IV

(Informacje)

INFORMACJE INSTYTUCJI, ORGANÓW I JEDNOSTEK ORGANIZACYJNYCH UNII EUROPEJSKIEJ

PARLAMENT EUROPEJSKI

PYTANIA PISEMNE Z ODPOWIEDZIĄ

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

(2013/C 137 E/01)

Treść **Strona**

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-003605/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(4 Απριλίου 2012)

Θέμα: Δηλώσεις Ρέγκλινγκ για το κόστος υποστήριξης της Ελλάδας

Σε συνέντευξη που παραχώρησε στο περιοδικό Focus, ο Γερμανός Πρόεδρος του EFSF, κ. Ρέγκλινγκ, προσπαθώντας προφανώς να αποφορτίσει το γενικότερο κλίμα που έχει καλλιεργηθεί στη γερμανική κοινωνία κατά της Ελλάδας, δήλωσε ότι η διάσωση της Ελλάδας «δεν έχει κοστίσει μέχρι στιγμής ούτε ένα ευρώ από τα χρήματα του γερμανού φορολογούμενου», αλλά, αντίθετα, ότι η Γερμανία έχει ωφεληθεί από την κρίση, αναφέροντας ενδεικτικά ότι πληρώνει, εξαιτίας της κρίσης, «15 δισ. λιγότερα σε τόκους».

Τα λεγόμενα του κ. Ρέγκλινγκ επιβεβαιώνουν τις έρευνες πολλών οικονομολόγων και ερευνητικών ινστιτούτων, που υποστηρίζουν ότι οι γερμανοί και ευρωπαίοι φορολογούμενοι δεν έχουν επιβαρυνθεί καθόλου από τα πακέτα οικονομικής στήριξης της Ελλάδας, αλλά αντίθετα, έχουν επωφεληθεί, τόσο λόγω των επιτοκίων που χρεώνουν στην Ελλάδα, μέσω των πακέτων στήριξης, όσο και εξαιτίας της πτώσης του κόστους δανεισμού τους και της θετικής επίπτωσης που έχει η πτώση του ευρώ στις εξαγωγές τους. Αυτές οι δηλώσεις-επισημάνσεις έρχονται σε μια περίοδο, όπου επικίνδυνες εθνικιστικές και μικροπολιτικές λογικές μετατρέπονται σε κυρίαρχη κυβερνητική πολιτική σε χώρες όπως η Γερμανία, η Ολλανδία και η Φινλανδία, δημιουργώντας έτσι ένα εκρηκτικό κλίμα κατά της Ελλάδας και των ελλήνων εργαζομένων.

Με δεδομένο ότι επισημάνσεις σαν και αυτές του κ. Ρέγκλινγκ, φωτίζουν ακόμα περισσότερο την αλήθεια και αποδομούν τα επικίνδυνα εθνικιστικά και λαϊκιστικά ιδεολογήματα, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Συμμερίζεται τις απόψεις που εξέφρασε ο κ.Ρέγκλινγκ, και άλλοι οικονομολόγοι και ερευνητές, ότι οι γερμανοί φορολογούμενοι δεν έχουν χάσει, μέχρι σήμερα, από τα πακέτα οικονομικής στήριξης προς την Ελλάδα, αλλά αντίθετα απολαμβάνουν και οφέλη;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(7 Ιουνίου 2012)

Τα κράτη μέλη της ζώνης του ευρώ έχουν καταβάλει στην Ελλάδα, στο πλαίσιο του πρώτου προγράμματος προσαρμογής, 52,9 δισεκατ. ευρώ. Τα συγκεκριμένα ποσά που έχει καταβάλει κάθε κράτος μέλος εμφαίνονται στον πίνακα 2 της πλέον πρόσφατης έκθεσης συμμόρφωσης της Επιτροπής, που διατίθεται στη διεύθυνση: http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2012/pdf/ocp94_en.pdf

Στο δεύτερο πρόγραμμα προσαρμογής, τα κράτη μέλη της ζώνης του ευρώ συνεισφέρουν 144,7 δισεκατ. ευρώ, μέσω της Ευρωπαϊκής Διευκόλυνσης Χρηματοπιστωτικής Σταθερότητας (ΕΔΧΣ/EFSF). Οι συνεισφορές κάθε κράτους μέλους ως εγγυήσεις για την ΕΔΧΣ παρατίθενται στον πίνακα 3 της ανωτέρω έκθεσης.

Τα δάνεια του πρώτου προγράμματος προσαρμογής χορηγήθηκαν με σχετικά χαμηλά επιτόκια, μεταξύ 2,9 και 4 %: το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου παρακαλείται να ανατρέξει στον πίνακα 18 της ίδιας έκθεσης. Τα δάνεια ΕΔΧΣ που χορηγήθηκαν στην Ελλάδα και σε άλλα κράτη μέλη παρέχονται σχεδόν σε τιμή κόστους. Ως εκ τούτου, η Επιτροπή δεν θεωρεί ότι τα άλλα κράτη μέλη της ζώνης του ευρώ αποκομίζουν ουσιαστικά χρηματοοικονομικά οφέλη από τη χορήγηση δανείων στην Ελλάδα, όπως υπονοεί το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου στο προοίμιο της ερώτησής του. Οι τόκοι των δανείων προορίζονται να καλύψουν το κόστος χρηματοδότησης που βαρύνει τα συμμετέχοντα κράτη, συμπεριλαμβανομένης της αποζημίωσης για όσα έχουν υψηλότερο κόστος χρηματοδότησης. Στην πραγματικότητα, μετά την απόφαση της ευρωομάδας της 21ης Φεβρουαρίου 2012 για την αναδρομική μείωση των επιτοκίων που εφαρμόζονται στο πλαίσιο της δανειακής διευκόλυνσης της Ελλάδας, είναι πιθανό ότι ορισμένα κράτη μέλη ουσιαστικά χρηματοδοτούν την Ελλάδα με κόστος χαμηλότερο από το δικό τους κόστος χρηματοδότησης, δεδομένου ότι το Συμβούλιο αποφάσισε ότι δεν θα υπάρξουν πρόσθετες αποζημιώσεις για το υψηλότερο κόστος χρηματοδότησης.

Σε κάθε περίπτωση, τα δάνεια που χορηγήθηκαν στην Ελλάδα έχουν χορηγηθεί από τα κράτη μέλη της ζώνης του ευρώ με σκοπό να συμβάλουν στη χρηματοπιστωτική σταθερότητα της ζώνη του ευρώ, και στο πνεύμα της αλληλεγγύης της ΕΕ, και όχι ως μέσο για την αποκόμιση άμεσου οικονομικού οφέλους.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003605/12
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(4 April 2012)

Subject: Statements by Klaus Regling on the cost of supporting Greece

In an interview with the magazine Focus, in an evident attempt to calm the general feeling that has developed in German society towards Greece, the German Chief Executive Officer of the EFSF Klaus Regling stated that bailing out Greece has so far not cost a single euro of the German taxpayers' money and that on the contrary, Germany has benefited from the crisis. He specifically mentioned that on account of the crisis, Germany pays 15 billion less in interest.

What Klaus Regling says confirms the findings of many economists and research institutes, who assert that German and European taxpayers have not been burdened in any way by the economic support packages provided to Greece; on the contrary, they have benefited both from the interest they charge Greece on account of the support packages, the decrease in the cost of borrowing, and the positive effect on exports from a lower euro exchange rate. These statements/remarks come at a time when dangerous nationalistic and petty political reasoning are being transformed into mainstream government policy in countries such as Germany, Holland and Finland, thus generating volatile feelings towards Greece and Greek workers.

Given that remarks such as those of Klaus Regling shed even more light on the truth of the matter and discredit the dangerous nationalistic and populist ideological constructs, will the Commission say:

— Does it share the views expressed by Klaus Regling, not to mention other economists and researchers that German taxpayers have not lost anything so far from the economic aid packages to Greece, but rather they have even benefited from them?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(7 June 2012)

The euro area Member States (EAMS) have disbursed to Greece, in the context of the first adjustment programme, EUR 52.9 billion. The specific amounts paid by each Member State are shown in Table 2 of the latest Commission compliance report, which is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2012/pdf/ocp94_en.pdf

In the second adjustment programme, the EAMS contribute EUR 144.7 billion, via the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF). The contributions of each Member State as guarantees to the EFSF can be found in Table 3 of the above report.

The loans of the first adjustment programme were granted at moderate interest rates, between 2.9 and 4%: the Honourable Member is referred to Table 18 of the same report. The EFSF loans to Greece and other Member States are virtually at cost. Therefore the Commission does not consider that the other EAMS get any substantial financial benefit from their loans to Greece as the Honourable Member hints in the preamble of his question. The interest of the loans is intended to ensure coverage of funding costs of the participant countries, including compensation for those who face higher funding costs. Actually, after the Eurogroup's decision of 21 February 2012 on the retroactive reduction of interest rates charged under the Greek loan facility, it may even be possible that some Member States do effectively finance Greece below their own funding cost since the Council decided that there will be no additional compensation for higher funding costs.

In any case, the loans to Greece have been granted by the EAMS with the aim of contributing to the financial stability of the euro area, and in a spirit of EU solidarity, and not as a means of obtaining any direct financial benefit.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-003606/12
aan de Raad
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(4 april 2012)

Betreft: Duitsland wil meer grenscontroles

De Duitse minister van Binnenlandse Zaken Hans-Peter Friedrich wil meer mogelijkheden voor grenscontroles tussen EU-landen; hij wil aanzienlijke aanpassingen van het Schengenverdrag voor vrij verkeer. Als landen als Griekenland hun controle aan de grenzen verzaken, moeten andere landen volgens hem tijdelijk weer kunnen controleren. De PVV is het hier volledig mee eens.

1. Is de Raad bekend met het bericht „Duitse minister wil meer grenscontrole ([1])"?

2. Wat vindt de Raad van dit bericht?

3. Voor wanneer staat dit onderwerp, (tijdelijke) herinvoering van grenscontrole aan de binnengrenzen, op de agenda van de Raad?

Antwoord
(6 juni 2012)

Het is niet aan de Raad commentaar te geven op uitlatingen in de pers.

De Raad attendeert het geachte Parlementslid op Verordening (EG) nr. 562/2006 van het Europees Parlement en de Raad tot vaststelling van een communautaire code betreffende de overschrijding van de grenzen door personen (Schengengrenscode) ([2]), waarin onder meer bepalingen zijn opgenomen betreffende de tijdelijke herinvoering van het grenstoezicht aan de binnengrenzen in bepaalde specifieke omstandigheden.

De Raad verwijst ook naar punt 22 van de conclusies van de Europese Raad van 23 en 24 juni 2011, namelijk dat er een mechanisme moet worden ingevoerd ([3]) om *„te kunnen reageren op buitengewone omstandigheden die een bedreiging vormen voor de Schengensamenwerking in haar algemeenheid, zonder dat het beginsel van vrij personenverkeer in gevaar wordt gebracht"* [en dat] *„een reeks op graduele, gedifferentieerde en gecoördineerde wijze toe te passen maatregelen [moet] omvatten, waarmee een lidstaat die geconfronteerd wordt met zware druk aan de buitengrenzen kan worden bijgestaan"* [en] *„in allerlaatste instantie een beschermingsclausule"* kan omvatten *„op grond waarvan, in een werkelijk kritieke situatie, als een lidstaat niet langer in staat is zijn verplichtingen op grond van de Schengenvoorschriften na te komen, bij wijze van uitzondering opnieuw controles aan de binnengrenzen kunnen worden ingevoerd"*.

Gevolg gevend aan dit verzoek bespreken de Raad en het Parlement op dit moment twee wetgevingsvoorstellen die de Commissie op 16 september 2011 heeft ingediend, te weten: een gewijzigd voorstel voor een verordening van het Europees Parlement en de Raad betreffende de instelling van een evaluatie- en toezichtmechanisme voor de controle van de toepassing van het Schengenacquis ([4]), en een voorstel voor een verordening van het Europees Parlement en de Raad tot wijziging van Verordening (EG) nr. 562/2006 teneinde te voorzien in gemeenschappelijke regels inzake de tijdelijke herinvoering van het grenstoezicht aan de binnengrenzen in uitzonderlijke omstandigheden ([5]).

([1]) http://www.nu.nl/buitenland/2778950/duitse-minister-wil-meer-grenscontrole.html
([2]) PB L 105 van 13.4.2006, blz. 1-32.
([3]) Doc. EUCO 23/1/11 REV 1, punt 22.
([4]) Doc. 14358/11.
([5]) Doc. 14359/11.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003606/12
to the Council
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(4 April 2012)

Subject: Germany wants more border controls

The German Minister of the Interior, Hans-Peter Friedrich, wants more options for border controls between EU countries; he wants significant adjustments to the Schengen Agreement for free movement. If countries such as Greece neglect their border control then, according to him, other countries must be able to reinstate controls temporarily. The PVV agrees completely with this concept.

1. Is the Council familiar with the report, 'German minister wants more border control' ([1])?

2. What does the Council think of this report?

3. When will this subject, the (temporary) reintroduction of border control at internal borders, appear on the Council's agenda?

Reply
(6 June 2012)

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

The Council would draw the Honourable Member's attention to Regulation No (EC) 562/2006 ([2]) of the European Parliament and Council establishing a Community Code on the rules governing the movement of persons across borders (Schengen Borders Code) which includes provisions for the temporary reintroduction of border controls at the internal borders in certain specified circumstances.

The Council also recalls point 22 of the European Council's conclusions of 23- 24 June 2011 in which it ([3]) called for the introduction of a mechanism '*to respond to exceptional circumstances putting the overall functioning of Schengen cooperation at risk, without jeopardising the principle of free movement of persons* [which] *should comprise a series of measures to be applied in a gradual, differentiated and coordinated manner in order to assist a Member State facing heavy pressure at the external borders*' and which '*as a very last resort*' could include '*a safeguard clause* (…) *to allow the exceptional reintroduction of internal border controls in a truly critical situation where a Member State is no longer able to comply with its obligations under the Schengen rules*'.

In response to this request, the Council and the Parliament are currently examining two legislative proposals presented by the Commission on 16 September 2011, i.e. an amended proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of an evaluation and monitoring mechanism to verify the application of the Schengen acquis ([4]) and a proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 562/2006 in order to provide for common rules on the temporary reintroduction of border control at internal borders in exceptional circumstances ([5]).

([1]) http://www.nu.nl/buitenland/2778950/duitse-minister-wil-meer-grenscontrole.html
([2]) OJ L 105, 13.4.2006, p. 1-32.
([3]) EUCO 23/1/11 REV 1, paragraph 22.
([4]) 14358/11.
([5]) 14359/11.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-003607/12
to the Commission
Nessa Childers (S&D)
(4 April 2012)

Subject: Pádraig Flynn's pension entitlements

Will the Commission enforce its Code of Conduct in full and cut off the EU pension of former Irish Commissioner Pádraig Flynn?

Pádraig Flynn retired from Irish politics in 1993 and was Ireland's European Commissioner until 1999. He would have a substantial pension arising from this time, paid for by European citizens.

The Mahon Tribunal report, which was released this week after legal proceedings lasting many years, has found that former Commissioner Pádraig Flynn 'wrongly and corruptly' sought a substantial donation from property developers and proceeded to use that money for his personal benefit.

The former Commissioner has disgraced Ireland's good name in Europe. He should no longer receive his sizeable pension from the Commission.

Under the Commission's own Code of Conduct, a former Commissioner has a 'duty to behave with integrity' at all times and, if not, can be 'deprived of his right to a pension'. These rules should also be enforced retroactively.

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(3 May 2012)

The Commission is aware of the media reports concerning former Member of the Commission Padraig Flynn who left the Commission in 1999 and is informed of the findings of the Mahon Tribunal. Its understanding of the Irish judiciary proceedings is that the findings of the Mahon Tribunal have been referred to the Criminal Assets Bureau and do not represent the verdict of a court.

The Commission will await the results of the proceedings of the Criminal Assets Bureau before taking any decisions as to whether action under Article 245 of the TFEU should be taken in due course.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003608/12
to the Commission
Nessa Childers (S&D)
(4 April 2012)

Subject: Irish sugar industry and sugar quotas

In this time of recession, there are many economic benefits to a revitalisation of the Irish sugar industry. There are many people who believe that Ireland suffered from the ending of Irish sugar manufacturing. The recent report of the European Court of Auditors, which highlighted the inaccurate data used to justify the closure, only confirms such beliefs.

The EU already cannot meet internal demand for sugar from its own resources, and as a result of the closure Ireland is totally reliant on imported sugar. Furthermore, the brand name 'Siucra' has been bought by Nordzucker and is used on packaging to fool Irish consumers that they are buying an Irish product.

The closure of the Carlow sugar plant was a terrible blow not only to the workers but to the entire region. Farmers' incomes, apprenticeships, summer employment for students and winter employment for low-income farmers were all ended.

There is now a private group of business people who are very interested in rebuilding a sugar manufacturing industry in Ireland. In order to do so, they will need full support from the EU with changes in the quota rules.

— Will the Commission review the sugar quotas to allow the domestic sugar sector in Ireland to be relaunched?

— What other measures will the Commission take to aid the Irish sugar sector?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(29 May 2012)

In accordance with decisions taken in November 2005, sugar quotas will automatically end by 30 September 2015.

If sugar quotas indeed end in 2015, any entrepreneur that wishes to start processing sugar beet can do so. It is even possible to start producing out-of-quota sugar today, provided that (1) sugar is only used for bio ethanol or for the supply of the chemical industry as industrial sugar and (2) the beet is produced by farmers that have not received additional aid for diversification.

The current version of the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 for Ireland does not include measures that could provide for support to the Irish sugar Industry.

Similarly, the current 2007-2013 European Regional Development programmes operating in (1) the Southern and Eastern and (2) the Border, Midland and Western regions of Ireland provide no possibility for funding of such support measures.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003609/12
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(4 aprile 2012)

Oggetto: Possibile concessione di visti d'ingresso nell'Unione europea ai cittadini turchi

Alcuni esponenti dei maggiori partiti di opposizione turchi, negli ultimi giorni, hanno rilasciato dichiarazioni circa un ulteriore rallentamento del processo di democratizzazione della Turchia, in seguito a interventi estremamente autoritari del governo in carica. Giungono notizie di molti giornalisti in carcere con accuse di terrorismo (ma in realtà detenuti solo per la loro opposizione al governo), come pure di media minacciati o sotto il controllo del governo.

Sono inoltre sempre presenti discriminazioni contro i curdi, cui sarebbe impedito di esercitare i propri diritti e imposto lo studio della propria lingua madre nelle scuole solo come «lingua straniera».

Il ministro per gli Affari europei Egemen Bagis è di tutt'altra opinione e, sottolineando che l'ingresso della Turchia in Europa la renderebbe effettivamente un attore globale, chiede che si liberalizzino i visti d'ingresso nell'UE per i cittadini turchi.

— Come reputa la Commissione l'evolversi del processo di democratizzazione in Turchia?

— La Commissione sta valutando la concessione di una liberalizzazione dei visti d'ingresso nell'UE per i cittadini turchi, come chiesto dal ministro Bagis?

Risposta data da Štefan Füle a nome della Commissione
(4 giugno 2012)

Per un quadro completo dello stato di avanzamento del processo di democratizzazione della Turchia, la Commissione rimanda l'onorevole parlamentare all'ultima relazione sui progressi compiuti nel paese, adottata il 12 ottobre 2011, in cui sono evidenziati alcuni sviluppi positivi, ma anche diverse fonti di preoccupazione.

L'abolizione dell'obbligo del visto per i cittadini turchi per soggiorni di breve durata nello spazio Schengen (fino a tre mesi al massimo nell'arco di un periodo di sei mesi), richiederebbe una modifica, attraverso la procedura legislativa ordinaria, del regolamento (CE) n. 539/2001 del Consiglio. Tale modifica non è attualmente prevista.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003609/12
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(4 April 2012)

Subject: Possible granting of entry visas to Turkish nationals in the European Union

A number of representatives of the main Turkish opposition parties have issued statements in recent days regarding a further slowdown in the process of democratisation in Turkey, following highly authoritarian actions taken by the government in power. There are reports of many journalists being imprisoned on terrorism charges (but in reality being detained only because of their opposition to the government), as well as the media being threatened or under the control of the government.

There is also constant discrimination against the Kurds, who are prevented from exercising their rights and are forced to study their mother tongue in schools only as a 'foreign language'.

The Minister for EU Affairs Egemen Bagis is of another opinion altogether. Underlining that the entry of Turkey into Europe would effectively make it a global player, he has asked for the deregulation of EU entry visas for Turkish citizens.

— How does the Commission view the progress of the democratisation process in Turkey?

— Is the Commission considering deregulating EU entry visas for Turkish citizens, as requested by Minister Bagis?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(4 June 2012)

For a comprehensive overview of the state of play of democracy in Turkey, the Commission refers the Honourable Member to its latest progress report adopted on 12 October 2011, outlining both a number of positive developments in the country as well as matters of concern.

The abolition of the visa requirement for Turkish citizens for short stays (for up to three months within a six-month period) in the Schengen area would require the amendment, through the normal legislative procedure, of Council Regulation (EC) No 539/2001. Such an amendment is not under consideration at this time.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-003610/12
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (NI)
(4. April 2012)

Betrifft: Europäisches Jahr des aktiven Alterns und der Solidarität zwischen den Generationen 2012

Zum Start des Europäischen Jahres des aktiven Alterns und der Solidarität zwischen den Generationen veröffentlichte die Kommission am 13. Januar 2012 eine neue Eurobarometer-Umfrage ([1]), aus der hervorgeht, dass sich 71 % der Europäer bewusst sind, dass die Bevölkerung Europas immer älter wird, dass der Anteil, dem dies Sorge bereitet, aber nur bei 42 % liegt. Dies steht in starkem Kontrast zur Haltung politischer Entscheidungsträger, für die das demografische Altern eine große Herausforderung darstellt. Die meisten Bürger (mehr als 60 %) glauben, dass es uns möglich sein sollte, auch jenseits des Rentenalters noch zu arbeiten, und ein Drittel vertritt die Auffassung, dass sie auch selbst gerne länger arbeiten würden.

1. Was muss sich nach Ansicht der Kommission in der Arbeitswelt ändern, damit ältere Mitarbeiter länger arbeiten können?

2. Es ist immer häufiger der Fall, dass Rentner bezahlte Beschäftigungsverhältnisse eingehen. Welche gesellschaftlichen Folgen hat dies nach Ansicht der Kommission?

3. Welche Folgen hat der demografische Wandel nach Ansicht der Kommission für Europa?

4. Sollte die Kommission gewährleisten, dass hinsichtlich des Rentenalters Flexibilität herrscht, um dem derzeitigen statistischen Durchschnittswert gerecht zu werden?

Antwort von Herrn Andor im Namen der Kommission
(25. Mai 2012)

Die Europäische Union sieht sich mit einer signifikanten Bevölkerungsalterung infolge geringer Fertilität und eines steten Anstiegs der Lebenserwartung konfrontiert. Diese Entwicklung wird sich erheblich auf das Potenzialwachstum auswirken und einen starken Druck auf die öffentlichen Ausgaben erzeugen, vor allem die Renten- und Gesundheitsausgaben. Gleichzeitig wird die Zahl der Menschen im erwerbsfähigen Alter in den kommenden Jahren zurückgehen.

Die Gestaltung der Rentensysteme, u. a. die Festlegung des Rentenalters, fällt ebenso wie die Beschäftigungspolitik in die Zuständigkeit der Mitgliedstaaten. Allerdings ist die Kommission bestrebt, die Reformen der Mitgliedstaaten zu unterstützen, mit denen gewährleistet werden soll, dass die derzeitigen und künftigen Renten angemessen, tragfähig und sicher sind. Sie hat daher am 16. Februar 2012 das Weißbuch „Eine Agenda für angemessene, sichere und nachhaltige Pensionen und Renten“ ([2]) angenommen, in dem sie ihre Standpunkte und Maßnahmen erläutert. Eines der wichtigsten politischen Anliegen ist es, mehr Menschen in die Lage zu versetzen, mehr und länger zu arbeiten. Hierzu bedarf es unterschiedlicher Maßnahmen, um ältere Arbeitskräfte im Arbeitsmarkt zu halten, wie Anpassung der Arbeitsplätze und Arbeitspraktiken, sowie Maßnahmen zur Förderung einer flexiblen Pensions- bzw. Rentenpraxis, wie die Entwicklung von Arbeitplätzen für das Karriereende.

([1]) http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/12/16&format=HTML&aged=0&language=DE&guiLanguage=en.
([2]) KOM(2012)55 endg.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003610/12
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (NI)
(4 April 2012)

Subject: 2012 — European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations

On 13 January 2012, to mark the start of the European Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations, the Commission published a new Eurobarometer survey ([1]) showing that 71 % of Europeans are aware that Europe's population is getting older, but only 42 % are concerned about it. This is in strong contrast to the perceptions of policymakers, who regard demographic ageing as a major challenge. Most citizens (over 60 %) believe that we should be allowed to continue working after retirement age, with one-third saying they would like to work longer themselves.

1. What, in the Commission's view, needs to change in the workplace in order to retain older workers?

2. It has become more common for pensioners to take on paid employment. What, in the Commission's view, are the consequences of this for society?

3. In the Commission's view, what is the impact of demographic change on Europe?

4. Should the Commission ensure that there is flexibility with regard to the retirement age in order to reflect the current average as shown by the statistics?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(25 May 2012)

The European Union is experiencing significant population ageing. This ageing of the population results from low fertility and a steady rise in life expectancy. Population ageing will have a significant impact on potential growth and lead to strong pressures on public spending, notably in terms of pension and health expenditure. At the same time, the working-age population will start to decrease in the coming years.

The organisation of pension systems including the setting of the retirement age is the responsibility of Member States, as is employment policy. However, the Commission does seek to support Member State reforms to ensure pensions are adequate, sustainable and safe both now and in the future. To this end, the Commission adopted on 16 February ([2]) the White Paper 'An agenda for adequate, safe and sustainable pensions'. The Commission's views and actions are set out in this document. One of the main policy themes is enabling more people to work more and longer. This includes a number of actions to help retain older workers, such as adapting workplaces and labour market practices as well as measures to encourage flexible retirement practices such as the development of end-of-career labour markets.

([1]) http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/12/16&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en.
([2]) COM(2012) 55 final.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-003611/12
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (NI)
(4. April 2012)

Betrifft: Allianzen im Kampf gegen Alzheimer in Zypern

Eines der erfolgreicheren Beispiele eines Bündnisses zwischen einem nationalen Gesundheitsministerium und einer Nichtregierungsorganisation stammt aus Zypern, wo die gesamtzyprische Alzheimergesellschaft und das Gesundheitsministerium Zyperns ein starkes Bündnis im Kampf gegen die mit Alzheimer verbundenen Probleme gebildet haben.

Durch diese Zusammenarbeit wurde in Zypern der nationale Strategieplan ins Leben gerufen, der sich nicht nur mit der Krankheit selbst befasst, sondern auch versucht, das Bewusstsein für die Krankheit zu schärfen und die Bevölkerung über Präventionsmaßnahmen gegen Alzheimer zu informieren. Das Gesundheitsministerium hat dabei die unschätzbare Hilfe der gesamtyzprischen Alzheimergesellschaft in Anspruch genommen, um bessere Kampagnen zur Vorbeugung, zu Behandlungsmöglichkeiten und zu Frühdiagnosen zu entwickeln und der Bevölkerung zugänglich zu machen.

In Zypern gibt es bereits 14 000 Menschen über 60, die an verschiedenen Formen der Demenz leiden, und von diesen sind 9 500 an Alzheimer erkrankt. Das zeigt, dass die Bevölkerung Europas altert: Da Alzheimer eine altersabhängige, neurodegenerative Krankheit ist, nimmt die Anzahl der Betroffenen ebenfalls zu.

1. Welche Maßnahmen ergreift die Kommission, um die Zusammenarbeit und Allianzen zwischen lokalen Gesundheitsbehörden und NRO zu stärken?

2. In welchem Umfang können die Erfahrungen in Zypern ein produktives und wirksames Beispiel für andere Mitgliedstaaten sein?

3. Stehen der Kommission Daten und Zahlen zu den vorläufigen Ergebnissen der oben erwähnten Zusammenarbeit zur Verfügung?

Antwort von Herrn Dalli im Namen der Kommission
(15. Mai 2012)

Die 2009 angenommene Mitteilung der Kommission an das Europäische Parlament und den Rat über eine europäische Initiative zur Alzheimer-Krankheit und zu anderen Demenzerkrankungen ([1]) bildet die Grundlage für das Tätigwerden der Kommission in Bezug auf diese Gruppen von Krankheiten.

Das größte laufende Projekt in diesem Zusammenhang ist die gemeinsame Maßnahme ALCOVE (ALzheimer COoperative Valuation in Europe — gemeinsame Alzheimerbewertung in Europa ([2])) unter der Leitung der „Haute Autorité de Santé“ (HAS), Frankreich. Assoziiertes Mitgleid ist „Alzheimer Europe“ ([3]), eine Nichtregierungsorganisation, deren Ziel die Schärfung des Bewusstseins für Demenz und der Aufbau einer diesem Zweck dienenden Europäischen Plattform für die Koordinierung und Kooperation von europäischen Alzheimer-Organisationen ist. Die in der Frage genannte gesamtzyprische Alzheimergesellschaft ist Vollmitglied von Alzheimer Europe.

Daten zur Zusammenarbeit von lokalen Gesundheitsbehörden und Nichtregierungsorganisationen oder zu den Ergebnissen einer solchen Zusammenarbeit liegen der Kommission dagegen nicht vor.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/archive/ph_information/dissemination/documents/com2009_380_de.pdf
([2]) http://www.alcove-project.eu/.
([3]) http://www.alzheimer-europe.org/.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003611/12
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (NI)
(4 April 2012)

Subject: Alliances to fight Alzheimer's disease in Cyprus

One of the most successful examples of an alliance between a national health ministry and a non-governmental organisation comes from Cyprus, where the Pancyprian Alzheimer Association and the Cyprus Ministry of Health have built a strong alliance to tackle the problems linked to Alzheimer's disease.

This collaboration has given birth in Cyprus to a National Strategic Plan, which not only addresses this illness but also aims to raise awareness of the issue and to inform the population concerning correct means of preventing Alzheimer's. The Ministry of Health has made use of the invaluable help of the Pancyprian Association in order to develop better prevention campaigns and treatments and earlier diagnosis and make them available to citizens.

In Cyprus there are already 14 000 people aged over 60 who suffer from different types of dementia, and of these 9 500 suffer from Alzheimer's. This is a sign that Europe's population is ageing: as Alzheimer's is an age-related neurodegenerative disease, the number of those affected is consequently increasing.

1. What measures is the Commission taking to boost cooperation and alliances between local health authorities and NGOs?

2. To what extent can the experience of Cyprus be taken as a productive and efficient example for the other Member States?

3. Does the Commission have at its disposal data and figures for the results that the above- mentioned collaboration has already produced?

Answer given by Mr Dalli on behalf of the Commission
(15 May 2012)

The 2009 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on a European initiative on Alzheimer's disease and other dementias ([1]) has established the basis for the Commission to address this group of diseases.

In this context, the main underlying ongoing activity is the Joint Action 'Alzheimer Cooperative Valuation in Europe' (ALCOVE) ([2]), led by the Haute Autorité de Santé (HAS), France. The joint action includes Alzheimer Europe ([3]), a non-governmental organisation aiming to raise awareness about dementia by creating a common European platform for coordination and cooperation between Alzheimer organisations throughout Europe. The Pancyprian Alzheimer Association mentioned in the question is a full member of Alzheimer Europe.

The Commission does not however have at its disposal information on the cooperation of local health authorities and NGOs, nor on the results of the abovementioned collaboration.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/archive/ph_information/dissemination/documents/com2009_380_en.pdf
([2]) http://www.alcove-project.eu/.
([3]) http://www.alzheimer-europe.org/.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003612/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Berlato (PPE)
(4 aprile 2012)

Oggetto: 400 donne afghane in carcere per «reati morali»

Le donne afghane continuano a essere pesantemente discriminate.

Secondo un rapporto presentato da «Human Right Watch», l'organizzazione non governativa internazionale per i diritti civili, circa 400 donne rimangono in carcere in Afghanistan per i cosiddetti «reati morali».

Questa tipologia d'incriminazione comprende l'adulterio e l'abbandono del tetto coniugale; tuttavia, è necessario rilevare che, in molte testimonianze riportate da «Human Right Watch», l'abbandono del tetto coniugale rappresenta l'unica possibilità per evitare mariti violenti, torture fisiche e/o matrimoni forzati.

Preso atto di questa gravissima situazione, che assume i caratteri di una vera e propria violazione dei diritti umani, non ritiene la Commissione opportuno attivarsi tempestivamente in loro soccorso tramite la sua delegazione in Afghanistan?

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

L'RSUE/Capo delegazione in Afghanistan segue attentamente sul campo la situazione dei diritti umani in stretta consultazione con i capi missione dell'UE, anche per quanto attiene alla situazione delle donne e delle ragazze in prigione, una questione che continua a destare forte preoccupazione. A tale riguardo, l'RSUE/Capo delegazione ha preso atto della relazione di Human Rights Watch.

L'UE, sulla scorta dei suoi attuali programmi di assistenza incentrati sulla governance, continuerà a dare priorità all'assistenza concessa all'Afghanistan per rafforzare le istituzioni giudiziarie centralizzate del paese, poiché ciò è indispensabile per tutelare i diritti delle donne vittime di violenza. L'UE continuerà, inoltre, a sollevare la questione direttamente con il governo afghano in ogni sede opportuna e, in particolare, nel contesto dei negoziati sull'accordo di cooperazione sul partenariato e sullo sviluppo.

Da parte sua, il governo afghano si è impegnato fermamente a migliorare la situazione delle donne nell'ambito delle conferenze internazionali di Londra e Kabul del 2010, della conferenza di Bonn di dicembre 2011 e attraverso una dichiarazione rilasciata il 18 gennaio 2012. Questi impegni saranno riesaminati durante la conferenza di Tokyo dell'8 luglio 2012.

Dal 2001 l'UE ha speso più di 31 milioni di euro in progetti di sostegno diretto alle donne o, più in generale, volti a combattere l'emarginazione femminile in campo sociale, culturale ed economico. In tale contesto, l'UE supporta i servizi sociali rivolti ai soggetti più vulnerabili, come l'assistenza psicologica e legale e la mediazione, per le donne in conflitto con le tradizioni del loro paese, comprese quelle accusate di «immoralità secondo la legge». Altri programmi si pongono invece obiettivi a lungo termine, come il rafforzamento degli organismi esistenti per la protezione sociale e la tutela dei diritti delle donne e ragazze afghane vittime o a rischio di violenza domestica. Inoltre, il tema della violenza contro le donne sarà affrontato nel 2012 sia dall'UE che dagli Stati membri nell'ambito dei rispettivi programmi di assistenza. Allo stesso tempo, l'UE è pronta ad impegnarsi insieme ad altri portatori di interesse nel tentativo di rafforzare i diritti delle donne accusate di «immoralità secondo la legge».

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003612/12
to the Commission
Sergio Berlato (PPE)
(4 April 2012)

Subject: 400 Afghan women jailed for 'moral crimes'

The severe discrimination against Afghan women continues.

According to a report by Human Rights Watch, the international NGO for civil rights, around 400 women are in prison in Afghanistan for so-called 'moral crimes'.

This type of indictment includes adultery and abandonment of the marital home. However, it is important to bear in mind that, according to many testimonies in the Human Rights Watch report, abandonment of the marital home is the only way to escape violent husbands, physical torture and/or forced marriages.

Given the extreme seriousness of this situation, which constitutes a true violation of human rights, does the Commission not consider it appropriate to take swift action through its delegation in Afghanistan to assist those affected?

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

The EU Special Representative (EUSR)/Head of Delegation (HoD) Afghanistan monitors the human rights situation on the ground in close consultation with EU HoMs, notably also with respect to the situation of women and girls in prison, which remains a great concern. The EUSR/HoD has, in this context, taken note of the report by Human Rights Watch.

Building on its ongoing assistance programmes with a focus on governance the EU will continue to give priority to assisting with strengthening Afghanistan's centralised justice institutions, as this remains indispensable to uphold the rights of victims of violence against women. The EU will also continue to bring up this issue directly with the Government of Afghanistan whenever appropriate and, notably, in the context of negotiations on the cooperation agreement on Partnership and Development.

The Afghan Government, for its part, has made firm commitments to improve the position of women in the context of the international conferences held in 2010 in London and Kabul, in December 2011 at the Bonn Conference and in a statement issued on 18 January 2012. These undertakings will come under review at the Tokyo Conference on 8 July 2012.

Since 2001, the EU has spent more than EUR 31 million on projects in direct support of women or addressing more broadly their social, cultural and economic marginalisation. In this context, the EU supports social services to the most vulnerable including counselling, legal aid and mediation for women in conflict with traditions including those accused of 'immorality under the law'. Additional programmes address long-term objectives, such as strengthening existing bodies to exercise social protection and protect the rights of Afghan women and girls at risk or victims of domestic violence. Furthermore, violence against women will be addressed in 2012 both by the EU and its Member States in their respective assistance programmes, while the EU is ready to engage with other stakeholders to seek to strengthen women's rights accused of 'immorality under the law'.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003613/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Berlato (PPE)
(4 aprile 2012)

Oggetto: Disoccupazione in Europa: mai stata così elevata dal giugno 1997

Secondo i recenti dati pubblicati e diffusi da Eurostat, il tasso di disoccupazione nell'eurozona (UE-17) è salito al 10,8 % nel mese di febbraio 2012, rispetto al 10 % registrato nel febbraio 2011.

Allo stesso tempo, nell'Europa 27 il tasso di disoccupazione, sempre con riferimento al mese di febbraio 2011, risulta in aumento di circa un punto percentuale. Tra gli Stati membri, la disoccupazione più alta continua a registrarsi in Spagna (23,6 %), seguono la Grecia con il 21 % (dato riferito al mese di dicembre 2011), l'Irlanda con il 14,7 % e il Portogallo con il 15 %. In particolare l'Italia, pur mantenendosi al di sotto della media UE-27, registra pur sempre un livello elevato di disoccupazione, pari al 9,3 %.

Considerando che, sempre secondo i dati riportati da Eurostat, si tratta del livello più alto di disoccupazione registrato nell'eurozona dal giugno 1997 e che, due anni fa, il sottoscritto ha presentato l'interrogazione E-4856/2010 con riferimento alla problematica della crescente disoccupazione in Europa, può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

— non ritiene che gli strumenti elencati nella risposta all'interrogazione di cui sopra siano insufficienti a fronteggiare la grave emergenza disoccupazione?

— Sono allo studio nuove azioni comunitarie volte a sostenere i cittadini europei in questo particolare momento di congiuntura economica avversa?

Risposta di László Andor a nome della Commissione
(8 giugno 2012)

La Commissione condivide le preoccupazioni dell'onorevole deputato in merito alla disoccupazione che continua ad essere elevata e rammenta ([1]) che nessuna misura politica isolata basterà ad affrontare la piaga della disoccupazione. Per produrre risultati occorre uno sforzo combinato a livello europeo e nazionale.

La Commissione ha proposto di recente un «pacchetto occupazione» che ribadisce l'importanza della domanda di manodopera e l'urgente necessità di promuovere la creazione di posti di lavoro. Questa comunicazione ([2])rospetta nuove iniziative e proposte nel contesto della strategia europea per l'occupazione e presenta sia consigli strategici concreti rivolti agli Stati membri sia impegni dell'UE in tema di occupazione.

Gli Stati membri sono invitati ad attuare politiche occupazionali che contribuiscano a creare condizioni favorevoli per la creazione di posti di lavoro. Il pacchetto identifica i settori che hanno le più grandi potenzialità occupazionali — l'economia verde, il settore sanitario, le TIC — e propone tre piani d'azione concreti nel merito.

La Commissione ha presentato inoltre proposte per far sì che i mercati del lavoro divengano più dinamici e inclusivi. In tale contesto la Commissione dà rilievo a ulteriori misure nell'ambito delle riforme del mercato del lavoro volte ad assicurare le transizioni sul mercato del lavoro.

Il «pacchetto occupazione» prende in considerazione anche gli investimenti nelle competenze e propone strumenti per monitorare e gestire in modo proattivo la domanda e l'offerta di competenze. Per migliorare la mobilità del lavoro in Europa la Commissione si impegna a rimuovere i rimanenti ostacoli d'ordine legale e pratico che si frappongono alla libera circolazione dei lavoratori e a migliorare le strutture volte ad abbinare i posti di lavoro e le persone in cerca di lavoro.

Infine, la comunicazione delinea le modalità per rafforzare la governance e il coordinamento degli aspetti occupazionali grazie a un'accresciuta sorveglianza multilaterale. Essa prevede un maggiore coinvolgimento delle parti sociali a livello dell'UE e il rafforzamento del legame tra la politica e gli strumenti finanziari dell'UE.

([1]) Cfr. la risposta all'interrogazione scritta E-4856/2010.
([2]) Comunicazione della Commissione al Parlamento europeo, al Consiglio, al Comitato economico e sociale europeo e al Comitato delle regioni, COM(2012)173 — 18.4.2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003613/12
to the Commission
Sergio Berlato (PPE)
(4 April 2012)

Subject: Unemployment in Europe: the highest figures since June 1997

According to the recent data published and disseminated by Eurostat, the unemployment rate in the euro area (EU-27) rose to 10.8 % in February 2012, as against the 10 % recorded in February 2011.

The unemployment rate in the EU-27 also rose and was up by about one percentage point compared with February 2011. The highest unemployment figures in the Member States continue to be recorded in Spain (23.6 %), followed by Greece at 21 % (December 2011), with Ireland at 14.7 % and Portugal at 15 %. While remaining below the EU-27 average, Italy still recorded high levels of unemployment, at 9.3 %.

Given that, according to Eurostat data, this is the highest level of unemployment in the euro area since June 1997 and given that two years ago the undersigned submitted Written Question E-4856/2010 on the issue of rising unemployment in Europe, the Commission is asked to answer the following:

— Does it not believe that the tools listed in the answer to the above question are insufficient to cope with the severe unemployment emergency?

— Are new EU action plans aimed at supporting European citizens at this time of adverse economic conditions being considered?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(8 June 2012)

The Commission shares the Honourable Member's concern about persistently high unemployment and recalls ([1]) that no policy measure in isolation will be sufficient to tackle unemployment. Combined effort at European and national level is needed to deliver results.

The Commission recently proposed an 'Employment Package' which stresses the importance of labour demand and the urgent need to promote job creation . This communication ([2]) puts forward new initiatives and proposals in the context of the European Employment Strategy and presents both concrete policy advice to Member States and EU commitments on employment issues.

Member States are advised on employment policies that help to create favourable conditions to job creation. The package identifies those sectors with the biggest employment potential — the green economy, the health sector, ICTs — and proposes three concrete action plans in this regard.

The Commission has further laid down proposals for labour markets to become more dynamic and inclusive. In that context, the Commission highlights further steps in labour market reforms aiming at securing labour market transitions.

The 'Employment Package' also addresses investments in skills and proposes new instruments to better anticipate and monitor skills demand and supply. In order to improve labour mobility in Europe, the Commission commits to remove remaining legal and practical obstacles to free movement of workers and to enhance matching jobs with job-seekers.

Finally, the communication sets out ways to reinforce the Employment governance and coordination through enhanced multilateral surveillance. It envisages reinforcing the involvement of social partners at the EU level. and strengthening the link between policy and EU financial instruments.

([1]) See its answer to Written Question E-4856/2010.
([2]) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, COM(2012)173 — 18.4.2012.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003614/12
alla Commissione
Giommaria Uggias (ALDE) e Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE)
(4 aprile 2012)

Oggetto: Accertamento IVA sulle quote rimpatriate tramite lo scudo fiscale

A seguito dell'interrogazione presentata lo scorso 18 ottobre 2011 intitolata «Compatibilità dello scudo fiscale con la normativa europea in materia di IVA», la Commissione riferiva di avere «inviato una richiesta di informazioni alle autorità italiane relativa agli importi IVA recuperati nel corso dell'esercizio dello scudo fiscale».

Considerando che la Commissione, in una sua precedente risposta (E-000087/2011), aveva riconosciuto l'esclusione dell'IVA dall'ambito dei condoni fiscali, conformemente agli orientamenti giurisprudenziali espressi dalla Corte suprema di cassazione italiana e dalla Corte di giustizia europea, nonché in base a quanto affermato dalla circolare n. 3/E del 29 gennaio 2009 dell'amministrazione tributaria italiana (Agenzia delle entrate);

Può la Commissione comunicare se:

1. ha ricevuto, alla data odierna, dati ufficiali sul numero degli accertamenti effettuati in Italia in relazione alle operazioni coperte dallo scudo del 2009 e se può trasmettere tali dati, in caso affermativo;

2. è a conoscenza dell'entità delle somme coperte dallo scudo sottoposte a IVA e se può trasmettere tali dati in caso affermativo;

3. non ritenga necessario chiedere allo Stato italiano un aggiornamento periodico sull'IVA accertata;

4. non ritenga che, alla luce dei dati forniti, la condotta del governo italiano sia compatibile con la pertinente normativa europea sull'IVA o non ritenga opportuno intervenire aprendo una procedura di infrazione intimando allo Stato italiano di procedere a un controllo analitico che individui i soggetti tenuti al versamento dell'IVA?

Risposta data da Algirdas Šemeta a nome della Commissione
(28 maggio 2012)

Visto che sono stati sollevati dubbi relativamente al fatto che la legislazione italiana sullo scudo fiscale comprendesse anche l'IVA, i servizi della Commissione hanno inviato una lettera alle autorità italiane, chiedendo di fornire la prova che la legislazione summenzionata non disponeva in tal senso. Tale prova doveva assumere la forma degli importi IVA recuperati nel corso dell'amnistia.

Nel frattempo l'Italia ha adottato una legislazione [1] che elimina ogni ambiguità al riguardo, attestante inequivocabilmente che lo scudo fiscale non esclude l'accertamento IVA. Essendo in tal modo la legislazione italiana conforme al diritto dell'UE, non è necessario alcun altro intervento.

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[1] Articolo 8, comma 16, lettera i), del decreto legislativo n. 16 del 2 marzo 2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003614/12
to the Commission
Giommaria Uggias (ALDE) and Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE)
(4 April 2012)

Subject: VAT assessment on the amounts repatriated under the tax shield

In its answer to the Written Question submitted on 18 October 2011 entitled 'Compatibility of the tax shield with Community VAT legislation', the Commission stated that it had 'addressed an enquiry to the Italian authorities regarding the amounts of VAT recovered in the course of the tax shield exercise'.

Given that, in a previous answer (E-000087/2011), the Commission had recognised the exclusion of VAT from the scope of the tax amnesties in accordance with the case law established by the Italian Court of Cassation and the European Court of Justice, as well as Circular No 3/E of 29 January 2009 of the Italian tax authorities (Agenzia delle entrate).

1. Has the Commission received any official data to date on the number of assessments carried out in Italy in relation to transactions covered by the 2009 tax shield and it can make this information available?

2. If so, does it know the total amount covered by the shield that is subject to VAT and can it make this information available?

3. If so, does it not deem it necessary to ask the Italian Government to provide regular updates on all VAT assessments?

4. Does it also consider that, in view of the data provided, the Italian Government's actions are in line with European VAT legislation on the matter or does it not see fit to intervene by opening infringement proceedings and ordering the Italian State to conduct an analytical audit to identify all parties liable for paying VAT?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(28 May 2012)

Because doubts were expressed regarding whether the Italian legislation on *scudo fiscale* covered VAT, the Commission's services addressed a letter to the Italian authorities asking to provide proof that this was not the case. This proof was to take the form of the amounts of VAT recovered during the course of the amnesty.

Meanwhile Italy adopted legislation ([1]) which removes any ambiguity to this effect by clearly stating that scudo fiscale does not preclude VAT assessment. The Italian legislation being compliant with EC law no further action is required.

([1]) Article 8(16)(i) of Decree-Law of 2 March 2012, n. 16.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord P-003616/12
aan de Commissie (Vicevoorzitter — Hoge Vertegenwoordiger)
Johannes Cornelis van Baalen (ALDE)
(10 april 2012)

Betreft: VP/HR — EU-sancties tegen Suriname in reactie om amnestiewet voor verdachten decembermoorden

Is de Commissie op de hoogte van de amnestiewet die op 5 april door het Surinaamse parlement is aangenomen en die president Boutserse en andere verdachten van de decembermoorden uit 1982 amnestie verleent?

Is de Commissie bereid actie te ondernemen richting Suriname ten einde te voorkomen dat het proces tegen Bouterse c.s. wordt gestaakt op basis van de amnestiewetgeving?

Zo ja, welke restrictieve maatregelen en sancties overweegt zij om het regime van president Bouterse en zijn entourage in het hart te treffen en maximale druk uit te oefenen op Suriname om het proces tegen de verdachten van de decembermoorden alsnog voort te zetten?

Is de Commissie bereid een gemeenschappelijk standpunt voor te bereiden over deze kwestie ten behoeve van de eerstvolgende Raad van ministers van Buitenlandse Zaken?

Antwoord van hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter Ashton namens de Commissie
(18 juni 2012)

De Commissie is op de hoogte van de situatie die is ontstaan door de aanname van de gewijzigde amnestiewet in Suriname en van het potentiële effect van deze wet op het sinds 2007 lopende proces tegen huidig president Désiré Bouterse en 24 anderen vanwege de moord op 15 tegenstanders 30 jaar geleden.

Over ons standpunt is een verklaring van de woordvoerder van de hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter uitgebracht die alle Surinamers, zowel overheidsinstanties als burgers, ongeacht hun politieke gezindheid, ertoe oproept samen te werken om het proces van nationaal herstel en nationale verzoening te consolideren. Deze verzoening moet gepaard gaan met gerechtigheid en beiden moeten in het kader van de basisbeginselen van de scheiding der machten en de naleving van de internationale verbintenissen van Suriname worden gewaarborgd.

Wij achten het van groot belang dat het justitiële proces, dat nog steeds aan de gang is, ongehinderd wordt voortgezet tot het definitieve arrest.

Op verzoek van Nederland is de nieuwe amnestiewet aan de orde gesteld op de bijeenkomst van de Groep Latijns-Amerika van 17 april 2012, behandeld als punt onder diversen tijdens de Raad van ministers van Buitenlandse Zaken van 23 april 2012 en ook besproken als volwaardig agendapunt op de bijeenkomst van de Groep Latijns-Amerika van 27 april 2012. Er is besloten om, overeenkomstig artikel 8 van de Overeenkomst van Cotonou (waarvan Suriname partij is), een politieke dialoog te voeren. Op 31 mei 2012 vond een eerste bijeenkomst in het kader van de politieke dialoog plaats.

Via een versterkte politieke dialoog met de Surinaamse autoriteiten kan de EU herhaaldelijk uiting geven aan onze bezorgdheid over de situatie die na de goedkeuring van de wet is ontstaan, het belang van een eerlijke rechtsgang en van een open en alomvattende nationale verzoening benadrukken en samenwerking met regionale en internationale instanties aanmoedigen.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-003616/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Johannes Cornelis van Baalen (ALDE)
(10 April 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — EU sanctions against Suriname in response to amnesty law for the December Murders suspects

Is the Commission aware of the amnesty law that was adopted on 5 April 2012 by the Surinamese Parliament and that grants amnesty to President Bouterse and other suspects in the case of the December Murders of 1982?

Is the Commission prepared to take action against Suriname in order to prevent the trial of Bouterse and his followers being halted on the basis of the amnesty legislation?

If so, what restrictive measures and sanctions is the Commission considering in order to strike at the heart of President Bouterse's regime and his entourage and to exert maximum pressure on Suriname in order to continue with the trial of the December Murders suspects?

Is the Commission prepared to draft a joint position on this issue for the next Council of Foreign Ministers?

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

The Commission is aware of the situation created by the passing of the amended Amnesty Law in Suriname, and its potential impact on the ongoing trial, which started in 2007, against current president Désiré Bouterse and 24 others for the murder of 15 opponents 30 years ago.

A HR/VP Spokesperson's statement was issued on our position, calling for all Surinamese, public authorities and citizens, regardless of political affiliation, to join together and work to consolidate the healing and reconciliation process in the country. Reconciliation and justice go hand in hand, and should be ensured within the framework of the basic principles of the separation of powers and the respect of Suriname's international commitments.

The judicial process is still ongoing and we consider it very important that it continue, unhindered, to the final verdict.

At the request of NL the new Amnesty Law issue was dealt with in the AMLAT Group meeting on 17 April 2012, was an AOB point at the 23 April 2012 Council of Foreign Affairs and was also discussed as a full agenda point at the AMLAT Group meeting on 27 April 2012. It was decided to conduct a political dialogue under Article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement, to which Surinam is a Party. A first meeting of the Political Dialogue took place on 31 May 2012.

Stepping up political dialogue with the Surinamese authorities helps the EU to reiterate our concern for the situation created after the approval of the law, stress the importance of due process and of an open and inclusive national reconciliation, and encourage cooperation with regional and international bodies.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003617/12
to the Commission
Phil Prendergast (S&D)
(10 April 2012)

Subject: Council Regulation (EC) No 1100/2007

In the context of Council Regulation (EC) No 1100/2007 establishing measures for the recovery of the stock of European eel, and of the subsequent bans and curtailments affecting eel fisheries across Europe, does the Commission have scientific data pertaining to the current situation of the eel stock in Irish waters?

On the basis of such information, does the Commission deem a ban on eel fisheries in Irish waters to be a necessary measure with a view to ensuring sustainable stock levels?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(19 June 2012)

In the context of Council Regulation (EC) No 1100/2007, Member States have established and are currently implementing eel management plans which, according to the technical evaluation carried out by ICES, are expected to gradually achieve the recovery target set by the regulation. The recovery target is a long-term target to be achieved in several decades, depending on the location and the measures implemented. In line with the Regulation, Member States are to submit a report to the Commission by 1 July 2012, outlining the progress achieved to date via the implementation of their eel plans.

Taking into account the results of the technical analysis of the Irish plan which includes a blanket ban on eel fishing, the Commission considers that the fisheries measures implemented via the Irish eel plan are appropriate to achieve the recovery of the eel stock.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung P-003618/12
an die Kommission
Joachim Zeller (PPE)
(10. April 2012)

Betrifft: Strukturfondsmittel für Spanien für den Zeitraum 2012-2014 und die Zeit danach

Wie werden Strukturfondsmittel für 2012-2014 in Spanien eingesetzt? Erfolgt der Einsatz auf der Grundlage bestehender operationeller Programme, oder erfolgt eine Umschichtung („reprogramming")?

Wofür werden die Mittel in den Fällen einer Umschichtung verwendet? Worin unterscheidet sich der Mitteleinsatz im Hinblick auf den ursprünglich vorgesehenen Einsatz?

Gibt es im Hinblick auf eine mögliche Umschichtung des Strukturfondsmitteleinsatzes für den Zeitraum 2012-2014 in Spanien gleiche oder ähnliche Entwicklungen in den anderen Mitgliedstaaten der EU? Welchen prozentualen/absoluten Anteil der Gesamtmittel umfasst die Umschichtung („reprogramming")? Welche Mitgliedstaaten sind hiervon betroffen?

Antwort von Herrn Hahn im Namen der Kommission
(21. Mai 2012)

Im Jahr 2007 wurden von der Kommission 45 Programme angenommen, die Spanien betreffen und in denen die Maßnahmen festgelegt sind, die im Programmplanungszeitraum 2007-2013 vom Europäischen Fonds für regionale Entwicklung, vom Europäischen Sozialfonds und vom Kohäsionsfonds teilfinanziert werden. Der Gesamtbeitrag der Struktur- und Kohäsionsfonds beläuft sich auf 35 Mrd. EUR.

Diese Programme waren zur langfristigen Bewältigung der wesentlichen Strukturschwächen der Wirtschaft und des spanischen Arbeitsmarkts Spaniens gedacht. In Anbetracht des Ausmaßes des derzeitigen Konjunkturabschwungs hat die Kommission die Mitgliedstaaten allerdings dazu ermutigt, sich zu überlegen, ob sie die bis zum Ablauf des Programmplanungszeitraums noch verbleibenden Mittel für eine Ausweitung der bestehenden Förderungen für KMU und die Schaffung von Arbeitsplätzen — speziell für junge Menschen — nutzen wollen. Im Fall Spaniens könnte damit ein Teil der noch nicht zugewiesenen Mittel umgeschichtet werden, um so Investitionsprioritäten in den Vordergrund zu stellen, die der Schaffung von Wachstum und Arbeitsplätzen, der Verbesserung der Beschäftigungsfähigkeit und der Beschäftigungschancen junger Menschen sowie der Förderung von Unternehmensgründungen dienen.

Die Kommission führt darüber noch Gespräche mit den nationalen Behörden. Ein Bericht für die Tagung des Europäischen Rats im Juni 2012 ist in Arbeit. Darin soll die Initiative des Europäischen Rates vom Januar 2012 erörtert werden, mit der Aktionsteams eingesetzt wurden, die sich mit der Umsetzung der Kohäsionspolitik in acht Mitgliedstaaten befassen. In diesem Bericht werden wir auch auf den Stand der Gespräche mit Spanien eingehen.

Beim Europäischen Fonds für regionale Entwicklung beläuft sich das Gesamtvolumen der Umschichtungen in allen Mitgliedstaaten, die eine Umverteilung von Mitteln auf nationaler Ebene mit sich bringen, derzeit auf rund 14,5 Mrd. EUR oder 5 % des gesamten EU-Haushalts.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-003618/12
to the Commission
Joachim Zeller (PPE)
(10 April 2012)

Subject: Resources from the Structural Funds for Spain for the period 2012-2014 and thereafter

How are resources from the Structural Funds for the period 2012-2014 to be used in Spain? Are they to be used on the basis of existing operational programmes or is there to be a reprogramming?

What will the funds be used for if reprogamming is to occur? How does the way in which the funds are to be spent differ from the original plan?

With regard to a possible reprogramming of the use of resources from the Structural Funds for the period 2012-2014 in Spain, is there evidence of the same or similar developments in the other Member States of the EU? What is the percentage/absolute share of the total funds that will be subject to reprogramming? Which Member States are affected by this?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(21 May 2012)

In 2007, the Commission adopted 45 Spanish programmes, which set out the actions to be part-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund during the 2007-2013 programming period. The total contribution of the Structural and Cohesion Funds amounts to EUR 35 billion.

These programmes were designed to address the main structural weaknesses of the Spanish economy and labour market in the long run. Nevertheless, given the extent of the current economic downturn, the Commission has encouraged Member States to consider using the remaining balance of this allocation to expand existing support for SMEs and job creation, especially for young people, from now till the end of the programming period. In the case of Spain, the aim would be to redirect part of the unallocated funds focusing on investment priorities in support of growth and jobs, towards enhancing employability and youth employment opportunities and the promotion of entrepreneurship.

The Commission is still in discussions with the national authorities. A report is being prepared for European Council in June 2012. It will discuss the European Council initiative of January 2012 which set up action teams to look at cohesion policy implementation in eight Member States. This report will cover the status of the discussions with Spain.

In respect of the European Regional Development Fund, the total volume to date of reprogramming in all Member States involving the re-allocation of funds at the national level totals around EUR 14.5 billion or 5% of the EU total budget.

(České znění)

Otázka k písemnému zodpovězení E-003619/12
Komisi
Pavel Poc (S&D)
(10. dubna 2012)

Předmět: Evropský rozvojový fond – veřejná zakázka 2012/S 41-065374

V dubnu 2012 má dle serveru TED (dodatek k Úřednímu věstníku Evropské unie) ([1]), zveřejnit Karibské fórum států AKT (Cariforum) oznámení o veřejné zakázce Marketing a komunikační kampaň značky „Pravý karibský rum" na evropském a severoamerickém trhu (2012/S 41-065374), která má být financována z prostředků Evropského rozvojového fondu.

Domnívá se Komise, že propagace spotřeby alkoholu na vybraném území EU a Severní Ameriky je vhodnou formou rozvojové pomoci?

Domnívá se Komise, že reklamní a PR agentury z EU a Severní Ameriky jsou vhodným příjemcem financí, jejichž původ je v Evropském rozvojovém fondu?

Domnívá se Komise, že výroba, jejíž marketing je touto formou podporován, je vhodným a stabilním zdrojem příjmů v zemích, které mají být cílovými zeměmi pro tuto rozvojovou pomoc?

Odpověď pana Piebalgse jménem Komise
(30. května 2012)

Úmluva z Lomé, jež předcházela současné dohodě z Cotonou, zahrnovala i protokol o rumu, který stanovoval obchodní preference pro tuto komoditu. Po podpisu dohody z Cotonou z roku 2000 EU zahájila proces liberalizace obchodu, během kterého byly tyto preference postupně odstraněny. Aby Evropská unie karibskému odvětví výroby rumu napomohla zvýšit konkurenceschopnost, a tak si za těchto měnících se podmínek zachovat zisky, financovala program, který usnadňoval přechod od vyvážení rumu v hromadném balení k vývozu značkových výrobků. Náplní programu nebyla propagace spotřeby alkoholu v zemích EU a Severní Ameriky, nýbrž zvyšování efektivity výroby, dodržování ekologických předpisů a předpisů upravujících nakládání s odpady, standardy, distribuce a marketing. Program byl úspěšně završen v roce 2010. Měl i další přínosy, například poukázal na možné úspory z rozsahu v karibské oblasti, a zvýšil tak tlak místních podniků na regionální integraci v době, kdy proces integrace karibských zemí stagnuje a je zpochybňován ze všech stran.

Financování zakázky na marketing karibského rumu na evropských a severoamerických trzích, zmiňované v otázce, spadá do druhé fáze rumového programu. Má doplnit výsledky, kterých bylo dosaženo během první fáze programu, tedy úspory výrobců plynoucí z větší efektivity a snahu uvádět na trh značkové produkty, a to propagací těchto výrobků na nejdůležitějších vývozních trzích. Vyvážení značkových rumů má ve srovnání s vyvážením rumu v hromadném balením tu výhodu, že značná část přidané hodnoty zůstává v karibské oblasti, což má příznivý vliv na hospodářský růst a přispívá k udržitelnému hospodářskému rozvoji.

([1]) http://ted.europa.eu/udl?uri=TED:NOTICE:65374-2012:TEXT:CS:HTML&tabId=0.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003619/12
to the Commission
Pavel Poc (S&D)
(10 April 2012)

Subject: European Development Fund — public procurement 2012/S 41-065374

According to the Tender Electronic Daily server (Supplement to the *Official Journal of the European Union)* ([1]), in April 2012 the Caribbean Forum of ACP States (Cariforum) is to publish a public procurement notice for a Marketing and Communication Campaign for the Authentic Caribbean Rum on the European and North American markets (2012/S 41-065374), which is to be financed by resources from the European Development Fund.

Does the Commission believe that the promotion of alcohol consumption in selected EU and North American countries is an appropriate form of development aid?

Does the Commission believe that advertising and PR agencies from the EU and North America are appropriate recipients of finances from the European Development Fund?

Does the Commission believe that the product, the marketing of which is supported in this manner, is an appropriate and stable source of revenue in those countries for which this development aid is intended?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(30 May 2012)

The Lomé Convention, precursor to the current Cotonou Agreement, included a protocol on rum laying down the trade preferences for this commodity. Following the signing of the Cotonou Agreement in 2000, the EU started a trade liberalisation process under which these preferences were being eroded. To accompany the Caribbean rum sector in enhancing competitiveness to maintain profitability under these changing circumstances, the European Union funded a rum programme facilitating the transition from bulk rum exports to branded products. The programme did not encourage rum consumption in EU and North American countries, but targeted plant efficiency, compliance with environmental and waste management regulations, standards, distribution and marketing. The programme was successfully concluded in 2010. The programme had various positive side-effects, such as showing the potential of economies of scale in the Caribbean, thereby generating positive businesses pressure for regional integration in a time where the Caribbean integration process is stagnating and being questioned from many corners.

The contract in question, aimed at marketing Caribbean rum in the European and North American markets, is financed under a second phase of the rum programme. This seeks to complement the producers' efficiency gains and efforts to differentiate into branded products achieved under the first phase by promoting these products in key export markets. The advantage of exporting branded rum products over bulk rum is that a greater part of the value added remains in the Caribbean thus promoting economic growth and contributing to sustainable economic development.

([1]) http://ted.europa.eu/udl?uri=TED:NOTICE:65374-2012:TEXT:CS:HTML&tabId=0.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-003620/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(10 Απριλίου 2012)

Θέμα: Αύξηση κινητοποιήσεων και μέτρα ακραίας λιτότητας

Η κρίση ανέδειξε και επέτεινε τις δημοσιονομικές ανισορροπίες των κρατών μελών της ΕΕ κινητοποιώντας ένα κύμα πολιτικών ακραίας λιτότητας στις περισσότερες ευρωπαϊκές χώρες, που περιλαμβάνουν, μεταξύ άλλων, την περαιτέρω ελαστικοποίηση των αγορών εργασίας, οριζόντιες μειώσεις μισθών και συντάξεων, περικοπές κοινωνικών δαπανών, αύξηση της φορολογίας κ.λπ. Σύμφωνα με τη μέχρι σήμερα πρακτική, φαίνεται να επιδιώκεται -σε επίπεδο κρατών μελών- η δημοσιονομική εξυγίανση χωρίς, σε πολλές περιπτώσεις, να λαμβάνονται ταυτόχρονα τα απαραίτητα μέτρα για τη διαφύλαξη της κοινωνικής συνοχής και επάρκειας, ενώ σημειώνονται ολοένα και περισσότερες έντονες και πολυπληθείς κινητοποιήσεις πολιτών εναντίον των μονόπλευρων προγραμμάτων αυστηρής λιτότητας, που δημιουργούν προσχώματα στην απρόσκοπτη λειτουργία της εμπορικής δραστηριότητας με δυσμενείς συνέπειες για την πραγματική οικονομία και τις περιοχές όπου λαμβάνουν χώρα. Σε αυτό το πλαίσιο και με άξονα την καθολική προσπάθεια για ενίσχυση της ευρωπαϊκής συνείδησης των πολιτών, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Λαμβάνοντας υπόψη ότι η οικονομική στρατηγική των κρατών μελών σε σημαντικό βαθμό συνδιαμορφώνεται σε επίπεδο ΕΕ (οικονομική διακυβέρνηση), πώς έχει επηρεαστεί η άποψη των πολιτών για την Ένωση και αυτά που πρεσβεύει σε ιδεολογικό, κοινωνικό, πολιτικό επίπεδο; Ποιά τα σχετικά μηνύματα — συμπεράσματα της ευρωπαϊκής κοινής γνώμης σύμφωνα με τις πιο πρόσφατες σφυγμομετρήσεις;

— Δεδομένου του ιδιαίτερου ρόλου των δημοσιογράφων να καλύπτουν και να επικοινωνούν τα γεγονότα, σε αρκετές περιπτώσεις υπάρχουν καταγγελίες για βίαιη μεταχείριση εκπροσώπων του τύπου αποκλειστικά και μόνο λόγω της ιδιότητάς τους. Σε ποια κράτη μέλη έχουν σημειωθεί σχετικές καταγγελίες; Υπάρχει κάποια χρονική διασύνδεση με την εμφάνιση της κρίσης;

Απάντηση της κας Reding εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(12 Ιουνίου 2012)

1. Σύμφωνα με την πιο πρόσφατη έρευνα του τακτικού Ευρωβαρόμετρου, του Νοεμβρίου του 2011, η κρίση και οι επιπτώσεις της εξακολουθούν να απασχολούν την ευρωπαϊκή κοινή γνώμη. Το 70 % περίπου των Ευρωπαίων έχουν αρνητική άποψη για την τρέχουσα κατάσταση της οικονομίας της χώρας τους. Οι κύριες ανησυχίες τους σε εθνικό επίπεδο είναι η οικονομική κατάσταση (46 %), η ανεργία (45 %), ο πληθωρισμός (27 %), το σύστημα υγειονομικής περίθαλψης (14 %) και η εγκληματικότητα (11 %). Το 68 % θεωρεί ότι η κρίση δεν έχει περάσει ακόμη, ενώ το 23 % πιστεύει ότι έχει φτάσει στην κορύφωσή της.

Η εικόνα της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης θεωρείται γενικά ουδέτερη από το 41 % των Ευρωπαίων, θετική για το 31 % και αρνητική για το 26 %. Παράλληλα, η εμπιστοσύνη στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση έχει φτάσει στο σχετικά χαμηλό επίπεδο του 34 %, ελαφρά πάνω από την εμπιστοσύνη στις εθνικές κυβερνήσεις που βρίσκεται στο 24 %.

Η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση θεωρείται μέρος της αντιμετώπισης της κρίσης. Στην ερώτηση σχετικά με το ποιος θεσμός είναι ο καταλληλότερος για να αναλάβει δράση κατά των επιπτώσεων της χρηματοπιστωτικής και οικονομικής κρίσης, οι Ευρωπαίοι επιλέγουν πρώτα την Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση (23 %) και, στη συνέχεια, τις εθνικές κυβερνήσεις (20 %), την ομάδα G20 (16 %) και το ΔΝΤ (14 %).

2. Η ελευθερία της έκφρασης και ο πλουραλισμός των μέσων ενημέρωσης είναι βασικά θεμέλια της δημοκρατίας που κατοχυρώνονται στον Χάρτη των Θεμελιωδών Δικαιωμάτων της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης. Ο σεβασμός για τον πλουραλισμό των μέσων ενημέρωσης, η προστασία των πηγών των δημοσιογράφων, η ελευθερία άσκησης κριτικής σε ιδιωτική και κρατική εξουσία, τα ανεξάρτητα μέσα ενημέρωσης και οι ανεξάρτητες ρυθμιστικές αρχές είναι αναγκαία για την πλήρη άσκηση της ελευθερίας έκφρασης.

Η Επιτροπή δεσμεύεται πλήρως να εξασφαλίσει και να προαγάγει τον σεβασμό των θεμελιωδών δικαιωμάτων μέσα στο πλαίσιο των αρμοδιοτήτων της ([1]).

([1]) Άρθρο 51 παράγραφος 1.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003620/12
to the Commission
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(10 April 2012)

Subject: Increase in protests and tight austerity measures

The crisis has highlighted and accentuated the budgetary imbalances of the EU Member States, instigating a wave of tight austerity policies in most EU countries. These measures include increasing the flexibility of the labour market, horizontal cuts to wages and pensions, reductions in social spending, increasing taxes, etc. In accordance with action taken to date, it seems that the Member States are aiming for fiscal consolidation without also taking into account, in many cases, the measures required in order to maintain social cohesion and adequacy, while there are increasingly large-scale and vehement protests by citizens against strict unilateral austerity plans. This is hindering the smooth functioning of commercial activity with negative consequences for the real economy and the areas where this takes place. In this context and focusing on the universal attempt to strengthen citizens' sense of belonging to the EU, will the Commission answer the following:

— Considering that Member States' economic strategy is influenced to a significant extent by EU policy (economic governance), how have citizens' opinions on the EU and their beliefs on an ideological, social and political level been affected? What are the relevant findings or conclusions on European public opinion according to the most recent opinion polls?

— Given the particular role of journalists in investigating and reporting facts, in many instances, there have been accusations of ill-treatment of representatives of the press, purely because of their position. In which Member States have such claims been made? Is there a link, in terms of time, with the start of the crisis?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(12 June 2012)

1. According to the latest Standard Eurobarometer survey of November 2011, European public opinion continues to be concerned by the crisis and its effects. Around 70% of Europeans have a negative perception of the current state of their countries' economy. Their main concerns at national level are the economic situation (46%), unemployment (45%), inflation (27%), the healthcare system (14%) and crime (11%). 68% think the crisis is not yet over while 23% believe it has already reached its peak.

The image of the European Union is generally seen as neutral by 41% of Europeans, positive for 31% and negative for 26%. In parallel, trust in the European Union has reached a relatively low level of 34%, slightly above the trust in national governments which stands at 24%.

The European Union is perceived as part of the solution to the crisis. Asked about which institution is best able to take effective action against the effects of the financial and economic crisis, Europeans select first the European Union (23%), followed by the national governments (20%), the G20 (16%) and the IMF (14%).

2. Freedom of expression and media pluralism are essential foundations of democracy, enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Respect for media pluralism, protection of journalists' sources, freedom to criticise private and public powers, independent media and independent regulatory bodies are essential for the full exercise of freedom of expression.

The Commission is fully committed to ensuring and promoting the respect of fundamental rights within the scope of its competences ([1]).

([1]) Article 51(1).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003621/12
to the Commission
Timothy Kirkhope (ECR)
(10 April 2012)

Subject: Withdrawal of customs facilities at French airfields

It has recently been announced that the French authorities have withdrawn customs facilities at about 40 small airfields, and intend to announce further closures in the coming months. This adversely affects UK private pilots.

Since the UK is not part of the Schengen agreement, it will now be impossible to fly into a French airport. Until this announcement, pilots flying to continental Europe have been using a simple exchange of customs forms known as the General Aviation Report (GAR). For outbound flights from the UK these reports must be sent in advance to airfields where customs facilities exist. The process is less restrictive for those coming into the UK.

The withdrawal of customs facilities at so many French airfields used by general aviation pilots is an unreasonable impediment to free travel within the EU, and is not in the spirit of the Union. What can be done to ensure the continued free movement of persons in this way?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(23 May 2012)

In order to operate flights which are not exclusively to or from the territories of the Member States applying the Schengen acquis, airports of the Member States have to be notified by the respective Member State as border crossing points.

At international airports, appropriate staff and infrastructure must be deployed to ensure that all persons crossing the border are effectively checked in accordance with the Schengen Borders Code. Annex VI of the Schengen Borders Code lays down specific rules to be applied in airports that do not hold the status of international airports but are considered border crossing points. Under these rules, border guards do not need to be present at all times provided that the necessary personnel can be deployed in good time to carry out border checks.

It is up to Member States to decide on the number and localisation of their border crossing points including the choice of airports to be listed as authorised border crossing points.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003622/12
alla Commissione
Debora Serracchiani (S&D)
(10 aprile 2012)

Oggetto: TAV in Slovenia

Il progetto che fa parte della linea ferroviaria veloce comunemente nota come «Trieste-Divaccia», parte del Corridoio Mediterraneo, sembra avanzare rapidamente in territorio sloveno, relativamente al collegamento tra il porto di Capodistria e lo snodo di Divaccia. Un pezzo di questo tracciato, però, non solo sfiora, ma tocca fisicamente con cantieri e modifiche sul terreno una zona dell'Italia che si trova al confine, ovvero la Val Rosandra, caratterizzata dal particolare paesaggio composto di piante, sia alpine sia mediterranee, e diverse specie animali estremamente rare all'esterno della valle. Entro la fine del mese dovrà essere completata la fase delle pubbliche illustrazioni, che coinvolgono i Comuni di Erpelle, Cosina, Sesana, Capodistria e, naturalmente, Divaccia, dove la stazione subirà un ampliamento. I risultati dovranno confluire al Ministero delle Infrastrutture per la pianificazione territoriale e alla Direzione nazionale delle Ferrovie slovene, ma non risulta che alle autorità italiane sia stata data alcuna informazione. In effetti, la Slovenia non ha trasmesso una copia della proposta di piano né un rapporto ambientale all'Italia.

Alla luce di quanto sopra intende la Commissione chiedere maggiori informazioni alla Slovenia in virtù dell'articolo 7 della direttiva 2001/42/CE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 27 giugno 2001, concernente la valutazione degli effetti di determinati piani e programmi sull'ambiente?

Risposta data da Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(30 maggio 2012)

Il progetto di collegamento ferroviario ad alta velocità «Trieste-Divaccia» (parte del progetto prioritario 6 TEN-T) rientra nel campo di applicazione della direttiva 2011/92/UE ([1]) (nota come «direttiva sulla valutazione dell'impatto ambientale (VIA)». La direttiva 2001/42/CE (nota come «direttiva sulla valutazione ambientale strategica/VAS») ([2]) non si applica al progetto in specie in quanto il suo campo d'applicazione include soltanto piani e programmi.

Il progetto «Trieste-Divaccia» rientra nel campo d'applicazione dell'allegato I, parte 7, lettera a), della direttiva VIA che rende obbligatoria una valutazione d'impatto ambientale ai fini della «costruzione di tronchi ferroviari per il traffico a grande distanza». Quanto ai progetti soggetti a VIA, l'articolo 7 della direttiva VIA prevede consultazioni transfrontaliere. Queste ultime possono essere avviate o da uno Stato membro sul cui territorio si intenda realizzare il progetto o da uno Stato membro su cui il progetto potrebbe avere ripercussioni significative.

Disposizioni analoghe sono d'applicazione a norma della Convenzione UN/ECE sulla valutazione dell'impatto ambientale a livello transfrontaliero (nota come Convenzione ESPOO) in merito ai progetti elencati nell'appendice I in cui figurano, per l'appunto, i progetti, inclusi quelli relativi ai tronchi ferroviari per il traffico a grande distanza. Si ritiene infatti che questo tipo di progetti abbia ripercussioni fortemente negative a livello transfrontaliero.

In considerazione di quanto esposto finora, l'Italia ha senz'altro il diritto di esigere dalla Slovenia di essere ammessa a partecipare al processo decisionale in materia ambientale nell'ambito della direttiva VIA e della Convenzione ESPOO.

([1]) GU L 26 del 28.1.2012.
([2]) GU L 197 del 21.7.2001.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003622/12
to the Commission
Debora Serracchiani (S&D)
(10 April 2012)

Subject: High-speed railway line in Slovenia

The project that is part of the high-speed railway line commonly known as the 'Trieste-Divaca' (forming part of the Mediterranean Corridor) appears to be making rapid progress in Slovenia as regards the connection between the Port of Koper and the railway junction of Divaca. However, a part of the route is not only very close to but actually touches a bordering area in Italy with its construction sites and changes to the land. The area is Val Rosandra, an environment which is home to Alpine and Mediterranean plants as well as several animal species that are extremely rare outside the valley. The public disclosure phase must be completed by the end of the month and will involve the municipalities of Hrpelje, Kozina, Sezana, Koper and, of course, Divaca, where the station will be extended. The results must be sent to the Ministry of Infrastructure and Spatial Planning and to the Management of Slovenian Railways, but information does not appear to have been sent to the Italian authorities. In fact, Slovenia has not forwarded either a copy of the draft plan or an environmental report to Italy.

In view of the above, does the Commission intend to request further information from Slovenia under Article 7 of Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(30 May 2012)

The high-speed railway project Divaca-Koper (part of the TEN-T Priority Project 6) falls within the scope of the directive 2011/92/EU ([1]) (known as the 'Environmental Impact Assessment/EIA Directive'). Directive 2001/42/EC (known as the 'Strategic Environmental Assessment/SEA Directive') ([2]) does not apply to this project since its scope covers plans and programmes.

The Divaca-Koper project falls within Annex I(7)(a) of the EIA Directive which requires a mandatory EIA for 'construction of lines for long-distance railway traffic'. For projects subject to an EIA, Article 7 of the EIA Directive provides for transboundary consultations. These can be initiated either by a Member State in whose territory the project is intended to be carried out or by a Member State likely to be significantly affected.

Similar provisions apply under the UN ECE Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (known as the 'Espoo Convention') for projects listed in Appendix I. It covers projects, including lines for long-distance railway traffic, which are considered to have a significant adverse transboundary impact.

In view of the above, Italy is entitled to request Slovenia that it wishes to participate in the environmental decision-making under the EIA Directive and Espoo Convention.

([1]) OJ L 26, 28.1.2012.
([2]) OJ L 197, 21.7.2001.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-003624/12
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(10 de abril de 2012)

Asunto: Construcción de un complejo hotelero en terrenos protegidos

El Consejo de Gobierno de Baleares del pasado 30 de marzo declaró de interés autonómico la propuesta de inversión enviada por las sociedades Mirador d'Es Trenc SL, y Casas de Sa Rápita SL , en la Conselleria de Turismo y Deportes para la creación de un complejo turístico de cinco estrellas en la finca Son Durí de la Ràpita, en el término municipal de Campos.

Es Trenc-S'Arenal de Sa Ràpita es área natural de especial interés, con sistemas de dunas, zonas húmedas, salinas arcaicas y artesanas. Es un hábitat de escala en la migración de aves entre África y Europa. La ley balear de espacios naturales protege el terreno de la presión urbanística, ya que el Parlament de les Illes Balears declaró el año 1984 esta zona (1 492 hectáreas) como Àrea Natural d'Especial Interès por sus valores científicos y paisajísticos.

Sin embargo, el acuerdo del Consejo de Gobierno del pasado día 30 autoriza la construcción de un complejo hotelero que ocuparía una parcela de 20 hectáreas.

¿Tiene conocimiento la Comisión de los planes urbanísticos del Gobierno Balear y los comparte? ¿Tiene constancia la Comisión de que el proyecto declarado de interés autonómico por el Gobierno Balear dispone de estudios de impacto ambiental?

¿Considera la Comisión que el proyecto hotelero sobre la playa de Es Trenc respeta la Directiva de Hábitats y la Directiva de Aves?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(30 de mayo de 2012)

La Comisión no tiene conocimiento de los planes de desarrollo urbano del Gobierno de las Illes Balears que menciona Su Señoría.

La Comisión tampoco tiene conocimiento de ningún estudio de impacto ambiental realizado en relación con el proyecto de complejo vacacional en la finca de Son Durí de la Ràpita en el término municipal de Campos, provincia de Mallorca, España.

La responsabilidad de velar por el cumplimiento tanto de la Directiva de Hábitats 92/43/CEE ([1]) como de la Directiva de Aves 2009/147/CE ([2]) incumbe en primer lugar a las autoridades nacionales. La Comisión no dispone de información sobre el proyecto citado por Su Señoría y, por lo tanto, no es posible determinar, en esta fase, ninguna infracción de las Directivas mencionadas.

([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, DO L 103 de 25.4.1979.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003624/12
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(10 April 2012)

Subject: Construction of a hotel complex on protected land

On 30 March 2012, the Governing Council of the Balearic Islands declared the investment proposal submitted to the Department of Tourism and Sports by the companies Mirador d'Es Trenc SL and Casas de Sa Rápita SL to be in the autonomous region's interest. That proposal concerns the creation of a five-star holiday complex on the Son Durí de la Ràpita estate in the municipality of Campos.

Es Trenc — S'Arenal de Sa Ràpita is an area of special natural interest, with dune systems, wetlands and historic artisanal salt workings. It is a stopover habitat for birds migrating between Africa and Europe. The Balearic Islands law on natural areas protects this land from urban development, since the Balearic Islands Parliament declared this area (of 1 492 ha) an area of special natural interest in 1984, owing to its scientific and environmental importance.

However, the agreement reached by the Governing Council on 30 March 2012 authorises the construction of a hotel complex that would cover a plot of 20 ha.

Is the Commission aware of the Balearic Islands Government's urban development plans and does it agree with them? Is the Commission aware of any environmental impact studies that have been carried out for this project, which the Balearic Islands Government has declared to be of interest to the autonomous region?

Does the Commission consider that the proposed hotel project on Es Trenc Beach respects the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directives?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(30 May 2012)

The Commission is not aware of the urban development plans of the Balearic Islands Government mentioned by the Honourable Member.

The Commission is not aware of any environmental impact studies carried out for the holiday complex project in the estate of Son Durí de la Ràpita in the municipality of Campos, province of Mallorca, Spain.

The responsibility for ensuring compliance with both the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC ([1]) and the Bird Directive 2009/147/EC ([2]) lies primarily with the national authorities. The Commission does not possess information on the project mentioned by the Honourable Member and therefore it is not possible to identify, at this stage, any breach of the abovementioned Directives.

([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 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, OJ L 103, 25.4.1979.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-003625/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(10 Απριλίου 2012)

Θέμα: Αγορά ιδιωτικής ασφάλισης στην Ελλάδα

Την έντονη δυσαρέσκεια των καταναλωτικών οργανώσεων και ενδιαφερόμενων φορέων στην Ελλάδα έχει προκαλέσει η αιφνίδια απόφαση για απόσυρση από το πολυνομοσχέδιο του υπουργείου Εργασίας των διατάξεων που αναμορφώνουν το θεσμικό πλαίσιο λειτουργίας της ασφαλιστικής αγοράς στην Ελλάδα, με ιδιαίτερο βάρος στην ενίσχυση των κανόνων διαφάνειας, τη δικαιότερη κατανομή δικαιωμάτων και υποχρεώσεων ανάμεσα στα εμπλεκόμενα μέρη και την ενδυνάμωση της προστασίας των καταναλωτών με τη διεύρυνση των ουσιαστικών δικαιωμάτων τους. Πρόκειται, επομένως, για διατάξεις οι οποίες φέρνουν σημαντικές αλλαγές προς όφελος των καταναλωτών στο χώρο της ιδιωτικής ασφάλισης, θέτοντας, από τη μία, υποχρεώσεις των ασφαλιστικών εταιριών για διαφανείς όρους, σωστή πληροφόρηση και προσυμβατική ενημέρωση, και ρυθμίζοντας, από την άλλη, προβλήματα που ταλαιπωρούν χιλιάδες ασφαλισμένους, όπως το δικαίωμα εξαγοράς και οι αναπροσαρμογές ασφαλίστρων.

Δεδομένου ότι τα ασφαλιστικά προϊόντα είναι συχνά τόσο σύνθετα ώστε τις περισσότερες φορές είναι δύσκολη η κατανόηση και η αξιολόγησή τους από τους καταναλωτές, με αποτέλεσμα να μην είναι σε θέση να λαμβάνουν τη σωστή απόφαση για την ασφαλιστική τους κάλυψη, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Πώς αξιολογεί την ελληνική αγορά ιδιωτικής ασφάλισης σε σύγκριση με όσα ισχύουν στην αντίστοιχη αγορά στα υπόλοιπα κράτη μέλη; Πληρούνται οι υποχρεώσεις των ασφαλιστικών εταιρειών για διαφανείς όρους και σωστή πληροφόρηση των καταναλωτών; Προτίθεται η Επιτροπή να προβεί σε αναλυτικό έλεγχο της κατάστασης στην εν λόγω αγορά στα κράτη μέλη ώστε να εντοπίσει παρατυπίες και παραλείψεις που λειτουργούν εις βάρος των καταναλωτών;

— Πώς κρίνει το γεγονός ότι μια τόσο σημαντική για την εύρυθμη λειτουργία της ασφαλιστικής αγοράς διάταξη αποσύρεται σε μια χρονική στιγμή που περισσότερο από ποτέ οι έλληνες καταναλωτές χρειάζονται την προστασία των αρμόδιων θεσμών;

— Δεδομένου ότι οι ασφαλιστικές εταιρείες συχνά αποφεύγουν τη σύναψη της ασφάλισης με άτομα με αναπηρία εξαιτίας της διάγνωσης της αναπηρίας, ισχύει στην ελληνική αγορά ισότιμη πρόσβαση των ατόμων με αναπηρία στην ιδιωτική ασφάλιση; Τι ισχύει στα υπόλοιπα κράτη μέλη;

Απάντηση του κ. Barnier εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(4 Ιουνίου 2012)

Η Επιτροπή δεν είναι ενήμερη για τις νομοθετικές αλλαγές στις οποίες αναφέρεται το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου. Η Επιτροπή δεν διαθέτει δεδομένα βάσει των οποίων μπορεί να σχολιάσει την αγορά ιδιωτικής ασφάλισης στην Ελλάδα. Ωστόσο, η Επιτροπή εργάζεται για την ενίσχυση της προστασίας των καταναλωτών στον τομέα των ασφαλίσεων σε όλα τα κράτη μέλη ως μέρος των μέτρων λιανικής πώλησης για τους καταναλωτές.

Η Επιτροπή θα θέσει υπόψη της ΕΑΑΕΣ ([1]) το θέμα της σωστής πληροφόρησης των ασφαλισμένων για περαιτέρω εξέταση στο πλαίσιο των εργασιών της για την προστασία των καταναλωτών.

Υπάρχει ήδη ενωσιακή νομοθεσία, συμπεριλαμβανομένης της οδηγίας για τις αθέμιτες εμπορικές πρακτικές ([2]) και της οδηγίας για τους αθέμιτους όρους συμβάσεων ([3]), η οποία εξασφαλίζει ότι οι καταναλωτές λαμβάνουν κατάλληλες και ακριβείς πληροφορίες πριν από τη σύναψη σύμβασης και προστατεύονται από καταχρηστικές ρήτρες.

Η νομοθεσία περί ίσης μεταχείρισης της ΕΕ δεν καλύπτει επί του παρόντος την πρόσβαση των ατόμων με αναπηρία στην ιδιωτική ασφάλιση. Η Επιτροπή πρότεινε το 2008 μία νέα οδηγία ([4]) που θα επεκτείνει την απαγόρευση των διακρίσεων λόγω αναπηρίας όσον αφορά την πρόσβαση σε αγαθά και υπηρεσίες, συμπεριλαμβανομένων των χρηματοπιστωτικών υπηρεσιών. Η εν λόγω πρόταση είναι υπό συζήτηση στο Συμβούλιο και δεν εφαρμόζεται ακόμη. Ωστόσο, μετά την έγκρισή της, η οδηγία θα εξακολουθεί να επιτρέπει την διαφορετική μεταχείριση λόγω αναπηρίας, στις περιπτώσεις που η αναπηρία θα αποτελεί καθοριστικό παράγοντα για την εκτίμηση επικινδυνότητας, η οποία θα πρέπει να βασίζεται σε αναλογιστικές αρχές και αξιόπιστα δεδομένα.

([1]) Ευρωπαϊκή Αρχή Ασφαλίσεων και Επαγγελματικών Συντάξεων.
([2]) ΕΕ L 149 της 11.6.2005.
([3]) ΕΕ L 95 της 21.4.1993.
([4]) Πρόταση οδηγίας του Συμβουλίου για την εφαρμογή της αρχής της ίσης μεταχείρισης των προσώπων ανεξαρτήτως θρησκείας ή πεποιθήσεων, αναπηρίας, ηλικίας ή γενετήσιου προσανατολισμού, COM(2008)426 τελικό της 2.7.2008.

Η Επιτροπή διεξήγαγε το 2010 μια μελέτη που έδειξε ότι 18 κράτη μέλη έχουν προβλέψει περιορισμούς σχετικά με τη χρήση του όρου «αναπηρία» στον σχεδιασμό, την παροχή ή την τιμολόγηση των χρηματοπιστωτικών προϊόντων. Η Ελλάδα είναι ένα από τα κράτη μέλη που δεν έχουν προβλέψει περιορισμούς.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003625/12
to the Commission
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(10 April 2012)

Subject: The private insurance market in Greece

Consumer organisations and other interested parties in Greece have expressed great concern at the sudden decision to withdraw from the Ministry of Labour's legislative package the provisions reforming the institutional framework within which the insurance market in Greece conducts its operations. These provisions focus particularly on tightening the rules covering transparency, fairer distribution of rights and obligations between the parties involved and the upgrading of consumer protection through an expansion of consumers' basic rights. These are, therefore, provisions that bring about significant changes for the benefit of consumers in the field of private insurance, on the one hand imposing obligations on insurance companies to define clear terms, brief their clients properly and provide them with all necessary information before contracts are signed, on the other hand tackling problems that afflict thousands of insurance clients, such as opt-out rights and adjustments to insurance premiums.

Given that insurance products are often so complex that it is very often quite difficult for consumers to understand and evaluate them, with the result that they are not in a position to make the right decisions on their insurance cover, can the Commission answer the following:

— What is its assessment of the Greek private insurance market in comparison with the situation in that market in other Member States? Are insurance companies' obligations for transparent terms and proper information provision to consumers being fulfilled? Does the Commission intend to conduct a detailed check on conditions in the market in question in Member States so as to identify irregularities and omissions that are detrimental to consumers?

— How does it view the fact that a provision so important for the smooth functioning of the insurance market should be withdrawn at a time when Greek consumers need to be protected more than ever by the relevant institutions?

— Given that insurance companies often avoid signing insurance contracts with disabled people because they have been diagnosed as disabled, does equal access to private insurance for disabled people actually exist in the Greek market? What is the situation in other Member States?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(4 June 2012)

The Commission is not aware of the legislative changes referred to by the Honourable Member. The Commission does not have data on the basis of which it would be in a position to comment on the private insurance market in Greece. However, the Commission is working on reinforcing consumer protection in the area of insurance in all Member States as part of its Consumer Retail Package.

The Commission will bring the issue of proper information for policy-holders to the attention of EIOPA ([1]) for further examination in the context of their consumer protection agenda.

There is already Union legislation, including the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive ([2]) and the Unfair Contract Terms Directive ([3]), which ensures that consumers receive appropriate and accurate information before concluding a contract and are protected against unfair terms.

EU equal treatment legislation currently does not cover the access of people with disabilities to private insurance. The Commission proposed in 2008 a new Directive ([4]) that would extend the prohibition of discrimination on grounds of disability to the area of access to goods and services, including financial services. This proposal is still under discussion in Council and does not apply yet. Once adopted the directive would, however, still allow proportionate differences in treatment on the grounds of disability, if the disability is a determining factor in the risk assessment which must be based on actuarial principles and reliable data.

([1]) European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority.
([2]) OJ L 149, 11.6.2005.
([3]) OJ L 095, 21.4.1993.
([4]) Proposal for a Council Directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, COM(2008) 426 final, 2.7.2008.

A study conducted by the Commission in 2010 has shown that 18 Member States provided for restrictions concerning the use of the factor 'disability' in the design, supply or pricing of financial products. Greece is one of the Member States without restrictions.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-003626/12
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(10 April 2012)

Subject: The provision of school bus services in Ireland

Is the Commission aware that school bus services subsidised by the Irish State are not in fact put out to tender? Could the Commission comment on this matter? Could the Commission outline fully what conditions need to be met in order to exempt a country from putting its school transport services out to tender?

In view of the fact that school bus services in Ireland have never been subject to competition and have always been run by the national semi-State operator, which sometimes subcontracts particular routes out to smaller companies, does the Commission feel that Ireland is respecting EU competition rules?

Is the Commission aware of the extent of the subsidy being provided by the Irish Government to fund the school bus service in Ireland?

What is the position in other countries with regard to the provision of school bus services? Do tenders exist for the operation of such services in other Member States?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(8 May 2012)

The Commission has examined certain aspects of school transport in Ireland in the context of its decision to open a formal investigation procedure into state aid to Córas Iompair Éireann Bus Companies (Dublin Bus and Bus Éireann) ([1]).

A final decision ([2]) should be adopted for this case in 2012.

This final decision will address the compatibility of school transport in Ireland in relation to state aid competition rules. It is not possible for the Commission to comment further on specific competition aspects of school transport in Ireland, since the investigation is ongoing.

In general, when public authorities award contracts for school transport services, in addition to respecting state aid competition rules, the authorities also need to respect various EU rules on public procurement. These include Directive 2004/17/EC ([3]), and subsequent amendments thereof.

With regard to the provision of school bus services in other Member States, the Commission does not have complete information, but observes that in many Member States such services are organised by public authorities on a regional or local level, rather than coordinated nationally as is the case in Ireland.

([1]) Case C 31/07 (ex NN 17/07), OJ C 217, 15.9.2007, p. 44.
([2]) Pursuant to Article 7 of Council Regulation No 659/1999 of 22 March 1999 laying down detailed rules for the application of Article 93 of the EC Treaty (now Article 108 TFEU), OJ L 83, 27.3.1999, p. 1.
([3]) Directive 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.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-003629/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Marietta Giannakou (PPE)
(10 Απριλίου 2012)

Θέμα: Διακρίσεις σε βάρος ελληνορθόδοξων πολιτών στην Ίμβρο και την Τένεδο

Διακρίσεις σε βάρος ελληνορθόδοξων πολιτών που επιθυμούν να αποκτήσουν ακίνητα στην Ίμβρο και την Τένεδο εξακολουθούν να υφίστανται στην Τουρκία, όπως προκύπτει από τη δημοσιοποίηση της απόφασης του τουρκικού Συμβουλίου Επικρατείας που ακυρώνει πράξη του κτηματολογίου της Ίμβρου με την οποία μεταβιβάστηκε σε τούρκο υπήκοο, χριστιανό ορθόδοξο, τίτλος ιδιοκτησίας στην Ίμβρο.

Το σκεπτικό της απόφασης, όπως αναφέρει η εφημερίδα «Ταράφ», η οποία έφερε στη δημοσιότητα την εν λόγω απόφαση, βασίζεται στο γεγονός ότι «οι κινήσεις του πληθυσμού και των ακινήτων στα νησιά Ίμβρο και Τένεδο, νησιά που επηρεάζουν αποφασιστικά την ασφάλεια των Στενών των Δαρδανελίων και της Κωνσταντινούπολης, αποτελούν σημαντικό θέμα ασφαλείας».

Σύμφωνα με την απόφαση του τουρκικού Συμβουλίου Επικρατείας «Η Ίμβρος και η Τένεδος έχουν κηρυχθεί απαγορευμένη στρατιωτική περιοχή και περιοχή ασφαλείας και απαγορεύεται η αγορά ή ενοικίαση ακινήτων από αλλοδαπά πρόσωπα»: ωστόσο, δεν παρέχεται ερμηνεία στο θέμα της εξομοίωσης τούρκων πολιτών με αλλοδαπούς. Αξίζει να σημειωθεί, ότι το σκεπτικό της απόφασης του Συμβουλίου Επικρατείας, που εισάγει δυσμενείς διακρίσεις σε βάρος τούρκων υπηκόων με βάση το θρήσκευμα, είχε χαρακτηριστεί «απόρρητο» για λόγους «κρατικής ασφαλείας» και χρειάστηκε προσφυγή στο διοικητικό δικαστήριο της Προύσας για να δημοσιευθεί.

Λαμβάνοντας υπόψη τα παραπάνω, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

Είναι εν γνώσει της συγκεκριμένης απόφασης του τουρκικού Συμβουλίου Επικρατείας;

Σε ποιες ενέργειες προτίθεται να προβεί, εντός του πλαισίου της ενταξιακής διαδικασίας, προς την Άγκυρα προκειμένου να σταματήσουν οι απαράδεκτες διακρίσεις σε βάρος των μελών της ελληνικής μειονότητας σε σχέση με τα δικαιώματα ιδιοκτησίας τους, οι οποίες παραβιάζουν, μεταξύ άλλων, τόσο τα προβλεπόμενα της Συνθήκης της Λωζάννης όσο και το ψήφισμα αριθ. 1625 της Κοινοβουλευτικής Συνέλευσης του Συμβουλίου της Ευρώπης σχετικά με τη διατήρηση του διπολιτισμικού χαρακτήρα των νησιών Ίμβρου και Τενέδου;

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-004006/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Niki Tzavela (EFD)
(18 Απριλίου 2012)

Θέμα: Διακρίσεις σε βάρος χριστιανών στην Τουρκία

Διακρίσεις σε βάρος των χριστιανών ορθοδόξων πολιτών, εξακολουθούν να γίνονται στην Τουρκία, καταγγέλλει δικηγόρος πολλών Ρωμιών, που επιχείρησαν να αποκτήσουν ακίνητα στην Ίμβρο.

Η εφημερίδα «Ταράφ» έφερε στη δημοσιότητα απόφαση του τουρκικού Συμβουλίου Επικρατείας, που ακυρώνει πράξη του κτηματολογίου της Ίμβρου, με την οποία μεταβιβάστηκε σε Τούρκο υπήκοο, χριστιανό ορθόδοξο, τίτλος ιδιοκτησίας στην Ίμβρο.

«Οι κινήσεις του πληθυσμού και των ακινήτων στα νησιά Ίμβρος και Τένεδος, νησιά που επηρεάζουν αποφασιστικά την ασφάλεια των Στενών των Δαρδανελίων και της Κωνσταντινούπολης, αποτελούν σημαντικό θέμα ασφαλείας», αναφέρει το σκεπτικό της απόφασης του τουρκικού ανώτατου δικαστηρίου, που δόθηκε στη δημοσιότητα έπειτα από δικαστική πίεση που άσκησε ο δικηγόρος των ενδιαφερομένων.

Το σκεπτικό της απόφασης του Συμβουλίου Επικρατείας, που εισάγει δυσμενείς διακρίσεις σε βάρος Τούρκων υπηκόων, με βάση το θρήσκευμα, είχε χαρακτηριστεί «απόρρητο» για λόγους «κρατικής ασφάλειας» και χρειάστηκε προσφυγή στο διοικητικό δικαστήριο της Προύσας για να δοθεί στη δημοσιότητα.

Λαμβάνοντας υπόψη ότι η τουρκική κυβέρνηση δεν έχει ακόμα σχολιάσει το θέμα, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή ποια είναι η επίσημη θέση της.

Κοινή απάντηση του κ. Füle εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(5 Ιουνίου 2012)

Η Επιτροπή είναι ενήμερη σχετικά με το θέμα που θέτουν τα Αξιότιμα Μέλη και το παρακολουθεί εκ του σύνεγγυς σε συνεργασία με τις τουρκικές αρχές.

Η Τουρκία, ως χώρα που διαπραγματεύεται την ένταξη της στην ΕΕ πρέπει να εγγυηθεί στην πράξη ίσα δικαιώματα και ελευθερίες για όλους τους πολίτες της ανεξάρτητα από τη γλώσσα, τη φυλή, το χρώμα, το φύλο, τις πολιτικές απόψεις, τα φιλοσοφικά πιστεύω, τη θρησκεία και τη σέκτα ή οποιαδήποτε άλλη σχετική προκατάληψη.

Αυτά τα δικαιώματα και ελευθερίες πρέπει να κατοχυρώνονται σύμφωνα με την Ευρωπαϊκή Σύμβαση των Δικαιωμάτων του Ανθρώπου και τη νομολογία του Ευρωπαϊκού Δικαστηρίου Ανθρωπίνων Δικαιωμάτων.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003629/12
to the Commission
Marietta Giannakou (PPE)
(10 April 2012)

Subject: Discrimination against Greek Orthodox citizens on Imbros and Tenedos

There is continuing discrimination in Turkey against Greek Orthodox citizens wishing to purchase property on Imbros and Tenedos, as can be seen from the publication of the decision by the Turkish Council of State to annul a transfer by the Imbros land registry of a property title on Imbros to a Turkish citizen of Christian Orthodox religion.

The rationale behind the decision, as indicated by the *Taraf* newspaper, which reported the ruling in question, has to do with the fact that population movements and changes in property ownership on Imbros and Tenedos, islands which exert a decisive influence on the security of the Dardanelles Strait and Istanbul, are an important national security factor.

According to the decision by the Turkish Council of State, Imbros and Tenedos have been declared limited-access military and security areas and foreign individuals are prohibited from buying or renting property there. Nevertheless, no interpretation is provided on the subject of this equating of Turkish citizens with foreigners. It is worth noting that the rationale behind the decision by the Council of State, which discriminates against Turkish citizens on the basis of their religion, has been classified as 'secret' for reasons of 'state security', and it was necessary to have recourse to an administrative court in Bursa in order for it to be made public.

Taking the above into account, will the Commission answer the following:

Is it aware of this particular decision by the Turkish Council of State?

What action does it intend to take, in the context of the accession procedure, vis-à-vis Ankara to oblige it to cease such unacceptable discrimination against members of the Greek minority in relation to their property rights, violating, among other things, both the provisions of the Treaty of Lausanne and Resolution 1625 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on the maintenance of the multicultural character of the islands of Imbros and Tenedos?

Question for written answer E-004006/12
to the Commission
Niki Tzavela (EFD)
(18 April 2012)

Subject: Discrimination against Christians in Turkey

A lawyer acting on behalf of many ethnic Greeks who have attempted to purchase property on the island of Imbros has complained about continuing discrimination against Christian Orthodox citizens in Turkey.

The newspaper *Taraf* has drawn attention to a decision by the Turkish Council of State invalidating an act issued by the Imbros Land Registry transferring a land title on Imbros to a Christian Orthodox Turkish citizen.

In response to judicial pressure from the lawyer of the parties concerned, the Turkish supreme court has justified its decision as follows:' Movements of population and changes in land ownership on the islands of Imbros and Tenedos, which have a decisive influence on the security of the Dardanelles Straits and of Istanbul, are an important security issue'.

This statement regarding the decision by the Council of State, which discriminates against Turkish citizens on the basis of religion, had been characterised as 'confidential' for reasons of 'state security' and it was necessary to bring an action before the administrative court of Bursa for it to be made public.

Bearing in mind that the Turkish government has not yet commented on the matter, could the Commission state its official position?

Joint answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(5 June 2012)

The Commission is aware of the issue raised by the Honourable Members and follows it closely with the Turkish authorities.

Turkey, as a country negotiating its accession to the EU, needs to guarantee in practice equal rights and freedoms for all its citizens irrespective of their language, race, colour, gender, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion and sect, or any similar considerations.

These rights and freedoms need to be guaranteed according to the European Convention of Human Rights and the case law of the European Court of Human Rights.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-003630/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Marietta Giannakou (PPE)
(10 Απριλίου 2012)

Θέμα: Τέταρτη Σύνοδος Κορυφής των χωρών BRICS

Στις 29 Μαρτίου 2012 διεξήχθη η τέταρτη σύνοδος κορυφής των πέντε χωρών της ομάδας BRICS (Βραζιλία, Ρωσία, Ινδία, Κίνα και Νότια Αφρική) στο Νέο Δελχί της Ινδίας, όπου συζητήθηκαν εκτενώς οι μηχανισμοί ενίσχυσης των μεταξύ τους σχέσεων, όπως επίσης και οι κοινές γεωπολιτικές και οικονομικές φιλοδοξίες αυτών των ταχύτατα αναπτυσσόμενων χωρών.

Ποια είναι η θέση της Επιτροπής για το αίτημα των εκπροσώπων των χωρών BRICS, όπως διατυπώθηκε στη Διακήρυξη του Νέου Δελχί, για αλλαγή των ποσοστών εκπροσώπησης των χωρών στο διοικητικό Συμβούλιο του Διεθνούς Νομισματικού Ταμείου;

Είναι υπέρ της πρότασης για τη δημιουργία μιας νέας διεθνούς αναπτυξιακής τράπεζας, η οποία υποστηρίχτηκε και από τον απερχόμενο Πρόεδρο της Παγκόσμιας Τράπεζας κ. Ρόμπερτ Ζέλικ;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(11 Ιουνίου 2012)

Το 2010 το Συμβούλιο των Διοικητών του ΔΝΤ συμφώνησε σε μια συνολική μεταρρύθμιση των ποσοστών συμμετοχής και της διακυβέρνησης του ΔΝΤ. Από τη στιγμή που θα κυρωθεί, η μεταρρύθμιση θα οδηγήσει σε μετατόπιση περισσότερων από το 6 % των ποσοστών συμμετοχής προς δυναμικές αναδυόμενες αγορές και αναπτυσσόμενες χώρες. Τα κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ έχουν επίγνωση της ευθύνης τους για την επιτυχή εφαρμογή της μεταρρύθμισης των ποσοστών συμμετοχής και της διακυβέρνησης του ΔΝΤ του 2010 και καταβάλλουν προσπάθειες για την πλήρη εφαρμογή της έως τη συμφωνηθείσα προθεσμία της ετήσιας συνόδου του 2012. Μέχρι σήμερα, 14 κράτη μέλη έχουν ήδη ολοκληρώσει τις εθνικές διαδικασίες κύρωσης και η διαδικασία προβλέπεται να ολοκληρωθεί από τα περισσότερα άλλα κράτη μέλη έως τα μέσα του 2012. Τα κράτη μέλη εργάζονται επίσης για την υλοποίηση των δεσμεύσεων για μεγαλύτερη εκπροσώπηση των αναδυόμενων αγορών και των αναπτυσσόμενων χωρών στο Εκτελεστικό Συμβούλιο του ΔΝΤ μέσω της μείωσης της εκπροσώπησης των προηγμένων ευρωπαϊκών χωρών στο Συμβούλιο κατά δύο θέσεις.

Επιπλέον, τα κράτη μέλη προτίθενται να διαδραματίσουν εποικοδομητικό ρόλο στις επικείμενες συζητήσεις για την αναθεώρηση της υφιστάμενης διάρθρωσης των ποσοστών συμμετοχής του ΔΝΤ. Θα είναι σημαντικό να εξασφαλισθεί ότι η διαδικασία επανεξέτασης θα είναι πλήρως ενσωματωμένη στους φορείς του ΔΝΤ, συμπεριλαμβανομένης της Διεθνούς Νομισματικής και Οικονομικής Επιτροπής, με σκοπό να συμμετάσχει ενεργά το σύνολο των μελών του ΔΝΤ. Τα ποσοστά συμμετοχής θα πρέπει να συνεχίσουν να αντικατοπτρίζουν τις σχετικές θέσεις των μελών του Ταμείου στην παγκόσμια οικονομία και την ικανότητα των μελών να υποστηρίζουν τις εργασίες του Ταμείου, καθώς και την εντολή του Ταμείου.

Όσον αφορά τη δεύτερη ερώτηση, η Επιτροπή ευχαρίστως θα δεχθεί περισσότερες πληροφορίες σχετικά με το τι ακριβώς προτείνεται όσον αφορά τον σκοπό, τη δομή και τη διακυβέρνηση μιας νέας διεθνούς αναπτυξιακής τράπεζας.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003630/12
to the Commission
Marietta Giannakou (PPE)
(10 April 2012)

Subject: Fourth summit of the BRICS countries

On 29 March 2012 the fourth summit meeting of the five BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) was held in New Delhi, India, with extensive discussions taking place on the mechanisms for strengthening the mutual relations and common geopolitical and economic ambitions of these rapidly developing nations.

What is the Commission's position on the demand put forward by the representatives of the BRICS countries, as formulated in the Delhi Declaration, for a change in the proportions of these countries' representations on the Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund?

Is it in favour of the proposal for the creation of a new international development bank, which has been supported by Robert Zoellick, the outgoing President of the World Bank, among others?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(11 June 2012)

In 2010, the IMF Board of Governors agreed on a comprehensive reform of IMF quota and governance. Once ratified, the reform will result in a shift of more than 6% of quota shares to dynamic emerging market and developing countries. EU Member States are aware of their responsibility in successfully implementing the 2010 IMF Quota and Governance reform and are working on implementing it in full by the agreed deadline of the 2012 Annual Meetings. So far, 14 Member States have already concluded national ratification procedures and the process is projected to be completed by most other Member States by mid-2012. Member States are also working to implement the commitment for greater representation for emerging market and developing countries at the IMF Executive Board through a reduction of the representation of advanced European countries at the Board by two seats.

The Member States also intend to play a constructive role in forthcoming discussions on the review of the current IMF quota formula. It will be important to ensure that the review process is fully anchored within the IMF bodies, including the International Monetary and Financial Committee, with a view to engage the entire IMF membership. Quotas should continue to reflect the relative positions of the Fund's members in the world economy and members' capacity to support the Fund's work, and the mandate of the Fund.

As regards the second question, the Commission is looking forward to receiving more information on what is exactly proposed in terms of the purpose, structure and governance of a new international development bank.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-003631/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(10 Απριλίου 2012)

Θέμα: Η παιδική φτώχεια στην Ευρώπη της λιτότητας

Οι πολιτικές ακραίας λιτότητας που εφαρμόζονται στην Ελλάδα, αλλά και σε πολλές άλλες χώρες της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης, τα τελευταία δύο περίπου χρόνια, έχουν συντελέσει σε σημαντική υποβάθμιση του βιοτικού επιπέδου μιας μεγάλης μερίδας ευρωπαίων πολιτών, με την καταγραφή ανησυχητικών ποσοστών ανεργίας και φτώχειας σε επίπεδο Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης. Εν μέσω μιας ιδιαίτερα κρίσιμης κοινωνικής και οικονομικής συγκυρίας, οι ανήλικοι αποτελούν μία εκ των ηλικιακών ομάδων που φαίνεται να πλήττονται σημαντικά από τις συνέπειες της κρίσης και των πολιτικών αντιμετώπισής της, όπως καταδεικνύει πρόσφατη έκθεση της UNICEF για την κατάσταση των παιδιών στην Ελλάδα το 2012. Σε αυτή την κατεύθυνση, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

Ποιο είναι το ποσοστό παιδικής φτώχειας στα κράτη μέλη και στην Ένωση; Πώς επηρεάστηκε το εν λόγω ποσοστό κατά την περίοδο της κρίσης; Υπάρχει διασύνδεση μεταξύ των περικοπών των κοινωνικών δαπανών — και κυρίως των οικογενειακών επιδομάτων — και της παιδικής φτώχειας;

Δεδομένων των έκτακτων κοινωνικών συνθηκών που διαμορφώνονται στο πλαίσιο της αντιμετώπισης των δημοσιονομικών ανισορροπιών, πώς επηρεάζεται η ψυχική και σωματική υγεία των παιδιών;

Ποιες πρωτοβουλίες επεξεργάζεται να αναλάβει η Επιτροπή προκειμένου να συμβάλει στην καταπολέμηση της παιδικής φτώχειας; Προτίθεται να παρέχει επιπλέον βοήθεια σε κράτη μέλη που δεν σημειώνουν την αναμενόμενη πρόοδο σε αυτό το ζήτημα ή εμφανίζουν ανησυχητικά υψηλά ποσοστά παιδικής ένδειας;

Απάντηση του κ. Andor εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(25 Μαΐου 2012)

Σύμφωνα με τα πιο πρόσφατα διαθέσιμα στοιχεία, το 2010 το ποσοστό της παιδικής φτώχειας σε όλη την Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση ανέρχεται σε 20,5 %. Τα στοιχεία του 2010 για όλα τα κράτη μέλη υπάρχουν στο τεύχος Μαρτίου 2012 της τριμηνιαίας επιθεώρησης της εργασιακής και κοινωνικής κατάστασης στην ΕΕ ([1]). Δύσκολα μπορεί να κρίνει κανείς πώς επηρεάστηκε το ποσοστό αυτό από την περίοδο της κρίσης, επειδή το ποσοστό του 2008 ήταν 20,2 %. Ωστόσο, η Επιτροπή διαθέτει στοιχεία που μαρτυρούν ότι η φτώχεια και η υλική στέρηση των παιδιών έγιναν βαθύτερες σε διάφορες χώρες.

Παρά τις περικοπές στην κοινωνική ασφάλιση, τα περισσότερα κράτη μέλη προσπάθησαν να μη θίξουν τα επιδόματα για τα πιο ευάλωτα παιδιά, περικόπτοντας τα καθολικά επιδόματα και αντικαθιστώντας τα με στοχοθετημένα μέτρα για τους πιο άπορους. Δεν υπάρχουν ακόμη στατιστικά στοιχεία για να καταδειχθεί η σχέση μεταξύ αυτών των πρόσφατων αλλαγών πολιτικής και των αποτελεσμάτων στην παιδική φτώχεια. Δεν υπάρχουν ακόμη συστηματικά στατιστικά στοιχεία για τον αντίκτυπο των μέτρων δημοσιονομικής λιτότητας των κρατών μελών στην υγεία των παιδιών.

Η Επιτροπή επεξεργάζεται σήμερα μια νέα σύσταση που θα εκδώσει με σκοπό να υποστηρίξει τις προσπάθειες της ΕΕ και των κρατών μελών να αντιμετωπίσουν την παιδική φτώχεια. Όσον αφορά τις τρέχουσες δράσεις της ΕΕ, η Επιτροπή παραπέμπει τον αξιότιμο βουλευτή στην απάντησή της στην κοινοβουλευτική ερώτηση E-001262/2012 ([2]). Η Επιτροπή συγκρότησε επίσης θεματική ομάδα εργασίας με τα κράτη μέλη για την προσχολική εκπαίδευση και φροντίδα (ΠΕΦ) το 2012 ([3]).

Η πρόταση της Επιτροπής για την πολιτική συνοχής τα έτη 2014-2020 ([4]) είναι να υποστηρίξουν όλα τα ταμεία την προώθηση της κοινωνικής ένταξης και την καταπολέμηση της φτώχειας (καθώς και την ΠΕΦ), που είναι ένας από τους έντεκα θεματικούς στόχους. Όσον αφορά το ΕΚΤ, προτείνεται να διατεθεί τουλάχιστον το 20 % του συνολικού προϋπολογισμού του σ' αυτό τον στόχο.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=113&newsId=1255&furtherNews=yes.
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/QP-WEB/home.jsp
([3]) Συμπεράσματα του Συμβουλίου για την προσχολική εκπαίδευση και φροντίδα: παροχή σε όλα τα παιδιά μας του καλύτερου δυνατού ξεκινήματος για τον κόσμο του αύριο 2011/C 175/03.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/regulation/pdf/2014/proposals/regulation/general/general_proposal_en.pdf.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003631/12
to the Commission
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(10 April 2012)

Subject: Child poverty in the Europe of austerity

The policies of harsh austerity that have been implemented in Greece as well as in many other European Union countries for approximately the last two years have contributed to a significant deterioration in living standards for a large proportion of European citizens, with disturbing rates of unemployment and poverty being recorded throughout the European Union. At this particularly critical social and economic time, young people are one of the age groups that seem to be hit very hard by the consequences of the crisis and the policies to tackle it, as demonstrated by a recent Unicef report on the situation of children in Greece in 2012. In this connection, can the Commission answer the following:

What is the child poverty rate in the Member States and in the European Union as a whole? How has this rate been affected during the crisis period? Is there a connection between cuts in social expenditure — particularly family allowances — and child poverty?

Given the highly unusual social conditions that are arising in the context of dealing with fiscal imbalances, how is this situation affecting the mental and physical health of children?

What initiatives is the Commission preparing to take to help combat child poverty? Does it intend to provide additional assistance to Member States that are not making the expected progress on this front or that have a disturbingly high rate of child poverty?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(25 May 2012)

The latest available child poverty rate for the EU as whole is 20.5% in 2010. The 2010 figures for all Member States can be found in the March 2012 issue of the EU Employment and Social Situation Quarterly Review ([1]). It is difficult to judge how this rate has been affected during the crisis period as the 2008 rate was 20.2%. However, the Commission has evidence that depth of poverty and material deprivation of children have increased in a number of countries.

In spite of cuts in social expenditure, most Member States have tried to spare allowances for the most vulnerable children, with universal allowances being cut and replaced by targeted measures for the most needy. There is no statistical evidence yet to make a connection between these recent policy changes and child poverty outcomes. There is no systematic statistical evidence yet on the impact of budget austerity measures in the Member States on the health of children.

The Commission is currently working on a new Recommendation to support the EU and Member States' efforts to tackle child poverty. With regard to current EU actions the Commission would like to refer the Honourable Member to its response to parliamentary Question E-001262/2012 ([2]). The Commission has also set up a thematic working group with the Member States on early childhood education and care (ECEC) in 2012 ([3]).

The Commission proposal for cohesion policy in the years 2014-2020 proposes ([4]) that all these funds shall support promoting social inclusion and combating poverty (including ECEC), which is one of the eleven thematic objectives. As for the ESF it is proposed that at least 20% of its total budget should be earmarked for this objective.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=113&newsId=1255&furtherNews=yes.
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/QP-WEB/home.jsp
([3]) Council conclusions on early childhood and care: providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow 2011/C 175/03.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/regulation/pdf/2014/proposals/regulation/general/general_proposal_en.pdf

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-003632/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(10 Απριλίου 2012)

Θέμα: Οι επιπτώσεις της οικονομικής κρίσης στην εκπαιδευτική, κοινωνική και επαγγελματική συμπεριφορά των ανηλίκων

Χωρίς αμφιβολία, η παρατεταμένη ύφεση και τα ακολουθούμενα προγράμματα δημοσιονομικής εξυγίανσης στα κράτη μέλη έχουν διαμορφώσει ένα ιδιαίτερα δυσμενές περιβάλλον για τους ανήλικους συμπολίτες μας. Η επιδείνωση σημαντικών κοινωνικών και εκπαιδευτικών δεικτών υπονομεύει τόσο το παρόν όσο και το μέλλον της συγκεκριμένης πληθυσμιακής ομάδας, ενώ λειτουργεί πολλαπλασιαστικά για τη διαιώνιση και διόγκωση φαινομένων φτώχειας, κοινωνικού αποκλεισμού ή ακόμη και της παραβατικότητας.

Σε αυτό το πλαίσιο ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Ποια η διακύμανση των εκπαιδευτικών επιδόσεων (π.χ. σχολική διαρροή) των ανηλίκων στην Ελλάδα και στα υπόλοιπα κράτη μέλη κατά την περίοδο της ύφεσης;

— Υπάρχουν διαθέσιμα στοιχεία σχετικά με την αυξομείωση της παραβατικότητας των ανηλίκων στα κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ την τελευταία διετία;

— Ποια είναι τα ποσοστά εργασίας των ανηλίκων στην Ελλάδα και στα υπόλοιπα κράτη μέλη και ποιός ο βαθμός επίδρασης των σημαντικών κοινωνικοοικονομικών μεταβολών των δύο τελευταίων χρόνων;

— Υπάρχουν στατιστικές προσεγγίσεις αναφορικά με το ποσοστό της ανασφάλιστης εργασίας ανηλίκων στα κράτη μέλη;

Απάντηση του κ. Šemeta εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(30 Μαΐου 2012)

1. Δεν υπάρχουν στατιστικά στοιχεία σε επίπεδο ΕΕ για το μέγεθος της σχολικής διαρροής, δηλαδή για τον αριθμό των ατόμων που εγκαταλείπουν το εκπαιδευτικό σύστημα χωρίς να αποκτήσουν κάποιον τίτλο σπουδών.

Ένα μέτρο του εκπαιδευτικού αποτελέσματος για νέους ηλικίας 18-24 ετών δίνεται από το ποσοστό των νέων που αποχώρησαν από την εκπαίδευση και κατάρτιση με εφόδια, το πολύ, κατώτερης δευτεροβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης ([1]). Το μέτρο αυτό αντιστοιχεί στον βασικό δείκτη «άτομα που εγκαταλείπουν πρόωρα την εκπαίδευση και την κατάρτιση» της στρατηγικής «Ευρώπη 2020». Τα αποτελέσματα διατίθενται στον δικτυακό τόπο της Eurostat ([2]). Το ποσοστό ήταν 13,7 % το 2010 για την Ελλάδα σε σύγκριση με το 14,1 % για την ΕΕ συνολικά (βλέπε πίνακα 1 στο παράρτημα, που αποστέλλεται απευθείας στον αξιότιμο βουλευτή και στη Γραμματεία του Κοινοβουλίου).

2. Η Επιτροπή δεν έχει στη διάθεσή της στοιχεία για την παραβατικότητα των ανηλίκων.

3. Το ποσοστό εργασίας στους νέους ηλικίας 15-24 ετών ήταν 16,3 % στην Ελλάδα το 2011. Ο αντίστοιχος μέσος όρος για την ΕΕ το 2011 ήταν 33,6 %. Το έτος αυτό η Ελλάδα είχε το χαμηλότερο ποσοστό εργασίας στα άτομα ηλικίας 15-24 ετών στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση. Το ποσοστό εργασίας των νέων στην Ελλάδα υποχώρησε κατά 7,2 ποσοστιαίες μονάδες σε σχέση με το 2008 που ήταν 23,5 %. (βλέπε πίνακα 2 στο παράρτημα).

4. Η Επιτροπή δεν έχει διεξαγάγει μελέτες για τους νέους που εργάζονται χωρίς ασφαλιστική κάλυψη.

([1]) Ο τίτλος της ανώτερης δευτεροβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης αποκτάται κατά κανόνα στην ηλικία των 17 ετών σε όλη την ΕΕ. Περιγραφή των εκπαιδευτικών συστημάτων της ΕΕ διατίθεται στον δικτυακό τόπο Eurydice Network's website.

([2]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/search_database — Για την πρόσβαση στον πίνακα με όλες τις χώρες, χρησιμοποιήστε το εργαλείο «search in tree» και πληκτρολογήστε τον κωδικό «edat_lfse_14».

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003632/12
to the Commission
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(10 April 2012)

Subject: The effects of the economic crisis on young people's educational, social and professional conduct

There can be no doubt that the protracted recession and the consequent fiscal austerity programmes in Member States have produced a particularly unfavourable environment for our younger fellow citizens. The deterioration in significant social and educational indicators is undermining both the present and the future of the population group in question and has a multiplier effect in perpetuating and increasing poverty, social exclusion and even delinquency.

In this context, would the Commission answer the following:

— What fluctuations have been noted in the educational performance (e.g. in dropout rates) of young people in Greece and the other EU Member States during the period of recession?

— Are any data available on rises or falls in juvenile delinquency rates in EU Member States over the last two years?

— What is the employment rate for young people in Greece and the other EU Member States and how far-reaching have the effects of the significant socioeconomic shifts of the last two years been?

— Have statistical studies been carried out on the percentage of young people in Member States who are working without insurance cover?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(30 May 2012)

1. There are no statistics at EU level on the number of drop-outs (i.e. people leaving the education system without obtaining a given qualification).

A measure of the outcome of education for young people aged 18-24 is provided by the percentage of young persons who left education and training with at most lower secondary education ([1]). This measure corresponds to the Europe 2020 headline indicator 'early leavers from education and training'. The results are available on Eurostat's website ([2]). The rate was 13.7% in 2010 for Greece compared to 14.1% for the EU as a whole (see Table 1 in the annex sent directly to the Honourable Member and to Parliament's Secretariat).

2. The Commission has no data on juvenile delinquency rates.

3. The employment rate for young people aged 15-24 was 16.3% in Greece in 2011. The corresponding EU average in 2011 was 33.6%. In that year Greece had the lowest employment rate of 15-24 olds in the European Union. The employment rates for young people in Greece had gone down by 7.2 percentage points from 23.5% in 2008. (see Table 2 in the annex).

4. The Commission has not carried out any studies on young persons working without insurance cover.

([1]) Upper secondary qualifications are generally obtained after 17 years old across the EU. A description of educational systems in the EU is available from Eurydice Network's website.

([2]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/search_database — To access the table for all countries, use the tool 'search in tree' and type the code 'edat_lfse_14'.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-003634/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(10 Απριλίου 2012)

Θέμα: Αερολιμενικά τέλη στην Ελλάδα

Στις 22/3/2012, η Επιτροπή ανακοίνωσε διαδικασία επί παραβάσει κατά της Ελλάδας για «μη μεταφορά του μεγαλύτερου μέρους του διατακτικού της οδηγίας για τα αερολιμενικά τέλη». Η οδηγία θα έπρεπε να είχε μεταφερθεί στο εθνικό δίκαιο έως τις 15/3/2011.

Με δεδομένο ότι η μη συμμόρφωση με την οδηγία έχει ως αποτέλεσμα οι επιβάτες να καταβάλλουν υψηλοτέρα αερολιμενικά τέλη τόσο για τις πτήσεις εντός της ΕΕ όσο και για τις πτήσεις που αναχωρούν από αερολιμένες της ΕΕ προς άλλους προορισμούς, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

Ποιες είναι οι ρυθμίσεις που διασφαλίζουν τη διαφάνεια και την αμεροληψία των αερολιμενικών τελών και η εφαρμογή των οποίων θα οδηγούσε σε καταβολή μειωμένων τελών από τους καταναλωτές, τις οποίες η Ελλάδα δεν έχει ενσωματώσει;

Απάντησε η Ελλάδα εντός της προθεσμίας στην αιτιολογημένη γνώμη; Αν ναι, πώς κρίνει η Επιτροπή την απάντηση;

Απάντηση του κ. Kallas εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(25 Μαΐου 2012)

Σύμφωνα με την ανάλυση της Επιτροπής όσον αφορά τα μέτρα μεταφοράς στο εθνικό δίκαιο, την οποία ανέπτυξε στην αιτιολογημένη γνώμη της 22ας Μαρτίου 2012, οι ελληνικές αρχές έχουν δημιουργήσει το νομικό πλαίσιο για τη σύσταση της ανεξάρτητης εποπτικής αρχής που απαιτείται βάσει του άρθρου 11 της οδηγίας. Το εν λόγω πλαίσιο δημιουργήθηκε με τον νόμο 3913 σχετικά με την «Αναδιοργάνωση της Υπηρεσίας Πολιτικής Αεροπορίας και άλλες διατάξεις».

Ωστόσο, οι υπόλοιπες διατάξεις της οδηγίας, που καθορίζουν κοινές αρχές για τον υπολογισμό και την επιβολή τελών αερολιμένων, δεν έχουν μεταφερθεί στο εθνικό δίκαιο. Τα σχετικά θέματα περιλαμβάνουν, μεταξύ άλλων, τη μη διακριτική μεταχείριση, τη διαφάνεια, τη διαβούλευση με τους χρήστες του αερολιμένα, τις διαδικασίες επανόρθωσης μεταξύ του φορέα διαχείρισης του αερολιμένα και των χρηστών του αερολιμένα, καθώς και τη διαφοροποίηση των αερολιμενικών υπηρεσιών.

Οι ελληνικές αρχές καλούνται να απαντήσουν εντός δύο μηνών από την παραλαβή της αιτιολογημένης γνώμης. Κατά τον χρόνο σύνταξης της παρούσας δεν είχε ληφθεί η εν λόγω απάντηση.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003634/12
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(10 April 2012)

Subject: Airport charges in Greece

On Thursday 22 March 2012, the Commission announced infringement proceedings against Greece for 'failure to transpose most of the operative parts of the directive on airport charges'. The directive should have been transposed into national law by 15 March 2011.

Given that non-compliance with the directive leads to passengers having to pay higher airport charges both on flights within the EU and on flights departing for other destinations from airports within the EU, can the Commission answer the following:

What are the provisions ensuring the transparent and non-discriminatory character of airport charges that Greece has not incorporated, the implementation of which would lead to lower charges for passengers?

Has Greece responded within the deadline to the reasoned opinion? If so, what is the Commission's assessment of its response?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(25 May 2012)

According to the Commission's analysis of the transposition measures, set out in its reasoned opinion of 22 March 2012, the Greek authorities have put in place the legal framework for the creation of the independent supervisory aurthority as required under Article 11 of the directive. This is done by Law No 3913 on the 'Reorganisation of the Hellenic Civil Aviation Authority and other provisions'.

However, the remaining provisions of the directive, which set out common principles for the calculation and application of airport charges, have not been transposed. Such issues would include those related to non-discrimination, transparency, consultation of airport users, remedy procedures between the airport managing body and airport users as well as differentiation of airport services.

The Greek authorities are required to reply within two months of receipt of the reasoned opinion. At the time of writing, no such response had been received.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-003635/12
προς το Συμβούλιο
Charalampos Angourakis (GUE/NGL)
(10 Απριλίου 2012)

Θέμα: Κλιμάκωση των στρατιωτικών ενεργειών της ΕΕ στο Κέρας της Αφρικής

Σύμφωνα με τις δηλώσεις της Ύπατης Εκπροσώπου της Ένωσης για τις Εξωτερικές Σχέσεις και την Πολιτική Ασφάλειας Catherine Ashton στις 23/3/2012, τα πολεμικά πλοία της επιχείρησης της ΕΕ Atalanta, θα μπορούν πλέον να κάνουν χρήση πυρός και κατά του «εξοπλισμού φορτηγών, σκαφών και αποθηκών καυσίμων» στις παράκτιες περιοχές της Σομαλίας, τουλάχιστον μέχρι τον Δεκέμβρη του 2014. Ακόμα αναγγέλλεται η επέκταση της επέμβασης των ευρωπαϊκών στρατιωτικών δυνάμεων στην Ακτή της Σομαλίας και στα εσωτερικά ύδατα της Σομαλίας και αυξάνεται η συμμετοχή στα κοινά έξοδα κατά 14,9 εκατομμύρια ευρώ. Η απόφαση αυτή θα προσθέσει νέους κινδύνους για τον λαό της Σομαλίας που ήδη δοκιμάζεται από τις αεροπορικές επιδρομές των ΗΠΑ και την στρατιωτική δράση της Κένυας και της Αιθιοπίας. Οι ενδοϊμπεριαλιστικές αντιθέσεις για τους δρόμους της ενέργειας και τις πλουτοπαραγωγικές πηγές στο Κέρας της Αφρικής έχουν ήδη βυθίσει σε πόλεμο και εξαθλίωση τους λαούς της περιοχής.

Ερωτάται το Συμβούλιο:

— με ποιο δικαίωμα τα πλοία της επιχείρησης Atalanta θα μπορούν να βομβαρδίζουν πλοία και στόχους στο έδαφος της Σομαλίας, κηρύσσοντας στην ουσία πόλεμο με ανυπολόγιστες συνέπειες στον πληθυσμό και ολοκληρωτική καταστροφή ζωτικών υποδομών της χώρας;

— ποια είναι η συμμετοχή της κάθε χώρας της ΕΕ σε πλοία, στρατιωτικό προσωπικό και σε εθνική χρηματοδότηση όπως και τα «κοινά έξοδα» της επιχείρησης Atalanta αντίστοιχα για το 2010, 2011 και 2012;

Απάντηση
(6 Ιουνίου 2012)

Η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση διεξάγει την επιχείρηση EUNAVFOR ΑΤΑΛΑΝΤΗ βάσει των αποφάσεων του Συμβουλίου Ασφαλείας των Ηνωμένων Εθνών 1814 (2008), 1816 (2008), 1831 (2008) και 1851 (2008).

Επίσης, η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση έχει προσφέρει συνεργασία στη Μεταβατική Ομοσπονδιακή Κυβέρνηση (ΜΟΚ) της Σομαλίας, περί της οποίας έγινε κοινοποίηση προς τον Γενικό Γραμματέα των Ηνωμένων Εθνών κ. Ban Ki-Moon εκ μέρους του Πρωθυπουργού της ΜΟΚ κ. Abdiweli Mohamed Ali την 1η Μαρτίου 2012.

Στην επιχείρηση EUNAVFOR ΑΤΑΛΑΝΤΗ μετέχουν 23 κράτη μέλη (Βέλγιο, Βουλγαρία, Κύπρος, Εσθονία, Φιλανδία, Γαλλία, Γερμανία, Ελλάδα, Ουγγαρία, Τσεχική Δημοκρατία, Ιταλία, Λετονία, Λιθουανία, Λουξεμβούργο, Μάλτα, Κάτω Χώρες, Πολωνία, Πορτογαλία, Ρουμανία, Σλοβενία, Ισπανία, Σουηδία και Ηνωμένο Βασίλειο) με παροχή διαφόρων ειδών πόρων είτε στη θάλασσα είτε στο επιχειρησιακό επιτελείο στο Northwood.

Επί πλέον, μετέχουν ή μετείχαν στο παρελθόν στην επιχείρηση 5 κράτη εκτός ΕΕ (Κροατία, Μαυροβούνιο, Νορβηγία, Σερβία και Ουκρανία).

Τα «κοινά έξοδα» της επιχείρησης Αταλάντη ήταν 8,8 εκατ. ευρώ για το 2010, 7,720 εκατ. ευρώ για το 2011 και 8 εκατ. ευρώ για το 2012 (σχέδιο προϋπολογισμού).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003635/12
to the Council
Charalampos Angourakis (GUE/NGL)
(10 April 2012)

Subject: Escalation of EU military activity in the Horn of Africa

According to statements made on 23 March 2012 by Catherine Ashton, the European Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, warships from the EU's Operation Atalanta will henceforth be able to fire at 'armament in trucks, vessels and fuel dumps' in the coastal regions of Somalia, at least until December 2014. It was also announced that there will be an extension of the intervention of European military forces to the coastline of Somalia and to Somalia's inland waters and that Europe's share of the common costs will be EUR 14.9 million. This decision will pose new dangers for the people of Somalia, who are already suffering from aerial attacks by the United States and the military action of Kenya and Ethiopia. The inter-imperialist conflicts over energy routes and wealth-generating resources in the Horn of Africa have already plunged the peoples of the region into war and poverty.

Can the Council answer the following:

— By what right are the ships of Operation Atalanta enabled to bombard ships and targets in the territory of Somalia, in effect declaring war, with incalculable consequences for the population, and thoroughly ruining the infrastructure that is vital for the country?

— What is each EU Member State's proportional share in ships, military personnel and national funding and what are the 'common costs' of Operation Atalanta for 2010, 2011 and 2012 respectively?

Reply
(6 June 2012)

The European Union is conducting EUNAVFOR Operation Atalanta on the basis of United Nation Security Council Resolutions 1814 (2008), 1816 (2008), 1831 (2008) and 1851 (2008).

Furthermore, the European Union has made an offer of cooperation to the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of Somalia, of which the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr Ban Ki-Moon, was notified by the TFG Prime Minister Mr Abdiweli Mohamed Ali on 1 March 2012.

23 Member States are or have been involved in EUNAVFOR Operation Atalanta (Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Czech Republic, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom) through the provision of various resources either at sea or at the Operational Headquarters (OHQ) at Northwood.

In addition, 5 non-EU countries are or have been involved in the Operation (Croatia, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia and Ukraine).

The 'common costs' of Operation Atalanta were respectively 8,8 million euros for 2010, 7 720 million euros for 2011 and 8 million euros for 2012 (provisional budget).

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-003636/12
προς το Συμβούλιο
Kriton Arsenis (S&D)
(10 Απριλίου 2012)

Θέμα: Αλιευτικές δυνατότητες για το 2012

Στις 16 Δεκεμβρίου 2011, το Συμβούλιο αποφάσισε σχετικά με τον καθορισμό των αλιευτικών δυνατοτήτων για το επόμενο έτος. Τα αλιευτικά όρια ορίσθηκαν σε υψηλότερα επίπεδα από εκείνα που συνιστούν τα επιστημονικά στοιχεία και, για 53 αποθέματα ιχθύων, συμπεριλαμβανομένων ειδών που υπόκεινται επί του παρόντος σε υπεραλίευση και ακόμα και για είδη που χαρακτηρίζονται απειλούμενα, η διαφορά είναι άνω του 10 %.

Για παράδειγμα, η ποσόστωση για το χάλιμπατ του Ατλαντικού (Hipoglossus hipoglossus), το οποίο έχει χαρακτηρισθεί απειλούμενο είδος από τη Διεθνή Ένωση για τη Διατήρηση της Φύσης (IUCN), αυξήθηκε για το 2012 κατά 12 % στις ζώνες V και XIV των υδάτων της Γροιλανδίας και κατά 167 % στις ζώνες NAFO 0&1 των υδάτων της Γροιλανδίας.

Με δεδομένα τα ανωτέρω, θα μπορούσε το Συμβούλιο:

1. να διευκρινίσει ποιες μελέτες συμβουλεύτηκε προκειμένου να αποφασίσει σχετικά με τον καθορισμό των αλιευτικών δυνατοτήτων·

2. να εξηγήσει τους λόγους και τα επιστημονικά στοιχεία στα οποία βάσισε την απόφασή του να αυξήσει το συνολικό επιτρεπόμενο αλίευμα για το χάλιμπατ του Ατλαντικού (Hipoglossus hipoglossus) για το 2012·

3. να διευκρινίσει αν διεξάγεται παρακολούθηση και, εάν ναι, να αναφέρει ποια μορφή παρακολούθησης έχει χρησιμοποιηθεί όσον αφορά την κατάσταση των αποθεμάτων του χάλιμπατ του Ατλαντικού στις προαναφερθείσες αλιευτικές ζώνες;

Απάντηση
(11 Ιουνίου 2012)

Κάθε χρόνο το Συμβούλιο καθορίζει τις αλιευτικές δυνατότητας βάσει πρότασης που υποβάλλει η Επιτροπή, λαμβανομένων υπ' όψη -εφ' όσον υπάρχουν- των επιστημονικών, τεχνικών και οικονομικών στοιχείων. Θα πρέπει να σημειωθεί ότι πρόσβαση στα διαθέσιμα επιστημονικά δεδομένα για τα αποθέματα είχαν όλοι οι ενδιαφερόμενοι.

Οι ποσοστώσεις που πρότεινε η Επιτροπή και ενέκρινε το Συμβούλιο όσον αφορά τα αποθέματα χάλιμπατ του Ατλαντικού καθορίστηκαν σύμφωνα με το σχετικό Πρωτόκολλο ΕΕ-Γροιλανδίας για τις αλιευτικές σχέσεις και με βάση τα αποτελέσματα των διαβουλεύσεων με τους Γροιλανδούς εταίρους για τα αλιευτικά δικαιώματα. Για το απόθεμα χάλιμπατ του Ατλαντικού στις ζώνες NAFO 0 και 1, η ΕΕ αποδέχθηκε την προσφορά που είχε οποία είχε κάνει η Γροιλανδία κατά τη Μικτή Επιτροπή του 2011 για ποσότητα ίση προς εκείνη του 2011. Η συνολική ποσότητα (200 τόνοι) αποτυπώνεται στον κανονισμό του 2012, ενώ ο κανονισμός του 2011 ανέφερε απλώς την ποσότητα που ήταν απαραίτητη για τις διαπραγματεύσεις ΕΕ-Νορβηγίας. Οι πραγματικές αλιευτικές δυνατότητες δεν αυξήθηκαν.

Το ίδιο ισχύει και για το απόθεμα χάλιμπατ του Ατλαντικού στα γροιλανδικά ύδατα V και XIV, όπου δεν υπήρξε μεταβολή της ποσόστωσης για την ΕΕ έναντι του παρελθόντος έτους.

Ο αξιότιμος κύριος βουλευτής παρακαλείται να υποβάλει τα ερωτήματά του για την παρακολούθηση και την διάθεση επιστημονικών στοιχείων στην Επιτροπή, δεδομένου ότι αυτά εμπίπτουν στην αρμοδιότητά της.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003636/12
to the Council
Kriton Arsenis (S&D)
(10 April 2012)

Subject: Fishing opportunities for 2012

On 16 December 2011, the Council decided on the fixing of fishing opportunities for the following year. Fishing limits were set higher than the levels advocated by scientific advice, and for 53 stocks, including fisheries which are currently overfished and even for species classified as endangered, the difference is over 10 %.

For example, the Atlantic halibut (Hipoglossus hipoglossus), classified as an endangered species by the IUCN, had its quota increased for 2012, in Greenland waters V and XIV by 12 % and in Greenland waters NAFO 0&1 by 167 %.

In the light of the above, can the Council:

1. specify the studies consulted in order to decide on the fixing of fishing opportunities;

2. explain the grounds and scientific advice on which it based its decision to increase the TAC for the Atlantic halibut (Hipoglossus hipoglossus) for 2012;

3. specify whether monitoring is being carried out, and if so, indicate what form of monitoring has been employed regarding the state of the Atlantic halibut stocks in the aforementioned fishing zones?

Reply
(11 June 2012)

Every year the Council adopts the fishing opportunities based on a proposal submitted by the Commission, taking into account the scientific, technical and economic advice, when available. It should be noted that the available scientific data for these stocks were accessible to all concerned parties.

The quotas proposed by the Commission and adopted by the Council regarding Atlantic halibut stocks were set in accordance with the relevant EU-Greenland Protocol on fisheries relations and the results of the consultations on fishing rights with the Greenlandic partners. For the Atlantic halibut stock in NAFO 0 & 1, the EU accepted the offer made by Greenland in the 2011 Joint Committee of an amount equal to the one for 2011. This total amount (200 tonnes) is reflected in the 2012 Regulation, whereas the 2011 Regulation only indicated the amount necessary for the EU-Norway negotiations. The real fishing opportunities did not increase.

The same applies for the Atlantic halibut stock in the Greenland waters V and XIV, where there has been no change in the quota for the EU as compared to the previous year.

The Honourable Member is invited to put his questions on monitoring and availability of scientific advice to the Commission, as they fall within its remit.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003637/12
to the Commission
Roger Helmer (EFD)
(10 April 2012)

Subject: Money laundering scheme in the Balkan region

The Commission is aware that Austria's Carinthia province parliamentary commission uncovered Hypo Alpe-Adria Bank's (HAAB) illegal dealings in the Balkan region with EUR 8 billion worth of suspicious uncollected loans to 12 countries.

Nationalisation (Austria) and bailout (Germany — Bayerische Landesbank) covered up the huge money laundering scheme. HAAB grew with politicians from Austria and the Balkan region siphoning money during the UN arms embargo and ensuing corrupt privatisations. HAAB's 'loans' approved in the last two decades to politicians and 'connected individuals' in the region — without any collateral — were never supposed to be repaid.

Should the Commission not insist on the identification of the Austrian, German, Croatian and other involved countries' politicians who have benefited from this money laundering scheme that has cost taxpayers billions of euros? Who are the owners of Hypo Alpe-Adria Consultants (HAAC), owning a portfolio of real estate estimated at EUR 1.5 billion, which includes more than 50 projects comprising a total of two million square metres in Croatia (66 %) and Serbia (33 %)? Why was this lucrative arm of the HAAB divested just before the Austrian government nationalised the parent company HAAB?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(21 June 2012)

Directive 2005/60/EC ([1]) sets out the framework designed to protect the soundness, integrity and stability of credit and financial institutions and confidence in the financial system as a whole, against the risks of money laundering and terrorist financing.

It follows from the directive that if a a covered entity, such as a bank, suspects that funds are the proceeds of a criminal activity, it is required to report these suspicions to a Financial Intelligence Unit, which will further investigate the case and if necessary transfer it to the national law enforcement authorities.

The Commission has no competence to investigate schemes such as those described by the Honourable Member. This is the responsibility of the relevant national authorities and, ultimately, of national Courts.

([1]) OJ L 309, 25.11.2005, p. 15.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003638/12
to the Commission
Alyn Smith (Verts/ALE)
(10 April 2012)

Subject: European Medical Directory

In recent years, many European citizens have been caught out by the European City Guide scam. It now appears that a similar scam has been set up, trading under the name of the European Medical Directory and operated by NovaChannel. Its tactics are the same: the directory appears to offer free inclusion for general practitioners, hospitals and doctors' surgeries; the charge is hidden in the small print; and the operators bill one year later for approximately EUR 1 000, often using quite threatening language.

NovaChannel was previously a Swiss-registered company, and its practices were being investigated by the Swiss Office of Fair Trading. However, it has now ceased trading from Switzerland and payment is now being pursued by United Lda, a Portuguese company.

Can the Commission confirm whether it is aware of this scam, and clarify what steps it is taking to halt the activities of these fraudsters?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(31 May 2012)

The Commission is aware of a number of misleading directory companies operating in Europe and decided to address this issue in the context of a communication, scheduled to be published in the first half of 2012. It will focus on the problems which European businesses face when confronted with misleading practices and present concrete proposals to address them, both at national and cross-border level.

In October 2011, the Commission issued a public consultation on Directive 2006/114/EC on misleading and comparative advertising and on other unfair commercial practices affecting business. An important part of this consultation was dedicated to the practices of misleading directory companies.

Moreover, the Member States have reported on their implementation of Directive 2006/114/EC, which prohibits such practices, as well as on actions taken to prevent misleading cross-border schemes in the area of business-to-business relations.

While the need for future legislative action is currently evaluated, the Commission will promote better enforcement by coordinating the enforcement activities of the Member States. In this context, meetings with the Member States' authorities will be organised in the course of 2012 to coordinate actions in cross-border cases of business-to-business misleading schemes and to exchange information with the view to improve enforcement.

Hence, the Commission would urge the Honourable Member's constituents to report their case to the Portuguese Authority for Food Safety and Economic Oversight (ASAE) ([1]).

([1]) http://www.asae.pt/.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-003641/12
aan de Commissie (Vicevoorzitter — Hoge Vertegenwoordiger)
Philip Claeys (NI)
(10 april 2012)

Betreft: VP/HR — Moorden op boeren in Zuid-Afrika

Op zaterdag 7 april werden in Griekwastad in Zuid-Afrika de boer Deon Steenkamp, zijn vrouw Christelle en hun 14-jarige dochter Marthella vermoord (zie bijvoorbeeld http://www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/farmer-wife-and-daughter-killed-1.1271669). Sinds 1994 zijn meer dan 3 000 Zuid-Afrikanen op hun boerderij vermoord, vaak in gruwelijke omstandigheden.

De situatie is zo zorgwekkend dat de in Washington gevestigde NGO Genocide Watch in september 2011 de status van Zuid-Afrika verhoogde van fase 5 (polarisatie) naar fase 6 (voorbereiding).

Landbouworganisaties klagen echter dat de aanvallen op boerderijen niet ernstig genoeg worden genomen door de politiediensten en de regering.

Heeft de hoge vertegenwoordiger voor het buitenlands beleid de regering van Zuid-Afrika hierover al aangesproken, en aangedrongen op maatregelen die de veiligheid bevorderen? Zo ja, wat waren de conclusies?

Zo neen, overweegt ze contact op te nemen met de Zuid-Afrikaanse regering om dit prangende probleem te bespreken?

Antwoord van hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter Ashton namens de Commissie
(15 juni 2012)

Wat betreft de kwestie van geweld tegen boeren in Zuid-Afrika wordt het geachte Parlementslid vriendelijk verwezen naar de antwoorden op de schriftelijke vragen E-3506/2010, E-3505/2010, E-5051/2011, E-0631/2012 en E-1907/2012. De hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter is op de hoogte van de zaak die het geachte Parlementslid noemt en verwijst naar haar antwoord van 4 april 2012 op zijn brief van 2 maart 2012, waarin werd gewezen op de schriftelijke verklaring over de „moorden op boeren in Zuid-Afrika".

In het kader van hun strategische partnerschap onderhouden de EU en Zuid-Afrika een intensieve politieke dialoog, onder meer over de mensenrechten, die de EU de mogelijkheid biedt om belangrijke en zorgwekkende kwesties, zoals die waarnaar het geachte Parlementslid verwijst, te bespreken met de Zuid-Afrikaanse autoriteiten.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003641/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Philip Claeys (NI)
(10 April 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Murder of farmers in South Africa

Farmer Deon Steenkamp, his wife Christelle and their 14-year-old daughter Marthella were murdered in Griekwastad in South Africa on Saturday 7 April (see, for example, http://www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/farmer-wife-and-daughter-killed-1.1271669). Since 1994, more than 3 000 South Africans have been murdered on their farms, often in horrific circumstances.

The situation is so alarming that in September 2011 the Washington-based NGO Genocide Watch upgraded South Africa's status from phase 5 (polarisation) to phase 6 (preparation).

Farmers' organisations complain, however, that the attacks on farms are not taken seriously enough by the police and the government.

Has the High Representative for Foreign Affairs already approached the South African Government about this issue and urged it to take measures to promote security? If so, what were the conclusions?

If not, is she considering contacting the South African Government to discuss this pressing issue?

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

With regard to the issues of violence against farmers in South Africa, the Honourable Member is kindly referred to answers provided to Questions E-3506/2010, E-3505/2010, E-5051/2011 and E-0631/2012 and E-1907/2012. The HR/VP is well aware of the issue referred to by the Honourable Member and would also like to point to the attention of the Honourable Member her reply (dated 4 April 2012) to his letter of 2 March 2012, calling her attention to the written declaration introduced on the 'murder of farmers in South Africa'.

Close political dialogue with South Africa, including a dialogue on human rights, established under the framework of the EU-South Africa Strategic Partnership, provides the EU with the opportunity to convey messages to the South African authorities on important issues of concern such as those described by the Honourable Member whenever appropriate.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-003642/12
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(11 de abril de 2012)

Asunto: Más de 400 prisioneros políticos kurdos en huelga de hambre por las violaciones de derechos humanos y de los principios democráticos básicos por parte de Turquía

Desde mediados del pasado mes de febrero más de 400 prisioneros políticos kurdos encarcelados por Turquía se encuentran en huelga de hambre poniendo en serio riesgo su vida, exigiendo justicia y respeto por los derechos humanos de los kurdos en Turquía.

La situación de la población turca es alarmante ya que, desde 2009, el Gobierno turco ha detenido a más de 9 000 kurdos, entre ellos seis diputados del Parlamento, 31 alcaldes, 96 periodistas, 36 abogados y 183 líderes del PPD (Partido por la Paz y la Democracia) y decenas de sindicalistas, defensores de derechos humanos y estudiantes, e incluyendo menores de edad.

Asimismo, el Ejército turco ha violado en numerosas ocasiones el Derecho internacional al llevar a cabo operaciones militares en territorio iraquí, habiendo sido asesinados 41 civiles sólo en las últimas operaciones.

Además de estos 400 prisioneros políticos kurdos en cárceles turcas, 15 kurdos europeos han iniciado una huelga de hambre a principios de este mes exigiendo una solución justa y democrática a la situación de la población kurda y la liberación y justicia para todos los prisioneros políticos y para Abdullah Oçalan, reconocido líder kurdo encarcelado desde 1999, y con el que las autoridades turcas mantuvieron negociaciones hasta que, el pasado 27 de julio, decidieron pararlas y someter al Sr. Oçalan a un inhumano régimen de aislamiento.

Teniendo en cuenta las violaciones de los derechos humanos y del Derecho internacional, la continua venta de armamento a Turquía por parte de países miembros de la UE como Francia y Alemania, así como el proceso de negociación relativo a la entrada de Turquía en la UE,

¿tiene en cuenta la Comisión la sistemática violación por parte de las autoridades turcas de los derechos humanos y principios democráticos básicos de la población kurda en el contexto de la negociación? ¿Ha solicitado formalmente la Comisión o piensa solicitar a las autoridades turcas el fin de las ilegales e injustificadas prácticas contra la población kurda? ¿Piensa congelar la Comisión cualquier avance en las negociaciones para la adhesión de este país a la UE hasta que haya una justa y democrática resolución? ¿Dispone la Comisión de información actualizada y da seguimiento a la lamentable situación de los presos políticos kurdos?

Respuesta del Sr. Füle en nombre de la Comisión
(31 de mayo de 2012)

El respeto de los derechos humanos es un requisito esencial del proceso de ampliación, al que la Comisión otorga máxima importancia. La Comisión supervisa continuamente la situación de los derechos humanos en Turquía y le concede un lugar prominente en los informes anuales de situación. La Comisión ha señalado en diversas ocasiones su preocupación por los procedimientos judiciales en relación con el caso KCK, en el que alrededor de 2 000 políticos, representantes locales elegidos y activistas de los derechos humanos han sido detenidos en el sudeste del país desde abril de 2008. La Comisión también destaca que los artículos de la legislación turca relativos al terrorismo y la amplia definición de terrorismo recogida en la Ley Antiterrorista siguen siendo una fuente importante de preocupación.

La Comisión pide aclaraciones sistemáticamente a las autoridades turcas sobre casos concretos de violaciones de los derechos humanos. Además, la Delegación de la Unión Europea en Turquía sigue de cerca los casos importantes, como el que nos ocupa, e incluso asiste a las vistas de los juicios.

La Comisión ha subrayado repetidamente que se tiene que encontrar una solución equilibrada y justa a la cuestión kurda e insta a todas las partes a que hagan el mayor esfuerzo por traer la paz y la prosperidad a todos los ciudadanos de Turquía. En el sudeste de Turquía necesitan paz, democracia y estabilidad, así como un desarrollo social, económico y cultural. Esto sólo puede conseguirse mediante un consenso sobre las medidas concretas de ampliación de los derechos sociales, económicos y culturales de las personas que viven en la región. Este enfoque exige la participación y la inclusión de todas las fuerzas democráticas, y no su exclusión. La Comisión espera la adopción de una nueva constitución civil que sirva de base para futuros avances.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003642/12
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: More than 400 Kurdish political prisoners on hunger strike against the violations of human rights and of basic democratic principles by Turkey

More than 400 Kurdish political prisoners jailed by Turkey have been on hunger strike since mid-February, seriously risking their lives, to demand justice and respect for the human rights of Kurds in Turkey.

The situation of the Turkish population is alarming, the Turkish government having arrested more than 9 000 Kurds since 2009, including six members of Parliament, 31 mayors, 96 journalists, 36 lawyers and 183 leaders of the PPD (Party for Peace and Democracy) and dozens of trade unionists, human rights activists and students, including minors.

The Turkish army has also repeatedly violated international law by carrying out military operations in Iraq, where, in the latest operations alone, 41 civilians have been killed.

In addition to these 400 Kurdish political prisoners in Turkish prisons, 15 European Kurds began a hunger strike at the beginning of this month to demand a just and democratic solution to the situation of the Kurdish people and release and justice for all political prisoners and for Abdullah Öcalan. Mr Öcalan is a recognised Kurdish leader imprisoned since 1999, with whom the Turkish authorities were holding negotiations until, on 27 July 2011, they decided to halt these and to subject Mr Öcalan to inhumane solitary confinement.

Considering the violations of human rights and international law, the continued sale of arms to Turkey by EU Member States like France and Germany, and the process of negotiation for Turkey's entry into the EU,

Does the Commission, in the context of these negotiations, take into account the Turkish authorities' systematic violation of basic democratic principles and the human rights of the Kurdish population?

Has the Commission formally requested, or does it intend to request, that the Turkish authorities put an end to illegal and unjustified practices against the Kurds?

Does the Commission plan to freeze progress in negotiations on this country joining the EU until a just and democratic resolution to this problem is reached?

Does the Commission have up-to-date information on the plight of Kurdish political prisoners and is it monitoring this information?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(31 May 2012)

Respect for human rights is a core requirement of the enlargement process, to which the Commission attaches the highest importance. The Commission continuously monitors the human rights situation in Turkey. It features prominently in the annual Progress Reports. The Commission has at various occasions stressed its concern as regards the judicial procedures in connection with the KCK case in which around 2 000 politicians, locally elected representatives and human rights activists in the south-east have been detained since April 2008. The Commission also underlined that terrorism-related articles of Turkish legislation and the wide definition of terrorism under the Anti-Terror Law remain a cause for serious concern.

The Commission systematically raises specific cases of violations of human rights with the Turkish authorities. Furthermore, the EU Delegation in Turkey closely monitors important cases such as this, including by attending trial hearings.

The Commission has repeatedly stressed that a balanced and fair solution to the Kurdish issue needs to be found and encouraged all parties to make all efforts to bring peace and prosperity for all the citizens of Turkey. The south-east of Turkey needs peace, democracy and stability as well as social, economic and cultural development. This can only be achieved via consensus on concrete measures expanding the social, economic and cultural rights of the people living in the region. This approach requires the participation and inclusion of all democratic forces, and not their exclusion. The Commission expects a new civilian Constitution to provide a basis for further progress.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003643/12
to the Commission
Robert Sturdy (ECR)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: EU-Argentina trade relations

In a recent joint statement, the EU, the US and 10 other WTO members outlined their concern at the increasingly worrying behaviour of Argentina with regard to the imposition of trade restrictions.

What specific and concrete actions, aside from the aforementioned statement, has the Commission been taking to address this issue? Furthermore, should Argentina continue along the path to protectionism, is the Commission considering further, more punitive, actions such as proposals to remove preferences for Argentina under the current GSP scheme?

In addition, does the Commission foresee Argentina's actions affecting the current negotiations with Mercosur, of which Argentina currently holds the presidency, in view of the upcoming exchange of offers?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(3 May 2012)

The Commission is aware of the restrictive trade policy and practices of Argentina and takes very seriously the problems experienced on a systematic and regular basis by EU exporters to Argentina.

The Commission is determined to tackle these problems at all levels and by all possible avenues, including World Trade Organisation (WTO) dispute settlement if necessary. The Commission has had a number of bilateral contacts with Argentina on this matter since 2009 and non-automatic licenses have been raised by the EU and other WTO members at the WTO level on several instances. Regrettably, the bilateral and multilateral démarches have not as yet brought any shift to this policy.

The Commission has also engaged in alliance building with other WTO members to build common ground to pursue these matters in an effective manner and is seeking collaboration from industry to obtain a range of substantial evidence.

While further action is not excluded, it should be noted that Argentina will not be covered under the proposed revision of the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) scheme.

With regard to EU-Mercosur negotiations, the EU remains fully committed to a successful conclusion of these negotiations with the whole Mercosur region and has insisted in this framework with its Mercosur State parties on the need to fight protectionism and refrain from taking any measures running against its open markets' philosophy.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-003644/12
aan de Commissie
Philip Claeys (NI)
(11 april 2012)

Betreft: Istanbul-conferentie in Europa

Kloppen de berichten dat de Europese Unie aan de Organisatie voor Islamitische Samenwerking (OIC) zou hebben toegezegd om in de maand juli van dit jaar een conferentie te organiseren in het kader van het „Istanbul-proces", dat er in feite op gericht is kritiek op de islam te criminaliseren?

Zo ja, wanneer en waar zou deze conferentie plaatsvinden? Wie wordt daar voor uitgenodigd? Wie zal namens de Europese Unie deelnemen? Wie draagt de kosten? Op hoeveel worden deze kosten begroot?

Weke standpunten zullen worden ingenomen namens de Europese Unie? Wordt het principe van de vrije meningsuiting verdedigd?

Antwoord van hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter Ashton namens de Commissie
(15 juni 2012)

Het proces van Istanbul werd ingesteld op initiatief van de Verenigde Staten en de Organisatie van de Islamitische Samenwerking (OIC) om toe te zien op de tenuitvoerlegging van Resolutie 16/18 die in maart 2011 door de Mensenrechtenraad van de VN werd goedgekeurd. Deze in onderling overleg besloten resolutie, die was voorgesteld door de OIC, is een keerpunt in die zin dat de traditionele eis van de OIC-landen om het concept van „godsdienstlaster" te erkennen als een mensenrechtennorm, niet langer wordt gehandhaafd. Dit concept wordt door de EU als onverenigbaar met de vrijheid van meningsuiting afgewezen. De resolutie legt meer de nadruk op praktische manieren om religieuze intolerantie te bestrijden. Het proces van Istanbul voorziet in vergaderingen met deskundigen ter uitwisseling van optimale werkwijzen voor de bevordering van religieuze tolerantie en voor de vrijwaring van de vrijheid van godsdienst of religieuze overtuiging. Nadat het proces op ministerieel niveau in juli 2011 van start was gegaan, in aanwezigheid van hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter Ashton en vertegenwoordigers van diverse lidstaten, organiseerden de VS in december 2011 een eerste vergadering van deskundigen in Washington, waarbij de nadruk werd gelegd op anti-discriminatie-wetgeving en aandacht voor religieuze minderheden. Dit seminar van deskundigen werd bijgewoond door vertegenwoordigers van ongeveer 30 landen uit alle regio's, met inbegrip van ettelijke EU-lidstaten. De Europese dienst voor extern optreden was op deskundigenniveau vertegenwoordigd en gaf een overzicht van de EU-verworvenheden inzake wetgeving en beleid op het gebied van non-discriminatie op grond van godsdienst of geloofsovertuiging. De bescherming van de vrijheid van meningsuiting stond centraal in de bijdragen van de EU, haar lidstaten en talrijke gelijkgezinde partners. Naar verwachting zal een EU-lidstaat een volgende vergadering van deskundigen bijeenroepen in de tweede helft van 2012, hoewel dit nog bevestigd dient te worden.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003644/12
to the Commission
Philip Claeys (NI)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: Istanbul conference in Europe

Is it true that the European Union has promised the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) that it will organise a conference in July 2012 within the framework of the Istanbul Process, which has actually been established for the purpose of making it a crime to criticise Islam?

If so, when and where is this conference supposed to be held? Who is being invited to attend? Who will represent the European Union at the conference? Who will bear the costs? What are the estimated costs?

What positions are to be adopted on behalf of the European Union? Is the principle of freedom of expression going to be defended?

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

The Istanbul process was established upon the initiative of the US and the OIC (Organisation of Islamic Cooperation) to follow up on the implementation of Resolution 16/18 adopted by the UN Human Rights Council in March 2011. This consensual resolution, presented by the OIC, proved a turning point as it no longer includes a longstanding claim by OIC countries to have the concept of defamation of religion — rejected by the EU as being incompatible with freedom of expression — recognised as a human rights standard. The resolution rather focuses on practical ways to fight religious intolerance. The Istanbul process provides for expert meetings to exchange best practices in fostering religious tolerance and ensuring freedom of religion or belief. After the launch of the process at Ministerial level in July 2012, which HR/VP Ashton and several Member States attended, a first expert meeting was hosted by the US in Washington in December 2011, focusing on anti-discrimination legislations and outreach to religious minorities. This expert seminar was attended by around 30 countries from all regions, including several EU Member States. The EEAS attended at expert level and presented the EU legislative *acquis* and policies in the area of non-discrimination on the ground of religion or beliefs. The protection of freedom of expression was at the core of the contributions presented by the EU, its Member States and many like-minded partners. It is indeed expected that an EU Member State will convene another expert meeting in the second half of 2012, though this remains to be confirmed.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-003646/12
aan de Commissie (Vicevoorzitter — Hoge Vertegenwoordiger)
Philip Claeys (NI)
(11 april 2012)

Betreft: VP/HR — Voorbereidingen vrijhandelsakkoord met Vietnam

De commissaris voor Handel kondigde in de marge van een economische bijeenkomst tussen ASEAN en de EU in Phnom Penh aan dat de voorbereidingen over een vrijhandelsakkoord met Vietnam binnenkort starten. Het staat nu al vast dat de situatie van de democratie en de mensenrechten in Vietnam, nog altijd een communistische éénpartijstaat, geen onderdeel wordt van de onderhandelingen.

Sinds het in voege treden van het Verdrag van Lissabon maakt het handelsbeleid deel uit van het buitenlands beleid. Het lag dus voor de hand dat het aspect democratie en mensenrechten aan bod zou komen, maar dat blijkt niet het geval te zijn.

Gaat de hoge vertegenwoordiger ermee akkoord dat dit aspect geen deel uit van de onderhandelingen over het afsluiten van een vrijhandelsakkoord met Vietnam?

Hoe valt dat allemaal te rijmen met de EU-doelstelling dat de Unie in het buitenland de democratie, de rechtsstaat, de mensenrechten en de principes van het internationaal recht moet versterken en steunen?

Zitten de hoge vertegenwoordiger van de Unie voor buitenlandse zaken en veiligheidsbeleid en de Commissie op dezelfde lijn?

Antwoord van hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter Ashton namens de Commissie
(15 juni 2012)

De Europese Unie (EU) hecht veel belang aan het bevorderen van het respect voor mensenrechten en fundamentele vrijheden, ook in Vietnam.

In het geval van Vietnam — en andere Zuidoost-Aziatische landen — wil de EU een coherent beleidskader voor de algemene politieke en economische betrekkingen creëren. De Commissie en de Europese Dienst voor extern optreden (EDEO) werken nauw samen om deze doelstelling te verwezenlijken en hebben een goed gecoördineerd standpunt over hoe dit het best kan worden bereikt.

De nieuwe partnerschaps- en samenwerkingsovereenkomst (PSO) tussen de EU en Vietnam bevat belangrijke bepalingen inzake mensenrechten, de rechtsstaat en het Internationaal Strafhof, die de invloed van de EU zullen vergroten en het haar mogelijk zullen maken de dialoog en de samenwerking ter bevordering van de mensenrechten in Vietnam te versterken.

Met het oog op betere samenhang wat betreft de manier waarop de EU haar algemene doelstellingen op het gebied van buitenlands beleid nastreeft, trachten de Commissie en de EDEO de nieuwe vrijhandelsovereenkomsten waarover momenteel wordt onderhandeld duidelijk te koppelen aan de PSO's, die bepalingen inzake mensenrechten bevatten.

Ook de liberalisering van de handel zal een positieve bijdrage leveren aan de mensenrechten. De openstelling van markten stimuleert groei en bevordert ontwikkeling, en draagt op die manier bij tot de verwezenlijking van fundamentele mensenrechten zoals sociale en economische rechten. De vrijhandelsovereenkomsten bevatten bepalingen inzake duurzame ontwikkeling die erop gericht zijn de naleving van internationale arbeidsnormen te bevorderen.

De geachte afgevaardigde mag erop vertrouwen dat de EU haar bezorgdheid over de mensenrechten in Vietnam op het hoogste niveau zal blijven aankaarten, ook in het kader van de mensenrechtendialoog die geregeld wordt gehouden tussen de EU en Vietnam. De voorzitter van de Raad, de voorzitter van de Commissie, de hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter en de commissaris voor Handel hebben allen deze kwesties ter sprake gebracht tijdens hun meest recente bijeenkomsten met Vietnamese leiders.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003646/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Philip Claeys (NI)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Preparations for a free trade agreement with Vietnam

The Commissioner for Trade announced in the context of an ASEAN-EU economic meeting in Phnom Penh that the preparations for a free trade agreement with Vietnam would begin soon. It is already clear that the situation regarding democracy and human rights in Vietnam, still a Communist one-party state, will not be among the topics discussed at the negotiations.

Since the Treaty of Lisbon entered into force, trade policy has been part of foreign policy. It therefore seemed obvious that the issue of democracy and human rights would be raised, but that does not appear to be the case.

Does the High Representative accept that this issue should not be discussed at the negotiations on a free trade agreement with Vietnam?

How can all this be reconciled with EU targets that the Union should strengthen and support democracy, the rule of law, human rights and the principles of international law abroad?

Do the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the Commission follow the same line?

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

The EU is committed to promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in Vietnam as elsewhere.

In the case of Vietnam, as well as with other Southeast Asian countries, the aim of the EU is to establish a coherent policy framework for overall political and economic relations. The Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) are working closely to fullfill this aim and have a well-coordinated view on how this can best be achieved.

The new EU-Vietnam Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) includes clauses on human rights, provisions on the rule of law and on the International Criminal Court which will enhance EU leverage and will allow to intensify dialogue and cooperation aimed at promoting human rights in Vietnam.

To ensure coherence in the way the EU pursues its broader foreign policy objectives, the Commission and the EEAS pursue a clear linkage between the new Free Trade Agreements (FTA) being negotiated and the PCAs, including human rights provisions.

Trade liberalisation also makes a positive contribution to human rights. The opening of markets stimulates growth and helps spur development, thereby contributing to the implementation of fundamental human rights such as social and economic rights. FTAs include provisions on sustainable development which notably aim to promote compliance with international labour standards.

The Honourable Member of Parliament can be assured that the EU will continue to raise human rights concerns with Vietnam at the highest level as well as within the regular EU-Vietnam human rights dialogue. The President of the European Council and the President of the Commission, as well as the High Representative/Vice-President and the Commissioner responsible for Trade all raised these issues during their most recent meetings with Vietnamese leaders.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-003647/12
aan de Commissie
Philip Claeys (NI)
(11 april 2012)

Betreft: Vrijhandelsakkoord met Vietnam

De commissaris voor Handel kondigde in de marge van een economische bijeenkomst tussen ASEAN en de EU in Phnom Penh aan dat de voorbereidingen over een vrijhandelsakkoord met Vietnam binnenkort starten. Het staat nu al vast dat de situatie van de democratie en de mensenrechten in Vietnam, nog altijd een communistische éénpartijstaat, geen onderdeel wordt van de onderhandelingen.

Sinds het in voege treden van het Verdrag van Lissabon maakt het handelsbeleid deel uit van het buitenlands beleid. Het lag dus voor de hand dat het aspect democratie en mensenrechten aan bod zou komen, maar dat blijkt niet het geval te zijn.

Waarom maakt dat aspect geen deel uit van de onderhandelingen over het afsluiten van een vrijhandelsakkoord met Vietnam?

Hoe valt dat allemaal te rijmen met de EU-doelstelling dat de Unie in het buitenland de democratie, de rechtsstaat, de mensenrechten en de principes van het internationaal recht moet versterken en steunen?

Zitten de Commissie (DG Handel) en de hoge vertegenwoordiger van de Unie voor buitenlandse zaken en veiligheidsbeleid (EEAS) op dezelfde lijn? Bestaat hierover overeenstemming binnen de Commissie zelf?

Antwoord van de heer De Gucht namens de Commissie
(24 mei 2012)

De Europese Unie (EU) hecht veel belang aan het bevorderen van het respect voor mensenrechten en fundamentele vrijheden, ook in Vietnam.

In het geval van Vietnam — en andere Zuidoost-Aziatische landen — wil de EU een coherent beleidskader voor de algemene politieke en economische betrekkingen creëren. De Commissie en de Hoge Vertegenwoordiger werken nauw samen om deze doelstelling te verwezenlijken en hebben een goed gecoördineerd standpunt over hoe dit het best kan worden bereikt.

De nieuwe partnerschaps- en samenwerkingsovereenkomst (PSO) tussen de EU en Vietnam zal belangrijke bepalingen bevatten inzake mensenrechten, de rechtsstaat en het Internationaal Strafhof. Deze bepalingen zullen de invloed van de EU vergroten en zullen het haar mogelijk maken de dialoog en de samenwerking ter bevordering van de mensenrechten in Vietnam te versterken.

Met het oog op betere samenhang wat betreft de manier waarop de EU haar algemene doelstellingen op het gebied van buitenlands beleid nastreeft, trachten de Commissie en de Hoge Vertegenwoordiger een duidelijke koppeling te leggen tussen de nieuwe vrijhandelsovereenkomsten waarover momenteel wordt onderhandeld en de PSO's, die bepalingen inzake mensenrechten bevatten.

Bovendien zal ook de liberalisering van de handel een positieve bijdrage leveren aan de mensenrechten. De openstelling van markten zorgt voor efficiëntie, stimuleert groei en bevordert ontwikkeling, en draagt op die manier bij tot de verwezenlijking van fundamentele mensenrechten zoals sociale en economische rechten. De vrijhandelsovereenkomsten bevatten bepalingen inzake duurzame ontwikkeling die erop gericht zijn de partijen in een samenwerkingsproces te betrekken en de naleving van internationale arbeidsnormen in de betreffende landen te bevorderen.

Tot slot mag de geachte afgevaardigde erop vertrouwen dat problemen met mensenrechten in de EU op het hoogste niveau zullen worden blijven aangekaart door voorzitter Van Rompuy en de voorzitter van de Commissie, alsook door de commissaris voor Handel.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003647/12
to the Commission
Philip Claeys (NI)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: Free trade agreement with Vietnam

The Commissioner for Trade announced in the context of an ASEAN-EU economic meeting in Phnom Penh that the preparations for a free trade agreement with Vietnam would begin soon. It is already clear that the situation regarding democracy and human rights in Vietnam, still a Communist one-party state, will not be among the topics discussed at the negotiations.

Since the Treaty of Lisbon entered into force, trade policy has been part of foreign policy. It therefore seemed obvious that the issue of democracy and human rights would be raised, but that does not appear to be the case.

Why will this issue not be discussed at the negotiations on a free trade agreement with Vietnam?

How can all this be reconciled with EU targets that the Union should strengthen and support democracy, the rule of law, human rights and the principles of international law abroad?

Do the Commission (DG Trade) and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (EEAS) follow the same line? Is there agreement on this issue inside the Commission itself?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(24 May 2012)

The European Union (EU) is committed to promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, in Vietnam as elsewhere.

In the case of Vietnam, as well as with other Southeast Asian countries, the aim of the EU is to establish a coherent policy framework for overall political and economic relations. The Commission and the High Representative are working closely to fullfill this aim and have a well coordinated view on how this can best be achieved.

The new EU-Vietnam Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) will include significant clauses on human rights, provisions on the rule of law and on the International Criminal Court. Such clauses will enhance EU leverage and will allow it to intensify dialogue and cooperation aimed at promoting human rights in Vietnam.

In order to ensure coherence in the way the EU pursues its broader foreign policy objectives, the Commission and the High Representative pursue a clear linkage between the new Free Trade Agreements (FTA) being negotiated and the PCAs, including human rights provisions.

Furthermore, trade liberalisation also has a positive contribution to make to human rights. The opening of markets creates efficiency, stimulates growth and helps spur development, thereby contributing to the implementation of fundamental human rights such as social and economic rights. FTAs include provisions on sustainable development which aim to engage the Parties in a cooperative process and support compliance of international labour standard commitments in domestic implementation.

Last but not least, the Honourable Member can be assured that EU human rights concerns will continue to be raised at the highest level by President Van Rompuy and the President of the Commission, as well as by the Commissioner responsible for Trade.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-003649/12
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (NI)
(11. April 2012)

Betrifft: Rechte von Menschen mit Behinderung

Gemäß der Mitteilung der Europäischen Kommission hat die „Digitale Agenda für Europa" insgesamt das Ziel, einen nachhaltigen wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Nutzen zu ziehen.

Die Kommission unterstreicht die Notwendigkeit mehrerer konkreter Aktionen, mit denen sichergestellt wird, dass neue elektronische Inhalte auch für Personen mit Behinderungen uneingeschränkt zugänglich sind. Insbesondere öffentliche Internetseiten und Online-Dienste in der EU sollten für Behinderte einfach zu nutzen sein.

1. Hat die Kommission kontrolliert, ob Österreich positive Ergebnisse im Bereich „Digitale Agenda für Europa" erreicht hat?

2. Wenn ja, welche sind das im Einzelnen?

3. Welche Maßnahmen hat die Kommission getätigt, um die Mitgliedstaaten zu ermuntern, neue Geräte für Behinderte im Bereich „Internet und Online-Dienste" zu schaffen?

4. Will die Kommission die Mitgliedstaaten anregen, schneller und effizienter Maßnahmen auf nationaler Ebene zu ergreifen?

Antwort von Frau Kroes im Namen der Kommission
(29. Mai 2012)

Die Kommission prüft jährlich die von den Mitgliedstaaten erreichten Fortschritte auf bestimmten Gebieten im Zusammenhang mit der Digitalen Agenda für Europa ([1]). Daraus ergibt sich, dass im Jahr 2010 in Österreich 51,8 % der benachteiligten Menschen regelmäßige Internetnutzer waren, was 10 % über dem EU-Durchschnitt liegt. Weitere Informationen zum Thema Barrierefreiheit enthält der INCOM-Bericht 2011 ([2]). Daten zum barrierefreien Webzugang finden sich auch im MeAC-1-Bericht ([3]). In Österreich wurden demnach bestimmte Rechtsinstrumente geschaffen.

Seit über 20 Jahren fördert die Kommission Forschungsarbeiten zum barrierefreien Zugang und zu unterstützenden Technologien, darunter auch für die Benutzung des Web. Gegenwärtig werden im Rahmen des Projekts Aegis quelloffene Lösungen entwickelt, um die Barrierefreiheit im Web zu verbessern. Diese beziehen sich insbesondere auf reichhaltige Internetanwendungen und eine bessere Interoperabilität zwischen Inhalten, Hosted-Browsern und Unterstützungsrobotik („Assistics") ([4]).

Der Vorschlag für EU-Rechtsvorschriften im Bereich der Barrierefreiheit im Web soll der Kommission in den kommenden Wochen zur Annahme vorgelegt werden. Ziel ist ein Binnenmarkt für die Erstellung barrierefreier öffentlicher Websites, wobei mit grundlegenden öffentlichen Diensten der Anfang gemacht wird. Im Zusammenhang mit der EU-Strategie für Menschen mit Behinderungen 2010-2020 und dem Übereinkommen der Vereinten Nationen über die Rechte von Menschen mit Behinderungen (UNCRPD) arbeitet die Kommission außerdem einen Vorschlag für einen „europäischen Rechtsakt über Barrierefreiheit" aus. Ferner wird die gerade vorgeschlagene Überarbeitung der Richtlinie über die Vergabe öffentlicher Aufträge eine Stärkung der Bestimmungen zur Barrierefreiheit bewirken. Überdies wird aufgrund eines Normungsauftrags (M/376) derzeit eine Norm für funktionale Zugänglichkeitskriterien für IKT-Produkte und -Dienste, darunter auch Webinhalte und Autorenwerkzeuge, ausgearbeitet, die 2013 zur Verabschiedung ansteht.

([1]) Siehe:ec.europa.eu/information_society/digital-agenda/scoreboard/countries/at/index_en.htm
([2]) Siehe: circa.europa.eu/Public/irc/infso/cocom1/library?l=/public_2012/cocom12-06_incom/_EN_1.0_&a=d.
([3]) Siehe: www.eaccessibility-progress.eu/country-profiles/austria/ und www.eaccessibility-progress.eu/country-profiles/austria/levels-of-eaccessibility-in-austria/.
([4]) Siehe: www.aegis-project.eu. Projektüberblick und abrufbare Produkte: http://www.aegis-project.eu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=14&Itemid=33, Open Accessibility Framework: http://www.aegis-project.eu/images/docs/AEGIS_D1.2.1_final-revised_2nd_Annual_Review.pdf.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003649/12
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (NI)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: Rights of people with disabilities

The communication from the European Commission states that the 'Digital Agenda for Europe' has the overall goal of delivering sustainable economic and social benefits.

The Commission underlines the need for a number of concrete actions to ensure that people with disabilities have unrestricted access to new electronic content. In particular, public websites and online services in the EU should be easy for disabled people to use.

1. Has the Commission checked whether Austria has achieved positive results with regard to the 'Digital Agenda for Europe'?

2. If so, what are these results in detail?

3. What measures has the Commission taken to encourage the Member States to provide new devices for disabled people which give them access to the Internet and online services?

4. Does the Commission intend to prompt the Member States to put in place faster and more efficient measures at a national level?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(29 May 2012)

The Commission annually checks the progress of Member States in certain areas related to the Digital Agenda for Europe ([1]). It shows that in 2010 in Austria 51.8% of disadvantaged people were regular Internet users, which is 10% above EU-average. Regarding e-accessibility, further information is provided in the INCOMreport2011 ([2]). For web-accessibility, some data are available in the MeAC-1 report ([3]). It can be noted that in Austria, some legal instruments are in place.

For over 20 years the Commission has been funding research on e-Accessibility and Assistive Technologies, including for using the web. Currently the Aegis project is developing open source solutions to improve web-accessibility, in particular for rich Internet applications and better interoperability between content, hosted browsers and assistics ([4]).

The proposal for an EU legislative intervention on web-accessibility is intended to be submitted for adoption to the college within the next weeks. It targets the internal market for the creation of accessible public websites, starting with essential public services. In the context of the EU Disability Strategy 2010-2020 and the UNCRPD, the Commission is also working on a proposal for a 'European Accessibility Act'. The currently proposed revision of the Public Procurement Directive will also strengthen the accessibility provision. A mandated (M/376) standard specifying the functional accessibility requirements for ICT products and services, including web content and authoring tools, is expected to be adopted in 2013.

([1]) See ec.europa.eu/information_society/digital-agenda/scoreboard/countries/at/index_en.htm
([2]) See circa.europa.eu/Public/irc/infso/cocom1/library?l=/public_2012/cocom12-06_incom/_EN_1.0_&a=d.
([3]) See www.eaccessibility-progress.eu/country-profiles/austria/ and www.eaccessibility-progress.eu/country-profiles/austria/levels-of-eaccessibility-in-austria/.
([4]) See: www.aegis-project.eu, see: http://www.aegis-project.eu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=14&Itemid=33 for an overview of downloadable products and http://www.aegis-project.eu/images/docs/AEGIS_D1.2.1_final-revised_2nd_Annual_Review.pdf for their Open Accessibility Framework.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-003650/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)
(11 Απριλίου 2012)

Θέμα: Αντιμετώπιση περιβαλλοντικών επιπτώσεων από το Ναυάγιο Sea Diamond

Συμπληρώθηκαν 5 χρόνια από το ναυάγιο του Sea Diamond μέσα στον κόλπο της Καλντέρας της Σαντορίνης. Η Επιτροπή, απαντώντας στο παρελθόν σε ερωτήσεις συναδέλφων ευρωβουλευτών, θεωρούσε τις επιπτώσεις «προς το παρόν αμελητέες» — βασιζόμενη σε μελέτη του ΕΛΚΕΘΕ ([1]) ([2]), — αλλά παρακινούσε να της γνωστοποιηθούν τυχόν νεότερα στοιχεία. Σύμφωνα με την απάντηση στη γραπτή ερώτηση E-1944/08 του κυρίου Παπαδημούλη, η Επιτροπή θεωρεί ότι το πλοίο, εάν δεν ανελκυθεί και παραμείνει ως έχει, θα θεωρηθεί απόβλητο λαμβάνοντας υπόψη τον κίνδυνο πιθανής υποβάθμισης του περιβάλλοντος που μπορεί να προκαλέσει. Από τη νομολογία του Δικαστηρίου Ευρωπαϊκών Κοινοτήτων ([3]), προκύπτει ότι τα μεταφερόμενα εντός δεξαμενόπλοιου καύσιμα καθίστανται απόβλητα κατά την έννοια των ευρωπαϊκών οδηγιών από τη στιγμή που διαρρεύσουν στη θάλασσα έπειτα από ναυάγιο και δεν μπορούν πλέον να είναι εμπορικώς εκμεταλλεύσιμα. Μελέτη ([4]) του τμήματος Μηχανικών Περιβάλλοντος του Πολυτεχνείου Κρήτης όχι μόνο κατέγραψε την κατάσταση μια δεδομένη χρονική στιγμή (2011) αλλά κι εκτίμησε μελλοντικές περιβαλλοντικές συνέπειες, έτσι ώστε να μπορέσει να ακολουθηθεί συγκεκριμένη μεθοδολογία αποκατάστασης της περιοχής. Η μελέτη καταλήγει στο ότι «Η επιβάρυνση που έχει επιφέρει στην περιοχή είναι σαφής και μοναδικός τρόπος αποτροπής της συνέχισής της αποτελεί η απομάκρυνσή του. Κάθε άλλη καθυστέρηση ή ενέργεια θα έχει ως αποτέλεσμα την οικολογική, και όχι μόνον, καταστροφή της Καλντέρας». Λαμβάνοντας υπόψη ότι το ναυάγιο βρίσκεται κρεμασμένο σε μία απότομη πλαγιά του βυθού στα 120 μέτρα, με κίνδυνο κάθε στιγμή να ολισθήσει και να φτάσει στα 280 μέτρα βάθος, με δραματικές συνέπειες για το ιδιαιτέρου κάλλους φυσικό περιβάλλον του νησιού που αποτελεί και μοναδικό ευρωπαϊκό φυσικό πλούτο και καθιστώντας την ανέλκυση πιο δύσκολη έως ανέφικτη, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Ποιος είναι ο κρίσιμος χρόνος για να θεωρηθεί το ναυάγιο «στερεό απόβλητο» και να υπάρχει ενδεχόμενο παράβασης της Οδηγίας 2006/12/ΕΚ ([5]) περί των στερεών αποβλήτων;

2. Θεωρεί επαρκείς τις ενέργειες των ελληνικών αρχών μέχρι σήμερα; Αν όχι, θα προβεί σε συγκεκριμένες ενέργειες, ώστε να υποχρεωθεί η ελληνική κυβέρνηση να αναλάβει δράση και να ληφθούν μέτρα για την απομάκρυνση — ανέλκυση του ναυαγίου ώστε να προστατευθεί το θαλάσσιο οικοσύστημα της Καλντέρας;

Απάντηση του κ. Potočnik εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(25 Ιουνίου 2012)

Ένα ναυάγιο που έχει εγκαταλειφθεί λόγω ατυχήματος μπορεί να θεωρηθεί ότι έχει απορριφθεί και, επομένως, εμπίπτει στον ορισμό των αποβλήτων του άρθρου 3 σημείο 1 της οδηγίας 2008/98/ΕΚ ([6]) για τα απόβλητα (Οδηγία πλαίσιο για τα απόβλητα — WFD). Δυνάμει του άρθρου 13 της οδηγίας-πλαίσιο για τα απόβλητα, τα κράτη μέλη οφείλουν να εξασφαλίζουν ότι η διαχείριση των αποβλήτων πραγματοποιείται χωρίς να τίθεται σε κίνδυνο η ανθρώπινη υγεία και χωρίς να βλάπτεται το περιβάλλον.

Η Επιτροπή εκτιμά ότι κατά τη στιγμή της βύθισης οι ελληνικές αρχές έλαβαν τα αναγκαία μέτρα για την άντληση του καυσίμου που μετέφερε το πλοίο ώστε να αποφευχθεί η βλάβη στο θαλάσσιο περιβάλλον. Πέντε έτη μετά, δεν υπάρχουν πειστικά στοιχεία που να αποδεικνύουν ότι την παρούσα στιγμή το ναυάγιο αποτελεί κίνδυνο για το θαλάσσιο περιβάλλον.

Επιπλέον, η Επιτροπή στηρίζει πλήρως τις εργασίες του Διεθνούς Ναυτιλιακού Οργανισμού και ενθαρρύνει την έναρξη ισχύος της Σύμβασης του Ναϊρόμπι για την ανέλκυση ναυαγίων ([7]). Η Σύμβαση για την ανέλκυση ναυαγίων προβλέπει σταθερή νομική βάση για τα παράκτια κράτη που ανελκύουν ή έχουν ανελκύσει, από τις παράκτιες ζώνες, ναυάγια τα οποία θέτουν σε κίνδυνο την ασφάλεια της ναυσιπλοΐας ή το θαλάσσιο και παράκτιο περιβάλλον ή και τα δύο.

([1]) Ελληνικό Κέντρο Θαλασσίων Ερευνών.
([2]) H-0748/08, H-0037/10, E-1944/08.
([3]) Υπόθεση C-188/07/24.06.2008.
([4]) http://ecoanemos.files.wordpress.com/2011/03/cf83cf85ceb3cebaceb5cebdcf84cf81cf89cf84ceb9cebaceb1_ceb1cf80cebfcf84ceb5cebbceb5cf83cebcceb1cf84ceb1_sea_diamond_25-02-2011.pdf.
([5]) Οδηγία 2006/12/ΕΚ του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου και του Συμβουλίου της 5ης Απριλίου 2006 περί των στερεών αποβλήτων, ΕΕ L 114 της 27.4.2006.
([6]) ΕΕ L 312 της 22.11.2008.
([7]) Διεθνής Σύμβαση του Ναϊρόμπι για την ανέλκυση ναυαγίων· εγκρίθηκε στις 18/5/2007 (IMO), εκκρεμεί η κύρωση.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003650/12
to the Commission
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: Dealing with the environmental consequences of the *Sea Diamond* shipwreck

Five years have passed since the sinking of the *Sea Diamond* in the Santorini caldera. In response to previous questions by MEP colleagues, the Commission took the view that the consequences are 'at present negligible', basing this conclusion on a study by the Hellenic Centre for Marine Research ([1]) ([2]). However, it urged interested parties to keep it informed of any new data that might emerge. According to the reply to Written Question E-1944/08 by Dimitrios Papadimoulis, the Commission considers that, if the ship is not raised and remains as it is, it could be regarded as waste, given the potential risk of environmental degradation. The case law of the European Court of Justice ([3]) states that, pursuant to EU directives, fuel transported in a tanker comprises waste from the moment it leaks into the sea following a shipwreck and is no longer commercially exploitable. A study ([4]) by the Department of Environmental Engineering of the Technical University of Crete not only recorded the situation at a given point in time (2011) but also estimated the potential future environmental consequences in order to pursue a specific methodology for the restoration of the area. The study concludes that 'the damage that has been caused to the area is obvious and the only way that it can be prevented from continuing is for the wreck to be removed. Any further delay or other action will result in an ecological, and not only ecological, disaster for the caldera'. Bearing in mind that the wreck is perched on a steep underwater slope at a depth of 120 m, in danger of sliding down at any moment to a depth of 280 m, with dramatic consequences for the particularly beautiful natural environment that makes the island a unique European natural treasure and considering that these factors make the raising of the wreck difficult, if not impossible, will the Commission answer the following:

1. At what crucial point in time will the wreck be considered 'waste' suggesting a breach of Directive 2006/12/EC on waste?

2. Does the Commission consider the actions taken by the Greek authorities to be adequate? If not, does it intend to implement specific measures to oblige the Greek Government to take action and initiate measures for the removal/raising of the shipwreck to protect the marine ecosystem of the Caldera?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(25 June 2012)

A shipwreck that has been abandoned as a consequence of an accident may be regarded as having been discarded, thus falling under the definition of waste in Article 3.1 of the directive 2008/98/EC ([5]) on waste (Waste Framework Directive — WFD). Pursuant to Article 13 of the WFD, Member States have to ensure that waste management is carried out without endangering human health or the environment.

The Commission estimates that at the time of sinking the Greek authorities took the necessary actions to pump out the fuel carried on board of the ship so as to avoid damage to the marine environment. Five years on, there is no conclusive evidence that at present the shipwreck constitutes a threat to the marine environment.

In addition, the Commission fully supports the work of the International Maritime Organisation and encourages the entry into force of the Nairobi Convention on the Removal of Wrecks ([6]). The Wreck Removal Convention provides a sound legal basis for coastal States to remove, or have removed, from their coastlines, wrecks which pose a hazard to the safety of navigation or to the marine and coastal environments, or both.

([1]) Hellenic Centre for Marine Research.
([2]) H-0748/08, H-0037/10, E-1944/08.
([3]) Case C-188/07/24.06.2008.
([4]) http://ecoanemos.files.wordpress.com/2011/03/cf83cf85ceb3cebaceb5cebdcf84cf81cf89cf84ceb9cebaceb1_ceb1cf80cebfcf84ceb5cebbceb5cf83cebcceb1cf84ceb1_sea_diamond_25-02-2011.pdf
([5]) OJ L 312, 22.11.2008.
([6]) Nairobi International Convention on the Removal of Wrecks, adopted 18/5/2007 (IMO), pending ratification.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003651/12
to the Commission
William (The Earl of) Dartmouth (EFD)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: Turkey's ambitions regarding Cyprus and the EU

Given, on the one hand, Turkey's intention to annex the north of Cyprus because of its natural resources and, on the other hand, its ambition to join the EU, can the Commission say whether it is concerned about Turkey's aggressive behaviour towards a Member State?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(4 June 2012)

The Commission would like to stress that there is only one option: the reunification of the island in a bi-communal, bi-zonal federation. The Commission will continue calling on all stakeholders to act in this sense.

The Commission furthermore refers to the Conclusions of the European Council of 9 December 2011, in which the European Council expressed serious concern with regard to Turkish statements and threats and to the Council conclusions of the 5 December 2011, in which the Council expressed its expectation that Turkey actively supports the ongoing negotiations aimed at a fair, comprehensive and viable settlement of the Cyprus problem within the UN framework, in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and in line with the principles on which the Union is founded.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003652/12
to the Commission
Julie Girling (ECR)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: Supplementary travel charges

What is the Commission's view on hotels and tour operators levying supplementary charges on solo travellers within the EU?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(21 May 2012)

The Commission is aware that single travellers throughout the EU are often requested by tour operators and hotels to pay supplementary charges. There are, however, no EU rules which prohibit such practice. Tour operators and providers of accommodation, such as bed and breakfasts, motels and hotels, are in general free to determine the price of their services. The prices set for these services are most likely a result of many factors, such as the expected costs and income related to the booking. The market is, however, responding to the increasing demand of tourist services by single persons. Many tour operators and hotels regularly offer package deals or accommodation without any supplementary charges on solo travellers. Some companies also specialise in holidays for single persons. On this background, and as long as providers of accommodation and tour operators provide clear information to their customers regarding the prices of their services, the Commission does not see any need to intervene against the abovementioned pricing policies.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-003653/12
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(11 de abril de 2012)

Asunto: Emisiones de CO_2

Los objetivos actuales para las negociaciones sobre la propuesta de Directiva del Consejo que modifica la Directiva 2003/96/CE del Consejo por la que se reestructura el régimen comunitario de imposición de los productos energéticos y de la electricidad (COM(2001)169) pueden alcanzarse sobre la base de la cuota del gasóleo existente en el mercado de turismos de la UE. Un aumento del precio del gasóleo en las estaciones de servicio, debido a impuestos superiores comparados con los que se imponen a la gasolina, puede dar lugar a una importante reducción de la cuota del gasóleo en el parque de automóviles nuevos, máxime en el sector de las pequeñas y medianas empresas, lo que aumentaría las emisiones de CO_2 y, por lo tanto, comprometería la consecución de los objetivos ambientales de la UE en este ámbito. Puede considerarse que los automóviles diésel actuales, que cumplen con las especificaciones Euro 5 y Euro 6 relativas a los contaminantes (NO_X, PM, CO, etc.), se basan en tecnología limpia que contribuye a reducir considerablemente las emisiones de CO_2.

¿Puede la Comisión explicar si esta propuesta para modificar la Directiva 2003/96/CE se ajusta a los objetivos de emisiones de CO_2 de la UE para el parque de automóviles nuevos?

Respuesta del Sr. Šemeta en nombre de la Comisión
(4 de junio de 2012)

La propuesta de la Comisión de revisión de la Directiva 2003/96/CE ([1]) (Directiva sobre la fiscalidad de la energía) se ajusta a la estrategia de la UE dirigida a reducir las emisiones de CO_2 de los automóviles. Al basar la fiscalidad en criterios objetivos (emisiones de CO_2 y contenido energético), se garantiza una fiscalidad más en consonancia con los objetivos de la UE en materia de energía y cambio climático, incluida la estrategia sobre las emisiones de CO_2 de los automóviles, así como unas señales de precios que los complementen en vez de contradecirlos. Además, un período transitorio que permita una adaptación progresiva de la fiscalidad de la gasolina y el gasóleo dejaría tiempo suficiente a los fabricantes de vehículos para invertir en la mejora del potencial de eficiencia de los automóviles de gasolina y diésel o de los vehículos de motor impulsados por combustibles alternativos y, por lo tanto, seguir contribuyendo a la aplicación de la estrategia sobre las emisiones de CO_2 de los automóviles.

Las emisiones distintas al CO_2 de los vehículos ligeros están reguladas por el Reglamento (CE) n° 715/2007 ([2]) sobre la homologación de tipo de los vehículos de motor por lo que se refiere a las emisiones procedentes de turismos y vehículos comerciales ligeros (Euro 5 y Euro 6). También desde el punto de vista técnico, la reducción de las emisiones de NO_X, CO, hidrocarburos o partículas es independiente de la reducción de las emisiones de CO_2.

([1]) COM(2011) 169.
([2]) DO L 171 de 29.6.2007, pp. 1-16.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003653/12
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: CO_2 emissions

The current objectives for negotiations on the proposal for a directive amending Directive 2003/96/EC restructuring the Community framework for the taxation of energy products and electricity (COM(2011) 0169) are reachable on the basis of the existing diesel share on the EU passenger car market. An increased diesel price at the pump, due to higher taxes compared to those on petrol, is likely to cause a significant reduction in the diesel share in new car fleets, especially in the small and medium-sized business sector, increasing CO_2 emissions and thus compromising EU environmental objectives in this area. Today's diesel vehicles, which meet Euro 5 and Euro 6 specifications for pollutants (NOx, PM, CO, etc.), can be considered as based on clean technology that contributes to reducing CO_2 emissions significantly.

In the light of the above, can the Commission explain if this proposal to amend Directive 2003/96/EC is in line with the EU's CO_2 emission objectives for new passenger car fleets?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(4 June 2012)

The Commission proposal for a revision of Directive 2003/96/EC ([1]) (the Energy Taxation Directive) is in line with the EU strategy to reduce CO_2 emissions from cars. By basing taxation on objective criteria — CO_2 emissions and energy content — it would ensure that taxation is brought more closely in line with the EU's energy and climate change objectives, including the CO_2 from cars strategy, and that it gives price signals that complement rather than contradict them. Moreover, a transitional period allowing for a gradual alignment of petrol and diesel taxation would give car manufacturers sufficient time to invest in improving the efficiency potential of petrol and diesel cars or motor vehicles running on alternative fuels and thus stay on course for the implementation of the CO_2 from cars strategy.

Emissions other than CO_2 from light duty vehicles are regulated by Regulation 715/2007 ([2]) (Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2007 on type approval of motor vehicles with respect to emissions from light passenger and commercial vehicles (Euro 5 and Euro 6)). Also from a technical point of view, reducing emissions of NOx, CO, Hydrocarbons or Particulate Matter is independent from reducing CO_2 emissions.

([1]) COM(2011)169.
([2]) OJ L 171, 29.6.2007, p. 1-16.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-003654/12
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(11 de abril de 2012)

Asunto: Principio de equivalencia a todos los niveles de imposición sobre los combustibles

De acuerdo con los actuales objetivos de la propuesta de Directiva del Consejo que modifica la Directiva 2003/96/CE del Consejo por la que se reestructura el régimen comunitario de imposición de los productos energéticos y de la electricidad (COM(2011)169), basar dicha imposición en el contenido en energía y el contenido de CO_2 de un combustible es un planteamiento neutral y lógico para establecer impuestos mínimos para cada tipo de carburante. Ampliar el principio de proporcionalidad a la decisión de un determinado Estado miembro de introducir impuestos superiores elimina la flexibilidad necesaria para tener en cuenta el intercambio de diferentes tecnologías en las flotas existentes y promover adecuadamente el uso de tecnologías diésel avanzadas, a fin de incrementar la eficiencia energética y reducir las emisiones de CO_2.

¿Puede la Comisión explicar por qué esta modificación de la Directiva 2003/96/CE insiste en el principio de equivalencia a todos los niveles de imposición?

Respuesta del Sr. Šemeta en nombre de la Comisión
(24 de mayo de 2012)

La propuesta de revisión de la Directiva 2003/96/CE ([1]) presentada por la Comisión prevé la imposición equivalente de todos los productos energéticos empleados para el mismo uso, tomando en consideración su contenido en energía y las emisiones de CO_2 para enviar una señal de precios coherente a fin de ahorrar energía y reducir las emisiones de CO_2, con independencia del producto energético utilizado, y de eliminar las distorsiones fiscales en la competencia entre productos energéticos. La Directiva revisada proporcionaría seguridad a las empresas, ya que les permitiría planificar sus inversiones tecnológicas y elegir su fuente de energía preferida sin miedo a cambios arbitrarios en la estructura de la fiscalidad de la energía.

Si bien, según la propuesta de la Comisión, el principio de equivalencia se aplicaría a todos los productos energéticos y exigiría la fijación de tipos impositivos únicos para el mismo uso de combustible —uno para la imposición del consumo energético general y otro para la imposición de las emisiones de CO_2—, los Estados miembros mantendrían un gran margen de flexibilidad. Podrían fijar los dos tipos impositivos por encima del tipo mínimo, como consideraran oportuno en función de sus necesidades, tanto presupuestarias como atendiendo al nivel de ambición de sus objetivos nacionales en materia de cambio climático. Además, el principio de equivalencia del tipo impositivo aplicable al contenido en energía de los carburantes de automoción no entraría en vigor hasta 2023, lo que proporcionaría tiempo suficiente a los operadores económicos y ciudadanos para adaptarse.

([1]) COM(2011) 169 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003654/12
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: Principle of equivalence at all levels of taxation on fuels

According to the current objectives of the proposal for a Council directive amending Directive 2003/96/EC restructuring the Community framework for the taxation of energy products and electricity (COM(2011) 0169), basing such taxation on a fuel's energy and CO_2 content is a neutral and logical approach to setting minimum taxes for each type of fuel. Extending the principle of proportionality to a given Member State's decision to introduce higher taxes removes the flexibility needed in order to take into account the share of different technologies in existing fleets and promote adequately the use of advanced diesel technologies so as to increase energy efficiency and reduce CO_2 emissions.

In the light of the above, can the Commission explain why this modification of Directive 2003/96/EC insists on the principle of equivalence at all levels of taxation?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(24 May 2012)

The Commission proposal for a revision of Directive 2003/96/EC ([1]) provides for equivalent taxation of all energy products put to the same use, taking into account their energy content and CO_2 emissions, so as to provide a consistent price signal to save energy and reduce CO_2 emissions irrespective of the energy product used and to remove tax distortions in competition between energy products. The revised Directive would provide security for business and allow it to plan its technological investments and choose its preferred energy source without having to fear arbitrary changes in the structure of energy taxation.

Even though, according to the Commission proposal, the principle of equivalence would apply to all energy products and require the use of single tax rates for the same fuel use — one for the general energy consumption taxation and one for the taxation of CO_2 emissions — Member States would still retain a large degree of flexibility. They could set these two tax rates above the minima as they see fit according to their needs, budgetary and, in terms of the level of ambition regarding their national climate change objectives. In addition, the principle of equivalence for the rate on energy content for motor fuels would only come into force in 2023 which should provide sufficient time for economic operators and citizens to adapt.

([1]) COM(2011) 169 final.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-003655/12
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(11 de abril de 2012)

Asunto: Niveles de imposición aplicables al gasóleo comercial

Basar la imposición en el contenido en energía y de CO_2 de un combustible es un planteamiento neutral y lógico para establecer impuestos mínimos para cada tipo de carburante. Ampliar este requisito a fin de limitar la posibilidad de que los Estados miembros establezcan niveles de imposición inferiores para el gasóleo comercial no reporta ningún beneficio ambiental o en materia de eficiencia, puesto que no existe ninguna alternativa real a la tecnología diésel utilizada en los transportes pesados por carretera de larga distancia. Ello penalizará a la mayoría de los Estados miembros situados en la periferia de la UE, teniendo en cuenta que se enfrentan a mayores costes de logística para llegar al resto del mercado europeo.

¿Puede la Comisión explicar por qué la modificación de la Directiva 2003/96/CE elimina la posibilidad de distinguir entre la imposición de gasóleos comerciales y no comerciales?

Respuesta del Sr. Šemeta en nombre de la Comisión
(25 de mayo de 2012)

La Comisión opina que la posibilidad de que los Estados miembros apliquen a los usos comerciales del gasóleo de automoción un nivel de imposición inferior al aplicado a los usos no comerciales del mismo ya no es compatible con el requisito de mejorar la eficiencia energética y con la necesidad de abordar el creciente impacto medioambiental del transporte. En 2008, el transporte por carretera representó aproximadamente el 70 % de las emisiones de CO_2 procedentes del transporte ([1]). El transporte por carretera es uno de los pocos sectores en que las emisiones han aumentado rápidamente: entre 1990 y 2008, las emisiones procedentes del transporte por carretera aumentaron en un 26 %. Inevitablemente, a la postre habrá de lograrse la plena internalización de los costes externos en relación con el transporte comercial de mercancías por carretera, ya que este supone una importante y creciente fuente de emisiones y no hay ningún motivo medioambiental que justifique aplicarle un nivel de imposición inferior al de los usos privados. También cabe señalar que la propuesta establece un período transitorio hasta 2018 para alcanzar los nuevos niveles mínimos de imposición de la UE y hasta 2023 para la aplicación del principio de igualdad de la imposición de todos los carburantes, lo cual deja suficiente tiempo al sector del transporte para adaptarse.

([1]) EU transport in figures 2011, Comisión Europea.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003655/12
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: Tax rates for commercial diesel

Basing taxation on a fuel's energy and CO_2 content is a neutral and logical approach to setting minimum taxes for each type of fuel. Extending this requirement in order to limit the possibility for Member States to set lower tax rates for commercial diesel does not lead to any environmental or efficiency benefit, as there is no real alternative to diesel technology on heavy-duty long-distance road transport. It will penalise most of the Member States on the EU's periphery as they are faced with higher logistical costs in reaching the rest of the European market.

In the light of the above, can the Commission explain why this modification of Directive 2003/96/EC is removing the possibility of distinguishing between commercial and non-commercial diesel taxation?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(25 May 2012)

The Commission is of the view that the possibility for Member States to apply a lower level of taxation to commercial rather than to non-commercial use of gas oil as propellant is no longer compatible with the requirement to improve energy efficiency and the need to address the growing environmental impact of transport. In 2008, road transport accounted for about 70% of CO_2 emissions from transport ([1]). Road transport is one of the few sectors where emissions have risen rapidly: between 1990 and 2008 emissions from road transport increased by 26%. It is inevitable that full internalisation of external costs eventually has to be achieved for commercial road transport, since this is an important and growing source of emissions and there is no environmental reason to tax it lower than private use. It should also be noted that the proposal provides for a transitional period until 2018 to reach the new EU minimum levels of taxation and until 2023 for the application of the principle of equal taxation of all motor fuels, which leaves ample time for the transport sector to adapt.

([1]) EU transport in figures 2011, European Commission.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-003656/12
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(11 de abril de 2012)

Asunto: Tecnología diésel avanzada

La industria automovilística europea es líder mundial en tecnología diésel avanzada, y la UE ha estado promoviéndola mediante el establecimiento de objetivos de emisiones de nivel mundial para el mercado europeo, a saber, las normas Euro 6, para los turismos y los vehículos ligeros, y Euro VI, para los vehículos pesados. Las inversiones realizadas por los fabricantes de vehículos y sus proveedores, los fabricantes de componentes, para desarrollar dichas tecnologías no se amortizarán en el periodo previsto si la cuota de mercado del gasóleo se reduce con la introducción de un nuevo marco impositivo que penaliza el gasóleo frente a la gasolina y, por ende, perjudica a la industria automovilística europea, que ya soporta una fuerte presión debida a las crisis financiera y de la deuda, al tiempo que también disminuye los recursos disponibles para la investigación europea en torno a los sistemas alternativos de propulsión y los carburantes.

Por lo que respecta a la modificación de la Directiva 2003/96/CE ([1]), ¿considera la Comisión que la propuesta de Directiva a que se refiere el documento COM(2011)169 podría disminuir la rentabilidad de la industria automovilística europea?

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-003657/12
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(11 de abril de 2012)

Asunto: La industria europea del automóvil

La industria europea del automóvil es líder mundial en tecnología diésel avanzada, y ha estado promoviendo el uso de esta tecnología en otros mercados durante años. China, India e incluso Estados Unidos están adoptando niveles de emisiones similares a los de la UE y están aumentando sus cuotas de mercado del gasóleo, ofreciendo con ello una excelente oportunidad de crecimiento a la industria europea del automóvil. La reducción de la cuota del mercado del gasóleo que se prevé que se produzca tras introducirse la propuesta de Directiva del Consejo COM(2011)169 podría transmitir un mensaje erróneo a los otros grandes mercados.

¿Puede la Comisión indicar si cree que la propuesta de Directiva del Consejo COM(2011)169 debilitará la posición competitiva de la industria europea del automóvil en el mercado mundial?

Respuesta conjunta del Sr. Šemeta en nombre de la Comisión
(24 de mayo de 2012)

El periodo transitorio, hasta 2023, previsto en la propuesta de la Comisión de revisión de la Directiva 2003/96/CE ([2]) (Directiva de la imposición energética) para alcanzar el objetivo de la imposición equivalente de todos los carburantes de automoción dejaría tiempo suficiente a la industria del automóvil para adaptarse e invertir en mejorar la eficiencia de los automóviles de gasolina y de diésel o de los vehículos que utilizan carburantes alternativos.

Además, la evaluación de impacto ([3]) que acompaña a la propuesta muestra que la revisión de la Directiva no haría más que estabilizar la cuota de mercado del diésel más o menos en el 60 % en 2030, frente a un aumento del 64 % si no se adoptara la revisión. Como está previsto que el parque automovilístico total de la Unión Europea siga aumentando de aquí a 2030, se espera que sigan creciendo las ventas totales de automóviles de diésel (véase la página 36 de la evaluación de impacto). Así pues, la Directiva revisada se limitaría a ralentizar la tendencia hacia una mayor «dieselización» del parque automovilístico europeo, pero ni la revertiría ni repercutiría negativamente en la viabilidad de la industria europea del automóvil.

([1]) DO L 283 de 31.10.2003, p. 51.
([2]) COM(2011) 169 final.
([3]) SEC(2011) 409.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003656/12
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: Advanced diesel technology

The European automotive industry is the world's leader in advanced diesel technology, and the EU has been promoting it by setting world-class emission targets for the European market, namely Euro 6 for passenger cars and light-duty vehicles and Euro VI for heavy-duty vehicles. The investment made by vehicle manufacturers and their suppliers, the component manufacturers, in developing those technologies will not be amortised in the expected period if the market share for diesel is reduced by a new tax framework that penalises diesel over petrol and thus damages Europe's automotive industry, which is already under heavy pressure from the financial and debt crisis, while also reducing the resources available for European research into alternative propulsion systems and fuels.

In the light of the above and concerning the modification of Directive 2003/96/EC ([1]), does the Commission consider that the proposal for a directive set out in document COM(2011) 0169 could damage the viability of the European automotive industry?

Question for written answer E-003657/12
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: The European automotive industry

The European automotive industry is the world leader in advanced diesel technology, and has been promoting the use of this technology in other markets for years. China, India and even the USA are adopting emission standards similar to those of the EU, and are increasing their diesel market shares, providing the European automotive industry with an excellent growth opportunity. The reduction of the European diesel market share that is to be expected following the introduction of the proposal for a Council Directive COM(2011) 169 could send the wrong message to the other major markets.

In light of the above, can the Commission state whether it believes that the proposal for a Council Directive COM(2011) 169 will weaken the competitive position of the European automotive industry in the world market?

Joint answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(24 May 2012)

The transitional period until 2023 provided for in the Commission proposal for a revision of Directive 2003/96/EC ([2]) (the Energy Taxation Directive) to achieve equal taxation of all motor fuels would leave sufficient time to the automotive industry to adapt and to invest in improving the efficiency of petrol and diesel cars or motor vehicles running on alternative fuels.

Moreover, the impact assessment ([3]) accompanying the proposal shows that the revision of the Energy Taxation Directive would only lead to a stabilisation of the diesel market share at around 60% in 2030, instead of an increase to 64% without the revision. As the total number of cars in the EU is expected to grow further by 2030, total sales of diesel cars are still expected to grow (see page 36 of the impact assessment). Hence, the revised Energy Taxation Directive would only slow down the trend towards more dieselisation of the European car fleet, but would not revert it and is not expected to have a negative impact on the viability of the European automotive industry.

([1]) OJ L 283, 31.10.2003, p. 51.
([2]) COM(2011)169 final.
([3]) SEC(2011)409.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-003658/12
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(11 de abril de 2012)

Asunto: Motores diésel

Es probable que la alta tecnología europea de los motores diésel avanzados sea sustituida por tecnologías competidoras hasta ahora promovidas en otras regiones del mundo, lo que apunta a que las oportunidades de empleo podrían trasladarse de Europa a esas otras regiones. Puesto que la alta tecnología de los motores diésel genera una demanda de capacidades de ingeniería y producción excepcionales, creando oportunidades de empleo altamente cualificado en Europa, dicha pérdida no podría verse compensada con aumentos paralelos del empleo en otros ámbitos.

1. ¿Puede la Comisión explicar qué efectos tendrán los cambios propuestos a la Directiva 2003/96/CE en el empleo en la UE?

2. Si, como se prevé, la cuota de mercado del gasóleo de nuevos vehículos producidos en la UE se reduce a consecuencia de los cambios introducidos en la Directiva 2003/96/CE, ¿puede la Comisión explicar cómo afectará dicha reducción a la capacidad de la industria europea del automóvil para crear empleo?

Respuesta del Sr. Šemeta en nombre de la Comisión
(4 de junio de 2012)

La evaluación de impacto ([1]) adjunta a la propuesta de revisión de la Directiva 2003/96/CE ([2]) (Directiva sobre la fiscalidad de la energía) pone de manifiesto que el impacto global sobre el empleo depende de cómo los Estados miembros utilicen los ingresos adicionales resultantes de la revisión. Se prevé que el uso de los ingresos adicionales para reducir los impuestos sobre el trabajo surta un efecto positivo en el empleo. El número de nuevos empleos creados aumentaría a lo largo del tiempo y puede, en números absolutos, alcanzar la cifra de un millón en 2030 de adoptarse la opción política más ambiciosa. El efecto en el empleo también se ha modelizado y analizado teniendo en cuenta la crisis económica. Los resultados detallados de la modelización de la repercusión en el empleo pueden consultarse en el capítulo 5.4 «Impactos macroeconómicos» de la evaluación de impacto.

La Comisión no dispone de ninguna información sobre la incidencia de la propuesta en el empleo en la industria europea del automóvil. Sin embargo, tal como se explica en la respuesta a la pregunta E-003656/12, no es de esperar que la revisión de la Directiva 2003/96/CE tenga un impacto negativo en la viabilidad de la industria europea de ese sector.

([1]) SEC(2011) 409.
([2]) COM(2011) 169.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003658/12
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: Diesel engines

The European high-technology content of advanced diesel engines is likely to be replaced with competing technologies hitherto promoted in other world regions, suggesting that employment opportunities may be transferred from Europe to those other regions. As the high-technology content of diesel engines generates demand for outstanding engineering and production capabilities, providing highly qualified employment opportunities in Europe, such a loss could not be offset by parallel employment increases in other areas.

1. In light of the above, can the Commission explain what effect the proposed changes to Directive 2003/96/EC will have on employment in the EU?

2. If, as expected, the diesel market share of new vehicles produced in the EU is reduced as a result of the changes to Directive 2003/96/EC, can the Commission explain what effect this will have on the European automotive industry's ability to provide employment?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(4 June 2012)

The Impact assessment ([1]) accompanying the proposal for a revision of Directive 2003/96/EC ([2]) (the Energy Taxation Directive) shows that the overall impact on employment depends on how Member States use any additional revenue resulting from the revision. The use of additional revenue to reduce labour taxes is expected to have a positive impact on employment. The number of additional jobs created would grow over time and can, in absolute numbers, reach 1 million in 2030 under the most ambitious policy option. The impact on employment has also been modelled and analysed taking into account the economic crisis. Detailed results of the modelling of the impact on employment can be found in Chapter 5.4 'Macroeconomic impacts' in the impact assessment.

The Commission does not have any information about the impact of the proposal on the employment in the European automotive industry. However, as explained in the reply to Question E-003656/12, the revision of Directive 2003/96/EC is not expected to have a negative impact on the viability of the European automotive industry.

([1]) SEC(2011)409.
([2]) COM(2011)169.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-003659/12
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(11 de abril de 2012)

Asunto: Nuevas fuentes energéticas para alimentar vehículos de motor

Junto a otros sectores, las empresas europeas del sector del automóvil lideran los esfuerzos encaminados a desarrollar nuevas fuentes energéticas para alimentar vehículos de motor. La pérdida de recursos propios derivada de la reducción del mercado del gasóleo las privará de una fuente de ingresos necesaria para financiar el desarrollo de dichas tecnologías «limpias».

Con respecto a los cambios propuestos a la Directiva 2003/96/CE:

1. ¿Puede la Comisión indicar si se ha llevado a cabo alguna evaluación del impacto que los cambios propuestos tendrán sobre los esfuerzos de la UE encaminados a desarrollar nuevas tecnologías con las que se genere energía para la industria del automóvil?

2. En caso de que se haya efectuado dicha evaluación, ¿puede la Comisión proporcionar referencias a la misma o informarme acerca de sus conclusiones?

Respuesta del Sr. Šemeta en nombre de la Comisión
(4 de junio de 2012)

La propuesta de la Comisión de revisión de la Directiva 2003/96/CE ([1]) está acompañada de una evaluación de impacto ([2]). Esta evaluación de impacto no analiza cómo distribuyen sus ingresos las empresas del sector del automóvil ni cómo éstas y otras financian sus actividades de investigación e innovación, ya que se trata de un asunto de política de la empresa.

Sin embargo, la sección 5.8 de la evaluación de impacto incluye un análisis de impacto de la propuesta en las fuentes de energía renovables y los combustibles fósiles alternativos para el transporte. La sección 5.7 indica que la Directiva revisada reducirá la cuota de mercado del gasóleo en menos del 5 % en 2030 respecto a la hipótesis de base y en una cifra todavía menor en los años precedentes, lo que significa que los automóviles diésel seguirán siendo competitivos. Asimismo, una pérdida de cuota de mercado no ha de confundirse con una disminución de las ventas globales. Además, la aplicación de un tipo impositivo único para el contenido energético de los combustibles de automoción solo entrará en vigor desde 2023, lo que permitirá cambios graduales en los impuestos generales sobre el gasóleo.

Por otra parte, el apartado 5.8. de la evaluación de impacto indica claramente que la Directiva revisada creará incentivos para el despliegue de fuentes de energía renovables y fomentará la penetración de los biocarburantes sostenibles con mayor reducción de las emisiones de gases de efecto invernadero. La revisión de la Directiva también debería atraer otras inversiones en tecnologías que permitan economizar combustible.

([1]) COM(2011) 169.
([2]) SEC(2011) 409.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003659/12
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: New energy sources to power vehicles

Alongside other sectors, European automotive companies are in the forefront of efforts to develop new energy sources to power vehicles. The loss of revenue resulting from the reduction of the diesel market will deprive them of an income source needed to fund the development of such 'clean' technologies.

In light of the above, and with regard to the proposed changes to Directive 2003/96/EC:

1. Can the Commission state whether any assessment has been made of the impact of the proposed changes on European efforts to develop new technologies with which to generate energy for the automotive industry?

2. If there has been such an assessment, can the Commission provide references to it or inform me of its conclusions?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(4 June 2012)

The Commission proposal for a revision of Directive 2003/96/EC ([1]) is accompanied by an Impact Assessment ([2]). This Impact Assessment does not analyse how the automotive companies distribute their revenues and how they and others fund their research and innovation activities, as this is an issue of company policy.

However, Section 5.8. of the impact assessment contains an analysis of the impact of the proposal on renewable energy sources and alternative fossil fuels for transport. Section 5.7. indicates that the revised Directive will reduce the market share of diesel by less than 5% in 2030 compared to a baseline scenario and by even less in preceding years which means that diesel cars will remain competitive. Also a loss in market share should not be confused with a decline in overall sales. Furthermore, the application of a single tax rate for the energy content for motor fuels should only come into effect as of 2023 allowing for gradual changes to the overall tax on diesel.

On the other hand, Section 5.8. of the impact assessment clearly states that the revised Directive will create incentives for deployment of renewable energy sources and encourage the penetration of sustainable biofuels with higher greenhouse gas emission savings. Also the revision of the directive should trigger additional investments in fuel-saving technologies.

([1]) COM(2011) 169.
([2]) SEC(2011) 409.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-003660/12
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(11 de abril de 2012)

Asunto: Producción de nuevos motores diésel

La producción de nuevos motores diésel conforme a las normas Euro V y Euro VI exige el uso de equipos de alta precisión para fabricar las piezas necesarias. Los fabricantes de maquinaria y equipos cumplen con estos requisitos tecnológicos. La pérdida de la tecnología diésel tendrá repercusiones en el desarrollo de equipos de alta precisión con otras aplicaciones en otras industrias.

¿Puede la Comisión indicar si se ha realizado alguna evaluación del impacto de estas medidas en la industria de alta precisión? De ser así, ¿puede ofrecer información detallada?

Respuesta del Sr. Tajani en nombre de la Comisión
(5 de junio de 2012)

La normativa sobre Euro VI se basa, entre otros documentos, en una evaluación de impacto que tiene en cuenta distintos factores relacionados con los costes y los beneficios para la industria y la sociedad de la adopción de dicha normativa. Uno de estos factores es el aumento de los costes tecnológicos para el fabricante derivados de la instalación en el vehículo de equipo adicional, como un catalizador de reducción, así como el aumento de los gastos de explotación, que se deben principalmente al mantenimiento adicional necesario para que el equipo siga funcionando con la eficiencia necesaria.

Como no se han realizado estimaciones de los beneficios de la aplicación de la norma Euro VI para los fabricantes de equipos de alta precisión, no se pueden estimar los costes para dicho sector en el caso de una pérdida de la tecnología diésel. No obstante, teniendo en cuenta que la flota de vehículos pesados se compone en su mayoría de motores diésel y que esta tendencia no es probable que cambie en un futuro próximo, se considera improbable que los fabricantes de equipos de alta precisión se vean afectados negativamente por la normativa antes mencionada. Por el contrario, la aplicación en el futuro por parte de la Comisión de una política destinada a reducir las emisiones de CO_2 procedentes de los vehículos pesados puede conducir a una situación en la que la necesidad de motores más eficientes tenga un impacto muy positivo en los fabricantes de equipos para nuevos camiones y autobuses.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003660/12
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: Production of new diesel engines

The production of new diesel engines compliant with the Euro V and Euro VI standards requires the use of high-precision equipment to manufacture the necessary parts. These technological requirements are fulfilled by European manufacturers of machinery and equipment. The loss of diesel technology will have an impact on the development of high-precision equipment which has further applications in other industries.

In the light of the above, can the Commission say whether there has been any assessment of the impact of these measures on the high-precision industry in Europe? If so, can it provide details?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(5 June 2012)

Euro VI legislation is based, among other documents, on an impact assessment which takes account of different factors related to the costs and benefits, for industry and society, of the adoption of such a legislation. One of these factors is the increase of the technological costs for the manufacturer, derived from the fitting in the vehicle of additional equipment, like a reduction catalyst, as well as the increase of the operating costs, which are mainly a consequence of the additional maintenance needed for keeping the equipment working with the required level of efficiency.

Since no estimation has been made on the benefit of the implementation of Euro VI on manufacturers of high-precision equipment, it would not be possible to estimate the costs for that sector in the case of a loss of diesel technology. However, taking into account that the European heavy duty fleet is mostly composed of diesel engines, and that this trend is not likely to change in the near future, it is not considered as envisageable that manufacturers of high-precision equipment would be negatively affected by the above legislation. On the contrary, the future implementation by the Commission of a policy aiming at reducing CO_2 emissions from heavy duty vehicles, may lead to a situation where the need of more efficient engines would have a very positive impact on manufacturers of equipment for new trucks and buses.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003661/12
to the Commission
Linda McAvan (S&D)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: Massacre in Ethiopia

My constituent has raised urgent concerns with me regarding the massacre of the people of Somalia and Ethiopia by Ethiopian authorities. There are multiple accounts of civilians being slaughtered and women and girls being raped by Ethiopian soldiers in villages of the pastoral region of Ethiopia. Many have been abducted and others are unaccounted for. My constituent also has concerns over terrorism and the radicalisation of young Somalis.

Is the Commission aware of these developments? What action is the Commission currently taking, or does it plan to take, to address these distressing attacks? Is the Commission taking any action against the radicalisation of individuals in the EU?

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

The European Union closely follows human rights issues in Ethiopia and has a regular dialogue with Ethiopia. Where there is evidence of human rights abuse, this is taken up with the Ethiopian authorities.

While the European Union is not specifically aware of the alleged grave violations of human rights that the Honourable Member's constituent is referring to in the pastoralist region of Ethiopia, it knows that the civilian population of the Ogaden suffers as a consequence of the conflict in that region. The European Union, within its ongoing political dialogue with the Ethiopian authorities, repeatedly stresses the importance of respect for the human rights of the entire Ethiopian population. The European Union will continue to raise these issues with the Government of Ethiopia. The European Union also stresses the importance of free access to all regions of Ethiopia for humanitarian organisations and of the protection of civilians caught in conflict.

The European Union addresses radicalisation and violent extremism regardless of their motivation and modus operandi as one of the priorities for EU internal security and has launched the EU Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), which connects first liners involved in countering violent radicalisation. The RAN aims at pooling experiences and best practices to enhance awareness of radicalisation and communication techniques for challenging violent extremists' narratives, contributing to developing various aspects of the EU Strategy for Combating Radicalisation and Recruitment.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003662/12
to the Commission
Marina Yannakoudakis (ECR)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: Funding for 'non-state actors and local authorities in development'

Can the Commission please provide detailed information on the projects it has funded under the budget line 'Non-state actors and local authorities in development'? In particular, could it please provide details of projects where beneficiaries or partners have included local authorities from Azerbaijan, Belarus, Burma, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Kazakhstan, Laos, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan or Zimbabwe?

I would like to know the title of each project, the amount of EU funding granted and the name of the local authority partner/beneficiary in the country concerned. I am interested only in projects with local authority (government) partners, not NGOs or other non-state actors. I would appreciate details of funding for the 2007-2010 and 2011-2013 programming periods, with an indication of which projects are ongoing.

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(10 May 2012)

Since 2007, the Thematic Programme 'NSA/LA' co-finances actions led by local authorities (LA) and non-state actors (NSA). It aims at encouraging NSA and LA, both from the EU and developing countries, to get more involved in development issues. Projects led by NSA are supported through the specific budget line 21.03.01 and those led by LA are supported through the budget line 21.03.02.

Amongst the different countries indicated in the written question only Belarus, Cuba, Ivory Coast, Kazakhstan, Laos and Zimbabwe have benefited from an LA allocation.

The annex ([1]) details the 20 projects about which the Honourable Member has inquired. It should, however, be noted that the list only concerns projects where local authorities or an association of local authorities are leading partners. Numerous other local authorities are also partners in projects financed under both budget lines. The number is too great to be listed in a table.

([1]) The annex is sent directly to the Honourable Member and to Parliament's Secretariat.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003663/12
alla Commissione
Matteo Salvini (EFD)
(11 aprile 2012)

Oggetto: Microcredito e accesso al credito per le partite IVA

Secondo quanto appreso dal dipartimento finanze del ministero dell'economia italiano, nel mese di gennaio del corrente anno sono state aperte 87 553 nuove partite IVA, il che rappresenta un incremento del 4,5 % rispetto al medesimo mese dell'anno precedente.

Il 53,2 % delle nuove partite IVA è stato aperto da giovani fino a 35 anni; tale classe di età è l'unica che mostra un incremento rispetto all'anno scorso.

Tale dato mostra in modo eloquente il cambiamento del mondo del lavoro a seguito della crisi che da anni ormai imperversa a livello globale.

Le iniziative imprenditoriali (soprattutto intraprese da persone fisiche) mostrano che i posti da lavoratore dipendente sono sempre più un miraggio.

Si chiede alla Commissione quali iniziative finanziarie ha avviato a sostegno delle nuove iniziative imprenditoriali e se tali iniziative rivolgano particolare attenzione al microcredito e, in generale, all'accesso al credito.

Risposta di Antonio Tajani a nome della Commissione
(8 giugno 2012)

L'UE si adopera per sostenere l'accesso al credito per gli imprenditori e le PMI attraverso il meccanismo di garanzia del CIP 2007-2013 ([1]). Il meccanismo fornisce garanzie sui prestiti per incoraggiare le banche a concedere più agevolmente finanziamenti con capitale di debito alle imprese neocostituite e alle PMI. Vi rientra un capitolo specifico consacrato ai microcrediti ([2]). Le imprese di nuova creazione che desiderano chiedere un finanziamento garantito devono contattare uno degli intermediari che hanno sottoscritto un accordo con il Fondo europeo per gli investimenti ([3]).

Inoltre, lo Strumento europeo di microfinanziamento «Progress» ([4]) mette a disposizione 203 milioni di EUR (contributo UE e BEI) per accrescere l'erogazione di microcrediti alle microimprese e alle persone che hanno perso il posto di lavoro e vogliono avviare una propria piccola impresa. I suoi strumenti finanziari sono disponibili agli erogatori di microcrediti indipendentemente dal fatto che essi siano banche o strutture non bancarie.

Il sostegno finanziario dell'UE alle imprese di nuova creazione è disponibile anche per il tramite dei Fondi strutturali attraverso le autorità di gestione degli Stati membri. Un esempio è costituito dall'iniziativa JEREMIE che intende migliorare l'accesso ai finanziamenti, e quindi anche ai microcrediti, per le PMI ([5]).

Quanto alle misure previste per il futuro, la Commissione ha adottato di recente un piano d'azione ([6]) per migliorare l'accesso delle PMI ai finanziamenti. Tra le misure contemplate vi è un rafforzamento degli strumenti finanziari per le neoimprese e le PMI nell'ambito dei nuovi programmi COSME e Horizon 2020 ([7]) per il periodo 2014-2020. Nell'ambito di COSME si prevede di stanziare 1,4 miliardi di EUR per strumenti finanziari.

([1]) Il CIP (Programma quadro per la competitività e l'innovazione) ha una dotazione di bilancio di più di 1,1 miliardi di EUR per strumenti finanziari ed è gestito dal FEI.
([2]) Esso prevede garanzie di prestito alle organizzazioni di microcredito che concedono prestiti fino a 25 000 EUR alle microimprese.
([3]) Un elenco degli intermediari che beneficiano degli investimenti CIP è reperibile al seguente indirizzo: http://www.access2finance.eu.
([4]) Gestito dal Fondo europeo per gli investimenti. Un elenco degli intermediari è reperibile al seguente indirizzo: http://www.eif.org/what_we_do/microfinance/progress/Progress_intermediaries.htm
([5]) Nell'ambito dell'iniziativa JEREMIE (Risorse europee congiunte per le micro, le piccole e le medie imprese) alcune autorità di gestione italiane usano già parte dei loro Fondi strutturali UE per finanziare le PMI e le microimprese mediante prestiti o garanzie per il tramite di intermediari finanziari nazionali o regionali.
([6]) Un piano d'azione per migliorare l'accesso delle PMI ai finanziamenti, COM(2011)870 definitivo.
([7]) Entrambi i programmi sono stati presentati il 30 novembre 2011.

Inoltre, il nuovo programma dell'Unione europeo per il cambiamento e l'innovazione sociale estenderà il sostegno concesso agli erogatori di microcrediti nell'ambito dell'attuale strumento di microfinanza «Progress» compresi i finanziamenti per la capacity-building delle istituzioni di microfinanza e investimenti per lo sviluppo e l'espansione delle imprese sociali.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003663/12
to the Commission
Matteo Salvini (EFD)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: Microcredit and access to credit for VAT payers

According to the Department of Finance of the Italian Ministry of the Economy, 87 553 new VAT registrations were recorded in January 2012, which is an increase of 4.5 % compared with the same month of the previous year.

53.2 % of new VAT registrations were filed by young people up to 35 years of age; this is the only age group that shows an increase compared with last year.

This figure clearly shows how the world of work is changing following the global crisis that has marked recent years.

The number of new businesses (especially those started up by natural persons) shows that it is practically impossible to find a job as an employee.

Can the Commission say what financial measures it has taken in support of new businesses and whether those measures focus in particular on microcredit and, in general, access to credit?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(8 June 2012)

The EU seeks to support access to credit for entrepreneurs and SMEs through the guarantee facility of the CIP 2007-2013 ([1]). The facility provides loan guarantees to encourage banks to make more debt finance available to start-ups and SMEs. A specific window dedicated to microcredit loans is also included ([2]). Start-ups interested in applying for guaranteed financing should contact one of the intermediaries that have signed an agreement with the European Investment Fund ([3]).

In addition, the European Progress Microfinance Facility ([4]) makes available EUR 203 million (EU and EIB contribution) to increase the supply of microcredit to micro-enterprises and to people who have lost their jobs and want to start their own small businesses. Its financial instruments are available to both banks and non-bank microcredit providers.

EU financial support for start-ups is also available from the Structural Funds through Member States' managing authorities. One example is the JEREMIE initiative, which aims to improve access to finance for SMEs, including microcredit ([5]).

As for the measures envisaged for the future, the Commission recently adopted an Action Plan ([6]) to improve access to finance for SMEs. Among the measures indicated, the financial instruments for start-ups and SMEs will be reinforced in the new programmes COSME and Horizon 2020 ([7]) for the period 2014-2020. Within COSME, it is proposed that EUR 1.4 billion shall be allocated to financial instruments.

Moreover, the new EU Programme for Social Change and Innovation will extend the support given to microcredit providers under the current Progress Microfinance Facility, including funding for capacity-building of microfinance institutions and investments for developing and expanding social enterprises.

([1]) The CIP (Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme) has a budget of over EUR 1.1 billion for financial instruments and is managed by the EIF.
([2]) It provides loan guarantees to microcredit organisations granting loans of up to EUR 25 000 to micro-enterprises.
([3]) A list of the intermediaries benefitting from CIP investments can be found here: http://www.access2finance.eu.
([4]) is managed by the European Investment Fund. A list of the intermediaries can be found here: http://www.eif.org/what_we_do/microfinance/progress/Progress_intermediaries.htm
([5]) Under the JEREMIE scheme (Joint European Resources for Micro to Medium Enterprises), some Italian Managing Authorities are already using part of their EU Structural Funds to finance SMEs and micro-enterprises by means of loans or guarantees via national or regional financial intermediaries.
([6]) An action plan to improve access to finance for SMEs, COM(2011) 870 final.
([7]) Both programmes were presented 30 November 2011.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-003664/12
aan de Commissie
Esther de Lange (PPE)
(11 april 2012)

Betreft: Gelijk speeldveld voor metallurgische industrie onder ETS

Vanaf 1 januari 2013 veranderen de regels met betrekking tot carbon leakage onder de ETS. Verschillende metallurgische bedrijven in de EU, zoals aluminiumsmelterijen, zijn al in de problemen gekomen door onder andere hoge energiekosten, en dreigen door de veranderde regels van de ETS onder nog meer druk te komen staan.

In sommige lidstaten, zoals in Duitsland, wordt de industrie deels gecompenseerd door de transportkosten van de elektriciteitsrekening niet bij bedrijven in rekening te brengen. Nederland heeft hier geen regeling voor. Hierdoor bestaat er in de interne markt een ongelijk speelveld voor de bedrijven die in deze sector werkzaam zijn.

Is de Commissie op de hoogte van de ontwikkelingen in deze sector en de moeilijkheden voor de metallurgische industrie door de nieuwe regels met betrekking tot carbon leakage binnen de ETS?

Is de Commissie op de hoogte van compensatieregelingen die in sommige lidstaten bestaan voor de metallurgische industrie, en dan met name voor wat betreft (de transportkosten van) de energierekening? In welke lidstaten bestaan dergelijke regelingen?

Zal de Commissie optreden tegen het ongelijke speelveld dat door deze regelingen bestaat? Zo ja, hoe denkt zij dit te doen?

Antwoord van de heer Almunia namens de Commissie
(14 juni 2012)

Wat de compensatie van indirecte CO_2-kosten in elektriciteitsprijzen betreft, heeft de Commissie onlangs nieuwe richtsnoeren betreffende staatssteunmaatregelen in het kader van de regeling voor de handel in broeikasgasemissierechten na 2012 ([1]) aangenomen.

De Commissie heeft op basis van Eurostatgegevens uit de lidstaten en informatie uit openbare raadplegingen een aantal sectoren geïdentificeerd waar het bestaan van een significant CO_2-weglekrisico mag worden aangenomen. Bedrijfstakken die voor compensatie in aanmerking komen, zijn onder meer producenten van aluminium, koper, kunstmeststoffen, staal, papier, katoen, chemicaliën en bepaalde kunststoffen. Bij de nieuwe richtsnoeren is zorgvuldig gezocht naar een goed evenwicht tussen verschillende hoofddoelstellingen. Ze moeten de impact van indirecte CO_2-kosten op de meest kwetsbare bedrijfstakken beperken en het daarmee gepaard gaande CO_2-weglekrisico voorkomen, aangezien dit de doeltreffendheid van het EU ETS ondermijnt. Tegelijkertijd moeten deze regels ervoor zorgen dat de prijsprikkels van het EU-emissiehandelsysteem behouden blijven om de economie op rendabele wijze koolstofarm te maken. Verder moeten ze de concurrentieverstoringen op de interne markt tot een minimum beperken door subsidiewedlopen binnen de EU te voorkomen, zeker in tijden van economische onzekerheid en begrotingsdiscipline.

Wat de steun in de vorm van energiebelastingvrijstellingen betreft, moeten de lidstaten, in zoverre het om staatssteun gaat, voldoen aan de voorwaarden van de kaderregeling milieusteun of de algemene groepsvrijstellingsverordening, die dergelijke steunmaatregelen onder specifieke voorwaarden toestaan. Deze regels garanderen een gemeenschappelijk kader voor steunmaatregelen, dat in alle lidstaten geldt.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/competition/sectors/energy/legislation_en.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003664/12
to the Commission
Esther de Lange (PPE)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: Level playing field for the metallurgical industry under the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS)

The carbon leakage rules under the ETS are going to change as of 1 January 2013. Various metallurgical companies in the EU, such as aluminium smelters, are already in trouble partly due to high energy costs, and may be put at a further disadvantage by the change in the ETS rules.

In some Member States, for example Germany, the industry is partially compensated as companies are exempt from the energy tax on transport costs. Netherlands has no such provisions. This creates an uneven playing field in the internal market for companies working in this sector.

Is the Commission aware of the developments in this sector and the difficulties faced by the metallurgical industry because of the new rules on carbon leakage under the ETS?

Is the Commission aware of the compensation schemes in some Member States for the metallurgical industry and in particular concerning the energy tax exemption (for transportation)? Which Member States have such arrangements?

Will the Commission act against the inequalities created by these arrangements? If so, how does it intend to do that?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(14 June 2012)

As regards the compensation of indirect CO_2 costs in electricity prices, the Commission has recently adopted new guidelines for state aid connection with the EU ETS after 2012 ([1]).

Based on Eurostat data collected from Member States and input from public consultations, the Commission has identified a certain number of sectors that are deemed to be at a significant risk of carbon leakage. The sectors eligible for compensation include for example producers of aluminium, copper, fertilisers, steel, paper, cotton, chemicals and some plastics. The new rules carefully balance several key objectives. They aim to mitigate the impact of indirect CO_2 costs for the most vulnerable industries, thereby preventing carbon leakage which would undermine the effectiveness of the EU ETS. At the same time, the rules have been designed to preserve the price signals created by the EU ETS in order to promote cost-effective decarbonisation of the economy. They are 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.

As regards support in the form of exemptions from energy taxation, insofar as the support constitutes state aid, Member States must comply with the conditions of the Environmental Aid Guidelines or the General Block Exemption Regulation that allow such aid under certain conditions. These rules ensure a common framework for aid for applicable to all Member States.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/competition/sectors/energy/legislation_en.html

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-003665/12
aan de Commissie
Esther de Lange (PPE)
(11 april 2012)

Betreft: Terugnamesysteem plastic flessen met statiegeld

Richtlijn 94/62/EC over verpakkingsafval vereist van Lidstaten dat ze systemen opzetten voor terughalen, hergebruik of recycling van verpakkingsafval. De bedoeling hiervan is dat dit soort afval in de meest geschikte afvalstroom terecht komt.

De kaderrichtlijn afval voorziet in een recyclingdoelstelling van 50 % tegen 2020 voor huishoudelijk afval, en de richtlijn verpakkingsafval voorziet een doelstelling van 22,5 % recycling voor plastics. De Europese verplichting houdt dus in dat lidstaten een bepaald percentage moeten behalen voor wat betreft de recycling van plastic afval. Hoe de lidstaten dit doen, wordt in principe aan de lidstaten overgelaten.

Er bestaat derhalve geen Europese verplichting voor een terugnamesysteem van drinkverpakkingen, zoals PET-flessen, met een statiegeldsysteem. Er zijn evenwel lidstaten, zoals Nederland, die momenteel dergelijke systemen ingevoerd hebben. Dit leidt in de praktijk tot hoge percentages ingezamelde flessen.

— Hoe kijkt de Commissie aan tegen een overstap door lidstaten van een verplicht terugnamesysteem met statiegeld van PET-flessen, dat een hoog percentage inzameling genereert, naar een vrijwillig ophaalsysteem zonder statiegeld?

— Worden er door de Commissie voorwaarden verbonden aan een dergelijke overstap naar een nieuw systeem? Zo ja welke?

Antwoord van de heer Potočnik namens de Commissie
(4 juni 2012)

Richtlijn 94/62/EG betreffende verpakking en verpakkingsafval (hierna „de verpakkingenrichtlijn" genoemd) ([1]) schrijft voor dat de lidstaten adequate inzamelingssystemen voor verpakkingsafval opzetten. De lidstaten mogen zelf de inzamelingssystemen voor verpakkingsafval opzetten die het best zijn afgestemd op hun behoeften en de consumptie- en distributiepatronen van verschillende soorten verpakkingen en verpakte goederen, op voorwaarde dat deze inzamelingssystemen bijdragen tot de verwezenlijking van de doelstellingen en het behalen van de streefcijfers van de richtlijn.

Met name moeten de lidstaten ervoor zorgen dat deze systemen open staan voor deelneming van de ondernemingen van de betrokken sectoren, dat zij gelden voor ingevoerde producten onder niet-discriminerende voorwaarden, en dat zij niet leiden tot het ontstaan van handelsbelemmeringen of concurrentieverstoringen die onverenigbaar zijn met het Verdrag.

([1]) PB L 365 van 31.12.1994.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003665/12
to the Commission
Esther de Lange (PPE)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: Deposit return system for plastic bottles

Directive 94/62/EC on packaging waste requires that Member States set up systems for the return, reuse or recycling of packaging waste. The objective is to channel this kind of waste to the most appropriate waste stream.

The Waste Framework Directive provides for a recycling target of 50 % by 2020 for household waste and the Packaging Waste Directive provides for a recycling target of 22.5 % for plastics. The European obligation thus means that Member States must achieve a certain percentage with regard to the recycling of plastic waste. In principle, it is left to Member States to decide how they are going to do this.

There is therefore no European obligation to set up a deposit return system for drinks packaging, such as PET bottles. There are, however, Member States, such as the Netherlands, which have implemented such systems. In practice this leads to high percentages of collected bottles.

— How does the Commission view a move by Member States from a mandatory deposit return system for PET bottles, which generates a high collection percentage, to a voluntary non-deposit return system?

— Is the Commission attaching any conditions to such a move to a new system? If so, which?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(4 June 2012)

Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste ('Packaging Directive') ([1]) requires Member States to set up appropriate collection systems for packaging waste. Member States are free to establish packaging collection systems which are best suited to their needs, consumption and distribution patterns of various types of packaging and packaged goods provided that these collection schemes help meet the objectives and targets of the directive.

In particular, Member States have to ensure that such systems are open to the participation of economic operators of the sectors concerned, that they apply to imported products under non-discriminatory conditions and that they do not result in the creation of barriers to trade or distortions of competition inconsistent with the Treaty.

([1]) OJ L 365, 31.12.1994.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-003666/12
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(11 de abril de 2012)

Assunto: Discriminação de cidadãos com 60 anos nos transportes belgas

Chegou ao meu conhecimento o facto de na Bélgica, no que respeita às tarifas dos comboios, existirem preços diferentes para as diversas faixas etárias. Existem os bilhetes de adulto entre os 26 e os 59 anos (considerada a tarifa normal) e tarifas reduzidas para cidadãos seniores com mais de 65 anos. Acontece, porém, que os cidadãos adultos, com idades compreendidas entre os 60 e os 64 anos (o intervalo etário não abrangido por nenhuma das tarifas referidas anteriormente), também têm uma tarifa «especial», mais elevada do que a tarifa normal. Em alguns casos, a tarifa é praticamente o dobro da tarifa normal aplicável aos adultos entre os 26 e os 59 anos.

Pergunto à Comissão:

1. Tem conhecimento desta situação? Confirma a sua existência? Como a justifica?

2. Não considera que a situação descrita discrimina, de forma ilegítima, os cidadãos com idades compreendidas entre os 60 e os 64 anos de idade, pondo em causa o artigo 21.° da Carta dos Direitos Fundamentais da União Europeia?

Resposta dada por Siim Kallas em nome da Comissão
(29 de maio de 2012)

A Comissão contactou o serviço público federal belga «Mobilidade e Transportes» — que constitui o organismo nacional responsável pelo controlo da aplicação do Regulamento Direitos dos Passageiros do Transporte Ferroviário ([1]) — acerca da situação descrita pelo Senhor Deputado.

De acordo com as informações recebidas, não há indícios da existência de tarifas diferentes para pessoas com idade compreendida entre 26 e 59 anos e entre 60 e 64 anos.

De modo geral, as pessoas com idade compreendida entre 26 e 64 anos pagam a tarifa normal. Os únicos descontos são os seguintes:

— Para crianças com menos de 12 anos, que viajam gratuitamente quando acompanhados por um adulto e beneficiam de um desconto de 50 % quando viajam sozinhos;

— Para jovens com menos de 26 anos, que podem beneficiar de tarifas de estudante ou passes especiais;

— Para adultos com idade igual ou superior a 65 anos, que podem utilizar um bilhete «senior».

Existem, além disso, algumas tarifas com descontos especiais. Por exemplo, os casais que tenham a cargo, pelo menos, três filhos com menos de 25 anos podem solicitar um cartão que lhes confere direito a descontos para eles e os seus filhos.

([1]) Regulamento (CE) n.° 1371/2007 do Parlamento Europeu e do Conselho, de 23 de outubro de 2007, relativo aos direitos e obrigações dos passageiros dos serviços ferroviários (JO L 315 de 3.12.2007).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003666/12
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: Discrimination against the over-60s in Belgian public transport

It has come to my attention that train fares in Belgium vary by age group . There are 'adult' tickets for persons between 26 and 59 (this is considered to be the normal rate) and discounted fares for senior citizens over 65. However, adults aged between 60 and 64 (the age range not covered by either of the fares referred to above) have their own 'special' rate, which is higher than the normal fare. In some cases, the fare is practically double the normal rate for adults aged between 26 and 59.

1. Is the Commission aware of this situation? Has it confirmed that the details are correct? What possible reasons can there be for acting in this way?

2. Does the Commission agree that the situation described above constitutes unlawful discrimination against citizens aged between 60 and 64 and is thus contrary to Article 21 of the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(29 May 2012)

The Commission has contacted the Belgium Federal Public Service Mobility and Transport, which is the National Enforcement Body responsible for the enforcement of the Rail Passengers' Rights Regulation ([1]), about the situation described by the Honourable Member.

According to the information received, there is no evidence on different tickets rates for persons aged between 26 and 59 and persons aged between 60 and 64.

In general, persons between the age of 26 and 64 have to pay the normal fare. Age-based reduction fares exist only:

— for children under the age of 12 who travel free of charge in case they are supervised by an adult and who enjoy a reduction of 50% in case they are travelling alone;

— for persons under the age of 26 who can benefit of student fares or special rail passes;

— for adults of 65 or older who can make use of a senior ticket.

Furthermore, some special reduction fares exist. For example, parents with at least 3 dependent children under the age of 25 can request a discount card for themselves and for their children aged under 25.

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 1317/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2007 on rail passengers' rights and obligations, OJ L 315, 3.12.2007.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-003667/12
an die Kommission
Rebecca Harms (Verts/ALE) und Reinhard Bütikofer (Verts/ALE)
(11. April 2012)

Betrifft: Einsatz von EFRE-Mitteln für Transport von Asbestabfällen

In Wunstorf-Luthe, Niedersachsen, Deutschland, soll eine Deponie mit Asbestabfällen abgetragen werden. Die Abfälle sollen nach Mecklenburg-Vorpommern und Schleswig-Holstein gebracht werden. Für Sanierung und Demontage der Deponie sollen 3,983 Mio. EUR als Förderung aus EFRE-Mitteln beigesteuert werden.

Die Brachflächen- und Altlasten-Förderrichtlinie des Landes Niedersachsen sieht Qualitätskriterien vor, deren ausreichende Erfüllung Voraussetzung für eine Förderung sind:

— Effizienz der Maßnahme: Für einen Abtransport zu den 300 Kilometer entfernten Deponien in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern und Schleswig-Holstein sind ca. 7 700 Lkw-Ladungen nötig. Die Kosten hierfür belaufen sich auf etwa 9 Mio. EUR. Für eine Sanierung vor Ort werden die Kosten auf 2,8 Mio. EUR geschätzt (Informationsdrucksache II 213/2009; Region Hannover). Das ist eine Differenz von 6 Mio. EUR.

— Gefährlichkeit der Schadstoffbelastung: Eine Sanierung vor Ort, um den Austritt von Schadstoffen zu verhindern wäre u. a. mit Spundwänden oder durch eine Halle realisierbar (Beschlussdrucksache Nr. II 6/2008, Region Hannover). Erst durch den Abtransport und die damit drohende Freisetzung von Asbestfasern droht eine gesundheitliche Gefährdung und Schadstoffbelastung.

— Wahrscheinlichkeit einer Nachnutzung: In direkter Umgebung stehen freie Flächen zur Verfügung, die die entsprechende Nachfrage befriedigen können und als Industriegebiet ausgewiesen sind. Die sanierte Deponiefläche hingegen unterliegt gemäß EU-Deponierichtlinie sowie Ratsentscheidung 2003/33/EG Maßnahmen zur Einschränkung der möglichen Nutzung.

Kann die Kommission die Beantragung und Bewilligung von EFRE-Mitteln für die Sanierung der Deponie Wunstorf-Luthe und den Transport der Asbestbestände bestätigen? Was ist der Verfahrensstand?

Sieht die Kommission bei dieser Förderung durch EFRE-Mittel einen Verstoß gegen die aufgezeigten Qualitätskriterien der Landesförderrichtlinie? Wenn ja, gegen welche?

Sollte eine Förderung aus EFRE-Mitteln daher nicht erfolgen?

Inwiefern kann die Kommission einen effizienten und regelkonformen Einsatz der EFRE-Gelder gewährleisten?

Antwort von Herrn Hahn im Namen der Kommission
(7. Juni 2012)

Den Angaben der Verwaltungsbehörde zufolge wurde das von den Damen und Herren Abgeordneten genannte Projekt für eine Förderung aus dem Europäischen Fonds für regionale Entwicklung (EFRE) ausgewählt und der Kategorie „Sanierung von Industriestandorten und kontaminierten Flächen" zugeordnet. Der Durchführungszeitraum dieses aus dem EFRE kofinanzierten Projekts erstreckte sich von August 2008 bis Ende Mai 2012.

Gemäß dem in der Kohäsionspolitik angewendeten Grundsatz der geteilten Verwaltung müssen der Mitgliedstaat und insbesondere die Verwaltungsbehörde für das EFRE-Programm in Niedersachsen die Übereinstimmung der geförderten Projekte mit den EU-Rechtsvorschriften sicherstellen. Der Verwaltungsbehörde obliegt es daher, alle anwendbaren Kriterien zu überprüfen, bevor sie die Ausgaben im Rahmen des EFRE als förderfähig erklärt.

Nicht die Kommission, sondern die Verwaltungsbehörde des Programms entscheidet — unter Berücksichtigung der im Programm festgelegten und vom Begleitausschuss gebilligten Förderkriterien — darüber, für welche Projekte im Einzelnen EFRE-Mittel bereitgestellt werden. Projekte, die den EU-Rechtsvorschriften nicht entsprechen, können gemäß Artikel 9 der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1083/2006 des Rates ([1]) im Rahmen der Strukturfonds nicht gefördert werden.

([1]) Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1083/2006 des Rates vom 11. Juli 2006 mit allgemeinen Bestimmungen über den Europäischen Fonds für regionale Entwicklung, den Europäischen Sozialfonds und den Kohäsionsfonds und zur Aufhebung der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1260/1999 (ABl. L 210 vom 31.7.2006).

Die Kommission überprüft den Jahreskontrollbericht der Prüfbehörde zum EFRE-Programm und kann ihre eigenen Prüfungen durchführen, um die Rechtmäßigkeit und Ordnungsmäßigkeit (d. h. die Einhaltung der Rechtsvorschriften) der geltend gemachten Ausgaben sicherzustellen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003667/12
to the Commission
Rebecca Harms (Verts/ALE) and Reinhard Bütikofer (Verts/ALE)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: Use of the European Regional Development Funds (ERDF) for the transport of asbestos waste

A waste disposal site with asbestos waste situated in Wunstorf-Luthe, Lower Saxony, Germany, is due to be dismantled. The waste will be transported to Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Schleswig-Holstein. ERDF funds of EUR 3.983 million will be contributed for the clearance and dismantling of the site.

The guidelines for support for brownfield sites and contaminated sites in the state of Lower Saxony set quality criteria which must be met in order to receive a subsidy:

— Efficiency of the measure: Transportation to the waste disposal sites in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Schleswig-Holstein, 300 kilometres away, will require approximately 7 700 HGV loads. The costs will run to approximately EUR 9 million. The estimated costs of a local clearance operation are EUR 2.8 million (Information pamphlet II 213/2009; Region Hannover). This is a difference of EUR 6 million.

— Hazardous nature of the contaminant load: Local clearance to prevent a spill of contaminants would be possible with the aid of sheet piling or by means of a warehouse, for instance (Decision No II 6/2008, Region Hannover). The dangers of a health hazard and pollution are posed only in the case of removal, which incurs the threat of a release of asbestos fibres.

— Likelihood of recovery: The adjacent environment includes available open areas, which would be able to meet relevant demands and which are designated as an industrial area. The cleared disposal site area is, however, subject to measures limiting possible use, in accordance with the EU Landfill Directive and Council Decision 2003/33/EC.

Can the Commission confirm the application and authorisation of ERDF funds for clearing the Wunstorf-Luthe waste disposal site and the transport of asbestos waste? What is the status of the procedure?

Does the Commission consider that this subsidy using ERDF funds constitutes an infringement of the stated quality criteria in the state subsidy guideline? If so, which ones?

Should a subsidy using ERDF funds therefore be refused?

To what extent can the Commission guarantee the efficient use of ERDF monies in conformity with the rules?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(7 June 2012)

According to information provided by the managing authority, the project mentioned by the Honourable Members has been selected funding with European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) support. It was classified under the category 'Rehabilitation of industrial sites and contaminated land'. The implementation period of the ERDF co-financed project ran from August 2008 until the end of May 2012.

In line with the shared management principle used for the administration of cohesion policy, it is for the Member State and in particular for the managing authority of Niedersachsen's ERDF programme to ensure the compliance of projects funded with the EU Regulations. Thus, the managing authority is responsible for checking each applicable requirement before declaring the expenditure eligible for ERDF funding.

The decision to attribute ERDF funds to individual projects is not taken by the Commission but by the managing authority of the programme in accordance with the eligibility criteria set out in the programme and agreed by the Monitoring Committee. Should a project not comply with EU rules, it cannot be approved for funding through the Structural Funds, as provided for in Article 9 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 ([1]).

([1]) Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999, OJ L 210, 31.7.2006.

The Commission reviews the annual control report of the Audit Authority covering the ERDF programme and can carry out its own audits to ensure the legality and regularity (i.e. compliance to the rules) of expenditure declared.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003669/12
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Fiorello Provera (EFD)
(11 aprile 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Cittadini tunisini condannati a sette anni di reclusione per diffamazione dell'Islam

Il 6 aprile 2012 l'organizzazione Human Rights Watch ha fatto sapere che il 28 marzo 2012 due cittadini tunisini sono stati condannati a sette anni di reclusione per avere pubblicato alcuni scritti ritenuti offensivi per l'Islam. Uno dei condannati, Ghazi Ben Mohamed Beji, ha pubblicato un saggio in cui vengono canzonati alcuni aspetti della biografia del profeta Maometto, mentre il secondo, Jaber Ben Abdallah Majri, ha caricato sul proprio profilo Facebook alcune immagini caricaturali del profeta tratte dal libro di Beji.

La pena detentiva e le sanzioni pecuniarie ammontanti a 1 200 dinari tunisini sono state comminate dal tribunale di primo grado di Mahdia che ha ritenuto colpevoli i due uomini, i cui capi di accusa sono stati riuniti in un procedimento comune, di aver pubblicato materiali passibili di perturbare l'ordine pubblico o di ledere la moralità, ai sensi dell'articolo 121, paragrafo 3, del codice penale. Majri è in carcere dal 5 marzo 2012, mentre Beji, fuggito in Europa, è stato condannato in contumacia.

Dalla prima riunione della nuova assemblea nazionale costituente dello scorso novembre 2011, è la terza volta che le autorità tunisine accusano qualcuno di diffamazione dell'Islam o di oltraggio alla moralità.

Il procedimento contro Majri e Beji è stato avviato il 3 marzo 2012 su iniziativa di un avvocato di Mahdia, secondo il quale le immagini e gli scritti prodotti da Majri costituivano un oltraggio al profeta e ai valori sacri dell'Islam e creavano una *fitna* (divisione) tra i musulmani. Ai sensi del succitato articolo 121, paragrafo 3, sono considerate reato la distribuzione, l'offerta finalizzata alla vendita, la divulgazione al pubblico o il possesso preordinato alla distribuzione, alla vendita o alla divulgazione a fini di propaganda, di opuscoli, comunicati e volantini, di provenienza estera o nazionale, passibili di perturbare l'ordine pubblico o ledere la moralità.

1. È il Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante a conoscenza del caso dei cittadini tunisini di cui sopra?

2. È il Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante disposto a esortare le autorità tunisine a concedere una riduzione o un annullamento delle condanne comminate a Ghazi Ben Mohamed Beji e Jaber Ben Abdallah Majri?

3. Considerando che attualmente l'assemblea nazionale costituente tunisina lavora alla stesura di una nuova costituzione, è il Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante a conoscenza dell'esistenza di garanzie della libertà di espressione e di pensiero?

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

L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente viene regolarmente informata sugli sviluppi in Tunisia, con particolare riguardo al rispetto dei diritti umani tra i quali rientra la libertà di espressione e religione. L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente è a conoscenza dei due casi segnalati dall'onorevole parlamentare e ne segue da vicino gli sviluppi, e nei suoi contatti con le autorità tunisine ha evidenziato l'importanza di rispettare appieno i valori democratici. A tal fine è importante che le autorità tunisine consolidino il rispetto delle libertà di espressione con opportune disposizioni legislative.

Dal canto suo l'UE accoglie positivamente i numerosi progressi compiuti dalla Tunisia nell'ambito dei diritti umani a partire dalla rivoluzione del 2011, compresa la ratifica delle pertinenti convenzioni internazionali. La piena applicazione di queste convenzioni sarà decisiva nei prossimi mesi e anni dal momento che la Tunisia è ancora in una fase di transizione verso la democrazia. Fra le migliori garanzie per il rispetto della libertà di espressione e di pensiero dovranno figurare un sistema giudiziario efficace, in grado di difendere gli impegni presi sul fronte dei diritti umani nella costituzione provvisoria, una società civile dinamica, media aperti e lo sviluppo di una cultura del rispetto dei diritti umani e dei principi democratici a livello di governo e di società.

L'UE sostiene inoltre le autorità tunisine e la società civile nella promozione del rispetto dei diritti umani e dei principi democratici, e offre ulteriore assistenza per le riforme in settori quali la giustizia e la sicurezza.

Al contempo, nel dialogo che intrattiene con le autorità tunisine in Tunisia e a Bruxelles, l'UE discute regolarmente del processo di transizione democratica e se emergeranno preoccupazioni, le esporrà alle autorità.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003669/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Fiorello Provera (EFD)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Tunisians sentenced to seven years in jail for mocking Islam

On 6 April 2012, the organisation Human Rights Watch reported that prison sentences of seven years were handed down on 28 March 2012 to two Tunisian men for publishing writings which were perceived as being offensive to Islam. One of the men, Ghazi Ben Mohamed Beji, published an essay which satirised aspects of the Prophet Muhammad's biography, while the other man, Jaber Ben Abdallah Majri, published photos on his Facebook page containing caricatures of the Prophet drawn from Mr Beji's book.

The Court of First Instance of Mahdia handed down the prison terms and fines of TND 1 200. The two men were charged jointly and convicted by the court in Mahdia of publishing materials 'liable to cause harm to public order or good morals,' under Article 121(3) of the Penal Code. Mr Majri has been in prison since 5 March 2012, while Mr Beji, who fled to Europe, was convicted in absentia.

This is the third case in which the Tunisian authorities have brought charges for speech deemed offensive to Islam or morality since the country's new National Constituent Assembly convened in November 2011.

The case against Mr Majri and Mr Beji was filed on 3 March 2012 by a Mahdia lawyer. He contended that Mr Majri had caused 'harm to the Prophet by photos and writings and harm to the sacred values of Islam causing *fitna* (division) between Muslims'. Article 121(3) makes it an offence to 'distribute, offer for sale, publicly display, or possess, with the intent to distribute, sell, display for the purpose of propaganda, tracts, bulletins, and fliers, whether of foreign origin or not, that are liable to cause harm to the public order or good morals'.

1. Is the High Representative/Vice-President aware of the case of the individuals mentioned above?

2. Is the High Representative/Vice-President prepared to call on the Tunisian authorities to reduce or overturn the sentences handed down to Ghazi Ben Mohamed Beji and Jaber Ben Abdallah Majri?

3. At present, Tunisia's National Constituent Assembly is drafting a new constitution — is the High Representative/Vice-President aware of any safeguards for freedom of expression and conscience?

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

The High Representative/Vice-President is regularly kept informed of developments in Tunisia in particular as regards respect for human rights including freedom of expression and of religion. She is aware of the two cases mentioned by the Honourable Member and is closely following them. In her contacts with the Tunisian authorities she has underlined the importance of full respect for democratic values. In this context it is important that the Tunisian authorities consolidate with appropriate legal provisions respect for freedom of expression.

For its part the EU has welcomed the many positive steps taken by Tunisia in respect of human rights since the revolution in 2011 including the ratification of relevant international human rights conventions. Full implementation of these conventions will be critical in the coming months and years as Tunisia continues on its path of democratic transition. The best guarantees for respect for freedom of expression and conscience will include an effective system of justice able to uphold the commitments to human rights proposed in the draft Constitution, a dynamic civil society and open media and the development of a culture of respect for human rights and democratic principles within government and in society at large.

The EU is also supporting the Tunisian authorities and civil society in promoting respect for human rights and democratic principles and is offering to provide further assistance in areas such as reform in the areas of justice and the security sector.

At the same time during the course of the EU's dialogue with the Tunisian authorities in Tunisia and Brussels the process of democratic transition in Tunisia is regularly discussed. Where there are concerns, the EU will raise these with the authorities.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003670/12
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Barbara Matera (PPE)
(11 aprile 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Le istituzioni europee e la campagna Joseph Kony

L'organizzazione statunitense di base «Invisible Children», nata nel 2005, è stata creata al fine di sensibilizzare l'opinione pubblica in merito ai rapimenti e all'arruolamento forzato di bambini da parte della setta dell'Esercito di resistenza del Signore (Lord's Resistance Army — LRA) in Uganda. Il leader di tale setta, Joseph Kony, e i suoi assassini hanno strappato oltre 30 000 bambini alle loro famiglie, costringendo i bambini ad assassinare i propri genitori e diventare bambini soldato e riducendo le bambine a schiave sessuali. Per tali motivi, Joseph Kony è ora l'uomo più ricercato al mondo e nel 2006 è stato incriminato per crimini di guerra dalla Corte penale internazionale.

Gli sforzi profusi a tutela dei diritti umani su tale questione hanno portato a risultati più che soddisfacenti in Sudan e «Invisible Children» ha di recente lanciato una campagna video a sostegno dell'arresto di Joseph Kony. A pochi giorni dall'uscita il documentario ha già registrato oltre 4 milioni di condivisioni su Facebook e la risposta da parte del pubblico è stata talmente forte da far bloccare il sito dell'organizzazione. La campagna mira a sensibilizzare le celebrità e i responsabili politici per ottenere un cambiamento dell'atteggiamento dell'opinione pubblica occidentale, in modo da colpire Joseph Kony, assicurarne l'arresto e garantire la liberazione delle migliaia di bambini soldato che ha ridotto in schiavitù.

1. Quali azioni ha adottato il Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante per affrontare la questione dei diritti umani relativa al reclutamento forzato dei bambini soldato?

2. Può l'UE adottare delle azioni volte a pubblicizzare tale campagna e dare risalto agli sforzi profusi, a contribuire all'arresto di Joseph Kony, incriminato per i suddetti crimini, e ad assicurare che venga processato dalla Corte penale internazionale? In caso affermativo, quali strumenti può offrire l'UE a sostegno di tale campagna?

3. Può l'UE aprire un canale di comunicazione con i suoi cittadini per consentire loro di prendere iniziative dirette riguardanti le loro preoccupazioni rispetto a simili questioni, sulla scorta dell'esperienza di «Invisible Children», che ha permesso al pubblico di mettersi in contatto con le celebrità e i responsabili politici?

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

Nel 2003 l'UE ha adottato orientamenti specifici sui bambini e i conflitti armati e nel 2010 il Consiglio ne ha rivisto la strategia di attuazione. Nel 2006 l'UE ha elaborato una lista di controllo intesa a verificare che la questione della protezione dei minori fosse integrata nelle sue operazioni di gestione delle crisi.

Il mandato del rappresentante speciale del Segretario generale dell'ONU per i bambini e i conflitti armati è stato rinnovato l'anno scorso grazie alla risoluzione dell'Assemblea generale delle Nazioni Unite copromossa dall'UE. L'UE ha inoltre fornito assistenza a livello mondiale finalizzata a prevenire gravi violazioni dei diritti umani nei confronti di minori e a reintegrare e riabilitare i bambini coinvolti in conflitti armati, compresi i bambini soldato. Soltanto all'Uganda l'UE e gli Stati membri hanno destinato più di 6 milioni di euro nel periodo 2008-2012, affinché possa far fronte alla situazione dei bambini coinvolti in conflitti armati.

L'UE sostiene l'iniziativa di cooperazione regionale dell'Unione africana volta a potenziare gli sforzi regionali nella lotta contro l'LRA e sta fornendo assistenza finanziaria (1,2 milioni di euro) all'Ufficio dell'inviato speciale dell'Unione africana per le questioni relative all'LRA e alla creazione di un centro operativo comune che consenta alla task force regionale, composta da 5 000 uomini, provenienti da Uganda, Repubblica democratica del Congo, Repubblica Centrafricana e Sud Sudan, di agire con rapidità ed efficacia contro l'LRA. Lo scorso anno l'UE ha inoltre stanziato 9 milioni di euro per l'assistenza umanitaria alle vittime dell'LRA. In qualità di copresidente del gruppo di lavoro internazionale sull'LRA, l'UE è in prima linea negli sforzi diplomatici per risolvere il problema dell'LRA.

«Invisible Children» è una ONG e ha una sua specificità. Anche le istituzioni europee sono dotate di meccanismi atti a ricevere domande da parte del pubblico in merito alle politiche e alle azioni dell'UE e a fornire le risposte. Le osservazioni del pubblico, molte delle quali riguardanti l'LRA, sono prese in considerazione ogniqualvolta l'UE propone nuove politiche.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003670/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Barbara Matera (PPE)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — The EU institutions and the Joseph Kony campaign

In 2005, the US grassroots organisation Invisible Children was formed in order to raise awareness of the issue of the abduction and forced enlistment of children in Uganda by the sect known as the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The LRA's leader, Joseph Kony, and his killers have abducted more than 30 000 children from their families, forcing young boys to murder their parents and become child soldiers, and the girls to work as sex slaves. Accordingly, Joseph Kony is listed as the most wanted man in the world, and was indicted in 2006 for war crimes by the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Human rights advocacy efforts on the issue have had considerable success in Sudan, and Invisible Children has recently launched a video campaign for the arrest of Joseph Kony. In the few days since the documentary was released, it has been shared more than 4 million times via Facebook, and the overwhelming public response has even caused the organisation's website to crash. The campaign aims to influence celebrities and policy-makers, so as to alter the climate of Western opinion and target Joseph Kony, secure his arrest and free the thousands of child soldiers whom he has enslaved.

1. What action has the Vice-President/High Representative taken in order to address the human rights issue of forced enlistment of children in combat?

2. Can the EU act to raise awareness of this campaign and its efforts and help secure the arrest of the indicted Joseph Kony, so that he can be put on trial at the ICC? If so, what tools can the EU provide to facilitate the campaign?

3. Can the EU create a channel of communication with its citizens allowing them to act directly on their concerns over issues such as this, in the way that 'Invisible Children' has enabled the public to contact celebrities and policy-makers?

Answer given by High representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(25 July 2012)

In 2003, the EU adopted specific Guidelines on children and armed conflict and its Implementation Strategy was revised in 2010 by the Council. In 2006, the EU developed a checklist for the integration of child protection issue in its crisis management operations.

The mandate of the UNSG' Special Representative on children and armed conflict was renewed last year thanks to the EU co-sponsored UNGA resolution. The EU has also delivered assistance worldwide to prevention of grave violations against children and to reintegration and rehabilitation of children affected by armed conflict, including child soldiers. In Uganda alone, the EU and its Member States spent more than EUR 6 million in 2008-2012 in addressing situation of children affected by armed conflict.

The EU supports the African Union's Regional Cooperation Initiative to strengthen regional efforts to combat the LRA. It is providing financial assistance (EUR 1.2 million) to the Office of the African Union Special Envoy for LRA issues and the establishment of a Joint Operations Centre to enable the 5,000-strong Regional Task Force from Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic and South Sudan to act swiftly and effectively against the LRA. Last year it also provided EUR 9 million for humanitarian aid to LRA victims. As co-chair of the International Working Group on the LRA, the EU is at the forefront of diplomatic efforts to find solutions to the LRA problem.

Invisible Children is an NGO and has its own specificity. EU institutions also have mechanisms to receive and answer questions from the public on EU policy and actions. These views, many of which we received on the LRA, are taken into consideration whenever the EU proposes policies.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003672/12
alla Commissione
Carlo Fidanza (PPE)
(11 aprile 2012)

Oggetto: Titoli di Stato greci e tutela dei piccoli risparmiatori italiani

Negli ultimi anni numerosi sottoscrittori italiani ed europei (il cosiddetto mercato del retail) hanno acquistato, spesso con prezzo di carico vicino alla parità, titoli di Stato greci.

Con la decisione sul concambio dei 206 miliardi di bond greci detenuti da privati, i privati stessi devono rinunciare a oltre il 50 % del valore dei bond, per consentire allo Stato greco di dimezzare i debiti.

Si è quindi verificata una situazione inaccettabile: le banche possono ammortizzare le perdite, non solo mettendole a bilancio ma anche avvalendosi del prestito di 1000 miliardi di euro all'1 % dalla BCE; i fondi speculativi (hedge funds) si sono visti rimborsati i CDS; i risparmiatori italiani, in alcuni casi anche operatori non qualificati, sono invece obbligati ad accettare lo swap pur avendo le garanzie di titoli emessi sotto la legislazione di un paese europeo e dopo ampie rassicurazioni da parte di tutte le istituzioni comunitarie. Inoltre, la trattativa dello swap è stata condotta solo con le banche senza i risparmiatori che hanno avuto in cambio 20 minibond di durata fino a 30 anni ingestibili per loro.

Ciò premesso, può la Commissione far sapere:

— come giudica il ruolo della BCE che ha prima sottratto 56 miliardi di euro di suoi titoli allo swap, utili ad evitare il coinvolgimento dei privati, per poi prestare 1000 miliardi al sistema creditizio, permettendo a quest'ultimo di azzerare le perdite?

— perché l'adesione allo swap da volontaria si è trasformata poi di fatto in forzata?

— se uno Stato membro, in questo caso la Grecia, non ha violato il diritto internazionale inserendo nel contratto, unilateralmente e a posteriori, una clausola detta CAC (clausola di azione collettiva) sulle obbligazioni con effetto retroattivo, per cui al raggiungimento di una determinata percentuale di adesioni lo Stato greco poteva «forzare» l'adesione di quelli che non avevano aderito?

— se intende creare un fondo di garanzia che in simili casi tuteli i risparmiatori rimborsando almeno il prezzo d'acquisto dei titoli?

Risposta di Olli Rehn a nome della Commissione
(11 giugno 2012)

In linea con le conclusioni dei vertici dei capi di Stato e di governo della zona euro svoltisi il 21 luglio e il 26 ottobre 2011, il coinvolgimento del settore privato nel finanziamento di un secondo programma di aggiustamento strutturale e di assistenza finanziaria per la Grecia compete in primo luogo alle autorità della Grecia, di concerto con i detentori di titoli di debito. Per questioni che non rientrano nell'attuazione della normativa dell'UE compete unicamente allo Stato membro interessato garantire il rispetto dei propri obblighi in materia di diritti fondamentali derivanti da accordi internazionali e dalla legislazione nazionale. La Commissione non è pertanto in grado di esprimersi sull'argomento.

Per quanto riguarda la domanda dell'onorevole parlamentare relativa alla Banca centrale europea, si ricorda che la Commissione non è nella posizione di potersi esprimere circa la gestione, da parte della BCE, dei propri portafogli obbligazionari né delle operazioni di politica monetaria, in relazione alla quale, come sancito dal trattato, la BCE gode di indipendenza.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003672/12
to the Commission
Carlo Fidanza (PPE)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: Greek state bonds and protection of Italian small investors

In recent years, many Italian and European subscribers (the so-called retail market) have purchased Greek state bonds, often with a book value close to parity.

Following the EUR 206 billion swap of Greek bonds owned by private investors, the latter must accept losses of over 50 % on the value of the bonds to allow the Greek Government to halve its debts.

The situation that has emerged is unacceptable: banks are able to write off losses, not only by including them in their balance sheets but also by using the EUR 1 trillion ECB loan with a 1 % interest rate. Hedge funds have had their credit default swaps repaid. On the other hand, Italian savers, and in some cases even non-qualified operators, are being forced to accept the swap despite the bonds issued being guaranteed by the law of a European country and after ample reassurance from all EU institutions. Furthermore, the swap was negotiated only with the banks and not with savers, who in turn have received twenty 30-year mini-bonds, which they find unmanageable.

In view of the above, can the Commission say:

— How it views the position of the ECB, which initially removed EUR 56 billion of its own bonds from the swap, which would have helped avoid the involvement of private investors, and then provided a loan of EUR 1 trillion to the credit system, allowing the latter to write off its losses?

— Why the voluntary bond swap in fact turned into a forced bond swap?

— Whether a Member State, in this case Greece, has violated international law by including in the contract, unilaterally and a posteriori, a collective action clause (CAC) on the bonds with retroactive effect, whereby upon attainment of a certain percentage of acceptance, the Greek Government could 'force' bondholders who had not yet given their acceptance to do so?

— Whether it intends to create a guarantee fund which will protect investors in similar cases and at least repay the purchase price of the bonds?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(11 June 2012)

In line with the conclusions of the summit of the Euro Area Heads of States and Governments on 21 July and 26 October 2011, the implementation of the private sector involvement in the financing of a second structural adjustment and financial assistance programme for Greece is the primary responsibility of the authorities of Greece with its bond holders. In matters falling outside the implementation of EC law it is thus for Member States alone to ensure that their obligations regarding fundamental rights — as resulting from international agreements and from their internal legislation — are respected. Therefore, the Commission is not in a position to comment further on these questions.

Concerning the Honourable Member's question about the European Central Bank, is should be noted that the Commission is not in a position to comment on the ECB's management of its bond portfolios and monetary policy operations, in relation to which the ECB enjoys independence as enshrined in the Treaty.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003673/12
alla Commissione
Matteo Salvini (EFD)
(11 aprile 2012)

Oggetto: Problemi sociali e patologie legati al gioco d'azzardo

In Italia, come negli altri Stati membri, sono evidenti i problemi sociali e le patologie legati al gioco d'azzardo.

Si chiede alla Commissione quali siano le iniziative proposte o predisposte a livello dell'Unione rispetto alle tematiche citate.

Può la Commissione fornire un quadro di tali iniziative?

In particolare, la Commissione è al corrente dei gravi disagi sociali causati in Italia dalla grande diffusione di «slot machines» all'interno di normali locali commerciali?

Questa attività, sebbene legale, genera grande preoccupazione e le autorità locali hanno serie difficoltà a disciplinarne la crescente diffusione.

Quali iniziative intende prendere la Commissione per tutelare soprattutto i consumatori vulnerabili dall'ingente offerta di gioco d'azzardo attraverso «slot machines» negli esercizi commerciali presenti nelle città?

Risposta di Michel Barnier a nome della Commissione
(14 giugno 2012)

Come dimostrano le risposte alle recenti interrogazioni riguardo a preoccupazioni analoghe ([1]), la Commissione riconosce l'importanza della questione sollevata dall'onorevole parlamentare. L'attuazione di programmi e iniziative di prevenzione, ad esempio campagne di sensibilizzazione, per diffondere informazioni sui rischi del gioco d'azzardo problematico o compulsivo, rientra fondamentalmente tra le competenze delle autorità nazionali. Tuttavia, in vista dell'adozione della comunicazione sul gioco d'azzardo online nel mercato interno, prevista per il 2012 ([2]), la Commissione sta prendendo in considerazione una serie di opzioni politiche, sia a livello nazionale che dell'UE, al fine di garantire non soltanto una migliore tutela dei consumatori (nello specifico, mediante misure di prevenzione più efficaci per il gioco d'azzardo problematico e la dipendenza da gioco d'azzardo), ma anche una protezione adeguata per tutti i cittadini, ivi compresi i minori e gli adulti vulnerabili, dai rischi associati al gioco d'azzardo on-line.

La Commissione non dispone di informazioni specifiche riguardo alla portata degli eventuali problemi sociali legati all'uso di «slot machines» in Italia. A livello nazionale, purtroppo, gli studi e i dati statistici disponibili sono ancora limitati. Ciononostante, la Commissione è a conoscenza del fatto che il ministero della Salute italiano sta sviluppando, sulla scorta di dati concreti sul comportamento di gioco, un progetto per concepire una serie di azioni contro la dipendenza. La Commissione ritiene che le iniziative intraprese per incoraggiare la conoscenza del gioco d'azzardo problematico e della dipendenza da gioco d'azzardo, nonché delle relative cause, siano di grande utilità.

([1]) E-000370/2012 e E-002753/2012.
([2]) Seguito dato alla consultazione in merito al libro verde sul gioco d'azzardo on-line nel mercato interno (COM(2011)128 definitivo).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003673/12
to the Commission
Matteo Salvini (EFD)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: Social problems and illnesses associated with gambling

In Italy, as in other Member States, the social problems and illnesses associated with gambling are evident.

Can the Commission say what measures have been proposed or planned at EU level regarding these matters?

Can the Commission give an outline of these measures?

In particular, is the Commission aware of the serious social problems caused in Italy by the widespread presence of slot machines on ordinary commercial premises?

This activity, albeit legal, is causing great concern and local authorities are having serious difficulty in curbing the growing spread of these machines.

What action does the Commission intend to take to protect vulnerable consumers, above all, from the widespread availability of gambling via slot machines on commercial premises in our cities?

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

The relevance of the issue raised by the Honourable Member is recognised by the Commission, as reflected in the responses to recent questions raising similar concerns ([1]). The implementation of prevention schemes and initiatives, such as awareness-raising campaigns, to inform on risks of problem gambling or compulsive gambling are primarily the responsibility of national authorities. Nonetheless, in view of the communication on Online Gambling in the internal market, foreseen for adoption in 2012 ([2]), the Commission is giving consideration to a number of policy options, both at EU and national level, with a view to ensure not only a better protection of consumers — notably through a more efficient prevention of problem gambling and addiction to gambling, but also an appropriate protection of all citizens, including minors and vulnerable adults, against the risk that may be associated with online gambling.

The Commission is not in the possession of specific information regarding the magnitude of possible social problems in Italy related to the use of slot machines. Unfortunately, few studies are carried out or statistics gathered at national level on such issues. However, the Commission is aware that the Ministry responsible for health in Italy is working on a project to develop actions on addiction based on evidence related to gambling behaviour. The Commission considers that efforts to encourage a better understanding of problem gambling and addiction, including the causes are useful.

([1]) E-000370/2012 and E-002753/2012.
([2]) Follow-up to the Green Paper consultation on Online Gambling in the internal market (COM(201) 12 final).

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite P-003674/12
à la Commission
Philippe Juvin (PPE)
(11 avril 2012)

Objet: Traitement et prise en charge des personnes autistes

Selon l'Organisation mondiale de la santé, l'autisme est un trouble envahissant du développement qui touche environ 1 enfant sur 150 ([1]).

Les rares données existantes à l'échelle européenne nous permettent de constater que l'Europe marche à «deux vitesses».

En effet, force est de constater que de nombreux États membres accusent un retard dans le traitement et la prise en charge des personnes autistes. Ce retard n'est pas seulement causé par des contraintes budgétaires mais aussi par une approche psychanalytique qui ne laisse pas sa place aux autres méthodes éducatives et comportementales. D'autres, au contraire, ont fait le choix des méthodes éducatives et comportementales, des méthodes qui font leur preuve depuis plus de 40 ans. C'est par exemple le cas de l'Espagne, de la Belgique, de la Suède et du Royaume-Uni.

Plus largement, les quatre grands défis à résoudre sont le développement d'un dépistage précoce, la généralisation d'approches pluridisciplinaires intégrant des stratégies éducatives, l'amélioration de la formation des professionnels et l'existence de structures d'accueil adaptées à l'âge et au profil des personnes autistes.

Le 15 novembre 2010, Viviane Reding, commissaire en charge de la justice, des droits fondamentaux et de la citoyenneté, avait annoncé l'adoption de la stratégie européenne 2010-2020 en faveur des personnes handicapées.

1. Devant l'ampleur voire l'urgence des défis en matière de prise en charge de l'autisme, la Commission a-t-elle prévu des mesures spécifiques visant à encourager et à soutenir les États membres dans le développement d'une politique publique de prise en charge de l'autisme efficace et respectueuse? Si oui, quelles sont-elles? Si tel n'est pas le cas, la Commission l'envisage-t-elle?

2. Par ailleurs, la Commission a-t-elle mis en place un programme européen visant, d'une part, à soutenir les associations engagées dans la prise en charge des autistes et la sensibilisation et, d'autre part, à favoriser un échange de bonnes pratiques entre les États membres? Si tel n'est pas le cas, la Commission l'envisage-t-elle?

Réponse donnée par Mme Reding au nom de la Commission
(11 mai 2012)

La Commission connaît toute l'importance des divers troubles du spectre autistique (TSA) et a entrepris plusieurs actions pour traiter les problèmes qu'ils entraînent dans différents domaines de la vie.

Elle soutient notamment les organisations de la société civile qui représentent les personnes atteintes de TSA, ainsi que leurs familles. Dans le cadre du programme PROGRESS de l'UE pour l'emploi et la solidarité sociale, la Commission a conclu un accord de partenariat avec Autisme-Europe (2011-2013), qui permet à cette organisation de bénéficier d'une subvention de fonctionnement annuelle.

En outre, à la suite d'un appel à propositions (VP/2010/017), la Commission subventionne quatre projets pilotes pour l'emploi des personnes atteintes de TSA, visant à contribuer à l'élaboration de politiques d'emploi et d'intégration sociale de ces personnes. Les résultats des projets en question seront présentés avant la fin 2012.

Dans le cadre de son programme en matière de santé, la Commission finance le système européen d'information sur l'autisme (EAIS), qui vise à fournir des données fiables, cohérentes et systématiques sur les TSA, ainsi que des outils harmonisés de dépistage précoce. Nous finançons également le réseau européen de surveillance des facteurs de risques de l'autisme et de la paralysie cérébrale (ENSACP) ([2]), un projet destiné à faciliter le dépistage précoce des TSA chez les enfants, ce qui améliore le pronostic et la qualité de vie des enfants et des familles.

([1]) http://www.who.int/fr/.
([2]) http://www.ensacp.eu/.

Enfin, la Commission renvoie l'Honorable Parlementaire à sa réponse à la question P-005560/2010 ([3]) pour de plus amples informations concernant les projets de recherche sur les TSA, financés par le 6e PC et le 7e PC.

([3]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/QP-WEB/application/home.do?language=FR.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-003674/12
to the Commission
Philippe Juvin (PPE)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: The treatment and care of people with autism

According to the World Health Organisation, autism is a pervasive developmental disorder which affects around 1 in 150 children.

The scarce data available at European level demonstrates that Europe has a two-speed approach to autism.

It is clear in fact that many Member States are lagging behind in the treatment and care of people with autism. This delay is caused not only by budgetary constraints, but also by a psychoanalytic approach that leaves no place for other educational and behavioural methods. Others have, however, opted for these educational and behavioural methods, which have proven successful for over 40 years. Spain, Belgium, Sweden and the United Kingdom have adopted this approach.

More broadly, the four main challenges to be addressed are the promotion of early detection, the generalisation of multidisciplinary approaches including educational strategies, improved training of professionals and the availability of childcare facilities tailored to the age and profile of people with autism.

On 15 November 2010, Viviane Reding, the Commissioner for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship, announced the adoption of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020.

1. Given the scale and urgency of the challenges of dealing with autism, has the Commission planned specific measures to encourage and support Member States in the development of a public policy for autism that is both effective and respectful? If so, what are these measures? If not, does the Commission envisage doing so?

2. Moreover, has the Commission set up a European programme first of all, to support the associations involved in autism treatment and awareness-building, and secondly, to promote an exchange of good practices between Member States? If not, does the Commission envisage doing so?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(11 May 2012)

The Commission is aware of the importance of the different Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and has been undertaking actions to address the problems they create in various areas of life.

Notably, the Commission supports civil society organisations representing people with ASD and their families. Under the EU's employment and social solidarity programme PROGRESS, the Commission has a partnership agreement (2011-2013) with Autism Europe, allowing this organisation to benefit from an annual operational grant.

Moreover, following to a Call for Proposals (VP/2010/017), the Commission subsidises four pilot projects on employment of persons with ASD that aim to help develop policies for employment and social integration of people with ASD. These projects will present their results before the end of 2012.

In the framework of its Health Programme, the Commission funds the European Autism Information System (EAIS) that aims to provide systematic, consistent and reliable data on ASD and harmonised early-detection tools. We also fund the European network of surveillance on risk factors for autism and cerebral palsy (ENSACP) ([1]) a project to facilitate the early detection of ASD in children, improving the prognosis and quality of life for children and families.

Finally, the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Question P-005560/2010 ([2]) for detailed information on research projects on ASD funded by the FP6 and FP7.

([1]) http://www.ensacp.eu/.
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/QP-WEB/application/home.do?language=EN.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite P-003675/12
à la Commission
Sandrine Bélier (Verts/ALE)
(11 avril 2012)

Objet: ArcelorMittal et les mesures prises pour le développement industriel européen

Après avoir exigé des abattements fiscaux, des aides financières à l'emploi et à la recherche, des droits d'émissions gratuits de CO^2, les entreprises sidérurgiques promettent des investissements pour, en réalité, fermer les hauts-fourneaux, sans se soucier des conséquences sur les hommes et femmes dont les compétences et les engagements constituaient la force même de ces entreprises.

Cette récente vague de licenciements (36 000 emplois supprimés chez ArcelorMittal en 5 ans) nous invite donc à repenser fondamentalement nos politiques d'investissements et de fiscalité.

Pour assurer le dynamisme économique, la sauvegarde et la transition écologique du secteur industriel, c'est au niveau européen que nous pouvons agir. Ainsi, il est urgent que l'Union européenne adopte un cadre qui impose un processus paneuropéen pour assurer le maintien des emplois industriels en Europe et engager la transition écologique de ces secteurs particulièrement menacés.

Par ces mesures, l'UE pourra ainsi orienter le développement industriel à travers:

— l'instauration d'une politique fiscale intégrée avec des taux réellement harmonisés, pour sortir de la compétition des uns contre les autres au sein même de l'Union européenne;

— l'instauration de normes sociales et environnementales strictes et ambitieuses;

— la mise en œuvre d'une véritable politique industrielle commune, et non morcelée;

— la mise en œuvre d'une véritable politique de transition écologique du secteur;

— la taxation des transactions financières.

Face à la vague de licenciements passés, en cours et à venir en Europe et notamment en France (Florange et Gandrange), quelles mesures concrètes et immédiates la Commission compte-t-elle prendre à cet égard?

Réponse donnée par M. Tajani au nom de la Commission
(23 mai 2012)

En octobre 2010, la Commission a adopté la communication intitulée «Une politique industrielle intégrée à l'ère de la mondialisation — Mettre la compétitivité et le développement durable sur le devant de la scène» qui définit un certain nombre de lignes d'action politique pour améliorer la compétitivité, condition nécessaire à une croissance durable et à la création d'emplois. Cette communication est l'un des éléments phares de la stratégie Europe 2020 et fixe les objectifs de renforcer la base industrielle de l'Europe et de créer des conditions optimales pour une croissance durable.

Depuis lors, des progrès importants ont été accomplis. La page web suivante qui permet de suivre en détail l'avancement des actions prévues dans la communication sera disponible prochainement: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/industrial-competitiveness/industrial-policy/europe-2020/files/impl_table_en.pdf.

Compte tenu de l'évolution de la situation économique, la Commission procède actuellement à la mise à jour de cette communication. Elle proposera des initiatives susceptibles de contribuer à relancer la croissance ainsi qu'à identifier et à supprimer les obstacles qui entravent la poursuite de nos objectifs cohérents à plus long terme. Cette nouvelle communication devrait être adoptée au début de l'automne.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-003675/12
to the Commission
Sandrine Bélier (Verts/ALE)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: ArcelorMittal and measures to develop European industry

After having demanded tax relief, financial aid for job creation and research and free CO_2 emission rights, steel companies are now reneging on their promise to make new investments, and instead shutting down blast furnaces, regardless of the consequences for the men and women whose skills and commitment are these companies' lifeblood.

This recent wave of layoffs (36 000 jobs cut at ArcelorMittal in five years) thus makes a fundamental rethink of our investment and taxation policies essential.

Action can be taken at European level to keep our economy growing, safeguard industry and make it greener. Accordingly, there is an urgent need for the European Union to adopt a framework requiring action at pan-European level to protect industrial jobs in Europe and to start making these sectors, which are particularly at risk, greener now.

By taking these measures, the EU can therefore guide industrial development through:

— the establishment of an integrated fiscal policy with properly harmonised rates as a way of halting competition between countries in the European Union;

— the introduction of stringent and ambitious social and environmental standards;

— the implementation of a genuine, properly coordinated common industrial policy;

— the implementation of a genuine green industry policy;

— the taxation of financial transactions.

In view of the past, present and future waves of layoffs in Europe, in particular in France (Florange and Gandrange), what immediate practical measures does the Commission intend to take?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(23 May 2012)

The Commission adopted in October 2010 the communication entitled 'An Integrated Policy for the Globalisation Era — Putting Competitiveness and Sustainability at Centre Stage' defining a broad set of policy action lines to improve competitiveness as a necessary condition for sustainable growth and job creation. This communication is one of the flagships of the Europe 2020 strategy and includes the objectives of reinforcing Europe's industrial base and creating optimal conditions for sustainable growth.

Since then, significant progress has been made. The following webpage with a detailed account of this will be available soon:

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/industrial-competitiveness/industrial-policy/europe-2020/files/impl_table_en.pdf

In view of the current economic climate, the Commission is currently working on an update of this communication. This will propose actions to bring forward initiatives that can contribute to reigniting growth and identifying and overcoming obstacles in the pursuit of our consistent longer term objectives. This communication is scheduled to be adopted early this autumn.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord P-003676/12
aan de Commissie
Kartika Tamara Liotard (GUE/NGL)
(11 april 2012)

Betreft: Dode na consumptie zoetstof Sorbitol

1. Is de Commissie op de hoogte van het feit dat een Italiaanse vrouw onlangs is overleden — en twee mensen zijn opgenomen in het ziekenhuis — na consumptie van de zoetstof Sorbitol (product: Sorbitol Food Grade 5 Kg)?

2. Volgens een artikel in EU Food Policy is de sorbitolvergifitiging ontstaan door een te hoge concentratie sodiumnitraat in de geconsumeerde zoetstof. In welke hoeveelheden is deze gevaarlijke stof gewoonlijk aanwezig in Sorbitol? Wat is de EU-grenswaarde voor sodiumnitraat in Sorbitol?

3. Hoe groot schat de Europese Commissie het risico in dat er in sorbitol dat voor consumptie bedoeld is een te hoge concentratie sodiumnitraat terecht komt? Hoe controleert de Europese Commissie of er geen verhoogde concentratie sodiumnitraat in sorbitol voor consumptie terecht komt?

4. Is de vergiftigde Sorbitol volledig gelocaliseerd? Zo ja, in welke lidstaten is deze Sorbitol terecht gekomen en welke maatregelen zijn genomen om te voorkomen dat de vergiftigde Sorbitol nog langer bij consumenten terecht komt? In hoeverre kan de Commissie garanderen dat de vergiftigde Sorbitol niet in verwerkte producten terecht is gekomen? Hoe garandeert de Europese Commissie accurate controle als additieven lukraak op veilingssites kunnen worden aangeboden?

5. Als er bij foutieve productie van Sorbitol, zoals nu bij Sorbitol Food Grade 5 Kg een dergelijk groot risico kan ontstaan voor de volksgezondheid, acht de Commissie deze zoetstof dan nog wel veilig genoeg voor de Europese Markt? Zo ja, waarom?

6. Is de Commissie van mening dat de huidige regelgeving en grenswaarden omtrent zoetstof Sorbitol accuraat en veilig genoeg zijn voor de volksgezondheid? Zo ja, hoe heeft deze situatie dan kunnen plaatsvinden?

Antwoord van de heer Dalli namens de Commissie
(11 mei 2012)

Op 25 maart 2012 meldde Italië via het systeem voor snelle waarschuwingen voor levensmiddelen en diervoeders (RASFF) dat de dag voordien een vrouw was overleden en dat twee andere personen in het ziekenhuis waren opgenomen na de verkeerdelijke inname van zuiver natriumnitriet in een particuliere dokterspraktijk in Barletta, in het zuiden van Italië. Het product, dat werd geacht het levensmiddelenadditief (zoetstof) sorbitol te zijn, was geleverd door een bedrijf uit het Verenigd Koninkrijk en werd ingenomen tijdens een zogenaamde voedselintolerantietest om mogelijke allergische reacties op te sporen.

De specificaties voor de zoetstof sorbitol staan geen aanwezigheid van natriumnitriet toe, zelfs niet als een onzuiverheid. Voor sorbitol is geen aanvaardbare dagelijkse inname — dit is de hoeveelheid uitgedrukt in verhouding tot het lichaamsgewicht die een leven lang dagelijks kan worden ingenomen zonder risico voor de consument — vastgesteld. Voor sorbitol zijn er geen aanbevolen maximale grenswaarden en daarom kan de stof worden gebruikt in hoeveelheden die technisch noodzakelijk zijn. De wettelijke bepalingen voor deze zoetstof geven voldoende garanties voor het veilige gebruik ervan.

Natriumnitriet daarentegen is een goedgekeurd levensmiddelenadditief (E 250) dat onder specifieke voorwaarden en in kleine hoeveelheden wordt gebruikt om vleesproducten te bewaren. Het voorkomt de groei van bacteriën en beschermt de consument zo tegen botulisme, een voedselvergifting die dodelijk kan zijn.

Onmiddellijk nadat zij de informatie over het voorval hadden gekregen, stelden de autoriteiten van het Verenigd Koninkrijk een onderzoek in bij het internetbedrijf dat het verdachte pakket had geleverd. Informatie over de internetverkoop/kopers van dit bedrijf dat „sorbitol food grade" verkoopt, werd verstrekt en verspreid via het RASFF. In afwachting van de resultaten van het onderzoek verbood het Verenigd Koninkrijk per direct de verkoop en verspreiding van alle „food grade"-chemicaliën van dit bedrijf vanaf 27 maart 2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-003676/12
to the Commission
Kartika Tamara Liotard (GUE/NGL)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: Woman dies after ingesting sweetener Sorbitol

1. Is the Commission aware of the fact that an Italian woman has recently died — and two people have been hospitalised — after ingesting the sweetener Sorbitol (product: Sorbitol Food Grade 5Kg)?

2. According to an article in *EU Food Policy*, the Sorbitol poisoning was due to an excessive concentration of sodium nitrate in the ingested sweetener. In what quantities is this dangerous substance usually present in Sorbitol? What is the EU limit for sodium nitrate in Sorbitol?

3. How great, according to the European Commission, is the risk that food-grade Sorbitol might contain an excessive concentration of sodium nitrate? How does the European Commission ensure that food-grade Sorbitol does not contain excessive concentrations of sodium nitrate?

4. Has all the poisoned Sorbitol been traced? If so, in which Member States has this Sorbitol ended up and what measures have been taken to ensure that consumers are no longer exposed to the poisoned Sorbitol? To what extent can the Commission guarantee that the poisoned Sorbitol has not been added to processed food products? How does the European Commission guarantee accurate control if additives can be offered haphazardly on auction sites?

5. If a production error can lead to such a great risk for public health, as in the case of Sorbitol Food Grade 5Kg, does the Commission still consider this sweetener safe enough for the European market? If so, why?

6. Does the Commission believe that the current legislation and limits concerning the sweetener Sorbitol are sufficiently accurate and safe for public health? If so, how was it possible for this situation to occur?

Answer given by Mr Dalli on behalf of the Commission
(11 May 2012)

On 25 March 2012, Italy notified through the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) the death of one woman the previous day and the hospitalization of two more persons after the erroneous ingestion of pure sodium nitrite in a private medical practice in Barletta, south of Italy. The product, which was supposed to be Sorbitol supplied by company based in the UK, a food additive (sweetener), was consumed during a so called food intolerance test to check possible allergy reactions.

The specifications for the sweetener Sorbitol do not allow the presence of sodium nitrite, not even as an impurity. Sorbitol has no acceptable daily intake, which is the amount expressed on a bodyweight basis which can be ingested daily over a lifetime without risk to any consumer. For Sorbitol no maximum limits are recommended, and the substance can therefore be used in amounts which are technologically required. The legal provisions regulating this sweetener provide sufficient guarantees to allow its safe use.

Sodium nitrite on the other hand is an authorised food additive (E 250) used, under specific conditions and in small quantities, to preserve meat products. It prevents the growth of bacteria and thus protects consumers against botulism, a food poisoning which can be fatal.

Immediately following the information on the incident, the UK authorities carried out an investigation in the Internet company that delivered the incriminated package. Information on the Internet sales/buyers from this company of 'sorbitol food grade' was provided and circulated through RASFF. The UK immediately imposed a ban on the sale or distribution of any food grade chemicals by this company, effective from 27 March 2012, pending the outcome of the investigations.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003678/12
to the Commission
Derek Roland Clark (EFD)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: Toll roads

I understand that to use a toll road in Portugal one cannot pay at a toll booth as one travels. There is a two-day delay and the driver has to pay at a post office. For British people, this presents a language problem. If they are using a hire car from the airport they are then faced with extra administrative costs on its return, together with a fine for late payment.

Honest travellers are therefore being penalised when all they wish to do is to pay to use a toll road. They cannot easily observe the two-day rule if they pick up a hire car at the airport. It is no use telling them to book before they fly, as they might wish just to travel without a pre-planned itinerary.

I have not met this problem before, even though I have driven extensively in Europe — but not in Portugal. The EU is supposed to offer a level playing field, so why is Portugal allowed to continue with a practice not seen elsewhere?

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

There is no EU legislation that specifies rules for charging passenger cars. Consequently, Portugal is free to apply tolls for passenger cars on its roads and to choose the most appropriate toll collection method, as long as the Treaty principles of non-discrimination and proportionality are respected. The Commission has approached the Portuguese authorities to draw their attention on the issue and has not found reasons to start an infringement procedure. While the Commission will continue to monitor the matter, the Commission would suggest addressing any possible complaints or questions directly to the Portuguese authorities to explain the problems encountered by British travellers.

By the same occasion, the Commission would like to inform the Honourable Member that on 14 May 2012 it adopted a communication (COM(2012) 199) on vignettes for private cars, which is intended to guide Member States in designing vignette systems in a way that does not discriminate against foreign users.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-003679/12
alla Commissione
Matteo Salvini (EFD)
(11 aprile 2012)

Oggetto: Il diritto familiare tedesco e lo «Jugendamt»

Numerosi sono i casi in cui cittadini dell'Unione si sono trovati impotenti di fronte all'applicazione delle decisioni prese unilateralmente dalle strutture dello «Jugendamt», istituzione sociale che si occupa di diritto di famiglia, sorta durante il periodo del regime nazista ed ancora oggi operante in Germania.

I tribunali italiani si sono trovati spesso nella situazione di dover recepire, senza aver la possibilità di compiere alcun tipo di verifica, le decisioni prese dai giudici tedeschi i quali, a loro volta, non possono emettere una sentenza senza l'intervento dell'autorità dello «Jugendamt» competente territorialmente.

Il diritto familiare è di competenza degli Stati membri ma, senza alcun dubbio, deve sempre rispettare i principi sanciti nella Convenzione europea per i diritti dell'uomo e nella Carta dell'UE sui diritti fondamentali.

— Ritiene la Commissione di aderire al pensiero di molti cittadini secondo i quali lo «Jugendamt» non rispetta tali principi?

— È possibile, infine, conoscere il numero dei casi sollevati all'attenzione delle istituzioni europee sullo «Jugendamt» sia con petizioni dei cittadini o con interrogazioni presentate da deputati al Parlamento europeo?

Risposta data da Viviane Reding a nome della Commissione
(7 maggio 2012)

Con riguardo alla questione di violazioni dei diritti fondamentali da parte dello *Jugendamt*, la Commissione ricorda che, ai sensi dell'articolo 51 della Carta, le disposizioni di quest'ultima si applicano agli Stati membri esclusivamente nell'attuazione del diritto dell'Unione. Il diritto di famiglia dell'Unione europea relativo ai minori si limita alle norme comuni riguardanti la giurisdizione nonché il riconoscimento e l'applicazione delle decisioni giudiziarie pronunciate in un altro Stato membro. Per quanto riguarda l'applicazione del diritto sostanziale di famiglia tedesco, spetta unicamente agli Stati membri garantire il rispetto dei loro obblighi in materia di diritti fondamentali, in conformità con gli accordi internazionali e con la legislazione interna. Pertanto, la Commissione non può formulare osservazioni sul rispetto dei diritti fondamentali da parte delle autorità tedesche nell'applicazione del diritto di famiglia sostanziale tedesco.

La Commissione ha trattato 40 petizioni in relazione a questo tema formulate dal Parlamento europeo e 49 interrogazioni dallo stesso presentate su temi connessi allo *Jugendamt*. La Commissione non possiede dati statistici per quanto riguarda le altre istituzioni.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-003679/12
to the Commission
Matteo Salvini (EFD)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: German family law and the 'Jugendamt'

There have been numerous cases in which EU citizens have found themselves powerless in the face of the application of decisions made unilaterally by the 'Jugendamt' agency, a social institution which deals with family law, founded during the Nazi regime and still operational in Germany today.

Italian courts have often found themselves in the situation of having to accept, without having the possibility of completing any kind of check, decisions made by German judges who, in turn, cannot pass a sentence without the intervention of the authority of the 'Jugendamt' with territorial jurisdiction.

Family law is a matter for Member States but, without a doubt, it must always respect the principles enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights and in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

— Does the Commission agree with the many citizens who believe that the 'Jugendamt' does not respect these principles?

— Can the Commission state the number of cases that have come to the attention of the EU institutions concerning the 'Jugendamt', whether by petitions from citizens or by questions submitted by MEPs?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(7 May 2012)

Regarding the issue of violations of fundamental rights by the Jugendamt, the Commission would recall that, according to Article 51 of the Charter, its provisions are addressed to the Member States only when they are implementing Union law. EU family law relating to children is limited to common rules on jurisdiction and the recognition and enforcement of existing judgments in another Member State. When applying German substantive family law it is for Member States alone to ensure that their obligations regarding fundamental rights — as resulting from international agreements and from their internal legislation — are respected. Therefore, the Commission is not in a position to comment on the respect of fundamental rights by German authorities when they apply substantive German family law.

The Commission has dealt with 40 petitions referred to it by the European Parliament and 49 EP questions on issues related to Jugendamt. The Commission does not have statistics for other EU institutions.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-003681/12
al Consejo
Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE)
(11 de abril de 2012)

Asunto: Papel regional y local en la agenda europea para la integración

El Comité de las Regiones ha hecho público recientemente su dictamen sobre la nueva agenda europea para la integración en la que las instituciones europeas reconocen un papel más activo para las regiones y los poderes locales. Esta posición, que compartimos, es acorde con los servicios e implicación que dichos niveles de gobierno tienen en la adecuada integración de la inmigración desde instituciones de base territorial y próximas a la ciudadanía. Ellas son las que, en la práctica, realizan el trabajo de integración sobre el territorio y las comunidades que eligen los inmigrantes para vivir y trabajar.

Por eso parece imprescindible completar las previsiones genéricas incluidas en esta agenda europea con medidas específicas destinadas a reforzar la implicación y concretar el papel en esta política de los niveles de gobierno local y regional. A la vista de estas consideraciones y del informe del Comité de las Regiones:

— ¿Tiene previsto el Consejo integrar al Comité de las Regiones en las conferencias ministeriales europeas sobre integración?

— ¿Considera útil la utilización de los «pactos territoriales» como herramienta más adecuada para mejorar la eficiencia del gasto público en esta materia?

Respuesta
(6 de junio de 2012)

El Consejo desea informar a Su Señoría de que ha sido costumbre de las sucesivas Presidencias invitar a los representantes del Comité de las Regiones y del Comité Económico y Social a que asistan a las conferencias ministeriales sobre integración informales.

En lo que se refiere a las autoridades locales y regionales, el Consejo recuerda que, en sus conclusiones sobre la Agenda Europea para la Integración de Nacionales de Terceros Países, adoptada el 13 de diciembre de 2011 ([1]), el Consejo y los Representantes de los Gobiernos de los Estados Miembros, consideraron que las políticas de integración deberían elaborarse y aplicarse con la participación activa de las autoridades locales y regionales y otros agentes para garantizar que se produzca una coordinación adecuada entre los diferentes actores implicados ([2]). Consideraron asimismo que, cuando sea conveniente, la Unión Europea y los gobiernos nacionales deberían apoyar las iniciativas locales y a las ONG locales, entre otras cosas, mediante ayuda financiera ([3]). También se destacó la importancia que tiene definir e intercambiar las mejores prácticas en este ámbito ([4]).

Se recuerda asimismo a Su Señoría el Reglamento del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo por el que se crea el Fondo de Asilo y Migración para el período 2014-2020 ([5]), que la Comisión presentó el 17 de noviembre de 2011 y sobre el que están en curso negociaciones. Esta propuesta de Reglamento se refiere específicamente a las medidas de integración a nivel local y regional.

En el actual período de financiación, el Fondo Europeo para la Integración de Nacionales de Terceros Países para el período 2007-2013 ([6]), apoya asimismo programas que contribuyen a la integración de inmigrantes. También se tiene en cuenta la gobernanza multinivel en el diseño y la ejecución de dichos programas.

([1]) Doc. 18296/1/11.
([2]) Ídem, página 4, apartado 2.
([3]) Ídem.
([4]) Ídem.
([5]) Doc. 17289/11.
([6]) DO L 168 de 28.6.2007, p. 18.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003681/12
to the Council
Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: The role of regional and local authorities in the European integration agenda

The Committee of the Regions has recently published its opinion on the new European integration agenda, in which the European institutions grant a more active role to regional and local authorities. This stance, which we share, is in line with the services those levels of government provide to properly integrate immigrants from regional and local grassroots institutions that are close to the citizens and their involvement in that process. It is they who, in practice, carry out the task of integration on the ground and they who choose the immigrants who will live and work in their communities.

Accordingly, it seems essential to supplement the general precautionary measures contained in this European agenda with specific measures designed to strengthen this involvement and crystallise the role of local and regional levels of government in this policy. In view of these considerations and of the Committee of the Regions' report:

— Does the Council plan to include the Committee of the Regions in the European Ministerial Conferences on Integration?

— Does it consider the use of 'territorial pacts' to be the most appropriate tool for improving the efficiency of public expenditure in this field?

Reply
(6 June 2012)

The Council would like to inform the Honourable Member that it has been the practice of successive Presidencies to invite the representatives of the Committee of Regions and of the Economic and Social Committee to attend the informal Ministerial Conferences on Integration.

Concerning the role of local and regional authorities, the Council recalls that, in their conclusions on the European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals, adopted on 13 December 2011 ([1]), the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States considered that integration policies should be formulated and implemented with the active involvement of local and regional authorities and stakeholders ensuring appropriate coordination between the different actors involved ([2]). They also considered that the support of the European Union and national governments for local initiatives and local NGOs, *inter alia* by means of financial assistance, should be provided where appropriate ([3]). The importance of identifying and exchanging best practices in this area was also highlighted ([4]).

The Honourable Member's attention is also drawn to the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Asylum and Migration Fund for the period 2014-2020 ([5]), presented by the Commission on 17 November 2011 and on which negotiations are ongoing. This proposal for a regulation specifically targets integration measures at local and regional level.

In the current financing period, the European Fund for the Integration of third-country nationals for the period 2007 to 2013 ([6]) also supports programmes contributing to the integration of immigrants. Multi-level governance is taken into account in the design and implementation of these programmes.

([1]) 18296/1/11.
([2]) Idem, page 4, paragraph 2.
([3]) Idem.
([4]) Idem.
([5]) 17289/11.
([6]) OJ L 168, 28.6.2007, p. 18.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-003682/12
an die Kommission
Ismail Ertug (S&D)
(11. April 2012)

Betrifft: Grenzüberschreitende Fahrten mit überlangen Lkw zwischen Dänemark und Deutschland

Seit 2009 finden grenzüberschreitende Fahrten mit einem 25 m langen Lkw über den Grenzübergang Ellund (DK) nach Nützen-Kampen (DE) statt.

Plant die Kommission Vertragsverletzungsverfahren gegen die betreffenden Mitgliedstaaten einzuleiten, da die Fahrten gegen Richtlinie 96/53/EG des Rates verstoßen?

Antwort von Herrn Kallas im Namen der Kommission
(19. Juni 2012)

Die Kommission wurde von den dänischen Behörden über einen Testversuch mit verschiedenen Typen von modularen Fahrzeugen, der 2008 in Dänemark stattfand, in Kenntnis gesetzt. Die Kommission erhielt außerdem Nachricht von einem längere Fahrzeuge umfassenden Testversuch im Februar 2012, der in bestimmten Regionen Deutschlands stattfand, darunter Schleswig-Holstein, in dem Nützen-Kampen liegt. Was den spezifischen Fall angeht, auf den der Herr Abgeordnete sich hier bezieht, hat die Kommission kein Verletzungsverfahren eingeleitet.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003682/12
to the Commission
Ismail Ertug (S&D)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: Cross-border journeys by very long HGVs between Denmark and Germany

Since 2009, shipments have been made using a 25 m-long HGV via the border crossing from Ellund in Denmark to Nützen-Kampen in Germany.

Does the Commission plan to initiate infringement proceedings against the Member States involved, on the grounds that these journeys breach the terms of Council Directive 96/53/EC?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(19 June 2012)

The Commission was informed by the Danish authorities of a trial with different types of modular vehicles in Denmark in 2008. The Commission was also informed of a trial involving longer vehicles in certain German regions, including Schleswig Holstein where Nützen-Kampen is located, in February 2012. As to the specific case mentioned by the Honourable Member, the Commission has not launched infringement proceedings.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-003683/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(11 Απριλίου 2012)

Θέμα: Τρόποι αξιοποίησης κοινοτικών πόρων για αναστήλωση και συντήρηση κτηρίων μεγάλης πολιτιστικής αξίας.

Για την προστασία και τη διατήρηση της πολιτιστικής κληρονομιάς στην Ελλάδα, συνολικά προβλέπονται από τα διαρθρωτικά ταμεία κονδύλια ύψους 284 εκατομμυρίων ευρώ. Ωστόσο, παρά τα εκατοντάδες διατηρητέα κτίρια στην Ελλάδα, η πλειοψηφία των οποίων έχουν ιδιαίτερα μεγάλη πολιτιστική σημασία, οι ιδιώτες ιδιοκτήτες δεν είναι επιλέξιμοι ως άμεσοι δικαιούχοι συγχρηματοδότησης από το ΕΤΠΑ και, επομένως, δεν μπορούν να αξιοποιήσουν χρήματα από τα κοινοτικά ταμεία για την αναστήλωση σημαντικών πολιτιστικών κτισμάτων.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Δεδομένου ότι πολλά κτήρια ιδιαίτερης πολιτιστικής αξίας βρίσκονται στην κατοχή ιδιωτών, οι οποίοι εξαιτίας και της οικονομικής κρίσης δεν είναι σε θέση να τα συντηρήσουν ή να τα αναστηλώσουν, διαθέτει η Επιτροπή εργαλεία παρέμβασης προκειμένου να διασωθούν τα πολιτιστικά αυτά κειμήλια; Στο πλαίσιο αυτό, σκέπτεται να αναζητήσει τρόπους ώστε χρήματα του ΕΤΠΑ να διοχετευθούν προς αυτή την κατεύθυνση;

— Καθώς η Επιτροπή συνεργάζεται με τις ελληνικές αρχές και με την Ευρωπαϊκή Τράπεζα Επενδύσεων για τη δημιουργία νέου ταμείου εγγυήσεων, με βάση την επιμερισμένη διαχείριση, και με στόχο την αντιμετώπιση των αναγκών ρευστότητας, είναι εφικτή η χρηματοδότηση μέσω αυτού δράσεων που αφορούν τη συντήρηση και αναστήλωση σημαντικών πολιτιστικών κτηρίων στην χώρα;

Απάντηση του κ. Hahn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(11 Ιουνίου 2012)

1. Η Επιτροπή παραπέμπει τον κ. βουλευτή στην απάντησή της στην ερώτηση E-012637/2011 ([1]). Πολιτιστικές παρεμβάσεις με ιδιώτες δικαιούχους θα μπορούν να λάβουν υποστήριξη μέσω της JESSICA, ένα καινοτόμο μέσο χρηματοδοτικής τεχνικής, αν αποτελούν μέρος ενός ολοκληρωμένου σχεδίου βιώσιμης αστικής ανάπτυξης.

Όσον αφορά τη χρηματοδότηση από το πρόγραμμα «Πολιτισμός», δεν μπορεί να υποστηρίξει άμεσα την προστασία, αναστήλωση ή συντήρηση μνημείων πολιτιστικής κληρονομιάς, ανεξάρτητα αν είναι ιδιωτικής ή δημόσιας ιδιοκτησίας. Περισσότερες πληροφορίες διατίθενται στον δικτυακό τόπο: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/index_en.htm

2. Η συμφωνία χρηματοδότησης για το νέο ταμείο εγγυήσεων με κονδύλιο 500 εκατομμυρίων ευρώ από το Ευρωπαϊκό Ταμείο Περιφερειακής Ανάπτυξης υπογράφτηκε από την ΕΤΕπ και τις ελληνικές αρχές στις 21 Μαρτίου 2012. Αυτό το νέο μέσο θα βοηθήσει τις ΜΜΕ που πλήγηκαν δριμύτερα από την κρίση να αποκτήσουν πρόσβαση σε πιστώσεις με την παροχή επαρκούς ρευστότητας στις τράπεζες στην Ελλάδα. Τα κριτήρια επιλεξιμότητας για τη χρηματοδότηση ορίζονται στη στρατηγική επενδύσεων και είναι όμοια με τα τυπικά κριτήρια της ΕΤΕπ σχετικά με τα «Δάνεια για ΜΜΕ» και της σύστασης 2003/361/ΕΚ ([2]) της Επιτροπής με προτεραιότητα (αλλά όχι αποκλειστικότητα) σε εκείνες τις ΜΜΕ που υποστηρίζονται ήδη από την πολιτική συνοχής. Συνεπώς, αν μια ΜΜΕ δραστηριοποιείται στον τομέα της διατήρησης της πολιτιστικής κληρονομιάς και πληροί τα κριτήρια επιλεξιμότητας, θα μπορούσε να υποβάλει αίτηση για χρηματοδότηση μέσω αυτού του μηχανισμού.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/QP-WEB/application/home.do?language=EN .
([2]) ΕΕ L 124 της 20.05.2003.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003683/12
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: Ways to use Community resources to restore and maintain buildings of high cultural value

To protect and preserve the cultural heritage of Greece, a total of EUR 284 million is provided by the Structural Funds. However, despite the hundreds of listed buildings in Greece, the majority of which have great cultural importance, private owners are not eligible to be direct beneficiaries of co-financing by the ERDF and therefore, they are not able to use money from Community funds for the restoration of culturally important buildings.

The Commission is asked:

— Given that many buildings of high cultural value are owned by private owners who, due to the economic crisis are not in a position to maintain or restore these buildings, does the Commission have any intervention tools to save these cultural relics? In this context, is it considering looking for ways to channel ERDF funding in this direction?

— Given that the Commission is working with the Greek authorities and the European Investment Bank to create a new guarantee fund, based on shared management and aimed at dealing with liquidity needs, is funding for the restoration and maintenance of culturally important buildings in the country possible through these actions?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(11 June 2012)

1. The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its reply to Question E-012637/2011 ([1]). Cultural interventions with private beneficiaries could receive support via JESSICA, an innovative financial engineering instrument, if they are part of an integrated plan for sustainable urban development.

Concerning financing by the Culture programme, it cannot directly support the protection, restoration or maintenance of cultural heritage sites whether publicly or privately owned. More information can be found on: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/index_en.htm

2. The funding agreement for the new guarantee fund using EUR 500 million from the European Regional Development Fund was signed between the EIB and the Greek authorities on 21 March 2012. This new facility will help SMEs which have been worst hit by the crisis to access credit, by providing the banks in Greece with sufficient liquidity. The eligibility criteria for financing is defined in the investment strategy and is aligned to standard EIB 'Loan for SMEs' criteria and Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC ([2]) with priority (but not exclusivity) given to those SMEs already supported by cohesion policy. Providing that it meets the eligibility criteria therefore, an SME working in the field of cultural preservation could apply for funding through this mechanism.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/QP-WEB/application/home.do?language=EN.
([2]) OJ L 124, 20.5.2003.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-003685/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(11 Απριλίου 2012)

Θέμα: Εξέλιξη του σχεδίου Δράσης Δάφνη ΙΙΙ για την περίοδο 2007-2013

Το σχέδιο δράσης του ΕΚ για την καταπολέμηση της βίας κατά των παιδιών, των νέων και των γυναικών και την προστασία των θυμάτων και των ομάδων κινδύνου, Δάφνη ΙΙΙ, έρχεται για να ενισχύσει προγενέστερα ομοειδή προγράμματα, καθώς το φαινόμενο συνεχίζει να γνωρίζει μεγάλη έξαρση. Ο φόβος των θυμάτων να καταγγείλουν τα εν λόγω περιστατική επισκιάζει την πραγματικά εικόνα.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Ποια είναι η πορεία υλοποίησης του προγράμματος μέχρι σήμερα; Κρίνονται επιτυχή τα μέχρι τώρα αποτελέσματα;

2. Διαπιστώνεται όσον αφορά την Ελλάδα ομαλή εφαρμογή και εκτέλεση του σχεδίου δράσης για την περίοδο 2007-2013;

Απάντηση της κας Reding εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(29 Μαΐου 2012)

Τον Ιούνιο του 2011 εγκρίθηκε ενδιάμεση έκθεση της Επιτροπής προς το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο και το Συμβούλιο σχετικά με την αξιολόγηση του προγράμματος «Δάφνη ΙΙΙ 2007 — 2013».

Τα προκαταρκτικά πορίσματα υποδεικνύουν ότι οι στόχοι του προγράμματος παρουσιάζουν μεγάλη συνάφεια με τις ανάγκες, τα προβλήματα και τα θέματα που αντιμετωπίζουν οι ομάδες-στόχοι. Επιπλέον, από το 1997 που εγκαινιάστηκε η πρωτοβουλία «Δάφνη», τα δύο προγράμματα που την διαδέχθηκαν έχουν αποδείξει τη σημασία τους μέσω της συνεχούς προσαρμογής των στόχων τους προκειμένου να αντιμετωπίσουν τα εξελισσόμενα προβλήματα και ανάγκες. Σε αυτό συνέβαλε η επιλογή να χρησιμοποιηθούν ευρείς στόχοι για το πρόγραμμα, οι οποίοι καθίστανται πιο συγκεκριμένοι και στοχευμένοι μέσω ετήσιων προτεραιοτήτων. Πράγματι, παρότι η έννοια της βίας έχει αλλάξει με τη πάροδο των χρόνων, το γεγονός ότι η βία καθαυτή δεν ορίζεται στη νομική βάση της πρωτοβουλίας «Δάφνη» — αντιθέτως, ορίζεται ότι το πρόγραμμα «Δάφνη ΙΙΙ» καλύπτει «κάθε μορφή βίας» — σημαίνει ότι οι γενικοί και ειδικοί στόχοι του προγράμματος παραμένουν συναφείς. Η έκθεση επιβεβαιώνει ότι το πρόγραμμα έχει σημαντικό αντίκτυπο και έχει σημειώσει πρόοδο όσον αφορά την επίτευξη των στόχων του. Το πρόγραμμα «Δάφνη» έχει επίσης συνεισφέρει στη δημιουργία σημαντικών ευρωπαϊκών δικτύων για την ευαισθητοποίηση των πολιτών σχετικά με τα προβλήματα που σχετίζονται με τη βία.

Από το 2007, το «Δάφνη ΙΙΙ» έχει χρηματοδοτήσει περίπου 165 σχέδια. Σε έξι από τα σχέδια αυτά, ο κύριος δικαιούχος ήταν ελληνική οργάνωση. Επιπλέον, 33 ελληνικές οργανώσεις έχουν χρηματοδοτηθεί ως εταίροι σε άλλα σχέδια.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003685/12
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: Development of specific programme Daphne III for the period 2007-2013

The European Commission's specific programme Daphne III to prevent and combat violence against children, young people and women and to protect victims and groups at risk, builds on previous similar programmes as the problem continues to grow significantly. Victims' fear to speak out in these circumstances obscures the real picture.

The Commission is asked:

1. What is the state of implementation of the programme to date? Are the results obtained so far considered successful?

2. With regard to Greece, has the specific programme for the period 2007-2013 been implemented and carried out correctly?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(29 May 2012)

In June 2011, a Mid-term evaluation report of the Daphne III Programme 2007-2013 from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council was adopted.

Its preliminary findings point out that the programme's objectives are highly pertinent to the needs, problems and issues experienced by the target groups. Moreover, since the Daphne Initiative was launched in 1997 the two successor programmes have demonstrated their relevance through a continuous adaptation of their objectives to meet evolving problems and needs. The approach to use broad programme objectives, which are made more specific and targeted by means of annual priorities, have contributed to this. Indeed, although the concept of violence has changed over the years, the fact that violence per se is not defined in the legal basis for Daphne — on the contrary, it is stipulated that the Daphne III Programme covers 'all forms of violence' — has meant that the general and specific objectives of the programme remain relevant. The report confirms that the programme has a considerable impact and has managed to make progress towards achieving its objectives. Daphne has also contributed to the creation of important European networks to raise the awareness of citizens about the problems related to violence.

Since 2007, Daphne III has funded around 165 projects. In six of these projects, the lead beneficiary was a Greek organisation. Additionally, 33 Greek organisations have been funded as partners under other projects.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003686/12
to the Commission
Daniel Hannan (ECR)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: HS2 compliance with the SEA and Habitats Directives

Does the Commission consider the UK Government's high-speed railway project, 'HS2', to comply fully with the Strategic Environmental Assessment (2001/42/EC ([1])) and Habitats (92/43/EEC ([2])) Directives?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(30 May 2012)

The Commission has very recently received a number of complaints from members of the public raising concerns about this proposed project and its compatibility with European Union environmental legislation. The Commission will assess these complainants and if necessary contact the United Kingdom authorities to seek clarification.

([1]) OJ L 197, 21.7.2001, p. 30.
([2]) OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003687/12
alla Commissione
Mario Borghezio (EFD)
(11 aprile 2012)

Oggetto: L'UE intervenga a tutela della Costituzione e della laicità dello Stato in Turchia

In Turchia è stata recentemente approvata la riforma della scuola, che favorisce gli istituti coranici e introduce l'ora di religione musulmana.

L'introduzione di corsi — seppur facoltativi — sul Corano e sulla vita di Maometto, oltre a indebolire l'impianto laico dello Stato turco, viola la Costituzione turca che sancisce il principio di laicità dello Stato.

— Nel documento della Commissione europea COM(2011)0666 del 12.10.2011, relativo alla strategia di allargamento e alle sfide principali per il periodo 2011-2012, si sostiene che «la Turchia, che ha continuato le riforme connesse all'Unione, dovrà impegnarsi ancora molto, specie per garantire i principali diritti fondamentali». La Commissione considera la riforma scolastica appena approvata dal governo Erdogan una riforma connessa all'Unione?

— Nel summenzionato documento della Commissione europea si sostiene che «si osservano progressi nel campo dell'istruzione e della cultura, specialmente in materia di istruzione e formazione. L'interesse per i programmi comunitari è in costante aumento». Visti i recenti sviluppi, la Commissione è ancora convinta di questa affermazione?

— Alla luce di tutto quanto sopra, la Commissione non ritiene doveroso e opportuno congelare le procedure di adesione della Turchia all'UE affinché in Turchia sia rispettata la Costituzione e, quindi, la laicità dello Stato?

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003764/12
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(12 aprile 2012)

Oggetto: Riforma scolastica in Turchia: svolta filo-islamica

Il 30 marzo il parlamento turco ha approvato una riforma scolastica, fortemente osteggiata dall'opposizione laica, che rischia di spingere il paese verso una ancor maggiore «islamizzazione». Essa prevede non più un corso unico di 7 anni di scuola primaria cui se ne aggiungevano 4 di liceo, ma 3 cicli obbligatori di 4 anni e in particolare la possibilità, dopo il primo ciclo, di far iscrivere i bambini all'età di 10 anni alle «Imam Hatip Lisesi», le scuole religiose islamiche (con la precedente del 1997, l'età di accesso ad esse era stata alzata a 15 anni per limitarne il potere). Inoltre, si dà la possibilità di far concludere l'ultimo ciclo di studi a distanza tramite e-learning, scelta che, come denunciano l'opposizione politica e gli addetti ai lavori, potrebbe inficiare l'istruzione e l'emancipazione femminile, con le ragazze tenute in casa senza di fatto poter terminare effettivamente gli studi.

— La Commissione ne è al corrente? Qual è la sua posizione in merito?

— La Commissione, chiedendo ai cittadini maggiori aperture verso paesi islamici come la Turchia (il 99,8 % della popolazione è musulmana per un totale di circa 78 milioni di persone), come intende tutelare i cristiani presenti negli Stati membri dal pericolo di emarginazione e intolleranza?

— Come valuta questa svolta confessionale nell'istruzione e come reputa si integri con il percorso di adesione all'UE?

Risposta congiunta di Štefan Füle a nome della Commissione
(5 giugno 2012)

La Commissione rinvia l'onorevole parlamentare alla propria risposta all'interrogazione scritta E-002625/2012. ([1])

Nella relazione 2012 sui progressi compiuti dalla Turchia, prevista per ottobre 2012, la Commissione fornirà un'analisi completa degli sviluppi registrati nel settore dell'istruzione e della cultura.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/QP-WEB/application/home.do?language=IT.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003687/12
to the Commission
Mario Borghezio (EFD)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: The EU should intervene to protect the Constitution and the secularism of the state in Turkey

In Turkey, a school reform has recently been approved which favours Koranic schools and introduces an Islamic religious education hour.

The introduction of lessons — albeit optional — on the Koran and on the life of Mohammed not only undermines the secularism of the Turkish state but also violates the Turkish Constitution, which establishes the principle of secularism of the state.

— The Commission document COM(2011) 0666 of 12 October 2011, on the strategy of enlargement and principal challenges for the 2011-2012 period, maintains that 'Turkey has continued EU-relevant reforms, but significant further efforts are required, including on guaranteeing core fundamental rights'. Does the Commission consider the school reform recently approved by the Erdogan government to be an EU-relevant reform?

— The aforementioned Commission document maintains that 'in education and culture there has been progress, in particular in the area of education and training. Interest in the Community Programmes continued to grow'. Given the recent developments, is the Commission still convinced of this assertion?

— In view of the above, does the Commission not consider it essential and appropriate to freeze the procedure for Turkey's accession to the EU so that the Constitution, and consequently the secularism of the state, are respected in Turkey?

Question for written answer E-003764/12
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: School reform in Turkey: a pro-Islamic move

On 30 March, the Turkish parliament approved a school reform, strongly opposed by the secular opposition, which risks pushing the country towards even greater 'Islamisation'. The reform no longer provides for a single course of seven years of primary school and four years of high school, but instead three mandatory four-year cycles and — in particular — the option, after the first cycle, of enrolling 10-year-old children in the 'Imam Hatip Lisesi' Islamic religious schools (the previous reform in 1997 raised the entry age to 15, to limit their influence). Furthermore, the last cycle of studies can be completed via e-learning, a choice which, as the political opposition and professionals in the sector have argued, could compromise female education and emancipation, with girls being kept at home without really being able to finish their studies.

— Is the Commission aware of this? What is its position on this matter?

— Given that it urges its citizens to be more open towards Islamic countries like Turkey (99.8 % of whose population is Muslim, out of a total population of 78 million), how does the Commission intend to protect Christians in Member States from the dangers of marginalisation and intolerance?

— How does it assess this denominational change in education and how does it believe this can be part of Turkey's journey towards EU membership?

Joint answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(5 June 2012)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Members to its answer to the Written Question E-002625/2012 ([1]).

The Commission will provide a full analysis on developments in the field of education and culture in the upcoming Turkey 2012 Progress Report due in October 2012.

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

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-003688/12
aan de Commissie
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(11 april 2012)

Betreft: Executies in de Gazastrook

In de Gazastrook zijn drie terdoodveroordeelden terechtgesteld. Volgens de Hamas zijn zij opgehangen in een gevangenis in Gaza-stad. Eén van de geëxecuteerden had de doodstraf gekregen voor zogenaamde collaboratie met Israël, de andere twee waren veroordeeld voor moord. Sinds 2007 heeft Hamas het in de Gazastrook voor het zeggen. Sinds Hamas de Fatah-beweging van president Abbas uit Gaza heeft verdreven, zijn elf doodvonnissen voltrokken. Doodvonnissen mogen volgens de Palestijnse wet alleen worden uitgevoerd met toestemming van de president. Maar omdat Hamas Abbas niet erkent, is die toestemming nooit gegeven.

1. Is de Commissie bekend met de berichten „Drie executies in Gazastrook" ([1]) en „Urgent action — Four men face execution in Gaza"?

2. De betreffende executies zijn zonder de vereiste toestemming van de president uitgevoerd. Is de Commissie met de PVV van mening dat dergelijke onwettige executies moord zijn? Zo neen, waarom niet?

3. Uit het antwoord van de Commissie op schriftelijke vraag E-011266/2011 van 23.11.2011 blijkt dat de EU sinds 2007 — sinds de machtsovername door Hamas in de Gazastrook — 2,5 miljard euro aan de Palestijnen heeft gedoneerd. Is de Commissie thans van mening dat dat geld — in het licht van de executies in de Gazastrook — onder de juiste voorwaarden is verstrekt?

4. Vindt de Commissie samenwerking met Israël een reden voor de doodstraf? Zo neen, welke acties is de Commissie in het overleg met het regime in Gaza voornemens?

5. Welke acties is de Commissie voorts van plan te ondernemen?

Antwoord van hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter Ashton namens de Commissie
(15 juni 2012)

De hoge vertegenwoordiger weet dat er onlangs in Gaza terechtstellingen zijn uitgevoerd.

De EU-missies in Jeruzalem en Ramallah hebben op 10 april 2012 de terechtstellingen veroordeeld in een verklaring, waarvan de vertaling als volgt luidt:

„De EU-missies in Jeruzalem en Ramallah veroordelen de terechtstelling van drie mensen in Gaza op zaterdag 7 april 2012.

De EU-missies in Jeruzalem en Ramallah wijzen er nogmaals op dat de EU in alle omstandigheden absoluut gekant blijft tegen de doodstraf. De EU is van mening dat de afschaffing van de doodstraf bijdraagt tot de menselijke waardigheid en tot de geleidelijke ontwikkeling van de mensenrechten. De doodstraf is wreed en onmenselijk, werkt niet ontradend en vormt een onaanvaardbare miskenning van de menselijke waardigheid en integriteit.

De feitelijke autoriteiten in Gaza mogen geen gevangenen meer terechtstellen en moeten zich houden aan het feitelijke moratorium op terechtstellingen dat de Palestijnse Autoriteit heeft ingevoerd in afwachting van de afschaffing van de doodstraf, die wereldwijd meer en meer ingang vindt."

In reactie op punt 3 van de vraag wordt eraan herinnerd dat de EU geen geld verstrekt aan Hamas. Een strikt en uitgebreid audit- en controlemechanisme zorgt ervoor dat de EU de precieze bestemming kan nagaan van middelen die worden toegekend in het kader van PEGASE (Palestijns-Europees mechanisme voor het beheer van de sociaaleconomische bijstand).

([1]) http://nos.nl/artikel/360083-drie-executies-in-gazastrook.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003688/12
to the Commission
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: Executions in the Gaza Strip

Three criminals sentenced to death have been executed in the Gaza Strip. According to Hamas, they were hanged in a jail in Gaza City. One of those executed had received the death sentence for so-called collaboration with Israel, the other two were sentenced for murder. Since 2007 Hamas has dictated proceedings in the Gaza Strip. Since Hamas expelled President Abbas' Fatah movement from Gaza, 11 death sentences have been carried out. According to Palestinian law, death sentences are only carried out with the president's consent. But because Hamas does not acknowledge Abbas, this consent has never been given.

1. Is the Commission familiar with the reports, *Three executions in the Gaza Strip* ([1]) and *Urgent action — Four men face execution in Gaza?*

2. These executions were carried out without the required consent of the president. Does the Commission agree with the PVV that such unlawful executions are murder? If not, why not?

3. From the Commission's answer to Written Question E-011266/2011 from 23 November 2011, it appears that since 2007, when Hamas took over in the Gaza Strip, the EU has donated EUR 2.5 billion to the Palestinians. Is the Commission currently of the opinion that that money — in view of the executions in the Gaza Strip — was provided under the proper conditions?

4. Does the Commission think that collaboration with Israel is a reason for the death penalty? If not, what action does the Commission intend taking in the meeting with the regime in Gaza?

5. What other action does the Commission plan to undertake?

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

The High Representative is aware of the recent executions carried out in Gaza. The EU missions in Jerusalem and Ramallah issued the following statements on 10 April 2012 condemning the executions.

'The EU Missions in Jerusalem and Ramallah condemn the execution of 3 persons in Gaza on Saturday 7 April 2012'.

The EU Missions in Jerusalem and Ramallah recall the EU's firm opposition under all circumstances to the use of capital punishment. The EU considers that abolition of the death penalty contributes to the enhancement of human dignity and the progressive development of human rights. It considers capital punishment to be cruel and inhuman, failing to provide deterrence to criminal behaviour, and representing an unacceptable denial of human dignity and integrity.

The de facto authorities in Gaza must refrain from carrying out any executions of prisoners and comply with the de facto moratorium on executions put in place by the Palestinian Authority, pending abolition of the death penalty in line with the global trend.

With regards to point 3 of the question, it is recalled that the EU does not provide funds to Hamas. A strict and extensive mechanism of audit and verification is in place which allows the EU to verify the precise destination of funds committed through the Pegase Mechanism.

([1]) http://nos.nl/artikel/360083-drie-executies-in-gazastrook.html

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande E-003689/12
till kommissionen (Vice-ordföranden / Höga representanten)
Marita Ulvskog (S&D)
(11 april 2012)

Angående: VP/HR – EU:s valobservatörsuppdrags rapport om valet i Kongo

Den 29 mars offentliggjorde EU:s valobservatörsuppdrag sin rapport från parlamentsvalen i Kongo. Det är en nedslående läsning som bekräftar det uttalande valobservatörsgruppen gjorde den 13 december 2011 om att valet var uppgjort och att resultaten inte var trovärdiga. I svaret E-001006/2012 hänvisas till denna rapport.

— Hur ställer sig vice ordföranden för kommissionen/unionens höga representant för utrikes frågor och säkerhetspolitik till denna rapport och det faktum att valfusket här bekräftas?

I samma svar förespråkar vice ordföranden för kommissionen/unionens höga representant för utrikes frågor och säkerhetspolitik ”ytterligare insyn vid valen och insisterar på behovet att dra lärdom av erfarenheterna samt att ta valobservatörsuppdragens rekommendationer i beaktande”.

— Vilka strategier finns kring detta?

— Vad konkret görs från EU:s sida som ”engagerad partner” för att befästa ett öppet politiskt system och att uppmuntra den Demokratiska republiken Kongo att göra det som vice ordföranden för kommissionen/unionens höga representant för utrikes frågor och säkerhetspolitik förespråkar?

Vice ordföranden för kommissionen/unionens höga representant för utrikes frågor och säkerhetspolitik hänvisar även i svaret E-001006/2012 till behovet av att ”främja en konstruktiv dialog mellan kongolesiska aktörer inom ramen för landets institutioner, samtidigt som tilltron till valprocessen måste återupprättas”.

— På vilket sätt bidrar EU till detta?

Svar från den höga representanten/vice ordförande Catherine Ashton på kommissionens vägnar
(24 augusti 2012)

Vice ordföranden/den höga representanten berömmer kvaliteten på slutrapporten från EU:s valobservatörsuppdrag. Rapporten har tagits emot väl av alla politiska aktörer i Demokratiska republiken Kongo och anses vara en utmärkt utgångspunkt för att förbättra valförfarandet.

Vice ordföranden/den höga representanten noterar att de flesta oegentligheter ägde rum omedelbart efter valen, men beklagar också djupt att valen inte var öppna och trovärdiga. Sedan november 2011 har EU gjort flera uttalanden angående kvaliteten på valförfarandet i Demokratiska republiken Kongo, vilka var helt i linje med slutsatserna i EU:s valobservatörsuppdrags slutrapport. Sex månader efter president- och parlamentsvalen är det uppenbart att det skulle vara omöjligt att genomföra en omräkning av rösterna eller en ny omgång av dessa val. EU måste delta i en politisk dialog med de nya myndigheterna, samtidigt som man har genomförandet av rekommendationerna från EU:s valobservatörsuppdrag i åtanke. På kort sikt anses det vara viktiga prioriteringar att omstrukturera CENI (den oberoende nationella valkommittén), att inrätta en författningsdomstol och att genomföra en revision av röstlängderna.

Med hänsyn till den nya politiska situationen vill EU skapa en mer avtalsbaserad förbindelse med Demokratiska republiken Kongo. De kommande åren är det särskilt viktigt för EU att stödja demokratiseringen genom att insistera på att det ska anordnas fria, rättvisa och trovärdiga val under 2013 och 2014 och att ge skräddarsytt stöd till parlamentet, politiska partier, regionala och lokala institutioner, det civila samhället och medierna.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003689/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Marita Ulvskog (S&D)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — The EU Election Observation Mission's report on the election in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

On 29 March 2012, the EU Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) published its report from the parliamentary elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). It is depressing reading that confirms the press release issued by the EU EOM on 13 December 2011 that the election was fixed and that the results are not credible. The answer to E-001006/2012 refers to this report.

— What is the attitude of the VP/HR to this report and the fact that electoral rigging has been confirmed?

In the same answer, the VP/HR advocated 'further electoral transparency and insisted on the need to take into consideration the "lessons learned" and the recommendations of the electoral observation missions'.

— What strategies are there concerning this?

— What is being done in concrete terms by the EU as a 'committed partner' towards the consolidation of an open political system and to encourage the DRC to do what the VP/HR advocates?

The VP/HR also refers in the answer to E-001006/2012 to the need to 'support the emergence of a constructive dialogue among Congolese stakeholders in the framework of the DRC institutions, while restoring credibility in the electoral process'.

— In what way is the EU contributing to this?

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

The HR/VP pays tribute to the quality of the final report of the EU EOM. The report has been well received by all political actors in DRC and is considered an excellent basis for improving the electoral process.

While taking note of the fact that most irregularities took place immediately after the elections, the HR/VP deplores the fact that elections were not transparent and credible. Since November 2011, the EU has issued several statements regarding the quality of the electoral process in DRC which were fully consistent with the conclusions of the EU EOM final report. Six months after the presidential and legislative elections, it is clear that it would be impossible to organise a recount of the votes or a new round of those elections. The EU has to engage in a political dialogue with the new authorities, while keeping in mind the implementation of the recommendations of the EU EOM. Restructuring of the CENI, the setting up of a constitutional court and implementing an audit of the electoral lists are considered key priorities in the short term.

Taking into account the new political situation, the EU wishes to build a more contractual relationship with the DRC. In the coming years, it will be especially important for the EU to support democratization by insisting on the organisation of free, fair and credible elections in 2013 and 2014 and providing tailor-made support to the parliament, political parties, provincial and local institutions, civil society and the media.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-003691/12
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(11 de abril de 2012)

Asunto: Modificación de la propuesta de Reglamento de verificación y acreditación de verificadores de informes de emisión de gases de efecto invernadero II

En referencia a la propuesta de Reglamento relativo a la verificación de los informes de emisión de gases de efecto invernadero y de informe de datos sobre toneladas-kilómetro y a la acreditación de los verificadores de conformidad con la Directiva 2003/87/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo. La propuesta de Reglamento de verificación y acreditación, se justifica, entre otros, por los motivos siguientes:

— para garantizar que la verificación de los informes sea realizada por verificadores que tengan la competencia técnica necesaria y para llevar a cabo la tarea de verificación de forma independiente e imparcial,

— por la necesidad de armonizar las normas de acreditación,

— para aprovechar la sinergia del marco general de acreditación establecido por el Reglamento 765/2008, de 9 de julio,

— para aprovechar las sinergias entre el Reglamento 1221/2009, de 25 de noviembre (EMAS) y la propuesta de este Reglamento de verificación y acreditación Kyoto.

Analizando estas motivaciones y los Reglamentos 765/2008 y 1221/2009 y tomados como referencia y que reafirman uno de los principios del Tratado constitutivo de la Unión Europea de no interferir en la distribución de funciones en el sí de los Estados miembros, queremos trasladar a la Comisión las preguntas siguientes en relación a la propuesta de Reglamento:

1. ¿Cómo se puede encajar el cumplimiento del artículo 4.2 del Tratado constitutivo de la Unión Europea con esta propuesta de Reglamento?

2. ¿Es compatible la existencia de un organismo nacional de acreditación y que al mismo tiempo una administración pública certifique verificadores?

3. ¿Cómo puede ser que un organismo de acreditación pueda cuestionar una evidencia puesta de manifiesto por una Administración pública y pueda decidir sobre la validez, o no, de una queja efectuada por la autoridad competente (artículo 61.a)?

Respuesta de la Sra. Hedegaard en nombre de la Comisión
(4 de junio de 2012)

El proyecto de Reglamento de la Comisión relativo a la verificación de los informes de emisiones de gases de efecto invernadero y de los informes de datos sobre toneladas-kilómetro y a la acreditación de los verificadores de conformidad con la Directiva 2003/87/CE (en lo sucesivo denominado el proyecto de Reglamento de la Comisión) cumple plenamente el artículo 4, apartado 2, del TUE. La evaluación de impacto adjunta al mismo demuestra que se ajusta a los principios de subsidiariedad y proporcionalidad (artículo 5 del TUE). El proyecto de Reglamento de la Comisión garantiza el reconocimiento mutuo de los verificadores y, al hacerlo, reconoce también las características específicas de cada Estado miembro en un marco jurídico comúnmente acordado. Además, al garantizar el cumplimiento de la legislación de la UE ya vigente en el ámbito de la acreditación y la verificación, el proyecto de Reglamento de la Comisión contribuye a la transparencia y la coherencia y garantiza la igualdad de trato de todos los Estados miembros.

Los dos sistemas son perfectamente compatibles. Las autoridades mencionadas son dos autoridades públicas distintas que realizan dos funciones también distintas y que intervienen en dos situaciones diferentes, a pesar del hecho de que ambas autoridades deben cumplir los mismos requisitos legales y tener el mismo grado de credibilidad necesario para el desempeño de sus funciones.

El proyecto de Reglamento de la Comisión es claro en lo relativo a las funciones y responsabilidades de los organismos nacionales de acreditación o las autoridades nacionales de certificación, las autoridades competentes y los verificadores, así como sobre los requisitos del intercambio de información. El artículo 61, letra a), de la propuesta de Reglamento de la Comisión no contempla la facultad del organismo nacional de acreditación de cuestionar las pruebas presentadas por la autoridad competente, sino más bien la competencia de recibir una denuncia de la autoridad competente u otras partes interesadas relativa al verificador y de adoptar, en un plazo razonable, las nuevas medidas indicadas en el artículo 61, letras b) a e).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003691/12
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: Amendment to the proposal for a regulation on verification and accreditation of verifiers of greenhouse gas emission reports (II)

The grounds given for the proposal for a regulation on verification of greenhouse gas emission reports and tonne-kilometre reports and the accreditation of verifiers pursuant to Directive 2003/87/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council include the following:

— to ensure that verification of reports is carried out by verifiers that have the required technical competence to perform the verification task in an independent and impartial manner;

— the need to harmonise accreditation standards;

— in order to make use of the synergy of the overall accreditation framework established by Regulation (EC) No 765/2008 of 9 July 2008;

— in order to make use of the synergies between Regulation (EC) No 1221/2009 of 25 November 2009 (EMAS) and the provisions of this proposal for a regulation regarding Kyoto verification and accreditation.

Analysing these reasons, and with reference to Regulations (EC) Nos 765/2008 and 1221/2009, which reaffirm one of the principles of the Treaty establishing the European Union of not interfering in the distribution of functions within Member States, we would like to ask the Commission the following questions regarding the proposal for a regulation:

1. How does this proposal for a regulation comply with Article 4.2 of the Treaty establishing the European Union?

2. Is the existence of a national accreditation organisation compatible with that of a public authority responsible for certifying verifiers?

3. How is it possible for an accreditation organisation to challenge evidence offered by a public authority and make a decision regarding the validity or otherwise of a claim made by the competent authority (Article 61(a))?

Answer given by Ms Hedegaard on behalf of the Commission
(4 June 2012)

The draft Commission Regulation on the verification of greenhouse gas emission reports and tonne-kilometre reports and the accreditation of verifiers pursuant to Directive 2003/87/EC (hereafter: the draft Commission Regulation) complies fully with Article 4(2) of the TEU. The accompanying Impact Assessment shows that it is in accordance with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality (Article 5 of the TEU). The draft Commission Regulation ensures the mutual recognition of verifiers and by doing so recognises each Member State's specificity within a commonly agreed legal framework. Furthermore, by ensuring compliance with already existing EU legislation in the domain of accreditation and verification, the draft Commission Regulation contributes to transparency and consistency and guarantees the equal treatment of all Member States.

The two systems are perfectly compatible. The mentioned authorities are two distinct public authorities that perform two distinct functions and intervene in two different situations despite the fact that both authorities must fulfil the same legal requirements and meet the same level of credibility necessary for the performance of their duties.

The draft Commission Regulation is clear in the roles and responsibilities of national accreditation bodies/national authorities for certification, competent authorities and verifiers, and requirements for exchange of information. Article 61(a) of the draft Commission Regulation does not envisage the capacity for the national accreditation body to challenge evidence offered by the competent authority but rather the competence to receive a complaint concerning the verifier from the competent authority, or other interested parties and to take, within a reasonable time, the further actions outlined by Article 61(b) to (e).

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-003693/12
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(11 de abril de 2012)

Asunto: Modificación de la propuesta de Reglamento de verificación y acreditación de verificadores de informes de emisión de gases de efecto invernadero IV

En referencia a la propuesta de Reglamento relativo a la verificación de los informes de emisión de gases de efecto invernadero y de informe de datos sobre toneladas-kilómetro y a la acreditación de los verificadores de conformidad con la Directiva 2003/87/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo. La propuesta de Reglamento de verificación y acreditación se justifica, entre otros, por los motivos siguientes:

— para garantizar que la verificación de los informes sea realizada por verificadores que tengan la competencia técnica necesaria y para llevar a cabo la tarea de verificación de forma independiente e imparcial,

— por la necesidad de armonizar las normas de acreditación,

— para aprovechar la sinergia del marco general de acreditación establecido por el Reglamento 765/2008, de 9 de julio,

— para aprovechar las sinergias entre el Reglamento 1221/2009, de 25 de noviembre (EMAS) y la propuesta de este Reglamento de verificación y acreditación Kyoto.

Analizando estas motivaciones y tomando como referencia los Reglamentos 765/2008 y 1221/2009, que reafirman uno de los principios del Tratado constitutivo de la Unión Europea de no interferir en la distribución de funciones en el sí de los Estados miembros, queremos trasladar a la Comisión las preguntas siguientes en relación a la propuesta de Reglamento:

1. ¿Puede certificar verificadores una Administración regional?

2. ¿Por qué limita las competencias de la Administración en el momento de acreditar verificadores si, a priori, es la Administración la única que da todas las garantías de independencia e imparcialidad al no tener intereses económicos?

Respuesta de la Sra. Hedegaard en nombre de la Comisión
(30 de mayo de 2012)

En relación con la certificación de verificadores, el proyecto de Reglamento de la Comisión relativo a la verificación de los informes de emisiones de gases de efecto invernadero y de los informes de datos sobre toneladas-kilómetro y a la acreditación de los verificadores de conformidad con la Directiva 2003/87/CE (en lo sucesivo denominado «proyecto de Reglamento de la Comisión») se basa en las disposiciones del Reglamento (CE) n° 765/2008 y exige a los Estados miembros que decidan acogerse a esa posibilidad que aporten a la Comisión y a los demás Estados miembros todas las pruebas documentales necesarias para verificar las competencias de la autoridad nacional responsable de realizar esa tarea específica. En consonancia con el Reglamento (CE) n° 765/2008, que obliga a los Estados miembros a establecer un único organismo nacional de acreditación, los Estados miembros deben designar una única autoridad nacional encarga de llevar a cabo las actividades de certificación. Se deja a la discreción del Estado miembro considerado decidir a qué autoridad nacional va a designar para que se encargue de certificar a los verificadores, siempre que esa autoridad nacional ejerza sus funciones de forma independiente del organismo nacional de acreditación.

El proyecto de Reglamento de la Comisión se ajusta al marco general establecido en el Reglamento (CE) n° 765/2008 y, en ese sentido, no limita la autoridad de los organismos nacionales de acreditación para acreditar verificadores que sean personas jurídicas. Por otro lado, ese proyecto de Reglamento de la Comisión introduce disposiciones adicionales sobre la certificación de verificadores que son personas físicas para tener en cuenta la variedad de situaciones existentes en los Estados miembros.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003693/12
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: Amendment to the proposal for a regulation on verification and accreditation of verifiers of greenhouse gas emission reports (IV)

The grounds given for the proposal for a regulation on verification of greenhouse gas emission reports and tonne-kilometre reports and the accreditation of verifiers pursuant to Directive 2003/87/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council include the following:

— to ensure that verification of reports is carried out by verifiers that have the required technical competence to perform the verification task in an independent and impartial manner;

— the need to harmonise accreditation standards;

— in order to make use of the synergy of the overall accreditation framework established by Regulation (EC) No 765/2008 of 9 July 2008;

— in order to make use of the synergies between Regulation (EC) No 1221/2009 of 25 November 2009 (EMAS) and the provisions of this a regulation regarding proposal for this regulation on Kyoto verification and accreditation.

Analysing these reasons, and with reference to Regulations (EC) Nos 765/2008 and 1221/2009, which reaffirm one of the principles of the Treaty establishing the European Union of not interfering in the distribution of functions within Member States, we would like to ask the Commission the following questions regarding the proposal for a regulation:

1. Is a regional authority empowered to certify verifiers?

2. Why is it limiting the powers of the authority concerned to accredit verifiers if, in principle, only this authority gives all the guarantees of independence and impartiality, as it does not have economic interests?

Answer given by Ms Hedegaard on behalf of the Commission
(30 May 2012)

When dealing with the certification of verifiers, the draft Commission Regulation on the verification of greenhouse gas emission reports and tonne-kilometre reports and the accreditation of verifiers pursuant to Directive 2003/87/EC (hereafter: the draft Commission Regulation) builds upon the provisions of Regulation (EC) No 765/2008 and requires the Member State, which decides to make use of this possibility, to provide the Commission and the other Member States with all the documentary evidence necessary for the verification of the competences of the national authority responsible for performing that specific task. In line with Regulation (EC) No 765/2008, which requires Member States to establish a single national accreditation body, the Member State shall appoint one single national authority to carry out the certification activities. It is left to the discretion of the Member State concerned to decide which national authority it will appoint to carry out the certification of verifiers, provided that that national authority performs it duties separately from the national accreditation body.

The draft Commission Regulation is in conformity with the general framework set out in Regulation (EC) No 765/2008 and in that regard does not limit the authority of the national accreditation bodies to accredit verifiers that are legal persons. On the other hand, the draft Commission Regulation introduces additional provisions on the certification of verifiers that are natural persons in order to address the variety of situations that exist in the Member States.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-003694/12
an die Kommission
Jutta Steinruck (S&D)
(11. April 2012)

Betrifft: Arbeitszeitregelung für Angehörige der freiwilligen Feuerwehren und weitere Freiwillige

In der Mitteilung der Kommission KOM(2010)0801 vom Dezember 2010, mit der die zweite Phase des Dialogs der Sozialpartner zur Überarbeitung der Arbeitszeitrichtlinie eingeleitet wird, schreibt die Kommission, dass zu prüfen ist, ob es rechtlich zulässig sei, die Angehörigen der freiwilligen Feuerwehren von der Arbeitszeitregelung auszunehmen.

Sollte für das deutsche System der Zusammenarbeit von Berufsfeuerwehr und freiwilliger Feuerwehr eine Aufnahme ehrenamtlich geleisteter Tätigkeit in die Arbeitszeitrichtlinie umgesetzt werden, hätte das weitreichende Konsequenzen. Die Attraktivität der freiwilligen Feuerwehren nähme ab, weil dann für Freiwillige erhebliche Nachteile für den Beruf zu erwarten sind.

In der Antwort P-000709/2012 vom 21.2.2012 schreibt die Kommission, dass es hier möglich sein müsse, nationale Besonderheiten bei gleichem Gesundheitsschutz zu bewahren. Eine Heraushebung der Feuerwehren gegenüber anderen ehrenamtlich Tätigen erscheint aber in der Praxis nicht sinnvoll.

Die sich logisch anschließende Frage betrifft die Bewertung anderer ehrenamtlicher Tätigkeiten (zum Beispiel Trainer in Sportvereinen oder in Verbänden aktive Personen). Ehrenamt ist freiwillig geleistete Arbeit, die nicht unter dem Begriff des Beschäftigungsverhältnisses eingeordnet werden kann. Das Ehrenamt stärkt den gesellschaftlichen Zusammenhalt und darf nicht als Beschäftigungsverhältnis verstanden werden. Ist sich die Kommission der Folgen einer Veränderung ehrenamtlicher Strukturen bewusst, und will die Kommission das in Kauf nehmen?

Antwort von Herrn Andor im Namen der Kommission
(7. Juni 2012)

Die Absätze 1, 2 und 4 der Anfrage decken sich mit der bereits von der Frau Abgeordneten gestellten schriftlichen Anfrage P-003305/2012 ([1]), so dass die Kommission insoweit auf ihre Antwort auf diese Anfrage verweist.

Absatz 3 der Anfrage scheint auf einem Missverständnis der Antwort der Kommission auf die Anfrage P-000709/2012 ([1]) zu beruhen, in der nicht von einem „gleichen" Gesundheitsschutz Freiwilliger die Rede war. Vielmehr hat die Kommission in dieser Antwort unterstrichen, wie wichtig es ist, den besonderen Merkmalen der jeweiligen Tätigkeit in vollem Umfang Rechnung zu tragen. Außerdem hat die Kommission bereits in ihrer Antwort auf die Anfrage P-003305/2012 ausgeführt, dass die von der Frau Abgeordneten angesprochene Art der ehrenamtlichen Betätigung höchst unterschiedliche Formen annehmen kann. Wie die Kommission bereits in ihrem Papier zur zweiten Phase der Anhörung zur Änderung der Arbeitszeitrichtlinie ([2]) dargelegt hat, wäre es also sehr schwierig, eine allgemeingültige Regelung anzuwenden.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/QP-WEB/home.jsp
([2]) KOM(2010)801, Abschnitt 5.2.(v).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003694/12
to the Commission
Jutta Steinruck (S&D)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: Working time arrangements for members of the voluntary fire service and other volunteers

In the communication from the Commission (COM(2010) 0801) dated December 2010, marking the start of the second phase of the dialogue between the social partners for the revision of the Working Time Directive, the Commission writes that it is necessary to examine whether it is legally permissible to provide a derogation for members of the voluntary fire service from working time arrangements.

There would be serious, far-reaching consequences for the German system of cooperation between the professional and voluntary fire services if voluntary work were to be included in the Working Time Directive. The voluntary fire service would become less attractive because volunteers could expect serious disadvantages in relation to their paid work.

In its answer P-000709/2012 dated 21 February 2012, the Commission writes that it must be possible to preserve special national characteristics whilst providing identical protection of volunteers' health and safety. In practice, however, singling out the fire service from other voluntary activities does not seem useful.

The next logical question relates to how other voluntary activities are to be evaluated (such as trainers in sports clubs, or people who play an active role in other organisations). Voluntary work is carried out freely and willingly and cannot be viewed in the same way as employment. Voluntary work strengthens social cohesion and should not be understood as employment. Is the Commission aware of the implications of a change in voluntary structures and will the Commission take this into account?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(7 June 2012)

Paragraphs 1, 2 and 4 of the question are identical to the Honourable Member's previous Written Question P-003305/2012 ([1]), and the Commission would therefore refer her to the answer it already provided in that question.

Paragraph 3 of the question seems to be based on a misreading of the Commission's answer to Question P-000709/2012 ([2]), which did not in fact state that 'identical' protection should be provided for volunteers' health and safety. On the contrary, the Commission's reply underlined the importance of taking full account of the special characteristics of the activities in question. Moreover, the Commission already indicated, in its reply to Question P-003305/2012, that voluntary activities of the different types mentioned by the Honourable Member vary very widely in their nature. Thus, as the Commission already pointed out in its second-stage consultation paper on the review of the Working Time Directive ([3]), it would be difficult to apply any generalised rules.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/QP-WEB/home.jsp
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/QP-WEB/home.jsp
([3]) COM(2010)801, Section 5.2.(v).

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-003695/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)
(11 Απριλίου 2012)

Θέμα: Χρηματοδότηση της γραμμής 4 του Μετρό της Αθήνας

Η λειτουργία της γραμμής 4 του Μετρό της Αθήνας θα μειώσει τους ρύπους από τις μετακινήσεις και θα εξοικονομήσει χρήματα για περισσότερους από 400 000 πολίτες που εκτιμάται ότι θα εξυπηρετεί καθημερινά ([1]), ενώ η κατασκευή της θα συμβάλει και στην καταπολέμηση της ανεργίας. Το πρώτο τμήμα της γραμμής 4 υπολογίζεται ότι θα κοστίσει 1 δισ. ευρώ ([2]). Παρά το γεγονός ότι οι προμελέτες είναι ώριμες, η χρηματοδότηση του έργου αυτού με τα πολλαπλά οφέλη δεν έχει εξασφαλιστεί. Αντίθετα, το δημόσιο θα επιβαρυνθεί με 1 δισ. ευρώ για τη μετακίνηση των εγκαταστάσεων του πρώην αεροδρομίου και με άλλο 1 δισ. ευρώ για την κατασκευή αυτοκινητοδρόμου μήκους 127 χλμ και συνολικού προϋπολογισμού 1,5 δισ. ευρώ ([3]). Ο αυτοκινητόδρομος αυτός, που θα ξεκινά από τα Μέγαρα και θα καταλήγει στο Μαραθώνα ([4]),μαζί με το σχέδιο νόμου για το Ελληνικό, αποτέλεσε και έναν από τους βασικούς λόγους που οδήγησαν σε παραίτηση την ηγεσία του Οργανισμού Ρυθμιστικού Σχεδίου Αθήνας (ΟΡΣΑ).

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Αποτελεί η γραμμή 4 του Μετρό έργο επιλέξιμο για συγχρηματοδότηση από ευρωπαϊκούς πόρους;

2. Εκτιμά, ως μέλος της Τρόικα, ότι έξοδα του Ελληνικού Δημοσίου ύψους 2 δισ. σε αυτοκινητόδρομους και μεταφορά των εγκαταστάσεων του πρώην αεροδρομίου συνάδουν με τη δημοσιονομική κατάσταση της χώρας και τις προοπτικές της για βιώσιμη αναζωογόνηση της οικονομίας της;

3. Είναι πρόθυμη η Επιτροπή — με δεδομένο ότι οι προμελέτες του έργου είναι έτοιμες — να συμφωνήσει στη συγχρηματοδότηση της κατασκευής της γραμμής 4 του Μετρό, αντί για έναν από τους αυτοκινητοδρόμους, που δεν θα είναι βιώσιμος από άποψη εσόδων λόγω περιορισμού της χρήσης ΙΧ;

4. Εξετάζει την περίπτωση να αξιοποιηθεί το «εργαλείο διάχυσης κινδύνου» (risk sharing instrument) για τη διασφάλιση της συγχρηματοδότησης του έργου, και όχι μόνο για την προώθηση αυτοκινητοδρόμων;

Απάντηση του κ. Hahn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(5 Ιουνίου 2012)

1. Προκειμένου να εξεταστεί η επιλεξιμότητα της γραμμής 4 του μετρό της Αθήνας για συγχρηματοδότηση από την ΕΕ, οι ελληνικές αρχές χρειάζεται να υποβάλουν επίσημη αίτηση για έργο μεγάλης κλίμακας στην Επιτροπή. Στα δικαιολογητικά πρέπει να περιλαμβάνεται δικαιολόγηση της δημόσιας συνεισφοράς βάσει του άρθρου 40 του κανονισμού (ΕΚ) αριθ. 1083/2006 του Συμβουλίου ([5]). Κάθε επακόλουθη απόφαση της Επιτροπής αναμένεται να εκτιμηθεί βάσει του άρθρου 41 του ίδιου κανονισμού.

2. Η Επιτροπή καλωσορίζει επενδύσεις στην υποδομή επειδή συμβάλλουν στη βελτίωση της ανταγωνιστικότητας και στη μεσοπρόθεσμη ανάπτυξη της ελληνικής οικονομίας. Κάθε έργο πρέπει να κρίνεται με βάση τα χαρακτηριστικά του.

3. Σύμφωνα με την αρχή της κοινής διαχείρισης που χρησιμοποιείται για τη διαχείριση της πολιτικής για τη συνοχή, η επιλογή και η υλοποίηση του έργου είναι ευθύνη των ελληνικών αρχών. Σε περίπτωση που η διαχειριστική αρχή επιθυμεί να αποσύρει ή να περατώσει ένα υπάρχον έργο μεγάλης κλίμακας, αυτό θα μπορούσε να συνεπάγεται την ανάκτηση τυχόν κονδυλίων της ΕΕ που έχουν ήδη εκταμιευτεί για το έργο.

([1]) http://www.ypodomes.com/show_newsid.php?news_id=477.
([2]) http://www.ametro.gr/page/default.asp?la=1&id=384.
([3]) http://ypodomes.com/show_newsid.php?news_id=12265.
([4]) Θα ενώνει με υποθαλάσσια σήραγγα Μέγαρα με Σαλαμίνα και στη συνέχεια με δεύτερη υποθαλάσσια τη Σαλαμίνα με το Πέραμα, θα συνεχίζει στην παραλιακή για να διασχίσει στο ύψος της Αργυρούπολης με τούνελ τον Υμηττό μέχρι τα Μεσόγεια.
([5]) Κανονισμός (ΕΚ) αριθ. 1083/2006 του Συμβουλίου, της 11ης Ιουλίου 2006, περί καθορισμού γενικών διατάξεων για το Ευρωπαϊκό Ταμείο Περιφερειακής Ανάπτυξης, το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινωνικό Ταμείο και το Ταμείο Συνοχής και την κατάργηση του κανονισμού (ΕΚ) αριθ. 1260/1999, ΕΕ L 210/25 της 31.7.2006.

4. Το εργαλείο επιμερισμού του κινδύνου έχει σχεδιαστεί για την παροχή εγγυήσεων για επενδύσεις σε έργα μεγάλης κλίμακας και για παραγωγικές επενδύσεις και, συνεπώς, δεν περιορίζεται στην ανάπτυξη αυτοκινητοδρόμων. Ο κατάλογος των έργων που επωφελούνται από την πρόσβαση σε χρηματοδότηση με την εγγύηση του εργαλείου επιμερισμού του κινδύνου θα καταρτιστεί από τις ελληνικές αρχές κατόπιν έγκρισης από την ΕΤΕπ και την Επιτροπή και θα επισυναφθεί στη σχετική απόφαση της Επιτροπής, όπως προβλέπεται στον κανονισμό για τα μέσα επιμερισμού του κινδύνου που εκδόθηκε στις 22 Μαΐου 2012 ([6]).

([6]) Κανονισμός (ΕΕ) αριθ. 423/2012 του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου και του Συμβουλίου, της 22ας Μαΐου 2012, για την τροποποίηση του κανονισμού (ΕΚ) αριθ. 1083/2006 του Συμβουλίου, της 11ης Ιουλίου 2006.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003695/12
to the Commission
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: Financing Line 4 of the Athens Metro

The operation of Line 4 of the Athens Metro will reduce pollution caused by transport and will save money for over 400 000 citizens who are expected to use it each day ([1]). Its construction will also help to combat unemployment. It is estimated that the first section of Line 4 will cost EUR 1 billion ([2]). Despite the fact that the preliminary studies have been completed, funding has not been secured for this project, which has multiple benefits. Instead, the government will be paying EUR 1 billion for the removal of the installations at the former airport and a further EUR 1 billion towards the construction of a 127 km motorway, estimated to cost a total of EUR 1.5 billion ([3]). This motorway, which will begin at Megara and terminate at Marathon ([4]), along with the plans for the former Elliniko airport, was one of the main reasons for the resignation of the leadership of the Athens Planning Organisation.

The Commission is asked:

1. Is Line 4 of the Metro eligible for co-financing with European funds?

2. Does it, as a member of the 'Troika', consider that the Greek state's expenditure of EUR 2 billion on motorways and the removal of the installations at the former airport are compatible with the country's financial situation and prospects for sustainable revitalisation of the economy?

3. Is the Commission willing — given that the preliminary design of the project has already been prepared — to agree to co-finance the construction of Metro Line 4, instead of one of the motorways, which would not be sustainable in terms of revenue due to the reduction of car use?

4. Is it considering the possibility of exploiting the risk-sharing instrument to guarantee the financing of the project, and not just to promote motorways?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(5 June 2012)

1. In order to determine the eligibility of Line 4 of the Athens Metro for EU co-financing, a formal major project application would need to be submitted to the Commission by the Greek authorities. Supporting documentation must include a justification for the public contribution in line with Article 40 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 ([5]). Any subsequent decision by the Commission would be taken in accordance to Article 41 of the same regulation.

2. The Commission welcomes investments in infrastructure for their contribution to improving competitiveness and the medium-term growth of Greek economy. Each project should be judged on its own merits.

3. In line with the shared management principle used for the administration of cohesion policy, project selection and implementation is the responsibility of the Greek authorities. Should the managing authority wish to withdraw or terminate an existing major project, this could result in the recovery of any EU funds already disbursed to the project.

([1]) http://www.ypodomes.com/show_newsid.php?news_id=477.
([2]) http://www.ametro.gr/page/default.asp?la=1&id=384.
([3]) http://ypodomes.com/show_newsid.php?news_id=12265.
([4]) It will link Megara to Salamina via an underwater tunnel, then a second underwater tunnel will link Salamina to Perama; it will continue along the coastal road and will then cut from Argyroupoli to Mesogeia via a tunnel under Mt. Ymettos.
([5]) Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999, OJ L 210/25, 31.7.2006.

4. The risk sharing instrument is designed to provide guarantees for investment in large infrastructure projects and for productive investments, and as such is not restricted to motorway development. The list of the projects to benefit from the access to financing guaranteed by the risk sharing instrument will be drawn up by the relevant Greek authorities upon approval by the EIB and the Commission, and it will be annexed to the relevant Commission decision, as foreseen in the regulation on the risk sharing instrument which has been adopted on 22 May 2012 ([6]).

([6]) Regulation (EU) No 423/2012of the EP and the Council of 22 May 2012 amending Council Regulation(EC) No 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-003696/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)
(11 Απριλίου 2012)

Θέμα: Ερώτηση για τον ναυπηγοεπισκευαστικό κλάδο

Η ανεργία στην ελληνική Ναυπηγοεπισκευαστική Ζώνη ανέρχεται στο 95 %, ενώ η ΕΕ έχει επιβάλει στα Ελληνικά Ναυπηγεία, το μεγαλύτερο ναυπηγείο της χώρας, απαγόρευση κάθε εμπορικής δραστηριότητας και αναθέσεις έργου μόνο από το Πολεμικό Ναυτικό, στο πλαίσιο συμφωνίας για μη επιβολή προστίμου.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Ενισχύει σχέδια γι' ανακοπή της φθίνουσας πορείας του κλάδου μέσω συμπλήρωσης της ναυπηγο-επισκευαστικής δραστηριότητας με τομείς πράσινης τεχνολογίας, που ενσωματώνουν ένταση γνώσης, καινοτομία και περιβαλλοντικά προϊόντα και υπηρεσίες;

2. Σε τι βαθμό χρηματοδοτούνται — αξιοποιούνται παραγωγικά τα αποτελέσματα ερευνητικών προγραμμάτων, όπως η κατασκευή εξαρτημάτων και τμημάτων πλωτών εφαρμογών ΑΠΕ, πλωτών συστημάτων αφαλάτωσης με τη χρήση ΑΠΕ, που θα μπορούσαν να συμβάλουν στην απασχόληση στα ναυπηγεία;

3. Έχουν κατευθυνθεί πόροι του Ευρωπαϊκού Ταμείου Προσαρμογής στην Παγκοσμιοποίηση και του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινωνικού Ταμείου στον ναυπηγικό τομέα;

4. Αξιοποιούν τα κράτη μέλη το νέο ευρωπαϊκό πλαίσιο που επιτρέπει κρατικές ενισχύσεις στη ναυπηγική βιομηχανία, τα επόμενα 2 χρόνια, για καινοτομίες και κατασκευή πλωτών και κινητών παράκτιων κατασκευών για εκμετάλλευση ΑΠΕ ([1]);

5. Προβλέπεται, στο πλαίσιο εφαρμογής της ευρωπαϊκής πολιτικής μείωσης της ρύπανσης από πλοία, συγχρηματοδότηση της βελτίωσης των μηχανών πλοίων ή/και κατασκευής νέων, περιβαλλοντικά αποτελεσματικών και καινοτόμων πλοίων, κάτι που συμβάλλει και στη βιωσιμότητα των ακτοπλοϊκών συνδέσεων των νησιών, αφού τα καύσιμα αντιπροσωπεύουν το 37-50 % του συνολικού κόστους τους;

6. Εξετάζει εναλλακτικά σχέδια συμμόρφωσης που θα επιτρέψουν στα Ελληνικά Ναυπηγεία να επανέλθουν σε εμπορική δραστηριότητα και να επεκταθούν ίσως και σε πράσινους τομείς, λαμβάνοντας υπόψη ότι η σημερινή κατάσταση οδηγεί στο κλείσιμό τους και σε μεγαλύτερη ανεργία στον κλάδο;

Απάντηση του κ. Tajani εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(5 Ιουνίου 2012)

Η Επιτροπή γνωρίζει την πολύ δύσκολη κατάσταση στην οποία έχουν περιέλθει πολλές ευρωπαϊκές επιχειρήσεις στον ναυπηγικό τομέα και, ως εκ τούτου, έχει δρομολογήσει εργασίες για την αναθεώρηση της πρωτοβουλίας Leaderhip, έτσι ώστε να στηριχτεί ο κλάδος αυτός της οικονομίας.

1. Η διαφοροποίηση των δραστηριοτήτων σε συναφείς «πράσινες» δραστηριότητες, ιδίως στον τομέα των ανανεώσιμων πηγών ενέργειας, όπως είναι η υπεράκτια παραγωγή αιολικής ενέργειας, είναι σημαντική για την περαιτέρω ανάπτυξη της ναυτιλιακής βιομηχανίας της Ευρώπης. Παρότι εναπόκειται στην κάθε επιχείρηση να επιδιώξει τη διαφοροποίηση αυτή, η ΕΕ μπορεί να παράσχει στήριξη σύμφωνα με την απάντηση στην ερώτηση E-001957/2012 του κ. Jim Higgins.

2. Τα αποτελέσματα των ερευνητικών προγραμμάτων σχετικά με τις (θαλάσσιες) ανανεώσιμες πηγές ενέργειας αναμένεται να οδηγήσουν στην παραγωγή καινοτόμων επενδυτικών σχεδίων που θα μπορούσαν να δημιουργήσουν θέσεις εργασίας στα ναυπηγεία. Ανάλογα με τα ιδιαίτερα χαρακτηριστικά του κάθε έργου, αυτά μπορεί να είναι επιλέξιμα για χρηματοδότηση στο πλαίσιο των προγραμμάτων για την ανάπτυξη των ανανεώσιμων πηγών ενέργειας.

3. Το Ευρωπαϊκό Ταμείο Προσαρμογής στην Παγκοσμιοποίηση (ΕΤΠ) έχει ήδη παράσχει βοήθεια σε εργαζομένους που απολύθηκαν στον ναυπηγικό τομέα και στους προμηθευτές του τομέα αυτού στη Δανία και την Πολωνία ([2]).

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2011:364:0009:0013:EL:PDF (14.12.2011) «Πλαίσιο για τις Κρατικές Ενισχύσεις στη Ναυπηγική Βιομηχανία» Επίσημη Εφημερίδα της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης (2011/C 364/06).

([2]) Για περισσότερες πληροφορίες βλ.: http://ec.europa.eu/egf.

4. Το νέο πλαίσιο κρατικής βοήθειας για τις ενισχύσεις στη ναυπηγική βιομηχανία τέθηκε σε ισχύ την 1η Ιανουαρίου 2012. Συνεπώς, είναι πολύ νωρίς για να μπορέσει να υπολογιστεί ο αντίκτυπός του.

5. Τα περιβαλλοντικώς αποδοτικά πλοία, συμπεριλαμβανομένων και των οχηματαγωγών πλοίων, μπορούν να πληρούν τα κριτήρια χρηματοδότησης από την Ευρωπαϊκή Τράπεζα Επενδύσεων. Σε ορισμένες περιπτώσεις, μπορεί να προσφέρεται ως επιλογή και η συγχρηματοδότηση από τα διαρθρωτικά ταμεία, υπό την προϋπόθεση ότι ένα σχέδιο είναι επιλέξιμο στο πλαίσιο του αντίστοιχου επιχειρησιακού προγράμματος και είναι σύμφωνο με τις πολιτικές και τη νομοθεσία της ΕΕ. Τα σχέδια αυτά θα μπορούσαν επίσης να είναι επιλέξιμα για μερική χρηματοδότηση από το πρόγραμμα Marco Polo ([3]). Επιπλέον, τα ερευνητικά προγράμματα-πλαίσια της ΕΕ στηρίζουν μια σειρά έργων για τη βελτίωση της περιβαλλοντικής συμπεριφοράς και τη βελτίωση των μηχανών των πλοίων.

6. Η Επιτροπή παραπέμπει στην απάντηση που έδωσε στην ερώτηση E-002114/2012 του κ. Νικολάου Χούντη.

([3]) Βλέπε: http://ec.europa.eu/transport/marcopolo.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003696/12
to the Commission
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: A question regarding the shipbuilding sector

Unemployment in the Greek Shipbuilding Zone amounts to 95 %, while the EU has — as part of an agreement for not imposing a fine — imposed a ban on Hellenic Shipyards, the country's biggest shipyard, against carrying out any commercial activity other than undertaking work for the Greek Navy.

The Commission is asked:

1. Does it support plans to halt the industry's decline by supplementing shipbuilding activities with areas of green technology which combine knowledge intensity and innovation with environmental goods and services?

2. To what extent does it finance or productively utilise the results of research programmes which could contribute to employment in the shipyards, such as the construction of components and sections of floating renewable energy installations or floating desalination plants which use renewable energy?

3. Have funds from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund or the European Social Fund been directed towards the shipbuilding sector?

4. Are Member States taking advantage of the new European framework which permits state aid to be allocated to the shipbuilding industry in the next two years for innovation and the construction of floating or mobile coastal structures which exploit renewable energy sources? ([1])

5. Does it envisage — in the context of implementing European policy to reduce pollution from ships — co-financing the improvement of ships' engines and/or the construction of new, innovative and environmentally efficient ships, something which would also contribute to the sustainability of ferry links between the islands, since fuel represents 37-50 % of the total costs?

6. Is it considering alternative compliance plans which would allow Hellenic Shipyards to return to commercial activity and, perhaps, to expand into green areas, taking into account the fact that the current situation has led to their closure and to higher unemployment in the sector?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(5 June 2012)

The Commission is aware of the very difficult situation of many shipbuilding enterprises in Europe and has therefore started work to revise the LeaderShip initiative in support of the sector.

1. Diversification of the activities into related 'green' activities, namely in the area of renewable energy, such as off-shore wind energy, is important for the further development of Europe's maritime industries. While it is up to the individual enterprise to pursue such diversification, the EU can provide support as outlined in the answer to E-001957/2012 by Mr Jim Higgins.

2. Results of research programmes on (maritime) renewable energy should produce innovative investment projects which could generate employment in shipyards. Depending on the specificities of the project, these may qualify for funding as part of programmes for the development of renewable energy.

3. The European Global Adjustment Fund (EGF) has already provided assistance to workers made redundant in the shipbuilding sector and its suppliers in Denmark and Poland ([2]).

4. The new State Aid Framework on Aid to Shipbuilding entered into force on 1 January 2012. It is therefore too early to assess its impact.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2011:364:0009:0013:EL:PDF (14.12.2011), 'Framework on state aid to shipbuilding', *Official Journal of the European Union* (2011/C 364/06).
([2]) For more information see: http://ec.europa.eu/egf.

5. Environmentally efficient ships, including ferries, can qualify for financing by the European Investment Bank. In certain cases, co-financing from Structural Funds may be an option providing that it is eligible under the relevant Operational Programme and it complies with EU policy and law. Such a project could also be eligible for partial financing under the Marco Polo Programme ([3]). In addition, the EU research framework programmes support several projects for the greening of ships and improvement of ship engines.

6. The Commission refers to the answer given to E-002114/2012 of MEP Nikolaos Chountis.

([3]) See: http://ec.europa.eu/transport/marcopolo.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-003697/12
do Komisji
Filip Kaczmarek (PPE)
(11 kwietnia 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Wiecznie zielone rolnictwo w krajach afrykańskich

Aby uniknąć poważnych trudności ubodzy rolnicy muszą być w stanie wyhodować na tyle upraw, aby wyżywić swe rodziny. Ich życiem rządzi niepewność: deszcze przychodzą nieregularnie, podobnie jak dotacje na nawozy. Muszą oni zmagać się ze zmienną aurą, a nadmiernie przez nich eksploatowana gleba z roku na rok staje się coraz mniej urodzajna.

Aby zagwarantować podaż żywności w tych warunkach, rządy i darczyńcy wyszukują najskuteczniejsze dostępne systemy uprawy roli i wspierają je.

Celem takich systemów powinno być wspomożenie rolników w produkcji żywności bardziej bogatej w energię i zawierającej więcej składników odżywczych. Rolnicy powinni uodpornić swe ziemie na działanie suszy, wiatru i obfitych deszczy. Powinni również odbudowywać glebę, a nie ją zubażać. Ponadto powinni uniezależnić się od pomocy z zewnątrz, która tak często jest niedostępna dla ubogich.

Gospodarstwa, w których łączy się uprawy jednoroczne i hodowlę zwierząt z uprawą drzew, oferują lepsze gwarancje podaży żywności, zarówno pod względem jej wartości kalorycznej, jak i odżywczej. Tego rodzaju rolnictwo określa się mianem wiecznie zielonego rolnictwa. Wyniki ogromnej liczby przeprowadzonych badań sugerują, że rolnicy prowadzący takie gospodarstwa są bardziej odporni, a uprawiana przez nich gleba – bardziej żyzna. Jednak w państwach Afryki mamy do czynienia z szerokim spektrum ekosystemów.

— Jakie działania podejmuje Komisja w celu zapewnienia lepszego zrozumienia związków pomiędzy systemami rolnymi, w których stosuje się uprawę drzew, a trwałym zapewnieniem podaży żywności w różnych środowiskach?

— Jakie działania podejmuje Komisja w celu zagwarantowania, by wśród najuboższych rolników propagowano najskuteczniejsze systemy?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Daciana Cioloşa w imieniu Komisji
(8 czerwca 2012 r.)

Komisja zna trudności, z jakimi boryka się rolnictwo, zwłaszcza takie, jak degradacja zasobów naturalnych, skutki zmian klimatu i długoterminowe niedoinwestowanie.

Systemy rolnicze na całym świecie muszą produkować wystarczającą ilość żywności, aby wyżywić ludność świata, która według szacunków osiągnie liczbę 9,3 mld osób do 2050 r.; konieczne jest również podniesienie dochodu małych gospodarstw oraz ochrona zasobów naturalnych niezbędnych w celu utrzymania zdolności produkcyjnych w przyszłości. Rolą UE jest zarówno wpływanie na światową politykę rolną, jak wkład w nią poprzez kształtowanie własnej wspólnej polityki rolnej. Komisja opracowała inicjatywy w zakresie zrównoważonego leśnictwa i systemów rolnośrodowiskowych, które można przenieść na grunt innych krajów i które są spójne z systemami agroekologicznymi (np. wykorzystanie osłony drzew) propagowanymi w 2010 r. przez specjalnego sprawozdawcę ONZ ds. prawa do żywności ([1]). W niedawnym komunikacie „Program działań na rzecz zmian" ([2]) Komisja określiła zrównoważone rolnictwo, a także energię, jako priorytety rozwojowe UE, zrównoważony rozwój zaś jest propagowany przez UE w negocjacjach w ramach konferencji Rio+20.

Przykłady finansowanego przez UE wsparcia na rzecz zrównoważonych systemów agroekologicznych:

— programy badań realizowane przez grupę doradczą ds. międzynarodowych badań nad rolnictwem (CGIAR) ([3]) całkowite wsparcie wynosi 26,1 mln EUR);

— *Climate Smart Agriculture: Capturing Synergies between Agricultural Mitigation and Adaptation* (Rolnictwo przyjazne klimatowi: szukanie synergii między łagodzeniem zmian klimatu a dostosowaniem się do nich w działalności rolniczej), FAO, 2012-2014, (3,3 mln EUR);

([1]) Zob. raport specjalnego sprawozdawcy ONZ ds. prawa do pożywienia Oliviera de Schuttera, przedstawiony na Zgromadzeniu Ogólnym ONZ, podczas szesnastej sesji Rady Praw Człowieka, 20.12.2010, A/HRC/16/49.

([2]) Komunikat Komisji Europejskiej: „Zwiększanie wpływu unijnej polityki rozwoju – Program działań na rzecz zmian" z 13.10.2011, COM(2011)637.

([3]) http://www.cgiar.org/.

— *Creating an Evergreen Agriculture in Africa*: *Scaling-up Conservation Agriculture with Trees for Improved Livelihoods and Environmental Resilience in Eastern and Southern Africa* (Wprowadzanie wiecznie zielonego rolnictwa w Afryce: rozwój ekologicznego rolnictwa poprzez sadzenie drzew w celu poprawy warunków życia i odporności środowiskowej w Afryce Wschodniej i Południowej), 2010-2013 (2 mln EUR);

— *Information systems and knowledge for pest controls and smart use of insecticides on crops* (Systemy informacyjne i wiedza na potrzeby zwalczania szkodników oraz inteligentnego stosowania środków owadobójczych w uprawach (CABi, 10 mln EUR).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003697/12
to the Commission
Filip Kaczmarek (PPE)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: Evergreen agriculture in African countries

To escape great hardship, poor farmers must be able to grow enough crops to feed their families. Their lives are governed by unpredictability: the rains come and go, as do fertiliser subsidies. They have to cope with increasingly erratic weather, and the fertility of their overworked soils declines with every year that passes.

To achieve sustainable food security in these circumstances, governments and donors seek out and promote the most effective agricultural systems available.

The purpose of such agricultural systems should be to help farmers produce more calories and ensure a greater variety of nutrients. They should make the land more resistant to drought, wind and heavy rains. They should help rebuild soils rather than deplete them. Lastly, they should not be contingent on external inputs, which so often are out of reach of the poor.

Farms that combine annual crops and livestock with trees offer better food security, in terms both of more calories and of more varied nutrients. This is called 'evergreen agriculture.' A large body of research suggests that such farms are more resilient and that their soils are more fertile. But the range of ecosystems in the African countries is vast.

— What is the Commission doing to ensure a better understanding of the link between agricultural systems incorporating tree farming and sustainable food security in different environments?

— What is the Commission doing to ensure that the best systems are promoted vis-à-vis the poorest farmers?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(8 June 2012)

The Commission is aware of the pressures facing agriculture, especially degradation of natural resources, impacts of climate change, and long-term underinvestment.

Agricultural systems globally must produce enough food to feed an estimated world population of 9.3 billion by 2050, improve incomes for smallholders; and conserve natural resources for future production capacity. The EU plays its part, both to influence global agriculture policy and in the contribution of the common agricultural policy. The Commission has developed initiatives on sustainable forestry and agri-environment systems, which are transferable to other countries, and are congruent with the agro-ecological systems (including use of tree cover) promoted in 2010 by the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food ([1]). In the recent Communication, 'Agenda for Change' ([2]), the Commission identified sustainable agriculture, together with energy, as the EU's development priorities and sustainability is being advanced by the EU in negotiations for the Rio+20 conference.

Examples of EU financed support to agro-ecological sustainable systems include *inter alia*:

— *Research* programmes implemented by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) ([3]) total support amounts to EUR 26.1 million);

— *Climate Smart Agriculture*: Capturing Synergies between Agricultural Mitigation and Adaptation, FAO, 2012-2014, (EUR 3.3 million);

— *Creating an Evergreen Agriculture in Africa*: Scaling-up Conservation Agriculture with Trees for Improved Livelihoods and Environmental Resilience in Eastern and Southern Africa, 2010-2013 (EUR 2 million);

— *Information systems and knowledge for pest controls and smart use of insecticides* on crops (CABi, EUR 10 million).

([1]) See Report submitted by the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier De Schutter to UN General Assembly, Human Rights Council, Sixteenth session, 20.12.2010, A/HRC/16/49.
([2]) European Commission Communication: Increasing the impact of EU Development Policy: an Agenda for Change, 13.10.2011, COM(2011)637.
([3]) http://www.cgiar.org/.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-003698/12
do Komisji
Rafał Trzaskowski (PPE)
(11 kwietnia 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Dostępność stron internetowych instytucji sektora publicznego

W związku z pracami prowadzonymi przez Komisję Europejską w 2011 r. dotyczącymi dostępności stron internetowych instytucji sektora publicznego, a także biorąc pod uwagę:

— zainteresowanie obywateli UE, którzy korzystają z coraz większej dostępności i wygody usług on-line,

— kwestię zniesienia przeszkód na rynku wewnętrznym, jeżeli chodzi o normy dla programistów, mamy następujące pytania:

1. Kiedy Komisja zamierza opublikować wnioski dotyczące dostępności stron internetowych instytucji sektora publicznego oraz stron internetowych oferujących podstawowe usługi obywatelom?

2. Czy Komisja może podać szczegółowe informacje dotyczące charakteru i zakresu tych wniosków?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarz Neelie Kroes w imieniu Komisji
(30 maja 2012 r.)

Prace nad wnioskiem dotyczącym interwencji regulacyjnej UE w zakresie dostępności sieci postępują, ocena skutków została ukończona i oczekuje się, że wniosek zostanie przedłożony do przyjęcia przez kolegium w II kwartale 2012 r.

Celem interwencji jest zapewnienie skuteczności działań dzięki uniknięciu rozdrobnienia europejskiego rynku produktów i usług z zakresu dostępności sieci. W wyniku tego działania będzie można zagwarantować, że strony internetowe instytucji sektora publicznego, oferujące obywatelom niezbędne informacje i usługi, będą w pełni dostępne do 2015 r.; regulacja będzie również sprzyjać rozszerzaniu zakresu dostępności na wszystkie strony internetowe sektora publicznego lub strony oferujące podstawowe usługi dla obywateli. Oprócz realizacji tego celu w ramach Europejskiej agendy cyfrowej regulacja będzie służyła także wypełnianiu innych politycznych zobowiązań, takich jak te określone w art. 9 Konwencji Narodów Zjednoczonych o prawach osób niepełnosprawnych ([1]), dotyczące zapewnienia równego dostępu do usług elektronicznych.

W kontekście Europejskiej strategii w sprawie niepełnosprawności 2010-2020 oraz Konwencji NZ o prawach osób niepełnosprawnych Komisja pracuje również nad wnioskiem dotyczącym „Europejskiego aktu w sprawie dostępności".

([1]) Konwencja Narodów Zjednoczonych o prawach osób niepełnosprawnych.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003698/12
to the Commission
Rafał Trzaskowski (PPE)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: Accessibility of public sector websites

With regard to the Commission's efforts in 2011 to promote the accessibility of public sector websites, and taking into consideration:

— the interests of the EU's citizens, who will benefit from more accessible and comfortable online services,

— the issue of abolishing internal market barriers to programming standards,

the Commission is invited to answer the following questions:

1. When does the Commission plan to publish proposals regarding the accessibility of public sector websites and of websites providing basic services to citizens?

2. Can the Commission provide details on the nature and scope of these forthcoming proposals?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(30 May 2012)

The proposal for an EU legislative intervention on web-accessibility is progressing, work on an impact assessment has been completed and a proposal is expected to be submitted for adoption to the college within the second quarter of 2012.

The aim is to ensure efficiency of efforts by avoiding fragmentation of the European market for web-accessibility products and services. The effect of this action will help to ensure that public sector websites offering essential information and services for the citizens are fully accessible by 2015 and it will encourage extending the scope to all public sector websites and/or sites providing basic services to citizens. In addition to this action goal of the Digital Agenda for Europe, the intervention will also support the fulfilment of other political commitments such as Article 9 of the UNCRPD ([1]) on 'ensuring equal rights on the access to online services'.

In the context of the EU Disability Strategy 2010-2020 and the UNCRPD, the Commission is also working on a proposal for a 'European Accessibility Act'.

([1]) UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-003699/12
à la Commission
Sandrine Bélier (Verts/ALE)
(11 avril 2012)

Objet: Fuite de gaz en mer du Nord

En raison d'une fuite de gaz survenue le 25 mars 2012, la branche britannique de Total a annoncé avoir cessé la production de pétrole et de gaz sur sa plateforme d'Elgin-Franklin en mer du Nord et mis en place une zone d'exclusion maritime de deux milles. Les 238 employés de la plateforme ainsi que plusieurs dizaines de salariés de deux plateformes voisines ont dû être évacués pour des raisons de sécurité.

Cet accident peut être la source de différentes pollutions. D'abord, des observations visuelles ont confirmé la présence d'une nappe d'hydrocarbures à la surface de l'eau sur plusieurs kilomètres carrés. Il s'agit en outre de la pollution chimique et toxique de l'hydrogène sulfuré, la pollution thermique d'un rejet massif de gaz à une température de 190°C et la pollution acoustique de l'éruption de gaz sous haute pression. Ces pollutions pourraient impacter la faune et la flore locales.

De plus, l'accident risque de provoquer des rejets de gaz à effet de serre vingt fois plus nocifs pour le climat que le dioxyde de carbone, le potentiel de réchauffement global à un siècle du méthane étant même évalué à vingt-cinq fois celui du CO^2.

Or dans son rapport d'initiative de septembre 2011 intitulé «Faire face aux défis de la sûreté des activités gazières et pétrolières en offshore», le Parlement européen a lancé un appel à prendre trois mesures:

— la vérification des installations en haute mer par une partie tierce indépendante;

— l'extension des provisions de sécurité financière obligatoire, avec la preuve de la garantie par les compagnies de leur capacité financière pleine et entière ainsi que de l'assurance obligatoire pour couvrir les coûts sociaux, environnementaux et économiques en cas d'accident;

— l'extension du champ de la directive sur la responsabilité environnementale aux activités liées aux hydrocarbures.

Ce nouvel incident repose la question de la pertinence d'un moratoire sur les activités d'exploration et de forage en offshore jusqu'à ce que des standards de sûreté et des mesures règlementaires les plus hautes et uniformes possibles soient instaurées.

Quelles mesures concrètes et immédiates la Commission compte-t-elle prendre à cet égard?

Réponse donnée par M. Oettinger au nom de la Commission
(6 juin 2012)

En ce qui concerne sa réaction à l'accident survenu sur la plateforme Elgin, la Commission renvoie l'Honorable Parlementaire à sa réponse à la question écrite E-003358/2012 de M. Salavrakos. ([1])Pour ce qui est de la pertinence d'un moratoire, la Commission reste d'avis que les États membres, tout en conservant une compétence pleine et entière en ce qui concerne l'exploitation de leurs ressources naturelles, doivent prendre un maximum de précautions lors de la planification et de l'autorisation des activités en mer et ne devraient permettre leur démarrage que lorsqu'il a été prouvé que les risques ont été bien recensés, évalués et traités afin qu'ils restent à un niveau aussi faible que raisonnablement possible. Cette position est traduite pleinement dans la proposition de règlement ([2])ur la sécurité des activités de prospection, d'exploration et de production pétrolières et gazières en mer présentée par la Commission en novembre 2011, qui fait actuellement l'objet de négociations au Conseil et qui sera bientôt débattue au Parlement.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/QP-WEB/.
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+WQ+E-2012-003358+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN.

([2]) Proposition de règlement relatif à la sécurisation des activités de prospection, d'exploration et de production pétrolières et gazières en mer, COM(2011) 688. .

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003699/12
to the Commission
Sandrine Bélier (Verts/ALE)
(11 April 2012)

Subject: Gas leak in the North Sea

As a result of a gas leak on 25 March 2012, Total's UK subsidiary has announced that it has stopped the production of oil and gas on its Elgin-Franklin platform in the North Sea and has set up a two-mile maritime exclusion zone. The 238 workers employed on the platform and several dozen workers from two neighbouring platforms have had to be evacuated for safety reasons.

This accident could give rise to various kinds of pollution. Firstly, visual observation has confirmed the presence of an oil slick extending over several square kilometres. In addition, there is a risk of chemical pollution in the form of toxic hydrogen sulphide, thermal pollution arising from a massive gas discharge at a temperature of 190°C and noise pollution caused by the high-pressure gas blow-out. All these could affect local fauna and flora.

In addition, there is a risk that the accident may lead to the release of greenhouse gases 20 times more harmful to the climate than carbon dioxide (methane's global warming potential over 100 years has even been estimated at 25 times that of CO_2).

In its September 2011 own-initiative report entitled 'Facing the challenges of the safety of offshore oil and gas activities', the European Parliament called for three measures to be taken:

— inspection of deep-sea installations by an independent third party;

— tightening-up of compulsory financial guarantee mechanisms, with companies being required to provide proof of their full financial capacity and to take out mandatory insurance to cover the social, environmental and economic costs of an accident;

— extension of the scope of the Environmental Liability Directive to cover activities involving hydrocarbons.

This new incident raises once again the issue of the advisability of a moratorium on offshore exploration and drilling activities pending the introduction on the broadest possible basis of the most stringent possible safety standards and regulatory measures.

What immediate practical measures does the Commission intend to take in this connection?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(6 June 2012)

With regard to the Commission's reaction to the Elgin accident, the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its reply to Written Question E-003358/2012 by Mr Salavrakos ([1]).

As to the pertinence of a moratorium, the Commission remains of the opinion that Member States, while retaining full competence over the exploitation of their natural resources, should exercise utmost care when planning and authorising offshore activities and should allow these to proceed only when it has been demonstrated that risks have been properly identified, assessed and addressed to remain as low as reasonably possible. This is fully reflected in the proposal for a regulation ([2]) of safety of offshore oil and gas prospection, exploration and production activities tabled by the Commission in November 2011 on which negotiations have been under way in the Council and should start soon in the Parliament.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/QP-WEB/
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+WQ+E-2012-003358+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN.
([2]) Proposal for a regulation on safety of offshore oil and gas prospection, exploration and production activities, COM(2011)688 final.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita P-003700/12
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(12 de abril de 2012)

Asunto: Desmantelamiento progresivo del Centro de Investigación Príncipe Felipe

Actualmente, la situación de viabilidad y sostenibilidad de los centros de investigación científica españoles es alarmante ya que, como en el caso del Centro de Investigación Príncipe Felipe de Valencia (CIPF), se encuentran en serio peligro de cierre por el progresivo desmantelamiento y la dejadez financiera por parte de las autoridades públicas españolas.

El CIPF nació en 2002 «como la mayor apuesta hasta el momento por la Generalitat Valenciana en el campo de la investigación científica», según el propio Gobierno valenciano, pero la financiación del Gobierno valenciano ha ido descendiendo paulatinamente desde que buena parte de los investigadores firmaron una carta crítica con la gestión del anterior gerente, que acabó provocando su dimisión por irregularidades económicas.

A finales del año pasado la escasa financiación obligó a cerrar 14 líneas de investigación y a llevar a cabo un Expediente de Regulación de Empleo (ERE) que supuso el despido de casi un centenar de investigadores (casi todos ellos firmantes de la carta crítica que destapaba las irregularidades en la gestión del Centro) y la reducción del salario del resto de los trabajadores.

A esta escasa voluntad política por parte del Gobierno valenciano hay que sumar la política de recortes iniciada por el Gobierno de José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero y profundizada por el actual Gobierno de España presidido Mariano Rajoy, que ha conllevado un fuerte descenso en los recursos destinados a la innovación e investigación científica en España y que condena al cierre al Centro de Investigación Príncipe Felipe.

Teniendo en cuenta que la Unión Europea aportó financiación a través del Fondo Europeo de Desarrollo (FEDER) para la puesta en marcha y el desarrollo de este Centro de Investigación Científica, y que la Innovación e investigación son supuestamente pilares centrales en el modelo económico por el que la Comisión Europea apuesta dentro de la Estrategia 2020.

— ¿Se ha puesto la Comisión en contacto con las autoridades españolas para solicitar información sobre el estado del CIPF?

— ¿Ha solicitado la Comisión al Gobierno de España que lleve a cabo un financiamiento suficiente del CIPF que permita su viabilidad y sostenibilidad?

— ¿Piensa la Comisión investigar las irregularidades ocurridas en el CIPF?

— ¿Puede la Comisión destinar fondos europeos para asegurar la viabilidad del CIPF?

Respuesta del Sr. Hahn en nombre de la Comisión
(21 de mayo de 2012)

La Comisión remite a Su Señoría a su respuesta a la pregunta escrita E-012632/2011 ([1]) del Sr. Perelló Rodríguez.

La Comisión es plenamente consciente de que varios centros de investigación españoles están experimentando dificultades financieras graves debido a recortes presupuestarios serios, tanto a nivel nacional como regional, y a la reducción de las inversiones públicas en investigación e innovación.

En caso de cierre o desmantelamiento del centro de investigación, la Comisión examinará si se ha producido una modificación importante de la operación subvencionada por el FEDER a tenor del artículo 30, apartado 4, del Reglamento (CE) n° 1260/1999 del Consejo y, por tanto, si deben aplicarse medidas de corrección financiera.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer P-003700/12
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Progressive dismantling of the Príncipe Felipe Research Centre (CIPF)

At present, the situation of Spanish scientific research centres, in terms of their viability and sustainability, is alarming, as they are in serious danger of closure because of progressive dismantling and lack of funding from the Spanish public authorities. This is the case with the CIPF in Valencia.

The CIPF was established in 2002 as the largest investment so far by the Valencia Regional Government in the field of scientific research, according to the Valencian Government itself. However, funding from the Valencian Government has declined gradually since a large number of its researchers signed a letter criticising the former director's management, resulting in his dismissal for financial irregularities.

Late last year, inadequate funding made it necessary to close 14 lines of research and to implement a Labour Force Adjustment Plan (LFAP), which involved the dismissal of nearly one hundred researchers (almost all of whom had signed the critical letter that uncovered the irregularities in the Centre's management), and the reduction of the remaining employees' pay.

To this scant political will on the part of the Valencian Government, we must add the policy of cut-backs begun by the administration of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, and continued under the current Spanish Government, headed by Mariano Rajoy. This policy has entailed a large cut in resources earmarked for innovation and scientific research in Spain, condemning the CIPF to closure.

Bearing in mind that the European Union has contributed funding through the European Development Fund (ERDF) for the start-up and development of this scientific research centre, and that innovation and research are supposedly central pillars in the economic model adopted by the European Commission in the Europe 2020 Strategy:

— Has the Commission contacted the Spanish authorities to request information on the status of the CIPF?

— Has the Commission asked the Spanish Government to fund the CIPF at a level sufficient to ensure its viability and sustainability?

— Does the Commission plan to investigate the irregularities that took place at the CIPF?

— Can the Commission provide EU funding to ensure the viability of the CIPF?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(21 May 2012)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-012632/2011 ([1]) by Mr Perello Rodriguez.

The Commission is fully aware that several Spanish research centres are facing serious financial difficulties due to severe public budget cuts, both at national and regional level, and reductions of the public research and innovation investments.

In case of closure or dismantling of the research centre, the Commission will examine whether a substantial modification of the ERDF-supported operation has occurred within the meaning of Article 30.4 of Council Regulation (EC) 1260/1999, and consequently whether financial correction measures should be applied.

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

(българска версия)

Въпрос с искане за писмен отговор E-003701/12
до Комисията
Евгени Кирилов (S&D)
(12 април 2012 г.)

Относно: Програма за развитие на селските райони в България

В отговор на поставен от мен въпрос (E-011952/2011), получен на 8 февруари 2012 г., членът на Комисията Чолош посочва, че към края на декември 2011 г. Комисията е изплатила на България 769 млн. евро от Европейския фонд за развитие на селските райони, което представлява 29 % от цялата сума, отпусната за Програмата за развитие на селските райони в България (ПРСР).

Два месеца по-късно, в отговор на въпрос на моята колега Илияна Йотова (E-002145/2012) членът на Комисията Чолош изтъква, че към края на февруари 2012 г. сумата, която Комисията е възстановила на България по ПРСР, възлиза на 586 млн. евро или 22 %.

И в двата отговора членът на Комисията визира сумата от 250 млн. евро, която все още не е призната от Комисията за разход на България по въпросната програма и за която съществува риск да бъде загубена по правилото за автоматично освобождаване N+2.

Във връзка с това:

— На какво се дължи разминаването в сумите, посочени в отговорите на члена на Комисията Чолош от 8 февруари и от 4 април 2012 г.?

— Каква е причината повече от четири месеца Комисията да продължава да разглежда внесеното от българските власти в края на 2011 г. изменение на ПРСР и кога смята Комисията да излезе с решение по този въпрос?

— На какво се дължи потенциалният риск от загуба на част или на цялата сума от 250 млн. евро и свързан ли е с плащанията за създаване на гаранционен фонд под ПРСР (E-011952/2011)?

Отговор, даден от г-н Чолош от името на Комисията
(21 май 2012 г.)

Предоставените от Комисията отговори на въпроси E-011952/2011 и E-002145/2012 ([1]) са правилни и напълно последователни. Първият въпрос беше свързан със сумите, изплатени на България в рамките на нейната програма за развитие на селските райони от перспектива n + 2, докато вторият въпрос се отнасяше за действителното усвояване на място. В края на 2011 г. на България е била преведена обща сума в размер на 769 млн. EUR (29 % от общото разпределение за периода 2007 — 2013 г.) по линия на ЕЗФРСР, от които 586 млн. EUR (22% от отпуснатите средства) бяха предназначени за възстановяване на разходи, вече изплатени на бенефициерите. Разликата между цифрите се отнася за авансовото плащане от 7 % от общото разпределение на средства от ЕЗФРСР за България (183 милиона EUR), което се плаща след одобрение на програмата.

Четиримесечният срок за разглеждане на 8-то изменение на българската ПРСР е бил прекъсван (преустановяване на срока) три пъти, тъй като се е налагало българската страна да предостави съществена допълнителна обосновка и пояснение, за да се стигне до приемливо за Комисията предложение. От средата на април са изминали само два месеца от 4-месечния период за разглеждане, следователно Комисията е изцяло в рамките на допустимия период за разглеждане. Изменението е в напреднал етап на разглеждане и трябва да бъде завършено в скоро време.

Да, потенциалният риск от отмяна на финансови ангажименти на ЕЗФРСР за България за 2011 г. е свързан с предложения гаранционен фонд. Всички останали пера, които са включени в заявлението за плащане на 251 млн. EUR, представено на ЕЗФРСР през януари 2012 г., вече са възстановени на България (около 114 млн. EUR). Остава да бъдат изплатени 137 млн. EUR, свързани със създаването на гаранционния фонд, което — изцяло или частично — е обвързано с одобрението от Комисията на 8-то изменение. Като цяло съществува риск да бъде отменен финансовият ангажимент за всяка част от тази неизплатена сума, която не бъде приета.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003701/12
to the Commission
Evgeni Kirilov (S&D)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Bulgarian Rural Development Programme

In the answer to my question (E-011952/2011), given on 8 February 2012, Commissioner Cioloş indicated that by the end of December 2011, the Commission had paid to Bulgaria EUR 769 million from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, which constituted 29 % of the total funds released for the Bulgarian Rural Development Programme (RDP).

Two months later, in his answer to the question from my colleague Iliana Iotova (E-002145/2012), Commissioner Cioloş pointed out that by the end of February 2012 the amount the Commission had reimbursed Bulgaria via the Bulgarian RDP came to a total of EUR 586 million, or 22 %.

Both responses from the Commissioner make reference to an amount of EUR 250 million that the Commission has yet to recognise as expenditure for Bulgaria under the programme in question, and which is liable to be lost under the N+2 automatic decommitment rule.

In connection with this:

— What is the reason for the discrepancy in the amounts indicated in the answers by Commissioner Cioloş dated 8 February 2012 and 4 April 2012 respectively?

— Why has the Commission taken over four months to examine the modifications to the Bulgarian RDP submitted by the Bulgarian authorities at the end of 2011, and when does it think it will issue a decision on this matter?

— Why is there a potential risk of all or part of the EUR 250 million being lost, and is this related to the payments for setting up a guarantee fund under the Bulgarian RDP (see answer to question E-011952/2011)?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(21 May 2012)

The Commission's answers to Questions E-011952/2011 and E-002145/2012 ([1]) are both correct and fully consistent. The first question enquired about amounts paid to Bulgaria under its Rural Development Programme from a N+2 perspective, while the second referred to actual absorption on the ground. As of end 2011 a total EAFRD amount of EUR 769 million (29% of the total 2007-2013 allocation) had been paid to Bulgaria, of which EUR 586 million (22% of the allocation) was reimbursed for expenditures already paid out to beneficiaries. The difference between the figures relates to the advance payment of 7% of Bulgaria's overall EAFRD allocation (EUR 183 million) paid after approval of the programme.

The four month period for examination of the 8th modification of the Bulgarian RDP has been interrupted (clock stopped) three times, as it has required considerable additional justification and clarification from the Bulgarian side in order to reach a proposal which can be accepted by the Commission. As of mid-April only some two months of the 4-month examination period have passed, so the Commission remains fully within the permitted examination period. The modification is at an advanced stage of processing and should be finalised shortly.

Yes, the potential risk of EAFRD decommitment for Bulgaria for 2011 is linked to the proposed guarantee fund. All other items included in the payment claim for EUR 251 million EAFRD submitted in January 2012 have now been reimbursed to Bulgaria (some EUR 114 million). An amount of EUR 137 million related to the setting up of the guarantee fund, whose eligibility — in full or partially — is subject to Commission acceptance of the 8th modification is outstanding for payment. In broad terms, any of this outstanding amount which is not accepted risks to be decommitted.

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

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-003702/12
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(12 de abril de 2012)

Asunto: VP/HR — Detención y tortura de Abdulhadi Al Khawaja

El Sr. Abdulhadi Al Khawaja, ex Director de MENA en «Front Line» el expresidente del Centro de Bahréin para los Derechos Humanos (BCHR) fue detenido de forma arbitraria el 9 de abril de 2011 por policías enmascarados y posteriormente torturado. El 22 de junio de 2011, el Sr. Al Khawaja fue condenado a cadena perpetua por «organizar y dirigir una organización terrorista», «intento de derrocar al Gobierno por la fuerza» y por «colaboración con una organización terrorista trabajando para un país extranjero», junto con otros 20 activistas políticos y de derechos humanos por el Tribunal de Seguridad Nacional de Bahréin. De acuerdo con su familia y sus abogados, su vida podría estar en peligro ya que pronto cumplirá 60 días de huelga de hambre en denuncia de su detención arbitraria. El Observatorio para la Protección de los defensores de Derechos Humanos y la Federación Internacional de Derechos Humanos denuncian que la detención y acusación pretende sancionar sus actividades en Derechos Humanos y que las autoridades no permiten a estas organizaciones visitar al detenido.

Considerando que el derecho a un juicio justo es un derecho fundamental y un principio general de los Tratados de la UE, que a ésta le corresponde respetar y defender. Teniendo en cuenta la Declaración de Defensores de Derechos Humanos (1988) adoptada por la ONU donde se afirma que «todo el mundo posee el derecho de forma individual o en asociación de promover y proteger los Derechos Humanos y libertades fundamentales a nivel nacional e internacional».

Visto que las Líneas de Actuación de la EU sobre Tortura declaran que la tortura es una de violaciones de los derechos humanos más detestables y que su prevención y erradicación es uno de los principales objetivos de la Unión Europea, preguntamos a la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante:

— ¿Qué acciones va a tomar para que las autoridades de Bahréin garanticen la integridad física y psicológica del Sr. Al Khawaja, así como de todos los defensores de los derechos humanos en Bahréin?

— ¿Va a pedir la liberación inmediata visto su delicado estado de salud y la inconsistencia de las acusaciones que se presentan contra él? ¿Va a encargar una investigación sobre las acusaciones de tortura?

Respuesta de la Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta Sra. Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(5 de junio de 2012)

La Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta Sra. Ashton ha estado siguiendo el caso del Sr. A. Al Khawaja muy de cerca, de manera coordinada con los Estados miembros de la UE, sin escatimar esfuerzos para ayudar a encontrar una solución positiva y compasiva para el caso, incluso a través de contactos directos con las autoridades bahrainíes y, públicamente, por medio de declaraciones.

La última declaración de la Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta sobre el caso del Sr. A. Al Khawaja fue emitida en nombre de la Unión Europea, el 17 de abril de 2012. En ella expresó, con la máxima firmeza, su preocupación por el estado de salud del Sr. Al Khawaja y pidió su liberación por razones humanitarias. Esta declaración se realizó después de que el portavoz de la Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta declarara sobre el mismo asunto el 10 de abril de 2012.

Además, el Servicio Europeo de Acción Exterior ha tenido varios contactos al más alto nivel con las autoridades bahrainíes, tanto en Bruselas como en Manama, e incluso a través de la Delegación de la UE en Riad, que también tiene competencias en Bahréin. La Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta Sra. Ashton escribió al Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores bahrainí para llamar su atención sobre el caso.

La Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta seguirá la evolución de esta preocupante situación y adoptará todas las medidas que resulten adecuadas y necesarias al respecto.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003702/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Detention and torture of Abdulhadi Al Khawaja

Mr Abdulhadi Al Khawaja, former Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Director at Front Line and former president of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights (BCHR), was arbitrarily detained by masked police on 9 April 2011 and subsequently tortured. On 22 June 2011, Mr Al Khawaja, along with 20 other political and human rights activists, was sentenced by the National Security Court in Bahrain to life imprisonment for 'organising and leading a terrorist organisation', 'attempting to overthrow the Government by force' and 'collaborating with a terrorist organisation working for a foreign country'. According to his family and his lawyers, his life could be in danger as his hunger strike against his arbitrary detention will soon reach 60 days. The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and the International Federation of Human Rights reported that the arrest and charge are to punish his Human Rights activities, and that the authorities will not allow these organisations to visit the detainee.

Whereas the right to a fair trial is a fundamental right and a general principle of the EU Treaties, and one which the EU must respect and uphold. Taking into account the Declaration of Human Rights Defenders (1988) adopted by the UN, which states that 'Everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to promote and to strive for the protection and realisation of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels'.

Given that the EU action lines on torture state that torture is one of the most abhorrent human rights violations and that its prevention and eradication is one of the main objectives of the European Union, we ask the Vice-President/High Representative:

— What action will she take so that the Bahraini authorities guarantee the physical and mental integrity of Mr Al Khawaja and of all human rights defenders in Bahrain?

— Will she ask for his immediate release, given his poor health and the inconsistency of the charges brought against him? Will she order an investigation into the torture allegations?

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

High Representative/Vice-President (HR/VP) Ashton has been following the case of Mr A. Al Khawaja very closely, in coordination with EU Member States, sparing no efforts to help bring about a positive and compassionate solution to it, including through direct contacts with the Bahraini authorities and, publicly, through statements.

The latest Declaration by the HR/VP on Mr Al Khawaja's case, was issued on behalf of the EU on 17 April 2012. It expressed concern about the health conditions of Mr Al Khawaja in the strongest terms and asked for his liberation on humanitarian grounds. This Declaration followed on a statement on the same matter issued on 10 April 2012 by the HR/VP's spokesperson.

In addition to this, the European External Action Service has been in touch with the Bahraini authorities several times and at the highest levels, both in Brussels and in Manama, including through the EU Delegation in Riyadh, which is also accredited to Bahrain. HR/VP Ashton wrote to the Bahraini Foreign Minister to bring the case to his attention.

The HR/VP will continue to follow this worrying situation, adopting all the measures that prove appropriate and necessary.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-003703/12
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(12 de abril de 2012)

Asunto: Urbanización El Cuartón (Tarifa, Cádiz, Andalucía, España)

La urbanización «El Cuartón», es una zona declarada de «Interés Turístico Nacional», ubicada dentro de la Red Natura, en medio de dos Parques naturales. Ciudadanos de diversos Estados miembros, basándose en la premisa de comprar en un Estado miembro perteneciente a la UE y por lo tanto con similares derechos, adquirieron en esta urbanización propiedades con una publicidad registral no acorde a la realidad. Sus propiedades figuran como «urbanas» sin serlo, careciendo, a la fecha, de los servicios básicos necesarios para ser catalogados como tales. Calles sin asfaltar o en mal estado, sistema de agua potable deficiente, agua turbia, falta de alumbrado público y la inexistencia de un sistema de evacuación de aguas fecales y depuradora que implican vertidos a campo abierto dentro de la Red Natura. El Ayuntamiento de Tarifa recauda desde hace más de 30 años impuestos de bienes inmuebles (IBI), impuestos de transmisión de inmuebles y de incremento del valor de terrenos de naturaleza urbana basados en suelo «urbano». Extiende sin cesar cédulas urbanísticas como tal y otorga licencias de obras. El Plan de Ordenación Urbana de 1990 (publicado en 2002) especifica la redacción de «Proyectos complementarios» con el objetivo de obtener el rango de «urbano» por medio de «impuestos especiales».

Hasta la fecha nunca se realizó, a pesar del intento desesperado e infructuoso de los propietarios. Ahora, 22 años más tarde, este Ayuntamiento pretende aplicar estos «impuestos especiales» a pesar de seguir cobrando en la actualidad el IBI «urbano» y los impuestos mencionados que representan un aumento del bien inmueble inexistente y por lo tanto de mero interés especulativo.

— ¿Considera la Comisión asegurado el derecho de consumidores y garantizada la seguridad jurídica a la compra de las propiedades tanto por el Registro de la Propiedad como por el Ayuntamiento de Tarifa?

— ¿Considera la Comisión que el Ayuntamiento de Tarifa cumple con la responsabilidad de tutela y el amparo al otorgar licencias que no concuerdan con la realidad deteriorando el medioambiente?

— ¿Considera la Comisión que se encuentra controlada la especulación?

Respuesta de la Sra. Reding en nombre de la Comisión
(1 de junio de 2012)

La Comisión participa en una amplia gama de actividades con el fin de lograr un alto grado de protección de los consumidores en todos los Estados miembros, entre las que se incluye la adopción de actos legislativos que les confieren determinados derechos.

Sin embargo, las cuestiones planteadas por Su Señoría son competencia de los Estados miembros y están reguladas por su Derecho administrativo nacional u otras medidas de Derecho público. La aplicación de las leyes relativas a la clasificación de las propiedades, la concesión de licencias de construcción, la imposición de los impuestos y gravámenes pertinentes y los correspondientes recursos contra las decisiones de las autoridades nacionales en caso de un uso incorrecto de los poderes que les han sido conferidos, sigue siendo competencia de las autoridades y órganos jurisdiccionales nacionales.

Los propietarios que deseen obtener una reparación deberán acudir a las autoridades judiciales y administrativas españolas competentes.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003703/12
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: El Cuarton urbanisation (Tarifa, Cádiz, Andalucía, Spain)

The El Cuarton urbanisation is an area of National Tourist Interest situated within the Natura 2000 network between two national parks. On the premise of buying property in an EU Member State, which would therefore have similar rights, citizens from various Member States bought properties in this urbanisation which were subject to false advertising in the Property Register. Their properties are listed as 'urban' but this is not the case as, at the time, they lacked the basic services needed to be classified as such. Roads which are unsurfaced or are in poor condition, an inadequate drinking water system, cloudy water, a lack of street lighting and the absence of a system for getting rid of and purifying wastewater, meaning that it has to be dumped in open fields within the Natura 2000 network. Tarifa City Council has been collecting municipal property tax, transfer tax and VAT on urban land value in 'urban' areas for over 30 years. They continue to extend town planning certificates and grant building permits. The 1990 *Plan de Ordenación Urbana* (Urban Planning Framework) (published in 2002) specifies drafting 'complementary projects' with the aim of being classed as 'urban' by means of 'excise duties'.

So far this has not happened, in spite of desperate and fruitless attempts by the owners. Now, 22 years later, this Council is trying to apply these 'excise duties' despite continuing to collect 'urban' municipal property tax and the aforementioned taxes, which do not represent an increase in real estate and are, therefore, of little speculative interest.

— Does the Commission believe that consumers' rights are ensured and legal security guaranteed in buying properties both through the Property Register and through Tarifa City Council?

— Does the Commission believe that Tarifa City Council is complying with the responsibility of protection by granting building permits which are not in line with reality and contribute to the deterioration of the environment?

— Does the Commission believe that speculation is being kept under control?

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

The Commission participates in a wide range of activities with the aim of achieving a high level of consumer protection in all the Member States, including the adoption of legislation conferring certain rights on consumers.

However, the issues raised by the Honourable Member are within the remit of the Member States and are regulated by their national administrative or other public law. It remains the exclusive competence of national authorities and courts to apply the national laws concerning the classification of properties, the granting of building permits, the imposition of the relevant taxes and duties, and the respective remedies against national authorities in case of misuse of public powers.

The owners should seek redress through the competent administrative and judicial authorities in Spain.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-003704/12
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(12 de abril de 2012)

Asunto: Uso de pelotas de goma y violencia policial en España: homicidio de Íñigo Cabacas

El lunes 9 de abril falleció Íñigo Cabacas, joven de 28 años de edad, como consecuencia de la fractura craneal y la hemorragia que sufría causada por el impacto de una pelota de goma disparada por la Ertzaintza, policía autonómica vasca, el pasado jueves 5 de abril.

La muerte de este joven se produce solo unos días después de la violenta actuación policial durante la jornada de huelga general en Barcelona, cuando seis personas quedaron gravemente heridas por impactos de pelotas de goma.

Según denuncia la asociación «Stop Bales de Goma», solo durante el año pasado, tres ciudadanos perdieron la visión en un ojo a consecuencia del impacto de estos proyectiles y otro ciudadano tuvo que recibir atención hospitalaria durante una semana a consecuencia de un traumatismo cardiopulmonar causado por el golpe de una pelota de goma. Esta asociación informa de que, durante los últimos 22 años, más de veinte personas se han quedado tuertas como consecuencia del impacto de estos proyectiles disparados por los Cuerpos de Seguridad del Estado.

Según varios medios de comunicación españoles, el pasado año la Comisión Europea se dirigió formalmente al Gobierno de España para solicitar que la Policía española dejara de utilizar este tipo de armamento letal, pero el silencio del Gobierno español y el permanente uso en los últimos meses de este tipo de armamento indican que las autoridades españolas han hecho caso omiso de la solicitud de la Comisión Europea.

Asimismo, el portavoz de un sindicato de la Policía catalana declaró en marzo pasado que las adquisiciones del de subfusiles LL-06 y de nueva munición «no es en ningún caso sustitutiva» de la actual escopeta.

— ¿Piensa la Comisión prohibir tajantemente el uso de la actuales escopetas de pelotas de goma así como exigir al Gobierno español el cese inmediato del uso de éstas? ¿No considera la Comisión necesario regular estrictamente el uso de armamento represivo contra personas civiles que ejercen derechos democráticos básicos como la manifestación, la libertad de expresión y asociación?

— ¿Piensa la Comisión solicitar una investigación y depuración de responsabilidades, así como que se indemnicen a las personas heridas por el impacto de este arma tras haber informado el año pasado la Comisión al Gobierno de España del peligro de su uso y solicitado el fin de su utilización?

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-003745/12
a la Comisión
Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE)
(12 de abril de 2012)

Asunto: Utilización de pelotas de goma por las policías europeas

En las últimas semanas diversas intervenciones policiales en el Estado español protagonizadas por distintos cuerpos de policía han reabierto el debate en torno a los materiales antidisturbios. En todas ellas el empleo de pelotas de goma impulsadas por cartuchos han producido lesiones de diversa gravedad a varias personas e incluso han provocado el lamentable fallecimiento de Iñigo Cabacas, un aficionado al futbol en la ciudad de Bilbao que ajeno por completo a unos incidentes de orden público resulto alcanzado por uno de estos proyectiles y falleció a consecuencia de las lesiones que le produjo.

Esta diputada ha localizado diversas referencias hemerográficas en las que se alude a una supuesta instrucción de la Comisión Europea alertando sobre el peligro que presentan en concreto las pelotas de caucho impulsadas por cartuchos. Al parecer, y según las fuentes citadas, la Comisión se habría dirigido a mediados del pasado año a distintos cuerpos policiales alertando sobre la utilización de este tipo de material y anunciando su prohibición a finales del presente año.

1. ¿Existe efectivamente alguna comunicación de la Comisión dirigida a las policías europeas en torno a la utilización de material antidisturbios?

2. En caso afirmativo, ¿en qué fechas y a qué cuerpos de policía se remitió dicha información? ¿Se ha efectuado algún seguimiento de los resultados que ha tenido esta comunicación?

3. ¿Es cierto que la Comisión ha planteado la prohibición de este tipo de material antidisturbios a finales del presente año?

Respuesta conjunta de la Sra. Malmström en nombre de la Comisión
(11 de junio de 2012)

La Comisión Europea no tiene competencias para supervisar las actividades de las fuerzas policiales nacionales. El artículo 72 del Tratado de Funcionamiento de la Unión Europea establece claramente que incumbe a los propios Estados miembros el mantenimiento del orden público y la salvaguardia de la seguridad interior.

La legislación de la UE no prohíbe el uso de balas de goma por la policía. La Comisión no tiene intención de proponer una legislación que prohíba dicha utilización.

Dentro de sus competencias, la Comisión siempre ha mantenido su firme compromiso de garantizar que la libertad de expresión y la libertad de reunión sean estrictamente respetadas, ya que constituyen la base de una sociedad libre, democrática y pluralista. Sin embargo, las atribuciones de la Comisión con respecto a los actos y omisiones de los Estados miembros se ven limitadas a supervisar la aplicación del Derecho de la Unión bajo el control del Tribunal de Justicia de la Unión Europea. Con arreglo al artículo 51, apartado 1, de la Carta de los Derechos Fundamentales, las disposiciones de la Carta están dirigidas a los Estados miembros únicamente cuando apliquen el Derecho de la Unión.

Cuando los Estados miembros actúan al margen de la aplicación del Derecho de la Unión, las autoridades nacionales deben garantizar el respeto de sus obligaciones con respecto a los derechos fundamentales (como consecuencia de acuerdos internacionales y de la legislación interna). España, al igual que todos los otros Estados miembros, está obligada a respetar el Convenio Europeo para la Protección de los Derechos Humanos y de las Libertades Fundamentales. La Comisión tiene plena confianza en la voluntad de las autoridades españolas, tal como lo exigen su propia Constitución y sus obligaciones internacionales, de garantizar el respeto de los derechos fundamentales.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003704/12
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Use of rubber bullets and police violence in Spain: murder of Íñigo Cabaças

On Monday 9 April 2012, Íñigo Cabaças, a young man aged 28, died as a result of a fractured skull and haemorrhaging caused by the impact of a rubber bullet fired by the Ertzaintza (the Basque Country regional police) on Thursday 5 April 2012.

This young man's death comes just days after the violent police action that took place on the day of the general strike in Barcelona, when six people were seriously injured by rubber bullet impacts.

The Stop Rubber Bullets association reported, last year alone, that three people lost their sight in one eye as a result of the impact of these projectiles, while another citizen needed a week's hospital care for a cardio-pulmonary injury caused by the blow from a rubber bullet. The association reports that during the last 22 years more than 20 people have been blinded in one eye by the impact of these projectiles fired by State Security Forces.

According to several Spanish media sources, last year the European Commission addressed the Spanish Government formally to request that Spanish police stop using such lethal weapons. However, its silence and the continued use of these weapons in recent months shows that the Spanish authorities have ignored the European Commission's request.

Likewise, a spokesman for the Catalan police union stated in March 2012 that procurement of LL-06 automatic rifles and new ammunition 'is in no case a substitute' for the current shotgun.

— Does the Commission intend to prohibit categorically use of the current shotguns and rubber bullets and to require the Spanish Government to cease their use immediately? Does the Commission not consider it necessary to regulate strictly the use of repressive weapons against civilians who are exercising basic democratic rights such as demonstration, freedom of expression and association?

— Does the Commission intend to request an investigation and clarification of responsibilities, as well as compensation for the people injured by the impact of these weapons, after the Commission had informed the Spanish Government last year of the danger of using them and had requested an end to their use?

Question for written answer E-003745/12
to the Commission
Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Use of rubber bullets by European police

In recent weeks, various police actions in Spain involving different police forces have led to the debate about riot-control equipment being reopened. In all of these actions, the use of cartridge-fired rubber bullets has led to injuries of varying degrees of seriousness inflicted on several people, and has even caused the unfortunate death of Iñigo Cabacas. Cabacas, a football fan in the city of Bilbao who was not involved in any public order incident, was hit by one of these projectiles and died from the resulting injuries.

This deputy has located various references in periodicals that allude to a supposed instruction from the European Commission, warning of the danger specifically posed by cartridge-fired rubber bullets. Apparently, according to the aforementioned sources, the Commission may have addressed various police forces mid-way through 2011, warning about the use of this type of equipment and announcing their prohibition at the end of this year.

1. Does a communication from the Commission addressed to European police on the use of riot-control equipment actually exist?

2. If so, on what dates and to what police forces was said information sent? Has there been any follow-up on the results of this communication?

3. Is it true that the Commission has suggested the prohibition of riot-control equipment of this type at the end of this year?

Joint answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(11 June 2012)

The European Commission has no competence to intervene in policing measures of national police forces. Article 72 of the Treaty on Functioning of the European Union makes clear that that Member States themselves are responsible for the maintenance of law and order and the safeguarding of internal security in their country.

EC law does not prohibit the use of rubber bullets by police forces. The Commission does not intend to propose legislation banning such use.

Within its competences, the Commission has always been strongly committed to ensuring that freedom of expression and freedom of assembly are strictly respected since they lie at the very base of a free, democratic and pluralist society. However, the Commission's powers regarding acts and omissions by Member States are limited to overseeing the application of Union law, under the control of the Court of Justice of the European Union. According to Article 51(1) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, the provisions of the Charter are addressed to the Member States only when they are implementing Union law.

Where Member States act outside the implementation of Union law, it is for the national authorities to ensure that their obligations regarding fundamental rights — as resulting from international agreements and from internal legislation — are respected. Spain, like all the other Member States, is bound to respect the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. The Commission has full confidence in the willingness of Spanish authorities, as required by their own constitutions and international obligations, to ensure the respect for fundamental rights.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-003706/12
til Kommissionen
Morten Løkkegaard (ALDE)
(12. april 2012)

Om: Inter-institutionel gruppe for information (IGI)

Rådet, Kommissionen og Europa-Parlamentet har indgået et formelt samarbejde på kommunikationsområdet i den inter-institutionelle gruppe om information (IGI). Baggrunden for dette samarbejde er deklarationen om at kommunikere om EU i fællesskab fra 2008.

Hvor mange IGI-møder har kommissæren deltaget i siden gruppen blev dannet?

Hvor mange IGI-møder agter kommissæren at deltage i i henholdsvis 2012 og 2013?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Viviane Reding
(30. maj 2012)

Ifølge den politiske deklaration »Partnerskab om formidling om EU« ([1]) mødes Den Interinstitutionelle Informationsgruppe (IIG) normalt to gange om året. Siden vedtagelsen af deklarationen i oktober 2008 har IIG afholdt fem møder (to in 2009, et i 2010 og to i 2011). Næstformanden for Kommissionen med ansvar for kommunikation deltog i alle møderne.

Næstformanden for Kommissionen med ansvar for kommunikation har også til hensigt at deltage i det næste IIG-møde den 6. juni 2012.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:013:0003:0004:DA:PDF.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003706/12
to the Commission
Morten Løkkegaard (ALDE)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Interinstitutional Group on Information

The Council, Commission and European Parliament have entered into formal cooperation on communication matters in the Interinstitutional Group on Information (IGI). The background to this cooperation is the 2008 declaration of 2008 made on communicating Europe in partnership.

How many IGI meetings has the Commissioner attended since the group was formed?

How many IGI meetings does the Commissioner intend to attend in 2012 and in 2013?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(30 May 2012)

According to the political declaration 'Communicating Europe in Partnership' ([1]), the Inter-Institutional Group on Information (IGI) meets in principle twice a year. Since the adoption of the declaration in October 2008, the IGI has met five times (two in 2009, one in 2010 and two in 2011). In all cases the Vice-President of the Commission responsible for Communication attended the meetings.

The Vice-President of the Commission responsible for Communication intends also to participate in the next IGI meeting, scheduled on 6 June 2012.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:013:0003:0004:EN:PDF.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-003707/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(12 Απριλίου 2012)

Θέμα: Οι αρνητικές συνέπειες της άναρχης εξάπλωσης των ευέλικτων μορφών απασχόλησης στην αύξηση της φτώχειας και τη βιωσιμότητα των ασφαλιστικών συστημάτων

.Η μείωση της ανεργίας και η αύξηση της απασχολησιμότητας υπήρξε η κεντρική επιχειρηματολογία των υποστηρικτών της διάδοσης των ευέλικτων μορφών απασχόλησης, ακόμη και των πιο ακραίων μορφών εργασιακής επισφάλειας. Σύμφωνα με τα πρόσφατα στοιχεία της Eurostat, η ανεργία στην Ευρώπη ξεπερνά το 10,2 % και στην Ευρωζώνη το 10,8 % –σημειώνοντας αρνητικό ιστορικό ρεκόρ από την ίδρυσή της– γεγονός που καταδεικνύει τη «χαμηλή συνεισφορά» της ευελι(ξα)σφάλειας ακόμη και στη διατήρηση των υφιστάμενων θέσεων εργασίας. Οι ευέλικτες μορφές απασχόλησης, με μισθούς που σε πολλές χώρες βρίσκονται κάτω από τα εθνικά όρια φτώχειας, λειτουργούν –σε όλη τη διάρκεια της κρίσης– ως μέσο υποκατάστασης της πλήρους εργασίας και όχι ως «προπομπός» γι' αυτήν, στερώντας αφενός τις όποιες δυνατότητες εξειδίκευσης και σταδιοδρομίας, καθώς βασίζονται στη λογική της περιορισμένης άσκησης της επαγγελματικής δραστηριότητας, και αφετέρου κρίσιμους πόρους από τα ασφαλιστικά ταμεία λόγω της επακόλουθης μείωσης των εισφορών.

Σε αυτήν την κατεύθυνση, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Με δεδομένους τους διακηρυγμένους στόχους της ΕΕ για μείωση της φτώχειας (συμπεριλαμβανομένου και του φαινομένου των φτωχών εργαζομένων) και διασφάλισης αξιοπρεπών αμοιβών για την εργασία, επεξεργάζεται την αναθεώρηση του υφισταμένου μοντέλου προώθησης των ευέλικτων μορφών απασχόλησης, ενισχύοντας με ένα ισχυρό κανονιστικό πλαίσιο το σκέλος της «ασφάλειας»;

— Σκοπεύει να διενεργήσει μελέτη για τις επιπτώσεις της άναρχης επέκτασης των ευέλικτων μορφών απασχόλησης –που παρατηρείται σε πολλά κράτη μέλη– στη βιωσιμότητα και την επάρκεια των Συστημάτων Κοινωνικής Ασφάλισης;

— Ποια είναι η σχέση της επέκτασης των ευέλικτων μορφών απασχόλησης με το φαινόμενο των φτωχών εργαζομένων και σε ποιες χώρες παρατηρείται η ισχυρότερη διασύνδεση;

— Προτίθεται να προωθήσει την ανταλλαγή βέλτιστων πρακτικών μεταξύ των κρατών μελών ώστε να δημιουργηθεί ένα ευνοϊκότερο περιβάλλον συντονισμού και συνδυασμού της ευέλικτης απασχόλησης με τις πολιτικές κατάρτισης;

Απάντηση του κ. Andor εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(7 Ιουνίου 2012)

Η οδηγία για την εργασία ορισμένου χρόνου ([1]) καθορίζει τις ελάχιστες απαιτήσεις για την της κατάχρησης που προκαλείται από την υπερβολική χρήση διαδοχικών συμβάσεων εργασίας ορισμένου χρόνου. Ζητά από τα κράτη μέλη να θεσπίζουν κυρώσεις για τις παραβάσεις και προβλέπει διατάξεις για τον περιορισμό του υπερβολικού διοικητικού φόρτου που συνεπάγεται η εφαρμογή της για τις ΜΜΕ. Η Επιτροπή, στο παρόν στάδιο, αξιολογεί την εφαρμογή της εν λόγω οδηγίας.

Η Επιτροπή, παράλληλα με τη διασφάλιση της εφαρμογής της οδηγίας από τα κράτη μέλη, υποστηρίζει τις εθνικές και ευρωπαϊκές πρωτοβουλίες για την αύξηση της απασχόλησης, ανεξάρτητα από το αν χρησιμοποιούνται ή όχι συμβάσεις ορισμένου χρόνου. Η αύξηση του φαινομένου των φτωχών εργαζομένων αποτελεί μία από τις μεγαλύτερες πηγές ανησυχίας για την Επιτροπή. Στην ετήσια έρευνα για την ανάπτυξη, η Επιτροπή πρότεινε στα κράτη μέλη, για τον σκοπό αυτό, να κάνουν μεγαλύτερη χρήση των παροχών προς τους εργαζομένους. Στη δέσμη μέτρων για την απασχόληση που εκδόθηκε πρόσφατα ([2]), η Επιτροπή καλεί επίσης τα κράτη μέλη να εξετάσουν — από κοινού με τους κοινωνικούς εταίρους — τον καθορισμό των ελάχιστων μισθών σε σωστά επίπεδα για να συμβάλουν στην πρόληψη της αυξανόμενου φαινομένου των φτωχών εργαζομένων.

Ο αντίκτυπος των προσωρινών συμβάσεων εργασίας στο φαινόμενο της φτώχειας των εργαζομένων ποικίλει από κράτος σε κράτος. Οι προσωρινές συμβάσεις εργασίας μπορούν να λειτουργήσουν ως μεταβατικό στάδιο για τους εργαζόμενους που εισέρχονται στην αγορά εργασίας, με μεγάλα ποσοστά μετάβασης σε καλύτερες θέσεις εργασίας και χωρίς να υφίστανται τις επιπτώσεις των χαμηλότερων αποδοχών. Αντιθέτως, η υπερβολική χρήση των προσωρινών συμβάσεων εργασίας θα μπορούσε να οδηγήσει σε κατακερματισμό της αγοράς εργασίας. Η Επιτροπή έχει αξιολογήσει τη χρήση των προσωρινών συμβάσεων στο έγγραφο εργασίας των υπηρεσιών για το 2012 ([3]) για ανοικτές, δυναμικές και χωρίς αποκλεισμούς αγορές εργασίας.

([1]) Οδηγίες 99/70/ΕΚ (βλ. Επίσης 97/81/ΕΚ).
([2]) COM(2012)173 της 18ης Απριλίου 2012.
([3]) SWD(2012)97 της 18ης Απριλίου 2012.

Στη δέσμη μέτρων για την απασχόληση ([4]) προτείνεται επίσης να δημιουργηθούν πλατφόρμες με τα κράτη μέλη και τους κοινωνικούς εταίρους για τη διευκόλυνση και την προαγωγή της ανταλλαγής καλών πρακτικών σχετικά με θέματα όπως οι πολιτικές δεξιοτήτων, η διά βίου μάθηση και τα αναγκαία πλαίσια επαγγελματικών προσόντων.

([4]) Ibidem.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003707/12
to the Commission
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: The negative consequences of the unregulated expansion of flexible modes of employment in the form of increasing poverty and threats to the viability of insurance systems

Reducing unemployment and increasing employability were the central arguments used by supporters of flexible modes of employment, even when applied to the most extremely precarious employment situation. According to recent Eurostat statistics, the rate of unemployment in Europe exceeds 10.2 % (10.8 % in the eurozone), which shows a negative tendency from the time of the establishment of 'flexicurity' and also highlights the meagreness of this mode's contribution even to preserving existing jobs. Flexible forms of employment, with wage levels that are often below the national poverty line, have throughout the crisis been functioning as a substitute for, not as a precursor of, full employment, on the one hand removing whatever opportunities exist for specialisation and career-building, because such jobs are grounded in the logic of a limited engagement in professional activity, and on the other hand depriving insurance funds of much needed resources because of the resultant contraction in contributions.

In this context, can the Commission answer the following:

— Given the EU's declared objectives of combating poverty (including the phenomenon of the working poor) and ensuring decent remuneration for work, will it revise the existing model of promoting flexible modes of employment to strengthen the 'security' dimension through a forceful regulatory framework?

— Does it plan to initiate a study on the effects of the unregulated proliferation of flexible forms of employment — observable in many Member States — on the viability and adequacy of social insurance systems?

— What is the relationship between the expansion of flexible modes of employment and the phenomenon of the working poor? In which countries are they most visibly interlinked?

— Does it intend to promote the exchange of best practices between Member States so as to create a favourable environment for the coordination and amalgamation of flexible employment and training policies?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(7 June 2012)

The fixed-term work directive ([1]) stablishes minimum requirements in order to prevent abuse arising from over-use of successive fixed-term employment contracts. It calls on Member States to lay down penalties for infringements and stipulates clauses to limit excessive administrative burdens ensuing for SMEs in its application. The Commission is currently evaluating the implementation of the directive.

While ensuring its implementation by Member States, the Commission supports national and EU-level employment growth initiatives, regardless of whether fixed-term contracts are used or not. Arising cases of in-work poverty are key Commission's concerns. In the Annual Growth Survey the Commission has proposed Member States the increased use of in-work benefits for this purpose. In its recently adopted Employment Package ([2]), the Commission also invites Member States to consider -together with social partners- minimum wages at appropriate levels to help prevent growing in-work poverty.

The impact of temporary contracts on in-work poverty varies across Member States. Temporary contracts can act as stepping stones for workers entering the labour market with high transition rates into better jobs and without being penalised by lower wages. Contrastingly, over-use of temporary contracts could lead to labour market segmentation. The Commission has assessed the use of temporary contracts in its 2012 staff working document ([3]) in Open, Dynamic and Inclusive Labour Markets.

([1]) Directives 99/70/EC (see also 97/81/EC).
([2]) COM(2012)173 of 18 April 2012.
([3]) SWD(2012)97 of 18 April 2012.

The Employment Package ([4]) also suggests creating platforms with Member States and social partners to facilitate and promote exchange of best practices regarding issues such as skills policies, lifelong learning, and necessary qualifications frameworks.

([4]) Ibidem.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-003708/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE) και Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(12 Απριλίου 2012)

Θέμα: Τιμή εισιτηρίων για άνεργους στα Μέσα Μαζικής Μεταφοράς στην Ελλάδα

Παρά τον αρχικό σχεδιασμό, τελικά δεν προωθήθηκε στην Ελλάδα η παροχή δικαιώματος στους άνεργους, μετακίνησής τους με μειωμένο κόμιστρο (κατά 50 %) **στα ελληνικά Μέσα Μαζικής Μεταφοράς**. Υπενθυμίζεται ότι στην Ελλάδα η ανεργία ξεπερνά το 20 % και στις νεανικές ηλικίες το 50 %. Η μη πρόβλεψη για μείωση στην τιμή του εισιτηρίου σε αυτή την πολυπληθή ομάδα του πληθυσμού αποτελεί πρόσθετο δυσβάσταχτο οικονομικό βάρος για τους άνεργους και ενισχύει την αίσθηση της κοινωνικής ανισοκατανομής του βάρους της οικονομικής κρίσης. Σημειώνεται, εξάλλου, ότι η τιμή των εισιτηρίων την τελευταία διετία στην Ελλάδα έχει διπλασιαστεί.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Ποια η θέση της για το συγκεκριμένο ζήτημα; Στο πλαίσιο των συναντήσεων των αρμόδιων υπουργείων με την τρόικα, τέθηκε το συγκεκριμένο ζήτημα;

2. Καθώς το συνολικό ποσό που απαιτείτο για να μην επιβαρυνθούν οι δημόσιες συγκοινωνίες από την πρόβλεψη αυτή, έφτανε τα 35 εκατ. ευρώ, τα οποία θα παρέχονταν μέσω του ΕΣΠΑ, για ποιο λόγο δεν προχώρησε το συγκεκριμένο μέτρο;

3. Γνωρίζει η Επιτροπή σε ποια κράτη μέλη εφαρμόζεται το συγκεκριμένο μέτρο και με τι αποτελέσματα;

Απάντηση του κ. Andor εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(7 Ιουνίου 2012)

1. Η άποψη της Επιτροπής είναι ότι εναπόκειται στα κράτη μέλη να αποφασίζουν εάν θα εφαρμόσουν κοινωνικές τιμές των κομίστρων υπέρ των ανέργων.

2. Το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινωνικό Ταμείο ([1]) (ΕΚΤ) υποστηρίζει ενεργά μέτρα για την αύξηση της απασχολησιμότητας των ανθρώπινων πόρων και την ενίσχυση της πρόσβασής τους στην αγορά εργασίας. Στο πλαίσιο αυτό, η επιδότηση των τιμών των εισιτηρίων καθεαυτών δεν μπορεί να θεωρηθεί επιλέξιμη για συγχρηματοδότηση από το ΕΚΤ. Για είναι μια πράξη επιλέξιμη για συγχρηματοδότηση θα πρέπει να συνδέεται σαφώς με ενεργό μέτρο για την αγορά εργασίας. Η Επιτροπή έλαβε ανεπίσημα το 2011 ερώτηση σχετικά με το θέμα αυτό από τις ελληνικές αρχές και τους απάντησε με το ίδιο σκεπτικό.

3. Η Επιτροπή γνωρίζει σχετικά με τα εισιτήρια μειωμένης τιμής που παρέχονται στους ανέργους σε ορισμένα κράτη μέλη, όπως για παράδειγμα στη Γαλλία και τη Γερμανία. Στις μελέτες στις οποίες είχε πρόσβαση η Επιτροπή επισημαίνεται ότι οι αποφάσεις για τα εν λόγω ζητήματα λαμβάνονται στα συγκεκριμένα κράτη μέλη είτε σε περιφερειακό είτε σε τοπικό επίπεδο και, ως εκ τούτου, δεν υπάρχει συνεκτική προσέγγιση. Κανένα κράτος μέλος δεν εφάρμοσε το μέτρο αυτό μέσω του ΕΚΤ για το λόγο που αναφέρεται παραπάνω.

([1]) Κανονισμός (ΕΚ) αριθ. 1081/2006 της 5ης Ιουλίου 2006.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003708/12
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE) and Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Ticket prices for the unemployed on public transport in Greece

Despite initial planning, provision of the right for the unemployed to travel at a reduced rate (50 %) on public transport in Greece has not gone ahead. This comes at a time when unemployment in Greece is running at over 20-50 % among young people. The failure to provide a reduced ticket price for this large sector of the population represents an additional intolerable economic burden for the unemployed, reinforcing the sense of the unequal social distribution of the costs of the economic crisis. It should be noted, moreover, that the price of tickets on public transport in Greece has doubled in the last two years.

Can the Commission answer the following?

1. What is its position on this particular issue? Was the matter raised in the meetings between the competent ministries and the Presidency Trio?

2. Given that the total sum required to ensure that the public transport system does not bear the burden of this provision is EUR 35 million, which could be made available through the NSRF, why has this particular measure not been implemented?

3. Does the Commission know which Member States have implemented the measure and with what results?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(7 June 2012)

1. The Commission is of the view that it is for the Member States to decide whether to grant social fares to the unemployed.

2: The European Social Fund ([1]) ESF) supports active measures enhancing the employability of human resources and reinforcing their access to the labour market. In this framework, the subsidisation of the ticket price as such cannot be considered eligible for co-financing by the ESF. In order for an operation to be eligible for co-financing, it has to be clearly connected to an active labour market measure. The Commission received informally in 2011 a question on this issue from the Greek authorities and it replied to them along this same line.

3. The Commission is aware of discounted tickets provided to the unemployed in certain Member States, as for example in France and Germany. The studies that the Commission had access to indicate that those matters are decided in the Member States concerned either on regional or local level and there is therefore no coherent approach. No Member State has implemented this measure through the ESF for the reasons mentioned above.

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006 of 5 July 2006.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003709/12
to the Commission
Charles Tannock (ECR)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Portability of an individual's credit history throughout the EU

A constituent who has at different times exercised his right to live and work in a Member State other than the one of his origin has brought to my attention a barrier which, he alleges, hinders him in exercising this right freely. He points to the fact that his credit history appears to be non-transferable from one Member State to another. Thus, having moved to the UK after a decade living in Germany, he claims that he must now build up a credit history from scratch over three years in line with UK legislation, despite having built up a flawless personal credit history for the preceding 10 years in Germany. The constituent is aware that certain banks within the EU allow dual simultaneous accounts to be maintained; however, the high bank charges associated with such accounts are prohibitive to most EU citizens.

Can the Commission state what legislation currently exists concerning the intra-EU portability of individual credit histories, and, if they are not transferable between Member States, state whether it plans to introduce legislation permitting this?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(1 June 2012)

There is currently no EU level legislation supporting the intra-EU portability of individual credit histories. The Commission is however aware of the problem described by the Honourable Member. Credit histories portability was one of the aspects on which the Expert Group on Credit Histories advised the Commission in 2009. The Expert Group analysed a number of possibilities for the cross-border exchange of credit data. It considered that there was a higher risk of fraud in the case of portable credit histories. However, the Group concluded that it should be left to each creditor to decide what cross-border data access model would be the most suitable in each case.

Regarding future Commission plans, it needs to be noted that credit histories imply processing of personal data which must comply with Directive 95/46/EC ([1]). Disclosure of credit histories is a processing activity which also shall respect data protection principles laid down in the directive.

The recent proposal for a regulation on data protection ([2]) provides for the right of the data subject to the portability of his personal data.

([1]) OJ L 281, 23.11.1995, p. 31.
([2]) COM(2012)11, 25 January 2012 (Article 18).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003710/12
to the Commission
Charles Tannock (ECR)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Portability of an individual's 'no claims' insurance status throughout the EU

A constituent, who has at different times exercised his right to live and work in an EU Member State other than the one of his origin, has brought to my attention a barrier which he alleges hinders him in exercising this right freely. The constituent points to the fact that his coveted 'no claims' insurance status appears to be non-transferable from one EU Member State to another. A 'no claims' status is granted by vehicle and home insurance firms, for example, to long-standing customers who have not claimed anything against their insurance policy. A 'no claims' status can often confer significant discounts on insurance policies to customers.

Can the Commission confirm what current legislation exists concerning the intra-EU portability of 'no claims' statuses, and, if they are not transferable between Member States, does it plan to introduce legislation permitting this?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(28 May 2012)

Article 16 of the Motor Insurance Directive 2009/103/EC ([1]) introduces the right for policy-holders to request a claims statement under their third party motor liability insurance policy. This is particularly relevant for policy-holders moving from one Member State to another. There are no similar rules for other types of insurance under EC law.

At this stage the Commission does not plan to introduce legislation requiring the intra-EU portability of 'no claims' statuses. However, the Commission will bring this matter to the attention of EIOPA (European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority) for examination.

([1]) OJ L 263, 7.10.2009, p. 0011-0031.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-003711/12
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(12 de abril de 2012)

Asunto: Gestión de los bosques

Las cuestiones relacionadas con los bosques y el agua revisten la mayor importancia: los bosques cubren el 40 % de la superficie terrestre de la UE y la mayor parte del agua potable de la Unión procede de cuencas forestales. En consecuencia, los bosques y su gestión desempeñan una función esencial en la gestión sostenible de los recursos hídricos. Paralelamente, el agua es un elemento determinante para garantizar la sostenibilidad de los ecosistemas forestales y su potencial para prestar servicios ecosistémicos. Esta interrelación es más importante aún en un contexto de cambios globales, que suponen aumentos de temperaturas, patrones futuros de precipitaciones inciertos e importantes cambios en el uso de la tierra. En regiones ya caracterizadas por la escasez de agua, el crecimiento demográfico origina una demanda aún mayor.

A pesar de la importancia estratégica de la relación entre el agua y los bosques, las políticas, las estrategias y los planes normalmente se elaboran y aplican de manera sectorial, desoyendo las implicaciones de la interacción entre estos dos ecosistemas y recursos fundamentales.

En vista de lo anterior, ¿no cree la Comisión que es hora de integrar de manera eficaz el conocimiento adquirido gracias a estudios de diverso alcance en el ámbito de distintas disciplinas a fin de superar la actual fragmentación del conocimiento y la consiguiente falta de comprensión científica, garantizando de este modo que se presta la debida atención al impacto de los bosques en los recursos hídricos a la hora de gestionar los bosques, así como de diseñar y aplicar las políticas del agua?

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-003713/12
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(12 de abril de 2012)

Asunto: Investigación e integración del conocimiento actual

Habida cuenta de que el 40 % de la superficie terrestre de la UE está cubierta por bosques y que la mayor parte del agua potable procede de cuencas forestales, la realización de nuevas investigaciones así como la integración del conocimiento actual podrían repercutir de manera considerable no solo en el desarrollo de nuevas estrategias de gestión integradas e instrumentos de apoyo a las decisiones que vinculen las decisiones a nivel de rodal (silvicultura) y de cuenca (planificación del uso de la tierra), con objeto de optimizar el impacto de la silvicultura en el ciclo hidrológico y aumentar la comprensión de sus relaciones con otros servicios ecosistémicos, sino también en el diseño de instrumentos económicos adecuados (relativos al precio del agua y los mercados, los pagos por servicios ambientales, etc.) y de recomendaciones políticas basados en un enfoque integrado de los bosques y el agua.

En vista de lo anterior, ¿no cree la Comisión que este tipo de conocimiento e instrumentos pueden proporcionar a los responsables políticos una mejor comprensión de la interacción bosques/agua, en el contexto de la Directiva marco sobre el agua de la UE y el proceso «Protección de los Bosques de Europa»?

Respuesta conjunta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(30 de mayo de 2012)

La Comisión es muy consciente de la relación entre los bosques y el agua e hizo hincapié en este aspecto en el «Libro Verde sobre protección de los bosques e información forestal en la EU: Preparación de los bosques al cambio climático». La Comisión también es signataria de la Resolución *Forest Europe* sobre la silvicultura y el agua de 2007.

En la actualidad, tanto la Comisión como la Agencia Europea de Medio Ambiente están realizando estudios en los que analizan las interacciones entre los bosques y la metereología local y regional. Con ocasión del próximo «Plan rector para la protección de las aguas europeas», la Comisión va a prestar atención a las medidas concretas dirigidas a apoyar el papel de los bosques en la protección de los recursos hídricos, que luego se deben aplicar en el marco de los planes hidrológicos de cuenca con arreglo a la Directiva Marco del Agua.

Proyectos de investigación de la UE en curso, tales como Motive ([1]) y Newforex ([2]), se han pensado para proporcionar herramientas de ayuda a la toma de decisiones, así como instrumentos de mercado para la gestión integrada de los bosques. Estos proyectos incluyen las relaciones entre el agua y los bosques, pero van más lejos.

La Comisión no ha cesado de poner de relieve ([3]) la importancia de los bosques y los servicios ecosistémicos que suministran, como la depuración del agua y su retención, y este vínculo también se subrayará en la próxima estrategia de la UE sobre infraestructura ecológica. A fin de fijar un planteamiento más integrado, la Comisión está realizando, en colaboración con los Estados miembros y las partes interesadas, la cartografía de los ecosistemas y una evaluación del estado de los ecosistemas y de sus servicios en la UE. Los resultados de esta iniciativa deben tenerlos en cuenta las autoridades nacionales y locales a la hora de preparar la segunda ronda de planes hidrológicos de cuenca en 2015.

([1]) Models for Adaptive Forest Management (http://motive-project.net/).
([2]) New Ways to Value and Market Forest Externalities (http://www.newforex.org/).
([3]) Estrategia de la UE sobre la biodiversidad hasta 2020, COM(2011) 244 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003711/12
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Forest management

Forest- and water-related issues are of the utmost importance: forests cover 40 % of the EU's land surface, and most of the EU's drinking water comes from forested catchments. Forests and forest management therefore play a crucial role in the sustainable management of water resources. At the same time, water is a key factor in ensuring the sustainability of forest ecosystems and their potential to provide ecosystem services. This interrelationship becomes even more important in the context of global changes involving increased temperatures, uncertain future rainfall patterns and major land-use changes. The demand for water is further increased by population growth in regions already characterised by water scarcity.

Despite the strategic importance of the interplay between water and forests, policies, strategies and plans are generally developed and implemented in a sectoral way that disregards the implications of the interaction between these two key ecosystems and resources.

In light of the above, does the Commission not believe that the time has come to integrate, in an effective way, the knowledge amassed in studies on different scales and in different disciplines, in order to overcome the current fragmentation of knowledge and the resulting lack of scientific understanding, and thereby to ensure that in forest management, as well as in the formulation and implementation of water policies, account is taken of the impacts of forests on water resources?

Question for written answer E-003713/12
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Research and the integration of existing knowledge

In view of the fact that 40 % of the EU's land surface is covered by forests and that drinking water comes mainly from forested catchments, new research and the integration of existing knowledge could have a definite impact not only on the development of new, integrated management strategies and decision-support tools linking stand-level (silviculture) decisions with basin-level (land-use planning) decisions, in order to optimise the impact of forestry on the water cycle and increase understanding of trade-offs with other ecosystem services, but also on the creation of adequate economic instruments (relating to water pricing and markets, payments for environmental services, etc.) and of policy recommendations based on an integrated approach to forests and water.

In the light of the above, does the Commission not consider that such knowledge and tools could provide policy-makers with a more comprehensive understanding of the forest/water interface, in the context of the EU Water Framework Directive and the Forest Europe process?

Joint answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(30 May 2012)

The Commission is well aware of the relationship between forests and water and highlighted this in the Green Paper on forest protection and information in the EU: Preparing forests for climate change. The Commission is also a signatory of the Forest Europe resolution on forest and water of 2007.

Currently both the Commission and the European Environment Agency are carrying out studies exploring the interactions between forests and local and regional weather. In the context of the upcoming 'Blueprint to safeguard Europe's waters', the Commission is paying specific attention to concrete measures supporting the role of forests in the protection of water resources, to be further implemented in the context of the River Basin Management Plans under the Water Framework Directive.

Ongoing EU research projects, such as MOTIVE ([1]) and NEWFOREX ([2]), are designed to provide decision support tools and market-based instruments for the integrated management of forests. These include and go beyond water-forest relationships.

The Commission has continuously highlighted ([3]) the importance of forests and the ecosystem services they supply such as water purification and water retention and this link will also be stressed in the upcoming Strategy on Green Infrastructure. In order to establish a more integrated approach the Commission is working together with Member States and stakeholders on ecosystem mapping and an assessment of the state of ecosystems and their services in the EU. The results of this initiative should be taken on board by national and local authorities when drafting the second round of the River Basin management Plans in 2015.

([1]) Models for Adaptive Forest Management (http://motive-project.net/).
([2]) New Ways to Value and Market Forest Externalities (http://www.newforex.org/).
([3]) EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020, COM(2011) 244 final.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-003712/12
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(12 de abril de 2012)

Asunto: Investigación interdisciplinaria de escala múltiple

La comprensión científica de las interacciones entre los bosques y el agua presenta lagunas evidentes en el conocimiento; existen contradicciones aún más importantes entre los modelos explicativos propuestos por diferentes escuelas de pensamiento científico. Un grupo de científicos concluye que la forestación y reforestación tienen efectos negativos en las reservas hídricas, si bien el impacto es positivo en términos de calidad del agua, y que la tala de árboles ayudará, en principio, a aumentar la disponibilidad del flujo de agua. Por el contrario, otro grupo de científicos sostiene que la conservación de los bosques y la plantación de árboles deberían aumentar la disponibilidad del flujo de agua e intensificar el ciclo hidrológico. La cuestión no es tan nítida y evidente, ya que el impacto de los bosques y la silvicultura en la cantidad y la calidad del agua así como los factores de riesgo hidrológico, tales como las sequías y las inundaciones, varían en función de la escala geográfica, las condiciones geoclimáticas y el tipo de bosque en cuestión.

En función de lo anterior y habida cuenta de la gran importancia de las interacciones entre los bosques y el agua, ¿no considera la Comisión que se necesitan nuevas investigaciones, interdisciplinarias y de escala múltiple, que creen e integren nuevos conocimientos y logren una mejor comprensión del impacto de los bosques y la silvicultura en el ciclo hidrológico a todos los niveles (desde la escala mínima de la hoja hasta nivel del paisaje), así como elaborar un enfoque socio-eco-hidrológico nuevo y eficaz para la gestión de los bosques con objeto de optimizar los servicios vinculados con el agua (en términos tanto de calidad como de cantidad de agua) y minimizar los riesgos hidrológicos, tales como sequías e inundaciones?

Respuesta de la Sra. Geoghegan-Quinn en nombre de la Comisión
(4 de junio de 2012)

La Comisión Europea ha reconocido plenamente la importancia de las interacciones entre los bosques y el agua, tal como se señaló en la resolución Varsovia n° 2 de Forest Europe. La investigación subvencionada al amparo del tema de medio ambiente (incluido el cambio climático) del Séptimo programa marco de investigación y desarrollo tecnológico (7° PM, 2007-2013) se centra en un planteamiento interdisciplinario sobre la gestión sostenible desde la escala del sitio hasta la del paisaje y considera todos los motores del cambio, tales como el uso del suelo y el cambio climático y toda la gama de servicios ecosistémicos, incluidas una calidad excelente del agua, la protección del suelo contra la erosión, la función amortiguadora de los bosques en caso de inundaciones, etc.

Se ha adoptado en el 7° PM un planteamiento integrador interdisciplinario y de escala múltiple sobre la investigación forestal en vez de hacer hincapié únicamente en los bosques y el agua. Entre los ejemplos de proyectos en curso del 7° PM pueden mencionarse tres proyectos integradores a gran escala sobre «modelos de una gestión forestal adaptativa» (*Models for Adaptive Forest Management)* ([1]), la «importancia funcional de la biodiversidad forestal» (*Functional Significance of Forest Biodiversity)* ([2]) y una «gestión de los paisajes forestales europeos integrada y orientada hacia el futuro» (*Future-oriented Integrated Management of European Forest Landscapes)* ([3]), que se complementan recíprocamente con vistas a un planteamiento plenamente integrado de la gestión forestal, incluidos los aspectos relativos a la conservación del agua. El plan ERA-Net de la investigación sobre el bosque mediterráneo ([4]) también intensificará la cooperación entre disciplinas como la hidrología, la climatología, la ecología, la silvicultura, la economía, la edafología, etc.

Asimismo, la acción de COST ([5]) recientemente concluida sobre «Gestión forestal y el ciclo del agua» ([6]) tiene por objeto aumentar los conocimientos sobre las interacciones entre los bosques y el agua en Europa.

([1]) Motive: http://motive-project.net.
([2]) FunDivEurope: http://www.fundiveurope.eu.
([3]) Integral: http://cordis.europa.eu/search/index.cfm?fuseaction=proj.document&PJ_RCN=12174046.
([4]) Foresterra: http://cordis Europa.eu/projects/rcn/101686_en.html
([5]) Cooperación Europea en Ciencia y Tecnología.
([6]) http://www.cost.eu/domains_actions/fps/Actions/FP0601.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003712/12
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Cross-disciplinary multi-scale research

Scientific understanding of the interactions between forests and water presents clear gaps in knowledge, and there are even strong contradictions between the explanatory models presented by different schools of scientific thought. One group of scientists concludes that the impact of reforestation or afforestation on water yield is negative (even if the impact in terms of water quality is positive), and that removing trees will, in principle, increase the availability of water downstream. Another group of scientists argue that maintaining forests and planting trees should, on the contrary, raise the availability of water downstream and intensify the hydrological cycle. The issue is not black and white, as the impacts of forests and forestry on water quantity and quality, as well as the factors determining water-related risks such as drought and floods, differ according to the geographical scale, the geo-climatic conditions and the type of the forest under consideration.

In light of the above, and taking into account the great importance of forest and water interactions, does the Commission not believe that there is a need for new, cross-disciplinary, multi-scale research which, as it develops and integrates new knowledge, seeks to attain a better understanding of the impacts on the water cycle of forests and forestry on every scale (from leaf to landscape basin) and to develop a new and effective socio-eco-hydrological approach to forest management that is designed to optimise water-related services (as regards both water quality and water quantity) and to minimise water-related risks (such as droughts and floods)?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(4 June 2012)

The European Commission has fully recognised the importance of interactions between forests and waters, which was highlighted in the Forest Europe's Warsaw Resolution II. The research supported within the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7, 2007-2013) Environment Theme (including Climate Change) concentrates in a transdisciplinary approach on the sustainable management of forest ecosystems, which integrates ecological, social and economic aspects from the stand to landscape scales and considers all drivers of change, e.g. land use and climate changes and the entire suite of ecosystem services, including the provision of excellent quality water, protection of soils against erosion, the buffering function of forests against flooding, etc.

A cross-disciplinary and multi-scale integrative approach of forest research has been introduced in FP7 rather than having a singled out emphasis on forest and water alone. Examples of ongoing FP7 projects include three large-scale Integrating Projects on 'Models for Adaptive Forest Management' ([1]), the 'Functional significance of forest biodiversity' ([2]) and 'Future-oriented integrated management of European forest landscapes' ([3]), which complement each other towards a fully integrated approach of forest management, including aspects of water preservation. The ERA-Net on Mediterranean forest research ([4]) will also increase cooperation among disciplines including hydrology, climatology, ecology, forestry, economics, soil science, etc.

Also the recently finalised COST ([5]) Action on 'Forest Management and the Water Cycle' ([6]), is aiming at enhancing the knowledge on forest-water interactions in Europe.

([1]) MOTIVE: http://motive-project.net.
([2]) FunDivEUROPE: http://www.fundiveurope.eu.
([3]) INTEGRAL: http://cordis.europa.eu/search/index.cfm?fuseaction=proj.document&PJ_RCN=12174046.
([4]) FORESTERRA: http://cordis Europa.eu/projects/rcn/101686_en.html
([5]) European Cooperation in Science and Technology.
([6]) http://www.cost.eu/domains_actions/fps/Actions/FP0601.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003714/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Frances Silvestris (PPE)
(12 aprile 2012)

Oggetto: Appendicite: antibiotici al posto del bisturi

La sala operatoria potrebbe divenire solo un lontano ricordo per i pazienti affetti da appendicite acuta non complicata. Stando all'ultima scoperta in ambito medico, tale stato patologico potrebbe regredire attraverso una comune terapia antibiotica. A far crollare le vecchie certezze è uno studio condotto da tre ricercatori i quali ritengono che il passo dal rimedio chirurgico ai farmaci potrebbe essere breve. Se fino a poco tempo fa l'unica soluzione valida per sconfiggere l'infiammazione dell'appendice vermiforme consisteva in un'operazione chirurgica, oggi il rischio di contrarre la peritonite può essere vinto attraverso una cura più blanda e meno invasiva che prevede il solo utilizzo di antibiotici.

Per il momento i ricercatori continuano i loro studi e nel frattempo suggeriscono di iniziare a considerare l'approccio farmacologico come una possibile alternativa di trattamento dell'appendicite acuta non complicata, e aggiungono che si tratta di una «possibilità» che, ovviamente, va evitata in presenza di chiari segni di perforazione o di peritonite.

Alla luce di quanto sopra illustrato, può la Commissione far sapere se, in linea con le azioni da essa promosse nel campo dello sviluppo di nuovi antimicrobici efficaci o trattamenti alternativi, ritiene che si possa finanziare la nuova scoperta tramite il settimo programma quadro (7° PQ)?

Risposta di Máire Geoghegan-Quinn a nome della Commissione
(11 giugno 2012)

La Commissione è a conoscenza dello studio al quale si riferisce l'onorevole parlamentare. Si tratta di una meta-analisi di quattro prove cliniche controllate randomizzate, svoltasi presso l'Università di Nottingham (Regno Unito), i cui risultati sono stati recentemente pubblicati sul British Medical Journal ([1]) Benché tali risultati siano incoraggianti, restano ancora molte questioni aperte prima di formulare una raccomandazione generale intesa a modificare il trattamento clinico dell'appendicite, quali ad esempio le conseguenze a lungo termine per il paziente legate alla mancata rimozione di un'appendice infiammata e il valore aggiunto dell'ampliamento delle indicazioni a favore dell'uso di antibiotici mentre la politica generale mira ad una sua limitazione.

Nel suo ultimo invito a presentare proposte, il Settimo programma quadro di ricerca e sviluppo tecnologico (2007-2013) offrirà un'ampia gamma di potenziali opportunità di finanziamento, che saranno assegnate in condizioni di concorrenza.

([1]) (BMJ 2012; 344: e2156).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003714/12
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Frances Silvestris (PPE)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Appendicitis: antibiotics instead of surgery

The operating theatre could become a distant memory for patients suffering from uncomplicated acute appendicitis. With the latest discovery in the world of medicine, this medical condition could be reversed by means of a common antibiotic treatment. A study conducted by three researchers who maintain that the step from surgical remedy to drugs could be short, is doing away with the old certainties. Until recently the only effective way to overcome the inflammation of the vermiform appendix consisted of a surgical operation, but today the risk of contracting peritonitis can be overcome by a treatment that is milder and less invasive, involving the use of antibiotics alone.

For now, the researchers are continuing their study and in the meantime they suggest that hospitals start considering the pharmacological approach as a possible alternative treatment for uncomplicated acute appendicitis, and add that it is only a 'possibility' that, obviously, should not be used when there are clear signs of perforation or peritonitis.

In view of the above, could the Commission state whether, in line with the actions that it has promoted in the field of development of new effective antimicrobials or alternative treatments, it considers that the new discovery could be funded through the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7)?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(11 June 2012)

The Commission is aware of the study referred to by the Honourable Member. This meta-analysis of four randomised controlled clinical trials was conducted at the University of Nottingham in the United Kingdom and the results were recently published in the British Medical Journal ([1]). Although these results are encouraging, many questions remain that need to be further addressed before issuing a general recommendation to change clinical management of appendicitis, such as the long-term consequences to the patient of not removing a previously inflamed appendix and the added value of widening the indications for the use of antibiotics while the general policy is to restrict their use.

The Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (2007-2013) in its last call for proposals will offer a broad range of potential funding opportunities, awarded on a competitive basis.

([1]) (BMJ 2012; 344: e2156).

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003716/12
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Sergio Paolo Frances Silvestris (PPE)
(12 aprile 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Bombardamenti in Siria

La Siria ha annunciato di aver iniziato ad attuare il piano di pace dell'inviato dell'ONU e della Lega Araba Kofi Annan ma, nel giorno previsto per il ritiro delle truppe e delle armi pesanti, da questo Stato sono giunte ancora notizie di bombardamenti nella provincia di Aleppo.

Le truppe di Damasco, infatti, hanno anche attaccato un campo profughi in Turchia. La tensione sul confine è così sfociata in uno scontro tra le forze armate di Damasco e i ribelli siriani nei pressi della frontiera dove si trova un campo profughi vicino a Kilis, nella provincia sudoccidentale turca di Gaziantep. Alcune persone sono state raggiunte da colpi di arma da fuoco.

Alla luce di quanto citato, può l'Alto Rappresentante far sapere:

1. se è informata sulla vicenda,

2. in quale modo intende intervenire per evitare altri bombardamenti e altri attacchi ai campi profughi in Turchia da parte delle truppe di Damasco,

3. quali sono le attività diplomatiche intraprese in precedenza dall'Unione europea nello Stato della Siria?

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

L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente è a conoscenza degli incidenti verificatisi al confine turco-siriano ed è in stretto contatto con il suo omologo turco; l'UE sostiene inoltre la Turchia nella fornitura di aiuti umanitari ai profughi siriani.

Da quando è scaduto il termine del 10 aprile per il ritiro delle truppe, l'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente ha ripetutamente sollecitato il governo siriano ad attuare integralmente gli impegni presi nell'ambito del piano in sei punti dell'inviato speciale congiunto dell'ONU e della Lega araba, Kofi Annan.

Nelle conclusioni del Consiglio «Affari esteri» del 23 aprile, l'UE ha accolto con favore la decisione del Consiglio di sicurezza dell'ONU di inviare una missione di osservazione in Siria per controllare che si ponga fine alle violenze e sia applicato integralmente il piano in sei punti dell'inviato speciale. L'UE ha esortato il governo siriano a garantire l'operatività e lo spiegamento effettivi della missione e a concedere piena libertà di circolazione, accesso e comunicazione.

Sebbene la situazione in Siria rimanga molto instabile ed incerta, il cessate il fuoco e la missione di osservazione costituiscono sviluppi a lungo attesi dalla popolazione siriana, dopo oltre un anno di violenze e repressione. Tali sviluppi vanno nella giusta direzione nell'attuazione del piano di pace di Kofi Annan, il quale prevede un dialogo politico e la transizione pacifica verso una Siria democratica e rispettosa dei diritti fondamentali di tutti i suoi cittadini.

Per fare pressione sul regime affinché metta fine alle violenze e rispetti le richieste sopra citate, il 23 aprile l'UE ha rafforzato per la quindicesima volta le misure restrittive, introducendo un divieto di esportazione di beni di lusso ed ampliando la lista di beni e di materiali che potrebbero essere utilizzati a fini di repressione interna. L'UE ha già sospeso la cooperazione bilaterale con la Siria nel maggio 2011, mentre la Banca europea per gli investimenti ha sospeso i prestiti al paese.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003716/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Sergio Paolo Frances Silvestris (PPE)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Bombings in Syria

Syria has announced that it has begun to implement the peace plan of the UN and Arab League envoy, Kofi Annan. However, on the day scheduled for the withdrawal of troops and heavy arms, there were still reports from Syria of bombings occurring in the province of Aleppo.

Troops from Damascus have also attacked a refugee camp in Turkey. Tensions at the border thus led to a battle between armed forces from Damascus and Syrian rebels near the border, where there is a refugee camp near Kilis in the south-eastern Turkish province of Gaziantep. Several people were hit by gunfire.

In view of the above, could the High Representative state:

1. Whether she is aware of this event?

2. What action she intends to take to prevent further bombings and further attacks on refugee camps in Turkey by troops from Damascus?

3. What diplomatic activities have been carried out previously by the European Union in the State of Syria?

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

The HR/VP is aware of the incidents at the Syrian-Turkish border. She is in close contact with her Turkish counterpart and the EU supports Turkey in providing humanitarian aid to Syrian refugees.

Since the 10 April deadline for the withdrawal of troops has passed, the HR/VP has repeatedly called on the Syrian government to fully implement its commitments under the six point proposal by the Joint UN-Arab League Envoy Kofi Annan.

In its Foreign Affairs Council conclusions of 23 April, the EU welcomed the UN Security Council's decision to deploy an observer mission to Syria to monitor a cessation of armed violence and the implementation of all aspects of the Envoy's six point plan. It urged the Syrian government to ensure the effective operation and deployment of the mission and allow full freedom of movement, access and communication.

Even if the situation in Syria remains very unstable and uncertain, the ceasefire and observation mission are also long-awaited developments for the Syrian population after more than a year of suffering from violence and repression. They are additional steps in the right direction in the implementation of the Annan peace plan, which provides for political dialogue and a peaceful transition to a democratic Syria respectful of the fundamental rights of all its citizens.

To put pressure on the regime to end the violence and to comply with the abovementioned demandsthe EU has extended its restrictive measures for the 15th time on 23 April, introducing a ban on the export of luxury goods and extending the list of goods and equipment that may be used for internal repression. The EU already suspended its bilateral cooperation with Syria in May 2011 and the European Investment Bank suspended its loans to the country.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003717/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Frances Silvestris (PPE)
(12 aprile 2012)

Oggetto: La delocalizzazione delle aziende

La delocalizzazione è l'ultimo approdo del capitalismo italiano che, assecondando il forte slancio industriale di paesi e zone emergenti come Cina e Brasile, preferisce trasferire la propria produzione nazionale all'estero, dove il costo della manodopera è più basso anche del 75 % rispetto alla paga di un operaio italiano. Le infrastrutture di base non sono ovviamente all'altezza di un paese europeo, anche come il nostro, ma la regolamentazione del mercato e della manodopera è di certo meno rigida, soprattutto sul piano sindacale. Anche i call center vengono delocalizzati, poiché le aziende leader del settore appaltano il lavoro ad aziende di outsourcer, che a loro volta provvedono a trasmigrare all'estero. I call center sono il simbolo del lavoro precario per eccellenza, ma il fenomeno di cui parliamo coinvolge ben altri attori e soggetti, alcuni dei quali sono autentici simboli del capitalismo italiano.

Il passaggio in terra straniera è quindi la punta dell'iceberg, per molte aziende, di tutti i progetti di revisione e ottimizzazione degli assetti industriali esistenti, a prescindere da quelli che in ambito italiano sono anche legami storici con il territorio.

Alla luce di quanto precede, può la Commissione far sapere quali sono le azioni messe in atto per ridurre l'emorragia delle aziende dal proprio territorio e se esistono incentivi finanziari per le imprese che continuano a produrre nel territorio europeo?

Risposta di Antonio Tajani a nome della Commissione
(14 giugno 2012)

Nell'attuale clima economico dobbiamo creare le condizioni necessarie per offrire alle nostre imprese e ai nostri cittadini il migliore contesto imprenditoriale possibile per produrre e competere a partire dall'Europa. È vero che l'affermarsi delle economie emergenti ha intensificato la competizione, ma esso ha anche determinato nuove opportunità per l'UE attraverso gli scambi e gli investimenti nelle catene di valore internazionali.

La Commissione ha avviato con il sostegno dell'OMC e dell'OCSE una base dati World Input Output. Essa consentirà di acquisire una conoscenza più esatta del ruolo delle catene di valore e degli scambi nella nostra economia e l'entità dell'interdipendenza economica nel mondo odierno.

Nel contesto della politica industriale la Commissione affronta questioni orizzontali al fine di definire valide condizioni quadro per la competitività dell'industria. In esse rientra l'accesso ai finanziamenti, che sarà una delle tematiche del riesame di quest'anno della comunicazione sulla politica industriale del 2010. La nostra politica industriale tiene anche conto della competizione globale, ad esempio nel contesto dei negoziati in tema di commercio e investimenti.

Incentivi finanziari direttamente finalizzati a mantenere in Europa la produzione delle imprese corrisponderebbero probabilmente ad aiuti al funzionamento e rischierebbero di determinare distorsioni della concorrenza oltre a richiedere in tutti i casi un cambiamento dell'attuale quadro degli aiuti di Stato.

Inoltre gli investimenti diretti esteri fatti dalle imprese europee che avviano operazioni all'estero hanno di fatto recato un contributo significativo e positivo alla competitività delle imprese dell'UE in termini di produttività più elevata e, nel complesso, non hanno avuto un impatto negativo misurabile sull'occupazione aggregata come risulta da uno studio realizzato per conto della Commissione nel 2010 ([1]).

([1]) Copenhagen Economics (2010) Impacts of EU Outward FDI.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003717/12
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Frances Silvestris (PPE)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: The relocation of companies

Relocation is the last refuge of Italian capitalism, which, in order to benefit from the strong industrial growth of emerging countries and regions, such as China and Brazil, prefers to transfer national production abroad, where labour costs are as much as 75 % lower than the wages of Italian manual workers. Obviously, the basic infrastructure is not the same level as that of a European country, including ours, but the market and employment regulations are certainly less rigid, particularly at union level. Even call centres are being transferred, because the leading industrial companies are contracting the work to outsourcers, who in turn migrate abroad. Call centres are a symbol of precarious employment par excellence, but this phenomenon also involves other players and people, some of whom are true symbols of Italian capitalism.

The move abroad is therefore the tip of the iceberg for many companies with regard to any plans to revise and upgrade existing industrial structures, let alone those which, in the Italian context, also have historic links with the country.

In view of the above, can the Commission state what measures have been put in place to reduce the outflow of companies from their own countries and whether financial incentives exist for those companies that continue to produce in Europe?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(14 June 2012)

In the current economic climate, we need to create the necessary conditions to offer our companies and citizens the best possible business environment to produce and compete from Europe. It is true that the rise of emerging economies has intensified competition, but it has also created new opportunities for the EU through trade and investment in international value chains.

The Commission has launched a World Input Output Database, with WTO and OECD support. This will contribute to a more precise understanding of the role of value chains and trade in our economy and the extent of economic interdependence in today's world.

As part of the development of industrial policy, the Commission addresses horizontal issues, aiming at establishing sound framework conditions for industrial competitiveness. This includes access to finance, which will be one of the issues in this year's review of the 2010 industrial policy Communication. Our industrial policy also addresses global competition, e.g. in the context of trade and investment negotiations.

Financial incentives directly targeted to keep companies' production in Europe would most likely amount to operating aid. They would risk creating distortions of competition and in any cases it would require a change of the current state aid framework.

Furthermore, outward foreign direct investment by European companies that establish operations abroad has in fact made a positive and significant contribution to EU firms' competitiveness in the form of higher productivity and overall has had no measurable negative impact on aggregate employment as a study commissioned by the Commission in 2010 found ([1]).

([1]) Copenhagen Economics (2010) Impacts of EU Outward FDI.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003719/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Frances Silvestris (PPE)
(12 aprile 2012)

Oggetto: Emergenza rifiuti a Palermo

L'emergenza rifiuti a Palermo può nuocere alla salute dei cittadini e dar origine a epidemie a causa della putrefazione dei rifiuti e della proliferazione di topi. L'allarme arriva dalle istituzioni dell'isola che assicurano poi la massima cooperazione per far fronte a tutti gli aspetti igienico-sanitari connessi all'insufficiente raccolta.

Il comune di Palermo ha già allertato anche gli uffici dell'Asp del capoluogo siciliano, invitandoli alla massima sorveglianza della situazione, e ha offerto la più ampia collaborazione istituzionale per affrontare tutti gli aspetti igienico-sanitari connessi all'insufficiente raccolta di rifiuti solidi urbani, rilevando il pericolo di epidemie a causa della putrefazione dei rifiuti e della consequenziale proliferazione di ratti. Situazione resa ancor più critica a causa delle elevate temperature di questo periodo.

Si aggiunge poi la questione dei numerosi incendi, di rifiuti e cassonetti, registrati negli ultimi giorni che sono causa di inquinamento ambientale e atmosferico poiché generano l'emissione di sostanze nocive come la diossina e possono determinare conseguenze per i cittadini anche attraverso l'assunzione di alimenti contaminati. Benché a tutt'oggi non siano state segnalate patologie correlate all'emergenza in questione, i servizi deputati alla vigilanza confermano che la situazione venutasi a creare può provocare in qualunque momento l'insorgere di epidemie.

Alla luce di quanto sopraesposto, si interroga la Commissione per sapere:

1. se l'Unione Europea, che annovera la protezione della salute dei cittadini tra le priorità della sua politica, ritiene che si debba intervenire, con un'azione congiunta, per evitare il rischio di malattie;

2. quali sono oggi i progressi compiuti negli Stati membri per garantire una più adeguata gestione dei rifiuti.

Risposta data da Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(24 maggio 2012)

Spetta al governo italiano la responsabilità di garantire che la normativa europea, per quanto riguarda la raccolta dei rifiuti a Palermo, sia adeguatamente attuata: tale responsabilità comprende misure intese a controllare in modo efficace le attività illegali in materia di rifiuti, in conformità della direttiva quadro sui rifiuti ([1]).

In tale contesto la Commissione è stata informata del fatto che le autorità giudiziarie italiane hanno recentemente avviato indagini nei confronti di persone accusate di perturbare i servizi pubblici adibiti alla raccolta dei rifiuti in quella città. La Commissione è a conoscenza del fatto che le autorità italiane competenti si sono attivate e attende i risultati delle misure intraprese prima di prendere in considerazione un suo eventuale intervento.

Per quanto riguarda la gestione dei rifiuti, l'attuazione della legislazione sui rifiuti nell'UE è ancora lacunosa. Le statistiche di recente pubblicate da EUROSTAT ([2]) indicano che numerosi Stati membri non rispettano alcuni obblighi fondamentali previsti dalla normativa dell'Unione europea, ad esempio la gerarchia dei rifiuti. Nell'intento di rimediare a tali carenze, la Commissione sta elaborando una serie di disposizioni volte ad ottenere che tali paesi intensifichino gli sforzi per conformarsi pienamente agli obblighi della direttiva quadro sui rifiuti. In tali disposizioni, di diversa natura, saranno previsti il controllo delle misure nazionali di attuazione e dei piani di gestione dei rifiuti, eseguiti anticipando potenziali carenze di attuazione future, fino, se necessario, ad eventuali procedimenti giudiziari.

([1]) Direttiva 2008/98/CE del 19.11.2008, GU L 312 del 22.11.2008.
([2]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/eurostat/home.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003719/12
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Frances Silvestris (PPE)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Refuse disposal emergency in Palermo

The refuse disposal emergency in Palermo could harm the health of its citizens and cause an epidemic due to the rotting waste and the proliferation of rats. The alarm is being raised by Sicily's institutions, which have also guaranteed maximum cooperation in dealing with all the hygienic and sanitary aspects connected with inadequate rubbish collection.

The Municipality of Palermo has also alerted the Provincial Health Authority in Sicily's capital, urging it to ensure strict supervision of the situation, has offered full institutional cooperation in dealing with the hygienic and sanitary consequences of insufficient rubbish collection and has noted the danger of epidemics resulting from decaying refuse and the consequent proliferation of rats. The situation is made even more critical because of the high temperatures at this time of year.

Added to this is the issue of the numerous fires lit in piles of rubbish and in bins in the past few days, which have caused atmospheric and environmental pollution due to the emission of harmful substances, such as dioxins, which can have negative effects on citizens if they eat food contaminated by them. Although there have so far been no reports of diseases related to this emergency, the services charged with monitoring the situation confirm that the situation could provoke an epidemic at any moment.

In view of the above, we ask the Commission:

1. Whether the European Union, which places the protection of its citizens' health among the top priorities of its policies, believes that it should take joint action to avoid the risk of disease?

2. What improvements have been made by Member States to guarantee more suitable waste management?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(24 May 2012)

The Italian Government is responsible for ensuring that European legislation is effectively implemented as regards waste collection in Palermo including measures to effectively control illegal waste activities in accordance with the Waste Framework Directive ([1]) (WFD).

In this context, the Commission has been informed of the fact that the Italian judicial authorities have recently started investigations against people accused of disrupting of public services related to the waste collection in the city. The Commission understands that the matter has been taken up by the Italian competent authorities and is awaiting the results of these measures before considering further action.

As regards waste management, an implementation gap in waste legislation still persists in the EU. The statistics recently published by Eurostat ([2]) show that several Member States do not comply with some fundamental requirements laid down in EU legislation, including the waste hierarchy. In order to address this implementation gap, the Commission is preparing a range of measures to ensure that those countries step up efforts to fully comply with the WFD requirements. This will range from the control of the national transposition measures and waste management plans, through anticipation of potential future implementation gaps, to legal action where necessary.

([1]) 2008/98/EC of 19.11.2008, OJ L 312, 22.11.2008.
([2]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/eurostat/home.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003721/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Frances Silvestris (PPE)
(12 aprile 2012)

Oggetto: Parco Felifonte chiuso dal 2008

Felifonte era un parco di divertimenti situato in località Nova Yardinia, nel comune di Castellaneta Marina in provincia di Taranto.

Si trattava di un vero e proprio parco tematico. Sorto abbastanza velocemente e inaugurato il 13 agosto 2003 senza dare particolare rilevanza all'evento (una «soft opening» volta a testare principalmente le strutture e l'organizzazione generale in vista dell'apertura primaverile dell'anno successivo), questo parco si presentava già di buon livello e in grado, con le sue attrazioni e spettacoli, di posizionarsi egregiamente nel panorama nazionale. Presentava alcuni difetti dettati dall'essere ancora una struttura «work in progress» e subiva la penalizzazione di alcune scelte discutibili a livello di «concept», che tuttavia non ne inficiavano il valore intrinseco. Si auspicava che, correggendo i difetti strutturali, nel corso della stagione 2005 Felifonte potesse risultare un'eccellente forma di intrattenimento per tutto il Sud Italia e per i turisti in vacanza, con un particolare occhio di riguardo anche per il target scolastico, che doveva essere fortemente incentivato alla visita da alcune attrazioni ad hoc già presenti fin dal 2004 e che si sperava venissero ulteriormente potenziate laddove presentavano alcune notevoli carenze in termini di «appeal» per il pubblico italiano. Purtroppo, i disastrosi risultati in termini di affluenza registrati negli anni successivi hanno condotto alla chiusura.

1. Alla luce di quanto sopraesposto, può la Commissione far sapere se per la realizzazione del parco Felifonte si è fatto ricorso a fondi europei?

2. Può indicare se dal 2008, data di chiusura del parco, sono state fatte richieste all'Unione europea per avvalersi di fondi che possano garantire il ripristino dell'area o per la messa a punto di un nuovo progetto nell'area interessata?

Risposta di Johannes Hahn a nome della Commissione
(11 giugno 2012)

Stando alle informazioni fornite dall'autorità di gestione del programma Puglia del Fondo europeo di sviluppo regionale (FESR), il progetto cui fa riferimento l'onorevole deputato non ha ricevuto un finanziamento dal FESR e all'Unione europea non sono pervenute richieste di finanziamento per garantire il ripristino dell'area o per lo sviluppo di un nuovo progetto nell'area interessata.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003721/12
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Frances Silvestris (PPE)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Felifonte Park closed since 2008

Felifonte was an amusement park in Nova Yardinia, in the municipality of Castellaneta Marina, in the province of Taranto, Italy.

It was a proper theme park that was built fairly quickly and opened on 13 August 2003, without any particular fanfare (a 'soft opening', mainly aimed at testing the structures and general organisation ready for the opening in spring of the following year). It was found to be of a good standard and, with its attractions and shows, it seemed to fit in with the national scene very well. It had a few defects, because work was still in progress, and it did suffer from a few debatable choices in terms of concept, but this did not affect its intrinsic value. It was hoped that by correcting the structural defects during the 2005 season, Felifonte could provide an excellent form of entertainment for the whole of southern Italy and for tourists, and also in particular for the educational sector, which had had to be given strong incentives to visit some of the ad hoc attractions which had existed since 2004. It was hoped that these could then be further improved where they presented significant shortcomings in terms of their appeal to the Italian public. Unfortunately, the disastrous results in terms of visitor numbers in subsequent years led to its closure.

1. In view of the above, can the Commission say whether European funds were used to build the Felifonte Park?

2. Can it say whether, from 2008, the date when the park closed, any requests have been made to the European Union for funds to guarantee the restoration of the area or for the development of a new project in the area concerned?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(11 June 2012)

According to the information provided by the managing authority of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) programme for Puglia, the project referred to by the Honourable Member did not receive any ERDF funding and no requests have been made to the European Union for funds to guarantee the restoration of the area or for the development of a new project in the area concerned.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003723/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Frances Silvestris (PPE)
(12 aprile 2012)

Oggetto: Fuga di gas nel Mare del Nord

Una fuga di gas è stata scoperta dalla Guardia costiera della Scozia, che ha poi ordinato una zona di interdizione marina e aerea di quattro miglia intorno al pozzo petrolifero. La zona interessata dalla fuga di gas sottomarina è il Mare del Nord, un'area dove sono presenti diversi pozzi per estrazione di greggio. Una nota compagnia petrolifera ha riconosciuto che l'avaria sottomarina è probabilmente dovuta a una manovra errata dei propri ingegneri: in pratica è stata creata una via di fuga da una sacca di gas inutilizzata sopra la riserva principale del giacimento.

Gli esperti avanzano due soluzioni possibili per evitare il disastro ambientale: perforare un nuovo pozzo laterale che intercetti la fuga di gas, ma sono necessari almeno sei mesi, oppure tappare la fuoriuscita.

Alla luce di quanto sopraesposto, non ritiene la Commissione di dover rivedere le attuali regole in materia di sicurezza delle piattaforme di petrolio e di gas, anche a seguito di quest'ennesimo incidente al largo delle coste europee?

Risposta di Günther Oettinger a nome della Commissione
(14 giugno 2012)

La Commissione rimanda l'onorevole parlamentare alle risposte fornite alle interrogazioni scritte E-003358/2012 dell'onorevole Salavrakos e E-003699/2012 dell'onorevole Bélier ([1]) concernenti l'incidente nell'impianto di Elgin, cui fa riferimento l'onorevole parlamentare nella sua interrogazione. Esse forniscono informazioni sulla recente proposta legislativa riguardante la sicurezza delle attività offshore nel settore degli idrocarburi. La Commissione è convinta che tale proposta legislativa, se adottata nella forma suggerita, ridurrà i rischi di incidenti offshore in Europa e ne limiterà l'impatto sia sulle persone che sull'ambiente.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/QP-WEB/application/home.do?language=IT.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003723/12
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Frances Silvestris (PPE)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Gas leak in the North Sea

The Scottish Coastguard has discovered a gas leak and ordered a 2-mile air and sea exclusion zone around the oil well. The area affected by the gas leak is the North Sea, where various oil wells are located. A well-known oil company has acknowledged responsibility for the accident due to a mistake made by its engineers. What has happened is that an escape route has been created from an unused gas reservoir above the main oil field.

Experts have put forward two possible solutions to prevent an environmental disaster: drilling a new side well to intercept the gas leak, but this would take at least six months, or plugging the outlet.

In view of the above, does the Commission not consider it necessary to review the current safety rules governing oil and gas platforms, particularly as this is one of many incidents off the coast of Europe?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(14 June 2012)

The Commission would like to refer the Honourable Member to its earlier replies to Written Questions E-003358/2012 by Mr Salavrakos and E-003699/2012 by Mrs Bélier ([1]), which relate to the Commission's response to the Elgin accident, referred to in the Honourable Member's question, and give details of its recent legislative proposal related to the safety of offshore oil and gas operations. The Commission trusts that the legislative proposal will, if adopted as proposed, significantly improve the prospects of preventing offshore accidents in Europe and limit their impact on both people and the environment.

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

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003724/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Frances Silvestris (PPE)
(12 aprile 2012)

Oggetto: Possibili fondi per un progetto di inserimento lavorativo a Taranto

A Taranto, negli ultimi mesi, l'Associazione Italiana Persone Down e la Casa Famiglia S. Damiano hanno dato vita a un progetto che ha l'obiettivo di insegnare un mestiere e al tempo stesso offrire una concreta occasione di reinserimento sociale a chi, per lungo tempo, è stato assente, o lo è ancora, dalla quotidianità familiare, lavorativa e affettiva.

I ragazzi dell'A.I.P.D, infatti, acquisiranno una serie di competenze in continuità del progetto di autonomia lavorativa, mentre agli ospiti della Casa Famiglia S. Damiano si vuole rendere una vera occasione di risarcimento e di riavvicinamento alla società lesa, dando loro modo di sperimentarsi con una realtà lontana dai loro canoni e dalle loro conoscenze, rafforzando positivamente la personale sfera sociale e affettiva.

Alla luce dei fatti sopraesposti, può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

1. È a conoscenza del progetto a cura dell'Associazione Italiana Persone Down e della Casa Famiglia S. Damiano?

2. Considerate le finalità sociali, volte al reinserimento lavorativo per i detenuti con scopi solidaristici, può il progetto usufruire di fondi europei?

Risposta di John Dalli a nome della Commissione
(11 giugno 2012)

La Commissione è consapevole della necessità di un'azione a livello europeo per le persone affette dalla sindrome di Down. Questo è il motivo per cui il programma Sanità dell'UE sostiene, nell'ambito dell'azione congiunta EUROCAT (Sistema di registrazione europea delle malattie congenite), due iniziative sullo screening prenatale della sindrome di Down e delle sindromi genetiche e sulla prevenzione primaria delle anomalie congenite.

Le azioni finanziate dal programma Salute devono offrire un valore aggiunto europeo e andare a vantaggio di diversi Stati membri. I finanziamenti nell'ambito di questo programma possono essere destinati al sostegno di iniziative nazionali che rientrano nella responsabilità degli Stati membri in merito all'organizzazione e alla fornitura di assistenza sanitaria.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003724/12
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Frances Silvestris (PPE)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Potential funding for a work placement project in Taranto

In recent months, the Italian Association for People with Down's Syndrome (AIPD) and the St Damiano Family House have launched a project in Taranto which aims to teach a trade, while at the same time offering a genuine opportunity for social reintegration, to those who have for a long time been, and are still, excluded from everyday family, professional and emotional life.

The young people from the AIPD acquire a range of skills as part of the project promoting independent working, while guests of the St Damiano Family House are offered a genuine opportunity to repay and achieve reconciliation with the injured party, allowing them to experience a reality that is far removed from their standards and experience, positively reinforcing their personal, social and emotional spheres.

In view of this, could the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Is it aware of the work of the AIPD and the St Damiano Family House?

2. Given the social objectives, which are to reintegrate prisoners into work and promote solidarity, could the project benefit from European funding?

Answer given by Mr Dalli on behalf of the Commission
(11 June 2012)

The Commission is aware of the need for European level action addressing people suffering from Down Syndrome. This is the reason why the EU Health Programme is supporting, under the Joint Action Eurocat (European Surveillance on Congential Anomalies), two intiatives on Prenatal Screening Down Syndrome and Genetic Syndromes and on Primary Prevention of Congenital anomalies.

The actions funded by the Health Programme must offer European added value and benefit different Member States. Funding from this Programme cannot be devoted to supporting national initiatives that fall under Member States' responsibility for the organisation and delivery of healthcare.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003725/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Frances Silvestris (PPE)
(12 aprile 2012)

Oggetto: Sistema per la difesa delle coltivazioni dagli insetti parassiti

Un nuovo sistema per difendere le coltivazioni dagli insetti parassiti delle piante è stato messo a punto da un gruppo di ricerca italiano. Utilizza microvibrazioni al posto dei prodotti chimici e i risultati ottenuti sono sorprendenti.

Il principio su cui si basa questa lotta ecologica, che non immette nell'ambiente alcun pesticida o prodotto nocivo, è quello di creare interferenze con le vibrazioni che moltissimi insetti adottano per comunicare sessualmente. Questa interferenza vibrazionale, generata da apparecchi elettronici, manda in confusione gli insetti, che non si cercano e non si accoppiano, e quindi non si riproducono. Lo studio, il primo in pieno campo a livello mondiale, appena pubblicato sulla prestigiosa rivista scientifica internazionale «PLoS ONE», è stato condotto dai ricercatori della Fondazione Edmund Mach dell'Istituto agrario di San Michele all'Adige (Trento).

Alla luce dei fatti sopraesposti, può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

1. È a conoscenza dello studio italiano per difendere le coltivazioni dagli insetti parassiti delle piante senza utilizzare prodotti chimici?

2. Non intende finanziare uno studio che approfondisca i dati scientifici rilevati dalla suddetta ricerca, anche considerando come l'UE cerchi sempre più di ridurre l'impatto complessivo dei pesticidi sulla salute e sull'ambiente e il loro effettivo impiego?

Risposta di John Dalli a nome della Commissione
(11 giugno 2012)

La Commissione è a conoscenza delle ricerche in corso sull'uso delle vibrazioni per interferire con lo sviluppo delle popolazioni di insetti parassiti in quanto potenziale tecnica di fitoprotezione. L'articolo di recente pubblicazione cui fa riferimento l'onorevole deputato indica per la prima volta che è possibile indurre tramite interferenza vibrazionale un'efficace confusione sessuale tra gli insetti. Tuttavia, anche se i risultati sono promettenti, gli autori ribadiscono la necessità di ulteriori lavori, tra l'altro per verificare i possibili effetti negativi sugli organismi benefici.

La Commissione sostiene, nell'ambito del Settimo programma quadro (FP7), la ricerca sullo sviluppo di approcci integrati di gestione dei parassiti. In particolare, la ricerca sulla confusione sessuale mediante vibrazioni è uno degli obiettivi del progetto PURE (contributo UE di circa 9 milioni di EUR) condotto nell'ambito di FP7 e di cui la Edmund Mach Foundation è uno dei partner. L'applicabilità di questa metodologia sarà ulteriormente studiata.

La promozione di tecniche alternative per ridurre la dipendenza da sostanze chimiche è tra gli obiettivi della direttiva 2009/128/CE ([1]) sull'utilizzo sostenibile dei pesticidi. Gli Stati membri sono invitati a incoraggiare lo sviluppo e l'introduzione di tecniche alternative per ridurre l'impatto dell'uso di pesticidi.

([1]) GU L 309 del 24.11.2009.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003725/12
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Frances Silvestris (PPE)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: System for protecting crops from parasitic insects

A new system for protecting crops from plant insect parasites has been developed by an Italian research group. It uses micro-vibrations instead of chemical products and the results obtained are surprising.

The principle on which this ecological battle is based, which does not introduce any pesticides or harmful products into the environment, is to create interference with the vibrations used by a large number of insects for sexual communication. This vibratory interference, generated by electronic equipment, sends the insects into a state of confusion, as a result of which they stop looking for each other, do not pair off and, consequently, do not reproduce. Recently published in the prestigious international scientific journal *PLoS ONE*, the study, which is the first to be carried out in an open field anywhere in the world, is the work of researchers from the Edmund Mach Foundation at the Agricultural Institute of San Michele all'Adige (Trento).

In view of this, could the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Is the Commission aware of the Italian study to protect crops from plant insect parasites without using chemical products?

2. Does it intend to fund a study to further investigate the scientific data relating to the above-mentioned research, particularly considering that the EU is increasingly looking to reduce the overall impact of pesticides on health and the environment, and their use?

Answer given by Mr Dalli on behalf of the Commission
(11 June 2012)

The Commission is aware of ongoing research into the use of vibrations to interfere with pest populations' development as a potential plant protection technique. The recently published article to which the Honourable Member refers claims to show, for the first time, that effective mating disruption through vibrational signals can be achieved. However, although the results are promising, the authors underline the necessity of further work, among other things, to verify possible negative effects on beneficial organisms.

The Commission supports, under the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7), research on the development of Integrated Pest Management approaches. In particular, research on vibration mating disruption is one of the objectives of the FP7 project PURE (EU contribution approximately EUR 9 million) in which the Edmund Mach Foundation is one of the partners. The applicability of the methodology will be further investigated.

Finally, the promotion of alternative techniques to reduce the dependency on chemicals is among the objectives of Directive 2009/128/EC ([1])on the sustainable use of pesticides, and Member States are called upon to encourage the development and introduction of alternative techniques to reduce impacts of pesticides use.

([1]) OJ L 309, 24.11.2009.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003726/12
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Sergio Paolo Frances Silvestris (PPE)
(12 aprile 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Nuovi sbarchi a Lampedusa

Ancora una tragedia della disperazione nel Mediterraneo. Dieci migranti, sei somali e quattro eritrei, sono morti in mare durante la traversata tra la Libia e le coste italiane. I migranti, tutti provenienti da paesi dell'Africa sub-sahariana, hanno raccontato che i loro compagni di viaggio sarebbero affogati dopo essere finiti in mare. Sono stati gli stessi profughi a lanciare l'SOS con un telefono satellitare. Le operazioni di soccorso sono state condotte dalle unità italiane nonostante l'imbarcazione si trovasse in una zona di competenza maltese. I profughi, tra i quali dodici donne, erano su un gommone alla deriva che rischiava di affondare a causa del mare Forza 4-5. I superstiti, giunti in serata a Lampedusa profondamente provati dalla traversata, hanno ribadito quanto avevano già sostenuto nel corso delle loro telefonate. Le dieci vittime sarebbero finite in mare poche ore dopo la partenza, avvenuta nella notte tra venerdì e sabato da un porto al confine tra la Libia e la Tunisia.

Alla luce dei fatti sopraesposti, si interroga il VP/HR per sapere:

1. se è a conoscenza dell'ennesima tragedia avvenuta al largo delle coste italiane;

2. se sono in programma nuove azioni di soccorso gestite da ECHO e se si intende assicurare ulteriori aiuti di emergenza sotto forma di sovvenzioni finanziarie per acquistare e fornire beni di prima necessità.

Risposta di Cecilia Malmström a nome della Commissione
(14 giugno 2012)

La Commissione è bene a conoscenza della situazione drammatica dei migranti che attraversano il Mar Mediterraneo e si rammarica profondamente per la perdita di così tante vite umane. L'Europa deve essere pronta a rispondere a questo fenomeno, evitando le perdite di vite in mare, offrendo protezione agli individui bisognosi e sostenendo gli Stati membri interessati.

Dal 2011 sono state messe in atto molte iniziative per far fronte a tali flussi, dare assistenza agli Stati membri interessati e assicurare il rispetto dei diritti umani. In particolare, Frontex ha coordinato numerose operazioni di sorveglianza delle frontiere nell'ambito della rete europea di pattuglie, con una particolare attenzione alle rotte dalla Tunisia all'Italia (Operazione Hermes). Frontex è pronta a dare supporto all'Italia attraverso ulteriori attività operative che verranno attuate nel 2012.

Inoltre, uno dei principali obiettivi della proposta relativa all'istituzione dell'EUROSUR ([1]) è la considerevole riduzione delle perdite di vite umane, grazie ad una migliore capacità di individuazione, identificazione e localizzazione delle piccole imbarcazioni, con una conseguente agevolazione delle operazioni di ricerca e soccorso in stretta collaborazione con i centri di coordinamento delle ricerche competenti.

L'UE fornisce inoltre un notevole sostegno finanziario per far fronte alla sfida dei flussi migratori attraverso il Fondo per le frontiere esterne, il Fondo per i rimpatri e il Fondo europeo per i rifugiati, tutti facenti parte del programma generale «Solidarietà e gestione dei flussi migratori». L'Italia è tra i maggiori beneficiari di questi fondi.

([1]) Proposta di regolamento del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio che istituisce il sistema europeo di sorveglianza delle frontiere (EUROSUR), COM(2011)873 definitivo.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003726/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Sergio Paolo Frances Silvestris (PPE)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — New landings on Lampedusa

Another tragedy borne of desperation in the Mediterranean. Ten migrants, six Somalis and four Eritreans, died at sea during a crossing from Libya to the Italian coast. The migrants, all from sub-Saharan African countries, reported that their travelling companions had drowned after falling into the sea. It was the refugees themselves who broadcast the SOS via a satellite phone. Rescue operations were conducted by Italian units despite the fact that the boat was within Maltese waters. The refugees, including twelve women, were adrift on a rubber dinghy which was in danger of sinking because of the Force 4-5 seas. The survivors, who reached Lampedusa in the evening, completely exhausted by the crossing, confirmed what they had claimed during their phone calls. The ten victims apparently ended up in the sea soon after their departure, which occurred during the night of Friday to Saturday, from a port on the border between Libya and Tunisia.

In view of the facts set out above, we would like to know from the Vice-President/High Representative:

1. Whether she is aware that yet another tragedy has occurred off the Italian coast;

2. Whether further rescue action managed by ECHO is scheduled and whether there are any plans to provide additional emergency aid in the form of financial grants to buy and distribute basic necessities.

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(14 June 2012)

The Commission is well aware of the dramatic situation of migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea and deeply regrets that so many are losing their lives. Europe needs to be ready to address this phenomenon, by preventing loss of lives at sea, offering protection to those in need and supporting affected Member States.

Many initiatives have been put in place since 2011 to both address those flows, assist the Member States affected and ensure respect of human rights. In particular Frontex has coordinated a number of border surveillance operations in the framework of the European Patrol Network, with a special focus on the routes from Tunisia to Italy (Operation Hermes). Frontex stands ready to support Italy by further operational activities to be implemented in 2012.

In addition, one of the main objectives of the proposal on the establishment of Eurosur ([1]) is to considerably reduce the loss of human lives, by improving the detection, identification and tracking of small boats, thereby facilitating Search and Rescue operations in close cooperation with responsible Rescue Coordination Centres.

The EU also provides substantial financial support to address the challenge of migration flows under the External Borders Fund (EBF), the Return Fund (RF) and the European Refugee Fund (ERF), all part of the General Programme 'Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows'. Italy is among the largest beneficiaries of these Funds.

([1]) Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the European Border Surveillance System (Eurosur), COM(2011) 873 final.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003727/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Frances Silvestris (PPE)
(12 aprile 2012)

Oggetto: Possibilità di fondi diretti — Associazione dei molesi nel mondo

Da troppo tempo il rapporto tra i cittadini molesi e i molesi residenti e operanti all'estero è limitato a eventi sporadici ed episodici. Le occasioni di una visita, le notizie sul paese che filtrano attraverso gli amici che hanno la possibilità di tornare più spesso a visitarlo o un giro fugace sul web alla ricerca di qualche ultima ora non possono più bastare a soddisfare la necessità di un confronto serio e incisivo sul paese. Si sente forte la necessità di instaurare un dialogo costante e legami più stabili, che permettano di coinvolgere realmente e attivamente gli emigranti nei cambiamenti che Mola oggi vive. Queste sono state le motivazioni che hanno indotto a prendere l'iniziativa, maturata dopo un lungo periodo di riflessione, di costituire l'Associazione dei molesi nel mondo, pensandola come uno spazio, anche virtuale, di incontro e riflessione comune. Si vuole scoprire una dimensione nuova, positiva del paese e dei suoi abitanti in giro per il mondo, anche rendendo partecipi i concittadini di tutte le vicende personali e professionali. Si avverte la necessità di alimentare un sentimento di appartenenza al paese attraverso una rinnovata progettualità e propositività.

C'è l'ambizione di diventare una struttura di collegamento Mola-Mondo e viceversa, e questa passa necessariamente dal contatto diretto con tutte le istituzioni, le persone e i livelli interessati a costruire un percorso organico, duraturo e innovativo, funzionale all'elevazione del nostro paese e dei suoi cittadini, ovunque questi vivano. Il vissuto comune può e deve essere il punto di partenza affinché tutti si sentano protagonisti della costruzione del futuro di Mola.

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

1. L'Associazione dei molesi nel mondo ha in precedenza fatto richiesta di fondi europei?

2. È possibile per la suddetta Associazione, visto il grande impegno messo in atto per progetti culturali, usufruire di fondi diretti che andrebbero a garantire una maggiore collaborazione con le associazioni di molesi presenti nel mondo?

Risposta di Androulla Vassiliou a nome della Commissione
(11 giugno 2012)

I dati relativi ai finanziamenti UE concessi a candidati selezionati in un ambito determinato possono essere consultati nel contesto del Sistema di trasparenza finanziaria (STF) ([1]). Il STF comprende informazioni sugli impegni di bilancio nell'ambito dei Fondi UE gestiti direttamente dalla Commissione e dalle sue agenzie esecutive. Esso esclude il Fondo europeo di sviluppo e le spese del personale. Attualmente nel STF sono disponibili soltanto dati per gli esercizi finanziari 2007-2010. I dati relativi al 2011 saranno pubblicati alla fine del primo semestre 2012.

La Commissione desidera attirare l'attenzione dell'onorevole deputato sul fatto che il nome di un'organizzazione introdotto nella base dati STF è il suo pieno nome ufficiale, che non sempre coincide con il nome comunemente usato tra il pubblico. Stando ai dati registrati l'Associazione dei Molesi nel mondo non ha ricevuto nessun finanziamento dalla Commissione europea.

La Commissione incoraggia e sostiene le attività di cooperazione culturale nel quadro del suo programma Cultura ([2]). I suoi obiettivi principali sono la promozione della mobilità transfrontaliera degli operatori culturali, l'incoraggiamento alla circolazione di opere d'arte e la promozione del dialogo interculturale. La Commissione non può però concedere un finanziamento diretto a progetti. Gli operatori culturali che soddisfano le condizioni per partecipare al programma possono chiedere un cofinanziamento UE per il loro progetto. A seguito di un invito a presentare proposte e di un processo di selezione altamente competitivo i progetti migliori possono ottenere una sovvenzione.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/beneficiaries/fts/index_en.htm
([2]) Ulteriori informazioni sono disponibili sul sito: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003727/12
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Frances Silvestris (PPE)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Availability of direct funding for the association representing the people of Mola around the world

For too long the relationship between the people of Mola di Bari (known as Molesi) and their fellow citizens residing or working abroad has been limited to sporadic events. Occasional visits, news about the town that filters down through friends who have the chance to return more often or a fleeting web search for the latest news can no longer suffice to satisfy the need for a serious and effective debate about the town. There is a keenly felt need to establish a constant dialogue and more stable links allowing emigrants to be genuinely and actively involved in the changes that are taking place in Mola today. These were the reasons that led to the initiative being taken, after a long period of reflection, to establish the Worldwide Association of Molesi (Associazione dei molesi nel mondo) as a real and virtual space serving as a forum for meeting and reflection. This will hopefully lead to the discovery of a positive new dimension to the town and its inhabitants around the world, allowing fellow citizens to share everything that is going on in their personal and professional lives. There is a need to fuel a sense of belonging to the town through a renewed capacity for forward thinking and pro-activeness.

The aim is for the association to become a structure connecting Mola to the world and vice versa, and this necessarily entails direct contact with all the institutions, people and parties interested in building an organic route that is both sustainable and innovative and able to promote our town and its citizens, wherever they may live. Shared experiences can and must be the starting point, so that everyone feels involved in building the future of Mola.

In view of this, could the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Has the Worldwide Association of Molesi previously requested European funds?

2. Is it possible for the above-mentioned Association, in view of the great effort put into cultural projects, to benefit from direct funding which would go towards guaranteeing greater collaboration with existing associations of people from Mola around the world?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(11 June 2012)

Data on EU funding granted to successful applicants in a particular field can be consulted in the Financial Transparency System (FTS) ([1]). The FTS includes information on budgetary commitments under EU funds managed directly by the Commission and its executive agencies. It excludes the European Development Fund and staff related expenditures. At this time, only data for 2007-2010 financial years is available in the FTS. Data for 2011 will be published at the end of the first semester 2012.

The Commission would like to draw the attention to of the Honourable Member to the fact that the name of an organisation introduced in the FTS database is its full official name, that does not always match the name commonly used in the public domain. According to record, the Worldwide Association of Molesi has not received any funding from the European Commission.

The Commission encourages and supports cultural cooperation activities in the framework of its Culture Programme ([2]). Its main objectives are to promote the cross-border mobility of cultural operators, to stimulate the circulation of works of art and to encourage intercultural dialogue. However, the Commission cannot grant any direct funding to projects. Cultural operators that comply with the conditions for participation in the Programme can apply for EU co-funding for their project. Further to calls for proposals and a highly competitive selection, best projects can be awarded a grant.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/beneficiaries/fts/index_en.htm
([2]) More information is available at: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/index_en.htm

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003728/12
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Sergio Paolo Frances Silvestris (PPE)
(12 aprile 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Attacco kamikaze in Nigeria

Sono più di cinquanta le persone uccise nella Nigeria settentrionale e decine quelle ferite nei due giorni di festività pasquali che hanno riportato la tragedia nello Stato africano, già colpito da attacchi degli integralisti islamici nell'ultimo periodo.

Non ci sono state finora rivendicazioni, ma le autorità nigeriane sono certe che dietro l'autobomba saltata in aria domenica a Kaduna (nel Nord del paese), nei pressi di una chiesa mentre era in corso una funzione religiosa, vi siano elementi di una setta fondamentalista legata ai terroristi di al Qaeda.

Questa serie di attentati coordinati non avrebbe matrice religiosa ma sarebbe piuttosto espressione di una strategia di destabilizzazione del governo del presidente Goodluck Jonathan.

Alla luce di quanto precede, può l'Alto Rappresentante far sapere:

1. se è a conoscenza di quanto accaduto nello Stato africano;

2. se sono previsti ulteriori provvedimenti e nuove contromisure per evitare i continui attacchi che ogni giorno coinvolgono la società civile?

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

L'onorevole parlamentare si riferisce agli attentati verificatisi durante le festività pasquali e la conseguente deplorevole perdita di vite umane. La situazione nigeriana in generale e questi problemi in particolare vengono presi in seria considerazione. Il 14 marzo 2012, a seguito della dichiarazione del ministro danese degli Affari esteri Villy Soevndal a nome dell'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente, si è tenuta nella sessione plenaria del Parlamento europeo un'approfondita discussione a riguardo.

Nell'ambito della riunione ministeriale Nigeria-UE ad Abuja dell'8 febbraio 2012 si è convenuto di avviare un dialogo sulla sicurezza a livello locale. L'UE condivide la sua esperienza nella lotta al terrorismo ed è in costante contatto con le autorità nigeriane.

Inoltre, il programma di sviluppo dell'UE è stato riadattato per concentrarsi maggiormente sui fattori che provocano la radicalizzazione nelle zone più svantaggiate della Nigeria. Questo processo è tuttora in atto e l'UE intende altresì fornire a breve un sostegno per il rafforzamento delle capacità in settori quali la giustizia, il buon governo e la mediazione.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003728/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Sergio Paolo Frances Silvestris (PPE)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Suicide attack in Nigeria

More than 50 people have been killed and dozens wounded in northern Nigeria during 2 days of Easter celebrations, bringing further tragedy to the African state, which has already been hit recently by attacks by Islamic fundamentalists.

So far nobody has claimed responsibility, but the Nigerian authorities are certain that elements of a fundamentalist group linked to al-Qaeda terrorists are behind the car bomb that exploded on Sunday in Kaduna (in the north of the country), near a church while a service was under way.

This series of coordinated attacks might not be religiously motivated but are likely to be an expression of a strategy to destabilise the government of President Goodluck Jonathan.

In view of the above, could the High Representative state:

1. Whether she is aware of what happened in the African state?

2. Whether there are additional provisions and new countermeasures planned to prevent the continuing attacks, which are affecting civilians on a daily basis?

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

The Honourable Members refer to the attacks during the Easter celebrations and the regrettable losses of lives. Nigeria in general and these problems in particular are taken very seriously. Following a statement by Danish Foreign Minister Villy Soevndal on behalf of the HR/VP a substantial discussion in the European Parliament's plenary took place already on 14 March 2012.

In the context of the Nigeria-EU Ministerial meeting in Abuja on 8 February 2012 it was agreed to set-up a local security dialogue. The EU is sharing its experience in dealing with terrorism, and the EU is in continuous contact with the Nigerian authorities.

Moreover, our development programme has been adapted to focus more on factors conducive to radicalisation in the most deprived parts of Nigeria. This process is continuing and, in addition, we are also shortly to provide capacity building in such areas as justice, good governance and mediation.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003729/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Frances Silvestris (PPE)
(12 aprile 2012)

Oggetto: PAC e riscontri

L'agricoltura può, se praticata correttamente, contribuire alla protezione della biodiversità. Numerose specie e molti habitat sono, infatti, interdipendenti con l'agricoltura. Com'è ovvio, il legame fra agricoltura e ambiente è strettissimo.

Nell'Unione europea circa la metà della superficie è adibita all'agricoltura che, nel corso degli anni, ha influenzato la nostra cultura e plasmato molti dei nostri paesaggi.

Tante sono le attività che possono mettere a repentaglio la biodiversità, ed essere la causa del degrado del suolo causando fenomeni come: l'impermeabilizzazione, l'erosione, la contaminazione (con sostanze nocive), la compattazione, la desertificazione. Intensificare o specializzare troppo la produzione agricola, oppure sottoutilizzare il suolo o usare impropriamente i parassitari, ecc. sono tutte pratiche che possono causare gravi danni al suolo.

Alla luce di quanto sopraesposto, può la Commissione per sapere:

1. in vista dell'attenzione sempre crescente ai temi della salvaguardia dell'ambiente rurale e della conservazione delle risorse naturali, quali sono ad oggi gli Stati membri che hanno saputo utilizzare le risorse del II pilastro, Sviluppo rurale, in modo ottimale e con quali strumenti in particolare hanno saputo proteggere l'ambiente e le biodiversità?

2. Con particolare riguardo alla protezione della «Risorsa Suolo», quali sono gli strumenti della futura PAC volti a proteggere l'impoverimento della superficie agricola?

Risposta di Dacian Cioloș a nome della Commissione
(5 giugno 2012)

1. Pur basandosi sulle priorità dell'UE, la programmazione dello sviluppo rurale lascia a Stati membri/regioni un margine d'azione per affrontare le loro problematiche specifiche. Tutti i programmi comprendono, in quanto elemento obbligatorio, misure agroambientali volte a incoraggiare pratiche agricole rispettose dell'ambiente. Inoltre, servizi di formazione e consulenza offrono assistenza per migliorare l'efficienza ambientale dell'agricoltura dell'UE e il sostegno agli investimenti non-produttivi integra le misure agroambientali.

Le azioni a favore della biodiversità previste nei programmi di sviluppo rurale sono essenzialmente quelle contemplate dall'asse 2 (quali ad esempio, i pagamenti agroambientali e quelli silvoambientali). Le misure agroambientali sono di gran lunga lo strumento più utilizzato per conseguire l'obiettivo di conservazione della biodiversità.

È in corso una valutazione intermedia sull'attuale periodo di programmazione del FEASR, i cui risultati saranno disponibili entro la fine del 2012.

2. La proposta di riforma della politica agricola comune prevede una serie di misure ambientali che trattano, tra gli altri aspetti, della questione del suolo:

— in linea con la scelta di rendere i pagamenti diretti più «verdi», il 30 % di detti pagamenti sarà subordinato a requisiti ambientali per la diversificazione delle colture, il mantenimento di prati permanenti e la creazione di aree di interesse ecologico;

— la condizionalità comprende due nuovi criteri relativi alle buone condizioni agronomiche e ambientali, connessi ai cambiamenti climatici e alla protezione del suolo, nonché un quadro aggiornato;

— il nuovo approccio alla programmazione dello sviluppo rurale pone l'accento sulle priorità strategiche, tra cui la gestione sostenibile delle risorse;

— un partenariato europeo per l'innovazione stimolerà approcci innovativi in materia di produttività e sostenibilità dell'agricoltura, con particolare attenzione alla conservazione delle risorse del suolo.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003729/12
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Frances Silvestris (PPE)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: The common agricultural policy and feedback

If it is practiced correctly, agriculture can contribute to protecting biodiversity. Numerous species and many habitats actually exist interdependently with agriculture. The link between agriculture and the environment is obviously very close.

About half of the EU's surface area is used for agriculture which, over the years, has influenced our culture and shaped many of our landscapes.

There are many activities that can threaten biodiversity and cause soil degradation, resulting in phenomena such as impermeability, erosion, contamination (with poisonous substances), compaction and desertification. Intensifying or over-specialising agricultural production, or instead under-using the soil or using pesticides inappropriately, are all practices that can cause serious damage to the soil.

In view of the above, would the Commission let us know:

1. In view of the increasing attention paid to safeguarding the rural environment and conserving natural resources, which Member States have thus far been able to use the resources of the second pillar, Rural Development, in an optimal way and with which tools in particular have they been able to protect the environment and biodiversity?

2. With particular regard to the protection of 'Soil Resources', which tools of the future common agricultural policy are aimed at safeguarding against the impoverishment of agricultural land?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(5 June 2012)

1. Rural development programming is based on EU priorities, while leaving scope for Member States/regions to address their specific concerns. As a mandatory element, all programmes include agri-environment measures, encouraging environmentally sound farming practices. In addition, training and advisory services help to enhance the environmental performance of EU agriculture, and support for non-productive investments complements agri-environment actions.

The measures for biodiversity in the Rural Development programmes are primarily the ones available under Axis 2 (such as agri-environment payments and forest-environment payments). The agri-environment measure is by far the most widely used measure to meet the objective of conserving biodiversity.

A mid-term evaluation of the ongoing EARDF programming period is under way and will provide results by the end of 2012.

2. The reform proposal for the common agricultural policy includes a range of environmental measures which address, among others, soils:

'Greening' of direct payment will make 30% of those payments conditional on environmental requirements for crop diversification, maintenance of permanent grassland, and the establishment of ecological focus area;

Cross-compliance includes two new standards of Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions related to climate change and soil protection; as well as an updated framework;

The new approach towards Rural Development Programming gives emphasis to strategic priorities, including sustainable resource management;

A European Innovation Partnership will mobilise innovative approaches for a productive and sustainable agriculture, with particular emphasis to the conservation of soil resources.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003730/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Frances Silvestris (PPE)
(12 aprile 2012)

Oggetto: Problema pensioni e invecchiamento attivo

La crisi finanziaria in Europa ha peggiorato quello che è stato a lungo un problema scottante. Cosa si deve fare con le persone in età avanzata che vivono sempre più a lungo, quando ci sono sempre meno lavoratori di supporto e sempre più pensionati?

Cercando di disinnescare la bomba a orologeria demografica e di tagliare i budget per evitare un tracollo finanziario, i governi devono ulteriormente aumentare l'età pensionabile, riducendo i benefici.

Una bozza di progetto della Commissione europea sulla riforma delle pensioni vuole che gli Stati membri dell'UE rinuncino all'età pensionabile obbligatoria e incoraggino le persone a lavorare più a lungo con altri programmi, come l'Apprendimento permanente.

A tale proposito è stato pubblicato lo scorso 16 febbraio — in concomitanza con il 2012, Anno europeo dell'invecchiamento attivo e della solidarietà tra le generazioni — il Libro bianco dal titolo «Un'agenda dedicata a pensioni adeguate, sicure e sostenibili», un piano nel quale si delinea il futuro dei sistemi pensionistici nei paesi dell'Unione Europea, basato soprattutto sui presupposti dell'ampliamento della partecipazione di uomini e donne all'attività professionale per tutto l'arco della vita e sulla sicurezza del risparmio destinato alle pensioni complementari.

Tutto ciò premesso e nell'ambito del Libro bianco sopra citato, si interroga la Commissione per chiedere:

1. quali sono, nel dettaglio, le opportunità che l'Europa annuncia per i lavoratori anziani, e in che modo e a partire da quando intende attivarle;

2. in che maniera la Commissione prevede di ampliare la partecipazione delle donne all'attività professionale per tutto l'arco della vita, e come intende eliminare il divario pensionistico tra gli uomini e le donne.

Risposta di László Andor a nome della Commissione
(6 giugno 2012)

L'organizzazione dei sistemi pensionistici compresa la definizione dell'età pensionabile e la determinazione dei livelli di prestazioni pensionistiche rientrano nelle responsabilità degli Stati membri come anche le politiche dell'occupazione, tra cui le misure destinate alle donne e ai lavoratori anziani in particolare. Tuttavia la Commissione si adopera per sostenere le riforme come indicato nel Libro bianco «Un'agenda dedicata a pensioni adeguate, sicure e sostenibili» ([1]).

Il Libro bianco illustra chiaramente come l'invecchiamento demografico e la crisi economica sottopongano a fortissime pressioni la sostenibilità dei sistemi pensionistici di tutta Europa. Esso enuncia le risposte politiche chiave per far sì che le pensioni possano rimanere adeguate, sostenibili e sicure sia ora che in futuro, assicurando in particolare che vi sia il debito equilibrio tra il tempo trascorso a lavorare e il tempo della pensione, tenendo conto del fatto che ora le persone vivono in media più a lungo.

A causa del persistere di disparità di genere sul mercato del lavoro (in particolare il divario retributivo di genere, i livelli occupazionali, la condivisione diseguale delle responsabilità di assistenza ai familiari e il lavoro part-time) le donne tendono a lasciare prima il mercato del lavoro o addirittura a non entrarvi e pertanto godono di diritti pensionistici più ridotti. Per tale motivo gli Stati membri sono incoraggiati ad adottare misure concrete volte ad affrontare i divari di genere sia sul mercato del lavoro che nei sistemi pensionistici al fine di raggiungere in futuro pensioni sostenibili e adeguate sia per gli uomini che per le donne.

L'allegato 1 del Libro bianco elenca in dettaglio dette misure.

([1]) COM(2012)55 definitivo del 16 febbraio 2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003730/12
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Frances Silvestris (PPE)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Pension problems and active ageing

The financial crisis in Europe has aggravated a problem which has been brewing for a long time. What is to be done about elderly people who are living longer and longer, when there are fewer support workers and more and more pensioners?

In an attempt to defuse the demographic time bomb and cut budgets in order to avoid financial collapse, politicians will have to raise the retirement age further and reduce benefits.

A European Commission draft project on pension reform wants EU Member States to remove the compulsory retirement age and encourage people to work longer with other programmes such as Lifelong Learning.

To this end, a White Paper was published on 16 February to coincide with 2012, the European Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity between the Generations. It is called 'An Agenda for Adequate, Safe and Sustainable Pensions' and it outlines the future of pension systems in the countries of the European Union. It is mainly based on increasing the participation of men and women in professional activity throughout their lifetimes and on the security of savings intended for complementary pensions.

Given the above, and in the context of the White Paper of 16 February, we ask the Commission:

1. What, in detail, are the opportunities that Europe is announcing for older workers and how and when does it intend to activate them?

2. In what manner does the Commission intend to increase the participation of women in professional activity throughout their lifetimes and how does it intend to eliminate the pensions gap between men and women?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(6 June 2012)

The organisation of pension systems including the setting of the retirement age and the determination of benefit levels is a responsibility of the Member States, as are employment policies including measures for women and older workers in particular. However, the Commission does seek to support reforms as described in the White Paper An agenda for adequate, safe and sustainable pensions ([1]).

The White Paper makes clear that demographic ageing and the economic crisis are putting very significant pressure on the affordability of pension systems across Europe. It sets out key policy responses to ensure pensions can remain adequate, sustainable and safe both now and in the future, notably by ensuring there is an appropriate balance between time spent in work and time spent in retirement, recognising that people are on average living longer.

Due to the persistence of gender inequalities in the labour market (in particular the gender pay gap, employment levels, unequal share of care responsibilities and part-time work) women tend to leave the labour market earlier or not to enter it, and thus have lower pension entitlements. Therefore, the Member States are encouraged to adopt concrete measures addressing gender gaps both in the labour market and in the pensions systems in order to achieve sustainable and adequate pensions for both men and women in the future.

Annex A of the White Paper lists the measures in detail.

([1]) COM(2012) 55 final of 16 February 2012.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003732/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Frances Silvestris (PPE)
(12 aprile 2012)

Oggetto: Una nuova invenzione, il robot-pesce

Alcuni ricercatori hanno ideato e creato un pesce robotico e testato la reazione comportamentale dei pesci alla sua presenza. I risultati dello studio hanno dimostrato che, in determinate condizioni, il robot viene accettato come un leader dai pesci reali, che lo seguono nei suoi movimenti. La ricerca consente di ottenere importanti informazioni sugli schemi collettivi seguiti dagli animali e apre nuovi orizzonti nelle metodologie di conservazione e di salvaguardia di specie marine in pericolo. Secondo gli scienziati, inoltre, se lo studio venisse validato in natura, facendo in modo che il robot venga seguito in differenti contesti ambientali, si aprirebbero nuove prospettive di salvaguardia e conservazione di specie marine in pericolo.

L'allontanamento dalle zone contaminate da fuoruscite di petrolio o l'aggiramento di dighe che impediscono il regolare percorso migratorio legato alla riproduzione sono solo alcuni dei vantaggi di cui i banchi di pesce che si trovano in condizioni di pericolo potrebbero beneficiare seguendo il robot. Il robot è stato testato mentre nuotava assieme ai pesci in un tunnel di nuoto a differenti velocità del flusso.

Alla luce di quanto sopraesposto, può dire la Commissione:

1. È a conoscenza dell'esperimento descritto e sono state messe in atto sperimentazioni simili in anni precedenti?

2. Ritiene opportuno presentare il progetto alla «Giornata europea del mare», che l'UE celebra ogni anno il 20 maggio?

Risposta di Maria Damanaki a nome della Commissione
(1º giugno 2012)

La Commissione è a conoscenza di due studi: un precedente studio dell'università di Leeds, nel Regno Unito, e un più recente studio americano, effettuato dal Polytechnic Institute dell'Università di New York negli Stati Uniti. Entrambi gli studi hanno rivelato che in condizioni sperimentali è possibile utilizzare un pesce robotico per influenzare il comportamento dei pesci. I risultati di tali studi sono estremamente interessanti e, come indicato dall'onorevole parlamentare, in futuro possono essere applicati per la protezione e la salvaguardia delle specie marine in pericolo.

In linea di massima i progetti come quello in questione si addicono perfettamente all'idea di Giornata europea del mare, poiché questa si prefigge l'obiettivo di celebrare la comunità marittima europea e di costituire un'occasione per condividere esperienze e ideare nuovi concetti e nuove strategie. Il programma della Giornata del mare di quest'anno è ormai definito. La Commissione invita l'onorevole parlamentare a presentare questa iniziativa durante la prossima edizione della Giornata del mare, che si svolgerà a La Valletta il 20 maggio 2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003732/12
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Frances Silvestris (PPE)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: A new invention: the robot fish

Researchers have designed and built a robotic fish and tested the behavioural reactions of fish in its presence. The results of the study have shown that, under certain conditions, the robot is accepted as a leader of the real fish, who follow its movements. The research has enabled significant information to be gained on the collective patterns followed by animals and has opened up new horizons in the conservation and protection of endangered marine species. According to the scientists, if the study were validated in nature, by following the robot in different environmental contexts, new prospects would open up for the protection and conservation of endangered marine species.

Moving fish away from areas contaminated by oil spills or bypassing dams which impede the normal migration routes linked to reproduction are just some of the advantages that shoals of endangered fish could benefit from by following the robot. The robot has been tested swimming among fish in a tunnel using different flow velocities.

In view of the above, can the Commission state:

1. Is it aware of the experiment described and have similar experiments been conducted in previous years?

2. Does it consider it appropriate to present the project on European Maritime Day which the EU celebrates each year on 20 May?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(1 June 2012)

The Commission is aware of two studies, an earlier study in the University of Leeds in the UK and a more recent study in the US carried out by the Polytechnic Institute of New York University in the US. Both studies have shown under experimental conditions that it is possible to use a robotic fish to influence the behaviour of fish. The results from these studies are most interesting and as indicated by the Honorable Member may, in the future, have uses for the protection and conservation of endangered marine species.

Projects such as the one under reference in principle fit very well in the concept of European Maritime Day whose aim is to be a celebration of Europe's maritime community, and to be an occasion where experiences can be shared and new concepts and strategies can be devised. This year's programme for Maritime Day is finalised. The Commission encourages the Honourable Member to bring the initiative forward during the next edition of the Maritime Day in Valetta on 20 May 2013.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003734/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Frances Silvestris (PPE)
(12 aprile 2012)

Oggetto: Politica spaziale europea

Il trattato di Lisbona crea una base giuridica che permette all'UE di condurre una politica spaziale europea. Difatti con l'entrata in vigore del trattato di Lisbona lo spazio è divenuto competenza specifica e condivisa dell'UE (artt. 4.3 e 189 del trattato sul funzionamento dell'Unione europea, TFUE). Allo stesso tempo, sono stati lanciati due ambiziosi programmi pilota (flagship programmes), Galileo e il Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES), sostenuti dall'UE, dall'ESA e dai rispettivi Stati membri. Il tema dell'accesso allo spazio ha una rilevanza strategica alla quale i principali attori spaziali europei, l'Unione europea, l'Agenzia spaziale europea e i rispettivi Stati membri, saranno chiamati a dare un chiaro indirizzo politico, industriale e tecnologico che permetta di consolidare la politica spaziale europea. Nell'ultimo decennio gli importanti risultati ottenuti in materia spaziale hanno permesso all'Europa di accrescere il proprio prestigio scientifico e tecnologico, rafforzandone l'indipendenza strategica e la posizione di attore globale.

Tutto ciò premesso, s'interroga la Commissione per sapere:

1. Quali sono le priorità per il futuro dell'Unione europea nel settore della politica spaziale, e in che modo e in quale misura crede la Commissione che il settore possa influenzare la competitività europea?

2. Per quanto incidono i due programmi summenzionati (GMES e Galileo) sul bilancio dell'Unione europea?

Risposta data da Antonio Tajani a nome della Commissione
(4 giugno 2012)

La Commissione ritiene le attività e le applicazioni spaziali un fattore vitale per la crescita e lo sviluppo della nostra società e vede nella politica spaziale uno strumento utile per la politica interna ed esterna dell'UE. Una comunicazione del 4 aprile 2011 ([1]) definiva gli elementi principali di una strategia spaziale dell'UE. La priorità precipua consiste nell'assicurare il successo dei programmi faro Galileo, EGNOS e GMES. Essi sono parte integrante della strategia Europa 2020 e rappresentano un enorme potenziale di crescita economica e di creazione di posti di lavoro grazie allo sviluppo di servizi e di applicazioni commerciali innovative.

Tra le altre priorità vi sono l'incoraggiamento della ricerca e dell'innovazione nell'industria spaziale europea, la promozione della sicurezza dei sistemi spaziali e delle infrastrutture e la promozione della cooperazione internazionale in campo spaziale. La Commissione porta inoltre avanti una politica industriale spaziale in stretta collaborazione con gli Stati membri e con l'Agenzia spaziale europea.

Il bilancio dei programmi europei GNSS , EGNOS e Galileo, ammonta a 3,4 miliardi di EUR nel quadro finanziario 2007-2013. La proposta della Commissione per il periodo 2014-2020 prevede 7 miliardi di EUR (ai prezzi del 2011) che dovrebbero assicurare il completamento della messa in atto dell'infrastruttura e lo sfruttamento dei sistemi.

Per GMES gli investimenti fatti finora dall'UE e dall'ESA ammontano a 3,2 miliardi di EUR, dei quali l'UE ha erogato 1,5 miliardi di EUR per il tramite dei programmi quadro FP6, FP7 e degli stanziamenti attinenti alla fase iniziale di operatività di GMES. Altri 5,8 miliardi di EUR saranno necessari nel periodo 2014-2020 e la Commissione ha proposto di finanziare tale importo al di fuori del quadro finanziario pluriennale. La comunicazione adottata il 30 novembre 2011 ([2]) propone di istituire un fondo GMES con i contributi finanziari di tutti gli Stati membri in base al loro reddito nazionale lordo (RNL) a seguito di un accordo intergovernativo.

([1]) COM(2011)152.
([2]) COM(2011)831.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003734/12
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Frances Silvestris (PPE)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: European space policy

The Lisbon Treaty creates a legal basis which allows the European Union to conduct a European space policy. As a result, with the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, space has become the specific and shared expertise of the EU (Articles 4.3 and 189 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU — TFEU). At the same time, two ambitious flagship programmes, Galileo and Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES), have been launched, supported by the EU, the ESA and by the respective Member States. The subject of access to space is of strategic importance and the principal players in the European space sector, the European Space Agency and the respective Member States, will have to give it clear political, industrial and technological directions in order to allow a European space policy to be consolidated. Over the past decade, important results achieved in space-related activities have allowed Europe to enhance its scientific and technological prestige and to strengthen both its strategic independence and its position as a global player.

Given the above, we ask the Commission to let us know:

1. What are the EU's priorities regarding space policy, and in what way and to what extent does the Commission believe that this sector can influence European competitiveness?

2. How much impact do the two abovementioned programmes (GMES and Galileo) have on the European Union budget?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(4 June 2012)

The Commission considers space activities and applications as vital to our society's growth and development, and space policy as an instrument serving the EU's internal and external policies. A Communication of 4 April 2011 ([1]) defined the main elements of an EU space strategy. The first priority is to ensure the success of the flagship programmes Galileo, EGNOS and GMES. They are an integral part of the Europe 2020 strategy and represent a huge potential for economic growth and job creation, through the development of services and innovative commercial applications.

Other priorities include boosting research and innovation in the European space industry, enhancing the security of European space assets and infrastructures and promoting international cooperation in the space domain. The Commission also pursues the elaboration of space industrial policy, in close collaboration with the Member States and the European Space Agency.

The budget of the European GNSS programmes, EGNOS and Galileo, amounts to EUR 3.4 billion in the 2007-2013 financial framework. The Commission's proposal for the period 2014-2020 foresees EUR 7 billion (in 2011 prices), which should ensure the completion of the deployment of the infrastructure and the exploitation of systems.

For GMES the investments made so far by the EU and ESA amount to EUR 3.2 billion of which the EU has provided EUR 1.5 billion through FP6, FP7 and GMES Initial Operations. A further EUR 5.8 billion will be needed during 2014-2020 and the Commission has proposed to fund this outside the MFF. The communication adopted on 30 November 2011 ([2]) proposed to set up a GMES fund with financial contributions from all Member States based on their gross national income (GNI), following an intergovernmental agreement.

([1]) COM(2011)152.
([2]) COM(2011)831.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003735/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Frances Silvestris (PPE)
(12 aprile 2012)

Oggetto: Suicidi legati alla crisi negli ultimi tre mesi

Ormai è cosa quotidiana ricevere la triste notizia di un lavoratore o un imprenditore che si è tolto la vita a causa di difficoltà economiche.

Non sono solo gli ultimi fatti di cronaca a segnalare che il fenomeno è in aumento, c'è anche la fredda evidenza dei numeri: la crisi ha portato a un'impennata dei suicidi per motivi economici. Sicuramente c'è un effetto imitazione e, come spesso succede in questi casi, il denominatore comune di queste tragedie è la crisi economica. In Europa sono in aumento i suicidi legati alla crisi economica: un dramma che tocca purtroppo tutte le categorie, imprenditori, impiegati, operai e pensionati. Ad essere investiti da difficoltà economiche risultano essere non più solo le famiglie dei ceti cosiddetti a rischio, quelli da sempre considerati meno abbienti, ma oggi si registra un ampio coinvolgimento della platea di cittadini del cosiddetto ceto medio.

In merito a quanto sopraesposto e alla luce della risposta fornita all'interrogazione scritta presentata dall'europarlamentare Georgios Papanikolaou nell'ottobre 2011, può la Commissione dire:

1. se può fornire all'interrogante dati comparati sul numero di suicidi negli Stati membri registrati nei primi tre mesi del 2012;

2. se non ritenga utile, in questa fase di crisi, intervenire affinché si istituisca un osservatorio ad acta che monitori la situazione sopraesposta per i diversi Stati membri?

Risposta di John Dalli a nome della Commissione
(11 giugno 2012)

La Commissione non è in grado di fornire dati sul numero di suicidi registrati negli Stati membri nei primi tre mesi del 2012. Tali dati, che provengono dalle statistiche Eurostat sulle cause di decesso, sono raccolti una volta all'anno nel quadro di appositi accordi giuridici ([1]).

Tenuto conto del ritardo nella disponibilità dei dati sul fenomeno dei suicidi e della scarsità di competenze a livello europeo per interventi in questo campo, peraltro di competenza degli Stati membri, la Commissione non intende istituire un osservatorio per seguire più da vicino il numero di suicidi negli Stati membri.

([1]) Regolamento (UE) n. 328/2011 della Commissione del 5 aprile 2011, recante disposizioni attuative del regolamento (CE) n. 1338/2008 del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio relativo alle statistiche comunitarie in materia di sanità pubblica e di salute e sicurezza sul luogo di lavoro, per quanto riguarda le statistiche sulle cause di decesso. http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:090:0022:0024:IT:PDF.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003735/12
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Frances Silvestris (PPE)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Suicides linked to the financial crisis in the last three months

The sad news of a worker or entrepreneur who has taken their own life because of financial problems is now an everyday occurrence.

It is not only the latest news stories that point to the fact that the phenomenon is on the increase, there is also the stark evidence of the figures: the crisis has led to a sudden rise in suicides for financial reasons. Certainly there is a copycat effect and, as often happens in these cases, the common denominator of these tragedies is the economic crisis. Suicides linked to the economic crisis are on the increase in Europe. It is a tragedy that unfortunately affects all kinds of people: entrepreneurs, employees, workers and pensioners. It is no longer just so-called 'at risk' families, those who have always been considered less affluent, who are experiencing financial problems; today, the middle classes are also widely affected.

In view of the above, and in view of the reply given to the written question submitted by MEP Georgios Papanikolaou in October 2011, can the Commission say:

1. Whether it can provide comparative data on the number of suicides recorded in Member States in the first three months of 2012?

2. Whether, in this time of crisis, it considers it useful to intervene by setting up an *ad acta* observatory to monitor the above situation for the various Member States?

Answer given by Mr Dalli on behalf of the Commission
(11 June 2012)

The Commission is not in a position to provide data on the number of suicides recorded in the Member States for the first three months of 2012. Such data derives from Eurostat statistics on causes of death, which are collected once a year within the framework of agreed legal arrangements ([1]).

Taking into account the delay in the availability of data on suicide, and the very limited EU-level competence for action in this field, which falls under the responsibility of Member States, the Commission does not intend to set up an observatory to monitor more closely the number of suicides in the Member States.

([1]) Commission Regulation (EU) No 328/2011 of 5 April 2011 implementing Regulation (EC) No 1338/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council on Community statistics on public health and health and safety at work, as regards statistics on causes of death. http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:090:0022:0024:EN:PDF.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003736/12
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Sergio Paolo Frances Silvestris (PPE)
(12 aprile 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Terremoto nell'Oceano Indiano

Due forti scosse di terremoto sono avvenute mercoledì nell'Oceano Indiano al largo della costa sud-occidentale di Sumatra. La prima di 8,6 gradi della scala Richter è stata registrata alle 10.38 (tutti gli orari sono riportati in ora italiana), la seconda di 8,2 gradi un po' più a nord alle 12.43. Onde anomale di circa un metro si sono abbattute sulle coste a Meulaboh, in Indonesia, la città più vicina all'epicentro, e sull'isola Nias.

Un allarme tsunami è stato lanciato per ben 26 Paesi, dall'Indonesia fino alle coste africane di Tanzania e Kenia, ma verso le 15.00 il Centro di allerta tsunami del Pacifico ha reso noto che l'allarme è rientrato, con l'avvertenza però di non abbassare la guardia per la possibilità di forti correnti locali. Al momento non è stato quantificato il numero delle vittime.

Alla luce di quanto citato, può l'Alto Rappresentante far sapere:

1. se è informato sul terremoto avvertito nell'Oceano Indiano e se può fornire altre informazioni dettagliate sui fatti;

2. come intende la Delegazione dell'Unione europea per l'Indonesia intervenire per prestare soccorso alle popolazioni dei 26 Paesi interessati dal terremoto?

Risposta di Kristalina Georgieva a nome della Commissione
(21 giugno 2012)

1. La Commissione è stata subito informata dei terremoti dell'11 aprile 2012. Nelle ore successive, il Centro comune di ricerca (CCR) — il laboratorio di ricerca scientifica e tecnica della Commissione — ha fornito informazioni sul disastro e ne ha esaminato l'entità. Poiché le placche tettoniche si sono spostate in senso orizzontale piuttosto che verticale, i terremoti non hanno provocato alte onde anomale.

2. Dato che i terremoti e le successive onde anomale hanno recato soltanto lievi danni alle popolazioni, gli aiuti di emergenza dell'UE non sono risultati, e non risultano, necessari.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003736/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Sergio Paolo Frances Silvestris (PPE)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Earthquake in the Indian Ocean

On Wednesday, two strong earthquakes occurred in the Indian Ocean, off the south-western coast of Sumatra. The first, with a magnitude of 8.6 on the Richter scale, was recorded at 10.38 (all times are reported in Italian time); the second, with a magnitude of 8.2, a little further north at 12.43. Freak waves of around one metre struck the coast at Meulaboh in Indonesia, the city closest to the epicentre, and Nias Island.

A tsunami alert was issued for 26 countries, from Indonesia to the coast of Tanzania and Kenya in Africa but, at about 15.00, the Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre reported that the alert had been lifted, with the warning, however, to be aware of the possibility of strong local currents. The number of victims has not yet been calculated.

In view of the above, could the High Representative state:

1. Whether she was informed about the earthquake in the Indian Ocean and whether she can provide other detailed information about what happened?

2. What action the EU Delegation to Indonesia intends to take to provide relief to the populations of the 26 countries affected by the earthquake?

Answer given by Ms Georgieva on behalf of the Commission
(21 June 2012)

1. The Commission was aware of the earthquakes of 11 April 2012 soon after they happened. In the hours following the earthquakes, the Joint Research Centre (JRC) — the scientific and technical research laboratory of the Commission, provided information on and analysed the extent of the disaster. As the tectonic plates moved in a horizontal rather than vertical direction, the earthquakes did not produce high tsunami waves.

2. As the earthquakes and the tsunami waves it produced caused only minor damage to the populations, there was and is no need for the EU to provide emergency relief.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003737/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Frances Silvestris (PPE)
(12 aprile 2012)

Oggetto: Programmi per fondi diretti, città di Chieti

Gli enti territoriali, quali Comuni e Province, sono tra i primi possibili beneficiari dei Fondi diretti programmati ed erogati da parte delle Direzioni generali della Commissione europea. Tra i fondi disponibili ci sono ad esempio: il programma cultura, il programma per l'occupazione e la solidarietà sociale Progress, il programma cittadinanza l'Europa per i cittadini, quello per l'ambiente Life +, quello per gestire i flussi migratori: Programma gestione Flussi Migratori, quello dedicato alle risorse umane: Programma Investire nelle persone e tanti altri.

In merito a questo e ad altri programmi disponibili, si chiede alla Commissione:

1. Ci sono programmi per i quali la città di Chieti ha fatto richiesta?

2. In caso affermativo, quali sono i progetti che hanno avuto accesso a fondi europei e con quali risultati i suddetti programmi sono stati portati a termine.

Risposta di Janusz Lewandowski a nome della Commissione
(11 giugno 2012)

Le richieste di fondi diretti presentate dalla città di Chieti alla Commissione sono riportate nell'allegato, inviato direttamente all'onorevole parlamentare e al segretariato generale del Parlamento.

La Commissione nota che l'onorevole parlamentare è interessato ai finanziamenti concessi direttamente a città italiane nell'ambito di programmi specifici dell'UE gestiti dalla Commissione. Qualora l'onorevole parlamentare lo desiderasse, la Commissione potrebbe preparare una tabella contenente tali informazioni per le principali città italiane che potrebbero partecipare a questi programmi. La Commissione potrebbe in tal modo risparmiare il tempo impiegato per rispondere ad ogni singola interrogazione e fornire all'onorevole parlamentare un unico insieme di dati esaustivi.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003737/12
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Frances Silvestris (PPE)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Programmes for direct funds, city of Chieti

Local authorities, such as municipalities and provinces, are among the potential recipients of direct funds planned and granted by the Directorates-General of the European Commission. The available funds include: the cultural programme, the Progress programme for employment and social support, the Europe for Citizens citizenship programme, the Life+ programme for the environment, the Solidarity and Management of Migrant Flows programme, programmes dedicated to human resources, such as the Investing in People programme, and many others.

Regarding this and other available programmes, we ask the Commission:

1. Are there programmes for which the city of Chieti has submitted applications?

2. If so, which projects have been successful in securing European funding and what results have these programmes achieved?

Answer given by Mr Lewandowski on behalf of the Commission
(11 June 2012)

The requests for direct funding submitted by the City of Chieti to the Commission are presented in annex, sent directly to the Honourable Member and to Parliament's Secretariat.

The Commission notes that the Honourable Member is interested in the funding granted directly to Italian cities from specific EU programmes managed by the Commission. Should the Honourable Member so wish, the Commission could prepare a table providing this information for the major Italian cities likely to take part in these programmes. This would save the Commission time needed to reply to each individual question and provide the Honourable Member with one single set of comprehensive data.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003738/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Frances Silvestris (PPE)
(12 aprile 2012)

Oggetto: Programmi per fondi diretti, città di Teramo

Gli enti territoriali, quali Comuni e Province, sono tra i primi possibili beneficiari dei fondi diretti programmati ed erogati da parte delle direzioni generali della Commissione europea. Tra i fondi disponibili ci sono ad esempio: il programma «Cultura», il programma per l'occupazione e la solidarietà sociale «Progress», il programma per la cittadinanza «Europa per i cittadini», quello per l'ambiente «Life +», quello per gestire i flussi migratori denominato «Gestione flussi migratori» e quello dedicato alle risorse umane, ossia il programma «Investire nelle persone» e tanti altri.

In merito a questo e ad altri programmi disponibili, può la Commissione chiarire quanto segue:

1. esistono programmi per i quali la città di Teramo ha fatto richiesta?

2. In caso affermativo, quali sono i progetti che hanno avuto accesso a fondi europei e con quali risultati i suddetti programmi sono stati portati a termine?

Risposta di Janusz Lewandowski a nome della Commissione
(11 giugno 2012)

Finora la città di Teramo non ha ricevuto alcun finanziamento diretto dell'UE; nel 2011 ha presentato un progetto nell'ambito del programma Cultura che però non è stato accettato.

Se la Commissione ha capito correttamente, l'onorevole parlamentare è interessato ai finanziamenti concessi direttamente alle città italiane nel quadro di specifici programmi UE gestiti dalla Commissione. In tal caso, la Commissione è disposta a fornirgli una tabella contenente queste informazioni per le principali città italiane che probabilmente partecipano ai programmi in questione; ciò darebbe all'onorevole parlamentare un unico insieme esauriente di dati, evitando alla Commissione di dover rispondere a ogni singola domanda.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003738/12
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Frances Silvestris (PPE)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Direct funding programmes — city of Teramo

Regional authorities, such as municipalities and provinces, are among the first possible beneficiaries of direct funding planned and allocated by the Directorates-General of the European Commission. For example, the funds available include: the 'Culture' programme, the 'Progress' programme for employment and social solidarity, the 'Europe for citizens' citizenship programme, the 'Life+' environmental programme, the 'Management of migration flows' programme, which is self-explanatory, and the 'Investing in people' programme dedicated to human resources, and many others.

With regard to this and other available programmes, can the Commission please clarify the following:

1. Are there any programmes for which the city of Teramo has applied?

2. If so, which projects have had access to European funds and what results did these programmes have once completed?

Answer given by Mr Lewandowski on behalf of the Commission
(11 June 2012)

The City of Teramo has not so far benefited from any direct EU funding. In 2011 the city was involved in an unsuccessful project application under the Culture Programme.

The Commission notes that the Honourable Member is interested in the funding granted directly to Italian cities from specific EU programmes managed by the Commission. Should the Honourable Member so wish, the Commission could prepare a table providing this information for the major Italian cities likely to take part in these programmes. This would save the Commission time needed to reply to each individual question and provide the Honourable Member with one single set of comprehensive data.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-003739/12
aan de Commissie
Lambert van Nistelrooij (PPE) en Ria Oomen-Ruijten (PPE)
(12 april 2012)

Betreft: Toegankelijkheid (semi)publieke websites voor mensen met een beperking

Sommige lidstaten hebben maatregelen getroffen die ertoe moeten leiden dat voor een bepaalde datum (semi)publieke websites ook toegankelijk moeten zijn voor mensen met een beperking. Omdat de lidstaten thans onafhankelijk van elkaar dergelijke maatregelen treffen, is te verwachten dat dit binnen de EU zal leiden tot marktfragmentatie, hetgeen het vrije verkeer van personen, goederen en diensten in de weg staat. Om dit te voorkomen is harmonisatie op EU-niveau gewenst. In het licht hiervan de volgende vragen:

1. Is de Commissie bereid om bij de voorstellen in het kader van actiepunt 64 van de Digitale Agenda voor Europa rekening te houden met de hierboven geschetste problematiek?

2. Is de Commissie bereid te bevorderen dat de regelgeving betreffende de toegankelijkheid van (semi)publieke websites binnen de EU wordt geharmoniseerd?

3. Kan de Commissie aangeven waarom de voorstellen betreffend actiepunt 64 van de Digitale Agenda, die voor eind 2011 zijn aangekondigd, het Europees Parlement nog niet hebben bereikt, en wanneer deze zijn te verwachten?

Antwoord van mevrouw Kroes namens de Commissie
(4 juni 2012)

De Europese Commissie werkt momenteel aan een voorstel in verband met actiepunt 64 van de Digitale Agenda voor Europa. Het is gebaseerd op de constatering dat marktfragmentatie en onzekerheid bij de actoren als gevolg van verschillen in de nationale beleidsregelingen en specificaties voor webtoegankelijkheid de voornaamste obstakels zijn voor de verdere ontwikkeling van webtoegankelijkheid.

Het voorstel beoogt daarom de specificaties voor webtoegankelijkheid en de verslaglegging inzake de naleving te harmoniseren, met name voor een reeks basisoverheidsdiensten. Verwacht wordt dat er een spill-overeffect zal zijn naar andere belangrijke online-diensten voor burgers, enerzijds omdat dergelijke beschikbare en bekende eisen zo simpel zijn in het gebruik en anderzijds omdat toegankelijke webinhoud en ondersteuning van de toegankelijkheid gemeengoed worden in het marktaanbod. Dit zal uiteindelijk leiden tot een kostenverlaging voor overheden en burgers en de webtoegankelijkheid verbeteren. Hiermee wordt ook iets gedaan aan de uiteenlopende en negatieve ervaringen van gebruikers en de obstakels voor grensoverschrijdende activiteiten van bedrijven en vakmensen die producten en diensten leveren voor webtoegankelijkheid.

Er worden vorderingen gemaakt met het voorstel en verwacht wordt dat het over een paar maanden bij de Europese Commissie kan worden ingediend. De vertraging kan vooral worden toegeschreven aan de complexe aard van een norm die zich nog in een ontwikkelingsstadium bevindt, met inbegrip van de bijbehorende evaluatiemethode en het verband met de WC3 WCAG2.0-richtsnoeren. De Commissie zou het voorstel in juli 2012 moeten goedkeuren.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003739/12
to the Commission
Lambert van Nistelrooij (PPE) and Ria Oomen-Ruijten (PPE)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Accessibility of (semi) public sector websites for people with disabilities

Some Member States have taken measures aimed at ensuring that, by a particular date, (semi) public sector websites should also become accessible for people with disabilities. Because the Member States are currently taking such measures independently of each other, it is to be expected that this will lead to market fragmentation within the EU, which will impede the free movement of persons, goods and services. Harmonisation at EU level is needed in order to prevent this. In view of this:

1. Is the Commission prepared to take account of the issues outlined above in the proposals in connection with Action 64 of the Digital Agenda for Europe?

2. Is the Commission prepared to promote harmonisation of the rules on the accessibility of (semi) public sector websites within the EU?

3. Can the Commission say why the proposals concerning Action 64 of the Digital Agenda, which were announced before the end of 2011, have not yet been submitted to the European Parliament and when can this be expected?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(4 June 2012)

The European Commission is actually preparing a proposal in connection with action 64 of the Digital Agenda for Europe. It is based on the finding that main barriers to web-accessibility deployment are the market fragmentation and actors uncertainty due to different national policy arrangements and specifications for web-accessibility.

The proposal thus seeks the harmonisation at EU level of the web-accessibility specifications and the corresponding conformance reporting, specifically for a set of basic public services. The expectation is that a spill-over will follow to the other types of important online services for the citizens, via both the simplicity of using such available and known requirements and via the mainstreaming of the market offer for accessible web content and accessibility support. Ultimately this will generate cost benefits for governments and citizens, and an improved web-accessibility market. This would also counter different and disruptive user-experiences in different countries, as well as barriers for cross border operation of companies and professionals providing products and services for web-accessibility.

The proposal is progressing and submission to European Commission is expected within a few months. The delay stems in particular from the complexity encountered in refering to a standard still in its development stage, including for the corresponding assessment methology and for its connection to the WC3 WCAG2.0 guidelines. The proposal should be adopted by the Commission in July 2012.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-003740/12
aan de Commissie (Vicevoorzitter — Hoge Vertegenwoordiger)
Barry Madlener (NI)
(12 april 2012)

Betreft: VP/HR — Ankara en Teheran gaan nauwer samenwerken

1. Is de vicevoorzitter/hoge vertegenwoordiger op de hoogte van de recente ontmoeting tussen de Turkse premier Erdogan en de Iraanse Ahmadinejad ([1])?

2. Hoe beoordeelt de vicevoorzitter/hoge vertegenwoordiger het gegeven dat Turkije en Iran nauwer gaan samenwerken op het gebied van politiek, economie, cultuur en handelsrelaties?

3. Wat vindt de vicevoorzitter/hoge vertegenwoordiger van de uitspraken van Erdogan waarin hij zegt dat hij volledig achter de nucleaire ambities van Ahmadinejad staat en deze zelfs steunt?

4. Wat vindt de vicevoorzitter/hoge vertegenwoordiger van het gegeven dat kandidaat-lidstaat Turkije de EU-sancties ten opzichte van Iran volledig ondermijnt?

5. Is de vicevoorzitter/hoge vertegenwoordiger met de PVV van mening dat Turkije hiermee aantoont het kandidaat-lidmaatschap van de EU niet waardig te zijn? Zo neen, waarom niet?

Antwoord van hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter Ashton namens de Commissie
(15 juni 2012)

Turkije streeft naar optimale bilaterale betrekkingen met zijn buurland Iran. Het traditionele standpunt van Turkije inzake de nucleaire ambities van Iran is dat elk land, dus ook Iran, het recht heeft om kernenergie te ontwikkelen voor vreedzame doeleinden. Turkije is daarom voorstander van onderhandelingen om het internationale geschil over het Iraanse kernwapenprogramma op te lossen. Tegelijkertijd beschouwt Turkije de VN-sancties als bindend. Daarnaast is Turkije als kandidaat-lidstaat verplicht zich aan te passen aan de verklaringen en de regelgeving van de EU op het gebied van het gemeenschappelijk buitenlands en veiligheidsbeleid.

([1]) http://www.neurope.eu/article/ankara-tehran-expand-ties.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003740/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Barry Madlener (NI)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Ankara and Tehran to cooperate more closely

1. Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware of the recent meeting between Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan and Iran's President Ahmadinejad ([1])?

2. What view does the Vice-President/High Representative take of the fact that Turkey and Iran are going to cooperate more closely in the political, economic, cultural and trade areas?

3. What does the Vice-President/High Representative think of Mr Erdogan's statements to the effect that he fully agrees with President Ahmadinejad's nuclear ambitions and even supports them?

4. What view does the Vice-President/High Representative take of the fact that Turkey, a candidate for accession to the EU, is completely undermining the EU sanctions against Iran?

5. Does the Vice-President/High Representative agree with the Party for Freedom that, in doing so, Turkey is demonstrating that it does not deserve EU candidate country status? If not, why not?

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

As a neighbouring country to Iran, Turkey aspires to the best possible bilateral relations to Iran. Turkey's long-standing position on Iran's nuclear ambitions is that any country including Iran has the right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Turkey therefore supports a negotiated settlement to the international dispute on Iran's nuclear programme. In the meantime, it considers UN sanctions binding. In addition, as a candidate country, Turkey is requested to align itself with EU statements and regulations in the field of common foreign and security policy.

([1]) http://www.neurope.eu/article/ankara-tehran-expand-ties.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-003741/12
aan de Commissie (Vicevoorzitter — Hoge Vertegenwoordiger)
Barry Madlener (NI)
(12 april 2012)

Betreft: VP/HR — Stop ontwikkelingshulp voor Suriname

1. Is de vicevoorzitter/hoge vertegenwoordiger bereid, nu het Surinaamse parlement de zogenoemde amnestiewet heeft aangenomen, per direct de toegezegde 19,8 miljoen euro ([1]) aan ontwikkelingshulp voor Suriname stop te zetten? Zo neen, waarom niet?

2. Is de vicevoorzitter/hoge vertegenwoordiger bereid een reisverbod uit te vaardigen voor zowel de verdachten van de decembermoorden alsook voor de 28 parlementsleden die voor de amnestiewet hebben gestemd? Zo neen, waarom niet?

Antwoord van hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter Ashton namens de Commissie
(5 juli 2012)

De hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter is zich ervan bewust dat het aannemen van de gewijzigde amnestiewet gevolgen kan hebben voor het lopende proces met betrekking tot de decembermoorden van 1982, dat in 2007 is begonnen. De kwestie wordt nauwlettend gevolgd, maar momenteel worden geen strafmaatregelen overwogen zoals artikel 96 van de Overeenkomst van Cotonou tussen de EU en de staten in Afrika, het Caribisch gebied en de Stille Oceaan (ACS). Op 7 april 2012 heeft de woordvoerder van de hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter een verklaring afgelegd, waarin Suriname werd opgeroepen zijn internationale verplichtingen na te komen en het proces te voltooien tegen de huidige president Désiré Bouterse en 24 andere verdachten die ervan worden beschuldigd dertig jaar geleden vijftien politieke tegenstanders te hebben vermoord. Op gezette tijden is deze kwestie door de Raadsinstanties besproken. Daarnaast kwamen de aangelegenheden van de mensenrechten, de amnestiewet en de geplande Waarheids- en verzoeningscommissie ook ter sprake in de eerste politieke dialoog ex artikel 8 van de Overeenkomst van Cotonou die op 30 mei in Paramaribo met Suriname heeft plaatsgevonden. In het kader van deze dialoog heeft de EU op ondubbelzinnige wijze haar standpunt over de amnestiewet herhaald.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/acp/country-cooperation/suriname/suriname_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003741/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Barry Madlener (NI)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Stopping development aid to Suriname

1. Is the Vice-President/High Representative prepared, now that the Suriname Parliament has passed what is termed the 'amnesty law', to suspend with immediate effect the EUR 19.8 million ([1]) in development aid pledged to Suriname? If not, why not?

2. Is the Vice-President/High Representative prepared to impose a travel ban both on the suspects of the 'December Murders' and on the 28 parliament members who voted for the amnesty law? If not, why not?

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

The HR/VP is aware of the passing of the Amended Amnesty Law which may have an impact on the ongoing 'December 1982' trial opened in 2007. The issue is being closely monitored, but at this time, no consideration is being given to any punitive measures such as Article 96 of the EU — African, Caribbean and Pacific States (ACP) Cotonou Agreement. A statement by the HR/VP's Spokesperson was issued, on 7 April 2012, calling for Suriname to respect its international commitments and to allow the trial against current president Désiré Bouterse and 24 others for the murder of 15 opponents 30 years ago to be completed. The issue has regularly been on the agenda of Council fora. Furthermore, the first Cotonou Agreement Article 8 political dialogue with the country on 30 May in Paramaribo also included the topic of human rights, the Amnesty Law and the envisaged Truth and Reconciliation Commission. During this dialogue, the EU side reiterated in no uncertain terms its position on the issue of the Amnesty Law.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/acp/country-cooperation/suriname/suriname_en.htm

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-003744/12
alla Commissione
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(12 aprile 2012)

Oggetto: Verifica sull'utilizzo di fondi comunitari nella regione Calabria

Secondo quanto riportato da alcune agenzie di stampa italiane, si sarebbero verificate delle gravi irregolarità nell'utilizzo di fondi comunitari, il cui importo ammonterebbe a un milione e trecentomila euro.

Con il predetto finanziamento, che avrebbe dovuto essere utilizzato per la realizzazione di strutture alberghiere nella provincia di Vibo Valentia, in Calabria, si sarebbero in realtà coperti i costi relativi alla ristrutturazione di alcune abitazioni private e a costosi regali per i matrimoni di parenti e amici dei soggetti denunciati.

Può la Commissione riferire:

— se e quali siano stati gli accertamenti svolti per appurare la veridicità di quanto divulgato;

— quali siano stati la linea di bilancio e il progetto di afferenza cui è stato imputato l'importo di un milione e trecentomila euro riportato dagli organi di stampa;

— ulteriori informazioni sull'attività di rendicontazione svolta dai beneficiari del finanziamento.

Ritiene la Commissione che, qualora vengano effettivamente riscontrate le supposte irregolarità, sia possibile rientrare in possesso delle somme indebitamente utilizzate e con quali modalità?

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003963/12
alla Commissione
Rosario Crocetta (S&D), Mario Pirillo (S&D) e Andrea Cozzolino (S&D)
(16 aprile 2012)

Oggetto: Controllo della gestione dei fondi UE assegnati alle regioni

In data odierna è emerso l'ennesimo scandalo relativo a una cattiva gestione dei fondi UE assegnati alle regioni. Nella fattispecie, la Guardia di finanza di Vibo Valentia, nel corso di un'operazione condotta d'intesa con la Procura della Repubblica della stessa città, ha denunciato 63 persone e sottoposto a sequestro fondi e beni appartenenti alle persone indagate per truffa nei confronti dell'Unione europea. Nella suddetta inchiesta, i fondi dell'UE destinati al finanziamento di strutture alberghiere B&B sarebbero stati, invece, utilizzati per costruire abitazioni private e persino per effettuare regali di vario tipo. Nella medesima inchiesta, risultano indagati funzionari pubblici della regione Calabria, collaudatori di strutture e titolari di aziende. Poiché la vicenda descritta rende evidenti le falle del sistema di controllo operato dalle regioni e il ripetersi di frodi e truffe ai danni dell'Unione costituisce danno all'erario e a tutti i cittadini dell'intera EU, può dire la Commissione se, alla luce dei fatti odierni e delle numerose vicende giudiziarie che hanno riguardato le gestione dei fondi UE, non ritenga ormai necessaria l'introduzione di una regolamentazione più severa e stringente in materia di controllo sull'utilizzo di tutti i fondi assegnati alle regioni?

Risposta congiunta data da Johannes Hahn a nome della Commissione
(30 maggio 2012)

In linea con il principio di gestione condivisa usato per l'amministrazione della politica di coesione, la prevenzione, l'individuazione e la correzione delle irregolarità nonché il recupero degli importi indebitamente versati a motivo delle stesse rientrano nei compiti precipui degli Stati membri. La Commissione partecipa pienamente a tutte queste fasi poiché gli Stati membri hanno l'obbligo di notificarle tutte le irregolarità e di tenerla informata dell'andamento dei procedimenti amministrativi e legali. La Commissione ha inoltre posto in atto tutti gli strumenti possibili per garantire un uso e una gestione sani delle risorse finanziarie. Gli Stati membri e la Commissione cooperano attivamente per garantire un uso sano ed efficace del denaro dei contribuenti. Nel complesso, l'intero sistema di audit e di controllo della politica di coesione è stato rafforzato nel corso dell'attuale periodo di programmazione. Nel periodo corrente la Commissione ha il potere, in caso di irregolarità e a seconda della gravità della fattispecie, di sospendere in toto o in parte i pagamenti relativi ai programmi o, in caso di mancato accordo alla fine di un contraddittorio con gli Stati membri, di apportare correzioni finanziarie.

La Commissione ha chiesto all'autorità di gestione della Regione Calabria informazioni sulla questione sollevata dall'onorevole deputato. Il programma interessato dalle presunte irregolarità è il programma regionale 2000-2006 (FESR), in particolare la misura 1.10b. Il programma è attualmente all'esame nel contesto delle procedure di chiusura del periodo 2000-2006. Tutti i progetti ritenuti irregolari nell'ambito di tale procedura saranno esclusi dal finanziamento ad opera del FESR e tutti i pagamenti già effettuati saranno recuperati.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-003744/12
to the Commission
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Checks on the use of EU funds in the Calabria region

According to reports from a number of Italian news agencies, serious irregularities are alleged to have arisen in connection with the use of EU funds, involving a total of EUR 1.3 million.

The funds in question, which were intended for the construction of hotel facilities in the province of Vibo Valentia, in Calabria, are alleged to have been used to cover the cost of renovating a number of private residences and to buy expensive wedding gifts for friends and relatives of the recipients.

Can the Commission say what, if any, checks have been carried out to ascertain the truth of the reports?

Against which budget heading was the amount of EUR 1.3 million which is the subject of the news agency reports entered, and which EU project was involved?

Can the Commission provide any further information on the efforts the recipients of the funds have made to account for their use?

Should the alleged irregularities be confirmed, does it believe that the amounts improperly used can be recovered, and by what method?

Question for written answer E-003963/12
to the Commission
Rosario Crocetta (S&D), Mario Pirillo (S&D) and Andrea Cozzolino (S&D)
(16 April 2012)

Subject: Monitoring the management of EU regional funding

Yet another scandal has emerged regarding the mismanagement of EU regional funding. In this latest case, the Vibo Valentia *Guardia di Finanza* (finance police), in an operation conducted in consultation with the town's Public Prosecutor, charged 63 people and seized funds and goods belonging to persons under investigation for fraud against the European Union. The inquiry revealed that EU funds intended to finance B&Bs were apparently used instead to pay for private house-building and even for gifts of various kinds. Civil servants from the Calabria region, structural surveyors and business proprietors were also investigated in the same inquiry. Given that the case described exposes the loopholes in the inspection system operated by the regions and that the repeated instances of fraud against the Union are harmful to the public coffers and every citizen throughout the EU, can the Commission say whether, in view of current events and the numerous earlier judicial proceedings relating to the management of EU funds, it does not now consider it necessary to lay down more severe and stringent rules governing checks on the use made of regional funding as a whole?

Joint answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(30 May 2012)

In line with the shared management principle used for the administration of cohesion policy, the prevention, detection and correction of irregularities as well as the recovery of amounts unduly paid as a result of the former fall within the core duties of Member States. The Commission is fully involved in all these phases, as Member States have the duty to notify it of all irregularities and keep it informed of the progress of administrative and legal proceedings. The Commission has, moreover, put in place all possible instruments to guarantee a sound use and management of financial resources. Member States and the Commission cooperate actively to guarantee a sound and effective use of taxpayers' money. Overall, the entire audit and control system of cohesion policy has been strengthened during the current programming period. In the current period, the Commission has the power, in the case of irregularities, and depending on the seriousness of the case, to suspend all or part of the payments in programmes or, in the event of non-agreement at the end of a contradictory procedure with the Member State, to make financial corrections.

The Commission has asked for information on the issue from the managing authority of the Calabria region. The programme concerned by the alleged irregularities is the 2000-2006 regional programme (ERDF), notably measure 1.10b. The programme is currently being examined as part of the closure procedures of the 2000-2006 period. All projects considered irregular within the context of the procedure will be excluded from funding by the ERDF and any payment already executed will be recovered.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-003746/12
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(12 de abril de 2012)

Asunto: Paridad en el Gobierno de Rajoy

Vista la Carta de los Derechos Fundamentales de la Unión Europea y, en particular, sus artículos 21 y 23.

Considerando la Resolución del Parlamento Europeo, de 13 de marzo de 2012, sobre la representación de las mujeres en los procesos de toma de decisiones políticas: calidad e igualdad (2011/2295(INI)) ([1]) donde se reconocen que las medidas de acción positiva, las cuotas y las listas cerradas son determinantes para que la mujeres puedan estar en pie de igualdad en la toma de decisiones públicas.

Considerando también que el nuevo gobierno del Partido Popular en España no se aproxima siquiera a la paridad ya que cuenta con una vicepresidenta y tres ministras sobre un total de trece carteras. De los 308 nombramientos realizados por el Gabinete en los primeros 100 días de mandato, el 71,8 % corresponden a hombres y el 28,2 %, a mujeres, según el análisis realizado por *El País*. Este desequilibrio además va en contra de los principios que consagra la Ley de Igualdad.

1. ¿Considera la Comisión que el nuevo Gobierno de Mariano Rajoy va en contra de los principios fundamentales de igualdad de la Unión Europea?

2. ¿Qué medidas piensa adoptar la Comisión para hacer vinculantes las recomendaciones del informe INI 2011/2295 nombrado?

3. ¿Considera evidente la necesidad de aplicar un reglamento sobre el sistema de cuotas femeninas en altos cargos públicos?

Respuesta de la Sra. Reding en nombre de la Comisión
(31 de mayo de 2012)

Garantizar la igualdad de participación de las mujeres y los hombres en la vida política y en las elecciones sigue siendo competencia de los Estados miembros y de los partidos políticos teniendo en cuenta sus contextos y normas nacionales.

La Estrategia para la igualdad entre mujeres y hombres (2010-2015) ([2]) tiene entre sus prioridades la promoción de la representación paritaria en la toma de decisiones y la Comisión ya está llevando a cabo diversas acciones en este sentido. La Comisión apoya a las distintas partes interesadas para mejorar la situación a través del diálogo político, el desarrollo de indicadores comunes a escala de la UE para medir los progresos realizados, las actividades de sensibilización, la promoción de buenas prácticas y el apoyo financiero. La Comisión supervisa periódicamente la situación a través de su base de datos sobre hombres y mujeres en la toma de decisiones ([3]), su «Informe sobre los progresos realizados para promover la igualdad entre mujeres y hombres» que se publica anualmente y otros informes temáticos sobre las mujeres y los hombres en la toma de decisiones.

La competencia de la UE sobre igualdad de género en materia de empleo y asuntos sociales, establecida en el artículo 157, apartado 3, del TFUE, no se extiende al orden político y constitucional de los Estados miembros.

([1]) P7_TA-PROV(2012)0070.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/document/index_en.htm
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003746/12
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Parity in Rajoy's government

Having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and in particular Articles 21 and 23 thereof;

Whereas the European Parliament Resolution of 13 March 2012 on women in political decision-making — quality and equality (2011/2295(INI)) ([1]) recognises that positive measures, quotas and closed lists are determining factors for women to be able to stand on an equal footing in public decision-making;

Whereas the new People's Party administration in Spain is not even close to parity, since it has a female vice president and three female ministers out of a total of 13 portfolios; of the 308 appointments made by the Cabinet in the administration's first 100 days, 71.8 % were men and 28.2 % were women, according to the analysis performed by *El País*. This imbalance is also contrary to the principles enshrined in the Law on Equality;

1. Does the Commission take the view that Mariano Rajoy's new government is acting contrary to the European Union's fundamental principles of equality?

2. What measures does the Commission plan to adopt in order to make the recommendations of the aforementioned INI 2011/2295 report binding?

3. Does the Commission think that there is a need to apply a regulation to the gender quota system in high-ranking public positions?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(31 May 2012)

Ensuring equal participation of women and men in political life and in elections remains under the competence of Member States and political parties taking into account their national contexts and rules.

The Commission's Strategy for Equality between Women and Men (2010-2015) ([2]) has amongst its priorities the promotion of equal representation in decision-making and various actions are implemented by the Commission. The Commission supports the various actors involved to improve the situation through political dialogue, development of common indicators at EU level to measure progress, awareness-raising activities, promotion of good practices, financial support. The Commission monitors regularly the situation through its database on women and men in decision-making ([3]), its 'Report on Progress on Equality between Women and Men' published annually and other relevant thematic reports on women and men in decision-making.

The EU competence on gender equality in employment and social matters, established in Article 157(3) TFEU, does not extend to political and constitutional orders of Member States.

([1]) P7_TA-PROV(2012)0070.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/document/index_en.htm
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/index_en.htm

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-003747/12
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(12 de abril de 2012)

Asunto: Balas de goma

Siguiendo la pregunta E-008376/2011 presentada por Raül Romeva el pasado mes de septiembre sobre el uso de pelotas de goma y su posible prohibición, la Comisión Europea dio una respuesta negativa a la misma. Sin embargo, el 5 de junio de 2011 un artículo en «El Mundo» daba a entender que la Comisión había pedido directamente a las diferentes policías que dejaran de usarlas. El periódico «Gara» ([1]) reiteraba la recomendación de la Comisión a la Ertzaintza de retirar el uso de las pelotas de goma el pasado día 10 de abril.

Desde septiembre, en España han ocurrido más incidentes relacionado con el uso de pelotas de goma. El jueves 29 de marzo un joven perdió un ojo en Barcelona por un impacto de pelota y otro joven fue ingresado en la UCI en Gasteiz, según la versión policial tras golpearse al huir y según los testigos presenciales por un disparo a bocajarro.

El jueves 5 de abril un joven resultó herido en Bilbao tras el partido Athletic-Schalke 04 y falleció el lunes 9. Las versiones de testigos y policías fueron otra vez diferentes hasta que el martes 10 la autopsia confirmo que la causa de la muerte había sido el impacto de una pelota de goma ([2]) lanzada a corta distancia.

¿Conoce la Comisión estos hechos? ¿Sabe la Comisión si los cuerpos policiales, los Mossos y la Ertzaintza, han tomado alguna medida respecto esas recomendaciones? ¿Podría reconsiderar la Comisión la decisión de prohibir definitivamente el uso de balas de goma en la Unión Europea?

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-003801/12
a la Comisión
Ana Miranda (Verts/ALE)
(13 de abril de 2012)

Asunto: Utilización de pelotas de goma en cargas policiales

El pasado viernes 6 de abril, un joven fue atacado por las fuerzas policiales del País Vasco con una bala de goma, que impactó directamente en su cráneo, falleciendo éste 3 días más tarde a consecuencia del disparo. El consejero de Interior del Gobierno Vasco, el señor Rodolfo Ares, máximo dirigente de la «Ertzaintza» o cuerpo policial vasco, primero negó que la herida fuera producida por una bala de goma y después ordenó abrir una investigación para esclarecer los hechos.

Teniendo en cuenta que la Comisión Europea desaconseja el uso de pelotas de goma en las congregaciones multitudinarias, y siendo conscientes de que España y Portugal son los únicos Estados miembros que aún hoy hacen gran uso de ellas, sin seguir las recomendaciones de la Comisión en este aspecto, llegando a causar la muerte de civiles;

¿Qué opinión le merece a la Comisión que un cuerpo de policía pueda llegar a matar a ciudadanos con proyectiles desaconsejados por la Comisión?

¿Va la Comisión a seguir la investigación del caso de la muerte del joven?

¿Cree la Comisión que la investigación abierta por el consejero de Interior del Gobierno Vasco, máximo responsable del cuerpo de policía que efectuó los disparos, será neutral y objetiva, habiendo éste negado los hechos, y ocultado información desde el primer momento?

([1]) http://www.gara.net/paperezkoa/20120410/333684/es/Europa-insto-Lakua-dejar-disparar-pelotas.
([2]) http://www.elcorreo.com/vizcaya/v/20120411/pvasco-espana/pelotazo-cercano-mato-inigo-20120411.html

¿Qué certezas puede dar la Comisión de que las balas de goma no volverán a ser usadas indiscriminadamente cada vez que haya un mínimo altercado?

Respuesta conjunta de la Sra. Malmström en nombre de la Comisión

(29 de mayo de 2012)

La Comisión Europea no tiene competencias para intervenir en las medidas de vigilancia de las actividades de las fuerzas policiales nacionales. El artículo 72 del Tratado de Funcionamiento de la Unión Europea establece claramente que los propios Estados miembros son responsables del mantenimiento del orden público y la salvaguardia de la seguridad interior.

La legislación de la UE no prohíbe el uso de pelotas de goma por parte de las fuerzas de policía. La Comisión no tiene intención de proponer legislación que prohíba dicha utilización.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003747/12
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Rubber bullets

Following Question E-008376/2011 submitted by Raül Romeva in September 2011 on the use of rubber bullets and their possible prohibition, the European Commission answered the question in the negative. Nevertheless, on 5 June 2011, an article in *El Mundo* suggested that the Commission had directly asked the various police forces to stop using them. The *Gara* newspaper ([1]) repeated the Commission's recommendation to the Basque regional police force to stop using rubber bullets, on 10 April 2012.

Since September 2011, more incidents linked to the use of rubber bullets have occurred in Spain. On Thursday, 29 March 2012, a young man lost an eye in Barcelona because of a wound caused by a rubber bullet. Another young man was brought to the ICU in Gasteiz after being hit, according to the police version, as he fled, and, according to witnesses, by a shot fired at point-blank range.

On Thursday, 5 April 2012, a young man was wounded in Bilbao after the Athletic-Schalke 04 football game and later died on Monday, 9 April 2012. The versions of the story from witnesses and the police again differed, that is until Tuesday, 10 April 2012, when the autopsy confirmed that the cause of death had been the impact of a rubber bullet ([2]) fired from a short distance.

Is the Commission aware of these facts? Does the Commission know whether the police force of the Autonomous Community of Catalonia and the Basque regional police force have taken any measures in relation to those recommendations? Would the Commission be able to reconsider the decision to definitively prohibit the use of rubber bullets in the European Union?

Question for written answer E-003801/12
to the Commission
Ana Miranda (Verts/ALE)
(13 April 2012)

Subject: Use of rubber bullets in police charges

On Friday 6 April 2012, a young man was attacked by the police force of the Basque Country with a rubber bullet. The bullet struck his skull directly and he died three days later as a result of the shot. The Basque Government's Minister for the Interior, Rodolfo Ares, who, as such, bears ultimate responsibility for *Ertzaintza* (the Basque police force) first denied that the injury had been caused by a rubber bullet and then ordered an investigation to clarify the facts.

Given that the Commission advises against the use of rubber bullets in mass gatherings and that Spain and Portugal are the only Member States that still make extensive use of them, ignoring the Commission's recommendations in this respect and to the point of causing the death of civilians:

What is the Commission's opinion of the fact that a police force can go so far as to kill citizens with bullets the use of which the Commission advises against?

Will the Commission be monitoring the investigation into the young man's death?

Does the Commission believe that the investigation opened by the Basque Government's interior minister, who bears ultimate responsibility for the police force that fired the shots, will be neutral and objective, given that he denied the facts and withheld information from the outset?

([1]) http://www.gara.net/paperezkoa/20120410/333684/es/Europa-insto-Lakua-dejar-disparar-pelotas.
([2]) http://www.elcorreo.com/vizcaya/v/20120411/pvasco-espana/pelotazo-cercano-mato-inigo-20120411.html

What assurances can the Commission give that rubber bullets will not be used indiscriminately again whenever there is the slightest altercation?

Joint answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(29 May 2012)

The European Commission has no competence to intervene in policing measures of national police forces. Article 72 of the Treaty on Functioning of the European Union makes clear that that Member States themselves are responsible for the maintenance of law and order and the safeguarding of internal security in their country.

EC law does not prohibit the use of rubber bullets by police forces. The Commission does not intend to propose legislation banning such use.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003749/12
to the Commission
Marta Andreasen (EFD)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Follow-up to Question E-010607/11 on tenders

With reference to the Commission's answer to my Question E-010607/11, I note that apart from the Joint Research Centre (JRC), the two Commission Directorates-General with the lowest number of tenders are DG Human Resources (HR) and the Office for Infrastructure and Logistics in Brussels (OIB).

The answers to my questions reveal that the OIB has one of the lowest average number of tenders received per procurement procedure, whereas the products and services it procures do not seem to be as sophisticated as those procured by a DG such as JRC. For the latter, with an average number of 3.1 tenders, a plausible explanation has been provided.

1. What is the explanation for the low average number of tenders that DG HR (3.3 tenders) and the OIB (3.5 tenders) have received per procurement procedure?

It is public knowledge that OLAF in the past has investigated OIB for alleged irregularities in the purchase of materials (see previous EP questions E-5819/06, E-3721/07 and E-3795/09), and that some Belgian judicial procedures have been set in motion.

While the principle of presumption of innocence should be respected, indicators like this may be a reason for concern.

The Commission's rotation policy covers, with exceptional derogations, staff in so-called 'sensitive posts', meaning that such posts cannot be held for more than a certain number of years. One reason for this rotation is to prevent collusion, nepotism and corruption.

2. Are all staff members at the OIB with authority to take decisions on public procurement procedures, and who therefore should be considered to hold 'sensitive posts', transferred from these after a certain number of years?

3. If not, why is a post that entails authority to take decisions on public procurement procedures not considered a 'sensitive post'?

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(25 June 2012)

1. The relatively low average number of bids received by DG HR and OIB is linked to the characteristics of the tenders. They concern services to be provided locally in the Commission premises which may discourage contractors not yet locally represented. Several tenders also relate to specialised services (e.g. security, medical services, building equipment, etc) supplied by a limited number of operators and there is sometimes no other alternative but launching negotiated procedures with one operator on the basis of Article 126(1)(b) of the implementing rules. Finally, some tenders concern services requiring an important number of staff or investment, which makes them inaccessible to smaller companies.

In contrast, tenders for straightforward services receive many bids and the average number of bids has increased from 2010 to 2011. In order to increase competition, DG HR and OIB advertise in particular via the web, in addition to the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

2 and 3. The risks linked to sensitive functions are carefully managed by OIB through specific controls and staff mobility in line with the internal control standards. Decisions related to procurement are always taken by members of staff whose posts are flagged as sensitive. In addition, the mobility of OIB's Director is governed by the Commission Decision on the creation of the Office ([1]), which establishes the provisions on his functions, in particular the duration of his mandate. Middle management functions are subject to mobility based on the related Commission Decision ([2]). Staff responsible for the technical specifications of tenders (above EUR 60 000 annually) are also subject to mobility requirements.

([1]) 2003/523/CE.
([2]) C(2005)504.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003750/12
to the Commission
Marta Andreasen (EFD)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Follow-up to Question E-010608/11 on absence from the workplace

— Responding to my question on absenteeism, the Commission answered that the level of absence was below 4 % both in 2010 and in the first six months of 2011.Can the Commission provide a yearly breakdown of harmonised data on absenteeism in the last five years, including the second half of 2011?

— The Commission also replied that it was unwilling to produce harmonised statistics on absence within units and sections of the various DGs, although the 40 resource managers must have provided input for the abovementioned average. Which are the five best-performing and five worst-performing DGs? What are the reasons given by each of the DGs with the highest levels of absenteeism?

— Should the Commission not have the information and if it is concerned about the prevention of and early warnings about mismanagement, I suggest that it create harmonised absenteeism data — including within units and sections — to help identify possible mismanagement problems. This does not have to be incompatible with the revised Internal Control Standards for Effective Management which the Commission spoke about in its answer to Question E-010608/11.

— Please also provide a comparison with absenteeism figures for other institutions and agencies.

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(6 June 2012)

The Commission regrets that it cannot provide the information requested and it refers the Honourable Member to its answer to her Written Question E-10608/11 ([1]).

The Commission would like to inform the Honourable Member that it can only reply on its own behalf.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/QP-WEB/application/home.do?language=EN.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003752/12
to the Commission
Marta Andreasen (EFD)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Follow-up to Question E-010609/11 on psychological harassment — Part 2

The Commission's answer to my question on harassment revealed some interesting data, but what cannot be found in its answer is even more interesting. I therefore have to ask these follow-up questions to point 5, 6 and 7 of my Question E-010609/11:

5. Can the Commission make a breakdown by Directorate-General and service of the 61 complaints lodged under Article 24 of the Staff Regulations for moral harassment between 2006 and 2010?

6. In annual reports, the Commission's Mediator has recommended that the Commission encourage the transfer to other units of staff members who feel harassed. Could the Commission explain what has caused the Mediator to recommend this, whether it has implemented the recommendation, and whether it has tried to find out about the good practices used by other institutions or agencies to tackle this issue?

7. The Commission replied that in the last five years the Belgian authorities have not intervened in response to harassment, although they are able to do so under rules and procedures laid down in EU primary law. Could the Commission provide figures on how often it (or any of its employees) has been sued by its staff in the Belgian courts following a complaint of moral harassment at work? Could it provide separate figures for industrial tribunals, actions for damages in the civil courts and cases in the criminal courts?

In how many cases did the Belgian courts (again with separate figures for industrial tribunals, civil courts and criminal courts) determine that moral harassment had indeed taken place at the Commission?

Answer given by M Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(14 June 2012)

5. The Commission regrets not being able to provide the information. Due to the few cases involved and the risk of identifying individual cases, the Commission must refrain from giving away information which is confidential.

6. In application of Article 5 paragraph 1 of the Commission decision of 4th March 2002 on the reinforced Mediation Service, the Mediation Service submits each year to the Commission an activity report which may include general recommendations with a view to improve relations between staff and the administration and to prevent similar problems from arising in the future.

In the context of its annual reports, the Mediation Service has regularly recommended to use a mechanism of rapid mobility as an effective tool to solve certain relational conflicts. In addition, such a mechanism could also help to apply the 'emergency measures' which are foreseen in the Commission Decision on the European Commission policy on protecting the dignity of the person and preventing psychological harassment and sexual harassment.

7. The Commission would like to correct the impression that Member States' jurisdictions are in principle competent to deal with matters of harassment involving staff members of the European institutions. The lodging of harassment cases in national courts may have occurred in very limited cases, e.g. in cases of erroneous choice of jurisdiction or of matters involving 'non statutory staff'. To the knowledge of the Commission, there is currently one such case pending before a Belgian labour court (Tribunal du travail).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003753/12
to the Commission
Marta Andreasen (EFD)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Follow-up to Question E-010610/11 on dismissals

Part 4 of my Question E-010610/11, regarding the number of contract staff and temporary staff offered the possibility of having their probationary periods extended in other units, was not answered. The follow-up question below could have been avoided had the Commission answered the original question fully.

Please provide, in tabular form, the numbers of staff who, in each of the past five years:

1. were offered the possibility of carrying out their extended probationary periods in a different unit;

2. were offered only the possibility of having their probationary periods extended in the same unit;

3. were dismissed at the end of their probationary period, with no extension.

Please specify these figures for each of the following three categories: contract staff, temporary staff and officials.

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(4 June 2012)

The research required to provide a detailed answer to the Honourable Member's questions would be out of all proportion to the result obtained and would be inappropriate in the context of answering a written question.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003755/12
to the Commission
Marina Yannakoudakis (ECR)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Drug-resistant strains of TB and the European Union's HIV policies

As the WHO's MDR-TB Action Plan demonstrates, there is an urgent need to address the spread of drug-resistant strains of TB in the region. Equally importantly, TB is the immediate cause of a quarter of all AIDS-related deaths, and drug-resistant strains of TB are almost always fatal for patients who are HIV-positive. What plans does the Commission have to ensure that the European Union's HIV policies include measures to address the spread of drug-resistant strains of TB?

Answer given by Mr Dalli on behalf of the Commission
(14 June 2012)

The Commission is aware of the spread of drug-resistant tuberculosis (TB) strains and of the fatalities related to AIDS patients.

HIV/TB co-infections are an issue addressed in the Commission communication on 'Combating HIV/AIDS in the EU and neighbouring countries, 2009-2013' ([1]) and a major topic in discussions with EU Member States and neighbouring countries in the HIV/AIDS Think Tank and Civil Society Forum meetings.

The Commission has funded different projects addressing HIV/B co-infections.

Through the Health Programme, the Commission has supported projects such as the TUBIDU project — Empowering civil society and public health system to fight TB epidemic among vulnerable groups; the 'IMP.AC.T' project to improve access to testing for HIV/TB; and a project to identify HIV/co-infection prevention strategies.

The Commission has also supported the surveillance of HIV/AIDS and TB, including TB drug-resistant cases in the EU, surveillance which is now run by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) in close collaboration with WHO Europe.

In addition, through the EU Framework Programmes for Research, the Commission has also supported, for example, the EUCO-NET project on strategy for HIV-TB co-infections and the Eurocoord network of excellence focused on improving the management of TB in HIV-positive people.

Furthermore, the Commission is a major funder of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and thus supports national HIV/TB responses in EU, European Neighbourhood Policy countries and in the Russian Federation.

([1]) COM(2009) 569.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-003756/12
à la Commission
François Alfonsi (Verts/ALE)
(12 avril 2012)

Objet: la protection des droits de la minorité turque en Thrace occidentale (Grèce)

Le statut juridique et les droits de la minorité turque en Thrace occidentale (Grèce) sont définis par le traité de Lausanne de 1923. Et la Grèce est obligée d'agir en accord avec les dispositions de la section III de ce traité qui concerne la protection des minorités (articles 37 à 45).

Les obligations de la Grèce prévues à la section III de ce traité qui concerne la protection des minorités incluent le maintien d'un droit égal à créer, diriger et contrôler à leurs frais toutes institutions charitables, religieuses ou sociales, toutes écoles et autres établissements d'enseignement et d'éducation, avec le droit d'y faire librement usage de leur propre langue et d'y exercer librement leur religion.

Pendant la période qui a suivi le coup d'état des colonels de 1967, la minorité turque de Thrace occidentale a fait l'objet d'une répression et d'une discrimination systématiques. Au cours de cette période, les droits des membres de cette minorité ont systématiquement été bafoués par la junte. Et les structures autonomes garanties par le traité de Lausanne ont été détruites par des atteintes continuelles et massives aux Droits de l'homme. Ceci constitue clairement une violation de ce traité et d'autres traités internationaux signés par la Grèce, ainsi que des principes et des valeurs qui sous-tendent l'Union européenne.

Bien que l'on a constaté certaines améliorations en matière de droits individuels des membres de la minorité turque en Thrace occidentale, bon nombre des problèmes majeurs qui concernent l'exercice collectif des droits de la minorité sont toujours présents. Les structures autonomes dans les domaines de la religion et de l'enseignement n'ont pas été totalement rétablies par le gouvernement grec.

Eu égard à ce qui précède, peut-on insister auprès du gouvernement grec pour qu'il respecte, protège et défende les droits garantis par le traité de Lausanne et permette la restauration des structures autonomes de cette minorité? Le gouvernement grec agirait ainsi en parfait accord avec les dispositions de ce traité et des principaux traités internationaux sur les Droits de l'homme dont la Grèce fait partie.

La Commission peut-elle faire savoir quelles mesures elle entend adopter pour protéger les droits des membres des minorités traditionnelles et des communautés nationales et linguistiques dans les États membres, étant donné que ces derniers sont tenus de respecter les droits des membres des minorités, par le traité de Lisbonne et la charte des droits fondamentaux?

Réponse donnée par Mme Viviane Reding au nom de la Commission
(25 mai 2012)

Ainsi qu'elle l'a expliqué, par exemple, dans sa réponse à la question écrite E-001067/2012, la Commission n'a pas de compétences générales en ce qui concerne les minorités. Elle n'a notamment pas de compétence concernant la définition de ce qui constitue une minorité nationale, la reconnaissance du statut des minorités, leur droit à disposer d'elles-mêmes et leur autonomie ou le régime régissant l'emploi des langues régionales ou minoritaires, ces questions relevant de la responsabilité des États membres.

Dans le champ d'application du droit de l'Union européenne, la Commission veille à ce que les États membres, lorsqu'ils appliquent ce droit, respectent les droits fondamentaux, y compris le principe de non-discrimination inscrit à l'article 21 de la charte. En outre, la législation de l'UE et ses programmes de financement contribuent à remédier à certains problèmes susceptibles de toucher les personnes appartenant à des minorités, tels que la discrimination et l'incitation à la violence ou à la haine fondée sur la race ou l'origine nationale ou ethnique ([1]).

([1]) Pour plus d'informations, veuillez consulter le site internet de la DG Justice: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/racism-xenophobia/index_fr.htm.

La Commission soutient également des projets relatifs aux langues régionales et minoritaires au moyen de divers programmes, notamment dans les domaines de l'éducation et de la formation, de la culture et de la jeunesse. Le programme pour l'éducation et la formation tout au long de la vie, en particulier, finance des projets visant à promouvoir l'apprentissage des langues et la diversité linguistique, que ce soit dans le cadre des différents sous-programmes (Comenius, Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci ou Grundtvig) ou au titre de son volet transversal (activité clé n° 2 «Langues»).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003756/12
to the Commission
François Alfonsi (Verts/ALE)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Protection of the rights of the Turkish minority in western Thrace (Greece))

The legal status and rights of the Turkish minority in western Thrace (Greece) are determined by the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923, and Greece is obliged to act in accordance with the provisions of Section III of that treaty dealing with the protection of minorities (Articles 37 to 45).

The obligations assumed by Greece under Section III of this treaty dealing with the protection of minorities include upholding the minorities' equal right to establish, manage and control, at their own expense, any charitable, religious and social institutions and any schools or other establishments for instruction and education, together with the right to use their own language and to exercise their own religion freely therein.

In the period following the Colonels' coup of 1967, the Turkish minority in western Thrace suffered systematic repression and discrimination. During that period, the rights of the members of that minority were systematically violated by the junta, and the autonomous structures guaranteed by the Treaty of Lausanne were destroyed with persistent and massive violations of human rights, in clear breach of that treaty and of other international treaties to which Greece is a party, as well as of the principles and values inspiring the European Union.

While there have been some improvements in terms of the individual rights of members of the Turkish minority in western Thrace, many of the major problems regarding the collective exercise of minority rights remain. The autonomous structures in the fields of religion and education have not fully been restored by the Greek Government.

In the light of the above, can the Greek Government be urged to respect, protect and promote the rights enshrined in the Treaty of Lausanne and allow the restoration of the autonomous structures of this minority, thus acting in full compliance with the provisions of that treaty and the core international human rights treaties to which Greece is a party?

What does the Commission intend to do to protect the rights of members of traditional minorities and national and language communities in the Member States, given that the latter are, under the Treaty of Lisbon and the Charter of Fundamental Rights, obliged to respect the rights of members of minorities?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(25 May 2012)

As explained for instance in its reply to Written Question E-001067/2012, the Commission has no general powers as regards minorities. In particular, the Commission has no competence over matters concerning the definition of what is a national minority, the recognition of the status of minorities, their self-determination and autonomy or the regime governing the use of regional or minority languages, which fall under the responsibility of the Member States.

Within the scope of European Union law, the Commission ensures that Member States, when implementing this law, respect fundamental rights, including the principle of non-discrimination provided in Article 21 of the Charter. Furthermore, EU legislation and financing programmes contribute to address certain difficulties which are likely to affect persons belonging to minorities, such as discrimination and incitement to violence or hatred based on race or national or ethnic origin ([1]).

The Commission supports also projects related to regional and minority languages through a variety of programmes, including in areas such as education and training, culture and youth support. In particular, the Lifelong Learning Programme finances projects to promote language learning and linguistic diversity, either through the different sub-programmes (Comenius, Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci or Grundtvig) or through its transversal programme (key activity 2 'Languages').

([1]) For further information, please see DG Justice website at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/racism-xenophobia/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003757/12
to the Commission
William (The Earl of) Dartmouth (EFD)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: GSP+ scheme — illegal under international law?

Resolution 3281 (XXIX) of the United Nations General Assembly, of 12 December 1974, and in particular Article 32 thereof, declares that 'no State may use or encourage the use of economic, political or any other type of measures to coerce another State in order to obtain from it the subordination of the exercise of its sovereign rights'. The EU GSP+ scheme requires countries to make huge legal commitments, and thus uses economic coercion to force sovereign nation states to change their laws. Does the Commission concede that the GSP+ scheme violates the abovementioned UN resolution?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(15 May 2012)

The special incentive arrangement for sustainable development and good governance (GSP+) is a fully voluntary scheme for additional tariff preferences which countries can apply for if they so wish. Therefore, the Commission fails to see the connection with the prohibition of coercion used against States with the purpose of obtaining from them the subordination of the exercise of their sovereign rights as reflected in Article 32 of the Resolution to which the Honourable Member refers.

Furthermore, the Commission wishes to recall that one of the fundamental objectives of the said Resolution is the acceleration of the economic growth of developing countries with the view to bridging the economic gap between developing and developed countries and the overcoming of the main obstacles in the way of development of these countries. With regards to tariff preferences, the United Nations General Assembly Resolution urges developed countries to extend, improve and enlarge the system of generalised, non-reciprocal and non-discriminatory tariff preferences to the developing countries consistent with the relevant agreed conclusions and relevant decisions of international organisations.

The Commission is confident that the GSP+ scheme as applied fully reflects the objectives and aspirations of the said Resolution.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003758/12
to the Commission
William (The Earl of) Dartmouth (EFD)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Macro-financial assistance to third countries — application procedure

Could the Commission provide details of the application process to be followed by third countries in order for them to receive macro-financial assistance?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(11 June 2012)

The application process for requesting Macro-Financial Assistance (MFA) is triggered by a letter sent to the Commission from the Government of a third country, referring to the circumstances which have led to the request (such as the existence of a balance of payments crisis, the existence of a residual external financing gap, etc.). Then, the Commission verifies if the applicant fulfils the conditions for providing macro-financial assistance, in particular the so called Genval criteria (see reply to Question E-003883/2012 ([1]).

In case the Commission finds that the Genval criteria are met, it may adopt a proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council for an MFA operation. If the legislative decision-making process leads to a positive decision by the co-legislators, the Commission concludes a loan- and/or grant agreement with the authorities of the third country, as well a memorandum of understanding which contains the economic policy and financial conditions attached to the assistance.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003759/12
to the Commission
William (The Earl of) Dartmouth (EFD)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Macro-financial assistance to third countries — speeding-up process

At the AFET Committee meeting of 21 March 2012, it was suggested that an 'enabling act' could be added, to speed up the application procedure for third countries requesting macro-financial assistance. Could the Commission say whether it considers such a mechanism desirable?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(14 June 2012)

The Commission fully supports the objective of speeding up the decision-making process for the adoption of Macro-Financial Assistance decisions concerning third countries, and therefore has proposed a framework regulation according to which implementing powers should be conferred to the Commission on the basis of Article 291 TFEU. This approach has been supported by the opinion of the Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET).

In addition, the AFET Committee now proposes to use the delegated act procedure (Article 290 TFEU) in a selected manner to update the list of eligible countries. This proposal will be carefully explored by the Commission.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003760/12
to the Commission
William (The Earl of) Dartmouth (EFD)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Macro-financial assistance to third countries — legal basis

Could the Commission provide details of the legal basis on which macro-financial assistance is provided to third countries?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(6 June 2012)

Over more than twenty years, macro-financial assistance (MFA) to non-EU countries has been an important EU instrument to address partner countries' exceptional external financing needs.

In the past, MFA was based on Article 235 and, since the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1999, on Article 308 of the EC Treaty. This article enabled the EU institutions to act in all those areas for which the treaties did not confer specific powers on them, but in which there was a need to act in order to attain one of the objectives of the Community. It required unanimity in the Council.

Under the Lisbon Treaty the legal basis changed: macro-financial assistance is based on provisions for economic and financial cooperation with third countries under Articles 212 ('other than developing countries') and 209 ('developing countries'). Both articles foresee the ordinary legislative procedure (co-decision).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003761/12
to the Commission
Struan Stevenson (ECR)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Concerns regarding COM(2011) 0851 and Commission Communication 2012/C 8/02

The proposals in the Commission communication on the future of VAT (COM(2011) 0851) put forward the case that the present system of differing national VAT rules distorts competition in the single market and requires reform. Yet it appears that some of the suggested ways in which reforms could be carried out could negatively affect UK local authority budgets.

My main area of concern is the Commission's desire to limit the ability of public bodies to be exempt from or recover VAT. Given that most public services in the UK have private sector equivalents, this could have significant financial implications for local authorities.

Furthermore, I have reservations about the assertion in a related Communication (2012/C 8/02) ([1]) relating to services of general economic interest (SGEIs) that: '[t]he decision of an authority not to allow third parties to provide a certain service (for example, because it wishes to provide the service in-house) does not rule out the existence of an economic activity'. This could be interpreted as meaning that SGEI rules come into play when there is the potential for the private sector to wish to provide a service. This could include virtually every service provided by a local authority, creating increased bureaucracy and providing the Commission with powers to scrutinise the provision of services by local authorities, should it choose to do so.

While the proposals are intended to simplify and clarify existing rules relating to VAT and state aid, could the Commission perhaps review the unforeseen consequences arising from them?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(6 June 2012)

In its communication on the future of VAT (COM(2011) 851, bullet point 5.2.1) the Commission stressed that a possible proposal on VAT in the public sector will concentrate on activities with a greater degree of private sector involvement and a heightened risk of distortion of competition. The Commission is fully aware of the need to carry out a thorough impact assessment on such an important proposal. This impact assessment will cover the effects on local authorities to which the Honourable member refers.

In any case, a future proposal in this area would, in all likelihood, not affect the ability of those public bodies which are exempted from or out of scope of VAT to recover VAT outside the VAT system, e.g. via the UK compensation scheme.

The communication on services of general economic interest (SGEI) ([2]) provides for the clarification of the basic concepts of state aid which are relevant for SGEI. This clarification is based on the case-law of the European Court of Justice. The section on the concept of an economic activity makes clear that the mere fact that an authority does not allow third parties to provide a service cannot as such rule out the economic character of an activity. The existence of an economic activity does not automatically mean, however, that the state aid rules concerning SGEI apply because all the criteria to qualify a measure as state aid have to be fulfilled. The communication also highlights that whether a market exists or not depends on how a specific area is organised in the respective Member State. The communication provides further specific guidance on the conditions under which activities in certain areas, such as the exercise of public powers and social security, can be considered as non-economic.

([1]) OJ C 8, 11.1.2012, p. 4.
([2]) OJ C 8/4, 11.1.2012.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-003762/12
à la Commission
Catherine Grèze (Verts/ALE)
(12 avril 2012)

Objet: Pollution de la rivière Uhabia à Bidart et mise en concurrence des directives sur l'eau

L'Uhabia est un petit fleuve côtier, long de quelques kilomètres, qui traverse cinq communes du Pays Basque (Saint-Pée-sur-Nivelle, Arcangues, Arbonne, Ahetze et Bidart) avant de se jeter dans l'océan sur la plage dite «de l'Uhabia» à Bidart, dans les Pyrénées-Atlantiques.

L'avis de l'autorité administrative de l'État sur l'évaluation environnementale, de septembre 2010, spécifie que le cours d'eau subit une contamination bactériologique diffuse, comme en attestent les données collectées par temps sec. Par temps de pluie, la qualité des eaux est très mauvaise avec une aggravation vers l'aval.

C'est pourquoi la municipalité de Bidart, avec l'Agglomération Côte basque-Adour, a décidé de poser un «émissaire» en mer afin de se mettre en conformité avec les obligations de la directive sur la qualité des eaux de baignade du 15 février 2010 et de protéger la qualité des eaux de la plage de Bidart. Le Préfet a donné son autorisation en date du 10 janvier 2012. Les travaux ont donc commencé.

Or, cette solution revient purement et simplement à renvoyer les eaux polluées à 500 mètres au large, sachant que la partie littorale est concernée par deux sites Natura 2000 en cours de classement: le site d'importance communautaire (SIC) Fr 7200 776 «Les falaises de Saint Jean de Luz à Biarritz» et le SIC Fr 7200 813 «Côte basque rocheuse et extension au large». Les mesures prises vont de ce fait à l'encontre des directives européennes que sont la directive-cadre «Eau» (2000/60/CE), adoptée le 23 octobre 2000, ainsi que de la directive relative aux eaux résiduaires urbaines (91/271/CEE) du 21 mai 1991. En effet, selon les termes de son article 1er, la directive-cadre sur l'eau «vise à renforcer la protection de l'environnement aquatique ainsi qu'à l'améliorer, notamment par des mesures spécifiques conçues pour réduire progressivement les rejets, émissions et pertes de substances prioritaires, et l'arrêt ou la suppression progressive des rejets, émissions et pertes de substances dangereuses prioritaires».

1. Que compte faire la Commission afin que la priorité soit donnée au traitement des pollutions à leur source, en particulier sur tout le bassin versant de la rivière Uhabia?

2. Que pense la Commission de la décision de poser un «émissaire» en mer, en pleine zone Natura 2000?

3. Comment la Commission compte-elle promouvoir le respect commun de la directive relative aux eaux de baignade et de la directive-cadre sur l'eau?

Réponse donnée par M. Potočnik au nom de la Commission
(6 juin 2012)

Selon les informations publiées par les autorités françaises ([1])sur la mise en œuvre de la directive relative au traitement des eaux urbaines résiduaires ([2]), les stations d'épuration des eaux usées des agglomérations mentionnées dans la question fonctionnent correctement et respectent les dispositions de la directive.

En ce qui concerne la mise en œuvre de la directive relative à la qualité des eaux de baignade ([3]) dans cette région, seule la plage «Ouhabia Sud» présentait des valeurs peu satisfaisantes ces dernières années (2004 et 2007) ([4]). Le respect de la directive n'est pas remis en cause si des normes microbiologiques sont dépassées pendant un temps limité. De même, cette situation n'empêche pas les eaux concernées de présenter un bon état écologique au sens la directive-cadre sur l'eau ([5]).

Le traité énonce le principe de la correction, par priorité à la source, des atteintes à l'environnement. L'utilisation d'émissaires marins pour rejeter les effluents est une solution qui permet, en principe, d'assurer une protection efficace des eaux de baignade, tout en maintenant un bon état écologique des eaux côtières.

([1]) http://assainissement.developpement-durable.gouv.fr/.
([2]) Directive 91/271/CEE du Conseil, JO L 135 du 30.5.1991.
([3]) Directive 2006/7/CE du Parlement européen et du Conseil, JO L 64 du 4.3.2006.
([4]) http://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/water/status-and-monitoring/state-of-bathing-water-1/bathing-water-data-viewer.
([5]) Directive 2000/60/CE du Parlement européen et du Conseil, JO L 327 du 22.12.2000.

Tout projet d'émissaire doit cependant être soumis à une évaluation appropriée s'il a une incidence notable sur un site désigné au titre de la directive «habitats» ([6]). En cas d'incidence négative importante et en l'absence de solutions de remplacement, le projet ne peut être autorisé que pour des raisons impératives d'intérêt public majeur, et des mesures compensatoires doivent alors être prises.

Selon les informations recueillies par la Commission, une évaluation de l'incidence environnementale du projet a été réalisée conformément à la directive EIE ([7]). Le rapport adressé au Conseil départemental de l'environnement et des risques sanitaires et technologiques (Coderst) donne un avis favorable.

La Commission entend poursuivre son étroite coopération avec les États membres afin de garantir la mise en œuvre intégrale de la directive-cadre sur l'eau et de la directive relative à la qualité des eaux de baignade.

([6]) Directive 92/43/CEE du Conseil, JO L 206 du 22.7.1992.
([7]) Directive 2011/92/UE du Parlement européen et du Conseil (JO L 26 du 28.1.2012, p. 1 (codifiée).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003762/12
to the Commission
Catherine Grèze (Verts/ALE)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Pollution of the Uhabia river in Bidart and competitive water directives

The Uhabia is a small coastal river, several kilometres in length, which flows through five communes in the Basque country (Saint-Pée-sur-Nivelle, Arcangues, Arbonne, Ahetze and Bidart) before flowing out into the ocean at Uhabia beach in Bidart, in the French department of Pyrénées-Atlantiques Atlantic Pyrenees.

The opinion of the competent State authority on the environmental impact assessment of September 2010 determined that the river is a cause of diffuse bacteriological pollution, which was confirmed by data collected in dry weather. During rainy weather, water quality is very poor and deteriorates downstream.

That is why the commune of Bidart in conjunction with the urban area community council of Côte Basque-Adour have decided to install a sea outfall in order to comply with the requirements of the Bathing Water Directive of 15 February 2010 and to protect water quality on the beach in Bidart. Work began on the site after being approved by the prefect of the department of Pyrénées-Atlantiques on 10 January 2012.

However, this solution merely involves sending the polluted waters 500 metres out to sea, bearing in mind that two sites along the coastline are in the process of being classified as Natura 2000 sites: The site of Community importance (SIC) Fr 7200 776 'The cliffs of Saint Jean de Luz à Biarritz' and the site of Community importance (SIC) Fr 7200 813 'Basque rock coast and offshore extension'. As such, the measures taken go against Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy (the Water Framework Directive) and Council Directive 91/271/EEC of 21 May 1991concerning urban waste water treatment. Indeed, according to the provisions of Article 1, the Water Framework Directive, 'aims at enhanced protection and improvement of the aquatic environment, *inter alia*, through specific measures for the progressive reduction of discharges, emissions and losses of priority substances and the cessation or phasing-out of discharges, emissions and losses of the priority hazardous substances'.

1. What does the Commission intend to do to give priority to the treatment of pollution at its source, and in particular in the whole catchment area of the Uhabia river?

2. What does the Commission think of the decision to install a sea outfall right in the middle of a Natura 2000 area?

3. How does the Commission intend to promote joint respect for the Bathing Water Directive and the Water Framework Directive?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(6 June 2012)

The information published by the French authorities ([1]) on the implementation of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive ([2]) indicates that the treatment plants for the agglomerations mentioned in the question work properly and comply with the provisions of the directive.

On the implementation of the Bathing Water Directive ([3]) in the area, only the beach 'Ouhabia Sud' presented poor values in last years (2004 and 2007) ([4]). Compliance with the directive is not affected if microbiological standards are exceeded for a limited time. Likewise, this does not prevent the waters concerned to be in good ecological status according to the Water Framework Directive ([5]).

The Treaty lays down the principle of rectifying pollution at source as a priority. Using sea outfalls to discharge effluents is an option that can, in principle, be effective in protecting bathing water whilst at the same time maintaining good ecological status of coastal waters.

([1]) http://assainissement.developpement-durable.gouv.fr/.
([2]) Council Directive 91/271/EEC, OJ L 135, 30.5.1991.
([3]) Directive 2006/7/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, OJ L 64, 4.3.2006.
([4]) http://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/water/status-and-monitoring/state-of-bathing-water-1/bathing-water-data-viewer.
([5]) Directive 2000/60/EC of the Parliament and of the Council, OJ L 327, 22.12.2000.

However, any outfall project must be subject to an appropriate assessment if a site designated under the Habitats Directive ([6])s significantly affected. In case of significant negative impact and in the absence of alternative solutions, the project may be authorised only for imperative reasons of overriding public interest and compensatory measures must be taken.

According to the information hold by the Commission, an assessment of the environmental impact of the project has been carried out in line with the EIA Directive ([7]). The report addressed to the Departmental Council on Environment, Health and Technological Risks (CODERST) gives a positive opinion.

The Commission will continue to work closely with Member States to ensure full implementation of the Water Framework and Bathing Water Directives.

([6]) Council Directive 92/43/EEC, OJ L 206, 22.7.1992.
([7]) Directive 2011/92/EU of the Parliament and of the Council OJ L 26/1, 28.1.2012 (codified).

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003765/12
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(12 aprile 2012)

Oggetto: Attentato in Nigeria contro una chiesa cristiana a Pasqua: escalation anticristiana

In Nigeria, nella città di Kaduna, l'8 aprile, proprio nel giorno di Pasqua, si è consumato l'ennesimo attentato estremista islamico con obiettivo i fedeli cristiani. Un'autobomba è esplosa nei pressi di una chiesa poco prima dell'uscita dei fedeli dalla funzione pasquale, mietendo 36 vittime: a nulla sono valse le seppur rigide misure di sicurezza messe in campo dalle autorità del Paese. La scelta di questo attacco proprio durante la più importante festa religiosa cristiana lancia un chiaro messaggio circa la volontà di uccidere e colpire il cuore della cristianità e si aggiunge alla serie di attentati già perpetrati in Nigeria contro di essa.

— Le Commissione è a conoscenza dell'accadimento?

— Il servizio esterno della Commissione ha preso contatti con il Governo nigeriano in merito quest'ultimo attentato?

— La Commissione sta seguendo l'evolversi in Nigeria delle tensioni fra musulmani e cristiani?

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

La situazione della Nigeria, in generale, e questo tipo di problemi, in particolare, vengono presi molto seriamente. Un dibattito approfondito, in seguito ad una dichiarazione del ministro degli esteri danese Villy Soevndal a nome dell'Alto Rappresentante/Vicepresidente, è stato avviato già durante la seduta plenaria del Parlamento del 14 marzo 2012.

Nel contesto dell'incontro ministeriale Nigeria-UE, tenutosi ad Abuja l'8 febbraio 2012, si è deciso di instaurare un dialogo in materia di sicurezza locale. L'UE condivide la sua esperienza riguardo alla lotta contro il terrorismo e si tiene continuamente in contatto con le autorità nigeriane.

Inoltre, il programma di sviluppo dell'UE è stato riadattato per concentrarsi maggiormente sui fattori che provocano la radicalizzazione nelle zone più svantaggiate della Nigeria. Questo processo è tuttora in atto e l'UE intende altresì fornire un sostegno per il rafforzamento delle capacità in settori quali la giustizia, il buon governo e la mediazione.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003765/12
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Attack on a Christian church in Nigeria at Easter: Anti-Christian escalation

In Nigeria, in the city of Kaduna, on 8 April — Easter day, the umpteenth Islamic extremist assault on people of the Christian faith was perpetrated. A car bomb exploded near to a church just before the congregation left the Easter service, killing 36 people: even the strict security measures adopted by the country's authorities were to no avail. The choice of Christianity's most important holy day for this attack sends a clear message about the desire to kill and strike at the heart of Christianity and is just one more in a series of attacks already perpetrated against the Church in Nigeria.

— Is the Commission aware of this event?

— Has the Commission's Foreign Service contacted the Nigerian government about this latest attack?

— Is the Commission following the developing tensions between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria?

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

Nigeria in general, and these problems in particular, are taken very seriously. Following a statement by Danish Foreign Minister Villy Soevndal on behalf of the HR/VP, a substantial discussion in Parliament's plenary took place already on 14 March 2012.

In the context of the Nigeria-EU Ministerial meeting in Abuja on 8 February 2012 it was agreed to set up a local security dialogue. The EU is sharing its experience in dealing with terrorism, and the EU is in continuous contact with the Nigerian authorities.

Moreover, the EU's development programme has been adapted to focus more on factors conducive to radicalisation in the most deprived parts of Nigeria. This process is continuing and, in addition, the EU is also shortly to provide capacity building in such areas as justice, good governance and mediation.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-003767/12
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(12 de abril de 2012)

Assunto: Cultura para todos

O governo português, através da Secretaria de Estado da Cultura, anunciou que, a partir do dia 27 de março de 2012, todos os desempregados terão acesso gratuito à cultura, isto é, quem perdeu o emprego vai ter a oportunidade de entrar, sem pagar, nos museus, monumentos e palácios tutelados pelo Governo, assim como usufruir de descontos em espetáculos nos teatros nacionais.

O objetivo é permitir que os desempregados, apesar da situação preocupante em que se encontram, não tenham qualquer tipo de limitação no acesso à cultura.

Para terem acesso a estes descontos, os desempregados têm apenas de levar consigo o «comprovativo de inscrição no Instituto de Emprego e Formação Profissional, ou qualquer outro documento emitido pela Segurança Social que comprove a situação».

Pergunto à Comissão:

— Existe a possibilidade de esta iniciativa ser alargada aos restantes Estados-Membros da União Europeia?

— Pondera a Comissão a possibilidade de atribuição de fundos europeus a todos os museus, teatros, cinemas, e outros espaços de cultura que não sejam propriedade dos governos, de forma a que todos os desempregados possam beneficiar deste desconto e, desta forma, ter mais e melhor acesso à cultura?

Resposta dada por Androulla Vassiliou em nome da Comissão
(11 de junho de 2012)

A UE não dispõe de um mandato para harmonizar leis e regulamentos no domínio da cultura. No entanto, o intercâmbio de práticas e experiências, através do método aberto de coordenação, pode ser útil para prestar informações sobre as decisões políticas nacionais.

Estão em curso debates entre peritos dos Estados-Membros sobre a forma de promover o acesso à cultura, em especial para os grupos desfavorecidos, apoiados pela Comissão no âmbito do método aberto de coordenação. Os resultados do referido debate serão compilados num manual que será publicado até ao final de 2012.

No quadro do atual programa Cultural ([1]) a Comissão apoia anualmente algumas organizações culturais europeias, incluindo instituições não governamentais, com cerca de 57 milhões de euros destinados a realizar projetos de cooperação e medidas operacionais. O acesso à cultura é um tema central do programa, e muitos milhões de cidadãos, incluindo aqueles que são tradicionalmente excluídos, já foram beneficiados, tanto direta como indiretamente, e acederam a obras culturais de outros países desde o seu lançamento em 2007. Além disso, a Comissão está a organizar uma conferência em outubro de 2012, em Bruxelas, para discutir formas de envolver mais ativamente os cidadãos que geralmente nunca participam em atividades culturais. A conferência irá facilitar o intercâmbio de melhores práticas em matéria de desenvolvimento de audiências, incluindo medidas como modalidades de entrada gratuita, também com vista ao futuro programa Europa Criativa (que a Comissão propôs para substituir o programa Cultura a partir de 2014).

([1]) Decisão n.° 1855/2006/CE do Parlamento Europeu e do Conselho, de 12 de dezembro de 2006.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003767/12
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Culture for all

The Portuguese Government, through the State Secretary for Culture, announced that, from 27 March 2012, all unemployed people would have free access to culture, meaning that anyone who lost his or her job would have the opportunity to visit, free of charge, government-funded museums, monuments and palaces, as well as enjoy discounts on shows at national theatres.

The aim is to ensure that access to culture for unemployed people, despite the worrying situation in which they find themselves, is not limited in any way.

To obtain such discounts, unemployed people need only carry proof of enrolment at the Institute of Employment and Vocational Training, or any other document issued by the social security authority which establishes their circumstances.

Would the Commission answer the following:

— Is it possible for this initiative to be extended to other European Union Member States?

— Is the Commission considering the possibility of allocating European funds to all non-government-owned museums, theatres, cinemas and other cultural spaces, so that all unemployed people can benefit from this discount and, as such, have greater and better access to culture?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(11 June 2012)

The EU does not have a mandate to harmonise laws and regulations in the field of culture. Nevertheless, exchanging practices and experiences through the Open Method of Coordination may be useful to inform national policy decisions.

Discussions among Member State experts on how to promote access to culture, especially for disadvantaged groups, are ongoing, supported by the Commission in the framework of the Open Method of Coordination. The results of such debate will be gathered in a handbook to be published by the end of 2012.

Within the current Culture Programme ([1]) the Commission is annually supporting European cultural organisations, included non-governmental institutions, with approximately EUR 57 million to carry out cooperation projects and operational measures. Access to culture is a key theme of the Programme, and many millions of citizens, also those traditionally excluded, have been reached both directly and indirectly and enjoyed cultural works from other countries since its launch in 2007. Moreover, the Commission is organising a conference in October 2012 in Brussels to discuss how to more actively involve citizens who usually never participate in cultural activities. The conference will facilitate an exchange of best practice on audience development, including such measures as free entrance schemes, also with a view to the future Creative Europe Programme (which the Commission has proposed to replace the Culture Programme as of 2014).

([1]) Decision No 1855/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-003768/12
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(12 de abril de 2012)

Assunto: Desgaste dos oceanos

Segundo um estudo com o nome «Valuing the Ocean», coordenado pelo Instituto do Ambiente de Estocolmo, o custo dos desgastes causados aos oceanos poderá ser de 1,5 biliões de euros anuais até 2100, se nada for feito para abrandar o ritmo das alterações climáticas.

De acordo com os especialistas, se continuarmos a lançar para a atmosfera elevados níveis de gases com efeito de estufa, a subida média da temperatura será de 4 graus, até 2100. Isto faria com que o custo da degradação dos oceanos correspondesse a 0,37 % do produto interno bruto mundial, com perdas para o turismo estimadas em 639 mil milhões de dólares e para as pescas em 343 mil milhões.

Pergunto à Comissão:

— Tem conhecimento deste estudo?

— Quais as medidas que estão a ser tomadas para diminuir o impacto dos níveis de gases com efeitos de estufa na atmosfera?

Resposta dada por Connie Hedegaard em nome da Comissão
(12 de junho de 2012)

A Comissão tem conhecimento do referido estudo. Observa, contudo, que, até à data, apenas foram divulgados uma síntese e alguns resumos de capítulos selecionados e aguarda com expectativa, após exame pelos pares, a publicação de todo o estudo.

A Comissão está consciente dos impactos perigosos que podem acontecer se, (incluindo nos oceanos) a temperatura média mundial subir 4 °C (acima dos níveis pré industriais). O objetivo da UE a nível internacional é desenvolver esforços para garantir um acordo ambicioso a nível mundial para atingir a redução das emissões globais, de acordo com o objetivo de 2 °C. Em relação aos oceanos, de acordo com o relatório preliminar do Instituto do Ambiente de Estocolmo, limitar o aumento da temperatura a cerca de 2 °C poderia reduzir significativamente os impactos económicos e ambientais nos nossos oceanos comparativamente com um cenário de 4 °C.

A próxima estratégia de adaptação da UE, cuja adoção está prevista para 2013, procurará garantir que a UE está preparada para os impactos esperados das alterações climáticas e, juntamente com a Política Marítima Integrada da União Europeia e a Diretiva Quadro «Estratégia Marinha», cobrirá igualmente as águas costeiras e marinhas da UE. Neste contexto, a Comissão terá em conta as estratégias de adaptação às alterações climáticas de acordo com os interesses das águas costeiras e marinhas em diferentes cenários, incluindo a contenção dos riscos e a prevenção de impactos associados a aumentos de temperatura de 2 °C e superiores.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003768/12
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Damage to the oceans

According to a study entitled 'Valuing the Ocean', coordinated by the Stockholm Environment Institute, the annual cost of damage caused to the oceans could reach EUR 1.5 billion by 2100 if nothing is done to mitigate the rate of climate change.

According to specialists, the average increase in temperature will be four degrees by 2100 if high levels of greenhouse gases continue to be released into the atmosphere. This would mean that the cost of ocean degradation would be equivalent to 0.37 % of global gross domestic product, with losses to tourism put at USD 639 billion and losses to fisheries of USD 343 billion.

Would the Commission answer the following:

— Is it aware of this study?

— What measures will be taken to reduce the impact of the level of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere?

Answer given by Ms Hedegaard on behalf of the Commission
(12 June 2012)

The Commission is aware of the study. However, it notes that only an executive summary and summaries of selected chapters have been issued so far and it looks forward to the publication, after peer review, of the full study.

The Commission is aware of the dangerous impacts globally (including the oceans) if the global average temperature reaches 4°C (above pre-industrial levels). Internationally, the EU's goal is to make effort to ensure an ambitious global agreement to achieve global emissions reductions, consistent with the 2°C target. As far as oceans are concerned, according to the Stockholm Environment Institute's preliminary report, limiting the temperature increase to around 2°C would reduce significantly the economic and environmental impacts on our oceans compared to a 4°C scenario.

The forthcoming EU Adaptation Strategy, foreseen for adoption in 2013, will seek to ensure that the EU is prepared for the expected impacts of climate change and, together with the EU Integrated Maritime Policy and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, it will also cover EU coastal and marine waters. In this context, the Commission will consider strategies for adaptation to climate change in coastal waters and marine interests under various scenarios, including the containment of risks and the prevention of impacts associated with temperature increases of 2°C and higher.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-003769/12
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(12 de abril de 2012)

Assunto: Situação económica em Espanha

Considerando:

— que o principal mercado exportador de Portugal é a Espanha;

— que as exportações são um dos motores da economia portuguesa nesta fase de recessão que ela atravessa;

— e que, segundo notícias recentes, a situação económica em Espanha se está a agravar, o que pode trazer problemas às exportações portuguesas e, consequentemente, deteriorar a situação económica do país;

Pergunto à Comissão:

Perante este cenário, estão previstos apoios para Portugal fazer face a futuras dificuldades na consecução dos objetivos estipulados no acordo com a «troika»?

Resposta dada por Olli Rehn em nome da Comissão
(1 de agosto de 2012)

De acordo com as previsões da primavera da Comissão, as perspetivas para a economia espanhola pioraram desde o outono de 2011, o que afeta negativamente as exportações portuguesas, uma vez que cerca de um quarto se destina a Espanha, embora parte do comércio com este país funcione nos dois sentidos e, por conseguinte, também as importações diminuam. No entanto, os dados recentes mostram que o crescimento das exportações portuguesas tem mantido um dinamismo notável. Enquanto as exportações para os mercados europeus diminuíram, as destinadas aos mercados ultramarinos continuaram a registar um forte crescimento. Se esta tendência se mantiver, é de esperar que, apesar do abrandamento da economia espanhola, as exportações continuem a dar um impulso significativo à economia.

Com este pano de fundo, a Comissão não vê necessidade, neste momento, de rever radicalmente as projeções macroeconómicas para Portugal, embora os riscos de degradação tenham de certo modo aumentado. Caso esses riscos de degradação se materializem, a Comissão, juntamente com o Fundo Monetário Internacional e o Banco Central Europeu, discutirá com o Governo português as eventuais consequências do agravamento da situação no cumprimento dos objetivos do programa e o apoio que pode ser fornecido em termos de medidas corretivas.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003769/12
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Economic situation in Spain

Portugal's main export market is Spain. Exports are one of the engines of the Portuguese economy in this period of recession it is going through. According to recent reports, the economic situation in Spain is worsening, which could lead to problems for Portuguese exports and, consequently, worsen the country's economic situation.

In view of this, is support planned for Portugal to tackle future difficulties in achieving the objectives laid down in agreement with the Presidency Trio?

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

According to the Commission's spring forecast the outlook for the Spanish economy has worsened since the autumn 2011. This affects Portuguese exports adversely since about one quarter of them is directed towards Spain, even though some of the trade with Spain is two-way and therefore also reduces imports. Nevertheless, recent data show that Portuguese export growth has remained remarkably dynamic. While exports to European markets have weakened those to overseas markets have continued to grow strongly. If this trend continues it can be expected that overall, and despite of the downturn of the Spanish economy, exports will continue to provide significant growth impulses to the economy.

Against this background the Commission does, at the moment, not see a need for a major revision of the macroeconomic projections for Portugal, although downside risks have somewhat increased. To the extent that such downside risks materialise the Commission will, together with the International Monetary Fund and the European Central Bank, discuss with the Portuguese Government the potential consequences for the achievement of the programme objectives and the support that can be provided in terms of remedial action.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-003770/12
to the Commission
William (The Earl of) Dartmouth (EFD)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Auditing and accountability — pre-accession funding forTurkey

Will the Commission outline the auditing and accountability measures which aim to ensure the proper and appropriate use of monies made available as pre-accession funding for Turkey?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(14 May 2012)

The auditing and accountability measures for countries which receive Instruments of Pre-adhesion (IPA) pre-accession assistance are defined in the IPA Implementing Regulation. Each year the national authorising officer in that country makes an annual management declaration concerning a confirmation of the effective functioning of the management and control systems, a confirmation regarding legality and regularity of underlying transactions and information concerning any changes in systems and controls and elements of supporting accounting information. Furthermore, an audit authority in Turkey (which is functionally independent from all actors in the management and control system and complies with internationally accepted audit standards) is responsible for verifying the effective and sound functioning of the management and control systems. According to the 2012 audit plan, the audit authority will carry out audits concerning verification of effective functioning of management and control systems during the tendering and payments activities.

The pre-accession financial assistance programmes and functioning of the management system are also subject to monitoring and supervision by the Commission, including on-the-spot-checks by EU Delegation staff during project implementation. The Commission also carries out audits related to the management of the IPA funds and functioning of the system in Turkey at the different stages of the fund management. The major findings detected by the auditors are followed up by the national authorities under the supervision of the Commission.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita P-003771/12
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(12 de abril de 2012)

Assunto: Ajudas de Estado para aeroporto complementar

Dada a situação geográfica de Lisboa e de Portugal e a crescente afluência de passageiros a um dos aeroportos mais antigos da Europa, é de considerar a capacidade de acolhimento e de absorção de tráfego aéreo pelo aeroporto da Portela.

Tendo em conta o investimento mínimo necessário, a determinação dos custos e proveitos da exploração aeroportuária e a análise do potencial de contribuição para o desenvolvimento do tecido empresarial, em especial no setor do turismo;

Pergunto à Comissão:

1. De que forma analisa a necessidade de uma estrutura aeroportuária complementar ao aeroporto da Portela?

2. Poderá esta estrutura complementar ser alvo de fundos comunitários? Quais?

3. De que forma poderá o projeto de um aeroporto completar ser enquadrado nas futuras regras de ajudas de Estado para o setor da aviação?

Resposta dada por Siim Kallas em nome da Comissão
(24 de maio de 2012)

1. Dada a sua localização, o aeroporto da Portela não pode expandir-se, não podendo, por consequência, responder ao crescimento atual e previsto do tráfego. A Comissão reconheceu esse facto e apoiou por onze vezes, entre 1997 e 2006, a realização de estudos para a construção de um novo aeroporto, bem como planos para a otimização do aeroporto da Portela, através de fundos do programa RTE-T no montante total de cerca de 16,6 milhões de euros. Porém, atendendo à atual situação ecomómica, a Comissão considera mais sensato, menos dispendioso e mais rápido manter em funcionamento o aeroporto da Portela e converter outras instalações na região de Lisboa (nomeadamente um aeroporto militar) para o acolhimento de transportadoras *low cost*.

2. Previa-se que, no atual período de programação, o Fundo de Coesão contribuísse com cerca de 170 milhões de euros para o financiamento do novo aeroporto de Lisboa, com localização em Alcochete. Entretanto, o governo português adiou a construção deste, pelo que os fundos foram transferidos para o financiamento de outros projetos. Dado Lisboa ser, atualmente, uma «região competitiva», devendo ser classificada de «região desenvolvida» no próximo período, não é possível recorrer ao FEDER para financiar infraestruturas aeroportuárias; pode, contudo, utilizar-se o Fundo de Coesão para o financiamento, em todo o território português, de aeroportos que façam parte da RTE-T.

3. Os Estados-Membros podem conceder auxílios estatais aos aeroportos, em conformidade com as Orientações comunitárias sobre o financiamento dos aeroportos e os auxílios estatais ao arranque das companhias aéreas que operam a partir de aeroportos regionais (JO C 312 de 9.12.2005, p. 1).

(English version)

Question for written answer P-003771/12
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: State aid for supplementary airports

The capacity of Portela airport to receive and process air traffic needs attention, given the geographical situation of Lisbon and Portugal and the growing number of passengers using one of Europe's oldest airports.

Taking into account the required minimum investment, the assessment of the costs and profits of airport operation, and the analysis of the potential for business development, particularly in the tourism sector;

I ask the Commission:

1. What is the Commission's analysis of the need for an airport supplementary to Portela airport?

2. Could European Union funds be targeted at such a supplementary airport? If so, what funds?

3. In what way could a supplementary airport project fit within future rules for state aid for the aviation sector?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(24 May 2012)

1. Because of its geographical position Portela airport cannot be expanded but it clearly cannot cope with actual and forecasted traffic growth as it is. The Commission has recognised such need and has supported studies for a new airport as well as optimisation plans for Portela through TEN-T funds 11 times between 1997 and 2006 for a total of about EUR 16.6 million. Given the current economic situation, the Commission considers a wiser, less expensive and much faster measure to keep Portela open and to convert other facilities (e.g. military airport) existing in the Lisbon area for low-cost transport.

2. In the current programming period, it was foreseen that the Cohesion Fund would contribute some EUR 170 million for the financing of the new Lisbon airport (which should be located in Alcochete). In the meantime the Portuguese Government has postponed the construction of a new airport and those funds were transferred to finance other projects. Since Lisbon is currently a 'competitiveness' region and will be a 'developed region' in the coming period, the ERDF cannot be used to finance airport infrastructures but the Cohesion Fund can be used to finance airports throughout the whole Portuguese territory as long as they are part of the TEN-T.

3. Member States can grant state aid to airports in accordance with the provisions of the Community guidelines on the financing of airports of 2005 (OJ C 312, 9.12.2005, p. 1).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003773/12
to the Commission
William (The Earl of) Dartmouth (EFD)
(12 April 2012)

Subject: Saint Martin and Saint Barthélemy and EU withdrawal

In 2007, Saint Martin and Saint Barthélemy seceded from Guadeloupe. It has been reported that this led to a considerable change in their legal status, in terms of their definition as an outermost region or as an overseas country or territory. Could the Commission explain this, with a particular focus on how the change in status was negotiated, with whom, and according to what timetable?

Question for written answer E-004479/12
to the Commission
William (The Earl of) Dartmouth (EFD)
(27 April 2012)

Subject: Overseas countries and territories, outermost regions and the Commission

It has been reported that a Member State may, on its own initiative, request a change in the status of an overseas country or territory or an outermost region (see Article 355(6) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union). Could the Commission explain in detail the procedure for making such requests, the timetable applicable, and whether or not members of the Commission have the right to stop this?

Joint answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(8 June 2012)

Article 355(6) TFEU ([1])allows the European Council, on the initiative of the Member State concerned and acting unanimously after consulting the Commission, to adopt a decision amending the status of a Danish, French or Dutch territory covered by §1 and 2 of the same article. France has used this possibility twice, submitting initiatives with a view to modifying the status of Saint-Barthélemy and Mayotte.

Saint-Barthelemy's separation from Guadeloupe in 2007 was as such a matter internal to France and had no incidence on its position under EC law. At that time, it had the status of an outermost region (OR). In 2010 however, France submitted an initiative to the European Council with a view to have the EC law status of Saint-Barthélemy amended, so as to become an overseas country or territory (OCT). That initiative was based on Article 355(6) TFEU. In accordance with this provision, the European Council decided on 29 October 2010 to amend the status of Saint-Barthélemy from an OR into an OCT, with effect from 1 January 2012.

As regards Mayotte, it has presently the status of an OCT associated to the Union. In March 2011, Mayotte became a French Department. On 26 October 2011, France submitted an initiative to the European Council to amend its status with regard to the EU, to become an OR from 2014. The Comission is currently preparing its opinion referred to in Article 355(6), in view of the European Council meeting in June.

No such inititative has been put forward in regard to Saint-Martin. As with Saint-Barthélemy, its separation from Guadeloupe was as such a matter internal to France and had no incidence on its position under Union law.

([1]) Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.