Greek Government has set the same price for diesel fuel and heating oil, causing the price of the latter to rise from 0.9 euros / litre in February 2012 to over 1.3 euros / litre now. The result has been a sharp fall in demand for heating oil, which has led to a fall in government revenue and the creation of an incredible situation in Greek cities: Greek consumers are now forced to burn in their fireplaces and stoves any wood, paper as well as other inappropriate materials which come to hand. This has created clouds of smog over Athens and other Greek cities.

Will the Commission say:

1. Have the Greek authorities been asked when they intend to take serious practical measures to stop the unprecedented degradation of the environment in Greek cities?

2. Has a proposal been put to the Greek authorities to deal rationally with the price of heating oil in order to restore a normal situation on the market, to secure revenue for the government and to eliminate the hazardous smog clouds hanging over Greek cities?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(8 March 2013)

1. The Commission has an ongoing legal case on airborne particles (PM10) infringement with the aim of urging Greece to keep the period of noncompliance as short as possible ([1]). The Greek authorities will be asked in the near future about the measures they intend to take in the frame of the PM10 infringement procedure.

2. While the press has recently reported about some upcoming initiatives of the Greek Government to reduce the taxation on fuels, the Commission is not aware of any initiative in this respect. The equalisation of heating oil has been decided by the Greek Government, in consultation with the EC/ECB/IMF, with the specific aim of both reducing the incentive for smuggling and addressing fiscal needs.

([1]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-47_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000384/13
to the Commission
Marian Harkin (ALDE)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Atlantic Biogeographical Region

Can the Commission detail which new and amended Sites of Community Importance have been proposed to it by Ireland for the Atlantic Biogeographical Region since 2010 which have necessitated the Commission Implementing Decision of 16 November 2012 adopting a sixth updated list of Sites of Community Importance for the Atlantic Biogeographical Region [C(2012)8222]?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(27 February 2013)

There have been two Commission decisions updating lists of Sites of Community Importance (SCIs) for the Atlantic Region since 2010, the latest being that of 16 November 2012 ([1]). No new SCIs have been added to the Irish network of sites during this period but there have been slight amendments to the area of 35 sites ([2]), resulting in an overall net increase in surface area of the network of approximately 370 hectares. Such changes arise from greater scientific precision of the boundaries of the areas affected. Information on these and all other Natura 2000 sites in Ireland, including updated standard data forms, is available on the Natura 2000 map viewer ([3]).

([1]) C(2011) 8203 final; C(2012) 8222 final.
([2]) IE0000037, IE0000102, IE0000106, IE0000218, IE0000252, IE0000268, IE0000297, IE0000343, IE0000365, IE0000463, IE0000770, IE0000781, IE0001125, IE0001228, IE0001311, IE0001625, IE0001922, IE0001926, IE0001932, IE0001976, IE0002008, IE0002031, IE0002032, IE0002034, IE0002047, IE0002074, IE0002126, IE0002158, IE0002162, IE0002165, IE0002170, IE0002176, IE0002250, IE0002298, IE0002299.
([3]) http://natura2000.eea.europa.eu/#

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000385/13
an die Kommission
Alexander Alvaro (ALDE)
(16. Januar 2013)

Betrifft: EU PNR — 50 000 000 EUR für gezielte Aufforderung zur Einreichung von Vorschlägen

Die Kommission wird gebeten, jede Frage direkt und separat zu beantworten.

Aus welchem Grund hat die Kommission die gezielte Aufforderung zur Einreichung von Vorschlägen zu nachstehendem Thema veröffentlicht: „Zusammenarbeit bei der Strafverfolgung in der Form, dass die Mitgliedstaaten Stellen einrichten, die Fluggastdaten (Passenger Name Records, PNR) sammeln, weiterverarbeiten, analysieren und austauschen"?

Ist sich die Kommission der Tatsache bewusst, dass das Europäische Parlament keinen Legislativvorschlag angenommen hat, um ein EU-PNR-System einzurichten, und sich Monate lang geweigert hat, über diesen Vorschlag abzustimmen?

Ist sich die Kommission der Tatsache bewusst, dass einige Mitglieder des Europäischen Parlaments Änderungsanträge eingereicht haben, in denen der Legislativvorschlag der Kommission, ein EU-PNR-System einzurichten, abgelehnt wird?

Ist sich die Kommission der Tatsache bewusst, dass es gemäß den Verträgen ihre Aufgabe ist, Rechtsvorschriften lediglich vorzuschlagen, nicht aber die Rechtssetzungsorgane vor bereits vollendete Tatsachen zu stellen?

Wie rechtfertigt die Kommission ihr Vorhaben, 50 000 000 EUR für ein System auszugeben, das möglicherweise nie eingerichtet wird?

Welche Generaldirektionen waren an der Erarbeitung dieser Aufforderung zur Einreichung von Vorschlägen beteiligt?

Antwort von Frau Malmström im Namen der Kommission
(1. März 2013)

Als Teil des Förderprogramms „Prävention und Bekämpfung von Kriminalität" (ISEC), das von der GD Inneres verwaltet wird, steht die gezielte Aufforderung zur Einreichung von Vorschlägen für die Einrichtung von Stellen in den Mitgliedstaaten zur Verarbeitung von Fluggastdaten (PNR) in Einklang mit den Programmvorgaben, nämlich die Entwicklung innovativer Methoden und Technologien, die den Bürgern ein hohes Maß an Sicherheit gewährleisten.

Die Kommission hat die Aufforderung zur Einreichung von Vorschlägen deshalb veröffentlicht, weil die Sammlung, Verarbeitung, Auswertung und Weitergabe von PNR-Daten aus ihrer Sicht notwendig ist, um terroristische Straftaten und schwere Kriminalität wirksam zu verhüten, aufzudecken, aufzuklären und strafrechtlich zu verfolgen und damit die innere Sicherheit zu erhöhen.

Die Aufforderung zur Einreichung von Vorschlägen stellt eine eigenständige Fördermaßnahme im Rahmen des ISEC-Programms dar und ist nicht direkt an das laufende Legislativverfahren zum Kommissionsvorschlag für ein EU-PNR-System (KOM(2011)32 endg.) gekoppelt. Im Gegensatz zu dem Legislativvorschlag, der alle Mitgliedstaaten dazu verpflichten würde, eine zuständige Stelle für die Sammlung, Speicherung und Auswertung von PNR-Daten zu schaffen, ist die Aufforderung zur Einreichung von Vorschlägen darauf ausgerichtet, einzelne Mitgliedstaaten zu unterstützen, die auf freiwilliger Basis und nach innerstaatlichem Recht ein nationales PNR-System einrichten.

Die Aufforderung zur Einreichung von Vorschlägen und der Legislativvorschlag für ein EU- PNR-System dienen demselben zweifachen Ziel, d. h. die Verarbeitung von PNR-Daten soll als wirksames Instrument zur Bekämpfung von schwerer Kriminalität und Terrorismus in der EU gefördert und gleichzeitig strengen Auflagen und verlässlichen Garantien unterworfen werden, um die Achtung der Grundrechtecharta und den Schutz personenbezogener Daten sicherzustellen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000385/13
to the Commission
Alexander Alvaro (ALDE)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: EU Passenger Name Record — EUR 50 million for targeted call for proposal

The Commission is requested to answer each question directly and separately.

Why did the Commission publish the targeted call for proposal 'Law enforcement cooperation through measures to set up Passenger Information Units in Member States for the collection, processing, analysis and exchange of Passenger Name Record (PNR) data'?

Is the Commission aware of the fact that Parliament has not adopted any legal proposal to set up an EU PNR system and has refused to vote on such a proposal for months?

Is the Commission aware of the fact that several Members of the European Parliament have tabled amendments rejecting the Commission's legal proposal to set up an EU PNR system?

Is the Commission aware of the fact that its role under the Treaties is to propose legislation and not to present the legislative bodies with a fait accompli?

How does the Commission justify planning to spend EUR 50 million on a system which may never be set up?

Which DGs were involved in drafting this call for proposal?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(1 March 2013)

As part of the funding programme on the 'Prevention of and Fight against Crime' (ISEC), managed by DG Home Affairs, the targeted call for proposals to set up Passenger Information Units in Member States for the processing of passenger name record (PNR) data is in accordance with the objectives of the ISECprogramme, namely to develop innovative methods and technologies that contribute to a high level of security for citizens.

The Commission published the call for proposals as it considers that the collection, processing, analysis and exchange of PNR data is necessary to effectively prevent, detect, investigate and prosecute terrorist offences and serious crime, and thus enhance internal security.

The call for proposals is a stand-alone funding action within the ISECprogramme. It is not directly linked to the ongoing legislative procedure on the Commission proposal for an EU PNR system (COM(2011) 32 final). Unlike the legislative proposal, which would make it obligatory for all Member States to set up a competent authority to collect, store and analyse PNR data, the call for proposals aims at supporting individual Member States that voluntarily set up a national PNR system on the basis of national law.

The call for proposals and the legislative proposal for an EU PNR system share the same dual objective, namely to foster the processing of PNR data as an effective tool to fight serious crime and terrorism in the EU, while making such processing subject to strict conditions and effective safeguards in order to comply with the Charter of Fundamental Rights and the protection of personal data.

(Tekstas lietuvių kalba)

Klausimas, į kurį atsakoma raštu, Nr. E-000386/13
Komisijai
Juozas Imbrasas (EFD)
(2013 m. sausio 16 d.)

Tema: Naminių paukščių importas iš trečiųjų šalių

Iš trečiųjų šalių į Europos Sąjungos teritoriją importuojami paukščiai turi atitikti 2008 m. rugpjūčio 8 d. Komisijos reglamento (EB) Nr. 798/2008, kuriuo nustatomas trečiųjų šalių, teritorijų, zonų ar skyrių, iš kurių galima importuoti į Bendriją ir vežti tranzitu per Bendriją naminius paukščius ir naminių paukščių produktus, sąrašas ir veterinarijos sertifikatų reikalavimai (OL L 226, 2008 8 23, p. 1), reikalavimus. Vadovaujantis reglamento (EB) Nr. 798/2008 3 straipsniu ir I priedo I dalies lentele, importuoti paukščius iš trečiųjų šalių į Europos Sąjungos teritoriją draudžiama, tačiau paukščių auginimo verslui, kuriam įtaką daro gamtinės sąlygos ir geografinė vieta, būtų tikslinga pradinę gamybą vykdyti trečiosiose šalyse, pvz., Ukrainoje. Ten būtų perkamos patalpos, įrengimai, motininis pulkas, o prieauglis būtų atsivežamas į ES toliau auginti ir realizuoti vietinėje rinkoje.

Ar Komisija nemano, kad šis draudimas importuoti paukščius iš trečiųjų šalių į Europos Sąjungos teritoriją yra neproporcingas ir neigiamai veikia Europos Sąjungos rinką, o tai galimai brangina produkciją ir daro neigiamą įtaką galutiniam vartotojui?

Ar Komisija nemano, kad būtina keisti nusistovėjusią tvarką, kad šios produkcijos gamintojai galėtų įvykdę atitinkamas sąlygas šiuos paukščius (prieauglį) atsivežti į Europos Sąjungą?

Kaip paukščių fermas, esančias trečiosiose šalyse, įtraukti į reglamento sąrašą ir ko reikėtų, kad būtų galima paukščius ar jų prieauglį importuoti į Europos Sąjungą?

T. Borgo atsakymas Komisijos vardu
(2013 m. vasario 27 d.)

ES gyvūnų sveikatos ir maisto saugos teisės aktai dėl gyvūnų ir jų produktų importo grindžiami principais, kad nepaisant tokio importo kilmės, jis turi atitikti standartus, lygiaverčius ES viduje galiojantiems standartams, ir būti saugus.

Komisijos reglamentu (EB) Nr. 789/2008 ([1]) nustatyti gyvūnų ir visuomenės sveikatos reikalavimai, taikomi kelioms paukštienos prekėms, įskaitant gyvus naminius paukščius, perinius kiaušinius, paukštieną, kiaušinius ir kiaušinių gaminius. Minėto reglamento I priedo 1 dalyje išvardytos visos trečiosios šalys, iš kurių valstybėms narėms leidžiama importuoti prekes, kurioms jos gali panaudoti atitinkamą veterinarijos sertifikatą. Importas iš į šią lentelę neįtrauktų trečiųjų šalių neleidžiamas, nes trečioji šalis arba neprašė Komisijos ją įtraukti, arba neatitinka ES sveikatos ir maisto saugos reikalavimų.

Trečiųjų šalių įtraukimo į visų ar tam tikrų prekių, kurioms taikomas šis reglamentas, importo sąrašą procedūra yra aiškiai apibrėžta. Išsami informacija pateikiama Komisijos svetainėje:
http://ec.europa.eu/food/international/trade/poultry/index_en.htm.

Visai neseniai Komisijos įgyvendinimo reglamentu (ES) Nr. 88/2013 ([2]) Ukraina įrašyta į trečiųjų šalių, iš kurių leidžiama į Sąjungą įvežti tam tikrą mėsą, mėsos gaminius, kiaušinius ir kiaušinių gaminius, sąrašą. Į ES importuoti gyvus naminius paukščius Ukraina leidimo neprašė.

([1]) OL L 226, 2008 8 23.
([2]) OL L 32, 2013 2 1.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000386/13
to the Commission
Juozas Imbrasas (EFD)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Poultry imports from third countries

Poultry imported into the territory of the European Union from third countries must comply with the requirements of Commission Regulation (EC) No 798/2008 of 8 August 2008, laying down a list of third countries, territories, zones or compartments from which poultry and poultry products may be imported into and transit through the Community and the veterinary certification requirements (OJ L 226, 23.8.2008 p. 1). According to Article 3 and the table in Annex I (Part I) of Regulation (EC) No 798/2008, it is prohibited to import poultry from third countries into the territory of the European Union, but it would be appropriate for poultry rearing businesses that are affected by natural conditions and geographical location to carry out initial production in third countries, such as Ukraine. Facilities, equipment and the parent flock would be purchased there and the offspring would be brought into the EU to be further reared and sold on the local market.

Does the Commission not think that this ban on importing poultry from third countries into the territory of the European Union is disproportionate and has a negative impact on the European Union market, and that this possibly makes production more expensive and has a negative impact on the end consumer?

Does it not think that we need to change the established practice so that the producers could, having fulfilled relevant conditions, bring such poultry (offspring) into the European Union?

How can poultry farms located in third countries be included on the regulation's list and how can we make it possible to import poultry or their offspring into the European Union?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(27 February 2013)

EU animal health and food safety legislation on imports of animals and their products is based on the principles that those imports comply with standards equivalent to those in place within the EU and that they should be safe regardless of their origin.

Commission Regulation (EC) No 789/2008 ([1]) lays down the animal and public health conditions for imports of several poultry commodities including live poultry, hatching eggs, poultry meat, eggs and egg products. The table in Part 1 of Annex I to that regulation lists all third countries from where Members States are authorised to import the commodities for which they may use the respective veterinary certificate. Imports from third countries not listed in this table are not authorised because the third country has either not requested the Commission to be listed or the EU health and food safety requirements cannot be met.

There is a well-defined procedure in place for listing third countries for imports of all or certain commodities covered by this regulation. Detailed information is available on the Commission's website:
http://ec.europa.eu/food/international/trade/poultry/index_en.htm

Most recently Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 88/2013 ([2]) added Ukraine in the lists of third countries from which certain meat, meat products, eggs and egg products may be introduced into the Union. Ukraine did not request to be authorised for the import into the EU of live poultry.

([1]) OJ L 226, 23.8.2008.
([2]) OJ L 32, 1.2.2013.

(Magyar változat)

Írásbeli választ igénylő kérdés E-000387/13
a Tanács számára
Gál Kinga (PPE)
(2013. január 16.)

Tárgy: Hiányosság a szabadság, biztonság és jog térségének működésében

2000 áprilisában Francis Ciaran Tobin két kisgyermek életét követelő autóbalesetet okozott a magyarországi Leányfalun. Tobin, mivel időközben megszűnt a magyarországi munkaviszonya, 2000 novemberében hazatért Írországba. A magyar bíróság 2002 novemberében távollétében 18 hónap szabadságvesztésre ítélte az ír férfit. Magyarország kérte Francis Tobin kiadatását a dublini hatóságoktól, akik jogszabályi hivatkozások miatt ezt megtagadták.

A magyar közvélemény elégedetlen a helyzet megoldatlanságával. Ez nem tesz jót a jog és az igazságosság érvényesülésén alapuló térség megítélésének, illetve csalódást kelt az Unió közösségi politikájával kapcsolatban. A magyar közvélemény és a hatóságok számára nem az a fontos, hogy Francis Tobin Magyarországon töltse le büntetését, hanem hogy egyáltalán letölti-e. Hiszen elfogadhatatlan, hogy jogi kiskapuk lehetővé tegyék az elkövető számára, hogy büntetlenül élje mindennapjait.

Ezek fényében kérdezném a soros Elnökséget, hogy milyen rendelkezésre álló eszközei vannak arra, hogy segítse az ügy nemcsak jogszerű, hanem igazságot is szolgáltató lezárását, bizonyítva ezzel a jog és az igazságosság érvényesülésén alapuló térség működőképességét?

Válasz
(2013. május 15.)

A tagállamok közötti korábbi kiadatási rendszer helyébe lépő európai elfogatóparancs a kölcsönös elismerés és bizalom elvén nyugszik.

A Tanács a 97/827/IB együttes fellépés alapján értékelte az európai elfogatóparancs gyakorlati alkalmazását valamennyi tagállamban. Az értékelés ([1]) egyik fő megállapítása az, hogy az európai elfogatóparancs összességében eredményesen működik.

Az európai elfogatóparancson kívül léteznek más olyan jogi eszközök is, amelyek az Európai Unión belül a szabadság, a biztonság és a jogérvényesülés növelését célozzák. A kölcsönös elismerés elvének büntetőügyekben hozott, szabadságvesztés-büntetéseket kiszabó vagy szabadságelvonással járó intézkedéseket alkalmazó ítéleteknek az Európai Unióban való végrehajtása céljából történő alkalmazásáról szóló, 2008. november 27-i 2008/909/IB tanácsi kerethatározat meghatározza azokat a szabályokat, amelyek a szabadságvesztés-büntetéseket kiszabó vagy szabadságelvonással járó intézkedéseket alkalmazó, valamely tagállamban hozott ítéleteknek a valamely más tagállamban való elismerésére és végrehajtására vonatkoznak.

A tisztelt képviselő olyan tragikus eseményre utal, amely kétoldalú üggyel kapcsolatos, és amelyet az érintett tagállamok igazságügyi hatóságai vizsgáltak meg. A Tanácsnak nem feladata véleményt nyilvánítani a nemzeti bíróságok határozatairól.

([1]) 8302/4/09 REV 4.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000387/13
to the Council
Kinga Gál (PPE)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Deficiency in the operation of the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice

In April 2000 Francis Ciaran Tobin caused a road accident which cost the lives of two small children at Leányfalu in Hungary. Because his work contract in Hungary had by then ended, Tobin returned to Ireland in November 2000. In November 2002 the Hungarian court sentenced the Irishman in his absence to 18 months' imprisonment. Hungary requested the extradition of Francis Tobin from the Dublin authorities, but they refused, citing legal reasons.

Public opinion in Hungary is dissatisfied with the failure to resolve this situation. This does not do any good to perceptions of the area of law and justice, and is a disappointment in terms of the Union's common policy. For Hungarian public opinion and the Hungarian authorities the main thing is not that Francis Tobin should serve his sentence in Hungary, but that he should serve it somewhere. It is unacceptable that legal loopholes should make it possible for the culprit to live out his days unpunished.

In the light of the above, what instruments does the Presidency have at its disposal to help this case to reach a conclusion that satisfies not just the law but also the interests of justice, thus ensuring the proper functioning of the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice?

Reply
(15 May 2013)

The European arrest warrant, which replaced the previous system of extradition between the Member States, is based on the principle of mutual recognition and trust.

The Council has evaluated the practical operation of the European arrest warrant in all Member States on the basis of Joint Action 97/827/JHA. A main conclusion of that evaluation ([1]) is that, in general, the European arrest warrant is operating efficiently.

Besides the European arrest warrant, there are also other legal tools which aim at the strengthening of freedom, security and justice in the European Union. The Council Framework Decision 2008/909/JHA of 27 November 2008 on the application of the principle of mutual recognition to judgments in criminal matters imposing custodial sentences or measures involving deprivation of liberty for the purpose of their enforcement in the European Union sets out the rules whereby judgments that impose custodial sentences or measures involving the deprivation of liberty delivered in one Member State are to be recognised and enforced in another Member State.

The tragic case raised by the Honourable Member relates to a bilateral case which has been dealt with by judicial authorities in the Member States concerned. It is not for the Council to comment on decisions taken by national courts.

([1]) 8302/4/09 REV 4.

(Magyar változat)

Írásbeli választ igénylő kérdés E-000388/13
a Bizottság számára
Gál Kinga (PPE)
(2013. január 16.)

Tárgy: Hiányosság a szabadság, biztonság és jog térségének müködésében

2000 áprilisában Francis Ciaran Tobin két kisgyermek életét követelő autóbalesetet okozott a magyarországi Leányfalun. Tobin, mivel időközben megszűnt a magyarországi munkaviszonya, 2000 novemberében hazatért Írországba. A magyar bíróság 2002 novemberében távollétében 18 hónap szabadságvesztésre ítélte az ír férfit. Magyarország kérte Francis Tobin kiadatását a dublini hatóságoktól, akik jogszabályi hivatkozások miatt ezt megtagadták.

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Ezek fényében kérdezném a Bizottságot, hogyan tervez közbenjárni a Tobin-ügyben, különös tekintettel a most kezdődő ír elnökségre az elnökségi ideje alatt? Milyen lépéseket szándékozik tenni az ügy nemcsak jogszerű, hanem igazságot is szolgáltató lezárásában, bizonyítva ezzel elköteleződését a jog és az igazságosság érvényesülésén alapuló térség további építésében?

Viviane Reding válasza a Bizottság nevében
(2013. március 25.)

A Bizottság osztozik az említett tragikus balesetben elhunyt gyermekek szüleinek gyászában. Nagyra tartja továbbá a jog érvényesülésén alapuló európai térség tiszteletét.

Miután a Bizottság az ügyről tudomást szerzett, azonnal lépéseket tett annak megoldására. 2012 júliusában hivatalos ülést tartott a magyar és az ír igazságügyi minisztériummal. A Bizottság kezdeményezésére az ügy 2012 októberében az Igazságügyi Tanács elé került, amely megerősítette, hogy nincs mód további lépésekre.

Az ügy rendezéséhez alkalmazható uniós eszközöket az érintett tagállam nem kellő időben vagy egyáltalán nem hajtotta végre. Az Igazságügyi Tanács 2012. októberi ülésén a Bizottság hangsúlyozta az elítélt személyek átszállításáról szóló kerethatározat valamennyi tagállam általi gyors végrehajtásának fontosságát a kölcsönös elismerésre vonatkozó meglévő uniós eszközök működésének biztosítása érdekében. A határok nem jelenthetnek akadályt a büntetőeljárások lebonyolításában és az ítéletek végrehajtásában. A Bizottság 2013 közepén jelentést tesz közzé arról, hogy milyen szakaszban tart a fenti kerethatározat végrehajtása.

A Bizottság megérti, hogy miután az Ír Legfelsőbb Bíróság az ügyben véglegesnek tekintendő döntést hozott, Írországban valamennyi jogi eljárást kimerítettek. Ennélfogva az igazságszolgáltatás és az ítéletek függetlenségének alapvető tiszteletben tartására tekintettel a Bizottság az ügyben nem rendelkezik további hatáskörrel.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000388/13
to the Commission
Kinga Gál (PPE)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Deficiency in the operation of the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice

In April 2000 Francis Ciaran Tobin caused a road accident which cost the lives of two small children at Leányfalu in Hungary. Because his work contract in Hungary had by then ended, Tobin returned to Ireland in November 2000. In November 2002 the Hungarian court sentenced the Irishman in his absence to 18 months' imprisonment. Hungary requested the extradition of Francis Tobin from the Dublin authorities, but they refused, citing legal reasons.

Public opinion in Hungary is dissatisfied with the failure to resolve this situation. This does not do any good to perceptions of the area of law and justice, and is a disappointment in terms of the Union's common policy. For Hungarian public opinion and the Hungarian authorities the main thing is not that Francis Tobin should serve his sentence in Hungary, but that he should serve it somewhere. It is unacceptable that legal loopholes should make it possible for the culprit to live out his days unpunished.

In the light of the above, how does the Commission plan to intervene in the Tobin case during this Presidency period, particularly since Ireland has just assumed the Presidency of the Council? What measures does it propose to take to enable this case to reach a conclusion that satisfies not just the law but also the interests of justice, thus ensuring the proper functioning of the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(25 March 2013)

The Commission sympathises with the distress of the parents of the children who died in this tragic case. It also recognises that respect for the European Judicial area.

Once aware of the case, the Commission immediately responded. It held, in July 2012, a meeting with officials from the Ministries of Justice of Hungary and Ireland. Following a Commission's initiative, the matter was discussed at the Justice Council in October 2012, where it was acknowledged that no further action could be taken.

The EU instruments that could have been applied to settle this case were not implemented in time or at all by the Member State concerned. At the Justice Council in October 2012, the Commission stressed the importance of speedy implementation by all Member States of the framework Decision on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons to ensure that all available EU mutual recognition instruments are operational. Borders should not be an impediment to carrying out criminal proceedings and to enforcing the outcome. The Commission will publish a report in mid-2013 including the state of implementation of this framework Decision.

The Commission understands that all legal procedures in Ireland have been exhausted after the matter was judged by the Supreme Court of Ireland, whose decision is final. Therefore, with regard to the essential respect for the independence of the judiciary and of judicial decisions, the Commission has no competence to further intervene in this case.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000389/13
an die Kommission
Axel Voss (PPE)
(16. Januar 2013)

Betrifft: Förderung der Ausfuhr von Fenstern und Türen aus Polen

Ein Unternehmen aus der Region Mittelrhein hat mitgeteilt, dass der polnische Staat den Export von in Polen hergestellten Fenstern und Türen in den europäischen Binnenmarkt fördert. Diese Förderung soll auch mit Mitteln aus dem Europäischen Fonds für regionale Entwicklung finanziert werden.

Kann die Kommission dazu folgende Fragen beantworten:

1. Ist es nach Auffassung der Kommission generell zulässig, dass Mittel aus dem Europäischen Fonds für regionale Entwicklung von einem Mitgliedsland für die Unterstützung von Exporten in den europäischen Binnenmarkt verwendet werden?

2. Wie bewertet die Kommission die Tatsache, dass der polnische Staat den Export von in Polen hergestellten Fenstern und Türen in den europäischen Binnenmarkt fördert? Wird die Kommission die polnische Regierung in der Angelegenheit um eine Stellungnahme ersuchen?

3. Welche Schritte wird die Kommission einleiten, falls sie diese Beihilfen als mit dem EU-Recht nicht vereinbar bewerten sollte?

Antwort von Herrn Almunia im Namen der Kommission
(4. März 2013)

Wie die Kommission bereits in ihrer Antwort auf die Anfrage E-011525/2012 ([1]) erläutert hat, ist bei ihr eine Beschwerde über die mutmaßliche staatliche Beihilfe des polnischen Staates für den Export von in Polen hergestellten Fenstern und Türen eingegangen.

Die Kommissionsdienststellen prüfen zurzeit die Beschwerde und wissen, dass die besagte Maßnahme aus Mitteln des Europäischen Fonds für regionale Entwicklung finanziert wird.

Im Rahmen der Prüfung forderte die Kommission Informationen von den polnischen Behörden an, die kürzlich eingegangen sind. Diese Informationen sowie die vom Beschwerdeführer vorgelegten Daten sollten es den Kommissionsdienststellen ermöglichen, die Maßnahmen vor dem Hintergrund der Artikel 107 und 108 AEUV zu bewerten.

Sollte die Kommission feststellen, dass nicht mit den Wettbewerbsvorschriften vereinbare Beihilfen gewährt werden, weist sie den Mitgliedstaat an, diese von den Begünstigten zurückzufordern. Die Begünstigten müssen dann den vom Staat erhaltenen Beihilfebetrag zuzüglich aufgelaufener Zinsen an den Mitgliedstaat zurückzahlen.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000389/13
to the Commission
Axel Voss (PPE)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Support for the export of windows and doors from Poland

An enterprise from the region of Mittelrhein has stated that the Polish Government is supporting the export of windows and doors made in Poland to the European internal market. This support is said to be financed with funds from the European Regional Development Fund.

1. In the Commission's view, is it generally permissible for funds from the European Regional Development Fund to be used by a Member State to support exports to the European internal market?

2. How does it assess the fact that the Polish Government is supporting the export of windows and doors made in Poland to the European internal market? Will the Commission request a statement from the Polish Government on this issue?

3. What steps will it take if it finds that this aid is incompatible with EC law?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(4 March 2013)

As the Commission already explained in its answer to Question E-011525/2012 ([1]), it has received a complaint about the alleged state aid granted by Poland in favour of window and door producers located in Poland to promote their export activities.

The Commission services are currently analysing the complaint and are aware of the fact that the measure in question is based on ERDF support.

As part of the assessment, the Commission services requested information from the Polish authorities, which it recently received. This information together with the data provided by the complainant should allow the Commission services to assess the measures in the light of Articles 107 and 108 TFEU.

If the Commission finds that incompatible aid has been granted, it orders the Member State to recover the incompatible aid from the beneficiaries. The beneficiaries will then be required to pay back to the Member State's budget the amount of the state aid received together with applicable interest.

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

(Leagan Gaeilge)

Ceist i gcomhair freagra scríofa E-000390/13
chuig an gCoimisiún
Liam Aylward (ALDE)
(16 Eanáir 2013)

Ábhar: Horizon 2020

1. Is bac orthu siúd a bhíonn ag beartú ar chur isteach ar mhaoiniú ón Aontas Eorpach go minic iad an rómhaorlathas agus an ró-oifigiúlachas atá i gceist. Ag tús na tréimhse Parlaiminte seo, aithníodh go raibh an rómhaorlathas sin ag cur isteach ar an bhfás geilleagrach agus ag cur le costais riaracháin. Cad iad na forálacha atá i gceist faoin gclár nua seo (Horizon 2020) chun dul i ngleic leis an bhfadhb sin agus cad iad na bearta atá i bhfeidhm chun a chinntiú go mbíonn sé éasca rochtain a fháil ar an gclár agus gur córas díreach, ó thús go deireadh, a bhíonn i gceist dóibh siúd atá ag cur isteach air?

2. Cad iad na bearta atá i bhfeidhm ag an gCoimisiún ar mhaithe le tionscadail oiriúnacha taighde agus nuála a aithint agus chun taighdeoirí a chur ar an eolas maidir leis na deiseanna atá ann dóibh faoin gclár seo?

3. Tá fiontair bheaga agus mheánmhéide (FBManna) ríthábhachtach ó thaobh an gheilleagair agus an téarnaimh gheilleagraigh de. Chuige sin, an bhféadfadh an Coimisiún eolas a thabhairt maidir leis na bearta atá i bhfeidhm faoin gclár Horizon 2020 chun cúnamh agus tacaíocht a thabhairt do na FBManna sin nach bhfuil ach acmhainní teoranta agus cumas nuála teoranta acu?

Freagra ón gCoimisinéir Geoghegan-Quinn thar ceann an Choimisiúin
(7 Márta 2013)

1. Moltar struchtúr níos simplí i dtogra an Choimisiúin maidir le Fís 2020, struchtúr atá bunaithe ar thrí chuspóir: sraith aonair rialacha a thabharfaidh le chéile na gníomhaíochtaí taighde agus nuálaíochta uile ar leibhéal an AE agus ráta maoinithe aonair do gach cineál rannpháirtí agus do gach cineál gníomhaíochta. Fágfaidh sé seo go mbeidh sé níos éasca ag rannpháirtithe deiseanna maoinithe atá ann a aithint agus beidh rochtain dhíreach ar an gclár dá bharr. Níl gá réamh-mhaoiniú a thuairisciú agus ús a aisghabháil air a thuilleadh de thoradh athruithe ar an Rialachán Airgeadais agus tá an bealach réitithe chun gach idirbheart a chur i gcrích ar líne gan pháipéar.

2. Baineann saineolaithe seachtracha úsáid as dianchóras athbhreithnithe piaraí chun na tograí is fearr le maoiniú a aithint. Foilsítear gach gairm tograí san Iris Oifigiúil, agus ar an Tairseach do Rannpháirtithe de chuid an Choimisiúin ([1]). Cuirtear faisnéis, tacaíocht agus comhairle ar an láthair ar fáil d'iarratasóirí féideartha trí líonra de níos mó ná 1 000 Pointe Teagmhála Náisiúnta (PTN) agus tá sé beartaithe ócáid sheolta a reáchtáil i ngach Ballstát freisin. Maidir le folúntais taighde arna maoiniú ag an AE, cuirtear tairseach soghluaiseachta taighdeoirí Euraxess chun cinn mar 'ionad ilfhreastail'.

3. Beidh ionstraim thiomnaithe mar chuid de Fís 2020 chun FBManna, nó cuibhreannais FBManna, a spreagadh chun na smaointe is nuálaí a chur isteach. Beidh seirbhísí cóitseála ar fáil do thairbhithe tríd an Líonra Fiontar Eorpach ([2]). Tabharfar tacaíocht do FBManna ón mbuiséad 'Rochtain ar mhaoiniú riosca'; agus beidh bearta eile ann chun cuideachtaí a dhéanann T&F a chur chun cinn, chun uirlisí a fhorbairt le haghaidh seirbhísí tacaíochta níos fearr don nuálaíocht agus chun piarfhoghlaim a spreagadh idir gníomhaireachtaí.

([1]) https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/page/home
([2]) http://portal.enterprise-europe-network.ec.europa.eu/

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000390/13
to the Commission
Liam Aylward (ALDE)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Horizon 2020

1. Red tape and bureaucracy often a hinder those intending to apply for European Union funding. At the start of this Parliamentary period, it was recognised that red tape and bureaucracy were affecting economic growth and adding to administrative costs. What provisions are envisaged under this new programme (Horizon 2020) to tackle this problem and what measures are in place to ensure easy access to the programme and that the programme, from start to finish, is straightforward for those who are applying to it?

2. What measures has the Commission in place to give recognition to suitable projects of research and innovation and to inform researchers about the opportunities that are available to them under this programme?

3. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are essential for the economy and economic recovery. To that effect, can the Commission provide information concerning the measures that are in place under the Horizon 2020 programme to assist and support SMEs with limited resources and limited capacity for innovation?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(7 March 2013)

1. The Commission's proposal for Horizon 2020 offers a simpler structure based on three objectives; a single set of rules bringing together all EU level Research & Innovation activities and one single funding rate for all types of participants and activities. This will make it easier for participants to identify where funding opportunities exist and make access to the programme straightforward. Changes to the Financial Regulation have removed the need to report and recover interest on pre-financing and have paved the way for online, paperless completion of all transactions.

2. A rigorous system of peer review by external experts is used to identify the best proposals for funding. All calls for proposals are published in the Official Journal, and on the Commission's Participant Portal ([1]). A network of over 1000 National Contact Points (NCP) provides information, support and on-the-ground advice to potential applicants and a launch event is also foreseen in all Member States. For EU-funded research vacancies, the EURAXESS researcher mobility portal is promoted as a 'one-stop shop'.

3. Horizon 2020 will include a dedicated instrument encouraging single SMEs, or SME consortia, to submit their most innovative ideas. Beneficiaries may access coaching services via the Enterprise Europe Network ([2]). SMEs will be supported by the 'Access to risk finance' budget; while other measures will promote R&D performing companies, develop tools for better innovation support services and encourage peer-learning between agencies.

([1]) https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/page/home.
([2]) http://portal.enterprise-europe-network.ec.europa.eu/.

(Leagan Gaeilge)

Ceist i gcomhair freagra scríofa E-000391/13
chuig an gCoimisiún
Liam Aylward (ALDE)
(16 Eanáir 2013)

Ábhar: Galaitheoirí agus an Treoir maidir le Tobac

Tá an Treoir Eorpach nua maidir le Tobac ag déanamh imní dóibh siúd san Aontas Eorpach atá ag iarraidh éirí as an gcaitheamh tobac. Tá an Treoir nua seo ag moladh gur uasleibhéal de 2 mg nicitín nó tiúchan nicitín de 4 mg/ml a bheadh i bhfeidhm do na hearraí sin a bhfuil nicitín iontu agus a bhíonn ar fáil gan oideas leighis. Cé go bhfuil neart díoltóirí agus úsáideoirí galaitheoirí i bhfách le reachtaíocht a thabhairt isteach agus caighdeáin a fheabhsú, tá siad buartha faoin togra áirithe seo toisc go gceapann siad nach leor na leibhéil molta sin dóibh siúd atá ag iarraidh éirí as an gcaitheamh tobac.

1. Ós rud é go bhfuil daoine a bhíonn ag úsáid galaitheoirí buartha faoin laghdú atá molta ar an méid nicitín atá i dtoitíní leictreonacha, an bhféadfadh an Coimisiún breis eolais a thabhairt faoina bhfuil taobh thiar den togra áirithe sin? An bhféadfadh sé, freisin, a mhíniú conas go díreach a chabhródh an togra nua sin leo siúd atá ag iarraidh éirí as an gcaitheamh tobac le cabhair galaitheoirí/toitíní leictreonacha?

2. Anuas ar sin, an bhfuil na scéalta sin cloiste ag an gCoimisiún a thugann le tuiscint go gcuirfeadh an cinneadh i dtaca le huasmhéid tiúchana nicitín de 4 mg brú ar an dream a úsáideann toitíní leictreonacha a dtoitíní ar leibhéal nicitín níos airde a cheannach ar an margadh dubh?

Freagra ón gCoimisinéir Borg thar ceann an Choimisiúin
(28 Feabhra 2013)

1. Tháinig méadú mór ar dhíolachán na dtoitíní leictreonacha le blianta beaga anuas agus is minic a chuirtear na táirgí ar an margadh gan rialú iomchuí a dhéanamh orthu. Bíonn cineálacha difriúla cur chuige ag na Ballstáit maidir le conas toitíní leictreonacha a rialú. Dá bharr sin, bíonn ilroinnt sa mhargadh agus fágann sin go bhfuil údar le gníomhaíochtaí ar leibhéal an AE.

Tá sé mar aidhm leis an togra ón gCoimisiún taighde, nuálaíocht agus forbairt ar tháirgí níos sábháilte a spreagadh, táirgí a ndearnadh cothromaíocht idir riosca agus tairbhe orthu roimh ré agus atá níos oiriúnaithe don éirí as an gcaitheamh tobac.

2. De réir an togra ón gCoimisiún, beidh toitíní leictreonacha atá os cionn na tairsí nicitín atá molta ceadaithe ar an margadh fós, ar choinníoll iad a bheith údaraithe mar tháirgí míochaine. Dá bhrí sin, meastar gur teoranta an baol go ndéanfar trádáil aindleathach ar tháirgí den sórt sin.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000391/13
to the Commission
Liam Aylward (ALDE)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Vaporisers and the Tobacco Directive

The new European Tobacco Directive is causing concern to those in the European Union who are trying to quit smoking. This new directive proposes that a limit of 2 mg of nicotine or 4 mg/ml of nicotine concentrate would be applied to devices that contain nicotine and that are available without prescription. While many sellers and users of vaporisers are in favour of the introduction of legislation and improving standards, they are concerned about this particular proposal as they believe that the proposed limits are too low for those who are trying to quit smoking.

1. Given that people who use vaporisers are concerned about the proposed reduction in the amount of nicotine contained in electronic cigarettes, could the Commission provide further information on the background to this particular proposal? Could it also explain how exactly this new proposal would help those who are trying to quit smoking with the aid of vaporisers/electronic cigarettes?

2. Furthermore, has the Commission heard those reports which suggest that a decision in favour of a maximum nicotine concentrate limit of 4mg would put pressure on those who use electronic cigarettes to purchase their cigarettes, with a higher nicotine level, on the black market?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(28 February 2013)

1. The sales of electronic cigarettes have increased substantially in recent years and the products are often placed on the market without appropriate control. Member States take different approaches how to regulate electronic cigarettes. This leads to fragmentation of the market and justifies action at the EU level.

The Commission proposal seeks to encourage research, innovation and development of safer products which have undergone a prior risk/benefit balance and which are more adapted for smoking cessation.

2. According to the Commission proposal, electronic cigarettes above the suggested nicotine threshold would still be allowed on the market, provided they have been authorised as medicinal products. Therefore, the risk of illicit trade of such products is considered limited.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-000392/13
do Komisji
Filip Kaczmarek (PPE)
(16 stycznia 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Sprzedaż urządzeń i programów komputerowych z UE mogących służyć władzom Białorusi do inwigilacji obywateli

Jak podaje raport „Belarus: Pulling the Plug" organizacji Index on Censorship, Białoruś jest jednym z najbardziej nieprzyjaznych miejsc na świece dla użytkowników Internetu. Nowe technologie mogą być bardzo pomocne w wyrażaniu wolności swoich myśli, ale i mogą być również skutecznym narzędziem w jej ograniczaniu. Tak też się dzieje na Białorusi gdzie reżim ogranicza wolność słowa w sieci poprzez filtrowanie treści, blokowanie dostępu do krytykujących władze Białorusi stron, inwigilowanie użytkowników i cyberataki na niezależne strony, w tym również zmienianie ich treści.

Jak wynika z raportu władze Białorusi planują jeszcze większe nasilenie masowej kontroli obywateli w dostępie do Internetu.

Rząd głównie nastawia się na rozwój specjalnego oprogramowania, które umożliwi śledzenie prawie wszystkich działań każdego użytkownika Internetu w kraju. Europejskie firmy dostarczają sprzęt, który ułatwia inwigilację obywateli. Dzięki tym narzędziom na Białorusi było kilka fal aresztowań moderatorów internetowych społeczności i serwisów opozycyjnych. Dziennikarze i działacze, którzy wyrażają swoje opinie on-line stali się przedmiotem postępowania karnego o zniesławienie.

Dla przykładu, jak informuje raport, firma Ericsson sprzedała sprzęt komunikacyjny do białoruskich operatorów komórkowych, który mógł zostać wykorzystany do śledzenia komunikacji mobilnej telefonów liderów opozycji i niezależnych dziennikarzy w Mińsku przed i podczas wydarzeń z dnia 19 grudnia 2010 r.

Raport powołuje się również na informację gazety Die Zeit mówiącą o tym, że niemiecka policja szkoliła białoruską milicję z obsługi Analyst's Notebook, narzędzia zaprojektowanego do monitoringu działalności grup terrorystycznych, jak się okazało zostało ono wykorzystane do inwigilacji i represjonowania działaczy demokratycznych.

W związku z tym zapytuję:

Czy Komisja planuje wprowadzić rozwiązania zmierzające do ograniczenia lub zablokowania sprzedaży i dostarczania urządzeń i programów komputerowych, pochodzących z terenu Unii Europejskiej, mogących służyć do inwigilacji opozycji na Białorusi, filtrowania treści, blokowania dostępu do stron internetowych i prowadzenia cyberataków?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Karela de Guchta w imieniu Komisji
(1 marca 2013 r.)

Zgodnie z art. 215 TFUE zastosowanie środków przewidujących zerwanie lub ograniczenie stosunków gospodarczych i finansowych, takich jak zmniejszenie lub zablokowanie sprzedaży i dostaw z UE sprzętu komputerowego i oprogramowania, które mogłyby zostać wykorzystane do inwigilacji opozycji na Białorusi, jest możliwe jedynie na podstawie decyzji przyjętej w ramach wspólnej polityki zagranicznej i bezpieczeństwa. Komisja jest zdania, że podjęcie takich działań wymaga bardziej dogłębnego zbadania kwestii poruszonych w raporcie „Belarus: Pulling the Plug" i w związku z tym, wraz z Wysoką Przedstawiciel ds. Wspólnej Polityki Zagranicznej i Bezpieczeństwa, przeprowadzi dalszą analizę zagadnień, o których mowa we wspomnianym raporcie.

W strategii bezpieczeństwa cybernetycznego Unii Europejskiej ([1]) zaproponowano, by jednym z priorytetów UE było ustanowienie spójnej międzynarodowej polityki w zakresie cyberprzestrzeni dla Unii Europejskiej i promowanie podstawowych wartości UE. Mogłoby to pociągać za sobą monitorowanie wywozu produktów lub usług, które mogłyby zostać wykorzystane do cenzury lub masowych kontroli za pośrednictwem Internetu.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/news/eu-cybersecurity-plan-protect-open-internet-and-online-freedom-and-opportunity

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000392/13
to the Commission
Filip Kaczmarek (PPE)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Sale of EU computer equipment and software that could be used by the Belarusian authorities to spy on citizens

According to a report entitled 'Belarus: Pulling the Plug', which was produced by the 'Index on Censorship' organisation, Belarus is one of the most hostile countries on Earth for Internet users. New technologies may help to facilitate freedom of expression, but they may also be used as an effective means of restricting it. This is the situation in Belarus, where the regime is restricting freedom of expression on the Internet by filtering content, blocking access to websites that criticise the Belarusian authorities, spying on users and conducting cyber attacks on independent websites, including altering their content.

The report states that the Belarusian authorities are planning to tighten their grip on citizens' access to the Internet.

Above all, the government is seeking to develop specialised software that will enable it to track nearly all of the activities of every Internet user in the country. European companies are supplying equipment that helps the Belarusian authorities to spy on their citizens. The use of this equipment has already led to several waves of arrests of moderators of online opposition groups and services. Journalists and activists who express their opinions online have been subject to criminal prosecutions for libel.

The report gives the example of Ericsson, which sold communications equipment to Belarusian mobile phone operators which may have been used to track the mobile telephone communications of opposition leaders and independent journalists in Minsk in the run-up to and during the events of 19 December 2010.

It also refers to information published by the German newspaper 'Die Zeit' stating that the German police had trained their Belarusian counterparts to use 'Analyst's Notebook' software, which is designed to monitor the activities of terrorist groups. It was later confirmed that the software was used to spy on and persecute democratic activists.

In light of the above:

Does the Commission plan to take steps to restrict or block the sale and supply of computer equipment and software from the EU that could be used to spy on the Belarusian opposition, filter content, block access to websites and carry out cyber-attacks?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(1 March 2013)

In accordance with Article 215 TFEU, measures that provide for the interruption or reduction of economic and financial relations such as the restriction or blockage of the sale and supply of computer equipment and software from the EU that could be used to spy on the Belarusian opposition have to be based on a decision adopted under the common foreign and security policy. The Commission considers that such action would require a more in-depth study of the issues raised in the report and will therefore reflect further with the High Representative. on the issues referred to in the report 'Belarus: Pulling the Plug'.

The Cybersecurity Strategy of the European Union ([1]) proposes that the EU define as one of its priorities the establishment of a coherent international cyberspace policy for the EU and the promotion of its core values. This could entail monitoring the export of products or services that might be used for censorship or mass surveillance online.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/news/eu-cybersecurity-plan-protect-open-Internet-and-online-freedom-and-opportunity.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000393/13
an die Kommission
Sven Giegold (Verts/ALE)
(16. Januar 2013)

Betrifft: Konzeptpapier vom 19.11.2012

Inwiefern ist das am 19.11.2012 vom Bundeswirtschaftsministerium, der GD Energie sowie der hessischen und bayrischen Landesregierung vorgelegte Konzeptpapier mit dem Titel „Zusammenstellung von für den Stromnetz- und Kraftwerksbau bedeutsamen Regelungen und mögliche Ansatzpunkte für Erleichterungen“ mit der GD Energie abgestimmt worden, und unterstützt die GD Energie den Inhalt dieses Papiers uneingeschränkt?

Antwort von Herrn Oettinger im Namen der Kommission
(6. März 2013)

Die Kommission wurde zu dem Konzeptpapier des deutschen Bundesministeriums für Wirtschaft sowie der hessischen und der bayrischen Landesregierung, die für dessen Inhalt und Empfehlungen allein verantwortlich sind, nicht offiziell konsultiert.

Zu dieser Initiative erfolgte eine informelle Konsultation der Kommission. Sie war mit einigen Aspekten des Papiers nicht einverstanden und machte dazu informelle Anmerkungen und Vorschläge.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000393/13
to the Commission
Sven Giegold (Verts/ALE)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Draft paper of 19 November 2012

To what extent has the draft paper put forward on 19 November 2012 by the German Federal Ministry of Economics, the Directorate-General for Energy (DG Energy) and the provincial governments of Hessen and Bavaria entitled 'Zusammenstellung von für den Stromnetz- und Kraftwerksbau bedeutsamen Regelungen und mögliche Ansatzpunkte für Erleichterungen' ('Compilation of significant regulations for the construction of power supply networks and power plants and possible strategies for easing') been agreed with DG Energy, and does DG Energy support the content of this paper without reservation?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(6 March 2013)

The Commission has not been formally consulted on the draft paper prepared by the German Federal Ministry of Economics and the provincial governments of Hessen and Bavaria who are solely responsible for its content and recommendations.

The Commission has been informally consulted on this initiative. It did not agree with some of the elements of the paper and provided informal comments and suggestions.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-000394/13
à la Commission
Gaston Franco (PPE)
(16 janvier 2013)

Objet: Garanties concernant la libre circulation des prestataires de services à l'intérieur de la Communauté européenne

Le règlement (CE) nº 883/2004 du 29 avril 2004, et son règlement d'application (CE) nº 987/2009 du 16 septembre 2009, concernant la garantie de libre circulation des personnes et des prestataires de services à l'intérieur de la Communauté européenne, régissent notamment les règles d'assujettissement des travailleurs salariés et non salariés au régime de protection sociale.

Ces règlements disposent que la législation applicable en matière de sécurité sociale est normalement celle du territoire sur lequel s'effectue l'activité professionnelle, conformément au principe de territorialité. Cependant, il existe une exception à ce principe de territorialité, qui est le détachement.

1. Quelles sont les conditions minimales, légales, précises, à réunir pour que des prestataires de services étrangers, exerçant une activité rémunérée dans un pays qui n'est pas leur pays d'origine soient considérés comme relevant de l'exception au principe de territorialité, tant dans leur pays d'origine, que dans le ou les pays de l'UE où ils exerceraient leurs activités?

2. Les règlements disposent que les prestations de service effectuées dans le cadre du détachement doivent être de durée inférieure à 24 mois, sauf accord préalable:

— De quel accord préalable s'agit-il? Qui est habilité à le délivrer? Quelles sont les conditions à réunir pour pouvoir l'obtenir?

— Cette durée, inférieure à 24 mois, peut-elle être renouvelée? À quelles conditions? Notamment, existe-t-il une règle communautaire précisant les possibilités de renouvellement de cette période de détachement, la durée d'interruption entre deux périodes de détachement, la possibilité de cumul de plusieurs périodes successives de détachement?

Réponse donnée par M. Andor au nom de la Commission
(13 mars 2013)

1. Les exigences légales concernant le détachement figurent à l'article 12 du règlement (CE) nº 883/2004 ([1]) et à l'article 14 du règlement (CE) nº 987/2009 ([2]). D'autres dispositions relatives au détachement sont énoncées dans la décision A2 ([3]) de la commission administrative pour la coordination des systèmes de sécurité sociale.

Les dispositions sont expliquées en détail et accompagnées d'exemples dans la première partie du guide pratique ([4]) de la législation applicable aux travailleurs dans l'UE, l'EEE et en Suisse, élaboré et adopté par la commission administrative. Il est conseillé à l'Honorable Parlementaire de consulter ce guide, qui contient des réponses à toutes ses questions.

2. Les détachements au sens de la législation de l'UE ne doivent pas être d'une durée supérieure à 24 mois.

([1]) JO L 166 du 30.4.2004.
([2]) JO L 284 du 30.10.2009.
([3]) Décision nº A2 du 12 juin 2009 concernant l'interprétation de l'article 12 du règlement (CE) nº 883/2004 du Parlement européen et du Conseil relatif à la législation applicable aux travailleurs salariés détachés et aux travailleurs non salariés qui exercent temporairement une activité en dehors de l'État compétent, JO C 106 du 24.4.2010.
([4]) «Guide pratique: la législation applicable aux travailleurs dans l'UE, l'EEE et en Suisse», disponible dans toutes les langues officielles de l'UE à l'adresse: (http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=868).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000394/13
to the Commission
Gaston Franco (PPE)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Guaranteeing the free movement of service providers in the European Union

Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 of 29 April 2004, and its implementing regulation, Regulation (EC) No 987/2009 of 16 September 2009, on the free movement of persons and service providers in the European Union lay down rules specifying how Member State social security legislation applies to employed and self-employed persons.

These regulations state that the applicable social security legislation is that of the Member State in which the professional activity is carried out, in line with the territoriality principle. However, that principle does not apply when workers are posted to another Member State.

1. What are the specific minimum legal requirements that service providers engaged in a remunerated activity in a country other than their country of origin must meet in order to be exempt from the territoriality principle, both in their country of origin and in the EU country or countries in which they work?

2. The regulations provide that the duration of the work carried out by a service provider posted to another Member State must not exceed 24 months unless prior authorisation to the contrary has been given.

What does this prior authorisation consist of? Who has the power to issue such authorisation? What conditions must a service provider meet in order to obtain such authorisation?

Can a posting period of less than 24 months be renewed? Subject to what conditions? In particular, is there an EU rule which specifies under what circumstances a posting period may be renewed, the period of time which must elapse between two posting periods, and whether it is possible to complete a series of consecutive posting periods?

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

1. The legal requirements concerning posting are set out in Article 12 of Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 ([1]) and Article 14 of Regulation (EC) No 987/2009 ([2]). Further provisions on posting are set out in Decision No A2 ([3]) of the Administrative Commission for the Coordination of Social Security Systems.

The provisions are explained in detail with examples in Part I of the Practical Guide ([4]) to legislation applying to workers in the EU, the EEA and Switzerland, drafted and adopted by the Administrative Commission. The Honourable Member is advised to consult the Guide, which contains answers to all his questions.

2. Postings within the meaning of the EU legislation may not cover a period of more than 24 months.

([1]) OJ L 166, 30.4.2004.
([2]) OJ L 284, 30.10.2009.
([3]) Decision No A2 of 12 June 2009 concerning the interpretation of Article 12 of Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the legislation applicable to posted workers and self-employed workers temporarily working outside the competent State, OJ C 106, 24.4.2010.
([4]) 'Practical guide: The legislation that applies to workers in the European Union (EU), the European Economic Area (EEA) and in Switzerland', available in all EU official languages at: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=868

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000395/13
a la Comisión
Antolín Sánchez Presedo (S&D)
(16 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Áreas protegidas de pesca en el Gran Sol

Diversas informaciones apuntan a una iniciativa del Gobierno británico orientada a proteger la pesca en determinadas áreas del Gran Sol en las que, tradicionalmente y de manera particular, faena la flota europea con origen en Galicia (España). Estas mismas informaciones señalan el primer semestre de este año, en el marco de la presidencia irlandesa, como el plazo previsto para la creación de tales áreas, generándose así una gran inquietud en el sector.

El establecimiento de estas áreas protegidas de pesca no puede vulnerar los derechos pesqueros de manera unilateral y proteccionista en detrimento de otros Estados miembros. Con el agravante de que esas áreas, orientadas a la conservación de los recursos y los ecosistemas marinos, puedan albergar parques eólicos, explotaciones petrolíferas u otras actividades agresivas con el medio ambiente.

Estas mismas informaciones, aduciendo fuentes de la DG MARE de la Comisión Europea, plantean la posibilidad de que se produzcan modificaciones en las cuotas asignadas a los pesqueros que faenan en las zonas protegidas de pesca.

1. ¿Podría aclarar la Comisión si ha recibido algún tipo de solicitud o propuesta por parte de algún Estado miembro en el sentido de constituir áreas protegidas de pesca en su espacio marino, en particular, en el Gran Sol?

2. ¿Qué requisitos se han de cumplir para decretar ciertas áreas marinas como de especial protección, de manera compatible con la política pesquera común y los derechos históricos de los Estados miembros?

3. En tales áreas protegidas, además de la pesca ¿se prevé excluir aquellas otras actividades potencialmente dañinas con el medio ambiente (parques eólicos, explotaciones petrolíferas, etc.)?

4. ¿Es compatible la creación de estas áreas protegidas de pesca con que se produzcan modificaciones en la asignación de las cuotas de pesca? En su caso, ¿de qué manera?

Respuesta de la Sra. Damanaki en nombre de la Comisión
(15 de marzo de 2013)

Es responsabilidad de los Estados miembros designar áreas protegidas en las aguas bajo jurisdicción nacional y establecer medidas de conservación para proteger los hábitats y especies vulnerables y en peligro. En función de los objetivos de conservación del espacio marino que se desee proteger, los Estados miembros pueden prever la aplicación de diferentes medidas para reglamentar o restringir las actividades marítimas en el área. Naturalmente, entre tales medidas pueden contarse las de gestión y control de la pesca, así como las que afecten a cualquier otra actividad económica.

Con respecto a la pesquería del Gran Sol (mar Céltico), la Comisión es consciente de que el Reino Unido prevé designar una serie de áreas protegidas en esta región en el marco del programa Natura 2000 ([1]) y debe presentar medidas de gestión para las áreas candidatas. Esta presentación aún no ha tenido lugar. Una vez se haya efectuado la misma, la Comisión tendrá que evaluar los planes de gestión a fin de comprobar si son adecuados para garantizar la consecución de los objetivos de conservación de estas áreas. Las medidas previstas en tales planes de gestión que puedan limitar o prohibir las actividades de pesca en las áreas protegidas deberían ser adoptadas a nivel de la UE cuando la zona afectada se encuentre fuera del límite de las doce millas del mar territorial, si fueran a aplicarse a buques distintos de los que enarbolan el pabellón del Estado miembro ribereño. Las decisiones sobre asignación de cuotas corresponden en todo caso a los Estados miembros.

([1]) Puede encontrarse más información en los sitios web públicos de los Estados miembros correspondientes, en la dirección siguiente: http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-5201 http://webgis.npws.ie/npwsviewer/

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000395/13
to the Commission
Antolín Sánchez Presedo (S&D)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Fishing protected areas in the Gran Sol

Several reports point to a UK Government initiative which aims to protect fishing in certain areas of the Gran Sol, where the EU fleet from Galicia (Spain), in particular, traditionally operates. These same reports indicate that the first half of 2013, during Ireland's EU Presidency, is the deadline planned for establishing these areas, which is causing major concern in the industry.

Fishing protected areas cannot be established in a unilateral and protectionist manner in breach of fishing rights and at the expense of other Member States. Even more seriously, these areas, which aim to conserve marine resources and ecosystems, can accommodate wind farms, oil fields and other activities that harm the environment.

These same reports, citing sources from the European Commission Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, raise the possibility of changes to the quotas allocated to fishing vessels operating in fishing protected areas.

1. Could the Commission confirm whether it has received any request or proposal from a Member State to establish fishing protected areas in its marine space, particularly in the Gran Sol?

2. What requirements must be fulfilled to declare certain marine areas as special protection areas, in accordance with the common fisheries policy and the historical rights of the Member States?

3. Does it plan to ban activities other than fishing that may harm the environment (wind farms, oil fields, etc.) in these protected areas?

4. Will establishing these fishing protected areas lead to changes in the allocation of fishing quotas? If so, how?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(15 March 2013)

It is the responsibility of Member States to designate protected areas in the waters under national jurisdiction and to establish conservation measures in order to protect vulnerable and endangered habitats and species. Depending on the conservation objectives of the marine site to be protected, Member States may envisage the implementation of various measures regulating and/or restricting maritime activities in the area. These may of course include fisheries management and control measures along with those affecting any other economic activity.

With regard to the fishing grounds in Gran Sol (Celtic Sea), the Commission is aware that the United Kingdom envisages designating a number of protected areas in this region in the framework of the EU Natura 2000 programme ([1]) and must submit management measures for the candidate areas. This submission has not yet taken place. Once received, the Commission will need to assess the management plans to see if they are adequate to ensure the attainment of the conservation objectives for these areas. Measures foreseen in such management plans that would restrict or prohibit fishing activities in protected areas would need to be adopted at EU level whenever the area would lie beyond the 12 miles territorial sea limit, if they are to apply to vessels other than those flying the flag of the coastal Member State. Decisions on quota allocation rest in any case with the Member States.

([1]) For further details, public websites of the relevant Member States involved are available: http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-5201 http://webgis.npws.ie/npwsviewer/

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000396/13
an die Kommission
Evelyn Regner (S&D)
(16. Januar 2013)

Betrifft: Informationskampagne SE/SCE

In ihrem Aktionsplan zum europäischen Gesellschaftsrecht und zur Corporate Governance kündigt die Kommission unter anderem als eine der Hauptinitiativen eine Informationskampagne über die SE und gegebenenfalls die SCE an.

1. Warum beschränkt die Kommission die Kampagne auf die SE und zieht eine Kampagne für die SCE nur gegebenenfalls in Erwägung?

2. Teilt die Kommission nicht die Auffassung, dass insbesondere europäische Gesellschaftsformen, die selten von den Unternehmen als Gesellschaftsform gewählt werden (wie etwa die SCE), besonders beworben werden sollten?

3. Bei der Ankündigung der Informationskampagne zur SE erwähnt die Kommission ausdrücklich die Einbeziehung der Arbeitnehmer. Wird es auch Informationen für die Arbeitnehmer/innen geben? Sollten nicht auch die Arbeitnehmer/innen europäischer Gesellschaftsformen gleichberechtigt mit den Unternehmen über ihre Rechte und Pflichten aufgeklärt werden?

4. Im Rahmen der Konsultation haben die einschlägigen Interessengruppen Zurückhaltung bei der SPE gezeigt. Die Kommission hingegen erklärt, dass Interesse an alternativen Modellen besteht. Welche Alternativen werden hier vornehmlich genannt?

5. Warum setzt die Kommission die Verhandlungen über die SPE offensichtlich fort, obwohl die Mitgliedstaaten und auch die Interessensgruppen dem Statut eher zurückhaltend oder gar ablehnend gegenüberstehen?

Antwort von Herrn Barnier im Namen der Kommission
(28. Februar 2013)

Im Aktionsplan zum Gesellschaftsrecht und zur Corporate Governance heißt es, dass die Kommission eine Informationskampagne zur Stärkung der Kenntnisse über das Statut der Europäischen Aktiengesellschaft (SE) lancieren wird. Die Kommission hat die Kampagne nicht auf die SE beschränkt, sondern sich lediglich für ein schrittweises Vorgehen entschieden, das den Prioritäten und verfügbaren Ressourcen Rechnung trägt. Bevor für andere Rechtsinstrumente wie das Statut der Europäischen Genossenschaft (SCE) eine ähnliche Aktion gestartet wird, will die Kommission zunächst die Erfahrungen mit der Informationskampagne zur SE auswerten.

Die Kommission möchte der relativ geringen Popularität bestimmter Gesellschaftsformen, etwa der SCE, näher auf den Grund gehen. Eine Ursache könnte darin liegen, dass Genossenschaften, auf die in vielen Mitgliedstaaten nur ein vergleichsweise geringer Teil aller eingetragenen Unternehmen entfällt, eher klein und lokal stark verwurzelt sind; deshalb kann es sein, dass sich die Gesellschaftsform der Europäischen Genossenschaft, die ja grenzüberschreitend tätig sein soll, kaum öfter in Anspruch nehmen lässt.

Die Kommission misst dem Gleichstellungsgebot höchste Bedeutung bei. Die im Aktionsplan geforderte Beteiligung der Arbeitnehmerseite schließt Arbeitnehmerinnen ebenso ein wie Arbeitnehmer.

In der Kommission werden derzeit Überlegungen über mögliche Alternativen zur SPE angestellt. Allerdings wird eine Fortführung des SPE-Projekts von verschiedenen Mitgliedstaaten und Interessenträgern nach wie vor befürwortet, um die mit der SPE angestrebten Ziele zu erreichen. Aus diesem Grund hält es die Kommission nicht für angemessen, ihren Vorschlag zurückzuziehen. In der Tat ist die Kommission nach wie vor überzeugt, dass KMU einfachere und weniger aufwändige Bedingungen, auch in Bezug auf ihren Rechtsrahmen, brauchen, um EU-weit tätig sein zu können. Maßnahmen in dieser Richtung haben für die Kommission daher nach wie vor klare Priorität.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000396/13
to the Commission
Evelyn Regner (S&D)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: SE/SCE information campaign

One of the main initiatives announced by the Commission in its action plan on European company law and corporate governance is an information campaign on the European Company (SE) Statute and possibly the European Cooperative (SCE) Statute.

1. Why does the Commission propose to restrict the campaign to the SE and why is it only possibly considering a campaign for the SCE?

2. Does not the Commission agree that it is precisely European company forms which undertakings hardly ever choose for their business (such as the SCE) that ought particularly to be publicised and popularised?

3. In announcing the information campaign on the SE, the Commission explicitly mentions involving employees *[the masculine form is used — translator's note]*. Will information also be provided for female employees? Ought not female employees of European forms of company to be informed about their rights and duties on a footing of equality with undertakings?

4. In the consultations, stakeholders displayed hesitations about the European Private Company (SPE); the Commission mentions that they were keen to explore alternative measures — what alternatives are mainly referred to here?

5. Why is the Commission evidently continuing the negotiations on the SPE even though the Member States and also stakeholders are either hesitant about the Statute or even reject it?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(28 February 2013)

The action plan on company law and corporate governance SPECIFIES that the Commission will launch an information campaign to increase awareness of the European Company (SE) Statute. The Commission did not restrict the campaign to the SE, but adopted a 'step-by-step' approach based on priorities and available resources. The Commission plans to draw lessons from the experience of SE campaign before launching a similar action for other legal instruments such as the European Cooperative (SCE) Statute.

The Commission would like to assess in more detail the reasons for the relatively low popularity of certain company law forms such as the SCE. One reason might be that cooperatives, which in many Member States make up only a relatively small proportion of registered companies, are small in size and have strong roots in local communities; therefore it might be difficult for a European cooperative form that is supposed to have cross-border activities to be used more frequently.

The Commission attaches the highest importance to the principle of non-discrimination. Therefore, the Action plan refers to the involvement of employees regardless of their gender.

The Commission is in the process of considering whether there are possible alternatives to the SPE. It has to be stressed that a number of Member States and stakeholders remain positive about a continuation to arrive at the objective pursued by the SPE. Therefore, the Commission has not considered it appropriate to withdraw its proposal. Indeed, the Commission continues to believe that SMEs need simpler and less burdensome conditions, including their legal framework, for doing business across the EU and it remains therefore a clear priority for the Commission to take measures in this regard.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000397/13
an die Kommission
Evelyn Regner (S&D)
(16. Januar 2013)

Betrifft: Folgemaßnahmen Gute Unternehmensführung

Die Kommission hat ihren Aktionsplan „Europäisches Gesellschaftsrecht und Corporate Governance" vorgelegt, in dem sie konkrete Initiativen für die Modernisierung des Gesellschaftsrechts und der Corporate Governance für europäische Unternehmen bis zum Ende ihrer Mandatszeit in Aussicht stellt. Bei der zur Verbesserung der Corporate Governance in Aussicht gestellten Initiative bleiben einige Fragen offen:

1. Obwohl die Kommission die Notwendigkeit erkennt, dass zumindest eine bessere Berichterstattung über Corporate Governance eingeführt werden sollte, erwägt die Kommission nur, eine Empfehlung an die Mitgliedstaaten zu richten. Teilt die Kommission nicht die Ansicht, dass der Grundsatz „comply and explain" („Mittragen oder begründen") und sämtliche vorangegangenen Initiativen der Kommission, die nicht bindend waren, fehlgeschlagen sind?

2. Wenn nicht, wo sieht die Kommission den Fortschritt der letzten Jahrzehnte? Inwieweit kontrolliert oder beobachtet die Kommission laufend die Einhaltung von Kodizes zur Corporate Governance?

3. Was hält die Kommission von dem Ansatz, ein Monitoring-System zur Einhaltung der nationalen Kodizes für Governance einzurichten und in der Folge die Fortschritte in einem jährlichen Bericht zu veröffentlichen?

4. Warum erwägt die Kommission nicht für den Fall der Nichteinhaltung der nationalen Kodizes eine Auffangregel in Form einer Richtlinie mit bindenden Regeln für die Corporate Governance und/oder eines Europäischen Kodex für Corporate Governance?

5. Erwägt die Kommission, eine Rahmenrichtlinie zur Corporate Governance für jene Fälle einzuführen, in denen keine Abweichung vom jeweils anwendbaren Kodex erfolgt?

6. Wie gedenkt die Kommission die Unternehmen zu besserer Berichterstattung über Corporate Governance ohne Sanktionen oder Strafen bei nicht konformem Verhalten zu motivieren?

Antwort von Herrn Barnier im Namen der Kommission
(1. März 2013)

1. Nach Auffassung der Kommission hat der „Comply-or-explain"-Ansatz erhebliche Vorteile, da er den Unternehmen den nötigen Spielraum lässt, ihre Unternehmensregelungen so anzupassen, wie es ihren jeweiligen Bedürfnissen entspricht. Auch wenn sich bei der praktischen Anwendung dieses Grundsatzes, insbesondere kurz nach seiner Einführung auf EU-Ebene, Schwachstellen offenbart haben, hat die Regeltreue offenbar doch zugenommen.

2. Die Kommission erhält von den einzelstaatlichen Stellen, die über die Einhaltung der nationalen Corporate-Governance-Kodizes wachen, regelmäßig aktualisierte Informationen. Danach sind in der Tat konstante Verbesserungen festzustellen.

3. Angesichts der Vielfalt der nationalen Corporate-Governance-Rahmen sind die nationalen Stellen nach Auffassung der Kommission am besten in der Lage, die Einhaltung der nationalen Kodizes zu überwachen. Die meisten zuständigen nationalen Stellen veröffentlichen Jahresberichte über die Anwendung der entsprechenden Kodizes.

4. Da es in den Mitgliedstaaten vielfältige Unternehmen unterschiedlicher Sektoren und unterschiedlicher Größe gibt, hält es die Kommission nicht für angemessen, in diesem Bereich mit einer Richtlinie oder einem europäischen Corporate-Governance-Kodex einheitliche Regeln auf EU-Ebene einzuführen.

5. Die Kommission erwägt keine Rahmenrichtlinie, hat jedoch die Absicht, verbindliche Vorschriften für die Aspekte vorzuschlagen, bei denen eine vollumfängliche Regeleinhaltung als notwendig angesehen wird (z. B. Geschäfte mit verbundenen Unternehmen).

6. Die Kommission will Leitlinien aufstellen, wie die Berichterstattung über die Corporate Governance verbessert werden kann, und arbeitet eng mit den für die Überwachung der Corporate Governance zuständigen nationalen Stellen zusammen, um die Regeltreue durch geeignete Anreize für eine qualitativ bessere Berichterstattung zu erhöhen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000397/13
to the Commission
Evelyn Regner (S&D)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Follow-up measures for good business management

The Commission has presented its Action Plan on 'European Company Law and Corporate Governance' in which it proposes specific initiatives for the modernisation of company law and corporate governance for European enterprises until the end of its term. A number of questions remain outstanding in relation to the promised initiative for improving corporate governance:

1. Although the Commission recognises the need to introduce at least improved reporting on corporate governance, it is only considering making a recommendation to the Member States. Does it not agree that the principle of 'comply or explain' and all previous non-binding initiatives by the Commission have failed?

2. If not, what progress can it identify in recent decades? To what extent is it continuously monitoring or observing compliance with codes of conduct for corporate governance?

3. What is its view of the idea of introducing a system for monitoring compliance with national codes of conduct for governance and publishing an annual report on the progress achieved?

4. Why does it not consider issuing a 'catch-all rule' in the form of a directive with binding rules for corporate governance and/or a European code of conduct for corporate governance in the event that national codes of conduct are flouted?

5. Is it considering the introduction of a framework directive for corporate governance for cases in which there is no deviation from the applicable code of conduct?

6. How does the Commission intend to encourage enterprises to improve reporting on corporate governance without sanctions or penalties for non-compliance?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(1 March 2013)

1. The Commission believes that the 'comply or explain' approach has significant merits, as it offers companies flexibility to adapt corporate arrangements corresponding to their specific needs. Although shortcomings in the practical application of this principle have been identified, in particular shortly after the introduction of this approach on EU level, the level of compliance appears to have increased.

2. The Commission receives regularly updates from the national bodies in charge of monitoring compliance with national corporate governance codes and the information received shows indeed constant improvements in this area.

3. Given the variety of national corporate governance frameworks, the Commission considers that national bodies are best placed to monitor compliance with the national codes. Most of the competent national bodies publish annual reports on the application of the codes.

4. Given the great variety of companies within different Member States, with different sectors and different sizes, the Commission does not consider it appropriate to introduce uniform rules in this respect at EU level in the form of a directive or of an EU corporate governance code.

5. The Commission does not consider introducing a framework directive, but it intends to put forward binding rules regarding issues where full compliance is considered necessary (such as for example related party transactions).

6. The Commission intends to provide guidelines on how to improve corporate governance reporting and will cooperate closely with the national bodies in charge of monitoring corporate governance in order to encourage a better level of compliance through appropriate incentives encouraging a better quality of reporting.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita P-000398/13
a la Comisión
Eva Ortiz Vilella (PPE)
(16 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Activación del Fondo de Solidaridad de la UE para la Comunidad Valenciana

En su respuesta a la pregunta parlamentaria sobre la activación de ayuda del Fondo de Solidaridad de la UE tras el incendio que asoló la Comunidad Valenciana el verano pasado, la Comisión Europea afirmaba que antes de acabar el año 2012 se habría concluido la evaluación de una posible intervención excepcional de este Fondo conforme a los criterios aplicables a las llamadas «catástrofes regionales».

1. ¿Podría informar la Comisión si ya ha tomado una decisión al respecto?

2. En caso afirmativo, ¿podría indicar cuándo recibirá España estas ayudas?

Respuesta del Sr. Hahn en nombre de la Comisión
(19 de febrero de 2013)

La naturaleza y el carácter detallado de la información facilitada ha hecho que la evaluación de si se debe movilizar de manera excepcional el Fondo de Solidaridad para los incendios forestales en la Comunidad Valenciana lleve más tiempo del previsto inicialmente. Actualmente la evaluación se encuentra en su fase final. La Comisión tiene intención de adoptar a su debido tiempo una decisión sobre la solicitud relativa a la Comunidad Valenciana.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-000398/13
to the Commission
Eva Ortiz Vilella (PPE)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Activation of the EU Solidarity Fund for the Autonomous Community of Valencia

In its answer to the parliamentary question on activating EU Solidarity Fund aid following the wildfires that ravaged the Autonomous Community of Valencia last summer, the Commission stated that it would assess, before the end of 2012, whether the Fund could be activated exceptionally under the criteria for 'regional disasters'.

1. Could the Commission state whether it has made a decision yet in this regard?

2. If so, could it indicate when Spain will receive this aid?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(19 February 2013)

The nature and detail of the information provided has led to the assessment of whether the criteria for exceptionally mobilising the Solidarity Fund for the forest fires in Valencia taking longer than initially envisaged. The assessment is currently in its concluding phase. The Commission intends taking a decision in due course on the application relating to Valencia.

(Slovenska različica)

Vprašanje za pisni odgovor P-000399/13
za Komisijo
Romana Jordan (PPE)
(16. januar 2013)

Zadeva: Okoljsko-energetski vidiki plinskih terminalov v severnem Jadranskem morju

V Tržaškem zalivu Italija načrtuje gradnjo dveh plinskih terminalov. Projektoma nasprotuje Slovenija, spodbijajo pa ju tudi lokalne tržaške italijanske oblasti. Italijanski minister za okolje je pred kratkim celo ponovno odprl okoljsko poročilo za projekta. Nasprotovanje gradnji terminalov namreč ne izvira le iz postopkovnih in birokratskih težav, ampak obstajajo tudi močni okoljski razlogi proti gradnji terminalov, kot sta neupoštevanje kumulativnih vplivov terminalov na okolje ter nevarnosti živega srebra, ki se je skozi stoletja nalagalo na dnu Tržaškega zaliva zaradi nekdaj delujočega rudnika živega srebra. Predvsem slednje je zaskrbljujoče tako v okoljskem smislu kot tudi v smislu skrbi za javno zdravje prebivalcev te regije. Poleg tega z energetskega stališča izgradnja terminala ni prioriteta, saj sta predvidena dva nova plinovoda iz Azije v Srednjo Evropo.

Zaradi obstoječih postopkov se lahko zgodi, da se bo gradnja terminalov začela prej, preden bo imela Slovenija pravno možnost ukrepanja.

Zato sprašujem Komisijo, kaj bo storila, da se gradnja terminalov ne bo začela prej, preden bo imela Slovenija pravno možnost ukrepanja.

Odgovor komisarja Potočnika v imenu Komisije
(27. februar 2013)

Izbira posameznega projekta in njegova lokacija ter izvrševanje nacionalnih predpisov so v nacionalni pristojnosti. Zagotovitev spoštovanja ustreznih postopkov, ki jih določa okoljska zakonodaja EU, je temeljna odgovornost nacionalnih organov. Zato Komisija meni, da bi bilo najboljšo rešitev treba poiskati z dialogom med vsemi zainteresiranimi stranmi. Komisija dejavno spodbuja tak dialog.

Na podlagi informacij, ki so trenutno na voljo, soglasje za izvedbo plinskih projektov v Tržaškem zalivu še ni bilo izdano. Kar zadeva domnevno neupoštevanje kumulativnih vplivov na okolje in zdravstvenih tveganj, ki jih predstavlja živo srebro, ki se nabira na dnu Tržaškega zaliva, so italijanski organi obvestili Komisijo, da so bili kumulativni vplivi projektov in možna zdravstvena tveganja, ki izhajajo iz živega srebra, upoštevani v okviru postopkov presoje vplivov na okolje (EIA), ki še potekajo. Poleg tega so italijanski organi nedavno obvestili Komisijo o svoji odločitvi, da bodo postopke presoje vplivov na okolje podaljšali, tako da bo mogoče bolje upoštevati možne učinke navedenih projektov.

V okviru tekoče preiskave je Komisija ocenila vse informacije, o katerih je bila obveščena v zvezi s to zadevo, in do zdaj nima dokazov o kršitvi zakonodaje EU.

Komisija poslanki zagotavlja, da bo še naprej pozorno spremljala dogajanje in ocenila vse dodatne informacije, ki jih bo Komisiji predložila katera koli stran, da se zagotovi ustrezno spoštovanje določb prava EU, zlasti direktive o presoji vplivov na okolje.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-000399/13
to the Commission
Romana Jordan (PPE)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Environmental and energy aspects of gas terminals in the northern Adriatic

Italy is planning to build two gas terminals in the Gulf of Trieste. Slovenia opposes the projects, and is supported by the Italian local authorities in Trieste. Italy's environment minister recently even reopened the environmental report on the projects. Opposition to the construction of the terminals is based not only on procedural and bureaucratic difficulties; there are also strong environmental arguments against their construction, such as the failure to take account of the cumulative impact on the environment and the risks posed by mercury, which over the centuries accumulated on the seabed in the Gulf of Trieste as a result of earlier mercury mining operations in the region. This latter element is particularly worrying, both from an environmental point of view and in terms of public health for the people living in the area. In addition, as far as the energy aspect is concerned, the construction of these terminals is not a priority, given that plans exist for two new gas pipelines from Asia to central Europe.

Given that the existing procedures are already in progress, it is possible that construction of the terminals could begin before Slovenia has the opportunity to take legal action.

I would ask, therefore, what the Commission intends to do to ensure that construction does not begin before Slovenia has the chance to pursue legal measures.

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(27 February 2013)

The choice of a particular project, its location and enforcement of national rules are matters of national competence. It falls primarily to national authorities to ensure that the relevant procedures required by EU environmental legislation are respected. Therefore the Commission considers that the best solution should be obtained by way of dialogue between all interested parties. The Commission has actively encouraged such dialogue.

According to the information currently available, no development consent has yet been granted to the gas projects in the Gulf of Trieste.

As concerns the alleged failure to take account of the cumulative impacts on the environment and of the health risks posed by mercury which accumulated on the seabed of the Gulf of Trieste, the Italian authorities have informed the Commission that the cumulative impacts of the projects as well as the potential health risks deriving from mercury have been taken into account in the framework of the environmental impact assessment (EIA) procedures which are still ongoing. In addition, the Italian authorities have recently informed the Commission about their decision to extend the environmental impact assessment procedures to better take into account the potential effects of these projects.

In the framework of the ongoing investigation, the Commission has assessed all the information brought to its attention in relation to this matter. So far, no evidence of a breach of EC law has emerged.

The Commission can therefore reassure the Honourable Member that it will continue to follow closely the developments and assess all additional information provided to it by any parties, to make sure that the relevant provisions of the EC law are duly observed, in particular the EIA Directive.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000400/13
a la Comisión
Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo (S&D)
(16 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Agencia Europea de Control de la Pesca

Esta diputada quisiera conocer las medidas desarrolladas en materia de control e inspección de pesca irregular e ilegal por la Agencia Europea de Control de la Pesca desde la fecha de su constitución en cada Estado miembro.

Así mismo requiere que se informe del número de infracciones y de expedientes abiertos así como de las resoluciones recaídas sobre los mismos.

Finalmente, solicita que se presente una memoria de las actividades desarrolladas con cargo al presupuesto de la Agencia durante los últimos tres años, especificándose el número de personas contratadas y la categoría profesional a la que pertenecen.

Respuesta de la Sra. Damanaki en nombre de la Comisión
(13 de marzo de 2013)

La Comisión ha solicitado a la Agencia Europea de Control de la Pesca (AECP) que le facilite elementos de respuesta a la pregunta planteada por Su Señoría. La respuesta de la Agencia se remitirá a Su Señoría lo antes posible.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000400/13
to the Commission
Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo (S&D)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: European Fisheries Control Agency

This MEP would like to know what measures the European Fisheries Control Agency has implemented in terms of controlling and inspecting irregular and illegal fishing activity in each Member States since its establishment.

She also requests information on the number of offences and open cases as well as the number of judgments handed down.

Finally, she calls for a report on the activities carried out under the Agency's budget in the last three years, specifying the number of people employed and the occupation of each employee.

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(13 March 2013)

The Commission has asked to the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) to provide the elements of response to the question raised by the Honourable Member. The response from the Agency will be forwarded to the Honourable Member as soon as possible.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000401/13
a la Comisión
Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo (S&D)
(16 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Fondo Europeo de Pesca

¿Puede indicar la Comisión las cantidades y concepto de las mismas del Fondo Europeo de Pesca destinadas a España durante el periodo comprendido entre 2007 y 2012?

¿Puede detallar esta información por tipo de subvenciones y finalidad de las mismas, así como explicitar y constatar el oportuno control y verificación que se ha hecho de las mismas?

Respuesta de la Sra. Damanaki en nombre de la Comisión
(8 de marzo de 2013)

En el período 2007-2013, se destinaron a España 1 131 890 912 euros del Fondo Europeo de Pesca (FEP). Las medidas financiadas abarcan todo el espectro de posibilidades que ofrece el FEP. Las autoridades españolas han elaborado un plan estratégico que especifica las prioridades, los objetivos, los gastos públicos estimados y los plazos, conforme a los objetivos del FEP. También proporciona una perspectiva a largo plazo de cómo ven el desarrollo de su política pesquera y acuícola entre 2007 y 2013 y explica de qué modo ello se ajusta a los objetivos de la política pesquera común. Este plan se lleva a cabo mediante un programa operativo que describe más detalladamente cómo piensan las autoridades nacionales aprovechar en la práctica las posibilidades que ofrece el FEP. Ambos documentos se preparan en estrecha colaboración con los interlocutores económicos y sociales regionales y locales.

La Comisión confirma que el uso de los fondos en España se controla y verifica adecuadamente. En particular, la Comisión comprueba que existan sistemas nacionales de gestión y control, y que funcionen correctamente, y realiza periódicamente auditorías *in situ*.

Para más información sobre el programa operativo español, ruego a Su Señoría se dirija a la autoridad española de gestión ([1]).

([1]) http://www.magrama.gob.es/es/pesca/temas/fondo-europeo-de-la-pesca/documentos-fep/otros-documentos/default.aspx

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000401/13
to the Commission
Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo (S&D)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: European Fisheries Fund

Can the Commission indicate the amounts allocated to Spain from the European Fisheries Fund during the period 2007-2012 and their purpose?

Can it provide details of the types of subsidies and their purpose, and confirm that their use has been appropriately monitored and verified?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(8 March 2013)

The amount allocated to Spain from the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) during the period 2007-2013 is EUR 1 131 890 912. Measures funded cover the wide spectrum of the possibilities offered by the EFF. The Spanish national authorities have drawn up a strategic plan which defines priorities, objectives, public spending estimates and deadlines in line with EFF objectives and gives a long-term view of how they see the development of their fisheries and aquaculture policy between 2007 and 2013, and explaining how this meets the CFP's objectives. This plan is implemented by way of an Operational Programme describing in more detail the way the national authorities intend to translate the opportunities offered by the EFF into practice. Both are prepared in close consultation with regional and local economic and social partners.

The Commission confirms that the use of the funds in Spain is appropriately monitored and verified. The Commission checks in particular the existence and proper functioning of national management and control systems and carries out on a regular basis on the spot audits.

For more information on the Spanish Operational Programme, the Honourable Member is invited to refer to the Spanish Managing Authority ([1]).

([1]) http://www.magrama.gob.es/es/pesca/temas/fondo-europeo-de-la-pesca/documentos-fep/otros-documentos/default.aspx.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000402/13
a la Comisión
Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo (S&D)
(16 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Fondo Europeo de Pesca en los Estados miembros de la UE

¿Puede informarme la Comisión de las cantidades del Fondo Europeo de Pesca destinadas a los Estados Miembros durante el periodo comprendido entre 2007 y 2012, así como del concepto de las mismas?

¿Puede facilitar la Comisión información detallada por tipo de subvenciones y la finalidad de las mismas, así como explicitar y constatar el oportuno control y la verificación que se ha hecho de ellas?

Respuesta de la Sra. Damanaki en nombre de la Comisión
(13 de marzo de 2013)

El Fondo Europeo de Pesca (FEP) ofrece a la industria pesquera y a las comunidades costeras financiación para adaptarse al cambio de las condiciones del sector y lograr que este sea económicamente fuerte y ecológicamente sostenible.

El Fondo Europeo de Pesca cuenta con un presupuesto de 4 300 millones de euros para el periodo 2007-2013. La Decisión de la Comisión, de 13 de agosto de 2008, publicada en el Diario Oficial L 229 de 28.8.2008, fija los importes del FEP asignados a cada Estado miembro para el periodo de programación 2007-2013. Pueden optar a la financiación todos los sectores de la industria pesquera: pesca marina e interior, acuicultura (peces, moluscos y plantas acuáticas), transformación y comercialización de productos de la pesca. Se presta especial atención a las comunidades pesqueras más afectadas por los cambios recientes en la industria.

Las autoridades nacionales elaboran un plan estratégico con una perspectiva a largo plazo sobre la previsible evolución de su política pesquera y acuícola entre 2007 y 2013, y explican de qué modo dicho plan cumple los objetivos de la PPC. El plan debe definir prioridades, objetivos, estimaciones de gasto público y plazos. Tras el plan, elaboran un programa operativo que describe más detalladamente la manera en que las autoridades nacionales tienen previsto poner en práctica las oportunidades ofrecidas por el FEP. Ambos se elaboran en estrecha consulta con interlocutores económicos y sociales, regionales y locales.

Las autoridades de gestión de cada Estado miembro son directamente responsables, en particular, de garantizar la coordinación general y los avances en la aplicación de los programas operativos del FEP, y de informar a la Comisión sobre el grado de ejecución, incluyendo eventuales cambios y transferencias de recursos entre prioridades y programas operativos.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000402/13
to the Commission
Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo (S&D)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: European Fisheries Fund in EU Member States

Can the Commission indicate the amounts allocated to Member States from the European Fisheries Fund during the period 2007-2012, and their purpose?

Can it provide details of the types of subsidies and their purpose, and confirm that their use has been appropriately monitored and verified?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(13 March 2013)

The European Fisheries Fund (EFF) provides funding to the fishing industry and coastal communities to help them adapt to changing conditions in the sector and become economically resilient and ecologically sustainable.

The EFF has a budget of EUR 4.3 billion for 2007-2013. The amounts allocated from the EFF per Member State for the programming period 2007-2013 are laid down in the Commission decision of 13 August 2008 published in the Official Journal OJ L 229, 28.8.2008. Funding is available for all sectors of the industry — sea and inland fishing, aquaculture (the farming of fish, shellfish and aquatic plants), and processing and marketing of fisheries products. Particular attention is given to fishing communities most affected by recent changes in the industry.

National authorities draw up a strategic plan giving a long-term view of how they see the development of their fisheries and aquaculture policy between 2007 and 2013, and explaining how this meets the CFP's objectives. The plan must define priorities, objectives, public spending estimates and deadlines. This is then followed by an operational programme describing in more detail the way the national authorities intend to translate the opportunities offered by the EFF into practice. Both are prepared in close consultation with regional and local economic and social partners.

Managing Authorities in each Member State are directly responsible mainly for: ensuring overall coordination and progress in the implementation of the EFF operational programmes and report to the Commission on the progress of implementation including on any changes and shifts of resources between priorities and operational programmes.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-000403/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(16 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Ελληνική Βιομηχανία Ζάχαρης: διασφάλιση συνέχισης της παραγωγής

Με βάση τους όρους του διαγωνισμού για την πώληση της Ελληνικής Βιομηχανίας Ζάχαρης δεν εξασφαλίζεται η συνέχιση της λειτουργίας της, αφού, σύμφωνα με δημοσιεύματα, οι υποψήφιοι αγοραστές ενδιαφέρονται μόνο για την εξασφάλιση της ποσόστωσης της Ελλάδας. Υπενθυμίζεται ότι, την περίοδο 2007/2008, η Ελλάδα είχε ενταχθεί στο πρόγραμμα αναδιάρθρωσης, βάσει του 2006/320/ΕΚ, αποποιούμενη το 50,01% της εθνικής της ποσόστωσης. Επίσης, επισημαίνεται ότι τον Δεκέμβριο του 2012 το Υπουργείο Αγροτικής Ανάπτυξης και Τροφίμων, στα πλαίσια του Προγράμματος Αγροτικής Ανάπτυξης 2007-2013, για το Μέτρο των Αγροπεριβαλλοντικών Ενισχύσεων, εξέδωσε «Πρόσκληση για συμμετοχή στο Σύστημα Ολοκληρωμένης Διαχείρισης στην Παραγωγή Σακχαροτεύτλων», βάσει του Κανονισμού (ΕΚ) αριθ. 1698/2005 όπως τροποποιημένος ισχύει. Το πρόγραμμα αυτό συγχρηματοδοτείται από το Ευρωπαϊκό Γεωργικό Ταμείο Αγροτικής Ανάπτυξης.

Ανεξάρτητα από την άποψη που κάποιος μπορεί να έχει για την πώληση κρατικών επιχειρήσεων σε ιδιώτες,

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Υπάρχουν αντίστοιχες περιπτώσεις στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση, όπου κρατικές βιομηχανίες ζάχαρης εντάχθηκαν στο καθεστώς αναδιάρθρωσης βάσει του Κανονισμού 320/2006 και στη συνέχεια ιδιωτικοποιήθηκαν; Πώς διασφαλίσθηκαν στις περιπτώσεις αυτές τα δικαιώματα των εργαζομένων, βάσει του άρθρου 4 παρ. 3στ του Κανονισμού;

2. Σε ενδεχόμενη πώληση της Ελληνικής Βιομηχανίας Ζάχαρης εκχωρείται και η ελληνική ποσόστωση ζάχαρης; Ποια είναι η αντίστοιχη ευρωπαϊκή εμπειρία; Διασφαλίζονται οι θέσεις των εργαζομένων στη Βιομηχανία, βάσει του άρθρου 4 παρ. 3στ του Κανονισμού;

3. Μπορεί να διαβεβαιώσει ότι η ελληνική κυβέρνηση έχει το δικαίωμα, κατά την πώληση της Βιομηχανίας, να θέσει ως όρο τη συνέχιση της λειτουργίας της και τη διασφάλιση των δικαιωμάτων των εργαζομένων σε αυτήν, προκειμένου να μην διακοπεί η παραγωγική διαδικασία σακχαροτεύτλων από την οποία εξαρτώνται χιλιάδες οικογένειες, δεδομένης και της δέσμευσης που θα αναλάβουν οι δικαιούχοι του Συστήματος Ολοκληρωμένης Διαχείρισης ως το 2017;

Απάντηση του κ. Ciolos εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(26 Φεβρουαρίου 2013)

1. Η Επιτροπή δεν γνωρίζει την ύπαρξη άλλων κρατικών βιομηχανιών ζάχαρης εντός της Ένωσης που εντάχθηκαν στο καθεστώς αναδιάρθρωσης βάσει του κανονισμού (ΕΚ) αριθ. 320/2006 ([1]) του Συμβουλίου και στη συνέχεια ιδιωτικοποιήθηκαν.

2. Η Ένωση χορηγεί στα κράτη μέλη ποσοστώσεις ζάχαρης και ισογλυκόζης. Η μεταφορά των ποσοστώσεων αυτών μεταξύ κρατών μελών δεν επιτρέπεται. Ωστόσο, κάθε κράτος μέλος είναι αρμόδιο για την κατανομή της εθνικής του ποσόστωσης σε εγκεκριμένες επιχειρήσεις παραγωγής ζάχαρης ή ισογλυκόζης, οι οποίες είναι εγκατεστημένες στο έδαφός του. Οι διατάξεις για την εν λόγω κατανομή και οι λεπτομερείς κανόνες μεταφοράς· ποσοστώσεων ζάχαρης ή ισογλυκόζης περιέχονται στα άρθρα 56 έως 60 και στο Παράρτημα VIII του κανονισμού αριθ. 1234/2007 ([2]) του Συμβουλίου.

3. Το άρθρο 5 παράγραφος 4 του κανονισμού (ΕΚ) αριθ. 320/2006 προβλέπει ότι: *«τα κράτη μέλη παρακολουθούν, ελέγχουν και επαληθεύουν την υλοποίηση της ενίσχυσης αναδιάρθρωσης, όπως την έχουν εγκρίνει». Επίσης, το άρθρο 5 του κανονισμού (ΕΚ) αριθ. 968/2006* ([3]) της Επιτροπής προβλέπει ότι: *«Τα κράτη μέλη διασφαλίζουν τη συνοχή και τη συμπληρωματικότητα των μέτρων ή των δράσεων που χρηματοδοτούνται από το ταμείο αναδιάρθρωσης και από άλλα κοινοτικά ταμεία σε περιφερειακό ή εθνικό επίπεδο, καθώς και τη μη αλληλοεπικάλυψη μεταξύ τους.»*.

Κατά συνέπεια, η εφαρμογή της αναδιάρθρωσης και η συμμόρφωση με άλλα μέτρα αποτελεί αρμοδιότητα του κράτους μέλους.

([1]) ΕΕ L 58 της 28.2.2006.
([2]) ΕΕ L 299 της 16.11.2007.
([3]) ΕΕ L 176 της 30.6.2006.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000403/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Hellenic Sugar Industry: ensuring continued production

The terms of the tender for the sale of the Hellenic Sugar Industry fail to guarantee the continued functioning of this industry, since prospective purchasers are reportedly interested only in preserving Greece's quota. It should be recalled that in the period 2007/2008, Greece had joined the restructuring programme under Regulation 2006/320/EC, renouncing 50.01% of its national quota. It should also be noted that in December 2012 the Ministry of Rural Development and Food, under the 2007-2013 Rural Development Programme, issued in respect of the measure agri-environmental aid a 'Call for Participation in the Integrated Management System in the Production Sugar Beet' under Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005, as amended, which is currently in force. This programme is co-funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

Leaving aside the controversial question of whether state companies should be sold to private individuals, will the Commission say:

1. Do other cases exist in the European Union, in which state sugar refiners have been included in the restructuring scheme under Regulation 320/2006 and then privatised? What measures have been taken in such cases to safeguard employee rights under Article 4, paragraph 3f, of the regulation?

2. In the event of a sale of the Hellenic Sugar Industry, will the Greek quota sugar also be transferred? What experience does the EU have of such matters? Are workers' jobs in the Industry safeguarded, under Article 4, paragraph 3f, of the regulation?

3. Can it confirm that the Greek Government has the right, in selling the Hellenic Sugar Industry, to make the sale conditional upon the continued operation of the Industry and the safeguarding of workers' rights in order not to interrupt sugar beet production on which thousands of families depend for their livelihoods, given also the commitment to be assumed by the beneficiaries of the Integrated Management System until 2017?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(26 February 2013)

1. The Commission is not aware of other state owned sugar producers within the Union which have been included in the restructuring scheme under Council Regulation (EC) No 320/2006 ([1]) and then privatised.

2. The Union allocates sugar and isoglucose quotas to Member States. Transfer of these quotas between Member States is not allowed. However, it is a Member States' competence to allocate its national quota to approved undertakings producing sugar or isoglucose established in its territory. The provisions for such an allocation and detailed rules on transfer of sugar or isoglucose quotas are laid down in the articles 56 to 60 and Annex VIII to Council Regulation 1234/2007 ([2]).

3. Article 5(4) of Regulation (EC) No 320/2006 states: 'Member States shall monitor, control and verify the implementation of the restructuring aid as approved by it'. Moreover, Article 5 of Commission Regulation (EC) No 968/2006 ([3]) states that 'The Member States shall ensure the coherence and the complementarity of measures or actions financed by the restructuring fund and by other Community funds at regional or national level, as well as the absence of duplication between them'.

The implementation of the restructuring and compliance with other measures is therefore a Member States' competence.

([1]) OJ L 58, 28.2.2006.
([2]) OJ L 299, 16.11.2007.
([3]) OJ L 176, 30.6.2006.

(Suomenkielinen versio)

Kirjallisesti vastattava kysymys E-000404/13
komissiolle (Varapuheenjohtajalle / Korkealle edustajalle)
Anneli Jäätteenmäki (ALDE) ja Tarja Cronberg (Verts/ALE)
(16. tammikuuta 2013)

Aihe: VP/HR – Asekauppasopimus

Neuvottelut kansainvälisestä asekauppasopimuksesta (ATT) päättyivät tuloksettomina heinäkuussa 2012. Uusi ja viimeinen neuvottelukierros pidetään New Yorkissa 18.–27. maaliskuuta 2013.

Parlamentti ja jäsenvaltiot ovat olleet laajan asekauppasopimuksen vankkoja tukijoita. Tiettyihin avoimiin kysymyksiin on kuitenkin kiinnitettävä edelleen huomiota ja niitä on selvennettävä, erityisesti EU:n asemaa asekauppasopimuksen osapuolena ja sopimuksen avointa täytäntöönpanoa.

1. Miten jäsenvaltiot aikovat varmistaa, että asekauppasopimuksen täytäntöönpano on mahdollisimman avointa, ja millaiseen avoimuuteen ne ovat valmiita? Noudattavatko jäsenvaltiot edelleen velvoitetta julkistaa vuotuiset aseiden siirtoja koskevat raportit?

2. Miten jäsenvaltiot varmistavat, että asekauppasopimukseen sisällytetään lauseke, jolla EU tunnustetaan sopimuksen osapuoleksi, ja että aseiden siirtoja EU:ssa koskeva EU:n säännöstö otetaan asianmukaisesti huomioon sopimuksessa?

Korkean edustajan, varapuheenjohtaja Catherine Ashtonin komission puolesta antama vastaus
(18. maaliskuuta 2013)

Kansainvälisen asekauppasopimuksen (ATT) avulla on mahdollista tehdä asekaupasta aiempaa vastuullisempaa ja läpinäkyvämpää ja siten edistää maailmanlaajuista rauhaa ja turvallisuutta. Tästä syystä EU:n ensisijainen tavoite on sopimuksen onnistunut tekeminen. EU on määrittänyt ensisijaisia neuvottelutavoitteitaan asekauppasopimusta käsittelevään YK:n päätöskonferenssiin, joka järjestetään maaliskuussa 2013.

EU on ollut ensimmäisten joukossa edistämässä läpinäkyvyyttä kansainvälisessä asekaupassa. EU julkaisee vuosittain tavanomaisten aseiden viennistä laajan raportin, joka sisältää tiedot kaikkien EU:n jäsenvaltioiden aseviennistä. EU on johdonmukaisesti puoltanut asekauppasopimuksen raportointi- ja läpinäkyvyyssäännöksiä. Tällä hetkellä sopimusluonnoksen säännöksissä edellytetään, että osapuolina olevat valtiot raportoivat aseiden siirroista YK:n pääsihteeristölle. EU tekee kaikkensa maaliskuun 2013 konferenssissa varmistaakseen, että aseiden siirrosta raportoinnin tulisi olla julkista.

Heinäkuun 2012 asekauppasopimuskonferenssissa EU puhui sen puolesta, että sopimusluonnokseen sisällytettäisiin RIO-lauseke, joka sallisi alueellisen yhdistymisen järjestön (regional integration organization, RIO), eli myös EU:n, tulla sopimuspuoleksi. Jotkut YK:n jäsenet vastustivat kuitenkin jyrkästi RIO-lausekkeen lisäämistä sopimukseen. EU pyrkii edelleen ajamaan RIO-lausekkeen lisäämistä asekauppasopimukseen neuvotteluissaan kolmansien maiden kanssa.

Valtuuksista neuvotella asekauppasopimus maaliskuun konferenssissa on käyty keskusteluja, joiden yhteydessä komissio suositteli, että RIO-lauseke olisi lisättävä asekauppasopimukseen. Samaan aikaan EU:ssa tehdään valmistelutyötä, jotta voitaisiin määrittää sopimusluonnokseen välttämättä vaadittavat muutokset, joilla voitaisiin taata yhteensopivuus EU:n säännöstön kanssa siinä tapauksessa, ettei sopimukseen saada RIO-lauseketta.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000404/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Anneli Jäätteenmäki (ALDE) and Tarja Cronberg (Verts/ALE)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Arms trade treaty

The negotiations on the global arms trade treaty (ATT) ended unsuccessfully without a treaty in July 2012. The new and last round of negotiations will be organised in New York on 18-27 March 2013.

Parliament and the Member States have been robust supporters of a comprehensive ATT. However, there are some unanswered questions which require further attention and clarification, especially regarding the EU's status as a party to the ATT and the transparent implementation of the treaty.

1. How are the Member States going to ensure the highest possible level of transparency in the implementation of the ATT and what level of transparency can they accept? Will the Member States pursue an obligation to publish annual reports on arms transfers?

2. How will the Member States guarantee the inclusion of a clause recognising the EU as a party to the ATT and that the EU *acquis* on arms transfers within the EU will be appropriately taken into account within the framework of the treaty?

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

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) has the potential of making the trade in arms more responsible and transparent, thus contributing to reinforcing global peace and security. This is why the EU considers the successful conclusion of the Treaty as a priority. The EU has been developing its negotiating priorities for the final UN Conference on the ATT to be held in March 2013.

The EU has been at the forefront in the promotion of transparency in the international arms trade. It publishes, annually, a comprehensive report on exports of conventional arms including data on arms exports by all EU Member States. The EU has been consistently advocating reporting and transparency provisions in the ATT. At present, the provisions of the draft Treaty foresee an obligation by States Parties to report on arms transfers to the UN Secretariat. The EU will exert its best efforts at the March 2013 Conference to ensure that reporting on arms transfer should be public.

The EU advocated at the July 2012 Conference on ATT the inclusion of a RIO (regional integration organisation) clause in the draft treaty text that would allow the EU to become a party to the Treaty. However, the inclusion of a RIO clause was strongly opposed by a number of UN Members. The EU continues to promote the inclusion of a RIO clause in the ATT in its consultations with third countries.

In the framework of the discussions on the authorisation to negotiate at the March Conference the ATT, the Commission recommended that a RIO clause should be inserted in the ATT. At the same time, preparatory work is ongoing in the EU to identify amendments to the draft ATT that would be necessary to ensure compatiblity with the EU *acquis* in the absence of a RIO clause.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000405/13
to the Commission
Catherine Bearder (ALDE)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Hunger-striking prisoners

Jafar Azzidine, Tarek Qa'adan and Yousef Yassin are currently on hunger strike in prisons in Israel after being arrested under the occupation policy of administrative detention. Although they have not been charged with any crimes, they are being held indefinitely in poor conditions. Their situation is the subject of much media attention, yet a solution does not appear to be imminent.

In light of this, can the Commission confirm whether it is aware of these cases? In addition, will the Commission consider liaising with other partners involved in the situation to attempt to resolve the matter for these prisoners and tell me what is being done to end the Israeli policy of administrative detention?

Question for written answer E-000621/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Catherine Bearder (ALDE)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Hunger-striking prisoners

Jafar Azzidine, Tarek Qa'adan and Yousef Yassin are currently on hunger strike in prisons in Israel after being arrested under the occupation policy of administrative detention. They have not been charged with any crimes yet and are being held indefinitely in poor conditions. Their situation is the subject of much media attention, yet a solution does not appear to be imminent.

In light of this, can the Vice-President/High Representative confirm whether she is aware of these cases?

In addition, will the Vice-President/High Representative consider liaising with other partners involved in the situation in order to attempt to resolve the matter for these prisoners, and will she tell me what is being done to end the Israeli policy of administrative detention?

Joint answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(12 March 2013)

The Commission is indeed aware of the cited cases. Conditions of detention remain a matter of concern for the EU vis-à-vis Israel. The issue is discussed with Israel at all relevant levels, and we have witnessed some improvements in the numbers of administrative detainees (from 322 in April 2012 to 178 on 1 January 2013). A ruling of Israel's Supreme Court of 7 May 2012 stated that 'the policy of administrative detention should be changed: the decision to detain people should be taken at a higher judicial level and there should be more legal oversight'. The EU will continue to engage Israel in order to promote humanitarian protection of detainees in its territory.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000406/13
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(16 gennaio 2013)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Violenze ai danni del principale esponente dell'opposizione in Azerbaigian

In base al comunicato stampa emesso da Amnesty International, Isa Gambar, leader del principale partito d'opposizione in Azerbaigian, il «Musavat», il 13 gennaio ha subito un attacco premeditato durante un viaggio, nel quale la sua auto e altre al suo seguito sono state oggetto di una fitta sassaiola, seguita da aggressioni fisiche. Nove persone sono state ferite senza che vi fosse un intervento della polizia locale, mentre un fotografo è stato temporaneamente fermato e rilasciato solamente dopo aver consegnato la fotocamera.

— Considerando che tale evento rappresenta una palese violazione sia dei diritti umani che di quelli politici;

— considerando che l'Azerbaigian figura al 162° posto su 179 nella classifica, redatta da «Reporter Senza Frontiere», dei paesi con la maggior libertà di informazione;

— considerando che l'Unione Europea e l'Azerbaigian sono legati da un accordo di partenariato e di cooperazione in base al quale l'UE mira a rafforzare lo sviluppo democratico e la buona governance;

— considerando che anche le ultime elezioni presidenziali del 2008, in cui il presidente Aliyev aveva ottenuto l'89 % delle preferenze, si erano svolte sotto l'ombra di pesanti brogli;

si chiede alla VP/HR:

1. quali provvedimenti sta prendendo per migliorare la democrazia e per assicurare che in Azerbaigian si svolgano elezioni aperte, libere e corrette?

2. ha già presentato rimostranze al governo azero in merito alla situazione sopra esposta?

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

L'UE è al corrente degli incidenti avvenuti durante il viaggio del *leader* del partito di opposizione, Musavat, a Lenkoran per celebrare il ventesimo anniversario della sezione locale del Musavat. Benché vi siano versioni divergenti su quello che è veramente accaduto, è evidente che i membri del Musavat sono stati aggrediti e feriti da una folla inferocita.

Il ministero dell'Interno ha preso le distanze dagli eventi, affermando che all'origine dell'aggressione vi potrebbe essere la frustrazione di un gruppo di sfollati dal Nagorno-Karabakh. L'argomentazione sembra discutibile. Il ministero dell'Interno ha avviato un'indagine, ma finora non si hanno informazioni concrete da riferire.

Nel corso di riunioni politiche di alto livello con il governo, l'Unione europea ha messo in rilievo — e su questo punto continuerà a insistere — la necessità di una campagna elettorale corretta, trasparente e in condizioni di parità, pienamente conforme alle raccomandazioni dell'OSCE-ODIHR formulate in seguito alle elezioni del 2010. Nel contempo l'UE continuerà ad esigere il rispetto dei diritti fondamentali e a monitorare attentamente gli sviluppi nel periodo precedente le elezioni presidenziali nella seconda metà dell'anno.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000406/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Violence against the main opposition leader in Azerbaijan

According to the press release issued by Amnesty International, on 13 January Isa Gambar, leader of Musavat, the main opposition party in Azerbaijan, suffered a premeditated attack while travelling. His car and others in his entourage were subjected to heavy stoning, followed by physical attacks. Nine people were injured with no intervention by the local police, while a photographer was briefly detained. He was released only after handing over his camera.

— Given that this episode is a clear violation of human and political rights;

— given that Azerbaijan occupies the 162nd place out of 179 on the index of countries with the greatest press freedom drawn up by Reporters Without Borders;

— given that the European Union and Azerbaijan are linked by a partnership and cooperation agreement, on the basis of which the EU is seeking to strengthen the development of democracy and good governance;

— given that the last presidential elections in 2008, in which President Aliyev obtained 89 % of the vote, were also marred by serious election fraud:

1. What measures is the Vice-President/High Representative taking to strengthen democracy and to ensure that open, free and fair elections are held in Azerbaijan?

2. Has she already made representations to the Azerbaijani Government with regard to the above situation?

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

The EU is well aware of the incidents linked to the trip of the leader of the opposition party Musavat to Lenkoran, to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the local branch of Musavat. Although there seem to be conflicting reports on what actually happened, it is clear that Musavat party members were hit and injured by a mob.

The Ministry of Interior has distanced itself from the events, claiming frustrated Internally Displaced Persons from Nagorno Karabakh likely to be behind the attack. This argument seems debatable. An investigation has been launched by the Ministry of Interior, without any concrete information to report to date.

In political meetings with the government at high level, the EU has underlined and will continue to underline the need for fair, transparent and level ground election campaign fully in line with the OSCE-ODIHR recommendations issued following the 2010 elections. At the same time, the EU will continue to press for respect of fundamental rights and continue closely to monitor developments, in the run-up to the Presidential elections later this year.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000407/13
alla Commissione
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(16 gennaio 2013)

Oggetto: Applicabilità della normativa spagnola alle concessioni demaniali per fini turistici e ricreativi in Italia

Nella risposta all'interrogazione E-010266/2012, relativa alla compatibilità della «Ley de Costas» spagnola con la direttiva 2006/123/CE in termini di durata e rinnovo delle concessioni demaniali, la Commissione europea riconosce la legittimità della durata di settantacinque anni per le concessioni accordate ai proprietari per l'uso di fabbricati costruiti in aree facenti parte del demanio marittimo.

Dato che in Italia molte strutture turistico-balneari sono costituite da fabbricati di proprietà, composti da strutture dotate di una vasta gamma di servizi come piscine, bar, ristoranti, ecc., può la Commissione chiarire se il periodo di settantacinque anni previsto dalla normativa spagnola può applicarsi anche alla fattispecie italiana, viste l'importanza economica, la diffusione territoriale e la caratterizzazione, anche strutturale, delle imprese turistico-balneari italiane?

Risposta di Michel Barnier a nome della Commissione
(6 marzo 2013)

Come la Commissione ha spiegato nella recente risposta all'interrogazione E-010266/2012, la direttiva 2006/123/CE (direttiva sui servizi) impone agli Stati membri di garantire la parità di accesso al mercato quando il numero di autorizzazioni disponibili è limitato a causa della scarsità delle risorse naturali. In base all'articolo 12, paragrafo 2, della direttiva sui servizi, in questi casi l'autorizzazione è rilasciata per una durata limitata adeguata.

Spetta agli Stati membri fissare per la suddette autorizzazioni una congrua durata, che consenta al prestatore di recuperare il costo degli investimenti e ottenerne un giusto rendimento.

È altresì compito degli Stati membri stabilire la procedura per il rilascio delle autorizzazioni in conformità degli articoli 9 e 10 e dell'articolo 12, paragrafo 1, della direttiva sui servizi.

Il periodo di 75 anni previsto dalla normativa spagnola non si riferisce ad autorizzazioni specificamente destinate all'esercizio di attività di servizio, ma rappresenta piuttosto un indennizzo per la reversione dei terreni al demanio marittimo. Come la Commissione ha spiegato nelle sue recenti risposte alle interrogazioni E-10266/2012 e P-010112/2012, il citato periodo di settantacinque anni si applica alle concessioni accordate ai proprietari per l'utilizzo dei loro immobili, che erano stati edificati in aree che tornano ora al demanio marittimo. Il progetto di riforma mira a garantire la certezza del diritto per i proprietari, in considerazione delle ambiguità riscontrate nel vigente quadro giuridico sui fabbricati situati nella fascia costiera in Spagna.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000407/13
to the Commission
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Applicability of Spanish regulations on State property concessions for tourism and leisure purposes in Italy

In its answer to Question E-010266/2012 on the compatibility of the Spanish *Ley de Costas* with Directive 2006/123/EC in terms of the duration and renewal of State property concessions, the European Commission acknowledges the legitimacy of the 75-year duration for concessions granted to owners for the use of buildings constructed in areas that are part of the public maritime domain.

Given that, in Italy, many seaside tourism facilities are composed of privately owned buildings, comprising constructions featuring a wide range of services such as swimming pools, bars, restaurants and so on, can the Commission clarify whether the 75-year period specified by the Spanish regulations could also be applied to the situation in Italy, given the economic importance, the geographical distribution and the features, including structural features, of Italian seaside tourism businesses?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(6 March 2013)

As the Commission explained in its recent reply to Question E-010266/2012, Directive 2006/123/EC (the Services Directive) obliges Member States to ensure equal access to the market when the number of available authorisations is limited due to the scarcity of natural resources. According to Article 12, paragraph 2 of the Services Directive in those cases the authorisations shall be granted for an appropriate limited period.

It is for the Member States to set the appropriate duration of such authorisations. This period should be such as is necessary to enable the provider to recoup the cost of investment and to generate a fair return.

It is also for the Member States to determine the procedure for the grant of authorisations in accordance with Articles 9, 10 and 12 paragraph 1 of the Services Directive.

The 75-year period specified by the Spanish regulation does not concern authorisations granted specifically for the purpose of exercising a service activity but rather a compensation following the reversion of the territory to the public maritime domain. As the Commission explained in its recent replies to Question E-10266/2012 and Question P-010112/2012, the seventy-five year period mentioned in the question applies to concessions granted to owners for the use of their own property, which had been constructed in areas that now revert to the public maritime domain. The draft reform seeks to ensure legal certainty for owners of buildings in view of the ambiguities found in the current legal framework for shoreline property in Spain.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite P-000409/13
à la Commission
Gilles Pargneaux (S&D)
(16 janvier 2013)

Objet: Renforcer la pharmacovigilance sur les pilules de dernières générations

Le 14 décembre dernier, Marion Larat accuse la pilule de 3e génération Méliane, fabriquée par le laboratoire Bayer, d'avoir provoqué son accident vasculaire cérébral.

Elle dépose plainte pour «atteinte involontaire à l'intégrité de la personne humaine» contre le directeur général du laboratoire, auprès du procureur de Bobigny (Seine-Saint-Denis). Cette plainte vise également le directeur général de l'Agence nationale de sécurité du médicament (ANSM), qui n'a pas demandé le retrait de cette pilule du marché, «en violation manifestement délibérée du principe de précaution».

La dangerosité des pilules de 3e et 4e générations — risques accrus de phlébite et d'embolie pulmonaire — est reconnue en Europe et en Amérique du Nord.

Au Canada, en Australie, en Suisse, en Belgique, en Allemagne, des procédures judiciaires sont en cours depuis plusieurs années, et aux États-Unis, ce sont quelque 15 000 plaintes qui ont été déposées.

L'Agence européenne du médicament doit prendre des mesures concrètes pour répondre aux inquiétudes des citoyennes européennes.

Pouvez-vous me préciser les mécanismes que vous entendez mettre en place afin de renforcer le suivi de pharmacovigilance et de faciliter la remontée des effets secondaires de ces contraceptifs?

À l'instar des tests menés par votre prédécesseur, John Dalli, sur le médicament Mediator, pouvez-vous lancer des tests de résistance pour déterminer les dangers des contraceptifs de dernières générations?

Réponse donnée par M. Borg au nom de la Commission
(5 février 2013)

La Commission renvoie l'auteur de la question à la réponse donnée à la question P-000297/2013 ([1]) sur le même sujet.

Le 22 janvier 2013, la France a ouvert une procédure de saisine à l'échelle de l'Union européenne en vue de la réévaluation des contraceptifs oraux combinés de troisième et de quatrième génération, au motif d'un risque majeur de thrombose veineuse et d'un volume élevé de prescriptions en France. À l'issue de cette réévaluation, la Commission prendra, le cas échéant, des mesures d'ordre réglementaire.

Sur la base des résultats du test de résistance effectué dans l'affaire du Mediator, l'UE a renforcé son cadre législatif en 2010, puis en 2012 ([2]), pour ce qui est de la pharmacovigilance et de la surveillance post-commercialisation. La responsabilité de l'Agence européenne des médicaments quant au suivi des signes relatifs à la sécurité des produits (c'est-à-dire, la pharmacovigilance) s'en trouve désormais beaucoup plus engagée. Le nouveau Comité pour l'évaluation des risques en matière de pharmacovigilance de l'Agence évalue ces signes et recommande, le cas échéant, une action réglementaire au niveau de l'Union. Le projet d'une réévaluation prochaine des contraceptifs oraux combinés témoigne du bon fonctionnement de ce système de pharmacovigilance redynamisé.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/fr/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) Règlement (CE) n° 1235/2010 du Parlement européen et du Conseil. Directive 2010/84/UE du Parlement européen et du Conseil, règlement (UE) n° 1027/2012 du Parlement européen et du Conseil, directive 2012/26/UE du Parlement européen et du Conseil.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-000409/13
to the Commission
Gilles Pargneaux (S&D)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Improving the monitoring of third- and fourth-generation contraceptive pills

On 14 December 2012, Marion Larat publicly blamed the third-generation contraceptive pill Méliane (made by Bayer) for the stroke she had suffered.

She has filed a lawsuit with the public prosecutor of Bobigny (Seine-Saint-Denis) against the head of Bayer for 'involuntary bodily harm' and the director-general of the French medicines agency (ANSM) for failing to withdraw Méliane from sale, which constituted 'a clear and wilful violation of the precautionary principle'.

The dangers posed by third- and fourth-generation contraceptive pills (increased risk of phlebitis and pulmonary embolisms) have been recognised in Europe and North America.

Legal proceedings have been under way for years in Canada, Australia, Switzerland, Belgium and Germany, and some 15 000 complaints have been lodged in the United States.

The European Medicines Agency must now take practical measures to allay the concerns of people in Europe.

What measures is the Commission planning to take to improve the monitoring of these types of contraceptive pill and make it easier to get feedback on the side effects?

Could the Commission launch a resistance testing programme to assess the dangers of third- and fourth-generation contraceptive pills along the lines of the tests that the former Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy, John Dalli, ordered into the drug Mediator?

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

The Commission would like to refer the Honourable Member to the answer to Parliamentary Question P-000297/2013 ([1]) on the same subject.

On 22 January 2013 France initiated a referral procedure at EU level for the review of third and fourth generation of combined oral contraceptives, taking into account a higher risk of venous thrombosis and high prescription volumes in France. Following this review the Commission will take regulatory action if necessary.

The EU legal framework, as regards the post-marketing surveillance of medicinal products' safety, was strengthened in 2010 and again 2012 ([2]) following the Mediator stress-test. The European Medicines Agency now possesses much stronger responsibilities in the monitoring of signals related to the safety of products (i.e. pharmacovigilance). The Agency's new Pharmacovigilance Risk Assessment Committee performs the assessment of signals and recommends, where necessary, a regulatory action at EU level. The issue of combined oral contraceptives and its upcoming review indicates the robust functioning of this reinvigorated pharmacovigilance system.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) Regulation (EU) No 1235/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council. Directive 2010/84/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council, Regulation (EU) No 1027/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council, Directive 2012/26/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita P-000410/13
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Mário David (PPE)
(16 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: VP/HR — Relações UE-Conselho de Cooperação do Golfo

Em 24 de março de 2011, o Parlamento Europeu aprovou um relatório de iniciativa sobre as relações entre a União Europeia e o Conselho de Cooperação do Golfo (CCG). Fui o autor do parecer da INTA sobre esse relatório.

O relatório lamentava que a presença diplomática da UE nos países do CCG continuasse a ser mínima: apenas uma delegação para seis países (Barém, Koweit, Omã, Catar, Arábia Saudita e Emirados Árabes Unidos). Consequentemente, o Parlamento insistiu em que, na sequência da criação do SEAE, a UE deveria aumentar a sua presença diplomática na região, incluindo abrindo uma delegação da União em cada um dos seis Estados do CCG.

Passados quase dois anos, persiste esta situação lamentável. Os estados do CCG são potências regionais e mundiais extremamente importantes. Os seus laços políticos e comerciais com a UE aumentam diariamente, mas esta falta de interesse pode transmitir a impressão errada a estes estados e povos amigos, em particular quando a UE já dispõe de 140 delegações em todo o mundo, muitas das quais assentes em acordos internacionais e com países que representam muito menos em termos de parceria.

Recusamos admitir que esta situação fique a dever-se a limitações financeiras. Concluímos, por conseguinte, que se trata de uma decisão política com a qual não concordamos e que desejamos seja revertida o mais rapidamente possível.

A Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante está a ponderar criar delegações da UE em todos os países do CCG?

Em caso afirmativo, quando?

Em caso negativo, por que razão?

Espero poder felicitar em breve a Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante pela criação das cinco delegações da UE que faltam no Barém, no Koweit, em Omã, no Catar e nos Emirados Árabes Unidos.

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(27 de fevereiro de 2013)

A AR/VP está ciente da necessidade de reforçar a rede das delegações da UE nos países do Conselho de Cooperação do Golfo, dada a importância dos nossos interesses geoestratégicos e das relações políticas, económicas e setoriais com esses países. Contudo, a abertura de novas delegações da UE na região e a reconversão da atual rede de delegações da UE só pode ser gradual, tendo em conta os condicionalismos em matéria de recursos orçamentais e humanos.

A decisão da AR/VP, de 10 de janeiro de 2013, de abrir uma nova delegação em Abu Dhabi, nos Emirados Árabes Unidos, é um primeiro passo nessa direção. A nova delegação deverá estar operacional no segundo semestre deste ano e complementará o trabalho da atual delegação em Riade, que continuará a abranger as relações com o Secretariado do CCG e com o Barém, o Kuwait, Omã, o Catar e a Arábia Saudita.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-000410/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Mário David (PPE)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — EU-Gulf Cooperation Council relations

On 24 March 2011 the European Parliament adopted an own-initiative report on European Union relations with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). I was the rapporteur for the INTA opinion on that report.

The report deplored the fact that the EU's diplomatic presence in the GCC member states remains minimal: only one delegation for six countries (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates). Consequently, Parliament insisted that following the establishment of the EEAS the EU should increase its diplomatic presence in the region, including by setting up an EU delegation in each of the six GCC member states.

Almost two years have passed and still the same regrettable situation persists. The GCC states are extremely important regional and world powers. Their political and commercial ties with the EU are increasing daily, yet this lack of interest can give the wrong impression to such friendly states and peoples, particularly when the EU already has 140 delegations all over the world, many of them based on international agreements and with countries that represent much less in terms of partnership.

We refuse to accept that this situation is due to any financial constraints. We conclude, therefore, that it is a political decision, and one which we do not share and would like to see reversed as soon as possible.

Is the Vice-President/High Representative considering setting up EU delegations in all the GCC countries?

If so, when will that be?

If not, why not?

I look forward to congratulating the Vice-President/High Representative soon on the establishment of the five missing EU delegations in Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.

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

The HR/VP is well aware of the need to strenghten the network of EU Delegations in the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, in view of the importance of our geo-strategic interests and political, economic and sectoral ties with these countries. The opening of new EU Delegations in the region and the redeployment of the current network of EU Delegations however can only be gradual, taking due account of budgetary and human resources constraints.

The decision of the HR/VP of 10 January 2013 to open a new Delegation in Abu Dhabi, UAE, is a first step in this direction. The new Delegation should be operational in the second half of this year, and will complement the work of the existing Delegation in Riyadh, which will continue to cover relations with the GCC Secretariat and with Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and Saudi Arabia for the time being.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej P-000411/13
do Komisji
Bogusław Liberadzki (S&D)
(16 stycznia 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Kroki Komisji Europejskiej i Europejskiej Agencji Kolejowej w sprawie bezpieczeństwa kolei w Polsce

Ostatni rok był dla Polski fatalny pod względem bezpieczeństwa transportu kolejowego. W roku 2012 zaistniało bardzo wiele wypadków i katastrof kolejowych. Najbardziej tragiczna – pod Szczekocinami z dnia 3.3.2012 – pochłonęła aż 16 ofiar śmiertelnych i spowodowała poważne okaleczenia ponad 60 dalszych osób. Polski Związek Zawodowy Maszynistów Kolejowych (ZZMK) ostrzega, że nadal praktycznie codziennie dochodzi do zagrażających zdrowiu i życiu ludzkiemu wypadków i incydentów.

Stan ten wpisuje się w katastrofalny bilans ostatnich siedmiu lat (2006-2012), w których w Polsce – zgodnie z danymi polskiego Urzędu Transportu Kolejowego oraz Europejskiej Agencji Kolejowej – prawie 2500 osób straciło życie w wypadkach kolejowych.

ZZMK od wielu lat wskazuje instytucjom rządowym na zaniechania, mające bezpośredni wpływ na stan bezpieczeństwa na kolei. Jednak wystąpienia do właściwego ministerstwa odpowiedzialnego za sprawy transportu oraz do Urzędu Transportu Kolejowego (krajowej władzy odpowiedzialnej za bezpieczeństwo kolejowe), nie spowodowały dotąd podjęcia rzeczywistych i skutecznych działań, przywracających bezpieczeństwo na polskiej kolei.

W obliczu zastanej sytuacji, Związek Zawodowy Maszynistów Kolejowych zwrócił się pod koniec ostatniego roku do Europejskiej Agencji Kolejowej. W liście z dnia 12.11.2012 r., wystosowanym do rąk pana Chrisa Carra, są szczegółowo opisane systemowe, organizacyjne, techniczne oraz szkoleniowe aspekty aktualnej sytuacji polskiego rynku kolejowego, które zagrażają bezpieczeństwu ruchu.

Czy Komisja i jej podległe, właściwe instytucje – tj. Europejska Agencja Kolejowa – mają zamiar podjąć jakieś kroki w obliczu tak dramatycznego i nie do zaakceptowania stanu bezpieczeństwa kolei w Polsce?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Siima Kallasa w imieniu Komisji
(18 lutego 2013 r.)

Komisja jest świadoma niepokojących danych dotyczących bezpieczeństwa transportu kolejowego w Polsce. Według danych zebranych przez Europejską Agencję Kolejową, Polska zajmuje drugie miejsce w UE pod względem liczby śmiertelnych wypadków na kolei na mln pociągokilometrów (2009-2011) i sytuuje się powyżej średniej UE pod względem liczby ofiar śmiertelnych wśród pasażerów na mld pasażerokilometrów (2006-2011). Ponadto, Polska ma stosunkowo dużą liczbę przejazdów kolejowych, z których większość posiada bierny system zabezpieczeń, co negatywnie wpływa na dane dotyczące bezpieczeństwa.

W związku z tym, Komisja zwróci się do Europejskiej Agencji Kolejowej o wydanie opinii technicznej na ten temat, w tym również wizytę w terenie. Następnie Komisja podejmie decyzję, czy należy podjąć odpowiednie środki.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-000411/13
to the Commission
Bogusław Liberadzki (S&D)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Commission and European Railway Agency action on rail safety in Poland

2012 was a terrible year for rail transport safety in Poland, with a great number of incidents and rail disasters occurring. The most tragic of these happened near Szczekociny on 3 March 2012, when 16 people lost their lives and more than 60 were seriously injured. The Polish train drivers' union (ZZMK) has stated that life-threatening incidents are occurring on an almost daily basis.

The 2006-2012 period was a disastrous one in which, according to data from the Polish Office of Rail Transportation and the European Railway Agency, almost 2 500 people died in rail accidents in Poland.

For many years, the ZZMK has been pointing out failings that have a direct impact on rail safety to government institutions. However, in spite of the representations made to the Polish Ministry of Transport and the Office of Rail Transportation (the Polish rail safety body), no real or effective action has been taken to improve safety on the Polish rail system.

Faced with such a state of affairs, the ZZMK appealed to the European Railway Agency in late 2012. In its letter of 12 November 2012, which was addressed to Chris Carr, the ZZMK described the systemic, organisational, technical and training aspects of current situation on the Polish rail market that pose a threat to transport safety.

Do the Commission and its appropriate subordinate institutions — specifically the European Railway Agency — intend to take action with regard to the appalling and unacceptable state of safety on the Polish rail system?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(18 February 2013)

The Commission is aware of the poor railway safety figures in Poland. According to data gathered by the European Railway Agency, Poland scores second highest in the EU regarding railway fatalities per million train-km (2009-2011) and is above the EU average regarding passenger fatalities per billion passenger-km (2006-2011). Moreover, Poland has a relativelly high number of level crossings, with most of them passive; this negatively contributes to the railway safety figures.

Therefore the Commission will ask the European Railway Agency for a technical opinion on this subject, including a field visit. Following this, the Commission will decide whether it is necessary to take appropriate measures.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-000412/13
to the Commission
Marina Yannakoudakis (ECR)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Iceland's suspension of talks on joining the European Union and payments to Iceland under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA)

On 14 January, Iceland announced that it was suspending talks on joining the European Union.

1. Can the Commission please confirm that, following this announcement, it has suspended all payments to Iceland under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA)?

2. Can the Commission also confirm that, following the suspension of negotiations, no more budgetary commitments will be made to Iceland from the IPA budget lines?

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

The accession negotiation process with Iceland has not been suspended.

The agreement of the two governing parties on the management of the EU accession negotiations in the run up to the parliamentary elections (scheduled for 27 April) is a domestic political decision that will imply a temporary slowing down for a limited part of the accession negotiation process.

In all other respects, cooperation continues including on the implementation of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance.

In consequence payments will continue to be made in accordance with underlying contractual provisions.

No new budgetary commitments are foreseen at this stage for the remaining part of 2013.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-000413/13
à la Commission
Ivo Belet (PPE), Carlos Coelho (PPE), Regina Bastos (PPE), Christine De Veyrac (PPE), Ria Oomen-Ruijten (PPE) et Csaba Őry (PPE)
(16 janvier 2013)

Objet: Licenciements chez Netjets

Dans sa réponse à la question E-009186/12, la Commission fait savoir que le règlement (UE) n° 465/2012 ne devrait pas servir de prétexte aux compagnies pour licencier du personnel navigant.

Toutefois, dans une communication interne sur ce sujet, Netjets affirme: «Un nouveau règlement européen qui vient d'entrer en vigueur a une incidence sur le régime de sécurité sociale applicable au personnel navigant en fonction du pays où se trouve son aéroport d'affectation. Selon nos calculs, effectués sur la base du niveau des effectifs et des cotisations sociales, ces changements devraient coûter, par an, 6,3 millions d'euros de cotisations patronales à l'entreprise. (…) Nous proposons d'offrir la possibilité aux commandants de bord ayant leur aéroport d'affectation dans l'un des six pays où la part des cotisations sociales de l'employeur est la plus élevée de démissionner volontairement. (…) Si la réduction nécessaire du nombre de commandants de bord ne peut être atteinte par le biais des départs volontaires, alors nous proposerons de choisir quels commandants de bord feront l'objet d'un licenciement sec, en tenant compte en premier lieu de la part de cotisations sociales de leur employeur dans leur pays d'affectation».

1. Quelles mesures la Commission envisage-t-elle en la matière?

2. De quelle manière le personnel navigant peut-il faire valoir ses droits contre cette pratique?

Réponse donnée par M. Andor au nom de la Commission
(14 mars 2013)

1. La Commission ne peut pas intervenir dans le processus décisionnel des entreprises privées en se prononçant, par exemple, sur la taille de leurs effectifs ou sur le choix de l'État membre où elles exercent leurs activités.

La législation européenne en matière de sécurité sociale prévoit la coordination, et non l'harmonisation, des régimes de sécurité sociale. Cela signifie que chaque État membre est libre de définir les spécificités de son propre système de sécurité sociale, y compris le type de prestations qu'il octroie, les conditions à remplir pour en bénéficier, le mode de calcul des prestations et le montant des cotisations.

À titre d'exemple, la législation européenne détermine uniquement, par ses règles de conflit de lois, la législation applicable en matière de sécurité sociale. Elle veille également à ce que toutes les personnes relevant de la même législation bénéficient des mêmes droits et aient les mêmes obligations, indépendamment de leur nationalité ou de leur lieu de résidence (principes d'égalité de traitement et de non-discrimination).

2. Le personnel navigant peut faire valoir ses droits en cas, par exemple, de licenciement injustifié, de discrimination ou de tout autre problème lié au droit du travail et à la relation avec l'employeur, de la même manière que n'importe quel autre travailleur, c'est-à-dire en engageant une procédure devant une juridiction nationale.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-000413/13
aan de Commissie
Ivo Belet (PPE), Carlos Coelho (PPE), Regina Bastos (PPE), Christine De Veyrac (PPE), Ria Oomen-Ruijten (PPE) en Csaba Őry (PPE)
(16 januari 2013)

Betreft: Ontslagen bij Netjets

In haar antwoord op vraag E-009186/12 verklaart de Commissie dat bedrijven Verordening (EU) nr. 465/2012 niet als voorwendsel mogen gebruiken om cockpitpersoneel te ontslaan.

In een interne mededeling over deze kwestie schrijft Netjets echter het volgende: „Een nieuwe Europese verordening die van kracht is geworden is nu van invloed op het sociale-zekerheidsstelsel dat van toepassing is op het personeel en dat zich nu baseert op het land waarin zich hun gateway bevindt. Wij schatten dat deze veranderingen, uitgaande van de huidige personeelomvang en socialezekerheidstarieven de branche een extra bedrag van 6,3 miljoen EUR per jaar aan werkgeversbijdragen zal kosten (…). Wij stellen voor een vrijwillig ontslag aan te bieden aan gezagvoerders met gateways in de zes landen waarin de werkgever de hoogste socialeverzekeringstarieven moet betalen (…). Indien de noodzakelijke vermindering van het aantal gezagvoerders niet door middel van vrijwillige ontslagen kan worden bereikt, wordt voorgesteld gezagvoerders die gedwongen ontslagen zullen moeten worden allereerst te selecteren op grond van de door de werkgever te betalen sociale-verzekeringstarieven van het land waarin zich hun gateway bevindt".

1. Welke actie denkt de Commissie naar aanleiding van deze zaak te ondernemen?

2. Op welke manieren kan cockpitpersoneel zijn rechten tegenover deze praktijk doen gelden?

Antwoord van de heer Andor namens de Commissie
(14 maart 2013)

1. De Commissie kan zich niet mengen in de besluiten die door particuliere ondernemingen worden genomen, zoals het aantal personeelsleden dat zij aannemen en vanuit welke lidstaat zij hun werkzaamheden uitvoeren.

De EU-wetgeving voorziet op het gebied van sociale zekerheid in de coördinatie en niet in de harmonisatie van de socialezekerheidsregelingen. Dit betekent dat elke lidstaat zelf mag bepalen hoe zijn socialezekerheidsstelsel eruit ziet, welke soorten uitkeringen worden verstrekt, aan welke voorwaarden moet worden voldoen om in aanmerking te komen voor deze uitkeringen, hoe deze uitkeringen worden berekend en hoeveel premie er moet worden betaald.

De EU-wetgeving beperkt zich, middels haar collisieregels, ertoe te bepalen welke socialezekerheidswetgeving van toepassing is. Zij zorgt er ook voor dat alle personen die onder dezelfde wettelijke regeling vallen dezelfde rechten en plichten genieten ongeacht hun nationaliteit of verblijfplaats (grondbeginselen van gelijke behandeling en non-discriminatie).

2. Vliegtuigbemanningsleden kunnen, net als andere werknemers, hun rechten doen gelden, bijvoorbeeld bij kennelijk onredelijk ontslag, discriminatie of enig andere kwestie op het gebied van arbeidsrecht en de verhouding met de werkgever, via nationale gerechtelijke procedures.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000413/13
à Comissão
Ivo Belet (PPE), Carlos Coelho (PPE), Regina Bastos (PPE), Christine De Veyrac (PPE), Ria Oomen-Ruijten (PPE) e Csaba Őry (PPE)
(16 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: Despedimentos na Netjets

Na sua resposta à pergunta E-009186/12, a Comissão afirma que o Regulamento (UE) n.° 465/2012 não deve ser utilizado como desculpa pelas companhias para despedir pessoal navegante.

No entanto, numa comunicação interna sobre o assunto, a Netjets afirma o seguinte: «Acaba de entrar em vigor um novo regulamento europeu que afeta o regime de segurança social aplicável aos membros de tripulações de voo em função do país em que está situada a sua base de afetação. Consideramos que, tendo em conta os atuais níveis de efetivos e as contribuições para a segurança social, tais alterações custarão à empresa mais 6,3 milhões de euros por ano em contribuições patronais. (…) Propomo-nos oferecer um incentivo à cessação voluntária da relação de trabalho aos comandantes com bases nos seis países em que as contribuições patronais para a segurança social são mais elevadas. (…) Se a redução necessária do número de comandantes não puder ser atingida através da saída voluntária, propomo-nos então selecionar comandantes para despedimento assente em primeiro lugar nas contribuições patronais para a segurança social do respetivo país de base».

1. Que medidas tenciona a Comissão tomar a este respeito?

2. De que forma podem as tripulações defender os seus direitos contra esta prática?

Resposta dada por László Andor em nome da Comissão
(14 de março de 2013)

1. A Comissão não pode intervir no processo de decisão das empresas privadas, por exemplo quanto ao número de trabalhadores que empregam e a partir de que Estado-Membro exploram o seu negócio.

A legislação da UE no domínio da segurança social prevê a coordenação, e não a harmonização, dos regimes de segurança social. Tal significa que cada Estado-Membro tem liberdade para determinar as modalidades do respetivo sistema de segurança social, incluindo quais as prestações a ser concedidas, as condições de elegibilidade, o modo de cálculo das prestações e quais as contribuições a pagar.

Por exemplo, a legislação da UE só determina, através das suas normas de conflito de leis, qual é a legislação aplicável em matéria de segurança social. Assegura também que todas as pessoas abrangidas pela mesma legislação beneficiam dos mesmos direitos e obrigações, independentemente da sua nacionalidade ou do local de residência (princípios de igualdade de tratamento e de não-discriminação).

2. O pessoal de bordo das companhias de aviação pode defender os seus direitos, por exemplo, contra os despedimentos sem justa causa, a discriminação ou qualquer outra questão relativa ao direito do trabalho e à relação com a entidade patronal, tal como quaisquer outros trabalhadores, no âmbito de um processo judicial.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000413/13
to the Commission
Ivo Belet (PPE), Carlos Coelho (PPE), Regina Bastos (PPE), Christine De Veyrac (PPE), Ria Oomen-Ruijten (PPE) and Csaba Őry (PPE)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Redundancies at Netjets

In its answer to Question E-009186/12, the Commission states that regulation (EU) No 465/2012 should not be used as an excuse by companies to dismiss aircrew staff.

However, in an internal communication on the matter Netjets states the following: 'A new European regulation that has come into force now affects the social security regime applicable to crew based upon the country in which their gateway is located. We estimate that based on current crew levels and social security rates, these changes will cost the business an additional EUR 6.3m per year in employer contributions. (…) We propose to offer voluntary redundancy to pilots-in-command (PIC's) with gateways in the six countries with the highest employer social security rates. (…) If the necessary reduction in the number of PIC's cannot be achieved through voluntary redundancy then the proposal is to select PIC's for compulsory redundancy based first on the employer social security rates of their gateway country'.

1. What action does the Commission intend to take on the matter?

2. In what ways can flight crews defend their rights against this practice?

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

1. The Commission cannot intervene in the decision making of private companies, for example how many staff they employ and from which Member State it operates its business.

EC law in the field of social security provides for the coordination and not the harmonisation of social security schemes. This means that each Member State is free to determine the details of its own social security system, including which benefits it provides, the conditions of eligibility, how these benefits are calculated and what contributions should be paid.

For example, EC law only determines, through its conflict of law rules, which social security legislation applies. It also ensures that all persons falling under the same legislation enjoy the same rights and obligations despite their nationality or place of residence (principles of equality of treatment and non-discrimination).

2. Flight crews can defend their rights, e.g. against unjustified dismissal, discrimination or any other matter concerning labour law and the relationship with the employer, as any other worker, through national court proceedings.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-000414/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(16 janvier 2013)

Objet: Droit de procédure administrative

Un droit de procédure administrative est l'opportunité de renforcer la légitimité de l'Union et, en parallèle, de donner aux citoyens et aux personnes morales des droits plus clairs. C'est aussi l'opportunité de leur fournir davantage de sécurité juridique dans leurs relations avec l'administration de l'Union.

Dès lors, la Commission travaille-t-elle, sur la base de l'article 298 du traité FUE, à l'élaboration d'une proposition de règlement comprenant les principes fondamentaux de bonne administration et établissant des normes de qualité et des garanties procédurales minimales à respecter par l'ensemble des institutions, organes, bureaux et agences de l'Union?

Réponse donnée par M. Barroso au nom de la Commission
(4 mars 2013)

Cette question porte sur la résolution du Parlement européen du 15 janvier 2013 contenant des recommandations à la Commission sur un droit de procédure administrative de l'Union européenne [2012/2024(INI)], qui se réfère à l'article 225 du TFUE. Conformément à l'accord-cadre sur les relations entre le Parlement européen et la Commission, cette dernière informera le Parlement de la suite qu'elle compte donner à cette résolution dans les trois mois.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000414/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Law of administrative practice

Introducing a law of administrative practice would strengthen the legitimacy of the EU, more clearly define the rights of citizens and legal persons, and give the latter greater legal security in their dealings with the EU administration.

Is the Commission currently drawing up, on the basis of Article 298 TFEU, a proposal for a regulation setting out the basic principles of sound administration and laying down minimum quality standards and procedural safeguards to be respected by all EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies?

Answer given by Mr Barroso on behalf of the Commission
(4 March 2013)

This question concerns the European Parliament resolution of 15 January 2013 with recommendations to the Commission on a Law of Administrative Procedure of the European Union (2012/2024(INI)), which refers to Article 225 TFEU. In line with the framework agreement between Parliament and Commission, the Commission will inform Parliament of its intended follow-up to this resolution within three months.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-000415/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(16 janvier 2013)

Objet: Rôle de la politique de cohésion de l'Union dans la mise en œuvre de la nouvelle politique européenne de l'énergie

1. La Commission compte-t-elle donner suite à la demande du Parlement d'instaurer un programme de coopération à l'échelle européenne, fondé sur l'expérience des programmes de jumelage, afin d'améliorer la coopération entre les régions ayant un taux d'absorption élevé des fonds de l'Union et celles affichant de faibles taux d'absorption, et afin de faciliter la diffusion des bonnes pratiques?

2. Comment la Commission compte-t-elle optimiser le niveau de coordination entre les Fonds structurels et le Fonds de cohésion, d'une part, et le mécanisme pour l'interconnexion en Europe, d'autre part?

3. La Commission pourrait-elle clarifier et définir les secteurs de l'énergie qui ne seraient pas admissibles au financement au titre de la politique de cohésion? Les projets déployés dans les régions de convergence pourraient-ils bénéficier de ces financements?

Réponse donnée par M. Hahn au nom de la Commission
(13 mars 2013)

1. La proposition de règlement relatif à la coopération territoriale européenne prévoit déjà la possibilité d'encourager, dans le cadre de la coopération interrégionale, les activités de coopération et l'échange des bonnes pratiques, dans le respect de certaines priorités d'investissement, notamment le passage à une économie sobre en carbone. Il ne semble, dès lors, pas utile d'élaborer un nouveau programme paneuropéen spécifiquement consacré à l'amélioration de la coopération. Des activités de coopération et des forums de discussion sont en outre organisés dans ce domaine dans le cadre du programme «Énergie intelligente Europe».

2. En ce qui concerne la coordination entre les différents Fonds structurels et d'investissement européens (ESI) et le mécanisme pour l'interconnexion en Europe, le Parlement européen et le Conseil ont récemment approuvé les dispositions de programmation stratégique du projet de règlement portant dispositions communes des Fonds structurels et d'investissement européens, qui dispose que les contrats de partenariat présentés par les États membres doivent prévoir des dispositifs assurant la coordination entre les Fonds structurels et d'investissement européens, les autres instruments de financement de l'Union et des États membres ainsi que la Banque européenne d'investissement, de manière compatible avec le cadre institutionnel de chaque État membre. La Commission vérifiera le caractère adapté de ces dispositifs lors de l'évaluation des projets d'accords de partenariat.

3. L'article 3 du projet de règlement FEDER et l'article 2 du projet de règlement relatif au Fonds de cohésion définissent les domaines non couverts par ces fonds: le déclassement des centrales nucléaires et la réduction des émissions de gaz à effet de serre provenant d'activités relevant de l'annexe I de la directive 2003/87/CE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000415/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: The role of EU cohesion policy in the implementation of the new European energy policy

1. Does the Commission intend to act on Parliament's request to introduce a cooperation programme at European level, based on the experience of twinning programmes, in order to improve cooperation between the regions that have a high EU fund absorption rate and those with low absorption rates, and to facilitate the dissemination of good practices?

2. How does it intend to optimise the level of coordination between the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund, on the one hand, and the Connecting Europe Facility, on the other?

3. Could it clarify and define the energy sectors which might not be eligible for funding under the cohesion policy? Could the projects implemented in the convergence regions benefit from this funding?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(13 March 2013)

1. The proposed European Territorial Cooperation Regulation already sets out the possibility for interregional cooperation to support cooperation activities and exchange of good practices within certain investment priorities, covering in particular the shift towards a low-carbon economy. For this reason, the setting up of another specific EU-wide programme aiming to foster cooperation does not seem to be necessary. In addition, there are cooperation activities and discussion fora organised in this field via the Intelligent Energy Europe programme.

2. As regards coordination between the various European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds and the Connecting Europe Facility, the European Parliament and the Council have recently agreed on the strategic programming block of the draft Common Provisions Regulation of the ESI Funds, which provides that Partnership Agreements submitted by Member States shall set out the arrangements ensuring coordination between the ESI Funds and other EU and national funding instruments and with the European Investment Bank, in line with the institutional framework of each Member State. The Commission will assess the appropriateness of these arrangements when appraising the draft Partnership Agreements.

3. Article 3 of the proposed ERDF Regulation and Article 2 of the proposed Cohesion Fund Regulation set out the areas which these Funds shall not support: decommissioning of nuclear power stations, and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from activities falling under Annex I of Directive 2003/87/EC.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000416/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Consumer protection legislation

Recently, in the British media, there has been concern raised over the exclusion of Northern Ireland residents from buying online products and the additional cost of posting packages to Northern Ireland.

1. Could the Commission provide information on whether it is lawful to exclude residents of the UK from buying products due to their geographical location?

2. Are there any legal provisions regarding these disparities in EU competition law? Are customers not protected by EU consumer protection legislation?

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

Selling practices and prices of related services, such as for example delivery, are normally subject to market forces and commercial decisions taken by economic operators.

Nevertheless, these operators are, when selling their goods or providing their services cross-border within the EU, bound by certain EU rules, examples of which have been provided in the reply to the parallel question of the Honourable Member of the Parliament ([1]).

1. Where customers are based in the same Member State as the service provider, the lawfulness of any differentiated treatment depends on how the Services Directive has been implemented in national law. The legal assessment is the sole prerogative of the competent national authorities, rather than the Commission.

2. EU competition law, which can be applied by the Commission and national competition authorities, prohibits anti-competitive agreements and abuses of a dominant position which may appreciably affect trade between Member States. If there is no such effect on inter-State trade, national competition laws may nevertheless apply.

3. Furthermore the Distance Selling Directive requires the online traders to clearly inform the consumers, before the conclusion of the distance contract, about the delivery costs. The same provision is included in the new Consumer Rights Directive (CRD), which will become applicable in the Member States by 13 June 2014 and will replace the Distance Sales Directive. The CRD also requires the online traders to indicate clearly, at the latest at the beginning of the ordering process, whether any delivery restrictions apply.

([1]) E-000417/2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000417/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Consumer protection legislation II

Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands, Isle of Man, the Scottish Highlands and the Northern Isles are among locations in the United Kingdom that currently require an additional delivery cost for some packages.

The Citizens Advice Bureau states that customers living in Northern Ireland experience an additional cost of GBP 9.29, an increase of 127 %. It should not matter whether an individual lives in London or Enniskillen: they are both in the United Kingdom and so should be treated equally.

Can the Commission clarify whether this is an infringement of consumer protection legislation? Are there any EU directives in place to prevent traders from discriminating against the citizens of Member States due to their location?

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

Prices of delivery services are normally subject to market forces and commercial decisions of economic operators. Nevertheless, these operators are, when providing cross-border services within the EU, bound by EU rules such as:

1. The Services Directive requires in Article 20(2) that there should be no discrimination against the recipient of the service based on nationality or place of residence, unless different treatment is directly justified by objective criteria (e.g. additional costs incurred due to the distance involved). The Commission Staff Working Document ([1]) on Article 20(2) shows that the costs of the delivery service may differ significantly between countries, as well as in national circumstances, which may justify different pricing.

2. The Postal Services Directive in Article 3 provides that the provision of basic postal services must be affordable and available to all citizens on the whole territory at, where applicable, uniform tariff. It is for the national regulatory authorities to ensure that these principles are respected.

3. Article 4 of the Distance Selling Directive requires the traders to clearly inform the consumers, before the conclusion of the distance contract, about the delivery costs. The new Consumer Rights Directive, which will become applicable by 13 June 2014, requires the traders to provide the information on delivery costs for all consumer sales contracts (Articles 5 and 6).

([1]) SWD(2012) 146 final (8 June 2012)
http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/services/docs/services-dir/implementation/report/SWP_article20.2_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000418/13
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Fuel rebate system under EC law

Can the Commission state whether a fuel rebate system under EC law could be restricted to Irish licensed hauliers or whether it would have to be extended to all vehicles intended exclusively for the carriage of goods by road, with a maximum permissible gross laden weight of not less than 7.5 tonnes? In addition, would the rebate have to include the carriage of passengers by a motor vehicle falling under category M2 or category M3 as defined in Council Directive 70/156/EEC?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(26 February 2013)

Article 7(3) of Directive 2003/96/EC defines the term 'commercial gas oil used as propellant'. Although the legislator has not clearly stated this, the Commission, considers that the scope of the tax advantage for such gas oil can be limited to the carriage of goods covered by Article 7(3)(a) of Directive 2003/96/EC and it is not obligatory to include the carriage of passengers by a motor vehicle covered by Article 7(3)(b) thereof.

Member States should determine conditions for the control of the application of Article 7, paragraphs 2 and 3 in order to avoid abuse. However these conditions should not result in discrimination of hauliers registered in other Member States and in particular in depriving them from the possibility to purchase in Ireland commercial gas oil for propellant use which is taxed at a lower rate than the gas oil used as motor fuel for non-commercial uses.

It goes without saying that the Commission can only comment on specific national legislation after careful analysis of its precise terms.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000420/13
a la Comisión
Pilar Ayuso (PPE)
(16 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Directrices de ayudas de Estado — Régimen de comercio de emisiones

En su respuesta a la pregunta P-006867/2012, la Comisión afirma que «el factor de emisión de CO_2 para cada zona es una media de las emisiones de CO_2 generadas por cada uno de los combustibles fósiles consumidos en la generación, ponderado por la cantidad de electricidad producida a partir de dichos combustibles fósiles. Las emisiones de CO_2 por unidad de combustible se calculan utilizando el mismo método en toda la UE».

¿Puede la Comisión detallar los factores de emisión de cada combustible fósil aplicados para el cálculo de los factores regionales de emisión?

Respuesta del Sr. Almunia en nombre de la Comisión
(15 de marzo de 2013)

Las Directrices sobre ayudas estatales en relación con el régimen de comercio de derechos de emisión de la UE a partir de 2012 definen las normas relativas a las ayudas estatales por el aumento de los costes de emisión de CO_2 repercutidos en los precios de la electricidad por los derechos de emisión de la UE. Establecen las condiciones que permitirán a los Estados miembros compensar una parte de dichos costes, calculados para las empresas más eficientes de cada sector en cuanto al consumo de electricidad, si el Estado miembro así lo decide.

La compensación se calcula teniendo en cuenta la cantidad de CO_2 utilizada para generar electricidad a partir de combustibles fósiles en el Estado miembro o en la región en su conjunto. Este «factor de emisión de CO_2» se refiere a la cantidad de CO_2 (en t) utilizada para producir un MWh de electricidad a partir de combustibles fósiles en distintas zonas geográficas. La ponderación deberá reflejar la mezcla de producción de los combustibles fósiles en la zona geográfica de que se trate. El factor de CO_2 es el resultado de la división de los datos equivalentes de emisión de CO_2 de la industria de la energía por la producción bruta de electricidad con combustibles fósiles en TWh. La media ponderada de la intensidad de CO_2 de la electricidad producida a partir de combustibles fósiles en cada zona de tarificación representará la central eléctrica que fija los precios. La ponderación debe reflejar la producción mixta de combustibles fósiles en la zona determinada. Los cálculos se realizan en dos fases: 1) factor de insumo: establecimiento de la intensidad de CO_2 de las fuentes de combustibles fósiles utilizadas para producir electricidad, y 2) factor de producción: establecimiento de la intensidad de CO_2 de la producción de energía a partir de combustibles fósiles que impliquen la eficiencia de las centrales eléctricas.

La diferenciación regional de los factores de emisión de CO_2 sigue correspondiendo a la realidad de la integración del mercado de la electricidad en la EU. El cálculo del factor de CO_2 se ha basado en los datos más recientes de generación de electricidad de Eurostat (2009).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000420/13
to the Commission
Pilar Ayuso (PPE)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: State aid guidelines — emissions trading scheme

In response to Question P-006867/2012, the Commission stated that 'For each zone the CO_2 factor is an average of the CO_2 emissions caused by each fossil fuel consumed in generation, weighted by the amount of electricity produced from such fossil fuel. CO_2 emissions per unit of fuel are calculated using the same method across the EU.'

Can the Commission indicate the emission factor applied to each fossil fuel in calculating regional emission factors?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(15 March 2013)

The Guidelines for state aid in connection with the EU ETS after 2012 define the rules concerning state aid for increased CO_2 costs passed through in electricity prices due to the EU ETS. They set the conditions that allow Member States to compensate part of these costs, calculated for the most electricity efficient companies in each sector, if the Member State decides to do so.

The calculation of the compensation takes into account the amount of CO_2 used to generate electricity from fossil fuels in the Member State or wider region. This 'CO_2 emission factor' refers to the amount of CO_2 (in t) used to produce one MWh of electricity from fossil fuels in different geographic areas. The weight shall reflect the production mix of the fossil fuels in the given geographic area. The CO_2 factor is the result of the division of the CO_2 equivalent emission data of the energy industry divided by the Gross electricity generation based on fossil fuels in TWh. Weighted average of the CO_2 intensity of electricity produced by using fossil fuel sources in each pricing area shall represent the price setting power plant. The weight should reflect the production mix of the fossil fuels in the given area. The calculations are done in two steps: Step 1) Input factor: establishing the CO_2 intensity of fossil fuel sources used to produce electricity, Step 2) Output factor: establishing the CO_2 intensity of fossil fuel power production involving efficiency of power plants.

The regional differentiation for CO_2 emission factors still corresponds to the reality in terms of electricity market integration in the EU. The CO_2 factor calculation was based on the most recent Eurostat electricity generation data (2009).

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-000421/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)
(16 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Θέμα: «Η λίστα Λαγκάρντ»

Η Ελλάδα, ως γνωστόν, λαμβάνει δανειακή βοήθεια από το ΔΝΤ και την ΕΕ. Η ήδη επικεφαλής του ΔΝΤ κ. Λαγκάρντ παρέδωσε στις ελληνικές αρχές λίστα με φυσικά πρόσωπα ελληνικής υπηκοότητας που φέρονται να έχουν καταθέσεις σε συγκεκριμένη τράπεζα.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

Έλαβε γνώση της λίστας αυτής στα πλαίσια της συνεργασίας ΕΕ και ΔΝΤ καθώς και της συνεργασίας Ελληνικής κυβέρνησης και τρόικας;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(20 Μαρτίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή πληροφορήθηκε την ύπαρξη της λίστας η οποία παραδόθηκε από την τότε Υπουργό Οικονομικών της Γαλλίας, κ. Lagarde, από τα μέσα ενημέρωσης.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000421/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: The 'Lagarde list'

Greece is receiving loan assistance from the IMF and the EU. Ms Lagarde, Managing Director of the IMF, handed to the Greek authorities a list of names of Greek nationals alleged to have deposits in a specific bank.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

Did it learn of the existence of this list within the framework of EU- IMF cooperation and cooperation between the Greek Government and the Troika?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(20 March 2013)

The Commission only learned about the existence of the list, which was handed over by Mrs Lagarde as French Minister of Finance at the time, from the media.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-000423/13
à la Commission
Gilles Pargneaux (S&D)
(16 janvier 2013)

Objet: Révision des limites d'exposition aux champs électromagnétiques

Selon le rapport BioInitiative 2012, les téléphones portables, réseaux Wifi, ordinateurs portables, téléviseurs et autres lignes à haute tension sont des outils au potentiel dangereux, en raison des ondes électromagnétiques.

Cette compilation de 1 800 études internationales réalisées par vingt-neuf chercheurs de dix pays décrit les conséquences très variées d'une trop forte exposition aux radiations, notamment pour les femmes enceintes et les jeunes enfants.

Le rapport BioInitiative conclut que «les ondes devraient être classées comme cancérigènes pour les humains».

Le Centre de recherche international sur le cancer (CIRC) de l'Organisation mondiale de la santé (OMS) était arrivé à une conclusion similaire en 2011.

Dans ses recommandations finales, BioInitiative 2012 préconise une baisse rapide des normes d'exposition actuelles et l'instauration de campagnes de sensibilisation pour les populations les plus fragiles, comme les femmes enceintes, les nourrissons et les enfants. La multiplication des gadgets sans fil et l'exposition journalière, même à de faibles quantités de radiations, restent dangereuses pour la santé publique.

Face à ce constat, je ne peux que m'étonner que les limites d'exposition aux champs électromagnétiques n'aient pas été modifiées dans l'Union européenne depuis 1999.

La Commission peut-elle indiquer si elle envisage, à court terme, de réviser la législation sur l'exposition aux champs électromagnétiques afin de mieux prendre en compte les dangers de la multiplication des gadgets sans fil?

Si oui, peut-elle préciser quel est le calendrier législatif envisagé?

Réponse donnée par M. Borg au nom de la Commission
(20 février 2013)

La Commission demande périodiquement une actualisation des preuves scientifiques disponibles et vérifie que ces preuves confirment toujours les limites d'exposition proposées dans la recommandation du Conseil relative à la limitation de l'exposition du public aux champs électromagnétiques (1999/519/CE) ([1]).

Le comité scientifique des risques sanitaires émergents et nouveaux (CSRSEN), comité indépendant qui travaille pour la Commission européenne, dispose d'un mandat permanent pour évaluer les risques des champs électromagnétiques, y compris ceux qui émanent des téléphones mobiles. Conformément à ses dernières conclusions (2009) ([2]), trois séries de preuves indépendantes (études épidémiologiques, in vivo et in vitro) montrent qu'il est peu probable que l'exposition aux radiations des téléphones mobiles entraîne une augmentation de l'incidence du cancer chez les êtres humains.

Une actualisation par le CSRSEN est en cours et devrait être prête pour une consultation publique d'ici à la fin de juin 2013. Dans le cadre de ses travaux, le CSRSEN se fonde sur toutes les preuves scientifiques disponibles. Le rapport BioInitiative a été soigneusement évalué par le CSRSEN avec de nombreux autres rapports et études.

Il sera évalué s'il convient de modifier la recommandation actuelle à la lumière des preuves scientifiques fournies dans le prochain avis du CSRSEN.

([1]) Journal officiel des Communautés européennes L 199/59 du 30.7.1999.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/archive/ph_risk/committees/04_scenihr/docs/scenihr_o_022.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000423/13
to the Commission
Gilles Pargneaux (S&D)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Revision of electromagnetic field exposure limits

According to the BioInitiative 2012 report, mobile phones, wireless Internet networks, laptop computers, televisions and other power lines are potentially dangerous tools, due to the presence of electromagnetic waves.

This assortment of 1 800 international studies carried out by 29 researchers from 10 countries describes the very diverse consequences of overexposure to radiation, in particular for pregnant women and young children.

The BioInitiative report concludes that 'waves should be classified as a human carcinogen'.

The World Health Organisation's International Agency for Research on Cancer (WHO/IARC) came to a similar conclusion in 2011.

In its final recommendations, BioInitiative 2012 advocates a swift lowering of exposure standards and the introduction of awareness campaigns for the most vulnerable citizens, such as pregnant women, infants and children. The increase in the number of wireless devices and daily exposure, even to small amounts of radiation, remain a danger for public health.

In view of this, it is surprising that electromagnetic field exposure limits have not been modified in the European Union since 1999.

Can the Commission say whether it intends, in the short term, to revise the legislation on electromagnetic field exposure limits in order to better reflect the dangers presented by the proliferation of wireless devices?

If so, can it specify the legislative timetable envisaged?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(20 February 2013)

The Commission requests periodically an update of the scientific evidence available and checks whether this still supports the exposure limits as proposed in the Council Recommendation on electromagnetic fields (EMF) exposure limits (1999/519/EC) ([1]).

The independent Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (SCENIHR) serving the European Commission has a standing mandate to evaluate the risks from EMF, including those emanating from mobile phones. According to its latest conclusion (2009) ([2]), three independent lines of evidence (epidemiological, *in vivo* and *in vitro* studies) show that exposure to mobile phones radiation is unlikely to lead to an increase of cancer incidence in humans.

An update by SCENIHR is ongoing and scheduled to be ready for public consultation by the end of June 2013. In its work, SCENIHR relies on all available scientific evidence. The BioInitiative report was also carefully evaluated by the Committee together with numerous other reports and studies.

Any need to modify the current Recommendation will be evaluated in the light of scientific evidence provided by the forthcoming opinion of SCENIHR.

([1]) *Official Journal of the European Communities*, L 199/59, 30. 7. 1999.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/archive/ph_risk/committees/04_scenihr/docs/scenihr_o_022.pdf

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande E-000424/13
till kommissionen
Amelia Andersdotter (Verts/ALE)
(16 januari 2013)

Angående: Innebörden av ”närstående rättigheter” del 3

I sitt svar på den tidigare skriftliga frågan E-009977/2012 skriver kommissionen att ”[f]örklaringarna avseende stadgan om de grundläggande rättigheterna [inte härrör] från kommissionen” och att de ”därför inte [kan] ta på sig något ansvar för tolkningen av dessa”. Vidare anmärker kommissionen att ”förklaringarna inte i sig har rättslig status, [men att de trots allt] utgör de ett värdefullt tolkningsverktyg avsett att klargöra stadgans bestämmelser”.

I den skriftliga frågan E-005787/2012 ställde jag till rådet frågan om hur man ska utläsa innebörden av ”närstående rättigheter”. Rådet svarade att det ”inte [är] upphovsman till den förklaring till artikel 17.2 i stadgan som den ärade parlamentsledamoten hänvisar till” och att ”[t]olkning av stadgan ligger inte inom rådets behörighetsområde”.

Även om det är uppenbart att det i slutändan kommer vara domstolen som avgör omfattningen av artikel 17.2, synes inte domstolen vara rätt institution i unionen att belastas med politiskt ansvar av den arten. Vem menar kommissionen bär det politiska ansvaret för formuleringarna i artikel 17.2 och det dokument som ska underlätta artikelns tolkning?

Svar från José Manuel Barroso på kommissionens vägnar
(5 mars 2013)

Kommissionen hänvisar parlamentsledamoten till svaret på skriftlig fråga E-009977/2012. ([1])

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000424/13
to the Commission
Amelia Andersdotter (Verts/ALE)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: The meaning of 'associated rights' — Part 3

In its answer to my previous Written Question E-009977/2012, the Commission writes that 'the explanations relating to the Charter of Fundamental Rights do not emanate from the Commission' and that it 'therefore cannot claim authority for their interpretation'. The Commission also notes that '[the explanations] do not as such have the status of law, [however,] they are a valuable tool of interpretation intended to clarify the provisions of the Charter'.

In Written Question E-005787/2012, I asked the Council what it means by 'associated rights'. The Council answered that '[it] is … not the author of the explanation of Article 17(2) of the Charter to which the Honourable Member refers' and that 'interpreting the Charter is not within the remit of the Council'.

Obviously it will ultimately be the Court of Justice which decides on the scope of Article 17(2). However, the Court does not seem to be the right EU institution to be burdened with this kind of political responsibility. Whom does the Commission think should take political responsibility for the wording of Article 17(2) and for the document intended to make the article easier to interpret?

Answer given by Mr Barroso on behalf of the Commission
(5 March 2013)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-009977/2012 ([1]).

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

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000425/13
a la Comisión
Pilar Ayuso (PPE)
(16 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Importaciones de paneles solares procedentes de China

El 6 de septiembre de 2012 la Comisión Europea inició una investigación antidumping sobre las importaciones de paneles solares procedentes de China, después de una denuncia de la industria europea. Dos meses después se inició otra investigación sobre ayudas públicas. Según anunció la Comisión en el Pleno del Parlamento Europeo, las importaciones de paneles solares procedentes de China se han incrementado de manera notable, superando los 20 000 millones de euros.

El hecho de que los Estados Unidos hayan impuesto ya aranceles a las importaciones de China puede hacer que el volumen dirigido a la Unión Europea sea todavía mayor. La industria europea se vería así claramente perjudicada, aunque las medidas adoptadas por los Estados Unidos están muy probablemente bien fundamentadas.

1. ¿Tiene más datos la Comisión sobre las cantidades de paneles importados, sus diferentes procedencias y los fabricados en la Unión Europea?

2. ¿Qué porcentaje aproximado de los paneles instalados en la Unión Europea son fabricados en terceros países?

3. ¿En qué plazo prevé la Comisión tener resultados sobre las investigaciones iniciadas?

4. ¿Qué medidas podrían adoptarse si se acredita que los paneles solares fabricados en China reciben ayudas públicas o se venden por debajo del coste?

Respuesta del Sr. De Gucht en nombre de la Comisión
(12 de marzo de 2013)

De acuerdo con la información de que dispone en estos momentos la Comisión, aproximadamente un 80 % de los paneles solares instalados en la EU en 2011 proviene de China y entre el 5 % y el 6 %, de terceros países. La Comisión dispondrá de más detalles una vez hayan concluido las investigaciones.

La Comisión se reserva el derecho de adoptar medidas provisionales tras haberlo consultado con los Estados Miembros en un plazo de nueve meses desde el comienzo de las investigaciones. De estimarse necesarias, las medidas provisionales antidumping y las medidas antisubsidio habrían de adoptarse no más tarde del 5 de junio de 2013 y del 5 de agosto de 2013 respectivamente. La Comisión prevé contar con los resultados definitivos de ambas investigaciones a principios de diciembre de 2013.

Si de las investigaciones se desprende que se cumplen las condiciones para imponer estas medidas, y que estas no son claramente contrarias a los intereses de la Unión Europea, el Consejo se reserva el derecho de adoptar medidas antidumping y/o antisubsidio siguiendo una propuesta de la Comisión a fin de contrarrestar los efectos negativos de tales prácticas. Dichas medidas suelen imponerse para un período de cinco años.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000425/13
to the Commission
Pilar Ayuso (PPE)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Imports of solar panels from China

On 6 September 2012, the Commission initiated an anti-dumping investigation into imports of solar panels from China following a complaint from European industry. Two months later another investigation was initiated into state aid. As announced by the Commission in the Plenary Sitting of the European Parliament, imports of solar panels from China have increased significantly, exceeding EUR 20 billion.

The fact that the United States has now imposed tariffs on imports from China may lead to the volume heading to the European Union to become even greater. European industry will clearly suffer in consequence, although the measures taken by the United States are probably well-founded.

1. Does the Commission have details about the quantities of imported panels and their different sources, and about those manufactured in the European Union?

2. Approximately what percentage of panels installed in the European Union are manufactured in non-member countries?

3. When does the Commission expect to have the results of the investigations initiated?

4. What measures might be taken if it is established that solar panels manufactured in China receive state aid or are sold below cost?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(12 March 2013)

According to the information currently available to the Commission, around 80% of panels installed in the EU in 2011 were from China and around 5-6% from other non-EU countries. More precise and detailed data will be available once investigations are completed.

The Commission may decide within nine months of initiation to impose provisional measures after consultation with Member States. Provisional measures, if any, could be imposed by 5 June 2013 for the anti-dumping case and by 5 August 2013 for the anti-subsidy case. The definitive findings for both proceedings are due in early December 2013.

If the investigations conclude that the conditions for imposition of measures are met including a finding that measures are not clearly against Union interest, the Council may impose, based on a proposal from the Commission, anti-dumping and/or anti-subsidy measures to remove effects of injurious dumping and subsidisation. Measures are usually imposed for five years.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000426/13
a la Comisión
Pilar Ayuso (PPE)
(16 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Medidas estructurales para la reforma del régimen de derechos de emisión

La Comisión publicó en noviembre de 2012 un informe sobre el estado del mercado europeo del carbono en 2012 ([1]). En él se dan una serie de opciones para emprender cambios de gran calado en el régimen de comercio de derechos de emisión de la UE.

Las tres primeras opciones implican una subida —explícita o implícita— del objetivo de reducción para 2020, que actualmente es del 20 %. Las tres últimas tienen diferentes ventajas e inconvenientes derivados de intervenir en un mercado que debe funcionar con las mínimas interferencias posibles.

1. ¿Estaría dispuesta la Comisión a proponer un objetivo mayor de reducción de emisiones en 2020 —mediante cualquiera de las tres primeras opciones— sin el acuerdo previo del Parlamento y el Consejo?

2. En caso de optarse por la inclusión de nuevos sectores en el régimen de comercio de derechos de emisión, ¿qué sectores está considerando la Comisión? ¿Sería necesario modificar la Decisión n° 406/2009/CE, sobre el reparto del esfuerzo?

3. Puesto que el problema que subyace es la abundancia de derechos de emisión en el mercado, y su bajo precio, debido a la crisis económica, ¿ha previsto la Comisión medidas de estímulo para los diferentes sectores industriales?

Respuesta de la Sra. Hedegaard en nombre de la Comisión
(8 de marzo de 2013)

El régimen de comercio de derechos de emisión de la Unión Europea necesita medidas estructurales que puedan ofrecer una solución duradera a su consolidación. El Parlamento Europeo así lo ha reconocido al solicitar a la Comisión, en el contexto de las negociaciones sobre la Directiva relativa a la eficiencia energética, ([2]) que examine en el informe sobre el estado del mercado europeo del carbono opciones de actuación con vistas a adoptar lo antes posible las medidas adecuadas durante la fase 3 ([3]). Como opción, el Parlamento Europeo ha subrayado la retirada permanente de los derechos, lo que implica un aumento del objetivo. Si la Comisión propone algunas medidas, incluido un objetivo mayor, se examinarán a la luz del debate, en el que también se espera tomen parte el Parlamento Europeo y el Consejo, y tras efectuar una consulta pública y una evaluación de impacto.

En caso de que, tras la consulta pública, se opte por ampliar el ámbito de aplicación, la cuestión de qué sector o sectores se incluirían sería objeto de una evaluación de impacto. En caso de que esta opción también exija modificar los objetivos previstos en la Decisión sobre el esfuerzo compartido ([4]), dicha circunstancia debería examinarse.

La Comisión es plenamente consciente de la situación de muchos sectores de elevado consumo de energía y, por supuesto, de la situación de la economía europea y de su industria en general. En la actualización de la Comunicación del pasado año, «Una contribución al crecimiento y a la recuperación económica» ([5]) se identifican cuatro ámbitos principales que se reforzarán en el futuro: inversión en nuevas tecnologías e innovación; acceso a los mercados; acceso a la financiación y a los mercados de capitales y capital humano. En su Comunicación «Hacia una recuperación generadora de empleo» ([6]), la Comisión propuso, además, explotar el potencial de creación de empleo, por ejemplo, en la eficiencia energética y en los sectores de las energías renovables, que, por sí solos, podrían crear cinco millones de puestos de trabajo de aquí a 2020.

([1]) COM(2012)0652.
([2]) DO L 315 de 14.11.2012, p. 1.
([3]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2012-0306+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN
([4]) DO L 140 de 5.6.2009, p. 136.
([5]) COM(2012) 582 final.
([6]) COM(2012) 173 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000426/13
to the Commission
Pilar Ayuso (PPE)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Structural measures for reforming the Emissions Trading System

In November 2012 the Commission published a report on the state of the European carbon market in 2012 ([1]). The report outlines a number of options for making major changes to the EU Emissions Trading System.

The first three options involve an explicit or implicit increase in the reduction target for 2020, which is currently 20 %. The final three options have various advantages and disadvantages which stem from participating in a market that must operate with minimum possible interference.

1. Would the Commission be willing to propose an increased emissions reduction target in 2020, via any of the first three options, without the prior consent of Parliament and of the Council?

2. Should it choose to include new sectors in the Emissions Trading System, which sectors is it considering? Would it therefore be necessary to amend Decision No 406/2009/EC on the distribution of effort?

3. Since the underlying problem is the abundance of emission allowances on the market, and their low price, due to the economic crisis, has it planned stimulus measures for the different industries?

Answer given by Ms Hedegaard on behalf of the Commission
(8 March 2013)

The EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) needs structural measures that can provide a lasting solution to strengthen it. The European Parliament has recognised this in asking the Commission in the context of the negotiations on the Energy Efficiency Directive ([2]) to examine in the report on the state of the European carbon market options for action with a view to adopting as soon as possible appropriate measures during phase 3 ([3]). As an option, the European Parliament has outlined permanent withholding of allowances, which implies an increase in the target. If the Commission will propose any measures, including an increased target, it will be in the light of the debate, in which also the European Parliament and the Council are expected to take part, and after a public consultation and an impact assessment.

Should it, in the light of the public consultation, be chosen to extend the scope, the question of which sector(s) would be included would be subject to an impact assessment. Whether this option would also require amendments to the targets under the Effort-Sharing Decision ([4]) would need to be examined.

The Commission is certainly aware of the situation of many energy intensive sectors and of course of the situation of the European economy and its industry at large. In last year's communication update, 'A Contribution to Growth and Economic Recovery' ([5]) it identified four main policy areas which will be further strengthened: investment in new technologies and innovation; access to markets; access to finance and capital markets and the human capital. In its communication 'Towards a Job Rich Recovery' ([6]) it further proposed to exploit the job creation potential e.g. in the energy efficiency and renewable energy sectors which alone could create 5 million jobs by 2020.

([1]) COM(2012)0652.
([2]) OJ L, 14.11.2012, 315 p. 1.
([3]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2012-0306+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN
([4]) OJ L 140, 5.6.2009, p. 136-148.
([5]) COM(2012) 582 final.
([6]) COM(2012) 173 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000427/13
to the Commission
Sir Graham Watson (ALDE)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Spanish tobacco limits for residents of Campo de Gibraltar

Directive 2007/74/EC lays down quantitative limits for alcohol and tobacco products exempt from VAT and excise duty.

On 1 January 2013 the Spanish authorities implemented further restrictions on imports of cigarettes across the La Línea de la Concepción border with Gibraltar. Under the new rules, people living within a radius of 15 kilometres of the border (that is, residents of Campo de Gibraltar in southern Spain) will only be allowed to bring 80 cigarettes per month across the border, instead of 200 cigarettes.

Citizens who reside in all other parts of Spain will continue to be allowed to cross the border with 200 cigarettes. The Campo de Gibraltar area contains a sizable British community.

1. Is the Commission aware of this new restriction?

2. Whilst Article 8(2) of the directive allows Member States to implement lower quantitative limits on tobacco products for non-airline travellers, does the Commission consider such a limited geographical restriction, confined to residents of Campo de Gibraltar, to be:

— in line with the directive, which refers to restrictions applied to Member States as a whole?

— discriminatory against residents of Campo de Gibraltar?

— indirectly discriminatory against the sizable minority of non-Spanish EU citizens and cross-border workers in the area?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(21 February 2013)

According to Recital (10) and Articles 3(5), 8 and 13 of Council Directive 2007/74/EC:

(i) Member States shall exempt from VAT and excise duty imports of cigarettes subject either to the higher limit of 200 units or to the lower limit of 40 units.

(ii) However, Member States may lower those limits in the case of 'persons resident in a frontier zone' and 'frontier-zone workers', to take account of the special situation of those persons. To this effect, 'frontier zone' is *'a zone which, as the crow flies, does not extend more than 15 kilometres from the frontier of a Member State and which includes the local administrative districts part of the territory of which lies within the zone'*.

(iii) The lower limit in (ii) cannot apply where the person affected *'produces evidence to show that he is going beyond the frontier zone of the Member State or that he is not returning from the frontier zone of the neighbouring third country'*.

The Spanish Excise Duty Law applies the limit of 200 cigarettes. However, the Budget Law for 2013 provides that, as of 1-1-2013, this limit will be restricted to 80 cigarettes for residents in the frontier zone of Gibraltar and frontier-zone workers. 'Frontier zone of Gibraltar' means the zone within the Spanish territory which extends 15 kilometres from the frontier with Gibraltar. A limit of 200 cigarettes applies in the situations in (iii) above.

The Explanatory Memorandum to the Budget Law states that this measure aims at tackling the abuse of law detected specifically in this frontier zone. It underlines that the 80-cigarette limit established should be enough to cover the daily consumption of these goods. The Commission is of the view that these measures are in line with Directive 2007/74/EC.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-000428/13
do Komisji
Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)
(16 stycznia 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Aktywistka „Europejskiej Białorusi" napadnięta w Mińsku

W nocy na 14 stycznia 2013 r. w Mińsku została napadnięta działaczka opozycyjnego ruchu „Europejska Białoruś" Julia Ściapanawa. Nieznani sprawcy pobili ją i rzucili w śnieg, jeden z napastników trzymał ją za ręce, a drugi obciął jej włosy. Sprawcy obrzucali ją przy tym inwektywami, grozili jej i żądali, by zaprzestała swej działalności na rzecz więźniów politycznych. Ściapanawa zajmuje się m.in. zbiórką darów dla więźniów politycznych w sieciach społecznościowych.

Aktywistka już wcześniej skarżyła się na to, że prześladują ją nieznani ludzie, dostawała anonimowe groźby, a na jej konto na Facebooku niejednokrotnie się włamywano.

Projekt Partnerstwa Wschodniego nakłada na Unię Europejską obowiązek monitorowania przestrzegania praw człowieka na Białorusi.

W związku z tym pragnę zapytać Komisję, czy ma zamiar podjąć interwencję w sprawie napaści na aktywistkę „Europejskiej Białorusi" i przedsięwziąć kroki, by zatrzymać falę represji i aktów tłamszenia działaczy społecznych, przedstawicieli organizacji pozarządowych i opozycji na Białorusi? Jakie kroki w tej sprawie podejmie Przedstawicielstwo UE na Białorusi?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wysoką Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodniczącą Catherine Ashton w imieniu Komisji
(7 marca 2013 r.)

UE wie o przypadku napaści na działaczkę społeczną Julię Ściapanawą, która pomaga innym ofiarom represji. Zajście to było przedmiotem licznych doniesień.

UE uważnie śledzi rozwój sytuacji w zakresie praw człowieka na Białorusi. Przypadki represji i prześladowań są przedmiotem regularnych dyskusji dyplomatów UE i państw członkowskich w Mińsku oraz szefów unijnych misji.

W związku z tym UE nieustannie podnosi kwestię represji na spotkaniach z władzami białoruskimi w Mińsku, Brukseli i stolicach państw członkowskich.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000428/13
to the Commission
Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: 'European Belarus' activist attacked in Minsk

On the night of 14 January 2013, Yuliya Stsyapanava, an activist with the opposition 'European Belarus' movement, was attacked in Minsk. The unidentified attackers beat her and threw her into the snow, where one of them held her by her arms while another cut off her hair. At the same time, the attackers insulted and threatened her, demanding that she cease her activities on behalf of political prisoners. Stsyapanava's activities include the collection of donations for political prisoners via social networks.

The activist had previously complained that she was being persecuted by unidentified persons; she had received anonymous threats, and her Facebook page had been hacked on numerous occasions.

The Eastern Partnership project obliges the EU to monitor respect for human rights in Belarus.

In this connection, does the Commission intend to intervene with regard to the attack on the 'European Belarus' activist and take steps to end the wave of repression and the constant attacks on social activists, representatives of NGOs and opposition activists in Belarus?

What steps will the EU Representation in Belarus take in this matter?

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

The EU is aware of this act of harassment of civic society activist Yuliya Stsyapanava, who was assisting other victims of repression. The incident was widely reported.

The EU is closely monitoring the Human Rights situation in Belarus on the ground. Cases of repression and harassment are regularly discussed by EU and Member States diplomats in Minsk and by EU Heads of Missions.

In this context, the EU is consistently raising the issue of repressions in meetings with Belarusian authorities in Minsk, Brussels and in Member States capitals.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000429/13
a la Comisión
Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo (S&D) y Juan Fernando López Aguilar (S&D)
(16 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Prospecciones petrolíferas en el Canal Canario

Los diputados que formulan la presente pregunta están al tanto de que la autorización de catas de hidrocarburos, y posible explotación en el futuro, en el Canal Canario, situado entre las Islas Canarias orientales y África, es plenamente efectiva y que, por tanto, podrían iniciarse en cualquier momento, lo que pondría en peligro numerosos hábitats y especies protegidas recogidas en la legislación nacional, europea e internacional en materia de conservación del medio ambiente.

Entre las áreas elegidas para las exploraciones podrían encontrarse arrecifes y formaciones geológicas generadas por emisiones de gases que podrían vulnerar la Directiva 92/43/CEE. Asimismo, entre las zonas potencialmente afectadas se encuentran doce zonas de especial conservación (ZEC) y una reserva marina, pero su impacto podría extenderse a otras once ZEC y a un área marina designada para su protección, que cuenta con financiación de la Comisión Europea a través del proyecto LIFE para su estudio e inclusión en la Red Natura 2000.

En este contexto, ¿podría facilitar la Comisión las conclusiones de la investigación realizada por EU Pilot al respecto, tal y como señaló en su respuesta del 5 de julio de 2012?

Asimismo, ¿podría facilitar la Comisión la evaluación inicial del medio marino y el análisis de un buen estado medioambiental, así como los objetivos en materia de medioambiente, que el Gobierno español ha tenido que haberle enviado ya (el plazo finalizó el pasado 15 de octubre)?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(11 de marzo de 2013)

La Comisión ha examinado la información recabada en la investigación EU PILOT 3279/12. Las autoridades españolas han otorgado una concesión administrativa para la prospección de petróleo, es decir, para realizar un sondeo exploratorio, en aguas de las islas Canarias. Ese tipo de proyecto no requiere una evaluación de impacto ambiental (EIA) con arreglo a la Directiva 2011/92/UE ([1]). No obstante, si el sondeo exploratorio conduce a una solicitud de autorización de un proyecto de producción de petróleo, las autoridades competentes tendrán que realizar una EIA antes de conceder tal autorización. Esa EIA debería identificar, describir y evaluar los efectos del proyecto en el medio ambiente y, en particular, los recursos naturales protegidos por la Directiva 92/43/CEE ([2]). Como parte de esa EIA, debería abrirse un procedimiento de consulta pública para que cualquier persona interesada pueda presentar todos los elementos y documentos que obren en su poder que demuestren que el futuro proyecto podría tener un impacto ambiental negativo. Las autoridades españolas han confirmado que, en relación con ese proyecto, van a tenerse debidamente en cuenta las disposiciones pertinentes del Derecho de la UE. Por consiguiente, la Comisión no tiene motivos para intervenir en este momento.

España ha presentado la evaluación inicial prevista en la Directiva Marco sobre la Estrategia Marina (artículo 8) ([3]). En la actualidad, la Comisión está examinando el informe y comprobando si los elementos notificados cumplen los requisitos de la Directiva y constituyen un marco adecuado para conseguir un buen estado medioambiental de aquí a 2020.

En el marco del expediente EU PILOT 3880, la Comisión sigue investigando supuestas infracciones de la Directiva 94/22/CE en relación con los permisos de las islas Canarias, e informará a su debido tiempo de su decisión a los denunciantes.

([1]) Versión codificada de la Directiva 85/337/CEE, relativa a la evaluación de las repercusiones de determinados proyectos públicos y privados sobre el medio ambiente, en su versión modificada (DO L 26 de 28.1.2012).

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

([3]) Directiva 2008/56/CE, por la que se establece un marco de acción comunitaria para la política del medio marino (DO L 164 de 25.6.2008).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000429/13
to the Commission
Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo (S&D) and Juan Fernando López Aguilar (S&D)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Prospecting for oil off the Canary Islands

It has come to our attention that a decision has been made approving plans for exploratory drilling, and potential future oil production, in the stretch of water between the eastern Canary Islands and the African continent. Drilling could begin at any time and could pose a threat to many habitats and protected species listed in national, European and international environmental conservation law.

The marine areas earmarked for oil prospecting may contain reefs and geological formations which are created by the gases which bubble up from the ocean floor. Drilling in these areas could lead to breaches of Directive 92/43/EEC. The marine areas in question would include 12 special areas of conservation (SACs) and a marine reserve, as well as a further 11 SACs and a protected marine area, for which the Commission has set aside funding under the LIFE project so that it can be studied and declared part of the Natura 2000 network.

Can the Commission say what conclusions have been reached in the EU PILOT investigation into the matter, as referred to in its answer of 5 July 2012?

Can it make available the findings of the initial impact assessment concerning the marine environment in question and the good environmental status report, along with the relevant environmental objectives, which the Spanish Government should have submitted by now (the deadline having expired on 15 October 2012)?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(11 March 2013)

The Commission has assessed the information resulting from the EU PILOT 3279/12 investigation. The Spanish authorities have granted an administrative concession for oil prospecting, i.e. exploratory drilling, in the waters off the Canary Islands. This type of project does not call for an environmental impact assessment (EIA) under the terms of Directive 2011/92/EU ([1]). By contrast, should the exploratory drilling result in a project request for oil production, the competent authorities will have to conduct an EIA before consent can be granted. This EIA shall identify, describe and assess the effects of the project on the environment and, in particular, on the natural assets protected by Directive 92/43/EC ([2]). The EIA should include a public consultation procedure whereby any person concerned may submit all the elements and documents in his/her possession that would point to the possible negative effects of the future project on the environment. The Spanish authorities have confirmed that the relevant provisions of EC law will be duly taken into account in relation to this project. Consequently, the Commission has no ground to intervene at this stage.

Spain has submitted its initial assessment in accordance with the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (art. 8) ([3]). The Commission is now in the process of assessing the report and verifying whether the elements notified comply with the directive and constitute an appropriate framework to meet good environmental status by 2020.

Under the EU PILOT 3880/12, the Commission continues to investigate into alleged breaches of Directive 94/22/EC regarding the Canary Islands permits and will inform the complainants of its decision in due time.

([1]) Codified version of Directive 85/337/EEC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment, as amended, OJ L 26.1.2012.
([2]) Directive 92/43/EEC on the protection of natural habitats and wild fauna and flora, OJ L 206, 22.7.1992.
([3]) Directive 2008/56/EC establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy, OJ L 164, 25.6.2008.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung P-000430/13
an die Kommission
Sabine Verheyen (PPE)
(16. Januar 2013)

Betrifft: Vorbereitung der Leitlinien der Kommission zum offenen Internet und seinen Auswirkungen auf Medienvielfalt und Demokratie

Das Internet ist angesichts der Tatsache, dass 91 % der Internet-Nutzer in Europa (388,5 Millionen Menschen) online Nachrichten lesen ([1]), zu einem wichtigen Kommunikationsmedium geworden. Diese Nachrichten entstammen professionellen Nachrichtenportalen (z. B. der Website einer Zeitung oder einer Sendeanstalt) oder Kommentaren und Links, die in Diskussionsforen, soziale Netzwerke oder auf Video-Websites eingestellt werden.

Einer Studie des Gremiums Europäischer Regulierungsstellen für elektronische Kommunikation (GEREK) zufolge ist das stark marktorientierte Datenverkehrsmanagement einiger Internetdienstanbieter möglicherweise problematisch, da durch das Blockieren und Drosseln der Übertragungsgeschwindigkeit von Inhalten anderer Online-Dienste ein kommerzieller Vorteil für ihre eigenen Dienstleistungen bewirkt werden könnte.

1. Teilt die Kommission die Auffassung, dass der Zugang der EU-Bürger zu Nachrichten gefährdet ist, wenn Internetdienstanbieter Inhalte blockieren oder deren Übertragungsgeschwindigkeit drosseln?

2. Teilt die Kommission meine Auffassung, dass im Rahmen ihrer Bewertung der Definition eines „angemessenen" bzw. „nicht angemessenen" Datenverkehrsmanagements auch der Zugang zu Medien und Nachrichten bewertet werden sollte, und wird die Kommission in ihre Leitlinien, die 2013 veröffentlich werden sollen, Leitlinien zu „angemessenem" bzw. „nicht angemessenem" Datenverkehrsmanagement aufnehmen?

Antwort von Frau Kroes im Namen der Kommission
(12. Februar 2013)

Die Kommission setzt sich für den Erhalt der Offenheit und Neutralität des Internets ein und ist überzeugt, dass die EU im Interesse der Regulierungssicherheit für Bürger, Betreiber und alle anderen Beteiligten in Fragen der Netzneutralität eine gemeinsame Linie vertreten sollte. Die Untersuchungen des GEREK („Gremium europäischer Regulierungsstellen für elektronische Kommunikation") zum Datenverkehrsmanagement und die öffentliche Konsultation der Kommission zu „spezifischen Aspekten der Transparenz, des Datenverkehrsmanagements und des Anbieterwechsels in einem offenen Internet" haben Anhaltspunkte für die Definition und Behandlung der einschlägigen Fragen ergeben. Auf der Grundlage der bestehenden Rechtsvorschriften über elektronische Kommunikationsdienste verfügen die nationalen Regulierungsbehörden über alle erforderlichen Durchführungsbefugnisse. Die Kommission erarbeitet derzeit Empfehlungen, die eine gemeinsame europäische Herangehensweise an Fragen der Netzneutralität unterstützen sollen. Sie sollen die Endnutzer in die Lage versetzen, Entscheidungen in voller Sachkenntnis zu treffen, und Leitlinien zur Transparenz, zum Anbieterwechsel und zum verantwortlichen Einsatz von Instrumenten des Datenverkehrsmanagements enthalten. Insbesondere möchte die Kommission erreichen, dass alle Internetanbieter ihren Kunden ein umfassendes Best-Effort-Internetzugangsprodukt anbieten.

([1]) http://www.iabeurope.eu/news/4269m-europeans-online-across-28-markets-%E2 %80 %A6-from-belgium-to-bulgaria-uk-to-ukraine---europeans-are-more-connected-than-ever-before.aspx

(English version)

Question for written answer P-000430/13
to the Commission
Sabine Verheyen (PPE)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Preparation of Commission guidance on the Open Internet and its impact on media plurality and democracy

The Internet has become an important medium of communication given that 91 % of Internet users in Europe read news online (388.5 million people) ([1]). This news may come from professional news outlets (e.g. a newspaper or broadcaster's site) or from comments and links posted on discussion forums, social networks or video sites.

A study by the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC) points out that the strongly market-oriented traffic management of some Internet service providers (ISPs) is potentially problematic, since blocking or slowing down content from online services may be to the commercial advantage of their own services:

1. Does the Commission agree that blocking and throttling by ISPs puts European citizens' access to news at risk?

2. Does the Commission share my view that access to media and news must form part of the Commission's assessment of what constitutes 'reasonable' or 'unreasonable' traffic management and will the Commission offer guidelines as to what is 'reasonable' or 'unreasonable' in its guidance scheduled for publication in 2013?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(12 February 2013)

The Commission is committed to maintaining the open and neutral character of the Internet and is convinced that a common EU approach on net neutrality issues is necessary to provide regulatory certainty for citizens, operators and all other stakeholders. The traffic management investigation undertaken by BEREC (the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications) and the Commission's public consultation 'on specific aspects of transparency, traffic management and switching in an Open Internet' have provided evidence to define and address the issues at stake. NRA's have all the necessary powers of implementation under the existing legislation on electronic communication services. The Commission is currently working on recommendations which will foster a common European approach to net neutrality. It will aim at empowering end-users to make informed choices and will include guidance on transparency, switching and the responsible use of traffic management tools. In particular, the Commission envisages that every ISP should offer a full, best efforts Internet access product to its clients.

([1]) http://www.iabeurope.eu/news/4269m-europeans-online-across-28-markets-%E2%80%A6-from-belgium-to-bulgaria-uk-to-ukraine---europeans-are-more-connected-than-ever-before.aspx.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita P-000431/13
a la Comisión
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(16 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Ayudas de Estado al mercado europeo de CO_2

La prensa española (El País, 16 de enero de 2013) informa de que la Comisión Europea ha autorizado ayudas de Estado para la industria pesada en riesgo de deslocalización por el alto precio de la electricidad derivado del coste del dióxido de carbono. Algún país, concretamente Alemania, ya ha anunciado que concederá tales ayudas, lo que difícilmente pueden hacer otros países —notoriamente los del Sur de Europa— al no gozar de una situación presupuestaria saneada.

¿Podría informarme la Comisión de si es cierta esta información que incide de lleno en la sesión de voto que se desarrollará el próximo día 24 de enero de 2013 en la Comisión de Investigación, Industria y Energía del Parlamento Europeo?

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

De conformidad con el artículo 10 *bis*, apartado 6, de la Directiva 2003/87/CE ([1]), modificada por la Directiva 2009/29/CE ([2]) (en lo sucesivo, «la Directiva RCDE»), los Estados miembros pueden adoptar medidas financieras en favor de sectores o subsectores que se consideren expuestos a un riesgo significativo de fugas de carbono debido a los costes relacionados con las emisiones de gases de efecto invernadero repercutidos en los precios de la electricidad, a fin de compensar dichos costes de conformidad con las normas sobre ayudas estatales.

Los Estados miembros tienen libertad para decidir sobre la concesión o no de una ayuda estatal en favor de sectores o subsectores que se consideren expuestos a un riesgo significativo de fugas de carbono. No obstante, esa ayuda estatal puede generar falseamientos significativos de la competencia en el mercado interior, en particular cuando empresas del mismo sector reciben un trato diferente en los distintos Estados miembros, debido a las diferentes limitaciones presupuestarias. Por esa razón, la Comisión adoptó en 2012 las Directrices relativas a determinadas medidas de ayuda estatal ([3]), en las que se establecen las condiciones en las que los Estados miembros pueden compensar una parte del aumento de los costes de la electricidad a que tienen que hacer frente las empresas más eficientes de cada sector como resultado de la aplicación de la Directiva RCDE, con efecto a partir del 1 de enero de 2013. Al mismo tiempo que garantizan la transparencia y la seguridad jurídica, las Directrices tratan tres objetivos específicos: la minimización del riesgo de fuga de carbono, la conservación del objetivo del RCDE de la UE de lograr una descarbonificación rentable y la minimización de los falseamientos de la competencia en el mercado interior.

Como se subrayó en la Hoja de ruta hacia una economía hipocarbónica competitiva en 2050, la Comisión seguirá supervisando el impacto del RCDE UE en la competitividad de las industrias de gran consumo de energía. Además, la Comisión supervisará periódicamente las subvenciones concedidas por los Estados miembros, y podría revisar las Directrices del RCDE después de los primeros años de aplicación.

([1]) Directiva 2003/87/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 13 de octubre de 2003, por la que se establece un régimen para el comercio de derechos de emisión de gases de efecto invernadero en la Comunidad y por la que se modifica la Directiva 96/61/CE del Consejo, DO L 275 de 25.10.2003, p. 32.

([2]) Directiva 2009/29/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 23 de abril de 2009, por la que se modifica la Directiva 2003/87/CE para perfeccionar y ampliar el régimen comunitario de comercio de derechos de emisión de gases de efecto invernadero, DO L 140 de 5.6.2009, p. 63.

([3]) Comunicación de la Comisión — Directrices relativas a determinadas medidas de ayuda estatal en el contexto del régimen de comercio de derechos de emisión de gases de efecto invernadero [SWD(2012) 130 final] [SWD(2012) 131 final] Texto pertinente a efectos del EEE, DO C 158 de 5.6.2012, p. 4.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-000431/13
to the Commission
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: State aid to the European CO_2 market

The Spanish press (*El País*, 16 January 2013) reports that the European Commission has approved state aid for heavy industry at risk of relocation due to the high price of electricity that results from the cost of carbon dioxide. Some countries, such as Germany, have already announced that they will grant this type of aid, while other countries — notably those in Southern Europe — are not in a position to so, as they do not have a sound budgetary situation.

Can Commission inform me as to the truth of this information, which has great bearing on the voting session on 24 January 2013 in the European Parliament Committee on Industry, Research and Energy?

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

Under Article 10a(6) of Directive 2003/87/EC ([1]), as amended by Directive 2009/29/EC ([2]) (hereafter the 'ETS Directive'), Member States may grant state aid in favour of sectors or subsectors deemed to be exposed to a significant risk of carbon leakage due to costs relating to greenhouse gas emissions passed on in electricity prices, in order to compensate for those costs in accordance with state aid rules.

The Member States are free to decide whether or not to grant any state aid in favour of sectors or subsectors deemed to be exposed to a significant risk of carbon leakage. However, such state aid may result in significant distortions of competition in the internal market, in particular whenever undertakings in the same sector are treated differently in different Member States due to different budgetary constraints. Therefore, the Commission adopted in 2012 State aid Guidelines ([3]) which set the conditions under which Member States may compensate part of the increased electricity costs faced by the most efficient companies in each sector as a result of implementation of the ETS Directive incurred as of 1 January 2013. The Guidelines, while ensuring transparency and legal certainty, address three specific objectives: minimising the risk of carbon leakage, preserving the EU ETS objective to achieve cost-efficient decarbonisation and minimising competition distortions in the internal market.

As was underlined in the 2050 Low carbon Roadmap, the Commission will continue to monitor the impact of the EU ETS on the competitiveness of energy-intensive industries. Moreover, the Commission will regularly monitor the subsidies granted by Member States and may review the ETS Guidelines after the first years of application.

([1]) Directive 2003/87/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 October 2003 establishing a scheme for greenhouse gas emission allowance trading within the Community and amending Council Directive 96/61/EC, OJ L 275, 25.10.2003, p. 32.

([2]) Directive 2009/29/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2009 amending Directive 2003/87/EC so as to improve and extend the greenhouse gas emission allowance trading scheme of the Community, OJ L 140, 5.6.2009, p. 63.

([3]) Communication from the Commission — Guidelines on certain state aid measures in the context of the greenhouse gas emission allowance trading scheme post-2012 (SWD(2012) 130 final) (SWD(2012) 131 final), Text with EEA relevance, OJ C 158, 5.6.2012, p. 4.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-000432/13
alla Commissione
Francesco Enrico Speroni (EFD)
(16 gennaio 2013)

Oggetto: Imposta su prodotti e attività finanziarie in ambito UE — Incompatibilità della legge italiana 214/2011 con l'ordinamento comunitario

La legge italiana n. 214 del 22.12.2011 ha istituito un'imposta di bollo sulle «attività finanziarie» facenti capo a cittadini italiani al di fuori del territorio nazionale e dunque anche sulle attività finanziarie localizzate in ambito UE. Tale imposta rileva allo 0,10 % per l'anno 2012 e, retroattivamente, per l'anno 2011 ed allo 0,15 % per l'anno 2013. La normativa in questione ha applicato la medesima percentuale impositiva limitatamente ai «prodotti finanziari» facenti capo a cittadini italiani sul territorio nazionale.

Tale normativa stabilisce, di fatto, un criterio impositivo più estensivo, iniquo ed evidentemente in contrasto con l'esercizio della libera circolazione dei capitali in ambito UE. Infatti, l'investimento in «attività finanziarie» in altri paesi UE risulta, per quanto sopra esposto, più svantaggioso rispetto all'investimento in «prodotti finanziari» in territorio nazionale. A diverso titolo le «attività finanziarie» condotte negli altri Stati membri subiscono già gli effetti delle diverse imposizioni previste dalle differenti normative nazionali, per cui l'ulteriore previsione impositiva applicata dalla L. 214/2011 renderebbe più svantaggioso l'investimento in altri paesi UE.

Ritiene la Commissione che il criterio impositivo previsto dalla L. 214/2011 sulle attività finanziarie estere sia contrario ai principi comunitari ed all'articolo 63 TFUE?

Risposta di Algirdas Šemeta a nome della Commissione
(21 febbraio 2013)

La Commissione informa l'onorevole deputato di aver già avviato la verifica della compatibilità con il diritto dell'UE delle due imposte italiane cui l'interrogazione si riferisce, vale a dire l'imposta sul valore degli immobili situati all'estero (IVIE) e l'imposta sul valore delle attività finanziarie detenute all'estero da persone residenti in Italia (IVAFE).

La Commissione ha sollevato dubbi su tale compatibilità, con particolare riguardo all'articolo 63 del TFUE, nel quadro del procedimento amministrativo EU-Pilot/3506/12/TAXUD. In risposta le autorità italiane hanno modificato la normativa in materia, abolendo segnatamente la retroattività delle imposte ([1]).

Raffrontando l'IVAFE all'imposta corrispondente (imposta di bollo) applicata in Italia alla comunicazione d'informazioni sui prodotti finanziari fra intermediario e investitore/residente, si riscontra che ambedue applicano la stessa base imponibile, le stesse aliquote e le stesse esenzioni. Dalla prassi amministrativa corrente ([2]) emerge che l'ambito d'applicazione non è identico: l'IVAFE riguarda anche le partecipazioni e i finanziamenti delle persone fisiche (residenti) in società straniere, mentre l'imposta di bollo si applica anche alle società.

Per evitare una doppia imposizione, l'articolo 19 del D.L. 201/2011 permette di dedurre dall'IVAFE un credito d'imposta pari all'ammontare dell'eventuale imposta patrimoniale versata nello Stato in cui sono detenute le attività finanziarie.

È pertanto intenzione della Commissione approfondire l'esame per stabilire se le differenze tra l'IVAFE e l'imposta di bollo configurino di fatto una violazione del diritto dell'UE, in particolare del principio di libera circolazione dei capitali ([3]).

L'onorevole deputato sarà tenuto al corrente degli sviluppi.

([1]) Legge di stabilità 24 dicembre 2012, n. 228.
([2]) Circolare 21.2012 n. 48/E per l'imposta di bollo e Circolare 2.12.2012 n. 28/E per l'IVAFE.
([3]) Articolo 63 del TFUE.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-000432/13
to the Commission
Francesco Enrico Speroni (EFD)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Tax on financial products and activities in the EU — incompatibility of Italian Law No 214/2011 with EU legislation

Italian Law No 214 of 22 December 2011 established a stamp duty on 'financial activities' carried out by Italian citizens outside national territory and therefore also on financial activities located within the EU. This duty is levied at 0.10 % for 2012 and, retroactively, for 2011, and at 0.15 % for 2013. The legislation in question has applied the same tax percentage rate only to 'financial products' held by Italian citizens on national territory.

This law lays down a taxation criterion that is broader, unfair and which clearly runs counter to the free movement of capital in the EU. Indeed, investment in 'financial activities' in other EU countries is more unfavourable than investment in 'financial products' on national territory. The 'financial activities' carried out in other Member States are already subject to the effects of the different taxes laid down by the various national regulations. The additional tax requirement applied by Law No 214/2011 therefore appears to make investing in other EU countries more unfavourable.

Does the Commission believe that the taxation criterion specified in Law No 214/2011 on foreign financial activities runs counter to EU principles and to Article 63 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(21 February 2013)

The Commission would like to inform the Honourable Member that it has already started to investigate the compatibility with EC law of the two Italian taxes raised in this question (IVIE and IVAFE), namely, the Taxes on the Value of the Immovable Property and on the Value of the Financial Transaction held by Italian residents abroad.

The Commission's doubts concerning their compatibility with the EC law, in particular with Article 63 of TFUE, were raised in the context of administrative procedure EU-Pilot/3506/12/TAXUD. As a result, the Italian authorities amended the relevant legislation eliminating, in particular, the retroactive effect of the taxes ([1]).

As concerns the comparison between the IVAFE and the correspondent tax (so called 'bollo'), applied in Italy on the transmission of information between the financial intermediaries and the investor/resident on financial products, it appears that they both apply the same tax basis, rates and exemptions. From the prevailing administrative practice ([2]), it appears that they do not have exactly the same scope. On the one hand, the IVAFE covers also participations and financing of natural persons (residents) in foreign companies while, on the other hand, the 'bollo' applies also to corporate entities.

According to Article 19 of D.L. 201/2011, double taxation is eliminated by allowing the deduction from IVAFE of similar taxes already paid in the country where the financial activities take place.

In these circumstances, the Commission intends further investigate whether the differences between the IVAFE and the 'bollo' effectively constitute a violation of EC law, in particular with the principle of free movement of capital ([3]).

The Honourable Member will be kept informed on the developments.

([1]) Stability Law of 24 December 2012 n.228.
([2]) Circular 21.2012 n.48/E for the 'Bollo' and Circular 2.12.2012 n.28/E for the IVAFE.
([3]) Article 63 TFEU.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000433/13
an den Rat
Martin Ehrenhauser (NI)
(16. Januar 2013)

Betrifft: Ausschreibung der EU-Kommission zu PIUs

Die Europäische Kommission hat im Bereich Erhebung und Verarbeitung von Fluggastdatensätzen eine Ausschreibung unter dem Titel „TARGETED CALL FOR PROPOSALS — Law enforcement cooperation through measures to set up Passenger Information Units in Member States for the collection, processing, analysis and exchange of Passenger Name Record (PNR) data" veröffentlicht, noch bevor eine Entscheidung durch den Rat und das EU-Parlament über die Nutzung von PNR-Daten herbeigeführt werden konnte.

1. Wie steht der Rat dieser Ausschreibung gegenüber?

2. Wurde der Rat vor der Veröffentlichung der Ausschreibung seitens der Kommission über diese Ausschreibung informiert? Falls ja, wann, wie und durch wen? Falls nicht, wann, wie und durch wen wurde der Rat über die Ausschreibung unterrichtet?

3. Wie steht der Rat dem Umstand gegenüber, dass die Ausschreibung die Sammlung und Auswertung von PNR-Daten von internationalen Flügen, nicht aber von innereuropäischen Flügen abdeckt?

4. Wie steht der Rat dem Vorwurf gegenüber, die Kommission würde durch derartige Handlungen das EU-Parlament und den Rat übergehen?

Antwort
(11. März 2013)

Die Ausschreibung der Kommission, auf die der Herr Abgeordnete verweist, beruht auf dem Beschluss des Rates vom 12. Februar 2007 ([1]) zur Auflegung des spezifischen Programms „Kriminalprävention und Kriminalitätsbekämpfung" als Teil des Generellen Programms „Sicherheit und Schutz der Freiheitsrechte" für den Zeitraum 2007 bis 2013. Nach diesem Beschluss des Rates ist es die Aufgabe der Kommission, diese Art von Ausschreibung zu veröffentlichen. Folglich ist es nicht Sache des Rates, bezüglich einer bestimmten Ausschreibung Stellung zu nehmen.

Der Beschluss des Rates vom 12. Februar 2007 verpflichtet die Kommission nicht dazu, dem Rat solche Ausschreibungen mitzuteilen. Artikel 8 des Beschlusses sieht vor, dass die Kommission von einem Ausschuss unterstützt wird, der sich aus Vertretern der Mitgliedstaaten zusammensetzt und in dem der Vertreter der Kommission den Vorsitz führt. Gemäß Erwägungsgrund 9 des Durchführungsbeschlusses der Kommission vom 19. September 2011 zur Annahme des Arbeitsprogramms 2012 für das spezifische Programm „Kriminalprävention und Kriminalitätsbekämpfung" als Teil des Generellen Programms „Sicherheit und Schutz der Freiheitsrechte" entsprechen die in diesem Arbeitsprogramm vorgesehenen Maßnahmen der Stellungnahme dieses Ausschusses. Das Arbeitsprogramm 2012 bezieht sich auf eine gezielte Aufforderung zur Einreichung von Vorschlägen zur Zusammenarbeit bei der Strafverfolgung in der Form, dass die Mitgliedstaaten Stellen einrichten, die Fluggastdaten (Passenger Name Records, PNR) sammeln, weiterverarbeiten, analysieren und austauschen.

Wie bereits erwähnt, ist es nicht Sache des Rates, bezüglich einer bestimmten Ausschreibung Stellung zu nehmen. Der Rat möchte den Herrn Abgeordneten jedoch darauf hinweisen, dass sich der Rat am 26. April 2012 auf eine allgemeine Ausrichtung zu dem Vorschlag für eine Richtlinie des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates über die Verwendung von Fluggastdatensätzen zu Zwecken der Verhütung, Aufdeckung, Aufklärung und strafrechtlichen Verfolgung von terroristischen Straftaten und schwerer Kriminalität verständigt hat.

([1]) ABl. L 58 vom 24.2.2007, S. 7.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000433/13
to the Council
Martin Ehrenhauser (NI)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Commission tendering procedure on PIUs

The Commission published a 'TARGETED CALL FOR PROPOSALS — Law enforcement cooperation through measures to set up Passenger Information Units in Member States for the collection, processing, analysis and exchange of Passenger Name Record (PNR) data' before any decision could be reached by the Council and the European Parliament on the use of PNR data.

1. What is the Council's position on this tendering procedure?

2. Was the Council notified prior to the publication of this call for proposals by the Commission? If so, when, how and by whom? If not, when, how and by whom was the Council notified?

3. What is the Council's position with respect to the fact that the tender covers the collection and analysis of PNR data for international flights, but not for flights within Europe?

4. What is the Council's position on the charge levelled against the Commission that it is going over the heads of the European Parliament and the Council by proceeding in this way?

Reply
(11 March 2013)

The Commission call for proposals referred to by the Honourable Member is based on the Council Decision of 12 February 2007 ([1]) establishing for the period 2007 to 2013, as part of General Programme on Security and Safeguarding Liberties, the Specific Programme 'Prevention of and Fight against Crime'. Under this Council Decision, it falls to the Commission to issue this type of call for proposals. Consequently it is not up to the Council to take a position with regard to a specific call for proposals.

Council Decision of 12 February 2007 does not require the Commission to notify the Council of any such call for proposals. Article 8 of the decision stipulates that the Commission is to be assisted by a Committee composed of representatives of the Member States and chaired by the representative of the Commission. According to Recital 9 of the Commission Implementing Decision of 19 September 2011 on adopting the annual work programme for 2012 for the specific programme on the 'Prevention of and Fight against Crime' as part of the General Programme 'Security and Safeguarding Liberties', the measures provided for in this work programme are in accordance with the opinion of that Committee. The annual work programme for 2012 refers to a targeted call on law enforcement cooperation through measures to set up Passenger Information Units in Member States for the collection, processing, analysis and exchange of Passenger Name Record (PNR) data.

As stated above, it is it is not up to the Council to take a position with regard to a specific call for proposals. However, the Council would like to inform the Honourable Member that on 26 April 2012 the Council agreed on a general approach on the proposal for a directive of the Council and the European Parliament on the use of Passenger Name Record data for the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of terrorist offences and serious crime.

([1]) OJ L 58, 24.2.2007, p. 7.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-000434/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE)
(16 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Ανισορροπίες κόστους υπηρεσιών κινητής τηλεφωνίας στην ΕΕ

Σύμφωνα με τη μελέτη ([1]) της εταιρείας Rewheel Ltd. για την ανταγωνιστικότητα των δασμών σχετικά με τα «έξυπνα» τηλέφωνα στην ΕΕ των 27, οι τιμές στα κράτη-μέλη που χαρακτηρίζονται από «προστατευόμενη» αγορά είναι έως και δέκα φορές υψηλότερες από ό,τι στα κράτη μέλη με «προοδευτική αγορά». Συγκεκριμένα, τονίζεται πως οι ευρωπαίοι καταναλωτές καλούνται να πληρώσουν μεταξύ 8 ευρώ και 78 ευρώ το μήνα για χρήση «έξυπνων» τηλεφώνων, προσφέροντας επίδομα δεδομένων 2GB και 200 λεπτά ομιλίας, με τις υψηλότερες μηνιαίες τιμές να διαπιστώνονται στην Τσεχία, την Ελλάδα (50 ευρώ), την Ουγγαρία και τη Γερμανία. Παράλληλα, η έρευνα αναφέρει πως στα πλουσιότερα κράτη-μέλη όπου υφίσταται «προοδευτική» αγορά, οι καταναλωτές δαπανούν 1% του καθαρού μηνιαίου εισοδήματος τους για τη χρήση των «έξυπνων» τηλεφώνων όταν στα φτωχότερα κράτη-μέλη με «προστατευόμενες» αγορές οι καταναλωτές δαπανούν 10-17% του εισοδήματος τους. Δεδομένου ότι η ΕΕ και τα κράτη μέλη πρέπει να εργαστούν για τη δημιουργία ενός ρυθμιστικού και νομικού περιβάλλοντος που να ενισχύει τον ανταγωνισμό και την καινοτομία αλλά και την προστασία των δικαιωμάτων των χρηστών ([2]) με ακόμη περισσότερα οφέλη σε επίπεδο διακυβέρνησης, υγείας, εκπαίδευσης, προστασίας του περιβάλλοντος, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Διαθέτει σχετικές μελέτες κόστους χρήσης «έξυπνων» τηλεφώνων;

2. Πώς αντιμετωπίζει την ύπαρξη ανισορροπιών που αναφέρει η μελέτη της Rewheel Ltd., δεδομένης μάλιστα της σημασίας που αποκτάει ο ανταγωνισμός και η ενίσχυση της ενιαίας αγοράς στις τηλεπικοινωνίες στο πλαίσιο της ψηφιακής ατζέντας για την Ευρώπη 2020;

3. Πώς αξιολογεί την αποτελεσματικότητα του έργου των εθνικών ρυθμιστικών αρχών στην κατεύθυνση της τόνωσης του ανταγωνισμού;

4. Πώς κρίνει τη σύσταση της Rewheel Ltd. κατά την οποία η ανάδειξη του ανταγωνιστικού δυναμικού της αγοράς κινητής τηλεφωνίας θα πρέπει να δρομολογηθεί μέσω της καταγραφής της χρήσης δεδομένων από τα κινητά ανά άτομο όπως και της διείσδυσης της κινητής ευρυζωνικότητας από την ΕΕ και τους εθνικές ρυθμιστικές αρχές;

Απάντηση της κ. Kroes εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(22 Φεβρουαρίου 2013)

Οι αγορές κινητής τηλεφωνίας στην Ευρώπη συνεχίζουν να έχουν κατά κύριο λόγο εθνικό χαρακτήρα. Οι εγχώριες υπηρεσίες κινητής τηλεφωνίας εμπίπτουν στην εποπτεία της εθνικής ρυθμιστικής αρχής (ΕΡΑ) της κάθε χώρας. Το κανονιστικό πλαίσιο της ΕΕ παρέχει στις ΕΡΑ μέσα ώστε να ενεργούν σχετικά με τυχόν προβλήματα ανταγωνισμού, τα οποία υπάρχουν στις εθνικές αγορές τους, και να επιβάλουν διορθωτικά μέτρα όταν κρίνεται σκόπιμο.

Τα πορίσματα που παρουσιάζονται σχετίζονται με συγκεκριμένο τμήμα της αγοράς, τους χρήστες των υψηλής ποιότητας «έξυπνων τηλεφώνων» (smartphones) και δεν πρέπει να γενικεύονται. Αν και όντως υπάρχουν διαφορές όσον αφορά τη χρήση των «έξυπνων τηλεφώνων» στην ΕΕ, οι συγκρίσεις βάσει ενιαίου καλαθιού του καταναλωτή δεν φιλοτεχνούν την πλήρη εικόνα. Η Επιτροπή και ο BEREC (Φορέας Ευρωπαϊκών Ρυθμιστικών Αρχών για τις Ηλεκτρονικές Επικοινωνίες) συμμετείχαν πρόσφατα στον καθορισμό της μεθοδολογίας μέτρησης των τιμών της κινητής ευρυζωνικότητας στον ΟΟΣΑ και σύντομα θα ξεκινήσει η συλλογή στοιχείων. Η Επιτροπή και οι ΕΡΑ προβαίνουν τακτικά σε συλλογή και διάθεση στοιχείων για τη διείσδυση της κινητής ευρυζωνικότητας ([3]).

Η αγορά κινητών υπηρεσιών δεδομένων είναι ακόμη σχετικά νέα και ταχέως μεταβαλλόμενη, και οι προσφορές στην αγορά διαφοροποιούνται ανάλογα με τα καταναλωτικά πρότυπα και την ωρίμανση της αγοράς. Οι περισσότερες εθνικές αγορές κινητής τηλεφωνίας προσφέρουν στους πελάτες ποικιλία υπηρεσιών (μεμονωμένες ή δέσμες υπηρεσιών) και τιμών η οποία επιτρέπει στους καταναλωτές να επιλέγουν υπηρεσίες που ανταποκρίνονται καλύτερα στις ανάγκες τους.

([1]) http://www.rewheel.fi/insights_14.php
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/tl/industry/comms/pol/index_en.htm
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/sites/digital-agenda/files/KKAH12001ENN-chap3-PDFWEB-3.pdf

Τα μερίδια αγοράς του κορυφαίου παρόχου και του βασικού ανταγωνιστή συνεχίζουν να μειώνονται στα κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ λόγω της εμφάνισης ανταγωνιστών που αμφισβητούν την κυριαρχία τους ([4]). Η Επιτροπή και οι ΕΡΑ συνεργάζονται στενά για την ενίσχυση του ανταγωνισμού και του οφέλους του καταναλωτή.

([4]) Βλέπε πίνακα αποτελεσμάτων του ψηφιακού θεματολογίου 2012, https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/sites/digital-agenda/files/KKAH12001ENN-PDFWEB_1.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000434/13
to the Commission
Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Digital divide in the cost of mobile telephony in the EU

According to a study ([1]) carried out by the company Rewheel Ltd on smartphone tariff competitiveness in EU-27, pricing in Member States that have a 'protected' market is up to ten times higher than in Member States with a 'progressive' market. Specifically, it argues that European consumers are required to pay between EUR 8 and EUR 78 per month for the use of smartphones, with a 2GByte data allowance and 200 off-net minutes a month, with the highest monthly tariffs to be found in the Czech Republic, Greece (EUR 50), Hungary and Germany. Furthermore, the report indicates that in the richer Member States where there is a 'progressive' market, consumers spend 1% of their net monthly income on using smartphones while in the poorer Member States with 'protected' markets consumers spend 10-17% of their income for this purpose. Given that the EU and Member States should work towards creating a regulatory and legal environment that fosters competition and innovation, while protecting the rights of users ([2]) with even more benefits in terms of governance, health, education and environmental protection, will the Commission say:

1. Does it have at its disposal any studies on the cost of using smartphones?

2. How does it view the existence of the digital divide referred to in the study by Rewheel Ltd., especially given the importance of competition and strengthening the single market in telecommunications in the context of the Digital Agenda for Europe 2020?

3. How does it evaluate the effectiveness of the work of national regulatory authorities in stimulating competition?

4. How does it view the recommendation by Rewheel Ltd that the competitive potential of the mobile telephony market should be tapped by the EU and the national regulatory authorities through recording data usage by mobile per person and the penetration of mobile broadband?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(22 February 2013)

Mobile markets in Europe continue to be primarily national in scope. Domestic mobile services fall under the supervision of the National Regulatory Authority (NRA) in each country. The EU regulatory framework provides NRAs with tools to act in relation to any competition problems that exist within their national markets and to impose remedies when appropriate.

The presented findings relate to a specific segment of the market, high end smartphone users, and should not be generalized. There are indeed differences in smartphone use in the EU, but comparisons based on one single consumption basket do not give a full picture. The Commission and BEREC have recently been involved in defining the methodology to measure prices of mobile broadband in the OECD and data collection should start soon. The Commission and NRAs regularly collect and make available data about mobile broadband penetration ([3]).

The mobile data market is still relatively young and changing quickly, offerings on the market differ depending on consumption patterns and market maturity. Most national mobile markets offer customers a variety of services and tariffs, both as stand alone or in bundles that allow consumers to choose services that best correspond to their needs.

The market shares of the leading operator and the main competitor continue to decrease in the EU Member States due to the appearance of challengers ([4]). The Commission and NRAs are closely cooperating to strengthen competition and consumer benefit.

([1]) http://www.rewheel.fi/insights_14.php.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/tl/industry/comms/pol/index_en.htm
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/sites/digital-agenda/files/KKAH12001ENN-chap3-PDFWEB-3.pdf
([4]) See Digital Agenda Scoreboard 2012, https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/sites/digital-agenda/files/KKAH12001ENN-PDFWEB_1.pdf

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-000435/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Theodoros Skylakakis (ALDE)
(16 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Διευκρινίσεις για την αδειοδότηση φαρμακείων στην Ελλάδα

Σε συνέχεια της προηγούμενης ερώτησής μου προς την Επιτροπή, αναφορικά με το θέμα της αδειοδότησης των φαρμακείων στην Ελλάδα (E-009719/2012) και κατόπιν σχετικής επιστολής του Προέδρου και του Γενικού Γραμματέα του Πανελλήνιου Φαρμακευτικού Συλλόγου ([1]), ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Γνωρίζει πόσες νέες άδειες δόθηκαν για το άνοιγμα φαρμακείων, με βάση το καθεστώς του νόμου 3918/2011, γύρω από συνταγογραφικά κέντρα (Νοσοκομεία ή Κέντρα Υγείας) ή εάν ακόμα ισχύουν περιορισμοί που αποσκοπούν στη διατήρηση της μονοπωλιακής θέσης όσων ήδη διατηρούν φαρμακεία έξω από Νοσοκομεία και Κέντρα Υγείας;

2. Γνωρίζει το ισχύον καθεστώς για την τήρηση αποστάσεων μεταξύ φαρμακείων και ειδικότερα εάν αυτές τροποποιήθηκαν ή παρέμειναν ως είχαν, με αποτέλεσμα κάποιοι απ' όσους έλαβαν άδεια ίδρυσης, να μη μπορούν να βρουν κατάστημα που να πληρεί τον σχετικό όρο περί τήρησης αποστάσεων από τα ήδη υπάρχοντα φαρμακεία;

3. Γνωρίζει πώς ακριβώς λειτουργεί στην πράξη το πληθυσμιακό όριο του ενός φαρμακείου ανά 1 000 κατοίκους, εάν δηλαδή είναι δυνατή η ίδρυση και δεύτερου φαρμακείου μόλις υπάρχει αξιοσημείωτη υπέρβαση του σχετικού ορίου ή αν για παράδειγμα απαιτούνται 2 001 κάτοικοι για να επιτραπεί η ίδρυση δεύτερου φαρμακείου, με αποτέλεσμα να διατηρείται η μονοπωλιακή κατάσταση σε χωριά με σχεδόν 2 000 κατοίκους;

4. Γνωρίζει εάν υπήρξε ενιαίο κριτήριο από πλευράς υπολογισμού των πληθυσμιακών κριτηρίων για την ίδρυση νέων φαρμακείων και ειδικότερα εάν ιδρύθηκαν νέα φαρμακεία, όχι με βάση τον ν. 3852/2010 (Καλλικράτης) για την αναδιοργάνωση της τοπικής αυτοδιοίκησης, αλλά με βάση την αυτοδιοικητική διαίρεση της χώρα σύμφωνα με τον προγενέστερο ν. 2539/1997 (Καποδίστριας), με αποτέλεσμα να είναι εξαιρετικά δύσκολη η έκδοση νέων αδειών σε αστικά κέντρα;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(4 Μαρτίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή γνωρίζει ότι ζητήθηκαν και εκδόθηκαν νέες άδειες για την εγκατάσταση και εκμετάλλευση φαρμακείων στην Ελλάδα. Οι ελληνικές αρχές δεν υποβάλλουν στην Επιτροπή εκθέσεις σχετικά με τον αριθμό των νέων αδειών που εκδίδονται κάθε χρόνο.

Τα μέτρα πολιτικής που αφορούν τα φαρμακεία έχουν επικεντρωθεί σε μια σειρά μεταβλητών, όπως η μείωση των περιθωρίων κέρδους, η επέκταση των ωρών λειτουργίας τους και η αναθεώρηση του πληθυσμιακού ορίου για την εγκατάσταση φαρμακείου το οποίο έχει μειωθεί από ένα φαρμακείο ανά 1 500 κατοίκους σε ένα φαρμακείο ανά 1 000 κατοίκους. Μειώνοντας το πληθυσμιακό όριο, στόχος των αρχών ήταν να αυξηθεί ο αριθμός των φαρμακείων, ιδίως σε αραιοκατοικημένες περιοχές.

Η Επιτροπή θα παρακολουθεί την πρόοδο σχετικά με την τήρηση των πολιτικών αυτών στα πλαίσια των τακτικών αποστολών ελέγχου βάσει του προγράμματος οικονομικής προσαρμογής για την Ελλάδα.

Όσον αφορά τις ακριβείς λεπτομέρειες για την πρακτική εφαρμογή των νομοθετικών διατάξεων, το Αξιότιμο Μέλος καλείται να έλθει σε απευθείας επαφή με τις εθνικές αρχές.

([1]) http://www.skylakakis.gr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1821:skylakakis-farmakeia&catid=53:skylakakis-category-drastiriotites&Itemid=105

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000435/13
to the Commission
Theodoros Skylakakis (ALDE)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Clarifications about the licensing of pharmacies in Greece

Further to my previous question to the Commission about the licensing of pharmacies in Greece (E-009719/2012) and in the light of the letter on this subject by the President and the General Secretary of the Panhellenic Pharmaceutical Association ([1]), will the Commission say:

1. Does it know how many new licences have been issued to open pharmacies, under the rules of Law 3918/2011, around prescription issuing centres (hospitals or health centres) or whether the restrictions aimed at preserving the monopoly of those who already operate pharmacies outside hospitals and health centres still apply?

2. Does it know the current rules about the distance to be respected between pharmacies and in particular whether they have been amended or remained unchanged, resulting in a situation in which some of those who have received authorisation to establish a pharmacy cannot find an establishment that meets the condition about maintaining the requisite distance from existing pharmacies?

3. Does it know exactly how the population limit of one pharmacy per 1 000 inhabitants works in practice, i.e. whether it is possible to establish a second pharmacy as soon as the threshold has been significantly exceeded or whether, for example, a second pharmacy may only be established if there is a population of 2 001, which would perpetuate the monopoly that exists in villages with nearly 2 000 residents?

4. Does it know whether there was a uniform criterion for calculating the population for the establishment of new pharmacies, in particular whether new pharmacies were established, not on the basis of Law 3852/2010 (Kallikratis) on the reorganisation of local government, but on the basis of the local government division of the country according to the earlier Law 2539/1997 (Kapodistrias), which makes it extremely difficult to issue new licences in urban centres?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(4 March 2013)

The Commission is aware that new licences have been requested and issued to establish and operate pharmacies in Greece. The Greek authorities do not report to the Commission on the number of new licences that are issued every year.

The policy measures regarding pharmacies have focused on a number of variables such as the reduction of their profit margins, the extension of their opening hours and the revision of the population criteria for establishing a pharmacy which has been reduced from one pharmacy per 1500 inhabitants down to one pharmacy per 1000 inhabitants. By reducing the population threshold, authorities' aim was to increase the number of pharmacies especially in less populated areas.

The Commission will be monitoring progress regarding these policies within the regular review missions under the Economic Adjustment Programme to Greece.

As regards the precise modalities of the practical implementation of the legislative provisions, the Honourable Member is invited to directly contact the national authorities.

([1]) http://www.skylakakis.gr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1821:skylakakis-farmakeia&catid=53:skylakakis-category-drastiriotites&Itemid=105

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-000436/13
à la Commission
Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(16 janvier 2013)

Objet: Financement du prochain Fonds européen d'aide aux plus démunis

Alors que l'Union européenne s'est fixé comme objectif de réduire la pauvreté de 20 % à l'horizon 2020, plus de 24 % de sa population est actuellement menacée de pauvreté ou d'exclusion sociale.

Dans cette situation sociale d'extrême urgence, le programme européen d'aide aux plus démunis (PEAD) permet de distribuer des repas à 18 millions d'Européens dans vingt États membres. De plus, rappelons que le droit à la sécurité alimentaire est un droit fondamental et élémentaire, qui relève des Droits de l'homme.

La Commission européenne a proposé, en octobre dernier, la création d'un nouveau Fonds européen d'aide aux plus démunis, doté d'un montant de 2,5 milliards pour la période de sept ans. Dans le dernier document issu du Conseil européen des 22 et 23 novembre 2012, le Fonds se voit doté d'un montant de 2,1 milliards d'euros pour la période 2014-2020.

Alors que la dotation du PEAD est d'environ 500 millions par an, et compte tenu de l'augmentation du nombre de personnes en situation ou menacées de pauvreté en raison de la crise, la Commission ne pense-t-elle pas que la dotation du futur Fonds européen d'aide aux plus démunis sera insuffisante pour répondre aux besoins des plus nécessiteux?

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-000775/13
à la Commission
Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(25 janvier 2013)

Objet: Financement du prochain Fonds européen d'aide aux plus démunis

Alors que l'Union européenne s'est fixé comme objectif de réduire la pauvreté de 20 % à l'horizon 2020, plus de 24 % de sa population est actuellement menacée de pauvreté ou d'exclusion sociale.

Dans cette situation sociale d'extrême urgence, le Programme européen d'aide aux plus démunis (PEAD) permet de distribuer des repas à 18 millions d'Européens dans 20 États membres. De plus, rappelons que le droit à la sécurité alimentaire est un droit fondamental et élémentaire, qui relève des Droits de l'homme.

La Commission a proposé, en octobre dernier, la création d'un nouveau Fonds européen d'aide aux plus démunis, doté d'un montant de 2,5 milliards pour les 7 ans à venir. Dans le dernier document issu du Conseil européen des 22 et 23 novembre 2012, le Fonds se voit doté d'un montant de 2,1 milliards d'euros pour la période 2014-2020.

Alors que la dotation du PEAD est d'environ 500 millions par an, et compte tenu de l'augmentation du nombre de personnes en situation — ou menacées — de pauvreté en raison de la crise, la Commission ne pense-t-elle pas que la dotation du futur Fonds européen d'aide aux plus démunis sera insuffisante pour répondre aux besoins des plus nécessiteux?

Réponse commune donnée par M. Andor au nom de la Commission
(13 mars 2013)

Le Fonds européen d'aide aux plus démunis ne suffira effectivement pas à répondre à lui seul au dénuement des citoyens européens les plus vulnérables. Il y contribuera néanmoins et la proposition de la Commission prévoit un cofinancement des États membres qui augmentera les ressources disponibles. Le Fonds européen d'aide aux plus démunis viendra en outre en complément des dispositifs nationaux qui fournissent une assistance non-financière aux plus pauvres, en aide alimentaire, mais aussi en biens de consommation de base pour les personnes sans-abris ou les enfants confrontés à la très grande pauvreté.

Il reste qu'en ces temps de fortes contraintes budgétaires, la recherche d'une plus grande efficience a présidé à l'élaboration de cette proposition, qui conjugue ouverture et flexibilité.

Pour ce faire, la Commission propose un instrument qui assure à la fois une grande prévisibilité des ressources et une grande flexibilité. En effet, le Fonds serait mis en œuvre par les États membres à travers des programmes multi-annuels. Chaque pays serait donc en mesure d'adapter l'assistance en privilégiant une des formes d'assistance ou en les combinant, afin de répondre au mieux aux situations nationales.

Cette proposition de la Commission a été transmise au Parlement européen et au Conseil de l'Union européenne. La création de ce nouveau Fonds et le niveau du budget y afférent sont maintenant de leur ressort.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000436/13
to the Commission
Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Funding of the next Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived

Although the European Union has set itself the goal of reducing poverty by 20 % by 2020, more than 24 % of its population is currently at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

In this extremely urgent social situation, food is distributed to 18 million Europeans in 20 of the Member States through the European Food Aid Programme for the Most Deprived (PEAD). Moreover, it should be noted that the right to food security is a basic and fundamental human right.

In October 2012, the European Commission proposed a budget of EUR 2.5 billion for a period of seven years for the creation of a new Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived. The last statement to be released by the European Council on 22 and 23 November 2012 confirmed that a budget of EUR 2.1 billion would be provided for the period 2014-2020.

Given that the PEAD allocation is almost EUR 500 million per annum, and taking account of the increased number of people that are either living in poverty or are at risk of poverty because of the crisis, does the Commission believe that the allocation for the future Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived will be sufficient to meet the needs of the most deprived?

Question for written answer E-000775/13
to the Commission
Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(25 January 2013)

Subject: Funding of the forthcoming Fund for European aid to the most deprived

Although the European Union has set the goal of reducing poverty by 20 % by 2020, more than 24 % of its population are currently at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

In this extremely urgent social situation, the European programme of food aid for the most deprived persons helps ensure that food is distributed to 18 million Europeans in 20 Member States. Moreover, it should be noted that the right to food security is a basic and fundamental human right.

In October 2012, the Commission proposed the creation of a new Fund for European aid to the most deprived, equipped with a budget of EUR 2.5 billion for the next seven years. The last document issued by the European Council of 22 and 23 November 2012 confirmed that the Fund will be allocated a budget of EUR 2.1 billion for the period 2014-2020.

Given that the budget for the European food aid programme for the most deprived is around EUR 500 million per annum, and given that more people are now either living in poverty or at risk of poverty because of the crisis, does the Commission not believe that the budget for the future Fund for European aid to the most deprived will be insufficient in terms of meeting the needs of the most deprived?

(Version française)

Réponse commune donnée par M. Andor au nom de la Commission
(13 mars 2013)

Le Fonds européen d'aide aux plus démunis ne suffira effectivement pas à répondre à lui seul au dénuement des citoyens européens les plus vulnérables. Il y contribuera néanmoins et la proposition de la Commission prévoit un cofinancement des États membres qui augmentera les ressources disponibles. Le Fonds européen d'aide aux plus démunis viendra en outre en complément des dispositifs nationaux qui fournissent une assistance non-financière aux plus pauvres, en aide alimentaire, mais aussi en biens de consommation de base pour les personnes sans-abris ou les enfants confrontés à la très grande pauvreté.

Il reste qu'en ces temps de fortes contraintes budgétaires, la recherche d'une plus grande efficience a présidé à l'élaboration de cette proposition, qui conjugue ouverture et flexibilité.

Pour ce faire, la Commission propose un instrument qui assure à la fois une grande prévisibilité des ressources et une grande flexibilité. En effet, le Fonds serait mis en œuvre par les États membres à travers des programmes multi-annuels. Chaque pays serait donc en mesure d'adapter l'assistance en privilégiant une des formes d'assistance ou en les combinant, afin de répondre au mieux aux situations nationales.

Cette proposition de la Commission a été transmise au Parlement européen et au Conseil de l'Union européenne. La création de ce nouveau Fonds et le niveau du budget y afférent sont maintenant de leur ressort.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000437/13
alla Commissione
Iva Zanicchi (PPE)
(16 gennaio 2013)

Oggetto: Persistere di attività di pirateria nel Golfo di Aden e nell'Oceano Indiano

L'Unione europea, mediante Eunavfor (la missione navale antipirateria al largo delle coste della Somalia, che vedrà impegnate unità della marina da guerra di diversi paesi europei almeno fino al dicembre del 2014) si sta adoperando per la deterrenza, la prevenzione e la repressione delle attività di pirateria lungo le coste somale e la protezione delle navi in transito nei mari a rischio.

Secondo le recenti dichiarazioni rilasciate dall'ammiraglio Duncan L. Potts, comandante di Eunavfor, nel corso dell'ultimo anno gli attacchi da parte dei pirati al largo del Corno d'Africa si sono sensibilmente ridotti. Ciò nonostante il tratto di mare comprendente il Mar Rosso meridionale, il Golfo di Aden e l'Oceano Indiano occidentale continua ad essere considerata un'area ad alto rischio.

L'attività dei pirati lungo le coste della Somalia continua, infatti, a turbare la sicurezza marittima internazionale e le attività economiche nell'area. Nonostante l'impegno della forza antipirateria, per i diportisti e gli operatori mercantili il pericolo di venire assaltati resta elevato.

Inoltre, secondo fonti locali, alcuni pirati, starebbero cercando di riciclarsi, chiedendo soldi ai mercantili o agli yachts in transito nel Golfo di Aden a garanzia di una navigazione tranquilla.

Può la Commissione far sapere:

— quali ulteriori sforzi intende compiere l'Unione europea per combattere il fenomeno della pirateria;

— se l'Unione europea è a conoscenza dei recenti tentativi dei pirati di estorcere denaro ai mercantili e alle altre imbarcazioni in transito nel Golfo di Aden in cambio di «finta protezione» durante la navigazione?

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

Nonostante i recenti successi ottenuti nella lotta alla pirateria, non ci si può riposare sugli allori. Il 5 gennaio 2013 EUNAVFOR ATALANTA ha arrestato 12 presunti pirati autori di un violento assalto a una nave mercantile panamense, perpetrato a circa 400 kilometri dalla costa somala. Queste persone sono attualmente a Maurizio, in attesa di processo. Ciò dimostra che, nonostante i recenti successi ottenuti nella lotta alla pirateria, le capacità chiave dei gruppi di pirati rimangono intatte. Più di 100 ostaggi sono ancora in mano a gruppi criminali.

L'azione volta a contrastare la pirateria deve proseguire sulla terraferma. L'UE è persuasa che, a lungo termine, solo l'instaurazione dello Stato di diritto e lo sviluppo economico permetteranno di fare terra bruciata alla criminalità organizzata in Somalia. L'UE collaborerà con le autorità somale per sviluppare le capacità delle autorità di contrasto costiere e terrestri che sostengono l'autorità dello Stato in tutto il paese. Le tre missioni della politica estera e di sicurezza comune (PESC) (EUNAVFOR ATALANTA, EUCAP Nestor e EU Training Mission (EUTM)) contribuiscono a questo obiettivo. Un elemento importante di questa svolta radicale verso un'azione UE maggiormente incentrata sulle operazioni terrestri sarebbe un'impostazione più mirata che, oltre ai flussi finanziari, punti a individuare i principali capi della pirateria, e non solo i «soldati semplici».

Nell'ottobre 2012 EUNAVFOR ATALANTA ha segnalato un caso di «protezione fittizia», in cui la nave è stata abbandonata dalla squadra di sicurezza somala che l'avrebbe dovuta proteggere e assalita durante la notte da un commando di pirati che però è fuggito, probabilmente per paura di essere arrestato.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000437/13
to the Commission
Iva Zanicchi (PPE)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Continued acts of piracy in the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean

The European Union is endeavouring to deter, prevent and curb piracy off the coast of Somalia and to protect vessels transiting high-risk waters by means of Eunavfor (the European Union's counter-piracy operation off the coast of Somalia which will involve warships from various European countries until at least December 2014).

According to recent statements by Rear Admiral Duncan L. Potts, Operation Commander of Eunavfor, during the last year, attacks by pirates off the Horn of Africa have diminished considerably. This is despite the fact that the stretch of sea comprising the southern Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and the western Indian Ocean continues to be considered a high-risk area.

Indeed, acts of piracy off the coast of Somalia continue to disrupt international maritime safety and economic activities in the area. Despite the efforts of the counter-piracy force, the danger of leisure craft and merchant ships being attacked remains high.

Furthermore, according to local sources, some pirates are attempting to reinvent themselves, asking for money from cargo ships or yachts transiting the Gulf of Aden in return for safe passage.

Can the Commission state:

— what additional efforts the European Union intends to make to combat piracy;

— whether the European Union is aware of pirates' recent attempts to extort money from cargo ships and other vessels transiting the Gulf of Aden in return for 'sham protection' while at sea?

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

Despite recent success in the fight against piracy, there is not room for complacency. On 5 January 2013, EUNAVFOR ATALANTA arrested 12 suspected pirates who violently attacked a Panama Merchant Vessel, some 400 kilometres off the Somali Coast. They have now been successfully transferred to Mauritius for prosecution. This is a sign that, despite the recent success in the fight against piracy, key capabilities of piracy groups remain intact. Over 100 hostages are still being held by criminal groups.

Pressure on pirates at sea needs to continue on land. The EU is convinced that — in the long run — only the establishment of the rule of law and economic development will withdraw the breeding ground for organised crime in Somalia. Together with Somali authorities the EU will help to develop law enforcement capacities, both coastal and land, that support the authority of the state across the country. All three Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions (EUNAVFOR ATALANTA, EUCAP Nestor and EU Training Mission (EUTM)) are supporting this objective. One important element of such a 'paradigm shift' towards more land-based EU action would be a more focused approach to target not only financial flows but also seek out the 'pirate kings', not just the foot soldiers.

EUNAVFOR ATALANTA reported a case of 'sham protection' in October 2012 when a Somali Security team left the ship they were supposed to be protecting. The vessel was boarded by a pirate action group during the night but nothing happened in the end as the pirate group left, probably for fear of being arrested.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-000438/13
aan de Commissie
Bart Staes (Verts/ALE)
(16 januari 2013)

Betreft: Begrotingen ten koste van de waterconsument en die in strijd zijn met het kostenterugwinningsprincipe uit de kaderrichtlijn water (2000/60/EG)

In Vlaanderen wordt een deel van de infrastructuur van de Vlaamse Milieu Maatschappij verkocht aan Aquafin (20 miljoen euro). Aquafin leent hiervoor geld op de markt en betaalt die lening terug (voor een deel) met het geld dat consumenten betalen via de waterfactuur. De waterconsument betaalt dus twee keer voor de infrastructuur: via de algemene belastingen + via de waterfactuur (afbetaling van die lening). Daarnaast komen er nog kosten voor de transfer en de lening zelf bij.

Deze manier van handelen is al bezig sinds de begroting 2010 op Vlaams niveau (voor een bedrag van ongeveer 150 miljoen euro), maar wordt ook toegepast tussen de gemeentes en de intercommunales. Er wordt een milieubelasting misbruikt om de gaten in de begrotingen te dichten, in plaats van het geld in te zetten voor onderhoud van de infrastructuur.

Is deze manier van werken niet in strijd met het kostenterugwinningsprincipe uit de kaderrichtlijn water (2000/60/EG) of in strijd met andere EU-regels?

Wat kan de EU doen aan deze niet-duurzame manier van werken?

Antwoord van de heer Potočnik namens de Commissie
(6 maart 2013)

Artikel 9 van de kaderrichtlijn water ([1]) vereist onder andere dat de diverse watergebruikssectoren (huishoudens, bedrijven en landbouw) een redelijke bijdrage leveren aan de terugwinning van kosten van waterdiensten, rekening houdend met het beginsel dat de vervuiler betaalt. Waterdiensten zijn alle diensten die ten behoeve van huishoudens, openbare instellingen en andere economische actoren voorzien in de onttrekking, opstuwing, opslag, behandeling en distributie van water, alsmede installaties voor de verzameling en behandeling van afvalwater.

Mits er rekening wordt gehouden met het beginsel dat de vervuiler betaalt, biedt artikel 9 de lidstaten de mogelijkheid om besluiten te nemen over de bijdrage van watergebruikssectoren aan de terugwinning van kosten van waterdiensten, de lokale omstandigheden in acht nemend. Daarnaast verbiedt het artikel niet dat lidstaten belastingen gebruiken voor andere doeleinden dan de terugwinning van kosten voor waterdiensten.

([1]) Richtlijn 2000/60/EG, PB L 327 van 22.12.2000.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000438/13
to the Commission
Bart Staes (Verts/ALE)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Budgets at the expense of water consumers that conflict with the cost recovery principle of the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)

In Flanders, a part of the Flemish Environment Agency's (VMM) infrastructure is being sold to Aquafin for EUR 20 million. In order to do this, Aquafin is borrowing money on the market and repaying the loan (in part) with the money consumers pay their water bills with. The water consumer thus pays twice for the infrastructure: through general taxation and through the water bill (repayment of the loan). On top of that, there are also costs for the transfer and the loan itself.

This way of doing business has been in operation since the 2010 budget at the Flemish level (for an amount of approximately EUR 150 million), and is also being applied between municipal councils and local authorities. An environmental tax is being misused to fill the gaps in the budgets, instead of being used for infrastructure maintenance.

Does this practice not conflict with the cost recovery principle of the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) or other EU rules?

What can the EU do about this unsustainable practice?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(6 March 2013)

Article 9 of the Water Framework Directive ([1]) requires, *inter-alia*, that Member States ensure an adequate contribution of the different water uses (industry, households and agriculture) to the recovery of the costs of water services, taking into account the polluter pays principle. Water services are all those services which provide — for households, public institutions or any economic activity — abstraction, impoundment, storage, treatment and distribution of water, as well as waste-water collection and treatment facilities.

Provided the polluter pays principle is taken into account, Article 9 allows Member States to decide on the adequacy of the contribution by water uses to cost recovery of water services taking into account local conditions. It also does not prevent Member States from relying on taxation through water bills for other purposes than cost-recovery of water services.

([1]) Directive 2000/60/EC, OJ L 327, 22.12.2000.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-000439/13
au Conseil
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(16 janvier 2013)

Objet: Ivoire et non application de la réglementation CITES

Le Parlement a récemment dénoncé la non-application de la réglementation de la CITES. Dans un des rapports soumis en session plénière, il est demandé au Conseil d'encourager la création d'un dispositif de certification et de contrôle des importations d'ivoire dans l'Union européenne, inspiré de la réussite du processus de Kimberley.

Le Conseil compte-t-il donner suite? Si oui, de quelle manière?

Réponse
(15 avril 2013)

Comme le sait l'Honorable Parlementaire, la Convention sur le commerce international des espèces de faune et de flore sauvages menacées d'extinction (CITES), à laquelle l'Union n'est pas partie contractante, est néanmoins mise en œuvre dans l'Union par le règlement (CE) n° 338/97 du Conseil du 9 décembre 1996 relatif à la protection des espèces de faune et de flore sauvages par le contrôle de leur commerce ([1]).

C'est à la Commission, dans le cadre de son initiative législative, qu'il appartiendrait de décider, si nécessaire, des mesures qu'il conviendrait de prendre pour l'avenir en ce qui concerne la question évoquée par l'Honorable Parlementaire. Le Conseil examinera alors avec beaucoup d'attention les propositions qui émaneraient de la Commission à ce propos.

([1]) JO L 61 du 3.3.1997, p. 1.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000439/13
to the Council
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Ivory and lack of implementation of the CITES regulations

Parliament recently denounced the lack of implementation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) regulations. In one of the reports tabled in plenary, the Council was called on to promote the creation of a system of certification and control of ivory imports into the European Union, similar to the successful Kimberley process.

Does the Council intend to do this? If so, how?

Reply
(15 April 2013)

As the Honourable Member is aware, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES), to which the Union is not a contracting party, is nonetheless implemented in the Union by Council Regulation (EC) No 338/97 of 9 December 1996 on the protection of species of wild fauna and flora by regulating trade therein ([1]).

It would be for the Commission — in the context of its legislative initiative — to take, if necessary, the appropriate decisions for future action on the issue the Honourable Member refers to. The Council would examine with great attention any proposals that might come from the Commission on this subject.

([1]) OJ L 61, 3.3.1997, p. 1.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-000440/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(16 janvier 2013)

Objet: Ivoire et non-application de la réglementation CITES

Le Parlement a récemment dénoncé la non-application de la réglementation de la CITES. Dans un des rapports soumis en session plénière, il est demandé à la Commission d'encourager la création d'un dispositif de certification et de contrôle des importations d'ivoire dans l'Union européenne, inspiré de la réussite du processus de Kimberley.

La Commission compte-t-elle donner suite? Si oui, de quelle manière?

Réponse donnée par M. Potočnik au nom de la Commission
(14 mars 2013)

La convention CITES, mise en œuvre dans l'UE par le règlement (CE) n° 338/97 du Conseil relatif à la protection des espèces de faune et de flore sauvages ([1]), interdit le commerce international de l'ivoire.

Tant que cette interdiction s'applique, il n'est pas nécessaire d'élaborer un système de certification et de contrôle des importations d'ivoire dans l'UE.

Les parties à la convention CITES œuvrent à la mise en place d'un «mécanisme décisionnel régissant le commerce de l'ivoire» établissant les conditions d'un éventuel commerce de l'ivoire à l'avenir. Ces travaux sont toujours en cours. Ils devraient être achevés lors de la 17e session de la conférence des parties à la convention CITES, prévue pour 2016.

([1]) JO L 061 du 3.3.1997.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000440/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Ivory and lack of implementation of the CITES regulations

Parliament recently denounced the lack of implementation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) regulations. In one of the reports tabled in plenary, the Commission was called on to promote the creation of a system of certification and control of ivory imports into the European Union, similar to the successful Kimberley process.

Does the Commission intend to do this? If so, how?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(14 March 2013)

International trade in ivory is prohibited under the CITES Convention, which is implemented within the EU through Council Regulation (EC) No 338/97 ([1]) on the protection of species of wild fauna and flora.

As long as this prohibition is in place, there is no need for the creation of any system of certification and control of ivory imports into the EU.

The Parties to the CITES Convention have been working on the establishment of a 'Decision-making mechanism for a process of trade in ivory', which would set out the conditions under which possible trade in ivory could occur in the future. This work has not been finalised yet. It is expected that it will be concluded at the 17th Conference of the Parties to the CITES Convention which should take place in 2016.

([1]) OJ L 061 , 3.3.1997.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-000441/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(16 janvier 2013)

Objet: Évaluation des soldes structurels des États membres

Pour plus de transparence et une compréhension plus aisée, la Commission envisage-t-elle la publication de la méthode qu'elle utilise pour évaluer les soldes structurels des États membres, ainsi que les changements opérés dans cette méthode depuis 2008 et l'incidence de ces changements sur l'évaluation des soldes structurels des États membres?

Réponse donnée par M. Rehn au nom de la Commission
(28 février 2013)

La Commission va publier la méthode qu'elle utilise pour évaluer les soldes budgétaires corrigés des variations conjoncturelles des États membres dans sa série *European Economy*. Cette publication sera disponible avant la fin de mars 2013 et tiendra compte des améliorations méthodologiques apportées récemment au cadre de l'UE pour la surveillance budgétaire.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000441/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Assessment of Member States' structural balances

Does the Commission intend to publish its methodology underpinning the assessment of Member States' structural balances, as well as the changes introduced in this methodology since 2008 and the impact of those changes on the assessment of Member States' structural balances, so as to improve transparency and facilitate understanding?

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

The Commission will publish the methodology underpinning the assessment of the Member States' cyclically-adjusted budget balances in its European Economy series. The publication will be released by the end of March 2013 and will include the recent methodological improvements used in the EU's framework of fiscal surveillance.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000442/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Marina Yannakoudakis (ECR)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Ahwazi Arab minority prisoners sentenced to death by the Iranian High Revolutionary Court in Tehran

I have been contacted by one of my London constituents, who has expressed grave concern that the prisoners Mokhtar Alboshoka, Jabber Alboshoka, Hadi Rashedi, Hashem Shabani and Mohammad Ali Amoori have all been sentenced to death by the Iranian High Revolutionary Court in Tehran.

Could the European External Action Service (EEAS) please explain what measures it has taken, or intends to take, in response in order to urgently help these five Ahwazi Arab minority prisoners avoid the death penalty by quashing the grossly unfair verdict against them?

In its response, could the EEAS please take the following points into account:

— The situation is now very critical, since the High Court in Tehran very recently confirmed the sentence, despite Amnesty International's Urgent Actions identifying the prisoners' plight and the July 2012 report by Human Rights Watch.

— A revolutionary court allegedly convicted the men without transparency and behind closed doors on terrorism-related charges that carry the death penalty, and there is little information available about the evidence used against the men, except for televised confessions.

— The men's lawyers and family members have been denied access to visit them in detention.

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

The HR/VP is very concerned about the death sentences recently reaffirmed against five Ahwazi Arab men in Iran, and follows further developments very closely. She issued a statement on these cases on 29 January, where she urged the Iranian authorities to commute the death sentences. She also expressed her concern over reports that the men had not received fair trials, and reminded the Iranian authorities of their obligations to uphold the civil and political rights of all of its citizens, including ethnic minorities.

In line with the EU's strong and principled position against the death penalty, the High Representative continues to call upon the Iranian authorities to introduce a moratorium and halt all pending executions.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000443/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(16 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Prohibición del despido en empresas con superávit

Desde el inicio de la crisis financiera internacional el desempleo en la Unión Europea ha crecido hasta alcanzar los insostenibles niveles actuales. El número de trabajadores despedidos no deja de crecer, especialmente en los países del sur de Europa, impulsado por las reformas laborales fomentadas por las instituciones europeas.

Este drama del desempleo, paradójicamente, no es consecuencia solamente del fracaso económico y la quiebra de las empresas europeas, ya que son numerosos los despidos en grandes empresas que obtienen cuantiosos beneficios económicos con su actividad y, simplemente, están aprovechando el cambio en las condiciones laborales para «deslocalizar» su producción.

Así, en España son numerosos los casos de este tipo desde la aprobación de la última reforma laboral puesto que abarata el despido de forma escandalosa. Empresas con importantes beneficios como Telefónica, Asea Brown Boveri, etc., están aprovechando las facilidades para destruir empleo a través de expedientes de regulación de empleo. Estas empresas cargan el coste del desempleo de sus trabajadores a las arcas públicas mientras mejoran aún más su cuenta de resultados. El Gobierno de España trató de intervenir el pasado octubre, obligando a que dichas empresas con beneficios paguen parte de las cotizaciones en el caso de despidos masivos, pero el drama que viven sus trabajadores lanzados directamente al desempleo y a la pobreza no es retribuido de ninguna manera. En el caso de España, con una tasa de desempleo del 26,6 % según Eurostat, el despido supone con certeza una importante carencia económica que puede conllevar la pobreza y la exclusión social para muchos trabajadores.

En una crisis económica como la que atraviesa Europa, marcada por el masivo desempleo, resulta incomprensible que las diferentes legislaciones nacionales, así como las recomendaciones específicas elaboradas por la Comisión, sostengan marcos legales que permiten el despido en empresas rentables, obviando la necesidad de trabajar para una mayor protección de los trabajadores, sobre todo en contextos laborales donde sí es posible conservar sus puestos por existir beneficios.

— ¿Está la Comisión contemplando en sus recomendaciones específicas que los Estados miembros prohíban el despido de trabajadores en las empresas con superávit?

— ¿Plantea la Comisión desarrollar normativa para evitar que las empresas que operen con beneficios puedan despedir a trabajadores?

Respuesta del Sr. Andor en nombre de la Comisión
(13 de marzo de 2013)

La Comisión no tiene la intención de recomendar a los Estados miembros que prohiban el despido de los trabajadores en las empresas con superávit.

La Comisión no está facultada para interferir en las decisiones de las empresas de despedir a sus trabajadores. No obstante, la legislación de la UE ([1]) establece que los empleadores deben informar y consultar a los representantes de los trabajadores antes de proceder a despidos colectivos. Dicha consulta incluye medios para evitar los despidos, o reducir su número, y para mitigar sus consecuencias con medidas sociales de acompañamiento.

La Comisión insta a las empresas y las partes interesadas a que anticipen las necesidades de cualificación y formación de su mano de obra y lleven a cabo las reestructuraciones de manera socialmente responsable. Tras la adopción en enero de 2012 del Libro Verde ([2]) sobre reestructuración y previsión del cambio, la Comisión decidirá qué medidas son necesarias para garantizar de la mejor manera posible su aplicación.

([1]) En particular, la Directiva 98/59/CE, de 20 de julio de 1998, relativa a la aproximación de las legislaciones de los Estados miembros que se refieren a los despidos colectivos, DO L 225 de 12.8.1998.

([2]) «Reestructuración y previsión del cambio: ¿qué lecciones sacar de la experiencia reciente? », COM(2012) 7 final de 17 de enero de 2012.

La Comisión también puede apoyar a las empresas inmersas en importantes procesos de reestructuración y a sus trabajadores a través del Fondo Social Europeo y el Fondo Europeo de Adaptación a la Globalización, de conformidad con las normas que los rigen. Es posible asimismo movilizar el Fondo Europeo de Desarrollo Regional y el Fondo Europeo de Inversiones cuando se cumplen las condiciones para ello.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000443/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Banning profitable companies from dismissing workers

Since the start of the international financial crisis, unemployment in the EU has grown to its current unsustainable levels. The number of workers being laid off continues to grow, especially in southern European countries, driven by labour reforms promoted by the European institutions.

Paradoxically, this unemployment predicament is not solely down to the economic failure and bankruptcy of European companies; major companies operating at a substantial profit have laid off countless workers and, quite simply, are using the change in labour conditions to 'outsource' their production.

Spain has seen many such cases, since the adoption of the latest labour reform, which scandalously makes dismissal cheaper. Companies making hefty profits, such as Telefónica and Asea Brown Boveri, are using the opportunity to cut jobs by dismissing workers. The public coffers fund the cost of the workers' unemployment, while the companies further improve their own income statements. The Spanish Government tried to intervene last October, by forcing profitable companies to pay part of the costs in the event of mass layoffs; however, the plight of workers plunged directly into unemployment and poverty is not remunerated in any way. In the case of Spain, which has an unemployment rate of 26.6 % according to Eurostat, dismissal is undoubtedly a major economic issue which can lead to poverty and social exclusion for many workers.

In an economic crisis such as that sweeping Europe, marked by mass unemployment, it is incomprehensible that the different national laws and the Commission's specific recommendations should uphold legal frameworks that enable profitable companies to dismiss workers, making obvious the need for greater worker protection, especially in situations where jobs could be retained due to profit being made.

— In its specific recommendations, will the Commission suggest that Member States ban profitable companies from dismissing workers?

— Does it plan to establish rules to prevent companies operating at a profit from being able to dismiss workers?

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

The Commission does not intend recommending that the Member States prohibit profitable companies from dismissing workers.

The Commission has no powers to interfere in companies' decisions to dismiss their workers. However, EC law ([1]) provides that employers are to inform and consult employees' representatives before they decide to carry out collective redundancies. Such consultation covers ways of avoiding redundancies, or reducing their number, and of mitigating their consequences through accompanying social measures.

The Commission urges companies and stakeholders to anticipate skills and training needs for their workforce and carry out restructuring in a socially responsible way. Following the Commission's January 2012 Green Paper ([2]) on restructuring and anticipation of change, The Commission will decide soon on how best a follow-up to this Green Paper could be ensured.

The Commission can also provide support for enterprises undergoing major restructuring and for their workers through the European Social Fund and the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, in accordance with the rules governing them. Support from the European Regional Development Fund and the European Investment Fund can also be mobilised where the required conditions are met.

([1]) In particular, Council Directive 98/59/EC of 20 July 1998 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to collective redundancies, OJ L 225, 12.8.1998.

([2]) 'Restructuring and anticipation of change: what lessons from recent experience?' (COM(2012) 7 final of 17 January 2012).

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000444/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(16 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Mal uso de Fondos Europeos en Palencia (España)

En el municipio español de Palencia, el Ayuntamiento está tratando de cambiar el uso de un parque urbano construido con la participación de los Fondos FEDER. Se trata del parque Ribera Sur de Palencia que fue financiado al 70 % con fondos europeos para ser destinado al recreo y uso público de la ciudadanía palentina.

La construcción del parque se aprobó con el II plan de Riberas Urbanas de Palencia en 2004, que acondicionó una zona en la ribera izquierda del río Carrión con un gran espacio verde. Este espacio ha sido utilizado durante años por la ciudadanía como un parque público que ha permitido desarrollar actividades de recreo o descanso.

El actual Ayuntamiento de Palencia ha decidido convertir dicha área verde en una ampliación del cercano Campo de Golf Municipal, limitando el disfrute de la zona a las personas federadas al golf. Este cambio de uso y limitación de su acceso supone la utilización de bienes construidos con la participación de los Fondos FEDER para fines diferentes de los acordados en el proyecto original. Así, lo que fue diseñado y financiado como un espacio de esparcimiento de la población se convertirá en un centro para la práctica de un deporte exclusivo.

El Ayuntamiento alega que, pasados los cinco años de la inversión en dicho proyecto, ya ha finalizado la obligación municipal de seguir destinando esa zona de la ribera del río recuperada con fondos FEDER para uso y disfrute de la ciudadanía como parque público y que por tanto, ahora puede ser destinado a otro tipo de fines sin suponer incumplimiento alguno del proyecto original.

1. ¿Está la Comisión informada sobre las intenciones del Ayuntamiento de Palencia de convertir el citado parque en la ampliación del Campo de Golf y piensa investigar este proyecto?

2. ¿Considera la Comisión que el citado cambio de uso del parque Ribera Sur de Palencia respeta las condiciones de cofinanciación de los Fondos FEDER?

3. En caso de que esta decisión municipal contravenga la normativa europea, ¿qué medidas pretende desarrollar la Comisión para impedir el proyecto de transformación del citado parque en la ampliación del Campo de Golf Municipal?

Respuesta del Sr. Hahn en nombre de la Comisión
(18 de marzo de 2013)

1. La Comisión no dispone de información relativa a la construcción de un campo de golf en un emplazamiento de Palencia (España) inicialmente previsto como parque de la ribera del río y cofinanciado por el Fondo Europeo de Desarrollo Regional (FEDER) para el periodo 2000-2006.

2. y 3. La Comisión debe aclarar que, aunque el desarrollo de dicho campo de golf pueda modificar de manera significativa la naturaleza del plan inicial en caso de seguir adelante, esta institución carece de base jurídica que le permita oponerse según los términos del FEDER.

Los programas cofinanciados por los fondos europeos se rigen por el principio de gestión descentralizada y compartida entre las autoridades nacionales y regionales. Por consiguiente, corresponde a las autoridades españolas seleccionar los proyectos que consideran convenientes con arreglo a dichos programas y de conformidad con la normativa vigente.

En el caso a que hace referencia Su Señoría, ha de tenerse en cuenta que las disposiciones legales no suponen ningún compromiso de mantener la inversión una vez transcurridos los cinco primeros años. Dado que la construcción de este parque y su cofinanciación por parte del FEDER se aprobaron en 2004, la Comisión no puede impedir que este proyecto siga adelante.

Para el futuro, la Comisión no propone que se modifique esta norma, si bien el Parlamento está a favor de aumentar del periodo a diez años.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000444/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: Misuse of EU Funds in Palencia (Spain)

The Council of the Spanish town of Palencia is trying to change the use of an urban park co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The Parque Ribera Sur de Palencia (Palencia South Bank Park) was 70 % financed using EU funds and was designated as a public recreational area for local residents.

The park's construction was approved under the II Palencia Urban Riverside Plan in 2004, with an area on the left bank of the River Carrión turned into a large green space. For years, this space has been used as a public park, enabling residents to enjoy recreational and leisure activities.

The current Palencia Council has decided to convert this green space into an extension of the nearby Municipal Golf Course, limiting enjoyment of the area to golfers. This change in use and access limitation involves using facilities co-financed by the ERDF for purposes other than those agreed in the original project. What was therefore designed and funded as a public recreational area will become a centre for practising an exclusive sport.

The Council argues that, after five years of investment in the project, it has fulfilled its municipal obligation to designate this restored riverbank area, co-financed by the ERDF, as a public park to be used and enjoyed by residents and, as such, it can now assign it to other purposes without any breach of the original project.

1. Is the Commission aware of the Palencia Council's intentions to convert this park into an extension of the golf course and will it investigate this project?

2. Does it believe that this change in use of the Parque Ribera Sur de Palencia complies with the ERDF co-financing conditions?

3. Should this municipal decision contravene EC law, what measures will the Commission take to prevent this park from being converted into an extension of the Municipal Golf Course?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(18 March 2013)

1. The Commission has no information concerning the construction of a golf course on a site in Palencia (Spain) that was previously designated as a riverside park and co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) for the period 2000-2006.

2-3. The Commission must point out that, while the development of this golf course could substantially change the nature of the initial plan were it to go ahead, there is no legal basis for the Commission to oppose it on the terms of the ERDF.

Programmes co-financed by the European funds are governed by the principle of decentralised management, shared between the national and regional authorities. It therefore falls to the Spanish authorities to select those projects which they consider suitable under these programmes and in accordance with the regulations in force.

In the case the Honourable Member refers to, it should be borne in mind that the legal provisions do not entail any commitment to maintain the investment beyond the first five years. Given that the construction of this park and its co-financing by the ERDF were approved in 2004, the Commission cannot prevent this project from going ahead.

For the future, the Commission does not propose to change this rule, though the Parliament is supporting an increase of the period to 10 years.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-000445/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(16 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Οι «κοινωνικές μεταβιβάσεις» ως αναγκαίο εργαλείο αντιμετώπισης φαινομένων ακραίας φτώχειας

Στο πλαίσιο πρόσφατης έρευνας της Ελληνικής Στατιστικής Αρχής (ΕΛ.ΣΤΑΤ.) για τις «Συνθήκες Διαβίωσης στην Ελλάδα» επισημαίνεται η σημαντικότατη αύξηση του αριθμού των Ελλήνων που απειλούνται από τον κίνδυνο της φτώχειας ενώ υπογραμμίζεται ότι η συσχέτισή της με την «εκτίναξη» του ποσοστού ανεργίας διαμορφώνει μια «εκρηκτική» κοινωνική κατάσταση. Την ίδια στιγμή, οι «κοινωνικές μεταβιβάσεις» (οικογενειακά επιδόματα, επιδόματα ή βοηθήματα ανεργίας, αναπηρίας, ασθένειας, ανικανότητας, ενισχύσεις κατοίκων ορεινών και μειονεκτουσών περιοχών) περιγράφονται ως αναγκαίο «ανάχωμα» στην ένταση και έκταση της κοινωνικής κρίσης. Σε αυτήν την κατεύθυνση, και με δεδομένο τον κορυφαίο κοινωνικό στόχο της «Στρατηγικής Ευρώπη 2020» για το δραστικό περιορισμό της φτώχειας στην Ένωση, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Έχει λάβει γνώση των αποτελεσμάτων της εν λόγω έρευνας;

2. Πώς αξιολογεί την αναγκαιότητα των συγκεκριμένων κοινωνικών-προνοιακών παροχών μέσα στις έκτακτες κοινωνικές συνθήκες που βιώνουν οι Έλληνες πολίτες;

3. Υπάρχουν διαθέσιμα κονδύλια από τα Ευρωπαϊκά Διαρθρωτικά Ταμεία για τη χρηματοδότηση δράσεων αντίστοιχου περιεχομένου;

4. Διαθέτει στατιστικά στοιχεία για τα ποσοστά απορροφητικότητας των κρατών-μελών είτε για την υλοποίηση είτε για την κάλυψη κοινωνικών μεταβιβάσεων;

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

1. Η ΕΛ.ΣΤΑΤ παράγει ευρωπαϊκές στατιστικές για το εισόδημα και τις συνθήκες διαβίωσης ([1]) συντονιζόμενες από την Eurostat. Η Επιτροπή είναι ενήμερη για τα εν λόγω δεδομένα και τα χρησιμοποιεί για να προτείνει και να παρακολουθεί τις κοινωνικές πολιτικές των κρατών μελών.

2. Η κρίση έχει αυξήσει την εξάρτηση από τις κοινωνικές παροχές με τους αυτόματους σταθεροποιητές να έρχονται στο προσκήνιο εν μέσω ύφεσης. Η Ελλάδα καταβάλλει προσπάθεια στο πλαίσιο του Προγράμματος Οικονομικής Προσαρμογής για την προστασία του εισοδήματος και της ευημερίας των πλέον ευπαθών κοινωνικών ομάδων. Μέρος της εν λόγω προσπάθειας αποτελούν μέτρα όπως ο νόμος 3869/2010 για την προστασία των υπερχρεωμένων νοικοκυριών και ο νόμος 4093/2012, ο οποίος προβλέπει σύστημα εγγύησης ελάχιστου εισοδήματος, σε μία προσπάθεια ενδυνάμωσης των μηχανισμών κοινωνικής ασφάλειας. Επιπλέον, το συγχρηματοδοτούμενο από το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινωνικό Ταμείο ([2]) επιχειρησιακό πρόγραμμα για την ανάπτυξη του ανθρώπινου δυναμικού χρηματοδοτεί την αναθεώρηση των κοινωνικών προγραμμάτων βάσει μελέτης του ΟΟΣΑ, στοχεύοντας στην πιο αποτελεσματική αντιμετώπιση της φτώχειας στην Ελλάδα, όπου έως τώρα οι κοινωνικές παροχές έχουν καταφέρει να τη μειώσουν στο 13,7%, ενώ σε επίπεδο ΕΕ κυμαίνεται κατά μέσο όρο στο 35,2% ([3]).

3. Το ΕΚΤ υποστηρίζει διάφορα ενεργητικά μέτρα ([4]) για τη βελτίωση της απασχολησιμότητας, όμως δεν μπορεί να συγχρηματοδοτήσει τις κοινωνικές παροχές αυτές καθ'εαυτές. Ωστόσο, χάρη στον συνολικό προϋπολογισμό του ΕΚΤ για την Ελλάδα ύψους περίπου 4,4 δισεκατομμυρίων ευρώ για την περίοδο 2007-13, το ΕΚΤ παρέχει σημαντική βοήθεια σε ευπαθείς κοινωνικές ομάδες, διευκολύνοντας την ενσωμάτωσή τους στην κοινωνία και την αγορά εργασίας. Η Επιτροπή είναι πρόθυμη να εξετάσει από κοινού με τις ελληνικές αρχές τους τρόπους με τους οποίους η Ελλάδα μπορεί να χρησιμοποιήσει καλύτερα τα κοινοτικά κονδύλια.

4. Η Eurostat συγκεντρώνει και δημοσιεύει τις ακόλουθες στατιστικές για τις κοινωνικές παροχές στα κράτη μέλη:

— Τις κοινοτικές στατιστικές για το εισόδημα και τις συνθήκες διαβίωσης (EU-SILC), ιδίως όσες αφορούν την επίδραση των κοινωνικών παροχών στη φτώχεια,

([1]) Κοινοτικές στατιστικές για το εισόδημα και τις συνθήκες διαβίωσης (EU-SILC).
([2]) ΕΚΤ.
([3]) http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc_li10&lang=en και http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=t2020_52
([4]) Κανονισμός (ΕΚ) αριθ. 1081/2006 του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου και του Συμβουλίου, της 5ης Ιουλίου 2006, για το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινωνικό Ταμείο και την κατάργηση του κανονισμού (ΕΚ) αριθ. 1784/1999 (ΕΕ L 210 της 31.7.2006).

— Το ευρωπαϊκό σύστημα στατιστικών για την κοινωνική προστασία,

— Τους εθνικούς λογαριασμούς, στους οποίους παρουσιάζονται αναλυτικά όλες οι δημόσιες δαπάνες.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000445/13
to the Commission
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: 'Social transfers' — a necessary tool for addressing extreme poverty

A recent survey by the Greek Statistical Authority (ELSTAT) on living conditions in Greece notes the very significant increase in the number of Greeks at risk from poverty. It stresses that, coupled with soaring unemployment, this is creating a highly volatile social situation. In this context, 'social transfers' (family allowances, unemployment, disability, illness and invalidity benefits or allowances, and assistance for residents of mountainous and disadvantaged areas) are seen as a necessary cushion reducing the intensity and extent of the social crisis. Given this situation and given also the paramount social objective of the 'Europe 2020 strategy', namely drastically to reduce poverty in the EU, will the Commission say:

1. Is it aware of the findings of this survey?

2. How does it assess the need for specific social and welfare benefits under the extraordinary social conditions facing Greek citizens today?

3. Is any funding available from the European Structural Funds to finance actions in this area?

4. Does it have any statistics on take-up rates by Member States to implement and cover social transfers?

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

1. ELSTAT produces European statistics on income and living conditions ([1]) coordinated by Eurostat. The Commission is aware of these data and uses them to propose and monitor social policies in the Member-States.

2. The crisis has increased dependence on social transfers with automatic stabilisers coming into play during recession. Greece is making an effort under the Economic Adjustment Programme to protect the income and welfare of the most vulnerable. That includes also measures such as Law 3869/2010 to protect over-indebted households and Law 4093/2012 introducing a minimum income guarantee scheme in an effort to enhance social safety nets. In addition, the Human Resources Development operational programme co-financed by the European Social Fund ([2]) is funding a review of social programmes on the basis of an OECD study with a view to increasing their impact in reducing poverty in Greece, where the impact of social transfers in reducing poverty currently stands at 13.7% compared with an EU average of 35.2% ([3]).

3. The ESF supports active measures ([4]) to improve employability, but cannot co-finance social transfers as such. However, thanks to the overall ESF budget for Greece of almost EUR 4.4 billion for the 2007-13 period, the ESF provides significant assistance to vulnerable groups by facilitating their social and labour-market integration. The Commission is willing to discuss with the Greek authorities the ways for Greece to better utilise EU funds.

4. Eurostat compiles and publishes the following statistics on social transfers in Member States:

— the EU-SILC, in particular those on the effect of social transfers on poverty;

— the European System for social protection statistics;

— the national accounts, which detail all public expenditure.

([1]) EU SILC.
([2]) ESF.
([3]) http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc_li10&lang=en and http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=t2020_52
([4]) Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the European Social Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1784/1999, OJ L 210, 31.7.2006.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-000446/13
to the Commission
Nessa Childers (S&D)
(16 January 2013)

Subject: EU meat labelling rules

Will the Commission consider introducing stronger EU meat labelling rules following the recent horsemeat scandal in Irish and British markets?

We need an examination of the case of horsemeat traces found in Irish processed meat products, and must bring forward stronger legislation if necessary.

If, as it seems, some of the meat additive suppliers were from European plants, this shows how EU rules on meat traceability and labelling are not strong enough. That 27 % of meat tested in one burger was horsemeat is shocking to all consumers. It is very serious then that this product was exported under an Irish meat label, which is a brand of quality around the world.

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(14 February 2013)

Under the existing EU food labelling legislation ([1]), the sale names of meat preparations which only suggest the presence of beef meat where, in fact, also other species of meat are present, are to be considered as misleading and breaching the EU legislation. Similarly, labelling of meat products containing horse meat/protein used for their preparation infringes the EU legislation, if the presence of such substances is not mentioned in the list of ingredients. Moreover, if an ingredient is mentioned in the name of the food, its quantity expressed as percentage has to be provided in the list of ingredients. These requirements, when correctly enforced, are sufficient to ensure that consumers receive correct and complete information about the characteristics and composition of meat products.

In addition, the new Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 ([2]) requires that, when meat products/preparations contain added proteins as such, of a different animal origin, their names shall indicate the presence of those proteins and of their origin. The new rules will apply from 13 December 2014.

The enforcement of the EU food legislation, including traceability requirements, is the responsibility of the competent authorities of the Member States. They shall verify, through the organisation of official controls, that the EU rules are fulfilled by food business operators.

The Commission is in close contact with the Irish authorities and is kept informed about the investigations launched in this regard. Member States' enforcers have all the elements necessary to decide whether the information they collect during their official activities justifies an increased level of checks such as suggested by the Honourable Member.

([1]) Directive 2000/13/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 March 2000 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the labelling, presentation and advertising of foodstuffs, OJ L 109, 6.5.2000, p. 29.

([2]) Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011 on the provision of food information to consumers, amending Regulations (EC) No 1924/2006 and (EC) No 1925/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and repealing Commission Directive 87/250/EEC, Council Directive 90/496/EEC, Commission Directive 1999/10/EC, Directive 2000/13/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, Commission Directives 2002/67/EC and 2008/5/EC and Commission Regulation (EC) No 608/2004, OJ L 304, 22.11.2011, p.18.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord P-000447/13
aan de Commissie
Wim van de Camp (PPE)
(17 januari 2013)

Betreft: Wenselijkheid van een herordening van de bevoegdheden van de Europese Unie

In het Nederlandse regeerakkoord van het Kabinet Rutte 2 staat:

„Nederland vraagt de Europese Commissie te inventariseren, op basis van het beginsel van subsidiariteit, welke beleidsterreinen kunnen worden overgedragen aan nationale overheden en zal zelf ook voorstellen doen ([1])."

In de aanloop naar een veelbesproken toespraak van de Engelse Premier David Cameron op vrijdag 18 januari in Nederland, wordt ook duidelijk dat een herordening van de bevoegdheden van de Unie de komende jaren bovenaan de agenda komt te staan. Na het „money back" van oud minister-president Thatcher wil minister-president Cameron de geschiedenisboeken in gaan met „competencies back".

1. Heeft de Commissie het verzoek van de Nederlandse regering reeds ontvangen? Zo ja op welke termijn kunnen we een antwoord verwachten?

2. Zo niet kunt u aangeven of de Commissie de intentie heeft in haar huidige mandaat de discussie over de bevoegdheden tussen het nationale en Europese bestuur, zoals vastgelegd in het Verdrag van Lissabon, te voeren?

3. Vindt de Commissie het wenselijk om tot een duidelijkere verdeling van de bevoegdheden te komen?

4. Is de Commissie van mening dat er naast exclusieve Europese bevoegdheden ook exclusieve nationale bevoegdheden bestaan? Zo ja, welke zijn dat dan?

Antwoord van de heer Barroso namens de Commissie
(14 februari 2013)

De Commissie heeft dergelijk verzoek van de Nederlandse overheid niet ontvangen.

In het Verdrag van Lissabon worden de bevoegdheidsterreinen van de EU reeds duidelijk omschreven. In overeenstemming met het beginsel van de bevoegdheidstoedeling blijven de lidstaten bevoegd voor elk domein dat niet onder de bevoegdheid van de EU valt. De bevoegdheden van de EU worden uitgeoefend in overeenstemming met de beginselen van subsidiariteit en evenredigheid zoals die zijn vastgelegd in de Verdragen.

([1]) http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/regering/regeerakkoord/nederland-in-europa.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-000447/13
to the Commission
Wim van de Camp (PPE)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: Desirability of a review of EU competences

The Netherlands coalition agreement of the Second Rutte cabinet states that:

'The Netherlands will ask the European Commission to list the policy areas that, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, could be transferred to national governments. We will also make proposals ourselves' ([1]).

In the run-up to a much-discussed address by British Prime Minister David Cameron in the Netherlands on Friday, 18 January, it is becoming clear that a review of the Union's competences will rise to the top of the agenda in the coming years. After former Prime Minister Thatcher's 'money back', Prime Minister Cameron wants to enter the history books with 'competences back'.

1. Has the Commission already received the Netherlands government's request? If so, when can we expect an answer?

2. If not, can you indicate whether the Commission intends to conduct a discussion, during its current mandate, on the division of competences between national and European authorities, as enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty?

3. Does the Commission consider it desirable to arrive at a clearer division of competences?

4. Does the Commission believe that, alongside exclusive European competences, exclusive national competences should also exist? If so, which ones?

Answer given by Mr Barroso on behalf of the Commission
(14 February 2013)

The Commission has not received any such request from the Dutch authorities.

The Treaty of Lisbon defines already clearly the areas of competence of the EU. In accordance with the principle of conferral any area not falling within the EU competence remains in the domain of the Member States. EU competences are exercised in accordance with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality as set out in the Treaties.

([1]) http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/regering/regeerakkoord/nederland-in-europa

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung P-000448/13
an die Kommission
Richard Seeber (PPE)
(17. Januar 2013)

Betrifft: Gestaltung eines Systems von Nährwertprofilen gemäß Art. 4 der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1924/2006

Im Rahmen der vom Europäischen Parlament am 13. November 2012 veranstalteten Anhörung hat sich das damals noch designierte Mitglied der Kommission mit Zuständigkeit für Gesundheit, Tonio Borg, klar dafür ausgesprochen, die Gestaltung eines Systems von Nährwertprofilen gemäß Artikel 4 der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1924/2006 voranzutreiben. Zum gegenwärtigen Zeitpunkt sind dem Europäischen Parlament keine Fortschritte bei dieser Thematik bekannt.

1. Wann plant die Kommission, ihren Vorschlag für ein System der Nährwertprofile vorzulegen?

2. Welche Probleme traten in den letzten Monaten bei der Erarbeitung dieses Vorschlags auf?

3. Gibt es potenzielle Interessenkonflikte von Bediensteten der Kommission bezüglich der Gestaltung der Nährwertprofile?

Antwort von Herrn Borg im Namen der Kommission
(8. Februar 2013)

Die Kommission kann keine ausführliche Planung für die Festlegung von Nährwertprofilen vorschlagen, da die Erörterungen innerhalb der Kommission noch andauern.

Der Kommission liegen keine Informationen über einen Interessenskonflikt in diesem Bereich vor. Sollte ein Bediensteter/eine Bedienstete einem solchen unterliegen, ist er/sie verpflichtet, dies zu melden, damit die Anstellungsbehörde entsprechende Maßnahmen ergreifen kann ([1]).

([1]) Artikel 11a des Statuts der Beamten.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-000448/13
to the Commission
Richard Seeber (PPE)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: Design of a system of nutrient profiles under Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 1924/2006

During the hearing held by the European Parliament on 13 November 2012, the designated EU Commissioner for Health at the time, Tonio Borg, indicated his intention to press forward with the design of a system of nutrient profiles under Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 1924/2006. To date, the European Parliament is unaware of any progress in this area.

1. When does the Commission plan to put forward its proposal for a system of nutrient profiles?

2. What problems have been encountered in recent months during the drafting of this proposal?

3. Is there any potential for a conflict of interest among Commission officials in relation to the design of nutrient profiles?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(8 February 2013)

The Commission is not in a position to propose a detailed planning for the setting of nutrient profiles, since discussions are still ongoing within the Commission.

The Commission has not been informed of a situation of conflict of interest in this field. Should a member of staff face such a situation, he/she has the obligation to declare it in order for the appointing authority to take appropriate measures ([1]).

([1]) Art 11 a of the Staff Regulations.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-000449/13
do Komisji
Filip Kaczmarek (PPE)
(17 stycznia 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Zmiana regulacji na rynku telekomunikacyjnym UE

Na rynku telekomunikacyjnym Unii Europejskiej istnieje wiele odmiennych regulacji krajowych, które utrudniają operatorom dzielenie jednej sieci telekomunikacyjnej. Przekłada się to na trudności w budowie jednolitego rynku, wyrównywaniu opłat i zniesienia roamingu w UE. W sumie we wszystkich 27 państwach UE funkcjonuje ponad 100 operatorów sieci komórkowych.

Według informacji prasowych firmy telekomunikacyjne wyrażają niezadowolenie w związku z sytuacją na rynku i poszukują konstruktywnych pomysłów na sprawniejsze funkcjonowanie europejskiego rynku telekomunikacyjnego.

Zgodnie z wypowiedzią komisarz ds. agendy cyfrowej Neelie Kroes, Komisja Europejska pracuje nad szeregiem rozwiązań, mających na celu stworzenie w Unii wspólnych, stabilnych warunków do konkurencji, inwestycji i wzrostu w branży telekomunikacji, co powinno także zwiększyć atrakcyjność transgranicznych fuzji.

Zwracam się z zapytaniem:

1. Czy Komisja będzie wspierać działania mające na celu utworzenie jednolitych regulacji na rynku telekomunikacyjnym Unii Europejskiej?

2. Czy w prowadzonych w przyszłości działaniach Komisja będzie mieć na uwadze dążenie do obniżenia nieproporcjonalnie wysokich cen za połączenia telefoniczne do krajów Partnerstwa Wschodniego?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wiceprzewodniczącą Neelie Kroes w imieniu Komisji
(4 marca 2013 r.)

Jak zauważył Szanowny Pan Poseł, brak spójnej i stabilnej regulacji w całej Europie stanowi przeszkodę w zapewnieniu prawdziwego, jednolitego rynku.

Komisja podziela Pana opinię, że Europa potrzebuje dużo bardziej zintegrowanego jednolitego rynku łączności elektronicznej. W tym celu, zgodnie z deklaracją ([1]) Wiceprzewodniczącej Neelie Kroes, Komisja pracuje obecnie nad wnioskami legislacyjnymi mającymi na celu zapewnienie operatorom telekomunikacyjnym większej przewidywalności i przejrzystości, wspieranie konkurencji i zwiększanie inwestycji w zakresie łączy szerokopasmowych.

Bezpośrednimi wynikami działań zapowiedzianych w deklaracji politycznej będą m.in. przegląd rynków, które powinny zostać objęte regulacją w sposób skoordynowany, oraz bardziej zharmonizowane podejście regulacyjne do kluczowych elementów regulacji sieci dominujących operatorów w UE.

Jeśli chodzi o koszty międzynarodowych połączeń wykonywanych z danego kraju, Komisja zachęca kraje spoza UE do zajęcia się tą kwestią, na przykład w ramach Partnerstwa Wschodniego. Komisja wspiera w szczególności państwa Partnerstwa Wschodniego w ich działaniach na rzecz zbliżenia swoich ustawodawstw do ram regulacyjnych UE.

Chociaż poziom cen połączeń międzynarodowych nie jest regulowany na mocy prawa UE, ramy regulacyjne UE zapewniają krajowym organom regulacyjnym narzędzia do podejmowania działań ukierunkowanych na rozwiązanie problemów związanych z konkurencją w obrębie swoich rynków krajowych.

([1]) Deklaracja z dnia 12 lipca 2012 r.: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-12-554_pl.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000449/13
to the Commission
Filip Kaczmarek (PPE)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: Revising EU telecommunications market regulations

The EU telecommunications market is governed by a variety of divergent national regulations which make it difficult for operators to share a single telecommunications network. This translates into difficulties constructing a single market, levelling out charges and abolishing roaming within the EU. A total of more than 100 mobile network operators are currently operating in the 27 Member States.

According to press reports, telecommunications companies are dissatisfied with the state of affairs on the market and are seeking constructive ideas to enable the European telecommunications market to function more efficiently.

As stated by the Commissioner for the Digital Agenda, Neelie Kroes, the Commission is working on a series of solutions aimed at establishing common and stable conditions across the EU for competition, investment and growth in the telecommunications sector. This should also help make cross-border mergers more attractive.

1. Will the Commission give its backing to steps to establish uniform regulations on the EU's telecommunications market?

2. In its future activities, will the Commission take into consideration the objective ofreducing the disproportionally high charges levied on telephone calls to EasternPartnership countries?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(4 March 2013)

As pointed out by the Honourable Member the lack of consistent and stable regulation across Europe is an obstacle to ensuring a true single market.

The Commission shares your assessment that Europe needs a much more integrated single market for e-communications. To that end, further to the announcement ([1]) by the Vice-President Neelie Kroes, the Commission is currently working on regulatory proposals to bring more predictability and clarity to telecom operators, promote competition and enhance the broadband investments.

Among the immediate outputs of the announcement will be the review of markets that should be regulated in a coordinated manner and more harmonised regulatory approach of key elements for the regulation of the dominant operator's networks in the EU.

As regards the costs of international calls made from caller's own country, the Commission is encouraging the non-EU countries, for example within the Eastern Partnership, to address this issue. In particular, the Commission is supporting the Eastern Partnership countries in their work to approximate their laws to the EU regulatory framework.

Although the price levels of international calls are not regulated as such under the EC law, the EU regulatory framework provides National Regulatory authorities with tools to act in relation to any competition problems that exist within their national markets.

([1]) Statement of 12 July 2012, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-12-554_en.htm

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-000450/13
aan de Commissie
Kathleen Van Brempt (S&D)
(17 januari 2013)

Betreft: Rapport EFSA: bijensterfte en pesticides

Het voedselveiligheidsagentschap van de EU heeft vandaag een studie gepubliceerd waaruit blijkt dat de meeste gebruikte insecticiden een onaanvaardbaar risico inhouden voor de gezondheid van de bijen. In februari nog stelde ik een vraag over de massale bijensterfte en het eventuele verband met het gebruik van insecticiden ([1]) (E-001228/2012). De Commissie antwoordde dat het de resultaten van verschillende Europese onderzoeken afwachtte. Deze resultaten werden nu door de EFSA gepubliceerd ([2]).

De neonicotinoide-insecticides waarvan sprake is, zitten onder meer in het veelgebruikte imidacloporide, een product dat door Bayer wordt geproduceerd. Het product lag al langer onder vuur, maar bij gebrek aan sterk wetenschappelijk bewijs werden de verbanden tussen bijensterfte en insecticiden steeds geminimaliseerd. De EFSA besluit nu in haar rapport, dat tot stand kwam in samenwerking met experts uit heel Europa en meer dan 300 studies over bijensterfte onder de loep nam, dat imidacloporide enkel aanvaardbaar is als het gebruikt wordt op planten die minder aantrekkelijk zijn voor bijen. Het product houdt echter een „hoog risico in, of een hoog risico kon niet uitgesloten worden, in relatie tot sommige aspecten van het risico-assessment voor honingbijen," schrijft de EFSA, die verder stelt dat „de huidige regelgeving belangrijke zwaktes vertoont". Volgens de EFSA missen de risico-assessments ook belangrijke gegevens, die het mogelijk moeten maken de precieze risico's van neonicotinoïden in te schatten.

1. Hoe zal de Commissie omgaan met deze resultaten?

2. Worden de nodige procedures opgestart om (bepaalde) nu toegelaten neonicotinoïden te verbieden of hun gebruik te beperken? Zo ja, welke?

3. Zal de Commissie Imidacloperide van de markt weren?

4. Hoeveel tijd zou dat vragen?

5. Overweegt de Commissie om de manier waarop pesticides op de markt toegelaten worden te herzien?

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-000479/13
aan de Commissie
Bas Eickhout (Verts/ALE) en Bart Staes (Verts/ALE)
(17 januari 2013)

Betreft: Invloed neonicotinoiden op bijensterfte

De Europese Autoriteit voor voedselveiligheid (EFSA) concludeert uit onderzoek dat bepaalde pesticiden schadelijk zijn voor de gezondheid van honingbijen. Zie „EFSA identifies risks to bees from neonicotinoids" ([3]).

Het EFSA-rapport geeft aan dat bestrijdingsmiddelen als imidacloprid, clothianidine en thiamethoxam een belangrijke factor zijn in de bijensterfte. Bovendien concludeert de EFSA dat de manier waarop wordt beoordeeld of een bepaald bestrijdingsmiddel veilig tot de markt kan worden toegelaten, tot nu toe geen rekening houdt met deze schadelijke effecten op bijen.

Bas Eickhout riep samen met collega's op 10 februari 2012 al op, dit risico te erkennen en maatregelen te nemen (E-001297/2012) ([4]).

Op 2 maart 2012 antwoordde de Commissie op deze vraag over de invloed van pesticiden (neonicotinoiden) op bijensterfte onder andere:

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+WQ+E-2012-001228+0+DOC+XML+V0//NL.
([2]) http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/2668.htm
([3]) http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/press/news/130116.htm?utm_source=homepage & utm_medium=infocus & utm_campaign=beehealth.
([4]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fTEXT%2bWQ%2bE-2012-001297 %2b0 %2bDOC%2bXML%2bV0 %2f%2fNL&language=NL.

„Tot nu toe kon geen verband worden vastgesteld tussen neonicotinoïde insecticiden, wanneer die correct worden gebruikt, en het probleem van bijensterfte. Er zijn bijgevolg geen cijfers beschikbaar."

De EFSA erkent met zijn onderzoek het verband tussen neonicotinoïde insecticiden en het probleem van bijensterfte, waardoor de antwoorden op de eerder gestelde vragen bijgesteld kunnen worden.

1. Kan de Commissie meedelen of de lidstaten de nodige maatregelen hebben getroffen om aan Richtlijn 2010/21/EU te voldoen?

2. Kan de Commissie aan de hand van concrete cijfers aangeven of de vastgestelde rechtsnormen (bv. Richtlijn 2010/21/EU en Verordening (EG) nr. 1107/2009) toereikend zijn en de terugloop van het honingbijenbestand voorkomen?

3. Welke concrete maatregelen denkt de Commissie te nemen om honingbijen tegen neonicotinoïden te beschermen?

4. Is de Commissie bereid en in staat een moratorium op het gebruik van neonicotinoïden in te stellen totdat concrete wetgeving in werking treedt?

Antwoord van de heer Borg namens de Commissie

(11 maart 2013)

De Europese Autoriteit voor voedselveiligheid (EFSA) is op verzoek van de Commissie overgegaan tot toetsing van de risico-evaluatie voor bijen van de werkzame stoffen clothianidine, imidacloprid en thiamethoxam als pesticide ([5]).

In overeenstemming met Richtlijn 2010/21/EU van de Commissie ([6]) deden sommige lidstaten een uitgebreide monitoring. De Commissie is echter van mening dat de in deze richtlijn opgenomen risicobeperkende maatregelen niet volstaan om de door de EFSA in haar recente conclusies gesignaleerde risico's te ondervangen.

Daarom kondigde de Commissie al aan dat er snelle en evenredige maatregelen moeten worden genomen op EU-niveau.

Op 31 januari 2013 vond een eerste overleg met deskundigen van de lidstaten plaats bij het Permanent Comité voor de voedselketen en de diergezondheid.

Op 7 februari 2013 stelde de Commissie in het kader van een ad-hocvergadering van de Adviesgroep voor de voedselketen ontwerpmaatregelen voor aan alle belanghebbenden.

Vervolgens zal de Commissie zo spoedig mogelijk een definitieve ontwerpverordening ter advies voorleggen aan het Permanent Comité voor de voedselketen en de diergezondheid.

([5]) Europese Autoriteit voor voedselveiligheid, „Conclusion on the peer review of the pesticide risk assessment for bees for the active substance clothianidin", EFSA Journal 2013; 11(1):3066. [58 blz.] doi:10.2903/j.efsa.2013.3066.
„Conclusion on the peer review of the pesticide risk assessment for bees for the active substance imidacloprid", EFSA Journal 2013; 11(1):3068. [55 blz.] doi:10.2903/j.efsa.2013.
„Conclusion on the peer review of the pesticide risk assessment for bees for the active substance thiamethoxam", EFSA Journal 2013; 11(1):3067. (68 blz.). doi: 10.2903/j.efsa.2013.3067. Online beschikbaar op: www.efsa.europa.eu/efsajournal.htm

([6]) PB L 65 van 13.3.2010.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000450/13
to the Commission
Kathleen Van Brempt (S&D)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: EFSA report: bee mortality and pesticides

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has today published a study showing that the most widely used insecticides pose an unacceptable risk to the health of the bees. Last February, I asked a question about the massive levels of bee mortality and the possible connection with the use of insecticides (E-001228/2012) ([1]). The Commission replied that it was awaiting the results of various European studies. These results have now been published by EFSA ([2]).

The neonicotinoid insecticides at issue are present *inter alia* in Imidacloporid, a widely used product produced by Bayer. This product had already been under fire for some time but, in the absence of strong scientific evidence, the links between bee mortality and insecticides were always minimised. EFSA has now decided in its report, which was compiled in cooperation with experts from across Europe and looked at over 300 studies on bee mortality, that Imidacloporid is only acceptable if it is used on plants that are less attractive to bees. EFSA states, however, that 'a high risk was indicated or could not be excluded in relation to certain aspects of the risk assessment for honey bees', and that there are major weaknesses in the current legislation. According to EFSA, there is also some important information missing from the risk assessments that would make it possible to estimate the precise risks of neonicotinoids.

1. How will the Commission deal with these results?

2. Have the necessary procedures been launched to ban, or restrict the use of, (certain) neonicotinoids that are currently authorised? If so, which?

3. Will the Commission exclude Imidacloporid from the market?

4. How long would that take?

5. Does the Commission intend to change the rules on market authorisation for pesticides?

Question for written answer E-000479/13
to the Commission
Bas Eickhout (Verts/ALE) and Bart Staes (Verts/ALE)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: Impact of neonicotinoids on bee mortality

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) concludes from research that certain pesticides are harmful to the health of honey bees. See 'EFSA identifies risks to bees from neonicotinoids' ([3]).

The EFSA report states that pesticides such as imidacloprid, clothianidine and thiamethoxam are an important factor in bee mortality. EFSA also concludes that the procedure for deciding whether a particular pesticide may safely be approved for marketing does not at present take account of these harmful effects on bees.

Together with other MEPs, Bas Eickhout called in February 2012 for this risk to be acknowledged and measures to be taken (E-001297/2012) ([4]).

On 2 March 2012 the Commission, in its answer to this question on the impact of pesticides (neonicotinoids) on bee mortality, stated: 'Until today, no link between neonicotinoid insecticides, if correctly used, and the problem of bee mortality could be established, and therefore figures are not available'.

By its research, EFSA has recognised the link between neonicotinoid insecticides and the problem of bee mortality, and the answers to the earlier questions may therefore need to be adjusted.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+WQ+E-2012-001228+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN.
([2]) http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/2668.htm
([3]) http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/press/news/130116.htm?utm_source=homepage&utm_medium=infocus&utm_campaign=beehealth
([4]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+WQ+E-2012-001297+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN

1. Can the Commission state whether the Member States have taken the necessary measures to comply with Directive 2010/21/EU?

2. Can the Commission supply specific figures indicating whether the legislative measures adopted (e.g. Directive 2010/21/EU and Regulation (EC) No1107/2009) are sufficient and are contributing to prevent depletion of honey bees?

3. What other concrete measures is the Commission planning to adopt in order to protect honey bees from neonicotinoids?

4. Is the Commission willing and able to introduce a moratorium on the use of neonicotinoids until specific legislation is in force?

Joint answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(11 March 2013)

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), as requested by the Commission, carried out a review of the pesticide risk assessment for bees for the active substances clothianidin, imidacloprid and thiamethoxam ([5]).

Extensive monitoring has been performed by some Member States in compliance with Commission Directive 2010/21/EU ([6]). However, the Commission believes that the risk mitigation measures provided for in this directive are not sufficient to address the risks identified by EFSA in the recent conclusions.

Therefore, the Commission already announced swift and proportionate measures to be applied at EU level.

A first discussion with Member States experts took place on 31 January 2013 at the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health.

On 7 February 2013 the Commission draft measures were presented to all interested parties in the framework of an ad hoc meeting of the Advisory group of the Food Chain.

Thereafter, a final Commission draft regulation will be submitted for opinion of the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health within the shortest delay.

([5]) European Food Safety Authority; Conclusion on the peer review of the pesticide risk assessment for bees for the active substance clothianidin. EFSA Journal 2013;11(1):3066. [58 pp.] doi:10.2903/j.efsa.2013.3066.
Conclusion on the peer review of the pesticide risk assessment for bees for the active substance imidacloprid. EFSA Journal 2013;11(1):3068. [55 pp.] doi:10.2903/j.efsa.2013.
Conclusion on the peer review of the pesticide risk assessment for bees for the active substance thiamethoxam. EFSA Journal 2013;11(1):3067. [68 pp.] doi:10.2903/j.efsa.2013.3067. Available online: www.efsa.europa.eu/efsajournal.htm

([6]) OJ L 65, 13.3.2010.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000451/13
an die Kommission
Franziska Katharina Brantner (Verts/ALE)
(17. Januar 2013)

Betrifft: Förderung aus dem Programm „De minimis“ für Aldi

Das Magazin Der Spiegel berichtete am 31. Juli 2012 ([1]) , dass der deutsche Discounter Aldi im Zeitraum 2009 bis 2011 Zuschüsse von über 4 Mio. EUR vom deutschen Bundesamt für Güterverkehr erhalten hat. Das De-minimis-Programm, aus dem Aldi diese Gelder bezog, steht Unternehmen des Güterkraftverkehrs offen und zielt auf fahrzeugbezogene Maßnahmen, personenbezogene Maßnahmen und Maßnahmen zur Effizienzsteigerung ab.

1. Ist die Kommission über diese Subventionen unterrichtet, insbesondere über die 1,75 Mio. EUR aus dem Programm De minimis, welche regionalen Subunternehmen von Aldi gewährt wurden?

2. Welchen Standpunkt vertritt die Kommission im Zusammenhang mit der Tatsache, dass Aldi (ein Handelsunternehmen und kein Transportunternehmen) diese Zuschüsse aus dem De-minimis-Programm, das sich an Unternehmen im Straßengüterverkehr richtet, erhalten hat, um spezifische Maßnahmen zur Stärkung der Komponenten Sicherheit und Umweltschutz durchzuführen? Vertritt die Kommission die Auffassung, dass das Bundesamt für Güterverkehr bei der Zuteilung dieser Fördergelder an Aldi in Übereinstimmung mit EU-Recht handelte?

3. Falls sich die Förderung als unzulässig herausstellen sollte, welche (rechtlichen) Schritte gedenkt die Kommission zu unternehmen, um diesen Missstand zu beheben?

Antwort von Herrn Almunia im Namen der Kommission
(23. April 2013)

Die *De-minimis-Verordnung* ([2]) legt die Bedingungen für die Gewährung von *De-minimis*-Beihilfen fest. Sie gilt für Beihilfen an Unternehmen in allen Wirtschaftsbereichen, einschließlich des Verkehrsgewerbes, und unter bestimmten Voraussetzungen für die Verarbeitung und Vermarktung landwirtschaftlicher Erzeugnisse. Nicht unter die Verordnung fallen Beihilfen in der Fischerei und Aquakultur, an Primärerzeuger landwirtschaftlicher Produkte, für exportbezogene Tätigkeiten, im Steinkohlebergbau, für den Erwerb von Fahrzeugen für den Straßengütertransport oder an Unternehmen in Schwierigkeiten sowie Beihilfen, die von der Verwendung heimischer Erzeugnisse zu Lasten von Importwaren abhängig gemacht werden. Zuwendungen, die in einem Zeitraum von drei Jahren 200 000 EUR nicht übersteigen, gelten nicht als staatliche Beihilfen im Sinne von Artikel 107 Absatz 1 AEUV. Im Bereich des Straßentransportsektors gilt eine spezifische Höchstgrenze von 100 000 EUR.

Die Verantwortung für die Durchführung der *De-minimis*-Verordnung liegt bei den Mitgliedstaaten. Sie müssen sicherstellen, dass den Anforderungen in vollem Umfang entsprochen wird. Die Kommission braucht weder über die Absicht, *De-minimis*-Beihilfen zu gewähren, noch über die tatsächliche Gewährung unterrichtet werden. Daher ist die Kommission nicht über die Beihilfe in Höhe von 1,75 Mio. EUR aus einem *De-minimis*-Programm in Deutschland informiert worden. Die Rolle der Kommission beschränkt sich darauf, eine Ex-Post-Kontrollfunktion wahrzunehmen und einzugreifen, wenn sie von einer missbräuchlichen oder fehlerhaften Praxis bei der Gewährung von *De-minimis*-Beihilfen Kenntnis erlangt.

Die Kommission sieht sich anhand der in der Anfrage vorgelegten Informationen nicht in der Lage, die Rechtmäßigkeit oder Vereinbarkeit der den regionalen Subunternehmen von Aldi gewährten Beihilfen zu beurteilen. Sollten die Anforderungen der *De-minimis*-Verordnung nicht eingehalten worden sein, könnte dies darauf hindeuten, dass es sich um nicht angemeldete staatliche Beihilfen im Sinne von Artikel 108 Absatz 3 handelt, die von der Kommission zu prüfen sind. Bei einer solchen Prüfung könnte sich allerdings herausstellen, dass die Beihilfen dennoch nach Maßgabe des Artikels 107 Absatz 3 Buchstabe c als mit dem AEUV vereinbar anzusehen sind.

([1]) http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/vorab/aldi-bekommt-mehr-als-vier-millionen-euro-subventionen-a-846940.html
([2]) Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1998/2006 der Kommission vom 15. Dezember 2006 über die Anwendung der Artikel 87 und 88 EG-Vertrag auf De-minimis-Beihilfen (ABl. L 379 vom 28.12.2006, S. 5).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000451/13
to the Commission
Franziska Katharina Brantner (Verts/ALE)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: Support for Aldi from the 'De minimis' programme

On 31 July 2012 ([1]), *Der Spiegel* magazine revealed that German discounter Aldi had received subsidies of over EUR 4 million from the German Federal Office for Goods Transport in the period 2009 to 2011. The 'De minimis' programme that provided the funding to Aldi is open to enterprises involved in the carriage of goods and is intended for vehicle-related measures, personnel-related measures and measures aimed at increasing efficiency.

1. Is the Commission aware of these subsidies, in particular the EUR 1.75 million from the 'De minimis' programme paid out to Aldi's regional subsidiaries?

2. What is its position on the fact that Aldi (which is a distributor, not a transport company) received these subsidies from the 'De minimis' programme, which is aimed at road transport companies to encourage specific measures aimed at enhancing safety and environmental protection? Does it take the view that the Federal Office for Goods Transport acted in compliance with EC law when it allocated this grant to Aldi?

3. If this support is found to be inadmissible, what (legal) steps is the Commission considering to rectify this instance of maladministration?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(23 April 2013)

The *de minimis* regulation ([2]) lays down the conditions under which *de minimis* subsidies can be granted. It applies to subsidies granted to firms in all sectors, including transport and, on certain conditions, for the processing and marketing of agricultural products. It does not apply to aid for fisheries and aquaculture, primary production of agricultural products, export-related activities, the coal sector, acquisition of road freight transport vehicles or firms in difficulty, or aid tied to the use of domestic over imported goods. Subsidies of less than EUR 200 000 granted over a period of three years are not regarded as state aid within the meaning of Article 107(1) TFEU. A specific ceiling of EUR 100 000 applies to road transport.

Implementation of the *de minimis* regulation is the full responsibility of Member States. Member States must ensure that the requirements are fully complied with. They do not need to inform the Commission of their intention to grant *de minimis* aid nor of the fact that they have granted it. Thus, the Commission has not been informed of EUR 1.75 million grant from a *de minimis* programme in Germany. The Commission's role is limited to *ex post* control functions and to acting when informed of abuse or misapplication of *de minimis* aid.

On the basis of the information received through this question, the Commission is not in a position to assess the legality or compatibility of the subsidies received by Aldi's regional subsidiaries. If the conditions of the *de minimis* Regulation were not complied with, this could indicate that this might constitute non-notified state aid within the meaning of Article 108(3) that the Commission would have to examine. However, the aid could still be considered compatible with the TFEU under Art. 107(3) (c), depending on the outcome of such examination.

([1]) http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/vorab/aldi-bekommt-mehr-als-vier-millionen-euro-subventionen-a-846940.html
([2]) Commission Regulation (EC) No 1998/2006 of 15 December 2006 on the application of Articles 87 and 88 of the Treaty to *de minimis* aid, OJ L 379, 28.12.2006, p. 5.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000452/13
to the Commission
Andrew Henry William Brons (NI)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: Public image of the President of the European Commission

With regard to its answer to my Written Question E-009871/2012, the Commission is asked the following:

1. Looking beyond the more general budget, which covers the wider issues to which the Commission refers in its reply, will the Commission kindly provide, from its files or from the suppliers of the services rendered, an account of the costs to the public purse of outlays pertaining specifically to advice and/or information provided regarding the President's personal and public image? I wish to know the costs of this service.

2. Will the Commission kindly provide copies of the reports made on such payments over the past two years?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(22 March 2013)

The Commission refers the Honourable Member to its reply to the Written Question E-9871/12 ([1]).

The relevant budget line is a general one covering public opinion analysis and media monitoring of the European Union and its Institutions.

There is not a more specific budget line for monitoring the President's personal and public image.

The Honourable Member's request for the reports will be handled in accordance with the provisions of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000453/13
to the Council
Andrew Henry William Brons (NI)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: Public image of the President of the European Council

With regard to reply E-008109/2012, will the Council kindly specify whether reports are prepared relating to the President's personal and public image, and if so will it supply me with those reports which will have been prepared with public funds?

Reply
(11 March 2013)

There are no such reports.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000454/13
to the Commission
Andrew Henry William Brons (NI)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: UK membership of the EU

With respect to the Commission's answer to Written Question E-010616/2012, would it kindly explain, therefore, why UK opinion polls consistently register public dissatisfaction with the EU, usually with a majority desiring withdrawal?

Answer given by Mr Barroso on behalf of the Commission
(14 March 2013)

In the performance of its duties under the Treaties, the Commission does not acquire information of the kind requested. It is therefore unable to answer the question.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000455/13
to the Commission
Sir Graham Watson (ALDE)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: Democracy and the rule of law in the 'former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia'

A series of disturbing events took place during the plenary session of the Sobranie (the parliament of the 'former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia', or FYROM) of 24 December 2012.

Ahead of the vote on the budget, 42 MPs out of the total of 123 were deprived of their right to register their presence at the session and were forced out of the plenary hall by security guards. Two female MPs were hospitalised and another person had to receive medical treatment. Journalists were removed in violation of the Macedonian Constitution and the Law on the Assembly.

In view of FYROM's status as an EU candidate country:

1. how does the Commission assess the impact of the events described above on FYROM's commitment to achieving progress towards the Copenhagen political criteria, in particular the stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy and the rule of law?

2. what has the Commission done to raise its concern about the events described above with FYROM's parliament and government?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(6 March 2013)

In EU statements and frequent contacts by the Commissioner responsible for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy and senior EU officials, the Commission has expressed its concern regarding the events of 24 December 2012 and their handling.

The Commissioner responsible for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy has called on political leaders to take responsibility and find a solution to the current political stalemate, demonstrating the maturity of democratic institutions and putting the best interests of the country and its citizens first.

The Commission assesses compliance with the relevant criteria in its annual enlargement package, published each autumn ([1]). The December 2012 Council Conclusions, which invited the Commission to report in spring 2013 on progress on EU-related reforms and good neighbourly relations, are a real opportunity to advance the country's strategic interests.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/strategy-and-progress-report/index_en.htm

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000456/13
a la Comisión
Pilar Ayuso (PPE)
(17 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Directrices para las ayudas de Estado — Comercio de derechos de emisión

En las Directrices para las ayudas de Estado en el contexto del régimen del comercio de derechos de emisión, la Comisión Europea afirma que estas ayudas «pueden dar lugar a significativas distorsiones de la competencia en el mercado interior, en particular si las empresas del mismo sector son tratadas de manera diferente en distintos Estados miembros, debido a diferentes limitaciones presupuestarias».

En estos momentos algunos Estados miembros están sometidos a fuertes programas de ajuste de sus presupuestos y no pueden otorgar ayudas a sus industrias en el marco de las directrices mencionadas. En cambio, otros Estados miembros sí pueden hacerlo.

¿Qué medidas va a tomar la Comisión para evitar las distorsiones en el mercado interior que puede causar el hecho de que unos Estados miembros puedan otorgar ayudas a su industria y otros no, por razones estrictamente presupuestarias?

Respuesta del Sr. Almunia en nombre de la Comisión
(7 de marzo de 2013)

La Directiva 2009/29/CE ([1]) prevé el perfeccionamiento y la ampliación del régimen de comercio de derechos de emisión de la UE a partir del 1 de enero de 2013. Dicha Directiva se integra en el paquete legislativo de medidas para combatir el cambio climático y fomentar la energía renovable y con bajas emisiones de carbono. A fin de acompañar el cambio y neutralizar el riesgo de fuga de carbono, la Directiva establece la posibilidad de que los Estados miembros otorguen una ayuda temporal para compensar la subida del precio de la electricidad derivada de la inclusión en el mismo de los costes de las emisiones de gases de efecto invernadero debido al régimen de comercio de derechos de emisión de la UE (denominados habitualmente «costes indirectos de las emisiones de CO_2»).

La Comisión ha adoptado unas Directrices sobre ayudas estatales ([2]) que fijan las condiciones en las que los Estados miembros pueden compensar parcialmente el aumento de los costes de la electricidad. Las Directrices garantizarán la transparencia, la previsibilidad jurídica y unas condiciones equitativas de competencia para todos los Estados miembros y demás partes interesadas.

Con objeto de reducir al máximo el falseamiento de la competencia en el mercado interior y salvaguardar el objetivo del régimen de comercio de derechos de emisión de la UE de lograr una descarbonización eficiente en costes, la Comisión ha determinado un número limitado de sectores que pueden acogerse a ayudas estatales (15 sectores y subsectores). Por otro lado, las compañías más eficientes de cada sector han servido de referencia para determinar el importe máximo de ayuda, el cual solo puede compensar parcialmente los costes de las emisiones de CO_2 en los precios de la electricidad y se irá reduciendo con el transcurso del tiempo.

La Comisión controlará periódicamente las subvenciones otorgadas por los Estados miembros y podrá revisar las Directrices relacionadas con el régimen de comercio de derechos de emisión una vez transcurridos los primeros años de aplicación.

([1]) Directiva 2009/29/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo de 23 de abril de 2009 por la que se modifica la Directiva 2003/87/CE para perfeccionar y ampliar el régimen comunitario de comercio de derechos de emisión de gases de efecto invernadero, DO L 140 de 5.6.2009, p. 63.
([2]) DO C 154 de 5.6.2012, p. 4.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000456/13
to the Commission
Pilar Ayuso (PPE)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: Guidelines for state aid — Emissions Trading System

In the Guidelines for state aid in the context of the Emissions Trading System, the Commission states that such aid 'can lead to significant distortions of competition in the internal market, particularly if companies in the same sector are treated differently in different Member States, due to different budgetary constraints'.

At present, some Member States are subject to severe budgetary adjustment programmes and are unable to grant aid to their industries as indicated in the above guidelines. Other Member States, however, are able to do so.

What measures will the Commission take to avoid the distortions in the internal market that may be caused by the fact that some Member States can grant aid to industry while others, for strictly budgetary reasons, cannot?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(7 March 2013)

Directive 2009/29/EC ([1]) has improved and extended the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) as from 1 January 2013. It is part of a legislative package containing measures to fight climate change and promote renewable and low-carbon energy. In order to accompany the change and address the risk of carbon leakage, the ETS Directive foresees the possibility for Member States to temporarily grant aid to compensate increases in electricity prices resulting from the inclusion of the costs of greenhouse gas emissions due to EU ETS (commonly referred to as 'indirect CO_2 costs').

The Commission adopted state aid Guidelines ([2]) which set the conditions under which Member States may compensate part of the increased electricity costs. The Guidelines will ensure transparency, legal predictability and a level playing field across Member States and other stakeholders.

In order to minimise competition distortions in the internal market and preserve the objective of the EU ETS to achieve a cost-effective decarbonisation, the Commission defined a limited number of sectors which may receive state aid (15 sectors and subsectors). Furthermore, the maximum aid has been benchmarked by the most efficient companies in each sector, may only partially compensate the costs of CO_2 in electricity prices, and shall be reduced over time.

The Commission will regularly monitor the subsidies granted by Member States and may review the ETS Guidelines after the first years of application.

([1]) Directive 2009/29/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2009 amending Directive 2003/87/EC so as to improve and extend the greenhouse gas emission allowance trading scheme of the Community, OJ L 140 5.6.2009, p. 63.
([2]) OJ C154, 5.6.2012, p. 4.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000457/13
a la Comisión
Pilar Ayuso (PPE)
(17 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Directrices para las ayudas de Estado — Comercio de derechos de emisión II

En la Declaración realizada durante el proceso de adopción de la Directiva 2009/29/CE, la Comisión afirmaba que «los Estados miembros podrán considerar necesario compensar temporalmente a determinadas instalaciones por los costes relacionados con el CO_2 que repercuten en los precios de la electricidad, en caso de que dichos costes les expusieran a un riesgo de fuga de carbono». Por entonces los precios de los derechos de emisión oscilaban entre los 15 y los 20 euros.

Más recientemente, la Comisión ha propuesto modificar el calendario de subastas, así como varias opciones para la reforma estructural del régimen de comercio de derechos de emisión. En todas estas propuestas subyace el desajuste entre oferta y demanda, que desemboca en un precio actual de entre 5 y 7 euros por derecho de emisión.

¿Cree la Comisión que los precios actuales del derecho de emisión justifican un mecanismo de ayudas de Estado como el aprobado en junio de 2012?

Si los factores de emisión se fijan en función de las instalaciones de CO_2, que son las que determinan el precio marginal en los mercados mayoristas, ¿no se estará perjudicando a los Estados miembros que más esfuerzos han hecho para el fomento de las energías renovables?

Respuesta del Sr. Almunia en nombre de la Comisión
(11 de abril de 2013)

La Comisión adoptó las Directrices para las ayudas estatales que establecen las condiciones en las que los Estados miembros pueden compensar parte del aumento de los costes de electricidad debido al régimen de comercio de derechos de emisión. Los Estados miembros son libres de decidir si es o no oportuno conceder este tipo de ayuda estatal.

Dichas Directrices equilibran cuidadosamente varios objetivos clave. Su objetivo es mitigar el efecto de los costes indirectos del CO_2 en las industrias más vulnerables, y también minimizar las distorsiones de la competencia en el mercado interior, evitando la escalada de subvenciones dentro de la UE en momentos de incertidumbre económica y disciplina presupuestaria.

Para la elaboración de la lista de sectores elegibles para las ayudas estatales y los derechos de emisión gratuitos, la Comisión utilizó las hipótesis para el precio del CO_2 establecidas en la evaluación de impacto realizada para el paquete sobre cambio climático y energía en 2009. No obstante, en el caso de las ayudas estatales para el período 2013-2020, solo se tendrá en cuenta el precio de mercado real del CO_2, a fin de evitar beneficios extraordinarios.

Aunque la situación económica de algunos Estados miembros ha cambiado desde la modificación de la Directiva sobre el comercio de derechos de emisión, en estos momentos la Comisión se está centrando en la aplicación de la Directiva, a fin de garantizar que puedan establecerse los mecanismos acordados para abordar las fugas de carbono.

El cálculo de las emisiones de CO_2 solo tiene en cuenta la cantidad de electricidad producida a partir de combustibles fósiles, ya que la generación de electricidad basada en los combustibles fósiles es fundamental para la formación de los precios de la electricidad. La producción de electricidad sin CO_2, como la de las energías renovables, no suele influir en la formación de los precios de la electricidad al por mayor.

La Comisión efectuará un seguimiento periódico de las subvenciones concedidas por los Estados miembros y podrá revisar las Directrices sobre el régimen de comercio de derechos de emisión después de los primeros años de aplicación.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000457/13
to the Commission
Pilar Ayuso (PPE)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: Guidelines for state aid — Emissions Trading System II

In the Declaration made during the adoption process for Directive 2009/29/EC, the Commission stated that 'Member States may deem it necessary to temporarily compensate certain installations which have been determined to be exposed to a significant risk of carbon leakage for costs related to greenhouse gas emissions passed on in electricity prices.' At that time, allowance prices ranged from EUR 15 to EUR 20.

More recently, the Commission has proposed amending the auction calendar, as well as several options for structural reform of the Emissions Trading System. The mismatch between supply and demand underlies all of these proposals, leading to a current price of between EUR 5 and EUR 7 per allowance.

Does the Commission believe that current allowance prices justify a state aid mechanism as approved in June 2012?

If emission factors are set according to CO_2 facilities, which are the ones used to determine the marginal price in wholesale markets, will Member States that have made efforts to promote renewable energies not be adversely affected?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(11 April 2013)

The Commission adopted state aid Guidelines which set the conditions under which Member States may compensate part of the increased electricity costs due to the ETS. Member States are free to decide whether or not to grant such state aid.

The Guidelines carefully balance several key objectives. They aim to mitigate the impact of indirect CO_2 costs for the most vulnerable industries, while also designed to minimise competition distortions in the internal market by avoiding subsidy races within the EU at a time of economic uncertainty and budgetary discipline.

For establishing the list of eligible sectors both for state aid and for free allowances, the Commission used the assumptions for the CO_2 price laid down in the impact assessment made for the climate and energy package in 2009. However, for the state aid for the period 2013-2020, only the actual market price of CO_2 will be taken into account, so as to avoid windfall profits.

Although the economic situation for some Member States has changed since the amendment of the ETS Directive, the Commission currently is concentrating on implementing the directive, to ensure that the agreed policy tools to address carbon leakage can be put in place.

The calculation of CO_2 emissions takes into account only the amount of electricity produced from fossil fuels, because fossil fuel-based electricity generation is key to electricity price formation. CO_2 -free electricity production such as renewables usually do not influence wholesale electricity price formation.

The Commission will regularly monitor the subsidies granted by Member States and may review the ETS Guidelines after the first years of application.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000458/13
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Mario Mauro (PPE)
(17 gennaio 2013)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Massacro di cristiani nel villaggio di Masuri in Nigeria

Il 28 dicembre 2012, le milizie islamiste Boko Haram hanno perpetrato un attacco contro la minoranza cristiana residente nel villaggio di Masuri, nel nord-est della Nigeria, uccidendo quindici fedeli nel sonno. Fonti umanitarie e testimoni locali hanno riferito del massacro e hanno smentito la versione fornita dalle autorità nigeriane, le quali parlano di un numero inferiore di vittime e forniscono scarsi dettagli sull'accaduto.

Nel 2012 sono stati ben tredici gli attentati contro i fedeli cristiani registrati sul territorio nigeriano, quasi tutti rivendicati dalle milizie islamiste Boko Haram. Dal 2009 ad oggi sono oltre tremila le vittime di attacchi a sfondo religioso in Nigeria.

Tale situazione minaccia di diventare ancora più drammatica dopo l'intervento militare francese in Mali, che rischia di provocare le reazioni dei ribelli islamisti anche in Nigeria.

1. Alla luce di tali avvenimenti, può l'Alto Rappresentante far sapere se è a conoscenza della tragica situazione dei fedeli cristiani in Nigeria?

2. Quali sono stati gli interventi dell'Unione europea per far fronte ai sempre più numerosi attacchi terroristici delle milizie islamiste Boko Haram?

3. Tenendo conto del recente intervento militare francese in Mali, l'Unione europea ha intenzione di prendere provvedimenti adeguati, allo scopo di proteggere i fedeli cristiani di quest'area dalle eventuali ripercussioni islamiste?

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

L'inasprirsi delle violenze in alcune zone della Nigeria settentrionale, che hanno preso di mira civili innocenti, sia musulmani che cristiani, è fonte di crescenti preoccupazioni per chi si trova all'interno e all'esterno del paese. L'UE collabora con la Nigeria per sostenerla nel difficile tentativo di creare condizioni di sicurezza durature e di agire sui fattori che contribuiscono alla radicalizzazione e alla violenza, sia mediante un costante dialogo politico sulle strategie più idonee ad affrontare i problemi, sia con interventi di aiuto mirati. Di recente, una missione inviata in Nigeria ha esaminato forme specifiche di sostegno alla lotta al terrorismo. L'obiettivo è aiutare le autorità nigeriane a garantire lo Stato di diritto e il rispetto dei principi in materia di diritti umani.

L'Unione europea ha già avviato una serie di programmi di assistenza sociale, ad esempio nel settore della maternità, e in materia di risorse idriche nel nord del paese, e attualmente sta sviluppando un progetto sul coinvolgimento delle donne nella costruzione della pace nella Nigeria settentrionale. L'UE sta tuttavia prendendo in considerazione la possibilità di concentrarsi maggiormente, nell'ambito dell'11° FES, su programmi integrati che affrontino l'insieme delle questioni economiche e sociali all'origine della violenza.

Inoltre, nel luglio 2012 l'Unione europea ha sostenuto il rafforzamento delle capacità di mediazione in una delle aree più sensibili, ricorrendo ai fondi di un'iniziativa speciale del Parlamento europeo (EEAS BL 2238). L'UE sta inoltre preparando un altro progetto incentrato sulla prevenzione dei conflitti e sull'occupazione giovanile nella regione.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000458/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Mario Mauro (PPE)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Massacre of Christians in the Nigerian village of Masuri

On 28 December 2012, the militant Islamist group Boko Haram carried out an attack against the Christian minority living in the village of Masuri in the north-east of Nigeria, killing 15 Christians while they slept. Humanitarian sources and witnesses on the ground reported the massacre and contradicted the version of events provided by the Nigerian authorities, who gave little information regarding the attack other than a lower death toll.

In 2012, there were 13 attacks against Christians in Nigeria and the militant Islamist group Boko Haram has claimed responsibility for almost all of these. Since 2009, more than 3 000 people have fallen victim to religiously motivated attacks in Nigeria.

The situation is likely to become even more serious following France's military intervention in Mali which may provoke violent reactions from Islamist rebels in Nigeria as well.

1. Given these events, can the Vice-President/High Representative state whether she is aware of the tragic situation of Christians in Nigeria?

2. What action has the European Union taken to tackle the increasing number of terrorist attacks by the Islamist militant group Boko Haram?

3. Taking into account France's recent military intervention in Mali, does the European Union intend to take appropriate measures, in order to protect Christians in this area from potential Islamist reprisals?

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

The escalating violence in parts of northern Nigeria are a growing cause of concern for those inside and outside the country and targets innocent civilians, both christians and muslims, and the institutions of the state. The EU is working with Nigeria to help it tackle the challenges of creating durable security and dealing with the factors conducive to radicalisation and violence, through both continuous political dialogue on appropriate approaches to the problems, as well as targeted aid interventions. A mission was recently in Nigeria to examine specific forms of support to fight terrorism. The objective is to help the Nigerian authorities ensure the rule of law and the respect of human rights principles.

The EU already undertakes a number of programmes providing social assistance, e.g. through maternal care, and water resources in the North and is currently designing a project on women's engagement in peace building in the North. The EU is considering, however, focusing more attention under the 11th EDF on integrated programmes that tackle the full range of economic and social challenges that give impetus to the violence.

In addition, in July 2012, the EU provided capacity building for mediation in one of the most fragile areas, using funds from a special initiative by the European Parliament (EEAS BL 2238). The EU is also preparing another project focusing on conflict prevention and youth employment for this area.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000459/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(17 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Morosidad del sector bancario

En fecha reciente, la prensa se ha hecho eco de que la banca debe 256 millones de euros a las comunidades de propietarios en el Estado español ([1]). Este hecho es debido a que actualmente el sector bancario se está quedando en propiedad un gran número de pisos por el impago de la hipoteca por parte de sus propietarios.

El problema en este caso reside en que una vez las entidades bancarias se quedan los pisos, no siguen pagando las cuotas de la comunidad de vecinos. Este impago, al producirse de forma masiva acumula ya una deuda por valor de 256 millones de euros.

A la luz de lo anterior:

¿Cree la Comisión que el sector bancario cumple con la Directiva de morosidad 2011/7/UE por lo que se refiere a las comunidades de vecinos?

¿No cree la Comisión que los bancos, al quedarse los pisos, deben seguir manteniendo sus obligaciones con respecto a las comunidades de vecinos?

Respuesta del Sr. Tajani en nombre de la Comisión
(2 de abril de 2013)

La Directiva 2011/7/UE por la que se establecen medidas de lucha contra la morosidad en las operaciones comerciales ([2]) se aplica a los pagos efectuados como contraprestación en operaciones comerciales entre empresas o entre empresas y poderes públicos que den lugar a la entrega de bienes o la prestación de servicios.

La Directiva establece, además, que una empresa es cualquier organización, distinta de los poderes públicos, que actúe en ejercicio de su actividad independiente económica o profesional. Teniendo en cuenta la información disponible, la Comisión es de la opinión de que las cuotas que abonen los bancos en su calidad de propietarios a las comunidades de propietarios no pueden considerarse como contraprestación en operaciones comerciales entre empresas a tenor de la Directiva.

En el caso que nos ocupa, un banco, tan pronto como se convierte en propietario de una vivienda en un edificio, está legalmente obligado, como cualquier otro propietario, a pagar las cuotas a la comunidad establecidas por los propietarios de las viviendas situadas en el mismo edificio. La Ley española de Propiedad Horizontal (Ley 8/1999, de 6 de abril, de Reforma de la Ley 49/1960, de 21 de julio, sobre Propiedad Horizontal) regula los derechos y obligaciones de dichos propietarios. Si uno de ellos no cumpliera con esa obligación, la comunidad puede recurrir a la «vía judicial» para exigir el pago. La legislación española prevé un sistema rápido de seguimiento para la resolución de estos casos.

([1]) http://epreader.elperiodico.com/APPS_GetPlayerZSEO2.aspx?pro_id=00000000-0000-0000-0000-000000000001&fecha=15/01/2013&idioma=0&doc_id=53704911-fd93-405c-8cb9-1952deb44123&index=no

([2]) DO L 48 de 23.2.2011, pp. 1-10.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000459/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: Late payments by banks

The press have recently reported that banks owe EUR 256 million to owners' associations in Spain ([1]). This is due to the fact that banks currently own a large number of flats, on account of their owners defaulting on mortgage payments.

The problem is that once the banks own these flats they stop paying fees to owners' associations. This failure to pay on a massive scale has already accumulated a debt of EUR 256 million.

Does the Commission believe that banks are acting in accordance with Directive 2011/7/EU on late payment, regarding their treatment of owners' associations?

Does it not believe that banks that own flats should continue to fulfil their obligations to owners' associations?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(2 April 2013)

Directive 2011/7/EU on combating late payment in commercial transactions ([2]) applies to payments made as remuneration for commercial transactions between undertakings or between undertakings and public authorities which lead to the delivery of goods or provision of services.

The directive further establishes that an undertaking is any organisation, other than a public authority, acting in the course of its independent economic or professional activity. Taking into consideration the available information, the Commission is of the opinion that the fees paid by the bank in its capacity as a home owner to home owners' associations cannot be considered as remuneration for commercial transactions between businesses in the meaning of the directive.

In the case under discussion, a bank, as soon as it is entitled to the ownership of a dwelling in a building, and as any other owner, is legally obliged to pay contribution fees to the community set up by the owners of the dwellings located in the same building. The Spanish law on *Propiedad Horizontal* (LEY 8/1999, de 6 de abril, de Reforma de la Ley 49/1960, de 21 de julio, sobre Propiedad Horizontal) regulates the rights and obligations of these owners. If an owner does not comply with this obligation, the community can appeal to the 'judicial via' to demand the payments. Spanish law provides for a fast track system for the resolution of these cases.

([1]) http://epreader.elperiodico.com/APPS_GetPlayerZSEO2.aspx?pro_id=00000000-0000-0000-0000-000000000001&fecha=15/01/2013&idioma=0&doc_id=53704911-fd93-405c-8cb9-1952deb44123&index=no

([2]) OJ L 48, 23.2.2011, pp. 1-10.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000460/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(17 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Respuesta sobre el incremento de la desigualdad en España

En su respuesta a mi pasada pregunta parlamentaria E-009516/2012, el Comisario Rehn elude escuetamente responder sobre el contenido de sus recomendaciones específicas a España aduciendo que dichas políticas son competencia de los Estados miembros.

En su respuesta dice: «La Comisión comparte la preocupación por las desigualdades en la renta y la riqueza y por las consecuencias sociales de la crisis»; sin embargo, no logramos entender cómo esta preocupación de la Comisión se ha trasladado al texto de las recomendaciones específicas a España.

En el actual contexto de crisis presupuestaria, las recomendaciones elaboradas por la Comisión están calcándose en las agendas de reformas de los Estados miembros, en especial de España, que parece querer cumplir las recomendaciones más que la propia Comisión. Pero atendiéndonos al propio texto de las recomendaciones, no logramos encontrar ni una sola medida en la que se proponga política económica alguna para luchar contra la desigualdad en España. Por esto insisto en mi anterior pregunta, puesto que no consideramos que exista ninguna política de lucha contra la desigualdad que no pase por el mecanismo de los impuestos directos y no encontramos ninguna recomendación realizada a España que pueda reducir la desigualdad.

¿Ha plasmado la Comisión su «preocupación por las desigualdades en la renta y la riqueza» en el caso de España en sus recomendaciones específicas? ¿En qué forma?

Por lo tanto, ¿considera la Comisión que el incremento en la desigualdad en España facilitará su salida de la crisis económica?

Respuesta del Sr. Rehn en nombre de la Comisión
(21 de febrero de 2013)

La Comisión comparte la preocupación por las consecuencias de la crisis en las desigualdades de la renta y la riqueza, y considera que la pobreza y la exclusión social son obstáculos importantes para la consecución del objetivo de Europa 2020 de un crecimiento integrador.

Los desafíos y recomendaciones fundamentales para salir de la crisis se resumieron en las recomendaciones específicas por país dirigidas a España el 10 de julio de 2012:
http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/economic_governance/sgp/pdf/20_scps/2012/04_council/es_2012-07-10_council_recommendation_en.pdf

En particular, la recomendación 7 aconseja a España que tome medidas para mejorar la empleabilidad de los grupos vulnerables, junto con servicios eficaces de apoyo a los niños y a las familias, con el fin de mejorar la situación de las personas en riesgo de pobreza o exclusión social o ambas, y de incrementar por consiguiente el bienestar de los niños.

Además, la recomendación 5 pide a España que aplique las reformas del mercado laboral y tome medidas adicionales encaminadas a aumentar la eficacia de las políticas activas del mercado de trabajo, mejorando la selección de sus destinatarios; aumentando la utilización de los servicios de formación, de asesoramiento y acoplamiento de la oferta y la demanda de empleo; intensificando sus vínculos con las políticas pasivas, y reforzando la coordinación entre los servicios públicos de empleo nacionales y autonómicos, incluido el intercambiando de información sobre ofertas de empleo. Esta recomendación tiene por objeto tratar directamente el aumento del desempleo en España, que constituye uno de los principales factores que explican el aumento de la pobreza y la desigualdad.

La respuesta a estas recomendaciones se supervisa en el marco del «semestre europeo».

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000460/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: Answer regarding growing inequality in Spain

In answer to my previous Written Question No E-009516/2012, Commissioner Rehn only briefly eludes to the content of the Commission's specific recommendations to Spain, on the grounds that such policies are the responsibility of the Member States themselves.

In his answer, the Commissioner says 'the Commission shares the concern about income and wealth inequality and the social consequences of the crisis'. However, we fail to understand how this concern from the Commission is reflected in the text containing specific recommendations to Spain.

In the current budget crisis, the Commission's recommendations are based on the reform agendas of the Member States, particularly of Spain, which seems more willing to comply with the recommendations than the Commission itself. Nevertheless, in the text we fail to find a single measure proposing an economic policy to combat inequality in Spain. I therefore return to my previous question, as we refuse to believe that any policy to combat inequality does not involve direct taxation and we fail to find any recommendations to Spain that could reduce inequality.

Is the Commission's 'concern about income and wealth inequality' reflected in its specific recommendations to Spain? If so, how?

Does it therefore believe that the growing inequality in Spain will help the country emerge from the economic crisis?

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

The Commission shares the concern about the consequences of the crisis on income and wealth inequality, and believes that poverty and social exclusion are major obstacles to the achievement of the Europe 2020 objective of inclusive growth.

The basic challenges and recommendations to emerge from the crisis have been summarised in the country-specific recommendation addressed to Spain on 10 July 2012:
http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/economic_governance/sgp/pdf/20_scps/2012/04_council/es_2012-07-10_council_recommendation_en.pdf

In particular Recommendation 7 thereof, requests Spain to improve the employability of vulnerable groups, combined with effective child and family support services, in order to improve the situation of people at risk of poverty and/or social exclusion, and consequently to achieve the well-being of children.

Moreover, Recommendation 5 asks Spain to implement the labour market reform and take additional measures to increase the effectiveness of active labour market policies by improving their targeting, by increasing the use of training, advisory and job matching services, by strengthening their links with passive policies, and by strengthening coordination between the national and regional public employment services, including sharing information about job vacancies. This recommendation aims to address directly the increase in unemployment in Spain, one of the major factors behind rising poverty and inequality.

The response given to these recommendations is monitored in the framework of the European Semester.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000461/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(17. Januar 2013)

Betrifft: Mehr als 20 Millionen Kinder in der EU übergewichtig

Den jüngsten Forschungsergebnissen zufolge sind mehr als 20 Millionen Kinder in der Europäischen Union übergewichtig.

1. Ist der Kommission diese erschreckend hohe Zahl bekannt?

2. Welche Empfehlung an die Mitgliedstaaten erlässt/plant die Kommission, um langfristige Auswirkungen auf die zukünftig erwachsene Generation in puncto Volksgesundheit aber auch im Hinblick auf die sicher damit verbundenen Kosten „zumindest" in Grenzen zu halten?

Antwort von Herrn Borg im Namen der Kommission
(18. Februar 2013)

Die Kommission kennt das Problem der wachsenden Zahl übergewichtiger Kinder in der Europäischen Union und die damit verbundenen gesundheitlichen Probleme. Der Bericht „Gesundheit auf einen Blick — Europa 2012" der Kommission hat gezeigt, dass der Anteil der Fünfzehnjährigen mit Übergewicht und Adipositas in der EU von durchschnittlich 11 % im Jahr 2001 auf 13 % im Jahr 2010 gestiegen ist ([1]).

Als Reaktion auf diesen Trend fördert die Kommission die im Weißbuch „Ernährung, Übergewicht, Adipositas: Eine Strategie für Europa" dargelegten EU-Maßnahmen ([2]). Kinder sind eine der vorrangigen Zielgruppen der EU-Strategie.

Durch Förderung verantwortungsvoller Werbe- und Marketingaktionen, durch die Verbesserung der Verbraucherinformationen und durch Maßnahmen zur besseren Verfügbarkeit gesünderer Lebensmittelvarianten leistet die Kommission einen Beitrag dazu, dass sich Familien für einen gesünderen Lebensstil entscheiden. So trägt die Kommission durch das EU-Schulobstprogramm ([3]) zur Etablierung gesünderer Ernährungsgewohnheiten bei Kindern bei. Es ist überaus wichtig, dass die Mitgliedstaaten auf regionaler und lokaler Ebene Maßnahmen zur Förderung einer gesunden Ernährung und zur Bekämpfung von Übergewicht ergreifen.

Die EU-Strategie wird derzeit evaluiert, und die Ergebnisse dieser Evaluierung dürften im Frühjahr 2013 vorgelegt werden.

([1]) OECD Gesundheit auf einen Blick — Europa 2012: http://ec.europa.eu/health/reports/european/health_glance_2012_en.htm
([2]) Ernährung, Übergewicht, Adipositas: Eine Strategie für Europa, KOM(2007)279 endg.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sfs/index_de.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000461/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: More than 20 million overweight children in the EU

According to the latest research findings, more than 20 million children in the European Union are overweight.

1. Is the Commission aware of this shockingly high figure?

2. What recommendation will the Commission adopt, or is the Commission planning to adopt, for the Member States in order to at least limit the long-term effects on the future adult generation in terms of public health, but also regarding the costs that will inevitably be associated with this problem?

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

The Commission is aware of the increasing number of overweight children in the European Union and of the health problems associated with this. The report 'Health at a Glance Europe 2012' funded by the Commission showed that, on average, 15-year-olds' rate of overweight and obesity across the EU has increased from 11% in 2001 to 13% in 2010 ([1]).

In response to this trend, the Commission is promoting EU action as set out in the in the strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity related Health issues ([2]). Children are among the priority groups in the EU Strategy.

By working on responsible advertising and marketing to children, by improving consumer information, and by working to make the healthier option easily available, the Commission contributes to help families choose a healthier lifestyle. For instance, through the EU School Fruit Scheme ([3]), the Commission contributes to establishing healthier eating habits among children. It is essential that actions to promote healthy eating and fight obesity are developed and carried out by Member States at regional and local levels.

The EU Strategy is currently being evaluated and the results of this evaluation are expected in spring 2013.

([1]) OECD Health at a glance Europe 2012: http://ec.europa.eu/health/reports/european/health_glance_2012_en.htm
([2]) A Strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity related health issues, COM(2007) 279.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sfs/index_en.htm

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-000462/13
aan de Commissie
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(17 januari 2013)

Betreft: Bevoorrechte rijken
In oktober 2012 nam de Portugese regering nieuwe wetgeving aan die de weg vrijmaakt voor een grootscheeps programma voor het aantrekken van niet-Europese investeerders naar Portugal, en met hen vers kapitaal dat het land moet helpen de economische crisis te boven te komen. Op grond van deze wet moeten de investeerders ten minste 1 miljoen EUR in een Portugees bedrijf injecteren of onroerend goed ter waarde van 500 000 EUR verwerven. Indien aan een van deze voorwaarden is voldaan, krijgen betrokkenen een „voorlopig" visum met een geldigheid van twee jaar en dat kan worden omgezet in een permanente verblijfsvergunning of zelfs een Portugees paspoort ([1]).

1. Is de Commissie op de hoogte van deze regeling waarmee welgestelden uit derde landen paspoorten kunnen kopen?

2. Heeft Portugal de Commissie geraadpleegd over dit voornemen om nieuwe wetgeving vast te stellen, die uiteraard ook gevolgen voor andere lidstaten zal hebben?

3. Is de Commissie van oordeel dat dit initiatief strookt met het gemeenschappelijk beleid betreffende grenscontroles, asielverlening en immigratie, met name in het licht van artikel 77 VWEU? Zo niet, welke juridische stappen zal zij dan nemen?

4. Kennen andere lidstaten dergelijke wetgeving?

5. Zo ja, hoe zal zij er dan voor zorgen dat er een bescherming is tegen het witwassen van geld, wat een mogelijke consequentie van deze wet zou zijn?

Antwoord van mevrouw Malmström namens de Commissie
(27 februari 2013)

De EU-wetgeving bevat geen geharmoniseerde verblijfsvoorwaarden voor investeerders uit derde landen in de lidstaten. De lidstaten bepalen zelf de voorwaarden voor toegang en verblijf van onderdanen van derde landen die in het land wensen te investeren en langer dan drie maanden wensen te blijven.

Portugal kan dus zelf de voorwaarden bepalen waarop visa voor verblijf van lange duur en verblijfsvergunningen worden verstrekt aan onderdanen van derde landen. Deze nationale vergunningen geven de onderdanen van derde landen niet het recht om buiten Portugal te gaan wonen. Overeenkomstig artikel 21 van de Overeenkomst ter uitvoering van het akkoord van Schengen mogen zij wel gedurende ten hoogste drie maanden binnen een periode van zes maanden verblijven of reizen op het grondgebied van andere Schengenlanden.

Alleen langdurig ingezeten onderdanen van derde landen met een verblijfsvergunning die verleend is onder de voorwaarden van Richtlijn 2003/109/EG ([2]) van de Raad, hebben recht van verblijf in andere lidstaten. Een van deze voorwaarden is dat onderdanen van derde landen al vijf jaar legaal en ononderbroken op het grondgebied van de lidstaat moeten verblijven; een andere voorwaarde is dat zij moeten beschikken over voldoende inkomsten om zichzelf te onderhouden en over een ziektekostenverzekering.

Als regelingen als bedoeld door het geachte Parlementslid betrekking hebben op investeringen in een lidstaat, is de EU-wetgeving inzake het witwassen van geld ([3]) van toepassing op de transacties of zakelijke relaties die verband houden met deze investeringen.

([1]) http://www.presseurop.eu/en/content/article/3247111-1m-gateway-europe
([2]) Richtlijn 2003/109/EG van de Raad van 25 november 2003 betreffende de status van langdurig ingezeten onderdanen van derde landen.
([3]) In het bijzonder Richtlijn 2005/60/EG van het Europees Parlement en de Raad van 26 oktober 2005 tot voorkoming van het gebruik van het financiële stelsel voor het witwassen van geld en de financiering van terrorisme.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000462/13
to the Commission
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: Privileged rich

In October 2012 the Portuguese Government adopted new legislation paving the way for a major programme for attracting non-European investors to Portugal. and with them fresh capital to help the country overcome the economic crisis. Under this new law, investors are required to inject at least EUR 1 million into a Portuguese company or to acquire property worth EUR 500 000. Once one of these conditions has been fulfilled, they are issued an 'initial' visa which is valid for two years and can be converted into a permanent residence permit or even a Portuguese passport ([1]).

1. Is the Commission aware of this rule allowing passport-buying by wealthy people from third countries?

2. Has Portugal consulted the Commission about its intention to adopt this new legislation, which will evidently also have an impact on the other Member States?

3. Does the Commission consider this initiative to be in line with the common policies on border checks, asylum and immigration, especially in the light of Article 77 TFEU? If it is not, what legal action will the Commission take?

4. Does similar legislation exist in other Member States?

5. Does the Commission consider this to be a suitable tool for fighting the economic crisis? If so, how will the Commission ensure that there is protection against money laundering, which could be a possible consequence of this law?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(27 February 2013)

Conditions for residence of third-country national investors in the Member States have not been harmonised under EC law. Member States determine the conditions of entry and stay of third-country nationals who wish to invest in the country and stay for longer than three months.

Portugal is therefore entitled to determine the conditions on which it grants long-stay visas and residence permits to third-country nationals. These national permits do not entitle the third-country nationals to reside outside Portugal, but according to Article 21 of the Convention Implementing the Schengen Agreement, their holders can travel for up to three months in any six-months period within the territories of the other Schengen Member States.

Only long-term third-country national residents issued with a residence permit according to the conditions of Council Directive 2003/109/EC ([2]) have a right of residence in other Member States. Those conditions include that the third-country nationals must have legally and continuously lived in the territory of the Member State concerned for at least five years; they must also have sufficient resources to maintain themselves, as well as health insurance.

To the extent that schemes such as the one referred to by the Honourable Member refer to investments in a Member State, EU legislation against money laundering ([3]) applies to transactions or business relationships connected to those investments.

([1]) http://www.presseurop.eu/en/content/article/3247111-1m-gateway-europe
([2]) Council Directive 2003/109/EC of 25 November 2003 concerning the status of third-country nationals who are long-term residents.
([3]) In particular, Directive 2005/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 October 2005 on the prevention of the use of the financial system for the purpose of money laundering and terrorist financing.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000463/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(17 gennaio 2013)

Oggetto: Livello di sicurezza delle sigarette elettroniche

Le sigarette elettroniche sono dispositivi elettronici che, consentendo al fumatore di inalare vapore acqueo contenente anche nicotina, emulano una normale sigaretta eliminando però la fase della combustione.

Questi dispositivi sono sempre più diffusi in Italia. La loro commercializzazione è ormai larghissima e un numero sempre maggiore di cittadini ne fanno uso.

A fine dicembre 2012, un ragazzo di 25 anni di Genova è rimasto ferito mentre stava maneggiando una sigaretta elettronica di fabbricazione cinese che è esplosa, causandogli bruciature a mani, occhi e volto.

È la Commissione a conoscenza di quanto sopra descritto?

Si sono verificati episodi simili in altri Stati membri?

Reputa che siano sufficientemente elevati gli standard di sicurezza richiesti per la commercializzazione di questi prodotti?

Ritiene che i controlli effettuati sulle sigarette elettroniche prima della commercializzazione siano sufficienti?

Come intende affrontare il pericolo e la minaccia all'incolumità dei cittadini rappresentato da tutti quei dispositivi che arrivano e arriveranno dalla Cina?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(28 febbraio 2013)

La Commissione è consapevole delle preoccupazioni concernenti la sicurezza del prodotto legate alle sigarette elettroniche. Diverse misure adottate dalle autorità di sorveglianza del mercato degli Stati membri su prodotti che presentano un grave rischio (essenzialmente i liquidi di ricarica) sono state notificate attraverso il sistema di allarme rapido RAPEX. Tuttavia la Commissione non dispone di un quadro completo degli incidenti legati alle sigarette elettroniche poiché questi non vengono registrati sistematicamente.

Nel contesto della proposta della Commissione del 19 dicembre 2012 finalizzata alla revisione della direttiva sui prodotti del tabacco, le sigarette elettroniche rientrerebbero nel campo di applicazione della direttiva sui prodotti medicinali se contenessero livelli di nicotina superiori a certe soglie. Pertanto, l'immissione sul mercato di tali sigarette elettroniche richiederebbe l'autorizzazione previa in forza della legislazione farmaceutica.

Per le sigarette elettroniche che si situano al di sotto delle soglie in questione la proposta prevede che rechino avvertimenti sanitari. Esse dovrebbero inoltre ottemperare al disposto della direttiva sulla sicurezza generale dei prodotti che impone ai produttori d'immettere sul mercato esclusivamente prodotti sicuri. Far rispettare la normativa dell'UE, comprese la direttiva sui prodotti del tabacco e la direttiva sulla sicurezza generale dei prodotti, è responsabilità degli Stati membri.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000463/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: Safety of electronic cigarettes

Electronic cigarettes are electronic devices which allow the person smoking to inhale vapour containing nicotine thus mimicking a real cigarette, although no combustion is involved.

These devices are increasingly widespread in Italy. They are now being sold more widely and growing numbers of Italians are using them.

At the end of December 2012, a 25-year-old man from Genoa was injured while handling an electronic cigarette manufactured in China. The device exploded, resulting in burns to his hands, eyes and face.

Is the Commission aware of the facts described above?

Have there been any similar incidents in other Member States?

Does it believe that the safety standards required to sell these products are stringent enough?

Does it believe that the checks carried out on electronic cigarettes before they are put on sale are sufficient?

How does it intend to tackle the danger and the threat to citizens' safety posed by all these devices coming from China?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(28 February 2013)

The Commission is aware of product safety concerns connected with electronic cigarettes. A number of measures taken by Member States' market surveillance authorities on products posing a serious risk (mainly refill liquids) have been notified to the rapid alert system RAPEX. However, the Commission does not have a comprehensive overview of incidents involving electronic cigarettes because they are not systematically reported.

Under the Commission proposal of 19 December 2012 to revise the Tobacco Products Directive, electronic cigarettes would fall under the Medicinal Products Directive if they contain levels of nicotine above certain thresholds. Thus, the placing on the market of such electronic cigarettes would require prior authorisation under pharmaceutical legislation.

For electronic cigarettes below the thresholds in question, the proposal foresees that they carry health warnings. They would also have to comply with the General Product Safety Directive requiring producers to place only safe products on the market. Enforcement of EU legislation, including the Tobacco Products Directive and the General Product Safety Directive is the responsibility of the Member States.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000464/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(17 gennaio 2013)

Oggetto: Istituzione della Giornata europea contro la persecuzione e la discriminazione dei cristiani nel mondo

Autorevoli fonti internazionali hanno diffuso alla fine del 2012 studi e ricerche che descrivono un'escalation senza precedenti di violenze contro i cristiani e dimostrano che, proprio quella cristiana è la comunità religiosa più perseguitata al mondo. Il centro di statistica americano «Center for Study of Global Christianity» ha stimato che, nel solo 2011, sono stati uccisi 105.000 cristiani, 1 ogni 5 minuti, a fronte di episodi di violenza, attentati e attacchi terroristici. La «Società internazionale per i Diritti Umani» conferma con propri studi che l'80 % delle persone perseguitate nel mondo per motivi religiosi sono di fede cristiana. L'ONG «Open Doors» indica almeno 100 milioni di cristiani vittime di discriminazioni, persecuzioni e atti di violenza in tutto il globo. Dal fondamentalismo islamico arrivano i casi più frequenti e violenti di intolleranza religiosa verso i cristiani: sempre secondo «Open Doors», su 50 paesi dove sono in atto forme di persecuzione contro i cristiani, ben 38 sono islamici.

Preso atto delle cifre che descrivono la gravità del fenomeno;

considerati i valori fondanti dell'UE quali il rispetto della dignità umana, della libertà, dei diritti umani, dei diritti delle persone e dell'uomo, della libertà religiosa sanciti tanto dai Trattati quanto dalla Carta dei diritti fondamentali dell'UE;

ricordando che la percentuale di musulmani in Europa è destinata a crescere di circa un terzo nei prossimi 20 anni, passando dai 44,1 milioni del 2010 ai 58 milioni del 2030;

può la Commissione far sapere se:

è a conoscenza del fenomeno e quali misure pensa di adottare per fermare la persecuzione silenziosa dei cristiani nel mondo?

Al fine di sensibilizzare l'opinione pubblica e non dimenticare le migliaia e migliaia di cristiani uccisi ogni anno dall'intolleranza religiosa che sono troppo spesso colpevolmente ignorati dai grandi media ha essa intenzione di istituire una Giornata europea contro la persecuzione e la discriminazione dei cristiani nel mondo?

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

L'UE ha dedicato un'attenzione crescente alle violazioni della libertà di religione o di convinzione e ha condannato il sempre maggior numero di atti d'intolleranza e discriminazione religiosa e di violenza contro le comunità religiose.

In una dichiarazione rilasciata il 20 marzo 2012 i presidenti van Rompuy e Barroso hanno rammentato che la libertà di pensiero, di religione e di convinzione e il rispetto della persona fanno parte della Carta dei diritti fondamentali e che l'UE continua a sostenere questi diritti. L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente ha formulato numerose dichiarazioni sulla situazione specifica in diversi paesi.

L'UE ha sostenuto la promozione e la difesa della libertà di religione o di convinzione a livello bilaterale e multilaterale e continuerà a farlo con la redazione di nuovi orientamenti dell'UE in materia; incrementerà inoltre il proprio impegno nello spirito delle risoluzioni 16/13 e 16/18 della commissione delle Nazioni Unite per i diritti umani.

Sul versante interno dell'UE, la decisione quadro 2008/913/GAI impone agli Stati membri di rendere punibili l'istigazione pubblica intenzionale alla violenza o all'odio definito in riferimento alla razza, al colore, alla religione, all'ascendenza o all'origine nazionale o etnica. La Commissione segue attentamente il recepimento e l'attuazione della decisione e ne valuterà la conformità da parte degli Stati membri in una relazione che presenterà nel 2013. La decisione quadro non autorizza la Commissione ad avviare procedure di infrazione fino al 1° dicembre 2014. Spetta alle autorità nazionali giudiziarie e di contrasto analizzare le situazioni in concreto e stabilire se rappresentino un'istigazione alla violenza o all'odio.

Dato il numero di attività intraprese, l'UE non crede che la creazione di una Giornata europea contro la persecuzione e la discriminazione dei cristiani nel mondo possa portare un valore aggiunto.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000464/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: Creating a European Day against persecution and discrimination of Christians throughout the world

At the end of 2012, authoritative international sources published studies and research describing an unprecedented escalation of violence against Christians and which illustrate that Christianity is the most widely persecuted religion in the world. The Center for the Study of Global Christianity, a US statistical organisation, has estimated that 105 000 Christians were killed in 2011 alone, that is, one every five minutes, during outbreaks of violence, aggression and terrorist attacks. Studies by the International Society for Human Rights confirm that 80 % of people who suffer religious persecution around the world are Christians. The non-governmental organisation Open Doors says that at least 100 million Christians are victims of discrimination, persecution and acts of violence globally.

Islamic fundamentalism is behind the most frequent and violent outbreaks of religious intolerance towards Christians.

According to Open Doors, Islamic countries make up 38 out of the 50 countries where Christians face persecution.

Given the figures which illustrate the gravity of the situation;

considering the founding values of the European Union such as respect for human dignity, freedom, human rights, the rights of persons and religious freedom ratified by the Treaties and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union;

recalling that Europe's Muslim population is projected to grow to 58 million by 2030, up from 44.1 million in 2010, increasing by approximately one third over the next 20 years:

Is the Commission aware of the situation and what measures it is considering in order to put a stop to the silent persecution of Christians throughout the world?

In order to raise public awareness and remember the thousands of Christians killed every year because of religious intolerance, and who are all too often ignored by the mainstream media, does the Commission intend to create a European Day against persecution and discrimination of Christians throughout the world?

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

The EU has been increasingly focusing on violations of freedom of religion or belief and condemned the increasing number of acts of religious intolerance and discrimination and violence against religious communities.

In a statement made on 20 March 2012, Presidents van Rompuy and Barroso recalled that freedom of thought, freedom of religion and belief and the respect for the individual formed part of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, and that the EU would continue to foster these rights. The HR/VP made numerous statements on specific country situations.

At bilateral and multilateral levels, the EU has been addressing the promotion and defence of freedom of religion or belief and will carry on doing so through the elaboration of new EU guidelines on freedom of religion or belief. It will also enhance efforts in the spirit of UNHRC resolutions 16/13 and 16/18.

On the internal EU side, Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA obliges MS to make punishable intentional public incitements to violence or hatred defined by reference to race, colour, religion, descent or national or ethnic origin. The Commission is closely monitoring the transposition and implementation of this decision. It will present its assessment of MS' compliance in a report in 2013. The Commission is not authorised to launch infringement proceedings on the basis of Framework Decision until 1 December 2014. It is for national law enforcement and judicial authorities to investigate concrete situations and determine whether such situations represent incitement to violence or hatred.

Given the number of activities undertaken, the EU does not believe that the creation of a 'European Day against persecution and discrimination of Christians throughout the world' would have further value.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000465/13
alla Commissione
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(17 gennaio 2013)

Oggetto: Possibili finanziamenti per la società Vortalia srl, network di portali italiani

In Italia è presente una società considerata uno dei più grandi network di portali italiani, che ha l'obiettivo di fornire uno strumento innovativo di commercio elettronico e che raccoglie i prodotti/servizi esclusivamente italiani.

Tale società si presenta attualmente in rete con un servizio di comparazione di 100 domini tematici, aggregati in 19 aree tematiche e 25 mila categorie merceologiche. Esso permette quindi alle aziende che hanno un negozio online o un listino di prodotti/servizi di essere facilmente ricercabili nel loro target, incrementando così le performance di vendita.

Al fine di aumentare le proprie prestazioni, questa società intende investire nell'internazionalizzazione del brand e nell'implementazione dell'attuale infrastruttura per fornire alle imprese ulteriori servizi di dropshipping con logistica integrata, di e-content multilanguage e di direct marketing. Questa società, per conferire maggiore sostenibilità alla crescita innovativa e tecnologica delle imprese italiane, intende altresì promuovere un centro di ricerca e sviluppo di applicazioni web-based e un centro di rilevazione statistica su target, strutturati in gruppi operativi per aree tematiche e aventi in carico le funzioni di marketing analysis.

Ciò premesso, si chiede alla Commissione di verificare:

1. se siano previsti programmi o finanziamenti per la realizzazione del progetto suesposto;

2. quali azioni o programmi siano previsti per il sostegno alle PMI e alle tecnologie di comunicazione e informazione nella nuova programmazione 2014-2020;

3. un quadro generale della situazione.

Risposta di Antonio Tajani a nome della Commissione
(13 marzo 2013)

1. e 3. La Commissione stabilisce programmi e finanziamenti a sostegno delle PMI, quale il Programma Quadro per la Competitività e l'Innovazione ([1]). Nello specifico, nel Programma per l'Imprenditorialità e l'Innovazione (CIP/EIP) rientrano provvedimenti miranti ad agevolare l'accesso a finanziamenti, servizi imprenditoriali e innovazione da parte delle PMI. Disponibili in forma sia di garanzie sia di investimenti, i finanziamenti sono erogati dalle istituzioni finanziarie che prendono parte al programma. La Enterprise Europe Network potrà fornire ulteriori informazioni riguardo alle fonti di finanziamento locali e/o europee più appropriate per ogni progetto ([2]).

Per quanto riguarda la possibilità di ricevere sovvenzioni da parte del Fondo europeo di sviluppo regionale, per promuovere l'imprenditoria il Programma Regionale Campania 2007-2013 finanzia anche lo sviluppo di servizi interattivi a vantaggio delle PMI e la promozione di un impiego efficace delle TIC da parte di queste imprese.

2. In merito alla programmazione futura la Commissione ha proposto un nuovo Programma per la competitività delle imprese e delle PMI, che porterà avanti le iniziative già promosse dal CIP/EIP ([3]).

La Commissione ha proposto inoltre un nuovo programma quadro per la ricerca e l'innovazione, denominato Horizon 2020 ([4]).

([1]) Maggiori informazioni riguardo al CIP sono disponibili sul sito http://ec.europa.eu/cip/
([2]) Si consiglia quindi alla società Vortalia di rivolgersi alle sedi italiane dell'Enterprise Europe Network in merito a eventuali finanziamenti disponibili a livello Europeo e locale. (http://portal.enterprise-europe-network.ec.europa.eu/about/branches/it/)
([3]) Maggiori informazioni riguardo al COSME sono disponibili sul sito: http://ec.europa.eu/cip/cosme/index_en.htm
([4]) Maggiori informazioni riguardo a Horizon sono disponibili sul sito: http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index_en.cfm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000465/13
to the Commission
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: Possible funding for the company Vortalia srl, a network of Italian portals

In Italy there is a company which is considered to be one of the largest networks of Italian portals and which aims to provide an innovative *e*-commerce tool that brings together exclusively Italian goods and services.

This company currently presents itself on the Internet as a comparison service covering 100 thematic domains, grouped into 19 thematic areas and 25 000 categories of goods. This therefore enables businesses with an online store or with a list of goods or services to be easily searched for in their sector, thereby improving their sales performance.

In order to improve its own performance, the company intends to invest in internationalising its brand and in implementing its current infrastructure to provide businesses with further services: drop shipping with integrated logistics, multilingual *e*-content and direct marketing. Furthermore, in order to make the innovative and technological growth of Italian companies more sustainable, this company intends to promote a research and development centre for web-based applications and a centre for statistical surveys based on target area, organised into operational groups according to thematic area, and with marketing analysis functions.

1. Can the Commission confirm whether any programmes or funding to implement the above project are planned?

2. Can it confirm what actions or programmes are envisaged to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and information and communication technologies in the new 2014-2020 programming period?

3. Can it provide an overview of the situation?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(13 March 2013)

1 and 3. The Commission provides financial and non-financial support to SMEs, among others, via the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme) ([1]). In particular the specific Programme for Entrepreneurship and Innovation (CIP/EIP) includes measures to improve SMEs' access to finance, business services and innovation. Financing is provided in the form of guarantees and equity which are available through financial institutions participating in the programme. The Enterprise Europe Network can provide advice on any sources of European and/or local funding which may be appropriate for a specific project ([2]).

Regarding the possibility of funding from the European Regional Development Fund, the Regional Programme 'Campania' 2007-2013 supports entrepreneurship also by funding the development of fully interactive services to SMEs and the promotion of the effective use of ICT by SMEs.

2. For the new programming period, the Commission presented a proposal for a new Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs which will continue the successful initiatives taken under the CIP/EIP ([3]).

The Commission has also proposed a new framework programme for research and innovation, Horizon 2020 ([4]).

([1]) More information on the CIP is available under: http://ec.europa.eu/cip/
([2]) Vortalia could therefore contact the Italian branches of the Network for information on any funding which may be available at European and local level for its specific project (http://portal.enterprise-europe-network.ec.europa.eu/about/branches/it/)
([3]) More information on COSME is available on: http://ec.europa.eu/cip/cosme/index_en.htm
([4]) More information on Horizon 2020 is available on: http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index_en.cfm

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-000466/13
aan de Commissie
Esther de Lange (PPE)
(17 januari 2013)

Betreft: Geneesmiddelen uit China

Op 21-25 september jl. heeft de Nederlandse minister van Volksgezondheid mw. Schippers een bezoek gebracht aan de Volksrepubliek China. Tijdens dit bezoek heeft commissaris Yin Li vragen gesteld aan minister Schippers over de inwerkingtreding in 2013 van de nieuwe EU richtlijn 2011/62/EU over vervalste geneesmiddelen. Deze richtlijn zegt dat voor de import van actieve farmaceutische bestanddelen naar de EU een schriftelijke verklaring moet worden uitgegeven door de bevoegde autoriteit van het exporterende derde land, waaruit blijkt dat de actieve bestanddelen zijn geproduceerd volgens de goede fabricatiepraktijken.

Commissaris Yin Li heeft van Chinese zijde bij de Nederlandse minister zijn zorgen geuit over het niet betrokken zijn bij de totstandkoming van de uiteindelijke certificaten en de mate van detaillering van de documenten. De minister heeft toegezegd dat de IGZ (inspectie voor de gezondheidszorg) en de politiek in de betreffende EU-kanalen de bezwaren van Chinese zijde naar voren zullen brengen.

1. Wat vindt de Commissie van deze belofte van de Nederlandse minister? Het bepalen van het formaat van de verklaring is toch een uitvoeringsbevoegdheid van de Commissie? Deelt de Commissie de mening dat dit detailniveau nodig is om de veiligheid van Europeanen te waarborgen?

2. Heeft de Nederlandse minister de bezwaren van Chinese zijde bij de Commissie kenbaar gemaakt? En zo ja, op welke wijze en hoe is daarop van EU-zijde gereageerd?

3. Is het niet aan de EU (en niet aan de Nederlandse minister), om een dergelijke opschorting van de verplichte verklaring voor te stellen? Heeft de minister hiervoor gepleit in Brussel?

4. De minister heeft de toezegging gedaan met het oog op het belang voor de EU en Nederland van een continue toevoer van (grondstoffen van) geneesmiddelen uit China. Zij heeft expliciet in haar verslag opgenomen dat het mogelijk is om tijdelijk af te zien van een schriftelijke verklaring als de beschikbaarheid van geneesmiddelen in gevaar komt voor de duur van geldigheid van het GMP-certificaat. Is dit een legitieme toezegging van de minister? Wat vindt de Commissie van deze toezegging?

Antwoord van de heer Borg namens de Commissie
(20 februari 2013)

1. De Commissie heeft geen opmerkingen met betrekking tot de door het geachte Parlementslid gerapporteerde verklaringen van minister Schippers. Een richtsnoer met daarin een geharmoniseerd model voor de schriftelijke verklaring is door de Commissie gepubliceerd in „EudraLex — the rules governing medicinal products in the EU", Volume 4, Part III ([1]). Dit model volgt het „model certificate of good manufacturing practices" van de Wereldgezondheidsorganisatie ([2]).

2. De Commissie is niet door de Nederlandse minister op de hoogte gebracht van de bezwaren van China. De tenuitvoerlegging van dit dossier is echter sinds september 2012 meermaals besproken met vertegenwoordigers van de lidstaten. De Commissie heeft voortdurend nauw contact met de overheden van de lidstaten en derde landen, waaronder China, waar actieve farmaceutische bestanddelen worden geproduceerd voor de export naar de EU, teneinde een vlotte inwerkingtreding van de nieuwe regelgeving te waarborgen.

3. De regelgeving inzake de „schriftelijke verklaring" kan enkel door middel van door het Europees Parlement en de Raad vastgestelde wetgeving worden opgeschort. De Commissie is niet voornemens een opschorting voor te stellen noch heeft minister Schippers (of enige andere minister) bij de Commissie gepleit voor een eventuele opschorting.

4. Artikel 46 ter, lid 4, van Richtlijn 2001/83/EG van het Europees Parlement en de Raad ([3]) geeft lidstaten inderdaad de mogelijkheid om, in bepaalde goed gedefinieerde gevallen, afstand te doen van de vereiste voor een „schriftelijke verklaring".

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/documents/eudralex/vol-4/index_en.htm
([2]) WHO Technical Report Series, No. 908, 2003.
([3]) PB L 311 van 28.11.2011, blz. 67.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000466/13
to the Commission
Esther de Lange (PPE)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: Medicines from China

On 21 to 25 September 2012, the Dutch Health Minister, Ms Schippers, visited the People's Republic of China. During this visit, Commissioner Yin Li asked Minister Schippers about the entry into force in 2013 of the new EU Directive 2011/62/EU on falsified medicinal products. With regard to the import of active pharmaceutical ingredients into the EU, this directive states that a written confirmation must be issued by the competent authority of the exporting third country showing that the active ingredients are produced in accordance with good manufacturing practice.

Commissioner Yin Li expressed China's concern to the Dutch Minister about not being involved in the drafting of the final certificates and about the level of detail of the documents. The Minister promised that the Health Care Inspectorate (IGZ) and politicians would raise the Chinese concerns through the relevant EU channels.

1. What does the Commission think of the Dutch Minister's promise? Is determining the format of the confirmation not one of the Commission's implementation powers? Does the Commission agree that this level of detail is necessary to ensure the safety of Europeans?

2. Has the Dutch Minister made the Commission aware of China's complaints? If so, what was the EU response?

3. Is it not up to the EU (and not up to the Dutch Minister) to propose such a suspension of the mandatory confirmation? Did the Minister argue for this in Brussels?

4. The Minister made this promise in view of the importance for the EU and the Netherlands of a continuous supply of (raw materials for) medicinal products from China. She explicitly noted in her report that it is possible to temporarily waive a written confirmation if there is a threat to the availability of medicinal products for the period of validity of the certificate of Good Manufacturing Practice. Is this a legitimate commitment by the Minister? What is the Commission's view of this commitment?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(20 February 2013)

1. The Commission has no comments on Minister Schippers' statements as reported by the Honourable Member. A guideline setting out the harmonised template for the written confirmation has been published by the Commission in 'EudraLex — the rules governing medicinal products in the EU', Volume 4, Part III ([1]). This template follows the 'model certificate of good manufacturing practices' of the World Health Organisation ([2]).

2. The Commission has not been made aware by the Dutch Minister of China's complaints. However, since September 2012 implementation of this file was discussed at various occasions with Member States representatives. The Commission is in close, continued contact with the authorities of the Member States and of third countries where active pharmaceutical ingredients are produced for export to the EU, including China, in order to ensure a smooth coming into operation of the new rules.

3. The rules on 'written confirmation' can only be suspended by way of legislation adopted by the European Parliament and Council. The Commission has no intention to propose a suspension nor did Minister Schippers (or any other Minister) argue vis-à-vis the Commission for any suspension.

4. Article 46b(4) of Directive 2001/83/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council ([3]) gives indeed Member States the possibility, in certain well defined circumstances, to waive the requirement for 'written confirmation'.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/documents/eudralex/vol-4/index_en.htm
([2]) WHO Technical Report Series, No 908, 2003.
([3]) OJ L 311, 28.11.2011, p. 67.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-000467/13
aan de Commissie
Laurence J. A. J. Stassen (NI) en Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(17 januari 2013)

Betreft: Istanbul als smokkelnest voor emigranten naar de EU

In de EU Observer van 16 januari jl. is een artikel verschenen over Istanbul als de hoofdstad van mensensmokkelaars die illegale immigranten naar de Europese Unie loodsen ([1]). Verschillende wijken in Istanbul blijken te zijn gespecialiseerd in immigranten met een verschillende Aziatische of Afrikaanse herkomst. Deze mensensmokkel is uiterst winstgevend; er gaan miljoenen euro's in om.

Naar aanleiding van vragen die de heer Zijlstra in mei 2012 aan de Commissie heeft gesteld (E-002733/2012) heeft mevrouw Malmström geantwoord dat de Commissie maatregelen heeft ingesteld en financiële steun verstrekt om de illegale migratiestromen in te dammen. Onderdeel van die maatregelen is de versterking van de dialoog met Turkije, gericht op de bestrijding van criminele netwerken die zich bezig houden met de smokkel van illegale immigranten.

1. Kan de Commissie aangeven welke concrete afspraken er inmiddels zijn gemaakt met de Turkse overheid gericht op de bestrijding van de criminelen die zich bezighouden met mensensmokkel?

2. Kan de Commissie aangeven wat het kwantitatieve effect is van de gemaakte afspraken? Bijvoorbeeld hoeveel criminele netwerken er zijn opgerold? Met welke aantallen is het aantal gesmokkelde illegalen afgenomen?

3. Kan de Commissie aangeven met welk bedrag de Turkse overheid door de Europese Unie is gesteund bij zijn bestrijding van de criminele netwerken die zich bezighouden met mensensmokkel?

Antwoord van mevrouw Malmström namens de Commissie
(5 april 2013)

1. De Europese Commissie heeft geen enkele overeenkomst gesloten met de Turkse regering die erop is gericht, op te treden tegen mensensmokkelaars, maar hoopt zo snel mogelijk de overnameovereenkomst namens de Europese Unie te tekenen.

2. Mede dankzij grote inspanningen van zowel de EU als de Turkse autoriteiten is sinds medio 2012 het aantal migranten dat rechtstreeks van Turks grondgebied komt en door de Griekse en Bulgaarse autoriteiten aan de buitengrenzen van de EU wordt onderschept, sterk gedaald. In de tweede helft van het jaar zijn slechts 8 717 migranten onderschept, terwijl dat er in de eerste helft van het jaar nog 22 015 waren. Turkije blijft echter een belangrijk doorvoerland voor illegale migratie naar de Europese Unie.

3. Turkije ontvangt financiële steun via het instrument voor pretoetredingssteun (IPA), onder meer voor de omschakeling en institutionele opbouw op het gebied van justitie en binnenlandse zaken. In het kader van de financiële vooruitzichten 2007-2013 is ongeveer 272 miljoen euro toegewezen aan 32 projecten op dit gebied. Het gaat onder meer om projecten voor de opleiding van grenspolitie (IPA 2008) en de bescherming van slachtoffers van mensensmokkel (IPA 2011). Alle goedgekeurde nationale programma's en bijbehorende projectfiches kunnen worden geraadpleegd op: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/instruments/funding-by-country/turkey/index_en.htm

([1]) http://euobserver.com/fortress-eu/118377.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000467/13
to the Commission
Laurence J.A.J. Stassen (NI) and Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: Istanbul as the smuggler capital for EU-bound migrants

The *EU Observer* of 16 January 2013 published an article about Istanbul as the capital for groups smuggling illegal immigrants into the European Union ([1]). Various districts in Istanbul appear to specialise in immigrants of different Asian or African origin. This human trafficking is an extremely profitable operation worth millions of euros.

In response to questions raised by Mr Zijlstra in May 2012 in his Written Question to the Commission (E-002733/2012), Mrs Malmström stated that the Commission has put measures in place and provided financial support to curb the illegal migration flows. One of these measures is to strengthen the dialogue with Turkey aimed at combating criminal networks that are behind the smuggling of illegal immigrants.

1. Can the Commission indicate which specific agreements have already been reached with the Turkish government aimed at combating the criminals engaged in human trafficking?

2. Can the Commission report on the quantitative impact of these agreements? For example, how many criminal networks have been dismantled? What are the figures for the reduction in the number of smuggled illegal immigrants?

3. Can the Commission specify the amount provided by the European Union to support the Turkish government in its fight against the criminal networks involved in human trafficking?

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

1. The European Commission has not concluded with the Turkish government any agreement aimed at combating the criminals engaged in human smuggling, but looks forward to sign as soon as possible, on behalf, of the European Union, the readmission agreement.

2. As of mid-2012, also as a result of the increased efforts made both by the EU and by Turkish authorities, the number of migrants intercepted at the EU external border by Greek and Bulgarian authorities coming directly from the Turkish territory has seriously decreased. While in the first half of the year 2012 that number amounted up to 22,015, in the second half it had declined to 8,717. Turkey remains, however, an important transit country for irregular migration to the European Union.

3. Turkey receives financial support via the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance, including for transition assistance and institution building in in the area of Justice and Home Affairs. For the 2007-2013 framework an approximate allocation of EUR 272 million have been allocated for 32 projects in this area. These include projects such as 'Training of Border Police' (IPA 2008) or 'Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking' (IPA 2011). All adopted national programmes and related Project Fiches are publicly available at:
http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/instruments/funding-by-country/turkey/index_en.htm

([1]) http://euobserver.com/fortress-eu/118377

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000468/13
to the Commission
Nicole Sinclaire (NI)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: UK state pensions: special provision for women

The British Government has unveiled reforms to the state pension.

The reforms include a provision whereby women will be allowed to take a career break, and therefore will not be required to pay National Insurance contributions for as long as men in order to qualify for a full state pension.

Could the Commission advise me as to the legality of this discriminatory provision?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(26 February 2013)

The provisions of Directive 79/7/EEC on the progressive implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women in matters of social security apply to statutory state pension schemes.

Article 7 of the directive authorises Member States to exclude from the principle of equal treatment the determination of pensionable age for the purposes of granting old-age and retirement pensions, advantages in respect of old-age pension schemes granted to persons who have brought up children and the acquisition of benefit entitlements following periods of interruption of employment due to the bringing up of children.

The Honourable Member refers to the ongoing reform of pension schemes in the United Kingdom, and in particular the fact that women will now be allowed to take a career break, resulting in a difference in the number of years of entitlement contributions to be paid by women as compared with men in order to qualify for a full pension. The Commission has no specific information on the reform in question, including on any connection between the career break allowed for women and the fact that women have had to take such a break in order to bring up children. The Commission will contact the United Kingdom authorities in order to obtain information on the issues raised by the Honourable Member.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-000469/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(17 janvier 2013)

Objet: Soutien au développement économique et social à Somaliland

Somaliland a démontré pendant plus de vingt ans sa capacité à développer et à consolider ses structures démocratiques, économiques et administratives, ainsi qu'à créer un processus démocratique durable.

La sécurité et la stabilité sur son territoire semblent renforcées et la lutte contre la piraterie et le terrorisme fait l'objet d'une coopération. Toutefois, il est pour le moins préoccupant que le Somaliland risque d'être fragilisé si le mouvement Al-Chabab se regroupe dans les régions montagneuses frontalières.

Partant du principe qu'il est important de soutenir le Somaliland dans sa lutte contre le terrorisme, notamment en encourageant la diversification économique, le développement social et le renforcement des capacités en faveur de l'emploi des jeunes, ce afin de réduire le recrutement parmi ces derniers, la Commission est invitée à répondre aux questions suivantes:

1. De quelle nature sont les contacts établis entre la Commission et Somaliland?

2. Comment la Commission envisage-t-elle de soutenir le Somaliland afin d'améliorer ses perspectives de développement et de renforcer sa stabilité économique et sociale?

Réponse donnée par M. Piebalgs au nom de la Commission
(6 mars 2013)

L'UE entretient un dialogue politique continu et coopère avec les autorités du Somaliland en tant que région de la Somalie, sans préjudice de la souveraineté, de l'intégrité et de l'unité de la Somalie. Lors de sa visite au Somaliland en juillet 2011, le commissaire chargé du développement s'est entretenu avec le gouvernement régional et les membres du parlement de la coopération avec le Somaliland et des perspectives de développement. En 2010, le gouvernement du Somaliland a établi un forum de dialogue avec les donateurs ainsi qu'avec des organes des Nations unies et des ONG ([1]) qui mettent en œuvre des programmes humanitaires et de développement. L'UE possède une antenne à Hargeisa et met en œuvre un important programme de coopération visant à favoriser une gouvernance efficace, à promouvoir l'éducation et à stimuler le développement économique du Somaliland.

Le Somaliland bénéficie donc du programme d'aide au développement actuel de la Commission d'un montant de 412 millions d'euros alloué à la Somalie pour la période 2008-2013. Le soutien à la gouvernance peut être considéré comme une condition préalable au développement social et économique. Le soutien de l'UE à l'éducation a pour objectif de contribuer au développement d'un système éducatif homogène et durable grâce à la mise en place de services adaptés proposés à l'ensemble de la population (meilleur accès à l'éducation, formation des enseignants et formation professionnelle). En ce qui concerne les programmes de développement économique, l'UE modernise et développe les infrastructures d'approvisionnement en eau dans plusieurs villes du Somaliland. Le financement de l'UE sert également par exemple à soutenir la production et la commercialisation de bétail ainsi que l'école vétérinaire technique de Sheikh.

L'aide octroyée au Somaliland par l'UE fait donc partie du programme d'aide de l'UE pour l'ensemble du pays, dans l'espoir que ces régions plus stables auront un effet tache d'huile positif sur le reste du pays.

([1]) ONG — Organisation non gouvernementale.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000469/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: Support for economic and social development in Somaliland

For more than 20 years Somaliland has shown its ability to develop and consolidate its democratic, economic and administrative structures, as well as to create a sustainable democratic process.

Security and stability within its territory seem to have increased, and there is cooperation in the fight against piracy and terrorism. However, the fact that Somaliland is likely to be weakened if the al-Shabaab movement regroups in the mountainous border regions is worrying to say the least.

Working on the principle that it is important to support Somaliland in its fight against terrorism, in particular by encouraging economic diversification, social development and capacity building for youth employment, in order to reduce the number of young people being recruited by terrorists, can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. What kind of contacts have been established between the Commission and Somaliland?

2. How does the Commission aim to support Somaliland in order to improve its development prospects and to increase its economic and social stability?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(6 March 2013)

As a region of Somalia and without prejudice to Somalia's sovereignty, integrity and unity, the EU has an ongoing political dialogue and cooperation with the Somaliland authorities. The Commissioner responsible for Development visited Somaliland in July 2011 and has discussed with the regional government and members of parliament about cooperation with Somaliland and the development perspectives. The Government of Somaliland established in 2010 a forum for dialogue with the donors as well as with UN bodies and NGOs ([1]) working in humanitarian and development programmes. The EU has a Field Office in Hargeisa and implements a substantial cooperation programme in support of effective governance, education and stimulating economic development in Somaliland.

Somaliland therefore benefits from the Commission's ongoing development aid programme with Somalia of EUR 412 million for the years 2008-2013. The support to good governance can be seen as a precondition for economic and social development. EU support to education aims at contributing to the development of a sustainable, cohesive education system through the provision of relevant services to the entire population (improved access to education, teacher training, vocational training). As to economic development programmes, the EU is rehabilitating and expanding urban water infrastructure in several cities across Somaliland. EU funding also includes for example support to livestock production and marketing and to the Sheikh Technical Veterinary School in Somaliland.

EU support to Somaliland is thus part of the EU's support to the whole country and it is hoped that a positive spill-over effect will take place from those more stable regions to the rest of the country.

([1]) NGO = Non-governmental Organisation.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-000470/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(17 janvier 2013)

Objet: Victimes des incendies dans des usines de textiles au Bangladesh

Le 24 novembre 2012, plus de 110 personnes ont péri dans l'incendie d'une usine textile de Tazreen, dans la banlieue de Dacca. Le Bangladesh compte plus de 4 500 usines de vêtements, qui emploient plus de quatre millions de travailleurs, en majorité des jeunes femmes; ce secteur est donc vital pour l'économie nationale en raison des emplois qu'il procure et des devises qu'il rapporte.

Compte tenu du fait que les usines de vêtements du Bangladesh travaillent pour de nombreuses marques internationales, dont des marques européennes (57 % des exportations étant destinées à l'Union européenne), la Commission compte-t-elle exiger des marques européennes de vêtements de réexaminer leurs chaînes d'approvisionnement et de coopérer avec leurs fournisseurs afin d'améliorer les normes sur la santé et la sécurité au travail?

Réponse donnée par M. Tajani au nom de la Commission
(1er mars 2013)

En ce qui concerne l'incendie dans une usine au Bangladesh, la Commission renvoie l'Honorable Parlementaire aux réponses apportées aux questions écrites E-010829/2012 de M. Raül Romeva I Rueda et E-011460/2012 de M. Harlem Désir ([1]).

À l'heure actuelle, la Commission ne prévoit pas de proposer de nouvelles exigences pour les chaînes d'approvisionnement des marques de vêtements européennes.

La Commission attire l'attention de l'Honorable Parlementaire sur la déclaration commune de la vice-présidente/haute représentante de l'Union pour les affaires étrangères et la politique de sécurité et du commissaire au commerce. Les deux représentants se sont exprimés le 30 janvier à la suite d'un autre incendie mortel dans une usine de textiles au Bangladesh. Ils ont ainsi rappelé que l'Union européenne constituait le premier partenaire commercial du Bangladesh, pays qui jouit d'un accès privilégié au marché de l'UE, et que cette dernière était vivement préoccupée par les conditions de travail dans les usines bangladaises, y compris en matière de santé et de sécurité. Par cette déclaration, l'UE appelait en outre les autorités bangladaises à prendre immédiatement des mesures pour que les normes internationales du travail, et notamment les conventions de l'Organisation internationale du travail, soient appliquées dans les usines du pays. Enfin, elle se disait disposée à apporter aux autorités bangladaises toute l'aide voulue afin de permettre le respect des normes internationales et appelait dans le même temps les entreprises européennes et internationales à faire davantage pour favoriser de meilleures conditions de santé et de sécurité dans le secteur de la confection au Bangladesh, conformément aux principes internationalement reconnus en matière de responsabilité sociale des entreprises.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000470/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: Victims of textile factory fires in Bangladesh

On 24 November 2012, more than 110 people died in a textile factory fire in Tazreen, on the outskirts of Dhaka. Bangladesh has more than 4 500 clothes factories, which employ more than four million workers, the majority of whom are young women; this sector is therefore vital for the national economy due to the number of jobs that it provides and the money that it generates.

In view of the fact that Bangladesh's clothes factories work for numerous international brands, including European brands (57 % of their exports are sold to the EU), does the Commission intend to make European clothes brands re-examine their supply chains and cooperate with their suppliers in order to improve health and safety standards at work?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(1 March 2013)

Regarding the factory fire in Bangladesh, the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its responses to written questions E-010829/2012 by Sr. Raül Romeva i Rueda and E-011460/2012 by M. Harlem Désir ([1]).

The Commission does not currently have plans to propose new requirements on European clothes brands regarding their supply chains.

The Commission draws the attention of the Honourable member to the joint statement of the Vice-President/High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the Member of the Commission responsible for Trade on 30 January following fatalities in a further textiles fire in Bangladesh, noting that the EU is Bangladesh's largest trade partner with preferential access to the EU market and reiterating the European Union's deep concern about the labour conditions, including health and safety provisions, established for workers in factories across the country. The statement called upon the Bangladeshi authorities to act immediately to ensure that factories comply with international labour standards including International Labour Organisation conventions and offered any possible EU assistance to the Bangladeshi authorities to meet such standards, and also called on European and international companies to do more to promote better health and safety standards in garment factories in Bangladesh, in line with internationally recognised guidelines on Corporate Social Responsibility.

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

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-000471/13
au Conseil
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(17 janvier 2013)

Objet: Support de l'Union européenne à la France face à la situation malienne

Depuis le coup d'état du 22 mars, la situation est très confuse au Mali, où trois forces armées rivales sont en présence: la junte, qui a pris le pouvoir à Bamako, la rébellion touareg, qui poursuit son offensive dans le nord du pays, et l'armée régulière, fidèle au président sortant qui est en repli.

La France a pris le parti de s'engager dans ce conflit avec comme premier objectif d'arrêter l'offensive des groupes terroristes.

Elle a mené lundi une nouvelle journée d'offensive au nord du Mali. Paris envisage de déployer 2 500 soldats pour soutenir l'armée malienne et y «accompagner» le déploiement de forces de la Communauté économique des États d'Afrique de l'Ouest (Cedeao).

Le président du Conseil européen a estimé «urgent de stopper» les «terroristes» et les «groupes rebelles» qui ont repris l'offensive au Mali et il a réitéré la profonde inquiétude de l'Union européenne face aux actions de terroristes et de groupes rebelles dans ce pays.

Comment va se concrétiser ce soutien à la France, dans cette confrontation, sur le court, moyen et long terme?

Réponse
(22 avril 2013)

En cohérence avec les travaux du groupe international de soutien et de suivi de la situation au Mali, qu'elle a accueilli le 5 février à Bruxelles, l'UE participe à la mobilisation internationale en faveur de la stabilité et de la sécurité au Mali.

À ce titre, lors de sa session du 18 février 2013, le Conseil des affaires étrangères a apporté son soutien politique à l'opération française Serval ainsi qu'à la Mission internationale de soutien au Mali sous conduite africaine (MISMA). Il a également réaffirmé son engagement en faveur de la lutte contre la menace terroriste.

En outre, parallèlement à l'action menée par ses États membres, qu'ils participent directement au plan opérationnel de la France ou qu'ils soient indirectement associés par la fourniture d'un soutien logistique à l'opération africaine, l'UE apporte un appui financier et logistique à la MISMA, qui se traduit par le déblocage de 50 millions d'euros au titre de la facilité de soutien à la paix ainsi que par la mise à disposition d'experts. L'UE a également appelé à la mise en œuvre de tous les engagements pris lors de la Conférence des donateurs tenue à Addis Abeba le 29 janvier 2013.

L'UE a par ailleurs lancé le 12 février, la mission EUTM de formation des forces de défense et de sécurité maliennes et renforcé le bureau de liaison de la mission EUCAP Sahel Niger à Bamako.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000471/13
to the Council
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: European Union support for France in response to the situation in Mali

Since the military coup on 22 March, the situation in Mali has been very confused. The country has three rival armed forces: the junta, which seized power in Bamako; the Tuareg rebel group, which is continuing its offensive in the north of the country; and the regular army, which is loyal to the outgoing president, who is in retreat.

France decided to enter into this conflict with the primary objective of halting the terrorist groups' offensive.

On Monday it carried out another day of attacks in the north of Mali. Paris is planning to deploy 2 500 soldiers to support the Malian army and to 'accompany' the deployment of forces from the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas).

The President of the Council has stated that it is 'urgent to stop' the 'terrorists' and the 'rebel groups' that have renewed their offensive in Mali. He has also reiterated the EU's deep concern regarding the actions of terrorists and rebel groups in that country.

What form will this support for France take, in this conflict, in the short, medium and long terms?

Reply
(22 April 2013)

In line with the international Support and Follow-up Group on the situation in Mali, which it hosted in Brussels on 5 February, the EU is participating in the efforts of the international community to achieve stability and security in Mali.

As such, on 18 February the Foreign Affairs Council offered its political support to both the French Operation Serval and the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA). It also reaffirmed its commitment to the fight against the threat of terrorism.

Furthermore, in parallel with the action of its Member States, whether directly involved in France's operational plan or indirectly involved via logistical support for the African operation, the EU is providing financial and logistical support for AFISMA, which involves the release of EUR 50 million for the Peace Facility and making experts available. The EU has also called for the implementation of all commitments made at the Addis Ababa donors' conference on 29 January 2013.

Moreover, on 12 February the EU launched the EUTM mission to train the Malian defence and security forces and reinforced the Bamako liaison office for the EUCAP Sahel Niger mission.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-000472/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(17 janvier 2013)

Objet: Fonds de solidarité

Après les inondations dévastatrices survenues en 2002 en Europe centrale, l'Union, dépourvue d'outil lui permettant de répondre aux populations touchées et d'aider les États membres victimes d'une catastrophe, a créé un nouvel instrument: le Fonds de solidarité de l'Union européenne (FSUE).

Le règlement conçu à cette époque n'a subi depuis lors aucune modification visant à l'adapter aux nouveaux besoins et à corriger certaines lacunes observées dans son fonctionnement en dix ans d'existence. Depuis sa création et jusqu'en septembre 2012, le Fonds a fourni des aides financières pour remédier aux dommages causés par quarante-neuf catastrophes, essentiellement des inondations et des incendies.

Ces dernières années, la Commission a reçu un nombre croissant de demandes, situation découlant, d'une part, de l'augmentation du nombre de catastrophes et, d'autre part, de la réglementation en vigueur, dont le manque de clarté empêche d'éliminer les incertitudes quant à l'éventuelle couverture et recevabilité des demandes liées à des catastrophes et présentées au titre des normes exceptionnelles pour celles dites «catastrophes régionales hors du commun».

1. La Commission envisage-t-elle de faire preuve d'une plus grande souplesse à l'égard du délai fixé pour la présentation des demandes, afin que les dommages causés puissent également être couverts par le FSUE?

2. La Commission compte-t-elle accéder à la demande du Parlement visant à ce qu'elle définisse clairement le champ d'application et la couverture du Fonds, en éliminant toute incertitude juridique éventuelle liée à sa portée et en évitant également la présentation de demandes par des États membres qui, même s'ils savent qu'elles seront rejetées, ressentent les pressions exercées par leurs citoyens?

3. La Commission envisage-t-elle d'adapter les critères pour que le FSUE puisse intervenir à la suite de catastrophes naturelles à caractère méditerranéen, lesquelles ont été, ces dernières années et partiellement à cause du changement climatique, les catastrophes naturelles les plus graves survenues dans l'Union?

Réponse donnée par M. Hahn au nom de la Commission
(4 mars 2013)

La Commission n'a cessé d'analyser le fonctionnement du Fonds de solidarité de l'Union européenne depuis sa création en 2002. Sur la base de ce suivi, la Commission a présenté en 2005 une proposition de règlement visant à modifier le règlement instituant le Fonds de solidarité ([1]). Malgré le soutien et les efforts considérables du Parlement européen, cette proposition a été bloquée au Conseil et a été retirée par la Commission en 2012.

Dans sa communication intitulée «L'avenir du Fonds de solidarité de l'Union européenne» présentée en octobre 2011 ([2]), la Commission a fait le point sur le fonctionnement de ce fonds et a présenté un certain nombre d'améliorations possibles. Celles-ci comprennent 1) une disposition visant à prolonger, dans certains cas, le délai normal de présentation des demandes qui est de 10 semaines, 2) une clarification concernant le champ d'intervention du fonds et 3) des dispositions qui permettraient à l'Union européenne de réagir plus efficacement aux types de catastrophes qui revêtent un intérêt particulier pour les pays du sud de l'UE, telles que les sécheresses et les incendies de forêts.

La Commission a l'intention de présenter, en temps voulu, une nouvelle proposition législative visant à modifier le règlement actuel et qui comprendra les aspects susmentionnés.

([1]) COM(2005) 108 final
([2]) COM(2011) 613 final

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000472/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: Solidarity Fund

Following the devastating floods in Central Europe in 2002, and realising it lacked a tool that would enable it to assist populations and Member States affected by disasters, the Union created a new instrument: the European Union Solidarity Fund (EUSF).

Since then, not even minor changes have been made to the regulation governing the Solidarity Fund to adapt it to new demands and to correct some of the shortcomings that have become apparent in its 10 years of operation. Between its creation and September 2012, the Fund has provided financial aid to offset the damage caused by 49 disasters, chiefly fires and floods.

In recent years the Commission has received a growing number of applications, partly because more disasters have occurred and partly because the current rules are not sufficiently clear to remove doubts on the possible eligibility of disasters where applications are submitted under the exceptional rules for 'extraordinary regional disasters'.

1. Does the Commission plan to exercise greater flexibility with regard to the timeframe for submitting requests, to ensure that any damage caused is still covered by the EUSF?

2. Does it intend to grant Parliament's request for it to define clearly the scope and area covered by the Fund, and to eliminate any legal uncertainty as regards its scope in order to avoid a situation where Member States submit applications under pressure from their citizens even though they know their applications will have to be rejected?

3. Does it plan to adapt the criteria so that the EUSF can respond to Mediterranean natural disasters which, partly due to climate change, represent the most serious natural disasters that have occurred in the Union in recent years?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(4 March 2013)

The Commission has continuously assessed the functioning of the EU Solidarity Fund since its creation in 2002. Based on this monitoring, the Commission presented in 2005 a legislative proposal for an amended Solidarity Fund Regulation ([1]). Despite major efforts and broad support from the European Parliament, this proposal was blocked in the Council and was withdrawn by the Commission in 2012.

In its communication on the Future of the Solidarity Fund presented in October 2011 ([2]), the Commission again took stock of the functioning of the Solidarity Fund and presented a number of possible improvements. These included 1) a provision to extend the normal 10 week application deadline in certain cases, 2) a clarification with regard to the scope of the Fund, and 3) provisions that would allow the EU to respond more effectively to the kinds of disasters of particular interest to countries in the south of the EU, such as droughts and forest fires.

In due course, the Commission intends to present a new legislative proposal, amending the current Regulation, that would include these elements.

([1]) COM(2005) 108 final.
([2]) COM(2011) 613 final.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-000473/13
do Komisji
Konrad Szymański (ECR)
(17 stycznia 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Stawki telefonii komórkowej za połączenia z krajami Partnerstwa Wschodniego

Obecnie minuta rozmowy za pośrednictwem telefonii komórkowej z Polski z Ukrainą lub Białorusią kosztuje w polskich sieciach komórkowych aż 2 PLN i więcej, co nie znajduje uzasadnienia w realnych kosztach. Problemem są również zbyt wysokie administracyjne stawki tzw. interkonektu, czyli stawki rozliczeń międzyoperatorskich w relacjach między polskimi a ukraińskimi i białoruskimi operatorami.

Ukraina i Białoruś sąsiedzi UE, dużo się mówi o potrzebie integracji tych krajów z Europą, jednak obecna sytuacja, kiedy za dziesięciominutową rozmowę telefoniczną trzeba zapłacić 20-30 PLN nijak się ma do deklaracji o przyjaznym sąsiedztwie i współpracy polsko-ukraińskiej.

Jak wiadomo, rynek telekomunikacyjny jest rynkiem regulowanym, a stawki w połączeniach zagranicznych nie są wynikiem wyłącznie gry konkurencyjnej, ale też licznych uregulowań (lub ich braku) na poziomie krajowym i unijnym.

W związku z powyższym pragnę zadać pytania:

1. Czy Komisja podejmuje działania mające na celu obniżenie kosztów rozmów telefonicznych między krajami UE a krajami Partnerstwa Wschodniego?

2. Czy Komisja podjęła się ustalenia, jakie czynniki wpływają na wysoki poziom stawki rozliczeń międzyoperatorskich?

3. Czy Komisja podniesie kwestię wysokich kosztów rozmów międzynarodowych w ramach obrad szczytu Ukraina-UE w lutym 2013 i szczytu Partnerstwa Wschodniego pod koniec 2013 r.?

4. Czy docelowo planowane jest włączenie krajów Partnerstwa Wschodniego, za zgodą tych krajów, do unijnych regulacji dotyczących maksymalnych dopuszczalnych stawek rozmów?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wiceprzewodniczącą Neelie Kroes w imieniu Komisji
(4 marca 2013 r.)

Krajowe i międzynarodowe połączenia telefoniczne wykonywane z danego kraju objęte są nadzorem krajowego organu regulacyjnego w tym państwie.

Wprawdzie stawki za połączenia krajowe i międzynarodowe nie są bezpośrednio regulowane przepisami unijnymi, jednak ramy regulacyjne UE zapewniają krajowym organom regulacyjnym instrumenty umożliwiające reagowanie na wszelkiego rodzaju problemy dotyczące konkurencji, w tym możliwość stosowania w odpowiednich przypadkach środków naprawczych.

Ponadto w zaleceniu z 2009 r. w sprawie stawek za zakańczanie połączeń (tj. stawek za połączenia między sieciami, naliczanych sobie wzajemnie przez operatorów tych sieci) Komisja zaleciła krajowym organom regulacyjnym ustalenie tych stawek, zarówno w przypadku połączeń międzynarodowych, jak i krajowych, na poziomie odpowiadającym efektywnym kosztom. Gdyby zatem kraje Partnerstwa Wschodniego zbliżyły swoje przepisy do ram regulacyjnych UE i na zasadzie dobrowolności stosowały zalecenie w sprawie stawek za zakańczanie połączeń, mogłoby to w ostatecznym rozrachunku prowadzić do obniżenia hurtowych kosztów połączeń międzynarodowych, co na rynku, na którym panuje konkurencja, powinno również prowadzić do obniżenia stawek detalicznych.

Komisja wspiera kraje Partnerstwa Wschodniego w ich działaniach na rzecz zbliżenia swoich ustawodawstw do ram regulacyjnych UE. Komisja podjęła zobowiązanie do kontynuacji tych wysiłków, jak określono we wspólnym komunikacie „Partnerstwo Wschodnie: Plan działania w okresie poprzedzającym szczyt jesienią 2013 r." ([1]).

Wysiłki te nie wykluczają rozmów dwustronnych między właściwymi organami krajowymi oraz porozumień handlowych między operatorami.

([1]) SWD(2012) 108 final, http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/docs/2012_enp_pack/e_pship_multilateral_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000473/13
to the Commission
Konrad Szymański (ECR)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: Mobile telephone charges for calls to Eastern Partnership countries

The current price per minute for a mobile telephone call made from Poland to Ukraine or Belarus using Polish mobile telephone networks is as much as PLN 2 and more, which is not justified by the real costs involved. Another problem is the inflated administrative charges or interconnection rates charged between operators for calls made between Polish and Ukrainian or Belarusian networks.

Ukraine and Belarus are neighbours of the EU and a great deal is said about the need to integrate these countries with Europe. The present situation however, when a 10-minute telephone call costs PLN 20-30, is completely inconsistent with declarations of friendly neighbourliness and Polish-Ukrainian cooperation.

The telecommunications market is a regulated market, and charges for international connections are not only the result of competition, but also of numerous regulations (or lack thereof) at national and EU level.

I therefore ask the following:

1. Is the Commission taking any action to reduce the cost of telephone calls between EU Member States and Eastern Partnership countries?

2. Has the Commission tried to establish the reasons for the high rates charged between operators?

3. Will the Commission raise the issue of the high costs of international calls at the Ukraine-EU Summit in February 2013 and the Eastern Partnership Summit at the end of 2013?

4. Does it plan to eventually include the Eastern Partnership countries, with their consent, in the requirements of EU legislation on maximum permissible call charges?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(4 March 2013)

International or local calls made from caller's own country fall under the supervision of the National Regulatory Authority (NRA) in each country.

Although the price levels of domestic and international calls are not regulated as such under the EC law, the EU regulatory framework provides National Regulators with tools to act in relation to any competition problems that exist and to impose remedies when appropriate.

In addition, under the recommendation of 2009 on termination rates (i.e. the interconnection rates operators charge each other) the Commission guided NRAs to set the termination rates, both for international and domestic calls, at the level corresponding to the efficient cost. Therefore, if the Eastern Partnership countries were to approximate their legislation with the EU regulatory framework and voluntarily apply the termination recommendation, this could eventually lead to lowering the wholesale costs for international calls which in a competitive market should also lead to lowering retail prices.

The Commission has been supporting Eastern Partnership countries in their work to approximate to the EU regulatory framework. The Commission is committed to continue these efforts, as specified in the Joint Communication 'Eastern Partnership: A Roadmap to the autumn 2013 Summit' ([1]).

These efforts should not exclude bilateral discussions between relevant national authorities and commercial agreements between operators.

([1]) SWD(2012) 108 final http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/docs/2012_enp_pack/e_pship_multilateral_en.pdf

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-000474/13
do Komisji
Zbigniew Ziobro (EFD), Jacek Włosowicz (EFD), Tadeusz Cymański (EFD) oraz Jacek Olgierd Kurski (EFD)
(17 stycznia 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Wysokość stawek opłat za korzystanie z infrastruktury kolejowej w UE

Zgodnie z raportem Instytutu Spraw Obywatelskich „Tiry na tory, towary na kolej" stawki opłat za korzystanie z infrastruktury kolejowej w Polsce są jednymi z najwyższych w Unii Europejskiej.

Sytuacja jest dość kuriozalna, bowiem spółka PKP PLK domaga się wysokiej stawki opłat za niską jakość infrastruktury kolejowej. W konsekwencji transport kolejowy w Polsce stanowi zaledwie ok. 2 % wszystkich przewozów, podczas gdy w krajach Unii Europejskiej średnio ok. 15 %.

W związku z powyższym kierujemy do Komisji pytanie, czy i jakie działania zamierza ona podjąć w przyszłości celem ujednolicenia opłat za korzystanie z infrastruktury kolejowej w poszczególnych krajach UE, tak aby za ceną szła jakość świadczonych usług?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Siima Kallasa w imieniu Komisji
(4 marca 2013 r.)

Według danych EUROSTAT ([1]) udział transportu kolejowego w transporcie lądowym w Polsce wynosił w 2010 r. 27,2 % i był znacznie wyższy niż średnia unijna wynosząca 13 %. Według danych organów krajowych opłaty za korzystanie z infrastruktury wynoszą w tym roku 3,10 EUR /km za 1 000 t masy pociągu towarowego. Daje to polskiej sieci kolejowej miejsce w środku stawki na poziomie UE. Komisja przyjmuje szereg środków w celu poprawy jakości infrastruktury i udostępniania jej po niższych kosztach.

— Jedynie ograniczona część budżetu przyznanego w ramach Funduszu Spójności i funduszy strukturalnych w obecnej perspektywie finansowej została do chwili obecnej przeznaczona w Polsce na potrzeby kolei.

— Komisja zasygnalizowała niektórym państwom członkowskim, że w dyrektywach, np. w art. 7 dyrektywy 2001/14/WE ([2]), określono wymóg, aby opłaty za użytkowanie infrastruktury odzwierciedlały bezpośrednie koszty przewozów kolejowych i dawały zachętę do zmniejszania kosztów. W konsekwencji obniżono również niektóre opłaty w Polsce. Jakość infrastruktury sama w sobie nie jest uwzględniana przy ustalaniu opłat za korzystanie z infrastruktury zgodnie z przepisami UE.

— Zgodnie z dyrektywą 2001/14/WE opłaty za korzystanie z infrastruktury powinny wspierać efektywne wykorzystanie infrastruktury, przy czym nie jest celem sama harmonizacja tych opłat.

— Terminale kontrolowane przez zasiedziałych operatorów przewozów towarowych często są niedostępne dla innych operatorów przewozów towarowych. Z tego powodu w dyrektywie 2012/34/UE ([3]) ustanowiono bardziej restrykcyjne przepisy dotyczące niezależności operatorów obiektów infrastruktury.

W celu zapewnienia równych warunków działania w ramach czwartego pakietu kolejowego Komisja przedstawiła wniosek dotyczący zarządzania sektorem kolei ([4]).

([1]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/product_details/publication?p_product_code=KS-SF-12-013; udział poszczególnych rodzajów transportu.

([2]) Dyrektywa 2001/14/WE Parlamentu Europejskiego i Rady z dnia 26 lutego 2001 r. w sprawie alokacji zdolności przepustowej infrastruktury kolejowej i pobierania opłat za użytkowanie infrastruktury kolejowej oraz przyznawania świadectw bezpieczeństwa, Dz.U. L 75 z 15.3.2001.

([3]) Dyrektywa Parlamentu Europejskiego i Rady 2012/34/UE z dnia 21 listopada 2012 r. w sprawie utworzenia jednolitego europejskiego obszaru kolejowego, Dz.U. L 343 z 14.12.2012.

([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/kallas/headlines/news/2013/01/fourth-railway-package_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000474/13
to the Commission
Zbigniew Ziobro (EFD), Jacek Włosowicz (EFD), Tadeusz Cymański (EFD) and Jacek Olgierd Kurski (EFD)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: Level of charges for using railway infrastructure in the EU

According to a report produced by Poland's Civil Affairs Institute entitled 'Trucks on Tracks, Freight on Rails', charges for using the railway infrastructure in Poland are among the highest in the European Union.

This is a somewhat bizarre situation, because the Polish state railway company PKP PLK is imposing a high charge for a railway infrastructure of low quality. As a consequence rail transport in Poland represents only around 2 % of all haulage, while in the EU Member States this figure is on average around 15 %.

Does the Commission therefore intend to take any action, and what future measures it is planning, to achieve harmonisation of charges for using railway infrastructure in the different EU Member States so that the price reflects the quality of service provided?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(4 March 2013)

According to Eurostat ([1]), Poland's share of rail amounted to 27.2% of the inland modes of transport, exceeding by far the EU average of 13% in 2010. According to national authorities, the infrastructure charges amount to EUR 3.10 per km for a 1,000 t freight train this year. This puts the Polish rail network in a middle position at EU level. The Commission takes a series of measures to improve the quality of infrastructure and make it available at a lower cost:

— Only a limited share of the budget awarded under the cohesion and structural funds in the current financial perspectives has been devoted in Poland to rail up till today.

— The Commission has pointed out to certain Member States that the directives require charges to reflect direct costs of the train service and set incentives to reduce costs, as is required under Article 7 of Directive 2001/14/EC ([2]). As a result, also certain charges in Poland have been lowered. Infrastructure quality as such is not taken into consideration when fixing infrastructure charges in accordance with EC law.

— According to Directive 2001/14/EC, infrastructure charges should foster the efficient use of infrastructure, whereby their harmonisation as such is not an objective.

— Terminals under control of the incumbent freight operator are often not accessible to other freight operators. Therefore Directive 2012/34/EC ([3]) establishes stricter independence rules for facility operators.

To ensure level playing field, the Commission presented a proposal on the governance of the railway sector in the framework of the 4th railway package ([4]).

([1]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/product_details/publication?p_product_code=KS-SF-12-013; Modal Share
([2]) Directive 2001/14/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2001 on the allocation of railway infrastructure capacity and the levying of charges for the use of railway infrastructure and safety certification ; OJ L 75, 15.3.2001.
([3]) Directive 2012/34/EC of the European parliament and of the Council of 21 November 2012 establishing a single European railway area OJ L 343, 14.12.2012.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/kallas/headlines/news/2013/01/fourth-railway-package_en.htm

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-000475/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE)
(17 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Αναντιστοιχίες δεξιοτήτων στην αγορά εργασίας

Σύμφωνα με πρόσφατη έρευνα (Δεκέμβριος 2012) του McKinsey Center for Government, παγκοσμίως, 75 εκατομμύρια νέοι είναι άνεργοι. Περίπου το 50% των νέων αποφοίτων δεν είναι σίγουροι ότι η τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση έχει βελτιώσει τις προοπτικές τους στην εύρεση εργασίας. Παράλληλα, το 39% των εργοδοτών θεωρούν ότι η δυσκολία να «γεμίσουν» τις entry level θέσεις τους οφείλεται στην έλλειψη υποψηφίων με τα κατάλληλα προσόντα. Πιο συγκεκριμένα, σύμφωνα πάντα με την έκθεση, το 72% των εκπαιδευτικών ιδρυμάτων θεωρούν ότι οι απόφοιτοί τους είναι έτοιμοι για την αγορά εργασίας, ενώ μόλις το 42% των εργοδοτών και το 45% των νέων αποφοίτων ενστερνίζονται την άποψη αυτή. Σημειώνεται ότι το 1/3 των εργοδοτών δηλώνουν ότι δεν έχουν επικοινωνήσει ποτέ με εκπαιδευτικά ιδρύματα, ενώ από όσους επικοινωνούν, λιγότερο από το 50% το θεώρησε αποτελεσματικό ([1]). Παράλληλα, σύμφωνα με την Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή, παρ' ότι πολλοί νέοι εργαζόμενοι κατέχουν επίσημα τα επαγγελματικά προσόντα που υπερβαίνουν εκείνα που απαιτούνται από την θέση εργασίας την οποία είναι σε θέση να καταλάβουν (χαμηλότερο επίπεδο απασχόλησης), συγχρόνως οι δεξιότητές τους είναι λιγότερο πιθανό να είναι οι σωστές (ποσοστό αντιστοιχίας) σε σύγκριση με μεγαλύτερης ηλικίας εργαζόμενους. Η ανακοίνωση της Επιτροπής τονίζει ότι παρά την κρίση, υπάρχουν πάνω από δύο εκατομμύρια κενές θέσεις εργασίας στην ΕΕ, συχνά εξαιτίας του ότι δεν υπάρχουν εργαζόμενοι με τις απαιτούμενες δεξιότητες στην τοπική αγορά εργασίας ([2]).

Η Επιτροπή ερωτάται:

1. Πώς κρίνεται η αντιστοιχία μεταξύ των δεξιοτήτων που προσφέρονται από τα ευρωπαϊκά πανεπιστήμια και των δεξιοτήτων που ζητούνται στην αγορά εργασίας; Ποια μέτρα σχεδιάζει η Επιτροπή για τη βελτίωση της αντιστοιχίας αυτής και για την ενίσχυση της επικοινωνίας μεταξύ επιχειρήσεων και πανεπιστημίων;

2. Σε ποια κράτη μέλη θεωρεί ότι η εκπαίδευση συμβάλλει επαρκώς στην ενθάρρυνση της καινοτομίας, της δημιουργικότητας και της επιχειρηματικότητας των νέων και σε ποια παρατηρούνται αδυναμίες στον τομέα αυτό;

3. Ποια άλλα μέτρα θεωρεί ότι θα μπορούσαν να συμβάλλουν στην κατάλληλη προσαρμογή των εκπαιδευτικών προγραμμάτων στις ανάγκες της αγοράς; (π.χ. μάθημα επιχειρηματικότητας στο σχολείο)

4. Ποιες οι κινήσεις σε επίπεδο ΕΕ για αποτελεσματικό επαγγελματικό προσανατολισμό μέσω κατάλληλης πληροφόρησης των μαθητών όσον αφορά την κατάσταση στην αγορά εργασίας (ζήτηση για επαγγέλματα, επίπεδο μισθών κ.λπ.) και τις απαιτήσεις της;

Απάντηση της κ. Βασιλείου εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(15 Μαρτίου 2013)

Παρ' όλο που η τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση αυξάνει τις πιθανότητες επιτυχίας των νέων στην αγορά εργασίας (οι μη πτυχιούχοι αντιμετωπίζουν υψηλότερο ποσοστό ανεργίας κατά 60% σε σχέση με τους πτυχιούχους), ωστόσο, τα πανεπιστημιακά προγράμματα πρέπει να διαμορφωθούν, ώστε να ανταποκρίνονται καλύτερα στις ανάγκες της αγοράς εργασίας και να παρέχουν περισσότερες επιχειρηματικές/εργασιακές δεξιότητες. Η βελτίωση των εταιρικών σχέσεων μεταξύ επιχειρήσεων και πανεπιστημίων είναι καθοριστικής σημασίας για τη βελτίωση της απασχολησιμότητας των αποφοίτων και της ικανότητας καινοτομίας της Ευρώπης. Προς αυτή την κατεύθυνση, δημιουργήθηκε το ευρωπαϊκό φόρουμ για τον διάλογο πανεπιστημίων-επιχειρήσεων και οι «συμμαχίες γνώσης». Στα μέσα του 2013 αναμένεται να ολοκληρωθεί μελέτη για την απασχολησιμότητα των αποφοίτων τριτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης.

Σύμφωνα με έρευνα που διεξήγαγε το 2012 το δίκτυο ΕΥΡΥΔΙΚΗ σχετικά με την εκπαίδευση στην επιχειρηματικότητα, 5 κράτη μέλη έχουν συγκεκριμένες στρατηγικές εκπαίδευσης στην επιχειρηματικότητα, ενώ 13 κράτη μέλη έχουν εντάξει την εκπαίδευση στην επιχειρηματικότητα στα πλαίσια της γενικής πρωτοβάθμιας/δευτεροβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης.

([1]) http://www.mckinsey.com/client_service/public_sector/mckinsey_center_for_government/education_to_employment
([2]) http://www.ipex.eu/IPEXL-WEB/dossier/document/COM20120727.do

Στην πρόσφατη ανακοίνωση «Ανασχεδιασμός στην Εκπαίδευση» εντοπίστηκαν διάφορα μέσα, ώστε να εξασφαλίζεται ότι η εκπαίδευση εναρμονίζεται περισσότερο με τις ανάγκες τις αγοράς εργασίας. Οι προτεινόμενες δράσεις περιλαμβάνουν: καθιέρωση πρακτικής επιχειρηματικής εμπειρίας για όλους τους νέους στην υποχρεωτική εκπαίδευση, συμμετοχή εργοδοτών/ενδιαφερόμενων μερών στον σχεδιασμό και την ανάπτυξη των προγραμμάτων σπουδών, ενίσχυση της μάθησης με βάση την εργασία μέσω διττών συστημάτων μάθησης και ανάπτυξη επαγγελματικών προσόντων μέσω σύντομων κύκλων τριτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης (2 έτη) σε τομείς όπου παρατηρείται έλλειψη δεξιοτήτων.

Στο πλαίσιο της στρατηγικής Ευρώπη 2020 και των συναφών κατευθυντήριων γραμμών για την απασχόληση, τα κράτη μέλη καλούνται να ενισχύσουν τις εξατομικευμένες υπηρεσίες στο πλαίσιο των υπηρεσιών απασχόλησης και να παρέχουν ευκολότερη πρόσβαση στον επαγγελματικό προσανατολισμό. Η Επιτροπή χρηματοδοτεί δραστηριότητες για τη βελτίωση της δια βίου καθοδήγησης στα κράτη μέλη, ώστε να βοηθήσει τους νέους να κάνουν συνειδητές επιλογές, μέσω εταιρικών σχέσεων μεταξύ υπηρεσιών απασχόλησης και υπηρεσιών επαγγελματικού προσανατολισμού.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000475/13
to the Commission
Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: Mismatch of skills on the labour market

According to a recent survey (December 2012) by the McKinsey Center for Government, 75 million young people are unemployed worldwide. Approximately 50% of young graduates are unsure whether higher education has improved their prospects in finding work. At the same time, 39% of employers believe that the trouble they have in 'filling' entry-level positions is due to a lack of candidates with the right qualifications. More specifically, according to the same report, 72% of educational establishments believe that their graduates are ready for the job market, while only 42% of employers and 45% of young graduates espouse this view. It should be noted that one third of employers say they have never contacted educational establishments, while among those who have, less than 50% consider such contacts to have been effective ([1]). Furthermore, according to the Commission, although many young workers officially have professional qualifications that exceed those required by the job which they able to do (lower level jobs), their skills are less likely to be the correct ones compared to older workers. The Commission stresses that despite the crisis, there are over two million job vacancies in the EU, in many cases because there are no workers with the requisite skills in the local labour market ([2]).

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. How do the skills provided by European universities match those sought on the labour market? What measures does the Commission intend to take to create a better match between the two and to improve communications between businesses and universities?

2. In which Member States does it believe that education contributes sufficiently to encourage innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship among young people and in which are there weaknesses in this area?

3. What other measures does it believe could help properly adjust curricula to the needs of the market (i.e. entrepreneurship courses at school)?

4. What steps are being taken at EU level to promote effective careers advice by informing pupils properly about the situation on the labour market (demand for jobs, wage levels etc.) and the requirements of the labour market?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(15 March 2013)

While higher education improves a young person's chances of success on the labour market (non-graduates have a 60% higher unemployment rate than graduates) university programmes need, nevertheless, to be better tailored to labour market needs and provide stronger entrepreneurial/work-relevant skills. Better partnerships between business and universities are key to improving graduates' employability and Europe's innovation capacity. To support this, the European University-Business Forum and Knowledge Alliances were created. A study is due mid-2013 on higher education graduate employability.

A EURYDICE survey in 2012 on entrepreneurship education shows that 5 Member States have specific strategies for entrepreneurship education, while 13 Member States implement entrepreneurship education in general education within primary/secondary level.

The recent Rethinking Education communication outlined several means to ensure that education is more aligned to labour market needs. Suggested actions include: introducing a practical entrepreneurial experience for all young people in compulsory education; involvement of employers/stakeholders in designing and developing curricula; increased work-based learning through dual learning systems; and short cycle 2-year qualifications in areas of skills shortage.

([1]) http://www.mckinsey.com/client_service/public_sector/mckinsey_center_for_government/education_to_employment
([2]) http://www.ipex.eu/IPEXL-WEB/dossier/document/COM 20120727.do

Within the Europe 2020 strategy and the related Employment Guidelines Member States are called on to strengthen personalised services in employment services and to improve access to career guidance. The Commission funds activities to improve lifelong guidance in Member States to help young people make informed choices through partnerships between employment and career guidance services.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000476/13
to the Commission
Alyn Smith (Verts/ALE)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: Alcohol minimum pricing

As the Commission is aware, the United Kingdom is planning to introduce a minimum price per unit of alcohol ([1]).

Alcohol is one of the world's leading health risks. In the 25-59 age group (the core of the working-age population), it is the number one risk factor for bad health and premature death ([2]). According to the World Health Organisation, Europe is the world's heaviest drinking region, with an average annual consumption of 12.5 litres per person ([3]).

Price and taxation interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm have been recommended by WHO as being very effective ([4]). Despite this, a 2010 study shows that since 1996 the European legislature has not addressed the issue of affordability of alcoholic drinks, excise duties have not been increased and there is still a zero rate for wine ([5]).

It has been reported that the drinks industry (mainly producers) have undertaken a vast lobbying campaign across Europe to stop the Scottish Government from introducing a minimum price for alcohol.

Taking into consideration the factors mentioned above, and in light of Article 168 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, how does the Commission see its role, in the ongoing discussions on alcohol minimum pricing?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(1 March 2013)

On 25 June 2012 the UK notified to the Commission the draft Alcohol (Minimum Price per Unit) (Scotland) Order 2013 in the framework of Directive 98/34/EC laying down a procedure for the provision of information in the field of technical regulations.

The Commission fully shares the Scottish Government's objective of public health protection. However, any measure setting minimum retail prices and its effects need to be compatible with the internal market rules and other EC law.

After having carefully examined the notified draft order, the Commission issued a detailed opinion on 26 September 2012 based on the assessment that the draft order may create obstacles to the free movement of goods in the internal market.

The Commission received several comments concerning the notified draft order both from industry and health protection associations. All these comments have been taken into account during the assessment of the measure.

The UK authorities replied to the Commission's detailed opinion on 21 December 2012. The Commission is currently examining this reply. Thus, the dialogue with the UK authorities under Directive 98/34/EC is ongoing.

The Commission is aware that the UK plans to introduce a similar measure in England and Wales. However, the Commission did not receive any notification in this respect yet.

([1]) European Commission, Enterprise and Industry, TRIS: notification number 2012/394/UK, in accordance with the technical standards and regulations Directive 98/34/EC (as amended by Directive 98/48/EC): http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/tris/pisa/app/search/index.cfm?fuseaction=pisa_notif_overview&iYear=2012&inum=394&lang=EN&sNLang=EN

([2]) 'Global Health Risks: Mortality and burden of disease attributable to selected major risks', World Health Organisation, 2009: http://www.who.int/healthinfo/global_burden_disease/GlobalHealthRisks_report_full.pdf

([3]) 'Alcohol in the European Union: Consumption, harm and policy approaches', Word Health Organisation (Europe), 2012: http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/160680/e96457.pdf

([4]) 'Evidence for the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm', Word Health Organisation (Europe), 2009: http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/43319/E92823.pdf

([5]) 'Study analysing possible changes in the minimum rates and structures of excise duties on alcoholic beverages — Final Report to EC DG Taxation and Customs Union', London Economics, 2010: http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/resources/documents/common/publications/studies/min_rates.pdf

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000477/13
a la Comisión
Antolín Sánchez Presedo (S&D)
(17 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Progresos en el ámbito de la fibromialgia

La Declaración por escrito 69/2008 sobre la fibromialgia, aprobada por el Parlamento Europeo el 13 de enero de 2009, solicitaba a la Comisión y al Consejo el desarrollo de una estrategia comunitaria para el reconocimiento de la patología como enfermedad, la sensibilización sobre la misma, la mejora del acceso al diagnóstico y el tratamiento, así como la investigación y la recopilación de datos sobre la patología.

En la respuesta a mi pregunta E-004347/2009, de septiembre de 2009, la Comisión señaló que la versión actual de la Clasificación Internacional de Enfermedades (CID-10) incluye la fibromialgia (código M79.7) y reconocía que entre las prioridades para el desarrollo del plan de trabajo adoptado mediante una Decisión de la Comisión de 2007 contemplaba la definición de indicadores e información sobre el dolor crónico, el síndrome de fatiga crónica (SFC) y la fibromialgia y que era factible adoptar un enfoque similar respecto a las enfermedades musculoesqueléticas. También informaba de la selección para financiación de un proyecto de Red Europea de Información y vigilancia de las Enfermedades Musculoesqueléticas coordinado por el Royal Cornwall Hospital Trust del Reino Unido

Al cumplirse cuatro años de la Declaración por escrito, la European Network of Fibromialgia Associations ha expresado que no le consta la adopción de medidas que desarrollen lo solicitado en la Declaración por escrito 69/2008.

1. ¿Puede actualizar la Comisión la respuesta a mi anterior pregunta y señalar las medidas adoptadas en los últimos cuatro años para el desarrollo de la Declaración aprobada por el Parlamento Europeo?

2. ¿Tiene previsto adoptar alguna nueva iniciativa?

3. ¿Mantiene o va a mantener la Comisión algún tipo de interlocución o relación con la European Network of Fibromialgia Associations o con otras organizaciones de afectados por la enfermedad para mejorar la respuesta europea ante los problemas derivados de la fibromialgia?

Respuesta del Sr. Borg en nombre de la Comisión
(28 de febrero de 2013)

La Comisión es consciente de los problemas a que se enfrentan las personas afectadas por el síndrome de la fibromialgia y del impacto de la enfermedad sobre los sistemas sanitarios.

Aunque la prestación de asistencia sanitaria es competencia exclusiva de los Estados miembros, la Comisión ha tomado una serie de medidas de apoyo para complementar las actividades de los Estados miembros. Entre ellas figura la cofinanciación del proyecto en curso «Red Europea de Información y Vigilancia de las Enfermedades Musculoesqueléticas» ([1]) en el marco del Programa de Salud de la UE, que cuenta con una contribución de más de 980 000 euros y aborda asimismo la fibromialgia como patología perteneciente al grupo de enfermedades musculoesqueléticas.

Se espera que, antes de marzo de 2013, este proyecto tenga los resultados siguientes: una Red Europea de Información y Vigilancia de las Enfermedades Musculoesqueléticas y una página web; información armonizada sobre el impacto sanitario, social, laboral y económico de las enfermedades musculoesqueléticas en todos los Estados miembros; normas de indicadores de calidad asistencial y sanitaria para las principales enfermedades musculoesqueléticas; y recomendaciones para lograr una mejor aplicación de las normas de indicadores de calidad asistencial y sanitaria mediante la comprensión de los elementos que obstaculizan y favorecen dicha aplicación, con ejemplos de buenas prácticas.

El proyecto reúne a las principales partes interesadas europeas que trabajan en el ámbito de las enfermedades musculoesqueléticas y su objetivo es establecer una red sostenible más allá del proyecto trienal (de febrero de 2010 a enero de 2013). En este sentido, la red servirá de organización de contacto para ese grupo de enfermedades.

([1]) http://www.eumusc.net/index.cfm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000477/13
to the Commission
Antolín Sánchez Presedo (S&D)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: Progress with regard to fibromyalgia

Written Declaration 69/2008 on fibromyalgia adopted by the European Parliament on 13 January 2009 called on the Commission and Council to develop a Community strategy for recognition of this condition as an illness, increased awareness of the problem, better access to diagnosis and treatment and research and data collection with regard to the illness.

In reply to my Question E-4347/2009 of September 2009, the Commission indicated that the current version of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10) includes fibromyalgia (Code M79.7), that the priority for work established by the Commission decision of 2007 includes the definition of indicators on chronic pain, CFS and fibromyalgia and that a similar approach is also feasible regarding muscular-skeletal conditions. It also indicated that the Commission had selected for funding a projected European muscular-skeletal conditions surveillance and information network coordinated by the Royal Cornwall Hospital Trust in the United Kingdom.

Four years down the line, the European Network of Fibromyalgia Associations indicates that it can see no sign of the measures referred to in Written Declaration 69/2008 having been adopted.

1. Can the Commission give any further information in reply to my previous question indicating what measures have been adopted in the last four years further to the declaration adopted by the European Parliament?

2. Does it intend to take any further measures?

3. Is the Commission have any contact with the European Network of Fibromyalgia Associations or other organisations of those affected by this illness or will it establish such contacts in future with a view to ensuring a more effective response at European level to the problems arising from fibromyalgia?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(28 February 2013)

The Commission is aware of the problems that people suffering from fibromyalgia syndromes face, and of the impact of the disease on health systems.

While the provision of healthcare falls under the exclusive competence of the Member States, the Commission has undertaken a range of supportive measures to complement Member States' activities. This includes co-financing of the ongoing project 'European Musculoskeletal Conditions Surveillance and Information Network' ([1]) under the EU Health Programme, with a contribution of more than 980 000 Euro and which also addresses fibro-myalgia as a condition belonging to the musculoskeletal disease group.

This project is expected to deliver the following outcomes by March 2013: a sustainable European Musculoskeletal Conditions Surveillance and Information Network and website; harmonised information on health, social, employment and economic impact of musculoskeletal conditions across all Member States; standards of care and healthcare quality indicators for the major musculoskeletal conditions; and recommendations to achieve better implementation of Standards of Care and Health Care Quality Indicators through an understanding of barriers and facilitators, with examples of good practice.

The project brings together major European stakeholders working in the area of musculo-skeletal diseases and is intended to establish a sustainable network beyond the duration of the 3 year project (February 2010 to January 2013). In this regard, the network will serve as a contact organisation for this group of diseases.

([1]) http://www.eumusc.net/index.cfm.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000478/13
alla Commissione
Giancarlo Scottà (EFD)
(17 gennaio 2013)

Oggetto: Recupero e riutilizzo delle acque grigie

L'acqua è la risorsa naturale più importante per la vita. Gestire tale risorsa in maniera sostenibile è fondamentale per garantire alle generazioni future un suo uso in qualità e quantità sufficienti. La normativa europea attuale fornisce un solido quadro per una gestione sostenibile ed efficace dell'acqua. Sussistono delle carenze, tuttavia, nelle disposizioni in merito al recupero e riutilizzo delle acque grigie. Perseguendo gli obiettivi prefissati dalla strategia Europa 2020, nella quale è previsto un miglioramento dell'utilizzo delle risorse idriche, il recupero e riutilizzo delle acque grigie all'interno degli edifici assume notevole importanza. Se si pensa, infatti, a quanta acqua finisce nei condotti di scarico, mentre, potrebbe esser riutilizzata in altri modi, ci si rende conto delle enormi quantità di acqua ancora utilizzabile che vanno definitivamente sprecate.

Il recupero e riutilizzo delle acque grigie potrebbe esser combinato, inoltre, con il recupero delle acque piovane costruendo serbatoi di stoccaggio da poter usare nei casi in cui non è necessaria acqua potabile, ma l'installazione di apparecchiature in grado di raccogliere e convogliare l'acqua grigia nelle abitazioni è molto costosa ed è difficilmente sostenibile per buona parte dei cittadini europei.

Facendo riferimento a quanto figura al punto 14 della relazione (2011/2297 (INI), P7_TA(2012)0273) sull'attuazione della normativa UE sulle acque e in attesa di un necessario approccio globale alle sfide europee in materia di acque, può la Commissione far sapere:

1. se ha intenzione di elaborare raccomandazioni e/o pareri in merito al recupero e riutilizzo delle acque grigie;

2. se, eventualmente, dispone di strumenti finanziari atti ad incentivare l'adozione di pratiche di recupero e riutilizzo delle acque grigie?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(1º marzo 2013)

Nel novembre del 2012 la Commissione ha adottato un Piano per la salvaguardia delle risorse idriche europee ([1]). Nel quadro delle consultazioni dei portatori d'interesse su cui è basato il Piano è emersa l'esigenza di tematizzare a livello dell'UE il riutilizzo delle acque per l'irrigazione o per uso industriale. Come annunciato nel Piano, la Commissione si prefigge di lanciare entro il 2015 alcune idee circa lo strumento più indicato a livello unionale per incoraggiare il riutilizzo dell'acqua e garantire nel contempo il mantenimento di un elevato livello di salute pubblica e di protezione ambientale nell'UE.

La politica di coesione prevede finanziamenti per l'adozione di pratiche di recupero e riutilizzo delle acque grigie, a disposizione degli Stati membri che considerano questo un settore prioritario.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/blueprint/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000478/13
to the Commission
Giancarlo Scottà (EFD)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: Grey water recovery and recycling

Water is the most vital natural resource for human life and the sustainable management thereof is essential to ensure that it is properly conserved for future generations in terms of both quantity and quality. While European legislation currently provides a substantial framework for sustainable and effective water management, a number of gaps remain in respect of grey water recovery and recycling, particularly within buildings, this being of great importance in the context of the Europe 2020 strategy objectives, which include the more effective use of water resources. If we consider how much recyclable water is simply poured down the drain, we realise the extent to which a valuable resource is simply being squandered rather than being put to further use.

Grey water recovery and recycling could also be combined with rainwater collection in storage tanks for use as non-potablewater. However, the installation of the necessary domestic collection and channelling systems is extremely expensive and beyond the reach of many European citizens.

In the light of paragraph 14 of the report on the implementation of EU water legislation ahead of a necessary overall approach to European water challenges (2011/2297(INI), P7_TA(2012)0273):

1. Does the Commission intend to issue recommendations and/or opinions regarding grey water recovery and recycling?

2. Does it have available financial instruments to encourage the use of grey water recovery and recycling systems?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(1 March 2013)

In November 2012, the Commission adopted a Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water Resources ([1]). In the stakeholder consultations leading to this Blueprint, water re-use for irrigation or industrial purposes emerged as an issue requiring EU attention. As announced in the Blueprint, the Commission plans to put forward some ideas by 2015 for a suitable EU-level instrument to encourage water re-use while ensuring the maintenance of a high level of public health and environmental protection in the EU.

In the framework of the Cohesion policy, funding is available for the use of grey water recovery and recycling systems, if Member States identify it as a priority area.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/blueprint/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000480/13
to the Commission
William (The Earl of) Dartmouth (EFD)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: Use of Irish Gaelic

The Irish Prime Minister did not speak in Irish Gaelic when he addressed the European Parliament on 16 January 2013.

In view of that, does the Commission have any plans to abolish or reduce the costs of Irish Gaelic translation and interpretation?

Answer given by Mr Barroso on behalf of the Commission
(4 March 2013)

It is not for the Commission to comment on the use of languages by political office-holders when addressing the European Parliament. The interpretation during events of the European Parliament is under the responsibility of that Institution.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung P-000481/13
an die Kommission
Michael Theurer (ALDE)
(17. Januar 2013)

Betrifft: EU-Finanzmittel für den Bau des Berlin Brandenburg Airport

Gravierende Planungsfehler haben die Eröffnung des neuen Hauptstadtflughafens entscheidend verzögert. Finanzielle Engpässe haben während des Bauprozesses zu Komplikationen geführt. Der Flughafen wird definitiv nicht vor 2014 eröffnet werden können. Daraus ergeben sich neue finanzielle Herausforderungen.

Hierzu richte ich folgende Fragen an Sie:

1. Sind EU-Mittel in den Bau des Berlin Brandenburg Airport Willy Brandt geflossen?

2. Wenn ja, welche Summe floss in den Bau?

3. Lag bzw. liegt der Kommission ein schlüssiges Finanzierungskonzept vor?

Antwort von Herrn Kallas im Namen der Kommission
(18. Februar 2013)

Der Bau des Flughafens Berlin-Brandenburg International wurde aus Mitteln des TEN-V-Haushalts der EU kofinanziert.

Die Europäische Union hat insgesamt 34,5 Mio. EUR für die Planung und Entwicklung des Flughafens zur Verfügung gestellt:

— 1997: Auslegungsstudien und Studien zum Schienen- und Straßenzugang (Kofinanzierung mit bis zu 1 Mio. EUR aus TEN-V-Mitteln);

— 1999: Auslegungs- und Zugangsstudien (Kofinanzierung mit bis zu 1 Mio. EUR aus TEN-V-Mitteln);

— 2001: Planungsleistungen für Verkehrsverbindungen (Straße und Schiene) (Kofinanzierung mit bis zu 2 Mio. EUR aus TEN-V-Mitteln);

— 2006: Planungsgenehmigungen für den Bau eines Fluggastterminals direkt gegenüber dem Bahnhof der DB AG (Kofinanzierung mit bis zu 2 Mio. EUR aus TEN-V-Mitteln);

— 2009: Strukturarbeiten für die Betonstruktur und die äußere Glasverkleidung des Fluggastterminals sowie für die Installation der Fluggastbrücken: (Kofinanzierung mit bis zu 29 576 020 EUR aus TEN-V-Mitteln).

Der wichtigste finanzielle Beschluss der EU (2009) beruht auf einem Projektvorschlag der deutschen Behörden, einschließlich der damaligen Finanzplanung. Die Kommission verfügt über keine neuere Finanzplanung. Die Frist für die Durchführung des Beschlusses aus dem Jahr 2009 endete im Dezember 2011. Seitdem wurden keine TEN-V-Mittel mehr in die Planung und den Bau des Flughafens investiert.

Derzeit liegt kein neuer Antrag auf eine Kofinanzierung aus TEN-V-Mitteln vor. Dementsprechend besteht zurzeit keine Verpflichtung der Europäischen Union, weitere Kosten mitzufinanzieren.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-000481/13
to the Commission
Michael Theurer (ALDE)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: EU funding for the construction of Berlin Brandenburg Airport

Because of serious planning errors, the opening of the new airport for Germany's capital has been greatly delayed. Financial shortfalls have resulted in complications during construction. It is now definitively known that it will not be possible to open the airport before 2014. This gives rise to fresh financial challenges.

1. Has the EU contributed to the funding of Berlin Brandenburg Airport ('Willy Brandt')?

2. If so, how much has it contributed?

3. Did the Commission have at its disposal a coherent financing plan, or does it now have one?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(18 February 2013)

The construction of the Berlin-Brandenburg International has received co-financing from the EU's TEN-T budget.

Overall, the European Union has committed a total funding of EUR 34.5 million for the planning and development of the airport:

— 1997: layout studies and studies for rail and road access (up to EUR 1 million TEN-T co-financing);

— 1999: layout and access studies (up to EUR 1 million TEN-T co-financing);

— 2001: design services for transport links (road and rail) (up to EUR 2 million TEN-T co-financing);

— 2006: planning permission for the construction of a passenger terminal directly across the railroad station of the DB AG (up to EUR 2 million TEN-T co-financing);

— 2009: structural works for the concrete structure and the outer glass cladding of the passenger terminal building as well as the installation of the passenger bridges: (up to EUR 29 576 020 TEN-T co-financing);

The most relevant EU financial decision (2009) is based on a project proposal from the German authorities, including a financial planning at that time. The Commission does not dispose of any more recent financial planning. The execution date of the decision of 2009 ended in December 2011. Since then, no more TEN-T funding has been invested in the planning and construction of the airport.

No new request for TEN-T co-financing has currently been received. Accordingly, there is at present no commitment from the European Union to co-finance any additional costs.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-000482/13
to the Commission
Jill Evans (Verts/ALE)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: Traces of horse meat found in beefburgers

The Commission will be aware that scientific tests by the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) this week found traces of horse DNA in beefburgers sold in various supermarkets, including in my constituency of Wales. The source of the meat was found to be Liffey Meats and Silvercrest Foods in Ireland and Dalepak Hambleton in the United Kingdom.

What steps is the Commission taking to find out how this situation occurred, whether it is a matter of widespread practice and whether EU rules on traceability are being implemented properly across the Union?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(13 February 2013)

The Commission is aware of the case referred to.

The Commission shares the views of the Irish Food Safety Authority that, in principle, the food in question poses no risk to public health. However, such food is undoubtedly considered as not complying with the EU labelling rules.

The enforcement of the EU food requirements and the evaluation of the misleading character of the food information are to be carried out by the competent authorities of the Member States. They shall verify, through the organisation of official controls that the EU rules are fulfilled by food business operators at all stages of production, processing and distribution. Official controls must be carried out regularly, on a risk basis, with appropriate frequency, and appropriate measures must be taken to eliminate risk and ensure enforcement of EU food law. The Commission has been informed that the Irish authorities launched an in-depth investigation and a comprehensive sampling programme in all meat establishments.

The Commission is in contact with the Irish authorities and is kept informed about the investigations. Member States' enforcers have all the elements necessary to decide whether the information they collect during their official activities justifies an increased level of checks or the performance of controls specifically targeted at the issue you refer to.

The Commission is responsible for ensuring that Community legislation on food safety is properly implemented and enforced. The Food and Veterinary Office of the Commission's Health and Consumers Directorate General (FVO) through regular audits in the Member States contributes to this task. The Commission will monitor all enforcement measures put in place to enforce compliance with the legislation.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000483/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(17 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Nuevo Plan español del Carbón

El Gobierno de España está desarrollando en la actualidad el nuevo Plan del Carbón (2013-2018) que atañe principalmente al sector minero en la región de Asturias. Dicho plan está siendo elaborado «en la sombra», puesto que ningún actor implicado ha recibido información del Ministerio de Industria, Energía y Turismo o de la Sociedad Estatal de Participaciones Industriales (SEPI).

Este nuevo Plan del Carbón debe especificar el futuro del grupo empresarial Hulleras del Norte (Hunosa). Este grupo empresarial da trabajo en las cuencas mineras asturianas a una importante parte de la población que tradicionalmente se ha dedicado al sector. Es por ello que se trata de un plan de vital importancia para el mantenimiento de cientos de comunidades rurales asturianas fuertemente vinculadas a la explotación minera del carbón, tan necesaria para sostenibilidad social de las comunidades situadas en las cuencas de los ríos Nalón y Caudal.

El Ministro de Industria, Energía y Turismo del Gobierno español, José Manuel Soria, propuso el pasado verano abrir las negociaciones sobre el citado Plan. Esta «oferta» del Ministro se produjo después de las importantes movilizaciones que culminaron con una gran marcha a Madrid. Tras el cese de estas movilizaciones la oferta nunca se hizo realidad y el nuevo Plan del Carbón (2013-2018) se está elaborando sin dar cabida a ninguno de los actores involucrados y en el más absoluto secretismo. Este secretismo hace temer lo peor para el sector, puesto que el Ministro conoce su capacidad de movilización y pretende evitarla a través de su silencio. En teoría, este nuevo plan está ya elaborado, sin haber contado ni con la patronal ni con los sindicatos del sector, y ha sido enviado a la Comisión Europea para ser discutido en Bruselas.

¿Tiene la Comisión a disposición información enviada por el Gobierno de España sobre el nuevo Plan del Carbón (2013-2018)?, ¿podría facilitarla?, ¿considera la Comisión que existen importantes vínculos entre la actividad minera y el tejido económico de la región, de manera que se justifique su importancia económica para la sostenibilidad social de las comunidades de las zonas mineras? De cara a la transparencia, ¿cuál es la opinión de la Comisión acerca de elaborar dichos planes en secreto y sin tener en cuenta la opinión de los actores implicados?, ¿cuál es su opinión en cuanto a que el ajuste del Gobierno sea mucho más agresivo por lo que se refiere a los plazos y a la reducción de ayudas de lo que establece la Decisión 2010/787/UE?, ¿en qué situación está el proyecto del sello de calidad del carbón europeo?

Respuesta del Sr. Almunia en nombre de la Comisión
(4 de marzo de 2013)

La Comisión recibió una notificación sobre los planes españoles de conceder ayudas a las minas de carbón en virtud de la Decisión 2010/787/UE del Consejo, con el objeto de facilitar el cierre de las minas de carbón no competitivas.

La Decisión del Consejo permite la concesión de ayudas al cierre de las minas de carbón a condición de que formen parte de un plan de cierre irrevocable y definitivo de las minas para finales de 2018. La Decisión del Consejo exige también que el volumen global de las ayudas al cierre concedidas por un Estado miembro se ajusten a los umbrales mínimos de reducción de las ayudas en comparación con las concedidas en 2011, entre otras condiciones. En concreto, el importe global de las ayudas al cierre concedidas por un Estado miembro debe seguir una tendencia descendente y no deberá superar, para cualquier año a partir de 2010, el importe de la ayuda concedida y autorizada para 2010.

La Comisión es consciente de la importancia de las medidas que se adoptarán con arreglo a la Decisión del Consejo para la región de Asturias y otras regiones de España.

La Comisión tiene que comprobar que las medidas notificadas por los Estados miembros se ajustan a la Decisión del Consejo. Sin embargo, corresponde a las autoridades españolas determinar las medidas anteriores al cierre definitivo de las unidades de producción afectadas y el modo de hacerlo, incluido el importe de la reducción anual de las ayudas por encima de los umbrales mínimos fijados en la Decisión del Consejo.

Las partes en los procedimientos de notificación de las ayudas estatales son el Estado miembro y la Comisión. Por lo tanto, los terceros no pueden acceder a ninguna información facilitada por el Estado miembro a la Comisión mientras los procedimientos estén en curso.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000483/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: Spain's new Carbon Plan

The Spanish Government is currently drawing up the new Carbon Plan (2013-2018), which mainly concerns the future of the mining sector in Asturias. The plan is being drawn up 'behind closed doors', and stakeholders have not received any information about it from the Ministry of Industry, Energy and Tourism or the State Industrial Holding Company (SEPI).

The new Carbon Plan should shed light on the future of the Hulleras del Norte (Hunosa) company. The conglomerate, which operates in the Asturian coalfields, employs a large section of the local population, which has traditionally been heavily involved in the mining sector. The plan will therefore have a vital bearing on the survival of hundreds of rural Asturian communities that revolve around coal mining, an industry that is essential for the social sustainability of the communities living in the Nalón and Caudal river basins.

Last summer, the Spanish Minister for Industry, Energy and Tourism, José Manuel Soria, suggested opening negotiations on this plan. The Minister's 'offer' came after huge protests that culminated in miners staging a large-scale march from Asturias to Madrid. After this wave of protests came to end, the promise of negotiations never became a reality and the new Carbon Plan (2013-2018) is being drawn up in absolute secrecy without taking into account the views of those it will affect. The secrecy surrounding the plan leads many to fear the worst for the future of the mining sector, especially since the minister is well aware of the sector's ability to mobilise large numbers and is thus attempting to avoid further protests by not discussing the plan. The plan has apparently already been finished, without consulting the sector's employers' association or the unions, and has been forwarded to the Commission for deliberation in Brussels.

Has the Commission received any information from the Spanish Government about the new Carbon Plan (2013-2018)? Could this information be provided? Does the Commission agree that mining is an essential part of the economic make-up of the Asturias region, so much so that it can be judged to be necessary for the social sustainability of local communities? As for transparency, what is the Commission's response to these plans being drawn up in secret and without taking into account the views of stakeholders in the mining sector? What would the Commission's response be if the Spanish government's reduction in aid for the mining sector is much more drastic than the timeframes and reductions set out in Decision 2010/787/EU? How advanced are the plans for a European quality label for coal?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(4 March 2013)

The Commission received a notification on the Spanish plans to grant aid to coal mines on the basis of Council Decision 2010/787/EU, to facilitate the closure of uncompetitive coal mines.

The Council Decision allows for the granting of aid for closure of coal mines provided the latter form part of a closure plan aiming at irrevocable and definitive closure of the aided mines by the end of 2018. The Council Decision also requires the overall amount of closure aid granted by a Member State to comply with minimum aid reduction thresholds compared to aid in 2011, among other conditions. In particular, the overall amount of closure aid granted by a Member State must follow a downward trend and must not exceed, for any year after 2010, the amount of aid granted and authorised for the year 2010.

The Commission is aware of the importance of the measures to be adopted pursuant to the Council Decision for the Asturias region as well as for other regions in Spain.

The Commission has to verify that the measures notified by the Member States comply with the Council Decision. However, it is up to the Spanish authorities to identify the measures preceding the definitive closure of the production units concerned and how to do so, including the amount of annual reduction of aid above the minimum thresholds set out in the Council Decision.

The parties to state aid notification proceedings are the Member State and the Commission. Therefore, third parties are not granted access to any information provided by the Member State to the Commission while those proceedings are ongoing.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-000484/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE)
(17 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Η αύξηση του δημόσιου χρέους σε μεγάλες ευρωπαϊκές οικονομίες και οι κίνδυνοι αποσταθεροποίησης

Σύμφωνα με τα τελευταία διαθέσιμα στοιχεία το χρέος σε σημαντικές ευρωπαϊκές οικονομίες και στις Ηνωμένες Πολιτείες διαμορφώνεται σε πολύ υψηλά επίπεδα. Συγκεκριμένα, το δημόσιο χρέος της Ιταλίας το Νοέμβριο του 2012 ανήλθε στα 2,02 τρις ευρώ ([1]) σημειώνοντας αύξηση 6 δις ευρώ σε σχέση με τον προηγούμενο μήνα. Την ίδια στιγμή στην Ισπανία το δημόσιο χρέος για το τρίτο τρίμηνο του 2012 ([2]) κατεγράφη στο 77,4% του ΑΕΠ αντανακλώντας τις αυξήσεις τόσο σε επίπεδο κεντρικής διοίκησης όσο και σε επίπεδο περιφερειών. Παράλληλα, τα σημάδια της οικονομικής επιβράδυνσης της γερμανικής οικονομίας είναι εμφανή καθώς ο ρυθμός ανάπτυξης του ΑΕΠ ([3]) το 2012 ήταν 0,7% όταν το αντίστοιχο ποσοστό το 2011 ήταν 3% και το 2010 4,2%, ενώ το 2013 οι επίσημες εκτιμήσεις ([4]) προσδιορίζουν το ποσοστό ανάπτυξης μόλις 0,4%. Τέλος, στις ΗΠΑ την παρούσα χρονική περίοδο, το χρέος ανέρχεται στα 16,4 τρις δολάρια ([5]) αντιστοιχώντας σχεδόν στο 103% με τις αυξητικές τάσεις να συνεχίζονται έως το 2016 ([6]).

Δεδομένων των παραπάνω στοιχείων και της σημασίας που κατέχουν οι παραπάνω οικονομίες για την ευρωπαϊκή και διεθνή σταθερότητα αλλά και των σημαντικών βημάτων που έχουν γίνει προς την κατεύθυνση της εποπτείας και της οικονομικής προσαρμογής στην ΕΕ, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Πως αντιμετωπίζει τα προαναφερόμενα δεδομένα όσον αφορά την εξέλιξη αλλά και τη βιωσιμότητα του ευρωπαϊκού χρέους;

2. Θεωρεί πως η ΕΕ, πέραν των προσφάτων σημαντικών αποφάσεων για την πρόληψη και τη διόρθωση των ανισορροπιών είναι επαρκώς θωρακισμένη προκειμένου να μην αποτελέσει το αυξημένο δημόσιο χρέος παράγοντα αποσταθεροποίησης της ευρωπαϊκής οικονομίας σε μεσοπρόθεσμο χρονικό ορίζοντα;

3. Προγραμματίζει πολιτικές για τη διαχείριση αυτής της δυνητικής απειλής άμεσα ενταγμένες στις προσπάθειες δημοσιονομικής προσαρμογής και ανάπτυξης της ΕΕ;

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

Η Επιτροπή συμμερίζεται τους προβληματισμούς του Αξιότιμου Μέλους σχετικά με το υψηλό επίπεδο του χρέους στην ΕΕ. Οι κίνδυνοι που προέρχονται από το υψηλό χρέος έχουν ήδη επέλθει σε ορισμένα κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ, τα οποία υποχρεώθηκαν να ζητήσουν χρηματοδοτική στήριξη. Για το λόγο αυτό, η Επιτροπή ζητεί από τα κράτη μέλη να εξυγιάνουν τα δημόσια οικονομικά τους, ενώ ταυτόχρονα έχει επίγνωση των αρνητικών επιπτώσεων, βραχυπρόθεσμα, της δημοσιονομικής εξυγίανσης στην ανάπτυξη. Για να μετριάσει τις επιπτώσεις αυτές, η Επιτροπή τάσσεται υπέρ μιας στρατηγικής εξυγίανσης βασισμένης σε δύο συνιστώσες:

— η ταχύτητα της εξυγίανσης πρέπει να είναι διαφορετική μεταξύ των χωρών, ανάλογα με τα δημοσιονομικά τους περιθώρια, ώστε να υπάρξει ισορροπία μεταξύ των δυνητικών αρνητικών επιπτώσεων στην ανάπτυξη και των κινδύνων για τη βιωσιμότητα του χρέους. Το Σύμφωνο Σταθερότητας και Ανάπτυξης και ο κεντρικός ρόλος των διαρθρωτικών δημοσιονομικών ισοζυγίων προσφέρουν το κατάλληλο πλαίσιο για το χειρισμό της διαφοροποιημένης ταχύτητας προσαρμογής·

— μολονότι η εξυγίανση θα πρέπει να εστιαστεί στο σκέλος των δαπανών, υπάρχει ανάγκη αναζήτησης ενός συνολικά φιλικού προς την ανάπτυξη μείγματος εσόδων και δαπανών, με στοχευμένα μέτρα στα πλαίσια των περιθωρίων του προϋπολογισμού, ώστε να προστατευθούν οι κύριοι μοχλοί της ανάπτυξης ενώ παράλληλα θα διασφαλιστεί η αποτελεσματικότητα των δαπανών.

([1]) http://www.bancaditalia.it/statistiche/finpub/pimefp/2013/sb4_13/en_suppl_4_13.pdf
([2]) http://www.bde.es/webbde/en/estadis/infoest/bolest11.html
([3]) https://www.destatis.de/EN/PressServices/Press/pr/2013/01/PE13_017_811.html
([4]) http://www.bundesbank.de/Redaktion/DE/Pressemitteilungen/BBK/2012/2012_12_07_wirtschaftsprognose.html
([5]) http://www.treasurydirect.gov/NP/BPDLogin?application=np
([6]) http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703789104576272891515344726.html

Γενικά, η συμβουλευτική δράση της Επιτροπής όσον αφορά τις οικονομικές πολιτικές των κρατών μελών αποβλέπει στην αποφυγή μακροοικονομικής και δημοσιονομικής αστάθειας και στη δημιουργία συνθηκών για διατηρήσιμη οικονομική ανάπτυξη. Η Επιτροπή παρουσίασε προσφάτως τις απόψεις της σχετικά με τις πολιτικές προκλήσεις και τις προτεραιότητες στην Ετήσια Επισκόπηση της Ανάπτυξης για το 2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000484/13
to the Commission
Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: Increase of public debt in large European economies and the risk of destabilisation

According to the most recent data, the public debt of large European economies and the United States has reached very high levels. Specifically, the Italian public debt in November 2012 amounted to EUR 2.02 trillion ([1]), an increase of EUR 6 billion compared to the previous month. At the same time, Spanish public debt in the third quarter of 2012 ([2]) amounted to 77.4 % of GDP, reflecting the increases at central government and regional levels. Similarly, there are signs of downturn in the German economy as the GDP growth rate ([3]) in 2012 was 0.7 %, compared to 3 % in 2011 and 4.2 % in 2010, while official estimates for 2013 ([4]) predict a growth rate of just 0.4 %. Finally, public debt in the USA for the current period amounts to USD 16.4 trillion ([5]) , almost 103 % of GDP, with rates expected to increase until 2016 ([6]).

Given the above data and the significance of these economies for European and international stability, as well as the important steps taken towards supervision and economic adjustment in the EU, will the Commission answer the following:

1. What is its response to the above data in terms of the development and sustainability of EU public debt?

2. Does it believe that the EU, above and beyond the recent important decisions taken on the prevention and correction of imbalances, can protect itself against medium-term instability in the European economy?

3. Are there any policies planned to manage this potential threat which are directly part of the EU's fiscal adjustment and growth efforts?

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

The Commission shares the Honourable Member's worries about the high level of debt in the EU. The risks stemming from high debt have already materialised in some EU Member States, which have had to request financial support. For this reason the Commission has been calling on Member States to consolidate their public finances, while at the same time being aware of the negative effects of fiscal consolidation on growth in the short term. To alleviate these effects the Commission has been advocating a consolidation strategy based on two components:

— the speed of consolidation has to be differentiated across countries according to their fiscal space, to strike the right balance between potential negative growth effects and the risks to debt sustainability. The Stability and Growth Pact and the central role of structural budget balances therein offer the appropriate framework to guide the differentiated speed of adjustment;

— while focusing the consolidation on the expenditure side, there is a need to devise an overall growth-friendly mix of revenue and expenditure, with targeted measures within available fiscal space to protect key growth drivers while ensuring efficiency of expenditure.

In general, the Commission advice for Member States economic policies aims at avoiding macroeconomic and financial instability and creating conditions for sustainable economic growth. Recently, the Commission has presented its views on policy challenges and the priorities in the Annual Growth Survey 2013.

([1]) http://www.bancaditalia.it/statistiche/finpub/pimefp/2013/sb4_13/en_suppl_4_13.pdf
([2]) http://www.bde.es/webbde/en/estadis/infoest/bolest11.html
([3]) https://www.destatis.de/EN/PressServices/Press/pr/2013/01/PE13_017_811.html
([4]) http://www.bundesbank.de/Redaktion/DE/Pressemitteilungen/BBK/2012/2012_12_07_wirtschaftsprognose.html
([5]) http://www.treasurydirect.gov/NP/BPDLogin?application=np.
([6]) http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703789104576272891515344726.html

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-000485/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(17 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Βέτο Άγκυρας

Η Τουρκία εμπόδισε την ένταξη της Κυπριακής Δημοκρατίας στο Συμβούλιο της Διεθνούς Υπηρεσίας για τις ανανεώσιμες πηγές ενέργειας (IRENA). Αυτό δήλωσε στις 15 Ιανουαρίου 2013, ο Υπουργός Ενέργειας της Τουρκίας, Τανέρ Γιλντίζ, στο Αμπού Ντάμπι, όπου βρισκόταν για τη σύνοδο της Υπηρεσίας. Σημειωτέον πως η Τουρκία ήταν η μοναδική χώρα από 115 μέλη της IRENA που αντιτάχθηκε στην υποψηφιότητα της Κύπρου.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

Γιατί ανέχεται η ΕΕ μία χώρα υπό ένταξη να τορπιλίζει την προοπτική μιας χώρας-μέλους της, της Κυπριακής Δημοκρατίας, για παραγωγή ενέργειας από ανανεώσιμες πηγές, κάτι που αποτελεί πάγια επιδίωξη της ΕΕ και εμβληματικό στόχο της στρατηγικής Ευρώπη 2020;

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-000623/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Niki Tzavela (EFD)
(22 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Η Τουρκία παρεμποδίζει τη συμμετοχή της Κύπρου στο Διεθνή Οργανισμό Ανανεώσιμων Πηγών Ενέργειας (IRENA)

Στα μέσα Ιανουαρίου 2013, τα μέλη του Διεθνούς Οργανισμού Ανανεώσιμων Πηγών Ενέργειας (IRENA) συνεδρίασαν στο Άμπου Ντάμπι προκειμένου να ψηφίσουν για την είσοδο νέων μελών. Δεδομένου ότι η Τουρκία αποτελεί μέλος του εν λόγω οργανισμού, είχε τη δυνατότητα να αντιταχθεί στην έγκριση της προσχώρησης της Κύπρου και του Ισραήλ στο συμβούλιο του IRENA.

Κατά την τελευταία του συνεδρίαση το Νοέμβριο, το συμβούλιο του IRENA σύναψε συμφωνία σχετικά με πρόταση τροποποίησης του προσωρινού εσωτερικού του κανονισμού όσον αφορά τη σύνθεση, την εκλογή και το σύστημα εναλλαγής του συμβουλίου, κατόπιν εκτενών διαβουλεύσεων με τους διαμεσολαβητές που διορίστηκαν στην τελευταία σύνοδο της συνέλευσης. Η πρόταση αυτή προβλέπει τη διάθεση επτά εδρών στην περιφερειακή ομάδα Europe and Others. Σε περίπτωση έγκρισης της προτεινόμενης τροποποίησης, τα μέλη του συμβουλίου θα εκλέγονται κατόπιν ορισμού από τις περιφερειακές ομάδες.

Στην πρόταση κανονισμού του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου και του Συμβουλίου για τις κατευθυντήριες γραμμές για τις διευρωπαϊκές ενεργειακές υποδομές, η οποία συμφωνήθηκε στο πλαίσιο του τριμερούς διαλόγου μεταξύ της Επιτροπής, του Συμβουλίου και του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου, η Κύπρος περιλαμβάνεται στο παράρτημα Ι παράγραφος 1 στοιχείο 3 σε σχέση με τις «Διασυνδέσεις ηλεκτρικής ενέργειας Βορρά-Νότου στην κεντροανατολική και νοτιοανατολική Ευρώπη ("NSI East Electricity"): διασυνδέσεις και εσωτερικές γραμμές με κατεύθυνση Βορρά προς Νότο και Ανατολή προς Δύση με στόχο την ολοκλήρωση της εσωτερικής αγοράς και την ενσωμάτωση της παραγωγής ενέργειας από ανανεώσιμες πηγές».

1. Δεδομένης της σημασίας που έχει η πολιτική για τις ανανεώσιμες πηγές ενέργειας στην ΕΕ, και της αντίστοιχης σημασίας της ολοκλήρωσης της εσωτερικής αγοράς ενέργειας και της κατάργησης της ενεργειακής απομόνωσης στην Ένωση έως το 2014, ποια είναι η θέση της Επιτροπής όσον αφορά τις ενέργειες της Τουρκίας;

2. Θεωρεί η Επιτροπή ότι η συμπεριφορά αυτή είναι εποικοδομητική εκ μέρους της Τουρκίας και πιστεύει ότι η στάση αυτή αποτελεί αντίποινα για την πρόθεση της Κύπρου και του Ισραήλ να πραγματοποιήσουν εξορύξεις υδρογονανθράκων στην ανατολική Μεσόγειο;

Κοινή απάντηση του κ. Füle εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(15 Μαρτίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή εκφράζει τη λύπη της για τα γεγονότα στα οποία αναφέρεται το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου κατά την 3η συνέλευση του Διεθνούς Οργανισμού για τις Ανανεώσιμες Πηγές Ενέργειας (IRENA). Παρακολουθεί στενά τη διαδικασία και συμμετέχει στις προσπάθειες για την επίτευξη συναίνεσης.

Η Τουρκία, σύμφωνα με το πλαίσιο διαπραγμάτευσης για την προσχώρησή της στην ΕΕ, οφείλει να ευθυγραμμίσει σταδιακά, μέχρι την προσχώρηση, τις πολιτικές της έναντι τρίτων χωρών και τις θέσεις της εντός των διεθνών οργανισμών, περιλαμβανομένων και όσων αφορούν τη συμμετοχή όλων των κρατών μελών στους εν λόγω οργανισμούς, με τις πολιτικές και τις θέσεις που υιοθετούν η Ένωση και τα κράτη μέλη της.

Η Επιτροπή παραπέμπει το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου στα συμπεράσματα του Συμβουλίου του Δεκεμβρίου 2012, στα οποία υπενθυμίζεται ότι η Τουρκία δυστυχώς δεν έχει σημειώσει πρόοδο προς την κατεύθυνση της αναγκαίας εξομάλυνσης των σχέσεών της με την Κυπριακή Δημοκρατία, και εκφράζεται η έντονη δυσαρέσκεια της ΕΕ για την μη ευθυγράμμιση της Τουρκίας με τις ενωσιακές θέσεις και δηλώσεις σε διεθνή φόρουμ.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000485/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: Turkish veto

Turkey has blocked the accession of the Republic of Cyprus to the Council of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). This was confirmed by Taner Yildiz, the Turkish Energy Minister on 15 January 2013 in Abu Dhabi, where the IRENA summit was being held. It seems that Turkey was the only country out of the 115 members of IRENA to oppose Cyprus' candidacy.

Will the Commission answer the following:

Why is the EU allowing an accession country undermine the chances of a Member State — the Republic of Cyprus — of producing energy from renewable sources, a firm objective of the EU and an flagship target of the Europe 2020 strategy?

Question for written answer E-000623/13
to the Commission
Niki Tzavela (EFD)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Blocking by Turkey of Cyprus' admission to the Council of the International Agency for Renewable Energy (IRENA)

In mid-January 2013, the members of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) met in Abu Dhabi to vote on the admission of new members. Given that Turkey is a member of that Agency, it was able to oppose Cyprus and Israel's membership of the IRENA Council.

At its previous meeting, in November 2012, the IRENA Council had reached agreement on a proposal for amendment of the provisional rules of procedure on the Council's composition, election and rotation, after extensive consultations by the facilitators appointed at the previous session of the IRENA Assembly. That proposal provides for seven seats to be allocated to the regional grouping 'Europe and Others'. If the proposed amendment is adopted, the members of the Council will be elected as nominated by the regional groupings.

In the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on guidelines for trans-European energy infrastructure, which was agreed in trilogues between the Commission, the Council and the European Parliament, Cyprus is included in Annex I, paragraph 116 relating to 'North-South electricity interconnections in Central Eastern and South Eastern Europe ("NSI East Electricity"): interconnections and internal lines in North-South and East-West directions to complete the internal market and integrate generation from renewable energy sources.'

1. Given the importance attached to renewable energy policy in the EU and the equal significance of completing the internal energy market and ending energy isolation throughout the Union by 2014, what is the Commission's position on Turkey's actions?

2. Does the Commission view this as constructive behaviour on the part of Turkey, or does it consider this to be a retaliation to Cyprus' and Israel's intentions to drill for fossil fuels in the Eastern Mediterranean?

Joint answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(15 March 2013)

The Commission regrets the developments referred to by the Honourable Member at the 3rd assembly of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). It is following the process closely and participates in efforts to find consensus.

In line with the Negotiating Framework for the accession negotiations, Turkey will be required, in the period up to accession, to progressively align its policies towards third countries and its positions within international organisations, including in relation to the membership by all Member States of those organisations and arrangements, with the policies and positions adopted by the Union and its Member States.

The Commission would like to refer the Honourable Members to the December 2012 Council Conclusions, which recall that Turkey has regretfully still not made progress towards the necessary normalisation of its relations with the Republic of Cyprus, and which express deep regret for the non-alignment of Turkey with EU positions or statements in international fora.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-000486/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(17 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Θέμα: «Φορολογικός Παράδεισος»

Κατά τη διάρκεια του απολογισμού της Κυπριακής Προεδρίας στην Ολομέλεια της Ευρωβουλής, οι πολιτικές ομάδες των Πρασίνων και των Μεταρρυθμιστών-Συντηρητικών κατηγόρησαν την Κύπρο για ξέπλυμα βρώμικου χρήματος και για δημιουργία φορολογικού παράδεισου.

Ο ευρωβουλευτής Derk Jan Eppink, απευθυνόμενος προς τον Πρόεδρο της Κυπριακής Δημοκρατίας, ρώτησε χαρακτηριστικά: «Ποιον θα διασώσει η τρόικα, την Κύπρο ή τους ρώσους δισεκατομμυριούχους;». Η Συμπρόεδρος της Ομάδας των Ευρωπαίων Πρασίνων Rebeca Harms, υποστήριξε ότι η Κύπρος είναι «χώρος παραμονής για φοροφυγάδες και φορολογικούς πρόσφυγες».

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Αν δεχτούμε τις πληροφορίες ότι από τη Ρωσία έφυγαν 200 περίπου δισεκατομμύρια στη δεκαετία του '90 και από αυτά μεταφέρθηκαν στην Κύπρο περίπου 17-20 δισεκατομμύρια, σε ποιες τράπεζες της Ευρώπης πήγαν τα υπόλοιπα;

— Ποιοι είναι οι ρώσοι φοροφυγάδες στην Κύπρο και πώς συγκρίνονται με τους ρώσους επώνυμους μεγιστάνες που έστησαν αυτοκρατορίες δισεκατομμυρίων στην Κεντρική Ευρώπη και όχι στην Κύπρο;

— Αναγνωρίζει η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή πως τέτοιου είδους αστήρικτες κατηγορίες επέχουν θέση πολιτικών και οικονομικών σκοπιμοτήτων και τι προτίθεται να πράξει ώστε να υπάρχει πλήρης τεκμηρίωση και διαφάνεια για το ξέπλυμα βρώμικου χρήματος και για τους φορολογικούς παραδείσους εντός και εκτός της ΕΕ δίνοντας συγκριτικά και επιστημονικά τεκμηριωμένα στοιχεία;

— Με δεδομένο πως η Κυπριακή Δημοκρατία, πέραν από την πλήρη εναρμόνιση του νομοθετικού της πλαισίου, αξιολογήθηκε 4 φορές από την επιτροπή Moneyval του Συμβουλίου της Ευρώπης, εξασφαλίζοντας υψηλά ποσοστά συμμόρφωσης με τις διεθνείς συμβάσεις και τους διεθνείς κανόνες καταπολέμησης του ξεπλύματος μαύρου χρήματος, μήπως γίνεται σύγχυση του ψευδοκράτους (κατεχόμενη περιοχή της Κύπρου), που είναι «χώρος φοροφυγάδων και φορολογικών προσφύγων», με την Κυπριακή Δημοκρατία;

— Γιατί η ΕΕ ανέχεται τα τόσα κατά συρροή εγκλήματα που πραγματοποιούνται από την κατοχική Τουρκία στην κατεχόμενη Κύπρο (παράνομος εποικισμός, σφετερισμός περιουσιών, άντρο παρανόμων) και στρέφει τα πυρά της στην ημικατεχόμενη Κυπριακή Δημοκρατία; Είναι αυτή ένδειξη «κοινοτικής» αλληλεγγύης;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(13 Μαρτίου 2013)

Στοιχεία από την Κεντρική Τράπεζα της Ρωσίας (CBR) δείχνουν ότι οι εξαγωγές κεφαλαίων από τον ιδιωτικό τομέα ανήλθαν περίπου σε 100 δισεκατομμύρια USD από το 1994 έως το 1999, και σε 23 δισεκατομμύρια USD περίπου κατά μέσο όρο έκτοτε σε ετήσια βάση. Τα στοιχεία για τις χώρες προορισμούς του συνόλου των κεφαλαιακών ροών δεν είναι διαθέσιμα. Οι άμεσες ξένες επενδύσεις (ΑΞΕ) αντιπροσωπεύουν τμήμα των εκροών αυτών, ωστόσο, και το ύψος των ρωσικών εξερχόμενων ΑΞΕ από 2011, σύμφωνα με τη CBR, ανέρχονται σε 121 δισεκατομμύρια USD στην Κύπρο, ακολουθούμενες από τις Κάτω Χώρες (57 δισεκατομμύρια), τις Βρετανικές Παρθένους Νήσους (46 δισεκατομμύρια), την Ελβετία (13 δισεκατομμύρια) και το Λουξεμβούργο (12 δισεκατομμύρια).

Αναφορικά με το δεύτερο ερώτημα, η Επιτροπή δεν συγκεντρώνει ανάλογες πληροφορίες κατά την εκτέλεση των καθηκόντων της.

Η Επιτροπή γνωρίζει τη φύση των αιτιάσεων σχετικά με την Κύπρο. Η νέα κυβέρνηση συμφώνησε σε διενέργεια ανεξάρτητης αξιολόγησης της εφαρμογής του πλαισίου καταπολέμησης του ξεπλύματος μαύρου χρήματος σε κυπριακά χρηματοπιστωτικά ιδρύματα.

Όλα τα κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ υπόκεινται σε αξιολόγηση είτε από την FATF (Ειδική Ομάδα Χρηματοοικονομικής Δράσης) είτε από την MONEYVAL (Επιτροπή εμπειρογνωμόνων για την αξιολόγηση των μέτρων κατά της νομιμοποίησης προσόδων από παράνομες δραστηριότητες) ώστε να διασφαλίζεται ότι πληρούν τα διεθνή πρότυπα. Η Επιτροπή είναι μέλος της FATF και συμμετέχει ως παρατηρήτρια στη MONEYVAL. Η Επιτροπή έχει υπόψη τα πορίσματα των εκθέσεων αξιολόγησης της MONEYVAL για την Κύπρο και ανυπομονεί να πληροφορηθεί τα μέτρα για την επίτευξη περαιτέρω προόδου στην υλοποίηση των συστάσεων της έκθεσης του 2011, ιδίως σε σχέση με την υλοποίηση του νομοθετικού πλαισίου. Η Επιτροπή είναι σε θέση να επιβεβαιώσει ότι τα ζητήματα που εγείρονται στην εν λόγω έκθεση αφορά ειδικά την Κυπριακή Δημοκρατία.

Ως προς το τελευταίο ερώτημα, η Επιτροπή παραπέμπει το Αξιότιμο Μέλος στην έκθεση προόδου για την Τουρκία του 2012 ([1]).

([1]) SWD(2012) 336 τελικό (http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2012/package/tr_rapport_2012_en.pdf) . http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ecofin/135809.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000486/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: 'Tax haven'

During the debate on the Cypriot Presidency in the European Parliament plenary session, the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance and the European Conservatives and Reformists Group accused Cyprus of money laundering and of creating a tax haven.

MEP Derk Jan Eppink asked the President of the Republic of Cyprus if the Troika was bailing out Cyprus or Russian billionaires. Rebecca Harms, Co-Chair of the Group of the Greens, argued that Cyprus is a hotbed of tax evaders and tax exiles.

— If we believe the news that some 200 billion was taken out of Russia in the 1990s, of which some 17-20 billion was transferred to Cyprus, which banks in Europe are holding the rest?

— Who are the Russian tax exiles in Cyprus and how do they compare with the famous Russian magnates who have set up billionaire empires in Central Europe, not in Cyprus?

— Does the Commission acknowledge that such unsubstantiated accusations are tantamount to political and financial stratagems and what does it intend to do to safeguard full substantiation and transparency in connection with money laundering and tax havens both inside and outside the EU, by providing comparative and scientifically substantiated data?

— Given that, in addition to having fully aligned its legislative framework, the Republic of Cyprus has been evaluated four times by the Council of Europe Moneyval Committee, thereby ensuring high levels of compliance with international conventions and international anti-money laundering regulations, is there perhaps some confusion between the pseudo-state (occupied area of Cyprus), which is a 'hotbed of tax evaders and tax exiles' and the Republic of Cyprus?

— Why does the EU tolerate the endless crimes committed by occupying Turkey in occupied Cyprus (illegal settlements, appropriation of property, large numbers of illegals) and set its sights on the semi-occupied Republic of Cyprus? Is this a sign of 'Community' solidarity?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(13 March 2013)

Data from the Central Bank of Russia (CBR) show that net private sector capital export amounted to approximately USD 100 billion from 1994 to 1999, and some USD 23 billion on average every year since then. Data on destination countries for the entire capital flow are not available. Foreign direct investment (FDI) accounts for a part of outflows, however, and the stock of Russian outward FDI as of 2011 reported by CBR stands at USD 121 billion in Cyprus, followed by the Netherlands (57 billion), the British Virgin Islands (46 billion), Switzerland (13 billion) and Luxembourg (12 billion).

Regarding the second question, the Commission does not acquire information of the kind requested in the performance of its duties.

The Commission is aware of the nature of the allegations involving Cyprus. The new government has agreed on an independent evaluation of the implementation of the anti-money laundering framework in Cypriot financial institutions.

All EU Member States are subject to evaluation by either the FATF or MONEYVAL to ensure that they are adhering to the international standards. The Commission is a member of the FATF and is an observer to MONEYVAL. The Commission is aware of the results of Cyprus's MONEYVAL evaluation reports and looks forward to learning of its steps to make further progress in carrying out the actions recommended in the 2011 report, especially in implementing the legislative framework. The Commission can confirm that the issues raised in that report are specific to the Republic of Cyprus.

On the final question, the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its 2012 Progress Report for Turkey ([1]).

([1]) SWD(2012) 336 final (http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2012/package/tr_rapport_2012_en.pdf) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ecofin/135809.pdf

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-000487/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(17 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Ντερβίς Έρογλου: Μίλησε όπως ο Ραούφ Ντενκτάς

Σε πρόσφατες δηλώσεις του ο Τουρκοκύπριος ηγέτης και εκπρόσωπος της Τουρκοκυπριακής κοινότητας στις συνομιλίες για το κυπριακό πρόβλημα Ντερβίς Έρογλου, τόνισε πως *«ποτέ δε θα υποχωρήσει από του να έχει ένα "κράτος", και δε θα παραιτηθεί των εγγυήσεων της Τουρκίας»*, προσθέτοντας πως *«θα συνεχίσει να ακολουθεί τα βήματα του Ραούφ Ντενκτάς»* (πρώην ηγέτη των Τουρκοκυπρίων), *«για τον οποίο η ανεξαρτησία των Τ/κ ήταν ο λόγος ύπαρξής του και κύριος στόχος του ήταν να συνεχίσει να υφίσταται το "ψευδοκράτος" για πάντα»*.

1. Πιστεύει η Επιτροπή πως τέτοιου είδους δηλώσεις εκ μέρους του Τουρκοκύπριου ηγέτη βοηθούν στη δημιουργία ενός εποικοδομητικού κλίματος, ιδιαίτερα ενόψει της αναμενόμενης επανέναρξης των συνομιλιών για το Κυπριακό;

2. Ποια είναι η θέση της Επιτροπής στην απαίτηση του κ. Έρογλου και της Τουρκίας για συνέχιση των τουρκικών εγγυήσεων, σε μια μελλοντική λύση στην Κύπρο, που είναι ένα κράτος μέλος της ΕΕ;

3. Υπάρχουν άλλα κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ που να έχουν εγγυήτριες δυνάμεις όπως συμβαίνει στην Κυπριακή Δημοκρατία;

Απάντηση του κ. Füle εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(1 Μαρτίου 2013)

Το θέμα της ασφάλειας και των εγγυήσεων το οποίο εγείρει το Αξιότιμο Μέλος αποτελεί μέρος των θεμάτων που συζητώνται στις συνομιλίες για τη διευθέτηση του Κυπριακού, οι οποίες διεξάγονται υπό την αιγίδα των Ηνωμένων Εθνών.

Η Επιτροπή υπογράμμισε επανειλημμένα την ανάγκη για ταχεία συνολική διευθέτηση του Κυπριακού μεταξύ των ηγετών της ελληνοκυπριακής και τουρκοκυπριακής κοινότητας.

Η διευθέτηση αυτή θα απαντούσε τελικά στις ανησυχίες του αξιότιμου μέλους.

Στην ανακοίνωση του Οκτωβρίου 2012 για τη στρατηγική για τη διεύρυνσης και κυριότερες προκλήσεις για την περίοδο 2012-2013 ([1]), η Επιτροπή κάλεσε, μεταξύ άλλων, την Τουρκία να επιδείξει θετικό πνεύμα και να καταβάλει προσπάθειες από κοινού με όλα τα μέρη για να διευκολυνθεί η επιτυχής ολοκλήρωση της διαδικασίας.

([1]) COM(2012) 600 τελικό.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000487/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: Dervis Eroglu sounding just like Rauf Denktash

During talks on the Cyprus problem, Turkish Cypriot leader and representative of the Turkish Cypriot community, Dervis Eroglu, said 'I will never give up on having a "state" and I will never abandon Turkey's guarantees'. He added — 'I shall continue to follow in the footsteps of Rauf Denktash' (former Turkish Cypriot leader), 'for whom the independence of Turkish Cypriots was his *raison d'être* and whose main aim was that the "self-styled state" would continue to exist forever.'

1. Does the Commission believe that these kinds of statements by the Turkish Cypriot leader help to create a constructive climate, especially given that talks on the Cyprus problem are expected to resume?

2. What is the Commission's position on Mr Eroglu's and Turkey's call for Turkey's guarantees to continue in a future solution for Cyprus, an EU Member State?

3. Are there other EU Member States where guarantor powers are involved, as is the case in the Republic of Cyprus?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(1 March 2013)

The subject of security and guarantees raised by the Honourable Member forms part of the issues discussed in the Cyprus settlement talks under the auspices of the United Nations.

The Commission has repeatedly underlined the need for a rapid comprehensive settlement in Cyprus between the leaders of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities.

Such a settlement would ultimately address the concerns of the Honourable Member.

In its October 2012 Communication of the Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2012-2013 ([1]), the Commission has, amongst other things, called upon Turkey to engage positively with all parties in order to facilitate a successful completion of the process.

([1]) COM(2012) 600 final.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-000488/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(17 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Βέτο της Τουρκίας για το Ισραήλ

Κατά την τρίτη συνέλευση του Διεθνούς Οργανισμού Ανανεώσιμων Πηγών Ενέργειας (IRENA) η Τουρκία παρεμπόδισε όχι μόνο την αίτηση της Κύπρου για να γίνει μέλος του συμβουλίου αλλά και αυτή του Ισραήλ.

Στο πλαίσιο αυτό, θα μπορούσε η Επιτροπή να απαντήσει στα παρακάτω ερωτήματα:

1. Ποια είναι η απάντηση αλλά και η γνώμη της ΕΕ σχετικά με το βέτο της Τουρκίας για το Ισραήλ;

2. Η εν λόγω στάση της Τουρκίας, μιας υποψήφιας για ένταξη στην ΕΕ χώρας, προάγει τις σχέσεις καλής γειτονίας σύμφωνα με το στόχο της ΕΕ για εποικοδομητική συνεργασία με όλες τις χώρες της Μέσης Ανατολής, συμπεριλαμβανομένου του Ισραήλ;

Απάντηση της Ύπατης εκπροσώπου/Αντιπροέδρου κ. Ashton εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(28 Φεβρουαρίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή γνωρίζει τα *διαμειφθέντα* κατά την 3η Συνέλευση του Διεθνούς Οργανισμού Ανανεώσιμων Πηγών Ενέργειας (IRENA), τα οποία αναφέρει το Αξιότιμο Μέλος, και παρακολουθεί στενά τη διαδικασία καταβάλλοντας προσπάθειες με στόχο να επιτευχθεί συναίνεση.

Εν γένει, η Τουρκία εξακολουθεί να δραστηριοποιείται στην ευρύτερη γειτονική περιοχή, συμπεριλαμβανομένης της Μέσης Ανατολής. Όπως αναφέρεται στα συμπεράσματα του Συμβουλίου του παρελθόντος Δεκεμβρίου, η Ύπατη Εκπρόσωπος/Αντιπρόεδρος έχει εντατικοποιήσει την ενωσιακή εξωτερική πολιτική διαλόγου με την Τουρκία για θέματα κοινού ενδιαφέροντος — όπως η Μέση Ανατολή — και ευελπιστεί ότι οι στενότερες και τακτικότερες επαφές και διαβουλεύσεις με την Τουρκία σε διάφορα επίπεδα θα βοηθήσουν στη βελτίωση της ευθυγράμμισης της Τουρκίας με τις θέσεις και δηλώσεις της ΕΕ.

Όσον αφορά τις σχέσεις καλής γειτονίας, η Τουρκία και το Ισραήλ αποτελούν αναντικατάστατους εταίρους της ΕΕ. Ως εκ τούτου, ο διάλογος και οι καλές λειτουργικές σχέσεις μεταξύ των δύο αυτών χωρών είναι προς το συμφέρον της ΕΕ στο πλαίσιο της επιδίωξης ειρήνης και σταθερότητας στην περιοχή γειτονίας που μοιραζόμαστε, λαμβανομένων ιδίως υπόψη των προκλήσεων στην περιοχή αυτή. Η Ύπατη Εκπρόσωπος/Αντιπρόεδρος παροτρύνει τόσο την Τουρκία όσο και το Ισραήλ να επιδείξουν αυτοσυγκράτηση ώστε να αποφευχθεί περαιτέρω επιδείνωση των διμερών σχέσεων, και δίνει μεγάλη σημασία σε μια εποικοδομητική διαδικασία προσέγγισης, διαλόγου και περαιτέρω προσπαθειών για τη βελτίωση των σχέσεών τους. Η ΕΕ είναι πρόθυμη να συμβάλει στη διαδικασία αυτή εφόσον κληθεί από τα δύο μέρη.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000488/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: Turkey's veto of Israel

At the 3rd assembly of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), Turkey blocked not only Cyprus's application for membership of the council, but also that of Israel.

In light of this, could the Commission please answer the following questions:

1. What is the EU's response to, and opinion of, Turkey's veto of Israel?

2. Does such behaviour by Turkey, a candidate country for EU accession, promote good-neighbourly relations in line with the EU's aim of having fruitful cooperation with all the countries in the Middle East, including Israel?

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

The Commission is aware of the events referred to by the Honourable Member at the 3rd assembly of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), and is following the process closely undertaking efforts aiming at reaching consensus.

In general, Turkey continues to be actively involved in its wider neighbourhood, including the Middle East. The HR/VP has intensified EU foreign policy dialogue with Turkey on issues of common interest — including the Middle East — as stated in the Council conclusions of last December and trusts that closer and more regular contacts and consultations with Turkey at various levels will help improve Turkey's alignment with EU positions and statements.

As for good neighbourly relations, Turkey and Israel are crucial partners of the EU. Therefore, dialogue and good, functional relations between them are in the interest of the EU in the quest for peace and stability in our shared neighbourhood, especially when considering the challenges in the region. The HR/VP urges both Turkey and Israel to exercise restraint in order to avoid further deterioration of bilateral relations and places great importance on a constructive rapprochement process, dialogue and further efforts to improve ties. The EU stands ready to assist in this process if invited by both parties.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000489/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Marina Yannakoudakis (ECR)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Safety and well-being of Sombath Somphone, who has been missing in Laos since Saturday, 15 December 2012

Could the European External Action Service (EEAS) please provide information on the safety and well-being of Mr Sombath Somphone, who has been missing in Laos since Saturday, 15 December 2012? Sombath Somphone is one of the most prominent Lao co-organisers of the Asia Europe People's Forum 9 and the founder and former director of the Participatory Development Training Centre (PADETC).

Could the EEAS urge the Lao Government to initiate an investigation immediately and as a matter of urgency into Sombath Somphone's alleged forced disappearance, possibly due to an unknown personal dispute?

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

The disappearance of Mr Sombath Somphone is a very serious matter which the EU is pursuing not merely through the usual diplomatic channels, but also in close cooperation with like-minded countries, including some Asian countries.

Since 15 December 2012, the EU Delegation in Vientiane has been in contact with Mr Somphone's spouse and has kept this issue high on the agenda in all its meetings with high-ranking Laotian officials and civil society representatives. A demarche by the EU was delivered to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs. Laotian diplomats have also been informed by the EEAS of the deep concern expressed by Members of the European Parliament.

Furthermore, the EU held a Human Rights dialogue with Laos on 4 February 2013 in Vientiane. The matter of Mr Somphone featured prominently at this dialogue.

As the Honourable Member is aware, on 7 February 2013 the European Parliament held an urgency debate about Mr Somphone's disappearance and adopted a Resolution. In her speech at that occasion Commissioner Hedegaard stressed that his situation is of great concern, she called for stepping up the investigation and for keeping up international engagement.

HR/VP Ashton reacted publicly already on 21 December 2012 by way of a statement by her spokesperson.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-000490/13
aan de Commissie
Sophia in 't Veld (ALDE)
(17 januari 2013)

Betreft: Extraterritoriale rechtsmacht van de VS ten aanzien van Europese gegevens

Onder verwijzing naar mijn brief d.d. 13 april 2012 aan Commissielid Reding over de vragen nrs. E-006901/2011, E-001307/2012 and O-00315/2011 ([1]), zijn er in het Nederlandse parlement ([2]) verdere vragen gesteld betreffende de extraterritoriale rechtsmacht van de US Patriot Act ten aanzien van gegevens van Nederlandse burgers die worden verwerkt door Morpho, een bedrijf dat paspoorten produceert waarin vingerafdrukken en socialezekerheidsnummers („burgerservicenummers") zijn opgenomen. De Nederlandse regering ziet in dat de extraterritoriale rechtsmacht van de VS op grond van de Patriot Act niet uitsluitend „theoretisch" is. Bij wijze van oplossing is zij met Morpho overeengekomen dat dit bedrijf onder meer zijn verstrengeling met de VS zal beperken door niet dezelfde personen aan te wijzen als bestuurleden bij Morpho in Nederland en bij de zusterondernemingen van Safran in de VS (zie onderstaande links).

1. Is de Commissie het er niet mee eens dat de oplossing die de Nederlandse regering en Morpho zijn overeengekomen ontoereikend is, aangezien Morpho zich nog steeds aan de wetgeving van de VS zou moeten houden en een verzoek om gegevens op grond van de Patriot Act niet zou kunnen afwijzen?

2. Is de Commissie het er niet mee eens dat het bij het ontstaan van een rechtsmachtconflict niet een zaak van bedrijven is te kiezen of men zich aan de wetgeving van de EU of aan die van de VS zal houden?

3. Is de Commissie bereid erover na te denken om maatregelen voor te stellen die ervoor moeten zorgen dat de autoriteiten van de VS op het grondgebied van de EU geen rechtsmacht zullen uitoefenen over de persoonsgegevens van Europese burgers op grond van de Patriot Act?

4. Is de Commissie bereid om door middel van een prejudiciële vraag het Europese Hof van Justitie om zijn oordeel te verzoeken over het vraagstuk van de extraterritoriale toepassing van VS-wetgeving, in het bijzonder van de Patriot Act?

5. I de Commissie van mening dat de voorgestelde verordening inzake gegevensbescherming een oplossing zal brengen voor het vraagstuk van de extraterritorialiteit van de wetgeving van derde landen? Zo ja, op welke manier?

Antwoord van mevrouw Reding namens de Commissie
(18 maart 2013)

De Commissie is erg behoedzaam ten aanzien van buitenlandse wetgeving waarvan de extraterritoriale toepassing het fundamentele recht op gegevensbescherming in de Europese Unie in gevaar kan brengen. Volgens het internationaal publiekrecht kan geen enkel buitenlands rechtsbesluit prevaleren boven de desbetreffende wetgeving van de EU of van de lidstaten. Elke verwerking van persoonsgegevens in de EU moet dus aan de in de EU geldende regels inzake gegevensbescherming voldoen. Het controleren van de naleving van die regels is in de eerste plaats de taak van de nationale autoriteiten van elke lidstaat, bijvoorbeeld de controleautoriteit voor gegevensbescherming.

De Commissie is van mening dat internationale overeenkomsten tussen de EU en haar lidstaten en de VS het geschikte samenwerkingsmodel vormen en moeten blijven vormen om persoonsgegevens door te geven ten behoeve van rechtshandhaving. Daartoe zal zij samen met haar internationale tegenhangers blijven zoeken naar manieren om de efficiëntie van deze samenwerkingsmodellen te verhogen en voor de juiste garanties met betrekking tot gegevensbescherming te zorgen. Deze kwesties worden geregeld aangekaart bij de Amerikaanse autoriteiten, met name in het kader van de onderhandelingen over een overeenkomst tussen de EU en de VS betreffende de uitwisseling van persoonsgegevens tussen gerechtelijke en politieautoriteiten die ieder individu een hoog niveau van gegevensbescherming moet kunnen bieden.

([1]) Mondeling antwoord van 15 februari 2012.
([2]) Links naar de antwoorden van de Nederlandse regering op parlementaire vragen:
04-06-12 http://site.d66.nl/intveld/document/antwoord_minister_spies/f=/vj6dcarj5b92.pdf,
26-10-12 http://site.d66.nl/intveld/document/antwoord_minister_plasterk/f=/vj6dcbulazws.pdf,
13-12-12 http://site.d66.nl/intveld/document/plasterk_biometrie/f=/vj6dg4qqmkxl.pdf,
14-01-13 http://site.d66.nl/intveld/document/antwoord_minister_plasterk_en/f=/vj6dccg2zrrr.pdf

De Commissie heeft eveneens terdege rekening gehouden met deze bezorgdheid in het omvangrijke hervormingspakket voor de regels inzake gegevensbescherming. In het voorstel van een algemene verordening inzake gegevensbescherming ([3]) is in verband met de kwestie van buitenlandse extraterritoriale wetgeving bepaald dat gegevens slechts mogen worden doorgegeven indien de in de verordening neergelegde voorwaarden voor internationale doorgiften zijn nageleefd, ook wanneer openbaarmaking nodig is om gewichtige redenen van algemeen belang die worden erkend door het recht van de Unie of van een lidstaat.

([3]) Voorstel voor een verordening van het Europees Parlement en de Raad betreffende de bescherming van natuurlijke personen in verband met de verwerking van persoonsgegevens en betreffende het vrije verkeer van die gegevens (algemene verordening gegevensbescherming), COM(2012) 11 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000490/13
to the Commission
Sophia in 't Veld (ALDE)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: US extraterritorial jurisdiction over European data

With reference to my letter to Commissioner Reding dated 13 April 2012 concerning Questions Nos E-006901/2011, E-001307/2012 and O-00315/2011 ([1]), further questions have been asked in the Netherlands Parliament ([2]) with regard to the extraterritorial jurisdiction of the US Patriot Act over data of citizens of the Netherlands processed by Morpho, a company producing passports carrying fingerprints and social security numbers ('*burgerservicenummers*').

The Netherlands Government recognises that the US extraterritorial jurisdiction of the Patriot Act is not just 'theoretical'. As a solution, it has negotiated an agreement with Morpho that the latter will, among other measures, limit its links with the US by not designating the same persons as board members of Morpho in the Netherlands and of the sister companies of Safran in the US (see links below).

1. Does the Commission agree that the solution negotiated by the Netherlands Government and Morpho is inadequate, as Morpho would still have to comply with US law and would not be able to refuse a request for data on the basis of the Patriot Act?

2. Does the Commission agree that in a case of conflict of jurisdiction it is not for companies to choose between compliance with EC law or with US law?

3. Will the Commission consider proposing measures to ensure that the US authorities will not exercise jurisdiction over European citizens' personal data on EU soil on the basis of the Patriot Act?

4. Is the Commission willing to seek the view of the Court of Justice of the European Union on the issue of the extraterritorial application of US law, specifically the Patriot Act, by means of a prejudicial question?

5. Does the Commission consider that the proposed Data Protection Regulation will resolve the issue of extraterritoriality of third-country legislation? If so, how?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(18 March 2013)

The Commission is particularly mindful of foreign legislation whose possible extraterritorial application could jeopardise the fundamental right to data protection in the EU. As a matter of international public law, no foreign legal act can overrule relevant EU or Member States laws. Any processing of personal data in the EU has thus to respect applicable EU data protection rules. Monitoring of compliance with these rules lies primarily with the national authorities of each Member State, such as their data protection supervisory authority.

The Commission believes that international agreements between the EU and its Member States and the US are and should continue to be the appropriate channel of cooperation to transfer personal data for law enforcement purposes. To that end, it will continue to explore with its international counterparts ways of improving the efficiency of these channels of cooperation that provide for appropriate data protection guarantees. These issues are regularly raised with the US authorities, notably in the context of the negotiation of an EU-US agreement on the exchange of personal data between judicial and police authorities that should provide a high level of data protection for all individuals.

([1]) Oral answer of 15 February 2012.
([2]) Links to the answers of the Netherlands Government to parliamentary questions (in Dutch): 4-6-12 http://site.d66.nl/intveld/document/antwoord_minister_spies/f=/vj6dcarj5b92.pdf, 26-10-12 http://site.d66.nl/intveld/document/antwoord_minister_plasterk/f=/vj6dcbulazws.pdf, 13-12-12 http://site.d66.nl/intveld/document/plasterk_biometrie/f=/vj6dg4qqmkxl.pdf, 14-1-13 http://site.d66.nl/intveld/document/antwoord_minister_plasterk_en/f=/vj6dccg2zrrr.pdf

The Commission also duly took into account these concerns in the comprehensive reform package of data protection rules. The proposed General Data Protection Regulation ([3]) refers to the issue of foreign extraterritorial legislation, making clear that data transfers should only be allowed where the conditions of the regulation for an international transfer are met, including where the disclosure is necessary on important grounds of public interest recognised by the Union law or the law of a Member State.

([3]) Proposal for a regulation by the European Parliament and the Council on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data (General Data Protection Regulation), COM(2012) 11 final.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000491/13
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(17 gennaio 2013)

Oggetto: Cybersicurezza sui mercati illegali: azioni per contrastarne il fenomeno

Da qualche anno ormai le comunità online sono diventate un luogo dove ritrovarsi virtualmente per fare nuove amicizie o per condividere interessi. Esiste una comunità online nascosta, ma affollata di gente alla ricerca di qualsiasi cosa che sia illegale ad ogni ora e in qualsiasi giorno. Si tratta di una vera e propria «via della seta» per coloro che vendono, impuniti, materiali e sostanze illegali. Il sito internet di vendita, a una prima indagine sui motori di ricerca, non esiste ma, scaricando un software gratuito, si diventa navigatori anonimi e si può comprare qualsiasi cosa, poiché la moneta di scambio utilizzata è il bitcoin, moneta elettronica che non lascia alcuna traccia. In questo sito si possono comprare vestiti contraffatti, medicine, sostanze dopanti, passaporti falsi, materiale pornografico fino a qualsivoglia tipologia di droga in quantità illimitata. L'offerta di droga è quella che ha registrato un trend esponenziale da quando la stampa mondiale ha diffuso la notizia. In sei mesi infatti, il numero di venditori è più che raddoppiato e secondo le fonti fornite dalla Carnegie Mellon University di Pittsburg il volume d'affari del primo semestre è stato di 1,5 milioni di euro al mese. Il rischio maggiore che si corre è che la criminalità organizzata utilizzi questi nuovi canali nei paesi europei. In Russia infatti, le mafie assumono laureati in informatica per piazzare la loro merce anche nel mondo virtuale, che poi è più reale di quanto si pensi. Le spedizioni avvengono sotto copertura e le droghe vengono messe sottovuoto per eludere i controlli.

Considerato che:

— la Commissione europea è sensibile in materia di cybersicurezza;

— l'European CyberCrime Center (EC3) è l'arma di difesa che l'Unione mette in campo contro i reati a mezzo internet;

può la Commissione far sapere se è a conoscenza del fenomeno descritto e quali sono le misure che l'Unione europea, per mezzo dell'EC3, intende attuare per contrastare fermamente questa realtà illegale, come pure se intende promuovere campagne d'informazione in merito ai danni che questi metodi arrecano al sistema fiscale di ogni paese e, soprattutto in riferimento alle sostanze illecite, se intende informare la popolazione e le giovani generazioni di quali siano gli effetti disastrosi e deleteri che l'assunzione di stupefacenti provoca sul corpo dei giovani e di come questo abbia ricadute pesanti anche nella vita adulta?

Risposta di Cecilia Malmström a nome della Commissione
(11 marzo 2013)

La Commissione è a conoscenza dell'uso di Internet per effettuare molti tipi di traffici illegali. Il nuovo Centro europeo per la lotta alla criminalità informatica ([1]) sta potenziando ulteriormente le sue capacità per affrontare questi fenomeni, con una particolare attenzione alle attività di gruppi organizzati, come la frode online, fonte di ingenti profitti illegali. La strategia dell'UE in materia di sicurezza informatica ([2]) pone un forte accento sulla necessità di aumentare le risorse per combattere tutti i tipi di attività criminali online, a livello di Unione e di Stati membri.

Sono in via di attuazione varie strategie e piani di azione, nonché il quadro UE per facilitare lo scambio di informazioni e di *intelligence* e contrastare la droga, la contraffazione, le frodi fiscali o altri traffici illegali e attività criminali, in cui sono riconosciute come priorità orizzontali la dimensione Internet e la sensibilizzazione degli utenti.

La vendita, anche su Internet, di nuove sostanze psicoattive costituisce una sfida per le autorità pubbliche, giacché queste sostanze possono danneggiare la salute e la sicurezza delle persone. La Commissione intende presentare una proposta legislativa per potenziare l'attuale sistema di scambio di informazioni a livello UE, la valutazione dei rischi e il controllo delle nuove sostanze psicoattive come previsto dalla decisione 2005/387/GAI del Consiglio. Inoltre, la Commissione finanzia, nel quadro del programma «Prevenzione e informazione in materia di droga» ([3]), progetti che studiano i rischi provocati da tali sostanze e conducono campagne di sensibilizzazione su tali rischi, in particolare tra i giovani.

Si prevede che il nuovo ciclo di politiche dell'UE in materia di criminalità internazionale grave e organizzata porrà maggiormente l'accento sui traffici che avvengono in rete.

([1]) https://www.europol.europa.eu/ec3
([2]) Comunicazione «Strategia dell'Unione europea per la cibersicurezza: un ciberspazio aperto e sicuro» 7.2.2013, JOIN(2013) 1 definitivo.
([3]) GU L 257 del 3.10.2007, pag. 23.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000491/13
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: Cyber security on illegal markets: measures to tackle the phenomenon

For several years now, online communities have become a virtual meeting place to make new friends or share interests. However there is one online community that is hidden, yet full of people seeking all kinds of illegal things at any time of the day or night. This is nothing less than a 'Silk Road' for those who sell illegal materials and substances with impunity. The trading website seems not to exist when one first looks for it with a search engine, but by downloading some free software one can become an anonymous surfer and buy absolutely anything, since the currency used is the bitcoin, electronic currency which leaves no trace. On this site one can buy anything from counterfeit clothes, medicines, performance-enhancing drugs, false passports and pornographic material right up to any kinds of drugs in unlimited quantities. It is the drug supply that has grown exponentially since the world press first published the news. In fact, in six months the number of sellers has more than doubled, and according to sources from the Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh the volume of trade during the first half of the year was EUR 1.5 million per month. The greatest risk faced is that organised crime will use these new channels in EU countries. Indeed, in Russia, the mafias are taking on IT graduates to also sell their goods in the virtual world, which is more real than one might think. Deliveries take place under cover and the drugs are vacuum-packed to evade any inspections.

Given that:

— the European Commission is highly sensitive to matters of cyber security;

— the European Cybercrime Centre (EC3) is the EU's defence against crimes committed on the Internet;

Can the Commission state whether it is aware of the trend described and what measures the European Union, through the EC3, intends to implement to robustly combat this illegal situation? How does the Commission intend to promote information campaigns about the losses these methods cause to the tax system in every country? Above all, in regard to illegal substances, does it intend to inform the population and young people about the catastrophic and harmful effects that taking drugs has on their bodies and how this also has serious repercussions in adult life?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(11 March 2013)

The Commission is aware of the use of Internet to carry out many types of illegal trades. The newly established European Cybercrime Centre ([1]) is progressively building further capacity to address these phenomena with a particular focus on the activities of organised groups, such as online fraud, generating large criminal profits. The Cybersecurity Strategy of the EU ([2]) places a strong emphasis on the need to step up resources to fight all types of criminal activities online, both at EU and at Member States level.

As well as the EU framework facilitating exchange of information and intelligence and tacking drugs, counterfeiting, tax fraud or other illegal trades and criminal activities, various strategies and Actions Plans are being implemented where both the Internet dimension and awareness-raising are acknowledged as horizontal priorities.

The sale of new psychoactive substances, including over the Internet, poses a challenge to public authorities, as these substances can harm the health and safety of individuals. The Commission is planning to present a legislative proposal to enhance the current system for EU-level information exchange, risk assessment and control of new psychoactive substances as laid down in Council Decision 2005/387/JHA. In addition, the Commission provides funding, under the Drug Prevention and Information Programme ([3]), for projects studying the risks that these substances pose and raising awareness of such risks, particularly among young people.

It is expected that the new EU policy cycle for organised and serious international crime will put greater focus on Internet related trafficking.

([1]) https://www.europol.europa.eu/ec3
([2]) Joint Communication, 'Cybersecurity Strategy of the European Union: An Open, Safe and Secure Cyberspace', 7.2.2013, JOIN(2013) 1 final.
([3]) OJ L 257, 3.10.2007, pp. 23-29.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000492/13
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(17 gennaio 2013)

Oggetto: Ipoacusia neurosensoriale: nuove prospettive terapeutiche con cellule staminali

Una recente ricerca pubblicata su Nature dimostrerebbe come sia possibile ripristinare la capacità di sentire suoni con l'uso di cellule staminali. Il risultato è stato ottenuto da un team dell'Università di Sheffield solo sui gerbilli, piccoli roditori usati come modello animale. Gli studi clinici prodotti finora hanno provato che i danni ai cosiddetti neuroni del ganglio spirale non possono essere rimpiazzati. Tali elementi del sistema nervoso periferico sono contenuti nell'orecchio e convertono le vibrazioni meccaniche dei suoni in segnali elettrici da mandare al cervello. La patologia che ne deriva, chiamata neuropatia uditiva, è causa di circa il 10 % delle sordità e proprio per la sua natura non può essere corretta, a meno di non sottoporsi a una procedura costosa e rischiosa, in cui vengono impiantati elettrodi direttamente nel cervello.

La nuova ricerca inglese assicura trattamenti molto più semplici, basati sull'uso di un particolare tipo di cellule staminali, progenitrici dei neuroni che si trovano all'interno dell'orecchio e ottenute in laboratorio a partire da staminali embrionali umane. Per dimostrare questa possibilità gli scienziati hanno iniettato circa 50 mila di queste particolari cellule nelle orecchie di 18 gerbilli, i cui neuroni del ganglio spirale erano stati deliberatamente distrutti con l'aiuto di un particolare farmaco e che per questo motivo erano completamente sordi. Si è così osservato che le staminali si trasformavano in cellule specializzate che andavano a sostituire proprio quelle rovinate: in 10 settimane, circa i due terzi degli animali avevano recuperato in parte l'udito e, in media, le cavie lo vedevano ripristinato al 46 %. Un risultato del genere sugli esseri umani vorrebbe dire passare dal non riuscire a cogliere nemmeno i rumori forti — come quelli che producono i camion più grandi per strada — a poter sostenere una normale conversazione.

Considerato che:

— la sordità neurosensoriale è la patologia degenerativa più diffusa a tutte le età: si stima che 250 milioni di pazienti nel mondo ne siano affetti, tra cui 1 su 1000 dei bambini nati ed il 20 % della popolazione con più di 65 anni (OMS, 2011);

— il trauma acustico ha un'incidenza crescente tra i giovani e nei lavoratori per cui, in Europa, 7 milioni di essi ogni anno è colpito da ipoacusia (osha.europa.eu);

— la degenerazione dell'organo del Corti e delle cellule ciliate (HCs) è irreversibile;

— la terapia riabilitativa con impianti cocleari ha rappresentato un progresso rivoluzionario, seppur abbia tuttora riscontrato limiti nella qualità della percezione del suono;

può la Commissione far sapere se intende:

1. finanziare nuovi studi clinici sulla conoscenza dei meccanismi dell'ipoacusia;

2. promuovere nuove linee terapeutiche, come quella proposta dalla ricerca menzionata che si avvale delle cellule staminali?

Risposta di Máire Geoghegan-Quinn a nome della Commissione
(4 marzo 2013)

La Commissione è al corrente di questi interessanti lavori, da cui risulta che è possibile utilizzare cellule derivate da cellule staminali embrionali umane per riparare lesioni dell'orecchio nei roditori.

Nell'ambito del Settimo programma quadro di ricerca e sviluppo tecnologico 2007-2013, l'UE ha sostenuto la ricerca sulla lotta alle disabilità sensoriali, cui è riservata particolare attenzione nel programma di lavoro Salute del 2012. Cinque dei sette progetti finanziati ([1]) dall'UE, a ciascuno dei quali è destinato un contributo di 21,3 milioni di EUR, riguardano problemi di udito.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/health/medical-research/severe-chronic-diseases/projectsfp7_en.html

Per quanto riguarda la promozione di nuovi metodi terapeutici, la proposta della Commissione che istituisce Orizzonte 2020, il programma quadro di ricerca e innovazione (2014-2020) ([2]), individua nell'obiettivo «salute, cambiamento demografico e benessere» una delle sei sfide che la società si troverà ad affrontare, ed è probabile che tale settore fornisca opportunità per la ricerca sulla medicina rigenerativa, incentivando proprio questo tipo di lavoro.

([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index_en.cfm?pg=h2020-documents

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000492/13
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: Neurosensory hypoacusis: new possibilities of treatment with stem cells

Recent research published in *Nature* seemingly shows how the ability to hear sounds can be restored with the use of stem cells. This result was obtained by a team from the University of Sheffield only on gerbils, small rodents used as animal models. Clinical studies conducted thus far have proved that damage to the spiral ganglion neurons cannot be repaired. These components of the peripheral nervous system are contained within the ear and convert the mechanical vibrations of sounds into electrical signals to be sent to the brain. The pathology which arises from them, known as auditory neuropathy, is the cause of around 10 % of hearing loss cases and, due to its very nature, cannot be corrected without the individual concerned undergoing an expensive and risky procedure, during which electrodes are implanted directly into the brain.

The new British research guarantees much simpler treatments, based on the use of a particular type of stem cell, progenitors of the neurons found inside the ear and obtained in the laboratory from human embryonic stem cells. To demonstrate this possibility the scientists injected approximately 50 000 of these cell particles into the ears of 18 gerbils, whose spiral ganglion neurons had been deliberately destroyed with the aid of a specific drug and who were thus completely deaf. It was then observed that the stem cells transformed into specialised cells which actually replaced those that had been ruined. In 10 weeks, around two thirds of the animals had regained some of their hearing and, on average, the test animals' hearing had improved by 46 %. Such a result in human beings would mean going from being unable to hear even loud noises — such as those produced by the largest lorries in the street — to being able to hold a normal conversation.

Given that:

— neurosensory deafness is the most widespread degenerative pathology across all ages — it is estimated that around 250 million patients worldwide are affected by it, including 1 in every 1 000 newborn babies and 20 % of those aged over 65 (WHO, 2011);

— acoustic trauma is becoming more prevalent among young people and workers, 7 million of whom contract hypoacusis every year in Europe (osha.europa.eu);

— degeneration of the organ of Corti and hair cells (HCs) is irreversible;

— rehabilitation treatment with cochlear implants has proved a revolutionary process, even though there are still limits in the quality of sound perception;

can the Commission state whether it intends:

1. to finance new clinical studies in order to better understand the mechanisms of hypoacusis;

2. to promote new treatment methods, such as that proposed by the abovementioned stem cell research?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(4 March 2013)

The Commission is aware of this interesting work establishing proof of concept that cells derived from human embryonic stem cells can be used to repair the damaged ear in rodents.

Under its Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7, 2007-2013), the EU has supported research on combating sensory impairment with a special topic in the Health 2012 work programme. Of the seven projects supported ([1]), five concern hearing and receive an EU contribution of EUR 21.3 million.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/health/medical-research/severe-chronic-diseases/projectsfp7_en.html

As for promoting new treatment methods, the Commission's proposal for Horizon 2020 — The framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020) ([2]) identifies 'Health, demographic change and well-being' as one of the six societal challenges to be tackled, likely to provide opportunities for research on regenerative medicine which will foster precisely this type of work.

([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index_en.cfm?pg=h2020-documents

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000493/13
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(17 gennaio 2013)

Oggetto: Mononucleosi e buone pratiche per evitare il contagio

La mononucleosi è un'infezione virale causata dal virus di Epstein — Barr che si trasmette con la saliva, tramite contatto diretto o per la condivisione di oggetti (posate, bicchieri, bottiglie, penne) che sono entrati in contatto con la saliva della persona infetta. Comunemente questa infezione è definita la malattia del bacio, poiché colpisce maggiormente durante la fase adolescenziale, anche se questa concezione è in parte errata. Oltre il 90 % della popolazione ha già sviluppato anticorpi contro questo virus, poiché si tratta di un'infezione molto diffusa che si è sviluppata senza che le persone se ne rendessero realmente conto. Se contratta nei primi anni di vita, i sintomi non sono evidenti, mentre in altre fasce d'età i sintomi sono evidenti e spesso scambiati per influenza. La malattia si manifesta circa dopo 2-3 settimane nei bambini piccoli ed è spesso asintomatica e circa 3-6 settimane dopo il contagio negli adolescenti e negli adulti. Essa comporta forte mal di gola, tonsille ricoperte di patina biancastra, febbre alta, linfonodi ingrossati, malessere generale e costante senso di stanchezza. Frequentemente compare sull'epidermide un esantema simile al morbillo, ma nei casi più gravi ci può essere un importante ingrossamento della milza che rischia di subire una lesione in seguito a un semplice sforzo o a un trauma.

Considerata l'importanza di informare la popolazione su quelle che sono le buone prassi igieniche da seguire al fine di evitare di contrarre la malattia in età adulta, poiché questa è debilitante e provoca spossatezza per settimane e, se non adeguatamente trattata, anche per mesi, può la Commissione far sapere quali misure intende adottare per sensibilizzare direttamente i cittadini che rischiano di trattare tale patologia in modo scorretto con misure di automedicazione inadeguate e sollecitare studi di ricerca al fine di trovare un farmaco capace di contrastare gli effetti dell'elevato numero di immunoglobine IgM che indicano lo stato di attività del virus?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(4 marzo 2013)

La Commissione è consapevole del problema costituito dalla mononucleosi infettiva nell'Unione europea. Nella grande maggioranza dei casi essa è causata dal virus di Epstein-Barr che si diffonde da una persona all'altra attraverso le secrezioni orali e in caso di contatto ravvicinato. È grandissimo il numero delle persone esposte a questo virus e circa il 95 % vengono infettate prima di compiere i quarant'anni. Finora non esiste un vaccino che offra protezione dalla mononucleosi infettiva; l'infezione può essere però prevenuta lavandosi con cura le mani.

Diverse iniziative, tra cui la «Giornata europea degli antibiotici» ([1]), attirano l'attenzione sugli effetti negativi e sui rischi dell'automedicazione che, nel caso della mononucleosi infettiva, è inutile e pericolosa. La comunicazione della Commissione al Parlamento europeo e al Consiglio sul «Piano d'azione di lotta ai crescenti rischi di resistenza antimicrobica» ribadisce la necessità di assicurare che gli antimicrobici vengano usati nel modo più appropriato ([2]).

Per quanto concerne i medicinali potenzialmente utilizzabili contro la mononucleosi infettiva, sono in corso prove per determinare se il trattamento con il valomaciclovir migliori in modo significativo i sintomi clinici e riduca il carico virale nei soggetti immunocompetenti affetti da mononucleosi infettiva dovuta a infezioni primarie da virus di Epstein-Barr.

([1]) http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/it/eaad/Pages/Home.aspx.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/docs/communication_amr_2011_748_it.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000493/13
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: Mononucleosis and best practice to avoid infection

Mononucleosis is a viral infection caused by the Epstein-Barr virus which is transmitted in saliva, through direct contact or the sharing of objects (cutlery, glasses, bottles, pens) which have come into contact with the saliva of an infected person. This infection is commonly known as the 'kissing disease', since it generally strikes during adolescence, even if this idea is only partly incorrect. Over 90 % of the population has already developed antibodies against this virus, since it is a very widespread infection which develops without the person really being aware of it. If contracted at a very young age, the symptoms are not obvious, while at other ages the symptoms are obvious but often mistaken for influenza. The disease manifests after approximately 2-3 weeks in young children and is often asymptomatic, and approximately 3-6 weeks after infection in adolescents and adults. Symptoms include a very sore throat, a white coating covering the tonsils, high fever, swollen lymph glands, general sickness and a constant feeling of fatigue. A rash, similar to measles, often appears on the skin but in more serious cases there may be severe swelling of the spleen which can give rise to lesions after simple exertion or a trauma.

Considering the importance of informing the population about best hygiene practice to follow to avoid contracting the disease as an adult, since it is debilitating and causes fatigue which lasts for weeks or even months if not properly treated, can the Commission state what measures it intends to adopt to directly raise the awareness of citizens who risk treating this pathology incorrectly with unsuitable methods of self-medication, and to encourage research to find a drug able to combat the effects of the high number of IgM immunoglobulins which indicate how active the virus is?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(4 March 2013)

The Commission is aware of the burden of infectious mononucleosis in the European Union. The vast majority of cases are caused by the Epstein-Barr virus, spread from human to human through oral secretions and close contact. Most people are exposed to this virus and up to 95% of people are infected before they turn 40 years old. There is no vaccine available so far to protect against infectious mononucleosis; however the infection can be prevented by careful hand-washing.

A number of initiatives, including the annual European Antibiotic Awareness Day ([1]), raise the attention on the negative effects and risks of self-medication, which in the case of infectious mononucleosis is useless and dangerous. The Commission Communication to the European Parliament and the Council on the 'Action Plan against the Rising Threats from Antimicrobial Resistance' highlights the need to ensure that antimicrobials are used in the most appropriate way ([2]).

Concerning potential drugs to be used during infectious mononucleosis, trials are ongoing to determine if treatment with valomaciclovir will significantly improve the clinical symptoms and reduce the viral burden in immunocompetent subjects with infectious mononucleosis due to primary Epstein-Barr virus infections.

([1]) http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/eaad/Pages/Home.aspx.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/docs/communication_amr_2011_748_en.pdf

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000494/13
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(17 gennaio 2013)

Oggetto: Normativa sul latte concentrato e le disparità di trattamento

In Italia la legge 11 aprile 1974 n. 138 vieta la detenzione, la commercializzazione e l'utilizzo del latte in polvere e di latte conservato con qualunque trattamento chimico, o comunque concentrati, per la produzione di latte UHT e dei prodotti lattiero caseari. Tale posizione italiana è stata riconfermata dal decreto legge 175/2011 per il recepimento della direttiva UE 2007/61/CE relativa a taluni tipi di latte conservato parzialmente o totalmente disidratato destinato all'alimentazione umana.

Le aziende produttrici di yogurt (per la cui produzione il latte concentrato è un ingrediente essenziale) in Italia, sono, quindi, obbligate a trasportare una quantità di latte maggiore di quella di cui avrebbero bisogno perché, a causa della citata legge, non possono operare il processo di concentrazione all'origine e poi trasportare il prodotto negli stabilimenti.

Questa normativa crea un ingente danno economico e competitivo alle aziende, essendo un ostacolo all'ottimizzazione dei costi logistici e ad una maggiore efficienza del processo produttivo. Inoltre, in base ai principi di libera circolazione nel mercato interno, si viene a creare una situazione di disparità rispetto ad altri paesi europei, come ad esempio Belgio e Francia, che possono utilizzare latte concentrato per la fabbricazione di prodotti lattiero caseari.

Può la Commissione far sapere se ritiene che la permanenza in vigore in Italia della legge 11 aprile 1974 n. 138 e il recepimento della direttiva 2007/61/CE siano in linea con il diritto dell'Unione europea?

Risposta di Dacian Cioloș a nome della Commissione
(6 marzo 2013)

La Commissione ringrazia l'onorevole parlamentare per le informazioni riguardanti la legge 11 aprile 1974, n. 138, che vieta la detenzione, la commercializzazione e l'utilizzo del latte in polvere e del latte conservato con qualunque trattamento chimico, o comunque concentrato, per la produzione di alcuni prodotti lattiero-caseari. Per dare una risposta a questa interrogazione, la Commissione sta raccogliendo le informazioni riguardanti il recepimento della direttiva 2001/114/CE del Consiglio del 20 dicembre 2001 ([1]) in Italia e comunicherà al più presto le risultanze di tale ricerca.

([1]) GU L 15 del 17.1.2002, pag. 19. Direttiva modificata dalla direttiva 2007/61/CE (GU L 258 del 4.10.2007, pag. 27).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000494/13
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: Legislation on concentrated milk and differences in treatment

In Italy, Law No 138 of 11 April 1974 prohibits the storage, sale and use of powdered milk and milk preserved by any kind of chemical treatment, or at least concentrated milk, for the production of UHT milk and dairy products. The Italian position was confirmed by legislative Decree 175/2011 which transposed EU Directive 2007/61/EC relating to certain partly or wholly dehydrated preserved milk for human consumption.

As a result of the aforementioned law, Yoghurt-producing companies (for whom concentrated milk is an essential ingredient) in Italy are obliged to transport a larger quantity of milk than necessary because they cannot conduct the concentration process at the point of origin and then transport the product to the factories.

This legislation results in enormous economic and competitive damage to the companies, since it is an obstacle to optimising logistics costs and to a more efficient productive process. Furthermore, based on the principles of free movement within the internal market, a situation of disparity is developing compared with other EU countries, such as Belgium and France for example, which can use concentrated milk for the production of milk and milk products.

Can the Commission state whether it believes Law No 138 of 11 April 1974 remaining in force in Italy, and the transposition of Directive 2007/61/EC are in line with European Union law?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(6 March 2013)

The Commission thanks the Honourable Member for the information concerning the Italian Law No 138, of 11 April 1974, which prohibits the storage, sale and use of powdered milk and milk preserved by any kind of chemical treatment, including concentrated milk, for the production of certain milk products. In order to answer this question the Commission is collecting the information concerning the transposition of Council Directive 2001/114/EC of 20 December 2001 ([1]) in Italy. It will communicate its findings as soon as possible.

([1]) OL L 15, 17.1.2002, p. 19-23 amended by Directive 2007/618/EC OJ L 258, 4.10.2007, pp. 27-28.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000495/13
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(17 gennaio 2013)

Oggetto: Rotatorie stradali — Nuove statistiche e valutazioni di impatto sui benefici della normativa europea

Negli ultimi 15 anni anche in Italia si sono diffuse le rotatorie di «seconda generazione», ossia con precedenza ai veicoli che si trovano a percorrere l'anello, anziché a quelli che entrano dai diversi rami; regola che invece valeva per le rotatorie della prima generazione. Questa nuova regola di gestione delle precedenze all'anello fa sì che si possano realizzare rotatorie di dimensioni abbastanza contenute a fronte di alti valori di capacità di traffico. Adottate per la prima volta nel Regno Unito già dalla seconda meta degli anni Sessanta, le rotatorie di seconda generazione hanno cominciato a diffondersi negli altri paesi europei. In particolare, Germania, Francia e Svizzera finanziano ricerche specifiche ed estese e pubblicano norme tecniche che, assieme a quelle inglesi, fanno ormai scuola e sono tra i maggiori riferimenti della tecnica corrente, nonché dell'attuale normativa europea (direttiva 2008/96/CE).

La progettazione di una rotatoria si basa su principi di sicurezza combinati alle caratteristiche geometriche per requisiti di capacità e di percezione dello spazio stradale come segno distintivo sul territorio. Dunque, nel progettare una rotatoria, si devono considerare simultaneamente sia fattori di sicurezza e capacità, generalmente normalizzati e ridotti in formule e modelli, sia aspetti di percezione e di condizionamento visivo. In effetti, con la trasformazione dei più grandi incroci semaforici in rotatorie alla francese (cioè con la precedenza data a chi è all'interno della rotatoria), sembrano essere drasticamente diminuiti gli incidenti e le casistiche d'infortuni gravi. Ovviamente non è dato certo sapere se questo sia accaduto grazie alle rotonde in sé, o se sia semplicemente un effetto del fatto che gli automobilisti, non avendo ancora afferrato del tutto questo sistema, tendano a rallentare e procedere a passo d'uomo all'approssimarsi di una rotatoria.

Di fatto, le rotatorie viarie sono un fenomeno architettonico abbastanza recente, esploso negli ultimi 20 anni, regolamentato dai differenti codici della strada.

Tuttavia, può la Commissione far sapere se siano stati compiuti di recente studi statistici o valutazioni d'impatto che verifichino:

1. il consumo di suolo agricolo o comunque integro che è stato sacrificato in quindici anni per realizzare rotonde stradali,

2. quali limitazioni abbiano comportato per le aziende di servizi, costrette a spostare le linee sotterranee per consentirne la realizzazione,

3. i rapporti che legano gli amministratori con l'impresa che realizza l'opera, oppure con la ditta che utilizzerà la rotatoria per farsi pubblicità (attività di monitoraggio e auditing sulle pubbliche amministrazioni concedenti gli appalti)?

Risposta di Siim Kallas a nome della Commissione
(26 febbraio 2013)

1. La Commissione non dispone delle informazioni richieste dall'onorevole parlamentare. La relazione «Overview of best practices for limiting soil sealing or mitigating its effects in EU-27» (Panoramica delle migliori pratiche per limitare l'impermeabilizzazione del suolo o attenuarne gli effetti nell'UE a 27) ([1]), completata nel 2011, contiene informazioni sul consumo di suolo dovuto all'urbanizzazione nell'UE (circa 920 km^2 l'anno nel periodo 2000-2006) ma non, nello specifico, sul consumo di suolo agricolo causato dalla realizzazione di rotonde.

2. e 3. La direttiva 2008/96/CE sulla gestione della sicurezza delle infrastrutture stradali ([2]), che si applica soltanto alle strade della rete transeuropea dei trasporti, non prevede provvedimenti specifici riguardanti i lavori pubblici per la realizzazione di rotonde o questioni relative ad appalti pubblici o alla pubblicità sulle rotonde. Tali problematiche sono di competenza degli Stati membri. La Commissione non dispone pertanto delle informazioni richieste e invita l'onorevole parlamentare a mettersi in contatto con le autorità competenti a livello nazionale o locale.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/soil/sealing.htm
([2]) Direttiva 2008/96/CE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 19 novembre 2008, sulla gestione della sicurezza delle infrastrutture stradali, GU L 319 del 29.11.2008.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000495/13
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(17 January 2013)

Subject: Traffic roundabouts — New statistics and impact assessments of the benefits of European legislation

Over the last 15 years, not least in Italy, 'second-generation' roundabouts have become more common: these are junctions at which vehicles driving around the central island have the right of way, and not entering vehicles, as the rule used to be for first-generation traffic circles. This new operating rule means that quite small roundabouts can cope with high volumes of traffic. First adopted in the United Kingdom in the latter half of the 1960s, second-generation roundabouts have started to spread to other European countries. Germany, France, and Switzerland in particular are funding wide-ranging specific studies; their published technical standards are widely recognised, along with the British standards, and are among the main reference points for the state of the art and current European legislation (Directive 2008/96/EC).

Roundabout design is based on safety principles combined with geometrical characteristics determined by capacity requirements and the need to perceive the road space as a distinct part of the area concerned. When designing a roundabout, therefore, it is necessary to allow at once for safety and capacity factors, generally standardised and reduced to formulae and models, and for points related to perception and visual conditioning. Since the largest signal-controlled junctions have been turned into French-style roundabouts (on which, in other words, those driving around the island have the right of way), accidents and cases of serious injury appear to have fallen sharply. Obviously, it is not certain whether this has happened because of the roundabouts per se or is simply due to the fact that motorists, who have not yet fully grasped the system, tend to slow down to walking pace as they approach a roundabout.

Roundabouts are a fairly recent road building phenomenon which has mushroomed within the past 20 years and is subject to different traffic regulations.

Can the Commission say, however, whether there have been any recent statistical surveys or impact assessments covering the following:

1. the amount of farmland, or at any rate untouched land, sacrificed in the last 15 years in order to build roundabouts,

2. the constraints entailed for utility companies, if they have to move underground lines to make way for roundabouts,

3. the relations between administrators and building contractors or firms intending to use roundabouts for advertising purposes (monitoring and auditing of public contracting authorities)?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(26 February 2013)

1. The Commission does not have the information required by the Honourable Member. The report 'Overview of best practices for limiting soil sealing or mitigating its effects in EU-27' ([1]), completed in 2011, does contain information on land lost to urbanisation in the EU (some 920 km^2 per year in the period 2000-2006), but not on farmland specifically lost to roundabouts.

2 and 3. Directive 2008/96/EC on road infrastructure safety management ([2]), which is only applicable to the roads on the Trans European Network for Transport, does not have any specific provision on public works related to roundabouts or on issues related to public procurement or advertisement on roundabouts. These matters fall under the competence of Member States. Therefore the Commission does not have the information requested, and would suggest the Honourable Member to contact the competent authorities at national or local level.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/soil/sealing.ht
([2]) Directive 2008/96/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on road infrastructure safety management, OJ L 319, 29.11.2008.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000497/13
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(18 January 2013)

Subject: Community development programmes

It is important to support small communities and rural communities throughout these hard economic times by creating jobs and encouraging development. The Leader programme in Ireland is a good example of how this can be done; it takes a bottom-up approach to community development and has been very successful in ensuring that local communities continue to develop during the current economic crisis. The work done under the Leader programme has allowed for the diversification of rural economies and the revitalisation of rural areas.

What is the Commission doing to protect the survival of projects such as Leader?

What is the Commission doing to encourage the establishment of programmes, based on similar models, throughout Europe?

How does the Commission intend to promote further development and innovation in smaller communities and rural communities in the current economic climate?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(22 February 2013)

The Leader approach has proved to be an effective and efficient tool for the delivery of rural development policy since 1991 while local development has also been a policy delivery tool in the European fisheries policy since 2007. The European Commission has promoted similar delivery methods in other European policies through other Community Initiatives such as URBAN and EQUAL till 2006.

For the 2014-2020 programming period, the Leader approach will be extended to other European Funds covered by the Common Provisions Regulation, under the banner of 'Community-led Local Development (CLLD)' (see Articles 28-31 of that regulation). The CLLD approach will therefore be available with regard to the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund (see Factsheet on CLLD: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/community_en.pdf). The choice of whether to use CLLD across all Funds is one of the strategic decisions which Member States have to take when designing their Partnership Contract. The Commission is supporting them in this respect and as regards CLLD with specific guidance.

CLLD can be a powerful tool — especially in times of crisis — for helping local communities to take concrete steps towards various forms of development, in line with the Europe 2020 strategy goals of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-000498/13
adresată Comisiei
Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă (S&D)
(18 ianuarie 2013)

Subiect: Electrificarea în zona rurală în statele mediteraneene

În zona rurală din statele din zona mediteraneană există multe localități care nu sunt racordate la electricitate. Autoritățile locale și regionale din aceste zone au nevoie, totodată, și de sprijin pentru calificarea personalului necesar pentru exploatarea rețelei care ar urma să fie construită.

În ce măsură Uniunea Europeană se implică în sprijinirea autorităților din țările din bazinul Mării Mediterane pentru realizarea de proiecte de electrificare a zonelor rurale, precum și pentru realizarea și punerea în aplicare a unor programe de calificare profesională a personalului necesar?

Răspuns dat de dl Füle în numele Comisiei
(1 martie 2013)

Asistența specifică este furnizată prin intermediul proiectului finanțat de UE — *Paving the Way for the Mediterranean Solar Plan* (Pregătirea implementării Planului solar mediteraneean) — (4,6 milioane EUR), în care sunt formulate recomandări privind electrificarea zonelor rurale în țările partenere din sud, prin definirea structurii unui proiect de referință portabil și la scară variabilă (producție la scară mică și sistemul de distribuție conex) pentru îmbunătățirea accesului zonelor rurale la rețelele de energie electrică. Mai mult, acest proiect a elaborat programe de formare, care, pentru unele țări, se referă la conectarea la rețea (de exemplu, Iordania). Acesta prevede, de asemenea, asistență tehnică specifică pentru a sprijini, de exemplu, teritoriile palestiniene ocupate să găsească alternative sub formă de energie regenerabilă la scară mică pentru reducerea penuriei de energie electrică, în special în zonele izolate, în parte cauzată de slaba conectare la rețelele de electricitate.

Sprijinul bilateral oferit de UE contribuie, de asemenea, la soluționarea, în mod indirect, a accesului la rețelele de electricitate în regiunea mediteraneeană. De exemplu, în Maroc, Inițiativa națională pentru dezvoltare umană (susținută de UE prin două operațiuni în valoare totală de 85 de milioane EUR) sprijină îmbunătățirea electrificării în zonele rurale cele mai sărace.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000498/13
to the Commission
Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă (S&D)
(18 January 2013)

Subject: Rural power supplies in Mediterranean countries

Many rural Mediterranean areas are not linked up to the power grid. At the same time, the local and regional authorities concerned also need assistance in training operators to man any future grids.

To what extent is the European Union providing assistance to the authorities of the Mediterranean countries for projected power supplies in rural areas and the introduction and implementation of professional training programmes for the necessary manpower?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(1 March 2013)

Specific assistance is provided via the regional EU funded project 'Paving the Way for the Mediterranean Solar Plan' (EUR 4.6 million) which is preparing recommendations on rural electrification for the Southern Partner Countries by defining a conceptual design of a portable and scalable reference project (small scale generation and related distribution system) to improve access of rural areas to grids. Moreover, this project has designed training programmes, which for some countries concern grid connection (i.e. Jordan). It also provides specific technical assistance to help for instance the occupied Palestinian Territory to find renewable energy alternatives at small scale to reduce energy shortage, especially in isolated areas which is partly due to poor connection to electricity grids.

Bilateral support provided by the EU helps also to address indirectly rural access to electricity grids in the Mediterranean region. For instance: in Morocco, the National Initiative for Human Development (supported by the EU through two operations worth EUR 85 million in total) supports improvement of rural electrification in the poorest areas.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000499/13
an die Kommission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(18. Januar 2013)

Betrifft: Auslegung von Unisex-Tarifen zu Lasten der Versicherten

Seit 21. Dezember 2012 darf es nach einem Urteil des EuGH (Rechtssache C 236/09) beim Abschluss eines neuen Versicherungsvertrags keine Tarife mehr geben, die nach Geschlecht getrennt sind. Bis dahin fand etwa das statistisch gesehen größere Risiko bei Männern seinen Niederschlag in höheren Kfz-Versicherungsprämien. Frauen werden statistisch gesehen älter als Männer und beziehen länger Leistungen, was für sie andere Policen verteuerte. Von der Änderung betroffen sind insbesondere Personenversicherungen, also Lebensversicherung, private Unfallversicherung, Kranken- und Pflegeversicherung. Wird ein Altvertrag wesentlich verändert (etwa versichertes Risiko, Versicherungssumme, Laufzeit); ist er wie ein Neuvertrag zu beurteilen, weshalb auch hier die neuen Vorschriften zum Tragen kommen können.

Laut Studie des Analysehauses Morgen & Morgen soll es in Deutschland in den neuen Verträgen vor allem in der privaten Krankenversicherung für Männer deutliche Aufschläge geben, während gleichzeitig die Kosten für Frauen nicht sanken. Mit den Unisex-Tarifen wird die private Krankenversicherung für Frauen nicht nur nicht billiger, in einigen Fällen verteuert sie sich sogar. Da die Versicherer nicht wissen, wie viele Männer und Frauen den neuen Tarif wählen werden, haben die Anbieter nun einen Sicherheitszuschlag einkalkuliert, was im Durchschnitt höhere Beiträge für beide Geschlechter nach sich zieht.

Die Kommission hat damals angekündigt, den Versicherungen auf die Finger zu schauen.

1. Gibt es schon EU-weite Vergleiche hinsichtlich der Auswirkungen der neuen Unisex-Tarife in anderen EU-Mitgliedstaaten?

2. Falls ja, welches sind die Ergebnisse?

3. Falls nein, für wann ist diese Kontrolle geplant?

4. Ist gegebenenfalls geplant, auf EU-Ebene koordiniert vorzugehen, um zu verhindern, dass Versicherungen die neuen Unisex-Tarife zur generellen Verteuerung missbrauchen?

Antwort von Herrn Barnier im Namen der Kommission
(13. März 2013)

Nach dem Urteil in der Rechtssache C-236/09 *Test-Achats* dürfen Versicherungsunternehmen seit dem 21. Dezember 2012 Prämien und Leistungen in neuen Versicherungsverträgen nicht mehr geschlechtsspezifisch berechnen (Prinzip der Unisex-Tarife) ([1]). Der Kommission liegen keine Zahlen über Auswirkungen dieses Urteils auf die Preise in verschiedenen Versicherungszweigen und Mitgliedstaaten vor.

Die Kommission wird prüfen, ob dem Urteil in der Rechtssache *Test Achats* in den Rechtsvorschriften der Mitgliedstaaten ordnungsgemäß nachgekommen wird, und im Jahr 2014 im Rahmen eines allgemeinen Berichts über die Umsetzung der Richtlinie 2004/113/EG ([2]) auch über die Auswirkungen des Urteils berichten.

Die Kommission appelliert an das Versicherungsgewerbe der EU, attraktive Versicherungsprodukte mit Unisex-Tarifen und unter Verzicht auf unbegründete, generelle Preiserhöhungen anzubieten. Sie wird die weitere Entwicklung des Versicherungsmarkts aufmerksam verfolgen, ihr Hauptaugenmerk dabei auf ungerechtfertigte Verteuerungen richten und bei mutmaßlichem wettbewerbswidrigen Verhalten die ihr zu Gebote stehenden Instrumente des Wettbewerbsrechts nutzen.

([1]) Rechtssache C-236/09, Test-Achats.
([2]) ABl. L 373 vom 21.12.2004, S. 37.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000499/13
to the Commission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(18 January 2013)

Subject: Policyholders adversely affected by how unisex insurance premiums are interpreted

Since 21 December 2012 — under a European Court of Justice judgment (Case C-236/09) — sex differentiation of insurance premiums, when a new policy is taken out, has not been allowed. Previously, the fact that men present a greater risk, statistically, was reflected in higher car insurance premiums for them, for instance. Women live longer than men, statistically, and draw benefits for a longer period, making other types of policy more expensive for them. The change affects insurance for individuals in particular, i.e. life assurance and private accident, sickness and nursing care insurance. An existing policy to which a major change is made (e.g. to the risk or amount insured or to the term) must be regarded as a new policy, meaning that the new rules may also be applied.

In Germany, according to a study by the rating agency Morgen & Morgen, there are marked increases in new-policy premiums for private medical insurance for men, in particular, while costs for women have not fallen. Unisex premiums will not only not reduce the cost of private medical insurance for women; in some cases, it will even rise. As insurers do not know how many men and women will opt for the new premium, providers have factored in a contingency surcharge, resulting, overall, in higher premiums for both sexes.

The Commission gave notice that it would be keeping a close eye on insurers.

1. Are there already EU-wide comparisons as to the impact of the new unisex premiums in other Member States?

2. If so, what are the findings?

3. If not, when are such checks planned?

4. Are there any plans for a coordinated approach at EU level in order to prevent insurers from misusing the new unisex premiums so as to raise prices across the board?

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

Under the judgment in Case C-236/09 *Test-Achats*, insurers must apply the unisex rule in relation to the calculation of individuals' premiums and benefits in new insurance contracts as of 21 December 2012 ([1]). The Commission has currently no evidence about the judgment's impacts on prices in different insurance business lines and Member States.

The Commission will ensure that every Member State has properly implemented in its legislation the *Test Achats* ruling. The Commission will report on the impact of the ruling in 2014, in the context of a more general report on the implementation of Directive 2004/113/EC ([2]).

The Commission would like to encourage the EU insurance industry to offer attractive unisex insurance products without unjustified overall price rises. The Commission will remain vigilant in following the evolution of the insurance market in order to detect any unjustified rise in prices, including in light of the tools that are available under competition law in the event of alleged anti-competitive conduct.

([1]) Case C-236/09 Test-Achats.
([2]) OJ L 373, 21.12.2004, p. 37-43.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000500/13
an die Kommission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(18. Januar 2013)

Betrifft: Befüllungsgrad von Verpackungen

2009 wurden die bisherigen Einheitsgrößen von der EU abgeschafft. Seither steht es den Herstellern frei, ihre Produkte in beliebiger Menge anzubieten. Verbraucherschützer zeigen auf, dass Möglichkeiten, mehr Inhalt vorzutäuschen, flächendeckend genutzt werden. Es wird mit diversen Tricks gearbeitet, damit Verbraucher die tatsächliche Füllmenge nicht ertasten können und bei Gläsern, Flaschen etc. nicht durchschauen können.

Ist auf EU-Ebene eine Vorschrift hinsichtlich des (Mindest)-Befüllungsgrades von Verpackungen geplant, um Mogeleien ein Ende zu setzen?

Antwort von Herrn Tajani im Namen der Kommission
(4. März 2013)

Der Herr Abgeordnete wird auf die Antworten der Kommission zu den Anfragen E-3854/2011 und E-178/2013 verwiesen ([1]).

Die Kommission ist sich der Tatsache bewusst, dass seit der Abschaffung von einheitlichen Packungsgrößen einige Verbraucherorganisationen die Geschäftspraktiken der Hersteller aufmerksam verfolgen. Sie teilt jedoch nicht die Ansicht, dass mit dem Verkauf von kleineren Mengen Verbraucherrechte häufig verletzt werden. Chipstüten weisen zum Beispiel oft ein Luftpolster auf, um zu verhindern, dass der Inhalt zerkrümelt, Waschpulver kann etwa mit geringer oder hoher Konzentration erzeugt werden, weshalb von den Herstellern die Anzahl der Waschgänge auf der Verpackung angegeben wird.

Gemäß der Richtlinie 94/62/EG über Verpackungen und Verpackungsabfälle ([2]) muss Verpackungsmaterial auf ein Mindestmaß begrenzt werden und nach der Richtlinie 2005/29/EG über unlautere Geschäftspraktiken ([3]), die sich auf den gesamten Geschäftsverkehr zwischen Unternehmen und Verbrauchern bezieht, ist der Handel gehalten, in Übereinstimmung mit der ihm obliegenden beruflichen Sorgfaltspflicht wesentliche Informationen klar, verständlich und rechtzeitig bereitzustellen, so dass die Verbraucher gut informiert Kaufentscheidungen treffen können. Laut Richtlinie 98/6/EG über die Angabe des Preises je Maßeinheit ([4]) ist der Preis eines Erzeugnisses je Maßeinheit (d. h. der Preis je Kilogramm, Liter usw.) stets „unmissverständlich, klar erkennbar und gut lesbar“ anzugeben, so dass die Verbraucher die verschiedenen Größen vergleichen können.

Des Weiteren wurde in EU-Rechtsvorschriften ([5]) festgelegt, dass der Verbraucher beim Kauf von Lebensmitteln über die in der Verpackung enthaltene Produktmenge informiert werden soll. Demnach ist bei Lebensmitteln die Nettofüllmenge und bei festen Lebensmitteln in einer Aufgussflüssigkeit auch das Abtropfgewicht in der Etikettierung anzugeben.

Angesichts der umfassenden Regelung durch die bestehenden EU-Rechtsinstrumente besteht kein weiterer Bedarf an harmonisierten Vorschriften über die Verbraucher irreführenden Mogelpackungen. Auf EU-Ebene sind seitens der Kommission also keine Vorschriften über den Mindestbefüllungsgrad bei abgepackten Produkten geplant.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/de/parliamentary-questions.html;jsessionid=8BAA0A1FCDC40B5A69ACAFB2E37FD809.node2
([2]) ABl. L 365 vom 31.12.1994.
([3]) ABl. L 149 vom 11.6.2005.
([4]) ABl. L 80 vom 18.3.1998.
([5]) Richtlinie 2000/13/EG des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 20. März 2000 zur Angleichung der Rechtsvorschriften der Mitgliedstaaten über die Etikettierung und Aufmachung von Lebensmitteln sowie die Werbung hierfür, ABl. L 109 vom 6.5.2000, S. 29.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000500/13
to the Commission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(18 January 2013)

Subject: Fill levels in packaging

Standard quantities and volumes were abolished by the EU in 2009. Since then, manufacturers have been free to supply their products in any quantities or volumes they like. Consumer organisations point out that ways and means of concealing that products contain less than indicated are exploited on a grand scale. Various ploys are used to prevent consumers from detecting how much a package or packaging actually contains, by feeling it, or from seeing through glass containers or bottles, etc.

Are there plans at EU level for rules on minimum fill levels for packaging in order to put an end to such deception?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(4 March 2013)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to questions E-3854/2011 and E-178/2013 ([1]).

The Commission is aware that some consumer organisations are tracking the practices of manufacturers since the abolition of the pack sizes. However, it does not agree that there is widespread abuse of consumers by means of selling smaller quantities. For example, crisps are often sold in inflated packs to avoid crushing them and washing powder can be more or less concentrated which is why industry indicates the number of washes.

The Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive 94/62/EC ([2]) prohibits the use of excess packaging materials and the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive 2005/29/EC ([3]), which applies to all business-to-consumer transactions, requires that traders operate in accordance with professional diligence and that they display in clear, intelligible and timely manner material information that allows consumers to make informed choices. The Unit Price Directive 98/6/EC ([4]) requires the unit price of a product (i.e. the price per kilo or litre) to be indicated in an 'unambiguous, easily identifiable and clearly legible' manner so that consumers can compare different sizes.

Moreover, regarding food, in order to inform the consumer of the amount of product contained in the package, EU legislation ([5]) requires the net quantity of the food, and in the case of food presented in liquid medium also the drained net weight, to be indicated on the label.

Given that EU legal instruments conceivably fully cover the issues raised, the Commission considers that there seems to be no immediate need for further harmonised rules on deceptive packaging misleading consumers. Hence, the Commission has no plans for EU rules on minimum fill levels for pre-packed products.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) OJ L 365, 31.12.1994.
([3]) OJ L 149, 11.6.2005.
([4]) OJ L 80, 18.3.1998.
([5]) Directive 2000/13/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 March 2000 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the labelling, presentation and advertising of foodstuffs, OJ L 109, 6.5.2000, p. 29.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-000501/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(18 janvier 2013)

Objet: Défi de la stratégie numérique 2013

La stratégie numérique entre dans sa troisième année et a déjà fait des progrès en direction de la réalisation des objectifs suivants: permettre l'utilisation d'Internet pour tous les citoyens européens et aider les citoyens et les entreprises de l'Union à tirer le meilleur profit possible des technologies numériques. Depuis le lancement de la stratégie, 15 millions d'Européens se sont connectés pour la première fois, et 68 % sont désormais régulièrement en ligne, dont 170 millions sur les réseaux sociaux. De plus, l'accès haut débit est disponible quasiment partout en Europe, et 95 % des Européens ont un accès haut débit par ligne fixe.

Les consommateurs et entreprises jouissent également de la flexibilité de l'Internet mobile avec 217 millions de souscriptions à l'Internet mobile en Europe. Mais l'avenir nous réserve encore de nombreuses surprises. La stratégie numérique a établi ses priorités pour cette année et la suivante.

Sept nouvelles priorités ont été établies par la Commission pour la société et l'économie numérique. Ces priorités suivent les révisions d'un ensemble de politiques et placent un nouvel accent sur les éléments transformatifs de la stratégie numérique pour l'Europe 2010. Cette actualisation projette une augmentation du PIB de 5 %, soit 1 500 euros par personne dans les 8 prochaines années.

Quels seront les moyens mis en place par la Commission en 2013 pour obtenir un tel résultat?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Kroes au nom de la Commission
(1^er^ mars 2013)

L'examen de la stratégie numérique du 18 décembre 2012 a confirmé l'importance de cette stratégie et mis en évidence sept domaines essentiels sur lesquels concentrer les efforts afin de stimuler davantage l'économie numérique ainsi que la création d'emplois et la croissance en Europe. Les actions prévues au titre de la stratégie numérique doivent être exécutées par toutes les parties prenantes.

Pour que ces objectifs puissent être atteints, la Commission va, en 2013, favoriser les investissements privés dans les réseaux à haut débit. Pour ce faire, elle présentera notamment des propositions visant à faire diminuer les coûts de génie civil liés à l'installation de réseaux à haut débit et à libérer des radiofréquences pour la fourniture de services internet. Elle fournira aussi des orientations sur la neutralité de l'internet car il est capital que l'internet reste ouvert et accessible à tous, conformément aux principes qui ont présidé à sa création.

La Commission engagera aussi des actions permettant de stimuler la demande de haut débit du point de vue de l'utilisateur, premièrement, en faisant en sorte que le régime des droits d'auteur soit adapté à l'ère numérique, deuxièmement, en adoptant un livre vert sur la télévision connectée et, troisièmement, en élaborant une stratégie européenne de cybersécurité — car si les particuliers et les entreprises ne font pas confiance à la technologie et aux services disponibles, nous ne progresserons pas. La Commission soutiendra également, par ses programmes d'aide à la recherche et à l'innovation, les actions visant à accélérer l'innovation du secteur public et elle poursuivra la mise en œuvre de la stratégie de l'UE en matière d'informatique en nuage ([1]).

La «grande coalition en faveur des compétences et des emplois dans le secteur du numérique» sera lancée en mars de cette année en vue de garantir que les Européens disposent des compétences nécessaires pour utiliser les technologies numériques dans les échanges économiques, dans leur vie professionnelle et au quotidien. En outre, un certain nombre d'initiatives destinées à encourager les entreprises innovantes fondées sur le web sont en train d'être mises en place.

([1]) Références de la communication COM(2012)529.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000501/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(18 January 2013)

Subject: The 2013 Digital Agenda challenge

The Digital Agenda is entering its third year and progress has already been made towards realising the following objectives: enabling all EU citizens to use the Internet, and helping EU citizens and businesses to derive maximum benefit from digital technologies. Since the Digital Agenda was rolled out, 15 million Europeans have logged on for the first time, and 68% of them are regularly online, including 170 million on social networks. Furthermore, broadband access is available virtually everywhere in Europe, with 95% of Europeans having fixed-line broadband access.

Consumers and businesses are also benefiting from mobile Internet flexibility; there are 217 million mobile subscriptions in the EU. However, the future has a host of surprises in store for us. Digital Agenda priorities have been set for this year and the next.

Seven new priorities for the digital economy and society have been set by the Commission. They follow on from policy reviews and place fresh emphasis on the transformative features of the 2010 Digital Agenda for Europe. Under the updated Agenda, a 5% increase in GDP, or 1 500 euros per person, is projected over the next eight years.

What action will be taken by the Commission in 2013 in order to achieve this?

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

The Digital Agenda Review of 18 December 2012 confirmed the importance of the Digital Agenda and identified seven key areas to focus on to better stimulate the digital economy and further boost jobs and growth in Europe. DAE actions are to be carried out by all stakeholders.

To help to achieve those goals, in 2013 the Commission will stimulate private investment in broadband networks. In particular, the Commission will present proposals for reducing the civil engineering costs of installing broadband; and for freeing up more space for Internet provision via radio spectrum. It will also provide guidance on net neutrality; it is vital that the Internet remains true to its principles of being open and accessible to all.

The Commission will also look into actions to stimulate broadband demand from a user perspective — firstly, by ensuring that the copyright regime is fit for the digital age; secondly, by adopting a Green Paper on Connected TV and thirdly, by setting out a European Strategy for cyber security — because if consumers and businesses don't trust the technology and the services on offer, we will not advance. The Commission will also support actions to speed up public sector innovation through its research and innovation support programmes and continue implementation of the Cloud Computing strategy ([1]).

The 'Grand Coalition for digital skills and jobs' will be launched in March this year to make sure that Europeans have the right ICT skills to use digital technologies in business, work and daily life. In addition a number of initiatives supporting innovative web-based ventures are being rolled out.

([1]) References of the communication COM(2012)529.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris P-000503/13
adresată Comisiei
Elena Băsescu (PPE)
(21 ianuarie 2013)

Subiect: Strategia UE în vederea combaterii violenței împotriva femeilor, a violenței domestice și a mutilării genitale a femeilor

Se estimează că, în Europa, 45% din femei au fost supuse unor diferite forme de violență, iar o femeie din cinci a fost victimă a violențelor domestice. Totodată, de foarte multe ori aceste infracțiuni nu sunt raportate.

Conform Strategiei pentru egalitatea între femei și bărbați 2010-2015, Comisia trebuia să adopte o Strategie la nivelul UE în vederea combaterii violenței împotriva femeilor, a violenței domestice și a mutilării genitale a femeilor. Conform Planului de acțiune pentru punerea în aplicare a Programului de la Stockholm, termenul pentru adoptarea documentului era perioada 2011-2012.

1. Când estimează Comisia că va adopta această strategie și planul de acțiuni aferent?

2. Intenționează Comisia să prezinte și măsuri cu caracter legislativ care să abordeze problema violenței împotriva femeilor?

Răspuns dat de Reding în numele Comisiei
(22 februarie 2013)

Comisia invită distinsa membră să consulte răspunsul oferit de Comisie la întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns oral O-04/2013. Comisia s-a angajat să reacționeze prin politici ferme în vederea combaterii tuturor formelor de violență împotriva femeilor, în principal prin autonomizarea femeilor, campanii de sensibilizare, măsuri legislative, schimburi de bune practici, îmbunătățirea cunoștințelor, precum și prin colectarea de date. Programul Daphne III oferă sprijin financiar pentru proiectele transnaționale.

Printre măsurile juridice civile și penale eficiente se numără legislația privind traficul de persoane ([1]), abuzurile sexuale și exploatarea sexuală a copiilor ([2]) și victimele infracționalității. Pachetul Comisiei privind drepturile victimelor cuprinde o directivă (adoptată la 4 octombrie 2012) care stabilește norme minime privind drepturile, sprijinirea și protecția victimelor criminalității și care va asigura evaluarea individuală a nevoilor victimelor și acordarea unui tratament adecvat ([3]) celor mai vulnerabile victime, inclusiv victimelor violenței pe motive de gen. Regulamentul propus privind recunoașterea reciprocă a măsurilor de protecție în materie civilă — în curs de negociere de către colegislatori — va veni în completarea ordinului european de protecție ([4]) și va asigura faptul că măsurile de protecție emise într-unul dintre statele membre pot fi recunoscute în celelalte state membre. În prezent, statele membre au obligația de a pune în aplicare aceste instrumente în timp util și în mod eficient.

Pentru a accelera progresele în domeniul eliminării mutilării organelor genitale ale femeilor, Comisia va lansa în 2013 și o serie de activități la nivel european și național.

Comisia va continua să elaboreze inițiative specifice și coerente pentru a susține statele membre în vederea obținerii unor rezultate tangibile în domenii în care există o bază juridică clară.

([1]) Directiva 2011/36/UE a Parlamentului European și a Consiliului din 5 aprilie 2011 privind prevenirea și combaterea traficului de persoane și protejarea victimelor acestuia, precum și de înlocuire a Deciziei-cadru 2002/629/JAI a Consiliului, JO L 101, 15.4.2011, p. 1-11.

([2]) Directiva 2011/93/UE a Parlamentului European și a Consiliului din 13 decembrie 2011 privind combaterea abuzului sexual asupra copiilor, a exploatării sexuale a copiilor și a pornografiei infantile și de înlocuire a Deciziei-cadru 2004/68/JAI a Consiliului, JO L 335, 17.12.2011, p. 1-14.

([3]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0275:FIN:RO:PDF

([4]) Directiva 2011/99/UE a Parlamentului European și a Consiliului din 13 decembrie 2011 privind ordinul european de protecție (JO L 338, 21.12.2011, p. 2) aplicabilă în materie penală.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-000503/13
to the Commission
Elena Băsescu (PPE)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: EU strategy for combating violence against women, domestic violence and female genital mutilation

It is estimated that in Europe 45% of women have been subject to some form of violence, while one in five has been the victim of domestic violence. At the same time, many such cases go unreported.

Under the 2010-2015 gender equality strategy, the Commission is required to adopt measures at EU level to combat violence against women, domestic violence and female genital mutilation. Under the action plan implementing the Stockholm Programme, the deadline for adoption was 2011-2012.

1. When does the Commission expect to adopt the relevant strategy and action plan?

2. Does the Commission intend to table legislative provisions in a bid to tackle the problem of violence against women?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(22 February 2013)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answers to oral question O-04/2013. The Commission is committed to a strong policy response to combat all forms of violence against women. This primarily through empowerment of women, awareness raising, legislative action, exchanges of good practice, improving knowledge and data collection. The Daphne III Programme provides financial support for transnational projects.

Effective criminal and civil justice measures include legislation on human trafficking ([1]), sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children ([2]) and the rights of victims of crime. The Commission's Victims' Package includes a directive (adopted on 4 October 2012) establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime that will ensure that needs of victims are individually assessed and that the most vulnerable including victims of gender-based violence receive appropriate treatment ([3]). The proposed Regulation on mutual recognition of protection measures in civil matters — currently being negotiated by co-legislators — will complement the European Protection Order ([4]) and ensure that protection measures issued in one Member State can be recognised in another. Member States are now required to timely and effectively implement these tools.

In order to accelerate progress towards the elimination of female genital mutilation, the Commission will also launch a series of activities at European and national levels in 2013.

The Commission will continue to develop targeted and consistent initiatives to support Member states in achieving tangible results in areas where we have a clear legal basis.

([1]) Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA, OJ L 101, 15.4.2011, p. 1-11.

([2]) Directive 2011/93/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2004/68/JHA, OJ L 335, 17.12.2011, p. 1-14.

([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/policies/criminal/victims/docs/com_2011_275_en.pdf

([4]) The Directive 2011/99/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on the European protection order (OJ L 338, 21.12.2011, p. 2) which is applicable in criminal matters.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung P-000504/13
an die Kommission
Ismail Ertug (S&D)
(21. Januar 2013)

Betrifft: Donauausbau Straubing-Vilshofen

Der Donauabschnitt Straubing-Vilshofen ist Teil des prioritären TEN-V-Projekts 18. Besteht im Rahmen der aktuellen TEN-V Förderbedingungen eine Möglichkeit der Kofinanzierung bei einer Entscheidung für die Ausbauvariante A, oder ist für eine Bezuschussung zwingend ein Ausbau nach Variante C280 erforderlich?

Antwort von Herrn Kallas im Namen der Kommission
(22. Februar 2013)

In den TEN-V Leitlinien ([1]) ist die Donau als prioritäres Vorhaben genannt. Im Vorschlag für eine Verordnung des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates zur Schaffung der Fazilität „Connecting Europe“ ([2]) wird sie als Kernnetzkorridor eingeordnet.

In beiden Dokumenten ist vorgesehen, dass Mittel des TEN-V Programms für internationale Wasserstraßen der Klasse IV und darüber nach der Definition im Europäischen Übereinkommen über die Hauptbinnenwasserstraßen von internationaler Bedeutung (AGN) (UNECE) bereitgestellt werden können. Nach dem AGN können Tiefgangsbeschränkungen (weniger als 2,5 m) nur für schon bestehende Wasserstraßen und als Ausnahmen zugelassen werden.

Für den Donauabschnitt Straubing-Vilshofen könnten diese Ausnahmen geltend gemacht werden. Daher ist eine Finanzierung durch die EU im Prinzip für beide Varianten (Variante A nur in Bezug auf den Hochwasserschutz und Variante C280 einschließlich des Baus einer Schleuse zur Ermöglichung der Binnenschifffahrt während 300 Tagen im Jahr) möglich, je nach den Bedingungen künftiger Aufforderungen zur Einreichung von Vorschlägen und dem europäischen Mehrwert des jeweiligen Vorhabens.

([1]) Beschluss Nr. 661/2010/EU des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 7. Juli 2010 über Leitlinien der Union für den Aufbau eines transeuropäischen Verkehrsnetzes, ABl. L 204 vom 5.8.2010.
([2]) KOM(2011)0665 endg.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-000504/13
to the Commission
Ismail Ertug (S&D)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Straubing-Vilshofen Danube development project

The Straubing-Vilshoden section of the Danube comes under TEN-T Priority Project 18. Under the current terms for TEN-T assistance, is co-financing possible if development variant A is adopted, or must development be based on variant C280 in order to obtain financial aid?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(22 February 2013)

The TEN-T Guidelines ([1]) mention the Danube as a Priority Project. The proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Connecting Europe Facility ([2]) refers to it as a core network corridor.

In both documents, it is stated that financing through the TEN-T programme is possible following the AGN (UNECE) definition of international waterways, for class IV and higher. In the same AGN document, restriction of draught (less than 2.50 m) can be accepted only for existing waterways and as an exception.

The Straubing-Vilshofen stretch of the Danube would qualify under these exceptions. Therefore, EU financing is in principle possible for both variants (variant A, only concerning flood protection and variant C280, including the construction of a lock to support inland navigation for 300 days a year) subject to the conditions of future calls for proposals and the European added value of the project.

([1]) 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 network, OJ L 204, 5.8.2010.
([2]) COM(2011) 0665 final.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-000505/13
alla Commissione
Giancarlo Scottà (EFD)
(21 gennaio 2013)

Oggetto: Assicurazioni mediche per i viaggi extra europei

Dallo scorso 31 dicembre un cittadino italiano è ricoverato nell'ospedale di Mindelo, città sull'isola di Sao Vicente (Capo Verde), a causa di un improvviso malore. Le sue condizioni rimangono tuttora gravi e i medici dell'ospedale locale non hanno a disposizione strumenti idonei per poterlo aiutare adeguatamente. Sarebbe fondamentale un suo rimpatrio al più presto, tuttavia, considerate le sue condizioni di salute, l'uomo non può essere imbarcato su di un volo di linea diretto in Italia. Serve, perciò, un'altra soluzione e possibilmente in tempi brevi. Il preventivo di un aereo attrezzato e con personale medico ammonta a 42 500 euro, una cifra esorbitante e tutta a carico del malato. A questa cifra si dovranno aggiungere, poi, tutte le spese che incomberanno per le cure e la riabilitazione. Gli amici del malato hanno subito attivato una raccolta fondi, ma raggiungere la cifra prevista dal preventivo appare molto difficile.

Si tratta di un caso che sta riscontrando molta attenzione dai media locali, ma che può esser preso come esempio anche per molti altri casi di cittadini comunitari che vengono colpiti da gravi patologie mentre soggiornano in paesi extra europei e che necessitano di rimpatri per motivi sanitari.

A questo punto, può la Commissione far sapere quanto segue:

1. Esistono disposizioni europee che invitano a stipulare assicurazioni sanitarie per i viaggi extra europei?

2. Si possono rendere tali disposizioni obbligatorie, soprattutto per le destinazioni ad alto rischio sanitario e con infrastrutture ospedaliere non adeguate?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(21 febbraio 2013)

Non vi è alcun atto normativo comunitario che prescriva ai cittadini dell'UE di avere una copertura del rischio malattia relativa all'assistenza sanitaria ricevuta al di fuori dell'UE; analogamente, non esiste alcuna base giuridica che consenta all'Unione europea di prendere disposizioni in tal senso.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-000505/13
to the Commission
Giancarlo Scottà (EFD)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Medical insurance for travel outside Europe

Since 31 December 2012, an Italian citizen has been a patient in the hospital of Mindelo, a town on the island of Sao Vicente (Cape Verde), having been suddenly taken ill. His condition remains serious and doctors at the local hospital do not have the appropriate instruments to assist him properly. It is vital that he be returned home as soon as possible. However, given his state of health, he cannot be taken on board a scheduled flight to Italy. He therefore needs to find another solution, as soon as possible. A fully-equipped plane with medical personnel would cost EUR 42 500, an exorbitant amount which would all have to be paid for by the patient. All the costs relating to his care and rehabilitation will also have to be added to that figure. Friends of the patient immediately started raising funds, but it will be very difficult to raise the amount required.

This case is attracting a lot of attention in the local media, but it can be taken as an example also for many other cases of EU citizens who are struck down by serious illness when staying in non-EU countries and who need to be returned home for health reasons.

Can the Commission therefore answer the following questions:

1. Are there any EU provisions calling on people to take out health insurance for travel outside Europe?

2. Can such provisions be made mandatory, especially for destinations where there are high health risks and where hospital infrastructure is inadequate?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(21 February 2013)

There is no EC law that requires EU citizens to have any health insurance cover for healthcare received outside the EU; equally there is no legal basis allowing the European Union to adopt any such provisions.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000506/13
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(21 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Incumplimiento por parte de la Generalitat Valenciana de la obligación de planes de gestión de espacios incluidos en la Red Natura 2000

En 2012, el Gobierno de la Comunitat Valenciana (España) incumplió por segundo año consecutivo la exigencia legal de aprobar los planes de gestión de 34 espacios naturales de la provincia de Castelló que forman parte de la Red Natura 2000. El Ministerio de Medio Ambiente estableció que antes de diciembre de 2010 fueran aprobados los planes de gestión de los enclaves protegidos en la Red Natura 2000 en calidad de Zonas de Especial Protección para las Aves (ZEPA) y Lugares de Interés Comunitario (LIC). Los planes o instrumentos de gestión deberán cumplir con la Ley 42/2007 del Patrimonio Natural y de la Biodiversidad, por la que se incorpora al Derecho nacional la Directiva Hábitats. En la provincia de Castelló, las doce Zonas de Especial Protección para las Aves (ZEPA) pendientes de los planes de gestión son l'Alt Maestrat, Tinença de Benifassà y Sierras del Turmell y la Vallivana, Penyagolosa, Serra d'Irta, Planiols-Benasques (junto al aeropuerto de Vilanova), Desert de les Palmes, Costa d'Orpesa i Benicàssim, Prat de Cabanes-Torreblanca, Serra d'Espadà, Illes Columbretes, Desembocadura del Millars, Serra Calderona y Marjal i Estanys d'Almenara. En lo referente a los Lugares de Interés Comunitario (LIC), los 22 ecosistemas castellonenses son el Riu Bergantes, Tinença de Benifassà, Turmell y Vallivana, l'Alt Maestrat, Serra d'Engarcerán, Marjal de Peñíscola, Serra d'Irta, Penyagolosa, Cova Oscura-Atzeneta del Maestrat, Prat de Cabanes-Torreblanca, Desert de les Palmes, Font d'en Ferràs-Orpesa, Curs Alt del riu Millars, Serra d'Espadà, Desembocadura del riu Millars, Illes Columbretes, Alt Palància, Curs Mitjà del riu Palància, Marjal de Nules, Alguers de Borriana-Nules-Moncofa, Platja de Moncofa y Marjal d'Almenara.

En el año 2000, la Comisión Europea inició un procedimiento de infracción contra España por designar un número insuficiente de ZEPA. En junio de 2004, la Comisión interpuso recursos de incumplimiento ante el Tribunal de Justicia de la Unión Europea (asunto C-235/0A) al estimar que el número y la extensión de las ZEPA declaradas en España era inferior de las recomendadas. En julio de 2006, la Comisión Europea mantuvo sus acusaciones en el sentido de que el número de ZEPA era insuficiente en el caso de siete Comunidades Autónomas, incluida la Comunitat Valenciana. En la actualidad, se está a la espera de que el Tribunal de Justicia de la Unión Europea dicte sentencia.

¿Está al tanto la Comisión Europea de estos hechos ¿Cree abusivo que España no solo defina un número inferior de ZEPA sino que incumpla la protección de los espacios declarados en la Red Natura 2000? ¿Tiene intención de incoar un nuevo proceso de infracción contra España, en particular a la luz de la situación en Valencia?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(27 de febrero de 2013)

La Comisión tiene conocimiento de la situación que describe Su Señoría.

El Tribunal de Justicia Europeo condenó al Reino de España en el asunto C-235/04 ([1]) por no haber clasificado en diversas regiones y, entre ellas, en la de Valencia un número suficiente de Zonas de Especial Protección para las Aves (ZEPA) y no brindar así la protección necesaria a todas las especies de aves que contempla el anexo I de la Directiva de Aves ([2]). Tras esa sentencia, el Reino de España procedió a completar la extensión de su red de ZEPA en noviembre de 2009. El caso se encuentra cerrado desde entonces dado que la Comisión considera que, tras su ampliación, la red española de ZEPA cumple ya los requisitos de esa Directiva.

La Comisión evalúa en estos momentos los avances realizados por cada uno de los Estados miembros en la designación de Zonas Especiales de Conservación (ZEC) y en el establecimiento de las medidas de conservación necesarias del artículo 6, apartado 1, de la Directiva de Hábitats ([3]). A la vista de los resultados de esa evaluación, la Comisión tomará cuantas medidas sean necesarias —incluidas, en su caso, acciones legales— para garantizar el cumplimiento de las Directivas de Aves y de Hábitats.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:62004CJ0235:ES:HTML
([2]) Directiva 2009/147/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 30 de noviembre de 2009, relativa a la conservación de las aves silvestres (DO L 20 de 26.1.2010, p. 7).
([3]) Directiva 92/43/CEE del Consejo, de 21 de mayo de 1992, relativa a la conservación de los hábitats naturales y de la fauna y flora silvestres (DO L 206 de 22.7.1992, p. 7).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000506/13
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Valencian government's failure to comply with the requirement to adopt management plans for Natura 2000 network areas

In 2012 the government of the Valencian Community (Spain) failed for the second consecutive year to comply with the legal requirement to adopt management plans for 34 Natura 2000 network natural sites in the province of Castelló. The Environment Ministry stipulated that management plans for sites designated as special protection areas for birds (SPAs) and sites of Community importance (SCIs) in the Natura 2000 network were to be adopted by December 2010. The management plans or instruments were to comply with Law 42/2007 on the natural heritage and biodiversity, through which the Habitats Directive was transposed into national law. The 12 special protection areas for birds (SPAs) for which management plans are still pending in the province of Castelló are: l'Alt Maestrat, Tinença de Benifassà y Sierras del Turmell y la Vallivana, Penyagolosa, Serra d'Irta, Planiols-Benasques (near Vilanova airport), Desert de les Palmes, Costa d'Orpesa i Benicàssim, Prat de Cabanes-Torreblanca, Serra d'Espadà, Illes Columbretes, Desembocadura del Millars, Serra Calderona and Marjal i Estanys d'Almenara. The 22 ecosystems classed as sites of Community importance (SCIs) for which management plans are still pending in the province of Castelló are: Riu Bergantes, Tinença de Benifassà, Turmell y Vallivana, l'Alt Maestrat, Serra d'Engarcerán, Marjal de Peñíscola, Serra d'Irta, Penyagolosa, Cova Oscura-Atzeneta del Maestrat, Prat de Cabanes-Torreblanca, Desert de les Palmes, Font d'en Ferràs-Orpesa, Curs Alt del riu Millars, Serra d'Espadà, Desembocadura del riu Millars, Illes Columbretes, Alt Palància, Curs Mitjà del riu Palància, Marjal de Nules, Alguers de Borriana-Nules-Moncofa, Platja de Moncofa and Marjal d'Almenara.

In 2000 the Commission opened infringement proceedings against Spain on the grounds that it had designated an insufficient number of SPAs. In June 2004, the Commission brought an action for failure to fulfil obligations before the Court of Justice of the European Union (Case C-235/04) on the grounds that the number and size of SPAs designated in Spain fell below the recommended targets. In July 2006, the Commission upheld its allegations that an insufficient number of SPAs had been designated in seven autonomous communities, including the Valencian Community. A Court judgment is now pending.

Is the Commission aware of the above situation? Does it consider that Spain is in breach of Community law by failing to designate a sufficient number of SPAs and failing to protect the areas listed in the Natura 2000 network? Will it open fresh infringement proceedings against Spain, with particular regard to the situation in Valencia?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(27 February 2013)

The Commission is aware of the situation described by the Honourable Member.

The Kingdom of Spain was condemned by the European Court of Justice in Case C-235/04 ([1]) for its failure to classify sufficient SPA (Special Protection Areas) sites to provide protection for all species of birds listed in Annex I to the Birds Directive ([2]), including *inter alia* for the region of Valencia. Following this ruling, the Kingdom of Spain completed the extension of its SPA network in November 2009. The case has since been closed as the Commission considers that, following its enlargement, the SPA network in Spain now complies with the requirements of the Birds Directive.

The Commission is currently assessing progress by all Member States on the designation of Special Areas of Conservation and the establishment of necessary conservation measures pursuant to Article 6.1 of the Habitats Directive ([3]). In light of the results of this assessment, the Commission will take all the necessary steps to ensure compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives, including through legal action if needed.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:62004CJ0235:EN:HTML.
([2]) Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, of 30 November 2009, on the conservation of wild birds (OJ L 20/7, 26.1.2010).
([3]) Council Directive 92/43/EEC, of 21 May 1992, on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (OJ L 206, 22.7.1992).

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000507/13
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(21 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Vulneración de la Directiva sobre hábitats en el Marjal de Nules

Desde que en 2002 fuera declarado zona de especial protección el lugar de importancia comunitaria (Lic) «Marjal de Nules», incluido en la red Natura 2000, humedal catalogado y por lo tanto sujeto a todas las normas de protección europeas, estatales y autonómicas, ha sufrido una constante agresión, ya que se ha permitido la construcción de hasta unas quinientas viviendas dentro de la zona protegida.

El Juzgado de Primera Instancia e Instrucción n° 2 de Nules (Castelló) ha abierto una causa contra el alcalde de esta localidad y diputado provincial de Medio Ambiente, Mario García (PP) por un presunto delito de prevaricación ([1]). Las autoridades municipales eran plenamente conocedoras de estas irregularidades y no hicieron nada para atajar esta práctica. Asimismo, la Administración valenciana, que era la responsable de controlar estas actuaciones, ha practicado también la dejación de funciones.

Si bien se debe aguardar la conclusión del procedimiento judicial en curso, ¿qué opinión tiene la Comisión sobre la desprotección del humedal «Marja de Nules» por parte de las autoridades del Estado español? ¿Considera que la construcción de viviendas indica una clara violación de la Directiva sobre hábitats y de las indicaciones de la Comisión relativas a la Red Natura 2000? ¿Considera la Comisión que no solo el Gobierno local, sino también el autonómico de Valencia, así como el Gobierno central español han incumplido sus responsabilidades? ¿Qué medidas adoptará la Comisión para sancionar a estas autoridades y garantizar así el cumplimiento de la Directiva sobre hábitats y la protección de las áreas dentro de la red Natural 2000, particularmente el «Marjal de Nules»?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(6 de marzo de 2013)

La Comisión no dispone de información detallada sobre la situación descrita por Su Señoría, pero confirma que el Marjal de Nules es un lugar de importancia comunitaria (SCI ES 5222005) con arreglo a la Directiva de hábitats ([2]).

La Comisión quisiera recordar que la responsabilidad de hacer cumplir la legislación recae fundamentalmente sobre las autoridades nacionales. La Comisión pedirá aclaraciones a las autoridades españolas sobre las cuestiones planteadas por Su Señoría con el fin de garantizar, sin perjuicio del resultado del proceso judicial en curso, el cumplimiento de lo dispuesto en la Directiva de hábitats en este lugar de Natura 2000.

([1]) http://ccaa.elpais.com/ccaa/2013/01/08/valencia/1357673696_918089.html
([2]) Directiva 92/43/CEE del Consejo, de 21 de mayo de 1992, relativa a la conservación de los hábitats naturales y de la fauna y flora silvestres (DO L 206 de 22.7.1992).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000507/13
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Breach of the Habitats Directive in Marjal de Nules

The site of Community importance (SCI) Marjal de Nules was designated as a special protection area in the Natura 2000 network in 2002. As a listed wetland, it is covered by all the corresponding European, national and autonomous-community level rules on protection. The site has nevertheless suffered constant damage, and permits have been granted for the construction of around 500 homes inside the protected area.

The Court of First Instance No 2 in Nules (Castelló) has brought a case for perversion of the course of justice against the town's mayor and provincial deputy for the environment, Mario García (PP) ([1]). The municipal authorities were fully aware of the irregularities and did nothing to put a stop to such practices. The Valencian authorities, which were responsible for monitoring these activities, also failed to fulfil their obligations.

Without prejudice to the outcome of the ongoing legal proceedings, what is the Commission's view on the Spanish authorities' failure to protect the Marjal de Nules wetland? Does it believe that the construction of houses indicates a clear breach of the Habitats Directive and the Commission's guidelines on the Natura 2000 network? Does the Commission take the view that not only the local government but also the Valencian autonomous government and the central Spanish Government have failed to fulfil their obligations? What steps will the Commission take against these authorities in order to guarantee compliance with the Habitats Directive and ensure that Natura 2000 network areas, and Marjal de Nules in particular, are protected?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(6 March 2013)

The Commission does not possess detailed information on the situation described by the Honourable Member but confirms that 'Marjal de Nules' is listed as a site of Community importance (SCI ES 5222005) under the Habitats Directive ([2]).

The Commission would like to recall that the responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Habitats Directive lies primarily with the national authorities. The Commission will seek clarification from the Spanish authorities on the issues raised by the Honourable Member, in order to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Habitats Directive in this Natura 2000 site, without prejudice to the outcome of the ongoing legal procedures.

([1]) http://ccaa.elpais.com/ccaa/2013/01/08/valencia/1357673696_918089.html
([2]) Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (OJ L 206, 22.7.1992).

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000508/13
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(21 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Fracking en la Comunidad Valenciana

El pasado día 28 de septiembre aparecieron publicadas en el Boletín Oficial de la Generalitat Valenciana informaciones públicas sobre las solicitudes de permisos de investigación de hidrocarburos denominados Aristóteles, Arquímedes y Pitágoras por parte de la empresa Montero Energy Corporation. Dichas solicitudes abarcarían un terreno total de 195 569,5 hectáreas y 41 términos municipales.

Estos permisos se basan en la práctica del fractura hidráulica o *fracking*. En el informe *Impactos del gas y petróleo no convencional para el medioambiente y la salud*, realizado para el Parlamento Europeo, se reconoce que no existe en Europa una normativa detallada, exhaustiva y accesible públicamente del marco regulatorio de la extracción del gas de esquisto y la necesidad de que ésta se desarrolle. El informe recoge expresamente la necesidad de que sea revisada la Directiva Marco en materia de aguas y los posibles impactos de la fractura, y propone que se valore la prohibición del uso de compuestos químicos tóxicos, o al menos, recomienda que se revele la composición exacta de los mismos.

La práctica de la fractura introduciendo compuestos químicos en el subsuelo puede contaminar el acuífero subterráneo del Maestrat, que nutre a zonas húmedas protegidas a nivel comunitario, español y autonómico como la Marjal de Peníscola o Parc Natural de Prat de Cabanes-Torreblanca (Zona ZEPA), además de no haberse evaluado su impacto en zonas LIC de l'Alt Maestrat, o Zonas ZEPA incluidas en la Red Natura 2000 como la ZEPA Tinença de Benifassà, Serres Turmell i Vallivana, Zona ZEPA Penyagolosa o Parc Natural de la Serra d'Irta.

En la respuesta a la pregunta E-007627/2011 la Comisión afirmaba que «los proyectos de prospección y explotación de gas de esquisto están regulados por la Directiva de Impacto Ambiental (EIA), que impone a los Estados miembros la responsabilidad de someter ese tipo de proyectos (sean públicos o privados) a evaluación antes de autorizar su ejecución, aplicando, si resulta necesario, el principio de cautela.»

¿Conocía la Comisión dicho proyecto de extracción de *shale gas*? ¿Considera que la Generalitat Valenciana (y el Estado español) está violando el principio de cautela? ¿Qué acciones tomará para frenar, al menos temporalmente, los proyectos con la empresa Montero Energy Corporation SL?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(13 de marzo de 2013)

La Comisión no dispone de datos suficientes sobre el proyecto para responder a las cuestiones planteadas por Su Señoría, por lo que va a tomar contacto con las autoridades españolas competentes para recabar más información.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000508/13
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: 'Fracking' in the region of Valencia

On 28 September 2012, a public notification of applications submitted by the Montero Energy Corporation and designated as 'Aristóteles', 'Arquímedes' and Pitágoras', seeking authorisation for hydrocarbon prospection over a total area of 195 569.5 hectares encompassing 41 municipalities, appeared in the Valencia Regional Government Gazette.

The procedure for which the permits were being sought is known as hydraulic fracturing or 'fracking'. The report on the environmental and health implications of unconventional gas and oil extraction drawn up for the European Parliament recognises the absence at European level of any detailed, exhaustive and publicly available analysis of the legal framework regulating shale gas extraction and hence the need to carry out such an analysis. The report expressly indicates that it is necessary to review the Water Framework Directive and the possible effects of fracking, recommending that consideration be given to a possible ban on the use of toxic chemical compounds or, at least, the compulsory disclosure of their precise composition.

Fracking, which involves the injection of chemical compounds into the subsoil, could result in contamination of the Maestrat groundwater resources supplying wetlands protected under EU, Spanish and regional law, such as the Marjal de Peníscola or the Prat de Cabanes-Torreblanca Wildlife Park (SPA). Furthermore, no impact assessment has been carried out in respect of the Alt Maestrat SCI areas or Natura 2000 SPAs such as Tinença de Benifassà or Penyagolosa, not to mention Serres Turmell i Vallivana or the Serra d'Irta Wildlife Park.

In reply to Question E-007627/2011, the Commission indicated that shale gas exploration and extraction projects were regulated by the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive, requiring Member States to have public and private projects assessed before issuing authorisation, applying where necessary the precautionary principle.

Is the Commission aware of the projected shale gas extraction project? Does it consider that Valencia regional authorities and the Spanish Government are failing to comply with the precautionary principle? What actions will it take to halt, or at least suspend, projects involving the Montero Energy Corporation SL?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(13 March 2013)

The Commission does not have sufficient details on the project referred to in order to respond to the questions raised by the Honourable Member. It will contact the competent Spanish authorities for further information.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000509/13
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(21 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Participación de menores en corridas de toros

La UE ha reconocido los derechos de la infancia en la Carta de los Derechos Fundamentales. Los menores tienen derecho a la protección y a los cuidados necesarios para su bienestar, y las autoridades públicas deberán actuar primando el interés superior del niño sobre cualquier otro interés legítimo que pudiera concurrir. La Comunicación de la Comisión «Una agenda de la UE en pro de los Derechos del Niño» (COM(2011)0060) indica que ha llegado el momento de dar un nuevo impulso a estos derechos y plasmar los objetivos políticos en medidas. Diversos estudios como «El procedimiento de la corrida: el punto de vista de un psicólogo de la educación», del Dr. Joël Lequesne, «Los menores de edad ya no deben tener acceso a las corridas de toros en el mundo», manifiesto firmado por 90 psiquiatras y psicólogos, «de la violencia en las corridas de toros a la educación violenta: una perspectiva psicológica», del Prof. Dr. Vítor José F. Rodriguez, o la carta de Kenneth Shapiro firmada por 273 investigadores, científicos, psicólogos, sociólogos y expertos en la protección del menor, revelan que los espectáculos donde se contempla el sufrimiento y/o la muerte de un ser vivo en un acontecimiento público aplaudido por adultos, como las corridas de toros, tienen efectos negativos en los niños. Los menores son testigos de muertes violentas de personas o de impactantes imágenes de cornadas y pueden acarrear secuelas como: efectos traumáticos, ya que no podrán expresar libremente sus sentimientos en la medida en que su entorno, conformado por adultos, negará el carácter agresivo del espectáculo alegando que es arte, tradición y cultura; habituación a la violencia a través de la insensibilización y la imitación de comportamientos si les mostramos que la violencia gratuita puede ser legítima e incluso recomendable; debilitación del sentido moral ante la desestabilización del criterio infantil de lo que es justo e injusto; perturbaciones y negación de los valores morales y de la ley en un momento en el que el niño necesita encontrar modelos de conducta con los que identificarse. Conociendo esto, la UE debería actuar primando el interés general del infante y limitando su acceso a las corridas taurinas.

¿Considera la Comisión que se violan los derechos del niño al dejar a los menores presenciar corridas taurinas? ¿Piensa la Comisión tomar medidas para obligar o recomendar a España, Portugal y Francia que restrinjan o prohíban el acceso de los menores de edad a las plazas de toros?

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000510/13
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(21 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Participación de menores en escuelas taurinas

Los derechos de la infancia, recogidos en la Convención sobre los Derechos del Niño, forman parte de los derechos humanos. La UE ha reconocido los derechos de la infancia en la Carta de los Derechos Fundamentales y protegerlos es uno de los objetivos principales del Tratado de Lisboa. Los menores tienen derecho a la protección y a los cuidados necesarios para su bienestar y las autoridades públicas deberán actuar siempre primando el interés superior del niño sobre cualquier otro interés legítimo que pudiera concurrir. De acuerdo con la Comunicación de la Comisión «Una agenda de la UE en pro de los Derechos del Niño» (COM(2011)0060), la Comisión considera que ha llegado el momento de dar un nuevo impulso a estos derechos y plasmar los objetivos políticos en medidas.

Dicho esto, en la EU existen alrededor de 58 escuelas taurinas conocidas repartidas entre España (42), Francia (8) y Portugal (8), donde los niños y niñas menores de edad reciben lecciones prácticas con reses vivas a las que se tortura y da muerte, lo que compromete la integridad física y psíquica de estos menores. Por este motivo, algunos reglamentos de las escuelas taurinas obligan a disponer de un sistema de evacuación para el traslado en ambulancia de menores heridos y se prohíbe expresamente la presencia de los padres o de público durante las clases prácticas con animales. Aprender a hacer daño y a matar exige una constante formación en la insensibilización o anestesia de las emociones del niño para que no reaccione ante la crueldad que él mismo está causando al animal. La Comisión no puede ampararse en las «tradiciones culturales» y seguir desprotegiendo a los niños y niñas que son enviados a escuelas taurinas, ya que debe exigir a los estados que protejan la integridad física, moral, psicológica y emocional de los menores.

¿Qué opinión tiene la Comisión sobre este asunto? ¿Cree que actualmente se violan los derechos del niño en los estados que permiten a escuelas taurinas enseñar a menores? ¿Piensa la Comisión tomar medidas para recomendar u obligar a los Estados miembros España, Portugal y Francia a que restrinjan o prohíban el acceso de los menores de edad a las escuelas taurinas?

Respuesta conjunta de la Sra. Reding en nombre de la Comisión

(25 de marzo de 2013)

Con arreglo al artículo 51, apartado 1, de la Carta de los Derechos Fundamentales, las disposiciones de dicha Carta, incluido el artículo 24 sobre los derechos del menor, están dirigidas a los Estados miembros únicamente cuando aplican el Derecho de la Unión. La Unión Europea no tiene competencias generales en lo que se refiere a esos derechos.

En cuanto a la opinión de la Comisión sobre las corridas de toros en general, la Comisión remite a Su Señoría a sus respuestas a las preguntas escritas E-002699/2011, E-008975/2011 y E-010978/201.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000509/13
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Children attending bullfights

Children's rights have been recognised by the EU in the Charter of Fundamental Rights. Minors have the right to such protection and care as is necessary for their well-being, and public authorities should have a child's best interests as their primary consideration. The communication from the Commission entitled 'An EU Agenda for the Rights of the Child' (COM(2011) 0060) says that it is now time to step up efforts to ensure that these rights are upheld and transform policy objectives into action. A number of studies have been published which argue that public events, such as bullfights, where adults applaud the suffering and/or death of living creatures have a negative impact on children. These studies include 'Bullfighting: An educational psychologist's perspective' by Dr Joël Lequesne, a manifesto signed by 90 psychiatrists and psychologists calling for children to be banned from attending bullfights, a paper by Professor Vítor José F. Rodriguez entitled 'From violence at bullfights to a violent education: A psychological perspective', and a letter by Kenneth Shapiro which was signed by 273 researchers, scientists, psychologists, sociologists and child protection experts. When children attend bullfights, they may witness shocking scenes of people being gored and even killed. This can affect them in a number of ways. Firstly, the fact that the adults around them see the spectacle as a type of art, tradition or culture, and not as an aggressive act, prevents children from expressing their true feelings and may lead to trauma. Secondly, children may become inured to violence and start to imitate such behaviour if they are given the impression that gratuitous violence can be justified and is even desirable. They may begin to lose their sense of right and wrong, as their childlike understanding of what is fair and what is unfair is increasingly challenged. Children's perception of the importance of moral values and the law may also be radically altered, at an age when they need good behavioural models. The EU should therefore prioritise what is in children's best interests and restrict their access to bullfights.

Does the Commission take the view that, by allowing minors to attend bullfights, children's rights are being violated? Does it intend to take measures to oblige or encourage Spain, Portugal and France to restrict or ban minors from attending bullfights?

Question for written answer E-000510/13
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Children at bullfighting schools

Children's rights, as set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, form part of human rights. The EU has recognised children's rights in its Charter of Fundamental Rights and protecting them is one of the prime aims of the Treaty of Lisbon. Children are entitled to the protection and care necessary for their well-being, and public authorities must, in everything that they do, give precedence to children's best interests over any other legitimate interest that might be involved. As it states in its communication entitled 'An EU Agenda for the Rights of the Child' (COM(2011) 0060), the Commission considers that the time has come 'to move up a gear on the rights of the child and to transform policy objectives into action'.

However, 58 bullfighting schools are known to exist in the EU, of which there are 42 in Spain, 8 in France, and 8 in Portugal. Children who are still minors are given practical instruction using live animals, which are tortured and killed, exposing the children to the danger of physical and psychological harm. That is why some bullfighting schools are obliged under their rules to have an evacuation system, enabling injured children to be taken away by ambulance, and parents or spectators are expressly prohibited from attending practical classes with animals. If children are to learn to wound and kill, they have to be constantly trained in insensitivity, or their emotions have to be deadened, to prevent them from reacting to the cruelty that they are inflicting on animals. The Commission cannot shelter behind the excuse of 'cultural traditions' and go on failing to protect the children who are sent to bullfighting schools, given that it has a duty to insist that countries protect minors from physical, mental, and emotional injury.

What is the Commission's view on this matter? Does the Commission believe that the rights of the child are being violated in the countries which allow bullfighting schools to teach minors? Will it recommend that Spain, Portugal, and France restrict or prohibit the enrolment of minors in bullfighting schools, or will it take steps to make them do so?

Joint answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(25 March 2013)

According to Article 51(1) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, the provisions of the Charter including Article 24 on the rights of the child are addressed to Member States only when they are implementing Union law. The European Union does not have general powers in respect of the rights of the child.

As for the Commission's view on bullfighting in general, the Commission would like to refer the Honourable Member to its answers to Written Questions E-002699/2011, E-008975/2011 and E-010978/201.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000511/13
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(21 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Efectos del Proyecto Sísmica 3D en Casablanca

Actualmente se encuentra bajo Evaluación de Impacto Ambiental el «Proyecto Sísmica en 3D» en Casablanca, Tarragona. Estos trabajos tienen por objeto encontrar la «posibilidad de que existan nuevos yacimientos de hidrocarburos» en una zona que incluye el Área de los Campos de Montanazo, Lubina y Casablanca. Según el informe EIA, y junto con la evaluación del impacto acústico, la zona de actuación está próxima a los siguientes espacios naturales protegidos de la Red Natura 2000: Delta de l'Ebre, Litoral Tarragona, Sequia Major, Costes del Tarragona, Costes del Garraf, de Masia Blanca, Serra d' Irta, LaMarjal de Peñíscola e lles Columbretes, y también coincide en el 5 % con la propuesta de Zona Especialmente Protegida (ZEP) «Corredor de migración de cetáceos», sin que se presenten medidas correctoras suficientes.

Los estudios sísmicos del proyecto dentro del corredor de migración de cetáceos y próximos a espacios protegidos, así como de 12 km del Parque Natural Delta de l'Ebre, pondrán en peligro las especies protegidas en virtud de la Red Natura 2000 y de la ZEP. La propuesta de vigilancia ambiental hacia las tortugas marinas y cetáceos para detectar su avistamiento dentro de 500 m de distancia de la fuente no garantiza la protección de estas especies, ya que se han observado impactos de comportamiento a distancias mayores que 2-3 km que pueden afectar el equilibrio de las poblaciones, especialmente en zonas de migración.

Además, los estudios del EIA están basados en modelos que pueden subestimar las condiciones reales, tal y como se ha demostrado previamente en un estudio realizado en Nueva Escocia (*McQuinn and Carrier*, 2005). Según este estudio, los científicos encontraron que los niveles reales de la intensidad sonora producida por las prospecciones sísmicas en la zona eran 10 dB (valor medio) mas altos que los reales, lo cual supone que, a una distancia de 800 m, los cetáceos estarían expuestos a 180 dB, que es el límite de umbral de seguridad para daños físicos.

¿Tiene conocimiento la Comisión del «Proyecto de Sísmica en 3D»? ¿Qué opinión le sugiere la información relativa al EIA? ¿Considera que el EIA subestima las condiciones reales y que, por tanto, desprotege la zona blindada por la Red Natura 2000? ¿Qué medidas piensa adoptar la Comisión al respecto?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(12 de marzo de 2013)

Remitimos a Su Señoría a la respuesta de la Comisión a su pregunta escrita E-000129/2013 sobre el mismo tema.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000511/13
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Impact of the 3D Seismic Interpretation Project in Casablanca (Tarragona, Spain)

The 3D Seismic Interpretation Project in Casablanca (Tarragona) is currently at the stage of environmental impact assessment (EIA). The aim of this project is to find out whether further deposits of hydrocarbons exist in an area which includes the Montanazo, Lubina and Casablanca fields. According to both the EIA and the noise assessment, the area where the survey would be conducted is close to the following natural habitats, which are part of the Natura 2000 network: Delta de l'Ebre, Litoral Tarragoní, Sèquia Major, Costes del Tarragonés, Costes del Garraf, Masia Blanca, Sierra de Irta, la Marjal de Peñíscola and Islas Columbretes. It would also affect 5 % of a proposed Special Protection Area (SPA), the 'Migration corridor for cetaceans', without sufficient corrective measures having been proposed.

Conducting seismic surveys within this marine migration corridor and in close proximity to protected natural areas (including less than 12 km away from the Delta de l'Ebre natural park) would endanger species that are protected under the Natura 2000 programme or in SPAs. The proposal to monitor sea turtles and cetaceans in order to detect their presence within a 500-metre radius of the survey offers no guarantee that they will be protected, since effects on their behaviour likely to affect their population balance, particularly in migration areas, have been observed at distances of over two or three kilometres.

Moreover, EIAs are based on models that may underestimate the actual conditions, as has already been shown by a study carried out in Nova Scotia (McQuinn and Carrier, 2005). McQuinn and Carrier found that the actual noise levels of seismic pulses in the studied area were on average 10 dB higher than those predicted. This means that cetaceans at a distance of 800 metres from the exploration area would be exposed to sound levels of 180 dB, which is the maximum safe limit for these species.

Is the Commission aware of the 3D Seismic Interpretation Project? What is its view on the information concerning the EIA? Does it consider that the EIA underestimates the actual conditions, thereby removing protection from an area which forms part of the Natura 2000 network? What measures does the Commission intend to take to address these issues?

(Version française)

Réponse donnée par M Potočnik au nom de la Commission
(12 mars 2013)

L'Honorable Parlementaire voudra bien se reporter à la réponse que la Commission a donnée à sa question écrite E-000129/2013 sur le même sujet.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000512/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(21. Januar 2013)

Betrifft: Bücher für blinde Menschen — Urheberrecht

Wie bereits in einer Anfrage vom 18.9.2012 ausgeführt wurde, ist die Lage betreffend den Zugang zu Literatur für blinde und sehbehinderte Menschen prekär und entspricht nicht den in Artikel 21 der UN-Konvention über die Rechte von Menschen mit Behinderungen garantierten Rechten. Insbesondere die Problematik der kommerziellen Verfügbarkeit („commercial availability") steht einem fairen und gleichberechtigten Zugang von blinden und sehbehinderten Menschen zu Informationen entgegen und erschwert die Arbeit der Behindertenverbände beträchtlich.

1. Plant die Kommission nun endlich Maßnahmen, um den gleichberechtigten Zugang zu Informationen nach Artikel 21 der UN-Konvention über die Rechte von Menschen mit Behinderungen zu gewährleisten?

2. Wie will die Kommission den Grundsatz der „commercial availability" festschreiben, ohne die Rechte von Menschen mit Behinderung zu beschneiden?

Antwort von Frau Reding im Namen der Kommission
(3. April 2013)

Die Kommission ist sich der Verpflichtungen der EU aus dem Übereinkommen der Vereinten Nationen über die Rechte von Menschen mit Behinderungen (UNCRPD), vor allem des Artikels 21, bewusst. Sie trifft im Rahmen ihrer Zuständigkeit Maßnahmen zur Umsetzung dieser Bestimmung. Das UNCRPD wurde in den Ratsbeschluss aufgenommen, der die Kommission ermächtigt, in der WIPO einen internationalen Vertrag über besseren Zugang zu Büchern für Menschen mit Lesebehinderung auszuhandeln.

Gleichzeitig erarbeitet die Kommission den Europäischen Rechtsakt über die Barrierefreiheit, um das Funktionieren des Binnenmarktes in Bezug auf die Zugänglichkeit von Waren und Dienstleistungen zu verbessern. Dabei wird zur Steigerung der kommerziellen Verfügbarkeit zugänglicher Information der Markt für zugängliche Information geprüft.

Darüber hinaus können die Mitgliedstaaten nach EU-Recht gemäß Artikel 5 Absatz 3 Buchstabe b der Richtlinie 2001/29 bereits eine Einschränkung der einschlägigen Urheberrechte zugunsten behinderter Personen vorsehen, soweit die Nutzung aufgrund der betreffenden Behinderung erforderlich ist, mit der Behinderung unmittelbar in Zusammenhang steht und nicht kommerzieller Art ist. Sehbehinderte Personen sind dabei eingeschlossen. Es handelt sich allerdings um eine fakultative Ausnahme.

Die in der WIPO laufenden Verhandlungen für einen internationalen Vertrag sollen konkret zu einer Urheberrechtsbeschränkung zugunsten sehbehinderter Personen führen. Ziel der EU ist die Annahme eines Vertrags, der gewährleistet, dass Sehbehinderte auf der gleichen Grundlage wie andere Menschen Zugang zu Büchern haben.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000512/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Books for the blind and copyright

As already stated in a question of 18 September 2012, the situation concerning access to literature for the blind and visually impaired is unsatisfactory, since they are unable to exercise the rights enshrined in Article 21 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In particular the principle of commercial availability precludes fair and equal access by blind and visually impaired persons to information and makes the work of associations for the blind considerably more difficult.

1. Does the Commission intend finally to take measures to ensure equal access to information under Article 21 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities?

2. How does the Commission intend to enshrine the principle of 'commercial availability' in EC law, without curtailing the rights of persons with disabilities?

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

The Commission is fully aware of the EU obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), including its Article 21, and is taking steps for its implementation to the extent of its competences. More specifically, the UNCRPD is included in the Council decision authorising the Commission to negotiate an international agreement within WIPO on improved access to books for print impaired persons.

In parallel, the Commission is preparing the European Accessibility Act with a view to improve the functioning of the internal market for accessible goods and services. In that context the market of accessible information is being examined with a view to enhance the commercial availability of accessible information.

Furthermore, in EC law, Article 5(3) (b) of Directive 2001/29 already allows Member States to provide a limitation to the relevant rights of authors for uses for the benefit of people with a disability which are directly related to the disability and of a non-commercial nature, to the extent required by the specific disability. The scope of this limitation includes the visually impaired. However, this exception is optional.

The negotiations underway for an international treaty in WIPO, are aimed specifically at a copyright limitation for the benefit of visually impaired persons., The objective of the EU is to adopt a treaty that, in effect, ensures that visually impaired persons have access to books on an equal basis with others.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000513/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: A doação e o transplante de órgãos na União Europeia

Considerando que:

— Os transplantes de órgãos salvam vidas e melhoram a qualidade de vida a milhares de pessoas;

— Só em 2011, mais de 30 mil órgãos foram transplantados;

— Recentemente, o Conselho Europeu reconheceu os esforços de colaboração entre os Estados-Membros e a Comissão Europeia no sentido de aumentar o número de órgãos transplantados;

Pergunto à Comissão:

Está previsto algum plano de ação para aumentar a disponibilidade de órgãos e melhorar a eficiência, qualidade e segurança dos sistemas de transporte?

Resposta dada por Joe Borg em nome da Comissão
(11 de março de 2013)

A Comissão está a trabalhar ativamente no domínio da doação e transplante de órgãos, a fim de apoiar os Estados-Membros da UE a melhorar a qualidade e a segurança dos transplantes — o principal mandato legal da UE neste domínio. Consequentemente, foram adotadas diretivas que estabelecem disposições relativas à proteção dos dadores e recetores e à prestação de informações em caso de intercâmbio transfronteiriço de órgãos, em 2010 ([1]) e 2012 ([2]), respetivamente. O transporte de órgãos é abordado explicitamente na Diretiva 2013/53/UE.

A Comissão promove também o intercâmbio voluntário de boas práticas entre Estados-Membros, no âmbito do Plano de Ação no domínio da doação e transplante de órgãos. A Comissão apoiou ativamente a Presidência Cipriota do Conselho no processo que conduziu à recente adoção de conclusões do Conselho sobre o referido plano de ação.

Os objetivos principais do plano de ação são aumentar a disponibilidade de órgãos, apoiar sistemas de transplante e melhorar a qualidade e a segurança. Os Estados-Membros têm a possibilidade de proceder ao intercâmbio de conhecimentos no contexto de grupos de trabalho e de projetos financiados pelo Programa de Saúde da UE ([3]). Muitos projetos visam diretamente a disponibilidade de órgãos e a qualidade e segurança (por exemplo, Odequs ([4]) e Efretos ([5])).

Além disso, a Comissão está a financiar projetos de investigação relacionados com a doação e o transplante de órgãos, tais como o projeto COPE na área das novas técnicas destinadas a melhorar a preservação de órgãos ([6]).

([1]) Diretiva 2010/53/UE do Parlamento Europeu e do Conselho, de 7 de julho de 2010, relativa a normas de qualidade e segurança dos órgãos humanos destinados a transplantação.
([2]) Diretiva de Execução 2012/25/UE da Comissão, de 9 de outubro de 2012, que estabelece procedimentos de informação para o intercâmbio, entre Estados-Membros, de órgãos humanos destinados a transplantação.
([3]) A lista de projetos está disponível em http://ec.europa.eu/health/blood_tissues_organs/projects/index_en.htm
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/projects/database.html?prjno=20091108
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/projects/database.html?prjno=20081101
([6]) http://cordis.europa.eu/search/index.cfm?fuseaction=proj.document&PJ_RCN=13430950

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000513/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Organ donation and transplantation in the European Union

Organ transplants save lives and improve the quality of life of thousands of people.

In 2011 alone, over 30 000 organs were transplanted.

The European Council has recently acknowledged the cooperation efforts between Member States and the European Commission to increase the number of transplanted organs.

Can the Commission say whether any action plan is foreseen to increase the availability of organs and improve the efficiency, quality and security of the transport systems?

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

The Commission is actively working on Organ donation and transplantation to support EU Member States in improving quality and safety of transplantation — the core EU legal mandate in this field. Directives have therefore been adopted in 2010 ([1]) to protect donors and recipients of donors and in 2012 ([2]) on provision of information when organs are exchanged cross-border. The transport of organs is explicitly addressed in Directive 2013/53/EU.

The Commission also promotes the voluntary exchange of best practices between Member States through the action plan on Organ Donation and Transplantation. The Commission actively supported the Cypriot Presidency of the Council in the process leading to the recent adoption of Council Conclusions relating to this Action Plan.

The main objectives of the action plan are to increase organ availability, to support transplant systems and to improve quality and safety. Member States are given the opportunity to exchange knowledge in the context of working groups and projects funded under the EU Health Programme ([3]).Many projects directly focus on organ availability and on quality and safety (e.g. ODEQUS ([4]) and EFRETOS ([5])).

Moreover, the Commission is funding research projects related to organ donation and transplantation, such as the COPE project for new techniques to improve organ preservation ([6]).

([1]) Directive 2010/53/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2010 on standards of quality and safety of human organs intended for transplantation.
([2]) Commission Implementing Directive 2012/25/EU of 9 October 2012 laying down information procedures for the exchange, between Member States, of human organs intended for transplantation.
([3]) The list of projects is available at http://ec.europa.eu/health/blood_tissues_organs/projects/index_en.htm
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/projects/database.html?prjno=20091108.
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/projects/database.html?prjno=20081101.
([6]) http://cordis.europa.eu/search/index.cfm?fuseaction=proj.document&PJ_RCN=13430950.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000514/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: Vacina contra doença invasiva pneumocócica

Considerando que:

— Segundo dados da Organização Mundial de Saúde, a doença pneumocócica causa todos os anos mais de três milhões de mortes em todo o mundo;

— A doença é mais comum em crianças com menos de dois anos e dá sintomas como cansaço, dores de cabeça e musculares, febre, dores de ouvidos e náuseas — sinais comuns a muitas outras patologias;

— Não é preciso contacto com outras pessoas para se ficar infetado: a doença é causada pelo Streptococcus pneumoniae ou pneumococo, que está presente na nasofaringe, e, por vezes, quando a criança está mais debilitada, a bactéria entra na corrente sanguínea;

— Metade dos casos surge em crianças sem nenhum tipo de característica que as coloque num grupo de risco;

— A crise financeira e económica é responsável pela dificuldade crescente na aquisição da vacina contra esta doença;

— Quase todos os países têm a vacina incluída no seu plano de vacinação, sendo Portugal uma exceção;

Pergunto à Comissão:

Do ponto de vista das vantagens sanitárias e humanas, como avalia a inclusão desta vacina nos planos de vacinação nacionais?

Resposta dada por Joe Borg em nome da Comissão
(11 de março de 2013)

Em 2010, foi criado na União Europeia um novo sistema de vigilância reforçada para a doença invasiva pneumocócica. O primeiro relatório relativo aos dados de 2010 foi publicado em dezembro de 2012 ([1]). Em 2010, foram registados 21 565 casos da doença invasiva pneumocócica, em 26 países da UE/EEE. As taxas mais elevadas ocorrem entre crianças com menos de um ano (18,54 por 100 000) e entre adultos de 65 anos ou mais (15,59 por 100 000).

A maioria dos países europeus incluiu, em 2006 ou posteriormente, vacinas pneumocócicas conjugadas (PCV) no seu plano de imunização infantil universal. Não obstante, os dados sobre a eficácia das PCV na Europa são limitados. A eficácia das PCV que abrange 7 serótipos (PCV7) foi posta em causa pela circunstância de os serótipos não incluídos nessa vacina se terem tornado mais prevalentes. Em 2009, foi concedida uma autorização de introdução no mercado na UE em relação a PCV que abrangem 10 e 13 serótipos (respetivamente PCV10 e PCV13). Desde então, a maior parte dos países que utilizava PCV7 mudou para a PCV10 ou a PCV13.

Até 2012, 17 dos 27 Estados-Membros da UE recomendavam a imunização infantil universal e gratuita com PCV . Em dois outros países, a administração universal de PCV não estava a ser recomendada numa base nacional, mas tinha já sido aplicada em algumas regiões. Quatro outros países recomendavam a PCV às crianças que eram consideradas como em risco acrescido de doença pneumocócica.

O Centro Europeu de Prevenção e Controlo das Doenças está atualmente a avaliar e a resumir a experiência adquirida até agora com PCV nos países europeus. O relatório estará concluído nos próximos meses e será publicado no sítio Web do Centro em meados de 2013.

([1]) http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/Forms/ECDC_DispForm.aspx?ID=1021

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000514/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Vaccine against invasive pneumococcal disease

Given that:

— According to World Health Organisation data, pneumococcal disease causes more than 3 million deaths worldwide every year;

— The disease is more common in children under two years old and causes symptoms such as tiredness, headaches and muscle pain, fever, earaches and nausea — similar to many other diseases;

— Contact with other people is not required to get infected, the disease is caused by *Streptococcus pneumoniae* or pneumococcus, which is present in the nasopharynx, and, sometimes, if the child is much weakened, the bacteria can enter the blood system;

— Half of all cases occur in children with no characteristics that would put them in a risk group;

— The financial and economic crisis is responsible for increasing difficulties in buying the vaccine against this disease;

— Almost all countries have the vaccine as part of their immunisation plan; Portugal is an exception.

I would like to ask the Commission:

Given the benefits for humans and their health, what is its assessment of the inclusion of this vaccine in national vaccination plans?

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

In 2010, a new enhanced surveillance system for invasive pneumococcal disease was established in the European Union. The first report on 2010 data was published in December 2012 ([1]). In 2010, 21 565 cases of invasive pneumococcal disease were reported in 26 EU/EEA countries. The highest rates are among children under one year (18.54 per 100 000) and adults of 65 years or above (15.59 per 100 000).

Most European countries included pneumococcal conjugate vaccines (PCV) in their universal childhood immunisation schedule in 2006 or later; nevertheless, data on the effectiveness of PCV in Europe is limited. The effectiveness of the PCV covering 7 serotypes (PCV7) was put into question by the fact that serotypes not included in this vaccine become more prevalent. In 2009, PCV covering 10 and 13 serotypes (respectively PCV10 and PCV13) were granted a marketing authorisation in the EU. Since then, most countries that were using PCV7 have switched to PCV10 or PCV13.

By 2012, 17 out of 27 EU Member States were recommending universal PCV childhood immunisation free of charge. In two additional countries universal PCV vaccination was not being recommended on a national basis but had been implemented in some regions. Four additional countries were recommending PCV to children that are considered as having an increased risk for pneumococcal disease.

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control is currently assessing and summarising experience so far with PCV in European countries. The report will be finalised within the coming months and published on the Centre's website by mid-2013.

([1]) http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/Forms/ECDC_DispForm.aspx?ID=1021.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000515/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: Companhia low-cost Ryanair

Considerando que:

— Numa emissão do canal holandês KRO, em finais de dezembro de 2012, quatro pilotos da companhia low-cost Ryanair denunciaram nas condições de trabalho e de voo a bordo da companhia irlandesa;

— Têm sido frequentes as notícias de aterragens de emergência, como as do dia 26 de julho de 2012, em que 3 aviões foram obrigados a uma aterragem forçada no aeroporto de Valência, bem como a de início de setembro de 2012, em Lanzarote, por falta de combustível;

— Ainda em setembro passado, um outro voo com destino a Gran Canaria foi obrigado a uma aterragem de emergência após um problema técnico ter provocado uma despressurização de cabine;

Pergunto à Comissão:

Tem conhecimento desta situação?

Como a avalia os sucessivos incidentes técnicos verificados?

Resposta dada por Siim Kallas em nome da Comissão
(12 de março de 2013)

A Comissão remete o Senhor Deputado para as respostas dadas às perguntas escritas E-000032/2013, P-000042/2013 e E-000054/2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000515/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Low-cost airline Ryanair

Given that:

— Four pilots from the low-cost airline Ryanair denounced the Irish airline's on-board working and flying conditions during a broadcast on Dutch channel KRO in late December 2012;

— There have been many reports of emergency landings, including those of 3 aircraft forced to land at Valencia airport on 26 July 2012 and then later, in early September 2012, in Lanzarote, because of lack of fuel;

— Another flight to Gran Canaria also had to make an emergency landing last September following a technical problem that caused the cabin to depressurise.

I would like to ask the Commission:

Is it aware of this situation?

What is the Commission's assessment of this series of technical incidents?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(12 March 2013)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to written questions E-000032/2013, P-000042/2013 and E-000054/2013.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000516/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: Pílulas com riscos elevados para a saúde

Considerando que:

— As autoridades francesas revogaram a comparticipação de pílulas contracetivas de terceira e quarta geração por causa de riscos acrescidos para a saúde;

— A Bayer foi condenada pelos efeitos secundários da pílula numa mulher que sofreu um AVC, tendo outras 30 pacientes apresentado queixa ao tribunal;

— Os riscos são há muito acrescidos mas a banalização da pílula pode ter levado ao esquecimento das contraindicações;

Pergunto à Comissão:

1. Tem conhecimento do caso descrito?

2. Como avalia os riscos para a saúde do uso da pílula de terceira e quarta geração?

3. Que mecanismos existem de fiscalização e controle da indústria farmacêutica que possam avaliar a necessidade de retirada de mercado de pílulas com efeitos altamente nefastos para a saúde da mulher?

Resposta dada por Tonio Borg em nome da Comissão
(27 de fevereiro de 2013)

1. A Agência Europeia de Medicamentos encetou uma análise dos contracetivos hormonais combinados ([1]), também designados de terceira e quarta geração, em 7 de fevereiro de 2013. A análise foi solicitada pela agência francesa de medicamentos no seguimento de preocupações em França relativas ao risco de tromboembolia venosa.

2. Os contracetivos hormonais combinados contêm dois tipos de hormonas, sendo uma delas um estrogénio e a outra um progestagénio ([2]). Sabe-se que o risco de tromboembolia venosa depende dos níveis de estrogénio e do tipo de progestagénio. Ainda que o risco geral destes produtos seja baixo, sabe-se que o risco associado a alguns progestagénios é mais elevado do que o risco associado ao progestagénio levonorgestrel.

O Comité de Avaliação do Risco de Farmacovigilância analisará agora todos os dados disponíveis sobre o risco de tromboembolia venosa e arterial destes contracetivos. As recomendações do referido comité serão depois enviadas ao Comité dos Medicamentos para Uso Humano que irá adotar um parecer. A fase final do processo de análise consiste na adoção por parte da Comissão Europeia de uma decisão juridicamente vinculativa aplicável em todos os Estados-Membros da UE.

3. Após a sua autorização, um medicamento é sujeito a um sistema de vigilância pós-comercialização. As obrigações dos titulares de autorizações de introdução no mercado e das autoridades competentes são definidas pela legislação ([3]), reforçada com as revisões de 2010 e 2012. A empresa tem de enviar relatórios periódicos atualizados de segurança, assim como quaisquer novas informações que possam influenciar a avaliação dos benefícios e riscos do produto em questão.

([1]) http://www.ema.europa.eu/ema/index.jsp?curl=pages/medicines/human/referrals/Combined_hormonal_contraceptives/human_referral_prac_000016.jsp&mid=WC0b01ac05805c516f

([2]) A análise inclui contracetivos hormonais combinados que contenham, como substâncias ativas progestagénicas, clormadinona, desogestrel, dienogest, drospirenona, etonogestrel, gestodeno, nomegestrol, norelgestromina ou norgestimato.

([3]) Regulamento (CE) n.° 726/2004 que estabelece procedimentos comunitários de autorização e de fiscalização de medicamentos para uso humano e veterinário e que institui uma Agência Europeia de Medicamentos, JO L 136 de 30.4.2004, alterado; Diretiva 2001/83/CE que estabelece um código comunitário relativo aos medicamentos para uso humano, JO L 311 de 28.11.2001, alterada.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000516/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Pills with major health risks

The French authorities have stopped reimbursing the cost of third- and fourth-generation contraceptive pills due to increased health risks.

Bayer has been prosecuted due to the side effects produced by the pill in a woman who suffered a stroke, while a further 30 patients have lodged complaints with the courts.

There have long been additional risks, but the pill's widespread use may have led people to disregard its contraindications.

1. Is the Commission aware of the case described?

2. What is its view of the health risks of using the third- and fourth-generation pill?

3. What supervisory and control mechanisms exist in the pharmaceutical industry for assessing the need to withdraw from the market pills which have very harmful effects on women's health?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(27 February 2013)

1. The European Medicines Agency started a review of combined hormonal contraceptives ([1]), also referred to as 3rd and 4th generation, on 7 February 2013. The review was requested by the French Medicines Agency following concerns in France about the risk of venous thromboembolism (VTE).

2. Combined hormonal contraceptives contain two types of hormones, an oestrogen and a progestogen ([2]). The risk of VTE is known to depend on both the level of oestrogen and the type of progestogen. While the overall risk with these products is low, the risk is known to be higher for some progestogens than the risk associated with the progestogen levonorgestrel.

The Pharmacovigilance Risk Assessment Committee (PRAC) will now review all available data on the risk of venous and arterial thromboembolism with these contraceptives. The PRAC recommendations will then be forwarded to the Committee for Medicinal Products for Human Use which will adopt an opinion. The final stage of the review procedure is the adoption by the European Commission of a legally binding decision applicable in all EU Member States.

3. After its authorisation, a medicinal product is subject to a post-marketing surveillance. Obligations of marketing authorisation holders and competent authorities are set by the legislation ([3]), strengthened by the revisions in 2010 and 2012. The company has to submit periodic safety update reports as well as any new information which might influence the evaluation of benefits and risks of the product concerned.

([1]) http://www.ema.europa.eu/ema/index.jsp?curl=pages/medicines/human/referrals/Combined_hormonal_contraceptives/human_referral_prac_000016.jsp&mid=WC0b01ac05805c516f.

([2]) The review includes combined hormonal contraceptives containing as progestogen active substances chlormadinone, desogestrel, dienogest, drospirenone, etonogestrel, gestodene, nomegestrol, norelgestromin or norgestimate.

([3]) Regulation (EC) No 726/2004 laying down Community procedures for the authorisation and supervision of medicinal products for human and veterinary use and establishing a European Medicines Agency, OJ L 136, 30.4.2004, as amended, Directive 2001/83/EC on the Community code relating to medicinal products for human use, OJ L 311, 28.11.2001, as amended.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000517/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: Fundo Social Europeu

Considerando que:

— No orçamento plurianual para 2007-2013, só para os três fundos estruturais foram alocados 341 mil milhões de euros, verba que representa cerca de um terço do total do orçamento da UE;

— Foi divulgado pela imprensa que, na Polónia, foram gastos cerca de 7 milhões de euros do Fundo Social Europeu por um conjunto de multinacionais para darem formação extra aos seus próprios funcionários; os fundos deveriam ter sido usados para formação de desempregados de longa duração, de forma a incentivar à entrada no mercado de trabalho;

— Em 2012, o Tribunal de Contas Europeu descobriu que grandes extensões de terra de pastagem permanente em Itália e em Espanha, a que tinham sido atribuídos subsídios, eram, afinal, áreas florestais ou estavam destinadas a culturas que não eram abrangidas por subsídios;

— Há dois anos, o jornal *Financial Times* apresentou os resultados de uma pormenorizada investigação ([1]) que revelou os casos de indevida utilização de fundos comunitários;

— Os fundos europeus representam e continuarão a constituir um contributo fundamental para a correção de desequilíbrios entre países e regiões;

— Os Estados-Membros são responsáveis pela gestão desses fundos e pela sua utilização como complemento dos seus próprios investimentos;

— Como os Estados-Membros gerem cerca de 80 % do orçamento anual da UE e a Comissão Europeia os restantes 20 %, a fiscalização seria mais fácil se existisse uma abordagem comum em matéria de combate à fraude. Nesse sentido, o Parlamento Europeu está a discutir a proposta de diretiva do Parlamento Europeu e do Conselho relativa à luta contra a fraude lesiva dos interesses financeiros da União através do direito penal;

Pergunto à Comissão:

Sabendo que a crise económica e financeira pode ser uma tentação crescente para tentar ter acesso aos fundos europeus, utilizando-os de forma incorreta, como avalia a coordenação existente entre o trabalho do Organismo Europeu de Luta Antifraude e os Estados-Membros para prevenir este tipo de fraude, garantindo uma correta utilização desses fundos?

Resposta dada por Algirdas Šemeta em nome da Comissão
(8 de março de 2013)

Num contexto de crise económica e de contenção orçamental, as medidas de prevenção e deteção da fraude constituem um contributo particularmente importante para a boa gestão financeira.

A UE e os Estados-Membros partilham a responsabilidade pela proteção dos interesses financeiros da UE e pela luta contra a fraude. As autoridades nacionais gerem 76 % das despesas da UE ([2]).

De acordo com as normas em matéria de gestão partilhada, que regem os Fundos Estruturais e os Fundos Agrícolas, os Estados-Membros são responsáveis em primeira instância pela aplicação das medidas estruturais e agrícolas, assim como pela auditoria e pelo controlo dessa aplicação. Neste âmbito, os Estados-Membros estão ainda obrigados a comunicar à Comissão, num prazo determinado, informações pormenorizadas sobre as irregularidades detetadas.

O OLAF pode intervir em casos específicos, sempre que existam suspeitas suficientemente graves de fraude ou de corrupção, ou irregularidades gravemente lesivas do orçamento da UE.

([1]) http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/7c7dbaa8-fbf2-11df-b7e9-00144feab49a.html#axzz2HIwBKQLX
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/managt_who/who_en.cfm#resp

No exercício da sua função de coordenação da luta contra a fraude ao nível da UE, o OLAF coopera estreitamente com os seus homólogos, incluindo entidades policiais, aduaneiras e judiciárias, tanto no interior da UE como além-fronteiras. Por esta razão, foi criado um serviço de coordenação antifraude (AFCOS) em todos os países que aderiram à UE depois de 2004, assim como nos países candidatos. O AFCOS é uma autoridade nacional responsável pela coordenação das atividades administrativas e operacionais destinadas a proteger os interesses financeiros da União Europeia contra a fraude. Este serviço coordena a partilha de informações entre as autoridades nacionais de prevenção da fraude e o OLAF. Na revisão do Regulamento (CE) n.° 1073/1999 ([3]), cuja negociação está prestes a ser concluída, incluir-se-á uma disposição relativa à designação de um AFCOS por cada Estado-Membro, que visa facilitar e aperfeiçoar a cooperação.

([3]) Regulamento (CE) n.° 1073/1999 do Parlamento Europeu e do Conselho, de 25 de maio de 1999, relativo aos inquéritos efetuados pelo Organismo Europeu de Luta Antifraude (OLAF).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000517/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: The European Social Fund

Whereas:

— In the multiannual budget for 2007-2013, EUR 341 billion was allocated to the three structural funds alone, an amount which represents around a third of the EU's total budget;

— The press disclosed that in Poland around EUR 7 million from the European Social Fund was spent by a group of multinationals to provide extra training for their own employees; the funds should have been used for training long-term unemployed people, in order to encourage them to enter the labour market;

— In 2012, the European Court of Auditors discovered that large areas of permanent pasture land in Italy and Spain, which had received subsidies, were in reality forested areas or were intended for crops that did not qualify for subsidies;

— Two years ago, the *Financial Times* presented the results of a detailed investigation ([1]) which brought to light the cases of improper use of Community funds;

— European funds represent and will continue to be an essential contribution towards correcting imbalances between countries and regions;

— Member States are responsible for managing these funds and for their use as a complement to their own investments;

— As the Member States generate around 80% of the EU's annual budget and the European Commission the remaining 20%, supervision would be simpler if there were a common approach to fighting fraud. As such, the European Parliament is discussing the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the fight against fraud to the Union's financial interests by means of criminal law;

Can the Commission answer the following question:

Knowing that the economic and financial crisis may cause a growing temptation to attempt to access European funds and use them incorrectly, what is its opinion on the existing coordination between the work of the European Anti-Fraud Office and the Member States in preventing this type of fraud, thereby ensuring the correct use of these funds?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(8 March 2013)

In the economic crisis and times of tight public budgets, fraud prevention and detection measures constitute a particularly important contribution to sound financial management.

The EU and the Member States share responsibility for the protection of the EU's financial interests and the fight against fraud. National authorities manage 76% of EU expenditure ([2]).

Under the rules of shared management which govern the Structural and Agricultural Funds, Member States are responsible in the first instance for the implementation of the agricultural and structural measures, their audit and control. In this framework the Member States also are obliged to transmit detailed information on detected irregularities to the Commission within a certain time limit.

OLAF may intervene in specific cases whenever there are sufficiently serious suspicions of fraud or corruption or serious irregularities detrimental to the EU budget.

([1]) http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/7c7dbaa8-fbf2-11df-b7e9-00144feab49a.html#axzz2HIwBKQLX
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/managt_who/who_en.cfm#resp

In its role of coordinating the fight against fraud at EU level, OLAF cooperates closely with its counterparts, including police, customs and judicial bodies, both within the EU and beyond its borders. For this reason an Anti-Fraud Coordination Service (AFCOS) has been established in all countries that joined the EU after 2004 as well as in Candidate Countries. An AFCOS is a national authority responsible for coordination of administrative and operational activities for protecting the EU's financial interests from fraud. It coordinates the sharing of information between the national fraud-prevention authorities and with OLAF. In the revision of Regulation (EC) No 1073/1999 ([3]), the negotiation on which are about to be finalised, there is a provision for all Member States to designate an AFCOS to facilitate and further improve cooperation.

([3]) Regulation (EC) No 1073/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 May 1999 concerning investigations conducted by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF).

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000518/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: Acordo Comercial Anticontrafação

Considerando que:

— O acordo internacional contra a pirataria na rede, ACTA (Acordo Comercial Anticontrafação), foi chumbado pelo Parlamento Europeu;

— O Acordo Comercial Anticontrafacção foi inicialmente apresentado como um tratado global que visava a criação de mecanismos internacionais de combate à contrafação e pirataria, mas rapidamente foi considerado por várias entidades como uma ameaça à liberdade na Internet, criando clivagens entre organismos públicos e organizações da sociedade civil e gerando movimentos de contestação por toda a parte;

— Uma primeira proposta tinha sido negociada no início do ano de 2012 e assinada por 22 dos 27 Estados-Membros da UE, incluindo Portugal, visando uniformizar as medidas de combate à violação dos direitos de autor, combater os *downloads* ilegais de conteúdos e a contrafação em geral — desde medicamentos a produtos comerciais que são «copiados» ilegalmente;

— Apesar de ter origem na Europa, o objetivo era alargar o seu âmbito a nível mundial, tendo sido envolvidos países como os Estados Unidos, Japão, Canadá, Nova Zelândia, Austrália, Singapura, Coreia do Sul, Marrocos, México e Suíça;

— Na sequência do chumbo do Parlamento Europeu, a Comissão Europeia tinha pedido a revisão do tratado pelo Tribunal de Justiça Europeu a fim de avaliar a conformidade das suas disposições com os direitos fundamentais, com o objetivo de o submeter novamente a votação;

— Tem sido noticiada a intenção de desistência de reavaliação da ACTA por parte da Comissão Europeia.

Pergunto à Comissão:

Confirma a intenção de desistir do processo de pedido de revisão do tratado ACTA no Tribunal Europeu?

Resposta dada por Karel De Gucht em nome da Comissão
(1 de março de 2013)

Em 19 de dezembro de 2012, a Comissão decidiu retirar o pedido (datado de 10 de maio de 2012) apresentado ao Tribunal de Justiça Europeu para este emitir um parecer sobre a compatibilidade do Acordo Comercial Anticontrafação (ATA) com os tratados europeus, em particular com a Carta dos Direitos Fundamentais da União Europeia. No mesmo dia, a Comissão informou a Comissão do Comércio Internacional (INTA) do Parlamento Europeu.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000518/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement

Whereas:

— The international agreement against online piracy, ACTA (Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement) was rejected by the European Parliament;

— The Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement was initially presented as a global treaty aiming to create international mechanisms to combat counterfeiting and piracy, but was soon considered by various entities to be a threat to Internet freedom, creating rifts between public institutions and civil society organisations and causing opposition movements to spring up everywhere;

— The first proposal had been negotiated at the beginning of 2012 and signed by 22 of the 27 EU Member States, including Portugal, aiming to standardise the measures for fighting copyright infringement and to combat illegal downloading and counterfeiting in general — from medicines to commercial products which are 'copied' illegally;

— Although it had started in Europe, the objective was to extend it to have worldwide scope, with countries such as the United States, Japan, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Singapore, South Korea, Morocco, Mexico and Switzerland having been involved;

— Following its rejection by the European Parliament, the European Commission requested that the agreement be reviewed by the European Court of Justice in order to assess if its provisions complied with fundamental rights, with the objective of re-submitting it to the vote;

— There has now been news that the European Commission has decided not to go ahead with the re-assessment of ACTA.

Can the Commission answer the following question:

Can it confirm its decision not to go ahead with requesting a review of the ACTA Treaty in the European Court?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(1 March 2013)

On 19 December 2012, the Commission decided to withdraw its request (dated 10 May 2012) to the European Court of Justice to give its opinion on whether the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) is compatible with the European Treaties, in particular with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. The Commission informed the European Parliament's INTA Committee on that same day.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000519/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: Dengue na Madeira II

Considerando o seguinte:

— O arquipélago da Madeira registou 2013 casos de dengue entre 3 de outubro e 19 de dezembro de 2012, tendo sido hospitalizados 122 doentes;

— A febre de dengue transmite-se aos humanos pela picada do mosquito *Aedes aegypti* infetado e apresenta como sintomas febre e dores de cabeça e nas articulações; num estado mais avançado, a doença pode causar hemorragias e tornar-se mortal;

— Tem-se verificado uma tendência decrescente de novos casos, confirmando-se uma evolução favorável da situação na ilha;

— O surto de dengue foi detetado a 3 de outubro, mas a presença do *Aedes aegypti* na Madeira data de 2005;

— Com o aumento das temperaturas no continente, existe risco de o mosquito passar do arquipélago para o território continental;

Pergunto à Comissão:

1. Como avalia a situação descrita?

2. Tem conhecimento de casos semelhantes no espaço da União Europeia?

3. Que medidas tenciona a Comissão adotar para um controlo mais eficaz da disseminação da febre de dengue?

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

A Comissão está plenamente ciente da situação epidemiológica relativa ao atual surto de dengue no arquipélago da Madeira. A legislação em vigor em matéria de doenças transmissíveis (Decisão n.° 2119/98/CE) abrange a vigilância e o controlo das doenças transmitidas por vetores, nomeadamente dengue, que devem ser notificadas através do sistema de alerta rápido e resposta da UE.

Desde o início de 2013, foi notificado um número total de 28 casos, o que demonstra que o surto tem diminuído sensivelmente. A vigilância entomológica demonstrou igualmente uma quebra da atividade do mosquito.

Em 2010, foram registados casos autóctones esporádicos de dengue em França e na Croácia em áreas onde tinha sido identificada a presença do mosquito *Aedes albopictus*. Até à data, não foram comunicados surtos semelhantes ao da Madeira no espaço da UE.

O Centro Europeu de Prevenção e Controlo das Doenças efetuou uma missão no arquipélago em outubro-novembro de 2012, tendo elaborado uma avaliação dos riscos relativa ao surto ([1]); uma segunda missão está prevista para março de 2013. As autoridades portuguesas publicaram recomendações sobre medidas de proteção individual e medidas de segurança relativas ao sangue, às células, aos tecidos e à doação de órgãos na região.

([1]) http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/dengue-madeira-risk-assessment-update.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000519/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Dengue fever in Madeira II

Given that:

— The archipelago of Madeira had 2013 recorded cases of dengue fever between 3 October and 19 December 2012, with 122 patients needing to be hospitalised;

— Humans catch dengue fever after being bitten by an infected *Aedes aegypti* mosquito and the symptoms include fever, headaches and sore joints. In a more advanced stage, the disease can cause haemorrhaging and become fatal;

— The number of new cases has been falling, confirming a favourable progress on the island;

— The outbreak of dengue was first detected on 3 October, but the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito has been living on Madeira since 2005;

— Rising temperatures on mainland Portugal mean there is a risk of the mosquito moving from the archipelago to the rest of the country.

I would like to ask the Commission:

1. What is its assessment of this situation?

2. Is it aware of any other similar cases in the European Union?

3. What measures does it intend to take to control the spread of dengue fever more effectively?

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

The Commission is fully aware of the epidemiological situation of the ongoing outbreak of dengue fever in the Madeira Islands. The current legislation on communicable diseases (Decision 2119/98/EC) covers surveillance and control of vector borne diseases, including Dengue, that should be reported through the EU Early Warning and Response System.

Since the beginning of 2013 a total number of 28 cases have been notified, demonstrating that the outbreak has sensibly decreased. Entomological surveillance has shown a decrease of mosquito activity as well.

In 2010, autochthonous sporadic cases of dengue were reported in France and Croatia in areas where Aedes albopictus had been identified. To date, no outbreaks similar to the Madeira outbreak have been reported in the EU area.

The European Centre for Disease prevention and Control conducted a mission on the island in October-November 2012 and produced a risk assessment of the outbreak ([1]); a second mission is planned for March 2013. The Portuguese authorities have published recommendations regarding personal protective measures and measures for the safety of blood, cells, tissues and organ donations within the region.

([1]) http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/dengue-madeira-risk-assessment-update.pdf

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000520/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: Biocombustível de alfarroba

Segundo notícia veiculada pela Lusa, a Universidade do Algarve está a desenvolver uma tecnologia de fermentação para produzir bioetanol de segunda geração, biocombustível aditivado à gasolina, a partir de polpa de alfarroba. A polpa de alfarroba é uma excelente matéria-prima para a produção de bioetanol, já que existe em Portugal, é barata, muito rica em açúcares e extraída com poucos gastos de energia. Este processo de fermentação é mais fácil e evita a utilização dos cereais (bens alimentares).

Pergunto à Comissão:

Tem conhecimento desta nova tecnologia de fermentação, que revela evidentes vantagens ambientais e alimentares?

Justifica-se ou não o incremento na produção de alfarroba e o apoio a esta investigação?

Resposta dada por Máire Geoghegan-Quinn em nome da Comissão
(12 de março de 2013)

A Comissão tem conhecimento da utilização da alfarroba como matéria-prima para a produção de combustíveis.

A alfarroba é atualmente utilizada como alimento para animais e alguns dos seus produtos têm também utilização na indústria agroalimentar. Além disso, com a fermentação dos hidratos de carbono contidos nesta matéria-prima, podem ser produzidos combustíveis que são, pois, considerados biocombustíveis de «primeira geração».

Estes biocombustíveis poderão contribuir para os objetivos fixados na Diretiva Energias Renováveis, embora caiba aos Estados-Membros estabelecer os correspondentes regimes de incentivos. Note-se é intenção da Comissão promover a utilização de biocombustíveis avançados, cujo potencial de redução das emissões de gases com efeito de estufa é superior ao dos seus equivalentes de primeira geração.

Quanto à investigação em apoio aos combustíveis à base de alfarroba, a política de investigação da UE está centrada exclusivamente na produção de combustíveis avançados, pelo que não apoia esta via tecnológica. Por outro lado, é de supor que a produção de biocombustíveis à base de alfarroba não difira de forma essencial dos atuais processos de produção de combustíveis de primeira geração baseados noutras matérias-primas ricas em açúcar (por exemplo, cana-de-açúcar, beterraba açucareira), razão pela qual essa investigação tem de ser limitada.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000520/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Carob bean biofuel

According to the Portuguese news agency Lusa, the University of Algarve is developing fermentation technology to produce second-generation bioethanol, a biofuel additive for petrol, using carob bean pulp. This pulp is an excellent raw material for making bioethanol as it already grows in Portugal, is cheap, has a high sugar content and little energy is needed to extract it. This fermentation process is easier and avoids the use of cereals (food products).

I would like to ask the Commission:

Is it aware of this new fermentation technology that offers clear advantages in terms of the environment and food supplies?

Would increased carob bean production and support for this research be justified?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(12 March 2013)

The Commission is aware of the use of carob beans as a biofuel feedstock source.

Carobs are currently used as animal feed, and some carob products are also used in the agro-food industry. Fuels can also be produced from this feedstock through the fermentation of its carbohydrate contents, which are therefore considered as 'first generation' biofuels.

Such biofuels could contribute to the targets set out by the Renewable Energy Directive, although it is the competence of Member States to establish the relevant incentive regimes. It should be noted that the Commission aims at promoting the use of advanced biofuels, as these have a higher potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions than their first generation equivalents.

As regards research support to carob-based biofuels, the EU Research Policy concentrates exclusively on advanced biofuel production, and hence does not support this technology pathway. Also, it can be assumed that carob biofuel production does not essentially differ from state-of-art, first-generation biofuel production processes based on other sugar feedstock (e.g. sugar cane, sugar beet), and hence that research needs are limited.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000521/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: OMM apela à redução urgente das emissões de dióxido de carbono

A Organização Meteorológica Mundial (OMM) defendeu, recentemente, uma redução urgente das emissões de dióxido de carbono (CO_2) e de outros gases com efeito de estufa, bem como uma adaptação da sociedade mundial ao aquecimento global.

O Secretário-Geral deste organismo, Michel Jarraud, que participou na celebração do 10.° Aniversário do Centro Internacional para a Investigação do Fenómeno do El Niño, com sede na cidade de Guayaquil, no Equador, refere que é «importante atuar em duas frentes»: primeiro, na redução, «o mais rápido possível», das emissões de gases com efeito de estufa, de forma a travar o aquecimento global, sendo, ao mesmo tempo, necessário «trabalhar na adaptação» da humanidade às mudanças climáticas.

Posto isto, pergunto à Comissão:

Qual o entendimento da Comissão relativamente a esta matéria?

Qual ou quais as estratégias pensadas ao nível da UE para o setor agrícola e da energia para que haja uma adaptação mais rápida e eficaz às novas realidades provocadas pelo aquecimento global?

Resposta dada por Connie Hedegaard em nome da Comissão
(6 de março de 2013)

Em Copenhaga, a comunidade internacional reconheceu como objetivo geral para a ação climática manter o aquecimento mundial abaixo dos 2 °C, de forma a evitar impactos perigosos e potencialmente catastróficos. Desde então, cerca de 90 países que representam mais de 80 % das emissões mundiais comprometeram-se a respeitar metas internas no âmbito da Convenção-Quadro das Nações Unidas sobre Alterações Climáticas. Uma análise do PNUA mostra que estes compromissos, infelizmente, correspondem, no máximo, a 1/3 das necessárias reduções de emissões até 2020 ([1]). Por esta razão, a UE está empenhada no debate com os parceiros internacionais sobre formas de reduzir este desfasamento. A UE está também a trabalhar ativamente na integração da redução dos riscos de catástrofes e da adaptação às alterações climáticas na cooperação para o desenvolvimento e na resposta humanitária.

O pacote Clima e Energia adotado pela UE desenvolveu um vasto conjunto de medidas a tomar pela União Europeia para atenuar as alterações climáticas a nível da UE. Em paralelo, a fim de gerir os impactos inevitáveis das alterações climáticas, a Comissão apresentará esta primavera uma estratégia sobre a adaptação às alterações climáticas. Um dos seus objetivos consiste em assegurar que as considerações em matéria de adaptação às alterações climáticas são devidamente integradas em políticas setoriais da UE. Além disso, a adaptação às alterações climáticas é tomada em consideração em toda a proposta de reforma da política agrícola comum para o período de 2014 a 2020. Espera-se igualmente que aspetos de adaptação sejam integrados em próximas iniciativas políticas da UE no setor da energia, por exemplo, para melhorar a eficiência energética, e o Mecanismo «Interligar a Europa».

([1]) PNUA 2012, «Colmatar o desfasamento em termos de emissões».

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000521/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: The World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) appeals for the urgent reduction of carbon dioxide emissions

The WMO recently advocated an urgent reduction of carbon dioxide (CO_2) and other greenhouse gas emissions, as well as the need for society worldwide to adapt to global warming.

WMO's Secretary-General, Michel Jarraud, participating in the 10th anniversary commemorations of the International Research Centre on El Niño in Guayaquil, Ecuador, stated it was important to act on two fronts: first, by reducing greenhouse gas emissions as quickly as possible so as to stop global warming, and at the same time working to adapt humankind to climate change.

What is the Commission's view on this issue?

What strategy or strategies is the EU considering for the agriculture and energy sectors so that we can adapt more quickly and efficiently to the new realities caused by global warming?

Answer given by Ms Hedegaard on behalf of the Commission
(6 March 2013)

In Copenhagen, the international community recognised limiting global warming below 2°C as the overall ambition level for climate action in order to be able to prevent dangerous and potentially catastrophic impacts. Since then, around 90 countries representing more than 80% of global emissions have pledged domestic targets under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. A UNEP analysis shows that these pledges, unfortunately, amount to at most 1/3 of the required emission reductions by 2020 ([1]). Hence the EU is engaging proactively in discussions with international partners on how to close the ambition gap. The EU is also working on integrating disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate change into development cooperation and humanitarian response.

With the climate and energy package, the EU has developed a comprehensive set of measures to address climate change mitigation at EU level. In parallel, in order to manage the unavoidable impacts of climate change, the Commission this spring will present a strategy on adaptation to climate change. One of its objectives is to ensure that climate change adaptation considerations are properly integrated in EU sectoral policies. Furthermore climate change adaptation is considered throughout the proposal for the reform of the common agricultural policy 2014-2020. Adaptation aspects are also expected to be integrated into up-coming EU policy initiatives in the energy sector, for instance to improve energy efficiency and the Connecting Europe Facility.

([1]) UNEP 2012, The Emissions gap report.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000522/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: Grécia — Austeridade dificulta luta contra a SIDA

Recentemente, a agência Bloomberg noticiou que o combate na luta contra a SIDA na Grécia está a ser dificultado pela austeridade.

A saúde é uma das áreas afetadas pelas medidas de austeridade que a Grécia tem implementado nos últimos anos, e que, inclusivamente, levou a problemas no fornecimento de medicamentos a este país.

Pergunto à Comissão:

— Tem conhecimento desta situação?

— De que forma prevê auxiliar os países mais afetados pela austeridade e que têm obrigatoriamente que implementar políticas orçamentais restritivas na área da saúde, sabendo que a qualidade e eficiência dos serviços prestados poderá ser prejudicada?

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

A Comissão tem conhecimento da situação do sistema de saúde grego.

Em abril de 2012, a Comissão convidou o Centro Europeu de Prevenção e Controlo das Doenças (CEPCD) a elaborar uma avaliação de riscos no que diz respeito à situação do VIH/SIDA na Grécia. Esta avaliação, de que constam recomendações sobre a forma como a Grécia poderia resolver a situação, está publicada no sítio Web do CEPCD ([1]).

A Comissão presta apoio técnico e científico aos Estados-Membros e, especificamente, aos que enfrentam dificuldades financeiras. A Comissão iniciou um diálogo entre as autoridades helénicas e os serviços de saúde pública da Comissão, a fim de examinar as opções de uma atuação conjunta, com base nos conhecimentos especializados disponíveis fornecidos pelos principais parceiros, incluindo as agências das Nações Unidas e da UE competentes.

A Comunicação da Comissão relativa à «Luta contra o VIH/SIDA na União Europeia e nos países vizinhos» e o plano de ação correlacionado ([2]) estabeleceram o enquadramento político para a resposta da UE em matéria de VIH/SIDA. Esta política centra-se numa prevenção eficaz, em atividades em regiões prioritárias e com grupos prioritários, nomeadamente os utilizadores de drogas injetáveis. Essas atividades são levadas a cabo em cooperação com os Estados-Membros, a sociedade civil, as agências da UE e a Organização das Nações Unidas.

([1]) http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/20121130-Risk-Assessment-HIV-in-Greece.pdf
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_threats/com/aids/docs/com2009_pt.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000522/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Greece — Austerity hampers fight against AIDS

The Bloomberg agency recently reported that the fight against AIDS in Greece is being hampered by austerity.

Health is one of the areas affected by the austerity measures Greece has implemented in recent years, even leading to problems with the supply of drugs to that country.

Is the Commission aware of this situation?

How is it considering assisting the countries that are most affected by austerity and must necessarily implement restrictive fiscal policies in the area of health, knowing that the quality and efficiency of the services provided may be impaired?

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

The Commission is aware of the situation in the Greek healthcare system.

In April 2012, the Commission asked the European Centre for Disease Control to prepare a risk assessment as regards the situation on HIV/AIDS in Greece. This assessment with recommendations on how Greece could address the situation is published on the ECDC's website ([1]).

The Commission provides technical and scientific support to Member States and specifically to those which are facing financial constraints. The Commission has initiated a dialogue between the Greek authorities and the Commission's public health services to examine options for joint action, building on the available expertise provided by key partners, including relevant EU and UN agencies.

The Commission's Communication 'on combating HIV/AIDS in the EU and neighbouring countries' and its accompanying Action Plan ([2]) set out the policy framework for the EU response to HIV/AIDS. This policy focuses on effective prevention, activities in priority regions and in priority groups, including injecting drug users. Activities are implemented in cooperation with Member States, civil society, EU agencies and UN organisations.

([1]) http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/20121130-Risk-Assessment-HIV-in-Greece.pdf
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_threats/com/aids/docs/com2009_en.pdf

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000523/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: Infraestrutura de telecomunicações pan-europeia

Considerando que, segundo uma notícia recentemente veiculada pela *Financial Times*, os presidentes das principais empresas de telecomunicações de toda a Europa têm estado a debater a criação de uma rede de infraestruturas de telecomunicações que englobe toda a Europa.

Posto isto, pergunto à Comissão:

Que posição assume perante a possibilidade de criação deste tipo de infraestrutura?

Resposta dada por Neelie Kroes em nome da Comissão
(13 de março de 2013)

A Comissão tomou nota do recente relatório do *Financial Times* sobre a criação de uma rede pan-europeia, mas observa que a ETNO, a associação dos operadores europeus de redes de telecomunicações, negou, vários dias após a sua publicação, que as principais empresas europeias de telecomunicações tenham debatido esse plano em conjunto.

Independentemente da exatidão do relatório, a criação de um verdadeiro mercado interno para as comunicações eletrónicas constitui o fulcro da estratégia da Comissão para o crescimento e o emprego. Nesse quadro, o desenvolvimento de redes transfronteiras e pan-europeias constituiria certamente um fator crítico, independentemente das diferentes formas em que assentasse, como, por exemplo, expansão transfronteiras ou pan-europeia, consolidação, acordos de partilha de ativos, etc., desde que fossem compatíveis com as regras de concorrência da UE.

Para o conseguir, há que começar por superar a atual fragmentação do mercado das comunicações eletrónicas. De acordo com os peritos, um mercado único plenamente integrado para as comunicações eletrónicas poderia trazer benefícios da ordem dos 110 mil milhões de euros por ano, ou seja, de mais de 0,8 % do PIB.

Tendo em conta que, no seu entender, a Europa necessita de uma muito maior integração do mercado único para as comunicações eletrónicas, a Comissão está a ponderar a necessidade de medidas adicionais e, na sequência do anúncio ([1]) pela Comissária responsável pela Agenda Digital, está já a trabalhar sobre propostas de regulamentação destinadas a oferecer aos operadores de telecomunicações maior clareza e previsibilidade, a promover a concorrência e a reforçar o investimento em banda larga. Uma das consequências imediatas do anúncio a nível legislativo será a análise dos mercados que deverão ser regulamentados de modo coordenado e uma abordagem regulamentar mais harmonizada para certos elementos fundamentais da regulação das redes do operador dominante na UE.

([1]) Declaração de 12 de Jullho de 2012
http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-12-554_pt.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000523/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Pan-European telecommunications infrastructure

According to a report recently published by the *Financial Times*, the presidents of the major telecommunications companies throughout Europe have been debating the creation of a network of telecommunications infrastructures covering the whole of Europe.

What is the Commission's position on the possibility of creating this type of infrastructure?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(13 March 2013)

The Commission has taken note of the recent report from the *Financial Times* about the creation of a pan-European network, but observes that ETNO, the association of European telecom network operators, denied several days after its publication that major European telecom firms have debatted such a plan together.

Irrespective of the accuracy of the report, the building of a fully-fledged internal market for electronic communications lies at the core of the Commission's strategy for growth and jobs . In that respect, the development of cross-border and pan-European networks would certainly be a critical enabler, without prejudice to the various forms underpinning this development, e.g. cross-border or pan-European expansion, consolidation, assets sharing agreements etc., as long as these are compatible with EU competition rules.

To achieve this, the current fragmentation of the e-communications market first needs to be overcome. According to experts, a fully integrated single market for electronic communications could bring benefits of the order of EUR 110 billion euros a year, or more than 0.8% of GDP

In the light of its assessment that Europe needs a much more integrated single market for e-communications, the Commission is reflecting on the need for additional measures and, further to the announcement ([1]) by the Digital Agenda Commissioner, is already working on regulatory proposals to bring more predictability and clarity to telecom operators, promote competition and enhance the broadband investments. Among the immediate legislative outputs of the announcement will be the review of markets that should be regulated in a coordinated manner and more harmonised regulatory approach of key elements for the regulation of the dominant operator's networks in the EU.

([1]) Statement of 12 July 2012, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-12-554_en.htm

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000524/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: França: Intervenção no Mali

O Ministro das Relações Exteriores de França, Laurent Fabius, afirmou que a intervenção militar francesa no Mali, que foi iniciada na passada sexta-feira e que conta com o apoio do Reino Unido e da Alemanha, será encerrada nas próximas semanas.

Posto isto, pergunto à Comissão:

Considera possível tal previsão temporal?

Qual o risco para o recrudescimento das atividades terroristas no território europeu em razão da descrita intervenção?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(9 de abril de 2013)

A França afirmou que a diminuição progressiva da sua intervenção se iniciaria em abril de 2013, paralelamente ao reforço da Missão Internacional de Apoio ao Mali (MISMA) e a provável passagem desta missão para os capacetes azuis (discussões em curso relacionadas com a próxima resolução das Nações Unidas).

Desde 2011, a «Estratégia da UE para a Segurança e o Desenvolvimento do Sael» menciona o risco terrorista para os cidadãos e os interesses europeus. Desde a intervenção militar francesa, a possibilidade de uma maior ameaça para os cidadãos e os interesses europeus em África e no território da UE é tida em conta por todos os Estados-Membros, o que já levou a UE a elaborar novas respostas a curto prazo (ajuda às capacidades de contraterrorismo no Mali; preparação de opções para uma maior implicação da UE neste setor no Mali e na Mauritânia).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000524/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: France: Intervention in Mali

France's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Laurent Fabius, has stated that the French military intervention in Mali, which started last Friday with the support of the United Kingdom and Germany, will be finished in the next few weeks.

Does the Commission consider this timeframe likely?

What are the risks of increased terrorist activities within Europe's borders due to this intervention?

(Version française)

Réponse donnée par la Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante Ashton au nom de la Commission
(9 avril 2013)

La France a indiqué que la baisse progressive de son engagement débuterait en avril 2013, parallèlement à la montée en puissance de la mission internationale de soutien au Mali (MISMA), et le probable passage de celle-ci sous casque bleu (discussions en cours autour de la prochaine résolution des Nations unies).

Depuis 2011, la «Stratégie de l'UE pour la sécurité et le développement au Sahel» mentionne le risque terroriste sur les ressortissants et intérêts européens. Depuis l'intervention militaire française, la possibilité d'une menace accrue sur les ressortissants et intérêts européens en Afrique et sur le territoire de l'UE est prise en compte par l'ensemble des États-membres et l'UE et a d'ores et déjà amené l'UE à mettre en œuvre des réponses additionnelles à court terme (aide aux capacités contre-terrorisme du Mali; préparation d'options pour une implication accrue de l'UE sur ce secteur au Mali et en Mauritanie).

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000525/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: EUA — estudo alarmante sobre alterações climáticas

O Governo norte-americano divulgou recentemente, na Internet, o primeiro esboço de uma nova avaliação sobre o clima e sobre o impacto das alterações climáticas nos Estados Unidos.

Segundo o estudo, a temperatura média nos Estados Unidos subiu 1,5 graus centígrados desde 1895, tendo 80 por cento deste aumento sido registado desde 1980. As previsões apontam para a continuação deste cenário, independentemente de haver lugar a «substanciais reduções» nas emissões de gases com efeito de estufa a partir de 2050.

Pergunto à Comissão:

Que considerações tece sobre a nova avaliação climática do Governo norte-americano?

Qual a avaliação feita para o continente europeu sobre esta mesma matéria?

Resposta dada por Connie Hedegaard em nome da Comissão
(14 de março de 2013)

O primeiro projeto de avaliação do Governo dos EUA, recentemente publicado, apresenta projeções para o aumento da temperatura média dos EUA em diferentes cenários de desenvolvimento socioeconómico global. A temperatura média global deverá continuar a aumentar durante a primeira metade do presente século, independentemente do cenário em termos de emissões, devido aos gases com efeito de estufa que já foram libertados para a atmosfera. O relatório dos EUA prevê que a temperatura dos EUA no final deste século se situe entre 1,7 e 2,8 graus Celsius acima dos níveis de 1895, num cenário de baixo nível de emissões. Este cenário específico tem em conta as futuras reduções das emissões, em resultado da utilização de tecnologias limpas e eficientes em termos de recursos, mas não os esforços destinados explicitamente a fazer face às alterações climáticas.

A Comissão considera que esta avaliação confirma a necessidade de ações mais vigorosas para reduzir significativamente as emissões de gases com efeito de estufa, a fim de limitar o aquecimento global a um nível inferior a 2 graus Celsius e evitar os riscos mais graves decorrentes das alterações climáticas. Contudo, mesmo neste cenário de um aumento da temperatura média global de 2 graus Celsius, continuaria a sentir-se o impacto das alterações climáticas, e a UE — bem como o resto do mundo — não tem outra solução senão adaptar-se a esses efeitos para assegurar um crescimento sustentável.

A temperatura média no solo da Europa na última década (2002-2011) foi 1,3 graus Celsius mais elevada do que a verificada na era pré-industrial, o que significa que a temperatura na Europa aumentou mais rapidamente do que a média global. Verificou-se igualmente que a temperatura no solo da Europa poderá em 2071 — 2100 subir entre 2,5 e 4 graus Celsius em relação aos níveis pré-industriais, se não forem feitos esforços de atenuação para combater as alterações climáticas ([1]).

([1]) «Climate change, impacts and vulnerability in Europe 2012: an indicator-based report», Agência Europeia do Ambiente, Copenhaga, 2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000525/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Alarming US study on climate change

The US Government recently published on the Internet the first draft of a new assessment on climate and the impact of climate change in the United States.

According to the study, the average temperature in the United States has risen by 1.5 degrees Celsius since 1895, with 80 % of this increase having occurred since 1980. The predictions show a continuation of this scenario, regardless of whether there are 'substantial reductions' in greenhouse gas levels starting in 2050.

What are the Commission's thoughts on the new climate assessment by the United States Government?

What is the assessment for Europe on this same issue?

Answer given by Ms Hedegaard on behalf of the Commission
(14 March 2013)

The US Government's recently-published draft assessment presents projected US average temperature rise under different global socioeconomic development scenarios. Global average temperature is expected to continue to increase during the first half of this century, regardless of the emissions scenario, due to greenhouse gases that have already been released into the atmosphere. The US report projects that US warming at the end of this century will be 1.7 to 2.8 degrees Celsius above 1895 levels under a low emissions scenario. This particular scenario includes future emissions reductions from the use of clean and resource-efficient technologies but not efforts to explicitly tackle climate change.

The Commission considers that this assessment supports the need for stronger action to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions in order to limit global warming to below 2 degrees Celsius and avoid the most serious risks of climate change. However, climate change impacts would still occur under such a 2 degrees Celsius global average temperature increase, and the EU — as well as the rest of the world — has no choice but to adapt to these impacts to ensure sustainable growth.

The average land temperature for Europe for the last decade (2002-2011) is 1.3 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial level, which means that temperature over Europe has risen faster than the global average. It has also been assessed that land temperature in Europe could rise by 2.5 to 4 degrees Celsius relative to pre-industrial levels by 2071 to 2100 in the absence of mitigation efforts to tackle climate change ([1]).

([1]) 'Climate change, impacts and vulnerability in Europe 2012: an indicator-based report', European Environment Agency, Copenhagen, 2012.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000526/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: Nova descoberta para tratamento do cancro da mama

Segundo notícia veiculada pela comunicação social portuguesa, uma nova nanopartícula foi desenvolvida por uma equipa de investigadores portugueses que «previne os efeitos secundários associados à quimioterapia e aumenta a eficácia terapêutica do tratamento». Segundo um dos investigadores envolvidos no projeto, além de «matar as células cancerígenas», a nanopartícula para o tratamento do cancro da mama distingue-se por aniquilar os vasos sanguíneos que alimentam o tumor, evitando reincidências.

— Como avalia esta nova descoberta?

— De que forma é que a investigação pode merecer o apoio da UE?

Resposta dada por Máire Geoghegan-Quinn em nome da Comissão
(12 de março de 2013)

A Comissão tem conhecimento da publicação da Universidade de Coimbra ([1]) a que se refere o Senhor Deputado, bem como das ações conexas que visam avaliar a utilização de nanopartículas transportadoras de medicamentos para o tratamento do cancro.

A utilização de nanopartículas associada a medicamentos da quimioterapia convencional assegura que os medicamentos visem melhor o tumor e sejam menos prejudiciais para os doentes ([2]).

A Comissão apoiou, no âmbito do Sétimo Programa-Quadro de Investigação e Desenvolvimento Tecnológico (7.° PQ 2007-2013), 58 projetos de investigação no domínio das nanopartículas e do cancro com uma contribuição total da CE de 90,9 milhões de euros.

O financiamento da União Europeia é concedido a trabalhos de investigação com base em convites à apresentação de propostas concorrenciais que são publicados anualmente com os respetivos Programas de Trabalho. As candidaturas para projetos de investigação em colaboração apresentadas no âmbito destes convites são selecionadas mediante um processo de avaliação com análise interpares independente, sendo a excelência científica o critério fundamental e o apoio financeiro concedido às melhores candidaturas. Uma vez que o 7.° PQ está a chegar ao seu termo, não estão atualmente previstos mais convites neste domínio.

A proposta da Comissão relativa ao Horizonte 2020 — Programa-Quadro de Investigação e Inovação (2014-2020) ([3]) — irá provavelmente proporcionar oportunidades de investigação sobre abordagens de tratamento do cancro no âmbito do desafio societal «Saúde, alterações demográficas e bem-estar» e do objetivo «Liderança em Tecnologias Facilitadoras e Industriais» da prioridade «Liderança Industrial». É todavia ainda prematuro dizer quais poderão ser as questões específicas de investigação abordadas.

([1]) Uma equipa de investigadores (João Nuno Moreira, Vera Moura e Sérgio Simões) do Centro de Neurociências e Biologia Celular (CNC) e da Faculdade de Farmácia da Universidade de Coimbra (FFUC) registaram uma patente nos EUA relativa a um dos seus produtos de nanopartículas (Pegasemp ®) que tem por objetivo a administração de medicamentos com baixo peso molecular. Ao visar as células cancerosas e os vasos sanguíneos que alimentam o tumor, deveria evitar a propagação de células cancerosas bem como recidivas do tumor.

([2]) http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v491/n7425_supp/full/491S58a.html

([3]) www.ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index_en.cfm?pg=h2020-documents

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000526/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: New discovery in the treatment of breast cancer

According to reports in the Portuguese media, a new nanoparticle has been developed by a team of Portuguese researchers that 'prevents the side effects associated with chemotherapy and increases the efficacy of the treatment'. According to one of the researchers involved in the study, besides 'killing the cancer cells', the nanoparticle used for treating breast cancer also eliminates the blood vessels feeding the tumour, thereby avoiding relapses.

What is the Commission's view of this new discovery?

How could this research benefit from EU support?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(12 March 2013)

The Commission is aware of the publication mentioned by the Honourable Member, performed by the University of Coimbra ([1]), as well as related efforts aimed at evaluating the use of drug carrying nanoparticles in cancer treatment.

Using nanoparticles associated with usual chemotherapy drugs ensure that the drugs better target the tumour and are less harmful for patients ([2]).

The Commission has supported through the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7, 2007-2013) 58 projects addressing research in the area of nanoparticles and cancer for a total EC contribution of EUR 90.9 million.

European Union research funding is granted based on annual competitive calls for proposals published with relevant Work Programmes. Collaborative research applications submitted to these calls are selected through an independent peer-review evaluation process with scientific excellence as the overriding criterion and financial support awarded to the best applications. As FP7 comes to an end, there are currently no more calls foreseen in this area.

The Commission's proposal for Horizon 2020 — The framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020) ([3]) will likely offer opportunities for research on cancer therapy approaches through the 'Health, demographic change and well-being' societal challenge and the 'Leadership in enabling and industrial technologies' objective of the priority 'Industrial leadership'. It is yet too premature to ascertain which could be the specific research issues addressed.

([1]) A team of researchers (João Nuno Moreira, Vera Moura and Sergio Simões) from the Center for Neuroscience and Cell Biology (CNC) and the Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Coimbra (FFUC) have succeeded in obtaining a patent, in USA, for one of their nanoparticles product (PEGASEMP®) aiming at delivering small molecular weight drugs. By targeting cancer cells and the blood vessels that nurture the tumour, it should prevent spreading of cancer cells and avoid relapse of the tumour.

([2]) http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v491/n7425_supp/full/491S58a.html

([3]) www.ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index_en.cfm?pg=h2020-documents

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000527/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: Pobreza alastra no sul da UE

Considerando que:

— Foi apresentado esta terça-feira em Bruxelas o relatório de 2012 da Comissão Europeia sobre «Emprego e Desenvolvimento Social», que conclui que o risco da pobreza e exclusão social está a aumentar na UE, especialmente nos países do sul, como é o caso de Portugal;

— Um dos fatores apontado como responsável por esta situação é o aumento do desemprego, cuja taxa média nos 17 países do sul da Europa é de 14,5 %, ou seja, mais do que o dobro da taxa verificada nos países do centro e norte da UE;

— O comissário europeu Laszlo Andor admite que a austeridade deve ser suavizada e afirma mesmo que «os membros da troika precisam de trabalhar em conjunto para chegar a acordo sobre uma maior flexibilidade em termos dos prazos e dos tipos de medidas de consolidação fiscal».

Assim pergunto à Comissão:

Como interpreta as declarações do Comissário Laszlo Andor, tendo em conta a posição mais conservadora da Comissão?

Resposta dada por László Andor em nome da Comissão
(21 de março de 2013)

A Análise Anual do Crescimento adotada pela Comissão no final de 2012 estabelece como uma das cinco prioridades para 2013 «prosseguir uma consolidação orçamental diferenciada favorável ao crescimento». As estratégias adotadas pelos Estados-Membros para restabelecer a sustentabilidade das finanças públicas devem ser implementadas de forma a apoiarem o crescimento e a justiça social. A Comissão recomenda aos Estados-Membros que sejam seletivos quando preveem cortes orçamentais, a fim de preservar o potencial de crescimento futuro e redes de segurança social essenciais.

A Comissão considera que os investimentos em domínios como a educação, a investigação, a inovação e a energia devem receber prioridade e ser reforçados e que os Estados-Membros devem, em particular, reforçar os serviços de emprego e as políticas ativas do mercado de trabalho, nomeadamente os mecanismos de garantia destinados aos jovens.

A passagem da carga fiscal global para bases fiscais menos prejudiciais ao crescimento e à criação de emprego, bem como sistemas fiscais mais eficientes, competitivos e equitativos, são formas de alcançar uma redistribuição mais equitativa nos Estados-Membros da UE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000527/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Poverty spreads across the southern EU

This Tuesday the Commission presented its 2012 report on 'Employment and Social Developments in Europe' in Brussels. It concludes that the risk of poverty and social exclusion is increasing in the EU, especially in the southern countries, as is the case of Portugal.

One of the factors seen as responsible for this situation is the growth of unemployment, with an average rate of 14.5 % in the 17 countries of southern Europe, which is more than double the rate seen in the countries of central and northern Europe.

Commissioner László Andor admits that austerity should be softened and even claims that the members of the troika need to work together to reach an agreement on greater flexibility in terms of deadlines and the types of measures for fiscal consolidation.

How does the Commission view Commissioner László Andor's statements, given its own more conservative position?

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

The Annual Growth Survey adopted by the Commission at the end of 2012 sets as one of five priorities for 2013 'pursuing differentiated, growth-friendly fiscal consolidation'. The strategies adopted by Member States to restore the sustainability of public finances must be implemented in a way that supports both growth and social fairness. The Commission recommends to the Member States to be selective where fiscal cuts are envisaged, in order to preserve future growth potential and essential social safety nets.

The Commission considers that investments in areas such as education, research, innovation and energy should be prioritised and strengthened, and that Member States should in particular reinforce employment services and active labour market policies, notably youth guarantee schemes.

Shifting the overall tax burden towards tax bases that are less detrimental to growth and job creation, and make tax systems more efficient, competitive and fairer are ways in which a more equitable redistribution can be achieved in the EU Member States.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000528/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: Incêndios na Austrália

Considerando que:

— A Austrália tem vastas regiões muito secas e que os incêndios são habituais no país;

— Os primeiros 6 dias de 2013 entraram diretamente para os 20 dias mais quentes de que há registo, tendo mesmo ultrapassado os 50 graus;

— Neste momento estão ativos simultaneamente mais de 130 incêndios, 40 dos quais estão por controlar;

— A Primeira-Ministra australiana, Julia Gilliard, considerou que quatro áreas em Nova Gales do Sul estão no nível «catastrófico» de perigo de incêndio.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

Como avalia a situação descrita face aos avisos da comunidade científica a propósito do fenómeno do aquecimento global do planeta?

Qual o risco de uma evolução equivalente nos países do sul da UE?

Resposta dada por Connie Hedegaard em nome da Comissão
(13 de março de 2013)

As vagas de calor causaram nos últimos anos mortes, incêndios, prejuízos nas colheitas, bem como prejuízos económicos ([1]). Na Europa, desde 1980 as temperaturas extremas, as secas e os incêndios florestais representam 20 % dos custos resultantes de catástrofes naturais ([2]). Num contexto climatérico mais quente, as projeções para a Europa do Sul, Central e Oriental revelam que os riscos de incêndio aumentam em zonas já propensas a incêndios, as zonas vulneráveis expandem-se e as épocas de incêndios prolongam-se, com uma variação regional considerável.

A comunidade internacional, no âmbito da Convenção das Nações Unidas sobre as Alterações Climáticas, acordou em limitar o aquecimento global num máximo de 2°C, a fim de prevenir impactos potencialmente catastróficos, nomeadamente acontecimentos mais frequentes ou mais intensos, como os acontecimentos com que atualmente a Austrália se confronta. Contudo, os impactos das alterações climáticas ocorreriam do mesmo modo mesmo com uma temperatura média global até 2°C e a UE — tal como o resto do mundo — não tem outra alternativa senão adaptar-se a estes impactos, nomeadamente os impactos sobre a probabilidade e a intensidade dos incêndios florestais.

Instrumentos como o Sistema de Informação sobre Incêndios Florestais na Europa (EFFIS) contribuem já para apoiar a prevenção dos incêndios florestais na UE. A Comissão, consciente da vulnerabilidade às alterações climáticas dos sistemas naturais e socioeconómicos da UE, tem estado a trabalhar numa estratégia da UE em matéria de adaptação às alterações climáticas, a adotar na primavera de 2013. Tem por objetivo assegurar medidas de adaptação em todo o seu território coerentes com as vulnerabilidades regionais e locais específicas.

([1]) http://climatechange.worldbank.org/content/climate-change-report-warns-dramatically-warmer-world-century
([2]) http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/climate-impacts-and-vulnerability-2012

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000528/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Fires in Australia

Australia has vast very dry areas and fires occur regularly in the country.

The first six days of 2013 were all among the 20 hottest days on record, with temperatures above 50 degrees.

There are currently more than 130 fires active at the same time, 40 of which are as yet uncontrolled.

The Australian Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, has stated that four areas of New South Wales are at a 'catastrophic' level of fire risk.

Can the Commission therefore give its view on the situation described above given the warnings from the scientific community regarding the planet's global warming?

What is the risk of similar developments in the southern countries of the EU?

Answer given by Ms Hedegaard on behalf of the Commission
(13 March 2013)

Heat waves have in recent years caused deaths, fires, harvest damages as well as economic loss ([1]). In Europe, extreme temperatures, droughts and forest fires account for 20% of the costs due to natural disasters since 1980 ([2]). In a warmer climate, projections for Southern, Central and Eastern Europe show fire risks increase in fire-prone areas, vulnerable areas expand, and fire seasons lenghten, with considerable regional variation.

The international community, under the U.N. Convention on Climate Change, has agreed on limiting global warming below 2°C in order to prevent potentially catastrophic impacts, including more frequent or more intense events like the ones currently faced by Australia. However climate change impacts would still occur under such a 2°C global average temperature increase, and the EU — as well as the rest of the world — has no choice but to adapt to these impacts, including impacts on forest-fires likelihood and intensity.

Tools, such as the European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS), already help support forest fire prevention in the EU. The Commission, aware of the vulnerability to climate change of the EU's natural and socioeconomic systems, is currently working on an EU Strategy on adaptation to climate change, to be adopted in spring 2013. It aims at ensuring adaptation action across its territory that is consistent with the particular regional and local vulnerabilities.

([1]) http://climatechange.worldbank.org/content/climate-change-report-warns-dramatically-warmer-world-century.
([2]) http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/climate-impacts-and-vulnerability-2012.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000529/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: Apelos ao Reino Unido para que se mantenha na UE

Considerando que:

— Dirigentes de grandes empresas britânicas apelaram ao Primeiro-Ministro David Cameron para não «pôr em perigo» a participação do Reino Unido na União Europeia dadas as consequências negativas para a economia e as empresas;

— Os empresários referem que «a UE continua a ser o destino de metade das exportações britânicas» e «a mais poderosa zona comercial do mundo»;

— O Ministro britânico das Finanças, George Osborne, afirmou, recentemente, em entrevista ao diário alemão *Die Welt*, que a UE devia mudar, se quer que o Reino Unido se mantenha como Estado-Membro;

— Teve-se igualmente conhecimento de uma tomada de posição norte-americana sobre a conduta que o Reino Unido deveria adotar relativamente à União Europeia contida numa declaração emitida pelo Secretário-Adjunto do Departamento de Estado para os Assuntos Europeus, a saber: «*Os EUA têm uma relação crescente com a UE como instituição, a qual tem uma voz crescente no mundo, e nós queremos ver uma voz britânica forte nessa UE. Esse é o interesse americano. Desejamos uma UE virada para fora com o Reino Unido dentro dela*».

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

Qual a posição da Comissão relativamente a esta matéria?

Resposta dada por José Manuel Durão Barroso em nome da Comissão
(1 de março de 2013)

Cabe ao governo britânico e ao povo britânico decidir qual é a melhor abordagem para definir o lugar que o Reino Unido deve ocupar na União Europeia. O Reino Unido, enquanto membro da União Europeia, contribuiu positivamente para a realização das políticas europeias, incluindo o aprofundamento do mercado único, o alargamento, a política em matéria de clima e energia, a abertura da Europa ao mundo e o desenvolvimento de novas oportunidades de comércio. A Comissão considera que, desde que seja esse o desejo do Reino Unido, é do interesse da Europa e do próprio Reino Unido que este país continue a ser um membro ativo da UE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000529/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Appeal to the United Kingdom to stay within the EU

Directors of large UK companies have appealed to Prime Minister David Cameron not to 'endanger' the United Kingdom's EU membership given the negative consequences for the economy and business.

The entrepreneurs maintain that the EU continues to be the destination of half of the UK's exports and the most powerful trading bloc in the world.

In a recent interview to the German newspaper *Die Welt*, the British Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, stated that the EU should change if it wants the United Kingdom to remain as a Member State.

The US State Department's Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs has said, with regard to the conduct that the United Kingdom should adopt towards the European Union, that: 'The United States has a growing relationship with the EU as an institution, which has an increasing voice in the world, and we want to see a strong British voice in that EU. That is in America's interests. We welcome an outward-looking EU with Britain in it.'

Can the Commission therefore say what its view is on this issue?

Answer given by Mr Barroso on behalf of the Commission
(1 March 2013)

It is for the British Government and the British people to set out what they feel is the best approach to the UK's place within the European Union. Through its membership the UK has positively contributed to the realisation of European policies from the deepening of the single market, to enlargement, to climate and energy policy, to keeping Europe open to the world and developing new trade opportunities. The Commission considers that, provided that the UK so wishes, it is in the European interest and in the UK's own interest for Britain to continue to be an active member of the EU.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000530/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: Notas de 500 euros

Desde a sua criação, em 2002, tem-se chamado a atenção para a utilização das notas de 200 euros e, sobretudo, das notas de 500 euros, na facilitação das atividades ilícitas do submundo das associações criminosas, designadamente no tráfico de pessoas e drogas, na lavagem de dinheiro, na evasão fiscal e no terrorismo.

No Reino Unido, inclusivamente, em abril de 2010, as casas de câmbio pararam de vender as notas de 500 euros depois de um estudo de 8 meses realizado pela *Serious and Organised Crime Agency* (SOCA) ter revelado que 90 % de todas as notas de 500 euros vendidas no Reino Unido estavam nas mãos do crime organizado.

A preferência pela sua utilização é facilmente explicável: o facto de valer seis vezes mais que a nota mais elevada dos EUA (um milhão de dólares em notas de 100 pesa quase 10 quilos e o equivalente em notas de 500 euros pesa pouco menos de dois quilos), de ser transacionável em todo o mundo e de ser igualmente fiável como reserva de valor.

Não obstante a Diretiva de 2005/60/CE da UE relativa à prevenção da utilização do sistema financeiro para objetivos criminosos ter implementado um controlo das transações superiores a 15.000 euros, tal sistema não se aplica fora da zona euro e, portanto, revela-se inócuo face ao fenómeno da globalização do crime organizado.

Assim, pergunta-se à Comissão:

Quais as vantagens de continuar a emitir notas de 200 euros e, sobretudo, de 500 euros, face às evidentes desvantagens reveladas pelos estudos realizados por entidades que combatem o crime organizado?

Resposta dada por Olli Rehn em nome da Comissão
(13 de março de 2013)

A Comissão não tem competências na denominação de notas de euro, dado que nos termos do disposto no artigo 28.º do TFUE, o direito de determinar e alterar a denominação das notas de euro é da exclusiva responsabilidade do Banco Central Europeu.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000530/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: EUR 500 banknotes

Since their creation in 2002, warnings have been given regarding the use of EUR 200 and, above all, EUR 500 banknotes in facilitating illegal activities by underground criminal organisations, namely trafficking in persons and drugs, money laundering, tax avoidance and terrorism.

In fact, in April 2010, in the United Kingdom, the bureaux de change stopped selling EUR 500 banknotes after an eight-month study carried out by the Serious and Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) showed that 90 % of all EUR 500 banknotes sold in the United Kingdom were in the hands of organised crime.

Preference for their use can easily be explained: the fact that they are worth six times more than the highest-value banknote in the United States (USD 1 million in USD 100 banknotes weighs almost 10 kilograms and the equivalent in EUR 500 banknotes weighs a little under two kilograms), they are marketable throughout the world and equally reliable as stores of value.

Although EU Directive 2005/60/EC on the prevention of the use of the financial system for criminal purposes put in place controls on transactions above EUR 15 000, that system is not applicable outside the euro area and, therefore, has no effect on the problem of the globalisation of organised crime.

I therefore ask the Commission:

What are the advantages of continuing to issue EUR 200 and, above all, EUR 500 banknotes, in the light of the obvious disadvantages shown by the studies carried out by entities that fight organised crime?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(13 March 2013)

The Commission has no competence for euro banknote denominations, given that the right of determining and changing the denomination of euro banknotes lies exclusively with the European Central Bank pursuant to Article 128 TFEU.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000531/13
à Comissão
Ana Gomes (S&D)
(21 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: Concorrência fiscal na UE

Na primeira comunicação aos eurodeputados após o início da Presidência irlandesa do Conselho da UE, o Primeiro-Ministro irlandês prometeu apostar no mercado único para fomentar o crescimento e o emprego. Contudo, a concorrência no mercado interno continuará a ser distorcida e pervertida se não forem tomadas medidas para pôr termo à rivalidade fiscal florescente entre os Estados-Membros.

O *dumping* fiscal entrava a recuperação económica no meu país: 19 das 20 empresas cotadas em bolsa estão domiciliadas na Holanda e em outros países europeus, para evitar pagar impostos mais altos no seu país e para evitar impostos sobre lucros feitos em países em desenvolvimento.

Na Irlanda, a taxa de IRC é de 12,5 %. O Governo português está a ponderar aplicar uma taxa de 10 %. Outros se seguirão, numa corrida para o fundo que desvia recursos dos orçamentos da UE e nacionais, tão necessários para investir em crescimento, emprego e para sustentar o modelo social europeu.

A Comissão considera aceitável que Portugal, país intervencionado pela Comissão, pelo Banco Central Europeu e pelo FMI, que atravessa uma grave crise financeira, económica e social, possa reduzir consideravelmente as receitas fiscais cobradas às empresas, numa altura em que essas receitas são imprescindíveis, com o único propósito de conseguir competir com os seus pares europeus na atração de investimento?

Resposta dada por Olli Rehn em nome da Comissão
(25 de março de 2013)

A taxa do imposto sobre as sociedades é determinada pelos Estados-Membros. Não obstante, como indicado na Análise Anual do Crescimento, a Comissão é de opinião que a concentração numa política fiscal sólida, que reforce a qualidade da tributação, permite que os regimes fiscais dos Estados-Membros apoiem a consolidação orçamental e o crescimento económico.

No contexto do Programa de Ajustamento Económico para Portugal, o governo pretende conceber um regime de imposto sobre as sociedades que atinja ambos os objetivos. Em primeiro lugar, as escolhas no domínio da tributação das sociedades devem apoiar os esforços de consolidação e evitar as perdas de receitas a curto e a médio prazo. Em segundo lugar, existe a possibilidade de criar um enquadramento fiscal mais favorável para as empresas em Portugal, através da redução da taxa de imposto efetiva, do alargamento da matéria coletável, da simplificação das normas a cumprir e da revisão dos aspetos internacionais.

A coordenação e cooperação a nível da UE são necessárias a fim de evitar os efeitos negativos, para o mercado único, de uma concorrência fiscal prejudicial. Para esse efeito, os Estados-Membros adotaram, em 1997, um código de conduta no domínio da fiscalidade das empresas. Além disso, a fim de lutar contra alguns dos principais entraves fiscais ao crescimento do mercado único, a Comissão apresentou ao Conselho, em 2011, um projeto de diretiva relativa a uma matéria coletável comum consolidada do imposto sobre as sociedades (Mcccis).

Entre outros objetivos, estas iniciativas dão precisamente resposta às preocupações expressas pela Senhora Deputada.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000531/13
to the Commission
Ana Gomes (S&D)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Tax competition in the EU

In the first communication to MEPs after the beginning of the Irish Presidency of the EU, the Irish Prime Minister promised to strengthen the single market in order to foster growth and employment. However, competition in the internal market will continue to be distorted and warped if measures are not taken to put an end to the booming tax rivalry between Member States.

Tax dumping hinders the economic recovery of my country: 19 out of the 20 listed companies are domiciled in Holland and other European countries, to avoid paying higher taxes in their own country and to avoid tax on profits made in developing countries.

In Ireland, corporation tax is 12.5 %. The Portuguese Government is considering applying a rate of 10 %. Others will follow, in a race to the bottom, which diverts resources from the EU and national budgets, so badly needed for investing in growth and employment and for upholding the European social model.

Does the Commission consider it acceptable that Portugal, a country that is receiving support from the Commission, the European Central Bank and the IMF and undergoing a serious financial, economic and social crisis, should substantially reduce its corporate tax revenue at a time when that revenue is essential, with the sole purpose of being able to compete with its European peers in attracting investment?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(25 March 2013)

The corporate tax rate is determined by the Member States. Nevertheless, as pointed out in the Annual Growth Survey, the Commission believes that by focusing on a sound tax policy that enhances the quality of taxation Member States' tax systems can support fiscal consolidation and economic growth.

In the context of the Economic Adjustment Programme for Portugal, the government aims at designing a corporate tax system that attains both objectives. First, the choices in corporate taxation must support the consolidation efforts and should prevent revenue losses in the short to medium-term. Second, there is scope for offering a more attractive tax environment for business in Portugal, by lowering the effective tax rate, broadening the basis, simplifying compliance and revising international aspects.

Coordination and cooperation at EU level is necessary to prevent the negative effects on the Single Market of harmful tax competition. For that purpose, Member States adopted a Code of Conduct for business taxation in 1997. Furthermore, to tackle some major fiscal impediments to growth in the Single Market, the Commission proposed a draft directive to the Council to establish a Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base (CCCTB) in 2011.

These initiatives, among other objectives, precisely address the concerns expressed by the Honourable Member.

(Tekstas lietuvių kalba)

Klausimas, į kurį atsakoma raštu, Nr. E-000532/13
Komisijai
Radvilė Morkūnaitė-Mikulėnienė (PPE)
(2013 m. sausio 21 d.)

Tema: Specifinių maisto saugos terminų vertimo tikslumas

Teiginiai apie maisto produktų maistingumą ir sveikatingumą, tvirtinami pagal Reglamento (EB) Nr. 1924/2006 nuostatas, labai svarbūs užtikrinant, kad vartotojams pateikiama informacija būtų teisinga, aiški, patikima ir naudinga. Ypač svarbu, kad ši informacija būtų tiksli visomis oficialiosiomis ES kalbomis, kaip to reikalaujama Sutarties dėl ES veikimo 297 straipsnyje ir Reglamente 1/1958. Pagal minėtas taisykles Reglamentu (ES) Nr. 432/2012 patvirtintas Leidžiamų vartoti teiginių apie maisto produktų sveikumą sąrašas ne į visas oficialiąsias kalbas išverstas vienodai tiksliai, kadangi, verčiant specifinius terminus į lietuvių kalbą, buvo konsultuojamasi tik su reguliuojančiomis institucijomis, bet ne su mokslo ar suinteresuotųjų verslo institucijų specialistais.

1. Ar Komisijai yra žinoma situacija apie tai, kad ne visuomet užtikrinamas tikslus specifinių terminų (ne tik maisto saugumo srityje) vertimas į mažiau vartojamas ES oficialiąsias kalbas?

2. Kokių papildomų veiksmų planuoja imtis Komisija, kad būtų užtikrinamas specifinių terminų vertimo į mažiau vartojamas ES kalbas tikslumas ir aiškumas?

T. Borgo atsakymas Komisijos vardu
(2013 m. kovo 6 d.)

Visus Europos Komisijos teisės aktus verčia kalbą gerai išmanantys Komisijos vertėjai raštu. Svarbiausia laikytis Europos Sąjungos daugiakalbystės principo ir drauge užtikrinti, kad Komisijos dokumentai visomis oficialiosiomis kalbomis būtų kokybiški ir aiškūs. Siekiant teksto teisinio tikrumo, tikslumo ir aiškumo, valstybėms narėms suteikiama galimybė peržiūrėti ir komentuoti Komisijos teisės aktų vertimų kalbą.

Jei Komisijai pranešama apie tekstų skirtingomis kalbomis netikslumus ar nenuoseklumą, atsiradusius dėl vertimo klaidų, ir jei yra pakankamas pagrindas teisės akto klaidas taisyti, pradedama speciali klaidų ištaisymo procedūra. Komisijos nuomone, keisti šios tvarkos nėra reikalo.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000532/13
to the Commission
Radvilė Morkūnaitė-Mikulėnienė (PPE)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Accuracy of the translation of specific food safety terms

Nutrition and health claims made on foods, approved under the provisions of Regulation (EC) No 1924/2006, are very important for ensuring that the information provided to consumers is correct, clear, reliable and useful. It is particularly important for this information to be accurate in all official EU languages, as required by Article 297 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and Regulation No 1/1958. The list of permitted health claims made on foods approved by Regulation (EU) No 432/2012 in accordance with the rules mentioned is not translated into all the official languages with the same accuracy because when translating specific terms into Lithuanian, only regulatory authorities were consulted, not specialists from scientific institutions or the businesses concerned.

1. Is the Commission aware that there is not always a guarantee that specific terms (not only in the field of food safety) are translated accurately into lesser-used official EU languages?

2. What additional action does the Commission plan to take to ensure the accuracy and clarity of the translation of specific terms into lesser-used EU languages?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(6 March 2013)

The European Commission uses, for all pieces of legislation, the mechanism of in-house translation which relies on professional linguists. The main aim is to respect the European Union's multilingual character by making sure that the Commission produces high quality and clearly written documents in all the official languages. For the sake of legal certainty, further accuracy and clarity of the text, in addition to the official translation provided by the Commission, the legal acts are also usually subject to linguistic comments by the Member States.

Where the Commission is made aware of any inaccuracies or inconsistencies in any of the language versions due to translation errors, it launches the specific procedure for correcting the error, if there are grounds for a corrigendum of the legal act. The Commission does not consider it necessary to change this approach.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-000533/13
à la Commission
Rachida Dati (PPE)
(21 janvier 2013)

Objet: Accord de libre-échange avec les États-Unis: nous ne pouvons plus attendre

Plus de 15 millions. C'est le nombre de personnes employées en 2010 dans le cadre de la relation transatlantique entre entreprises européennes et américaines, selon les chiffres de la Commission européenne.

Au vu d'un tel enjeu, la conclusion d'un accord de libre-échange entre les États-Unis et l'Union européenne apparaît plus que jamais opportune. L'idée circule depuis plusieurs années déjà, mais ce n'est qu'en novembre 2011 qu'un groupe de travail de haut niveau, chargé d'étudier les possibilités et de formuler des propositions, a été créé.

Plus d'un an après, la décision politique d'ouvrir des négociations n'a toujours pas été prise, malgré le vote, en octobre dernier, d'une résolution du Parlement sur le sujet. La Commission a elle-même émis le souhait que des négociations puissent démarrer début 2013. Aujourd'hui, non seulement les négociations n'ont pas encore commencé, mais les conclusions finales du groupe de travail, attendues pour fin 2012, n'ont toujours pas été rendues.

Pourtant, dans un rapport intérimaire publié au mois de juin 2012, le groupe de travail se déclarait convaincu qu'un accord commercial étendu était le meilleur moyen de soutenir l'emploi et de renforcer l'économie et la compétitivité en Europe et outre-Atlantique. Il n'y a donc plus de temps à perdre, il faut dès aujourd'hui passer de la parole aux actes.

Ce retard envoie un mauvais signe à plus de 800 millions de citoyens qui pourraient bénéficier de ce renforcement de la relation transatlantique. Les États-Unis se tournent chaque jour un peu plus vers l'Asie, tandis que l'Europe s'enfonce dans la crise. Nous avons l'obligation d'agir, et vite. Selon une étude de 2009 réalisée pour la Commission, un accord de libre-échange avec les États-Unis a le potentiel de relancer nos économies, en augmentant de 163 milliards d'euros, d'ici à 2018, le PIB des deux côtés de l'Atlantique. Nous ne pouvons pas nous permettre de passer à côté d'une telle opportunité.

Aussi, je souhaiterais demander à la Commission quand exactement le rapport du groupe de travail sera rendu, et quels sont les motifs qui justifient le retard pris sur le calendrier initial?

Réponse donnée par M. De Gucht au nom de la Commission
(8 avril 2013)

L'information que demande l'auteur de la question se trouve à l'adresse suivante:
(http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2013/february/tradoc_150519.pdf).

Les Présidents de la Commission et du Conseil et M. Barack Obama ont approuvé le rapport et invité l'Union européenne et les États-Unis à entamer leurs procédures internes pour ouvrir les négociations. Pour l'Union européenne, cela signifie que la Commission recommandera au Conseil d'autoriser l'ouverture de négociations au nom de l'Union européenne conformément aux directives de négociation jointes à cette recommandation, directives adoptées le 12 mars 2013 par le collège des commissaires et transmises au Conseil.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000533/13
to the Commission
Rachida Dati (PPE)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Free trade agreement with the United States — time for action

According to Commission statistics, in 2010 more than 15 million people owed their jobs to transatlantic trade between European and US businesses.

This demonstrates why a free trade agreement with the US is more necessary than ever. Although the idea has been around for several years, a high-level working group to look into the possibility of an agreement and to draw up proposals was established only in November 2011.

A year has passed and a political decision to open negotiations has still not been made, despite the fact that Parliament issued a resolution on the matter in October 2012. The Commission itself has said it hoped to see negotiations launched at the beginning of 2013. However, not only have the negotiations not yet begun, but the working group's final conclusions, due in late 2012, have still not been submitted.

In an interim report published in June 2012 the working group itself expressed its conviction that a comprehensive trade agreement would be the best way to boost employment and strengthen economic activity and competitiveness in Europe and the United States. There is no time to waste — now is the time for action, not words.

These delays send out the wrong message to the more than 800 million people who stand to benefit from closer transatlantic relations. At a time when Europe is becoming ever more mired in crisis, the US is focusing increasingly on Asia. We must take action, and quickly. According to a 2009 study by the Commission, a free trade agreement with the US could boost GDP on both sides of the Atlantic by EUR 163 billion by 2018 and get our economies moving again. We cannot afford to let this opportunity pass us by.

When will the working group submit its report and what are the reasons for the delay?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(8 April 2013)

The information required by the Honourable Member is available on the following site:
http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2013/february/tradoc_150519.pdf.

The Presidents of the Commission and of the European Council and President Obama have endorsed the report and called upon the European Union and the United States to initiate their internal procedures to start the negotiations. For the European Union this means the Commission will recommend the Council to authorise the opening of negotiations on behalf of the European Union in accordance with the negotiating directives attached to that recommendation. These have been adopted 12 March 2013 by the College of Commissioners and transmitted to the Council.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-000534/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(21 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Ξεπάγωμα τουρκικών κεφαλαίων

Έντονες προσπάθειες για άνοιγμα των κεφαλαίων «Δικαιοσύνη», «Θεμελιώδη Δικαιώματα» και «Ενέργεια» επιχειρείται από την Τουρκία και το τουρκοκυπριακό ψευδοκράτος. Τα κεφάλαια αυτά και άλλα έχουν παγώσει μονομερώς από την Κυπριακή Δημοκρατία και άλλες χώρες, ως αποτέλεσμα της αρνητικής στάσης της Άγκυρας έναντι της Κυπριακής Δημοκρατίας, τόσο όσον αφορά την καταπάτηση θεμελιωδών δικαιωμάτων του κυπριακού λαού, όσο και για τη συνεχιζόμενη άρνηση της Τουρκίας να εφαρμόσει το Πρωτόκολλο της Άγκυρας.

Ερωτάται η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή:

1. Εντοπίζει συμμόρφωση της Τουρκίας τόσο στις ευρωπαϊκές της υποχρεώσεις όσο και έναντι της Κυπριακής Δημοκρατίας που να δικαιολογεί το άνοιγμα το προαναφερθέντων κεφαλαίων;

2. Έχει εφαρμόσει η Τουρκία το Πρωτόκολλο της Άγκυρας; Αν όχι, γιατί; Τι προτίθεται να πράξει η ΕΕ προς αυτή την κατεύθυνση;

Απάντηση του κ. Fule εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(5 Απριλίου 2013)

Σύμφωνα με το διαπραγματευτικό πλαίσιο, η Επιτροπή αξιολόγησε το επίπεδο εναρμόνισης της Τουρκίας με το κεκτημένο στα κεφάλαια των διαπραγματεύσεων 15 (Ενέργεια) και 23 (Δικαιοσύνη και θεμελιώδη δικαιώματα). Οι σχετικές αναλυτικές εκθέσεις υποβλήθηκαν στο Συμβούλιο το 2007. Όσον αφορά το κεφάλαιο 15, η Επιτροπή θεωρεί ότι η Τουρκία είναι επαρκώς προετοιμασμένη για να ξεκινήσει διαπραγματεύσεις. Όσον αφορά το κεφάλαιο 23, η Επιτροπή έχει προτείνει μία σειρά κριτηρίων αξιολόγησης. Ωστόσο, η απόφαση για το άνοιγμα των εν λόγω κεφαλαίων προς διαπραγματεύσεις ή για τον καθορισμό των κριτηρίων αξιολόγησης απαιτεί τη συναίνεση όλων των κρατών μελών, η οποία δεν έχει επιτευχθεί μέχρι στιγμής.

Η Επιτροπή επιθυμεί να παραπέμψει το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου στην έκθεση προόδου του 2012 για την Τουρκία, στην οποία αναφέρεται ότι η Τουρκία δεν έχει εκπληρώσει την υποχρέωσή της να διασφαλίσει την πλήρη και άνευ διακρίσεων εφαρμογή του Πρόσθετου Πρωτοκόλλου της Συμφωνίας Σύνδεσης και ότι δεν εξάλειψε όλους τους φραγμούς που εμποδίζουν την ελεύθερη κυκλοφορία των εμπορευμάτων, ιδίως τους περιορισμούς που επιβάλλονται στην άμεση μεταφορική σύνδεση με την Κύπρο. Τον Δεκέμβριο του 2006, το Συμβούλιο αποφάσισε ομόφωνα να μην ξεκινήσουν οι διαπραγματεύσεις όσον αφορά οκτώ κεφάλαια και να μην κλείσει κανένα κεφάλαιο έως ότου η Επιτροπή επιβεβαιώσει τη πλήρη εφαρμογή του Πρόσθετου Πρωτοκόλλου από την Τουρκία. Τα κεφάλαια 15 (Ενέργεια) και 23 (Δικαιοσύνη και θεμελιώδη δικαιώματα) στα οποία αναφέρεται το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου δεν συγκαταλέγονται στα οκτώ κεφάλαια το άνοιγμα των οποίων πάγωσε λόγω της απόφασης αυτής.

Η Επιτροπή θα εξακολουθήσει να απευθύνει εκκλήσεις στην Τουρκία να συμμορφωθεί με τις υποχρεώσεις αυτές.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000534/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Unblocking chapters in Turkish accession negotiations

Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot pseudo-state are making vigorous efforts to have the chapters 'Justice', 'Fundamental Rights' and 'Energy' opened. These chapters and others were blocked unilaterally by the Republic of Cyprus and other countries as a result of the negative attitude of Ankara vis-à-vis the Republic of Cyprus, both as regards the violation of the fundamental rights of the Cypriot people and the continued refusal by Turkey to implement the Ankara Protocol.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Has it found that Turkey is complying both with its EU accession obligations and with its obligations towards the Republic of Cyprus so that opening the above chapters would be justified?

2. Has Turkey implemented the Ankara Protocol? If not, why? What will the EU do in this connection?

Answer given by Mr Fule on behalf of the Commission
(5 April 2013)

In line with the Negotiating Framework, the Commission has assessed Turkey's level of alignment with the *acquis* on negotiation chapters 15 — Energy and 23 — Judiciary and fundamental rights. The relevant screening reports were submitted to the Council in 2007. Regarding Chapter 15, the Commission considers that Turkey is sufficiently prepared to start negotiations. Regarding Chapter 23, the Commission has proposed a number of opening benchmarks. However a decision to open these chapters for negotiations or to establish opening benchmarks requires consent of all Member States, which has not been possible to achieve so far.

The Commission would like to refer the Honourable Member to its 2012 Progress Report on Turkey, which states that Turkey has not met its obligation to ensure full, non-discriminatory implementation of the Additional Protocol to the Association Agreement and has not removed all obstacles to the free movement of goods with Cyprus, including restrictions on direct transport links. In December 2006, the Council unanimously decided that negotiations will not be opened on eight chapters and no chapter will be closed until the Commission confirms that Turkey has fully implemented the Additional Protocol. Chapters 15 — Energy and 23 — Judiciary and fundamental rights to which the Honourable Member refers are not among the eight chapters whose opening is blocked by this decision.

The Commission will continue calling on Turkey to comply with these obligations.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-000535/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(21 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Μοιράζουν «υπηκοότητες»

Η τουρκοκυπριακή συνδικαλιστική οργάνωση «δημοσίων» λειτουργών, στο υπό τουρκική κατοχή τμήμα της Λευκωσίας, κατήλθε σε διαδήλωση διαμαρτυρόμενη για παροχή «αυθαίρετων ιθαγενειών» του ψευδοκράτους. Σε ομιλία του, ο πρόεδρός της, Καπτάν, ανέφερε ότι οι Τουρκοκύπριοι δεν έχουν μέλλον και εγκαταλείπουν την Κύπρο, γιατί το Κόμμα Εθνικής Ενότητας έχει δώσει περισσότερες από 5 000 «ιθαγένειες» στη διάρκεια των τελευταίων τριών ετών που βρίσκεται στην «εξουσία».

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Πώς μπορεί η ΕΕ να τερματίσει άμεσα και αποτελεσματικά τον παράνομο εποικισμό των κατεχομένων εδαφών της Κυπριακής Δημοκρατίας που γίνεται κατά παράβαση του Διεθνούς και Ευρωπαϊκού Δικαίου;

2. Πώς μπορεί η ΕΕ, μέσα στο πλαίσιο των ενταξιακών διαπραγματεύσεων με την Τουρκία, να τερματίσει την παροχή «ιθαγένειας» από το ψευδοκράτος σε Τούρκους υπηκόους;

3. Γιατί η ΕΕ σφυρίζει αδιάφορα παρακολουθώντας την παράνομη αλλοίωση του δημογραφικού χαρακτήρα της Κύπρου που αναγκάζει τους τουρκοκυπρίους σκοπίμως να εγκαταλείπουν το νησί και δημιουργεί νέα τετελεσμένα επί του εδάφους, καθιστώντας έτσι ακόμη πιο δύσκολη την ορθολογική λύση του κυπριακού προβλήματος;

Απάντηση του κ. Füle εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(6 Μαρτίου 2013)

Το ζήτημα που έθιξε το Αξιότιμο Μέλος αποτελεί μέρος των θεμάτων που συζητήθηκαν κατά τις συνομιλίες υπό την αιγίδα των Ηνωμένων Εθνών για τη διευθέτηση του κυπριακού προβλήματος.

Τα θέματα που τέθηκαν, για άλλη μια φορά, τονίζουν την επείγουσα ανάγκη να επιτευχθεί συνολική διευθέτηση του κυπριακού ζητήματος. Η Επιτροπή, σε ανακοίνωση που εξέδωσε τον Οκτώβριο του 2012 ([1]) με θέμα «Στρατηγική για τη διεύρυνση και κυριότερες προκλήσεις για την περίοδο 2012-2013», υπογράμμισε την ανάγκη για επανέναρξη των διαπραγματεύσεων με στόχο την ταχεία ολοκλήρωση των συνομιλιών.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/strategy-and-progress-report/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000535/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Rapid naturalisation of Turkish citizens by the Turkish Cypriot puppet state

The Turkish Cypriot 'public servants' trade union in the Turkish-occupied part of Nicosia has staged a demonstration against the arbitrary naturalisation of Turkish citizens by the puppet state. In a speech, its president, Ahmet Kaptan, said that Turkish Cypriots had no future on the island and were leaving Cyprus because the National Unity Party had naturalised over five thousand people during its last three years in 'government'.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. How can the EU put an immediate and effective end to the illegal settlement of the occupied territories of the Republic of Cyprus in violation of international and European law?

2. How can the EU, within the framework of the accession negotiations with Turkey, put an end to the naturalisation of Turkish nationals by the puppet state?

3. Why is the EU standing idly by in the face of the illegal alteration of the demographic character of Cyprus which is forcing Turkish Cypriots to leave the island and is creating new facts on the ground, thus making it even more difficult to find a rational solution to the Cyprus problem?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(6 March 2013)

The subject raised by the Honourable Member forms part of the issues discussed in the Cyprus settlement talks under the auspices of the United Nations.

The issues raised, once again, emphasise the urgency to reach a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus issue. In its October 2012 Communication ([1]) on the Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2012-2013, the Commission underlined the necessity to re-launch the negotiations with the aim of reaching a swift conclusion of the talks.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/strategy-and-progress-report/index_en.htm

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-000536/13
aan de Commissie
Laurence J. A. J. Stassen (NI)
(21 januari 2013)

Betreft: Turkije censureert EU-voortgangsverslag

Turkije heeft het meest recente voortgangsverslag m.b.t. de toetredingsonderhandelingen van de Commissie gecensureerd. In de Turkse vertaling ervan zijn de voor Turkije „pijnlijke" passages simpelweg weggelaten: zo wordt naar Cyprus verwezen alsof het een „niet-bestaande EU-lidstaat" zou zijn. Ook wordt over de genocide op de Armeniërs gesproken alsof dat een „verzinsel" zou zijn. Verder wordt verzwegen dat de 34 burgers, die in Uludere zijn omgekomen, door Turkse militairen zijn vermoord.

1. Is de Commissie bekend met het bericht „Türkei schönt Fortschrittsbericht der Kommission" ([1])?

2. Wat vindt de Commissie ervan dat Turkije het voortgangsverslag m.b.t. de toetredingsonderhandelingen, bij de vertaling naar het Turks, heeft gecensureerd? Wat vindt de Commissie ervan dat Turkije „pijnlijke" passages in de Turkse vertaling simpelweg heeft weggelaten? Deelt de Commissie de mening dat het schandalig is dat de Turkse bevolking hiermee een niet-realistisch respectievelijk te rooskleurig beeld van de toetredingsonderhandelingen wordt voorgespiegeld?

3. De Commissie heeft reeds laten weten dat zij van deze censuur op de hoogte is, maar hier niets aan wil doen; zij zou geen invloed hebben op de correcte vertaling van haar eigen documenten. Kan de Commissie dit toelichten? Waarom buigt de Commissie voor deze censuur? Waarom impliceert de Commissie hiermee dat de Turkse bevolking niet correct over de toetredingsonderhandelingen voorgelicht hoeft te worden?

4. Hoeveel waarde kan men volgens de Commissie nog aan de conclusies in haar eigen voortgangsverslag hechten, nu blijkt dat zij van een gecensureerde respectievelijk te rooskleurige vertaling ervan geen enkel probleem maakt?

Antwoord van de heer Füle namens de Commissie
(27 maart 2013)

De vertaling waar het geachte Parlementslid naar verwijst, is uitsluitend in opdracht van de Turkse autoriteiten uitgevoerd. Een ongekleurde en ongewijzigde versie van het voortgangsverslag wordt elk jaar in het Turks gepubliceerd op de website van de EU-delegatie in Turkije en is bijgevolg toegankelijk voor alle burgers en inwoners van Turkije die de inhoud ervan wensen te kennen ([2]).

([1]) http://www.welt.de/politik/ausland/article112756007/Tuerkei-schoent-Fortschrittsbericht-der-EU-Kommission.html
([2]) http://www.avrupa.info.tr/fileadmin/Content/Files/File/key_documents-Turkish/2012_Ilerleme_Raporu.doc

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000536/13
to the Commission
Laurence J.A.J. Stassen (NI)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Turkey's censorship of the EU progress report

Turkey has censored the Commission's most recent progress report on the accession negotiations. In the Turkish translation of the report, passages which are 'painful' to Turkey are simply omitted: for example, Cyprus is referred to as if it were a 'non-existent EU Member State'. The genocide against the Armenians is also referred to in terms suggesting that it is a 'myth'. The fact is also concealed that the 34 civilians who died in Uludere were murdered by the Turkish military.

1. Is the Commission familiar with the report 'Türkei schönt Fortschrittsbericht der Kommission' ([1])?

2. What view does the Commission take of the fact that Turkey has censored the Turkish translation of the progress report on the accession negotiations? What does the Commission think about the fact that, in the translation, Turkey has simply omitted 'painful' passages from the report? Does the Commission agree that it is scandalous that in this way the Turkish people are being given an unrealistic (too rose-tinted) picture of the accession negotiations?

3. The Commission has already indicated that it is aware of this censorship, but does not wish to do anything about it; it claims that it has no influence to ensure the correct translation of its own documents. Can the Commission explain this? Why is the Commission accepting this censorship? Why does the Commission imply in this way that the people of Turkey do not need to receive accurate information about the accession negotiations?

4. How much value does the Commission believe can still be attached to the conclusions in its own progress report, given that it has now become apparent that the Commission sees no problem at all in a censored/excessively rose-tinted translation of that report?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(27 March 2013)

The translation the Honourable Member refers to has been made under the sole authority of the Turkish authorities. A plain and non-modified version of the progress report in Turkish language is published every year on the website of the EU Delegation to Turkey and therefore is accessible to all citizens and residents in Turkey wishing to be informed about its content ([2]).

([1]) http://www.welt.de/politik/ausland/article112756007/Tuerkei-schoent-Fortschrittsbericht-der-EU-Kommission.html
([2]) http://www.avrupa.info.tr/fileadmin/Content/Files/File/key_documents-Turkish/2012_Ilerleme_Raporu.doc

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000537/13
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(21 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Vulneración de la Directiva 2009/147/CE por parte del Gobierno autonómico valenciano (España) por la autorización de caza de la especie Streptopelia decaocto

En la respuesta del Sr. Potočnik E-007302/2012 en nombre de la Comisión (4.9.2012) se informa de lo siguiente: «la especie *Streptopelia decaocto* figura en la parte 2 del anexo II de la Directiva 2009/147/CE. Con arreglo a las disposiciones del artículo 7 de esta Directiva, las especies mencionadas en la parte 2 del anexo II podrán cazarse únicamente en los Estados indicados al respecto. España no figura en la parte 2 del anexo II para esta especie.

No obstante, con arreglo al artículo 9, los Estados miembros podrán establecer excepciones a lo dispuesto en el artículo 7, entre otras cosas si no existe ninguna otra solución satisfactoria, previa demostración de que se aplica cualquiera de las razones contempladas en ese artículo. Los Estados miembros deben enviar a la Comisión un informe anual sobre la aplicación del artículo 9. La Comisión adoptará las medidas adecuadas para garantizar que las consecuencias de estas excepciones no sean incompatibles con la Directiva 2009/147/CE.

La Comisión ha solicitado información a las autoridades españolas acerca de otros extremos del Decreto a que se refiere Su Señoría. La Comisión ampliará su solicitud al tema planteado en la pregunta escrita con el fin de aclarar que se cumplen correctamente las disposiciones de la Directiva 2009/147/CE».

Por ello se pregunta:

¿Qué respuesta ha recibido la Comisión a la solicitud de información requerida a las autoridades españolas? ¿Ha enviado el Estado Español a la Comisión un informe anual sobre la aplicación del artículo 9, a fin de acordar la excepción de la caza de tórtola turca en el territorio valenciano? ¿A qué conclusiones ha llegado la Comisión? En caso contrario, ¿qué piensa hacer al respecto?

¿Considera la Comisión que esta excepción es incompatible con la Directiva 2009/147/CE? ¿Adoptará medidas al respecto?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(7 de marzo de 2013)

La Comisión ha evaluado la información disponible en relación con la disposición adicional tercera de la Orden 9/2012, que permite la caza de la especie *Streptopelia decaocto*, ya que, de acuerdo con el Decreto 213/2009 de la Comunidad Valenciana, tiene la consideración de especie invasora.

En su investigación, la Comisión tuvo conocimiento de que el Tribunal Superior de Justicia de la Comunidad Valenciana emitió en julio de 2012 la Sentencia n° 887/2012 ([1]), en la que concluía que no está justificada la inclusión de la especie *Streptopelia decaocto* en el anexo I del Decreto 213/2009.

Los últimos informes anuales recibidos de los Estados miembros acerca de la aplicación del artículo 9 de la Directiva de aves silvestres ([2]) son los de los años 2009 y 2010. Los informes españoles de esos años no establecen ninguna excepción para la *Streptopelia decaocto* en la Comunidad Autónoma de Valencia.

A la vista de la sentencia emitida por el tribunal nacional competente, la Comisión ha archivado su investigación y decidido no iniciar acciones legales sobre este asunto.

([1]) http://www.poderjudicial.es/search/doAction?action=contentpdf&databasematch=AN&reference=6502190&links=t%F3rtola%20turca&optimize=20120925&publicinterface=true

([2]) Directiva 2009/147/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 30 de noviembre de 2009, relativa a la conservación de las aves silvestres (DO L 20/7 de 26.1.2010); versión codificada de la Directiva 79/409/CEE del Consejo, de 2 de abril de 1979, relativa a la conservación de las aves silvestres.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000537/13
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Authorisation to hunt the Streptopelia decaocto issued by the Valencia regional government in infringement of Directive 2009/147/EC

The answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission (4 September 2012) to Question for Written Answer E-007302/2012 indicates that the Streptopelia decaocto is one of the species entered in Annex II/2 of Directive 2009/147/EC. Under Article 7 of the directive, such species may be hunted only in the designated Member States. Spain is not included among the countries listed in Annex II/2 in which this species may be hunted.

However, under Article 9, Member States are authorised to derogate from the provisions of Article 7 in the absence of any satisfactory alternative solution, once it is established that any of the conditions stipulated in this Article have been fulfilled. Member States are also required to send an annual report to the Commission on the implementation of Article 9. The Commission must then take the appropriate steps to ensure that the effects of these derogations do not run counter to Directive 2009/147/EC.

Mr Potočnik goes on to say that the Commission has requested information from the Spanish authorities concerning other issues mentioned by the honourable Member in connection with the relevant decree and that it will also seek information regarding the matters raised in this Written Question so as to verify full compliance with Directive 2009/147/EC.

What reply has the Commission received from the Spanish authorities? Has the Spanish Government forwarded to the Commission an annual report on the implementation of Article 9 with a view to granting an exemption for the hunting of the Eurasian Collared Dove in the region of Valencia? What conclusion has been drawn by the Commission? If it has not received the report, what action is it envisaging?

Does the Commission consider such an exemption to be incompatible with Directive 2009/147/EC? Will it take appropriate action?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(7 March 2013)

The Commission has assessed the information available concerning the third additional provision of the Order 9/2012, which permits the hunting of *Streptopelia decaocto*, as this species was considered an invasive species under the provisions of Decree 213/2009 of the Region of Valencia.

During its investigation, the Commission found out that, in July 2012, the High Court of Justice of Valencia issued its judgment 887/2012 ([1]), concluding that there is no justification for the inclusion of *Streptopelia decaocto* in Annex I of Decree 213/2009.

The last annual reports received from the Member States on the implementation of Article 9 of the Birds Directive ([2]), correspond to the years 2009 and 2010. The Spanish reports for these years do not include any derogation for *Streptopelia decaocto* in the region of Valencia.

In light of the existing ruling from the competent national Court, the Commission has closed its investigation on this issue and has decided not to undertake any further legal steps on this issue.

([1]) http://www.poderjudicial.es/search/doAction?action=contentpdf&databasematch=AN&reference=6502190&links=t%F3rtola%20turca&optimize=20120925&publicinterface=true.

([2]) Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (OJ L 20/7, 26.1.2010) that codifies the Council Directive 79/409/EEC of 2 April 1979 on the conservation of wild birds.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000538/13
an die Kommission
Franz Obermayr (NI)
(21. Januar 2013)

Betrifft: Schutz von kirchlichen Kulturgütern in der serbisch-orthodoxen Gemeinde im Kosovo

Anlässlich der orthodoxen Weihnachtsfeiern am 6./7. Januar 2013 wurden neun Gläubige der serbisch-orthodoxen Gemeinde nach ihrem Gottesdienst in einem reinen Willkürakt von der kosovarischen Polizei festgenommen und erst nach Tagen wieder freigelassen. Der serbische Präsident Tomislav Nikolić, der im Kloster Gracanica Weihnachten feiern wollte, wurde gar nicht ins Land gelassen. Es wird berichtet, dass um das Kloster Decani, das ebenso wie das Kloster Gracanica zum Unesco-Weltkulturerbe gehört, von albanischen Nationalisten eine Blockade aufgebaut wurde, um Gläubige daran zu hindern, an den Gottesdiensten teilzunehmen. Immer mehr Hiobsbotschaften dieser Art werden in den Medien bekannt. So verwüsteten in der Nacht vom 2. auf den 3. Januar 2013 Männer aus dem benachbarten Kosovo das örtliche Kloster in Mrtvica, zerstörten Ikonen und plünderten den Kirchenopferstock.

Kann die Kommission dazu folgende Fragen beantworten:

1. Ohne das Mitwirken der USA und der EU hätte die südserbische Provinz Kosovo niemals zu einem von vielen Ländern anerkannten Kleinstaat werden können. Wie ordnet die Kommission diese Übergriffe auf die serbisch-orthodoxe Gemeinde ein — überwiegend als Ausnahmeerscheinung oder als zunehmenden Trend?

2. Kann nicht davon ausgegangen werden, dass die EU-Rechtsstaatsmission (EULEX) die international garantierte Reisefreiheit im Kosovo vor Ort kontrolliert, bzw. warum hat dies beim Besuch des serbischen Präsidenten nicht funktioniert? Wie sieht die Kommission den Sachverhalt?

3. Was gedenkt die EU zu unternehmen, um die christlichen Kulturgüter, die sich im Kosovo befinden, vor willkürlicher Beschädigung zu schützen?

4. Müssen die orthodoxen Gläubigen im Kosovo und insbesondere in den oben genannten Kirchengemeinden nicht besser zu geschützt werden, damit sie ihre Religion frei ausüben und ihre kirchlichen Traditionen fortsetzen können, ohne behelligt zu werden? Wie beurteilt die Kommission den Sachverhalt?

5. Es wird von Experten befürchtet, dass Angehörige der serbisch-orthodoxen Kirche gezielt von der kosovarischen Exekutive Repressalien ausgesetzt werden. Ist dies nicht ein Verstoß gegen die UN-Resolution 1244?

Antwort von Herrn Füle im Namen der Kommission
(5. März 2013)

Die Kommission bedauert die vom Herrn Abgeordneten geschilderten Vorkommnisse, die sie aufs Schärfste verurteilt hat. Auch die Präsidentin des Kosovos ([1]), Atifete Jahjaga, und Premierminister Thaçi haben die Vorfälle verurteilt.

Die Kommission nimmt die Beziehungen zwischen den verschiedenen ethnischen und religiösen Gruppen im Kosovo überaus ernst und hat dieses Thema in ihrer Machbarkeitsstudie für ein Stabilisierungs- und Assoziierungsabkommen zwischen der EU und der Republik Kosovo besonders hervorgehoben. Der Schutz der Minderheiten, einschließlich des damit verbundenen religiösen und kulturellen Erbes, zählt zu den prioritären Herausforderungen, die das Kosovo im Rahmen seiner Vorbereitungen auf mögliche Verhandlungen über ein Stabilisierungs- und Assoziierungsabkommen angehen muss.

([1]) Diese Bezeichnung berührt nicht die Standpunkte zum Status des Kosovos und steht im Einklang mit der Resolution 1244/1999 des VN-Sicherheitsrates und dem Gutachten des Internationalen Gerichtshofs zur Unabhängigkeitserklärung des Kosovos.

Am 12. Februar 2013 haben die kosovarischen Behörden in enger Zusammenarbeit mit der EU und der OSZE Leitlinien zur Einrichtung eines Umsetzungs- und Überwachungsrates (Implementation and Monitoring Council) erlassen, in dem Vertreter der Regierung und der serbisch-orthodoxen Kirche zusammenarbeiten sollen. Die EU wird den Ko-Vorsitz dieses Rates übernehmen, der allen Beteiligten die Möglichkeit bietet, sich abzustimmen und gemeinsame Entscheidungen zum Schutz des kulturellen und religiösen Erbes Serbiens im Kosovo zu treffen. Damit bekräftigt die EU ihr nachdrückliches Engagement für den Schutz des kulturellen Erbes aller Volksgruppen im Kosovo. Zudem wurden Verfahren geschaffen, die den Besuch serbischer Beamter im Kosovo erleichtern und ihnen, nachdem die kosovarischen Behörden zugestimmt haben, die Einreise in das Kosovo ermöglichen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000538/13
to the Commission
Franz Obermayr (NI)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Protecting Church cultural assets in Kosovo's Serbian Orthodox community

On the occasion of the Orthodox Christmas celebrations on 6 /7 January 2013, nine Serbian Orthodox worshippers were arrested by Kosovo police after attending church in a purely arbitrary act and only released a few days later. The President of Serbia, Tomislav Nikolić, who had wanted to celebrate Christmas in Gračanica Monastery, was not even allowed into the country. It is reported that Dečani Monastery, which like Gračanica Monastery is a Unesco World Heritage Site, was blockaded by Albanian nationalists in order prevent worshippers attending services there. The media are reporting an increasing number of negative incidents of this type. For example, during the night of 2/3 January 2013, men from neighbouring Kosovo looted the local monastery of Mrtvica in southern Serbia, destroying icons, and plundering the church's offertory box.

In view of the above, will the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Without the intervention of the US and the EU, the southern Serbian province of Kosovo could never have become a small state recognised by many countries. How does the Commission interpret these attacks on the Serbian Orthodox community — as a series of isolated incidents or rather as part of a growing trend?

2. Is it not fair to assume that the EU Rule of Law Mission (EULEX) ensures freedom of movement — which is internationally guaranteed — on the ground in Kosovo? If so, what went wrong when the Serbian President wanted to visit the country? How does the Commission view this incident?

3. What does the EU intend to do in order to protect Church cultural assets that are located in Kosovo from vandalism?

4. Should the Orthodox faithful in Kosovo and particularly in the above parishes not be better protected, so they can practise their religion freely and continue their religious traditions without being harassed? What is the Commission's view about this?

5. Experts fear that members of the Serbian Orthodox Church are being targeted for reprisals by the Executive in Kosovo. Does this not constitute a violation of UN Resolution 1244?

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

The Commission regrets the incidents referred to by the Honourable Member and has condemned them in the strongest possible terms. Kosovo's ([1]) President Jahjaga and Prime Minister Thaçi have also condemned these incidents.

The Commission takes inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations in Kosovo very seriously. In its Feasibility Study for a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) between the EU and Kosovo, the Commission put particular emphasis on this issue. The protection of minorities, including related religious and cultural heritage, is included among the priorities for Kosovo to address in preparation of possible negotiations for a SAA.

On 12 February 2013, in close cooperation with the EU and OSCE, Kosovo authorities issued an instruction establishing an Implementation and Monitoring Council, which brings together representatives of the Kosovo government and the Serbian Orthodox Church. The EU is to co-chair this Council. The Council should allow all stakeholders to coordinate and reach joint decisions on the protection of Serbian cultural and religious heritage in Kosovo. This confirms the EU's continued commitment to the protection of cultural heritage of all communities in Kosovo. Procedures have been put in place facilitating visits of Serbian officials to Kosovo. These procedures provide for the possibility for Serbian officials to visit Kosovo after consent by the Kosovo authorities.

([1]) This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000539/13
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Fiorello Provera (EFD)
(21 gennaio 2013)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Commenti del Presidente egiziano su Israele

Il 16 gennaio, varie fonti di informazione hanno riferito che, nel settembre 2010, il Presidente egiziano Mohammed Morsi in un'intervista per il canale al-Quds, basato in Libia, ha affermato che gli israeliani sono «i discendenti di scimmie e maiali». Al momento dell'intervista Morsi era un dirigente del movimento dei Fratelli Musulmani. Egli ha anche liquidato i negoziati tra Israele e la Palestina come «perdita di tempo», per poi andare oltre descrivendo l'Autorità palestinese come «una creazione dei nemici americani e sionisti che ha il solo scopo di opporsi alla volontà del popolo palestinese e dei suoi interessi». Secondo la testata britannica *The Times* vi è anche un filmato in cui Morsi, durante un rito religioso nell'ottobre scorso avrebbe pronunciato insieme alla folla la parola «Ameen [Amen]» mentre un imam pregava Dio di «eliminare gli ebrei e i loro sostenitori. . . disperdendoli e facendoli a pezzi».

Un portavoce della Casa Bianca a Washington ha dichiarato di aver sollevato il problema dei commenti di Mohammed Morsi con il governo egiziano. Secondo il portavoce Jay Carney: «Il Presidente Morsi dovrebbe confermare con chiarezza il suo rispetto per gli appartenenti a tutte le fedi e che siffatta retorica è inaccettabile e controproducente in un Egitto democratico.»

Come risposta ai commenti del presidente, Gehad el-Haddad, consigliere del partito Libertà e giustizia, ha dichiarato: «Quelle dichiarazioni sono state rilasciate in un contesto specifico, e rispecchiano il punto di vista di Mohammed Morsi in veste di dirigente dei Fratelli Mussulmani, che è diverso da quello di Presidente».

1. Qual è la posizione dell'Alto Rappresentante/Vicepresidente in merito alle osservazioni formulate dal Presidente egiziano Mohammed Morsi?

2. È l'AR/VP disposto a discutere dei commenti del presidente con il governo egiziano?

3. Come valuta i commenti del presidente Morsi e il potenziale danno arrecato al processo di pace israelo-palestinese?

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

È prassi della Commissione non commentare dichiarazioni pubbliche rilasciate da politici.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000539/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Fiorello Provera (EFD)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Egyptian President's comments on Israel

On 16 January 2013, various media sources reported that in September 2010 Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi had said in an interview for the Lebanese-based channel al-Quds that Israelis were the 'descendants of apes and pigs'. Morsi was a senior official in the Muslim Brotherhood at the time of the interview. He dismissed negotiations between Israel and Palestine as a 'waste of time'. He also went further, describing the Palestinian Authority as a creation of 'the Zionist and American enemies for the sole purpose of opposing the will of the Palestinian people and its interests'. According to the UK's *The Times* there is also footage of Morsi at a sermon in October 2012 in which he joined the crowd in saying 'ameen' [amen] as an imam prayed for God to 'deal with the Jews and their supporters [and to] disperse them and render them asunder'.

A spokesman for the White House in Washington said it had raised its concerns over Morsi's comments with the Egyptian Government. The spokesman, Jay Carney, said: 'President Morsi should make clear that he respects people of all faiths and that this type of rhetoric is not acceptable or productive in a democratic Egypt.'

In response to the comments made by the President, an adviser to the Freedom and Justice party, Gehad el-Haddad, said: 'Those statements were said in a certain context. And this was the position of Mohamed Morsi, the senior Muslim Brotherhood official, which is different than that of the President.'

1. What is the position of the Vice-President/High Representative regarding the comments made by Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi?

2. Is the VP/HR prepared to raise the issue of the President's comments with the Egyptian Government?

3. What is the assessment of the VP/HR regarding President Morsi's comments and the potential damage caused to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process?

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

It is Commission policy not to comment on public statements by politicians.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000540/13
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(21 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Instalaciones fotovoltaicas en España

El Gobierno español aprobó en 2010 el Real Decreto 1566 5/2010 y el Real Decreto-Ley 14/2010, que establecen una serie de medidas con carácter retroactivo y suponen la imposición de importantes y gravosas obligaciones a los titulares e inversores de instalaciones fotovoltaicas. Esta acción provoca el inmediato incumplimiento de la Directiva 2009/28/CE por el agravio comparativo que ha supuesto con respecto a otros ciudadanos de la Unión y por la flagrante vulneración de principios constitucionales y europeos de seguridad jurídica, de confianza legítima e incluso de legalidad.

El Gobierno español estaría así incumpliendo la obligación de prestar un trato equitativo y justo, que se recoge en el artículo 10 del Tratado de la Carta de la Energía. Sin embargo, como la mayoría de los inversores afectados son de nacionalidad española, no pueden acudir al mecanismo arbitral presente en el TCE, lo que implica una discriminación inversa.

Asimismo, determinadas medidas adoptadas en relación con las instalaciones fotovoltaicas pueden tener dicho carácter expropiatorio a los efectos del TCE; por ejemplo, haberse suprimido el derecho de los productores fotovoltaicos a la tarifa regulada, por un lado, una vez alcanzado el límite de horas impuesto, y, por otro lado, a partir de cierto año, sin que se hayan cumplido los requisitos formales establecidos al efecto y sin que medie pago de indemnización alguna.

1. ¿Conoce la Comisión la modificación de las leyes españolas?

2. ¿Comparte el análisis hecho aquí sobre la vulneración de los principios de seguridad jurídica, confianza legítima, legalidad y no discriminación?

3. ¿No cree que esta discriminación inversa frente a los inversores españoles es incompatible con el mercado único y con el TCE?

4. ¿Qué medidas adoptará al respecto?

Respuesta del Sr. Oettinger en nombre de la Comisión
(13 de marzo de 2013)

La Comisión está al corriente de los cambios introducidos en los regímenes de ayuda españoles a las energías renovables. Sobre la base de la información que obra en nuestro poder actualmente, la Comisión no ve indicios de infracción de la Directiva 2009/28/CE sobre fuentes de energía renovables. Al incorporar la Directiva a su ordenamiento jurídico (a lo que tenían que proceder a más tardar el 5 de diciembre de 2010), las autoridades españolas y, en última instancia, los tribunales españoles tienen que velar por el respeto de los principios del Derecho de la UE, incluidas la seguridad jurídica y la protección de la confianza legítima ([1]).

La Comisión no es competente para evaluar el cumplimiento del Tratado sobre la Carta de la Energía. La Comisión supervisa continuamente la evolución de la política energética y el respeto de la legislación de la UE en España, en particular las medidas suplementarias recientemente aprobadas, con vistas a considerar la posibilidad de adoptar nuevas medidas a escala de la Unión si resulta necesario.

([1]) TJUE de 10 de septiembre de 2009, asunto C-201/08, Plantanol, apartado 43 y siguientes.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000540/13
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Solar energy in Spain

In 2010 the Spanish Government adopted Royal Law 15665/2010 and Royal Decree-Law 14/2010, which lay down a series of retroactive measures and impose considerable and burdensome obligations on owners of and investors in solar energy installations. This action constituted an immediate infringement of Directive 2009/28/EC because of the comparative disadvantage it introduced in relation to other Union citizens and its blatant violation of the constitutional and European principles of legal certainty, legitimate trust and legality.

The Spanish Government is failing in its obligation to provide fair and equitable treatment under the terms of Article 10 of the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT). However, as most of the affected investors are Spanish nationals, they are unable to have recourse to the ECT's arbitration mechanism, which is reverse discrimination.

Furthermore, some of the measures adopted in relation to solar energy installations may be constitute expropriation under the terms of the ETC, such as the suppression, once the limited number of hours has been reached and from a certain year onwards, of solar energy producers' right to a regulated tariff, without the established formal requirements having been met or payment of any compensation.

1. Is the Commission aware of these changes to the law in Spain?

2. Does it share the view expressed here that this violates the principles of legal certainty, legitimate trust and non-discrimination?

3. Does it not consider this reverse discrimination against Spanish investors to be incompatible with the single market and the Energy Charter Treaty?

4. What steps does it intend to take in this matter?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(13 March 2013)

The Commission is aware of the changes in the Spanish support schemes for renewable energy. On the basis of the information available to us at the moment, the Commission does not see an indication of a violation of the Renewable Energy Directive (2009/28/EC). By transposing the directive (required by 5 December 2010), the Spanish authorities and ultimately the Spanish courts have to ensure that the principles of Community law including legal certainty and the protection of legitimate expectations are respected ([1]). The Commission is not competent for assessing compliance with the Energy Charter Treaty. The Commission continuously monitors energy policy developments and respect of EU legislation in Spain, including the additional measure recently approved, with a view to consider further action from or at EU level if necessary.

([1]) ECJ of 10 September 2009, Case C-201/08, *Plantanol*, points 43 and following.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-000541/13
aan de Commissie
Kathleen Van Brempt (S&D)
(21 januari 2013)

Betreft: Controle van voertuigen met een nummerplaat uit een ander EU land

Naar aanleiding van enkele uitspraken van de Procureur des Konings in Antwerpen, is er in België een discussie ontstaan over het omgaan met mensen uit de nieuwe lidstaten die zich in België bevinden. De procureur had er in een interview onder meer toe opgeroepen dat burgers de gegevens van auto's en bestelwagens met vreemde nummerplaten zouden doorgeven aan de politie. De bedoeling is dat de politie deze vervolgens kan controleren. Dit alles in het kader van het plan om de kleine criminaliteit aan te pakken. De vreemde nummerplaten waar men zich hierbij opricht zijn nummerplaten van een aantal EU-lidstaten, waarbij onder meer Bulgarije later expliciet werd vermeld. De vraag bij dit alles is of dit wel strookt met de EU-wetgeving en in het bijzonder met het vrij verkeer van personen dan wel of dit een schending is van het verbod om te discrimineren op basis van nationaliteit.

1. Is het aanzetten van burgers om gegevens van wagens door te geven aan de politie, alleen op basis van het feit dat ze een nummerplaat uit bepaalde EU-landen hebben, in lijn met EU-wetgeving en -verdragen?

2. Is het selectief controleren van (inzittenden van) wagens op grond van het feit dat ze een nummerplaat uit bepaalde EU-lidstaten hebben volgens de Commissie geoorloofd onder de huidige EU-regels en -verdragen?

Antwoord van mevrouw Reding namens de Commissie
(27 maart 2013)

Wat de vraag van het geachte Parlementslid over het controleren van buitenlandse voertuigen betreft: in het EU-recht wordt niet bij voorbaat vastgelegd hoe politiecontroles op het grondgebied van de lidstaten moeten worden georganiseerd. Wel is het zo dat de controles niet stelselmatig en op een ongerechtvaardigde en onevenredige wijze tegen bepaalde nationaliteiten mogen zijn gericht.

Het geachte Parlementslid suggereert dat de uitspraken in kwestie criminaliteit in verband brengen met een bepaalde nationaliteit. De Commissie neemt normaliter geen standpunt in over individuele uitspraken, met name wanneer zij niet bekend is met de precieze inhoud ervan.

Principieel veroordeelt de Commissie met klem alle uitingen van racisme en vreemdelingenhaat, en aanverwante vormen van intolerantie, ongeacht van wie ze afkomstig zijn, omdat deze fenomenen niet stroken met de waarden en principes waarop de Europese Unie is gebaseerd.

Uitspraken die criminaliteit in verband zouden brengen met een bepaalde nationaliteit, zoals het vragen om kentekenplaten van andere lidstaten te signaleren om kleine criminaliteit te bestrijden, kunnen die lidstaten inderdaad stigmatiseren en vreemdelingenhaat aanwakkeren en zijn dus niet verenigbaar met het EU-beginsel van niet-discriminatie op grond van nationaliteit. Overheidsinstanties, politieke partijen en het maatschappelijk middenveld moeten racistisch en xenofoob gedrag krachtig veroordelen en actief bestrijden.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000541/13
to the Commission
Kathleen Van Brempt (S&D)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Checks on vehicles registered in other EU Member States

Following a number of statements by the Antwerp Public Prosecutor, a debate has got under way in Belgium concerning the treatment of people from the new Member States while they are in Belgium. In an interview, the Public Prosecutor had, among other things, called for members of the public to inform the police of the particulars of cars and vans with foreign registration plates. The idea is that the police can then check them. This forms part of a plan to tackle petty crime. The foreign registration plates in question are those from a number of EU Member States, among which Bulgaria was later explicitly mentioned. The question arises whether this accords with EU legislation, particularly that concerning free movement of persons, and whether it breaches the ban on discrimination on grounds of nationality.

1. Does inciting members of the public to pass on particulars of vehicles to the police purely because they have registration plates from certain EU countries accord with EC law and the EU Treaties?

2. Does the Commission believe that selectively checking cars (and their occupants) because they have a registration plate from one or another of certain EU Member States is permissible under current EC law and the EU Treaties?

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

On the Honourable Member's question regarding control of foreign cars, EC law does not prejudge police controls put in place on the territory of Member States. However, these controls should not systematically aim specific nationalities in an unjustified and disproportionate manner.

On the Honourable Member's implication that the statements in question would associate criminality with a certain nationality, the Commission does not usually take position on individual statements, in particular when their precise content is not known to it.

In principle, the Commission strongly condemns all manifestations of racism and xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, regardless of who they come from, as these phenomena are incompatible with the values and principles the EU is founded on.

Statements which allegedly associate criminality with a certain nationality, like asking to report registration plates from other Member States in the context of combatting petty crime, could indeed stigmatise the latter and fuel xenophobia, and would therefore be incompatible with the EU principle of non-discrimination on the basis of nationality. Public authorities, political parties, and civil society should strongly condemn and actively fight against xenophobic and racist behaviour.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-000543/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Theodoros Skylakakis (ALDE)
(21 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Αδειοδοτήσεις φαρμακείων στην Ελλάδα — Αριθμός αδειών ίδρυσης και λειτουργίας

Λαμβάνοντας υπόψη την απάντηση του Επιτρόπου κ. Rehn (E-009719/2012) όπου αναφέρεται ότι «Η Επιτροπή παρακολουθεί την πρόοδο στην εφαρμογή των εν λόγω πολιτικών κατά την τακτική εξέταση που διενεργείται στο πλαίσιο του Προγράμματος Οικονομικής Προσαρμογής της Ελλάδας», ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

Γνωρίζει, στο πλαίσιο της παρακολούθησης της προόδου για την εφαρμογή της πολιτικής αυτής, πόσες καινούργιες άδειες ίδρυσης και λειτουργίας φαρμακείων έχουν δοθεί, από την έναρξη ισχύος του ανωτέρω νόμου, στους Δήμους που προέκυψαν από συνένωση προϋπαρχόντων Δήμων, καθώς και τους Δήμους που προέκυψαν από συνένωση άλλων Δήμων και Κοινοτήτων, όπως αυτοί ορίζονται στο άρθρο 2 του ν. 3852;

Στην περίπτωση που δεν το γνωρίζει και με δεδομένο ότι ο αριθμός αδειών αποτελεί αψευδή μάρτυρα του βαθμού απελευθέρωσης, προτίθεται να υποβάλει σχετικό ερώτημα κατά την τακτική εξέταση που διενεργείται στο πλαίσιο του Προγράμματος Οικονομικής Προσαρμογής της Ελλάδας και να με ενημερώσει σχετικώς;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(10 Απριλίου 2013)

Η τακτική εξέταση εστιάζει στην εφαρμογή του προγράμματος της Ελλάδος και ειδικότερα στη συμμόρφωση με τους όρους του προγράμματος. Η Επιτροπή θα ζητήσει εξηγήσεις στην επόμενη τακτική εξέταση σχετικά με τον αριθμό νέων αδειών ίδρυσης και λειτουργίας φαρμακείων που έχουν δοθεί από την αρχή του προγράμματος προσαρμογής.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000543/13
to the Commission
Theodoros Skylakakis (ALDE)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Licensing of pharmacies in Greece — number of licences issued to establish and run pharmacies

In view of the answer given by Commissioner Rehn to my Written Question E-009719/2012 which states that: 'The Commission will be monitoring progress regarding these policies within the regular review missions under the Economic Adjustment Programme to Greece', will the Commission say:

In monitoring progress regarding this policy, does it know how many new licences to establish and operate pharmacies have been issued since the entry into force of the law in question in municipalities resulting from the merger of existing municipalities and municipalities resulting from the merger of other municipalities and communities, as defined in Article 2 of Law 3852?

If not, and given that the number of licences issued provides unimpeachable evidence about the degree of liberalisation achieved, will it submit a question on this issue during the regular examination conducted under the Economic Adjustment Programme to Greece and notify the author of this question of the answer?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(10 April 2013)

The review mission focuses on Greece's programme implementation and in particular on compliance with the programme conditionality. The Commission will inquire in the next review mission about the number of new licenses granted to set up and operate pharmacies since the beginning of the adjustment programme.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000544/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: Supervisão Bancária na Europa

A proposta da Comissão sobre esta matéria previa que a supervisão bancária fosse extensível a todos os bancos. No entanto, a decisão do Conselho foi contrária a essa pretensão, deixando de fora a maioria dos bancos europeus.

Como viu a Comissão esta decisão do Conselho?

Na opinião da Comissão, a aprovação da supervisão bancária nestes termos assegura de forma eficiente a estabilidade do sistema financeiro, tão importante para a retoma do crescimento económico?

Resposta dada por Michel Barnier em nome da Comissão
(13 de março de 2013)

A Comissão considera que o texto de compromisso adotado por unanimidade pelo Conselho em dezembro de 2012 está em consonância com o objetivo da proposta da Comissão sobre a atribuição de competências de supervisão específicas ao Banco Central Europeu, de forma a abranger todas as instituições de crédito dos Estados-Membros participantes no mecanismo único de supervisão.

O compromisso do Conselho especifica a divisão do trabalho entre o BCE e as autoridades nacionais de supervisão: o BCE será incumbido da supervisão direta das instituições de crédito mais proeminentes, enquanto as autoridades nacionais de supervisão serão responsáveis pelas instituições de crédito menos significativas. As atividades das autoridades nacionais de supervisão serão integradas no mecanismo único de supervisão. Agirão no âmbito do enquadramento estabelecido pelo BCE. O BCE terá a possibilidade de assumir a supervisão direta de qualquer instituição de crédito dos Estados-Membros participantes, quando tal for necessário para assegurar uma aplicação coerente de elevados padrões de supervisão.

O BCE será responsável pelo funcionamento do mecanismo único de supervisão, que deverá assegurar uma supervisão eficiente e de elevada qualidade relativamente a todas as instituições de crédito, contribuindo assim para a estabilidade do sistema financeiro.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000544/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Banking supervision in Europe

The Commission's proposal on this issue foresaw that banking supervision would extend to all banks. The Council's decision, however, was contrary to this intent, leaving out the majority of European banks.

How does the Commission view the Council's decision?

Does it consider that the approval of banking supervision under these terms efficiently ensures the financial system's stability, which is much needed for the resumption of economic growth?

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

The Commission believes that the compromise text unanimously agreed by the Council in December 2012 is in line with the purpose of the Commission's proposal on the conferral of specific supervisory tasks to the European Central Bank to cover all credit institutions in the Member States participating in the Single Supervisory Mechanism.

The Council compromise specifies the division of labour between ECB and national supervisors: the ECB will carry out direct supervision of more significant credit institutions while national supervisors will have responsibility for less significant credit institutions. The activity of national supervisors will be integrated in the Single Supervisory Mechanism. They will act within the framework established by the ECB. The ECB will be able to take over the direct supervision of any credit institution in participating Member States when necessary to ensure consistent application of high supervisory standards.

The ECB will be responsible for the functioning of the Single Supervisory Mechanism, which should ensure efficient and high quality supervision of all credit institutions thereby contributing to the stability of the financial system.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000545/13
to the Commission
Syed Kamall (ECR)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Loans written off by payday loan companies

I have been contacted by a constituent whose bank account has been used to perpetrate a fraud on a payday loan company. On doing some research, he found many recorded instances of fraud of the type he had experienced.

My constituent is concerned that there may be a risk of loss to the taxpayer.

Could the Commission inform me what steps are taken to ensure that loans written off by payday loan companies as a result of fraud do not end up as credit default securitisations purchased by the European Central Bank, or by EU private sector banks subsidised, supported or owned by Member States?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(19 March 2013)

The activities carried out by payday loans companies are not subject to credit institutions authorisation according to the European banking law. As these entities do not 'receive deposits or other repayable funds from the public', they remain outside the scope of Directive 2006/48/EC relating to the taking-up and pursuit of the business of credit institutions ([1]). National authorities hold the competence to restrict such activities in conformity with the Treaty and impose specific prudential requirements.

However, the Union legal framework seeks to protect EU regulated investors, and ultimately EU taxpayers, by requiring EU investor credit institutions ([2]) to perform some due diligence duties in order to be able to demonstrate to the competent authorities that they have a comprehensive and thorough understanding of the risk characteristics of any asset backed securities they invest in.

Similar requirements are being developed for EU insurance companies and asset managers that are subject to Solvency II ([3]) and Alternative Investment Fund Managers ([4]) Directives and their respective implementing rules.

The performance of the due diligence will be facilitated since the recently agreed Credit Rating Agencies III Regulation requires all information necessary for a comprehensive assessment of an EU securitisation product to be disclosed to the public by the issuer, originator or sponsor.

The European Central Bank and the Bank of England have also developed their own policy on eligible collaterals and risk management in the Central Banks' refinancing operations.

Finally, the Union legal framework confers competent authorities the necessary investigatory powers in order to detect fraud and requires establishing mechanisms for reporting of fraud.

([1]) OJ L 177, 30.6.2006, p. 1-200.

([2]) Directive 2009/111/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 September 2009 amending Directives 2006/48/EC, 2006/49/EC and 2007/64/EC as regards banks affiliated to central institutions, certain own funds items, large exposures, supervisory arrangements, and crisis management, OJ L 302, 17.11.2009, p. 97-119.

([3]) Directive 2009/138/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2009 on the taking-up and pursuit of the business of Insurance and Reinsurance (Solvency II), OJ L 335, 17.12.2009, p. 1-155.

([4]) Directive 2011/61/EU of The European Parliament and of the Council of 8 June 2011 on Alternative Investment Fund Managers and amending Directives 2003/41/EC and 2009/65/EC and Regulations (EC) No 1060/2009 and (EU) No 1095/2010, OJ L 174, 1.7.2011, p. 1.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000546/13
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(21 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Financiación del BEI en Valencia — crea escola

En diciembre de 2008 el Banco Europeo de Inversiones hizo pública la financiación del programa «crea escola» destinado a la renovación de escuelas de educación primaria, secundaria y de formación profesional de la Comunidad Valenciana, con un total de 300 millones de euros aprobados, bajo la denominación del proyecto «Valencia Centros Escolares II-2».

El 11 de marzo de 2010, fue aprobado otro proyecto denominado «Valencia Centros Escolares III» para la planificación, construcción, rehabilitación y extensión de 260 centros de preprimaria, primaria, secundaria y de formación profesional de la Comunidad Valenciana.

Si ambos proyectos financiaban la planificación, construcción, rehabilitación y extensión de los mismos centros escolares o de distintos, se sugiere que hubo una mala utilización de los fondos públicos otorgados por el BEI.

Por todo ello, se pregunta:

1. ¿Conoce la Comisión si han sido justificados por la Generalitat Valenciana los gastos relativos al dinero financiado por el Banco Europeo de Inversiones para el proyecto «Valencia Centros Escolares II-2»? ¿y los del proyecto «Valencia Centros Escolares III»?

2. ¿Conoce la Comisión si el BEI ha comprobado si se ha construido, rehabilitado o ampliado alguno de los centros escolares citados en ambos proyectos o la totalidad de ellos?

3. ¿Recomendará la Comisión que todos los documentos relativos a la auditoría de la buena gestión de fondos públicos del BEI sean públicos y accesibles?

Respuesta del Sr. Rehn en nombre de la Comisión
(27 de marzo de 2013)

El Banco Europeo de Inversiones (BEI) sigue muy de cerca la ejecución del programa «Crea Escola». El programa está financiado parcialmente por el BEI mediante dos préstamos, por un importe total de 800 millones EUR que cubren las dos primeras fases del programa. Según su procedimiento general, el BEI supervisa los proyectos desde la firma del contrato de préstamo, pasando por la ejecución del proyecto y la fase operativa, hasta que se reembolsa el préstamo.

En julio de 2012, un equipo técnico del BEI hizo una visita a la Comunidad Valenciana para evaluar sobre el terreno en qué punto se encuentra la ejecución del programa «Crea Escola». Durante la visita, se confirmó que, si bien la primera fase del programa («Valencia Centros Escolares II-1») se había completado a satisfacción del BEI, la segunda fase («Valencia Centros Escolares II-2») ha tenido algunos retrasos y todavía se está ejecutando.

Después de la visita de julio de 2012, el BEI ha intensificado su supervisión del proyecto y ha pedido a la Comunidad Valenciana que presente un Plan de Acción para la culminación del proyecto. El BEI no ha realizado, ni le consta que se haya hecho, ninguna auditoría de la primera y la segunda fase del proyecto.

Además, el BEI recibió una reclamación relativa al proyecto en abril de 2012. La reclamación se está tramitando confidencialmente, tal como solicitó el demandante. El BEI espera enviar al demandante un informe confidencial elaborado con arreglo al mecanismo de reclamaciones del BEI en las próximas semanas.

«Valencia Centros Escolares III» es la tercera fase del programa. Su financiación fue aprobada por el Consejo de Administración del BEI el 11.3.2010, pero el préstamo correspondiente todavía no se ha firmado, es decir, aún no se han hecho los pagos. Por tanto, en esta fase no hay prevista una evaluación final interna.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000546/13
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: European Investment Bank funding for the Crea Escola programme in Valencia

In December 2008 the European Investment Bank (EIB) announced that it was funding the Crea Escola programme to upgrade primary, secondary and vocational education facilities in the Valencian Community and had approved a total of EUR 300 million under the project heading *Valencia Centros Escolares II-2*.

On 11 March 2010 another project called *Valencia Centros Escolares III* was approved, involving the design, construction, upgrading and expansion of 260 preschool, primary, secondary and vocational education facilities in the Valencian Community.

If both projects funded the design, construction, upgrading and expansion of the same educational facilities, or different ones, the public funding granted by the EIB may have been misused.

In light of the above:

1. Does the Commission know whether the Valencian regional government has justified its spending in relation to the funding provided by the EIB for the *Valencia Centros Escolares II-2* and *Valencia Centros Escolares III* projects?

2. Does the Commission know whether the EIB has verified whether any or all of the educational centres covered by these two projects have been built, upgraded or expanded?

3. Does the Commission intend to recommend that all documents relating to the sound management audit of public funds from the EIB be made publicly available and accessible?

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

The Europen Invesment Bank (EIB) is closely following the implementation of the 'Crea Escola' programme. The programme is being partially financed by the EIB through two loans — for a total amount of EUR 800 million covering the first two phases of the programme. According to its general procedures, the EIB monitors projects from the signature of the loan contract through the project implementation and operation phase until the loan is paid back.

In July 2012 an EIB technical team made a visit to the Comunidad Valenciana to evaluate on site the status of implementation of the 'Crea Escola' programme. During the visit, it was confirmed that, while the first phase of the programme ('Valencia Centros Escolares II-1') has been completed to the satisfaction of the EIB, the second phase ('Valencia Centros Escolares II-2') has suffered some delays and is still under implementation.

After the July 2012 visit, the EIB has reinforced its monitoring of the project and has requested the Comunidad Valenciana to produce an Action Plan for the project's completion. The EIB has neither carried out nor is aware of any audit on the 1st and 2nd phases of the project.

In addition, the EIB received a complaint related to this project in April 2012. The complaint is being treated confidentially, as requested by the complainant. The EIB expects to send a confidential report prepared under the EIB Complaints Mechanism to the complainant in the coming weeks.

'Valencia Centros Escolares3' is the programme's third phase. Its financing was approved by the EIB Board of Directors on 11.03.10, but the corresponding loan has not been signed yet, i.e. no disbursements have been made. Hence, no internal final evaluation of the project's third phase is foreseen at this stage.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000547/13
an die Kommission
Ria Oomen-Ruijten (PPE), Thijs Berman (S&D), Franziska Keller (Verts/ALE), Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE) und Esther de Lange (PPE)
(21. Januar 2013)

Betrifft: Kinderarbeit und Schuhproduktion — Folgemaßnahmen

Kommissionsmitglied de Gucht führt in seiner Antwort auf die Anfrage E-007450/2012 aus, dass der Strategische Rahmen und der Aktionsplan der EU für Menschenrechte und Demokratie 2012 die Förderung einer Aktualisierung der Listen gefährlicher Arbeiten nach dem IAO-Übereinkommen Nr. 182 vorsieht. Auf welche Listen nimmt die Kommission Bezug — auf die Listen der Mitgliedstaaten der EU und/oder die Listen von Drittländern, die in denen das Problem der Kinderarbeit besteht? Zu welchem Zeitpunkt werden die Listen aktualisiert?

Die Kommission verweist auf einen umfassenden Rahmen, bei dem die Ursachen der Kinderarbeit angegangen werden. Kann die Kommission darlegen, wie dieser Rahmen angewendet werden kann, um Kinderarbeit und Verstöße gegen das Arbeitsrecht zu bekämpfen, und zwar insbesondere in der weltweiten Schuhproduktion?

Gemäß ihrer Antwort ist die Kommission bestrebt, die soziale Verantwortung der Unternehmen (SVU) in die Verhandlungen über Handel und Investitionen einzubeziehen. Welche Fortschritte wurden in dieser Frage im Hinblick auf die derzeit laufenden Handels- und Investitionsverhandlungen bislang erzielt?

Gemäß dem kürzlich veröffentlichten Bericht zur Kinderarbeit im Lederschuhsektor und zu den SVU-Maßnahmen und -verfahren der Schuhindustrie (Child labour in the leather shoe sector — An analysis of CSR policy and practice of footwear companies) im Zuge der Kampagne „Stopp Kinderarbeit“ gehen auf dem europäischen Markt nur wenige Unternehmen der Schuhindustrie aktiv gegen Kinderarbeit in ihrer Zuliefererkette vor. Welche Maßnahmen gedenkt die Kommission zu ergreifen, um die Unternehmen der Schuhindustrie dazu anzuhalten, dem Problem der Kinderarbeit in ihrer Zuliefererkette mehr Aufmerksamkeit zu widmen?

Die Kommission führt in ihrer Antwort aus, dass zu der Einbindung der Interessenträger im Hinblick auf die OECD-Leitlinien keine weitere Untersuchung erforderlich sei. Allerdings wurde in der Anfrage auf spezifische Untersuchungen zu Kinderarbeit und Menschenrechtsfragen in der weltweiten Schuhindustrie Bezug genommen. Ist die Kommission bereit, derartige Untersuchungen auch im Lichte des ernstzunehmenden Faktenmaterials zu Kinderarbeit und Verstößen gegen das Arbeitsrecht, die durch die SOMO-Studie zu Indien und die Arbeiten von „Stopp Kinderarbeit“ aufgezeigt wurden, fortzuführen?

Antwort von Herrn De Gucht im Namen der Kommission
(14. März 2013)

In dem 2012 verabschiedeten Aktionsplan mit dem neuen Strategischen Rahmen für Menschenrechte werden, insbesondere unter Punkt 19d (Gefahrenlisten), alle Mitgliedstaaten der Internationalen Arbeitsorganisation (IAO), ob EU-Mitglied oder nicht, aufgefordert, im Einklang mit Artikel 4 des IAO-Übereinkommens Nr. 182 aktualisierte Verzeichnisse gefährlicher Arbeiten zu erstellen.

Da es in der Regel mehrere, wenn auch zusammenhängende, Ursachen für Kinderarbeit gibt, ist zu deren Bekämpfung eine umfassende und komplexe Betrachtungsweise vonnöten. Armut ist der häufigste Grund für Kinderarbeit und muss auf mehreren Ebenen bekämpft werden, was auch aber nicht nur die Schaffung von Arbeitsplätzen, die Bereitstellung von Sozialschutz, Schul- und Bildungseinrichtungen sowie Infrastruktur einschließt. Der internationale Handel trägt zur Verbesserung der Entwicklung und Steigerung des Wirtschaftwachstums und damit auf lange Sicht auch zur Armutsbeseitigung bei.

Zusätzlich zur Antwort zu der schriftlichen Anfrage E-007450/2012 ist zu sagen, dass die soziale Verantwortung der Unternehmen (SVU) auch bei den derzeit laufenden Handels- und Investitionsverhandlungen diskutiert wird.

Die Kommission entwickelt unter Einbindung von Interessenträgern für eine begrenzte Zahl von Industriebranchen Richtlinien zur SVU im Bereich Menschenrechte basierend auf den Leitprinzipien der Vereinten Nationen (VN). Diese Richtlinien sollten so global wie möglich anwendbar und für ein breiteres Spektrum von Industriebranchen relevant sein. Die Kommission hat außerdem ein Projekt durchgeführt, das sich mit der Erstellung von Orientierungshilfen für kleine und mittlere Unternehmen (KMU) im Bereich Wirtschaft und Menschenrechte befasst, um diese bei der Umsetzung der Leitprinzipien der VN zu unterstützen. Des Weiteren entwickelt die Kommission ein Regelwerk für die Selbst- und Koregulierung, an der die Teilnahme der Schuhindustrie zu begrüßen wäre.

Die Kommission wird weiterhin mit Interessenträgern zusammenarbeiten und alle relevanten Entwicklungen in diesem Bereich verfolgen.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000547/13
alla Commissione
Ria Oomen-Ruijten (PPE), Thijs Berman (S&D), Franziska Keller (Verts/ALE), Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE) e Esther de Lange (PPE)
(21 gennaio 2013)

Oggetto: Lavoro minorile e produzione di calzature — follow-up

Nella sua risposta all'interrogazione scritta E-007450/2012 il commissario de Gucht sostiene che il quadro strategico UE 2012 sul piano d'azione per i diritti umani prevede la promozione dell'aggiornamento delle liste dei lavori pericolosi di cui alla convenzione OIL n. 182. A quale liste si riferisce la Commissione: a quelle degli Stati membri dell'UE e/o a quelle dei paesi terzi con problemi di lavoro minorile? Quando verranno aggiornate le liste?

La Commissione fa riferimento a un quadro globale il quale affronti alla radice il lavoro minorile. Potrebbe la Commissione spiegare in che modo è possibile impiegare tale quadro nel contrasto al lavoro minorile e alle violazioni dei diritti dei lavoratori, in particolare nel settore calzaturiero globale?

Stando alla risposta della Commissione esso mira a includere nei negoziati in materia di commercio/investimenti la responsabilità sociale d'impresa (RSI). Quali progressi sono stati compiuti a questo riguardo nel contesto dei negoziati dedicati al commercio e agli investimenti?

Secondo la recente relazione «Child labour in the leather shoe sector — An analysis of CSR policy and practice of footwear companies» (Lavoro minorile nel settore delle calzature in pelle — analisi delle politiche e delle pratiche delle imprese calzaturiere in materia di RSI), pubblicata nell'ambito della campagna Stop Child Labour, nel mercato europeo soltanto poche aziende calzaturiere affrontano efficacemente il lavoro minorile nella propria catena di fornitura. Quali misure intende adottare la Commissione per incoraggiare le imprese calzaturiere a prestare maggiore attenzione al problema del lavoro minorile nella propria catena di fornitura?

Nella sua risposta la Commissione sostiene che con riferimento alle linee guida dell'OCSE per le imprese multinazionali non sono necessari ulteriori approfondimenti sul coinvolgimento delle parti interessate. Nell'interrogazione, tuttavia, si menzionavano le ricerche specifiche sul lavoro minorile e sulle questioni dei diritti umani nel settore calzaturiero mondiale. Intende la Commissione portare avanti tali ricerche, in particolare per quanto concerne le gravi violazioni in materia di lavoro minorile e di diritti dei lavoratori esposte da SOMO e da Stop Child Labour nello studio sull'India?

Risposta di Karel De Gucht a nome della Commissione
(14 marzo 2013)

Il Piano d'azione adottato nel 2012 assieme al nuovo Quadro strategico in materia di diritti umani, segnatamente al punto 19d, elenchi dei lavori pericolosi, promuove l'elaborazione di elenchi aggiornati dei lavori pericolosi ad opera dei membri dell'Organizzazione internazionale del lavoro (OIL), siano essi unionali o meno, in linea con la convenzione OIL 182, articolo 4.

Per affrontare le cause soggiacenti del lavoro minorile occorre un approccio ampio e articolato, poiché per ogni singola fattispecie le cause sono di solito molteplici anche se spesso interrelate. La povertà è il motivo principale alla base del lavoro minorile e va affrontata a diversi livelli tra cui, ma non esclusivamente, con la creazione di posti di lavoro, la messa a disposizione di sistemi di protezione sociale, di scuole e strutture educative e delle necessarie infrastrutture. Gli scambi internazionali finiscono per promuovere lo sviluppo e la crescita e contribuiscono quindi all'eradicazione della povertà in una prospettiva di lungo periodo.

In aggiunta a quanto indicato nella risposta alla precedente interrogazione scritta E-007450/2012 si fa presente che la responsabilità sociale delle imprese (RSI) è oggetto di discussione nei negoziati in corso in materia di scambi/investimenti.

La Commissione si adopera con gli stakeholder per sviluppare orientamenti sui diritti umani nell'ambito della RSI per un numero limitato di settori industriali, sulla base dei principi guida delle Nazioni Unite. Tali orientamenti saranno applicabili su scala quanto più ampia possibile e dovrebbero interessare un'ampia gamma di settori industriali. La Commissione ha anche completato un progetto per produrre materiale orientativo sulle imprese e i diritti umani all'indirizzo delle piccole e medie imprese (PMI) per assisterle nell'implementazione dei principi guida delle Nazioni Unite. La Commissione sviluppa inoltre un codice di auto — e coregolamentazione cui l'industria calzaturiera è invitata a partecipare.

La Commissione continua ad impegnarsi con gli stakeholder e a seguire gli sviluppi di rilievo in questo ambito.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-000547/13
aan de Commissie
Ria Oomen-Ruijten (PPE), Thijs Berman (S&D), Franziska Keller (Verts/ALE), Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE) en Esther de Lange (PPE)
(21 januari 2013)

Betreft: Kinderarbeid en productie van schoenen — follow up

In zijn antwoord op schriftelijke vraag E-007450/2012 stelt commissaris De Gucht dat het strategisch kader en actieplan van de EU van 2012 voor mensenrechten en democratie voorziet in het bevorderen van de geactualiseerde lijsten van gevaarlijk werk in de zin van Verdrag nr. 182 van de Internationale Arbeidsorganisatie. Aan welke lijsten refereert de Commissie: die van de lidstaten en/of die van derde landen die een probleem hebben op het vlak van kinderarbeid? Wanneer worden die lijsten geüpdatet?

De Commissie heeft het ook over een omvattend kader dat de fundamentele oorzaken van kinderarbeid wil aanpakken. Kan de Commissie mij uitleggen hoe met dit kader het probleem van kinderarbeid en de schendingen van het arbeidsrecht kan worden opgelost, in het bijzonder op het terrein van de wereldwijde schoenenindustrie?

Uit het antwoord van de Commissie kunnen wij opmaken dat zij de beginselen van maatschappelijk verantwoord ondernemen (MVO) aan de orde wil stellen in de handels- en investeringsonderhandelingen. Is er op dat punt vooruitgang geboekt tijdens de lopende onderhandelingsronde over handel en investeringen?

Volgens een recent rapport over „Kinderarbeid in de sector van de leren schoenen: een analyse van MVO-beleid en de dagelijkse praktijk van de schoenenproducenten", gepubliceerd in het kader van de campagne „Stop Child Labour", hebben slechts enkele bedrijven op de Europese markt het probleem van kinderarbeid in hun toeleveringsketen daadwerkelijk aangepakt. Wat is de Commissie bereid te ondernemen om de schoenenproducenten ertoe aan te zetten meer aandacht te besteden aan het probleem van kinderarbeid in hun leveringsketen?

In haar antwoord zegt de Commissie voorts dat geen nader onderzoek vereist is over de manier om de belanghebbenden ertoe aan te zetten zich te houden aan de OESO-richtsnoeren voor multinationals. De vraag ging echter over specifiek onderzoek over kinderarbeid en problemen inzake mensenrechten in de wereldwijde schoenenindustrie. Is de Commissie bereid verder te gaan met dit soort onderzoek, in het bijzonder naar de ernstige schendingen op het vlak van kinderarbeid en arbeidsrecht die aan het licht zijn gekomen in de landenstudie over India van SOMO en „Stop Child Labour"?

Antwoord van de heer De Gucht namens de Commissie
(14 maart 2013)

Het actieplan dat in 2012 samen met het nieuwe strategisch kader voor mensenrechten en democratie is vastgesteld, en met name punt 19, onder d), voorziet in de bevordering van het opstellen van actuele lijsten van gevaarlijk werk door leden van de Internationale Arbeidsorganisatie (IAO), EU-lidstaten en andere, overeenkomstig artikel 4 van Verdrag 182 van de IAO.

De achterliggende oorzaken van kinderarbeid moeten vanuit een alomvattend en breed perspectief worden aangepakt, aangezien er gewoonlijk een combinatie van oorzaken is, ook al houden die oorzaken verband. Armoede is de belangrijkste oorzaak van kinderarbeid en moet op verschillende vlakken worden aangepakt, onder meer maar niet uitsluitend door het scheppen van banen en het bieden van sociale bescherming en van school- en onderwijsfaciliteiten en -infrastructuur. Internationale handel draagt bij tot ontwikkeling en groei en bijgevolg tot de bestrijding van armoede op lange termijn.

In aanvulling op het antwoord op de eerdere schriftelijke vraag E-007450/2012 zij erop gewezen dat maatschappelijk verantwoord ondernemen (MVO) wordt besproken in het kader van lopende handels- en investeringsonderhandelingen.

Voor een beperkt aantal industriesectoren werkt de Commissie samen met belanghebbenden aan de ontwikkeling van MVO-richtsnoeren op het gebied van mensenrechten, die gebaseerd zijn op de richtsnoeren van de Verenigde Naties (VN). De gids zal zo universeel mogelijk toepasbaar zijn en moet voor een groot aantal sectoren relevant zijn. De Commissie heeft ook een gids over mensenrechten voor kleine en middelgrote ondernemingen (kmo's) gepubliceerd om hen te helpen de richtsnoeren van de VN te volgen. Voorts ontwikkelt de Commissie een gedragscode voor zelf- en mederegulering. De deelname van de schoenenindustrie aan deze werzkaamheden zou welkom zijn.

De Commissie blijft samenwerken met belanghebbenden en volgt de relevante ontwikkelingen op dit gebied.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000547/13
to the Commission
Ria Oomen-Ruijten (PPE), Thijs Berman (S&D), Franziska Keller (Verts/ALE), Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE) and Esther de Lange (PPE)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Child labour and shoe production — follow-up

In his answer to Written Question E-007450/2012, Commissioner de Gucht states that the 2012 EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights foresee the promotion of updated hazardous work lists under ILO Convention No 182. To which lists is the Commission referring: the lists of EU Member States and/or the lists of third countries with a child labour problem? When will these lists be updated?

The Commission refers to a comprehensive framework that addresses the root causes of child labour. Could the Commission explain how this framework can be applied to tackling child labour and labour rights violations, in particular in the global footwear industry?

According to the Commission's answer, it aims to incorporate corporate social responsibility (CSR) into trade/investment negotiations. What progress has been made on this issue in ongoing trade and investment negotiations?

According to a recent report on 'Child labour in the leather shoe sector — An analysis of CSR policy and practice of footwear companies', published by the Stop Child Labour campaign, only a few shoe companies in the European market effectively tackle child labour in their supply chain. What action is the Commission willing to take to encourage footwear companies to pay more attention to the problem of child labour in their supply chain?

In its answer, the Commission says that no further research is needed on involving stakeholders with regard to the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. However, the question referred to specific research on child labour and human rights issues in the global footwear industry. Is the Commission willing to pursue such research, particularly with regard to the serious child labour and labour rights violations revealed by the country study on India by SOMO and Stop Child Labour?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(14 March 2013)

The action plan adopted in 2012 with the new Strategic Framework on Human Rights, notably point 19d, hazardous lists, promotes the establishment of up-to-date hazardous work lists by International Labour Organisation (ILO) members, whether EU or not, in line with ILO Convention 182, Article 4.

A comprehensive and broad perspective in addressing root causes of child labour is needed as the causes are normally several in each case even though interlinked. Poverty is the most important reason for child labour and needs to be addressed at several levels including but not limited to job creation, provision of social protection, school and education facilities and infrastructure. International trade is contributing to enhancing development and growth and therefore contributes to poverty eradication in a long term perspective.

In addition to the reply to previous Written Question E-007450/2012, corporate social responsibility (CSR) is discussed in ongoing trade/investment negotiations.

The Commission is working with stakeholders to develop CSR human rights guidance for a limited number of industrial sectors, based on the United Nations (UN) Guiding Principles. The guide will be applicable as globally as possible and should be relevant for a wider range of industrial sectors. The Commission has also accomplished a project to produce guidance material on Business and Human Rights for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to assist them with the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles. The Commission is furthermore developing a code for self- and co-regulation and in which the footwear industry would be welcome to participate.

The Commission continues to engage with stakeholders and follows relevant developments in this area.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000548/13
alla Commissione
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(21 gennaio 2013)

Oggetto: Diritto di voto per gli studenti italiani temporaneamente residenti all'estero per il programma Erasmus

Gli studenti italiani residenti temporaneamente all'estero per motivi di studio e formazione, in particolare gli studenti Erasmus, non potranno votare alle prossime elezioni politiche e regionali del 24 e 25 febbraio. Infatti, gli studenti che temporaneamente risiedono all'estero per motivi di studio non sono compresi nelle categorie di elettori aventi diritto di voto all'estero.

Negando ai giovani Erasmus il diritto di voto, il governo italiano non dà la possibilità ad oltre 20.000 giovani di esprimere il loro punto di vista sul futuro dell'Italia, in una congiuntura in cui sono i giovani che rischiano di pagare il prezzo più alto della crisi economica con una disoccupazione giovanile che ha superato il 37 %.

Ciò premesso, può la Commissione verificare:

1. in che modo è possibile garantire il diritto di voto agli studenti italiani impegnati nell'Erasmus;

2. se non siano stati violati il principio di non discriminazione e di cittadinanza sanciti dalla Carta dei diritti fondamentali dell'Unione europea;

3. e fornire un quadro generale della situazione?

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000559/13
alla Commissione
Matteo Salvini (EFD)
(22 gennaio 2013)

Oggetto: Diritto di voto per cittadini europei che si trovano temporaneamente in uno Stato UE diverso dal proprio nell'ambito di programmi di scambio patrocinati dalla UE

Con le imminenti elezioni in Italia è emerso in maniera massiccia il problema del diritto di voto per gli studenti italiani aderenti al programma llp-Erasmus che si trovano attualmente in un altro Stato UE per motivi di studio.

Ad oggi questi studenti, se vogliono votare, devono rientrare appositamente nel proprio comune di residenza in Italia. Il numero di partecipanti al programma Erasmus e a programmi analoghi è in continuo aumento e crescerà ancora nei prossimi anni e considerando che un effettivo diritto al voto è uno dei fondamenti di un'autentica democrazia, può la Commissione rispondere al seguente quesito:

— quali politiche intende attuare la Commissione al fine di garantire l'effettivo diritto di voto a quei cittadini che, al momento delle consultazioni elettorali, si trovino temporaneamente in un Paese UE diverso dal proprio in quanto hanno aderito ad un programma di scambio bandito dalla Commissione stessa o da altre istituzioni europee?

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000652/13
alla Commissione
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(23 gennaio 2013)

Oggetto: Esercizio del diritto di voto a beneficio di studenti temporaneamente residenti all'estero a causa della partecipazione a scambi di mobilità nell'ambito di programmi UE

In questi giorni, gli studenti italiani che stanno fruendo di una borsa nell'ambito del programma Erasmus hanno sollevato il loro caso: si trovano all'estero per motivi di studio con un programma europeo ma non potranno votare nelle loro rispettive città. Lo Stato italiano non riconosce loro la possibilità di votare alle prossime elezioni politiche che avranno luogo il 24 e 25 febbraio.

La possibilità di voto è garantita ai soli residenti all'estero, a condizione che sia stata effettuata la registrazione presso l'Aire (Anagrafe italiana dei residenti all'estero); solitamente, uno studente che fruisce di una borsa di mobilità Erasmus, in genere inferiore ai dodici mesi, non è iscritto al predetto registro.

Considerando che le leggi elettorali per le elezioni nazionali e per tutti gli aspetti a esse correlate sono di assoluta competenza dei singoli Stati Membri;

che, inoltre, l'Unione dovrebbe prevenire qualsiasi discriminazione;

che questa anomalia è circoscritta a un numero molto limitato di Stati Membri, fra i quali l'Italia,

si chiede alla Commissione quali azioni potrà intraprendere, anche in futuro, affinché gli studenti europei che si trovino per motivi di studio o formazione in un altro Stato Membro dell'Unione possano esercitare il diritto di voto nel paese ospitante.

Risposta congiunta di Viviane Reding a nome della Commissione
(4 aprile 2013)

La partecipazione democratica è un valore fondamentale per l'Unione europea.

Ai sensi dell'articolo 20, paragrafo 2, lettera b) e dell'articolo 22 del trattato sul funzionamento dell'Unione europea, i cittadini dell'Unione hanno il diritto di voto e di eleggibilità alle elezioni comunali ed europee nello Stato membro in cui risiedono, alle stesse condizioni dei cittadini di detto Stato.

Le elezioni nazionali sono di esclusiva competenza degli Stati membri.

In base alle informazioni di cui dispone la Commissione, tutti i cittadini italiani che risiedono all'estero hanno il diritto di votare alle elezioni nazionali per posta o ritornando in Italia.

Ai sensi della normativa italiana, i cittadini che risiedono all'estero per almeno 12 mesi devono registrarsi all'AIRE (anagrafe degli italiani residenti all'estero). Una volta iscritti all'AIRE, hanno il diritto di votare alle elezioni politiche nazionali per posta.

Gli italiani che risiedono all'estero temporaneamente e per meno di 12 mesi, come gli studenti Erasmus, non sono iscritti all'AIRE come residenti all'estero e possono votare alle elezioni politiche nazionali ritornando in Italia.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000548/13
to the Commission
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Voting rights for Italian students temporarily residing abroad under the Erasmus programme

Italian students temporarily residing abroad for purposes of study or training, particularly Erasmus students, will not be able to vote in the next parliamentary and regional elections on 24 and 25 February. Students residing abroad temporarily for purposes of study are not among the categories of voters who have the right to vote from abroad.

By denying Erasmus students the right to vote, the Italian Government makes it impossible for more than 20 000 young people to express their point of view on Italy's future, at a time when it is young people who are at risk of paying the highest price for the economic crisis, youth unemployment now exceeding 37%.

1. How would it be possible to give Italian students who are studying under the Erasmus programme the right to vote?

2. Does this not breach the principle of non-discrimination and of citizenship laid down in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union?

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

Question for written answer E-000559/13
to the Commission
Matteo Salvini (EFD)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Right to vote for European citizens who find themselves temporarily in an EU Member State other than their own, in the context of EU-sponsored exchange programmes

The imminent elections in Italy have highlighted a large-scale problem: the right to vote of Italian students who are part of the LLP-Erasmus programme and currently resident in other Member States for study purposes.

Currently these students, if they wish to vote, must expressly return to their municipality of residence in Italy. The number of participants in the Erasmus programme and similar programmes is constantly rising, and will continue to rise over the next few years. Given that an effective right to vote is one of the foundations of a true democracy, can the Commission answer the following:

— What policies does the Commission intend to implement to guarantee the effective right to vote to those citizens who, at the time of the elections, are temporarily in a Member State other than their own because they are participating in an exchange programme promoted by the Commission or by other EU institutions?

Question for written answer E-000652/13
to the Commission
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(23 January 2013)

Subject: Right to vote for students temporarily resident abroad on an exchange arranged through EU programmes

Students with grants under the Erasmus programme have recently raised their case: they are living away from their country for purposes of study under an EU programme but are not able to vote in their home towns. The Italian State does not allow them any way of voting in the forthcoming political elections on 24 and 25 February 2013.

Italians residing abroad are only able to vote if they have registered with 'Aire', the Italian registry office for nationals residing abroad. However students with Erasmus grants, which normally run for a period of less than 12 months, are not entered on this register.

It is true that individual Member States have sole competence over electoral laws for national elections and all aspects pertaining thereto. It is also true that the European Union ought to prevent discrimination of any kind and that this anomaly only occurs in a very limited number of Member States, of which Italy is one.

What action can the Commission take, now or in the future, to ensure that EU students studying or training in an EU Member State other than their own may exercise their right to vote whilst in their host country.

Joint answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(4 April 2013)

Democratic participation is a fundamental value for the European Union.

In accordance with Articles 20(2)(b) and 22 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the citizens of the Union have the right to vote or stand as candidates in municipal and European elections in their Member State of residence, under the same conditions of the nationals of that State.

National elections are a matter falling exclusively within the competences of the Member States.

According to the information available to the Commission, all Italian citizens who reside abroad are entitled to vote at national elections, by mail or by returning to Italy.

Under the Italian law, Italian citizens residing abroad and who are supposed to stay there for at least 12 months must register in AIRE (registry of Italians residing abroad). Once enrolled in AIRE, they are entitled to vote at national political elections by mail.

Italians who reside abroad temporarily and for less than 12 months, like Erasmus students, do not register in AIRE as residents abroad and are entitled to vote at national political elections by returning to Italy.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-000549/13
aan de Commissie
Patricia van der Kammen (NI) en Lucas Hartong (NI)
(21 januari 2013)

Betreft: Steun aan Noord-Koreaans regime misplaatst gezien mensenrechtenschendingen

Sinds 1995 heeft de EU meer dan 366 miljoen euro aan Noord-Korea verstrekt ([1]). In Noord-Korea worden mensen onderdrukt, geldt absolute censuur en bestaan strafkampen waar mensen onder barre omstandigheden leven. De organisatie „Open Doors" presenteert de top 50 van landen waar christenen op grond van hun overtuiging worden vervolgd, Noord-Korea staat al 11 jaar op nummer 1 op die lijst ([2]).

1. Is de Commissie bekend met feit dat er in Noord-Korea strafkampen bestaan, executies plaatsvinden, absolute censuur heerst, onderdrukking van de bevolking en marteling dagelijks plaatsvinden, kortom: waar de mensenrechten op grote schaal worden geschonden? Zo ja, wat vindt de Commissie daarvan?

2. Is de Commissie bekend met het feit dat Noord-Korea nummer 1 op de lijst van landen staat waarin christenen vervolgd worden? Zo ja, wat vindt de Commissie daarvan?

3. Hoe (her)beoordeelt de Commissie thans de financiële ondersteuning van de EU aan Noord-Korea — 366 miljoen euro sinds 1995 –, wetende dat Noord-Korea jaar in jaar uit het land is waar christenen het meeste worden vervolgd en de mensenrechten op grote schaal worden geschonden?

4. Deelt de Commissie de mening dat het verwerpelijk is dat de EU, direct of indirect, deze schending van de mensenrechten waaronder de grootschalige christenvervolging — maar ook zaken als het bestaan van werkkampen en strafkampen waarin politieke gevangenen worden opgesloten, het niet bestaan van vrijheid van meningsuiting, en de prioritering van wapenontwikkeling boven voedselvoorziening zoals bijvoorbeeld blijkt uit raketlanceringen etc. — financieel gezien mede mogelijk maakt en daarmee in feite het bewind legitimeert?

5. Waarom heeft de Commissie, aangezien Noord-Korea reeds jarenlang op gruwelijke wijze haar bevolking onderdrukt, de financiële ondersteuning van de EU aan Noord-Korea nog niet beëindigd dan wel scherpe voorwaarden gesteld aan de financiële ondersteuning zoals het eerbiedigen van de mensenrechten? Hoe garandeert de Commissie dat de reeds verstrekte financiële middelen in de juiste handen terecht zijn gekomen en voor het juiste doel zijn aangewend? Controleert zij dit überhaupt en zo ja, op welke wijze?

6. Is de Commissie bereid alsnog alle financiële ondersteuning van de EU aan Noord-Korea per direct te beëindigen dan wel per vandaag nog expliciete voorwaarden met betrekking tot de eerbiediging van de mensenrechten te stellen voor financiële ondersteuning?

Antwoord van de heer Piebalgs namens de Commissie
(19 maart 2013)

Het verbeteren van de mensenrechtensituatie in de DVK ([3]) blijft een kerndoelstelling van het EU-beleid ten aanzien van dat land. De EU is diep bezorgd over de aanhoudende stelselmatige en ernstige schendingen van de mensenrechten in de DVK. De EU heeft de situatie duidelijk veroordeeld en uit haar bezorgdheid bij iedere mogelijke gelegenheid tegenover de vertegenwoordigers van Noord-Korea.

De EU vestigt de aandacht van de Mensenrechtenraad en de Algemene Vergadering van de VN regelmatig op de betreurenswaardige mensenrechtensituatie in de DVK.

De bijstand van de EU is in overeenstemming met twee resoluties van de Raad uit 2002 en 2003 die de EU-interventies in de DVK beperken tot humanitaire hulp. Na beoordeling van de humanitaire situatie en omdat de uitdagingen waarmee de DVK wordt geconfronteerd structureel van aard zijn, is in 2006 besloten dat die beter zouden worden aangepakt met het langetermijninstrument van de EU. De aanpak van de EU is verschoven van zuiver humanitaire hulp naar bijstand in het kader van de component samenhang van noodhulp, rehabilitatie en ontwikkeling van het thematische programma voor voedselzekerheid.

([1]) http://eeas.europa.eu/korea_north/index_en.htm
([2]) http://www.opendoors.nl/vervolgdechristenen/ranglijst-christenvervolging/
([3]) DVK= Democratische Volksrepubliek Korea.

De doelstelling van die interventies is het verbeteren van de levensomstandigheden van de meest kwetsbare bevolkingsgroepen, zoals kinderen, zwangere vrouwen en gehandicapten. De maatregelen worden uitgevoerd door internationale ngo's ([4]) die zijn geselecteerd via openbare oproepen tot het indienen van voorstellen en niet via de regering van de DVK.

De EU blijft bezorgd over de benarde situatie van de Noord-Koreaanse bevolking en zal zowel de bestaande samenwerking als de humanitaire bijstand voortzetten indien de omstandigheden dat rechtvaardigen. Er wordt nauwlettend op toegezien dat de hulpgoederen terechtkomen bij degenen voor wie ze zijn bestemd.

De EU verleent geen enkele bijstand aan het Noord-Koreaanse regime. De EU maakt een onderscheid tussen het regime en de bevolking.

([4]) Ngo = niet-gouvernementele organisatie.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000549/13
to the Commission
Patricia van der Kammen (NI) and Lucas Hartong (NI)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Inappropriateness of aid to the North Korean regime in view of human rights violations

Since 1995, the EU has given more than EUR 366 m to North Korea ([1]). In North Korea, people are repressed, absolute censorship is in force, and prison camps exist where people live in appalling conditions. The organisation 'Open Doors' presents a top-50 list of countries where Christians are persecuted for their beliefs, and for 11 years now, North Korea has topped the list ([2]).

1. Is the Commission aware that, in North Korea, prison camps exist, executions are carried out, absolute censorship is in force, and repression of the people and torture are daily occurrences, so that, to sum up, human rights are breached on a large scale? If so, what view does the Commission take of this?

2. Is the Commission aware that North Korea tops the list of countries where Christians are persecuted? If so, what view does the Commission take of this?

3. What is the Commission's current view/reassessment of the financial assistance from the EU to North Korea — EUR 366 m since 1995 — bearing in mind that, year in year out, North Korea is the country where Christians are most persecuted and that human rights are breached on a large scale there?

4. Does the Commission agree that it is reprehensible for the EU, either directly or indirectly, to help to finance these violations of human rights, including the large-scale persecution of Christians — but also for example the existence of labour camps and prison camps where political prisoners are held, the lack of freedom of expression, and the priority assigned to arms development in preference to the food supply, as indicated for example by missile launches, etc. — thus effectively legitimising the regime?

5. Why has the Commission not yet either ended the EU's financial support for North Korea or imposed strict conditions on that support, for example a requirement to respect human rights, considering that the country has for years been harshly repressing its people? How does the Commission ensure that the funding already provided has reached the right recipients and been used for the right purpose? Does the Commission verify this at all, and if so, how?

6. Will the Commission immediately end all financial assistance from the EU to North Korea or, as of today, introduce explicit requirements with regard to respect for human rights as a precondition for financial support?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(19 March 2013)

Promoting improvements in the human rights situation in DPRK ([3]) remains a core objective of the EU's policy towards the country. The EU is deeply concerned by the continuing systematic and grave violations of human rights in the DPRK. The EU has been clear in its condemnation of the situation and expresses its concerns on every possible occasion with North Korean representatives.

The EU regularly draws the attention of the UN Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly to the deplorable human rights situation in the DPRK.

The EU's assistance is in line with two Council resolutions of 2002 and 2003, which limit EU interventions in DPRK to humanitarian aid. In 2006, upon assessment of the humanitarian situation, and as challenges faced by DPRK are structural in nature, it was decided that these would be better addressed by the EU's longer-term instrument. The EU shifted from a pure humanitarian aid approach to provision of assistance under the Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development component of the Food Security Thematic Programme.

([1]) http://eeas.europa.eu/korea_north/index_en.htm
([2]) http://www.opendoors.nl/vervolgdechristenen/ranglijst-christenvervolging/
([3]) DPRK = Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The objective of these interventions is to improve the living conditions of the most vulnerable, such as children, pregnant women and the disabled. These actions are implemented by international NGOs ([4]) selected through open Calls for Proposals and not through the Government of the DPRK.

The EU remains concerned about the plight of the North Korean people and will continue the ongoing cooperation as well as the provision of humanitarian assistance in duly justified cases. In order to ensure that relief items reach the intended beneficiaries, strict monitoring measures are carefully applied.

The EU does not provide any assistance to the North Korean regime. The EU distinguishes between the regime and the population.

([4]) NGO = Non-governmental Organisations.

(Suomenkielinen versio)

Kirjallisesti vastattava kysymys E-000550/13
komissiolle
Riikka Manner (ALDE)
(21. tammikuuta 2013)

Aihe: Luontodirektiivin tulkinta susien osalta

Suden (*Canis lupus*) kaatomahdollisuuksia säädellään EU:n laajuisella luontodirektiivillä. Susi katsotaan direktiivin liitteessä tiukkaa suojelua edellyttäväksi lajiksi. Poikkeukseksi Suomessa katsotaan poronhoitoalue, jolla susi on lähtökohtaisesti mutta samalla vain luvanvaraisesti metsästettävissä. Poikkeusluvilla susia voidaan kaataa myös muualla Suomessa erityisen merkittävien vahinkojen estämiseksi.

Suomen susikannat katsotaan pieniksi, ja suojelutoimenpiteet tietyssä laajuudessa voidaan katsoa perustelluiksi. Suomessa on kuitenkin jatkuvasti tilanteita, joissa sudet uhkaavat esimerkiksi lasten koulumatkojen turvallisuutta. Turvallisuuden takaamiseksi sekä lasten vanhemmille että asuinkunnille aiheutuu ylimääräisiä kustannuksia. Inhimillistä huolta ei liene mahdollista edes mitata ja kuvailla. Lisäksi sudet aiheuttavat ajoittain korvaamatonta vahinkoa tuotanto- ja harraste-eläimille myös poronhoitoalueen ulkopuolella. Suurpetohavaintojen määrä kokonaisuudessaan on Suomessa kasvanut, mikä on herättänyt epäilyksen siitä, että suurpedot ovat luontaisesti siirtyneet elämään entistä lähemmäksi ihmisiä ja että esimerkiksi suden pelko ihmistä kohtaan on vähentynyt. Suurpetojen aiheuttamia vahinkoja on viime vuosina ollut selvästi aiempaa enemmän. Pelkästään Pohjois-Savon maakunnassa, joka ei Suomessa ole suden keskeisimpiä pesintäalueita, kirjattiin 22 344 suden aiheuttamaa vahinkoa vuosina 2008–2011. Vahingoista merkittävä osa on koira- tai muita kotieläinvahinkoja. Susi on suurpedoista ainoa, joka herättää pelkoa myös metsissä liikkuvissa metsäalan ammattilaisissa. Kaatolupien määrää toivotaan kasvatettavan ja harkintavaltaa siirrettävän nykyistä paikallisemmaksi. Tällä hetkellä suojelussa ja luvissa koetaan korostuvan sellaisten kansalaisten tahto, jotka eivät itse elä suurpetokeskittymissä. Metsäasiantuntijoiden suorittama häiriöyksilöiden poisto myös ylläpitäisi petojen luontaista pelkoa ihmistä kohtaan.

Kysynkin, onko komissiossa arvioitu mahdollisuutta, että koko Suomi voitaisiin tulkita suden kaatomahdollisuuksien osalta samoin kuin poronhoitoalue (siirto luontodirektiivin liitteestä IV liitteeseen V). Toisekseen kysyn, onko komissiossa arvioitu luontodirektiivistä ihmisille koituvia negatiivisia vaikutuksia, jollaisia sillä väistämättä susiesimerkin kuvaamissa tilanteissa on.

Janez Potočnikin komission puolesta antama vastaus
(15. maaliskuuta 2013)

Komissio kehottaa arvoisaa parlamentin jäsentä tutustumaan Hannu Takkulan esittämään kirjalliseen kysymykseen E-6576/2012 ([1]) annettuun vastaukseen ja lisää, että se käynnisti vuonna 2012 EU:n laajuisen suurpetohankkeen, jonka tavoitteena on sovittaa yhteen kyseisten lajien suojelu ja ihmisten liikkuminen. Hankkeessa arvioidaan suurpetojen aiheuttamien ongelmien luonnetta ja laajuutta, joita koskevat näkemykset vaihtelevat suuresti. Eri sidosryhmiä kuullaan mahdollisuuksien mukaan käytännön ratkaisujen löytämiseksi.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000550/13
to the Commission
Riikka Manner (ALDE)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Interpretation of the Habitats Directive in relation to wolves

Hunting of wolves (*Canis lupus*) is regulated throughout the EU by the Habitats Directive. An annex to the directive defines the wolf as a species in need of strict protection. An exception is made in Finland for the reindeer conservation area, where wolves may in principle be hunted, but only with a permit. Provided that exceptional permits are issued, wolves may also be hunted elsewhere in Finland in order to prevent particularly serious damage.

Wolf populations in Finland are considered to be small, and conservation measures can be regarded as justified within certain limits. However, in Finland situations constantly arise in which, for example, wolves become a threat to the safety of children travelling to and from school. Measures to maintain safety then occasion extra costs both to children's parents and to the localities where they live. The human input which is required probably cannot even be measured and described. In addition, at times wolves cause irreparable harm to farm animals and animals used for recreation, even outside the reindeer conservation area. Numbers of sightings of large predators have increased in Finland as a whole, suggesting that, for natural reasons, large predators are choosing to live closer to human beings than previously and, for instance, that wolves are less afraid of people than they used to be. Significantly more damage has been caused by large predators in recent years. In Northern Savo province alone, which is not one of the main wolf habitats in Finland, 22 344 cases of damage caused by wolves were registered in 2008-2011. Much of the damage involves injury to dogs or other pets. Wolves are the only large predator that also frightens people moving around in the forests for purposes of their work. It is hoped that the number of hunting permits will be increased and that discretionary powers will be devolved to a more local level than at present. As things stand, there is a feeling that decisions on conservation measures and on permits mainly express the wishes of sections of the population who do not themselves live in areas where large predators are concentrated. If forestry experts were to eliminate problematic individuals, this would also serve to maintain the animals' natural fear of human beings.

Has the Commission considered the possibility that the whole of Finland could be classified in the same way as the reindeer conservation area from the point of view of wolf-hunting (i.e. that it could be transferred from Annex IV to Annex V of the Habitats Directive)? Secondly, has the Commission assessed adverse effects of the Habitats Directive on people, such as indisputably arise in the situations described here for wolves?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(15 March 2013)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its reply to Written Question E-6576/2012 ([1]) by Hannu Takkula and adds that it has launched in 2012 an EU Large Carnivores Initiative aimed at reconciling the conservation of these species with human co-existence. This will assess evidence of the nature and scale of problems presented by large carnivores about which there are wide ranging views. Different stakeholder groups will be involved, as far as possible, in finding practical solutions.

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

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita P-000551/13
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(21 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Prospección de hidrocarburos en la costa mediterránea (Girona)

La empresa Capricorn Spain SL, filial de la británica Cairn, ha conseguido una docena de permisos de prospección de hidrocarburos, publicados el día 17 de enero de 2013 en el Boletín Oficial del Estado (BOE) por la Dirección General de Política Energética y Minas. El procedimiento consiste en generar explosiones con un cañón de aire comprimido desde un barco y captar el rebote de las ondas en el fondo marino. La empresa investigará la presencia de gas y petróleo en unos 11 500 kilómetros cuadrados del mar Mediterráneo frente a la costa catalana.

Esto generará efectos adversos en el medio ambiente y principalmente sobre los peces, cefalópodos y el coral, así como sobre la protección de los delfines que habitan en el Cap de Creus. Por ello grupos ecologistas, así como los propios alcaldes de algunas ciudades, se han manifestado en contra de los permisos.

En la respuesta E-010860/2011 el Sr. Oetinger, en nombre de la Comisión, explicaba que se está elaborando una propuesta de Reglamento (COM(2011)0688) sobre la seguridad de las actividades de prospección, exploración y producción de petróleo y de gas mar adentro. En la propuesta se explica cómo reforzar los medios para influir en las normas de seguridad en alta mar y se prevé la obligatoriedad de los Estados miembros de informar a la Comisión de las acciones que puedan ser susceptibles de accidentes en alta mar.

Asimismo, la Directiva 2008/56/CE por la que se establece un marco de acción comunitaria para la política del medio marino, dispone en el artículo 13, apartado 5, la necesidad del Gobierno español de informar a la autoridad competente para evitar cualquier desastre ecológico.

1. ¿Qué opinión tiene la Comisión respecto al inicio de prospecciones petrolíferas en una zona de alto valor ecológico y de elevada dependencia económica del turismo como es el caso de la Costa Brava y la costa mediterránea en Girona?

2. ¿Ha informado España a la UE, como indica la Directiva 2008/56/CE? ¿Sabe si se han realizado estudios de impacto medioambiental antes de la concesión de las prospecciones? ¿Considera indispensable estos estudios de impacto medioambiental?

3. ¿Cree que los permisos otorgados cumplen la Directiva 94/22/CE sobre concesión, producción y explotación de hidrocarburos? ¿Cree que las prospecciones en el mar Mediterráneo cumplirían plenamente la propuesta de Reglamento que están elaborando la Comisión y el Parlamento Europeo?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(5 de marzo de 2013)

La Comisión espera de los Estados miembros que, al conceder permisos de prospección de hidrocarburos, hagan lo necesario para garantizar que los efectos negativos en el medio ambiente se reduzcan al mínimo.

España no ha enviado a la Comisión ninguna información en virtud de la Directiva 2008/56/CE ([1]). Los estudios de impacto ambiental pueden realizarse en diferentes marcos, a saber, la Directiva 2011/92/UE ([2]), modificada, la Directiva 2001/42/CE o el Protocolo para la protección del Mar Mediterráneo (denominado Protocolo «off-shore») del Convenio para la Protección del Medio Marino o Convenio de Barcelona, al que la UE se ha adherido recientemente ([3]) y que forma parte así del Derecho de la Unión. Dado que la Comisión no ha recibido de España información alguna, va a preguntar a sus autoridades de qué forma garantizan que los efectos medioambientales queden reducidos al mínimo de conformidad con la normativa aplicable de la UE.

([1]) Directiva 2008/56/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 17 de junio de 2008, por la que se establece un marco de acción comunitaria para la política del medio marino (Directiva marco sobre la estrategia marina) (DO L 164 de 25.6.2008).

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

([3]) Decisión del Consejo, de 17 de diciembre de 2012, sobre la adhesión de la Unión Europea al Protocolo para la protección del Mar Mediterráneo contra la contaminación resultante de la exploración y explotación de la plataforma continental, del fondo del mar y de su subsuelo (DO L 4 de 9.1.2013).

Según la notificación que ha hecho España a la Comisión (DO C 283 de 27.10.95), las zonas marítimas situadas frente a sus costas están, como prevé el artículo 3, apartado 3, de la Directiva 94/22/CE, disponibles de forma permanente. España puede por tanto conceder autorizaciones sin iniciar un procedimiento en virtud del apartado 2 de ese mismo artículo, según el cual es preciso publicar un anuncio en el Diario Oficial de la Unión Europea y abrir un plazo de al menos 90 días para la presentación de solicitudes. No obstante, en aplicación del apartado 1 de la misma disposición así como del artículo 2, España debe tomar las medidas necesarias para garantizar que todas las entidades interesadas puedan presentar solicitudes y que no haya entre ellas ningún tipo de discriminación.

La Comisión no puede hacer ningún comentario sobre el cumplimiento de una propuesta legislativa que ha de ser todavía adoptada por los colegisladores.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-000551/13
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Hydrocarbon exploration along the Mediterranean coast (Girona)

Capricorn Spain SL, a subsidiary of the British company Cairns, has been awarded a dozen permits for hydrocarbon exploration, published in the Spanish Official Gazette by the Directorate-General for Energy Policy and Mines on 17 January 2013. The exploration method involves using a compressed-air gun to generate explosions from a vessel and recording the way in which waves rebound from the seabed. The company will be prospecting for oil and gas in an area of the Mediterranean comprising around 11 500 km^2 along the Catalan coast.

This will have an adverse impact on the environment, particularly on fish, cephalopods and coral, and will also affect the protection of dolphins living in Cap de Creus. Environmental groups and the mayors of some towns and cities in the area therefore oppose the permits.

The answer to Written Question E-010860/2011, given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission, stated that it was working on a proposal for a regulation on the safety of offshore oil and gas prospection, exploration and production activities (COM(2011)0688). That proposal would set out tougher measures aimed at influencing offshore safety standards and oblige Member States to inform the Commission of activities that could lead to offshore accidents.

Under Article 13(5) of Directive 2008/56/EC establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy, the Spanish Government is obliged to inform the competent authority in order to avert any ecological disaster.

1. What is the Commission's view on the commencement of oil and gas exploration in an ecologically valuable area that is highly dependent on tourism, as is the case for the Costa Brava and the Mediterranean coastline of Girona?

2. Has Spain informed the EU under the terms of Directive 2008/56/EC? Does the Commission know whether environmental impact studies were carried out before the exploration permits were granted? Does it consider such environmental impact studies to be essential?

3. Does it believe that the permits granted comply with Directive 94/22/EC on the conditions for granting and using authorisations for the prospection, exploration and production of hydrocarbons? Does it believe that these exploration activities in the Mediterranean would fully comply with the proposal for a regulation being drawn up by the Commission and the European Parliament?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(5 March 2013)

The Commission expects Member States, when granting permits for hydrocarbon exploration, to ensure that negative impacts on the environment are reduced to a minimum.

The Commission has not received information from Spain under Directive 2008/56/EC ([1]). Environmental impact studies may be carried out under Directive 2011/92/EU ([2]), as amended, under Directive 2001/42/EC or under the Offshore Protocol of the Barcelona Convention, to which the EU has recently acceded ([3]) and which is therefore part of EC law. The Commission has not received any notification from Spain; it intends to ask the Spanish authorities how they ensure that the environmental impacts are minimised, in conformity with applicable EU legislation.

([1]) Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy.

([2]) Directive 2011/92/EU (OJ L 26, 28.1.2012), codified version of Directive 85/337/EEC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment, as amended.

([3]) Council Decision of 17 December 2012 on the accession of the European Union to the Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against pollution resulting from exploration and exploitation of the continental shelf and the seabed and its subsoil.

According to the notification Spain has made to the Commission (OJ C 283, 27.10.95), its offshore areas are available on permanent basis within the meaning of Article 3(3) of Directive 94/22. Consequently, Spain may grant authorisations without initiating a procedure under Article 3(2) which specifies publication of notices to the *Official Journal of the European Communities* and a 90-day period to submit applications. Nevertheless, under Article 3(1) and Article 2, Spain shall take the necessary measures to guarantee that all interested parties may submit applications and that Spain shall ensure there is no discrimination between entities.

The Commission is not in the position to comment on the compliance with a legislative proposal still to be adopted by the co-legislators.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-000552/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(21 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Παραίτηση από ασυλία του κράτους μέλους του ΟΗΕ

Η Γκάνα, με βάση δικαστική απόφαση αμερικανικού δικαστηρίου υπέρ του hedge fund NML Capital Limited (το οποίο είχε αρνηθεί να υπαχθεί στην αναδιάρθρωση χρέους της Αργεντινής το 2000) παρακράτησε πολεμικό πλοίο της Αργεντινής από τις 2/10/2012 έως τις 19/12/2012. Η Αργεντινή προσέφυγε στο Διεθνές Δικαστήριο για το Δίκαιο της Θάλασσας, το οποίο, στις 15/12/2012, διέταξε, λόγω έκτακτων συνθηκών και πριν εξετάσει τα λοιπά επιχειρήματα των χωρών, την Γκάνα να απελευθερώσει το πλοίο, δεδομένου ότι, «σύμφωνα με το Γενικό Διεθνές Δίκαιο, ένα πολεμικό πλοίο απολαμβάνει ασυλίας». Οι Συμβάσεις Χρηματοδοτικής Διευκόλυνσης μεταξύ του ΕΤΧΣ και της Ελλάδας προβλέπουν ότι «το ελληνικό κράτος, η Τράπεζα της Ελλάδος και το Ελληνικό Ταμείο Χρηματοπιστωτικής Σταθερότητας, παραιτούνται με την παρούσα αμετάκλητα κι ανεπιφύλακτα από κάθε δικαίωμα ασυλίας που ήδη έχουν ή μπορεί να δικαιούνται σε σχέση με την Σύμβαση Τροποποίησης σε σχέση με τους ίδιους και τα περιουσιακά τους στοιχεία έναντι κάθε άσκησης αγωγής, δικαστικής απόφασης κατάσχεσης στο μέτρο που τα ανωτέρω δεν απαγορεύονται από αναγκαστικό νόμο».

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Με δεδομένο ότι κατά τη διάρκεια του PSI της Ελλάδας, υπήρξαν hedge funds που αρνήθηκαν να υπαχθούν στη ρύθμιση κι ότι το ελληνικό δημόσιο έχει δικαίωμα να αρνηθεί την πλήρη αποπληρωμή τους, η απόφαση του αμερικανικού δικαστηρίου για την Αργεντινή μπορεί να αποτελέσει προηγούμενο για κατάσχεση ελληνικών περιουσιακών στοιχείων στην αλλοδαπή που απολαμβάνουν ασυλίας με βάση το Διεθνές Δίκαιο; Η επίκληση του Δικαστηρίου για το Δίκαιο της Θάλασσας ότι, «σύμφωνα με το Γενικό Διεθνές Δίκαιο, ένα πολεμικό πλοίο απολαμβάνει ασυλίας», προστατεύει την Ελλάδα σε μια ανάλογη περίπτωση διεκδικήσεων από ένα hedge fund;

Ως προς την Σύμβαση ΕΤΧΣ και Ελλάδας, κατά την οποία εφαρμοστέο είναι το αγγλικό δίκαιο και η Ελλάδα παραιτείται αμετάκλητα κι ανεπιφύλακτα από κάθε δικαίωμα ασυλίας, σε περίπτωση που η Ελλάδα δεν αποπληρώσει το ΕΤΧΣ:

— επιτρέπεται η επίκληση, εκ μέρους της Ελλάδας, ασυλίας σύμφωνα με το Γενικό Διεθνές Δίκαιο, αν επιχειρηθεί η κατάσχεση από το ΕΤΧΣ πολεμικού πλοίου στην αλλοδαπή ή άλλου περιουσιακού στοιχείου εκτός της επικράτειάς της;

— θα μπορούσε κράτος μέτοχος του ΕΤΧΣ να επικαλεστεί την παραίτηση από το δικαίωμα ασυλίας της Ελλάδας προκειμένου να διεκδικήσει περιουσιακό στοιχείο της;

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

Η πρώτη ερώτηση του Αξιότιμου Μέλους του Κοινοβουλίου αφορά τις πιθανές επιπτώσεις της εκκρεμοδικίας μεταξύ της Δημοκρατίας της Αργεντινής και ορισμένων εκ των ομολογιούχων της. Η Επιτροπή δεν είναι σε θέση να σχολιάσει τις εν λόγω εξελίξεις. Με τη δεύτερη ερώτηση το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου ζητά ερμηνεία ορισμένων διατάξεων σύμβασης που συνάφθηκε μεταξύ της Ελλάδας και του Ευρωπαϊκού Ταμείου Χρηματοπιστωτικής Σταθερότητας (ΕΤΧΣ). Δεδομένου ότι η Επιτροπή δεν είναι συμβαλλόμενο μέρος αυτής της σύμβασης, συνιστούμε το εν λόγω ερώτημα να τεθεί απευθείας στο ΕΤΧΣ.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000552/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Waiver of immunity by a UN member state

Acting on the basis of a US court judgment in favour of the hedge fund NML Capital Limited (which had refused to submit to Argentine debt restructuring in 2000), Ghana impounded an Argentine warship from 2/10/2012 to 19/12/2012. Argentina appealed to the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, which, on 15/12/2012, invoking extraordinary circumstances, and before examining the other arguments of the countries concerned, ordered Ghana to release the vessel, since, 'under customary international law… the immunity of warships is a special and autonomous type of immunity which provides for the complete immunity of these ships'. The Finance Facility Agreements between the European Financial Stabilisation Fund (EFSF) and Greece provide that the Greek Government, the Bank of Greece and the Hellenic Financial Stability Fund waive irrevocably and unconditionally any claim of immunity which they already enjoy or may be entitled to enjoy in future in connection with the amending agreement in respect of themselves and their assets vis-à-vis any law suit, court order or impoundment in so far as these are not prohibited by an emergency law.

Will the Commission say:

— Given that during PSI in Greece, there were hedge funds that refused to submit to rules and that the Greek Government has the right to refuse full repayment, could the decision of the US Court on Argentina be a precedent for seizing Greek assets abroad which enjoy immunity under International Law? Does the invocation by the Tribunal for the Law of the Sea of the rule that 'under customary international law… the immunity of warships is a special and autonomous type of immunity which provides for the complete immunity of these ships' protect Greece in an analogous situation involving claims by a hedge fund?

As regards the EFSF Agreement and Greece, under which English law is applicable and Greece waives irrevocably and unconditionally any right to immunity, if Greece does not repay the EFSF:

— Can Greece invoke immunity under customary international law, if the EFSF attempts to seize a warship or any other asset outside its territory?

— Could a state shareholder of the EFSF invoke the waiver of the right to immunity by Greece in order to claim its assets?

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

The Honourable Member's first question concerns the potential repercussions of pending litigation between the Republic of Argentina and some of its bondholders. The Commission is not in a position to comment on these developments. By the second question, the Honourable Member asks to interpret some provisions of a contract concluded between Greece and the European Financial Stabilisation Fund (EFSF). The Commission not being party in this contract, we would advise raising this question directly to the EFSF.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000553/13
alla Commissione
Fiorello Provera (EFD)
(21 gennaio 2013)

Oggetto: Piano di risposta umanitaria in Siria

Il 19 gennaio scorso la Coalizione nazionale per le forze siriane rivoluzionarie e d'opposizione ha rilasciato un comunicato stampa in cui ha rilevato che nel dicembre 2012 l'ONU aveva stanziato 519 milioni di dollari per i siriani all'interno della Siria, nell'ambito del Piano di risposta di assistenza umanitaria. Il Piano ha lo scopo di sostenere il governo nell'impegno della Siria a fornire assistenza umanitaria alle popolazioni colpite e, nell'ambito di un comitato direttivo, sarà presieduto dal viceministro degli Affari esteri e degli espatriati (o chiunque egli deleghi) e il ministero degli Affari esteri e degli espatriati è il punto focale del governo siriano incaricato della supervisione di attuazione dei progetti umanitari.

La Coalizione siriana rileva che ciò è assolutamente contraddittorio, visto che il governo siriano è responsabile del deterioramento della situazione umanitaria all'interno del paese, ma allo stesso tempo le Nazioni Unite hanno deciso di affidargli la responsabilità della consegna di aiuti umanitari. Inoltre numerose prove dimostrano che è quasi impossibile che gli aiuti forniti dalle Nazioni Unite siano trasportati nel paese. Questi aiuti coprono solo il 10 % delle persone che ne hanno bisogno.

1. È la Commissione a conoscenza della situazione per quanto riguarda le forniture di aiuti delle Nazioni Unite al governo siriano?

2. Qual è la posizione della Commissione in merito al Piano di risposta di assistenza umanitaria delle Nazioni Unite alla Siria lanciato il 19 dicembre 2012?

3. Quali misure intende la Commissione adottare per garantire che gli aiuti umanitari dell'Unione europea siano distribuiti in modo responsabile?

4. Ha la Commissione espresso preoccupazione per la distribuzione di aiuti nelle regioni settentrionali della Siria?

Risposta di Kristalina Georgieva a nome della Commissione
(21 marzo 2013)

Le formulazioni linguistiche specifiche del piano di risposta di assistenza umanitaria alla Siria scaturiscono da un processo negoziale con il governo siriano, ma l'assistenza dell'UE non viene fornita al regime di tale paese. La distribuzione degli aiuti viene organizzata attraverso la SARC ([1]), una serie di ONG ([2]) locali controllate dall'ONU, 11 OING ([3]) e il personale delle Nazioni Unite.

Malgrado le sue carenze, lo SHARP ([4]) rappresenta un valido tentativo di valutare il fabbisogno umanitario della Siria e mettere a punto una risposta adeguata. Poiché la situazione peggiora costantemente e tali piani vengono presentati a intervalli di tempo relativamente lunghi, gli elementi specifici diventano presto obsoleti, visto che il fabbisogno umanitario continua ad essere superiore all'aiuto fornito. Lo SHARP dev'essere considerato un documento di orientamento in un momento determinato, in termini sia di misure raccomandate che di volume globale dei finanziamenti. L'assistenza della Commissione si spinge oltre i progetti e le organizzazioni elencate nel piano.

La Commissione adotta tutte le misure necessarie per garantire che l'aiuto umanitario venga distribuito in Siria in modo responsabile, iniziando con un processo di selezione di progetti umanitari basata su criteri di qualità (comprese valutazioni del fabbisogno sulla base di missioni in loco, capacità di controllo, ecc.). Grazie alle relazioni di controllo presentate mensilmente dai partner, inoltre, la Commissione dispone di un quadro costante dell'erogazione dell'assistenza in loco.

([1]) SARC = Mezzaluna rossa araba siriana.
([2]) ONG = Organizzazioni non governative.
([3]) OING = Organizzazioni internazionali non governative.
([4]) SHARP = Syrian Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (piano di risposta di assistenza umanitaria alla Siria).

La situazione nella regione settentrionale della Siria è effettivamente difficile, ma anche in molte altre parti del paese sono state individuate esigenze umanitarie. Il fabbisogno in Siria è ancora di gran lunga superiore alle capacità di distribuzione e la Commissione riesamina costantemente la situazione con i suoi partner. Tutti gli operatori umanitari sanno che occorrono particolari sforzi per raggiungere le persone bisognose di assistenza in tutto il paese. Operazioni trasversali recentemente organizzate dall'ONU nel nord della Siria hanno permesso di raggiungere 65 000 persone.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000553/13
to the Commission
Fiorello Provera (EFD)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan in Syria

On 19 January, the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces issued a press release in which they noted that in December 2012 the UN allocated USD 519 million for Syrians inside Syria, as part of the Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan. The plan is aimed at 'supporting the Government of Syria's efforts in providing humanitarian assistance to the affected populations,' and under it a 'Steering Committee' will be 'chaired by the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates (or whomever he delegates)' and 'The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates is the [Syrian] Government focal point in charge of the supervision of implementation of humanitarian projects'.

The Syrian Coalition notes that this is entirely contradictory, given that the Syrian Government is responsible for the deterioration of the humanitarian situation inside the country, yet at the same time the UN has chosen to put it in charge of humanitarian aid delivery. There is also ample evidence to show that it is almost impossible for aid provided by the UN to be moved around the country. It only covers around 10% of the people who need it.

1. Is the Commission aware of the situation regarding UN aid deliveries to the Syrian Government?

2. What is the position of the Commission towards the UN Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan for Syria launched on 19 December 2012?

3. What steps is the Commission taking to ensure that EU humanitarian aid is being responsibly distributed?

4. Has the Commission raised concerns over aid distribution to northern parts of Syria?

Answer given by Ms Georgieva on behalf of the Commission
(21 March 2013)

The specific linguistic formulations in the Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan are due to a process of negotiations with the Syrian Government. However, EU assistance is not delivered to the Syrian regime. Aid deliveries are organised through SARC ([1]), a number of UN-vetted local NGOs ([2]), 11 INGOs ([3]) and UN staff.

Despite its shortcomings, SHARP ([4]) represents a good attempt at estimating humanitarian needs in Syria and devising the corresponding response. Since the situation is constantly worsening and such plans are issued at relatively long intervals, specific elements are soon outdated as humanitarian needs continue to outpace the response. The SHARP must be regarded as a guidance document at a point in time, both in terms of recommended action and the overall financing volume. Commission assistance goes beyond the projects and organisations listed in the plan.

The Commission takes all steps to ensure that humanitarian aid is responsibly distributed in Syria. These start with a selection process of humanitarian projects, based on quality criteria (*inter alia* needs assessments based on field missions, monitoring capacity). The Commission has also a constant view of the assistance delivery in the field, based on partners' monthly monitoring reports.

The situation in Northern Syria is difficult but there are also uncovered humanitarian needs in many other parts of the country. The needs in Syria are still far larger than delivery capacities. The Commission is constantly reviewing the situation with its partners. All humanitarian actors know that special efforts have to be made to reach people in need in the whole country. Recent cross-line operations organised by the UN in Northern Syria reached 65 000 people.

([1]) SARC = Syrian Arab Red Crescent.
([2]) NGO = Non-governmental organisation.
([3]) INGO = International non-governmental organisation.
([4]) SHARP = Syrian Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000554/13
to the Commission
Daniel Hannan (ECR)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Expansion of the Liverpool Cruise Terminal

With reference to the ongoing state aid investigation into the Liverpool Cruise Terminal:

1. Has Liverpool City Council (LCC) advised the Commission that it has no plans to expand the Liverpool Cruise Terminal, and that no public money would be used to do so?

2. If so, is the Commission confident that this information is accurate? Papers from Liverpool City Council and recent press coverage suggest that expansion plans are in place and that public funding may be forthcoming.

3. If the Commission finds that LCC is planning to expand the terminal and that public money will, or is likely to, be used, will the Commission take this into account in the current state aid clearance process?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(13 March 2013)

The UK authorities informed the Commission on 10 May 2012 the LCC does not intend to apply for further grants or spend its own resources on any further infrastructure investment in the Terminal other than that associated with providing border security necessary for turnaround cruising. The Commission has not received any new information from the UK authorities concerning this issue since then.

The Commission assumes that the information submitted by the UK authorities is accurate and based on the currently available evidence it has no reasons to doubt it. If the Commission comes accross new evidence affecting this assumption it will ask the UK authorities to provide clarification.

If there is substantiated evidence that additional public money will or is likely to be used with respect to the Terminal, the Commission will take it into account in the current assessment of this state aid case.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000555/13
alla Commissione
Francesco De Angelis (S&D), Silvia Costa (S&D), Guido Milana (S&D) e David-Maria Sassoli (S&D)
(21 gennaio 2013)

Oggetto: Gestione dei rifiuti nel territorio della regione Lazio

Il territorio della regione Lazio vive una situazione di emergenza ambientale dovuta al carico accumulato di rifiuti da smaltire.

Con delibera il Commissario straordinario ai rifiuti impone lo smaltimento dei rifiuti del Comune di Roma presso tutti gli impianti di discarica della regione.

Numerosi impianti laziali presi in considerazione dal Commissario non sono in grado di sostenere lo smaltimento dei rifiuti del comune di Roma, mentre altri non interessati dalla delibera sono ancora dotati di potenzialità residue.

La soluzione all'emergenza rifiuti passa per una profonda revisione del piano regionale fondato non più sullo smaltimento in discarica, ma su un sistema capillare di raccolta differenziata in grado di garantire un efficiente recupero e riciclo dei rifiuti e scongiurare così nuove emergenze.

Alla luce delle precedenti considerazioni può la Commissione europea precisare quanto segue:

1. è stata informata dal governo italiano e/o dalla regione Lazio di questo piano di smaltimento?

2. ritiene che il piano sia conforme alla Direttiva 2008/98/CE?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(1º marzo 2013)

La Commissione segue da vicino le misure adottate dalla Regione Lazio in materia di gestione dei rifiuti in vista della chiusura della discarica di Malagrotta, prevista per giugno 2013.

Gli ultimi piani riferiti dalle autorità italiane sono volti in particolare a:

— potenziare l'attuale capacità di trattamento meccanico-biologico in modo da evitare lo smaltimento di rifiuti non trattati;

— aumentare la raccolta differenziata nella città di Roma;

— sviluppare l'incenerimento con recupero di energia, riducendo al contempo lo smaltimento in discarica;

— realizzare una discarica temporanea per garantire lo smaltimento una volta chiusa la discarica di Malagrotta.

La Commissione sta valutando tali piani ([1]).

([1]) GU L 312 del 22.11.2008.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000555/13
to the Commission
Francesco De Angelis (S&D), Silvia Costa (S&D), Guido Milana (S&D) and David-Maria Sassoli (S&D)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Waste management in Lazio region

Lazio region is facing an environmental emergency caused by the backlog of waste still to be disposed of.

The Special Commissioner for Waste has decided that the disposal of waste produced in Rome is to be spread throughout Lazio as a whole.

In many cases the landfills which the Commissioner took into consideration cannot cope with municipal waste from Rome, whereas other sites not affected by the decision still have spare capacity.

The solution to the waste emergency lies in a complete rethink of the regional plan, which, instead of relying on landfill, should be based on a comprehensive sorting system enabling waste to be recovered and recycled efficiently, thereby averting future emergencies.

1. Has the Commission been informed by the Italian Government and/or the Lazio regional authorities about the abovementioned disposal plan?

2. Does it consider the plan to be in accordance with Directive 2008/98/EC?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(1 March 2013)

The Commission is monitoring the waste management measures which are being implemented in the Lazio region in view of the closure of the Malagrotta landfill, now foreseen in June 2013.

The latest plans communicated by the Italian authorities aim in particular to:

— enhance existing mechanical biological treatment capacity in order to avoid the disposal of untreated waste;

— increase separate waste collection in the city of Rome;

— develop incineration with energy recovery while reducing disposal in landfills;

— build a temporary landfill to ensure disposal once the Malagrotta landfill is closed.

The Commission is currently evaluating the latest plans ([1]).

([1]) OJ L 312, 22.11.2008.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-000556/13
til Kommissionen
Christel Schaldemose (S&D)
(21. januar 2013)

Om: EFSA's ekspertpanel til undersøgelse af hormonforstyrrende stoffer

Arbejdet med hormonforstyrrende stoffer på EU-plan følges nøje af både Europa-Parlamentet og de nationale parlamenter — men også af dele af kemiindustrien, der som bekendt ikke mener, at der er grundlag for at regulere området yderligere.

Set i lyset af de mange forskellige interesser i spil kan det undre, at arbejdet med afdækningen af indsatsen over for de hormonforstyrrende stoffer flyttes rundt mellem forskellige enheder.

Kan Kommissionen forklare, hvorfor arbejdet med at finde kriterier for hormonforstyrrende stoffer er blevet flyttet fra GD for Miljø til EFSA efter et års arbejde? Skyldes det utilfredshed med arbejdet, pres fra industrien eller noget andet?

Hvad forventer Kommissionen at få ud af, at arbejdet er flyttet til EFSA?

Er Kommissionen klar over, at en række af eksperterne i EFSA's ekspertpanel har tætte industrirelationer og derfor ikke kan siges at være uafhængige? Har Kommissionen reflekteret over konsekvenserne af, at eksperterne ikke kan siges at være fuldt ud uafhængige?

Det sidste er i øvrigt også en sag, som Den Europæiske Revisionsret har påpeget i en særberetning i 2012 omkring håndtering af interessekonflikter i særlige EU-agenturer. I den forbindelse blev særligt EFSA kritiseret for ikke at håndtere interessekonflikter hensigtsmæssigt.

Agter Kommissionen at gøre noget for at styrke EFSA's reelle uafhængighed af industriinteresser?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Tonio Borg
(11. marts 2013)

Det ærede medlem henvises til Kommissionens svar på skriftlig forespørgsel P-011702/2012 ([1]) om Den Europæiske Fødevaresikkerhedsautoritets (EFSA's) kommissorium med henblik på en videnskabelig udtalelse om hormonforstyrrende stoffer og agenturets uafhængighed.

Hvad angår agenturernes uafhængighed i almindelighed, giver den fælles tilgang til EU's decentraliserede agenturer, der blev godkendt af Europa-Parlamentet, Rådet og Kommissionen i juli 2012, Kommissionen mandat til sammen med agenturerne at undersøge, om der er mulighed for en harmoniseret tilgang til forebyggelse og styring af interessekonflikter for bestyrelsesmedlemmer og direktører. I den fælles tilgang foreslås det også, at spørgsmålet undersøges, for så vidt angår medlemmer af videnskabelige udvalg og appelkamre. Kommissionen er i færd med at gennemgå eksisterende regler og praksis i agenturerne i samråd med disse og på baggrund af Kommissionens regler og praksis. Kommissionen vil på grundlag af resultaterne udvikle retningslinjer eller fastlægge bedste praksis, som kan tjene som referencegrundlag for agenturerne.

Kommissionen vil være drivkraften i gennemførelsen af den fælles tilgang, men agenturerne, herunder navnlig deres bestyrelser, skal også løse deres del af opgaven. Kommissionen vil fortsat arbejde tæt sammen med dem om at øge deres effektivitet og gennemsigtighed, samtidig med at deres uafhængighed respekteres.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000556/13
to the Commission
Christel Schaldemose (S&D)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: European Food Safety Agency (EFSA) expert panel investigating hormone-disrupting substances

Work on hormone-disrupting substances at EU level is being closely followed by both the European Parliament and by national parliaments, but also by sections of the chemical industry, which, as is well known, believes that there are no grounds for further regulation of this area.

Given the many different interests involved, it is surprising that work on revealing the use of hormone-disrupting substances is being transferred to various entities.

Can the Commission explain why, after one year, work on establishing criteria for hormone-disrupting substances has been shifted from DG Environment to the EFSA? Has this been done because of dissatisfaction with the work carried out, industry pressure or other factors?

What benefit does the Commission expect as a result of shifting the work to the EFSA?

Does the Commission realise that a number of members of the EFSA expert panel have close links with industry and therefore cannot be regarded as independent? Has the Commission given thought to the consequences of the fact that the experts cannot be regarded as fully independent?

That, moreover, is an issue pointed to by the Court of Auditors in a special report in 2012 on management of conflict of interest in selected EU agencies. In this connection, criticism was directed at the EFSA, in particular, for not managing conflicts of interest appropriately.

Does the Commission propose to take any action to make the EFSA genuinely more independent of industry interests?

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

The Honourable Member is invited to refer to the Commission's reply to Written Question P-011702/2012 ([1]) dealing with the mandate to the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) for a scientific opinion on endocrine disruptors and the independence of the Agency.

In relation to agencies' independence in general, the Common Approach on EU decentralised agencies, endorsed by the European Parliament, Council and Commission in July 2012, mandates the Commission to 'examine, together with the agencies, if there is scope for a harmonised approach' on preventing and managing conflicts of interest for management board members and directors. It also suggests looking at the issue with regard to members of scientific committees and boards of appeal. The Commission is currently screening existing rules and practices in the agencies, in consultation with them, and in light of Commission rules and practices. Based on the outcome of this exercise, the Commission intends to develop guidelines or define best practices that could serve as a reference for agencies.

While the Commission will be the driving force in the implementation of the Common Approach, agencies, in particular their management boards will have to play their part. The Commission will continue to work closely with them to enhance their efficiency and transparency, while respecting their autonomy.

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

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000557/13
alla Commissione
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(21 gennaio 2013)

Oggetto: Preoccupante gestione dell'area protetta del Parco Naturale Regionale del fiume Sile, tutelata nell'ambito di Rete Natura 2000

L'area protetta del Parco Naturale Regionale del fiume Sile si estende su una superficie di 4.152 ettari, interessando 11 comuni distribuiti nelle province di Padova, Treviso e Venezia; presenta zone umide e prative di particolare pregio, ed è tutelata quale SIC (ai sensi della direttiva «Habitat» 92/43/CEE) e ZPS (ai sensi della direttiva «Uccelli» 2009/147/CE). All'interno di tale Parco, infatti, si trovano le sorgenti del Sile ([1]) , il più lungo fiume di risorgiva dell'intera Europa.

Il fragile ecosistema e la peculiare biodiversità del sito non vengono correttamente preservati dall'Ente. Alcune zone sono abbandonate all'incuria: solo a esempio, nella scorsa primavera non sono stati eseguiti i necessari lavori di falciatura di uno dei prati più importanti, la torbiera, col rischio di scomparsa delle specie più delicate, soffocate dalla permanenza di erbe alte e secche della stagione precedente (in particolare, sono a rischio estinzione le orchidacee ([2]) ivi presenti). Secondo, e altrettanto significativo aspetto, alcuni interventi sono invece stati compiuti in modo sbagliato; il rimboschimento della zona delle sorgenti è stato eseguito mettendo a dimora arbusti fuori contesto, causa certa di futuro inquinamento genetico ambientale del sito ([3]). Sempre per citare un esempio, buona parte dell'arbusteto autoctono a Frangola (Rhamnus frangula), estirpato in passato, è stato sostituito con Lantana (Viburnum lantana) estranea al contesto ambientale.

Il Parco, inoltre, da tempo si trova al centro di numerose polemiche a causa di irregolarità amministrative; in particolare è in atto tra l'Ente Parco e la regione del Veneto una diatriba in merito alla figura del direttore, nominato con procedura anomala che ha comportato nei mesi scorsi la dichiarazione di illegittimità di alcuni atti dell'Ente ([4]), con conseguente decisione di un esponente della locale associazione «Un'altra Treviso» di presentare alla Corte dei Conti italiana un esposto per sospetto danno erariale ([5]).

Tutto ciò premesso, visto che l'Ente attende un finanziamento comunitario di oltre 3.000.000 di euro volto a realizzare, attraverso la regia della regione del Veneto, il progetto «Girasile: la Greenway del Parco del Sile», un percorso ciclo-pedonale che si snoderà attraverso il suo territorio, può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

1. a quanto ammonta precisamente e per quando è previsto il finanziamento in questione?

2. non crede che l'erogazione di tali fondi necessiti un'indagine approfondita sull'affidabilità dell'ente, e che debba essere condizionata a una corretta gestione delle aree SIC e ZPS presenti nel Parco?

Risposta di Johannes Hahn a nome della Commissione
(22 marzo 2013)

1. Il progetto menzionato dall'onorevole deputato è stato selezionato per un cofinanziamento del Fondo europeo di sviluppo regionale (FESR) nel quadro del programma Veneto, azione 4.3.1 «Realizzazione di piste ciclabili in aree di pregio ambientale e in ambito urbano e di altri interventi di mobilità sostenibile» per un importo complessivo di 3 milioni di euro. Il bando di gara per la preparazione e l'esecuzione dei lavori sarà pubblicato nei mesi a venire.

Due progetti addizionali presentati dall'ente del Parco naturale regionale del fiume Sile sono stati cofinanziati nell'ambito dell'obiettivo «Tutelare e valorizzare l'ambiente e prevenire i rischi»: un progetto volto al recupero del patrimonio naturale del Parco naturale regionale del fiume Sile (1 350 000 euro) e un secondo progetto denominato «Girasile — La via dei mulini» (145 000 euro). Entrambi i progetti sono stati completati.

2. In linea con il principio della gestione condivisa utilizzato per l'implementazione della politica di coesione, la selezione dei progetti, la loro implementazione e gestione sono di competenza delle autorità nazionali che assicurano che i finanziamenti UE siano spesi in linea con le regole nazionali e unionali e che gli interessi finanziari dell'UE siano rispettati. Pertanto spetta alle autorità italiane verificare che i beneficiari dei finanziamenti dell'UE ottemperino ai criteri summenzionati.

([1]) Sorgenti ubicate precisamente in un'area sita tra le frazioni di Casacorba di Vedelago (TV) e Torreselle di Piombino Dese (PD).
([2]) Famiglia di piante tutelata dalla direttiva «Habitat» (92/43/CEE).
([3]) Per un confronto http://www.michelezanetti.it/drupal/node/343
([4]) Decreto del Presidente della Regione del Veneto: vedi http://bur.regione.veneto.it/BurvServices/Pubblica/DettaglioDecreto.aspx?id=241985.
([5]) Vedi http://unaltratreviso.blogspot.it/2012/09/direttore-dellente-parco-esposto-alla.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000557/13
to the Commission
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(21 January 2013)

Subject: Worrying shortcomings in the management of the protected area in the River Sile Regional Nature Park, which is part of the Natura 2000 network

The protected area in the River Sile Regional Nature Park covers 4152 hectares and is spread across 11 communes in the provinces of Padua, Treviso and Venice. It includes significant wetland areas and meadows and, as such, it is classified as an Area of Community Importance (within the meaning of the 'Habitats' Directive, 92/43/EEC) and as a Special Protection Area (within the meaning of the 'Birds' Directive, 2009/147/EC). The source of the River Sile, the longest karst-spring river in the whole of Europe, is located within the park ([1]).

The authority which manages the park is not protecting its fragile ecosystem and its unique flora and fauna properly. Some areas have been abandoned to nature: to give only one example, last spring one of the most important meadows, a peat moor, was not mown, creating the risk that the most delicate species to which it is home will be suffocated by tall, dry weeds from the previous season (the orchid species ([2]) present in the area are particularly at risk). Just as significantly, some conservation measures which have been carried out are misguided: the area around the source of the river has been reafforested with non-native shrubs, damaging the genetic and environmental purity of the site ([3]). Once again to give only one example, many of the native alder buckthorn shrubs (*Rhamnus frangula*) which have been removed have been replaced with non-native lantana bushes (*Viburnum lantana*).

What is more, for some time the park has been the focus of a number of controversies concerning administrative irregularities. In particular, the park authority and the Veneto regional authority are at loggerheads over the park director, and the errors made in the procedure by means of which the latter was appointed have in recent months led to a number of park authority decisions being declared unlawful ([4]). In response, a representative of the local pressure group 'Un'altra Treviso' ('A different Treviso') has submitted to the Italian Court of Auditors a complaint concerning the possible misuse of public funds ([5]).

The park authority is currently awaiting approval of EU funding of more than EUR 3 million which will enable it to carry out, under the auspices of the Veneto region, a project entitled 'Girasile: the Sile Park Greenway', a footpath and cycle path passing through the park.

1. Can the Commission say precisely how much funding is involved and when it is likely to be provided?

2. Does it not believe that, before any such funding is granted, a detailed investigation is needed to determine whether the park authority is performing its work properly, which should be reflected in its effective management of the Area of Community Importance and the Special Protection Area located in the park?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(22 March 2013)

1. The project mentioned by the Honorable Member has been selected for co-financing by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) within the framework of the Veneto programme, action 4.3.1 'Realiszazione di piste ciclabili in aree di pregio ambientale e in ambito urbano e di altri interventi di mobilità sostenibile' for a total amount of EUR 3 million. The public procurement procedure for the preparation and carrying out of the works will be published in the coming months.

Two additional projects presented by the River Sile Regional Nature Park Authority have been co-financed under the programme priority 3 'Environment and risk prevention': a project for enhancing the natural heritage of the River Sile Regional Nature Park (EUR 1 350 000), and a second one called 'Girasile — La via dei mulini' (EUR 145 000). Both projects are completed.

([1]) More specifically in an area between the villages of Casacorba di Vedelago and Torreselle di Piombino Dese.
([2]) Family of plants protected under the 'Habitats' Directive (92/43/EEC).
([3]) See http://www.michelezanetti.it/drupal/node/343
([4]) Decree issued by the President of the Veneto Region: see http://bur.regione.veneto.it/BurvServices/Pubblica/DettaglioDecreto.aspx?id=241985
([5]) See http://unaltratreviso.blogspot.it/2012/09/direttore-dellente-parco-esposto-alla.html

2. In line with the shared management principle used for the implementation of cohesion policy, project selection, implementation and management is the responsibility of the national authorities which make sure that EU funds are disbursed in line with national and EU rules and that EU financial interests are respected. Therefore, the Italian authorities are responsible for verifying that beneficiaries of EU funding comply with the abovementioned criteria.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000560/13
ao Conselho
Ana Gomes (S&D)
(22 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: Concorrência fiscal na UE

Na primeira comunicação aos eurodeputados após o início da Presidência irlandesa do Conselho da UE, o Primeiro-Ministro irlandês prometeu apostar no mercado único para fomentar o crescimento e o emprego. Contudo, a concorrência no mercado interno continuará a ser distorcida e pervertida se não forem tomadas medidas para pôr termo à rivalidade fiscal florescente entre os Estados-Membros.

O *dumping* fiscal entrava a recuperação económica no meu país: 19 das 20 empresas cotadas em bolsa estão domiciliadas na Holanda e noutros países europeus para evitar pagar impostos mais altos no seu país e para evitar impostos sobre lucros feitos em países em desenvolvimento.

Na Irlanda, a taxa de IRC é de 12,5 %. O Governo português está a ponderar aplicar uma taxa de 10 %. Outros se seguirão, numa corrida para o fundo que desvia recursos dos orçamentos da UE e nacionais, tão necessários para investir em crescimento, emprego e para sustentar o modelo social europeu.

1. O Conselho tenciona agir para pôr termo a esta selva fiscal que distorce o mercado único e acentua as desigualdades económicas entre os Estados-Membros da UE?

2. O Conselho tenciona elaborar um mandato para a Comissão poder negociar acordos, em nome dos Estados-Membros, para evitar a dupla tributação fiscal e a evasão fiscal com outras jurisdições como a Suíça, utilizadas para depositar ativos desviados para evitar pagar impostos nas economias dos países da UE?

Resposta
(22 de abril de 2013)

A pergunta da Senhora Deputada diz respeito à tributação direta, questão em geral da competência nacional dos Estados-Membros. A harmonização da tributação das sociedades em toda a UE é limitada e, na ausência de medidas de harmonização, os Estados-Membros são livres de adotar as suas próprias leis para satisfazer os objetivos e exigências das suas políticas nacionais, desde que tal competência seja exercida de acordo com a legislação da UE.

No entanto, o Conselho adotou uma série de atos referentes a questões específicas de tributação das sociedades, para apoio do mercado único. Entre eles contam-se a diretiva relativa ao regime fiscal comum aplicável às sociedades-mãe e sociedades afiliadas ([1]) de Estados-Membros diferentes, a Diretiva «Juros e royalties» ([2]) e a Diretiva «Fusões» ([3]).

Em 2009, o Conselho subscreveu o Código de Conduta revisto para a efetiva implementação da Convenção relativa à eliminação da dupla tributação em caso de correção de lucros entre empresas associadas (convenção de arbitragem) ([4]).

Em 2011, a Comissão apresentou uma proposta de diretiva do Conselho relativa a uma matéria coletável comum consolidada do imposto sobre as sociedades (Mcccis) ([5]), destinada a criar regras comuns para o cálculo da matéria coletável do imposto sobre as sociedades e que prevê a consolidação dos lucros e perdas das sociedades ou grupos de sociedades para obter os lucros ou perdas líquidos de toda a sua atividade na UE. Estão atualmente em curso no Conselho discussões sobre esta complexa proposta.

O Conselho tem abordado ativamente com países terceiros a questão da fraude fiscal.

([1]) Diretiva 2003/123/CE do Conselho de 22 de dezembro de 2003 que altera a Diretiva 90/435/CEE relativa ao regime fiscal comum aplicável às sociedades-mãe e sociedades afiliadas de Estados-Membros diferentes, JO L 7 de 13.1.2004, p. 41.
([2]) Diretiva 2003/49/CE do Conselho, de 3 de junho de 2003, relativa a um regime fiscal comum aplicável aos pagamentos de juros e royalties efetuados entre sociedades associadas de Estados-Membros diferentes, JO L 157 de 26.6.2003, p. 49.
([3]) Diretiva 2005/19/CE do Conselho de 17 de fevereiro de 2005 que altera a Diretiva 90/434/CEE relativa ao regime fiscal comum aplicável às fusões, cisões, entradas de ativos e permutas de ações entre sociedades de Estados-Membros diferentes, JO L 58 de 4.3.2005, p. 58.
([4]) JO C 322 de 30.12.2009, p. 1.
([5]) COM(2011) 121 final/2.

Em primeiro lugar, estão em vigor desde 1 de julho de 2004 acordos entre a UE e os seus Estados-Membros, por um lado, e Andorra, Listenstaine, Mónaco, São Marinho e Suíça, por outro, relativos às medidas equivalentes às previstas na Diretiva da UE «Tributação da poupança». Em 2011, a Comissão apresentou ao Conselho uma recomendação sobre a abertura de negociações para uma atualização dos acordos. Estão ainda em curso no Conselho as discussões sobre a recomendação.

Em segundo lugar, o Conselho adotou em 2004 uma decisão relativa à assinatura do Acordo de Cooperação entre a Comunidade Europeia e os seus Estados-Membros , por um lado, e a Confederação Suíça, por outro, para lutar contra a fraude e quaisquer outras atividades ilegais lesivas dos seus interesses financeiros.

Finalmente, em 2009, a Comissão apresentou ao Conselho uma recomendação relativa à abertura de negociações para alterações ao Acordo de Cooperação e à celebração de acordos anti-fraude com Andorra, São Marinho e Mónaco.

Estão ainda em curso discussões no Conselho com vista à adoção da proposta de decisão.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000560/13
to the Council
Ana Gomes (S&D)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Tax competition in the EU

In his first communication with MEPs following the start of the Irish Presidency of the Council, the Irish Prime Minister promised to support the single market in order to promote growth and employment. However, competition in the internal market will continue to be distorted and perverted if measures are not taken to end the flourishing fiscal rivalry amongst Member States.

Tax dumping is hindering my country's economic recovery. Nineteen out of 20 firms quoted on the stock exchange are based in the Netherlands and other European countries to avoid paying higher taxes in their country of origin and to evade taxes on profits made in developing countries.

In Ireland, corporation tax is 12.5 %. The Portuguese Government is considering applying a rate of 10 %. Others are likely to follow, in a race to the bottom which is depriving national and EU budgets of crucial resources for investment in growth and employment and with which to maintain the European social model.

1. Does the Council intend to take action to end this tax jungle which is distorting the single market and accentuating economic inequalities amongst the EU Member States?

2. Does the Council intend to draw up a mandate for the Commission to negotiate, on behalf of the Member States, agreements to prevent dual taxation and tax evasion with other territories such as Switzerland, where diverted resources are deposited in order to avoid paying tax in EU countries?

Reply
(22 April 2013)

The question submitted by the Honourable Member concerns direct taxation, an issue which remains largely within the national competence of the Member States. Harmonisation of company taxation across the EU is limited and in the absence of harmonisation measures, Member States are free to adopt their own laws in order to meet their domestic policy objectives and requirements, provided that they exercise that competence in accordance with EC law.

However, the Council has adopted a number of acts addressing specific company taxation issues, to support the single market. They include, in particular, the directive on the common system of taxation applicable in the case of parent companies and subsidiaries ([1]) of different Member States, the Interest and Royalties Directive ([2]) and the Merger Directive ([3]).

In 2009, the Council endorsed the revised Code of Conduct for the effective implementation of the Convention on the elimination of double taxation in connection with the adjustment of profits of associated enterprises (arbitration convention) ([4]) .

In 2011, the Commission presented a proposal for a Council Directive on a Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base (CCCTB) ([5]), which aims to create common rules for calculating the corporate tax base and provides for the consolidation of the profits and losses of companies or groups of companies in order to arrive at a net profit or loss for the whole of their activity in the EU. Discussions on this complex proposal are currently ongoing in the Council.

The Council has been actively engaging with third countries on the issue of tax fraud.

([1]) Council Directive 2003/123/EC of 22 December 2003 amending Directive 90/435/EEC on the common system of taxation applicable in the case of parent companies and subsidiaries of different Member States, OJ L 007, 13.1.2004, p. 41.
([2]) Council Directive 2003/49/EC of 3 June 2003 on a common system of taxation applicable to interest and royalty payments made between associated companies of different Member States, OJ L 157, 26.6.2003, p. 49.
([3]) Council Directive 2005/19/EC of 17 February 2005 amending Directive 90/434/EEC 1990 on the common system of taxation applicable to mergers, divisions, transfers of assets and exchanges of shares concerning companies of different Member States, OJ L 58, 4.3.2005, p. 58.
([4]) OJ C 322 , 30.12.2009, p. 1.
([5]) COM(2011) 121 final/2.

Firstly, since 1 July 2004, agreements have been in force between the EU and its Member States, of the one part, and Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino and Switzerland, of the other part, on measures equivalent to those provided in the EU Savings Taxation Directive. In 2011, the Commission submitted a recommendation to the Council on the opening of negotiations for an update of the agreements. Discussions on the recommendation are still ongoing in the Council.

Secondly, in 2004 the Council adopted a decision on the signature of the cooperation agreement between the European Community and its Member States, of the one part, and the Swiss Confederation, of the other part, to combat fraud and any other illegal activity to the detriment of their financial interests.

Finally, in 2009 the Commission submitted a recommendation to the Council on the opening of negotiations for changes to the cooperation agreement and conclude anti-fraud agreements with Andorra, San Marino and Monaco.

Discussions are still ongoing in the Council with a view to adopting the proposed decision.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000561/13
à Comissão
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(22 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: Ameaça de despedimentos na empresa Kemet Electronics, Évora, Portugal

A Kemet Electronics, multinacional norte-americana de componentes automóveis, em Évora, anunciou, no final de novembro, que iria realizar o despedimento coletivo de 154 trabalhadores, cerca de metade dos seus trabalhadores.

De acordo com informações do Sindicato das Indústrias Elétricas do Sul e Ilhas, a Kemet estaria a preparar a deslocalização para o México. No entanto, resultado da luta dos trabalhadores da empresa, a administração anunciou há dias que iria recuar no processo de despedimento coletivo.

A Região do Alentejo tem uma das taxas de desemprego mais elevadas de Portugal, 16,1 %, e qualquer processo de despedimento significa atirar os trabalhadores para o desemprego sem que existam outras alternativas para estes homens e mulheres.

Assim, solicito à Comissão que me informe sobre o seguinte:

1. A referida empresa recebeu quaisquer apoios comunitários? Com que fins foram concedidos e que compromissos assumiu aquando da concessão dos apoios? Considera que, a existirem compromissos, estes estão a ser postos em causa pela administração da empresa?

2. Conhece a Comissão qualquer intenção de deslocalização da fábrica da Kemet, em Évora, para o México?

3. Que medidas pensa tomar, tendo em conta os graves problemas sociais e económicos existentes em Portugal onde o desemprego não cessa de aumentar?

Resposta dada por Johannes Hahn em nome da Comissão
(18 de março de 2013)

1. A Comissão remete o Senhor Deputado para a resposta dada à pergunta escrita E-010508/2011. A KEMET Electronics, localizada em Évora, recebeu financiamento da UE tanto no período 2000-2006 como no período em curso. Através do programa «PRIME» (2000-2006), recebeu 20 milhões de euros. No período em curso, recebeu 990 000 euros destinados a atividades de I & D ao abrigo do programa Compete.

O objetivo do primeiro projeto era aumentar o valor acrescentado bruto da produção industrial e suplantar as dificuldades e a falta de dinamismo do setor industrial na região. Neste aspeto, contribuiu para a criação de 151 novos empregos e para a manutenção de 511 postos de trabalho permanentes. De acordo com a autoridade de gestão do programa, a KEMET tem, até agora, cumprido as condições da subvenção. Relativamente ao financiamento das atividades de I & D no período em curso, os resultados do projeto devem ser medidos em função dos resultados/objetivos científicos e técnicos alcançados.

2.-3. A Comissão está ciente de que a empresa assinalou que poderá ser necessário reduzir o número de trabalhadores, embora este processo se encontre atualmente suspenso. A verificar-se uma redução, as autoridades portuguesas e a autoridade de gestão do programa Compete teriam de apurar se tal eventualidade viola as condições estabelecidas no contrato de financiamento. A Comissão continuará a acompanhar a situação.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000561/13
to the Commission
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Threat of lay-offs at Kemet Electronics (Evora, Portugal)

At the end of November 2012, Kemet Electronics, a US multinational company manufacturing automobile parts, announced a collective lay-off of 154 workers at its Evora plant, almost half of the staff employed there.

According to the workers' trade union (Sindicato das Indústrias Elétricas do Sul e Ilhas), Kemet plans to relocate to Mexico. However, as a result of the employees' protests, the administration announced a few days ago that it was backtracking on the collective dismissal.

The Alentejo region has one of the highest unemployment rates in Portugal — 16 % — and any lay-off process will inevitably cast workers into unemployment, as there are no other alternatives for these men and women.

Can the Commission provide the following information:

1. Has the company in question received any form of Community funding? For what purposes was the funding granted and what commitments did the firm make on receiving it? Does the Commission consider that, if commitments were made, these are now being sidestepped by the management of the firm?

2. Is the Commission aware of any plan by Kemet Electronics to relocate from Evora to Mexico?

3. What steps does it intend to take, given the current serious social and economic problems in Portugal and the rising level of unemployment in that country?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(18 March 2013)

1. The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-010508/2011. KEMET Electronics, located in Évora, received EU funding during both the 2000-2006 and current periods. Through the 'PRIME' programme (2000-2006), it received EUR 20 million. In the current period, it has received EUR 990 000 for R&D activities under the COMPETE programme.

The aim of the first project was to improve industrial gross value added and overcome the shortcomings and lack of dynamism of the industrial sector in the region. As such, it contributed to the creation of 151 new jobs and the continuation of 511 permanent jobs. According to the programme managing authority, KEMET has so far complied with the conditions of the grant. As regards the R&D financing during the current period, the project results should be measured in terms of the scientific and technical results/targets achieved.

2 and 3. The Commission is aware that the company has indicated that it may need to reduce the number of workers, although this process is currently suspended. Should a reduction happen, the Portuguese authorities and the 'COMPETE' programme managing authority would need to investigate whether that would breach the conditions set out in the funding contract. The Commission will continue to monitor the situation.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000562/13
à Comissão
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(22 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: Encerramento da fábrica de peluches Steiff

Tomei conhecimento de que a fábrica de peluches Steiff anuncia, para o próximo dia 15 de março, o seu encerramento, colocando no desemprego 103 trabalhadores. Esta fábrica alemã, que se encontra há 22 anos instalada em Oleiros — um dos concelhos do Pinhal interior, distrito de Castelo Branco, mais envelhecido e de grande interioridade —, pretende deslocalizar a sua produção para a Tunísia.

A fábrica de peluches Steiff, que já foi responsável pela produção das coleções mais importantes da marca, produz mais de 100 mil bonecos por ano. As encomendas continuam a crescer, segundo informações tornadas públicas.

Assim, solicito à Comissão que me informe sobre o seguinte:

1. A referida empresa recebeu quaisquer apoios comunitários? Com que fins foram concedidos e que compromissos assumiu aquando da concessão dos apoios? Considera que, a existirem compromissos, estes estão a ser postos em causa pela administração da empresa?

2. Que medidas pensa tomar, tendo em conta os graves problemas sociais e económicos existentes em Portugal onde o desemprego não cessa de aumentar?

3. Que tipo de apoios pode esta empresa ou o governo português solicitar para evitar que estes trabalhadores fiquem desempregados?

Resposta dada por László Andor em nome da Comissão
(21 de março de 2013)

De acordo com a informação recebida das autoridades portuguesas, a fábrica de bonecos de peluche Steiff, localizada em Oleiros, Portugal beneficiou de apoio financeiro, no valor de 5 260,12 euros, do Fundo Social Europeu (FSE) durante o período de programação 2000-2006. As operações selecionadas para financiamento cumpriram as regras da UE e nacionais durante o período de implementação.

O pacote do Emprego, lançado pela Comissão em abril de 2012, apoia a mobilização dos fundos da UE para a criação de emprego. Os fundos da Politica de Coesão são importantes fontes de investimento, ao estimular o crescimento sustentável e o emprego, e podem ser usados para apoiar políticas ativas para o mercado de trabalho, bem como para financiar mecanismos de apoio às PME, com vista à manutenção e à criação de postos de trabalho.

A pedido de Portugal, o Fundo Europeu de Ajustamento à Globalização (FEG) pode ajudar os trabalhadores despedidos a encontrar outro posto de trabalho o mais rapidamente possível, de acordo com as condições estabelecidas no regulamento relativo ao FEG ([1]). O Senhor Deputado poderá contactar a pessoa responsável pelo FEG em Portugal para saber se está prevista uma candidatura nesse sentido. ([2])

([1]) Regulamento (CE) n.º 1927/2006 do Parlamento Europeu e do Conselho, de 20 de dezembro de 2006, que institui o Fundo Europeu de Ajustamento à Globalização, JO L 406 de 30.12.2006.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=581&langId=pt

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000562/13
to the Commission
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Closure of the Steiff stuffed toy factory

It has come to my attention that the Steiff stuffed toy factory has announced it will close on 15 March, leaving 103 workers without a job. This German factory has been in Oleiros — a municipality in Pinhal, a district of Castelo Branco — for the past 22 years. The municipality has an ageing population and is extremely isolated. Steiff intends to move production to Tunisia.

The Steiff stuffed toy factory has produced some of the brand's most important collections and turns out over 100 000 toys a year. According to published information, orders continue to rise.

I therefore ask the Commission the following:

1. Has this company received any funding from the EU? What were the funds given for and what undertakings were given when the support was granted? If any undertakings were given, does the Commission believe they the company's directors are comply with them?

2. What measures is the Commission thinking of taking, given the serious social and economic problems in Portugal, where unemployment rates are continuing to rise?

3. What kind of support could this company or the Portuguese Government apply for in order to save these workers' jobs?

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

According to information received from the Portuguese authorities the Steiff stuffed toy factory, located in Oleiros, Portugal has received financial support amounting to EUR 5.260,12 from the European Social Fund (ESF) in the programming period 2000-2006. The operations selected for funding complied with EU and national rules throughout the implementation period.

The Employment package launched by the Commission in April 2012 supports the mobilisation of the EU funds for job creation. Cohesion Policy funds are important sources of investment stimulating sustainable growth and employment and can be used to support active labour market policy and to fund SME support mechanisms aiming at maintaining and creating jobs.

Upon request from Portugal, the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) could help the redundant workers to find another job as quickly as possible, under the conditions laid down in the EGF Regulation ([1]). The Honourable Member may wish to ask the EGF Contact Person for Portugal whether such an application is being planned ([2]).

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 on establishing the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, OJ L 406, 30.12.2006.
([2]) Contact details http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=581&langId=pt

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000563/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Alyn Smith (Verts/ALE)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Disappearance of Sombath Somphone

Although there have been positive political developments in Laos in recent months, there is widespread public concern over continuing disappearances. The case in December 2012 of Sombath Somphone, a figure well respected and known internationally for his role in education, youth and development work in Laos, has attracted particular attention.

Following the recent statement from Vice-President/High Representative Ashton regarding the disappearance of Mr Somphone, I would like to ask the Vice-President/High Representative what further steps have been taken by the Commission to pressurise the Laotian Government to promptly discover the whereabouts of Mr Somphone?

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

The disappearance of Mr Sombath Somphone is a very serious matter which the EU is pursuing not merely through the usual diplomatic channels, but also in close cooperation with like-minded countries, including some Asian countries.

Since 15 December 2012, the EU Delegation in Vientiane has been in contact with Mr Somphone's spouse and has kept this issue high on the agenda in all its meetings with high-ranking Laotian officials and civil society representatives. A demarche by the EU was delivered to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs. Laotian diplomats have also been informed by the EEAS of the deep concern expressed by Members of the European Parliament.

Furthermore, the EU held a Human Rights dialogue with Laos on 4 February 2013 in Vientiane. The matter of Mr Somphone featured prominently at this dialogue.

As the Honourable Member is aware, on 7 February 2013 the European Parliament held an urgency debate about Mr Somphone's disappearance and adopted a Resolution. In her speech at that occasion Commissioner Hedegaard stressed that his situation is of great concern, she called for stepping up the investigation and for keeping up international engagement.

HRVP Ashton reacted publicly already on 21 December 2012 by way of a statement by her spokesperson.

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande E-000564/13
till kommissionen
Amelia Andersdotter (Verts/ALE)
(22 januari 2013)

Angående: Påverkan av särskilda 301-rapporter på medlemsstaternas lagstiftning

I sitt svar på den skriftliga frågan E-010043/2012 uppgav kommissionen att den, utifrån bevisen för att medlemsstaternas enskilda lagstiftning påverkas av den särskilda 301-rapportens bevakningslista, inte kan ”spekulera över Spaniens skäl för införandet av Ley Sinde år 2011”. Efter vad som påstås beror detta på att kommissionens uppgift endast ”är att se till att den berörda nationella lagstiftningen är i överensstämmelse med EU:s regelverk”.

Det berörda området – säkerställande av immateriella rättigheter – regleras i artikel 26 (f.d. artikel 14 i EG-fördraget) i EUF-fördraget, där det förklaras att ”unionen ska besluta om åtgärder i syfte att upprätta den inre marknaden eller säkerställa dess funktion”.

1. Anser kommissionen att målen i artikel 14 i EG-fördraget/artikel 26 i EUF-fördraget har uppnåtts genom direktivet om säkerställande av skyddet för immateriella rättigheter, med tanke på att dess harmoniseringsmål så enkelt kan undergrävas av utländska makter, så som beskrivs i den skriftliga frågan E-010043/2012?

2. Har kommissionen någon strategi för den händelse att utländska makter påverkar beslutsfattandet i EU, så som beskrivs i den skriftliga frågan E-010043/2012, och orsakar fragmentering på EU-marknaden?

3. Kan kommissionen bevisa att den över huvud taget har beaktat den påverkan som särskilda 301-rapporter sannolikt har på inhemsk EU-lagstiftning, inbegripet på medlemsstatsnivå?

Svar från Michel Barnier på kommissionens vägnar
(13 april 2013)

Direktivet om säkerställande av skydd för immateriella rättigheter (Ipred) ([1]) syftar till att komma till rätta med skillnaderna mellan medlemsstaternas system för civilrättslig verkställighet och att etablera en harmoniserad skyddsnivå för immateriella rättigheter på den inre marknaden.

Kommissionens uppgift är att se till att medlemsstaternas system för immateriella rättigheter ligger i linje med Ipred. Medlemsstaterna omfattas av EU:s regelverk samt internationella avtal, till exempel Världshandelsorganisationens Trips-avtal.

Rapporten Uspto 301 omfattas inte av någon av dessa kategorier. Det är bara ett ensidigt, icke-bindande initiativ och det finns ingen anledning för att det ska orsaka fragmentering av den inre marknaden eller påverka EU:s beslutsprocess.

([1]) Direktiv 2004/48/EG.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000564/13
to the Commission
Amelia Andersdotter (Verts/ALE)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Special 301 Reports' influence on Member State legislation

In its answer to Written Question E-010043/2012, the Commission states that it cannot, on the basis of the evidence of the Special 301 Report listing influence on individual Member State legislation as presented in that question, 'speculate on Spain's reasons for having introduced the Ley Sinde in 2011'. Allegedly, this is because the role of the Commission is merely 'to ensure that the national legislation ... is in line with the EU acquis'.

The area concerned — intellectual property enforcement — is governed by Article 26 TFEU (formerly Article 14 TEC), where it is explained that 'The Union shall adopt measures with the aim of establishing or ensuring the functioning of the internal market'.

1. Does the Commission believe that the goals of Article 14 TEC/Article 26 TFEU are achieved by the Intellectual Property Rights Enforcement Directive, given that its objectives of harmonisation are so easily subverted by foreign powers, as outlined in Written Question E-010043/2012?

2. Does the Commission have a strategy for dealing with the contingency of foreign powers having an impact on European policy making, as outlined in Written Question E-010043/2012, that causes fragmentation of the European market?

3. Can the Commission prove that it has considered at all the likely impact of the Special 301 Reports on domestic European Union legislation, including at Member State level?

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

The IPR Enforcement Directive (IPRED) ([1]) aims at tackling the disparities between the civil enforcement systems of Member States and therefore at establishing a harmonised level of protection of IPR within the internal market.

The role of the Commission is to ensure that Members States' intellectual property regimes are in line with IPRED. Member States are indeed subject to the EU *acquis* as well as to international treaties, such as the World Trade Organisation's TRIPS agreement.

The USPTO 301 Report does not fall under any of these categories. It is merely a unilateral non-binding initiative and it has no reason to cause the fragmentation of the internal market or to impact the EU policy making.

([1]) Directive 2004/48/EC.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-000565/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(22 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Η καταστροφή του ελληνοκυπριακού νεκροταφείου και εκκλησίας στο κατεχόμενο χωριό Λάπηθος (Κύπρος)

Σύμφωνα με άρθρο που δημοσιεύθηκε στην τουρκοκυπριακή εφημερίδα Kıbrıslı στις 18 Ιανουαρίου 2013, το ελληνοκυπριακό νεκροταφείο στο κατεχόμενο χωριό Λάπηθος (Κύπρος) έχει καταστραφεί εξαιτίας πρωτοβουλιών του «δημάρχου» της κατεχόμενης Λαπήθου Fuat Namsoy, ο οποίος είναι και γενικός γραμματέας του τουρκοκυπριακού Κόμματος Εθνικής Ενότητας (UBP). Εκσκαφείς και μπουλντόζες κατέστρεψαν το νεκροταφείο και την εκκλησία που βρισκόταν σε αυτό και έσπασαν ταφόπλακες, οι οποίες εν συνεχεία πετάχτηκαν μέσα στην κατεστραμμένη εκκλησία. Τα ξεθαμμένα οστά τα πέταξαν σαν σκουπίδια. Κατά την ελληνορθόδοξη παράδοση, τέτοιες πράξεις βεβήλωσης νεκροταφείων και έλλειψης σεβασμού προς τους νεκρούς θεωρούνται σοβαρή παραβίαση των θρησκευτικών δικαιωμάτων του ανθρώπου.

Η Επιτροπή καλείται κατόπιν τούτων να απαντήσει στα ακόλουθα:

1. Πώς μπορεί να σταματήσει τέτοιες πράξεις βαρβαρότητας εκ μέρους του τουρκικού καθεστώτος κατοχής εις βάρος ελληνοκυπριακών νεκροταφείων και ασέβειας προς τις οικογένειες των θαμμένων Ελληνοκυπρίων;

2. Δεδομένου ότι δεν πρόκειται για μεμονωμένο γεγονός αλλά για ένα από πολλά παρόμοια κατά τα τελευταία 39 χρόνια τουρκικής κατοχής του 37% της επικράτειας του νησιού, τι συμβουλεύει η Επίτροπος Δικαιοσύνης, Θεμελιωδών Δικαιωμάτων και Ιθαγένειας της ΕΕ την κυπριακή κυβέρνηση, και ειδικότερα τον κυπριακό λαό, να κάνουν, για να θέσουν τέλος σε όλες αυτές τις τουρκικές προκλήσεις κατά το 2013, το «Ευρωπαϊκό Έτος των Πολιτών»;

Απάντηση του κ. Füle εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(12 Μαρτίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή αποδοκιμάζει κάθε καταστροφή σε θρησκευτικούς χώρους στην Κύπρο και λαμβάνει υπόψη τις ανησυχίες του Αξιότιμου Μέλους.

Η Επιτροπή θέτει τακτικά τα ζητήματα αυτά υπόψη των τουρκοκυπρίων συνομιλητών της και θα συνεχίσει να το πράττει όταν παρίσταται ανάγκη.

Το θέμα που έθεσε το Αξιότιμο Μέλος καταδεικνύει για μία ακόμη φορά την ανάγκη ταχείας και συνολικής επίλυσης του Κυπριακού. Στην ανακοίνωση που εξέδωσε τον Οκτώβριο του 2012 σχετικά με τη στρατηγική διεύρυνσης και τις κυριότερες προκλήσεις για το διάστημα 2012-2013 ([1]), η Επιτροπή επεσήμανε την ανάγκη επανέναρξης των διαπραγματεύσεων με στόχο την ταχεία ολοκλήρωση των συνομιλιών.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/strategy-and-progress-report/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000565/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Destruction of the Greek Cypriot cemetery and church in occupied Lapythos village (Cyprus)

According to an article published in the Turkish Cypriot daily newspaper *Kibrisli* on 18 January 2013, the Greek Cypriot cemetery in the occupied village of Lapythos (Cyprus) has been destroyed as a result of action initiated by the so-called mayor of occupied Lapythos, Fuat Namsoy, who is also the General Secretary of the Turkish Cypriot National Unity Party (UBP). Diggers and bulldozers destroyed the cemetery and the church located inside it, and the headstones of the Greek Cypriot graves were broken and thrown into the destroyed church. The bones which had been taken out of the cemetery were thrown away as rubbish. In the Greek Orthodox tradition, such actions against cemeteries and lack of respect for the dead are considered a severe violation of religious human rights.

The Commission is therefore asked to answer the following:

1. How can it stop such acts of barbarism by the Turkish occupying regime against Greek Cypriot cemeteries and the disrespect shown for the families of the buried Greek Cypriots?

2. As this is not an isolated incident but is one of many over the last 39 years of Turkish occupation of 37% of the island's territory, what does the Commissioner for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship of the EU advise the Cypriot Government, and the Cypriot people in particular, to do in order to stop all such Turkish acts of provocation in 2013, the 'European Year of Citizens'?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(12 March 2013)

The Commission deplores any damage to religious sites in Cyprus and takes note of the concerns of the Honourable Member.

The Commission regularly raises those issues with its Turkish Cypriot interlocutors and will continue to do so as appropriate.

The issue raised by the Honourable Member once again underlines the need to reach a rapid comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem. In its October 2012 Communication on the Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2012-2013 ([1]), the Commission underlined the necessity to re-launch the negotiations with the aim of reaching a swift conclusion to the talks.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/strategy-and-progress-report/index_en.htm

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000566/13
an die Kommission
Michael Cramer (Verts/ALE)
(22. Januar 2013)

Betrifft: Schienengüterverkehr zwischen Wendlingen und Ulm (Vorrangiges Vorhaben 17)

Unter Bezugnahme auf die Aussagen des für das Vorrangige Vorhaben 17 der Transeuropäischen Verkehrsnetze (TEN-T) zuständigen Koordinators Péter Balázs vom 26. November 2012 im Verkehrsausschuss sowie zusätzliche schriftliche Erläuterungen vom 11. Dezember 2012 wird die Kommission hinsichtlich des Abschnitts Wendlingen-Ulm um die detaillierte Beantwortung folgender Fragen ersucht:

1. Kann die Kommission bestätigen, dass die Neubaustrecke Wendlingen-Ulm eine stärkere Steigung aufweist als die Bestandsstrecke über die Geislinger Steige? Wenn ja, wie groß ist die Differenz?

2. Steht nach Aussage der Kommission die bis zu 31 ‰ betragende Steigung mit den Erfordernissen der anzuwendenden Technischen Spezifikation für Interoperabilität (TSI) im Einklang? Wenn ja, warum? Wenn nein, warum nicht?

3. Was bedeutet dies im Hinblick auf die technischen Begrenzungen bezüglich zulässiger Achslast, Länge der Züge, Zahl der notwendigen Lokomotiven und der zu fahrenden Geschwindigkeiten — ggf. getrennt betrachtet nach Talfahrt und Bergfahrt — im Vergleich zu von den betroffenen Zügen zu befahrenden angrenzenden Streckenabschnitten?

4. Welche Auswirkungen ergeben sich hieraus auf die Effizienz, Wirtschaftlichkeit und Wettbewerbsfähigkeit des Schienengüterverkehrs auf den betroffenen Relationen? In welcher Weise und mit welchem Ergebnis wurden diese Auswirkungen bei der Bewertung des Projektes berücksichtigt?

5. Ist der Kommission bekannt, dass im Personenverkehr 70 % der Fahrgäste im Stuttgarter Hauptbahnhof ein- und aussteigen und dem Schienengüterverkehr auf der Strecke Wendlingen-Ulm deshalb für die Wirtschaftlichkeit der Neubaustrecke zentrale Bedeutung zukommt?

6. Zudem verweist die Kommission darauf, dass auf der parallel verlaufenden Bestandsstrecke über die Geislinger Steige durch die Neubaustrecke Wendlingen-Ulm Kapazitäten für den Güterverkehr frei würden. Von welchen Kapazitäten geht die Kommission aus, und welche Art von Güterverkehr — in Bezug auf Achslast, Zuglänge und nötige Zahl der Lokomotiven — könnte dort verkehren?

7. Welche Verteilung des Güterverkehrs (Anzahl Zugtrassen) wird im Abschnitt zwischen Stuttgart und Ulm zwischen Bestandsstrecke und Neubaustrecke erwartet oder angestrebt?

Antwort von Herrn Kallas im Namen der Kommission
(5. März 2013)

1. Ausgehend von den ihr vorliegenden Informationen kann die Kommission bestätigen, dass die Neubaustrecke Wendlingen — Ulm (durchschnittliche Steigung: 24,47 ‰ (15,9 km), maximale Steigung: ≤ 31 ‰ (1,47 km)) eine stärkere Steigung aufweist als die Bestandsstrecke über die Geislinger Steige (22,5 mm/m bzw. ‰).

2. Der Kommission liegen keine Informationen vor, nach denen die in Abschnitt 4.2.4.3 der technischen Spezifikationen für Hochgeschwindigkeitsinfrastruktur festgelegten Anforderungen (siehe: Beschluss 2011/275/EU der Kommission ([1])) von der Neubaustrecke nicht erfüllt würden.

3. Generell sind stärkere Steigungen, insbesondere für Güterzüge, nachteilig, da die Kostenwirksamkeit und somit die Wettbewerbsfähigkeit sehr von einer hohen Transportkapazität pro Zug bezogen auf eine bestimmte Zugkraft und Leistung abhängen. Der Trend geht daher zu einem größeren Gewicht der Züge und zu längeren Zügen. Eine hohe Transportkapazität pro Zug kann auch für den Infrastrukturbetreiber wichtig sein, um eine hohe Transportkapazität zu erreichen. Aus diesen beiden Gründen wird versucht, starke Neigungen auf für den Güterverkehr wichtigen Strecken (z. B. alpine Basistunnels) zu vermeiden oder zu verringern.

([1]) Beschluss 2011/275/EU der Kommission vom 26. April 2011 über die technische Spezifikation für die Interoperabilität des Teilsystems „Infrastruktur" des konventionellen transeuropäischen Eisenbahnsystems, ABl. L 126 vom 14.5.2011.

Nach Kenntnis der Kommission werden für die Neubaustrecke Gewichtsbegrenzungen bzw. eine stärkere Leistung/Zugkraft erwogen.

4.-7. Die erbetenen Informationen betreffen operative Aspekte der neuen Strecke. Diese Aspekte waren Gegenstand einer Kosten-Nutzen-Analyse der Projektträger. Die Kommission regt daher an, dass sich der Herr Abgeordnete mit diesen Fragen direkt an die deutsche Regierung wendet.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000566/13
to the Commission
Michael Cramer (Verts/ALE)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Rail freight transport between Wendlingen and Ulm (Priority Project 17)

With reference to the statements by Péter Balázs, the coordinator of Priority Project 17 of the Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T), on 26 November 2012 in the Committee on Transport and Tourism and additional written explanations on 11 December 2012, the Commission is requested to provide detailed answers to the following questions regarding the section between Wendlingen and Ulm:

1. Can the Commission confirm that the line to be constructed between Wendlingen and Ulm involves a steeper incline than the existing line using the Geislinger Steige route? If so, how great is the difference?

2. In the Commission's opinion, does the incline of up to 31 % comply with the requirements of the applicable Technical Specification for Interoperability (TSI)? If so, why? If not, why not?

3. What is the significance of this in relation to the technical restrictions for permissible axle weight, train length, number of locomotives required and permissible speeds — differentiated as necessary according to downhill and uphill travel — compared to the adjacent sections to be used by the relevant trains?

4. What is the resultant impact on the efficiency, cost-effectiveness and competitiveness of rail freight transport in these cases? How and to what extent has this impact been taken into account when evaluating the project?

5. Is the Commission aware that, when it comes to passenger transport, 70 % of all passengers board and alight in Stuttgart's main station, thus, rail freight transport on the Wendlingen-Ulm line is of central importance for the cost-effectiveness of the line not yet constructed?

6. In addition, the Commission points out that the line to be constructed between Wendlingen and Ulm will free up capacity for freight traffic on the existing parallel line using the Geislinger Steige route. What capacity does the Commission expect and what type of freight traffic could use the line — in terms of axle weight, train length and the number of locomotives required?

7. What distribution of freight traffic (number of train paths) is expected or aimed for between the existing line and the line to be constructed in the section between Stuttgart and Ulm?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(5 March 2013)

1. According to available information the Commission can confirm that the new line NBS Wendlingen-Ulm involves a steeper gradient (average gradient is 24.47‰ (15.9 km) and maximum gradient ≤31‰ (1.47km)) than the existing line via the Geislinger Steige (22.5 mm/m or ‰).

2. The Commission has no information indicating that the requirements of the Technical Specifications High-Speed — Infrastructure specified in Art. 4.2.4.3 would not be met by the NBS (see: Commission Decision 2011/275/EU ([1])).

3. Generally, steep gradients are disadvantageous in particular for freight trains, since the cost-efficiency and, consequently, the competitiveness is highly dependent on a high transport capacity per train in relation to a given tractive force and power. Therefore, there is a trend towards increased train weights and lengths. A high transport capacity per train can also be important for an infrastructure manager in order to achieve a high transport capacity. For both reasons attempts are made, to eliminate or reduce steep gradients on important routes for freight (ex: alpine base tunnels).

As far as the Commission understands, a weight limit or additional power/tractive force are considered along the NBS.

([1]) Commission decision of 26 April 2011 concerning a technical specification for interoperability relating to the 'energy' subsystem of the trans-European conventional rail system, OJ L126, 14.5.2011.

4-7. The requested information concerns operational aspects of the new line. These aspects have been subject to a cost-benefit analysis by the project promoters. The Commission would therefore suggest to the Honourable member to contact directly the German Government on these questions.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000567/13
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: 2013 legislative package on road tolls

What are the broad intentions of the Commission's planned 2013 initiative on road tolls? What will the legislative package contain and when does the Commission expect to publish it?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(4 March 2013)

In its work programme for 2013, the Commission already outlined its broad intentions on this initiative with the aim of improving the economic and environmental efficiency of road freight transport. Vice-President Kallas further set out the problems which the initiative on road charging could address at the stakeholder conference on fair and efficient road pricing held on 5 December 2012. These are:

(1) underinvestment in the maintenance of road transport infrastructure;

(2) inefficient use of the road infrastructure which results in peak hour congestion on an increasing number of inter-urban roads;

(3) confusing or contradictory price signals to trucks along trans-European corridors, which results in suboptimal transport choices;

(4) a patchwork of largely incompatible fee collection systems across the EU, resulting in unnecessarily high compliance costs for users; and

(5) lack of transparency; unequal or unfair treatment of motorists subject to road charges.

The Commission is currently preparing an impact assessment report which considers various policy options, including legislative initiative(s), soft law and a 'no new EU policy' scenario. The Commission cannot prejudge the outcome of the impact assessment. It is therefore not yet in a position to confirm that it will make a legislative proposal, nor to say what the content of such a proposal could be.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000568/13
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Coastal erosion in Dublin

Concerns have been expressed to me about worsening coastal erosion in north County Dublin, including at Portrane.

In its 9 March 2011 resolution on a European Strategy for the Atlantic Region (P7_TA(2011)0089), the European Parliament drew attention to the problem of coastal erosion as a consequence of climate change.

1. What are the Commission's conclusions and recommendations on the implementation in Ireland over the past decade of Recommendation 2002/413/EC on Integrated Coastal Zone Management, especially with regard to the issue of coastal erosion?

2. What proposals, if any, is the European Regional Development Fund currently supporting in Ireland to support actions tackling the problem of coastal erosion, as foreseen by Article 4(5) of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006?

3. What action has the Commission taken, or is it planning to take, on foot of its 'Eurosion' study on sustainable coastal erosion management in Europe? ([1])

4. What specific projects is the Commission funding under the topic 'Coasts at threat in Europe: tsunamis and climate-related risks' under the Seventh Framework Programme for Research, as published on 9 July 2012?

5. How does the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (Directive 2008/56/EC), which should have been transposed by all Member States by July 2010, specifically deal with the issue of coastal erosion?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(13 March 2013)

1. The Commission has carried out a study to examine the Member States reports on progress on Integrated Coastal Zone Management up to 2010 which includes an assessment of the implementation of the recommendation in Ireland ([2]). This study includes some conclusions as regards the needs for further improvements but not specifically on coastal erosion.

2. In the 2007-2013 period, County Dublin receives Structural Fund support from the Southern and Eastern Regional Programme under the Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective. Tackling coastal erosion is not included in the list of eligible activities under the Operational programme.

3. The Commission refers the Honourable Member to its answers to Written Questions E-010925/2011, E-005638/2012 and E-005941/2012.

4. The last call for proposals under the Seventh EU Framework Programme for Research provides research on coastal threats. Following evaluation of proposals received before the deadline of 28 February 2013, selected project(s) will in principle start before the end of 2013. There are some ongoing EU projects on coastal research that might be of interest such as: SECOA ([3]) — Solutions for Environmental Contrasts in Coastal Areas, Theseus ([4]) — Innovative coastal technologies for safer European coasts in a changing climate and MICORE ([5]) — Morphological impacts on coastal risks induced by extreme storm events.

5. Coastal erosion does not fall specifically within the scope of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive ([6]) (MSFD). To complement the MSFD, the Commission is currently preparing an initiative on Maritime Spatial Planning and Integrated Coastal Management which will address coastal erosion, amongst others threats to EU coasts, through coastal management strategies.

([1]) www.eurosion.org
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/iczm/pdf/Final%20Report_progress.pdf
([3]) SECOA — Solutions for Environmental Contrasts in Coastal Areas, www.projectsecoa.eu
([4]) Theseus — Innovative coastal technologies for safer European coasts in a changing climate, www.theseusproject.eu
([5]) MICORE — Morphological impacts on coastal risks induced by extreme storm events, www.micore.eu
([6]) Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy (Marine Strategy Framework Directive), OJ 164, 25.6.2008.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000569/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Emer Costello (S&D)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Civil society organisations and religious minorities in Russia

How has the Vice-President/High Representative responded to Parliament's resolution of 16 February 2012 on the situation in Russia ([1]), and notably to its paragraph 14, which expressed Parliament's 'deep concern about the misuse of anti-extremism legislation involving the illegal implementation of criminal laws against civil society organisations such as Memorial and religious minorities such as [the] Jehovah's Witnesses and Falun Dafa and the improper banning of their materials on grounds of extremism'?

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

The EEAS is following the cases of Jehovah's Witnesses and Falun Dafa in Russia very closely. EEAS officials have met with the Jehovah's Witnesses and Falun Dafa representatives from Russia on numerous occasions to get the firsthand information on these cases and thus are aware of their situation in Russia and the restrictive actions taken against them, including banned texts, prosecutions, searches, fines and confiscations. The HR/VP is very concerned about these cases and about their broader implications.

Issues relating to the freedom of religion, freedom of expression, the application of the anti-extremist law, and the due process of law in the Russian courts are all repeatedly being raised with the Russian authorities. The HR/VP has raised the issue of the use and abuse of the Law of the Anti-Extremism during the last three consecutive human rights consultations with Russia. The issue of the Ministry of Justice's list of extremist publications has been part of those discussions. The EEAS will continue to follow the developments in these cases closely.

([1]) Texts adopted, P7_TA(2012)0054.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000571/13
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Violence against women

How is the Commission responding to Parliament's resolution of 5 April 2011 on priorities and outline of a new EU policy framework to fight violence against women (P7_TA(2011)0127), most notably to paragraph 11, which urged it to consider establishing an observatory on violence against women based on the reporting of court cases involving violence against women, paragraph 15, which called on it to submit a study on the financial impact of violence against women, building on research using methodologies that can financially quantify the impact of this form of violence on health services, welfare systems and the labour market, and paragraph 22, which noted that domestic violence had been identified as a major cause of miscarriage or stillbirth and of maternal death during childbirth, and which asked the Commission to focus more closely on violence against pregnant women where the offender harmed more than one party?

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

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answers to oral question O-04/2013. The Commission is committed to a strong policy response to combat all forms of violence against women as seen in the Stockholm Programme and the strategy for equality between women and men (2010-2015) ([1]). This primarily through empowerment of women, awareness raising, legislative action, exchanges of good practice, improving knowledge and data collection. The Daphne III Programme provides financial support for transnational projects, that should continue with the future Rights Equality and Citizenship Program under negotiation.

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) supports the EU institutions and the Member states in their efforts to combat violence against women, by collecting and providing them with comparable and reliable data and resources on violence against women ([2]).

In 2013, the Commission will support information and communication activities developed at national level aiming at ending violence targeted to specific groups of women, including pregnant women.

([1]) COM(2010) 491 final, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0491:FIN:EN:PDF
([2]) The EIGE studies are available at: http://www.eige.europa.eu/content/activities/Gender-based-violence

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000572/13
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Urban mobility package

What are the Commission's broad intentions at this stage with regard to the planned urban mobility package it is due to launch during 2013? When does the Commission expect to launch this initiative?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(5 March 2013)

1. The Commission services are preparing a 'Urban Mobility initiative' as a follow up to its 2011 White Paper on Transport ([1]). It would provide an overview of the present state of affairs on the urban dimension of EU transport policy, including the review of the implementation of the 2009 Action Plan on Urban Mobility ([2]) which finished end 2012. Preparatory works also cover a cost/benefit analysis of a European framework for the development and implementation of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans and supporting elements, such as an EU framework for urban road user charging and access restriction zones and a Strategy for 'near-zero emission urban logistics by 2030'.

2. The initiative would be planned to be adopted in the second half of 2013.

([1]) White Paper 'Towards a European transport area' (COM(2011) 144 final), also: Staff Working Document — SEC(2011) 391 final — and Impact Assessment report for the White Paper — SEC(2011)358 final.
([2]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2009:0490:FIN:EN:PDF

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000573/13
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Planned Commission activities to raise awareness of trafficking among specific vulnerable groups

Further to the EU strategy towards the eradication of trafficking in human beings launched by the Commission on 19 June 2012, what is the current situation with regard to the Commission's plans to launch EU-wide awareness-raising activities in 2014 targeting specific vulnerable groups, including women and children at risk, domestic workers, Roma communities, and undocumented workers?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(4 March 2013)

In its communication 'the EU Strategy towards the eradication of trafficking in human beings 2012-2016 ([1])', the Commission stressed that vulnerable groups are at greater risk of becoming victims of trafficking in human beings.

In line with the strategy, in 2014 the Commission plans to launch EU-wide awareness-raising activities targeting specific vulnerable groups, such as women and children at risk, domestic workers, Roma communities, undocumented workers and situations such as major sporting events. The Internet and social networks will be used as a means of effectively raising awareness in a targeted manner.

In addition, the Commission is currently in the preparatory stages for the commissioning of a study on high-risk groups, and is considering the specific groups to be targeted. The Commission will ensure that funding is available under the research funding programme and it will target actions in a coherent manner and collaborate with Member States.

The European Parliament will be kept informed about future developments.

([1]) The EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings 2012-2016 COM(2012)286 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000574/13
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Palliative care

Under Article 168 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, EU Member States are responsible for the organisation and provision of health services and medical care.

In its resolution of 9 September 2010 on long-term care for older people ([1]), Parliament, through paragraph 10, called on the Member States to provide support, as a matter of priority, for the establishment of home palliative care units.

What were the principal conclusions and recommendations of the collaborative project EuropaLL ([2]), funded by the EU Health Programme? What action is the Commission now taking or considering taking on foot of this project?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(28 February 2013)

The EuropaLL project proposed a set of indicators for palliative care based on the consensus of its project partners. It also selected best practices on palliative care across Europe which included education and training of health professionals and volunteers, presence of family at patients' bedside, development of national policies on palliative care and setting up a palliative care association at national level ([3]).

The results of the project were presented at several conferences, including the conference concluding the project which took place in September 2010 in Brussels, and in scientific journals.

The Commission is not currently preparing specific action related to the palliative care.

([1]) Texts adopted, P7_TA(2010)0313.
([2]) www.europall.eu
([3]) The deliverables of the projects are available on the Website of the Executive Agency for Health and Consumers: http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/projects/database.html?prjno=2006111

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000575/13
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: UN Safer Cities Global Programme

Paragraph 30 of Parliament's resolution of 5 April 2011 on priorities and outline of a new EU policy framework to fight violence against women (P7_TA(2011)0127), calls on the Commission and the Member States to address violence against women and the gender-related dimension of human rights violations internationally.

Could the Commission outline how the EU is supporting the UN Safer Cities Global Programme?

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

The Commission considers the initiative taken by 'Safe and Friendly Cities for All', the UN Women, Unicef and UN-Habitat aiming at making women and children feel safer in their local neighborhoods, and thus to improve their quality of life, very important.

By working with local municipalities, women's groups, child and youth advocates, the joint initiative will increase safety among women, youth and children, and prevent and reduce violence, including sexual harassment, in public spaces.

The EU has a strategic partnership with UN Women. In April 2012 a memorandum of understanding was signed to foster policy dialogue and close cooperation on policies and programmes. With the adoption of this agreement the EU has sent a strong signal about the EU's commitment to gender issues, women's rights and women's empowerment and of its support to UN Women.

The elimination of violence against women is one of the priorities of the Women's Charter of the Commission and its Strategy for equality between women and men (2010-2015). From the legislative perspective a proposal for a 'European Protection Order', aiming at protecting crime victims, is in the pipeline. When adopted, it will complement a number of recent criminal and civil justice legislative measures on human trafficking, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children, on the strengthening of the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, on the 'European Protection Order' in criminal matters. All these legislative measures will be of benefit especially to women — victims of violence, and help make women's life safer in the territory of the EU.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000576/13
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Industrial heritage

Could the Commission outline what EU funding programmes would be of interest in relation to the conservation, transformation and rehabilitation of industrial heritage in Ireland?

To the Commission's knowledge, what EU funds have been used, or are being used, for such purposes in Ireland under the 2007-13 round of Structural Funds?

Further to the 27 September 2011 Conference on 'Industrial Heritage: Differentiating the European Tourism Offer', how is the Commission planning to respond to the European Parliament's resolution of the same date on Tourism in Europe (P7_TA(2011)0407), most notably to paragraph 44 of that resolution, which urged the Commission to promote more vigorously Europe's industrial heritage and which emphasised that the development of Europe's industrial heritage, as a major area of cultural interest, could also benefit secondary destinations?

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

The 2007-2013 European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) programmes in Ireland principally focus on niche investment opportunities in the areas of Research and Technological Development and small business support through the country-wide network of City/County Enterprise Boards. Industrial heritage investments are considered unlikely to fall into these investment categories.

Two ERDF 2007-2013 programmes ((1) Border, Midland and Western region and (2) Southern and Eastern region) have invested in sustainable urban development. Thus, following the closure of the Waterford Crystal factory in 2009, ERDF part-funded the House of Waterford Crystal. This facility has allowed the retention of traditional glass-making skills in Waterford and serves as a focal attraction for visitors to the city. No further 2007-2013 funding is available under this urban development strand of activity.

For the current period, investments in the conservation, transformation and rehabilitation of industrial heritage may continue to qualify for ERDF support, depending on their ability to generate economic and employment growth. A high proportion of past investment in tourism delivered the expected results and proved sustainable, as underlined in the 2011 performance audit of the European Court of Auditors ([1]) In addition, the Commission facilitates the promotion of industrial heritage through calls for proposals aiming at supporting interregional cooperation projects based on cultural and industrial heritage ([2]).

Ways of encouraging urban development under 2014-2020 funding for Ireland will be considered during future negotiations with the relevant national and regional authorities.

([1]) http://eca.europa.eu/portal/pls/portal/docs/1/8746728.PDF. This report reviewed EU funds — amounting to EUR 4.6 billion between 2000 and 2006 — allocated under the ERDF was based on a wide survey of projects in nine member states, including Ireland, encompassing 26 regions.
([2]) For more information: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer P-000577/13
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Delays in transferring funding to Léargas, the Irish National Agency for the Lifelong Learning Programme

I have received correspondence on behalf of Léargas, the Irish National Agency for the Lifelong Learning Programme, expressing concern about delays in the Commission transferring funding to national agencies in relation to Comenius, Grundtvig, Leonardo, Youth and other EU programmes. I understand the national agencies in other Member States have experienced the same problem.

Could the Commission indicate how it is proposing to resolve this problem and when any outstanding funding will be transferred?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(22 February 2013)

In 2012, significant cuts in the EU budget affected several EU funding programmes, including the Lifelong Learning (LLP) programme, leaving the Commission short of payment credits and unable to make payments to national agencies towards the end of the year.

On 23 October 2012 the Commission presented an amending budget proposal in order to bridge the shortfall in the EU 2012 budget. EUR 180 million was earmarked to cover the deficit in the Lifelong Learning Programme budget. The Commission's budget proposal was formally approved by the Parliament on 12 December 2012.

Therefore, payment requests introduced by the LLP National Agencies during the period September — December 2012 could only be honoured as from mid-December onwards. The Commission made all outstanding payments to the LLP National Agencies between mid-December and early January. As regards the specific case of the National Agency Léargas, the payment request dated 21 November was honoured on 20 December 2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000578/13
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Follow-up to December 2012 Council conclusions on violence against women

What action is the Commission taking or considering taking following the adoption of the Council's conclusions of 6 December 2012 on 'Combating Violence Against Women, and the Provision of Support Services for Victims of Domestic Violence', most notably on foot of paragraph 20, which urged the EU to 'consider developing a European strategy for preventing and combating all forms of violence against women…', paragraph 28, which suggested that the EU 'consider establishing a European helpline (within the 116 numbering system) to assist victims of violence against women…' and paragraph 38, which called for the EU to 'consider designating 2015 the European Year on Zero Tolerance for Violence against Women…'?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(25 March 2013)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answers to oral question O-04/2013 ([1]).

The Commission welcomes the adoption of the forward-looking Council's conclusions of 6 December 2012 on 'Combating Violence Against Women, and the Provision of Support Services for Victims of Domestic Violence'.

The Commission reaffirms its commitment to a strong policy response to combat all forms of violence against women. In order to further raise awareness of the issue of violence against women, the Commission will conduct and support awareness-raising activities at EU and national levels on female genital mutilation and the rights of women victims of violence in 2013. On 6 March 2013, the Commission has hosted a High level Round table and has also launched a public consultation on female genital mutilation.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20130204+ITEM-017+DOC+XML+V0//EN.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000579/13
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: EU funding for health and sex education programmes for people with disabilities such as spina bifida hydrocephalus

Could the Commission indicate what, if any, EU funding programmes would be of interest to support training and education programmes on subjects such as health and sex education for people with physical disabilities such as spina bifida hydrocephalus?

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

The Commission supports civil society organisations representing persons with disabilities under the EU's employment and social solidarity programme Progress. Currently, the Commission has a three-year framework partnership agreement (2011-2013) with Spina Bifida, under which this organisation benefits from an annual grant covering a large part of its eligible operational expenses, subject to the approval of its yearly work plan.

Although there is no specific programme for spina bifida, the Lifelong Learning and the Youth in Action funding programmes provide opportunities for support to organisations, associations, institutions and individuals to run or participate in thousands of transnational cooperation and networking projects that enable citizens at all stages of their lives -including many with disabilities- to pursue learning and mobility across Europe. This support will continue through the Erasmus for All programme after 2013.

Regarding funding for health, the 2013 work plan for the EU health programme does not foresee any specific funding priority for health and sex education for people with physical disabilities such as spina bifida or hydrocephalus.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-000771/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(25 janvier 2013)

Objet: Temps de vol des pilotes de ligne et rapport de l'EASA

Les pilotes d'avions et le personnel des cabines manifestaient il y a peu dans tous les pays de l'Union européenne. Ils protestaient contre la hausse des temps de vol et demandaient aux gouvernants européens de faire passer la sécurité des passagers avant les intérêts des compagnies aériennes.

1. Piloter un avion en état de fatigue revient à voler en état d'ivresse. Pourtant, la nouvelle règlementation prévoit une limite de 12 h 30 de vol la nuit. Cependant, d'après de nombreux médecins, il ne faudrait pas excéder dix heures de vol en nocturne car le risque d'accident deviendrait exponentiel. Comment la Commission se positionne-t-elle sur cette thématique?

2. Il faut, certes, saluer la volonté européenne d'uniformiser les règles liées aux pratiques de vols qui diffèrent d'un pays à un autre. Cependant, comment se fait-il que l'Agence européenne de la sécurité aérienne (EASA), dans son rapport présenté en octobre dernier et faisant office de version finale de la nouvelle règlementation sur les temps de vols, ne tienne pas compte des études scientifiques mettant en évidence les dangers de la fatigue des pilotes?

Réponse commune donnée par M. Kallas au nom de la Commission
(13 mars 2013)

La Commission est très attachée à la sécurité, qu'elle juge essentielle, et n'a pas l'intention de mettre en place un système susceptible d'aller à l'encontre de ce principe.

Elle étudie actuellement en détail la proposition de l'AESA et n'a pas encore pris de décision sur aucun aspect spécifique de cette proposition.

La Commission invite l'Honorable Parlementaire à se référer à ses réponses aux questions écrites E-011669/2012, P-011515/2012, E-009003/2012 et E-011134/2012 ([1]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000580/13
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Air crew fatigue rules

Further to the publication by the European Aviation Safety Agency on 1 October 2012 of its 'Opinion 04/2012' on EU-wide Flight Time Limitations, what are the Commission's plans as regards proposals to revise Subpart Q of Annex III to Council Regulation (EEC) No 3922/91?

How will the Commission ensure that any proposal it issues will not lead to pilot and air cabin crew fatigue, thereby undermining safety?

Question for written answer E-000771/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(25 January 2013)

Subject: Airline pilots' flight times and the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) report

Airline pilots and cabin crew recently demonstrated in every Member State of the European Union. They were protesting against increased flight times and calling on Europe's governments to put passenger safety before the interests of airlines.

1. Flying an aircraft while tired is tantamount to flying while intoxicated. Despite this, the limit on night flight times will be 12.5 hours under the new rules. Many doctors, however, maintain that flight times should not exceed 10 hours at night, as the risk of accidents increases exponentially. What is the Commission's position on this matter?

2. Europe should certainly be applauded for seeking to harmonise the rules on flying practices, which differ from one country to another. Why, though, in its report presented in October 2012, which serves as the final version of the new rules on flight times, does the EASA fail to take account of scientific studies demonstrating the dangers of pilot fatigue?

Joint answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(13 March 2013)

The Commission is committed to safety, which is paramount, and does not intend to put in place any system which might go against this principle.

The Commission is currently assessing in detail the EASA proposal and has not yet taken a decision on any specific aspect of this proposal.

The Commission further refers the Honourable Member to its answers to written questions E-011669/2012, P-011515/2012, E-009003/2012 and E-011134/2012 ([1]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000581/13
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Ratification of the ILO Convention on Domestic Workers

1. Has the Commission has committed itself to coming forward with a proposal for a Council decision authorising Member States to ratify the International Labour Organisation's Convention No 189 on Domestic Workers?

2. What areas of this Convention come under the competencies of the EU?

3. What were the principal conclusions and recommendations of the project, funded by the EU since 2010, which focused on the consequences of the economic and financial crisis for precarious domestic, migrant and young workers in twelve Member States and on those workers' efforts to improve their rights?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(20 March 2013)

1. The Commission intends to propose shortly a Council decision authorising Member States to ratify, in the interest of the European Union, the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (N°189) of the International Labour Organisation. Member States would thereby be authorised to ratify this Convention for the parts falling under Union competence.

2. Union competence is involved in provisions of the Convention aimed at protecting migrant domestic workers, which potentially affect the freedom of movement for workers, as well as in rules covered to a large extent by Union *acquis* in the areas of social policy, anti-discrimination, judicial cooperation in criminal matters and asylum.

3. The Commission refers to its answer to Written Question E-006109/2012 for its general policy regarding working conditions of domestic workers.

A study on precarious work and social rights, covering twelve Member States, was carried out for the Commission in 2012, in the framework of the Pilot project to encourage conversion of precarious work into work with rights.

The study found that the growth of non-standard forms of employment and the current economic crisis contribute to increasing the risk of precariousness for a significant number of workers who are more likely to be excluded from the benefit of certain social rights. It further concluded that precariousness arises from a combination of factors that are specific to the employment relationship, the category of work and the individual's own circumstances. Its recommendations aim at extending the social rights, in particular the employment protection and welfare benefits, of different categories of workers, notably women and young workers. The report of the study is available online ([1]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=7925&langId=en

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000582/13
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Study on the deployment of electric vehicles in Ireland

What are the aims of the study being carried out to assess the fast-charging infrastructure for enabling the deployment of electric vehicles in Ireland and Northern Ireland (2011-EU092145-S), which, the Commission announced on 10 September 2012,would receive approximately EUR 2.1 million in funding under the TEN-T 2011 Annual Call? When is it expected that this study will be completed?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(5 March 2013)

The project has been selected under the TEN-T Annual Call 2011 under the priority 'Promote infrastructure development contributing to mitigation and adaptation to climate change and reducing the impact of transport on the environment'. This priority opened the TEN-T funding for innovation on transport infrastructure for the second time (first in 2010).

Project 2011-EU-92145-S aims to assess fast charging infrastructure and technology requirements for electric vehicles (EV) in Ireland and Northern Ireland. As a result, the project will provide a roadmap, which could also be used by other EU Member States, to follow when making decisions on the nationwide rollout of EV infrastructure. The project will also provide an understanding of customer attitude to fast charging and will deliver both an assessment and a validation of the technology requirements for a national fast charging infrastructure.

The project will also specifically test and validate the necessary supporting Information Technology (IT) systems used to monitor remotely and manage the fast charging points and to facilitate payment and energy settlement. Finally, the project will act as a trial of cross-border roaming and payment capability with fast charging points being deployed on both sides of the border.

It is planned that the project will be completed in September 2014.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000583/13
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Supporting women's employment in Afghanistan

I have been contacted by an enterprise employing over 200 women in Afghanistan which is in danger of closing. Could the Commission outline what action the EU is taking to support such women's employment in Afghanistan and indicate which, if any, EU funding programmes currently operating in Afghanistan might be of interest to this enterprise?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(15 March 2013)

The Commission refers the Honourable Member to its answer to previous written question P-008166/2012 ([1]) which deals with a similar issue.

The financial regulation of the EU excludes the possibility for EU to fund, lend or support in any other direct way private business enterprises. However, through the thematic budget lines — 'European instrument for democracy and human rights' (EIDHR) and 'Non-state actors and local authorities in development' (NSA-LA), the EU supports activities implemented through civil society organisations, which may include legal assistance to women whose working rights are violated. The EU Delegation, upon request, may refer women in need to the relevant projects.

Safeguarding the rights of women is a priority for the EU in its engagement with Afghanistan. Through its policy dialogue and aid cooperation strategies with Afghanistan, the EU aims to improve access to justice and to ensure that the Constitution and other fundamental laws are enforced. Special EU attention to women aims at ensuring that women can fully enjoy their economic, social, civil, political and cultural rights.

The EU's core areas of cooperation with Afghanistan include capacity building and reform of the public administration and justice sectors. This cooperation is expected to contribute to improving the gender balance in the country and to creating a better investment climate, which, in turn, should stimulate the development of the private sector and more jobs, including for women.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000584/13
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Au pairs

1. In October 2012 a report by the Migrants Rights Centre Ireland, 'Part of the Family — Experiences of au pairs in Ireland' ([1]), found that 75 % of au pairs surveyed are doing in excess of the 30-hour maximum working week recommended by the European Committee of Au Pairs (ECAPS) and the Pan-European Agreement, that more than one third are on duty between 40 and 60 hours weekly, with a further number working in excess of 60 hours, and that the average weekly 'pocket money' is EUR 110. Will the Commission give consideration to this report and its recommendations?

2. Further to its answer of 26 July 2012 to my Written Question E-005337/2012 on au pairs, can the Commission provide information on the Member States' response to its Recommendation 85/64/EEC of 20 December 1984 urging them to ratify the European Agreement on Au Pair Placement sponsored by the Council of Europe? Will the Commission consider further initiatives, including legislative initiatives, to encourage Member States to ratify this agreement in order to better protect au pairs?

3. What is the current situation with regard to the Commission's plans to present modifications of Directives 2004/114/EC 2004 on the conditions of admission of third-country nationals for the purposes of studies, pupil exchange, unremunerated training or voluntary service and Directive 2004/71/EC on a specific procedure for admitting third-country nationals for the purposes of scientific research, particularly with regard to the personal scope of the proposal and the possibility of including au pairs?

4. What is the current situation regarding the study of third-country national au pairs mentioned in the 26 July answer, and what action is the Commission now considering taking on foot of this study?

5. Will the Commission consider including au pairs among the specific vulnerable groups due to be the target of EU-wide awareness-raising activities in 2014 on the issue of trafficking in human beings, as announced in the EU strategy towards the eradication of trafficking in human beings launched on 19 June 2012?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(15 March 2013)

1. The Commission thanks the Honourable Member for drawing its attention to the report of October 2012 dealing with the situation of au pairs in Ireland. Due consideration is given to it.

2. Four Member States ([2]) have ratified the European Agreement on au pair placement sponsored by the Council of Europe. At this stage the Commission does not envisage a specific legislative initiative to encourage Member States to ratify this agreement.

Following the implementation reports presented by the Commission in 2011 on Directives 2004/114/EC and 2005/71/EC ([3]) on third-country national students and researchers respectively, a number of weaknesses were identified which called for substantial modifications of these directives. Based on a number of studies which provided evidence to an impact assessment, the Commission is considering widening the personal scope of the existing Directives in its new proposal for a recast Directive, in order to cater for the needs of specific vulnerable groups, such as au-pairs. The Commission intends to adopt its formal proposal in a few weeks' time. The study on au pairs to which the Honourable Member refers was one the sources that was used in preparing the new proposal.

The Commission is considering which specific groups, such as au-pairs, should be targeted by EU awareness raising activities in 2014 under the EU Strategy towards the eradication of trafficking in human beings 2012-2016.

([1]) 'Part of the Family — Experiences of au pairs in Ireland', MRCI, October 2012 http://www.mrci.ie/resources/publications/leaflets-reports/part-of-the-family-experiences-of-au-pairs-in-ireland/

([2]) Denmark, France, Italy and Spain.

([3]) Council Directive 2004/114/EC of 13 December 2004 on the conditions of admission of third-country nationals for the purposes of studies, pupil exchange, unremunerated training or voluntary service, OJ L 375 of 23.12.2004.and Council Directive 2005/71/EC of 12 October 2005 on a specific procedure for admitting third-country nationals for the purposes of scientific research, OJ L 289, 3.11.2005.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000585/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(22 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: Europeana — conteúdos em línguas oficiais

Em resposta à minha pergunta escrita E-010950/2012, a senhora Comissária Neelie Kroes declarou, em relação à Europeana, que «o número de obras por língua e a respetiva percentagem do total variam, dado que o número de obras disponíveis na Europeana vai aumentando. A Europeana reflete, pois, a diversidade linguística da Europa enquanto parte integrante da identidade cultural europeia, respeitando, assim, o compromisso da União em matéria de multilinguismo.»

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

1. A amplitude desta variação é tal que a impeça de indicar, *grosso modo*, um número e a percentagem de conteúdos por língua oficial?

2. Tendo por referência o mês de dezembro de 2012, poderia transmitir a informação pretendida?

Resposta dada por Neelie Kroes em nome da Comissão
(8 de março de 2013)

Como se indicava na resposta à pergunta escrita E-010950/2012, a Europeana disponibiliza o número atualizado de obras por língua. Estes dados podem ser obtidos visitando o portal da Europeana (www.europeana.eu) e clicando na ligação «Por língua» que surge após uma pesquisa com os três carateres «*:*» na caixa de pesquisa.

Para informação do Senhor Deputado, apresenta-se a seguir a lista atualizada do número de obras por língua, sendo atualmente 25 897 000 o número total de obras disponibilizadas pela Europeana:

Alemão	4 586 000	Eslovaco	85 000
Francês	2 609 000	Lituano	78 000
Neerlandês	2 368 000	Estónio	75 000
Sueco	2 227 000	Checo	74 000
Espanhol	2 112 000	Russo	68 000
Inglês	1 793 000	Búlgaro	54 000
Norueguês	1 557 000	Romeno	52 000
Polaco	1 457 000	Turco	47 000
Italiano	1 412 000	Catalão	37 000
Finlandês	698 000	Irlandês	29 000
Dinamarquês	496 000	Sérvio	18 000
Húngaro	325 000	Letão	12 000
Esloveno	254 000	Iídiche	6 000
Grego	177 000	Islandês	570
Português	106 000		

Além destas, estão catalogadas como multilingues 3 070 000 obras.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000585/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Europeana — content in official languages

In answer to my Written Question No E-010950/2012, Commissioner Kroes, in relation to Europeana, said that 'The number of items by language and their percentage of total vary as Europeana's content base grows. Europeana thus reflects Europe's linguistic diversity as part and parcel of European cultural identity and thus complying with the Union's commitment to multilingualism.'

1. Is the content changing at such a rate that the Commission is unable to provide a rough indication of the amount and percentage of content in each official language?

2. Could it provide this information, with reference to December 2012?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(8 March 2013)

As mentioned in answer to Written Question E-010950/2012, an up to date number of items by language is available through Europeana. It can be consulted by accessing the Europeana portal www.europeana.eu and clicking on the 'by language' tab which appears after conducting a search with the three characters *:* in the search box.

For your convenience, please find enclosed the up to date list for the total number of 25 897 000 items now available through Europeana:

German	4 586 000	Slovakian	85 000
French	2 609 000	Lithuanian	78 000
Dutch	2 368 000	Estonian	75 000
Swedish	2 227 000	Czech	74 000
Spanish	2 112 000	Russian	68 000
English	1 793 000	Bulgarian	54 000
Norwegian	1 557 000	Romanian	52 000
Polish	1 457 000	Turkish	47 000
Italian	1 412 000	Catalonian	37 000
Finnish	698 000	Irish	29 000
Danish	496 000	Serbian	18 000
Hungarian	325 000	Latvian	12 000
Slovenian	254 000	Yiddish	6 000
Greek	177 000	Icelandic	570
Portuguese	106 000		

In addition, 3 070 000 items are catalogued as Multilanguage.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000586/13
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(22 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: VP/HR — Guiné-Bissau: Ramos-Horta — Uniogbis

O ex-Presidente da República de Timor-Leste e Prémio Nobel da Paz José Ramos-Horta foi recentemente nomeado pelo Secretário-Geral das Nações Unidas seu Representante Especial e Chefe do Gabinete Integrado das Nações Unidas para a Consolidação da Paz na Guiné-Bissau (Uniogbis). Esta nomeação visa dar novo alento à busca de uma solução pacífica, democrática e duradoura que ponha termo à desestabilização político-militar naquele país.

Assim, pergunto à Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante:

1. Contactou o Representante Especial a propósito da sua nova missão?

2. Que expectativas tem em relação à ação futura do Uniogbis na Guiné-Bissau sob a sua liderança?

3. Estará disponível para manter e, se possível, intensificar, os esforços de coordenação da ação da União Europeia naquele país com o Uniogbis?

4. Estabeleceu ou pretende estabelecer canais diretos de comunicação com o Uniogbis que agilizem o contacto e a ação conjunta?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(15 de março de 2013)

Teve recentemente lugar uma reunião em Nova Iorque, entre o Representante Especial do Secretário-Geral das Nações Unidas Ramos-Horta e o Chefe da Delegação da UE junto da ONU que transmitiu as felicitações da AR/VP e uma mensagem abordando três prioridades: i) a necessidade de fomentar um processo conducente a eleições pacíficas e inclusivas, a realizar logo que tal seja viável, ii) a importância de pôr fim à cultura de impunidade e iii) a necessidade de a Cedeao começar a aplicar reformas abrangentes do setor da segurança. O Representante Especial do Secretário-Geral das Nações Unidas está plenamente de acordo com estes objetivos.

A AR/VP reconhece a importância da coordenação com as Nações Unidas e a missão do Uniogbis em Bissau, nomeadamente através da recente missão de avaliação conjunta UA/UE/ONU/CPLP/Cedeao e de contactos através das Delegações da UE na Guiné-Bissau e em Nova Iorque.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000586/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Guinea-Bissau: Ramos-Horta — UNIOGBIS

José Ramos-Horta, the former President of the Democratic Republic of East Timor and a Nobel Peace Prize winner, was recently appointed the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative and Head of the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS). This appointment is intended to give new impetus to the search for a peaceful, democratic and lasting solution that puts an end to the politico-military instability in the country.

1. Has the Vice-President/High-Representative contacted the Special Representative with regard to his new assignment?

2. What are her expectations regarding the future action of UNIOGBIS in Guinea-Bissau under his leadership?

3. Is she willing to maintain and, if possible, intensify efforts to coordinate the EU's action in Guinea-Bissau with that of UNIOGBIS?

4. Has she established or will she establish direct channels of communication with UNIOGBIS to facilitate contact and joint action?

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

A meeting took place recently in New York between the UNSG SR Ramos-Horta and the EU Head of Delegation to the UN who transmitted the HR/VP's congratulations and a message focusing on three priorities: i) the need to encourage a process conducive to inclusive and peaceful elections to be held as soon as feasible, ii) the importance of putting an end to the culture of impunity and iii) the need for Ecowas to begin to implement comprehensive security sector reform. The UNSG SR fully shares these objectives.

The HR/VP recognises the importance of coordination with the UN and the UNIOGBIS mission in Bissau, notably via the recent AU/EU/UN/CPLP/Ecowas joint assessment mission and contacts through the EU Delegations in Guinea-Bissau and New York.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000587/13
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(22 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: VP/HR — Guiné-Bissau: futuro Congresso do PAIGC — segurança dos congressistas

Encontra-se agendado para maio de 2013 o Oitavo Congresso do PAIGC, partido no poder na Guiné-Bissau até ao golpe militar de 12 de abril de 2012, que terá lugar na cidade de Cacheu.

Face à interrupção da ordem constitucional em pleno processo eleitoral e ao clima de medo que se vive naquele país africano desde então, são legítimos os receios pela segurança dos futuros participantes naquela reunião política e pela liberdade das decisões que dela venham a resultar.

Assim, pergunto à Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante:

1. Contactou os detentores do poder político-militar na Guiné-Bissau a este propósito?

2. Em caso negativo, prevê fazê-lo?

3. Que garantias obteve da parte daqueles quanto à segurança dos intervenientes e à liberdade das decisões que aí forem tomadas?

4. A União Europeia tenciona fazer-se representar no congresso?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(19 de março de 2013)

A UE não reconhece as autoridades de transição da Guiné-Bissau resultantes do golpe de Estado de abril de 2012 e evita contactos formais com as mesmas e com as forças armadas. No entanto, as autoridades de transição e as forças armadas estão plenamente conscientes de que a UE e o resto da comunidade internacional estão a acompanhar com especial atenção a situação na Guiné-Bissau, com particular atenção para o respeito dos Direitos do Homem e das liberdades políticas de base, e de que a retoma da cooperação da UE depende de um regresso à ordem constitucional, bem como dos progressos efetuados no que diz respeito ao planeamento de eleições inclusivas, a realizar o mais rapidamente possível.

A UE não se faz representar em congressos em situações em que tal poderia ser considerado uma tomada de partido. No entanto, através da missão de avaliação conjunta UA/UE/ONU/CEDEAO/CPLP de dezembro, bem como de contactos informais a nível local, a UE estabeleceu um bom grau de comunicação com os interlocutores relevantes.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000587/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Guinea-Bissau: forthcoming PAIGC congress — safety of attendees

The eighth congress of the PAIGC, Guinea-Bissau's governing party until the military coup of 12 April 2012, is due to take place in May 2013 in the city of Cacheu.

With the interruption of constitutional order right in the middle of the electoral process, and the climate of fear that has reigned in Guinea-Bissau since then, there are legitimate concerns for the safety of participants and the decision-making freedom of the congress.

In view of the above, could the Vice-President/High Representative please answer the following:

1. Has she contacted the holders of political/military power in Guinea-Bissau regarding this matter?

2. If not, does she intend to do so?

3. What guarantees has she obtained from them concerning the safety of those attending the congress and their decision-making freedom?

4. Does the European Union plan to send a representative to the congress?

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

As a result of the coup d'état of April 2012 the EU does not recognise the transitional authorities in Guinea-Bissau and avoids formal contacts with them and the armed forces. Nevertheless, the transitional authorities and the armed forces are fully aware that the EU and the rest of the international community are following with special attention the situation in Guinea-Bissau, with a particular attention for the respect of Human Rights and basic political freedoms, and that the resumption of the EU cooperation depends on a return to constitutional order and on progress regarding the planning of inclusive elections to take place as soon as possible.

The EU does not attend party congresses in situations where doing so could be seen as taking sides. Through the AU/EU/UN/CPLP/Ecowas joint assessment mission in December, as well as informal contacts locally, the EU however established good communication with the relevant interlocutors.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000588/13
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(22 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: VP/HR — Guiné-Bissau: marginalização de partidos políticos

Em resposta à minha pergunta escrita E-009678/2012, a Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante deu nota de que a sociedade civil guineense estaria «muito preocupada com as violações dos direitos humanos e com a marginalização de certos partidos políticos, nomeadamente o partido maioritário no Parlamento, e da sociedade civil por parte das autoridades de transição.»

Assim, pergunto à Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante:

1. Subscreve as preocupações da sociedade civil guineense?

2. De que modo se tem dado essa marginalização e quais as suas principais consequências?

3. Que medidas tomou ou prevê tomar para evitar que a mesma se verifique de modo irreversível?

4. Contactou os detentores do poder político-militar na Guiné-Bissau a este propósito? Que respostas e garantias obteve da sua parte?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(22 de março de 2013)

Tal como foi corretamente referido pelo Senhor Deputado, a Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente (AR/VP) já manifestou a sua preocupação com a marginalização de certos partidos políticos e da sociedade civil na sequência do golpe de estado de 12 de abril de 2012.

A UE instou repetidas vezes todos os partidos políticos da Guiné-Bissau a prosseguir o diálogo, em prol de uma participação alargada e do consenso na presente transição politica.

A AR/VP congratula-se com os recentes progressos no seio da Assembleia Nacional, que poderão conduzir à participação ativa de todos os principais partidos políticos no processo de resolução da crise.

A UE não reconhece as autoridades de transição e incentiva a realização de eleições democráticas e alargadas o mais cedo possível. É essencial que se constitua um governo legítimo e credível logo que possível, de modo que este proceda a uma reforma, fundamental e urgente, do setor da segurança, e ponha em prática programas contra a impunidade e o tráfico de droga, que a UE poderá apoiar. A UE também tem participado nos esforços conjuntos com a União Africana (UA), as Nações Unidas (ONU), a Comunidade de Países de Língua Portuguesa (CPLP) e a Comunidade Económica dos Estados da África Ocidental (Cedeao) para encontrarem uma solução e se coordenarem na assistência prestada. As autoridades de transição em Bissau estão perfeitamente informadas de tudo isto.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000588/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Guinea-Bissau: marginalisation of political parties

In answer to my Written Question No E-009678/2012, the Vice-President/High Representative said that civil society in Guinea-Bissau was 'very concerned about human rights abuses and by the marginalisation of certain political parties, namely the majority party in Parliament, and of Civil Society by the transitional authorities'.

1. Does the Vice-President/High Representative share the concerns of civil society in Guinea Bissau?

2. How has this marginalisation occurred and what are the main consequences of it?

3. What measures has she taken or will she take to prevent this situation from becoming permanent?

4. Has she contacted those holding political and military power in Guinea-Bissau in this regard? What answers and assurances did she obtain from them?

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

As correctly indicated by the Honorable Member of the EP, the HR/VP already expressed concern with the exclusion of certain political parties and civil society as a result of the 12.4.2012 coup.

The EU repeatedly urged all parties involved in the political scene in Guinea-Bissau to pursue internal dialogue in order to achieve inclusive participation and consensus in the current political transition.

The HR/VP is pleased to note the recent progress within the National Assembly which could lead to the active participation of all main political parties to the crisis resolution process.

The EU does not recognise the transitional authorities and encourages the holding of democratic and inclusive elections as early as feasible. It is essential that a legitimate and credible government be in place as soon as possible in order for it to pursue the fundamental and urgent reform of the security sector as well as credible programmes against impunity and illicit drugs trafficking, programs which the EU can support.The EU is also participating in efforts with the AU, UN, CPLP and Ecowas to find a way forward and coordinate their assistance in a collective effort. The transitional authorities in Bissau are fully informed thereof.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000589/13
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(22 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: VP/HR — Guiné-Bissau: alteração da atual chefia militar

Em resposta à minha pergunta escrita E-009678/2012, a Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante recordou a existência de uma «necessidade urgente de regressar à ordem constitucional e de acabar com o controlo do poder por parte das Forças Armadas» sentida pelo Governo no exílio e pela sociedade civil guineense. Este regresso apenas será possível através de «uma verdadeira e profunda reforma do setor da segurança, que só será possível com uma alteração completa da atual chefia militar.»

Assim, pergunto à Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante:

1. Subscreve as preocupações do Governo no exílio e da sociedade civil guineense quanto à necessidade de substituir as chefias militares que vêm lançando o país na instabilidade e na violência?

2. Contactou os detentores do poder político-militar na Guiné-Bissau a este propósito? Que respostas e garantias obteve da sua parte? Que confiança lhe merecem as mesmas?

3. Registou algum desenvolvimento concreto rumo à pacificação do país e ao regresso à ordem constitucional que seja digno de nota?

4. Acha possível, a breve trecho, o abandono do poder por parte das forças armadas e a reformulação integral da sua estrutura? Estaria disponível para colaborar ativamente nesta reformulação?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(19 de março de 2013)

A Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente, sublinhou, de facto, a necessidade urgente de se regressar à ordem constitucional na Guiné-Bissau e de se por termo ao controlo das forças armadas sobre os poderes civis.

A substituição da hierarquia militar faz parte da tão necessária reforma do setor da segurança e é também uma das condições indicadas na Decisão do Conselho 2011/492 relativa ao estabelecimento de medidas adequadas para o pleno restabelecimento da cooperação da UE com a Guiné-Bissau, na sequência do artigo 96.° do Acordo de Cotonu.

As condições para que essa substituição poderão ocorrer apenas quando um verdadeiro processo de reforma e de transformação estiver em curso, na sequência de eleições democráticas, resultantes de um novo contexto político e da dinâmica criada por um governo legítimo, credível e inclusivo.

A UE está a trabalhar na consecução deste objetivo e pretende apoiar reformas específicas no âmbito dos seus programas de assistência.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000589/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Guinea-Bissau: changing the current military leadership

In answer to my Written Question No E-009678/2012, the Vice-President/High Representative stressed 'the urgent need to return to a constitutional order and to remove the grip of the armed forces on the civilian powers' felt by the government-in-exile and the civil society of Guinea-Bissau. This return will only be possible through 'a genuine and deep reform of the security sector which will only be possible with a complete change of the current military leadership'.

1. Does the Vice-President/High Representative share the concerns of the government-in-exile and the civil society of Guinea-Bissau regarding the need to replace the military leadership that has plunged the country into instability and violence?

2. Has she contacted those holding political and military power in Guinea-Bissau in this regard? What answers and assurances did she obtain from them? How reliable are these claims?

3. Have there been any real significant developments towards peace and a return to the constitutional order in the country?

4. Does she believe that the armed forces may relinquish power and that a full structural reform may occur in the near future? Would she be willing to take an active role in this structural reform process?

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

On several occasions the HR/VP indeed stressed the urgent need to return to a constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau and to remove the grip of the armed forces on the civilian powers.

The renewal of the military hierachy is part of the much needed Security Sector Reform and is also one of the conditions indicated in Council Decision 2011/492/EU establishing appropriate measures for the resumption of full EU cooperation with Guinea-Bissau, in the framework of Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement.

The conditions for this renewal to take place may materialize only when a genuine process of reform and transformation is underway, after democratic elections, as a result of a new political climate and under the impulsion of a legitimate, credible and inclusive government.

The EU is working towards this goal and is seeking to support specific reforms in the framework of its relevant assistance programmes.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000590/13
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(22 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: VP/HR — Crise no Mali e na Argélia — reação europeia

A crise militar no Mali e a ação terrorista na Argélia perpetrada por grupos islamitas com ligações à Al-Qaeda alegando tratar-se de uma represália face à ação francesa contra os insurrectos malianos — apesar de esta versão não ser unanimemente aceite como verdadeira — dão conta da dimensão, da capacidade de organização destas organizações e do seu modo de operar, tornando-se cada vez mais evidente a necessidade de vigilância europeia face às suas atividades e, sempre que tal se mostre necessário, de serem desenvolvidas ações militares que ponham termo às suas iniciativas de cariz bélico ou disruptor da paz social e da segurança das populações nos países em que operem.

Assim, pergunto à Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante:

1. Como caracteriza a atual crise no Mali?

2. De que modo avalia a intervenção francesa naquele país africano? Advoga que outros Estados-Membros possam intervir no conflito caso se mostre necessário para reforçar a presença militar no país e assim procurar assegurar a segurança das suas populações?

3. Que interpretação faz do sucedido na Argélia?

4. Face à disseminação deste tipo de organizações terroristas, à sua capacidade de projeção de forças e a capacidade de atingir alvos civis, nomeadamente europeus, julga que os países da União já articulam informações militares e policiais de modo suficientemente eficaz? Em caso negativo, que medidas advoga para melhorar a sua eficácia?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(16 de abril de 2013)

A Alta Representante e Vice-Presidente, em conformidade com as posições reafirmadas por diversas vezes pelo Conselho Negócios Estrangeiros, nomeadamente os Conselhos de 17 de janeiro e de 18 de fevereiro de 2013:

— Considera que a crise do Mali constitui um desafio essencial para a Europa e defende uma mobilização reforçada da UE para a estabilidade e a segurança no país num quadro internacional, em sintonia com o Grupo internacional de Apoio e Acompanhamento sobre a situação no Mali, o qual recebeu em 5 de fevereiro em Bruxelas. Neste contexto, e em conformidade com a Estratégia da União Europeia para a Segurança e o Desenvolvimento, foi lançada a missão militar EUTM ([1]), tendo igualmente sido retomada gradualmente a cooperação com o Mali em matéria de desenvolvimento no âmbito de um diálogo político. Por outro lado, para além do reforço da ajuda humanitária no Mali e nos países vizinhos, a UE apoia o destacamento de observadores dos direitos humanos pela UA ([2]), a Cedeao ([3]) e a ONU e considera que os autores das violações deverão ser responsabilizados pelos seus atos.

— Deu o seu apoio à operação francesa Serval e à MISMA ([4]) (sob liderança africana) e reafirmou o seu empenho na luta contra a ameaça terrorista.

— Condenou o ataque terrorista ocorrido em In Amenas, na Argélia. De salientar que, no âmbito da sua Estratégia do Sael, a UE declarou-se pronta a contribuir para as iniciativas regionais destinadas a ter em conta os desafios de segurança específicos do espaço do Sara-Sahel e que envolvem a Argélia, como a UA ou a sede operacional conjunta de Tamanghasset (quadro dos «países da região» com o Mali, a Mauritânia e o Níger).

— Apoia os esforços dos Estados-Membros e dos serviços da União Europeia com vista ao reforço da coordenação em matéria antiterrorista.

([1]) Missão militar de formação do exército do Mali.
([2]) União Africana.
([3]) Comunidade Económica dos Estados da África Ocidental.
([4]) Missão internacional de apoio ao Mali.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000590/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Crisis in Mali and Algeria: European reaction

The military crisis in Mali and the terrorist acts in Algeria carried out by Islamist groups with links to al-Qaeda, who claim that they were a reprisal against the French action against Malian insurgents — although this version is not universally accepted as true — highlight the size and organisational capacity of these organisations and the way in which they operate. The need for Europe to be vigilant is becoming increasingly evident in light of its activities and, where appropriate, to resort to military action to put an end to these groups' armed initiatives or those disrupting the social peace and security of civilians in the countries where they operate.

1. How does the Vice-President/High Representative view the current crisis in Mali?

2. What is her assessment of France's intervention in the African country? Does she support the fact that other Member States may intervene in the conflict should it prove necessary to strengthen the military presence in Mali in an attempt to ensure the safety its people?

3. How does she view the events in Algeria?

4. Given the expansion of these types of terrorist organisations, their ability to launch attacks and their ability to hit civilian targets, particularly European targets, does she believe that the EU countries have gathered military and police intelligence effectively enough? If not, what measures does she believe would improve this effectiveness?

(Version française)

Réponse donnée par la Haute représentante/Vice-présidente Ashton au nom de la Commission
(16 avril 2013)

La Haute représentante/Vice-présidente, en ligne avec les positions régulièrement réaffirmées par le Conseil Affaires étrangères, notamment celui du 17 janvier et du 18 février 2013:

— estime que la crise malienne est un enjeu essentiel pour l'Europe et œuvre à une mobilisation renforcée de l'UE pour la stabilité et la sécurité au Mali dans un cadre international, ceci en phase avec le Groupe international de Soutien et de Suivi sur la situation au Mali qu'elle a accueilli le 5 février à Bruxelles. Dans ce cadre, en ligne avec la Stratégie de l'UE pour la sécurité et le développement, a été lancée la mission militaire EUTM ([1]), et engagée la reprise graduelle de la coopération de développement avec la Mali dans le cadre d'un dialogue politique. Par ailleurs, outre une aide humanitaire renforcée au Mali et dans les pays limitrophes, l'UE appuie le déploiement d'observateurs des Droits de l'homme par l'UA ([2]), la Cedeao ([3]) et l'ONU et indique que les auteurs des violations devront être tenus responsables de leurs actes.

— a apporté son soutien à l'opération française Serval et à la MISMA ([4]) (conduite africaine) et a réaffirmé son engagement contre la menace terroriste

— a condamné l'attaque terroriste sur In Amenas en Algérie. Il est à noter que, dans le cadre de sa Stratégie Sahel, l'UE s'est déclarée prête à contribuer aux initiatives régionales destinées à prendre en compte les défis sécuritaires spécifiques de l'espace saharo-sahélien et impliquant l'Algérie, telles l'UA ou le Centre d'état-major opérationnel conjoint de Tamanghasset (cadre des «Pays du Champ» avec Mali, Mauritanie et Niger).

— soutient les efforts des Etats-membres et des services de l'Union européenne visant au renforcement de la coordination en matière anti-terroriste.

([1]) La mission militaire de formation de l'armée malienne.
([2]) Union africaine.
([3]) Communaute Économique des États de l'Afrique de l'Ouest.
([4]) Mission internationale de soutien au Mali.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000591/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(22 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: Portugal — temporal — prejuízos

Portugal continental foi afetado durante o dia 19 de janeiro de 2013 por um forte temporal e ventos na ordem dos 140 km/hora que provocaram avultados prejuízos materiais — ainda por apurar na sua totalidade — e causaram a morte a uma pessoa, ferimentos de gravidade díspar a diversas outras e dezenas de desalojados.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Tem conhecimento desta situação? De que informações dispõe a este respeito?

2. Se as autoridades portuguesas considerarem a apresentação de um pedido de ajuda, ao abrigo dos instrumentos disponíveis, está disponível para lhe prestar aconselhamento e apoio com brevidade?

Resposta dada por Johannes Hahn em nome da Comissão
(20 de março de 2013)

1. A Comissão está a par da tempestade que afetou Portugal. A autoridade nacional portuguesa de proteção civil nada comunicou em relação a esta ocorrência e não foi recebido nenhum pedido de assistência.

2. As autoridades portuguesas podem solicitar assistência financeira através do Fundo de Solidariedade da UE no prazo de 10 semanas a contar da ocorrência da catástrofe caso considerem que estão reunidas as condições para a mobilização do Fundo. O limiar normal para ativar o Fundo de Solidariedade aplicável a Portugal em 2013 é equivalente a danos diretos superiores a 987 milhões de euros (ou seja, 0,6 % do RNB). Para catástrofes menores o Fundo só pode ser ativado muito excecionalmente, caso estejam reunidas condições especiais. As autoridades portuguesas estão conscientes destas condições e dos procedimentos pertinentes. Se necessário, a Comissão está disposta a proporcionar mais orientações e aconselhamento.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000591/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Portugal — storm damage

On 19 January 2013 mainland Portugal was hit by a powerful storm and winds of around 140 km/hour, causing huge material damage — the full extent of which remains to be seen — killing one person, causing several others to sustain varying degrees of injuries and leaving dozens homeless.

1. Is the Commission aware of this situation? What information does it have on it?

2. Should the Portuguese authorities consider submitting an aid application, under the available instruments, is it prepared to provide timely advice and support?

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

1. The Commission is aware of the storm that affected Portugal. No contact was made by the Portuguese national civil protection authority regarding this event and no request for assistance was received.

2. The Portuguese authorities may apply for financial assistance from the EU Solidarity Fund within 10 weeks of the occurrence of the disaster, if they consider that the conditions for mobilising the Fund are met. The normal threshold for activating the Solidarity Fund applicable to Portugal in 2013 is direct damage exceeding EUR 987 million (i.e. 0.6% of GNI). For smaller disasters the Fund could only be activated very exceptionally if special conditions are met. The Portuguese authorities are aware of these conditions and the relevant procedures. If required the Commission stands ready to give further guidance and advice.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000592/13
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(22 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: VP/HR — Barack Obama — segundo mandato

O Presidente Barack Obama tomou recentemente posse como Presidente dos Estados Unidos da América.

Assim, pergunto à Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante:

1. Como caracteriza o atual estado das relações UE-EUA?

2. O que espera deste novo mandato e da nova administração?

3. Quais são, do ponto de vista europeu, as questões que urgiria colocar na agenda do relacionamento transatlântico? Que acolhimento espera obter para estas pretensões?

4. Por que formas a União Europeia poderá contrabalançar a relativa periferia geoestratégica a que vem sendo votada, de modo a reforçar a sua parceria com os Estados Unidos?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(14 de março de 2013)

1. A cooperação desenvolvida nos últimos anos entre a UE e os Estados Unidos da América demonstrou que a amplitude e profundidade do seu relacionamento mútuo não têm paralelo. Os EUA continuam a ser o nosso parceiro estratégico mais importante a nível mundial. Ao longo dos últimos cinco anos, debatemos as principais questões internacionais «olhos nos olhos» e trabalhámos afincadamente para dar resposta aos desafios globais e regionais.

2. O novo acordo sobre o lançamento de negociações com vista a uma inovadora «Parceria Transatlântica de Comércio e Investimento» abre um novo capítulo nas relações mútuas. Esta parceria vai estimular o crescimento e o emprego de ambos os lados do Atlântico, sendo a conclusão das negociações a principal prioridade das relações entre ambos ao longo dos próximos dois anos.

3. e 4. A UE vai igualmente trabalhar com os EUA para promover, tanto a nível bilateral como multilateral, valores e interesses partilhados em matéria de direitos humanos, desenvolvimento, luta contra o terrorismo, segurança energética e alterações climáticas. Em matéria de política externa a UE vai procurar, nomeadamente, reavivar o empenho dos EUA no processo de paz no Médio Oriente, apoiar o recomeço das negociações com o Irão, cooperar com os EUA sobre o Sahel e do Corno de África, manter o estreito alinhamento entre a UE e os EUA sobre os Balcãs e coordenar as posições sobre a região da Ásia-Pacífico. Além disso, a decisão de abrir as negociações com vista a um acordo de comércio e investimento entre a UE e os EUA constitui uma importante reafirmação dos valores partilhados no que diz respeito à promoção da abertura dos mercados, à prosperidade mundial e ao Estado de direito.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000592/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Barack Obama: second term

President Barack Obama was recently sworn in as President of the United States of America.

1. How does the Vice-President/High Representative assess the current state of EU-US relations?

2. What does she expect from this new term and new administration?

3. From a European standpoint, what issues should take precedence on the transatlantic agenda? How does she expect these demands to be received?

4. How can the EU counteract the relatively isolated geostrategic position it is adopting, to strengthen its partnership with the United States?

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

1. EU-US cooperation in recent years has demonstrated that the breadth and depth of the relationship is unparalleled. The US remains the EU's most important global strategic partner. We see eye to eye on the key international issues and have worked well over the last five years to respond to global and regional challenges.

2. The new agreement to launch negotiations on a ground-breaking Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership opens an exciting new chapter in the relationship. It will boost growth and jobs on both sides of the Atlantic and completing the negotiations will be a major priority in the relationship over the next two years or so.

3-4. The EU will also work with US to advance shared values and interests both bilaterally and multilaterally on human rights, development, counter-terrorism, energy security and climate change. On foreign policy, the EU will — amongst other things — focus on re-engaging the US in the Middle East Peace Process; supporting resumption of negotiations with Iran; cooperating with the US on the Sahel and the Horn of Africa; maintaining close EU-US alignment on the Balkans; and coordinating our approaches to the Asia-Pacific region. In addition, the decision to launch negotiations on an EU-US trade and investment agreement represents an important re-affirmation of shared values with regard to promoting open markets, global prosperity and the rule of law.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000593/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(22 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: Açores — estabulação de bovinos

A Federação Agrícola dos Açores lançou recentemente um documento intitulado «Fruto da pastagem» no qual defende as potencialidades da carne dos Açores de indicação geográfica protegida (IGP). Para esta Federação, o modo de produção extensivo é a melhor via para propiciar rentabilidade à produção, dada a situação geográfica do arquipélago, as condições naturais para a produção de pastagens de qualidade, o bem-estar animal e o equilíbrio ambiental, e a qualidade organoléptica e composicional da carne vendida. Assim sendo, a qualidade da carne do gado bovino dos Açores e o equilíbrio ambiental na Região implicariam um modo de produção incompatível com a estabulação.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Que apreciação faz desta posição? Não considera que a reconversão de unidades de produção de um regime extensivo para um regime mais intensivo, com recurso à estabulação total ou permanente dos animais, colide com as orientações da Política Agrícola Comum (PAC), atendendo a que esta vem advogando a diminuição da intensificação, bem como a promoção da eficiência dos recursos e a transição para uma economia de baixo carbono, ou seja, sistemas de produção menos intensivos e menos poluentes?

2. Considerando a necessidade de acrescentar valor aos produtos açorianos, promovendo a sua diferenciação e segmentação no mercado, não considera que a carne açoriana (IGP) teria a ganhar em preservar as características que lhe conferem autenticidade e notoriedade e, consequentemente, que não fossem apoiados projetos para estabulação total ou permanente de gado bovino?

Resposta dada por Dacian Cioloş on em nome da Comissão
(6 de março de 2013)

A Comissão informa o Senhor Deputado de que a Comissão apoia projetos que contribuem para que o setor pecuário da UE seja mais competitivo, tendo simultaneamente em conta as exigências ambientais de novos projetos. Os sistemas de produção pecuária na UE são muito variados e têm diversos impactos. O nível das emissões de gases com efeito de estufa de sistemas de produção pecuária não está necessariamente ligado ao seu nível de intensificação. As melhorias de produtividade que permitam produzir a mesma quantidade de produto com um menor número de animais podem trazer também benefícios em termos de redução das emissões de metano.

Em conformidade com o artigo 7.° do Regulamento (UE) n.° 1151/2012 ([1]), uma indicação geográfica protegida (IGP) deve respeitar o seu caderno de especificações, como consagrado a nível da União Europeia. As características da «Carne dos Açores» (IGP), registada a nível da União por força do Regulamento (UE) n.° 617/2003 ([2]), estão fortemente ligadas, de acordo com as suas especificações, ao seu método de produção ancestral e ao sistema tradicional de alimentação, mais particularmente as pastagens ao ar livre. A carne dos Açores, por conseguinte, produzida sem respeitar estas características não poderia beneficiar da IGP.

No âmbito da política de desenvolvimento rural, o Regulamento (CE) n. ° 698/2005 do Conselho ([3]) prevê apoio da UE para promover métodos de produção sustentáveis, nomeadamente, a manutenção da produção animal extensiva (Medida 214 — Pagamentos no domínio ambiental). Esta medida está incluída no Programa de Desenvolvimento Rural dos Açores (Prorural), elevando-se a respetiva contribuição do Feader a 43 milhões de euros. Contudo, a gestão, incluindo a seleção, a adjudicação e o pagamento dos projetos, é da competência da autoridade de gestão do programa.

([1]) JO L 343 de 14.12.2012, pp. 1-29.
([2]) JO L 89 de 5.4.2003, pp. 3-4.
([3]) JO L 277 de 21.10.2005, pp. 1-40.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000593/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: The Azores — cattle lairage

The Azores Agricultural Federation recently released a document entitled 'Fruit of the pasture' advocating the potential of Azorean meat, which benefits from protected geographical indication (PGI). According to this Federation, the extensive production mode is the best way to render production more profitable, due to the archipelago's geographical location, natural conditions for the production of quality pastures, animal welfare and environmental balance, and the organoleptic and compositional quality of the meat sold. The quality of the meat from Azorean cattle and the environmental balance in the region would therefore imply a production mode that does not involve lairage.

1. What is the Commission's view on this situation? Does it not believe that converting production units from an extensive regime to a more intensive regime, involving the total or permanent lairage of animals, contravenes the guidelines of the common agricultural policy (CAP), given that the CAP continues to advocate less intensification, the promotion of resource efficiency and the transition to a low carbon economy, for example through less intensive and cleaner production systems?

2. Given the need to add value to Azorean products, promoting their market differentiation and segmentation, does the Commission not believe that Azorean meat (PGI) would benefit from preserving the characteristics that give it its authenticity and reputation? As such, does it not believe that projects involving the total or permanent lairage of cattle should not receive support?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(6 March 2013)

The Commission informs the Honourable Member that the Commission supports projects which help the EU's livestock sector being more competitive while taking into account the environmental requirements of new projects. Livestock systems in the EU are very varied and have multiple impacts. The level of greenhouse gas emissions of livestock systems is not necessarily linked to their level of intensification. Productivity improvements which allow producing the same amount of product with fewer animals can also bring benefits in terms of reduction of methane emissions.

In accordance with Article 7 of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 ([1]), a protected geographical indication (PGI) shall comply with its product specification, as enshrined at European Union level. The characteristics of 'Carne dos Açores' (PGI), registered at Union level by virtue of Regulation (EU) No 617/2003 ([2]), are strongly linked according to its specification to its ancestral method of production and traditional feeding, more particularly the open-air pastures. Accordingly, Azorean meat produced without respecting these characteristics would not qualify for the PGI.

In the framework of Rural Development policy, Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 ([3]) foresees EU support for promoting sustainable production methods, notably, the maintenance of extensive livestock production (Measure 214 — Environmental payments). This measure is included in the Rural Development Programme Azores (PRORURAL) and the EAFRD contribution to it amounts to EUR 43 million. However, the management, including the selection, contracting and payment of projects, is a competence of the Programme Managing Authority.

([1]) OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1-29.
([2]) OJ L 89, 5.4.2003, p. 3-4.
([3]) OJ L 277, 21.10.2005, p. 1-40.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000594/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(22 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: Açores — fim das quotas leiteiras — estudo de impacto

A agricultura é uma atividade económica de grande importância para a Região Autónoma dos Açores, sendo responsável por cerca de 13 % da população empregada e por 8,6 % do Valor Acrescentado Bruto regional, segundo os últimos dados publicados (2009). Apesar do aumento do número de produtores de carne registado nos últimos anos, as cerca de 13 mil explorações agrícolas existentes na Região são responsáveis por cerca de 30 % da produção nacional de leite, sendo esta a produção principal das explorações agrícolas das ilhas de São Miguel, Terceira e São Jorge.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Apoia ou está disponível para apoiar a realização de estudos sobre os reais impactos que o fim do regime das quotas leiteiras pode ter na agricultura e na economia açorianas, nomeadamente agregados por: a) Ilhas; b) Atividades agrícolas; c) Bens e serviços conexos com a atividade agropecuária; d) Dimensão económica das explorações verificando, especificamente no caso dos bovinos de produção de leite, qual o efeito da eliminação do respetivo Prémio aos Produtos Lácteos (conhecido como «subsídio à quota»); e) Identificação dos fatores que contribuem para a viabilização das explorações?

2. Em suma, dispõe desde já de instrumentos e de dados que lhe permitam aferir da viabilidade da produção e comercialização do leite dos Açores num contexto pós-quotas leiteiras e da dimensão do impacto do fim das quotas leiteiras numa economia tão dependente daquela produção? Em caso negativo, pretende obtê-los?

Resposta dada por Dacian Cioloș em nome da Comissão
(13 de março de 2013)

1. A Comissão lançou um estudo independente com o objetivo de obter uma análise prospetiva sobre a evolução mais provável do setor do leite no futuro contexto sem quotas. Embora sem incidir especificamente nos Açores, o estudo, que deverá estar concluído no verão de 2013, abordará, em especial, o papel do setor do leite na manutenção de comunidades rurais vivas, em especial nas zonas mais frágeis. Em 2009 tinha já sido encomendado um estudo externo sobre o impacto económico da abolição do regime das quotas leiteiras — análise regional da produção leiteira na UE (*Economic Impact of the Abolition of the Milk Quota Regime — Regional Analysis of the Milk Production in the EU* ([1])).

2. No âmbito do novo estudo, é possível que o contratante deseje contactar Estados-Membros específicos e partes interessadas pertinentes para recolher informações suplementares, que servirão para destacar casos específicos de relevância no contexto geral do estudo.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/analysis/external/milkquota/full_report_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000594/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: The Azores — end of milk quotas — impact study

Farming is an economic activity of major importance to the Azores, providing around 13 % of employment and 8.6 % of regional gross added value, according to the most recently published data (2009). Despite an increase in the number of beef producers in recent years, the nearly 13 000 farms in the region account for almost 30 % of national milk production, and dairy farming is the main activity of farms on the islands of São Miguel, Terceira and São Jorge.

In view of the above, could the Commission please answer the following:

1. Does it, or would it be prepared to, back the carrying out of studies into the real impact which the end of the milk-quota system could have on Azorian farming and the Azorian economy, in terms of: a) islands; b) agricultural activities; c) farming-related goods and services; d) economic size of the holdings, ascertaining, specifically in the case of dairy cattle, what the effect would be of getting rid of the dairy premium (known as the 'quota subsidy'); and e) identification of contributing factors to farm viability?

2. In short, does the Commission already have at its disposal instruments and data for evaluating the viability of the production and marketing of Azorian milk in a post-quota context and the scale of the impact of the end of milk quotas on an economy which is so dependent on dairy production? If not, does it intend to obtain them?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(13 March 2013)

1. The Commission has initiated an independent study to obtain a prospective analysis on the most likely evolution of the milk sector in the future context without quotas. While there is no specific focus on the Azores, the study, which is expected to be finalised by the summer 2013, will tackle particularly the role of the milk sector in maintaining vibrant rural communities, especially in the most fragile areas. In 2009, an external study had already been commissioned on 'Economic Impact of the Abolition of the Milk Quota Regime — Regional Analysis of the Milk Production in the EU' ([1]).

2. In the framework of the new study, the contractor may wish to contact specific Member States and relevant stakeholders to gather additional information to highlight specific cases of relevance under the overall scope of the study.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/analysis/external/milkquota/full_report_en.pdf

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000595/13
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(22 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: VP/HR — Acordo de Comércio Livre UE — Índia: ponto da situação

Em resposta às minhas perguntas E-009465/12 e E-009466/12, a Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante declarou que a Comissão Europeia está a negociar um acordo de comércio livre com a União Indiana, «com o objetivo de fomentar o emprego e a prosperidade na UE e na Índia, servindo assim de exemplo e de estímulo para o resto do mundo».

Assim, pergunto à Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante:

1. Como caracteriza o atual estado das negociações tendentes à celebração do referido Acordo?

2. Quais são, do seu ponto de vista, as principais questões que obstam à sua conclusão? E as principais vantagens para ambas as partes?

3. Está em condições de antecipar um calendário de negociações e de apontar uma data para a desejável celebração do mesmo?

4. Dispõe de dados acerca do impacto que a entrada em vigor de semelhante Acordo teria na economia dos Estados-Membros?

Resposta dada por Karel De Gucht em nome da Comissão
(14 de março de 2013)

As negociações atingiram uma fase crucial e ambas as partes estão a trabalhar intensamente para resolver as questões pendentes, de modo a atingir um resultado equilibrado. Visto que se ambiciona obter um resultado abrangente, subsistem questões difíceis de solucionar — nomeadamente nos setores automóvel, dos vinhos/bebidas espirituosas, no pacote global dos serviços e nos contratos públicos. Está em curso uma intensa atividade de negociação, prosseguindo a Comissão o objetivo de alcançar uma conclusão política em 2013; porém, é difícil indicar uma data para a conclusão das negociações.

Uma cobertura abrangente para a UE implicaria um pacote significativo no que diz respeito aos direitos aduaneiros (produtos industriais e agrícolas), um nível ambicioso de resultados no setor dos serviços, dos contratos públicos e do desenvolvimento sustentável, entre outros. A taxa média de direitos aduaneiros aplicável à Índia é de 14,1 % (vinhos e bebidas espirituosas: 150 % e veículos automóveis: 60 % a 75 %) e seria necessária uma redução substancial desses direitos. No setor dos serviços, a Índia terá de assumir compromissos nos setores de interesse para a UE, como o setor bancário de retalho e os seguros. A segurança jurídica para as empresas da UE é inestimável ao estudarem a possibilidade de efetuar investimentos nesses setores, que estão apenas em fase de lançamento na Índia. No que diz respeito aos contratos públicos e ao desenvolvimento sustentável, é a primeira vez que a Índia inclui estas questões num acordo de comércio livre. Os contratos públicos poderiam representar uma oportunidade significativa, uma vez que a Índia previu despesas que ascendem a 1 bilião de dólares americanos nos próximos cinco anos — uma parte significativa deste montante será desembolsada pelas autoridades públicas.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000595/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — EU-India Free-Trade Agreement: update

In reply to my questions E-009465/12 and E-009466/12, the Vice-President/High Representative stated that the Commission is negotiating a free-trade agreement with India 'in order to boost employment and prosperity in the EU and India and thus to serve as an example and a stimulus to the rest of the world'.

In view of this, could the Vice-President/High Representative please answer the following:

1. How would she describe the current state of negotiations towards signing that agreement?

2. What are, in her view, the main obstacles to the signing of the agreement? And what are the main advantages for both parties?

3. Is she able to provide a timescale for negotiations and a date for the desired signing of the agreement?

4. Does she have data at her disposal concerning the impact which the entry into force of such an agreement would have on the economies of Member States?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(14 March 2013)

Negotiations have reached a crucial stage and both sides are working intensively to resolve outstanding issues to reach a balanced outcome. Given the ambition for a comprehensive outcome there remain difficult issues to resolve — notably cars, wines/spirits, the overall services package and procurement. Intense negotiating activity is taking place and the Commission is aiming for a political conclusion during 2013 but it is difficult to give a date for conclusion of negotiations.

A comprehensive coverage for the EU would imply a meaningful package on tariffs (industrial and agricultural goods), high level of ambition in services, public procurement, sustainable development etc. India has an average applied tariff rate of 14.1% (wines & spirits: 150% and cars: 60% to 75%) and a substantial reduction in these tariffs would be necessary. In services, India will need to take commitments in sectors of EU interest such as retail banking and insurance. Legal certainty for EU companies is invaluable as they contemplate investments in these sectors which are just opening in India. As regards public procurement and sustainable development, this is the first time India is including these issues in a Free Trade Agreement. Public procurement could be a significant opportunity as India has forecasted expenditure of 1 trillion USD in the next five years, a significant portion of which will be spent by public authorities.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000596/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(22 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: Açores — recursos cinegéticos para fins turísticos

Face à necessidade de diversificar a sua economia, muito dependente da agropecuária e, em particular, das explorações leiteiras, discute-se na Região Autónoma dos Açores a possibilidade de aproveitar melhor e de forma sustentada os recursos cinegéticos disponíveis para fins turísticos.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Apoia ou estaria disponível para apoiar projetos com este propósito naquela região autónoma?

2. Existem já instrumentos europeus a que o governo regional ou os particulares possam recorrer nesse sentido?

Resposta dada por Johannes Hahn em nome da Comissão
(21 de março de 2013)

O atual programa «Proconvergência» para os Açores, relativo ao período 2007-2013, não prevê um apoio específico aos projetos relacionados com recursos cinegéticos na área do desenvolvimento do turismo.

Quanto ao período 2014-2020, propostas, opções políticas e estratégicas e projetos de programas encontram-se ainda em fase de preparação pelas autoridades regionais e nacionais. Medidas e projetos relacionados com os recursos cinegéticos deverão igualmente respeitar a legislação prevista pela UE.

Para mais informações, a Comissão sugere que o Senhor Deputado contacte diretamente a autoridade competente de gestão do programa:

Direção Regional do Planeamento e Fundos Estruturais — DRPFE
Caminho do Meio, 58 — S. Carlos
9701-853 Angra Do Heroísmo
Região Autónoma dos Açores
Tel. (+351) 295 206 380
Rui.MG.Amann@azores.gov.pt

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000596/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: The Azores — game resources for tourism purposes

In view of the need to diversify its economy, which is highly dependent on agriculture and, in particular, dairy farming, discussions are under way in the Azores concerning the possibility of making better, sustainable use of available game resources for tourism purposes.

Could the Commission please answer the following:

1. Does it, or would it be prepared to, back projects with this purpose in the Azores?

2. Are there EU instruments in place that the regional government or private enterprise could use to that end?

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

The current 2007-2013 Proconvergência programme for the Azores, does not provide specific support for projects related to game resources in the area of tourism development.

As for the 2014-2020 period, proposals, strategic policy options and draft programmes are still under preparation by regional and national authorities. Measures and projects related to game resources will also need to abide by the relevant provisions of EU legislation.

For further information, the Commission suggests that the Honourable Member t contact the competent managing authority :

Direcção Regional do Planeamento e Fundos Estruturais (DRPFE)
Caminho do Meio, 58 — S. Carlos
9701-853 Angra Do Heroismo
Região Autónoma dos Açores
Tel. (+351) 295 206 380
Rui.MG.Amann@azores.gov.pt

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung P-000597/13
an die Kommission (Vizepräsidentin/Hohe Vertreterin)
Josef Weidenholzer (S&D)
(22. Januar 2013)

Betrifft: VP/HR — Derzeitige Situation in Kambodscha, insbesondere die eingeschränkte Meinungsfreiheit und die Parlamentswahlen 2013

Im Juli 2013 finden in Kambodscha die nächsten Parlamentswahlen statt. Das Land leidet immer noch unter den Folgen des während der Schreckensherrschaft der Roten Khmer (1975-1979) verübten Genozids und des anschließenden Bürgerkriegs.

20 Jahre nach Unterzeichnung des Friedensabkommens in Paris ist die Situation der Menschenrechte in Kambodscha weiterhin auf niedrigstem Niveau. Das Land wird immer noch mit autoritären Methoden regiert. Die Meinungsfreiheit ist massiv einschränkt. Oppositionelle Kräfte werden systematisch eingeschüchtert, friedliche Demonstrationen von Arbeitnehmern oder Landwirten werden durch Einsatz von Gewalt behindert und Aktivisten mit hohen Gefängnisstrafen zum Schweigen gebracht. Unter diesen Bedingungen ist es für oppositionelle Gruppen beinahe unmöglich, sich zu politischen Parteien zusammenzuschließen. Auch die bisher schon im Parlament vertretenen Gegner der Regierung werden systematisch an ihrer Arbeit behindert. Der Oppositionsführer Sam Rainsy und seine Ehefrau Tioulong Saumura (beide sind Mitglieder des Parlaments) wurden von der aktuellen Wählerliste gestrichen und damit von den kommenden Wahlen ausgeschlossen.

1. Welche Schritte gedenkt die Vizepräsidentin/Hohe Vertreterin zu unternehmen, um sicherzustellen, dass sich die Menschen ungehindert zu politischen Gruppierungen zusammenschließen und sich den Wählerinnen und Wählern frei präsentieren können? Nur wenn diese Vorbedingungen hergestellt sind, wird es auch möglich, demokratisch legitimierte Wahlen abzuhalten.

2. Gedenkt die Vizepräsidentin/Hohe Vertreterin mit der zu Gebote stehenden Dringlichkeit, die kambodschanische Regierung zu bewegen, die Menschenrechte einzuhalten?

Antwort von Frau Ashton — Hohe Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin im Namen der Kommission
(2. Mai 2013)

Bei seinem Treffen mit dem kambodschanischen Premierminister Hun Sen anlässlich seines Besuches vom 2. bis 4. November 2012 in Kambodscha hat der Präsident des Europäischen Rates, Herr Van Rompuy, nachdrücklich hervorgehoben, wie wichtig die Wahrung der Menschenrechte und Rechtsstaatlichkeit ist, um günstige Rahmenbedingungen für freie und faire Wahlen zu schaffen, bei denen die Kandidaten und Wähler ihre grundlegenden politischen Rechte ausüben können.

Im Anschluss rief der Leiter der EU-Delegation in Kambodscha am 18. Februar 2013 den kambodschanischen Premierminister Hun Sen im Rahmen einer Demarche auf, ein offenes und förderliches Klima für die Wahlen im Juli 2013 zu schaffen, einschließlich des Rechts auf freie Meinungsäußerung und die Freiheit der Medien.

Darüber hinaus wird derzeit zur Begleitung der Vorbereitungen für die Parlamentswahlen im Juli eine Expertenmission aufgestellt, deren Mitglieder sechs bis sieben Wochen vor und unmittelbar nach den Wahlen im Einsatz sein werden. Zudem ist eine Mission zur technischen Unterstützung geplant, um den Zugang der verschiedenen politischen Parteien und Kandidaten zu den Medien zu erleichtern. Die EU-Delegation in Phnom Penh steht in regelmäßigem Kontakt zur Nationalen Wahlkommission, mit der es diese Missionen erörtert.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-000597/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Josef Weidenholzer (S&D)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Current situation in Cambodia, in particular the restrictions on freedom of opinion and the parliamentary elections in 2013

The next parliamentary elections are to be held in Cambodia in 2013. The country is still suffering from the aftermath of the genocide carried out during the reign of terror of the Khmer Rouge (1975-1979) and the subsequent civil war.

20 years after the signing of the Peace Treaty in Paris, the human rights situation in Cambodia is still dire. The country is still under authoritarian rule. Freedom of opinion is massively restricted. Opposition forces are subjected to systematic intimidation, peaceful demonstrations by workers or farmers are violently suppressed and activists are silenced with long prison sentences. Under these conditions, it is almost impossible for opposition groups to form political parties. Even those opponents of the government already represented in Parliament find their work systematically disrupted. Opposition leader Sam Rainsy and his wife Tioulong Saumura (both of whom are Members of Parliament) have been dropped from the current voters' list, thus excluding them from the forthcoming elections.

1. What steps is the Vice-President/High Representative considering to ensure that the people are unimpeded in forming political groupings and can present themselves freely to the electorate? It will only be possible to hold democratically legitimate elections if these preliminary conditions are met.

2. Is it the Vice-President/High Representative's intention to act with due urgency to impress on the Cambodian government the need to comply with human rights principles?

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

In his meeting with Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen at the occasion of his visit to the country on 2-4 November 2012, the President of the European Council, Mr Van Rompuy strongly underlined the importance of respect for Human Rights and the rule of law to create an environment conducive to free and fair elections, where the voter, the candidate and the commentator can exert their basic political rights.

As a follow-up, on 18 February 2013, the Head of the EU Delegation to Cambodia delivered a demarche to Cambodia's Prime Minister (PM) Hun Sen, calling for an open and conducive environment for the upcoming elections in July 2013, including freedom of expression and freedom of the media.

In addition, an Election Experts' mission to follow the preparation of the parliamentary elections next July is under preparation with experts to be deployed during six to seven weeks ahead and immediately after the elections. A mission for technical assistance is also currently envisaged to support access of the various political parties and candidates to the media. The EU Delegation in Phnom Penh is in regular contact with the National Election Committee to discuss these missions.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000598/13
an die Kommission
Birgit Sippel (S&D) und Josef Weidenholzer (S&D)
(22. Januar 2013)

Betrifft: Einsatz von RFID-Chips

Immer mehr Bekleidungshersteller, wie beispielsweise Peuterey, Lemmi Fashion, Levi's oder Gerry Weber, benutzen in ihren Kleidungsstücken RFID-Chips („radio-frequency-identification"), andere Unternehmen bereiten den Einsatz dieser Chips vor. Meist werden solche Chips — mit eindeutiger Produkt- und Seriennummer — im Pflegeetikett verborgen. Darüber hinaus wird im Einzelhandel bereits der Einsatz von RFID-Chips getestet, etwa bei Verpackungen in Supermärkten.

Der Einsatz der RFID-Technologie hat immense datenschutzrelevante Auswirkungen: Von KundInnen könnten verschiedene Daten gesammelt und theoretisch sogar Bewegungsprofile erstellt werden. Bei Kartenzahlung könnten die Daten der RFID-Chips sogar mit Kreditkartendaten verknüpft werden.

In einer Anfragebeantwortung vom Oktober 2009 zum Thema beteuerte die Kommission, sich für verbindliche Vorschriften in diesem Bereich einzusetzen, sofern die RFID-Empfehlungen zum Schutz der Privatsphäre der BügerInnen zu wenig berücksichtigt werden.

1. Welche konkreten und verbindlichen Vorschriften zum Datenschutz im Kontext mit der RFID-Technologie sind von der Kommission geplant?

2. Gibt es Pläne, eine Informationspflicht für alle Handelsketten, die RFID-Chips in ihren Produkten verwenden, einzuführen?

3. Inwiefern wirkt sich das Datenschutzpaket in dieser Hinsicht aus?

4. Wie steht die Kommission zu den Plänen, RFID-Chips flächendeckend in Supermärkten einzusetzen?

Antwort von Frau Kroes im Namen der Kommission
(2. April 2013)

Die Kommission ist sich der Tatsache bewusst, dass die Nutzung der Funkfrequenzkennzeichnung (RFID) Folgen für den Schutz personenbezogener Daten und der Privatsphäre haben kann, und hat daher am 12. Mai 2009 eine RFID-Empfehlung ([1]) herausgegeben. Darin sind Maßnahmen beschrieben, die bei der Anwendung der RFID-Technik zur Wahrung des Datenschutzes, der Privatsphäre und der Sicherheit zu treffen sind. Zudem hat die Kommission die Entwicklung eines Rahmens für „Datenschutz-Folgenabschätzungen" ([2]) in Bezug auf RFID-Anwendungen unterstützt, den RFID-Betreiber übernehmen und anwenden sollten. Dieser Rahmen erhielt die Zustimmung der Datenschutzgruppe nach Artikel 29 und wurde am 6. April 2011 von wichtigen Interessenträgern und der Kommission in Brüssel unterzeichnet. Für die Umsetzung der Vorgaben in der RFID-Empfehlung sind die Mitgliedstaaten verantwortlich.

Zu den Fragen 1 und 2: In einem nächsten Schritt wird die Kommission einen Bericht zur Umsetzung, zur Wirksamkeit und zu den Auswirkungen der RFID-Empfehlung auf Unternehmen und Verbraucher vorlegen. Auf dieser Grundlage wird sie prüfen, ob die Empfehlung ausreichend umgesetzt wurde und welche weiteren Maßnahmen gegebenenfalls erforderlich sind.

Zu Frage 3: Die Kommission weist darauf hin, dass die vorgesehene Datenschutz-Grundverordnung ([3]) neben anderen Bereichen auch die RFID-Technik betreffen würde. Die vorgeschlagene Verordnung unterstützt die Festlegung sektorspezifischer Verhaltensregeln und schafft diesbezügliche Anreize (Artikel 38). In bestimmten, mit besonderen Risiken verbundenen Fällen wären die für die Datenverarbeitung Verantwortlichen zudem verpflichtet, eine Datenschutz-Folgenabschätzung vorzunehmen (Artikel 33).

Zu Frage 4: Die Kommission arbeitet mit Normungsorganisationen an der Entwicklung eines gemeinsamen europäischen Zeichens, mit dessen Hilfe RFID-Anwendungen leicht zu erkennen sein sollen, um die Verbraucher für das Thema zu sensibilisieren und ihnen bewusste Entscheidungen zu ermöglichen.

([1]) K(2009) 3200.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/policy/rfid/documents/infso-2011-00068.pdf
([3]) KOM(2012) 11 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000598/13
to the Commission
Birgit Sippel (S&D) and Josef Weidenholzer (S&D)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Use of RFID chips

An increasing number of clothing manufacturers, such as Peuterey, Lemmi Fashion, Levis or Gerry Weber, are using RFID ('radio frequency identification') chips in their clothing, while others are preparing to use these chips. In most cases, these chips, which carry unique product and serial numbers, are concealed in the care label on garments. In addition, tests are also being carried out on the use of RFID chips in the retail sector, for example in supermarket packaging.

The use of RFID technology has enormous implications for data privacy: a variety of data relating to customers could be gathered, which would even make it theoretically possible to profile people's movements. When cards are used for payment transactions, it would even be possible to link the data on the RFID chip to credit card data.

In answer to a question on this matter in October 2009, the Commission asserted that it would support binding regulations in this area if RFID recommendations for protecting privacy were not sufficiently respected.

1. What specific and binding regulations in relation to data privacy in the context of RFID technology are planned by the Commission?

2. Are there any plans to introduce an obligation on all retail chains that use RFID chips in their products to inform the public accordingly?

3. What will be the effect of the data privacy package in this respect?

4. What is the Commission's position in relation to the plans for the widespread use of RFID chips in supermarkets?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(2 April 2013)

The Commission acknowledges that the use of radio frequency identification (RFID) technology can have implications for the protection of personal data and privacy and adopted its 'RFID Recommendation' ([1]) on 12 May 2009. This recommendation outlines the precautions to be taken when an RFID application is deployed, notably to protect personal data, privacy and security. In addition, the Commission supported the development of a 'Privacy impact assessment' (PIA) framework ([2]) for RFID Applications that RFID operators should adopt and use. This PIA framework has been endorsed by the article 29 Data Protection Working Party and signed by key stakeholders, including the Commission, in Brussels on 6 April 2011. It is the responsibility of the Member States to ensure that the modalities of the RFID Recommendation are implemented.

In answer to questions 1 and 2, the Commission's next step will be to issue a report on the implementation, effectiveness and impact on operators and consumers of the RFID Recommendation. On this basis, the Commission will then assess whether the recommendation has been sufficiently respected and what further action, if any, may be required.

In answer to question 3, the Commission notes that the proposed General Data Protection Regulation ([3]) would apply, amongst other areas, to RFID. The proposed Regulation encourages and incentivizes the adoption of sectoral codes of conducts (art. 38). In certain cases presenting specific risks, data controllers would also be required to conduct a data protection impact assessment (art. 33).

In answer to question 4, to increase choice and awareness for consumers, the Commission is working with standards organisations to deliver by a common European sign that will make it easy to detect applications using RFID.

([1]) C(2009)3200.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/policy/rfid/documents/infso-2011-00068.pdf
([3]) COM(2012) 11 final.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-000599/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(22 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Η τουρκική αστυνομία συλλαμβάνει 15 δικηγόρους των ανθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων

Μέσα σε μία νύχτα οι τουρκικές «αντιτρομοκρατικές» επιδρομές στην Άγκυρα, την Κωνσταντινούπολη και την Σμύρνη είχαν ως αποτέλεσμα τη σύλληψη 15 δικηγόρων υπερασπιστών των ανθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων, συμπεριλαμβανομένων μελών του δικηγορικού συλλόγου. Οι αρχές δεν έχουν κοινοποιήσει καμία λεπτομέρεια στους δικηγόρους υπεράσπισης. Η Διεθνής Αμνηστία πραγματοποιεί εκστρατείες εδώ και καιρό κατά της κατάχρησης των τουρκικών αντιτρομοκρατικών νόμων, οι οποίοι είναι υπερβολικά ασαφείς και έχουν πολύ ευρύ πεδίο εφαρμογής, σε σχέση με τη δίωξη νόμιμων ειρηνικών δραστηριοτήτων. Ο Andrew Gardner, ερευνητής της Διεθνούς Αμνηστίας σε θέματα της Τουρκίας, έθεσε το εξής ερώτημα: «Ποιος θα μείνει να υπερασπιστεί τα θύματα των εικαζόμενων παραβιάσεων των ανθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων;».

Με βάση τα παραπάνω ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Μπορεί η ΕΕ να απαντήσει στο παραπάνω ερώτημα;

2. Τι είδους δράση σκοπεύει να αναλάβει η ΕΕ προκειμένου να προστατεύσει τους ακτιβιστές των ανθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων και τον δικηγόρων του εν λόγω τομέα στην Τουρκία, μια χώρα υποψήφια προς ένταξη;

Κοινή απάντηση του κ. Füle εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(15 Μαρτίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή παρακολουθεί στενά τις εξελίξεις στην Τουρκία υπό το πρίσμα συγκεκριμένων πολιτικών κριτηρίων και είναι ενήμερη για τα θέματα που έθεσαν τα Αξιότιμα Μέλη του Κοινοβουλίου. Η Επιτροπή θίγει τακτικά το θέμα αυτό στο πλαίσιο των επαφών που έχει με τις τουρκικές αρχές.

Η Επιτροπή εξέφρασε σοβαρές ανησυχίες όσον αφορά τις διατάξεις του τουρκικού ποινικού κώδικα, του αντιτρομοκρατικού νόμου και του κώδικα ποινικής δικονομίας, που ορίζουν τα εγκλήματα που συνδέονται με την τρομοκρατία. Έχει επανειλημμένα τονίσει ότι επιβάλλεται να γίνει σαφής διάκριση μεταξύ της ελεύθερης έκφρασης της γνώμης και της υποκίνησης βίαιων ενεργειών. Η Επιτροπή είναι αισιόδοξη ότι στο πλαίσιο της τέταρτης δέσμης δικαστικών μεταρρυθμίσεων, που αναμένεται να υποβληθεί σύντομα στο Κοινοβούλιο, θα αντιμετωπιστεί η ουσία του προβλήματος.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000653/13
alla Commissione
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(23 gennaio 2013)

Oggetto: Arresto di 85 persone, tra cui molti avvocati impegnati nella difesa dei diritti umani, in Turchia

Un'operazione di polizia, eseguita la notte tra il 17 e il 18 gennaio in diverse città della Turchia, ha portato all'arresto di oltre un'ottantina di persone, tra cui quindici avvocati, noti per aver difeso imputati in processi sulla libertà d'espressione e vittime della violenza della polizia.

Il 21 gennaio, altri nove legali, fra cui il presidente dell'associazione degli avvocati progressisti (CHD) Selcuk Kozagacli, hanno subito la stessa sorte.

Considerando le dichiarazioni di Andrew Gardner, ricercatore di Amnesty International sulla Turchia, il quale afferma che «l'arresto di noti avvocati impegnati per la tutela dei diritti umani e quella che risulta essere stata una perquisizione illegale dei loro uffici si aggiungono a una serie di azioni persecutorie tese a colpire le voci del dissenso»;

che, avvalendosi della procedura sulle «decisioni segrete», della legge antiterrorismo n. 2911, del 21 aprile 1991, la cui formulazione tanto vaga quanto ampia favorisce la persecuzione di legittime attività pacifiche, le autorità non hanno reso noto alcun dettaglio agli avvocati difensori;

che secondo Reporter senza frontiere la Turchia è una delle «più grandi prigioni per i giornalisti», dal momento che almeno 42 operatori e 4 collaboratori sono in carcere a causa della loro professione;

considerando il ruolo della Turchia come paese candidato all'adesione all'Unione Europea;

si chiede alla Commissione:

1. se sia al corrente di quanto sopra descritto e se siano stati intrattenuti colloqui con la controparte turca al fine di fare luce sull'episodio;

2. se e quali azioni siano state o saranno intraprese per porre fine a queste palesi violazioni dei diritti umani fondamentali.

Risposta congiunta di Štefan Füle a nome della Commissione
(15 marzo 2013)

La Commissione segue da vicino gli sviluppi in Turchia nel quadro dei criteri politici ed è a conoscenza dei fatti esposti dall'onorevole parlamentare. Essa solleva regolarmente la questione nei contatti in corso con le autorità turche.

La Commissione ha espresso gravi preoccupazioni in merito alle disposizioni del codice penale turco, della legge antiterrorismo e del codice di procedura penale, che definiscono i reati di terrorismo, e ha ripetutamente sottolineato che occorre operare una netta distinzione tra la libertà di espressione e l'istigazione alla violenza. La Commissione spera che il quarto pacchetto della riforma giudiziaria, che dovrebbe essere presentato al Parlamento quanto prima, affronterà il nodo del problema.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000599/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Turkish police arrest 15 human rights lawyers

Overnight raids by Turkish 'anti-terror' police in Ankara, Istanbul and Izmir have resulted in the arrest of 15 human rights lawyers, including members of the Contemporary Lawyers Association. The authorities have not released any details to defence lawyers. Amnesty International has long campaigned against the abuse of Turkey's overly broad and vague anti-terrorism laws to prosecute legitimate peaceful activities. Andrew Gardner, a researcher on Turkey for Amnesty, has asked: 'Who will be left to defend the victims of alleged human rights violations?'

The Commission is therefore asked:

1. Does the EU have the answer?

2. What actions does the EU intend to take to protect human rights activists and lawyers in Turkey, a candidate country for accession?

Question for written answer E-000653/13
to the Commission
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(23 January 2013)

Subject: Eighty-five people arrested in Turkey — human rights lawyers among those detained

During the night of 17 and 18 January 2013, more than 80 people were arrested in the course of a police operation in a number of towns and cities in Turkey. Fifteen of those detained were lawyers known for defending victims of police violence and persons accused of crimes under Turkey's laws restricting freedom of speech.

On 21 January 2013, a further nine lawyers were arrested, including the President of the Progressive Lawyers' Association (CHD), Selcuk Kozagacli.

According to Andrew Gardner, an Amnesty International researcher on Turkey, the detention of prominent human rights lawyers and the clearly illegal search of their offices continue a pattern of prosecutions which form part of a crackdown on dissenting voices.

Invoking the 'secret decisions' procedure under anti-terrorism law No 2911 of 21 April 1991, whose wording is so vague and broadly framed that it can be used to justify a clampdown on legitimate peaceful activities, the authorities have not released any details to defence lawyers.

Reporters Without Borders has said that Turkey is one of the 'world's biggest prisons for journalists' — at least 42 journalists and four other media employees are currently being held in the country in connection with their work.

In view of the above and the fact that Turkey is a candidate country for EU membership:

1. Can the Commission say whether it is aware of what has been happening in Turkey? Have talks been held with the Turkish authorities in an effort to shed light on the reasons for the arrests?

2. What steps, if any, have been or will be taken to put a stop to these blatant violations of basic human rights?

Joint answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(15 March 2013)

The Commission closely monitors developments in Turkey under the political criteria and is aware of the issues raised by the Honourable Members. It regularly raises the matter in its ongoing contacts with the Turkish authorities.

The Commission has expressed serious concerns regarding the provisions in the Turkish Criminal Code, the Anti-Terror Law and the Code of Criminal Procedures, which define crimes related to terrorism. It has consistently underlined that a clear distinction between the free expression of opinion and incitement to violence should be made. The Commission is hopeful that the fourth judicial reform package, expected to be submitted to Parliament soon, will address the core of the problem.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000600/13
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(22 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Superficie marina del Parque Nacional Marítimo-Terrestre del Archipiélago de Cabrera

En relación con el asunto objeto de la pregunta, deben tomarse en consideración la Directiva 79/409/CEE, relativa a la conservación de las aves silvestres, la Directiva 92/43/CEE, relativa a la conservación de los hábitats naturales y de la fauna y la flora silvestres, y la reglamentación española, principalmente la Ley de Parques Nacionales.

El Patronato del Parque Nacional Marítimo-Terrestre del Archipiélago de Cabrera no ha tenido reuniones periódicas durante 2012 y ha sido permisivo con el deterioro de la gestión del parque, permitiendo la reducción de personal y la reducción de fondos, tal y como denunció la organización internacional de conservación marina Oceana.

En la Ley se especifica que el Patronato debe reunirse al menos cuatro veces al año para organizar todas las actividades necesarias y velar por el cumplimiento de la normativa europea y que el presidente del Patronato debe velar por el cumplimiento de los acuerdos alcanzados, ante lo que Oceana recordó que, en junio de 2011, el Patronato alcanzó un acuerdo por el que se daba pleno apoyo a las recomendaciones de ampliación de la superficie marina del Parque Nacional.

Hasta la fecha, el Patronato no ha avanzado en la ampliación de la superficie marina del Parque y no ha instado a la Consejería de Medio Ambiente a realizar una nueva cartografía ni ha realizado los estudios socioeconómicos, jurídicos y de gestión necesarios.

— ¿Conoce la Comisión esta situación?

— ¿Cree la Comisión que la irregularidad en las reuniones del Patronato y la reducción de personal y de presupuesto ponen en riesgo el cumplimiento de la Directiva «Hábitats» y de la Directiva «Aves»?

— ¿Considera la Comisión que la no ampliación de la superficie marina de forma discrecional por parte del presidente del Patronato es contraria a la voluntad de protección y conservación de los hábitats naturales recogidos por la legislación europea?

— ¿Tiene previsto la Comisión tomar medidas al respecto, a fin de instar a la Consejería y al Gobierno de España a que amplíen la superficie marina protegida?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(15 de marzo de 2013)

La Comisión no tiene conocimiento de la situación descrita por Su Señoría.

La designación del lugar *Archipiélago de Cabrera* se ajusta a lo dispuesto en las Directivas de Hábitats ([1]) y de Aves ([2]). De conformidad con el artículo 6, apartado 1, de la Directiva de Hábitats, corresponde a las autoridades competentes fijar las medidas de conservación necesarias para alcanzar los objetivos de conservación del lugar. Las cuestiones específicas relacionadas con la gestión de los lugares como, por ejemplo, la frecuencia de las reuniones del patronato, no entran en el ámbito de competencia de la Comisión.

En cuanto a la propuesta de ampliar el parque nacional, es un asunto de competencia nacional, pero los Estados miembros deben velar por el cumplimiento de su obligación de designar suficientes lugares Natura 2000 en las zonas marítimas.

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

([2]) Directiva 2009/147/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 30 de noviembre de 2009, relativa a la conservación de las aves silvestres (DO L 20 de 26.1.2010, p. 7), que codifica la Directiva 79/409/CEE del Consejo, de 2 de abril de 1979, relativa a la conservación de las aves silvestres.

La Comisión está evaluando actualmente los progresos realizados por todos los Estados miembros en la designación de las zonas especiales de conservación y en la adopción de medidas de conformidad con el artículo 6, apartado 1, de la Directiva de Hábitats. A la luz de los resultados de dicha evaluación, la Comisión adoptará todas las medidas necesarias para garantizar el cumplimiento de lo dispuesto en las Directivas de Hábitats y de Aves, incluso a través de las acciones legales que puedan ser necesarias.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000600/13
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Marine area of the Marítimo-Terrestre National Park in the Cabrera Archipelago

Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds, Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, as well as Spanish regulations, particularly the National Parks Law, should be considered with regard to the matter in question.

The Board of Trustees of the Marítimo-Terrestre National Park in the Cabrera Archipelago did not hold regular meetings in 2012 and permitted management of the park to deteriorate, allowing staff and funds to be cut back, as denounced by Oceana, the international organisation for marine conservation.

The Law specifies that the Board of Trustees must meet at least 4 times each year to organise all necessary activities and to ensure compliance with EU regulations, and that the Chair of the Board of Trustees must ensure compliance with the agreements reached. With regard to this, Oceana noted that, in June 2011, the Trustees reached an agreement by which they fully supported the recommendations that the National Park marine area be extended.

To date, the Trustees have not made any progress in extending the Park's marine area and have not urged the regional Ministry of Environment to draw up new maps, nor have they carried out any of the necessary socioeconomic, legal or management studies.

— Is the Commission aware of this situation?

— Does the Commission believe that the irregular nature of the Board of Trustee meetings and the staff and budget cutbacks put compliance with the 'Habitats' and 'Birds' Directives at risk?

— Does the Commission believe that the failure to extend the marine area at the Chair of the Board of Trustees' discretion conflicts with the wish to protect and conserve natural habitats covered by EU legislation?

— Does the Commission intend to take any measures to urge the Council and the Spanish Government to extend the protected marine area?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(15 March 2013)

The Commission is not aware of the situation described by the Honourable Member.

The site *Archipèlag de Cabrera* has been designated under the provisions of the Habitats ([1]) and Birds Directives ([2]). In accordance with Article 6.1 of the Habitats Directive, it is left to the competent authorities to establish the conservation measures necessary to achieve the conservation objectives for the site. Specific matters related to the management of sites, such as the frequency of board meetings, do not fall within the Commission's remit.

As for the proposal to expand the National Park, it is a matter of national competence but Member States must ensure that they fulfil their obligation to designate sufficient Natura 2000 sites in the marine area.

The Commission is currently assessing progress by all Member States on the designation of Special Areas of Conservation and on the establishment of measures pursuant to Article 6.1 of the Habitats Directive. In light of the results of this assessment, the Commission will take all the necessary steps to ensure compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives, including through legal action if needed.

([1]) Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the protection of natural habitats and wild fauna and flora (OJ L 206, 22.7.1992).
([2]) Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (OJ L 20/7, 26.1.2010) that codifies the Council Directive 79/409/EEC of 2 April 1979 on the conservation of wild birds.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000601/13
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(22 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Banqueros con delitos dolosos

El 22 de enero de 2013 el Ministerio de Economía propuso un Real Decreto en el que se suavizan los requisitos de honorabilidad, experiencia y buen gobierno de la banca, ya que simplemente será el Banco de España el responsable de juzgar si alguien cumple o no estas condiciones. Así, la condición de condenado por delitos dolosos no será motivo suficiente para impedir que un ejecutivo sea banquero. El texto legal establece que tienen honorabilidad para ser banquero quienes hayan venido mostrando una conducta personal, comercial y profesional que no arroje dudas sobre su capacidad para desempeñar una diligente y prudente gestión de la entidad.

Si alguno de los candidatos está incurso en un proceso penal, se debe analizar si la condena o sanción es o no firme, la gravedad de la condena o sanción impuesta y la tipificación de los hechos que motivaron la condena. El texto reclama atención especial si se tratara de delitos contra el patrimonio, blanqueo de capitales, contra la Hacienda Pública, contra la Seguridad Social o infracciones de las normas reguladoras del ejercicio de la actividad bancaria, entre otras condiciones.

El Ministerio de Economía asegura que está siguiendo recomendaciones de la Autoridad Bancaria Europea.

— ¿Conoce la Comisión esta reforma?

— ¿Confirma la Comisión que la ABE está auditando dichas reformas?

— En un momento de corrupción, de falta de independencia del sistema judicial a nivel europeo, de tráfico de influencias, de incapacidad de la ciudadanía de juzgar quién está detrás de sus ahorros y de inyección de activos financieros creativos que exceden la regulación bancaria, ¿considera la Comisión que la decisión final sobre las características de un banquero se debe dejar a la discreción del Banco de España?

— ¿Qué opinión le merece a la Comisión que la ABE haya recomendado que un condenado por delito doloroso pueda ser un banquero?

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000843/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(28 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Condiciones para dirigir entidades bancarias

En la redacción del *Memorandum of Understanding* para la condicionalidad del crédito al sector financiero del Estado español, se ponía de relieve en las condiciones 18, 20 y 27 la importancia que se concede a que los dirigentes de las entidades financieras no puedan tener conflictos de intereses y a que su conducta no pueda ser puesta en duda.

El Gobierno español ha decidido modificar la ley para que sea posible que personas que hayan estado involucradas en procesos judiciales, condenadas o no, y personas que lo estén actualmente, tengan menos dificultades para dirigir una entidad bancaria, y la decisión recaerá de forma discrecional sobre el Banco de España ([1]).

A la luz de lo anterior,

1. ¿No cree la Comisión que permitir a personas condenadas por la justicia que dirijan un banco va contra las buenas prácticas que el MoU trata de introducir dentro del sector bancario español?

2. ¿Piensa la Comisión posicionarse sobre este intento del Gobierno español de añadir discrecionalidad en los requisitos para dirigir una entidad bancaria?

([1]) http://economia.elpais.com/economia/2013/01/21/actualidad/1358808048_009102.html

Respuesta conjunta del Sr. Barnier en nombre de la Comisión
(2 de abril de 2013)

La Directiva 2006/48/CE ([2]), en su versión modificada (DRC III), que constituye la norma vigente de la UE en materia de regulación prudencial del sector bancario, establece que las autoridades competentes no autorizarán una entidad de crédito si las personas que efectivamente dirigen su actividad no poseen la honorabilidad necesaria (artículo 11). Además, dispone que la Autoridad Bancaria Europea (ABE) emita directrices sobre la evaluación de la idoneidad de las personas.

La ABE adoptó sus directrices sobre la evaluación de la idoneidad de los miembros del órgano de dirección y titulares de funciones clave ([3]) el 22 de noviembre de 2012. Estas directrices indican que las entidades de crédito deben poner a disposición de las autoridades, a petición de estas, toda la información necesaria para evaluar la idoneidad de los miembros del órgano de dirección, incluida la información sobre investigaciones y actuaciones judiciales en el ámbito penal. Las directrices aclaran que se deben tener en cuenta los antecedentes penales, incluidas la naturaleza y la gravedad de la condena o acusación, atendiendo especialmente, entre otras cosas, a los delitos financieros, de falta de honradez y de fraude. En la designación de un nuevo miembro del órgano de dirección de una entidad de crédito, las autoridades pueden dar peso diferente a los distintos criterios de idoneidad, teniendo en cuenta la legislación nacional pertinente.

Por consiguiente, las autoridades nacionales competentes deben tener debidamente en cuenta las condenas penales a la hora de evaluar la idoneidad de los miembros del órgano de dirección de las entidades de crédito, de conformidad con la normativa de la UE.

La ABE se ha comprometido a revisar sus directrices tras la adopción del paquete de la «DRC IV», que incluye disposiciones más rigurosas sobre la gobernanza empresarial en el sector financiero.

([2]) Directiva 2006/48/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 14 de junio de 2006, relativa al acceso a la actividad de las entidades de crédito y a su ejercicio (DO L 177 de 30. 6.2006, p. 1).

([3]) EBA/GL/2012/06.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000601/13
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Bankers convicted of intentional crimes

On 22 January 2013 the Ministry of Finance proposed a Royal Decree by which the requirements for a bank's honourability, experience and good governance were relaxed, since the Bank of Spain will simply be responsible for judging whether or not a party fulfils these conditions. Therefore, conviction for an intentional crime will not be sufficient reason to prevent an executive from becoming a banker. The legal text establishes that those honourable enough to become a banker are persons who have conducted themselves personally, commercially and professionally in a manner that does not cast any doubt upon their ability to manage the bank prudently and diligently.

If a candidate is the subject of criminal proceedings, one must evaluate whether or not the sentence or penalty is firm, the severity of the sentence or penalty imposed and the nature of the actions that gave rise to the sentence. The legal text calls for special attention in the case of crimes relating to assets, money laundering, crimes against the Treasury, against Social Security or any breaches of banking regulations in force, among other conditions.

The Ministry of Finance confirms that it is following the recommendations of the European Banking Authority (EBA).

— Is the Commission aware of this reform?

— Can the Commission confirm that the EBA is auditing these reforms?

— At a time of corruption, lack of independence of the judiciary system at EU level, influence peddling, inability of citizens to judge who is behind their savings and the injection of creative financial assets that exceed the banking regulations, does the Commission believe that the final decision regarding the qualities of a banker should be left to the discretion of the Bank of Spain?

— What is the Commission's opinion with regard to the EBA's recommendation that someone who has been convicted of an intentional crime can become a banker?

Question for written answer E-000843/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(28 January 2013)

Subject: Conditions for being a bank director

In Spain's Memorandum of Understanding on financial-sector policy conditionality, conditions 18, 20 and 27 make it clear that it is important that directors of financial institutions do not have conflicts of interests and that their conduct is beyond reproach.

The Spanish Government has decided to change the law so that it will be easier for people who have been involved in criminal proceedings, whether they were convicted or not, and people who are currently involved in a court case, to be bank directors. Whether someone is fit to be a director will be at the discretion of the Bank of Spain ([1]).

1. Does the Commission not think that allowing people who have been convicted by the courts to sit on a bank's board of directors is contrary to the good practice that the MoU aims to implement in the Spanish banking sector?

2. Does the Commission intend to express its views on the Spanish government's attempt to allow for discretion in relation to the list of requirements for being a bank director?

([1]) http://economia.elpais.com/economia/2013/01/21/actualidad/1358808048_009102.html

Joint answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(2 April 2013)

Directive 2006/48/EC ([2]) as amended (CRD III), which constitutes the current EU framework for the prudential regulation of the banking sector, provides that competent authorities shall not authorise a credit institution if the persons who effectively direct its business are not of sufficiently good repute (Article 11). It further provides for the European Banking Authority (EBA) to issue guidelines for the assessment of the suitability of those persons.

The EBA adopted its Guidelines on the assessment of the suitability of members of the management body and key function holders ([3]) on 22 November 2012. These say that credit institutions should provide authorities on request with all information necessary to assess the suitability of the members of the management body, including information on criminal investigations and proceedings. The Guidelines make clear that any criminal records should be taken into account, including the type and seriousness of any conviction or indictment, with particular account being taken (*inter alia*) of offences of dishonesty, fraud or financial crime. On appointment of a new member of a management body of a credit institution, authorities may accord the criteria for suitability different weight, 'taking into consideration relevant national law'.

National competent authorities will therefore need to give due weight to criminal convictions when assessing the suitability of members of the management body of credit institutions, in accordance with the EU framework.

The EBA has undertaken to review its Guidelines once the 'CRD IV' package, which contains strengthened provisions on corporate governance in the financial sector, is adopted.

([2]) Directive 2006/48/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 June 2006 relating to the taking up and pursuit of the business of credit institutions (OJ L 177, 30.6.2006, p. 1).

([3]) EBA/GL/2012/06.

(Leagan Gaeilge)

Ceist i gcomhair freagra scríofa E-000602/13
chuig an gCoimisiún
Liam Aylward (ALDE)
(22 Eanáir 2013)

Ábhar: Tús áite a thabhairt do Phoblacht Dhaonlathach an Chongó agus cás na tíre ag éirí níos measa

Tá rudaí uafásacha ag dul ar aghaidh i bPoblacht Dhaonlathach an Chongó. Tá sáruithe ar chearta an duine agus coireanna cogaidh, cosúil le hearcú saighdiúirí linbh agus oll-éigniú, i measc na n-ainghníomhartha atá ag tarlú sa tír. Sna sé mhí dheiridh den bhliain seo caite, chuir ospidéal in Goma, a bhíonn ag déileáil de daoine a éigníodh, cóir leighis ar 2 517 duine a ndearnadh éigniú orthu. Anuas ar sin, meastar go bhfuil ionsaí gnéasach déanta ar bheirt as gach triúr ban agus cailíní i gceantar Kivu Thuaidh.

1. An bhféadfadh an Coimisiún breis eolais a thabhairt maidir leis an méid atá á dhéanamh chun tús áite a thabhairt do dhí-armáil mhílístí uile na tíre agus deireadh a chur leis an troid?

2. Chun go bhféadfaí síocháin agus forbairt gheilleagrach a bhaint amach i bPoblacht Dhaonlathach an Chongó, ní mór nach mbeadh Ruanda agus Uganda bainteach a thuilleadh le gníomhaíochtaí corraitheacha sa tír. An bhféadfadh an Coimisiún sonraí a thabhairt maidir leis an méid atá á dhéanamh chuige sin?

3. Céard atá á dhéanamh chun lucht sáraithe chearta an duine agus coirpigh chogaidh a thabhairt os comhair na Cúirte Coiriúla Idirnáisiúnta?

4. Tá leanaí Phoblacht Dhaonlathach an Chongó i mbaol millteanach ón dúshaothrú míleata toisc babhta nua foréigin a bheith sa tír. Céard atá á dhéanamh chun fiosrúchán ceart éifeachtach a dhéanamh ar cheist earcú saighdiúirí linbh agus chun iad siúd atá bainteach leis an earcú sin agus le linbh a úsáid mar shaighdiúirí a ghabháil agus a thabhairt os comhair na cúirte?

Freagra ón Ardionadaí/Leasuachtarán Ashton thar ceann an Choimisiúin
(15 Márta 2013)

Tá an-imní fós ar an Aontas Eorpach faoin riocht ina bhfuil cúrsaí slándála agus daonnúla in oirthear Phoblacht Dhaonlathach an Chongó (PDC), agus faoina thionchar sin ar na sáruithe atáthar a dhéanamh ar chearta an duine, ar a n-áirítear earcú saighdiúirí linbh agus an foréigean inscne.

Ní féidir tabhairt faoi ghrúpaí armtha agus mílístí a dhí-armáil gan réitigh chuí bunaithe ar thionscnaimh pholaitiúla agus/nó mhíleata. Tá an tAontas Eorpach ag tacú leis an idirphlé mar chéadrogha modha chun dul i ngleic leis an ngéarchéim struchtúrach atá sa tír, ach san am céanna tá an AE ag leagan béime ar a riachtanaí agus atá sé go gcothódh Poblacht Dhaonlathach an Chongó an t-athchóiriú san earnáil slándála. Aithníonn cách easpa éifeachtúlachta Phoblacht Dhaonlathach an Chongó san earnáil sin agus aithníonn cách go gcuireann an easpa éifeachtúlachta sin cosc ar bhrú míleata éifeachtach a úsáid in éadan grúpaí armtha nuair is gá.

Tacaíonn an AE le hiarrachtaí an phobail idirnáisiúnta iad siúd atá ciontach as sáruithe ar chearta an duine agus as coireanna cogaidh a thabhairt chun triail dlí agus é sin a dhéanamh tríd an gcóras náisiúnta breithiúnach, tríd an gCúirt Choiriúil Idirnáisiúnta, agus ar shlite eile. Go ginearálta, is maith mar a d'oibrigh an comhoibriú breithiúnach go dtí seo idir Poblacht Dhaonlathach an Chongó agus an Chúirt Choiriúil Idirnáisiúnta.

Maidir le saincheist na saighdiúirí linbh (agus maidir le saincheisteanna eile faoi chearta an duine), téitear i ngleic leo go tráthrialta le linn an idirphlé pholaitiúil le húdaráis Phoblacht Dhaonlathach an Chongó. Chomh maith leis sin, tá an AE ina bhall gníomhach den ghrúpa deontóirí áitiúil a chuidíonn le leanaí atá thíos leis an gcoinbhleacht armtha.

Dá dteastódh tuilleadh faisnéise uait faoi ghníomhartha an AE i dtaca le réiteach a fháil ar an ngéarchéim i bPoblacht Dhaonlathach an Chongó agus ar a himpleachtaí réigiúnacha, d'fhéadfá tagairt don fhreagra a tugadh ar cheist E-000203/2013 ([1]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000602/13
to the Commission
Liam Aylward (ALDE)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Prioritising the Democratic Republic of Congo as the country's situation deteriorates

The situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo is grave. Human rights are being violated, and war crimes such as the recruitment of child soldiers and mass rape, along with other evil acts, are being committed throughout the country. There were 2 517 rape victims treated at a hospital in Goma during the last six months of last year. Furthermore, it is estimated that two out of every three women and girls in the North Kivu province are sexually assaulted.

1. Could the Commission provide further information with regard to what is being done to prioritise country-wide military disarmament and to put an end to conflict?

2. In order to achieve peace and economic development in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Uganda must end their involvement in acts of aggression in the country. Could the Commission provide details on what is being done to this effect?

3. What is being done to bring those guilty of human rights violations and war crimes to trial at the International Criminal Court?

4. The children of the Democratic Republic of Congo are in danger of being exploited by the military due to the renewed wave of violence in the country. What is being done to properly and effectively investigate the issue of recruiting child soldiers and to capture and bring to trial those who are involved?

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

The EU remains very concerned about the humanitarian and security situation in eastern DRC and its impact on human rights violations, including recruitment of child soldiers and gender-based violence.

A country-wide effort to disarm militia and armed groups requires appropriate solutions based on political and/or military initiatives. The EU is supporting dialogue as a first mean to address structural crisis in the country, while at the same time underlining the need for the DRC to foster progress in the Security Sector Reform, an area where the DRC's lack of efficiency is acknowledged by all and prevents the use of effective military pressure on armed groups when necessary.

The EU supports the efforts of the international community to bring those guilty of human rights violations and war crimes to trials, including through the national judicial system and the International Criminal Court. The DRC has, in general, a good record of judicial cooperation with the ICC.

The issue of child soldiers (and other human rights issues) are regularly tackled with DRC authorities in the framework of political dialogue. The EU is also an active member of the local donors group on children and armed conflict (CAAC).

For further information regarding the actions undertaken by the European Union to address the crisis in the DRC and its regional implications, please kindly refer to the reply givent to Question E-000203/2013 ([1]).

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

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-000603/13
lill-Kummissjoni
Joseph Cuschieri (S&D)
(22 ta' Jannar 2013)

Suġġett: Proposta tal-EASA għal limitu tas-sigħat ta' titjir tal-ekwipaġġi tal-ajru

Fl-1 ta' Ottubru 2012 l-EASA (Aġenzija Ewropea tas-Sikurezza tal-Avjazzjoni) ippubblikat l-Opinjoni 04/2012 dwar limitu tas-sigħat ta' titjir.

Kemm ir-Regolament OPS tal-UE kif ukoll ir-Regolament Bażiku tal-EASA jirrikjedu li r-regolament ġejjieni dwar limitu tas-sigħat ta' titjir ikun ibbażat fuq evidenza xjentifika, skont l-istandards tal-ICAO.

Tista' l-Kummissjoni ġentilment tispjega għalfejn ħafna mir-rakkomandazzjonijiet inklużi f'erba' rapporti xjentifiċi mill-EASA mhumiex riflessi, jew mhumiex riflessi biżżejjed, fl-opinjoni tal-EASA, pereżempju rigward kwistjonijiet bħal titjiriet bil-lejl, tnaqqis ta' setturi, estensjonijiet jew sitwazzjonijiet ta' bidu kmieni?

1. Tista' l-Kummissjoni tikkonferma li kemm l-EASA kif ukoll il-Kummissjoni nnifisha għandhom l-għarfien tekniku xjentifiku u mediku adegwat biex jinterpretaw is-sejbiet ta' dawn ir-rapporti u biex sussegwentement jinjorawhom?

2. Tista' l-Kummissjoni tikkjarifika jekk il-prinċipju prekawżjonarju ġiex applikat, u jekk le, għaliex? U dan huwa bbażat fuq valutazzjoni tar-riskji?

3. Tista' l-Kummissjoni tispjega kif ħinijiet ta' xogħol estiżi (standby + titjir) għal bejn 20 u 22 siegħa jista' jitqiesu sikuri? Fejn hi l-evidenza tal-EASA f'dan ir-rigward?

4. Tista' l-Kummissjoni tikkonferma li hi se tikkunsidra "riżerva" bħal ħin "standby" u tintroduċi mekkaniżmu vinkolanti li jagħti lok lill-ekwipaġġi li jippjanaw il-mistrieħ tagħhom u jevitaw interuzzjoni tar-ritmi tal-irqad tagħhom?

5. Tista' l-Kummissjoni tikkonferma li l-prinċipju ta' non-rigressjoni se jinżamm, u li l-Istati Membri se jkunu jistgħu jkomplu iżommu u jintroduċu standards ta' sikurezza aktar stretti fil-livell nazzjonali?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Kallas f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(12 ta' Marzu 2013)

Il-Kummissjoni hija impenjata għas-sikurezza, li hija importanti ħafna, u m'għandhiex l-intenzjoni li tistabbilixxi xi sistema li tista' tmur kontra dan il-prinċipju.

Il-Kummissjoni bħalissa qed tevalwa fid-dettall Il-proposta tal-EASA u għadha ma ħaditx deċiżjoni dwar xi aspett speċifiku ta' din il-proposta.

Il-Kummissjoni tirreferi lill-Onorevoli Membru għat-tweġibiet tagħha għall-mistoqsijiet bil-miktub E-011669/2012, P-011515/2012, E-009003/2012 u E-011134/2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000603/13
to the Commission
Joseph Cuschieri (S&D)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: EASA proposal for air crew flight time limitations

EASA (European Aviation Safety Agency) Opinion 04/2012 on flight time limitations (FTL) was published on 1 October 2012.

Both the EU-OPS Regulation and the EASA's Basic Regulation require the future FTL regulation to be based on scientific evidence, in line with ICAO standards.

Can the Commission kindly explain why many of the recommendations contained in four scientific reports commissioned by the EASA are not, or are only insufficiently, reflected in the EASA opinion, e.g. on issues such as night flights, sector reductions, extensions and early starts?

1. Can the Commission confirm that both the EASA and itself have adequate scientific and medical expertise to interpret the findings of these reports and to subsequently disregard them?

2. Can the Commission clarify whether the precautionary principle has been applied and, if not, why not? Is this based on a risk assessment?

3. Can the Commission explain why extended duty times (standby + flight duty) of up to 20-22 hours can be considered safe? What is the EASA's evidence for this?

4. Can the Commission confirm that it will consider 'reserve' as 'standby' time and introduce a binding mechanism that allows crews to plan their rest and avoid disruption of sleep patterns?

5. Can the Commission confirm that the non-regression principle will be maintained and that Member States will continue to be able to maintain and introduce stricter safety standards at national level?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(12 March 2013)

The Commission is committed to safety, which is paramount, and does not intend to put in place any system which might go against this principle.

The Commission is currently assessing in detail the EASA proposal and has not yet taken a decision on any specific aspect of this proposal.

The Commission further refers the Honourable Member to its answers to written questions E-011669/2012, P-011515/2012, E-009003/2012 and E-011134/2012.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-000604/13
do Komisji
Filip Kaczmarek (PPE)
(22 stycznia 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Filtry do wody jako rozwiązanie problemu skażenia wody

W milenijnych celach rozwoju wezwano do zmniejszenia o połowę (w latach 1990-2015) liczby ludności pozbawionej trwałego dostępu do bezpiecznej wody pitnej. Ponad miliard ludzi nie ma dostępu do bezpiecznego zaopatrzenia w wodę, a spośród 30 tys. osób, które co tydzień umierają z powodu skażonej wody i niehigienicznych warunków życia, 90 % stanowią dzieci w wieku poniżej pięciu lat.

Jednak największe żniwo na świecie zbiera choroba biegunkowa wywoływana przez bakterie: dur brzuszny, cholera, pałeczki okrężnicy (E. coli), salmonella i wiele innych. Wielu z tych chorób można zapobiec, a WHO donosi, że można zmniejszyć światowe obciążenie chorobami o ponad 3,6 % dzięki samej tylko poprawie zaopatrzenia w wodę, infrastruktury sanitarnej i higieny.

Osobiste filtry ręczne są niedrogim narzędziem umożliwiającym oczyszczanie wody przez mniej więcej rok dla zużycia wody przez jedną osobę. Ponadto nie wymagają one zasilania energią elektryczną.

Odnotowano pozytywne wyniki badań dla wody wodociągowej, wody mętnej i słonej.

1. Co Komisja sądzi o filtrach ręcznych?

2. Czy Komisja przewiduje możliwość przyjęcia i zastosowania tego rozwiązania w krajach rozwijających się dotkniętych skutkami niedoboru czystej wody?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Andrisa Piebalgsa w imieniu Komisji
(6 marca 2013 r.)

Wkład w realizację milenijnego celu rozwoju polegającego na zapewnieniu dostępu do wody i urządzeń sanitarnych jest kluczowym elementem unijnych działań na rzecz ograniczenia ubóstwa. Od 2007 r. Komisja Europejska przekazała w sumie prawie 2 mld EUR na projekty mające na celu zapewnienie dostępu do wody i usług sanitarnych realizowane w ponad 60 krajach na całym świecie.

Komisja w pełni rozumie korzyści wynikające ze stosowania osobistych filtrów ręcznych do oczyszczania wody pitnej. Są one szczególnie użyteczne w przypadku braku formalnej lub wystarczającej infrastruktury do oczyszczania wody, m.in. w sytuacjach kryzysowych.

Ze względu na wymóg obiektywności Komisja nie promuje jednak żadnego szczególnego systemu oczyszczania wody. Wybór w tego typu kwestiach najlepiej pozostawić w gestii partnerów wykonawczych, którzy są w stanie dokonać bezpośredniej oceny lokalnych potrzeb i sytuacji.

Producentów urządzeń wspomnianych przez Szanownego Pana Posła zachęca się do zaprezentowania filtrów lokalnym władzom i organizacjom pozarządowym, które mogą być zainteresowane ich wykorzystaniem lub promocją.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000604/13
to the Commission
Filip Kaczmarek (PPE)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Water filters as a solution for water contamination

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) call for a reduction by half (between 1990 and 2015 figures) in the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water. More than one billion people are without access to safe water supplies, and 90 % of the 30 000 deaths that occur each week from unsafe water and unhygienic living conditions are of children aged under five.

The world's most prolific killer, however, is diarrhoeal disease caused by bacteria: typhoid, cholera, E. coli, salmonella and many others. Many of these diseases are preventable, and the WHO reports that over 3.6 % of the global disease burden can be prevented simply by improving water supply, sanitation, and hygiene.

Personal, handheld filters are a low-cost water purification tool with a lifespan corresponding to approximately one year of water consumption by one person. What is more, this is a tool that des not require electricity use.

Positive test results have been registered for tap, turbid and saline water.

1. What is the Commission's opinion on handheld filters?

2. Does the Commission envisage the possibility of adopting and developing this solution in developing countries affected by a shortage of clean water?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(6 March 2013)

Contributing to the Millennium Development Goal of access to water and sanitation is at the core of the EU's work on reducing poverty. Altogether, since 2007, the European Commission has provided nearly EUR 2 billion to water and sanitation projects in over 60 countries worldwide.

The Commission fully understands the benefits of using personal handheld filters for drinking water purification. These are particularly useful where there is no formal or sufficient infrastructure for water treatment, including in disaster situations.

However the Commission does not promote any particular system of water purification equipment for reasons of objectivity. Such choices are best left to the implementing partners, who can directly appreciate the local needs and context.

The manufacturers of the devices mentioned by the Honourable Member are encouraged to present their filters directly to local authorities and non-governmental organisations who may be interested in using or promoting them.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-000605/13
til Kommissionen
Dan Jørgensen (S&D)
(22. januar 2013)

Om: EU-støtte til tyrefægtning

Den 8. november 2012 stillede jeg Kommissionen et spørgsmål vedrørende tyrefægtning. Jeg spurgte, om Kommissionen kunne bekræfte, at EU-lovgivningen ikke forhindrer, at landbrugsstøtten under søjle 1 bliver udbetalt til landmænd, der opdrætter tyre til brug for tyrefægtning.

Det gav Kommissionen mig ikke et klart svar på. Kommissionen svarede, at der ikke foretages specifikke udbetalinger med henblik på at opdrætte tyre. Dette besvarer dog ikke spørgsmålet om, hvorvidt EU-lovgivningen forhindrer, at der udbetales EU-midler til tyrefægtning.

Jeg spørger derfor Kommissionen igen. Kan Kommissionen garantere, at EU-midler ikke går til tyrefægtning i Europa?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Dacian Cioloş
(22. marts 2013)

Siden reformen af den fælles landbrugspolitik i 2003 har landbrugsstøtten under søjle 1 været afkoblet fra produktionen og er derfor pr. definition ydet pr. støtteberettiget hektar til landbrugere med betalingsrettigheder. Da støtten ikke er koblet til produktionen — endsige slutdestinationen for tyre, der opdrættes af landbrugeren — er der derfor intet retsgrundlag for at forhindre støtte i at blive udbetalt til opdrættere, hvis tyre sælges til tyrefægtning.

Under søjle 2 findes der ingen specifik støtte til aktiviteter forbundet med tyrefægtning, men det kan ikke udelukkes, at disse landbrugere modtager støtte under visse foranstaltninger for landdistriktsudvikling (modernisering af landbrug, miljøvenlige landbrugsordninger, ugunstigt stillede områder, osv.). Ydermere forstår Kommissionen, at størstedelen af disse potentielle støttemodtagere ikke fokuserer udelukkende på aktiviteter forbundet med tyrefægtning. Endelig har hvert medlemsland eller hver region selv ansvaret for at udvælge projekterne.

For så vidt angår regionalpolitik, fastsætter Rådets forordning (EF) nr. 1260/1999 af 21. juni 1999 ([1]) rammerne for fællesskabsstøtte med det formål at styrke den økonomiske og sociale samhørighed. For at opnå dette har medlemslandene eksklusiv ret til at udvælge og gennemføre delvist EU-finansierede foranstaltninger inden for rammerne af de operationelle retningslinjer, som Kommissionen har godkendt. Disse foranstaltninger består typisk af statsstøtteordninger og investeringer i offentlige anlæg, som er blevet godkendt af EU. I denne forbindelse kan EFRU støtte foranstaltninger til fremme af turisme, som muligvis ikke udelukker tyrefægtningsfaciliteter.

([1]) Europa-Parlamentets og Rådets forordning (EF) nr. 1260/1999 af 21. juni 1999 om vedtagelse af generelle bestemmelser for strukturfondene (EFT L 161 af 26.6.1999, s. 1).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000605/13
to the Commission
Dan Jørgensen (S&D)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: EU subsidies for bullfighting

On 8 November 2012 I put a question to the Commission concerning bullfighting. I asked if the Commission could confirm that EU legislation does not prevent agricultural support under Pillar 1 from being paid to farmers who raise bulls for bullfighting.

The Commission did not give me a clear answer on this point. It said that no specific payments are made for the breeding of bulls. However, that does not answer the question whether EU legislation prevents the payment of EU funds for bullfighting.

I therefore ask again: can the Commission guarantee that EU funds do not go to bullfighting in Europe?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(22 March 2013)

As from the 2003 CAP reform, the support under Pillar I has been decoupled from production and therefore, by definition, is granted per eligible hectare to farmers holding payment entitlements. Consequently, as there is no link to production — let alone a link to the final destination of any bulls reared by the farmer — there can be no legal provision preventing support to be paid to breeders, whose bulls are sold on for bullfighting.

Under Pillar II there is no specific support for bullfighting-related activities; however, it cannot be excluded that these farmers receive support under a certain measures of Rural Development (farm modernisation, agri-environment schemes, Less Favoured Areas, etc). Moreover, the Commission understands that the majority of these potential beneficiaries do not focus exclusively on the activities related to bullfighting. Finally, it is under the responsibility of each Member State or Region to select the projects.

As far as regional policy is concerned, Regulation (EC) 1260/1999 of 21 June 1999 ([1]), sets up the framework for Community support to strengthen economic and social cohesion across regions. To achieve this objective, Member States are solely entitled to select and implement EU-part-financed operations, within the framework of operational guidelines approved by the Commission. Those operations typically consist in Community-approved state aid schemes and investments in public facilities. In this sense, the ERDF can support actions for enhancement of tourist activities, which potentially do not exclude bullfighting facilities.

([1]) Parliament and Council Regulation (EC) 1260/1999 of 21 June 1999, laying down general provisions on the Structural Funds, OJ L 161, 26.6.1999.

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande E-000606/13
till kommissionen
Amelia Andersdotter (Verts/ALE)
(22 januari 2013)

Angående: Kvantitativa bevis för effektiviteten i ordningen för växtförädlarrätten

I sitt svar på den skriftliga frågan E-009257/12 säger kommissionen att ”med beaktande av den stora mängd uppgifter som varje år tas fram av [G]emenskapens växtsortsmyndighet (CPVO) anser kommissionen att kvantitativa uppgifter finns tillgängliga, särskilt hos CPVO” men att uppgifterna inte analyserades av konsulterna, varvid kommissionen syftar på den studie om en utvärdering av regelverket för gemenskapens växtförädlarrätt som utfördes av GHK Consulting på kommissionens uppdrag. Konsulterna skriver dock i avsnitt 3.2 i sin rapport att man har analyserat följande:

CPVO:s uppgifter om

— gemenskapens växtförädlarrätt, inbegripet omfattande uppgifter om tillämpningar och rättigheter som beviljats under perioden 1995–2011 för samtliga växtsorter,

— kostnader, inbegripet

avgifter för att ansöka om, erhålla och behålla en rättighet inom ramen för gemenskapens växtförädlarrätt, och

avgifter som tas ut för sorttester och de nationella provningscentrumens beräknade kostnader för att genomföra testerna,

— tekniska rapporter som säljs av CPVO till myndigheter i tredjeländer, samt

— antalet domstolsärenden.

Vilka ytterligare uppgifter tillhandahåller CPVO som kommissionen anser kommer att visa att gemenskapens växtförädlarrätt har bidragit till att stimulera skapandet av nya växtsorter och som kommer att rasera den slutsats som konsultföretaget drar på s. 33 i sin rapport, nämligen att det inte finns några kvantitativa bevis på att detta regelverk är effektivt?

Svar från Tonio Borg på kommissionens vägnar
(11 mars 2013)

Den slutsats som parlamentsledamoten hänvisar till avser undantaget för växtförädlare. Detta obligatoriska undantag från gemenskapens växtförädlarrätt gör det möjligt för andra växtförädlare att fritt använda skyddade sorter för utveckling av nya sorter.

Utöver de uppgifter som parlamentsledamoten anger finns även uppgifter på växtsortsmyndighetens webbplats, t.ex. om antal ansökningar, antal beviljade rättigheter, antal botaniska taxa tillgängliga för skydd samt tekniska protokoll för undersökning av växtsorter, inklusive ytterligare karakteristika för undersökning.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000606/13
to the Commission
Amelia Andersdotter (Verts/ALE)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Quantitative proof of the efficacy of the plant variety rights regime

In its answer to Written Question E-009257/12, the Commission states that 'taking into account the considerable amount of data produced each year by the Community Plant Variety Office (CPVO), the Commission considers that quantitative data were available, in particular at the level of the CPVO', but that 'the data were not analysed by the Consultant', referring to the study completed for the Commission by GHK Consulting on the Evaluation of the Community Plant Variety Rights Acquis. However, the Consultant states in Section 3.2 of that report that it has analysed:

'CPVO data on:

— CPVRs, including comprehensive data on applications and rights granted from 1995-2011 for all plant varieties;

— Costs, including:

Fees for applying for, obtaining and maintaining CPVRs;

Fees charged for variety testing and estimated costs to national testing centres for conducting the tests;

— Technical reports sold by the CPVO to authorities in third countries; and

— The number of court cases'.

What additional data does the CPVO provide that the Commission believes will show that the Community Plant Variety Rights regime has helped in incentivising the creation of new plant varieties and that will undo the aforementioned conclusion by the Consultant on page 33 of its report that quantitative proof of the efficacy of this regulatory regime does not exist?

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

The conclusion the Honourable Member is referring to is in relation with the breeders' exemption. This compulsory exception to the right of the Community Plant Variety Right holder, allows other plant breeders to freely use protected varieties for the development of other new varieties.

In addition to the data indicated by the Honourable Member, data is available on the CPVO website such as number of applications, number of granted rights, number of botanical taxa available for protection, technical protocols for the examination of plant varieties including additional characteristics for the examination.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000607/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(22 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Europa 2020, Juventud en Movimiento, pero no en España

Según estadísticas de Eurostat, el pasado mes de septiembre de 2012 el Estado español tenía una tasa de desempleo juvenil del 56,5 %, la más elevada de la UE ([1]). En los Presupuestos Generales del Estado español del 2011, las partidas presupuestarias para combatir el desempleo juvenil sumaban la cantidad de 7 322 millones de euros, mientras que en el año 2012 se han reducido a 3 775 millones de euros.

1. ¿Cree la Comisión que con esta inversión el Estado español podrá cumplir con la Iniciativa Europa 2020 y, más concretamente, con el programa Juventud en Movimiento ([2]) hasta cumplir con la tasa de empleo del 75 % de la población en edad laboral en el 2020?

No es solamente que las partidas destinadas al fomento de la ocupación juvenil no están debidamente presupuestadas, sino que, además, el Gobierno central no hace las transferencias previstas para este fin. En diciembre de 2012 el Gobierno central español todavía no había transferido a Cataluña los 191 millones de euros acordados para ejecutar el «Plan de Política de Empleo 2012» ([3]).

2. ¿Qué opinión tiene la Comisión sobre este tema?

3. ¿Qué medidas tomará la Comisión para que el Estado español cumpla con la Iniciativa Europa 2020, concretamente por lo que hace referencia a la horrible cifra actual de desempleo juvenil?

Respuesta del Sr. Andor en nombre de la Comisión
(20 de marzo de 2013)

1. En su Estudio Prospectivo Anual sobre el Crecimiento para 2013, la Comisión recomienda, en particular, proseguir la consolidación fiscal diferenciada y preservar el potencial de crecimiento futuro. Los Estados miembros deben establecer prioridades para las inversiones con el fin de reforzar la cobertura y la eficacia de los servicios de empleo y de las políticas activas del mercado de trabajo, como la formación de los desempleados y los sistemas de Garantía Juvenil. La Comisión presenta también orientaciones firmes para los Estados miembros acerca de sus políticas de empleo y del mercado laboral, centradas en el desempleo de larga duración y el desempleo juvenil, insistiendo en la aplicación de la Garantía Juvenil. La reciente adopción por parte del Consejo de la Recomendación sobre la Garantía Juvenil y la ayuda financiera que se concederá a través de la Iniciativa sobre Empleo Juvenil y del FSE darán un fuerte respaldo a los esfuerzos de las autoridades españolas para combatir el desempleo juvenil.

2. Los flujos financieros entre el presupuesto de la administración central y los presupuestos de las comunidades autónomas son una cuestión interna del Estado miembro.

3. Durante el periodo 2007-2013, el programa operativo del FSE «Adaptabilidad y Empleo» habrá asignado 1 350 millones de euros a acciones de fomento del empleo juvenil, en las que habrán participado 1 350 000 jóvenes. Además, la Comisión aprobó en 2012 una reasignación de 286,3 millones de euros a acciones para los jóvenes en el marco de este programa operativo del FSE. Se reasignaron también fondos del FEDER por un valor de 1 000 millones de euros a programas operativos españoles para apoyar las PYME en regiones con una tasa de desempleo juvenil elevada.

([1]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Unemployment_statistics#Youth_unemployment_trendsn
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=950&langId=es
([3]) http://www.sepe.es/contenido/empleo_formacion/formacion/formacion_para_el_empleo/plan_anual_politica_activa.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000607/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Europe 2020, Youth on the Move, but not in Spain

According to Eurostat statistics, in September 2012, the youth unemployment rate in Spain was 56.5 %, the highest in the EU ([1]). In Spain's General Budgets for 2011, budget appropriations for combating youth unemployment amounted to EUR 7 322 million, whereas in 2012 they were cut to EUR 3 775 million.

1. Does the Commission believe that with this investment Spain will be able to comply with Europe 2020, and more particularly with the Youth on the Move initiative ([2]), and reach an employment rate in the working-age population of 75 % by 2020?

Not only is the funding set aside for developing youth employment not being duly included in the budget, but the central government is not even making the credit transfers scheduled for this purpose. In December 2012, Spain's central government still had not transferred to Catalonia the EUR 91 million that it had been allotted for implementing the '2012 Employment Policy Plan' ([3]).

2. What is the Commission's view on this matter?

3. What measures will the Commission take so that Spain complies with Europe 2020 and, in particular, concerning the atrocious current figures for youth unemployment?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(20 March 2013)

1. In its Annual Growth Survey for 2013, the Commission recommends in particular that the fiscal consolidation should be differentiated and future growth potential preserved. Member States should prioritise investments to reinforce the coverage and effectiveness of employment services and active labour market policies, such as training for the unemployed and youth guarantee schemes. The Commission also presents strong guidance to Member States for their employment and labour market policies focusing on long-term unemployment and on youth unemployment — by insisting on the implementation of the Youth Guarantee. The recent adoption by the Council of the recommendation on the Youth Guarantee and the financial support that will be provided through the Youth Employment Initiative and the ESF will strongly support the efforts of the Spanish authorities to tackle youth unemployment.

2. The financial flows between the central administration budget and the budget of the Autonomous Communities is an internal issue of the Member State.

3. In the period 2007-2013, the ESF Operational Programme 'Adaptabilidad y Empleo' allocates EUR 1 350 million to actions to promote youth employment; 1 350 000 young people will participate in these actions. Moreover, the Commission approved in 2012 a further reallocation of EUR 286.3 million to youth-related actions under this ESF Operational Programme. ERDF funds worth EUR 1 billion were also reallocated within the Spanish OPs to support SMEs in regions with high youth unemployment rate.

([1]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Unemployment_statistics#Youth_unemployment_trendsn
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=950&langId=en
([3]) http://www.sepe.es/contenido/empleo_formacion/formacion/formacion_para_el_empleo/plan_anual_politica_activa.html

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000608/13
an den Rat
Elisabeth Köstinger (PPE)
(22. Januar 2013)

Betrifft: Mehrwertsteuerbetrug bei Grundnahrungsmittel

Laut einer aktuellen Studie ([1]) des Unternehmens Ernst & Young, beläuft sich der Mehrwertsteuerbetrug beim Grundnahrungsmittelhandel in Ungarn auf 450 Millionen EUR pro Jahr. Der Steuerbetrug in Ost- und Mitteleuropa soll sogar doppelt so hoch ausfallen. Die Studie kommt zu dem Schluss, dass ein Mehrwertsteuersatz von 25 % bzw. 27 % der Hauptgrund für den Mehrwertsteuerbetrug in den Ländern wie Ungarn und Rumänien ist.

Vor diesem Hintergrund wird der Rat um die Beantwortung folgender Fragen gebeten:

1. Ist der Rat über die geschilderte Situation bereits informiert bzw. sind dem Rat weitere Fälle in anderen Mitgliedstaaten mit hohen MwSt.-Sätzen, wie z. B. in Rumänien, Bulgarien und der Slowakei bekannt?

2. Kann der Rat darüber Auskunft erteilen, welche Produktgruppen von dem Betrug betroffen sind?

3. Lässt sich seitens des Rates eine direkte Beziehung zwischen der Höhe der MwSt. von 25 % bzw. 27 % und den Betrügen, wie in der Studie aufgezeigt, herstellen?

4. Würde eine Herabsetzung des MwSt.-Satzes auf Grundnahrungsmittel auf 10 % die Betrüge eindämmen?

5. Welche Maßnahmen werden seitens der betroffenen Mitgliedsländer getroffen, um den aufgezeigten Mehrwertsteuerbetrug wirksam zu bekämpfen?

6. Welche Aufgaben kommen in diesem Zusammenhang EUROPOL sowie OLAF zu?

7. Wie schätzt der Rat die Auswirkungen eines MwSt.-Satzes von 25 % bzw. 27 % auf die ökonomische Entwicklung eines Landes sowie auf den Binnenmarkt ein?

8. Was gedenkt der Rat, in Bezug auf die Stellungnahme Nr. 8/2012 des Europäischen Rechnungshofes betreffend „strafrechtlicher Bekämpfung von gegen die finanziellen Interessen der Europäischen Union gerichtetem Betrug“, zu tun?

Antwort
(15. April 2013)

Der Rat hat sich bereits mehrfach mit der Bekämpfung des Mehrwertsteuerbetrugs befasst und eine Reihe von Rechtsakten erlassen, um noch konsequenter gegen Betrug vorzugehen, u. a. die Verordnung (EU) Nr. 904/2010 des Rates vom 7. Oktober 2010 über die Zusammenarbeit der Verwaltungsbehörden und die Betrugsbekämpfung auf dem Gebiet der Mehrwertsteuer ([2]), die Richtlinie 2010/23/EU des Rates vom 16. März 2010 zur Änderung der Richtlinie 2006/112/EG über das gemeinsame Mehrwertsteuersystem im Hinblick auf eine fakultative und zeitweilige Anwendung des Reverse-Charge-Verfahrens auf die Erbringung bestimmter betrugsanfälliger Dienstleistungen ([3]) sowie die Richtlinie 2009/69/EG des Rates vom 25. Juni 2009 zur Änderung der Richtlinie 2006/112/EG über das gemeinsame Mehrwertsteuersystem zur Bekämpfung des Steuerbetrugs bei der Einfuhr ([4]).

([1]) Ernst & Young: On the budget neutral elimination of VAT fraud in the basic food sector.
([2]) ABl. L 268 vom 12.10.2010, S. 1.
([3]) ABl. L 72 vom 20.3.2010, S. 1.
([4]) ABl. L 175 vom 4.7.2009, S. 12.

Überdies liegen zum Thema Mehrwertsteuerbetrug der Vorschlag für eine Richtlinie des Rates zur Änderung der Richtlinie 2006/112/EG des über das gemeinsame Mehrwertsteuersystem in Bezug auf einen Schnellreaktionsmechanismus bei Mehrwertsteuerbetrug ([5]) und der Vorschlag für eine Richtlinie des Rates zur Änderung der Richtlinie 2006/112/EG im Hinblick auf eine fakultative und zeitweilige Anwendung des Reverse Charge-Verfahrens auf Lieferungen bestimmter betrugsanfälliger Gegenstände und Dienstleistungen ([6]) vor, die derzeit im Rat erörtert werden. Ferner berät der Rat gegenwärtig über den Vorschlag der Kommission vom 11. Juli 2012 für eine Richtlinie über die strafrechtliche Bekämpfung von gegen die finanziellen Interessen der Europäischen Union gerichtetem Betrug; wichtig ist in diesen Beratungen die diesbezügliche Stellungnahme Nr. 8/2012 des Rechnungshofes, insbesondere die Nummer 8. Allerdings hat der Rat noch keinen förmlichen Standpunkt zu diesen Vorschlägen festgelegt.

Mit den anderen Fragen, die die Frau Abgeordnete anspricht, hat sich der Rat nicht befasst, da sie nicht in seinen Zuständigkeitsbereich fallen.

([5]) Dok. 13027/12.
([6]) Dok 13868/09.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000608/13
to the Council
Elisabeth Köstinger (PPE)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: VAT fraud on staple foods

According to a recent study ([1]) by Ernst & Young, VAT fraud on staple foods in Hungary amounts to EUR 450 million per annum. The study estimates that tax fraud in Eastern and Central Europe is probably twice that amount. It comes to the conclusion that VAT rates of 25% and 27% are the main reason for VAT fraud in countries like Hungary and Romania.

In view of this, could the Council answer the following:

1. Is the Council already informed of the situation described here and is the Council aware of other cases in other Member States with high rates of VAT, such as Romania, Bulgaria and Slovakia?

2. Can the Council indicate what product groups are affected by fraud?

3. Can the Council draw a direct link between the VAT rates of 25% and 27% and the fraud revealed in the study?

4. Would a decrease in the VAT rate on staple foods to 10% reduce the level of fraud?

5. What steps are being taken by the relevant Member States to combat the VAT fraud revealed in an effective way?

6. What are the tasks facing Europol and OLAF in this context?

7. How does the Council assess the impact of a VAT rate of 25% or 27% on the economic development of a country and on the internal market?

8. What steps does the Council intend to take in relation to Opinion No 8/2012 of the European Court of Auditors concerning 'the fight against fraud to the Union's financial interests by means of criminal law'?

Reply
(15 April 2013)

The Council has on several occasions addressed the issue of combating VAT fraud and has adopted a number of acts aimed at strengthening the fight against fraud, *inter alia* Council Regulation (EU) No 904/2010 of 7 October 2010 on administrative cooperation and combating fraud in the field of value added tax ([2]), Council Directive 2010/23/EU of 16 March 2010 amending Directive 2006/112/EC on the common system of value added tax, as regards an optional and temporary application of the reverse charge mechanism in relation to supplies of certain services susceptible to fraud ([3]), Council Directive 2009/69/EC of 25 June 2009 amending Directive 2006/112/EC on the common system of value-added tax as regards tax evasion linked to imports ([4]).

Moreover, the proposal for a Council Directive amending Directive 2006/112/EC on the common system of value-added tax as regards a quick reaction mechanism ([5]) and the proposal for a Council Directive amending Directive 2006/112/EC as regards an optional and temporary application of the reverse charge mechanism in relation to supplies of certain goods and services susceptible to fraud ([6]), address VAT fraud and are being discussed within the Council. The Council is currently also discussing the Commission's proposal of 11 July 2012 for a directive on the fight against fraud to the Union's financial interests by means of criminal law and Opinion 8/2012 of the Court of Auditors, in particular point 8 therein, is an important element in such discussions. However, the Council has not yet taken any formal position on those proposals.

The Council has not discussed the other issues raised by the Honourable Member, as they do not fall within its sphere of competence.

([1]) Ernst & Young: On the budget neutral elimination of VAT fraud in the basic food sector.
([2]) OJ L 268, 12.10.2010, p. 1.
([3]) OJ L 72, 20.3.2010, p. 1.
([4]) OJ L 175, 4.7.2009, p. 12.
([5]) 13027/12.
([6]) 13868/09.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000609/13
an die Kommission
Elisabeth Köstinger (PPE)
(22. Januar 2013)

Betrifft: Mehrwertsteuerbetrug bei Grundnahrungsmittel

Laut einer aktuellen Studie ([1]) des Unternehmens Ernst & Young beläuft sich der Mehrwertsteuerbetrug beim Grundnahrungsmittelhandel in Ungarn auf 450 Mio. EUR pro Jahr. Der Steuerbetrug in Ost- und Mitteleuropa soll sogar doppelt so hoch ausfallen. Die Studie kommt zu dem Schluss, dass ein Mehrwertsteuersatz von 25 % bzw. 27 % der Hauptgrund für den Mehrwertsteuerbetrug in den Ländern wie Ungarn und Rumänien ist.

Vor diesem Hintergrund wird die Kommission um die Beantwortung folgender Fragen gebeten:

1. Ist die Kommission über die geschilderte Situation bereits informiert bzw. sind der Kommission weitere Fälle in anderen Mitgliedstaaten mit hohen MwSt.-Sätzen, wie z. B. in Rumänien, Bulgarien und der Slowakei, bekannt?

2. Gibt es seitens der Kommission Erhebungen über Mehrwertsteuerbetrüge im Grundnahrungsmittelsektor? Wenn ja, kann die Kommission Auskunft über betroffenen Produktgruppen geben?

3. Welche Maßnahmen zur Betrugsbekämpfung wurden seitens der Kommission diesbezüglich ergriffen?

4. Welche Aufgaben kommen in diesem Zusammenhang Europol sowie OLAF zu?

5. Lässt sich seitens der Kommission eine direkte Beziehung zwischen der Höhe der MwSt. von 25 % bzw. 27 % und den Betrügen, wie in der Studie aufgezeigt, herstellen?

6. Würde eine Herabsetzung des MwSt.-Satzes auf Grundnahrungsmittel auf 10 % die Betrüge eindämmen?

7. Wie bewertet die Kommission die Einführung einer MwSt.-Obergrenze für die Mitgliedstaaten?

8. Was gedenkt die Kommission, in Bezug auf die Stellungnahme Nr. 8/2012 des Europäischen Rechnungshofes betreffend „strafrechtlicher Bekämpfung von gegen die finanziellen Interessen der Europäischen Union gerichtetem Betrug“ zu tun?

Antwort von Herrn Šemeta im Namen der Kommission
(25. März 2013)

Die Kommission kennt diese Studie, hat aber noch keine Erhebungen über MwSt.-Betrug im Grundnahrungsmittelsektor durchgeführt. In einer von ihr in Auftrag gegebenen Studie zur Prüfung der MwSt.-Lücke ([2]) in den 27 Mitgliedstaaten im Zeitraum 2007-2010 wird eine ökonometrische Schätzung der Determinanten der MwSt.-Lücke erfolgen und geprüft, wie sich die Steuersätze auf den Umfang der Lücke auswirken. Anhand dieser Studie wird die Kommission u. a einen möglichen Zusammenhang zwischen höheren MwSt.-Sätzen und dem Ausmaß der MwSt.-Lücke analysieren können.

Am 6. Dezember 2012 nahm die Kommission einen Aktionsplan ([3]) zur Verstärkung der Bekämpfung von Steuerbetrug und Steuerhinterziehung an, der spezifische Maßnahmen zur Bekämpfung von MwSt.-Betrug vorsieht.

Die Mehrwertsteuer ist nach der Rechtsprechung des Gerichtshofs der Europäischen Union ([4]) ein Teil der Eigenmittel der Union und fällt daher in den Aufgabenbereich des OLAF gemäß der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1073/99 des Rates.

Bezüglich der Aufgaben von EUROPOL im Bereich der Betrugsbekämpfung kann diese Einrichtung direkt Auskunft geben. EUROPOL verstärkt den Informationsaustausch über Steuerdelikte, insbesondere Karussellbetrug. Des Weiteren unterstützt und/oder koordiniert EUROPOL strafrechtliche Ermittlungen.

([1]) Ernst & Young: On the budget neutral elimination of VAT fraud in the basic food sector.
([2]) Die MwSt.-Lücke ist die Differenz zwischen den tatsächlich entrichteten MwSt.-Beträgen und der theoretischen Netto MwSt.-Schuld der gesamten Volkswirtschaft. Sie ist keine Messgröße für den MwSt.-Betrug, da sie auch aufgrund rechtmäßiger Steuervermeidungsmaßnahmen nicht entrichtete oder aufgrund von Insolvenzen im Zuge regulärer Geschäftstätigkeiten nicht erhobene Mehrwertsteuer umfassen könnte.
([3]) KOM(2012)722 endg. vom 6.12.2012.
([4]) Siehe z. B. Urteil vom 26. Februar 2013 (Rechtssache 617/10).

Die Kommission hat in der Vergangenheit zweimal Vorschläge für einen MwSt.-Regelsteuersatz mit einer Bandbreite von mindestens 15 bis höchstens 25 % vorgelegt. In beiden Fällen beschloss der Rat, nur den Grundsatz eines Mindestsatzes von 15 % aufzugreifen.

Im Juli 2012 schlug die Kommission eine Richtlinie zur strafrechtlichen Bekämpfung von Betrug vor, der die finanziellen Interessen der Europäischen Union beeinträchtigt. Der Vorschlag bezieht sich auch auf MwSt.-Betrug. Wird er von Parlament und Rat angenommen, würde die Definition von Betrug und damit zusammenhängenden Straftaten geklärt und EU-weit wären ein angemessenes Strafmaß sowie ausreichend lange Verjährungsfristen gewährleistet.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000609/13
to the Commission
Elisabeth Köstinger (PPE)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: VAT fraud on staple foods

According to a recent study ([1]) by Ernst & Young, VAT fraud on staple foods in Hungary amounts to EUR 450 million per annum. The study estimates that tax fraud in Eastern and Central Europe is probably twice that amount. It comes to the conclusion that VAT rates of 25% and 27% are the main reason for VAT fraud in countries like Hungary and Romania.

In view of this, could the Commission answer the following:

1. Is the Commission already informed of the situation described here and is the Commission aware of other cases in other Member States with high rates of VAT, such as Romania, Bulgaria and Slovakia?

2. Has the Commission conducted surveys on VAT fraud in the staple foods sector? If so, can the Commission provide information on the relevant product groups?

3. What steps has the Commission taken in this regard to combat fraud?

4. What are the tasks facing Europol and OLAF in this context?

5. Can the Commission draw a direct link between the VAT rates of 25% and 27% and the fraud revealed in the study?

6. Would a decrease in the VAT rate on staple foods to 10% reduce the level of fraud?

7. What is the Commission's assessment of the introduction of an upper limit for VAT in the Member States?

8. What steps does the Commission intend to take in relation to Opinion No 8/2012 of the European Court of Auditors concerning 'the fight against fraud to the Union's financial interests by means of criminal law'?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(25 March 2013)

The Commission is aware of the study but has not conducted any surveys on VAT fraud in the staple food sector. It has ordered a study to assess the VAT gap ([2]), in the 27 EU Member States for the period 2007-2010. As part of the study, the contractor will make an econometric estimate of the determinants of the VAT gap, including the effect of the VAT rates on its size. After the conclusion of the study, the Commission will have an additional tool to analyse the possible link between higher VAT rates and the size of the VAT gap.

The Commission adopted on 6 December 2012 an Action Plan ([3]) to strengthen the fight against tax fraud and tax evasion, including specific measures to address VAT fraud.

VAT, according to the jurisprudence of the European Court of Justice ([4]), is part of the Union's own resources. It therefore falls within OLAF's mandate as defined in the Council Regulation 1073/99.

Europol should be contacted directly as regards its tasks concerning fight against fraud. It enhances information exchange concerning tax related crimes notably VAT carousel fraud. It also supports and/or coordinates related criminal investigations.

([1]) Ernst & Young: On the budget neutral elimination of VAT fraud in the basic food sector.
([2]) The VAT gap is the difference between accrued VAT receipts and a theoretical net VAT liability for the economy as a whole. It is not a measure of VAT fraud as it might include VAT not paid as a result of legitimate tax avoidance measures or VAT that is not collected due to insolvencies arising as a result of regular business activity.
([3]) COM(2012) 722 final of 6.12.2012.
([4]) See e.g. judgment of 26 February 2013 (case 617/10).

The Commission has in the past presented twice proposals providing for a standard VAT rate band with a minimum rate of 15% and a maximum rate of 25%. In both cases the proposals were amended by the Council which decided to retain the principle of a minimum rate of 15% only.

In July of 2012, the Commission proposed a directive to fight fraud against the Union's financial interests by means of criminal law. The proposal also covers VAT-fraud. If adopted by the Council and the Parliament, it would clarify the definition of fraud and related offences and ensure an appropriate sanction level and sufficiently long statutory limitation throughout the EU.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000610/13
a la Comisión
Antolín Sánchez Presedo (S&D)
(22 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Compras transnacionales de tierras para la agricultura en los países en desarrollo

El informe «Operaciones transnacionales de compras de tierra para la agricultura en el Sur Global», publicado en abril de 2012 por un consorcio europeo de institutos y centros de investigación, acredita la compra por inversionistas u organismos del Estado de países ricos o emergentes de más de 83 millones de hectáreas de tierras de cultivo (aproximadamente el 1,7 % de las tierras de cultivo globales) en los países en desarrollo más pobres desde el año 2000.

El estudio determina cómo aproximadamente el 45 % de las adquisiciones de tierras de cultivo existentes y casi una tercera parte de las tierras adquiridas pueden plantear riesgos para la biodiversidad. Además, según el informe, más del 40 % de esos proyectos tienen como objetivo la exportación de alimentos a los países fuente, lo que podría sugerir que su seguridad alimentaria es una de las principales razones para comprar tierras, incluso a costa de la de los países donde se ubican estas.

En otro informe, «Nuestra tierra, nuestras vidas», presentado por Oxfam Internacional en octubre de 2012, se hace referencia a 21 quejas formales por violación de derechos de propiedad de la tierra presentadas desde 2008 por comunidades afectadas por proyectos del Banco Mundial.

Estos datos plantean preguntas sobre la sostenibilidad, abusos y ética de algunas operaciones de compraventa a gran escala de terrenos cultivables en países en desarrollo y sobre la protección de los derechos de sus propietarios. También suscitan cuestiones sobre las estrategias de producción, competencia, aproximación a la seguridad alimentaria y protección medioambiental de países y empresas de los estados económicamente más fuertes en relación con los más débiles.

La intensificación de estas prácticas coincide en la Unión Europea con una nueva revisión de la Política Agraria Común.

¿Tiene información la Comisión al respecto de las prácticas descritas en los dos informes anteriormente citados? ¿Tiene alguna opinión al respecto? ¿Qué medidas ha adoptado o va adoptar para asegurar que la compra de tierra para la agricultura por parte de inversores u organismos estatales europeos respeta los derechos de los propietarios locales y la biodiversidad y promueve el desarrollo sostenible? ¿Va a impulsar la Comisión alguna iniciativa internacional al respecto?

Respuesta del Sr. Piebalgs en nombre de la Comisión
(13 de marzo de 2013)

La Comisión conoce el contenido de ambos informes. De hecho, el primero es una publicación de la Matriz de las Tierras, una iniciativa organizada por la Coalición Internacional para el Acceso a la Tierra, que la Comisión apoya activamente desde 2006.

Ayudar a los países a concebir y aplicar sistemas integrales de tenencia de tierras que protejan a su población contra transacciones con tierras de carácter abusivo y no transparente es una prioridad de la cooperación al desarrollo de la UE en materia de seguridad alimentaria y desarrollo rural. Las Directrices voluntarias sobre la gobernanza responsable de tenencia de la tierra, la pesca y los bosques, aprobadas en mayo de 2012 por el Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria Mundial, especifica los principios de gobernanza relativos a los derechos de tenencia de tierras y las transacciones. La Comisión colaboró activamente en la adopción de las Directrices y apoya el proceso para transponerlas en la legislación nacional y en los sistemas de gobernanza, y ayuda financieramente a la FAO en su tarea de coordinación. Tras el compromiso alcanzado en pro de la Nueva Alianza por la Seguridad Alimentaria en el G8 en 2012, la Comisión está elaborando un proyecto de apoyo a la transposición de las Directrices en las políticas y sistemas nacionales relativos a la gobernanza de la tierra, incluido un componente sobre la responsabilidad de las inversiones agrarias.

Asimismo, se están preparando otras iniciativas, junto con Alemania y la actual Presidencia del G8, para mejorar la transparencia y la responsabilidad en las adquisiciones a gran escala en los países en desarrollo, con el fin de incentivar a inversores y Gobiernos a que faciliten información sobre las transacciones (incluidas las evaluaciones de impacto ambiental y social).

Además, la Comisión remite a Su Señoría a las respuestas a las preguntas escritas E-266/2013 y E-5839/2012 ([1]) y al acta de la comparecencia ante el Parlamento Europeo de 9 de octubre de 2012.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000610/13
to the Commission
Antolín Sánchez Presedo (S&D)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Transnational land deals for agriculture in developing countries

The report entitled 'Transnational Land Deals for Agriculture in the Global South', published in April 2012 by a European consortium of research institutes and centres, affirms that investors or State agencies in rich or emerging countries have purchased more than 83 million hectares of arable land (approximately 1.7% of global arable land) in the poorest developing countries since 2000.

The study identifies how approximately 45% of purchases of existing arable land and almost one third of the land acquired may pose risks to biodiversity. Furthermore, according to the report, the aim of more than 40% of these projects is to export food to the countries of origin, which may suggest that food security is one of the main reasons to buy land, even at the expense of the countries where the land is located.

Another report entitled 'Our Land, Our Lives', presented by Oxfam International in October 2012, refers to 21 formal complaints brought since 2008 for violation of land ownership rights by communities affected by World Bank projects.

These figures raise questions about sustainability, the abuses and ethics of some large-scale sales of arable land in developing countries, and the protection of landowners' rights. Questions also arise regarding the production strategies, competence, approach to food security and environmental protection measures of the economically strongest Member State countries and businesses in relation to the weakest.

In the EU, the intensification of these practices coincides with a further revision of the common agricultural policy.

Does the Commission have any information regarding the practices described in the two aforesaid reports? What is the Commission's opinion on the matter? What measures has the Commission adopted or does it plan to adopt to ensure that the purchase of land for agricultural use by EU investors or agencies respects the rights of local landowners and biodiversity and promotes sustainable development? Does the Commission plan to promote an international initiative on this matter?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(13 March 2013)

The Commission is aware of the content of the two mentioned reports. Actually, the first report is a publication of the Land Matrix, an initiative hosted by the International Land Coalition, which is actively supported by the Commission since 2006.

Helping countries to design and implement comprehensive land tenure systems, protecting their population against abusive and non-transparent land deals, is a priority in EU development cooperation for food security and rural development. The Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Forestry and Fisheries adopted in May 2012 by the World Committee on Food Security provides governance principles on the respect of land tenure rights and transactions. The Commission was an active partner in the adoption of the guidelines and supports the process of translating the guidelines into national legislation and governance systems, and financially supports FAO in its coordination. Following a commitment to the New Alliance for Food Security at the G8 in 2012, the Commission is preparing a project to support the transposition of the guidelines into national land policies and governance systems, including a component on responsible agricultural investments.

Also other initiatives together with Germany and the current G8 chair are under preparation to improve transparency and accountability in large-scale acquisitions in developing countries by means of incentivizing investors and governments to provide information on the land deals (including environmental and social impact assessments).

The Commission also refers the Honourable Member to answers to written questions E-266/2013 and E-5839/2012 ([1]) and to the records of the Parliamentary hearing of 9 October 2012.

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

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000611/13
alla Commissione
Fiorello Provera (EFD)
(22 gennaio 2013)

Oggetto: Contributo UE al programma UNRWA di creazione di occupazione a Gaza

Il 18 gennaio 2013 l'UNRWA ha rilasciato una dichiarazione stampa che annuncia che l'Unione europea contribuirebbe con 14 milioni di euro al programma di creazione di posti di lavoro (JCP) dell'Ufficio di Gaza dell'Agenzia delle Nazioni Unite per il soccorso e l'occupazione (UNRWA). Questa somma sarà messa a disposizione attraverso lo strumento UE per la stabilità.

Il rappresentante dell'Unione europea, John Gatt-Rutter, ha detto: «Il nostro nuovo sostegno è una risposta diretta alla elevata disoccupazione a Gaza e al suo terribile impatto economico. Mettendo a disposizione i finanziamenti per il programma per la creazione di posti di lavoro dell'UNRWA — con cui l'UE ha un partenariato forte e duraturo — siamo in grado di portare un sollievo immediato a molte delle famiglie più vulnerabili».

Il Direttore dell'UNRWA per le Operazioni a Gaza, Robert Turner, ha anche osservato che «Questi finanziamenti contribuiranno a mitigare gli effetti della prolungata crisi economica sulle famiglie più vulnerabili dei rifugiati palestinesi attraverso opportunità di occupazione a breve termine e il relativo tanto necessario reddito a più di 10 000 persone».

La Commissione europea e l'UNRWA hanno firmato una dichiarazione congiunta nel settembre 2011, in cui indicano l'intenzione dell'UE di contribuire per un importo annuo di 80 milioni di euro per il periodo 2011-2013. L'Unione europea è il maggiore prestatore multilaterale di assistenza internazionale ai rifugiati palestinesi.

1. Quali passi sta effettuando la Commissione con questo ultimo contributo alla UNRWA per garantire che non verrà utilizzato abusivamente a scopo di finanziamento del terrorismo?

2. I finanziamenti saranno distribuiti con la supervisione del governo di Hamas? E qual è il ruolo di Hamas relativamente al programma UNRWA di creazione di posti di lavoro?

Risposta di Štefan Füle a nome della Commissione
(15 marzo 2013)

1. Il contributo dell'Unione europea al fondo generale dell'Agenzia delle Nazioni Unite per il soccorso e l'occupazione dei profughi palestinesi nei paesi del Medio Oriente (UNRWA) è utilizzato prevalentemente per sostenere i costi del personale UNRWA impegnato nell'erogazione di servizi essenziali ai profughi — personale medico, docente e che presta assistenza sociale ai profughi più vulnerabili. L'UNRWA è tenuta a fornire rendiconti finanziari dettagliati per tutti i contributi UE.

2. L'Agenzia versa la retribuzione degli addetti al programma per la creazione di posti di lavoro nei loro conti bancari personali. Le autorità de facto a Gaza non svolgono alcun ruolo nel programma per la creazione di posti di lavoro dell'UNRWA, che è interamente gestito dall'Agenzia stessa.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000611/13
to the Commission
Fiorello Provera (EFD)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: EU contribution to UNWRA for job creation programme in Gaza

On 18 January 2013 UNWRA released a press statement announcing that the EU would contribute EUR 14 million to the job creation programme (JCP) of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) Gaza Field Office. This sum would be provided through the EU's Instrument for Stability.

The EU representative, Mr John Gatt-Rutter, said: 'Our new support is a direct response to the high unemployment in Gaza and its dire economic impact. By providing funds for the Job Creation Programme of UNRWA — with whom the EU has a strong and lasting partnership — we can bring immediate relief to many of the most vulnerable families'.

UNWRA's Director of Operations in Gaza, Robert Turner, also noted: 'These funds will assist in mitigating the effects of the protracted economic crisis on vulnerable Palestine refugee households by providing short-term employment opportunities and much-needed income to over 10 000 individuals'.

The Commission and UNRWA signed a joint declaration in September 2011, indicating the EU's intention to contribute an annual amount of EUR 80 million for the period 2011-2013. The European Union is the largest multilateral provider of international assistance to Palestinian refugees.

1. What steps is the Commission taking with this latest contribution to UNWRA to ensure that it will not be misused for the purpose of terrorist funding?

2. Will the funds be distributed with the oversight of the Hamas government, and what is the role of Hamas with regard to UNWRA's job creation programme?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(15 March 2013)

1. The contribution of the European Union to UNRWA's General Fund is used overwhelmingly for staff costs of those UNRWA employees providing essential services to the refugee population — medical and teaching staff and those providing social assistance to the most vulnerable refugees. UNRWA is obliged to provide detailed financial reports for all EU contributions.

2. Wages for job creation programme workers are paid by UNRWA into their personal bank accounts. The 'de facto' authorities in Gaza have no role whatsoever in the Job Creation Programme of UNRWA, which is managed entirely by the Agency itself.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000612/13
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(22 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: VP/HR — Guiné-Bissau: futuras eleições — papel da UE

Será importante para a resolução da grave crise que afeta a Guiné-Bissau que seja retomada a ordem constitucional e que, nesse contexto, possam ter lugar eleições legislativas e presidenciais.

Assim, pergunto à Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante:

1. Sabendo-se as grandes carências técnicas e materiais da Guiné-Bissau, estaria disponível para fazer deslocar para aquele país missões de observação eleitoral de modo a que pudessem atestar a lisura e a justeza de futuros atos eleitorais?

2. Que papel pode assumir a União Europeia na formação política e, em particular, eleitoral dos cidadãos guineenses e em que medida poderá auxiliar a criação e estabelecimento de estruturas técnicas de apoio aos processos eleitorais e que assegurem que as mesmas respeitam as leis do seu país e que estas se conformam com as melhores práticas internacionais nesse tocante?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Ashton em nome da Comissão
(15 de março de 2013)

Ainda é muito cedo para considerar a possibilidade de uma observação eleitoral da UE na Guiné-Bissau.

As autoridades da fase de transição ainda não marcaram a data das eleições nem apresentaram um plano com dados pormenorizados, metodologia, calendário, orçamento, etc.

Por conseguinte, o apoio às eleições, incluindo a observação das mesmas, é uma opção que deverá ser analisada quando os elementos mencionados supra estiverem disponíveis e tendo em conta a situação política do momento.

Por diversas vezes no passado, a UE deu apoio técnico à organização de eleições na Guiné-Bissau. Foram feitas recomendações concretas com o objetivo de melhorar todo o processo eleitoral. O grau de execução dessas recomendações é irregular, embora o nível de eficiência e de credibilidade das eleições anteriores tenha sido considerado suficiente pela maioria dos observadores internacionais.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000612/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Guinea-Bissau: future elections — the EU's role

A return to the constitutional order and the consequent holding of legislative and presidential elections will go a long way towards resolving the serious crisis affecting Guinea-Bissau.

1. Given that Guinea-Bissau is seriously lacking in both technical and material resources, would the Vice-President/High Representative be willing to send election observation missions to the country to verify the integrity and fairness of future elections?

2. What role can the EU play in policy formation, particularly as regards general elections in Guinea-Bissau, and to what extent can it help to create and establish technical support structures for electoral processes, ensuring that these comply with both national law and with relevant international best practice?

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

It is still too early to consider the possibility of EU electoral observation in Guinea-Bissau.

The transition authorities have not yet established the date of the elections, nor have they presented any plan with details, methodology, timetable, budget, etc.

Support to the elections, including observation, is therefore an option which will have to be analysed when the above elements are available and in view of the political situation of the moment.

On several occasions in the past, the EU provided technical support to the organisation of elections in Guinea-Bissau. Concrete recommendations have been provided aiming at improving the overall electoral process. The degree of implementation of such recommendations remains uneven, although the level of efficiency and credibility of past elections was judged sufficient by most international observers.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000613/13
an die Kommission
Franz Obermayr (NI)
(22. Januar 2013)

Betrifft: Aktuelle Übergriffe auf christliche Gemeinden in der Türkei

In den vergangenen Jahren wurden Christen in der Türkei wiederholt Opfer von Übergriffen. Wegen mutmaßlicher Pläne für einen Anschlag auf eine christliche Gemeinde im Nordwesten der Türkei sind erst vor einigen Tagen 13 Verdächtige festgenommen worden. Sie hatten, Meldungen der Nachrichtenagentur AFP zufolge, ein Attentat auf einen protestantischen Pfarrer in Izmit, sowie auf Mitglieder seiner Gemeinde vorbereitet. Auch der Pastor der christlichen Gemeinde Karaali berichtet, in der Vergangenheit mehrere Todesdrohungen erhalten zu haben. Seiner bereits 1999 gegründeten Gemeinde gehören etwa 50 Gläubige an. 2006 wurde der italienische katholische Priester Andrea Santoro im nordosttürkischen Trabzon erschossen. Im April 2007 wurden ein deutscher Missionar und zwei zum Christentum konvertierte Türken ermordet. Daraus ergeben sich folgende Fragen:

1. Wie beurteilt die Kommission die aktuellen grausamen Anschläge auf Christen in der Türkei?

2. Während Muslime in christlichen Ländern ein Maximum an Religionsfreiheit genießen, herrscht in den islamischen Ländern eine unberechenbare, vielschichtige und zum Teil weitreichende Unterdrückung der Christen. Welche Bedingungen zur Umsetzung der verfassungsmäßig garantierten Religionsfreiheit für Christen werden von der EU für die weiteren Beitrittsverhandlungen von der Türkei eingefordert?

3. Schon im Jahresbericht 2007 des deutschen „Instituts für Islamfragen" wurde eine Zunahme der Angriffe gegen christliche Kirchen und deren kirchliche Mitarbeiter festgestellt — ausdrücklich wurde in dem Bericht festgehalten — dass ein Hauptgrund für die zunehmende Gewalt gegen Christen in der duldenden bis hin zur täterunterstützenden Haltung der türkischen Ordnungskräfte zu suchen sei. Kennt die Kommission diesen Bericht und wie steht sie dazu? Wie beurteilt die Kommission die Beitrittsverhandlungen im Lichte dieser Anschläge und in Anbetracht dieses Berichtes?

4. Welche Schritte werden seitens der EU unternommen — abseits der Beitrittsverhandlungen — um Christen in der Türkei die sorgenfreie und problemlose Ausübung ihrer Religion zu gewährleisten?

5. Auch im von der Türkei seit 1974 besetzten Nordzypern wird den zyprisch-orthodoxen Christen der Zugang zu ihren Klöstern und Kirchen verwehrt. Dagegen klagten südzypriotische Vertreter der Kirche vor dem Europäischen Gerichtshof für Menschenrechte. Wie sieht die Kommission die Chancen der Christen, Recht auf freie Religionsausübung im von den Türken besetzten Territorium vom EGMR zugesprochen zu bekommen?

Antwort von Herrn Füle im Namen der Kommission
(14. März 2013)

Der Kommission sind die in der Anfrage des Herrn Abgeordneten enthaltenen Informationen bekannt und sie hat sich zu den meisten von ihnen in ihren jährlichen Fortschrittsberichten über die Türkei geäußert.

Was die Gedanken-, Gewissens- und Religionsfreiheit betrifft, so kam die Kommission in ihrem Fortschrittsbericht 2012 zu folgendem Ergebnis: „Insgesamt wurden bei der Gedanken-, Gewissens- und Religionsfreiheit begrenzte Fortschritte erzielt. Einige Fortschritte gab es bei der Wehrdienstverweigerung aus Gewissensgründen, indem die Rechtsprechung des Europäischen Gerichtshofs für Menschenrechte angewandt wurde. Der Dialog mit den nichtmuslimischen Religionsgemeinschaften wurde fortgeführt. Personen, die sich zu Minderheitsreligionen oder aber zur Konfessionslosigkeit bekennen, waren jedoch weiterhin Diskriminierungen und extremistischen Drohungen ausgesetzt. Ein Rechtsrahmen im Einklang mit dem EGMR ([1]) muss noch geschaffen werden, damit alle nichtmuslimischen Religionsgemeinschaften und die alevitische Gemeinschaft ([2]) ohne ungebührliche Einschränkungen arbeiten können". Die Kommission erörtert diese Fragen mit den türkischen Behörden bei entsprechenden Anlässen.

([1]) EGMR= Europäischer Gerichtshof für Menschenrechte.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2012/package/tr_rapport_2012_en.pdf

Darüber hinaus wirft die Kommission gegenüber der türkisch-zyprischen Gemeinschaft regelmäßig die Frage der Religionsfreiheit auf, wobei sie auf die herausragende Bedeutung der Achtung der Religions- und Glaubensfreiheit hinweist. Dies wird sie gegebenenfalls auch weiterhin tun.

Von der Türkei wird außerdem erwartet, dass sie im Einklang mit ihren internationalen Verpflichtungen die Urteile des EGMR umsetzt.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000613/13
to the Commission
Franz Obermayr (NI)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Recent attacks on Christian communities in Turkey

In recent years, Christians have repeatedly suffered attack in Turkey. Just a few days ago, 13 suspects were apprehended on suspicion of plotting an attack on a Christian community in north-western Turkey. According to reports from the AFP news agency, they were preparing for an attack on a Protestant minister in Izmit and members of his church. The pastor of the Christian community in Karaali also reports having received numerous death threats in the past. Founded in 1999, his community consists of about 50 members. In 2006, Italian Catholic priest Andrea Santoro was shot dead in Trabzon in north-eastern Turkey. In April 2007, a German missionary and two Turks who had converted to Christianity were murdered. This raises the following questions:

1. What is the Commission's assessment of the current horrific attacks on Christians in Turkey?

2. While Muslims enjoy maximum freedom of religious beliefs in Christian countries, in Islamic countries Christians suffer arbitrary, multi-faceted and, in some cases, endemic oppression. What conditions will the EU demand from Turkey for the transposition of the constitutionally guaranteed freedom of religious beliefs for Christians in its continuing accession negotiations?

3. Back in 2007, the annual report from the German 'Institute for Islamic Issues' identified an increase in attacks on Christian churches and church officials. The report expressly stated that one of the main reasons for increasing violence against Christians was the tolerant if not complicit attitude of the Turkish armed forces. Is the Commission familiar with this report and what is its position on it? How does the Commission assess the accession negotiations in light of these attacks and in the context of this report?

4. What steps will the EU take — apart from the accession negotiations — to ensure that Christians in Turkey are allowed to practise their religion without interference?

5. Cypriot Orthodox Christians in Northern Cyprus, which has been occupied by Turkey since 1974, are also denied access to their convents and churches. Southern Cypriot church representatives have taken this case to the European Court of Human Rights. In the Commission's opinion, how likely is it that the ECHR will uphold Christians' right to practise their religion freely in the Turkish-occupied territory?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(14 March 2013)

The Commission is aware of the information included in the question of the Honourable Member and has commented on most of it in the context of successive Progress Reports on Turkey.

As regards freedom of thought, conscience and religion, in its 2012 Progress Report the Commission concluded that 'overall, there was limited progress on freedom of thought, conscience and religion. There has been some progress on conscientious objection in terms of application of the case law of the European Court of Human Rights. Dialogue with the non-Muslim religious communities continued. However, people professing faith in minority religions or indeed no faith continued to be discriminated against, and were subject to threats from extremists. A legal framework in line with the ECHR ([1]) has yet to be established to ensure that all non-Muslim religious communities and the Alevi ([2]) community can function without undue constraints'. The Commission raises these issues with the Turkish authorities on appropriate occasions.

In addition, the Commission also regularly raises the issue of religious freedom with the Turkish Cypriot community and will continue to take up this issue as appropriate, stressing the paramount importance of respecting freedom of religion or belief.

Finally, Turkey is expected to implement the judgments of the ECHR as part of its international obligations.

([1]) ECHR = European Court of Human Rights.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2012/package/tr_rapport_2012_en.pdf

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-000614/13
à la Commission
Robert Goebbels (S&D)
(22 janvier 2013)

Objet: Soutien financier de la Commission à une étude contre le gaz de schiste

L'organisation «Friends of the Earth» vient de publier une étude contre l'exploitation du gaz de schiste en Europe. C'est le droit le plus strict de cette organisation. Mais il est étonnant que cette prétendue étude scientifique soit largement financée par des services de la Commission, en l'occurrence la DG Développement et la DG Environnement.

Même s'il est rappelé que le contenu de cette étude n'engage que la responsabilité de ses auteurs et ne peut pas être regardée comme une prise de position de l'Union européenne, ce patronage financier de deux directions générales de la Commission est susceptible de faire croire au public que la Commission œuvre en sous-main contre l'exploitation de cette nouvelle forme d'énergie en Europe. L'utilisation du drapeau européen confère en tout cas au lecteur une sorte de «caution morale» de la Commission européenne pour cette publication.

1. La Commission n'est-elle pas d'avis que l'argent du contribuable européen ne devrait pas être utilisé pour soutenir des compagnes partisanes et manquant d'objectivité scientifique?

2. Quel est le montant des subventions accordées par les deux directions générales et qui en assure la responsabilité politique?

3. La Commission est-elle disposée à financer également des travaux d'organisations militant en faveur de l'exploitation du gaz de schiste?

4. La Commission et ses services ne devraient-elles pas s'imposer une plus grande retenue sur un sujet controversé où il n'existe apparemment pas de doctrine officielle de l'Union européenne?

Réponse donnée par M. Piebalgs au nom de la Commission
(22 avril 2013)

L'étude en question a été publiée par l'organisation «Friends of the Earth» en 2012. Selon les informations dont la Commission dispose, cette organisation a l'intention d'inclure le coût de cette publication dans les dépenses admissibles au titre d'une convention de subvention bien plus vaste conclue entre la DG Développement et coopération de la Commission européenne et l'organisation «Milieu Defensie» ([1]).

Le contrat de subvention met l'accent sur la durabilité environnementale et le développement, en particulier en Afrique subsaharienne. Il fait spécifiquement référence au septième objectif du millénaire pour le développement, mais ne mentionne pas le gaz de schiste. Plusieurs publications ont été produites dans le cadre de ce contrat. La Commission a constaté avec surprise que l'un des rapports porte sur le gaz de schiste en Europe. Ce rapport n'a pas encore été présenté à la Commission en vue de l'obtention d'un remboursement. Toutefois, à première vue, il semble en effet que ce rapport dépasse la portée du contrat et que toute demande de remboursement serait irrecevable. Une fois que le rapport d'activité lui aura été présenté par le bénéficiaire, la Commission examinera attentivement la déclaration de dépenses et prendra les mesures nécessaires pour faire en sorte que les fonds de l'UE soient utilisés de manière appropriée.

Il convient néanmoins de préciser que le contenu des rapports engage la responsabilité du seul bénéficiaire et ne devrait en aucune manière être considéré comme reflétant la position de l'Union européenne. La Commission note que la clause de non-responsabilité requise figure bien dans la publication. La présence du drapeau est obligatoire; cette exigence s'applique à tous les projets financés par l'UE.

La Commission a prévu dans son programme de travail pour 2013 la mise en place d'un «cadre d'évaluation des questions liées à l'environnement, au climat et à l'énergie visant à permettre une extraction sûre et sécurisée des hydrocarbures non conventionnels». Cette initiative devrait être achevée d'ici la fin de cette année ([2]).

([1]) La subvention concernée a été octroyée dans le cadre du programme visant à encourager les acteurs non étatiques à participer à l'éducation au développement, pour un projet intitulé «Making Extractive Industry work for Climate and Development»: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/finance/dci/non_state_actors_fr.htm

([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/integration/energy/unconventional_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000614/13
to the Commission
Robert Goebbels (S&D)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Financial support by the Commission for a study opposing shale gas

Friends of the Earth has just published a study opposing extraction of shale gas in Europe. It has every right to do so. What is astonishing however is that this supposedly scientific study has been largely funded by Commission services, in this instance DG Development and DG Environment.

Even if it is stated that the contents of the study are the sole responsibility of its authors and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union, this financial patronage by two Commission directorates-general is likely to make the public believe that the Commission is working behind the scenes to oppose exploitation of this new form of energy in Europe. Readers of the study will in any case see the use of the EU flag as conferring a kind of 'moral support' by the Commission for this publication.

1. Would the Commission not agree that EU taxpayers' money should not be used to support partisan campaigns that lack scientific objectivity?

2. What was the total cost of the subsidies granted by the two directorates-general and who bears political responsibility for this?

3. Is the Commission also prepared to fund work by organisations campaigning for shale gas extraction?

4. Surely the Commission and its services should show greater restraint in regard to a controversial issue on which the European Union does not appear to have an official line?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(22 April 2013)

The publication referred to was issued by Friends of the Earth in 2012. The Commission has been informed that Friends of Earth intends to submit the cost of the publication as eligible expenditure under a much wider grant agreement between the EU Commission Development and Cooperation DG and 'Milieu Defensie' ([1]).

The grant contract focuses on environmental sustainability and development, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. It makes specific reference to Millennium Development Goal 7 but does not mention shale gas. Several publications have been produced in the framework of this contract. The Commission was surprised to find out that one of the reports focuses on shale gas in Europe. This report has not yet been submitted to the Commission for reimbursement. However, based on a preliminary assessment it does indeed seem that the report goes beyond the scope of the contract and if submitted for reimbursement would not be eligible. Once the activity report has been submitted by the beneficiary, the Commission will carefully assess the cost claim and take the measures needed to make sure that EU support is used appropriately.

It should be added, however, that the content of the reports remains the responsibility of the beneficiary and should in no way be taken to reflect the views of the EU. The Commission notes that the required disclaimer is included in the publication. The presence of the flag is a compulsory requirement for all EU financed projects.

The Commission has included in its Work Programme for 2013 the development of an 'Environmental, Climate and Energy Assessment Framework to Enable Safe and Secure Unconventional Hydrocarbon Extraction'. This initiative is expected to be completed by the end of this year ([2]).

([1]) This grant was awarded under the Non-State Actor programme for 'Development Education', for a project focused on 'Making Extractive Industry work for Climate and Development': http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/finance/dci/non_state_actors_en.htm

([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/integration/energy/unconventional_en.htm

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000615/13
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(22 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Reforma laboral y ajustes de plantilla en bancos nacionalizados

El Gobierno español, a través del FROB, ha anunciado drásticos ajustes de plantilla sin negociar en las entidades financieras nacionalizadas. Por eso, los sindicatos bancarios han convocado una huelga en Bankia, NCG Banco y Banco de Valencia para el próximo 6 de febrero.

Los sindicatos aseguran que, de cumplirse los planes ya anunciados por las entidades, este año saldrán del sector financiero otros 20 000 trabajadores, lo que suman 50 000 trabajadores menos en el sector en menos de tres años. Las entidades nacionalizadas no han realizado ningún esfuerzo negociador para alcanzar acuerdos sobre la reducción de plantilla, sino que utilizan el Memorando de Entendimiento (MoU) como «excusa».

Sin embargo, el MoU concede un plazo de hasta cinco años, con lo que hay margen para pactar medidas no traumáticas.

Por otro lado, la última reforma laboral que adoptó España, con el visto bueno de la UE, facilita el despido de empleados públicos, por lo que sugiere que existía un plan premeditado para facilitar el despido de los trabajadores y las trabajadoras de los bancos cuya nacionalización y rescate eran previsibles.

1. Cuando la Comisión hizo las recomendaciones sobre el despido en el sector público, ¿preveía el despido y los ERE en las entidades financieras nacionalizadas?

2. En el MoU se acuerda la reestructuración del sector financiero. ¿Puede aclarar si esto implica la reducción inmediata de la plantilla? ¿Cómo garantiza esta reducción la eficiencia y competitividad de las entidades nacionalizadas en el mercado financiero?

3. Equipos de la Comisión controlan el trabajo del FROB. ¿Estos no exigen que se lleve a cabo una negociación colectiva con los sindicatos en los bancos nacionalizados?

4. ¿Exigirá la Comisión al FROB que no realice los despidos hasta que no se haga un proceso de negociación adecuado y se llegue a un acuerdo entre las partes afectadas?

5. En vistas del próximo semestre europeo y de las recomendaciones que se enviarán, ¿conoce cuál es el efecto de esta medida sobre el problema general de desempleo en España?

Respuesta del Sr. Almunia en nombre de la Comisión
(13 de marzo de 2013)

Las autoridades españolas realizaron la reducción de sucursales y empleados de los bancos de propiedad estatal con fines de reestructuración. Deben garantizar que el plan de reestructuración cumple la legislación nacional.

La Comisión evaluó y aprobó los planes de reestructuración de los bancos de conformidad con las normas sobre ayudas estatales y con los criterios del Memorando de Entendimiento (MOU). Las autoridades españolas realizaron compromisos de ejecución, en particular sobre la reducción de las sucursales y de los empleados. El período de ejecución se extiende hasta finales de 2017, pero algunos compromisos específicos podrían tener una fecha de ejecución anterior.

El objetivo de los planes es garantizar que los bancos subvencionados recuperan la viabilidad y alcanzan una rentabilidad sostenible. Aumentarán su eficacia mediante la reorientación hacia las actividades principales y las regiones en las que tienen una buena base de clientes y una buena rentabilidad global.

La Comisión es responsable de la aplicación de las normas en materia de ayudas estatales y del seguimiento de la aplicación de sus decisiones. No tiene competencias de supervisión en las actividades desarrolladas por el FROB.

La negociación colectiva se regula a escala nacional. La legislación nacional establece la naturaleza y el grado de participación de los sindicatos en el proceso de reestructuración de los bancos de propiedad estatal. No obstante, las autoridades nacionales deben garantizar que los empresarios informen y consulten a los representantes de los trabajadores sobre los medios para evitar o reducir los despidos antes de decidir efectuar despidos colectivos ([1]).

Las recomendaciones de la Comisión para el Semestre Europeo 2013 se basarán en un análisis en profundidad de los retos de la política económica de España.

([1]) De acuerdo con la legislación de la UE, en particular la Directiva del Consejo 98/59/CE, de 20 de julio de 1998 relativa a la aproximación de las legislaciones de los Estados miembros que se refieren a los despidos colectivos, DO L 225 de 12.8.1998, p. 16.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000615/13
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Labour reform and workforce reductions in nationalised banks

The Spanish Government, through the Fund for Orderly Bank Restructuring (FOBR), has announced drastic non-negotiated workforce reductions in nationalised banks. That is why bank trade unions have called a strike in Bankia, NCG Banco and Banco de Valencia for 6 February.

The trade unions claim that if the plans already announced by the institutions are carried out, another 20 000 workers will leave the financial sector this year, resulting in a fall of 50 000 workers in the sector in less than three years. The nationalised institutions have made no effort to reach negotiated agreements on workforce reductions, using instead the memorandum of understanding (MoU) as an 'excuse'.

However, as the MoU allows a period of five years, there is a margin for agreeing non-traumatic measures.

Moreover, the latest labour reform adopted by Spain, with the approval of the EU, makes it easier to dismiss public employees. This suggests that there was a premeditated plan to dismiss workers more easily from banks for which nationalisation and rescue were foreseeable.

1. When the Commission made its recommendations on dismissal in the public sector, did it anticipate such dismissals and labour force adjustment plans (LFAPs) in nationalised banks?

2. Restructuring of the financial sector is agreed in the MoU. Can the Commission clarify whether this means an immediate reduction of the workforce? How does this reduction ensure the efficiency and competitiveness of nationalised institutions in the financial market?

3. Teams from the Commission control the FOBR's work. Do they not require collective bargaining to be undertaken with trade unions in nationalised banks?

4. Will the Commission require the FOBR to refrain from making dismissals until a proper negotiation process has taken place and an agreement has been reached between the parties concerned?

5. Looking ahead to the next European Semester and the recommendations to be sent, is the Commission aware of the effect this measure has on Spain's general unemployment problem?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(13 March 2013)

The reduction in State-owned bank branches and employees was done by the Spanish authorities for restructuring purposes. They must ensure that the restructuring plan complies with national law.

The Commission assessed and approved the Spanish banks' restructuring plans under state aid rules and the MoU criteria. The Spanish authorities made implementation commitments, in particular about reducing branches and employees. The implementation period runs until end-2017 but specific commitments may have an earlier implementation date.

The goal of the plans is to ensure that aided banks return to viability and attain sustainable profitability. They will increase efficiency by re-focusing on core businesses and regions, where they have a good client base and good overall profitability.

The Commission is responsible for applying state aid rules and monitoring the application of its decisions. It has no supervision powers over activities developed by the FROB.

Collective bargaining is regulated at national level. National law establishes the nature and degree of trade union involvement in the restructuring process of State-owned banks. However, national authorities have to ensure that employers inform and consult employees' representatives about ways of avoiding or reducing redundancies before they decide to carry out collective redundancies ([1]).

The Commission's recommendations for the 2013 European Semester will be based on a thorough analysis of Spain's economic policy challenges.

([1]) According to EC law, in particular Council Directive 98/59/EC of 20 July 1998 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to collective redundancies, OJ L 225, 12.8.1998, p. 16.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000616/13
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(22 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Prospección de hidrocarburos en las Islas Baleares

El año pasado, el Consejo de Ministros de España autorizó a la empresa Capricorn Spain SL para hacer prospecciones petrolíferas en el Golfo de Valencia, cerca de las Islas Pitiusas, concretamente a 40 y 60 kilómetros de Ibiza. Se espera que hagan sus primeros pozos en 2014 y 2015 en algún punto de los casi 4 000 kilómetros cuadrados que tienen adjudicados. A estas prospecciones se suman en España las realizadas en la Costa Brava y en las Islas Canarias.

En la propuesta de Reglamento (COM(2011)0688) sobre la seguridad de las actividades de prospección, exploración y producción de petróleo y de gas mar adentro, se explica cómo reforzar los medios para influir en las normas de seguridad en alta mar y se prevé la obligatoriedad de los Estados miembros a informar a la Comisión de las acciones que puedan ser susceptibles de accidentes en alta mar.

Asimismo, la Directiva 2008/56/CE por la que se establece un marco de acción comunitaria para la política del medio marino dispone en el artículo 13, apartado 5, la necesidad del Gobierno español de informar a la autoridad competente para evitar cualquier desastre ecológico.

1. ¿Qué opinión tiene la Comisión respecto al inicio de prospecciones petrolíferas en una zona de alto valor ecológico y de elevada dependencia económica del turismo como es el caso de las Islas Pitiusas?

2. ¿Ha informado España a la UE como indica la Directiva 2008/56/CE? ¿Sabe si se han realizado estudios de impacto medioambiental antes de la autorización de las prospecciones? ¿Considera indispensable estos estudios de impacto medioambiental? ¿Ha sido informada la Comisión sobre el lugar y el número de pozos que hará la empresa Capricorn Spain SL en la zona del Golfo de Valencia?

3. ¿Cree que los permisos otorgados cumplen con la Directiva 94/22/CE sobre concesión, producción y explotación de hidrocarburos? ¿Cree que las prospecciones en el Mediterráneo cumplirían plenamente la propuesta de Reglamento que se está elaborando?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(26 de marzo de 2013)

La Comisión no ha recibido ninguna notificación de las autoridades españolas sobre las actividades descritas por Su Señoría. Se remite a Su Señoría a la respuesta a su pregunta P-000551/2013 ([1]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000616/13
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Prospecting for oil and gas in the Balearic Islands

Last year, the Spanish Council of Ministers authorised the company Capricorn Spain SL to prospect for oil in the Gulf of Valencia, near the Pitiusas Islands, more exactly between 40 and 60 kilometres from Ibiza. They are expected to drill their first wells in 2014 and 2015 somewhere in the almost 4 000 square kilometres that they have been allotted. These prospecting operations are in addition in Spain to those carried out on the Costa Brava and in the Canary Islands.

The proposal for a regulation (COM(2011)0688) on safety of offshore oil and gas prospection, exploration and production activities explains how to strengthen the means of influencing offshore safety standards and stipulates that Member States must inform the Commission of any actions that may be liable to accidents offshore.

Similarly, under Article 13(5) of Directive 2008/56/EC, which establishes a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy, the Spanish Government must inform the competent authority to avoid any ecological disaster.

1. What is the Commission's view on the launching of oil prospection in an area of great ecological value and high economic dependency on tourism like the Pitiusas Islands?

2. Has Spain informed the EU as Directive 2008/56/EC stipulates that it should? Does it know whether environmental impact studies were carried out before the authorisation to prospect was granted? Does it consider such environmental impact studies indispensable? Has the Commission been informed of where and of how many wells Capricorn Spain SL will drill in the Gulf of Valencia?

3. Does it believe that the licences issued comply with Directive 94/22/EC on the conditions for granting and using authorisations for the prospection, exploration and production of hydrocarbons? Does it believe that the prospecting operations in the Mediterranean will comply fully with the proposal for a regulation that is being drafted?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(26 March 2013)

The Commission has not received any notification from the Spanish authorities about the activities described by the Honorable Member. It would refer the Honorable Member to its answer to his Question P-000551/2013 ([1]).

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

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej P-000617/13
do Komisji
Filip Kaczmarek (PPE)
(22 stycznia 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Problemy finansowe TV Biełsat

TV Biełsat jest kanałem telewizyjnym powstałym w 2007 r. Pierwsza emisja programu tej niezależnej stacji, nadającej z Polski dla widzów na Białorusi, odbyła się 10 grudnia 2007 r. w Światowy Dzień Praw Człowieka. Pięć lat od rozpoczęcia swojej działalności Biełsat boryka się z dramatycznymi problemami spowodowanymi brakiem środków finansowych. Pod koniec listopada 2012 r. stacja musiała ograniczyć czas nadawania antenowego oraz zrezygnować z emisji programów na żywo.

TV Biełsat jest jednym z ważniejszych białoruskich mediów niezależnych, dostarczającym bieżących informacji z kraju i świata dla setek tysięcy Białorusinów. Programy emitowane na antenie Biełsatu poruszają tematy polityczne, ekonomiczne i społeczne, upowszechniają wiedzę dotyczącą historii i rodzimej kultury wśród białoruskiego społeczeństwa. Widzowie odnajdują w Biełsacie również oparcie dla niezależnego życia obywatelskiego.

Działalność Biełsatu jest głównie finansowana przez Telewizję Polską i polski MSZ. Stacja otrzymuje również pomoc ze strony Szwecji, Holandii, Norwegii oraz Rady Nordyckiej. Jednakże z powodu problemów finansowych Telewizji Polskiej budżet Biełsatu został znacznie uszczuplony, powodując znaczny niedobór środków finansowych oraz zagrażając przyszłej działalności anteny. TV Biełsat nie korzystała do tej pory ze wsparcia finansowego Unii Europejskiej.

Zwracam się z zapytaniem:

1. Czy Komisja posiada środki, które mogą zostać przeznaczone na finansowanie telewizji Biełsat?

2. Czy w prowadzonych w przyszłości działaniach Komisja ma zamiar wspierać działalność niezależnej białoruskiej stacji TV Biełsat?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Štefana Füleg w imieniu Komisji
(26 lutego 2013 r.)

Komisja jest w pełni świadoma ciągłego zainteresowania, jakie budzi kwestia telewizji Biełsat, a także dalszej konieczności wspierania tej stacji.

Przewidywanie obecnie wsparcie dla telewizji Biełsat przybiera następującą postać:

1. Szkolenia dla dziennikarzy telewizji Biełsat: dziennikarze pracujący dla TV Biełsat będą mogli uczestniczyć w szkoleniach organizowanych w ramach regionalnego program komunikacji na lata 2011-2013 wchodzącego w zakres Europejskiego Instrumentu Sąsiedztwa i Partnerstwa (ENPI).

2. Program telewizyjny poświęcony prawom człowieka: delegatura UE na Białorusi rozpoczęła negocjacje w sprawie finansowania projektu mającego na celu wyprodukowanie przez Biełsat TV programu dotyczącego praw człowieka. Realizacja projektu będzie mogła się rozpocząć po zamknięciu tych negocjacji.

Telewizja Biełsat może także składać oferty w odpowiedzi na globalne zaproszenia do składania ofert ogłaszane przez Komisję w ramach programów na rzecz praw człowieka.

Być może w niedalekiej przyszłości możliwe będzie wskazanie alternatywnych sposobów udzielenia telewizji Biełsat dodatkowego wsparcia z Europejskiego Funduszu na rzecz Demokracji.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-000617/13
to the Commission
Filip Kaczmarek (PPE)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Financial troubles at Belsat TV

Founded in 2007, Belsat TV is an independent television station that broadcasts programmes from Poland to viewers in Belarus. Its first broadcast took place on 10 December 2007 — World Human Rights Day. Five years later, Belsat is facing major problems owing to a lack of funds. In late November 2012, the station had to limit broadcast time and cease live broadcasts.

Belsat TV is one of the most important Belarusian independent media outlets, providing up-to-date international and domestic news to hundreds of thousands of Belarusians. Programmes broadcast by Belsat deal with political, economic and social issues; they disseminate knowledge of history and native culture to Belarusian society. Belsat also supports viewers in their attempts to lead an independent civil life.

Belsat's activities are largely funded by Telewizja Polska and the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It also receives support from Sweden, the Netherlands, Norway and the Nordic Council. However, financial difficulties at Telewizja Polska have resulted in Belsat's budget being significantly reduced, leading to a major funding shortfall and endangering the station's future broadcast activities. Belsat TV has so far not benefited from any EU financial support.

1. Does the Commission have access to funds that could be used to finance Belsat TV?

2. Does the Commission intend to support the activities of this independent Belarusian TVstation in the future?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(26 February 2013)

The Commission is well aware of the continuing interest in Belsat TV and the ongoing necessity to support this television station.

At present, the following support for Belsat is envisaged:

1. Training for Belsat journalists: The European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument (ENPI) Regional Communication programme 2011-2013 will offer training to journalists working for Belsat.

2. Human Rights TV programme: The EU Delegation to Belarus has started negotiations for funding a project for the production of a Human Rights programme on Belsat TV. This project can start once negotiations are finalised.

Belsat can also submit proposals for the global calls for proposals launched by the Commission under the Human Rights programmes.

In the near future the European Endowment for Democracy may also identify alternative ways to provide complementary support to Belsat.

(Suomenkielinen versio)

Kirjallisesti vastattava kysymys E-000618/13
komissiolle
Mitro Repo (S&D)
(22. tammikuuta 2013)

Aihe: Väärinkäytökset vähittäiskauppojen alihankintaketjuissa

Suomessa Finnwatchin julkaiseman tutkimuksen mukaan Thaimaassa Prachuap Khiri Khanin maakunnassa Natural Fruit -tehtaan työntekijät saavat laittoman alhaista palkkaa ja joutuvat tekemään ylitöitä jopa 5–10 tuntia päivässä.

Lisäksi tehtaan johto on takavarikoinut siirtotyöntekijöiden passit sekä työluvat ja estää heitä vaihtamasta työpaikkaa. Monet tehtaan työntekijöistä on laittomasti maahan tulleita, alaikäisiä ja/tai paperittomia siirtolaisia. Natural Fruit -tehdas valmistaa muun muassa useiden eurooppalaisten kauppaketjujen private label -tuotteissaan käyttämää ananasmehukonsentraattia.

Tutkimuksessa löydettiin ongelmia myös suomalaisille kauppaketjuille tonnikalasäilykkeitä valmistavien Unicord- ja Thai Union Manufacturing -yhtiöiden toiminnassa.

Euroopassa kolmansista maista tuotujen elintarvikkeiden takana ovat kansainväliset ostorenkaat, kuten AMS Sourcing, Coop Trading, United Nordic sekä EMD.

1. Onko komissio tietoinen kyseisestä tutkimuksesta ja siinä esitetyistä väitteistä?

2. Aikooko komissio ryhtyä toimiin, jotta vähittäiskaupan ketjuja velvoitettaisiin valvomaan myymiensä tuotteiden vastuullisuutta nykyistä tarkemmin tarjontaketjun kaikissa vaiheissa?

3. Onko komissio tietoinen vastaavasta pakkotyövoiman käytöstä ja ihmisoikeuksien rikkomisesta muiden eurooppalaisten alihankintaketjujen kohdalla?

4. Mihin toimenpiteisiin komissio aikoo ryhtyä, jotta kyseiset yritykset ryhtyvät toimiin työolojen parantamiseksi?

Karel De Guchtin komission puolesta antama vastaus
(19. maaliskuuta 2013)

1. Komissio on tietoinen Finnwatch-tutkimuksesta, johon arvoisa parlamentin jäsen viittaa.

2. Komissio edistää yritysten yhteiskuntavastuuta ja niitä kansainvälisesti tunnustettuja periaatteita ja suuntaviivoja, joihin sillä viitataan. Komissio kannustaa yritysten yhteiskuntavastuuta koskevassa tiedonannossaan ([1]) suuria yrityksiä ja sellaisia yrityksiä, joiden toimintaan liittyy erityinen vaara haittavaikutuksista, tekemään riskilähtöisiä asianmukaista huolellisuutta koskevia arviointeja (due diligence), myös toimitusketjuissaan. Jotkin kestävän kehityksen standardeihin liittyvät vapaaehtoiset järjestelyt edellyttävät myös toimitusketjujen jokaisen osan seurantaa.

3. Komissiolla ei ole erityistä tietoa vastaavanlaisesta tapauksesta.

4. Komissio edistää kaikissa toimintalinjoissaan Kansainvälisen työjärjestön (ILO) yleissopimusten ja erityisesti työelämän perusnormien ratifiointia ja tehokasta täytäntöönpanoa ja tekee yhteistyötä ILO:n kanssa tätä varten. Euroopan unioni on lisäksi sisällyttänyt sosiaaliset oikeudet vuonna 2012 hyväksyttyyn ihmisoikeuksia ja demokratiaa koskevaan EU:n strategiakehykseen, joka on tarkoitettu käytettäväksi EU:n ulkosuhteissa. Euroopan unioni ja Thaimaa ovat aloittamassa neuvottelut vapaakauppasopimuksesta, johon komissio pyrkii sisällyttämään määräyksiä, jotka koskevat kauppaa ja kestävää kehitystä, mukaan luettuna työelämän perusnormien täytäntöönpano.

([1]) KOM(2011)0681 lopullinen, 25.10.2011, Yritysten yhteiskuntavastuuta koskeva uudistettu EU:n strategia vuosiksi 2011–2014.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000618/13
to the Commission
Mitro Repo (S&D)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Abuses in retail trade supply chains

According to a study published in Finland by Finnwatch, a Finnish civil society organisation, workers at the Natural Fruit factory, in the Thai province of Prachuap Khiri Khan, are paid unlawfully low wages and have to work as much as 5 to 10 hours' overtime a day.

Furthermore, the factory's management has confiscated its migrant workers' passports and work permits and is thus preventing workers from changing jobs. The workforce consists largely of illegal immigrants and under-age and/or undocumented migrants. Natural Fruit manufactures pineapple juice concentrate used in the private label products of several European store chains.

The study has also revealed problems at Unicord and Thai Union Manufacturing, which produce canned tuna for Finnish store chains.

In Europe, food imports from non-EU countries are handled by international buying alliances such as AMS Sourcing, Coop Trading, United Nordic, and EMD.

1. Is the Commission aware of the above study and its findings?

2. Will the Commission impose stricter monitoring requirements on retailers, covering every link of their supply chains, and in that way oblige them to ascertain that the products which they sell are ethical?

3. Does the Commission know whether similar cases involving forced labour and human rights violations have been found to occur within the supply chains of other European retailers?

4. What steps will the Commission take to make the companies concerned improve their working conditions?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(19 March 2013)

1. The Commission is aware of the Finnwatch study, referred to by the Honourable Member.

2. The Commission promotes Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and the internationally recognised principles and guidelines it refers to. In its CSR Communication ([1]), the Commission encourages large enterprises, and enterprises at particular risk of having adverse impacts, to carry out risk-based due diligence, including through their supply chains. Some voluntary sustainability standards schemes also entail the monitoring of every link of the supply chains.

3. The Commission has no specific information of a similar case.

4. The Commission promotes in all its policies the ratification and effective implementation of the Conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), in particular the core labour standards, and cooperates with the ILO to this regard. The European Union has further included social rights in the EU Strategic Framework on Human rights and Democracy adopted in 2012, which is intended for use in EU external relations. The European Union and Thailand are about to launch negotiations on a free trade agreement in which the Commission will aim to include provisions on Trade and Sustainable Development including implementation of core labour standards.

([1]) COM(2011) 682 final, 25.10.2011, A renewed EU strategy 2011-2014 for Corporate Social Responsibility.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000619/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(22 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Sensibilidad química múltiple e hipersensibilidad electromagnética

En la Unión Europea son cada vez más los afectados por los síndromes denominados sensibilidad química múltiple e hipersensibilidad electromagnética que no han sido reconocidos por la OMS como enfermedades oficiales, pero que comienzan a ser considerados dentro de la comunidad científica internacional, tras una primera fase de negación absoluta del síndrome.

Las personas que sufren los efectos de las citadas enfermedades se encuentran una situación de completa indefensión y doble sufrimiento, puesto que más allá de sufrir los dolorosos efectos vienen a ser tratados por los sistemas públicos de salud como enfermos mentales. Sin embargo, muchos de estos enfermos diagnosticados con problemas mentales sufren en realidad los síndromes de sensibilidad química múltiple e hipersensibilidad electromagnética.

Es por esto que resulta necesaria una legislación que proteja a todos los enfermos europeos y no trate de evitar responsabilidades negando la existencia de estas enfermedades. La comunidad científica internacional está produciendo significativos avances en la detección y evaluación de los síndromes citados. Como consecuencia de esto, los sistemas nacionales de salud de los Estados miembros deben incluir la sensibilidad química múltiple y la hipersensibilidad electromagnética en sus CIE respectivas y en sus listas de enfermedades profesionales basadas en la de la OIT, así como solicitar su reconocimiento por la OMS.

Al reconocer la existencia de estas enfermedades la Comisión Europea debería instar a los Estados miembros a aplicar las normas existentes en términos de radiación electromagnética y exposición a sustancias nocivas, así como a revisar los límites actuales hasta garantizar el mínimo impacto sobre la salud de los enfermos de los síndromes citados.

1. ¿Considera la Comisión que la sensibilidad química múltiple y la hipersensibilidad electromagnética deben ser reconocidas como enfermedades en los respectivos Estados miembros?

2. ¿Estudia la posibilidad de revisar los límites legales de radiación electromagnética y exposición a sustancias nocivas así como la armonización con los criterios más estrictos para garantizar la salud de todos los europeos?

Respuesta del Sr. Borg en nombre de la Comisión
(18 de marzo de 2013)

1. La Comisión no tiene competencias para determinar si síndromes como la sensibilidad química múltiple y la hipersensibilidad electromagnética están reconocidos como enfermedades. Esto es responsabilidad de las autoridades sanitarias de los Estados miembros y de las organizaciones internacionales pertinentes, como la Organización Mundial de la Salud.

2. La Comisión hace un seguimiento periódico de los efectos potenciales de los campos electromagnéticos y las sustancias químicas sobre la salud, solicitando reseñas de la literatura científica, financiando la investigación y difundiendo información. Los Comités Científicos revisan periódicamente los efectos de muchas sustancias químicas sobre la salud, lo que conduce a menudo a la revisión de la legislación vigente.

El Comité Científico de los Riesgos Sanitarios Emergentes y Recientemente Identificados está actualizando su dictamen sobre los efectos de los campos electromagnéticos sobre la salud, basándose en la literatura científica más reciente, incluidos los nuevos datos sobre hipersensibilidad electromagnética. La actualización está prevista para junio de 2013, como muy tarde. Se evaluará si es necesario modificar la Recomendación 1999/519/CE del Consejo, sobre los límites de exposición a los campos electromagnéticos, teniendo en cuenta los datos científicos que facilitará en breve el próximo dictamen del Comité Científico.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000619/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Multiple chemical sensitivity and electromagnetic hypersensitivity

The syndromes known as 'multiple chemical sensitivity' and 'electromagnetic hypersensitivity' affect increasing numbers of people in the European Union. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has not recognised them as official illnesses but, after an initial phase of absolute denial of a syndrome, the international scientific community is beginning to take them into account.

People suffering from these illnesses are in a situation of complete helplessness and suffering twice over, since they must endure the painful effects of their illness while being treated as mentally ill by public health systems. Many patients diagnosed with mental problems actually suffer from the syndromes of multiple chemical sensitivity and electromagnetic hypersensitivity.

This is why legislation is needed to protect all sick EU citizens, rather than trying to avoid responsibility by denying the existence of these illnesses. The international scientific community is making significant advances in detecting and evaluating the syndromes mentioned. Consequently, national health systems in Member States should include multiple chemical sensitivity and electromagnetic hypersensitivity in their respective International Classification of Diseases (ICD) and in their lists of occupational diseases based on the International Labour Organisation (ILO) list. Furthermore, they should ask the WHO to recognise these illnesses.

On recognising the existence of these illnesses, the European Commission should encourage Member States to implement existing standards on electromagnetic radiation and exposure to harmful substances, and to review current limits to ensure minimum impact on the health of people suffering from the aforementioned syndromes.

1. Does the Commission consider that multiple chemical sensitivity and electromagnetic hypersensitivity should be recognised as illnesses in the respective Member States?

2. Is the Commission studying the possibility of reviewing the legal limits for electromagnetic radiation and exposure to harmful substances, and of harmonisation with the highest standards to safeguard the health of all EU citizens?

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

1. The Commission does not have the competence to establish whether or not syndromes such as multiple chemical sensitivity and electromagnetic hypersensitivity are recognised as diseases. This is in the responsibility of the health authorities of the Member States and of relevant international organisations such as the World Health Organisation.

2. The Commission regularly monitors the potential health effects of electromagnetic fields and of chemical substances, by requesting reviews of scientific literature, by financing research and disseminating information. The Scientific Committees review on a regular basis the health effects of many chemicals, leading often to the revision of existing legislation.

The Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks is currently updating its opinion on the health effects of electromagnetic fields based on the latest scientific literature, including any new information on electromagnetic hypersensitivity. The update is expected by June 2013. Any need to modify the Council Recommendation on electromagnetic fields' exposure limits (1999/519/EC) will be evaluated in the light of scientific evidence provided by the forthcoming opinion of the Scientific Committee.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000620/13
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Mario Mauro (PPE)
(22 gennaio 2013)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Processo in Iran al cristiano Saeed Abedini

È iniziato il 21 gennaio il processo a Saeed Abedini, americano di origini iraniane che lo scorso settembre è stato arrestato dalla polizia iraniana con l'accusa di aver violato gli impegni sottoscritti nel 2009 in cui Saeed si impegnava, dopo la sua conversione al cristianesimo, a non fare opera di proselitismo in territorio iraniano.

Il processo è stato assegnato al giudice Pir-Abassi, autore di alcune tra le sentenze più dure inflitte ai fedeli cristiani e ai giovani dell'Onda Verde, protagonisti nel 2009 delle proteste scatenatesi a Teheran dopo la rielezione di Ahmadinejad.

Saeed Abedini è accusato di attentato alla sicurezza nazionale ed il giudice Pir-Abassi potrebbe condannarlo alla pena di morte per impiccagione.

Sottolineando che il giudice Pir-Abassi è già stato bandito dai paesi membri dell'Unione europea a causa delle continue violazioni dei diritti umani può l'Alto Rappresentante precisare quanto segue:

1. quali sono i provvedimenti che l'Unione europea ha intrapreso per ostacolare l'operato del giudice Pir-Abassi in territorio iraniano?

2. quali provvedimenti prenderà l'Unione europea se la sentenza emessa dal giudice Pir-Abassi contro Saeed Abedini sarà effettivamente di condanna a morte?

3. quali provvedimenti ha preso l'Unione europea per proteggere i fedeli di religione cristiana in territorio iraniano?

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

L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente segue con attenzione il caso del pastore Saeed Abedini ed è preoccupata dalle relazioni informative secondo le quali il pastore è stato condannato a otto anni di reclusione per le proprie convinzioni: ancora un'ulteriore manifestazione delle restrizioni alle libertà religiose in Iran.

L'UE ribadisce il proprio impegno a rafforzare la tutela dei diritti delle minoranze in Iran, nonché, più in generale, dei diritti umani. Un aspetto della questione riguarda l'imposizione di sanzioni nei confronti di chi si è reso responsabile, direttamente o per aver obbedito agli ordini, di gravi violazioni dei diritti umani in Iran. Il giudice Pir Abbasi, al quale è stato assegnato il processo di Saeed Abedini, figura in questo elenco a causa della sua partecipazione ai procedimenti giudiziari contro i manifestanti dopo le elezioni presidenziali del 2009 in Iran. Gli è stato imposto il congelamento dei beni e il divieto di viaggio nel territorio dell'UE.

L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente sostiene inoltre le minoranze religiose in Iran difendendone il diritto a praticare liberamente il proprio culto secondo le proprie convinzioni religiose. Un portavoce dell'Alta Rappresentante ha rilasciato una dichiarazione di condanna nei confronti della sentenza che comminava la pena di morte al pastore Youcef Nadarkhani, nel febbraio 2012. L'Alta Rappresentante ha accolto con soddisfazione la successiva assoluzione e scarcerazione di Youcef Nadarkhani, con un'altra dichiarazione nel settembre 2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000620/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Mario Mauro (PPE)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Trial in Iran of the Christian, Saeed Abedini

On 21 January, the trial began of Saeed Abedini, an American of Iranian origin who was arrested in September by Iranian police and charged with breaching the commitments made in 2009 when, after his conversion to Christianity, Saeed undertook not to proselytise on Iranian territory.

The judge in charge of the trial is Pir-Abassi, who has handed down some of the harshest sentences to Christians and young members of the Green Movement who took part in the protests that broke out in Tehran after Ahmadinejad's re-election in 2009.

Saeed Abedini is accused of compromising national security, and Judge Pir-Abassi could sentence him to death by hanging.

Bearing in mind that Judge Pir-Abassi has already been condemned by the Member States for repeated violations of human rights, can the High Representative answer the following:

1. What measures has the European Union taken to prevent Judge Pir-Abassi from acting in Iran?

2. What measures will the European Union take if the sentence pronounced by Judge Pir-Abassi against Saeed Abedini is indeed the death penalty?

3. What measures has the European Union taken to protect Christians in Iran?

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

The HR/VP is closely following the case of Pastor Saeed Abedini. She is concerned with reports informing that he has been sentenced to eight years in prison for his beliefs, which is yet another manifestation of the restrictions on religious freedoms in Iran.

The EU remains committed to improving the rights of minorities in Iran, alongside with the protection of human rights more generally. One aspect of this is the imposition of sanctions on those who are responsible, directly or by order, for grave human rights violations inside Iran. Judge Pir Abbasi, who was in charge of Saeed Abedini's trial, is placed on this list for his participation in the court cases against protesters following the 2009 Presidential elections in Iran. He is subject to an asset freeze and travel ban within the EU.

The HR/VP also supports religious minorities in Iran by speaking out for their right to exercise their freedom of religion and belief. A spokesperson for the High Representative released a statement condemning the death sentence against pastor Youcef Nadarkhani in February 2012. The High Representative welcomed his subsequent acquittal and release through another statement in September 2012.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000622/13
alla Commissione
Mario Borghezio (EFD)
(22 gennaio 2013)

Oggetto: Impugnativa da parte dello Stato italiano di una legge regionale della Valle d'Aosta in violazione dell'autonomia

Il Consiglio dei Ministri italiano, in data 18.1.2013, ha impugnato la legge regionale della Valle d'Aosta che impedisce il trattamento a caldo dei rifiuti, legge approvata a seguito di un referendum propositivo votato con il 94 % di «sì» dal popolo valdostano;

Con una pretestuosa ingerenza il Governo centrale di Roma, sovrapponendosi illegittimamente ad una legge regionale che recepisce la volontà espressa dalla comunità valdostana in tema di tutela della salute, ha stabilito che la legge che boccia il pirogassificatore «contrasta con la normativa statale in materia di rifiuti».

Alla luce di tutto ciò, può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

— come valuta la compatibilità di una norma statale che vieti il «pirogassificatore» con la direttiva quadro sui rifiuti (2008/98/CE)?

— intende verificare se l'Italia ha messo concretamente in opera tale direttiva europea?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(25 marzo 2013)

In linea di massima, il trattamento a caldo attraverso pirogassificatore con recupero energetico può essere considerato un metodo ecocompatibile per gestire i rifiuti residui generati da altri processi di gestione e i rifiuti non riciclabili. Gli Stati membri sono tenuti a preferire le opzioni di gestione dei rifiuti che producono il miglior risultato ambientale complessivo, in linea con la gerarchia dei rifiuti stabilita nell'articolo 4 della direttiva 2008/98/CE ([1]) relativa ai rifiuti. Secondo tale gerarchia, la prevenzione, il riutilizzo e il riciclaggio sono generalmente le opzioni da preferire ove possibile. È pertanto opportuno che gli Stati membri garantiscano che non si crei una sovraccapacità delle opzioni di trattamento gerarchicamente inferiori che porterebbero ad una combinazione non ottimale di gestione dei rifiuti.

Gli impianti per il trattamento a caldo dei rifiuti urbani o pericolosi sono disciplinati dalla direttiva 2000/76/CE ([2]) sull'incenerimento dei rifiuti e, nella maggior parte dei casi, anche dalla direttiva 2008/1/CE ([3]) sulla prevenzione e la riduzione integrate dell'inquinamento. Queste direttive saranno sostituite dalla direttiva 2010/75/UE ([4]) relativa alle emissioni industriali che prevede che gli impianti operino conformemente a una serie di autorizzazioni e non superino i valori limite di emissione stabiliti sulla base delle migliori tecniche disponibili (BAT). Essa prevede, inoltre, la partecipazione del pubblico al processo di autorizzazione.

Questi requisiti mirano a proteggere l'ambiente e la salute umana da qualsiasi effetto negativo derivante dall'incenerimento dei rifiuti.

Sulla base delle informazioni fornite dall'onorevole parlamentare, la Commissione non intende eseguire nessun approfondimento con le autorità italiane.

([1]) GU L 312 del 22.11.2008.
([2]) GU L 332 del 28.12.2000.
([3]) GU L 24 del 29.1.2008.
([4]) GU L 334 del 17.12.2010.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000622/13
to the Commission
Mario Borghezio (EFD)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Law on waste processing: Italian central government meddles in Valle d'Aosta regional affairs

On 18 January 2013 the Italian Cabinet challenged a law passed by the Valle d'Aosta region banning the use of heat treatment technology in waste processing. The law had been adopted following a regional referendum, in which 94% of participants voted 'yes'.

The central government in Rome is meddling in regional affairs by illegally overturning a regional law that reflects the will of the inhabitants of Valle d'Aosta concerning a public health protection issue. The Italian Government claims that the law, which prohibits the use of pyro-gasification technology (employed in a particular type of waste incinerator), is not consistent with national waste processing legislation.

Does the Commission think that the law banning the use of pyro-gasification technology is consistent with the Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC)? Will it check whether Italy has properly implemented the directive?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(25 March 2013)

In general, thermal treatment via pyro-gasification and including energy recovery can be an environmentally sound management option to treat residual waste generated from other waste management processes and non-recyclable waste. It is matter for Member States to decide on the waste management options that deliver the best overall environmental outcome in line with the waste hierarchy as laid down in Article 4 of Directive 2008/98/EC ([1]) on waste. According to the waste hierarchy prevention, re-use and recycling are generally preferable options where possible. It is therefore advisable for Member States to take care to ensure that excess capacity is not created in treatment options lower in the hierarchy that would lead to a sub-optimal waste management mix.

Installations for thermal treatment of municipal or hazardous waste fall under Directive 2000/76/EC ([2]) on the incineration of waste and in most cases also under Directive 2008/1/EC ([3]) concerning integrated pollution prevention and control. These Directives will be replaced by Directive 2010/75/EU ([4]) on industrial emissions, which require installations to operate in accordance with permits including emission limit values based on the best available techniques (BAT) and provide for public participation in the permitting process.

These requirements aim at protecting the environment and human health from any adverse effects of waste incineration.

Based on the information provided by the Honourable Member, the Commission does not envisage any follow-up with the Italian authorities.

([1]) OJ L 312, 22.11.2008.
([2]) OJ L 332, 28.12.2000.
([3]) OJ L 24, 29.1.2008.
([4]) OJ L 334, 17.12.2010.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-000624/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(22 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Μελέτη κόστους-οφέλους για το συγχρηματοδοτούμενο έργο διασύνδεσης των Κυκλάδων-Ηπειρωτικής Ελλάδας με υποβρύχια καλώδια

Στην ερώτησή μου (E-009923/2012) σχετικά με το συγχρηματοδοτούμενο έργο διασύνδεσης των Κυκλάδων-Ηπειρωτικής Ελλάδας με υποβρύχια καλώδια, η Επιτροπή μου απάντησε μεταξύ άλλων ότι «και οι δύο υποψήφιες εταιρίες απορρίφθηκαν· η εταιρία Ελληνικά Καλώδια ΑΕ λόγω έλλειψης εμπειρίας και η κοινοπραξία των εταιριών Siemens AE — Prysmian Powerlink SRL — Nexans Norway AS λόγω της προσφερόμενης τιμής. Επομένως, η πρόσκληση υποβολής προσφορών κηρύχθηκε άκυρη ή ακυρώσιμη. Δυστυχώς, αυτή η εξέλιξη θέτει σε κίνδυνο την έγκαιρη ολοκλήρωση του έργου έως το τέλος του 2015. Ωστόσο, μια πιθανή ολοκλήρωσή του σε δύο στάδια πρέπει να αποτελέσει αντικείμενο διαπραγμάτευσης με την Επιτροπή».

Κατόπιν των ανωτέρω, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Με δεδομένες τις υπάρχουσες δυσκολίες χρηματοδότησης από τον ελληνικό προϋπολογισμό και την περιορισμένη δυνατότητα συγχρηματοδότησης στην επόμενη προγραμματική περίοδο (2014-2020), μπορεί η Επιτροπή να παρουσιάσει τα βασικά σημεία της μελέτης κόστους-οφέλους από την πραγματοποίηση ενός τέτοιου έργου; Ποιες είναι οι βασικές παραδοχές της μελέτης;

2. Έχει η Ευρωπαϊκή Τράπεζα Επενδύσεων δεχτεί να χρηματοδοτήσει το έργο; Αν ναι υπό ποιες προϋποθέσεις;

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

1. Η Επιτροπή δεν μπορεί να παράσχει τις πληροφορίες που ζητήθηκαν. Η μελέτη της ανάλυσης κόστους-οφέλους αποτελεί αναπόσπαστο μέρος της αίτησης του κυρίως έργου για βοήθεια από την Επιτροπή. Η Επιτροπή δεν έχει λάβει ακόμα τέτοια αίτηση.

2. Η Ευρωπαϊκή Τράπεζα Επενδύσεων (ΕΤΕπ) είναι ενήμερη για την ακύρωση της εν λόγω πρόσκλησης υποβολής προσφορών και παρακολουθεί επισταμένως το εν λόγω έργο. Όταν ολοκληρωθεί η νέα πρόσκληση υποβολής προσφορών και επιλεγεί ο ανάδοχος, η ΕΤΕπ θα πράξει τα δέοντα. Εάν το αποτέλεσμα της εν λόγω διαδικασίας είναι θετικό, η ΕΤΕπ θα υποβάλει στα οικεία διοικητικά όργανα πρόταση απόφασης για χρηματοδότηση.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000624/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Co-funding for projected submarine cable link between the Cyclades and mainland Greece — cost-benefit study

In reply to my question for Written Answer E-009923/2012, concerning the co-financed project to link the Cyclades and mainland Greece via submarine cables, the Commission indicated that both bids submitted had been rejected, from 'Greek Cables SA' because of lack of experience and from the 'Siemens SA-Prysmian Powerlink SRL-Nexans Norway AS' consortium because of the proposed price. The relevant call for tenders had therefore been declared null and void. Unfortunately this put the timely completion of the project by the end of 2015 at risk and a possible two-phase split had to be negotiated with the Commission.

In view of this:

1. Given the current difficulties in obtaining funding from Greece and the limited possibilities for co-funding over the next programming period (2014-2020), can the Commission outline the basic findings of the cost-benefit study relating to the a project? On what underlying assumptions was it based?

2. Has the European Investment Bank agreed to fund the project? If so, under what conditions?

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

1. The Commission cannot provide the information requested. The cost benefit analysis study is an integral part of the major project application for assistance from the Commission. The Commission has not yet received such an application.

2. The European Investment Bank (EIB) is aware of the cancellation of the relevant call for tender and is closely following this project. Once a new tender is completed and a supplier selected, the EIB will conduct its due diligence. If the outcome of this process is positive, the EIB will submit a funding proposal to its Governing Bodies for decision.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-000625/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(22 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Στεγαστικά δάνεια και προστασία δανειοληπτών στην Ελλάδα

Με δεδομένα, α) τη ραγδαία πτώση των εισοδημάτων της πλειονότητας των Ελλήνων, πολλοί εκ των οποίων αδυνατούν πλέον να αντεπεξέλθουν στα βάρη των δανείων που είχαν συνάψει με καλή πίστη πριν την κρίση, β) την κατακόρυφη πτώση των τιμών των ακινήτων και σε ορισμένες περιοχές πολύ κάτω από την αντικειμενική τους αξία και, γ) ότι η ανακεφαλαιοποίηση των τραπεζών πραγματοποιείται λαμβάνοντας υπόψη και τις επισφάλειες που έχουν σχέση με τη στεγαστική πίστη.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Τι στοιχεία μπορεί να δώσει για τη διαχρονική εξέλιξη των επισφαλών στεγαστικών δανείων που έχουν χορηγήσει οι ελληνικές τράπεζες;

2. Τι μέτρα προτίθεται να λάβει προκειμένου να διευρυνθεί η όποια προστασία προσφέρεται στους Έλληνες δανειολήπτες, οι οποίοι αδυνατούν να αντεπεξέλθουν στα δανειακά βάρη, λόγω της συνεχιζόμενης οικονομικής κρίσης;

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

1. Λόγω της οικονομικής κρίσης, οι τιμές των ακινήτων και το διαθέσιμο εισόδημα των νοικοκυριών παρουσίασαν μείωση. Τα μη εξυπηρετούμενα δάνεια αυξήθηκαν φτάνοντας, σε μεμονωμένη βάση, σε ποσοστό 18,5% στα τέλη Μαρτίου του 2012, έναντι 16% τον Δεκέμβριο του 2011. Αν συμπεριληφθούν και τα αναδιαρθρωμένα δάνεια, τα μη εξυπηρετούμενα δάνεια ανήλθαν σε 23,8% κατά το πρώτο τρίμηνο του 2012. Το ποσοστό των μη εξυπηρετούμενων δανείων για τα οποία προβλέφθηκαν ρυθμίσεις μειώθηκε από 62% σε 57% κατά την ίδια περίοδο. Μέχρι τα τέλη Αυγούστου του 2012, η χορήγηση πιστώσεων προς την εγχώρια οικονομία μειώθηκε κατά 8%, με μείωση των δανείων τόσο στα νοικοκυριά (-6,3%) όσο και στις επιχειρήσεις (-8,5%). Ωστόσο, ο δείκτης των δανείων προς τις καταθέσεις αυξήθηκε σε 132% το πρώτο τρίμηνο του 2012 έναντι 120% το πρώτο τρίμηνο του 2011, δεδομένου ότι οι καταθέσεις μειώθηκαν με ταχύτερο ρυθμό από ό,τι τα δάνεια. Το ελληνικό τραπεζικό σύστημα είναι αντιμέτωπο με τις προκλήσεις της ανακεφαλαιοποίησης και της αναδιάρθρωσης. Κατά τη διάρκεια της διαδικασίας αυτής, η Τράπεζα της Ελλάδος εντόπισε και δημοσίευσε τις κεφαλαιακές ανάγκες όλων των τραπεζών. Το επόμενο βήμα είναι η ανακεφαλαιοποίηση των τραπεζών.

Προκειμένου να επιτευχθεί μια προβλέψιμη, δίκαιη και διαφανής κατανομή των κινδύνων μεταξύ όλων των ενδιαφερόμενων μερών, προβλέπεται στο ΜΣ ότι οι ελληνικές αρχές θα ενισχύσουν το πλαίσιο αφερεγγυότητας. Μέχρι τα τέλη Φεβρουαρίου 2013, οι αρχές θα αναθεωρήσουν το υφιστάμενο πλαίσιο αφερεγγυότητας, με την τεχνική υποστήριξη διεθνών εμπειρογνωμόνων (συμπεριλαμβανομένης της ΕΚ) ([1]). Η διαδικασία αυτή περιλαμβάνει τροποποιήσεις στην ισχύουσα νομοθεσία (Νόμος 3869/2010) και ενδεχομένως θέσπιση νέων μέτρων για την προστασία των νοικοκυριών που βρίσκονται σε δεινή οικονομική κατάσταση.

2. Τη στιγμή αυτή, οι διαδικασίες διακανονισμού χρεών στην Ένωση διέπονται από συστήματα και νόμους που διαφέρουν πολύ μεταξύ τους. Οι διαδικασίες αυτές αντιμετωπίζονται σε εθνικό επίπεδο και παραμείνουν στην αρμοδιότητα των εθνικών αρχών. Οι ελληνικές αρχές εξετάζουν μέτρα για να αντιμετωπιστεί το πρόβλημα των υπερχρεωμένων νοικοκυριών.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2012/pdf/ocp123_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000625/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Mortgages and protection of borrowers in Greece

In view of (a) the drastic fall in the incomes of the majority of Greeks, many of whom are now unable to cope with repayments on loans they contracted in good faith before the crisis, (b) plummeting real-estate prices leaving properties in certain areas valued at far below their real worth and (c) bank recapitalisation partly conditioned by bad mortgage debts:

1. Can the Commission say how the situation is developing with regard to unsafe mortgage loans issued by Greek banks?

2. What steps will it take to increase protection for Greek borrowers unable to cope with loan repayments because of the ongoing economic crisis?

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

Ad 1) Due to the economic crisis, real estate prices and the disposable income of households decreased. Non-performing loans (NPL) increased, reaching 18.5% at a solo level by the end of March 2012, up from 16% in December 2011. Including restructured loans, NPLs reached 23.8% by Q1 2012. The coverage of non-performing loans by provisions decreased from 62% to 57% in the same period. Until end-August 2012, credit to the domestic economy shrank by 8%, with a reduction in loans to both households (-6.3%) and corporations (-8.5%). Nonetheless, loan to deposit (LTD) ratios increased to 132% in Q1 2012 from 120% in Q1 2011, since deposits decreased at a faster rate than loans. The Greek banking system is undergoing a recapitalization and restructuring. During this process the Bank of Greece identified and published the capital need of all banks. The next step is to recapitalize banks.

In order to achieve a predictable, equitable and transparent allocation of risks among all interested parties, it is envisaged in the MoU that the Greek authorities will strengthen the insolvency framework. By end-February 2013, the authorities will revise the existing insolvency framework, with technical support of international experts (including the EC) ([1]). This process includes amendments to the current legislation (Law 3869/2010) and the possible introductions of new measures to safeguard households in dire economic situation.

Ad 2) Different systems and laws are currently in force throughout the Union regarding debt settlement procedures. These procedures are dealt with at national level and remain within the jurisdiction of the national authorities. The Greek authorities are considering measures to address the problem of overly-indebted households.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2012/pdf/ocp123_en.pdf

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-000626/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(22 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Δυνατότητα χρηματοδότησης από τα διαρθρωτικά ταμεία της μεταφοράς παιδιών με ειδικές ανάγκες στις σχολικές τους μονάδες

Σε ερώτησή μου προς την Επιτροπή με θέμα τη «*Διακοπή της χρηματοδότησης για τη μεταφορά παιδιών με ειδικές ανάγκες στις Σχολικές Μονάδες Ειδικής Αγωγής*» η Επιτροπή στην απάντησή της μεταξύ άλλων αναφέρει ότι «*Στην τρέχουσα περίοδο προγραμματισμού είναι διαθέσιμα κονδύλια από τα διαρθρωτικά ταμεία (Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινωνικό Ταμείο και Ευρωπαϊκό Ταμείο Περιφερειακής Ανάπτυξης) για την στήριξη όλων των σχετικών δραστηριοτήτων, όπως η βελτίωση της πρόσβασης στην εργασία, την εκπαίδευση, την απασχόληση, την επαγγελματική κατάρτιση και τις μεταφορές, καθώς και η μετάβαση από υπηρεσίες ιδρυμάτων σε υπηρεσίες παρεχόμενες σε επίπεδο τοπικής κοινωνίας*». Με δεδομένο ότι η ως άνω παράγραφος ερμηνεύεται θετικά πως θα μπορούσε να τύχει χρηματοδότησης η μεταφορά των παιδιών εφόσον υπάρξει κατάλληλο αίτημα εκ μέρους των αρμόδιων φορέων, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Ενθαρρύνει η Επιτροπή τους φορείς Γονέων και Κηδεμόνων να καταθέσουν σχετικό πρόγραμμα σε συνεργασία με την ελληνική κυβέρνηση προκειμένου να χρηματοδοτηθεί η μεταφορά των παιδιών στα ειδικά σχολεία;

2. Εφόσον υπάρχει αυτή η δυνατότητα μπορούν οι υπηρεσίες της Επιτροπής, ή η ίδια η Επίτροπος να δεχθεί αντιπροσωπεία των Γονέων και Κηδεμόνων ώστε να τους διευκρινισθούν οι όροι και οι προϋποθέσεις για την κατάθεση σχετικού προγράμματος χρηματοδότησης;

Απάντηση του κ. Andor εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(21 Μαρτίου 2013)

1. Η ιδέα να υποβάλλουν πρόταση έργου οι φορείς γονέων και κηδεμόνων για τη μεταφορά των παιδιών σε ειδικά σχολεία με χρηματοδότηση από τα διαρθρωτικά ταμεία θα πρέπει να εξεταστεί και να εγκριθεί σε εθνικό επίπεδο και σε συνεργασία με τις αρμόδιες αρχές. Σύμφωνα με το ρυθμιστικό πλαίσιο που διέπει το Ευρωπαϊκό Περιφερειακό Ταμείο Ανάπτυξης και το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινωνικό Ταμείο ([1]), την ευθύνη για την επιλογή, το σχεδιασμό και τη διαχείριση, μέσω των κατάλληλων δομών, των επιμέρους έργων συγχρηματοδοτούμενων από τα εν λόγω ταμεία φέρουν τα κράτη μέλη.

2. Η Επιτροπή παραμένει πάντα στη διάθεση των εθνικών ενδιαφερόμενων φορέων για να εξετάσουν από κοινού ζητήματα που εμπίπτουν στο πεδίο των αρμοδιοτήτων της. Όπως προαναφέρθηκε, δεδομένου ότι το ζήτημα που έθιξε το αξιότιμο μέλος δεν άπτεται των αρμοδιοτήτων της Επιτροπής, συνιστούμε στους εν λόγω ελληνικούς φορείς να συμβουλευτούν τη διαχειριστική αρχή του προγράμματος «Εκπαίδευση και Διά Βίου Μάθηση».

Στοιχεία επικοινωνίας:
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([1]) ΕΚΤ.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000626/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Availability of structural fund appropriations for the transport of children with special needs to education centres

In reply to my question concerning the withholding of funding for the transport of pupils with special needs to specialised education centres, the Commission indicated that Structural funds (European Social Fund and European Regional Development Fund) are available in the current programming period for supporting all related activities, such as improving access to employment, education, occupation and vocational training and improving transport accessibility and achieving the shift from institutional to Community-based services. Given that this paragraph is open to positive interpretation in the sense that funding could be made available for the transport of children if officially requested through the appropriate channels:

1. Is the Commission encouraging associations of parents and guardians, in cooperation with the Greek Government, to submit a project with a view to obtaining funding for the transport of children to special education centres?

2. Given that this possibility exists, can the Commission or the Commissioner responsible meet with a delegation of parents and guardians so as to explain to them the terms and conditions for the submission of such projects?

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

1. The idea of associations of parents and guardians putting forward a project proposal for the transport of children to special education centres for funding under the Structural Funds should be discussed and decided at a national level and in cooperation with the competent authorities. Under the regulatory framework governing the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund ([1]), it is the Members States that, through designated structures, are responsible for the selection, design and management of individual projects co-financed by these Funds.

2. The Commission is always available to meet and discuss with national stakeholders on matters falling within its area of competence. As explained above, given that the issue raised by the Honourable Member does not pertain to the Commission's competences, we encourage the related Greek associations to consult with the Managing Authority of the Education and Lifelong Learning Operational Programme.

Contact information:

Managing Authority of the Education and Lifelong Learning Operational Programme
Konstantinoupoleos 45-49
11855, Keramikos, ATHENS — GR

Mr Sofoklis Gogos, Head of Managing Authority
Tel. 0030 210 3278012
Fax. 0030 210 3278028
E-mail: sgogos@epeaek.gr

([1]) ESF.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000628/13
alla Commissione
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR), Gianluca Susta (S&D) e Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE)
(22 gennaio 2013)

Oggetto: Ricalibrazione del sistema SPG per i produttori di tubi di rame

Nell'ultimo decennio in UE il prezzo della materia prima «rame» ha subito una brusca impennata, con parziale sostituzione dei tubi di rame con altri materiali (plastica/alluminio).

A causa di una sovraccapacità produttiva stimata intorno alle 90.000 tonnellate (18 % dell'attuale produzione europea), dal 2008 ad oggi due importanti produttori di tubi di rame europei hanno cessato l'attività: l'azienda belga Boliden Cuivre & Zinc, da 30.000 tonnellate annue, e il colosso finlandese dell'acciaio Outokumpu, che ha chiuso il suo stabilimento spagnolo da 40.000 tonnellate annue ed ha abbandonato completamente il settore. Attualmente gran parte della produzione europea di tubi di rame avviene in tre Paesi europei: Italia, Germania, Grecia.

Il tubo di rame si vende «a metro» e il 90 % circa del valore di vendita è il costo della materia prima. Questa incidenza ha fatto sì che nei mercati dove i controlli sono scarsi o poco incisivi si vendano prodotti non a norma.

Un esempio è il caso di Haliang Copper Tube Manifacturer (HLG), colosso cinese nella produzione di tubi di rame, la cui quota di importazioni di tubi in rame dalla Cina in Europa è andata dal 2008 progressivamente calando. HLG dal 2009 ha infatti iniziato ad esportare in UE da uno stabilimento collocato in Vietnam, con dazio 1,3 %, tre volte inferiore rispetto a quello previsto per le imprese operanti in Cina. Gli effetti distorsivi sulle quantità esportate e sui prezzi finali sono enormi.

Venuta a conoscenza di ciò, la Commissione, nel definire la lista dei Paesi che sulla base del Regolamento (UE) N. 978/2012 (che entrerà in vigore a partire dal 2014) godranno delle preferenze tariffarie in materia di tubi in rame, intende prendere provvedimenti in particolare nei confronti dei produttori cinesi con stabilimenti in Cina e Vietnam?

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000629/13
alla Commissione
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR), Gianluca Susta (S&D) e Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE)
(22 gennaio 2013)

Oggetto: Comportamento scorretto produttori messicani di rame

Nell'ultimo decennio il prezzo della materia prima «rame» ha subito una brusca impennata, con parziale sostituzione dei tubi di rame con altri materiali (plastica/alluminio). A causa di una sovraccapacità produttiva stimata intorno alle 90.000 tonnellate (18 % dell'attuale produzione europea), dal 2008 ad oggi due importanti produttori di tubi di rame europei hanno cessato l'attività: l'azienda belga Boliden Cuivre & Zinc, da 30.000 tonnellate annue, e il colosso finlandese dell'acciaio Outokumpu, che ha chiuso il suo stabilimento spagnolo da 40.000 tonnellate annue ed ha abbandonato completamente il settore. Attualmente gran parte della produzione europea di tubi di rame avviene in 3 Paesi europei: Italia, Germania, Grecia.

La crescita esponenziale di esportazioni verso l'Europa di prodotti fabbricati in paesi che godono di regimi preferenziali o accordi di libero scambio in materia di dazi danneggia enormemente i produttori europei.

Ad esempio, Golden Dragon Precise Tube (GD), primo produttore al mondo di tubi di rame con 250.000 tonnellate prodotte annualmente, nel 2008 annuncia l'istallazione di un nuovo impianto in Messico entro l'anno 2009, con capacità produttiva di 60.000 tonnellate di prodotto EN 12735/2, destinato al mercato nord americano ed europeo. Per tutta risposta, nel 2009 gli USA applicano un dazio del 61 % per i tubi di rame provenienti dalla Cina e del 54 % dal Messico. Dopo l'introduzione del suddetto dazio, GD MEXICO si focalizza sul mercato europeo, con cui vi è dazio zero per accordo di libero scambio: a titolo esemplificativo, in un anno (2012) le importazioni di prodotto EN 12735/2 dal Messico all'Italia passano da 0 a 2.000 tonnellate, e le previsioni di spedizione indicano 4.000 tonnellate entro la fine del 2013.

Reputa la Commissione necessario approfondire tale problema, che arreca grave danno all'economia europea, con eventuale indagine volta a verificare l'esistenza di un comportamento scorretto da parte del Messico?

Risposta congiunta di Karel De Gucht a nome della Commissione
(13 marzo 2013)

Il commercio unionale di tubi di rame risulta stabile negli ultimi anni: le esportazioni superano le importazioni di un quantitativo medio annuo di 20 000 tonnellate. La Commissione, oltre a migliorare l'accesso al mercato per gli esportatori europei, assicura anche che i paesi terzi si attengano alle regole del gioco per quanto concerne le importazioni nell'UE a prezzi equi.

Nei casi in cui gli scambi internazionali di tubi di rame sono distorti dalla politica dei sussidi o da pratiche di dumping, possono essere imposti dazi antisussidio/antidumping previa investigazione ad opera della Commissione che consenta di accertare che tali pratiche causano danno all'industria UE. È possibile avviare un'indagine se vi sono sufficienti prove *prima facie* di un avvenuto dumping o della concessione di sussidi nonché di un danno materiale per l'industria dell'Unione causato da importazioni in dumping o in regime di sovvenzione.

L'industria è libera di presentare una denuncia e la Commissione ha l'obbligo legale di avviare un'indagine se si soddisfano le pertinenti condizioni legali.

Il nuovo Sistema di preferenze generalizzate (SPG) concentra le preferenze su quanti ne hanno maggiore bisogno: i settori non competitivi di economie a basso reddito e paesi meno avanzati. Il settore cinese dei tubi di rame è competitivo, pertanto non riceve preferenze SPG, cosa che però non vale per il Vietnam, che riceve preferenze nel pieno rispetto del principio di non discriminazione.

Come previsto nel regolamento SPG, se le esportazioni vietnamite avvengono sulla base di pratiche fraudolente, le preferenze possono essere ritirate. Esistono inoltre delle salvaguardie nel caso di gravi difficoltà per i produttori dell'UE causate dalle importazioni preferenziali. In questa fase nessuna delle fattispecie di cui sopra è stata segnalata alla Commissione. I tubi di rame sono ritenuti un prodotto sensibile e ricevono pertanto un numero relativamente limitato di preferenze. Ciò spiega perché le salvaguardie rimangono uno strumento eccezionale nell'ambito del SPG.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000628/13
to the Commission
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR), Gianluca Susta (S&D) and Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Recalibration of the GSP system for copper pipe producers

Over the last decade in the EU, there has been a steep rise in raw material prices for copper, with some copper pipes being replaced by other materials (plastic/aluminium).

Because of a production overcapacity estimated at around 90 000 tonnes (18 % of current EU production), two major copper pipe producers have been forced to close since 2008: the Belgian company Boliden Cuivre & Zinc, which previously produced 30 000 tonnes a year, and the Finnish steel giant Outokumpu, which closed its Spanish factory producing 40 000 tonnes a year and left the sector completely. Currently, the majority of the EU's copper pipe production takes place in three countries: Italy, Germany and Greece.

Copper pipe is sold by the metre, and the raw material cost accounts for around 90 % of the selling price. The small margin for profit has led to sub-standard products being sold in markets where checks are scarce or not very thorough.

One example is the case of Haliang Copper Tube Manufacturer (HLG), a Chinese giant in the copper pipe sector, whose share of imports of copper pipe from China into the EU has been steadily falling since 2008. In 2009, HLG began to export to the EU from a factory located in Vietnam, with a duty rate of just 1.3 %, three times lower than that stipulated for companies operating in China. The distorting effects on the quantities exported and the final prices are enormous.

In the light of the above, does the Commission — when it compiles the list of countries that will benefit from preferential tariffs for copper pipes under Regulation (EU) No 978/2012 (which will come into force from 2014) — intend to take any particular measures with regard to Chinese producers with factories in China and Vietnam?

Question for written answer E-000629/13
to the Commission
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR), Gianluca Susta (S&D) and Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Improper behaviour by Mexican copper producers

Over the last decade, there has been a steep rise in the raw material price of copper, with some copper pipes being replaced by other materials (plastic/aluminium). Because of a production overcapacity estimated at around 90 000 tonnes (18 % of current EU production), two major producers of copper pipes have been forced to close since 2008: the Belgian company Boliden Cuivre & Zinc, which previously produced 30 000 tonnes a year, and the Finnish steel giant Outokumpu, which closed its Spanish factory producing 40 000 tonnes a year and left the sector completely. Currently, the majority of the EU's production of copper pipes takes place in three countries: Italy, Germany and Greece.

The exponential growth in exports to Europe of products manufactured in countries that benefit from preferential rules or free trade agreements in terms of duties is causing huge damage to European producers.

For example, Golden Dragon Precise Tube (GD), the world's largest producer of copper pipes, with an annual output of 250 000 tonnes, announced in 2008 that it would be setting up a new factory in Mexico by 2009, with a production capacity of 60 000 tonnes of EN 12735/2 product, intended for the North American and European markets. In response, in 2009 the USA applied a duty of 61 % for copper pipes from China and 54 % for those from Mexico. After this duty was introduced, GD MEXICO concentrated on the European market, with which there is zero duty because of a free trade agreement: by way of example, in just one year (2012) imports of EN 12735/2 copper from Mexico to Italy rose from 0 to 2 000 tonnes, and forecasts suggest that the figure will reach 4 000 tonnes by the end of 2013.

Does the Commission believe it is necessary to look more closely into this problem, which is causing serious damage to the European economy, with a possible investigation to determine whether Mexico is behaving improperly?

Joint answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(13 March 2013)

The EU trade in copper pipes has been stable in recent years with exports exceeding imports by an annual average of 20 000 tons. The Commission, in addition to improving market access for European exporters, also ensures that third countries are playing by the rules with imports into EU traded at fair prices.

In cases where international trade in copper pipes is distorted by subsidy or dumping practices, anti-subsidy/dumping duties may be imposed after an investigation by the Commission and if these practices cause injury to EU industry. An investigation may be open if there is sufficient prima facie evidence of dumping or subsidisation and of material injury to the Union industry, caused by the dumped or subsidised imports.

Industry is free to bring a complaint and the Commission is under a legal obligation to initiate an investigation if the relevant legal conditions are met.

The new Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) focuses preferences on those most in need: non-competitive sectors from lower income economies and Least Developed Countries. The Chinese copper pipe sector is competitive, so it does not receive GSP preferences, which is not the case for Vietnam, which thus receives preferences in full respect of the non-discrimination principle.

As foreseen in the GSP regulation, if Vietnamese exports are being made on the basis of fraudulent practices, preferences may be withdrawn. In addition, safeguards exist in case of serious difficulties for EU producers caused by preferential imports. At this stage, none of the above has been raised to the Commission. Copper pipes are considered a sensitive product, and thus receive relatively limited preferences. This explains why safeguards remain an exceptional tool under GSP.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000630/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(22 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Acuerdos Rubik entre Estados miembros de la UE y Suiza

Según noticias aparecidas en diferentes medios de comunicación de algunos Estados miembros, el 8 de octubre del año pasado se produjo una reunión entre Didier Burkhalter, jefe de la diplomacia helvética, y el Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores español.

Según la información publicada, el contenido de la reunión fue la propuesta de un pacto para garantizar la privacidad de los ciudadanos españoles que disponen de cuentas bancarias abiertas en el país helvético debido al término del plazo de la amnistía fiscal vigente. A través de este tipo de acuerdos Suiza garantiza la privacidad de los datos bancarios de ciudadanos extranjeros en su territorio a cambio de una pequeña remuneración en concepto de los impuestos que se pudieran derivar de estas cuentas bancarias en sus respectivos países de origen. Este acuerdo, que recibe el nombre de «Acuerdo Rubick», es utilizado para la ocultación de rentas y garantizar la tranquilidad de los clientes, y cuenta con el respaldo de la Asociación Suiza de Banqueros y la Asociación de Bancos Extranjeros en Suiza.

Estas millonarias evasiones de capital favorecidas por los propios gobiernos de los Estados miembros, en clara colusión con los intereses de los grandes capitales, suponen una manifiesta actividad ilegal y una sangría para las arcas públicas. Debido a este tipo de evasiones masivas de capital se están quebrando las cuentas públicas de los países del sur de Europa y se imponen medidas de austeridad para las clases trabajadoras mientras los grandes capitales eluden y evaden su obligación de pagar impuestos.

En la actual crisis económica que atraviesa Europa resulta central el control de la evasión internacional de capitales debido a que suponen la mayor parte de la evasión fiscal en muchos Estados miembros de la Unión. Estos Estados están destruyendo sus servicios públicos al mismo tiempo que permiten la evasión a gran escala, convirtiendo la crisis financiera internacional en una verdadera estafa mediante la cual se están expropiando los servicios que ofrece el sector público a las clases trabajadoras.

¿Dispone la Comisión de información sobre los Acuerdos Rubik firmados entre los Estados miembros y Suiza? En caso negativo, ¿está desarrollando investigaciones al respecto? ¿Cuáles y qué países son sospechosos de mantener este tipo de acuerdos?

¿Desarrollará la Comisión normativa para impedir este tipo de acuerdos? ¿Incluirá en sus recomendaciones específicas a los Estados miembros la prohibición de este tipo de acuerdos?

Respuesta del Sr. Šemeta en nombre de la Comisión
(28 de febrero de 2013)

En octubre de 2011 y en abril de 2012, Suiza firmó acuerdos fiscales similares al mencionado con el Reino Unido y Austria, respectivamente. Ambos acuerdos entraron en vigor el 1 de enero de 2013. Además de imponer retenciones a cuenta sobre determinados flujos de ingresos presentes o futuros, los acuerdos establecen un mecanismo para regularizar la imposición de determinados activos no declarados y no gravados anteriormente. El Bundesrat alemán se negó recientemente a ratificar un acuerdo similar. Suiza ha comunicado que está celebrando negociaciones con otros Estados miembros.

En principio, los Estados miembros son libres de celebrar acuerdos internacionales, siempre y cuando dichos acuerdos se ajusten al Derecho de la UE, en particular en lo que respecta a las competencias de la Unión. El 5 de marzo de 2012, los Estados miembros fueron informados por escrito por la Comisión de determinados parámetros que deben cumplirse a fin de garantizar el respeto del Derecho y las competencias de la UE.

Es bien conocido el planteamiento que prefiere la Comisión a la hora de garantizar la adecuada imposición de los ahorros depositados en el extranjero, inclusive en Suiza. La Comisión prefiere acuerdos de la UE con los terceros países de que se trate, que redundan en beneficio de los 27 Estados miembros. Tal planteamiento es más eficaz que los acuerdos bilaterales entre Estados, que pueden eludirse mediante estructuras de inversión complejas en múltiples jurisdicciones. La Comisión también se inclina por un intercambio automático de información con arreglo a la regla general establecida en la Directiva 2003/48/CE («Directiva sobre la fiscalidad del ahorro»). La Comisión seguirá promoviendo la aplicación de esta norma en la EU y velará en la medida de lo posible por que se apliquen normas equivalentes en las relaciones con terceros países vecinos, incluida Suiza.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000630/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Rubik Agreements between EU Member States and Switzerland

According to stories that appeared in different news sources in some Member States, a meeting took place on 8 October last year between the Swiss Foreign Minister, Didier Burkhalter, and the Spanish Foreign Minister.

According to the information published, the purpose of the meeting concerned a pact guaranteeing the privacy of Spanish citizens who keep their bank accounts open in Switzerland in light of the expiration of the current tax amnesty. It is through these types of agreements that Switzerland guarantees the privacy of non-nationals' bank data on its territory in exchange for a small remuneration in the form of taxes that may arise from these bank accounts in their respective countries of origin. This agreement, known as the 'Rubick Agreement', is used to hide income and guarantee clients' peace of mind, and enjoys the support of the Swiss Bankers Association and the Association of Foreign Banks in Switzerland.

These millions of euros in capital evasions favoured by Member State governments, in clear collusion with the interests of big businesses, patently constitute illegal activity and a drain on public funds. Due to massive capital evasion of this nature, public funds in southern Europe are being depleted and austerity measures are being imposed on the working classes, while big businesses elude and evade their obligation to pay taxes.

Given the current economic crisis in Europe, it is essential to control international tax evasion, since it constitutes the largest proportion of tax evasion within EU Member States. These States are destroying their public services, while at the same time permitting tax evasion on a large scale, turning the international financial crisis into a real racket in which the working classes are being deprived of services provided through the public sector.

Does the Commission have any information with regard to the Rubik Agreements signed by Member States and Switzerland? If not, is it conducting investigations to this end? Which countries are suspected of participating in these kinds of agreements?

Will the Commission develop regulations to stop these kinds of agreements? Will it include a ban on these kinds of agreements in its specific recommendations to Member States?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(28 February 2013)

In October 2011 and April 2012, tax agreements, similar to the one referred to, were signed by Switzerland with the United Kingdom and Austria, respectively. Both agreements became operable on 1 January 2013. As well as imposing withholding taxes on certain present and future income streams, the agreements provide a mechanism for regularising the taxation of certain previously undeclared and untaxed assets. The German Bundesrat recently refused to ratify a similar agreement. Switzerland has announced that it is conducting negotiations with other Member States.

In principle, Member States are free to enter into international agreements, provided such agreements comply with EC law, including in regard to EU competences. Member States were informed in writing by the Commission on 5 March 2012 about certain parameters to be observed in order to ensure respect for EC law and competences.

The approach favoured by the Commission to ensure proper taxation of savings held abroad, including in Switzerland, is well known. The Commission favours EU agreements with the third countries concerned, benefitting all 27 Member States. Such approach is more efficient than bilateral agreements between states, which can be circumvented by complex investment structures involving multiple jurisdictions. The Commission also favours automatic exchange of information in line with the general rule set out in Directive 2003/48/EC ('Savings Taxation Directive'). The Commission will continue to promote the application of that standard across the EU and to ensure, as far as possible, that equivalent standards apply in the relationship with neighbouring third countries, including Switzerland.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000631/13
à Comissão
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL) e João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(22 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: Forte tempestade (vento e chuva) destruiu plantações e infraestruturas agrícolas

Uma tempestade caracterizada por forte vendaval e chuva, esta sexta-feira e sábado, assolou várias regiões de Portugal e atingiu com estragos significativos várias zonas do país, incluindo, entre outras, a região da Grande Lisboa, a região Oeste — Caldas da Rainha e Torres Vedras — e o norte do país — nomeadamente Esposende e a Póvoa do Varzim. As cerca de vinte horas de ventos fortes destruíram plantações, estufas, danificaram a rede de água para a rega e rede elétrica, causando prejuízos ainda não inteiramente estimados, mas que, num balanço preliminar relativo apenas a algumas das áreas acima mencionadas, ultrapassarão a dezena de milhões de euros.

Num cenário em que centenas de estufas hortícolas e de produção de morango ficaram destruídas, assim como muitas plantações aí existentes, as explorações agrícolas e os agricultores em causa, que lutam para sobreviver nas condições económicas e sociais que o país atravessa, fruto da crise e agravadas pela intervenção UE-FMI, ficam agora ainda mais fragilizados.

Assim, solicitamos à Comissão que nos informe sobre o seguinte:

1. Que medidas de apoio existem para a reabilitação destas explorações, incluindo as estufas, as redes hídrica e elétrica destruídas pela forte tempestade, e para obras de consolidação das zonas envolventes, indispensáveis à segurança das populações?

2. Qual o ponto de situação relativamente à revisão do Regulamento do Fundo de Solidariedade da UE?

Resposta dada por Johannes Hahn em nome da Comissão
(8 de abril de 2013)

1. O limiar normal para mobilizar o Fundo de Solidariedade da UE aplicável a Portugal corresponde a prejuízos diretos superiores a 987 milhões de euros. No que respeita às catástrofes de menor dimensão, denominadas regionais, o Fundo só pode ser mobilizado em condições muito excecionais, caso esteja em causa a maioria da população na zona afetada e se fizerem sentir repercussões graves e prolongadas nas condições de vida e na estabilidade económica da região. Se as autoridades portuguesas desejarem solicitar a ajuda do Fundo de Solidariedade, devem apresentar um pedido à Comissão no prazo de 10 semanas a contar da data em que foram causados os primeiros danos. A Comissão coloca-se à disposição para fornecer orientações. O Fundo de Solidariedade não pode compensar danos privados, incluindo os danos às empresas e no domínio da agricultura.

O Programa de Desenvolvimento Rural de Portugal Continental para 2007-2013 oferece atualmente a possibilidade de restabelecimento do potencial de produção agrícola afetado por catástrofes naturais e introdução de medidas de prevenção adequadas, com um financiamento público total de cerca de 31 milhões de euros, dos quais 25 milhões de euros são cofinanciados pelo Fundo Europeu Agrícola de Desenvolvimento Rural. Os Estados-Membros são responsáveis pela seleção, adjudicação e pagamento dos projetos. Por conseguinte, a Comissão sugere que os Senhores Deputados contactem diretamente a autoridade de gestão:

Rua Padre António Vieira, n.° 1 — 8.° andar
1099-073 Lisboa
Telefone: 00 351 21 381 9318/19/20
gabrielaventura@gpp.pt ou st.proder@gpp.pt

2. A Comissão está atualmente a trabalhar numa proposta legislativa para alterar o Regulamento do Fundo de Solidariedade, que tenciona apresentar durante o segundo trimestre de 2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000631/13
to the Commission
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL) and João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: Destruction of crops and farming infrastructure by strong winds and rainstorm

On Friday 18 and Saturday 19 January 2012 several parts of Portugal were hit by a violent storm, with strong winds and rain, which inflicted serious damage on a number of regions, including the Greater Lisbon area, western Portugal — Caldas da Rainha and Torres Vedras — and the north of the country — in particular, Esposende and Póvoa do Varzim. Almost 20 hours of violent winds destroyed crops and greenhouses and damaged the irrigation and electricity networks. The extent of the damage has yet to be fully calculated, but an initial assessment for just some of the areas listed points to losses of over EUR 10 million.

With the destruction of hundreds of greenhouses used for horticultural and strawberry production, as well as a large part of the crops being grown inside them, the affected farms and farmers, who are already struggling to survive in Portugal's current economic and social crisis which has been aggravated by EU-IMF intervention, now find themselves in an even more precarious situation.

Could the Commission provide the following information:

1. What forms of support are available for restoring these farms, including the greenhouses and the water and electricity networks destroyed by the storm and for work to consolidate the surrounding areas, which is essential for the safety of the population?

2. What is the state of play concerning the revision of the regulation on the EU Solidarity Fund?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(8 April 2013)

1. The normal threshold for activating the EU Solidarity Fund applicable to Portugal is direct damage in excess of EUR 987 million. For smaller, so-called regional, disasters the Fund can only be activated under very exceptional conditions if the majority of the population in the affected area is concerned and if there are serious and lasting repercussions on the living conditions and the economic stability of the region. If the Portuguese authorities wish to request aid from the Solidarity Fund they should present an application to the Commission within 10 weeks of the date of the first damage caused. The Commission stands ready to provide guidance. The Solidarity Fund may not compensate private damage including damage to businesses and in agriculture.

The Rural Development Programme of Mainland Portugal for 2007-2013 currently offers the possibility of restoring agricultural production potential damaged by natural disasters and introducing appropriate preventive actions, with a total public financing of around EUR 31 million, of which EUR 25 million co-financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. Member States are responsible for the selection, contracting and payments of projects. Therefore the Commission suggests that the Honourable Member contact directly the managing authority:

Rua Padre António Vieira, 1 — 8° andar
1099-073 LISBOA
Tel.: 00 351 21 381 9318/19/20
gabrielaventura@gpp.pt or st.proder@gpp.pt

2. The Commission is currently working on a legislative proposal amending the Solidarity Fund Regulation and intends to present it during the second quarter of 2013.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000632/13
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Pino Arlacchi (S&D)
(22 gennaio 2013)

Oggetto: VP/HR — relazione della Corte dei conti su EULEX

Nel periodo 2007-2011, l'Unione europea ha fornito 680 milioni di euro a sostegno dello Stato di diritto in Kosovo, facendo del paese il maggior beneficiario pro capite degli aiuti dell'Unione europea nel mondo. Secondo una relazione della Corte europea dei conti, di recente pubblicazione, la Missione EULEX, che è la più grande missione di gestione di una crisi mai effettuata dall'Unione europea, è stata inefficace e non ha adempiuto al proprio mandato nel contrasto alla criminalità organizzata e alla corruzione. La relazione constata che uno dei problemi principali di EULEX è stata la mancanza di obiettivi chiaramente definiti e una debole struttura organizzativa. In particolare, EULEX non ha raggiunto l'obiettivo di migliorare le prestazioni del sistema giudiziario e dei servizi di polizia del Kosovo, la cui preoccupazione principale è il controllo delle retribuzioni dei funzionari.

Dati i risultati della relazione:

1. Il SEAE intende intraprendere una revisione completa della missione EULEX, onde garantire che i suoi obiettivi abbiano parametri di riferimento definiti per poterne misurare i progressi?

2. Considerando la crisi economica in atto, la VP/AR non crede che gli stanziamenti UE dovrebbero essere spesi in modo più responsabile ed efficace?

3. Il SEAE sta esaminando l'opportunità di sostenere la proposta del Ministro della Difesa tedesco, Thomas de Maiziere, di chiudere la Missione EULEX e sostituirla con una nuova missione dotata di nuovi mandato, struttura e personale?

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

Le conclusioni della relazione della Corte dei conti sono già state trattate nella sezione «Risposte della Commissione e del Servizio europeo per l'azione esterna», allegata alla relazione. La ristrutturazione di EULEX, effettuata nell'estate del 2012 (quindi dopo il periodo di riferimento della relazione), ha già fornito una risposta a molte delle osservazioni sollevate nella relazione circa un coordinamento più stretto e un approccio globale.

L'Alta Rappresentante ritiene che il lavoro di EULEX dovrebbe essere svolto in modo responsabile ed efficace e persegue un continuo miglioramento in stretta collaborazione con altri soggetti istituzionali.

Il futuro a lungo termine e il bilancio di EULEX, e in particolare eventuali modifiche del mandato prima o dopo la fine dell'attuale mandato che scade a giugno 2014, sono oggetto di discussioni e dovranno trovare l'accordo degli Stati membri, ovviamente in consultazione con le autorità e la società civile del Kosovo.

L'Alta Rappresentante attuerà la proposta concordata dai soggetti interessati.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000632/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Pino Arlacchi (S&D)
(22 January 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — European Court of Auditors report on EULEX

In the period 2007-2011, the European Union provided EUR 680 million to support the rule of law in Kosovo, making the country the biggest per capita recipient of EU aid in the world. According to a recently-released European Court of Auditors report, the EULEX Mission, which is the European Union's largest-ever crisis management mission, has been ineffective and has not fulfilled its mandate in the fields of countering organised crime and corruption. The report found that one of the main problems with EULEX was the lack of clearly defined objectives and a weak organisational structure. In particular, EULEX did not achieve its goal of improving the performance of Kosovo's judiciary and police service, with the main concern being checks on its officials' pay.

Given the findings of this report:

1. Is the EEAS planning to undertake a complete revision of the EULEX Mission, in order to ensure that its goals have benchmarks so that progress can be measured?

2. Considering the ongoing economic crises, does the VP/HR not believe that EU monies should be spent in a more accountable and effective way?

3. Is the EEAS considering supporting the proposal by the German Minister of Defence, Thomas de Maiziere, that the EULEX Mission be ended and replaced with a new mission with a new mandate, structure and personnel?

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

The findings of the Court of Auditors Report have already been addressed in 'The Commission's and European External Action Service's replies' included at the end of the report. The successful restructuring of EULEX in summer 2012 (occurring after the reporting period of the Court) addressed many of the report's observations regarding closer coordination and the comprehensive approach.

The HR/VP believes that its work should be delivered in the accountable and effective way and pursues continuous improvement in close consultation with other institutional actors.

The long-term future and budget of EULEX and in particular variations of the mandate before or after the end of the current mandate in June 2014 are a matter for discussion and agreement with Member States and, of course, in consultation with Kosovo authorities and civil society.

The HR/VP will implement the proposal that is fully agreed among these stakeholders.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-000633/13
adresată Comisiei
Daciana Octavia Sârbu (S&D)
(23 ianuarie 2013)

Subiect: Pistele de biciclete EuroVelo

Promovarea ciclismului, ca sport, activitate recreativă și formă de transport, contribuie la realizarea mai multor obiective esențiale de politică. Printre acestea se numără: promovarea mai accentuată a unui turism sustenabil; promovarea activității fizice; reducerea aglomerării în trafic; reducerea emisiilor de CO_2. Rețeaua de piste EuroVelo are un rol important în promovarea ciclismului prin oferirea unei modalități sigure, bine întreținute de practicare a ciclismului în statele membre și între acestea. Astfel de rute pot promova și obiective turistice mai puțin cunoscute și pot încuraja investițiile și creșterea în comunitățile pe care le traversează.

Deși multe tronsoane ale rețelei EuroVelo sunt deja bine cunoscute și întreținute, unele necesită totuși investiții importante pentru a deveni viabile pentru ciclişti. Una dintre aceste rute este cea a Cortinei de fier, ce se întinde pe mai mult de 10 000 km între Marea Barents și Marea Neagră. Planul de acțiune cu caracter transnațional de realizare a acestei piste a identificat, printre alte obstacole, lipsa de norme naționale pentru infrastructura de ciclism în țările din sud drept unul dintre obstacolele principale în realizarea pistei.

1. Intenționează Comisia să sprijine elaborarea de norme pentru infrastructura de ciclism?

2. În calitate de cofinanțator al proiectului EuroVelo, se va asigura Comisia că aceste piste în stare deplorabilă, precum cea a Cortinei de fier, vor beneficia de finanțare prioritară?

Răspuns dat de dl Tajani în numele Comisiei
(20 martie 2013)

Comisia recunoaște rolul ciclismului și al rutelor EuroVelo în promovarea turismului durabil, a destinațiilor mai puțin cunoscute în Europa, precum și contribuția acestora la turism și dezvoltare regională.

1. Federația Cicliștilor Europeni, care administrează rețeaua EuroVelo, a conceput deja anumite orientări și standarde privind rutele certificate EuroVelo, inclusiv pista de biciclete „Cortina de Fier". Deocamdată nu există proiecte concrete ale Comisiei vizând dezvoltarea standardelor pentru infrastructura aferentă ciclismului.

2. Dintr-o perspectivă turistică, în perioada 2009-2012, Comisia a lansat mai multe cereri de propuneri specifice și a co-finanțat proiecte legate de dezvoltarea pistei de biciclete „Cortina de Fier" (EuroVelo 13), ceea ce a dus la elaborarea de planuri de acțiune pentru diferite sectoare ale acestei piste. A co-finanțat de asemenea proiecte legate de rețeaua EuroVelo menite să consolideze coordonarea acesteia la nivel central și să crească potențialul și vizibilitatea ei turistică ([1]).

În plus, investițiile în infrastructura ciclistă pot fi finanțate în cadrul politicii de coeziune a UE, în special prin Fondul european de dezvoltare regională (FEDER) ([2]). FEDER finanțează, de asemenea, dezvoltarea proiectelor de cooperare precum rețeaua EuroVelo.

([1]) Pistele transnaționale cicliste sau itinerarele culturale , printre altele, ar putea fi sprijinite în continuare prin intermediul cererii de propuneri „Sprijin pentru îmbunătățirea și promovarea produselor turistice tematice cu caracter transnațional" din cadrul Programului pentru spirit antreprenorial și inovare 2013, a cărui publicare este planificată în primăvara anului 2013: http://ec.europa.eu/cip/files/cip/docs/eip-2013-work-programme-final_en.pdf

([2]) Pentru perioada 2000-2006, aproximativ 74,4 de milioane de euro au fost alocate pistelor de biciclete, iar pentru perioada 2007-2013, sprijinul din partea FEDER se va ridica la 646 de milioane de euro. Finanțarea infrastructurii pentru bicicliști depinde de prioritățile regionale/naționale.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000633/13
to the Commission
Daciana Octavia Sârbu (S&D)
(23 January 2013)

Subject: EuroVelo routes

The promotion of cycling, as a sport, a recreational activity and a form of transport, contributes to several key policy objectives. These include: increasing sustainable tourism; promoting physical activity; reducing traffic congestion; and lowering CO_2 emissions. The EuroVelo network plays an important role in promoting cycling by providing a safe, well- maintained environment in which to cycle within and between European countries. The existence of a EuroVelo route can help to promote lesser-known tourist destinations and bring investment and growth to the communities it passes through.

Although many parts of the EuroVelo network are well established, some routes still require significant development to make them viable for many cyclists. One of these is the 'Iron Curtain Trail', which runs for over 10 000 km from the Barents Sea to the Black Sea. The Transnational Action Plan for the implementation of this route cites, amongst other issues, the lack of national standards for cycling infrastructure in southern countries as an obstacle to the development of the route.

1. Will the Commission assist with the development of standards for cycling infrastructure?

2. As a co-financer of the EuroVelo project, will the Commission ensure that those routes most in need of investment, such as the Iron Curtain Trail, receive priority funding?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(20 March 2013)

The Commission recognises the role of cycling and EuroVelo routes in promoting sustainable tourism, lesser-known destinations in Europe as well as their contribution to tourism and regional development.

1. The European Cyclists' Federation, which manages the EuroVelo Network, has already developed some guidance and standards concerning the certified EuroVelo routes, including the Iron Curtain Trail. For the time being, there are no concrete Commission projects targeting the development of standards for cycling infrastructure.

2. From a tourism perspective, over the period 2009-2012, the Commission had several dedicated calls for proposals and co-financed projects related to the development of the Iron Curtain Trail (EuroVelo 13) which resulted in the elaboration of action plans for different sections of this specific trail. It also co-financed projects related to the EuroVelo network aimed at strengthening its central coordination and increasing its tourism potential and visibility ([1]).

Further to this, cycling infrastructure investments can be financed under the EU cohesion policy, in particular the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) ([2]). The ERDF also provides funding for the development of cooperation projects, such as the EuroVelo Network.

([1]) Cycle or cultural transnational routes, amongst others, could be further supported via the call for proposals 'Supporting the enhancement and promotion of transnational thematic tourism products' under the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme 2013, planned to be published in spring 2013: http://ec.europa.eu/cip/files/cip/docs/eip-2013-work-programme-final_en.pdf

([2]) For the period 2000-2006, about 74.4 million EUR were allocated to cycle paths and, for the 2007-2013 period, the support from the ERDF will amount to 646 million EUR. Funding of cycling infrastructure depends on regional/national priorities.

(българска версия)

Въпрос с искане за писмен отговор E-000634/13
до Комисията
Michael Cashman (S&D), Ulrike Lunacek (Verts/ALE), Sophia in 't Veld (ALDE), Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE), Cornelis de Jong (GUE/NGL), Antonyia Parvanova (ALDE), Marije Cornelissen (Verts/ALE), Anna Hedh (S&D) и Mikael Gustafsson (GUE/NGL)
(23 януари 2013 г.)

Относно: Бъдещите закони и политики на ЕС, отнасящи се до пола, половата идентичност и изразяването на половата принадлежност

В отговорите си на въпроси с искане за писмен отговор E-002442/2011 и E-000716/2012 Комисията препраща към продължаващите проучвания за нов доклад „Транссексуалните и интерсексуалните хора: дискриминация въз основа на пола, половата идентичност и изразяването на половата принадлежност". Документът беше завършен през юни 2011 г. и проучването беше публикувано през юни 2012 г.

1. Какво планира да предприеме Комисията във връзка с констатациите, съдържащи се в това проучване, след като е разполагала с повече от година и половина, за да обсъди резултатите от него?

2. По-специално Комисията ще включи ли изрично дискриминацията въз основа на половата идентичност и изразяването на половата принадлежност в бъдещите си оценки и ревизии на съответното право на ЕС, включително Директиви 2004/113/ЕО и 2006/54/ЕО, за да ги съгласува с подобни текстове в правото на ЕС, в това число в Директиви 2011/95/ЕС и 2012/29/ЕС, които включват тези основания?

3. Как Комисията възнамерява да използва основанията в Договорите във връзка с пола за разработване на политики, свързани с дискриминацията, с която се сблъскват транссексуалните и интерсексуалните хора в ЕС?

4. Какво ще предприеме Комисията за премахване на „разстройството на половата идентичност" от следващата версия на Международната класификация на болестите на СЗО и за намиране на нова класификация, която не предполага, че това е патологично състояние?

5. И накрая, Комисията ще предприеме ли действия във връзка с все още съществуващия проблем за насилствената стерилизация на транссексуалните хора в някои държави — членки на ЕС, като се има предвид, че това е нарушение на тяхното човешко достойнство с необратими последици?

Отговор, даден от г-жа Рединг от името на Комисията
(4 април 2013 г.)

В член 19 от ДФЕС половата идентичност не е посочена като отделно основание при дискриминация, което ограничава възможностите на Комисията да предложи законодателни мерки в тази област. В съответствие със съдебната практика на Съда на ЕС ([1]) Комисията включва дискриминацията срещу транссексуални лица, основана на промяната на пола им, в наблюдението относно прилагането на Директива 2004/113/ЕО и Директива 2006/54/ЕО от държавите членки.

В допълнение Комисията дава голяма публичност на резултатите от проучването на тема „Дискриминация на транссексуалните и интерсексуалните лица въз основа на пол, полова идентичност и изразяване на пола" както на вътрешноинституционално ниво, така и сред практикуващите юристи, гражданското общество и държавите членки. Освен това тя разпространява резултатите от последното проучване Евробарометър относно дискриминацията ([2]). Чрез програма „Progress" Комисията допринася за укрепване на капацитета на организациите на гражданското общество ([3]), защитаващи правата на транссексуалните лица.

По време на преговорите по 11-та Международна класификация на болестите (МКБ) Комисията изрази подкрепата си за намиране на нова класификация на разстройството на половата идентичност, която да не предполага, че то е патологично състояние. Макар Комисията да не участва в процеса на вземане на решения по МКБ и да има ограничено пряко влияние, тя води понастоящем разговори по темата със Световната здравна организация ([4]).

([1]) Решение по дело C-13/94 P c/y S и Cornwall County Council, Recueil I-2143, 1996 г.; Решение по дело C-423/04 Richards c/y Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, 2006 г.; Решение по дело C-117/01 KB c/y NHS Trust Pension Agency, 2004 г.

([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb_special_399_380_en.htm#393

([3]) Международната асоциация на лесбийки, гейове, бисексуални, транссексуални и интерсексуални лица (ILGA) и Международната младежка и студентска организация на лесбийки, гейове, бисексуални, транссексуални лица и куиър (IGLYO).

([4]) Основната отговорност за работата по МКБ е възложена на Секретариата на Световната здравна организация, който работи в сътрудничество с експерти от държавите — членки на СЗО, като МКБ ще бъде одобрена от Световната здравна асамблея.

Във връзка с въпроса относно насилственото стерилизиране на транссексуални лица следва да припомним, че съгласно Договорите за ЕС Комисията не разполага с компетентност да се намесва в работата на държавите членки, ако липсва връзка с правото на ЕС. При липса на такава връзка гарантирането на защитата на основните права в съответствие с националното законодателство и поетите международни задължения в областта на правата на човека е задача на държавите членки и на националните съдилища.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000634/13
a la Comisión
Michael Cashman (S&D), Ulrike Lunacek (Verts/ALE), Sophia in 't Veld (ALDE), Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE), Cornelis de Jong (GUE/NGL), Antonyia Parvanova (ALDE), Marije Cornelissen (Verts/ALE), Anna Hedh (S&D) y Mikael Gustafsson (GUE/NGL)
(23 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Futuras leyes y políticas de la UE relativas a la orientación sexual, a la identidad de género y a la expresión de género

En sus respuestas a las preguntas escritas E-002442/2011 y E-000716/2012, la Comisión tuvo la amabilidad de hacer referencia a la investigación en curso para elaborar un nuevo informe, «Trans and intersex people: Discrimination on the grounds of sex, gender identity and gender expression» («Transexuales e intersexuales: discriminación por motivos de orientación sexual, identidad de género y expresión de género»). El manuscrito se terminó en junio de 2011 y el estudio se publicó en junio de 2012.

1. Ahora que la Comisión ha tenido más de un año y medio para considerar los resultados del estudio, ¿cómo tiene previsto poner en práctica sus conclusiones?

2. En particular, ¿incluirá la Comisión la discriminación por razón de identidad de género y de expresión de género explícitamente en sus futuros exámenes y revisiones de la legislación pertinente de la UE, incluidas las Directivas 2004/113/CE y 2006/54/CE, para estar en sintonía con progresos similares que se han hecho en la legislación de la UE, como en las Directivas 2011/95/UE y 2012/29/UE, que contemplan estos motivos?

3. ¿Cómo utilizará la Comisión la razón de la orientación sexual en los Tratados para diseñar políticas relativas a la discriminación que sufren los transexuales e intersexuales en la EU?

4. ¿Qué hará la Comisión para eliminar los «trastornos de identidad de género» de la clasificación internacional de enfermedades de la Organización Mundial de la Salud (OMS) en su próxima revisión y para que no se reclasifiquen como patologías?

5. Por último, ¿tratará la Comisión la cuestión actual de la esterilización forzosa de transexuales en varios Estados miembros de la UE, ya que se trata de una vulneración irreversible de su dignidad humana?

Respuesta de la Sra. Reding en nombre de la Comisión
(4 de abril de 2013)

El artículo 19 del TFUE no contiene ninguna referencia a la identidad de género como motivo de discriminación, lo que restringe el margen de la Comisión para proponer legislación en este ámbito. En consonancia con la jurisprudencia del Tribunal de Justicia ([1]), la Comisión atiende a la discriminación contra las personas transexuales por razones de su reasignación de sexo al controlar la aplicación por los Estados miembros de la Directiva 2004/113/CE y la Directiva 2006/54/CE.

Además, la Comisión está difundiendo ampliamente los resultados del estudio sobre la discriminación contra las personas transexuales e intersexuales por razón de sexo, identidad de género y expresión de género, tanto internamente como entre los profesionales de la justicia, la sociedad civil y los Estados miembros. La Comisión también divulga los resultados del último eurobarómetro sobre la discriminación ([2]). Mediante el programa PROGRESS, la Comisión contribuye a reforzar la capacidad de las organizaciones de la sociedad civil ([3]) que defienden los derechos de las personas transexuales.

La Comisión expresó su apoyo a la reclasificación no patologizante de la identidad de género en las negociaciones de la undécima Clasificación Internacional de Enfermedades (CIE). Aunque la Comisión no participa en el proceso de toma de decisiones en relación con la CIE y ejerce una influencia directa limitada, se mantienen conversaciones con la Organización Mundial de la Salud sobre este tema ([4]).

([1]) Sentencia en el asunto C-13/94, P contra S y Cornwall County Council, Rec. 1996, p. I-2143. asunto C-423/04 Richards v Secretary of State for Work and Pensions 2006; asunto C-117/01 KB v the NHS Trust Pension Agency 2004.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb_special_399_380_en.htm#393
([3]) Asociación Internacional de Lesbianas, Gays, Transexuales e Intersexuales (International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association, ILGA) y Organización Internacional de Jóvenes y Estudiantes Lesbianas, Gays, Bisexuales, Transexuales y Queer (International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Youth and Student Organisation, IGLYO).
([4]) La principal responsable del trabajo sobre la CIE es la Secretaría de la Organización Mundial de la Salud, en colaboración con expertos de los Estados miembros de la OMS, y su aprobación compete a la Asamblea Mundial de la Salud.

En lo que respecta a la pregunta sobre la esterilización forzosa de los transexuales, cabe recordar que, de conformidad con los Tratados de la UE, la Comisión no tiene competencias para intervenir ante los Estados miembros si el asunto no afecta a la legislación de la UE. En todos los demás casos, incumbe a los Estados miembros y a los órganos jurisdiccionales nacionales velar por la protección de los derechos fundamentales, de conformidad con la legislación nacional y las obligaciones internacionales en materia de derechos humanos.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000634/13
an die Kommission
Michael Cashman (S&D), Ulrike Lunacek (Verts/ALE), Sophia in 't Veld (ALDE), Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE), Cornelis de Jong (GUE/NGL), Antonyia Parvanova (ALDE), Marije Cornelissen (Verts/ALE), Anna Hedh (S&D) und Mikael Gustafsson (GUE/NGL)
(23. Januar 2013)

Betrifft: Künftige Rechtsvorschriften und Maßnahmen der EU hinsichtlich des Geschlechts, der Geschlechtsidentität und des Ausdrucks der Geschlechtlichkeit

In ihren Antworten auf die schriftlichen Anfragen E-002442/2011 und E-000716/2012 verweist die Kommission auf die laufende Untersuchung für einen neuen Bericht, „Trans- und intersexuelle Menschen: Diskriminierung von trans- und intersexuelle Menschen aufgrund des Geschlechts, der Geschlechtsidentität und des Geschlechtsausdrucks". Das Manuskript wurde im Juni 2011 fertig gestellt und die Untersuchung im Juni 2012 veröffentlicht.

1. Welche Folgemaßnahmen gedenkt die Kommission heute, nachdem sie mehr als eineinhalb Jahre Zeit für die Prüfung der Untersuchungsergebnisse hatte, hinsichtlich der Erkenntnisse der Untersuchung zu unternehmen?

2. Wird die Kommission insbesondere bei ihren künftigen Bewertungen und Überprüfungen der einschlägigen EU-Rechtsvorschriften, wie etwa der Richtlinien 2004/113/EG und 2006/54/EG, Diskriminierungen aus Gründen der Geschlechtsidentität und des Ausdrucks der Geschlechtlichkeit ausdrücklich berücksichtigen, um so ähnlichen Entwicklungen in EU-Rechtsvorschriften Rechnung zu tragen, wie etwa den Richtlinien 2011/95/EU und 2012/29/EU, in die diese Diskriminierungsgründe bereits Eingang gefunden haben?

3. Wie wird die Kommission der geschlechterspezifischen Diskriminierung in den Verträgen Rechnung tragen, um Maßnahmen gegen die Diskriminierung trans- und intersexueller Menschen in der EU auszuarbeiten?

4. Was wird die Kommission unternehmen, damit die WHO den Begriff „Geschlechtsidentitätsstörung" bei ihrer nächsten Überarbeitung der Internationalen Klassifikation der Krankheiten streicht, und inwieweit wird sie auf eine nichtpathologisierende Neueinstufung hinwirken?

5. Wird sich die Kommission schließlich mit dem Problem der in einigen EU-Mitgliedstaaten immer noch praktizierten Zwangssterilisation von Transsexuellen befassen, die einen unumkehrbaren Verstoß gegen deren Menschenwürde darstellt?

Antwort von Frau Reding im Namen der Kommission
(4. April 2013)

In Artikel 19 AEUV wird die Geschlechtsidentität nicht explizit als Diskriminierungsgrund aufgeführt. Die Möglichkeiten der Kommission, entsprechende Rechtsvorschriften vorzuschlagen, sind somit beschränkt. Diskriminierungen transsexueller Menschen infolge einer Geschlechtsumwandlung werden — im Einklang mit der Rechtsprechung des Gerichtshofs ([1]) — von der Kommission bei der Überwachung der Umsetzung der Richtlinien 2004/113/EG und 2006/54/EG in den Mitgliedstaaten berücksichtigt.

Die Kommission sorgt außerdem für eine weite Verbreitung der Ergebnisse der Studie „Diskriminierung von trans- und intersexuellen Menschen aufgrund des Geschlechts, der Geschlechtsidentität und des Geschlechtsausdrucks", und zwar sowohl intern als auch bei Angehörigen der Rechtsberufe, in der Zivilgesellschaft und in den Mitgliedstaaten. Auch die Ergebnisse der jüngsten Eurobarometer-Umfrage zum Thema Diskriminierung wurden von der Kommission veröffentlicht ([2]). Im Rahmen des Progress-Programms leistet sie darüber hinaus einen Beitrag zur Stärkung zivilgesellschaftlicher Organisationen ([3]), die sich für die Rechte transsexueller Menschen einsetzen.

([1]) P gegen S und Cornwall County Council, C-13/94, Slg. 1996, I-02143; Sarah Margaret Richards gegen Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, C-423/04, Slg. 2006, I-03585; K.B. gegen National Health Service Pensions Agency, C-117/01, Slg. 2004, I-00541.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb_special_399_380_en.htm#393
([3]) International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) und International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Youth and Student Organisation (IGLYO).

Im Rahmen der Verhandlungen über die 11. Internationale Klassifikation der Krankheiten (International Classification of Diseases — ICD) tritt die Kommission für eine nichtpathologisierende Neueinstufung von „Geschlechtsidentitätsstörungen“ ein. Wenngleich die Kommission nicht am ICD-Entscheidungsprozess beteiligt ist und lediglich über einen begrenzten direkten Einfluss verfügt, sind Gespräche mit der Weltgesundheitsorganisation über diese Frage im Gange ([4]).

Was das Problem der Zwangssterilisation von Transsexuellen anbelangt, sei daran erinnert, dass der Kommission durch die EU-Verträge keinerlei Befugnisse übertragen wurden, die es ihr ermöglichen würden, bei den Mitgliedstaaten zu intervenieren — es sei denn, es geht um die Einhaltung des EU-Rechts. In allen anderen Fällen ist es Sache der Mitgliedstaaten und der nationalen Gerichte, im Einklang mit den nationalen Rechtsvorschriften und internationalen Menschenrechtsverpflichtungen den Schutz der Grundrechte zu gewährleisten.

([4]) Für die Arbeiten an der ICD ist in erster Linie das Sekretariat der Weltgesundheitsorganisation verantwortlich, das mit Sachverständigen aus den WHO-Mitgliedstaaten zusammenarbeitet. Die Genehmigung der ICD obliegt der Weltgesundheitsversammlung.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-000634/13
aan de Commissie
Michael Cashman (S&D), Ulrike Lunacek (Verts/ALE), Sophia in 't Veld (ALDE), Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE), Cornelis de Jong (GUE/NGL), Antonyia Parvanova (ALDE), Marije ornelissen (Verts/ALE), Anna Hedh (S&D) en Mikael Gustafsson (GUE/NGL)
(23 januari 2013)

Betreft: Toekomstig EU-recht en -beleid inzake geslacht, genderidentiteit en -expressie

In antwoorden op schriftelijke vragen E-002442/2011 en E-000716/2012 verwees de Commissie naar lopend onderzoek voor een nieuw rapport, „Transseksuelen en interseksen: Discriminatie op grond van geslacht, genderidentiteit en -expressie". Het manuscript was in juni 2011 voltooid en de studie is in juni 2012 gepubliceerd.

1. Hoe wil de Commissie, nu zij meer dan anderhalf jaar de tijd heeft gehad om de resultaten in overweging te nemen, vervolg gaan geven aan de bevindingen van deze studie?

2. Is de Commissie in het bijzonder bereid om discriminatie op grond van genderidentiteit en -expressie uitdrukkelijk op te nemen in haar toekomstige beoordelingen en herzieningen van relevant EU-recht, met inbegrip van Richtlijnen 2004/113/EG en 2006/54/EG, om gelijkaardige ontwikkelingen in EU-recht beter op elkaar af te stemmen, met inbegrip van Richtlijnen 2011/95/EG en 2012/29/EG die deze uitgangspunten bevatten?

3. Hoe gaat de Commissie seksegerelateerde passages uit de Verdragen gebruiken bij het opstellen van beleidsplannen inzake de discriminatie waar transseksuelen en interseksen in de EU mee te maken hebben?

4. Hoe wil de Commissie ernaar streven dat „geslachtsidentiteitsstoornis" in de komende herziening van de Internationale classificatie van ziekten van de WHO wordt geschrapt en hoe wil zij een herindeling nastreven waarbij een andere genderidentiteit niet als ziekte wordt gezien?

5. Ten slotte, wil de Commissie ingaan op de aanhoudende kwestie aangaande gedwongen sterilisatie van transseksuelen in verschillende EU-lidstaten, een onomkeerbare schending van hun menselijke waardigheid?

Antwoord van mevrouw Reding namens de Commissie
(4 april 2013)

In artikel 19 van het VWEU wordt genderidentiteit niet als een aparte discriminatiegrond genoemd, waardoor de bevoegdheid van de Commissie om wetgeving op dit gebied voor te stellen, beperkt is. Overeenkomstig de jurisprudentie van het Hof van Justitie ([1]), neemt de Commissie discriminatie van transseksuelen op grond van hun geslachtsverandering op in de monitoring op de uitvoering van Richtlijn 2004/113/EG en Richtlijn 2006/54/EG door de lidstaten.

Daarnaast verspreidt de Commissie de resultaten van de studie *Discrimination against trans and intersex people on the grounds of sex, gender identity and gender expression* op grote schaal, zowel intern als onder beoefenaars van juridische beroepen, maatschappelijke organisaties en de lidstaten. De Commissie verspreidt eveneens de resultaten van de meest recente Eurobarometer over discriminatie ([2]). Via het PROGRESS-programma draagt de Commissie bij tot de versterking van de capaciteit van maatschappelijke organisaties die opkomen voor de rechten van transseksuelen ([3]).

De Commissie heeft er zich tijdens de onderhandelingen over de elfde versie van de internationale classificatie van ziekten (*International Classification of Diseases* — ICD) voor uitgesproken om transgenderidentiteit niet meer als een ziekte te classificeren. Hoewel de Commissie geen deel uitmaakt van het besluitvormingsproces over ICD en er slechts een beperkte rechtstreekse invloed op heeft, overlegt zij toch met de Wereldgezondheidsorganisatie (WHO) over dit onderwerp ([4]).

([1]) Zaak C-13/94 P tegen S en Cornwall County Council [1996] Jurispr. blz. I-2143; Zaak C-423/04 Richards tegen Secretary of State for Work and Pensions 2006; Zaak C-117/01 K. B. tegen National Health Service Pensions Agency en Secretary of State for Health 2004.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb_special_399_380_en.htm#393
([3]) International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) en International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Youth and Student Organisation (IGLYO).
([4]) De hoofdverantwoordelijke voor de ICD is het secretariaat van de Wereldgezondheidsorganisatie, in samenwerking met deskundigen van de WHO-lidstaten. De ICD zal worden goedgekeurd door de Wereldgezondheidsvergadering.

In verband met de gedwongen sterilisatie van transseksuelen wil de Commissie eraan herinneren dat zij uit hoofde van de EU-verdragen niet bevoegd is om in te grijpen in de lidstaten als het EU-recht niet van toepassing is. In alle andere gevallen is het de bevoegdheid van de lidstaten en nationale rechtbanken om de bescherming van grondrechten te garanderen overeenkomstig de nationale wetgeving en de internationale mensenrechten-verplichtingen.

(Suomenkielinen versio)

Kirjallisesti vastattava kysymys E-000634/13
komissiolle
Michael Cashman (S&D), Ulrike Lunacek (Verts/ALE), Sophia in 't Veld (ALDE), Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE), Cornelis de Jong (GUE/NGL), Antonyia Parvanova (ALDE), Marije Cornelissen (Verts/ALE), Anna Hedh (S&D) ja Mikael Gustafsson (GUE/NGL)
(23. tammikuuta 2013)

Aihe: Sukupuoleen, sukupuoli-identiteettiin ja sukupuolen ilmaisemista koskeva tuleva EU:n lainsäädäntö ja politiikka

Vastauksessaan kirjallisiin kysymyksiin E-002442/2011 ja E-000716/2012 komissio viittasi tekeillä olevaan tutkimukseen aiheesta "Transsukupuolisten ja intersukupuolisten ihmisten syrjintä sukupuolen, sukupuoli-identiteetin ja sukupuolen ilmaisemisen perusteella". Tutkimusluonnos valmistui kesäkuussa 2011 ja tutkimus julkaistiin kesäkuussa 2012.

1. Komissiolla on nyt ollut yli puolitoista vuotta aikaa tarkastella tutkimuksen tuloksia. Mihin toimiin se aikoo ryhtyä tekemiensä havaintojensa jälkeen?

2. Aikooko komissio etenkin ottaa huomioon sukupuoli-identiteettiin ja sukupuolen ilmaisemiseen perustuvan syrjinnän arvioidessaan ja tarkistaessaan asiaa koskevaa EU:n lainsäädäntöä, esimerkiksi direktiivejä 2004/113/EY ja 2006/54/EY, jotta ne vastaisivat unionin lainsäädännön kehitystä, esimerkiksi direktiivejä 2011/95/EU ja 2012/29/EU, joihin nämä perusteet on sisällytetty?

3. Miten komissio aikoo käyttää sukupuolen perustetta perussopimuksissa suunnitellessaan toimintalinjoja, jotka koskevat transsukupuolisten ja intersukupuolisten ihmisten kohtaamaa syrjintää EU:ssa?

4. Mihin toimiin komissio aikoo ryhtyä, jotta "sukupuoli-identiteetin häiriö" poistettaisiin WHO:n kansainvälisestä tautiluokituksesta sen seuraavassa tarkistuksessa ja laadittaisiin luokittelu, jossa luovutaan patologisoinnista?

5. Aikooko komissio ottaa kantaa useissa EU:n jäsenvaltioissa voimassa olevaan transihmisten pakkosterilisaatioon, kun otetaan huomioon, että kyseessä on transihmisten ihmisarvon peruuttamaton loukkaus?

Viviane Redingin komission puolesta antama vastaus
(4. huhtikuuta 2013)

SEUT-sopimuksen 19 artiklassa ei viitata sukupuoli-identiteettiin erillisenä syrjinnän perusteena, mikä rajoittaa komission mahdollisuuksia ehdottaa lainsäädäntöä tässä asiassa. Komissio valvoo sitä, että jäsenvaltiot panevat täytäntöön direktiivit 2004/113/EY ja 2006/54/EY, ja katsoo Euroopan yhteisöjen tuomioistuimen oikeuskäytännön mukaisesti ([1]), että nämä direktiivi sisältävät transsukupuolisten ihmisten syrjinnän heidän sukupuolenvaihdoksensa perusteella.

Lisäksi komissio levittää laajasti tuloksia tutkimuksesta, jonka aiheena oli "Transsukupuolisten ja intersukupuolisten ihmisten syrjintä sukupuolen, sukupuoli-identiteetin ja sukupuolen ilmaisemisen perusteella". Tuloksia jaetaan sekä sisäisesti että myös oikeusalan toimijoiden keskuudessa, kansalaisyhteiskunnassa ja jäsenvaltioissa. Komissio jakaa tuloksia myös viimeisimmästä syrjintää koskevasta Eurobarometri-tutkimuksesta ([2]). Komissio tukee Progress-ohjelman kautta sellaisten kansalaisyhteiskunnan järjestöjen ([3]) toimintavalmiuksien vahvistamista, jotka edistävät transsukupuolisten ihmisten oikeuksia.

Komissio ilmaisi tukensa sukupuoli-identiteetin patologisoinnista luopumiselle ja uudelle luokittelulle 11:ttä kansainvälistä tautiluokitusta koskevissa neuvotteluissa. Vaikka komissio ei osallistukaan päätöksentekoprosessiin kansainvälisestä tautiluokituksesta ja sen suora vaikutus on rajallinen, se on käynyt aiheesta keskusteluja WHO:n kanssa ([4]).

([1]) Asia C-13/94, P v. S ja Cornwall County Council, tuomio 30.4.1996 (Kok., s. I-2143); asia C-423/04, Richards v. Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, 2006; asia C-117/01, KB v. the NHS Trust Pension Agency, 2004.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb_special_399_380_en.htm#393
([3]) Kansainvälinen lesbojen, homojen, biseksuaalien, trans- ja intersukupuolisten järjestö (ILGA) ja IGLYO-järjestö (International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Youth and Student Organisation).
([4]) Päävastuu kansainvälisestä tautiluokituksesta on WHO:n sihteeristöllä, joka tekee yhteistyötä WHO:n jäsenvaltioiden asiantuntijoiden kanssa. Tautiluokitus hyväksytään maailman terveyskokouksessa.

Liittyen kysymykseen transsukupuolisten ihmisten pakkosterilisaatiosta on syytä muistuttaa, että EU:n perussopimusten mukaisesti komissiolla ei ole valtuuksia puuttua jäsenvaltioiden toimintaan, jos siihen ei liity EU:n lainsäädännön soveltaminen. Kaikissa muissa tapauksissa jäsenvaltioiden ja kansallisten tuomioistuimien tehtävä on varmistaa perusoikeuksien suojelu kansallisen lainsäädännön ja kansainvälisten ihmisoikeusvelvoitteiden mukaisesti.

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande E-000634/13
till kommissionen
Michael Cashman (S&D), Ulrike Lunacek (Verts/ALE), Sophia in 't Veld (ALDE), Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE), Cornelis de Jong (GUE/NGL), Antonyia Parvanova (ALDE), Marije Cornelissen (Verts/ALE), Anna Hedh (S&D) och Mikael Gustafsson (GUE/NGL)
(23 januari 2013)

Angående: EU:s framtida lagstiftning och politik i samband med kön, könsidentitet och könsuttryck

I sina svar på de skriftliga frågorna E-002442/2011 och E-000716/2012 hänvisade kommissionen till en pågående studie om diskriminering av transpersoner och intersexuella personer, *"Trans and intersex people: Discrimination on the grounds of sex, gender identity and gender expression"*. Manuskriptet färdigställdes i juni 2011 och studien offentliggjordes i juni 2012.

1. Nu har kommissionen haft mer än ett och ett halvt år på sig att behandla resultaten av studien. Hur planerar den att följa upp dessa resultat?

2. Framför allt, kommer kommissionen uttryckligen att inkludera diskriminering på grund av könsidentitet och könsuttryck i sina framtida utvärderingar och översyner av relevant EU-lagstiftning, däribland direktiv 2004/113/EG och 2006/54/EG, för att skapa överensstämmelse med liknande utveckling i annan EU-lagstiftning, bland annat direktiv 2011/95/EU och 2012/29/EU, som omfattar dessa grunder?

3. Hur ämnar kommissionen utnyttja könsaspekten enligt fördragen för att utforma politiska strategier mot den diskriminering som transpersoner och intersexuella personer utsätts för i EU?

4. Vilka åtgärder ämnar kommissionen vidta för att "könsidentitetsstörning" ska strykas ur nästa version av WHO:s internationella sjukdomsklassifikation och för att det ska göras en icke-patologiserande omklassificering?

5. Ämnar kommissionen ta upp det aktuella problemet med tvångssterilisering av transpersoner i olika medlemsstater, eftersom det innebär en oåterkallelig kränkning av dessa personers människovärde?

Svar från Viviane Reding på kommissionens vägnar
(4 april 2013)

Artikel 19 i fördraget om Europeiska unionens funktionssätt innehåller ingen hänvisning till könsidentitet som en separat diskrimineringsgrund, vilket begränsar kommissionens möjlighet att föreslå lagstiftning på detta område. I linje med EG-domstolens rättspraxis ([1]) låter kommissionen diskriminering av transsexuella människor på grund av deras könsbyte ingå vid övervakningen av medlemsstaternas genomförande av direktiv 2004/113/EG och direktiv 2006/54/EG.

Kommissionen sprider dessutom resultaten av undersökningen "Discrimination against trans and intersex people on the grounds of sex, gender identity and gender expression" internt och bland jurister, i det civila samhället och till medlemsstaterna. Kommissionen offentliggör även resultaten av den senaste Eurobarometern om diskriminering ([2]). Genom Progress-programmet bidrar kommissionen till att bygga ut och stärka civila samhällorganisationer ([3]) som främjar transpersoners rättigheter.

Vid förhandlingarna om den elfte internationella sjukdomsklassifikationen (ICD) gav kommissionen sitt stöd till att könsidentitet skulle omklassificeras som icke-patologiserande. Även om kommissionen inte är en del av beslutsprocessen inom ICD och har begränsat direkt inflytande, har samtal förts med WHO i denna fråga ([4]).

([1]) Mål C-13/94 P mot S och Cornwall County CouncilFall [1996] REG I-2143. Mål C-423/04 Richards mot Secretary of State for Work and Pensions 2006 (ministern för arbete och pensioner). Mål C-117/01 KB mot NHS Trust Pension Agency 2004.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb_special_399_380_en.htm#393
([3]) International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) och International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Youth and Student Organisation (IGLYO).
([4]) Huvudansvaret för arbetet i fråga om ICD har WHO:s sekretariat, i samarbete med experter från WHO:s medlemsstater. Arbetet ska godkännas av Världshälsoförsamlingen.

När det gäller frågan om tvångssterilisering av transpersoner, kan det förtjänas att påpekas att kommissionen enligt EU-fördragen inte har någon behörighet att ingripa mot medlemsstaterna, om inte EU-rätten berörs. I alla andra fall är det medlemsstaternas och nationella domstolars ansvar att skydda grundläggande rättigheter, i enlighet med nationell lagstiftning och internationella förpliktelser i fråga om mänskliga rättigheter.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000634/13
to the Commission
Michael Cashman (S&D), Ulrike Lunacek (Verts/ALE), Sophia in 't Veld (ALDE), Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE), Cornelis de Jong (GUE/NGL), Antonyia Parvanova (ALDE), Marije Cornelissen (Verts/ALE), Anna Hedh (S&D) and Mikael Gustafsson (GUE/NGL)
(23 January 2013)

Subject: Future EC laws and policies pertaining to sex, gender identity and gender expression

In its answers to Written Questions E-002442/2011 and E-000716/2012, the Commission kindly referred to the ongoing research for a new report, 'Trans and intersex people: Discrimination on the grounds of sex, gender identity and gender expression'. The manuscript was completed in June 2011, and the study was published in June 2012.

1. Now that the Commission has had over a year and a half to consider the results of this study, what plans does it have to follow up its findings?

2. Notably, will the Commission explicitly include discrimination on grounds of gender identity and gender expression in its future assessments and revisions of relevant EC law, including Directives 2004/113/EC and 2006/54/EC, to match similar developments in EC law, including in Directives 2011/95/EU and 2012/29/EU which include those grounds?

3. How will the Commission use the ground of sex in the Treaties to design policies pertaining to the discrimination transgender and intersex people face in the EU?

4. How will the Commission work to remove 'gender identity disorder' from the WHO's International Classification of Diseases in its next revision, and seek a non-pathologising reclassification?

5. Finally, will the Commission take up the ongoing matter of forced sterilisation of transgender people in several EU Member States, given that this is an irreversible violation of their human dignity?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(4 April 2013)

Article 19 of the TFEU does not contain reference to gender identity as a separate ground of discrimination, which restricts the Commission's scope to propose legislation in this field. In line with the jurisprudence of the Court of Justice ([1]) the Commission is including discrimination against transsexual people on grounds of their gender reassignment in the monitoring of the Member States' implementation of Directive 2004/113/EC and Directive 2006/54/EC.

In addition, the Commission is widely disseminating the results of the study 'Discrimination against trans and intersex people on the grounds of sex, gender identity and gender expression' both internally and amongst legal practitioners, civil society and Member States. The Commission also disseminates the results of the last Eurobarometer on discrimination ([2]). Through the PROGRESS programme the Commission contributes to strengthening the capacity of civil society organisations ([3]) promoting transgender people's rights.

The Commission expressed its support to a non-pathologising reclassification for gender identity in the negotiations on the 11th International Classification of Diseases (ICD). Even if the Commission is not part of the decision making process on ICD and has limited direct influence, conversations have been ongoing with the World Health Organisation on this topic ([4]).

([1]) Case C-13/94 P v S and Cornwall County Council [1996] ECR I-2143; Case C-423/04 Richards v Secretary of State for Work and Pensions 2006; Case C-117/01 KB v the NHS Trust Pension Agency 2004.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb_special_399_380_en.htm#393
([3]) International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) and International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Youth and Student Organisation (IGLYO).
([4]) The main responsible for the work on the ICD is the Secretariat of World Health Organisation, in collaboration with experts of WHO Member States and it will be approved by the World Health Assembly.

Regarding the question of forced sterilisation of transgender people, it is recalled that under the EU Treaties, the Commission has no competence to intervene with the Member States, if the EC law is not involved. In all other cases, it is for Member States and national courts, to ensure protection of fundamental rights, in line with national legislation and international human rights obligations.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite P-000635/13
au Conseil
Véronique Mathieu (PPE)
(23 janvier 2013)

Objet: Indépendance du Collège européen de police

Le collège européen de police (CEPOL), agence de l'Union européenne, a accompli des progrès importants au cours des trois dernières années. Ainsi, le nombre des participants aux formations organisées par le CEPOL est passé de 2 300 en 2009 à plus de 6 000 en 2012. La participation au programme d'échange au sein de la police européenne a augmenté, passant de 50 participants en 2009 à 293 participants en 2012. L'agence développe également de nouvelles méthodes de formation en ligne afin de proposer une formation au plus grand nombre des représentants des forces de police, attirant jusqu'à 3 026 participants.

Le CEPOL a par ailleurs corrigé les faiblesses relevées par le Parlement en 2010 concernant la gestion budgétaire et financière, le recrutement et la réforme de la gouvernance de l'agence, qui, dans ce domaine, va même au-delà des exigences du Parlement, avec une restructuration interne qui permet au CEPOL de réaliser des économies substantielles.

Les très bons résultats présentés par l'agence en terme de formation, notamment par le développement de formations en ligne, répondent par ailleurs pleinement aux priorités établies par le programme de Stockholm concernant la formation. Celui-ci nomme expressément le CEPOL comme agence qui devrait jouer «un rôle clé dans la formation des forces de l'ordre». Afin de répondre aux exigences du programme selon lequel un tiers de tous les policiers participant à la coopération policière européenne doit se voir offrir des programmes de formation européenne, le CEPOL, en tant qu'agence indépendante, est la seule structure qui bénéficie de l'expérience et du réseau nécessaire pour accomplir cet objectif. L'augmentation du nombre de participants et les très bons taux de satisfaction déclarés par ceux-ci illustrent la valeur ajoutée du CEPOL pour l'Union européenne et confirment que la mission de formation des policiers ne pourrait pas être mieux menée par une autre structure.

Alors que la majorité des groupes politiques présents au Parlement se sont exprimés contre la fusion du CEPOL avec Europol lors des échanges de vues en commission des libertés civiles, de la justice et des affaires intérieures du Parlement européen, notamment le 6 novembre 2012, le Conseil peut-il indiquer sa position sur ce sujet?

Réponse
(25 mars 2013)

Lors de sa session des 6 et 7 décembre 2012, le Conseil a procédé à un premier et bref échange de vues sur l'avenir du CEPOL et d'europol sur la base d'un exposé de la Commission à ce propos ([1]). À cette occasion, la Commission a souligné qu'aucune décision définitive n'avait encore été prise en ce qui concerne une fusion éventuelle de ces agences et qu'elle n'avait, à cette date, présenté aucune proposition de fusion au Conseil. Au stade actuel, le Conseil n'a pas adopté de position définitive sur la question évoquée par l'Honorable Parlementaire.

([1]) Doc. 17315/12.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-000635/13
to the Council
Véronique Mathieu (PPE)
(23 January 2013)

Subject: Independence of the European Police College

The European Police College (CEPOL), an agency of the European Union, has made substantial progress in the last three years. For instance, the number of people taking part in training courses organised by CEPOL rose from 2 300 in 2009 to more than 6 000 in 2012. And participation in the European police exchange programme increased from 50 in 2009 to 293 in 2012. The agency is also developing new methods of online training in order to provide training to as many police force representatives as possible. Some 3 026 people have already taken part.

Furthermore, CEPOL has addressed the weaknesses identified by Parliament in 2010 concerning budgetary and financial management, recruitment and reform of the agency's governance. Indeed, in this area it has exceeded Parliament's requirements, with an internal reorganisation being undertaken to allow CEPOL to make substantial savings.

The very good results reported by the agency in terms of training, including the development of online training, also fully match the priorities set out in the Stockholm training programme, which specifically identifies CEPOL as the agency that should play 'a key role in the training of law enforcement personnel'. One of the programme's requirements is that a third of all police officers participating in European police cooperation should be offered European training programmes. CEPOL, as an independent agency, is the only organisation with the necessary experience and network to meet this objective. The increase in the number of participants and the very high satisfaction rates reported by them illustrate the added value which CEPOL brings to the European Union and confirms that the task of training the police could not be better performed by any other organisation.

Most of the political groups in Parliament have spoken out against the merger of CEPOL and Europol in discussions in Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, notably on 6 November 2012. Could the Council indicate its position on this matter?

Reply
(25 March 2013)

At its meeting on 6-7 December 2012, the Council had a brief initial exchange of views on the future of CEPOL and Europol on the basis of a presentation on the subject by the Commission ([1]). At that meeting, the Commission emphasised that no final decision had yet been taken regarding a possible merger of these agencies and that to date, the Commission had not submitted any proposal for a merger to the Council. At this stage, the Council has not taken a final position on the question raised by the Honourable Member.

([1]) 17315/12.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης P-000636/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Anni Podimata (S&D)
(23 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Ποινική δίωξη για τα Ελληνικά δημοσιονομικά στοιχεία

Σήμερα, στην Ελλάδα, ασκήθηκε ποινική δίωξη σε βάρος του Προέδρου της ΕΛΣΤΑΤ και δύο ακόμη στελεχών της Αρχής. Ανάμεσα στις κατηγορίες είναι η ψευδή βεβαίωση στοιχείων και παράβαση καθήκοντος, με αφορμή προηγούμενες καταγγελίες για τεχνητή διόγκωση των δημοσιονομικών δεδομένων της Ελλάδας για το έτος 2009 — και των ετών πριν από αυτό — ενώ προτείνεται η αναζήτηση και ηθικών αυτουργών για τις παραπάνω κατηγορίες.

Παρά το γεγονός ότι η Επιτροπή έχει επανειλημμένως επιβεβαιώσει την αξιοπιστία και την άρση των επιφυλάξεων για τα ελληνικά δημοσιονομικά στατιστικά, μετά την αναθεώρηση που ολοκληρώθηκε τον Νοέμβριο 2010, όπως σε γραπτή απάντηση (της 26.4.2012) σε συνέχεια ερώτησής μου με θέμα «Αξιοπιστία ελληνικών στατιστικών στοιχείων», η άσκηση της ποινικής δίωξης ανοίγει νέο κύκλο αμφισβητήσεων.

Από τη στιγμή που η άσκηση ποινικής δίωξης αφορά στην αποτύπωση δεδομένων που έχουν επικυρωθεί από την Eurostat και αποτελούν την βάση της λήψης αποφάσεων από το Ευρωπαϊκό Συμβούλιο και εν γένει τα ευρωπαϊκά θεσμικά όργανα, θεωρεί η Επιτροπή ότι δημιουργείται πρόβλημα αμφισβήτησης αποφάσεων που έχουν ληφθεί από τον Νοέμβριο του 2010 για την Ελλάδα, συμπεριλαμβανομένης και της ίδιας της επικύρωσης των σχετικών δεδομένων;

Αν ναι, προτίθεται η Επιτροπή να προβεί σε συγκεκριμένες ενέργειες και σε ποιες προκειμένου να υπερασπιστεί τόσο τα δημοσιονομικά δεδομένα, που έχει επικυρώσει, όσο και τις αποφάσεις που στηρίχθηκαν σε αυτά;

Ποια είναι η άποψη της Επιτροπής σχετικά με την αναθεώρηση των δημοσιονομικών δεδομένων της Ελλάδας το 2010;

Συμμερίζεται η Επιτροπή την άποψη ότι υπάρχουν αμφισβητούμενα σημεία στην μεθοδολογία κατάρτισης των δημοσιονομικών δεδομένων που θα είχαν καταστήσει δυνατή την αποτύπωση ενός άλλου επιπέδου ελλείμματος σε εθνικολογιστική βάση (με βάση το ΕΣΛ95) για την Ελλάδα, ώστε να μην είχε χρειαστεί η προσφυγή στον ευρωπαϊκό μηχανισμό στήριξης;

Απάντηση του κ. Šemeta εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(21 Φεβρουαρίου 2013)

Το δημόσιο έλλειμμα και οι στατιστικές χρέους συλλέγονται και κοινοποιούνται σύμφωνα με τους κανόνες του ΕΣΟΛ 95. Η Επιτροπή (Eurostat) εξετάζει τα κρατικά στοιχεία που αναφέρονται από τα κράτη μέλη σε πίνακες γνωστοποίησης στοιχείων διαδικασίας υπερβολικού ελλείμματος (ΔΥΕ), χρησιμοποιώντας τις ενισχυμένες εξουσίες της για την επαλήθευση των στατιστικών που χρησιμοποιούνται για τους σκοπούς της ΔΥΕ, η οποία καθιερώθηκε με τον κανονισμό (ΕΚ) αριθ. 679/2010 της 26ης Ιουλίου 2010. Η Επιτροπή (Eurostat) έχει δημοσιεύσει τα ελληνικά στοιχεία ΔΥΕ σε πέντε διαδοχικές περιπτώσεις από τον Νοέμβριο του 2010 χωρίς επιφύλαξη. Το μέτρο που ελήφθη από την Εισαγγελική Αρχή δεν τροποποιεί τη θέση της Eurostat όσον αφορά το καθεστώς των ελληνικών στοιχείων ΔΥΕ, το οποίο συνεχίζει να θεωρείται σύμφωνο με το ΕΣΟΛ 95.

Η Επιτροπή (Eurostat) μπορεί μόνο να συνεχίσει να επιβεβαιώνει ότι η αναθεώρηση των στοιχείων τον Νοέμβριο του 2010, ήταν αναγκαία για να είναι σύμφωνα με το ΕΣΟΛ 95. Η Επιτροπή (Eurostat) διαψεύδει οποιουσδήποτε ισχυρισμούς ότι το έλλειμμα που δημοσιεύθηκε τον Νοέμβριο του 2010 είχε υπερεκτιμηθεί.

Κατά τα τελευταία έτη, η ελληνική στατιστική υπηρεσία στηρίχθηκε όσον αφορά την ενίσχυση του πλαισίου διακυβέρνησής της και της στατιστικής ικανότητάς της σε διάφορους τομείς όπως οι στατιστικές των δημόσιων οικονομικών. Η πρόοδος παρακολουθείται τακτικά από την Eurostat.

Λεπτομερής απολογισμός των ελληνικών προβλημάτων ΔΥΕ κατά τον Νοέμβριο του 2010, καθώς και των ενεργειών της Επιτροπής (Eurostat), περιλαμβάνονται σε εκθέσεις και στην επιστολή ([1]) του γενικού διευθυντή της Eurostat, κ. Walter Radermacher, προς τον πρόεδρο της εξεταστικής επιτροπής.

([1]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/COM_2010_REPORT_GREEK/EN/COM_2010_REPORT_GREEK-EN.PDF
http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/government_finance_statistics/documents/Greece%20-%202010%20methodological%20visits%20report.pdf
http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/GR_LETTER_26_03_2012/EN/GR_LETTER_26_03_2012-EN.PDF

(English version)

Question for written answer P-000636/13
to the Commission
Anni Podimata (S&D)
(23 January 2013)

Subject: Criminal proceedings arising from the publication of fiscal data for Greece

Criminal proceedings have today been initiated in Greece against the President of the Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT) and two other ELSTAT officials on charges which include the making of false statements and dereliction of duty and relate to previous charges of artificially inflating fiscal data for 2009 (and previous years) in respect of Greece. At the same time, an inquiry is now being called for to identify those responsible behind the scenes.

This throws fresh doubts on the reliability of fiscal data for Greece, notwithstanding repeated assurances received from the Commission, which indicted in its answer of 26 April 2012 to my question concerning this matter that, following the review completed in November 2010, it had withdrawn its reservations.

Given that the criminal proceedings have arisen in connection with the publication of data authenticated by Eurostat and forming the basis for decision making by the European Council and other European institutions in general, does the Commission consider that this throws doubt on those decisions relating to Greece from November 2010 onwards, including authentication of the above data?

If so, what specific action will the Commission take in defence of the fiscal data authenticated by it and any resulting decisions?

What view does the Commission take of the 2010 review of economic data for Greece?

Does the Commission agree that the compilation of fiscal data is tainted by a number of anomalies and that, based on ESA95 national accounts for Greece, a different deficit figure could have resulted, thereby avoiding the need for recourse to the European Support Mechanism?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(21 February 2013)

Government deficit and debt statistics are compiled and reported according to the rules of ESA95. The Commission (Eurostat) verifies the government data reported by the Member States in Excessive Deficit Procedure (EDP) notification tables, using its strengthened powers to verify statistics used for the purposes of the EDP, introduced by Council Regulation No 679/2010 of 26 July 2010. The Commission (Eurostat) has published Greek EDP data on five consecutive occasions since November 2010 without reservation. The step taken by the Prosecutor does not modify the position of Eurostat as regards the status of Greek EDP data, which continues to be considered compliant with ESA 95.

The Commission (Eurostat) can only continue to confirm that the revision of the data in November 2010 was necessary to be compliant with ESA 95. The Commission (Eurostat) refutes any allegation that the deficit published in November 2010 was overestimated.

Over the past years the Hellenic statistical office has been supported in enhancing its governance framework and its statistical capacity in various areas such as public finance statistics. Progress is regularly monitored by Eurostat.

A detailed account of the Greek EDP problems in November 2010, as well as of the actions of the Commission (Eurostat), can be found in reports and the letter ([1]) of the Eurostat's Director General, Mr Walter Radermacher, to the Chairman of the Commission of Inquiry.

([1]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/COM_2010_REPORT_GREEK/EN/COM_2010_REPORT_GREEK-EN.PDF; http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/government_finance_statistics/documents/Greece%20-%202010%20methodological%20visits%20report.pdf; http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/GR_LETTER_26_03_2012/EN/GR_LETTER_26_03_2012-EN.PDF

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000637/13
to the Commission
Roger Helmer (EFD)
(23 January 2013)

Subject: Croatia

Is the Commission aware of the reports that Croatia has lost USD 15.2 billion in illicit financial outflows during the period 2001-2010, through corruption, crime and tax evasion? ([1])

According to published reports, significant amounts ended up in the Austrian-based Hypo Alpe Adria Bank and its Liechtenstein branch, which was taken over by Prince Michael von Liechtenstein in 2007 ([2]).

1. Does the Commission know whether the Croatian authorities have requested from the Liechtenstein authorities the names of individuals and amounts of illicit financial outflows? If not, would the Commission consider intervening and requesting this on behalf of Croatia's taxpayers?

2. Would the Commission agree with me that we should save EU Member State taxpayers' funds and stop any further financial aid to Croatia until the illicit enrichment allegedly amassed by Croatia's corrupt politicians is confiscated and the USD 15.2 billion of illicit financial outflows is paid back to Croatia's treasury?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(14 March 2013)

The Commission follows closely, and reports on, Croatia's efforts to fight corruption and has taken note of the first instance verdict on the corruption cases 'INA-MOL' and 'Hypo Bank'. Croatia has made great strides in this area, with a solid legal framework and institutions. The Commission consistently calls on Croatia to continue the fight against corruption at all levels, including at the highest ones, and to continue building a sustainable track record in this area.

On the question of whether the Commission is aware of the Croatian authorities requesting information from the Liechtenstein authorities, the Commission recalls that this is a matter for the relevant Croatian authorities. The Commission cannot intervene in any such procedures.

Concerning the future financial aid to Croatia, the Commission recalls that the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) funds (pre-accession) and structural and cohesion funds (post-accession) serve the purpose of ensuring Croatia's preparedness to join and fully participate in the EU's policies. They are subject to a strict control and audit system. In case of misuse, the relevant financial corrections are applied.

([1]) http://tinyurl.com/bfk58h7
([2]) http://tinyurl.com/b4wbqwv

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000638/13
an die Kommission
Jürgen Creutzmann (ALDE)
(23. Januar 2013)

Betrifft: Marktüberwachung im Internet in Zusammenhang mit der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 765/2008

Das Angebot von Produkten im Internet, die den grundlegenden gesetzlichen Anforderungen in der Europäischen Union nicht entsprechen, ist in den letzten Jahren enorm gewachsen und hat das Angebot im stationären Einzelhandel bereits überstiegen. Hierdurch entsteht nicht nur eine Gefahr für Verbraucher, sondern auch ein Nachteil für Unternehmen, die sich an die Regelungen halten.

Die Feststellung der Verantwortlichen für die Vermarktung der nicht-konformen Produkte ist für die Behörden im Internet schwieriger als im Einzelhandel. Außerdem ist nicht eindeutig geregelt, welche Behörde für eine Internet-Marktüberwachung federführend wäre.

Eine Zusammenarbeit mit Hosts, Inhabern von Webseiten und Registries würde den Marktüberwachungsbehörden die Bekämpfung illegaler Angebote im Internet erleichtern.

In Deutschland wird eine solche Zusammenarbeit bereits zwischen Online-Akteuren und Behörden praktiziert, in anderen europäischen Ländern jedoch noch nicht, was zu einer Wettbewerbsverzerrung zu Lasten der deutschen Wirtschaft führen kann.

In der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 765/2008 wird lediglich die Marktüberwachung generell geregelt. Die besonderen Bedürfnisse des Handels im Internet werden hingegen nicht berücksichtigt.

1. Wie bewertet die Kommission diese Problematik?

2. Plant die Kommission, die spezifischen Anforderungen des Internethandels an die Marktüberwachung in die vorgesehene Überarbeitung der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 765/2008 aufzunehmen? Wenn ja, in welcher Form?

Antwort von Herrn Tajani im Namen der Kommission
(27. März 2013)

Der Kommission ist bewusst, dass der Online-Handel eine Herausforderung für die Marktüberwachungsbehörden darstellt. Am 13. Februar 2013 verabschiedete die Kommission das Produktsicherheits- und Marktüberwachungspaket, das einen Vorschlag für eine Verordnung über die Marktüberwachung ([1]) enthält, mit der die Verordnung (EG) Nr. 765/2008 geändert werden soll.

Das Paket umfasst ferner einen mehrjährigen Aktionsplan zur Produktüberwachung in der EU ([2]). Der Plan sieht eine spezifische Maßnahme vor, die auf online verkaufte Produkte abzielt, und die sich mit den Vertriebsmethoden von Online-Händlern befasst, auch mit den Standorten großer Online-Händler, den Auslieferungslagern und den Lieferwegen des Online-Handels, insbesondere wenn Produkte direkt aus Drittländern an den Endverbraucher gelangen. Ferner soll geprüft werden, welche Rolle bzw. welcher Stellenwert den KMU in der Lieferkette des Online-Handels zukommt. Die Kommission wird sich zusammen mit den Mitgliedstaaten auf eine gemeinsame Vorgehensweise zur Gestaltung der Marktüberwachung beim Online-Vertrieb von Produkten in der EU verständigen und Orientierungshilfen für die Durchsetzung der für diese Geschäfte geltenden Regeln insbesondere dann anbieten, wenn die Zusammenarbeit der Behörden verschiedener Mitgliedstaaten oder Drittländer erforderlich ist. Darüber hinaus wird die Kommission bei den mit der Durchsetzung betrauten Behörden der Mitgliedstaaten Informationen über die Durchsetzung von Vorschriften für online verkaufte Produkte anfordern und kurze, einfache und verständliche öffentliche Stellungnahmen abgeben, um den Verbrauchern zu helfen und die Rollen und Zuständigkeiten der Behörden, Wirtschaftsakteure und Verbraucher zu definieren.

([1]) KOM(2013)75.
([2]) KOM(2013)76.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000638/13
to the Commission
Jürgen Creutzmann (ALDE)
(23 January 2013)

Subject: Market surveillance on the Internet in connection with Regulation (EC) No 765/2008

The range of products available on the Internet that do not meet basic legal requirements in the European Union has grown enormously in recent years and already exceeds that of over-the-counter retail trade. This not only poses a threat to consumers but also disadvantages companies that comply with the rules.

It is more difficult for the authorities to determine liability for the marketing of non-compliant products on the Internet than it is in retail trade. It has, moreover, not been clearly determined which authority would be responsible for Internet market surveillance.

Collaboration with hosts, website owners and registries would make it easier for the market surveillance authorities to combat illegal offers on the Internet.

Such cooperation already exists in Germany between online operators and the authorities, but this is not yet the case in other European countries, which can lead to distortions in competition to the detriment of the German economy.

Regulation (EC) No 765/2008 only regulates market surveillance in general. The specific demands of Internet commerce, on the other hand, are not taken into account.

1. How does the Commission view this problem?

2. Does the Commission have any plans to include the specific demands for market surveillance of Internet commerce in the proposed revision of Regulation (EC) No 765/2008? If so, in what form?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(27 March 2013)

The Commission is aware that e-commerce constitutes a challenge for the activities of market surveillance authorities. On 13 February 2013 the Commission adopted the Market Surveillance and Product Safety Package which includes the proposal for a Market Surveillance Regulation ([1]) which will revise Regulation (EC) No 765/2008.

The Package also includes a Multi-annual Action Plan for the Surveillance of Products in the EU ([2]). The Plan envisages a specific action aimed at products sold online, namely to study the ways in which e-shops selling consumer products operate, including the location of large e-commerce operators, e-commerce supply depots and e-commerce supply routes, in particular if products are distributed to the final consumer directly from third countries and the role and importance of SMEs in the e-commerce supply chain. The Commission will also establish, together with the Member States, a common approach on the way in which the surveillance of products sold online should be performed in the Union and it will produce guidance on the enforcement of the rules for products sold online, especially in cross-border situations that require cooperation between the authorities of different Member States or third countries. In addition, the Commission will collect information from the Member States' enforcement authorities on enforcement activities of the rules for products sold online and it will publish short, simple and clear public information statements to help consumers and to define the roles and responsibilities of authorities, economic operators and consumers.

([1]) COM(2013)75.
([2]) COM(2013)76.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-000639/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(23 janvier 2013)

Objet: L'aspartame est-il dangereux? EFSA

Le 8 janvier dernier, l'Autorité européenne de sécurité des aliments (EFSA) a lancé une consultation publique sur son projet d'avis scientifique portant sur la sécurité de l'édulcorant artificiel aspartame.

L'EFSA a décidé d'entreprendre un examen complet des documents scientifiques disponibles sur l'édulcorant le plus utilisé, l'aspartame. Cependant, l'EFSA a déjà confirmé que l'aspartame était globalement sans risque, émettant juste quelques réserves sur l'utilisation du produit par les femmes enceintes atteintes de phénylcétonurie. L'Autorité européenne met en avant un indice important dans ces études, le DJA, la dose journalière admissible. En effet, la DJA aujourd'hui fixée à 40 milligrammes par kilo corporel et par jour ne mériterait aucune révision selon l'agence sanitaire européenne.

1. L'agence remet son rapport mais, dans le même temps, «lance une consultation publique sur son projet d'avis scientifique portant sur la sécurité de l'édulcorant artificiel aspartame». N'y a-t-il pas là un problème de stratégie? En effet, le fait d'avoir d'abord communiqué sur le quasi non danger de l'aspartame a focalisé les médias et les citoyens sur cette conclusion.

2. Que restera-t-il du crédit de l'EFSA si, après consultation publique, l'agence annonce que l'aspartame est dangereux, rendant dès lors un avis fondamentalement opposé? De la même manière, n'y a-t-il pas un grand risque dans le cas où l'EFSA remet un avis final identique à sa première conclusion que la consultation publique passe pour un effet d'annonce?

3. On imagine que cette consultation publique a pour objectif de tenter de réconcilier l'opinion publique et l'EFSA ainsi que de restaurer un semblant de confiance entre les deux. Toutefois, et compte tenu de la question précédente, la consultation publique n'aurait-elle pas dû voir le jour avant que l'EFSA ne révèle ses premières conclusions?

Réponse donnée par M. Borg au nom de la Commission
(11 mars 2013)

La Commission a demandé à l'Autorité européenne de sécurité des aliments (EFSA) de procéder à une réévaluation complète de la sécurité de l'aspartame.

En qualité d'agence indépendante de l'Union européenne, l'EFSA est chargée d'organiser les travaux qui lui permettront de rendre un avis scientifique au sujet de l'aspartame d'ici mai 2013.

Conformément à son règlement fondateur, l'EFSA doit agir selon des principes d'ouverture et de transparence. En ce sens, elle a pour politique de lancer des consultations publiques concernant les projets d'avis scientifiques. Dans le cas de l'aspartame, l'EFSA estime qu'une consultation publique est justifiée en raison du fait que ce projet d'avis est d'intérêt public. La Commission soutient les principes d'ouverture et de transparence appliqués par l'EFSA et approuve son intention de lancer une consultation publique sur l'aspartame.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000639/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(23 January 2013)

Subject: European Food Safety Authority (EFSA): Is aspartame safe?

On 8 January 2013, the EFSA launched a public consultation on its draft scientific opinion on the safety of the artificial sweetener aspartame.

The EFSA has decided to carry out an in-depth review of the scientific literature on aspartame, the most popular artificial sweetener. However, the EFSA has already stated that aspartame is essentially completely safe, except when consumed by pregnant women who suffer from the medical condition phenylketonuria. In its work, the EFSA attaches particular importance to the Acceptable Daily Intake (ADI) indicator. According to the EFSA, the current ADI for aspartame (40 mg/kg body weight) is safe and does not need to be revised.

1. The EFSA chose to publish its own findings at the same time as launching 'a public consultation on its draft scientific opinion on the safety of the artificial sweetener aspartame'. Is this the right approach? The fact that the EFSA has already publicly stated that aspartame poses virtually no risk to health has undoubtedly served to focus media and public attention on this finding.

2. Will the EFSA's standing not be irreparably damaged if, after the public consultation, it announces that aspartame is not safe after all, flatly contradicting its draft opinion? Conversely, if the EFSA publishes a definitive scientific opinion that, like its draft opinion, finds that aspartame is safe, is there not a considerable risk that the public consultation will be condemned as merely an attempt to garner good press?

3. The public consultation was probably a public relations exercise intended to restore a semblance of confidence in the EFSA. However, and in the light of my previous question, should the public consultation not have been launched before the EFSA published its initial findings?

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

The Commission has mandated the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) to carry out a full re-evaluation of aspartame.

EFSA, as an independent EU agency, is responsible for organising its work to deliver a scientific opinion on aspartame by May 2013.

EFSA's stated policy on holding public consultations on draft scientific opinions stems from its Founding Regulation of ensuring openness and transparency. In the case of aspartame, EFSA states that a public consultation is warranted because of the public interest in this draft opinion. The Commission supports EFSA's policy on openness and transparency and agrees with its intention to hold a public consultation on aspartame.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000640/13
to the Commission
Pat the Cope Gallagher (ALDE)
(23 January 2013)

Subject: Tourism sector in the European Union

Europe's tourism sector offers tremendous potential for advancing the goals set out in the Europe 2020 strategy, among them smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

1. Can the Commission outline what forms of support, including financial support, are available at EU level for the tourism sector in the Union?

2. Can the Commission outline what policy actions or strategies are currently in place to advance the tourism sector in the EU?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(21 March 2013)

1. EU tourism stakeholders can benefit from different types and forms of support. They can benefit from EU funding programmes, either directly, via co-financing of projects, or indirectly, via surveys, studies or research, carried out by the Commission through calls for tender specific to the tourism sector. In addition to tourism earmarked financial resources, tourism activities and projects can be funded under different EU financial instruments ([1]), depending on their focus and provided that the objectives of the projects match the different objectives and requirements specific to those financial programmes ([2]).

Further to this, EU tourism enterprises can benefit of free service-tailored support provided by the Enterprise Europe Network ([3]) which includes a dedicated tourism and cultural heritage sector group ([4]).

2. In 2010, through its communication 'Europe, the world's No 1 tourist destination — a new political framework for tourism in Europe' ([5]) the Commission created a renewed framework for a coherent tourism policy. The Commission's initiatives and actions in the tourism sector are implemented in line with this framework and concentrate around four main priorities: stimulating competitiveness in the European tourism sector, promoting the development of sustainable, responsible and high-quality tourism, consolidating the image and profile of Europe as a collection of sustainable and high-quality destinations, and last but not least, maximising the potential of EU policies and financial instruments to develop tourism. The Commission tourism services regularly publish updates on the implementation of its actions on their website at: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/index_en.htm

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([1]) Cohesion policy, in particular, plays a key role in assisting regions to strengthen their tourism-related potential, and help their tourism SMEs to become more innovative. Investments in tourism infrastructure, services and branding, including for joint promotion of tourism destinations, have been an important element of past cohesion policy investments. In the forthcoming programming period (2014-2020) tourism investments that contribute to the Europe 2020 goals will continue to play an important role in EU Regional and urban policy as an integrated element under different thematic objectives/strategic priorities such as: research and innovation, ICT/Digital Agenda, SME competitiveness, low-carbon economy, environment, employment and labour mobility, education, skills and lifelong learning.

([2]) An overview of EU financial instruments for possible use by the tourism sector's public and private stakeholders can be found at: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newsroom/cf/_getdocument.cfm?doc_id=7652

([3]) http://portal.enterprise-europe-network.ec.europa.eu/about/about

([4]) http://portal.enterprise-europe-network.ec.europa.eu/about/sector-groups/tourism-cultural-heritage

([5]) COM(2010)352 final of 30.6.2010.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000641/13
to the Commission
Pat the Cope Gallagher (ALDE)
(23 January 2013)

Subject: Carbon monoxide poisoning

Can the Commission outline what EU policies are in place to prevent the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning?

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

The safety of consumer products with respect to the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning is covered by the requirements of the applicable EU legislation (for example, in the case of gas appliances, the Gas Appliances Directive, 2009/142/EC).

Information about measures taken by national market surveillance authorities to protect consumers from products that pose a risk of carbon monoxide poisoning, such as carbon monoxide detectors that are insufficiently sensitive or defective gas appliances, is exchanged between Member States via the EU rapid alert system for dangerous products, RAPEX.

Concerning the specific issue of a possible future harmonised European standard for battery-operated carbon monoxide detectors, the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Question E-000023/2013 ([1]).

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

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-000642/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)
(23 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Οι αρνητικές επιπτώσεις του προγράμματος προσαρμογής της Ελλάδος

Στην πρόσφατη έκθεση του Διεθνούς Νομισματικού Ταμείου για την Ελλάδα οι εμπειρογνώμονες του ΔΝΤ διαπιστώνουν χρηματοδοτικό κενό ύψους 5,5 έως 9,5 δισεκατομμυρίων ευρώ για την περίοδο 2015-16 και ύφεση 4,25% για το 2013, υπογραμμίζοντας πως η περαιτέρω έγκαιρη παροχή βοήθειας από τη Γηραιά Ήπειρο για τη χρηματοδότηση της Ελλάδας και την αντιμετώπιση του χρέους είναι κρίσιμα μεγέθη για την επιτυχία του προγράμματος. Παράλληλα, το ΔΝΤ επισημαίνει τη λήψη μέτρων ύψους 2 έως 4 δισεκατομμυρίων ευρώ για τη διετία 2015-16, έπειτα από τη δέσμη των 13,5 δις που θα εφαρμοσθεί έως τη λήξη του 2014. Η διάθεση πόρων για την εφαρμογή των εν λόγω μέτρων αναμένεται να προέλθει μεταξύ άλλων και από την παράταση της έκτακτης εισφοράς και πέραν του 2014, λόγω της επέκτασης του προγράμματος, τη μείωση του δημόσιου τομέα, αλλά και από την πάταξη της φοροδιαφυγής. Την ίδια στιγμή η πλειονότητα των ελληνικών νοικοκυριών πλήττεται σφοδρά από την επιβολή έκτακτων εισφορών και πρόσθετων φορολογικών επιβαρύνσεων όπως επίσης και από τις σκληρές επαναλαμβανόμενες περικοπές μισθών και συντάξεων, ενώ το θέμα της φοροδιαφυγής παραμένει ένα από τα μεγαλύτερα αγκάθια.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Από την στιγμή που όλοι οι φορείς στην Ελλάδα βεβαιώνουν προς πάσα κατεύθυνση πως δεν υπάρχουν άλλα περιθώρια μείωσης μισθών και συντάξεων καθώς και αύξησης των φορολογικών συντελεστών και εσόδων από μισθωτούς και συνταξιούχους, ποια πιστεύει η Επιτροπή ότι είναι τα μέτρα που θα πρέπει να ληφθούν;

2. Σε ό,τι αφορά την φοροδιαφυγή, ποια είναι εκείνα τα μέτρα που εφαρμόζονται από τα υπόλοιπα κράτη-μέλη της ΕΕ και τα οποία θα μπορούσαν να εφαρμοσθούν επιτυχώς και στην Ελλάδα;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(8 Μαρτίου 2013)

1. Το ισχύον Μνημόνιο Συμφωνίας (ΜΣ) προβλέπει ότι στο βαθμό που εξακολουθεί να υπάρχει χρηματοδοτικό κενό το 2015-16, οι αρχές θα μπορούσαν να ακολουθήσουν διάφορες στρατηγικές. Σε αυτές περιλαμβάνονται η βελτίωση των εσόδων με τη διεύρυνση της φορολογικής βάσης μέσω της περαιτέρω μείωσης των φορολογικών απαλλαγών και εκπτώσεων, η παράταση μέτρων που πρόκειται να λήξουν, καθώς και οι στοχοθετημένες περικοπές των τρεχουσών δαπανών. Υπάρχουν επίσης περιθώρια αναπροσανατολισμού του προγράμματος επενδύσεων προς την κατεύθυνση μιας πιο αποτελεσματικής στήριξης της ανάπτυξης. Το αργότερο μέχρι τα τέλη Αυγούστου του 2013, πρέπει να έχουν προσδιοριστεί συγκεκριμένα μέτρα για την κάλυψη του κενού το 2015, και ειδικότερα στη ΜΔΣτρ για την περίοδο 2014-2015, τα οποία θα πρέπει να συνάδουν με τον στόχο επίτευξης πρωτογενούς πλεονάσματος ύψους 3% το 2015.

2. Όσον αφορά την καταπολέμηση της φοροδιαφυγής, οι ευρωπαϊκές βέλτιστες πρακτικές συνηγορούν υπέρ ενός βελτιωμένου δικτύου τοπικών εφοριών, με ηλεκτρονικές υπηρεσίες και τηλεφωνικά κέντρα για τη διευκόλυνση των επαφών με τους φορολογούμενους, και ένα καλό σύστημα αξιολόγησης κινδύνου ώστε να έχουν τη δυνατότητα οι ειδικευμένες ομάδες ελέγχου και είσπραξης να αναζητούν τους φορολογούμενους που δεν συμμορφώνονται με τις υποχρεώσεις τους.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000642/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)
(23 January 2013)

Subject: Harmful effects of adjustment programme in Greece

A recent report by IMF experts for Greece predicts a financing gap of between EUR 5.5 billion and EUR 9.5 billion for the period 2015-16, indicating that is economy is likely to shrink by 4.25% in 2013. It goes on to stress that speedier European financial aid and debt-reduction measures for Greece are also vital to the success of the adjustment programme, and refers in particular to a package of between EUR 2 billion and EUR 4 billion for 2015-16 in the wake of the EUR 13.5 billion package up to the end of 2014. It is anticipated that the necessary funding will come from a number of sources, including the special levy, which is to be extended beyond 2014, given the scope of the projected public sector cuts and measures to halt tax evasion. At the same time, special levies, additional taxes and harsh repeated pay and pension cuts are proving a particularly bitter pill for most Greek households to swallow, given that large-scale tax evasion continues to be a major stumbling block.

1. In view of the consensus in Greece that no further pay or pension cuts or tax increases on pay and pensions are possible, what measures does the Commission now consider necessary?

2. What methods are being used in other Member States to halt tax evasion that could be successfully applied in Greece?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(8 March 2013)

1. The current Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) provides that to the extent that a fiscal gap in 2015-16 remains, the authorities could pursue several strategies. These include improving revenue by broadening the tax base through further reduction in exemptions and deductions; extending measures that are expiring; and through targeted cuts in current expenditure. There are also opportunities to refocus the investment program for more effective support to growth. Concrete plans to fill the gap in 2015 have to be identified no later than end-August 2013, namely in the MTFS for 2014-2015 which must be consistent with a primary surplus of 3% in 2015.

2. Concerning the fight against tax evasion, European best practice points towards the promotion of voluntary compliance through a streamlined network of local tax offices, with electronic services and call centres to facilitate contact with taxpayers, and a good risk assessment system to enable specialized audit and collection teams to go after non-compliant taxpayers.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-000643/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)
(23 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Ανενεργές κλίνες σε Μονάδες Εντατικής Θεραπείας στην Ελλάδα

Υπάρχουν 160 κλίνες σε Μονάδες Εντατικής Θεραπείας στην Ελλάδα, οι οποίες είναι ανενεργές, την ώρα που καθημερινώς αναζητείται θέση για περίπου 40 ασθενείς! Αιτία αποτελεί η έλλειψη προσωπικού. Εάν λειτουργούσαν οι 160 ανενεργές κλίνες, θα μπορούσαν να νοσηλεύονται 4 700 ασθενείς ετησίως. Μάλιστα, έως το τέλος Μαρτίου αναμένεται να κλείσουν 40 έως 50 ακόμη κλίνες, καθώς λήγουν οι συμβάσεις 170 γιατρών και νοσηλευτών. Το υπουργείο Υγείας από την πλευρά του αναγνωρίζει το πρόβλημα και επιχειρεί να ενισχύσει με επικουρικό προσωπικό τις ΜΕΘ, ωστόσο οι διαδικασίες δεν έχουν μέχρι στιγμής αποτελέσματα.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

Δεδομένου ότι η ανθρώπινη ζωή είναι ανεκτίμητης αξίας, αλλά και ότι η παροχή των υπηρεσιών υγείας από το κράτος προς τους πολίτες αποτελεί μία εκ των βασικών υποχρεώσεων του, με ποιόν τρόπο και πόσο άμεσα πιστεύει η Επιτροπή ότι πρέπει να αντιμετωπιστεί το συγκεκριμένο καθημερινό πλέον πρόβλημα που αγγίζει το σύνολο των Ελλήνων πολιτών;

Απάντηση του κ. Borg εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(18 Μαρτίου 2013)

Με το δεύτερο πρόγραμμα οικονομικής προσαρμογής οι ελληνικές αρχές δεσμεύτηκαν να βελτιώσουν τη σχέση κόστους/αποτελεσματικότητας του ελληνικού συστήματος υγείας, και, παράλληλα, να διατηρήσουν την καθολική πρόσβαση και να βελτιώσουν την ποιότητα των παρεχόμενων υπηρεσιών. Η μεταρρύθμιση του ιατροφαρμακευτικού συστήματος αποσκοπεί στην αντιμετώπιση των προβλημάτων που υπάρχουν όσον αφορά την οργάνωση, τη χρηματοδότηση και την παροχή της υγειονομικής περίθαλψης στην Ελλάδα. Τα σχετικά μέτρα περιλαμβάνουν τη μείωση της φαρμακευτικής δαπάνης μέσω της μεγαλύτερης χρήσης γενόσημων φαρμάκων, τη μεταρρύθμιση της νοσοκομειακής περίθαλψης στο πλαίσιο της γενικότερης πολιτικής για τη δημόσια υγεία, την καλύτερη παρακολούθηση και τη βελτίωση της ασφάλειας των ασθενών, τον καλύτερο καταμερισμό των κινδύνων, τη θέσπιση ενιαίων ποσοστών εισφορών και την καθιέρωση ενιαίας δέσμης παροχών μέσω της συγχώνευσης των ταμείων κοινωνικής ασφάλισης.

Όσον αφορά, ειδικότερα, τη διαθεσιμότητα και τη χρήση των πόρων στον ελληνικό νοσοκομειακό τομέα, η προγραμματισμένη νοσοκομειακή μεταρρύθμιση έχει ως δεδηλωμένο στόχο τη βελτιστοποίηση του εφοδιασμού με βάση τις κλινικές ανάγκες του πληθυσμού. Τα μεταρρυθμιστικά μέτρα περιλαμβάνουν επίσης την επικαιροποίηση της πολιτικής για το ανθρώπινο δυναμικό, με βάση διεξοδική αξιολόγηση των υπηρεσιών υγειονομικής περίθαλψης που απαιτούνται.

Η Επιτροπή υποστηρίζει απόλυτα την Ελλάδα στην υλοποίηση αυτών των μεταρρυθμίσεων.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000643/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)
(23 January 2013)

Subject: Unoccupied beds in Greek intensive care units

As a result of staff shortages, 160 beds in Greek intensive care units are currently unoccupied at a time when 40 places per day are needed! If they were all occupied, it would be possible to treat an additional 4700 patients annually. Furthermore, it is expected that, by the end of March, the number of unoccupied beds will increase by 40 to 50 as the contracts of 170 medical and nursing staff come to an end. While the Health Ministry has indicated that it is aware of the problem and is seeking to recruit the necessary additional staff, this has yet to produce any tangible results.

In view of this:

Given the incalculable value of human life and the fundamental duty of the state to provide public health services, what measures does the Commission consider appropriate in response to what is now a pressing problem for the everyday lives of Greek citizens and how soon does it consider that such measures must be taken?

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

Under the Second Economic Adjustment Programme, the Greek Authorities have committed to improving the cost-effectiveness of their health system, while maintaining universal access and improving the quality of the services rendered. The healthcare reform aims to address problems in the organisation, financing and delivery of healthcare in Greece. Measures include the reduction of spending on medicinal products through greater use of generic medicines, a hospital reform integrated within a general public health policy, improved monitoring and patient safety, better risk pooling, uniform contribution rates and uniform package of benefits through the merging of social security funds.

With regard more specifically to the availability and use of resources in the Greek hospital sector, the planned hospital reform explicitly aims at optimising supply on the basis of the population's clinical needs. Reform measures also include the updating of the Human Resources Policy, based on an in-depth assessment of the healthcare services needed.

The Commission fully supports Greece in achieving these reforms.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-000644/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)
(23 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Το δημογραφικό πρόβλημα στις δυτικές κοινωνίες

Ο πιστοληπτικός οίκος αξιολόγησης Fitch κρούει τον κώδωνα του κινδύνου για το εντεινόμενο δημογραφικό πρόβλημα που αντιμετωπίζουν οι δυτικές κοινωνίες. Η γήρανση του πληθυσμού είναι ένας ακόμη κίνδυνος για τις δυτικές οικονομίες σύμφωνα με νέα έκθεση του οίκου η οποία προειδοποιεί για τον κίνδυνο σοβαρού δημοσιονομικού σοκ. Ο οίκος αξιολόγησης αναφέρει ότι εάν δεν ληφθούν σημαντικά μέτρα για την αντιμετώπιση αυτού του προβλήματος, τότε κατά μέσο όρο το κόστος για το ΑΕΠ θα είναι 0,6% έως το 2020, και 4,9% έως το 2050 στις χώρες της ΕΕ και του ΟΟΣΑ, ενώ συγκεκριμένα προβλέπει ότι στην ΕΕ, ο μέσος λόγος χρέους προς ΑΕΠ θα ενισχυθεί κατά 6,9% το 2020 και κατά 119,4% το 2050.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

Ποια είναι τα μέτρα που ήδη λαμβάνει η ΕΕ για την αντιμετώπιση αυτού του προβλήματος και ποια επιπρόσθετα προτίθεται να λάβει ώστε να αποφευχθεί ένα δημοσιονομικό σοκ, δεδομένης και της κακής οικονομικής κατάστασης που επικρατεί σε πολλές χώρες της ΕΕ, όπως για παράδειγμα στην Ελλάδα;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(8 Μαρτίου 2013)

Η έκθεση Fitch στην οποία αναφέρεται το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου πρόκειται για έργο που εκπονήθηκε από την Επιτροπή. Η Επιτροπή και η ομάδα εργασίας για τη γήρανση του πληθυσμού της ΕΟΠ εκπόνησαν το 2012 έκθεση για τη δημογραφική γήρανση, στην οποία αξιολογούνται οι προβλεπόμενες δημοσιονομικές επιπτώσεις των δαπανών που συνδέονται με τη γήρανση του πληθυσμού ([1]). Επιπλέον, η Επιτροπή έχει αξιολογήσει τον κίνδυνο για τα δημόσια οικονομικά λόγω της αύξησης των δαπανών που σχετίζονται με τη γήρανση του πληθυσμού στην πρόσφατη έκθεση για τη δημοσιονομική διατηρησιμότητα του 2012 ([2]). Η έκθεση για τη δημοσιονομική διατηρησιμότητα περιέχει επίσης προβλέψεις του δείκτη του χρέους της γενικής κυβέρνησης προς το ΑΕΠ μακροπρόθεσμα, που αντανακλούν την προβλεπόμενη αύξηση των συνδεόμενων με τη δημογραφική γήρανση δαπανών με την παραδοχή ότι οι πολιτικές παραμένουν αμετάβλητες.

Στο πλαίσιο του ευρωπαϊκού εξαμήνου, η Επιτροπή συνιστά να προβλεφθούν διαρθρωτικές μεταρρυθμίσεις στα συστήματα κοινωνικής ασφάλισης ώστε να αναχαιτιστούν οι μελλοντικές αυξήσεις των δαπανών. Οι συστάσεις βασίζονται στη μεθοδολογία που αναπτύσσεται στην έκθεση δημοσιονομικής διατηρησιμότητας και σε συγκεκριμένους ανά χώρα παράγοντες.

Όσον αφορά τη συγκεκριμένη περίπτωση της Ελλάδας, στο πλαίσιο του προγράμματος οικονομικής προσαρμογής, έχουν ήδη γίνει σημαντικές προσαρμογές στο ελληνικό σύστημα κοινωνικής ασφάλισης, ιδίως στον τομέα των συντάξεων, προκειμένου να αντιμετωπιστούν οι μελλοντικές αυξήσεις των δαπανών λόγω της γήρανσης του πληθυσμού.

([1]) Η Επιτροπή θα ήθελε να παραπέμψει το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου στην ακόλουθη ιστοσελίδα όπου μπορεί να τηλεφορτωθεί η έκθεση: http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/european_economy/2012/2012-ageing-report_en.htm

([2]) Η Επιτροπή θα ήθελε να παραπέμψει το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου στην ακόλουθη ιστοσελίδα όπου μπορεί να τηλεφορτωθεί η έκθεση: http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/european_economy/2012/fiscal-sustainability-report_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000644/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)
(23 January 2013)

Subject: The demographic problem in western societies

In a recent report, the Fitch ratings agency sounds the alarm in response to the worsening demographic problem facing western societies, predicting the danger of a further fiscal shock to western economies as a result of the ageing population and warning that, without substantial reforms, the average resulting cost to EU and OECD countries is likely to be 0.6% of GDP by 2020 and 4.9% by 2050. At the same time, the average EU debt/GDP ratio is projected to rise by 6.9% by 2020 and 119.4% by 2050.

In view of this:

Can the Commission say what measures are already being taken by the EU in response to this problem and what additional measures will be taken to prevent a fiscal shock compounding the existing economic tribulations of many EU Member States, for example Greece?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(8 March 2013)

The Fitch report the Honourable Member refers to is the work done by the Commission. The Commission and the EPC Ageing Working Group have produced the 2012 Ageing report, in which the fiscal impact of projected ageing related expenditures is assessed ([1]). Furthermore, the Commission has assessed the risk to public finances of the increase in age-related expenditures in the recent Fiscal Sustainability Report 2012 ([2]). The Fiscal sustainability Report also contains projections of the general government debt-to-GDP ratio over the long-term, reflecting the projected increases in age-related expenditure based on unchanged policies.

Within the frame of the European Semester, the Commission recommends structural reforms to social security systems to curb future expenditure increases. The recommendations are based on the methodology laid out in the Fiscal Sustainability Report and on country-specific factors.

As for the specific case of Greece, as part of the economic adjustment programme, significant adjustments to the Greek social security system, notably in the pension field, have already been made to address future increases in expenditures due to population ageing.

([1]) The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to the following website where the report can be downloaded: http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/european_economy/2012/2012-ageing-report_en.htm

([2]) The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to the following website where the report can be downloaded: http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/european_economy/2012/fiscal-sustainability-report_en.htm

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000645/13
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(23 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: Dengue na Madeira

A chegada da febre de dengue à Madeira exige um conjunto de medidas de saúde pública para conter a doença, especialmente nas épocas mais críticas do ano. Estas medidas deverão desenvolver-se, essencialmente, a dois níveis: 1. controlo do mosquito transmissor da doença (*Aedes aegypti*), o que poderá envolver quer campanhas de sensibilização em massa da população sobre os procedimentos a adotar com esta finalidade, quer uma intervenção direta das autoridades públicas no controlo do mosquito, por exemplo através da aplicação de inseticidas, quando se justifique; 2. deteção precoce da doença nas pessoas infetadas, de modo a minimizar as possibilidades de dispersão do vírus, o que envolve igualmente a sensibilização da população local e visitante, bem como um incremento da capacidade de resposta das autoridades regionais de saúde no diagnóstico da doença.

Estas medidas são cruciais não apenas para conter a doença, mas também para impedir a sua evolução para formas mais graves, designadamente as formas hemorrágicas, que poderão resultar da chegada à ilha de outros serotipos do vírus, para além do único cuja presença foi, até à data, detetada.

Em face do exposto, solicito à Comissão que me informe sobre o seguinte:

1. Que acompanhamento está a ser feito pelo Centro Europeu de Controlo e Prevenção de Doenças sobre a evolução da doença na Madeira? Que medidas estão previstas no futuro próximo?

2. Que apoios comunitários poderão ser mobilizados para o desenvolvimento e aplicação das medidas supracitadas (financiamento de campanhas de sensibilização da população residente e visitante, aquisição de testes de diagnóstico da doença, campanhas de controlo do mosquito vetor, entre outras)?

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

Os relatórios periódicos apresentados por Portugal através do sistema de alerta da UE para as doenças transmissíveis permitiram à Comissão estar plenamente informada sobre o surto de febre de dengue no arquipélago da Madeira. O Centro Europeu de Prevenção e de Controlo das Doenças efetuou uma missão no arquipélago da Madeira de 22 de outubro a 7 de novembro de 2012 e está a planear uma segunda missão em março de 2013, de modo a assegurar uma análise retrospetiva completa do surto, rever o plano de emergência já existente, apoiar o acompanhamento dos parâmetros ambientais e avaliar o risco atual e futuro da transmissão da dengue no arquipélago da Madeira.

As atividades realizadas na Madeira incluem campanhas de sensibilização do público, um plano de comunicação, em que são especialmente consideradas medidas de proteção individual contra as picadas de mosquito; o controlo dos vetores, incluindo uma maior vigilância entomológica, bem como o reforço das capacidades de diagnóstico, que permitam assegurar a deteção precoce da doença.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000645/13
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(23 January 2013)

Subject: Dengue fever in Madeira

The arrival of dengue fever in Madeira calls for a range of public health measures to counter its propagation, especially at the most critical times of year. These measures basically need to be developed at two levels. 1: control of the vector mosquito (*Aedes aegypti*), which could be done either through public awareness campaigns providing information on the correct procedures to follow, or through direct intervention by the authorities, which could include the application of insecticide when necessary. 2: early detection of incidences of the virus to minimise its spread, which would involve creating awareness in the local and visiting population, as well as increasing the regional health authorities' capacity to respond to cases of the disease.

These measures are crucial, not only to contain the disease but also to prevent its evolution towards more serious versions, such as the hemorrhagic ones, which could happen if other serotypes of the virus reach the island in addition to the one which has already been detected there.

In light of the above, can the Commission answer the following:

1. How is the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control monitoring the evolution of dengue fever in Madeira? What measures are planned for the immediate future?

2. What Community support can be mobilised to develop and apply the measures described above (funding for public awareness campaigns aimed at residents and visitors, purchase of diagnostic tests, campaigns to control the vector mosquito, etc)?

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

The Commission is fully aware of the outbreak of dengue fever in the Madeira Islands on the basis of the regular reports from Portugal through the EU alerting system for communicable diseases. The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control carried out a field mission in Madeira from 22 October to 7 November 2012 and is planning a second mission in March 2013 to ensure complete retrospective analysis of the outbreak, review the contingency plan already in place, support the monitoring of the environmental parameters and assess the current and future risk of dengue transmission in Madeira.

Activities implemented in Madeira include public awareness campaigns; a communication plan, especially targeted at individual protective measures against mosquito bites; vector control, including enhanced entomological surveillance; and diagnostic capacity building to ensure early detection of the illness.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000646/13
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(23 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: Estratégia Europeia de Combate à Dengue

Para além de Portugal, na ilha da Madeira, terão já sido detetados casos de dengue noutros países da União Europeia, designadamente em países da bacia do Mediterrâneo.

A dengue figura entre algumas das doenças que poderão ser consideradas emergentes no continente europeu. Num contexto de alterações climáticas e de intensificação dos fluxos intercontinentais de pessoas e de mercadorias, aumenta a possibilidade de chegada ao continente europeu de diversos serotipos do vírus da dengue e de mosquitos vetores.

Na ilha da Madeira terá sido identificado até à data apenas um dos quatro serotipos do vírus da dengue. O mosquito vetor é o *Aedes aegypti*. Já nos restantes países, terá sido identificada a presença de *Aedes albopictus*. Como é sabido, a coexistência de diferentes serotipos do vírus aumenta a probabilidade de surgimento das formas mais graves da doença (hemorrágicas).

Pergunto à Comissão:

1. Em que países da UE foi até à data confirmada a presença da dengue? Quais os serotipos do vírus detetados e quais os mosquitos vetores envolvidos?

2. Considera a possibilidade de propor uma Estratégia Europeia de Combate à Dengue, que envolva, entre outros aspetos, a deteção e mapeamento da distribuição atual e previsível futura dos mosquitos vetores?

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

A Comissão está plenamente ciente da situação relativa à febre de dengue na Europa e ao atual surto no arquipélago da Madeira. A legislação da UE sobre as doenças transmissíveis (Decisão 2119/98/CE) abrange a vigilância e o controlo das doenças transmitidas por vetores, nomeadamente dengue, que devem ser notificadas através do sistema de alerta rápido e resposta da UE.

A maior parte dos casos de dengue na UE são importados de países tropicais e subtropicais com dengue endémico. Foram constatados 497 casos em 2008, 522 em 2009, e 1571 em 2010, comunicados principalmente pela Alemanha, França, Suécia e Bélgica. Em 2010, registaram-se dois casos de dengue nativos, em França e na Croácia ([1]).

Em consequência do surto de dengue na Madeira, foi diagnosticada a dengue nos países europeus em 78 doentes. Os serótipos do vírus da dengue detetados em casos contraídos localmente são os seguintes: França (2010) DENV1, Croácia (2010) DENV1, e Madeira (2012) DEN1.

É necessária uma abordagem europeia para o controlo da dengue, dado que o principal vetor, o mosquito *Aedes aegypti,* está presente na Madeira e em torno do Mar Negro, e que o vetor secundário, o mosquito *Aedes albopictus,* se encontra disseminado nos países mediterrânicos. Aparentemente é pouco elevado o risco de transmissão da dengue na Europa, mas é fundamental manter o acompanhamento contínuo em relação ao mosquito *Aedes albopictus* e a vigilância no que respeita ao mosquito *Aedes aegypti*.

O Centro Europeu de Prevenção e Controlo das Doenças criou a VBORNET ([2]), uma rede de médicos entomólogos e peritos em saúde pública para a recolha de dados sobre vetores, fornecidos por estudos científicos ou atividades locais de vigilância. Além disso, com vista a poder facultar informação sistemática sobre a repartição dos vetores na Europa, o Observatório desenvolveu diretrizes para a vigilância das espécies de mosquitos invasivos na Europa ([3]).

([1]) http://ecdc.europa.eu/pt/publications/Publications/1111_SUR_Annual_Epidemiological_Report_on_Communicable_Diseases_in_Europe.pdf
([2]) http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/activities/diseaseprogrammes/emerging_and_vector_borne_diseases/Pages/VBORNET_maps.aspx.
([3]) http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/TER-Mosquito-surveillance-guidelines.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000646/13
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(23 January 2013)

Subject: European strategy to combat dengue fever

In addition to its presence in the Portuguese island of Madeira, cases of dengue fever have also been detected in other EU countries, specifically those around the Mediterranean basin.

Dengue fever is one of the diseases which are potentially emerging on the European continent. With climate change and the increasing intercontinental movement of people and goods, there is a rising possibility that various dengue fever serotypes and vector mosquitoes will reach the European continent.

In Madeira, only one of the four dengue fever serotypes has been identified so far. It is transmitted by the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito. In the other affected countries, the presence of *Aedes albopictus* has been identified. It is a well known fact that the coexistence of different dengue fever serotypes increases the probability that more serious (hemorrhagic) forms of the virus will emerge.

Can the Commission answer the following:

1. In which EU countries has dengue fever been detected so far? Which serotypes of the virus have been detected and which types of mosquito were involved?

2. Is it considering the possibility of proposing a European strategy to combat dengue fever, which would, among other aspects, detect and chart the current and foreseeable distribution of vector mosquitoes?

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

The Commission is fully aware of the situation of dengue fever in Europe and the ongoing outbreak on the Madeira Islands. EU legislation on communicable diseases (Decision 2119/98/EC) covers surveillance and control of vector borne diseases, including dengue, that must be reported through the EU Early Warning and Response System.

Most of the dengue cases in the EU are imported from tropical and sub-tropical dengue-endemic countries. There have been 497 cases in 2008, 522 in 2009, and 1571 in 2010, primarily reported from Germany, France, Sweden, and Belgium. In 2010, two cases of autochthonous dengue fever occurred in France and Croatia ([1]).

As a consequence of the dengue outbreak in Madeira, 78 patients have been diagnosed in European countries with dengue. The dengue virus serotypes detected in locally acquired cases are as follows: France (2010) DENV1, Croatia (2010) DENV1, and Madeira (2012) DEN1.

A European approach for control of dengue is needed given that the main vector 'Aedes aegypti' is present in Madeira and around the Black Sea and that the secondary vector 'Aedes albopictus' is widespread in the Mediterranean countries. The risk of dengue transmission in Europe appears to be currently low, but continued monitoring for 'Ae. Albopictus' and vigilance for 'Ae. Aegypti' is important.

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control has established VBORNET ([2]), a network of medical entomologists and public health experts to collect data on vectors provided by scientific studies or local surveillance activities. In addition, to provide systematic information about vectors distribution in Europe, the Centre developed guidelines for the surveillance of invasive mosquito species in Europe ([3]).

([1]) http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/1111_SUR_Annual_Epidemiological_Report_on_Communicable_Diseases_in_Europe.pdf
([2]) http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/activities/diseaseprogrammes/emerging_and_vector_borne_diseases/Pages/VBORNET_maps.aspx.
([3]) http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/TER-Mosquito-surveillance-guidelines.pdf

(Magyar változat)

Írásbeli választ igénylő kérdés P-000647/13
a Bizottság számára
Bauer Edit (PPE)
(2013. január 23.)

Tárgy: Lakossági nyilvántartásból való törlés és állandó lakhelytől való adminisztratív megfosztás

A Szlovákiában elfogadott 250/2010-es törvény értelmében azok a polgárok, akik felveszik egy másik ország állampolgárságát, elveszítik, akaratukon kívül, a szlovák állampolgárságukat. A törvény 9.§ 19. bekezdése értelmében egy másik állam állampolgárságának megszerzéséről a polgárnak bejelentési kötelezettsége van. A körzeti hivatalnak erről tájékoztatást kell küldenie több intézménynek, a Szociális Biztosítót, az egészségbiztosítókat, a lakossági nyilvántartást is beleértve.

A napi gyakorlat azt mutatja, hogy e tájékoztatás alapján a kettős állampolgárokat a hatóság törli a lakossági nyilvántartásból, gyakorlatilag megfosztják őket állandó lakhelyüktől abban az esetben is, ha továbbra is ugyanazon a helyen, akár a saját ingatlanjukban laknak. Mivel más állandó lakhellyel nem rendelkeznek, kétségessé válik szociális és egészségügyi ellátásuk.

1. A Bizottság szerint nem ütközik a 250/2010-es, állampolgárságról szóló törvény alkalmazása az uniós jogrenddel, mely szerint az állandó lakhely meghatározó a szociális ellátások tekintetében?

2. A Bizottság egy korábbi válaszában az arányosságra utalt. Nem teszi ki a kormány az államukhoz és állampolgárságukhoz ragaszkodó polgárait aránytalan zaklatásnak, amikor egyetlen identitásukat igazoló okirat be nem szolgáltatása miatt ismételten szankcionálják őket?

Viviane Reding válasza a Bizottság nevében
(2013. március 12.)

Ahogyan a Bizottság a P-5994/2011 és E-2730/12 írásbeli kérdésekre adott válaszaiban kifejtette, a Bíróság a C-135/08. sz. *Rottmann* ügyben hozott ítélete értelmében – mely ügy tárgya a honosítás visszavonásáról szóló határozat volt – uniós polgárok esetében a tagállamok állampolgársággal kapcsolatos hatáskörének gyakorlása az uniós jogra vonatkozóan működtetett bírói felülvizsgálat alá tartozik, amennyiben az az uniós jogrend által biztosított és védett jogokat érinti, különös tekintettel az arányosság elvére.

Amint azt a Bizottság a fent hivatkozott válaszaiban hangsúlyozta, a *Rottmann* ügyben fennálló körülmények eltérnek a Tisztelt Képviselőnek a Szlovák Köztársaság állampolgárságáról szóló 250/2010-es törvény hatályára vonatkozó kérdésében bemutatott helyzettől. E törvény értelmében ugyanis az állampolgárság elvesztése annak a következménye, hogy egy adott személy a saját kérésére, önként egy másik ország állampolgárságát szerzi meg.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-000647/13
to the Commission
Edit Bauer (PPE)
(23 January 2013)

Subject: Deletion of citizens from the population register and administrative measures depriving them of a permanent address

In Slovakia, under Law no 250/2010, citizens who acquire the nationality of another country automatically lose Slovak nationality. Under Section 9(19) of this law a citizen has an obligation to notify the acquisition of another country's nationality. He must send this notification to several bodies of the district authority, including the social security, the health insurance fund and the population register.

Experience shows that on the basis of this notification the authorities delete such 'dual citizens' from the population register, effectively depriving them of a permanent address even when they continue to reside in the same place, even in their own property. Since they do not have another permanent address, they risk losing their social and health benefits.

1. In the Commission's view does the application of Law No 250/2010 on nationality not conflict with the EU legal system, under which a person's permanent address is crucial to obtaining their social benefits?

2. In an earlier answer the Commission referred to the principle of proportionality. Is the government not creating a disproportionate problem for its citizens, who are attached to their country and their nationality, when it repeatedly punishes them for not surrendering the only document by which they can establish their identity?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(12 March 2013)

As the Commission indicated in its replies to Written Questions P-5994/2011 and E-2730/12, the Court of Justice ruled in Case C-135/08 *Rottmann*, which concerned a decision withdrawing naturalisation, that, in respect of Union citizens, the exercise of Member States' powers in the sphere of nationality, in so far as it affects the rights conferred and protected by the legal order of the Union, is amenable to judicial review carried out in the light of EC law and notably the principle of proportionality.

As further underlined in the Commission replies cited above, the circumstances of the Rottmann case differ from the situation described by the Honourable Member in her question on the implications of the Law 250/2010 on citizenship of the Slovak Republic. Indeed, under this law, loss of nationality occurs as a result of the voluntary acquisition of a foreign nationality at the person's own request.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-000649/13
au Conseil
Anna Záborská (PPE)
(23 janvier 2013)

Objet: Kazakhstan: Persécution des Églises chrétiennes

Depuis la loi sur les cultes votée par l'Assemblée nationale kazakhe le 25 octobre 2011, les églises chrétiennes, même celles qui étaient déjà légalement déclarées, n'ont pas vu leur autorisation reconduite, parfois pour des motifs politiques. Une église, par exemple, n'a plus été autorisée pour «fausses informations»: entre le dépôt de la demande et son examen par les autorités, l'un des signataires de la demande était décédé et le dossier était désormais réputé faux. Une autre église, qui existait depuis plus de dix ans au Kazakhstan, a été dissoute par la décision d'un tribunal, de manière parfaitement arbitraire, après que l'administration eut, à plusieurs reprises, exigé des modifications de ses statuts, de la liste de demandeurs, etc., ce qui pourtant été fait. Beaucoup d'églises ont également cessé d'exister par simple décision d'un tribunal qui avait omis de les convoquer à l'audience. Au total, des dizaines d'églises protestantes ont cessé d'exister au Kazakhstan depuis le 25 octobre 2012. Les procédures d'appel sont opaques et onéreuses, et l'on ne voit pas trop comment remédier à cette atteinte à la liberté de culte et de religion dans ce pays.

1. Le Conseil dispose-t-il d'informations à ce sujet?

2. Quelle est l'action menée par l'Union pour garantir l'État de droit, l'équité des procédures pour les Églises et communautés religieuses ainsi que la liberté de culte et de religion au Kazakhstan dans le cadre de la coopération entre l'Union et ses États membres et le Kazakhstan?

3. Pourquoi la problématique de la persécution des Églises chrétiennes par l'État, fondée sur la religion, n'est-elle pas mentionnée dans le récent «projet de rapport d'étape commun du Conseil et de la Commission européenne au Conseil européen sur la mise en œuvre de la stratégie de l'UE à l'égard de l'Asie centrale»?

4. Le Conseil a-t-il l'intention d'inclure dans ce rapport la problématique de la persécution des Églises chrétiennes au Kazakhstan?

Réponse
(15 mai 2013)

L'UE suit de près la situation des Droits de l'homme au Kazakhstan, y compris en ce qui concerne la liberté de religion et de conviction, et a fait part aux autorités kazakhes des préoccupations que lui inspire l'incidence de la nouvelle loi sur les activités religieuses. Bien qu'il ne mentionne pas spécifiquement les minorités chrétiennes présentes dans la région, le récent rapport d'étape conjoint sur le Kazakhstan a abordé de manière exhaustive les questions relatives aux Droits de l'homme.

L'UE fait part de ses préoccupations en matière de Droits de l'homme à tous les niveaux, y compris au plus haut niveau, ainsi que dans le cadre des dialogues relatifs à cette question qui se tiennent depuis l'adoption de la stratégie pour l'Asie centrale en 2007.

(Slovenské znenie)

Otázka na písomné zodpovedanie E-000649/13
Rade
Anna Záborská (PPE)
(23. januára 2013)

Vec: Kazachstan: prenasledovanie kresťanských cirkví

Od prijatia zákona o náboženských vyznaniach, ktoré odhlasovalo kazašské národné zhromaždenie 25. októbra 2011, nebolo kresťanským cirkvám, dokonca ani tým, ktoré už boli právoplatne povolené, povolenie obnovené, a to niekedy aj z politických dôvodov. Jedna cirkev nebola napríklad znovu povolená z dôvodu podávania „nepravdivých informácií“: v čase medzi podaním žiadosti a jej posudzovaním úradmi jeden zo signatárov tejto žiadosti zomrel a spis bol tak považovaný za nepravdivý. Iná cirkev, ktorá v Kazachstane pôsobila už viac ako desať rokov, bola rozpustená na základe svojvoľného rozhodnutia súdu po tom, čo správne orgány niekoľkokrát vyžadovali zmenu jej stanov, zoznamu žiadateľov a pod., čo cirkev nakoniec aj splnila. Mnoho cirkví tiež zaniklo na základe jednoduchého rozhodnutia súdu, ktorý ich ani nepredvolal na pojednávanie. Od 25 októbra 2012 prestali v Kazachstane pôsobiť dokopy desiatky protestantských cirkví. Odvolacie konania sú neprehľadné a nákladné a nie je celkom jasné, ako sa dá v tejto krajine napraviť takéto porušovanie slobody náboženského vyznania a náboženstva.

1. Má Rada informácie o tomto probléme?

2. Aké opatrenia Únia uplatňuje, aby v rámci spolupráce medzi Úniou, členskými štátmi a Kazachstanom zabezpečila v Kazachstane zásady právneho štátu, spravodlivý proces pre cirkvi a náboženské spoločenstvá, ako aj slobodu náboženského vyznania a náboženstva?

3. Prečo sa problematika náboženského prenasledovania kresťanských cirkví štátom neuvádza v nedávnom návrhu spoločnej správy o pokroku vo vykonávaní Stratégie EÚ pre Strednú Áziu, ktorú Európskej rade predložili Rada a Európska komisia?

4. Má Rada v úmysle zahrnúť do tejto správy problematiku prenasledovania kresťanských cirkví v Kazachstane?

Odpoveď
(15. mája 2013)

EÚ pozorne sleduje situáciu v oblasti ľudských práv v Kazachstane, a to aj v oblasti náboženského vyznania a viery, pričom tlmočila kazašským orgánom svoje znepokojenie v súvislosti s dôsledkami nového Zákona o náboženských aktivitách. Nedávno predložená spoločná správa o pokroku v tejto krajine sa komplexne zaoberala otázkami ľudských práv, hoci sa osobitne neodvolávala na kresťanské menšiny v tomto regióne.

EÚ vyjadruje znepokojenie v súvislosti s porušovaním ľudských práv na všetkých úrovniach, vrátane najvyššej úrovne, a takisto v súvislosti s prebiehajúcimi dialógmi o ľudských právach, keďže stratégia pre Strednú Áziu bola prijatá v roku 2007.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000649/13
to the Council
Anna Záborská (PPE)
(23 January 2013)

Subject: Kazakhstan: persecution of Christian churches

Following the adoption of a law on religious communities by the Kazakh Parliament on 25 October 2011, Christian churches — including churches that were already legally registered — have been unable to have their authorisation renewed, in some cases for political reasons. One church, for instance, has had its authorisation terminated for having provided 'false information' after one of the signatories of the application died in the period between the application's submission and its examination by the authorities. The information was consequently considered to be false. Another church that had existed in Kazakhstan for more than 10 years was closed by an entirely arbitrary decision taken by a court after the authorities had repeatedly demanded that it make changes to its statutes, the list of applicants, and so on, all of which it had in fact done. Many churches have also been forced to close following decisions taken by courts without calling anyone from the churches to the hearings. Dozens of Protestant Churches in Kazakhstan have been forced to close since 25 October 2012. The appeals process is non-transparent and expensive, and it is difficult to see what can be done about this attack on freedom of worship and of religious belief in Kazakhstan.

1. Does the Council have any information on this matter?

2. What steps is the EU taking, as part of the arrangements for cooperation between the EU and its Member States and Kazakhstan, with a view to guaranteeing the rule of law, the fairness of administrative procedures for churches and religious communities, and freedom of worship and of religious belief in Kazakhstan?

3. Why was the issue of the persecution of Christian communities by the state not mentioned in the recent draft joint progress report of the Council and the Commission to the European Council on the implementation of the EU strategy for Central Asia?

4. Does the Council intend to include the issue of the persecution of Christian communitiesin Kazakhstan in this report?

Reply
(15 May 2013)

The EU closely follows the human rights situation in Kazakhstan, including in the area of freedom of religion and belief, and has raised its concerns about the effect of the new Law on Religious Activites with the Kazakh authorities. The recent joint progress report on the country covered human rights issues comprehensively, although it did not specifically refer to the Christian minorities in the region.

The EU raises human rights concerns at all levels, including at the highest level as well as in the context of human rights dialogues that are in place since the Central Asia strategy was adopted in 2007.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000650/13
an die Kommission
Renate Sommer (PPE)
(23. Januar 2013)

Betrifft: Angabe der Erklärung zur Referenzmenge i.S.d. Art. 32 Abs. 5 der Verordnung (EU) Nr. 1169/2011 (LMIV)

Artikel 32 Absatz 4 der Verordnung (EU) Nr. 1169/2011 (LMIV) erlaubt die Angabe des Brennwerts und der Nährstoffmengen als Prozentsatz der in Anhang XIII Teil B festgelegten Referenzmengen im Verhältnis zu 100 g oder 100 ml (sogenannte GDA-Angabe je 100 g/ml). Artikel 32 Absatz 5 der LMIV bestimmt, dass im Falle der vorstehenden Angabe in unmittelbarer Nähe folgende Erklärung formuliert werden muss: „Referenzmenge für einen durchschnittlichen Erwachsenen (8 400kJ/2 000kcal)".

Der Wille der Rechtssetzungsbehörde geht eindeutig dahin, dass bei der GDA-Angabe die Referenzmenge grundsätzlich anzugeben ist. Artikel 33 erscheint in dieser Hinsicht jedoch interpretationsfähig.

Teilt die Kommission die Einschätzung, dass die Erklärung zur Referenzmenge im Sinne des Artikels 32 Absatz 5 der LMIV auch dann zu formulieren ist, wenn nicht die Angabe nach Artikel 32 Absatz 4 der LMIV, sondern an ihrer Stelle die Angabe des Prozentsatzes der in Anhang XIII Teil B festgelegten Referenzmenge je Portion und/oder Verzehreinheit gemäß Artikel 33 Absatz 1 Buchstabe c erfolgt (sogenannte GDA-Angabe je Portion/Verzehreinheit)?

Antwort von Herrn Borg im Namen der Kommission
(12. März 2013)

Gemäß Artikel 32 Absatz 5 der Verordnung (EU) Nr. 1169/2011 ([1]) ist die zusätzliche Erklärung „Referenzmenge für einen durchschnittlichen Erwachsenen (8 400 kJ/2 000 kcal)" in unmittelbarer Nähe zur Nährwertdeklaration vorgeschrieben, wenn die Angaben in dieser Deklaration gemäß Artikel 32 Absatz 4 als Prozentsatz der Referenzmengen im Verhältnis zu 100 g oder zu 100 ml ausgedrückt sind. Aus dem von Parlament und Rat vereinbarten Wortlaut des Rechtsakts lässt sich nicht ableiten, dass diese Erklärung auch dann erforderlich ist, wenn die Nährwertdeklaration gemäß Artikel 33 Absatz 1 Buchstabe c als Prozentsatz der Referenzmengen je Portion und/oder je Verzehreinheit formuliert ist.

Die Kommission verweist die Frau Abgeordnete ferner auf das Dokument „Fragen und Antworten zur Anwendung der Verordnung (EU) Nr. 1169/2011 betreffend die Information der Verbraucher über Lebensmittel" ([2]), das die Kommission vor Kurzem auf der Website der Generaldirektion Gesundheit und Verbraucher veröffentlicht hat.

([1]) Verordnung (EU) Nr. 1169/2011 des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 25. Oktober 2011 betreffend die Information der Verbraucher über Lebensmittel und zur Änderung der Verordnungen (EG) Nr. 1924/2006 und (EG) Nr. 1925/2006 des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates und zur Aufhebung der Richtlinie 87/250/EWG der Kommission, der Richtlinie 90/496/EWG des Rates, der Richtlinie 1999/10/EG der Kommission, der Richtlinie 2000/13/EG des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates, der Richtlinien 2002/67/EG und 2008/5/EG der Kommission und der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 608/2004 der Kommission, ABl. L 304 vom 22.11.2011, S. 18.

([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/labellingnutrition/foodlabelling/proposed_legislation_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000650/13
to the Commission
Renate Sommer (PPE)
(23 January 2013)

Subject: Information in the statement on reference intake under Article 32(5) of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 (Food Information Regulation)

Article 32(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 (Food Information Regulation) allows the energy value and the amounts of nutrients to be indicated as a percentage of the reference intakes set out in Part B of Annex XIII in relation to per 100g or per 100ml (the so-called GDA indication per 100g/ml). Article 32(5) of the Food Information Regulation determines that where information is provided pursuant to paragraph 4, the following additional statement must be indicated in close proximity to it: 'Reference intake of an average adult (8400 kJ/ 2000 kcal)'.

It is clearly the desire of the legislative authority that the reference intake must be specified in principle when indicating the GDA. In this respect, however, Article 33 seems open to interpretation.

Does the Commission agree that the statement on reference intake under Article 32(5) of the Food Information Regulation must also be made if the information is not indicated in accordance with Article 32(4) of the Food Information Regulation, but is instead indicated as a percentage of the reference intakes set out in Part B of Annex XIII per portion/consumption unit in accordance with Article 33(1)(c) (the so-called GDA indication per portion/ consumption unit)?

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

Article 32(5) of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 ([1]) requires the additional statement 'Reference intake of an average adult (8400 kJ/ 2000 kcal)' to be indicated in close proximity to the nutrition declaration, when expressed as a percentage of the reference intakes in relation to per 100 g or per 100 ml, following Article 32(4). From the wording of the legal text agreed by the co-legislator, it cannot be concluded that this statement is also required when the nutrition declaration is expressed as a percentage of the reference intakes in relation to per portion and/or consumption unit following Article 33(1)(c).

The Commission would like to refer the Honourable Member to a document 'Questions and Answers on the application of the regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers' ([2]) recently published on the website of the Commission's Health and Consumers Directorate-General.

([1]) Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011 on the provision of food information to consumers, amending Regulations (EC) No 1924/2006 and (EC) No 1925/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and repealing Commission Directive 87/250/EEC, Council Directive 90/496/EEC, Commission Directive 1999/10/EC, Directive 2000/13/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, Commission Directives 2002/67/EC and 2008/5/EC and Commission Regulation (EC) No 608/2004, OJ L 304, 22.11.2011, p.18.

([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/labellingnutrition/foodlabelling/proposed_legislation_en.htm

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000651/13
alla Commissione
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(23 gennaio 2013)

Oggetto: Valutazione in merito alla potenziale dannosità per la salute delle sigarette elettroniche

Pur essendo sul mercato da vari anni, soltanto nell'ultimo periodo si è iniziato a discutere della pericolosità per la salute delle cosiddette «e-cig», le sigarette elettroniche. Secondo le informazioni a disposizione delle istituzioni comunitarie e dell'Organizzazione mondiale della sanità, non esistono, infatti, studi medico-scientifici in grado di dimostrare che esse non siano nocive, né tantomeno che aiutino a smettere di fumare. Sempre più pareri sostengono invece la loro pericolosità.

Uno studio della European Respiratory Society mette in guardia contro i possibili danni ai polmoni e l'aumento della resistenza delle vie aeree, la cosiddetta «broncocostrizione».

In uno studio che rispondeva alla richiesta di parere da parte del Ministro della salute Balduzzi, l'Istituto superiore di sanità italiano ha dichiarato che le sigarette elettroniche alla nicotina sono dannose per la salute.

L'ordinanza n. 248 del Ministero della salute italiano, del 28 settembre 2012, vieta la vendita delle sigarette elettroniche ai minori di 16 anni.

La legislazione in materia di sigarette elettroniche in vari paesi ne ha resa molto difficile la vendita, ipotizzando effetti nocivi sulla salute.

In considerazione di quanto sopra esposto, può dire la Commissione:

1. se ritiene necessario condurre analisi approfondite per determinare o escludere la nocività di tali sigarette e se intende intervenire in via legislativa, al fine di equipararle alle sigarette tradizionali, vietandone quindi l'uso in luoghi pubblici?

2. quale tipo di autorizzazione all'immissione nel mercato intende predisporre per questa tipologia di prodotti?

3. se ritiene necessario richiedere al Comitato scientifico dei rischi sanitari emergenti e recentemente identificati (CSRSERI) di valutare gli effetti nocivi?

4. se intende valutare l'equiparazione delle sigarette elettroniche alle sigarette tradizionali da regolamentare come «prodotto del tabacco di nuova generazione»?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(11 marzo 2013)

La Commissione è a conoscenza delle discussioni sui rischi per la salute legati alle sigarette elettroniche.

Conformemente alla proposta della Commissione per una revisione della direttiva sui prodotti del tabacco, le sigarette elettroniche dovrebbero rientrare nel quadro giuridico che si applica ai prodotti medicinali se contengono livelli di nicotina superiori a certe soglie. Pertanto, la loro immissione sul mercato richiederebbe un'autorizzazione previa in forza della legislazione farmaceutica. Le soglie di nicotina sono state identificate sulla base del contenuto di nicotina delle terapie di sostituzione della nicotina che hanno già ricevuto dagli Stati membri un'autorizzazione alla commercializzazione.

Per le sigarette elettroniche che si situano al di sotto di tali soglie è previsto che rechino avvertimenti sanitari. Esse dovrebbero anche ottemperare alla direttiva sulla sicurezza generale dei prodotti, come sono tenute a fare già ora. I prodotti contenenti nicotina quali le sigarette elettroniche non rientrerebbero nel proposto regime dei nuovi prodotti del tabacco poiché non contengono tabacco.

La proposta della Commissione intende incoraggiare la ricerca, l'innovazione e lo sviluppo di prodotti che abbiano superato previamente una valutazione del rapporto rischio/beneficio e siano atti ad incoraggiare la cessazione del fumo. In questa fase la Commissione non prevede di chiedere un altro parere scientifico.

Non compete alla Commissione proporre il divieto dell'uso delle sigarette elettroniche nei luoghi pubblici poiché ciò rientra nelle competenze degli Stati membri.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000651/13
to the Commission
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(23 January 2013)

Subject: Assessment of potential harmful effects on health of electronic cigarettes

Although they have been on the market now for several years, it is only recently that the dangers to health posed by the so-called 'e-cig' or electronic cigarette have begun to be discussed. As far as the EU institutions and the World Health Organisation know, none of the medical-scientific studies in existence demonstrate that these cigarettes are not harmful, and even less that they help people to stop smoking. An ever increasing number of opinions, on the other hand, state that they are dangerous.

A study by the European Respiratory Society warns against possible damage to the lungs and increased resistance in the airways, otherwise known as 'bronchoconstriction'.

In a study conducted in response to a request for an opinion from Health Minister Mr Balduzzi, the Italian Higher Institute for Health stated that electronic cigarettes containing nicotine are harmful to health.

Decree No 248 of the Italian Ministry of Health of 28 September 2012 prohibits the sale of electronic cigarettes to people under the age of 16.

Legislation on electronic cigarettes in various countries has made their sale very difficult, on grounds of their harmful effects on health.

1. Does the Commission feel that in-depth studies need to be conducted to establish whether or not these cigarettes are harmful? Does it plan to introduce legislation that would place electronic cigarettes on an equal footing with traditional cigarettes, thereby banning their use in public places?

2. What form of marketing authorisation does the Commission plan to establish for products in this category?

3. Does it believe that the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (SCENIHR) should be asked to assess their harmful effects?

4. Does it intend to treat electronic cigarettes in the same way as those traditional ones which are to be regulated as a 'next generation tobacco product'?

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

The Commission is aware of discussions about adverse health risks associated with electronic cigarettes.

According to the Commission proposal for a revised Tobacco Product Directive, electronic cigarettes would fall under the legal framework for medicinal products if they contain levels of nicotine above certain thresholds. Thus, their bringing on the market would require prior authorisation under pharmaceutical legislation. The nicotine threshold has been identified by considering the nicotine content of nicotine replacement therapies that have already received a marketing authorisation by Member States.

For electronic cigarettes below the thresholds, it is foreseen that they carry health warnings. They would also have to comply with the General Product Safety Directive as it is the case at the moment. Nicotine containing products such as electronic cigarettes would not fall under the proposed regime for novel tobacco products, as they do not contain tobacco.

The Commission proposal seeks to encourage research, innovation and development of products which have undergone a prior risk/benefit balance and which are suitable for smoking cessation. The Commission at this stage does not plan to ask for another Scientific opinion.

The Commission does not have the competence to propose prohibiting the use of electronic cigarettes in public places, which falls under Member States competence.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000654/13
à Comissão
Nuno Teixeira (PPE)
(23 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: Novo estudo sobre indicadores que substituam/complementem o critério do PIB per capita na política de coesão

Considerando que:

O indicador do PIB *per capita* é o critério de aferição da elegibilidade, ao abrigo dos fundos estruturais da política de coesão, no atual período de programação de 2007 a 2013;

Embora o artigo 174.° do TFUE refira que uma especial atenção deve ser consagrada às regiões com limitações particulares, tais como as regiões insulares, das propostas legislativas da Comissão Europeia e das negociações delas decorrentes não resulta uma intenção de substituir ou complementar o critério do PIB *per capita* por outros critérios relativos a indicadores de ordem económica ou social;

A substituição ou complementaridade do critério do PIB permitiria efetivar uma atenção especial às regiões com características e limitações particulares, ao abrigo do artigo 174.° do TFUE, e fazer respeitar os objetivos da coesão económica, social e territorial;

Que, na sua Comunicação sobre «O PIB e mais além — Medir o progresso num mundo de mudança», de 20 de agosto de 2009, a Comissão Europeia avança uma análise dos eventuais critérios alternativos ou complementares a ponderar no futuro,

Pergunta-se à Comissão:

1. Pretende avançar com um novo estudo que afira da possibilidade de serem considerados outros indicadores de ordem económica e/ou social enquanto critério de alocação dos fundos estruturais ao abrigo da política de coesão?

2. Como vê o facto de que, embora se considere que as regiões com características particulares devem ser objeto de uma particular atenção na prossecução dos objetivos da política de coesão, fatores como o afastamento, a insularidade e a mobilidade/transportes condicionados não entrem sequer na ponderação de um critério de distribuição dos fundos estruturais, os quais são o principal instrumento de realização dos próprios objetivos dessa mesma política?

3. Como tenciona concretizar na prática as conclusões da sua Comunicação sobre «O PIB e mais além»? Sem ações concretas para o efetivar, qual é a utilidade prática deste documento e das contribuições nele contidas?

Resposta dada por Johannes Hahn em nome da Comissão
(13 de março de 2013)

1. A Comissão está a estudar a possibilidade de obter indicadores de pobreza regional e de exclusão social provenientes do inquérito sobre o rendimento e as condições de vida. Consoante os resultados desse inquérito, a Comissão irá examinar se os referidos indicadores podem eventualmente ser considerados na política de coesão pós-2020.

2. A Comissão considera que os fatores como a distância, o isolamento e os transportes/mobilidade são particularmente relevantes na conceção das estratégias do programa. No entanto, visto que não existem dados harmonizados disponíveis a nível europeu, esses fatores não podem ser tomados em consideração na atribuição de fundos.

3. A Comissão publicará um relatório de acompanhamento sobre a Comunicação «O PIB e mais além» deste ano. Esse relatório fornecerá uma panorâmica de todas as ações que foram concluídas neste quadro e indicará as áreas em que são necessários esforços adicionais.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000654/13
to the Commission
Nuno Teixeira (PPE)
(23 January 2013)

Subject: New study on indicators to replace/complement the GDP per capita criterion for cohesion policy

The GDP per capita indicator is the benchmark criterion for eligibility under the cohesion policy structural funds during the current 2007-2013 programming period.

Although Article 174 of the TFEU states that special attention should be given to regions with specific constraints, such as island regions, the Commission's legislative proposals and the negotiations arising from them do not indicate any intention to replace the GDP per capita criterion with other criteria linked to economic or social indicators.

Substitution or complementarity of the GDP indicator would make it possible to provide special attention to regions with special characteristics and constraints, under the terms of Article 174 TFEU, and uphold the aims of economic, social and territorial cohesion.

In its August 2009 communication 'GDP and beyond — Measuring progress in a changing world', the Commission presented an analysis of possible alternative or complementary indicators for future consideration.

1. Does the Commission intend to move ahead with a new study evaluating the possibility of taking other social and/or economic indicators into account as criteria for allocating structural funds under cohesion policy?

2. How does the Commission view the fact that although it is agreed that regions with specific characteristics should be given special consideration when pursuing the objectives of cohesion policy, factors such as distance, isolation and adequate transport/mobility are not even taken into consideration when distributing structural funds, which are the main instrument used to attain the objectives of this same policy?

3. How does the Commission intend to put into practice the conclusions of its communication 'GDP and beyond'? With no specific actions to be implemented, what practical purpose is served by this document and the information contained in it?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(13 March 2013)

1. The Commission is investigating the possibility of obtaining regional poverty and social exclusion indicators from the survey on income and living conditions. Depending on the outcome of this investigation, the Commission will examine whether these indicators could possibly be considered in the allocation of cohesion policy post-2020.

2. The Commission considers that factors such as distance, isolation and transport/mobility are particularly relevant when designing programme strategies. However, since there is no harmonised data available at European level, these factors cannot be taken into account in the allocation of funds.

3. The Commission will publish a follow up report on the 'GDP and beyond' communication this year. This report will provide an overview of all actions which have been completed within this framework and indicate areas where further work is needed.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000655/13
à Comissão
Nuno Teixeira (PPE)
(23 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: Fundo de Auxílio Europeu às Pessoas mais Carenciadas — âmbito de intervenção

Considerando que:

A Comissão Europeia adotou uma proposta de Regulamento do Parlamento Europeu e do Conselho relativo ao Fundo de Auxílio Europeu às Pessoas mais Carenciadas, a 24 de outubro de 2012, que visa, ao dar assistência não financeira, contribuir para a inclusão social das pessoas mais carenciadas;

O Fundo de Auxílio Europeu às Pessoas mais Carenciadas insere-se no âmbito da Estratégia UE2020, a saber, reduzir até 2020 em pelo menos 20 milhões o número de pessoas em risco de pobreza ou exclusão social;

A proposta da Comissão relativa a um quadro financeiro plurianual prevê a afetação de um montante 2,5 mil milhões de euros no quadro da política de coesão para o período de 2014 a 2020;

O risco de pobreza ou de exclusão social é particularmente iminente em situações de privação material grave, tais como a falta de habitação; e que o Fundo de Auxílio Europeu às Pessoas mais Carenciadas vem complementar os mecanismos de coesão já existentes em domínios semelhantes;

Pergunta-se à Comissão:

1. No que respeita ao âmbito de intervenção do Fundo, como vê a possibilidade de o apoio a medidas no domínio, por exemplo, da habitação ou da remodelação de habitações vir a ser inscrito no Plano Operacional e, assim, contribuir para uma inclusão social das pessoas?

2. Dado que o estado de pessoa mais carenciada pode resultar de inúmeras causas, como vê a Comissão a possibilidade de este Fundo vir a ser utilizado para fazer face às consequências sentidas pelas populações no rescaldo de uma catástrofe ou desastre natural e contribuir, assim, para completar o apoio ao abrigo de outros fundos da política de coesão?

Resposta dada por László Andor em nome da Comissão
(15 de março de 2013)

O Fundo de Auxílio Europeu às Pessoas mais Carenciadas (FAEC), proposto pela Comissão, visa apoiar mecanismos nacionais que proporcionem uma assistência não financeira, sob a forma de alimentos ou bens de consumo, e diretamente aos beneficiários. Os subsídios de alojamento ou à remodelação não estão enquadrados neste âmbito de aplicação.

O Fundo Europeu de Desenvolvimento Regional (FEDER) recompensa as pessoas mais carenciadas através de investimentos na educação, saúde, assistência infantil, habitação e outras infraestruturas sociais (montante total atribuído de 17,9 mil milhões de euros) e pelo desenvolvimento urbano sustentável integrado (cerca de 10 mil milhões de euros) no atual período de programação. Os mapas da pobreza irão identificar os territórios mais desfavorecidos (para além do nível regional) no próximo ciclo de programação 2014-2020.

O FAEC visa principalmente atuar em situações diferentes daquelas que normalmente surgem na sequência de desastres, já que aborda a privação material induzida pela pobreza e não por acontecimentos catastróficos.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000655/13
to the Commission
Nuno Teixeira (PPE)
(23 January 2013)

Subject: Fund for European aid to the most deprived: scope of intervention

On 25 October 2012, the Commission adopted a proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Fund for European aid to the most deprived, which aims to promote the social inclusion of the most deprived through providing non-financial aid.

The Fund for European aid to the most deprived falls within the framework of the EU2020 strategy, which seeks to reduce by at least 20 million the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion by 2020.

The Commission proposal for a multiannual financial framework provides for the allocation of EUR 2.5 billion to cohesion policy for the period 2014-2020.

The risk of poverty or social exclusion is particularly acute in situations of severe material deprivation, such as homelessness. The fund for European aid to the most deprived complements existing cohesion mechanisms operating in similar areas.

1. In terms of the fund's scope of intervention, how does the Commission view the possibility of support for measures in the fields of, for example, housing or housing renovation being included in the operational plan and thereby contributing to social inclusion?

2. Given that there are countless reasons why people may find themselves severely deprived, how does the Commission view the possibility of this fund being used to address the situation of people hit by a catastrophe or natural disaster, thereby helping to complete the support provided under other cohesion policy funds?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(15 March 2013)

The Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD), as proposed by the Commission, is intended to support national schemes that deliver non-financial assistance — in the form of food and consumer goods — directly to the beneficiaries. Housing or renovation aid does not therefore fall within its scope.

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) offers the most deprived communities investment in education, health, childcare, housing and other social infrastructure (total allocated EUR 17.9 billion) and integrated sustainable urban development (approximately EUR 10 billion) in the current programming period. The poverty maps will identify the most deprived territories (beyond the regional level) in the next programming cycle, 2014-2020.

The FEAD is primarily aimed at situations other than those that typically arise in the aftermath of disasters, as it addresses material deprivation induced by poverty rather than catastrophic events.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-000657/13
do Komisji
Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)
(23 stycznia 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Śmierć białoruskiego dziennikarza w Grodnie

19 stycznia 2013 r. Jury Humianiuk, białoruski pisarz i dziennikarz, wypadł z 9. piętra internatu w Grodnie i zginął na miejscu. Na razie nie wiadomo, w jakich okolicznościach dziennikarz stracił życie. Jego bliscy sugerują jednak, że mogło to być zabójstwo.

Humianiuk był współpracownikiem białostockiego miesięcznika Czasopis, Polskiego Radia i Radia Racja.

Wolność słowa na Białorusi jest nieustannie ograniczana, niezależne media zmuszane są do przenoszenia swoich redakcji poza granice kraju. Dziennikarze, którzy ośmielają się mówić prawdę na temat sytuacji w kraju, stanu demokracji i przestrzegania praw człowieka, narażeni są na prześladowania i represje ze strony władz. Przeciwko niepokornym dziennikarzom wszczynane są sprawy karne. Istnieje również kilka niewyjaśnionych dotąd przypadków zabójstw przedstawicieli tego zawodu, np. Aleha Biebienina, współpracownika Karty97, czy Weroniki Czerkasowej.

Zwracam się więc do Komisji z pytaniem, czy ma zamiar zbadać sprawę śmierci dziennikarza polskiego radia na Białorusi i znaleźć adekwatne środki do wyrażenia sprzeciwu wobec represjonowania dziennikarzy w tym kraju?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Štefana Füleg w imieniu Komisji
(12 marca 2013 r.)

Komisja zna doniesienia na temat śmierci Jurija Humianiuka, jednak nie dysponuje własnymi informacjami na temat okoliczności tej sprawy.

UE jest poważnie zaniepokojona utrzymującym się na Białorusi brakiem poszanowania dla praw człowieka, praworządności i zasad demokratycznych, a także sytuacją niezależnych mediów w tym kraju. UE uważnie śledzi te kwestie i będzie w dalszym ciągu wykorzystywać każdą możliwość, by przypominać białoruskim władzom o ich międzynarodowych zobowiązaniach w tym względzie.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000657/13
to the Commission
Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)
(23 January 2013)

Subject: Death of a Belarusian journalist in Hrodna

On 19 January 2013 Yuriy Humyanyuk, a Belarusian writer and journalist, fell from the eighth floor of a dormitory in Hrodna and died at the scene. It is currently unclear how the journalist lost his life, but those close to him suggest that he may have been murdered.

Humyanyuk collaborated with the Białystok-based monthly magazine 'Czasopis', Polskie Radio and Radio Racja.

Freedom of expression is constantly being attacked in Belarus, and independent media are forced to relocate their editorial offices abroad. Journalists who dare to tell the truth about the situation in the country, the state of democracy and respect for human rights risk government persecution. Non-compliant journalists are brought up on criminal charges. There are also several other cases in which representatives of the media, such as Aleh Byebyenin, who cooperated with Charter 97, and Veronika Cherkasova, have been killed in unexplained circumstances.

Does the Commission intend to investigate the death of this journalist who worked for Polish radio in Belarus and take appropriate steps to express its opposition to the persecution of journalists in that country?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(12 March 2013)

The Commission is aware of reports about the death of Mr Humyanyuk but has no own information about the circumstances of the case.

Overall the EU remains deeply concerned about the continued lack of respect for human rights, the rule of law and democratic principles in Belarus as well as about the situation of independent media in Belarus. It follows these matters closely and will continue to seize every opportunity to remind the Belarusian authorities of its international obligations in this regard.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000658/13
a la Comisión
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(23 de enero de 2013)

Asunto: Financiación a cargo del presupuesto de la Unión del proyecto de regadío de olivares privados de la Comunidad de Regantes de Beas de Segura (Jaén)

La Comisión de Peticiones del PE tramita la Petición n° 0338/2010 de 25.2.2010, presentada por la Plataforma por la Defensa de los Valles Verdes, de España, en respuesta a la cual la Comisión Europea ha anunciado en el Parlamento que la inminente incoación contra España de un procedimiento de infracción de tres directivas europeas en la concesión por la administración española de los permisos de captación de agua dentro del parque natural Sierra de Cazorla, Segura y las Villas (Jaén. España), zona ZEPA, LIC y parte de la Red Natura 2000.

Constato por la denuncia de la Plataforma que las obras necesarias para la extracción de agua dentro del parque natural, así como la captación misma de agua, son muy costosas, por lo que han necesitado y siguen necesitando una importante inversión de capital, y para las cuales la administración regional andaluza española responsable de riegos e infraestructuras ha concedido en enero de 2012 a dicha comunidad de regantes al menos una subvención por un importe de 1 259 000 euros.

Todo ello conduce a preguntarme y a preguntar:

¿La Comisión ha verificado si dicha subvención se concede con cargo al presupuesto comunitario y, en particular, al Feader o al FEDER?

Respuesta del Sr. Cioloş en nombre de la Comisión
(18 de marzo de 2013)

La autoridad de gestión del programa de desarrollo rural de Andalucía ha confirmado que en enero de 2012 se concedió al proyecto de regadío al que se refiere Su Señoría una subvención, por un importe de 1 259 000 euros, cofinanciada por el Feader. Sin embargo, según las autoridades, el beneficiario del proyecto —la Comunidad de Regantes de Beas de Segura— ha solicitado una modificación del proyecto inicial con el fin de reducir el nivel de captación de agua. El resultado es que, como han señalado las autoridades, las obras del proyecto no se han iniciado todavía ni se ha efectuado tampoco pago alguno. Una vez revisado, el proyecto de regadío tendrá que presentarse de nuevo a la autoridad de gestión del programa y ser aprobado por ella. Dicha autoridad tendrá que garantizar entonces y en todo caso que las operaciones financiadas por el Feader se ajusten al Tratado y a los actos normativos adoptados en su marco ([1]).

([1]) Artículo 5, apartado 7, del Reglamento (CE) n° 1698/2005 del Consejo, de 20 de septiembre de 2005.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000658/13
to the Commission
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(23 January 2013)

Subject: Funding under the Union budget of the irrigation project for the private olive groves of the Beas de Segura (Jaen) irrigation association

Parliament's Committee on Petitions is handling Petition No 0338/2010 of 25 February 2010, filed by the Plataforma por la Defensa de los Valles Verdes (Spain), as a result of which the Commission has announced in Parliament that it is about to launch a procedure against Spain for the infringement of three European directives in relation to the Spanish authorities' concession of permits allowing water extraction within the Sierra de Cazorla, Segura and Las Villas nature reserve (Jaen, Spain), which is a Special Protection Area (SPA), Site of Community Interest (SCI) and part of the Natura 2000 network.

From the petitioners' statement, it is clear that the work required in order to extract water within the park, as well as the extraction itself, is very expensive, that this has called for and continues to call for major capital investment, and that in January 2012 the Andalusian regional irrigation and infrastructure authority made the abovementioned irrigation community at least one grant for the amount of EUR 1 259 000.

This leads me to ponder and pose the following question:

Has the Commission established whether the grant in question was made using Community funds and, more specifically, out of EAFRD or ERDF funding?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(18 March 2013)

The Managing Authority of the Rural Development Program of Andalucía has confirmed that in January 2012 a grant for an amount of EUR 1 259 000, co-funded with the EAFRD, was awarded for the irrigation project referred by the Honourable Member. However, according to the authorities, the project beneficiary, the Comunidad de Regantes de Beas de Segura, has requested a modification of the initial project in order to reduce the level of water extraction. As a result, the authorities have underlined that works related to the irrigation project have not started, and no payment has been made. The revised irrigation project will have to be presented to and approved by the Managing Authority of the program, which shall ensure in any case that the operations financed by the EAFRD are in conformity with the Treaty and any acts adopted under it ([1]).

([1]) Article 5.7, Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 of 20 September 2005.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000659/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: Cheias em Moçambique

Moçambique está a ser devastado por chuvas intensas que estão a afetar sobretudo o sul do país, como a província de Gaza.

Até à data, já morreram 35 pessoas e a informação meteorológica deixa antever que a situação irá piorar, com a subida das águas do rio Limpopo em zonas ribeirinhas de cinco distritos da província de Gaza.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Está ao corrente da situação calamitosa por que Moçambique está a passar?

2. Em caso afirmativo, tem a intenção de prestar auxílio material e humanitário ao povo moçambicano?

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-001591/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(14 de fevereiro de 2013)

Assunto: Cheias Moçambique — apelo da Cruz Vermelha

Notícias recentes dão conta que a Cruz Vermelha Internacional necessitaria de cerca de 500 mil euros para apoiar as vítimas das enchentes em Moçambique que já vitimaram mais de 90 pessoas e obrigaram à deslocação de 150 mil.

Segundo aquela organização em Moçambique, a província de Gaza seria a que tem maior necessidade de ajuda, por ter sido a mais atingida.

Após fenómenos como o das cheias registadas em Moçambique, é expectável a eclosão de doenças contagiosas que agravarão a já difícil situação das populações.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

— Tem conhecimento deste facto?

— Dispõe de informações quanto à situação das populações afetadas?

— Por que formas tem procurado ajudar as populações?

— Apoia ou estaria em condições de apoiar a ação da Cruz Vermelha em Moçambique e de outras organizações civis e religiosas empenhadas em minorar o sofrimento das vítimas?

Resposta conjunta dada por Kristalina Georgieva em nome da Comissão
(15 de março de 2013)

A Comissão tem pleno conhecimento das recentes inundações em Moçambique e tem acompanhado de perto esta situação de emergência humanitária. O número de mortos ascende a 91 e as províncias mais afetadas são Gaza (com cerca de 150 000 pessoas deslocadas — Pessoas Deslocadas Internamente (PDI)) e Zambézia (20 000 PDI). Até agora, a perdas agrícolas são estimadas em 110 000 hectares. Existem agora preocupações relacionadas com a saúde e a higiene nos distritos atingidos pelas inundações em que os níveis da água estão a recuar; as operações de limpeza e de recuperação de serviços básicos de saúde são uma prioridade.

As necessidades de financiamento para ajuda humanitária para os seis próximos meses, apenas para a província de Gaza, estimam-se em 25 milhões de euros. A Comissão enviou uma missão técnica para Moçambique no início de fevereiro de 2013, a fim de avaliar as necessidades humanitárias que surgiram devido às inundações. Com base na presente avaliação, a Comissão lançou uma decisão de emergência no valor de 3 milhões de euros, que deverá ser adotada em breve, para financiar as operações humanitárias mais urgentes. Estes fundos serão canalizados através de organizações humanitárias já no terreno e com capacidade para executar operações rapidamente. Os possíveis setores de intervenção serão no domínio dos abrigos, da água e do saneamento, da logística, da ajuda alimentar e da proteção.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000659/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 January 2013)

Subject: Floods in Mozambique

Mozambique is being devastated by torrential rains, which are mainly affecting areas in the south of the country, such as Gaza province.

To date, 35 people have already dies and the weather forecast indicates that the situation will worsen as the water level surges in the Limpopo River, flooding adjacent areas in five districts of Gaza province.

1. Is the Commission aware of the disastrous situation unfolding in Mozambique?

2. If so, does it intend to offer material and humanitarian aid to the people of Mozambique?

Question for written answer E-001591/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(14 February 2013)

Subject: Floods in Mozambique

According to recent news reports, the International Committee of the Red Cross needs over EUR 500 000 to assist flood victims in Mozambique, where 90 people have already died and a further 150 000 have been displaced.

According to the Red Cross in Mozambique, the area most in need is Gaza province, which has been the hardest hit.

Events like these floods in Mozambique are often followed by outbreaks of contagious diseases, which further complicate the population's already difficult situation.

Can the Commission answer the following:

— Is the Commission aware of these events?

— Does it have any information about the situation of the affected population?

— In what ways has it tried to help them?

— Is the Commission supporting, or is it willing to support, the work of the Red Cross in Mozambique, and that of other civil and religious organisations working to alleviate the suffering of those affected?

Joint answer given by Ms Georgieva on behalf of the Commission
(15 March 2013)

The Commission is fully aware of the recent floods in Mozambique and is closely following this humanitarian emergency. The number of deaths now stands at 91 and the most affected provinces are Gaza (with about 150 000 displaced persons — Internally Displaced Persons (IDP)) and Zambezia (20 000 IDP). So far, the agricultural losses are estimated at 110 000 hectares. Health and sanitation concerns are emerging in flood-affected districts where water levels are receding; cleaning up operations and restoration of basic health services are a priority.

Funding requirements for humanitarian aid recovery needs for the next six months have been estimated at EUR 25 million only for the Gaza Province. The Commission sent a technical mission to Mozambique at the beginning of February 2013 to assess the humanitarian needs that have arisen as a consequence of the floods. Based on this assessment, the Commission has launched a EUR 3 million emergency decision, expected to be adopted very soon, to fund humanitarian operations addressing urgent needs. These funds will be channelled through humanitarian organisations already on the ground and capable of implementing operations quickly. Possible sectors of intervention will be shelter, water and sanitation, logistics, food assistance and protection.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000660/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 de janeiro de 2013)

Assunto: Tratado do Eliseu — 50 anos

Celebra-se no presente ano o 50.° aniversário do Tratado do Eliseu que assinala a amizade franco-alemã, a sua reconciliação. A parceria estreita entre os dois Estados, também decorrente deste Tratado, tem estado no âmago da construção europeia.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Associou-se de alguma forma a estas celebrações?

2. Promoveu a divulgação da sua história, objetivos e resultados junto das gerações mais jovens?

Resposta dada por Viviane Reding em nome da Comissão
(19 de março de 2013)

A Comissão participou ativamente e de várias formas no 50.° aniversário das comemorações do Tratado do Eliseu.

O Comissário Europeu responsável pela Política de Energia, bem como funcionários da representação na Alemanha participaram nas várias celebrações oficiais em Berlim. A representação em Berlim e as delegações regionais em Munique e Bona organizaram eventos, tal como sucedeu em muitos dos 55 Centros de Informação *Europe Direct*.

Em França, a Comissão participou nestes eventos através da sua representação em Paris e da delegação regional em Marselha, incluindo a publicação de artigos académicos e de publicidade nos meios de comunicação social (*Courrier International*, *Telerama* e no jornal gratuito *20 Minutes*, assim como breves anúncios na NRJ). Os artigos publicados no jornal francês *20 Minutes* (dois sobre a história e as instituições, um sobre oportunidades económicas — incluindo a mobilidade para os jovens — e um outro ainda sobre educação e cultura) ([1]) eram dirigidos aos jovens. Quanto à rádio, foi escolhida a NRJ, uma estação com um público jovem, e os anúncios, centrados na mobilidade e na cultura, foram efetuados por locutores jovens e populares.

A representação da Comissão em Berlim e as delegações regionais em Munique e em Bona levaram a cabo atividades para dar a conhecer à juventude a história da integração europeia, especialmente a relação franco-alemã. Um DVD intitulado «Os Pais fundadores da Europa — como o dia 9 de maio de 1950 mudou a Europa», que realça a «reconciliação» franco-alemã, foi produzido em 2010 e tem sido, desde então, distribuído aos difusores de informações na Alemanha. Em janeiro de 2013, a representação em Berlim organizou um encontro de jovens da Fundação Franco-Alemã. Serão organizados outros seminários para a juventude pela delegação regional de Bona no primeiro semestre do corrente ano.

([1]) http://pdf.20mn.fr/2013/quotidien/20130121_FRA.pdf, pp. 6 e 7 (exemplo sobre a história e as instituições).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000660/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 January 2013)

Subject: 50 years of the Élysée Treaty

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Élysée Treaty, the symbol of Franco-German friendship and reconciliation. The close partnership between the two countries, not least under the Élysée Treaty, has been at the heart of European integration.

1. Has the Commission been involved in any way in the anniversary celebrations?

2. Has it sought to make younger generations more aware of the history, aims, and results of the Treaty?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(19 March 2013)

The Commission has been actively involved in the 50th anniversary celebrations of the Elysée Treaty in various ways.

The Commissioner responsible for Energy and officials from the Representation in Germany took part in the official celebrations in Berlin. The Representation in Berlin and the regional offices in Munich and Bonn have organised events, as have many of the 55 Europe Direct Information Centres.

In France, the Commission was involved through its Representation in Paris and the regional office in Marseille, including the publication of scholarly articles and media publicity (*Courrier international*, *Telerama* and the free newspaper *20 Minutes*, as well as short radio advertisements on NRJ). The articles that appeared in the French paper *20 Minutes* (two on history and institutions, one on economic opportunities — including mobility for the young — and one on education and culture) ([1]) targeted young people. For the radio, NRJ, a station with a young audience was chosen and the advertisements, focusing on mobility and culture, were made by young and popular presenters.

The Commission's Representation in Berlin and the regional offices in Munich and Bonn have run activities to raise awareness among young people of the history of European integration, especially the German-French relationship. A DVD called *The founding fathers of Europe — how 9 May 1950 changed Europe*, emphasising Franco-German 'reconciliation', was produced in 2010 and has since been distributed to multipliers in Germany. In January 2013, the Representation in Berlin hosted a youth meeting from the German-French Foundation. Other workshops will be organised for young people by the Bonn regional office in the first half of this year.

([1]) http://pdf.20mn.fr/2013/quotidien/20130121_FRA.pdf, pp. 6 and 7 (example on history and institutions).

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