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 183 E/01)

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Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-006179/12
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(21 de junho de 2012)

Assunto: Europa 2020: Recomendações por país — Hungria

A Comissão Europeia, nas palavras do seu presidente, lançou o mais importante pacote de propostas económicas do presente ano depois de ter feito um exame rigoroso à «saúde» orçamental e económica de cada um dos 27 Estados-Membros.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Que resultados destaca em relação à Hungria?

2. Que principais desafios impendem sobre o país no tocante à estabilização económica e orçamental, ao crescimento e ao emprego?

3. Considera que a Hungria se encontra no bom caminho para cumprir os objetivos da Estratégia Europa 2020?

4. Que medidas deve este país tomar para os atingir?

Resposta dada por Olli Rehn em nome da Comissão
(26 de setembro de 2012)

As respostas às questões a que se refere o Senhor Deputado são um dos principais objetos dos documentos da Comissão publicados em 30 de maio de 2012 (COM(2012)317 final ([1]), SWD(2012)317 final ([2])). As recomendações específicas por países foram adotadas pelo Conselho em 10 de julho de 2012 (2012/C 219/12) ([3]). Em suma, os principais desafios enfrentados pela Hungria são a necessidade de reduzir as elevadas dívidas das administrações públicas e externa, aumentando, em simultâneo, o potencial de crescimento e a taxa de emprego, que se situam a níveis baixos.

Para responder de forma adequada a estes desafios, além do prosseguimento da consolidação orçamental e da revisão do quadro orçamental, recomenda---se à Hungria que adote uma série de ações nos domínios fiscal e dos mercados laboral e de produtos, bem como da educação, dos transportes e da energia. Estas ações incluem medidas destinadas a proporcionar uma tributação do trabalho favorável ao emprego, aumentar a participação das mulheres e a eficácia das políticas ativas no mercado de trabalho, estimular a concorrência, promover um ambiente económico favorável às empresas, contribuir para o decréscimo do abandono escolar precoce e o aumento do acesso dos grupos desfavorecidos à educação e aumentar a eficiência dos setores dos transportes e da energia.

Quanto ao cumprimento dos objetivos Europa 2020, a Hungria realizou alguns progressos nos domínios do emprego e da I&D, bem como no que respeita à redução das emissões de CO_2 e em matéria de energias renováveis. São, contudo, necessários mais progressos nestas áreas, em especial no domínio do emprego, em que o objetivo estabelecido pela Hungria é bastante ambicioso. Foram também realizados progressos para o cumprimento dos objetivos na área da educação, que podem, contudo, abrandar devido a algumas recentes alterações da legislação. Por fim, não se registaram progressos no decréscimo da exclusão social.

([1]) (http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2012:0317:FIN:PT:PDF).
([2]) (http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/economic_governance/sgp/pdf/20_scps/2012/02_staff_working_document/hu_2012-05-30_swd_en.pdf).
([3]) (http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2012:219:0040:0043:PT:PDF).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006179/12
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(21 June 2012)

Subject: Europe 2020: country-specific recommendations — Hungary

The Commission has, in the words of its President, launched this year's most important package of economic proposals, after having carried out a rigorous economic and budgetary health check on each of the 27 Member States.

1. What are the Commission's findings in relation to Hungary?

2. What are the main challenges facing Hungary in terms of economic and budgetary stabilisation, growth and employment?

3. Does the Commission consider that Hungary is on track towards meeting the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy?

4. What measures should Hungary adopt in order to attain these objectives?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(26 September 2012)

Answers to the questions, the Honourable Member refers to are mainly discussed in the Commission documents published on the 30 May 2012 (COM(2012) 317 final ([1]), SWD(2012) 317 final ([2])). The Country Specific Recommendations were adopted by a Council Recommendation on the 10 July 2012 (2012/C 219/12) ([3]). In short, the main challenges Hungary is facing are the need to decrease high public and external debt, while increasing its low growth potential and employment rate.

To adequately respond to these challenges, beside continuing fiscal consolidation and reviewing the budgetary framework, Hungary is recommended to implement a series of actions in the fields of taxation, labour and product markets, education, transport and energy. These include measures that introduce a more employment friendly taxation of labour, increase women's labour market participation and increase the effectiveness of active labour market policies, boost competition, increase the business friendliness of the economic environment, contribute to a decline in early school leaving and improving access of disadvantaged groups to education, and increase the efficiency of transport and energy sectors.

Regarding meeting Europe 2020 targets, the country made some progress with employment, R & D, CO_2 emission reduction target and renewable energy targets. However, more progress is needed even in these areas, especially in the field of employment where the Hungarian target is very challenging. Progress has also been made towards meeting education objectives, but recent changes in legislation could slow down the improvement. Finally, there has been no progress in decreasing social exclusion.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/economic_governance/sgp/pdf/20_scps/2012/03_commission/hu_2012-05-30_recommendation_for_cr_en.pdf
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/economic_governance/sgp/pdf/20_scps/2012/02_staff_working_document/hu_2012-05-30_swd_en.pdf
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/economic_governance/sgp/pdf/20_scps/2012/04_council/hu_2012-07-10_council_recommendation_en.pdf

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-006194/12
à Comissão
Edite Estrela (S&D)
(21 de junho de 2012)

Assunto: Agências de rating

Tendo em conta que tanto o Parlamento Europeu como a Comissão Europeia consideram que a crise da dívida soberana na Zona euro mostrou que as agências de rating adquiriram demasiada preponderância, ao ponto de influenciarem a agenda política europeia, e que é reconhecida a necessidade de serem adotadas medidas reguladoras da atividade destas agências;

Tendo em conta as atuais negociações em torno da proposta legislativa que irá regular a atividade das agências de notação, designadamente em matéria de conflito de interesses, com vista a aumentar a responsabilidade e a transparência no funcionamento destas agências;

Pergunta à Comissão:

Que estudos foram feitos pela Comissão ou de que tenha conhecimento que permitam apurar a responsabilidade das agências de rating na crise das dívidas soberanas?

Dispõe a Comissão de informações claras sobre os verdadeiros proprietários das principais agências de rating e de eventuais conflitos de interesse?

Resposta dada por Michel Barnier em nome da Comissão
(6 de agosto de 2012)

A Autoridade Europeia dos Valores Mobiliários e dos Mercados (ESMA), a funcionar desde 1 de janeiro de 2011, tem competência exclusiva para a supervisão das agências de notação de risco estabelecidas na UE. Em conformidade com o Regulamento Agências de Notação, a ESMA pode investigar o comportamento destas agências e aplicar coimas, caso se prove ter havido infração ao regulamento. A ESMA apresenta anualmente um relatório sobre os seus trabalhos e conclusões nesta matéria. Em 22 de março de 2012, foi publicado um primeiro relatório, que faz uma panorâmica das atividades de supervisão da ESMA e resume os resultados dos primeiros controlos efetuados às três principais agências de notação de risco em atividade na Europa. Este relatório pode ser consultado no seguinte endereço: (http://www.esma.europa.eu/node/57739).

Como é prática corrente, a proposta da Comissão, publicada em novembro de 2011, de revisão do Regulamento Agências de Notação foi acompanhada de uma avaliação de impacto. Esta proposta, atualmente em negociação pelos colegisladores, o Parlamento e o Conselho, inclui medidas para o reforço da transparência das notações da dívida soberana.

No que respeita à estrutura de propriedade das principais agências de notação, a atual legislação da UE já exige ([1]) que estas informem anualmente, no relatório de transparência que elaboram, sobre a sua estrutura jurídica e de propriedade. Trata-se de informações que estão disponíveis ao público. A Comissão analisou também a estrutura de propriedade das agências de notação na sua avaliação de impacto ([2]).

([1]) Regulamento (CE) n.° 1060/2009, relativo às agências de notação de risco: Anexo I, secção E, parte III, Relatório de transparência.
([2]) Anexo IV, Descrição do mercado, disponível no seguinte endereço: (http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/securities/docs/agencies/SEC_2011_1354_en.pdf).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006194/12
to the Commission
Edite Estrela (S&D)
(21 June 2012)

Subject: Credit-rating agencies

Both Parliament and the Commission consider the sovereign debt crisis in the eurozone to have demonstrated the excessive influence of the credit-rating agencies, which has allowed them to influence the European political agenda, and recognise the need to adopt measures to regulate these financial bodies.

Negotiations are currently underway to draft a legislative proposal to regulate the activity of the rating agencies, particularly with respect to conflicts of interest, in order to increase their operational transparency and responsibility.

What studies has the Commission carried out, or is it aware of, which would make it possible to investigate the responsibility of the credit-rating agencies in the sovereign debt crisis?

Does the Commission have any clear information as to the real owners of the leading credit-rating agencies and any existing conflicts of interest?

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

The European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA), operational since 1 January 2011, has exclusive competence for the supervision of credit rating agencies (CRAs) established in the EU. According to the CRA Regulation, ESMA may investigate the behaviour of the CRAs and impose fines, if an infringement of the CRA Regulation is established. ESMA reports annually on its work and findings in this regard. A first report was published on 22 of March 2012. It provides an overview of ESMA's supervisory activities and summarises the results of the first examinations carried out with regard to the three major credit rating agencies active in Europe. The report can be found at the following link: http://www.esma.europa.eu/node/57739.

As is common practice, the Commission's proposal published in November 2011, revising the CRA-Regulation, was accompanied by an impact assessment. This proposal, currently being negotiated by the co-legislators, the Parliament and the Council, includes measures enhancing transparency on sovereign debt ratings.

As regards the ownership structure of the dominant credit rating agencies, the current EU legislation already requires ([1]) credit rating agencies to report annually, in their transparency report, on their legal structure and ownership. This information is available to the public. The Commission has also analysed the structure and ownership of CRAs in its impact assessment ([2]).

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 1060/2009 on credit rating agencies: Annex E (III) Transparency report.
([2]) Annex IV Market Description, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/securities/docs/agencies/SEC_2011_1354_en.pdf

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-006195/12
adresată Comisiei
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(21 iunie 2012)

Subiect: Hidratul de amoniu în prelucrarea hranei destinate consumului uman

Comisia este rugată să răspundă la următoarele întrebări:

1. Care este în UE statutul hidratului de amoniu, respectiv este acesta autorizat pentru prelucrarea hranei destinate consumului uman?

2. Având în vedere preocupările recente ale opiniei publice din Statele Unite ale Americii cu privire la utilizarea acestei substanţe, există indicii cu privire la posibila folosire a hidratului de amoniu în prelucrarea grăsimii din carnea de vită utilizată în restaurantele de tip fast-food?

Răspuns dat de dl Dalli în numele Comisiei
(3 august 2012)

Hidratul de amoniu sau hidroxidul de amoniu (E 527) este autorizat ca aditiv alimentar. Acesta este utilizat ca regulator de aciditate în vederea modificării sau controlării acidităţii sau alcalinităţii unui produs alimentar. Hidroxidul de amoniu a fost evaluat de către Comitetul ştiinţific pentru alimentaţie (SCF), în 1990, împreună cu alţi hidroxizi ([1]). SCF nu a specificat o doză zilnică acceptabilă (DZA), întrucât substanţa face parte în mod normal din dietă. Utilizarea acesteia ca regulator de aciditate nu este considerată o problemă de siguranţă atunci când este utilizată în conformitate cu bunele practici de fabricaţie.

Hidratul de amoniu nu este aprobat în cadrul UE pentru decontaminarea resturilor de carne de vită.

([1]) Raportul Comitetului ştiinţific pentru alimentaţie, Seria douăzeci şi cinci, 1990.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006195/12
to the Commission
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(21 June 2012)

Subject: Use of ammonium hydrate in the processing of food intended for human consumption

1. Can the Commission indicate how ammonium hydrate is classified within the EU and whether its use is authorised in the processing of food intended for human consumption?

2. In view of recent public concern in the United States regarding the use of this substance, does it have any information regarding the possible use of ammonium hydrate for the processing of beef trimmings used in fast food restaurants?

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

Ammonium hydrate or ammonium hydroxide (E 527) is authorised as a food additive. It is used as an acidity regulator in order to alter or control the acidity or alkalinity of a foodstuff. Ammonium hydroxide was evaluated by the Scientific Committee for food (SCF) in 1990 together with other hydroxides ([1]). The SCF did not specify an Acceptable Daily Intake (ADI), as the substance is a normal constituent of the diet. Its use as an acidity regulator is not considered of safety concern when used according to good manufacturing practice.

Ammonium hydrate is not approved within the EU for the decontamination of beef trimmings.

([1]) Report of the Scientific Committee for Food, twenty-fifth series, 1990.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-006196/12
adresată Comisiei
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(21 iunie 2012)

Subiect: Atac împotriva școlilor cu predare în grafie latină din regiunea transnistreană

În ianuarie 2012, Alexandru Bejan, elev în clasa a XI-a din Tiraspol (așa-numita Republică Moldovenească Nistreană, regiune separatistă aflată de jure în componența Republicii Moldova) a fost citat la sediul serviciului secret din Tiraspol, unde a fost forțat să transcrie în mod exact textul unei scrisori necunoscute în limba rusă.

Ulterior, tânărul a fost obligat să scrie un autodenunț și să-și recunoască vina în săvârșirea unor „acte de terorism", fiind confruntat cu o „expertiză grafică" dovedind că textul scrisorii de „amenințare" îi aparține. În iunie 2012, elevul a fost trimis în judecată pentru „denunțare mincinoasă a actelor de terorism", el riscând trei ani de închisoare.

Organizațiile pentru apărarea drepturilor omului din așa-numita Republică Moldovenească Nistreană afirmă că acest abuz, făcut posibil de necunoașterea limbii ruse și a grafiei chirilice, reprezintă un atac împotriva școlilor cu predare în grafie latină din regiunea transnistreană.

Comisia este rugată să prezinte un punct de vedere cu privire la această situație.

Răspuns dat de dna Ashton în numele Comisiei
(8 august 2012)

Cazul lui Alexandru Bejan este un alt caz de presupusă arestarea arbitrară și de presupusă supunere la rele tratamente de către serviciile de securitate de facto din așa-numita Republică Moldovenească Nistreană. Începând cu 1993, birourile OSCE și ONU de la Chișinău au urmărit problemele legate de drepturile omului din această entitate nerecunoscută, devenind o parte integrantă a dialogului dintre UE și Republica Moldova.

UE a finanțat mai multe proiecte de consolidare a încrederii, care vizează, printre altele, promovarea protecției drepturilor omului în regiunea Transnistria și care au contribuit la stabilirea unor legături solide cu societatea civilă locală. În acest mod s-a îmbunătățit considerabil gradul de cunoaștere a problemelor și s-a pregătit terenul pentru recenta numire a domnului Hammarberg în calitate de expert al ONU în domeniul drepturilor omului în Transnistria.

Cu ocazia întâlnirii grupului de negociere „5+2" privind soluționarea conflictului din Transnistria, care s-a desfășurat în zilele de 17 și 18 aprilie 2012, UE s-a aflat printre cei care au insistat ca drepturile omului să fie înscrise pe ordinea de zi a procesului oficial de negociere. La 23 mai 2012, în cadrul dialogului său periodic purtat cu Chișinăul pe tema drepturilor omului, UE a propus înființarea unui grup de lucru comun Chișinău-Tiraspol care să abordeze în mod sistematic problemele legate de drepturile omului. De asemenea, UE a prezentat o listă de cazuri individuale, în vederea demarării unui dialog intra-moldovean pe tema drepturilor omului. UE va ridica și cazul lui Alexandru în cadrul contactelor sale cu Chișinău și Tiraspol.

În fine, UE acordă o atenție deosebită situației școlilor cu grafie latină din „Transnistria", nu în ultimul rând în contextul actualelor restricții de călătorie impuse liderilor transnistreni. Acest aspect a fost discutat cu ocazia întâlnirii grupului „5+2" din zilele de 12 și 13 iulie 2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006196/12
to the Commission
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(21 June 2012)

Subject: Assault on schools in Transnistria that use the Latin script

In January 2012, Alexandru Bejan, a secondary school pupil in Tiraspol (in the so-called 'Transnistrian Moldovan Republic', a separatist region which by law forms part of the Republic of Moldova) was summoned to the headquarters of the Tiraspol secret service, where he was forced to copy word-for-word the text of an anonymous letter in Russian.

He was then compelled to write a confession acknowledging that he had committed 'acts of terrorism', after being confronted with a graphologist's report stating that he had written the 'letter of threat' in question. In June 2012, he was charged with 'false exposure of terrorist acts' and risks three years in prison.

Human rights organisations in the Transnistrian Moldovan Republic claim that this mistreatment, which was made possible by his not understanding Russian and the Cyrillic script, constitutes an assault on schools in Transnistria that use the Latin script.

Can the Commission express its views on this situation.

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

The case of Alexandru Bejan is another case of alleged arbitrary arrest and ill-treatment by the de facto security services of the so-called 'Transnistrian Moldovan Republic'. Since 1993, human rights issues in that unrecognised entity have been followed by the OSCE and the UN offices in Chisinau. They have now become an integral part of the dialogue between the EU and the Republic of Moldova.

A number of the confidence-building projects funded by the EU are connected with the promotion of human rights protection in the Transnistrian region, and have helped establish solid links with local civil society. This has considerably improved knowledge of the issues and prepared ground for the recent appointment of Mr Hammarberg as UN Senior Expert on Human Rights in Transnistria.

In the 17-18 April 2012 meeting of the '5+2' negotiating group on the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict, the EU was among those who insisted to put human rights on the agenda of the official negotiating process. On 23 May 2012, during its regular Human Rights Dialogue with Chisinau, the EU proposed to set up a joint Chisianu/Tiraspol working group to tackle human rights problems in a systematic manner. It also submitted a list of individual cases to initiate an intra-Moldovan dialogue on human rights. The EU will raise similarly Alexandru's case in its contacts with Chisinau and Tiraspol.

Finally, the EU is paying particular attention to the situation of the Latin-script schools in 'Transnistria', not least in the context of the current travel restrictions on the Transnistrian leadership. The issue was discussed at the 12-13 July 2012 meeting of the '5+2'.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse P-006198/12
til Kommissionen
Morten Løkkegaard (ALDE)
(21. juni 2012)

Om: Forhandlinger mellem EU og Japan om en frihandelsaftale

I maj 2012 spillede Kommissionen en vigtig rolle i forbindelse med fastlæggelse af, hvilken rækkevidde aftalen mellem EU og Japan skal have. Det er et afgørende skridt på vejen mod indledning af forhandlinger mellem EU og Japan om en frihandelsaftale — som er en handelsaftale, der indebærer et enormt potentiale for handel og vækst.

I et dokument fra Kommissionen til Rådets møde (eksterne anliggender) i maj skønnes det, at EU's udenrigshandel skulle bidrag med 0,7 procentpoint til væksten i BNP i 2012. Uden dette bidrag ville EU være i recession. Et andet bemærkelsesværdigt skøn er, at ca. 30 millioner job i EU (ca. 10 % af EU's arbejdsstyrke) er knyttet til EU's eksport.

Frihandel og åbenhed på EU's marked er en fribillet til vækst. Kommissionen påpeger selv den kendsgerning, at en forøgelse på 1 % af en økonomis åbenhed medfører en stigning på 0,6 % i arbejdsstyrkens produktivitet det efterfølgende år.

Vi ved allerede, at EU's handel med Sydkorea er vokset med 16 % siden indgåelsen af frihandelsaftalen, og skønnene for en frihandelsesaftale mellem EU og Japan taler for sig selv. I en analyse foretaget af Copenhagen Economics skønnes det, at en frihandelsaftale mellem EU og Japan vil øge EU's eksport til Japan med 71 % og Japans eksport til EU med 61 %.

1. Hvordan vil Kommissionen i en tid med økonomisk stagnation og presserende behov for vækst bidrage til, at der hurtigt indledes forhandlinger mellem EU og verdens tredjestørste økonomi, Japan?

2. Hvordan vil Kommissionen bidrage til at sikre et stærkt forhandlingsmandat, der kan befordre forhandlingerne, således at EU's borgere og erhvervsliv hurtigst muligt kan få gavn af de mange fordele, som en frihandelsaftale mellem EU og Japan vil medføre?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Karel De Gucht
(2. august 2012)

Fastlæggelsen af, hvilken rækkevidde frihandelsaftalen mellem EU og Japan skal have, er nu afsluttet på en vellykket måde. Det dokument, som beskriver omfanget af de potentielle forhandlinger om en frihandelsaftale, er det hidtil mest ambitiøse, som EU har tilsluttet sig i forbindelse med bilaterale handelsforhandlinger, og dækker alle EU's prioriterede områder. Det omfatter tilsagn i forbindelse med en række ikke toldmæssige handelshindringer, som EU-industrien har fremhævet inden for f.eks. automobil-, levnedsmiddel- og lægemiddelsektoren, og indeholder en køreplan for offentlige indkøb i jernbanesektoren. Kommissionen anser dette ambitiøse dokument for at være et godt udgangspunkt for fremtidige forhandlinger om frihandelsaftaler.

Den 18. juli 2012 godkendte Kommissionen en henstilling til Rådets afgørelse om bemyndigelse til at indlede forhandlinger om en frihandelsaftale mellem Den Europæiske Union og Japan. Udkastet til forhandlingsdirektiver vil blive drøftet i Rådet i de kommende måneder. Selv om Kommissionen har udarbejdet udkastet til forhandlingsdirektiver og henstillet, at drøftelserne om en frihandelsaftale indledes, er det i sidste ende Rådet, der skal træffe afgørelse om, hvorvidt forhandlingerne skal indledes, og hvilken type forhandlingsdirektiver der skal være tale om. Kommissionen kan først føre forhandlinger om en frihandelsaftale, når alle de nødvendige foranstaltninger er truffet.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-006198/12
to the Commission
Morten Løkkegaard (ALDE)
(21 June 2012)

Subject: EU-Japan FTA negotiations

In May 2012, the Commission played an important role in concluding the scoping exercise between the EU and Japan. This is a crucial step towards opening negotiations between the EU and Japan on a free trade agreement — a trade agreement that carries an enormous potential for trade and growth.

A paper from the Commission to the Foreign Affairs Council in May estimates that the EU's external trade would contribute 0.7 percentage points to GDP growth in 2012. Without this, the EU would be in recession. Other noteworthy estimates are that approximately 30 million jobs in the EU (approx. 10 percent of the EU's workforce) are tied up in EU exports.

Free trade and openness of the EU's market are a free ticket to growth. The Commission itself points to the fact that a 1 percent increase in the openness of an economy results in a 0.6 percent increase in labour force productivity the following year.

We already know that EU's trade with South Korea has increased by 16 percent since the conclusion of the free trade agreement. And estimates for an EU-Japan trade agreement speak for themselves. An analysis from Copenhagen Economics estimates that an EU-Japan FTA will increase the EU's exports to Japan by 71 percent and Japan's exports to the EU by 61 percent.

1. At a time of economic stagnation and urgent need for growth, how will the Commission contribute to a swift opening of the negotiations between EU and the world's third largest economy, Japan?

2. How will the Commission help ensure a strong negotiation mandate that facilitates negotiations so that European citizens and businesses can benefit within the shortest possible period of time from the many advantages that an EU-Japan FTA will bring?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(2 August 2012)

The 'scoping exercise' for the an EU-Japan Free Trade Agreement (FTA) has been sucessfully completed. The FTA scoping paper, which lays out the scope of the potential FTA discussions, is the most ambitious the EU has agreed so far in the area of bilateral trade negotiations and fully covers the EU's priorities. It includes commitments on a number of Non Tariff Barriers (NTBs) highlighted by the EU industry in areas such as the automotive, foodstuff and pharmaceutical sectors and provides a roadmap on public procurement in the railway sector. The Commission believes that this ambitious scoping paper is a good basis to frame any future FTA negotiations.

On 18 July 2012 the Commission approved the recommendation for a Council Decision authorising the opening of negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement between the European Union and Japan. The draft negotiating directives will be discussed in the Council in the coming months. While the Commission has prepared the draft negotiting directives, and recommended the launch of FTA negotiations,, the final decision on whether to launch them and on the type of negotiating directives, is a decision for the Council. The Commission can only negotiate an FTA once all the necessary steps are completed.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-006199/12
an die Kommission
Franziska Keller (Verts/ALE) und Michael Cramer (Verts/ALE)
(21. Juni 2012)

Betrifft: Freihändige Vergabe des „Elektronetzes Nord" in Sachsen-Anhalt

Wir danken der Kommission für ihre Antwort vom 2. Mai 2012 auf unsere Anfrage E-002399/2012 und möchten hiermit unter Bezugnahme auf Artikel 108 Absatz 3 AEUV (Pflicht zur vorherigen Anmeldung staatlicher Beihilfen) folgende Fragen mit Bitte um einzelne Beantwortung stellen:

1. Artikel 9 Absatz 1 der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1370/2007 stellt Beihilfen für den öffentlichen Schienennahverkehr nur dann von der Pflicht zur Anmeldung frei, wenn die zugrunde liegenden Verträge mit der genannten Verordnung in Einklang stehen. Ergibt sich durch den Verstoß bei der Direktvergabe des Elektronetzes Nord gegen Artikel 5 Absatz 6 in Verbindung mit der Richtlinie 2004/18/EG eine Verpflichtung zur Aussetzung der Zahlung der Beihilfen?

2. Hat die Kommission eine vorläufige Prüfung der Verträge unter beihilferechtlichen Gesichtspunkten eingeleitet? Wenn ja: Bis wann kann ggf. mit einer Entscheidung der Kommission in der Sache gerechnet werden? Wenn nein: warum nicht?

3. Die Vergabekammer des Landes Sachsen-Anhalt hat den Nachprüfungsantrag des Unternehmens NBE Regio GmbH mit dem Hinweis zurückgewiesen, er sei nicht formgerecht und seine Erweiterung sei nicht fristgerecht erfolgt. Wie beurteilt die EU-Kommission die Forderung Verlangen der Vergabekammer, ein Nachprüfungsantrag müsse sich gegen alle beteiligten Unternehmen richten, vor dem Hintergrund der Anforderungen in Artikel 1 Absatz 1 Unterabsatz 3 der Richtlinie 2007/66/EG oder anderer relevanter Rechtsvorschriften der EU?

4. Hat die Kommission den bisher für die fraglichen Nahverkehrsangebote gültigen „Großen Verkehrsvertrag" Sachsen-Anhalt vom 3. März 2003 einer beihilferechtlichen Prüfung unterzogen? Wenn nein: warum nicht? Wenn ja: Wurde dabei auch die Angemessenheit der gewährten Zahlungen geprüft? Mit welchem Ergebnis?

Antwort von Herrn Almunia im Namen der Kommission
(27. August 2012)

1. Mit Artikel 5 Absatz 6 der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1370/2007 [1] werden die zuständigen Behörden der Mitgliedstaaten ermächtigt, öffentliche Dienstleistungsaufträge im Eisenbahnverkehr — mit Ausnahme anderer schienengestützter Verkehrsträger wie Untergrund- oder Straßenbahnen — direkt zu vergeben. In dieser Bestimmung ist nur eine Form der Vergabe öffentlicher Dienstleistungsaufträge genannt. Ein Verstoß gegen diese Bestimmung hat als solcher nicht zur Folge, dass die Maßnahme nicht von der Anmeldepflicht des Artikels 108 Absatz 3 AEUV befreit sein kann. Wenn jedoch keine der Voraussetzungen für die alternativen Formen der Vergabe öffentlicher Dienstleistungsaufträge nach Artikel 5 der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1370/2007 erfüllt ist, kann die Maßnahme nicht nach Artikel 9 Absatz 1 der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1370/2007 von der Anmeldepflicht befreit sein.

2. Die Kommission hat beschlossen, so lange kein Verfahren zur Prüfung der Vereinbarkeit des Vertrags zwischen Sachsen-Anhalt und der DB Regio AG über die Bereitstellung des „Elektronetzes Nord" in Sachsen-Anhalt mit den EU-Beihilfevorschriften einzuleiten, bis ein Beschluss über die Einhaltung der EU-Richtlinie 2004/18/EG über die Vergabe öffentlicher Aufträge und ein endgültiger Beschluss der zuständigen mitgliedstaatlichen Behörden über die Einhaltung des Ausschreibungsverfahrens nach mitgliedstaatlichem Recht vorliegen.

3. Die Kommission prüft zurzeit die zugrunde liegende Beschwerde, einschließlich des Zurückweisungsbeschlusses der Vergabekammer des Landes Sachsen-Anhalt, der jedoch noch nicht rechtskräftig ist. Sie kann die Vereinbarkeit des nach mitgliedstaatlichem Recht ergangenen Beschlusses mit dem EU-Recht und insbesondere mit Artikel 1 Absatz 3 der Richtlinie 89/665/EWG jedoch erst dann abschließend klären, wenn ihr die Einzelheiten des endgültigen Beschlusses mitgeteilt worden sind.

[1] Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1370/2007 des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 23. Oktober 2007 über öffentliche Personenverkehrsdienste auf Schiene und Straße und zur Aufhebung der Verordnungen (EWG) Nr. 1191/69 und (EWG) Nr. 1107/70 des Rates (ABl. L 315 vom 3.12.2007, S. 1).

4. Die Kommission ist bisher nicht mit der Prüfung des „Großen Verkehrsvertrags“ Sachsen-Anhalt vom 3. März 2003 befasst worden. Sie hat jedoch zum jetzigen Zeitpunkt keinen Grund zu der Annahme, dass er nicht mit der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1370/2007 im Einklang steht.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006199/12
to the Commission
Franziska Keller (Verts/ALE) and Michael Cramer (Verts/ALE)
(21 June 2012)

Subject: Award of the contract for the 'Elektronetz Nord' northern electric rail network service in Saxony-Anhalt by means of a private treaty

We thank the Commission for its answer of 2 May 2012 to our Question E-002399/2012. We would now like to ask the following questions relating to Article 108(3) TFEU (prior notification requirement for state aid) and request a separate answer to each question:

1. Under Article 9(1) of Regulation (EC) No 1370/2007 aid for local public rail transport is exempt from the notification requirement only where the relevant contracts are consistent with that regulation. Does the infringement of Article 5(6) of that regulation and of Directive 2004/18/EC through the direct award of the contract for the 'Elektronetz Nord' mean that the payment of state aid must be suspended?

2. Has the Commission initiated a preliminary review of the contracts in the light of the relevant state aid rules? If so, when can we expect a decision from the Commission? If not, why not?

3. The Saxony-Anhalt procurement board rejected the request for a review of the award decision submitted by the undertaking NBE Regio GmbH on the grounds that the request was not formally admissible and that the subsequent revised request was not submitted in time. In the light of the requirements laid down in Article 1(1)(3) of Directive 2007/66/EC or in other relevant EU legislation, what view does the Commission take of the procurement board's position that the request for a review must cover the bids submitted by all participating undertakings?

4. Has the Commission assessed Saxony-Anhalt's 'Großen Verkehrsvertrag' (principal transport contract) of 3 March 2003, which covers the local transport services in question, in the light of the relevant state aid rules? If not, why not? If so, was the appropriateness of the approved payments also examined? With what result?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(27 August 2012)

1. Article 5(6) of Regulation (EC) No 1370/2007 ([1]) empowers competent national authorities to directly award public service contracts for rail transport, with the exception of other track-based modes such as metro or tramways. This provision provides but one means of awarding public service contracts. Failure to comply with it does not in itself mean that the measure cannot benefit from the exemption to notification requirement of Article 108(3) TFEU. If, however, none of the conditions of the alternative means of awarding public service contracts under Article 5 of Regulation (EC) No 1370/2007 are complied with, the measure cannot be exempted from the notification obligation under Article 9(1) of Regulation (EC) No 1370/2007.

2. Pending a decision on compliance with the EU Public Procurement Directive 2004/18/EC and a definitive decision of the competent national authorities on the compliance of the tender procedure under national law, the Commission decided not to initiate a procedure concerning the compatibility of the contract between Saxony-Anhalt and DB Regio AG for the provision of the 'Elektronetz Nord' northern electric rail network service in Saxony-Anhalt with the state aid rules.

3. The Commission is currently analysing the underlying complaint including the rejection decision of the Saxony-Anhalt procurement board which is, however, subject to an appeal. The Commission will only be able to assess the compatibility of the national jurisdiction decision with EC law, in particular Article 1(1)(3) of Directive 2007/66/EC once it is informed of the details of the final decision.

4. The Commission has not been requested to assess Saxony-Anhalt's 'Großen Verkehrsvertrag' (principal transport contract) of 3 March 2003. At this stage, it does not have any reason to believe that this contract is not in compliance with Regulation (EC) No 1370/2007.

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 1370/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2007 on public passenger transport services by rail and by road and repealing Council Regulations (EEC) No 1191/69 and No 1107/70, OJ L 315, 3.12.2007, p. 1.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006201/12
to the Commission
Struan Stevenson (ECR)
(21 June 2012)

Subject: Commission's answer to my written question on VAT rates on e-books (E-004190/2012)

With regard to the Commission's answer to my Written Question E-004190/2012, could the Commission advise when the two Member States concerned will respond?

The Member States in question are breaking the law. Has the Commission set a timetable for response?

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

The Commission decided on 3 July 2012 to launch an infringement procedure against France and Luxembourg concerning VAT rates applicable to e-books and sent a letter of formal notice to both Member States. The first stage allows the two countries to explain their position. France and Luxembourg have one month to submit their comments. If the information provided is not regarded as sufficient, the Commission could formally state that there has been an infringement and send a reasoned opinion to the two countries asking them to change their laws, which is the second stage of the infringement procedure.

(Tekstas lietuvių kalba)

Klausimas, į kurį atsakoma raštu, Nr. E-006203/12
Komisijai
Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D)
(2012 m. birželio 21 d.)

Tema: Pensijų mažinimas valstybėse narėse krizės laikotarpiu

Didelę įtaką Europos Sąjungos valstybių narių pensijų sistemai padarė ekonomikos ir finansų krizė. Kai kurios valstybės narės sumažino pensijų dydį arba sustabdė jų augimą.

Ar galėtų Komisija pateikti duomenis, kurios valstybės narės 2009-2011 metais sumažino pensijų dydį ir kaip tai paveikė žmonių gyvenimo kokybę?

O. Rehno atsakymas Komisijos vardu
(2012 m. liepos 31 d.)

Pastaraisiais metais dauguma valstybių narių reformavo savo pensijų sistemas, kad jos taptų tvaresnės ir padėtų spręsti visuomenės senėjimo problemą. Be apribojimų, susijusių su ankstyvu išėjimu į pensiją ir invalidumo draudimo sistemomis, keletas šalių priėmė teisės aktus dėl pensinio amžiaus ilginimo, o kai kurios (Čekija, Danija, Graikija, Ispanija ir Italija) nustatė dar ir automatinę sąsają su ilgėjančia tikėtina gyvenimo trukme. Šios reformos, atitinkančios 2012 m. Metinėje augimo apžvalgoje ir Baltojoje knygoje „Adekvačių, saugių ir tvarių pensijų darbotvarkė" pateiktas Komisijos rekomendacijas dėl pensijų, turi akivaizdų teigiamą poveikį biudžetui. Tačiau, 2012 m. Pranešimo apie visuomenės senėjimą duomenimis, 2009-2011 m. daugumoje valstybių narių išlaidų pensijoms dalis, palyginti su BVP, didėjo. Tai ypač pasakytina apie Latviją, Rumuniją, Lietuvą, Vengriją, Čekiją ir Bulgariją. Tad ekonomikos krizė ir jos padariniai augimui turi didelę įtaką minėtam santykiui.

Manoma, kad dėl įgyvendintų pensijų reformų per artimiausius dešimt metų išlaidų pensijoms dalies, palyginti su BVP, padidėjimas bus nedidelis, o po to toliau didės. Šių reformų poveikis žmonių gyvenimo kokybei priklauso nuo to, kokią įtaką tos reformos turi pensinio amžiaus žmonių pajamoms ir, antra vertus, kokią įtaką išlaidų pensijoms sumažėjimas turi likusiems gyventojams (ar sumažėja mokesčiai bei įmokos ir ar padidėja kitų valstybės pervedimų ir išlaidos paslaugoms). Atsižvelgiant į tai, 2012 m. Pensijų adekvatumo ataskaitoje dabartinių ir būsimų pensijų adekvatumo klausimas apžvelgiamas plačiau.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006203/12
to the Commission
Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D)
(21 June 2012)

Subject: Reducing pensions in the Member States during the crisis

The economic and financial crisis has had a major impact on pension systems in the European Union's Member States. Certain Member States have reduced the size of pensions or halted their growth.

Could the Commission provide information on the Member States that have reduced the size of pensions over 2009-2011 and how this has affected people's quality of life?

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

In recent years, a majority of Member States have reformed their pension systems so as to put them on a more sustainable footing and enable them to cope with ageing populations. Next to restrictions to early retirement and disability schemes, several countries have legislated increases in retirement ages, sometimes including automatic links to gains in life expectancy (Czech Republic, Denmark, Greece, Spain, Italy). These reforms — that are in line with the Commission's recommendations on pensions in the 2012 Annual Growth Survey as well as the White Paper on Adequate, Safe and Sustainable Pensions — are having visible positive budgetary impacts. The 2012 Ageing Report shows, however, that an increase of pension expenditures as a share of GDP can be observed between 2009 and 2011 in most of the Member States. This especially holds for Latvia, Romania, Lithuania, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Bulgaria. Thereby, the economic crisis and its effect on growth is influencing the ratio heavily.

Going forward, pension spending as a share of GDP is expected to increase only moderately over the next 10 years in the EU, reflecting pension reforms implemented, and thereafter rise further. The impact of those reforms on people's quality of life depends, on one hand, on how they affect incomes of people in retirement and, on the other hand, on how reduced spending on pensions affects the rest of the population through reduced taxes and contributions or increased spending on other public transfers and services. In that context, the 2012 Pension Adequacy Report provides a broader look at current and expected future pension outcomes in terms of adequacy.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-006204/12
adresată Comisiei
Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE)
(21 iunie 2012)

Subiect: CFM 2014-2020 și resursele financiare proprii

Comisia Europeană a prezentat prin COM(2011)0500 „Un buget pentru Europa 2020" necesitatea de modernizare a cadrului financiar și modul de finanțare a bugetului UE.

La revizuirea bugetului, a fost prevăzută o listă detaliata a eventualelor mijloace de finanțare care ar putea înlocui în mod treptat contribuțiile naționale și ar putea ușura povara statelor membre. Comisia a efectuat o analiză aprofundată a opțiunilor și a decis să propună un nou sistem de resurse proprii bazat pe o taxă pe tranzacțiile financiare și o nouă resursă TVA. Aceste noi resurse proprii ar finanța parțial bugetul UE, ar putea înlocui în întregime resursa proprie bazată pe TVA și ar reduce ponderea resurselor bazate pe venitul național brut (VNB).

În prezent, peste 85% din finanțarea UE se bazează pe agregatele statistice derivate din (VNB) și TVA, percepute în general de statele membre ca fiind contribuții naționale care trebuie reduse la minimum. Având în vedere acest lucru, are în vedere Comisia efectuarea în viitor a unor analize aprofundate periodice care să determine și alte noi surse de finanțare proprii (ale Uniunii Europene)?

Din studiile și analizele precedente efectuate de către Comisie, sunt avute în vedere și alte opțiuni de finanțare a bugetului, altele decât cele prezentate în COM(2010)0700 „*Revizuirea bugetului UE*"?

Răspuns dat de dl Lewandowski în numele Comisiei
(6 august 2012)

Documentul de lucru al serviciilor Comisiei „Finanțarea bugetului UE: Raport privind funcționarea sistemului de resurse proprii" [SEC(2011) 876 final] cuprinde cea mai detaliată analiză elaborată de Comisie până în prezent cu privire la finanțarea bugetului UE.

Comisia a prezentat periodic propuneri de modificare a Deciziei privind resursele proprii în legătură cu propunerile sale privind cadrul financiar multianual, în special în 1998 și 2004. Cu toate acestea, exercițiul analitic din 2011 iese în evidență, deoarece se bazează pe o analiză cuprinzătoare și aprofundată efectuată în 2008 în cadrul revizuirii bugetare, analiză cu privire la care Comisia a încheiat un contract cu un grup de specialiști în domeniul sistemului de finanțare al UE în vederea elaborării unui raport.

Pe baza analizei efectuate în 2011, Comisia a propus modificarea semnificativă a modului în care este finanțat bugetul UE. În special, aceasta a propus o simplificare prin eliminarea actualului sistem de TVA statistic și prin introducerea a două noi resurse care îndeplinesc condițiile necesare pentru asigurarea unor adevărate resurse proprii: taxa pe tranzacțiile financiare și o nouă resursă bazată pe TVA. Propunerea menționată anterior explică în detaliu motivele pentru care Comisia consideră aceste două noi resurse proprii ca fiind cele mai adecvate pentru reformarea sistemului de finanțare a bugetului. În plus, Comisia a propus simplificarea în mod substanțial a sistemului de reduceri, și anume înlocuirea tuturor reducerilor actuale cu un sistem de sume forfetare aplicabile acelor state membre care, în caz contrar, ar suporta o sarcină bugetară excesivă în raport cu prosperitatea lor relativă.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006204/12
to the Commission
Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE)
(21 June 2012)

Subject: MFF 2014-2020 and own resources

In its communication 'A Budget for Europe 2020' (COM(2011)0500), the European Commission stated the need to modernise the financial framework and the way the EU budget is financed.

In the budget review, the Commission set out a detailed list of possible financing means that could gradually replace national contributions and relieve the burden on Member States. The Commission carried out an extensive analysis of the options and has decided to propose a new own resources system based on a financial transactions tax and a new VAT resource. These new own resources would partially finance the EU budget, could fully replace the existing VAT-based own resource and would reduce the scale of the GNI-based resource.

At present, more than 85% of EU financing is based on statistical aggregates derived from gross national income (GNI) and VAT, which are widely perceived by Member States as national contributions to be minimised. In view of this, does the Commission plan to conduct in the future regular in-depth analyses aimed at identifying more own funding sources for the EU?

Have any other budget financing options, besides those presented in 'The EU Budget Review' (COM(2010)0700), emerged from previous studies and analyses performed by the Commission?

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

The most detailed analysis to date presented by the Commission on the financing of the Budget is included in the Commission Staff working Paper: 'Financing the EU budget: Report on the operation of the own resources system' (SEC(2011) 876 final).

The Commission has regularly presented proposals to modify the Own Resources Decision, in relation with its proposals on the multi-annual financial framework, notably in 1998 and 2004. However, the 2011 exercise stands out as it is based on the extensive and in-depth analysis conducted in 2008 in the framework of the Budget Review, for which the Commission contracted a report by a group of specialists on the EU financing system.

On the basis of the analysis conducted in 2011, the Commission proposed to significantly change the way the EU budget is financed. It notably proposed to simplify the system by abolishing the current statistical VAT, and to introduce two new resources which fulfil the conditions necessary for genuine own resources: the Financial Transaction Tax and a new VAT-based resource. The Commission proposal explains in details the reasons why it considers these two new own resources as the most appropriate candidates to reform the financing system of the Budget. Moreover, the Commission proposed to simplify substantially the system of rebates, i.e. to replace all current rebates with a system of lump sums for those Member States who would otherwise sustain a budgetary burden excessive to their relative prosperity.

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande E-006205/12
till kommissionen
Åsa Westlund (S&D)
(21 juni 2012)

Angående: Label and Liability – Stulna tomater från Västsahara

I veckan släppte Emmaus Stockholm och Western Sahara Resource Watch en rapport som bevisar att tomater som uppges komma från Marocko i själva verket kommer från det ockuperade Västsahara. Handeln är omfattande, under 2010 exporterades 60 000 ton frukt och grönt från dessa plantager i Västsahara.

Handelsavtalet mellan EU och Marocko om ömsesidiga liberaliseringsåtgärder angående jordbruksprodukter, bearbetade jordbruksprodukter, fisk och fiskeriprodukter, förväntas träda i kraft den 1 juli. Detta innebär att det blir billigare att leverera varor med marockanskt ursprung till Europa. Enligt den svenska regeringen ingår inte produkter från Västsahara i avtalet, då avtalet är mellan EU och Marocko och inget EU-land anser att Västsahara är en del av Marocko.

Rapporten visar dock att statliga marockanska kontor i de ockuperade områden systematiskt märker frukt och grönt från plantagerna i Västsahara med marockanska stämplar.

Anser kommissionen att det är acceptabelt att Marocko systematiskt märker jordbruksprodukter som producerats i Västsahara som marockanska?

Anser kommissionen att avtalet mellan EU och Marocko inbegriper varor från Västsahara?

Svar från Dacian Cioloş på kommissionens vägnar
(29 augusti 2012)

Enligt FN:s ståndpunkt i frågan, som EU ansluter sig till, betraktas Västsahara som ett ”icke-självstyrande område” och Konungariket Marocko som dess de facto administrerande makt.

I den utsträckning som exporterade produkter från Västsahara faktiskt omfattas av handelsförmåner är verksamhet som rör naturresurser och som bedrivs av en administrerande makt i ett icke-självstyrande område lagenlig så länge detta folks behov, intressen och fördelar inte åsidosätts.

Marockos administration i Västsahara måste följa dessa principer i internationell rätt. Samma sak gäller för det nya avtalet om liberalisering av handeln med jordbruks- och fiskeriprodukter som kommer att träda i kraft den 1 oktober 2012. I detta sammanhang har de marockanska myndigheterna redan samtyckt till att lämna information på alla relevanta områden för genomförandet av avtalet. Detta omfattar även information om fördelarna med detta avtal för den lokala befolkningen, även i Västsahara.

När det gäller frågan om ursprungsmärkning måste man komma ihåg att det varken i associeringsavtalet eller i det nya avtalet om liberalisering av handeln med jordbruks- och fiskeriprodukter finns några särskilda regler om märkning av produkter. EU beviljar därmed i praktiken produkter från Västsahara förmånstullar om produkterna inte särskiljs från produkter med ursprung i Marocko. Annars skulle de omfattas av de tullar som tillämpas på mest gynnad nation.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006205/12
to the Commission
Åsa Westlund (S&D)
(21 June 2012)

Subject: Label and Liability — stolen tomatoes from Western Sahara

Last week Emmaus Stockholm and Western Sahara Resource Watch released a report showing that tomatoes labelled as coming from Morocco actually come from the occupied Western Sahara. The volume of trade is extensive, with 60 000 tonnes of fruit and vegetables being exported in 2010 from these plantations in Western Sahara.

The trade agreement between the EU and Morocco concerning reciprocal liberalisation measures on agricultural products, processed agricultural products, fish and fishery products is due to enter into force on 1 July. This will make it cheaper to deliver goods of Moroccan origin to Europe. According to the Swedish Government, products from Western Sahara are not covered by the agreement, as the agreement is between the EU and Morocco and no EU Member State considers Western Sahara to be part of Morocco.

The report shows, however, that Moroccan State agencies in the occupied areas systematically stamp fruit and vegetables from the plantations in Western Sahara as coming from Morocco.

Does the Commission consider it acceptable that Morocco systematically labels agricultural products produced in Western Sahara as Moroccan?

Does the Commission consider that the agreement between the EU and Morocco includes produce from Western Sahara?

Answer given by Mr Çioloş on behalf of the Commission
(29 August 2012)

According to the United Nations position on the subject, which the EU adheres to, Western Sahara is considered a 'non-self-governing territory' and the Kingdom of Morocco its de facto administering power.

To the extent that exports of products from Western Sahara are de facto benefitting from the trade preferences, activities related to natural resources undertaken by an administering power in a non-self-governing territory are lawful as long as they are not undertaken in disregard of the needs, interests and benefits of the people of that territory.

The de facto administration of Morocco in Western Sahara is obliged to comply with these principles of international law. The same applies to the new Agreement on the liberalisation of trade on agriculture and fisheries products which will enter into force as from 1 October 2012. In this context, the Moroccan authorities have already agreed to provide information on all relevant areas of the implementation of this Agreement. This would also cover information on the benefits of this Agreement for the local population including in the Western Sahara territory.

Concerning the issue of origin labelling, it must be borne in mind that neither the Association Agreement nor the new Agreement on the liberalisation of trade on agriculture and fisheries products foresee any specific rules regarding requirements as to the labelling of products. As a result, the EU de facto grants Western Sahara products the benefit of preferential tariffs if they are not differentiated from products originating in Morocco, otherwise they would be subject to the full Most Favoured Nation tariffs.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej P-006206/12
do Komisji
Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)
(22 czerwca 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Zatrzymanie polonijnego działacza

21 czerwca 2012 r. białoruskie władze zatrzymały Prezesa Rady Naczelnej Związku Polaków na Białorusi i korespondenta polskiej gazety, Andrzeja Poczobuta. Wcześniej przeprowadzono rewizję w jego domu, skonfiskowano komputer działacza. Jak informują media, przeciwko Poczobutowi wszczęto sprawę karną za zniesławienie prezydenta Alaksandra Łukaszenki. Dziennikarz miał się dopuścić zniesławienia w artykułach opublikowanych na łamach opozycyjnych portali Karta97 i „Białoruski Partyzant".

Zatrzymanie Poczobuta jest kolejnym przypadkiem prześladowania i represji tego działacza polonijnego przez białoruskie władze. W lipcu ubiegłego roku Poczobut został skazany na trzy lata więzienia w zawieszeniu na dwa lata również za zniesławienie prezydenta. A na początku czerwca tego roku został on zatrzymany podczas pikiety w obronie polskiej szkoły w Grodnie.

W związku z tym pragnę zapytać, jak Komisja zamierza interweniować w sprawie zatrzymania Andrzeja Poczobuta i wyrazić sprzeciw wobec oczywistych represji i prześladowania tego polonijnego działacza?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wysoką Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodniczącą Catherine Ashton w imieniu Komisji
(30 lipca 2012 r.)

UE jest nadal głęboko zaniepokojona sytuacją w zakresie poszanowania praw człowieka, praworządności i zasad demokratycznych na Białorusi.

W kontekście rosnącej w ostatnim czasie liczby doniesień o prześladowaniu przedstawicieli społeczeństwa obywatelskiego, opozycji politycznej i niezależnych mediów w dniu 28 czerwca 2012 r. rzecznik Wysokiej Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodniczącej Komisji wyraził w jej imieniu głębokie zaniepokojenie istniejącą sytuacją, jak również oskarżeniami wniesionymi przeciwko dziennikarzowi Andrzejowi Poczobutowi w związku z domniemanym zniesławieniem prezydenta.

Unia Europejska wykorzystywała i będzie nadal wykorzystywać wszystkie możliwości, aby przedstawiać w rozmowach z władzami białoruskimi swoje zastrzeżenia dotyczące aktów prześladowania przedstawicieli społeczeństwa obywatelskiego, opozycji politycznej i niezależnych mediów, również w odniesieniu do kwestii takich jak prawa mniejszości i wolność prasy.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-006206/12
to the Commission
Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)
(22 June 2012)

Subject: Detention of Polish-community activist

On 21 June 2012 the Belarusian authorities detained the head of the Supervisory Board of the Union of Poles in Belarus, Andrzej Poczobut, who also is a correspondent for a Polish newspaper. His home had previously been searched and his computer confiscated. According to media reports, Poczobut has been charged with defaming President Alexander Lukashenko. The journalist is alleged to have committed the defamation in articles published on the opposition's Charter97 and 'Belarus Partisan' websites.

This latest detention is yet another example of the persecution and repression of Poczobut by the Belarusian authorities. In July last year Poczobut was sentenced to three years' imprisonment, suspended for two years, also for defaming the President. And in early June this year he was detained during a picket in defence of the Polish school n Grodno.

What action does the Commission intend to take in response to the detention of Andrzej Poczobut? How does it intend to register its protest at the persecution and repression of this Polish-community activist?

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

The EU remains deeply concerned about the respect for human rights, the rule of law and democratic principles in Belarus.

Against the background of an increasing amount of recent reports of acts of harassment of representatives of civil society, the political opposition and independent media, the Spokesperson of the High Representatives/Vice-President on 28 June 2012 expressed the High Representative/Vice-President's deep concern, including as regards the charges brought against journalist Andrzej Poczobut for alleged libel against the President.

The EU has also used and will continue to use all available opportunities to raise its concerns as regard acts of harassment of representatives of civil society, the political opposition and the independent media, including as regards the rights of minorities and freedom of the press, with the Belarusian authorities.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-006208/12
lill-Kunsill
Simon Busuttil (PPE)
(22 ta' Ġunju 2012)

Suġġett: Waqfien tat-traffikanti tal-bnedmin

Ir-riżoluzzjoni 1872 (2012) bit-titlu ta' "Ħajjiet mitlufa fil-Baħar Mediterran: Min hu responsabbli?" adottata mill-PACE (Assemblea Parlamentari tal-Kunsill tal-Ewropa) tagħti rendikont tar-rwol tat-traffikanti tal-bnedmin fl-organizzazzjoni ta' vjaġġi perikolużi bid-dgħajjes fil-Mediterran.

Xhieda inkluża fir-riżoluzzjoni tgħid li matul l-organizzazzjoni ta' vjaġġ bid-dgħajsa ħamsin raġel, għoxrin mara u żewġ trabi ġew akkumpanjati sad-dgħajsa minn milizja Libjana. It-traffikanti tellgħuhom abbord, u neħħewlhom il-biċċa l-kbira tal-provvisti tagħhom ta' ilma u ikel biex ikun hemm spazju għal aktar nies fid-dgħajsa.

— Meta wieħed jikkunsidra r-rwol tat-traffikanti tal-bnedmin fl-organizzazzjoni ta' dawn il-vjaġġi perikolużi bid-dgħajjes, fl-ipperikolar evidenti tal-ħajja ta' ħafna minn dawk li jfittxu l-ażil u fit-tmexxija tal-migrazzjoni irregolari lejn l-Ewropa, l-Istati Membri ħadu xi passi biex iwaqqfu l-attivitajiet tat-traffikanti tal-bnedmin u jressquhom il-qorti? Jekk le, biħsiebhom jieħdu xi passi bħal dawn, u l-Kunsill jara xi rwol għall-Unjoni Ewropea f'dan ir-rigward?

Tweġiba
(18 ta' Settembru 2012)

Il-Kunsill, fil-fatt, jara rwol tal-Unjoni Ewropea fil-prevenzjoni u l-ġlieda kontra l-kuntrabandu ta' bnedmin.

Fir-rigward tal-leġislazzjoni f'dan il-qasam, l-Unjoni Ewropea adottat fl-2002 Deċiżjoni Qafas ([1]) biex tiġġieled kontra l-għajnuna għal qsim tal-fruntieri mhux awtorizzat u biex jissaħħu l-penali għall-kuntrabandisti ta' bnedmin. Din id-Deċiżjoni Qafas tissupplimenta strumenti oħra adottati għall-ġlieda kontra l-immigrazzjoni illegali, impjieg illegali, traffikar ta' bnedmin u esplojtazzjoni sesswali tat-tfal. Simultanjament, ġiet adottata Direttiva li tiddefinixxi l-iffaċilitar ta' dħul, transitu u residenza mhux awtorizzati ([2]).

L-aktar strument internazzjonali importanti huwa l-Konvenzjoni tan-NU kontra l-Kriminalità Organizzata Transnazzjonali (2000), li hija ssumplimentata bi tliet protokolli, wieħed minnhom huwa l-Protokoll kontra l-kuntrabandu ta' migranti fuq l-art, bil-baħar u bl-ajru. Dan il-Protokoll ġie ffirmat mill-Istati Membri tal-UE kollha (u ratifikat minn kollha ħlief minn tlieta), u ġie ffirmat u ratifikat ukoll mill-Unjoni Ewropea. Huwa daħal fis-seħħ fit-28 ta' Jannar 2004.

L-iskop ta' dan il-Protokoll huwa li jipprevjeni u jrażżan il-kuntrabandu ta' migranti, kif ukoll biex jippromwovi l-kooperazzjoni bejn l-Istati Partijiet għal dak il-għan, filwaqt li jiġu protteti d-drittijiet tal-migranti mdaħħla bil-kuntrabandu.

Skont il-Programm ta' Stokkolma — Ewropa miftuħa u sigura għas-servizz u l-protezzjoni taċ-ċittadini ([3]) — il-ġlieda kontra t-traffikar ta' bnedmin u d-dħul klandestin ta' persuni għandha tiġi intensifikata. Sabiex jittejbu l-miżuri kontra l-kuntrabandu ta' bnedmin, l-UE ħadet numru ta' passi.

Il-Frontex ([4]), fil-Programm ta' Ħidma tagħha tal-2012, inkludiet l-implimentazzjoni tal-Proġett tal-Unitajiet Mobbli Operattivi (UMO) f'operazzjonijiet konġunti kkoordinati tal-Frontex adattati. L-objettiv tal-Proġett tal-UMO huwa li jappoġġa lill-awtoritajiet nazzjonali tal-Istat Membru ospitanti fil-ġbir ta' informazzjoni dwar l-immigranti meta jinqabdu, bil-għan li jiġu identifikati dawk issuspettati li kienu involuti fl-iffaċilitar tal-immigrazzjoni illegali, it-traffikar ta' bnedmin u attivitajiet kriminali transkonfinali oħra. Għal dan il-għan, il-Frontex timmobilizza timijiet imħarrġa fl-intervisti f'numru ta' postijiet b'riskju għoli fil-fruntieri esterni tal-UE sabiex jipprovdu assistenza lill-Istat Membru ospitanti waqt Operazzjonijiet Konġunti kkoordinati mill-Frontex.

([1]) Deċiżjoni Qafas tal-Kunsill 2002/946/ĠAI tat-28 ta' Novembru 2002 dwar it-tisħiħ tal-qafas penali biex ikun impedut it-tħaffif tad-dħul, it-transitu u r-residenza mhux awtorizzati (ĠU L 328, 5.12.2002, p. 1).

([2]) Direttiva tal-Kunsill 2002/90/KE tat-28 ta' Novembru 2002 li tiddefinixxi l-iffaċilitar ta' dħul, transitu u residenza mhux awtorizzati (ĠU L 328, 5.12.2002, p. 17).

([3]) ĠU C 115, 4.5.2010, p. 1.

([4]) L-Aġenzija Ewropea għall-Ġestjoni tal-Kooperazzjoni Operattiva fil-Fruntieri Esterni.

Fil-qafas taċ-Ċiklu ta' Politika tal-UE għal kriminalità internazzjonali organizzata u serja stabbilit fl-2010 ([5]) u abbażi tal-Valutazzjoni ta' Theddid mill-Kriminalità Organizzata (OCTA) tal-2011 imħejjija mill-Europol, il-Kunsill stabbilixxa diversi prijoritajiet għall-ġlieda kontra l-kriminalità organizzata bejn l-2011 u l-2013 ([6]). Tnejn minnhom huma ffukati prinċipalment fuq l-immigrazzjoni illegali u t-traffikar ta' bnedmin, u huma għandhom l-għan li:

— Tiddgħajjef il-kapaċità ta' gruppi ta' kriminalità organizzata li jiffaċilitaw immigrazzjoni illegali lejn l-UE, partikolarment min-nofsinahr, mix-xlokk u mil-lvant tal-Ewropa u b'mod partikolari fil-fruntiera Griega-Torka u f'żoni ta' kriżi tal-Mediterran qrib l-Afrika ta' Fuq;

— Jiġu miġġielda l-forom kollha tat-traffikar ta' bnedmin u l-kuntrabandu ta' bnedmin billi jiġu mmirati l-gruppi ta' kriminalità organizzata li jwettqu attivitajiet kriminali bħal dawn b'mod partikolari fiċ-ċentri kriminali fin-nofsinhar, fil-lbiċ u fix-xlokk tal-UE;

Wara li ġew stabbiliti dawn il-prijoritajiet mill-Kunsill, il-Kumitat Permanenti tal-UE dwar is-Sigurtà Interna (COSI) identifika atturi rilevanti fil-livell tal-UE u tal-Istati Membri biex jistabbilixxu miri strateġiċi li jkopru l-perijodu 2011-2013 għal kull prijorità dwar il-kriminalità. Dawn il-miri strateġiċi fuq sentejn ġew adottati mill-COSI u nbidlu fi Pjanijiet annwali Operattivi ta' Azzjoni li bħalissa qed jiġu implimentati. L-Aġenziji tal-ĠAI (Europol, Frontex, il-Kulleġġ Ewropew tal-Pulizija (CEPOL) u Eurojust) kellhom rwol importanti f'dan il-proċess. Mekkaniżmu ta' rappurtar u valutazzjoni huwa wkoll provdut fuq bażi regolari sabiex jiġi żgurat segwitu adegwat tal-azzjonijiet imwettqa.

([5]) Ġie deċiż, bħala riżultat tal-hekk imsejjaħ "Proġett Armonija", li jiġi stabbilit ċiklu ta' politika pluriennali u metodoloġija ċara għat-twaqqif, l-istabbiliment u l-prijoritajiet ta' valutazzjoni fil-ġlieda kontra l-kriminalità internazzjonali organizzata u serja (15358/10).

([6]) 11050/11.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006208/12
to the Council
Simon Busuttil (PPE)
(22 June 2012)

Subject: Stopping people-smugglers

Resolution 1872 (2012) entitled 'Lives lost in the Mediterranean Sea: who is responsible?' adopted by the PACE (Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe) gives an account of the role of people-smugglers in organising dangerous boat crossings in the Mediterranean.

A testimony included in the resolution states that during the organisation of one boat trip fifty men, twenty women and two babies were accompanied to the boat by Libyan militia. They were boarded by the smugglers, who removed most of their water and food supplies in order to get more people into the boat.

— Further to the role that people-smugglers play in organising these dangerous boat trips, in putting the lives of many asylum-seekers in manifest danger and in running irregular migration into Europe, have the Member States taken any steps to stop the activities of people-smugglers and to bring the smugglers to justice? If not, do they intend taking any such steps, and does the Council see any role for the European Union in this regard?

Reply
(18 September 2012)

The Council does see a role for the European Union in preventing and combating people smuggling.

As regards legislation in this area, the European Union adopted in 2002 a Framework Decision ([1]) to combat the aiding of unauthorised crossing of borders and strengthen penalties for people smugglers. This framework Decision supplements other instruments adopted in order to combat illegal immigration, illegal employment, trafficking in human beings and sexual exploitation of children. Simultaneously, a directive defining the facilitation of unauthorised entry, transit and residence was adopted ([2]).

The most important international instrument is the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (2000), which is supplemented by three protocols, one of them being the Protocol against the smuggling of migrants by land, sea and air. This Protocol has been signed by all EU Member States (and ratified by all but three), and it has also been signed and ratified by the European Union. It entered into force on 28 January 2004.

The purpose of this Protocol is to prevent and suppress the smuggling of migrants, as well as to promote cooperation among State Parties to that end, while protecting the rights of smuggled migrants.

According to the Stockholm Programme — An open and secure Europe serving and protecting citizens ([3]) — the fight against both trafficking in human beings and smuggling of persons should be stepped up. In order to enhance measures against people smuggling, the EU has taken a number of steps.

Frontex ([4]) has included in its 2012 Work Programme the implementation of the Mobile Operational Units (MOU) Project in suitable Frontex coordinated joint operations. The objective of the MOU Project is to support the national authorities of the host Member State in collecting information on immigrants upon their apprehension, with the aim of identifying those suspected of being involved in the facilitation of illegal immigration, human trafficking and other cross- border crime activities. For this purpose, Frontex deploys trained interview teams to a number of high -risk locations at the EU external borders in order to provide assistance to the host Member State during Frontex -coordinated Joint Operations.

([1]) Council Framework Decision 2002/946/JHA of 28 November 2002 on the strengthening of the penal framework to prevent the facilitation of unauthorised entry, transit and residence (OJ L 328, 5.12.2002, p. 1).

([2]) Council Directive 2002/90/EC of 28 November 2002 defining the facilitation of unauthorised entry, transit and residence (OJ L 328, 5.12.2002, p. 17).

([3]) OJ C 115, 4.5.2010, p. 1.

([4]) The European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders.

In the framework of the EU Policy Cycle for organised and serious international crime established in 2010 [5] and on the basis of the 2011 Organised Crime Threat Assessment (OCTA) prepared by Europol, the Council has set several priorities for the fight against organised crime between 2011 and 2013 [6]. Two are focused mainly on illegal immigration and human trafficking, and they are to:

— weaken the capacity of organised crime groups to facilitate illegal immigration to the EU, particularly via southern, south-eastern and eastern Europe and notably at the Greek-Turkish border and in crisis areas of the Mediterranean close to North Africa;

— combat against all forms of trafficking in human beings and human smuggling by targeting the organised crime groups conducting such criminal activities in particular at the southern, south-western and south-eastern criminal hubs in the EU.

Following the setting of these priorities by the Council, the EU Standing Committee on Internal Security (COSI) has identified relevant actors at EU and Member State level to set up the strategic goals covering the period 2011-2013 for each crime priority. These two-year strategic goals have been adopted by COSI and have been converted into annual Operational Action Plans which are currently being implemented. The JHA Agencies (Europol, Frontex, the European Police College (CEPOL) and Eurojust) have played an important role in this process. A reporting and evaluation mechanism is also provided for on a regular basis to ensure proper follow-up of the actions undertaken.

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(5) It was decided, as the result of the so-called 'Harmony project', to establish a multi-annual policy cycle and a clear methodology for setting, implementing and evaluating priorities in the fight against organised and serious international crime (15358/10).

(6) 11050/11.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006210/12
to the Council
Paul Murphy (GUE/NGL)
(22 June 2012)

Subject: Forced eviction of some 2 300 people from the area of the Ma'ale Adumim settlement

The Israeli army plans to forcibly evict and relocate some 2 300 people, a majority of which are Jahalin Bedouin, from their homes in the area of the Ma'ale Adumim settlement block in the occupied West Bank. The civil administration's plans call for them to be relocated to a site next to a large landfill rubbish dump near the Palestinian town of Abu Dis. The dump receives up to 1 100 tons of rubbish per day, most of it from Jerusalem. The communities have not been consulted in this decision and oppose being removed from their homes. The Israeli army has previously stated its intention to start this process in early 2012 and many demolition orders have been issued already. According to Amnesty International, in some areas more than 90 per cent of homes and other structures are at risk of demolition, including two schools, one in Khan al-Ahmar and one in Wadi Abu Hindi. Children stand to lose access to education in this way, and children also constitute up to two-thirds of the residents targeted for displacement.

In my view this constitutes a violation of Israel's obligations under international law and a violation of the Jahalin's human rights.

1. Is the Council aware of these plans of the Israeli state?

2. If so, is the situation being monitored and who is responsible for this?

3. What steps will the Council take if the Israeli state continues with these plans?

Reply
(1 October 2012)

The Council is following with concern the plans to relocate a large number of Bedouins in Area C of the West Bank, including the plan to forcibly transfer some 2300 persons, most of whom are Palestinian refugees, from the so called E1 area in the vicinity of Jerusalem.

This issue is being closely monitored by the Office of the EU Representative, the Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Office, and by Member States' representatives on the ground. The matter has been discussed in the Council and raised with Government of Israel officials bilaterally, including through a letter from Commissioner Georgieva to the Minister of Defence Ehud Barak in December 2011.

In its conclusions of 14 May 2012 the Council recalled the applicability of international humanitarian law in the occupied Palestinian territory, including the applicability of the fourth Geneva Convention concerning the protection of civilians. The EU also called upon Israel to meet its obligations regarding the living conditions of the Palestinian population in Area C, including by accelerated approval of Palestinian master plans, halting forced transfer of population and demolition of Palestinian housing and infrastructure, simplifying administrative procedures to obtain building permits, ensuring access to water and addressing humanitarian needs. The Council will consider appropriate responses if the plan is implemented.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006211/12
to the Commission
Paul Murphy (GUE/NGL)
(22 June 2012)

Subject: Forced eviction of some 2 300 people from the area of the Ma'ale Adumim settlement

The Israeli army plans to forcibly evict and relocate some 2 300 people, a majority of which are Jahalin Bedouin, from their homes in the area of the Ma'ale Adumim settlement block in the occupied West Bank. The civil administration's plans call for them to be relocated to a site next to a large landfill rubbish dump near the Palestinian town of Abu Dis. The dump receives up to 1 100 tons of rubbish per day, most of it from Jerusalem. The communities have not been consulted in this decision and oppose being removed from their homes. The Israeli army has previously stated its intention to start this process in early 2012 and many demolition orders have been issued already. According to Amnesty International, in some areas more than 90 per cent of homes and other structures are at risk of demolition, including two schools, one in Khan al-Ahmar and one in Wadi Abu Hindi. Children stand to lose access to education in this way, and children also constitute up to two-thirds of the residents targeted for displacement.

In my view this constitutes a violation of Israel's obligations under international law and a violation of the Jahalin's human rights.

1. Is the Commission aware of these plans of the Israeli state?

2. If so, is the situation being monitored and who is responsible for this?

3. What steps will the Commission take if the Israeli state continues with these plans?

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

The EU has followed with concern the plans to relocate a large number of Bedouins in Area C of the West Bank, including the plan to forcibly transfer some 2 300 persons, most of whom are Palestine refugees, from the so called E1 area in the vicinity of Jerusalem.

On the EU side the issue is being closely monitored by the Office of the EU Representative, the Commission, and by Member States' representatives on the ground. The special matter has been discussed in Council bodies and raised with Government of Israel officials bilaterally, including through a letter from the Commissioner responsible for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response to the Minister of Defence Ehud Barak in December 2011.

In its conclusions of 14 May 2012 the Foreign Affairs Council recalled the applicability of international humanitarian law in the occupied Palestinian territory, including the applicability of the fourth Geneva Convention relative to the protection of civilians. The EU also called upon Israel to meet its obligations regarding the living conditions of the Palestinian population in Area C, including by accelerated approval of Palestinian master plans, halting forced transfer of population and demolition of Palestinian housing and infrastructure, simplifying administrative procedures to obtain building permits, ensuring access to water and addressing humanitarian needs. The Council will consider appropriate responses if the plan is indeed implemented.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006213/12
to the Commission
Emma McClarkin (ECR)
(22 June 2012)

Subject: Interactive technologies

1. What impact has the ongoing reform in DG INFSO (DG Connect) had on support measures for immersive and interactive technologies? Is there a connection with the recent lift of the reserve on the multimedia budget?

2. How far does the Commission value the importance of the video game development sector in the discussion about the Horizon 2020 and the Creative Europe programme? What concrete measures are to be taken?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(1 August 2012)

The new DG CONNECT, replacing DG INFSO, is the result of an internal restructuring carried out by the Commission to better meet the challenges of the Digital Agenda for Europe and to pursue the objectives proposed by the new Research and Innovation Programme — Horizon 2020. In particular, a new Unit G2 — 'Creativity' has been created to support the creative industries in their innovation process, including support measures for immersive and interactive technologies, acting as a focal point for these industries as regards European programmes and policies.

The Commission considers the creative industries, and in particular the video game development sector, as a dynamic economic sector with an important potential for growth and jobs. The future Framework Programme for Research and Innovation — Horizon 2020 —, under the 'Industrial Leadership' priority, pursues the objective to reinforce the competitiveness of European industry in different areas, amongst them 'Content technologies and ICT for digital content and creativity', which includes the video game industry. Horizon 2020 will include new instruments specifically addressed to SMEs which are the core component of the video game sector. Furthermore, the video game industry will be in the scope of the future Creative Europe Programme, a support programme for the European cultural and creative sectors. Video games developer and distributer will in particular be addressed by some parts of the MEDIA strand of the programme such as training and by a special financial facility that will establish a loan guarantee fund for SMEs active in the cultural and creative sectors.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006214/12
alla Commissione
Iva Zanicchi (PPE)
(22 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Ulteriori iniziative d'aiuto alla regione del Corno d'Africa

Da oltre due anni l'intera regione del Corno d'Africa sta subendo la peggiore siccità degli ultimi 60 anni, il che ha comportato una situazione di emergenza e di grave crisi alimentare con 8 milioni di persone stanziate tra Somalia, Kenya, Gibuti ed Etiopia che hanno urgente bisogno di aiuti umanitari.

Particolarmente allarmante è la situazione della Somalia meridionale: nel febbraio 2012 è stato revocato dagli inviati delle Nazioni Unite lo stato di carestia nelle 6 aree in cui era stato proclamato a luglio 2011, ma i livelli di mortalità per malattie e malnutrizione rimangono molto elevati e colpiscono nella maggior parte dei casi i bambini.

Negli ultimi mesi, grazie all'aumento dell'assistenza umanitaria e ai buoni raccolti, si sono registrati dei miglioramenti, ma ciò nonostante la situazione resta ancora precaria in tutto il Corno d'Africa.

Intende la Commissione sviluppare ulteriori iniziative, oltre a quelle già in atto, per potenziare gli aiuti e arginare questa grave situazione che ogni giorno causa centinaia di vittime, specie tra le donne e i minori?

Risposta di Andris Piebalgs a nome della Commissione
(21 agosto 2012)

L'UE ha reagito all'insorgere della crisi umanitaria erogando, a partire dal 2011, circa 791 milioni di euro di assistenza umanitaria (dei quali 181 milioni nel 2011 e 132 milioni a oggi nel 2012 sono stati stanziati dal bilancio dell'UE/dal FES). Tali stanziamenti hanno contribuito a salvare molte vite, fornendo assistenza alimentare, aiuti in materia di nutrizione e assistenza medica, nonché accesso ad acqua, strutture igienico-sanitarie e alloggi d'emergenza.

Per far fronte all'insicurezza alimentare nella Somalia centro-meridionale, le iniziative in materia di assistenza d'emergenza includono interventi su vasta scala (aiuti alimentari) associati ad aiuti al sostentamento, attività per il trasferimento di denaro e sistemi di «voucher». Dette iniziative di sostegno a breve termine sono connesse a programmi di sviluppo sostenibile a lungo termine, quali aiuti al sostentamento, iniziative di riduzione dei rischi di calamità e di gestione della siccità.

Per il periodo 2012-2013, oltre all'assistenza umanitaria, l'UE intende prendere ulteriori misure, che prevedano un sostegno alla produzione agricola e zootecnica, all'alimentazione, al trattamento sanitario del bestiame, all'approvvigionamento idrico e ad attività di gestione delle risorse naturali, per un importo complessivo di oltre 270 milioni di euro, di cui 120 milioni provenienti dai fondi recentemente stanziati delle riserve del FES.

Nell'ambito dell'iniziativa «SHARE: Supporting Horn of Africa Resilience» (SHARE: sostenere la capacità di reazione del Corno d'Africa) ([1]), si è effettuato un esame della vulnerabilità alle sfide nella regione del Corno d'Africa. In tale contesto, si prevede che la questione dell'agricoltura sostenibile/sicurezza alimentare rivestirà un ruolo prioritario nella programmazione dell'11° Fondo europeo di sviluppo (2014-2020) in tutti i paesi del Corno d'Africa. Ciò dovrebbe tra l'altro rafforzare la capacità delle famiglie più vulnerabili di far fronte alle crisi in materia di sicurezza alimentare, causate, ad esempio, dal susseguirsi di stagioni di scarse piogge.

([1]) Documento di lavoro della Commissione SWD(2012)102 dell'11 aprile 2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006214/12
to the Commission
Iva Zanicchi (PPE)
(22 June 2012)

Subject: Further assistance for the Horn of Africa

For over two years now the entire Horn of Africa region has been experiencing its worst drought in 60 years, which has led to a situation of emergency and severe food crisis for eight million people in Somalia, Kenya, Djibouti and Ethiopia, who are in urgent need of humanitarian aid.

Particularly alarming is the situation in Southern Somalia: in February 2012, the state of famine in the six areas in which it had been declared in July 2011 was revoked by UN envoys, but mortality rates from disease and malnutrition remain very high, affecting mostly children.

In recent months, thanks to increased humanitarian assistance and good harvests, there have been improvements, but nevertheless the situation remains precarious throughout the Horn of Africa.

Will the Commission take further measures, in addition to those already in place, to strengthen aid and curb this serious situation that causes hundreds of deaths every day, especially among women and children?

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

The EU reacted to the emerging humanitarian crisis providing around EUR 791 million in humanitarian assistance since 2011 (of which the EU Budget/EDF allocated EUR 181 million in 2011 and so far EUR 132 million in 2012). This has contributed to save many lives through the provision of food assistance, nutrition treatment, medical care, as well as access to water, sanitation and shelter.

To address food insecurity in south-central Somalia, emergency assistance initiatives comprise large scale interventions (food aid) associated with livelihood support, cash transfers activities and vouchers schemes. These short term relief initiatives are linked to longer term sustainable development programmes such as support to livelihoods, disaster risk reduction and drought management initiatives.

For 2012-2013, in addition to continued humanitarian assistance, the EU intends to take further measures including support to agricultural and livestock production, nutrition, livestock health, water supply and natural resource management activities worth over EUR 270 million, of which EUR 120 million is newly allocated funds mobilised from the EDF reserves.

The SHARE initiative '(Supporting Horn of Africa Resilience)' ([1]) has assessed the challenging vulnerability in the Horn. In this context, it is expected that sustainable agriculture/food security will be a priority for the programming of the 11th European Development Fund (2014-2020) in all countries of the Horn of Africa. This should *inter alia* strengthen the resilience capacities of the most vulnerable households in dealing with food security shocks, which are triggered for instance by consecutive seasons of failed rains.

([1]) Commission Staff Working Document SWD(2012)102 of 11 April 2012.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006215/12
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Iva Zanicchi (PPE)
(22 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Violazione dei diritti umani nel campo di prigionia di Yopuogon in Costa d'Avorio

Dopo l'arresto dell'ex presidente Laurent Koudou Gbagbo e l'insediamento al potere di Alassane Ouattara, la Costa d'Avorio ha continuato ad essere terra di violenze.

In particolare le forze repubblicane continuano ad attuare abusi e violazioni dei diritti umani su coloro i quali sono sospettati di opporsi politicamente al neopresidente.

Secondo alcune testimonianze raccolte da organizzazioni non governative operanti in loco, ad Yopougon, popoloso quartiere della capitale Abidjan, sorgerebbe una sorta di campo di prigionia dove i sospettati verrebbero pestati, messi con la testa in grossi barili d'acqua e quasi soffocati per estorcerne le confessioni.

Ogni giorno sarebbero diverse le persone arrestate, condotte nel campo di prigionia e poi sottoposte a questo pesante regime detentivo.

La crisi politico-militare che da anni affligge la Costa d'Avorio sembra dunque non aver fine, costringendo la popolazione ivoriana a vivere sotto il continuo timore di violenze e minacce.

È il Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante a conoscenza delle testimonianze sull'esistenza del campo di prigionia di Yopougon? Se sì, quali misure intende avviare per porre fine alle violazioni dei diritti umani che secondo fonti locali vi si perpetrerebbero?

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

L'AR/VP è a conoscenza di alcuni casi di arresti arbitrari e detenzioni illegali ad Abidjan e nel sud-ovest del paese, un fenomeno che è aumentato dopo i recenti attacchi nell'ovest e i presunti complotti contro il governo nella metà di giugno.

In questi casi i detenuti sono arrestati dalla polizia e dalla gendarmeria o dalle *Forces Républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire* (FRCI) e posti in detenzione prolungata nella *Direction de la Sécurité du Territoire*, nel *Camp d'Agban* o nei «campi militari non ufficiali». Sono stati inoltre denunciati maltrattamenti, in particolare nel caso delle FRCI. Tuttavia, le accuse relative alle torture mediante acqua o altri mezzi non sono ad oggi confermate stando alla divisione sui diritti umani dell'UNOCI che ha accesso ad alcuni di questi campi.

L'UE segue questi casi di abuso in collaborazione con l'UNOCI. Tali pratiche sono comunque del tutto inaccettabili. L'UE pone i diritti umani, il ripristino dello Stato di diritto e la riforma del settore della sicurezza al centro del suo dialogo politico con le autorità nazionali. Essa sostiene la professionalizzazione della polizia nazionale mediante la formazione e lo sviluppo delle capacità al fine di promuovere la creazione di una sicurezza effettiva per i cittadini della Costa d'Avorio in conformità ai principi dei diritti umani. Inoltre l'UE è il donatore principale per la riforma giudiziaria e carceraria con un progetto di 18 milioni di euro.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006215/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Iva Zanicchi (PPE)
(22 June 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Violation of human rights in the prison camp of Yopougon, Côte d'Ivoire

Since former President Laurent Koudou Gbagbo was arrested and Alassane Ouattara took power, Côte d'Ivoire has continued to be a land of violence.

Republican forces, in particular, are continuing to carry out human rights abuses and violations against those who are suspected of politically opposing the new president.

According to accounts given by non-governmental organisations operating locally, in Yopougon, a populous part of the capital, Abidjan, there is a kind of prison camp where suspects are beaten, have their heads put into large barrels of water and are nearly choked in order to make them confess.

Every day many people are arrested, taken to the prison camp and subjected to this harsh prison treatment.

The political and military crisis that has been afflicting Côte d'Ivoire for years now, thus never seems to end, forcing the population to live under the constant fear of violence and threats.

Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware of these stories of the prison camp in Yopougon? If so, what measures will she take to put an end to the human rights violations which, according to local sources, are being committed there?

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

The HR/VP is aware of some cases of arbitrary arrest and illegal detention in Abidjan and in the South West of the country, a phenomenon, which has increased since the recent attacks in the West and the alleged plots against the Government in mid-June.

In these cases, detainees are either arrested by the Police and the Gendarmerie or by the Forces Républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire (FRCI) and placed in prolonged detention in either the Direction de la Sécurité du Territoire, the Camp d'Agban or 'unofficial military camps'. Mistreatments have also been reported particularly in the case of the FRCI. However, the allegations of water or other types of torture are so far unconfirmed, according to the UNOCI human rights division, who have access to some of these camps.

The EU is following these cases of abuses in collaboration with UNOCI. Such practices are in any case completely unacceptable. The EU places human rights, the restoration of the rule of law and the reform of the security sector at the centre of its political dialogue with the national authorities. The EU is supporting the professionalization of the National Police through training and capacity-building, to promote the provision of effective security to the Ivorian citizens in compliance with human rights principles. The EU is also the lead donor in justice and penitentiary reform with a EUR 18 million project.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006216/12
alla Commissione
Iva Zanicchi (PPE)
(22 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Politiche di urbanizzazione volte a promuovere lo sviluppo urbano ed economico

Il numero delle persone che vivono nelle favela sta gradualmente aumentando a livello mondiale ed è stimato, secondo fonti ONU, a più di 800 milioni.

Allo stesso tempo vi sono milioni di persone che riescono a scappare da queste pessime condizioni di vita grazie alla trasformazione delle favela in nuove zone residenziali.

Il Brasile, ospite del recente *World Urban Forum* del 2010, può esser preso come esempio della notevole trasformazione dei quartieri poveri tramite una forte volontà politica e investimenti importanti.

Il governo brasiliano sta attuando la seconda fase del *Growth Acceleration Program*, potenziando gli investimenti in determinate aree urbane con nuove installazioni idriche e fognarie, con la conversione all'energia elettrica, con il potenziamento dei mezzi di trasporto pubblici e con lo sviluppo di politiche educative e di prevenzione della violenza.

Un'iniziativa che ha attirato l'attenzione mondiale è inoltre la «Unidade de Polìcia Pacificadora», attuata dallo Stato brasiliano di Rio de Janeiro, nella quale gli agenti di polizia sono considerati come una sorta di «promotori della pace» per manifestare la loro forte presenza nelle favela: il loro ruolo fa parte, infatti, delle misure che promuovono lo sviluppo urbano ed economico, la democratizzazione e l'istruzione garantendo, per i residenti locali, una qualità della vita più che accettabile.

Ritiene la Commissione che tali politiche di urbanizzazione siano un mezzo adeguato per favorire la democratizzazione, l'istruzione e il miglioramento delle condizioni di vita nei grandi centri urbani, specie nei paesi in via di sviluppo? Se sì, quali aspetti ritiene vadano potenziati in un prossimo futuro?

Risposta di Andris Piebalgs a nome della Commissione
(7 agosto 2012)

L'UE fornisce sostegno alle politiche di urbanizzazione del Brasile sin dalla firma dell'accordo quadro di cooperazione UE-Brasile del giugno 1992, che ha riconosciuto la necessità di promuovere i diritti sociali e in particolare i diritti della popolazione più svantaggiata.

Due progetti bilaterali finanziati dall'UE sostengono tali politiche in Brasile: «Sostegno alla popolazione svantaggiata di Rio de Janeiro e San Paolo», volto a fornire servizi sociali di base (approvvigionamento idrico, strutture igienico-sanitarie) e l'accesso al credito edilizio e «Sostegno istituzionale alla Segreteria dei diritti umani», volto a promuovere i servizi di polizia di quartiere e il controllo esterno delle forze di polizia per ridurre l'uso della violenza (Rio de Janeiro e altri Stati brasiliani). Questo progetto ha contribuito all'istituzione della *Policia de Unidade Pacificadora* a Rio de Janeiro. Più di recente, il progetto tematico finanziato dall'UE «Riduzione della povertà nelle zone urbane di Olinda» (Stato di Pernambuco), volto a migliorare le condizioni di vita nelle baraccopoli, è stato concepito a complemento delle attività del Piano per accelerare la crescita (PAC) del governo brasiliano.

Sulla base dell'esperienza, la Commissione può concludere che in questo ambito il sostegno al miglioramento delle citate politiche di urbanizzazione brasiliane ha contribuito a promuovere fra l'altro la democrazia e l'istruzione, e a migliorare le condizioni di vita nelle grandi aree urbane. Per quanto riguarda i paesi in via di sviluppo in generale, l'UE ha stabilito alcuni principi generali del suo approccio globale nel «Programma di cambiamento» ([1]) per migliorare le condizioni dei poveri: una strategia più mirata che si concentra su meno settori per accrescere l'efficacia degli aiuti.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/news/agenda_for_change_en.htm e
http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/130243.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006216/12
to the Commission
Iva Zanicchi (PPE)
(22 June 2012)

Subject: Urbanisation policies to promote urban and economic development

The number of people living in shanty towns or favelas is gradually increasing worldwide and, according to UN sources, is estimated to be more than 800 million.

At the same time, millions of people manage to escape from these terrible living conditions thanks to the transformation of shanty towns into new residential areas.

Brazil, which hosted the recent World Urban Forum in 2010, can be taken as an example of the remarkable transformation of poor neighbourhoods through strong political will and significant investment.

The Brazilian Government is now implementing the second phase of its Growth Acceleration Programme, by increasing investments in certain urban areas, providing them with new water and sewage systems and with electricity, strengthening public transport and developing education and violence prevention policies.

An initiative that has attracted worldwide attention is also the *'Policia de Unidade Pacificadora'*, implemented by the Brazilian state of Rio de Janeiro, according to which police officers are considered to be a kind of 'peacekeeper' and are visibly present in the favelas; indeed, their role is one of the measures to promote urban and economic development, democratisation and education, giving local residents a decent quality of life.

Does the Commission agree that such urbanisation policies are an appropriate way to promote democracy, education and improved living conditions in large urban areas, especially in developing countries? If so, what aspects does it think should be strengthened in the near future?

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

The EU has provided support to Brazilian urbanisation policies since the signature of the EU-Brazil Framework Cooperation Agreement in June 1992, which recognised the need to promote social rights and in particular the rights of the most disadvantaged population.

Two EU funded bilateral projects are precursors of such policies in Brazil: 'Support to underprivileged population in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo' aiming at the provision of basic social services (water supply, sanitation) and the access to credit for housing; and 'Institutional Support to the Secretariat of Human Rights' which aimed at promoting community policing and external control of police forces in order to reduce their use of violence (Rio de Janeiro and other States of Brazil). This project was a precursor to the establishment of the 'Policia de Unidade Pacificadora' in Rio de Janeiro. More recently, the EU funded thematic project 'Poverty Reduction in urban areas of Olinda' (Pernambuco State) for the improvement of living conditions in shantytowns was conceived to complement actions of the Brazilian Government Plan to Accelerate Growth (PAC).

Based on this experience, the Commission may conclude that within the given context its support to the improvement of mentioned Brazilian urbanisation policies has been instrumental in promoting, among others, democracy and education, and improving living conditions in large urban areas. Concerning developing countries in general, the EU laid down some overarching principles of its comprehensive approach in the 'Agenda for Change' ([1]) for improving the conditions of people in poverty: a more focused strategy concentrating in fewer sectors for increased aid effectiveness.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/news/agenda_for_change_en.htm and http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/130243.pdf

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006217/12
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(22 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Porto Franco di Trieste

Il Porto Libero di Trieste è stato istituito il 18 marzo 1719 dall'Imperatore Carlo VI d'Asburgo come porto extraterritoriale per lo sviluppo economico di tutte le Nazioni del centro Europa. Alla fine della seconda guerra mondiale, con la sottoscrizione del Trattato di pace di Parigi del 10 febbraio 1947 nell'allegato VIII e, in seguito, con il Memorandum di Londra del 1954, è stato riconosciuto e disciplinato il regime del Porto Libero di Trieste, attribuendogli lo status di Porto Franco internazionale, ovvero di zona extraterritoriale ed extradoganale.

I principi sanciti dal Trattato di pace del 1947 e dal Memorandum di Londra del 1954 vennero poi accolti nell'ordinamento giuridico italiano con i decreti del Commissario Generale del Governo n. 29 del 19 gennaio 1955 e n. 53 del 23 dicembre 1959.

1. A tale proposito può la Commissione confermare, come già affermato dal Presidente dell'autorità portuale di Trieste, l'insussistenza di conflittualità normativa tra il trattato CE e le materie regolate dal Trattato di pace del 1947 in virtù dell'articolo 351 del TFEU?

2. Conferma la Commissione l'operatività dello speciale regime delle Zone franche del Porto di Trieste, nelle cui aree si devono poter compiere, in piena libertà, senza alcuna discriminazione o percezione di dazi doganali o gravami se non quelli applicati quale corrispettivo di servizi prestati, tutte le operazioni inerenti lo sbarco, l'imbarco di materiali e merci, il loro deposito, la contrattazione, e la trasformazione, anche a carattere industriale?

Risposta di Algirdas Šemeta a nome della Commissione
(7 agosto 2012)

1. L'allegato VIII del trattato di pace con l'Italia, del 10 febbraio 1947, al suo articolo 1 stabilisce che il porto di Trieste è un porto extra doganale. L'articolo 5, comma 2, dell'allegato VIII dispone che, in relazione all'importazione o esportazione o transito nel Porto Libero, le autorità del TLT non possono pretendere su tali merci dazi o pagamenti altri che quelli derivanti dai servizi resi. Nell'ambito del diritto unionale tale posizione è garantita dal funzionamento del porto quale zona franca a norma delle disposizioni di legge dell'UE di cui in appresso.

2. La zona franca di Trieste è una zona franca sottoposta a controllo di tipo I. Ai sensi dell'articolo 166 del codice doganale comunitario è parte del territorio doganale della Comunità in cui le merci extraunionali non sono assoggettate a dazi doganali.

Tutte le operazioni che possono essere effettuate nella zona franca di Trieste devono essere conformi alle disposizioni doganali.

A norma degli articoli 156 e 160 della direttiva 2006/112/CE del Consiglio, del 28 novembre 2006 ([1]), gli Stati membri, tramite la loro relativa legislazione nazionale e sotto la loro responsabilità per quanto riguarda la corretta applicazione, possono esentare dall'IVA le cessioni di beni destinati a essere collocati in una zona franca e le cessioni di beni e le prestazioni di servizi effettuate nella stessa.

([1]) Direttiva 2006/112/CE del Consiglio, del 28 novembre 2006, relativa al sistema comune d'imposta sul valore aggiunto, GU L 347 dell'11.12.2006.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006217/12
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(22 June 2012)

Subject: Free Port of Trieste

The Free Port of Trieste was established on 18 March 1719 by the Habsburg Emperor Charles VI as an extraterritorial port to promote the economic development of all the nations of central Europe. At the end of the Second World War, the free port regulations were recognised and laid down in Annex VIII of the Paris Peace Treaty, signed on 10 February 1947, and the later London Memorandum, signed in 1954; Trieste acquired the status of an international free port, that is to say, an extraterritorial zone outside customs jurisdiction.

The principles enshrined in the 1947 Peace Treaty and the 1954 London Memorandum were subsequently incorporated into Italian law under decrees Nos 29 and 53, issued by the Government Commissioner-General on 19 January 1955 and 23 December 1959 respectively.

1. Can the Commission confirm what the President of the Trieste Port Authority has already said, namely that there is no conflict of laws under Article 351 TFEU between the EC Treaty and the matters regulated by the 1947 Peace Treaty?

2. Can it confirm that the special regulations governing the free zones of the Port of Trieste still hold good and hence that all operations entailed in the loading and unloading of materials and goods, depositing, trading, and processing, industrial or otherwise, may be carried out in those zones, completely freely and without discrimination, and with no customs duties or taxes other than fees for services rendered?

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

1. Annex VIII to the Treaty of peace with Italy of 10 February 1947 stipulates in its Article 1 that the port of Trieste shall be a customs free port. Article 5(2) of Annex VIII provides that in connection with importation into or exportation from or transit through the Free Port, the authorities of the Free Territory shall not levy on such goods customs duties or charges other than those levied for services rendered. Under Union law, this position is assured through the operation of the port as a Free Zone in accordance with the EC law provisions referred to below.

2. The Free Zone of Trieste is operated as a free zone of control type I. In accordance with Article 166 of the Community Customs Code it is a part of the customs territory of the Community in which non-Union goods are not subject to customs duties.

All operations which may be carried out in the Free Zone of Trieste must be in line with the customs provisions.

By virtue of Articles 156 and 160 of the Council Directive 2006/112/EC of 28 November 2006 ([1]) Member States can through their national legislation and under their responsibility regarding correct application, exempt from VAT the supply of goods which are intended to be placed under free zones and the supply of goods or services carried out therein.

([1]) Council Directive 2006/112/EC of 28 November 2006 on the common system of value added tax, OJ L 347, 11.12.2006.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006218/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Gaetano Cofferati (S&D)
(22 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Licenziamento e trasferimento dei lavoratori delle sedi europee del gruppo Merck

Il gruppo chimico-farmaceutico tedesco Merck KGaA ha annunciato una pesante ristrutturazione della società biotecnologica Merck Serono, dallo stesso controllata, che comporterà, entro il giugno del 2013, il licenziamento di circa 580 lavoratori e il trasferimento di altri 750 verso i siti produttivi di Darmstadt, Boston e Pechino. Il maxi licenziamento non avrà ripercussioni solamente a livello locale, ma colpirà anche le economie degli Stati membri limitrofi: molti lavoratori impiegati alla Merck Serono sono, infatti, frontalieri provenienti dalla vicina Francia e da altri paesi europei. Nelle scorse settimane la stessa Merck ha inoltre annunciato ulteriori licenziamenti nella sede francese di Lione (circa 270) e negli stabilimenti spagnoli e italiani. Si tratta, pertanto, di una ristrutturazione che interesserà diversi siti europei del gruppo.

Il gruppo Merck non solo non ha mai dato alcun segnale di crisi, ma ha anche recentemente triplicato i propri utili, con il conseguente superamento dei 10 miliardi di franchi svizzeri di volume d'affari, e un aumento del 20 % del dividendo degli azionisti.

I licenziamenti, i trasferimenti e la delocalizzazione della produzione comporterebbero gravissime conseguenze occupazionali e sociali, tenendo conto anche dei numerosi lavoratori impiegati nell'indotto.

Alla luce di quanto sopra esposto si chiede alla Commissione di rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

1. Quali azioni intende adottare per garantire, nei confronti dei lavoratori dei siti produttivi europei del gruppo Merck, il rispetto della direttiva 98/59/CE del 20 luglio 1998 concernente il ravvicinamento delle legislazioni degli Stati membri in materia di licenziamenti collettivi e della direttiva 2002/14/CE, dell'11 marzo 2002, che istituisce un quadro generale relativo all'informazione e alla consultazione dei lavoratori?

2. Quali azioni ha intrapreso o intende intraprendere per impedire l'impoverimento del sistema produttivo europeo, con le gravi conseguenze economiche e sociali che ne derivano, a causa dei sempre più frequenti processi di delocalizzazione, molto spesso neppure collegati a una reale situazione di crisi delle aziende coinvolte?

Risposta di László Andor a nome della Commissione
(14 agosto 2012)

La Commissione non ha modo di valutare i fatti, né di stabilire se effettivamente una società privata abbia rispettato o meno una disposizione attuativa della legislazione dell'UE. Spetta alle competenti autorità nazionali, inclusi i tribunali, vigilare sulla corretta ed effettiva applicazione della legislazione nazionale di recepimento delle direttive comunitarie da parte del datore di lavoro interessato, considerate le circostanze specifiche dei singoli casi.

La Commissione sostiene la necessità di programmare eventuali ristrutturazioni, svolgendo il lavoro preparatorio con la massima tempestività, e gestirle con responsabilità sociale. Le buone pratiche in fatto di programmazione, preparazione e gestione delle esigenze di ristrutturazione delle imprese devono essere applicate con maggiore efficacia in tutta l'Unione. La Commissione ha svolto una consultazione pubblica sulla programmazione dei cambiamenti e delle ristrutturazioni nell'ambito del Libro verde «Ristrutturare e anticipare i mutamenti: quali insegnamenti trarre dall'esperienza recente ([1])?» per individuare pratiche e politiche più efficaci al riguardo, promuovere l'occupazione, la crescita e la competitività e sfruttare le sinergie.

([1]) COM(2012)7 definitivo del 17 gennaio 2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006218/12
to the Commission
Sergio Gaetano Cofferati (S&D)
(22 June 2012)

Subject: Redundancy and relocation of Merck Group employees in Europe

The German chemicals and pharmaceuticals group Merck KGaA has announced a major restructuring of its biotechnology firm Merck Serono. Between now and June 2103, approximately 580 employees will be made redundant and a further 750 will be transferred to its manufacturing sites in Darmstadt, Boston and Pechino. Redundancy measures on this scale will not just have repercussions locally, but will also hit the economies of neighbouring EU Member States: many of Merck Serono's employees are cross-border workers living in nearby France and other European countries. What is more, Merck has announced plans in recent weeks for further redundancies at its French site in Lyon (approx. 270) and at plants in Spain and Italy. This restructuring will therefore affect several of the Group's sites in Europe.

Not only has the Merck Group never given any indication that it is suffering problems, but its profits recently tripled, with revenue exceeding 10 billion Swiss francs and a 20% increase in dividends paid to shareholders.

Taking into account the large number of people working in satellite industries, the redundancies and relocation of staff and production will have serious social and employment repercussions.

1. What action does the Commission intend to take to ensure compliance, in regard to Merck Group employees at manufacturing bases in Europe, with Directive 98/59/EC of 20 July 1998 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to collective redundancies and Directive 2002/14/EC of 11 March 2002 establishing a general framework for informing and consulting employees?

2. What action has the Commission taken or will it take to stop the impoverishment of the manufacturing system in Europe, and the resultant major economic and social repercussions, caused by the constant rise in the number of firms relocating, very often for reasons that have nothing to do with the companies concerned experiencing genuine problems?

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

The Commission is not in a position to assess the facts or state whether a private company has or has not complied with any provisions implementing EU legislation. It is for the competent national authorities, including the courts, to ensure that the national legislation transposing EU directives is correctly and effectively applied by the employer concerned, having regard to the specific circumstances of each case.

The Commission is convinced of the need for restructuring operations to be anticipated and prepared as far in advance as possible and to be managed in a socially responsible way. Good practice in anticipating, preparing and managing enterprise restructuring needs to be implemented more effectively across the EU. The Commission has issued a public consultation on anticipating change and restructuring via its Green Paper 'Restructuring and anticipation of change: what lessons from recent experience?' ([1]) to identify successful practice and policy in this field, promote employment, growth and competitiveness and harness synergy.

([1]) COM(2012) 7 final of 17 January 2012.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-006220/12
aan de Commissie
Philippe De Backer (ALDE)
(22 juni 2012)

Betreft: Ingeval van realisatie van een geherwaardeerd vast activum dienen in België alle rekeningen m.b.t. voorheen uitgedrukte, niet-gerealiseerde meerwaarde van dat vaste activum in principe tegengeboekt te worden, zodanig dat het voor zijn oorspronkelijke boekwaarde gewaardeerd wordt in de balans

De hoger aangehaalde Belgische boekhoudwetgeving is van toepassing op Belgische rechtspersonen, terwijl er voor bedrijven naar buitenlands recht met een *„vaste inrichting" (branch/succursale)* in België de boekhoudwetgeving van de EU-lidstaat van de moedervennootschap van het Belgisch filiaal toepasselijk zou kunnen zijn en niet de Belgische boekhoudwetgeving.

1. Vindt de Commissie zulke wetgeving gepast en in regel met het Europese gedachtegoed? De Commissie weet van andere EU-lidstaten die bij realisatie van een geherwaardeerd vast activum een gelijkaardige boekhoudverplichting als deze in België hebben? Indien ja, welke?

2. Daarenboven moet, om in België van een gespreide belasting op meerwaarden te kunnen genieten, voldaan worden aan een onaantastbaarheidsvoorwaarde. Heeft de Commissie weet van andere EU-lidstaten die volgens hun fiscale wetgeving eenzelfde of gelijkaardige verplichting opleggen? Indien ja, welke?

3. Is de Commissie niet van oordeel dat een rechtspersoon *(subsidiary)* in EU-lidstaat A, op wie de boekhoudverplichting van lidstaat A rust, indirect wordt gediscrimineerd t.o.v. een filiaal *(branch/succursale)* in lidstaat A dat valt onder boekhoudwetgeving van de moedervennootschap uit lidstaat B, die geen boekhoudverplichting kent?

4. Welke aanbevelingen of maatregelen zou de Commissie desgevallend ondernemen om in casu de Europese beginselen van non-discriminatie te doen naleven?

Antwoord van de heer Barnier namens de Commissie
(6 augustus 2012)

Voorafgaand merkt de Commissie op dat als een activum te gelde wordt gemaakt (ongeacht de waardering ervan), dit activum over het algemeen niet langer in de balans wordt opgenomen. De boekwaarde van het betreffende activum en de verkoopwaarde ervan (in de meeste gevallen de verkoopprijs) zullen in de winst- en verliesrekening worden opgenomen.

In het licht van de verstrekte informatie, lijkt de Belgische wetgeving niet in strijd te zijn met de desbetreffende bepalingen in de EU-boekhoudwetgeving. In de EU-jaarrekeningenrichtlijn ([1]) is bepaald dat lidstaten regels voor het gebruik van de herwaarderingsreserve kunnen opstellen. Sommige lidstaten, waaronder België, vergunnen of vereisen een dergelijke herwaardering.

Aangezien deze nationale keuze op grond van het EU-recht is toegestaan, is het niet discriminerend dat er verschillende boekhoudregels van toepassing zijn op een filiaal al naargelang van de vestiging van de moederentiteit. Meer algemeen, wat de filialen betreft, wordt in Richtlijn 89/666/EEG ([2]) de coördinatie geregeld van de openbaarmakingsverplichtingen die van toepassing zijn op de boekhouding van de filialen. Uit die richtlijn valt af te leiden dat de lidstaten geen aanvullende openbaarmakingsregels mogen opleggen met betrekking tot boekhoudbescheiden die op een filiaal betrekking hebben. Deze richtlijn heeft echter geen betrekking op de inhoud van de boekhoudverplichtingen.

Voorlopig zijn er nog geen specifieke maatregelen of aanbevelingen op dit gebied. De jaarrekeningenrichtlijnen worden momenteel echter grondig herzien. Het doel van deze herziening is het EU-boekhoudkader te vereenvoudigen en een grotere mate van harmonisatie te bereiken.

([1]) 78/660/EEG, PB L 222 van 1978.
([2]) PB L 395 van 30.12.1989, blz. 36-39.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006220/12
to the Commission
Philippe De Backer (ALDE)
(22 June 2012)

Subject: In Belgium, if a revalued fixed asset is realised, all accounts relating to a previously expressed but unrealised gain in the value of that fixed asset must in principle be cross-entered, so that it is valued at its original book value on the balance sheet

The Belgian accountancy law cited above applies to Belgian legal persons, while in the case of businesses established under the law of other countries which have a branch in Belgium, the accountancy law of the EU Member State of the parent company of the Belgian branch could apply instead of Belgian accountancy law.

1. Does the Commission consider such legislation appropriate and compatible with European principles? Does the Commission know of any other EU Member States which apply an accounting requirement similar to that which exists in Belgium when a revalued fixed asset is realised? If so, which?

2. Moreover, in order to have the benefit of fractioned payment of tax on a gain in value in Belgium, an inviolability condition must be met. Is the Commission aware of any other EU Member States whose tax law imposes the same or an equivalent requirement? If so, which?

3. Does not the Commission consider that a legal person (a subsidiary) in Member State A to which the accounting requirement of Member State A applies suffers indirect discrimination in comparison with a branch in Member State A which ís subject to the accountancy law applicable to its parent company from Member State B, which has no accounting requirement?

4. What recommendations would the Commission make or what measures would it take, if appropriate, in order to enforce the European principles of non-discrimination in this case?

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

The Commission would note as a preliminary observation that when an asset is realised (irrespective of its valuation), that asset is generally no longer presented in the balance sheet. The book value of the asset concerned and its realisation value (in most cases the selling price) will be entered in the profit and loss statement.

In light of the information provided, the Belgian legislation does not seem incompatible with the relevant rules of the EU accounting legislation. The EU Accounting Directive ([1]) allows Member States to lay down rules governing the application of the revaluation reserve. Certain Member States, including Belgium, allow or require such revaluation.

Given that this national option is allowed under EC law, the fact that different accounting rules would apply to a branch depending on where its parent entity is domiciled does not amount to discrimination. More generally as far as branches are concerned, Directive 89/666/EEC ([2]) coordinates disclosure requirements applicable to accounting of branches. It follows from that directive that Member States may not impose additional disclosure rules regarding accounting documents relating to a branch. However, this directive does not deal with the substance of the accounting obligations.

No particular measures or recommendations are foreseen in this area for the time being. However, the Accounting Directives are currently subject to an in-depth revision. The objective of this revision is to simplify the EU accounting framework and achieve a higher degree of harmonisation.

([1]) 78/660/EEC, OJ L 222, 1978.
([2]) OJ L 395, 30.12.1989, pp. 36-39.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-006222/12
adresată Comisiei
Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE)
(22 iunie 2012)

Subiect: Reglementarea instituțiilor de combatere a discriminării

Problema discriminării este una de actualitate, în contextul în care a devenit îngrijorător numărul cazurilor de restricție, sau chiar excludere, aplicate cetățenilor pe considerente de naționalitate, etnie, religie, apartenență la categorii defavorizate și altele. În mod particular, discriminarea pe piața muncii reprezintă o problemă majoră cu care se confruntă cetățenii Uniunii Europene și, implicit, instituțiile abilitate să monitorizeze acest fenomen.

Din păcate, există discrepanțe considerabile între statutele și rolurile instituțiilor de combatere a discriminării la nivelul statelor membre. Organismele din unele țări au atribuții jurisdicționale, putând emite decizii, dar și impune sancțiuni (cum este cazul Consiliului Național pentru Combaterea Discriminării din România), pe când în alte țări acestea au rol doar de mediator/observator (precum Agenția Federală Anti-discriminare din Germania).

Reglementarea unitară a instituțiilor de combatere a discriminării din statele membre este, așadar, necesară, luând în considerare Directiva Consiliului 2000/43/CE din 29 iunie 2000 de punere în aplicare a principiului egalității de tratament între persoane, fără deosebire de rasă sau origine etnică, dar și Directiva Consiliului 2000/78/CE din 27 noiembrie 2000 de creare a unui cadru general în favoarea egalității de tratament în ceea ce privește încadrarea în muncă și ocuparea forței de muncă, ambele documente obligând la asigurarea protecției cetățenilor împotriva discriminării în domeniul angajării și instruirii, educației, securității sociale, sănătății, accesului la bunuri și servicii și nu numai.

În acest context, propun spre analiză următoarele întrebări:

1. Care ar fi cea mai eficientă soluție pe care o propune Comisia în vederea reglementării și organizării acestor instituții în mod uniform la nivelul statelor membre ale Uniunii Europene?

2. În mod particular, pentru a reduce numărul sesizărilor sau chiar al cauzelor de discriminare din cadrul tribunalelor sau secțiilor specializate pe conflicte de muncă, ce măsuri unitare se impun a se lua la nivel comunitar?

Răspuns dat de dna Reding în numele Comisiei
(31 iulie 2012)

Comisia este convinsă că organismele de promovare a egalității au un rol extrem de important în ceea ce privește sensibilizarea opiniei publice, consilierea și sprijinirea cetățenilor în combaterea discriminării. Aceste organisme reprezintă un instrument esențial pentru punerea în aplicare a legislației UE în domeniul egalității de gen și al combaterii discriminării, constituită în principal din Directivele 2006/54/CE și 2004/113/CE (egalitatea de gen), precum și 2000/43/CE și 2000/78/CE (combaterea discriminării).

Atunci când, în temeiul acestor directive, statele membre sunt obligate să creeze organisme de promovare a egalității, aceste organisme trebuie să îndeplinească trei sarcini esențiale: să ofere victimelor asistență independentă, să efectueze analize independente și să publice rapoarte și recomandări independente. Statele membre dispun, așadar, de o marjă de apreciere în ceea ce privește stabilirea atribuțiilor care le revin acestor organisme și normele procedurale aplicabile în cazurile de discriminare. Până în prezent, 17 state membre au desemnat organisme de promovare a egalității care pot emite decizii, în timp ce în alte state, aceste organisme nu au atribuții judiciare sau cvasijudiciare.

Comisia evaluează activitatea organismelor de promovare a egalității în contextul rapoartelor periodice privind punerea în aplicare a directivelor respective.

În plus, Comisia sprijină activitățile EQUINET, o rețea a organismelor de promovare a egalității și încurajează schimbul de informații și de bune practici în vederea îmbunătățirii funcționării acestor organisme și a eficienței procedurilor la nivelul UE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006222/12
to the Commission
Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE)
(22 June 2012)

Subject: Provisions governing anti-discrimination bodies

Discrimination is currently a matter of great concern, given the large number of restrictions or even exclusions on grounds of nationality, ethnic origin, religion or membership of lesser-favoured categories to name but a few. In particular, discrimination on the employment market is of major concern to European citizens and, by extension, the watchdog bodies responsible.

Unfortunately there are considerable disparities between the status of such bodies and the role played by them in combating discrimination in the various Member States. In some countries they have legal powers and are able to issue rulings or impose penalties (for example, the Romanian National Anti-Discrimination Council), while in others they are merely mediators or observers (for example, the German Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency).

Standard provisions governing anti-discrimination bodies in the Member States are therefore necessary in the light of Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin and Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation, both making it compulsory to ensure that citizens are protected against discrimination in respect of recruitment, training, education, social security, health, access to goods and services etc.

In view of this:

1. What would the Commission propose as being the most effective way of establishing standard procedures governing such bodies and their organisation in the EU Member States?

2. In particular, what standard procedures are necessary at EU level with a view to reducing the number of complaints, court cases or hearings before industrial arbitration bodies arising from discrimination?

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

The Commission is convinced that Equality Bodies are of utmost importance to raise awareness, give advice to citizens and support them in the fight against discrimination Equality bodies are a central tool for the implementation of EU Gender equality and Antidiscrimination legislation, basically composed by Directives 2006/54/EC and 2004/113/EC (Gender Equality) and Directives 2000/43/EC and 2000/78/EC (Antidiscrimination).

Where under these Directives Member States are obliged to establish equality bodies these bodies must perform three essential tasks: provide independent assistance to victims, conduct independent surveys, and publish independent reports and recommendations. This leaves Member States a margin of discretion as to the precise powers of such bodies and the applicable procedural rules in discrimination cases. Currently 17 Member States have designed their equality bodies as tribunals handing down decisions while in others they do not possess such judicial or quasi-judicial powers.

The Commission reviews the operations of equality bodies in the context of the regular reports on the implementation of the directives in question.

In addition, the Commission supports the activities of EQUINET, a network of equality bodies, including the exchange of information and of best practices with a view to improving the functioning of these bodies and the efficiency of procedures across the EU.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006224/12
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(22 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Sviluppo sostenibile ad Haiti: una nuova economia con un progetto di filiera caffeicola

Dopo il terremoto del 2010, Haiti riparte dal caffè per rendere indipendente, attraverso l'economia, un territorio che vive di agricoltura di sussistenza. Già prima del devastante evento sismico del 2010, il paese viveva in estrema povertà, con una superficie di territorio disboscato pari al 90 % e la popolazione disoccupata per il 70 %. Una situazione aggravata dal sisma, sulla quale è intervenuta *Oxfam Italia*, rete internazionale di organizzazioni per la lotta contro la povertà e l'ingiustizia nel mondo. L'ONG ha avviato un progetto a sostegno dei piccoli produttori di caffè nel dipartimento a sud di Haiti, a Les Cayes, con l'obiettivo di creare un gruppo di produttori consapevoli di essere una cooperativa, in grado di coordinarsi e di coltivare e vendere caffè di qualità su mercati locali e internazionali, guadagnando dalle loro piantagioni. Questo processo di sviluppo sostenibile della filiera di caffè, risponde alla naturale vocazione caffeicola del paese; di fatto, «il chicco» rappresenta una delle sue risorse principali.

Il problema del caffè nei mercati locali è che se il prezzo, definito in borsa, subisce un abbassamento, per i produttori non è più conveniente coltivarlo e, così le piantagioni vengono abbandonate. Per questo è importante raggiungere i mercati internazionali, puntando a migliorare quantità e qualità del prodotto, rinnovando le pratiche agricole, molto arretrate ad Haiti. Dalle infrastrutture alla potatura e fertilizzazione, magari impiegando solo sostanze organiche.

Considerando che:

— decenni di povertà, degrado ambientale, vulnerabilità di fronte alle molteplici calamità naturali, violenza, instabilità politica e dittatura hanno fatto di questo paese il più povero del continente americano in cui, prima della catastrofe, la maggior parte dei dodici milioni di abitanti sopravviveva con meno di due dollari al giorno;

— i danni provocati dal sisma hanno aggravato ulteriormente l'incapacità dello Stato di fornire servizi pubblici di base e di rispondere attivamente agli sforzi di soccorso e ricostruzione;

— l'UE ha aderito all'ingente ammontare di aiuti finanziari promessi e stanziati durante la conferenza internazionale dei donatori per la ricostruzione di Haiti, tenutasi a New York il 31 marzo 2010;

Può la Commissione :comunicare quanto segue:

1. Quali misure intende intraprendere l'UE a sostegno e conferma dell'impegno preso in sede internazionale?

2. Quali progetti ha avviato o intende cofinanziare al fine di integrare la produzione alimentare locale e la sicurezza alimentare mediante lo sviluppo delle infrastrutture rurali e l'aiuto ai piccoli agricoltori, nell'ambito di un approccio congiunto alla programmazione delle risorse per la ricostruzione di Haiti?

Risposta di Andris Piebalgs a nome della Commissione
(7 agosto 2012)

1. Nonostante il difficile contesto politico che negli ultimi due anni ha complicato la cooperazione con le autorità haitiane, la Commissione ritiene di aver costantemente rispettato l'impegno preso alla conferenza di New York del marzo 2010. Finora è stato impegnato l'85 % dei 522 milioni di euro promessi dall'UE, sono cioè stati identificati progetti specifici, per i quali sono stati o stanno per essere firmati contratti. Il livello di esborso è inferiore, intorno al 25 %, principalmente a causa del fatto che l'UE fornisce un cospicuo sostegno a progetti complessi di ripristino delle infrastrutture, che solitamente presentano un basso livello di spese anticipate. La Commissione prevede comunque che l'esborso aumenti con l'avanzamento dei progetti.

2. Già prima del terremoto del 2010 l'UE forniva ad Haiti sostegno a breve e a lungo termine per accrescere la produzione alimentare, sviluppare il mercato e garantire l'accesso alle zone rurali. Alcuni esempi sono l'iniziativa Strumento alimentare (19 milioni di euro), un progetto nell'ambito del Programma tematico di sicurezza alimentare (6 milioni di euro) per l'aumento della produzione alimentare e un programma per i prodotti di base intra-ACP nel settore caffeicolo. Attualmente, nell'ambito della cosiddetta «iniziativa OSM» (obiettivi di sviluppo del millennio), viene messo a punto insieme al ministero dell'Agricoltura un nuovo programma (20 milioni di euro) che sosterrà la produzione alimentare e la commercializzazione nelle zone rurali più vulnerabili. A questi programmi si aggiungono investimenti nelle infrastrutture rurali e stradali (70 milioni di euro), che miglioreranno l'accesso ai mercati per i produttori locali. Inoltre, dopo il terremoto, la Commissione ha attuato attraverso vari operatori numerosi progetti in materia di assistenza alimentare e nutrizione, per un totale di 23,5 milioni di euro.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006224/12
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(22 June 2012)

Subject: Sustainable development in Haiti: restarting the economy with a project in the coffee-growing sector

Following the 2010 earthquake, Haiti is turning back to coffee to make a region dependent on subsistence farming independent via the country's economy. Even before the devastating earthquake in 2010, there was extreme poverty throughout the country, with deforestation affecting 90% of the land area and unemployment standing at 70%. The earthquake made this situation worse. Oxfam Italia, an international network of organisations fighting poverty and injustice in the world, arrived in Haiti and has started up a project to support small coffee producers in Les Cayes in the south of Haiti, with the aim of establishing a producers' group willing to form a cooperative, who are able to coordinate amongst themselves and grow and sell good quality coffee on local and international markets, thereby earning a living from their plantations. This process of sustainable development in the coffee sector is allied to the country's natural coffee-growing vocation: 'the bean', as it is known, is one of the country's main resources.

Coffee has a problem on local markets: if its price, set on the stock market, falls, then growing it is no longer worthwhile for producers and plantations are abandoned. Being able to sell on international markets is important therefore. To do this, the quality and quantity of the product must both rise, and new agricultural practices covering infrastructure through to pruning and fertilisation methods, maybe using only organic products, need to be brought in to replace Haiti's outdated ones.

Bearing in mind that:

— decades of poverty, environmental damage, vulnerability to numerous natural disasters, violence, political instability and dictatorship have turned Haiti into the poorest country on the American continent where most of the 12 million inhabitants survived on less than two dollars a day before the earthquake;

— the damage caused by the earthquake further worsened the State's inability to provide basic public services and respond actively to rescue and reconstruction efforts;

— the EU has contributed to the huge amount of aid pledged and allocated during the International Donors Conference for the reconstruction of Haiti, held in New York on 31 March 2010;

1. What measures will the EU take to support and confirm pledges made at the international conference?

2. What projects has it begun or does it plan to co-finance that will integrate local food production with food security through the development of rural infrastructure and aid to small farmers, as part of a joint approach to resource planning for Haiti's reconstruction?

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

1. In spite of the difficult political context which has complicated for the past two years the cooperation with the Haitian authorities, the Commission considers it has consistently been delivering on the pledge made at the New York conference of March 2010. To date, 85% of the EU's EUR 522 million pledge has been committed, i.e. specific projects have been identified and contracted or are in the process of being contracted. The level of disbursement is lower, at around 25%, mostly due to the fact that the EU is providing substantial support for complex infrastructure rehabilitation projects, which usually have a low level of upfront expenditure. The Commission expects, however, that disbursements will pick up as these projects advance.

2. Even before the 2010 earthquake, the EU has been providing both short- and long-term support to increased food production, market development and access to rural areas in Haiti. Examples of this support include the Food Facility initiative (EUR 19 million) and a project under the Thematic Food Security Programme (EUR 6 million) for increased food production and an Intra-ACP Commodity Programme for the coffee sector. A new programme (EUR 20 million) under the so-called 'MDG initiative' is currently being prepared together with the Ministry of Agriculture. This project will support food production and commercialisation in the most vulnerable rural areas. These programmes are complemented by investments in rural and road infrastructure (EUR 70 million) that will ultimately improve the access to markets for local producers. In addition, the Commission has implemented since the earthquake a number of projects in the field of food assistance and nutrition through a variety of actors, for a total of EUR 23.5 million.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006226/12
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(22 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Futuro della filiera del tabacco: tra regolamentazione europea e mercato della contraffazione la Cina avanza

L'industria del tabacco genera milioni di posti di lavoro e nei paesi in via di sviluppo tale filiera spesso costituisce una delle risorse per risollevare l'economia locale dalla povertà. In Italia nel 2011 le sigarette hanno garantito allo Stato il 97,4 % del gettito Iva e il 98,5 % di quello delle accise sul tabacco, mentre il 60 % degli introiti delle tabaccherie italiane (circa 56 mila) deriva proprio dalla vendita di sigarette e affini. Nel solo 2011 il volume d'affari relativo ai prodotti del tabacco nel nostro Paese sarebbe inoltre stato pari a 19 miliardi di euro. L'industria mondiale del settore produce circa 5 500 milioni di sigarette l'anno: il mercato principale è quello cinese, nel quale le aziende del settore sono di proprietà dello Stato e che rappresenta, di fatto, il 40 % del consumo totale, con 350 milioni di fumatori che consumano circa 2 200 milioni di sigarette l'anno.

Sempre dalla Cina provengono 400 miliardi di sigarette contraffatte, che alimentano il 99 % del mercato illecito del contrabbando di tabacco degli USA e l'80 % di quello europeo con una differenza di prezzo rispetto ai prodotti legali che può variare dal 25 al 90 %. Plastica, escrementi di animali, frammenti di metallo, mosche e vermi morti: sono questi i materiali rinvenuti nei pacchetti cinesi di tabacco contraffatto che, nel 2009 secondo le stime di BAT hanno fruttato oltre 450 milioni di euro con un'evasione di 380 milioni al fisco e danni per ora non quantificati alla proprietà intellettuale delle aziende europee. Uno studio sulle dimensioni del traffico illecito di sigarette, presentato da The European House — Ambrosetti ha ribadito la scarsa evidenza e proporzionalità delle recenti proposte di revisione della direttiva 2001/37/CE sui prodotti di tabacco in corso di discussione. Tali misure, si legge nello studio, non sono avvalorate da sufficiente evidenza della loro efficacia per la salute pubblica, ma andrebbero a danneggiare seriamente la filiera del tabacco che contribuisce per oltre 14 miliardi di euro annui al bilancio pubblico e andrebbe ad aumentare il commercio illecito, stimato da KPMG a oltre il 10 % del commercio totale in Europa, ovvero 64 miliardi di sigarette nel 2010.

Stante che prospettive interessanti per il tavolo istituzionale possono venire dall'immissione sul mercato di prodotti associati a minori rischi per la salute e dall'implementazione di canali di «permission marketing» disciplinati e indirizzati ai fumatori adulti, nonché attraverso il recupero della domanda legale di tabacchi lavorati, può la Commissione far sapere se la valutazione di impatto, attualmente in esame, abbia considerato le risultanze citate che dimostrano chiaramente come la nuova normativa vada incontro al rischio di provocare un effetto «amplificatore» sul fenomeno della contraffazione, alimentando quindi i proventi delle organizzazioni criminali che la gestiscono?

Risposta di John Dalli a nome della Commissione
(6 agosto 2012)

La Commissione rinvia l'onorevole deputato alla propria risposta alle interrogazioni scritte E-002734/2012 e E-002356/2011 ([1]) per quanto concerne il riesame della direttiva sui prodotti del tabacco e il traffico illecito.

La Commissione valuta attualmente l'impatto delle diverse opzioni politiche identificate nell'ambito del riesame della direttiva sui prodotti del tabacco ([2]). La valutazione d'impatto comprende un'analisi approfondita delle ripercussioni economiche, sociali e sanitarie legate alle diverse opzioni politiche. L'impatto su tutti gli interessati è vagliato attentamente nell'ambito di questa analisi, compresi gli effetti sull'occupazione e quelli, eventuali, sul traffico illecito.

La Commissione sta considerando tutta una serie di diverse opzioni politiche e non ha ancora adottato una posizione finale. L'adozione di una nuova proposta è prevista per la fine del 2012 e in tale fase verrà anche pubblicata la valutazione d'impatto.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/QP-WEB.
([2]) GU L 194 del 18.7.2001.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006226/12
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(22 June 2012)

Subject: Future of the tobacco sector: European regulations, the market in counterfeit goods and the advance of China

The tobacco industry generates millions of jobs and, in developing countries, is often one of the only means of lifting the local economy out of poverty. In Italy, in 2011, cigarettes provided the State with 97.4% and 98.5% respectively of the revenues from VAT and excise duty on tobacco, while 60% of the takings of Italy's tobacconists (of which there are some 56 000) derive from the sale of cigarettes and similar products. In 2011 alone, total sales of tobacco products in Italy are reported to have been around EUR 19 billion. The tobacco sector worldwide produces around 5.5 billion cigarettes per year; the main market is China. All Chinese undertakings in the tobacco sector are state-owned, and the Chinese market accounts for 40% of total consumption, with 350 million smokers consuming around 2.2 billion cigarettes per year.

China is also the source of 400 billion counterfeit cigarettes, which supply 99% of the illegal market in contraband tobacco products in the US and 80% of the equivalent European market. The price of these products undercuts legal products by between 25% and 90%. Plastic, animal excrement, metal fragments, dead flies and worms have all been found in packages of Chinese counterfeit tobacco. These products, according to British American Tobacco estimates, brought in over EUR 450 million while avoiding EUR 380 million in duties and causing as yet unquantified damage in terms of European companies' intellectual property rights. A study by The European House — Ambrosetti on the illegal trade in cigarettes pointed to the lack of evidence in support- and disproportionate nature — of recent proposals to revise Directive 2001/37/EC on tobacco products, which are currently under discussion. The study finds that the proposals are not backed up with sufficient evidence as to their beneficial effect on public health, but would cause serious damage to the tobacco sector, which contributes over EUR 14 billion per year to public funds, while boosting the illegal trade in tobacco products, which, according to KPMG estimates, accounts for over 10% of the total trade in Europe, or 64 billion cigarettes in 2010.

Given that it would be in the public interest to ensure that the products released on the market cause fewer risks to consumers' health, establish opportunities for well regulated 'permission marketing' aimed at adult smokers, and meet the legal demand for processed tobacco products, would the Commission state whether the impact assessment currently being considered has taken account of the abovementioned consequences, which clearly demonstrate that the new legislation is at risk of exacerbating the problem of counterfeit goods and thereby swelling the revenues of the criminal organisations which control this trade?

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

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Questions E-002734/2012 and E-002356/2011 ([1]), as regards the review of the Tobacco Products Directive and illicit trade.

The Commission is currently assessing the impact of various policy options identified within the review of the Tobacco Products Directive ([2]). The impact assessment includes a thorough analysis of the economic, social and health impacts of different policy options. The impact on all stakeholders is being carefully considered within this analysis, including effects on employment and the effects — if any — on illicit trade.

The Commission is still considering a number of different policy options and a final position has yet to be taken. Adoption of the new proposal is planned for the end of 2012, at which stage the impact assessment will also be published.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/QP-WEB.
([2]) OJ L 194 of 18.7.2001.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006227/12
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(22 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Inquinamento indoor

Spesso si pensa che gli ambienti domestici siano puliti e sani, ma secondo uno studio condotto dall'università di Sheffield, a volte in casa esiste inquinamento maggiore di quello nelle strade o nel centro cittadino. Come è stato accertato, all'interno delle abitazioni si registrano concentrazioni elevate di biossido di azoto, fino tre volte superiori a quelle misurate all'esterno. Questo inquinamento indoor viene preso in considerazione molto raramente. Isolare le nostre case, rendendole impenetrabili, confortevoli e calde può ridurre i costi del riscaldamento, ma ci rende più esposti ad alti livelli di inquinamento indoor. Gli arredi e gli elettrodomestici sono rivestiti con prodotti chimici come colla e solventi, oppure materiali apparentemente innocui come la plastica o il truciolato che rendono l'aria impura.

Oltre a ciò, nelle cucine con fornelli a gas sono state riscontrate alte percentuali di composti organici volatili (VOCs) e particelle solide sufficientemente piccole da penetrare nei polmoni. Dal momento che trascorriamo circa l'80 % del nostro tempo in ambienti chiusi e poco arieggiati dovremmo preoccuparci maggiormente della qualità dell'aria che respiriamo. Adottare delle misure antinquinamento è pertanto fondamentale per le abitazioni.

Esaminando i risultati di questo studio e considerando che non esistono linee guida che fissino i livelli di polveri sottili ritenuti non rischiosi in casa, intende la Commissione approfondire lo studio sull'inquinamento indoor?

Risposta di John Dalli a nome della Commissione
(13 agosto 2012)

La Commissione concorda con l'onorevole parlamentare nel ritenere che le scelte personali in fatto di consumi e stili di vita esercitino un'influenza importante sulla qualità dell'aria in ambienti chiusi e sui conseguenti effetti sulla salute.

La Commissione è a conoscenza di un ampio ventaglio di ricerche le quali dimostrano l'importanza per la salute della qualità dell'aria in ambienti chiusi e ha ravvisato la necessità di ulteriori ricerche e lavoro su questo argomento, in particolare mediante la «Strategia europea per l'ambiente e la salute ([1])» ma anche grazie alla valutazione del Piano d'azione europeo per l'ambiente e la salute pubblicato sotto la Presidenza belga ([2]).

La Commissione ha operato, anche per mezzo del Centro Comune di Ricerca, per valutare i rischi alla salute causati dalle particelle aeree in ambienti chiusi, per stabilire un elenco in ordine di importanza degli inquinanti in tali ambienti ([3]) e definire criteri armonizzati per il relativo monitoraggio dell'aria, oltre che per collaudare protocolli di monitoraggio della qualità dell'aria in tali ambienti relativamente ad inquinanti selezionati mediante studi pilota da elaborare ed eseguire in ambienti chiusi di vario tipo in diversi Stati membri dell'UE (progetto PILOT INDOOR AIR MONIT) ([4]).

La Commissione attualmente finanzia progetti di ricerca mirati a individuare il ruolo e l'impatto degli agenti biologici in ambienti chiusi ([5]) e dei nuovi inquinanti primari o secondari derivanti da fonti interne agli ambienti ([6]) rispettivamente nelle scuole e negli uffici moderni. ENVIE ([7]) ha dimostrato che si possono ottenere significativi miglioramenti della salute pubblica con l'applicazione di specifiche politiche per la qualità dell'aria degli ambienti chiusi.

([1]) COM(2003)338 definitivo.
([2]) http://www.env-health.org/IMG/pdf/ehap_final_report_final.pdf
([3]) http://ihcp.jrc.ec.europa.eu/our_activities/public-health/index_final_report of INDEX project/ INDEX —PM pubblicazione prevista per ottobre 2012.
([4]) Progetto in corso, relazione prevista all'inizio del 2013.
([5]) HITEA, finanziato dal PQ7: http://www.hitea.eu/.
([6]) OFFICAIR, finanziato dal PQ7: http://www.officair-project.eu/ http://www.officair-project.eu/.
([7]) ENVIE ha ricevuto finanziamenti dal Sesto programma quadro di ricerca (PQ6): http://www.envie-iaq.eu/.

La Commissione ha inoltre svolto valutazioni dell'impatto sulla salute dell'inquinamento atmosferico in ambienti chiusi in occasione di interventi passati e futuri e progetti e politiche relativi alla qualità dell'aria in tali ambienti nel 2011 [8]. Essa sta inoltre gestendo un progetto finanziato dal Parlamento europeo consistente in una ricerca sulla qualità dell'aria in ambienti chiusi nelle scuole, i cui risultati figureranno in una relazione che dovrebbe essere presentata entro la fine dell'anno (SINPHONIE) [9].

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(8) http://ec.europa.eu/health/healthy_environments/docs/env_iaiaq.pfd.
(9) http://www.sinphonie.eu/.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006227/12
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(22 June 2012)

Subject: Indoor pollution

People often think that their indoor environments at home are clean and healthy, but according to a study by the University of Sheffield, sometimes our homes are more polluted than streets or city centres. It has been ascertained that homes contain high concentrations of nitrogen dioxide, up to three times higher than those measured outdoors. This indoor pollution is very rarely taken into consideration. Insulating our homes, making them impenetrable, comfortable and warm can cut heating costs but exposes us more to high levels of indoor pollution. Furniture and electrical appliances are coated with chemicals such as glues and solvents, or seemingly innocuous materials such as plastic or particle board, which make the air impure.

In addition, in kitchens with gas cookers, high percentages of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and solid particles small enough to penetrate the lungs have been found. Since we spend about 80% of our time indoors, in poorly ventilated environments, we should be more concerned about the quality of air we breathe. It is therefore vital that we adopt pollution control measures for housing.

Will the Commission look at the results of this study and, given that there are no guidelines that establish what levels of fine particles do not pose a danger in the home, will it conduct further research into the indoor pollution study?

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

The Commission agrees with the Honourable Member that personal consumption and lifestyle choices have an important impact on indoor air quality and associated health effects.

The Commission is aware of a wide range of research demonstrating the importance of indoor air quality for health and has identified the need for further research and work on this issue, in particular through the European Environment and Health Strategy ([1]) and also the assessment of the EU Environment and Health Action Plan published under the Belgian Presidency ([2]).

The Commission has carried out work, including through its Joint Research Centre, to assess the health risks from indoor air particles, to set up a priority list for indoor pollutants ([3]) and harmonised criteria for indoor air monitoring as well as to test protocols for the monitoring of indoor air quality for selected pollutants via pilot studies to be designed and performed in various indoor settings across EU Member States (PILOT INDOOR AIR MONIT project) ([4]).

The Commission currently supports research projects aimed at identifying the role and impact of indoor biological agents ([5]) and new primary or secondary pollutants originating from indoor sources ([6]) respectively in schools and modern offices. ENVIE ([7]) showed that important public health gains can be achieved by implementing specific indoor air quality policies

In addition, the Commission assessed health impacts of indoor air pollution along with past and future actions, projects and policies related to indoor air quality in 2011 ([8]). It is also managing a project financed by the European Parliament on research on indoor air quality in schools, which is planned to deliver its report by the end of the year (SINPHONIE) ([9]).

([1]) (COM(2003)338 final).
([2]) http://www.env-health.org/IMG/pdf/ehap_final_report_final.pdf
([3]) http://ihcp.jrc.ec.europa.eu/our_activities/public-health/index_final_report of INDEX project/ INDEX -PM publication expected by 10/2012.
([4]) Ongoing project, report expected beginning of 2013.
([5]) HITEA, financed under FP7:, http://www.hitea.eu/.
([6]) OFFICAIR, , financed under FP7:, http://www.officair-project.eu/.
([7]) ENVIE, financed under the Sixth Framework Programme for Research (FP6): http://www.envie-iaq.eu/.
([8]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/healthy_environments/docs/env_iaiaq.pdf
([9]) http://www.sinphonie.eu/.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006228/12
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(22 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Ridurre le emissioni di CO_2 con l'aiuto di batteri e alberi

In ausilio alla riduzione delle emissioni di CO_2 potrebbe arrivare una nuova tecnica innovativa che sfrutta una specie di microbi capaci di ricacciare l'anidride carbonica nei suoli permettendo così di mitigare il riscaldamento globale causato dai livelli elevati di gas a effetto serra.

La scoperta effettuata dall'Università di Edimburgo rivela che l'albero di iroko, quando cresce su terreni secchi e con un suolo acido trattato con una combinazione naturale di funghi e batteri, utilizza il carbonato di calcio presente nella terra combinandolo con CO_2 dell'atmosfera. Da questa combinazione gli alberi dell'iroko ottengono minerali calcarei indispensabili per il loro sostentamento e per la fioritura.

Inoltre, questi minerali rendono più fertile il terreno, aumentando la redditività del suolo e dunque la qualità della vita degli agricoltori nei paesi in via di sviluppo. A detta dei ricercatori inglesi, il processo di produzione dei minerali calcarei offre una tecnica accessibile e facile da gestire per agricoltori con poche risorse.

Considerato che il metodo migliorerebbe la composizione di nutrienti del suolo e progetti pilota di riforestazione con tale metodo sono in corso in Africa, in Bolivia, ad Haiti e in India intende la Commissione approfondire la ricerca e la diffusione d'informazioni in merito a questo studio che mitigherebbe il riscaldamento globale e sarebbe di ausilio alla salute dei terreni e al benessere delle popolazioni?

Risposta di Máire Geoghegan-Quinn a nome della Commissione
(1º agosto 2012)

Il tema «Energia» del Settimo programma quadro di ricerca e sviluppo tecnologico (7° PQ, 2007-2013) incoraggia innovazioni radicali pubblicando inviti a presentare proposte relativi alle tecnologie future ed emergenti (Future and Emerging Technologies — FET) ([1]). La tecnica alla quale fa riferimento l'onorevole parlamentare rientra in uno dei progetti finanziati dall'UE in quanto appartenente alle FET, ossia il progetto CO_2SolStock ([2]). Tra i diversi risultati ottenuti grazie a soluzioni di tipo biologico per il sequestro del carbonio figura la messa a punto di un approccio ecosistemico, realizzato dopo aver scoperto che l'interazione tra alcuni alberi, funghi e batteri porta alla precipitazione del carbonato di calcio nei suoli acidi circostanti e al di sotto delle radici dell'albero interessato.

Prima che il progetto fosse portato a termine è stata organizzata una riunione di riesame, dedicata all'importanza dello sfruttamento dei risultati ottenuti. Dopo l'intervento iniziale a livello di ricerca e sviluppo, il consorzio responsabile del progetto si è posto l'obiettivo di operare a favore dell'accettazione ufficiale dei carbonati come sistema di stoccaggio del carbonio. A tale scopo ha creato una rete, coinvolgendo nel suo lavoro team di ricercatori agroforestali di livello mondiale, comunità locali e ONG internazionali specializzate nel mercato del carbonio e nella riforestazione. Sono state contattate anche fondazioni interessate a progetti di innovazione filantropici nonché grosse società che si trovavano nella necessità di compensare le emissioni di carbonio.

Il progetto è stato pubblicizzato attraverso due comunicati stampa, 51 conferenze e varie iniziative mediatiche, ossia due interviste televisive, sei interventi radiofonici e 17 articoli su internet. In diversi paesi sono già in corso progetti pilota di riforestazione basati su questo metodo innovativo.

([1]) http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ict/fet-proactive/home_en.html
([2]) http://www.co2solstock.eu/.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006228/12
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(22 June 2012)

Subject: Reducing CO_2 emissions with the help of bacteria and trees

The reduction of CO_2 emissions could be assisted by an innovative technology which takes advantage of a species of microbes that are able to capture CO_2 in the atmosphere and lock it in the soil, thus potentially reducing the global warming caused by high levels of greenhouse gases.

Edinburgh University has discovered that the iroko tree, when grown on dry, acidic soil treated with a combination of natural fungus and bacteria, combines calcium from the earth with CO_2 from the atmosphere to produce the calcareous minerals it needs to grow and flourish.

Furthermore, these minerals make the soil more fertile, thus enhancing its productivity and, hence, the standard of living of farmers in developing countries. According to the British researchers involved in this project, this low-tech method of producing limestone minerals is easy for farmers with few resources to manage.

Given that this method would improve the nutrient content of the soil, and pilot reforestation projects based on the method are already in progress in Africa, Bolivia, Haiti and India, does the Commission intend to help further this research and circulate information about this project, which could mitigate global warming and help enhance the quality of soil and the well-being of local communities?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(1 August 2012)

The Energy Theme of the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7, 2007-2013) has been encouraging radical breakthroughs, through the publication of calls for proposals dealing with Future and Emerging Technologies (FET) ([1]). The project mentioned by the Honourable Member is one of these FET funded projects called CO2SolStock ([2]). Amongst several results, related to bio-inspired solutions for carbon sequestration, an ecosystem management approach was developed based on the discovery of the interaction between some trees, fungi and bacteria, leading to the precipitation of calcium carbonate in acidic soils around and below the tree roots.

Before the end of the project, an innovation review meeting was organised focusing on the importance of the exploitation of the results. After the initial R & D effort, the consortium joined forces and established a network with world-class agro-forestry researcher teams, local communities and field and international NGOs specialized in carbon markets and reforestation, to work on an official acceptance of carbonates as carbon storage. Foundations searching for philanthropic innovating projects and big companies in need for carbon compensation were also contacted.

Two press releases and dissemination activities in various media were performed. The project was advertised in 51 conferences, in 2 TV interviews and 6 radio interventions, as well as in 17 web articles. Pilot reforestation projects based on the method developed are already in progress in several countries.

([1]) http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ict/fet-proactive/home_en.html
([2]) http://www.co2solstock.eu/.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006229/12
alla Commissione
Mario Borghezio (EFD)
(22 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Intervento dell'UE contro gli attacchi speculativi all'Italia

Il *Bridgewater*, il più grande hedge fund del mondo, ha pubblicato il 6 giugno un report in cui si spiega come le banche italiane abbiano per alcuni mesi utilizzato gli oltre 100 miliardi messi a disposizione dalle aste Ltro per acquistare debito pubblico, poiché lo strumento EFSF/ESM non dispone di liquidità sufficienti. Il fondo sentenzia come oggigiorno gli istituti italiani di credito sarebbero in rosso di 48 miliardi rispetto a quanto ottenuto dalla BCE. Le due aste Ltro non hanno quindi affatto risolto i problemi monetari dell'Italia — e neanche della Spagna — con la conseguenza che, a breve, i tassi di interesse saliranno nuovamente.

Questo report, molto simile a quello pubblicato antecedentemente da *BlackRock*, elabora scenari drammatici sulle future esigenze di rifinanziamento dell'Italia, in modo però un poco sospetto; infatti, in questo modo, spinge i mercati finanziari stranieri a speculare sui mercati italiani, proprio mentre i titoli di Stato italiani pagano rendimenti relativamente contenuti.

1. Ritiene la Commissione che vi siano reali problematiche monetarie in Italia o reputa i report succitati uno strumento per speculare da parte di istituti finanziari stranieri, tramite informazioni fallaci, in modo da aumentare i tassi di interesse?

2. Quali azioni intende intraprendere per tutelare la credibilità monetaria dell'Italia e della Spagna e proteggerle dagli attacchi speculativi?

Risposta di Olli Rehn a nome della Commissione
(20 agosto 2012)

In linea con il mandato ricevuto dal vertice dei paesi della zona euro il 26 ottobre 2011, la Commissione segue da vicino gli sviluppi economici, finanziari e di bilancio in Italia. Come indicato nell'esame approfondito effettuato a norma dell'articolo 5 del regolamento (UE) n. 1176/2011 sulla prevenzione e la correzione degli squilibri macroeconomici, l'economia italiana è caratterizzata da due principali squilibri, ossia l'elevato debito pubblico e la perdita di competitività esterna ([1]). Per porre rimedio a questi squilibri e risollevare la crescita dell'Italia, strutturalmente debole, il 6 luglio 2012 il Consiglio, nel quadro del semestre europeo, ha raccomandato all'Italia di intervenire in sei settori ([2]). La Commissione seguirà da vicino l'agenda di riforma dell'Italia e la sua conformità con queste raccomandazioni, nonché gli sviluppi dei mercati finanziari ([3]).

Il vertice dei paesi della zona euro del 29 giugno 2012 ha preso decisioni importanti per rompere il circolo vizioso banche-debito sovrano. La Commissione formulerà presto una proposta legislativa per un meccanismo di vigilanza unico, che coinvolge la BCE. Quando questo meccanismo sarà operativo, il MES (meccanismo europeo di stabilità) potrebbe avere la possibilità di ricapitalizzare le banche direttamente. I capi di Stato e di governo hanno riaffermato con vigore l'impegno a fare tutto il necessario per garantire la stabilità finanziaria della zona euro.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/nd/idr2012_italy_it.pdf
([2]) http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/it/12/st11/st11259.it12.pdf
([3]) Un'analisi dei recenti sviluppi del settore finanziario in Italia è presente nel documento di lavoro dei servizi della Commissione (punto 3.2): http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/nd/swd2012_italy_it.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006229/12
to the Commission
Mario Borghezio (EFD)
(22 June 2012)

Subject: EU action against speculative attacks on Italy

The biggest hedge fund in the world, Bridgewater, published a report on 6 June 2012 in which it explains how Italian banks have for several months now been using the more than EUR 100 billion placed at their disposal through LTRO auctions to acquire public debt, as the EFSF/ESM does not have sufficient liquidity. The fund estimates that Italian credit institutes are now EUR 48 billion in the red as regards the funds obtained from the ECB. The two LTRO auctions have not therefore solved Italy's monetary problems — nor those of Spain — with the result that interest rates will move up again soon.

This report, very similar to the one BlackRock published previously, paints a dramatic picture of Italy's future refinancing requirements, albeit slightly suspiciously; this will in fact push foreign financial markets to speculate on the Italian markets, just when Italian Government bonds are paying returns that are relatively restrained.

1. Does the Commission believe that Italy really is experiencing monetary problems or does it consider the aforementioned reports to be a tool for speculation, used by foreign financial institutions to drive up interest rates by providing misleading information?

2. What action will the Commission take to safeguard Italy's and Spain's monetary credibility and protect them from speculative attacks?

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

In line with the mandate from the Euro Area Summit of 26 October 2011, the Commission monitors the economic, financial and fiscal developments in Italy very closely. As indicated in the in-depth review in accordance with Article 5 of Regulation No 1176/2011 on the prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances, Italy has two key imbalances, namely a high level of government debt and external competitiveness losses ([1]). To address these imbalances and raise Italy's structurally weak growth, on 6 July 2012 the Council, in the context of the European Semester, recommended Italy to take action in six areas ([2]). The Commission will closely monitor Italy's reform agenda and its compliance with these recommendations, as well as developments in its financial markets ([3]).

The Euro Area Summit of 29 June 2012 took important decisions to break the vicious circle between banks and sovereign. The Commission will soon make a legislative proposal for a single supervisory mechanism, involving the ECB. When this mechanism is established, the ESM could have the possibility to recapitalise banks directly. Heads of State and Government reaffirmed their strong commitment to do whatever is necessary to ensure the financial stability of the euro area.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/nd/idr2012_italy_en.pdf
([2]) http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/12/st11/st11259.en12.pdf
([3]) An analysis of recent developments in Italy's financial sector is made in the European Commission Staff working document (Section 3.2), available at: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/nd/swd2012_italy_en.pdf

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006230/12
alla Commissione
Mario Borghezio (EFD)
(22 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: In crescita solo gli Stati membri dell'UE al di fuori dell'eurozona

L'Europa viaggia a tre velocità diverse. C'è chi cresce, chi sta fermo e chi torna indietro: osservando gli ultimi dati della Commissione europea, emerge che ci sono tre differenti blocchi. L'Europa a 27 ha infatti al suo interno nazioni che nel 2012 registreranno un Pil superiore all'1 %, economie comprese fra l'1 % e lo 0 % (come l'intera media dell'eurozona) e paesi in recessione, come l'Italia.

Nel primo blocco, quello con la velocità maggiore, ci sono poche nazioni dell'eurozona. L'Estonia e la Slovacchia saranno le migliori, con una performance prevista per il 2012 in costante miglioramento. Secondo la Commissione europea, l'Estonia crescerà dell'1,6 %, il suo deficit sarà ampiamente al di sotto dei limiti Ue (fissati al 3 %), registrando un disavanzo del 2,4 %, e il suo debito pubblico, seppure in aumento, sarà del 10,4 per cento; la Slovacchia crescerà dell'1,8 %, mentre avrà un deficit del 4,7 % e un debito pubblico oltre il 90 per cento.

Nella sola eurozona, solamente il Lussemburgo e Malta faranno compagnia all'Estonia e alla Slovacchia nel club dei paesi con crescita oltre il punto percentuale. Intanto, però, sono le nazioni come Polonia, Lettonia e Lituania a correre. In particolare, la Polonia sarà nel 2012 il paese con la crescita maggiore, pari al 2,7 %, un debito pubblico in calo dal 56,3 % del Pil al 55 % e un deficit fissato a 3 punti percentuali. Poi ci sono le nazioni che stanno vivendo una stagnazione economica: il Belgio e la Germania, che secondo la Commissione europea nel 2012 crescerà solo dello 0,7 %. Infine c'è l'Europa più lenta, dove si ritrovano l'Italia, la Grecia, la Spagna, ormai sempre più vicina a diventare la prossima vittima della crisi europea, e il Portogallo, che già è sotto tutela del Fmi dopo il salvataggio da 78 miliardi di euro dello scorso anno.

Come spiega la Commissione il fatto che solo gli Stati membri dell'UE che non hanno aderito all'euro presentino dati di crescita del PIL?

Risposta di Olli Rehn a nome della Commissione
(21 agosto 2012)

Ultimamente la crescita economica nell'area dell'euro ha avuto in effetti un andamento più lento di quello che si sarebbe potuto conseguire con una migliore attuazione delle politiche in materia. Gli sviluppi economici che si sono verificati nell'area dell'euro nel 2012 vanno valutati nel contesto della perdita di fiducia che accompagna la crisi del debito sovrano in alcuni Stati membri. I bilanci delle banche, le preoccupazioni sulla sostenibilità del debito sovrano e le prospettive di crescita potrebbero produrre contraccolpi negativi e la sfida consiste nell'impedirli agendo contemporaneamente su questi tre fattori. Le decisioni del Consiglio europeo relative all'istituzione di un'unione bancaria, a misure che promuovono la crescita e a una tabella di marcia per approfondire l'unione economica e monetaria contribuiranno notevolmente a ristabilire un clima di fiducia e prospettive di crescita. Inoltre, occorre valutare gli sviluppi economici in un dato anno alla luce della loro evoluzione nel tempo. Se è vero che nel 2012 il PIL reale dovrebbe presentare una contrazione dello 0,3 % nell'area dell'euro e registrare una crescita vicina allo zero per l'UE nel suo complesso, dal 2007 in poi l'evoluzione del PIL reale è stata sostanzialmente uguale a quella dei paesi non appartenenti all'area dell'euro. Inoltre l'impossibilità di utilizzare il tasso di cambio come strumento correttivo impone ulteriori vincoli agli Stati membri dell'area dell'euro. Come indicato dalla riforma in corso a livello di governance economica nell'area dell'euro e dalle raccomandazioni specifiche per paese adottate nell'ambito del semestre europeo, sono necessarie profonde riforme strutturali, che possano migliorare la produttività e la capacità di adeguamento, per avere prospettive di crescita più favorevoli in alcuni paesi della zona euro nel futuro.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006230/12
to the Commission
Mario Borghezio (EFD)
(22 June 2012)

Subject: Growth found only in EU countries outside the euro area

We have a three-speed Europe: a Europe that is growing, a Europe that is at a standstill and a Europe that has gone into reverse. The latest data from the Commission shows that three different blocks exist. The EU-27 comprises countries whose GDP in 2012 will be above 1%, economies where GDP will be between 1% and 0% (the average overall for the euro area) and countries in recession, such as Italy.

Very few euro area countries are to be found in the first block, the one with the highest speed. Estonia and Slovakia will come out best, with a constant improvement in performance forecast for 2012. According to the Commission, there will be 1.6% growth in Estonia, at 2.4% its deficit will be well below the EU limit (set at 3%), and its public debt, even if rising, will be 10.4%. Slovakia will record growth of 1.8%, with a deficit of 4.7% and public debt of more than 90%.

In the euro area only Luxembourg and Malta will join Estonia and Slovakia in the club of countries that are experiencing growth of more than one percentage point. Meanwhile, however, countries such as Poland, Latvia and Lithuania are running ahead. At 2.7% Poland in particular will record the highest growth in 2012, with public debt falling from 56.3% of GDP to 55% and a deficit set at three percentage points. Then there are the countries experiencing economic stagnation: Belgium, and Germany which, according to the Commission, will only grow by 0.7% in 2012. Lastly there are the slowest EU countries: including Italy, Greece, Spain — now closer than ever to becoming the next victim of the EU crisis — and Portugal which is already under IMF supervision following its EUR 78 billion rescue last year.

How does the Commission explain the fact that only those EU Member States that have not joined the euro show a growth in GDP?

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

Economic growth in the euro area has in the past indeed been slower than it could have been with better policy implementation. Economic developments in the euro area in 2012 have to be seen in the context of the crisis of confidence that is associated with the sovereign debt crisis in a number of its Member States. The challenge is to undo the potential negative feedback loops between banks' balance sheets, concerns about sovereign debt sustainability, and growth prospects, by acting on all three elements at the same time. The decisions by the European Council on establishing a banking union, growth-enhancing measures, and setting down a roadmap towards deeper economic and monetary union will go a long way to re-establishing confidence and growth prospects. Economic developments in any one year must also be seen in the context of their evolution over time. While it is true that in 2012 euro area real GDP is forecast to contract by 0.3% and is flat for the EU as a whole, real GDP has evolved broadly at the same speed with that of non-euro area countries since 2007. The absence of the exchange rate as an instrument for adjustment also imposes additional constraints on members of the euro area. As is reflected in the ongoing overhaul of economic governance in the euro area and the country-specific recommendations adopted as part of the European Semester, better future growth prospects in some euro area countries will depend on deep structural reforms which can increase productivity growth and enhance adjustment capacity.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006231/12
to the Commission
Syed Kamall (ECR)
(22 June 2012)

Subject: Residential structures in area C of the Occupied Palestinian Territories

A constituent has written to me pointing out that the EU is spending her money (and that of other EU taxpayers) on the very residential structures in area C of the Occupied Palestinian Territories which the Israeli Civil Administration (ICA) is currently threatening with demolition.

The Israeli Civil Administration (ICA) issued eight eviction orders to the Kurshan compound of the Khan al-Ahmar Arab al-Jahalin Bedouin community on Sunday 6 May 2012. The orders affect the eight families of the community, who have been part of a recent EU shelter rehabilitation project, designed to replace sub-standard shelters with eight residential structures. Their shelters were upgraded earlier this year under the supervision of the European Commission Humanitarian Office (ECHO).

However the ICA officers informed those present in the community that 'the community had been built illegally, and that Area C was not for Palestinians'. The ICA has also informed the Az-Zayyem Arab al-Jahalin Bedouin community that demolitions will take place in their community, effective immediately, following the lifting of an injunction order protecting their structures. These are also structures funded by the EU following demolitions in November 2011.

Can the Commission say:

1. If these structures were built with the written permission of all the necessary public authorities?

2. If it has made representations to the Israeli Civil Administration to persuade them not to proceed with the illegal demolition of these structures?

3. What compensation would be payable to residents, and to EU taxpayers who funded these buildings, if the structures are demolished?

Answer given by Ms Georgieva on behalf of the Commission
(20 August 2012)

1. The removable and dismantable temporary shelters and latrines in Al Kurshan have been put in place without written permission. This is a commonly agreed practice, in line with the United Nations emergency response mechanisms, to address verified basic humanitarian needs in Area C.

The European Union is funding organisations that provide legal assistance to the communities to stop or delay the demolitions and eviction orders. At the moment the demolition orders referred to have been put on hold. The EU position has been very clear: the EU has called on several occasions, including in the conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council in May 2012, to end demolitions and the forced population transfers.

2. On the demolitions in question, the EU Representation in East Jerusalem has protested to the Israeli Civil Administration.

3. The cost of the removable and dismantable temporary shelters and latrines amounts to around EUR 30 000. The Commission does not have information on the cost of the structures in Jahalin, which were funded by an Italian non-governmental organisation (NGO).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006232/12
to the Commission
Syed Kamall (ECR)
(22 June 2012)

Subject: Mr Filep Karma

A constituent has brought to my attention the plight of Mr Filep Karma who was arrested by Indonesian authorities on 1 December 2004 after taking part in a ceremony where the 'Morning Star' flag — the symbol of West Papuan independence — was raised.

Recent reports confirm that Mr Karma is seriously ill and is being denied proper medical treatment by the Indonesian authorities. In November 2011, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention declared Mr Karma's detention to be in violation of international law and called for his immediate release. He is also an Amnesty International prisoner of conscience.

Could the Commission say:

1. If it believes that Mr Karma's sentence is incompatible with Indonesia's obligations as a signatory to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights?

2. If it has any plans to raise Mr Karma's situation with the Indonesian authorities?

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

The HR/VP is following closely the case of Mr Karma and it has been raised at the annual EU-Indonesia human rights dialogue and at other official meetings, therefore underlining Indonesia's obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political rights.

At the last human rights dialogue held in May 2012 in Jakarta, Mr Karma's case was specifically raised, and it was stressed that the Indonesian authorities have a legal duty to provide healthcare and should do everything to allow his hospitalisation in Jakarta.

The latest available information is that Mr Karma has received a permit from the Director General of Correctional Institutions in Jakarta to have surgery there.

Civil society organisations are raising funds for his medical treatment, having already collected 61 million rupees of the 110 million rupees required for the surgery

The EU will continue, in contacts with the Indonesian authorities, to address the issue of the harsh sentences imposed for displaying the Papua flag and the need to respect the right of peaceful freedom of expression.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006233/12
to the Commission
Syed Kamall (ECR)
(22 June 2012)

Subject: Interference in Grameen Bank operations by the Bangladeshi Government

I have been contacted by a constituent who is concerned at the way in which the Bangladeshi Government is interfering in the operations of Grameen Bank, one of the few banks in the country that provides unsecured loans to women.

Can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Does it plan to investigate the extent of of this interference and the impact it can have on Member States' aid programmes in support of poor Bangladeshi women?

2. What plans does it have to make representations to the Bangladeshi Government?

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

The Government of Bangladesh is aware of the concern in Europe about the removal of Prof. Yunus from his position in Grameen Bank. The matter was raised by the EU side in the course of political dialogue with the Bangladeshi authorities in November 2011. The EU took the occasion to urge the Government to ensure that the independence of Grameen Bank is preserved. Also, a European Parliament delegation which visited Bangladesh in March 2012 met with Prof. Yunus and raised the situation of the Grameen Bank with the Government.

Regarding Member States' aid programmes targeting poor Bangladeshi women, the Commission is not aware of any new problems they are facing. Moreover the Commission sees no impact of possible Government action on the programmes it currently implements under the Development Cooperation Instrument in this area.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006234/12
to the Commission
Syed Kamall (ECR)
(22 June 2012)

Subject: Scottish independence — implications for the UK's EU membership

I have been contacted by a constituent who believes that there might be constitutional implications for the UK's membership of the European Union if Scotland were to become an independent sovereign state.

My constituent claims that, if Scotland were to secede from the 1707 Treaty of Union, this would, de jure, mean that a new treaty would have to be signed between Wales, Northern Ireland and England which, he believes, would render the United Kingdom a new legal entity. He therefore claims that not only Scotland but also the new United Kingdom would be obliged to enter into accession talks with the EU as a new sovereign state.

Could the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Would the UK have to apply for membership of the EU if Scotland decided to secede from the United Kingdom?

2. Could the UK remain a member of the EU, without having to re-apply for membership, if Scotland became independent?

3. What procedure would the United Kingdom (without Scotland) have to follow in order to re-apply for membership of the EU?

4. Would a newly independent Scotland have to apply for membership of the EU?

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

The Honourable Member is kindly referred to the reply given to Question E-000395/2012 by Mr Tremosa I Ballcells ([1]).

(1) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/QP-WEB/.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-006235/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(25 Ιουνίου 2012)

Θέμα: Αποκατάσταση των χαμηλών συντάξεων και των επιδομάτων των πολυτέκνων

Κατά τη διάρκεια της προεκλογικής περιόδου και του δημόσιου διαλόγου που πραγματοποιήθηκε στην Ελλάδα, αναδείχτηκε, σχεδόν από όλα τα κόμματα, η ανάγκη για επαναδιαπραγμάτευση ορισμένων αποφάσεων που είχαν ληφθεί στο παρελθόν στα πλαίσια του Μνημονίου. Στο πλαίσιο αυτό, εκτιμήθηκε ότι ήταν αναγκαία η αποκατάσταση των πολύ χαμηλών συντάξεων και των επιδομάτων πολυτέκνων στα επίπεδα του 2009.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή

Πως σχολιάζει το αίτημα για αύξηση των πολύ χαμηλών συντάξεων, και των επιδομάτων πολυτέκνων, ώστε να φτάσουν στα επίπεδα που ήταν το 2009;

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

Η μεταρρύθμιση του συνταξιοδοτικού συστήματος που εγκρίθηκε από την Ελληνική Βουλή τον Ιούλιο 2010 απλούστευσε το κατακερματισμένο συνταξιοδοτικό σύστημα, ενίσχυσε τη διαφάνεια και δικαιοσύνη με τη δημιουργία στενότερου δεσμού μεταξύ των καταβαλλόμενων εισφορών και των λαμβανόμενων συνταξιοδοτικών παροχών, μετέθεσε την ηλικία συνταξιοδότησης και μείωσε τη γενναιοδωρία των παροχών. Συνολικά, αυτό έχει ενισχύσει την οικονομική βιωσιμότητα του συστήματος.

Ο αντίκτυπος της μεταρρύθμισης όσον αφορά την επάρκεια των συνταξιοδοτικών παροχών αμβλύνεται με την καθιέρωση των βασικών συντάξεων που αντιμετωπίζει αποτελεσματικά την πλέον ακραία ένδεια μεταξύ των συνταξιούχων, και με την επικέντρωση των περικοπών των κύριων και των επικουρικών συντάξεων στις υψηλότερες (κύριες και επικουρικές) συντάξεις με αποτέλεσμα να μην επηρεάζονται οι λιγότερο εύπορες κατηγορίες συνταξιούχων. Η αύξηση του ορίου ηλικίας συνταξιοδότησης θα συμβάλει επίσης, υπό τον όρο ότι θα βελτιωθούν οι ευκαιρίες απασχόλησης των εργαζομένων μεγαλύτερης ηλικίας, στην εξασφάλιση της οικονομικής βιωσιμότητας χωρίς να χρειάζεται περαιτέρω αποδυνάμωση της επάρκειας των συντάξεων.

Όταν εξετάζονται περαιτέρω αλλαγές στο συνταξιοδοτικό σύστημα θα πρέπει να λαμβάνεται υπόψη ότι το συνταξιοδοτικό σύστημα οφείλει να στηρίζεται σε οικονομικώς βιώσιμη βάση ώστε να παρέχει στους συνταξιούχους επαρκείς και εξασφαλισμένες συντάξεις μακροπρόθεσμα.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006235/12
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(25 June 2012)

Subject: Topping up low pension entitlements and allowances for large families

In the run-up to the elections and in the course of the public debate in Greece, almost all parties concurred regarding the need to renegotiate certain decisions taken in the past under the memorandum of understanding. In this connection, it was judged necessary to top up extremely low pension entitlements and allowances for large families, restoring them to their 2009 levels.

In view of this:

What view does the Commission take of calls for an increase in very low pension entitlements and in allowances for large families so as to restore them to their 2009 levels?

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

The pension reform adopted by the Greek Parliament in July 2010 simplified the highly fragmented pension system; enhanced transparency and fairness by creating a tighter link between contributions paid and pension benefits received, postponed the retirement age and decreased the generosity of benefits. Overall, this has enhanced its financial sustainability.

The impact of the reform on the adequacy of pension benefits is being mitigated by the introduction of the basic pensions which effectively combats the most extreme poverty amongst pensioners, and by focusing the cuts to main pensions and supplementary pensions on the highest (main and supplementary) pensions and, therefore, which do not impact on the less well-off segment of pensioners. Increasing retirement age will, subject to an improvement in the employment opportunities for older workers, also help to ensure financial sustainability without having to further weaken the adequacy of pensions.

When considering further changes to the pension system, it should be borne in mind that the pension system has to stand on a financially sustainable footing in order to provide pensioners with adequate and safe pensions over the long run.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-006236/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(25 Ιουνίου 2012)

Θέμα: Χρονοδιάγραμμα δημοσιονομικής προσαρμογής

Κατά τη διάρκεια της προεκλογικής περιόδου και του δημόσιου διαλόγου που πραγματοποιήθηκε στην Ελλάδα, αναδείχτηκε, σχεδόν από όλα τα κόμματα, η ανάγκη για επαναδιαπραγμάτευση ορισμένων αποφάσεων που είχαν ληφθεί στο παρελθόν στα πλαίσια του Μνημονίου. Στο πλαίσιο αυτό, εκτιμήθηκε ότι ήταν αναγκαία η χρονική επέκταση του χρονοδιαγράμματος επίτευξης της «επιθυμητής» δημοσιονομικής προσαρμογής.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

Με δεδομένα τα ανωτέρω, πώς σχολιάζει το αίτημα χρονικής επιμήκυνσης για επίτευξη των στόχων δημοσιονομικής προσαρμογής; Ποιο είναι το κόστος μια τέτοιας επιμήκυνσης;

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

Στις 10 Μαΐου 2010 το Συμβούλιο εξέδωσε την απόφαση 2010/320/ΕΕ, η οποία απευθύνεται στην Ελλάδα βάσει του άρθρου 126 παράγραφος 9 και του άρθρου 136 της ΣΛΕΕ και με την οποία ειδοποιείται η χώρα να λάβει τα μέτρα μείωσης του ελλείμματος που κρίνονται αναγκαία για την αντιμετώπιση της κατάστασης υπερβολικού ελλείμματος το αργότερο έως το 2014.

Η Ελλάδα πρέπει να αντιμετωπίσει αποφασιστικά τις διαρθρωτικές αδυναμίες της οικονομίας της, τηρώντας τις δεσμεύσεις της. Η βασική στρατηγική του Μνημονίου Συνεννόησης είναι έγκυρη και πρέπει να παραμείνει αμετάβλητη: η μείωση του ελλείμματος και η αποκατάσταση της βιωσιμότητας του χρέους είναι καίριας σημασίας για την επανεξισορρόπηση της οικονομίας. Η συνέχιση των δημοσιονομικών και διαθρωτικών μεταρρυθμίσεων που προβλέπονται στο πρόγραμμα οικονομικής προσαρμογής συνιστά την καλύτερη εγγύηση για την ανάκτηση της διεθνούς ανταγωνιστικότητας, την αποκατάσταση της δημοσιονομικής και χρηματοοικονομικής βιωσιμότητας και την εξασφάλιση, με τον τρόπο αυτό, ενός μέλλοντος με μεγαλύτερη ευημερία εντός της ζώνης του ευρώ. Οι μεταρρυθμίσεις αυτές είναι προς το συμφέρον της Ελλάδας.

Στο πλαίσιο της παρακολούθησης του προγράμματος, η τρόικα ([1]) διενεργεί από τον Ιούλιο του 2012 αποστολή ελέγχου στην Αθήνα, η οποία θα συνεχιστεί τον Σεπτέμβριο. Οι κύριοι στόχοι της αποστολής είναι η επανεξέταση της δράσης που ανέλαβαν οι ελληνικές αρχές για την επίτευξη της απαραίτητης οικονομικής και δημοσιονομικής προσαρμογής και για την επαναφορά του προγράμματος στη σωστή κατεύθυνση, μετά τις καθυστερήσεις που συσσωρεύτηκαν την άνοιξη λόγω, κυρίως, των δύο εκλογικών αναμετρήσεων και της βαθύτερης οικονομικής ύφεσης. Επί του παρόντος, είναι πρόωρο να γίνονται εικασίες σχετικά με την παράταση της προθεσμίας για την επίτευξη της οικονομικής προσαρμογής.

([1]) Τριμερής επιτροπή υπό τη διεύθυνση της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής, με την Ευρωπαϊκή Κεντρική Τράπεζα και το Διεθνές Νομισματικό Ταμείο.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006236/12
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(25 June 2012)

Subject: Economic adjustment schedule

In the run-up to the elections and during the public debate in Greece, almost all parties concurred on the need to renegotiate certain decisions taken in the past under the memorandum of understanding. It was in particular considered necessary to extend the deadline for achieving the 'desired' economic adjustment.

In view of this:

What view does the Commission take of calls for an extension of the deadline for achieving economic adjustment objectives? What would be the cost of such a measure?

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

On 10 May 2010, the Council adopted Decision 2010/320/EU addressed to Greece under Article 126(9) and Article 136 of the TFEU, giving notice to take measures for the deficit reduction judged necessary to remedy the situation of excessive deficit at the latest by 2014.

Greece must resolutely address the structural weaknesses of its economy, respecting its commitments. The basic strategy in the memorandum of understanding is valid and must remain intact: the reduction in the deficit and restoring debt sustainability are of critical importance to rebalance the economy. Continuing the fiscal and structural reforms spelled out in the Economic Adjustment Programme is the best guarantee to regain international competitiveness, fiscal and financial sustainability, and to therefore ensure a more prosperous future in the euro area. These reforms are in the interest of Greece.

As part of the monitoring of the Programme, the troika ([1]) has been carrying out since July 2012 a review mission in Athens, which will continue in September. The main objectives of the mission are to review the action taken by the Greek authorities to deliver the needed economic and budgetary adjustment and bring the programme back on track, after the delays accumulated in Spring largely due to the double electoral round and the deeper economic recession. At the current moment, any speculation on extending the deadline for achieving the economic adjustment is premature.

([1]) Tripartite committee led by the European Commission with the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-006237/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(25 Ιουνίου 2012)

Θέμα: Χρονική επέκταση και θέσπιση επιδόματος ανεργίας

Κατά τη διάρκεια της προεκλογικής περιόδου και του δημόσιου διαλόγου που πραγματοποιήθηκε στην Ελλάδα, αναδείχτηκε, σχεδόν από όλα τα κόμματα, η ανάγκη για επαναδιαπραγμάτευση ορισμένων αποφάσεων που είχαν ληφθεί στο παρελθόν στα πλαίσια του Μνημονίου.

Ένα από τα μέτρα αυτά, που θα βοηθούσαν τους ανέργους, είναι η χρονική επέκταση του επιδόματος ανεργίας και η θέσπιση ενός έκτακτου επιδόματος ανεργίας και για τους μη μισθωτούς.

Με δεδομένα τα ανωτέρω, τη διαπιστωμένη αδυναμία δημιουργίας νέων θέσεων απασχόλησης, τη δεινή θέση των ανέργων οι οποίοι στην πλειονότητα τους έχουν καταστεί μακροχρόνια άνεργοι, πώς σχολιάζει η Επιτροπή την ενδεχόμενη χρονική επιμήκυνση της χορήγησης του επιδόματος ανεργίας και τη θέσπιση ενός έκτακτου επιδόματος ανεργίας σε επαγγελματίες για τους οποίους δεν υπάρχει κανένα δίκτυο κοινωνικής προστασίας; Υπάρχουν δυνατότητες, η ανωτέρω επέκταση και θέσπιση επιδόματος ανεργίας να συγχρηματοδοτηθεί από υφιστάμενους κοινοτικούς πόρους; Αν ναι, από πού; Θα πρέπει να καταργηθούν άλλα προγράμματα κοινωνικού χαρακτήρα και αναλόγου προϋπολογισμού για να χρηματοδοτηθούν τα ανωτέρω;

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

Τα επιδόματα ανεργίας και οι πολιτικές στον χώρο των κοινωνικών μεταβιβάσεων γενικότερα εμπίπτουν στην αρμοδιότητα των επιμέρους κρατών μελών (ΚΜ). Όχι μόνο τα κράτη μέλη είναι ελεύθερα να επιλέξουν τις πολιτικές που ασκούν, αλλά είναι επίσης υπεύθυνα για τη χρηματοδότησή τους. Τα κονδύλια της ΕΕ προορίζονται για ενεργητικές πολιτικές παρέμβασης στην αγορά εργασίας, με τις οποίες ενθαρρύνεται η παραμονή στην αγορά εργασίας, αντίθετα από τις αποκαλούμενες παθητικές πολιτικές παρέμβασης στην αγορά εργασίας ([1]).

Στην περίπτωση της Ελλάδας, η ύπαρξη του προγράμματος οικονομικής προσαρμογής που συμφωνήθηκε μεταξύ των ελληνικών αρχών, του ΔΝΤ και της ΕΕ συνεπάγεται συμφωνία για τη μεσοπρόθεσμη δημοσιονομική πορεία, για πολιτικές που αναμένεται να στηρίξουν την πορεία αυτή, όπως επίσης και για πολιτικές με τις οποίες επιδιώκεται η βελτίωση διαφόρων χαρακτηριστικών της λειτουργίας της οικονομίας και με αυτόν τον τρόπο η τόνωση της ανάπτυξης και της δημιουργίας θέσεων εργασίας.

Η Επιτροπή δεν σχολιάζει μέτρα που εμπίπτουν στις αρμοδιότητες των ΚΜ, αν και ενθαρρύνει τις κυβερνήσεις να επιδιώκουν τη δίκαιη κατανομή των βαρών της οικονομικής προσαρμογής. Εφόσον οι αρχές καταθέσουν προτάσεις για να βοηθήσουν όσους πλήττονται σκληρότερα λόγω απώλειας του εισοδήματος από εργασία, και προτείνουν πιθανές επιλογές χρηματοδότησης, στο πλαίσιο της συζήτησης για το πρόγραμμα οικονομικής προσαρμογής, η Επιτροπή είναι πρόθυμη να τις αναλύσει και να τις συζητήσει στον βαθμό που συνάδουν με τους ευρύτερους στόχους του προγράμματος.

Μέσω της χρήσης των ενωσιακών κονδυλίων η ΕΕ εξακολουθεί να στηρίζει την Ελλάδα, χρηματοδοτώντας διάφορες πρωτοβουλίες για την ενίσχυση της παραμονής στην αγορά εργασίας. Οι προσπάθειες αυτές αντιπροσωπεύουν ποσό περίπου 3 858 800 403 ευρώ (2007-2013) ([2]). Η προσπάθεια αυτή καταβάλλεται σε συνεργασία με τις ελληνικές αρχές, οι οποίες είναι υπεύθυνες για τη διασφάλιση της αποτελεσματικής υλοποίησης των εν λόγω πρωτοβουλιών. Πάλι μαζί με τις ελληνικές αρχές, η Επιτροπή εξετάζει τρόπους για να μεγιστοποιήσει η Ελλάδα τα οφέλη που μπορούν να αντληθούν με την αποδοτική και αποτελεσματική αξιοποίηση των ενωσιακών κονδυλίων.

([1]) Οι πολιτικές εκείνες που έχουν ως στόχο την αντικατάσταση της απώλειας εργατικού εισοδήματος λόγω ανεργίας εξαιρούνται από την ενωσιακή χρηματοδότηση.
([2]) Η αριθμητική αυτή τιμή αναφέρεται στα πάσης φύσεως μέτρα που αποσκοπούν στη στήριξη της απασχόλησης.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006237/12
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(25 June 2012)

Subject: Introduction of special unemployment benefits and extension of the period of entitlement to benefits

In the run-up to the elections and during the public debate in Greece, almost all parties concurred on the need to renegotiate certain decisions taken in the past under the memorandum of understanding.

One of the measures which would help the unemployed is extension of the period of entitlement to unemployment and the introduction of special unemployment benefits for the self employed.

In view of this and given the impossibility of creating new jobs and the parlous situation of those out of work, most of whom have become long-term unemployed:

What view does the Commission take of the proposal to extend the period of entitlement to unemployment benefits and to introduce emergency unemployment benefits for professions with no welfare safety net? Could extension of the period of entitlement to unemployment benefits and the introduction of emergency unemployment benefits be financed under existing Community funds and, if so, which funds? Would it be necessary to end other programmes of a social nature and comparable budget in order to fund such initiatives?

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

Unemployment benefits and policies on social transfers in general are a matter of competence of the individual Member States (MS). Not only are MS free to choose their policies, they are also responsible for their funding. EU funds are earmarked for active labour market policies that foster attachment to the labour market; the so-called passive labour market policies ([1]).

In Greece's case, the existence of the economic adjustment programme agreed between the Greek authorities, the IMF and the EU involves an agreement on the fiscal path for the medium term, on policies that should support that path, and also on policies intended at improving various features of the economy functioning and in that way at spurring growth and jobs.

The Commission does not comment on measures that fall within the competences of the MS, though it encourages governments to pursue a fair distribution of the burden of the economic adjustment. Should the authorities bring proposals to help the hardest hit by loss of labour income to the table, and possible funding options, when discussing the economic adjustment programme, the Commission is willing to analyse and discuss them as far as they are consistent with the broader programme objectives.

Through the use of EU funds the EU continues supporting with funding various initiatives to foster labour market attachment in Greece. Those efforts amount to approx. EUR 3.858.800.403 (2007-2013) ([2]). That effort is carried out in tandem with the Greek authorities, which are responsible for ensuring the effective implementation of those initiatives. Again together with the Greek authorities, the Commission is reviewing ways for Greece to maximise the benefits which can be obtained through an efficient and effective use of EU funds.

([1]) Those policies whose aim is to replace lost labour income due to unemployment, are excluded from that EU funding.
([2]) This figure refers to all measures which aim to support employment.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-006238/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(25 Ιουνίου 2012)

Θέμα: Θέμα: Αίτημα παύσης περιορισμού για τα Ελληνικά Ναυπηγεία (ΕΝΑΕ)

Τον Απρίλιο του 2010, τον ίδιο ακριβώς μήνα που η Ελλάδα έμπαινε υπό την επιτήρηση της Τρόικα, η Επιτροπή με απόφασή της για παράνομες και ασύμβατες κρατικές ενισχύσεις, απαγόρευσε στα Ελληνικά Ναυπηγεία (ΕΝΑΕ) να ναυπηγούν εμπορικά σκάφη και επέτρεψε μόνο τη ναυπήγηση σκαφών του Ελληνικού Πολεμικού Ναυτικού. Η απόφαση αυτή, συνέβαλε στη δραματική αύξηση της τεράστιας ανεργίας που μάστιζε τη ναυπηγοεπισκευαστική ζώνη, στην οποία εργάζονταν δεκάδες χιλιάδες πολίτες.

Στα μάτια των πολιτών, η απόφαση αυτή μοιάζει εξαιρετικά οξύμωρη και αντιφατική, αφού η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή, ως μέλος της Τρόικα, έχει επιβάλει στους έλληνες πολίτες σειρά μέτρων απίστευτης λιτότητας με το επιχείρημα της παραγωγικής ανασυγκρότησης, και την ίδια στιγμή η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή, με απόφασή της, διαλύει κάθε παραγωγική υποδομή όπως η ναυπηγοεπισκευαστική βιομηχανία που ήταν και μπορεί γίνει ξανά ένα από τα πιο δυναμικά κομμάτια της ελληνικής βιομηχανίας, αφού ο ελληνόκτητος εμπορικός στόλος είναι ο μεγαλύτερος παγκοσμίως.

Στην απάντηση της Επιτροπής σε σχετική ερώτησή μου (E-002114/2012), η Επιτροπή μου απάντησε αρνητικά με το επιχείρημα ότι «μέχρι τώρα δεν πραγματοποιήθηκε ανάκτηση (έστω περιορισμένη). Με αυτές τις συνθήκες και την απουσία πλήρους ανάκτησης, η άρση του περιορισμού των μη στρατιωτικών δραστηριοτήτων δεν δικαιολογείται.».

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή: Δεδομένου ότι αν επιτραπεί η ναυπήγηση και εμπορικών πλοίων θα δοθεί δυνατότητα απασχόλησης σε χιλιάδες εργαζόμενους και θα βοηθηθεί σημαντικά η ανάκαμψη μιας ολόκληρης περιοχής και ενός ολόκληρου βιομηχανικού κλάδου, και με δεδομένο το κρίσιμο σημείο στο οποίο βρίσκεται η ελληνική οικονομία και τον κίνδυνο χρεοκοπίας που αντιμετωπίζει, προτίθεται να εξετάσει η Επιτροπή την άρση της απαγόρευσης ναυπήγησης εμπορικών πλοίων από τα ΕΝΑΕ;

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

Η Επιτροπή θα ήθελε να υπενθυμίσει ότι η απαγόρευση ναυπήγησης εμπορικών σκαφών ήταν μία από τις δεσμεύσεις που πρότεινε η Ελλάδα, όταν η Ελλάδα, για λόγους εθνικής ασφάλειας, επικαλέστηκε το άρθρο 346 ΣΛΕΕ για να θέσει σε εφαρμογή την απόφαση ανάκτησης της Επιτροπής της 2ας Ιουλίου 2008.

Προς το παρόν, καμία από τις δεσμεύσεις που προτάθηκαν από την Ελλάδα και έγιναν δεκτές από την Επιτροπή το 2010 δεν έχει εφαρμοστεί.

Επιπλέον, η Επιτροπή θα ήθελε να υπενθυμίσει στο Αξιότιμο Μέλος την πρόσφατη απόφαση του Δικαστηρίου της 28ης Ιουνίου 2012 (Υπόθεση C-485/10, Επιτροπή κατά Ελλάδας), με την οποία το Δικαστήριο αποφάνθηκε ότι η Ελλάδα παρέβη τις υποχρεώσεις που υπέχει βάσει της Συνθήκης, λόγω μη εκτέλεσης της απόφασης της Επιτροπής της 2ας Ιουλίου 2008 (E-2008, 3118 τελικό διορθ.).

Δεδομένου ότι, στο παρόν στάδιο, καμία ανάκτηση δεν έχει υλοποιηθεί, και λαμβάνοντας υπόψη την απόφαση του Δικαστηρίου, η Επιτροπή εκφράζει τη λύπη της για το γεγονός ότι δεν θεωρεί ότι υπάρχουν περιθώρια αναθεώρησης της ισχύουσας θέσης της (βλ. απάντηση της Επιτροπής στη γραπτή ερώτηση E-002114/2012 ([1])).

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/QP-WEB/application/home.do?language=EN.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006238/12
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(25 June 2012)

Subject: Call for an end to restrictions on Hellenic Shipyards (HSY)

In April 2010, the very month in which Troika supervision of Greece commenced, the Commission, in its decision regarding illegal and inadmissible state aids, banned the construction of merchant vessels by Hellenic Shipyards (HSY), authorising only the construction of Greek navy vessels. This decision contributed to a sharp increase in the massive unemployment affecting this shipbuilding area and its tens of thousands of workers.

In the eyes of the public, this decision is particularly contradictory and inconsistent in view of the incredibly severe austerity measures imposed on Greek citizens by the Commission, a Troika member; for the purposes of industrial restructuring, given that it's effect is to undermine all industrial infrastructures, including shipbuilding, which was once, and could once again become, one of the most dynamic industrial sectors in Greece, whose shipyards produce the largest number of merchant vessels in the world.

The Commission justified its negative reply to my question (E-002114/2012), arguing that 'at this stage no recovery (even limited) has been realised. In these circumstances and in the absence of a full recovery lifting the ban on civil activities is not justified'.

If the Commission authorises the construction of merchant vessels as well, it will help provide employment for thousands of workers and significantly assist in the recovery of an entire area and an entire industrial sector. Given the economic crisis and danger of insolvency currently being confronted by Greece, will the Commission therefore consider lifting the ban on the production of merchant vessels by HSY?

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

The Commission would like to recall that the ban on civil activities was one of the commitments offered by Greece when Greece, for reasons of national security, invoked Article 346 TFEU in view of implementing the Commission's recovery decision of 2 July 2008.

At this stage, none of the commitments offered by Greece and accepted by the Commission in 2010 have been implemented.

In addition, the Commission would like to remind the Honourable Member of the Court's recent judgment of 28 June 2012 (Case C-485/10, Commission against Greece) in which the Court ruled that Greece had failed to fulfil its obligations under the Treaty by not implementing the Commission decision of 2 July 2008 (E-2008, 3118 final cor.).

Since at this stage no recovery has been realised, and in light of the Court's judgment, the Commission regrets that it sees no scope for reconsidering its current position (cf. the Commission's answer to Written Question E-002114/2012 ([1])).

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/QP-WEB/application/home.do?language=EN.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-006240/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(25 Ιουνίου 2012)

Θέμα: Κατανομή κονδυλίων προς την Ελλάδα του γενικού προγράμματος «Αλληλεγγύη και διαχείριση μεταναστευτικών ροών» για το 2013

Είναι σε θέση να με ενημερώσει η Επιτροπή για την ενδεικτική κατανομή των κονδυλίων προς την Ελλάδα, βάσει των τεσσάρων Ταμείων του γενικού προγράμματος «Αλληλεγγύη και διαχείριση μεταναστευτικών ροών», για το έτος 2013; Παρουσιάζεται αυξητική τάση σε σχέση με τα αντίστοιχα για το 2012 διαθέσιμα κονδύλια;

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

Για το 2013, η ενδεικτική κατανομή των κονδυλίων για την Ελλάδα ανέρχεται συνολικά σε 85 εκατ. ευρώ στο πλαίσιο των τεσσάρων Ταμείων του Γενικού Προγράμματος «Αλληλεγγύη και διαχείριση των μεταναστευτικών ροών» (σε σύγκριση με 90 εκατ. ευρώ, το 2012), δηλ. 42,5 εκατ. ευρώ από το Ταμείο Εξωτερικών Συνόρων, 35,3 εκατ. ευρώ από το Ταμείο Επιστροφής, 3,2 εκατ. ευρώ από το Ευρωπαϊκό Ταμείο Προσφύγων και 4 εκατ. ευρώ από το Ευρωπαϊκό Ταμείο Ένταξης των υπηκόων τρίτων χωρών. Η κατανομή αυτών των κονδυλίων είναι προσωρινή, δεδομένου ότι βασίζεται στο σχέδιο προϋπολογισμού 2013 της ΕΕ, το οποίο δεν έχει εγκριθεί ακόμη από την αρμόδια για τον προϋπολογισμό αρχή.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006240/12
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(25 June 2012)

Subject: Allocation of funds to Greece for 2013 under the framework programme for solidarity and the management of migration flows

Can the Commission indicate what amount has been allocated to Greece for 2013 from the four funds set up under the framework programme for solidarity and the management flows? Has the amount increased compared with funding allocated in 2012?

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

For 2013, a total allocation of EUR 85 million has been earmarked for Greece under the four Funds of the General Programme 'Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows' (compared to EUR 90 million in 2012), i.e. EUR 42.5 million under the External Borders Fund, EUR 35.3 million under the Return Fund, EUR 3.2 million under the European Refugee Fund and EUR 4 million under the European Fund for the Integration of third-country nationals. These allocations are provisional, as they are based on the 2013 draft budget of the EU which has not yet been adopted by the budget authority.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-006241/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(25 Ιουνίου 2012)

Θέμα: Ευρωπαϊκή συνεργασία για την αντιμετώπιση φαινομένων ξεπλύματος χρημάτων

Τόσο η Επιτροπή όσο και το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο έχουν καταβάλει επίπονες προσπάθειες για την βελτίωση της συνεργασίας των κρατών μελών για την αντιμετώπιση της νομιμοποίησης παράνομων κερδών (money laundering) και την εναρμόνιση των ποινών για την αντιμετώπισή του. Οι ανταλλαγές πληροφοριών στον τομέα αυτόν μεταξύ των κρατών μελών πραγματοποιείται μέσω του δικτύου FIU-NET project [1]. Χρηματοδοτούμενο από την Επιτροπή το συγκεκριμένο πρόγραμμα αποσκοπεί στη δημιουργία ενός ασφαλούς διαδικτυακού πλαισίου ανταλλαγής πληροφοριών χρηματικού περιεχομένου.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Συγκεντρώνει στοιχεία σχετικά με τον αριθμό και το χρηματικό ύψος των παραβάσεων και εγκληματικών πράξεων που διεπράχθησαν και εντοπίστηκαν από την συγκεκριμένη διακρατική συνεργασία;

2. Συλλέγονται πληροφορίες από κάθε κράτος μέλος χωριστά; Ποιός ο αριθμός παραβάσεων που προήλθαν από την Ελλάδα και ποια η περίπτωση της χώρας σε σύγκριση με τον ευρωπαϊκό μέσο όρο;

3. Ποίο το ύψος των κεφαλαίων με το οποίο η Επιτροπή ενισχύει το συγκεκριμένο πρόγραμμα;

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

Το FIU.Net είναι μία ασφαλής, αποκεντρωμένη και ολοκληρωμένη πλατφόρμα για την ανταλλαγή, την επεξεργασία και την ανάλυση των πληροφοριών μεταξύ των ΜΧΠ (Μονάδων Χρηματοοικονομικών Πληροφοριών) των κρατών μελών της ΕΕ και των σχετικών τρίτων μερών για την καταπολέμηση της νομιμοποίησης εσόδων από παράνομες δραστηριότητες και της χρηματοδότησης της τρομοκρατίας. Χρηματοδοτείται μέσω του προγράμματος για την πρόληψη και την καταπολέμηση της εγκληματικότητας και, από την 1η Ιανουαρίου 2014, θα ενταχθεί στην Ευρωπόλ. Σήμερα, είναι συνδεδεμένες με το FIU.Net 26 μονάδες χρηματοοικονομικών πληροφοριών της ΕΕ.

Το σύστημα το διαχειρίζεται ανεξάρτητη διευθύνουσα επιτροπή που απαρτίζεται από ορισμένες μονάδες χρηματοοικονομικών πληροφοριών, στην οποία καλείται να συμμετέχει επίσης η Επιτροπή και, τώρα, η Ευρωπόλ.

Το FIU.Net δεν συγκεντρώνει ούτε αποθηκεύει στοιχεία σχετικά με τον αριθμό και το χρηματικό ύψος των παραβάσεων και εγκληματικών πράξεων που διαπράχθηκαν και εντοπίστηκαν από τη συγκεκριμένη διακρατική συνεργασία.

Σχετικές πληροφορίες περιλαμβάνονται στην έκθεση «Η νομιμοποίηση εσόδων από παράνομες δραστηριότητες στην Ευρώπη [2]», η οποία εκπονήθηκε στο πλαίσιο της εφαρμογής του σχεδίου δράσης 2006-2010 σχετικά με τη χάραξη ολοκληρωμένης και συνεκτικής στρατηγικής της ΕΕ για την κατάρτιση στατιστικών σχετικά με την εγκληματικότητα και την ποινική δικαιοσύνη [3]. Δυστυχώς, η Ελλάδα δεν ήταν πάντα σε θέση να παράσχει τα σχετικά δεδομένα στα οποία βασίζεται η εν λόγω έκθεση.

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[1] http://www.fiu.net/.
[2] http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-RA-10-003/EN/KS-RA-10-003-EN.PDF
[3] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2006:0437:FIN:EN:PDF.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006241/12
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(25 June 2012)

Subject: Cooperation at European level to combat money laundering

Both the Commission and European Parliament have been making persistent efforts to improve cooperation between Member States in combating money laundering and harmonise penalties for this offence. Exchanges of information between Member States for this purpose are being carried out over FIU-NET ([1]). This programme, which is being funded by the Commission, is intended to ensure the safe online exchange of financial information.

In view of this:

1. Is the Commission gathering information regarding the number of offences and criminal activities committed and detected as a result of this cross-border cooperation and the amounts involved?

2. Is it collecting information from each Member State individually? How many offences were committed in Greece and how does this compare with the European average?

3. What Commission funding is being allocated to this programme?

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

FIU.Net is a secure, decentralised and integrated platform for information exchange, processing and analysis between FIUs of EU Member States and relevant third parties to combat money laundering and terrorist financing. It is financed through the Prevention of and Fight against Crime programme and is to be embedded within Europol as of 1 January 2014. 26 EU Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs) are currently connected.

The system is managed by an independent Board composed of some EU Financial Intelligence Units where the Commission and now Europol are also invited.

FIU.Net does not collect nor store information 'regarding the number of offences and criminal activities committed and detected as a result of this cross-border cooperation and the amounts involved'.

Pertinent information can be found in the report 'Money Laundering in Europe ([2])' as part of the implementation of the 2006-10 Action Plan Developing a comprehensive and coherent EU strategy to measure crime and criminal justice ([3]). Regrettably, Greece was not always able to provide the relevant data on which this Report is based.

([1]) http://www.fiu.net/.
([2]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-RA-10-003/EN/KS-RA-10-003-EN.PDF
([3]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2006:0437:FIN:EN:PDF.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-006242/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(25 Ιουνίου 2012)

Θέμα: Αντιμετώπιση φοροδιαφυγής που διαπράττεται μέσω των «φορολογικών παραδείσων»

Στην ανακοίνωση της Επιτροπής σχετικά με το πρόγραμμα εργασίας της Επιτροπής για το 2012 (COM(2011)0777), αναφέρεται ότι η Επιτροπή σκοπεύει να προτείνει μια ενισχυμένη στρατηγική για να βοηθήσει τα κράτη μέλη να αντιμετωπίσουν τους «φορολογικούς παραδείσους», ώστε με τη συνεισφορά της ΕΕ να αναχαιτιστούν οι δυνητικές απώλειες για τα δημόσια ταμεία.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Ποια είναι τα βήματα προόδου που έχουν πραγματοποιηθεί προς αυτή την κατεύθυνση;

2. Υπάρχουν μετρήσιμα αποτελέσματα από την προσπάθεια των κρατών μελών να αντιμετωπίσουν την φοροδιαφυγή που διαπράττεται μέσω φορολογικών παραδείσων; Ποια η περίπτωση της Ελλάδας;

3. Είναι σε θέση να με ενημερώσει η Επιτροπή για το κατά πόσον οι καλές πρακτικές που ακολουθήθηκαν από κράτη μέλη και συνέβαλαν στην φορολόγηση διαφυγόντων κεφαλαίων μεταδίδονται και σε κράτη μέλη που αντιμετωπίζουν προβλήματα; Πώς έχει συμβάλει η Επιτροπή προς αυτή την κατεύθυνση;

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

Οι εργασίες βρίσκονται σε εξέλιξη. Η ανακοίνωση σχετικά με τη χρηστή διακυβέρνηση όσον αφορά τους φορολογικούς παραδείσους και τον επιθετικό φορολογικό σχεδιασμό έχει προγραμματιστεί για το Δεκέμβριο του 2012. Εξάλλου, όπως αναφέρεται στην πρόσφατη ανακοίνωση της 27ης Ιουνίου 2012 ([1]) σχετικά με την αντιμετώπιση της απάτης και της φοροδιαφυγής, τότε θα είναι έτοιμο και ένα σχέδιο δράσης προς το σκοπό αυτό.

Η Επιτροπή διεξάγει έρευνα ως μέρος των προπαρασκευαστικών εργασιών για την ανακοίνωση του Δεκεμβρίου. Η Επιτροπή δεν διαθέτει καμία πληροφορία αυτή τη στιγμή όσον αφορά την Ελλάδα

Το νομικό πλαίσιο, εντός της ΕΕ, για τη διοικητική συνεργασία στον τομέα της άμεσης φορολογίας και την είσπραξη των φόρων ενισχύθηκε πρόσφατα με τις οδηγίες 2011/16/ΕΕ και 2010/24/ΕΕ του Συμβουλίου, καθώς και με τον εκτελεστικό κανονισμό (ΕΕ) αριθ. 1189/2011 της Επιτροπής. Επιπλέον, οι φορολογικές αρχές των κρατών μελών συνεργάζονται για την αποτελεσματική ανταλλαγή παραδειγμάτων βέλτιστων πρακτικών, ιδίως στο πλαίσιο του προγράμματος FISCALIS.

([1]) COM(351)2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006242/12
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(25 June 2012)

Subject: Measures to deal with tax evasion through 'tax havens'

In its communication concerning its work programme for 2012 (COM(2011) 0777), the Commission announced its intention of proposing a reinforced strategy to help Member States tackle 'tax havens' as a contribution to stemming potential losses to public coffers.

In view of this:

1. Can the Commission say what progress has been made in this direction?

2. Have efforts by Member States to combat tax evasion through tax havens produced any measurable results? What is the situation with regard to Greece?

3. To what extent are good practices successfully followed by Member States for the recovery of tax on errant funds being passed onto those Member States encountering difficulties? What contribution has been made by the Commission in this respect?

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

Work is ongoing. The communication on good governance in relation to tax havens and aggressive tax planning is planned for December 2012. In addition, as mentioned in the recent Communication of 27 June 2012 ([1]) on tackling fraud and tax evasion an action plan covering this area of activity will be issued at the same time.

The Commission is in the process of conducting research as part of the preparatory work for the December Communication. With regard to Greece, the Commission does not have any information at the present time.

Within the EU, the legal framework for administrative cooperation in the field of direct taxation and the recovery of tax claims has been recently enhanced by Council Directives 2011/16/EU and 2010/24/EU, as well as by the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1189/2011. In addition, Member States' tax administrations liaise together to exchange best practices effectively, notably in the framework of the Fiscalis program.

([1]) COM 2012 (351).

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006244/12
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Mario Mauro (PPE)
(25 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Attacco dei talebani in un hotel a Kadana

Nella sera del 21 giugno 2012, militanti talebani hanno cominciato un assedio allo Spozhmai Hotel appena fuori Kadana, Afghanistan. Decine di persone nell'hotel sono state prese in ostaggio dai ribelli, che hanno iniziato uno scontro con le forze di sicurezza afghane protrattosi per dodici ore uccidendo almeno venti persone, 15 delle quali civili. Una volta messo in sicurezza l'edificio, la polizia ha trovato una cinquantina di ostaggi all'interno. Tutti e cinque i ribelli sono stati uccisi dalle forze di sicurezza afghane, con il sostegno della coalizione NATO. In una e-mail i talebani hanno rivendicato l'attacco, asserendo che avevano notizia che fossero presenti molti membri ISAF e diplomatici delle ambasciate di altri paesi stranieri. Hanno anche accusato l'hotel di ospitare cerimonie e «feste selvagge» antislamiche.

L'attacco si presenta come l'ultimo di una serie che testimonia un'aumentata incidenza di violenze in Afghanistan. La polizia e le forze armate del paese hanno risposto ad alcuni degli ultimi attacchi più impegnativi dei ribelli, conquistando il favore e il sostegno dei loro connazionali. Tuttavia, questo aumento delle violenze era prevedibile come primo effetto dell'annunciata partenza delle forze NATO nel 2014, allorché il governo afghano avrà la totale responsabilità della protezione dei suoi cittadini.

Si sottopongono all'esame della Alto Rappresentante i seguenti quesiti:

1. La Alto Rappresentante è consapevole delle crescenti violenze in Afghanistan?

2. Nel marzo 2012, l'Unione europea, unitamente alla NATO, ha riaffermato il proprio impegno per l'Afghanistan. Quali misure si dovrebbero prendere — o sono già state prese — per dimostrare questo sostegno, soprattutto alla luce dei recenti attacchi?

3. Come può l'Unione europea tenere in equilibrio gli interessi dei suoi Stati membri con il suo investimento nella tutela dei diritti umani attraverso la costruzione di un Afghanistan più stabile?

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

L'AR/VP è al corrente dello stato di insicurezza in cui versa l'Afghanistan e ha più volte condannato la deplorevole e incessante violenza diretta contro i civili. Le cause sottostanti a tali episodi violenti e ingiustificabili sono complesse, e trovare una soluzione richiederà tempi non brevi. Sebbene si siano registrati notevoli progressi nell'ultimo decennio in Afghanistan, il Paese rimane uno dei meno sviluppati al mondo. La mancanza di opportunità a livello economico e sociale, che è una delle principali cause dell'instabilità, offre un terreno fertile agli attentati estremisti.

L'UE è uno dei maggiori donatori dell'Afghanistan in termini di assistenza umanitaria e aiuti allo sviluppo. L'assistenza prodigata dal bilancio dell'UE riguarda principalmente l'agricoltura e lo sviluppo rurale, i metodi di governo e tematiche sociali (salute e protezione sociale).

L'UE, insieme ad altri partner internazionali tra cui la NATO, gli USA e le Nazioni Unite, sostiene l'impegno dell'Afghanistan a rafforzare la polizia civile e lo stato di diritto. L'impegno internazionale di lungo periodo può aiutare l'Afghanistan a superare decenni di conflitti violenti, sviluppare le proprie istituzioni e migliorare i metodi di governo. La sicurezza è l'elemento chiave per ottenere una crescita economica diffusa, riducendo l'incentivo a ricorrere alla violenza.

L'UE continuerà a propugnare un maggiore rispetto dei diritti umani, come reiterato nelle conclusioni del Consiglio del 14 maggio 2012. Il quadro di responsabilità reciproca concordato alla Conferenza di Tokyo dell'8 luglio 2012 costituirà uno strumento per misurare i progressi del governo afghano su questi temi fondamentali. L'RSUE/Capo delegazione, in stretta collaborazione con gli Stati membri dell'UE, proseguirà l'attento monitoraggio della situazione dei diritti umani e tratterà la questione direttamente con il governo afghano, se necessario.

Per maggiori informazioni si rimanda all'esposizione dello stato attuale della cooperazione tra l'UE e l'Afghanistan ([1]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/asia/country-cooperation/afghanistan/documents/eu_afghanistan_state-of-play_0712_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006244/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Mario Mauro (PPE)
(25 June 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Taliban attack on a hotel in Kadana

On the night of 21 June 2012, militant members of the Taliban began a siege of the Spozhmai Hotel just outside Kadana, Afghanistan. Dozens of people at the hotel were taken hostage by the insurgents, who began a standoff with Afghan security forces that lasted for 12 hours and killed at least 20 people, 15 of whom were civilians. Once the building had been safely cleared, police found 50 hostages inside. All five insurgents were killed by the Afghan security forces, with support from the NATO coalition. In an e-mail the Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack, saying that it had information that many International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and other embassy diplomats from foreign countries were present. It also accused the hotel of hosting anti-Islamic ceremonies and 'wild parties'.

The attack comes as the latest in a series of increased incidences of violence in Afghanistan. The country's police and armed forces have led the response to some of the most challenging recent insurgent attacks, winning favour and support from their countrymen. However, it is expected that this increase in violence anticipates the removal of NATO forces in 2014, when the Afghan Government will have full responsibility for protecting its citizens.

The following questions are submitted for the consideration of the High Representative:

1. Is the High Representative aware of the increased violence in Afghanistan?

2. In March 2012, the EU, along with NATO, re-affirmed its commitment to Afghanistan. What measures should be taken — or are already being taken — to show this support, especially in light of recent attacks?

3. How can the EU balance the interests of its Member States with its investment in protecting human rights by building a more stable Afghanistan?

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

The HR/VP is aware of the current security situation in Afghanistan, and has frequently condemned the deplorable and continued violence against civilians. The underlying reasons for such violent and unjustifiable incidents are complex and can only be addressed over time. While much progress has been made over the last decade, Afghanistan remains one of the least developed nations in the world. Lack of economic and social opportunity, one of the driving factors of instability, provides fertile ground for extremist attacks.

The EU is one of the major donors providing development and humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan. Assistance under the EU budget concentrates on agriculture and rural development, governance, and social sectors (health and social protection).

The EU, together with other international partners — *inter alia* NATO, US, UN — supports Afghan efforts to strengthen civilian policing and rule of law. Long-term international engagement can assist Afghanistan to overcome decades of violent conflict, develop its institutions and improve governance. Security is key to broad based economic growth, reducing the incentives for those who resort to violence

The EU will continue to champion greater respect for human rights as reiterated in the Council conclusions on 14 May 2012. The Mutual Accountability Framework, agreed during the Tokyo Conference on 8 July 2012, will be a tool to measure Afghan Government's progress on these key issues. The EUSR/HoD, in close cooperation with EU Member States, will continue to carefully monitor the human rights situation and raise the issue directly with the Government of Afghanistan as appropriate.

For additional information, please refer to the State of Play on EU Afghanistan Cooperation ([1]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/asia/country-cooperation/afghanistan/documents/eu_afghanistan_state-of-play_0712_en.pdf

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-006255/12
aan de Commissie
Kartika Tamara Liotard (GUE/NGL)
(25 juni 2012)

Betreft: Veiligheidsregimes pesticiden

Een rapport gemaakt door PAN-Europe (*Le Monde,* 3.4.2012) laat zien dat vele pesticiden door DG-SANCO op de positieve lijst worden geplaatst terwijl niet alle benodigde uitkomsten van veiligheidstesten zijn geleverd door de aanvragende industrie. Het blijkt dat daardoor in veel gevallen de risico-analyse voor de consument niet afgerond is, en in bijna alle gevallen dat verplichte testen voor het milieu ontbreken. Bovendien valt op dat in 2007/2008 het ontbreken van data een reden was voor niet-plaatsing en bij de herziening (resubmission) in 2010/2011 dezelfde gebreken aan het dossier wel aanvaardbaar worden geacht. Chemische onzuiverheden werden in de besluitvorming genegeerd.

1. Is het waar dat de Commissie in een speciaal regime (resubmission) pesticiden op de positieve lijst (Annex I) heeft geplaatst terwijl het dossier onvolledig was (zie het rapport van PAN-Europe)?

2. Klopt het dat onvolledige dossiers nu routinematig worden geaccepteerd bij plaatsing („confirmatory data")?

3. Hoe verhoudt „confirmatory data" zich met het voorzorgbeginsel zoals dat in de pesticiden regelgeving is vervat?

4. In het EFSA-advies werden vaak chemische onzuiverheden geconstateerd met een mogelijke giftige werking. Waarom zijn deze onzuiverheden niet bij de besluitvorming van SANCO betrokken?

5. Hoe kan de Commissie garanderen dat de veiligheid van de consument is gewaarborgd als de risico-analyse niet is afgerond?

6. Hoe kan de Commissie garanderen dat het milieu niet wordt geschaad als vele data voor het milieu (vogels, zoogdieren, etc.) ontbreken in de dossiers?

7. Hoe kan de Commissie garanderen dat de „verzachtende maatregelen" voor het milieu het milieu voldoende beschermen? Heeft de Commissie ooit onderzoek gedaan naar de implementatie van „verzachtende maatregelen" bij de nationale toelating in de lidstaten? En naar de handhaving van de voorschriften t.a.v. „verzachtende maatregelen"?

8. Nu diverse pesticiden met een hoog risico voor vogels en zoogdieren op de markt worden toegelaten, en de nationale implementatie ongewis is, wat zijn de cumulatieve effecten van al die middelen met een hoog risico?

Antwoord van de heer Dalli namens de Commissie
(20 augustus 2012)

De Commissie verwijst het geachte Parlementslid naar haar antwoord op de schriftelijke vragen E-4148/12 en E-4727/12 ([1]).

Voorts verwijst de Commissie naar de informatie die over dit onderwerp werd verstrekt en de aansluitende bespreking op de vergadering van de Commissie milieubeheer, volksgezondheid en voedselveiligheid van het Europees Parlement, die plaatsvond op 21 juni 2012 (agendapunt 25).

Het feit dat het toetsingsprogramma voor alle werkzame stoffen die in 1993 op de markt waren, tot een vermindering met ten minste 60 % van de werkzame stoffen heeft geleid, onderstreept het voornemen van de Commissie om een hoog niveau van bescherming voor consumenten, dieren en het milieu na te streven.

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

In dit verband zij erop gewezen dat de lidstaten verantwoordelijk zijn voor een juiste handhaving van de EU-wetgeving. De inspectiedienst van de Commissie (Voedsel- en veterinair bureau) voert op grond van artikel 68 van Verordening (EG) nr. 1107/2009 betreffende het op de markt brengen van gewasbeschermingsmiddelen ([2]) in de lidstaten audits uit op de controles die de lidstaten hebben uitgevoerd met het oog op de naleving van de verordening. In het licht van de beschikbare informatie heeft de Commissie geen reden om aan te nemen dat de nationale vergunningen voor gewasbeschermingsmiddelen geen risicobeperkende maatregelen verplicht stellen wanneer dat nodig is.

Ten aanzien van cumulatieve effecten als gevolg van de blootstelling van vogels en zoogdieren aan verscheidene bestrijdingsmiddelen voorziet Verordening (EG) nr. 1107/2009 erin dat deze worden beoordeeld zodra er door de Europese Autoriteit voor voedselveiligheid aanvaarde wetenschappelijke methoden beschikbaar zijn. De Commissie merkt op dat dergelijke methoden bijna gereed zijn voor wat de menselijke gezondheid aangaat, maar dat er op ecotoxicologisch gebied nog geen methoden voor de beoordeling van de cumulatieve blootstelling van vogels en zoogdieren aan verscheidene bestrijdingsmiddelen beschikbaar zijn.

([2]) PB L 309 van 24.11.2009, blz. 1.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006255/12
to the Commission
Kartika Tamara Liotard (GUE/NGL)
(25 June 2012)

Subject: Pesticide safety regimes

According to a report by PAN-Europe (*Le Monde*, 3 April 2012), DG SANCO places many pesticides on the positive list despite the fact that not all the required safety test results have been supplied by the industry applying for this. As a result, in many cases the consumer risk analysis has not been completed, and in nearly every case, compulsory environmental tests have not been performed. Moreover, it is striking that, in 2007/2008, if data were lacking, pesticides were not placed on the positive list, yet upon resubmission in 2010/2011, the same shortcomings in the documentation submitted were considered acceptable after all. Chemical impurities were ignored in the decision-making.

1. Is it true that the Commission has placed pesticides on the positive list (Annex I) under a special regime (resubmission) although documentation was incomplete (see the report by PAN-Europe)?

2. Is it true that incomplete documentation is now accepted on a routine basis for purposes of listing ('confirmatory data')?

3. How can 'confirmatory data' be reconciled with the precautionary principle laid down in pesticide legislation?

4. The EFSA report often refers to chemical impurities having been identified which could have toxic effects. Why were these impurities not taken into account in DG SANCO's decisions?

5. How can the Commission guarantee consumer safety if the risk analysis has not been completed?

6. How can the Commission guarantee that the environment will not be damaged if many environmental data (concerning birds, mammals, etc.) are missing in the documentation submitted?

7. How can the Commission guarantee that the environmental 'mitigation measures' will protect the environment adequately? Has the Commission ever investigated the implementation of 'mitigation measures' in connection with national licensing in the Member States? Has it investigated enforcement of the rules on 'mitigation measures'?

8. As various pesticides which present serious risks to birds and mammals are being admitted to the market, and national implementation is uncertain, what are the cumulative effects of all these high-risk products?

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

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to Written Questions E-4148/12 ([1]) and E-4727/12[1].

In addition, the Commission would refer to the information provided and the following discussion on this subject at the meeting of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety of the European Parliament, held on 21 June 2012 (agenda item 25).

The fact that the review programme of all active substances on the market in 1993 resulted in a reduction of at least 60% of the active substances underlines the determination of the Commission to set a high level of protection for consumers, animals and the environment.

As regards mitigation measures, it is the responsibility of the Member States to correctly enforce the EU legislation. The Commission's inspection service (Food and Veterinary Office) carries out audits in Member States based on Article 68 of Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 ([2]) concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market to verify the controls carried out by Member States to enforce compliance with that regulation. In the light of the information available, the Commission has no reason to believe that national authorisations of plant protection products do not prescribe mitigation measures, whenever necessary.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) OJ L 309, 24.11.2009, p. 1.

As regards cumulative effects due to the exposure of birds and mammals to several pesticides, Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 provides for their evaluation once scientific methods accepted by the European Food Safety Authority become available. The Commission notes that such methods are under finalisation for human health, but that in the field of ecotoxicology methods to assess the cumulative exposure of birds and mammals to several pesticides are not available yet.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-006258/12
til Kommissionen
Jens Rohde (ALDE)
(25. juni 2012)

Om: Kommissionens meddelelse om vedvarende energi

Kommissionen har i et svar til undertegnedes spørgsmål, som blev stillet den 13. april 2012 (E-003892/2012) gjort det klart, at den kommende meddelelse om vedvarende energi vil omhandle behovet for at sikre, at vedvarende energi i Europa integreres fuldt ud i det europæiske energimarked.

Kommissionen har nu sidenhen offentliggjort sin meddelelse KOM(2012)0271, men berører ikke problemstillingen angående implementeringen af artikel 13 bestemmelsen i direktivet 2009/28/EF.

Dette opleves dog som en betydelig udfordring for markedsaktørerne, idet artikel 13 stadig implementeres på vidt forskellig vis i medlemslandene og dermed skaber barrierer i det indre marked. Derfor efterlyser markedsaktørerne klarere retningslinjer fra Kommissionen til medlemslandene i forhold til, hvad der udgør, og hvad der ikke udgør, forholdsmæssige og nødvendige foranstaltninger.

Kan Kommissionen redegøre for, hvorfor den ikke har berørt ovennævnte problemstilling i sin meddelelse?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Günther Oettinger
(3. august 2012)

Som nævnt i svaret på det ærede medlems spørgsmål E-003892/2012 fokuserer meddelelsen »Vedvarende energi: en stor aktør på det europæiske energimarked« ([1]) på integrationen af vedvarende energi i det europæiske energimarked, ligesom den indeholder overvejelser omkring passende regler for vedvarende energi for perioden efter 2020. Meddelelsens formål er ikke at tage fat om den aktuelle situation for administrative procedurer, forskrifter og reglementer, der er omhandlet i artikel 13 i direktiv 2009/28/EF ([2]). Kommissionen skal i slutningen af 2012 ([3]) fremlægge en fremskridtsrapport, hvori dette vil blive behandlet.

([1]) KOM(2012)0271.
([2]) EUT L 140 af 5.6.2009.
([3]) Som fastlagt i artikel 23, stk. 3, i direktiv 2009/28/EF.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006258/12
to the Commission
Jens Rohde (ALDE)
(25 June 2012)

Subject: Commission communication on renewable energy

In its answer to my question of 13 April 2012 (E-003892/2012), the Commission made it clear that the forthcoming communication on renewable energy would address the need to ensure that renewable energy in Europe is fully integrated into the European energy market.

The Commission has, in the interim, published its communication COM(2012) 0271, but does not address the problem regarding the implementation of the provisions of Article 13 of Directive 2009/28/EC.

This does pose a major challenge to market operators as Article 13 is still implemented in very different ways in the Member States and thus creates barriers in the internal market. Market operators are therefore seeking clearer guidelines from the Commission to the Member States as to what does, and does not, constitute proportionate and necessary measures.

Can the Commission explain why it did not address the above problem in its communication?

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

As mentioned in reply E-003892/2012 by the Honourable Member, the communication ([1]) 'Renewable Energy: A Major Player in the European Energy Market' addressed the integration of renewable energy in the European energy market, while also reflecting on the appropriate regulatory framework for renewable energy post-2020. This communication was not intended to address the state of play on administrative procedures, regulations and codes referred to in Article 13 of Directive 2009/28/EC ([2]), this will be addressed in the progress report the Commission has to publish by the end of 2012 ([3]).

([1]) COM(2012) 0271.
([2]) OJ L 140, 5.6.2009.
([3]) As required by Article 23(3) of Directive 2009/28/EC.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-006259/12
til Kommissionen
Jens Rohde (ALDE)
(25. juni 2012)

Om: Administration og bureaukrati i den fælles landbrugspolitik 2013-2020

Kommissionen fremlagde den 12. oktober 2011 et forslag til reform af den fælles landbrugspolitik i årene efter år 2013.

Reformen indeholder ti centrale elementer, hvoraf det ene består i, der for fremtiden kun skal gives landbrugsstøtte til såkaldt »aktive landbrugere«. Bevæggrunden herfor er, at den hidtidige politik om at give støtte til alle ejere af landbrugsjord, har medført at nogle støttekroner er gået til jordejere, som reelt ikke driver landbrug.

Selvom der måtte være bred politisk enighed om hensigten og formålet med denne del af forslaget, er der dog blevet udtrykt bekymring for omkostningsniveauet i forhold til håndhævelsen heraf.

Ifølge Kommissionens egen konsekvensanalyse (SEK(2011)1153, s. 66-67) vil et sådan reformforslag betyde øget bureaukrati og mere kontrol af landmændene, samtidig med at de administrative byrder samlet set vil blive øget med 15 procent.

Kan Kommissionen acceptere, at forslaget om »aktive landbrugere« vil betyde en øget administrationsbyrde på 15 procent for medlemsstaterne? I så fald, hvordan vil Kommissionen sikre, at forslaget bliver nemmere at implementere, så de enkelte medlemsstater undgår mere bureaukrati?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Dacian Cioloş
(8. august 2012)

Kommissionen vil gerne understrege, at den foreslåede »aktiv landbruger-regel« ikke vil resultere i en øget administrationsbyrde på 15 % for medlemsstaterne.

De 15 %, der refereres til i Kommissionens konsekvensanalyse, er for det første et samlet skøn, som vedrører den fremtidige ordning med direkte betalinger som sådan, og som dækker administrationsomkostninger og -byrder for både virksomheder og offentlige myndigheder. De øgede administrative omkostninger ved gennemførelsen af »aktiv landbruger-reglen« vil kun udgøre en brøkdel af de 15 %. For det andet er der i den beregning af »aktiv landbruger-reglen«, som er blevet foretaget i forbindelse med konsekvensanalysen, ikke taget højde for den foreslåede undtagelse, som er fastsat i artikel 9, stk. 2, i forslaget til en forordning om direkte betalinger (KOM(2011)0625). Ifølge denne bestemmelse skal »aktiv landbruger-reglen« ikke finde anvendelse på landbrugere, der har modtaget under 5 000 EUR i direkte betalinger for det foregående år. Denne undtagelse vil i gennemsnit gælde for 80 % af EU's landbrugere. Gennemførelsesomkostningerne vil følgelig ikke nå det niveau, der er anslået i konsekvensanalysen.

Det må erkendes, at en mere målrettet direkte indkomststøtte ikke kan nås uden en vis stigning i de administrative omkostninger. Kommissionen er imidlertid åben over for tilpasninger af forslaget i løbet af lovgivningsprocessen og tager hensyn til forskellige løsninger, der kan lette gennemførelsen og holde de administrative omkostninger nede. Lovgiveren bør dog have in mente, at opretholdelse af status quo strider mod målet om at forbedre den fælles landbrugspolitiks samlede effektivitet og princippet om forsvarlig forvaltning af EU-midler.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006259/12
to the Commission
Jens Rohde (ALDE)
(25 June 2012)

Subject: Administration and bureaucracy in the 2013-2020 common agricultural policy

On 12 October 2011, the Commission submitted a proposal for the reform of the common agricultural policy after 2013.

The reform contains ten key elements, one of which is that agricultural aid shall in future only be given to so-called 'active farmers'. The rationale for this is that the previous policy of giving aid to all owners of agricultural land has led to some subsidies going to landowners who do not actually carry out farming activities.

Whilst there may be broad political consensus on the intent and purpose of this part of the proposal, some concerns have however been expressed about the cost of enforcement.

According to the Commission's own impact assessment (SEC(2011) 1153, pp. 66-67), such a reform would mean more bureaucracy and more checks on farmers, whilst the administrative burden overall would increase by 15%.

Does the Commission accept that the proposal on 'active farmers' will mean a 15% increase in the administrative burden for Member States? If so, how will it ensure that the proposal will be easier to implement, allowing individual Member States to avoid more bureaucracy?

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

The Commission would like to underline that the proposed 'active farmer clause' will not result in a 15% increase in the administrative burden for Member States.

The 15% referred to in the Commission's impact assessment is, to begin with, an overall estimate which relates to the future direct payment system as such and which represents a total of the administrative cost and burdens for both businesses and public authorities. The increase in administrative costs associated with the implementation of the 'active farmer clause' will only be a fraction of this 15%. Moreover, the calculation made in the framework of the impact assessment with regard to the 'active farmer clause' did not take into account the proposed exemption provided for in Article 9(2) of the proposal for a regulation on direct payments (COM(2011)625). According to this provision, the 'active farmer clause' shall not apply to farmers receiving less than EUR 5000 of direct payments for the previous year. The exemption would cover an average of 80% of the farmers in the EU. The implementing costs would therefore, in this respect, not be at the level of the estimates set out in the impact assessment.

It needs to be acknowledged that a better targeting of direct income support cannot be achieved without some increase in administrative costs. The Commission is however open to adaptations to the proposal in the course of the legislative process, taking into account various options that could facilitate the implementation and keep down administrative costs. The legislator should on the other hand bear in mind that maintenance of the status quo would contradict the objective of improving the overall effectiveness of the CAP and the principle of a sound management of EU funds.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-006260/12
til Kommissionen
Morten Messerschmidt (EFD)
(25. juni 2012)

Om: Rabat på Danmarks EU-bidrag

Den danske regering indgik den 22. juni 2012 en aftale om skattereform ([1]) med dele af oppositionen.

Aftalen indebærer skattelettelser på 7 mio. DKK, hvoraf 1 mia. DKK skal finansieres ved rabat på det danske EU-bidrag. Den tidligere regering havde varslet et veto mod EU's fælles budget, hvis den ikke opnåede en sådan rabat, hvilket den nuværende regering imidlertid ikke har.

Har den danske regering indgået en forhåndsaftale eller blot konsulteret Kommissionen vedrørende denne rabat?

Har Kommissionen i givet fald lovet den danske regering en rabat på 1 mia. DKK i Danmarks EU-bidrag?

Hvornår skulle en sådan rabat i givet fald have virkning fra?

Skulle Kommissionen ikke have lovet Danmark den nævnte rabat, agter den da at se positivt på en evt. henvendelse fra den danske regering?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Janusz Lewandowski
(1. august 2012)

Ordningen for finansieringen af Unionens budget er beskrevet i Rådets afgørelse af 7. juni 2007 om ordningen for De Europæiske Fællesskabers egne indtægter (2007/436/EF, Euratom), i det følgende benævnt »afgørelsen«. Den omfatter i øjeblikket korrektionen til fordel for Det Forenede Kongerige, som finansieres af alle øvrige medlemsstater, idet Tysklands, Sveriges, Nederlandenes og Østrigs finansieringsandel nedsættes til en fjerdedel af deres normale andel. Det fastsættes også i afgørelsen, at der foretages en bruttoreduktion (faste beløb) af Nederlandenes og Sveriges betalinger på henholdsvis 605 mio. EUR og 150 mio. EUR i 2004-priser. Disse bruttoreduktioner finansieres af alle medlemsstater i forhold til deres bruttonationalindkomst.

Som led i finansieringsordningen skal alle finansielle korrektioner, der indrømmes en medlemsstat, aftales og indarbejdes i afgørelsen, som skal vedtages med enstemmighed af Rådet og ratificeres af alle medlemsstater.

Kommissionen foreslår i forslaget til en ny ordning for Unionens egne indtægter (KOM(2011)0510 endelig), som der i øjeblikket føres forhandlinger om sideløbende med forslagene til EU's budgetudgifter i perioden 2014-2020, at der foretages væsentlige ændringer af finansieringsordningen for EU's budget, som bygger på rimelighed og forenkling. Den har derfor foreslået faste reduktioner for Tyskland, Nederlandene, Sverige og Det Forenede Kongerige. På grundlag af udgiftsforslagene for 2014-2020 er det Kommissionens opfattelse, at Danmark ikke opfylder betingelserne for en korrektion i modsætning til de omtalte fire lande.

([1]) http://www.fm.dk/nyheder/pressemeddelelser/2012/6/historisk-bred-skatteaftale/(/media/Files/Nyheder/Pressemeddelelser/2012/06/skatteaftale/rammeaftale%20om%20skattereform_juni%202012.ashx.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006260/12
to the Commission
Morten Messerschmidt (EFD)
(25 June 2012)

Subject: Rebate on Denmark's contribution to the EU

On 22 June 2012, the Danish Government signed an agreement on tax reform ([1]) with some Opposition parties.

The agreement involves DKK 7 billion of tax concessions, DKK 1 billion of which will be financed by the rebate on Denmark's contribution to the EU. The previous government had threatened to veto the common EU budget if it did not obtain this rebate, which the current government has so far failed to achieve.

Has the Danish Government reached a preliminary agreement with the Commission, or simply consulted it about this rebate?

If so, has the Commission promised the Danish Government a DKK 1 billion rebate on Denmark's contribution to the EU?

If so, when should this discount take effect?

Should the Commission not have promised Denmark this discount, will it be sympathetic to any such request from the Danish Government?

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

The system for the financing of the Union budget is set out in the Council Decision of 7 June 2007 on the system of the European Communities' own resources (2007/436/EC, Euratom), also called the Own Resources Decision (ORD). It currently includes the UK correction, which is financed by all Member States except the UK itself, with Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands and Austria contributing only one-fourth of their share. The ORD also foresees gross reductions in gross national income payments (lump sums) for the Netherlands and Sweden, EUR 605 million and 150 million in 2004 prices respectively. These gross reductions are financed by all Member States in proportion to their GNI.

As part of the financing system, any financial correction granted to a Member State needs to be agreed and included in the Own Resources Decision (ORD), which is to be adopted at unanimity by Council and after ratification by all Member States.

In its proposal for a new ORD (COM(2011)510 final), which is currently being negotiated in parallel with the proposals for EU budgetary expenditure for the period 2014-2020, the Commission has proposed substantial changes to the financing system of the EU budget based on fairness and simplicity. As a consequence, it has proposed lump-sum corrections for Germany, The Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom. On the basis of its expenditure proposals for 2014-2020, the Commission considered that, contrary to the case of the four countries for which it has proposed a correction, the conditions were not met in the case of Denmark.

([1]) http://www.fm.dk/nyheder/pressemeddelelser/2012/6/historisk-bred-skatteaftale/(/media/Files/Nyheder/Pressemeddelelser/2012/06/skatteaftale/rammeaftale%20om%20skattereform_juni%202012.ashx.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-006263/12
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL), João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) y Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(25 de junio de 2012)

Asunto: VP/HR — Condena del golpe de Estado que se desarrolla actualmente en Paraguay

Se está desarrollando actualmente en Paraguay un golpe de Estado que pretende la destitución de Fernando Lugo, el Presidente elegido por la expresión soberana del voto popular de los paraguayos.

Las fuerzas más reaccionarias de este país tratan de hacer un juicio político del Presidente electo no sólo para blanquear posibles responsabilidad en la matanza de los 20 agricultores y policías que las autoridades de ese país deben investigar, sino también para intentar por esa vía destituir al Presidente y tomar ilegítimamente el poder otorgado por la expresión soberana del pueblo, liquidando el proceso democrático en curso en Paraguay.

Es necesario recordar y rechazar la repetición del pasado reciente de golpes (algunos de ellos fascistas) en América Latina, cuyo ejemplo más reciente es el de Honduras, donde fue depuesto el Presidente electo con la complicidad activa de potencias extranjeras, en particular los Estados Unidos y la UE, con su secuela de represión contra todos aquellos que se le opusieron o siguen oponiendo, de asesinatos de opositores, sindicalistas, campesinos, miembros del Frente contra el golpe de Estado y de imposición de las limitaciones más severas al ejercicio de las libertades políticas y democráticas.

¿No considera la Comisión necesario condenar y rechazar el golpe de Estado en curso?

¿No considera necesario defender el pleno respeto de la legalidad democrática y constitucional paraguaya, garantía de que la voluntad soberana del pueblo prevalezca sobre la voluntad de la oligarquía y/o sobre interferencias externas?

Respuesta de la Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(8 de agosto de 2012)

Los Jefes de Misión de la UE en Paraguay están efectuando una ronda de diálogos y debates con todos los sectores de la sociedad, incluido el Gobierno de Paraguay, el expresidente Lugo y sus aliados políticos, organizaciones de la sociedad civil, intelectuales y líderes de opinión.

El día siguiente al de la destitución, la Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta expresó su preocupación por la situación y subrayó que es importante respetar la voluntad democrática del pueblo paraguayo.

Todas las organizaciones regionales, incluso aquellas que han suspendido la presencia de Paraguay, coinciden en que la destitución se llevó a cabo de conformidad con la legislación paraguaya, pero cuestionan su legitimidad, en especial porque no se concedió al Sr. Lugo un plazo razonable para organizar su defensa.

Seguiremos de cerca el análisis y las decisiones de la OEA y de otras organizaciones. En línea con nuestros esfuerzos para disponer de una visión completa de la situación, una misión del Parlamento Europeo visitó Asunción del 15 al 18 de julio.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-006263/12
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente / Alta Representante)
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL), João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) e Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(25 de junho de 2012)

Assunto: VP/HR — Condenação do golpe de estado em desenvolvimento no Paraguai

Está em desenvolvimento no Paraguai um golpe de estado que visa a destituição do presidente eleito pela expressão soberana do voto popular dos paraguaios, Fernando Lugo.

As forças mais reacionárias deste país tentam proceder a um julgamento político do presidente eleito para não só branquearem eventuais responsabilidades próprias no massacre dos 20 camponeses e polícias que as autoridades do país devem apurar, como para procurar por esta via destituir o presidente e tomar ilegitimamente o poder a ele atribuído pela expressão soberana do povo, liquidando o processo democrático em curso no Paraguai.

É necessário relembrar e rejeitar a repetição do passado recente de golpes (alguns deles fascistas) na América Latina, cujo exemplo mais recente é as Honduras, onde o presidente eleito foi deposto com a ativa cumplicidade de potências estrangeiras, nomeadamente dos EUA e da UE, seguindo-se a repressão de todos quantos a ele se opuseram ou opõem, assassinatos de opositores, sindicalistas, camponeses, membros da Frente contra o Golpe, e a imposição das mais graves limitações ao exercício das liberdades políticas e democráticas.

Não considera necessário condenar e rejeitar o golpe de estado em desenvolvimento?

Não considera necessário defender o pleno respeito pela legalidade democrática e constitucional paraguaia, garantia de que a vontade soberana do povo prevalece sobre a vontade da oligarquia e/ou sobre a ingerência externa?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(8 de agosto de 2012)

Os Chefes de Missão da UE no Paraguai estão a realizar uma série de diálogos e discussões com todos os intervenientes da sociedade paraguaia, incluindo o Governo em funções, o antigo Presidente Fernando Lugo e os seus aliados políticos, as organizações da sociedade civil, os líderes intelectuais e os formadores de opinião.

Logo no dia a seguir à impugnação, a AR/VP manifestou a sua preocupação com a situação e sublinhou que é importante respeitar a vontade democrática dos cidadãos do Paraguai.

Todas as organizações regionais, mesmo aquelas que suspenderam o Paraguai, concordam que a impugnação foi efetuada em conformidade com a legislação do país, mas questionam a sua legitimidade, em especial visto que não foi concedido a Fernando Lugo um período de tempo razoável para organizar a sua defesa.

Acompanharemos de perto a análise e as decisões da OEA e de outras organizações. No âmbito dos nossos esforços no sentido de obter uma imagem completa da situação, uma missão do Parlamento Europeu visitou Asuncion entre 15 e 18 de julho.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006263/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL), João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) and Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(25 June 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Condemnation of the orchestrated coup in Paraguay

A coup d'état is being orchestrated in Paraguay with the aim of ousting the president, Fernando Lugo, who was democratically elected by popular vote.

The country's most reactionary forces are attempting to put the elected president on political trial, in order to not only whitewash their own possible implication in the massacre of 20 peasants and police officers, which has yet to be investigated by the national authorities, but also to overthrow the president and illegally take over the power invested in him by popular vote, thereby nullifying Paraguay's ongoing democratic process.

It is essential to remember and reject any repetition of Latin America's recent history of coups (some of them fascist), of which the most recent example is Honduras, whose elected president was deposed with the active connivance of foreign powers, namely the US and EU, with the subsequent repression of all those who expressed or continue to express opposition, assassination of members of the opposition, trade unionists, peasants, members of the Front against the Coup and the imposition of severe restrictions on the exercise of political and democratic rights.

Does the High Representative not see a need to condemn or reject this orchestrated coup?

Does she not consider it necessary to ensure that Paraguay's democratic and constitutional legal order is fully upheld, in order to ensure that the sovereign will of the Paraguayan people prevails over that of the oligarchy and/or any outside interference?

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

EU Heads of mission in Paraguay are undertaking a round of dialogues and discussions with all actors of the Paraguayan society, including the government in office, former President Lugo and his political allies, civil society organisations, intellectual and opinion leaders.

The very day after the impeachment, the HR/VP expressed her concern with the situation and underlined that it is important to respect the democratic will of the Paraguayan people.

All regional organisations, even those that have suspended Paraguay, agree that the impeachment was carried out in accordance with the Paraguayan law, but question its legitimacy, in particular since Fernando Lugo was not granted a reasonable period of time to organise his defence.

We will keep following closely the analysis and decisions of the OAS and other organisations. In line with our efforts towards obtaining a complete picture, a mission of the European Parliament visited Asuncion from 15 to 18 July.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006264/12
to the Commission
Chris Davies (ALDE)
(25 June 2012)

Subject: Subsidies for building new fishing vessels

1. Can the Commission confirm the substance of the story reported in *The Sunday Times* newspaper of 17 June 2012 to the effect that since 1999 there have been seven convictions of members of the Vidal family of Ribeira, Spain, for illegal fishing in the southern Atlantic and Indian Oceans, including the use of illegal gear, exceeding quotas, falsifying information, and obstructing inspections, resulting in the imposition of fines of some EUR 3 million, and the confiscation of three fishing vessels?

2. Can the Commission also confirm that between 2003 and 2006, EU subsidies totalling more than EUR 4 million were paid to Vidal Armadores and other Vidal companies to build new trawlers?

3. If the newspaper account accords with the facts, does the Commission agree that it highlights the way in which the use of EU funds has been brought into public disrepute, and emphasises the need to change the way in which the subsidy regime for fishing activities is used?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(24 August 2012)

The Commission has not been officially informed of the specific cases mentioned by the Honourable Member. As far as funding support from the EU budget is concerned, national and regional authorities are primarily responsible for the implementation of the European Fisheries Fund (EFF). For this reason, the Commission has not followed in detail the EU subsidies that might have been paid to Vidal Armadores over the period 2003-2006. The Commission is aware of irregularities involving the Vidal family, and is in contact with the relevant national and regional authorities to ensure close follow-up.

The Commission continues its efforts to improve the means to prevent that EU subsidies support directly or indirectly IUU activities. The IUU Regulation ([1]), which applies already since 1 January 2010, provides that Member States shall not to grant any public aid under national aid regimes or under EU funds to operators involved in the operation, management or ownership of fishing vessels included in the EU IUU vessel list.

To further strengthen the framework, the Commission has included in its proposal for the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) provisions on conditionality to strengthen compliance with Common Fisheries Policy rules and facilitate recovery of funds allocated to operators involved in IUU fishing. This proposal also includes measures to reduce the dependency of the European fishing fleet on subsidies, in particular by redirecting such subsidies away from fleet structural adjustments, which may further mitigate the risks in this area.

([1]) Article 40, paragraph 3 of COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 1005/2008 of 29 September 2008 establishing a Community system to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006266/12
to the Commission
Keith Taylor (Verts/ALE)
(25 June 2012)

Subject: Swedish healthcare and UK citizens

It has come to my attention that retired UK citizens residing in Sweden are facing discrimination over healthcare. The Swedish authorities are insisting that non-working residents from other EU countries take out private medical insurance, despite them having previously been covered by the European Health Insurance Card and having occupational pensions.

It is my understanding that the UK's Department of Health makes annual payments to other EU countries in respect of the healthcare provision for people in receipt of British retirement pensions and now resident in those Member States. In view of this, I believe that the Swedish Government may be acting in contravention of EC law by denying British pensioner residents healthcare cover, as well as being in de facto breach of national and international age discrimination legislation.

1. Is the Commission aware of this situation?

2. Is there a breach of EC law?

3. If so, will the Commission raise this with the Swedish authorities and what other measures will it take?

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

The Commission has learned of the situation described and will conduct an investigation in the way the Swedish authorities are applying the EC law. Together with the Member States within the Administrative Commission for the Coordination of Social Security Schemes, the Commission is also investigating the application of a habitual residence test in Sweden.

In general, pensioners are entitled to healthcare in most Member States, either because they are in receipt of a pension there or because the healthcare system is based on residence. As a rule, Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 ([1]) provides that the cost of a pensioner's healthcare is to be borne by the Member State which pays that person's pension. That Member State is also responsible for issuing the European Health Insurance Card for necessary healthcare during a temporary stay abroad and Form S1 to pensioners residing abroad for registration with the healthcare institution in the Member State of residence.

However, UK citizens not yet in receipt of a UK State pension and residing habitually in Sweden are subject to Swedish social security legislation, pursuant to Article 11(3)(e) of Regulation (EC) No 883/2004. Persons in receipt of a UK occupational pension scheme but not in receipt of a UK State pension do not qualify as pensioners under that regulation.

Article 4 of the regulation states that persons to whom the regulation applies 'shall enjoy the same benefits and be subject to the same obligations under the legislation of any Member States as the nationals thereof.' In the Commission's view, therefore, that equal treatment principle gives UK citizens not yet in receipt of a UK State pension and residing habitually in Sweden the right to enjoy the same benefits as Swedish nationals.

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

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-006269/12
à la Commission
Patrick Le Hyaric (GUE/NGL)
(25 juin 2012)

Objet: Camps de réfugiés palestiniens au Liban

Quelques jours après la mort de trois Palestiniens tués dans plusieurs incidents qui ont opposé l'armée libanaise à des habitants des camps — deux dans le camp de Nahr al-Bared (nord), et un à Aïn el-Helwé, le plus grand camp de réfugiés palestiniens au Liban, près de la ville de Saïda (sud) —, un rapport publié par l'American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA) révèle que les camps de réfugiés palestiniens au Liban sont considérés comme les pires camps de réfugiés de la région en terme de pauvreté, de santé, d'éducation et de conditions de vie.

Les Palestiniens réfugiés au Liban souffrent de la discrimination, de l'isolement, de la pauvreté, du chômage, de problèmes de logement et du manque de véritables écoles, hôpitaux et systèmes d'égouts.

Le Liban a le plus haut taux de réfugiés palestiniens vivant dans une extrême pauvreté. Deux réfugiés palestiniens sur trois survivent avec moins de 6 dollars par jour, indique le rapport.

Les réfugiés de Palestine au Liban sont spoliés de plusieurs droits de base. Il leur est par exemple interdit d'exercer une vingtaine de professions, et la plupart d'entre eux dépendent de l'aide de l'ONU pour survivre.

1. La Commission est-elle au courant de la situation des réfugiés palestiniens au Liban?

2. Quelles mesures ont été prises afin d'améliorer les conditions de vie dans les camps de réfugiés?

3. La Commission a-t-elle évoqué la question des réfugiés et leur droit au retour sur leur territoire avec les autorités israéliennes?

4. Quelles démarches l'Union européenne peut-elle entreprendre auprès du Liban afin de mettre fin aux conditions de vie inhumaines infligées aux réfugiés palestiniens?

Réponse donnée par M. Füle au nom de la Commission
(22 août 2012)

La Commission n'ignore rien de la situation des réfugiés palestiniens au Liban et l'UE a déployé des efforts considérables afin d'améliorer leur situation et leurs conditions de vie.

Le 13 juillet 2012, la Commission a annoncé un nouveau financement d'un montant de 20 millions d'euros pour la remise en état des infrastructures et l'éducation des réfugiés palestiniens au Liban. Des contrats seront passés pour un montant supplémentaire de 6 millions d'euros cette année, afin d'améliorer les infrastructures dans le camp de Aïn el-Helwé. De nombreux autres projets seront financés au titre de l'IEVP, de l'instrument de stabilité et de l'assistance humanitaire, 5 millions d'euros étant affectés à la protection, à la santé, à l'assistance alimentaire et à la remise en état des abris en 2012. En outre, l'UE coopère activement avec l'UNRWA au Liban afin de répondre au mieux aux besoins les plus urgents et de recueillir davantage de fonds auprès de la communauté internationale.

Sur le plan politique, l'UE participe activement au dialogue avec les autorités libanaises visant à améliorer les droits économiques et sociaux des réfugiés palestiniens vivant au Liban. Cette question figure au premier rang des priorités du nouveau plan d'action UE-Liban dans le cadre de la PEV, qui est en cours de négociation, et est régulièrement abordée au sein du sous-comité UE-Liban des Droits de l'homme, de la démocratie et de la gouvernance.

En ce qui concerne le droit au retour des réfugiés palestiniens, l'UE appelle de ses vœux une solution concertée, juste, équitable et réaliste à la question des réfugiés, et souligne qu'il relève de la question du statut définitif. Elle continue d'encourager les parties à négocier directement pour trouver une solution à toutes les questions liées au statut définitif.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006269/12
to the Commission
Patrick Le Hyaric (GUE/NGL)
(25 June 2012)

Subject: Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon

A few days after the deaths of three Palestinians in a series of clashes between the Lebanese army and residents of the refugee camps — two of them at Nahr al-Bared, in northern Lebanon, and one at Ain al-Hilweh, the largest Palestinian refugee camp in the country, close to the southern town of Sidon — a report published by American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA) revealed that the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon are considered to be the worst in the region in terms of poverty, health, education and living conditions.

Palestinian refugees in Lebanon suffer from discrimination, isolation, poverty, unemployment, housing problems and a lack of proper schools, hospitals and sewage systems.

Lebanon has the highest level of Palestinian refugees living in extreme poverty. According to the report, two out of three Palestinian refugees survive on less than six dollars a day.

Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon are deprived of a number of basic rights. For example, they are banned from exercising some 20 professions, and most of them depend on UN aid for survival.

1. Is the Commission aware of the situation of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon?

2. What measures have been adopted to improve living conditions in the refugee camps?

3. Has the Commission raised the issue of these refugees and their right to return home with the Israeli authorities?

4. What initiatives can the EU undertake in conjunction with Lebanon to improve the subhuman living conditions endured by Palestinian refugees in Lebanese camps?

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

The Commission is well aware of the situation of Palestine refugees in Lebanon and the EU has dedicated significant efforts to improving their situation and living conditions.

On 13 July 2012, the Commission announced new funding amounting EUR 20 million for infrastructure rehabilitation and education of Palestine refugees living in Lebanon. Additional EUR 6 million will be contracted this year to improve infrastructure in the Ain El Hilweh Camp. Numerous other projects are being funded through ENPI funds, the Instrument for Stability, and humanitarian assistance with EUR 5 million in 2012 for protection, health, food assistance and shelters' rehabilitation. Besides that, the EU is working actively with UNRWA in Lebanon to best address the most pressing needs and mobilise further funding from the international community.

On the political level, the EU is actively involved in the dialogue with the Lebanese authorities on improving economic and social rights of the Palestine refugees living in Lebanon. This issue is high on the priority list of the new EU-Lebanon ENP Action Plan, currently under negotiation, and is regularly discussed in the EU-Lebanon Subcommittee on Human Rights, Democracy and Governance.

Regarding the right of the Palestine refugees to return home, the EU calls for an agreed, just, fair and realistic solution to the refugee question, and underlines that it is a final status issue. The EU continues to urge the parties to find a solution to all final status issues through direct negotiations.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-006270/12
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(25 juin 2012)

Objet: Fournisseurs internationaux de la grande distribution

Au niveau national belge, notre ministre de l'économie a commandé une étude pour tenter de comprendre pourquoi les prix dans nos supermarchés étaient plus élevés que ceux de nos voisins (France, Pays-Bas et Allemagne).

L'étude révèle nettement que le marché intérieur européen est un système à sens unique. Les fournisseurs le voient comme un marché unifié dans lequel ils peuvent fabriquer et vendre leurs produits où bon leur semble mais dans lequel — par voie juridique ou très concrètement — ils n'autorisent pas les acheteurs à vendre ces articles partout aux consommateurs, ce marché restant strictement national. En d'autres termes, le marché unique est une réalité pour les producteurs, mais pas pour les consommateurs. C'est ainsi que les prix dans de plus petits pays comme le nôtre restent artificiellement onéreux.

Le marché européen des biens de consommation semble donc être segmenté de manière artificielle par l'industrie et, en particulier, par les grands groupes alimentaires (Procter & Gamble, Unilever, etc.) qui facturent des prix différents pour des produits identiques en fonction du pays dans lequel les commerçants sont établis. Cette différence peut atteindre 6 %.

Conclusion de l'étude, le marché européen n'est donc pas à proprement parler un marché unique pour les commerçants. Par exemple, une cannette de soda coûte au commerçant français (prix d'achat) 12 % de moins qu'au commerçant belge. Étant donné que les coûts d'achat représentent, en moyenne, 70 à 80 % du chiffre d'affaires, et qu'une partie des achats sont effectués par des groupes multinationaux, j'en déduis donc que les différences dans les coûts d'acquisition ne peuvent expliquer à elles seules plus de 2 % de la différence de prix.

Qui plus est, le problème ne se pose pas uniquement entre chaînes de distribution de pays différents; le problème se pose également pour les chaînes qui ont des établissements dans deux pays différents et qui sont obligées d'acheter des biens identiques à des conditions différentes.

1. La Commission est-elle consciente de ces défaillances de marché?

2. Que compte faire la Commission pour y remédier?

3. La création d'un régulateur européen ne dépendant d'aucune institution est elle envisagée?

Réponse donnée par M. Barnier au nom de la Commission
(17 août 2012)

La Commission a été informée de l'étude menée à la demande des autorités belges, avec lesquelles elle a pris contact afin de procéder à un examen conjoint de la question et d'y apporter des solutions.

Les conclusions de l'étude montrent que pour des produits identiques, les prix en Belgique sont supérieurs de 7 % à 10,6 % à ceux pratiqués dans les États membres voisins, et que ce pourcentage ne peut s'expliquer qu'à hauteur de 2 % tout au plus par une différence entre les coûts d'achat.

La pratique de prix plus élevés par les fournisseurs auprès des détaillants belges peut s'expliquer par diverses raisons ne constituant pas nécessairement une défaillance de marché. L'étude cite, par exemple, la taille des marchés, en ce sens que les détaillants qui commandent de plus grandes quantités obtiennent, à juste titre, de meilleures conditions.

La Commission a cependant lancé plusieurs initiatives en faveur d'un meilleur fonctionnement de la chaîne d'approvisionnement au détail. Faisant suite à la résolution du Parlement européen du 5 juillet 2011 sur un marché du commerce de détail plus efficace et plus équitable, la Commission prépare actuellement un plan d'action européen pour le commerce de détail, dont le but est d'aider le secteur du commerce de détail à fonctionner au maximum de ses capacités. En ce qui concerne le secteur alimentaire, la Commission a créé en 2010 le Forum à haut niveau sur l'amélioration du fonctionnement de la chaîne d'approvisionnement alimentaire, chargé en particulier de travailler à l'objectif que s'est fixé la Commission d'améliorer les relations entre entreprises et de favoriser la transparence dans la communication des prix de l'alimentaire. La Commission a également établi au sein de la direction générale de la concurrence une task force spécifique au secteur alimentaire. Celle-ci est chargée, dans le but d'empêcher le commerce parallèle, d'examiner toute plainte concrète concernant des abus de position dominante de la part des fournisseurs ou des ententes entre fournisseurs et distributeurs.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006270/12
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(25 June 2012)

Subject: International suppliers of major retailers

The Belgian Minister for Economic Affairs has commissioned a study at national level to determine why prices in Belgian supermarkets are higher than those in neighbouring countries (France, the Netherlands and Germany).

The study reveals that the European internal market is a one-way system. Suppliers see it as a unified market in which they are able to manufacture and sell their products wherever they see fit, but in which they do not allow buyers — whether on legal grounds or by express prohibition — to sell these same articles to all consumers, restricting them to their national market only. In other words, the single market exists for producers but not for consumers. This is why prices in small countries such as ours remain artificially high.

The European consumer goods market thus appears to be artificially fragmented by industry, and particularly so by the major food groups (Proctor & Gamble, Unilever, etc) which charge different prices for identical products depending on which country retailers are based in. This difference can be as high as 6%.

The study concludes that the European single market does not exist as such for retailers. For example, the cost to a French retailer of a canned soft drink is 12% less than to a Belgian retailer. Given that purchasing costs represent, on average, 70 to 80% of turnover, and that some purchases are carried out by multinational groups, I would calculate that the differences in purchasing price do not by themselves account for more 2% of the price difference.

Furthermore, this problem not only affects distribution chains in different countries, but also applies to chains with outlets in more than one country, which are forced to buy identical products on different terms.

1. Is the Commission aware of this market failure?

2. How does the Commission intend to correct it?

3. Does any plan exist to set up an independent European regulating body not tied to any institution?

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

The Commission has been informed of the study commissioned by the Belgian authorities and is in contact with them to discuss this issue and find solutions.

The study concluded that prices for identical products in Belgium are higher than in neighbouring Member States (7% to 10.6%). The study further found that differences in purchasing costs can explain at most 2% of these differences.

There can be many reasons for suppliers to charge higher prices to Belgian retailers, which do not necessarily constitute a market failure: for instance the study mentions the size of markets, since retailers that order larger quantities justifiably get better conditions.

However, the Commission works on promoting a better functioning of the retail supply chain through several initiatives. Further to the Parliament resolution of 5 July 2011 on a more efficient and fairer retail market, it is preparing a European Retail Action Plan to help the retail sector achieving its full potential. In the food sector, the Commission has also set up in 2010 the High Level Forum on the Better Functioning of the Food Supply Chain, which in particular supports the Commission's objective to improve business-to-business relationships as well as transparency in food price transmission. It has also set up a task force dedicated to the food sector within its Directorate General for Competition, which investigates any concrete complaint about abuses of a dominant position by suppliers or agreements between suppliers and distributors to prevent parallel trade.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006271/12
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(25 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Inefficienza della pubblica amministrazione italiana

Lo scorso 6 giugno 2012, nella sua relazione annuale per l'assemblea confederale Confartigianato Italia ha messo in evidenza un gravissimo problema: tra il 2000 e il 2012 la spesa pubblica del paese è aumentata di 250 miliardi alla straordinaria velocità di crescita di oltre 2 milioni di euro all'ora.

Il peso della spesa pubblica italiana è cresciuto in dodici anni del 5,5 % sul totale del PIL contro una media del 3,5 % per l'eurozona. Nel 2012 la pressione fiscale effettiva sui contribuenti in regola in Italia ha raggiunto la cifra record a livello mondiale del 55 % sul PIL. Nonostante queste preoccupanti statistiche, alcune regioni italiane continuano a comportarsi in modo poco virtuoso. La Regione Siciliana, ad esempio, che riunisce solo l'8 % della popolazione nazionale ha annunciato pochi giorni fa l'assunzione di altri 110 dipendenti che si aggiungono alle 1.600 nuove assunzioni deliberate nel dicembre 2011, arrivando a intestarsi quasi il 26 % di tutta la spesa relativa al personale delle regioni italiane nel loro complesso, il che si traduce per ciascun cittadino siciliano in un aggravio di spesa pari a 346 euro al giorno.

1. È la Commissione a conoscenza di questo fenomeno?

2. È essa in grado di fornire i dati relativi al peso della spesa pubblica sul totale del PIL negli altri Stati membri?

Risposta di Algirdas Šemeta a nome della Commissione
(29 agosto 2012)

La Commissione vigila attentamente sulla dinamica delle finanze pubbliche degli Stati membri e sulla loro compatibilità con il Patto di Stabilità e Crescita potenziato, il quale prescrive fra l'altro agli Stati membri di rispettare le disposizioni relative al tasso di aumento della spesa primaria. È quindi in linea di massima una prerogativa degli Stati membri gestire i propri bilanci.

Nell'ambito del semestre europeo 2012 il Consiglio ha raccomandato all'Italia di «perseguire un miglioramento duraturo dell'efficienza e della qualità della spesa pubblica mediante le previste revisioni della spesa». La Commissione accoglie quindi con favore l'impegno del governo per riequilibrare il consolidamento del bilancio sul fronte della spesa nel rispetto dello sforzo di riadeguamento programmato, e incoraggia ulteriori interventi mirati ad una spesa pubblica più efficiente.

Eurostat pubblica ogni anno le «Tabelle sinottiche di statistica del bilancio statale» ([1]). L'ultima edizione è stata pubblicata sul suo sito l'8 maggio 2012 (si veda il link sottostante). Per l'Europa a 27, l'Europa a 17 e tutti gli Stati membri (con l'aggiunta di Islanda, Norvegia e Svizzera) il rapporto spesa/prodotto interno lordo è riportato alla riga 10 delle tabelle. Nel 2011 esso corrispondeva a 49,4 % per l'eurozona, spaziando dal 38,2 % dell'Estonia al 55,9 % della Francia. L'Italia è molto prossima alla media dell'eurozona con un rapporto del 49,9 % ([2]).

([1]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-EK-12-001/EN/KS-EK-12-001-EN.PDF
([2]) Le tabelle complete per il periodo 1995-2011 sono disponibili all'indirizzo: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/government_finance_statistics/data.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006271/12
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(25 June 2012)

Subject: Inefficiency in public authorities in Italy

On 6 June 2012, in its annual report for the confederation's assembly, Confartigianato Italia drew attention to an extremely serious problem: between 2000 and 2012 public spending in Italy rose by EUR 250 billion, an extraordinary growth rate of over EUR 2 billion per hour.

Italy's public spending as a percentage of total GDP has risen by 5.5% in twelve years, compared to a euro area average of 3.5%. In 2012 the effective overall tax burden on recorded taxpayers in Italy hit a world record figure of 55% of GDP. Despite these worrying statistics, some regions in Italy continue to be less than ethical in their behaviour. In Sicily, for example, home to only 8% of the national population, the regional authority announced just a few days ago that it will hire a further 110 employees on top of the 1 600 new posts created in December 2011, bringing to almost 26% Sicily's share in total human resources expenditure for all the Italian regions put together. This equates to a rise in costs of EUR 346 per day for each member of the public in Sicily.

1. Is the Commission aware of these facts?

2. Is it able to provide data on the ratio of public spending to GDP in the other Member States?

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

The Commission closely monitors Member States' public finance developments and their compatibility with the strengthened Stability and Growth Pact which, *inter alia*, requires Member States to respect rules concerning the growth rates of their primary expenditure. It is then in principle the Member States' prerogative to manage their budget.

In the framework of the 2012 European Semester, the Council recommended Italy to 'Pursue a durable improvement of the efficiency and quality of public expenditure through the planned spending review'. The Commission thus welcomes the government's effort to rebalance fiscal consolidation towards expenditure while adhering to the planned adjustment effort, and encourages further action towards more efficient public spending.

Eurostat publishes every year 'Summary tables on Government finance statistics' ([1]). The latest edition was published on its website on 8 May 2012 (link below). For EU-27, EU17 and all Member States (+ Iceland, Norway and Switzerland), the ratio Expenditure/Gross Domestic Product is mentioned in line 10 of the tables. In 2011, it amounted to 49.4% for the Euro Area, from 38.2% for Estonia to 55.9% for France. Italy is very close to the EA17 average, at 49.9% ([2]).

([1]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-EK-12-001/EN/KS-EK-12-001-EN.PDF
([2]) The complete tables over 1995-2011 are available at: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/government_finance_statistics/data.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006272/12
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(25 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Scudo contro la pressione fiscale per tutelare cittadini e imprese europee

Dalla rielaborazione dei dati messi a disposizione da Eurostat e dai database della Commissione europea si evince che, tra il 2000 e il 2012, la spesa pubblica italiana è aumentata di 250 miliardi. In tema di spesa pubblica l'atteggiamento assunto dagli Stati membri è alquanto eterogeneo: mentre in Grecia Samaras annuncia il licenziamento di 150 000 dipendenti pubblici, nel Sud Italia si annunciano invece nuove assunzioni.

Considerato il particolare momento storico che, per la sopravvivenza dei sistemi economici, richiede urgentemente ai governi nazionali misure di austerity ma anche stimoli alla crescita; preso atto del continuo incremento di tasse e oneri burocratici che ricadono su cittadini e imprese proprio per sanare i deficit nazionali derivanti dalla cattiva gestione delle finanze pubbliche; considerati i dibattiti in tema di unificazione delle politiche fiscali europee e dei programmi di spending review può la Commissione precisare quanto segue:

1. ha intenzione di introdurre uno «scudo» che tuteli i cittadini e imprese da questo accanimento, impedendo agli Stati Membri di aumentare l'imposizione fiscale ed obbligandoli, invece, a ridurre la spesa pubblica, allorché sia dimostrabile l'evidente presenza di «sprechi»?

2. ha intenzione di monitorare attentamente per ciascuno Stato Membro i costi di produzione dei servizi pubblici che, comparati al tasso d'inflazione e al costo di produzione di quelli privati, allorché ingiustificatamente superiori, potrebbero costituire una prova incontrovertibile di sprechi e di un mal funzionamento di gestione?

3. ha intenzione di monitorare se i costi di gestione, dichiarati delle pubbliche amministrazioni e inseriti nei bilanci nazionali degli Stati Membri, stanti le condizioni specifiche del paese, rispetto ad una media di efficienza europea, superino una certa percentuale di tolleranza dando prova della presenza di sprechi?

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006811/12
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(9 luglio 2012)

Oggetto: Task force europea contro gli sprechi nella spesa pubblica

A seguito della politica di austerity dell'attuale governo italiano, la pressione fiscale sui cittadini del nostro paese è ormai pari al 55 % sul PIL. Di contro nel periodo 2000-2012 la spesa pubblica è aumentata di 250 miliardi di euro, con una crescita del 5,5 % rispetto alla media europea del 3,5 %.

Le misure di austerity sono probabilmente una scelta obbligata nell'attuale congiuntura storico-economica e rappresentano l'unica via per permettere agli Stati membri e all'Europa di uscire dalla crisi.

Considerato però che a fronte dei sacrifici richiesti ai cittadini e alle imprese non pare esservi un corrispettivo da parte dello Stato, in particolare con riferimento alla gestione non virtuosa e ottimizzata della spesa pubblica e delle risorse da parte delle pubbliche amministrazioni, può la Commissione valutare la creazione di una «Task force europea» in grado di monitorare l'efficienza dell'impiego dei flussi di denaro nelle pubbliche amministrazioni e valutarli a livello nazionale e regionale, per individuare le aree e i territori che dimostrano evidenti lacune gestionali e ingenti sprechi che devono poi essere ripagati da tutti i cittadini e le imprese attraverso l'aumento della pressione fiscale?

Risposta congiunta di Olli Rehn a nome della Commissione
(22 agosto 2012)

La verifica dei costi di produzione e di gestione dei servizi pubblici non rientra nelle competenze della Commissione nel contesto della sorveglianza multilaterale. Tuttavia la qualità della pubblica amministrazione è fondamentale ai fini della competitività economica e del benessere sociale, in particolare in tempi in cui gli Stati membri devono far fronte a crescenti pressioni sui bilanci pubblici.

Di conseguenza la Commissione ha adottato varie iniziative:

1. Nonostante la vastità e la complessità del concetto di qualità delle finanze pubbliche, i servizi della Commissione hanno cercato di reperire un'ampia serie di indicatori pertinenti e li hanno suddivisi in gruppi chiave, compresi gli indicatori relativi alla composizione, all'efficienza e all'efficacia della spesa. La metodologia seguita e i risultati ottenuti sono illustrati nell'edizione 2009 della relazione sulle finanze pubbliche nell'UEM ([1]).

2. In risposta ad una richiesta di maggiori informazioni e orientamenti pratici in merito alle norme comunitarie sui servizi di interesse generale (in particolare nell'ambito dei servizi sociali di interesse generale), la Commissione nel dicembre 2011 ha adottato un nuovo pacchetto in materia, che comprende:

— la comunicazione «Una disciplina di qualità per i servizi di interesse generale in Europa» http://ec.europa.eu/services_general_interest/docs/comm_quality_framework_it.pdf,

— le proposte della Commissione intese a modernizzare gli appalti pubblici europei ([2]),

— un nuovo pacchetto di aiuti di Stato (state aid package).

3. Più recentemente la Commissione ha adottato, il 30 maggio 2012, una relazione, nell'ambito del semestre europeo per il coordinamento delle politiche economiche, che illustra gli indicatori statistici fondamentali e valuta le principali sfide che aspettano gli Stati membri in relazione alla qualità della pubblica amministrazione ([3]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/publication15390_en.pdf
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/publicprocurement/modernising_rules/reform_proposals_en.htm
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/themes/26_public_administration.pdf
Maggiori dettagli saranno contenuti nella relazione riguardante la competitività, i risultati e le politiche degli Stati membri, prevista per il prossimo autunno.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006272/12
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(25 June 2012)

Subject: Shielding citizens and EU companies from tax burden

Following a revision of data held by Eurostat and the Commission's database, it can be deduced that between 2000 and 2012 public spending in Italy rose by EUR 250 billion. The positions taken by Member States in regard to public spending differ somewhat: in Greece Mr Samaras announced that 150 000 public employees were to be made redundant, while in the south of Italy the creation of nine new posts was reported instead.

At this particular moment in history national governments need to impose austerity measures if economic systems are to survive, but they also need to stimulate growth. To correct national deficits caused by poor management of public finances, taxes are being raised and bureaucracy increased, which hits the general public and businesses. Unification of the EU's fiscal policies and spending-review programmes is under debate.

1. In view of all the above, will the Commission introduce a 'shield' to protect the general public and businesses, by preventing Member States from relentlessly increasing taxation and forcing them instead to cut public spending when there is clear evidence of 'waste'?

2. Does the Commission intend to monitor public service production costs carefully in each Member State as, when these are unjustifiably high compared to the inflation rate and production costs for private services, this could constitute incontrovertible proof of waste and poor management?

3. Does the Commission intend to monitor public authorities' management costs — as certified and included in Member States' national budgets — in light of specific conditions in the country concerned to see whether, when compared to average levels of efficiency in the EU, they exceed a specific tolerance percentage, thereby providing proof of waste?

Question for written answer E-006811/12
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(9 July 2012)

Subject: European task force to clamp down on government extravagance

As a result of the austerity policy being pursued by the current Italian Government, the tax burden on Italian citizens now stands at 55% of GDP. Since the year 2000, public spending has risen by EUR 250 000 million, the rate of increase being 5.5% compared with the European average of 3.5%.

The austerity measures are arguably an inescapable necessity in the present economic circumstances and the only way in which the Member States and Europe can overcome the crisis.

Given, however, that citizens and industry are being asked to make sacrifices and the State is apparently doing nothing in return, especially as regards the wasteful, ineffectual use of public money and resources by government departments, does the Commission think that it should set up a European task force to monitor efficiency in public spending and make national and regional assessments in order to identify sectors and places in there are visible management shortcomings and instances of huge extravagance, causing damage which citizens collectively and industry have to make good by shouldering a larger tax burden?

Joint answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(22 August 2012)

The audit of public service production and management costs do not fall under the competencies of the Commission in the context of multilateral surveillance. However, the quality of the public administration is fundamental for economic competitiveness and societal well-being, notably at a time when Member States are facing increased pressures on public budgets.

Hence, the Commission has taken several initiatives.

1. Despite the broadness and complexity of the concept of quality of public finances, the Commission services have made an attempt to identify a large set of relevant indicators and summarise them into some key groups, including indicators for composition, efficiency and effectiveness of expenditure. The methodology used and the results are presented in the 2009 edition of the report on Public Finance in EMU ([1]).

2. In response to a demand for more practical information and guidance on Community rules relevant to services of general interest (notably in the field of social services of general interest), the Commission has adopted in December 2011 a new package on services of general interest, including:

— a communication on a Quality Framework for Services of General Interest in the EU;

— the Commission proposals to modernise the European public procurement ([2]);

— a new state aid package.

3. More recently, it adopted a report on 30 May 2012 in the context of the European Semester of economic coordination, which presents key statistical indicators and assesses the main challenges in the Member States as regards the quality of public administration ([3]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/publication15390_en.pdf
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/publicprocurement/modernising_rules/reform_proposals_en.htm
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/themes/26_public_administration.pdf
Further details will be included in the report Member States' competitiveness performance and policies this coming autumn.

(българска версия)

Въпрос с искане за писмен отговор E-006274/12
до Комисията
Димитър Стоянов (NI)
(25 юни 2012 г.)

Относно: Лишаване на българското малцинство в Молдова от правото на образование на майчин език

Представителите на българското малцинство в Молдова споделиха в свое обръщение до международната общност, че централната власт е изразила намерение да прекрати отпускането на финансиране за образование на български език в страната. Това дискриминационно отношение към малцинството не следва да бъде толерирано от страна на ЕС, особено в светлината на преговорите за сключване на споразумение за асоцииране с Молдова. В докладите на европейските институции относно политическия напредък на Молдова се сочи, че днес страната демонстрира воля за реформи, чрез които да приведе управленските си системи в съответствие с достиженията на правото на ЕС.

В тази връзка една от задачите на Делегацията на Европейския съюз в Молдова е да проследява тенденциите в страната, било то положителни или отрицателни. Макар че Делегацията е уведомена за проблема на българското малцинство по време на пресконференция във връзка с борбата срещу дискриминацията, председателят Дирк Шубел не се е противопоставил и не е заел позиция по решението на властите в Молдова да спрат финансирането за образование на български език в страната. От съществено значение е представителите на Европейския съюз да не подминават проблеми от естеството на горепосочения, а напротив — да се ангажират с тяхното разрешаване. В тази връзка се обръщам към Вас с въпросите:

1. Счита ли Комисията, че, спирайки финансирането за образование на български език в Молдова, централните власти в държавата дискриминират българското малцинство?

2. Ще се ангажира ли Делегацията на ЕС в Молдова активно с разрешаването на възникналия спор между местните власти и българското малцинство в Молдова?

3. Какви действия ще предприеме Комисията в рамките на преговорите за сключване на споразумение за асоцииране с Молдова, за да защити правото на българското малцинство на образование на майчин език?

Отговор, даден от върховния представител/заместник-председателя Аштън от името на Комисията
(7 август 2012 г.)

1.Този въпрос трябва да се разглежда в контекста на цялостното намаляване на средствата за молдовската образователна система в рамките на задълженията, поети от Република Молдова към МВФ. Начинът на извършване на реформата действително бе повод за загриженост по отношение на принципа, че всички граждани следва да се радват на равни възможности и качество на публичните услуги. Въпреки това след писмата, изпратени от българския президент Плевнелиев и българския министър-председател Борисов, и след задълбочен телефонен разговор между българския и молдовския министър на външните работи преди предстоящото посещение на министър-председателя Филат в София централните и местните власти на Молдова постигнаха на 17 април 2012 г. споразумение за възстановяване на финансирането за Taraclia raion, включително по отношение на училищата. Това споразумение бе последвано от споразумението за подновяване на финансирането за часовете по български език от следващата година.

2. ЕС и по-специално неговата делегация в Кишинеу наблюдават внимателно положението на всички малцинства в Република Молдова и имат готовност да изтъкнат своята загриженост, когато това е уместно. В този контекст въпросът за училищата на български език остава в дневния ред на политическия диалог между ЕС и Молдова.

3. В Споразумението за асоцииране ще бъде посочено зачитането на демократичните принципи, на правата на човека и на основните свободи като съществен елемент, т.е. елемент, чието нарушение може да бъде основание за едностранно суспендиране на споразумението от страна на ЕС. Следователно то ще представлява солидна правна рамка за защита на правата на малцинствата в Република Молдова.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006274/12
to the Commission
Dimitar Stoyanov (NI)
(25 June 2012)

Subject: Bulgarian minority in Moldova to be denied the right to mother-tongue education

In an appeal to the international community, representatives of the Bulgarian minority in Moldova have reported that the central authorities there intend to cut the funding for Bulgarian-language education in the country. This discriminatory attitude to the minority ought not to be tolerated by the European Union, especially in the light of the negotiations on an association agreement with Moldova. The EU institutions' reports on political progress in Moldova indicate that the country is currently demonstrating willingness to undertake reforms to bring its systems of governance into line with the EU legal *acquis*.

In this regard, one of the tasks of the EU Delegation to Moldova is to monitor trends there, be they positive or negative. Despite the fact that the Delegation was informed, at a press conference on the fight against discrimination, about the problem facing the Bulgarian minority, the Head of Delegation, Dirk Schuebel, has not taken any stand on the issue or expressed a view about the Moldovan authorities' decision to cut the funding for Bulgarian-language education in the country. It is fundamentally important that the EU representatives should not skirt round problems of this kind but that they should, on the contrary, commit to resolving them.

1. Does the Commission consider that, in cutting the funding for Bulgarian-language education in Moldova, the central authorities in the country are discriminating against the Bulgarian minority?

2. Will the EU Delegation to Moldova commit to resolving the dispute that has arisen between the authorities there and Moldova's Bulgarian minority?

3. What steps will the Commission take, in the context of the negotiations on an association agreement with Moldova, to defend the right of the Bulgarian minority to mother-tongue education?

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

1. This issue needs to be considered in the light of the overall cuts in funding of the Moldovan education system, under the IMF obligations of the Republic of Moldova. The way the reform was implemented gave indeed rise to concerns as regards the principle that all citizens should enjoy equal opportunities and quality of public services. However, following letters sent by Bulgaria's President Plevneliev and Prime Minister Borissov, and a comprehensive telephone discussion between the Bulgarian and Moldovan Foreign Ministers before the upcoming visit of Prime Minister Filat to Sofia, the Moldovan central and local authorities reached on 17 April 2012 agreement to restore funding of the Taraclai raion, including with respect to schools. This agreement was followed by the agreement to resume funding of Bulgarian language classes starting from next year.

2. The EU and in particular its Delegation in Chisinau are following closely the situation of all minorities in the Republic of Moldova and stand ready to raise its concerns where relevant. In this context, the issue of schools in the Bulgarian language stays on the agenda of the EU-Moldova political dialogue.

3. The Association Agreement will refer to respect for the democratic principles, human rights and fundamental freedoms as an essential element, i.e. an element whose infringement could be the basis for unilateral suspension of the Agreement by the EU. It will therefore constitute a solid legal frame for the protection of the rights of minorities in the Republic of Moldova.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-006275/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(25 Ιουνίου 2012)

Θέμα: Παράνομες ανασκαφές στα κατεχόμενα

Για 14 χρόνια συνεχίζονται οι παράνομες ανασκαφές στον κατεχόμενο αρχαιολογικό χώρο της Σαλαμίνας. Σύμφωνα με τον τουρκοκυπριακό Τύπο, η τελευταία φάση των παράνομων ανασκαφών άρχισε από τις 7 Ιουνίου και αναμένεται να ολοκληρωθεί μέχρι τις 19 Ιουλίου 2012. Οι ανασκαφές διεξάγονται από το λεγόμενο Πανεπιστήμιο Ανατολικής Μεσογείου σε συνεργασία με το Πανεπιστήμιο της Άγκυρας.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή και η αρμόδια Επίτροπος Πολιτισμού:

1. Προτίθενται να προβούν σε οποιεσδήποτε ενέργειες για να τερματίσουν τέτοιου είδους παράνομες ανασκαφές;

2. Γιατί ανέχονται τη σύληση της πολιτιστικής κληρονομιάς μιας χώρας μέλους της ΕΕ, χωρίς αντίδραση;

3. Γιατί δεν ενεργοποιούν μηχανισμούς προστασίας κατά της σύλησης του ευρωπαϊκού πολιτισμού της Κύπρου σε συνεργασία με την UNESCO;

Απάντηση του κ. Füle εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(8 Αυγούστου 2012)

Η Επιτροπή δεν έχει την εξουσία να παρέμβει στις ανασκαφές στις οποίες αναφέρεται το Αξιότιμο Μέλος.

Όσον αφορά την προστασία της πολιτιστικής κληρονομιάς στην Κύπρο, η Επιτροπή συνεργάζεται στενά με το αναπτυξιακό πρόγραμμα των Ηνωμένων Εθνών και την δικοινοτική τεχνική επιτροπή για την πολιτιστική κληρονομιά για να χρηματοδοτήσει έργα προτεραιότητας, τα οποία συμφωνήθηκαν και εγκρίθηκαν από τη δικοινοτική επιτροπή. Τον Μάιο του 2012, η Επιτροπή δρομολόγησε ένα έργο ύψους 2 εκατ. ευρώ για τον σκοπό αυτό, στο πλαίσιο του προγράμματος βοήθειας για την τουρκοκυπριακή κοινότητα. Η συμβολή της ΕΕ θα επιτρέψει τη διεξαγωγή επειγόντων έργων αποκατάστασης σε έξι μνημεία, συμπεριλαμβανομένου του Πύργου του Οθέλλου στην Αμμόχωστο. Τα μνημεία αποτελούν μέρος ενός καταλόγου 11 μνημείων πολιτιστικής κληρονομιάς μεγάλης σημασίας που έχουν προσδιοριστεί από τη δικοινοτική τεχνική επιτροπή πολιτιστικής κληρονομιάς. Η επιτροπή αυτή επέλεξε τα μνημεία με βάση διεξοδική μελέτη που πραγματοποιήθηκε το 2010, με την οποία καταρτίστηκε κατάλογος των μνημείων πολιτιστικής κληρονομίας της νήσου.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006275/12
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(25 June 2012)

Subject: Illegal excavations in occupied Cyprus

For 14 years illegal excavations have been taking place at the archaeological site of Salamis in occupied Cyprus. According to the Turkish Cypriot press, the most recent phase of the illegal excavations commenced on 7 June and is expected to end on 19 July 2012. The excavations are being conducted by the so-called Eastern Mediterranean University in cooperation with the University of Ankara.

In view of this:

1. Do the Commission and the Commissioner responsible for Culture intend to take action to end such illegal excavations?

2. Why are they passively allowing the cultural heritage of an EU Member State to be pillaged?

3. Why are they failing to take measures in cooperation with Unesco to protect the European cultural heritage in Cyprus from such depredations?

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

The Commission has no powers to interfere with the excavations that the Honourable Member refers to.

Regarding the protection of cultural heritage in Cyprus, the Commission is working in close cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the bi-communal Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage to fund priority projects, which have been agreed and approved by the bi-communal committee. In May 2012, the Commission launched a EUR 2 million project to this end, as part of the aid programme for the Turkish Cypriot community. The EU contribution will allow carrying out emergency support works on six sites, including the Othello Tower in Famagusta. The sites are part of a list of 11 cultural heritage sites of great importance identified by the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage. The committee selected the sites based on an in-depth study carried out in 2010, which established an inventory of cultural heritage sites on the island.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-006276/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(25 Ιουνίου 2012)

Θέμα: Συνέδριο των ευρωπαίων εκπαιδευτικών στα κατεχόμενα

Μεσούσης της Κυπριακής Προεδρίας του Συμβουλίου της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης, η Πανευρωπαϊκή Συνομοσπονδία Εκπαιδευτικών Οργανώσεων — ETUCE προγραμματίζει συνέδριο στα κατεχόμενα. Η ενέργεια αυτή χαρακτηρίζεται ιδιαίτερα προκλητική αφού α) το συνέδριο θα γίνει στην κατεχόμενη Αμμόχωστο, στο ξενοδοχείο «Salamis», στις 28 και 29 Σεπτεμβρίου και β) πραγματοποιείται κατά τη διάρκεια του εξαμήνου της Κυπριακής Προεδρίας, σε μια προσπάθεια εξίσωσης της Κυπριακής Δημοκρατίας με το ψευδοκράτος. Σύμφωνα με τον τουρκοκυπριακό Τύπο, το συνέδριο φέρει την ονομασία «3rd Party Violence project — final conference».

Ερωτάται η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή και η αρμόδια Επίτροπος για θέματα εκπαίδευσης:

1. Σε ποιες ενέργειες έχουν προβεί ή προτίθενται να προβούν για να τερματίσουν μια τόσο προκλητική ενέργεια, αφού η ETUCE είναι οργάνωση που χρηματοδοτείται από την Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση και παράνομα αξιοποιεί αυτή τη χρηματοδότηση για να διοργανώσει συνέδριο στην κατεχόμενη Κύπρο και μάλιστα σε ξενοδοχείο που ανήκει σε Ελληνοκύπριους;

2. Γιατί δεν λήφθηκαν όλα τα απαιτούμενα μέτρα αντίδρασης, καθώς τέτοιου είδους συνέδρια πραγματοποιούνται συνεχώς στην κατεχόμενη Κύπρο από το παράνομο τουρκικό καθεστώς;

Απάντηση του κ. Füle εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(4 Σεπτεμβρίου 2012)

Η Πανευρωπαϊκή Συνομοσπονδία Εκπαιδευτικών Οργανώσεων (ETUCE) έχει επιβεβαιώσει ότι το συνέδριο με την ονομασία «Third Party Violence Project — final conference» θα πραγματοποιηθεί στις Βρυξέλλες.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006276/12
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(25 June 2012)

Subject: European Teachers Convention in occupied Cyprus

During the Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the EU, the European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) is planning to hold a convention in occupied Cyprus. This can only be regarded as an act of provocation since (a) the convention will be held in occupied Famagusta in the 'Salamis Hotel' on 28 and 29 September, and (b) it will be held during the six months of the Cyprus Presidency, seeking to place the Republic of Cyprus and the self-styled Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus on the same footing. According to the Turkish Cypriot press, the convention will be known as the 'Third-Party Violence Project — Final Conference'.

In view of this:

1. What measures have been or will be taken by the Commission and the Commissioner responsible for education to end such acts of provocation, given that the ETUCE is a recipient of EU funding and is using it improperly to organise a convention in occupied Cyprus in a hotel belonging to Greek Cypriots?

2. Why have the necessary measures not been taken in response to this situation, given that such conventions are constantly being organised in occupied Cyprus by the illegal Turkish regime?

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

The European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) has confirmed that the final conference of the Third Party Violence Project will take place in Brussels.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-006280/12
aan de Commissie
Laurence J. A. J. Stassen (NI)
(25 juni 2012)

Betreft: Voorstel Commissie verplicht lidstaten tot jaarlijkse apk-keuring

Zaterdag 16 juni jl. zijn plannen uitgelekt om lidstaten te verplichten tot meer apk-keuringen ([1]). Die zouden in de toekomst standaard jaarlijks moeten plaatsvinden.

1. Is de Commissie het met de PVV eens dat Nederland prima zelf zijn apk-keuringen kan controleren en organiseren en dat Nederland daarbij niet door Europa bij de hand genomen hoeft te worden? Zo neen, waarom niet?

2. Is de Commissie het met de PVV eens dat Nederland uitstekende apk-controles heeft waar de EU nog wat van kan leren? Zo neen, waarom niet?

3. Is de Commissie het met de PVV eens dat Europese regelgeving voor autokeuringen volstrekt overbodig is voor Nederland? Zo neen, waarom niet?

4. Is de Commissie het met de PVV eens dat het in deze zware economische tijden onacceptabel is dat Europese regelgeving automobilisten verder op kosten jaagt? Zo neen waarom niet?

Antwoord van de heer Kallas namens de Commissie
(27 juli 2012)

Willen wij tot een veiliger vervoerssysteem en tot een halvering van het aantal verkeersdoden komen, dan moet de gehele EU, en dus ook Nederland, maatregelen nemen ter verbetering van de verkeersveiligheid. Volgens Nederlands onderzoek (SWOV Fact Sheets ([2])) is niet minder dan 6 % van de ongevallen die lichamelijk letsel of dodelijke ongevallen veroorzaken, te wijten aan technische oorzaken. Het voorstel van de Commissie om minimumnormen voor autokeuringen in Europa vast te stellen, zal naar schatting 1 200 levens redden.

([1]) http://www.spiegel.de/auto/aktuell/jaehrlicher-tuev-fuer-aeltere-autos-soll-laut-eu-pflicht-werden-a-839229.html
([2]) http://www.swov.nl/rapport/Factsheets/UK/FS_MOT.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006280/12
to the Commission
Laurence J.A.J. Stassen (NI)
(25 June 2012)

Subject: Commission proposal compelling Member States to perform annual roadworthiness tests

On Saturday, 16 June 2012, plans were leaked under which Member States would be required to perform more roadworthiness tests on private cars ([1]). In future the standard procedure would be to have them performed annually.

1. Does the Commission agree with the PVV that the Netherlands is perfectly capable of regulating and organising its own roadworthiness tests and that the Netherlands does not need Europe to issue instructions to it on this subject? If not, why not?

2. Does the Commission agree with the PVV that the Netherlands has excellent roadworthiness tests, from which indeed the EU itself could learn a certain amount? If not, why not?

3. Does the Commission agree with the PVV that European regulation of roadworthiness tests is completely superfluous in the case of the Netherlands? If not, why not?

4. Does the Commission agree with the PVV that in these economically difficult times it is unacceptable for European regulation to further drive up motorists' costs? If not, why not?

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

In an effort to reach the objective to provide for a safer transport system and to further half the number of road fatalities, the entire EU, including the Netherlands, has to take measures to further improve road safety. According to Dutch research (SWOV Factsheet ([2])), as much as 6% of road accidents causing personal injuries or fatalities are due to technical reasons. The Commission proposal to set minimum standards for road-worthiness testing in Europe is estimated to save 1 200 lives.

([1]) http://www.spiegel.de/auto/aktuell/jaehrlicher-tuev-fuer-aeltere-autos-soll-laut-eu-pflicht-werden-a-839229.html
([2]) http://www.swov.nl/rapport/Factsheets/UK/FS_MOT.pdf

(българска версия)

Въпрос с искане за писмен отговор E-006281/12
до Комисията
Мария Неделчева (PPE)
(25 юни 2012 г.)

Относно: Орловата папрат като проблем в естествените ливадни площи в планинските райони, борбата с нея и усвояването на почистените площи

Естествените ливади и пасища, разположени в предпланинските и планинските райони, имат решаващо значение за изхранването на животните в тези райони. Голяма част от тях са силно заплевени с нежелана храстовидна и плевелна растителност, включително и опасни растителни видове, един от които е орловата папрат.

По приблизителни данни заплевените с орлова папрат площи са над 2 000 000 дка, от които 800 000 дка са силно заплевени, като тези площи се увеличават ежегодно с 2 %. Безпрецедентното глобално разпространение на орловата папрат представлява голям екологичен и икономически проблем. Той се състои в загуба на земя, която плевелът заема много бързо, превръщайки площите в пустеещи. Вредата от плевела е многостранна. От една страна, той потиска и измества полезния тревостой. От друга страна, той е токсичен за домашните животни, предизвиква редица заболявания по тях, като е потенциално опасен и за хората, които консумират животинска продукция. Държавните ловни стопанства, както и частните стопани, губят хиляди тонове ливадно сено.

Борбата с орловата папрат, а и с другата плевелна растителност, е изключително трудоемка, съпроводена с влагането на много ръчен труд, бавен и продължителен процес. Почистването на заплевените ливадни площи, обаче, ще допринесе за увеличаването на добивите от тях, респективно до рязкото нарастване на производството на месо, мляко, вълна и кожи.

1. Какви мерки може да предприеме Комисията съвместно с държавите членки, за да даде възможност на държавните горски и лесовъдни стопанства (ДГС/ДЛС), както и на общините, да се справят ефективно с проблема?

2. Предвижда ли новата финансова рамка на ОСП за периода 2014-2020 г. увеличаване на финансирането за единица площ на ДГС/ДЛС и на общините, за борба с проблема с орловата папрат и плевелната растителност, която изисква значителни средства?

Отговор, даден от г-н Чолош от името на Комисията
(7 август 2012 г.)

Предложението на Комисията за подпомагане на развитието на селските райони през новия програмен период от 2014 до 2020 г. ([1]) не предвижда нарочна мярка за преодоляване на проблема с инвазивните видове като орловата папрат.

То, обаче, съдържа мярка, насочена към превантивни действия и възстановяване на горския потенциал, нарушен от природни бедствия, включително вредители и болести. За да бъде това подпомагане допустимо, трябва да се изпълнят специфични условия, определени в предложението.

Освен това както настоящата, така и бъдещата рамка за развитие на селските райони съдържат мерки за подпомагане на доброволни и надхвърлящи законовите задължения практики на земеделие и управление на горите (агроекологични и горскоекологични мерки), насочени към защитата и подобряването на околната среда и свързаните с нея екосистеми. Тези мерки могат да се използват за прилагането на екологосъобразни управленски практики, които, в крайна сметка, ще допринесат да се предотврати разпространението на орловата папрат.

([1]) COM(2011) 627 окончателен/2.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006281/12
to the Commission
Mariya Nedelcheva (PPE)
(25 June 2012)

Subject: The problem of bracken in natural mountain pastures, combating bracken and using land cleared of bracken

Mountain and hillside meadows and natural pastures are vitally important animal grazing areas, many of which have been seriously overgrown by invasive bushes and plants, including harmful plants such as bracken.

Bracken is estimated to have invaded over 2 000 000 decares of grazing land, of which 800 000 are badly overgrown, and that area is increasing by 2% each year. The unprecedented pervasive spread of bracken constitutes a major ecological and economic problem. Land is being lost to bracken, which very quickly takes over pastures and stops anything else growing. This invasive plant poses manifold threats. On the one hand, it suppresses and supplants good grasses, while on the other hand it is poisonous to domestic animals, causing a range of illnesses, and is potentially dangerous to consumers of animal products. State hunting areas, as well as private farmers, are being deprived of thousands of tonnes of hay.

Combating bracken and other invasive plants is particularly labour-intensive, and entails a lot of long, slow manual work. Were pastures overgrown with bracken to be cleared, however, this would increase the yield from them, and hence lead to a swift rise in meat, milk, wool and hide production.

1. What joint action can the Commission take with the Member States to enable state forestry and hunting areas, as well as municipal councils, to tackle this problem effectively?

2. Does the CAP under the new financial framework for 2014-2020 provide for an increase in per unit funding granted to state forestry and hunting areas and municipal councils to combat the problem of bracken and other invasive plants, which calls for substantial investment?

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

The Commission Proposal on support for rural development for the new programming period 2014-2020 ([1]) does not provide for an explicit measure addressing the problem of invasive species such as bracken.

However, it includes a measure aimed at preventing and restoring forest potential damaged by natural disasters including pests and diseases. Specific conditions defined in the proposal have to be met to make such a support eligible.

Furthermore, both the current and future framework for rural development include measures supporting voluntary and going beyond the legal obligations farming and forestry management practices (agri-environment and forest-environment measures) aimed at protecting and enhancing the environment and related ecosystems. These measures can be used for applying environmentally sound management practices which, as an effect, would help preventing a spread of bracken.

([1]) COM(2011)627 final/2.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006282/12
to the Commission
Nigel Farage (EFD)
(25 June 2012)

Subject: Liability for debts of the ECB in the event of insolvency

In the event of the European Central Bank becoming insolvent, would every Member State be liable for a proportion of the indebtedness of the ECB, regardless of whether it was a member of the eurozone or not? Under what provisions of the Treaties and/or the Statute of the Central Bank (Protocol No 4 to the Treaties) would such liability be incurred?

If all Member States are liable for a share of the debts of the European Central Bank were it to become insolvent, how would the individual shares of the indebtedness of the Member States be calculated and in accordance with what provisions of the Treaties and/or the Statute of the Central Bank (Protocol No 4 to the Treaties)?

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

Article 33.2 of the Protocol No 4 to the Treaties provides that, in the event of a loss incurred by the ECB, the shortfall may be offset against the general reserve fund of the ECB and, if necessary, following a decision by the Governing Council, against the monetary income of the relevant financial year in proportion and up to the amounts allocated to the National Central Banks in accordance with their paid up shares in the ECB's capital. The non-euro area National Central Banks are not entitled to receive any share of the distributable profits of the ECB, nor are they liable to fund any losses of the ECB.

The capital of the ECB comes from the National Central Banks of all EU Member States. Article 28.1 of the Protocol provides that the capital may be increased as may be decided by the ECB's Governing Council, within the limits and under the conditions set by the Council. The ECB increased its subscribed capital once, in 2010 (see the ECB's press release of 16 December 2010, http://www.ecb.int/press/pr/date/2010/html/pr101216_2.en.html).

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-006283/12
à la Commission
Constance Le Grip (PPE)
(25 juin 2012)

Objet: Remise en cause des aides d'État à l'industrie cinématographique

À la suite de la consultation lancée le 14 mars dernier au sujet des aides d'État dans le secteur cinématographique, la Commission européenne s'apprête à remettre en cause le système d'aides à l'industrie cinématographique mis en place par plusieurs pays européens, dont la France.

Il s'agit d'un projet inquiétant dans la mesure où il ne semble pas s'appuyer sur les critères pertinents qui le justifieraient.

La Commission européenne estime que les aides versées par la France aux nombreuses productions cinématographiques, principalement financées par la taxe payée par les distributeurs de télévision, sont incompatibles avec l'article 107 TFUE, qui encadre le versement des aides d'État par rapport aux règles de concurrence au sein du marché intérieur européen, et qui détermine certaines dérogations, notamment au paragraphe d), lequel précise que «les aides destinées à promouvoir la culture et la conservation du patrimoine, quand elles n'altèrent pas les conditions des échanges et de la concurrence dans l'Union dans une mesure contraire à l'intérêt commun», sont compatibles avec les règles de concurrence du marché intérieur.

Le but de ces aides versées par la France n'est en rien d'altérer les conditions des échanges dans l'Union, mais justement d'œuvrer à l'intérêt commun de la culture cinématographique européenne: de nombreux films européens sont produits chaque année grâce aux aides françaises et diffusés dans toute l'Europe.

1. La Commission prend-elle en considération le risque qu'avec l'interdiction de ces aides, nombre de ces productions ne puissent pas voir le jour? Est-ce compatible avec la volonté de la Commission de promouvoir la diversité culturelle dans l'Union européenne?

2. La Commission est-elle consciente de la spécificité du secteur de l'industrie cinématographique, et a-t-elle fait des études d'impact d'une telle mesure, notamment en termes d'emplois menacés?

3. La Commission juge-t-elle pertinent le fait de réduire les aides accordées à l'industrie cinématographique dans un contexte économique difficile pour le secteur de la culture, menant plutôt à une baisse des budgets qui lui sont alloués?

Réponse donnée par M. Almunia au nom de la Commission
(30 juillet 2012)

La Commission est consciente que les films jouent un rôle important lorsqu'il s'agit de forger l'identité culturelle et la diversité de l'Europe. C'est dans cette optique qu'elle réexamine les règles actuellement en vigueur concernant les aides d'État pour la production de films qui expirent à la fin de cette année. Cependant la Commission n'a pas estimé que les subsides accordés par la France à la production de films étaient incompatibles avec l'article 107, paragraphe 3, point d), du TFUE. Au contraire, elle a explicitement approuvé les régimes d'aides français concernés, le dernier en date par décision du 20 décembre 2011 dans l'affaire d'aide d'État SA.33370 ([1]).

Comme l'indique le document de consultation publié le 14 mars 2012, auquel l'Honorable Parlementaire fait référence, la Commission est consciente de la nature singulière de l'industrie du film et de la nécessité de soutenir, par des aides publiques, le secteur cinématographique européen. La Commission n'entend pas interdire les aides à la production de films.

Le document de consultation de la Commission ne propose pas non plus de réduire les aides versées à l'industrie cinématographique. Il suggère plutôt de maintenir leur niveau actuel voire même de permettre leur augmentation pour les cas de coproductions financées par plus d'un État membre.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/register/.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006283/12
to the Commission
Constance Le Grip (PPE)
(25 June 2012)

Subject: Review of the arrangements for the provision of state aid to the film industry

In the light of the results of the consultation process launched on 14 March 2012, the Commission is preparing to review the arrangements for the provision of state aid to the film industry which are employed by a number of European countries, including France.

This is a worrying step, in that it does not seem to have been properly thought out.

The Commission takes the view that the subsidies paid by France to many film projects, which are largely financed from the tax levied on television distribution companies, are incompatible with Article 107 TFEU, which stipulates that the payment of state aid must be consistent with the rules governing competition within the internal market and that certain derogations, including 'aid to promote culture and heritage conservation where such aid does not affect trading conditions and competition in the Union to an extent that is contrary to the common interest' (Article 107(3)(d)) are compatible with the internal market.

In paying the subsidies, France is not seeking to affect trading conditions in the Union, but in fact to promote 'the common interest' by supporting the European film industry: the French subsidies help to ensure that many European films are produced and distributed throughout Europe every year.

1. Does the Commission recognise that banning this form of aid may well reduce the number of films produced in the European Union? Is this consistent with its stated aim of promoting cultural diversity in the EU?

2. Is the Commission aware of the specific nature of the film industry and has it carried out studies to determine the impact of such a ban, in particular in terms of the jobs which it would place at risk?

3. Does the Commission feel that it makes sense to reduce the aid granted to the film industry, thereby cutting back even further the budgets available for film productions, at a time when the arts sector is already starved of funding?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(30 July 2012)

The Commission is aware that films play an important role in shaping Europe's cultural identity and diversity. With this in mind, it is reviewing the current rules on state aid to film production, which expire at the end of this year. However, it has not expressed the view that the subsidies paid by France to film production are incompatible with Article 107(3)d TFEU. On the contrary, it has explicitly approved the relevant French aid schemes, the last time by decision of 20 December 2011 in state aid case SA.33370 ([1]).

As already set out in the document published for consultation on 14 March 2012, to which the Honourable Member refers, the Commission is aware of the specific nature of the film industry and of the need for public support of the European film sector. It is not the intention of the Commission to ban aid for film production.

Neither did the Commission propose to reduce the aid granted to the film industry in the consultation document. Rather, it suggested maintaining the current level and even allowing higher levels in the case of co-productions financed by more than one Member State.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/register/.

(Leagan Gaeilge)

Ceist i gcomhair freagra scríofa E-006284/12
chuig an gCoimisiún
Liam Aylward (ALDE)
(25 Meitheamh 2012)

Ábhar: Saothar Éigeantais Leanaí san Úisbéiceastáin

I dtuarascáil bhliantúil na heagraíochta 'Human Rights Defenders' don bhliain 2012 tá tuairisc ar sháruithe ar chearta an duine san Úisbéiceastáin agus ar an gciapadh atá á dhéanamh ar leanaí agus ar ghníomhaithe ar son chearta an duine sa tír. Tá seacht scannán eisithe ag an Lárionad Eorpach um Chearta Bunreachtúla agus Cearta an Duine (an ECCHR as Béarla), a léiríodh le cabhair ó ocht n-eagraíocht neamhrialtasacha éagsúla agus a thugann fianaise shaineolach maidir le sáruithe ar chearta an duine san Úisbéiceastáin.

1. Chuige sin, cad iad na bearta atá i bhfeidhm ag an gCoimisiún le cinntiú go gcloíonn an Úisbéiceastáin lena dualgais de réir an dlí idirnáisiúnta maidir le saothar leanaí in earnáil an chadáis?

2. Cén fhreagairt atá ag an gCoimisiún ar a bhfuil i dtuarascáil bhliantúil na heagraíochta 'Human Rights Defenders'?

Freagra ón Ardionadaí/Leas-Uachtarán Ashton thar ceann an Choimisiúin
(7 Lúnasa 2012)

Thar na blianta choimeád an AE súil ghéar ar staid chearta an duine, lena n-áirítear saothar éigeantais leanaí, san Úisbéiceastáin. Is ceist shonrach an tsaothair éigeantais leanaí a bhí thar a bheith tábhachtach don AE riamh anall. Thapaigh an AE gach deis chun a imní maidir le saothair éigeantais leanaí a chur in iúl, bíodh sin mar chuid den idirphlé struchtúrtha faoi chearta an duine nó mar chuid d'idirphlé polaitiúil, lena n-áirítear ar an leibhéal is airde. Is féidir leis an bhFeisire Onórach a bheith cinnte de go leanfar ag déanamh amhlaidh sa todhchaí.

Maidir le saothar éigeantais leanaí, leagann an AE béim mhór ar an gceist seo, rud a chuidigh go mór le tús a chur an athuair leis an bplé idir an Eagraíocht Idirnáisiúnta Saothair (EIS) agus an Úisbéiceastáin. De réir mar a thuigimid an scéal, táthar ag leanúint den phlé idir an dá pháirtí d'fhonn bealaí agus modhanna a aithint chun go bhféadfaidh an EIS misean faireacháin a dhéanamh san Úisbéiceastáin agus chun measúnú a dhéanamh ar an staid sa tír sin ó thaobh saothair éigeantais leanaí. Táimid ag tacú go gníomhach leis an bpróiseas seo.

Idir an dá linn, bhí an AE gníomhach freisin ag cur comhair chun cinn mar fhreagairt ar an bhfadhb. Táthar tar éis clár um fhorbairt tuaithe agus nuachóiriú talmhaíochta, ar chostas EUR 10 milliún, a cheapadh chuige sin, agus ba cheart go lainseálfar go luath é.

Sna himthosca sin, leanfaidh ceist an tsaothair leanaí de bheith an-tábhachtach sa straitéis um Chearta an Duine a glacadh le déanaí ar leibhéal an AE i leith na hÚisbéiceastáine.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006284/12
to the Commission
Liam Aylward (ALDE)
(25 June 2012)

Subject: Forced child labour in Uzbekistan

In its account of human rights violations in Uzbekistan the Human Rights Defenders' 2012 annual report describes the harassment to which children and human rights activists are being subjected. The European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR) has released seven films, produced with the aid of eight NGOs, in which experts testify to human rights violations in Uzbekistan.

1. What steps is the Commission taking to ensure that Uzbekistan fulfils its obligations under international law regarding child labour in the cotton sector?

2. How does the Commission respond to the annual report of the Human Rights Defenders' organisation?

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

Over the years, the EU has been following the situation of human rights, including forced child labour, in Uzbekistan with a lot of attention. The particular issue of forced child labour is a question to which the EU has always attached the utmost importance. It has raised concerns on forced child labour on every occasion, be it as part of the structured dialogue on human rights or under political dialogue, including at the highest level. The Honourable Member can be reassured that it will continue to do so in the future.

As regards forced child labour, the EU's insistence on this issue has already greatly contributed to the recent resumption of talks between the ILO and Uzbekistan. Discussions between the two parties, we understand, continue with a view to finding the ways and means of an ILO monitoring mission to Uzbekistan and assess the situation of forced child labour. We are actively supporting this process.

Meanwhile, the EU has also been active to promote responses to this problem in terms of cooperation. A EUR 10 million programme on Rural development and agriculture modernisation has been designed to this effect, and should be launched shortly.

In such conditions, the issue of child labour will also continue to feature prominently in the Human Rights strategy for Uzbekistan recently adopted at EU level.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006285/12
alla Commissione
Aldo Patriciello (PPE)
(25 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Rischi della rete per i minori

Il progetto di ricerca EU Kids Online finanziato dal Safer Internet Programme della Commissione europea, ha analizzato le pratiche d'uso e i rischi connessi all'esperienza online da parte dei minori svolgendo un'indagine in 25 paesi europei, su un campione di 25 142 bambini e adolescenti di età compresa tra 9 e 16 anni.

Dalla ricerca è emerso che i rischi più diffusi riguardano contenuti generati da altri utenti che incitano alla violenza e al razzismo o a comportamenti autolesionistici come l'anoressia. Seguono poi i rischi di carattere sessuale: da un lato contenuti pornografici, dall'altro, il sexting ovvero lo scambio di messaggi a contenuto sessualmente esplicito.

Si richiama l'attenzione della Commissione su «Chatroulette», un sito web che in maniera del tutto causale mette in contatto persone di tutto il mondo attraverso una chat on line supportata anche da audio e video. Il meccanismo su cui si basa è quello della roulette russa ovvero un incontro con una persona sconosciuta. In qualsiasi momento l'utente può lasciare la chat corrente avviando un'altra connessione causale cliccando semplicemente sul tasto NEXT della chat. Non occorre nessun tipo di registrazione, neanche la scelta del nick name, per cui possono accedere al servizio anche i minorenni.

I pericoli di questa chat sono molti. In primo luogo all'utente non è dato sapere in nessuna maniera chi si troverà di fronte, quindi potrebbe ritrovarsi all'improvviso qualcosa di non gradito come adescatori (soprattutto nel caso di minori), scherzi di cattivo gusto o peggio ancora veri e propri casi di pornografia.

Alla luce di quanto detto, può la Commissione far sapere:

1. considerato che l'età media in cui si inizia a navigare è 7 anni in Svezia e Danimarca, 8 anni negli altri paesi nordici e 10 in Grecia, Italia e Portogallo, come si possono difendere gli utenti più giovani dalle possibili minacce online;

2. come si può sensibilizzare l'opinione pubblica e i genitori ai rischi per i più piccoli connessi all'esperienza online e agli eventuali benefici o danni che ne conseguono?

Risposta di Neelie Kroes a nome della Commissione
(25 luglio 2012)

La Commissione concorda nel ritenere che i bambini e i ragazzi debbano ricevere le informazioni e gli strumenti giusti per sfruttare al massimo internet. La convergenza delle tecnologie e dei loro usi rende il settore TIC maggiormente responsabile nel fornire prodotti e servizi che proteggano i bambini on-line e li rendano autonomi e consapevoli.

Le misure di protezione devono procedere di pari passo con la responsabilizzazione e l'istruzione. La Strategia europea per un'internet migliore per i ragazzi ([1]) sottolinea l'importanza di dare ai bambini le competenze e gli strumenti necessari per beneficiare pienamente e in modo sicuro del mondo digitale. Uno degli obiettivi principali è incrementare le azioni di sensibilizzazione e formazione sulla sicurezza on-line in tutte le scuole dell'UE al fine di sviluppare l'alfabetizzazione digitale e mediatica dei bambini.

La Commissione ha inoltre riunito le principali aziende del settore della tecnologia e della comunicazione con l'intento di formare una nuova coalizione per rendere internet migliore e più sicuro per i bambini. La coalizione fornirà a bambini e genitori strumenti di protezione chiari e coerenti per trarre il massimo vantaggio dal mondo del web ([2]). Più precisamente, la coalizione si è impegnata a intervenire nelle cinque aree seguenti: 1) Strumenti di segnalazione semplici e affidabili, 2) Impostazioni di privacy consone all'età, 3) Maggiore utilizzo della classificazione dei contenuti, 4) Disponibilità più diffusa e maggior impiego dei controlli parentali e 5) Rimozione effettiva di materiale pedopornografico.

([1]) http://preprod.europa.cnect.cec.eu.int/information_society/activities/sip/policy/index_en.htm
([2]) http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/1485&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en.

Il Safer Internet Programme ([3]) sostiene iniziative di sensibilizzazione e di lotta a contenuti e comportamenti on-line illegali e nocivi, attraverso azioni per rendere i giovani, i genitori, gli educatori e gli insegnanti più consapevoli dei potenziali rischi che i giovani potrebbero incontrare in rete, nonché renderli capaci di difendersi.

([3]) http://preprod.europa.cnect.cec.eu.int/information_society/activities/sip/policy/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006285/12
to the Commission
Aldo Patriciello (PPE)
(25 June 2012)

Subject: Online dangers for minors

The EU research project Kids Online, which is funded by the Commission's Safer Internet Programme, has carried out a survey of 25 142 children and adolescents between the ages of 9 and 16 from 25 European countries with a view to analysing minors' online habits and the dangers they face when online.

The research has shown that the most common dangers relate to content generated by other users which incites people to violence and racism and to forms of behaviour detrimental to young people's own health, such as anorexia. These are followed by dangers of a sexual nature: pornographic content and sexting, that is to say exchanges of sexually explicit messages.

I would like to draw the Commission's attention to 'Chatroulette', a website which, on an entirely casual basis, brings people throughout the world together in an audio and video chat room. It involves a series of meetings with unknown persons and works on the same principle as Russian roulette: at any time the user can interrupt the chat session and switch to another partner simply by clicking on the 'NEXT' button. No form of registration is required, and users are not even asked to choose a nickname, so that minors can easily access the site.

The dangers involved are many: most importantly, users have absolutely no idea who they are chatting with, with the result that they may suddenly find themselves confronted with tasteless jokes or, even worse, pornography or objectionable phenomena such as grooming (in particular in the case of minors).

1. Given that the average age at which children start to surf the Internet is seven in Sweden and Denmark, eight in the other Nordic countries and 10 in Greece, Italy and Portugal, how can very young Internet users be protected against the dangers they may encounter online?

2. How can the public and parents be made aware of the dangers faced by young children online and of the ways in which Internet use can be beneficial or harmful?

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

The Commission agrees that children and young people have to be provided with the right tools and information in order to make the most of the Internet. The convergence of technologies and its uses, places a greater responsibility on the ICT industry to provide products and services that protect and empower children online.

Protection measures need to work in conjunction with empowerment and education, and the European strategy for a better Internet for children ([1]) outlines the importance of giving children the digital skills and tools they need to benefit fully and safely from the digital world. One of the main goals is to scale up awareness raising and teaching of online safety in all EU schools to develop children's digital and media literacy.

The Commission has also put together the leading top tech & media companies to form a new Coalition to make a better and safer Internet for children. The Coalition will provide both children and parents with transparent and consistent protection tools to make the most of the online world ([2]). Concretely, the Coalition has agreed to take action in the following five areas ([3]): 1) simple and robust reporting tools, 2) age-appropriate privacy settings, 3) wider use of content classification, 4) wider availability and use of parental control and 5) effective takedown of child abuse material.

The Safer Internet Programme ([4]) supports awareness raising initiatives and actions to fight illegal and harmful online content and conduct, through actions to make young people, parents, carers and teachers more aware about the potential risks young people may encounter online and to empower them to stay safe.

([1]) http://preprod.europa.cnect.cec.eu.int/information_society/activities/sip/policy/index_en.htm
([2]) http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/1485&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/sip/docs/ceo_coalition_statement.pdf
([4]) http://preprod.europa.cnect.cec.eu.int/information_society/activities/sip/index_en.htm

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-006286/12
aan de Commissie
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(25 juni 2012)

Betreft: Hof zet streep door Nederlandse leges voor verblijfsvergunning (vervolgvraag)

Op 21 juni 2012 heeft commissaris Malmström namens de Commissie antwoord gegeven op schriftelijke vraag E-004397/2012. Daarin schrijft zij: „In zijn arrest in zaak C-508/10 oordeelt het Hof van Justitie dat de leges overdreven en onevenredig hoog zijn en als zodanig een belemmering kunnen vormen voor de uitoefening van de bij Richtlijn 2003/109/EG toegekende rechten. Door deze leges van onderdanen van derde landen te vragen, is Nederland de krachtens Richtlijn 2003/109/EG op hem rustende verplichtingen niet nagekomen. De betrokken lidstaat is op grond van het EU-recht verplicht om onverwijld uitvoering te geven aan het arrest van het Hof."

1. Kan de Commissie aangeven op welke wijze de hoogte van de Nederlandse leges een belemmering zou vormen voor de uitvoering van de bij Richtlijn 2003/109/EG toegekende rechten? In concreto: met welk(e) artikel(en) in Richtlijn 2003/109 zouden de Nederlandse leges in strijd zijn? Immers, in de betreffende richtlijn wordt het woord „lege(s)" überhaupt niet genoemd.

2. Is de Commissie met de PVV van mening dat het volledig subjectief is om de betreffende leges „overdreven en onevenredig hoog" te noemen en dat, in plaats daarvan, objectief de kostprijs van de leges ter kennis moet worden genomen? Is de Commissie in dit licht met de PVV van mening dat de hoogte van de Nederlandse leges, die simpelweg overeenkomstig de kostprijs zijn, niet meer dan logisch is — ook al moge de hoogte van de leges elders anders/lager zijn en moge de Commissie hier niet tevreden mee zijn?

3. Kan de Commissie verklaren hoe de prijs van een product dat overeenkomstig de kostprijs wordt verkocht, „overdreven en onevenredig hoog" kan zijn?

4. Is de Commissie met de PVV van mening dat de leges in Nederland zeker níet „onevenredig" zijn, aangezien niet alleen de leges voor het verkrijgen van een verblijfsvergunning, maar *alle* leges in Nederland overeenkomstig de kostprijs zijn? Is de Commissie met de PVV van mening dat het *juist* onevenredig is dat de Commissie één soort leges bekritiseert? Is de Commissie derhalve met de PVV van mening dat niemand anders dan Nederland zich hier mee te bemoeien heeft? Zo neen, waarom niet?

5. De kostenopbouw binnen het ambtelijk apparaat is een structuurkwestie van de Nederlandse overheid. Kan de Commissie aangeven waar in de Verdragen staat gemeld dat Europa hier zich mee kan/mag bemoeien?

6. Is de Commissie met de PVV van mening dat het onlogisch is om de leges onder de kostprijs te houden, omdat de Nederlandse staat dit moet compenseren? Is de Commissie met de PVV van mening dat het logisch is als de persoon die een verblijfsvergunning verkrijgt de leges hiervoor zelf betaalt?

Antwoord van mevrouw Malmström namens de Commissie
(27 juli 2012)

De Commissie betwist noch het beginsel van de inning van leges voor de afgifte van de in Richtlijn 2003/109 ([1]) voorziene verblijfsvergunningen, noch de beoordelingsmarge waarover de lidstaten beschikken om het bedrag van die leges vast te stellen. Deze marge is echter niet onbeperkt.

Overeenkomstig het evenredigheidsbeginsel ([2]) moeten namelijk de in de nationale wetgeving ter omzetting van een richtlijn gebruikte middelen de door die wetgeving nagestreefde doelen kunnen verwezenlijken en mogen zij niet verder gaan dan hetgeen noodzakelijk is om deze te bereiken.

Zoals volgt uit de overwegingen 4, 6 en 12 van Richtlijn 2003/109, is het hoofddoel van deze richtlijn de integratie van onderdanen van derde landen die duurzaam in een lidstaat zijn gevestigd. Wanneer onderdanen van derde landen voldoen aan de voorwaarden van de richtlijn (over voldoende inkomsten en een ziektekostenverzekering beschikken, om te voorkomen dat zij ten laste komen van de lidstaat) en aan de procedures (bij de bevoegde autoriteiten een aanvraag indienen, vergezeld van de benodigde bewijsstukken), hebben zij het recht om de status van langdurig ingezetene te verkrijgen.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2004:016:0044:0053:NL:PDF.
([2]) Een erkend algemeen beginsel van het EU-recht.

Zoals het Hof van Justitie heeft vastgesteld ([3]), kunnen leges die aanzienlijke financiële gevolgen hebben voor de onderdanen van derde landen die voldoen aan de bij de richtlijn vastgestelde voorwaarden, die onderdanen de mogelijkheid ontnemen om de hun bij die richtlijn verleende rechten te doen gelden, hetgeen in strijd is met overweging 10 van die richtlijn.

Het bedrag van de leges kan variëren afhankelijk van het type verblijfsvergunning dat wordt aangevraagd en van het onderzoek dat de lidstaat dient te verrichten. De bedragen van de door Nederland aan onderdanen van derde landen gevraagde leges varieerden echter binnen een marge waarbij het laagste bedrag ongeveer zeven maal hoger was dan het bedrag dat moest worden betaald voor het verkrijgen van een nationale identiteitskaart. Ook al zijn deze twee situaties niet identiek, toont een dergelijk verschil aan dat de gevraagde leges onevenredig zijn.

([3]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:62010CJ0508:nl:HTML.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006286/12
to the Commission
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(25 June 2012)

Subject: Court of Justice ruling against administrative charges for residence permits in the Netherlands (follow-up question)

On 21 June 2012, Commissioner Malmström replied on behalf of the Commission to Written Question E-004397/2012. In her reply, she wrote: 'In its judgment in Case C-508/10, the Court of Justice holds that the charges are excessive and disproportionate and as such are liable to create an obstacle to the exercise of the rights conferred by Directive 2003/109/EC. Consequently, by applying them to third-country nationals, the Netherlands failed to fulfil its obligation under Directive 2003/109/EC. Under EC law, it is the obligation of the Member State concerned to comply with the Court's judgment without delay.'

1. Can the Commission indicate how the amount of the Dutch administrative charge creates an obstacle to the exercise of the rights conferred by Directive 2003/109/EC? More specifically, which article(s) of the directive does the charge contravene? It may be noted that the directive does not use the term 'administrative charge' (Dutch: *leges*) at all.

2. Does the Commission agree with the PVV that it is completely subjective to describe the charge in question as 'excessive and disproportionate' and that instead the cost price of the charge should be assessed objectively? In this light, does the Commission agree with the PVV that the amount of the Dutch administrative charge, which simply accords with the cost price, is entirely logical — even if corresponding charges may possibly be different or lower elsewhere and even if the Commission is not satisfied with it?

3. Can the Commission explain how the price of a product which is sold at cost price can be 'excessive and disproportionate'?

4. Does the Commission agree with the PVV that the administrative charge in the Netherlands is certainly not 'disproportionate', as not only the charge for issuing a residence permit but all administrative charges in the Netherlands are levied at cost price? Does the Commission agree with the PVV that, on the contrary, what is disproportionate is the fact that the Commission is only criticising one type of administrative charge? Does the Commission therefore agree with the PVV that no party other than the Netherlands should concern itself with the matter? If not, why not?

5. The cost structure of the public service is a matter concerning the structure of government in the Netherlands. Can the Commission indicate where it is stipulated in the Treaties that Europe is empowered to concern itself with this?

6. Does the Commission agree with the PVV that it is illogical to keep the administrative charge below cost price, because the Netherlands State would have to compensate for this? Does the Commission agree with the PVV that it is logical for the person to whom a residence permit is issued to pay the administrative charge for it himself?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(27 July 2012)

The Commission contests neither the principle of levying administrative charges for the issuance of residence permits under Directive 2003/109/EC ([1]) nor the margin of discretion for Member States in setting the level of such charges. However, this margin is not unlimited.

In accordance with the principle of proportionality ([2]), the measures taken by national legislation transposing a directive must be suitable for achieving the objectives of that legislation and must not go beyond what is necessary to attain them.

According to recitals 4, 6 and 12 the principal purpose of the directive is the integration of third-country nationals who are settled on a long-term basis in a Member State. When third-country nationals satisfy the conditions set by the directive (having sufficient resources and sickness insurance to avoid becoming a burden on the Member State) and comply with the procedures (submission of an application and supporting documents to the competent authorities) they have the right to obtain long-term resident status.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2004:016:0044:0053:EN:PDF.
([2]) A recognised general principle of EC law.

As the Court of Justice set out ([3]), charges which have a significant financial impact on third-country nationals who satisfy the conditions laid down by the directive prevent them from claiming the rights conferred by it, contrary to Recital 10.

The level of charges may vary depending on the type of residence and the verifications to be carried out. However, the level of charges applied in the Netherlands for third-country nationals was varying within a range in which the lowest amount was about seven times higher than the amount to be paid to obtain a national identity card. Even if those two situations are not identical, such a variation is an indicator for the disproportionality of such charges.

([3]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:62010CJ0508:EN:HTML.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-006288/12
alla Commissione
Debora Serracchiani (S&D)
(26 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Investimenti in Slovenia da parte di società di altri Stati membri

In Slovenia la realizzazione di investimenti da parte di operatori di altri Stati membri incontra notevoli difficoltà, dovute in particolare all'eccessiva discrezionalità degli enti locali nel rilascio delle concessioni e autorizzazioni necessarie per l'esercizio di attività economiche e all'inefficacia del sistema giudiziario, il quale non garantisce un'adeguata tutela del diritto di proprietà nel caso di abusi da parte degli enti locali.

Alcune imprese comunitarie hanno dovuto rinunciare ai propri investimenti in Slovenia proprio a causa delle difficoltà più sopra denunciate. Un caso è quello della società di diritto italiano Altan Prefabbricati s.p.a che, attraverso le sue controllate di diritto sloveno (Universe Service d.o.o., Marinvest d.o.o. e Porting d.o.o.), a metà degli anni Novanta aveva ottenuto da un'autorità locale della Repubblica di Slovenia (il Comune di Isola) una concessione per la costruzione e la gestione di un porto turistico denominato «Marina di Isola».

Dopo che tale società aveva realizzato, interamente a proprie spese, il primo molo del porto turistico, tale concessione è stata in parte revocata, pur in assenza di qualsiasi motivo di interesse generale e senza alcun indennizzo. Inoltre, l'esercizio di tale concessione è stato, e continua ad essere, gravemente ostacolato attraverso l'illegittima revoca dei permessi di costruzione per le opere necessarie, l'occupazione fisica di una parte delle aree concesse, l'unilaterale fatturazione di canoni mai pattuiti e del tutto sproporzionati.

Nonostante i ricorsi proposti, le autorità giudiziarie slovene non hanno in alcun modo tutelato gli investimenti operati dalla Altan Prefabbricati s.p.a., in regime di stabilimento ai sensi dell'articolo 49 TFUE.

Tutto ciò considerato, si chiede alla Commissione se:

1. è a conoscenza di casi in cui le autorità slovene hanno ostacolato l'esercizio del diritto di stabilimento da parte di operatori di altri Stati membri, e in particolare del caso relativo alla società Altan Prefabbricati S.p.A.?

2. non ritiene, in particolare, che la revoca di fatto da parte delle autorità di uno Stato membro, senza l'indicazione di un motivo di pubblico interesse e senza il pagamento di un indennizzo, di una concessione pubblica di costruzione e gestione di cui è titolare una società di un altro Stato membro costituisca, oltre che un ostacolo alla libertà di stabilimento esercitata da detta società ai sensi degli articoli 49 e 54 TFUE, anche una violazione del diritto di proprietà salvaguardato dall'articolo 17 della Carta dei diritti fondamentali dell'Unione europea?

Risposta di Michel Barnier a nome della Commissione
(24 luglio 2012)

1. La Commissione è a conoscenza delle difficoltà incontrate dalla società Altan Prefabbricati S.p.A. in Slovenia. È già stata analizzata una denuncia presentata dalla società e protocollata presso la Commissione ([1]). Essa riguardava questioni relative agli appalti pubblici. Le analisi della Commissione, basate sulle prove fornite dal denunciante, non hanno individuato nessun elemento che richiederebbe l'avvio di un procedimento di infrazione. Ciò è stato in parte dovuto al fatto che i contratti in questione erano stati stipulati prima dell'adesione della Slovenia all'UE. Inoltre, le concessioni non sono state disciplinate in maniera dettagliata a livello europeo. In seguito ad un incontro con il denunciante, avvenuto il 7 maggio 2012, è stato concordato che Atlan Prefabbricati S.p.A. avrebbe presentato un'altra denuncia alla Commissione incentrata sulla libertà di stabilimento. Finora la Commissione non ha ricevuto alcun elemento di fatto da parte del denunciante.

La Commissione non è a conoscenza di altri casi in cui le autorità slovene abbiano ostacolato l'esercizio del diritto di libertà di stabilimento.

([1]) Numero di protocollo CHAP(2010)03397.

2. Al momento la Commissione non è in grado di rispondere al secondo quesito posto dall'onorevole parlamentare in quanto non ha ancora ricevuto le necessarie informazioni e prove supplementari da parte del denunciante, nonché la risposta chiesta alle autorità nazionali in merito alle misure che potrebbero essere incompatibili con la libertà di stabilimento. In ogni caso, ai sensi dell'articolo 51, paragrafo 1, della Carta dei diritti fondamentali dell'Unione europea, le disposizioni della Carta si applicano agli Stati membri soltanto quando essi attuano il diritto dell'Unione. Per i casi che non rientrano nell'ambito di applicazione del diritto dell'UE, spetta unicamente allo Stato membro interessato garantire il rispetto dei propri obblighi in materia di diritti fondamentali derivanti da accordi internazionali e dalla legislazione nazionale.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-006288/12
to the Commission
Debora Serracchiani (S&D)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Investments in Slovenia by companies from other Member States

In Slovenia, operators from other Member States are experiencing considerable difficulties in making investments. This is due, in particular, to the excessive discretionary powers of local authorities when issuing the licences and permits required to do business, and to the inefficiency of the judicial system, which does not ensure adequate protection of property rights in the event of abuse by local authorities.

Some EU companies have had to give up their investments in Slovenia, precisely because of such difficulties. One case is that of a company under Italian law called Altan Prefabbricati s.p.a., which, through its subsidiaries under Slovenian law (Universe Service d.o.o., Marinvest d.o.o. and Porting d.o.o.), in the mid-Nineties was granted a concession from a local authority in Slovenia (municipality of Izola) to build and operate a marina called 'Izola Marina'.

After the company in question had built, entirely at its own expense, the first pier of the marina, the concession was partly withdrawn, without any grounds of public interest and with no compensation. Moreover, the implementation of the concession agreement has been, and continues to be, severely hampered by the illegal revocation of building permits for the necessary works, the physical occupation of part of the land granted and the unilateral billing of fees that were never agreed on and are totally disproportionate.

Despite a number of appeals, the Slovenian judicial authorities have in no way protected the investments made by Altan Prefabbricati s.p.a., which has established itself in the country under Article 49 TFEU.

Given the above:

1. Is the Commission aware of cases in which the Slovenian authorities have hindered the exercise of the right of establishment by operators from other Member States, and in particular of the case concerning the company Altan Prefabbricati s.p.a?

2. Does it not consider, more specifically, that the withdrawal by the authorities of a Member State of a public building and operating concession granted to a company of another Member State, without providing a reason of public interest and without payment of compensation, is not only an obstacle to the freedom of establishment of that company, under Articles 49 and 54 TFEU, but is also a violation of the property rights protected by Article 17 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(24 July 2012)

1. The Commission is aware of the difficulties encountered by Altan Prefabbricati s.p.a. in Slovenia. A complaint by the company registered with the Commission ([1]) has been analysed. The complaint concerned public procurement issues. The Commission's analysis based on the evidence provided by the complainant did not identify any elements that would call for the opening of an infringement proceeding. This was partly due to the fact that the contracts in question were concluded prior to the accession of Slovenia to the EU. In addition, the concessions have not been regulated in detail at EU level. Further to a meeting with the complainant on 7 May 2012, it was agreed that Altan Prefabbricati s.p.a. would lodge a new complaint with the Commission focusing on the freedom of establishment. To date, the Commission has received no new factual elements from the complainant.

The Commission is not aware of other cases where the Slovenian authorities may have hindered the exercise of the right of establishment.

2. The Commission cannot yet respond to the second question of the Honourable Member because it has not yet received the necessary additional information and evidence from the complainant and the required reply from the national authorities on the measures that may be incompatible with freedom of establishment. In any case, 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. In cases falling outside the scope of Union law, it is for the Member State alone to ensure that its obligations regarding fundamental rights — as resulting from international agreements and from internal legislation — are respected.

([1]) Registered as CHAP (2010) 03397.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita P-006289/12
ao Conselho
Mário David (PPE)
(26 de junho de 2012)

Assunto: Preferências comerciais autónomas de emergência para o Paquistão

«Na sequência das inundações devastadoras [...] que atingiram o Paquistão em julho, o Conselho Europeu [...] decidiu mandatar os Ministros para acordarem, com urgência, um pacote abrangente de medidas [...] que facilitem a recuperação e o desenvolvimento futuro do país. Entre elas devem figurar medidas comerciais ambiciosas que concedam exclusivamente ao Paquistão um acesso acrescido ao mercado da UE, através de uma redução imediata e temporária dos direitos aduaneiros sobre os principais produtos importados do Paquistão». Esta citação é o início da resposta a uma pergunta que enviei à Comissão (E-7522/2010, 24.9 2010) sobre o assunto em epígrafe (sublinhados meus).

Passados praticamente dois anos das inundações e após a atribuição de 320 milhões de euros em ajuda humanitária em 2010 (Estados-Membros e Comissão, dados de Outubro 2010), de 94,9 milhões de euros em 2011 e de 55 milhões de euros em 2012 (Comissão), em resposta às situações de emergência criadas pelas cheias, por conflitos e pelos refugiados afegãos, de um total de 2 458 milhões de euros para o período 2009/2013 de ajuda humanitária concedida às populações pelos Estados-Membros e pela Comissão, que louvamos e apoiamos sem reservas, continuamos sem perceber a racionalidade de se insistir no precedente do uso da política comercial como instrumento de ajuda humanitária.

Acrescendo a estes factos a atuação condenável das autoridades paquistanesas, nomeadamente a recente reiteração do bloqueio paquistanês às rotas de abastecimento da NATO para o Afeganistão; a condenação do médico Shakeel Afridi a 33 anos de prisão, por supostamente ter ajudado a CIA a encontrar Osama bin Laden; os ataques impunes a templos de outras religiões que não a muçulmana; a suspeita de que o Paquistão estará a funcionar como «porto seguro» para grupos terroristas a operar no Afeganistão; e a realidade indesmentível de que não existem «medidas de urgência» ou «uma redução imediata», passados dois anos sobre a ocorrência dos factos, pergunto ao Conselho:

1. Face a estas considerações, manteria hoje o Conselho esta iniciativa?

2. É de algum modo coerente, racional, lógico, justo, inteligente ou acertado insistir nestas preferências comerciais autónomas ao Paquistão, em junho de 2012?

3. Não é óbvio suspender esta medida de imediato?

4. Merece o Paquistão este «prémio»?

Resposta
(1 de outubro de 2012)

Como o Senhor Deputado recorda, na sequência das inundações devastadoras que ocorreram no Paquistão em julho de 2010, o Conselho Europeu mandatou os Ministros para acordarem num pacote abrangente de medidas, incluindo medidas comerciais ambiciosas, para contribuir para a recuperação e o desenvolvimento futuro do Paquistão.

A proposta de regulamento do Parlamento Europeu e do Conselho que introduz preferências comerciais autónomas de emergência para o Paquistão deverá ser adotada no âmbito do processo legislativo ordinário. Na sua sessão plenária de 10 de maio de 2011, o Parlamento Europeu adotou a sua posição em primeira leitura. Os trílogos foram concluídos com êxito em 11 de julho de 2012, abrindo o caminho à adoção final do regulamento.

Chama--se a atenção do Senhor Deputado para o facto de que, nas suas conclusões sobre o Paquistão de 25 de junho de 2012, o Conselho recordou o compromisso da UE de conceder ao Paquistão um melhor acesso ao mercado através da aplicação de preferências comerciais autónomas e o empenhamento da UE a favor da elegibilidade do Paquistão para o SPG+ a partir de 2014, desde que preenchesse os critérios necessários. Ao mesmo tempo, o Conselho fez referência a uma série de questões levantadas pelo Senhor Deputado na sua pergunta. Em especial, incentivou o Paquistão a redobrar os esforços no sentido de proceder a reformas políticas, económicas, fiscais e no domínio da energia, recordou as expectativas da UE quanto à promoção e respeito dos direitos humanos, incluindo a proteção dos direitos das minorias e a liberdade de religião, e declarou que a UE trabalharia em estreita cooperação com as autoridades paquistanesas para ultimar e implementar os Planos de Ação de combate ao terrorismo.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-006289/12
to the Council
Mário David (PPE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Emergency autonomous trade preferences for Pakistan

'*Against the background of the … devastating July floods, the European Council … resolved to mandate Ministers to agree urgently a comprehensive package of … measures which will help underpin Pakistan's recovery and future development. These should, inter alia, comprise ambitious trade measures granting exclusively to Pakistan increased market access to the EU through the immediate and time limited reduction of customs duties on key imports from Pakistan*'. This quotation is the beginning of the answer to my question to the Commission (E-7522/2010, 24 September 2010) on the above subject (my emphasis).

The floods occurred nearly two years ago; EUR 320 million in humanitarian aid was granted in 2010 (by Member States and the Commission, according to the October 2010 figures), followed by EUR 94.9 million in 2011 and EUR 55 million in 2012 (Commission), in order to deal with the emergencies caused by floods, fighting, and Afghan refugees; the total amount of humanitarian aid granted to Pakistani populations by the Member States and the Commission for the period from 2009 to 2013 stands at EUR 2 458 million, which we applaud and endorse unreservedly. Given those facts, however, we fail to see the logic in the continued determination to set a precedent by using trade policy as a means of humanitarian aid.

Another point to take into account is the reprehensible actions of the Pakistani authorities, including the recent repeated blocking of NATO supply routes to Afghanistan; the 33-year prison sentence passed on Shakeel Afridi, a doctor who allegedly helped the CIA to find Osama bin Laden; the attacks — which are going unpunished — on places of worship for faiths other than Islam; the suspicion that Pakistan is serving as a 'haven' for terrorist groups operating in Afghanistan; and the indisputable truth that there is no such thing as 'emergency measures' or 'immediate reduction' two years after the event.

1. In the light of the foregoing, does the Council believe that this initiative should remain in place?

2. Is it in any way coherent, rational, logical, fair, intelligent, and right to continue applying autonomous trade preferences to Pakistan?

3. Would not the obvious course be to end this measure immediately?

4. Does Pakistan deserve such a 'reward'?

Reply
(1 October 2012)

As the Honourable Member recalls, following the devastating floods that occurred in Pakistan in July 2010, the European Council mandated Ministers to agree a comprehensive package of measures, including ambitious trade measures, to help Pakistan's recovery and future development.

The proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and the Council introducing emergency autonomous trade preferences for Pakistan is to be adopted under the ordinary legislative procedure. At its plenary session of 10 May 2011, the European Parliament adopted its position at first reading. The trilogues were successfully concluded on 11 July 2012, paving the way for the final adoption of the regulation.

The attention of the Honourable Member is drawn to the fact that, in its conclusions on Pakistan of 25 June 2012, the Council recalled the undertaking of the EU to offer improved market access to Pakistan through the implementation of the autonomous trade preferences and the EU's commitment to provide for Pakistan's eligibility to GSP+ as from 2014, provided that it meets the necessary criteria. At the same time the Council referred to a number of issues raised by the Honourable Member in his question. In particular it encouraged Pakistan to intensify efforts on political, economic, fiscal and energy reform, recalled the EU expectations regarding the promotion and respect of human rights, including the protection of the rights of minorities and of freedom of religion, and stated that the EU would work closely with the Pakistani authorities to finalise and implement Action Plans on counter-terrorism.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-006290/12
a la Comisión
Ana Miranda (Verts/ALE)
(26 de junio de 2012)

Asunto: Eurovegas (1)

El Gobierno de la Generalitat de Cataluña negocia con Las Vegas Sands la instalación de un complejo de 200 hectáreas de casinos, hoteles, restaurantes y otros espacios de ocio cerca de Barcelona, concretamente en la comarca del Baix Llobregat, en terrenos del Parque Agrario del Baix Llobregat y cerca de la zona deltaica, y dentro de un espacio definido como Zona de Especial Protección para las Aves (ZEPA). Varios agentes sociales, económicos y políticos se oponen al proyecto por el modelo de desarrollo que conlleva y por el impacto social, ambiental y paisajístico.

1. ¿Considera la Comisión que la instalación del complejo Eurovegas es compatible con el cumplimiento de los criterios de los apartados 1 y 2 del artículo 4 de la Directiva europea 79/409/CEE (Directiva de Aves)?

2. ¿Considera la Comisión que la instalación del complejo Eurovegas es compatible con el cumplimiento de los artículos 1 y 3 de la Directiva europea 92/43/CEE (Directiva de Habitats)?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(6 de agosto de 2012)

La Comisión desconoce los detalles del proyecto «Eurovegas» mencionado por Su Señoría.

De acuerdo con el artículo 6, apartado 3, de la Directiva sobre hábitats ([1]), cualquier plan o proyecto que pueda tener un efecto negativo en los lugares de Natura 2000 ha de someterse a una evaluación pertinente conforme a los objetivos de conservación de dichos lugares. A la vista de las conclusiones de la evaluación, las autoridades nacionales competentes solo se declararán de acuerdo con dicho plan o proyecto tras haberse asegurado de que no causará perjuicio a la integridad del lugar. Si ello no puede asegurarse, el plan o proyecto solo puede llevarse a término según las condiciones excepcionales establecidas en el artículo 6, apartado 4, de la Directiva y debe someterse a la aplicación de las medidas compensatorias pertinentes.

No obstante, la Comisión desea recordar que la responsabilidad de garantizar el cumplimiento tanto de la Directiva sobre hábitats 92/43/CEE como de la Directiva sobre aves 2009/147/CE ([2]) es principalmente de las autoridades nacionales. La Comisión carece de información sobre el proyecto al que se refiere Su Señoría y, por consiguiente, en este momento no le es posible determinar ningún incumplimiento de las Directivas anteriormente 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 20/7 de 26.1.2010), 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-006290/12
to the Commission
Ana Miranda (Verts/ALE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Eurovegas (1)

The Government of Catalonia is negotiating with Las Vegas Sands about setting up a 200-hectare complex of casinos, hotels, restaurants and other leisure facilities near Barcelona; specifically in the comarca (county) of Baix Llobregat, on land that is part of Baix Llobregat agricultural park, close to the river delta and is a designated special bird protection area (SBPA). The project is opposed by a number of social, economic and political actors because of the development model involved, and because of its social and environmental impact and effect on the landscape.

1. Does the Commission consider the construction of the Eurovegas complex to be compatible with the provisions of Article 4(1) and (2) of Directive 79/409/EEC (Birds Directive)?

2. Does the Commission consider the construction of the Eurovegas complex to be compatible with the provisions of Articles 1 and 3 of Directive 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive)?

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

The Commission is not aware of the details of the 'Eurovegas' project mentioned by the Honourable Member.

In accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive ([1]), any plan or project likely to have a negative effect on Natura 2000 sites has to undergo an appropriate assessment having regard to the sites' conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment, the competent authorities shall agree to this plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site. If this cannot be ascertained, the plan or project can only proceed under the exceptional conditions set out in Article 6(4) of the directive and must be subject to implementing adequate compensatory measures.

The Commission would like however to recall that the responsibility for ensuring compliance with both the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC 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, 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.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-006291/12
a la Comisión
Ana Miranda (Verts/ALE)
(26 de junio de 2012)

Asunto: Eurovegas (2)

El Gobierno de la Generalitat de Cataluña negocia con Las Vegas Sands la instalación de un complejo de 200 hectáreas de casinos, hoteles, restaurantes y otros espacios de ocio cerca de Barcelona, concretamente en la comarca del Baix Llobregat, en terrenos del Parque Agrario del Baix Llobregat y cerca de la zona deltaica, y dentro de un espacio definido como Zona de Especial Protección para las Aves (ZEPA). Varios agentes sociales, económicos y políticos se oponen al proyecto por el modelo de desarrollo que conlleva y por el impacto social, ambiental y paisajístico.

Expertos en gestión del agua han estimado que el complejo Eurovegas necesitará un abastecimiento de agua de unos 5 hm^3 anuales, es decir, unos 5 000 millones de litros agua por año, el mismo volumen que necesitan los municipios de Viladecans y El Prat de Llobregat juntos para abastecer el consumo doméstico de su población —cerca de 130 000 habitantes.

— ¿Considera la Comisión que la instalación del complejo Eurovegas es compatible con el cumplimiento de los objetivos de la Directiva europea 2000/60/CE (Directiva marco sobre el agua) y los artículos 1 y 4b de dicha Directiva?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(17 de agosto de 2012)

La Comisión no ha sido informada de ninguna decisión de las autoridades españolas sobre el proyecto Eurovegas. Si España tiene la intención de acometer un proyecto de estas características en la cuenca del Llobregat, debe ajustarse a lo dispuesto en el Derecho de la UE, que incluye la Directiva 2000/60/CE ([1]), por la que se establece un marco comunitario de actuación en el ámbito de la política de aguas.

([1]) DO L 327 de 22.12.2000.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006291/12
to the Commission
Ana Miranda (Verts/ALE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Eurovegas (2)

The Government of Catalonia is negotiating with Las Vegas Sands about setting up a 200-hectare complex of casinos, hotels, restaurants and other leisure facilities near Barcelona; specifically, in the comarca (county) of Baix Llobregat, on land that is part of Baix Llobregat agricultural park, close to the river delta and a designated Special Protection Area. The project is opposed by a number of social, economic and political actors because of the development model involved, and because of its social and environmental impact and effect on the landscape.

Water management experts have estimated that the Eurovegas complex will need an annual water supply of some 5 hm^3, or some 5 billion litres of water per year. That is the same volume as the combined domestic requirements of the populations of the municipalities of Viladecans and El Prat de Llobregat, a total of around 130 000 people.

— Does the Commission consider the construction of the Eurovegas complex to be compatible with the goals of European Directive 2000/60/EC (Water Framework Directive) and Articles 1 and 4(1)(b) thereof?

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

The Commission has not been informed of any decision on the Eurovegas project by the Spanish authorities. If Spain intends to develop such a project in the Llobregat basin, it must be in line with the provisions of EU legislation, including Directive 2000/60/EC ([1]) establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy and its requirements related to 'non-deterioration' and the achievement of a good water status.

([1]) OJ L 327, 22.12.2000.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-006293/12
a la Comisión
Ana Miranda (Verts/ALE)
(26 de junio de 2012)

Asunto: Eurovegas (4)

El Gobierno de la Generalitat de Cataluña negocia con Las Vegas Sands la instalación de un complejo de 200 hectáreas de casinos, hoteles, restaurantes y otros espacios de ocio cerca de Barcelona, concretamente en la comarca del Baix Llobregat, en terrenos del Parque Agrario del Baix Llobregat y cerca de la zona deltaica, y dentro de un espacio definido como Zona de Especial Protección para las Aves (ZEPA). Varios agentes sociales, económicos y políticos se oponen al proyecto por el modelo de desarrollo que conlleva y por el impacto social, ambiental y paisajístico.

Los complejos hoteleros y lúdicos de la empresa Las Vegas Sand se caracterizan por permitir fumar en los espacios de dichos recintos. El Gobierno de la Generalitat, en plena negociación con la empresa, ha afirmado que flexibilizará la ley que prohíbe fumar en los espacios públicos de Catalunya.

— ¿Considera la Comisión que el proyecto Eurovegas se ajusta a las directrices y recomendaciones de la propuesta de recomendación del Consejo Europeo a los Estados miembros del 30 de noviembre de 2009, sobre los entornos libres de humo ([1]), donde se insta a los Estados miembros a adoptar leyes para proteger a los ciudadanos de la exposición al humo del tabaco en espacios públicos cerrados?

Respuesta del Sr. Dalli en nombre de la Comisión
(3 de agosto de 2012)

La Comisión remite a Su Señoría a la respuesta a la pregunta E-002081/2012 ([2]) por lo que se refiere a la Recomendación del Consejo sobre los entornos libres de humo ([3]).

La Comisión comparte plenamente la preocupación de Su Señoría por los riesgos que entraña la exposición ambiental al humo del tabaco y es consciente de la necesidad de proporcionar una amplia protección frente al humo del tabaco, especialmente en el sector de la hostelería.

La Recomendación del Consejo, adoptada por los Ministros de Sanidad de la UE, insta a los Estados miembros a proteger plenamente a sus ciudadanos frente a la exposición al humo del tabaco para finales de 2012. La aplicación de dicha Recomendación es responsabilidad exclusiva de los Estados miembros; la competencia de la Comisión en este ámbito es básicamente la de apoyar y alentar la actuación de los Estados miembros.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:296:0004:0014:ES:PDF.
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/QP-WEB.
([3]) Recomendación del Consejo, de 30 de noviembre de 2009, sobre los entornos sin humo (DO C 296 de 5.12.2009, p. 4).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006293/12
to the Commission
Ana Miranda (Verts/ALE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Eurovegas (4)

The Government Catalonia is negotiating with Las Vegas Sands about setting up a 200-hectare complex of casinos, hotels, restaurants and other leisure facilities near Barcelona; specifically in the comarca (county) of Baix Llobregat, on land that is part of Baix Llobregat agricultural park, close to the river delta and is a designated special bird protection area (SBPA). The project is opposed by a number of social, economic and political actors because of the development model involved, and because of its social and environmental impact and effect on the landscape.

The hotel and leisure complexes owned by the Las Vegas Sands company are notable for permitting smoking therein. During its negotiations with the company, the Government of the Catalonia has stated that it will relax Catalonia's law banning smoking in public places.

— Does the Commission consider the Eurovegas project to be in compliance with the guidelines and recommendations to the Member States of the Council Recommendation of 30 November 2009 on smoke-free environments ([1]), which urges the Member States to adopt laws protecting the public from exposure to tobacco smoke in enclosed public spaces?

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

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to the response to Question E-002081/2012 ([2]), as regards the Council Recommendation on smoke-free environments ([3]).

The Commission fully shares his concern about the risk of exposure to environmental tobacco smoke and on the need to provide comprehensive protection from tobacco smoke, in particular in the hospitality sector.

The Council recommendation, as endorsed by the Ministers of Health of the EU, calls on Member States to fully protect their citizens from exposure to tobacco smoke by 2012. The implementation of this recommendation falls under the exclusive responsibility of Member States, while the Commission competence in this area is primarily to support and encourage Member States' action.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:296:0004:0014:EN:PDF.
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/QP-WEB.
([3]) Council recommendation of 30 November 2009 on smoke-free environments (OJ C 296, 5.12.2009, p. 4).

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-006294/12
an die Kommission
Werner Langen (PPE)
(26. Juni 2012)

Betrifft: LIFE-Biodiversitätprojekt „Sicherung und Förderung der Biodiversität in den Weinbauterrassen Walporzheim, Kulturlandschaft Mittelahr“

Nach Angaben des rheinland-pfälzischen Ministeriums für Umwelt, Landwirtschaft, Ernährung, Weinbau und Forsten wurde der oben genannte Antrag auf Gewährung von Mitteln des LIFE-Teilprogramms „Biologische Vielfalt“ von der Kommission bereits nach der technischen Prüfung abgelehnt.

1. Trifft diese Angabe zu?

2. Wann wurde der Antrag gestellt und wann wurde er abgelehnt?

3. Wie sind die Chancen eines neuen Antrags auf Fördermittel für das genannte Projekt zu bewerten?

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

Der Vorschlag BIO/DE/000356 (Sicherung und Förderung der Biodiversität in den Weinbauterrassen Walporzheim in der Kulturlandschaft Mittelahr) wurde am 9. September 2011 im Rahmen des LIFE-Programms 2011 der Europäischen Kommission übermittelt und tatsächlich am 7. Dezember 2011 nach technischer Prüfung von dem für die fachliche Auswahl zuständigen Ausschuss abgelehnt.

Die Europäische Kommission kann Entscheidungen über die Zuschussgewährung für einen Vorschlag nicht vorgreifen, bevor dieser im Rahmen einer Aufforderung zur Vorschlagseinreichung für LIFE+ fristgerecht vorgelegt und einer unabhängigen externen Bewertung unterzogen wurde. Ein neuer Vorschlag sollte mindestens die Auswahlkriterien erfüllen; die Kriterien für die Aufforderung zur Vorschlagseinreichung für LIFE+ 2012 sind im Leitfaden für die Bewertung von 2012 veröffentlicht. Sind die Auswahlkriterien erfüllt, so ist die Finanzierung abhängig von der Punktevergabe und von der Rangfolge in der Liste der bei der technischen Prüfung erfolgreichen Vorschläge. Wegen der begrenzten Mittelausstattung von LIFE+ können nicht alle aus technischer Sicht erfolgreichen Vorschläge finanziert werden.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006294/12
to the Commission
Werner Langen (PPE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: LIFE biodiversity project: 'Protection and promotion of biodiversity in the Walporzheim vine terraces in the Middle Ahr landscape'

According to information from the Ministry of the Environment, Agriculture, Food, Viticulture and Forestry of the Rhineland-Palatinate, the aforementioned application for funding from the LIFE 'Biodiversity' programme was rejected after the technical examination.

1. Is this correct?

2. When was the application submitted and when was it rejected?

3. What are the chances of a new application for funding being evaluated for the aforementioned project?

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

The proposal BIO/DE/000356 (Sicherung und Förderung der Biodiversität in den Weinbauterrassen Walporzheim in der Kulturlandschaft Mittelahr) was submitted to the LIFE 2011 programme of the European Commission on 9 September 2011 and was indeed rejected after technical examination in the Technical Selection panel on 07 December 2011.

The European Commission cannot prejudge the award decision on any proposal prior to its timely submission under a LIFE+ call and its evaluation by independent external evaluators. As a minimum condition for financing, any new proposal should fulfil all the selection criteria; for the 2012 LIFE+ call for proposals, these criteria are published in the 2012 Evaluation Guide. For proposals meeting the selection criteria, funding depends on the award scoring and the proposal's ranking in the list of technically successful proposals. Due to the limited budget of LIFE+, not all technically successful proposals can be financed.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-006295/12
an die Kommission
Ulrike Rodust (S&D)
(26. Juni 2012)

Betrifft: Verbleib von Fisch aus illegaler Fischerei

Artikel 89 der Fischereikontrollverordnung sieht vor, dass Strafen für IUU-Fischerei so gestaltet sind, dass den betroffenen Fischern „wirksam der wirtschaftliche Gewinn aus den Verstößen entzogen wird". Die IUU-Verordnung ermöglicht den Mitgliedstaaten die Beschlagnahmung illegal gefangenen Fisches, schreibt diese aber nicht zwingend vor.

1. Liegen der Kommission Informationen darüber vor, wie von den mitgliedstaatlichen Behörden mit entdeckten Fischen aus IUU-Fischerei umgegangen wird?

2. Sind der Kommission Fälle bekannt, wo diese Fische weiterhin im Handel bleiben?

Antwort von Frau Damanaki im Namen der Kommission
(6. September 2012)

Die EU verfügt über ein umfassendes System von Vorschriften zur Kontrolle der Fangtätigkeiten und zur Bekämpfung illegaler Fischerei gemäß der Kontrollverordnung ([1]) und der IUU-Verordnung ([2]). Dadurch wird die Gleichbehandlung zwischen den Wirtschaftsbeteiligten hinsichtlich der Durchsetzung der Vorschriften, der Sanktionen und der flankierenden Maßnahmen sichergestellt.

Die Mitgliedstaaten sind dafür verantwortlich, gemäß ihren nationalen Gesetzen gegen natürliche oder juristische Personen, die einen schweren Verstoß begangen haben bzw. dafür haftbar gemacht werden, Sanktionen zu verhängen und flankierende Maßnahmen zu ergreifen (z. B. Beschlagnahme illegal gefangenen Fisches). Gemäß der Kontrollverordnung sowie der IUU-Verordnung ([3]) sollen solche Sanktionen und flankierenden Maßnahmen insgesamt so gestaltet sein, dass den Verantwort-lichen wirksam der wirtschaftliche Gewinn aus ihren schweren Verstößen entzogen wird.

Die Mitgliedstaaten müssen die Einfuhren von Fischereierzeugnissen kontrollieren und können jede Einfuhr verweigern, wenn ein Verstoß gegen die Bestimmungen der IUU-Verordnung festgestellt wird. IUU-Fänge dürfen nicht in die EU gelangen und können beschlagnahmt werden ([4]). Der Kommission ist bekannt, dass die Erzeugnisse, deren Einfuhr verweigert wurde, in manchen Mitgliedstaaten an wohltätige Einrichtungen abgegeben werden, während sie in anderen Mitgliedstaaten vernichtet werden.

Wie bereits betont, dürfen Erzeugnisse aus IUU-Fischerei bei der Einfuhr nicht für den EU-Markt freigegeben werden. Sind solche Erzeugnisse jedoch bereits in die EU gelangt, gibt es keine EU-Rechtsvorschriften, um sie wieder vom Markt zu nehmen. In diesem Fall gelten die jeweiligen nationalen Bestimmungen, nach denen illegale Erzeugnisse in der Regel beschlagnahmt werden. Die Kommission wird über die Details der in den Mitgliedstaaten ergriffenen Maßnahmen nicht systematisch informiert. Sie erhielt jedoch Kenntnis über einen speziellen Fall, in dem solche Erzeugnisse auf den EU-Markt gelangt sind. Näheres hierzu finden Sie in der Antwort der Kommission auf die Anfrage E-006141/2012 ([5]).

([1]) Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1224/2009 des Rates vom 20. November 2009 zur Einführung einer gemeinschaftlichen Kontrollregelung zur Sicherstellung der Einhaltung der Vorschriften der gemeinsamen Fischereipolitik und zur Änderung der Verordnungen (EG) Nr. 847/96, (EG) Nr. 2371/2002, (EG) Nr. 811/2004, (EG) Nr. 768/2005, (EG) Nr. 2115/2005, (EG) Nr. 2166/2005, (EG) Nr. 388/2006, (EG) Nr. 509/2007, (EG) Nr. 676/2007, (EG) Nr. 1098/2007, (EG) Nr. 1300/2008, (EG) Nr. 1342/2008 sowie zur Aufhebung der Verordnungen (EWG) Nr. 2847/93, (EG) Nr. 1627/94 und (EG) Nr. 1966/2006.
([2]) Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1005/2008 über ein Gemeinschaftssystem zur Verhinderung, Bekämpfung und Unterbindung der illegalen, nicht gemeldeten und unregulierten Fischerei, ABl. L 286 vom 29.10.2008, S. 1.
([3]) Artikel 89 Absatz 2 der Kontrollverordnung und Artikel 46 der IUU-Verordnung.
([4]) Artikel 18 der IUU-Verordnung.
([5]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/de/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006295/12
to the Commission
Ulrike Rodust (S&D)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: The fate of fish caught illegally

Article 89 of the Fisheries Control Regulation provides that penalties for illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing should be calculated in such a way as to 'deprive those responsible of the economic benefit derived from their infringement'. The IUU Regulation allows Member States to confiscate illegally caught fish but does not stipulate that this action is compulsory.

1. Does the Commission have any information on how authorities in the Member States deal with the IUU fishing catches they discover?

2. Is the Commission aware of cases where these fish have remained on the market?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(6 September 2012)

The EU has in place a comprehensive system of rules concerning control of fishing activities and combat of illegal fishing as set out in the Control ([1]) and IUU Regulations ([2]). This system ensures equal treatment between operators as to enforcement, sanctions and accompanying measures.

Member States are responsible for taking sanctions and accompanying measures such as confiscation of illegally caught fish, in conformity with their national law, against natural persons having committed or legal persons held liable for a serious infringement. The overall level of such sanctions and accompanying measures shall effectively deprive those responsible of the economic benefits derived from their serious infringements, in accordance with the control and IUU Regulations ([3]).

Member States are responsible for controlling imports of fisheries products and can refuse any import if the provisions of the IUU Regulation are not fulfilled. IUU catches cannot enter into the EU and can be confiscated ([4]). The Commission knows that in some Member States the products denied importation are given to charity while in other Member States the products are destroyed.

As stressed, IUU fisheries products cannot be released into the EU market at import. However, once such products have entered the EU there is no EU legislation to remove them from the market. In such case national legislation applies which normally includes provisions to confiscate products that are illegal. The Commission is not systematically informed about the detailed measures implemented by Member States. It has been informed of one particular case where such products have entered the market, please see Commission reply to E-006141/2012 ([5]).

([1]) Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 of 20 November 2009 establishing a Community control system for ensuring compliance with the rules of the common fisheries policy, amending Regulations (EC) No 847/96, (EC) No 2371/2002, (EC) No 811/2004, (EC) No 768/2005, (EC) No 2115/2005, (EC) No 2166/2005, (EC) No 388/2006, (EC) No 509/2007, (EC) No 676/2007, (EC) No 1098/2007, (EC) No 1300/2008, (EC) No 1342/2008 and repealing Regulations (EEC) No 2847/93, (EC) No 1627/94 and (EC) No 1966/2006.
([2]) Council Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008 to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, OJ L 286/1, 29.10.2008.
([3]) Article 89(2) of the Control Regulation and 46 of the IUU Regulation.
([4]) Article 18 of the IUU Regulation.
([5]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-006296/12
lill-Kummissjoni
Louis Grech (S&D)
(26 ta' Ġunju 2012)

Suġġett: Il-qgħad taż-żgħażagħ fl-UE

Skont ir-rapport reċenti tal-ILO "Global Employment Trends for Youth 2012" (Xejriet Globali tal-Impjiegi għaż-Żgħażagħ 2012), ir-rata globali tal-qgħad taż-żgħażagħ (ta' etajiet bejn 15-il sena u 25 sena) għadha f'livelli ta' kriżi u mhuwiex mistenni li tibda tonqos qabel l-2016 l-aktar kmieni. Aktar speċifikament, ir-rapport jistqarr li wieħed minn kull ħames żgħażagħ fl-Unjoni Ewropea qed ifittex ix-xogħol.

Il-Kummissjoni dan l-aħħar varat l-inizjattiva "L-Ewwel Impjieg EURES tiegħek", proġett pilota maħsub biex jgħin liż-żgħażagħ isibu x-xogħol billi jagħti lil min iħaddem inċentivi finanzjarji u appoġġ għar-reklutaġġ, jinkoraġġixxi l-mobilità soċjali u jiżgura aktar trasparenza fis-suq tax-xogħol Ewropew — dan kollu biex jindirizza u jittratta l-kriżi tal-qgħad fl-Ewropa direttament.

Il-Kummissjoni ddikjarat li hija kommessa li "l dawk li qed ifittxu x-xogħol tlaqqagħhom mal-impjiegi korrispondenti f'pajjiżi oħra, biex taqdi d-domanda għax-xogħol. Bihsiebha tagħmel hekk billi tgħin liż-żgħażagħ b'ħiliet relevanti jsibu x-xogħol f'pajjiżi oħra.

1. Il-Kummissjoni x'tittama li tilħaq permezz ta" dan il-proġett pilota? Il-proġett iwassal "il bogħod biżżejjed? X'se jkun il-pass li jmiss?

2. Il-Kummissjoni sejra tiżgura li persuni minn sfond ta" edukazzjoni vokazzjonali jew apprendistat ikollhom l-istess opportunità li jsibu impjiegi barra minn pajjiżhom daqs dawk li jkollhom kwalifiki akkademiċi?

3. Billi timplimenta dan il-proġett pilota, il-Kummissjoni sa liema grad se tkun qed tippromwovi l-ħolqien ta' impjiegi ħodor u l-investiment f'dawn l-impjiegi?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Andor f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(27 ta' Lulju 2012)

1. Fl-Ewropa jeżistu livelli għoljin ta' qgħad fost iż-żgħażagħ flimkien ma' postijiet tax-xogħol vakanti. "Your first EURES job" għandu l-għan li jittestja l-effettività ta' servizz imfassal apposta biex iqabbel l-impjiegi kkombinat ma' fondi tal-UE. L-objettiv għall-2012-2013 huwa li jiżgura il-pjazzament ta' 5,000 impjiegi fi Stat Membru ieħor barra mill-pajjiż tar-residenza taż-żagħżugħ ikkonċernat ([1]).

Il-kapaċità tal-kopertura tiegħu hija limitata għall-baġit disponibbli. Il-Kummissjoni pproponiet l-introduzzjoni ta' skemi ta' mobbiltà bħal dawn mill-2014 "il quddiem skont l-abbozz tal-Programm għall-Bidla Soċjali u l-Innovazzjoni tal-UE.

2. L-azzjoni preparatorja hija miftuħa għal ċittadini żgħażagħ ta" età bejn it-18 u t-30 sena, irrispettivament mil-livell tagħhom ta' kwalifiki, l-esperjenza tax-xogħol jew l-isfond tagħhom. Il-benefiċjarji individwali tal-proġett huma responsabbli għall-għażla tal-popolazzjoni fil-mira.

3. Il-proġetti magħżula mhux neċessarjament għandhom fil-mira impjiegi speċifiċi. Skont l-azzjoni preparatorja, l-impjiegi kollha konformi mal-istandards tax-xogħol u l-liġi nazzjonali huma eliġibbli, irrispettivament mis-settur ekonomiku. L-impjiegi għandhom ikunu tal-anqas għal sitt xhur u s-salarju għandu jkun żgurat.

([1]) Dan l-objettiv huwa stipulat fl-"Inizjattiva għall-Opportunitajiet taż-Żgħażagħ", COM(2011)933 finali, 20.12.2011.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006296/12
to the Commission
Louis Grech (S&D)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Youth employment in the EU

According to the recent ILO report 'Global Employment Trends for Youth 2012', the global unemployment rate for youth (aged 15-24) remains at crisis peak levels and is not expected to start to fall until 2016 at the earliest. More specifically, the report states that one in five young people in the European Union are looking for work.

The Commission recently launched the initiative 'Your First EURES job', a pilot project geared towards helping young people find jobs by providing financial incentives and recruitment support to employers, by encouraging social mobility and by ensuring more transparency in the European labour market — all in a bid to address and tackle Europe's unemployment crisis head-on.

The Commission has stated that it is committed to matching jobs and jobseekers across borders in order to meet occupational demand. It intends to do this by helping young people with relevant skills to find jobs in other countries.

1. What does the Commission hope to achieve through this pilot project? Is it far-reaching enough? What will the next step be?

2. Will the Commission ensure that persons who come from a background of vocational learning or apprenticeship have the same opportunity to find job placements abroad as those who have academic qualifications?

3. In implementing this pilot project, to what extent will the Commission be promoting the creation of and investment in green jobs?

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

1. In Europe high levels of youth unemployment co-exist with unfilled job vacancies. 'Your first EURES job' aims to test the effectiveness of a tailor-made job matching service combined with EU funding. The objective for 2012-2013 is to ensure around 5 000 job placements in another Member State than the country of residence of the young person concerned. ([1])

Its outreach capacity is limited given the budget available. The Commission has proposed, under the draft EU Programme for Social Change and Innovation, the introduction of more such targeted mobility schemes as from 2014.

2. The preparatory action as such is open to young EU citizens aged 18-30, irrespective of their level of qualification, work experience or background. The individual project beneficiaries are responsible for the selection of the target population.

3. The projects selected do not necessarily target specific jobs. Under the preparatory action, all jobs compliant with national labour standards and law are eligible, irrespective of the economic sector. Jobs need to have minimum six months duration and ensure a salary.

([1]) The objective is laid down in the 'Youth Opportunities Initiative', COM(2011)933 final, 20.12.2011.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006299/12
to the Commission
Mairead McGuinness (PPE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: VAT on digitised e-textbooks and hard-copy printed textbooks

Can the Commission outline the rules concerning the provision for VAT on publications in e-textbook form and hard-copy printed textbooks, and the reason for any difference, should there be any?

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

In the VAT legislation currently in force, the definition of digitised e-textbooks differs from hard-copy printed textbooks and the place of their taxation is also different. In principle, the place of taxation of a supply of goods, such as printed books, is the place where the goods are located at the time when the supply takes place. Whereas services (including e-books) supplied electronically to final consumers within the EU by an EU established supplier are subject to VAT in the Member State of establishment of the supplier.

Member States are normally required to apply a standard rate of VAT of at least 15% to all supplies of goods and services. They may opt to apply one or two reduced rates to some or all of a list of goods and services set out in Annex III to the VAT Directive which contains the supply of books on any physical means of support.

However, electronically supplied services, including supplies of e-books, are specifically excluded from the scope of the reduced VAT. Because of their place of taxation, giving Member States the option to apply reduced rates to e-publications would create a situation of unfair competition against those suppliers located in Member States which apply the standard VAT rate. It would create the potential for the relocation of business activities simply to benefit from the reduced VAT rate, and therefore the EU VAT system would not be neutral.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006300/12
to the Commission
James Nicholson (ECR)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: The definition of 'manufacturer' for the purposes of Directive 2009/23/EC

Can the Commission clarify whether it agrees with the thrust of the current discussions within WELMEC (European Cooperation in Legal Metrology) concerning the definition of 'manufacturer'?

These definitions focus on whether the economic operator placing a non-automatic weighing instrument on the market must concurrently be the operator who obtains the EC type-approval certificate.

The present view of WELMEC is that the type-approval holder does have to be the person placing the instrument on the market.

As it is not an explicit requirement, the limitation on the scope of manufacturer to the type-approval holder would impinge on the development of novel compliance solutions and prevent the development of different business models. Such a definition would undoubtedly have a disproportionate affect on SMEs — especially considering that each EC type-approval certificate costs approximately EUR 640.

Question for written answer E-006652/12
to the Commission
Sir Graham Watson (ALDE)
(3 July 2012)

Subject: Metrology

Measuring instruments are essential to ensure accuracy of measurement, notably for transactions by consumers and industry in everyday life. The main EU legislation on measuring instruments are Directives 2004/22/EC and 2009/23/EC.

Before weighing instruments can be used for commercial practice they must be subject to two separate procedures, first laboratory testing to obtain a type approval certificate, and secondly a verification check to ensure compliance with the type approval before the product is marketed.

Some Member States have operated the system such that the business placing the measuring instrument on the market does not need to be the same business which gained the type approval document. This has allowed many SMEs to base their business models on using type approval documents for the relevant component within the subsequently manufactured measuring instrument.

WELMEC has recently submitted that the term 'manufacturer', as set out in the directives, should only be interpreted as meaning the business placing the instrument on the market if it is the same as the one undertaking the type approval process. This would lead to additional expense for industry and only create a need for parallel approvals, where identical type approvals are obtained on products with no real benefit to consumers.

What is the Commission's view on how the term manufacturer is defined within EU metrology?

Joint answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(14 August 2012)

In the context of the New Approach, of which Directive 2009/23/EC is part, 'manufacturer' means the person who manufactures an instrument or has an instrument designed or manufactured, and markets that instrument under his name or trademark. The definition implies that the manufacturer is fully responsible for the whole process from design through to placing on the market and putting into use of the instrument.

With this in mind the WELMEC [1] guidance would seem too drastic an approach. A manufacturer is at all times responsible for the instruments he places on the market under his name. Given this clear responsibility there is no need to change current practices and force anyone into revising the name on their type examination certificates. The Commission is further looking into this matter and will inform stakeholders of the outcome.

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(1) European cooperation in legal metrology.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006301/12
to the Commission
James Nicholson (ECR)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Invitation to Northern Ireland — Commissioner Georgieva

The European Union is the world's largest humanitarian aid donor, providing more than 50% of humanitarian aid worldwide. This year marks the 20th anniversary of ECHO which for the past two decades has been providing humanitarian aid to millions of people, and has helped to lift countless more out of the severe poverty that exists across the globe.

Northern Ireland (NI) may be one of the smaller parts of the United Kingdom but has nonetheless continually shown itself to support international development and aid right across the world. Notably, the NI Executive is currently examining proposals for an International Development Strategy for Northern Ireland drafted by the NI Assembly's All Party Group on International Development.

The Coalition of Aid and Development Agencies in Northern Ireland (CADA) is an umbrella organisation of overseas aid agencies with an active presence in Northern Ireland. There are currently 23 member agencies, which are collectively supported by more than 150 000 people across Northern Ireland who donate their money and time to campaign, fundraise and volunteer. In 2009 these member organisations raised over GBP 23 million for overseas aid.

With this in mind, I wish to ask if the Commissioner or any of her officials have any plans to visit Northern Ireland during 2012 to meet with organisations involved with international development work and, if not, would they be open to accepting such an invitation?

Answer given by Ms Georgieva on behalf of the Commission
(10 August 2012)

The Commissioner is very much aware and appreciative of the valuable work carried out in Northern Ireland supporting aid and international development . She has yet to visit Northern Ireland but would certainly consider doing so if a suitable opportunity were to arise. In the meantime, members of the Coalition of Aid and Development Agencies in Northern Ireland are very welcome to contact the Commissioner either directly or through the VOICE network.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-006302/12
an die Kommission
Sophia in 't Veld (ALDE), Cornelis de Jong (GUE/NGL), Joanna Senyszyn (S&D), Franziska Katharina Brantner (Verts/ALE) und Jean-Marie Cavada (PPE)
(26. Juni 2012)

Betrifft: Forschungsprojekt RELIGARE

RELIGARE ist ein auf drei Jahre angelegtes Forschungsprojekt, das von der Kommission finanziert wird. Themenstellungen sind Religionen, Zugehörigkeit, Glaubensüberzeugungen und Säkularismus. Mit diesem neuen sozialrechtlichen europäischen Projekt soll die Vielfalt der Glaubensüberzeugungen im heutigen Europa untersucht werden, wobei es schwerpunktmäßig um die rechtlichen Aspekte geht sowie um Fragen, die den Umgang mit Pluralismus im Staatsrecht betreffen. Am 27. und 28. Juni 2012 wird im Zuge von RELIGARE ein internationales Seminar veranstaltet und ein Dialog über Politik geführt. Leider sind dabei Stimmen der säkularen Seite nicht vertreten.

1. Kann die Kommission einen Überblick darüber geben, wie viele Mittel sie für das Projekt RELIGARE aufgewandt hat und wie sie sicherstellen will, dass bei dem Projekt alle religiösen und säkularen Stimmen in der europäischen Gesellschaft widergespiegelt werden? Kann die Kommission genau angeben, nach welchen Kriterien im Rahmen des 7. RP dieses Projekt finanziert wurde und wie das RELIGARE-Seminar diese Kriterien erfüllt?

2. Kann die Kommission klarstellen, warum nur Religionsgemeinschaften gezielt angesprochen wurden? Plant sie, eine ähnliche Veranstaltung über die Finanzierung säkularer gesellschaftlicher Kräfte abzuhalten?

3. Ist die Kommission überzeugt, dass die Religionsfreiheit und religiöse Vielfalt sich nur auf religiöse Überzeugungen und nicht auf andere Lebenseinstellungen und -überzeugungen bezieht?

4. Hält die Kommission diese RELIGARE-Veranstaltung für repräsentativ für die Vielfalt der Lebensauffassungen in Europa? Würde nach Meinung der Kommission die gesellschaftliche Realität von heute in den Podiumsdiskussionen und beim RELIGARE Projekt generell nicht besser widergespiegelt, wenn dazu auch Vertreter anderer Überzeugungen eingeladen wären?

5. Kann die Kommission im Einzelnen darlegen, wie die Teilnehmer von RELIGARE von ihr ausgewählt wurden?

6. Sollte ein von der EU finanziertes Projekt wie RELIGARE nicht die Grundsätze Freiheit und Glauben einhalten?

Antwort von Frau Geoghegan-Quinn im Namen der Kommission
(14. August 2012)

RELIGARE ist ein Forschungsprojekt der EU, das über den Bereich „Sozial-, Wirtschafts- und Geisteswissenschaften" (Tätigkeit „Wichtigste gesellschaftliche Tendenzen und ihre Auswirkungen") des Siebten Rahmenprogramms für Forschung und technologische Entwicklung (RP7, 2007-2013) gefördert wird. Das Thema 3.3.2 des Arbeitsprogramms 2009 für die Sozial-, Wirtschafts- und Geisteswissenschaften lautete „Religion und Säkularismus in Europa" ([1]). Gegenstand der Arbeiten sind Koexistenz und Interaktion säkularer und religiöser Werte im modernen Europa.

Nach der Veröffentlichung einer Aufforderung zur Einreichung von Vorschlägen für ein Thema gehen bei der Kommission Vorschläge ein, die das vorher festgelegte Bewertungsverfahren durchlaufen.

Wie alle Forschungsvorschläge wurde das Projekt RELIGARE im Anschluss an eine Aufforderung ausgewählt, in deren Folge eine Finanzhilfevereinbarung über einen maximalen EU-Beitrag von 2 699 943 EUR unterzeichnet wurde.

Entsprechend den Regeln für das RP7 hat die Kommission keinen Einfluss auf die wissenschaftliche Methodik und die Inhalte sowie auf Aktivitäten und Forscherteams des Projektkonsortiums. Die Forscher können ihre wissenschaftliche Tätigkeit frei gestalten und u. a. Seminare, politische Gespräche und andere Veranstaltungen zur Verbreitung der Forschungsergebnisse organisieren.

([1]) Im Rahmen der Forschungsprojekte wird evaluiert, inwieweit säkulare Werte im modernen Europa mit religiösen Werten koexistieren und interagieren. Insbesondere soll untersucht werden, wie sich das Zusammenspiel religiöser und säkularer Regeln, Werte und Praktiken auf die Formulierung und Umsetzung politischer Maßnahmen auswirkt, außerdem werden die Folgen dieser Regeln, Werte und Praktiken für das Verhalten und die Möglichkeiten Einzelner und von Gruppen im privaten und öffentlichen Leben analysiert.

Entsprechend der Beschreibung der Projektarbeiten berücksichtigt RELIGARE nicht nur religiöse Gemeinschaften. Die Erhebungen beinhalten auch Befragungen von Bürgern ohne religiöse Überzeugungen. Die Forschungsergebnisse werden zum Projektabschluss (Dezember 2012) veröffentlicht.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-006302/12
à la Commission
Sophia in 't Veld (ALDE), Cornelis de Jong (GUE/NGL), Joanna Senyszyn (S&D), Franziska Katharina Brantner (Verts/ALE) et Jean-Marie Cavada (PPE)
(26 juin 2012)

Objet: Projet de recherche Religare

Religare est un projet de recherche d'une durée de trois ans, financé par la Commission européenne, qui porte sur les religions, l'appartenance, les croyances et la laïcité. Ce nouveau projet socio-juridique européen explore la diversité des croyances dans l'Europe contemporaine, en se concentrant plus particulièrement sur le droit et les questions relatives à la gestion du pluralisme dans le droit étatique. Les 27 et 28 juin 2012, un séminaire international et un dialogue politique seront organisés dans le cadre du projet Religare. Aucune voix laïque n'y sera malheureusement représentée.

1. La Commission peut-elle indiquer dans les grandes lignes quel financement elle a accordé au projet Religare et de quelle façon elle veille à ce que le projet reflète pleinement tous les courants religieux et laïcs de la société européenne? Peut-elle préciser quels sont les critères de financement au titre du 7e PC et de quelle manière le séminaire Religare satisfait à ces critères?

2. La Commission peut-elle préciser pourquoi seules les communautés religieuses ont été ciblées? Entend-elle financer une manifestation similaire sur le rôle des forces séculaires dans la société?

3. La Commission estime-t-elle que la liberté de religion et la diversité religieuse s'appliquent uniquement aux croyances religieuses et non à d'autres philosophies de vie et croyances?

4. La Commission est-elle d'avis que cette manifestation dans le cadre du projet Religare est représentative de la diversité des philosophies de vie en Europe? La Commission convient-elle que, si Religare invitait des représentants d'autres philosophies de vie et croyances, les participants à ses réunions, et le projet Religare en général, seraient un reflet plus exact de la société d'aujourd'hui?

5. La Commission peut-elle préciser comment elle sélectionne les participants au projet Religare?

6. La Commission estime-t-elle que le projet Religare, financé par l'Union européenne, respecte pleinement les principes de liberté et de croyance?

Réponse donnée par Mme Geoghegan-Quinn au nom de la Commission
(14 août 2012)

Religare est un projet de recherche européen dans le domaine des sciences socioéconomiques et humaines (SSH), activité «Les grandes tendances dans la société et leurs implications». Il est financé par le septième programme-cadre de recherche et développement technologique (7e PC, 2007-2013). Le sujet 3.3.2 du programme de travail SSH 2009 s'intitulait «La religion et le sécularisme à travers l'Europe» ([1]) et traitait de la coexistence et des interactions entre les valeurs séculières et religieuses en Europe contemporaine.

Une fois le sujet publié, la Commission reçoit des propositions qui sont soumises à un processus d'évaluation déterminé.

Comme tous les projets de recherche, Religare a été sélectionné à la suite d'un appel à propositions qui a débouché sur la signature d'une convention de subvention prévoyant une contribution de l'Union européenne d'un montant maximum de 2 699 943 euros.

Conformément aux règles du 7e PC, la Commission n'intervient pas dans la méthodologie scientifique, le contenu, les activités ou les équipes impliquées dans le consortium du projet. Les chercheurs sont libres d'organiser leurs activités scientifiques, en ce compris des séminaires, des dialogues politiques ou la diffusion des résultats des recherches.

([1]) Les projets de recherche évalueront dans quelle mesure les valeurs séculières coexistent et interagissent avec les valeurs religieuses en Europe contemporaine. La recherche abordera en particulier la manière dont l'interaction entre les règles, les valeurs et les pratiques religieuses et séculières influence la formulation et la mise en œuvre des politiques publiques ainsi que l'impact de ces règles, valeurs et pratiques sur le comportement et les perspectives des individus et des groupes dans les sphères privée et publique.

Au vu de la description de ses travaux, Religare ne cible pas uniquement les communautés religieuses. Ses enquêtes comporteront des interviews de personnes sans convictions religieuses. Les résultats de la recherche seront publiés à la fin du projet (décembre 2012).

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-006302/12
aan de Commissie
Sophia in 't Veld (ALDE), Cornelis de Jong (GUE/NGL), Joanna Senyszyn (S&D), Franziska Katharina Brantner (Verts/ALE) en Jean-Marie Cavada (PPE)
(26 juni 2012)

Betreft: RELIGARE — onderzoeksproject

RELIGARE is een drie jaar durend onderzoeksproject over religies, gemeenschapsgevoel, overtuigingen en secularisme, dat door de Europese Commissie wordt gesubsidieerd. Dit nieuwe maatschappelijk-juridische Europese project onderzoekt de diversiteit aan overtuigingen in het hedendaagse Europa, met bijzondere aandacht voor recht en de wijze waarop in het nationale recht met pluralisme wordt omgegaan. Op 27 en 28 juni 2012 worden een internationaal seminar en een beleidsdialoog over RELIGARE georganiseerd. Helaas zullen er geen seculiere stemmen vertegenwoordigd zijn.

1. Kan de Commissie een overzicht geven van de subsidies die zij aan het RELIGARE-project heeft verleend en toelichten hoe zij erop toeziet dat alle religies en seculiere stemmen volledig in het project aan bod komen? Kan de Commissie verduidelijken wat de criteria voor subsidiëring uit het zevende kaderprogramma zijn en hoe het RELIGARE-seminar aan die criteria voldoet?

2. Kan de Commissie toelichten waarom alleen religieuze gemeenschappen aan bod komen? Is de Commissie van plan een soortgelijk evenement over de rol van seculiere krachten in de samenleving te subsidiëren?

3. Is de Commissie van mening dat godsdienstvrijheid en religieuze diversiteit alleen betrekking hebben op godsdienstige overtuigingen en niet op andere levensbeschouwingen en overtuigingen?

4. Is de Commissie van oordeel dat het RELIGARE-evenement representatief is voor de diversiteit aan levensbeschouwingen in Europa? Is de Commissie het ermee eens dat de panels van de RELIGARE-bijeenkomsten, en het project in het algemeen, een betere afspiegeling van de hedendaagse samenleving zouden vormen als RELIGARE ook vertegenwoordigers van andere levensbeschouwingen en overtuigingen zou uitnodigen?

5. Kan de Commissie toelichten hoe zij de deelnemers aan RELIGARE selecteert?

6. Is de Commissie van mening dat RELIGARE, een door de EU gesubsidieerd project, de beginselen van vrijheid en overtuiging volledig eerbiedigt?

Antwoord van mevrouw Geoghegan-Quinn namens de Commissie
(14 augustus 2012)

RELIGARE is een Europees onderzoeksproject dat gefinancierd wordt uit het zevende kaderprogramma voor onderzoek en technologische ontwikkeling (KP7, 2007-2013) op het gebied van de sociaaleconomische wetenschappen en geesteswetenschappen (SSH), activiteit „Belangrijke tendensen in de maatschappij en hun gevolgen". Onderwerp 3.3.2 van het SSH-werkprogramma 2009 is getiteld „Godsdienst en secularisme in Europa" ([1]) en onderzoekt het samengaan en de interactie van seculiere en religieuze waarden in het huidige Europa.

Wanneer het onderwerp gepubliceerd is, ontvangt de Commissie voorstellen die het omschreven evaluatieproces doorlopen.

Zoals alle onderzoeksvoorstellen werd RELIGARE geselecteerd naar aanleiding van een uitnodiging tot het indienen van voorstellen die heeft geleid tot de ondertekening van een subsidieovereenkomst voor een financiële bijdrage van de Europese Unie van maximaal 2 699 943 EUR.

Volgens de regels van het zevende kaderprogramma bemoeit de Commissie zich niet met de wetenschappelijke methoden, de inhoud, de activiteiten of de teams die bij het projectconsortium zijn betrokken. De onderzoekers kunnen hun wetenschappelijke activiteiten waaronder seminars, beleidsdialogen en andere wijzen van verspreiding van de onderzoekresultaten vrij organiseren.

([1]) In de onderzoeksprojecten zal worden nagegaan in hoeverre seculiere waarden bestaan naast en interageren met religieuze waarden in het huidige Europa. Met name moet het onderzoek betrekking hebben op de wijze waarop de wisselwerking van religieuze en seculiere regels, waarden en praktijken van invloed is op de formulering en uitvoering van overheidsbeleid en het effect van deze voorschriften, waarden en praktijken op het gedrag van en mogelijkheden voor individuen en groepen in het openbare en het privéleven.

Volgens de beschrijving van de werkzaamheden is RELIGARE niet alleen gericht op religieuze gemeenschappen. Voor het onderzoek worden onder meer vraaggesprekken gevoerd met mensen zonder religieuze overtuiging. De onderzoeksresultaten worden gepubliceerd aan het eind van het project (december 2012).

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-006302/12
do Komisji
Sophia in 't Veld (ALDE), Cornelis de Jong (GUE/NGL), Joanna Senyszyn (S&D), Franziska Katharina Brantner (Verts/ALE) oraz Jean-Marie Cavada (PPE)
(26 czerwca 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Projekt badawczy RELIGARE

Projekt RELIGARE to trzyletni projekt badawczy finansowany przez Komisję Europejską, który zajmuje się religiami, przynależnością, przekonaniami i sekularyzmem. Ten nowy społeczno-prawny projekt europejski bada różnorodność przekonań we współczesnej Europie, skupiając się na prawie i zagadnieniach dotyczących zarządzania pluralizmem w państwie prawa. W dniach 27 i 28 czerwca 2012 r. RELIGARE będzie przedmiotem międzynarodowego seminarium i dialogu politycznego. Niestety brak tam świeckich przedstawicieli.

1. Czy Komisja może przedstawić w ogólnych zarysach środki finansowe przyznane projektowi RELIGARE i jak dopilnowuje, by projekt w pełni odzwierciedlał wszystkie religijne i świeckie poglądy europejskiego społeczeństwa? Czy Komisja może wyjaśnić kryteria finansowania 7PR i w jakim zakresie projekt RELIGARE spełnia te kryteria?

2. Czy Komisja może wyjaśnić, dlaczego zwrócono się tylko do wspólnot religijnych? Czy Komisja zamierza sfinansować podobne wydarzenie na temat roli świeckich nurtów w społeczeństwie?

3. Czy Komisja jest zdania, że wolność wyznania i różnorodność religijna dotyczy tylko przekonań religijnych, a nie innych postaw życiowych i przekonań?

4. Czy Komisja uważa, że wydarzenie zorganizowane wokół RELIGARE reprezentuje różnorodność postaw życiowych występujących w Europie? Czy Komisja zgadza się, że gdyby w ramach RELIGARE zaproszono przedstawicieli reprezentujących inne postawy i przekonania zespoły dyskusyjne na posiedzeniach i ogółem projekt RELIGARE lepiej odzwierciedlałyby dzisiejsze społeczeństwo?

5. Czy Komisja może wyjaśnić jak wybrano uczestników RELIGARE?

6. Czy Komisja uważa, że finansowany przez UE projekt RELIGARE w pełni przestrzega zasad dotyczących wolności przekonań?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarz Máire Geoghegan-Quinn w imieniu Komisji
(14 sierpnia 2012 r.)

RELIGARE jest europejskim projektem badawczym finansowanym przez siódmy program ramowy w zakresie badań i rozwoju technologicznego (7PR, 2007-2013) w dziedzinie nauk społeczno-ekonomicznych i humanistycznych), działanie „Główne tendencje w społeczeństwie i ich konsekwencje". Program prac w zakresie nauk społeczno-ekonomicznych i humanistycznych na rok 2009 w temacie 3.3.2 nosił tytuł: „Religia i świeckość w całej Europie" [1] i zbadała współistnienia upraw i interakcji świeckiego i religijnych wartości we współczesnej Europie.

Po publikacji tematu Komisja otrzymuje wnioski, które przechodzą opisany proces oceny.

Podobnie jak w przypadku wszystkich projektów badawczych, projekty w ramach RELIGARE były wybierane w następstwie zaproszenia do składania wniosków, które doprowadziło do podpisania umów o przyznanie grantów, przy czym łączny wkład Unii Europejskiej nie mógł przekroczyć 2 699 943 EUR .

Zgodnie z zasadami realizacji 7PR, Komisja nie ingeruje w stosowane metody naukowe, treść, podejmowane działania ani skład zespołów uczestniczących w konsorcjum projektu. Naukowcy mają swobodę w zakresie organizowania swej pracy naukowej, w tym wykorzystywania seminariów, dialogu politycznego i innych form upowszechniania wyników swych badań.

Zgodnie z opisem zadań projektu RELIGARE, nie obejmuje on wyłącznie wspólnot wyznaniowych. Prowadzone w jego ramach ankiety i badania obejmują też wywiady z osobami bez przekonań religijnych. Wyniki badań zostaną opublikowane przed zakończeniem projektu (grudzień 2012 r.).

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[1] Projekty badawcze służą dokonaniu oceny, w jakim stopniu świeckie wartości współistnieją i wchodzą w interakcję z wartościami religijnymi we współczesnej Europie. W szczególności, badania będą ukierunkowane na oddziaływanie religijnych i świeckich zasad, wartości i praktyk na kształtowanie i wdrażanie polityki publicznej, a także na wpływ tych zasad, wartości i praktyk na zachowania jednostek i grup w życiu osobistym i społecznym oraz na indywidualne i grupowe perspektywy.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006302/12
to the Commission
Sophia in 't Veld (ALDE), Cornelis de Jong (GUE/NGL), Joanna Senyszyn (S&D), Franziska Katharina Brantner (Verts/ALE) and Jean-Marie Cavada (PPE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: RELIGARE — research project

RELIGARE is a three-year research project funded by the European Commission and is about religions, belongings, beliefs and secularism. This new socio-legal European project investigates the diversity of convictions in contemporary Europe with a focus on law and on questions relating to the management of pluralism under state law. On 27 and 28 June 2012, RELIGARE will be the subject of an international seminar and policy dialogue. Disappointingly, no secular voices will be represented.

1. Can the Commission provide an overview of the funding it has granted to the RELIGARE project and of how it ensures that the project is fully reflecting all religious and secular voices in European society? Can the Commission clarify the criteria for funding in FP7 and how the RELIGARE seminar meets those criteria?

2. Can the Commission clarify why only religious communities have been targeted? Does the Commission intend to fund a similar event on the role of secular forces in society?

3. Is the Commission of the opinion that freedom of religion and religious diversity only relates to religious beliefs and not to other life stances and beliefs?

4. Does the Commission consider that this RELIGARE event is representative of the diversity of life stances in Europe? Does the Commission agree that were RELIGARE to invite representatives from other life stances and beliefs, the panels of its meetings, and the RELIGARE project in general, would reflect today's society more accurately?

5. Can the Commission clarify how it selects the participants in RELIGARE?

6. Does the Commission believe that RELIGARE, an EU-funded project, fully respects the principles of freedom and belief?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(14 August 2012)

RELIGARE is a European research project funded by the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7, 2007-2013) in the field of Socioeconomic Sciences and Humanities (SSH), Activity 'Major trends in society and their implications'. The SSH work programme 2009 topic 3.3.2 was entitled 'Religion and secularism across Europe' ([1]) and looked into the coexistence and interactions of secular and religious values in contemporary Europe.

Once the topic is published, the Commission receives proposals which go through the defined evaluation process.

Like all research proposals, RELIGARE was selected following a call for proposals which led to the signature of a grant agreement for a European Union contribution of maximum EUR 2 699 943 funding.

According to FP7 rules, the Commission does not intervene in the scientific methodology, content, activities or teams involved in the project consortium. Researchers have the freedom to organise their scientific activities including seminars, policy dialogues and other dissemination of research results.

According to its work description, RELIGARE does not only target religious communities. Its research surveys will include interviews with people without religious convictions. Research findings will be published by the end of the project (December 2012).

([1]) Research projects will assess to what extent secular values coexist and interact with religious values in contemporary Europe. In particular, research will address how the interplay of religious and secular rules, values and practices influences the formulation and implementation of public policies as well as the impact of these rules, values and practices on the behaviour of, and opportunities for, individuals and groups in private and public life.

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande E-006303/12
till kommissionen
Anna Hedh (S&D)
(26 juni 2012)

Angående: Frontex analys av människohandel under fotbolls-EM 2012

I ett riskanalysdokument om fotbolls-EM 2012, som arrangeras av Uefa, konstaterar Frontex att mästerskapet inte medför någon ökad risk för människohandel och att hotnivån fortsätter att vara låg. I dokumentet rekommenderas också att en åtskillnad görs mellan prostitution och människohandel. Den slutsats som dras är att även om de flesta offer för människohandel hamnar i prostitution, så är de personer som kommer till Ukraina endast ”frivilliga sexarbetare”.

Känner kommissionen till Frontex slutsatser och delar kommissionen dess bedömning att arrangemanget av fotbolls-EM inte påverkar risken för människohandel i de länder där det arrangeras?

Instämmer kommissionen i bedömningen att de personer som kommer till Polen är ”frivilliga sexarbetare” och känner den till på vilka grunder Frontex gör denna bedömning?

Hur ser kommissionen på Frontex konstateranden i relation till åtagandet i direktiv 2011/36/EU ([1]) om att vidta ”åtgärder för att minska den efterfrågan som ligger till grund för alla former av utnyttjande och åtgärder för att minska risken för att människor blir offer för människohandel”?

Svar från Cecilia Malmström på kommissionens vägnar
(6 augusti 2012)

I enlighet med Frontex gemensamma integrerade modell för riskanalys, som bygger på medlemsländernas bidrag och andra relevanta informationskällor, har kommissionen tillgång till Frontex riskanalyser. Dessa analyser genomförs helt och hållet under byråns ansvar, men kommissionen beaktar den riskanalys som nämns i frågan.

Som understryks i EU:s nyligen antagna strategi ([2]) visar de preliminära resultaten från de uppgifter kommissionen sammanställde i september 2011 ([3]) att tre fjärdedelar av de registrerade offren var utsatta för människohandel i syftet sexuell exploatering (andelen ökade från 70 % 2008 till 76 % 2010). Strategin identifierar ytterligare grundorsaker, som bland annat våld mot kvinnor och ojämlikhet mellan könen.

EU har inte behandlat fenomenet prostitution varken ur en politisk eller en lagstiftningsmässig synpunkt. Hur medlemsländerna behandlar prostitution i lagen och i politiken varierar. Dock är det en prioritet för EU och dess medlemsländer att bekämpa människohandel, inklusive där syftet är sexuell exploatering, var den än förekommer.

En av åtgärderna i EU:s strategi innefattar forskning som finansieras av kommissionen om tillgång och efterfrågan på de tjänster som offer för människohandel tillhandahåller, även de som utsätts för sexuell exploatering och specifika offerkategorier såsom barn. Forskningen kommer att utgöra material till en rapport som kommissionen ska lägga fram 2016, vilket krävs enligt direktiv 2011/36 ([4]), där effekterna av de befintliga lagar som kriminaliserar utnyttjandet av tjänster från offer för människohandel bedöms.

([1]) EUT L 101, 15.4.2011, s. 1.
([2]) EU:s strategi för utrotande av människohandel (2012-2016).
([3]) Insamlade under perioden 2008-2010.
([4]) Europaparlamentets och rådets direktiv 2011/36/EU av den 5 april 2002 om förebyggande och bekämpande av människohandel, om skydd av dess offer och om ersättande av rådets beslut 2002/629/RIF (EUT L 101, 15.4.2011).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006303/12
to the Commission
Anna Hedh (S&D)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Frontex assessment of human trafficking during Euro 2012

In a risk analysis document on the 2012 UEFA European Football Championship, Frontex concludes that the championship presents no increased risk of human trafficking and that the threat level remains low. Moreover the document recommends that a distinction be drawn between sex workers and trafficking in human beings. It concludes that, even though most victims of trafficking end up in prostitution, the people coming to Ukraine are solely 'voluntary sex workers'.

Is the Commission aware of the statements by Frontex and does it share the assessment that hosting the European Football Championships has no effect on the risk of human trafficking in the host countries?

Does the Commission share the assessment that the people entering Poland are 'voluntary sex workers', and is it aware of the grounds on which Frontex made this judgment?

Lastly, how does the Commission view the statements by Frontex in relation to the commitment made in Directive 2011/36/EU ([1]) to take 'measures to discourage and reduce the demand that fosters all forms of exploitation, and measures to reduce the risk of people becoming victims of trafficking in human beings'?

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

The Commission has access to risk analyses prepared by Frontex, in accordance with the latter's Common Integrated Risk Analysis Model, which builds upon contributions from the Member States and other relevant sources of information. Such analyses are drawn up under the sole responsibility of the Agency. The Commission takes note of Frontex's risk analysis in question.

As stressed in the EU Strategy recently adopted ([2]), preliminary results of the data collected by the Commission in September 2011 ([3]) demonstrate that three quarters of registered victims were trafficked for sexual exploitation (an increase from 70% in 2008 to 76% in 2010). The strategy further identifies several root causes, such as *inter alia* violence against women and gender inequality.

The EU has not touched upon the phenomenon of prostitution from a political nor a legislative point of view. Policies and the legal treatment of prostitution vary amongst different Member States. However, addressing trafficking in human beings, including for the purpose of sexual exploitation, is a priority for the EU and its Member States wherever it occurs.

One of the actions in the EU Strategy involves Commission funding research on demand for and supply of services and goods by victims of trafficking in human beings, including victims trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation and specific categories of victims such as children. The research will provide material for a report by the Commission in 2016, as required by Directive 2011/36 ([4]), assessing the impact of existing national laws criminalising the use of services of victims of trafficking.

([1]) OJ L 101, 15.4.2011, p. 1.
([2]) EU Strategy towards Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings (2012-2016).
([3]) Collected for the period 2008-2010 inclusive.
([4]) Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, and replacing Council Decision 2002/629/JHA (OJ L 101,1, 15.4.2011).

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-006305/12
à la Commission
Christine De Veyrac (PPE)
(26 juin 2012)

Objet: Présence de substances polluantes dans les vernis à ongles

Des études ont mis en avant un possible danger émanant de certains vernis à ongles pour les consommateurs européens.

D'après le dernier rapport du système d'alerte rapide pour les produits dangereux non alimentaires (Rapex) commandité par la Commission, certains vernis à ongles présents sur le marché contiendraient des produits toxiques, responsables de cancers.

Fin 2009, une enquête de l'organisme français DGCCRF (Direction du commerce et de la répression des fraudes) a été réalisée sur le marché national et révélait qu'on retrouve dans certains vernis des phtalates prohibés et des concentrations de formaldéhyde supérieures aux 5 % autorisés depuis 1996.

Selon Frédéric Vincent, porte-parole des questions de consommation et de santé à la Commission, «les phtalates interdits sont les substances le plus souvent identifiées dans ces produits. Ils proviennent surtout des États-Unis mais aussi d'Europe, notamment du Royaume-Uni».

Les risques auxquels sont exposés les consommateurs sembleraient alors bien établis. Certains chimistes environnementalistes du réseau santé-environnement relèvent que «le formaldéhyde est un cancérigène et les phtalates sont toxiques pour la reproduction. Ces substances dans les vernis peuvent traverser l'ongle et atteindre le métabolisme. Comme elles sont volatiles, on peut aussi les respirer».

Au vu de ces éléments, la Commission peut-elle indiquer si elle envisage de mettre en place des mesures destinées à renforcer l'information des consommateurs concernant la toxicité de certains vernis à ongles?

Réponse donnée par M. Dalli au nom de la Commission
(3 août 2012)

La législation sur les produits cosmétiques ([1]) vise à garantir que seuls les produits cosmétiques sûrs sont mis sur le marché européen.

Il existe plusieurs phtalates dont l'utilisation dans les produits cosmétiques est interdite. Le formaldéhyde est actuellement autorisé dans les produits cosmétiques en tant qu'agent conservateur à une concentration maximale de 0,2 %, sauf pour les produits d'hygiène buccale, dans lesquels la concentration exprimée en formaldéhyde libre ne peut dépasser 0,1 %. En outre, le formaldéhyde est autorisé dans les préparations pour durcir les ongles à une concentration maximale de 5 % calculée en formaldéhyde. Les conditions d'emploi et avertissements qui doivent figurer sur l'étiquette du produit sont énoncés dans la législation sur les produits cosmétiques.

C'est aux autorités nationales compétentes qu'il incombe de mettre en application la législation sur les produits cosmétiques et, à ce titre, d'assurer la surveillance du marché. Leur rôle est de la plus haute importance pour garantir que seuls les produits conformes se trouvent sur le marché. Les États membres échangent régulièrement des informations sur la surveillance du marché des produits cosmétiques par l'intermédiaire de la plate-forme des autorités de surveillance du marché européen concernant les produits cosmétiques (Pemsac). D'après les informations dont elle dispose, la Commission ne juge pas nécessaire de mettre en place des mesures pour renforcer l'information des consommateurs concernant la toxicité de certains vernis à ongles.

([1]) Directive 76/768/CEE du Conseil du 27 juillet 1976 concernant le rapprochement des législations des États membres relatives aux produits cosmétiques (JO L 262 du 27.9.1976, p. 169).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006305/12
to the Commission
Christine De Veyrac (PPE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Toxic substances in nail varnish

Studies have revealed that certain nail varnishes are potentially dangerous to EU consumers.

According to the latest report by the European Rapid Alert System for non-food dangerous products (RAPEX) commissioned by the European Commission, certain nail varnishes on the market contain toxic substances that cause cancer.

At the end of 2009, an investigation by the French body DGCCRF (Directorate-General for Competition, Consumer Affairs and Fraud Repression) was carried out on a national level, revealing that prohibited phthalates and formaldehyde concentrations exceeding the 5% limit (set in 1996) could be found in certain nail varnishes.

According to Frédéric Vincent, spokesperson for health and consumers at the Commission, 'prohibited phthalates are the substances that are most often identified in these products. They mainly come from the United States but also from Europe, in particular from the United Kingdom'.

The risks consumers are exposed to have therefore been established. Some environmental chemists from the RES (Health-Environment Network) claim that 'formaldehyde is carcinogenic and phthalates are toxic to reproduction. These substances in nail varnishes can pass from the nail into the body. As they are volatile, they can also be inhaled'.

In view of the above, can the Commission indicate whether it intends to implement measures to increase consumer information on the toxicity of certain nail varnishes?

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

The objective of the cosmetics legislation ([1]) is to ensure that only safe cosmetic products are placed on the European market.

Several phthalates are prohibited for use in cosmetic products. Formaldehyde is currently authorised in cosmetics as preservative at a maximum concentration of 0.2%, except for the products for oral hygiene where the maximum concentration of 0.1% expressed as free formaldehyde applies. In addition, formaldehyde is allowed in nail hardeners at a maximum concentration of 5% calculated as formaldehyde. Conditions of use and warnings which must be printed on the label of the product are laid down in the cosmetics legislation.

Enforcement of the cosmetics legislation, including market surveillance, is the responsibility of the competent national authorities. Their role is of utmost importance in ensuring that only compliant products can be found on the market. Member States regularly exchange information on market surveillance of cosmetic products within the Platform of European Market Surveillance Authorities for Cosmetics (PEMSAC). Based on the information available to it, the Commission does not consider that it necessary to implement measures to increase consumer information about the toxicity of certain nail varnishes.

([1]) Council Directive 76/768/EEC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to cosmetic products, OJ L 262, 27.9.1976, p. 169.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-006307/12
à la Commission
Gilles Pargneaux (S&D)
(26 juin 2012)

Objet: Recherche européenne sur les maladies rares et orphelines

Les patients européens atteints de maladies rares et orphelines regrettent souvent le manque d'informations autour de leurs pathologies et demandent une meilleure mutualisation des moyens de la recherche dans ce domaine.

Le commissaire européen à la santé a réitéré, dans un discours tenu le 24 mai 2012 lors de la 6e conférence européenne sur les maladies rares et les médicaments orphelins, l'engagement de la Commission européenne sur le dossier du développement de centres d'expertise et de réseaux européens de référence. Ceux-ci doivent en effet permettre de mutualiser à l'échelle européenne les moyens et exploiter au maximum les ressources humaines, médicales et scientifiques des différents États membres. Une action communautaire en la matière peut constituer une réelle plus-value. Cependant, les réseaux européens de mutualisation de la recherche dédiés aux maladies orphelines sont en cours de constitution depuis 2004.

Par conséquent, la Commission peut-elle m'indiquer quel est l'état d'avancement de la constitution de ces réseaux européens de référence? Quand envisage-t-elle de publier un document de référence répertoriant ces organismes? Quelle part de financement entend-elle mobiliser pour la recherche sur les maladies rares et orphelines et éventuellement pour favoriser le développement de ces réseaux européens dédiés aux maladies rares, en particulier dans le cadre des 446 millions d'euros prévus par le prochain programme d'action pluriannuel pour la santé (2014-2020)?

Réponse donnée par M. Dalli au nom de la Commission
(13 août 2012)

L'article 12 de la directive 2011/24/UE du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 9 mars 2011 relative à l'application des droits des patients en matière de soins de santé transfrontaliers ([1]) établit que la Commission doit aider les États membres à créer des réseaux européens de référence (RER) entre leurs prestataires de soins de santé et centres d'expertise.

La Commission va adopter, par un acte délégué, une liste de critères auxquels ces réseaux doivent satisfaire ainsi que les conditions et critères auxquels les prestataires qui souhaitent rejoindre ces réseaux doivent répondre. Elle va également arrêter, au moyen d'un acte d'exécution, des critères d'établissement et d'évaluation de ces RER. Elle entend adopter ces actes avant la fin de 2013. À ce moment-là, et lorsque le processus de désignation sera en place, la liste officielle des réseaux sera publiée.

Actuellement, pour les maladies rares, il n'existe, dans la base de données Orphanet ([2]), qu'une liste de centres d'expertise nationaux, désignés par les autorités nationales, et une liste de réseaux européens officieux. Une aide de plus de 325 millions d'euros a été accordée à 50 projets de recherche sur les maladies rares au titre du volet «Santé» du 7e programme-cadre pour la recherche (PC7) ([3]). Vingt-cinq autres projets représentant près de 108 millions d'euros ont été sélectionnés lors du dernier appel à propositions (le sixième) lancé au titre du PC7. Les programmes «Horizon 2020» et «Santé en faveur de la croissance» (2014-2020) prévoient de poursuivre l'aide aux projets de santé publique et de recherche consacrés aux maladies rares. La Commission renforce également la coopération internationale dans ce domaine en soutenant le Consortium international de recherche sur les maladies rares, qui ambitionne de mettre à disposition, d'ici 2020, 200 nouvelles thérapies pour traiter ces maladies ainsi que des moyens pour diagnostiquer la plupart d'entre elles ([4]).

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:088:0045:0065:FR:PDF.
([2]) http://www.orpha.net/consor/cgi-bin/Clinics.php?lng=FR.
([3]) http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/health/home_en.html
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/health/medical-research/rare-diseases/irdirc_en.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006307/12
to the Commission
Gilles Pargneaux (S&D)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: EU research on rare and orphan diseases

Patients in the EU affected by rare and orphan diseases are often disappointed by the lack of information on their diseases and are asking for a better pooling of research resources in this area.

In a speech given on 24 May 2012 during the 6th European Conference on Rare Diseases and Orphan Products, the European Commissioner for Health reaffirmed the Commission's commitment to developing specialised centres and ERNs (European reference networks). These centres and networks should be able to pool resources at a European level and make the best use of human, medical and scientific resources in the different Member States. EU action in this area could add real value. However, European networks for pooling research on orphan diseases have been under construction since 2004.

In view of this, can the Commission indicate what progress has been made in setting up these ERNs?

When does the Commission plan to publish a reference document listing these centres?

How much funding does the Commission intend to allocate to research on rare and orphan diseases, and possibly to support the development of European networks for rare diseases, particularly in the context of the EUR 446 million earmarked for the next multiannual programme of action for health (2014-2020)?

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

Article 12 of Directive 2011/24/EU of the Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2011 on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare ([1]) establishes that the Commission shall support Member States in the development of European reference networks (ERN) between healthcare providers and centres of expertise in Member States.

The Commission will adopt, via a delegated act, a list of criteria that these networks must fulfil, and the conditions and criteria which providers wishing to join networks must meet. The Commission will also adopt, via an implementing act, criteria to establish and evaluate such ERN. The Commission intends to adopt these acts before end 2013. When adopted, and the process of designation is in place, the official list of networks will be published.

At present, only a list of national centres of expertise, designated by national authorities, and a list of existing unofficial European networks for rare diseases is available in the Orphanet database ([2]). Fifty research projects on rare diseases have been supported by over EUR 325 million in the Health Theme of the 7th Framework Programme (FP7) ([3]). Additional 25 projects requesting nearly EUR 108 million were shortlisted through the last 6th FP7 Health call. The continuation of support to public health and research actions into rare diseases is foreseen under the Horizon 2020 and Health for Growth Programmes (2014-20). The Commission is also fostering international research cooperation on rare diseases by supporting the International Rare Disease Research Consortium, whose goals are to deliver, by 2020, 200 new therapies for rare diseases and means to diagnose most rare diseases ([4]).

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:088:0045:0065:EN:PDF.
([2]) http://www.orpha.net/consor/cgi-bin/Clinics.php?lng=EN.
([3]) http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/health/home_en.html
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/health/medical-research/rare-diseases/irdirc_en.html

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006309/12
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(26 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Carabiniere italiano morto in Afghanistan

Un carabiniere italiano, originario della provincia di Lecce, è morto ed altri due sono rimasti feriti in seguito ad una esplosione avvenuta questa mattina in un campo di addestramento della polizia afghana ad Adraskan. L'esplosione è avvenuta alle 8.50 locali in prossimità di una garitta di osservazione installata a ridosso della linea di tiro del poligono. L'esplosione ha coinvolto quattro militari dell'Arma appartenenti al PSTT (Police Speciality Training Team), uno speciale nucleo della polizia afghana. Tutti i militari italiani coinvolti nell'esplosione appartengono a un team che cura l'addestramento della polizia afghana e lavorano per formarli e garantire la sicurezza.

L'Italia purtroppo anche oggi paga un prezzo altissimo per la tutela della democrazia e della libertà in Afghanistan in una missione fondamentale per la sicurezza internazionale.

Alla luce di quanto sovraesposto, può il Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante far sapere:

1. se è a conoscenza di quanto accaduto in Afghanistan;

2. se è in possesso di maggiori informazioni;

3. quali immediate azioni intende disporre per accertare, nell'ambito delle sue competenze, le cause della morte e le eventuali responsabilità?

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

L'AR/VP e il SEAE hanno seguito da vicino questo tragico attacco. Purtroppo sono frequenti gli attacchi diretti contro i consiglieri come quello menzionato nell'interrogazione e il numero di vittime di ordigni esplosivi desta serie preoccupazioni.

L'AR si rende conto della situazione attualmente esistente in Afganistan, in particolare per quanto riguarda le difficili condizioni sotto il profilo della sicurezza. L'UE, in collaborazione con altri partner internazionali come la NATO e le Nazioni Unite, sostiene gli sforzi compiuti dal governo afgano per rafforzare le proprie forze di polizia e lo Stato di diritto. Le indagini relative alle circostanze esatte in cui avvengono tali incidenti vengono condotte dalle competenti autorità afgane, assistite dai partner internazionali interessati e dalle autorità del paese di invio.

Le ragioni alla base della difficile situazione in materia di sicurezza sono complesse e possono essere affrontate nel tempo solo attraverso una combinazione di politiche e strumenti diversi. Anche se in Afghanistan nel corso degli ultimi anni si sono compiuti notevoli progressi, tale paese rimane uno dei meno sviluppati del mondo. La mancanza di opportunità sul piano economico e sociale è una delle principali cause di instabilità che finisce per creare un terreno fertile per gli attentati suicidi.

L'UE è uno dei principali donatori dell'Afghanistan attraverso aiuti pubblici allo sviluppo (APS) e assistenza umanitaria. L'assistenza offerta nell'ambito del bilancio dell'UE si concentra su tre settori prioritari: sviluppo rurale, governance e assistenza sanitaria, ma riguarda anche progetti di sostegno nel campo della protezione sociale e della cooperazione regionale.

Solo attraverso un impegno internazionale di lungo termine l'Afghanistan può essere aiutato a superare decenni di conflitti violenti, a sviluppare istituzioni e una governance proprie e promuovere una crescita economica su un'ampia base, riducendo quindi le motivazioni per quanti ricorrono a forme estreme di violenza.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006309/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Death of an Italian soldier in Afghanistan

An Italian soldier from Lecce died, and two others were injured, in an explosion this morning at an Afghan police training camp in Adraskan, Afghanistan. The explosion happened at 08:50 a.m. local time, close to an observation hut placed out of the line of fire of the shooting range. The blast involved four soldiers from the PSTT (Police Speciality Training Team), a special Afghan police unit. All the Italian soldiers involved are members of a team that trains Afghan police officers and works to ensure security.

Today, Italy is unfortunately paying a very high price to protect democracy and freedom in Afghanistan as part of this crucial international security mission.

Can the Vice-President/High Representative answer the following:

1. Is she aware of what happened in Afghanistan?

2. Does she have any further information?

3. What immediate action will she take to determine the cause of the deaths and identify those responsible?

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

The HR/VP and the EEAS have followed closely this tragic attack. Sadly, attacks on advisors such as the one mentioned have taken place on a number of occasions, and the casualty rate due to explosive devices is a matter of serious concern.

The HR is aware of the current situation in Afghanistan, notably with respect to the difficult security conditions. The EU, together with international partners such as NATO and the UN, also supports Afghan efforts in strengthening policing and the rule of law. Investigations into the exact circumstances of such incidents are conducted by the competent Afghan authorities, assisted by the international partners concerned and the authorities of the sending State.

The underlying reasons for the difficult security situation are complex and can only be addressed over time through a combination of policies and instruments. While much progress has been made in Afghanistan over the last years it remains one of the least developed nations in the world. The lack of economic and social opportunity is one of the driving factors of instability, which provides fertile ground for suicide attacks.

The EU is one of the major donors providing official development assistance (ODA) and humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan. Assistance under the EU budget concentrates on three focal areas: rural development, governance and health but also provides assistance to projects in support of social protection and regional cooperation.

Only through long-term international engagement can Afghanistan be assisted to overcome decades of violent conflict and develop its institutions and governance and encourage broad based economic growth and, thereby, reduce the incentives for those who resort to extreme forms of violence.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006310/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(26 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Discarica abusiva e direttiva 2008/99/CE

Una vasta discarica abusiva a cielo aperto di eternit, estesa 451 mila metri quadrati, l'equivalente di 110 campi di calcio, è stata sequestrata da militari di Ostuni (provincia di Brindisi) in collaborazione con le unità aeree del corpo forestale. In particolare i militari hanno accertato che all'interno dell'area (che si trova tra San Vito dei Normanni e Latiano) erano stoccate diverse tonnellate di rifiuti speciali, costituiti in gran parte da numerosissimi pannelli di eternit, alcuni integri ed altri ridotti in frantumi, per un peso complessivo di oltre 20 quintali; materiale di risulta edile; pneumatici usati; diverse batterie di artifici pirotecnici, ecc.

Viste le potenzialità cancerogene delle fibre d'amianto disperse nell'aria, il sito, ora sottoposto a sequestro, è stato circoscritto con nastri segnalatori e cartelli, in attesa dell'avvio delle procedure di bonifica.

Sono al vaglio anche la posizione dei proprietari del terreno: ascoltati dagli inquirenti, avrebbero dichiarato di essere all'oscuro dello stato di degrado nel quale versavano i campi in questione.

Alla luce di quanto precede, può la Commissione far sapere:

1. se è a conoscenza del blitz delle forze dell'ordine pugliesi;

2. se la direttiva 2008/99/CE sulla tutela penale dell'ambiente, è stata recepita da tutti gli Stati membri e, in caso di risposta negativa, quali provvedimenti intende adottare per garantire che i principi della direttiva vengano adottati al più presto in tutta l'UE?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(16 agosto 2012)

A parte le informazioni comunicate dall'onorevole parlamentare, la Commissione non è al corrente dei provvedimenti adottati dalle autorità italiane riguardo alla discarica abusiva ubicata tra San Vito dei Normanni e Latiano nella zona di Ostuni (Puglia).

A norma del diritto dell'UE spetta principalmente alle competenti autorità nazionali attuare gli interventi necessari ad assicurare la tutela dell'ambiente. La Commissione prende atto del fatto che, stando alle informazioni comunicate dall'onorevole parlamentare, le competenti autorità italiane hanno adottato provvedimenti per accertare le responsabilità e procedere alla bonifica del sito.

Per quanto attiene alla direttiva 2008/99/CE sulla tutela penale dell'ambiente ([1]), la Commissione sta valutando se in tutti gli Stati membri le misure di attuazione soddisfino i requisiti della direttiva. In base ai risultati della valutazione la Commissione avvierà, laddove necessario, un procedimento d'infrazione.

([1]) GU L 328 del 6.12.2008.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006310/12
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Illegal dumping and Directive 2008/99/EC

A huge illegal open-air asbestos dump, covering 451 000 square metres, equivalent to 110 football pitches, has been seized by the military in Ostuni (province of Brindisi) in collaboration with Forestry Corps airborne units. Soldiers found that the area (between San Vito dei Normanni and Latiano) had been used to store several tonnes of special waste, comprising huge numbers of asbestos panels — some whole and some in fragments — with a total weight of more than 2 000 kilos: construction rubble; old tyres and various pyrotechnic devices, etc.

Since asbestos fibres dispersed in the air have carcinogenic properties, the seized site has been cordoned off with warning tape and notices about reclamation procedures.

The land's owners are being questioned by investigators, but said they were unaware of the degradation in the fields concerned.

In view of the above, can the Commission answer the following:

1. Is it aware of the raid by the Apulian law enforcement agencies?

2. Has Directive 2008/99/EC on the protection of the environment through criminal law been transposed by all Member States? If not, what measures will it take to ensure that the principles of the directive are adopted throughout the EU as soon as possible?

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

Apart from the information provided by the Honourable Member, the Commission has no information on the measures taken by the Italian law enforcement authorities concerning the illegal dump in the area between San Vito dei Normanni and Latiano (in Ostuni, Apulia region).

Under EC law, it is primarily for the competent national authorities to take the actions necessary to ensure the protection of the environment. The Commission takes note of the fact that, according to the information provided by the Honourable Member, the competent Italian authorities have taken measures aimed at ascertaining responsibilities and at ensuring reclamation of the site.

As concerns Directive 2008/99/EC on the protection of the environment through criminal law ([1]), the Commission is assessing whether the national transposition measures in all the Member States meet the requirements of the directive. Based on this assessment, the Commission will launch, if necessary, infringement proceedings.

([1]) OJ L 328, 6.12.2008.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006311/12
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(26 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Imprenditrice italiana uccisa in Ghana

Le hanno sparato un colpo alla testa durante un assalto a un autobus. È accaduto vicino ad Accra, la capitale del Ghana, dove la donna, imprenditrice nel settore dell'alimentazione e del benessere, e il suo compagno si erano trasferiti da aprile.

In un primo momento si era pensato a un attacco nei pressi dell'abitazione dell'imprenditrice, poi lo scenario dell'agguato è cambiato. Secondo alcuni network locali, la donna sarebbe stata uccisa alle quattro di notte durante una rapina, con assalto al bus, condotta da un commando di almeno cinque banditi. Secondo la prima ricostruzione, i banditi avrebbero ucciso la donna e l'autista risparmiando altre cinquanta persone che si trovavano sul mezzo. Il bus era partito da Asankragwa e poi durante il tragitto si è fermato perché i banditi avevano sbarrato la strada.

Alla luce di quanto sopra, si interroga la Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante per sapere:

1. Se è a conoscenza di quanto accaduto in Ghana;

2. se è in possesso di maggiori informazioni;

3. quali immediate azioni intende disporre per accertare, nell'ambito delle sue competenze, le cause della morte e le eventuali responsabilità?

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

L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente è a conoscenza della tragica morte della cittadina italiana cui fa riferimento l'onorevole parlamentare. Le indagini della polizia sulla sua uccisione sono tuttora in corso e due persone sospette sono già state arrestate. Tuttavia, in base alle informazioni disponibili, la rapina che ha portato alla morte della donna sarebbe avvenuta di fronte alla sua abitazione e non sarebbe collegata all'attacco all'autobus menzionato dall'onorevole parlamentare. Per contribuire al rafforzamento delle capacità di prevenzione e individuazione della criminalità nel Ghana, l'UE continua a sostenere la direzione investigativa anticrimine della polizia di questo paese.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006311/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Italian entrepreneur killed in Ghana

The victim was shot in the head during a bus attack near Accra, Ghana's capital, where the woman, a food and wellbeing entrepreneur, and her partner had been living since April.

Initially it was believed that the attack had occurred near the entrepreneur's home, until a different ambush location emerged. According to local networks, the woman was killed at 4 a.m. during a robbery, involving an attack on the bus, carried out by at least five gunmen. According to initial reports, the gunmen killed the woman and the driver, but spared the other 50 passengers. The bus was stopped by the gunmen's blockade after departing Asankragwa.

In view of the above, can the Vice-President/High Representative say:

1. if she is aware of these events in Ghana;

2. whether she has any more information;

3. what immediate steps she will take to ascertain the cause of death and the identities of those responsible?

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

The HR/VP is aware of the tragic demise of the Italian citizen refered to by the Honourable Member. The police investigation on the murder is still ongoing but two suspects have already been arrested. However, according to the available information the robbery leading to the demise took place in front of the house of the victim and was not related to the bus attack mentioned by the Honourable Member. In order to strengthen crime prevention and detection capacities in Ghana the EU has been supporting the Criminal Investigation Department of the Ghana Police Service.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006312/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(26 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Falsi tartufi dall'Africa settentrionale

Le forze dell'ordine di Bologna, nell'ambito di attività di controllo a ristoranti della provincia, hanno sequestrato più di 300 chili di tartufi di provenienza non chiara e con caratteristiche che facevano sorgere forti dubbi sulla loro genuinità. I prodotti sequestrati sono stati sottoposti alle analisi di laboratorio che hanno certificato l'appartenenza alla specie molto comune e di nessun pregio di «tuber oligospermum», una tipologia di tubero di provenienza nord-africana la cui vendita è vietata in Italia.

In particolare, è risultato che una ditta toscana importava clandestinamente dal nordafrica tartufi di nessun valore, per poi venderli ad altre tre aziende che li sottoponevano a lavorazione con l'utilizzo di oli ed aromi sintetici dal caratteristico odore di tartufo. Il prodotto così ottenuto veniva quindi commercializzato come «tartufo bianchetto», il cui valore di mercato oscilla tra i 180 e i 700 euro al chilo.

Alla luce di quanto precede, può la Commissione precisare quanto segue:

1. se è a conoscenza del blitz delle forze dell'ordine emiliane?

2. quali normative europee regolano la commercializzazione dei tartufi?

Risposta di John Dalli a nome della Commissione
(3 agosto 2012)

La Commissione non è a conoscenza delle indagini di polizia condotte nella regione Emilia-Romagna.

Non esiste una legislazione specifica dell'UE in merito all'etichettatura o alla qualità dei tartufi. Per tale motivo si applica la legislazione alimentare generale. La tutela degli interessi dei consumatori e in particolare la prevenzione a) di pratiche fraudolenti o ingannevoli, b) dell'adulterazione degli alimenti e c) di altre pratiche atte a fuorviare i consumatori costituisce uno dei principi fondamentali della legislazione generale alimentare ([1]). Inoltre, il quadro giuridico dell'UE per l'etichettatura degli alimenti ([2]) assicura che i consumatori siano pienamente informati sulla natura e le caratteristiche degli alimenti. Conformemente a tale legislazione e in assenza di regole specifiche unionali o nazionali, la denominazione sotto la quale un alimento è venduto deve essere quella usuale dello Stato membro in cui è venduto o essere una descrizione del prodotto alimentare sufficientemente chiara per consentire all'acquirente di conoscerne la vera natura. È prescritto inoltre che l'etichettatura, compresi il nome e i metodi usati, non sia tale da fuorviare l'acquirente, in particolare per quanto concerne le caratteristiche dell'alimento e, tra l'altro, la sua vera natura e identità.

In assenza di norme unionali specifiche gli Stati membri possono, previa notifica alla Commissione, adottare misure nazionali in tema di qualità e di armonizzazione del nome di determinate categorie di alimenti. Sulla base delle informazioni di cui dispone la Commissione una simile legislazione è stata adottata in Italia in relazione ai tartufi ([3]).

La valutazione della conformità dei prodotti alimentari con la rispettiva legislazione unionale e nazionale rientra nelle responsabilità delle autorità competenti degli Stati membri in cui gli alimenti sono commercializzati.

([1]) Regolamento (CE) n. 178/2002 del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 28 gennaio 2002, che stabilisce i principi e i requisiti generali della legislazione alimentare, istituisce l'Autorità europea per la sicurezza alimentare e fissa procedure nel campo della sicurezza alimentare (GU L 31 dell'1.2.2002).

([2]) Direttiva 2000/13/CE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 20 marzo 2000, relativa al ravvicinamento delle legislazioni degli Stati membri concernenti l'etichettatura e la presentazione dei prodotti alimentari, nonché la relativa pubblicità (GU L 109 del 6.5.2000, pag. 29).

([3]) «Normativa quadro in materia di raccolta, coltivazione e commercio dei tartufi freschi o conservati destinati al consumo» Legge 16 dicembre 1985, n. 752.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006312/12
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: False truffles from North Africa

Following restaurant checks in Bologna, police officers have seized over 300 kilos of dubious truffles: their origin and authenticity were unproven. After analysis, the seized products were found to be a very common, low-value species named *tuber oligospermum*, which is a North African tuber which is banned in Italy.

A Tuscan firm was secretly importing these valueless truffles from North Africa, and selling them to three other firms for processing with oils and synthetic truffle aromas. The resulting product was then marketed as a Bianchetto truffle, whose market value ranges between EUR 180 and 700 per kilo.

In view of this:

1. Is the Commission aware of the police raids in Emilia-Romagna?

2. What European rules govern truffle marketing?

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

The Commission is not aware of the police investigations in the region of Emilia-Romagna.

There is no specific EU legislation governing the labelling or quality of truffles. Therefore, the general food legislation applies. The protection of consumer's interests and in particular the prevention of (a) fraudulent or deceptive practices, (b) the adulteration of food and (c) any other practices which may mislead the consumer is one of the fundamental principles of the General Food Law ([1]). In addition, the EU legal framework for food labelling ([2]) ensures that consumers are fully informed about the nature and characteristics of the foods. According to this legislation and in the absence of specific Union or national rules, the name under which a food is sold should be the name customary in the Member State in which it is sold, or a description of the food which is clear enough to let the purchaser know its true nature. Furthermore, it is required that the labelling, including the name, and methods used must not be such as could mislead the purchaser, particularly as to the characteristics of the food and, in particular, as to *inter alia* its true nature and its identity.

In the absence of specific Union rules, the Member States may, following a procedure of notification to the Commission, adopt national measures on the quality and harmonising the name of specific categories of foods. According to the Commission's information, such legislation has been adopted in Italy with regard to truffles ([3]).

The evaluation of the compliance of foods with the respective Union and national law is the responsibility of the competent authorities of the Member States where the food is marketed.

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 of the Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2002 laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety (OJ L 31, 1.2.2002).
([2]) Directive 2000/13/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 March 2000 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the labelling, presentation and advertising of foodstuffs, OJ L 109, 6.5.2000, p. 29.
([3]) 'Normativa quadro in materia di raccolta, coltivazione e commercio dei tartufi freschi o conservati destinati al consumo' Legge 16 dicembre 1985, n.752.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006314/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(26 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: La piccola pesca costiera artigianale

La pesca sostenibile reclama spazio e sostegno. La piccola pesca costiera artigianale, quando esercitata in maniera responsabile, rappresenta il settore della pesca con il minor impatto ambientale e con il più alto tasso di occupazione. Si tratta quindi di una porzione di comparto che caratterizza fortemente il settore ittico, che può contare sulla maggioranza delle imbarcazioni registrate e il maggior numero di occupati, che è omogeneamente diffusa lungo tutte le coste europee e che maggiormente interagisce con le aree più pregiate, in particolare con le aree marine protette.

Eppure, la piccola pesca costiera artigianale non ha mai conosciuto significativi progetti di promozione e sviluppo che facessero leva sui temi della tracciabilità, della qualità del prodotto, della cosiddetta «filiera corta» che, eliminando l'intermediazione, permetta al mondo della pesca la vendita diretta del proprio prodotto.

È fondamentale avviare processi di etichettatura del prodotto, iniziative di promozione in collaborazione con le aree marine protette, esperienze di vendita diretta del pescato (il pesce a miglio zero) che rendano l'attività della piccola pesca artigianale da un lato più remunerativa, dall'altro più moderna, che possa cioè fare leva su innovativi processi di commercializzazione e promozione del prodotto.

Alla luce di quanto precede, può la Commissione precisare:

1. quali misure di sostegno e valorizzazione sono state adottate dall'UE a favore della piccola pesca costiera?

2. quali prodotti ittici italiani fra quelli a marchio dop e igp sono riconosciuti dall'Unione europea?

Risposta di Maria Damanaki a nome della Commissione
(14 agosto 2012)

La Commissione riconosce l'importanza della piccola pesca per la situazione socioeconomica e lo sviluppo sostenibile delle zone costiere italiane.

Attualmente il Fondo europeo per la pesca (FEP) prevede il finanziamento di misure socioeconomiche rivolte specificamente alla piccola pesca nonché il pagamento di premi per migliorare la gestione e il controllo delle zone di pesca locali; esso promuove l'organizzazione della catena di produzione, trasformazione e commercializzazione dei prodotti della pesca, incoraggia la riduzione degli sforzi di pesca e le innovazioni tecnologiche per uno sfruttamento sostenibile delle risorse e promuove il miglioramento delle competenze professionali e la formazione in materia di sicurezza. Inoltre, il contributo pubblico per la piccola pesca viene aumentato fino al 20 % rispetto alla normale aliquota di aiuto del FEP.

Nella sua proposta relativa al nuovo FEAMP, la Commissione mantiene ed estende la maggior parte delle suddette misure di sostegno e aumenta i finanziamenti per lo sviluppo sostenibile delle zone di pesca.

Nella sua proposta di riforma dell'OCM la Commissione propone la revisione dell'etichettatura dei prodotti della pesca e dell'acquacoltura al fine di stimolare pratiche di pesca sostenibili e di agevolare la differenziazione dei prodotti, tra l'altro in base alla provenienza (zona di cattura o di allevamento) e alla freschezza (data di cattura o di raccolta). Le informazioni obbligatorie per i consumatori rappresentano un'occasione particolarmente propizia per i prodotti della piccola pesca.

Per quanto riguarda l'etichettatura come IGP o come DOP, l'Italia conta attualmente cinque prodotti della pesca: la cozza di Scardovari, il salmerino del Trentino, le trote del Trentino, le acciughe sotto sale del Mar Ligure e la tinca gobba dorata del Pianalto di Poirino.

L'elenco aggiornato può essere consultato in qualsiasi momento cercando i prodotti della classe 1.7 nella banca dati DOOR: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/quality/schemes/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006314/12
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Small-scale artisanal coastal fishing

Sustainable fisheries need opportunities and support. Responsible, small-scale artisanal coastal fishing has the lowest environmental impact and highest employment rates in the fisheries sector. This industry segment is highly characteristic of the fishing sector and accounts for most of the registered vessels and people working in the sector. It is uniformly distributed along all European coasts and interacts with the most valuable areas, such as protected marine areas.

However, there have never been significant promotion and development projects for small-scale artisanal coastal fishing leveraging traceability, product quality, and the so-called 'short distribution chain' which, by eliminating the middle-man, allows fishermen to directly sell their catches.

It is vital to initiate product-labelling processes, protected marine area promotion initiatives and experiments in direct sales of fish ('zero-mile' fish) to make small-scale artisanal fishing both more profitable and more modern; in other words, to enable this kind of fishing to use innovative product marketing and promotion processes.

In view of the above, can the Commission answer the following:

1. What support and promotion measures has the EU adopted to benefit small-scale coastal fishing?

2. Which Italian fish products has the European Union recognised from fish products with a PDO or PGI label?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(14 August 2012)

The Commission recognises the importance of the small scale fisheries (SSF) for the socioeconomic and sustainable development of the Italian coastal areas.

The current European Fisheries Fund (EFF) foresees financing of socioeconomic measures specifically targeted to the SSF, payment of premiums to improve management and control of local fishing areas, promotes the organisation of production, processing and marketing chains for fisheries products, encourages reduction of fishing efforts and technological innovations for sustainable exploitation, improves professional skills and safety training. In addition, public contribution is increased up to 20% for the SSF from the normal aid intensity rate of the EFF.

In its proposal for the new EMFF, the Commission maintains and enlarges most of the support mentioned above and enhances the financing for the sustainable development of fisheries areas.

In its proposal for the reform of the CMO, the Commission proposes that labelling of fishery and aquaculture products should be revised in order to stimulate sustainable fishing practices and to facilitate product differentiation including provenance (catch or farm area) and freshness (date of capture/harvest). Compulsory information to consumers offers a particularly favourable opportunity for SSF production.

In respect of the labelling of fisheries products under PGI or PDO, Italy has at the moment five species listed: cozza di Scardovari; salmerino del Trentino; trote del Trentino; acciughe sotto sale del Mar Ligure; tinca gobba dorata del Pianalto di Poirino.

The list is always available online by consulting the DOOR database, Category c.7, at:
http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/quality/schemes/index_en.htm

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006316/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(26 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Oggetti da cucina cedono metalli pericolosi

In Europa non esiste una regolamentazione unica sulla cessione agli alimenti di residui di metalli pesanti come cromo, nichel e manganese presenti negli utensili di cucina. Eppure ogni settimana il Sistema di allerta rapido europeo (RASFF) riporta segnalazioni concernenti l'eccesso di migrazione di metalli da articoli in acciaio inossidabile. La maggior parte delle segnalazioni proviene dall'Italia, dove gli standard di sicurezza sono molto severi, tanto che per i prodotti non conformi scatta il ritiro dal mercato.

In molti altri Stati europei non esistono regolamenti precisi per cui coltelli, padelle e forchette possono circolare anche se le cessioni di metalli sono elevate. Una padella o una forchetta bloccata in Italia può essere distribuita in Francia o in Svezia.

In Europa esiste il principio di mutuo riconoscimento, secondo cui un prodotto commercializzato in uno Stato può essere venduto anche negli altri (fatti salvi i casi di esigenza di tutela della salute pubblica). Per i metalli pesanti ceduti dalle posate il principio non sembra essere applicato da tutti i Paesi. Questo diverso comportamento è dovuto al fatto che la maggior parte dei materiali di utensili e imballaggi non è regolamentata in maniera «armonizzata» a livello europeo e molti Stati non possiedono legislazioni proprie.

Alla luce di quanto precede, si chiede alla Commissione:

non ritiene che l'UE dovrebbe porre rimedio alla mancanza di una regolamentazione tramite direttive e regolamenti specifici, così com'è accaduto per la plastica, per far fronte alle migrazioni di cromo, nichel e manganese dagli oggetti da cucina?

Risposta di John Dalli a nome della Commissione
(21 agosto 2012)

Sui materiali che entrano in contatto con gli alimenti, la Commissione sta attualmente indagando a livello generale per individuare in quali campi siano necessari ulteriori interventi dell'UE nonché quale sia il modo migliore per garantire la sicurezza dei prodotti alimentari e l'efficace funzionamento del mercato interno.

La Commissione esaminerà a fondo i settori in cui potrà essere necessario intervenire e valuterà tutte le opzioni in modo che le permettano di scegliere gli strumenti più efficaci per conseguire i suddetti obiettivi. A tal fine, la Commissione effettuerà una valutazione d'impatto nel periodo 2012-2013. I metalli pesanti che migrano dagli utensili da cucina saranno valutati nell'ambito delle possibili opzioni per nuovi provvedimenti sui materiali a contatto con gli alimenti.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006316/12
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Cooking utensils release hazardous metals

There is no single regulation in Europe regarding the release into food of heavy metal residues from cooking utensils, such as chromium, nickel and manganese. Yet each week the European Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) contains reports of excess migration of metals from stainless steel items. Most of the reports come from Italy, where safety standards are so severe that non-conforming products are withdrawn from the market.

In many other European States there are no precise regulations, meaning that knives, frying pans and forks can be sold even if their metal release levels are high. A frying pan or fork which is banned in Italy can be sold in France or Sweden.

In Europe, the principle of mutual recognition means that a product sold in one Member State can also be sold in other Member States (unless there is a danger to public health), but this does not seem to be applied by all countries for heavy metals released by cutlery. Most materials used in utensils and packaging are not regulated in a 'harmonised' manner across Europe and many States lack their own legislation.

In view of the above, can the Commission say whether the EU should adopt specific directives and regulations, as has happened for plastic, in order to address the migration of chromium, nickel and manganese from cooking utensils?

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

For food contact materials, the Commission is currently investigating on a general level in which areas further provisions are necessary at EU level as well as the means to ensure food safety and an effective functioning of the internal market.

The Commission will investigate further those areas in which provisions may be necessary and consider different options to be able to choose the most effective and efficient instruments to achieve the objectives referred to above. To this end, the Commission will carry out an impact assessment during 2012-2013. Heavy metals migrating from cooking utensils will be considered in the options for further provisions on food contact materials.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006317/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(26 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Possibili rischi da due metalli usati in marmitte catalitiche

Secondo i risultati di uno studio condotto da ricercatori italiani, rodio e iridio — due composti chimici sempre più usati a livello industriale e quindi sempre più diffusi nell'ambiente — potrebbero avere effetti tossici per la salute umana. Gli studiosi hanno dimostrato, per ora su cellule in provetta, che sali dei due metalli in concentrazioni compatibili con quelle a cui si è esposti in ambito professionale possono danneggiare il Dna e alterare la crescita cellulare. Inoltre, studi su ratti hanno permesso di evidenziare che queste stesse concentrazioni possono anche interferire con le naturali difese del sistema immunitario come pure, nel caso dell'iridio, creare problemi ai reni.

Il rischio da esposizione a rodio e iridio non riguarda esclusivamente i lavoratori dei settori industriali in cui questi metalli vengono impiegati, infatti i fenomeni di abrasione e il normale deterioramento delle marmitte catalitiche causano l'immissione di questi metalli nell'ambiente, determinando un progressivo e costante incremento delle loro concentrazioni. Per questo motivo il rischio riguarda anche la popolazione generale, soprattutto le categorie di lavoratori esposte al traffico dei veicoli come i vigili urbani o i conducenti dei mezzi di trasporto del servizio pubblico o privato.

Alla luce di quanto precede, può la Commissione far sapere se:

1. è a conoscenza dello studio dei ricercatori italiani?

2. l'UE non ritiene necessario svolgere ulteriori indagini su questi effetti a livello molecolare, valutandone la potenziale tossicità nell'organismo, e identificare meccanismi di prevenzione?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(27 agosto 2012)

La Commissione non è al corrente degli studi menzionati dall'onorevole parlamentare. Nell'ambito del regolamento (CE) n. 1272/2008 relativo alla classificazione, all'etichettatura e all'imballaggio delle sostanze e delle miscele (regolamento CLP) ([1]), attualmente non esistono una classificazione e un'etichettatura armonizzate di tali sostanze (allegato VI del regolamento) e l'industria ha effettuato solo poche notifiche di classificazione e di etichettatura in merito alle due sostanze in questione per comunicarne la potenziale tossicità. Il rodio e l'iridio non sono neppure registrati nell'ambito del regolamento (CE) n. 1907/2006 concernente la registrazione, la valutazione, l'autorizzazione e la restrizione delle sostanze chimiche (regolamento REACH) ([2]). Attualmente il rodio figura nell'elenco delle sostanze identificate dall'industria e destinate a essere registrate entro il prossimo termine di registrazione REACH nel maggio del 2013. Se l'industria esegue tale registrazione, tutte le informazioni disponibili, comprese quelle riferite dall'onorevole parlamentare, saranno valutate dal dichiarante.

Un altro approccio possibile aperto a tutti gli Stati membri consiste nel valutare se eventuali nuovi dati (nella fattispecie i risultati dello studio effettuato dai ricercatori italiani) siano sufficienti a proporre una classificazione e un'etichettatura armonizzate a livello dell'UE nell'ambito del regolamento CLP. Una tale proposta sarebbe valutata a norma delle procedure previste dal regolamento, compreso nella fattispecie un riesame da parte del Comitato di valutazione dei rischi dell'Agenzia europea delle sostanze chimiche (ECHA). Se la proposta riceve il sostegno del comitato, la classificazione armonizzata costituirebbe allora una buona base per decidere le eventuali misure di gestione del rischio supplementari, a livello nazionale e/o unionale.

([1]) GU L 353 del 31.12.2008.
([2]) GU L 396 del 30.12.2006.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006317/12
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Possible risks from two metals used in catalytic converters

A study conducted by Italian researchers has shown that rhodium and iridium — two chemical compounds increasingly used in industry and therefore increasingly widespread in the environment — could be toxic for humans. The researchers have shown, by working on cells in a test tube, that salts of the two metals, at concentrations equivalent to those to which people are exposed in a working environment, can damage DNA and affect cell growth. Studies on rats have also highlighted that these concentrations can interfere with the immune system's natural defences and, in the case of iridium, cause kidney problems.

The risks arising from exposure to rhodium and iridium are a concern not only for workers in the industrial sectors where these metals are used, but also for the general population. Abrasion and normal wear and tear in catalytic convertors cause these metals to be released into the environment, resulting in a gradual but steady increase in their concentrations and placing workers exposed to vehicle traffic — such as traffic police and drivers of public and private transport vehicles — at particular risk.

In view of the above, can the Commission say whether:

1. It is aware of the study by the Italian researchers?

2. The EU will look further into these effects at molecular level, in order to assess the above metals' potential toxicity in the body and identify appropriate means of prevention?

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

The Commission is not aware of the studies referred to by the Honourable Member. In the framework of the EU Regulation EC/1272/2008 ([1]) on the Classification, Labelling and Packaging of substances and mixtures (CLP Regulation), there is currently no harmonised classification and labelling (Annex VI of the regulation) for these substances, and only few classification and labelling notifications so far received from industry for these two substances report potential toxicity. Rhodium and iridium are also not registered in the context of the regulation EC/1907/2006 ([2]) concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH Regulation). Rhodium is currently listed in the list of substances identified by Industry to be registered by the next REACH registration deadline in May 2013. If industry does register, then all available information, including that referred to by the Honourable Member, will be assessed by the registrant.

Another possible approach which is open to all Member States would be to consider if any new data (in this case the findings of the study conducted by Italian researchers) would be sufficient to propose at EU level a harmonised classification and labelling under the EU CLP Regulation. Such a proposal would be evaluated in line with the procedures foreseen in the regulation, which includes in particular a review by the Risk Assessment Committee (RAC) of the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA). If the proposal was supported by RAC, harmonised classification would then give a good basis for deciding on any further risk management measure, at national and/or EU level.

([1]) OJ L 353, 31.12.2008.
([2]) OJ L 396, 30.12.2006.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006318/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(26 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Strumento per lo studio del cancro

La capacità di poter in qualche modo «controllare» le cellule umane è da lungo tempo sotto i riflettori di numerose ricerche scientifiche. I risultati ottenuti da un team di ricercatori britannici hanno però del clamoroso e promettono di rivoluzionare completamente nel giro di qualche anno l'approccio medico dell'uomo. Il team è riuscito a codificare, scrivere e cancellare per diverse volte alcune informazioni all'interno di una cellula vivente.

Tre anni e quasi 750 tentativi: ma l'obiettivo è stato raggiunto con successo. Concretamente sono riusciti a creare l'equivalente genetico del codice binario, il linguaggio macchina utilizzato per la realizzazione di tutti i programmi eseguibili su un computer. Fino a questo momento si è riusciti quindi con successo a scrivere all'interno di una cellula l'equivalente di un bit e lo stadio successivo della ricerca sarà quello di immagazzinare l'informazione contenuta in un byte. Per rendere i risultati ottenuti facilmente visibili, si è deciso di agire sulla fluorescenza di alcuni microbi sotto luce ultravioletta: a seconda della rotazione scelta, gli organismi risultavano quindi di colore rosso o di colore verde su indicazione fornita dagli stessi ricercatori. In biotecnologia tutto il processo è conosciuto più genericamente come «recombinase-mediated DNA inversion», cioè l'insieme di tutti i processi enzimatici che vengono usati all'interno della cellula per tagliare, invertire e ricombinare tra di loro parti di DNA. Il processo che rende a tutti gli effetti le cellule dei supporti riscrivibili è stato invece definito Rad, acronimo di «recombinase addressable data».

In campo medico potrebbe essere uno strumento per lo studio del cancro, dell'età, dello sviluppo degli organismi viventi e dell'ambiente in generale.

Alla luce di quanto precede, si interroga la Commissione per sapere:

1. se è a conoscenza dello studio dei ricercatori britannici;

2. se, vista l'importanza della ricerca e la necessità di procedere con nuovi studi, non ritiene che la stessa debba essere finanziata tramite il Settimo programma quadro (7° PQ) oppure il Programma quadro per la competitività e l'innovazione.

Risposta di Máire Geoghegan-Quinn a nome della Commissione
(22 agosto 2012)

La Commissione è a conoscenza degli sforzi preliminari effettuati in materia di RAD (recombinase adressable data) a cui si riferisce l'onorevole parlamentare [1], [2].

Sebbene non vi siano iniziative specifiche in materia di RAD, la ricerca sull'ingegneria genetica volta a realizzare applicazioni biotecnologiche e strategie terapeutiche per curare le malattie è sostenuta nell'ambito del 7° programma quadro per la ricerca e lo sviluppo tecnologico (7° PQ, 2007-2013) [3]. Finora sono stati destinati 6 milioni di euro a progetti di ricerca «di frontiera», quali BACTOCOM [4], SYNAD [5], ALLEGRO [6], DMONICKASEDESIGN [7] e SMARTBREAKER [8].

Conformemente alla decisione relativa al programma quadro per la competitività e l'innovazione, quest'ultimo non sostiene il tipo di ricerca oggetto dell'interrogazione.

Vi possono comunque essere opportunità nei successivi inviti a presentare proposte nell'ambito del 7° PQ, tra l'altro nel programma di lavoro per la ricerca del 7° PQ SALUTE-2013-INNOVAZIONE, pubblicato il 10 luglio 2012 [9].

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[1] http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2012/05/14/1202344109.
[2] http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-18158131.
[3] http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/health/home_en.html
[4] http://cordis.europa.eu/projects/rcn/93008_en.html
[5] http://cordis.europa.eu/projects/rcn/103592_en.html
[6] http://cordis.europa.eu/projects/rcn/103447_en.html
[7] http://cordis.europa.eu/projects/rcn/97592_en.html
[8] http://cordis.europa.eu/projects/rcn/99457_en.html
[9] http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/page/searchcalls;efp7_SESSION_ID=yWhpP9qTS7fTtKDg6K6LkDwswtZkTlPy7vYT8mJ1VPhqcGx0gN2v!-204796060?state=open&theme=health.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006318/12
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: A tool for studying cancer

The potential to be able to 'control' human cells has long been the focus of scientific research. Results obtained by a team of British researchers are, however, astonishing, and promise in just a few years to completely revolutionise humankind's approach to medicine. The team has succeeded in repeatedly encoding, storing and erasing information within a living cell.

It took three years and almost 750 attempts before the goal was achieved. In practical terms, the researchers have devised the genetic equivalent of binary code — the machine language used to create all the programs that can be run on a computer. They have so far managed to store the equivalent of a bit inside a cell; the next stage in the research is to store the information contained in a byte. In order to make the results achieved more easily visible, it was decided to see whether some microbes would fluoresce under ultra-violet light. The organisms glowed red or green depending on the orientation chosen by the researchers themselves. In biotechnology, the overall process is known generically as recombinase-mediated DNA inversion, after the enzymatic processes used to cut, invert and recombine parts of DNA within the cell. The process which provides the cells' 'rewritable storage' is known as RAD, which stands for 'recombinase addressable data'.

In medicine, this could be a tool for studying cancer, aging, the development of living organisms and the environment in general.

In view of the above, can the Commission say whether:

1. It is aware of the study by the British researchers?

2. It believes that, given this research's importance and the need to carry out further studies, it should be financed under the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) or the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP)?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(22 August 2012)

The Commission is aware of preliminary efforts on recombinase addressable data (RAD) mentioned by the Honourable Member ([1]) ([2]).

Although RAD has not specifically been addressed, research on genetic engineering for the purpose of establishing biotechnology applications and therapeutic approaches for diseases is being supported within the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7, 2007-2013) ([3]). So far EUR 6 million has been devoted to frontier research projects, such as BACTOCOM ([4]), SYNAD ([5]), ALLEGRO ([6]), DMONICKASEDESIGN ([7]), SMARTBREAKER ([8]).

In line with the decision on the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP), this programme does not support this kind of research.

Opportunities may be found in the next calls under FP7 among others under FP7-HEALTH-2013-INNOVATION Research Work Programme, published on 10 July 2012 ([9]).

([1]) http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2012/05/14/1202344109.
([2]) http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-18158131.
([3]) http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/health/home_en.html
([4]) http://cordis.europa.eu/projects/rcn/93008_en.html
([5]) http://cordis.europa.eu/projects/rcn/103592_en.html
([6]) http://cordis.europa.eu/projects/rcn/103447_en.html
([7]) http://cordis.europa.eu/projects/rcn/97592_en.html
([8]) http://cordis.europa.eu/projects/rcn/99457_en.html
([9]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/page/searchcalls;efp7_SESSION_ID=yWhpP9qTS7fTtKDg6K6LkDwswtZkTlPy7vYT8mJ1VPhqcGx0gN2v!-204796060?state=open&theme=health.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006319/12
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(26 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Tensione tra Ankara e Damasco

Sale la tensione tra Ankara e Damasco dopo l'abbattimento da parte della Siria di un caccia F-4 turco mentre era in volo nello spazio aereo internazionale. Con la Turchia che invia una nota diplomatica alla Siria. E con la Nato chiamata in causa.

E mentre i tavoli diplomatici e militari si surriscaldano è stato trovato il relitto dell'F-4 in acque territoriali siriane a una profondità di 1300 metri. Proseguono intanto le ricerche dei due piloti dispersi, di cui non si hanno notizie, ma che secondo la televisione di stato turca si sarebbero salvati. La Siria sostiene che un gruppo di terroristi è stato intercettato mentre tentava di infiltrarsi dalla Turchia, a Latakia. Alcuni di loro sono stati uccisi, altri feriti e altri ancora sono fuggiti.

La Turchia ha invocato una riunione urgente della Nato, facendo riferimento all'articolo 4 del Trattato istitutivo della Nato, secondo il quale i paesi membri possono portare un problema all'attenzione del Consiglio dell'Alleanza atlantica per discuterne con gli alleati. Questo articolo stabilisce che «le parti devono consultarsi ogni volta che, secondo il parere di uno di loro, l'integrità territoriale, l'indipendenza politica o la sicurezza di una delle parti è minacciata».

Come intende affrontare il Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante la vicenda summenzionata per garantire nel paese una stabilità che risulta fondamentale anche per i paesi membri e per gli attori internazionali?

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

Nelle conclusioni del Consiglio Affari generali del 25 giugno, l'UE ha condannato l'abbattimento da parte della Siria di un aereo militare turco e ha lodato la reazione pacata e responsabile della Turchia. Ha poi invitato la Siria a cooperare pienamente con la Turchia e a consentire lo svolgimento immediato di un'indagine nel rispetto delle norme e degli obblighi internazionali.

L'UE condanna fermamente il crescente uso della forza da parte del regime, compresi l'uso dell'artiglieria pesante e i bombardamenti in zone popolate, in palese violazione degli obblighi previsti dal piano Annan e dalle risoluzioni 2042 e 2043 del Consiglio di sicurezza dell'ONU. L'UE resta profondamente preoccupata per gli effetti negativi della crisi siriana sulla sicurezza e sulla stabilità dei paesi limitrofi e invita il regime siriano a rispettare l'integrità territoriale e la sovranità di tali paesi. La brutalità del regime ha infatti avuto effetti drammatici in Siria e gravi ripercussioni nei paesi limitrofi.

L'UE è dispiaciuta che Kofi Annan si sia dimesso dall'incarico di inviato speciale congiunto delle Nazioni Unite e della Lega degli Stati arabi per la Siria, continua a sostenere gli sforzi dell'ONU e della Lega degli Stati arabi e invita a nominare prontamente un successore che porti avanti l'operato di Annan per giungere a una transizione politica pacifica in Siria. Il piano in sei punti resta la maggiore speranza per il popolo siriano, mentre un'ulteriore militarizzazione del conflitto da parte di uno dei contendenti può soltanto accrescere le sofferenze per la Siria, i suoi cittadini e l'intera regione. L'UE accoglie con soddisfazione l'esito della riunione del Gruppo d'azione tenutasi il 30 giugno 2012 a Ginevra, compreso l'invito a istituire per mutuo consenso un organo direttivo di transizione con pieni poteri esecutivi, formato da rappresentanti dell'opposizione e del governo.

L'UE appoggia la risoluzione dell'Assemblea Generale dell'ONU sulla situazione in Siria presentata dal Gruppo arabo e sostenuta da 133 Stati il 3 agosto. Deplora profondamente che il Consiglio di sicurezza dell'ONU non sia giunto a una risoluzione che avrebbe avallato il comunicato del Gruppo d'azione e previsto misure per obbligare al rispetto del Piano Annan ai sensi dell'articolo 41 della Carta dell'ONU. Deplora altresì che il Consiglio di sicurezza sia venuto meno alle proprie responsabilità e non abbia sostenuto gli sforzi dell'inviato speciale congiunto. Invita infine tutti i membri del Consiglio di sicurezza, comprese Russia e Cina, ad agire di concerto per esercitare pressioni più forti ed efficaci e garantire che vi siano gravi conseguenze in caso di mancato rispetto delle precedenti decisioni del Consiglio stesso.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006319/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Tension between Ankara and Damascus

Tension is growing between Ankara and Damascus after Syria shot down a Turkish F-4 fighter while it was flying in international airspace. Turkey has issued a diplomatic note to Syria, and NATO is due to meet to discuss the matter.

While the incident has served to intensify diplomatic and military relations, the remains of the F-4 have been found in Syrian territorial waters at a depth of 1 300 metres. Meanwhile, the search continues for the two lost pilots, of whom there is no news, although Turkish television reports that they have been rescued. Syria claims that a terrorist group was intercepted while attempting to enter Turkey in Latakia. Some of the group were killed and some were wounded, while others escaped.

Turkey has called for an urgent NATO meeting, invoking Article 4 of NATO's founding treaty, which allows member countries to refer problems to the Security Council for discussion with the allies. This article states that 'the Parties will consult together whenever, in the opinion of any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence, or security of any of the Parties is threatened'.

How will the Vice-President/High Representative tackle this issue to ensure stability in the country, which is also essential for the Member States and other international actors?

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

In its Foreign Affairs Council conclusions of 25 June the EU condemned the shooting down by Syria of a Turkish military plane. It commended Turkey's measured and responsible reaction. The EU called on Syria to cooperate fully with Turkey and allow full access for an immediate investigation. It urged Syria to ensure that it complies by international standards and obligations.

The EU strongly condemns the ever increasing use of force by the regime, including use of heavy artillery and shelling against populated areas in blatant violation of its obligations under the Annan Plan and UNSC resolutions 2042 and 2043. The EU remains deeply concerned about the spill-over effects of the Syrian crisis in neighbouring countries in terms of security and stability. It calls on the Syrian regime to respect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of neighbouring countries. The regime's brutality has had tragic effects in Syria and serious repercussions in neighbouring countries.

The EU regrets the resignation of Kofi Annan as the United Nations — League of Arab States Joint Special Envoy to Syria. The EU continues to support the efforts of the UN and the League of Arab States and calls for the early appointment of a successor to carry on Mr Annan's work towards a peaceful political transition in Syria. The Six Point Plan remains the best hope for the people of Syria, and any further militarisation of the conflict by any of the parties can only bring greater suffering to Syria, its citizens, and the region as a whole.It welcomes the outcome of the Action Group meeting in Geneva on 30 June 2012, including the call for the set up of a transitional governing body with full executive powers made up of opposition and government representatives and formed by mutual consent.

The EU supports the resolution by the UN General Assembly regarding the situation in Syria introduced by the Arab Group that was supported by 133 states on August 3. The EU deeply regrets that the UN Security Council (UNSC) has not been able to agree to a UNSC resolution which would have endorsed the communiqué of the Action Group and foreseen measures to enforce compliance with the Annan Plan under Article 41 of the UN Chapter. The EU regrets that the UNSC has thus failed to uphold its responsibilities and to back the Joint Special Envoy's efforts. The EU calls for united action by all members of the UNSC, including Russia and China, to add more robust and effective pressure and ensure that there will be serious consequences for continued non-compliance with its previous decisions.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006320/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(26 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Trapianto di parte di fegato di viventi tramite robot

Per la prima volta in campo medico, un robot ha eseguito un intervento per una donazione di organo, una porzione di fegato, tra viventi. È successo in un ospedale di Palermo. Il donatore e il ricevente non hanno avuto complicazioni. Solo dopo nove giorni il paziente è stato dimesso dall'ospedale, il ricevente dopo poche settimane.

L'intero intervento nell'addome del paziente è stato eseguito dal robot manovrato da medici esperti palermitani. Ciò ha comportato una sostanziale riduzione del trauma operatorio. Pertanto, tale modalità di intervento potrà favorire un incremento delle donazioni d'organo da vivente, quindi del numero di trapianti.

Purtroppo, ad oggi, esiste ancora un forte divario tra il numero di pazienti in lista di attesa e i trapianti effettuati per anno. Basti pensare che non meno del 15 % dei pazienti in lista di attesa può morire prima di ricevere il trapianto, quasi sempre per mancanza di organi disponibili.

Proprio per questi motivi le decisioni dei medici sull'assegnazione degli organi da trapiantare sono molto difficili, nel tentativo di ottimizzare le risorse a loro disposizione cercando e ricercando il modo migliore per regalare anni di vita ad un numero crescente di persone.

Alla luce di quanto precede, può la Commissione far sapere se:

1. è a conoscenza dell'intervento avvenuto tramite robot a Palermo?

2. non intende estendere l'informazione a tutti gli Stati membri approfondendo così la questione e valutando la possibilità di cui sopra di salvare più vite umane?

Risposta di John Dalli a nome della Commissione
(28 agosto 2012)

Le tecniche e pratiche mediche per eseguire trapianti di organi tra vivi, come la tecnica con l'uso di robot descritta dall'onorevole parlamentare, sono in continua trasformazione. La discussione relativa a tali tecniche in evoluzione deve svolgersi in sede di riunioni delle autorità competenti in fatto di trapianti di organi.

Esistono anche diversi interrogativi in tema di organizzazione e sicurezza che necessitano risposte da parte degli Stati membri intenzionati a sviluppare i trapianti di organi tra vivi, specialmente in fatto di tutela per tutta la vita della sicurezza dei donatori viventi. La Commissione pertanto sostiene l'attività degli stati membri volta a istituire un quadro normativo generale in fatto di sicurezza, sia mediante le prescrizioni della legislazione europea (direttiva 2010/53/UE ([1])) sia attraverso progetti volontari e gruppi di lavoro.

([1]) GU L 207 del 6.08.2010.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006320/12
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Partial liver transplant from live donor using a robot

For the first time in medical history, a robot has performed an organ donation operation, involving part of a liver, from one living person to another. The operation took place in a Palermo hospital and neither the donor nor the recipient have had any complications. The donor was discharged after just nine days and the organ recipient after a few weeks.

The whole operation on the patient's abdomen was carried out by a robot controlled by Palermo medical experts and it substantially reduced the trauma of the operation. This technique may promote an increase in organ donations from live donors and, therefore, in the number of transplants.

Unfortunately, there is still a significant gap between the number of patients on waiting lists and the transplants undertaken each year. No fewer than 15% of patients on waiting lists are likely to die before receiving a transplant, almost always due to a lack of available organs.

Doctors therefore face difficult decisions when allocating organs to be transplanted, making the best possible use of resources while granting a growing number of people a longer life.

In view of this:

1. Is the Commission aware of the operation undertaken using a robot in Palermo?

2. Does it intend to disseminate this information in greater detail among all the Member States, thereby raising awareness and taking advantage of this opportunity to save more human lives?

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

Medical techniques and practices to perform live donor transplants, like the robot-based technique described by the Honourable Member, are evolving continuously. These evolving techniques can be discussed in the context of the meeting of Competent Authorities on organ transplantation.

There are also a number of organisational and safety questions to be answered by the Member States who want to develop living donor transplants, in particular on lifelong protection of the safety of the living donor. The Commission therefore supports the Member States with building such safety framework, both through the requirements of the EU legislation (Directive 2010/53/EU ([1])) and through voluntary projects and working groups.

([1]) OJ L 207, 6.8.2010.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006322/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(26 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Studiato un cemento che imita il corallo per assorbire CO_2 dall'aria

Proviene da ricercatori di un'università americana la scoperta di un modo per creare un cemento innovativo «carbon neutral». L'ispirazione, ancora una volta, è stata offerta dalla natura, e in particolare dallo studio e dall'applicazione dei principi legati alla formazione del corallo. Il corallo, infatti, utilizzando minerali e anidride carbonica, produce carbonato di calcio per costruire la sua forte struttura.

Uno studioso americano è stato in grado di sfruttare sapientemente questa scoperta, sviluppando una strategia capace di catturare e dissolvere CO_2 in acqua marina per formare carbonato di calcio.

La nuova tecnologia, basata su questi principi, potrebbe consentire la riduzione dell'impatto ambientale nella costruzione di edifici, potendo al contempo contare su materiali molto resistenti e durevoli.

È noto l'impegno dell'Unione per migliorare la qualità dell'aria e garantire ai propri cittadini un salubre ecosistema. La strategia Europa 2020 annovera tra i suoi obiettivi proprio la riduzione delle emissioni di CO_2, obiettivo raggiungibile solo con l'impegno e la cooperazione degli Stati membri.

Alla luce di quanto precede, si chiede alla Commissione di rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

1. È essa a conoscenza della scoperta di questo nuovo tipo di cemento?

2. Intende essa approfondire l'innovazione scoperta in America, per riportarla come esempio di green economy in Europa?

Risposta di Máire Geoghegan-Quinn a nome della Commissione
(21 agosto 2012)

La Commissione è al corrente della tecnologia cui fa riferimento l'onorevole parlamentare ed è interessata a nuove tecnologie in grado di ridurre le emissioni di biossido di carbonio (CO_2).

Nel novembre 2011 il programma di ricerca e sviluppo sui gas serra dell'Agenzia internazionale dell'energia ([1]), di cui la Commissione è membro, ha condotto una valutazione dei sistemi alternativi di cattura del CO_2. Detta valutazione ha preso in esame tecnologie molto simili, concludendo che queste si trovano per ora in una fase iniziale di sviluppo ed è ancora necessario valutarne la fattibilità a livello tecnoeconomico e l'impatto ambientale.

Nell'ambito del Settimo programma quadro di ricerca e sviluppo tecnologico (7° PQ, 2007-2013), la Commissione procede a un esame di questo tipo di tecnologie tramite inviti a presentare proposte per le tecnologie future ed emergenti (Future and Emerging Technologies — FET). e finanzia lo sviluppo di tecnologie e processi di cattura innovativi ed ecocompatibili che presentino un elevato potenziale.

Quanto al futuro, la Commissione ha presentato la sua proposta di iniziativa Orizzonte 2020, mediante la quale è possibile finanziare progetti relativi a nuove tecnologie per la cattura e l'utilizzazione del CO_2.

([1]) http://www.etde.org/abtetde/ghg.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006322/12
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Research into a type of concrete that mimics coral to absorb CO_2 from the air

Researchers at an American university have discovered a way of creating an innovative 'carbon-neutral' type of concrete. As is often the case, the inspiration came from nature, particularly from studying and applying the principles involved in the formation of coral. Using minerals and carbon dioxide, coral produces calcium carbonate to build its strong structure.

An American academic has managed to cleverly exploit this discovery by developing a way of capturing and dissolving CO_2 in seawater to form calcium carbonate.

The new technology based on these principles could reduce the environmental impact of construction projects, while providing extremely strong and durable materials.

It is well known that the EU is committed to improving air quality and providing its citizens with a healthy ecosystem. One of the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy is to reduce CO_2 emissions — a goal that can be achieved only with the commitment and cooperation of the Member States.

Can the Commission state if:

1. It is aware of the discovery of this new type of concrete?

2. It will look more closely at this American discovery, with a view to adopting it as part of a green economy in Europe?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(21 August 2012)

The Commission is aware of the technology referred to by the Honourable Member and is looking for new technologies with a potential to reduce carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions.

In November 2011, the International Energy Agency Greenhouse Gas Programme ([1]), of which the Commission is a member, has carried out a review of alternative CO_2 capture systems. The review considers very similar technologies and concludes that they are still at a very early stage of development and that their techno-economic feasibility and environmental impact are still to be assessed.

In the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7, 2007-2013), the Commission is screening this type of technologies through its Future Emerging Technologies calls and is supporting the development of environmentally benign novel capture technologies and processes with high-potential.

For the future, the Commission has presented its proposal for Horizon 2020, in which projects working on novel CO_2 capture technologies and CO_2 utilisation may be funded.

([1]) http://www.etde.org/abtetde/ghg.html

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-006324/12
do Komisji
Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR) oraz Piotr Borys (PPE)
(26 czerwca 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Sytuacja w Kazachstanie

Jak Komisji zapewne wiadomo, zaostrza się sytuacja w Kazachstanie, coraz brutalniejsze są represje władzy wobec liderów opozycji.

4 czerwca 2012 r. zapadły wyroki w sprawie 37 osób aresztowanych po tragedii z 16 grudnia minionego roku, kiedy to w Żanaozen w wyniku agresji policji życie straciło kilkunastu robotników. Paradoksalnie, najgorliwszym obrońcom robotników zostały wymierzone najsurowsze kary. Wśród nich znalazł się Tałgat Saktaganow, wizytator instytucji europejskich i uczestnik konferencji OBWE z 2011 r.

Co więcej, na przestrzeni ostatniego miesiąca nasiliły się działania władz uderzające w działaczy opozycji. Aresztowani zostali m.in.: Bołat Atabajew, znany reżyser teatralny, laureat Nagrody Goethego, którą miał odebrać w sierpniu 2012 r. w Niemczech i działacz opozycyjnego ruchu „Hałyk Majdany" oraz Żanbołat Mamaj, lider organizacji młodzieżowej „Rukh Pen Til".

W tym samym czasie nasiliły się strajki robotnicze i można mieć obawy, iż w wyniku braku dialogu między kierownictwem przedsiębiorstw i pracownikami tragiczne wydarzenia z ubiegłego roku mogą się powtórzyć.

1. Czy Komisja ma zamiar zareagować na natężające się represje wobec opozycji w Kazachstanie?

2. Jak Komisja zamierza ukierunkować swoje dalsze relacje z Kazachstanem w świetle wyżej opisanych wydarzeń?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wysoką Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodniczącą Catherine Ashton w imieniu Komisji
(8 sierpnia 2012 r.)

Wysoka Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodnicząca jest zaniepokojona niedawnymi wydarzeniami, sytuacją w zakresie praw człowieka oraz rosnącą presją na działaczy opozycji w Kazachstanie. Obawy te są kwestią poruszaną w kontaktach dwustronnych z władzami Kazachstanu, jak również na forum publicznym za pośrednictwem oświadczeń Wysokiej Przedstawiciel publikowanych w zeszłym roku, w szczególności po wyborach prezydenckich w kwietniu 2011 r., w związku z brutalnymi wydarzeniami w grudniu 2011 r. oraz po wyborach parlamentarnych w styczniu 2012 r. Wysoka Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodnicząca podkreślała również przy wielu okazjach, że, zarówno UE, jak i Kazachstan, mogliby odnieść znaczące korzyści ze wzmocnionej współpracy i ściślejszych relacji. Powinno to jednak iść w parze z poszanowaniem naszych wspólnych wartości. W związku z tym Wysoka Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodnicząca wyraźnie dała do zrozumienia, że wzmocnienie stosunków UE z Kazachstanem nie jest niezależne od postępu w reformach politycznych.

Natomiast władze Kazachstanu odpowiedziały, że biorą pod uwagę obawy UE, zwłaszcza w kontekście nowych negocjacji w sprawie umowy i wzmacniania stosunków dwustronnych. W ostatnich tygodniach Bołat Atabajew oraz Żanbołat Mamaj, dwaj działacze opozycji, którzy byli uprzednio przetrzymywani, zostali uwolnieni.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006324/12
to the Commission
Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR) and Piotr Borys (PPE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Situation in Kazakhstan

The Commission is no doubt aware of the worsening situation in Kazakhstan and the increasingly brutal repression of opposition leaders by the authorities.

On 4 June 2012, court rulings were handed down in the case of 37 people arrested following the tragedy of 16 December last year, when police brutality claimed the lives of a dozen or so workers in the town of Zhanaozen. Paradoxically, the workers' most ardent defenders were given the harshest sentences. Among them was Talgat Saktaganov, an inspector for the European institutions and participant at the OSCE conference in 2011.

Furthermore, over the last month the authorities have stepped up their actions against opposition activists. Those arrested include Bolat Atabayev, a prominent theatre director, winner of the Goethe prize (which he was due to have collected in Germany in August 2012) and activist for the opposition 'Halyk Maidana' movement, and Zhanbolat Mamai, leader of the 'Rukh Pen Til' youth movement.

At the same time strikes have intensified and there are fears of a repeat of last year's tragic events, given the lack of dialogue between management and employees.

1. Does the Commission intend to respond to the increasing repression of the opposition in Kazakhstan?

2. What impact will these events have on the Commission's relations with Kazakhstan going forward?

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

The HR/VP is concerned by the recent developments, the human rights situation and the increasing pressure on the opposition activists in Kazakhstan. These concerns have been raised with the Kazakh authorities in bilateral contacts, as well as publicly through the statements of the High Representative published over the past year notably after the Presidential elections of April 2011, violent events of December 2011 and the parliamentary elections of Jaunary 2012. The HR/VP has also underlined on many occasions that both the EU and Kazakhstan could derive important benefits from enhanced cooperation and stronger relations; however, this should go hand-in-hand with respect of our common values. In line with this, the HR/VP made it clear that the enhancement of EU's relations with Kazakhstan is not independent from progress in political reforms.

In return, the Kazakh authorities have expressed that they do take into account the concerns of the EU, especially when linked to the new agreement negotiations and enhancement of bilateral relations. Over the past weeks, Mr Atabayev and Mr Mamay, oppistion activitsts who had been under detention, were both released.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-006325/12
do Komisji
Jarosław Leszek Wałęsa (PPE)
(26 czerwca 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Plan zasiedlenia południowego Bałtyku gatunkiem foki szarej

Rybołówstwo przybrzeżne jest obecnie poważnie zagrożonym sektorem gospodarki morskiej w Polsce. Jednym z powodów tego stanu jest plan zasiedlenia południowego Bałtyku gatunkiem foki szarej. Należy nadmienić, iż gatunek ten nie należy do zagrożonych, na co dowodem jest fakt, iż jego populacja na rok 2011 wynosiła 24 000 osobników i wzrasta w przedziale rocznym o 8,5 %-10 %. Foki wprowadzone do Słowińskiego Parku Narodowego przez pracowników SMIOUG (Stacja Morska Instytutu Oceanografii Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego) w ramach programu restytucji foki szarej w południowym Bałtyku wyrządzają tak duże straty, że rybacy są zmuszeni zmienić sprzęt połowowy i zająć się połowami dorsza w dużej odległości od brzegu i przebywających tam fok.

Ponadto foka szara jest uznawana za jednego z głównych żywicieli ostatecznych C.osculatum4, co powoduje wielkie zagrożenie ryb pasożytami. Należy zwrócić szczególną uwagę na patogenne dla ludzi nicienie należące do rodziny Anisakidae. Jest to wielki problem zarówno dla rybaków, jak i przetwórców, ponieważ spożycie ryb zawierających żywe larwy może stanowić zagrożenie dla zdrowia konsumentów.

Dowodem na to, iż dalsza odbudowa, czy też rozbudowa, populacji foki szarej na Bałtyku jest wyrazem nieodpowiedzialności, są spustoszenia dokonane w populacji łososi w Zatoce św. Wawrzyńca przez foki szare.

1. Z związku z powyższym zwracam się do Komisji z pytaniem, czy może ona podjąć jakieś działania mające na celu zakazanie dalszego rozmnażania w niewoli fok szarych oraz zasiedlania ich w południowym Bałtyku?

2. Dodatkowo czy Komisja możne podjąć kroki w celu doprowadzenia do redukcji jej populacji do zrównoważonego poziomu?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Janeza Potočnika w imieniu Komisji
(16 sierpnia 2012 r.)

Fokę szarą wymienia się w załącznikach II i V dyrektywy siedliskowej ([1]). Z tego względu odpowiednie władze państw członkowskich, na których obszarze gatunek ten występuje, są zobowiązane chronić jego środowisko naturalne poprzez wyznaczenie terenów mających znaczenie dla Wspólnoty (ang. Sites of Community Importance – SCIs). Jeśli wystąpi taka konieczność, władzom zezwala się na ograniczenie populacji fok, o ile jest ona utrzymywana we właściwym stanie ochrony. Jako teren mający znaczenie dla Wspólnoty, na którym odtwarza się populację foki szarej, Polska wyznaczyła Ostoję Słowińską (SCI PLH220023). Zgodnie z ostatnim sprawozdaniem przedstawionym przez Polskę na mocy art. 17 dyrektywy, stan ochrony foki szarej w Polsce jest postrzegany jako „niewłaściwy – zły".

W większości przypadków żywicielami ostatecznymi nicieni z rodziny Anisakidae zarażającymi ryby larwami tego pasożyta są walenie (wieloryby, morświny oraz fiszbinowce). Foki szare są głównym żywicielem występujących w rybach pasożytów: Contracaecum osculatum i Pseudoterranova decipiens. Według Europejskiego Urzędu ds. Bezpieczeństwa Żywności znaczenie, jakie dla zdrowia publicznego ma obecność żywych larw C. osculatum w surowym i niedogotowanym mięsie ryb, nie zostało ustalone. Zaobserwowano, że larwy z gatunku Pseudoterranova (ang. „cod worm") bardzo rzadko występują w organizmie dorsza z południowej części Morza Bałtyckiego. Przepisy dotyczące przeciwdziałania występującym w rybach pasożytom, które mogą stanowić zagrożenie dla zdrowia publicznego, w tym nicieni z rodzaju Anisakis, są określone w odpowiednim rozporządzeniu ([2]).

Do obowiązków władz państw członkowskich należy określenie niezbędnych środków ochronnych w celu utrzymania foki szarej we właściwym stanie ochrony lub przywrócenia jej populacji do takiego stanu zgodnie z dyrektywą siedliskową. Komisja nie jest uprawniona, ani nie zamierza decydować o tym, jaki stan populacji foki szarej należy uznać za zrównoważony, ani nie zamierza podjąć działania w celu zmniejszenia jej populacji.

([1]) Dyrektywa Rady 92/43/EWG z dnia 21 maja 1992 r. w sprawie ochrony siedlisk przyrodniczych oraz dzikiej fauny i flory, Dz.U. L 206 z 22.7.1992.
([2]) Pkt D rozdziału III i pkt D rozdziału Vw sekcji VIII załącznika III do rozporządzenia (WE) nr 853/2004, Dz.U. L 139 z 30.4.2004, s. 55.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006325/12
to the Commission
Jarosław Leszek Wałęsa (PPE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Plan to populate the southern Baltic with grey seals

Inshore fishing is a seriously endangered sector of Poland's maritime economy. One of the reasons for this is the planned introduction of grey seals to the southern Baltic. It should be noted that this is not an endangered species; in 2011 its population numbered 24 000 and it is growing annually by 8.5%-10%. The seals introduced into the Słowiński National Park by staff at the Marine Station of the University of Gdańsk's Oceanography Institute (SMIOUG) as part of a programme to restore grey seals in the southern Baltic are inflicting such heavy losses that fishermen have been forced to replace their fishing gear and start fishing for cod far from the coast, where the seals live.

In addition, the grey seal is known to be one of the main definitive hosts of C.osculatum 4, which poses a major parasite risk to fish. Of particular concern are the nematodes belonging to the Anisakidae family, which are pathogenic to humans. This is a major problem both for fishermen and producers because the consumption of fish containing live larvae can be a health risk.

Proof of just how irresponsible it is to continue to rebuild and expand the grey seal population in the Baltic is the way in which the salmon populations in the Gulf of St. Lawrence have been ravaged by grey seals.

1. Can the Commission take any action to prevent the further reproduction of grey seals in captivity and their release into the southern Baltic?

2. Can the Commission take action to reduce the grey seal population to a sustainable level?

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

The grey seal is listed in Annex II and V of the Habitats Directive ([1]). The competent authorities of Member States where the species is present are therefore required to designate Sites of Community importance (SCIs) for the protection of its habitat; if necessary, they are allowed to reduce the population of seals, as long as it is maintained at a favourable conservation status. Poland has designated for the species the SCI PLH220023 Ostoja Słowińska, where grey seal reintroduction programmes have been carried out. According to the last report provided by Poland under Article 17 of the directive, the conservation status of the grey seal in Poland is considered as 'unfavourable-bad'.

In most cases cetaceans (dolphins, porpoises and baleen whales) are the definite host for the Anisakis parasites infecting fish with their larvae. Grey seals are the main host for specific parasites in fish such as Contracaecum osculatum and Pseudoterranova decipiens. According to the European Food Safety Authority the public health importance of live C. osculatum in raw and undercooked fish is not known. Pseudoterravova sp. larvae (the 'cod worm') were found very rarely infecting cod from the southern Baltic Sea. Provisions for managing parasites in fish which may be of public health concern, including Anisakis, are laid down in the relevant Regulation ([2]).

It is the responsibility of Member State authorities to determine the necessary conservation measures in order to maintain or restore the grey seal at a favourable conservation status in accordance with the Habitats Directive. The Commission has no power or intention to decide which population level of grey seals should be considered as sustainable, nor does it plan to take action to reduce this population.

([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]) Point D of Chapter III and Point D of Chapter V of Section VIII of Annex III to Regulation (EC) No 853/2004, OJ L 139, 30.4.2004, p. 55.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-006326/12
à Comissão
Mário David (PPE)
(26 de junho de 2012)

Assunto: Preferências comerciais autónomas de emergência para o Paquistão

«Na sequência das inundações devastadoras […] que atingiram o Paquistão em julho, o Conselho Europeu, […] decidiu mandatar os Ministros para acordarem, com urgência, um pacote abrangente de medidas […] que facilitem a recuperação e o desenvolvimento futuro do país. Entre elas devem figurar medidas comerciais ambiciosas que concedam exclusivamente ao Paquistão um acesso acrescido ao mercado da UE, através de uma redução imediata e temporária dos direitos aduaneiros sobre os principais produtos importados do Paquistão». Este foi o início da resposta a uma pergunta que enviei à Comissão (24.9.2010— E-7522/2010) sobre o assunto em epígrafe (meus sublinhados).

Passados praticamente dois anos das inundações e após a atribuição de 320 milhões de euros em Ajuda Humanitária em 2010 (Estados-Membros e Comissão, dados de outubro de 2010), 94,9 milhões de euros em 2011 e 55 milhões de euros em 2012 (Comissão), em resposta às situações de emergência criadas pelas cheias, conflitos e refugiados afegãos, de um total de 2,458 mil milhões de euros de ajuda humanitária às populações para o período 2009/2013, por parte dos Estados-Membros e da Comissão, que louvamos e apoiamos sem reservas, continuamos sem perceber a racionalidade de se insistir no precedente do uso da política comercial como instrumento de ajuda humanitária.

Acresce a estes factos a condenável atuação das Autoridades Paquistanesas, nomeadamente o recente novo bloqueio paquistanês das rotas de abastecimento da NATO para o Afeganistão, a condenação do médico Shakeel Afridi a 33 anos de prisão por supostamente ter ajudado a CIA a encontrar Osama bin Laden, os ataques sem consequências a templos de outras religiões que não a muçulmana, a suspeita de o Paquistão estar a funcionar como «porto seguro» para grupos terroristas a operar no Afeganistão e a realidade indesmentível de que não existem «medidas de urgência» ou «uma redução imediata» passados dois anos sobre a ocorrência dos factos, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Face a estes considerandos, julga a Comissão que o Conselho deverá manter esta iniciativa?

2. É de algum modo coerente, racional, lógico, justo, inteligente ou acertado insistir nestas preferências comerciais em junho 2012?

3. Não é óbvio que esta medida deveria ser suspensa de imediato?

4. Merece o Paquistão este «prémio»?

Resposta dada por Karel De Gucht em nome da Comissão
(27 de julho de 2012)

A Comissão gostaria de recordar que, ao propor o regulamento que concede preferências comerciais autónomas ao Paquistão, procurou responder a um pedido específico e rigoroso formulado pelo Conselho Europeu nas Conclusões de setembro de 2010, que foram adotadas à luz das devastadoras inundações que atingiram o Paquistão no verão desse ano.

As preferências comerciais propostas constituem uma medida excecional destinada a responder a uma situação excecional. A recuperação levará vários anos, visando as referidas preferências, por conseguinte, dar seguimento e complementar a ajuda direta concedida às vítimas das inundações.

Foi necessário algum tempo para obter a necessária aprovação da Organização Mundial do Comércio para estas medidas. A aprovação foi concedida em fevereiro último, o que permitiu ao Conselho e ao Parlamento Europeu, enquanto colegisladores, relançar o exame da proposta da Comissão. Na sequência do debate tripartido, foi alcançado um compromisso em julho, pelo que as preferências consideradas deverão entrar em vigor logo após a conclusão dos procedimentos legislativo e administrativo.

A Comissão considera que continua a ser oportuno conceder essas preferências, uma vez que as inundações de 2010, bem como as inundações mais recentes de 2011, ainda têm um forte impacto no país, na sua população e na economia paquistanesa. É possível que possam ocorrer novamente graves inundações em 2012.

É do mais alto interesse da UE estabelecer uma relação estreita com o Paquistão, cuja cooperação é essencial para a nossa segurança. O efeito deste tipo de apoio excede largamente o valor das preferências em si mesmas.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006326/12
to the Commission
Mário David (PPE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Emergency autonomous trade preferences for Pakistan

'*Against the background of the … devastating July floods, the European Council … resolved to mandate Ministers to agree urgently a comprehensive package of … measures which will help underpin Pakistan's recovery and future development. These should, inter alia, comprise ambitious trade measures granting exclusively to Pakistan increased market access to the EU through the immediate and time limited reduction of customs duties on key imports from Pakistan*'. This quotation is the beginning of the answer to my question to the Commission (E-7522/2010, 24 September 2010) on the above subject (my emphasis).

The floods occurred nearly two years ago; EUR 320 million in humanitarian aid was granted in 2010 (by Member States and the Commission, according to the October 2010 figures), followed by EUR 94.9 million in 2011 and EUR 55 million in 2012 (Commission), in order to deal with the emergencies caused by floods, fighting, and Afghan refugees; the total amount of humanitarian aid granted to Pakistani populations by the Member States and the Commission for the period from 2009 to 2013 stands at EUR 2 458 000 million, which we applaud and endorse unreservedly. Given those facts, however, we fail to see the logic in the continued determination to set a precedent by using trade policy as a means of humanitarian aid.

Another point to take into account is the reprehensible actions of the Pakistani authorities, including the recent repeated blocking of NATO supply routes to Afghanistan; the 33-year prison sentence passed on Shakeel Afridi, a doctor who allegedly helped the CIA to find Osama bin Laden; the attacks — which are going unpunished — on places of worship for faiths other than Islam; the suspicion that Pakistan is serving as a 'haven' for terrorist groups operating in Afghanistan; and the indisputable truth that there is no such thing as 'emergency measures' or an 'immediate reduction' two years after the event.

1. In the light of the foregoing, does the Commission believe that the Council should keep this initiative in place?

2. Is it in any way coherent, rational, logical, fair, intelligent, or right to continue applying autonomous trade preferences to Pakistan in June 2012?

3. Would not the obvious course be to end this measure immediately?

4. Does Pakistan deserve such a 'reward'?

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

The Commission would recall that in proposing the regulation granting autonomous trade preferences for Pakistan, it responded to a specific and detailed request by the European Council in its Conclusions of September 2010 which were adopted in light of the devastating floods that hit Pakistan that summer.

The proposed trade preferences are an exceptional measure in response to an exceptional situation. Recovery will take several years, and these trade preferences therefore follow and complement the direct aid given to the flood victims.

It has taken some time to obtain the necessary approval by the World Trade Organisation for such measures. This approval was given last February which then allowed the European Parliament and the Council as co-legislators to re-launch the consideration of the Commission's proposal. As a result of the trilogue discussion, a compromise was reached in July and the preferences should enter into force as soon as the legislative and administrative procedures are completed.

The Commission is of the view that it is still opportune to grant these preferences because the 2010 floods as well as the more recent floods in 2011 still have a major impact on the country, its population, and its economy. It is possible that major flooding may recur in 2012.

It is in the deepest interest of the EU to establish a close relationship with Pakistan, whose cooperation is essential for our security. Support of this kind has an effect well beyond the value of the preferences themselves.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung P-006328/12
an die Kommission
Ismail Ertug (S&D)
(26. Juni 2012)

Betrifft: schriftliche Anfrage E-003682/2012

Die Antwort der Kommission auf die schriftliche Anfrage E-003682/2012/rev.1 zu grenzüberschreitenden Fahrten mit überlangen Lkw zwischen Dänemark und Deutschland ist nicht ausreichend. Die Kommission ist überhaupt nicht auf die Frage eingegangen, ob sie plant, ein Vertragsverletzungsverfahren einzuleiten. Daher wird die Kommission noch einmal um eine konkrete Antwort auf folgende Frage ersucht: Plant die Kommission, Vertragsverletzungsverfahren gegen die betreffenden Mitgliedstaaten einzuleiten, da die Fahrten gegen die Richtlinie 96/53/EG des Rates verstoßen?

Antwort von Herrn Kallas im Namen der Kommission
(6. August 2012)

Die Kommission teilt dem Herrn Abgeordneten mit, dass sie kein Vertragsverletzungsverfahren in Fällen einleiten wird, in denen sie der Auffassung ist, dass die Voraussetzungen für die Anwendung der Ausnahmen nach Artikel 4 Absatz 2 der Richtlinie 96/53/EG erfüllt sind ([1]). Die ihr zur Verfügung stehenden Informationen und die Angaben in der Anfrage des Herrn Abgeordneten geben der Kommission keinen Grund zu der Annahme, dass diese Voraussetzungen im Verkehr zwischen Dänemark und Schleswig-Holstein im Rahmen des europäischen modularen Systems (Eurocombis) nicht erfüllt sind.

([1]) Siehe Schreiben von Vizepräsident Kallas an den Vorsitzenden des Verkehrsausschusses vom 13. Juni 2012, abrufbar unter: http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road/weights-and-dimensions_en.htm.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-006328/12
to the Commission
Ismail Ertug (S&D)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Written Question E-003682/2012

The Commission's answer to Written Question E-003682/2012/rev.1 in relation to cross-border journeys by very long HGVs between Denmark and Germany is inadequate. The Commission has not addressed whether it plans to initiate infringement proceedings. Once again I ask the Commission for a specific answer to the following question: is the Commission planning to initiate infringement proceedings against the Member States involved because these journeys breach the terms of Council Directive 96/53/EC?

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

The Commission would like to inform the Honourable Member that it will not launch infringement procedures in cases where it considers that the conditions for exercise of the derogations contained in Article 4(2) of Directive 96/53/EC are met ([1]). On the basis of the information at its disposal and contained in the question of the Honourable Member, the Commission does not possess elements suggesting that these conditions for derogations are not met in the case of movements of vehicles using the European Modular System between Denmark and Schleswig Holstein.

([1]) See letter sent by Vice-President Kallas to the Honourable Chairman of the Transport Committee on 13 June 2012, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road/weights-and-dimensions_en.htm

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung P-006329/12
an den Rat
Angelika Werthmann (NI)
(26. Juni 2012)

Betrifft: Menschen mit Sehbehinderung

Ist sich der Rat vor dem Hintergrund der bevorstehenden Tagung am 16. Juli 2012 in Genf der Tatsache vollkommen bewusst, dass lediglich 5 % der gesamten Literatur für Sehbehinderte zugänglich sind?

Sollten nicht alle Mitgliedstaaten uneingeschränkt für das Recht sehbehinderter Menschen auf den Zugang zu Literatur eintreten?

Antwort
(18. September 2012)

Der Rat nimmt die Informationen der Frau Abgeordneten über den Prozentsatz der Literatur, der Menschen mit Sehbehinderung zugänglich ist, zur Kenntnis.

Er hat erst kürzlich begonnen, eine Empfehlung der Kommission ([1]) für einen Beschluss zu prüfen, mit dem die Kommission ermächtigt werden soll, im Rahmen der Weltorganisation für geistiges Eigentum ein internationales Übereinkommen über einen besseren Zugang zu Büchern für Menschen mit Lesebehinderung auszuhandeln.

Überdies prüft der Rat zurzeit einen Vorschlag der Kommission für eine Richtlinie des Rates zur Anwendung des Grundsatzes der Gleichbehandlung ungeachtet der Religion oder der Weltan-schauung, einer Behinderung, des Alters oder der sexuellen Ausrichtung ([2]). Nach dieser Richtlinie wären Diskriminierungen aus den vorgenannten Gründen u. a. beim Zugang zu und bei der Versorgung mit Sach- und Dienstleistungen verboten.

Außerdem haben alle Mitgliedstaaten und die EU das Übereinkommen der Vereinten Nationen über die Rechte von Menschen mit Behinderungen unterzeichnet, das die Vertragsstaaten verpflichtet, verschiedene Maßnahmen zu ergreifen und unter anderem sicherzustellen, „dass blinden, gehör-losen oder taubblinden Menschen, insbesondere Kindern, Bildung in den Sprachen und Kommuni-kationsformen und mit den Kommunikationsmitteln, die für den Einzelnen am besten geeignet sind, (…) vermittelt wird".

([1]) Dok. 11180/12.
([2]) Dok. 11531/08.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-006329/12
to the Council
Angelika Werthmann (NI)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Visually impaired people

In view of the upcoming meeting in Geneva on 16 July 2012, is the Council fully aware of the fact that only 5% of existing literature is available to visually impaired people?

Should not all Member States fully support the notion that visually impaired people ought to be granted the right to read?

Reply
(18 September 2012)

The Council takes good note of the information provided by the Honourable Member concerning the percentage of existing literature which is available to visually impaired persons.

The Council has just started the examination of a Commission recommendation for a Council Decision authorising the Commission to negotiate an international agreement within the World Intellectual Property Organisation on improved access to books for print impaired persons ([1]).

The Council is also currently examining a Commission proposal for a Council Directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation ([2]). The proposed Directive would prohibit discrimination on the abovementioned grounds, *inter alia* in relation to access to and supply of goods and other services.

Furthermore, all the Member States and the EU have signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which requires States parties to take various measures, including 'Ensuring that the education of persons, and in particular children, who are blind, deaf or deafblind, is delivered in the most appropriate languages and modes and means of communication for the individual'.

([1]) ST 11180/12.
([2]) ST 11531/08.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-006330/12
alla Commissione
Claudio Morganti (EFD)
(26 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Irrevocabilità dell'Euro nei Trattati

In risposta alla mia interrogazione circa la possibilità di uscita dall'Euro da parte di uno Stato membro (E-004398/2012), la Commissione afferma che l'irrevocabilità dell'adesione alla zona Euro è parte integrante del Trattato: può in proposito indicare quale sia o quali siano gli articoli dei Trattati in cui è sancita questa affermazione?

La Commissione, rispondendo all'interrogazione E-012169/2011, fa' riferimento come presunta base giuridica per l'irrevocabilità dell'Euro all'articolo 140(3) TFUE, che però in realtà parla solamente di «fissazione irrevocabile del tasso al quale l'Euro subentra alla moneta di uno Stato membro», ma nulla dice circa l'irrevocabilità dell'adozione dell'Euro in quanto tale.

Ammettendo tuttavia in linea teorica la validità della tesi dell'irrevocabilità dell'Euro, può la Commissione indicare cosa accadrebbe nel caso in cui uno Stato membro appartenente all'Eurozona decidesse di recedere dall'Unione europea a norma dell'articolo 50 TUE? Si troverebbe questo Paese a dover comunque utilizzare la moneta unica pur non facendo più parte dell'Unione?

Se invece l'unica maniera per abbandonare l'Euro fosse legata contestualmente all'abbandono dell'Unione attraverso suddetto articolo 50 TUE, si creerebbe comunque una situazione iniqua, poiché non si capisce come si sia giustamente data la possibilità ad alcuni Stati membri dell'Unione di non adottare la moneta unica, senza nel contempo dare la possibilità di recedere solo dalla moneta unica.

Risposta di Olli Rehn a nome della Commissione
(7 agosto 2012)

L'irrevocabilità della partecipazione all'area dell'euro è parte integrante dei trattati ed è sancita dall'articolo 140, paragrafo 3, del TFUE. I trattati non indicano alcuna procedura di abbandono dell'euro. Viste queste premesse, l'adozione della moneta unica va intesa come una decisione irrevocabile. Nella sua veste di custode dei trattati, la Commissione rispetta appieno tale principio e non ipotizza pertanto scenari in cui è messa in dubbio l'adesione all'area dell'euro.

Se uno Stato membro dell'area dell'euro decidesse di uscire dall'Unione europea in virtù delle disposizioni dell'articolo 50 del TUE, porrebbe termine anche alla partecipazione alla moneta unica.

La Commissione desidera sottolineare che il modo migliore per aumentare la stabilità degli Stati membri della zona euro a fronte di possibili crisi finanziarie ed economiche consiste nel rafforzare l'Unione economica e monetaria (UEM), piuttosto che frammentarla. Per migliorare il futuro funzionamento dell'UEM, la Commissione si sta adoperando, in stretta collaborazione con altri soggetti interessati tra cui il Parlamento, per rafforzare la *governance* economica e la stabilità finanziaria dell'area dell'euro.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-006330/12
to the Commission
Claudio Morganti (EFD)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Irrevocability of the euro in the Treaties

In its answer to my question on the prospect of a Member State's abandoning the euro (E-004398/2012), the Commission maintains that the irrevocability of membership in the euro area is an integral part of the Treaty framework. Can it say in which articles of the Treaties that irrevocability is enshrined?

In its answer to Question E-012169/2011, the Commission, proceeding from the premiss that membership in the euro area is irrevocable, cites the legal basis of Article 140(3) TFEU. That article, however, speaks only of irrevocably fixing the rate at which the euro will be substituted for the currency of a Member State, but says nothing about the irrevocability of adopting the euro as such.

Assuming, however, that the irrevocability of the euro is a valid concept in theory, can the Commission say what would happen if a Member State belonging to the euro area decided to withdraw from the European Union as provided for in Article 50 TEU? Would that country have to use the single currency despite no longer being part of the Union?

If, on the other hand, the only way to abandon the euro were to withdraw from the Union as well under the aforementioned Article 50 TEU, this would be unfair, since it is difficult to understand why some Member States should be allowed not to adopt the single currency when it is not possible to withdraw solely from the single currency.

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

The irrevocability of membership in the euro area is an integral part of the Treaty framework and is expressed under Article 140(3) TFEU. The Treaties do not provide for any procedure for withdrawing from the euro. On this basis, it must be understood that the adoption of the euro is an irreversible step. The Commission, as a guardian of the EU Treaties fully respects this principle and thus, does not deliver theoretical scenarios questioning membership in the euro area.

If a Member State belonging to the euro area decides to withdraw from the European Union membership based on Article 50 TEU, such withdrawal would imply termination of its participation to the single currency.

The Commission wishes to underline that reinforcing the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), rather than fragmenting it, is the best way going forward in order to increase the resilience of euro area Member States to potential economic and financial crises. In order to underpin the functioning of EMU for the future, the Commission is working closely with other stakeholders, including the Parliament, to enhance economic governance and financial stability in the euro area.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-006333/12
a la Comisión
Carlos José Iturgaiz Angulo (PPE)
(26 de junio de 2012)

Asunto: Astilleros españoles (4)

Mediante Decisión de fecha 29 de junio de 2011, la Comisión notificó al Gobierno español la apertura de una investigación con objeto de verificar si el denominado sistema español de arrendamiento financiero («SEAF») es compatible con la normativa de la Unión Europea en materia de ayudas estatales.

La apertura de este procedimiento ha puesto a la industria naval española en una situación crítica ya que, al haberse visto privada de un marco jurídico sobre el que operar, su actividad se ha visto paralizada al no poder cerrar nuevos contratos. Esto ha implicado que muchos de estos contratos perdidos hayan sido ganados por astilleros holandeses y noruegos.

Desde el inicio del procedimiento, las autoridades españolas han mantenido múltiples contactos con los servicios de la competencia con el objeto de facilitar toda la información y documentación necesaria para demostrar que el SEAF no es una ayuda de Estado; que, en caso de ser considerado como ayuda, es compatible con el mercado interior; y por último, que en caso de ser considerado como no compatible, no debería ordenarse la recuperación por respeto a los principios de confianza legítima, seguridad jurídica e igualdad.

La Comisión Europea no llevó a cabo ningún tipo de acción formal en los diez años durante los cuales el Sistema Español de Arrendamiento Financiero (SEAF) estuvo vigente y, en particular, en los cinco que pasaron desde que recibió diversas denuncias contra el mismo y las autoridades españolas facilitaron información al respecto.

¿No considera la Comisión que el largo periodo transcurrido sin que las autoridades comunitarias hayan tomado acciones al respecto ha inducido a albergar esperanzas fundadas a los agentes participantes en el sistema de que no se cuestionaría su situación?

Respuesta del Sr. Almunia en nombre de la Comisión
(3 de agosto de 2012)

Las observaciones presentadas por España y terceras partes con respecto a cuestiones como la existencia de esperanzas fundadas o la seguridad jurídica se tendrán en cuenta y serán examinadas por la Comisión en su evaluación final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006333/12
to the Commission
Carlos José Iturgaiz Angulo (PPE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Spanish shipyards (4)

On 29 June 2011, the Commission informed the Spanish Government of its decision to initiate a procedure to determine whether the so-called Spanish Tax Lease System (STL) is compatible with EU rules on state aid.

The launch of this procedure has placed the Spanish naval industry in a critical position, as it has been left without any legal framework within which to operate, making it impossible to conclude any new contracts. This has paralysed activity in the sector, with many of the contracts thus lost having been won by Dutch and Norwegian shipyards.

Since the start of the procedure, the Spanish authorities have repeatedly contacted the Competition Services, to provide them with all the information and documentation needed to demonstrate that the STL is not a form of state aid; that if it is considered a form of aid, it is compatible with the internal market; and finally, that if it should be considered incompatible, there should be no requirement to repay it, out of respect for the principles of legitimate expectation, legal certainty and equality.

The Commission took no formal steps during the ten years that the STL was in force, nor, in particular, during the five years that have passed since it received various accusations about the system and since the Spanish authorities provided it with related information.

Does the Commission not take the view that the elapse of a long period of time in which the EU authorities took no action on this issue has led the operators participating in the system to harbour justified hopes that their situation would not be called into question?

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

The observations made by Spain and third parties relative to the existence of possible legitimate expectations or legal certainty issues will be taken into account and examined by the Comission in its final assessment.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-006334/12
a la Comisión
Carlos José Iturgaiz Angulo (PPE)
(26 de junio de 2012)

Asunto: Astilleros españoles (5)

Mediante Decisión de fecha 29 de junio de 2011, la Comisión notificó al Gobierno español la apertura de una investigación con objeto de verificar si el denominado sistema español de arrendamiento financiero («SEAF») es compatible con la normativa de la Unión Europea en materia de ayudas estatales.

La apertura de este procedimiento ha puesto a la industria naval española en una situación crítica ya que, al haberse visto privada de un marco jurídico sobre el que operar, su actividad se ha visto paralizada al no poder cerrar nuevos contratos. Esto ha implicado que muchos de estos contratos perdidos hayan sido ganados por astilleros holandeses y noruegos.

Desde el inicio del procedimiento, las autoridades españolas han mantenido múltiples contactos con los servicios de la competencia con el objeto de facilitar toda la información y documentación necesaria para demostrar que el SEAF no es una ayuda de Estado; que, en caso de ser considerado como ayuda, es compatible con el mercado interior; y por último, que en caso de ser considerado como no compatible, no debería ordenarse la recuperación por respeto a los principios de confianza legítima, seguridad jurídica e igualdad.

La propuesta del nuevo sistema de *tax lease* que España ha presentado a la Comisión Europea no contiene forma alguna de ayuda de Estado, salvo la concedida mediante el régimen de tonelaje, aplicable en los términos que fueron aprobados por la Comisión.

¿En qué plazo considera la Comisión que pudiera ser aprobada esta propuesta?

Respuesta del Sr. Almunia en nombre de la Comisión
(3 de agosto de 2012)

La Comisión ha analizado con las autoridades españolas las modificaciones propuestas para el futuro a fin de adecuarse a las normas en materia de ayudas estatales. En este sentido, las autoridades españolas han solicitado que se les aplique el mismo trato que a otros Estados miembros, especialmente Francia. Se les ha informado de que podrían inspirarse en la Decisión de la Comisión sobre las agrupaciones de interés económico fiscales francesas («GIE Fiscaux») ([1]).

En esa Decisión la Comisión consideró que el régimen constituía una medida de ayuda e impuso una limitación de la ayuda en virtud de las Directrices comunitarias sobre las ayudas estatales al transporte marítimo, con arreglo a las cuales el nivel máximo de ayuda estatal que puede concederse a cada empresa naviera se determina sobre la base de dos parámetros: el nivel de cargas fiscales y sociales aplicables a los marinos y el nivel de imposición basado en el tonelaje pagado. La aplicación de este límite depende de las características específicas de cada operación, en particular de si los beneficiarios ya han recibido ayudas al amparo de las Directrices sobre ayudas al transporte marítimo en diferentes Estados miembros.

El 30 de mayo de 2012 España notificó un régimen para su aplicación en el futuro. La Comisión solicitó a las autoridades españolas más información para evaluar el asunto. Como hasta ahora, los servicios de la Comisión están a disposición de las autoridades españolas para discutir este asunto. Una vez que la Comisión haya recibido toda la información necesaria, dispondrá de un plazo de dos meses para adoptar una decisión formal.

([1]) Decisión de la Comisión 2007/256/CE de 20 de diciembre de 2006 relativa al régimen de ayudas ejecutado por Francia en virtud del artículo 39 CA del Code général des impôts — Ayuda estatal C 46/2004 (DO L 112 de 30.4.2007, p. 41).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006334/12
to the Commission
Carlos José Iturgaiz Angulo (PPE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Spanish shipyards (5)

On 29 June 2011, the Commission informed the Spanish Government of its decision to initiate a procedure to determine whether the so-called Spanish tax lease system (STL) is compatible with EU state aid legislation.

The launch of this procedure has placed the Spanish naval industry in a critical position, as it has been left without any legal framework within which to operate, making it impossible to conclude any new contracts. This has paralysed activity in the sector, with many of the contracts thus lost having been won by Dutch and Norwegian shipyards.

Since the start of the procedure, the Spanish authorities have repeatedly contacted the Competition Services, to provide them with all the information and documentation needed to demonstrate that the STL is not a form of state aid; that if it is considered a form of aid, it is compatible with the internal market; and finally, that if it should be considered incompatible, there should be no requirement to repay it, out of respect for the principles of legitimate expectation, legal certainty and equality.

The proposed new tax-lease system submitted by Spain to the Commission does not contain any form of state aid, except that granted by the tonnage regime applicable under the terms approved by the Commission.

How soon does the Commission believe that this proposal could be approved?

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

The Commission has discussed with the Spanish authorities proposed changes for the future so as to conform with state aid rules. In this respect, the Spanish authorities have claimed the application of equal treatment with other Member States, notably France. They have been informed that they could take inspiration from the Commission decision on the French 'GIE Fiscaux' ([1]).

In that decision, the Commission considered that the scheme was an aid measure and imposed limitation of the aid under the Maritime Guidelines, under which the maximum level of state aid which may be granted to each shipowner is determined on the basis of two parameters: the level of taxation and social charges for seafarers, and the level of tonnage tax paid. The application of this ceiling depends on the specific characteristics of each operation, in particular on whether the beneficiaries have already received aid under the Maritime Guidelines in different Member States.

Spain notified a scheme on 30 May 2012, to be applied in the future. The Commission required additional information to assess the case, which it has requested from the Spanish auhorities. As in the past, the Commission services remain available for discussion with the Spanish authorities. Once it receives all the necessary information, the Commission must adopt a formal decision within two months.

([1]) Commission Decision 2007/256/EC of 20 December 2006 on the aid scheme implemented by France under Article 39 CA of the General Tax Code — State aid C 46/2004 (OJ L 112, 30.4.2007, p. 41).

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-006335/12
a la Comisión
Carlos José Iturgaiz Angulo (PPE)
(26 de junio de 2012)

Asunto: Astilleros españoles (6)

Mediante Decisión de fecha 29 de junio de 2011, la Comisión notificó al Gobierno español la apertura de una investigación con objeto de verificar si el denominado sistema español de arrendamiento financiero («SEAF») es compatible con la normativa de la Unión Europea en materia de ayudas estatales.

La apertura de este procedimiento ha puesto a la industria naval española en una situación crítica, ya que al haberse visto privada de un marco jurídico sobre el que operar, su actividad se ha visto paralizada al no poder cerrar nuevos contratos. Esto ha implicado que muchos de estos contratos perdidos hayan sido ganados por astilleros holandeses y noruegos.

Desde el inicio del procedimiento, las autoridades españolas han mantenido múltiples contactos con los Servicios de la Competencia con el objeto de facilitar toda la información y documentación necesaria para demostrar que el SEAF no es una ayuda de Estado; que en caso de ser considerado como ayuda, es compatible con el mercado interior; y por último, que en caso de ser considerado como no compatible, no debería ordenarse la recuperación por respeto a los principios de confianza legítima, seguridad jurídica e igualdad.

España lleva prácticamente un año negociando con la Comisión Europea con el objetivo, durante todo el proceso, de recibir el mismo tratamiento que Francia, que usted mismo marcó como referencia: respecto al pasado, la no devolución de las hipotéticas ayudas y respecto al futuro, un nuevo sistema que permita la contratación. Respecto a este último aspecto sus servicios se han mostrado inflexibles.

¿No cree que España esté recibiendo un trato discriminatorio?

¿No le parece discriminatorio y contrario a la competencia que en 2011 mientras Holanda y Noruega, competidores directos de los astilleros españoles y denunciantes de nuestro sistema, hayan contratado 52 buques por importe de 2 400 millones de dólares, la contratación en España se encuentre congelada?

Respuesta del Sr. Almunia en nombre de la Comisión
(3 de agosto de 2012)

La Comisión evalúa cada caso de ayuda estatal basándose en los hechos concretos y sus efectos sobre la competencia, y no existen dos casos idénticos. Esto significa que cada situación, sea o no similar a otra, debe ser evaluada en función de sus propias características. Evidentemente la Comisión se compromete a garantizar un trato igual a todos los Estados miembros.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006335/12
to the Commission
Carlos José Iturgaiz Angulo (PPE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Spanish shipyards (6)

On 29 June 2011, the Commission informed the Spanish Government of its decision to initiate a procedure to determine whether the so-called Spanish Tax Lease System (STL) is compatible with EU rules on state aid.

The launch of this procedure has placed the Spanish naval industry in a critical position, as it has been left without any legal framework within which to operate, making it impossible to conclude any new contracts. This has paralysed activity in the sector, with many of the contracts thus lost having been won by Dutch and Norwegian shipyards.

Since the start of the procedure, the Spanish authorities have repeatedly contacted the Competition Services, to provide them with all the information and documentation needed to demonstrate that the STL is not a form of state aid; that if it is considered a form of aid, it is compatible with the internal market; and finally, that if it should be considered incompatible, there should be no requirement to repay it, out of respect for the principles of legitimate expectation, legal certainty and equality.

Spain has spent almost a year negotiating with the Commission, with the aim of receiving the same treatment as France, used by the Commission itself as a benchmark: namely, no retroactive obligation to return hypothetical aid and, for the future, a new system allowing procurement. On the latter point, the Commission's services have proved inflexible.

Does the Commission not think that Spain is receiving discriminatory treatment?

Does it not seem discriminatory and anti-competitive that the Netherlands and Norway, which are direct competitors of Spanish shipyards and have complained about our system, have procured orders for 52 vessels totalling USD 2.4 billion during 2011, while procurement activities are frozen in Spain?

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

The Commission assesses each state aid case on the basis of the specific facts and effects on competition, and no two cases are exactly the same. This means that each situation, whether similar to another situation or not, must be assessed on the merits of the individual case. Of course, the Commission is committed to ensuring equal treatment for all Member States.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-006336/12
a la Comisión
Carlos José Iturgaiz Angulo (PPE)
(26 de junio de 2012)

Asunto: Astilleros españoles (7)

Mediante Decisión de fecha 29 de junio de 2011, la Comisión notificó al Gobierno español la apertura de una investigación con objeto de verificar si el denominado sistema español de arrendamiento financiero («SEAF») es compatible con la normativa de la Unión Europea en materia de ayudas estatales.

La apertura de este procedimiento ha puesto a la industria naval española en una situación crítica, ya que al haberse visto privada de un marco jurídico sobre el que operar, su actividad se ha visto paralizada al no poder cerrar nuevos contratos. Esto ha implicado que muchos de estos contratos perdidos hayan sido ganados por astilleros holandeses y noruegos.

Desde el inicio del procedimiento, las autoridades españolas han mantenido múltiples contactos con los servicios de la competencia con el objeto de facilitar toda la información y documentación necesaria para demostrar que el SEAF no es una ayuda de Estado; que, en caso de ser considerado como ayuda, es compatible con el mercado interior y, por último, que en caso de ser considerado como no compatible, no debería ordenarse la recuperación por respeto a los principios de confianza legítima, seguridad jurídica e igualdad.

España lleva prácticamente un año negociando con la Comisión Europea con el objetivo, durante todo el proceso, de recibir el mismo tratamiento que Francia, que usted mismo marcó como referencia: respecto al pasado, la no devolución de las hipotéticas ayudas y respecto al futuro, un nuevo sistema que permita la contratación. Respecto a este último aspecto sus servicios se han mostrado inflexibles.

La cuota de mercado de los astilleros ubicados en países miembros de la UE en el conjunto de la cartera mundial de pedidos se ha visto reducida en los últimos 10 años del 19,7 % al 5,2 %.

¿No cree la Comisión que sus actuaciones en materia naval podrían generar una escalada de denuncias entre países miembros de la UE y que, mientras la CE investiga y decide, los países asiáticos podrían acaparar inexorablemente la totalidad del mercado, expulsando del mismo a la industria europea?

Respuesta del Sr. Almunia en nombre de la Comisión
(3 de agosto de 2012)

Las normas sobre ayudas estatales establecidas en el Tratado tienen como objetivo mantener unas condiciones competitivas equitativas y fomentar la competencia leal entre las empresas de todos los Estados miembros.

El 30 de mayo de 2012, a raíz de una denuncia presentada por unos competidores, la Comisión incoó un procedimiento de investigación formal en relación con el sistema español de imposición por tonelaje.

Los Estados miembros pueden aplicar sistemas tributarios en función del tonelaje con arreglo a las vigentes Directrices comunitarias sobre ayudas de Estado al transporte marítimo [1]. No obstante, la Comisión recuerda que estas Directrices son aplicables únicamente al transporte marítimo y no pueden ser utilizadas para facilitar ayudas a los astilleros. Las ayudas a los astilleros solo pueden concederse con arreglo a las disposiciones del Marco aplicable a las ayudas estatales a la construcción naval [2].

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[1] DO C 13 de 17.1.2004, p. 3.
[2] Véanse el Reglamento (CE) n° 1540/98 de 29.6.1998 (DO L 202 de 18.7.1998, p. 1), el Marco de 2004 (DO C 317 de 30.12.2003, p. 11) y el Marco de 2012 (DO C 364 de 14.12.2011, p. 9).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006336/12
to the Commission
Carlos José Iturgaiz Angulo (PPE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Spanish shipyards (7)

On 29 June 2011, the Commission informed the Spanish Government of its decision to initiate a procedure to determine whether the so-called Spanish Tax Lease System (STL) is compatible with EU rules on state aid.

The launch of this procedure has placed the Spanish naval industry in a critical position, as it has been left without any legal framework within which to operate, making it impossible to conclude any new contracts. This has paralysed activity in the sector, with many of the contracts thus lost having been won by Dutch and Norwegian shipyards.

Since the start of the procedure, the Spanish authorities have repeatedly contacted the Competition Services, to provide them with all the information and documentation needed to demonstrate that the STL is not a form of state aid; that if it is considered a form of aid, it is compatible with the internal market; and finally, that if it should be considered incompatible, there should be no requirement to repay it, out of respect for the principles of legitimate expectation, legal certainty and equality.

Spain has spent almost a year negotiating with the Commission, with the aim of receiving the same treatment as France, which the Commission itself used as a point of reference: namely, no retroactive obligation to return hypothetical aid and, for the future, a new system allowing procurement. On the latter point, the Commission's services have proved inflexible.

In the last 10 years, shipyards located in EU Member States have seen their share of the market reduced from 19.7% of worldwide shipbuilding orders to 5.2%.

Does the Commission not take the view that its actions on shipbuilding could lead to an increase in Member States reporting each other and that, while the Commission investigates and deliberates, Asian countries could inexorably take over the entire shipbuilding market, forcing out European industry?

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

The rules on state aid as established by the Treaty aim at maintaining a level playing field and at fostering undistorted competition among companies from all Member States.

The Commission opened on 30 May 2012 a formal investigation procedure concerning the Spanish tonnage tax system following a complaint from competitors.

Member States can implement tonnage tax systems in accordance with the existing Community guidelines on state aid to Maritime Transport ([1]). Nevertheless, the Commission recalls that these guidelines are only applicable to maritime transport and cannot be used to provide aid to shipyards. Aid to shipyards can only be granted in accordance with the provisions of the framework on state aid to Shipbuilding ([2]).

([1]) OJ C 13, 17.1.2004, p. 3.

([2]) See Regulation (EC) No 1540/98 of 29.6.1998 (OJ L 202, 18.7.1998, p. 1), Framework 2004 (OJ C 317, 30.12.2003, p. 11) and Framework 2012 (OJ C 364, 14.12.2011, p. 9).

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-006339/12
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (NI)
(26. Juni 2012)

Betrifft: Risiko im Zusammenhang mit der Umsetzung von Hilfsprogrammen in Griechenland

Wir wissen, dass der griechische Sanierungsplan vom Weg abgekommen sei; offenbar ist das Risiko im Zusammenhang mit der Umsetzung von Hilfsprogrammen wesentlich höher, als alle Akteure bisher einschätzen konnten.

1. Welche Maßnahmen gedenkt die Kommission hier zu ergreifen?

2. Was plant die Kommission hier vor allem an langfristigen und nachhaltigen Schritten?

3. Kann es sein, dass die Abwanderung der jungen Griechen bereits spürbar wird?

Antwort von Herrn Rehn im Namen der Kommission
(20. August 2012)

Das wirtschaftliche Anpassungsprogramm für Griechenland verfolgt das Ziel, mittel- und langfristig wieder für nachhaltiges Wachstum und Arbeitsplätze zu sorgen. Die Kommission ist sich voll und ganz des Risikos bewusst, dass Maßnahmen, die das staatliche Defizit verringern und die Wettbewerbsfähigkeit der Unternehmen im Außenhandel erhöhen sollen, kurzfristig einen Rückgang der Binnennachfrage, der Wirtschaftstätigkeit und der Beschäftigung bewirken können. Sie ist dennoch davon überzeugt, dass sich die mittelfristigen Aussichten der Wirtschaft durch die vorgeschlagenen Maßnahmen verbessern werden.

Die Kommission überwacht die Umsetzung des griechischen Anpassungsprogramms und erstattet dem Rat und den Kreditgebern regelmäßig über ihre Ergebnisse Bericht. Auch steht sie den griechischen Behörden bei der Durchführung konkreter Maßnahmen im Rahmen wachstumssteigernder Strukturreformen mit fachlichem Rat zur Seite.

In ihrer am 18. April 2012 vorgelegten Mitteilung „Wachstum für Griechenland“ ([1]) legt die Kommission die Grundzüge des Aktionsplans dar, der nach einem genau festgelegten Zeitplan den Erfolg der wirtschaftspolitischen Maßnahmen und die Rückkehr zum Wachstum gewährleisten wird. Darin wird das Augenmerk besonders auf die junge Generation gerichtet, die sich einer überaus hohen Arbeitslosigkeit gegenüber sieht und in großer Zahl emigriert. So könnten der Mitteilung zufolge beispielsweise „aus dem Europäischen Sozialfonds […] etwa 200 bis 250 Mio. EUR im Rahmen der bestehenden EU-Strukturfondsprogramme für Maßnahmen zugewiesen werden“, die für junge Arbeitssuchende „sofort etwas bewirken könnten. Es sollte ein Aktionsplan zur Förderung der Beschäftigung junger Leute — auch durch Schulungsmaßnahmen und Selbstständigenförderung — aufgestellt werden, der noch vor Jahresende umgesetzt werden sollte.“ Die Kommission hat ein Einsatzteam zur Jugendbeschäftigung nach Griechenland entsandt, dass den Anstoß zu den notwendigen Anpassungen der operationellen Programme geben soll. Erste Ergebnisse wurden dem Europäischen Rat im Juni 2012 unterbreitet.

([1]) KOM(2012)183 endg.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006339/12
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (NI)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Risks involved in implementing economic recovery programmes in Greece

The Greek recovery plan has lost its way: clearly the risks involved in implementing the programmes in question are much greater than any of the players had previously imagined.

1. What measures are under consideration by the Commission in this context?

2. What long-term and sustainable steps in particular is the Commission planning?

3. Is it possible that emigration among young Greeks is already having a tangible effect?

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

The objective of the economic adjustment programme of Greece is restoring sustainable growth and jobs in the medium and the long term. The Commission is fully aware of the risk that policies to reduce the government deficit, and to help firms to gain competitiveness in the external markets, may lead in the short term to a contraction in internal demand, in economic activity and in employment. However, it is convinced that the policy proposed will improve the medium-term prospects of the economy.

The Commission is monitoring the implementation of the Greek adjustment programme and reports to the Council and to the Lenders on a regular basis. The Commission is also providing technical assistance to the Greek authorities for the implementation of concrete actions in the area of growth-enhancing structural reforms.

In its communication 'Growth for Greece' ([1]), issued on 18 April 2012, the Commission outlines an action plan that will ensure the success of economic policies and the return to growth according to a specific timetable. Particular attention is paid to the young generation which is facing very high unemployment and emigration. For example and as discussed in the communication, 'a re-orientation of EU funding of around EUR 200-250 million from the ESF could be allocated under existing operational programmes to support measures which can deliver immediate results for job-seekers. An action plan to promote youth employment, including training and entrepreneurship, should be finalised and implemented before end-2012'. The Commission has sent an Action Team on Youth Employment to Greece to kick-off necessary adaptations in operational programmes. First results have been presented to the European Council in June 2012.

([1]) COM(2012)183 final.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-006341/12
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (NI)
(26. Juni 2012)

Betrifft: Drohender Zusammenbruch des Gesundheitssystems in Griechenland

Das Gesundheitssystem in dem von der Wirtschaftskrise aufs Schwerste gebeutelten Griechenland scheint vor dem Zusammenbruch zu stehen; im Grunde wird es auf den Status eines Entwicklungslandes abrutschen — und mit ihm all jene, die dringend der medizinischen Hilfe bedürfen.

So soll zum Beispiel eine Frau, die an Brustkrebs erkrankt ist, keine Möglichkeit haben, die notwendige Chemotherapie zu beginnen. Spitäler bekommen Medikamente und notwendiges Material nur mehr gegen Vorauszahlung usw.

Es ist klar, dass sich die Situation auf einen Zusammenbruch des öffentlichen Gesundheitssystems in Griechenland hin entwickelt.

1. Ist der Kommission diese Situation, die akut Menschenleben gefährdet, bekannt?

2. Wie gedenkt die Kommission, hier den Betroffenen entsprechende Unterstützung zuteilwerden zu lassen?

3. Hat die Kommission bereits Kenntnis von Fällen des Zusammenbruchs der öffentlichen Gesundheitssysteme und von deren Auswirkungen auf die Bürger in anderen europäischen Ländern?

Antwort von Herrn Rehn im Namen der Kommission
(6. August 2012)

Die derzeit schwierige wirtschaftliche und budgetäre Situation ist mit großen Herausforderungen für die Regierung und die Menschen in Griechenland verbunden. Dazu zählen auch Belastungen für das Gesundheitswesen. Im Rahmen des wirtschaftlichen Anpassungsprogramms unterstützen die Europäische Kommission, der Internationale Währungsfonds und die Europäische Zentralbank das Land daher auch bei der Behebung finanzieller Ungleichgewichte im Gesundheitswesen. Eine solide finanzielle Grundlage für das Gesundheitssystem ist langfristig die beste Garantie für die Gleichbehandlung aller Patienten und entscheidend für die Gewährleistung der Solidarität zwischen den Generationen.

Die Kommission prüft die Fortschritte bei der Umsetzung der Gesundheitsreformen in Griechenland regelmäßig. Das „Memorandum of Understanding" sieht umfangreiche Reformmaßnahmen vor, die insbesondere sicherstellen sollen, dass die Menschen in Griechenland künftig von einem strukturell tragfähigen Gesundheitswesen profitieren. Das übergeordnete Ziel dieser Reformen ist ein finanzpolitisch tragfähiger Zugang aller Menschen zu einer qualitativ hochwertigen medizinischen Versorgung.

Die Europäische Kommission setzt sich bei der Festlegung und Umsetzung aller Maßnahmen und Tätigkeiten der Union stets für ein hohes Maß an Gesundheitsschutz ein. Gemäß Artikel 168 des Vertrags über die Arbeitsweise der Europäischen Union sind für die Festlegung der Gesundheitspolitik sowie für die Organisation des Gesundheitswesens und die medizinische Versorgung jedoch die Mitgliedstaaten verantwortlich. Nach demselben Artikel muss die Union — und damit auch die Kommission — diese Zuständigkeit bei allen Tätigkeiten achten. Die Kommission kann daher in diesem Zusammenhang nicht direkt eingreifen, fordert die Mitgliedstaaten aber auf, bei Bedarf angemessene Maßnahmen zu ergreifen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006341/12
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (NI)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: The prospect of a collapse in Greece's healthcare system

The healthcare system in Greece, the country worst hit by the economic crisis, appears to be on the verge of collapse and looks set to slip to levels comparable with those of a developing country, impacting on all those who urgently need medical help.

For example, a woman suffering from breast cancer is reportedly unable to start the necessary course of chemotherapy. Hospitals can only secure the medicines and materials they need by paying in advance, etc.

Clearly the situation is moving towards the collapse of the public health system in Greece.

1. Is the Commission aware of this situation, which is putting human lives in acute danger?

2. How does the Commission intend to provide the appropriate support to the people affected?

3. Is the Commission aware of any previous cases in which public health systems have collapsed in other European countries? If so, how this has affected the lives of citizens there?

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

The current difficult economic and budgetary situation has proven a very challenging one for governments and citizens in Greece, putting among others also the health system under strain. In the context of the Economic Adjustment Programme, the European Commission, with the International Monetary Fund and European Central Bank, are helping Greece to address its fiscal imbalances, including in the health sector. Fiscally sound healthcare systems are the best long term guarantee for patient equity and crucial to ensure solidarity between generations.

The Commission regularly monitors progress in the implementation of healthcare reforms in Greece. The Memorandum of Understanding contains an extensive set of reform measures specifically aimed at ensuring that Greek patients in the future will benefit from a healthcare system that is structurally sustainable. The very ultimate goal of such reforms is to ensure fiscally sustainable access for all to high-quality health services.

The European Commission is fully committed in ensuring a high level of human health protection in the definition and implementation of all Union policies and activities. However, under Article 168 TFEU, Union action shall respect the responsibilities of the Member States for the definition of their health policy and for the organisations and delivery of health services and medical care. The same article requires any action at Union level — and therefore by the Commission — to respect these responsibilities. Therefore the Commission has no ability to take direct action, though it encourages Member States to take measures as appropriate.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-006342/12
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (NI)
(26. Juni 2012)

Betrifft: Zahlungen an die Türkei aus Mitteln des EU-Haushalts

Aus der Beantwortung der Anfrage E-004667/2012 ergibt sich eine Nachfrage.

Es werden im vierten Absatz zwar „andere Programme wie (…)" erwähnt, doch ergibt sich hier die Frage nach einer Auflistung aller Programme mit den jeweiligen Beträgen, aus denen die Türkei bisher finanzielle Unterstützung erhalten hat.

Antwort von Herrn Füle im Namen der Kommission
(27. August 2012)

Wie die der Antwort der Kommission auf die Anfrage E-0046672012 dargelegt, erhielt die Türkei bis 2002 Unterstützung im Rahmen des Programms MEDA (779 Mio. EUR in den Jahren 1996-2001). Im Zeitraum 2002-2006 wurde dem Land im Rahmen der speziellen Heranführungshilfe für die Türkei (TPA) ein Gesamtbetrag von 1,2 Mrd. EUR zugewiesen. Darüber hinaus erhielt die Türkei 2006 finanzielle Unterstützung im Rahmen des thematischen Programms „Umwelt und Wälder in den Entwicklungsländern" (1,67 Mio. EUR).

Für detaillierte Informationen über die Zuweisung von IPA-Mitteln für die Beteiligung der Türkei an Gemeinschaftsprogramme (wie z. B. Lebenslanges Lernen, Jugend in Aktion, Kultur 2007-2013, Europäische Umweltagentur, Progress, 7. Rahmenprogramm, Zoll usw.) sei die Frau Abgeordnete auf die folgende Internetseite verwiesen:
http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/candidate-countries/turkey/financial-assistance/index_en.htm?id=keydoc#library

Es wurde aus keinen weiteren Programmen Mittel bereitgestellt.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006342/12
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (NI)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Payments to Turkey from EU budgetary funds

The answer to Question E-004667/2012 gives rise to another question.

The fourth paragraph mentions 'other programmes, such as (…)'.

Will the Commission provide a list of all programmes from which Turkey has received financial support, as well as the amounts involved?

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

As stated in the Commission's reply to the Question E-004667/2012, until 2002 Turkey has received support under the MEDA programme (amount of EUR 779 million for the period 1996-2001). For the period 2002-2006, an amount of EUR 1.2 billion has been allocated to Turkey under the Pre-accession Assistance Programme (TPA) programme. In addition, in 2006 Turkey has received financial support under thematic programme 'Environment and Forests in Developing Countries' (an amount of 1.67 MEUR).

For detailed information on IPA funds allocated for Turkey's participation in European Community programmes (such as Lifelong Learning, Youth in Action, Culture 2007-2013, European Environment Agency (EEA), PROGRESS, 7thFramework Programme, Customs etc) the Honourable Member should refer to the following link: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/candidate-countries/turkey/financial-assistance/index_en.htm?id=keydoc#library

There were no other programmes concerned.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-006343/12
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (NI)
(26. Juni 2012)

Betrifft: Weltweiter Ausstieg aus der Atomkraft

„Global2000" hat in Österreich 700 000 Unterstützerinnen und Unterstützer für einen weltweiten Ausstieg aus der Atomkraft gewinnen können.

Jetzt planen sie die europäische Bürgerinitiative (EBI) „Meine Stimme gegen Atomkraft".

Die Kommission hat diese EBI mit der Begründung, sie werde in den Euratom-Vertrag eingreifen, abgelehnt.

Es liegt allerdings ein Rechtsgutachten vor, wonach die in der EBI geäußerten Forderungen im Einklang mit den EU-Vorgaben stehen.

Wie begründet die Kommission nun im Detail ihre im Gegensatz zu dem Rechtsgutachten stehende Ablehnung?

Antwort von Präsident Barroso im Namen der Kommission
(9. August 2012)

Die vorgeschlagene Bürgerinitiative, auf die sich die Anfrage bezieht, hat eine der rechtlichen Bedingungen für die Registrierung nicht erfüllt, die in Artikel 4 Absatz 2 der Verordnung über die Bürgerinitiative ([1]) festgelegt ist, d. h. „die geplante Bürgerinitiative liegt nicht offenkundig außerhalb des Rahmens, in dem die Kommission befugt ist, einen Vorschlag für einen Rechtsakt der Union vorzulegen, um die Verträge umzusetzen". Diese Bedingung ergibt sich unmittelbar aus Artikel 11 Absatz 4 des Vertrags über die Europäische Union, der folgenden Wortlaut hat: „Unionsbürgerinnen und Unionsbürger, deren Anzahl mindestens eine Million betragen und bei denen es sich um Staatsangehörige einer erheblichen Anzahl von Mitgliedstaaten handeln muss, können die Initiative ergreifen und die Europäische Kommission auffordern, im Rahmen ihrer Befugnisse geeignete Vorschläge zu unterbreiten, zu denen es nach Ansicht jener Bürgerinnen und Bürger eines Rechtsakts der Union bedarf, um die Verträge umzusetzen".

Die Kommission verweist die Frau Abgeordnete auf das Schreiben vom 30. Mai 2012 an die Organisatoren der Initiative, in dem die Gründe für die Ablehnung ausführlich dargelegt werden. Dieses Schreiben ist über die Webseite zur Europäischen Bürgerinitiative allgemein zugänglich:
http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/initiatives/non-registered.

([1]) Verordnung (EU) Nr. 211/2011 des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 16. Februar 2011 über die Bürgerinitiative, ABl. L 65 vom 11.3.2011.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006343/12
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (NI)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Worldwide withdrawal from nuclear power

GLOBAL 2000 has succeeded in attracting the support of 700 000 people in Austria for a worldwide withdrawal from nuclear power.

The group is now planning a European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) under the 'My vote against nuclear power' banner.

The Commission has rejected this ECI on the grounds that it would interfere with the Euratom Treaty.

However, an existing legal opinion indicates that the demands expressed in the ECI meet EU requirements.

Would the Commission explain in detail the reasons for its rejection, contrary to the legal opinion?

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

The proposed citizens' initiative referred to in the Honourable Member's question did not meet one of the legal conditions for registration as set out in Article 4(2) of the regulation on the citizens' initiative [1], namely that 'the proposed citizens' initiative does not manifestly fall outside the framework of the Commission's powers to submit a proposal for a legal act of the Union for the purpose of implementing the Treaties'. This condition directly results from Article 11(4) of the Treaty on European Union which states that 'not less than one million citizens who are nationals of a significant number of Member States may take the initiative of inviting the European Commission, within the framework of its powers, to submit any appropriate proposal on matters where citizens consider that a legal act of the Union is required for the purpose of implementing the Treaties'.

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its letter of 30 May 2012 sent to the organisers of this initiative in which the reasons for the refusal are detailed. This letter has been made publicly available in the citizens' initiative website:
http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/initiatives/non-registered.

[1] Regulation (EU) No 211/2011 of the Parliament and of the Council of 16 February 2011 on the citizens' initiative, OJ L 65, 11.3.2011.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-006344/12
an die Kommission
Werner Langen (PPE)
(26. Juni 2012)

Betrifft: Wettbewerbsrecht — Gemeindeordnung des Landes Rheinland-Pfalz

Die Gemeindeordnung des Landes Rheinland-Pfalz regelt die Zuständigkeiten der Kommunen und ihre Handlungskompetenzen. Der dritte Abschnitt regelt die wirtschaftliche Betätigung und privatrechtliche Beteiligung von Gemeinden und ist damit Bestandteil des Wettbewerbsrechts der EU. Die Festlegung der Grundsätze erfolgt in § 85 Absatz 1 Punkt 3 GemO. (Subsidiaritätsklausel) und lautet wie folgt:

„(1) die Gemeinde darf wirtschaftliche Unternehmen nur errichten, übernehmen oder wesentlich erweitern, wenn (…) 3. bei einem Tätigwerden außerhalb der Energieversorgung, der Wasserversorgung und des öffentlichen Personennahverkehrs der öffentliche Zweck nicht ebenso gut und wirtschaftlich durch einen privaten Dritten erfüllt wird oder erfüllt werden kann“.

1. Ist es zulässig, dass die Wirtschaftsbereiche Energieversorgung, Wasserversorgung und öffentlicher Personennahverkehr nicht dem EU-Wettbewerbsrecht unterliegen?

2. Darf das Subsidiaritätsprinzip einen freien Wettbewerb zugunsten der Kommunen ausschließen?

3. In der Begründung der Landesregierung wird die gestiegene Konkurrenz für kommunale Unternehmen durch die Öffnung der Versorgungsmärkte kritisiert. Die Privatisierung von kommunalen Unternehmen wird durch die Ausnahme der Energie-/Wasserversorgung und des öffentlichen Personennahverkehrs behindert. Zudem gehören auch Tätigkeiten, die üblicherweise von Wettbewerbern der kommunalen Unternehmen zusammen mit dem Kerngeschäft angeboten werden, zu den drei genannten Bereichen der Daseinsvorsorge, so dass auch hier die Ausnahmeregelung des § 85 Absatz 1 Punkt 3 GemO gilt und kein freier Wettbewerb stattfinden muss. Ist dies wettbewerbskonform und zulässig?

Antwort von Herrn Almunia im Namen der Kommission
(29. August 2012)

1. Die EU-Vorschriften über Wettbewerb und staatliche Beihilfen gelten für alle wirtschaftlichen Tätigkeiten. Wenn Tätigkeiten wirtschaftlicher Natur sind, können Mitgliedstaaten diese im Prinzip nicht vom Anwendungsbereich des EU-Rechts ausnehmen. Artikel 106 Absatz 2 AEUV gestattet nur dann eine Ausnahme von der Anwendung der im Vertrag enthaltenen Regeln, insbesondere der Wettbewerbsregeln, wenn diese Regeln die Erbringung von Dienstleistungen von allgemeinem wirtschaftlichen Interesse rechtlich oder tatsächlich behindern würden.

Obwohl der Vertrag von Lissabon die Anerkennung der kommunalen Selbstverwaltung erstmals primärrechtlich verankert ([1]), können die Mitgliedstaaten bestimmte Bereiche auch weiterhin nicht der Wirkung des EU-Rechts (einschließlich des Wettbewerbsrechts) entziehen, indem sie Aufgaben an die kommunalen Behörden übertragen mit dem Auftrag, sie autonom zu erfüllen.

2. Das EU-Beihilfenrecht gilt für von öffentlichen Behörden gewährte staatliche Beihilfen an Unternehmen (d. h. also eine wirtschaftliche Tätigkeit ausübende Einheiten) unabhängig davon, ob sie privat oder öffentlich sind. Ist ein bestimmter Sektor weder nach EU-Recht noch nach einzelstaatlichem Recht liberalisiert, so ist auch nach den Wettbewerbsregeln der EU ([2]) eine solche Liberalisierung nicht zwingend. Jede für liberalisierte Tätigkeiten gewährte Beihilfe muss mit den EU-Regeln für staatliche Beihilfen vereinbar sein, um Wettbewerbsverzerrungen zu verhindern.

3. Der AEUV ist in Bezug auf die Eigentumsverhältnisse von Unternehmen neutral (Artikel 345 AEUV) und hindert die Mitgliedstaaten daher nicht daran, nationale Rechtsvorschriften vorzusehen, die die Privatisierung von kommunalen Unternehmen behindern könnten. Erhalten Unternehmen Ausgleichszahlungen für Dienstleistungen von allgemeinem wirtschaftlichen Interesse, was in den erwähnten Bereichen durchaus der Fall sein kann, sind gemäß Artikel 106 Absatz 2 AEUV die EU-Regeln über staatliche Beihilfen zu beachten.

([1]) Siehe Artikel 4 Absatz 2 EUV.

([2]) Wir verstehen das in der Anfrage genannte „Subsidiaritätsprinzip“ nicht im Sinne des Art. 5 EUV, sondern im Sinne der in § 85 Absatz 1 Punkt 3 der Gemeindeordnung verankerten Subsidiaritätsklausel. Das in Artikel 5 EUV verankerte Subsidiaritätsprinzip gilt nur für Bereiche, die nicht in die ausschließliche Zuständigkeit der EU fallen, während die Wettbewerbsregeln nach Artikel 3 AEUV in die ausschließliche Zuständigkeit der Union fallen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006344/12
to the Commission
Werner Langen (PPE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Competition law — the municipal code of Rhineland-Palatinate

The municipal code of Rhineland-Palatinate regulates the areas for which local authorities are responsible and their powers. The third section regulates the economic activity and private stakeholdings of local authorities and therefore comes under EU competition law. The principles are defined in Article 85(1)(3) of the Municipal Code (Subsidiarity Clause):

'(1) A local authority may only establish, take over, or significantly expand commercial enterprises if … (3) In the case of activities not associated with the supply of power or water and public short-distance transport services, the public good is not or cannot be met equally effectively and economically by a private third party'.

1. Is it permissible for areas of economic activity such as power supply, water supply and public short-distance transport services to be excluded from EU competition law?

2. Can the subsidiarity principle exclude free competition in favour of local authorities?

3. The explanation provided by the provincial government (Landesregierung) criticises the increased competition faced by local authority enterprises resulting from deregulation of the utilities markets. The privatisation of local authority enterprises is impeded by excluding power/water supply and public short-distance transport services. In addition, the services usually offered by competitors of local authority enterprises, together with the core business, involve the three services of general interest mentioned above, so that here too the exemption contained in Article 85(1)(3) of the Municipal Code applies, and free competition is not required. Does this comply with competition rules?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(29 August 2012)

1. The EU rules on competition and state aid apply to any economic activity. If activities are economic in nature, Member States can in principle not exclude these activities from the scope of application of EC law. Article 106(2) of the Treaty allows an exception to the application of the rules contained in the Treaty, in particular the competition rules, only in so far as these rules would obstruct, in law or in fact, the performance of the operation of services of general economic interest.

Although the Lisbon Treaty introduced, for the first time by way of primary EC law, the recognition of local self-government ([1]), Member States still cannot withdraw particular matters from the effect of EC law (including EU competition law) by delegating tasks to the local authorities with the mandate to fulfill them in an autonomous capacity.

2. EU State aid rules apply to aid granted by the public authorities to undertakings (i.e. entities engaged in economic activity), irrespective of whether the undertakings are private or public. Where a sector is not liberalised by EC law or national law, the EU competition rules ([2]) do not impose such liberalisation. For liberalised activities, any aid granted has to comply with the EU State aid rules, to avoid distortions of competition.

3. The TFEU is neutral regarding ownership of companies (Article 345 TFEU) and therefore does not prevent Member States from having national legislation that might be considered to impede privatisation of municipal companies. Where companies receive compensation for services of general economic interest, as might be the case for the areas mentioned, the EU State aid rules have to be respected, in line with Article 106(2) TFEU.

([1]) See Article 4 (2) TEU.

([2]) We understand the 'subsidiarity principle' mentioned in the question as not referring to Art. 5 TEU, but to the subsidiarity clause as enshrined in Article 85(1)(3) of the Municipal Code. The subsidiarity principle as enshrined in Art. 5 TEU only applies to areas which do not fall under the Union's exclusive competence, whereas competition rules form part of the Union's exclusive competences under Article 3 TFEU.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-006346/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)
(26 Ιουνίου 2012)

Θέμα: Σχέδια για πυρηνικά εργοστάσια στην Τουρκία

Κατά τη διάρκεια του Παγκόσμιου Οικονομικού Φόρουμ για τη Μέση Ανατολή, τη Βόρεια Αφρική και την Ευρασία στην Κωνσταντινούπολη, ο υπουργός Ενέργειας και Φυσικών Πόρων της Τουρκίας Τανέρ Γιλντίζ ανακοίνωσε την πρόθεση της Τουρκίας να προχωρήσει στην ανέγερση 23 πυρηνικών μονάδων έως το 2023 σε τρεις περιοχές της, ώστε να αντιμετωπισθούν οι αυξανόμενες ενεργειακές της ανάγκες, οι οποίες από 92 MToe το 2006 έφτασαν σε 126 MToe το 2010, ενώ προβλέπεται να φτάσουν τους 222 MToe το 2020 ([1]). Είναι γεγονός ότι η Τουρκία ταλανίζεται από συχνούς σεισμούς με πιο πρόσφατο αυτόν ύψους 5,8 Ρίχτερ που συνοδεύτηκε από 60 τραυματίες ([2]) και πιο πολύνεκρο αυτόν της Νικομήδειας το 1999 που είχε 17 000 νεκρούς. Εντούτοις, και παρά την αναφορά στο ολέθριο ατύχημα της Φουκοσίμα, ο κ. Γιλντίζ συσχέτισε την ανάπτυξη με την πυρηνική ενέργεια. Από την άλλη, σύμφωνα και με τα συμπεράσματα της τεχνικής ανάλυσης που συνοδεύει τον Οδικό Χάρτη για την Ενέργεια 2050 ([3]), η αξιοπιστία του συστήματος εξασφαλίζεται το ίδιο καλά με το σενάριο 100 % ΑΠΕ για την Ευρώπη, Το ίδιο θα μπορούσε να ισχύει και για την Τουρκία, όπως τονίζουν και επιστημονικοί φορείς της χώρας ([4]).

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Σε τι ενέργειες προτίθεται να προβεί ώστε να εξασφαλίσει την ασφάλεια των χωρών μελών της ΕΕ ως προς τον κίνδυνο πυρηνικού ατυχήματος στην Τουρκία, με δεδομένο ότι η Τουρκία δεν είναι κράτος μέλος της ΕΕ και δεν υποχρεώνεται σε συμμόρφωση με την οδηγία 2009/71/Ευρατόμ για την ασφάλεια πυρηνικών εγκαταστάσεων, πράγμα που σε συνδυασμό με τη γεωγραφική της εγγύτητα σε κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ και το σεισμογενή χαρακτήρα των εδαφών της, καθιστά τα πυρηνικά σχέδια της Τουρκίας ως μια ιδιαίτερη απειλή για την ΕΕ;

2. Έχει ενημέρωση για τυχόν σχέδια της Τουρκίας για εξοικονόμηση ενέργειας και προώθηση των ΑΠΕ καθώς και γενικότερα για την ενεργειακή πολιτική που σκέφτεται να ακολουθήσει η Τουρκία ώστε να μειώσει την ολοένα και αυξανόμενη κατανάλωση ενέργειας;

3. Δεδομένων των κινδύνων πυρηνικού ατυχήματος που αυξάνονται σε μια σεισμογενή χώρα, όπως έδειξε και το ατύχημα στην Φουκουσίμα, είναι πρόθυμη να συνεργαστεί με την Τουρκική κυβέρνηση προτείνοντας στην υπό ένταξη αυτή χώρα πάγωμα της εγκατάστασης πυρηνικών εργοστασίων και εναλλακτικά ενεργειακά σχέδια βασισμένα στην εξοικονόμηση και στις ΑΠΕ;

Απάντηση του κ. Oettinger εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(6 Αυγούστου 2012)

Η Επιτροπή παραπέμπει το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου στις απαντήσεις της σε προηγούμενες ερωτήσεις E-7057/2011 της κας Hassi και E-5692/2012 του κ. Κουμουτσάκου ([5]).

Επιπλέον η Επιτροπή κάνει συνεχείς προσπάθειες για την εμβάθυνση της ενεργειακής συνεργασίας μεταξύ της ΕΕ και της Τουρκίας. Στις 14 Ιουνίου 2012 τα μέλη της Επιτροπής που είναι αρμόδια για την ενέργεια και τις πολιτικές διεύρυνσης και γειτονίας και οι τούρκοι υπουργοί Bağış και Yildiz προέβησαν σε κοινή δήλωση ([6]) σχετικά με την εμβάθυνση των ενεργειακών σχέσεων ΕΕ-Τουρκίας σε θέματα αμοιβαίου ενδιαφέροντος, συμπεριλαμβανόμενης της πυρηνικής ασφάλειας και της ακτινοπροστασίας. Η πρωτοβουλία αυτή αναμένεται, μεταξύ άλλων, να συμβάλει στην ανάπτυξη των κατάλληλων νομικών προτύπων και του ενδεδειγμένου διοικητικού πλαισίου όσον αφορά την πυρηνική ασφάλεια στην Τουρκία.

Η Τουρκία εφαρμόζει πολιτική για την ανάπτυξη των ανανεώσιμων πηγών ενέργειας και την ενεργειακή απόδοση στο πλαίσιο της οποίας προβλέπεται μείωση κατά 15 % της ζήτησης όσον αφορά τον πρωτογενή ενεργειακό εφοδιασμό χάρις σε μέτρα ενεργειακής απόδοσης και αύξηση του ποσοστού παραγωγής ηλεκτρικής ενέργειας από ανανεώσιμες πηγές ενέργειας στο 30 % μέχρι το 2023. Μέχρι τότε επιδιώκεται επίσης το εγκατεστημένο δυναμικό παραγωγής αιολικής ενέργειας να έχει ανέλθει σε 20 000 MW. Η Τουρκία έχει θέσει σε εφαρμογή μηχανισμό κινήτρων και εκδίδει άδειες που επιτρέπουν την ταχεία ανάπτυξη των ανανεώσιμων πηγών για την παραγωγή ηλεκτρικής ενέργειας.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/european_energy_policy/turkeys_energy_strategy_en.pdf
([2]) http://www.tanea.gr/kosmos/article/?aid=4728477.
([3]) http://www.roadmap2050.eu/attachments/files/Volume1_ExecutiveSummary.pdf
([4]) http://www.eurosolar.org.tr/eng/?page_id=69.
([5]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/QP-WEB/.
([6]) http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/12/434&type=HTML.

Η επιλογή της σύνθεσης των χρησιμοποιούμενων ενεργειακών πηγών, συμπεριλαμβανόμενης και της χρήσης της πυρηνικής ενέργειας, αποτελεί απόφαση που εναπόκειται στη διακριτική ευχέρεια κάθε χώρας. Η ΕΕ, ωστόσο, υποστηρίζει την Τουρκία στις προσπάθειες που καταβάλει για ανάπτυξη του δυναμικού της στον τομέα των ανανεώσιμων πηγών ενέργειας. Στην προαναφερόμενη κοινή δήλωση αναφέρεται επίσης ότι συμφωνήθηκε να επικεντρωθούν οι καταβαλλόμενες προσπάθειες στην προώθηση των ανανεώσιμων πηγών ενέργειας, στην ενεργειακή αποδοτικότητα και στις τεχνολογίες καθαρής ενέργειας στο πλαίσιο της εμβάθυνσης των ενεργειακών σχέσεων ΕΕ-Τουρκίας.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006346/12
to the Commission
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Projected nuclear reactors in Turkey

During the World Economic Forum on the Middle East, North Africa and Eurasia held in Istanbul, the Turkish Minister for Energy and Natural Resources, Taner Yildiz, announced plans by Turkey to construct 23 nuclear reactors in three locations by 2023, so as to meet its growing energy demand, which grew from 92 MTOE in 2006 to 126 MTOE in 2010 and is expected to reach 222 MTOE in 2020 ([1]). At the same time, Turkey is very prone to earthquakes, the most recent having reached 5.8 on the Richter scale, resulting in 60 casualties ([2]) and the most deadly having occurred in Izmit in 1999, claiming 17,000 lives. However, while referring to the devastating accident which occurred in Fukushima, Mr Yildiz continued to equate nuclear energy with growth. Furthermore, the technical analysis accompanying the Energy Roadmap 2050 ([3]) concludes that this form of energy is considered just as reliable in the context of a 100% renewable energy scenario for Europe and, according to Turkish scientific sources ([4]), this could apply just as well to Turkey.

In view of this:

1. What measures will the Commission take to ensure the safety of the EU Member States from the danger of a nuclear disaster in Turkey, given that Turkey is not an EU Member State and is not bound by the terms of Council Directive 2009/71/Euratom establishing a Community framework for the safety of nuclear reactors, which, together with its geographical proximity to EU Member States and the seismic nature of its terrain, means that such projected plant poses a particular threat to the EU?

2. Has the Commission been informed of any plans by Turkey to save energy or promote renewable energy or, more generally, of the energy policy which Turkey intends to follow with a view to reducing its constantly growing energy consumption?

3. In view of the increased danger of a nuclear disaster in a country prone to earthquakes, as shown by the Fukushima disaster, is it willing to work with the Turkish Government, a candidate country, recommending a freeze on the construction of nuclear reactors and developing alternative energy projects based on energy saving and renewable energy sources?

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

The Commission refers the Honourable Member to its replies to previous questions E-7057/2011 by Ms Hassi and E-5692/2012 by Mr Koumoutsakos ([5]).

Furthermore, the Commission is working on developing enhanced EU-Turkey energy cooperation. On 14 June 2012, a joint statement ([6]) was made by the Members of the Commission responsibles for Energy and for Enlargement and Neigbourhood Policy, and Turkish Ministers Bağış and Yildiz, concerning the deepening of EU-Turkey energy relations in topics of mutual interest, including nuclear safety and radiation protection. This initiative is expected, amongst other things, to contribute to the development of adequate legal standards and an appropriate administrative framework with regard to nuclear safety in Turkey.

Turkey is implementing a policy for the development of renewable energy and energy efficiency, foreseeing a 15% reduction in primary energy supply by efficiency measures on the demand side and a 30% target for renewables in the electricity generation mix by 2023. By that date the targeted installed capacity for wind generation could be 20.000 MW. Turkey has put in place an incentive mechanism and is issuing licences allowing for rapid growth in renewable electricity production.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/european_energy_policy/turkeys_energy_strategy_en.pdf
([2]) http://www.tanea.gr/kosmos/article/?aid=4728477.
([3]) http://www.roadmap2050.eu/attachments/files/Volume1_ExecutiveSummary.pdf
([4]) http://www.eurosolar.org.tr/eng/?page_id=69.
([5]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/QP-WEB/.
([6]) http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/12/434&type=HTML.

The choice of the energy mix, including the use of nuclear power, is a sovereign decision of each country. The EU is, however, supporting Turkey in developing its renewable energy potential. In the abovementioned joint statement, it was thus also agreed to focus on the promotion of renewable energy, energy efficiency and clean energy technologies in deepening EU-Turkey energy relations.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006347/12
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Fiorello Provera (EFD)
(26 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Mohammed Morsi invita a legami più stretti con l'Iran

Alla fine di giugno, l'agenzia di stampa semiufficiale iraniana Fars plaudeva all'elezione del candidato dei Fratelli musulmani Mohammed Morsi. In un'intervista con l'agenzia di stampa, Morsi ha detto che forgiare relazioni più strette con l'Iran «creerà un equilibrio di pressione nella regione, e questo fa parte del mio programma». Si è spinto oltre a dire: «Dobbiamo ripristinare relazioni normali con l'Iran sulla base di interessi condivisi, ed espandere i settori di coordinamento politico e di cooperazione economica, perché questo creerà un equilibrio di pressione nella regione». L'Iran ha definito la vittoria elettorale di Morsi come una «splendida visione di democrazia» che ha segnato la fase finale del «risveglio islamico» dell'Egitto.

Le relazioni diplomatiche tra Egitto e Iran erano state interrotte una trentina di anni fa, dopo che l'Egitto aveva scelto di riconoscere formalmente Israele, e la rivoluzione islamica aveva portato un cambiamento di governo in Iran.

1. La Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante è consapevole dell'impegno del Presidente Mohamed Morsi a perseguire relazioni più strette con l'Iran?

2. La Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante è pronta a prendere misure volte a monitorare attentamente il ripristino dei legami tra l'Iran e l'Egitto?

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

Per il momento nulla fa pensare che le relazioni tra Egitto e Iran subiranno cambiamenti di rilievo. Secondo le autorità egiziane, l'intervista all'agenzia di stampa iraniana in cui il Presidente Morsi avrebbe dichiarato l'intenzione di migliorare i rapporti con l'Iran sarebbe un falso e contro tale agenzia è stata intentata una causa.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006347/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Fiorello Provera (EFD)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Mohamed Morsi calls for closer links with Iran

In late June, the semi-official Iranian news agency Fars welcomed the election in Egypt of Muslim Brotherhood candidate Mohammed Morsi. In an interview with the news agency, Morsi said that forging closer relations with Iran 'will create a balance of pressure in the region, and this is part of my programme'. He went on to say that: 'We must restore normal relations with Iran based on shared interests, and expand areas of political coordination and economic cooperation because this will create a balance of pressure in the region'. Iran has called Morsi's electoral victory a 'splendid vision of democracy' that marked the final phase in Egypt's 'Islamic awakening'.

Diplomatic relations between Egypt and Iran were cut 30 years ago after Egypt chose to formally recognise Israel and the Islamic revolution led to a change of government in Iran.

1. Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware of President Mohammed Morsi's commitment to pursuing closer relations with Iran?

2. Is the Vice-President/High Representative prepared to take measures to carefully monitor the restoration of ties between Iran and Egypt?

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

Nothing indicates for the time being that groundbreaking changes will occur in the relations between Egypt and Iran. According to the Egyptian authorities, the Iranian news agency interview in which President Morsy supposedly declared its intention to improve ties with Iran was fabricated and a law suit has been launched against the news agency which reported it.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006348/12
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Fiorello Provera (EFD)
(26 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Donna egiziana picchiata a morte per la scelta del candidato alla presidenza

Il 24 giugno 2012, il sito di notizie al-Arabiya ha riferito che un uomo egiziano della città di Alessandria ha picchiato a morte la moglie dopo aver appreso che non aveva votato per il candidato dei Fratelli musulmani Mohammed Morsi. Il quotidiano egiziano Al-Wafd ha riferito la storia. La donna è morta in ospedale a causa delle lesioni subite. Il sito di notizie ha anche osservato che il tema delle violenze domestiche ha dominato i titoli dei notiziari in Egitto, da quando è stato annunciato il ballottaggio per la presidenza tra Mohammed Morsi e l'ex primo ministro Ahmed Shafiq.

1. La Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante e i funzionari dell'UE che hanno monitorato le elezioni in Egitto, credono che ci sia stato un problema di coercizione delle donne egiziane fa parte dei loro mariti o parenti maschi a votare per un determinato candidato.

2. Inoltre, i funzionari dell'Unione europea in Egitto sono del parere che alle donne egiziane sia stato garantito un accesso adeguato e l'opportunità di partecipare al processo elettorale?

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

Su invito della commissione suprema per le elezioni presidenziali, l'UE ha organizzato una missione di esperti elettorali. Parallelamente, Danimarca, Italia, Paesi Bassi, Spagna, Romania, India, Giappone e Russia hanno inviato esperti delle rispettive commissioni elettorali nazionali. Sono state altresì accreditate diverse ONG straniere specializzate nel monitoraggio elettorale, compresi il Carter Center e l'EISA, e 49 ONG egiziane (fra cui l'Organizzazione egiziana per i diritti umani e il Movimento Giudici per l'Egitto). Gli osservatori non hanno rilevato gravi vizi di forma sistemici che potrebbero aver falsato l'esito delle elezioni.

Le elezioni non sono state organizzate in modo perfetto, ma la missione degli esperti elettorali dell'UE concorda con gli altri osservatori internazionali ed egiziani sul fatto che si possono considerare credibili, visto che i risultati sembrano riflettere la volontà popolare e sono stati ampiamente accettati (anche da Ahmed Shafiq e dal Consiglio militare). L'AR/VP condivide questa conclusione.

Per quanto riguarda la partecipazione femminile al processo elettorale, in tutti i partiti politici egiziani vi è uno squilibrio di genere; inoltre, occorre fare ancora molto per migliorare la rappresentatività e la partecipazione delle donne alla vita politica. L'introduzione di una quota femminile con un sistema proporzionale aperto sia a candidati di partito che a candidati indipendenti contribuirebbe enormemente a raggiungere questo obiettivo. Peraltro, dopo la fine del regime di Mubarak, l'aumento dell'iscrizione delle donne nel registro delle carte d'identità nazionale, realizzato grazie al sostegno dell'UE, ha rappresentato un'evoluzione positiva. In precedenza le donne non vi figuravano automaticamente, poiché l'iscrizione dipendeva dalla volontà dei mariti.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006348/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Fiorello Provera (EFD)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Egyptian woman beaten to death for choice of presidential candidate

On 24 June 2012, the news site al-Arabiya reported that an Egyptian man from the city of Alexandria had beaten his wife to death after learning that she had not voted for the Muslim Brotherhood candidate Mohammed Morsi. The Egyptian newspaper *al-Wafd* also reported on the story. The woman died in hospital as a result of the injuries she sustained. The news site also noted that domestic abuse has been a headline issue in the Egyptian news since the announcement of the presidential runoff between Mohammed Morsi and former prime minister Ahmed Shafiq.

1. Do the Vice-President/High Representative and the EU officials who oversaw the elections in Egypt believe that there was a problem of Egyptian women being coerced or forced by their husbands or male relatives to vote for a certain candidate?

2. In addition, do EU officials in Egypt believe that Egyptian women were granted adequate access to, and opportunities to be involved in, the voting process?

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

Upon invitation by the Supreme Presidential Election Commission, the EU set up an Electoral Expert Mission. In the same context, Denmark, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Romania, India, Japan and Russia sent experts from their national elections' management bodies. Several foreign NGOs specialised in electoral monitoring, including the Carter Centre and EISA were also accredited. Domestically, 49 accredited local NGOs (including the Egyptian Organisation for Human Rights and the Judges for Egypt Movement) were accredited. The observers did not report any major and systemic flaws that could have changed the outcome of the elections.

The organisation of this election was not perfect but the EU Electoral Expert Mission concurred with the other international and domestic observers that it can be considered credible owing to the fact that the results seem to reflect the popular will and that they have been widely accepted as such (including by Ahmed Shafiq and by the Miltary Council). The HR/VP agrees with this conclusion.

Regarding women's inclusiveness in the electoral process, all Egyptian political parties suffer from gender imbalance and a lot has to be achieved to improve women's representativeness and participation in political life. The establishment of a female quota with a proportional system open to party and individual candidates would greatly contribute to this objective. That said, since the end of the Mubarak regime, a positve step has been taken with the enhancement of women's registration in the National ID Card database with EU support. Prior to this, women were not automatically registered as their registration depended on the good will of their husbands.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-006349/12
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (NI)
(26. Juni 2012)

Betrifft: Fortlaufender Anstieg der Selbstmordrate in Europa

Für jeden Anstieg der Arbeitslosigkeit um 1 % nimmt die Selbstmordrate um 0,8 % zu. Die Krise beeinträchtigt immer stärker auch die psychische Gesundheit der Menschen.

1. Wie kann die Kommission auch in schwierigen Zeiten essenzielle Systeme für die soziale Unterstützung aufrechterhalten?

2. Auf welche Weise könnte die Kommission die menschlichen Kosten der Krise senken?

3. Wie könnte nach Auffassung der Kommission die psychische Gesundheit eine wichtige Rolle im Gesundheitsprogramm der EU für den Zeitraum 2014-2020 spielen?

Antwort von Herrn Dalli im Namen der Kommission
(6. August 2012)

Die Suizidverhütung ist in erster Linie Aufgabe der Mitgliedstaaten.

Die Kommission unterstützt die Mitgliedstaaten bei ihren Maßnahmen in vielfacher Hinsicht: Auf einer Konferenz im Dezember 2009 wurde im Zusammenhang mit dem Europäischen Pakt für psychische Gesundheit und Wohlergehen neben anderen Maßnahmenpapieren zur Verhütung von Selbstmord ([1]) auch ein Gutachten über die Auswirkungen vorgelegt, die die Wirtschaftskrise auf die Häufigkeit von Depressionen und Suizid hat ([2]). Im darauffolgenden Jahr gingen der Ausschuss für Sozialschutz und die Kommission in ihrer Aktualisierung (2010) der gemeinsamen Bewertung der sozialen Auswirkungen der Wirtschaftskrise und der ergriffenen politischen Maßnahmen ([3]) insbesondere auf die Zunahme der Suizidraten im Zuge der Krise ein. Im Jahr 2011 erörterte die Gruppe von Regierungsexperten für psychische Gesundheit und Wohlbefinden die Entwicklung der Suizidrate auf mehreren Sitzungen.

Nach dem Aufruf zur Einreichung von Vorschlägen, der 2012 im Rahmen des EU-Gesundheitsprogramms erging, wird derzeit eine Gemeinsame Aktion für psychische Gesundheit und Wohlbefinden ausgearbeitet. In dieser Gemeinsamen Aktion soll auch die Suizidverhütung thematisiert werden.

Die Mitgliedstaaten können zudem ihre operationellen Programme im Rahmen der EU-Strukturfonds nutzen, um die sozialen Auswirkungen der Krise zu lindern.

Aus dem 7. FTE-Rahmenprogramm bezuschusst die Kommission schließlich das Forschungsprojekt „Optimising Suicide Prevention Programs and their Implementation in Europe (OSPI)" ([4]), an dem ausgewiesene Fachleute auf dem Gebiet der Suizidprävention zusammenarbeiten, die vielfach als Berater der Regierungen der Mitgliedstaaten tätig sind.

Im Rahmen des für den Zeitraum 2014-2020 vorgeschlagenen Programms „Gesundheit für Wachstum" richten sich die Zuschüsse nach den Prioritäten des Programmbeschlusses und der jährlichen Arbeitsprogramme.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/mental_health/events/ev_20091210_en.htm
([2]) „The impact of economic crises on depression and suicide": http://ec.europa.eu/health/mental_health/docs/depression_factsheets_en.pdf.
([3]) „2010 Update of the Joint Assessment by the Social Protection Committee and the Commission of the social impact of the economic crisis and of policy responses": http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/10/st16/st16905.ne10.pdf.
([4]) http://www.ospi-europe.com/index.php.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006349/12
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (NI)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Ever-increasing suicide rate in Europe

For every 1% increase in unemployment, suicide rates go up by 0.8%. The crisis is increasingly taking its toll on people's mental health.

1. How can the Commission maintain vital social support systems even in hard times?

2. How could the Commission reduce the human cost of the crisis?

3. In the Commission's view, how could mental health play an important role in the EU's health programme for 2014-2020?

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

Preventing suicide falls primarily under the responsibility of Member States.

The Commission supports Member States in several ways in their actions: at a conference from December 2009 in the context of the European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being, an expert paper was presented on 'The impact of economic crises on depression and suicide' ([1]), together with other papers on actions which can be taken to prevent suicide ([2]). In the following year, the '2010 Update of the Joint Assessment by the Social Protection Committee and the Commission of the social impact of the economic crisis and of policy responses' ([3]) addressed the increases in suicide rates during the crisis. During 2011, suicide developments were discussed in meetings of the Group of Governmental experts on Mental Health and Well-being.

In response to the 2012 call for proposals under the EU Health Programme, a Joint Action on Mental Health and Well-being is under preparation. This Joint Action is also expected to address suicide prevention.

Furthermore, Member States have the possibility to use their EU-Structural Funds Operational Programmes for the mitigation of the social impact of the crisis.

Finally, the Commission is funding from the FP7-Programme the research project 'Optimising Suicide Prevention Programs and their Implementation in Europe (OSPI)' ([4]), which brings together key experts in suicide prevention, who themselves in many cases advise Member State Governments.

Funding opportunities under the proposed 2014-2020 health for growth programme will depend on priorities as set out in the programme decision and the annual work programmes.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/mental_health/docs/depression_factsheets_en.pdf
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/mental_health/events/ev_20091210_en.htm
([3]) http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/10/st16/st16905.en10.pdf
([4]) http://www.ospi-europe.com/index.php.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-006351/12
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(26 juin 2012)

Objet: Suite à donner au tableau de bord de la consommation de mai 2012

Le 29mai 2012, la Commission a publié les résultats de l'édition de printemps du tableau de bord de la consommation. Ces données ne font que confirmer, d'après les conclusions de la Commission, des évidences répétées depuis plusieurs années:

1. Disparités dans le commerce en ligne;

2. Méconnaissance inquiétante de leurs droits par les consommateurs;

3. Persistance et même accroissement de pratiques commerciales déloyales, sept ans après l'adoption de la directive concernant ces mêmes pratiques.

La Commission n'estime-t-elle pas que les budgets importants dépensés pour arriver à de telles lapalissades pourraient être investis de manière beaucoup plus efficace dans l'information des consommateurs sur leurs droits et, surtout, sur les moyens de les faire respecter?

Réponse donnée par M. Dalli au nom de la Commission
(3 août 2012)

La Commission renvoie l'auteur de la question aux réponses qu'elle a données aux questions écrites E-008517/2011 et E-004423/2011 ([1]) relatives à l'utilité de la constitution d'un socle de connaissances sur les consommateurs et les marchés de consommation à l'intention des décideurs.

En ce qui concerne l'utilité et la pertinence des constatations qui figurent dans le tableau de bord de la consommation de 2012, dont certaines corroborent des données existantes, il convient d'observer:

— que le tableau de bord ne se contente pas de recenser les problèmes importants rencontrés par les consommateurs mais mesure aussi l'ampleur de ces problèmes et suit leur évolution dans le temps, deux démarches qui sont utiles aux décideurs. Le dernier tableau de bord, par exemple, constate que la situation des consommateurs a globalement continué de s'améliorer dans l'ensemble de l'Union européenne, mais qu'elle s'est dégradée à certains égards, notamment en ce qui concerne l'incidence des pratiques commerciales déloyales et l'idée que se font les consommateurs et les détaillants de la sécurité des produits;

— que les données fournies par le tableau de bord sont utiles à l'élaboration de l'action à la fois de l'Union européenne et de chacun des États membres. Par exemple, le dernier tableau de bord constate une amélioration de la situation des consommateurs dans la plupart des États membres, mais une détérioration de celle-ci dans d'autres.

La Commission considère donc que les constatations du tableau de bord sont utiles à l'élaboration de l'action à entreprendre dans le domaine en ce sens qu'elles permettent d'évaluer l'incidence de telles ou telles politiques sur les consommateurs et de juger de la nécessité de mesures correctives, mais aussi de recenser les situations dans lesquelles il est nécessaire de mieux faire appliquer les droits des consommateurs, et d'indiquer dans quels domaines il convient de prendre des mesures. Bon nombre de parties prenantes, dont les autorités nationales, sont de cet avis et utilisent les données livrées par le tableau de bord.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006351/12
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Follow-up to the consumer scoreboard of May 2012

On 29 May 2012, the Commission published the results of the spring consumer scoreboard. The Commission's results simply confirm evidence obtained repeatedly over the past several years:

1. disparities in e-commerce;

2. alarming ignorance by consumers of their rights;

3. persistent and even increasing unfair trade practices seven years after the directive on such practices was adopted.

Does not the Commission agree that the significant amounts of money spent to state the obvious could be invested much more effectively in informing consumers about their rights and above all ensuring that these rights are respected?

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

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answers to Written Questions E-008517/2011 and E-004423/2011 ([1]) concerning the utility of building up a knowledge base on consumers and consumer markets for policy-makers.

With regard to the usefulness and relevance of the findings of the 2012 Consumer Conditions Scoreboard, some of which corroborate existing evidence, it should be noted that:

— The Scoreboard not only identifies substantive issues and problems faced by consumers but also measures the extent of such problems and monitors their evolution in time, both of which are relevant from a policy perspective. For instance, the latest Scoreboard finds that overall consumer conditions have continued to improve across the European Union; however there are negative trends in some areas, such as the incidence of unfair commercial practices and consumers' and retailers' perception about product safety.

— The evidence provided by the Scoreboard is relevant for policy not only at the level of the whole European Union, but also in each Member State. For example, the latest Scoreboard finds that, while consumer conditions have improved in most Member States, they have deteriorated in others.

Thus, we consider that the Scoreboard findings are useful for policy purposes, as they help assess the impact of particular policies on consumers and the need for corrective action, identify areas where the enforcement of consumer rights needs to be strengthened, or point to the need for new policy initiatives. Numerous stakeholders, including national authorities, share this view and are using the evidence produced by the Scoreboard.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/QP-WEB.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-006352/12
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(26 juin 2012)

Objet: Médicaments à base de codéine et dangers pour les enfants

1. La réponse de la Commission à la question écrite E-003583/2012, n'est pas complète.

2. En effet, si la Commission admet que les procédures ne sont pas harmonisées pour les produits qui ont reçu une autorisation de façon indépendante au niveau national, estime-t-elle normal, au nom du principe de précaution, qu'un médicament contenant de la codéine puisse être délivré sans ordonnance dans un État membre et non dans l'État membre voisin, avec un âge minimum différent pour les enfants, et peut-être des risques et des effets secondaires différents selon les États membres?

3. Par ailleurs, la Commission peut-elle faire savoir dans quelle mesure elle entend tenir compte de la recommandation du Médiateur européen EO12/10 du 4 juin 2012, réclamant plus de transparence concernant les médicaments pour enfants?

Réponse donnée par M. Dalli au nom de la Commission
(21 août 2012)

Toutes les procédures d'autorisation de médicaments dans l'Union européenne sont harmonisées, que l'autorisation de mise sur le marché ait été accordée par un État membre ou par la Commission, ceci afin d'assurer des normes de qualité et de sécurité élevées pour les médicaments qui sont mis sur le marché dans l'UE.

Il est possible que des produits qui se trouvent sur le marché depuis longtemps n'aient pas fait l'objet d'une évaluation commune au moment de l'autorisation, mais seulement d'une d'évaluation individuelle par un État membre particulier: c'est ce qu'on appelle les «autorisations de mise sur le marché purement nationales». Ceci peut conduire à ce que certaines autorisations de mise sur le marché ne soient pas complètement harmonisées.

Les décisions relatives à la classification d'un produit en matière de délivrance (avec ou sans ordonnance) sont prises individuellement par chaque État membre lorsqu'une autorisation de mise sur le marché est accordée. Ces décisions doivent notamment obéir à des considérations de sécurité basées sur le principe de précaution, conformément à l'article 71 de la directive 2001/83/CE ([1]).

Enfin, en ce qui concerne la recommandation du médiateur du 4 juin 2012 à laquelle l'Honorable Parlementaire fait référence, la Commission tient à préciser qu'elle est adressée à l'Agence européenne des médicaments et non à la Commission. Cette recommandation traite de la transparence du processus décisionnel de l'Agence dans le cadre du règlement (CE) n° 1901/2006 sur les médicaments pédiatriques ([2]). L'Agence est invitée à fournir une réponse au médiateur le 30 septembre 2012 au plus tard, et à expliquer de quelle façon elle compte appliquer la recommandation.

([1]) Directive 2001/83/CE du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 6 novembre 2001 instituant un code communautaire relatif aux médicaments à usage humain, JO L 311 du 28.11.2001, p. 67.

([2]) Règlement (CE) n° 1901/2006 du Parlement européen et du Conseil, du 12 décembre 2006, relatif aux médicaments à usage pédiatrique, JO L 378 du 27.12.2006, p. 1.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006352/12
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Codeine-based medicines and dangers to children

1. The Commission's answer to Written Question No E-003583/2012 is not comprehensive.

2. While the Commission admits that the procedures for products that have been independently authorised at national level are not harmonised, does it consider it right, bearing in mind the precautionary principle, that a medicine containing codeine may be dispensed over the counter in one Member State but not in the neighbouring Member State, with a different minimum age for children, and perhaps with different risks and side effects depending on the Member State?

3. Furthermore, can the Commission state to what extent it intends to take account of the European Ombudsman's Recommendation No EO12/10 of 4 June 2012, calling for more transparency concerning medicines for children?

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

All authorisation procedures for medicinal products in the European Union are harmonised, irrespective of whether the marketing authorisation has been granted by a Member State or the Commission. This is to ensure high standards of quality and safety for medicinal products that are placed on the market in the EU.

It is possible that products that have been on the market for a long time were not subject to a common assessment at the time of authorisation but to an individual assessment of an individual Member State, so-called 'purely national marketing authorisations'. This may then lead to marketing authorisations that are not fully harmonised.

Decisions on classification of the supply, with or without a prescription, are taken individually by each Member State for a product when a marketing authorisation is granted. When taking those decisions, Member States have to take into account in accordance with Article 71 of Directive 2001/83/EC ([1]) safety aspects, which are a reflection of a precautionary approach.

Finally, as regards the Ombudsman's recommendation of 4 June 2012 the Honourable Member is referring to, the Commission wishes to clarify that it is addressed to the European Medicines Agency and not the Commission. It deals with the transparency of the decision-making process of the Agency in the framework of the Paediatric Regulation (EC) No 1901/2006 ([2]). The Agency is requested to provide the Ombudsman with an answer by 30 September 2012 at the latest outlining how the Agency will take the recommendation into account.

([1]) Directive 2001/83/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 November 2001 on the Community Code relating to medicinal products for human use, OJ L 311, 28.11.2001, p. 67.
([2]) Regulation (EC) No 1901/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006 on medicinal products for paediatric use, OJ L 378, 27.12.2006, p. 1.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006354/12
alla Commissione
Cristiana Muscardini (PPE)
(26 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Pedofilia online

Secondo quanto pubblicato dal settimanale «Il Venerdì di Repubblica», le ultime indagini effettuate da alcune associazioni nate per contrastare l'adescamento pedofilo sul web hanno fatto emergere che un minore su due è stato contattato da sconosciuti con proposte indecenti, che a tre giovani su dieci è stato chiesto un incontro al buio, che più di duecentomila hanno accettato proposte in cambio di una ricarica telefonica. Situazioni sconcertanti e molto preoccupanti.

Le associazioni, costituitesi per contrastare il fenomeno della pedofilia online, hanno lanciato delle campagne di sensibilizzazione e prevenzione.

Può la Commissione far sapere:

1. Qual è la situazione relativa al tragico fenomeno della pedofilia nei vari paesi dell'Unione? Quali degli interventi attuati ha dato risultati soddisfacenti?

2. Ha previsto di aiutare le associazioni che combattono la pedofilia online per promuovere campagne di comunicazione a sostegno dei giovani e dei loro genitori?

3. Quali iniziative ha previsto per bloccare l'espansione del fenomeno?

Risposta di Cecilia Malmström a nome della Commissione
(16 agosto 2012)

Una descrizione dei rischi per i minori sul web, compresi quelli di natura sessuale, è riportata nelle relazioni ([1]) del progetto UE Kids Online, finanziato dall'Unione europea.

Basandosi sulle migliori pratiche che negli Stati membri contribuiscono efficacemente alla lotta contro la circonvenzione dei minori attraverso il web, la Commissione ha presentato una proposta nel 2009, che è stata adottata come direttiva 2011/93/UE. Tale direttiva consentirà di intensificare la lotta contro questi reati. Essa ravvicina la definizione dei reati, tra cui alcuni nuovi come l'adescamento online e l'uso improprio delle webcam, e stabilisce i livelli minimi per le sanzioni penali. Inquirenti e pubblici ministeri saranno dotati di strumenti investigativi efficaci e gli Stati membri sono tenuti a organizzare unità investigative volte a individuare le vittime, analizzando in particolare la pedopornografia. Saranno adottate misure per eliminare le immagini di abusi sessuali su bambini dai siti Internet. Possono inoltre essere adottate misure per bloccare l'accesso a partire dal territorio dell'UE.

Nell'ambito del programma «Internet più sicuro», la Commissione sta inoltre finanziando attività mirate a combattere la pedofilia su Internet, ovvero la diffusione di immagini di abusi sessuali su minori. Le attività comprendono il funzionamento della rete internazionale delle hotline INHOPE, che elabora le segnalazioni di tali immagini e mette a punto strumenti per gli investigatori di polizia che consentono una migliore analisi dei dati connessi agli abusi sui minori e la condivisione dell'intelligence investigativa a livello internazionale. Campagne di sensibilizzazione sul rischio, per i bambini, di ricevere online proposte di tipo sessuale saranno organizzate dalla rete INSAFE, formata da centri di sensibilizzazione sull'uso sicuro di Internet. Anche tali campagne sono cofinanziate. Le proposte della Commissione in merito al Meccanismo per collegare l'Europa includono interventi atti a rafforzare le azioni di lotta contro la pedofilia sul web ([2]).

([1]) Risk and safety on the Internet — the perspective of European children, disponibile all'indirizzo http://www2.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline/EU%20Kids%20II%20(2009-11)/EUKidsOnlineIIReports/D4FullFindings.pdf

([2]) Proposta di regolamento del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio che istituisce il Meccanismo per collegare l'Europa, 19.10.2011, COM(2011)665 def.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006354/12
to the Commission
Cristiana Muscardini (PPE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Online paedophilia

According to an item published in the weekly magazine *Il Venerdì di Repubblica*, the latest investigations undertaken by a number of associations created to combat online soliciting by paedophiles have revealed that one child in two has been contacted by strangers with indecent proposals, three youngsters in ten have been asked for a blind date, and more than two hundred thousand have accepted proposals in exchange for a mobile phone top-up. These are distressing and worrying developments.

The associations set up to combat online paedophilia, have launched awareness-raising and prevention campaigns.

Can the Commission state:

1. What the situation is regarding paedophilia in the various countries in the Union? Which of the actions taken have produced satisfactory results?

2. Does it intend to help the associations attempting to combat online paedophilia to promote communication campaigns supporting young people and their parents?

3. What initiatives has it planned to block the spread of this phenomenon?

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

An outline of risks for children online, including risks of a sexual nature, is presented in the reports ([1]) of the project EU Kids Online, funded by the European Union.

On the basis of best practices in Member States effectively contributing to fight child sexual abuse online, the Commission tabled a proposal in 2009, which has been adopted as Directive 2011/93/EU. The directive will step up the fight against these crimes. It approximates the definition of offences, also covering new ones such as online grooming or webcam abuse, and sets minimum levels for criminal penalties. Effective investigative tools are to be made available to investigators and prosecutors, and Member States must set up investigative units to identify victims, in particular by analysing child pornography. Action shall be taken to remove images of child sexual abuse from websites where it is hosted and may be taken to block access from the EU.

Under the Safer Internet program the Commission is also funding activities which aim at fighting paedophilia on the Internet, namely the dissemination of child sexual abuse images. Actions include the operation of the INHOPE international network of hotlines which process reports on such images and tools for police investigators which allow better analysis of data linked to child abuse and the sharing of investigation intelligence across borders. Awareness campaigns on the risk of children being solicited online for sexual purposes are being run by the network of INSAFE Safer Internet Awareness Centers which are also being co-funded. The Commission's proposals for the Connecting Europe Facility include provision to step up actions on fighting online paedophilia. ([2])

([1]) Risk and safety on the Internet — the perspective of European children, available at: http://www2.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline/EU%20Kids%20II%20(2009-11)/EUKidsOnlineIIReports/D4FullFindings.pdf.

([2]) Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Connecting Europe Facility, 19.10.2011, COM(2011) 665 final.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-006355/12
do Komisji
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD)
(26 czerwca 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Nadmierne zadłużenie polskich samorządów

W ostatnim czasie media w Polsce coraz częściej podnoszą o problemie nadmiernego zadłużenia samorządów. Wójtowie, burmistrzowie czy prezydenci polskich miast i gmin coraz częściej wypowiadają się negatywnie o obciążeniach dla gminnych budżetów przekazywanych przez władzę centralną. Nierzadko zadłużenie polskich gmin związane jest z dofinansowaniami unijnymi. Bowiem w wielu przypadkach sięgania po unijne dotacje, gmina czy miasto, aby starać się w ogóle o pozyskanie środków unijnych bierze kredyt, który w dalszej perspektywie stanowi wkład własny dla konkretnej inwestycji dofinansowywanej środkami europejskimi. Barierą graniczną dla polskich włodarzy jest limit zadłużenia wynoszący 60 %.

Dziś wiele samorządów w Polsce jest bardzo blisko tej krytycznej granicy zadłużenia. Za chwilę może dojść w Polsce do sytuacji, gdzie wielu wójtów, burmistrzów czy prezydentów zostanie zastąpionych na swoich stanowiskach przez komisarzy wyborczych, a w dalszej kolejności rozpisywane będą wcześniejsze wybory na te urzędy w Polsce. Bowiem przekroczenie granicy 60 % zadłużenia dla włodarzy gminnych przynosi w myśl polskiego prawa takie konsekwencje. Spowodować to zatem może, że w najbliższym czasie osoby odpowiedzialne za zarządzanie polskimi miastami i gminami będą obawiały się sięgać po unijne dotacje, a swoją uwagę skupią na fakcie, by nie przekroczyć krytycznej bariery 60 % zadłużenia.

Wobec tego pragnę zapytać:

— Czy Komisja dysponuje wiedzą na temat zadłużenia polskich gmin, a co za tym idzie z zagrożeniem w sięganiu po unijne dotacje przez polskie samorządy w najbliższym czasie?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Johannesa Hahna w imieniu Komisji
(14 sierpnia 2012 r.)

Zasada współfinansowania jest jedną z podstawowych zasad realizowania polityki spójności, ponieważ dzięki połączeniu finansowania krajowego z finansowaniem ze źródeł UE władze lokalne mogą szybciej i skuteczniej wdrażać zaplanowane strategie inwestycyjne. Może to prowadzić do okresowego pogorszenia sytuacji finansów publicznych, jednak w perspektywie długofalowej powinno przyczynić się do poprawy wyników ekonomicznych w danym regionie lub mieście. Z tego powodu Komisja przywiązuje niezwykle dużą wagę do zabezpieczenia projektów, które wywierają rzeczywisty wpływ na wzrost gospodarczy i wzrost zatrudnienia we wspieranym regionie. Aby zachęcić do korzystania z funduszy unijnych, instytucje zarządzające odpowiedzialne za programy finansowania często obniżają stopę współfinansowania z funduszy UE, co pogłębia problem okresowego zadłużenia władz lokalnych będących beneficjentami tych programów.

Przepisy dotyczące wydatków obowiązujące władze lokalne stanowią istotny element polityki fiskalnej w Polsce. Komisja uważnie monitoruje funkcjonowanie tych przepisów i śledzi bieżące prace nad ich ewentualnymi zmianami. Jednak niezależnie od potrzeby konsolidacji fiskalnej Polska powinna ograniczyć cięcia wydatków stymulujących wzrost gospodarczy. W związku z tym Rada, w ramach europejskiego semestru, przyjęła w lipcu 2012 r. zalecenie dla Polski, które obowiązuje również władze lokalne ([1]).

Kwestia odpowiedniego poziomu współfinansowania będzie jednym z wyzwań na lata 2014-2020 i władze Polski powinny ten problem rozwiązać. Można to osiągnąć np. poprzez bardziej racjonalne ustalanie priorytetów i staranniejszą analizę zasadności projektów, w tym lepsze planowanie kosztów i wybór najlepszych wariantów inwestycyjnych.

([1]) http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/12/st11/st11267.en12.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006355/12
to the Commission
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Excessive debt of Polish local authorities

The Polish media has been reporting with increasing frequency on the overindebtedness of local authorities. Local authority leaders in Poland's towns and municipalities are expressing increasing concern about the burden placed on municipal budgets by the central authorities. The debt taken on by Polish municipalities is often connected to EU funding. In many cases a municipality or city takes out a loan in order to seek EU grants, which, in the long run, constitutes its own contribution to a specific investment that is being part-financed with EU funds. Polish local authority leaders are required to observe a maximum debt limit of 60%.

Today many local authorities in Poland are very close to this critical level. There could soon be a situation in Poland where many local authority leaders will be replaced by electoral commissioners and early elections will be called for their positions because that is the consequence provided for in Polish law for local authority leaders who exceed the 60% debt limit. This could mean that in the near future those responsible for the management of Polish cities and municipalities will be afraid to seek EU grants, concentrating instead on not exceeding the 60% debt limit.

— Is the Commission aware of the debt levels of Polish municipalities, and consequently of the risk to local authorities of applying for EU grants in the near future?

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

The principle of co-financing is one of basic principles of implementation of cohesion policy, as through joint efforts of national and EU financing the local governments can implement their planned investment strategies quicker and better. This may lead to short-term deterioration of the public finances, but in a long term should contribute to improved economic performance of a region or city. This is why the Commission is paying utmost attention to securing projects that have real impact on growth and jobs in the supported region. In order to stimulate the uptake of EU funding, the managing authorities in charge of the programmes frequently decide to lower the co-financing rates for EU funding which has further aggravated the problem of temporary indebtness of local authorities as beneficiaries.

Expenditure rules for local governments are an important element of the fiscal framework in Poland. The Commission is closely monitoring their functioning and is following ongoing work on their possible changes. However, despite the necessary fiscal consolidation, Poland should minimise cuts in growth-enhancing expenditures. In this context, a specific recommendation for Poland — that applies also to local governments — was adopted by the Council in July 2012 as a part of the European Semester process ([1]).

The issue of sufficient co-financing will be one of the challenges for the period 2014-2020 and the Polish authorities should address this issue. This could be done by e.g. better prioritisation of projects, and more careful analysis of the project rationale, including better planning of costs and selecting the best investment options.

([1]) http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/12/st11/st11267.en12.pdf

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-006356/12
do Komisji
Jarosław Leszek Wałęsa (PPE)
(26 czerwca 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Narodowe rejestry nowotworów

W ostatnim czasie pojawiła się inicjatywa stworzenia na poziomie europejskim podstaw prawnych funkcjonowania narodowych rejestrów nowotworów, które są jedynym źródłem danych o liczbie oraz strukturze i rozprzestrzenianiu się nowotworów.

Pamiętać należy, iż rolą rejestrów jest nie tylko monitoring sytuacji epidemiologicznej, ale również kontrola programów przesiewowych w kierunku wczesnego wykrywania nowotworów oraz analiza skuteczności leczenia.

Wielkim problemem mogą być rozważane przez Komisję Europejską zmiany ochrony danych osobowych obywateli Unii Europejskiej (Dyrektywa 95/46/WE). Zmiany te mogą spowodować niepotrzebne utrudnienia, opóźnienia oraz wzrost kosztów w celu monitorowania raka i badań publicznych zdrowia.

Należy zdać sobie sprawę z faktu, iż bez możliwości powiązania zachorowania ze stopniem zaawansowania choroby, sposobem diagnozy, leczenia i faktem zgonu oraz identyfikacji określonego zdarzenia z konkretną osobą nie będzie możliwa ocena liczby nowych zachorowań i liczby osób żyjących z chorobą nowotworową, czy też oceny skuteczności leczenia na poziomie kraju.

1. W związku z powyższym zwracam się do Komisji z pytaniem, czy Komisja może wziąć pod uwagę ten problem w momencie dokonywania zamian w dyrektywie dotyczącej ochrony danych osobowych obywateli Unii Europejskiej?

2. Ponadto, czy Komisja może poprzeć inicjatywę stworzenia podstaw prawnych funkcjonowania narodowych rejestrów nowotworów?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Johna Dallego w imieniu Komisji
(21 sierpnia 2012 r.)

W dniu 25 stycznia 2012 r. Komisja przyjęła pakiet reform w zakresie ochrony danych, który obejmuje wniosek dotyczący rozporządzenia w sprawie ochrony osób fizycznych w związku z przetwarzaniem danych osobowych i swobodnym przepływem takich danych ([1]) i ma na celu reformę unijnych przepisów o ochronie danych z 1995 r. ([2]).

Wniosek ten uwzględnia trudności związane z monitorowaniem zdrowia oraz z badaniami w zakresie zdrowia. Podczas gdy w ramach aktualnej dyrektywy o ochronie danych 95/46/WE odpowiednie przepisy dotyczące przetwarzania danych osobowych są wdrażane przez państwa członkowskie w odmienny sposób, wniosek dotyczący rozporządzenia ujednolica w szczególności warunki i środki bezpieczeństwa przy przetwarzaniu danych osobowych związanych ze zdrowiem oraz danych wykorzystywanych do celów badawczych.

Wniosek ustanawia w szczególności warunki i środki bezpieczeństwa przy przetwarzaniu danych osobowych dla celów zdrowotnych (art. 81), jak również do celów dokumentacji, statystyki oraz badań naukowych (art. 83), w tym warunki i środki bezpieczeństwa konieczne przy przetwarzaniu danych osobowych związanych ze zdrowiem i niezbędnych dla celów badawczych, takich jak rejestry pacjentów założone w celu udoskonalenia diagnostyki, rozróżnienia pomiędzy podobnymi rodzajami chorób i przygotowania opracowań dotyczących terapii. Ułatwi to zakładanie i prowadzenie rejestrów nowotworów lub chorób rzadkich i badań w tym zakresie.

Uwzględniając również zasadę pomocniczości, Komisja na tym etapie nie zamierza proponować aktów prawnych bezpośrednio regulujących funkcjonowanie narodowych rejestrów nowotworów.

([1]) Wniosek dotyczący rozporządzenia Parlamentu Europejskiego i Rady w sprawie ochrony osób fizycznych w związku z przetwarzaniem danych osobowych i swobodnym przepływem takich danych (ogólne rozporządzenie o ochronie danych); KOM(2012) 0011 final.

([2]) Dyrektywa 95/46/WE Parlamentu Europejskiego i Rady z dnia 24 października 1995 r. w sprawie ochrony osób fizycznych w zakresie przetwarzania danych osobowych i swobodnego przepływu tych danych (Dz.U. L 281 z 23.11.1995, s. 31).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006356/12
to the Commission
Jarosław Leszek Wałęsa (PPE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: National cancer registers

An initiative has recently been put forward to establish at European level the legal basis for the operation of national cancer registers, which are the only source of data on the number, structure and extent of cancers.

It should be noted that the role of registers is not only to monitor the epidemiological situation, but also to check early-detection cancer screening programmes and to analyse treatment effectiveness.

The amendments being considered by the European Commission to the protection of EU citizens' personal data (Directive 95/46/EC) could be a major problem. These amendments could result in unnecessary difficulties, delays and increased costs for cancer monitoring and public research into health issues.

Without the possibility of linking disease with the rate of progression, the method of diagnosis, the treatment and mortality, and the identification of a particular event with a specific person, it will not be possible to assess the number of new cases and the number of people living with cancer, nor to evaluate the effectiveness of treatment at national level.

1. Can the Commission take this problem into account when it amends the directive on the protection of the personal data of EU citizens?

2. Can the Commission also give its support to the initiative to establish a legal basis for the functioning of national cancer registers?

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

On 25 January 2012, the Commission adopted a data protection reform package which contains a proposal for a regulation on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and the free movement of such data aiming at reforming the EU's 1995 Data Protection Rules ([1]).

This proposal takes into account the problems in relation to health monitoring and research on health issues. While under the current Data Protection Directive 95/46/EC the relevant provisions for processing personal data relating have been implemented by the Member States in a rather divergent manner, the proposal for the regulation harmonises specifically the conditions and safeguards for processing personal data concerning health and for research purposes.

The proposal lays down specifically conditions and safeguards for processing personal data for health purposes (Art. 81) and on historical, statistical and scientific research purposes (Art. 83), including conditions and safeguards for processing of personal data concerning health which is necessary for research purposes, such as patient registries set up for improving diagnoses and differentiating between similar types of diseases and preparing studies for therapies. This will facilitate the setting up and operation of cancer or rare disease registries and related research.

The Commission, taking into account also the principle of subsidiarity, does not at this stage intend to propose legal acts specifically addressing the functioning of national cancer registers.

([1]) Directive 95/46/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24.10.1995 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, OJ L 281, 23.11.1995, p. 31.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-006357/12
alla Commissione
Matteo Salvini (EFD)
(26 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Precisazioni sulla direttiva 2007/7/UE

La direttiva 2007/7/UE relativa alla lotta contro i ritardi di pagamento nelle transazioni commerciali dovrà essere recepita entro il marzo 2013.

Tuttavia, la Commissione europea aveva invitato tutti gli Stati membri ad anticiparne l'attuazione a partire dal marzo 2012 e avevo altresì previsto la possibilità di creare un gruppo di esperti col compito di agevolarne il recepimento.

Può la Commissione fornire un quadro relativo all'attuale stato di attuazione della direttiva 2007/7/UE? Può essa fornire altresì informazioni sul gruppo di esperti?

Risposta di Antonio Tajani a nome della Commissione
(27 luglio 2012)

La direttiva 2011/7/UE prescrive l'obbligo per tutti gli Stati membri di conformarsi alle nuove disposizioni entro il 16 marzo 2013. Tuttavia, considerando l'entità dei ritardi nei pagamenti in tutta l'Unione europea e il loro effetto negativo sulle imprese europee, specie durante una crisi economica senza precedenti, il Vicepresidente della Commissione europea e commissario responsabile per l'industria e l'imprenditoria ha invitato gli Stati membri ad intensificare gli sforzi a livello nazionale per il recepimento e l'attuazione tempestivi della presente direttiva nel 2012. Le misure tempestive hanno effetti positivi sulle PMI durante l'attuale crisi finanziaria, poiché aumentano la loro capacità di sostenere la crescita e rafforzare la competitività.

Per aiutare gli Stati membri in questo compito impegnativo, la Commissione ha convocato per il 3 febbraio 2012 una prima riunione del Gruppo di esperti sui ritardi nei pagamenti. Per ora, Cipro è tra gli Stati membri il più prossimo a completare la procedura legislativa di recepimento nell'ordinamento nazionale ([1]). Una seconda riunione del Gruppo di esperti sui ritardi nei pagamenti è già prevista per il 23 ottobre 2012.

I servizi della Commissione che curano l'attuazione della direttiva 2011/7/UE sono in contatto costante con i membri del Gruppo di esperti e forniscono loro tutta l'assistenza tecnica e giuridica richiesta. Inoltre, la Commissione organizzerà una campagna informativa nel 2012 in ciascuno degli Stati membri e in Croazia. L'obiettivo è aumentare la consapevolezza dei nuovi diritti conferiti dalla direttiva 2011/7/UE tra le parti interessate europee che possono incontrare problemi di ritardi nei pagamenti nelle transazioni commerciali.

([1]) Il parlamento cipriota ha adottato la misura nazionale il 12 luglio. La sua pubblicazione nella Gazzetta ufficiale nazionale è prevista per le prossime settimane.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-006357/12
to the Commission
Matteo Salvini (EFD)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Clarifications on Directive 2011/7/EU

Directive 2011/7/EU on combating late payment in commercial transactions has to be transposed by March 2013.

The Commission, however, has urged all Member States to bring its implementation forward, starting from March 2012 and has also set up an expert group responsible for facilitating transposition.

Can the Commission outline the progress made to date in transposing Directive 2011/7/EU? Can it also provide information on the expert group?

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

Directive 2011/7/EU establishes the obligation for all Member States to comply with the new provisions by 16 March 2013 at the latest. However, considering the magnitude of late payments across the European Union and their detrimental effect on European enterprises, especially in a time of unprecedented economic crisis, the Vice-President and Commissioner for Industry and Entrepreneurship has invited Member States to step up their efforts at a national level for an early transposition and implementation of this directive in 2012. Earlier measures are beneficial to SMEs during this financial crisis, increasing their capacity to enhance growth and strengthen competitiveness.

To assist Member States in this challenging task, the Commission called a first meeting of the Expert Group on Late Payment on 3 February 2012. To date Cyprus is the first Member State on its way to finalise the legislative procedure leading to the adoption of it national measure ([1]). A second meeting of the Expert Group on Late Payment is already foreseen for 23 October 2012.

The Commission's services in charge of Directive 2011/7/EU are in regular contact with the members of the Expert Group and are providing technical and legal assistance when required. In addition the Commission will organise an information campaign in 2012 in all Member States and in Croatia. Its aim is to increase awareness among European stakeholders, who may face problems of late payment in commercial transactions, of the new rights conferred by Directive 2011/7/EU.

([1]) The Cyprian parliament adopted its national measure on July the 12. Its publication on the national official journal is expected in the coming weeks.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-006358/12
an die Kommission
Franz Obermayr (NI)
(26. Juni 2012)

Betrifft: Unfallgefahr durch das Zerplatzen von stromsparenden Glühlampen

Experten warnen vor der Unfallgefahr durch das Zerplatzen von Energiesparlampen. Bis zu 5 Milligramm Quecksilber, eine hochgiftige Substanz, wird nach dem Zerplatzen einer energiesparenden Lampe als gesundheitsschädlicher und toxischer Dampf frei. Das so frei werdende geruchlose Quecksilber zerstört laut Wissenschaftlern Nervenzellen, löst Krankheiten aus und neue gravierende Umweltprobleme entstehen.

1. Wie soll der Konsument im Fall des Zerplatzens einer energiesparenden Lampe mit der Unfallgefahr durch das austretende Quecksilber umgehen?

2. Ein von Experten empfohlener „Notfall-Kit" enthält u. a. sogar eigene Stiefel, eine Maske und Schutzkleidung für den Körper, Besen und Tücher usw. — demnach ist eine hoch komplizierte Anwendung nach dem Zerplatzen notwendig, um die Gefahr infolge des frei werdenden Quecksilbers einzudämmen. Was hält die Kommission von dieser Art der empfohlenen Entsorgung — ist sie ihrer Meinung nach notwendig?

3. Laut einer EU-Studie landen angeblich 80 % aller Energiesparlampen auf normalen Mülldeponien und das Quecksilber im Trinkwasser, da sich wenige an das EU-weite Entsorgungskonzept halten. Ist der Kommission diese Studie bekannt, und um welche Studie handelt es sich im Konkreten?

4. Wie beim Atommüll, gibt es noch keine Endlager für die Energiesparlampen. Welche Projekte gibt es, um das Endlagerproblem bei Energiesparlampen nachhaltig in den Griff zu bekommen?

5. Stimmt es, dass in den wissenschaftlichen Studien, auf die sich die EU stützt, nur 5 Energiesparlampen herangezogen wurden, um den Quecksilbergehalt einer Energiesparlampe zu untersuchen? Um welche Studien handelt es sich?

Antwort von Herrn Oettinger im Namen der Kommission
(6. August 2012)

In Bezug auf die Fragen 1, 2 und 4 möchte die Kommission den Herrn Abgeordneten auf ihre Antwort auf die schriftliche Anfrage E-6340/2012 von Frau Werthmann ([1]) verweisen. Wie aus dieser Antwort hervorgeht, kann eine zerbrochene Kompaktleuchtstofflampe mit einfachen Mitteln entsorgt werden, ohne dass dadurch die Gesundheit gefährdet wird.

Bei der Studie, auf die der Herr Abgeordnete infrage 3 und 5 Bezug nimmt, handelt es sich um die vorbereitende Studie ([2]) für die EU-Verordnung zur schrittweisen Abschaffung von Glühlampen ([3]). Ziel der Studie war nicht die Messung des Quecksilbergehalts von Lampen, für den bereits seit 2002 EU-Vorschriften gelten ([4]). Die Mitgliedstaaten müssen dafür Sorge tragen, dass Lampen mit einem Quecksilbergehalt von mehr als 3,5 mg in der EU nicht in Verkehr gebracht werden (der Grenzwert von 5 mg galt vor 2012, ab 2013 wird er auf 2,5 mg gesenkt).

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/QP-WEB/home.jsp

([2]) Vorbereitende Studien für Ökodesign-Anforderungen an energiebetriebene Produkte, Los 19: Domestic Lighting, VITO NV., Oktober 2009, verfügbar unter www.eup4light.net (erste Veröffentlichung von Teil 1 zu Haushaltslampen mit ungebündeltem Licht im Oktober 2008).

([3]) Verordnung (EG) Nr. 244/2009 der Kommission vom 18. März 2009 zur Durchführung der Richtlinie 2005/32/EG des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates im Hinblick auf die Festlegung von Anforderungen an die umweltgerechte Gestaltung von Haushaltslampen mit ungebündeltem Licht, ABl. L 76 vom 24.3.2009.

([4]) Richtlinie 2011/65/EU des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 8. Juni 2011 zur Beschränkung der Verwendung bestimmter gefährlicher Stoffe in Elektro- und Elektronikgeräten, ABl. L 174 vom 1.7.2011, S. 95 (Neufassung der Richtlinie 2002/95/EG).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006358/12
to the Commission
Franz Obermayr (NI)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Risk of accidents caused by shattering energy-saving light bulbs

Experts warn of the risk of accidents caused by shattering energy-saving light bulbs. Up to 5 mg of the highly toxic substance mercury is released as a harmful, toxic vapour when an energy-saving light bulb shatters. According to scientists, the odourless mercury released in this way can destroy nerve cells, trigger illnesses and give rise to serious new environmental problems.

1. How will consumers deal with the threat posed by escaping mercury in the event that an energy-saving light bulb shatters?

2. An 'emergency kit' recommended by experts even includes separate boots, mask and safety overalls for the body, as well as brushes and cloths, etc. — indicating that an extremely complex procedure is required after a bulb shatters in order to reduce the risk from the released mercury. What is the Commission's view of this type of recommended disposal? Does it consider it necessary?

3. According to an EU study, it seems that 80% of all energy-saving bulbs end up in normal landfills, and the mercury enters the drinking water system because few people adhere to the EU-wide disposal plan. Is the Commission familiar with this study and which is the specific study in question?

4. As with nuclear waste, there is no final repository for energy-saving light bulbs. What projects exist for taking long-term control of the problem of a final repository for energy-saving light bulbs?

5. Is it true that the scientific studies on which the EU has based its conclusions only looked at five energy-saving light bulbs in order to establish mercury levels in an energy-saving bulb? What are the studies in question?

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

In relation to his questions 1, 2 and 4, the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-6340/2012 by Ms Werthmann ([1]). It follows from that answer that the clean-up of a broken compact fluorescent lamp (CFL) can be performed with simple equipment without entailing a health risk.

The study that the Honourable Member refers to in his questions 3 and 5 is the preparatory study ([2]) for the EU regulation phasing out incandescent bulbs ([3]). It was not the goal of the study to measure the mercury content of lamps, which has been regulated since 2002 by EC law ([4]). Member States have to ensure that no lamps containing more than 3.5 mg of mercury are placed on the EU market (the limit used to be 5 mg before 2012, and will be lowered to 2.5 mg from 2013).

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/QP-WEB/home.jsp

([2]) Preparatory Studies for Ecodesign Requirements of EuPs, Lot 19: Domestic Lighting, VITO NV., October 2009, available from www.eup4light.net (first publication of Part 1 on non-directional household lamps in October 2008).

([3]) Commission Regulation (EC) No 244/2009 of 18 March 2009 implementing Directive 2005/32/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to ecodesign requirements for non-directional household lamps, OJ L 76, 24.3.2009.

([4]) Directive 2011/65/EU of the Parliament and of the Council of 8 June 2011 on the restriction of the use of certain hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment , OJ L 174, 1.7.2011 (recast of Directive 2002/95/EC).

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-006359/12
til Kommissionen
Dan Jørgensen (S&D) og Bogusław Liberadzki (S&D)
(26. juni 2012)

Om: Lager af hexachlorbenzen HCB) i Gdansk

I Armenien, Aserbajdsjan, Hviderusland, Georgien, Kasakhstan, Kirgisistan, Republikken Moldova, Den Russiske Føderation, Tadsjikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine og Usbekistan tårner over 250 000 tons forældede pesticider og kemikalier sig op i både lagerbygninger og på ubeskyttede steder i rustne, utætte tønder eller i plastiksække, der er beskadigede eller fuldstændig ødelagt.

I erkendelse af at denne situation udgør et internationalt miljøproblem har EU via naboskabspolitikken afsat 7 mio. EUR i bistand til de tidligere sovjetstater til at opbygge den kapacitet, der er nødvendig for at håndtere og i sidste instans destruere kemikalierne og pesticiderne på forsvarlig måde uden at eksportere problemet til andre regioner.

For nylig blev der imidlertid eksporteret en stor mængde (12 000 tons) hexachlorbenzen (HCB) fra Ukraine til et anlæg i Gdansk i Polen, hvor det skulle destrueres. HCB er kendt som et kræftfremkaldende, bio-akkumulerende og meget persistent stof, og det er desuden forbudt overalt i henhold til Stockholmkonventionen om persistente organiske miljøgifte. Bunkerne af HCB er nu blevet et akut problem. Videodokumentation viser, at HCB er lagret i utætte sække, og det oplagrede stof risikerer nu at forurene hele Østersøen (http://www.ihpa.info/2012/06/).

1. Erkender Kommissionen, at forældede kemikalier og pesticider i de tidligere sovjetstater bør destrueres så tæt på kilden som muligt i overensstemmelse med Basel-konventionen?

2. Kommissionen har udtalt, at der kræves 600 mio. EUR for effektivt afhjælpe problemet med forældede pesticider og kemikalier i de tidligere sovjetstater. Agter Kommissionen at yde yderligere bistand til disse stater med henblik på at løse et problem, som i sidste instans også en sundhedsfare og en trussel mod miljøet i EU?

3. Agter Kommissionen med henblik på at forhindre en miljøkatastrofe at foretage sig noget for at afhjælpe den akutte nødsituation i Gdansk ved at gøre brug af europæisk ekspertise til at sikre, at bunkerne af HCB behandles på forsvarlig måde?

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

Kommissionen er opmærksom på, hvor vigtigt problemet er, og er grundlæggende enig i, at forældede kemikalier og pesticider skal destrueres så tæt på kilden som muligt.

Kommissionen søger i samarbejde med andre donorer at gøre landene i det tidligere Sovjetunionen mere bevidste om, at miljømæssigt forsvarlig håndtering af gamle kemikalier og pesticider bør have høj prioritet. Kommissionen bistår partnerlandene og har afsat midler til et projekt, der har til formål at forbedre kapaciteten til at destruere og forhindre genopdukken af forældede pesticider og skal være en model for håndteringen af ubrugte kemikalier i det tidligere Sovjetunionen. I betragtning af de omkostninger, der er tale om i den forbindelse, foretrækker Kommissionen løsninger, der både er økonomisk og miljømæssigt effektive og i overensstemmelse med internationale konventioner og EU-lovgivningen.

Kommissionen har rejst spørgsmålet om transporten af hexachlorbenzen til Gdansk over for de ukrainske og polske myndigheder. Ifølge de oplysninger, de polske myndigheder har fremlagt, bliver der truffet de nødvendige foranstaltninger for at sikre, at lagerbunkerne behandles på en miljømæssigt forsvarlig måde, der er i overensstemmelse med EU's lovgivning. Kommissionen vil fortsætte med at overvåge situationen.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-006359/12
do Komisji
Dan Jørgensen (S&D) oraz Bogusław Liberadzki (S&D)
(26 czerwca 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Składowanie heksachlorobenzenu (HCB) w Gdańsku

Na terenie Armenii, Azerbejdżanu, Białorusi, Gruzji, Kazachstanu, Kirgistanu, Republiki Mołdawii, Federacji Rosyjskiej, Tadżykistanu, Turkmenistanu, Ukrainy i Uzbekistanu przechowuje się ponad 250 000 ton przestarzałych pestycydów i chemikaliów w magazynach, jak i w miejscach niezabezpieczonych, w skorodowanych, nieszczelnych beczkach czy plastikowych workach, które są uszkodzone lub całkowicie zniszczone.

Uznając, że sytuacja ta stanowi globalny problem ekologiczny, Unia Europejska w ramach europejskiej polityki sąsiedztwa przeznaczyła 7 milionów EUR na pomoc byłym republikom radzieckim w stworzeniu odpowiednich warunków do podjęcia działań i ostatecznego zniszczenia chemikaliów i pestycydów w bezpieczny sposób, bez próby przenoszenia problemu na inne regiony.

Ostatnio jednak duże ilości (12 000 ton) heksachlorobenzenu (HCB) przetransportowano z Ukrainy do zakładu w Gdańsku (Polska), gdzie zamierzano dokonać zniszczenia tej substancji. HCB jest bardzo trwałym związkiem rakotwórczym, wykazującym zdolność do bioakumulacji, co więcej jest zakazany na całym świecie na mocy Konwencji sztokholmskiej w sprawie trwałych zanieczyszczeń organicznych. W przypadku składowania substancji HCB można obecnie mówić o kryzysie. Istnieje materiał filmowy będący dowodem na to, że substancje HCB przechowywane są w nieszczelnych workach, a ich ogromny skład grozi zanieczyszczeniem całego Morza Bałtyckiego (http://www.ihpa.info/2012/06/).

1. Czy Komisja uznaje, że przestarzałe pestycydy i chemikalia pochodzące z byłych republik radzieckich powinny być niszczone możliwie jak najbliżej źródła zgodnie z Konwencją bazylejską?

2. Komisja stwierdziła, że potrzeba 600 milionów EUR, aby skutecznie rozwiązać problem dotyczący przestarzałych pestycydów i chemikaliów w byłych republikach radzieckich. Czy Komisja zamierza dalej udzielać wsparcia tym państwom z myślą o rozwiązaniu problemu, który ostatecznie stanowi również zagrożenie dla zdrowia ludzkiego i środowiska w UE?

3. Czy Komisja zamierza, w celu zapobiegania katastrofie środowiska naturalnego, podjąć stosowne działania w odpowiedzi na natychmiastową sytuację kryzysową, jaka zaistniała w Gdańsku, wykorzystując europejską wiedzę specjalistyczną, dzięki której upewni się, że substancje HCB są składowane i przechowywane w bezpieczny sposób?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Janeza Potočnika w imieniu Komisji
(1 sierpnia 2012 r.)

Komisja zdaje sobie sprawę ze znaczenia problemu i zgadza się, co do zasady, że przestarzałe chemikalia i pestycydy powinny być niszczone jak najbliżej źródła.

Komisja, we współpracy z innymi darczyńcami, zachęca kraje byłego Związku Radzieckiego do uznania, że racjonalne ekologicznie zagospodarowanie przestarzałych chemikaliów i pestycydów powinno mieć priorytetowe znaczenie. Komisja wspiera kraje partnerskie i przeznaczyła środki finansowe na rzecz projektu „Zwiększanie zdolności w celu wyeliminowania oraz zapobiegania ponownemu pojawianiu się przestarzałych pestycydów, jako model rozwiązania problemu niewykorzystanych niebezpiecznych chemikaliów w byłym Związku Radzieckim". Z uwagi na koszty, Komisja opowiada się za rozwiązaniami, które są skuteczne z perspektywy ochrony środowiska i gospodarczej, zgodnie z przepisami międzynarodowych konwencji i prawodawstwem UE.

Komisja podniosła kwestię heksachlorobenzenu (HCB) przetransportowanego do Gdańska w rozmowach z władzami Ukrainy i Polski. Zgodnie z informacjami przekazanymi przez polskie władze, podejmowane są odpowiednie kroki, aby zapewnić przetworzenie składowanych substancji w sposób przyjazny dla środowiska, zgodnie z prawodawstwem UE. Komisja będzie nadal monitorować tę sytuację.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006359/12
to the Commission
Dan Jørgensen (S&D) and Bogusław Liberadzki (S&D)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Hexachlorobenzene (HCB) stockpile in Gdańsk

In Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan more than 250 000 tonnes of obsolete pesticides and chemicals are piling up in warehouses as well as on unprotected sites, in corroded, leaking barrels or in plastic bags that are damaged or completely destroyed.

Recognising that this situation constitutes an international environmental problem, the European Union has allocated EUR 7 million via the neighbourhood policy to assist the former Soviet states in building the capacity required to handle and ultimately destroy the chemicals and pesticides safely, without exporting the problem to other regions.

Recently, however, a large quantity (12 000 tonnes) of hexachlorobenzene (HCB) was exported from Ukraine to a plant in Gdańsk, Poland, where it was to be destroyed. HCB is known to be carcinogenic, bioaccumulative and very persistent, and is furthermore banned globally under the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. The HCB stockpile has now become an emergency. Video evidence shows that the HCB is stored in bags that leak, with the stockpile now threatening to pollute the whole Baltic Sea (http://www.ihpa.info/2012/06/).

1. Does the Commission recognise that obsolete chemicals and pesticides in the former Soviet states should be destroyed as close to the source as possible, in accordance with the Basel Convention?

2. The Commission has stated that EUR 600 million is required in order to deal effectively with the problem of obsolete pesticides and chemicals in the former Soviet states. Does the Commission plan to provide further assistance to these states with a view to solving a problem which ultimately also constitutes a threat to human health and the environment in the EU?

3. In order to prevent an environmental catastrophe, does the Commission plan to take action in response to the immediate emergency situation in Gdańsk by harnessing European expertise to make sure that the HCB stockpile is treated safely?

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

The Commission is aware of the importance of the problem and agrees that, as a matter of principle, obsolete chemicals and pesticides should be destroyed as close to the source as possible.

The Commission, in cooperation with other donors, is encouraging former Soviet Union countries to recognise that environmentally sound management of old chemicals and pesticides should be a priority. The Commission is assisting the partner countries and has allocated funds to a project dedicated to "Improving capacities to eliminate and prevent recurrence of obsolete pesticides as a model for tackling unused hazardous chemicals in the former Soviet Union". In view of the costs involved, the Commission favours solutions that are efficient from an environmental and economic point of view, in conformity with international conventions and EU legislation.

The Commission has raised the issue of hexachlorobenzene transported to Gdansk with the Ukrainian and Polish authorities. According to the information provided by the Polish authorities, appropriate steps are being taken to ensure that the stockpiles are treated in an environmentally sound manner, in conformity with EU legislation. The Commission will keep on monitoring this situation.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-006360/12
aan de Commissie
Frank Vanhecke (EFD)
(26 juni 2012)

Betreft: Europese subsidies ENAR

Uit een antwoord op een vorige parlementaire vraag (E-004187/2012) blijkt dat het Europees netwerk tegen racisme (ENAR) in 2009, 2010 en 2011 respectievelijk 961 300,47, 967 553,88 en 983 983 euro werd toegestopt door de Europese Commissie. Deze organisatie staat of valt met Europese steun.

Een blik op de Belgische vertakking van ENAR leert dat de openingswebstek enkel in het Engels is opgesteld en dat alle rapporten in het Frans zijn opgesteld. Dit getuigt van weinig respect ten aanzien van de Vlamingen die het meerderheidsvolk in België uitmaken. Opmerkelijk is ook dat de organisatie stelling neemt tegen elke verstrenging van de Belgische nationaliteits- en immigratiewetgeving.

De webstek leert ook dat ENAR-België vrijwel uitsluitend bestaat uit vreemdelingen- en vluchtelingenorganisaties en de Waalse en Vlaamse socialistische vakbond.

Is de Commissie ervan op de hoogte dat de rapporten van de Belgische vertakking van de organisatie die zij zo royaal subsidieert, enkel in het Frans beschikbaar zijn? Vindt de Commissie dit aanvaardbaar? Welke stappen zal de Commissie in dit verband ondernemen? Vindt de Commissie de samenstelling van de Belgische vertakking evenwichtig met een proportionele vertegenwoordiging van alle politieke overtuigingen en filosofische verstrekkingen in het land? Zal de Commissie aandringen op meer diversiteit en haar controle op de organisatie, in het licht van de royale subsidiëring, verscherpen?

Antwoord van mevrouw Reding namens de Commissie
(1 augustus 2012)

De Commissie is niet bevoegd om beslissingen te nemen over de talen waarin verslagen en projectprestaties worden opgesteld door ngo-netwerken op EU-niveau die steun ontvangen van het Progress-programma ([1]), zoals het Europees netwerk tegen racisme (ENAR).

De exploitatiesubsidie die ENAR krijgt, is bedoeld om de organisatie te helpen onafhankelijk haar werk te doen. De Commissie ziet erop toe dat ENAR de beloofde werkprogramma's waarmaakt.

De Europese Commissie beoordeelt de samenstelling van de ngo-netwerken op EU-niveau en houdt daar toezicht op, maar doet dit uitsluitend in het licht van de criteria die zijn bepaald in de oproep tot het indienen van voorstellen VP/2010/12 ([2]), waarin is vastgelegd dat de ngo-netwerken op EU-niveau in ten minste vijftien lidstaten van de Europese Unie aangesloten organisaties moeten hebben.

De Commissie grijpt dus alleen in als de samenstelling van het ENAR niet aan de reeds genoemde criteria voldoet.

([1]) Besluit 1672/2006/EG van het Europees Parlement en de Raad van 24 oktober 2006 tot vaststelling van een communautair programma voor werkgelegenheid en maatschappelijke solidariteit — Progress, PB L 315 van 15.11.2006.

([2]) Totstandbrenging van kaderpartnerschapsovereenkomsten voor drie jaar met ngo-netwerken op EU-niveau inzake sociale integratie, non-discriminatie, gendergelijkheid, de integratie van personen met een handicap en de vertegenwoordiging van de Roma.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006360/12
to the Commission
Frank Vanhecke (EFD)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: European subsidies for ENAR

The answer to a previous parliamentary question (E-004187/2012) indicates that, in 2009, 2010 and 2011 respectively, the Commission gifted the European Network Against Racism EUR 961 300.47, EUR 967 553.88 and EUR 983 983 in European subsidies. The organisation is wholly dependent on European support.

A glance at the Belgian section of ENAR shows that its homepage is written exclusively in English and that all the reports are in French. This displays little respect towards the Flemings, who are the majority population group in Belgium. It is also remarkable that the organisation opposes any attempt to tighten up Belgian legislation on nationality and immigration.

The website also informs us that ENAR Belgium consists almost exclusively of aliens' and refugees' organisations plus the Walloon and Flemish socialist trade union.

Is the Commission aware that the reports of the Belgian section of the organisation which it subsidises so generously are available only in French? Does the Commission regard this as acceptable? What steps will the Commission take in this connection? Does the Commission consider the composition of the Belgian section to be balanced, with proportional representation of all political convictions and philosophical currents in the country? Will the Commission urge greater diversity upon it, and — in view of the generous subsidies — will the Commission step up its oversight of the organisation?

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

The Commission has no powers to take decisions on the languages of the reports and deliverables produced by the EU-level NGO Networks supported by the PROGRESS programme ([1]), including the European Network Against Racism (ENAR).

The operating grant that ENAR receives aims at supporting its functioning as an independent organisation, and the role of the Commission is to verify that ENAR adheres to the work programmes it has committed to.

The composition of the EU-level NGO Networks is assessed and monitored by the European Commission exclusively against the eligibility criteria established in the call for proposals VP/2010/012 ([2]), which foresees for EU-level NGO Networks to have member organisations in at least fifteen Member States of the European Union.

Therefore, the Commission will only take action to intervene in the composition of ENAR in case of breach of the eligibility criteria referred to above.

([1]) Decision 1672/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 2006 establishing a Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity-Progress, OJ L 315, 15.11.2006.

([2]) Establishment of 3 year framework partnership agreements with EU-level NGO networks in the areas of social inclusion, non-discrimination, gender equality, the integration of persons with disabilities and the representation of the Roma.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-006361/12
aan de Commissie (Vicevoorzitter — Hoge Vertegenwoordiger)
Frank Vanhecke (EFD)
(26 juni 2012)

Betreft: VP/HR — Mensenrechtendialoog met China

Op 29 mei 2012 vond in Brussel de zoveelste mensenrechtendialoog tussen de EU en China plaats.

Heeft de VP/HR aangedrongen op de vrijlating van Liu Xiaobo, ontvanger van de Nobelprijs 2010?

Heeft de VP/HR aangedrongen op een einde van de opsluiting van Liu Xia, de familie van Chen Guangcheng en de volksgezondheidsactivist Hu Jia en zijn familie?

Heeft de VP/HR erop aangedrongen dat advocaten die de voorbije jaren de toegang tot de advocatuur werd ontzegd vanwege hun inzet voor de mensenrechten, terug hun beroep kunnen uitoefenen?

Heeft de VP/HR erop aangedrongen dat de dialoog tussen de Chinese regering en de vertegenwoordigers van Tibet terug wordt aangevat?

Welke concrete resultaten heeft deze dialoog opgeleverd en welke concrete verbintenissen is China aangegaan?

Antwoord van hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter Ashton namens de Commissie
(8 augustus 2012)

Tijdens de laatste zitting van de mensenrechtendialoog tussen de EU en China op 29 mei 2012 drong de EU er bij China dringend op aan de Nobelprijswinnaar Liu Xiaobo onmiddellijk vrij te laten. In antwoord daarop verklaarde China dat Liu Xiaobo volgens de normale rechtsregels was berecht.

De EU spoorde de Chinese autoriteiten ook aan een einde te stellen aan het huisarrest van zijn echtgenote Liu Xia. De Chinese delegatie verklaarde dat huisarrest in het kader van de Chinese wetgeving niet bestond en dat de openbare veiligheidsdiensten geen enkele maatregel met betrekking tot Liu Xia hadden getroffen.

De EU betwistte de wettelijke basis voor de aanhouding van Chen Guangcheng en zijn gezin die zich thans in de Verenigde Staten bevinden na de ontsnapping van Chen Guangcheng uit huisarrest. De Chinese delegatie antwoordde dat het feit dat Chen Guangcheng, die blind is, in staat was geweest om naar Peking te reizen, een duidelijk bewijs was van het feit dat hij niet onder huisarrest had gestaan. De EU is nog steeds bezorgd om de vergeldingsmaatregelen tegen de neef en broer van Chen Guangcheng en zal hun situatie op de voet blijven volgen.

De EU gaf uiting aan haar bezorgdheid over het feit dat in de afgelopen maanden advocaten werden geconfronteerd met ernstige vormen van pesterijen en intimidatie. De Chinese delegatie antwoordde daarop dat er geen voorbeelden waren van advocaten die met pesterijen en intimidatie geconfronteerd waren.

Wat Tibet betreft, uitte de EU haar bezorgdheid over de reeks zelfverbrandingen, de restricties op de toegang tot Tibet, de gevolgen van de snelle economische ontwikkeling op het behoud van de Tibetaanse cultuur, diverse meldingen van gewelddadig uiteenjagen van betogingen van Tibetanen, de gevolgen van de massale hervestiging van nomaden en de toenemende controle van de overheid over de Tibetaanse kloosters. Na de laatste zitting van de dialoog tussen de Chinese regering en de afgezanten van de Dalai Lama in het begin van 2010, bepleit de EU het hervatten van de dialoog.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006361/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Frank Vanhecke (EFD)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Human rights dialogue with China

On 29 May 2012, yet another round of the human rights dialogue with China was held in Brussels.

Did the VP/HR urge China to release Liu Xiaobo, the winner of the 2010 Nobel Prize?

Did the VP/HR call for an end to the detention of Liu Xia, the relatives of Chen Guangcheng, and the health activist Hu Jia and his relatives?

Did the VP/HR make representations to the effect that lawyers who in recent years have been denied permission to practise because of their advocacy of human rights should be allowed to pursue their profession again?

Did the VP/HR call for the dialogue between the Chinese Government and representatives of Tibet to be resumed?

What concrete results did the dialogue produce, and what specific undertakings did China give?

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

At the last session of the EU-China human rights dialogue on 29 May 2012, the EU urged China to immediately release Nobel Peace price laureate Liu Xiaobo. In answer to the EU, China claimed that Mr Liu had been sentenced according to due process of law.

The EU also urged the Chinese authorities to put an end to the house arrest imposed upon his wife Liu Xia. The Chinese delegation stated that house arrest did not exist under Chinese law. Public security bodies had not put in place any measures concerning Mrs Liu.

The EU questioned the legal basis for the detention of Chen Guangcheng and his family who are now in the United States after Mr Chen's escape from house arrest. The Chinese delegation responded that the fact that Mr Chen, who was blind, had been able to travel to Beijing demonstrated that he had not been subject to house arrest. The EU is still concerned by retaliatory measures taken against his nephew and his brother and will continue to monitor their situation closely.

The EU raised its concern that in recent months lawyers appear to have been faced with severe harassment and intimidation. The Chinese delegation replied that there were no examples of lawyers being harassed or threatened.

On Tibet, the EU raised its concerns regarding the series of self-immolations, restrictions on access to Tibet, the impact of rapid economic development on the preservation of Tibetan culture, reports of violent dispersal of demonstrations by Tibetans, the impact of the mass resettlement of nomads and increased government control over Tibetan monasteries. Following the last session of the dialogue between the Chinese government and the Envoys of the Dalai Lama in early 2010, the EU supports the restart of the dialogue.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-006363/12
aan de Commissie (Vicevoorzitter — Hoge Vertegenwoordiger)
Barry Madlener (NI)
(26 juni 2012)

Betreft: VP/HR — Hoge Vertegenwoordiger Ashton feliciteert nieuwe president Egypte

1. Hoe kan de HV/VP spreken over „vreedzame" verkiezingen [1] terwijl er o.a. een zwangere vrouw is doodgeslagen door haar man aangezien zij niet op Mohammed Mursi van de Moslimbroederschap stemde [2]?

2. Hoe denkt de HV/VP over de betrekkingen tussen Egypte en Israël in de toekomst nu bekend is dat de nieuwe Egyptische president Mursi een criticaster van Israël is en dat een Hamasbestuurder, een terroristische organisatie volgens de EU [3], ook spreekt van „een historisch moment en een nieuw tijdperk in de geschiedenis van Egypte" [4]?

3. Hoe verklaart de HV/VP haar uitspraken dat zij er naar uitkijkt om samen te werken met Mursi terwijl de Egyptische president de banden met Iran wil aanhalen [5]? Hoe verklaart de HV/VP daarnaast ook dat Mursi daarmee dus EU-sancties [6] ondermijnt?

4. Hoeveel mensenrechten dienen er nog geschonden te worden in Egypte voordat de HV/VP stopt met het onderhouden van betrekkingen met Egypte?

Antwoord van hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter Ashton namens de Commissie
(8 augustus 2012)

De brief met gelukwensen die door de hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter is gezonden, was gebaseerd op de conclusies van internationale en binnenlandse verkiezingswaarnemers, die verklaarden dat de organisatie van de presidentverkiezingen, hoewel vanuit administratief oogpunt onvolkomen, transparant was verlopen en tot een geloofwaardig resultaat heeft geleid. Volgens deze verslagen, ook die van de missie van EU-verkiezingsdeskundigen, het Carter-centrum en het Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA), bleef het verkiezingklimaat vreedzaam ondanks een aantal spanningen en geïsoleerde incidenten.

President Morsi heeft voor en na zijn ambtsaanvaarding verklaard dat hij eerder gesloten internationale overeenkomsten zal honoreren en dat er momenteel geen reden is om deze ter discussie te stellen. Hetzelfde geldt voor de betrekkingen tussen Egypte en Iran. Het interview van het Iraanse nieuwsagentschap met President Morsi waarin deze zogenaamd verklaarde de banden met Iran te willen aanhalen, was een vervalsing en er werden gerechtelijke stappen tegen dat nieuwsagentschap ondernomen.

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[1] http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/131145.pdf
[2] http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/06/24/222413.html
[3] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:023:0037:0042:NL:PDF.
[4] http://www.limburger.nl/article/20120624/ANPNIEUWS02/306249779/1321.
[5] http://www.elsevier.nl/web/Nieuws/Buitenland/342326/Nieuwe-president-Egypte-wil-banden-aanhalen-met-Iran.htm
[6] http://www.nu.nl/buitenland/2770632/eu-verscherpt-sancties-iran.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006363/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Barry Madlener (NI)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — High Representative Ashton's congratulations to the new President of Egypt

1. How can the VP/HR speak about 'peaceful' elections ([1]) when, *inter alia*, a pregnant woman was beaten to death by her husband for failing to vote for Mohammed Mursi of the Muslim Brotherhood ([2])?

2. What is the VP/HR's view of the future of relations between Egypt and Israel, bearing in mind that the new President of Egypt, Mursi, likes to find fault with Israel and that one of the leaders of Hamas — a terrorist organisation according to the EU ([3]) — has also spoken of 'a historic moment and a new era in Egypt's history' ([4])?

3. How does the VP/HR explain her statement that she looks forward to working with Mursi, while the Egyptian President wishes to seek closer ties with Iran ([5])? Furthermore, how does the VP/HR explain the fact that Mursi is undermining the EU sanctions ([6]) in this way?

4. How many more human rights will need to be violated in Egypt before the VP/HR ceases to maintain relations with Egypt?

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

The letter of congratulations sent by the HR/VP was based on the conclusions by international and domestic election observers stating that the organisation of the Presidential elections, although not administratively perfect, was transparent and led to a credible outcome. According to these reports, including from the EU Election Expert Mission, the Carter Centre and the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA), the electoral climate remained peaceful despite some tensions and some isolated incidents.

President Morsi has repeated, before and after his inauguration, that he will uphold previously concluded international agreements and there is, at this moment, no reason to question this. The same applies to the relations between Egypt and Iran. The Iranian news agency interview in which President Morsi allegedly declared the intention to improve ties with Iran was fabricated and a law suit has been launched against that news agency.

([1]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/131145.pdf
([2]) http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/06/24/222413.html
([3]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:023:0037:0042:NL:PDF.
([4]) http://www.limburger.nl/article/20120624/ANPNIEUWS02/306249779/1321.
([5]) http://www.elsevier.nl/web/Nieuws/Buitenland/342326/Nieuwe-president-Egypte-wil-banden-aanhalen-met-Iran.htm
([6]) http://www.nu.nl/buitenland/2770632/eu-verscherpt-sancties-iran.html

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-006364/12
aan de Commissie
Lucas Hartong (NI) en Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(26 juni 2012)

Betreft: Bouw „situation room" Arabische Liga Cairo

Vandaag werd bekend ([1]) dat de EEAS van dame Ashton een „situation room" heeft gebouwd voor de Arabische Liga in Cairo „om toekomstige crises te helpen aanpakken". De apparatuur is bedoeld om straks samen met de Arabische ministeries van Buitenlandse Zaken een „panarabisch informatiecentrum" te vormen. Sinds afgelopen november werd voor bijna 2 miljoen euro aan communicatieapparatuur geïnstalleerd in een kamer boven die van AL-voorzitter Nabil Elaraby.

In dat kader de volgende vragen:

1. Hoe krijgt de Commissie het voor elkaar om geld van onze belastingbetalers te vergooien aan een dergelijke „situation room" die geheel ten bate staat van de Arabische Liga in Cairo?

2. Mag de PVV uit de woorden van Ashton's woordvoerder opmaken dat de zogenaamde „Arabische Lente" als crisis kan worden beschouwd?

3. Is de Commissie bekend met het gegeven dat vele organisaties, waaronder Amnesty International, zich zeer ernstig zorgen maken over de structurele schending van mensenrechten in landen die zijn aangesloten bij de Arabische Liga als Soedan, Lybië, Jemen, Somalië en Egypte zelf, alsmede over de grove discriminatie die plaatsvindt in bij de Arabische Liga aangesloten landen ([2])?

4. Kan de Commissie met zekerheid garanderen dat verzamelde gegevens nooit zullen worden gebruikt tegen de eigen vrijheidslievende bevolking in het Midden-Oosten?

5. Is de Commissie bekend met het gegeven dat de Arabische Liga tot op heden de Universele Verklaring van de Rechten van de Mens nog steeds niet ondertekend heeft? Een Verklaring die fundamenteel is voor de lidstaten in de Unie en die bovendien door hen wél ondertekend is? In hoeverre vindt de Commissie de shariawetgeving als onderschreven in de originele Grondverklaring van de Arabische Liga in overeenstemming met de democratische waarden waar Europa voor staat?

6. Welke toezegging moest de Arabische Liga worden gedaan om alsnog „na lange onderhandelingen" de scepsis tegen de „situation room" te overwinnen?

7. Is bijna 2 miljoen euro niet wat duur om dame Ashton rechtstreeks via een videoconferentie met de Arabische Liga te laten praten? Kan de Commissie garanderen dat mede daarom elke eurocent die in deze „situation room" is gestoken wordt teruggevorderd van de Arabische Liga?

Antwoord van hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter Ashton namens de Commissie
(14 augustus 2012)

Dit project voor technische steun ging van start in 2008 in samenwerking tussen de VN en de EU. Het is de bedoeling een crisisresponscapaciteit tot stand te brengen, nl. doeltreffende vroegtijdige waarschuwingen met gebruikmaking van informatie uit open bronnen, en het project is vast geïntegreerd in een aanpak van vredesopbouw. Het wordt ter plaatse gecoördineerd door de EU-delegatie en ten uitvoer gelegd door het regionale bureau van het Ontwikkelingsprogramma van de Verenigde Naties (UNDP) in Caïro.

Begin 2011, tijdens het hoogtepunt van de „Arabische lente", werd het nodig geacht dit project met spoed te voltooien, en wel om de volgende redenen:

— Een „situation room" is een fundamenteel hulpmiddel voor elke serieuze politieke actor. De aldus versterkte interne capaciteit van de Arabische Liga moet een positief gevolg hebben op de autonomie van de Liga tegenover haar leden.

([1]) http://euobserver.com/24/116757.
([2]) O.a. Annual Report 2012 — http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/POL10/002/2012/en/56ec5df1-0e8d-4e99-a26d- a0e9514b451d/pol100022012en.pdf — „Discrimination on grounds of gender, ethnicity, religion, national origin and other factors, such as sexual orientation, remained." (blz. 69).

— De EU en de VN wisselen optimale werkwijzen uit met de Arabische Liga wat betreft conflictpreventie, vredesopbouw en crisisrespons. Via een vlotte en samenhangende informatiestroom kunnen aldus niet-gerubriceerde politieke en operationele conclusies doelmatig worden uitgewisseld.

— Een „situation room" maakt een meer directe, frequente en informele uitwisseling van opvattingen actief mogelijk, en aangezien het open bronnen betreft, draagt hij ook bij tot het „openstellen" van de maatschappij.

Zonder afbreuk te doen aan de herhaaldelijke stellingnamen van de EU inzake de mensenrechten, bilateraal ten aanzien van de partners van de Arabische Liga en multilateraal in de daartoe bestemde fora, zoals de Mensenrechtenraad van de VN, betekent een verbetering van de capaciteit voor situationeel bewustzijn van een belangrijke regionale actor, zoals de Arabische Liga (met 22 leden en 356 miljoen mensen), in onze nabuurschap een gezonde investering voor de EU.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006364/12
to the Commission
Lucas Hartong (NI) and Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Building of Arab League 'situation room' in Cairo

Today it has been announced ([1]) that Lady Ashton's EEAS has built a 'situation room' for the Arab League in Cairo 'to help handle future crises'. In conjunction with Arab Foreign Ministries, this facility is intended in due course to form a 'pan-Arab information centre'. Since last November, nearly EUR 2 m worth of communication equipment has been installed in a room above that of Arab League Secretary-General Nabil Elaraby.

1. How can the Commission squander our taxpayers' money on such a situation room, which only benefits the Arab League in Cairo?

2. Would the PVV be right in interpreting Lady Ashton's spokesperson as implying that the so-called 'Arab Spring' can be regarded as a crisis?

3. Is the Commission aware that many organisations, including Amnesty International, are very concerned about the structural violation of human rights in such Arab League countries as Sudan, Libya, Yemen, Somalia and Egypt itself, and about the gross discrimination which occurs in Arab League countries? ([2])

4. Can the Commission guarantee for certain that the information gathered will never be used against countries' own peaceable populations in the Middle East?

5. Is the Commission aware that the Arab League has still not signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights? The Declaration is fundamental to the EU Member States, and they, moreover, have signed it. To what extent does the Commission consider that Sharia law as endorsed in the Arab League's original statement of principles accords with the democratic values for which Europe stands?

6. What undertaking had to be given to the Arab League in order, after what are described as protracted negotiations, to overcome the scepticism towards the situation room?

7. Is nearly EUR 2 m not a somewhat large sum to spend in order to enable Lady Ashton to speak directly to the Arab League by means of videoconferencing? Bearing in mind this point, among others, can the Commission guarantee that each cent which has been spent on the situation room will be recovered from the Arab League?

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

This technical assistance project started in 2008 in cooperation between the UN and the EU; it aims at creating a crisis response capability, i.e. effective early warning by using open source information, and is firmly inserted in a peacebuilding approach. The project is coordinated on the ground by the EU Delegation and implemented by the UNDP regional office in Cairo.

In early 2011, during the peak of Arab Spring, it was considered necessary to accelerate the completion of this project because of the following:

— A Situation Room is a basic tool for any serious political player, therefore enhancing the internal capacity of the LAS should have a positive effect on its degree of autonomy vis-à-vis its members.

— The EU and UN are sharing their best practices on conflict prevention, peace-building and crisis response with the League of Arab States (LAS). With an eased and congruent flow of information, we can efficiently exchange non-classified political and operational conclusions.

— A Situation Room actively facilitates a more direct, frequent and informal exchange of views, and since it deals with open source material, it helps in essence to 'open' societies.

([1]) http://euobserver.com/24/116757.
([2]) Inter alia Annual Report 2012 — http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/POL10/002/2012/en/56ec5df1-0e8d-4e99-a26d-a0e9514b451d/pol100022012en.pdf — 'Discrimination on grounds of gender, ethnicity, religion, national origin and other factors, such as sexual orientation, remained.' (p. 69).

Without prejudice to the repeated EU stance on human rights bilaterally with its LAS interlocutors and multilaterally in the dedicated for a, such as the UN Human Rights Council, an improvement of the situational awareness capacity of a major regional actor (LAS: 22 members with 356 million people) in our neighbourhood is a sound investment for the EU.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-006365/12
adresată Comisiei
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(26 iunie 2012)

Subiect: Extinderea Pachetului 5 din PNDR al României

În cadrul Programului Național de Dezvoltare Rurală al României, Pachetul 5 — Agricultură ecologică acoperă terenurile agricole înregistrate ca terenuri certificate în sistem ecologic de către un organism de inspecție și certificare autorizat, în conformitate cu Regulamentul (CE) Nr. 834/2007 cu modificările și completările ulterioare. Producătorii români solicită renegocierea PNDR cu Comisia Europeană pentru deschiderea procedurilor în vederea extinderii pachetului 5 și pentru fermierii care doresc să treacă din sistemul de agricultură convențională la practicarea agriculturii ecologice.

Comisia este rugată să prezinte un punct de vedere cu privire la această revendicare.

Răspuns dat de dl Cioloş în numele Comisiei
(7 august 2012)

Comisia nu are cunoștință de nicio intenție a autorităților române de a revizui Programul Național de Dezvoltare Rurală (PNDR) al României în sensul indicat de distinsul membru.

PNDR al României acoperă costurile de întreținere ale agriculturii ecologice în următoarele domenii: culturi agricole pe terenuri arabile (inclusiv culturi furajere), legume (inclusiv ciuperci și cartofi), livezi, vii, plante medicinale și aromatice.

În plus, România implementează deja, în conformitate cu articolul 68 din Regulamentul (CE) nr. 73/2009 al Consiliului ([1]), ajutorul specific pentru îmbunătățirea calității produselor agricole în sectorul agriculturii ecologice. Măsura implementată se aplică culturilor anuale și perene și creșterii animalelor în conversie către agricultura ecologică (păsări de curte, bovine, ovine și caprine și apicultură) în perioada 2010-2013.

Comisia va analiza tot în cadrul PNDR orice propunere a autorităților române de a sprijini conversia către agricultura ecologică. Cu toate acestea, ca regulă generală, statul membru este cel care trebuie să asigure coerența și complementaritatea schemelor de sprijin ale UE și să garanteze că un beneficiar poate primi sprijin pentru o anumită operațiune în cadrul unei singure scheme de sprijin.

([1]) Regulamentul (CE) nr. 73/2009 al Consiliului din 19 ianuarie 2009 de stabilire a unor norme comune pentru sistemele de ajutor direct pentru agricultori. JO L 30, 31.1.2009, p. 16.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006365/12
to the Commission
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Extension of Package 5 of the Romanian NRDP

Package 5 of the Romanian National Rural Development Programme (NRDP) — organic farming — covers farmland certified as organic by a recognised inspection and certification authority, in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 with subsequent amendments and additions. Romanian producers are now seeking renegotiation of the NRDP with the European Commission in order to open proceedings for the extension of Package 5 to farmers wishing to switch from conventional to organic farming.

What is the Commission's position on this?

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

The Commission is not aware of any intention of the Romanian authorities to revise the Romanian National Rural Development Programme (NRDP) in the sense indicated by the Honourable Member.

The Romanian NRDP covers maintenance costs of organic farming in the following areas: agricultural crops on arable lands (including fodder crops), vegetables (including mushrooms and potatoes), orchards, vineyards, medicinal and aromatic plants.

Moreover, Romania already implements, under Article 68 of Council Regulation (EC) No 73/2009 ([1]), specific support for improving the quality of agricultural products in the organic farming sector. The measure implemented applies to annual and perennial crops and livestock farming under conversion to organic farming (poultry, bovine animals, sheep and goats and beekeeping) during the period 2010-2013.

Any proposal from the Romanian authorities to support conversion to organic farming also under the NRDP would be analysed by the Commission. However, as a general rule, the Member State shall ensure consistency and complementarity between EU support schemes and that a beneficiary may receive support for a given operation only under one scheme.

([1]) Council Regulation (EC) No 73/2009 of 19 January 2009 establishing common rules for direct support schemes for farmers. OJ L 30, 31.1.2009, p. 16.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-006366/12
adresată Comisiei
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(26 iunie 2012)

Subiect: Exploatarea zăcămintelor prin metoda exploziilor subterane

Locuitorii din zona petroliferă Patos Marinza din sudul Albaniei reclamă faptul că cutremurele de pământ sunt din ce în ce mai frecvente de la demararea în zonă a exploatării unor zăcăminte de țiței și gaze prin metoda exploziilor subterane. Exploatarea este realizată de compania canadiană Bankers Petroleum, care a respins faptul că metoda exploziilor subterane ar putea provoca seisme.

Având în vedere preocupările cetățenilor europeni, Comisia este rugată să precizeze:

1. care sunt condițiile de desfășurare în statele UE a exploatării zăcămintelor prin metoda exploziilor subterane.

2. dacă Comisia a comandat studii cu privire la eventuala corelație între această metodă și seisme și dacă da, ce indică aceste studii.

Răspuns dat de dl Potočnik în numele Comisiei
(16 august 2012)

Comisia presupune că, în întrebarea sa, distinsul membru se referă la tehnica fracturării hidraulice, care implică injectarea în subteran a unor fluide de fracturare la presiuni mari, conținând de regulă apă, nisip și aditivi chimici, pentru a fisura roca și a elibera hidrocarburile captive în porii rocii.

În cadrul actual, statele membre sunt cele care trebuie să se asigure — prin evaluări, sisteme de autorizare și activități de monitorizare corespunzătoare — că toate activitățile de explorare sau exploatare a resurselor energetice, inclusiv cele desfășurate prin tehnica fracturării hidraulice, respectă cerințele cadrului legislativ existent în UE. Acestea includ, printre altele, dispoziții privind evaluările impactului asupra mediului ([1]), protecția apelor subterane și de suprafață ([2]) și gestionarea deșeurilor ([3]).

Comisia a solicitat efectuarea unui studiu pe baza căruia să poată fi identificate riscurile pentru sănătate și mediu asociate tehnicii fracturării hidraulice utilizate pentru extracția gazelor de șist, inclusiv riscurile legate de seismicitatea indusă. Rezultatele acestui studiu vor fi disponibile în curând. Comisia nu a cerut un studiu care să abordeze în mod special legătura dintre exploatarea resurselor de petrol și gaze în general și seismicitatea indusă.

([1]) Directiva 2011/92/UE privind evaluarea efectelor anumitor proiecte publice și private asupra mediului, JO L 26, 28.1.2012, p. 1.
([2]) Directiva 2000/60/CE de stabilire a unui cadru de politică comunitară în domeniul apei (JO L 327, 22.12.2000, p. 1) și Directiva 2006/118/CE privind protecția apelor subterane împotriva poluării și a deteriorării (JO L 372, 27.12.2006, p. 19).
([3]) Directiva 2006/21/CE privind gestionarea deșeurilor din industriile extractive și de modificare a Directivei 2004/35/CE, JO L 102, 11.4.2006.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006366/12
to the Commission
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Exploitation of deposits by underground explosions method

Residents of Patos Marinza oilfields in southern Albania complain that earthquakes are becoming more frequent in the area since the start of the exploitation of crude oil and gas deposits by means of underground explosions. The operation is carried out by the Canadian company Bankers Petroleum, which denied that underground explosions could cause earthquakes.

Given the concerns of European citizens, the Commission is asked to specify:

1. the conditions under which these deposits can be exploited using underground explosions in the EU countries;

2. whether the Commission has commissioned studies on the possible correlation between this method and earthquakes and, if so, what these studies show.

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

The Commission assumes that the Honourable Member refers in his question to the hydraulic fracturing technique, which involves the high-pressure injection of fracturing fluids underground, consisting typically of water, sand and chemical additives, so as to break the rock and to connect the pores that trap the hydrocarbons.

Under the current framework, it is up to Member States to ensure — via appropriate assessments, permitting regimes and monitoring activities — that any exploration or exploitation of energy sources, including those using hydraulic fracturing, complies with the requirements of the existing legal framework in the EU. This includes, *inter alia*, provisions on environmental impact assessments ([1]), the protection of surface and groundwater ([2]), and on waste management ([3]).

The Commission has requested a study to support the identification of health and environmental risks, including induced seismicity, associated with hydraulic fracturing practices such as used for shale gas extraction. Results of this study will be available shortly. It has not commissioned a study specifically addressing the correlation between oil and gas exploitation in general and induced seismicity.

([1]) Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on environment, OJ L 26/1, 28.1.2012.
([2]) Directive 2000/60/EC establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy (OJ L 327, 22.12.2000, p. 1) and Directive 2006/118/EC on the protection of groundwater against pollution and deterioration (OJ L372/19, 27.12.2006).
([3]) Directive 2006/21/EC on the management of waste from extractive industries and amending Directive 2004/35/EC, OJ L 102, 11.4.2006.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-006367/12
adresată Comisiei
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(26 iunie 2012)

Subiect: Susținerea proiectului Nabucco

Din interviul acordat de comisarul european pentru energie, Günther Oettinger, cotidianului Der Standard (Austria), în data de 21 iunie, precum și din comentariile analiștilor pe marginea acestui interviu, reiese că proiectul Nabucco nu mai are susținerea Comisiei Europene, care consideră o problemă secundară prin ce conductă vor fi aduse în Europa gazele naturale din regiunea Mării Caspice.

Având în vedere în special susținerea repetată acordată de către Parlament proiectului Nabucco, Comisia este rugată să prezinte un punct de vedere oficial în această privință.

Răspuns dat de dl Oettinger în numele Comisiei
(3 august 2012)

Comisia sprijină în continuare proiectul Nabucco, care se numără printre proiectele care întrunesc cerințele UE pentru realizarea coridorului sudic, respectiv coridorul de transport al gazului din bazinul Mării Caspice (în special din Azerbaidjan) prin intermediul unei infrastructuri dedicate, accesibile, pe baza unui acord internațional. În ultima perioadă, pe lângă proiectele care au fost deja luate în considerare (precum Nabucco și TAP) au fost înaintate spre analiză și alte proiecte sau combinații de proiecte (precum TANAP și o variantă a proiectului Nabucco) care întrunesc în egală măsură cerințele respective. Prin urmare, există șanse mari de realizare a obiectivului de transport al gazului din Azerbaidjan prin intermediul coridorului sudic, indiferent de infrastructura aleasă și de calendarul lucrărilor.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006367/12
to the Commission
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Support for the Nabucco project

From the interview with the European Energy Commissioner, Günther Oettinger, in *Der Standard* (Austria) on 21 June, and from the analysts' comments on this interview, it has come to light that the Nabucco project no longer has the support of the Commission, which considers that it is not so important which pipeline will bring gas into Europe from the Caspian Sea.

Taking into account in particular the repeated support granted by the European Parliament to the Nabucco project, the Commission is asked to submit an official standpoint on this matter.

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

The Commission continues to support Nabucco since it is one of the projects that meets the requirements of the EU for the realisation of the Southern Corridor, namely transporting gas from the Caspian basin, and in particular Azerbaijan, through a dedicated, scalable infrastructure based on an international agreement. Recently, however, in addition to projects already being considered (such as Nabucco and TAP), other projects or combinations of projects that also meet these objectives, such as TANAP and a variation of the Nabucco project, have been put forward for consideration. Therefore, there are good chances that the objective of transporting gas from Azerbaijan through the Southern Corridor will be achieved whichever choice and schedule of building is preferred.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-006369/12
adresată Comisiei
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(26 iunie 2012)

Subiect: Propunerea privind Capitalele Europene ale Culturii după anul 2019

Ca răspuns la întrebarea scrisă E-000753/2011, Comisia a arătat că va elabora o propunere privind Capitalele Europene ale Culturii după anul 2019 care urmează a fi prezentată în primul semestru al anului 2012. Având în vedere acest angajament, Comisia este rugată să precizeze care este stadiul acestei propuneri.

Răspuns dat de dna Vassiliou în numele Comisiei
(6 august 2012)

Comisia îl informează pe onorabilul membru că propunerea sa de continuare a evenimentului „Capitale europene ale culturii” după anul 2019 a fost adoptată la 20 iulie 2012 și a fost transmisă Parlamentului European și Consiliului în cadrul procedurii legislative ordinare.

Informații suplimentare sunt disponibile pe site-ul internet al Comisiei ([1]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/culture/news/201207201-capitals-beyond-2019_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006369/12
to the Commission
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Proposals for the European Capitals of Culture beyond 2019

In response to Written Question E-000753/2011, the Commission stated that it will draw up a proposal for the European Capitals of Culture beyond 2019 that will be presented in the first half of 2012. Given this commitment, the Commission is asked to indicate the status of this proposal.

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

The Commission informs the Honourable Member that its proposal for the continuation of the European Capitals of Culture beyond 2019 was adopted on 20 July 2012 and transmitted to the European Parliament and the Council in the framework of the ordinary legislative procedure.

Further information is available on the Commission's website ([1]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/culture/news/201207201-capitals-beyond-2019_en.htm

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-006370/12
adresată Comisiei
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(26 iunie 2012)

Subiect: Ineficiența registrului comun de transparență

Grupul pro-transparență Alter-EU atrage atenția, într-un raport publicat recent, asupra ineficienței registrului comun de transparență lansat de către Comisia Europeană și Parlamentul European în urmă cu un an. Potrivit organizației, înregistrarea voluntară nu este funcțională. Alter-EU a identificat 120 de companii care derulează activități de lobby la Bruxelles și care nu se regăsesc în registru.

Comisia este rugată să precizeze dacă are în vedere măsuri pentru îmbunătățirea funcționalității acestui registru și/sau noi reglementări privind activitatea de lobby.

Răspuns dat de dl Barroso în numele Comisiei
(27 iulie 2012)

Comisia dorește să reamintească faptul că registrul de transparență este operat în comun de Parlament și de Comisie, pe baza acordului interinstituțional dintre aceste instituții ([1]).

Acest acord prevede că registrul comun va fi revizuit după cel mult doi ani de la data punerii sale în funcțiune. În cazul în care se vor preconiza măsuri pentru îmbunătățirea funcționării acestui registru, măsurile respective vor trebui analizate și convenite de către cele două instituții în cadrul procesului de revizuire care urmează să aibă loc în 2013.

([1]) JO L 191, 22.7.2011.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006370/12
to the Commission
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Common Transparency Register inefficiency

In a recently published report, the pro-transparency group ALTER-EU draws attention to the inefficiency of the common Transparency Register launched by the Commission and the Parliament a year ago. According to the organisation, voluntary registration is not working. ALTER-EU has identified 120 companies that carry out lobbying activities in Brussels that cannot be found on the register.

The Commission is asked to specify whether it envisages measures to improve the functioning of this register and/or new regulations on lobbying activity.

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

The Commission wishes to recall that the Transparency Register is operated jointly by the Parliament and the Commission on the basis of their interinstitutional agreement ([1]).

This agreement foresees that the common register shall be subject to review no later than two years following its entry into operation. Should any measure be envisaged to improve the functioning of this register, these will have to be considered and decided by both institutions within this process due to take place in 2013.

([1]) OJ L 191, 22.7.2011.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-006372/12
adresată Comisiei
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(26 iunie 2012)

Subiect: Subiect xenofob la bacalaureatul francez

În acest an, în cadrul examenului de bacalaureat pentru Științe și Tehnologia Managementului (STG) organizat în Republica Franceză, a fost propus un subiect care reprezintă o insultă pentru cetățenii României, stat membru al Uniunii Europene. Subiectul a avut următorul enunț: „Prezentați formalitățile pe care trebuie să le îndeplinească un marochinier care vrea să își protejeze timp de 20 de ani marca de falsificatorii care operează în România". Subiectul a fost denunțat de sindicatele franceze din educație ca „rasist" și „discriminator". Comisia este rugată să răspundă la următoarele întrebări:

1. Dispune Comisia de o statistică din care să rezulte că în România au loc mai multe acte de falsificare a mărcilor comerciale decât în alte state ale UE?

2. Care este punctul de vedere al Comisiei cu privire la stimularea xenofobiei în cadrul sistemului educațional public din Franța, prin propunerea acestui exemplu?

3. Ce măsuri are în vedere Comisia, în cadrul politicilor sale, pentru a descuraja atitudinile de acest tip, bazate pe discriminare și de natură să inducă conflicte între națiunile Uniunii Europene?

Răspuns dat de dna Reding în numele Comisiei
(5 septembrie 2012)

Alegerea subiectelor pentru examene ține exclusiv de competența națională.

Comisia Europeană a condamnat în mod repetat toate formele și manifestările de xenofobie și rasism. Decizia-cadru 2008/913/JAI a Consiliului privind combaterea anumitor forme și expresii ale rasismului și xenofobiei prin intermediul dreptului penal obligă statele membre să pedepsească instigarea publică intenționată la violență sau la ură împotriva unui grup de persoane sau a unui membru al unui astfel de grup definit pe criterii de rasă, culoare, religie, descendență sau origine națională sau etnică, inclusiv în cazul în care aceasta este comisă prin difuzarea publică sau distribuirea de înscrisuri, imagini sau alte materiale. Este de competența instanțelor naționale să stabilească, în funcție de circumstanțele existente și de context, dacă o anumită situație reprezintă o instigare la xenofobie, ură rasială sau violență.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006372/12
to the Commission
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Xenophobic topic in the French baccalaureate

In the baccalaureate examination for Science and Technology Management (STG) held in the French Republic this year, a topic was proposed that is an insult to the citizens of Romania, an EU Member State. The topic was expressed as follows: 'Present the formal processes that must be adhered to by a leather worker who wants to protect his/her trademark of 20 years from counterfeiters operating in Romania'. The topic was denounced by French education unions as 'racist' and 'discriminatory'. The Commission is asked to respond to the following questions:

1. Does the Commission have statistics to show that more trademark counterfeiting takes place in Romania than in other EU countries?

2. What is the Commission's view on the fanning of xenophobia in the French public education system through this example's suggestion?

3. What measures does the Commission envisage, within its policy framework, to discourage such attitudes, which are based on discrimination and are likely to lead to conflicts between EU nations?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(5 September 2012)

Choice of topic for exams is an exclusive national competence.

The European Commission has repeatedly condemned all forms and manifestations of xenophobia and racism. Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law obliges Member States to make punishable the intentional public incitement to violence or hatred directed against a group of persons or a member of such a group defined by reference to race, colour, religion, descent or national or ethnic origin, including when committed by public dissemination or distribution of tracts, pictures or other material. It is for the national courts to determine, according to the surrounding circumstances and context, whether a given situation represents an incitement to xenophobic or racist hatred or violence.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-006373/12
adresată Comisiei
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(26 iunie 2012)

Subiect: Punerea în aplicare a planurilor strategice naționale de dezvoltare rurală

Ca răspuns la întrebarea E-9623/2010, Comisia a precizat că, în primul trimestru al anului 2011, intenționează să prezinte raportul său de sinteză privind „principalele progrese, tendințe și provocări legate de punerea în aplicare a planurilor strategice naționale (de dezvoltare rurală, n.n.) și a orientărilor strategice ale Comunității", prevăzut de art. 14 din Regulamentul (CE) nr. 1698/2005 al Consiliului din 20 septembrie 2005 privind sprijinul pentru dezvoltare rurală acordat din Fondul European Agricol pentru Dezvoltare Rurală (FEADR). Acest raport nu poate fi găsit pe site-ul internet al Comisiei Europene.

Comisia este rugată să precizeze:

1. A fost publicat acest raport? Dacă da, unde poate fi găsit pentru consultare? Dacă nu, de ce nu a fost publicat, conform prevederilor legale?

2. Când va fi publicat raportul corespunzător anului 2011?

Răspuns dat de dl Cioloş în numele Comisiei
(7 august 2012)

1. Raportul a fost întocmit în conformitate cu articolul 14 din Regulamentul (CE) nr. 1698/2005 al Consiliului și este disponibil pe pagina portalului Europa la rubrica „Publications (Publicații)" din secțiunea „Rural development policy 2007-2013 (Politica de dezvoltare rurală 2007-2013)":
http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/publi/index_en.htm (al treilea punct).

Acesta a fost aprobat la 20 iulie 2011 și publicat în săptămânile care au urmat.

2. Un raport similar va fi întocmit pe baza rapoartelor de sinteză transmise de statele membre privind implementarea planurilor lor strategice naționale, rapoarte așteptate pentru octombrie 2012 ([1]). Acest raport ar trebui să fie disponibil până la jumătatea anului 2013.

([1]) Articolul 13 din Regulamentul 1698/2005.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006373/12
to the Commission
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Implementation of national strategic plans for rural development

In response to Question E-9623/2010, the Commission has stated that it intends to present a report or summary on ‘the main developments, trends and challenges relating to the implementation of the national (regional development) strategy plans and the Community strategic guidelines’ in the first quarter of 2011, as stipulated in Article 14 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 of 20 September 2005, on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). This report cannot be found on the European Commission’s website.

The Commission is asked to specify if:

1. This report has been published? If so, where can it be found for consultation purposes? If not, why has it not been published as required by law?

2. The report for 2011 will be published?

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

1. The report has been prepared in accordance with the article 14 of Council Regulation (EC) N°1698/2005, and is available from the Europa page for ‘Publications’ under the ‘Rural development policy 2007-2013’ section: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/publi/index_en.htm (see third item).

It was approved on 20 July 2011 and published in the following weeks.

2. A similar report will be prepared on the basis of the summary reports by Member States on the implementation of their National Strategy Plans, expected for October 2012 ([1]). This report should be ready by mid-2013.

([1]) Article 13 of Reg. 1698/2005.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-006374/12
adresată Comisiei
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(26 iunie 2012)

Subiect: Finanțarea inițiativei IMPLICC

Comisia este rugata sa răspundă la următoarea întrebare:

Inițiativa IMPLICC (Implications and Risks of Novel Options to Limit Climate Change — Implicațiile și riscurile prezentate de noile opțiuni ce vizează limitarea schimbărilor climatice)- un experiment științific european de geoinginerie — beneficiază sau a beneficiat, direct sau indirect, de finanțare din bugetul UE?

Răspuns dat de dna Geoghegan-Quinn în numele Comisiei
(21 august 2012)

IMPLICC ([1]) a fost selectat pentru finanțare ca un mic proiect de colaborare în cadrul cererii de propuneri „Implicațiile și riscurile prezentate de noile opțiuni ce vizează limitarea schimbărilor climatice” din 2008, parte a Programului pentru mediu (inclusiv pentru schimbările climatice) inclus în cel de-Al șaptelea program-cadru pentru cercetare și dezvoltare tehnologică (FP7, 2007-2013). Proiectul aplică modele climatice pentru a cuantifica/simula eficacitatea, efectele secundare și riscurile pe care le prezintă conceptele de geoinginerie care vizează reducerea radiației solare.

Activitățile proiectului nu au implicat niciun experiment pe teren, ci doar simulări numerice, în vederea discutării rezultatelor cu diferite părți interesate, inclusiv cu ONG-urile din domeniul mediului. Principalele rezultate ale proiectului IMPLICC au fost prezentate atât comunității de cercetare, cât și unui public mai larg interesat de evoluția politicii în domeniul climei, în cadrul simpozionului de final de proiect, în mai 2012. Contribuția UE la proiect a fost de aproximativ 1 milion EUR.

([1]) www.implicc.zmaw.de

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006374/12
to the Commission
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: IMPLICC initiative financing

The Commission is asked to respond to the following question:

Does the IMPLICC (Implications and Risks of Novel Options to Limit Climate Change) initiative — a European scientific geo-engineering experiment — benefit or has it benefited, directly or indirectly, from financing from the EU budget?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(21 August 2012)

IMPLICC ([1]) has been selected for funding as a small collaborative project under the 2008 call 'Implications and Risks of Novel Options to Limit Climate Change' of the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7, 2007-2013) Environment (including climate change) Programme. The project applies climate models to quantify/simulate the effectiveness, side effects and risks of geo-engineering concepts aiming at a reduction of the incoming solar radiation.

The project activities did not imply any field experiment, but only numerical simulations, in view of discussing the outputs with a variety of stakeholders, including environmental NGOs. Main results of the IMPLICC project have been presented to the research community as well as to a broader audience interested in climate policy development at the final project symposium in May 2012. The EU contribution to the project has been of about EUR 1 million.

([1]) www.implicc.zmaw.de .

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-006376/12
alla Commissione
Rita Borsellino (S&D)
(26 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: Centro di identificazione ed espulsione (CIE) di Milo

Numerose fonti giornalistiche riportano la notizia che nel CIE di Milo, vicino Trapani, sarebbero stati perpetrati gravissimi atti di violenza e minacce ai danni degli ospiti della struttura: immigrati percossi con manganelli, minacciati e colpiti da forti getti da idrante, costretti a dormire su materassi adagiati sul pavimento delle camerate e a mangiare per terra in quanto le mense non verrebbero aperte per il possibile rischio di rivolte. Il CIE di Milo è oramai a tutti gli effetti una prigione amministrativa in cui gli immigrati sono detenuti fino a diciotto mesi non per aver commesso un reato ma, semmai, per un illecito amministrativo, in quanto non in possesso di un regolare permesso di soggiorno sul territorio italiano, o peggio, perché il loro permesso è scaduto e sono semplicemente in attesa di un rinnovo del permesso di lavoro.

Secondo quanto riportato poi da una delegazione di deputati italiani, in visita nei giorni scorsi proprio al CIE di Milo, molti degli immigrati ivi presenti hanno già scontato una pena in carcere ma anziché essere rilasciati con un'intimazione a lasciare il territorio o essere aiutati a inserirsi nella società, si ritrovano rinchiusi nel CIE per essere identificati. Questo a dimostrazione del fatto che non sussiste una collaborazione tra il Ministero di grazia e giustizia e il Ministero degli interni per l'identificazione della persona che dovrebbe avvenire in carcere e dovrebbe servire anche per il rilascio dell'intimazione a lasciare il territorio, nei casi di reati più gravi, quando la persona ha estinto la pena.

Ritiene la Commissione utile e necessario, a fronte di tali denunce, chiedere informazioni dettagliate al governo italiano su quanto accade nel Centro di identificazione ed espulsione di Milo al fine di verificare se le condizioni di fatto cui sono sottoposti gli immigrati ospiti di tale struttura sono conformi alla direttiva 2008/115/CE e se sussistono eventuali responsabilità delle autorità italiane nel caso di violazione dei diritti umani?

Risposta di Cecilia Malmström a nome della Commissione
(2 agosto 2012)

La Commissione confida che tutti gli Stati membri tengano fede agli impegni assunti con l'adozione della direttiva 2008/115/CE, recante norme e procedure comuni applicabili negli Stati membri al rimpatrio di cittadini di paesi terzi il cui soggiorno è irregolare, e che garantiscano condizioni umane e dignitose in tutti i centri di permanenza temporanea che si trovano sul loro territorio.

L'Italia ha notificato il pieno recepimento della direttiva nel 2011. La Commissione intende operare un controllo sistematico della compatibilità della notificata legislazione nazionale di attuazione con gli obblighi discendenti dalla direttiva sui rimpatri, comprese le disposizioni in materia di trattenimento.

La Commissione prende atto delle informazioni trasmesse dall'onorevole parlamentare e contatterà le autorità italiane per avere chiarimenti sulle preoccupazioni espresse.

La valutazione di fatti specifici e il perseguimento di reati che siano perpetrati all'interno dei centri nazionali di permanenza temporanea ricadono principalmente nella competenza delle autorità e dei tribunali nazionali interessati.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-006376/12
to the Commission
Rita Borsellino (S&D)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Milo identification and expulsion centre (IEC)

There have been numerous press reports to the effect that the inmates of the Milo identification and expulsion centre near Trapani are being subjected to menaces and extremely serious acts of violence. There have been reports of immigrants being threatened, bludgeoned and sprayed with fire hoses as well as being obliged to sleep on mattresses spread over dormitory floors and to eat on the ground since canteens are not being opened for fear of possible riots. The Milo IEC is now effectively an administrative detention centre in which immigrants are held for up to eighteen months, not because they have committed a crime but, at the most, for an administrative offence resulting from failure to produce a valid Italian residence permit or simply because they are awaiting renewal of an expired work permit.

According to a delegation of Italian MPs which recently visited the Milo IEC, many of its inmates have already served a prison sentence but instead of being released and ordered to leave the territory or receiving reintegration assistance, they are being held in the IEC in order to be identified, thus reflecting a lack of collaboration between the Italian Ministry of Grace and Justice and the Ministry of the Interior regarding the necessary identification of prison inmates as a preliminary to ordering them to leave the territory following completion of their sentence if they have been guilty of more serious offences.

— Does the Commission not consider that, in the light of such allegations, it would be useful and necessary to request detailed information from the Italian Government on what is happening at the Milo identification and expulsion centre in order to ascertain whether the conditions under which immigrants are being held are in compliance with Directive 2008/115/EC and whether the Italian authorities might bear some responsibility for any human rights infringements?

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

The Commission expects all Member States to live up to the commitments under Directive 2008/115/EC on common standards and procedures in Member States for returning illegally staying third-country nationals and to ensure humane and dignified conditions in all detention facilities on their territory.

Italy notified the full transposition of this directive in 2011. The Commission will systematically check the compatibility of the notified national implementing legislation with the obligations imposed by the Return Directive, including its detention related provisions.

The Commission takes note of the information transmitted by the Member of Parliament and will take contact with the Italian authorities to look for clarifications on the concerns raised.

The assessment of specific facts and pursuit of possible offences which take place in national detention centres is a matter primarily for the national authorities and courts concerned.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-006378/12
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(26 de junio de 2012)

Asunto: Proyecto Eurovegas

La propuesta del Gobierno catalán sitúa el proyecto Eurovegas en terrenos catalogados por el Plan Territorial Metropolitano de Barcelona como conectores de la red de espacios abiertos que se han de preservar de la urbanización, como espacios de protección especial por su interés natural y agrario y como espacios con protección jurídica por encima del ámbito municipal, sobre todo debido a que gran parte de este suelo está incluido en el Plan Especial de Protección del Parque Agrario y también parcialmente en el PEIN-Red Natura 2000. El Plan Territorial Metropolitano de Barcelona fue sometido a una evaluación ambiental, según lo establecido en la ley catalana 6/2009 de evaluación ambiental de planes y programas, que es la transposición a Cataluña de la Directiva 2001/42/CE de evaluación ambiental estratégica.

El consejero de Empresa y Empleo del Gobierno catalán, Francesc Xavier Mena, aseguró, en declaraciones públicas efectuadas el día 18 de junio de 2012, que Cataluña ha superado los problemas urbanísticos para atraer el proyecto Eurovegas. Dicha afirmación contraviene totalmente la legislación europea en materia de evaluación ambiental estratégica, puesto que, para ser cierta, se debería modificar el Plan Territorial Metropolitano de Barcelona y someter esa modificación a la evaluación ambiental según establece el artículo 2 de la mencionada Directiva 2001/42/CE, que dispone la obligatoriedad de evaluar cualquier modificación de los planes que tengan efectos ambientales significativos.

El Gobierno catalán, que no ha hecho público ningún tipo de documento oficial relacionado con el proyecto, afirma estar en disposición de llegar a acuerdos con el promotor sin informar a los ciudadanos sobre los efectos ambientales probables de dicha actuación.

El 14 de mayo de 2012 presentamos la pregunta E-004879/2012, también sobre Eurovegas, a la que todavía no hemos obtenido respuesta.

¿Considera la Comisión que el Gobierno catalán, al no hacer pública la información ambiental regulada por la Directiva 2003/4/CE —traspuesta al Derecho español mediante la Ley 27/2008 por la que se regulan los derechos de acceso a la información, participación pública y acceso a la justicia en materia de medio ambiente—, está vulnerando el derecho de los ciudadanos a la información?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(20 de agosto de 2012)

Como se informó a Su Señoría en la respuesta a su pregunta escrita E-004879/2012, la Comisión no tiene conocimiento de los detalles del proyecto Eurovegas.

La información complementaria sobre el proyecto Eurovegas facilitada por Su Señoría en la pregunta escrita no basta para confirmar la supuesta falta de revelación de información medioambiental, por lo que la Comisión no ve indicios de infracción de la Directiva 2003/4/CE ([1]).

A falta de información adicional, la Comisión no tiene previsto tomar ninguna otra medida relativa al tema del acceso a la información.

([1]) DO L 113 de 20.4.2004.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006378/12
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Eurovegas project

The Catalan Government's proposed site for the Eurovegas project is on land classified by the Barcelona Metropolitan Area development plan as corridors to connect green belt areas, which cannot be built upon and are afforded special legal protection — which goes beyond local authority level — due to their natural and agricultural value. This is largely because much of this land forms part of the 'Plan Especial de Protección del Parque Agrario' (Agricultural Park Special Protection Plan) and a part of it is covered by the Areas of Natural Interest in Catalonia Plan (PEIN) and the Natura 2000 network. The Barcelona Metropolitan Area development plan was subject to an environmental assessment, pursuant to Catalan Law 6/2009 on the environmental assessment of plans and programmes, transposed to Catalonia from Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment.

In a public statement made on 18 June 2012, the Catalan Minister for Business and Employment, Francesc Xavier Mena, said that Catalonia had overcome urban problems to secure the Eurovegas project. This statement flies in the face of EU rules on environmental impact assessments since authorising the project would entail amending the Barcelona Metropolitan Area development plan. Under Article 2 of Directive 2001/42/EC, any modification to such plans which would have significant impact on the environment must give rise to an environmental impact assessment.

The Catalan Government, which has not issued any official document on the project, states that it is willing to reach agreements with the developer without informing the public about the likely environmental effects of such action.

On 14 May 2012 I submitted Question E-004879/2012, also on Eurovegas, and am yet to receive an answer.

Does the Commission believe that, by not disclosing environmental information which it is required to provide under Directive 2003/4/EC — transposed into Spanish law by Law 27/2008 governing the rights of access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters — the Catalan Government is in breach of citizens' right to information?

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

As the Honourable Member was informed in the answer to his Written Question E-004879/2012, the Commission is not aware of the details of the Eurovegas project.

The additional information about the Eurovegas project provided by the Honourable Member in the present written question is not sufficient to confirm the alleged non-disclosure of environmental information. Therefore, the Commission cannot find any evidence for a breach of Directive 2003/4/EC ([1]).

Without additional details, the Commission does not intend to take any further action concerning the issue of access to information.

([1]) OJ L 113, 20.4.2004.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-006379/12
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(26 de junio de 2012)

Asunto: Desempleo juvenil

En diciembre de 2011, la Comisión Europea presentó la «Iniciativa de Oportunidades para la Juventud» para reducir el desempleo juvenil y, en enero de 2012, entraron en funcionamiento los grupos de acción de la Comisión en ocho Estados miembros para redistribuir fondos de la UE aún disponibles para el período 2007-2013.

España, con más de un 50 % de desempleo juvenil, fue uno de los países receptores de la ayuda de la Comisión, con un total a asignar de 10 712 millones de euros (según estimaciones de la propia Comisión).

En los resultados preliminares de la Comisión a 21 de mayo de 2012, se estima que 1 100 millones de euros fueron reasignados, pero se desconoce todavía el número de jóvenes potencialmente beneficiarios.

Al mismo tiempo, las recomendaciones específicas dentro del semestre europeo para España apuntan a aumentar el IVA, debilitar la negociación colectiva, desregular los sectores profesionales y contraer aún más el gasto público, destruyendo empleo.

¿Cuándo hará público la Comisión un informe más detallado del impacto de estas políticas públicas? ¿Se contrarrestará con el efecto negativo de las políticas de austeridad en el mercado laboral juvenil?

¿Considera la Comisión suficiente la simple redistribución de fondos europeos para reducir el desempleo juvenil en España? ¿Evalúa la posibilidad de destinar recursos adicionales, dada la situación de extrema urgencia y en vistas de una generación perdida? ¿Por qué no se han puesto en marcha todavía todos los recursos a disposición de España? ¿Está la Comisión aplicando estos programas con una participación activa de organizaciones juveniles para detectar el problema?

¿Cree la Comisión que la creación de una Garantía Europea Juvenil para garantizar que cada joven desempleado durante más de 4 meses tenga el derecho a un trabajo, unas prácticas o a la educación, es el primer paso hacia una respuesta europea, como recomienda la resolución «Iniciativa de Oportunidades para la Juventud» (2012/2617(RSP) — P7_TA(2012)0224)?

Respuesta del Sr. Andor en nombre de la Comisión
(16 de agosto de 2012)

En mayo de 2012, la Comisión publicó su evaluación ([1]) del programa nacional de reforma de 2012 de España ([2]), en el que el desempleo juvenil es una prioridad clave. En él se piden medidas específicas de apoyo destinadas a mejorar la incorporación al mercado de trabajo de los jóvenes, así como reformas estructurales para reforzar la creación de empleo y mejorar la situación económica global de España.

España aprobó reformas del mercado de trabajo en 2010, 2011 y febrero de 2012, lo que refleja las prioridades establecidas en las REP del Consejo ([3]). La reforma de 2012 se centra en revisar el sistema de protección del empleo, establecer un sistema dual de aprendizaje y reformar los contratos de aprendizaje y formación.

Una asignación eficaz de los FE ([4]) proporcionaría una asistencia fundamental, especialmente teniendo en cuenta las dificultades presupuestarias a que se enfrenta España. En consecuencia, la Comisión ha propuesto medidas tales como la modificación de los programas operativos del FSE ([5]) y del FEDER ([6]), lo que incluye la reasignación de financiación no comprometida en los casos en que existe margen para reorientar inversiones al empleo juvenil, así como la utilización de instrumentos financieros para proporcionar un mejor acceso a la financiación para las PYME, las principales creadoras de empleo en la actual crisis económica. En la actualidad, todos los programas españoles del FSE incluyen tanto acciones generales como específicas destinadas a los jóvenes. Diversas organizaciones que actúan en los ámbitos del empleo juvenil y la educación han colaborado como asociadas en los programas operativos.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/nd/swd2012_spain_es.pdf
([2]) Programas nacionales de reforma y de estabilidad.
([3]) Recomendaciones específicas por país.
([4]) Fondos Estructurales.
([5]) Fondo Social Europeo.
([6]) Fondo Europeo de Desarrollo Regional.

Al garantizar una transición sin obstáculos de la educación al trabajo, los sistemas de garantías juveniles pueden contribuir a evitar el desempleo de larga duración entre los jóvenes y a reducir el elevado número de quienes actualmente no tienen trabajo, no estudian y no reciben formación. Estos sistemas precisan un fuerte compromiso de los Estados miembros y las partes interesadas. La Comisión tiene previsto presentar una propuesta de Recomendación del Consejo sobre garantías juveniles en diciembre de 2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006379/12
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Youth unemployment

In December 2011 the Commission tabled the Youth Opportunities Initiative to reduce youth unemployment and, in January 2012, Commission action groups became operational in eight Member States to reallocate the EU funds still available for the 2007-2013 period.

With over 50% youth unemployment, Spain was one of the countries to receive assistance from the Commission, with a total allocation of EUR 10.712 billion (according to the Commission's own estimates).

In the Commission's preliminary results of 21 May 2012, an estimated EUR 1.1 billion was reallocated, but the number of potential young beneficiaries is still unknown.

Specific recommendations under the European semester for Spain also aim to increase VAT, weaken collective bargaining, deregulate professional sectors and further contract public spending, destroying jobs.

When will the Commission issue a more detailed report on the impact of these public policies? Will it be offset by the negative effect of austerity policies on the youth employment market?

Does the Commission believe that the simple redistribution of EU funds is enough to reduce Spain's youth unemployment? Is it considering the possibility of allocating additional resources, given the extremely urgent situation and in view of a lost generation? Why have all the resources at Spain's disposal still not been implemented? Is the Commission implementing these programmes with the active participation of youth organisations to help identify the problem?

Does the Commission believe that creating a European Youth Guarantee, ensuring the right to a job, an internship or education of every young person unemployed for over four months, is the first step towards a European response, as recommended by the Youth Opportunities Initiative (2012/2617(RSP) — P7_TA(2012)0224)?

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

In May 2012 the Commission published its assessment ([1]) of the Spanish 2012 NRSP ([2]), youth unemployment is a key priority. It calls for specific support measures aimed at improving labour market performance of young people and for structural reforms to boost job creation, along with improving Spain's overall economic performance.

Labour market reforms were adopted by Spain in 2010, 2011 and February 2012, reflecting the priorities set out in the Council CSRs ([3]). The 2012 reform focuses on revising the employment protection system, establishing dual learning system and reforming of apprenticeship and training contracts.

An effective allocation of SF ([4]) would provide key help, notably in light of the budgetary difficulties faced by Spain. The Commission thus proposed measures such as amending ESF ([5]) and ERDF ([6]) operational programmes, including by reallocating uncommitted funding, where there is room for re-channelling investment into youth employment, as well as using financial instruments to provide better access to finance for SMEs, the main creator of jobs in the current economic crisis. Currently all Spanish ESF programmes include both general and specific actions targeting young people. Various organisations working in the youth employment and education fields have been associated in the operational programmes.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/nd/swd2012_spain_en.pdf
([2]) national reform and stability programmes.
([3]) Country Specific recommendations.
([4]) Structural Funds.
([5]) European Social Fund.
([6]) European Regional Development Fund.

By ensuring a smooth transition from education to work, youth guarantee schemes can help to prevent long-term unemployment among young people and reduce the high number of those currently neither in employment nor in education or training. Such schemes call for a strong commitment from Member States and stakeholders. The Commission intends to present a proposal for a Council recommendation on youth guarantees in December 2012.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-006380/12
a la Comisión
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(26 de junio de 2012)

Asunto: Vídeo «La ciencia es cosa de chicas»

Los medios de comunicación han informado de la retirada del vídeo «La ciencia es cosa de chicas», que fue promovido por la Comisión Europea. Al parecer, ante las críticas recibidas, su difusión sólo ha durado unas horas.

¿A qué cantidad ascienden los distintos contratos de servicios que han sido necesarios para la confección y promoción de este vídeo?

Respuesta de la Sra. Geoghegan-Quinn en nombre de la Comisión
(21 de agosto de 2012)

El vídeo «La ciencia es cosa de chicas» se retiró el 22 de junio de 2012. La Comisión lamenta que alguien se haya sentido ofendido y ha pedido disculpas en Twitter y la página de Facebook ([1]), dando explicaciones. La Comisión no puede eliminar las copias espejo que la gente está compartiendo en Internet.

El vídeo de promoción se ideó para recabar la atención de las adolescentes de edad comprendida entre los 13 y los 18 años, a las que resulta muy difícil llegar con mensajes sobre la ciencia, y dirigirlas a la página web ([2]) en que figura mucha información sobre la ciencia y las carreras de investigación, así como perfiles en vídeo de modelos a emular. Según los grupos muestra, muchas adolescentes asocian la ciencia al aislamiento en un laboratorio: creen que no tienen la capacidad de hacer ciencia y prefieren la idea de trabajos creativos o sociales. La idea del vídeo era mostrar a las adolescentes que la ciencia puede ser para ellas mediante la combinación de imágenes de ciencia con otras de su vida cotidiana.

La preparación de este vídeo costó 102 000 euros y no hubo costes de promoción añadidos.

([1]) www.facebook.com/sciencegirlthing.
([2]) www.ec.europa.eu/science-girl-thing.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006380/12
to the Commission
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: The video 'Science: It's a Girl Thing'

Media reports state that the video 'Science: It's a Girl Thing', promoted by the European Commission, has been withdrawn. It was apparently broadcast for only a few hours due to the criticism it received.

How much did the individual service contracts required for the preparation and promotion of this video cost?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(21 August 2012)

The video 'Science: It's a Girl Thing' was withdrawn on 22 June 2012. The Commission regrets any offence caused and has posted an apology on Twitter and the Facebook page ([1]) with an explanation. The Commission cannot remove mirror version copies that people are sharing on the Internet.

The promotional video was meant to grab the attention of teenage girls aged 13 to 18, who are very hard to reach with messages about science, and direct them to the website ([2]) where there is lots of information on science and careers in research, including video-profiles of role models. According to focus groups, many teenage girls associate science with being isolated in a laboratory: they think they lack the ability to do science and prefer the idea of creative or social work. The concept of the video was to show teenage girls that science can be for them by combining images of science with images of their everyday life.

The preparation of this video cost EUR 102 000, there were no additional promotional costs.

([1]) www.facebook.com/sciencegirlthing.
([2]) www.ec.europa.eu/science-girl-thing.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-006381/12
a la Comisión
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(26 de junio de 2012)

Asunto: Régimen del impuesto de sociedades en Gibraltar

El Tribunal de Justicia de la Unión Europea, en su sentencia de 15 de noviembre de 2011, declaró contrario al Derecho de la Unión Europea el régimen del impuesto de sociedades en Gibraltar por entender que, al tributar la mayoría de las sociedades a un tipo cero, se estaba produciendo en puridad una ayuda de Estado prohibida por las normas comunitarias.

Puesto que la vigilancia del cumplimiento y ejecución de esta sentencia es responsabilidad de la Comisión, ¿qué medidas ha adoptado la Comisión para alcanzar este objetivo tras los meses transcurridos desde la publicación de la sentencia?

Respuesta del Sr. Almunia en nombre de la Comisión
(30 de julio de 2012)

Su Señoría se refiere a la sentencia del Tribunal de Justicia de 15 de noviembre de 2011 ([1]) sobre la propuesta de reforma del impuesto de sociedades de Gibraltar. El Tribunal anuló la sentencia del Tribunal General y mantuvo la Decisión sobre ayudas estatales de la Comisión, por la que se declara incompatible con el mercado interior la reforma del impuesto de sociedades notificada por el Reino Unido.

Puesto que la reforma fiscal propuesta en Gibraltar, que se notificó a la Comisión en 2002, nunca llegó a implementarse, en la sentencia del Tribunal no se solicitó ninguna acción determinada, ya fuera por parte de la Comisión o del Gobierno de Gibraltar. No obstante, a la luz de la reciente sentencia del Tribunal, la Comisión está estudiando actualmente la conformidad de la nueva reforma del impuesto de sociedades de Gibraltar, introducida en 2011, con las normas sobre ayudas estatales de la UE.

([1]) Asuntos acumulados C-106/09 P y C-107/09 P.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006381/12
to the Commission
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: Gibraltar's corporate tax regime

In its judgment of 15 November 2011, the Court of Justice of the European Union ruled that Gibraltar's corporate tax regime contravened EC law. The Court held that because most companies were being taxed at zero rate under Gibraltar's corporate tax regime, EU state aid regulations were technically being violated.

Since the Commission is responsible for monitoring compliance with and enforcement of this judgment, what measures has it taken to do so in the months since the judgment was published?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(30 July 2012)

The Honourable Member refers to the Court of Justice's judgment of 15 November 2011 ([1]) on Gibraltar's proposed corporate tax reform. The Court set the judgment of the General Court aside and upheld the Commission's state aid decision declaring the corporate tax reform notified by the UK incompatible with the internal market.

As Gibraltar's proposed tax reform notified to the Commission in 2002 was never put into effect, the Court's judgment did not require any particular action, either from the Commission or from Gibraltar's Government. However, the Commission is currently examining the compliance of Gibraltar's new corporate tax reform, introduced in 2011, with EU State aid rules in light of the recent Court judgment.

([1]) Joined Cases C-106/09 P and C-107/09 P.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-006384/12
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(26 de junio de 2012)

Asunto: VP/HR — Vietnam: detención arbitraria y violenta de personas de la población indígena degar en Vietnam — Petición de liberación de Puih H' Bat

El 11 de abril de 2008, Puih H' Bat fue detenida y encarcelada por celebrar una reunión de oración en su hogar. Desde su detención, la Fundación Montagnard ha intervenido ante los Estados Unidos, Naciones Unidas y la Unión Europea en favor de su liberación, sin éxito.

En su respuesta E-6313/08EN de 20 de enero de 2009, la Comisaria Ferrero-Waldner afirma en nombre de la Comisión Europea que: «la información aportada por Su Señoría coincide con la reunida por la Comisión», y que «representantes de la Embajada de Estados Unidos visitaron la comuna de origen de Puih H' Bat el 15 de octubre de 2008. Tras su visita, escribieron al presidente del Comité Popular del distrito de Ia Grai para recabar información acerca del paradero de Puih H' Bat. Siguen a la espera de respuesta».

El 29 de mayo de 2012, las fuerzas de seguridad vietnamitas se personaron en el domicilio de Nay Du ubicado en el pueblo de Ploi Ama Ling, comuna de Ia Hiao, distrito de Phu Thien, en la provincia de Gialai, con la intención de detenerlo. Lo ataron y comenzaron a golpearlo sin piedad hasta que cayó al suelo inconsciente. Se encuentra detenido en la prisión del distrito de Phu Thien.

El 31 de mayo de 2012, las tres aldeas degar Kon Klong, Kon H'Drom y Kon S'Mluh fueron rodeadas por las fuerzas de seguridad vietnamitas, que detuvieron a varias personas en el pueblo de Kon Klong, las amordazaron, las ataron de pies y manos y las condujeron como a animales valiéndose de un palo de madera. Se desconoce el paradero de estas personas.

En vista de lo expuesto, quisiera pedir a la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante que respondiese claramente a las siguientes preguntas:

1. ¿Está al corriente de los hechos que tienen lugar en la Meseta Central de Vietnam? ¿Qué medidas concretas tomará para determinar el paradero y las condiciones en que se encuentra Puih H' Bat?

2. ¿Mantendrá la UE su posición actual y su deficiente política de derechos humanos con respecto a la población degar, o presionará a Vietnam para satisfacer las reivindicaciones de esta población indígena de Vietnam?

Respuesta de la Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(10 de agosto de 2012)

La UE realiza un seguimiento estrecho de la situación en la Meseta Central de Vietnam, en cooperación con los Estados miembros de la UE y las embajadas afines en Hanoi.

La Sra. Puih H' Blat (*alias* Ami Quy, nacida en 1965) está incluida en la lista de la UE de personas a las que sigue de cerca en Vietnam. La UE sigue su caso desde que fue detenida y ha pedido en repetidas ocasiones su liberación así como información sobre su paradero. La Sra. Puih H' Blat pertenece a la minoría étnica jarai y fue detenida por «socavar la unidad nacional» (artículo 87 del Código penal) el 11 de abril de 2008. El Tribunal Popular de la provincia de Gia Lai la condenó a cinco años de cárcel el 9 de octubre de 2008. En la actualidad, cumple condena en la cárcel número 5 de Thanh Hoa y parece ser que goza de buena salud.

Durante la última ronda del diálogo UE-Vietnam sobre derechos humanos que tuvo lugar el 12 de enero de 2012 en Hanoi, la UE abogó por el respeto de los derechos de las minorías étnicas y pidió a Vietnam que suprimiese todas las restricciones a la libertad de expresión que no cumplen las normas internacionales, en particular el artículo 19 del Pacto Internacional de Derechos Civiles y Políticos (PIDCP), del que Vietnam es parte. La UE también animó a Vietnam a invitar al Relator Especial sobre la libertad de religión o de creencias a visitar el país. La UE también ha prestado apoyo a programas de asistencia técnica especialmente dirigidos a promover la capacitación de las minorías étnicas de Vietnam.

La UE seguirá expresando su preocupación a las autoridades vietnamitas. Considera que una combinación de presión política y compromiso constructivo tiene más posibilidades de influir en Vietnam para que camine hacia una sociedad abierta basada en el Estado de Derecho.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006384/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Vietnam: Arbitrary and violent arrest of indigenous Degar people of Vietnam — request for the release of Mrs Puih H'Bat

On 11 April 2008, Mrs Puih H'Bat was arrested and sent to prison for holding a prayer meeting in her home. Since her arrest, the Montagnard Foundation has been lobbying the USA, the UN and the EU for her release, but has not been successful.

In her reply of 20 January 2009 to parliamentary Question E-6313/08, Mrs Ferrero-Waldner stated on behalf of the European Commission that 'the information provided by the Honourable Member concurs with that collected by the Commission' and that 'representatives from the United States Embassy visited Mrs Puih H'Bat's home commune on 15 October 2008. Following their visit, they wrote to the Chairman of the People's Committee of Ia Grai district to enquire about the whereabouts of Puih H'Bat. They are still waiting for a reply.'

On 29 May 2012, the Vietnamese security police went to the house of Mr Nay Du in the village of Ploi Ama Ling (Ia Hiao commune, Phu Thien district, Gia Lai province) to arrest him. They tied him up and beat him mercilessly until he fell to the ground unconscious. He is detained in the Phu Thien district prison.

On 31 May 2012, the three Degar villages of Kon Klong, Kon H'Drom and Kon S'Mluh were surrounded by Vietnamese security forces, that arrested several people in Kon Klong village. The soldiers gagged the villagers' mouths with cloth, tied their hands and legs, and carried them away on wooden sticks like animals. Their whereabouts remain unknown.

In light of the above, the Vice-President/High Representative is asked to provide a clear answer to the following questions:

1. Is she aware of these developments in the Central Highlands, and what concrete steps will she take to ascertain the whereabouts and conditions of Mrs Puih H'Bat?

2. Will the EU pursue its current, low-performing human rights policy vis-à-vis the Degar people, or will it put pressure on the Vietnamese authorities to meet the demands made by the indigenous Degar people of Vietnam?

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

The EU has been monitoring the situation in the Central Highlands of Vietnam closely, in cooperation with EU Member States' and like-minded embassies in Hanoi.

Ms Puih H' Blat (aka Ami Quy, born in 1965) is included on the EU list of Persons of Concern in Vietnam. The EU has been following her case since she was arrested. It has repeatedly called for her release and regularly requested information on her whereabouts. Ms Puih H' Blat is an ethnic Jarai who has been arrested under charges of 'undermining national unity' (Article 87 of the Penal Code) on 11 April 2008. The People's Court of Gia Lai Province sentenced her to 5 years of imprisonment on 9 October 2008. She is currently serving her sentence term in prison number 5 in Thanh Hoa and is allegedly in good health.

During the last round of the EU-Vietnam human rights dialogue which took place on 12 January 2012 in Hanoi, the EU called for the respect of ethnic minorities' rights and called on Vietnam to lift all restrictions to freedom of expression that are not in line with international standards, in particular Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Vietnam is a party. The EU also encouraged Vietnam to invite the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief to visit the country. The EU has also supported technical assistance programmes particularly aimed at promoting empowerment of ethnic minorities in Vietnam.

The EU will continue to raise its concerns with Vietnamese authorities. It takes the view that a combination of political pressure and constructive engagement bears the greatest chance of influencing Vietnam towards a more open society based upon the rule of law.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006385/12
to the Commission
David Martin (S&D)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: EU funding for civil society human rights monitoring

As the Commission has acknowledged on many occasions ([1]), civil society organisations are expected to play an important role in implementing human rights provisions in upcoming free trade agreements.

1. Given the limited resources which many civil society and trade union organisations have and the difficult environment in which they operate, can the Commission outline what funding it intends to make available to these organisations in order to ensure that they can effectively monitor compliance with the human rights provisions?

2. Can the Commission confirm whether there will be a budget heading for civil society capacity building in countries with an FTA with the EU?

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

Civil society has a significant role to play in the implementation of trade and sustainable development provisions included in EU Free Trade Agreements (FTA). To this end, such provisions foresee the setting-up of platforms for joint civil society dialogue and the establishment by each Party of advisory groups of domestic civil society representatives. As FTAs enter into force, the Commission ensures the EU domestic advisory groups (DAGs) are operational. This is already the case for the EU-Korea FTA, where the Commission, in cooperation with the European Economic and Social Committee, has established the EU DAG and provided logistic support.

Improving the coherence of EU policies relevant to business and human rights is a critical challenge. Implementation of the UN Guiding Principles ([2]) involving local civil society actors can contribute to this. The Commission works with stakeholders to develop human rights guidance based on these Principles and as from 2013 issues periodic progress reports on its implementation.

Furthermore, in third countries, the Commission finances civil society capacity-building activities as part of its broader development cooperation policy independently of whether partner countries have concluded an FTA with the EU. Civil society has access to grants covered by different sources within bilateral cooperation and thematic instruments/programmes. The Thematic Programme on 'Non-State Actors and Local Authorities' and the European Instrument on Human Right support organisations at country level. The targeted partner countries are fixed each year on the basis of various criteria, providing for quite broad country coverage.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=CRE&reference=20120522&secondRef=ITEM-014&language=EN.
([2]) The UN Guiding Principles cover three pillars: the state duty to respect human rights, the corporate responsibility to respect human rights and the need for access to effective remedy.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006386/12
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Barbara Matera (PPE)
(26 giugno 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Attacchi alle chiese e alla comunità cristiana in Nigeria

In seguito agli attacchi di domenica 17 giugno 2012 alle chiese cristiane in Nigeria, che hanno segnato il proseguimento inarrestabile della crudele scia di attacchi terroristici compiuti nelle regioni settentrionali della Nigeria per opera del gruppo musulmano estremista Boko Haram, che dallo scorso Natale persegue la strategia di colpire la popolazione di fede cattolica presente in questa regione a prevalenza musulmana con attacchi durante le festività religiose.

Questa situazione finora presenta un triste bilancio di oltre 300 vittime nel solo 2010 e oltre 1000 vittime nel corso degli ultimi tre anni.

Alla luce di tutto ciò, il Parlamento nigeriano ha deciso di convocare il presidente Goodluck Jonathan chiedendogli di riferire sulle continue uccisioni rivendicate dei miliziani di Boko Haram. Inoltre, lo scorso lunedì 25 giugno 2012 si è svolta in Lussemburgo la riunione dei 27 Ministri degli Esteri europei in cui si è discusso anche del rinnovato impegno e della cooperazione tra l'Unione europea e il governo della Nigeria per affrontare i problemi sociali ed economici nel nord del paese con particolare riferimento alla libertà di religione.

Intanto nell'intera regione è stato ordinato da giorni un coprifuoco di 24 ore per permettere alle autorità locali di cercare i responsabili degli attentati e per ridurre le escalation di violenza ad opera di gruppi di cristiani che negli ultimi giorni stanno colpendo per vendetta la popolazione musulmana esasperando la società civile già tesa.

Si chiede all'Alto Rappresentante/Vice presidente della Commissione europea:

1. La Delegazione dell'UE in Nigeria sta giocando un ruolo attivo e di supporto al governo nigeriano per cessare tali forme di violenza verso la comunità cristiana e per garantire la protezione dei luoghi di culto?

2. Alla luce del dialogo sui diritti umani esistente tra l'Unione europea e la Nigeria che copre anche questioni legate alla libertà di religione, quali sono le misure che l'Unione europea intende esplorare in supporto agli sforzi del governo nigeriano intesi a creare una migliore convivenza tra le varie comunità religiose in Nigeria?

3. L'Unione europea ha intenzione, qualora non fosse garantita la libertà di religione come sancito dalla costituzione nigeriana, di adottare misure di pressione quali un blocco commerciale verso la Nigeria al fine di restaurare la libertà di religione?

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

I recenti attacchi terroristici in Nigeria hanno avuto come bersaglio edifici governativi e dei servizi di sicurezza, mercati, scuole, chiese e civili innocenti di ogni tipo. Tutte queste attività criminali sono state condannate come tali dall'UE. Si invita a consultare altresì la dichiarazione di Catherine Ashton del 19 giugno 2012.

L'UE collabora con la Nigeria per sostenerla nel difficile tentativo di creare condizioni di sicurezza durature e di agire sui molteplici fattori socioeconomici e politici che portano alla radicalizzazione.

L'UE ha già riorientato a favore del nord del paese determinate parti del programma di cooperazione con la Nigeria per accelerare le attività di lotta alla povertà e all'emarginazione in quella zona.

Inoltre, contribuirà tra breve a potenziare le capacità di mediazione in una delle zone più instabili, utilizzando fondi provenienti dal progetto di sostegno alla mediazione ([1]) promosso dal Parlamento.

([1]) EEAS BL 2238.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006386/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Barbara Matera (PPE)
(26 June 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Attacks on churches and the Christian community in Nigeria

The attacks on Christian churches in Nigeria on 17 June 2012 are the latest in an unstoppable escalation of ruthless terrorist attacks perpetrated in northern Nigeria by the extremist Muslim group Boko Haram. The group has, since last Christmas, been pursuing its strategy of attacking the Catholic population in this largely Muslim region during religious festivals.

The violence is taking a grim toll, claiming over 300 victims in 2010 alone and over 1 000 victims during the last three years.

As a result, the Nigerian Parliament decided to summon President Goodluck Jonathan to report on the continuous killings for which the Boko Haram militia is claiming responsibility. During a meeting on 25 June 2012 held in Luxembourg, the 27 European Foreign Ministers also discussed renewed commitment and cooperation between the European Union and the Government of Nigeria to address the social and economic problems in the north of the country, with particular reference to freedom of worship.

A 24-hour curfew has recently been imposed in the entire Nigerian region to enable local authorities to hunt down those responsible for the attacks and reduce the escalation of violence by Christian groups, who have recently been carrying out revenge attacks on the Muslim population, further exacerbating an already tense situation between the communities.

In view of this:

1. Can the Vice-President/High Representative say whether the EU delegation in Nigeria is playing an active and supporting role to the Nigerian Government to end this violence against the Christian community and to guarantee the protection of places of worship?

2. In view of the dialogue on human rights between the European Union and Nigeria, which also covers issues linked to religious freedom, what measures does the European Union intend to explore in support of the efforts being made by the Nigerian Government to establish better relations among the various religious communities in Nigeria?

3. If religious freedom as provided for in the Nigerian Constitution cannot be guaranteed, does the European Union intend to adopt measures such as a trade blockade on Nigeria in order to restore religious freedom?

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

The recent attacks by terrorists in Nigeria have targeted government and security buildings, markets, schools and innocent civilians of all kinds as well as churches. All such attacks are criminal activities and have been condemned as such by the EU. Please also refer to HR/VP Ashton's statement of 19 June 2012.

The EU is working together with Nigeria to help it tackle the challenges of creating durable security and dealing with the multiple socioeconomic and political factors conducive to radicalisation.

The EU has already reoriented parts of its cooperation programme with Nigeria to the North of the country to accelerate action against poverty and deprivation there.

In addition, the EU will shortly provide capacity building for mediation in one of the most fragile areas making use of funds from the mediation support project ([1]) initiated by the Parliament.

([1]) EEAS BL 2238.