IV

(Informacje)

INFORMACJE INSTYTUCJI, ORGANÓW I JEDNOSTEK ORGANIZACYJNYCH UNII EUROPEJSKIEJ

PARLAMENT EUROPEJSKI

PYTANIA PISEMNE Z ODPOWIEDZIĄ

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(2013/C 228 E/01)

Treść **Strona**

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007287/12
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(19. Juli 2012)

Betrifft: Steigende Zahl junger Alkoholiker

Die Zahl alkoholabhängiger junger Menschen in Österreich hat sich nach Angaben von Fachleuten der Wagner-Jauregg-Klinik in Linz in den letzten fünf Jahren verdoppelt. Die Ärzte in dieser Klinik behandeln jährlich über 7 000 Menschen, von denen 1 000 eingewiesen werden. Neben herkömmlichen und medikamentösen Therapien umfasst das Programm der Klinik für die Behandlung der Patienten auch die Ergotherapie.

Überraschenderweise gehören junge Frauen und Mädchen zu den am stärksten von Alkoholismus Betroffenen.

1. Welche Maßnahmen hat die Kommission auf Unionsebene ergriffen, um gegen das gesellschaftliche Problem des übermäßigen Alkoholkonsums vorzugehen?

2. Wird die Kommission ihre Bemühungen zur stärkeren Sensibilisierung und zur Bekämpfung des Alkoholismus ausbauen?

3. Auf welche Weise plant die Kommission, junge Menschen unter Berücksichtigung der Entwicklung sozialer Netzwerke vor Internet-Werbung und -Marketing für Alkohol zu schützen?

Antwort von Herrn Dalli im Namen der Kommission
(30. August 2012)

Die Kommission verweist die Frau Abgeordnete auf ihre Antwort auf die schriftliche Anfrage E-7092/2012 zum Tätigwerden der EU zur Eindämmung alkoholbedingter Schäden. Für Maßnahmen, die sich speziell an junge Menschen richten, verweisen wir auf die Beantwortung der schriftlichen Anfrage E-2637/2012.

Die Maßnahmen zum Schutz junger Menschen gegenüber Alkoholwerbung hat die Kommission in ihrer Antwort auf die schriftliche Anfrage E-9764/2011 genannt. In einigen Mitgliedstaaten wurde die kommerzielle Kommunikation in Bezug auf alkoholische Getränke im Fernsehen und in audiovisuellen Mediendiensten auf Abruf ganz oder teilweise verboten. Ein aktueller Bericht ([1]) über die Anwendung der Richtlinie über audiovisuelle Mediendienste (2010/13/EU) kommt zu dem Schluss, dass weitere Untersuchungen erforderlich sind, um die Auswirkungen kommerzieller Kommunikation (insbesondere in Bezug auf alkoholische Getränke) auf Jugendliche zu bewerten, und zwar hinsichtlich der Intensität, mit der sie dem ausgesetzt sind, und ihres Konsumverhaltens. Einschlägige Forschungsmaßnahmen will die Kommission 2013 einleiten.

Bei der Werbung über neue Informationskanäle (beispielsweise soziale Medien) fördert die Kommission die Selbstregulierung durch Internetdienstanbieter und Alkoholhersteller. Die Ausübung solcher Formen der Selbstregulierung wird von der Kommission genau überwacht; sie hat zudem eine Untersuchung in Auftrag gegeben, um herauszufinden, in welchem Maße junge Menschen in sozialen Medien der Alkoholwerbung ausgesetzt sind. Die Untersuchungsergebnisse werden bis Ende 2012 vorgelegt.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2012:0203:FIN:DE:PDF.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007287/12
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(19 July 2012)

Subject: Number of young alcoholics on the rise

The number of alcohol-dependent young people in Austria has doubled in the last five years, according to experts at the Wagner Jauregg clinic in Linz. Doctors at this clinic treat more than 7 000 people a year, 1 000 of whom are admitted. As well as using traditional therapies and medication to treat patients, the clinic also includes occupational therapy in its programme.

Surprisingly, young women and girls are among those most affected by alcoholism.

1. What measures has the Commission taken at Union level in relation to the social issue of excessive consumption of alcohol?

2. Will the Commission step up its efforts to raise awareness of and combat alcoholism?

3. How does the Commission plan to protect young people from online alcohol advertising and marketing, taking into consideration the development of social networks?

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

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answers to Question E-7092/2012 on actions at EU level towards the reduction of alcohol-related harm. For actions focused on young people in particular, the Commission would refer to its answer to Question E-2637/2012.

As regards protecting young people from alcohol advertising, the Commission would refer to its answer to Question E-9764/2011. A number of Member States have adopted rules prohibiting totally or partially commercial communications for alcoholic beverages in television broadcasts or on-demand audiovisual media services. A recent report ([1]) on the application of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (2010/13/EU), notes that further investigations are required to assess the impact of commercial communications, especially for alcoholic beverages, on minors, as regards exposure and consumption behaviour. The Commission plans to initiate research in this area in 2013.

As regards advertising through new channels such as social media, the Commission encourages self-regulation by Internet service providers and alcohol producers. The Commission follows closely the performance of self-regulatory approaches and has launched a study that looks at young people's exposure to alcohol advertising through social network media. The results will be available before the end of 2012.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2012:0203:FIN:EN:PDF.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007289/12
à la Commission
Robert Rochefort (ALDE)
(19 juillet 2012)

Objet: Qualité des gaz d'échappement des moteurs diesel

À l'occasion d'une réunion regroupant des experts internationaux le 12 juin 2012, le Centre international de recherche sur le cancer (CIRC), agence pour le cancer de l'Organisation mondiale de la santé (OMS), a classifié les gaz d'échappement des moteurs diesel parmi les cancérigènes certains (groupe 1 de la classification OMS). Ces mêmes experts ont démontré qu'une exposition aux gaz d'échappement de moteurs diesel était associée à un risque accru de cancer du poumon. Or, quotidiennement, de nombreux Européens sont exposés aux émissions de gaz d'échappement de moteurs diesel, ce qui pose un véritable problème de santé publique. Le CIRC estime également que les gouvernements et les décideurs publics ont suffisamment de données probantes pour réexaminer les normes environnementales en ce qui concerne les émissions de moteurs diesel.

L'Union européenne dispose, à ce titre, d'un corpus législatif important tant pour la régulation de la qualité de l'air que pour la régulation de la qualité des émissions des moteurs diesel, ainsi:

1. La Commission peut-elle indiquer si elle a l'intention de prendre en compte les récents travaux de l'OMS pour modifier la législation en vigueur afin d'améliorer la qualité des gaz d'échappement des moteurs diesel, pour lesquels la législation européenne est moins sévère que pour les rejets des moteurs à explosion?

2. En ce qui concerne les particules fines, la Commission envisage-t-elle de proposer une nouvelle législation imposant des valeurs limites respectant les recommandations de l'OMS? Rappelons dans ce contexte que les valeurs limites annuelles européennes sont deux fois supérieures à celles préconisées par l'OMS (pour les PM-10, l'OMS recommande un seuil moyen annuel de 20 $\mu g/m^3$ alors que l'Union impose 40 $\mu g/m^3$ comme valeur limite annuelle, et pour les PM-2,5, l'OMS recommande 10 $\mu g/m^3$ en moyenne annuelle alors que l'Union impose une valeur limite annuelle de 25 $\mu g/m^3$ à partir de 2015 et 20 $\mu g/m^3$ en 2020). Sinon, peut-elle justifier ces écarts, en particulier en termes de santé publique?

3. Toujours dans la lignée des recommandations de l'OMS, la Commission peut-elle indiquer si, en matière d'oxydes d'azote, elle a l'intention de prendre en compte les émissions particulièrement dangereuse de NO_2 comme valeur dans les nouvelles règlementations sur les émissions de véhicules plutôt que les NO_x, agrégat peu précis qui ne permet pas de limiter les émissions d'oxydes d'azote les plus dangereuses pour la santé humaine?

Réponse donnée par M. Potočnik au nom de la Commission
(27 août 2012)

1. La législation de l'UE ([1]), qui fixe des limites d'émission de polluants pour les voitures et les véhicules utilitaires, s'est progressivement durcie au cours des vingt dernières années.

Les recommandations de l'OMS mentionnées se rapportent aux émissions de particules par les moteurs diesel. Des valeurs limites strictes pour la masse et le nombre des particules émises par les véhicules neufs ont déjà été définies et s'appliquent depuis janvier 2012 dans le cas des véhicules utilitaires (Euro 6) et depuis septembre 2009 dans le cas des voitures (Euro 5), pour lesquelles la norme Euro 6 entrera en vigueur en 2014. Ces normes rendent obligatoire l'utilisation d'un filtre à particules dans les véhicules neufs et réduisent davantage les émissions de précurseurs des particules, tels que le NOx.

Au cours des prochaines années, le remplacement des véhicules anciens réduira encore l'exposition de la population aux particules et à d'autres polluants nocifs.

La Commission participe à l'initiative de la CEE/ONU qui définit des normes pour l'équipement a posteriori des véhicules utilitaires lourds en filtres à particules.

([1]) Règlements 715/2007 et 595/2009.

2. La Commission a lancé un réexamen complet des politiques de l'UE en matière de qualité de l'air, qui devra être terminé en 2013 ([2]). Dans ce cadre, la Commission collabore avec l'OMS afin d'examiner les données scientifiques les plus récentes concernant les incidences sur la santé humaine de tous les polluants réglementés en application des directives 2008/50/CE et 2004/107/CE ([3]) relatives à la qualité de l'air ambiant. Ce réexamen apportera des conclusions quant à la nécessité de compléter la législation.

3. La Commission met actuellement au point une procédure d'essai pour la réception dans la perspective d'une législation limitant efficacement les émissions de NOx des véhicules. Elle examinera la nécessité de fixer des limites d'émission spécifiques pour les émissions directes de NO_2, en tenant compte de la conversion naturelle de toutes les émissions de NOx en NO_2.

([2]) Document de travail des services de la Commission concernant la mise en œuvre de la politique de l'UE en matière de qualité de l'air, SEC(2011) 342 final.

([3]) JO L 152 du 11.6.2008 et JO L 23 du 26.1.2005.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007289/12
to the Commission
Robert Rochefort (ALDE)
(19 July 2012)

Subject: Quality of diesel engine exhaust gases

At a meeting of international experts on 12 June 2012, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) of the World Health Organisation (WHO) classified diesel engine exhaust gases as certainly carcinogenic (group 1 of the WHO classification). The same experts demonstrated that exposure to diesel engine exhaust gases was associated with an increased risk of lung cancer. Many Europeans are exposed to diesel engine exhaust gases on a daily basis, which poses a real public health problem. The IARC also takes the view that governments and public decision-makers have sufficient data to review the environmental standards for diesel engine emissions.

The European Union possesses a large corpus of legislation in this field, regulating both air quality and the quality of diesel engine emissions. That being so:

1. Can the Commission state whether it intends to take into account the recent work of the WHO to amend current legislation with a view to improving the quality of diesel engine exhaust gases, for which European legislation is less strict than for emissions from petrol engines?

2. Concerning particulates, does the Commission envisage proposing new legislation to set limit values in line with the WHO recommendations? It may be recalled in this connection that the European annual limit values are twice as high as those recommended by the WHO (for PM^{10} particulates, the WHO recommends an average annual threshold of 20 µg/m³ whereas the EU's annual limit value is 40 µg/m³, while for $PM^{2.5}$ particulates, the WHO recommends an annual average of 10 µg/m³ whereas the EU sets an annual limit value of 25 µg/m³ from 2015 and 20 µg/m³ in 2020). If not, can it justify these differences, particularly in terms of public health ?

3. Still on the subject of WHO recommendations, can the Commission say whether, for nitrogen oxides, it intends to take into account the particularly dangerous NO_2 emissions as a reference value in the new legislation on vehicle emissions rather than NO_x, a less precise aggregate which does not allow limitations to be placed on the nitrogen oxides that are most dangerous to human health?

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

1. EC law ([1]) limits the emission of pollutants by cars and trucks, and has been progressively tightened over the past two decades.

The WHO communication referred to covers particulate emissions from diesel engines. Strict mass and number limits for the emissions of particulates for new vehicles have already been defined and apply as from January 2012 for trucks (Euro 6) and from September 2009 (Euro 5) for cars with Euro 6 standards entering into force from 2014 onwards. These standards make the use of particle filters obligatory for new vehicles whilst also further reducing precursors of particulates such as NOx.

Replacement of old vehicles in the coming years will lead to a further reduction in the exposure of citizens to particulates and other harmful pollutants.

The Commission is involved in the UNECE initiative defining the standards for retrofitting heavy-duty vehicles with particulate filters.

2. The Commission has launched a comprehensive review of the EU air quality policies to be completed in 2013 ([2]). As part of this the Commission is working with the WHO to conduct a review of the latest scientific evidence on the health impacts of all pollutants regulated under the Air Quality Directives 2008/50/EC and 2004/107/EC ([3]), together with an evaluation of emerging risks to health. This review will include conclusions on the need for further legislation.

([1]) Regulations 715/2007 and 595/2009.
([2]) See Commission Staff Working Paper on the implementation of EU Air Quality Policy, SEC(2011) 342 final.
([3]) OJ L 152, 11.6.2008 and OJ L 23, 26.1.2005.

3. The Commission is currently developing a type approval test procedure with a view to legislation effectively limiting the automotive emission of NOx (i.e. NO + NO_2). It will investigate whether specific emission limits for direct NO_2 emissions will have to be set, whilst taking into account the natural conversion of all NOx emissions into NO_2.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-007291/12
alla Commissione
Mario Mauro (PPE)
(19 luglio 2012)

Oggetto: Interpretazione normativa sulla lana quale prodotto agricolo

A seguito di alcuni problemi riscontrati da aziende agricole italiane, è emerso il contrasto normativo tra regolamenti dell'Unione europea inerenti la classificazione della lana quale prodotto agricolo o no.

Il regolamento (CE) n. 510/2006 all'articolo 1 e nell'allegato II, del Consiglio europeo, del 20.3.2006, ha definito la lana prodotto agricolo, stabilendo, altresì che tale prodotto venga protetto dal marchio DOP (Denominazione di Origine Protetta) e da quello IGP (Indicazione Geografica Protetta).

Allo stesso tempo il regolamento (CE) n. 510/2006 include la lana nell'elenco dei prodotti agricoli che possono essere tutelati con una DOP o un IGP.

Tale orientamento dell'UE è stato confermato il 19.1.2009, quando la stessa Commissione europea, con protocollo CE UK PDO n. 0005-0737, ha istituito la DOP del prodotto agricolo «Lana Shetland» su proposta del Regno Unito.

Il contrasto, di cui sopra, si fonda sul fatto che la lana è disciplinata anche dal regolamento (CE) n. 1774/2002 sostituito dal regolamento (CE) n.1069/2011 che considera la stessa come un prodotto di scarto e, solo dopo un trattamento igienizzante, un prodotto tecnico, quindi non più agricolo.

Alla luce di questi elementi si chiede alla Commissione:

1. Ritiene che esista un contrasto di norme sulla definizione della lana?

2. Se sì, ritiene opportuno modificare le norme per una migliore certezza del diritto?

3. Ritiene che la lana sia un prodotto agricolo e in quanto tale possa essere tutelata con certificazioni DOP e IGP?

Risposta di Dacian Cioloş a nome della Commissione
(21 agosto 2012)

Il regolamento del Consiglio (CE) n. 510/2006 ([1]) non contiene una definizione della lana, ma, nell'allegato II, la lana è classificata come prodotto agricolo. Il regolamento (CE) n. 1069/2009 ([2]) prevede norme sanitarie relative ai sottoprodotti di origine animale e ai prodotti derivati non destinati al consumo umano e abroga il regolamento (CE) n. 1774/2002. Poiché i due regolamenti hanno ambiti di applicazione diversi, non confliggono tra loro.

Tenuto conto di quanto precede non si è ritenuto necessario modificare la normativa vigente.

La lana non è compresa nell'elenco di prodotti di cui all'allegato I del TFUE, ma rientra nella voce 51.01 della nomenclatura tariffaria «Lane, non cardate né pettinate.» Questo non è incoerente con il riferimento alla lana come «prodotto agricolo» all'articolo 1, paragrafo 1, del regolamento (CE) n. 510/2006, in combinato disposto con l'allegato II di detto regolamento. L'articolo 1, paragrafo 1, si riferisce ai «prodotti agricoli» in generale, comprende pertanto prodotti agricoli che non figurano all'allegato I del trattato. Come l'onorevole parlamentare ha correttamente indicato, la denominazione «lana Shetland» è la prima denominazione che riguarda un prodotto di lana ad essere stata registrata come denominazione di origine protetta nel gennaio 2009.

([1]) Regolamento (CE) n. 510/2006 del Consiglio, del 20 marzo 2006, relativo alla protezione delle indicazioni geografiche e delle denominazioni d'origine dei prodotti agricoli e alimentari (GU L 93 del 31.3.2006).

([2]) Regolamento (CE) n. 1069/2009 del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 21 ottobre 2009, recante norme sanitarie relative ai sottoprodotti di origine animale e ai prodotti derivati non destinati al consumo umano e che abroga il regolamento (CE) n. 1774/2002 (regolamento sui sottoprodotti di origine animale).

(English version)

Question for written answer P-007291/12
to the Commission
Mario Mauro (PPE)
(19 July 2012)

Subject: Legislative interpretation of wool as an agricultural product

Further to a number of problems encountered by Italian farms, it has emerged that there is a conflict between EU regulations in relation to whether or not wool is classified as an agricultural product.

Under Article 1 of Council Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 of 20 March 2006, and Annex II to the regulation, wool is defined as an agricultural product, and it is stipulated that the product has protected designation of origin (PDO) and protected geographical indication (PGI) status.

At the same time Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 includes wool in the list of agricultural products which may be protected by a PDO or PGI.

This approach by the EU was confirmed on 19 January 2009 when the Commission, by Protocol EC UK No PDO No 0005-0737, gave PDO status to Shetland wool as an agricultural product, at the proposal of the United Kingdom.

The conflict lies in the fact that wool is also governed by Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002, superseded by Regulation (EC) No1069/2011, which regards it as a waste product; it becomes a technical product — and is therefore no longer an agricultural product — only after it has undergone a process of hygienisation.

Can the Commission therefore answer the following questions:

1. Does it believe there may be a conflict of legislation on the definition of wool?

2. If so, should it not amend the rules to improve legal certainty?

3. Does it consider wool to be an agricultural product and, as such, can it be protected by PDO and PGI certification?

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

Council Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 ([1]) does not define wool, but in Annex II of this regulation, wool is classified as an agricultural product. Regulation (EC) No 1069/2009 ([2]) lays down health rules as regards animal by-products and derived products not intended for human consumption and repeals Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002. As both Regulations have a different scope, there is no conflict between them.

Considering the above, it is not deemed necessary to amend current rules.

Wool is not included in the list of products in Annex I to the TFEU but belongs to heading 51.01 of the tariff nomenclature 'Wool, not carded or combed'. This is not inconsistent with respect to the reference to wool as an 'agricultural product' in Article 1(1) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 in connection with Annex II of that regulation. Article 1(1) refers to 'agricultural products' which includes agricultural products that are not in Annex I of the Treaty. As the Honourable Member of the Parliament correctly indicated, the name 'Shetland wool' is the first designation referring to a wool product that was registered as a Protected Designation of Origin in January 2009.

([1]) Council Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 of 20 March 2006 on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs, OJ L 93, 31.3.2006.

([2]) Regulation (EC) No 1069/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 laying down health rules as regards animal by-products and derived products not intended for human consumption and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002 (Animal by-products Regulation).

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007292/12
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Mario Mauro (PPE)
(19 luglio 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Persecuzioni in Vietnam

Sebbene negli ultimi 40 anni in Vietnam si siano compiuti grandi progressi per quanto riguarda la libertà di religione, i cristiani sono ancora vittime di discriminazioni e violenze manifeste. Il 1º luglio 2012 un gruppo di criminali legati al Fronte patriottico vietnamita ha attaccato alcuni cattolici riunitisi per celebrare la Messa nella diocesi di Vinh. Da novembre 2011 il numero di aggressioni di questo tipo è in continua crescita.

Secondo il vescovo della diocesi, la regione rappresenterebbe un covo di violenti, dato che ha deciso di assumere la designazione di «distretto eroico», ossia luogo di resistenza comunista. Per far parte dei distretti eroici è necessaria, fra l'altro, l'assenza totale di religione. Il vescovo ritiene che la cosa più sconcertante sia il fatto che le autorità non si dimostrino intenzionate a denunciare gli aggressori. Ad esempio, l'anno scorso è esploso un ordigno di fronte a una cappella e, «pur trattandosi di un'azione criminale,» continua il vescovo, «[…] non c'è stato nessun tipo di reazione né da parte della polizia civile né da parte delle forze dell'ordine in generale.» Ciò nonostante, le autorità governative continuano a far visita alla comunità cattolica per porgere i più sentiti auguri in occasione delle festività.

In Vietnam i cristiani sono divisi tra l'agire in base alle virtù della pazienza e della perseveranza e il combattere per se stessi e per il diritto alla libertà di religione. Si tratta di una battaglia che non dovrebbero essere costretti ad affrontare.

Al Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante viene chiesto di rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

1. È il Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante al corrente dell'aumento degli atti di violenza contro i cristiani in Vietnam?

2. Quali misure si possono adottare o sono già state adottate in Vietnam per affrontare tali violazioni della libertà di religione?

3. Che cosa può fare l'UE per aiutare a garantire i diritti fondamentali dei cristiani vietnamiti?

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

L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente è perfettamente al corrente degli eventi verificatisi nella diocesi di Vinh a Con Cuong il 1º luglio scorso. Nessun elemento induce a credere che le comunità cristiane in Vietnam siano oggetto di persecuzioni a motivo della loro fede religiosa e delle loro attività, ma è innegabile che gli attacchi tendono ad aumentare. Tra gli incidenti e i conflitti registrati recentemente a danno delle comunità e delle parrocchie cattoliche, molti sembrano avere origine da discussioni con le autorità locali su questioni relative ai diritti di utilizzo dei terreni.

L'Unione esprime regolarmente le sue preoccupazioni sulla libertà di religione e di credo, nonché sulla libertà di espressione, alle autorità vietnamite, e le ha incoraggiate a invitare il Relatore speciale delle Nazioni Unite sulla libertà di religione o di credo a visitare il paese. La delegazione dell'UE a Hanoi ha sollevato il caso specifico di Con Cuong in una riunione del 27 luglio scorso con il dipartimento responsabile delle organizzazioni internazionali del ministero vietnamita degli Affari esteri e ha chiesto di incontrare il comitato nazionale per gli Affari religiosi per discutere dell'argomento.

Il nuovo accordo di partenariato e di cooperazione UE-Vietnam, firmato il 27 giugno a Bruxelles, contempla impegni relativi ai diritti umani, allo Stato di diritto e alla Corte penale internazionale. Grazie a tali clausole, l'UE potrà intensificare il dialogo e la cooperazione finalizzati a promuovere i diritti umani in Vietnam. In particolare, l'Unione potrà affrontare il caso specifico di Con Cuong e la questione generale del rispetto per la libertà di religione e di credo nel prossimo ciclo del dialogo UE-Vietnam sui diritti umani, previsto per il 25-26 ottobre a Bruxelles.

Il Vietnam sta altresì rafforzando le relazioni con il Vaticano, con il quale ha in corso colloqui bilaterali.

L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente continuerà a seguire attentamente la situazione della libertà di religione e di credo, anche per i cristiani, in Vietnam.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007292/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Mario Mauro (PPE)
(19 July 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Persecution in Vietnam

Despite major progress towards religious freedom in Vietnam over the last 40 years, Christians there are still experiencing discrimination and overt violence. On 1 July 2012, a group of thugs linked to the Vietnam Patriotic Front attacked a group of Catholics who had gathered to celebrate Mass in the Diocese of Vinh. Such attacks have occurred with increasing frequency since November 2011.

The bishop of the diocese suspects that this region may be a particular hotbed for violence on account of its self-designation as a 'heroic district' — a place of communist resistance. One of the criteria for a heroic district is the absence of religion. What the bishop finds most troubling about the situation, however, is the unwillingness of the authorities to help bring the perpetrators to justice. For example, last year a mine exploded in front of a chapel. 'It was a criminal act,' says the bishop, '…but there was no reaction from the civil police or police services.' Yet the Catholic community still receives best wishes and Christmas greetings in the form of personal, friendly visits from government authorities.

Christians in Vietnam are torn between acting according to the virtues of patience and perseverance and standing up for themselves and their right to religious freedom. This is not a struggle they should have to face.

The following questions are submitted for consideration by the Vice-President/High Representative:

1. Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware of the increase in the number of acts of violence against Christians in Vietnam?

2. What can be done/is currently being done in Vietnam to address these violations of religious freedom?

3. What can the EU do to help guarantee the basic human rights of Vietnamese Christians?

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

The HR/VP is well aware of the events, which took place in Con Cuong in the Diocese of Vinh on 1 July. There is no indication that Christian communities in Vietnam are being targeted because of their religious belief and activities. Nevertheless, there is a growing pattern of attacks. A number of recently recorded incidents and conflicts involving Catholic communities and parishes appear to be rooted in disputes with local authorities on land use rights' issues.

The EU has regularly raised concerns about freedom of religion and belief, as well as freedom of expression, with the Vietnamese authorities, and has encouraged them to invite the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief to visit the country. The EU Delegation in Hanoi has raised the specific case of Con Cuong with the Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs International Organisations Department at a meeting on 27 July and has asked for a meeting with the National Committee for Religious Affairs to discuss the matter.

The new EU-Vietnam Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), signed on 27 June in Brussels, includes commitments on human rights, the rule of law and the International Criminal Court (ICC). Such clauses will allow the EU to intensify dialogue and cooperation aimed at promoting human rights in Vietnam. In particular, the EU will be able to raise the specific case of Con Cuong and the general issue of respect for freedom of religion and belief at the next round of the EU-Vietnam human rights dialogue scheduled for 25-26 October in Brussels.

Vietnam is also in the process of strengthening its relations with the Vatican, and bilateral discussions are ongoing.

The HR/VP will continue to follow the situation of freedom of religion and belief, including for Christians, in Vietnam.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007293/12
à la Commission
Michael Cashman (S&D), Karima Delli (Verts/ALE), Leonidas Donskis (ALDE), Claude Moraes (S&D) et Peter van Dalen (ECR)
(19 juillet 2012)

Objet: Discrimination de caste et politique de développement de l'Union européenne

L'un des principaux objectifs de la coopération au développement de l'Union est de prévenir l'exclusion sociale et de combattre toutes les formes de discrimination. D'ailleurs, l'Union européenne ne cesse de renforcer son engagement à promouvoir et à défendre les Droits de l'homme, qui constitue un élément fondamental de son partenariat avec les pays tiers. Le but est également de veiller à ce que des politiques contre la discrimination soient mises en place et que l'aide au développement fournie par la Commission soit distribuée équitablement.

La résolution du Parlement européen du 18 avril 2010 relative au rapport annuel sur les Droits de l'homme dans le monde en 2010 et à la politique de l'Union européenne en la matière, recommande notamment que des initiatives soient prises pour que la politique des Droits de l'homme et les instruments de coopération de l'UE soient pris en considération dans la législation de l'Union pour éliminer les discriminations de caste, et que des mesures soient prises dans les pays pratiquant le système de caste, y compris le Népal, l'Inde, le Bangladesh, le Pakistan, le Sri Lanka et le Yémen.

Jusqu'à présent, dans ses communications relatives aux Droits de l'homme, parmi lesquelles le paquet sur les Droits de l'homme et le rapport annuel sur les Droits de l'homme dans le monde en 2010, l'Union a ignoré le sort terrible réservé aux 260 millions de personnes victimes de la discrimination de caste, dont les droits sont bafoués de manière scandaleuse et l'accès au développement limité gravement.

1. À ce jour, quelles méthodes et stratégies la Commission a-t-elle mises en œuvre pour faire en sorte que l'aide bilatérale au développement fournie par l'Union aux pays pratiquant le système de castes serve effectivement à lutter contre la discrimination decaste et réduise efficacement la pauvreté parmi les groupes touchés par cette forme dediscrimination?

2. La Commission elle-elle prête à reconnaître dans la discrimination de caste un sujet depréoccupation transversal touchant à la fois aux Droits de l'homme et au développement? Par ailleurs, la Commission est-elle disposée à collaborer avec le SEAE pour mettre au point des stratégies à tous les niveaux visant à mettre fin à cette forme de discrimination, et ce, en améliorant l'analyse des données et la mise en œuvre de solutions à travers une approche fondée sur le respect des droits?

3. Quelles mesures la Commission envisage-t-elle de prendre concernant la planification, la mise en œuvre et l'évaluation de l'aide au développement qu'elle compte accorder àl'avenir aux pays pratiquant le système de castes de sorte que cette assistance contribueeffectivement à mettre un terme à la discrimination de caste et à réduire ses conséquencesnégatives?

Réponse donnée par M. Piebalgs au nom de la Commission
(31 août 2012)

La lutte contre toutes les formes de discrimination est intégrée dans la politique et les programmes de coopération au développement de l'UE depuis le «consensus européen pour le développement» (2005), qui a désigné la non-discrimination comme question transversale à traiter par l'UE dans ses relations extérieures.

Sur cette base, l'UE examine régulièrement la question de la discrimination fondée sur l'appartenance à une caste dans son dialogue politique avec les pays tiers, lorsque le problème existe. L'UE est également active dans les enceintes des Nations unies qui traitent de la promotion et de la protection des droits des personnes concernées par tout type de discrimination, y compris les clivages de classes dans la société. Elle utilise un large éventail d'instruments de coopération financière et technique, y compris la coopération bilatérale avec les gouvernements et le soutien direct à la société civile pour promouvoir et protéger les droits des personnes appartenant à un groupe victime de discrimination, quel qu'il soit.

En annexe, vous trouverez quelques exemples de politiques et de programmes bénéficiant d'un soutien de l'UE pour lutter contre une discrimination liée à l'appartenance à une caste ou susceptible d'exercer une influence dans ce domaine.

Enfin, l'UE soutient les organisations de la société civile œuvrant à la protection et à la promotion des droits des personnes appartenant à des groupes victimes de discrimination pour quelque motif que ce soit, y compris la caste, en particulier par l'intermédiaire de l'IEDDH. Les activités soutenues visent essentiellement à contribuer à lutter contre la discrimination, à développer l'égalité des droits de participation à la vie sociale, économique et politique dans le contexte plus large du renforcement des Droits de l'homme, du pluralisme politique et de la participation à la vie politique démocratique.

(Tekstas lietuvių kalba)

Klausimas, į kurį atsakoma raštu, Nr. E-007293/12
Komisijai
Michael Cashman (S&D), Karima Delli (Verts/ALE), Leonidas Donskis (ALDE), Claude Moraes (S&D) ir Peter van Dalen (ECR)
(2012 m. liepos 19 d.)

Tema: Diskriminacija dėl priklausymo kastai ir ES vystymosi politika

Svarbiausia ES vystomojo bendradarbiavimo vertybė – kova su socialine atskirtimi ir visų gyventojų grupių diskriminacija, todėl esminiu partnerystės su trečiosiomis šalimis elementu tapo didesni ES įsipareigojimai skatinti ir ginti žmogaus teises, siekiant užtikrinti nediskriminavimo politiką ir tolygų Komisijos paramos vystymuisi paskirstymą.

Europos Parlamento 2012 m. balandžio 18 d. rezoliucijoje dėl 2010 m. metinio pranešimo apie žmogaus teisių padėtį pasaulyje ir Europos Sąjungos politiką šioje srityje pateikiama rekomendacija užtikrinti, kad „ES teisės aktuose būtų skiriamas dėmesys ES žmogaus teisių politikai ir bendradarbiavimo priemonėms siekiant panaikinti diskriminaciją dėl priklausymo kastai, taip pat veiksmams šalyse, kurioms būdinga kastų sistema, įskaitant Nepalą, Indiją, Bangladešą, Pakistaną, Šri Lanką ir Jemeną“.

Ligi šiol ES žmogaus teisių komunikatuose, įskaitant žmogaus teisių dokumentų rinkinį ir metinį pranešimą apie žmogaus teisių padėtį pasaulyje 2010 m., nebuvo atsižvelgiama į sunkią daugiau kaip 260 milijonų žmonių, kurių teisės šiurkščiai pažeidinėjamos ir kurių galimybes vystytis labai apriboja diskriminacija dėl priklausymo kastai, padėtį.

1. Kokius metodus ir strategijas Komisija iki dabar taikė, siekdama užtikrinti, kad skiriant dvišalę ES paramą vystymuisi šalims, kurioms būdinga kastų sistema, būtų deramai atsižvelgiama į diskriminaciją dėl priklausymo kastai ir veiksmingai mažinamas labiausiai nuo šios diskriminacijos formos nukentėjusių gyventojų grupių skurdas?

2. Ar Komisija gali pripažinti diskriminaciją dėl priklausymo kastai kompleksine žmogaus teisių ir vystymosi problema ir bendradarbiaudama su Europos išorės veiksmų tarnyba (EIVT) imtis veiksmų siekiant parengti diskriminacijos panaikinimo strategijas visais lygmenimis, taip pat skatinant šios problemos nagrinėjimą ir strategijų įgyvendinimą, remiantis teisėmis pagrįstu požiūriu?

3. Kokių priemonių Komisija imsis planuodama, įgyvendindama ir vertindama būsimą paramą vystymuisi šalims, kurioms būdinga kastų sistema, siekiant užtikrinti, kad skiriama parama prisidėtų prie diskriminacijos dėl priklausymo kastai panaikinimo ir palengvintų jos neigiamas pasekmes?

A. Piebalgo atsakymas Komisijos vardu
(2012 m. rugpjūčio 31 d.)

Kova su įvairia diskriminacija yra prioritetinis ES vystomojo bendradarbiavimo politikos ir programų uždavinys nuo to laiko, kai buvo priimtas „Europos konsensusas dėl vystymosi“ (2005 m.), kuriame nurodyta, kad nediskriminavimas yra vienas svarbiausių klausimų, kuriuos ES spręs išorės santykių srityje.

Šiuo pagrindu ES nuolat kelia diskriminacijos dėl priklausymo kastai klausimą dialoguose su trečiosiomis šalimis, kuriose ši problema aktuali. ES taip pat aktyviai dalyvauja JT forumuose, kurių tikslas – skatinti pagarbą su bet kokia diskriminacija, įskaitant klasinį visuomenės susiskaidymą, susiduriančių žmonių teisėms ir jas saugoti. ES naudoja įvairias finansinio ir techninio bendradarbiavimo priemones, įskaitant dvišalį bendradarbiavimą su vyriausybėmis ir tiesioginę paramą pilietinei visuomenei, kad skatintų pagarbą bet kuriai iš diskriminuojamų grupių priklausančių asmenų teisėms ir jas gintų.

Priede pateikiama ES remiamų programų ir politikos, kurių tikslas – kovoti su diskriminacija dėl priklausymo kastai arba kurios gali būti svarbios šiai sričiai, pavyzdžių.

Galiausiai ES remia pilietinės visuomenės organizacijas, ginančias dėl bet kokių priežasčių (įkaitant kastas) diskriminuojamų asmenų teises ir skatinančias šias teises gerbti, visų pirma per EDŽTRP. Remiama veikla pirmiausiai siekiama padėti kovoti su diskriminacija, plėtoti lygiavertį dalyvavimą socialiniame, ekonominiame ir politiniame gyvenime atsižvelgiant į platų žmogaus teisių stiprinimo, politinio pliuralizmo ir demokratinio bei politinio dalyvavimo kontekstą.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-007293/12
aan de Commissie
Michael Cashman (S&D), Karima Delli (Verts/ALE), Leonidas Donskis (ALDE), Claude Moraes (S&D) en Peter van Dalen (ECR)
(19 juli 2012)

Betreft: Discriminatie op basis van kaste en het EU-ontwikkelingsbeleid

Eén van de belangrijkste doelstellingen van het ontwikkelingsbeleid van de EU is het voorkomen van sociale uitsluiting en het bestrijden van discriminatie. De EU heeft in dit verband besloten steviger invulling te geven aan de belofte om de mensenrechten te bevorderen en te verdedigen door dit tot een centraal element in de partnerschappen met derde landen te maken, in de partnerschapsovereenkomsten antidiscriminatieclausules op te nemen, en hiervoor middelen van de begroting voor ontwikkelingshulp ter beschikking te stellen.

In de resolutie van het Parlement van 18 april 2012 over het jaarverslag 2010 over de mensenrechten in de wereld en het mensenrechtenbeleid van de Europese Unie staat „beveelt initiatieven voor EU-wetgeving aan om ervoor te zorgen dat er in het mensenrechtenbeleid en de samenwerkingsinstrumenten van de EU aandacht wordt besteed aan het uitbannen van discriminatie op basis van kaste, en aan optreden in landen met een kastenstelsel, zoals Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka en Jemen".

Tot nu toe heeft de EU in haar mensenrechtenmededelingen, met inbegrip van het mensenrechtenpakket en het jaarverslag 2010 over de mensenrechten in de wereld, verzuimd aandacht te besteden aan het lot van de meer dan 260 miljoen mensen wier rechten op grote schaal worden geschonden en wier toegang tot ontwikkeling ernstig wordt beperkt ten gevolg van discriminatie op basis van kaste.

1. Welke methoden en strategieën heeft de Commissie tot nu toe ten uitvoer gelegd om te bewerkstelligen dat bilaterale EU-ontwikkelingshulp aan landen met een kastenstelsel de discriminatie op basis van kaste aanpakt en daadwerkelijk resulteert in het terugdringen van de armoede onder de groepen mensen die met deze vorm van discriminatie worden geconfronteerd?

2. Erkent de Commissie discriminatie op basis van kaste als een ernstige bron van zorg in verband met de mensenrechten en ontwikkeling, en is zij bereid samen met de EDEO te werken aan de ontwikkeling van strategieën om deze discriminatie op alle niveaus te elimineren, door middel van méér onderzoek en het implementeren van benadering die uitgaat van rechten?

3. Welke maatregelen gaat de Commissie nemen bij de planning, de tenuitvoerlegging en de evaluatie van toekomstige ontwikkelingshulp aan landen met een kastenstelsel, teneinde ertoe te komen dat de hulp bijdraagt tot het elimineren van discriminatie op basis van kaste en helpt bij het verzachten van de negatieve gevolgen daarvan?

Antwoord van de heer Piebalgs namens de Commissie
(31 augustus 2012)

Het bestrijden van elke vorm van discriminatie heeft een vaste plaats gekregen in het ontwikkelingssamenwerkingsbeleid en de programma's van de EU sinds „De Europese consensus inzake ontwikkeling" (2005), waarin non-discriminatie als een van de algemene vraagstukken werd genoemd die de EU in het kader van haar buitenlandse betrekkingen moet aanpakken.

Op grond daarvan kaart de EU geregeld discriminatie op grond van kaste aan in haar politieke dialogen met derde landen waar het probleem voorkomt. De EU is tevens actief in VN-fora voor de bevordering en bescherming van de rechten van mensen die door een bepaalde vorm van discriminatie worden getroffen, bijvoorbeeld door klassentegenstellingen in de maatschappij. Zij gebruikt een ruime waaier aan financiële en technische samenwerkingsinstrumenten, waaronder bilaterale samenwerking met regeringen en rechtstreekse steun aan het maatschappelijk middenveld, om de rechten van personen die tot een bepaalde soort gediscrimineerde groep behoren, te bevorderen en te beschermen.

Als bijlage vindt u een aantal voorbeelden van door de EU ondersteunde programma's en beleidslijnen die gericht zijn op het bestrijden van discriminatie op grond van kaste of die op dat gebied een potentiële impact hebben.

Ten slotte ondersteunt de EU, in het bijzonder via het EIDHR, maatschappelijke organisaties die zich inzetten voor de bescherming en bevordering van de rechten van personen die deel uitmaken van gediscrimineerde groepen, zoals bepaalde kasten. De bevorderde activiteiten zijn voornamelijk gericht op de bestrijding van discriminatie en de ontwikkeling van gelijke deelname aan het sociale, economische en politieke leven, binnen de ruimere context van het versterken van mensenrechten, politiek pluralisme en democratische politieke deelname.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007293/12
to the Commission
Michael Cashman (S&D), Karima Delli (Verts/ALE), Leonidas Donskis (ALDE), Claude Moraes (S&D) and Peter van Dalen (ECR)
(19 July 2012)

Subject: Caste discrimination and EU development policy

A central value of EU development cooperation is preventing social exclusion and combating discrimination against all groups, and the EU has reinforced its obligations to promote and defend human rights, as an essential element of its partnerships with third countries and in order to ensure anti-discrimination policies and the equal distribution of Commission development assistance.

Parliament's resolution of 18 April 2012 on the 2010 Annual Report on human rights in the world and the European Union's policy on the matter includes a recommendation that 'EU legislation [should] ensure that attention is paid in EU human rights policy and cooperation instruments to eliminating caste discrimination, and action in caste-affected countries, including Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Yemen'.

Thus far the EU has, in its human rights communications including the Human Rights Package and the Annual Report on Human Rights in the World 2010, ignored the plight of more than 260 million people, whose rights are being grossly violated, and their access to development severely restricted, owing to caste-based discrimination.

1. What methods and strategies have the Commission applied to date to ensure that bilateral EU development aid to caste-affected countries addresses discrimination based on caste and effectively reduces poverty among groups affected by this form of discrimination?

2. Will the Commission acknowledge caste discrimination as a cross-cutting human rights and development concern, and take steps in cooperation with the EEAS to develop strategies at all levels for its elimination; enhancing analyses and implementation through a rights-based approach?

3. What measures will the Commission take in the planning, implementation and evaluation of future development aid to caste-affected countries to ensure that aid contributes to the elimination of caste-based discrimination and alleviates its negative consequences?

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

The fight against discrimination on any ground is mainstreamed in EU development cooperation policy and programmes since the 'The European Consensus on Development' (2005) which identified non-discrimination among the cross-cutting issues to be tackled by the EU in its external relations.

On this basis, EU regularly addresses discrimination based on caste in its political dialogues with third countries where the problem exist. The EU is also active in UN forums on the promotion and protection of the rights of people affected by any kind of discrimination, including class divisions in society. It uses a wide range of financial and technical cooperation instruments, including bilateral cooperation with governments and direct support to civil society, to promote and protect the rights of persons belonging to any kind of discriminated groups.

In annex you will find some examples of EU supported programmes and policies that are targeted at fighting against caste-related discrimination or that have a potential impact in this area.

Finally the EU supports civil society organisations working for the protection and promotion of the rights of persons belonging to groups discriminated on any ground, including caste, in particular through the EIDHR. The promoted activities aim essentially at contributing to combating discrimination, at developing equal participation in the social, economic and political life within the broader context of strengthening human rights, political pluralism and democratic political participation.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007294/12
to the Commission
Michael Cashman (S&D)
(19 July 2012)

Subject: Rights of persons with disabilities and the upcoming Communication on social protection in EU development cooperation

On 23 January 2011, the European Union signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). This is the first human rights treaty concluded by the EU, which is the only regional integration organisation to have ratified it.

This underlines the EU's will to fight violations of the rights of more than one billion people living with one or more disabilities worldwide and its determination to promote the full participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of life in accordance with the principle of respect for the fundamental rights of all, without any discrimination.

The CRPD is also a development instrument, and international cooperation plays an essential role in ensuring full respect for the rights of all people with disabilities. Approximately 80% of people with disabilities worldwide live in developing countries, where they often belong to the most marginalised population groups. In this context, social protection is of paramount importance with a view to putting into practice the principle of non-discrimination against people with disabilities, and offers them the opportunity to live a life of dignity. On the one hand, social protection schemes can help to cover the higher costs arising from a disability, which are not affordable for individuals (e.g. devices and accessible transportation). On the other hand, social protection should enable people with disabilities to participate fully in the life of the community (e.g. through access to education, the labour market and employment).

This is even more important in poor communities, where people with disabilities barely have access to basic services and are often excluded from the life of the community.

Against this backdrop, as the biggest donor worldwide and as a party to the CRPD, the EU has an important role to play in ensuring that social protection schemes targeting people with disabilities become an important feature of its development cooperation.

1. How does the Commission intend to address the rights and needs of people with disabilities in the upcoming Communication on social protection in EU development cooperation?

2. More generally, will the Commission ensure that everybody is covered by this communication, irrespective of their sex, gender identity, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, age, disability, disease and sexual orientation?

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

The communication on Social Protection in EU Development Cooperation, adopted on 20 August 2012 ([1]), affirms the important role of social protection in supporting inclusive development, based on the values of the provision of social protection in the European Union as contained in Art. 34 of its Charter of Fundamental Rights.

The new Communication strongly endorses the 'Recommendation Concerning National Floors of Social Protection', which was adopted at the 2012 International Labour Conference (ILC). The recommendation states that social protection floors should comprise a set of basic social security guarantees, including 'basic income security, at least to a nationally defined minimum level, for persons in active age who are unable to earn sufficient income, in particular in cases of sickness, unemployment, maternity and disability'. It calls on all members of the ILC to apply the principles of non-discrimination, gender equality and responsiveness to special needs.

The communication states that the EU should support social inclusion, social cohesion and equity through policy dialogue with partner governments to develop social protection systems that aim to give equal access to all, with particular attention to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people, including persons with disabilities. With respect to employment and job creation, the communication states that the EU should support national programmes to improve the employment opportunities of vulnerable and marginalised groups, such as persons with disabilities.

([1]) COM(2012) 446.

The communication affirms the role of universal social protection to enhance the capacity of 'all people', i.e. irrespective of age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, etc.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007295/12
to the Commission
Marian Harkin (ALDE)
(19 July 2012)

Subject: Call for proposal on European Partnership on Sports

Does the Commission recognise that a new criterion in the annual European Partnership on Sports, whereby a minimum of 20% of the total eligible cost of the action has to be provided by one or more private third parties, is such that very many partnerships will not be able to access funding of this magnitude from third-party private sources and will therefore be unable to participate in the programme?

On what basis was this new criterion introduced, and can the Commission outline what consultation took place on this matter?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(4 September 2012)

The 2012 call for proposals 'Preparatory Action: European Partnership on Sports' was open for submission until 31 July 2012. By 7 August the Commission had received almost 70 applications. Approximately half of them include duly signed confirmations of private third-party funding representing 20% of the total eligible costs.

The new requirement concerning private third-party funding in the 2012 call for proposals is a test exercise in view of the implementation of the proposed 'Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport 2014-2020: Erasmus for All'. It is premature at this early stage for the Commission to say whether or not this new criterion will act as an incentive or as a disincentive. However, the Commission will certainly consider this aspect carefully when planning future calls for proposals in the field of sport.

The idea of private third-party funding was the object of informal consultations during meetings between the Commission and relevant stakeholders.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-007296/12
til Kommissionen
Britta Thomsen (S&D)
(19. juli 2012)

Om: Tilgodehavender hos Kommissionen i forbindelse med 6. eller 7. forskningsrammeprogram

Jeg er blevet opmærksom på, at det kan være meget svært at få udbetalt tilgodehavender hos kommissionen i forbindelse med projekter under det 6. og 7. forskningsrammeprogram. Jeg ønsker derfor at stille følgende spørgsmål:

1. I hvor mange procent af forskningsprojekterne tilbageholdes betalingerne længere end 6 måneder efter afsluttende afrapportering i de to forskningsprogrammer?

2. Hvor lang tid går der i gennemsnit fra projektperioden er afsluttet til alle projekternes tilgodehavender hos kommissionen er udbetalt?

3. Hvor mange procent af de bevilgede projektmidler er udbetalt 2 år efter projekterne er afsluttet og afrapporteret?

4. Hvad vil kommissionen gøre for at fremskynde udbetalingerne af projektmidlerne og øge tilliden til, at tilgodehavender udbetales inden for en rimelig tidsfrist?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Máire Geoghegan-Quinn
(11. oktober 2012)

Der foretages hvert år omkring 10 000 udbetalinger i de seks tjenestegrene og tre agenturer i Kommissionen, der beskæftiger sig med udbetalinger af bevillinger inden for RP6 og RP7 ([1]). Langt størstedelen er blevet udbetalt til tiden i overensstemmelse med tidsfristerne i bevillingsaftalerne: inden for 45 dage ved forfinansiering efter undertegning af bevillingen og inden for 90 dage i RP6 eller 105 dage ved de mellemliggende og endelige betalinger i RP7. Disse betalingsfrister omfatter den tid, der ifølge reglerne er afsat til godkendelse af videnskabelige rapporter, og den tid, der går med kontrol og udbetaling af omkostningsgodtgørelse ([2]).

I tilfælde, hvor betaling ikke sker inden for tidsfristen, og hvor forsinkelsen tilskrives Kommissionen, betaler Kommissionen enten automatisk morarenter til støttemodtageren (RP7) eller på anmodning fra støttemodtageren (RP6).

Kommissionen har iværksat forskellige typer foranstaltninger for at reducere forsinkelserne i udbetalingen, især hvad angår forenkling af de administrative opgaver og den mængde dokumenter, som konsortierne skal indsende (for RP7 og Horisont 2020 sammenlignet med RP6 og RP5), samt vedtagelse af den nye finansforordning, der lægger op til kortere betalingstidsfrister fra 2013 og fremefter.

Hvad angår de mulige årsager til forsinkelser i udbetalinger, er det i visse tilfælde nødvendigt at undersøge omkostningsopgørelserne yderligere for at sikre, at udbetalingerne er lovlige og formelt korrekte.

Udbetalingsfristerne kan kun overholdes, hvis støttemodtagerne indsender al den nødvendige dokumentation rettidigt, og dette er ikke altid tilfældet. Udbetalinger sker sædvanligvis til koordinator, når alle konsortiets medlemmer har indsendt den nødvendige dokumentation. Det er ofte nødvendigt at tilbageholde udbetalingen, fordi nogle støttemodtagere, til skade for resten af konsortiet, ikke har indsendt den påkrævede dokumentation.

([1]) Sjette og syvende rammeprogram for forskning og teknologisk udvikling (RP6, 2002-2006 — RP7, 2007-2013).
([2]) Data vedrørende Generaldirektoratet for Forskning og Innovation er vedlagt under henvisning til det ærede medlems forespørgsel.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007296/12
to the Commission
Britta Thomsen (S&D)
(19 July 2012)

Subject: Claims against the Commission in connection with the 6th and 7th Research Framework Programmes

My attention has been drawn to the fact that it can be very difficult to obtain payment of claims against the Commission in connection with projects under the 6th and 7th Research Framework Programmes. That being so, I should like to ask the Commission the following questions:

1. In what percentage of research projects are payments withheld for more than six months after final reporting on these two research programmes?

2. What is the average time that elapses from the end of the project period until all claims against the Commission in respect of the projects are paid?

3. What percentage of authorised project funds are still unpaid two years after completion of and reporting on the projects?

4. What does the Commission propose to do to speed up the payment of project funds and increase confidence that claims will be paid within a reasonable time?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(11 October 2012)

About 10 000 payments are made each year by the six Commission services and three Agencies dealing with payment of grants from FP6 and FP7 ([1]). The large majority have been made on time, according to the deadlines set in the grant agreements: within 45 days for pre-financing after the signature of the grant and 90 days for FP6 or 105 days for FP7 interim & final payments. These payment times combine the regulatory time allowed for approval of scientific reports and for verification and payment of cost claims ([2]).

Whenever a payment is not made within the time limit, and when the delay is attributable to the Commission, the Commission either automatically pays late interest to the beneficiary (FP7) or upon the beneficiary request (FP6).

The Commission has taken different types of actions to reduce the payment delays, notably the simplification of the administrative tasks and documents requested from the consortia (for FP7 and Horizon 2020, compared to FP6 and FP5) and the adoption of the new Financial Regulation that foresees from 2013 onwards shorter payment delays.

As regards possible reasons for delays in payments, cost claims require in certain cases further analysis in order to ensure legality and regularity.

The respect of the time limits requires first that beneficiaries submit all the necessary justification documents in due time, which is not always the case. Payments are usually made to the coordinator when all beneficiaries of the consortium have submitted the necessary documentation. It often happens that the payment must be withheld as some beneficiaries, in detriment of the rest of the consortium, have not submitted the required documentation.

([1]) Sixth and Seventh Framework for Research and Technological Development (FP6, 2002-2006 — FP7, 2007-2013).
([2]) Data for the Research and Innovation Directorate General are attached further to the Honorable Member's requests.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007297/12
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Mario Mauro (PPE)
(19 luglio 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Violazione diritti dell'uomo in Cina

La Russia questa settimana si pronuncerà attraverso la Corte Suprema per rivedere il caso della messa al bando dei materiali stampati per la pratica del Falun Gong, il movimento spirituale osteggiato e censurato dal governo cinese. È indubbio che la discriminazione, in qualunque modo si manifesti, sia una palese violazione dei diritti dell'uomo. La libertà religiosa e culturale è fondamentale, e cercare di limitarla, o addirittura di abolirla, è un delitto da perseguire e condannare fermamente.

Al fine di sostenere la lotta che nel mondo si svolge a sostegno di tale libertà ed in particolare per esercitare pressioni nei confronti della Russia.

Si chiede pertanto al Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante:

1. Ha preso iniziative per tutelare la libertà d'azione di Falun Gong?

2. In quali sedi è disposta a battersi per la tutela della libertà religiosa, tenendo conto anche delle recenti stragi perpetrate in Nigeria e in Kenya contro i cristiani?

3. È disposto a condizionare il principio della difesa dei diritti umani alla sottoscrizione di accordi commerciali con i paesi che questi diritti non garantiscono?

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

1. L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente nutre viva preoccupazione per le severe restrizioni imposte dalla Cina alla pratica del Falun Gong e ha ripetutamente manifestato tale posizione alla Cina. Durante l'ultima sessione del dialogo UE-Cina sui diritti umani, nel maggio 2012, l'Unione europea ha ribadito la propria preoccupazione per le lunghe pene detentive inflitte ai praticanti del Falun Gong soltanto per aver espresso il loro credo; ha inoltre sottolineato la propria inquietudine per le notizie di un prolungato isolamento detentivo di praticanti del Falun Gong in campi di rieducazione attraverso il lavoro.

2. Per quanto riguarda le restrizioni imposte al movimento dalla Russia, l'Unione solleva regolarmente nei dialoghi con la Russia questioni relative alla libertà di espressione e di religione, all'applicazione della legge contro l'estremismo e al diritto a un equo processo. In particolare, durante le ultime consultazioni con la Russia in materia di diritti umani si è parlato dell'uso e dell'abuso della legge contro l'estremismo. Il 20 luglio 2012, l'UE ha menzionato l'elenco delle pubblicazioni estremiste stilato dal ministero della Giustizia e il trattamento riservato ai seguaci del Falun Gong; sta attualmente controllando il procedimento giudiziario in corso presso la Corte suprema russa riguardante i testi banditi del Falun Gong.

L'Unione europea affronta la questione della libertà di religione o di credo tanto nelle sue relazioni bilaterali con i paesi terzi quanto in consessi multilaterali come le Nazioni Unite e sta consolidando la sua azione in materia tramite l'elaborazione di linee guida, che saranno presentate al Consiglio in vista della loro adozione alla fine del 2012.

3. L'Unione cerca di promuovere i diritti dell'uomo in tutti gli aspetti delle sue politiche esterne, compresa quella commerciale. Tutti gli accordi quadro politici con paesi terzi contengono una clausola relativa ai diritti umani e a partire del 2009 l'UE ha cercato di assicurare che gli accordi commerciali siano collegati a tale clausola tramite un'apposita clausola passerella.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007297/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Mario Mauro (PPE)
(19 July 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Violation of human rights in China

The Supreme Court in Russia will this week review the ban on books containing teachings on Falun Gong, the spiritual movement opposed and censured by the Chinese Government. There can be no doubt that discrimination, whatever the form it might take, is a blatant violation of human rights. Religious and cultural freedom is a fundamental right and any attempt to curtail it, let alone abolish it, is a crime that should be met with firm action and strong condemnation.

It is important to support the worldwide struggle being waged for this freedom and in particular to exert pressure on Russia. That being the case:

1. Has the Vice-President/High Representative taken steps to safeguard Falun Gong's freedom of action?

2. In which forums is she prepared to fight to protect religious freedom, bearing in mind also the recent massacres of Christians in Nigeria and Kenya?

3. Is she willing to let the principle of defence of human rights be constrained by the signing of trade agreements with countries that do not respect these rights?

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

1. The HR/VP is profoundly concerned at the severe restrictions imposed by China upon the practice of Falun Gong; the EU has repeatedly raised these concerns with China. At the EU-China human rights dialogue in May 2012, the EU reiterated its concerns at long prison sentences imposed on Falun Gong practitioners for having expressed their beliefs and underlined its anxiety at reports of prolonged solitary confinement of Falun Gong practitioners in Re-Education through Labour camps.

2. Concerning restrictions imposed on Falun Gong by the Russia, the EU regularly raises freedom of expression and of religion, the application of anti-extremism legislation and fair trial issues with Russia. The EU has raised the issue of the use and abuse of the Law on Anti-Extremism during the last human rights consultations with Russia. On 20 July 2012, the EU raised the Ministry of Justice's list of extremist publications and the treatment of Falun Gong practitioners. The EU is monitoring the ongoing judicial proceedings before the Russian Supreme Court concerning banned Falun Gong publications.

The EU raises freedom of religion or belief in its bilateral relations with third countries and multilateral forums such as the UN. The EU is currently consolidating its action on freedom of religion or belief through the elaboration of EU Guidelines (to be presented for adoption by the Council at the end of 2012).

3. The EU seeks to promote human rights through all aspects of its external policies, including trade. All political framework agreements with third countries contain a human rights clause, and since 2009, the EU has sought to ensure that trade agreements are linked to the human rights clause through an appropriate passerelle clause.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-007299/12
alla Commissione
Alfredo Pallone (PPE)
(19 luglio 2012)

Oggetto: Calamità naturali in Italia

Nel mese di febbraio 2012 in alcune regioni italiane si sono verificati fenomeni atmosferici eccezionali con temperature particolarmente rigide e nevicate d'intensità e durata del tutto fuori dalla norma. In alcune aree del Lazio e dell'Abruzzo queste calamità hanno causato ingenti danni, oltre che ad abitazioni e beni privati, anche al tessuto produttivo e alle infrastrutture di rete per energia, acqua, comunicazioni o viabilità. L'agricoltura è stata particolarmente colpita, anche a causa del gelo di alcune piante, quali ad esempio l'ulivo, non adatte a climi eccessivamente rigidi.

1. Ritiene la Commissione che anche l'Europa debba mostrarsi solidale con le aree maggiormente colpite, e coprire parte dei costi di ripristino delle infrastrutture a sostegno della ripresa dell'economia, con particolare riguardo ai settori più colpiti quali quello agricolo?

2. Risulta alla Commissione che a seguito di tali eventi climatici il governo italiano abbia presentato domanda, con relativa documentazione istruttoria, per poter beneficiare del fondo europeo di solidarietà per le calamità naturali?

3. Qualora questa domanda sia stata presentata, può la Commissione indicare le regioni o aree geografiche italiane cui fa riferimento e l'iter amministrativo in cui tale pratica si trova?

Risposta di Johannes Hahn a nome della Commissione
(10 agosto 2012)

L'obiettivo del Fondo di solidarietà dell'UE è concedere un'assistenza finanziaria per le calamità che provocano un danno diretto superiore a una soglia piuttosto elevata la quale è fissata attualmente per l'Italia a 3,6 miliardi di euro (3 miliardi di euro a prezzi del 2002). Il danno dichiarato dalle autorità italiane è di quasi 1 miliardo di euro inferiore a tale soglia. Per calamità più piccole il fondo può essere mobilitato soltanto in casi estremamente eccezionali se è soddisfatta una serie di condizioni rigorose quanto agli effetti della catastrofe sulle condizioni di vita e sulla stabilità economica dell'area colpita considerata nel suo insieme. Il regolamento fa obbligo alla Commissione di applicare tali criteri «col massimo rigore». In tutti i casi l'aiuto del Fondo di solidarietà può essere usato soltanto per coprire i costi delle operazioni d'emergenza delle autorità pubbliche non assicurabili. Non può essere indennizzato il danno privato, compreso quello delle imprese e dell'agricoltura.

Il 5 aprile 2012 le autorità italiane hanno presentato una domanda d'aiuto del Fondo di solidarietà in relazione alla catastrofe causata dalle gravi condizioni invernali nel febbraio 2012 che hanno interessato 11 regioni italiane (Abruzzo, Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Emilia Romagna, Lazio, Marche, Molise, Puglia, Toscana, Umbria). Il 21 giugno sono state presentate informazioni addizionali. La Commissione intende adottare fra breve la propria decisione in merito alla domanda.

Gli agricoltori possono ricevere un sostegno tramite i programmi di sviluppo rurale cofinanziati dal Fondo europeo agricolo per lo sviluppo rurale ([1]) nell'ambito della Misura 126 — Ripristino del potenziale produttivo agricolo danneggiato da calamità naturali e introduzione di adeguate misure di prevenzione. La regione Lazio si è avvalsa di tale possibilità in seguito alle eccezionali nevicate del 2012; l'Abruzzo ha fatto altrettanto in seguito al sisma del 2009.

([1]) Regolamento (CE) n. 1698/2005 sul sostegno allo sviluppo rurale da parte del Fondo europeo agricolo per lo sviluppo rurale (FEASR).

(English version)

Question for written answer P-007299/12
to the Commission
Alfredo Pallone (PPE)
(19 July 2012)

Subject: Natural disasters in Italy

In February 2012 some Italian regions experienced extreme weather conditions with extremely cold temperatures and totally abnormal snowfalls, in both intensity and duration. In some areas of Lazio and Abruzzo these disasters caused extensive damage, not only to homes and private property but also to businesses and energy, water, communications and road infrastructure. Agriculture was particularly hard hit, partly because some plants, such as olive trees, which are unsuitable for excessively cold climates, froze.

1. Does the Commission not agree that Europe, too, should show solidarity with the most severely affected areas, and cover some of the costs of restoring infrastructure to support economic recovery, particularly with regard to the most hard-hit sectors such as agriculture?

2. Can the Commission say whether, following these weather events, the Italian Government submitted an application, with supporting documents, for funding from the European Union Solidarity Fund for natural disasters?

3. If it did, can the Commission specify which Italian regions or geographical areas are concerned and what stage of the administrative procedure has been reached by the application?

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

The objective of the EU Solidarity Fund is to grant financial assistance for disasters where total direct damage exceeds a high threshold, which for Italy is currently set at EUR 3.6 billion (EUR 3 billion in 2002 prices). The damage declared by the Italian authorities remains almost EUR 1 billion below that threshold. For smaller disasters the Fund can only be mobilised very exceptionally if a number of strict conditions are met relating to the effects of the disaster on living conditions, and the economic stability of the disaster stricken area as a whole. The regulation obliges the Commission to apply these criteria 'with the utmost rigour'. In any event, Solidarity Fund aid may only be used to help cover the costs of non-insurable emergency operations of the public authorities. Private damage, including to businesses and agriculture may not be compensated.

On 5 April 2012 the Italian authorities submitted an application for Solidarity Fund aid relating to the disaster caused by the severe winter conditions in February 2012 concerning 11 Italian regions (Abruzzo, Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Emilia Romagna, Lazio, Marche, Molise, Puglia, Toscana, Umbria). On 21 June additional information was presented. The Commission intends adopting its decision on the application shortly.

Farmers can be supported via Rural Development Programmes co-funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development ([1]) under Measure 126 — Restoring agricultural production potential damaged by natural disasters and introducing appropriate prevention measures. The region of Lazio used this possibility following the exceptional snow fall in 2012; Abruzzo did so following the earthquake in 2009.

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007300/12
a la Comisión
Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo (S&D)
(19 de julio de 2012)

Asunto: Acuerdo de pesca de la UE con Marruecos

El pasado mes de diciembre se tomó la decisión de no prorrogar el acuerdo de pesca que mantenían de forma provisional la Unión Europea y Marruecos, y que afecta principalmente al sector pesquero español. En Canarias y Andalucía, sobre todo en la zona de Barbate, numerosas familias no pueden sobrevivir ni obtener ingresos de su actividad principal, la pesca, puesto que esta es una zona especialmente castigada por el desempleo creciente debido a la adaptación de la flota a las exigencias de la nueva política pesquera de la UE. Más de 600 embarcaciones, principalmente flota de pesca costera y artesanal han desaparecido en los últimos cinco años.

Es preciso actuar, y actuar con urgencia, diligencia y respeto a lo acordado de nuevo por el Parlamento. En este sentido miembros de la Dirección General de la Comisión Europea, representantes de España y de otros ocho Estados miembros, celebrarán una reunión con el Reino de Marruecos en marzo para avanzar en un nuevo acuerdo.

Estamos a finales de julio y aún no se ha obtenido ninguna respuesta positiva, por ello le pregunto:

1. ¿En qué estado se encuentran las negociaciones con Marruecos para alcanzar un nuevo acuerdo sobre el protocolo de pesca?

2. ¿Qué medidas se han tomado y se van a mantener para que los barcos españoles, sobre todo canarios y andaluces, los más afectados, pueden verse compensados económicamente mientras no pueden salir a pescar?

Respuesta de la Sra. Damanaki en nombre de la Comisión
(8 de octubre de 2012)

Tras recibir un mandato del Consejo para iniciar negociaciones con vistas a la posible celebración de un nuevo protocolo de pesca entre la UE y Marruecos, la Comisión organizó, el 26 de marzo de 2012, una reunión técnica preparatoria con representantes de España y de otros ocho Estados miembros.

Las conversaciones preliminares entre la Comisión y las autoridades marroquíes se iniciaron en Rabat en junio de 2012 y prosiguieron en Bruselas los días 18 y 19 de septiembre de 2012.

El Fondo Europeo de Pesca ([1]) puede contribuir a la financiación de medidas de ayuda por la paralización temporal de actividades pesqueras y las autoridades españolas han decidido hacer uso de los fondos disponibles a tal fin. Esta ayuda está limitada al 6 % de la ayuda financiera de la UE asignada al Estado miembro de que se trate. No obstante, a fin de reforzar la ayuda a la flota española afectada, la Comisión adoptó el 25 de abril de 2012 una Decisión ([2]) que permite a España rebasar el umbral del 6 % y que lo fija en el 12 %. Las disposiciones de aplicación son aprobadas a escala nacional y local y se invita a Su Señoría a que se ponga en contacto con las autoridades de gestión españolas ([3]) para más detalles.

([1]) Reglamento (CE) n° 1198/2006 del Consejo.
([2]) Decisión C(2012)2675 de la Comisión.
([3]) Dirección General de Ordenación Pesquera, Secretaría General del Mar, C/ Velázquez, n° 144, E-28071 MADRID. Tel: 34.91.347.60.52, correo electrónico: depesmar@mapa.es.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007300/12
to the Commission
Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo (S&D)
(19 July 2012)

Subject: EU fisheries agreement with Morocco

In December 2011, a decision was taken not to extend the provisional fisheries agreement between the EU and Morocco, the main beneficiary of which had been the Spanish fisheries sector. Many families in the Canary Islands and Andalucia, especially the Barbate area, are already unable to earn a living from fishing, their main profession. Rising unemployment levels resulting from the need to adapt fleets to the requirements of the new EU fisheries policy have hit these communities particularly hard. More than 600 vessels have ceased operations in the last five years alone, most of them from the coastal and small-scale fleet.

Urgent and responsible action needs to be taken to address this issue, in line with what has been agreed by Parliament. In this context, representatives of the Commission, Spain and eight other Member States planned to hold a meeting with Morocco in March to work towards a new agreement.

It is now the end of July and there has still been no satisfactory response.

1. What stage has been reached in the negotiations on a new EU-Morocco fisheries protocol?

2. What measures have been taken and will remain in place to ensure that Spanish vessels, particularly in the Canary Islands and Andalucia, receive financial compensation for this period when they cannot fish?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(8 October 2012)

After receiving a mandate to start negotiations from the Council, in view of a possible conclusion of a new EU-Morocco fisheries protocol, the Commission organised a preparatory technical meeting with representatives of Spain and eight other Member States on 26 March 2012.

Exploratory talks between the Commission and the Moroccan authorities started in Rabat in June 2012 and continued in Brussels on 18 and 19 September 2012.

The European Fisheries Fund ([1]) may contribute to the financing of aid measures for the temporary cession of fishing activities and the Spanish authorities decided to make use of the available funds for that purpose. This aid is limited to 6% of the EU financial assistance allocated to the Member State concerned. Nevertheless, in order to further support the affected Spanish fleet, the Commission adopted on 25 April 2012 a decision ([2]) allowing Spain to exceed the threshold of 6% and setting it to 12%. Detailed implementation modalities are decided at national and local level and the Honourable Member is invited to contact the Managing Authorities of Spain ([3]) for further detail.

([1]) Council Regulation 1198/2006.
([2]) Commission Decision C(2012) 2675.
([3]) Dirección General de Ordenación Pesquera, Secretaría General del Mar, C/ Velazquez 144, E — 28071 MADRID Tel: 34.91.347.60.52, email: depesmar@mapa.es.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007301/12
a la Comisión
Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo (S&D)
(19 de julio de 2012)

Asunto: Crisis internacional por la pesca en Gibraltar

La crisis internacional abierta por la negativa de Gibraltar a que los pescadores de la bahía de Algeciras trabajen junto al Peñón afecta a 300 familias de la zona con una pequeña actividad. De hecho, las pérdidas durante estos dos meses en los que no han podido faenar, según los responsables pesqueros, son de 80 000 euros.

Las traíñas de La Línea y Algeciras que faenan en estas aguas, son embarcaciones de entre 10 y 16 metros con entre tres y cinco tripulantes. Se dedican a la pesca del jurel, caballas, salmonetes y al marisqueo de la concha fina. Para ello, utilizan las artes de trasmallo, redes de cerco y en menor medida, palangre. Algunas de estas artes están prohibidas por la legislación europea y a ello se aferra Gibraltar para impedir que faenen en la bahía. Desde que se regularon las artes, un acuerdo privado permitía mantener la actividad de esta flota, que tiene mínima capacidad de capturas.

A esta pesca se dedican unos 70 barcos artesanales, pero en la zona de conflicto no salen a faenar más que cuatro a diario. El mantenimiento de estos pesqueros oscila entre los 4 000 y los 6 000 euros mensuales y los armadores insisten en que necesitan trabajar para hacer frente a los pagos, principalmente de la seguridad social de los marineros.

De la flota artesanal, 53 barcos pertenecen al puerto de La Línea y una docena al de Algeciras, faenan en aguas del litoral andaluz entre Estepona (Málaga) y las aguas próximas a Gibraltar «de toda la vida», como dicen los pescadores.

El acuerdo de 1999 entre los pescadores de Gibraltar disponía que se podría faenar a 225 metros de la costa, en un número no superior a 4 barcos y sin obstaculizar la entrada y salida en las bocanas del puerto del Peñón de este pacto han estado, hasta ahora viviendo los pescadores.

Ante estos hechos, ¿tiene pensado la Comisión tomar alguna medida para mediar y resolver esta situación?

Respuesta de la Sra. Damanaki en nombre de la Comisión
(27 de septiembre de 2012)

La Comisión remite a Su Señoría a la respuesta dada a la pregunta escrita E-006085/2012 ([1]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007301/12
to the Commission
Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo (S&D)
(19 July 2012)

Subject: International Gibraltar fishing crisis

The international crisis caused by Gibraltar's refusal to allow fishermen from the Bay of Gibraltar to work close to the Rock affects 300 families in the area who carry out small-scale activities, as fishermen's representatives put the total losses incurred during the two months they have been unable to fish at some EUR 80 000.

The vessels from La Línea and Algeciras fishing these waters are small boats of between 10 and 16 metres with a crew of three to five. They fish for horse mackerel, mackerel, red mullet and clams (*concha fina*) using trammel nets, purse seines and, to a lesser extent, longlines. Some of these types of fishing gear are banned by European legislation and Gibraltar is sticking to this legislation to ban fishing in the bay. Since this gear was regulated, a private agreement has enabled this fleet, which has a minimal catch capacity, to maintain its activity.

There are around 70 small vessels involved in this type of fishing, but no more than 4 vessels leave port each day to fish in the disputed area. The cost of maintaining these vessels fluctuates between EUR 4 000 and 6 000 a month and the shipowners insist that they have to work in order to cover their payments, primarily the fishermen's social security contributions.

53 vessels in this fleet belong to the port of La Línea and a dozen to Algeciras, and the fishermen say they have been fishing the waters of the Andalusian coast between Estepona (Málaga) and the waters close to Gibraltar 'all their lives'.

The 1999 agreement between the fishermen and Gibraltar laid down that fishing was permitted up to 225 metres from the coast for no more than 4 fishing boats and without obstructing the entrance and exit of the openings to the Rock's port. The fishermen have, to date, been living off this agreement.

Given the above, does the Commission intend to take any steps to mediate and resolve the situation?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(27 September 2012)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-006085/2012 ([1]).

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

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007302/12
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(19 de julio de 2012)

Asunto: Incumplimiento de la Directiva relativa a la conservación de las aves silvestres, por parte del Gobierno autonómico valenciano

El pasado 10 de julio de 2012, el Gobierno autonómico valenciano publicó la Orden de Caza para la temporada 2012-13, que determina los periodos hábiles de caza y establece las vedas especiales de esta temporada. En la disposición adicional tercera de la Orden, ha regulado por primera vez la caza de la tórtola turca (*streptopelia decaocto*), a pesar de que el propio texto reconoce que se trata de una especie no cinegética. La caza de la tórtola turca está protegida por la Directiva 2009/147/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo relativa a la conservación de las aves silvestres y por el Convenio de Berna y, por lo tanto, está catalogada como no cinegética.

Aun así, el Gobierno autonómico justifica la inclusión de la tórtola turca en la Orden de Caza como una medida de control contra una especie que, según el Decreto 213/2009, de 20 de noviembre, está catalogada como exótica invasora por la Generalitat Valenciana. Por este motivo, según la Consejería, este año se podrá cazar la *streptopelia decaocto* en cualquier espacio cinegético de manera simultánea a la práctica de modalidades o técnicas de caza menor que cuentan con autorización.

Ante esta vulneración de la citada Directiva, ¿qué medidas piensa adoptar la Comisión?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(4 de septiembre de 2012)

La especie *Streptopelia decaocto* figura en la parte 2 del anexo II de la Directiva 2009/147/CE ([1]). Con arreglo a las disposiciones del artículo 7 de esta Directiva, las especies mencionadas en la parte 2 del anexo II podrán cazarse únicamente en los Estados indicados al respecto. España no figura en la parte 2 del anexo II para esta especie.

No obstante, con arreglo al artículo 9, los Estados miembros podrán establecer excepciones a lo dispuesto en el artículo 7, entre otras cosas si no existe ninguna otra solución satisfactoria, previa demostración de que se aplica cualquiera de las razones contempladas en ese artículo. Los Estados miembros deben enviar a la Comisión un informe anual sobre la aplicación del artículo 9. La Comisión adoptará las medidas adecuadas para garantizar que las consecuencias de estas excepciones no sean incompatibles con la Directiva 2009/147/CE.

La Comisión ha solicitado información a las autoridades españolas acerca de otros extremos del Decreto a que se refiere Su Señoría. La Comisión ampliará su solicitud al tema planteado en la pregunta escrita con el fin de aclarar que se cumplen correctamente las disposiciones de la Directiva 2009/147/CE.

([1]) Directiva 2009/147/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 30 de noviembre de 2009, relativa a la conservación de las aves silvestres (DO L 20 de 26.1.2010), 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-007302/12
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(19 July 2012)

Subject: Valencian regional government's failure to comply with the Birds Directive

On 10 July 2012, the Valencian regional government published its Hunting Decree for the 2012-13 season, which determines the hunting periods and special closures during this season. The third additional provision of this Decree regulates, for the first time, hunting of the Eurasian Collared Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*), even though the text itself recognises that this is not a game species. Hunting of the Eurasian Collared Dove is protected by Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and Council on the conservation of wild birds and by the Berne Convention and this dove is, therefore, classified as a non-game species.

Nonetheless, the regional government justifies the inclusion of the Eurasian Collared Dove in the Hunting Decree as a control measure against a species that, according to Decree 213/2009 of 20 November 2009, is listed as an invasive alien species by the Valencian regional government. For this reason, according to the regional Ministry, *Streptopelia decaocto* can this year be hunted in any hunting area at the same time as any authorised small game hunting methods or techniques are employed.

What measures does the Commission intend to take against this breach of the aforementioned Directive?

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

The species Streptopelia decaocto is listed in Annex II/2 of Directive 2009/147/EC ([1]). According to the provisions of Article 7 of this directive the species referred to in Annex II/2 may be hunted only in the Member States in respect of which they are indicated. Spain is not indicated in Annex II/2 for this species.

However, under Article 9 Member States may derogate from the provisions of Article 7, among others, where there is no other satisfactory solution, proven that any of the reasons listed in this article applies. Member States must send an annual report to the Commission on the implementation of Article 9. The Commission shall take the appropriate steps to ensure that the consequences of these derogations are not incompatible with the directive 2009/147/EC.

The Commission has asked information to the Spanish authorities concerning other issues stated in the regional order mentioned by the Honourable Member. The Commission will extend its request to the subject raised in this written question in order to clarify that the provisions of the directive 2009/147/EC are adequately respected.

([1]) 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.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007304/12
an die Kommission
Jutta Steinruck (S&D)
(19. Juli 2012)

Betrifft: Umsetzung der Richtlinie 2008/104/EG

In der Richtlinie 2008/104/EG wird verfügt, dass die wesentlichen Arbeits- und Beschäftigungsbedingungen der Leiharbeitnehmer mindestens denjenigen entsprechen müssen, die für sie gelten würden, wenn sie von diesem Unternehmen für den gleichen Arbeitsplatz eingestellt worden wären. Ausdrücklich wird in der Richtlinie auf den Gleichstellungsgrundsatz („Equal Pay, Equal Treatment") Bezug genommen. Die vollständige und korrekte Umsetzung hätte bis zum 5. Dezember letzten Jahres vorgenommen werden müssen.

Die Regierung der Bundesrepublik Deutschland hat die Richtlinie sehr mangelhaft umgesetzt und bisher kein Gesetz verabschiedet, welches die Gleichstellung von Stammbelegschaft und Leiharbeitern gesetzlich verankert. Der „Equal Pay, Equal Treatment"-Grundsatz wurde nicht in das Gesetz mit aufgenommen. Weiterhin ist in das in Deutschland zur Umsetzung der Richtlinie erlassene Gesetz eine „Drehtürklausel" mit aufgenommen worden, die bewirkt, dass Beschäftigte entlassen werden können und anschließend als Leiharbeiter zu schlechteren Arbeitsbedingungen und Löhnen wieder eingestellt werden können.

1. Wie will die Kommission die mangelhafte Umsetzung der Richtlinie in Deutschland korrigieren?

2. Ist der Kommission bewusst, dass bei der Umsetzung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland der„Equal Pay, Equal Treatment"-Grundsatz, wie in der Richtlinie gefordert, nicht übernommen wurde?

3. Was wird die Kommission unternehmen, damit die „Drehtürklausel" in Deutschland für rechtswidrig erklärt wird?

4. Wird die Kommission vor dem offiziellen Überprüfungstermin am 5. Dezember 2013 zur korrekten Umsetzung der Richtlinie eine Kontrolle der rechtmäßigen Umsetzung der Richtlinie 2008/104/EG in Deutschland vornehmen?

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

1/3/4. Die Richtlinie 2008/104/EG ([1]) wurde durch das „erste Gesetz zur Änderung des Arbeitnehmerüberlassungsgesetzes — Verhinderung von Missbrauch der Arbeitnehmerüberlassung" vom 28. April 2011 in deutsches Recht umgesetzt. Die Kommission prüft derzeit, ob die Richtlinie in Deutschland und den anderen Mitgliedstaaten vollständig und richtig umgesetzt wurde. Sollte ein Mitgliedstaat seinen Verpflichtungen aus dem EU-Recht nicht nachgekommen sein, so kann die Kommission gegen diesen Mitgliedstaat ein Vertragsverletzungsverfahren einleiten und gegebenenfalls den Gerichtshof der EU anrufen. Die Richtlinie sieht vor, dass die Kommission im Benehmen mit den Mitgliedstaaten und den Sozialpartnern auf EU-Ebene die Anwendung dieser Richtlinie bis zum 5. Dezember 2013 überprüft, um erforderlichenfalls die notwendigen Änderungen vorzuschlagen.

2. Der Kommission ist bekannt, dass die deutschen Rechtsvorschriften zur Umsetzung der Richtlinie über Leiharbeit in innerstaatliches Recht unter bestimmten Umständen die Möglichkeit einer Abweichung von den Grundsätzen der Gleichbehandlung und des gleichen Entgelts vorsehen. Diese Bestimmungen wird die Kommission sorgfältig prüfen.

([1]) Richtlinie 2008/104/EG des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 19. November 2008 über Leiharbeit, ABl. L 327 vom 5.12.2008, S. 9.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007304/12
to the Commission
Jutta Steinruck (S&D)
(19 July 2012)

Subject: Transposition of Directive 2008/104/EC

Directive 2008/104/EC lays down that the basic working and employment conditions of an undertaking's temporary agency workers shall be at least those that would apply if they had been recruited directly by that undertaking to occupy the same job. The directive refers explicitly to the principle of equal pay and equal treatment. The directive ought to have been fully and correctly transposed by 5 December 2011.

The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany has transposed the directive very inadequately and has not as yet adopted any act to enshrine in law the equal treatment of directly recruited and temporary agency workers. The principle of equal pay and equal treatment has not been included in the transposing act. The act transposing the directive in Germany also includes a 'revolving door clause' which enables employees to be dismissed and then re-hired as agency staff on less favourable working conditions and pay.

1. How does the Commission intend to remedy the inadequate transposition of the directive in Germany?

2. Is the Commission aware that, in transposing the directive, Germany has not taken over the principle of equal pay and equal treatment as called for in the directive?

3. What will the Commission do to ensure that the 'revolving door clauses' in Germany are declared illegal?

4. Will the Commission carry out a check of the lawful transposition of Directive 2008/104 in Germany before the official review date of 5 December 2013 for the correct transposition of the directive?

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

1/3/4. Directive 2008/104/EC ([1]) has been transposed into German law by the 'First Act amending the Temporary Agency Work Act — Prevention of Abuses of Temporary Agency Work' ('Erstes Gesetz zur Änderung des Arbeitnehmerüberlassungsgesetzes — Verhinderung von Missbrauch der Arbeitnehmerüberlassung') of 28 April 2011. The Commission is currently examining whether the provisions of the directive are fully and correctly implemented by Germany and the other Member States. Should a Member State fail to fulfil its obligations under EC law, the Commission may launch an infringement procedure against that Member State and, where necessary, may refer the case to the Court of Justice of the EU. The directive provides that by 5 December 2013, the Commission shall, in consultation with the Member States and social partners at EU level, review its application with a view to proposing, where appropriate, the necessary amendments.

2. The Commission is aware that the German legislation transposing the directive on temporary agency work into national law provides for the possibility, under certain conditions, to derogate from the principles of equal treatment and equal pay. These provisions will be examined carefully by the Commission.

([1]) Directive 2008/104/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on temporary agency work, OJ L 327, 5.12.2008, p. 9.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007305/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Maria Eleni Koppa (S&D)
(19 Ιουλίου 2012)

Θέμα: Κατάσταση στην Ανατολική Ιερουσαλήμ

Μεταξύ 15 και 18 Ιουλίου 2012, συμμετείχα σε αποστολή του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου στο Ισραήλ και την Παλαιστίνη και είχα την ευκαιρία να γνωρίσω από κοντά τη σκληρή πραγματικότητα που επικρατεί επιτόπου.

Ανάμεσα στις διάφορες συναντήσεις με επισήμους των δύο πλευρών, πραγματοποιήσαμε επαφές και με εκπροσώπους της Κοινωνίας των Πολιτών και Μη Κυβερνητικών Οργανώσεων, οι οποίοι παρουσίασαν την κατάσταση στην Ανατολική Ιερουσαλήμ και τη λεγόμενη Περιοχή Γ (Area C).

Ειδικότερα, τράβηξαν την προσοχή μου δύο καταγγελίες: α) η πρακτική παραποίησης τίτλων ιδιοκτησίας που ανήκουν σε Παλαιστινίους κατοίκους της Ιερουσαλήμ με αποτέλεσμα τη δήμευση αυτών των περιουσιών και β) η επιβολή λογοκρισίας στα αραβικά σχολικά βιβλία που προορίζονται για Παλαιστινίους της πόλης με αποτέλεσμα οι μαθητές να έχουν πρόβλημα κατά την αξιολόγησή τους σύμφωνα με το κεντρικά ελεγχόμενο εκπαιδευτικό σύστημα της Παλαιστινιακής Αρχής.

Καθώς παρόμοιες ενέργειες είναι αντίθετες προς τις προβλέψεις της 4ης Σύμβασης της Γενεύης καθώς και του Διεθνούς Συμφώνου για τα Οικονομικά, Κοινωνικά και Πολιτιστικά Δικαιώματα, δεδομένου δε ότι, τόσο στα Συμπεράσματα του Συμβουλίου της 14 Μαΐου 2012 όσο και στο ψήφισμα του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου της 5ης Ιουλίου 2012 σχετικά με την πολιτική της ΕΕ για τη Δυτική Όχθη και την Ανατολική Ιερουσαλήμ, επιβεβαιώνεται η προσήλωση της ΕΕ σε μία λύση δύο κρατών που θα έχουν ως πρωτεύουσά τους την Ιερουσαλήμ, ερωτάται η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή κατά πόσον προτίθεται να προβεί σε διαβήματα προς της αρμόδιες Ισραηλινές αρχές προκειμένου να σταματήσουν παρόμοιες πρακτικές, να υπάρξει επανόρθωση των πληγέντων, και να εξασφαλιστεί στην πράξη η βιωσιμότητα της λύσης των δύο κρατών;

Απάντηση της Ύπατης Εκπροσώπου/Αντιπροέδρου Ashton εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(27 Αυγούστου 2012)

Κατά το Συμβούλιο Εξωτερικών Υποθέσεων της 14ης Μαΐου, η ΕΕ εξέφρασε τη σοβαρή ανησυχία της για τις εξελίξεις στην Ανατολική Ιερουσαλήμ, στις οποίες περιλαμβάνονται οι συνεχιζόμενες εξώσεις και κατεδαφίσεις οικιών, οι μεταβολές στο καθεστώς διαμονής των Παλαιστινίων, η επέκταση των οικισμών Γκιβάτ Χαμάτος και Χαρ Χόμα και η παρεμπόδιση της άσκησης ειρηνικών πολιτιστικών, οικονομικών, κοινωνικών και πολιτικών δραστηριοτήτων από τους Παλαιστίνιους.

Η ΕΕ επανέλαβε ότι πρέπει να εξευρεθεί ένας τρόπος, μέσα από διαπραγματεύσεις, για τη διευθέτηση του καθεστώτος της Ιερουσαλήμ ως μελλοντικής πρωτεύουσας δύο κρατών. Έως τότε, η ΕΕ ζητά την ακριβοδίκαιη παροχή πόρων και υποδομών στον πληθυσμό της πόλης. Η ΕΕ ζητά την επανέναρξη της λειτουργίας των παλαιστινιακών φορέων στην Ιερουσαλήμ, όπως επιτάσσει ο οδικός χάρτης.

Η παραποίηση τίτλων ιδιοκτησίας, ανεξάρτητα από το αν επιχειρείται στην Ιερουσαλήμ, στο Ισραήλ ή στους ισραηλινούς οικισμούς της Δυτικής Όχθης, συνιστά παράνομη πρακτική με βάση το δίκαιο του Ισραήλ. Η ΕΕ αναμένει από τις δικαστικές αρχές του Ισραήλ να εξακολουθήσουν να επιλύουν κάθε νομική διαφορά σχετικά με την εγκυρότητα τίτλων ιδιοκτησίας επί ακινήτων στην Ανατολική Ιερουσαλήμ.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007305/12
to the Commission
Maria Eleni Koppa (S&D)
(19 July 2012)

Subject: Situation in East Jerusalem

Between 15 and 18 July 2012 I participated in a European Parliament delegation visit to Israel and Palestine and had the opportunity to become closely acquainted with the harsh realities on the ground.

In addition to various meetings with officials from both sides, we also met representatives of civil society and NGOs, who presented the situation in East Jerusalem and so-called Area C.

In particular, two complaints caught my attention: (a) the practice of forging title deeds belonging to Palestinian residents of Jerusalem resulting in the confiscation of their property; and (b) the censorship of Arab textbooks for Palestinians in Jerusalem so that students have problems when they come to be assessed under the Palestinian Authority's centralized educational system.

Given that such actions are contrary to the provisions of the fourth Geneva Convention and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and given also that both the Council conclusions of 14 May 2012 and the European Parliament's resolution of 5 July 2012 on EU policy on the West Bank and East Jerusalem confirm the EU's commitment to a two-state solution with Jerusalem as the capital of each state, will the Commission say whether it intends to make representations to the relevant Israeli authorities to prevent such practices, to right the wrongs that have been committed and to ensure the viability of a two-state solution in practice ?

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

At the Foreign Affairs Council on 14 May the EU expressed its deep concern at developments in East-Jerusalem, including the ongoing evictions and house demolitions, changes to the residency status of Palestinians, the expansion of Givat Hamatos and Har Homa, and the prevention of peaceful Palestinian cultural, economic, social or political activities.

The EU reiterated that a way must be found through negotiations to resolve the status of Jerusalem as the future capital of two states. Until then, the EU calls for an equitable provision of resources and investment to the city's population. The EU calls for the reopening of Palestinian institutions in Jerusalem in accordance with the Roadmap.

The forging of title deeds to property whether in Jerusalem, Israel or Israeli settlements in the West Bank, is illegal under Israeli law. The EU expects the Israeli judicial authorities to continue to resolve any dispute over the validity of title deeds of property in East Jerusalem.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007306/12
to the Commission
Charles Tannock (ECR)
(19 July 2012)

Subject: Increased bushmeat trade in Cameroon and alleged destruction of endangered wildlife by poachers

I have been contacted by a London constituent regarding reports of an increase in the bushmeat trade in Cameroon and the subsequent alleged loss of wildlife, based on the UK Channel 4 TV programme 'Unreported World'.

Apparently new roads are built by logging companies to facilitate their commercial activities and unfortunately these are then used by poachers to gain easy access to endangered species of wild animals such as gorillas, chimps and forest cats.

According to the constituent and the TV report, poachers allegedly kill gorilla mothers, eat them and sell their babies as pets. Rangers who try to protect the wildlife are unable to provide adequate protection as they are under-resourced, but it appears that the EU has granted funds in the past specifically for the protection of wildlife.

As Cameroon receives around EUR 250 million from the 10th European Development Fund, benefits from other African regional programmes and receives funding from the European Investment Bank, can the Commission raise these important and very disturbing issues of alleged increased slaughter of endangered wildlife and increased destruction of its habitats, and perhaps consider making the future allocation of EU funds conditional on better environmental and conservation standards?

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

The EU is very active on this issue, both through projects and through political dialogue with the authorities of Cameroon. In the case of the recent massacre of elephants in the Bouba Ndjida Park, the EU Head of Delegation wrote a letter to the Prime Minister immediately after the news of the events to call on the authorities to take urgent action.

More recently, the EU Delegation in Cameroon wrote to the Forest Ministry to express its deep concern regarding the attribution of natural resource-exploiting concessions in the Ngoyla-Mintom reserve. This forest area has received EU support for the reduction of deforestation and degradation by implementation of sustainable management in this tri-national (Cameroon, Congo-Brazzaville, Gabon) nature reserve area.

As for projects, one very important one is the regional programme known as 'ECOFAC V' for supporting Protected Areas in Central Africa. The current ECOFAC project foresees a specific intervention of EUR 4 million in Bouba N'Djida Park as well as neighbouring protected areas in Chad and is about to start in the coming months. Within the framework of this project, several project proposals have been submitted by conservation organisations in order to fight poaching and bush meat trade in protected areas.

Further, the EU strongly encourages the Government of Cameroon to cooperate with international organisations specialised in wildlife protection such as the International Consortium for Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC), which comprises five international organisations with expertise in law enforcement, wildlife trafficking and project management and is tasked with tackling transnational wildlife crime ([1]).

([1]) The Secretariat of the CITES Convention, Interpol, the World Customs Organisation (WCO), the UN Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the World Bank.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007307/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Charles Tannock (ECR)
(19 July 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Alleged desecration of non-Muslim heritage by extremist groups

I have been contacted by a constituent from the London Jewish community who is concerned about the alleged desecration of religious shrines and world heritage sites worldwide by extremist Islamist groupings.

My constituent is particularly concerned by the alleged continued desecration of the Temple Mount — Judaism's holiest site (also known as 'Har HaBayit' to Jews, and 'Haram el Sharif' to Muslims) — by the Waqf Islamic trust, as apparently reported by the Israeli news service Ynet.

These groups allegedly perpetrate such acts to further their own extremist agendas, by removing all signs of pre-Islamic history from these sites. From the Buddha statues of Afghanistan destroyed by the Taliban to the Sufi shrines in Timbuktu recently destroyed by Al Qaeda of the Islamic Maghreb, this is a tactic increasingly being used by extremist jihadi groupings across the world.

Can the Vice-President/High Representative give assurances that the EEAS will raise this serious matter in dialogue with the Palestinian Authority and anywhere else in the world where such tragic occurrences may be taking place?

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

Neither the HR/VP nor her services have any information concerning the possible desecration of the Temple Mount by the Islamic Waqf. The HR/VP would expect Israel as the occupying power to be particularly vigilant in this regard. Israel agreed to leave the administration of the site in the hands of the Waqf in connection to the extension of Israeli jurisdiction and administration over East Jerusalem following the 1967 Six-Day War. According to the Washington Declaration of 1994, signed by Jordan, Israel and the US, Israel respects the present special role of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in the Muslim holy shrines in Jerusalem. It is also recalled, that in the declaration, Israel and Jordan agreed to act together to promote interfaith relations among the three monotheistic religions.

The EU will carry on raising the issue of the destruction of religious and cultural heritage with the appropriate authorities, whenever necessary. Most recently, the HR/VP expressed her deep concerns about the wanton and ruthless destruction of mausoleums and holy shrines in Timbuktu, which appeared to be a deliberate attempt to destroy a valued and ancient part of the religious and cultural heritage not only of Mali's people but of the whole world. The HR/VP recalled that these sacred places of prayer, listed by Unesco as World Heritage, had to be protected now and for posterity, and condemned all such acts of destruction.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007308/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Charles Tannock (ECR)
(19 July 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Alleged miscarriage of justice in the Ahmed Ezz case in Egypt

A London constituent has brought to my attention the case of her father, Ahmed Ezz, who has been incarcerated in Egypt, where according to his daughter he has been subjected to systematic abuse and denial of his fundamental human rights and legal right to due process. During his first trial this was reportedly described as 'a stain on the reputation and conscience of Egyptian justice' by an international observer. My constituent has described her father, who was a prominent businessman during the government of President Mubarak, as a key reformist voice in the Egyptian parliament who is committed to a democratic evolution in his country of Egypt.

1. Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware, through the EU Delegation in Cairo, of this case and of the serious allegations of a gross miscarriage of justice and a politically motivated prosecution allegedly resulting from Mr Ezz's connections with the previous regime?

2. Can the EU Delegation in Cairo assess the fairness and transparency of the trial process and whether or not at any stage it has violated Mr Ezz's Egyptian constitutional rights and Egypt's international obligations under various UN covenants and agreements with the EU?

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

The HR/VP is aware of the imprisonment of Mr Ezz as well as of other businessmen, individuals and politicians following the Egyptian uprising on 25 January 2011 which led to the subsequent resignation of former President Mubarak and handing over of power to the transitional Supreme Council of Armed Forces. The EU, notably the HR/VP, Commissioner Füle and President Barroso, have repeatedly emphasised the importance of upholding basic human rights including the right to a fair trial by independent civilian courts in all its contacts with the interim Egyptian authorities. The respect of these fundamental human rights norms is an essential element in any modern democratic society to which the Egyptian population is striving.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007309/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)
(19 Ιουλίου 2012)

Θέμα: Εκποίηση και καταστροφή του ιστορικού παραθαλάσσιου πάρκου στη Βάρνα της Βουλγαρίας

Το παραθαλάσσιο πάρκο αποτελεί το παλαιότερο και γνωστότερο δημόσιο πάρκο της Βάρνας, καθώς και το μεγαλύτερο διαμορφωμένο πάρκο στα Βαλκάνια. Το πάρκο εκτείνεται κατά μήκος της ακτής της πόλης στη Μαύρη Θάλασσα και αποτελεί σημαντικό τουριστικό αξιοθέατο και εθνικό μνημείο αρχιτεκτονικής τοπίου ([1]). Πρόσφατα σημειώθηκαν μαζικές διαμαρτυρίες περίπου 2 000 πολιτών ενάντια στην πώληση του παραθαλάσσιου πάρκου σε εταιρείες που σχετίζονται με την κοινοπραξία TIM στο πλαίσιο ενός αμφιλεγόμενου επιχειρηματικού σχεδίου (έργο «Alley One»), το οποίο περιλαμβάνει την καταστροφή του τεράστιου παραθαλάσσιου χώρου περιπάτου του πάρκου, με σκοπό την ανέγερση επαγγελματικών ακινήτων ([2]). Οι διαμαρτυρίες αφορούν την παράνομη, σύμφωνα με τους πολίτες, εκποίηση τμημάτων του πάρκου, συμπεριλαμβανομένων παραλιών, καθώς και τη σχεδιαζόμενη ανέγερση κτιρίων στην έκταση και το τμήμα του πάρκου που είναι γνωστό ως περιοχή Σαλτανάτ. Αυτή η αστική διαφορά χρονολογείται από το 2009, όταν έξι ΜΚΟ άρχισαν να αμφισβητούν και να προσβάλλουν τις αποφάσεις σε διοικητικό επίπεδο, πρότειναν τροποποιήσεις στην ανάπτυξη του νέου γενικού πολεοδομικού σχεδίου, ενώ επίσης ειδοποίησαν τις εισαγγελικές αρχές και υπέβαλαν καταγγελία στην Επιτροπή για παράνομη κρατική ενίσχυση ([3]). Οι τιμές που καταβλήθηκαν για την αγορά γης θεωρούνται τουλάχιστον δέκα φορές χαμηλότερες από την πραγματική αγοραία τιμή. Οι εκτιμήσεις αυτές είναι πιθανόν ανακριβείς, δεδομένης της σκόπιμης απόκρυψης πληροφοριών από την Επαρχιακή Διοίκηση Βάρνας.

Οι εισαγγελικές αρχές δεν παρείχαν κανενός είδους πληροφορίες κατά τη διάρκεια των ελέγχων, ούτε όσον αφορά την εξέταση των εκτιμήσεων των εμπειρογνωμόνων, ούτε σχετικά με το αν έχουν πραγματοποιηθεί οποιοιδήποτε έλεγχοι. Για το λόγο αυτό, οι ΜΚΟ δεν μπόρεσαν να παράσχουν τις πληροφορίες που ζητήθηκαν από την Επιτροπή σε σχέση με αυτό το ζήτημα. Τα παραπάνω οδηγούν στο συμπέρασμα ότι το βουλγαρικό κράτος δεν επιθυμεί ή αδυνατεί να διευθετήσει την υπόθεση αυτή, η οποία εξακολουθεί να προκαλεί διαμαρτυρίες και δικαστικές αγωγές στη χώρα για τρίτο συνεχόμενο έτος.

1. Παρακολουθεί η Επιτροπή την υπόθεση και ποιες ενέργειες έχουν πραγματοποιηθεί σε σχέση με αυτήν; Θεωρεί η Επιτροπή αξιόπιστες τις πληροφορίες που έχουν υποβληθεί από την Επαρχιακή Διοίκηση Βάρνας;

2. Συμφωνεί η Επιτροπή ότι πρόκειται για υπόθεση παράνομης κρατικής ενίσχυσης;

3. Εφόσον είναι προφανές ότι οι βουλγαρικές αρχές δεν αναλαμβάνουν δράση, τι προτίθεται να κάνει η Επιτροπή;

Απάντηση του κ. Almunia εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(6 Σεπτεμβρίου 2012)

Η υπόθεση στην οποία αναφέρεται το Αξιότιμο Μέλος εξετάστηκε αναλυτικά από την Επιτροπή κατόπιν καταγγελίας που υπέβαλε ομάδα ΜΚΟ τον Δεκέμβριο του 2009. Σύμφωνα με την καταγγελία, ο δήμος της Βάρνας χορήγησε κρατική ενίσχυση με τη μορφή της πώλησης, τον Ιούνιο του 2009, οικοπέδου σε μια ιδιωτική επιχείρηση, τη Holding Varna AD, σε τιμή χαμηλότερη από την αγοραία αξία της και χωρίς προηγούμενη δημοσίευση προκήρυξης διαγωνισμού.

Σύμφωνα με τις πληροφορίες που υπέβαλαν οι βουλγαρικές αρχές, διενεργήθηκαν δύο εκ των προτέρων εκτιμήσεις της αξίας του επίμαχου οικοπέδου από ανεξάρτητους εμπειρογνώμονες και η πώληση πραγματοποιήθηκε στην υψηλότερη τιμή. Οι δύο εκτιμήσεις εμπειρογνωμόνων που υποβλήθηκαν στην Επιτροπή φάνηκαν αξιόπιστες και σύμφωνες με τη νομοθεσία περί κρατικών ενισχύσεων όσον αφορά την πώληση οικοπέδου από δημόσιες αρχές.

Οι υπηρεσίες της Επιτροπής, αφού ανέλυσαν όλα τα στοιχεία της υπόθεσης, έκριναν ότι δεν επρόκειτο για παράνομη κρατική ενίσχυση σύμφωνα με το άρθρο 107 παράγραφος 1 ΣΛΕΕ. Ως εκ τούτου, η υπόθεση περατώθηκε με επιστολή που εστάλη στον καταγγέλλοντα στις 26 Σεπτεμβρίου 2011.

([1]) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sea_Garden_%28Varna%29.
([2]) http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=138452 και http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=139203.
([3]) Αλληλογραφία με κοινοποίηση προς την Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή, ΓΔ Ανταγωνισμού, Μητρώο κρατικών ενισχύσεων, κωδικός μητρώου και ημερομηνία: CP402/2009 — Holding Varna A/26432 της 15.12.2009 σχετικά με το παραθαλάσσιο πάρκο, Βάρνα, Βουλγαρία.

Οι πληροφορίες που υποβλήθηκαν πρόσφατα, οι οποίες, μεταξύ άλλων, παραπέμπουν σε γεγονότα που συνέβησαν κάποια χρόνια μετά τη συναλλαγή, δεν παρέχουν νέα αποδεικτικά στοιχεία που να αποδεικνύουν ότι η συναλλαγή πραγματοποιήθηκε σε τιμή χαμηλότερη από την αγοραία αξία. Οι καταγγέλλοντες μάλλον καταγράφουν ορισμένες ανακρίβειες όσον αφορά τα αντικειμενικά στοιχεία στις ανατεθείσες από τις βουλγαρικές αρχές εκτιμήσεις, αλλά εξακολουθούν να μην υπάρχουν σαφείς ενδείξεις που να μεταβάλλουν τα κύρια συμπεράσματα των εκθέσεων των εμπειρογνωμόνων. Βάσει της αξιολόγησης αυτής, οι υπηρεσίες της Επιτροπής εκτιμούν ότι δεν συντρέχει λόγος να κινηθεί νέα έρευνα.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007309/12
to the Commission
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)
(19 July 2012)

Subject: The historic Sea Garden, Varna, Bulgaria, is being sold off and destroyed

The Sea Garden is Varna's largest, oldest and best-known public park, and the largest landscaped park in the Balkans. Located along the city's coast on the Black Sea, it is a major tourist attraction and a national monument of landscape architecture ([1]). Recently there have been massive civil protests by nearly 2 000 citizens against the selling off of the Sea Garden under a controversial business plan (Alley One project) by companies related to the TIM consortium, which involve the demolition of the vast park's seaside promenade to erect a number of business buildings ([2]). The protests concern parts of the garden, including beaches, which have been sold off illegally, according to the citizens, as well as proposed building on the land and the part of the garden known as the Saltanat area. This civil dispute dates back to 2009, when six NGOs started to question and challenge the decisions at administrative level, proposed amendments to the development of the new overall city plan, and alerted the prosecution service and filed a report with the Commission concerning illegal state aid ([3]). The prices paid for the land are believed to be at least ten times lower than the actual market price. These estimates are probably incorrect, given the deliberate withholding of information by the District Administration of Varna.

The prosecutors did not provide any information during their inspections, either on the examination of the expert assessments or indeed on whether anything at all has been checked, so that the NGOs were unable to provide the information requested by the Commission on this issue. All this suggests that the Bulgarian state is unwilling or unable to deal with this case, which continues to provoke protests and lawsuits in the country for the third year in succession.

1. Is the Commission monitoring this case, and what has been done about it? Does the Commission regard the information submitted to it by the District Administration of Varna as reliable?

2. Does the Commission agree that this is a case of illegal state aid?

3. What will the Commission do, given that it is obvious that no proper action is being taken by the Bulgarian authorities?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(6 September 2012)

The case to which the Honourable Member refers was analysed by the Commission following a complaint lodged by a group of NGOs in December 2009. The complaint alleged state aid given by the City of Varna in the form of selling in June 2009 land below its market value and without following the public tender procedure to a private undertaking, Holding Varna AD.

According to the information submitted by the Bulgarian authorities, the plot of land in question was valued by two *ex-ante* evaluations made by independent experts, and sold at the higher price. The two expert evaluations submitted to the Commission seemed to be reliable, and in line with state aid specific legislation regarding the sale of land by public authorities.

Having analysed all the information available in the file the Commission services found no ground for illegal state aid pursuant to Article 107(1) TFEU. The case was therefore closed following a letter sent to the complainant on 26 September 2011.

([1]) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sea_Garden_%28Varna%29.
([2]) http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=138452 and http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=139203.
([3]) Corresponding with a notification to the European Commission, DG Competition, State Aid Registry, Reg index and date: CP402/2009 — Holding Varna A/26432 of 15.12.2009 relating to the Sea Garden, Varna, Bulgaria.

The recently received new information, referring *inter alia* to elements that happened some years after transaction, does not provide any new evidence which proves that the transaction took place below market value. The complainant rather lists certain factual inaccuracies in the evaluations commissioned by the Bulgarian authorities but there are still no clear indications altering the main conclusions of those expert reports. In view of this assessment, the Commission services find no reason to re-open the investigation.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007311/12
to the Commission
Paul Murphy (GUE/NGL)
(19 July 2012)

Subject: Hazardous waste at Aughinish Alumina Rusal alumina plant

Can the Commission confirm that it believes that the contents of a red mud waste pond at the Aughinish Alumina Rusal alumina plant in Askeaton, Limerick, Ireland, are not hazardous and pose no environmental threat, bearing in mind that:

— the existing pond of 100 hectares contains anything from 25 to 50 million tonnes of waste;

— over 50 hectares of the pond have never been lined to prevent waste leakage into the Shannon Estuary, which has occurred every year since 1983;

— tonnes of the waste have blown from the red mud pond onto farmland since 1983.

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

The Commission is not yet in a position to determine whether the contents of the red mud waste pond at the Aughinish Alumina plant in Askeaton, County Limerick, should be considered hazardous. An investigation is currently ongoing on the nature and classification of the waste in this red mud pond. The Commission has yet to complete its assessment of the information received from the complainant and from the Irish authorities.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007314/12
alla Commissione
Mario Borghezio (EFD)
(19 luglio 2012)

Oggetto: Limitazione della libertà di stampa in Turchia

Il partito islamico nazionalista AKP ha presentato in Parlamento una proposta per limitare la libertà di stampa sancita dall'articolo 28 della Costituzione, il quale afferma che «la stampa è libera e non deve essere censurata». La proposta di Erdogan, al contrario, prevede limitazioni in nome «della protezione della sicurezza nazionale, dell'ordine pubblico, della morale pubblica, di altri diritti individuali, della privacy, per prevenire crimini, garantire l'imparzialità e l'indipendenza della giustizia, prevenire la propaganda per la guerra, le discriminazioni e i discorsi di odio».

La Commissione ha sempre sostenuto di esortare la Turchia a riformare la propria legislazione così come di continuare a sollevare la questione della libertà di espressione con le autorità turche e a monitorare da vicino gli ulteriori sviluppi.

Inoltre, la Commissione ha reputato incoraggiante l'annuncio fatto il 15.11.2011 dal governo turco e dal Segretario generale del Consiglio d'Europa Jagland sulla cooperazione volta a migliorare la situazione in materia di libertà di espressione.

1. Ritiene la Commissione evidente che le sue aspirazioni non sono state accolte dal governo turco?

2. Alla luce di quanto sopra descritto, come intende reagire?

3. Ritiene inoltre che l'iniziativa del governo di Erdogan dimostri ancora una volta quanto sia lontana la possibilità per la Turchia di aderire all'Unione europea?

Risposta di Štefan Füle a nome della Commissione
(4 settembre 2012)

Alla Commissione non risulta che esista un disegno di legge corrispondente a quello descritto dall'onorevole parlamentare.

La Commissione ricorda che i lavori su una nuova costituzione sono iniziati con la creazione di un comitato di conciliazione, che ha intrapreso la stesura del nuovo testo il 1° maggio, in seguito a consultazioni pubbliche con un'ampia gamma di parti interessate. Le deliberazioni si sono svolte a porte chiuse. A tutt'oggi il contenuto delle proposte dei partiti politici non è stato divulgato.

La libertà di espressione è un diritto fondamentale il cui rispetto è monitorato dalla Commissione nel valutare i progressi compiuti dalla Turchia verso la conformità con i criteri politici. L'UE ha sottolineato che il quadro giuridico per la lotta al terrorismo e alla criminalità organizzata attualmente in vigore in Turchia dà adito a frequenti violazioni del diritto alla libertà di espressione e deve essere modificato prima possibile. A tale riguardo, l'UE si augura che il quarto pacchetto di riforme giudiziarie annunciato sia iscritto rapidamente all'ordine del giorno del Parlamento e affronti alla radice le questioni suddette.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007314/12
to the Commission
Mario Borghezio (EFD)
(19 July 2012)

Subject: Restrictions on press freedoms in Turkey

The Islamist nationalist AKP party has tabled a bill in the Turkish Parliament seeking to restrict the freedom of the press established under Article 28 of the constitution, which states that 'the press is free, and shall not be censored'. Under the provisions of the bill brought forward by Mr Erdogan's government, restrictions could be placed on that freedom in order 'to protect national security, public order, public morality, other individual rights, privacy, to prevent crimes, safeguard impartiality and freedom of the judicial system, to prevent pro-war propaganda, discrimination and hate'.

The Commission has consistently maintained that it is urging Turkey to review its legislation and is continuing to raise the issue of freedom of expression with the Turkish authorities and to keep a close eye on developments in this area.

Furthermore, the Commission judged the statement on cooperation with a view to improving the situation as regards freedom of expression that was made on 15 November 2011 by the Turkish Government and the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe, Mr Jagland, to be encouraging.

1. Would the Commission agree that the Turkish Government has clearly disregarded its representations?

2. What action does it intend to take in response to the above situation?

3. Would it agree that the bill brought forward by Mr Erdogan's government is further proof of how distant a prospect EU membership is for Turkey?

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

The Commission is not aware of any draft legislation corresponding to the one described by the Honourable Member.

The Commission recalls that work on a new constitution started with the setting up of a Constitution Conciliation Committee. This Committee started drafting a new constitution as of 1 May, after public consultations with a broad range of stakeholders. Deliberations take place in closed sessions. The content of the proposals of the political parties has not been disclosed so far.

On a general note, freedom of expression is a fundamental right monitored by the Commission in its appreciation of Turkey's progress towards meeting the political criteria. The EU has underlined that the legal framework on anti-terrorism and organised crime currently applicable in Turkey leads to recurring infringements of the right to freedom of expression, and it needs to be amended as soon as possible. In this respect, the EU is hopeful that the announced 4th judicial reform package will be put on the Parliament's agenda rapidly and that it will address the heart of the above issues.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-007316/12
aan de Commissie
Judith Sargentini (Verts/ALE)
(19 juli 2012)

Betreft: Beleidsreactie Nederlandse regering op uitspraak Hof van Justitie in zaak C-508/10

In zijn brief aan de Kamer gedateerd 4 juli 2012 (kenmerk 2012-0000387574) geeft de Nederlandse minister voor Immigratie, Integratie en Asiel aan dat hij, in het kader van de uitspraak van het Europees Hof van Justitie van 26 april 2012 (C-508/10), de leges voor langdurig ingezeten derdelanders zal verlagen naar 130 euro.

1. Kan de Commissie aangeven hoe zij de verlaging van deze leges beoordeelt in het licht van de desbetreffende uitspraak van het Hof (C-508/10), en dan met name de „evenredigheid" van deze verlaging?

2. Kan de Commissie aangeven hoe zij de gevolgen van de uitspraak van het Hof (C-508/10), met specifieke inachtneming van rechtsoverwegingen 65 en 69, beoordeelt voor de leges die in Nederland gevraagd worden voor gezinshereniging (2003/86/EG), te weten 1 250 euro ([1])?

3. Kan de Commissie aangeven of zij bereid is de Nederlandse overheid te vragen om aan te tonen dat de leges voor gezinshereniging met een hoogte van 1 250 euro geen afbreuk doet aan de geest en doelstelling van richtlijn 2003/86/EG en deze diens nuttig effect niet ontneemt?

4. Is de Commissie bereid om Nederland te verzoeken de teveel betaalde leges terug te betalen? Zo nee, waarom niet?

Antwoord van mevrouw Malmström namens de Commissie
(24 augustus 2012)

Het Europees Hof van Justitie ([2]) oordeelde dat de leges die Nederland in het kader van Richtlijn 2003/109/EG vraagt voor verblijfsvergunningen voor onderdanen van derde landen onevenredig zijn, aangezien de bedragen ervan variëren binnen een marge waarbij het laagste bedrag ongeveer zeven maal hoger is dan het bedrag dat moet worden betaald voor het verkrijgen van een nationale identiteitskaart. Aangezien deze leges aanzienlijke financiële gevolgen hebben, werd ook geoordeeld dat zij te hoog zijn. Het Hof wees erop dat, hoewel de lidstaten de afgifte van verblijfsvergunningen van een legesheffing afhankelijk kunnen stellen, hun beoordelingsbevoegdheid ter zake niet onbeperkt is. De lidstaten mogen geen regeling toepassen die de verwezenlijking van de door de richtlijn nagestreefde doelen in gevaar kan brengen en deze haar nuttig effect kan ontnemen. De hoogte van de leges mag niet tot doel en evenmin tot gevolg hebben dat het verkrijgen van de status van langdurig ingezetene daardoor wordt belemmerd.

Een bedrag van 130 EUR voor alle op grond van de richtlijn afgegeven vergunningen lijkt niet onevenredig te zijn. De Commissie is echter voornemens de Nederlandse autoriteiten te vragen hoe het arrest van het Hof op nationaal niveau algemeen is uitgevoerd, waaronder de kwestie van de terugbetaling van de te veel betaalde leges.

De Commissie gaat momenteel na wat de gevolgen van het arrest zijn voor andere rechtsinstrumenten, zoals Richtlijn 2003/86/EG inzake gezinshereniging. Indien de Commissie tot de conclusie komt dat andere door de lidstaten opgelegde leges deze rechtsinstrumenten hun nuttig effect ontnemen, zal zij het nodige doen om de naleving van het EU-recht te waarborgen.

([1]) http://www.mvv-gezinshereniging.nl/admin/data/upimages/Overzicht_leges_per_1_juli_2011. PDF.
([2]) Arrest van 26 april 2012 in zaak C-508/10.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007316/12
to the Commission
Judith Sargentini (Verts/ALE)
(19 July 2012)

Subject: Statement of policy by the Netherlands Government in response to the judgment of the Court of Justice in Case C-508/10

In his letter of 4 July 2012 to the House of Representatives of the Netherlands Parliament (ref. 2012-0000387574), the Netherlands Minister for Immigration, Integration and Asylum indicates that, in response to the judgment given by the Court of Justice of the EU on 26 April 2012 (C-508/10), he will reduce the administrative charge for long-term resident third-country nationals to EUR 130.

1. Can the Commission indicate what view it takes of the reduction of this charge in the light of the relevant Court judgment (C-508/10), and particularly the 'proportionality' of this reduction?

2. Can the Commission indicate its opinion of the implications of the Court's judgment (in Case C-508/10), with specific reference to Grounds 65 and 69, for the administrative charge levied in the Netherlands for family reunification (2003/86/EG), namely EUR 1250? ([1])

3. Can the Commission indicate whether it is prepared to ask the Netherlands authorities to demonstrate that the administrative charge for family reunification — EUR 1 250 — is not contrary to the spirit and objective of Directive 2003/86/EC and does not prevent that directive from having the intended beneficial effect?

4. Will the Commission ask the Netherlands to refund the excess charges paid? If not, why not?

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

The European Court of Justice ([2]) found the charges imposed by the Netherlands for residence permits for third-country nationals under Directive 2003/109/EC to be disproportionate, based on the fact that the amount varied within a range in which the lowest was about seven times higher than the amount to be paid to obtain a national identity card. Due to their significant financial impact, the charges were also found to be excessive. The Court pointed out that, while Member States may make the issuance of residence permits subject to the payment of charges, their margin of discretion is not unlimited. They cannot apply rules which may jeopardise the achievement of the objectives pursued by the directive and deprive it of its effectiveness. The level of charges must not have either the aim or the effect of creating an obstacle to the obtaining of the long-term resident status.

A charge of EUR 130 for all permits issued under the directive might not seem disproportionate. However, the Commission intends to ask the Dutch authorities about the overall implementation of the Court's judgment at national level, including on the issue of reimbursement of excessive fees paid.

The Commission is currently analysing the impact of the judgment on the implementation of other legal instruments, including Directive 2003/86/EC on Family reunification. Should the Commission reach the conclusion that other fees charged by Member States are depriving legal instruments of their effectiveness, it will take all the necessary steps to ensure compliance with EC law.

([1]) http://www.mvv-gezinshereniging.nl/admin/data/upimages/Overzicht_leges_per_1_juli_2011.PDF
([2]) Judgment from 26 April 2012 in Case C-508/10.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-007317/12
do Komisji
Bogusław Liberadzki (S&D)
(19 lipca 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Wykładnia art. 7 ust. 2 rozporządzenia (WE) nr 1071/2009

Między władzami państw członkowskich pojawiają się istotne rozbieżności w praktyce stosowania wyjątku określonego w art. 7 ust. 2 rozporządzenia Parlamentu Europejskiego i Rady (WE) nr 1071/2009, dotyczącego uznawania alternatywnych sposobów wykazywania zdolności finansowej. Władze w Polsce przejawiają tendencję do zawężającej wykładni tego artykułu, a brytyjskie do rozszerzającej (patrz: „Senior Traffic Commissioner Statutory Document No. 2 FINANCE", 2.12.2011).

W związku z powyższym, następujące kwestie wymagają dokonania wykładni:

1. Czy art. 7 ust. 2 rozporządzenia (WE) nr 1071/2009 zawiera otwartą listę środków pozwalających na wykazanie zdolności finansowej i tym samym dopuszcza inne formy zabezpieczenia niż gwarancja bankowa lub ubezpieczenie?

2. Czy art. 7 ust. 2 rozporządzenia dopuszcza takie środki wykazania zdolności finansowej przewoźnika drogowego jak otwarta linia kredytowa o dobrej historii płatności lub posiadany przez przewoźnika drogowego majątek trwały, w tym nieruchomości?

3. Czy art. 7 ust. 2 rozporządzenia zawiera otwarty katalog rodzajów ubezpieczeń pozwalających na wykazanie zdolności finansowej?

4. Czy art. 7 ust. 2 rozporządzenia dopuszcza inne rodzaje ubezpieczenia niż ubezpieczenie odpowiedzialności zawodowej, jako środek wykazania zdolności finansowej, o ile suma ubezpieczenia jest równa lub przekracza kwotę określoną w art. 7 ust. 1?

5. Czy na podstawie art. 7 ust. 2 rozporządzenia właściwe władze mogą dopuścić ubezpieczenie odpowiedzialności cywilnej przewoźnika drogowego, obejmujące ryzyka specyficzne dla wykonywanej działalności (związane z odpowiedzialnością kontraktową i deliktową związaną z wykonywanymi usługami przewozowymi), w tym obejmujące odpowiedzialność na zasadach określonych w umowach międzynarodowych regulujących odpowiedzialność z tytułu umów przewozu, o sumie ubezpieczenia równej lub przekraczającej kwotę określoną w art. 7 ust. 1?

6. Czy art. 7 ust. 2 ustanawia wymóg, aby zabezpieczenie przyjmowane przez właściwe władze zabezpieczało również należności publicznoprawne przewoźnika, takie jak kary administracyjne, podatki i opłaty o charakterze danin publicznych?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wiceprzewodniczącego Siima Kallasa w imieniu Komisji
(7 września 2012 r.)

Ogólny wymóg dotyczący zdolności finansowej przewoźnika drogowego określono w art. 7 ust. 1 rozporządzenia 1071/2009 ([1]). Na mocy powyższego przepisu przedsiębiorca wykazuje na podstawie poświadczonych przez audytora lub odpowiednio upoważnioną osobę rocznych sprawozdań finansowych, że co roku dysponuje kapitałem i rezerwami o wartości co najmniej równej 9 000 EUR w przypadku wykorzystywania tylko jednego pojazdu i 5 000 EUR na każdy dodatkowy wykorzystywany pojazd.

Wzmiankowana przez Szanownego Pana Posła procedura, określona w art. 7 ust. 2, stanowi odstępstwo od tej ogólnej zasady mające na celu zapewnienie przedsiębiorstwom większej elastyczności. W gestii właściwych organów krajowych pozostaje ostateczna decyzja dotycząca zastosowania tego odstępstwa i dopuszczenia lub żądania innych środków wykazania zdolności finansowej. W art. 7 ust. 2 nie przedstawiono pełnego wykazu takich środków, określono jedynie wymóg, aby w każdym przypadku certyfikat używany przez przedsiębiorstwo w celu wykazania jego zdolności finansowej obejmował solidarną gwarancję na kwoty określone w ust. 1 akapit pierwszy. Ponadto zgodnie z art. 7 ust. 3 certyfikat musi być wystawiony na odpowiednią jednostkę gospodarczą posiadającą siedzibę w państwie członkowskim wydającym zezwolenie na wykonywanie danego zawodu.

([1]) Dz.U. L 300 z 14.11.2009, s. 51-71.

Pomimo że w rozporządzeniu nie określono takiego wymogu, Komisja stoi na stanowisku, że specyficzny cel i rodzaje ryzyka, które ma uwzględniać zdolność finansowa przewoźnika drogowego, mogą obejmować w ramach wymienionych powyżej kwot, między innymi, należności publicznoprawne nakładane na przedsiębiorstwo, np. kary finansowe i opłaty o charakterze danin publicznych.

Komisja ma nadzieję, że państwa członkowskie dokonają wdrożenia przepisów tego rozporządzenia w sposób umożliwiający uniknięcie wszelkich zbędnych ograniczeń lub obciążeń administracyjnych dla przewoźników drogowych, którzy będą chcieli prowadzić działalność gospodarczą w danym państwie członkowskim.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007317/12
to the Commission
Bogusław Liberadzki (S&D)
(19 July 2012)

Subject: Interpretation of Article 7(2) of Regulation (EC) No 1071/2009

Serious divergences exist between the Member States' governments as regards the application of the derogation set out in Article 7(2) of Regulation (EC) No 1071/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the recognition of alternative means of demonstrating financial standing. The Polish authorities tend to interpret this article restrictively, while the British authorities tend to interpret it more broadly (see: 'Senior Traffic Commissioner Statutory Document No 2 Finance', 2 December 2011).

In this connection, the following issues require clarification:

1. Does Article 7(2) of Regulation (EC) No 1071/2009 set out a non-exhaustive list of means by which financial standing may be demonstrated, thereby providing for the use of forms of security other than bank guarantees or insurance?

2. Does Article 7(2) allow for such means of demonstrating a road transport operator's financial standing as an open line of credit with a good payment history, or fixed assets in the possession of the road transport operator, including immovable property?

3. Does Article 7(2) set out a non-exhaustive list of the types of insurance that may be used to demonstrate financial standing?

4. Does Article 7(2) allow for the use of types of insurance other than professional liability insurance as a means of demonstrating financial standing, provided that the level of coverage is equal to or greater than the sum specified in Article 7(1)?

5. May the appropriate authorities, on the basis of Article 7(2), allow the use of a road transport operator's civil liability insurance — provided that it covers the specific risks of the activity being performed (relating to contractual and tortuous liabilities associated with the transport activities carried out) and that it covers liability on the basis of the principles set out in international treaties governing liability arising from transport contracts — where the coverage is equal to or greater than the sum set out in Article 7(1)?

6. Does Article 7(2) require the security accepted by the appropriate authorities to insure statutory charges payable by the road transport operator, such as administrative penalties, taxes and public levies?

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

The general requirement related to the financial standing of a road transport operator is defined in Article 7(1) of Regulation 1071/2009 ([1]). Under the latter, the undertaking shall demonstrate, on the basis of annual accounts certified by an auditor or a duly accredited person, that, every year, it has at its disposal capital and reserves totalling at least EUR 9 000 when only one vehicle is used and EUR 5 000 for each additional vehicle used.

The procedure of Article 7(2) refered to by the Hounourable member is a derogation to this general rule to allow greater flexibility to businesses. It is ultimately the decision of the national competent authority whether or not to use this derogation and to decide accordingly to allow or require other means of demonstrating the financial standing. Article 7(2) does not provide an exhaustive list of such means, it only requires that in any event the certificate used by the undertaking to demonstrate its financial standing provides a joint and several guarantee in respect of the amounts specified in paragraph 1. Moreover as per Article 7(3), the certificate must be in the name of the relevant entity established in the Member State which grants the admission to the occupation.

Although not required by the regulation, the Commission considers that the specific purpose and risks to be covered by the financial standing of a transport undertaking can include among others statutory charges payable by the undertaking such as financial penalties and taxes within the above mentionned amounts.

([1]) OJ L 300, 14.11.2009, pp. 51-71.

The Commission trusts that Member States implement the provisions of this regulation in a way that avoids any unneccessary restrictions or administrative burden on transport operators who wish to establish themselves in that Member State.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-007318/12
alla Commissione
Claudio Morganti (EFD)
(20 luglio 2012)

Oggetto: Fondo di solidarietà dell'Unione europea

Negli scorsi giorni è emersa notizia che l'Italia avrebbe fatto richiesta di accedere al Fondo di solidarietà dell'Unione europea, a seguito dell'emergenza neve dello scorso inverno, per poco meno di 3 miliardi di euro riferibili a 11 regioni (Abruzzo, Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Emilia-Romagna, Lazio, Marche, Molise, Puglia, Toscana e Umbria).

La cifra indicata è inferiore alla soglia nazionale per attivare questo fondo, che tuttavia può essere mobilitato anche per eventi regionali, come del resto è avvenuto recentemente con i danni causati dalle inondazioni in Liguria e Toscana lo scorso novembre 2011 (mobilitazione approvata dal Parlamento europeo nella sessione plenaria di giugno 2012).

I criteri perché il Fondo di solidarietà venga concesso su base regionale sono giustamente molto selettivi e numerose regioni del Sud Italia non parrebbero affatto avere i necessari requisiti per ottenere questi stanziamenti, pur essendo state inserite nella richiesta.

Questo tipo di problematica pare stia rallentando, se non addirittura bloccando, la procedura per ottenere questo tipo di aiuto, sicuramente utile in alcune zone particolarmente colpite da ingentissime precipitazioni nevose.

1. Può la Commissione fare luce sulla vicenda, che rischia di non concedere all'Italia la possibilità di fruire di decine di milioni di euro per la ricostruzione di aree particolarmente danneggiate?

2. Non ritiene essa possibile, se del caso, vincolare l'accesso al Fondo di solidarietà dell'Unione europea alle sole regioni realmente colpite?

3. Quali misure intende essa prendere per prevenire in futuro il verificarsi di simili episodi? Non sarebbe auspicabile stabilire criteri unificati su base regionale, in maniera tale che siano le regioni stesse a fare richiesta per il Fondo di solidarietà dell'Unione europea qualora rientrino in determinati parametri?

Risposta di Johannes Hahn a nome della Commissione
(16 agosto 2012)

Al momento della redazione della presente risposta la Commissione non ha ancora deciso in merito alla domanda presentata dall'Italia relativa alla catastrofe causata dalla neve e dal gelo nel febbraio 2011. La Commissione desidera ricordare all'onorevole deputato che l'obiettivo del Fondo di solidarietà è garantire un'assistenza finanziaria nel caso di catastrofi che comportano danni superiori a una soglia che, per l'Italia, è fissata attualmente a 3,6 miliardi di euro (3 miliardi di euro a prezzi del 2002). Per catastrofi di minore entità il Fondo può essere mobilitato esclusivamente in situazioni estremamente eccezionali qualora sia soddisfatto un certo numero di condizioni rigorose legate agli effetti della catastrofe sulle condizioni di vita e sulla stabilità economica dell'area colpita nel suo insieme. Il regolamento fa obbligo alla Commissione di applicare questi criteri «col massimo rigore». Lo Stato membro ha comunque facoltà di definire la zona come più ritiene opportuno e può limitarla all'area in cui la catastrofe ha avuto i suoi effetti maggiori.

Come indicato nella sua comunicazione sul futuro del Fondo di solidarietà ([1]) la Commissione ritiene che i criteri applicabili alle cosiddette catastrofi su scala regionale manchino di sufficiente chiarezza, siano complessi e vadano modificati. La Commissione sta esaminando il modo opportuno per chiarire la situazione, il che potrebbe anche sfociare in una proposta legislativa.

([1]) COM(2011) 613.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-007318/12
to the Commission
Claudio Morganti (EFD)
(20 July 2012)

Subject: European Union Solidarity Fund

Over the past few days it has been reported that Italy apparently applied for funding from the European Union Solidarity Fund — of just under EUR 3 billion with reference to 11 regions (Abruzzo, Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Emilia-Romagna, Lazio, Marche, Molise, Apulia, Tuscany and Umbria) — following the snow emergency last winter.

The figure stated is below the national threshold for activating this fund, which can, however, be mobilised also for regional events, as happened recently with the damage caused by the floods in Liguria and Tuscany in November 2011 (mobilisation approved by the European Parliament in the June 2012 plenary part-session).

The criteria for granting Solidarity Fund financing on a regional basis are, quite rightly, very selective and many regions of Southern Italy do not appear to have met all the necessary requirements for obtaining these funds, even though they have been included in the application.

This type of problem appears to be slowing down, if not halting, the procedure for obtaining such assistance, which would most certainly be useful in some areas which were particularly hard hit by huge snowfalls.

1. Can the Commission shed light on this matter, whereby Italy risks losing an opportunity to benefit from tens of millions of euro to reconstruct areas which have been particularly damaged?

2. Does it not think that, where appropriate, access to the European Union Solidarity Fund could be restricted only to the regions that were actually affected?

3. What measures does it intend to take to prevent similar incidents from occurring in the future? Would it not be appropriate to establish uniform criteria on a regional basis, so that the regions themselves can apply for assistance from the European Union Solidarity Fund where they fulfil certain criteria?

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

At the moment of writing, the Commission has not yet decided on the application submitted by Italy relating to the snow and frost disaster of February 2011. The Commission would however remind the Honourable Member that the objective of the Solidarity Fund is to grant financial assistance in such disasters where the damage exceeds a high threshold which for Italy is currently set at EUR 3.6 billion (EUR 3 billion in 2002 prices). For smaller disasters the Fund can only be mobilised very exceptionally if a number of strict conditions are met relating to the effects of the disaster on living conditions, and the economic stability of the disaster stricken area as a whole. The regulation obliges the Commission to apply these criteria 'with the utmost rigour'. The Member State is however free to define the zone as appropriate and may limit it to the area where the disaster has had the greatest effects.

As set out in its communication on the Future of the Solidarity Fund ([1]) the Commission considers that the criteria for so-called regional disasters lack sufficient clarity, are complex and should be modified. The Commission is considering the appropriate way forward to clarify the situation, which may include a legislative proposal.

([1]) COM(2011) 613.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007319/12
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(20. Juli 2012)

Betrifft: Spekulationen mit Agrarrohstoffen und Nahrungsmitteln

Die Weltbank schätzt, dass in der Hochpreisphase 2007 und 2008 etwa 100 Millionen Menschen zusätzlich Hunger leiden mussten, weil sie die höheren Lebensmittelpreise aufgrund von Nahrungsmittel- und Agrarrohstoffspekulationen nicht zahlen konnten.

Die Frage ist, wie die Spekulation mit Agrarrohstoffen unterbunden oder reguliert werden kann, um ihre negativen Auswirkungen auf die Nahrungsmittelpreise und so letztendlich den Hunger in der Welt zu verringern.

1. Inwieweit ist die Kommission bei dieser Problematik bisher aktiv geworden?

2. Warum trifft die Kommission keine Vorsorge, damit institutionelle Investoren vom Rohstoffgeschäft ausgeschlossen und Publikumsfonds sowie Zertifikate für Rohstoffe verboten werden?

3. Welche Maßnahmen hat die Kommission ergriffen oder welche plant sie, damit sich gerade die Banken mehr dem Gemeinwohl verpflichtet sehen und dem gesellschaftlichen Anspruch gerecht werden, sozial und ökologisch möglichst verantwortungsvoll zu handeln?

Antwort von Herrn Barnier im Namen der Kommission
(28. September 2012)

Gemäß unseren Zusagen im Rahmen der G20 und der Kommissionsmitteilung vom Februar 2011 ([1]) hat die Kommission bereits eine Reihe von Maßnahmen eingeleitet, um der Volatilität an den Rohstoffmärkten zu begegnen.

So wird in der EU-Verordnung über OTC-Derivate ([2]) (die seit August 2012 in Kraft ist) für alle OTC-Derivate, die aufgrund ihrer Kategorie einer Clearingpflicht und einer Meldepflicht gegenüber Transaktionsregistern unterliegen, ein zentrales Clearing vorgeschrieben, um Integrität und Transparenz zu erhöhen.

Um klarzustellen, welche Handelstätigkeiten an Rohstoffmärkten einen Marktmissbrauch darstellen und zu gewährleisten, dass alle Handelsplätze und Transaktionen, bei denen es zu missbräuchlichen Praktiken kommen kann, angemessen vom Rechtsrahmen der EU gegen Marktmissbrauch ([3]) abgedeckt sind, hat die Kommission auch in diesem Bereich Vorschläge vorgelegt.

Die von der Kommission vorgeschlagene Finanzmarktregulierung ([4]) wird die Übermittlung detaillierterer Angaben zu den Handelstätigkeiten der Marktteilnehmer vorschreiben, eine umfassendere Kontrolle von Rohstoffderivate-Positionen verlangen und den Regulierungsbehörden weiter gehende Befugnisse einräumen. Zusätzlich dazu schlägt die Kommission vor, Handelsplattformen dazu zu verpflichten, für den Handel mit Rohstoffderivaten Positionsbegrenzungen festzulegen und Positionen in diesen Produkten regelmäßig zu melden.

Im Bericht zur sozialen Verantwortung von Unternehmen vom Oktober 2011 schließlich wird vorgeschlagen, dass Unternehmen, einschließlich Banken, über ein Verfahren verfügen sollten, das es ermöglicht, die im Zusammenhang mit den Rohstoffmärkten aufkommenden sozialen, ökologischen und ethischen Fragen in ihre Geschäftstätigkeit und ihre Unternehmensstrategie einzubeziehen.

([1]) Grundstoffmärkte und Rohstoffe: Herausforderungen und Lösungsansätze (KOM(2011)25 endg. vom Februar 2011).
([2]) Verordnung (EU) Nr. 648/2012 des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 4. Juli 2012 über OTC-Derivate, zentrale Gegenparteien und Transaktionsregister.
([3]) Verordnung über Insider-Geschäfte und Marktmanipulation (Marktmissbrauch) (KOM(2011)651 endg.) und Richtlinie über strafrechtliche Sanktionen für Insider-Geschäfte und Marktmanipulationen (KOM(2011)654 endg. vom 20.10.2011).
([4]) Richtlinie über Märkte für Finanzinstrumente zur Aufhebung der Richtlinie 2004/39/EG des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates (Neufassung), (KOM(2011)656 endg.) und Verordnung über Märkte für Finanzinstrumente und zur Änderung der Verordnung [EMIR] über OTC-Derivate, zentrale Gegenparteien und Transaktionsregister (KOM(2011)652 endg. vom 20.10.2011).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007319/12
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(20 July 2012)

Subject: Speculation in agricultural commodities and foodstuffs

The World Bank estimates that around 100 million more people went hungry during the high price phase in 2007 and 2008 because they were unable to pay the higher food prices resulting from speculation in foodstuffs and agricultural commodities.

The question is how speculation in agricultural commodities can be prevented or regulated in order to reduce its negative impact on food prices and thus ultimately on famine worldwide.

1. What action has the Commission taken on this complex of issues so far?

2. Why is the Commission not taking any preventative action to ensure that institutional investors are excluded from the trade in commodities and that mutual funds and certificates in raw materials are banned?

3. What measures has the Commission taken or does it envisage taking to ensure that banks in particular feel a greater obligation to the public interest and respond to society's call for them to act in as socially and environmentally responsible a way as possible?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(28 September 2012)

In line with our G20 commitments and the Commission Communication of February 2011 ([1]) , the Commission has launched a number of initiatives to address volatility in commodity markets.

To improve integrity and transparency, the European regulation on OTC derivatives ([2]) (in force from August 2012) requires mandatory central clearing for all OTC derivatives pertaining to a class of OTC derivatives that have been declared subject to clearing obligation and mandatory reporting to trade repositories.

The Commission has also adopted proposals to clarify the types of trading activities in commodity markets which constitute market abuse, and to ensure that all venues and transactions where abusive practices can occur are properly covered by the EU Market Abuse framework ([3]).

The Commission's Mifid proposals ([4]) will require the reporting of more detailed information on trading activities by market participants, more comprehensive oversight of commodity derivative positions and wider powers for regulators. In addition they propose an obligation on trading platforms to impose position limits on trading in commodity derivatives and to provide regular reports on positions in these products.

Lastly, the October 2011 report on corporate social responsibility proposes that enterprises, including banks should have in place a process to integrate social, environmental and ethical concerns arising in commodity markets into their business and strategy.

([1]) Tackling the challenges in commodity markets and on raw materials, February 2011, COM(2011) 25 final.
([2]) Regulation (EU) No 648/2012 of the European Parliament and the Council of 4 July 2012 on OTC derivatives, central counterparties and trade repositories.
([3]) Regulation on insider dealing and market manipulation (market abuse), COM(2011) 651 final, and Directive on criminal sanctions for insider dealing and market manipulation, COM(2011) 654 final, 20.10.2011.
([4]) Directive on markets in financial instruments repealing Directive 2004/39/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (Recast) COM(2011) 656 final, and Regulation on markets in financial instruments and amending Regulation [EMIR] on OTC derivatives, central counterparties and trade repositories, COM(2011) 652 final, 20.10.2011.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007320/12
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(20. Juli 2012)

Betrifft: Jugendarbeitslosigkeit und Migration in Europa

Einige EU-Mitgliedstaaten wie Griechenland, Italien oder Spanien verzeichnen eine stark ansteigende Jugendarbeitslosigkeit, die mit bis zu 50 % mittlerweile dramatische Dimensionen annimmt. Dagegen werden beispielsweise in Deutschland und Dänemark nahezu in allen Sektoren Mitarbeiter gesucht. Deshalb wird zunehmend von einer notwendigen Migration von Südeuropa nach Nordeuropa gesprochen.

1. Wie bewertet die Kommission eine ggf. erforderliche (und durchaus positive) Migration der genannten Art?

2. Über welche Informationen und Daten verfügt die Kommission zu diesem Themenkomplex?

3. Welche Maßnahmen hat die Kommission ergriffen oder gedenkt sie zu ergreifen, um migrationswillige Personen, insbesondere Jugendliche, in der EU zu unterstützen?

Antwort von Herrn Andor im Namen der Kommission
(11. September 2012)

Mobilität trägt zum Ausgleich der in bestimmten Branchen bestehenden Arbeitskräfte- und/oder Qualifikationsdefizite innerhalb der EU bei. Besonders jungen Menschen fällt der Umzug in andere Länder leichter.

Seit 2004 gingen rund 3,6 Millionen Menschen aus Ländern, die der EU 2004 und 2007 beigetreten sind, in andere EU-Länder, um dort zu arbeiten. Ein Kommissionsbericht von 2011 zeigt, dass die Auswirkungen auf die Arbeitslosenzahlen sowie auf die Löhne in den meisten Mitgliedstaaten nicht erheblich waren. Außerdem bestand kaum die Gefahr eines Braindrain in den jeweiligen Heimatländern ([1]). Im Quartalsbericht über die soziale Lage und Beschäftigungssituation ([2]) in der EU vom Juni 2012 werden u. a. die Mobilitätsmuster innerhalb der EU eingehender analysiert.

Das Beschäftigungspaket ([3]) der Kommission sieht eine mittelfristige Agenda für Maßnahmen vor, die einen arbeitsplatzintensiven Aufschwung unterstützen sollen. Das Paket enthält einen Zwischenbericht über die Maßnahmen der Mitgliedstaaten zur Umsetzung der Initiative „Chancen für junge Menschen“ ([4]) und eine Beschreibung der strategischen EURES ([5])-Reform. Die Kommission schlägt vor, EURES in ein effektiveres, auf die Nachfrage ausgerichtetes Instrument zur Abstimmung von Angebot und Nachfrage am Arbeitsmarkt sowie zur Arbeitsvermittlung umzugestalten, um so einen echten europäischen Arbeitsmarkt zu schaffen. Mithilfe innovativer Online- und Selbstbedienungs-Tools soll gleichzeitig Transparenz bezüglich freier Stellen geschaffen werden.

Im Mai 2012 startete die Kommission das Programm „Dein erster EURES-Arbeitsplatz“ ([6]), eine vorbereitende Maßnahme, um jungen Europäern zwischen 18 und 30 bei der Arbeitssuche in einem anderen Mitgliedstaat zu helfen. Das Programm kombiniert individuelle Arbeitsvermittlung mit finanziellen Anreizen der EU. In den Jahren 2012 und 2013 soll es jungen Menschen unmittelbar zu einem Arbeitsplatz in einem anderen Mitgliedstaat als dem Heimatland verhelfen ([7]).

([1]) Siehe Kapitel 6 des Berichts „Entwicklungen in den Bereichen Beschäftigung und Soziales in Europa im Jahr 2011“, Europäische Kommission, November 2011
http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=de&catId=89&newsId=1137&furtherNews=yes.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=de&catId=89&newsId=948&furtherNews=yes.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/andor/headlines/news/2012/04/20120418_de.htm
([4]) „Implementing the Youth Opportunities Initiative: first steps taken“ (SWD(2012)98 final vom 18. April 2012).
([5]) „Reforming EURES to meet the goals of Europe 2020“ (SWD(2012)100 final vom 18. April 2012).
([6]) Siehe: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=993&langId=de.
([7]) Siehe die Mitteilung der Kommission Initiative „Chancen für junge Menschen“ (KOM(2011)933 endg. vom 20. Dezember 2011).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007320/12
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(20 July 2012)

Subject: Youth unemployment and migration in Europe

Some EU Member States such as Greece, Italy and Spain are experiencing a steep rise in youth unemployment, which has now reached alarming proportions (up to 50%). Conversely, in Germany and Denmark, for example, employers are seeking workers in almost all sectors. Consequently there is increasing talk of a need for migration from Southern to Northern Europe.

1. What is the Commission's view of the need for such migration, which would be extremely welcome?

2. What information and data does the Commission possess on this complex of issues?

3. What measures has the Commission taken, or does it envisage taking, to support people, particularly young people, who are keen to migrate?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(11 September 2012)

Mobility helps alleviate specific labour shortages and/or mismatches within the EU. Particularly young people are more likely to move to other countries.

Since 2004 around 3.6 million people from the countries which joined the Union in 2004 and 2007 have moved to other countries for work purposes within the EU. A 2011 Commission report found that the impact on local unemployment and wages in most Member States was not significant and the risk of an overall brain drain in the countries of origin seemed to be limited ([1]). The June 2012 EU Employment and Social Situation Quarterly Review ([2]) gives further analysis — among others — of intra-EU mobility patterns.

The Commission's Employment Package ([3]), which sets out a mid-term policy agenda to foster a job-rich recovery, includes an interim account of Member State measures to implement the Youth Opportunities Initiative ([4]) and a description of the strategic reform of EURES, the European network of employment services ([5]). The Commission proposes to transform EURES into a more effective demand-driven instrument for matching labour demand and supply, placement and recruitment to move to a genuine European labour market, while providing job vacancy transparency through innovative online tools and self-service.

In May 2012 the Commission launched Your first EURES job ([6]), a preparatory action to help young Europeans aged 18 to 30 to find work in other Member States. The scheme combines customised job-matching services with EU financial incentives and aims to provide direct support in 2012 and 2013 for around 5 000 job placements in Member States other than that of residence of the young persons concerned ([7]).

([1]) See Chapter 6 of Employment and Social Developments in Europe 2011 report, European Commission, November 2011, at: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=1137&furtherNews=yes.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=1389&furtherNews=yes.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/andor/headlines/news/2012/04/20120418_en.htm
([4]) 'Implementing the Youth Opportunities Initiative: first steps taken' (SWD(2012) 98 final of 18 April 2012).
([5]) 'Reforming EURES to meet the goals of Europe 2020' (SWD(2012) 100 final of 18 April 2012).
([6]) See http://ec.europa.eu/social/yourfirsteuresjob.
([7]) In line with the Commission communication 'Youth Opportunities Initiative' (COM(2011)933 final of 20 December 2011).

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007321/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)
(20 Ιουλίου 2012)

Θέμα: Απαράδεκτη νέα νομοθεσία στη Βουλγαρία για τα δάση και τις προστατευόμενες περιοχές

Στις 13 Ιουνίου, η Βουλή της Βουλγαρίας ψήφισε τροποποιήσεις στη δασική της νομοθεσία, οι οποίες παρέχουν χωρίς ανταλλάγματα σε ιδιωτικές επιχειρήσεις δικαιώματα εκμετάλλευσης και οικοπεδοποίησης σε δασικές περιοχές που μέχρι πρόσφατα ανήκαν στο δημόσιο και καταλαμβάνουν μια έκταση που φτάνει το 20 % της χώρας. Μεγάλες περιβαλλοντικές οργανώσεις, όπως το WWF και το βουλγαρικό δίκτυο «Για τη Φύση», χαρακτηρίζουν την πράξη αυτή ως αυθαίρετη κρατική βοήθεια προς τις ιδιωτικές επιχειρήσεις και θεωρούν ότι αυτό θα οδηγήσει στην καταλήστευση των τελευταίων σημαντικών φυσικών πόρων της χώρας ([1]). Εδώ και έξι μήνες υπάρχουν διαρκείς διαδηλώσεις ενάντια σε αυτή την πρωτοβουλία της πλειοψηφίας των βουλευτών στη Βουλγαρική Βουλή, η οποία αντίκειται στο δημόσιο συμφέρον των πολιτών και της προστασίας της Ευρωπαϊκής φύσης. Οι διαδηλωτές τώρα ζητούν από τον Πρόεδρο της χώρας, που διατηρεί το δικαίωμα της άσκησης βέτο, να σταματήσει το νόμο.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Έχει ενημέρωση από τις βουλγαρικές αρχές για τις συγκεκριμένες τροποποιήσεις στη δασική νομοθεσία της χώρας;

2. Συμφωνεί ότι αυτές αντίκεινται στη βουλγαρική και ευρωπαϊκή νομοθεσία, και ιδιαίτερα στην οδηγία περί οικοτόπων 92/43/ΕΟΚ;

3. Αν ναι, τι μέτρα προτίθεται να λάβει ώστε να προληφθεί η καταστροφή της βουλγαρικής φύσης και η πεποίθηση ότι η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή κατεδαφίζει το φιλοπεριβαλλοντικό της προφίλ σε όλη τη Νότια Ευρώπη;

Απάντηση του κ. Potočnikon εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(10 Σεπτεμβρίου 2012)

Οι τροποποιήσεις στη βουλγαρική δασική νομοθεσία ψηφίστηκαν αρχικά στις 13.06.2012, στη συνέχεια όμως ασκήθηκε βέτο από τον Πρόεδρο. Μετά από περαιτέρω συζητήσεις στη Βουλγαρική Βουλή ψηφίστηκε νέα πρόταση για τροποποίηση, στις 25.07.2012, που δημοσιεύθηκε στην Εφημερίδα της Κυβερνήσεως, στις 07.08.2012.

Παρά το γεγονός ότι οι τροποποιήσεις δεν συνιστούν μέτρο μεταφοράς στο εθνικό δίκαιο και παρά το γεγονός ότι οι βουλγαρικές αρχές δεν έχουν νομική υποχρέωση να τις κοινοποιούν στην Επιτροπή, η Επιτροπή παρακολουθεί στενά τις τροποποιήσεις της εθνικής νομοθεσίας που ενδέχεται να έχουν αντίκτυπο στο δίκτυο Natura 2000, ώστε να εξασφαλιστεί ότι δεν υπονομεύονται οι διατάξεις των οδηγιών για τα ενδιαιτήματα και τα πτηνά. Επιπλέον, οι εθνικές αρχές πρέπει να διασφαλίσουν την ορθή εφαρμογή των ενδεχόμενων εθνικών διατάξεων εφαρμογής των εν λόγω οδηγιών.

Δεν υφίσταται ειδικό νομικό μέσο της ΕΕ που να διέπει εν γένει τη δασική πολιτική. Η δασική στρατηγική της ΕΕ αναγνωρίζει εθνικά δασικά προγράμματα ή ισοδύναμα μέσα ως βασικά μέσα πολιτικής για τη διαχείριση και την προστασία των δασών. Το περιεχόμενο αυτών των προγραμμάτων και η συμβολή τους στη διατήρηση των δασικών εκτάσεων παραμένουν ωστόσο στην αρμοδιότητα των κρατών μελών.

Οι υπηρεσίες της Επιτροπής παρακολουθούν τη μεταφορά και την εφαρμογή της περιβαλλοντικής νομοθεσίας της ΕΕ, προβαίνουν σε νομικές ενέργειες, όπως προβλέπεται από τις Συνθήκες, και χρηματοδοτούν περιβαλλοντικά έργα.

Για παράδειγμα, το Πρόγραμμα Αγροτικής Ανάπτυξης για τη Βουλγαρία του 2007-2013 διαθέτει επί του παρόντος δημόσια κεφάλαια συνολικού ύψους 70 εκατ. ευρώ για την πρώτη δάσωση μη γεωργικών γαιών, την αποκατάσταση του δασοκομικού δυναμικού και την καθιέρωση ενεργειών πρόληψης.

([1]) http://wwf.panda.org/wwf_news/index.cfm?205209.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007321/12
to the Commission
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)
(20 July 2012)

Subject: Unacceptable new legislation in Bulgaria on forests and protected areas

On 13 June the Bulgarian Parliament adopted amendments to its forestry legislation which cede to private companies, without any counterpart, the right to exploit and develop areas of forestry covering up to 20% of the surface of the country that until recently were State-owned. Major environmental organisations like WWF and the Bulgarian network 'For Nature' describe this act as arbitrary state aid to private companies and believe that it will lead to the looting of the country's last major natural resources ([1]). For six months there have been constant demonstrations against this initiative by the majority of members of the Bulgarian Parliament, which is contrary to the public interest and protection of the natural environment in Europe. The demonstrators are now calling upon the State President, who has the right of veto, to block this law.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Has it been notified by the Bulgarian authorities about these amendments to Bulgaria's forestry legislation?

2. Does it agree that they are contrary to Bulgarian and European legislation, in particular the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC?

3. If so, what steps will it take to prevent the destruction of nature in Bulgaria and prevent the belief taking root across the whole of southern Europe that the Commission is wrecking its environmentally-friendly credentials?

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

The amendments of the Bulgarian Forestry Law were initially adopted on 13/06/2012 but then vetoed by the President. Following further discussions, a new proposal for amendments was adopted by the Bulgarian Parliament on 25 July 2012 and promulgated in the State Gazette on 7 August 2012.

Although the amendments are not a transposition measure, and although the Bulgarian authorities do not have a legal obligation to notify them to the Commission, the Commission closely monitors any amendments of the national legislation that may have an impact on Natura 2000, so as to ensure that the provisions of the Habitats and Birds Directives are not undermined. Moreover, the national authorities must ensure that any national provisions implementing those Directives are correctly applied.

There is no specific EU legal instrument covering forest policy in general. The EU Forestry Strategy recognises national forest programmes or equivalent tools as basic policy instruments to manage and protect forests. The content of these programmes and their contribution to maintaining forested areas remains however within the competence of the Member States.

The Commission services monitor the transposition and implementation of EU environmental law; undertake legal actions as provided for by the Treaties and finance environmental projects.

For example, the Rural Development Programme for Bulgaria 2007-13 currently allocates total public funds of EUR 70 million to first afforestation of non-agricultural land and restoring forestry potential and introducing prevention actions.

([1]) http://wwf.panda.org/wwf_news/index.cfm?205209.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007323/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)
(20 Ιουλίου 2012)

Θέμα: Κρατικές ενισχύσεις για ανάπτυξη εγκαταστάσεων σκι στη Βουλγαρία

Στις 28 Δεκεμβρίου 2011, το Συμβούλιο Υπουργών της Βουλγαρίας ανακοίνωσε ([1]) την έγκριση σχεδίου τροπολογίας του νόμου περί δασών σε σχέση με τις νομικές διαδικασίες για την κατασκευή χιονοδρομικών πιστών και εγκαταστάσεων σκι σε δημόσια δάση. Το σχέδιο τροπολογίας προβλέπεται να εγκριθεί από το κοινοβούλιο. Σύμφωνα με την τροπολογία του νόμου περί δασών ([2]) οι εταιρείες ανάπτυξης εγκαταστάσεων σκι μπορούν να κατασκευάζουν χιονοδρομικές πίστες και εγκαταστάσεις σκι σε δημόσια δάση χωρίς απόκτηση της δασικής έκτασης και χωρίς καταβολή πάγιου φόρου για αλλαγή της χρήσης γης στη δασική έκταση, ενώ όλες οι υπόλοιπες κατασκευαστικές εταιρείες (δηλ. εκτός των εταιρειών εκμετάλλευσης εγκαταστάσεων σκι) θα πρέπει πρώτα να αγοράζουν τη δημόσια δασική έκταση μέσω διαδικασίας υποβολής προσφορών άνευ όρων και στη συνέχεια να καταβάλλουν φόρο για αλλαγή της χρήσης γης στη δασική έκταση, ώστε να είναι δυνατή η υλοποίηση του κατασκευαστικού έργου.

Επιπλέον, η τροπολογία που εγκρίθηκε από το Συμβούλιο Υπουργών επιτρέπει στις εταιρείες ανάπτυξης εγκαταστάσεων σκι να αποκτούν δικαίωμα επιφανείας ή δικαίωμα εκμετάλλευσης για την κατασκευή και εκμετάλλευση χιονοδρομικών πιστών και εγκαταστάσεων σκι σε δημόσια δάση χωρίς διαδικασία υποβολής προσφορών, ενώ όλες οι υπόλοιπες κατασκευαστικές εταιρείες μπορούν να αποκτούν δικαίωμα επιφανείας ή δικαίωμα εκμετάλλευσης σε δημόσια περιουσία (όχι δασική έκταση) μόνο μετά από συμμετοχή σε διαδικασία υποβολής προσφορών σύμφωνα με τη νομοθεσία περί κρατικής ιδιοκτησίας.

Όπως δήλωσε ο Υπουργός Γεωργίας και Τροφίμων, κ. Miroslav Naidenov, από τα σχετικά μέτρα θα επωφεληθούν όλες οι εταιρείες εκμετάλλευσης εγκαταστάσεων σκι στη Βουλγαρία ([3]). Σύμφωνα με περιβαλλοντικές ΜΚΟ το όφελος αυτό ανέρχεται σε τουλάχιστον 25 εκατομμύρια ευρώ — ποσό το οποίο θα εξοικονομήσουν οι κατασκευαστικές εταιρείες για 6 υπό έγκριση έργα κατασκευής εγκαταστάσεων σκι από τη μη καταβολή φόρου για αλλαγή της χρήσης γης, σύμφωνα με την τροπολογία που εγκρίθηκε από το Συμβούλιο Υπουργών, καθώς και από την εξαίρεση από την υποχρεωτική απόκτηση της γης στην περίπτωση των δημόσιων δασών.

1. Στο πλαίσιο αυτό, θα μπορούσε η Επιτροπή να μας ενημερώσει εάν η Βουλγαρία έχει κοινοποιήσει στην Επιτροπή την έγκριση ενός πλαισίου που περιλαμβάνει σύμφωνα με καταγγελίες κρατικές ενισχύσεις για εταιρείες κατασκευής εγκαταστάσεων σκι στη Βουλγαρία;

2. Σε διαφορετική περίπτωση, προτίθεται η Επιτροπή να ερευνήσει τις καταγγελίες σχετικά με το προαναφερθέν πλαίσιο κρατικών ενισχύσεων;

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

1. Το σχέδιο τροποποίησης του νόμου περί δασών δεν έχει ακόμη κοινοποιηθεί επισήμως στην Επιτροπή προς έγκριση από πλευράς κρατικών ενισχύσεων. Ωστόσο, οι υπηρεσίες της Επιτροπής έχουν γνώση των θεμάτων αυτών δεδομένου ότι φέτος η Επιτροπή έλαβε ήδη δύο καταγγελίες σχετικά με κρατικές ενισχύσεις σχετικά με την τροποποίηση αυτή.

2. Οι εν λόγω δύο καταγγελίες είναι υπό εξέταση. Τυχόν άλλες ενέργειες θα εξαρτηθούν από τα συμπεράσματα της εξέτασης αυτής. Η Επιτροπή παρακολουθεί προσεκτικά τη νομοθετική διαδικασία για την τροποποίηση του νόμου περί δασών.

Η Επιτροπή παραπέμπει επίσης το Αξιότιμο Μέλος στην απάντησή της στη γραπτή ερώτηση E-006375/2012 της κας Nadezhda Neynsky ([4]).

([1]) http://www.government.bg/cgi-bin/e-cms/vis/vis.pl?s=001&p=0212&n=1623&g=.
([2]) http://www.strategy.bg/PublicConsultations/View.aspx?lang=bg-BG&Id=484.
([3]) http://www.mediapool.bg/правителството-одобри-застрояването-на-природните-паркове-news187916.html
([4]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/el/parliamentary-questions.html;jsessionid=C61D6C3590DA0A80275B222D1DCDC6D9.node2.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007323/12
to the Commission
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)
(20 July 2012)

Subject: State aid for ski resort developments in Bulgaria

On 28 December 2011, the Council of Ministers of Bulgaria announced the adoption of a draft amendment to the Forests Act regarding the legal procedures for the construction of ski runs and facilities in public forests ([1]). The draft amendment is due to be approved by the Bulgarian parliament. Under the amendment to the Forests Act ([2]), ski resort developers are allowed to build ski runs and facilities in public forests without acquiring forest land or paying a fixed fee for the change in land use, while all other developers (i.e. except ski operators) first have to buy the public forest land through an unconditional bidding procedure and then pay a fee for the change in land use in order to carry out their construction projects.

Further, the amending act adopted by the Council of Ministers allows ski resort developers to acquire a building or exploitation right for the purpose of constructing and operating ski runs and facilities in public forests without submitting a tender, while all other developers may acquire a building or exploitation right in respect of public property (except forests) only after participating in a bidding procedure in accordance with the State Property Act.

According to the Bulgarian Minister of Agriculture and Food, Miroslav Naidenov, all operators of ski areas in Bulgaria will benefit from the aforementioned measures ([3]). According to environmental NGOs, they will benefit to the tune of no less than EUR 25 million — the amount the developers of six ski projects awaiting authorisation will save a) by not having to pay a fee for the change in land use as a result of the amendment adopted by the Council of Ministers and b) thanks to the exemption on compulsory land acquisition in the case of public forests.

1. With regard to the above, would the Commission say whether Bulgaria has notified it of the adoption of a scheme which allegedly includes state aid for ski resort developers in Bulgaria?

2. If not, will the Commission investigate the alleged state aid scheme, as outlined above?

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

1. The draft amendments to the Forests Act have not yet been officially notified to the Commission for state aid clearance. However, the Commission services are aware of these issues as earlier this year the Commission received two state aid complaints concerning the amendments.

2. The two complaints are currently under assessment; any subsequent steps will depend on the conclusions reached. The Commission is carefully following the legislative procedure concerning the amendments to the Forests Act.

The Commission would also refer the Honourable Member to its reply to Written Question E-006375/2012 by Ms Nadezhda Neynsky ([4]).

([1]) http://www.government.bg/cgi-bin/e-cms/vis/vis.pl?s=001&p=0212&n=1623&g=.
([2]) http://www.strategy.bg/PublicConsultations/View.aspx?lang=bg-BG&Id=484.
([3]) http://www.mediapool.bg/правителството-одобри-застрояването-на-природните-паркове-news187916.html
([4]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007324/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)
(20 Ιουλίου 2012)

Θέμα: Κατασκευή αυτοκινητοδρόμου στο φυσικό πάρκο Μπούλγκαρκα (τόπος κοινοτικής σημασίας)

Η βουλγαρική κυβέρνηση πρόκειται να εγκρίνει έργο οδοποιίας που έχει προταθεί για χρηματοδότηση εκ μέρους της ΕΕ ως μέρος του Διευρωπαϊκού Διαδρόμου αριθ. 9 («Βουκουρέστι-Αλεξανδρούπολη»). Ωστόσο ο αυτοκινητόδρομος έχει σχεδιαστεί να περάσει μέσα από το φυσικό πάρκο Μπούλγκαρκα, τοποθεσία του Natura 2000, στην οποία προστατεύονται αρχέγονα δάση και πολύτιμοι βιότοποι της καφετιάς αρκούδας. Μέρος του δρόμου περνά μέσα από οικισμούς κοντά στην πόλη Γκάμπροβο.

Τον Απρίλιο του 2012 οι βουλγαρικές αρχές ενέκριναν την εκτίμηση περιβαλλοντικών επιπτώσεων (ΕΠΕ) για το έργο κατασκευής δρόμου. Ωστόσο υπάρχουν πολίτες που αντιτείνουν ότι οι αρχές ενέκριναν την ΕΠΕ χωρίς να λάβουν υπόψη τη γνώμη τους. Στο εν λόγω έργο δόθηκε άδεια, χωρίς να προηγηθεί ανάλυση ή εκτίμηση εναλλακτικών πορειών με τις οποίες θα αποφεύγονταν οι αρνητικές επιπτώσεις στο καθεστώς διατήρησης ειδών προτεραιότητας και θα απαλλάσσονταν κατοικημένες περιοχές από μη ανεκτά κατασκευαστικά έργα.

Κατόπιν των παραπάνω:

1. Είναι εν γνώσει της Επιτροπής ότι η Βουλγαρία πρόκειται να εγκρίνει οδοποιητικό έργο ευρωπαϊκής σημασίας, το οποίο δεν συμμορφώνεται με την ευρωπαϊκή οδηγία για την εκτίμηση περιβαλλοντικών επιπτώσεων ([1]) και την οδηγία για τους οικοτόπους ([2]);

2. Ποια μέτρα πρόκειται να λάβει η Επιτροπή για να διασφαλίσει ότι η χρηματοδότηση εκ μέρους της ΕΕ για το προαναφερθέν οδοποιητικό έργο θα χορηγηθεί μόνο αν η διαδικασία αδειοδότησης συμμορφώνεται πλήρως με την περιβαλλοντική νομοθεσία της ΕΕ;

Απάντηση του κ. Potočnik εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(5 Σεπτεμβρίου 2012)

1. Το έργο «Παρακαμπτήρια οδός και σήραγγα κάτω από το όρος Shipka» στο οποίο αναφέρεται το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου είναι γνωστό στην Επιτροπή. Το έργο αποτέλεσε το αντικείμενο της αναφοράς 1531/2008, η οποία περατώθηκε τον Ιούλιο του 2010. Η Επιτροπή έλαβε επίσης καταγγελία σχετικά με ενδεχόμενη παραβίαση της οδηγίας 2011/92/ΕΕ ([3]) σχετικά με την εκτίμηση των επιπτώσεων ορισμένων σχεδίων δημοσίων και ιδιωτικών έργων στο περιβάλλον (οδηγία ΕΠΕ) και της οδηγίας 92/43/ΕΟΚ ([4]) για τη διατήρηση των φυσικών οικοτόπων καθώς και της άγριας πανίδας και χλωρίδας, αλλά έθεσε την υπόθεση στο αρχείο στις 21.11.2011, δεδομένου ότι δεν διαπιστώθηκε παραβίαση.

2. Η απόφαση ΕΠΕ που εγκρίθηκε από τη βουλγαρική αρχή, συμπεριλαμβανομένων των εναλλακτικών λύσεων που εξέτασε ο κύριος του έργου, διατίθεται στο διαδίκτυο ([5]). Όσον αφορά τις εναλλακτικές λύσεις που εξετάστηκαν, η σχεδίαση ενός έργου και η επιλογή συγκεκριμένης εναλλακτικής παραμένουν στην αρμοδιότητα του οικείου κράτους μέλους, το οποίο οφείλει να διασφαλίσει τη συμμόρφωση με το σχετικό κεκτημένο. Όσον αφορά την άδεια εκτέλεσης του έργου, σύμφωνα με τις διαθέσιμες πληροφορίες, δεν έχει ακόμη χορηγηθεί.

3. Όλα τα συγχρηματοδοτούμενα από την ΕΕ έργα πρέπει να συμμορφώνονται με τη νομοθεσία της ΕΕ, συμπεριλαμβανομένης της περιβαλλοντικής νομοθεσίας. Στο πλαίσιο της πολιτικής συνοχής που διέπεται από την αρχή της επιμερισμένης διαχείρισης, η Επιτροπή ελέγχει τη συμμόρφωση των μεγάλων έργων συνολικού κόστους άνω των 50 εκατ. ευρώ με το σχετικό κεκτημένο. Για τα έργα κάτω από αυτό το ποσό, η εν λόγω εκτίμηση διενεργείται από τα κράτη μέλη. Επί του παρόντος, το προαναφερθέν έργο, το οποίο θεωρείται αυτή τη στιγμή ως «εναλλακτικό» έργο στο πλαίσιο του Επιχειρησιακού Προγράμματος Μεταφορών 2007-2013, δεν έχει ωριμάσει επαρκώς και δεν έχει υποβληθεί επίσημα στην Επιτροπή για περαιτέρω αξιολόγηση και έγκριση.

([1]) Οδηγία του Συμβουλίου 85/337/ΕΟΚ της 27ης Ιουνίου 1985 για την εκτίμηση των επιπτώσεων ορισμένων σχεδίων δημοσίων και ιδιωτικών έργων στο περιβάλλον, ΕΕ L 175 της 5.7.1985, όπως τροποποιήθηκε από την οδηγία του Συμβουλίου 97/11/ΕΚ της 3ης Μαρτίου 1997, ΕΕ L 73 της 14.3.1997.

([2]) Οδηγία του Συμβουλίου 92/43/ΕΟΚ της 21ης Μαΐου 1992 για τη διατήρηση των φυσικών οικοτόπων καθώς και της άγριας πανίδας και χλωρίδας, ΕΕ L 206 της 22.7.1992.

([3]) ΕΕ L 26 της 28.1.2012 (κωδικοποιημένη έκδοση της οδηγίας 85/337/ΕΟΚ για την εκτίμηση των επιπτώσεων ορισμένων σχεδίων δημοσίων και ιδιωτικών έργων στο περιβάλλον, όπως τροποποιήθηκε).

([4]) ΕΕ L 206 της 22.7.1992.

([5]) http://www3.moew.government.bg/files/file/Industry/EIA/reshenia_OVOS/Reshenie_4-2012.pdf.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007324/12
to the Commission
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)
(20 July 2012)

Subject: Construction of a motorway in Bulgarka Nature Park (site of Community importance)

The Bulgarian Government is in the process of authorising a road project proposed for EU funding as part of Trans-European Corridor No 9 ('Bucharest-Alexandroupolis'). However, it is planned that the road project will go through the Bulgarka Nature Park — a Natura 2000 site protecting unique old-growth forests and valuable brown bear habitats. Part of the road also passes through settlements in the vicinity of the town of Gabrovo.

In April 2012, the Bulgarian authorities approved the environmental impact assessment (EIA) for the road project. However, members of the public are arguing that the authorities adopted the EIA without taking account of their opinion. The road project was granted development consent without any analysis or assessment of alternative routes which would avoid negative impact on the conservation status of priority species and spare residential areas from unacceptable construction work.

In view of the above:

1. Is the Commission aware that Bulgaria is in the process of authorising a road project of European importance which does not comply with the European EIA Directive ([1]) and the Habitats Directive ([2])?

2. What measures will the Commission take to ensure that EU financing for the aforementioned road project is granted only if the authorisation procedure complies fully with EU environmental legislation?

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

1. The project 'Gabrovo by-pass and tunnel under the Shipka Mount' referred to by the Honourable Member is known to the Commission. The project was subject to Petition 1531/2008 which was closed in July 2010. The Commission also received a complaint related to a possible breach of Directive 2011/92/UE ([3]) on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (EIA Directive) and of Directive 92/43/EEC ([4]) on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, but closed the file on 21/11/2011, as no breach was identified.

2. The EIA decision approved by the Bulgarian authority including the alternatives studied by the developer is available online ([5]). As regards the assessed alternatives, the layout of a project and the choice of a specific alternative remains responsibility of the Member State concerned which has to ensure the compliance of the relevant *acquis*. As far as the development consent is concerned, according to the available information it is still to be granted.

3. All EU co-funded projects have to comply with EU legislation including on environment. Under the Cohesion Policy governed by the principle of shared management, the Commission verifies the compliance with relevant *acquis* for major projects with a total cost of above EUR 50 million. For projects below this threshold, the Member States perform this assessment. For the time being, the abovementioned project, currently an 'alternative' project under the Operational Programme Transport 2007-13, has not reached sufficient maturity and has not been submitted officially to the Commission for further appraisal and approval.

([1]) Council Directive 85/337/EEC of 27 June 1985 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, OJ L 175, 5.7.1985, as amended by Council Directive 97/11/EC of 3 March 1997, OJ L 73, 14.3.1997.
([2]) Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, OJ L 206, 22.7.1992.
([3]) OJ L 26, 28.1.2012 (codified version of Directive 85/337/EEC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment, as amended).
([4]) OJ L 206, 22.7.1992.
([5]) http://www3.moew.government.bg/files/file/Industry/EIA/reshenia_OVOS/Reshenie_4-2012.pdf

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007325/12
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(20. Juli 2012)

Betrifft: Programm Daphne

Am 15. November 2011 legte die Kommission Vorschläge zur Vereinfachung der Finanzierung von Programmen im Rahmen des EU-Haushalts für den Zeitraum 2014-2020 vor. Der Kommission zufolge sollen die derzeit im Finanzrahmen 2007-2013 bestehenden sechs Programme im Bereich Justiz, Grundrechte und Unionsbürgerschaft, darunter auch das Programm Daphne III, in den zwei neuen Programmen „Justiz“ und „Rechte und Unionsbürgerschaft“ aufgehen.

1. Kann die Kommission bestätigen, dass angesichts der Bedeutung, der Erfolge und der Popularität des Daphne-Programms zur Bekämpfung der Gewalt gegen Frauen, Kinder und Jugendliche dieser Vorschlag nach 2013 nicht zu einer Verkleinerung des Budgets für das Daphne-Programm führen wird?

2. Das Daphne-Programm hat eine große Bekanntheit in allen Mitgliedstaaten der Europäischen Union und auch darüber hinaus erlangt. Weshalb will die Kommission den Namen nach 2013 nicht beibehalten?

3. Wer wird Zugang zu den beiden neuen, von der Kommission vorgeschlagenen Programmen über Recht und Unionsbürgerschaft haben? Sind Bestimmungen für nichtstaatliche Organisationen vorgesehen?

4. Kann die Kommission Informationen und Zahlen über die Mittel für das neue Programm „Rechte und Unionsbürgerschaft“ vorlegen?

5. Kann die Kommission gewährleisten, dass die Prioritäten und die finanziellen Mittel des Programms Daphne III aufgrund von Überschneidungen mit anderen Programmen der Union nicht verloren gehen?

6. Was ist der geschlechtsspezifische Aspekt des neuen Programms „Rechte und Unionsbürgerschaft“?

Antwort von Frau Reding im Namen der Kommission
(17. September 2012)

Im neuen Programm „Rechte und Unionsbürgerschaft“ werden die Mittel nicht bestimmten Zielsetzungen zugewiesen, so dass die Gelder bei Bedarf flexibel eingesetzt werden können. Die Kommission wird die vorhandenen Mittel gerecht und angemessen auf die erfassten Bereiche und Ziele verteilen und beabsichtigt nicht, das Budget für die Bekämpfung der Gewalt zu kürzen.

Im neuen Programm „Rechte und Unionsbürgerschaft“ sind drei bestehende Programme, darunter Daphne, aufgegangen. Daher wurde die Programmbezeichnung geändert.

Alle in einem Mitgliedstaat oder EWR-Land ordnungsgemäß eingetragenen Organisationen werden Zugang zu den beiden neuen Programmen haben. NRO können Programmmittel erhalten.

Die Kommission hat ein Budget von insgesamt 439 Mio. EUR vorgeschlagen, was in etwa der Mittelausstattung der derzeitigen Programme entspricht. Die endgültige Entscheidung darüber treffen Europäisches Parlament und Rat im Zuge der Festlegung des mehrjährigen Finanzrahmens.

Durch die Verschmelzung der drei Programme sollen Synergien zwischen den entsprechenden Politikbereichen genutzt werden. Die Mittel für die Geschlechtergleichstellung und die Bekämpfung der Gewalt gegen Frauen können gebündelt auf prioritäre Maßnahmen konzentriert werden, wodurch dann auch Größenvorteile genutzt werden können. Dadurch wird zudem der Zugang zu Mitteln einfacher, denn die Ansätze, Mechanismen und Verfahren werden innerhalb des Programms die gleichen sein.

Eines der spezifischen Ziele des neuen Programms „Rechte und Unionsbürgerschaft“ ist neben der Bekämpfung von Gewalt gegen Frauen die Geschlechtergleichstellung. Beim Monitoring und bei der Programmevaluierung wird es auch möglich sein, die Berücksichtigung von Gleichstellungs- und Nichtdiskriminierungsfragen in sämtlichen Programmtätigkeiten zu bewerten.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007325/12
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(20 July 2012)

Subject: Daphne programme

On 15 November 2011 the Commission submitted proposals designed to simplify the funding of programmes under the EU budget over the 2014-2020 period. In particular, it would like to consolidate the six existing programmes implemented in the area of justice, fundamental rights and citizenship during the 2007-2013 funding period, including the Daphne III programme, into two new programmes entitled 'Justice' and 'Rights and Citizenship'.

1. Given the importance, successes and popularity of the Daphne programme, which aims to combat violence against women, children and young people, can the Commission confirm that this proposal will not lead to a reduction in the budget allocated to it after 2013?

2. The Daphne programme is well-known and recognised throughout the European Union. Why does the Commission not intend to retain this title after 2013?

3. Who will have access to the two new justice and citizenship programmes proposed by the Commission? Is there any provision for NGOs?

4. Can the Commission provide information and figures relating to the budget of the new Rights and Citizenship programme?

5. Can the Commission ensure that the Daphne III programme will not lose its priorities and financial resources as a result of overlapping with other Union programmes?

6. What is the gender dimension of the new Rights and Citizenship programme?

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

The new Rights and Citizenship programme does not pre-allocate budget to specific objectives, aiming to improve flexibility and response to policy needs. The Commission will distribute the available budget in a fair and appropriate way between the areas and objectives covered and does not intend to reduce the budget for combating violence.

The new Rights and Citizenship programme merges 3 existing programmes, including Daphne. A more generic title was therefore chosen.

Both programmes are open to all organisations legally established in Member States and EEA countries. NGOs will have access to funds from the programmes.

The Commission has proposed an overall budget of EUR 439 million, which represents an amount comparable to the current programmes. The final budget will be agreed on by the European Parliament and the Council in the context of the global Multiannual Financial Framework exercise.

The merge of three programmes aims to promote synergies between the policy areas covered. Combining the funds for gender equality and for combating violence against women means that these funds can be focused on the policy priorities and will lead to economies of scale. It will also simplify access to funding for beneficiaries, by applying the same approach, the same mechanisms and the same procedures within the Programme.

The new Rights and Citizenship programme will cover gender equality as one of its specific objectives, as well as violence against women. Monitoring and evaluation of the programme will also assess the way in which gender equality and anti-discrimination issues have been addressed across the programme's actions.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-007327/12
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) e Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(20 de julho de 2012)

Assunto: Incêndios na Ilha da Madeira — Apoios da União Europeia

Desde a passada terça-feira que vários incêndios de grandes proporções percorrem a ilha da Madeira. São vários os concelhos afetados — Calheta, Ribeira Brava, Câmara de Lobos, Funchal, Santa Cruz e Porto Moniz — e o nível de destruição causada, até ao momento, é muito significativo. Várias populações foram afetadas, havendo notícias de casas destruídas, famílias desalojadas e deslocação forçada de centenas de pessoas. Os fogos consumiram vastas áreas de floresta e importantes áreas de produção agrícola.

Esta é mais uma catástrofe de grandes dimensões que se abate sobre esta região ultraperiférica, o que deve merecer toda a solidariedade da União Europeia. Os prejuízos — ainda impossíveis de serem contabilizados em toda a sua extensão — serão seguramente muito elevados e os impactos profundos e possivelmente duradouros.

Assim, solicitamos à Comissão que nos informe sobre o seguinte:

1. Que medidas de emergência e apoios excecionais à Região Autónoma da Madeira e às populações atingidas por esta catástrofe podem ser desde já mobilizados?

2. Que programas e medidas poderão apoiar a recuperação e a reflorestação das áreas florestais ardidas?

3. Que programas e medidas poderão apoiar os agricultores afetados e a recuperação, tãorápida quanto possível, do potencial produtivo das áreas agrícolas afetadas?

Resposta dada por Dacian Cioloș em nome da Comissão
(30 de agosto de 2012)

Em princípio, os incêndios florestais são abrangidos pelo Fundo de Solidariedade. A possibilidade de ser concedida uma ajuda financeira proveniente desse fundo da União Europeia teria de ser avaliada pela Comissão com base num pedido a apresentar pelas autoridades nacionais portuguesas no prazo máximo de 10 semanas a contar do início dos incêndios. Até à data, porém, as autoridades portuguesas nada solicitaram, nem apresentaram nenhum pedido, relativamente aos incêndios florestais na Madeira.

No quadro da política de desenvolvimento rural, o Regulamento (CE) n.° 1698/2005 do Conselho ([1]) prevê apoios da UE para restabelecer o potencial silvícola afetado por incêndios e para a introdução de medidas de prevenção. A medida 226 do Programa de Desenvolvimento Rural da Madeira (Proderam) prevê o apoio da UE a essas ações. A contribuição do Feader para a medida 226 ascende a 16 463 989 euros. A utilização dos fundos da UE e a escolha das medidas no domínio florestal a financiar são, no entanto, da competência do Estado-Membro.

Além disso, quando o potencial de produção agrícola é afetado por catástrofes naturais, a medida 126, «Restabelecimento do potencial de produção agrícola», do mesmo programa pode proporcionar apoios a investimentos destinados a restabelecer o potencial de produção dos agricultores afetados pelos incêndios. A contribuição do Feader para esta medida ascende a 42 894 408 euros.

([1]) JO L 277 de 21.10.2005, pp. 1— 40.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007327/12
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) and Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(20 July 2012)

Subject: Fires on the island of Madeira — EU support

Since last Tuesday the island of Madeira has been swept by fires. A number of municipalities have been stricken — Calheta, Ribeira Brava, Câmara de Lobos, Funchal, Santa Cruz, and Porto Moniz — and the destruction caused so far is on a very large scale. Several communities have been affected: there are reports of houses destroyed, families made homeless, and hundreds of people displaced. The fires have destroyed vast expanses of forest and large tracts of farmland.

This is another major disaster to have struck Madeira, an outermost region, and it demands that the EU show the utmost solidarity. Although the full extent of the damage is impossible to calculate, the sums involved are bound to considerable, and the impacts will be far reaching and possibly permanent.

1. What emergency measures can be taken at this stage, and what special aid mobilised, to help the Autonomous Region of Madeira and the victims of this disaster?

2. What programmes and measures could be employed to support the restoration and reafforestation of the woodlands destroyed by fire?

3. What programmes and measures could support the farmers affected and enable the production potential of the damaged farmland to be restored as quickly as possible?

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

Forest fires fall in principle within the scope of the Solidarity Fund. Whether financial aid from the EU Solidarity Fund could be granted would have to be assessed by the Commission on the basis of an application to be presented by the Portuguese national authorities within 10 weeks of the start of the fires. However, until now Portuguese authorities have not sent any request or application regarding forest fires in Madeira.

In the framework of Rural Development policy, Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 ([1]) foresees EU support for restoring forestry potential damaged by fires and introducing prevention actions. Measure 226 of the Rural Development Programme Madeira (ProderAM) foresees the EU support to those actions. The EAFRD contribution to this measure amounts to EUR 16 463 989. However, the use of EU funds and the choice of forestry measures to be funded is a competence of the Member State

In addition, in case where the agricultural production potential is damaged by natural disasters, measure 126 'restoring the agricultural production potential' of the same Programme may provide support to investments aiming at restoring farmers' production potential damaged by fires. The EAFRD contribution for this measure amounts to EUR 42 894 408.

([1]) OJ L 277, 21.10.2005, pp. 1-40.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-007328/12
to the Commission
Charles Tannock (ECR)
(20 July 2012)

Subject: Current lack of clear international legal framework governing retrieval of abandoned satellite parts in space

Satellites in geosynchronous orbit (GEO) above the earth provide vital communication capabilities to governments and armed forces throughout the world. When a communication satellite fails or reaches the end of its working life, it often means the very expensive prospect of having to launch a brand-new replacement. Less appreciated is the fact that many of the satellites which are obsolete or have failed are now known still to have reusable hardware including GEO-based space apertures and antennas. Currently this valuable material is abandoned as 'space junk' and continues to orbit the earth in the graveyard or disposal orbit.

Recent work by a specialised US Government agency within the US Department of Defence, the DARPA (Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency), as part of its Phoenix programme is addressing the emerging new technology of robotic space retrieval of abandoned satellite parts. The Phoenix programme is designed to 'develop and demonstrate technologies to cooperatively harvest and re-use valuable components from retired, nonworking satellites in GEO and demonstrate the ability to create new space systems at greatly reduced cost'. DARPA's project will be groundbreaking, as it can reduce the cost of future satellite launches whilst reusing some of the decommissioned space satellite equipment.

1. As there is clearly scope for EU-US civil and military cooperation in this area, can the Commission confirm whether currently it has any jurisprudence or competence to legislate in this area, or whether this is a matter exclusively for the Member States?

2. Are there discussions going on at Member State or EU level in relation to the legal implications in the area of emerging space retrieval technology, including ownership rights, and the potential risk of 'space piracy' unless there is clear legal certainty for all those investing in or benefiting from this new technology?

3. Is this a matter best dealt with at UN level, with participation by the EU and its Member States alongside other countries and major international actors active in space technology?

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

1. The European Union could, in principle, adopt measures on issues such as the retrieval of abandoned satellite parts in space on the basis of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU — Article 189, which confers the EU shared competence in space matters. The 7th Framework Programme (FP7) is already supporting research projects dealing with the handling of end-of-life satellites ([1]). Although research has so far focused primarily on space-debris removal, the possibility is open for FP7 to support research on techniques for capturing or docking with uncooperative orbiting objects; these techniques are essential for robotic space retrieval.

2. At present, the legal aspects related to some of these issues are notably discussed within the Working Group of the UN Committee for the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) on Long Term Sustainability for Outer Space Activities.

3. The Commission will examine, together with Member States, the need for future discussion and possible action in this domain.

([1]) C(2012) 4536 of 9 July 2012, SPA.2013.2.3-02 Security of space assets from in-orbit collisions.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007329/12
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(20 de julio de 2012)

Asunto: Integración de la custodia del territorio en las políticas europeas y en la reforma de la PAC

De fácil aplicación y de coste reducido, la custodia del territorio (*land stewardship*, en inglés) es una herramienta flexible que se adapta a las necesidades locales, y que goza ya de un grado de implantación y de un reconocimiento importante en varios países de la Unión ([1]). A pesar de todo esto, la custodia del territorio, como concepto, no consta explícitamente en ningún documento o política de la Unión Europea como Horizonte 2020 o la PAC.

1. ¿Considera la Comisión que la custodia del territorio es una herramienta de gran relevancia de cara al Horizonte 2020 y con todo el potencial para fomentar un crecimiento inteligente, sostenible e integrador?

2. ¿No considera la Comisión que la custodia del territorio encaja perfectamente con la filosofía de la reforma de la Política Agrícola Común (PAC), y es una herramienta que podría favorecer y flexibilizar su dinámica de reverdecimiento?

Respuesta del Sr. Cioloş en nombre de la Comisión
(4 de septiembre de 2012)

1. La propuesta de Reglamento ([2]) por el que se establece Horizonte 2020 prevé la aplicación del reto social «Seguridad alimentaria, agricultura sostenible, investigación marina y marítima y bioeconomía» mediante la creación de sistemas de producción primaria productivos y eficientes en el uso de los recursos que fomenten los servicios ecosistémicos relacionados. En el programa específico correspondiente a este reto social, la agricultura y la silvicultura se consideran sistemas únicos que no solo ofrecen productos comerciales sino también bienes públicos dotados de un sentido social más amplio e importantes servicios ecológicos tales como la biodiversidad funcional, la polinización, la regulación hídrica, la preservación del paisaje, la reducción de la erosión y la captura de carbono o la atenuación de los gases de efecto invernadero. Por lo tanto, las actividades de investigación apoyarán la custodia del territorio y la prestación de estos bienes y servicios públicos mediante la aplicación de soluciones de gestión. Las cuestiones específicas que se abordarán son la identificación de sistemas agrícolas y forestales y patrones paisajísticos con potencial para lograr esos objetivos.

La cooperación de innovación europea «Productividad y sostenibilidad agrícolas» ([3]) también puede contribuir a fomentar la custodia del territorio al tender puentes entre la investigación y la práctica a través de los grupos operativos que reúnen a agricultores, investigadores, servicios de asesoramiento, empresas, ONG, etc. El planteamiento participativo de esa cooperación facilitará nuevos conocimientos e ideas y configurará los conocimientos implícitos existentes como soluciones específicas. La red de cooperación de innovación europea ampliará la base de conocimientos e intensificará el intercambio de experiencias, además de funcionar como instancia mediadora, facilitando un flujo de información efectivo más allá del nivel local y regional.

2. La Comisión remite a Su Señoría a su respuesta a la pregunta E-007330/2012 ([4]).

([1]) www.landstewardship.eu.
([2]) COM(2011) 809 final, de 30.11.2011.
([3]) COM(2012) 79 final, de 29.2.2012.
([4]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007329/12
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(20 July 2012)

Subject: Making land stewardship part of European policy and CAP reform

Land stewardship is an easy-to-apply, low-cost, flexible tool that can be adapted to meet local needs. It is, to a major extent, already being used and is a recognised concept in several Member States ([1]). Despite this, however, the concept of land stewardship is not explicitly mentioned in any EU documents or policies, such as Horizon 2020 or the CAP.

1. Does the Commission believe that land stewardship is a particularly relevant tool in respect of Horizon 2020, a tool that has all the potential necessary to foster intelligent, sustainable and inclusive growth?

2. Does the Commission take the view that land stewardship dovetails perfectly with the philosophy behind the CAP, and is a tool that could promote and introduce flexibility into efforts to 'green' the policy?

Answer given by Mr Çioloş on behalf of the Commission
(4 September 2012)

1. The proposed Horizon 2020 regulation ([2]) foresees the implementation of the Societal Challenge 'Food security, sustainable agriculture, marine and maritime research and the bio-economy' via developing productive and resource-efficient primary production systems that are fostering the related ecosystem services. In the specific programme for this societal challenge, agriculture and forestry are seen as unique systems delivering not only commercial products but also wider societal public goods and important ecological services such as functional and in-situ biodiversity, pollination, water regulation, landscape, erosion reduction and carbon sequestration/GHG mitigation. Research activities will therefore support land stewardship and the provision of these public goods and services through the delivery of management solutions. Specific issues to be dealt with include the identification of farming/forest systems and landscape patterns likely to achieve these goals.

The European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability ([3]) may also contribute to fostering land stewardship by building bridges between research and practice via operational groups bringing together farmers, researchers, advisory services, businesses, NGOs, etc. The participatory approach of the EIP will generate new insights and ideas and mould existing tacit knowledge into focused solutions. The EIP network will widen the knowledge base and enhance the sharing of experience. It will work as a mediator, facilitating the effective flow of information beyond the local and regional level.

2. The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-007330/2012 ([4]).

([1]) www.landstewardship.eu.
([2]) COM(2011) 809 final, 30.11.2011.
([3]) COM(2012) 79 final, 29.2.2012.
([4]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007330/12
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(20 de julio de 2012)

Asunto: Custodia del territorio

La custodia del territorio (*land stewardship*, en inglés) es una estrategia que pretende generar responsabilidades entre propietarios y usuarios del territorio para que conserven y utilicen correctamente los recursos, así como los valores naturales, culturales y paisajísticos. Así pues, la custodia del territorio es una estrategia integradora que permite reconciliar los compromisos ambientales y económicos, aumentando la coherencia entre las diferentes políticas de la Unión Europea.

En concreto, la custodia del territorio se plasma en acuerdos voluntarios entre propietarios y gestores de terrenos y entidades de custodia del territorio para mantener o recuperar el medio natural y el paisaje. Las entidades de custodia son organizaciones sin ánimo de lucro, públicas o privadas (asociaciones, fundaciones, y organismos públicos especialmente de ámbito local). Tal y como lo recomienda la Estrategia de la UE sobre la biodiversidad hasta 2020, la custodia del territorio fomenta colaboraciones para la biodiversidad, basándose en la implicación activa y voluntaria de la ciudadanía en la conservación del territorio. Además, genera sinergias entre fuentes públicas y privadas de financiación.

1. ¿Tiene conocimiento la Comisión de esta estrategia innovadora de conservación del territorio?

2. ¿Estaría de acuerdo la Comisión en reconocer el valor de la custodia para el desarrollo sostenible de la Unión Europea (incluyendo sus políticas agrícolas y medioambientales) y en promover su desarrollo?

Respuesta del Sr. Cioloş en nombre de la Comisión
(30 de agosto de 2012)

1. La Comisión está al corriente del concepto de custodia del territorio. De hecho, está financiando Landlife, un proyecto LIFE+ Información y comunicación para la promoción de la custodia del territorio en Europa ([1]).

2. Como afirma un estudio preliminar sobre la custodia del territorio en el marco del mencionado proyecto Landlife, todavía hace falta aclarar más la idea de custodia del territorio en Europa.

Sin embargo, algunos proyectos relacionados con la noción de custodia del territorio están recibiendo financiación de la UE al amparo de las medidas agroambientales en algunos de los programas nacionales de desarrollo rural. En el período 2014-2020, la gestión sostenible de los recursos naturales es central en la propuesta de reforma de la PAC y se ha propuesto que sea una de las seis prioridades de desarrollo rural ([2]) la recuperación, preservación y mejora de los ecosistemas dependientes de la agricultura y la silvicultura, prestándose especial atención, entre otras cosas, a las zonas Natura 2000, a la agricultura de alto valor natural y al estado de los paisajes europeos.

([1]) www.landstewardship.eu.
([2]) COM(2011) 627 final/2.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007330/12
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(20 July 2012)

Subject: Land stewardship

Land stewardship is a strategy designed to promote accountability among the owners and users of land with a view to encouraging them to conserve and correctly use resources and natural, cultural and landscape-related assets. Land stewardship is therefore an integration-oriented strategy that makes it possible to reconcile environmental and economic commitments, boosting coherence between various EU policies.

Specifically, land stewardship takes the form of voluntary agreements between the owners and managers of land, and land stewardship bodies, with a view to conserving or restoring the natural environment and the countryside. Land stewardship bodies are public or private non-profit organisations (e.g. associations, foundations and public authorities, particularly at local level). As proposed in the EU's biodiversity strategy to 2020, land stewardship promotes cooperation for biodiversity, encouraging the general public to volunteer and play an active role in conservation. It also creates synergies between public and private sources of funding.

1. Is the Commission aware of this innovative conservation strategy?

2. Would the Commission agree to recognise the value of stewardship for the sustainable development of the European Union (including its agriculture and environment policies) and for promoting its development?

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

1. The Commission is aware of the concept of land stewardship. Indeed, it is funding Landlife, a LIFE+ Information and Communication project to promote land stewardship in Europe. ([1])

2. As a preliminary study on land stewardship under the abovementioned Landlife project argues, there is still a certain need for further clarification on the concept of land stewardship in Europe.

However, projects related to the concept of land stewardship are currently receiving EU funding under agri-environment measures in some national rural development programmes. For the period 2014-2020 the sustainable management of natural resources is at the centre of the proposed CAP reform, and restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems dependent on agriculture and forestry, with *inter alia* a particular focus on Natura 2000 areas and high nature value farming and the state of European landscapes, is proposed to be one of six Union priorities for rural development ([2]).

([1]) www.landstewardship.eu.
([2]) COM(2011) 627 final/2.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007331/12
an die Kommission
Daniel Caspary (PPE)
(20. Juli 2012)

Betrifft: Einführung der Steel and Steel Product Quality Control Orders in Indien

Bereits im Jahr 2008 veröffentlichte das indische Stahlministerium sogenannte *Steel and Steel Product Quality Control Orders*. Diese untersagen die Produktion, den Verkauf und den Import von Stahlprodukten, deren Qualität nicht im Vorfeld durch das *Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)* zertifiziert wurde. Aufgrund großer Proteste seitens indischer Stahlproduzenten und der EU wurde die Einführung bis auf Weiteres verschoben. Nach aktuellen Presseberichten sollen diese Vorschriften nun im September 2012 in Kraft treten. Es gibt Befürchtungen, dass dadurch der Verkauf einer Reihe von sowohl indischen als auch europäischen Stahlprodukten, die nicht den neu eingeführten Normen entsprechen, verboten wird. Außerdem könnte die Einführung zu einem beträchtlichen administrativen Aufwand führen, welcher vor allem auch den kleinen und mittleren Unternehmen schaden könnte.

Kann die Kommission in diesem Zusammenhang folgende Fragen beantworten:

1. Hat die Kommission nähere Kenntnisse über die Einführung der *Steel and Steel Product Quality Control Orders* und ihre Folgen? Wenn ja, welche?

2. Wie begegnet die Kommission der Einführung dieser Vorschriften insbesondere vor dem Hintergrund der derzeitigen Verhandlungen über ein Freihandelsabkommen zwischen der EU und Indien?

Antwort von Herrn De Gucht im Namen der Kommission
(1. Oktober 2012)

Seit der Einführung obligatorischer Zertifizierungsauflagen für Stahlerzeugnisse im Jahr 2008 hat die Kommission über diese Frage mit Indien viele Diskussionen geführt. Im Anschluss an die Interventionen der EU (sowie Japans und Koreas) verschob Indien im Februar 2009 den Zeitpunkt für die Umsetzung und begrenzte den Geltungsbereich auf acht Produkte. Im Februar 2010 kündigte Indien eine vorübergehende Befreiung für alle Produkte mit einer Ausnahme an. Im März 2012 veröffentlichte Indien jedoch einen Erlass, mit dem die obligatorische Zertifizierung für neun Kategorien von Stahlerzeugnissen wieder eingeführt wurde. Diese Maßnahme soll im September 2012 in Kraft treten.

Das Thema ist mit Indien schon oft erörtert worden — auf bilateraler (zuletzt auf einer Sitzung in Delhi am 19. Juli 2012) wie auf multilateraler Ebene (im TBT-Ausschuss der WTO).

Indien führt an, dass Auflagen erforderlich sind, da die betroffenen Produkte wichtige Bestandteile von Erzeugnissen sind, für die Sicherheit von grundlegender Bedeutung ist. Darüber hinaus würden dieselben Auflagen auch für inländische Erzeugnisse gelten und es sei eine ausreichende Anpassungszeit gewährt worden, da die Ankündigung bereits 2008 erfolgt sei.

Die EU hat Indien aufgefordert, von der Einführung obligatorischer Zertifizierungsauflagen für Stahlerzeugnisse abzusehen und seine Normen an geltende internationale Normen (ISO) anzupassen. Darüber hinaus hat die EU versucht, Indien dazu zu bewegen, Prüfungen, die in ausländischen Labors durchgeführt wurden und die Einhaltung der ISO-Normen bestätigen, zu akzeptieren und keine Fabrikkontrollen durchzuführen, insbesondere nicht in ausländischen Werken, die ein Qualitätsmanagementsystem eingeführt haben (ISO 9001 zertifiziert). Angesichts des bevorstehenden Inkrafttretens der Vorschriften liegt der Schwerpunkt der jüngsten Diskussionen auf der Notwendigkeit, ein schnelleres und effizienteres Verfahren einzuführen, damit der Handel nicht gestört wird. Auch im Rahmen der Verhandlungen über ein Freihandelsabkommen der EU mit Indien wurde das Thema der obligatorischen Zertifizierung durch Dritte mit Indien erörtert.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007331/12
to the Commission
Daniel Caspary (PPE)
(20 July 2012)

Subject: Introduction of Steel and Steel Product Quality Control Orders in India

Back in 2008 the Indian Steel Ministry published Steel and Steel Product Quality Control Orders, which prohibit the production, sale and import of steel products whose quality has not been certified in advance by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS). Following protests from Indian steel producers and the EU, the introduction of these orders was postponed until further notice, but it is now being reported in the press that they are to enter into force in September 2012. There are fears that this could result a ban on the sale of a number of both Indian and European steel products which do not meet the new standards. It could also lead to a great deal of red tape which would be injurious to small and medium-sized enterprises in particular.

In this connection:

1. Does the Commission have any more details about the introduction of the Steel and Steel Product Quality Control Orders and their consequences? If so, what?

2. How is the Commission responding to the introduction of these orders, particularly in the light of the current negotiations on a free trade agreement between the EU and India?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(1 October 2012)

Since the introduction of mandatory certification requirements for steel products in 2008, the Commission has had many discussions with India on this issue. Following the EU's (and also Japan and Korea) interventions, India postponed in February 2009 the implementation and narrowed down the scope to 8 products. In February 2010 India announced a temporary exemption of all but one of the products. However in March 2012, India published an order that reintroduced mandatory certification for 9 categories of steel products. Entry into force of this measure is foreseen for September 2012.

This issue has been discussed often with India bilaterally (recently in a meeting in Delhi on 19 July 2012) and multilaterally in the WTO TBT Committee.

India argues that requirements are necessary as the concerned products are critical components of products for which safety is vital. Further, domestic products face same requirements and sufficient adaptation time has been given as announcement was in 2008.

The EU has asked India to refrain from imposing mandatory certification for steel products, and to align its standards to existing international standards (ISO). Further, the EU has sought to persuade India to accept tests carried out in foreign laboratories attesting compliance with ISO standards and not to conduct factory inspections particularly in foreign mills that have a quality management system in place (ISO 9001certified). In view of the entry into force of the Order, the recent discussions are focused on the necessity to provide a more rapid and efficient procedure so that trade is not interrupted. The framework of the EU-India Free Trade Agreement negotiations has also been used to discuss the issue of mandatory third party certification with India.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007332/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Koumoutsakos (PPE)
(20 Ιουλίου 2012)

Θέμα: Κλινικές δοκιμές φαρμάκων στην ΕΕ

Η πρόσφατη πρόταση κανονισμού της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής για τις κλινικές δοκιμές φαρμάκων που προορίζονται για τον άνθρωπο, αποσκοπεί στην απλοποίηση των κανόνων που τις διέπουν και στην αναστροφή του αρνητικού κλίματος που έχει διαμορφωθεί. Σημειώνεται ότι τα τελευταία χρόνια, ο αριθμός των κλινικών δοκιμών στην ΕΕ έχει μειωθεί κατά 25 %, εν μέρει εξαιτίας της ιδιαίτερα αυστηρής νομοθεσίας σε ευρωπαϊκό επίπεδο.

Είναι γεγονός ότι καινοτόμες μέθοδοι θεραπείας καίριας σημασίας για ασθενείς με χρόνιες παθήσεις, όπως είναι ο καρκίνος, δεν μπορούσαν να εφαρμοστούν εγκαίρως, κυρίως εξαιτίας της υπερβολικής γραφειοκρατίας. Η κατάσταση παραμένει εξαιρετικά ανησυχητική για τα παιδιά, αφού για κάθε φάρμακο απαιτούνται πρόσθετες κλινικές δοκιμές.

Σύμφωνα με τα παραπάνω, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Πιστεύει ότι με την παρούσα πρόταση αντιμετωπίζονται αποτελεσματικά τα βασικά προβλήματα -όπως η γραφειοκρατία και οι πολύπλοκες διαδικασίες- της ισχύουσας νομοθεσίας; Θεωρεί ότι θα ενθαρρυνθούν οι κλινικές δοκιμές στην ΕΕ για καινοτόμες μεθόδους θεραπείας και νέα φάρμακα, προς την κατεύθυνση της ανάπτυξης;

2. Υπάρχει ειδική πρόνοια για ασθενείς με χρόνιες παθήσεις, και κυρίως για τα παιδιά, για τα οποία η άμεση εφαρμογή νέας θεραπείας είναι ζωτικής σημασίας;

Απάντηση του κ. Dalli εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(29 Αυγούστου 2012)

Η πρόταση κανονισμού του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου και του Συμβουλίου για τις κλινικές δοκιμές φαρμάκων που προορίζονται για τον άνθρωπο αποβλέπει στη μείωση του διοικητικού φόρτου, του κόστους και των αυξημένων καθυστερήσεων που συνεπάγεται η ισχύουσα οδηγία. Η Επιτροπή έχει την πεποίθηση ότι η πρόταση θα συμβάλει στην τόνωση των κλινικών δοκιμών στην ΕΕ και, κατά συνέπεια, θα ενισχύσει την ανάπτυξη καινοτόμων μεθόδων θεραπείας και φαρμάκων.

Η πρόταση κανονισμού δεν ρυθμίζει το είδος κλινικής έρευνας αλλά τον τρόπο με τον οποίο αυτή διεξάγεται, ώστε να είναι εγγυημένες η ασφάλεια των συμμετεχόντων και η αξιοπιστία των στοιχείων που προκύπτουν. Ως εκ τούτου, δεν προβλέπει ειδικούς κανόνες σχετικά με τις χρόνιες παθήσεις ή συγκεκριμένες επιμέρους πληθυσμιακές ομάδες.

Ωστόσο, η πρόταση, διευκολύνοντας τη διεξαγωγή πολυεθνικών δοκιμών και μειώνοντας τον απαιτούμενο χρόνο για την έγκριση των κλινικών δοκιμών, αναμένεται ότι θα ωφελήσει έμμεσα την κλινική έρευνα για τις χρόνιες παθήσεις ή τις επιμέρους πληθυσμιακές ομάδες.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007332/12
to the Commission
Georgios Koumoutsakos (PPE)
(20 July 2012)

Subject: Clinical trials of drugs in the EU

The Commission's recent proposal for a regulation on clinical trials of medicinal products for human use is designed to simplify the rules governing such trials and dispel the adverse climate in which such trials are conducted. It should be noted that in recent years, the number of clinical trials in the EU has fallen by 25%, partly due to the very strict legislation at European level.

It is a fact that innovative methods of treatment, which are of vital importance for patients with chronic diseases such as cancer, have taken too long to develop, mainly due to excessive bureaucracy. The situation remains extremely worrying for children, since, for each drug, additional clinical trials are needed.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Does it believe that this proposal effectively addresses the key issues — such as the bureaucracy and complexity — of current legislation? Does it believe that it will encourage clinical trials in the EU so that new drugs for innovative treatments can be developed?

2. Does any special provision exist for patients with chronic diseases, especially children, for whom the immediate availability of a new treatment is crucial?

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

The proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and the Council on clinical trials on medicinal products for human use, aims at reducing the administrative burdens, the costs and the increased delays created by the current directive. The Commission is confident that the proposal will contribute to stimulating clinical trials in the EU and consequently will foster development of innovative treatment and medicines.

The proposal for a regulation does not regulate the type of clinical research but how this research is conducted in order to ensure the safety of participant and the reliability of the data generated. Therefore it does not set out any specific rules on chronic diseases or specific sub groups of the population.

However, by facilitating the conduction of multinational trials, and by reducing the approval time for the authorisation of clinical trials, the proposal should benefit indirectly clinical research on chronic diseases or sub groups of the population.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-007333/12
adresată Comisiei
Claudiu Ciprian Tănăsescu (S&D)
(20 iulie 2012)

Subiect: Medicamentele homeopatice (întrebare suplimentară)

Conștientizăm existența unei proceduri de înregistrare, în plus față de procedura de autorizare, cu privire la medicamentele homeopatice, în conformitate cu Directiva 2001/83/CE, după cum se subliniază în răspunsul Comisiei la întrebarea P-004526/12.

Comisia susține că, în prezent, cadrul juridic al UE privind medicamentele homeopatice oferă o flexibilitate suficientă în ceea ce privește atât înregistrarea, cât și autorizarea acestor produse. Având în vedere faptul că, începând cu anul 2001, niciun medicament homeopatic nu a fost autorizat, în conformitate cu cerințele de autorizare prevăzute în Directiva 2001/83/CE, flexibilitatea existentă în ceea ce privește atât înregistrarea, cât și autorizarea acestor produse, în temeiul articolului 16 alineatul (1) din această directivă, ar putea fi semnalată statelor membre. Acest fapt s-ar putea realiza prin intermediul unei modificări la Anexa 1 din Directiva 2001/83/CE. De altfel, existența flexibilității, conform legislației UE, ar putea fi semnalată statelor membre prin intermediul unei orientări al cărei scop să fie simplificarea practicii curente, în conformitate cu procedurile de autorizare privind medicamentele homeopatice.

Va lua Comisia vreo măsură pentru a semnala natura suficientă a flexibilității oferită statelor membre de către legislația UE, în ceea ce privește atât înregistrarea, cât și autorizarea medicamentelor homeopatice, conform Directivei 2001/83/CE, fie prin intermediul unei modificări la Anexa 1 din directivă, fie prin intermediul unei orientări adresate statelor membre?

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

După cum a fost subliniat în răspunsul dnei Harkin ([1]) la întrebarea scrisă E-003839/2012, Comisia consideră că actualul cadru de reglementare oferă suficientă flexibilitate în ceea ce privește înregistrarea și autorizarea medicamentelor homeopatice.

Prin urmare, Comisia nu are în vedere aducerea unor noi modificări la Directiva 2001/83/CE în ceea ce privește medicamentele homeopatice și nici elaborarea de orientări.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007333/12
to the Commission
Claudiu Ciprian Tănăsescu (S&D)
(20 July 2012)

Subject: Homeopathic medicinal products (follow-up question)

We share the awareness of the existence of a registration procedure in addition to the authorisation procedure for homeopathic medicinal products under Directive 2001/83/EC, as highlighted in the Commission's answer to Question P-004526/12.

The Commission argues that the current EU legal framework for homeopathic medicinal products offers sufficient flexibility as regards both registering and authorising such products. Given the fact that since 2001 no homeopathic medicinal product has been authorised according to the authorisation requirements foreseen by Directive 2001/83/EC, the existing flexibility in terms of not only registering but also authorising such products on the basis of Article 16(1) of that directive could be pointed out to Member States. This could be achieved by means of an amendment to Annex A to Directive 2001/83/EC. Alternatively, the existence of flexibility under EC law could be pointed out to Member States by means of a guideline aimed at simplifying current practice under the authorisation procedures for homeopathic medicinal products.

Will the Commission take any action to point out the sufficient nature of the flexibility offered to Member States by EC law, in terms of not only registering but also authorising homeopathic medicinal products pursuant to Directive 2001/83/EC, by means of an amendment to Annex A to the directive or else a guideline addressed to the Member States?

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

As highlighted in its answer to Written Question E-003839/2012 by Ms Harkin ([1]), the Commission considers that the existing regulatory framework provides sufficient flexibility in terms of the registration and authorisation of homeopathic medicinal products.

The Commission therefore neither envisages further amendments to Directive 2001/83/EC as far as homeopathic medicinal products are concerned nor the drafting of guidelines.

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

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-007334/12
adresată Comisiei
Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE)
(20 iulie 2012)

Subiect: Programe de asistență pentru securitatea informatică

Uniunea Europeană a avut o contribuție foarte importantă la adoptarea, la nivelul UE, de măsuri de rezistență împotriva atacurilor informatice. Totuși există diferențe semnificative între capacitățile individuale ale statelor membre privind securitatea informatică.

În lipsa unui cadru la nivel UE pentru a gestiona securitatea informatică, atât la nivel intern, cât și internațional, capacitatea UE de „a proiecta puterea informatică" sau chiar de a preveni ori de a gestiona atacurile informatice grave rămâne limitată.

1. Evaluează Comisia posibilitatea de a crea un instrument structural de finanțare a securității informatice care poate sprijini toate statele membre în vederea consolidării nivelului lor organizațional și tehnologic de securitate informatică?

2. Având în vedere că securitatea informatică din țările în curs de dezvoltare are o relevanță directă pentru securitatea informatică a întregii UE, are în vedere Comisia posibilitatea creării unor programe de asistență pentru securitatea informatică prin extinderea actualelor instrumente ale cooperării pentru dezvoltare?

3. Are în vedere Comisia posibilitatea creării unor instrumente de finanțare ale UE pentru aoferi asistență directă sectorului privat în vederea consolidării securității informatice,având în vedere daunele majore provocate de criminalitatea informatică întreprinderiloreuropene?

Răspuns dat de dna Kroes în numele Comisiei
(30 august 2012)

Comisia împărtășește pe deplin îngrijorarea cu privire la faptul că există diferențe semnificative între capacitățile de securitate informatică ale statelor membre ale UE și lucrează la o propunere legislativă prin care li se solicită statelor membre să stabilească un nivel minim comun de securitate a rețelelor informatice și a datelor la nivel național, se creează mecanisme de acțiune coordonată la nivelul Uniunii și li se cere părților interesate din sectorul privat să gestioneze riscurile din rețelele și din sistemele lor de informații și să raporteze incidentele importante.

Există o serie de instrumente de finanțare a măsurilor de îmbunătățire a securității informatice: de exemplu, instrumentul de finanțare care însoțește programul european pentru privind protecția infrastructurilor critice, programul de sprijinire a politicii în domeniul TIC, parte a Programului-cadru pentru competitivitate și inovare, și a celui de-Al 7-lea program-cadru pentru cercetare. Referitor la criminalitatea informatică, programul privind „Prevenirea și combaterea criminalității" sprijină dezvoltarea instrumentelor de detectare și criminalistice necesare pentru abordarea eficace a acestui tip de criminalitate.

În prezent, Comisia finalizează programul anual de acțiune pentru 2012 referitor la prioritatea 2 (combaterea amenințărilor mondiale și transregionale) a Instrumentului de stabilitate, care acordă prioritate, printre altele, consolidării, în țările în curs de dezvoltare, a capacităților legate de creșterea securității informatice și de combaterea criminalității informatice.

Comisia consideră că rolul părților interesate din sectorul privat, care operează majoritatea infrastructurilor informatice, este esențial pentru abordarea securității și a criminalității informatice și pentru schimbul de bune practici și de expertiză cu autoritățile publice. Prin programele susmenționate, organizațiile private pot solicita finanțare în parteneriat cu alte entități private sau cu organisme publice.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007334/12
to the Commission
Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE)
(20 July 2012)

Subject: Cyber security assistance programmes

The European Union has played a very important role in helping to develop EU-wide resilience measures against cyber attacks. However, there are significant differences in the cyber security capabilities of individual Member States.

Without Union-wide frameworks to manage cyber security both internally and internationally, the EU's ability to 'project cyber power' or even to prevent or manage serious cyber attacks remains limited.

1. Is the Commission evaluating the feasibility of establishing a structural cyber security funding instrument that can assist all Member States in raising their organisational and technological cyber security levels?

2. Given that cyber security in developing countries has a direct relevance to the cyber security of the EU as a whole, is the Commission considering the possibility of setting up cyber security assistance programmes as an extension of the current instruments for development cooperation?

3. Is the Commission considering the possibility of establishing EU funding instruments to provide direct assistance to the private sector for building cyber security, given the extensive damage caused to European businesses by cyber crime?

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

The Commission fully shares the concern that there are significant differences in the cyber security capabilities of individual EU Member States and is working on a legislative proposal asking Member States to establish a common minimum level of Network and Information Security at national level, setting-up mechanisms for coordinated action at Union level, and requiring private stakeholders to manage the risks on their networks and information systems and to report significant incidents.

A number of instruments exist to fund actions to improve cyber security: e.g. the financing instrument accompanying the European Programme for Critical Infrastructures Protection, the ICT Policy Support Programme under the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme and the 7th Research Framework Programme. On cybercrime, the programme on 'Prevention of and Fight against crime' supports the development of detection and forensic tools for addressing effectively cybercrime.

The Commission is currently finalising the 2012 Annual Action Programme for Priority 2 on counteracting global and trans-regional threats of the Instrument for Stability, which prioritises among others the building of capabilities in developing countries related to raising cybersecurity and fighting cybercrime.

The Commission considers the role of private parties, which operate most of IT infrastructures; as crucial to address cybersecurity and cybercrime and share best practice and expertise with public authorities. Through the abovementioned programmes, private organisations can apply for funding in partnership with other private entities or public bodies.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-007335/12
adresată Comisiei
Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE)
(20 iulie 2012)

Subiect: Becurile economice

Becurile de 25 și 40 de wați trebuie scoase din circulație în septembrie 2012 și înlocuite treptat cu becuri economice.

Totuși apar din ce în ce mai multe articole privind „tripla amenințare" a unor astfel de becuri economice la adresa sănătății: mercurul toxic, radiațiile ultraviolete și câmpurile electromagnetice. Un studiu german a ajuns la concluzia că aceste becuri emit substanțe chimice cancerigene atunci când sunt puse în funcțiune.

Este Comisia conștientă de aceste riscuri, care au fost subliniate în multe studii privind sănătatea și care este răspunsul său?

Răspuns dat de dl Oettinger în numele Comisiei
(10 septembrie 2012)

Comisia este conștientă de preocupările exprimate în legătură cu presupusele riscuri pe care le prezintă lămpile fluorescente compacte (*compact fluorescent lamps* — CFL).

Toate cele trei aspecte menționate de distinsul membru au fost analizate de Comitetul științific pentru riscurile asupra sănătății și mediului (*Scientific Committee on Health and Environmental Risks* — SCHER). SCHER a concluzionat că, în funcționare normală, lămpile fluorescente compacte nu prezintă riscuri pentru public și, în special, că:

— este puțin probabil ca mercurul (simbol chimic „Hg") conținut de CFL și eliberat la spargerea acesteia să prezinte un risc pentru sănătatea oamenilor, inclusiv a femeilor însărcinate și a copiilor, date fiind concentrațiile de mercur din aer (ng/m^3) măsurate într-o cameră standard după spargerea mai multor tipuri de CFL ([1]), ([2]);

— nu există nicio dovadă a legăturii dintre câmpurile electromagnetice generate de CFL și simptomele raportate de persoanele suferind de așa-numita hipersensibilitate electromagnetică ([3]);

— lumina ultravioletă și lumina albastră emise de CFL ar putea, în principiu, să agraveze simptomele anumitor boli în cazul unui număr de persoane sensibile la lumină. SCHER a evidențiat însă și faptul că utilizarea CFL-urilor cu înveliș dublu sau a altor tehnologii similare poate reduce în mare parte sau total atât riscul de apropiere, în condiții extreme, de limitele de emisii UV la locul de muncă, cât și riscul de agravare a simptomelor persoanelor sensibile la lumină ([4]).

Pentru informații mai detaliate, aș dori să recomand distinsului membru documentul explicativ elaborat de Comisie (capitolul III) ([5]) și publicat pe site-ul său ([6]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/environmental_risks/docs/scher_o_124.pdf
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/environmental_risks/docs/scher_o_159.pdf
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_risk/committees/04_scenihr/docs/scenihr_o_019.pdf
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_risk/committees/04_scenihr/docs/scenihr_o_019.pdf
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/energy/lumen/doc/full_faq-en.pdf
([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/energy/lumen/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007335/12
to the Commission
Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE)
(20 July 2012)

Subject: Energy-saving bulbs

25- and 40-watt light bulbs are to be taken out of circulation in September 2012 and gradually replaced by energy-saving bulbs.

However, more and more articles are appearing about the 'triple threat' of such energy-saving bulbs to health: toxic mercury, ultraviolet radiation and electromagnetic fields. A German study has found that they emit cancer-causing chemicals when switched on.

Is the Commission aware of these risks, which have been outlined in many health studies, and what is its response?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(10 September 2012)

The Commission is aware of the concerns expressed about the alleged risks posed by compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs).

All three aspects mentioned by the Honourable Member have been analysed by the Scientific Committee on Health and Environment (SCHER). The SCHER concluded that in normal use CFLs do not pose risks to the general public and that in particular:

— the mercury (chemical symbol 'Hg') content released from a broken CFL is unlikely to pose a health risk for people, including pregnant women and children, given the measured Hg (ng/m^3) air concentrations in a standard room after breakage of different types of CFLs ([1]) ([2]);

— there has been no evidence of the correlation between electromagnetic fields from CFLs and the symptoms reported by persons with the so-called electromagnetic hypersensitivity ([3]);

— the ultraviolet and blue light emissions of CFLs could in principle aggravate the symptoms of certain diseases for a number of light sensitive people. However, the SCHER also pointed out that the use of double-envelope CFLs or other similar technologies would largely or entirely mitigate both the risk of approaching workplace limits on UV emissions in extreme conditions and the risk of aggravating the symptoms of light-sensitive individuals ([4]).

For more detailed information, I would like to refer the Honourable Member to the explanatory document prepared by the Commission (Chapter III) ([5]) that is published on the Europe website ([6]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/environmental_risks/docs/scher_o_124.pdf
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/environmental_risks/docs/scher_o_159.pdf
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_risk/committees/04_scenihr/docs/scenihr_o_019.pdf
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_risk/committees/04_scenihr/docs/scenihr_o_019.pdf
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/energy/lumen/doc/full_faq-en.pdf
([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/energy/lumen/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007336/12
to the Commission
George Lyon (ALDE)
(20 July 2012)

Subject: EU Schools — recruitment

With respect to:

— teaching assistants

— primary school teachers

— secondary school teachers

working in official EU schools, can the Commission detail the recruitment process for these positions and the average number of applicants per post when recruitment is opened to applicants?

What is the average salary in each of these positions and what is the average promotion rate?

Question for written answer E-007337/12
to the Commission
George Lyon (ALDE)
(20 July 2012)

Subject: EU schools — statute

Can the Commission provide information on the statute of staff working in EU schools and the extent to which the Commission has been involved in the creation of this statute?

Specifically, to what extent was the Commission involved in the determination of staff salaries and what factors were taken into account in this process?

Joint answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(13 September 2012)

Teachers of the European Schools (ES) are mainly seconded to the ES by the Member States. Some are also recruited locally by the Director of the ES concerned. The recruitment process is based on provisions adopted by the Board of Governors ([1]), the decision-making body of the intergovernmental European School System, in which the Commission represents the EU institutions and has one vote. Staff rules have to be adopted unanimously by the Board of Governors. Not being involved in the recruitment of teachers, the Commission cannot detail the process further.

The salary grids and remuneration provisions can be found in the statutes for the seconded staff, administrative assistance staff, and locally recruited teachers of the European Schools (ES) on the website of the ES. Promotion takes place according to the national law of the seconding Member State whereas no promotion is foreseen for locally recruited teachers.

([1]) Please refer to the regulations for Members of the Seconded Staff of the European Schools, Document 2011-04-D-14-en-2, http://www.eursc.eu/fichiers/contenu_fichiers1/1636/2011-04-D-14-en-2.pdf and the Conditions of employment for part-time [locally recruited] teachers recruited after 31 august 2011, Document 2011-04-D-13-en-1, http://www.eursc.eu/fichiers/contenu_fichiers1/1653/2011-04-D-13-en-1.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007338/12
to the Commission
George Lyon (ALDE)
(20 July 2012)

Subject: Expatriation allowance

Can the Commission explain the legal basis and the functioning of the expatriation allowance paid to officials and other staff of the European institutions?

How much of the EU budget is allocated to the payment of expatriation allowances?

Question for written answer E-007339/12
to the Commission
George Lyon (ALDE)
(20 July 2012)

Subject: Expatriation allowance — calculation base

Can the Commission explain the rationale behind the expatriation allowance paid to officials and other staff of the EU institutions and provide information as to why the standard figure of 16% of an official's salary is used as the calculation basis?

As an official's salary increases over time, can the Commission clarify the rationale behind a parallel increase in the expatriation allowance?

Question for written answer E-007340/12
to the Commission
George Lyon (ALDE)
(20 July 2012)

Subject: Expatriation allowance — study

Can the Commission provide information as to when it last undertook a study of the budgetary implications and suitability for purpose of the expatriation allowance for staff and other officials of the European institutions?

Joint answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(12 September 2012)

The legal basis of the expatriation allowance is Article 69 of the Staff Regulations, Article 4 of Annex VII to the Staff Regulations (for officials) and Article 20, paragraph 2 (for temporary agents), Article 92 (for contract agents) and Article 132 (for parliamentary assistants) of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants.

As regards the budget for the expatriation allowance, the Commission refers to information related to work in the Budget Committee. ([1])

EU staff are expatriates throughout their career ([2]). Chapter V of the Protocol of Privileges and Immunities contains rules e.g. on immigration, customs and taxation that are a corollary of that fact. Around 70% of all expatriate EU staff do not settle in the country of their service after the end of their services for the EU.

The expatriation allowance remains 16% throughout the entire career of an EU civil servant. It can increase or decrease in absolute value according to the evolution of individual situation (family composition or grade). It is in the mid-range between different organisations employing expatriate staff such as international organisations, national civil services and private multinational companies.

([1]) Working Document Part VI — Administrative expenditure under heading 5 (COM(2012) 300 — May 2012) on the Draft General Budget of the European Commission for the financial year 2013.
([2]) According to the Protocol of Privileges and Immunities, which is integral part of EU Treaties.

The Commission has not and does not plan to spend money on a study on the suitability and purpose of expatriation allowance.

The market of expatriate staff is competitive and institutions have difficulties to ensure geographical balance. The reserve lists of past external open competitions include few citizens from a number of Member States. While the conditions of employment available in EU institutions appear to be sufficiently attractive for citizens of many Member States, this is not the case for candidates from the mentioned Member States including the UK.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007342/12
to the Commission
George Lyon (ALDE)
(20 July 2012)

Subject: Translation in the EU institutions — Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)

Can the Commission provide the correlated EU budget figures under the financial perspectives 2007-13 which have been committed to the engagement of translators across the institutions of the European Union?

For the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020, do the Commission proposals foresee a revision of these costs?

Answer given by Mr Lewandowski on behalf of the Commission
(21 September 2012)

In all institutions translating (and interpreting) is ensured by statutory and contractual staff as well as freelancers.

The Commission is not in a position to provide figures for the other EU institutions on their total cost of statutory and contractual translators (and interpreters). As for the Commission, this cost is EUR 2.4 billion for the period 2007-2013.

The Commission proposal for the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) ([1]) already takes into account the proposed 5% staff reduction by 2017. The Commission's statement of estimates for the year 2013 alone envisages for example a 1.18% reduction of all Commission staff.

The cost of freelance interpreters and translators in the current financial framework for all institutions is summarised below.

All institutions

(MEUR at current prices)

2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total 2007-2013
115	124	111	122	126	118	122	838

The expenditure relating to these external linguistic services is part of the larger category 'staff — administrative expenditure' for which the Commission's proposal for the upcoming financial framework envisages a 1.5% increase per year ([2]) to take into account evolution of remuneration stemming from changes in purchasing power and the effect of career progression.

([1]) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: A budget for Europe 2020 (COM(2011) 500 final of 29.6.2011); Draft Interinstitutional Agreement between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management, Article 23 (COM(2011) 403 final of 29.6.2011).

([2]) This rate has also been used for previous financial frameworks and has proved a relatively reasonable proxy for producing long-term estimates.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007345/12
to the Commission
George Lyon (ALDE)
(20 July 2012)

Subject: Sunscreen and skin cancer research

Can the Commission detail what measures it has taken in relation to research into the prevention and treatment of skin cancer, such as malignant melanoma, and what impact this has had?

In relation to reform of the VAT directive, has the Commission given consideration to the benefits which could arise from giving Member States the possibility to zero-rate VAT on sunscreen products?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(12 September 2012)

Research on treatment and prevention of skin cancers including malignant melanoma has been funded across the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7, 2007-2013). So far, EUR 67 million have been devoted to address areas such as novel diagnostic tools, improved or novel therapies including radiotherapy and immunotherapy, and mechanisms of skin cancers initiation, progression and resistance to therapy. A recently finalised FP6 Network of Excellence, GenoMEL ([1]), has created a durable collaboration between melanoma researchers in the EU, identified several genes associated with a greater melanoma risk and has engaged in outreach and education through web tutorials.

Further opportunities for collaborative research on skin cancers including malignant melanoma may be found in the FP7-HEALTH-2013-INNOVATION and FP7-HEALTH-2013-SMES-FOR-INNOVATION calls for proposals, published on 10 July 2012 ([2]).

For the reasons explained to the Honourable Member in the answer to his Question P-5847/2010 ([3]), the Commission recalls that Member States cannot be given the possibility to zero-rate VAT on sunscreen products.

In its communication on the future of VAT ([4]), the Commission has indicated that it will present by the end of 2013 a legislative proposal to the Council on VAT rates. In order to increase the efficiency of the VAT system, the Commission favours a restricted use of reduced VAT rates. Although economic studies ([5]) state that the use of reduced VAT rates is often not the most suitable instrument for pursuing policy objectives, the potential benefits of a limited use of reduced rates, if rationally defined and applied, will be addressed.

([1]) http://www.genomel.org/.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/page/searchcalls;efp7_SESSION_ID=yWhpP9qTS7fTtKDg6K6LkDwswtZkTlPy7vYT8mJ1VPhqcGx0gN2v!-204796060?state=open&theme=health.
([3]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=P-2010-5847&language=EN.
([4]) COM(2011) 851, 'Towards a simpler, more robust and efficient VAT system tailored to the single market'.
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/common/publications/studies/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007347/12
to the Commission
George Lyon (ALDE)
(20 July 2012)

Subject: European Agriculture Fund for Rural Development — thematic sub-programmes

In relation to the Commission's draft regulation on the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the proposed thematic sub-programmes which may be included in Member States' rural development programmes:

1. Does the Commission acknowledge that there are thematic sub-programmes beyond the four programmes suggested in the proposal — (a) young farmers; (b) small farms; (c) mountain areas; (d) short supply chains — which may be of interest to the Member States?

2. Will the Commission give a commitment that it will vigorously defend the flexibility available to Member States in terms of expanding the thematic sub-programmes beyond the 'non-exhaustive list' in the proposal?

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

1. Article 8(1) of the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) gives the possibility to Member States to include within their rural development programmes thematic sub-programmes, contributing to Union priorities for rural development. This Article sets out four potential sub-programmes and gives a possibility to formulate other sub-programmes outside these four, as long as such sub-programmes contribute to Union priorities for rural development and/or address specific needs relating to the agricultural sectors with a significant impact on the development of a specific rural area.

2. The Commission confirms that it maintains its legislative proposal.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007349/12
to the Commission
George Lyon (ALDE)
(20 July 2012)

Subject: EU Schools

Can the Commission provide the correlated EU budget figures under the Financial Perspective 2007-13 which have been allocated to the funding of EU schools?

Can the Commission give details as to how this money is spent and an explanation of the decision-making process involved in the administration of the EU schools' budgets?

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

As regards the budget figures related to funding of the European Schools for the period 2007-2013, the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to the information available in the relevant annual accounts and the draft budgets made available to the Parliament. The European Schools budget figures are detailed under Article 26.01.51 of the Commission's budget.

Concerning the statute and management of the EU schools, which do not depend from the Commission, we ask the Honourable Member to refer to the replies provided to his Questions E-007336/2012 and E-007337/2012 ([1]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007350/12
to the Council
Charles Tannock (ECR)
(20 July 2012)

Subject: Current lack of clear international legal framework governing retrieval of abandoned satellite parts in space

Satellites in geosynchronous orbit (GEO) above the earth provide vital communication capabilities to governments and armed forces throughout the world. When a communication satellite fails or reaches the end of its working life, it often means the very expensive prospect of having to launch a brand-new replacement. Less appreciated is the fact that many of the satellites which are obsolete or have failed are now known still to have reusable hardware including GEO-based space apertures and antennas. Currently this valuable material is abandoned as 'space junk' and continues to orbit the earth in the graveyard or disposal orbit.

Recent work by a specialised US Government agency within the US Department of Defence, the DARPA (Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency), as part of its Phoenix programme is addressing the emerging new technology of robotic space retrieval of abandoned satellite parts. The Phoenix programme is designed to 'develop and demonstrate technologies to cooperatively harvest and re-use valuable components from retired, nonworking satellites in GEO and demonstrate the ability to create new space systems at greatly reduced cost'. DARPA's project will be groundbreaking, as it can reduce the cost of future satellite launches whilst reusing some of the decommissioned space satellite equipment.

1. As there is clearly scope for EU-US civil and military cooperation in this area, can the Council confirm whether currently it has any jurisprudence or competence to legislate in this area, or whether this is a matter exclusively for the Member States?

2. Are there discussions going on at Member State or EU level in relation to the legal implications in the area of emerging space retrieval technology, including ownership rights, and the potential risk of 'space piracy' unless there is clear legal certainty for all those investing in or benefiting from this new technology?

3. Is this a matter best dealt with at UN level, with participation by the EU and its Member States alongside other countries and major international actors active in space technology?

Reply
(12 October 2012)

Article 189 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union provides for the EU to draw up a European space policy in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure. As set out in Article 4(3) of the TFEU, this does not prevent Member States from exercising their competences in the area. Currently, there are no legislative proposals from the Commission in this regard. In its Resolution ([1]) of 6 December 2011, the Council recognised that the protection of space assets will require continued research in areas such as space weather effects, near- earth objects and debris tracking and prediction, together with mitigation and removal, and called upon the Commission, the European Space Agency (ESA) and the Member States to evaluate appropriate actions to adequately address these issues.

Regarding international cooperation on space activities, in its conclusions of 31 May 2011 ([2]) the Council invited the Commission, in close collaboration with the Member States and in consultation with ESA, to strengthen its 'space dialogues' with its strategic partners, including the US. Furthermore, the Seventh Framework Programme of the European Union for research, technological development and demonstration activities (2007-2013) ([3]) provides support for space research actions carried out in the context of transnational cooperation. The Council supports the efforts of the international community to strengthen the security, safety and sustainability of activities in outer space. The International Code of Conduct for Outer Space activities proposed by the European Union is without prejudice to future work in other appropriate international fora such as in the UN framework.

([1]) Council Resolution of 6 December 2011 'Orientations concerning added value and benefits of space for the security of European citizens' (Official Journal C 377, 23.12.2011, pp. 1-4).
([2]) 'Towards a space strategy for the European Union that benefits its citizens' (doc. 10901/11).
([3]) Official Journal L 412, 30.12.2006, pp. 1-43.

As to the legislative framework relevant to emerging space retrieval technology, a number of existing international instruments relate to space activities, and also address in general terms the jurisdiction over and control of objects launched into space. In addition, the draft International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities ([4]) put forward by the European Union has the general purpose of enhancing the security, safety and sustainability of all outer space activities, and refers also specifically to measures on space debris control and mitigation. The Council has invited the High Representative to pursue consultations on the draft Code with the aim of drawing up a text that is acceptable to the greatest number of countries, and a multilateral diplomatic process was officially launched in Vienna on 5 June 2012. The Council also adopted, on 29 May 2012, Decision 2012/281/CFSP in the framework of the European Security Strategy in support of the Union proposal for an International Code of Conduct on outer-space activities ([5]).

([4]) Council conclusions of 27 September 2010 concerning the revised draft Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities (doc. 14455/10).
([5]) Official Journal L 140, 30.5.2012, pp. 68-73.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007351/12
à la Commission
Gilles Pargneaux (S&D)
(20 juillet 2012)

Objet: Révision des protocoles d'évaluation des pesticides

Alors que la France vient d'interdire le pesticide Cruiser utilisé sur le colza en raison de son impact nocif sur les abeilles, un avis de l'Autorité de sécurité des aliments (EFSA) daté de mai 2012 met en cause les protocoles d'évaluation des insecticides qui sont utilisés depuis vingt ans pour analyser l'impact des phytosanitaires sur l'écosystème.

Le rapport de l'EFSA souligne que les expositions prolongées et intermittentes ne sont pas évaluées en laboratoire, ni l'exposition par inhalation ou encore l'exposition des larves. Il relève d'autres problèmes, comme la taille des champs traités, qui est trop limitée pour déterminer de manière exhaustive les conséquences de l'utilisation des insecticides.

Il s'avère que l'annexe de la directive européenne sur les phytosanitaires définit les lignes directrices pour ces tests d'évaluation, qui sont édictées par l'Organisation européenne et méditerranéenne pour la protection des plantes (OEPP). Celle-ci délègue à l'International Commission on Plant-Bee Relationships (ICPBR) l'élaboration des éléments de base de ces tests standardisés.

L'ICPBR, structure informelle basée à l'université de Guelph, au Canada, organise régulièrement des conférences qui bénéficient du soutien financier des principaux fabricants de pesticides. Ainsi, selon le journal *Le Monde*, au cours de sa dernière conférence, fin 2011 à Wageningen, l'ICPBR a constitué sept nouveaux groupes de travail autour de la question des effets des pesticides sur les abeilles. Ces groupes comptent tous des chercheurs se trouvant en situation de conflits d'intérêts. La participation d'experts employés par des firmes agrochimiques ou par des laboratoires privés sous contrat avec elles y oscillerait entre 50 et 75 %.

1. Au regard de ces éléments ainsi que du rapport de l'EFSA, la Commission envisage-t-elle de réformer les procédures d'évaluation de l'impact des insecticides pour garantir la transparence du processus de décision?

2. Quelles suites entend-elle donner au rapport de l'EFSA de mai 2012?

3. Que répond-elle aux affirmations du journal *Le Monde* sur le caractère systémique des conflits d'intérêts au sein de l'ICPBR?

Réponse donnée par M. Dalli au nom de la Commission
(27 août 2012)

1. La Commission renvoie l'Honorable Parlementaire à la réponse qu'elle a donnée à la question écrite E-11265/10 de Mme Durant ([1]). Le 13 juillet 2012, le comité permanent de la chaîne alimentaire et de la santé animale s'est prononcé par vote, à la majorité qualifiée, en faveur des nouvelles exigences en matière de données inscrites dans le règlement (CE) nº 1107/2009. Il est prévu que la Commission adopte le projet, à l'issue de la procédure de réglementation avec contrôle (PRAC).

2. La Commission a demandé cet avis et se félicite de l'analyse détaillée effectuée par l'Autorité européenne de sécurité des aliments (EFSA). La Commission a déjà transposé le résultat de l'avis dans les nouvelles exigences en matière de données (voir point 1). En outre, il convient de souligner que cet avis constitue une étape intermédiaire d'une approche en deux temps dont le point culminant sera la révision de la stratégie d'évaluation de l'incidence des pesticides sur les abeilles.

3. La Commission souligne l'importance de l'indépendance des experts dans l'élaboration des lignes directrices pour les tests d'évaluation et attend de l'Organisation européenne et méditerranéenne pour la protection des plantes (OEPP) qu'elle prenne les mesures nécessaires pour garantir l'indépendance des experts au sein de la International Commission of Plant-Pollinator Relationship (ICPPR), anciennement International Commission of Plant Bees Relationship (ICPBR).

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/fr/parliamentary-questions.html;jsessionid=0194E14D444CCDCAE3AEA0754CA3BB9D.node2.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007351/12
to the Commission
Gilles Pargneaux (S&D)
(20 July 2012)

Subject: Review of pesticide testing protocols

While France has just banned the pesticide Cruiser, used on oilseed rape, because of its harmful effect on bees, an opinion of May 2012 by the European Food Safety Agency (EFSA) questions the insecticide testing protocols that have been in use for 20 years to analyse the impact of plant protection products on ecosystems.

The EFSA report stresses that prolonged and intermittent exposure are not evaluated in the laboratory, nor are exposure by inhalation or exposure of larvae. It highlights other problems such as the size of the fields treated, which is too small to determine the full consequences of using these insecticides.

It appears that the annex to the European Directive on Plant Protection Products determines the guidelines for these evaluation tests, which are adopted by the European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organisation (EPPO); the latter in turn delegates the task of devising the basis for these standardised tests to the International Commission on Plant-Bee Relationships (ICPBR).

The ICPBR, an informal structure based at the University of Guelph, Canada, regularly holds conferences which receive funding from the main pesticide manufacturers. For example, according to the French daily *Le Monde*, at its last conference in late 2011 in Wageningen (Netherlands), the ICPBR set up seven new working groups to study the effects of pesticides on bees. All these groups include researchers in conflict-of-interests situations. The proportion of experts employed by agro-chemical firms and private laboratories under contract to these firms apparently varies between 50% and 75%.

1. In the light of the above, and of the EFSA report, does the Commission envisage reforming the procedures for evaluating the impact of insecticides, in order to guarantee the transparency of the decision-making process?

2. What action does it propose to take to follow up the May 2012 EFSA report?

3. What is its response to the allegations in *Le Monde* concerning the systemic nature of conflicts of interests within the ICPBR?

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

1. The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-11265/10 by Mrs Durant ([1]). The new data requirements in the framework of the Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 were voted in the Standing Committee of Food Chain and Animal Health on 13 July 2012 and received a favourable opinion by qualified majority. It is foreseen that the Commission will adopt the draft after finalisation of the regulatory procedure with scrutiny (PRAC).

2. The Commission requested this opinion and welcome the detailed analysis made by European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). The Commission already reflected the outcome of the opinion in the new data requirements (see point 1). In addition, it has to be underlined that this opinion represents an intermediate outcome of a two steps approach. The finalisation of the second step will culminate in the review of the strategy to assess the impact of pesticides on bees.

3. The Commission stresses the importance of the independency of the experts developing the guidelines for the evaluation tests and expects that the European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organisation (EPPO) takes the measures to ensure the independency of experts within the International Commission of Plant-Pollinator Relationship (ICPPR), formerly International Commission of Plant Bees Relationship (ICPBR).

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

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-007353/12
do Komisji
Zbigniew Ziobro (EFD)
(20 lipca 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Nieprawidłowości w przyznawaniu koncesji na platformę cyfrową w Polsce

Najwyższa Izba Kontroli – niezależny organ pełniący funkcje kontrolne w Polsce – w najnowszym raporcie stwierdziła nieprawidłowości w przyznawaniu koncesji na platformę cyfrową. Nieprawidłowości miała się dopuścić Krajowa Rada Radiofonii i Telewizji (KRRiTV). Jako jeden z zarzutów stwierdzono promowanie podmiotów niespełniających warunków koncesji kosztem tych, które je spełniały. Negatywnie oceniono np. nieprzyznanie koncesji TV Trwam. Dodać należy, że telewizja ta jest krytyczna wobec aktualnego rządu i prezydenta. O takich przypadkach informowałem Komisję Europejską w swojej interpelacji z dnia 17 stycznia bieżącego roku.

Ponad 2,25 mln obywateli polskich podpisało się pod petycją, w której domagają się przyznania miejsca na multipleksie dla TV Trwam i protestują przeciwko ograniczeniu pluralizmu mediów w Polsce. Również w ponad 60 miastach i miasteczkach Polski odbyły się w tej sprawie wielotysięczne marsze protestacyjne. Pięciu członków KRRiTV pochodzi z nominacji politycznej na mocy porozumienia, jakie zawarły rządzące dziś w Polsce partie polityczne. Przewodniczący KRRiTV, były członek rządzącej PO, został powołany na funkcję przewodniczącego przez prezydenta Bronisława Komorowskiego, również pochodzącego z PO.

Powyższe fakty uzasadniają poważne zajęcie się problemem naruszenia wolności i pluralizmu w związku z nieprawidłowościami przy procesie cyfryzacji przez Komisję Europejską. Nie przesądzając z góry sprawy, istnieją bardzo uzasadnione i poważne podejrzenia, że zarzuty ponad 2,25 mln obywateli polskich poparte dokumentami NIKu są zgodne z rzeczywistością i Komisja, jeśli ma działać rzetelnie i obiektywnie, powinna podjąć procedury pozwalające zweryfikować te bardzo poważne, naruszające unijne prawo, oskarżenia.

Jakie konkretnie działania podejmie Komisja, by zweryfikować zasadność tego rodzaju podejrzeń ograniczenia wolności i pluralizmu mediów w Polsce popartych protestami społecznymi na dużą skalę oraz kontrolą NIKu i kiedy to nastąpi?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarz Neelie Kroes w imieniu Komisji
(13 września 2012 r.)

Komisja uprzejmie prosi Pana Posła o zapoznanie się z odpowiedzią udzieloną na pytanie pisemne nr E-00191/2012 ([1]) z dnia 10 lutego 2012 r.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007353/12
to the Commission
Zbigniew Ziobro (EFD)
(20 July 2012)

Subject: Irregularities in the granting of licences for the digital platform in Poland

In its most recent report, Poland's Supreme Audit Office (NIK) — an independent body performing audit functions in Poland — found irregularities in the granting of licences for the digital platform. These irregularities allegedly related to the actions of the National Broadcasting Council (KRRiTV). One of the accusations was that entities not meeting the conditions for concessions were promoted at the expense of those that did. The failure to award a concession to TV Trwam, for example, was viewed negatively. It should be noted that this is a television station which is critical of the current government and president. I informed the Commission of such cases in my question of 17 January 2012.

More than 2.25 million Polish citizens have signed a petition demanding that TV Trwam be granted a place on the multiplex and protesting against the restriction of media pluralism in Poland. Also, protest marches several thousand strong have been held in more than 60 Polish cities and towns. Five KRRiTV members are political appointees under an agreement concluded by the political parties ruling in Poland today. The head of the KRRiTV, a former member of the ruling Civic Platform party (*Platforma Obywatelska* — PO), was appointed to his post by President Bronisław Komorowski, who is also from the PO.

These facts justify the Commission taking seriously the violation of freedom and pluralism in connection with irregularities in the process of digitisation. Without prejudging the matter, there are very legitimate and serious suspicions that the allegations of over 2.25 million Polish citizens, backed by NIK documents, are consistent with reality, and the Commission, if it is to act fairly and objectively, should initiate procedures to verify these very serious allegations of infringements of EC law.

What specific action will the Commission take, and when, to check the validity of such suspicions of media freedom and pluralism being restricted in Poland, suspicions which are supported by large-scale popular protests and backed by an NIK audit?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(13 September 2012)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-00191/2012 ([1]) of 10 February 2012.

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

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-007354/12
à Comissão
Edite Estrela (S&D)
(20 de julho de 2012)

Assunto: Construção de um novo transvase no rio Tejo na região de Castilha, Espanha

Tendo em conta as notícias que referem a intenção de o Governo espanhol construir um novo transvase no rio Tejo, para irrigar a região de Castilha — La Mancha;

Tendo em conta que a associação ambientalista «Projeto» defende que tal medida vem aumentar significativamente o risco de uma redução extrema do caudal do rio Tejo, que tem vindo a acentuar-se desde 2007, e que em março deste ano já deixou sem capacidade de rega muitos agricultores;

Tendo em conta as exigências da diretiva-quadro da água, em matéria de cooperação transfronteiriça, quer em relação à qualidade da água quer à necessidade de garantir caudais mínimos, sobretudo em tempos de seca;

Pergunta à Comissão:

O projeto para a construção de um novo transvase no rio Tejo, levado a cabo pelo Governo espanhol, respeita as exigências da diretiva-quadro da água e garante os caudais mínimos dos rios partilhados com Portugal?

Resposta dada por Janez Potočnik em nome da Comissão
(4 de setembro de 2012)

A Comissão não tem conhecimento da intenção do governo espanhol de construir um novo sistema de transvases no rio Tejo. As autoridades espanholas devem assegurar o cumprimento das obrigações constantes da Diretiva-Quadro Água (Diretiva 2000/60/CE ([1])).

Esta diretiva impõe a elaboração de planos de gestão de bacia hidrográfica que incluam medidas tendentes a conseguir um bom estado das águas e a prevenir a sua deterioração. Por conseguinte, o caudal ecológico tem de ser suficiente para garantir tal objetivo. Obriga igualmente os Estados-Membros a coordenarem todos os programas de medidas para a totalidade das regiões hidrográficas, incluindo as internacionais.

Com exceção da Catalunha, a Espanha ainda não comunicou à Comissão os seus planos de gestão de bacias hidrográficas. A Comissão instaurou, pois, um processo por infração contra este Estado-Membro (Processo 2010/2083), por não ter adotado e comunicado os seus planos de gestão. O processo foi remetido ao Tribunal de Justiça (C-403/11).

Logo que receba o plano de gestão da bacia hidrográfica do Tejo, a Comissão verificará se as obrigações da Diretiva-Quadro Água foram respeitadas.

Por outro lado, a Diretiva 2011/92/UE (Diretiva Avaliação do Impacto Ambiental ou AIA) ([2]) aplica-se aos projetos públicos ou privados suscetíveis de ter efeitos significativos no ambiente e que requerem a realização de uma avaliação do impacto ambiental antes de ser concedida a autorização de execução. Os sistemas de transvases de água são abrangidos pela Diretiva AIA, que obriga a identificar impactos transfronteiriços potenciais e a realizar consultas com outros Estados-Membros que possam ser significativamente afetados.

([1]) JO L 327 de 22.12.2000.
([2]) JO L 26 de 28.1.2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007354/12
to the Commission
Edite Estrela (S&D)
(20 July 2012)

Subject: Construction of a new water transfer system on the Tagus in the Castile region of Spain

The Spanish Government reportedly intends to construct a new water transfer system on the Tagus in order to irrigate the autonomous community of Castile-La Mancha.

The environmentalist organisation 'Projeto' maintains that this measure will greatly increase the risk of severely reducing the flow of the Tagus, a problem which has been worsening since 2007 and in March of this year already left many farmers without watering capacity.

The Water Framework Directive lays down requirements for cross-border cooperation both as regards water quality and as regards the need to maintain minimum river flows, especially in periods of drought.

Does the Spanish Government's projected new Tagus water transfer system conform to the requirements of the Water Framework Directive? Will it allow minimum flow rates to be maintained in rivers running through both Spain and Portugal?

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

The Commission is not aware of the Spanish Government's intention to construct a new water transfer system on the Tagus River. The Spanish authorities should ensure that the obligations of the Water Framework Directive (WFD 2000/60/EC ([1])) are complied with.

The directive requires the setting up of River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs), which should include measures aimed at achieving good status and preventing deterioration. Therefore, the ecological flow should be sufficient to ensure that this is achieved. It also obliges Member States to coordinate all programmes of measures for the whole of a River Basin District, including the international ones.

With the exception of Catalonia, Spain has not yet reported its River Basin Management Plans to the Commission. The Commission has therefore opened an infringement procedure against Spain (Case 2010/2083) for failing to adopt and report its RBMPs. The case has been referred to the Court of Justice (C-403/11).

Once the RBMP for Tagus is reported, the Commission will analyse whether the requirements of the WFD have been respected.

In addition, Directive 2011/92/EU (Environmental Impact Assessment or EIA Directive) ([2]), applies to public and private projects which are likely to have significant effects on the environment and which require an environmental impact assessment to be carried out before development consent is granted. Water transfer systems are covered by the EIA Directive. Potential transboundary impacts must be identified and consultations launched with other Member States that may be significantly affected.

([1]) OJ L 327, 22.12.2000.
([2]) OJ L 26, 28.1.2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-007355/12
to the Commission
John Attard-Montalto (S&D)
(23 July 2012)

Subject: Birds Directive

I refer to the ongoing correspondence between the Environment Commissioner, Janez Potočnik, and St. Hubert Hunters — Malta (KSU), an affiliate of the Federation for Hunting and Conservation — Malta (FKNK), regarding inconsistencies in the application of the derogation for spring hunting on the Maltese islands, with particular reference to the calculation of 'small numbers'. The methodology in the framework legislation drawn up by the Maltese authorities and approved by the Commission is being questioned, as are the maximum quotas allowed for derogation.

The methodology initially divided by three the populations of Streptopelia turtur (turtle dove) and Coturnix coturnix (quail) on the unscientific assumption that these birds cross the three Mediterranean flyways in equal proportions. The Commission then deemed the resulting quotas to be unacceptable. The revised methodology led to new quotas, which surprisingly are far below the original ones, despite the fact that the population division was (correctly) dropped. The new quotas now in force, which Commissioner Potočnik described as being at the 'upper limit', were established by the Maltese authorities after consultation with, and endorsement by, the Commission.

There are serious doubts about the correctness of the Commission's assessment of the Maltese Government's framework legislation and the accuracy of the quotas, in view of the facts that:

1. political considerations were used, in the sense that only EU countries were taken into account, as opposed to European countries; and

2. certain countries were excluded purely because of lack of ringing records.

There is no basis for such a procedure in terms of the Birds Directive.

My question, therefore, is this:

Would the Commission present empirical evidence justifying its recognition of, and agreement with, the Maltese authorities' calculation of the relevant population data at '385 651 pairs of quail and 1 131 504 pairs of turtle dove'?

My question is also motivated by the fact that the Maltese authorities failed to take note of the evidence based on scientific calculations submitted to them by the Hunting Federation, as well as failing to involve the said Federation in the talks held with the Commission.

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

The Commission has discussed the Spring Hunting issues with all interested stakeholders and has provided the explanations required on its own views. The latest answer, dated 3 July 2012, provided to the President of the Saint Hubertus Hunters in Malta following his letter of 8 June 2012 explains once more the Commission's views on the Maltese authorities' data, on the basis of which Spring Hunting has been allowed in Malta. It states that, in line with the precautionary approach, it was correct to use the minimum estimates in case of poorly known populations and the average population in case of populations for which there is a good scientific knowledge. This approach led to the figures of 385 651 pairs of Quail and 1 131 504 pairs of Turtle dove.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007356/12
al Consejo
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(23 de julio de 2012)

Asunto: Rescate, transparencia y democracia

Según información del periódico «El País» ([1]), Holanda ([2]), Finlandia y Alemania están aprobando en estos días el posicionamiento de sus países respecto al rescate de España, por el cual la Facilidad Europea de Estabilidad Financiera (FEEF) otorgará un préstamo de 100 000 millones de euros.

En el documento otorgado a los diputados y diputadas del Bundestag, aparece un acuerdo bajo el nombre «Master Financial Assistance Facility» ([3]) el cual determina aspectos como qué sucederá en caso de «default» o la posibilidad de que el mismo FEEF intervenga directamente sobre el mercado de deuda pública primaria y secundaria española.

Hoy, 19 de julio, el Congreso español aprobó los dos decretos ley con los mayores recortes de la historia ([4]) con algunas medidas que exceden la propia Constitución española, pero con medidas que fueron explicadas a los diputados de los otros Parlamentos de la eurozona. Sin embargo, el acuerdo que firmará España con el Eurogrupo el día 20, no fue ni siquiera presentada a los miembros del Congreso español.

— ¿Cree que se viola así el derecho a la información de la ciudadanía española y europea?

— ¿Cree que dicho acuerdo debería haberse hecho público en la página del Eurogrupo y no exclusivamente en algunos Parlamentos nacionales?

— ¿No considera que todo ello es una violación a la soberanía del Congreso español, que no pudo pronunciarse frente a un acuerdo que impone condiciones muy duras a la economía y a las instituciones democráticas españolas?

— ¿Considera que el Consejo debería haber remitido en forma de comunicación, al menos, el mismo documento al Parlamento Europeo, al Comité de las Regiones y al Comité Económico y Social?

— ¿Consideraría apropiado realizar un referéndum popular en España sobre el Memorándum de Entendimiento y el Acuerdo mencionado?

Respuesta
(8 de octubre de 2012)

El 25 de junio de 2012, el Gobierno español solicitó ayuda financiera exterior en el contexto del actual proceso de reestructuración y recapitalización del sector bancario español. La ayuda de hasta 100 000 millones de euros, según la declaración del Eurogrupo sobre España del 9 de junio de 2012, se ha solicitado en el marco de la ayuda financiera de la Facilidad Europea de Estabilización Financiera para la recapitalización de las entidades financieras (FEEF).

La Comisión, previa consulta al Banco Central Europeo (BCE), la Autoridad Bancaria Europea (ABE) y el Fondo Monetario Internacional (FMI), ha acordado con las autoridades españolas las condiciones específicas de política para el sector financiero aparejadas a la ayuda financiera. Estas condiciones han quedado establecidas en el memorándum de entendimiento, firmado por la Comisión y las autoridades españolas. Las condiciones financieras detalladas se han establecido en el acuerdo de ayuda financiera. El memorándum de entendimiento está vinculado a la ayuda financiera provista por la FEEF y por el Mecanismo Europeo de Estabilidad, cuando este se haya creado. No obstante, para garantizar la vinculación entre el marco de vigilancia macroeconómica de la UE y el memorándum de entendimiento, la condicionalidad expuesta en el Memorándum también se ha incorporado en la Decisión del Consejo dirigida a España sobre medidas concretas para reforzar la estabilidad financiera con fecha de de 23 de julio de 2012 ([5]).

El Consejo no puede pronunciarse sobre cuestiones relacionadas con los procedimientos internos de cada Estado miembro en particular.

([1]) http://economia.elpais.com/economia/2012/07/18/actualidad/1342630778_162569.html
([2]) http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/ministeries/fin/documenten-en-publicaties/kamerstukken/2012/07/11/proposal-on-a-facility-on-the-recapitalisation-of-financial-institutions-for-the-kingdom-of-spain.html
([3]) http://dipbt.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/17/103/1710320.pdf
([4]) http://politica.elpais.com/politica/2012/07/19/actualidad/1342679963_240583.html
([5]) 12450/12.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007356/12
to the Council
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(23 July 2012)

Subject: Bailout, transparency and democracy

According to a report in the *El País* newspaper ([1]), the Netherlands ([2]), Finland and Germany are currently getting approval for their countries' positions regarding a bailout for Spain, by which the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) will grant a loan of EUR 100 000 million.

The document handed out to the members of the German Bundestag features an agreement which appears under the name of the 'Master Financial Assistance Facility' ([3]) and determines aspects like what will happen in case of a default or the possibility that the same EFSF may intervene directly in the Spanish primary and secondary debt market.

Today, 19 July 2012, the Spanish Parliament approved two decree laws containing the largest cuts in Spanish history ([4]), some of whose measures go beyond the limits of the Spanish Constitution itself, and including measures that were explained to members of other Parliaments in the eurozone. However, the agreement that Spain will sign with the Eurogroup on 20 July was not even presented to the members of the Spanish Parliament.

— Does the Council believe this to be a breach of the right of Spanish and European citizens to information?

— Does the Council believe that this agreement should have been made public on the Eurogroup website, and not just in some national parliaments?

— Does the Council not consider that all of this violates the sovereignty of the Spanish Parliament, which could not vote against an agreement that imposes very harsh conditions on the Spanish economy and Spain's democratic institutions?

— Does the Council think that it should have sent the same document to the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions and the Economic and Social Committee, at least in the form of a communication?

— Would the Council consider that a referendum should be carried out in Spain on the memorandum of understanding and Agreement referred to?

Reply
(8 October 2012)

On 25 June 2012, the Spanish Government applied for external financial assistance in the context of the ongoing restructuring and recapitalisation of the Spanish banking sector. The assistance of up to EUR 100 billion, pursuant to the Eurogroup statement on Spain of 9 June 2012, was sought under the terms of the Financial Assistance for the Recapitalisation of Financial Institutions by the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF).

The Commission, in consultation with the European Central Bank, the European Banking Authority and the International Monetary Fund, has agreed with the Spanish authorities the specific financial-sector policy conditions attached to the financial assistance. Those conditions are laid down in the memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed by the Commission and the Spanish authorities. The detailed financial terms are laid down in a Financial Assistance Facility Agreement. The MoU is linked to the financial assistance provided by the EFSF and the European Stability Mechanism, once the latter is established. However, in order to ensure the link between the EU macroeconomic surveillance framework and the MoU, the conditionality outlined in the MoU is also embedded in the Council Decision addressed to Spain on specific measures to reinforce financial stability, dated 23 July 2012 ([5]).

The Council cannot comment on issues relating to the internal procedures of any individual Member State.

([1]) http://economia.elpais.com/economia/2012/07/18/actualidad/1342630778_162569.html
([2]) http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/ministeries/fin/documenten-en-publicaties/kamerstukken/2012/07/11/proposal-on-a-facility-on-the-recapitalisation-of-financial-institutions-for-the-kingdom-of-spain.html
([3]) http://dipbt.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/17/103/1710320.pdf
([4]) http://politica.elpais.com/politica/2012/07/19/actualidad/1342679963_240583.html
([5]) 12450/12.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007357/12
to the Commission
George Lyon (ALDE)
(23 July 2012)

Subject: Commission buildings policy

Can the Commission detail how its buildings policy decision-making process and public procurement process compare to those of the European Parliament?

Has the Commission been approached by the KAD Project Team in Luxembourg to share expertise in the domain of building development?

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(17 September 2012)

The policy decision-making processes are different in each of the institutions. The Commission is therefore not in the position to compare these processes. When it comes to public procurement, the Financial Regulations ([1]) are applicable in all institutions and constitute a common basis for carrying out procurement procedures.

The institutions share general information, experiences and best practices in the field of building management and development. Indeed, regular interinstitutional meetings called ILISWG ([2]) are organised with the purpose of sharing expertise.

In the context of the KAD project, exchanges have taken place between the Parliament services and the Office for Infrastructure and Logistics (OIL) of the Commission to discuss the possible structures required to master such a major construction project.

([1]) http://www.cc.cec/budg/leg/finreg/leg-020_finreg_en.html
([2]) Inter-Institutional Infrastructures Logistics and Internal Services Working Group.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007359/12
to the Commission
George Lyon (ALDE)
(23 July 2012)

Subject: Draft budget 2013 — demand

With respect to the Commission draft budget 2013 and the increase of 6.8% in payment appropriations over 2012 figures:

— Can the Commission give specific examples of the most significant projects in the Member States for which payment demand is anticipated during 2013?

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

The Commission's communication on the Draft Budget (DB) 2013 ([1]) gives an overview of the main reasons for the requested increase in payment appropriations for 2013 ([2]). Essentially, the increase reflects the fact that all major programmes and actions are running at cruising speed, in the final year of the current financial framework (2007-2013). In turn, these proposed increases in payment appropriations will directly contribute to restoring economic growth in Europe, by investing in growth-enhancing projects.

As explained in the letter of the President of the Commission to the Heads of State and Government on the Council position on the 2013 DB ([3]), the increase in payment appropriations is to a large extent necessary to enable the Union to meet its legal obligations. Moreover, the year-on-year increase on the 2012 budget in percentage terms would have been much smaller if the level of payment appropriations in the voted 2012 budget would have been set at the level of actual needs in the first place.

The payment increases proposed in the 2013 DB are focused on key policy areas that are geared towards investment, such as research framework programme (FP7, +28.1% to EUR 9.0 billion) and for the structural and cohesion funds (+11.7% to EUR 49.0 billion). Moreover, significant increases are proposed for the Competitiveness and Innovation framework programme (CIP, +47.8% to EUR 546.4 million) and for the Life-long Learning programme (+15.8% to EUR 1 186.0 million).

([1]) COM(2012) 300 final.
([2]) This political presentation of the 2013 DB contains a section which presents the main changes to the level of payments by major programmes and actions, as compared to the voted budget 2012. Furthermore, Annex A.2.2 of that document contains a detailed breakdown of the Commission's payment requests by programme, again as compared to the 2012 budget.
([3]) Press release MEMO/12/599, 25 July 2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007360/12
to the Commission
George Lyon (ALDE)
(23 July 2012)

Subject: Budget payments December 2011

With respect to the 10.7 billion euro in payment drawdown which could not be met by the Commission in December 2011:

1. Can the Commission provide an exact breakdown of the countries from which these payments were demanded?

2. Notwithstanding any legal obligations of confidentiality, can the Commission provide a further breakdown of the individual projects for which these payments were demanded?

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

1. As concerns the breakdown by Member State of unpaid claims at the end of 2011, the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to written question No E-004995/2012 ([1]).

2. The EUR 10.7 billion of unpaid claims at the end of 2011 were only related to cohesion policy. The outstanding payment claims for the 2007-2013 programmes stood at EUR 3.2 billion for the European Social Fund (ESF), EUR 6.3 billion for the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and EUR 1.3 billion for the Cohesion Fund ([2]). The Honourable Member is invited to contact relevant national or regional authorities in order to obtain more detailed figures as the Commission is not directly involved in selecting and monitoring projects implemented through shared management.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html#sidesForm.
([2]) With a rounding difference of EUR 0.1 billion between the detailed figures and the total amount.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007361/12
to the Commission
George Lyon (ALDE)
(23 July 2012)

Subject: EU citizenship

What criteria are used to determine EU citizenship, and in what ways does this differ from Member State citizenship?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(4 September 2012)

Article 20 (1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which establishes citizenship of the Union, provides that every person holding the nationality of a Member State shall be a citizen of the Union. Citizenship of the Union is additional to and does not replace national citizenship.

Citizenship of the Union confers on Member States' nationals an additional set of rights. According to Article 20 (2) TFEU, these rights include the right to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States; the right to vote and to stand as candidates in elections to the European Parliament and in municipal elections in their Member State of residence, under the same conditions as nationals of that State; the right to enjoy, in the territory of a third country in which the Member State of which they are nationals is not represented, the protection of the diplomatic and consular authorities of any Member State on the same conditions as the nationals of that State; the right to petition the European Parliament, to apply to the European Ombudsman, and to address the institutions and advisory bodies of the Union in any of the Treaty languages and to obtain a reply in the same language

Member States are competent to determine who their nationals are, by laying down in their national legal order the conditions and procedures for acquisition and loss of their nationality, as well as the rights and duties attached to their national citizenship.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007363/12
alla Commissione
Elisabetta Gardini (PPE)
(23 luglio 2012)

Oggetto: Problema di siccità in Italia

Le condizioni climatiche degli ultimi mesi hanno provocato una grave siccità che sta colpendo numerose regioni italiane. Il livello delle precipitazioni è ai minimi storici e il comparto agricolo sta soffrendo questa mancanza d'acqua.

Secondo le principali associazioni di categoria, allo stato attuale è compromesso il raccolto di alcune tipiche colture italiane come il mais e la soia, oltre alla filiera del pomodoro.

Inoltre l'impossibilità di irrigare le coltivazioni inciderà anche sulla produzione frutticola e vitivinicola. Il danno calcolato ammonta già a centinaia di milioni di euro ma è destinato a salire se non arriveranno le piogge.

Considerato che il comparto agricolo italiano rappresenta per l'Europa uno dei più importanti punti di riferimento nel settore agroalimentare e che le autorità regionali hanno richiesto lo stato di calamità al governo italiano, può la Commissione far sapere:

1. se è a conoscenza delle difficoltà del comparto agricolo italiano;

2. quali misure può adottare per aiutare gli agricoltori italiani?

Risposta di Dacian Cioloş a nome della Commissione
(5 settembre 2012)

Nel 2012, quasi tutta l'Europa è stata colpita da condizioni meteorologiche avverse fra cui un'estrema siccità, un inverno particolarmente rigido e precipitazioni eccessive, che hanno arrecato gravi danni ai raccolti nonché alla produzione di foraggi nell'Unione. Per quanto attiene ai pagamenti diretti, il 25 luglio 2012 è stato approvato un progetto di regolamento che autorizza tutti gli Stati membri, a partire dal 16 ottobre 2012, ad anticipare pagamenti fino ad un massimo del 50 % dei regimi di sostegno diretto: detto regolamento dovrebbe essere adottato e pubblicato fra breve.

Il regolamento unico sull'organizzazione comune di mercato prevede che gli Stati membri abbiano la possibilità di inserire l'assicurazione del raccolto come misura ammissibile nell'ambito dei programmi operativi delle organizzazioni di produttori nel settore degli ortofrutticoli o nell'ambito dei programmi di sostegno nel settore vitivinicolo.

Per quanto riguarda gli aiuti nazionali gli Stati membri sono autorizzati a concedere aiuti *de minimis* fino ad un massimo di 7 500 euro per beneficiario nel comparto della produzione agricola, erogati nell'arco di tre esercizi. Si possono anche concedere aiuti per i danni subiti, a norma del regolamento di esenzione per categoria applicabile alle PMI attive nella produzione di prodotti agricoli (regolamento (CE) n. 1857/2006 ([1])), o, previa decisione della Commissione, in applicazione degli orientamenti per gli aiuti di Stato nel settore agricolo ([2]).

La politica di sviluppo rurale dell'UE in base alle disposizioni del regolamento (CE) n. 1698/2005 ([3]) prevede la possibilità di intervenire tramite la misura 126 ([4]). Tale misura è attualmente attivata in 13 regioni italiane nel quadro dei rispettivi programmi di sviluppo rurale: Abruzzo, Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Emilia-Romagna, Lazio, Liguria, Lombardia, Marche, Molise, Sicilia e Umbria.

([1]) GU L 358 del 16.12.2006, pag. 3.
([2]) GU C 319 del 27.12.2006, pag. 1.
([3]) Sul sostegno allo sviluppo rurale da parte del Fondo europeo agricolo per lo sviluppo rurale GU L 277 del 21.10.2005, pagg. 1-40.
([4]) «Ripristino del potenziale produttivo agricolo danneggiato da calamità naturali e introduzione di adeguate misure di prevenzione».

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007363/12
to the Commission
Elisabetta Gardini (PPE)
(23 July 2012)

Subject: Drought problems in Italy

Climate conditions in recent months have caused a severe drought that is affecting many Italian regions. The level of rainfall is at an all-time low and the agricultural sector is suffering from this lack of water.

According to leading industry associations, the harvest of some typical Italian crops such as corn, soybeans and tomatoes is currently under threat.

Furthermore, the inability to irrigate crops will also have an impact on fruit and wine production. The damage already calculated amounts to hundreds of millions of euro, but will surely rise unless the rain arrives.

Given that the Italian agricultural sector is one of Europe's most important points of reference in the food sector and that regional authorities have asked the Italian Government to officially declare this a natural disaster, can the Commission say:

1. whether it is aware of the difficulties of the Italian agricultural sector;

2. what measures can be taken to help Italian farmers?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(5 September 2012)

In 2012, almost all of Europe was affected by adverse weather conditions including extreme drought, a harsh winter and excessive rainfall causing severe damage to crops and fodder production within the Union. With regard to direct payments, a draft Regulation allowing all Member States to advance payments as from 16 October 2012 of up to 50% of the direct support schemes was voted on 25 July 2012 and should be adopted and published shortly.

The Single Common Market Organisation Regulation provides the possibility for Member States to include harvest insurance as an eligible measure under operational programmes of producer organisations in the fruit and vegetables sector or under support programmes in the winesector.

Concerning national aids, Member States may grant *de minimis* aid up to EUR 7 500 per beneficiary in the agricultural production sector over a period of three fiscal years.. Aid for the damage may also be granted under the block exemption regulation applicable to SMEs active in the production of agricultural products (Regulation (EC) No 1857/2006 ([1])), or, following Commission decision, in application of the Agricultural State Aid Guidelines ([2]).

The EU Rural Development policy, through provisions of Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 ([3]), provides for the possibility to intervene through measure 126 ([4]). This measure is currently activated in 13 Italian regions within the framework of their Rural Development Programmes: Abruzzo, Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Emilia Romagna, Lazio, Liguria, Lombardy, March, Molise, Sicily and Umbria.

([1]) OJ L 358, 16.12.2006, p. 3.
([2]) OJ C 319, 27.12.2006, p. 1.
([3]) on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, OJ L 277, 21.10.2005, pp. 1-40.
([4]) 'Restoring agricultural production potential damaged by natural disasters and introducing appropriate prevention measures'.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-007364/12
aan de Commissie
Marianne Thyssen (PPE)
(23 juli 2012)

Betreft: Internationale coördinatie ter bestrijding van de extreme volatiliteit van de landbouwprijzen

In de Agricultural Outlook 2010-2019 voorzien de OESO-FAO een stijging van de internationale landbouwgrondstofprijzen naar een gemiddeld niveau boven de piek van 2007-08. Deze stijging vormt een bedreiging voor arme landen die afhankelijk zijn van import voor hun voedselvoorziening. Hoewel prijsschommelingen meestal nuttige signalen zijn voor afstemming van de productie op de behoeftes van de consumenten, leidt de extreme prijsvolatiliteit en onvoorspelbaarheid op de landbouwmarkten van de afgelopen jaren tot grote onzekerheid en extra risico's voor alle operatoren van de agro-voedselketen. Zij bedreigen de levensvatbaarheid van een reeks operatoren en veroorzaken spanningen tussen de schakels van de voedselketen. Ofschoon de Commissie in haar voorstellen voor de hervorming van het gemeenschappelijk landbouwbeleid voorziet in een aantal lovenswaardige maatregelen om extreme prijsschommelingen in te dijken zonder verlies van de marktoriëntatie, beperken deze zich tot de Europese markt en volstaan ze dus niet om crisissituaties op de internationale markten bij te sturen.

Op initiatief van de G20 werd in 2011 overgegaan tot de oprichting van een Informatiesysteem voor de Landbouwmarkten (AMIS) waarbij landen elkaar informeren over vraag, aanbod en prijzen van de opgevolgde landbouwgrondstoffen en indicatoren vastleggen om abnormale evoluties op de wereldmarkten te detecteren. Bovendien werd een „Rapid Response Forum" in het leven geroepen voor strategisch overleg wanneer de voedselzekerheid in gevaar dreigt te komen. Het is mijn hoop dat dit AMIS-systeem snel kan uitgroeien tot een daadkrachtig orgaan voor internationale coördinatie van het beleid inzake landbouwmarkten.

Graag had ik van de Commissie vernomen op welke wijze ze van plan is bij te dragen tot de vormgeving van deze „prille" internationale coördinatie van het landbouwbeleid, en welke bijkomende initiatieven ze eventueel nodig acht om de extreme volatiliteit van de landbouwgrondstoffen in te dijken en internationale voedselcrisissen te voorkomen.

Antwoord van de heer Cioloș namens de Commissie
(30 augustus 2012)

De Commissie verwijst het geachte Parlementslid naar haar antwoorden op schriftelijke vragen E-000770/2012 van de heer Niculescu, E-001931/2012 van mevrouw Dăncilă en E-009532/2011 van de heer Meyer ([1]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007364/12
to the Commission
Marianne Thyssen (PPE)
(23 July 2012)

Subject: International coordination to counter the extreme volatility of farm prices

In the Agricultural Outlook 2010-2019, the OECD and FAO predict that international prices of agricultural commodities will rise to an average level higher than the peak of 2007-2008. This rise is a threat to poor countries which are dependent on imports for their food supplies. Although price fluctuations generally act as useful signals to align production with consumers' needs, the extreme price volatility and unpredictability on agricultural markets in recent years have led to great uncertainty and extra risks for all operators in the agro-food chain. They threaten the viability of many operators and cause tension between the links in the food supply chain. Although the Commission's proposals for reform of the common agricultural policy provide for a number of laudable measures to control extreme price fluctuations without surrendering the policy's market orientation, they are limited to the European market and are therefore not sufficient to alleviate crises on international markets.

At the initiative of the G20, in 2011 an Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) was established, under which countries inform one another about demand for, and supply and prices of, the agricultural commodities monitored, as well as adopting indicators to detect abnormal trends on world markets. Moreover, a Rapid Response Forum was established for strategic consultation when food security is liable to be endangered. It is my hope that this AMIS system can quickly develop into an effective instrument for international coordination of policy on agricultural markets.

How will the Commission help to guide this new international coordination of agricultural policy, and what additional initiatives might it consider necessary in order to counter the extreme volatility of agricultural commodity prices and prevent international food crises?

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

The Commission refers the Honourable Member to its replies to Written Questions E-000770/2012 by Mr Niculescu, E-001931/2012 by Ms Dăncilă and E-009532/2011 by Mr Meyer ([1]).

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

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-007367/12
alla Commissione
Sonia Alfano (ALDE)
(23 luglio 2012)

Oggetto: Affermazioni del ministro Clini su possibile utilizzo cementifici per incenerimento rifiuti

A metà aprile il ministro dell'ambiente Clini ha annunciato pubblicamente che entro maggio verrà varato un decreto atto ad autorizzare nei processi industriali — e in particolare nei cementifici — l'utilizzo dei combustibili solidi secondari (CSS) derivati dai rifiuti.

Un simile decreto avrebbe diverse controindicazioni. Innanzitutto andrebbe a danneggiare le amministrazioni e le comunità che stanno profondendo un concreto impegno per un circolo virtuoso della gestione dei rifiuti; difatti, in virtù degli accordi con le industrie che verrebbero predisposti a seguito del decreto, le amministrazioni sarebbero incentivate a produrre CSS piuttosto che a promuovere la riduzione, il riutilizzo e il riciclo dei rifiuti e una loro valorizzazione come materie prime. Un simile decreto rappresenterebbe sotto questo punto di vista una evidente violazione della direttiva rifiuti che pone l'incenerimento tra le opzioni residuali per lo smaltimento dei rifiuti.

In secondo luogo, pur se di primaria importanza, un tale decreto metterebbe a serio rischio la salute dei cittadini e l'ambiente in quanto non è ancora chiaro in che maniera verrebbe assicurata la composizione del CSS, al cui interno potrebbero trovarsi sostanze che in caso di combustione genererebbero delle emissioni nocive e inquinanti. Inoltre la normativa prevista per i cementifici consente dei livelli massimi di emissioni ben superiori a quelle previste per gli inceneritori. Sotto questo punto di vista, attraverso un decreto, si potrebbe eludere la normativa sugli impianti di incenerimento che mira a limitare i danni per la salute umana, ampiamente dimostrati da studi scientifici.

La trasformazione dei rifiuti urbani in CSS impone inoltre la loro trasformazione in rifiuti speciali, con le connesse difficoltà nella loro gestione e nel loro controllo e con preoccupanti occasioni di impresa da parte della criminalità organizzata.

Già nella risposta all'interrogazione E-6659/2009 la Commissione europea ha chiarito che l'utilizzo del coincenerimento nei processi industriali deve essere soggetto al rispetto rigoroso sia della direttiva 2000/76/CE che della direttiva 2008/1/CE.

Pertanto, può la Commissione avviare tempestivamente un dialogo con le autorità italiane, già in procedura di infrazione per la gestione sconsiderata dei rifiuti in diverse zone del suo territorio, per promuovere un rigido rispetto delle direttive esistenti e la piena tutela della salute dei cittadini e dell'ambiente? Può la Commissione informare la scrivente circa gli esiti di tali contatti?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(22 agosto 2012)

La Commissione non è al corrente del fatto che l'Italia abbia adottato nuove misure regolamentari riguardo all'utilizzo dei combustibili solidi secondari (CSS) nei processi industriali, in particolare nei cementifici. Se tali misure dovessero essere adottate, la Commissione ne valuterà la conformità a tutti i pertinenti requisiti della normativa dell'UE in materia di rifiuti, anche rispetto alla gerarchia dei rifiuti prevista all'articolo 4, paragrafo 1, della direttiva 2008/98/CE relativa ai rifiuti ([1]) e all'obbligo di evitare impatti nocivi sulla salute umana e sull'ambiente.

([1]) GU L 312 del 22.11.2008.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-007367/12
to the Commission
Sonia Alfano (ALDE)
(23 July 2012)

Subject: Possible use of incinerated waste in cement works

Italy's Minister for the Environment Mr Clini announced in mid-April that a decree would be passed by May to permit the use in industrial processes — and in cement works in particular — of solid recovered fuel (SRF) obtained from waste.

Such a decree would be inadvisable for various reasons. First of all those authorities and municipalities that have committed themselves firmly to a virtuous waste management circle and are now investing heavily in this would be placed at a disadvantage. In point of fact, the agreements that would be drawn up with industries as a result of the decree would have the effect of encouraging authorities to produce SRF rather than to promote waste reduction, reuse and recycling and the recovery of waste as raw materials. Viewed from this perspective, it is clear that such a decree would infringe the Waste Framework Directive, which places incineration low down on the list of waste disposal methods.

Secondly, but very significantly, a decree like this would constitute a serious risk to the health of citizens and the environment insofar as it is still not clear how the composition of the SRF would be controlled. It could contain substances which, should they combust, would produce noxious emissions and pollutants. Moreover, the legislation governing cement works permits maximum emission levels that are well above those laid down for incinerators. Viewed from this perspective, the decree would make it possible to circumvent the legislation on incinerator plants that seeks to limit the health risks so amply proven by scientific studies.

Transforming urban waste into SRF also transforms it into special waste, bringing with it difficulties in regard to its management and control and worry over the opportunities this affords organised crime organisations.

The Commission has already made it clear, in its answer to parliamentary Question E-6659/2009, that the use of co-incineration in industrial processes must be strictly in accordance with both Directive 2000/76/EC and Directive 2008/1/EC.

An infringement procedure has already been started against the Italian authorities for careless waste management in various areas of the country. Will the Commission contact the Italian authorities therefore to urge them to adhere strictly to the existing directives and protect fully public health and the environment? Would the Commission kindly keep me informed regarding the outcome of these talks?

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

The Commission is not aware of the adoption in Italy of new regulatory measures concerning the use of solid recovered fuel (SRF) in industrial processes, particularly in cement kilns. If adopted, the Commission will assess whether such measures comply with all relevant requirements under EU waste law, including the waste hierarchy as set out in Article 4.1 of Directive 2008/98/EC on waste ([1]) and the obligation to prevent detrimental impacts on human health and the environment.

([1]) OJ L 312, 22.11.2008.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007368/12
alla Commissione
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(23 luglio 2012)

Oggetto: Superstrada Pedemontana Veneta: possibile violazione delle direttive comunitarie 2003/4/CE, 2000/60/CE, 92/43/CEE, 85/337/CEE e 97/11/CE

Come riferito nell'interrogazione P-009842/2011 da me depositata il 20 ottobre 2011, nelle province di Vicenza e Treviso sono in corso i lavori di realizzazione della superstrada a pedaggio Pedemontana Veneta che collegherà i paesi Montecchio Maggiore (in provincia di Vicenza) e Spresiano (Treviso). L'area interessata dall'imponente opera, il cui costo è pari a circa 2,4 miliardi di euro, comprende 38 comuni. Per realizzare quest'opera sono stati espropriati circa 3 000 soggetti, fra cui circa 1 800 aziende agricole.

Questo progetto di superstrada vede l'opposizione della popolazione, organizzatasi in associazioni e comitati. In merito al progetto il TAR Lazio, con le sentenze n. 10184/2011 e n.01140/2012, ha bocciato il concetto emergenziale e, di conseguenza, eliminato la figura del commissario per la costruzione autostradale, rilevando inoltre la mancanza delle verifiche V.INC.A e V.I.A. sul progetto definitivo.

L'opera è accusata: 1) di non essere economicamente sostenibile poiché nessun flusso di traffico è in grado di ripagare i costi di costruzione; 2) di mettere a rischio la salubrità della falda acquifera, in contrasto con la direttiva 2000/60/CE, a causa degli scarichi delle acque nei tratti di strada che saranno costruiti in trincea.

Come già segnalato nell'interrogazione citata, i vari comitati e associazioni hanno presentato molteplici richieste di accesso agli atti relativi all'appalto della Pedemontana Veneta (in particolare, al piano economico-finanziario e alla convenzione di progetto definitivo), documenti che sono stati sistematicamente negati dalle autorità regionali venete e dal commissario straordinario, in possibile violazione della direttiva 2003/4/CE sull'accesso del pubblico all'informazione ambientale.

La Commissione, nella sua risposta all'interrogazione P-009842/2011, riferiva che avrebbe contattato le autorità italiane per ottenere maggiori informazioni sul rifiuto di accesso agli atti.

1. È ora possibile alla Commissione far conoscere l'esito dei contatti intercorsi?

2. È essa ora in grado di giudicare se il diniego dell'accesso agli atti da parte delle autorità italiane prefiguri una violazione della menzionata direttiva?

3. Ritiene l'opera compatibile e rispettosa delle direttive 2000/60/CE in materia di acque, 92/43/CEE in materia di procedura V.INC.A., 85/337/CEE e 97/11/CE in materia di procedura V.I.A.?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(10 settembre 2012)

In seguito all'interrogazione scritta P-009842/2011, nel novembre 2011 la Commissione ha avviato un'indagine su un'eventuale violazione delle disposizioni della direttiva 2003/4/CE ([1]). Dopo aver ricevuto la risposta delle autorità italiane, la Commissione, nell'agosto 2012, ha chiesto ulteriori chiarimenti. La Commissione deciderà sul seguito da dare all'indagine dopo aver ricevuto ed esaminato la risposta successiva attesa dalle autorità italiane.

Per quanto riguarda l'affermazione secondo la quale l'impatto ambientale del progetto non sarebbe stato valutato, in violazione delle direttive 85/337/CEE ([2]) e 92/43/CEE ([3]), la Commissione chiederà alle autorità italiane di precisare se tali direttive siano state applicate al progetto, con particolare riguardo per l'impatto sulle acque sotterranee.

([1]) Direttiva 2003/4/CE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 28 gennaio 2003, sull'accesso del pubblico all'informazione ambientale e che abroga la direttiva 90/313/CEE del Consiglio, GU L 41 del 14.2.2003.

([2]) Direttiva 85/337/CEE del Consiglio, del 27 giugno 1985, concernente la valutazione dell'impatto ambientale di determinati progetti pubblici e privati, ora codificata come direttiva 2011/92/UE, GU L 26 del 28.1.2012.

([3]) Direttiva 92/43/CEE del Consiglio, del 21 maggio 1992, relativa alla conservazione degli habitat naturali e seminaturali e della flora e della fauna selvatiche, GU L 206 del 22.7.1992.

Per quanto attiene all'applicazione della direttiva 2000/60/CE ([4]) in Italia, la Commissione sta esaminando se le informazioni contenute nei piani di gestione dei bacini idrografici d'Italia siano conformi alle norme della direttiva riguardanti lo stato chimico e quantitativo delle acque sotterranee.

([4]) Direttiva 2000/60/CE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 23 ottobre 2000, che istituisce un quadro per l'azione comunitaria in materia di acque, GU L 327 del 22.12.2000.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007368/12
to the Commission
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(23 July 2012)

Subject: Pedemontana Veneta expressway: possible breach of EU Directives 2003/4/EC, 2000/60/EC, 92/43/EEC, 85/337/EEC and 97/11/EC

As explained in Question No P-009842/2011, tabled on 20 October 2011, work has started in the provinces of Vicenza and Treviso on building the Pedemontana Veneta toll expressway to link the towns of Montecchio Maggiore (in Vicenza province) and Spresiano (Treviso). This enormous undertaking, at a cost of approximately EUR 2.4 billion, passes through 38 different municipalities and has required the compulsory purchase of approximately 3 000 properties, including some 1 800 farms.

The local residents have formed committees and associations to oppose the expressway. In its judgments No 10184/2011 and No 01140/2012, the Lazio regional administrative court rejected the argument that it is urgently needed and abolished thereby the post of Commissioner for motorway construction. It also pointed out that neither the implications nor the effects of the final plan on the environment had been assessed.

The project is accused of: 1) not being economically sustainable as traffic flows will never be high enough to repay construction costs; 2) endangering the good condition of the aquifer, in contravention of Directive 2000/60/EC, as a result of drainage of water in road cuttings.

As already pointed out in the previous question, the various committees and associations have submitted numerous requests for access to documents on the Pedemontana Veneta tendering process (the financial plan and the agreement on the final plan in particular), but access is systematically refused by the Veneto regional authorities and the special commissioner. This may constitute a breach of Directive 2003/4/EC on public access to environmental information.

In its answer to Question P-009842/2011, the Commission stated that it would contact the Italian authorities to obtain further information on the refusal to provide access to these documents.

1. Could the Commission now say what the outcome of these contacts has been?

2. Is the Commission now in a position to judge whether the Italian authorities's refusal to grant access to the documents constitutes a breach of the aforesaid directive?

3. Does the Commission believe that this project complies with Directive 2000/60/EC on water, Directive 92/43/EEC in regard to assessment of implications for the environment, and Directives 85/337/EEC and 97/11/EC in regard to assessment of its effect on the environment?

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

Following Written Question P-009842/2011, in November 2011 the Commission launched an investigation on the potential breach of Directive 2003/4/EC ([1]). Following the reply by the Italian authorities, the Commission asked for further clarifications in August 2012. The Commission will decide on the follow-up to this investigation once it has received and assessed the further reply expected from the Italian authorities.

As concerns the allegation that the environmental impact of the project has not been assessed, in breach of Directives 85/337/EEC ([2]) and 92/43/EEC ([3]), the Commission will ask the Italian authorities whether these Directives have been applied to the project, focusing in particular on the impact on groundwater.

([1]) Directive 2003/4/EC of the Parliament and the Council of 28 January 2003 on public access to environmental information and repealing Council Directive 90/313/EEC, OJ L 41, 14.2.2003.
([2]) Council Directive 85/337/EEC of 27 June 1985 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment, now codified as Directive 2011/92/EU, OJ L 26, 28.1.2012.
([3]) Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, OJ L 206, 22.7.1992.

As regards the application of Directive 2000/60/EC ([4]) in Italy, the Commission is analysing whether the information reported in Italy's River Basin Management Plans is in line with the requirements of the directive with regard to the chemical and quantitative status of groundwater.

([4]) Directive 2000/60/EC of the Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy, OJ L 327, 22.12.2000.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007369/12
alla Commissione
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(23 luglio 2012)

Oggetto: Documento unico di regolarità contributiva: possibile violazione delle norme in materia di libera concorrenza, circolazione dei lavoratori, prestazione di servizi e libertà di stabilimento

La legge n. 266/2002 ed il decreto legislativo n. 276/2003 hanno stabilito che INPS, INAIL e Casse edili stipulino convenzioni ai fini del rilascio del Documento unico di regolarità contributiva (DURC), il quale è un certificato che, sulla base di un'unica richiesta, attesta contestualmente la regolarità di un'impresa per quanto concerne gli adempimenti INPS, INAIL e Cassa edile. Il DURC rappresenta quindi un mero strumento di semplificazione amministrativa ai fini dell'osservazione delle dinamiche del lavoro e del contrasto al lavoro sommerso, consentendo il monitoraggio dei dati e delle attività delle imprese affidatarie di appalti con la creazione di un'apposita banca dati che dovrebbe ostacolare la concorrenza sleale nella partecipazione alle gare. Senonché, il ministero del Lavoro italiano, con vari decreti e circolari, ha circoscritto il novero delle Casse edili abilitate al rilascio del DURC fra quelle costituite da una o più associazioni dei datori o dei prestatori di lavoro stipulanti il contratto collettivo nazionale che siano, per ciascuna parte, comparativamente più rappresentative sul piano nazionale. Così facendo, il ministero ha arbitrariamente consentito che la convenzione potesse essere stipulata solo con la Commissione nazionale paritetica per le casse edili (C.N.C.E.).

Questa limitazione tradisce l'intento di favorire la costituzione separata di tali enti e la concorrenza tra gli stessi, creando una disparità di trattamento tra soggetti aventi la medesima connotazione giuridica, ma derivanti da un diverso contratto collettivo. È bene ricordare che fin dal 1997, l'Autorità italiana garante della concorrenza e del mercato (AGCM) invitò i ministeri competenti a vigilare sulla correttezza dei meccanismi previdenziali delle Casse edili, per le quali è stato individuato il rischio di intese restrittive della concorrenza e dell'abuso «collettivo» di posizione dominante da parte del nucleo originario di detti enti facenti capo alla C.N.C.E. Infine, il ministero del Lavoro italiano ha sostanzialmente creato un arbitrario distinguo tra tali enti, escludendo tutte le altre figure soggettive, e spingendosi ad affermare nelle sue circolari esplicative, quanto segue:

— «gli organismi … non in possesso del requisito della reciprocità assicurato attraverso il collegamento con la C.N.C.E. non possono definirsi "Casse edili" ai sensi del D.Lgs. n. 267/2003 e, conseguentemente, non possono rilasciare il Documento unico di regolarità contributiva.» (Circolare del 2 maggio 2012) e

— «eventuali certificazioni di regolarità rilasciate da Casse edili non abilitate, …non potranno in alcun modo sostituirsi al Documento unico di regolarità contributiva (DURC)…» (Circolare del 1º giugno 2012).

Tutto ciò premesso, ritiene la Commissione tale comportamento contrario alle norme in materia di libera concorrenza, circolazione dei lavoratori, prestazione di servizi e libertà di stabilimento? Può essa fornire un quadro generale della situazione?

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

Il diritto dell'Unione non limita la facoltà degli Stati membri di organizzare i propri regimi di sicurezza sociale. In mancanza di armonizzazione a livello di Unione spetta alla legislazione di ciascuno Stato membro stabilire le condizioni per accordare le prestazioni di sicurezza sociale nonché l'importo di tali prestazioni e il periodo durante il quale sono concesse. Nell'esercitare tale facoltà, gli Stati membri devono tuttavia rispettare il diritto dell'Unione e in particolare le disposizioni del trattato sulla libera circolazione dei lavoratori, o ancora il diritto di ogni cittadino dell'Unione di circolare e soggiornare liberamente nel territorio degli Stati membri (causa C-135/99 Elsen Racc. [2000], pag. I-10409, punto 33).

Il diritto dell'Unione europea è generalmente applicabile solo ai casi che presentano una dimensione transfrontaliera. Il caso cui fa riferimento l'onorevole parlamentare sembra limitato all'organizzazione della previdenza sociale in un solo Stato membro, ossia l'Italia. Esso non rientra di conseguenza né nel campo di applicazione del diritto dell'UE né nell'ambito di competenza della Commissione.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007369/12
to the Commission
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(23 July 2012)

Subject: Single document certifying payment of contributions: possible breach of rules on free competition, freedom of movement of workers, provision of services and freedom of establishment

Law No 266/2002 and Legislative Decree No 276/2003 laid down that the INPS (Italian social security organisation), INAIL (National Institute for Insurance against Accidents at Work) and the 'Casse Edili' (construction workers' benefit organisations) shall draw up agreements on issuing the DURC (single payment-compliance certification document). The DURC is a certificate confirming, on the basis of one request, that a company has met its obligations in respect of payments to all the aforementioned organisations. It is therefore simply a document that simplifies administration in analysing employment dynamics and combating the black economy. The DURC assists in monitoring data on companies that win contracts, and their activities, through a databank set up to prevent unfair competition in tender procedures.

However, the Italian Minister for Employment has issued a number of decrees and circulars which have had the effect of restricting the number of 'Casse Edili' authorised to issue the DURC solely to those formed of one or more employers' or employees' associations party to the national collective labour agreement and, comparatively speaking, more representative of each side of industry at national level. In so doing, the Minister has arbitrarily brought about a situation in which the National Joint Committee of the 'Casse Edili' (the CNCE) is the only 'Casse Edili' body permitted to be a party to the DURC agreement.

This restriction goes against the plan for the 'Casse Edili' to be independent bodies competing amongst themselves. It creates unequal treatment between bodies that have the same legal status but have each been established on the basis of different collective agreements. It is worth remembering that in 1997, Italy's Market Competitiveness Protection Authority (the AGCM) called on the ministers responsible to monitor the social security mechanisms at the 'Casse Edili' for their honesty, as it had been determined that there was a risk of restrictive competition arrangements and of 'collective' abuse of dominant position by the original group of 'Casse Edili' depending upon the CNCE. Lastly, the Italian Minister for Employment has to a large extent created an arbitrarily fine distinction between them, excluding all other entities, and going so far as to state in the Ministry's circulars:

— 'bodies … that do not fulfil the mutuality requirement guaranteed by affiliation to the CNCE may not describe themselves as "Casse Edili" in the sense of Legislative Decree No 267/2003 and, consequently, may not issue the single payment-compliance certification document (DURC)' (Circular of 2 May 2012) and

— 'no certification of compliance issued by "Casse Edili" that are not qualified to do so, …may in any way replace the Single payment-compliance certification document (DURC)…' (Circular of 1 June 2012).

In the Commission's opinion, is the foregoing contrary to the rules on free competition, freedom of movement of workers, provision of services and freedom of establishment?

Could the Commission provide a general overview of the situation?

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

Union law does not limit the power of the Member States to organise their social security schemes. In the absence of harmonisation at Union level, it is for the legislation of each Member State to lay down the conditions under which social security benefits are granted, as well as the amount of such benefits and the period for which they are granted. However, when exercising that power, the Member States must comply with Union law and, in particular, the Treaty provisions on freedom of movement for workers or again the freedom of every citizen of the European Union to move and reside in the territory of the Member States (Case C-135/99 *Elsen* [2000] ECR I-10409, paragraph 33).

European Union law is generally applicable only to cases which have a cross-border dimension. The case referred to by the Honourable Member seems to be limited to the organisation of social security in one Member State, namely Italy. It accordingly falls neither within the scope of application of EC law nor within the competence of the Commission.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-007371/12
do Komisji
Małgorzata Handzlik (PPE)
(23 lipca 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Zwiększenie konkurencyjności europejskich małych i średnich przedsiębiorstw – branża włókiennicza i kamieniarska

Europejska gospodarka wciąż jeszcze boryka się z kryzysem społeczno-gospodarczym. Skutki tego kryzysu są szczególnie bolesne dla małych i średnich przedsiębiorstw, a przecież to właśnie te firmy mają największy potencjał, jeżeli chodzi o tworzenie miejsc pracy, a dzięki temu minimalizowanie bezrobocia. Niestety okazuje się, że europejskie MŚP nie mają warunków do konkurowania z rażąco tanimi produktami oferowanymi przez firmy z Azji, w szczególności z Chin czy Indii. Szczególnie odczuwalne jest to w branżach przemysłu lekkiego m.in. produkcji odzieży, tkanin, tekstyliów. Tylko w Polsce branża ta generuje około 140 000 miejsc pracy, co stanowi ponad 7 % zatrudnionych w całym przetwórstwie przemysłowym.

Niestety liczba ta sukcesywnie spada ze względu na przenoszenie produkcji do krajów azjatyckich, które oferują bardzo niskie koszty produkcji, nie respektując przy tym jednak praw pracowników przez co europejskie MŚP nie mają szans z takimi firmami konkurować, co w konsekwencji prowadzi do ich upadku. Podobna sytuacja jest w sektorze producentów wyrobów z rodzimego kamienia budowlanego, gdzie rażąco niskie ceny oferowane przez firmy azjatyckie skutecznie wypierają z rynku firmy europejskie. Skutkiem tego jest likwidacja miejsc pracy i ograniczanie produkcji w Europie.

1. Pragnę zapytać Komisję, czy zachowując otwartość rynku i zdrową konkurencję z partnerami z krajów trzecich celowe byłoby, dla poprawy konkurencyjności europejskich MŚP, wprowadzenie limitów produkcyjnych dla europejskich przedsiębiorstw? Jak według Komisji powinniśmy chronić firmy europejskie przed produktami czy usługami oferowanymi po cenach dumpingowych z krajów trzecich?

2. Jakie działania Komisja podejmuje w celu zwiększenia konkurencyjności europejskich firm? Czy Komisja dysponuje statystykami pokazującymi efekty tych działań?

3. Czy Komisja planuje przyjąć inicjatywę w sprawie ewentualnych wymogów dotyczących etykietowania, tak aby firmy odnosiły realne korzyści z produkowania towarów wewnątrz UE?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Antonia Tajaniego w imieniu Komisji
(25 września 2012 r.)

1. Prawdą jest, że w wielu sektorach rośnie konkurencja z państw trzecich. Zrównoważonym sposobem na zachowanie konkurencyjności sektorów i miejsc pracy w Europie jest stworzenie korzystnych warunków ramowych i infrastruktury, jak również uczciwej i skutecznej konkurencji. W przypadku udowodnionego dumpingu z państw trzecich Komisja regularnie stosuje odpowiednie instrumenty ochrony handlu.

2. Poprawa konkurencyjności przedsiębiorstw europejskich jest jednym z celów unijnej polityki przemysłowej. Na wczesną jesień zaplanowano przyjęcie nowego komunikatu na ten temat. Skupi się on w szczególności na ułatwianiu inwestycji w nowe technologie i innowacje, dostępu do rynków i dostępu do finansowania. Komisja stale śledzi rozwój europejskiego sektora przedsiębiorstw, ale ponieważ zależy on od wielu różnych czynników, trudno jest jasno określić, które aspekty zmian można przypisać samej polityce UE.

3. W odniesieniu do etykietowania wyrobów włókienniczych, zgodnie z rozporządzeniem 1007/2011 ([1]) Komisja przedkłada Parlamentowi Europejskiemu i Radzie sprawozdanie w dotyczące ewentualnych nowych wymogów w zakresie etykietowania na poziomie UE.

W tym celu Komisja rozpoczęła badanie mające na celu zebranie opinii właściwych zainteresowanych stron oraz analizę istniejących przepisów na poziomie państw członkowskich.

Sprawozdanie końcowe ([2]) umożliwi Komisji ocenę możliwych dalszych działań w tej dziedzinie.

([1]) Dz.U. L 272 z 18.10.2011.
([2]) Przewidziane na wrzesień 2012 r.

W odniesieniu do wyrobów budowlanych obecna dyrektywa (89/106/EWG), jak i przyszłe rozporządzenie ([3]) zawierają pewne przepisy upraszczające w kwestii oznakowania CE, które mają zastosowanie do małych przedsiębiorstw produkcyjnych w Europie i które mogą przyczynić się do poprawy ich pozycji konkurencyjnej.

([3]) (305/2011/UE), które zacznie być w pełni stosowane i uchyli obecną dyrektywę (89/106/EWG) z dniem 1 lipca 2013 r.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007371/12
to the Commission
Małgorzata Handzlik (PPE)
(23 July 2012)

Subject: Increasing the competitiveness of European SMEs in the textile and stonemasonry industries

The European economy is still struggling with an economic and social crisis. The effects of this crisis are particularly keenly felt by small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and yet it is precisely such enterprises that have the greatest potential to create jobs and thus reduce unemployment. Regrettably, though, European SMEs are unable to compete with the extremely cheap products offered by companies from Asia, particularly from China and India. This is especially noticeable in light industries, such as the production of clothes, fabrics and textiles. In Poland alone this industry generates some 140 000 jobs and accounts for over 7% of all manufacturing jobs.

Unfortunately, this number is falling steadily as production is transferred to Asian countries that offer very low costs of production and do not respect workers' rights. The consequence of this is that European SMEs have no chance of competing with such firms and go bankrupt. A similar situation exists in the domestic building material production sector, where the extremely low prices offered by Asian companies are proving effective in pushing European companies out of the market. This results in job losses and a fall in European production.

1. Does the Commission believe that it would make sense, while maintaining market openness and healthy competition with partners from third countries, to introduce production quotas for European companies in order to increase the competitiveness of European SMEs? How should we protect European companies from products and services provided at dumping prices by third countries?

2. What steps is the Commission taking in order to improve the competitiveness of European companies? Does it have statistics showing the results of such steps?

3. Does the Commission plan to adopt an initiative on possible labelling requirements inorder to ensure that it will be in companies' interests to produce goods within the EU?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(25 September 2012)

1. It is true that competition from third countries is increasing in many sectors. The sustainable way forward to preserve competitive enterprises and jobs in Europe is to establish favourable framework conditions and infrastructure, as well as fair and effective competition. In cases of proven dumping from third countries, the Commission regularly applies trade defence instruments, as appropriate.

2. Improving the competitiveness of European companies is one of the objectives of our industrial policy. A new Communication on this topic is being planned for adoption in early autumn. It will focus notably on facilitating investment in new technologies and innovation, access to markets, and access to finance. The Commission follows the development of the European enterprise sector on a regular basis, but given that it depends on many different factors it is difficult to clearly establish which parts of the development that may be attributed to EU policy as such.

3. As regards the labelling textile products, in line with Regulation 1007/2011 ([1]), the Commission shall submit a report to the European Parliament and to the Council on possible new labelling requirements at the EU level.

To this end, the Commission has launched a study which will gather the opinions of the relevant stakeholders and look into the existing legislation at Member State level.

The final report ([2]) will enable the Commission to assess the possible ways forward in this field.

For construction products, the current Directive (89/106/EEC) as well as the forthcoming Regulation ([3]) contain some simplifying rules on the CE-marking, which apply to small companies manufacturing products in Europe and thereby promise to contribute to improving their competitive position.

([1]) OJ L 272, 18.10.2011.
([2]) Foreseen for September 2012.
([3]) (305/2011/EU), which is to enter into full application and repeal the current Directive (89/106/EEC) from 1 July 2013 onwards.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-007373/12
adresată Comisiei
Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE)
(23 iulie 2012)

Subiect: Funcționarea optimă a lanțului de aprovizionare cu alimente

Din Comunicarea Comisiei către Parlamentul European, Consiliu, Comitetul Economic și Social European și Comitetul Regiunilor intitulată „PAC în perspectiva anului 2020: Cum răspundem provocărilor viitorului legate de alimentație, resurse naturale și teritorii", COM(2010)0672, reiese că politica agricolă comună (PAC) se confruntă cu o serie de provocări care pot afecta serios viitorul securității alimentare pe termen lung a cetățenilor europeni.

Una dintre provocările identificate o reprezintă funcționarea optimă a lanțului de aprovizionare cu alimente, care, în perspectiva redresării din criza economică și financiară, dobândește o importanță deosebită. Având în vedere faptul că în momentul actual o mare parte din populația Uniunii Europene trăiește sub limita sărăciei, este primordial să ne asigurăm că alimentele sunt accesibile pentru toate categoriile sociale. Trebuie avut în vedere că escaladarea prețurilor datorită unei combinații de factori structurali și temporali poate amenința în același timp creșterea economică și poate submina eforturile mondiale de luptă împotriva sărăciei și foametei.

Multe studii concluzionează că reacția asimetrică a prețurilor alimentelor la fluctuațiile prețurilor produselor de bază este legată în principal de numărul mare al intermediarilor ce operează de-a lungul lanțului de aprovizionare.

— Din acest motiv, doresc să întreb Comisia dacă are în vedere pe viitor adoptarea unor instrumente prin care să fie promovate și susținute lanțurile scurte de aprovizionare și piețele în care agricultorii își pot desface marfa direct?

Consider că în acest fel se va crea o legătură directă între consumatori și agricultori, prin care aceștia din urmă vor obține o pondere crescută din valoarea prețului final, în timp ce populația se va bucura de prețuri mai avantajoase.

Răspuns dat de dl Cioloş în numele Comisiei
(24 august 2012)

În propunerile sale legislative generale legate de Politica Agricolă Comună (PAC) post-2013, Comisia a sugerat deja o serie de măsuri care să încurajeze dezvoltarea lanțurilor scurte de aprovizionare și a piețelor locale.

Printre măsurile din cadrul PAC, Comisia a propus ca una dintre prioritățile politicii de dezvoltare rurală să implice „o mai bună integrare a producătorilor primari în lanțul alimentar prin intermediul schemelor de calitate, al promovării pe piețele locale și în cadrul circuitelor scurte de aprovizionare…".

Cea mai relevantă măsură propusă în domeniul dezvoltării rurale pentru perioada post-2013 va fi măsura legată de cooperare, prin care factorii din cadrul lanțului de aprovizionare vor beneficia de sprijin pentru a crea platforme logistice care să ajute la dezvoltarea lanțurilor scurte de aprovizionare și a piețelor locale. Măsura va fi utilă și pentru activitățile de promovare la nivel local.

Au fost propuse și alte măsuri cu relevanță în acest sens, printre care cea referitoare la sistemele din domeniul calității produselor agricole și alimentare. Această măsură îi va ajuta pe fermieri să facă față costurilor presupuse de participarea la sistemele de calitate (fapt care le-ar putea aduce în unele cazuri clienți noi, locuitori ai zonelor din apropierea punctului de producție).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007373/12
to the Commission
Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE)
(23 July 2012)

Subject: Optimisation of food chain

From the Commission communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on meeting the food natural resources and territorial challenges of the future (COM(2010) 0672), it emerges that the common agricultural policy (CAP) is facing a series of challenges which could seriously affect the long-term future of European citizens in terms of food security.

One of the challenges identified is the optimal functioning of the food chain which in terms of recovery from the economic and financial crisis is of particular importance. Given that a substantial proportion of the EU population is currently living below the poverty line, it is essential to ensure that food is accessible to all social categories. It must not be forgotten that spiralling prices caused by a combination of structural and cyclical factors could also threaten economic growth and undermine international efforts to combat poverty and famine.

Many studies conclude that the asymmetric reaction of food prices to commodity price fluctuations is chiefly attributable to the large number of intermediaries operating along the entire food chain.

In view of this, does the Commission intend to adopt measures to promote and sustain short supply chains and markets on which farmers are able to sell their produce directly?

Such a measure would, in my opinion, create a direct link between consumers and farmers enabling the latter to secure an increased percentage of retail prices, which would, at the same time, be more affordable for consumers.

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

Within its overall legal proposals for a post-2013 Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the Commission has already proposed several measures to encourage the development of short supply chains and local markets.

Within the CAP package, the Commission has proposed that one of the priorities of rural development policy should involve 'better integrating primary producers into the food chain through quality schemes, promotion in local markets and short supply [chains]…'

The most relevant proposed rural development measure for the post-2013 period will be the 'Cooperation' measure, which will support actors in the supply chain to set up logistic platforms helpful for the development of short supply chains and local markets. It will also support promotion activities in a local context.

Other relevant measures will include (among others) the measure 'Quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs'. This will help farmers to meet the costs of becoming involved in quality schemes (some of which may win them additional consumers living close to the point of production).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007375/12
to the Commission
Linda McAvan (S&D)
(23 July 2012)

Subject: Charges for Schengen visas

Several constituents with family members who are not EU citizens have brought to my attention the difficulties the latter encounter in obtaining a Schengen visa free of charge, as is their right, from certain Member States' embassies.

Part III, Section 3.2, of the Schengen Visa Handbook states: 'As family members should not pay any fee when submitting the application, they cannot be obliged to obtain an appointment via a premium call line or via an external provider whose services are charged to the applicant.'

1. Is the Commission aware that certain Member States' embassies are extremely reluctant to grant visas themselves and are consistently directing non-EU citizens who are members of an EU citizen's family to companies which charge for a visa?

2. Do Member States' embassies have any responsibility to inform non-EU citizens of their right to obtain a Schengen visa free of charge if they are family members of an EU citizen?

3. Does the Commission have any plans to publicise the rights of non-EU citizens who are family members of an EU citizen, so that more people are aware that they do not have to pay for a Schengen visa?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(4 September 2012)

As provided in Article 5(2) of Directive 2004/38/EC ([1]), Member States may, where the EU citizen exercises the right to move and reside freely in its territory, require the family member who is a non-EU national to have an entry visa.

Such family members have not only the right to enter a Member State but also to obtain an entry visa for that purpose. Member States must grant them every facility to obtain the necessary visas which must be issued free of charge. The facilitation obligation entails also the requirement to provide sufficient guidance to the applicants as to the visa needed and underlying procedure and to offer a genuine possibility to obtain the visa without fees.

As identified in the 2008 report on the application of the directive ([2]), problems with entry visas are one of the most persistent violations of the core rights of EU citizens and their family members. The situation has improved since 2008 but still remains unsatisfactory.

The Commission is working closely together with Member States to ensure that there are no obstacles. The Handbook for the processing of visa applications and the modification of issued visas was adopted on 19 March 2010 to provide for detailed guidance as how to process Schengen visa applications under the directive.

Where Member States are failing to uphold the rights of non-EU family members, the Commission is ready to use its powers to ensure that the situation is remedied. For its part, it has given prominence to visas for family members on Your Europe website ([3]) which was visited by 177,000 users in June 2012. The website is also linked with the Immigration Portal ([4]).

Your Europe is accessible also via a dedicated application for smartphones.

([1]) Directive 2004/38/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the right of citizens of the Union and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States, OJ L 158 of 30 April 2004, p. 77.
([2]) COM(2008) 840 final.
([3]) http://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/immigration.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite P-007376/12
à la Commission
Karima Delli (Verts/ALE)
(23 juillet 2012)

Objet: Promotion du développement de systèmes de retraites par capitalisation par la Commission européenne, notamment via des dépenses fiscales

Dans le livre blanc sur les retraites, qui a été publié dernièrement par vos services, il apparaît que la Commission souhaite soutenir encore davantage le développement de l'épargne retraite, au moyen notamment de dépenses fiscales appropriées.

Or, il est désormais établi par la doctrine économique mais aussi par la presse internationale (comme *The Economist* dans son dossier thématique d'avril 2011) que la retraite par capitalisation ne constitue pas une réponse au vieillissement démographique, puisque ce sont toujours les jeunes actifs qui payent par le fruit de leur travail les pensions des retraités: soit par des cotisations directes, soit par le prélèvement de remboursement d'emprunt ou de dividendes. Seule l'intermédiation change, mais ce sont toujours les jeunes qui payent pour les anciens, les frais d'intermédiation étant d'ailleurs supérieurs en capitalisation.

Ensuite, les dépenses fiscales sont anti-redistributives, puisqu'elles consistent à ouvrir des dépenses nouvelles pour la partie la plus aisée de la population, celle qui peut épargner pour autre chose que le logement, l'automobile ou l'éducation des enfants, et celle qui paye des impôts élevés. Est-il opportun, en ces temps de disette budgétaire, de soutenir par une nouvelle dépense publique une protection supplémentaire pour le quintile supérieur de nos concitoyens?

Enfin, les fonds de pension ont une responsabilité importante dans la crise actuelle: la gestion privée de l'épargne collective par des opérateurs financiers visant la rentabilité à court terme a entraîné la multiplication de technique d'effet levier de l'endettement dans les investissements réalisés par les investisseurs institutionnels, dont les fonds de pension; ils ont en effet usé de l'endettement pour maximiser la rémunération de leurs capitaux propres, favorisant les phénomènes de bulles et l'explosion de la dette institutionnelle privée dont nous subissons actuellement les effets dévastateurs.

En conséquence, je souhaiterais poser la question suivante: pourquoi la Commission insiste-t-elle sur la nécessité de renforcer l'épargne retraite et la gestion privée de l'épargne sociale, alors que cette dernière n'est ni une réponse au vieillissement de la population, ni une mesure sociale puisqu'elle favorise les plus aisés, ni même une réponse à la déstabilisation actuelle de notre économie?

Réponse donnée par M. Andor au nom de la Commission
(6 septembre 2012)

Le livre blanc ([1]) n'encourage nullement les dépenses fiscales *supplémentaires* d'incitation au développement de l'épargne-retraite complémentaire. Il y est indiqué qu'« [à] partir de 2012, la Commission s'engagera avec les États membres dans un processus d'identification des bonnes pratiques aux fins d'évaluer et d'optimiser l'efficacité et l'intérêt économique des mesures, fiscales ou autres, d'incitation à l'épargne-retraite privée, en prévoyant notamment de mieux orienter les incitations vers des personnes qui ne seraient sinon pas en mesure de se constituer une pension adéquate». La législation de l'UE laisse aux États membres une grande liberté dans la conception de leurs systèmes fiscaux ([2]). La Commission jouera toutefois son rôle en encourageant les États membres à tirer mutuellement parti des expériences et bonnes pratiques des uns et des autres.

Le livre blanc promeut la recherche d'un meilleur équilibre entre la durée de la vie professionnelle et celle de la retraite comme l'une des réponses essentielles au défi de la viabilité et de l'adéquation des systèmes de retraite face au vieillissement de la population. En effet, une longévité accrue ne peut pas être simplement synonyme de plus longues retraites.

([1]) Livre blanc COM(2012) 55 final du 16.2.2012 intitulé «Une stratégie pour des retraites adéquates, sûres et viables», disponible à l'adresse http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=752&langId=fr.

([2]) Dans l'exercice de leurs droits d'imposition, les États membres doivent respecter les obligations qui leur incombent en vertu des traités, et ne sont dès lors pas autorisés à pratiquer une discrimination sur la base de la nationalité ou à appliquer des restrictions injustifiées à la jouissance des libertés fondamentales des traités. Si ces dispositions sont respectées, les États membres conservent la liberté de concevoir leurs systèmes directs de fiscalité, y compris les incitations fiscales pour l'épargne retraite privée.

Afin de contribuer au maintien de l'adéquation des retraites alors que les régimes légaux de retraites par répartition tendent à subir une diminution de moyens, le livre blanc suggère aussi aux États membres d'offrir à leurs citoyens de meilleures opportunités de souscrire à des retraites complémentaires sûres, utiles et au coût raisonnable.

Concernant le rôle tenu par les fonds de pension dans la crise, les fonds de pension professionnels sont habituellement des investisseurs à long terme qui utilisent d'autant moins l'effet de levier (consistant à emprunter pour investir) que la directive sur les institutions de retraite professionnelle ([3]) l'interdit. Pour plus d'informations sur la crise économique et les retraites, nous vous invitons à vous reporter à notre communiqué de presse de mars 2009 ([4]).

([3]) Directive 2003/41/CE du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 3 juin 2003 concernant les activités et la surveillance des institutions de retraite professionnelle.

([4]) «La crise économique et les retraites dans l'UE». MEMO/09/99 du 6 mars 2009 disponible à l'adresse: http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/09/99&format=HTML&aged=1&language=FR&guiLanguage=en.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-007376/12
to the Commission
Karima Delli (Verts/ALE)
(23 July 2012)

Subject: Commission support for the development of funded pension schemes, in particular through tax expenditure

Judging from its recent White Paper on pensions, the Commission apparently wishes to provide still more support for the development of retirement savings, for instance by offering appropriate tax incentives.

It has been established by the received economic wisdom and, for that matter, in the international press (for example *The Economist* in its April 2011 special report) that funded pension schemes are not an answer to population ageing, for it is always the case that young working people, through their earnings, pay the pensions of those who have retired, be it by means of direct contributions or by means of deductions from loan repayments or dividends. The only thing that changes is the transmission channel, but it is invariably the young who pay for the old, and transmission costs are, moreover, higher under funded schemes.

Secondly, tax expenditure runs counter to redistribution, since it brings new benefits for those most comfortably off, the people who can afford to save for something other than their home, their car, or their children's education and who pay high taxes. Is it right, in these days of budget cuts, to incur further public spending in order to bolster up additional protection for the wealthiest 20% of our fellow citizens?

Finally, pension funds bear much of the blame for the present crisis: private management of collective savings by financial operators out for short-term profit has led to a proliferation of leveraging in investment by institutional investors, pension funds included; they have borrowed in order to maximise the yield on their own capital, producing bubbles and an explosion in private institutional debt, whose devastating effects we are having to endure now.

Why is the Commission stressing the need to strengthen retirement savings and private management of social savings when the latter is neither an answer to population ageing, nor a social measure — given that it favours the most comfortably off — nor even a solution to the current destabilisation of our economy?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(6 September 2012)

The White Paper ([1]) does not promote *additional* spending on tax incentives for supplementary pension saving. It says 'The Commission will, as from 2012, cooperate with Member States following a best practices approach to assess and optimise the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of tax and other incentives for private pension saving, including better targeting of incentives on individuals who would otherwise not build up adequate pensions.' Under EC law, Member States have broad freedom to design their tax systems ([2]) but the Commission will play its role in encouraging Member States to learn from each other and best practice.

The White Paper promotes a better balance between time spent in work and time spent in retirement as a key response to the challenge to the adequacy and sustainability of pension systems brought by ageing populations. This recognises that rising longevity cannot just mean longer retirements.

In order to help support pension adequacy in the context of the typically declining generosity of statutory pay-as-you-go pensions, the White Paper on pensions also suggests Member States should provide enhanced opportunities for citizens to save in good value, safe and efficient supplementary pensions.

On the role of pension funds in the crisis, occupational pension funds are typically long term investors and they do not engage in leveraging (borrowing to invest), not least as the IORP Directive ([3]) outlaws this. More information on the economic crisis and pensions was in our March 2009 Memo ([4]).

([1]) White Paper 'An Agenda for Adequate, Safe and Sustainable Pensions', Brussels, 16.2.2012, COM(2012) 55 final available at: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=752&langId=en.

([2]) In the exercise of their taxation rights, Member States must respect their obligations under the Treaties and are therefore not allowed to discriminate on the basis of nationality or to apply unjustified restrictions to the exercise of the fundamental Treaty freedoms. Within these parameters, Member States remain free to design their direct tax systems including the tax incentives for private pensions savings.

([3]) Directive 2003/41/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 3 June 2003 on the activities and supervision of institutions for occupational retirement provision.

([4]) 'The economic crisis and pensions in the EU'. MEMO/09/99 Brussels, 6 March 2009 available at: http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/09/99&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007377/12
a la Comisión
Ana Miranda (Verts/ALE)
(23 de julio de 2012)

Asunto: Multa por plantación de viñedos no autorizados

La Comisión Europea anunció a finales de junio de 2012 una multa de 131,3 millones de euros al Estado español por la plantación no autorizada de viñedos. A propósito de este proceso sancionador, ¿podría la Comisión Europea informar sobre los siguientes detalles?

1. ¿En qué Comunidades autónomas del Estado español se han detectado viñedos no autorizados y cuántas hectáreas?

2. ¿En qué periodo de tiempo se ha llevado a cabo la infracción sancionada?

3. ¿Qué plazo tienen las autoridades españolas para recurrir la decisión comunitaria?

4. ¿Cómo se distribuiría la sanción, entre Ministerios del Estado o entre Comunidades autónomas?

Respuesta del Sr. Cioloş en nombre de la Comisión
(17 de septiembre de 2012)

La Comisión señala que, en el asunto que nos ocupa, no estamos ante una multa ni un procedimiento disciplinario. En virtud de la gestión compartida, los Estados miembros son responsables de garantizar que los pagos agrícolas se realizan y ejecutan correctamente a fin de prevenir y perseguir las irregularidades y recuperar los importes abonados indebidamente. La Comisión somete a auditorías a los Estados miembros dentro del régimen de liquidación de cuentas, que está pensado para excluir los gastos no pagados de conformidad con las normas sobre la financiación de la UE.

1. Se han detectado viñedos no autorizados con una superficie total de 32 825,23 hectáreas en las comunidades autónomas y provincias siguientes: Castilla-La Mancha, Extremadura, Murcia, Aragón, Cataluña, Castilla y León, Valencia, La Rioja, Madrid, Navarra y Alicante.

2. Los datos se refieren a la situación de los viñedos no autorizados a 1 de septiembre de 1998, según se constató durante las auditorías realizadas en 2002, 2008 y 2011.

3. Una vez concluido el procedimiento de liquidación de conformidad, cualquier corrección financiera resultante se incluye en una decisión oficial adoptada por la Comisión. Los Estados miembros pueden impugnar tal decisión ante el Tribunal General en Luxemburgo en el plazo de dos meses. La decisión correspondiente (2012/336/UE) se publicó el 22 de junio de 2012.

4. La Comisión reclama las correcciones financieras de los Estados miembros. La reclamación a entidades descentralizadas o a los beneficiarios finales, de acuerdo con el principio de gestión compartida, compete exclusivamente a los Estados miembros.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007377/12
to the Commission
Ana Miranda (Verts/ALE)
(23 July 2012)

Subject: Fine for planting unauthorised vineyards

In late June 2012 the Commission announced that Spain would be fined EUR 131.3 million for the unauthorised planting of vineyards. With reference to this disciplinary procedure:

1. In which of Spain's autonomous communities have unauthorised vineyards been identified, and how many hectares are involved?

2. During which time period did the offence concerned occur?

3. What is the deadline for the Spanish authorities to appeal against the EU's decision?

4. Would the fine be divided between national ministries or autonomous communities?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(17 September 2012)

The Commission would like to point out that in this case there is no question of a fine or disciplinary procedure. Under shared management Member States are responsible for ensuring that agricultural payments are carried out and executed correctly, to prevent and deal with irregularities and to recover amounts unduly paid. The Commission audits the Member States in the context of the clearance of accounts system, which is designed to exclude expenditure not paid in conformity with EU rules from EU financing.

1. Irregular vineyards totalling 32 825.23 ha were identified in the following autonomous regions:

Castilla La Mancha, Extremadura, Murcia, Aragón, Cataluña, Castilla y León, Valencia, La Rioja, Madrid, Navarra and Alicante.

2. The facts relate to the situation of illegal vineyards per 1 September 1998 as established during audits in 2002, 2008 and 2011.

3. Once the conformity clearance procedure has been completed, any resulting financial correction is included in a formal decision adopted by the Commission. Such a conformity decision can be challenged by the Member States before the General Court in Luxembourg within two months. The decision concerned (2012/336/EU) was published on 22 June 2012.

4. The Commission recovers financial corrections from the Member States. Recovery from decentralised entities or final beneficiaries, according to the principle of shared management, is the sole responsibility of the Member States.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007378/12
to the Commission
Arlene McCarthy (S&D)
(23 July 2012)

Subject: Syria

Following the rejection in the UN Security Council of a peace plan for Syria on 2 May, some Member States, including the UK, France, Spain, Italy and Germany, have expelled Syrian diplomats. On Thursday 19 July, Russia and China vetoed a UN resolution to coordinate and implement sanctions against Syria.

1. In the absence of coordinated international sanctions, what action is the Commission taking in order to encourage third countries which are still importing Syrian oil to implement similar sanctions against the Assad regime and intensify humanitarian efforts?

2. What action is the Commission taking in order to put pressure on China and Russia to take a tougher line on the situation in Syria, including the implementation of sanctions, which could bring about an end to the bloodshed?

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

The EU has, to date, adopted 17 rounds of sanctions, targeting the regime not the population. Sanctions include an arms embargo as well a ban on the export of software, telecommunications and IT equipment that may be used for repression by the regime. On 23 July 2012, EU Foreign Ministers approved measures to further strengthen the enforcement of the EU arms embargo.

The EU encourages all partners to impose and implement restrictive measures on Syria. It is an active participant in the Friends of Syria Groups' Working Group on Sanctions, which aims to harmonise national and regional sanctions regimes by imposing, at a minimum, an asset freeze on senior Syrian regime officials as well as an asset freeze on and restriction of transactions with the Central Bank of Syria and the Commercial Bank of Syria to ensure their isolation from the international financial system. The Working Group also calls upon all states to adopt an embargo on Syrian petroleum products and a ban on the provision of insurance and reinsurance for shipments of Syrian petroleum products.

The EU continues to engage with international partners and calls for a united response to the Syrian crisis by the international community. In its Foreign Affairs Council conclusions of 23 July 2012, the EU expressed regret that the UNSC has not thus far been able to agree to a UNSC resolution, which would have endorsed the measures agreed in the Action Group meeting on 30 June in Geneva together with Russia and China. We welcome the continued efforts by the UNSC to come to an agreement to increase pressure on the Syrian regime to work towards a peaceful political resolution of the crisis.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007379/12
to the Commission
Arlene McCarthy (S&D)
(23 July 2012)

Subject: Working conditions of former and current foreign-language lecturers and 'CELs' in Italy

On 8 December 2011, the Commission responded to several parliamentary questions tabled by MEPs regarding the working conditions of former and current foreign-language lecturers (*lettori*) and 'CELs' (*collaboratori e esperti linguistici*) in Italy.

I understand that Commission staff have been in contact with the Italian authorities in order to clarify the interpretation and practical consequences of the Gelmini reform.

1. It has recently been reported, however, that a new category of foreign-language lecturer has started appearing in Italian universities — a 'language facilitator'. Is the Commission aware of this recent development, and has it raised the matter with the Italian authorities?

2. Could the Commission also please provide an update on its contact with the Italian authorities on this issue, and outline the resulting action taken to ensure the fair and equal treatment of foreign-language lecturers in Italy?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(11 September 2012)

The issue of working conditions of former and current foreign language lecturers (lettori) and 'collaboratori e esperti linguistici' (CELs) in Italy is being followed up closely by the Commission services. The Commission is, however, not aware of the details concerning the new category of foreign language lecturers, the so-called 'language facilitators'.

In relation to the inquiries made by the Commission regarding the Italian law No 240 of 30 December 2010 (the so-called 'Gelmini reform'), the Italian authorities replied on the 29 May 2012.

In the light of the comments received from the Italian Government, the Commission is currently in the process of evaluating the situation of foreign lecturers in Italy in order to establish if the new law as such and/or the administrative practice are violating EC law. Further inquiries might be needed including for 'language facilitators'.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007380/12
to the Commission
Arlene McCarthy (S&D)
(23 July 2012)

Subject: Destruction of Palestinian olive trees by Israeli occupation forces

In April 2012 it was reported that Israeli occupation forces had demanded that Palestinian farmers in Deir Istiya, Salfit, destroy around 14 000 olive trees. According to the same reports, the farmers were threatened with large fines and even imprisonment if they failed to comply.

I understand that similar orders have been given in the past.

Is the Commission aware of such events occurring in the West Bank, and were they considered during drafting of the upcoming EU-Israel Conformity Assessment and Acceptance of Industrial Products (CAA)?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(5 September 2012)

The EU Representation in East Jerusalem is closely following the developments on the ground and has reported about the threat to the livelihoods of Palestinian farmers in the village of Deir Istiya referred to in the written question. The EU is concerned about the impact of the continuing occupation and settlement construction on the Palestinian population in the West Bank, in particular in the Area C and East Jerusalem. These issues are being raised with the representatives of the Government of Israel in bilateral contacts in different levels by the EU and individual Member States.

The EU-Israel Agreement on Conformity Assessment and Acceptance of industrial products (ACAA) in the sector of pharmaceuticals was signed in May 2010, and was included as an objective in the 2005 ENP Action Plan with Israel. The EU during the EU-Israel Association Council on 24 July reconfirmed its position as set out in 2009 to fully implement the existing Action Plan but not to go further until 'the conditions for proceeding towards an upgrade of bilateral relations are met'. According to the EU statement to the Association Council, the 'upgrade must be based on the shared values of both parties, (…) respect for human rights (…) and international humanitarian law (…) in the context of (…) the resolution of the Israel-Palestinian conflict through the implementation of the two-state solution.'

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007381/12
to the Commission
Sir Graham Watson (ALDE)
(23 July 2012)

Subject: Nicosia and the selection of the European Capital of Culture for 2017

Nicosia, along with its partner municipalities of Larnaca, Aglantzia, Ayios Dometios, Engomi, Strovolos, Latsia, Lakatamia and Dali (Idalion), has progressed to the final selection round in its bid to become the European Capital of Culture for 2017.

Nonetheless, the bid excludes the Turkish part of this divided city. Does the Commission consider such a bid, which ignores the opportunities for collaboration, reconciliation and engagement, to be appropriate?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(26 September 2012)

According to the Decision No 1622/2006/EC ([1]) establishing the title of European Capitals of Culture, cities are designated as European Capitals of Culture through a competitive, two-stage process organised by the managing authority in the Member States.

A panel of independent cultural experts comprised of six national experts appointed by the Member States alongside seven European experts appointed by the Council, the Parliament, the Commission and the Committee of the Regions has the task of assessing the bids of the competing cities on the basis of clear rules and criteria and making a recommendation to the Member State organising the competition.

As far as Cyprus is concerned, the panel recommended that Nicosia and Paphos be pre-selected for the 2017 title. According to the usual practice, the panel then visited the two pre-selected cities before issuing its recommendation — in favour of Paphos — on 14 September 2012.

The Commission refers the Honourable Member to the panel's pre-selection report, which refers to the situation of the Turkish-Cypriot community in the Nicosia bid ([2]).

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:304:0001:0006:EN:PDF.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc/ecoc/cyprus2017-panelsreport.pdf

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-007382/12
aan de Commissie
Sophia in 't Veld (ALDE)
(23 juli 2012)

Betreft: EU-norm voor toekomstige PNR-overeenkomsten met derde landen

De EU heeft met derde landen overeenkomsten gesloten om het doorgeven te vergemakkelijken van PNR-gegevens, met verschillende garantieniveaus voor de EU-burgers. In de PNR-overeenkomst met de VS is voorzien in een aanzienlijk lager beschermingsniveau voor de EU-burgers dan in de PNR-overeenkomst met Australië.

Andere derde landen, bijvoorbeeld Japan, Zuid-Korea en Qatar, plannen nu ook met de verzameling van PNR-gegevens te beginnen, zodat de EU verplicht is met deze landen onderhandelingen te starten, om de grondrechten en de belangen van de EU-burgers met betrekking tot het gebruik van PNR-gegevens te vrijwaren. Qatar heeft aangekondigd al in augustus 2012 met de verzameling van PNR-gegevens te zullen beginnen.

1. Wanneer zal de Commissie onderhandelingen met Japan, Zuid-Korea en Qatar starten, gelet op de intentie van deze landen om de PNR-gegevens van EU-burgers te verzamelen?

2. Welke andere derde landen hebben aangekondigd voornemens te zijn de PNR-gegevens van EU-burgers te verzamelen? Welk tijdpad willen zij hierbij volgen?

3. Welke specifieke waarborgen en normen om de grondrechten en de belangen van de EU-burgers te vrijwaren wil de Commissie in elke nieuwe PNR-overeenkomst met een derde land opgenomen zien?

4. Acht de Commissie het mogelijk dat de PNR-overeenkomst tussen de EU en Australië of de PNR-overeenkomst tussen de EU en de VS als startpunt dient voor toekomstige onderhandelingen over de uitwisseling van PNR-gegevens met derde landen?

Antwoord van mevrouw Malmström namens de Commissie
(24 september 2012)

De Commissie voert PNR-onderhandelingen met Canada. Deze onderhandelingen zijn nog gaande en de Commissie heeft nog niet bepaald of en zo ja wanneer, zij onderhandelingen met andere landen zal beginnen.

Alleen de derde landen die door het geachte Parlementslid worden genoemd, hebben de Commissie laten weten voornemens te zijn PNR-gegevens te verzamelen.

De Commissie heeft in haar PNR-mededeling ([1]) van 2010 uiteengezet welke waarborgen en normen in een PNR-overeenkomst moeten worden opgenomen. De onderhandelingsrichtsnoeren van de Raad voor de herziening van de PNR-overeenkomst met Canada van 2006, die met de VS van 2007 en die met Australië van 2008 zijn gebaseerd op die mededeling en dienen als uitgangspunt voor de onderhandelingen. Tegelijkertijd hebben de Commissie, het Parlement en de Raad in 2011 bij het begin van de onderhandelingen met Australië, Canada en de Verenigde Staten erkend dat elke overeenkomst moet worden bezien in het licht van de veiligheidsbehoeften van het betrokken land. Niettemin doet de Commissie alles wat redelijkerwijze mogelijk is om voor zoveel mogelijk consistentie tussen de verschillende overeenkomsten te zorgen.

De Commissie heeft zich verbonden tot een effectief, hoog niveau van bescherming van persoonsgegevens, en onder meer te verzekeren dat elke doorgifte van PNR-gegevens aan derde landen veilig en in overeenstemming met de bestaande wettelijke voorschriften van de EU verloopt en dat passagiers hun rechten met betrekking tot de verwerking van hun gegevens kunnen afdwingen.

([1]) COM(2010) 492 definitief.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007382/12
to the Commission
Sophia in 't Veld (ALDE)
(23 July 2012)

Subject: EU standard for future Passenger Name Record agreements with third countries

The EU has concluded agreements with third countries to facilitate the transfer of Passenger Name Record (PNR) data which contain different levels of safeguards for EU citizens. The PNR agreement with the US provides a considerably lower level of protection for EU citizens than the PNR agreement with Australia.

Other third countries such as Japan, South Korea and Qatar are now also planning to start collecting PNR data, which forces the EU to start negotiations with those countries in order to safeguard the fundamental rights and interests of EU citizens with regard to the use of PNR data. Qatar has announced that it will start collecting PNR data as early as August 2012.

1. When will the Commission start negotiations with Japan, with South Korea and with Qatar with regard to their intention to collect the PNR data of EU citizens?

2. Which other third countries have announced that they intend to collect the PNR data of EU citizens? In what time frame are they planning to start collecting PNR data?

3. Which specific safeguards and standards designed to protect the fundamental rights and interests of EU citizens does the Commission wish to be covered by any new PNR agreement with a third country?

4. Does the Commission consider it possible that either the EU-Australia PNR Agreement or the EU-US PNR Agreement will function as the starting point for future negotiations on the exchange of PNR data with third countries?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(24 September 2012)

The Commission is conducting PNR negotiations with Canada. Pending those negotiations, the Commission has not taken any position on whether or when to open negotiations with other countries.

Only those third countries mentioned by the Honourable Member have informed the Commission of their intention to collect PNR data.

The safeguards and standards the Commission wishes to be covered by any PNR agreement with third countries have been outlined in its 2010 PNR Communication ([1]). The Council negotiation directives for the renegotiation of the 2006 Canadian PNR agreement, the 2007 US PNR agreement and the 2008 Australian PNR agreement are based on this communication and have formed the starting point for these negotiations. At the same time, the Commission, as well as the Parliament and the Council have acknowledged in 2011 at the start of the renegotiations with Australia, Canada and the United States that each agreement has to be assessed in the light of the security needs of the country concerned. Whilst recognising this, the Commission makes every reasonable effort to ensure as much consistency between the various agreements as possible.

The Commission is committed to ensure a high level and effective protection of personal data, including that any transmission of PNR data to third countries is done in a secure manner in line with existing EU legal requirements and that passengers are able to enforce their rights in relation to the processing of their data.

([1]) COM(2010) 492 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007383/12
to the Commission
Struan Stevenson (ECR)
(23 July 2012)

Subject: Illegal use of dog fur in products bought online

Since the comprehensive ban on the cruel trade in cat and dog fur and products containing them entered into force on 1 January 2009, the Commission has successfully promoted various initiatives, such as microscopy and polymerase chain reaction, with a view to detecting fur products and preventing the trade continuing illegally.

Nevertheless, prominent animal welfare societies, such as the Humane Society, have recently warned that products containing dog fur are now frequently being advertised and sold in the US through online websites which are able to circumvent the enforcement initiatives.

What steps is the Commission taking to prevent the spread of cat and dog fur in Member States as a result of online advertising and trade?

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

The Commission is aware that the illegal online trade might circumvent Regulation (EC) No 1523/2007 ([1]), banning the placing on the market, import to and export from the Union of cat and dog fur, and products containing such fur. However, the enforcement of the regulation remains mainly under the responsibility of the Member States.

Based on the provisions of Regulation (EC) No 1523/2007, the Commission is collecting and analysing information on how Member States prevent commercial illegal imports and illegal exports, including orders by mail and through Internet. On the basis of this information, the Commission will report to the European Parliament and the Council on the application of the regulation. The information currently available confirms that the majority of Member States have implemented official checks on imports for placing these products on the EU market. Checks are also being performed on orders by mail and through the Internet.

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 1523/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2007 banning the placing on the market and the import to, or export from, the Community of cat and dog fur, and products containing such fur.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007384/12
to the Commission
Struan Stevenson (ECR)
(23 July 2012)

Subject: Social dimension of the Rogun Dam

Although construction commenced in 1976, the Rogun Dam in Tajikistan has still not been completed. The dam would easily provide more than enough electricity to ensure Tajikistan's energy security for future decades, allowing the country to focus on entrenching democracy and improving human rights. It would also allow Tajikistan to export electricity to neighbouring states, thus providing a vital source of income.

The World Bank has halted the construction of any new facilities until a comprehensive evaluation of the project can be made. However, it has repeatedly stalled the reporting process and delayed publishing its final assessment, which has had significant socioeconomic consequences for the people of Tajikistan.

More than 9 000 skilled workers were once employed on the project, but more than 5 000 of them have now been paid off on account of the World Bank's suspension of the project. This has the potential to create serious social strife in a country which has only recently emerged from a bloody civil war. Furthermore, there is a risk that these skilled workers will migrate to other countries and areas in search of work, meaning that if the Rogun project is eventually approved, vast numbers of employees will have to undergo costly training and retraining in order to complete the project.

1. As a source of carbon-free electricity which would provide power for an underdeveloped region, does the Commission support the construction of the Rogun Dam?

2. Is it aware of the serious socioeconomic problems caused by the delayed World Bank assessment?

3. Is it taking any steps to ensure that the situation is resolved as quickly and effectively as possible?

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

1. The EU supports the development of sustainable energy, but any major infrastructure project should be based on a sound feasibility and assessment study. Therefore, the EU cannot give its evaluation as long as the World Bank contractors have not concluded their work and presented the results.

2. The EU has never received any official information on the number of people working at the Rogun site, which makes it difficult to analyse the impact of any changes taking place. Any socioeconomic impact should be analysed within a wider scope, including the relocation of thousands of families due to the construction works and the general unemployment and labour migration situation.

3. The EU hopes that the World Bank contractors will be able to carry out their work in order to present their results within due time. Although the EU is not involved as an active partner to these feasibility studies, it is assisting Tajikistan in developing its energy and water sector (nexus approach) by working on the governance level. An effective and sustainable energy policy should not only look at the generation of energy, but also at its distribution and consumption.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007385/12
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(23. Juli 2012)

Betrifft: Virtuelle Bildung

Im Schuljahr 2010-2011 wurde im Vergleich zum Vorjahr ein erheblicher Anstieg der Zahl von Schülern von Grund- und Sekundarschulen verzeichnet, die für Online-Kurse eingeschrieben waren. Virtuelle Bildung ist eine aufregende neue Möglichkeit, eine große Vielfalt von Schulkindern zu erreichen, auch solche mit Behinderungen, solche, die in abgelegenen Regionen leben, zu Hause unterrichtet werden, fortgeschrittene Kurse belegen möchten oder möglicherweise besser in ihrem eigenen Rhythmus arbeiten.

1. Wie kann nach Ansicht der Kommission virtuelles Lernen die Bildung in Zukunft voranbringen und Lernvorgänge auf bisher unbekannte Weise fördern?

2. Wie kann die Kommission das virtuelle Lernen unterstützen?

3. Existieren Daten über die Effektivität von Online-Bildung?

4. Wie kann die Kommission zur Modernisierung von Bildung und Ausbildung — einschließlich Lehrpläne, Bewertung von Lernergebnissen und Berufsausbildung von Lehrern und Ausbildern — durch nationale Maßnahmen beitragen?

5. In welchen Mitgliedstaaten hält die Kommission die Einführung von Informationstechnologie als Pflichtfach für schwierig?

Antwort von Frau Vassiliou im Namen der Kommission
(4. September 2012)

Die Kommission ist sich der positiven Auswirkungen vollkommen bewusst, die „virtuelle Bildung“ (oder „frei verfügbare Lehr- und Lernmaterialien“ nach der Unesco-Definition) auf das Lernen und auf die Systeme der allgemeinen und beruflichen Bildung haben kann. Solche freien Bildungsressourcen können von ihren Nutzern jederzeit und überall auf flexible, individuelle und kreative Art verwendet werden. Es gibt bereits mehrere Studien, die sich mit der allgemeinen Verwendung von IKT in der Bildung und deren Auswirkungen auf den Lernerfolg der Lernenden befassen, doch es fehlt auch nicht an interessanten Erkenntnissen zur Nutzung freier Bildungsressourcen im Rahmen von Fernstudien, wo sie besonders in Entwicklungsländern den Zugang zu Bildungsangeboten erleichtern ([1]).

Das Eurydice-Netz ([2]) hat festgestellt, dass in fast allen EU-Ländern der Einsatz von IKT im Grundschul- und allgemeinbildenden Sekundarunterricht als eigenes Schulfach, als Instrument im Rahmen anderer Schulfächer oder für beides offiziell empfohlen wird. Obgleich der Einsatz von IKT in der Bildung auf der politischen Agenda ganz oben steht, werden Initiativen zur Förderung freier Bildungsressourcen im Allgemeinen eher selten ergriffen und sind oft finanziell nicht tragfähig. Die Möglichkeiten, die sie (für die Chancengerechtigkeit und die Qualität der Systeme der allgemeinen und beruflichen Bildung) bieten, werden bislang noch nicht in vollem Umfang genutzt.

Deshalb plant die Kommission bis Mitte 2013 eine EU-Initiative zum Thema *„Öffnung der Bildungssysteme: ein Vorschlag zur Nutzung des Beitrags, den IKT und freie Bildungsressourcen zur Bildung und zur Qualifizierung leisten können“*. Damit will sie eine kohärente und umfassende EU-Strategie für offene Bildungsressourcen auf den Weg bringen und Hindernisse abbauen, die der vollständigen Entwicklung und Nutzung dieser Ressourcen noch entgegenstehen. Ziel der Initiative sind u. a. Maßnahmen für einen transparenteren Zugang zu den offenen Bildungsressourcen, Schaffung eines einschlägigen Rechtsrahmens, uneingeschränkter Einsatz der entsprechenden Finanzinstrumente zur Schaffung von Infrastrukturen, die den erweiterten Zugang zu digitalen Ressourcen ermöglichen, sowie die Ausarbeitung europaweiter Qualitätsstandards zur Erleichterung eines problemlosen und transparenten Zugangs zu diesen Ressourcen.

([1]) Siehe beispielsweise Pennels, J. (2005) Literacy, distance learning and ICT. Hintergrundpapier für den EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006, Literacy for Life, abrufbar unter: http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001461/146100e.pdf.

([2]) EACEA- Eurydice (2011) Key Data on Learning and Innovation through ICT at School in Europe 2011. Brüssel, Exekutivagentur Bildung, Audiovisuelles und Kultur.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007385/12
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(23 July 2012)

Subject: Virtual education

During the 2010-2011 school year, there was a significant increase in the number of primary and secondary students enrolled in online classes compared with the previous year. Virtual education is an exhilarating new way to reach a wide variety of schoolchildren, including those with disabilities, those who live in remote areas, those who are homeschooled, those wishing to take advanced college courses and those who may work better at their own pace.

1. In the Commission's view, how can virtual learning propel education into the future and promote learning in ways that we have never seen before?

2. How can the Commission support virtual learning?

3. Is there any data on the effectiveness of online education?

4. How can the Commission contribute to the modernisation of education and training — including curricula, assessment of learning outcomes and the professional development of teachers and trainers — through national policies?

5. In which Member States does the Commission believe it is difficult to establish information technology as a compulsory subject?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(4 September 2012)

The Commission fully appreciates the positive impact that 'virtual education' (or, as defined by Unesco, 'open educational resources' — OER) can have on learning and on education and training systems. OER allow users to learn at any time, wherever they are and in a flexible, individualised and creative way. Several studies look into the general use of ICT in education and its impact on students' attainment, but there is also interesting evidence on the use of OER in distance learning as a facilitator of access, especially in developing countries ([1]).

According to Eurydice ([2]), in almost all EU countries the use of ICT is officially recommended in primary and general secondary education as a separate subject, as a tool for other subjects, or both. Although the use of ICT in education is high on the policy agenda, initiatives to promote OER are generally isolated and often financially unsustainable. The potential impacts of OER (on equity and on quality on education and training) are not fully exploited yet.

For these reasons, the EC will launch an EU Initiative on '*Opening up Education: a proposal to exploit the potential contribution of ICT and Open Educational Resources to education and skills development*' by mid-2013. The goal is to establish a coherent and holistic EU policy on OER, in order to address existing obstacles for their full development and exploitation. The initiative will foresee, among others, actions to promote more transparent access to OER, establishing a legal framework for OER, making full use of financial instruments to create enabling infrastructures for widening access to digital resources or developing European quality standards to facilitate an easy and transparent access to OER.

([1]) See for instance: Pennels, J. (2005) Literacy, distance learning and ICT. Paper commissioned for the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006, Literacy for Life. In: http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001461/146100e.pdf

([2]) EACEA — Eurydice (2011) Key Data on Learning and Innovation through ICT at School in Europe 2011. Brussels, Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007386/12
προς το Συμβούλιο
Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE)
(23 Ιουλίου 2012)

Θέμα: Οικονομική κατάσταση της Παλαιστινιακής Αρχής και χρηματοδοτική βοήθεια της ΕΕ

Για να εξασφαλίσει τη δημιουργία ενός μελλοντικού, ανεξάρτητου και βιώσιμου παλαιστινιακού κράτους, η ΕΕ έχει που παρέχει χρηματοδοτική βοήθεια στους Παλαιστίνιους από το 1971, με αποτέλεσμα να καταστεί με τα χρόνια ο μεγαλύτερος δωρητής του παλαιστινιακού λαού. Από το 2000 έως το 2011, η ΕΕ δέσμευσε περίπου 4 δισ. ευρώ για βοήθεια μέσω ποικίλων γεωγραφικών και θεματικών μέσων. Το σημερινό πρόγραμμα συνεργασίας PEGASE, το οποίο ξεκίνησε το 2008, στηρίζει τόσο τις τρέχουσες δαπάνες της Παλαιστινιακής Αρχής όσο και αναπτυξιακά έργα στους τέσσερις τομείς του προγράμματος μεταρρύθμισης και ανάπτυξης της Παλαιστίνης (διακυβέρνηση, κοινωνική ανάπτυξη, ανάπτυξη της οικονομίας και του ιδιωτικού τομέα και δημόσιες υποδομές).

Διεθνείς συνεισφορές καλύπτουν τώρα περισσότερο από το ήμισυ του ετήσιου προϋπολογισμού της Παλαιστινιακής Αρχής. Παρά ταύτα, οι προκλήσεις από την παγκόσμια οικονομία κατά τα παρελθόντα έτη έχουν επηρεάσει σημαντικά του πόρους των χωρών εταίρων. Η Παλαιστινιακή Αρχή βιώνει σήμερα μια σοβαρή οικονομική κρίση με αποτέλεσμα η κυβέρνηση να μην μπορεί να πληρώσει μισθούς και λογαριασμούς πράγμα που θέτει σε σοβαρό κίνδυνο τις προσπάθειές της να οικοδομήσει τους κυβερνητικούς οργανισμούς που απαιτούνται για ένα δημοκρατικό, ανεξάρτητο και βιώσιμο παλαιστινιακό κράτος. Το Διεθνές Νομισματικό Ταμείο (ΔΝΤ) και η Διεθνής Τράπεζα εξέδωσαν αναφορές το Μάρτιο 2012 σχετικά με την παλαιστινιακή οικονομία, εξετάζοντας τις μελλοντικές προκλήσεις και εκτιμώντας το έλλειμμα του προϋπολογισμού του 2012 σε 1,1 δισ. ευρώ ([1]). Αναφέρθηκε ότι το Ισραήλ ζήτησε μια ενδιάμεση πίστωση του ΔΝΤ ύψους 1 δισ. ευρώ για την Παλαιστινιακή Αρχή η οποία τελικά απορρίφθηκε επειδή το ΔΝΤ φοβήθηκε ότι θα αυτό θα δημιουργούσε προηγούμενο για διάθεση κεφαλαίων σε μη κρατικές οντότητες.

Θα μπορούσε το Συμβούλιο να αναφέρει τί πρωτοβουλίες θα αναλάβει για να αντιμετωπίσει την τρέχουσα ευαίσθητη οικονομική κατάσταση της Παλαιστινιακής Αρχής, η οποία απειλεί να θέσει σε κίνδυνο την ειρηνευτική διαδικασία στην περιοχή και τους στόχους που ορίζονται στην Ευρωπαϊκή Πολιτική Γειτονίας, και συγκεκριμένα τον στόχο της ενίσχυσης της ευημερίας, σταθερότητας και ασφάλειας της ΕΕ και των γειτόνων της;

Απάντηση
(8 Οκτωβρίου 2012)

1. Στα συμπεράσματά του της 14ης Μαΐου 2012 για την ειρηνευτική διαδικασία στη Μέση Ανατολή, το Συμβούλιο υπενθύμισε ότι η ΕΕ είναι ο μεγαλύτερος χορηγός βοήθειας στην Παλαιστινιακή Αρχή.

2. Το μεγαλύτερο μέρος του προϋπολογισμού της Παλαιστινιακής Αρχής καλύπτεται από ίδια τελωνειακά και φορολογικά έσοδα. Για τον λόγο αυτό, το Συμβούλιο ζήτησε την άμεση εφαρμογή των μέτρων που συζητούνται σήμερα από τα ενδιαφερόμενα μέρη για τη βελτίωση του μηχανισμού συλλογής και μεταφοράς των ως άνω εσόδων, ο οποίος πρέπει να χαρακτηρίζεται από διαφάνεια και προβλεψιμότητα. Το Συμβούλιο υπογράμμισε επίσης ότι η μεταφορά των εσόδων από το Ισραήλ αποτελεί υποχρέωση σύμφωνα με το Πρωτόκολλο των Παρισίων ([2]).

3. Το Συμβούλιο κάλεσε επίσης την Παλαιστινιακή Αρχή να συνεχίσει τις μεταρρυθμίσεις και ζήτησε από τους άλλους χορηγούς βοήθειας, ιδίως εκείνους της περιοχής, να αυξήσουν την οικονομική στήριξη που παρέχουν στην Παλαιστινιακή Αρχή.

([1]) http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWESTBANKGAZA/Resources/WorldBankAHLCreportMarch2012.pdf, http://www.imf.org/external/country/WBG/RR/2012/032112.pdf

([2]) Πρωτόκολλο για τις οικονομικές σχέσεις μεταξύ της κυβέρνησης του Κράτους του Ισραήλ και της Οργάνωσης για την Απελευθέρωση της Παλαιστίνης (PLO), ως εκπροσώπου του παλαιστινιακού λαού, Παρίσι, 29 Απριλίου 1994.

4. Εξάλλου, στις 25 Ιουνίου 2012, το Συμβούλιο επιβεβαίωσε τη στρατηγική σημασία της ευρωπαϊκής γειτονίας. Υπενθύμισε επίσης την ισχυρή δέσμευση της ΕΕ και των κρατών μελών να στηρίξουν τις απτές προσπάθειες κυβερνήσεων που προβαίνουν πραγματικά σε πολιτικές και οικονομικές μεταρρυθμίσεις, καθώς επίσης και τις κοινωνίες των πολιτών, όπως αναφέρεται στα συμπεράσματα του Συμβουλίου της 20ής Ιουνίου 2011 σχετικά με την ευρωπαϊκή πολιτική γειτονίας (ΕΠΓ). Το Συμβούλιο συμφώνησε επίσης ότι πρέπει να δοθεί μεγαλύτερη στήριξη στους εταίρους που εργάζονται για την οικοδόμηση ισχυρής και βιώσιμης δημοκρατίας, να στηριχθεί η άνευ αποκλεισμών οικονομική ανάπτυξη και να ενισχυθεί τόσο η ανατολική όσο και η νότια διάσταση της ΕΠΓ, ιδίως στους τομείς της δημοκρατίας, των ανθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων και του κράτους δικαίου. Τόνισε ότι η στενότερη πολιτική συνεργασία, η ενισχυμένη οικονομική ολοκλήρωση και η αυξημένη στήριξη της ΕΕ θα εξαρτηθούν από την πρόοδο των μεταρρυθμίσεων, θα είναι προσαρμοσμένες στις ανάγκες των εταίρων που είναι πρόθυμοι να προβούν σε μεταρρυθμίσεις και να συνεργαστούν αποτελεσματικά με την ΕΕ σε όλους τους σχετικούς τομείς, και μπορεί να επανεξεταστούν σε περίπτωση μη υλοποίησης των μεταρρυθμίσεων. Οι αρχές αυτές θα εφαρμοστούν ομοίως σε όλους τους εταίρους της ΕΠΓ.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007386/12
to the Council
Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE)
(23 July 2012)

Subject: Financial situation of the Palestinian Authority and EU financial assistance

In order to secure the creation of a future democratic, independent and viable Palestinian state, the EU has been providing financial assistance to the Palestinians since 1971, becoming over the years the largest donor to the Palestinian people. From 2000 to the end of 2011, the EU committed nearly EUR 4 billion in assistance through various geographical and thematic instruments. The current cooperation programme PEGASE, launched in 2008, supports both recurrent costs of the Palestinian Authority and development projects in the four sectors of the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan (governance, social development, economic and private sector development, and public infrastructure).

International contributions now cover more than half of the Palestinian Authority's annual budget. However, the challenges faced by the global economy in the past year have significantly affected partner countries' resources. The Palestinian Authority is currently suffering a serious financial crisis, leaving the government unable to pay wages and bills and thus seriously jeopardising its efforts to build the governmental institutions needed for a democratic, independent and viable Palestinian state. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank released reports in March 2012 on the Palestinian economy, looking at the challenges ahead and evaluating the 2012 budget deficit at nearly EUR 1.1 billion ([1]). It has been reported that Israel sought a EUR 1 billion IMF bridging loan for the Palestinian Authority which was eventually refused, the IMF fearing that this would set a precedent of making funds available to non-state entities.

In its priorities the Council has expressed its intention to emphasise the southern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy, which is considered to be a vital tool of the EU, aiming at the revitalisation of its cooperation with the countries of the Mediterranean.

Can the Council state what initiatives will be taken to address the Palestinian Authority's current sensitive financial situation, which is threatening to jeopardise the peace process in the region and the objectives set by the European Neighbourhood Policy, in particular that of enhancing the prosperity, stability and security of the EU and its neighbours?

Reply
(8 October 2012)

1. In its conclusions of 14 May 2012 on the Middle East Peace Process the Council recalled that the EU was the largest donor to the Palestinian Authority.

2. The majority of the Palestinian Authority's (PA) budget is met by its own customs and tax revenues and the Council therefore urged for swift implementation of improvements, currently under discussion between the parties, to the mechanism by which these are collected and transferred, which should be transparent and predictable. The Council also underlined that these transfers by Israel are an obligation under the Paris Protocol ([2]).

3. The Council also called on the PA to continue pursuing reforms and on other donors, especially donors in the region, to increase their financial support to the Palestinian Authority.

([1]) http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWESTBANKGAZA/Resources/WorldBankAHLCreportMarch2012.pdf, http://www.imf.org/external/country/WBG/RR/2012/032112.pdf

([2]) Protocol on Economic Relations between the Government of the State of Israel and the PLO, representing the Palestinian people, Paris, 29 April 1994.

4. Furthermore, on 25 June 2012, the Council reaffirmed the strategic importance of the European Neighbourhood. It also recalled the strong commitment of the EU and Member States to accompany and support concrete efforts by the governments genuinely engaged in political and economic reforms, as well as the civil societies, as stated in the Council conclusions on the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) of 20 June 2011. The Council then agreed on the need to provide greater support to partners engaged in building deep and sustainable democracy, to support inclusive economic development and to strengthen both the Eastern and the Southern dimensions of the ENP, in particular in the areas of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. It underlined that stronger political cooperation, closer economic integration and increased EU support, will depend on progress towards reform. They will be tailored to the needs of partners willing to undertake reforms and to cooperate effectively with the EU in all relevant domains, and may be reconsidered where reform does not take place. These principles would equally apply to all ENP partners.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007387/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE)
(23 Ιουλίου 2012)

Θέμα: Οικονομική κατάσταση της Παλαιστινιακής Αρχής και χρηματοδοτική βοήθεια της ΕΕ

Για να εξασφαλίσει τη δημιουργία ενός μελλοντικού, ανεξάρτητου και βιώσιμου παλαιστινιακού κράτους, η ΕΕ έχει που παρέχει χρηματοδοτική βοήθεια στους Παλαιστίνιους από το 1971, με αποτέλεσμα να καταστεί με τα χρόνια ο μεγαλύτερος δωρητής του παλαιστινιακού λαού. Από το 2000 έως το 2011, η ΕΕ δέσμευσε περίπου 4 δισ. ευρώ για βοήθεια μέσω ποικίλων γεωγραφικών και θεματικών μέσων. Το σημερινό πρόγραμμα συνεργασίας PEGASE, το οποίο ξεκίνησε το 2008, στηρίζει τόσο τις τρέχουσες δαπάνες της Παλαιστινιακής Αρχής όσο και αναπτυξιακά έργα στους τέσσερις τομείς του προγράμματος μεταρρύθμισης και ανάπτυξης της Παλαιστίνης (διακυβέρνηση, κοινωνική ανάπτυξη, ανάπτυξη της οικονομίας και του ιδιωτικού τομέα και δημόσιες υποδομές).

Διεθνείς συνεισφορές καλύπτουν τώρα περισσότερο από το ήμισυ του ετήσιου προϋπολογισμού της Παλαιστινιακής Αρχής. Παρά ταύτα, οι προκλήσεις από την παγκόσμια οικονομία κατά τα παρελθόντα έτη έχουν επηρεάσει σημαντικά του πόρους των χωρών εταίρων. Η Παλαιστινιακή Αρχή βιώνει σήμερα μια σοβαρή οικονομική κρίση με αποτέλεσμα η κυβέρνηση να μην μπορεί να πληρώσει μισθούς και λογαριασμούς πράγμα που θέτει σε σοβαρό κίνδυνο τις προσπάθειές της να οικοδομήσει τους κυβερνητικούς οργανισμούς που απαιτούνται για ένα δημοκρατικό, ανεξάρτητο και βιώσιμο παλαιστινιακό κράτος. Το Διεθνές Νομισματικό Ταμείο (ΔΝΤ) και η Διεθνής Τράπεζα εξέδωσαν αναφορές το Μάρτιο 2012 σχετικά με την παλαιστινιακή οικονομία, εξετάζοντας τις μελλοντικές προκλήσεις και εκτιμώντας το έλλειμμα του προϋπολογισμού του 2012 σε 1,1 δισ. ευρώ ([1]). Αναφέρθηκε ότι το Ισραήλ ζήτησε μια ενδιάμεση πίστωση του ΔΝΤ ύψους 1 δισ. ευρώ για την Παλαιστινιακή Αρχή η οποία τελικά απορρίφθηκε επειδή το ΔΝΤ φοβήθηκε ότι θα αυτό θα δημιουργούσε προηγούμενο για διάθεση κεφαλαίων σε μη κρατικές οντότητες.

Θα μπορούσε η Επιτροπή να αναφέρει τι μέτρα έχουν ληφθεί από την ΕΕ για την αποτελεσματική αντιμετώπιση της κρίσης που αντιμετωπίζει η Παλαιστινιακή Αρχή, πράγμα που θα μπορούσε να θέσει σε κίνδυνο την επιτυχή οικονομική, κοινωνική και πολιτική της ανάπτυξη καθώς και τον στόχο για ειρήνη και ευημερία στην περιοχή;

Θα μπορούσε η Επιτροπή να αναφέρει ποια είναι η θέση της ως προς την προσπάθεια του Ισραήλ να τύχει ενδιάμεσης πίστωσης εξ ονόματος της Παλαιστινιακής Αρχής;

Απάντηση του κ. Füle εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(11 Σεπτεμβρίου 2012)

Η ΕΕ παραμένει ο μεγαλύτερος δωρητής της Παλαιστινιακής Αρχής (ΠΑ). Το 2012, η ΕΕ διατήρησε το ίδιο επίπεδο χρηματοδότησης από το ΕΝΡΙ ([2]) προς τον παλαιστινιακό λαό (συμπεριλαμβανομένου του UNRWA ([3])) με αυτό του 2011. Επιπλέον, παρέχεται σημαντική χρηματοδότηση και από άλλα χρηματοδοτικά μέσα της ΕΕ καθώς και από τα κράτη μέλη.

Τον Μάρτιο του 2012, η Ύπατη Εκπρόσωπος/Αντιπρόεδρος φιλοξένησε για δεύτερη φορά στις Βρυξέλλες τη σύσκεψη της AHLC ([4]) που πραγματοποιείται ανά εξάμηνο, με σκοπό να επιστήσει την προσοχή στην οικονομική κρίση της ΠΑ και να συμβάλει στην αναζήτηση λύσεων. Στην πραγματικότητα, το μεγαλύτερο μέρος του προϋπολογισμού της ΠΑ καλύπτεται από τα δικά της τελωνειακά και φορολογικά έσοδα. Ωστόσο, χρειάζονται περισσότερες συνεισφορές με τη μορφή άμεσης οικονομικής βοήθειας, προκειμένου να καλυφθεί το τρέχον έλλειμμα του προϋπολογισμού της ΠΑ.

Τον Μάιο του 2012, το Συμβούλιο Εξωτερικών Υποθέσεων ζήτησε από άλλους δωρητές να αυξήσουν τη στήριξή τους. Το Συμβούλιο εξέφρασε επίσης σοβαρές ανησυχίες για τον κίνδυνο να υπονομευθούν τα σημαντικότερα επιτεύγματα της ΠΑ όσον αφορά την οικοδόμηση του κράτους, εάν οι τρέχουσες οικονομικές δυσκολίες δεν αντιμετωπιστούν από μια κοινή προσπάθεια της ΠΑ, του Ισραήλ και των δωρητών. Για να υπάρξει βιώσιμη οικονομική ανάπτυξη και να τερματιστεί η οικονομική κρίση θα απαιτηθεί μεγαλύτερη ανάπτυξη του δυναμικού του παλαιστινιακού ιδιωτικού τομέα.

([1]) http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWESTBANKGAZA/Resources/WorldBankAHLCreportMarch2012.pdf, http://www.imf.org/external/country/WBG/RR/2012/032112.pdf
([2]) Ευρωπαϊκό Μέσο Γειτονίας και Εταιρικής Σχέσης.
([3]) Γραφείο αρωγής και έργων την ΗΕ για τους παλαιστίνιους πρόσφυγες στην Εγγύς Ανατολή.
([4]) Ad Hoc Επιτροπή Σύνδεσης.

Η ΕΕ γνωρίζει ότι μέχρι τώρα δεν έχει υποβληθεί επίσημη αίτηση από το Ισραήλ προς το ΔΝΤ σχετικά με τη χορήγηση δανείου εξ ονόματος της ΠΑ. Εάν υποβληθεί παρόμοιο αίτημα, το ΔΝΤ προτίθεται να το εξετάσει. Ένα πρόσφατο παράδειγμα μιας θετικής εξέλιξης ήταν η συμφωνία της 31ης Ιουλίου 2012 μεταξύ του Ισραήλ και της ΠΑ για τη βελτίωση της ρύθμισης του διμερούς εμπορίου και της φορολογίας, τη σύναψη της οποίας ζήτησε και το Συμβούλιο Εξωτερικών Υποθέσεων του Μαΐου 2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007387/12
to the Commission
Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE)
(23 July 2012)

Subject: Financial situation of the Palestinian Authority and EU financial assistance

In order to secure the creation of a future democratic, independent and viable Palestinian state, the EU has been providing financial assistance to the Palestinians since 1971, becoming over the years the largest donor to the Palestinian people. From 2000 to the end of 2011, the EU committed nearly EUR 4 billion in assistance through various geographical and thematic instruments. The current cooperation programme PEGASE, launched in 2008, supports both recurrent costs of the Palestinian Authority and development projects in the four sectors of the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan (governance, social development, economic and private sector development, and public infrastructure).

International contributions now cover more than half of the Palestinian Authority's annual budget. However, the challenges faced by the global economy in the past year have significantly affected partner countries' resources. The Palestinian Authority is currently suffering a serious financial crisis, leaving the government unable to pay wages and bills and thus seriously jeopardising its efforts to build the governmental institutions needed for a democratic, independent and viable Palestinian state. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank released reports in March 2012 on the Palestinian economy, looking at the challenges ahead and evaluating the 2012 budget deficit at nearly EUR 1.1 billion ([1]). It has been reported that Israel sought a EUR 1 billion IMF bridging loan for the Palestinian Authority which was eventually refused, the IMF fearing that this would set a precedent of making funds available to non-state entities.

Can the Commission indicate what measures have been taken by the EU with a view to effectively tackling the crisis faced by the Palestinian Authority, which may potentially jeopardise its successful economic, social and political development and the objective of peace and prosperity in the region?

Can the Commission indicate her position on Israel's attempt to obtain a bridging loan on behalf of the Palestinian Authority?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(11 September 2012)

The EU remains the largest donor to the Palestinian Authority (PA). The EU has, in 2012, maintained the same level of funding from the ENPI ([2]) to the Palestinian people (including to UNRWA ([3])) as in 2011 at EUR 300 million. In addition to this, substantial funding is also provided from the EU's other financing instruments as well as from Member States.

In March 2012, the HR/VP hosted the bi-annual meeting of the AHLC ([4]) for the second time in Brussels with the aim of drawing attention to and contributing to solutions to the PA's financial crisis. In fact the majority of the PA's budget is met by its own tax and customs revenues. Nevertheless, more contributions are needed in the form of direct financial assistance in order to cover the current deficit in the PA's budget.

The May 2012 Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) called on other donors to increase their support. The Council also expressed grave concern about the risk of jeopardising the major achievements of the PA in state-building if the current financial difficulties are not addressed by a common effort of the PA, Israel and donors. Sustainable economic growth and an end to the fiscal crisis will require greater realisation of the Palestinian private sector's potential.

The EU is informed that so far no official request has been made by Israel to the IMF regarding a loan on behalf of the PA. Were such a request to be made, it would be considered by the IMF. A recent example of a positive development was the agreement of 31 July 2012 between Israel and the PA on improving the regulation of bilateral trade and taxation, the conclusion of which had also been urged at the May 2012 FAC.

([1]) http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWESTBANKGAZA/Resources/WorldBankAHLCreportMarch2012.pdf, http://www.imf.org/external/country/WBG/RR/2012/032112.pdf
([2]) European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument.
([3]) United Nations Relief and Works Agency.
([4]) Ad Hoc Liaison Committee.

(българска версия)

Въпрос с искане за писмен отговор E-007388/12
до Комисията
Владко Тодоров Панайотов (ALDE)
(23 юли 2012 г.)

Относно: Управление на ядрените отпадъци

Основна загриженост във връзка с процеса на производство на ядрена енергия — наред с опасността от земетресения, терористични атаки и т.н. — е управлението на ядрените отпадъци в края на жизнения цикъл.

Обмисляла ли е Комисията идеята за създаване на агенция за ядрени отпадъци, която да управлява радиоактивните отпадъци в целия ЕС на места, избрани от ЕС, и използвайки стандарти и технологии, насърчавани и контролирани от ЕС?

Редица агенции на ЕС бяха създадени с цел управление на различни сектори на политиката. Създаването на подобна агенция, която да отговаря за управлението на ядрените отпадъци, би могло да представлява осъществимо решение на едно от основните опасения на ЕС във връзка с използването на ядрената енергия и на ядрените отпадъци. То би дало възможност за използване на най-добрите налични технологии в съответствие със стандартите на ЕС и под контрола на ЕС и би повишило приемливостта на производството на ядрена енергия за обществото, тъй като понастоящем гражданското общество няма доверие в методите, използвани за транспорт и управление на радиоактивните отпадъци.

Отговор, даден от г-н Йотингер от името на Комисията
(6 септември 2012 г.)

Управлението на отработеното гориво и на радиоактивните отпадъци е национална отговорност съгласно законодателството на Европейския съюз (ЕС), по-специално Директива 2011/70/Евратом на Съвета за създаване на рамка на Общността за отговорно и безопасно управление на отработено гориво и радиоактивни отпадъци ([1]). За тази цел държавите членки са длъжни да създадат, поддържат и прилагат национална политика, рамка и програма за управление на отработено гориво и радиоактивни отпадъци от генерирането до погребването им.

Предвид на горепосоченото Комисията не е обсъждала идея за създаване на агенция за ядрени отпадъци. Все пак тя е в тясно сътрудничество с държавите членки във връзка с улесняването на прилагането на Директива 2011/70/Евратом посредством различни инициативи на равнището на ЕС като Европейска група за ядрена безопасност и управление на отпадъците (ENSREG), Европейски форум за ядрена енергия (ENEF) и Технологична платформа за прилагане на геоложко погребване на радиоактивни отпадъци (IGD-TP).

По отношение на IGD-TP по-специално, Комисията би желала да насочи вниманието на уважаемия член на Парламента към своя отговор на писмено зададен въпрос E-1410/12 от г-н Martin ([2]).

([1]) OB L 199, 2.8.2011 г.
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007388/12
to the Commission
Vladko Todorov Panayotov (ALDE)
(23 July 2012)

Subject: Nuclear waste management

A key concern surrounding nuclear energy production processes is the management of nuclear waste at the end of the life-cycle, together with the risk of earthquakes, terrorist threats etc.

Has the Commission considered the idea of establishing a nuclear waste agency that will manage radioactive waste across the European Union in EU-selected sites and using standards and technologies promoted and supervised by the EU?

A number of EU agencies have been created to manage various policy sectors. The establishment of a similar agency to deal with nuclear waste management could represent a feasible solution to one of the key EU concerns related to nuclear energy use and nuclear waste. It would make possible the use of the best available technologies in accordance with EU standards and under EU supervision, and could raise the level of social acceptance of nuclear energy production, civil society currently having no trust in the methods used for radioactive waste transportation and management.

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(6 September 2012)

The management of spent fuel and radioactive waste is a national responsibility according to European Union (EU) legislation, in particular Council Directive 2011/70/Euratom establishing a Community framework for the responsible and safe management of spent fuel and radioactive waste ([1]). To that end, Member States are obliged to establish, maintain and implement a national policy, framework and programme for the management of spent fuel and radioactive waste from generation to disposal.

In view of the above, the Commission has not considered establishing a nuclear waste agency. However, it cooperates closely with Member States in facilitating the implementation of Council Directive 2011/70/Euratom through different initiatives at EU level, such as the European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group (ENSREG), the European Nuclear Energy Forum (ENEF) and the Technology Platform for Implementing Geological Disposal of Radioactive Waste (IGD-TP).

With regard to the IGD-TP, in particular, the Commission would like to refer the Honourable Member to its reply to Written Question E-1410/12 by Mr Martin ([2]).

([1]) OJ L 199, 2.8.2011.
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007389/12
to the Commission
Paul Murphy (GUE/NGL)
(23 July 2012)

Subject: Contract agents in the representations

Can the Commission explain why those who work in the Commission representations as Function Group II contract agents are paid less than those who do the same work for the Commission as contract agents in Brussels?

Does the Commission consider this to be in contravention of the principle of equal pay for equal work, given that both groups of contract agents will have the same level of qualifications and be doing the same work?

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(17 September 2012)

The contracts offered to contract agents (CA) in Commission Representations are governed by Article 3a (d) ('contract staff') of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union (CEOS) and can lead to contracts of indefinite duration and reclassification to a higher grade under specific conditions, whereas the contracts offered to Function group II contract agents in Brussels are concluded under Article 3b ('contract staff for auxiliary tasks') CEOS and are limited to a maximum of three years with a fixed grading for the entire period.

The rules for grading of CA — as specified in Article 3 of Annex IV of the Commission's General provisions for implementing Article 79(2) CEOS — take these differences into account and explain that in some instances the entry grade may be set at a lower level for CA 3a than CA 3b.

Also, differences in total pay (i.e. basic salary plus allowances) may be due to differences in individual family situation (in relation to allowances provided for in Annex VII of the Staff Regulations), seniority (step), nationality and cost of living at the place of employment.

In particular, the expatriation allowance is not granted if a CA is working in his country of origin (which is often the case in Representations). Moreover, if the person works in an EU country other than Belgium or Luxembourg, a correcting coefficient is applied to the pay. This coefficient aims at offsetting the higher or lower cost of living compared with Brussels according to the principle of equivalence of purchasing power between staff working in different places as enshrined in the Staff Regulations. This also explains why staff members working in Member States with lower costs of living receive a pay that is lower in nominal terms.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007391/12
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Mario Mauro (PPE)
(23 luglio 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — emergenza nelle carceri libiche

Dopo la cacciata di Gheddafi, la Libia sta attraversando un difficile periodo di transizione. Lo Stato di diritto è ancora molto debole e le forze ufficiali fanno fatica a imporsi sulle numerose milizie che ancora agiscono al di sopra della legge e rifiutano di deporre le armi. La situazione è particolarmente difficile all'interno delle carceri libiche. È di pochi giorni fa la notizia di gravi soprusi da parte della polizia nei confronti di un gruppo di circa 350 persone rinchiuso nella struttura di Sibrata Mentega Delila (nei pressi di Tripoli). Un ragazzo è stato raggiunto da un colpo di pistola all'addome e un altro è stato picchiato sul volto con una mazza di ferro solo per aver chiesto acqua e cibo.

Questo perché i carcerieri stanno imponendo, già da qualche giorno, il mese di digiuno previsto dal Ramadan (che si concluderà il 20 agosto) a tutti i prigionieri indistintamente, anche ai non musulmani. Chi si ribella viene brutalmente picchiato. Tra questo gruppo di persone ci sono diverse donne in stato di gravidanza e alcuni bambini che, oltre ad avere un estremo bisogno di nutrirsi, necessitano di adeguate cure mediche.

Questo tipo di trattamento è inaccettabile perché, oltre a violare la libertà religiosa, calpesta i diritti fondamentali dell'essere umano.

Può il Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante far sapere:

1. Se è a conoscenza dei fatti di sistematica violazione dei diritti umani suesposti?

2. Quali provvedimenti e azioni possono essere intraprese per garantire un adeguato trattamento per queste persone che, oltre a dover vivere la difficile situazione della prigionia, si vedono privati anche di acqua e cibo?

3. Cosa pensa di fare per favorire il processo di ricostruzione dello Stato di diritto in Libia?

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

L'AR/VP nutre preoccupazioni in merito alle segnalazioni di violazioni dei diritti umani in Libia, in particolar modo per quanto concerne il maltrattamento dei detenuti. Già lo scorso 31 gennaio l'AR/VP aveva chiesto di rispettare appieno i diritti dei detenuti in Libia ed aveva altresì invitato le autorità ad accelerare il trasferimento sotto il loro controllo di tutti i luoghi detentivi e ad indagare sulle presunte violazioni dei diritti dei detenuti. Il governo libico ha risposto positivamente a tali inviti e ha dichiarato che avrebbe trasferito alle autorità il controllo delle strutture detentive. A tutt'oggi il processo non è ancora ultimato, ma l'UE ne segue da vicino gli sviluppi e solleva regolarmente la questione con le autorità.

L'Unione ha fornito aiuti di emergenza alle popolazioni bisognose di protezione in seguito al conflitto. Attualmente, offre sostegno alle vittime di torture e di traumi violenti in Libia e promuove, attraverso lo strumento europeo per la democrazia e i diritti umani (1,5 milioni di euro), l'istituzione di un quadro giuridico e politico nazionale per contrastare la tortura e altre forme di maltrattamento. È inoltre in preparazione una proposta per fornire, nell'ambito dello strumento per la stabilità, un contributo destinato allo sviluppo di sistemi di protezione efficaci per i gruppi vulnerabili in tutto il paese (4 milioni di euro).

Per quanto riguarda la riforma generale intesa a rafforzare il rispetto dello stato di diritto, l'UE è disposta a sostenere la riforma del settore della sicurezza e, una volta che il nuovo governo sarà formato in seguito alle elezioni per il Congresso nazionale generale, a riprendere il dialogo con le autorità libiche per garantire la piena titolarità del paese. Un programma destinato a tale ambito, con una dotazione di 10 milioni di euro, è in corso di elaborazione nel quadro del piano di azione annuale per il 2012 dello strumento europeo di vicinato e partenariato.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007391/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Mario Mauro (PPE)
(23 July 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — emergency in Libyan prisons

Since the overthrow of Gaddafi, Libya has been going through a difficult period of transition. The rule of law is still very weak and official forces are struggling to take command of the numerous militias that still operate above the law and refuse to lay down their weapons. The situation is particularly difficult within Libyan prisons. Just a few days ago news emerged of serious abuses by police against a group of around 350 people being held in custody in the Sibrata Mentega Delila prison (near Tripoli). One boy was shot in the abdomen and another was beaten in the face with an iron bar simply for asking for water and food.

This is because the jailers have, for a few days now, been imposing the month of fasting required by Ramadan (ending on 20 August) on all prisoners without distinction, even on non-Muslims. Those who rebel are brutally beaten. This group includes several pregnant women and some children who, in addition to having a great need to eat, also need suitable medical care.

This type of treatment is unacceptable because, in addition to violating religious freedom, it tramples on basic human rights.

Can the Vice-President/High Representative answer the following questions:

1. Is she aware of the abovementioned systematic breaches of human rights?

2. What measures and action can be taken to ensure appropriate treatment for these people who, as well as having to experience the plight of captivity, are now even being deprived of food and water?

3. What does she intend to do to promote the process of rebuilding the rule of law in Libya?

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

The HR/VP is concerned about reports of human rights violations in Libya, in particular the ill-treatment of detainees. Already on 31 January 2012 the HR/VP called for full respect of the rights of detainees in Libya, for the authorities to accelerate the process of bringing all places of detention under their control and to investigate allegations of violations of detainees' rights. The Libyan government reacted positively and stated that it would transfer the control of detention facilities to the authorities. This process is not yet completed but the EU follows it closely and continues to raise these issues with the authorities.

The EU has provided emergency assistance to people in need of protection as a result of the conflict. The EU is currently supporting victims of torture and of violent trauma in Libya and is advocating for a national legal and policy framework that addresses torture and other forms of ill-treatment through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EUR 1.5 million). In addition, a proposal is currently prepared for a contribution under the Instrument for Stability to develop effective protection systems for vulnerable groups throughout the country (EUR 4 million).

As regards wider reform designed to strengthen respect for the rule of law, the EU is ready to engage in support to security sector reform and is keen to resume the dialogue with the Libyan authorities once a new government is in place following the elections for the General National Congress with a view to ensuring full country ownership. A programme addressing this sector is under preparation with a budget of EUR 10 million in the 2012 Annual Action Plan of the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-007392/12
do Komisji
Zbigniew Ziobro (EFD), Jacek Włosowicz (EFD) oraz Tadeusz Cymański (EFD)
(23 lipca 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Implikacje wprowadzenie niskiej ilości bezpłatnych pozwoleń emisyjnych na produkcję i rynek pracy w Polsce, przykład Zakładów Przemysłu Wapienniczego Trzuskawica

Od dłuższego czasu eksperci oceniają, iż wprowadzenie limitów emisji CO_2 stanowi realne zagrożenie dla utrzymania miejsc pracy w Polsce. Pojawiają się już pierwsze informacje mówiące o podniesieniu kosztów produkcji, co ma negatywne przełożenie na nastroje przedsiębiorców oraz politykę zatrudnienia. Szczególnie narażone są sektory wysokoemisyjne – energetyka, przemysł budowlany, chemiczny oraz stalowy.

Jak informują związkowcy z Zakładów Przemysłu Wapienniczego Trzuskawica (Świętokrzyskie) bez zwiększenia darmowych kwot emisji w latach 2013-2020 cementownie oraz zakłady kooperujące produkujące w Polsce będą musiały ograniczać produkcje oraz zatrudnienie.

Wobec tego pragniemy zapytać:

1. Czy Komisja zamierza zwiększyć ilość darmowych pozwoleń na emisje gazów cieplarnianych dla krajów Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej?

2. Czy Komisja ma wiedzę na temat tego jak ustalone, niskie limity bezpłatnej emisji CO_2 odbiją się na rynku pracy w Polsce?

3. Jak Komisja zamierza reagować na istniejące przesłanki wskazujące na zamiary przeniesienia części produkcji do krajów nieobjętych limitami emisji gazów cieplarnianych, np. Białorusi?

4. Jakie działania podejmuje Komisja, aby wspomóc zakłady produkujące cement oraz branżę budowlaną w kontekście potrzeby kupowania pozwoleń na emisję CO_2 oraz rosnącej konkurencji z Chin, gdzie producentów nie obowiązują restrykcje?

5. Jak zapowiadane zmniejszenie limitów emisji ma się do założeń polityki konkurencji mówiących o obniżce kosztów produkcji i zwiększeniu konkurencyjności Unii względem reszty świata? Czy obie strategie nie kolidują ze sobą?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarz Connie Hedegaard w imieniu Komisji
(6 września 2012 r.)

Chociaż nie przewiduje się dodatkowych rozdziałów uprawnień dla instalacji w żadnym państwie członkowskim UE, także w Europie Środkowej i Wschodniej, to w odniesieniu do najbliższego okresu rozliczeniowego EU ETS zmieniona dyrektywa w sprawie ETS przewiduje szereg ułatwień na lata 2013-2020. Jednym z nich zwiększenie bezpłatnego rozdziału uprawnień na poziomie 100 % stosownego wskaźnika emisyjności dla sektorów uznanych za narażone na ryzyko ucieczki emisji. Ponadto dyrektywa dopuszcza stosowanie mniej kosztownych międzynarodowych jednostek emisji do celów zapewnienia zgodności z przepisami. Komisja przyjęła również wytyczne w sprawie pomocy państwa ([1]), w których zezwala się na pomoc dla niektórych sektorów przemysłu w celu zrekompensowania podwyższonych kosztów energii elektrycznej spowodowanych ETS. I wreszcie, prowadzący instalacje objęte systemem ETS mogą wykorzystać nadwyżki uprawnień niewykorzystane w drugim okresie (2008-2012).

Komisja jest w pełni świadoma, że przejście na gospodarkę niskoemisyjną należy przeprowadzić w taki sposób, aby ograniczyć jego negatywne skutki dla konkurencyjności przemysłu wobec państw trzecich, takich jak Białoruś czy Chiny. Zdaniem Komisji wymienione wyżej środki skutecznie przyczyniają się do realizacji tego celu. Ponadto redystrybucja dochodów z licytacji, w tym na rzecz Polski, pozwala na zwiększenie jej uprawnień przeznaczonych do zlicytowania o 39 %. Znaczne dodatkowe dochody uzyskane dzięki temu wzrostowi można wykorzystać na wsparcie technologii niskoemisyjnych, a tym samym modernizację części przemysłu, co może pobudzić wzrost gospodarczy i zwiększyć konkurencyjność.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2012:158:0004:0022:PL:PDF.

W przyjętej przez Radę Europejską strategii „Europa 2020” na rzecz zatrudnienia i inteligentnego, trwałego wzrostu gospodarczego sprzyjającego włączeniu społecznemu zdecydowanie nie ma sprzeczności między polityką wspierania wzrostu gospodarczego a realizacją celów w zakresie klimatu i energii. Przeciwnie – te dwa dążenia wzajemnie się uzupełniają.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007392/12
to the Commission
Zbigniew Ziobro (EFD), Jacek Włosowicz (EFD) and Tadeusz Cymański (EFD)
(23 July 2012)

Subject: Implications for the labour market and production in Poland of introducing free emission permits in low numbers: example of the Trzuskawica limestone plant

Experts have long believed that the introduction of CO_2 emission limits represents a genuine threat to Polish jobs. Evidence is already beginning to mount up of increasing production costs, which have a negative impact on the outlook of entrepreneurs and on employment policy. The high-emission energy production sector and the construction, chemical and steel industries are particularly affected.

Trade union representatives from the Trzuskawica limestone plant have made it known that cement plants and associated production facilities in Poland will be forced to cut production and jobs unless the number of free emission quotas for 2013 to 2020 is increased.

In this connection:

1. Does the Commission intend to increase the number of free greenhouse gas emission permits for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe?

2. Is it aware of how the low limits set for free CO_2 emission permits will affect the Polish labour market?

3. How does it intend to respond to mounting evidence that plans are afoot to move a share of production to countries where emission limits on greenhouse gases are not imposed, e.g. Belarus?

4. What action is it taking to support cement plants and the construction industry in the context of the need to buy CO_2 emission permits and of growing competition from China, where producers are not subject to restrictions?

5. How does the announced reduction of emission limits relate to the assumptions ofcompetition policy that speak of reducing production costs and increasing competitiveness vis-à-vis the rest of the world? Are the two strategies not mutually exclusive?

Answer given by Ms Hedegaard on behalf of the Commission
(6 September 2012)

Whilst no extra allocation is foreseen for installations in any EU Member State, including Central and Eastern Europe, for the coming EU ETS trading phase, the revised ETS Directive provides for a number of facilitating measures for the period 2013-2020. Amongst them is enhanced free allocation of allowances at a level of 100% of the relevant benchmark for sectors deemed to be exposed to the risk of carbon leakage. Furthermore, the directive permits the use of lower cost international emission credits for compliance purposes. The Commission has also adopted State aid rules ([1]) authorising aid to certain industries to compensate for increased electricity costs due to the ETS. Finally, operators of ETS-installations can make use of surplus allowances from the second phase (2008-2012).

The Commission fully understands that the transition to a low carbon economy has to be managed so as to limit any negative effects on industrial competitiveness with regards to third countries such as Belarus or China and believes the above measures contribute effectively to this aim. Moreover, there is a redistribution of auctioning revenues including to Poland increasing its allowances to be auctioned by 39%. The substantial additional revenues deriving from that increase can be used to support CO_2 efficient technologies thereby modernising parts of the industry, which could stimulate growth and enhance competitiveness further.

The European 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, endorsed by the European Council, explicitly sees no contradiction between policies fostering economic growth and our 2020 climate and energy targets, but rather a mutual reinforcement.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2012:158:0004:0022:EN:PDF.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-007393/12
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(23 de julho de 2012)

Assunto: Situação ambiental da bacia hidrográfica do Tejo em resultado da política de transvases

Diversas organizações não-governamentais e grupos de cidadãos, de Portugal e de Espanha, têm vindo a manifestar a sua preocupação face à situação da bacia hidrográfica do Tejo. Em especial, têm vindo a ser referidos os efeitos nefastos dos transvases construídos no lado espanhol. Esta semana, o movimento português «Protejo» lançou mais um alerta, em face dos planos que estarão em curso para a construção de novos transvases entre o médio Tejo espanhol e as bacias do Guadiana e do Segura. Segundo este movimento, os projetos dos novos transvases vêm aumentar significativamente o risco de uma redução extrema de caudal, que tem vindo a acentuar-se nos últimos anos, e que acarretou já sérios prejuízos para muitos agricultores dependentes das águas do Tejo. Em diversas outras ocasiões, têm também vindo a ser referidos os problemas relacionados com uma progressiva salinização das águas do Tejo, em Portugal, em áreas onde a atividade agrícola tem hoje uma importância fulcral.

Estas preocupações somam-se às que também em Espanha diversas organizações e cidadãos têm vindo a manifestar. Recentemente, foi apresentada à Comissão de Petições do Parlamento Europeu uma exposição detalhada na qual se chama a atenção para a preocupante degradação do estado de conservação ambiental da bacia do Tejo, em resultado da política de transvases. Estes cidadãos alertam para a progressiva diminuição do caudal do rio e, bem assim, para os impactos negativos daí decorrentes, quer para diversos habitats protegidos pela legislação comunitária, quer para um conjunto de atividades económicas que se desenvolvem a jusante dos transvases.

Em face do exposto, solicito à Comissão que me informe sobre o seguinte:

1. Que acompanhamento tem vindo a fazer desta problemática?

2. Tem conhecimento de planos das autoridades espanholas para a construção de novos transvases no rio Tejo?

3. Tem conhecimento de violações da legislação existente, seja no domínio ambiental (relativa à conservação de espécies e habitats protegidos), seja no domínio da qualidade da água ou outros, em resultado da política de transvases no rio Tejo?

4. Que ações e medidas irá adotar em função das informações disponíveis e das preocupações supramencionadas?

Resposta dada por Janez Potočnik em nome da Comissão
(4 de setembro de 2012)

A Comissão não tem conhecimento da intenção do governo espanhol de construir um novo sistema de transvases no rio Tejo. As autoridades espanholas devem assegurar o cumprimento das obrigações constantes da Diretiva-Quadro Água ([1]).

Esta diretiva impõe aos Estados-Membros a elaboração de planos de gestão de bacia hidrográfica que incluam medidas tendentes a prevenir a deterioração e a conseguir um bom estado das águas. Por conseguinte, o caudal ecológico tem de ser suficiente para garantir tal objetivo. A diretiva obriga igualmente os Estados-Membros a coordenarem todos os programas de medidas incluídos nos planos de gestão para toda a região hidrográfica.

Com exceção da Catalunha, a Espanha ainda não comunicou à Comissão os seus planos de gestão de bacias hidrográficas. A Comissão instaurou, pois, um processo por infração contra este Estado-Membro ([2]), por não ter adotado e comunicado os seus planos de gestão. O processo foi remetido ao Tribunal de Justiça, aguardando-se um acórdão para breve. Em junho e julho de 2012, o Tribunal condenou a Grécia, Portugal e a Bélgica, que tampouco comunicaram os seus planos de gestão das bacias hidrográficas.

Logo que receba o plano de gestão da bacia hidrográfica do Tejo, a Comissão verificará se as obrigações da Diretiva-Quadro Água foram respeitadas.

([1]) Diretiva 2000/60/CE, JO L 327 de 22.12.2000.
([2]) Processo 2083/2010.

Além da Diretiva-Quadro Água, a Diretiva 2011/92/UE (conhecida como Diretiva Avaliação do Impacto Ambiental ou AIA) ([3]) aplica-se aos projetos públicos ou privados suscetíveis de ter efeitos significativos no ambiente e que requerem a realização de uma avaliação do impacto ambiental antes de ser concedida a autorização de execução. Os sistemas de transvases de água são abrangidos pela Diretiva AIA, que obriga a identificar impactos transfronteiriços potenciais e a realizar consultas com outros Estados-Membros que possam ser significativamente afetados.

([3]) JO L 26 de 28.1.2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007393/12
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(23 July 2012)

Subject: Environmental status of the Tagus basin resulting from the water transfer policy

Various non-governmental organisations and citizens' groups, in Portugal and Spain, have been expressing their disquiet about the state of the Tagus basin. One cause of particular concern has been the disastrous effects of water transfer systems in Spain. This week the Portuguese 'Protejo' movement has raised the alarm again, this time on account of the plans allegedly on foot to build new systems to transfer water between the Spanish middle reaches of the Tagus and the Guadiana and Segura basins. According to Protejo, the planned new transfer systems will greatly increase the risk of severely reducing the flow rate, a problem which has been worsening in recent years and has already caused serious harm to many farmers who rely on the waters of the Tagus. Another subject to have repeatedly been mentioned is the problems arising from the gradual salinification of the Tagus in parts of Portugal where farming is at present vitally important.

In addition to these anxieties, a number of organisations and citizens in Spain have likewise been speaking out. Parliament's Committee on Petitions recently received a detailed account drawing attention to the worrying deterioration in the conservation status of the Tagus basin caused by the water transfer policy. These citizens are warning of the river's ever decreasing flow rate and its adverse impact, be it on habitats protected under EU legislation or on the range of economic activities carried on downstream of the transfer systems.

1. How has the Commission been keeping these problems under review?

2. Does it know whether the Spanish authorities are planning to construct new water transfer systems on the Tagus?

3. Does it know whether the Tagus water transfer policy has led to infringements of existing legislation, whether relating to the environment (conservation of protected habitats and species) or to water quality or to any other subject?

4. What action and measures will be taken in the light of the information available and the concerns described above?

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

The Commission is not aware of the Spanish Government's intention to construct a new water transfer system on the Tagus River. The Spanish authorities should ensure that the obligations of the Water Framework Directive ([1]) (WFD) are complied with.

The directive requires all Member States to set up River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs), which include measures aimed at preventing water status deterioration and at achieving good status. Therefore, the ecological flow should be sufficient to ensure that this is achieved. The directive also obliges Member States to coordinate all programmes of measures included in the RBMPs for the whole of a River Basin District.

With the exception of Catalonia, Spain has not yet reported its River Basin Management Plans to the Commission. The Commission has therefore opened an infringement procedure against Spain ([2]) for failing to adopt and report its RBMPs. The Case has been referred to the Court of Justice, and a ruling is expected shortly. In June and July 2012, the Court ruled against Greece, Portugal and Belgium who have also not reported RBMPs.

Once the RBMP for Tagus is reported, the Commission will analyse whether the WFD requirements have been respected.

([1]) Directive 2000/60/EC, OJ L 327, 22.12.2000.
([2]) Case 2010/2083.

In addition to the requirements of the Water Framework Directive, Directive 2011/92/EU (known as the Environmental Impact Assessment or EIA Directive) ([3]), applies to public and private projects which are likely to have significant effects on the environment and which require an environmental impact assessment to be carried out before development consent is granted. Water transfer systems are covered by the EIA Directive. Potential transboundary impacts must be identified and consultations launched with other Member States that may be significantly affected.

([3]) OJ L 26, 28.1.2012.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-007394/12
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(23 de julho de 2012)

Assunto: Utilização do apoio à gestão dos recursos da pesca por Portugal

O Orçamento da UE inclui na sua secção II (Preservação e Gestão dos Recursos Naturais), na rubrica 11 07 01, uma verba destinada ao «Apoio à gestão dos recursos da pesca (recolha de dados de base)». As medidas financeiras comunitárias para a aplicação da rubrica 11 07 01 são definidas em regulamento próprio, que estabelece as «medidas financeiras comunitárias relativas à execução da política comum das pescas e ao Direito do Mar». Este regulamento prevê o cofinanciamento comunitário da recolha de dados de base aplicável à despesa efetuada pelos Estados-Membros para fins de recolha e gestão de dados de base relativos à pesca. Esses dados são recolhidos no âmbito dos programas nacionais.

Assim, solicito à Comissão que me disponibilize informação atualizada sobre o seguinte:

1. Qual a totalidade das verbas disponíveis para Portugal, para a recolha de dados de base, no âmbito do respetivo programa nacional (em cada um dos anos do atual Quadro Financeiro Plurianual)? Qual a totalidade destas verbas que foram efetivamente utilizadas por Portugal?

2. Qual a totalidade das verbas disponíveis para Portugal, para a recolha de dados suplementares, no âmbito de estudos e/ou projetos-piloto (em cada um dos anos do atual Quadro Financeiro Plurianual)? Qual a totalidade destas verbas que foram efetivamente utilizadas por Portugal?

3. Que outros financiamentos comunitários estão disponíveis para apoiar a aquisição de dados sobre a pesca em Portugal?

4. Que programas e medidas podem apoiar projetos de Organizações Não Governamentais da área do Ambiente neste domínio?

Resposta dada por Maria Damanaki em nome da Comissão
(28 de setembro de 2012)

O programa nacional português de recolha de dados relativos à pesca está a ser executado sem problemas de monta. Portugal participa ativamente na coordenação regional das atividades de pesca em que participa, designadamente no Atlântico Norte, no mar do Norte e Ártico Oriental e no mar Mediterrâneo, bem como nas regiões em que a pesca é exercida por navios da UE e gerida por organizações regionais de gestão das pescas de que a UE é parte contratante ou observadora.

Em 2009, 2010 e 2011, a contribuição máxima disponível da UE foi de 1 481 203 euros, 1 738 336 euros e 2 144 655 euros, respetivamente. Os pagamentos efetuados naqueles anos foram de 1 153 690 euros, 1 325 318 euros e 1 299 190 euros.

A previsão de financiamento máximo da UE para 2012 é de 1 960 087 euros.

Ainda no respeitante ao referido período, foi adjudicado a um contraente português um estudo sobre os pareceres no domínio da política da pesca, que diz respeito à redução das capturas acessórias de tubarões de profundidade nas pescarias portuguesas de peixe-espada-preto e cujo montante é de 49 998 euros.

Quanto às outras fontes de financiamento da UE, nomeadamente as ações estruturais, importa referir que o Fundo Europeu das Pescas não abrange o apoio à recolha de dados relativos à pesca.

A única possibilidade de participação de ONG no quadro de recolha de dados é proporcionada pelo capítulo relativo aos estudos, nomeadamente no contexto dos concursos para contratos de serviços.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007394/12
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(23 July 2012)

Subject: Portugal's use of support for the management of fishery resources

Falling under heading 2 of the EU financial framework ('Preservation and management of natural resources') is Article 11 07 01 of the budget, which is intended to finance 'Support for the management of fishery resources (collection of basic data)'. The Community financial measures giving effect to that article are laid down in a specific regulation establishing 'Community financial measures for the implementation of the common fisheries policy and in the area of the law of the sea', whereby, as far as basic data collection is concerned, a Community contribution is provided to finance the expenditure incurred by Member States in the collection and management of basic fisheries data. The data in question are collected under national programmes.

Can the Commission supply up-to-date information to answer the following questions:

1. What total funding has been made available to Portugal for basic data collection under its national programme (for each year covered by the current multi-annual financial framework)? How much of that funding in all has Portugal actually used?

2. What total funding has been made available to Portugal for additional data collection in connection with studies and/or pilot projects (for each year covered by the current multi-annual financial framework)? How much of that funding in all has Portugal actually used?

3. What other sources of EU funding can be used to support fisheries data collection in Portugal?

4. Under what programmes and measures could support be provided for projects in this area carried out by environmental NGOs?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(28 September 2012)

The Portuguese National programme for fisheries data collection is being implemented without major difficulties. Portugal is actively participating in the regional coordination for the fisheries it is involved in: the North Atlantic, the North Sea and Eastern Arctic, the Mediterranean Sea as well as regions where fisheries are operated by EU vessels and managed by Regional Fisheries Management Organisations to which the EU is contracting party or observer.

For the years 2009, 2010 and 2011, the maximum EU contribution available was EUR 1 481 203 , EUR 1 738 336 and EUR 2 144 655 respectively. For the same years, the actual payments were EUR 1 153 690, EUR 1 325 318 and EUR 1 299 190.

As regards 2012, the forecast is EUR 1 960 087 for EU maximum funding.

For the same period, one study relating to advice in the area of fisheries policy has a Portuguese contractor. It concerns a study on reduction of deep-sea sharks' by-catches in the Portuguese black scabbard fishery, amounting to EUR 49 998.

Regarding other sources of EU funding, namely structural actions, it should be noted that the European Fisheries Fund does not cover support to fisheries data collection.

The only possibility for the NGO's to participate in the Data Collection Framework is through the study chapter, namely by responding to call for tenders for service contracts.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-007395/12
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(23 de julho de 2012)

Assunto: Prática de «finning» em águas cabo-verdianas

Segundo uma notícia de 19 de maio deste ano, do jornal cabo-verdiano «A Semana», navios pesqueiros espanhóis terão sido surpreendidos em flagrante, durante o mês de abril, pelas autoridades nacionais cabo-verdianas, com toneladas de barbatanas de tubarão capturadas nas águas deste país. Ainda segundo o Jornal, a Comissão Europeia estará ao corrente deste e de outros casos e «ameaça sancionar Madrid».

Em face desta notícia, solicito à Comissão que me informe sobre o seguinte:

1. Confirma ter conhecimento do caso concreto acima relatado? Quais os seus contornos? Estamos perante um caso de prática de «finning»?

2. Que medidas tomou na sequência deste caso? Concretamente, quais as «sanções» a que alude a referida notícia?

3. Que outras evidências da prática de «finning» por parte de frotas dos Estados-Membros tem a Comissão? Que medidas concretas foram até à data tomadas, na sequência dos casos identificados?

Resposta dada por Maria Damanaki em nome da Comissão
(10 de outubro de 2012)

Segundo o que foi comunicado por Cabo Verde em abril de 2012, foram inspecionados na ZEE cabo-verdiana três navios da União Europeia. Um dos navios recebeu instruções para aportar, uma vez que tinha tubarões a bordo. Como não foram detetadas infrações, Cabo Verde decidiu não impor nenhuma sanção. Os outros dois navios foram sancionados, por não terem a bordo certificados de navegação válidos.

A Comissão não sabe se os tubarões encontrados a bordo dos navios tinham as barbatanas ou se estas tinham sido cortadas, mas os relatórios das inspeções efetuadas não referem nenhuma infração às regras da ICCAT, que proíbem a captura de tubarões para simples remoção das barbatanas.

Os Estados-Membros devem apresentar anualmente um relatório da aplicação do Regulamento (CE) n.° 1185/2003. Alguns destes relatórios contêm informações sobre infrações ao regulamento. A Comissão vai enviar ao Secretariado do Parlamento e diretamente ao Senhor Deputado um quadro recapitulativo do número de inspeções efetuadas (quando disponível) e do número e natureza das infrações detetadas. Em alguns casos, as autoridades competentes tomaram a iniciativa de facultar informações sobre as medidas tomadas para responder às violações.

É importante salientar que as regras do regulamento, nomeadamente a permissão de descarregar barbatanas e carcaças em portos diferentes e a utilização de uma correspondência teórica entre pesos, geram uma lacuna jurídica que pode dar azo à captura de tubarões para simples remoção das barbatanas. A Comissão propôs, portanto, eliminar esta lacuna por meio de uma política específica para as barbatanas de tubarão, que está a ser debatida no Parlamento Europeu e no Conselho ([1]).

([1]) Proposta de Regulamento do Parlamento Europeu e do Conselho que altera o Regulamento (CE) n.° 1185/2003 relativo à remoção das barbatanas de tubarões a bordo dos navios. COM(2011)0798 final — 2011/0364 (COD).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007395/12
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(23 July 2012)

Subject: Shark finning in Cape Verde waters

According to a report that appeared in the Cape Verde newspaper 'A Semana' on 19 May 2012, in April 2012 the Cape Verde national authorities caught Spanish fishing vessels with tonnes of shark fins that had been caught in that country's waters. The newspaper also reported that the Commission is aware of this and other cases and 'is threatening to sanction Madrid'.

1. Can the Commission confirm that it is aware of the specific case referred to above? What exactly did it involve? Was it a case of shark finning?

2. What steps has it taken in response to this case? More specifically, what are the 'sanctions' referred to in the above newspaper report?

3. What other evidence does the Commission have of shark finning by Member State fleets? What practical steps have been taken to date in response to the cases detected?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(10 October 2012)

According to reports sent by Cape Verde in April 2012, three EU vessels were inspected in their EEZ. One vessel was sent to port as it had sharks on board. Cape Verde decided not to impose sanctions as no infringement was found. The two other vessels were sanctioned for not having valid navigation certificates on board.

The Commission does not have information on whether the sharks on board the vessels had their fins attached or separated, but the inspection reports do not mention any infringement of the rules established by the ICCAT, which prohibit shark finning.

Member States must submit annual reports on the implementation of Regulation (EC) No 1185/2003. Some of these reports contain information on breaches of the regulation. The Commission is sending directly to the Honourable Member and to Parliament's Secretariat a table detailing the number of inspections carried out (where available) and the number and nature of infractions detected. In some cases the competent authorities have volunteered information on the action taken in response to the violations.

It is important to point out that the rules of the regulation, in particular the permission to land fins and carcasses in separate ports and the use of a theoretical weight ratio, create a loophole that makes shark finning possible. The Commission has therefore proposed to close this loophole via a fins attached policy, which is currently under discussion in the European Parliament and Council ([1]).

([1]) Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 1185/2003 on the removal of fins of sharks on board vessels. COM(2011) 0798 final — 2011/0364 (COD).

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-007396/12
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(23 de julho de 2012)

Assunto: Financiamento para a construção de um Porto de Pesca na Trafaria

Desde o encerramento da Doca de Pedrouços, na Margem Norte do Tejo, as 406 embarcações do Estuário do Tejo (360 da Margem Sul), os armadores e pescadores das duas margens do Estuário ficaram sem nenhum local alternativo apropriado para aportarem as suas embarcações, desembarcarem o pescado e guardarem os seus materiais de pesca e aprestos.

As traineiras que pescam hoje na entrada da Barra veem-se obrigadas a fazer mais quatro horas de percurso, indo a Setúbal ou a Sesimbra descarregar o pescado, com o consequente aumento do consumo de combustível.

Nos últimos meses, o Sindicato dos Trabalhadores da Pesca do Sul tem vindo a realizar contactos com um conjunto amplo de entidades — autarquias, autoridades nacionais competentes, Assembleia da República e Governo — tendo em vista a procura de uma solução. Atualmente é claro que essa solução deverá passar pela construção de um Porto de Pesca na Trafaria, cujo projeto de construção será assumido pela Administração do Porto de Lisboa. O valor estimado do investimento é de 6 milhões de euros.

Tendo em conta a importância desta infraestrutura para as centenas de embarcações de pesca de pequena escala locais, para o futuro da própria atividade no Estuário do Tejo, e em face da urgência de se avançar para a sua construção, solicito à Comissão que me informe sobre o seguinte:

1. Foi já submetida alguma candidatura pelo governo português com este objetivo?

2. Qual o tempo previsto para aprovação de uma candidatura após a apresentação do projeto?

3. Qual o cofinanciamento comunitário que pode ser mobilizado para apoiar a construção um Porto de Pesca na Trafaria?

4. Quais as verbas ainda disponíveis, ao abrigo do atual Fundo Europeu das Pescas, para apoiar projetos com estas características? Até quando terão essas verbas de ser utilizadas, sob pena de se perderem?

5. Que outros instrumentos comunitários poderão apoiar financeiramente este projeto?

Resposta dada por Maria Damanaki em nome da Comissão
(5 de outubro de 2012)

O Fundo Europeu das Pescas (FEP) pode apoiar investimentos nos portos de pesca existentes, com vista a melhorar os serviços oferecidos. As infraestruturas devem estar já construídas para beneficiarem de apoio do FEP ao melhoramento das condições de desembarque do pescado e das condições de trabalho. No caso das regiões não abrangidas pelo objetivo da convergência, como a de Lisboa, a taxa máxima de cofinanciamento fixada no Regulamento FEP é de 50 %.

Os investimentos em infraestruturas do tipo descrito pelo Senhor Deputado não podem ser cofinanciados pelo Fundo Europeu de Desenvolvimento Regional (FEDER).

Os fundos estruturais e o FEP enquadram-se na gestão partilhada, pelo que incumbe às autoridades nacionais a aprovação de projetos de acordo com as condições estabelecidas pelos programas operacionais respetivos. Os projetos são diretamente aprovados pelos Estados-Membros. A Comissão não pode definir um calendário para a aprovação dos projetos, que depende do grau de pormenor e da complexidade de cada processo.

Para conhecer as possibilidades de cofinanciamento da UE, a Comissão sugere ao Senhor Deputado que contacte diretamente as autoridades portuguesas encarregadas da gestão dos programas em causa, designadamente:

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DGRM
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(English version)

Question for written answer E-007396/12
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(23 July 2012)

Subject: Funding to build a fishing port in Trafaria

Since the closure of the Pedrouços dock, on the north bank of the Tagus, the 406 vessels operating in the Tagus estuary (360 on the south bank), shipowners, and fishermen on both banks have been left with no alternative port of call and hence nowhere to land catches and keep their fishing gear.

The trawlers which now fish at the estuary entrance bar have to go to Setúbal or Sesimbra — the journey takes more than four hours — in order to unload their catches, resulting in correspondingly higher fuel consumption.

Over the past few months the union representing southern Portuguese fishery workers has been in touch with a wide range of bodies — local authorities, the national authorities concerned, the Assembly of the Republic, and the Government — in an attempt to find a solution, which, it is now clear, lies in building a fishing port at Trafaria. The construction project is to be placed under the responsibility of the Lisbon Port Authority, and the investment required is estimated at EUR 6 million.

This facility is vital for the hundreds of vessels making up the local small-scale fleet and for the future of fishing in the Tagus estuary; the building work thus needs to go ahead urgently.

1. Has the Portuguese Government submitted any application for the purposes described above?

2. Within what time-frame is an application approved once a project has been submitted?

3. What EU co-financing can be raised to support the construction of a fishing port in Trafaria?

4. What appropriations are still available under the present European Fisheries Fund? Is there are cut-off point by which they will have to be used or else will be lost?

5. Under what other EU instruments could financial support be provided for this project?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(5 October 2012)

The European Fisheries Fund (EFF) may support investments in existing fishing ports with the aim of improving the services offered. The infrastructure should be already built in order to benefit from EFF support on improvement conditions for fish landing and working conditions. For non-convergence regions as Lisbon the maximum co-financing rate fixed in the EFF Regulation is 50%.

With regard to the infrastructure investments, an investment like the one described by the Honourable Member cannot be co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

The structural funds and the EFF fall under shared management, and it is the responsibility of the national authorities to approve projects according to the conditions laid down by the respective operational programmes. The projects are directly approved by Member States. The Commission cannot define a time-frame for the projects approval which depends on completeness and complexity of each dossier.

In order to know the possibilities for EU co-financing, the Commission would therefore suggest the Honourable Member contacts directly the Portuguese authorities in charge of managing the programmes concerned, namely:

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(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-007397/12
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) e Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(23 de julho de 2012)

Assunto: Contributo das fortunas privadas para o refinanciamento do Estado

De acordo com um estudo recente realizado pelo Instituto Alemão de Estudos Económicos (DIW) de Berlim, publicado pelo diário alemão Süddeutsche Zeitung, com apenas 40 % da fortuna dos mais ricos seria possível pagar a totalidade da dívida acumulada pelos Estados da Zona Euro. O estudo avança com a proposta de que os mais ricos possam contribuir para resolver a crise da Zona Euro, mediante a obrigação de comprarem dívida pública ou de pagarem um imposto especial sobre o seu património. Os especialistas do DIW consideram ser esta uma forma de as fortunas privadas, em parte muito concentradas, darem a sua contribuição para o refinanciamento do Estado.

Como é sabido, à medida que os Estados se endividaram para acorrer aos prejuízos da banca e do sistema financeiro, as grandes fortunas continuaram a aumentar ou pelo menos permaneceram imunes aos prejuízos desse mesmo sistema financeiro. A vaga de salvamentos públicos está a ser paga pelos trabalhadores e pela população em geral, a quem são retirados salários e direitos sociais, ao mesmo tempo que sobre eles recai o insuportável peso crescente dos impostos. Assim vem sucedendo em inúmeros países, como Portugal, onde a situação social se vem degradando de forma preocupante, nalguns casos, nunca vista em democracia.

Tendo em conta as responsabilidades da Comissão Europeia na conceção e implementação dos programas FMI-UE que vêm sendo implementados, perguntamos à Comissão:

1. Tem conhecimento das conclusões deste estudo?

2. Considerou a Comissão o possível contributo das fortunas privadas para o refinanciamento dos Estados em alternativa às pesadas medidas que estão a ser impostas à generalidade da população, impondo uma regressão sem precedentes do seu nível de vida e, ao mesmo tempo, causando uma brutal e persistente recessão económica?

3. Terão as conclusões deste estudo alguma consequência na atitude e comportamento da Comissão no futuro?

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

A política geral da Comissão em matéria de comunicação é a de não comentar os artigos de imprensa. A Comissão está perfeitamente consciente dos efeitos adversos da crise económica e financeira nas finanças públicas. Sempre sublinhou a necessidade de prosseguir políticas de consolidação orçamental favoráveis ao crescimento, em função das situações orçamentais individuais dos Estados-Membros, abordando, simultaneamente, as consequências sociais da crise.

Forçar certas pessoas a comprar obrigações do Estado seria uma intervenção muito grave nas liberdades individuais, suscetível de ir contra os princípios do mercado único e os seus direitos fundamentais.

Na sua Análise Anual do Crescimento de 2012 e respetivo anexo sobre as políticas fiscais favoráveis ao crescimento nos Estados-Membros e uma melhor coordenação fiscal na UE, a Comissão reitera a necessidade de prestar maior atenção à conceção e estrutura dos sistemas fiscais, a fim de os tornar mais eficazes, eficientes e justos. Em especial, deveriam ser envidados mais esforços para se passar de uma tributação sobre o trabalho para uma fiscalidade menos prejudicial para o crescimento, por exemplo, os impostos sobre o consumo, os impostos ambientais e os impostos sobre os bens imóveis. Os impostos sobre o património podem implicar valorizações difíceis dos ativos e passivos e colocar obstáculos à prevenção da evasão fiscal, tal como também foi salientado no estudo DIW. A tributação dos bens imóveis, em particular de bens de elevado valor, pode ser considerada um imposto eficiente sobre o património e, ao mesmo tempo, apresentar propriedades desejáveis de redistribuição.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007397/12
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) and Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(23 July 2012)

Subject: Contribution from private assets to replenish state coffers

According to a recent study by the Berlin-based German Institute of Economic Research (DIW), published in the German *Süddeutsche Zeitung* newspaper, 40% of the assets held by the richest citizens would be sufficient to pay off the entire aggregate of the euro area countries. The study suggests that the richest citizens could help to overcome the euro area crisis if they were forced to buy government securities or made to pay a special wealth tax. The DIW specialists believe that private assets, which in some cases are concentrated in very few hands, could be tapped in this way to replenish state coffers.

It is common knowledge that as countries have borrowed in order to make good the losses incurred by banks and the financial system, large fortunes have continued to increase or at any rate have been shielded from the damage inflicted by the financial system. The wave of state bailouts is being paid for by workers and the general public, whose wages are being docked and who are being deprived of welfare entitlements while shouldering an intolerable growing tax burden. That is what is happening in many countries, Portugal included, where the social situation is deteriorating alarmingly, at times to an extent never seen under democracy.

Bearing in mind the Commission's role in devising and implementing the IMF-EU programmes now being carried out:

1. Is the Commission aware of the conclusions of the above study?

2. Has it considered whether a contribution from private assets to replenish state coffers might be an alternative to the painful measures being imposed on the public as a whole, which are leading to an unprecedented decline in living standards, combined with a severe and persistent economic recession?

3. Will the Commission's future attitude and behaviour be affected in any way by the study's conclusions?

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

As a general communication policy, the Commission refrains to comment on specific press articles. The Commission is well aware of the adverse effects of the economic and financial crisis on public finances. The Commission has always put a strong emphasis on the need to pursue differentiated growth-friendly fiscal consolidation policies tailored to Member States' current fiscal positions, while tackling the social consequences of the crisis.

Forcing certain individuals to buy government bonds would be a very severe intervention in the dispositions of individuals, which may impinge upon the principles of the single market and their fundamental rights.

In the 2012 Annual Growth Survey and its annex on growth-friendly tax policies in Member States and better tax coordination in the EU, the Commission reiterates that increased attention is needed in the design and structure of the tax systems to make them more effective, efficient and fairer. In particular, greater efforts should be made to shift taxation away from labour towards taxation which is less detrimental to growth, for example consumption taxes, environmental taxes and immovable property taxation. Wealth taxes may involve difficult valuations of assets and liabilities and pose challenges to prevent tax avoidance and tax evasion, as also pointed out in the DIW study. Immovable property taxation, in particular on high value property, can be considered as an efficient tax on immovable wealth and at the same time have desirable redistributive properties.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-007399/12
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(23 de julho de 2012)

Assunto: Direito humano à água potável e ao saneamento básico — Papel da UE

A Relatora Especial das Nações Unidas para o direito humano à água potável e ao saneamento básico, por ocasião da Conferência Rio+20, veio apelar aos Estados, através de uma Carta Aberta, para retomarem o seu empenho na efetiva consecução do direito humano à água e ao saneamento básico. Esse direito, afirma na missiva, «é essencial para o pleno gozo da vida e de outros direitos humanos».

Não obstante, a relatora manifestou a sua preocupação pelo facto de, apesar de a versão original do «rascunho zero» do documento final da conferência sublinhar «a importância do direito à água potável e ao saneamento básico como um direito humano que é essencial para o pleno gozo da vida e de todos os direitos humanos» (parágrafo 67), alguns Estados terem sugerido uma linguagem alternativa que não se refere explicitamente ao direito humano à água e saneamento.

A verdade é que o direito à água e ao saneamento constitui um direito humano que já foi reconhecido pelo direito internacional, inclusivamente pela Assembleia-Geral e pelo Conselho dos Direitos Humanos, em 2010.

Assim, e tendo em conta que alguns Estados-Membros, lamentavelmente, se abstiveram na votação na Assembleia-Geral da ONU que reconheceu o direito à água e ao saneamento como um direito humano, solicito à Comissão que me informe sobre o seguinte:

1. Qual a posição da UE relativamente ao apelo da Relatora Especial das Nações Unidas para o direito humano à água potável e ao saneamento básico?

2. Que medidas estão a ser tomadas para apoiar a efetiva fruição deste direito, sem exclusões?

Resposta dada por Janez Potočnik em nome da Comissão
(2 de outubro de 2012)

A União Europeia desempenhou um papel ativo na negociação do texto do documento final da Conferência Rio+20. Com base nas resoluções do Conselho dos Direitos Humanos e da Assembleia Geral mencionadas pelo Senhor Deputado, o documento acordado em consenso pelos Chefes de Estado e de Governo reafirma os compromissos assumidos relativamente ao direito humano à água potável e ao saneamento básico.

Este objetivo universal deve ser visto em conjunto com o compromisso, constante do documento final, de realização progressiva do acesso de todas as pessoas a água potável segura e barata e ao saneamento básico, como fator necessário para a erradicação da pobreza, a emancipação das mulheres e a proteção da saúde humana. Este texto está igualmente em sintonia com a proposta da UE sobre o tema.

Através de ações de ajuda humanitária e de cooperação para o desenvolvimento, a UE fornece anualmente perto de 400 milhões de euros. Atualmente, mais de 60 países parceiros beneficiam dos nossos projetos, que contribuem para criar infraestruturas de redes de abastecimento de água potável e de tratamento de águas residuais em todo o mundo.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007399/12
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(23 July 2012)

Subject: Human right to drinking-water and basic sanitation — Role of the EU

Prompted by the Rio+20 Conference, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human right to drinking-water and basic sanitation issued an open letter in which she appealed to states to renew their commitment to realising that right, one which, to quote her letter, 'is essential for the full enjoyment of life and all human rights'.

However, she also considered that there was cause for disquiet: the original 'zero draft' of the conference outcome document had 'underline[d] the importance of the right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation as a human right that is essential for the full enjoyment of life and all human rights' (paragraph 67), but some countries had proposed alternative wording that did not refer explicitly to the human right to water and sanitation.

The truth is that the right to water and sanitation is a human right that has already been recognised under international law, not least by the UN General Assembly and by the Human Rights Council, in 2010.

That being the case, and bearing in mind the deplorable fact that some Member States abstained when the General Assembly voted to recognise the right to water and sanitation as a human right:

1. How does the EU respond to the appeal from the UN Special Rapporteur on the human right to drinking-water and basic sanitation?

2. What measures are being taken to enable that right to be genuinely enjoyed by all?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(2 October 2012)

The European Union played an active role in negotiating the final text of the outcome document of Rio+20. Building on the resolutions by the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly mentioned by the Honourable Member, the document agreed in consensus by the Heads of State and Government reaffirms the commitments regarding the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation.

This universal goal is to be read in conjunction with the commitment in the outcome document to the progressive realisation of access to safe and affordable drinking water and basic sanitation for all, as necessary for poverty eradication, the empowerment of women and protection of human health. This text is also in line with the EU proposal on this topic.

Through humanitarian and development cooperation actions, the EU provides almost EUR 400 million per year and more than 60 partner countries benefit at present from our projects, helping to build infrastructure for drinking and waste water systems worldwide.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-007401/12
do Komisji
Janusz Wojciechowski (ECR)
(23 lipca 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Ograniczenie ilości uprawnień emisji dwutlenku węgla – zgodność z ustawodawstwem UE

Artykuł 10 (4) dyrektywy 2003/87/WE (po poprawkach) zakłada przyjęcie przez Komisję rozporządzenia w sprawie aukcji uprawnień emisji dwutlenku węgla w ramach trzeciej fazy europejskiego systemu handlu przydziałami emisji gazów cieplarnianych, łącznie z szacunkowym wolumenem udostępnionych uprawnień. Takie rozporządzenie zostało wydane w 2010 r. W naszym rozumieniu, obecne ustawodawstwo UE nie przewiduje instrumentów, które uprawniałyby Komisję Europejską (lub inną instytucję UE) do wykorzystania narzędzi prawnych i zmian konkretnych przepisów do wykluczenia dostępnych uprawnień w celu podwyższenia ceny emisji dwutlenku węgla. Takie podejście wymagałoby rewizji dyrektywy UE/ETS.

W dniu 19 kwietnia 2012 r. na nieformalnym spotkaniu ministrów ds. środowiska i klimatu, komisarz Hedegaard powiadomiła, że Komisja zamierza przyspieszyć sprawozdanie dotyczące funkcjonowania rynku uprawnień do emisji dwutlenku węgla, w tym procesu aukcyjnego, z 2013 r. (jak przewidziane przez artykuł 10 (5) dyrektywy 2003/87/WE) na bieżący rok (kolejne publiczne oświadczenia sugerują, że data została wyznaczona na lipiec br.). Komisarz Hedegaard oświadczyła również (patrz RAPID Memo/12/264), że takie działanie jest *„okazją do przedstawienia sprawozdania dotyczącego harmonogramu aukcji"* oraz *„przedstawienia propozycji Komisji ds. zmiany klimatu w celu podjęcia decyzji jeszcze w tym roku"*. Celem tych działań jest zmniejszenie wolumenu uprawnień do emisji dwutlenku węgla, które powinny zostać udostępnione na rynku, przed rozpoczęciem trzeciej fazy UE/ETS 1 stycznia 2013 r.

Czy Komisja mogłaby podać prawne uzasadnienie proponowanych działań? Co za tym idzie, czy Komisja jest w stanie potwierdzić, że propozycja zostanie wycofana, jeżeli okaże się, że takie działania nie są zgodne z ustawodawstwem UE?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Komisarz Hedegaardon w imieniu Komisji
(12 września 2012 r.)

Dzięki systemowi handlu uprawnieniami do emisji (ETS) powstał pierwszy na świecie duży rynek uprawnień do emisji dwutlenku węgla oraz wspólna dla całej UE cena emisji dwutlenku węgla. Powszechnie uznaje się, że rynek ten opiera się na dobrze funkcjonującej infrastrukturze. Pewien element tej infrastruktury dotyczy zasad sprzedaży na aukcji uprawnień do emisji, a dyrektywa w sprawie ETS ([1]) przyznaje już Komisji uprawnienia wykonawcze, w szczególności do przyjęcia rozporządzenia „w sprawie harmonogramu, kwestii administracyjnych oraz pozostałych aspektów sprzedaży na aukcji, aby zapewnić przeprowadzanie tej sprzedaży w sposób otwarty, przejrzysty, zharmonizowany i niedyskryminujący". Obecnie dyrektywa jest wyjaśniana, aby potwierdzić zdolność Komisji do przyjmowania środków i zapewnienia właściwego funkcjonowania rynku przy pełnej pewności prawa.

Bardziej szczegółowe informacje dostępne są w komunikacie prasowym z dnia 25 lipca 2012 r. ([2])

([1]) Dz.U. L 275 z 25.10.2003.
([2]) IP/12/850 – zob.: http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/12/850&format=HTML

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007401/12
to the Commission
Janusz Wojciechowski (ECR)
(23 July 2012)

Subject: Limiting the number of CO_2 emission allowances — compliance with EC law

Article 10(4) of Directive 2003/87/EC (as amended) requires the Commission to adopt a resolution on the auctioning of CO_2 emission allowances as part of the third phase of the EU Emission Trading Scheme for greenhouse gases and on the estimated volume of allowances to be made available. Such a regulation was published in 2010. It is our understanding that current EC law contains no provision for instruments that would authorise the Commission (or any other EU institution) to make use of legal tools and changes to specific laws in order to eliminate available allowances with a view to raising the price of CO_2 emissions. Such an approach would require a revision of the EU ETS Directive.

During an informal meeting of environment and climate ministers on 19 April 2012, Commissioner Hedegaard made it known that the Commission intends to bring forward the preparation of its 2013 report on the functioning of the CO_2 emissions market, including the auction process, from 2013 — as provided for in Article 10(5) of Directive 2003/87/EC — to 2012. Subsequent public statements suggest that a date in July 2012 has been set. Commissioner Hedegaard also stated (see: RAPID Memo/12/264) that such an action offered an opportunity 'to include a review of the auction time profile' and to present 'a proposal to the Climate Change Committee for decision this year'. The aim of this action is to reduce the volume of allowances to be made available to the market before the third phase of EU ETS begins on 1 January 2013.

Can the Commission say what the legal justification for its proposed action is? Furthermore, can the Commission confirm that the proposal will be withdrawn should it be proven that such an action does not comply with EC law?

Answer given by Ms Hedegaard on behalf of the Commission
(12 September 2012)

The Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) has created the world's first major carbon market and an EU-wide carbon price. The market is generally considered to be based on well-functioning infrastructure. Part of this infrastructure relates to the modalities for auctioning of emission allowances, and the ETS Directive ([1]) already confers implementing powers to the Commission, notably to adopt a regulation on 'the timing, administration and other aspects of auctioning to ensure that it is conducted in an open, transparent, harmonised and non-discriminatory manner'. The directive is currently being clarified to confirm the ability of the Commission to adopt measures, to ensure an orderly functioning of the market, with full legal certainty.

More detailed information is available in a press release of 25 July 2012 ([2]).

([1]) OJ L 275, 25.10.2003.
([2]) IP/12/850 — see http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/12/850&format=HTML

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007403/12
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(24 July 2012)

Subject: Alleged corruption in Cyprus property industry

A significant number of constituents have complained to the Commission and MEPs about the incidence of alleged corruption in the Cyprus property industry.

Is the Commission aware of such breaches of the law, and what action has it taken in relation to complaints about property transactions in Cyprus?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(27 September 2012)

As regards the problems faced by a number of immovable property buyers in Cyprus who failed to receive their title deed, the Commission has already initiated measures to ensure both an effective protection of EU consumers and a correct application of EU legislation.

As an example, the Commission sent an administrative letter to the Cypriot authorities enquiring about the actions carried out at national level to address the reported problems, in particular to ensure that buyers are provided with all necessary information in order to be able to take an informed purchase decision, such as on the pre-existence of a mortgage on the property offered for sale, as required by Directive 2005/29/EC on Unfair Commercial Practices ([1]).

The Vice-President and Member of the Commission responsible for Justice, Fundamental rights and Citizenship also met the Cypriot Interior Minister to raise this issue.

As regards the question related to the alleged corruption in the Cypriot property industry, the Commission has not conducted any particular analysis regarding this specific matter. If the Honourable Member has specific information regarding the extent and nature of alleged corruption within this sector in Cyprus, he can provide it to the Commission. The Commission is currently working on an EU anti-corruption reporting mechanism through which all Member States' efforts against corruption will be assessed. The first such report shall be published by the Commission in 2013, making country-specific recommendations for each Member State.

([1]) OJ L 149, 11.6.2005, p. 22.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007404/12
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(24 July 2012)

Subject: Efforts to encourage alternative approach to aviation emissions in USA

In 2011 the US House of Representatives adopted a bill that prohibited US airlines from complying with EU legislation aimed at curbing climate emissions caused by the aviation sector.

What steps has the EU taken to prescribe an alternative approach?

Answer given by Ms Hedegaard on behalf of the Commission
(6 September 2012)

The Commission is aware of the developments in the U.S. Congress and in June 2012 testified before a hearing organised by the Senate's Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation regarding inclusion of international aviation in the EU ETS. A written and recorded testimony is available at Directorate-General for Climate Action's website:
http://ec.europa.eu/clima/news/articles/news_2012060601_en.htm

More generally the Commission is engaging actively in discussions both bilaterally and in the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) in order to address these concerns. The Commission believes that all stakeholders need to step up efforts in bilateral and multilateral fora to find common ground. The EU has been and continues to be at the forefront of efforts at ICAO to agree on global action to reduce emissions from aviation.

The Commission is firm in the position that aircraft operators who choose to fly to and from the European Union must respect EU legislation and the rule of law.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007405/12
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(24 July 2012)

Subject: EU progress towards minimum broadband coverage targets

As part of the Digital Agenda for Europe's 2020 target, the EU has set an initial target for broadband coverage to all EU citizens by 2013, with speeds reaching at least 2 Mbps in rural areas and higher speeds in other areas.

Is the EU on target to receive extra support to achieve this aim?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(19 September 2012)

The Digital Agenda for Europe set the objective of making basic broadband access services available to all homes by 2013. The Commission did not specify the speed required across the different areas.

The Commission regularly monitors the performance of Member States towards the achievement of this target. Based on the latest report (to be published this autumn), fixed broadband access is available to 96% of EU homes as of end 2011. Fixed broadband access includes DSL, cable, WiMax and FTTP (Fibre to the Premises). Mobile broadband technologies cover 95% of population. Rural areas exhibit lower coverage figures: 78% for fixed broadband and 79% for mobile broadband technologies. In addition, satellite broadband is available to all homes in all but four Member States (SE, LV, LT, EE).

To achieve the 2013 coverage target, the Commission has taken a number of steps including calling on all Member States to make operational national broadband plans by 2012, coordinate activities under the Radio Spectrum Policy Programme and assisting Member States in the process of the management of structural funds. The Commission has also promoted stakeholders' initiatives, notably with the 'bottom-up broadband' model presented at the Digital Assembly last June as well as promoted ideas leading to cost savings (e.g. civil works initiative). As for financing, in addition to EUR 2.66 bn programmed for broadband deployment under the 2007-2013 Multiannual Financial Framework, the Commission will test the prospects for spending additional EUR 20 million on credit enhancement (i.e. the project bonds initiative), with potential leverage in a range of EUR 100-300 million.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007406/12
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(24 July 2012)

Subject: Cloud computing within the EU and beyond

What is the EU doing to promote the use of cloud computing within the borders of the EU, and is work ongoing with global partners?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(3 September 2012)

The main barriers to the take-up of cloud computing have been identified through the extensive public consultations undertaken by the European Commission in 2011-12, see:
http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/cloudcomputing/library/index_en.htm
These include data protection and lock-in (due to insufficient or unclear interoperability and data portability), uncertainties related to liability and applicable law. To promote the rapid and wide uptake of cloud computing, the European Commission is preparing a communication on a Cloud Computing Strategy that will be adopted in the 2nd half of 2012.

The Vice-President and Member of the Commission responsible for Digital Agenda has already announced that she will set up a European Cloud Partnership (ECP) to promote public procurement of cloud services in Europe, based on common definitions of requirements to make the public sector more effective, i.e. save money and do more with less and stimulate a European cloud industry.

Dialogue is already on going on Cloud Computing with major trade partners such as the United States and Japan including cooperation on research and policy development.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007408/12
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(24 July 2012)

Subject: Ukraine integration plans

Will the Commission postpone plans for closer integration with Ukraine until the issue with former Prime Minister Tymoshenko has been settled?

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

The EU has repeatedly informed the Ukrainian authorities that effectively tackling the issue of selective justice, including the cases of Mrs Tymoshenko and other members of the former government, will be critical to moving ahead on the path to Ukraine's political association and economic integration with the EU.

In this context the EU insists that the individual cases of selective justice be settled without delay. Moreover, the EU stresses the urgency of broad judicial reform. It should notably encompass the Criminal Code in addition to the Criminal Procedure Code, whose updating the EU side welcomed.

The joint statement at the 2011 EU-Ukraine Summit underlined that Ukraine's performance, notably in relation to respect for common values and the rule of law, will be of crucial importance for the speed of its political association and economic integration with the EU, including in the context of conclusion of the Association Agreement and its subsequent implementation.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007410/12
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(24 July 2012)

Subject: Fall in the number of starlings in Europe

Over the past three decades it is estimated that there has been a decline of 40 million in the number of starlings in Europe. The RSPB is conducting research to find out what is happening.

Has the Commission conducted research on the matter?

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

The Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme, which led to the discovery of a substantial decline in the number of starlings in Europe, is financially supported by the Commission.

The Commission has not conducted any further specific research with regard to the reasons for the decline of that species. It welcomes the recent announcement by the RSPB to conduct a study on that subject.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007411/12
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(24 July 2012)

Subject: Road death reduction targets

By the end of 2011, 30 100 people had died on EU roads. Whilst this is a fall of 3% over 2010 figures there is some way to go if the 2020 target of 15 500 or fewer is to be reached.

What more can the Commission do to attempt to lower this significant figure?

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

Implementation of road safety policy is a shared responsibility of actors at different levels, with a primary responsibility resting with Member States (MS). The Commission contributes at EU level with its Policy Orientations on Road Safety 2011-2020 ([1]) providing the framework for action that should lead to halving the number of road fatalities by 2020, setting out seven priority areas where the Commission can have an added value.

Several ongoing initiatives aim at lowering the number of road fatalities, such as: the newly proposed roadworthiness package to increase safety of vehicles — not least for motorcyclists, who are still a high-risk road user group; the preparation of the entry into force of the new driving licences Directive ([2]) and of the directive on cross-border exchange of information in the field of road safety ([3]); a forthcoming analysis of possible action promoting the deployment of modern technology for passive and active vehicle safety, such as for instance alcohol interlocks and blind spot detection systems; and a new strategy to start addressing serious road injuries is being prepared. Specifications and if appropriate deployment proposals for ITS-related road safety tools are being developed, such as the interoperable EU-wide eCall system to cut emergency response times, systems to ensure free provision of road safety related minimum universal traffic information and the provision of information services for safe and secure parking places for trucks. The Commission is also supporting awareness campaigns ([4]) and is maintaining the road accident database CARE ([5]) to increase and share knowledge on road safety. Several experts groups are also coordinated by the Commission, providing platforms for exchange of best practice between the MS.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/pdf/road_safety_citizen/road_safety_citizen_100924_en.pdf
([2]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:314:0031:0034:EN:PDF, entry into force in January 2013.
([3]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:288:0001:0015:EN:PDF, entry into force in November 2013.
([4]) 4th European Road Safety Day that was held on 25 July 2012: http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/events-archive/2012_07_25_ersd_en.htm
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/specialist/statistics/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007412/12
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(24 July 2012)

Subject: Mistreatment of stray animals in Member States

A number of constituents have written to me regarding the need for European legislation on dog and cat welfare. In certain Member States there are complaints of mistreatment of stray cats and dogs and a lack of welfare concern for these animals.

Does the Commission intend to put forward legislation to address dog and cat welfare on an EU-wide basis?

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

The Commission is unable to propose legislation on stray animal welfare. The Treaties do not provide a legal basis for such rules. Article 13 TFEU is not a legal basis nor does it describe an objective of the Treaties that could justify the use of the 'flexibility clause' (Article 352 TFEU). As a result animal welfare protection of stray animals falls within the competence of the Member States.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007413/12
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(24 July 2012)

Subject: Lead in ammunition

Many of my constituents have written to me recently regarding the issue of lead in ammunition, which is currently the subject of an investigation by the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA).

Can the Commission reveal what stage the investigation has reached, and whether any legislation is expected following it?

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

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question P-006712/2012 by Ms Vicky Ford ([1]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007414/12
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(24 July 2012)

Subject: Jellyfish increase on the Costa del Sol

Following reports of dramatic increases in the numbers of jellyfish, including an influx of stinging jellyfish on the Costa del Sol, does the Commission have a view as to the likely cause of such apparent changes in the population and/or distribution of jellyfish species?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(26 September 2012)

An increased rate of jellyfish blooms may be due to interactions of natural events and unnatural drivers such as the pollution, overfishing (ecosystems more and more dominated by smaller fishes and lower trophical levels, and in the absence of large competitors and predators, increase of gelatinous zooplankters), habitat degradation and climate change.

The Commission continues to support research studies aimed to better understand jellyfish blooms (causes, predictability, solutions…) and the functioning of marine ecosystems. At this respect, it is worth mentioning that FP7 includes the following projects: EURO-BASIN ([1]), PERSEUS ([2]), COCONET ([3]) and VECTORS ([4]).

Moreover, the Mediterranean Science Commission-CIESM coordinates a jellywatch programme whose main objectives are: to gather a Joint Mediterranean jellyfish database, to make predictions for fishery management, to establish a new methodology for automated monitoring and an early warning system for mass episodes (regional numerical modelling), and to study potential uses of jellyfish biomasses in pharmacology, aquaculture and as a food source, etc.

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answers to Written Questions E-006558/2010 and E-005657/2011 ([5]).

([1]) EURO-BASIN — Basin-scale Analysis, Synthesis and Integration: http://www.euro-basin.eu
([2]) PERSEUS: http://www.perseus.net.eu
([3]) COCONET — Towards Coast to Coast Networks of marine protected areas: http://www.coconet-fp7.eu/index.php/announcements/129-oceans-of-tomorrow
([4]) Vectors of changes in marine life, impact on economic sectors: http://www.marine-vectors.eu/
([5]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007415/12
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(24 July 2012)

Subject: Commercial whaling by Japan

What steps is the Commission taking to put pressure on Japan to stop its practice of commercial whaling?

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

The Commission has strong reservations concerning Japan's whaling programme and strives to ensure that any future solution on whaling within the International Whaling Commission (IWC) — where the EU has observer status — leads to a better overall conservation of whales worldwide and ultimately to a sizeable reduction of the number of whales being killed under whatever whaling regime (commercial or scientific).

Japan conducts scientific whaling under special permits; the International Whaling Convention does not ban this activity but the European Union and a number of other countries that are Parties to the Convention have been expressing strong reservations on this scientific whaling. In addition, the European Union is engaged in a regular dialogue with Japan covering all environment-related issues, and the issue of whaling is regularly part of these discussions.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007416/12
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(24 July 2012)

Subject: EU contributions to India

During a meeting of Parliament's Committee on Development on 18 June 2012, a report was presented on a recent delegation of that committee to India. During a segment regarding a meeting with ministers of the Indian Government, it was reported that a consensus was developing that there is no need for further EU contributions which would take important funds from the federal budget. For example, India is becoming a development partner in its own right with Bhutan and Nepal and therefore the continuation of the EU financial support may be unjustified.

Has the Commission reviewed the agreement in question, or does it have plans to do so?

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

The programming of EU development cooperation under the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) for the period 2014-2020 is currently taking place. It has been proposed that EU development assistance in future be focused on fewer sectors, and in fewer countries, where its impact may be maximised and where the assistance is most needed.

In this context, in view of India's increasing economic power and its capacity to finance and implement its own development programmes without the need for external assistance, it is not considered appropriate to continue to provide financing for the EU-India bilateral cooperation programme. As the Honourable Member stated, India is indeed itself a source of development funding for a number of developing countries.

India is nevertheless a very important partner for the EU, and one with which activities of mutual interest will be continued, notably under the Instrument for cooperation with industrialised and other high income countries and territories (ICI+) which will, from 2014, be replaced by the new Partnership Instrument.

Some EU-India development cooperation activities will also continue in the future under DCI-funded thematic budget lines and the regional cooperation programme.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007417/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(24 July 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Illegal evictions in Port Harcourt, Nigeria

In Port Harcourt, Nigeria, military forces are currently evicting people illegally from their homes following orders from Governor Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi to clear the area.

Will the High Representative put pressure on the Governor to adopt a moratorium on all evictions, to ensure that emergency relief is provided, and to ensure that all those evicted receive adequate alternative housing and compensation for all losses and suffering?

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

The promotions of human rights, including social and economic rights, as well as good governance principles are among the key priorities of the EU action in Nigeria. The EU Heads of Mission in Nigeria are following the matter of evictions in Port Harbour and elsewhere in the country closely. In addition, the EU Delegation is in close contact with local civil society organisations active in this area.

Together with other human rights matters, such issues are also addressed at the political level in the regular local human rights dialogue with Nigeria. This dialogue is open and constructive and in itself indicative of the considerable overall progress regarding human rights which Nigeria has experienced since its return to democratic rule in 1999. It is also one important tool to support further progress in areas where significant shortcomings remain.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007419/12
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(24 July 2012)

Subject: Green economy and EU competitiveness

In April 2012 the Commission announced a set of measures to boost jobs, including in the green economy, where it is estimated that 20 million jobs could be created between now and 2020. However, it can be argued that the EU is lacking the level of green economy investment found in nations such as Brazil, China and the US, which appear to be further ahead in terms of progress towards promoting and commercialising new technologies.

Therefore, is the EU ready to address the gap, and how can it ensure that it leads a race to the top in its move towards a green economy?

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

The Commission and Member States are aware of the importance of greening our economy and making the necessary investments, as reflected in the Europe 2020 strategy and the flagship initiatives for a Resource-efficient Europe, an Integrated Industrial Policy for the Globalisation Era and an Innovation Union. The Commission's subsequent Roadmap for a Resource-efficient Europe ([1]) sets out a vision for the structural and technological change needed up to 2050, with milestones for 2020, in order to put Europe on a resource efficient and sustainable growth path. Furthermore the 2050 Roadmap for moving to a competitive low carbon economy ([2]) highlights the need for enhanced investments in low carbon technologies. These will increase productivity and add value and output from many EU industries, thereby creating growth and jobs.

The Commission's Eco-Innovation Action Plan ([3]) expands the focus from green technologies to the broader concept of promoting eco-innovation. This will reduce environmental pressure, ensure a more efficient use of our increasingly scarce resources, and create growth and jobs.

Sustainable growth will also be an integral part of the review of flagship initiative on Industrial Policy, to be adopted by the Commission in October 2012.

Moreover, in its Employment Package Communication the Commission committed to promote greater use of EU financial instruments for smart green investments ([4]).

It is not possible to provide accurate international comparisons of investments in greening the economy due to data limitations. However, according to Bloomberg New Energy Finance ([5]), during the first half of 2012 Member States as a group are clearly leading in new investment in clean energy by region compared to China and the US.

([1]) COM(2011) 571 final.
([2]) COM(2011) 112 final.
([3]) COM(2011) 899 final.
([4]) COM(2012) 173 final.
([5]) Q3 2012 European New Energy Policy Quarterly Outlook, 31 July 2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007420/12
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(24 July 2012)

Subject: 'Green lining' to cloud computing

It is claimed that green technologies must be introduced to balance the increasing energy consumption resulting from policies and market factors that promote an expanding digital world.

What measures is the Commission considering to give a 'green lining' to cloud computing?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(4 September 2012)

The energy consumption of digital technologies is the subject of growing attention by the Commission as it has an impact on global energy consumption.

The complete carbon footprint of cloud computing depends not only on the amount but also on the source of energy that is used, as well as on all environmental impacts involved; measuring and assessing the real 'green lining' of cloud technologies is hence very important.

The Commission's Joint Research Centre developed a voluntary 'Code of Conduct on Data Centres Energy Efficiency' ([1]) in 2008 and there are over 150 endorsers of this code.

In 2009 the Commission issued a recommendation on 'Mobilising ICT to facilitate the transition to an energy-efficient, low-carbon economy' ([2]). The key themes of the recommendation were further extended by Digital Agenda actions for the ICT sector to adopt common measurement methods and develop standards for major emitting sectors such as energy, logistics and buildings.

The European Commission is also thinking about the possibility of addressing the energy performance of servers through Ecodesign, as can be seen in the recent preparatory study for the Ecodesign Working Plan ([3]).

The forthcoming cloud computing strategy should further extend such actions to the cloud domain ([4]).

([1]) http://re.jrc.ec.europa.eu/energyefficiency/html/standby_initiative_data_centers.htm
([2]) COM(2009) 7604 final.
([3]) http://www.ecodesign-wp2.eu/documents.htm
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/cloudcomputing/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007421/12
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(24 July 2012)

Subject: EU role in global solution to curb aviation sector emissions

With greenhouse gas emissions from aviation projected to increase by an estimated 700% between 2005 and 2050, what role is the EU playing in helping to find a global solution to curb carbon emissions from the aviation sector?

Answer given by Ms Hedegaard on behalf of the Commission
(10 September 2012)

The EU is fully committed to find a global solution to curb emissions from international aviation. For over a decade, we have been consistently working through both the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to reach a global agreement to reduce aviation emissions. We continue to be fully engaged in pushing for further action. By way of example the Commission has recently seconded staff to ICAO to work on environmental matters, and the Commission participates very actively in ICAO's ongoing expert level work on market based measures.

At the EU level we have led the way by adopting a comprehensive package of measures that will help to reduce emissions. This includes a major modernisation of our airspace, research into advanced aerospace technology, development of aviation biofuels and inclusion of aviation in our greenhouse gas emissions trading scheme (EU ETS). The measures adopted in Europe may provide building blocks for a future global approach.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007423/12
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(24 July 2012)

Subject: Forest targets

The Commission proposed to halt the loss of global forest cover by 2030 at the latest and to reduce gross tropical deforestation by at least 50% by 2020.

What progress has been made in meeting these goals?

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

The Honourable Member refers to the deforestation targets contained in Communication COM(2008) 645 final, of 17 October 2008 ([1]). The European Union is working towards achieving these targets within the context of the international negotiations on climate change, particularly on the mechanism for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD).

In the abovementioned Communication, the Commission has also undertaken to quantify the impacts of EU consumption of imports on deforestation. The results of the study will be available in the last quarter of this year. This will help to identify those commodities consumed in the EU which are linked to deforestation in the country of origin.

([1]) Addressing the challenges of deforestation and forest degradation to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss, SEC(2008) 2618, SEC(2008) 2619, SEC(2008) 2620.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007424/12
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(24 July 2012)

Subject: Flightpath 2050 progress

As part of the EU's vision for the future of aviation, ambitious targets were set under 'Flightpath 2050'.

What progress has been made so far towards 'Flightpath 2050'?

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

The goals put forward by the High Level Group on Aviation Research in Flightpath 2050 are indeed very ambitious. For this reason, in 2011, the Commission called on the European Aviation Community, represented by the Advisory Council for Aviation Research and Innovation in Europe (ACARE), to establish a Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA) ([1]) with the involvement of the Commission.

In the last 12 months, more than 250 stakeholders from the aeronautics industry and the air transport sector have been working together to prepare this SRIA, which will be presented at the ILA International Airshow in Berlin in two events on the 12th and 13th of September 2012.

The SRIA reaffirms the validity of the goals which were previously set out for 2020 in the 'Vision 2020' document published in 2001 and translated into concrete actions under the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7, 2007-13). During this period, a budget of around EUR 2.1 billion will be allocated to the Aeronautics and Air Transport (AAT) theme and contributes to the activities of the Clean Sky ([2]) and SESAR Joint Undertakings ([3]). These initiatives and projects will continue delivering results several years after 2013 and in this way are already contributing to the Flightpath 2050 objectives.

The Commission's proposal for Horizon 2020, the next Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2013-2020), includes an ambitious 'Smart, Green and Integrated Transport' Societal Challenge. With a proposed overall budget of EUR 7.2 billion for research and innovation actions on advanced transport technologies and services, the Horizon 2020 proposal is fully in line with the Flighpath 2050 objectives and the corresponding SRIA agenda.

([1]) http://www.acare4europe.org/sria.
([2]) http://www.cleansky.eu/.
([3]) http://www.sesarju.eu/.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007425/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(24 July 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Ebrima Manneh

The case of Ebrima Manneh, a Gambian journalist arrested in 2006 and held without trial ever since, has recently been brought to my attention.

Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware of the case of Mr Manneh, and what is being done to put pressure on the Gambian authorities to, at the very least, give information on his whereabouts and well-being?

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

The HR/VP and the EEAS are aware of the disappearance of the Gambian journalist, Mr Ebrima Manneh. The EU, and in particular the EU Delegation and the EU Heads of Mission in The Gambia have on several occasions expressed their concern regarding this case under the regular EU-The Gambia political dialogue held with the authorities under Article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement.

Following its commitment made in November 2011, during the sixth political dialogue meeting, the Government of The Gambia has requested an independent investigation from the UN on Mr Manneh's disappearance. The issue has been referred to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

More generally, Human Rights and Governance issues, including freedom of expression and association, as well as separation of powers and non-interference with the judiciary are systematically discussed under the article 8 political dialogue. Problems and shortcomings of freedom of expression and freedom of the media in The Gambia are of particular concern to the EU and constitute one of the priority areas of the EU Human Rights strategy.

In parallel, the EU supports improvements in Governance in The Gambia through its development cooperation. Governance issues are one of the focal sectors of the National Indicative Programme under the 10th European Development Fund. In particular, an ongoing EUR10 million Governance Programme is aimed at improving access to justice and legal education, as well as the effective exercise of press freedom.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007426/12
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(24 July 2012)

Subject: Constituent concerns about removal of duty-free quota-free trading provisions

Recently a number of my constituents have written to me outlining their concerns about ongoing negotiations with ACP countries, particularly in relation to the potential removal of duty-free quota-free trading provisions and the likely negative consequences of such a proposal.

What steps is the Commission taking to ensure that negotiations with ACP nations are fair for both sides of the negotiating table?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(6 September 2012)

The Commission makes sustained efforts to ensure that current trade negotiations between the EU and ACP countries promote a fair trading relationship between the parties. The Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) framework offers ACP partners asymmetric provisions, transitional periods and other pro-development measures. Examples include gradual and restricted market opening (as opposed to EU's full market opening from day one), long periods for the implementation of commitments ranging from tariff liberalisation to customs issues and special safeguards on food security and infant industry. The EU and its Member States also support the trade capacity of ACP countries, including for the negotiation and implementation of EPAs, through various Aid for Trade instruments. In 2010, EU Aid for Trade for ACP countries amounted to EUR 3.1 billion.

Regarding the Honourable Member's concerns about trading provisions for ACPs, the Commission is strongly committed to maintaining preferential access to the EU market for these countries. Duty-free and quota-free access on all products is offered to ACP countries that concluded an EPA with the EU. As per the proposed amendment to the Market Access Regulation (COM(1528) 2007), this access would be maintained for all those countries that follow through on their commitments by signing and ratifying their agreements. In addition, the EU offers tariff preferences to all developing countries under its unilateral Generalised System of Preferences scheme. A subset of the scheme, the 'Everything but Arms' initiative offers free access to the EU market to virtually all products from Least Developed Countries, including 41 of the 79 ACP countries.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007427/12
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(24 July 2012)

Subject: Overarching strategy to help ensure cyber security

With cyber crime estimated to cause worldwide damage amounting to EUR 310 billion per year, what progress have the Commission and the European External Action Service made towards the development of an overarching strategy to help ensure cyber security?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(19 September 2012)

The Commission fully shares the concerns about the current rise of cyber security incidents and the risk for increasingly serious negative impacts on our economy and society. Such incidents are related to cyber crime but also to natural events, human errors or technical failures. To address this issue the Commission, with the European External Action Service (EEAS), is currently working on a joint European Strategy for Cyber Security aiming at ensuring a safe and resilient digital environment and effectively preventing cybercrime, in respect of fundamental rights and European values.

The strategy aims at putting forward a comprehensive set of actions to reach the above objectives: foster preparedness, response and cooperation to prevent and respond to cyber risks and threats; develop an integrated EU internal market for cyber security products/services; support further the prevention of and response to cybercrime; promote awareness raising campaigns and cyber security training; foster R & D investments; ensure a coherent international cyber security policy for the EU; develop cyber defence capabilities in the framework of Common Security and Defence Policy and advance cyber security capacity and cooperation globally.

The Commission and EEAS are consulting stakeholders on elements of the strategy which is due for adoption in 2012. In particular, the Commission has just launched a public consultation to help for preparing a legislative proposal on Network and Information Security as part of the strategy ([1]).

([1]) http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/12/818&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007428/12
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(24 July 2012)

Subject: European cyber crime centre schedule

A European cyber crime centre, with the responsibility of coordinating with police investigations and serving as a knowledge repository for national law enforcement authorities, is due to open in early 2013.

Is the development on schedule?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(20 September 2012)

Preparations for the establishment of the European Cybercrime Centre (EC3) are well underway. Since adopting its communication ([1]) in in March 2012, the European Commission has been working closely with Europol's EC3 Implementation team. A meeting took place in June with future members of the EC3 Programme Board to discuss the setting up, composition, task and scope of the Programme Board, in order to ensure the EC3 comes into being by January 2013 and to achieve full operability by January 2014.

The European Commission is currently preparing an Ex-Ante Evaluation report that will contain a detailed analysis of resources required. This will draw upon the earlier Feasibility Study, published with the Commission's Communication in March, updated to take into consideration Europol's internal reallocation of resources exercise and budgetary estimates for the EC3.

([1]) 'Tackling Crime in our Digital Age: Establishing a European Cybercrime Centre': http://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/doc_centre/crime/docs/Communication%20-%20European%20Cybercrime%20Centre.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007429/12
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(24 July 2012)

Subject: Trade implications of violence in Syria

Since May 2011, following an increase in internal violence in Syria, trade restrictions have been applied to agreements between the EU and Syria.

Given the constant reporting of violent incidents in Syria, are the trade agreements under review?

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

1. The application of the cooperation agreement between the European Economic Community and the Syrian Arab Republic was already partially suspended in September 2011 in order to implement restrictive measures adopted with regard to Syria.

In the context of their discussion on restrictive measures against Syria in June 2012, Member States discussed a proposal to suspend the cooperation agreement in its entirety. However there was no consensus in the Council to suspend the agreement.

2. Initial trade data indicate that current sanctions have hitherto substantially affected bilateral trade. During the first three months (Q1) of 2012 the EU imports from Syria have abated to approximately 10% of Q1 2011 value (from EUR 783 million to EUR 80 million). This can be mainly attributed to the import ban on crude oil and petroleum products, affecting approximately 90% of Syria's traditional exports to the EU and fully in force since 15 November 2011. Restrictive measures implemented by the EU are also affecting EU exports to Syria which have decreased approximately by half (from EUR 858 million in Q1 2011 to EUR 457 million in Q1 2012.)

3. In case of the suspension of all trade provisions of the Agreement the EU would cease to grant to Syria the trade preferences. This would lead to higher duties being paid by importers of Syrian goods. The impact of the full suspension of the Agreement on EU exports is unpredictable as it would depend on possible subsequent measures taken by the Syrian side.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007430/12
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(24 July 2012)

Subject: Delay in introducing ban on animal-tested cosmetics

The European Union agreed in 2003 to a ban on all animal tests for cosmetics and a complete ban on the sale of cosmetic products containing ingredients tested on animals. In 2009 the sales ban came into force, with exemptions for certain tests that were still permitted. The final deadline for banning the marketing of all cosmetics containing ingredients tested on animals is 11 March 2013, after which the shelves of every shop and Internet supplier in the EU must be free of animal-tested cosmetics.

According to reports, the Commission intends to delay the March 2013 deadline. Can the Commission confirm whether this is the case?

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

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to earlier answers to similar questions, the most recent being E-005016/2012 ([1]). As indicated in this answer, the Commission is analysing the impacts of the 2013 marketing ban and possible options to mitigate these impacts. The Commission has not yet taken a final decision on this matter.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007431/12
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(24 July 2012)

Subject: Public- and private-sector cooperation in the field of cybersecurity

What is being done at EU level to strengthen cooperation between the public and private sectors in the field of cybersecurity?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(19 September 2012)

The Commission considers public — private cooperation as a key factor to improve cybersecurity. The European Public-Private Partnership for Resilience (EP3R) was established as a follow-up to the action plan on Critical Information Infrastructure Protection [COM(2009) 149 and COM(2011) 163]. EP3R aims at fostering cooperation across Europe between public and private stakeholders to develop coordinated strategic policy objectives as well as tactical/operational measures to strengthen security and resilience in Critical Information Infrastructures. Working groups address: (1) Key assets, resources and functions for the continuous and secure provisioning of electronic communications across countries; (2) Baseline requirements for the security and resilience of electronic communications; (3) Coordination and cooperation needs and mechanisms to prepare for and respond to large scale disruptions affecting electronic communications.

Another example is the Expert Group on Security and Resilience of Communication Networks and Information Systems for Smart Grids convened by the Commission since October 2010.

The Work Programme 2012 of the ICT Policy Support Programme (CIP-ICT PSP), under the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme, contains an objective aiming at the establishment of a pilot on fighting botnets that should involve relevant EU public administrations or agencies and private sector organisations (in particular Internet Service Providers).

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-007433/12
aan de Commissie
Frieda Brepoels (Verts/ALE)
(24 juli 2012)

Betreft: De hervormingen in Marokko

De gebeurtenissen in de mediterrane wereld hebben ook invloed gehad op de situatie in Marokko. Volgens de EU moeten de betrekkingen met het land binnen het nieuwe nabuurschapskader een nieuwe impuls krijgen met het oog op een samenwerking waarbij democratie en welvaart aan beide zijden van de Middellandse Zee vooropgesteld worden. De EDEO en de Commissie moeten erop gericht zijn hervormingen te stimuleren, rekening houdend met de behoeften en het economische en sociale ontwikkelingspeil van elk partnerland, op grond van een op prestaties gebaseerde methode van „meer voor meer". De EU, bij monde van Eneko Landaburu, heeft laten weten de hervormingen in het land te steunen ([1]).

Volgens sommigen stellen de Marokkaanse hervormingen echter te weinig tot niets voor en zou de EU hiermee aan struisvogelpolitiek doen en de problemen in Marokko niet bij naam willen noemen resp. ze willen aanpakken.

Staat de Commissie achter de verklaringen van de EU ambassadeur in Marokko?

Hoe beoordeelt de Commissie de mensenrechtensituatie in Marokko? Vindt zij die bevredigend? Op welke wijze zet de EU zich in het land in tegen mensenrechtenschendingen?

Hoe zal het hernieuwde nabuurschapsbeleid van invloed zijn op de ontwikkelingen in Marokko? Welke hervormingen moet Marokko doorvoeren opdat het „meer voor meer"-principe volledig van toepassing kan zijn op Marokko? Heeft de Commissie er vertrouwen in dat die hervormingen ook zullen worden doorgevoerd?

Antwoord van de heer Füle namens de Commissie
(27 augustus 2012)

Marokko voert al jarenlang een proces van volledige economische, sociale en politieke hervormingen door.

De mensenrechten zijn een centraal thema in de dialoog tussen de EU en Marokko en komen regelmatig aan bod in de vergaderingen van de bij de Associatieovereenkomst EU-Marokko opgerichte gezamenlijke organen. De EU kaart regelmatig knelpunten aan, zoals de doodstraf, inperkingen van de vrijheid van vereniging en meningsuiting, en de behandeling van verdedigers van de mensenrechten.

De EU verwacht dat de nieuwe regering zal blijven ijveren voor de volledige uitvoering van de politieke, economische en sociale hervormingen die nodig zijn om tegemoet te komen aan de aspiraties van het Marokkaanse volk. De EU zal deze hervormingen in het kader van het nieuwe nabuurschapsbeleid ten volle blijven steunen. Van kapitaal belang voor vooruitgang is de volledige uitvoering van de bepalingen van de nieuwe grondwet middels goedkeuring van relevante organieke wetten en/of afgeleide wetgeving. Dit is noodzakelijk om de scheiding van de machten en de onafhankelijkheid van relevante staatsinstellingen te versterken, zoals bepaald in de nieuwe grondwet, en om te consolideren dat democratische beginselen en fundamentele vrijheden worden gerespecteerd. De hervorming van het justitiële stelsel is zowel voor Marokkaanse burgers als voor buitenlandse investeerders een belangrijke prioriteit en zou er eveneens toe bijdragen dat de door de nieuwe regering aangekondigde inspanningen in de strijd tegen corruptie worden opgevoerd.

([1]) http://www.lematin.ma/journal/L-Union-europeenne-salue-les-reformes-au-Maroc/169185.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007433/12
to the Commission
Frieda Brepoels (Verts/ALE)
(24 July 2012)

Subject: Reforms in Morocco

The events in the Mediterranean area have also had an impact on the situation in Morocco. According to the EU, relations with Morocco within the framework of the new Neighbourhood Policy are to receive a new boost with a view to cooperation giving priority to democracy and prosperity on both sides of the Mediterranean. The EEAS and the Commission must be geared to stimulating reforms, taking account of the needs and the level of economic and social development of each partner country, employing a 'more for more' performance-based method. The EU, in the person of Eneko Landaburu, has stated that it supports the reforms in Morocco ([1]).

It is claimed in some quarters, however, that the Moroccan reforms have little or no substance, while the EU plays the ostrich, not wishing to mention or address the problems in Morocco.

Does the Commission support the statements of the EU ambassador in Morocco?

What is the Commission's view of the human rights situation in Morocco? Does it consider it satisfactory? What is the EU doing to oppose human rights violations in the country?

How will the new Neighbourhood Policy influence developments in Morocco? What reforms must Morocco carry out in order to ensure that the 'more for more' principle can fully apply there? Does the Commission have confidence that the these reforms will actually be carried out?

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

For many years, Morocco has been engaged in a process of complete economic, social and political reforms.

Human rights are at the heart of the EU's dialogue with Morocco and are regularly addressed in the meetings of the relevant joint bodies established under the EU Morocco Association Agreement. The EU regularly raises issues of concern, such as the death penalty, limitations on freedoms of association and expression, and the treatment of human rights defenders.

The EU expects that the new government will remain engaged in the full implementation of political, economic and social reforms needed in response to the aspirations of the Moroccan people. The EU will continue to fully support these reforms, in the context of the new Neighbourhood Policy. A key for progress is the full implementation of the provisions of the new Constitution by means of adoption of relevant organic laws and/or secondary legislation. This is necessary to strengthen the separation of powers and the independence of relevant state institutions as foreseen in the new Constitution and to consolidate the respect of democratic principles and fundamental freedoms. Reform of the justice system is an important priority both for Moroccan citizens and foreign investors and would also contribute to the stepping up of efforts in the fight against corruption announced by the new government.

([1]) http://www.lematin.ma/journal/L-Union-europeenne-salue-les-reformes-au-Maroc/169185.html

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita P-007434/12
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(24 de julio de 2012)

Asunto: Memorándum de Entendimiento de España

En referencia a la propuesta de Memorándum de Entendimiento (MoU) para el rescate de España y particularmente a su anexo 2 sobre las condiciones, en los puntos 5 y 10, se impone la creación de *Subordinated Liability Exercices*, es decir quitas en pasivos subordinados para asumir pérdidas, lo que afectaría a los ahorradores estafados con el negocio de las «participaciones preferentes». ADICAE calcula que un 8 % de la población española estaría involucrado en acciones preferentes y subordinadas. El punto 29 solo propone limitar este tipo de prácticas, sin pedir procesos judiciales que determinen los culpables de las estafas. ¿Cree la Comisión que es justo que las personas estafadas asuman también las pérdidas de la especulación bancaria?

La creación de una «*Asset Management Company*» (AMC) (puntos 7 y 15), no determina quién asumirá finalmente las pérdidas de los activos tóxicos colocados en la AMC, cuál será el control democrático al que estará sometida. Fuera del MoU se determina que 25 000 millones de euros del rescate serán asignados a esta AMC, deuda que será asumida directamente por la ciudadanía española. ¿Por qué no propone una AMC con control democrático que garantice la salubridad bancaria y la no socialización de las pérdidas?

Aún cuando la vinculación entre el sector financiero y el inmobiliario es la causa principal de la crisis española, el MoU propone solo revisar los problemas de concentración de crédito y las transacciones con partes relaciones (punto 28), ¿ Por qué no se hace ninguna propuesta de cambio del marco legislativo español para acabar con este círculo vicioso?

Respecto al punto 14, revisión interna, ¿podría el MoU exigir la creación de una regulación española y europea para evitar que los banqueros sigan especulando con el dinero de los ahorradores?

¿Cree que la bancarización definitiva de las cajas (punto 18), eliminando su obra social, contribuirá a que las finanzas vuelvan a servir a la economía real y a la sociedad?

A nivel transversal se propone la fusión de bancos del grupo 2 y 3. ¿No resultaría incompatible con el principio de «too big to fail, too risky to exist»?

¿Por qué el MoU carece de puntos fundamentales, como propuestas sobre el sistema de toma de decisiones para limitar el riesgo, desvinculación del sector financiero del inmobiliario, necesidad de un mayor escrutinio e independencia del BdE, necesidad de determinar las responsabilidades de los culpables?

Respuesta del Sr. Rehn en nombre de la Comisión
(22 de agosto de 2012)

El reparto de la carga es uno de los principios fundamentales subyacentes al ME ([1]) con España a fin de minimizar el coste de la reestructuración bancaria para los contribuyentes. El reparto de la carga de los titulares de capital híbrido y de los de deuda subordinada se aplicarán únicamente a aquellos bancos que requieran ayudas estatales. El ME aboga específicamente por reforzar la protección de los consumidores y la legislación sobre valores para limitar la venta de deuda subordinada a clientes minoristas no cualificados en el futuro ([2]).

Disociar el sector financiero del sector inmobiliario es uno de los objetivos fundamentales del ME mediante una estrategia de separación de los activos deteriorados de los balances de los bancos. Corresponde al supervisor, es decir, al Banco de España, controlar la futura participación de los bancos españoles en el sector inmobiliario. Los detalles relacionados con el diseño exacto de las SGA ([3]) siguen siendo objeto de debate. El ME incluye medidas dirigidas tanto a consolidar el marco de supervisión como a aumentar la independencia del Banco de España ([4]).

([1]) Memorándum de entendimiento.
([2]) Punto 25.
([3]) Sociedad de gestión de activos.
([4]) Punto 24.

En lo que respecta a la pregunta sobre la bancarización de las cajas, el ME solo consta de disposiciones encaminadas a consolidar la estructura de gobernanza de las antiguas cajas de ahorros. Además, se considera la posible cotización de estos bancos en los casos en que se acojan a ayudas estatales ([5]). En relación con el proceso de reestructuración de los bancos viables que reciban ayudas estatales, cualquier posible fusión deberá cumplir estrictamente las normas de competencia de la UE.

La Comisión está al corriente de las «cuotas participativas». Sus propuestas de revisión de la Directiva MiFID, adoptadas el 20 de octubre de 2011 ([6]), ofrecen más protección a los inversores. Las propuestas se basan en las normas vigentes y fijan requisitos más rigurosos sobre la gestión de carteras, el asesoramiento en materia de inversión y la oferta de productos financieros complejos como los productos estructurados, sobre todo a los pequeños inversores.

([5]) Punto 23.
([6]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0656:FIN:ES:PDF.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-007434/12
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(24 July 2012)

Subject: Memorandum of Understanding with Spain

The draft Memorandum of Understanding concerning the Spanish bailout, specifically points 5 and 10 of Annex A on conditionality, stipulates that Subordinated Liability Exercises must be set up to assume losses, which would hit savers swindled into acquiring 'preference shares'. The Spanish Association of Users of Banks, Building Societies and Insurers (ADICAE) estimates that 8% of the Spanish population holds preference or subordinated shares. Point 29 merely proposes limiting the sale of such instruments, and does not call for court action to establish the guilty parties in such swindles. Does the Commission consider it fair that the victims of swindles must also bear the costs of speculation by banks?

Points 7 and 15 call for the establishment of an asset management company (AMC), but there are no provisions to determine who will ultimately bear the losses associated with the toxic assets placed in the AMC, or concerning the form of democratic oversight to which it will be subject. It has been reported elsewhere that EUR 25 billion from bailout funds will be earmarked for this AMC, debt for which the Spanish people will be directly liable. Why then not propose an AMC with democratic oversight to ensure that banks are healthy without socialising losses?

Even though the coupling of financial services with the real estate sector was the main cause of the crisis in Spain, the MoU merely proposes a review of the problems of credit concentration and related party transactions (point 28). Why has no proposal been made to change the legislative framework with a view to breaking this vicious circle?

With regard to point 14, which imposes an internal review, could the MoU mandate the adoption of Spanish and European rules to prevent bankers from continuing to speculate with their savers' money?

Does the Commission believe that definitely transforming the *cajas* into banks (point 18), thereby removing their public service duty, will help ensure that finance goes back to serving the real economy and society?

At a sector-wide level, mergers between group-2 and group-3 banks have been proposed. Is this not incompatible with the principle of 'too big to fail, too risky to exist'?

Why is the MoU lacking in such fundamental elements as proposals to change the decision-making system with a view to limiting risk, to decouple the financial sector from the real estate sector, and proposals to address the need for greater scrutiny of and greater independence for the Banco de España, and the need to hold lawbreakers accountable for their crimes?

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

Burden sharing is one of the key principles underpinning the MoU ([1]) with Spain with the aim of minimising the cost of bank restructuring to taxpayers. Burden sharing from hybrid capital holders and subordinated debt holders will be applied only to those banks that require state aid. The MoU specifically asks for strengthening consumer protection and securities legislation to limit the sale of subordinate debt to non-qualified retail clients in the future ([2]).

Decoupling the financial sector from the real estate sector is one of the key objectives of the MoU through a strategy of separating impaired assets from the balance sheets of banks. It is up to the supervisor, i.e. Banco de España, to monitor the future involvement of the Spanish banks in the real estate sector. The details regarding the exact design of the AMC ([3]) are still under discussion. The MoU includes measures to both strengthen the supervisory framework and increase the independence of Banco de España ([4]).

([1]) Memorandum of Understanding.
([2]) Point 25.
([3]) Asset management company.
([4]) Point 24.

Regarding the question on transforming *cajas* into banks, the MoU only includes provisions for strengthening the governance structure of former savings banks. In addition, potential listing of these banks, in cases where they benefited from state aid, is considered ([5]). Regarding the restructuring process of viable banks receiving state aid, any possible mergers will have to strictly comply with the EU competition rules.

The Commission is aware of 'cuotas participativas'. Its proposals to revise the MiFID Directive adopted on 20 October 2011 ([6]), grant additional protection to investors These build on the existing rules, and, set stricter requirements for portfolio management, investment advice and the offering of complex financial products such as structured products, in particular to retail investors.

([5]) Point 23.
([6]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0656:FIN:EN:PDF

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007435/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(24 Ιουλίου 2012)

Θέμα: Μείωση των συντελεστών ΦΠΑ σε αγαθά πρώτης ανάγκης

Την ώρα που στην Ελλάδα — σύμφωνα με τα επίσημα στοιχεία του ΟΟΣΑ — μόνο για το 2011 παρατηρείται μείωση κατά 25,3 % στις αποδοχές των Ελλήνων εργαζομένων, οι τιμές στα αγαθά πρώτης ανάγκης εμφανίζουν συνεχώς αυξητικές τάσεις, που στις περισσότερες των περιπτώσεων ξεπερνούν κατά πολύ το μηνιαίο ρυθμό αύξησης του τιμάριθμου. Η ένταση της ακρίβειας, που συνεχίζει να πλήττει τη χώρα μας επιβεβαιώνεται και από τα πρόσφατα δημοσιοποιημένα στοιχεία της Eurostat, με βάση τα οποία η Ελλάδα βρίσκεται αρκετά πάνω από το μέσο όρο της ΕΕ στις τιμές προϊόντων ευρείας λαϊκής κατανάλωσης. Η ραγδαία μείωση του διαθέσιμου εισοδήματος των Ελλήνων πολιτών, σε συνδυασμό με τις υψηλές τιμές, μειώνει την πρόσβαση των νοικοκυριών σε είδη πρώτης ανάγκης, διαμορφώνοντας συνθήκες υποσιτισμού για ένα μεγάλο μέρος του πληθυσμού. Πέρα από τις εγγενείς παθογένειες και δυσλειτουργίες της ελληνικής αγοράς (εναρμονισμένες ή αθέμιτες εμπορικές πρακτικές, ολιγοπωλιακές καταστάσεις κ.α.) που πρέπει να αντιμετωπιστούν άμεσα, σημαντική είναι και η επίδραση των αυξήσεων του ΦΠΑ, δηλαδή του λεγόμενου φορολογικού πληθωρισμού, στην αύξηση των τιμών. Σε αυτό το πλαίσιο, και με δεδομένη τη συμμετοχή της στην «Τρόικα», ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Προτίθεται να υποστηρίξει προτάσεις για μείωση-αποκλιμάκωση των συντελεστών ΦΠΑ σε αγαθά πρώτης ανάγκης, προκειμένου να διασφαλιστεί η πρόσβαση του Ελλήνων πολιτών σε αναγκαία για τη διαβίωσή τους προϊόντα;

2. Διαθέτει στοιχεία για το ύψος των συντελεστών ΦΠΑ στα αγαθά πρώτης ανάγκης στα κράτη μέλη;

3. Σκοπεύει να προωθήσει την ανταλλαγή βέλτιστων πρακτικών μεταξύ των κρατών μελών ώστε να αναδειχθούν οι πλέον ενδεδειγμένοι τρόποι για την αντιμετώπιση της αδυναμίας πρόσβασης των Ευρωπαίων πολιτών σε απολύτως απαραίτητα για τη διαβίωσή τους αγαθά;

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

1. Η μείωση του ΦΠΑ θα οδηγούσε στην αύξηση του δημοσιονομικού ελλείμματος και κατά συνέπεια στην αύξηση και των δημοσιονομικών αναγκών της Ελλάδας, ειδικότερα εάν η ελαστικότητα της κατανάλωσης είναι χαμηλή (δηλαδή της κατανάλωσης των βασικών αγαθών). Επιπλέον, υπάρχει σημαντικό διοικητικό κόστος και κόστος προσαρμογής που προκύπτει από το διαφοροποιημένο σύστημα συντελεστών ΦΠΑ, που μπορεί να είναι δυσανάλογο σε σχέση με τα οφέλη. Η φτώχεια ή άλλα θέματα κοινωνικής φύσεως μπορούν να αντιμετωπιστούν καλύτερα μέσω άλλων, πιο στοχοθετημένων πολιτικών.

2. Η Επιτροπή παραπέμπει το αξιότιμο μέλος στο έγγραφο με τίτλο: «Συντελεστές ΦΠΑ που εφαρμόζουν τα κράτη μέλη της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης» ([1]) που έχει αναρτηθεί στον ιστότοπο της Επιτροπής. Στόχος του εν λόγω εγγράφου είναι η διάδοση γενικών πληροφοριών σχετικά με τους συντελεστές ΦΠΑ εν ισχύ στα κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ. Εντούτοις, είναι τα ίδια τα κράτη μέλη που είναι σε θέση να παράσχουν πλήρεις, δεσμευτικές και επικαιροποιημένες πληροφορίες σχετικά με τους συντελεστές ΦΠΑ που εφαρμόζονται στις επικράτειές τους.

3. Ο πιο αποτελεσματικός τρόπος για να αυξηθεί το επίπεδο διαβίωσης και να διατηρηθούν οι τιμές όσο το δυνατόν χαμηλότερα είναι μέσω της προώθησης ανταγωνιστικών αγορών προϊόντων που αποτελούν αντικείμενο αποτελεσματικής ρύθμισης, με ταυτόχρονη αποφυγή μη αναγκαίων νομικών και διοικητικών εμποδίων στο εμπόριο. Έτσι θα εξασφαλιστεί ότι όλοι οι παίκτες συμπεριφέρονται κατά τον πιο αποτελεσματικό τρόπο και θα εξαλειφθούν οι επιβαρύνσεις οι οποίες βαραίνουν συνήθως τα πιο ευάλωτα μέρη του πληθυσμού. Η Επιτροπή εκτιμά ότι η εμβάθυνση της εσωτερικής αγοράς της ΕΕ αποτελεί καίρια προτεραιότητα και πιέζει τα κράτη μέλη να εφαρμόσουν την απαραίτητη νομοθεσία όσο πιο αποτελεσματικά και γρήγορα γίνεται.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/resources/documents/taxation/vat/how_vat_works/rates/vat_rates_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007435/12
to the Commission
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(24 July 2012)

Subject: Reduction in VAT on basic commodities

While, according to official OECD statistics, earnings in Greece fell by 25.3% in 2011 alone, basic commodity prices are continuing to rise, in most cases at a rate greatly exceeding monthly inflation figures. The hardship caused by the continually increasing cost of living, in Greece, is also confirmed by recent Eurostat data placing Greece well above the EU average regarding the price of mass consumption products. The dramatic fall in available income in Greece, combined with high prices, is making it harder for households to afford even essentials, leaving a large percentage of the population undernourished. In addition to the inherent flaws and malfunctioning of the Greek market (concerted practices, unfair trading practices, oligopolies, etc.), which require remedial action, VAT increases are also having a major impact in terms of tax inflation, pushing up prices. In view of this and the role played by the 'Troika' in this situation:

1. Will the Commission support proposals to (progressively) reduce VAT on basic commodities ensuring that Greek citizens are able to afford everyday essentials?

2. Does it have information regarding the level of VAT on basic commodities in Member States?

3. Will it encourage an exchange of best practices between Member States with a view to establishing the most effective means of remedying a situation in which European citizens are unable to afford even the barest necessities?

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

1. A reduction of VAT would increase the fiscal gap and hence the financing needs of Greece, especially if the elasticity of consumption is low (i.e. basic commodities). In addition, there are significant administrative and compliance costs resulting from a diversified VAT rate system, which may outweigh the benefits. Poverty or other social issues may be better addressed by other more targeted policies.

2. The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to the document 'VAT rates applied by the Member States of the European Union' ([1]) that is published on the Commission's website. The purpose of this document is to disseminate general information about the VAT rates in force in the Member States of the EU. It is Member States, however, that are in a position to provide complete, binding and up-to-date information on the VAT rates applicable within their territories.

3. The most effective way to increase living standards and keep prices the lowest possible is by promoting competitive and effectively-regulated product markets, while avoiding unnecessary legal and administrative barriers to trade. This ensures that all actors behave in the most efficient manner, and eliminates rents which are usually paid by the most vulnerable parts of the population. The Commission considers the deepening of the EU Internal Market as a key priority and is pressing Member States to implement the necessary legislation as effectively and as rapidly as possible.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/resources/documents/taxation/vat/how_vat_works/rates/vat_rates_en.pdf

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007436/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(24 Ιουλίου 2012)

Θέμα: Χρέη Δήμων, Περιφερειών ή Τοπικών Κυβερνήσεων στην ΕΕ

Ανησυχίες εκφράζονται για την πορεία της οικονομικής κατάστασης, των χρεών και των ελλειμμάτων Δήμων, Περιφερειών ή Τοπικών Κυβερνήσεων σε χώρες μέλη της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης. Με δεδομένο ότι πολλά από τα χρέη αυτά είναι οφειλές σε τράπεζες, ή καλούνται να τα αποπληρώσουν οι κυβερνήσεις των χωρών μελών της ΕΕ, ερωτάται η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή:

1. Μπορεί να μας παράσχει σχετικό κατάλογο που να δείχνει το μέγεθος αυτών των χρεών ως ποσοστό του ΑΕΠ κάθε κράτους μέλους;

2. Μπορεί να σχολιάσει σε ποιες χώρες μέλη αυτού του είδους τα ελλείμματα επιβαρύνουν δυσανάλογα το δημόσιο χρέος και τι μέτρα λαμβάνονται σε ευρωπαϊκό ή σε εθνικό επίπεδο για τον περιορισμό τους;

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

1. Ο πίνακας του παραρτήματος 1 ([1]) περιέχει συγκεντρωτικά στοιχεία για το χρέος του Δημοσίου (περιφέρειες) και της τοπικής αυτοδιοίκησης (συμπεριλαμβανομένων των δήμων) ως ποσοστό του ΑΕΠ το 2011. Τα αποτελέσματα αντικατοπτρίζουν διαφορετικές αρμοδιότητες και συνταγματικές ρυθμίσεις σε υποεθνικό επίπεδο.

2. Η Επιτροπή δεν απαιτεί από τα κράτη μέλη να θεσπίσουν ειδικές ρυθμίσεις σχετικά με την κατανομή των αρμοδιοτήτων μεταξύ της κεντρικής κυβέρνησης, της περιφερειακής αυτοδιοίκησης και της τοπικής αυτοδιοίκησης. Το άρθρο 3 του πρωτοκόλλου αριθ. 12 των Συνθηκών ορίζει ότι οι κυβερνήσεις των κρατών μελών ευθύνονται για τα ελλείμματα του Δημοσίου υπό ευρεία έννοια, στο σύνολό του. Σύμφωνα με το ίδιο άρθρο τα κράτη μέλη εξασφαλίζουν ότι οι εθνικές διαδικασίες στον τομέα του προϋπολογισμού τους επιτρέπουν να εκπληρώνουν τις υποχρεώσεις τους στον δημοσιονομικό τομέα. Προκειμένου να επιτευχθεί αυτό, τα κράτη μέλη δημιουργούν κατάλληλους μηχανισμούς συντονισμού μεταξύ των κυβερνητικών βαθμίδων σύμφωνα με το άρθρο 13 της οδηγίας 2011/85/ΕΕ του Συμβουλίου (τα κράτη μέλη πρέπει να συμμορφωθούν με την οδηγία αυτή το αργότερο μέχρι τις 31 Δεκεμβρίου 2013). Ορισμένα κράτη μέλη έχουν ήδη εντάξει στην εθνική έννομη τάξη εσωτερικά σύμφωνα σταθερότητας που προβλέπουν ειδικούς δημοσιονομικούς στόχους ή κανόνες για το περιφερειακό και τοπικό επίπεδο, σε συνδυασμό με εθνικούς μηχανισμούς παρακολούθησης και επιβολής. Στο βαθμό που συνάδουν πλήρως με τις έννοιες και τους κανόνες του αναθεωρημένου ευρωπαϊκού δημοσιονομικού πλαισίου, τα εν λόγω εσωτερικά σύμφωνα σταθερότητας θα μπορούσαν να παρέχουν υποστήριξη για τη δημοσιονομική πειθαρχία, ιδίως σε κράτη μέλη με ιδιαίτερα αποκεντρωμένη δομή.

([1]) Το παράρτημα αποστέλλεται απευθείας στο Αξιότιμο Μέλος και στη Γραμματεία του Κοινοβουλίου.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007436/12
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(24 July 2012)

Subject: Municipal, regional and local government debt levels in the EU

Concern is being expressed at economic trends in the EU Member States regarding municipal, regional and local government debt and deficit levels. In view of the fact that, in many cases, the amounts outstanding are owed to banks or must be repaid by the governments of the EU Member States:

1. Can the Commission provide a list indicating by Member State, the level of these debts as a percentage of GDP?

2. Can it identify those Member States in which such deficits make up a disproportionate share of public debt and what measures are being taken at European and national level to contain them?

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

1. The table in Annex A ([1]) contains data for aggregate state (regional) and local (including municipal) government debt as % of GDP in 2011. The outcomes reflect different competences and constitutional arrangements at sub-national level.

2. The Commission does not require Member States to adopt specific arrangements regarding the sharing of prerogatives between central, regional or local government levels. Article 3 of Protocol No12 of the Treaties stipulates that governments of the Member States shall be responsible for the deficits of general government as a whole. According to the same article, Member States shall ensure that national procedures in the budgetary area enable them to meet their obligations in the fiscal area. In order to achieve this, Member States shall establish appropriate mechanisms of coordination between government tiers as per Article 13 of Council Directive 2011/85/EU (Member States must comply with this directive by 31 December 2013). Some Member States have already devised in their legal order internal stability pacts providing for specific fiscal targets or rules for regional and local levels, coupled with national monitoring and enforcement mechanisms. To the extent that they are fully consistent with the concepts and rules of the revised European fiscal framework, such internal stability pacts could provide support for fiscal discipline, especially in Member States with a highly decentralised structure.

([1]) The annex is sent directly to the Honourable Member and to the Secretariat of Parliament.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007437/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(24 Ιουλίου 2012)

Θέμα: Ραγδαία αύξηση του παιδικού πληθυσμού στην Ελλάδα που στερείται το βασικό κύκλο εμβολιασμού λόγω οικονομικών δυσχερειών

Σύμφωνα με επιτόπιες έρευνες και εκτιμήσεις τόσο του Ιατρικού Συλλόγου Αθηνών όσο και της Οργάνωσης «Γιατροί του Κόσμου», παρατηρείται μια ραγδαία αύξηση του παιδικού πληθυσμού που στερείται της απαραίτητης εμβολιαστικής κάλυψης, ενώ σημαντικά αυξημένο εμφανίζεται και το ποσοστό των παιδιών στην Ελλάδα που ζουν χωρίς τη στοιχειώδη ιατρική παρακολούθηση. Γενεσιουργός αιτία για αυτά τα ιδιαίτερα ανησυχητικά ποσοστά αποτελεί η οικονομική αδυναμία των μακροχρόνια άνεργων και ανασφάλιστων γονέων να ανταποκριθούν στην αγορά ακριβών εμβολίων, τα οποία δεν καλύπτονται από τα δημόσια ταμεία για τους ανέργους, με αποτέλεσμα να υπάρχει έντονος κίνδυνος «επιστροφής» σοβαρών λοιμώξεων και απειλητικών για τη ζωή ασθενειών όπως ο τέτανος, ο κοκκύτης, η διφθερίτιδα, η ιλαρά, η ερυθρά, η μηνιγγίτιδα και η ηπατίτιδα Β. Αν η δυσχερής αυτή κατάσταση συνδυαστεί και με την κακή διατροφή που ακολουθούν πολλά παιδιά λόγω των φαινομένων φτώχειας που αντιμετωπίζουν οι οικογένειές τους, τότε αποκτά ακόμη πιο επώδυνα και επικίνδυνα χαρακτηριστικά. Κατά αυτόν τον τρόπο, χιλιάδες παιδιά στερούνται το θεμελιώδες δικαίωμα της πρόσβασης στην ιατροφαρμακευτική περίθαλψη, την ώρα που βάσει έγκυρων ιατρικών μελετών η πρόληψη για τον παιδιατρικό πληθυσμό αξίζει όσο χίλιες θεραπείες. Σε αυτό το πλαίσιο και με δεδομένους τους διακηρυγμένους στόχους της ΕΕ για καταπολέμηση του φαινομένου της παιδικής φτώχειας και αναβάθμιση του πλέγματος κοινωνικής προστασίας για τον παιδικό πληθυσμό, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Διαθέτει στοιχεία για τα ποσοστά των παιδιών που αδυνατούν να πραγματοποιήσουν το βασικό κύκλο εμβολιασμού στα κράτη μέλη; Αν ναι, ποια είναι η διακύμανσή τους κατά την περίοδο της κρίσης;

2. Υπάρχουν διαθέσιμοι ευρωπαϊκοί πόροι για τη χώρα μας προκειμένου να χρηματοδοτηθεί η αγορά και η δωρεάν διάθεση εμβολίων στα παιδιά που ανήκουν σε ευπαθείς κοινωνικά και οικονομικά ομάδες;

3. Ποια είναι τα ποσοστά απορροφητικότητας των κρατών μελών σε κοινοτικά κονδύλια σχετικά με την κοινωνική προστασία του παιδικού πληθυσμού για δράσεις όπως ιατροφαρμακευτική κάλυψη, σίτιση κ.α.;

4. Προτίθεται να προωθήσει την ανταλλαγή βέλτιστων πρακτικών μεταξύ των κρατών μελών για την αντιμετώπιση αυτού του ιδιαίτερα ανησυχητικού φαινομένου;

Απάντηση του κ. Dalli εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(18 Σεπτεμβρίου 2012)

Η Επιτροπή έχει στοιχεία σχετικά με το ποσοστό των παιδιών που έχουν εμβολιαστεί κατά των νόσων για τις οποίες υπάρχει πρόληψη με εμβολιασμό και οι οποίες καλύπτονται συνήθως από τα προγράμματα ανοσοποίησης στην παιδική ηλικία στα κράτη μέλη. Η Επιτροπή δεν έχει, ωστόσο, στοιχεία σχετικά με το ποσοστό των παιδιών που δεν έχουν εμβολιαστεί, επειδή οι γονείς τους δεν έχουν την οικονομική δυνατότητα για τον εμβολιασμό.

Τα εμβόλια που αποτελούν μέρος των προγραμμάτων ανοσοποίησης των παιδιών παρέχονται δωρεάν στους ασφαλισμένους στα περισσότερα κράτη μέλη. Ορισμένα κράτη μέλη παρέχουν δωρεάν αυτά τα εμβόλια ανεξάρτητα από το ασφαλιστικό καθεστώς.

Σύμφωνα με τη Συνθήκη για τη λειτουργία της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης, η διαχείριση των υγειονομικών υπηρεσιών και της ιατρικής περίθαλψης, καθώς και η κατανομή των χορηγούμενων πόρων εμπίπτουν στην αρμοδιότητα των κρατών μελών. Συνεπώς, τα ταμεία της ΕΕ δεν μπορούν να χρησιμοποιηθούν για τη χρηματοδότηση της αγοράς και της διανομής φαρμάκων όπως είναι τα εμβόλια.

Η Επιτροπή προωθεί ενεργά την ανταλλαγή βέλτιστων πρακτικών μεταξύ των κρατών μελών για την ανοσοποίηση. Στο εν λόγω πλαίσιο, η Επιτροπή χρηματοδοτεί προγράμματα που αποσκοπούν στην ενίσχυση προγραμμάτων ανοσοποίησης και στη βελτίωση της πρόσβασης σε εμβόλια μέσω του προγράμματος υγείας της ΕΕ. Η Επιτροπή διοργανώνει επίσης διάσκεψη σχετικά με την ανοσοποίηση των παιδιών ([1]) στις 16-17 Οκτωβρίου 2012, στην οποία καλούνται τα κράτη μέλη να παρουσιάσουν παραδείγματα ορθής πρακτικής στην ενίσχυση των προγραμμάτων τους ανοσοποίησης. Στη διάσκεψη θα συζητηθεί επίσης η αύξηση της πρόσβασης σε εμβολιασμό για τις ομάδες πληθυσμού που στερούνται της πρόσβασης αυτής.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/vaccination/events/ev_20121016_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007437/12
to the Commission
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(24 July 2012)

Subject: Sharp increase in the number of children in Greece who have deprived of the basic immunization schedule owing to financial difficulties

According to field investigations and assessments both by Athens Medical Association and the 'Doctors of the World' organisation, there has been a sharp increase in number of children in Greece lacking essential immunization cover, and there has also been a significant increase in the percentage of children in that country without basic health screening. The prime reason for these alarming figures is that long-term unemployed and uninsured parents cannot afford expensive vaccines, which are not covered by the public funds for the unemployed; this greatly increases the danger that serious infections and life-threatening diseases, such as tetanus, whooping cough, diphtheria, measles, rubella, meningitis and hepatitis B, will return. This danger is further exacerbated by the fact that many children, particularly from poor families, have inadequate diet. In this way, thousands of children are denied the fundamental right of access to healthcare, at a time when reputed medical studies show that, in the case of children, prevention is a thousand times better than a cure. In this context and given the EU's stated objective to combat the phenomenon of child poverty and improve social protection for children, will the Commission say:

1. Does it have at its disposal any data on the percentage of children who are unable to undergo the basic vaccination schedule in Member States? If so, how much have these figures fluctuated during the crisis?

2. Are any EU funds available to Greece to finance the purchase and free distribution of vaccines to children belonging to socially and economically vulnerable groups?

3. What are the take-up rates in Member States for EU funds for the social protection of the child population for actions such as medical cover, food, etc.?

4. Will it promote exchanges of best practices between Member States in addressing this very worrying phenomenon?

Answer given by Mr Dalli on behalf of the Commission
(18 September 2012)

The Commission has data on the percentage of children who are vaccinated against vaccine preventable diseases usually covered by the childhood immunisation schedules in the Member States. The Commission does not, however, have data on the percentage of children who are not vaccinated because of their parents not being able to afford vaccination.

The vaccines that are part of the childhood immunisation schedule are free of charge for insured people in most Member States. Some Member States provide these vaccines free of charge regardless of insurance status.

According to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the management of health services and medical care and the allocation of the resources assigned to them is a Member State responsibility. Therefore, EU funds cannot be used to finance the purchase and distribution of medicinal products such as vaccines.

The Commission actively promotes the exchange of best practices on immunisation between Member States. In this context, the Commission funds projects aimed at strengthening immunisation programmes and improving access to vaccines through the EU Health Programme. The Commission is also organising a conference on childhood immunisation ([1]) on 16-17 October 2012, where Member States are invited to present examples of good practice in strengthening their immunisation programmes. Increasing access to vaccination for underserved populations in the EU will also be discussed at the conference.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/vaccination/events/ev_20121016_en.htm

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-007438/12
adresată Comisiei
Norica Nicolai (ALDE)
(24 iulie 2012)

Subiect: Raportul recent al Comisiei privind progresele înregistrate de România în cadrul mecanismului de cooperare și verificare

Se solicită Comisiei să țină cont de următoarele puncte în momentul în care răspunde întrebărilor prezentate mai jos:

— toate rapoartele Comisiei trebuie să fie obiective și să trateze fiecare parte în mod egal;

— în pofida axării sale obișnuite pe justiție și corupție, raportul Comisiei privind progresele înregistrate de România în cadrul mecanismului de cooperare și verificare (MCV) (COM(2012) 0410) se ocupă, în plus, de evenimentele politice recente din această țară;

— raportul menționează presiunea exercitată de Guvernul României asupra membrilor Curții Constituționale a țării;

— raportul consideră Curtea Constituțională a României ca fiind parte a sistemului judiciar; aceasta este o gravă interpretare greșită a Constituției României, care stabilește Curtea Constituțională a țării ca un organ în mod clar politic, ai cărui membri sunt numiți pe bază politică, unii dintre aceștia fiind înainte politicieni activi;

— raportul MCV aseamănă, în mod eronat, Curtea Constituțională a României cu curțile constituționale ale altor state membre;

— Articolul 4 din Tratatul privind Uniunea Europeană prevede tratament egal pentru toate statele membre în raport cu tratatele și respect pentru „identitatea lor națională, inerentă structurilor lor fundamentale politice și constituționale”.

1. Ce surse a ales Comisia să folosească în vederea descrierii evenimentelor politice, a presiunii exercitate de Guvernul României și a naturii Curții Constituționale a României?

2. Care este motivul pentru care raportul conține comentarii politice și în ce mod justifică Comisia faptul că solicită ca mai mulți politicieni să fie judecați și condamnați, însă, în același timp, nu remarcă specificitatea fiecărui caz și preponderența proceselor instigate de Direcția Națională Anticorupție (DNA) împotriva fostei opoziții?

3. Cum poate Comisia să facă presiune asupra sistemului judiciar din România și, în același timp, să deplângă faptul că prea multă presiune este exercitată asupra acestui sistem?

Răspuns dat de dl Barroso în numele Comisiei
(13 septembrie 2012)

1. Rapoartele Comisiei privind progresele înregistrate în cadrul mecanismului de cooperare și de verificare (MCV) se bazează pe informații obținute dintr-o gamă variată de surse, printre care se numără răspunsurile scrise detaliate furnizate de autoritățile române, dialogurile la fața locului cu reprezentanți ai instituțiilor românești și cu alți interlocutori-cheie, contribuțiile experților din alte state membre, rapoartele altor organizații internaționale și monitorizarea în curs.

2. Cel mai recent raport, publicat la data de 18 iulie 2012, este o evaluare echitabilă, obiectivă și bazată pe dovezi a progreselor înregistrate de România de la aderare în ceea ce privește îndeplinirea obiectivelor MCV ([1]). Durabilitatea și ireversibilitatea procesului de reformă sunt elemente esențiale în cadrul acestei evaluări. În consecință, contextul politic are un rol important. În mod necesar și inevitabil, raportul a făcut referire la evoluțiile politice recente.

([1]) COM(2012) 410 final.

Investigarea eficientă și judecarea cazurilor de corupție la nivel înalt sunt elemente importante ale MCV și fac parte din angajamentele asumate de România la momentul aderării. Performanța globală în acest domeniu este monitorizată îndeaproape de Comisie. Astfel cum s-a arătat în cel mai recent raport al Comisiei, istoricul activității Direcției Naționale Anticorupție (DNA) reprezintă o dovadă a faptului că, de la aderare, DNA s-a dovedit a fi un acuzator energic și imparțial în astfel de cazuri, investigațiile sale vizând persoane din toate partidele politice importante. Comisia nu a solicitat niciodată pronunțarea unei anumite sentințe împotriva unei anumite persoane.

3. Prin MCV, Comisia a sprijinit îndeaproape procesul de reformă judiciară din România. Comisia nu a făcut presiuni asupra sistemului judiciar din România pentru a influența o anumită procedură juridică.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007438/12
to the Commission
Norica Nicolai (ALDE)
(24 July 2012)

Subject: Recent Commission Report on Progress in Romania under the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism

The Commission is asked to bear in mind the following points when answering the questions set out below:

— all Commission reports need to be objective and to treat all sides equally;

— the Commission Report on Progress in Romania under the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism (CVM) (COM(2012) 0410), despite its usual focus on justice and corruption, deals additionally with recent political events in that country;

— the report mentions pressure exerted by the Romanian Government on members of the country's Constitutional Court;

— the report considers the Romanian Constitutional Court to be part of the judiciary; this is a grave misinterpretation of the Romanian Constitution, which establishes the country's Constitutional Court as an eminently political body whose members are appointed on a political basis, some of them having been active politicians;

— the CVM report mistakes the Romanian Constitutional Court as resembling the constitutional courts of other Member States;

— Article 4 of the Treaty on European Union provides for equal treatment of all Member States before the Treaties and respect for 'their national identities, inherent in their fundamental structures, political and constitutional'.

1. What sources did the Commission choose to follow when describing political events, the pressure exerted by the Romanian Government and the nature of the Romanian Constitutional Court?

2. Why does the report include political comments, and how does the Commission justify the fact that it calls for more politicians to be tried and sentenced, yet at the same time fails to note the particularities of each case and the preponderance of trials instigated by the National Anti-Corruption Directorate (DNA) against the former opposition?

3. How can the Commission put pressure on the Romanian judiciary at the same time as deploring the fact that too much pressure is being put on the Romanian judiciary?

Answer given by Mr Barroso on behalf of the Commission
(13 September 2012)

1. The Commission's Reports on Progress under the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism (CVM) are based upon information obtained from a variety of sources, including detailed written responses supplied by the Romanian authorities, on-the-spot dialogue with the Romanian institutions and other key interlocutors, the input of experts from other Member States, reports of other international organisations, and ongoing monitoring.

2. The most recent report published on 18 July 2012 is a fair, objective and evidence-based assessment of the progress Romania has made since accession in meeting the objectives of the CVM. ([1]) The sustainability and irreversibility of the reform process are determining elements in this assessment. The political context is therefore important. It was both necessary and inevitable that recent political developments are referenced in the report.

The effective investigation and trial of high-level corruption cases are important elements of the CVM and of the commitments Romania entered into upon accession. Overall performance in this field is closely followed by the Commission. As the Commission's most recent report indicated, the track record of the Romanian National Anti-Corruption Directorate (DNA) is proof of the fact that since accession the DNA has proven an energetic and impartial prosecutor of such cases, pursuing investigations against people from all major political parties. The Commission has never called for a particular verdict against any specific person.

([1]) COM(2012) 410 final.

3. Through the CVM the Commission has closely supported the judicial reform process in Romania. The Commission has not imposed pressure upon the Romanian judiciary to influence any specific legal proceeding.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007439/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)
(24 Ιουλίου 2012)

Θέμα: Προστασία της καφέ αρκούδας στην οροσειρά της Ρίλας

Προς συμμόρφωση με την οδηγία για τους οικοτόπους (92/43/ΕΟΚ), η Βουλγαρία όφειλε να ορίσει τόπους κοινοτικής σημασίας (ΤΚΣ) για τη διατήρηση των οικοτόπων προστατευόμενων ειδών το αργότερο μέχρι την 1η Ιανουαρίου 2007, ημερομηνία προσχώρησής της στην ΕΕ. Ωστόσο, μετά την πάροδο πέντε και πλέον ετών, η βουλγαρική κυβέρνηση δεν έχει ορίσει ακόμη επαρκείς περιοχές για την προστασία της καφέ αρκούδας στην οροσειρά της Ρίλας. Το 2009, η Βουλγαρία υπέβαλε στην Επιτροπή το εθνικό σχέδιο δράσης για την καφέ αρκούδα ([1]), όπως εγκρίθηκε από το βουλγαρικό Υπουργείο Περιβάλλοντος και Υδάτων.

Ωστόσο, σε απάντηση προς τη γραπτή ερώτηση E-3709/2010 που υποβλήθηκε από τη Sandrine Bélier και τον Μιχάλη Τρεμόπουλο, η Επιτροπή δήλωσε ότι «η Βουλγαρία προβαίνει σε περαιτέρω εκτιμήσεις προκειμένου να συμπεράνει τη σκοπιμότητα της ένταξης πρόσθετων τμημάτων της οροσειράς της Ρίλα στην εθνική πρόταση για την καφέ αρκούδα» ([2]), η οποίο επρόκειτο να υποβληθεί μέχρι το φθινόπωρο του 2010. Το 2011, η Βουλγαρική Ακαδημία Επιστημών και περιβαλλοντικές ΜΚΟ που δραστηριοποιούνται στον τομέα του Natura 2000, υπέβαλαν στο Υπουργείο Περιβάλλοντος και Υδάτων κοινή, επιστημονικά τεκμηριωμένη πρόταση για τον ορισμό πρόσθετων περιοχών Natura 2000 με σκοπό την προστασία της καφέ αρκούδας στην οροσειρά της Ρίλας.

Ενώ τα επιστημονικά δεδομένα καταδεικνύουν την ιδιαίτερη σημασία του Εθνικού Πάρκου της Ρίλας ως ζώνης προστασίας για τη διατήρηση της καφέ αρκούδας, η βουλγαρική κυβέρνηση εξακολουθεί να μην οριστικοποιεί τη διαδικασία καθορισμού, δίνοντας προτεραιότητα σε διάφορα έργα αστικοποίησης και υποδομής στην περιοχή της οροσειράς της Ρίλας.

1. Ποιες ενέργειες προτίθεται να αναλάβει η Επιτροπή, ώστε να πιέσει τη βουλγαρική κυβέρνηση να ορίσει επιτέλους τους επιστημονικά καθορισμένους οικότοπους της αρκούδας στην οροσειρά της Ρίλας;

2. Ποια μέτρα προτίθεται να λάβει, για να εξασφαλίσει την αποτελεσματική προστασία της καφέ αρκούδας στην οροσειρά της Ρίλας από τις βουλγαρικές αρχές σε συμμόρφωση με την οδηγία για τους οικοτόπους;

3. Έχει ολοκληρώσει η Επιτροπή τη διεξοδική έρευνα που υποσχέθηκε να πραγματοποιήσει σε σχέση με τον βουλγαρικό νόμο βάσει του οποίου επιτρέπεται το κυνήγι της καφέ αρκούδας ([3]);

Απάντηση του κ. Potočnik εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(10 Σεπτεμβρίου 2012)

Η Επιτροπή είναι σε θέση να ενημερώσει το αξιότιμο μέλος ότι η κυβέρνηση της Βουλγαρίας ενέκρινε, τον Νοέμβριο του 2010, τον χαρακτηρισμό 3 επιπλέον τόπων κοινοτικής σημασίας και τη διεύρυνση 25 άλλων τόπων. Στη συνέχεια, τα συναφή δεδομένα υποβλήθηκαν επισήμως στην Επιτροπή τον Οκτώβριο του 2011 και έκτοτε αποτελούν αντικείμενο αξιολόγησης από τις υπηρεσίες της Επιτροπής. Η επίσημη έγκριση των προαναφερόμενων τόπων που προστέθηκαν, ύστερα από απόφαση της Επιτροπής, αναμένεται να έχει ολοκληρωθεί στα τέλη του 2012.

Επίσης, η Επιτροπή διοργανώνει διμερές βιογεωγραφικό σεμινάριο τον Οκτώβριο του 2012, όπου θα συζητηθεί με τις κρατικές αρχές και με ΜΚΟ που εργάζονται υπέρ της διατήρησης του περιβάλλοντος η συμβολή της προσθήκης των εν λόγω τόπων στο δίκτυο Natura 2000, σε συνάφεια, μεταξύ άλλων, με τη σημασία τους όσον αφορά την καφέ αρκούδα. Η Επιτροπή θα δημοσιεύσει εκ των υστέρων τα σχετικά συμπεράσματα.

([1]) http://www.lcie.org/docs/Action%20Plans/Bulgarian_Bear_Action_Plan_ENG.pdf, το οποίο περιλαμβάνει τις καλύτερες διαθέσιμες επιστημονικές πληροφορίες σχετικά με την κατανομή της καφέ αρκούδας στη Βουλγαρία.
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2010-3709&language=EL.
([3]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2010-010337&language=EL.

Η αποτελεσματική προστασία της καφέ αρκούδας στην οροσειρά της Ρίλας δεν απαιτεί μόνον την προστασία του οικότοπού της αλλά και την προστασία του ίδιου του είδους. Όσον αφορά αυτή την τελευταία πτυχή, η Επιτροπή μπορεί να ενημερώσει το αξιότιμο μέλος ότι κίνησε διαδικασία επί παραβάσει κατά της Βουλγαρίας λόγω εσφαλμένης μεταφοράς των διατάξεων περί προστασίας των ειδών της οδηγίας 92/43/ΕΟΚ ([4]) («οδηγία περί οικοτόπων») στην εθνική της νομοθεσία για τη θήρα. Η απάντηση των βουλγαρικών αρχών στην προειδοποιητική επιστολή της Επιτροπής εξετάζεται από τις υπηρεσίες της Επιτροπής.

([4]) ΕΕ L 206 της 22.7.1992.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007439/12
to the Commission
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)
(24 July 2012)

Subject: Protection of brown bear in Rila Mountains

In order to comply with the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), Bulgaria was to designate Sites of Community Importance (SCIs) for the conservation of the habitats of protected species not later than its accession date of 1 January 2007. Nevertheless, more than five years later the Bulgarian Government has still not designated sufficient areas for the protection of the brown bear in the Rila Mountains. Back in 2009, the Commission was provided with Bulgaria's national Brown Bear Action Plan ([1]), adopted by the Bulgarian Ministry of Environment and Water (MoEW).

However, in answer to Written Question E-3709/2010 tabled by Sandrine Bélier and Michail Tremopoulos, the Commission stated that 'Bulgaria is carrying out further evaluation in order to find out if additional parts of the Rila Mountains are to be included in the national proposal for the brown bear' ([2]), which was due to be submitted by autumn 2010. In 2011, the Bulgarian Academy of Science and environmental NGOs working in the Natura 2000 field submitted to the MoEW a joint, scientifically based proposal for the designation of additional Natura 2000 areas for the protection of the brown bear in the Rila Mountains.

While the scientific facts show that Rila National Park is extremely important as a buffer zone for the conservation of the brown bear, the Bulgarian Government is still refusing to finalise the designation process, giving higher priority to various urbanisation and infrastructure projects in the vicinity of the Rila Mountains.

1. What steps will the Commission take to urge the Bulgarian Government finally to designate the scientifically determined bear habitats in the Rila Mountains?

2. What measures will it take to ensure that the brown bear is effectively protected in the Rila Mountains by the Bulgarian authorities in compliance with the Habitats Directive?

3. Has the Commission finalised the detailed investigation it promised into the Bulgarian law permitting brown bear hunting? ([3])

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

The Commission can inform the Honourable Member that the Bulgarian Government has approved, in November 2010, the designation of 3 additional and the enlargement of 25 other Sites of Community Importance. The relevant data were subsequently formally submitted to the Commission in October 2011 and have since been assessed by the Commission services. The formal endorsement of these site additions, through a Commission decision, is expected to take place in late 2012.

Furthermore, the Commission is organising a bilateral biogeographical seminar in October 2012, where the contribution of these area additions to the Natura 2000 network will be discussed with governmental authorities and nature conservation NGOs, also with regard to their importance for the Brown bear. The Commission will publish the relevant conclusions thereafter.

The effective protection of the Brown bear in the Rila Mountains does not only require a protection of its habitat, but also a protection of the species per se. With regard to this latter aspect, the Commission can inform the Honourable member that it has opened an infringement case against Bulgaria for incorrectly transposing the species protection requirements under Council Directive 92/43/EEC ([4]) ('Habitats Directive') into the national hunting legislation. The reply of the Bulgarian authorities to the Commission's letter of formal notice is currently being assessed.

([1]) http://www.lcie.org/docs/Action%20Plans/Bulgarian_Bear_Action_Plan_ENG.pdf, which includes the best available scientific information on the distribution of the brown bear in Bulgaria.
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2010-3709&language=EN
([3]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2010-010337&language=EN
([4]) OJ L 206, 22.7.1992.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite P-007440/12
à la Commission (Vice-Présidente/Haute Représentante)
Rachida Dati (PPE)
(24 juillet 2012)

Objet: VP/HR — La responsabilité de l'Union européenne face à la crise syrienne

L'escalade de la violence en Syrie et les souffrances qu'elle impose à la population nous contraignent à l'action. 19 000 morts: voilà le chiffre terrifiant que nous devons aujourd'hui affronter, voilà le poids de la faiblesse de l'Union européenne.

Hier, elle a décidé de doubler son aide humanitaire aux réfugiés syriens et de renforcer les sanctions sur le régime. C'est bien, mais c'est surtout bien trop peu. L'Union attend une solution, et pare, en attendant, au plus urgent. Combien de temps encore devrons-nous attendre?

Il est temps pour nous d'agir en responsables en se rendant à l'évidence: les négociations avec le régime de Bachar Al-Assad n'aboutiront pas. Il est urgent de trouver une autre voie d'action. L'Europe a un rôle à jouer dans l'identification et le soutien à la formation d'un gouvernement de transition, qui doit se faire avec celles et ceux qui se sont battus pour la liberté du peuple syrien.

L'Union européenne reste encore aujourd'hui inaudible dans la crise syrienne, alors que c'est son devoir moral d'agir devant l'Histoire qui s'écrit. Absente de la résolution de la crise libyenne, elle reste discrète dans celle de la crise syrienne.

Il est temps d'agir. L'Europe ne peut se contenter de se cacher derrière les efforts ou les échecs de l'ONU, de ses partenaires internationaux, de ses États membres. Cette faiblesse de l'Europe ne sera ni oubliée, ni pardonnée. L'ampleur des destructions et des vies perdues nous démontre qu'il est déjà trop tard. Il est temps d'en prendre conscience.

Je vous avais récemment appelée à vous rendre en Syrie, en tant que femme et en tant que représentante de l'Union. Sans réponse de votre part, Madame la Vice-présidente/Haute représentante, je vous le demande plus clairement: que comptez-vous faire pour incarner enfin un leadership politique et agir dans la résolution de la crise syrienne?

Réponse donnée par la Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante Ashton, au nom de la Commission
(30 août 2012)

L'UE partage vos préoccupations concernant l'impasse politique en Syrie, qui est encore aggravée par la démission de l'émissaire spécial conjoint des Nations unies et de la Ligue des États arabes, M. Annan. Elle continue à soutenir les efforts des Nations unies et de la Ligue des États arabes et se félicite de la nomination de M. Lakhdar Brahimi au poste de Représentant spécial conjoint des Nations unies et de la Ligue des États arabes pour la Syrie afin de poursuivre le travail de M. Annan vers une transition politique pacifique en Syrie. Le plus grand espoir de la population de ce pays réside dans une transition politique menée par les Syriens eux-mêmes.

La poursuite de la militarisation du conflit et des violences sectaires ne peut qu'être synonyme de souffrance pour la Syrie et ses citoyens. Tous ceux qui se sont rendus coupables de violations généralisées et flagrantes des Droits de l'homme doivent répondre de leurs actes. L'UE engage à nouveau tous les groupes d'opposition à poursuivre leurs efforts en vue d'une transition globale et pacifique dans le pays.

En partenariat avec les États membres, l'UE a débloqué 108 millions d'euros pour répondre aux besoins humanitaires en Syrie et dans les pays voisins. Malgré la suspension de l'accord bilatéral officiel avec les autorités de Damas en mai 2011, l'UE n'a pas mis un terme au soutien apporté aux étudiants, aux ONG et aux activistes syriens. Deux mesures spécifiques s'élevant respectivement à 10 millions et 23 millions d'euros ont récemment été adoptées afin d'aider la société civile ainsi que les Syriens réfugiés dans les pays limitrophes. L'UE soutient également les organisations et les militants syriens des Droits de l'homme et elle est disposée à jouer un rôle moteur en matière de coordination des efforts des donateurs afin de soutenir une future transition politique et économique en Syrie. L'UE participe activement au groupe de travail des Amis du peuple syrien pour le redressement économique et le développement.

Afin de maintenir la pression sur le régime, l'UE continuera d'adopter des mesures restrictives aussi longtemps que la répression se poursuivra.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-007440/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Rachida Dati (PPE)
(24 July 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — EU responsibility vis-à-vis the crisis in Syria

The escalation of violence in Syria and the suffering that it has inflicted on the population compels us to take action. 19 000 dead: that is the horrifying toll we are faced with today. That is the price in lives of the European Union's weakness.

Yesterday, the EU decided to double humanitarian aid to Syrian refugees and to step up sanctions on the regime. That is all well and good, but it falls significantly short of what is needed. As the EU waits for a solution to be found, it is merely reacting to events as they happen without addressing the problem as a whole. How much longer must we wait?

It is time for us to take responsibility and to look at the facts: negotiations with Bashar al-Assad's regime are doomed to failure. It is vital that a different approach be adopted. Europe has a role to play in identifying a transitional government and in supporting its formation, and this must be done with the involvement of those who fought for the freedom of the Syrian people.

The European Union has thus far failed to make its voice heard on the Syrian crisis, although its historic moral duty to act is clear. Having failed to play a part in resolving the Libyan crisis, the EU is now standing idly by while the Syrian crisis unfolds.

It is time to act. Europe cannot hide complacently behind the efforts or failures of the UN, its international partners or its Member States. Europe's weakness will neither be forgotten, nor forgiven. The scale of destruction and the number of lives lost show us that it is already too late. It is time to take account of this.

I recently urged you to visit Syria, both as a woman and in your role as EU High Representative. Since this call elicited no response from you, I shall restate it more clearly: what do you intend to do in order, at long last, to show political leadership and to play a part in resolving the Syrian crisis?

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

The EU shares your concerns about the political deadlock on Syria, further triggered by the resignation of UN-LAS Joint Special Envoy Annan. It continues to support the efforts of the UN and the League of Arab States, and welcomes the appointment of Mr Lakhdar Brahimi as a Joint Special Representative for Syria to carry on Mr Annan's work towards a peaceful political transition in Syria. A Syrian-led political transition is the best hope for the people of Syria.

Any further militarisation of the conflict and sectarian violence can only bring suffering to Syria and its citizens. All responsible for widespread and gross human rights violations must be held accountable. The EU continues to urge all opposition groups to work towards an inclusive and peaceful transition in Syria.

In combination with the Member States, the EU has allocated EUR 108 million to address humanitarian needs in Syria and in neighbouring countries. Despite the suspension of the official bilateral cooperation with the Syrian authorities in May 2011, the EU has not stopped its support to Syrian students, activists and NGOs. Two special measures of respectively EUR 10 million and 23 million were recently approved to support both civil society within Syria and the Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries. The EU also supports Syrian human rights organisations and defenders and stands ready to play a leading role in coordinating donor efforts to support a future political and economic transition in Syria. The EU actively participates in the Friends of Syria Working Group on Economic Recovery and Development.

To maintain pressure on the regime, the EU will continue to adopt restrictive measures as long as repression continues.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007441/12
to the Commission
Michael Cashman (S&D) and Arlene McCarthy (S&D)
(24 July 2012)

Subject: Proposed tax on non-resident second-home owners in France

We have been contacted by a number of constituents who own second homes in France and are concerned about the French Government's recent taxation proposals, which will result in a substantial increase in income tax and capitals gains tax affecting British and other 'non-resident' second-home owners in France.

It has been announced that, with the imposition of the 'social charge' element of French taxes on those living outside the country, capital gains tax will increase from 19% to 34.5%, while the tax on rental income will rise from 20% to 35.5% . The former change will come into force at the end of this month, while the latter will be retrospective and backdated to 1 January 2012.

Many of our constituents believe that the effects of this increase could prove disastrous, given the current economic climate and the difficulties many homeowners already face in maintaining their properties.

1. Can the Commission confirm whether this tax increase breaks any EC laws, particularly as the French Government is discriminating on the basis of nationality by imposing a 'social charge' on foreign-owned second homes, despite the fact that the homeowners affected will not gain all the benefits to which such a charge should entitle them?

2. What action, if any, does the Commission intend to take against the French Government if this tax increase is found to contravene EC law?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(12 September 2012)

The French draft bill amending the budget for 2012, which is presently under validation by the French Constitutional Court and then requires presidential promulgation to enter in force, will introduce a general social security contribution on real estate income and capital-gains on immovable proprieties realised by non-residents in France.

From the information currently at our disposal, it appears that the social charges are applied in France on a wide variety of income sources, such as income from investments, rental income and capital gains. They are not only levied on wages, salaries or on pensions. According to the ECJ (judgment of 3 April 2008, C-103/06, *Derouin*), these charges could be considered as part of the general system of taxation.

French residents and non-residents would pay this contribution at the same rate, which is currently 15.5%. Previously, non-residents were not subject to the general social security contribution on these types of income while residents were.

Considering that residents and non-residents will be equally subject to the general social security contribution, at this stage and under the reserve of the interpretation of the nature of the social contributions at stake, no discriminatory treatment with regard to the social charges can be upheld and no action is envisaged to be taken by the Commission in this respect.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007442/12
à la Commission
Rachida Dati (PPE)
(24 juillet 2012)

Objet: Quelle stratégie de cybersécurité à destination des citoyens?

L'internet fait partie du quotidien de plus de la moitié des citoyens européens. Parmi eux, beaucoup l'utilisent pour acheter des biens et des services, gérer leurs comptes bancaires, ou encore correspondre avec leurs administrations.

Pourtant, une partie encore trop élevée de la population n'a pas confiance dans ces outils numériques, car elle craint les abus et les fraudes. Et ces craintes sont légitimes: 12 % des usagers de l'internet en Europe ont été victimes de fraudes, et 8 % ont fait l'objet d'une usurpation d'identité.

Cette défiance est un obstacle à la réalisation du marché unique. Et elle va croissant. Selon un Eurobaromètre récent, 74 % des personnes interrogées considèrent que le risque de devenir victime d'un «cybercrime» s'est accru au cours de l'année écoulée.

Le centre européen de lutte contre la cybercriminalité, qui sera créé en 2013, ambitionne de concentrer son action sur les activités illicites en ligne menées par des groupes criminels organisés. Dans le même temps, la Commission et le SEAE préparent une stratégie européenne pour la cybersécurité qui, elle aussi, se concentrera sur la lutte contre la cybercriminalité.

Il semblerait que cette stratégie omette de s'attaquer aux racines du problème, c'est-à-dire les comportements à risque. Plutôt que d'en traiter uniquement les conséquences, l'adoption de gestes simples pourrait contribuer à réduire drastiquement le nombre d'attaques, de vols et de fraudes.

En effet, près de la moitié des citoyens européens n'a pas encore adopté les gestes de sécurité de base dans ses comportements numériques. Selon un Eurobaromètre récent, 53 % des personnes interrogées n'avaient pas modifié leurs mots de passe au cours de l'année écoulée, et près de la moitié n'avait pas installé d'antivirus!

Les actions d'éducation et de sensibilisation du public devraient être menées de façon parallèle aux actions de détection et de répression. Dès lors, la Commission prévoit-elle d'engager une stratégie d'éducation et de sensibilisation à destination des citoyens?

Réponse donnée par Mme Kroes au nom de la Commission
(3 septembre 2012)

La Commission est elle aussi préoccupée par le fait qu'un trop grand nombre de citoyens se méfient encore des outils numériques et que le nombre de problèmes de cybersécurité augmente, d'autant que cela entrave la réalisation du marché unique. Pour résoudre ces problèmes, la Commission et le Service européen pour l'action extérieure préparent une stratégie européenne conjointe pour la cybersécurité, visant à assurer un environnement numérique sûr et résistant, ainsi qu'une prévention efficace de la cybercriminalité, dans le respect des droits fondamentaux et des valeurs européennes.

Cette stratégie comporterait un vaste ensemble d'actions: elle viserait à favoriser la préparation, la réaction et la coopération afin d'assurer la prévention et de réagir aux risques pesant sur la cybersécurité, notamment par une éventuelle proposition législative relative à la sécurité du réseau et de l'information. à développer un marché intérieur intégré au niveau de l'UE pour les produits/services liés à la cybersécurité; à soutenir davantage la prévention et la lutte contre la cybercriminalité; à encourager les campagnes de sensibilisation et l'éducation à la cybersécurité; à promouvoir les investissements en R&D; à assurer une politique internationale cohérente en matière de cybersécurité pour l'UE; à développer les capacités de cyberdéfense dans le cadre de la politique commune de sécurité et de défense et à accroître de manière générale la capacité de cybersécurité et la coopération dans ce domaine.

Pour renforcer la prise de conscience et l'éducation à la cybersécurité, la Commission envisage de lancer des campagnes de sensibilisation coordonnées au niveau de l'UE et de promouvoir des formations adaptées en milieu scolaire ainsi que pour les professionnels et les étudiants en informatique.

La stratégie complétera les initiatives existantes telles que la proposition de directive sur les attaques contre les systèmes d'information qui entravent l'exploitation des outils de lutte contre la cybercriminalité, qui devrait être adoptée en 2012, et la proposition visant à mettre en place en janvier 2013 un centre européen de lutte contre la cybercriminalité au sein d'Europol.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007442/12
to the Commission
Rachida Dati (PPE)
(24 July 2012)

Subject: Cyber-security strategy for citizens

For over half of Europe's citizens, the Internet is a part of daily life. Many of them use it to purchase goods and services, manage their bank accounts or correspond with public bodies.

Nevertheless, still too many people do not trust these digital tools, fearing abuse and fraud. And these fears are legitimate: 12% of Internet users in Europe have been victims of fraud, while 8% have suffered identity theft.

This mistrust is an obstacle to the completion of the single market. And it is growing. In a recent Eurobarometer survey, 74% of respondents said that the risk of becoming a victim of 'cybercrime' had increased over the past year.

The European Cybercrime Centre to be established in 2013 aims to focus on illegal online activities carried out by organised criminal groups. At the same time, the Commission and the EEAS are preparing a European cyber-security strategy that will also focus on the fight against cybercrime.

It seems that this strategy fails to address the root of the problem, i.e. risk behaviour. Rather than simply tackling the consequences, by taking simple steps we could help to reduce drastically the incidence of attacks, theft and fraud.

For instance, nearly half of Europe's citizens have not yet taken even basic security precautions in their online behaviour. In a recent Eurobarometer survey, 53% of respondents had not changed their passwords during the past year, and nearly half had not installed antivirus software.

Action to detect and stop cybercrime should be accompanied by education and efforts to raise public awareness. Does the Commission therefore plan to implement an education and awareness raising strategy for citizens?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(3 September 2012)

The Commission fully shares the concerns that still too many people do not trust digital tools, that cyber security incidents are on the rise and that these are obstacles to the completion of the single market. To address these issues, the Commission and the European External Action Service are working on a joint European Strategy for Cyber Security aimed at ensuring a safe and resilient digital environment and effectively preventing cybercrime, in respect of fundamental rights and European values.

The strategy would put forward a comprehensive set of actions: foster preparedness, response and cooperation to prevent and respond to cyber risks including a possible legislative proposal on Network and Information Security; develop an integrated EU internal market for cyber security products/services; support further the prevention of and response to cybercrime; promote awareness raising campaigns and cyber security training; foster R & D investments; ensure a coherent international cyber security policy for the EU; develop cyber defence capabilities in the framework of Common Security and Defence Policy and advance cyber security capacity and cooperation globally.

To raise awareness and promote cyber security training, the Commission considers launching EU-wide coordinated awareness raising campaigns and promoting adapted security trainings in schools and for students in computer sciences and professionals.

The strategy will complement existing initiatives like the proposal for a directive on attacks against information systems penalising the exploitation of cybercrime tools, expected for adoption in 2012, and the proposal to establish the European Cybercrime Center within Europol whose launch is expected in January 2013.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej P-007443/12
do Komisji
Paweł Robert Kowal (ECR)
(24 lipca 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Okupacja terytorium Gruzji przez Rosję

Po wojnie z 2008 r. Rosja zwiększyła obecność swojego wojska w Gruzji, ignorując bezpośrednie wezwanie do wycofania rosyjskich sił zbrojnych na pozycje zajmowane przed wybuchem działań wojennych, które zawarto w sześciopunktowym porozumieniu o zawieszeniu broni z sierpnia 2008 r. Rosja podjęła działania logistyczne, wojskowe i fortyfikacyjne, by wytyczyć „granice państwowe" dla reżimu w Abchazji. Z informacji dostarczonych przez misję Gruzji przy UE wynika, że zamknięcie tych „granic" oraz późniejsze ograniczenia swobody przemieszczania się coraz bardziej utrudniają życie ludności po obu stronach linii okupacji. W wyniku okupacji wiele rodzin jest rozdzielonych. Wytyczenie „granic" ograniczyło też ruch przecinający linie okupacji, w tym dostawy pomocy humanitarnej.

Poza tym przed 2008 r. rosyjski personel wojskowy ograniczał się do członków misji pokojowej WNP w liczbie 500 osób (i 300 w rezerwie) w Osetii Południowej oraz dalszych 2500-3000 w Abchazji. Obecnie w okupowanej Gruzji stacjonuje 10 tysięcy rosyjskich żołnierzy.

Chciałbym zatem zapytać Komisję: Jakie podjęła w ostatnim czasie środki, by zaradzić sytuacji opisanej powyżej? Czy zamierza uznać status Gruzji jako państwa znajdującego się pod częściową okupacją, jak uczyniły to już Parlament Europejski, NATO, Rada Europy i Wspólnota Demokracji?

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

Podejście UE do Gruzji zostało potwierdzone w konkluzjach w sprawie Zakaukazia przyjętych przez Radę do Spraw Zagranicznych w dniu 27 lutego 2012 r. W konkluzjach tych podkreślono, jak duże znaczenie ma znalezienie pokojowego rozstrzygnięcia konfliktów w regionie, oraz wezwano wszystkie zainteresowane strony do zdecydowanego zaangażowania. Ponadto wyraźnie stwierdzono, że „UE potwierdza swoje zobowiązanie, że będzie nadal zaangażowana w wysiłki na rzecz stabilizacji i rozwiązywania konfliktów w Gruzji, w tym przez dalsze uczestnictwo w charakterze współprzewodniczącego rozmów genewskich, starania Specjalnego Przedstawiciela Unii Europejskiej w Regionie Południowego Kaukazu i ds. kryzysu w Gruzji oraz dalszą obecność misji obserwacyjnej Unii Europejskiej (EUMM)".

UE wielokrotnie wzywała Rosję do wypełnienia obowiązków wynikających z porozumienia o zawieszeniu broni z dnia 12 sierpnia 2008 r., a także poprzez środki wykonawcze z dnia 8 września 2008 r., zapewniając EUMM dostęp do separatystycznych regionów, co jest szczególnie istotne dla zwiększenia swobody przekraczania granic administracyjnych. Mimo że UE realizuje jasną politykę nieuznawania dążeń regionów separatystycznych, stara się angażować w rozwój tych regionów i ich ludności, aby ułatwić rozwiązywanie konfliktów, a także realizować praktyczne działania mające na celu poprawę jakości życia obywateli dotkniętych konfliktem oraz odtworzyć kontakty międzyludzkie ponad podziałami.

Komisja przypomina, że wiele kwestii poruszonych przez Szanownego Pana Posła w jego pytaniu ujętych jest w międzynarodowych rozmowach genewskich – jest to jedyne forum umożliwiające obu stronom konfliktu spotkanie i wymianę poglądów na temat spraw będących przedmiotem wspólnego zainteresowania.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-007443/12
to the Commission
Paweł Robert Kowal (ECR)
(24 July 2012)

Subject: Occupation of Georgian territory by Russia

After the 2008 war, Russia intensified its military presence in Georgia, in defiance of the direct call contained in the Six-Point Ceasefire Agreement of August 2008 for the withdrawal of Russian military forces to the positions held prior to the outbreak of hostilities. It has implemented logistical, military and fortification measures to establish 'state borders' for the regime in Abkhazia. According to information provided by the Mission of Georgia to the EU, the closure of these 'borders' and the subsequent restrictions on the freedom of movement are making life increasingly difficult for the population residing on both sides of the occupation line. Many families are separated by the occupation. The demarcation of the 'borders' has also restricted movement across the occupation lines, including humanitarian aid.

Furthermore, prior to 2008, Russian military personnel were limited to CIS peacekeeping levels: 500 (plus 300 reserves) in South Ossetia, and a further 2 500 to 3 000 in Abkhazia. Currently, there are 10 000 Russian soldiers stationed in occupied Georgia.

I would therefore like to ask the Commission: what measures it has taken recently to counteract the situation described above. Does the Commission plan to recognise the status of Georgia as a country under partial occupation, just as the European Parliament, NATO, the Council of Europe and the Community of Democracies have done?

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

The EU's approach to Georgia was reconfirmed in the Conclusions on the South Caucasus adopted by the Foreign Affairs Council on 27 February 2012. These conclusions underline the importance of finding peaceful settlements to the conflicts in the region and call for strong commitment by all parties concerned. Moreover, it was clearly stated that 'the EU confirms its commitment to remain engaged and involved in the stabilisation and conflict resolution efforts in Georgia, including by continuing engagement as co-chair in the Geneva Discussions, the efforts of the EUSR for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia and the continued presence of the EU Monitoring Missions (EUMM).'

The EU has repeatedly called on Russia to fulfil its obligations under the ceasefire agreement of 12 August 2008 and through the Implementing Measures of 8 September 2008, by providing access for the EUMM to the breakaway regions — especially important to improve freedom of movement across administrative boundary lines. Although the EU has a clear non-recognition policy towards the breakaway regions, it seeks to engage with those regions and their populations, to facilitate conflict resolution and to effect practical steps to improve the lives of citizens affected by the conflict and to recreate links between people across the dividing lines.

The Commission recalls that many issues raised by the Honourable Member in his question are covered in the Geneva International Discussions: this is the only forum where the sides of the conflict meet and exchange views on issues of common concern.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007444/12
to the Commission
Vicky Ford (ECR)
(24 July 2012)

Subject: Sharing of best practice and implementation of the Water Framework Directive

Following recent on-site meetings with representatives from the UK's environment agency in the east of England, it is clear that much excellent work is taking place towards achieving the ambitions of the Water Framework Directive (WFD). This includes investments and collaborative work with water companies, farmers, landowners, businesses, river users, local community groups, local government representatives and residents. Local management schemes are able not only to improve water quality and biodiversity, but also to help mitigate flood risk. However, despite these measures, in the short to medium term individual WFD targets may be challenging to achieve, particularly with regard to phosphate levels.

The east of England contains about half of England's Grade 1 agricultural land, which means, given food security and safety considerations, that it is important that the action taken to improve water quality is sensitive to the need to harness productive use of agricultural land. Economic circumstances also need to be taken into account.

Given these challenges, it would be extremely helpful if there was effective sharing of best practice across different Member States, so that lessons learned from individual catchment areas can be shared.

What action is the Commission taking to improve and facilitate sharing of best practices?

What monitoring of the implementation of the WFD is the Commission carrying out across Member States in order to ensure that there is a level playing field in implementation?

What impact assessments is the Commission undertaking in order to assess whether the directive's targets need to be re-assessed to take account of lessons learned during implementation?

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

The implementation of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) ([1]) has been supported since 2001 by an unprecedented informal cooperation under the Common Implementation Strategy (CIS), led by Water Directors of Member States and the Commission with participation from all relevant stakeholders. The CIS is a platform for common interpretation of the WFD that facilitates implementation by preparing explanatory documents on specific issues in order to support water managers responsible for WFD implementation.

In accordance with Article 18 of the WFD, the Commission is currently preparing a third report on the implementation of the WFD based on the assessment of the River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) reported by Member States. The Commission intends to publish this report by the end of 2012, as part of the Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water Resources. The report should highlight the main achievements, but also the gaps and deficiencies in the implementation of the directive. It should also contain suggestions for a better implementation of the directive in the WFD's second planning cycle.

The report will be accompanied by individual Member States' assessments presenting an up-to-date picture of the status of EU waters in accordance with the WFD's objective of achieving good ecological status.

([1]) Directive 2000/60/EC, OJ L 327, 22.12.2000.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-007445/12
lill-Kummissjoni
Louis Grech (S&D)
(24 ta' Lulju 2012)

Suġġett: Inizjattiva taċ-Ċittadini Ewropej (ECI) — segwitu

Ir-regolament dwar-Inizjattiva taċ-Ċittadini Ewropej (ECI) daħal fis-seħħ fl-1 ta' April 2012. Jiġbed l-attezzjoni dwar l-Artikolu 11(4) tat-Trattat dwar il-Funzjonament tal-Unjoni Ewropea, li jistipola "mhux inqas minn miljun ċittadin li huma ċittadini ta" numru sinifikanti ta' Stati Membri jista' jieħu l-inizjattiva li jistiednu lill-Kummissjoni, fi ħdan il-qafas tas-setgħat tagħha, biex jissottometti kull proposta adatta dwar materji fejn iċ-ċittadini jqisu li att legali tal-Unjoni huwa meħtieġ għall-fini tal-implimentazzjoni tat-Trattati'.

Din l-inizzjattiva, li għandha l-għan li tiżgura parteċipazzjoni akbar miċ-ċittadini tal-UE fit-tfassil tal-politika, għadha kemm bdiet tissawwar.

Il-Kummissjoni hija sodisfatta bin-numru ta' inizzjattivi rreġistrati proposti s'issa, u mill-kwalità tal-kontenut tagħhom? Kien hemm rispons qawwi miċ-ċittadini tal-UE? X'inhu t-thassib fundamentali taċ-ċittadini tal-UE?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Šefčovič f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(1 ta' Ottubru 2012)

Il-Kummissjoni rċeviet 20 talba għar-reġistrazzjoni ta' inizjattivi mindu daħal fis-seħħ ir-Regolament li jirregola l-Inizjattiva taċ-Ċittadini Ewropej. Minn dawn, il-Kummissjoni rreġistrat ħdax-il proposta ta' inizjattiva (waħda minnhom sadanittant ġiet irtirata mill-organizzaturi) u sebgħa oħra ġew rifjutati peress li ma ġietx rispettata waħda mill-kundizzjonijiet legali għar-reġistrazzjoni kif stipulat fl-Artikolu 4(2) tar-Regolament dwar l-inizjattiva taċ-ċittadini. It-tnejn li fadal qed jiġu analizzati biex jiġi vverifikat jekk il-kundizzjonijiet imsemmija ġewx rispettati.

L-inizjattivi proposti jkopru firxa wiesgħa ta' oqsma ta' politika bħal ma huma l-ambjent, l-edukazzjoni, il-mobilità u t-telekomunikazzjoni. L-Onorevoli Membru jista' jikkonsulta l-inizjattivi reġistrati kollha fir-reġistru li għandha l-Kummissjoni fuq l-internet:
http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/initiatives/ongoing?lg=mt

Kif qal l-Onorevoli Membru, l-Inizjattiva taċ-Ċittadini Ewropej m'ilhiex wisq li daħlet fis-seħħ, fl-1 ta' April 2012, u għaldaqstant għadu kmieni wisq biex wieħed jiġbed konklużjonijiet ġenerali dwar dak li l-aktar jinsab fuq moħħ iċ-ċittadini tal-UE abbażi tal-inizjattivi li sa issa ġew ipprezentati lill-Kummissjoni.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007445/12
to the Commission
Louis Grech (S&D)
(24 July 2012)

Subject: European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) — follow up

The regulation governing the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) came into force on 1 April 2012. It draws on Article 11(4) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which stipulates that 'not less than one million citizens who are nationals of a significant number of Member States may take the initiative of inviting the 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'.

This initiative, which aims to ensure greater participation by EU citizens in EU policy-making, is only just starting to take shape.

Is the Commission satisfied with the number of proposed initiatives registered thus far, and with the quality of their content? Has the response from EU citizens been strong?

What seem to be the overriding concerns of EU citizens?

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(1 October 2012)

The Commission has received 20 requests for registration of initiatives since the regulation governing the European Citizens' Initiative came into force. Of these, eleven proposed initiatives have been registered by the Commission (one of which has since been withdrawn by the organisers) and seven have been refused given that one of the legal conditions for registration set out in Article 4(2) of the regulation on the citizens' initiative was not met. The remaining two are being analysed to verify that the abovementioned conditions are met.

The proposed initiatives cover a wide range of policy areas such as environment, education, mobility and telecommunications. The Honourable Member can consult all registered initiatives in the Commission online register: http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/initiatives/ongoing

As the Honourable Member points out, the European Citizens' Initiative came into force only recently, on 1 April 2012, and therefore it is too early to draw general conclusions regarding the overriding concerns of EU citizens on the basis of the initiatives that have so far been submitted to the Commission.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007446/12
an die Kommission
Franziska Katharina Brantner (Verts/ALE)
(25. Juli 2012)

Betrifft: Ägypten — Rückzahlungsklage gegen die Allianz arabischer Frauen

Die Verfasserin hat Kenntnis davon erhalten, dass die Kommission im Rahmen einer Klage gegen die Allianz arabischer Frauen die Rückzahlung von 55 796,59 EURfordert, die für das Projekt „Frauen in Entscheidungsprozessen“ (Vertragsnummer 50-427, Betreff: B7-705/2000/170) vorgesehen waren.

1. Teilt die Kommission angesichts der gegenwärtigen politischen Lage und der neuen Agenda der VP/HV Ashton mit dem Schwerpunkt auf Menschen- und Frauenrechten ([1]) die Auffassung, dass es wegen diese besonderen Umstände einer Neuerwägung des Falles einschließlich der finanziellen Forderungen bedarf?

2. Ist sich die Kommission dessen bewusst, dass diese finanziellen Forderungen wegen innenpolitischer Finanzierungsbeschränkungen zwangsläufig zur Insolvenz und Schließung der Allianz arabischer Frauen führen werden?

3. Die Allianz arabischer Frauen hat große finanzielle Schwierigkeiten, die auf jüngste Verfügungen zurückzuführen sind, die den Zugang ägyptischer nichtstaatlicher Organisationen zu Finanzmitteln beschränken. Teilt die Kommission die Auffassung, dass die gegenwärtige Unfähigkeit der Allianz arabischer Frauen, den Rückzahlungsforderungen nachzukommen, daher auf höhere Gewalt zurückzuführen und somit keine Zinsforderungen für diesen Zeitraum erhoben werden sollten, solange sich an dieser Lage nichts ändert?

4. Bei der Unterzeichnung des Vertrags zwischen der Kommission und der Allianz arabischer Frauen kam man überein, dass die Allianz arabischer Frauen ihren Anteil in Ägyptischen Pfund (EGP) gemäß des Wechselkurses zum Zeitpunkt der Vertragsunterzeichnung entrichten werde. Wird die Kommission gewährleisten, dass alle weiteren Zahlungen der Allianz arabischer Frauen, einschließlich der Rückzahlung von 100 000 EGP vom 2. April 2008, gemäß dieses Wechselkurses erfolgen?

5. Sollte die Kommission in dem Fall wie beabsichtigt vorgehen, wie wird sie dann den Widerspruch zwischen dem Eintreten für die Frauenrechte in der arabischen Welt und der gleichzeitig von ihr erzwungenen Schließung der führenden ägyptischen Organisation auf diesem Gebiet erklären?

Antwort von Herrn Füle im Namen der Kommission
(11. September 2012)

1. und 2. Im Einklang mit den jüngsten Erklärungen der Hohen Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin und der EU-Agenda für die weltweite Förderung der Geschlechtergleichstellung und der Frauenrechte setzt sich die Kommission für die Unterstützung der Frauenrechte in Ägypten ein. Die Empfänger von EU-Mitteln müssen allerdings die Finanzvorschriften der EU umfassend einhalten und ein solides Finanzmanagement gewährleisten.

3. Der Vertrag wurde im Jahr 2000 unterzeichnet. Die Nichteinhaltung der vertraglichen Verpflichtungen der Organisation wurde im Rahmen einer Überprüfung im Jahr 2006 festgestellt und lässt sich also nicht auf „höhere Gewalt“ oder die gegenwärtige Lage in Ägypten zurückführen. Im Übrigen nimmt die Kommission zu laufenden Gerichtsverfahren üblicherweise nicht Stellung.

4. Die erhebliche Abwertung des EGP wurde von der Delegation im Einklang mit den geltenden allgemeinen Bedingungen berücksichtigt, und der Allianz arabischer Frauen wurde dementsprechend mitgeteilt, dass der zurückgeforderte Betrag von 90 328,80 EUR auf 56 551,79 EUR verringert wurde.

5. Die Kommission tritt auch weiterhin nachdrücklich für die Rechte der Frauen und ihre Interessen in der arabischen Welt ein. So wird beispielsweise zurzeit eine mit 4 Mio. EUR ausgestattete Maßnahme vorbereitet, die die Organisation UN-Women zur Förderung der Frauenrechte in Ägypten durchführen soll.

([1]) http://ecfr.eu/content/entry/commentary_the_eus_rights_of_passage

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007446/12
to the Commission
Franziska Katharina Brantner (Verts/ALE)
(25 July 2012)

Subject: Egypt — Repayment lawsuit against the Alliance for Arab Women (AAW)

It has come to my attention that the Commission is conducting a lawsuit against the Alliance for Arab Women (AAW) over a repayment of EUR 55 796.59 for the project 'Women in Decision-Making Process' (contract number 50-427, subject: B7-705/2000/170).

1. Given the present political situation and VP/HR Ashton's new agenda prioritising human and women's rights ([1]), does the Commission agree that these special circumstances call for a reconsideration of the case, including financial demands?

2. Is the Commission aware that, owing to domestically imposed funding restrictions, its financial demands will inevitably lead to the insolvency and closure of the AAW?

3. The AAW is facing severe financial hardship as a result of recent decrees impairing Egyptian NGOs' access to funds. Does the Commission agree that the AAW's current failure to meet repayment demands is therefore due to *force majeure* and that no interest payments should be charged for this period, as long as this situation continues?

4. When the Commission and AAW signed their contract, it was agreed that the AAW would pay its share in Egyptian pounds in accordance with the exchange rate at the time of signing. Will the Commission guarantee that all further payments by the AAW, including the repayment of EGP 100 000 on 2 April 2008, will be made in accordance with this exchange rate?

5. If the Commission pursues the case as planned, how will it explain the contradiction between advocating women's rights in the Arab world and simultaneously forcing the closure of Egypt's leading organisation in this field?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(11 September 2012)

1-2. The Commission is committed to supporting women's rights in Egypt in line with the recent declarations of the HR/VP and with the EU agenda for promoting gender and women's rights all over the globe. But EU financial rules and regulations must be fully respected by EU grant beneficiaries who are expected to exercise sound financial management.

3. The contract was signed in 2000 and an audit in 2006 revealed the breach by the organisation of its contractual obligations. This is thus not related to '*force majeure*' or the current situation in Egypt. The Commission has the policy not to comment further on an ongoing judicial process.

4. The substantial devaluation of the EGP was taken into account by the Delegation, in line with the applicable General Conditions: AAW was duly notified that the amount to be recovered was decreased from EUR 90,328.80 to EUR 56,551.79.

5. The Commission remains fully engaged and supportive of women's rights and cause in the Arab world. For exemple, it is currently preparing a EUR 4 million action to be implemented by UN Women for the promotion of women's rights in Egypt.

([1]) http://ecfr.eu/content/entry/commentary_the_eus_rights_of_passage

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007449/12
an die Kommission (Vizepräsidentin/Hohe Vertreterin)
Ria Oomen-Ruijten (PPE), Thijs Berman (S&D), Franziska Keller (Verts/ALE), Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE) und Esther de Lange (PPE)
(25. Juli 2012)

Betrifft: VP/HR — Diskriminierung aufgrund von Kastenzugehörigkeit

Mit Sorge haben wir festgestellt, dass weder im Menschenrechtspaket, das in der Gemeinsamen Mitteilung der Kommission an das Europäische Parlament und den Rat mit dem Titel „Menschenrechte und Demokratie im Mittelpunkt des auswärtigen Handelns der EU — ein wirksamerer Ansatz“ (KOM(2011)0886) umrissen wird, das den Strategischen Rahmen und den Aktionsplan der EU für Menschenrechte und Demokratie umfasst, noch in den Jahresberichten der EU über die Menschenrechte und die Demokratie in der Welt ein Verweis auf „Diskriminierung aufgrund von Kastenzugehörigkeit“ enthalten ist.

Weltweit sind über 260 Millionen Menschen aus Gründen der Kastenzugehörigkeit mit extremen Formen von Diskriminierung, Ausbeutung und Gewalt konfrontiert. Diskriminierung aufgrund von Kastenzugehörigkeit stellt ein wesentliches Hindernis für die Verwirklichung der bürgerlichen, politischen, wirtschaftlichen, sozialen und kulturellen Rechte der betroffenen Menschen dar; dies wurde durch zahlreiche UN-Vertragsorgane und -Sonderverfahren bestätigt. Das Europäische Parlament hat seine Bedenken zum Ausdruck gebracht und in seiner Entschließung zu dem Jahresbericht über die Menschenrechte in der Welt 2010 folgende Empfehlungen ausgesprochen:

„111. verurteilt alle Formen von Menschenrechtsverletzungen, die gegen Personen begangen werden, die aufgrund ihrer Arbeit und Abstammung diskriminiert werden, und verurteilt den beschränkten Zugang zu Gerechtigkeit für die Opfer; fordert die EU und ihre Mitgliedstaaten dazu auf, die Grundsätze und Leitlinien der Vereinten Nationen für die effektive Beseitigung von Diskriminierung aufgrund von Arbeit und Abstammung zu befürworten;

117. empfiehlt Initiativen für EU-Rechtsvorschriften, mit denen sichergestellt wird, dass bei der EU-Menschenrechtspolitik und den Instrumenten für die Zusammenarbeit auf die Beseitigung von Diskriminierung aufgrund von Kastenzugehörigkeit und Maßnahmen in Ländern mit Kastensystem, einschließlich Nepal, Indien, Bangladesch, Pakistan, Sri Lanka und Jemen, geachtet wird“.

1. Auf welche Weise hat die Hohe Vertreterin die Diskriminierung aufgrund von Kastenzugehörigkeit in den letzten 12 Monaten in Ländern mit Kastensystem zur Sprache gebracht?

2. Ist die Hohe Vertreterin bereit, die Kastenzugehörigkeit neben den anderen in den EU-Mitteilungen genannten Formen der Diskriminierung als Diskriminierungsgrund aufzunehmen und diese Form der Diskriminierung im Rahmen der Maßnahmen der EU zur Bekämpfung der Diskriminierung anzugehen? Wenn nicht, warum nicht?

Antwort von Frau Ashton — Hohe Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin im Namen der Kommission
(11. September 2012)

Die EU setzt sich nachdrücklich für die weltweite Bekämpfung aller Formen von Diskriminierung, einschließlich Kastendiskriminierung, ein. Dazu greift sie auf eine Reihe bereits bestehender Instrumente zurück:

— Auf bilateraler Ebene: Die EU benutzt politische und fachliche Dialoge, um ihre Anliegen zur Sprache zu bringen. So wird z. B. im Rahmen des Menschenrechtsdialogs mit Indien das Thema der Kastendiskriminierung regelmäßig angesprochen. Darüber hinaus pflegen die EU-Delegationen in Ländern mit Kastensystem regelmäßige Kontakte mit lokalen und internationalen Organisationen, sie sich mit dieser Thematik befassen.

— EU-Programmierung: Die Auswirkungen der Kastendiskriminierung sind auch Gegenstand von Maßnahmen der EU im Rahmen ihrer geografischen (Länder- und Regionalstrategien) und thematischen (vor all des Europäischen Instruments für Demokratie und Menschenrechte — EDIHR) Instrumente. Darüber hinaus finanziert die EU Maßnahmen im Rahmen des EIDHR und weiterer thematischer Haushaltslinien, die auf die Bekämpfung von Kastendiskriminierung ausgerichtet sind und von zivilgesellschaftlichen Organisationen durchgeführt werden. Die EDIHR-Strategiedokumente für die Jahre 2011-2013 enthalten einen ausdrücklichen Bezug auf die Kastendiskriminierung.

— Auf multilateraler Ebene: Die EU ist auch im Rahmen der UN aktiv und trug zur Arbeit der UN-Unterkommission für die Förderung und den Schutz der Menschenrechte, einschließlich dessen Abschlussbericht „Discrimination based in Work and Descent“, bei. Sie hat auch zur Behandlung von Fragen der Kastendiskriminierung im Rahmen der Allgemeinen Regelmäßigen Überprüfungen (Universal Periodic Review) beigetragen, so z. B. bei Indien, Pakistan, Sri Lanka und Bangladesch.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007449/12
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Ria Oomen-Ruijten (PPE), Thijs Berman (S&D), Franziska Keller (Verts/ALE), Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE) e Esther de Lange (PPE)
(25 luglio 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Discriminazione basata sulla casta

Abbiamo preso atto con preoccupazione del fatto che la «discriminazione basata sulla casta» non viene menzionata né nel pacchetto sui diritti umani illustrato nella comunicazione congiunta della Commissione al Parlamento europeo e al Consiglio intitolata «Diritti umani e democrazia al centro dell'azione esterna dell'Unione europea — Verso un approccio più efficace» (COM(2011)0886), consistente nel quadro strategico e nel piano d'azione dell'UE sui diritti umani e la democrazia, né nella relazione annuale dell'Unione europea sui diritti umani e la democrazia nel mondo.

Nel mondo sono più di 260 milioni le persone confrontate a forme estreme di discriminazione, sfruttamento e violenza in ragione dell'appartenenza di casta. Come osservato da numerosi organi delle Nazioni Unite nonché nell'ambito di varie procedure speciali delle Nazioni Unite, la discriminazione basata sulla casta crea enormi ostacoli alla realizzazione dei diritti civili, politici, economici, sociali e culturali di coloro che ne sono vittime. Il Parlamento ha espresso la sua preoccupazione in proposito e formulato raccomandazioni nella sua risoluzione sulla relazione annuale sui diritti umani nel mondo 2010 affermando quanto segue:

«111. condanna tutte le forme di violazione dei diritti umani ai danni di persone che subiscono discriminazioni sulla base del loro lavoro e della loro discendenza, come pure l'accesso limitato alla giustizia per le vittime di tali violazioni; invita l'UE e gli Stati membri ad appoggiare il progetto di principi e orientamenti delle Nazioni Unite per l'efficace eliminazione della discriminazione basata sul lavoro e la discendenza.

117. raccomanda iniziative legislative dell'UE al fine di garantire che, nella politica dell'Unione per i diritti umani e negli strumenti di cooperazione, si presti attenzione all'eliminazione della discriminazione basata sulla casta, e chiede di intervenire nei paesi colpiti dal fenomeno delle caste, inclusi il Nepal, l'India, il Bangladesh, il Pakistan, lo Sri Lanka e lo Yemen».

1. Può l'Alto Rappresentante indicare come ha affrontato negli ultimi dodici mesi il tema della discriminazione basata sulla casta nei paesi con un sistema di caste?

2. È disposto l'Alto Rappresentante ha inserire la casta fra i motivi di discriminazione, accanto alle altre forme di discriminazione elencate nelle comunicazioni dell'UE, e ad affrontare questa forma di discriminazione nel quadro delle politiche dell'Unione volte a combattere la discriminazione? In caso negativo, quali sono le ragioni per cui non intende farlo?

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

L'Unione europea è attivamente impegnata nella lotta contro ogni forma di discriminazione, compresa quella basata sulla casta, in tutto il mondo, e conduce tale lotta mediante una serie di mezzi e strumenti.

— A livello bilaterale, l'Unione esprime le sue preoccupazioni in occasione dei dialoghi politici e specializzati. Ad esempio, nell'ambito del dialogo con l'India in materia di diritti umani, l'UE solleva regolarmente questioni connesse alla discriminazione basata sulla casta. Nei paesi in cui esistono problemi di casta, inoltre, le delegazioni dell'UE intrattengono contatti periodici con le organizzazioni locali e internazionali impegnate ad affrontare il problema.

— A livello di programmazione, il problema della discriminazione basata sulla casta e delle relative conseguenze è affrontato tramite strumenti sia geografici (strategie nazionali o regionali), sia tematici, specialmente lo strumento europeo per la democrazia e i diritti umani (EIDHR). La Commissione finanzia inoltre, a titolo dell'EIDHR e di altre linee di bilancio tematiche, iniziative dedicate alla discriminazione basata sulla casta che vengono attuate da organizzazioni della società civile. I documenti strategici dell'EIDHR per il 2011-2013 contengono un riferimento esplicito a questa forma di discriminazione.

— A livello multilaterale, l'UE è attiva nel contesto delle Nazioni Unite e ha contribuito ai lavori dell'ex sottocommissione ONU sulla promozione e la protezione dei diritti umani, tra cui la relazione finale sulla discriminazione basata sul lavoro e sulla nascita. L'Unione ha inoltre contribuito a inserire le questioni connesse alla discriminazione basata sulla casta nel processo di revisione periodica universale: tali questioni sono infatti state prese in esame nelle revisioni dell'India, del Pakistan, dello Sri Lanka e del Bangladesh.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-007449/12
aan de Commissie (Vicevoorzitter — Hoge Vertegenwoordiger)
Ria Oomen-Ruijten (PPE), Thijs Berman (S&D), Franziska Keller (Verts/ALE), Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE) en Esther de Lange (PPE)
(25 juli 2012)

Betreft: VP/HR — Discriminatie op grond van kaste

Wij hebben er met bezorgdheid kennis van genomen dat noch het mensenrechtenpakket, zoals omschreven in de gemeenschappelijke mededeling aan het Europees Parlement en de Raad getiteld „Een centrale plaats voor mensenrechten en democratie in het externe optreden van de EU — voor een meer doeltreffende aanpak" (COM(2011)0886), bestaande uit het strategisch EU-kader en actieplan voor mensenrechten en democratie, noch EU-jaarverslagen over de mensenrechten en democratie in de wereld, een verwijzing bevatten naar discriminatie op grond van kaste.

Wereldwijd hebben meer dan 260 miljoen mensen te maken met extreme vormen van discriminatie, exploitatie en geweld op grond van kaste. Door een groot aantal VN-verdragsorganen en in speciale VN-procedures is opgemerkt dat discriminatie op grond van kaste grote barrières opwerpt voor het bereiken van burger-, politieke, economische, sociale en culturele rechten voor de slachtoffers. Het Parlement heeft zijn zorgen geuit en als volgt aanbevelingen gedaan in zijn resolutie over het jaarverslag over de mensenrechten in de wereld in 2010:

„111. veroordeelt alle vormen van mensenrechtenschendingen tegen mensen die gediscrimineerd worden op basis van werk en afkomst, en de beperkte toegang tot rechtspraak voor de slachtoffers; verzoekt de EU en haar lidstaten om de ontwerpbeginselen en -richtsnoeren van de Verenigde Naties voor de daadwerkelijke uitbanning van discriminatie op grond van werk en afkomst te ondersteunen;

117. beveelt initiatieven voor EU-wetgeving aan om ervoor te zorgen dat er in het mensenrechtenbeleid en de samenwerkingsinstrumenten van de EU aandacht wordt besteed aan het uitbannen van discriminatie op basis van kaste, en aan optreden in landen met een kastenstelsel, zoals Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka en Jemen;".

1. Hoe heeft de Hoge Vertegenwoordiger in de afgelopen twaalf maanden discriminatie op grond van kaste aan de orde gesteld in landen met een kastenstelsel?

2. Is de Hoge Vertegenwoordiger bereid kaste naast andere vermelde vormen van discriminatie als een grond van discriminatie op te nemen in EU-mededelingen, en deze vorm van discriminatie aan te pakken in het kader van het antidiscriminatiebeleid van de EU? Zo nee, waarom niet?

Antwoord van hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter Ashton namens de Commissie
(11 september 2012)

De EU is vastbesloten wereldwijd alle vormen van discriminatie, met inbegrip van discriminatie op grond van kaste, te bestrijden. De EU is uitgebreid hierbij betrokken via een aantal bestaande hulpmiddelen en instrumenten:

— Op bilateraal niveau: Er wordt gebruik gemaakt van politieke en gespecialiseerde dialogen om punten van zorg voor de EU op te werpen. Bijvoorbeeld in de context van de mensrechtendialoog tussen de EU en India worden kwesties als discriminatie op grond van kaste vaak door de EU aangekaart. Daarnaast onderhouden de EU-delegaties in landen waar een kastesysteem bestaat, regelmatig contact met de lokale en internationale organisaties die dit probleem trachten aan te pakken.

— EU-programmering: Discriminatie op grond van kaste en de gevolgen daarvan worden aan de orde gesteld via geografische instrumenten (landen- en regionale strategieën) en via thematische instrumenten, meer bepaald het Europees instrument voor democratie en mensenrechten (EIDHR). De Commissie financiert voorts ook activiteiten in het kader van het EIDHR en andere thematische begrotingslijnen, die zijn gericht tegen discriminatie op grond van kaste en ten uitvoer worden gelegd via de maatschappelijke organisaties. De EIDHR-strategiedocumenten voor 2011-2013 bevatten een expliciete verwijzing naar discriminatie op grond van kaste.

— Op multilateraal niveau: De EU is actief in de VN-context en heeft bijgedragen aan de werkzaamheden van de voormalige VN-subcommissie inzake de bevordering en de bescherming van de mensenrechten, met inbegrip van het eindverslag over discriminatie op basis van werk en afkomst. De EU heeft er ook toe bijgedragen om discriminatie op grond van kaste op te nemen in de universele periodieke evaluatie, met name voor India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka en Bangladesh.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007449/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Ria Oomen-Ruijten (PPE), Thijs Berman (S&D), Franziska Keller (Verts/ALE), Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE) and Esther de Lange (PPE)
(25 July 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Discrimination on grounds of caste

We have noted with concern that there is no reference to 'discrimination on the grounds of caste' in either the human rights package outlined in the Commission's joint communication to Parliament and the Council entitled 'Human rights and democracy at the heart of EU external action — towards a more effective approach' (COM(2011)0886), consisting of the EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy, or the EU's Annual Reports on Human Rights and Democracy in the World.

More than 260 million people worldwide face extreme forms of discrimination, exploitation, and violence based on caste. Caste-based discrimination imposes huge barriers to the attainment of the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of those affected, as has been noted by a large number of UN treaty bodies and UN Special Procedures. Parliament raised its concerns and made recommendations in its resolution on the Annual Report on Human Rights in the World in 2010, in the following terms:

'111. Condemns all forms of human rights violations committed against people discriminated against on the basis of work and descent, and the limited access to justice for victims; calls on the EU and its Member States to endorse the draft UN Principles and Guidelines for the Effective Elimination of Discrimination based on Work and Descent;

117. Recommends initiatives for EU legislation to ensure that attention is paid in EU human rights policy and cooperation instruments to eliminating caste discrimination, and action in caste-affected countries, including Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Yemen;'.

1. How has the High Representative addressed caste discrimination in caste-affected countries in the last 12 months?

2. Is the High Representative willing to include caste as a ground of discrimination, alongside other forms of discrimination listed in EU communications, and to address this form of discrimination under EU anti-discrimination policies? If not, why not?

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

The EU is deeply committed to fighting all forms of discirmination, including caste discrimination, worldwide. The EU is extensively engaged in this fight through a number of existing tools and instruments:

— At bilateral level: Political and specialised dialogues are used to raise EU concerns. For example, in the context of EU-India Human Rights Dialogue, questions of caste discrimination are regularly raised by the EU. In addition, the EU Delegations in caste-affected countries maintain regular contacts with the local and international organisations that are attempting to address this issue.

— EU Programming: Caste discrimination and its effects have been addressed both through geographic instruments (Country or Regional Strategies) and thematic instruments, in particular the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rigths (EIDHR). In addition, the Commission also finances activities under the EIDHR and other thematic budget lines, which are focused on caste-based discrimination and are implemented through civil society organisations. The EIDHR strategy documents for 2011-2013 contain an explicit reference to caste discrimination.

— At multilateral level: The EU is active in the UN context and has contributed to the work of the former UN Sub-Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, including the final report on Discrimination based on Work and Descent. The EU has also contributed in including caste based discrimination issues in the Universal Periodic Review process. Such has been the case for reviews on India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007450/12
an die Kommission
Ria Oomen-Ruijten (PPE), Thijs Berman (S&D), Franziska Keller (Verts/ALE), Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE) und Esther de Lange (PPE)
(25. Juli 2012)

Betrifft: Kinderarbeit und Schuhproduktion

Vor Kurzem ging aus einem Bericht des „Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations" (SOMO) (Wissenschaftliches Zentrum für Multinationale Unternehmen) mit dem Titel: „Where the Shoe Pinches — Child Labour in the Production of Leather Shoes" („Wo der Schuh drückt — Kinderarbeit bei der Herstellung von Lederschuhen") hervor, dass Kinderarbeit und Verstöße gegen die Arbeitnehmerrechte bei der Herstellung von Lederschuhen und anderen Schuhen in Indien für europäische Unternehmen sowie in der erweiterten internationalen Lieferkette dieser Unternehmen mit Sitz in der EU keine Seltenheit sind ([1]).

Im Rahmen der Kampagne „STOPP Kinderarbeit! — Schule ist der beste Arbeitsplatz" wurde eine Umfrage über die Herstellung von Schuhen durchgeführt, die meisten Unternehmen beantworteten den Fragebogen jedoch nicht. Darüber hinaus zeigen die Umfrageergebnisse, dass europäische Schuhunternehmen, die eine aktive Politik der sozialen Verantwortung betreiben, sich meistens auf Umweltthemen beschränken.

Ist die Kommission bereit, die Frage der sozialen Verantwortung von Unternehmen und die Frage der Menschenrechte im Rahmen ihrer Beziehungen zu Ländern, die Schuhe für den europäischen Markt herstellen — insbesondere China, Indien, Vietnam und Brasilien — anzusprechen und Möglichkeiten ausfindig zu machen, die Regierungen dieser Länder bei der Suche nach Lösungen einzubinden?

Ist die Kommission angesichts der Tatsache, dass sie die Leitlinien der Vereinten Nationen für Unternehmen und Menschenrechte und die revidierten Richtlinien der OECD für multinationale Unternehmen unterstützt, bereit, sich an die europäische Schuhindustrie zu wenden und in diesem Sektor auf eine vollständige Transparenz in der Lieferkette hinzuarbeiten und ihre Initiativkraft zu nutzen, um mit der Industrie einen konkreten Aktionsplan auszuarbeiten, um gegen Verletzungen der Arbeitnehmerrechte und andere Menschenrechtsverletzungen entlang der gesamtem Lieferkette vorzugehen?

Ist die Kommission bereit, diese Frage im Rahmen der Verhandlungen über das Freihandelsabkommen zwischen der EU und Indien zur Sprache zu bringen und gegebenenfalls die Möglichkeit eines Streitbeilegungsmechanismus und die Einbindung der Bürgergesellschaft in Erwägung zu ziehen?

Welche anderen Schritte kann und will die Kommission vor dem Hintergrund der neuen EU-Strategie 2011-2014 über die soziale Verantwortung von Unternehmen ([2]) zur Bekämpfung von Kinderarbeit und anderen Menschenrechtsverletzungen in der Schuhindustrie, die Unternehmen mit Sitz in der EU beliefern, unternehmen?

Ist die Kommission bereit, zusätzliche Untersuchungen über (Kinder-)Arbeit und andere Menschenrechtsfragen in der internationalen Schuhindustrie, die Lederschuhe für den europäischen Markt liefert, in die Wege zu leiten?

Wird die Kommission dafür sorgen, dass diese Untersuchungen mit Empfehlungen darüber einhergehen, wie alle Beteiligten zusammenarbeiten können, um zu einer Lösung zu gelangen?

([1]) Der Bericht ist unter folgender Adresse abrufbar: http://www.stopchildlabour.org/Stop-Childlabour/News-Items/Shoe-companies-keep-silent-about-child-labour
([2]) KOM(2011)0681.

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007451/12
an die Kommission (Vizepräsidentin/Hohe Vertreterin)
Ria Oomen-Ruijten (PPE), Thijs Berman (S&D), Franziska Keller (Verts/ALE), Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE) und Esther de Lange (PPE)
(25. Juli 2012)

Betrifft: VP/HR — Kinderarbeit und Schuhproduktion

Vor Kurzem ging aus einem Bericht des „Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations" (SOMO) (Wissenschaftliches Zentrum für Multinationale Unternehmen) mit dem Titel: „Where the Shoe Pinches — Child Labour in the Production of Leather Shoes" („Wo der Schuh drückt — Kinderarbeit bei der Herstellung von Lederschuhen") hervor, dass Kinderarbeit und Verstöße gegen die Arbeitnehmerrechte bei der Herstellung von

Lederschuhen und anderen Schuhen in Indien für europäische Unternehmen sowie in der erweiterten internationalen Lieferkette dieser Unternehmen mit Sitz in der EU keine Seltenheit sind ([3]).

Im Rahmen der Kampagne „STOPP Kinderarbeit! — Schule ist der beste Arbeitsplatz" wurde unlängst eine Umfrage über die Herstellung von Schuhen durchgeführt, die meisten Unternehmen beantworteten den Fragebogen jedoch nicht. Darüber hinaus zeigen die Umfrageergebnisse, dass europäische Schuhunternehmen, die eine aktive Politik der sozialen Verantwortung betreiben, sich meistens auf Umweltthemen beschränken.

Ist die Hohe Vertreterin bereit, die Frage der sozialen Verantwortung von Unternehmen und die Frage der Menschenrechte im Rahmen der Beziehungen der EU zu Ländern, die Schuhe für den europäischen Markt herstellen — insbesondere China, Indien, Vietnam und Brasilien — anzusprechen und Möglichkeiten ausfindig zu machen, die Regierungen dieser Länder bei der Suche nach Lösungen einzubinden?

Ist die Hohe Vertreterin bereit, zusätzliche Untersuchungen über (Kinder-)Arbeit und andere Menschenrechtsfragen in der internationalen Schuhindustrie, die Lederschuhe für den europäischen Markt liefert, in die Wege zu leiten?

Wird die Hohe Vertreterin dafür sorgen, dass diese Untersuchungen mit Empfehlungen darüber einhergehen, wie alle Beteiligten zusammenarbeiten können, um zu einer Lösung zu gelangen?

Gemeinsame Antwort von Herrn De Gucht im Namen der Kommission
(12. September 2012)

Die Kommission arbeitet auf die Abschaffung verbotener Formen von Kinderarbeit hin und stützt sich dabei auf die Schlussfolgerungen des Rates von 2010 zum Thema Kinderarbeit, die Mitteilung *„Eine EU-Agenda für die Rechte des Kindes"* von 2011 und das Internationale Programm zur Beseitigung der Kinderarbeit der ILO. Die EU befasst sich umfassend mit den grundlegenden Ursachen wie Armut und Bildung und unterstützt die Ratifizierung von zwei Fakultativprotokollen zum Übereinkommen über die Rechte des Kindes und der ILO-Übereinkommen Nr. 182 und 138. Im Strategischen Rahmen der EU und im Aktionsplan für Menschenrechte von 2012 sind die Beteiligung der EU an der Globalen Konferenz zu Kinderarbeit 2013 und die Förderung der Aktualisierung von Verzeichnissen gefährlicher Arten von Arbeiten im Rahmen des ILO-Übereinkommens Nr. 182 vorgesehen. Kinderarbeit steht mit Projektfinanzierung und einem Menschenrechtsdialog auf der EU-Menschenrechtsagenda in Indien. Indien ist dabei, sein Gesetz zur Kinderarbeit zu ändern und den Weg zur Ratifizierung der ILO-Übereinkommen frei zu machen.

Bei Handels-/Investitionsverhandlungen legt die Kommission Wert darauf, dass die soziale Verantwortung der Unternehmen (CSR) einbezogen wird, wie es in den Freihandelsabkommen mit Korea, den Cariforum-Staaten und Kolumbien/Peru der Fall war. Sie halten dazu an, international anerkannte Instrumente wie die OECD-Leitlinien für multinationale Unternehmen zu berücksichtigen, die mit dem Netz nationaler Kontaktstellen verbunden sind. Diese Stellen sollen zur Lösung derartiger Fragen beitragen. Die Kommission verfolgt diesen Ansatz, indem sie Interessengruppen wie die europäische Industrie einbezieht. Sie ist der Auffassung, dass hier ein ausreichendes Verständnis von CSR die Basis bildet und derzeit keine weiteren Untersuchungen erforderlich sind. Die Kommission hat einen Aufruf zum Aufbau von „European multi-stakeholder platforms on CSR in relevant business sectors" veröffentlicht, die allen Branchen offenstehen, und arbeitet mit Unternehmen und Interessengruppen zusammen, um Orientierungshilfen im Bereich Menschenrechte zu entwickeln.

([3]) Der Bericht ist unter folgender Adresse abrufbar: http://www.stopchildlabour.org/Stop-Childlabour/News-Items/Shoe-companies-keep-silent-about-child-labour

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007450/12
alla Commissione
Ria Oomen-Ruijten (PPE), Thijs Berman (S&D), Franziska Keller (Verts/ALE), Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE) e Esther de Lange (PPE)
(25 luglio 2012)

Oggetto: Lavoro minorile e produzione di calzature

Una recente relazione del Centro di ricerca SOMO (Centro di ricerca sulle multinazionali) intitolata «Where the Shoe Pinches — Child Labour in the Production of Leather Shoes» ha dimostrato che in India il lavoro minorile e la violazione dei diritti dei lavoratori sono frequenti nella produzione di scarpe in pelle e altre calzature destinate ad aziende europee e alla loro catena di approvvigionamento internazionale ([1]).

Nell'ambito della campagna «Stop Child labour — School is the best place to work», è stato condotto uno studio sull'industria calzaturiera, che prevede un questionario al quale la maggior parte delle aziende non ha però ancora risposto. Lo studio ha inoltre dimostrato che le aziende calzaturiere europee che seguono una politica attiva di responsabilità sociale d'impresa si limitano a impegnarsi soprattutto in questioni di tipo ambientale.

È la Commissione disposta a sollevare la questione della responsabilità sociale d'impresa e della difesa dei diritti umani nell'ambito delle sue relazioni con i paesi che producono calzature per il mercato europeo — in particolare Cina, India, Vietnam e Brasile — e a cercare di coinvolgere i governi di tali paesi per trovare soluzioni?

In vista dell'approvazione dei principi guida delle Nazioni Unite su imprese e diritti umani e delle nuove linee guida dell'OCSE destinate alle imprese multinazionali, è la Commissione disposta a cercare di raggiungere la massima trasparenza nella catena di approvvigionamento dell'industria calzaturiera europea e a utilizzare il suo potere di iniziativa per elaborare un piano di azione concreto assieme a quest'ultima, in modo da affrontare le violazioni del diritto del lavoro e dei diritti umani commesse nella catena di approvvigionamento?

È la Commissione disposta a sollevare tale questione nell'ambito dei negoziati per l'accordo di libero scambio tra l'UE e l'India, includendo la possibilità di un dispositivo di risoluzione delle controversie e il coinvolgimento della società civile?

Alla luce della strategia rinnovata dell'UE per il periodo 2011-2014 in materia di responsabilità sociale delle imprese ([2]), quali altre misure può e intende adottare la Commissione per lottare contro il lavoro minorile e le violazioni dei diritti umani perpetrate nell'industria calzaturiera che rifornisce le aziende con sede nell'UE?

È la Commissione disposta ad avviare ulteriori ricerche in materia di diritti umani e di diritto del lavoro (minorile) nell'industria calzaturiera mondiale che rifornisce il mercato europeo di scarpe in pelle?

Integrerà la Commissione tali ricerche con raccomandazioni in modo tale che tutte le parti interessate possano elaborare delle soluzioni?

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007451/12
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Ria Oomen-Ruijten (PPE), Thijs Berman (S&D), Franziska Keller (Verts/ALE), Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE) e Esther de Lange (PPE)
(25 luglio 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Lavoro minorile e produzione di calzature

Una recente relazione del Centro di ricerca SOMO (Centro di ricerca sulle multinazionali) intitolata «Where the Shoe Pinches — Child Labour in the Production of Leather Shoes» ha dimostrato che in India il lavoro minorile e la violazione dei diritti dei lavoratori sono frequenti nella produzione di scarpe in pelle e altre calzature destinate ad aziende europee e alla loro catena di approvvigionamento internazionale ([3]).

([1]) La relazione è disponibile alla seguente pagina web: http://www.stopchildlabour.org/Stop-Childlabour/News-Items/Shoe-companies-keep-silent-about-child-labour
([2]) COM(2011) 0681.
([3]) La relazione è disponibile alla seguente pagina web: http://www.stopchildlabour.org/Stop-Childlabour/News-Items/Shoe-companies-keep-silent-about-child-labour

Nell'ambito della campagna «Stop Child labour — School is the best place to work», è stato condotto uno studio sull'industria calzaturiera, che prevede un questionario al quale la maggior parte delle aziende non ha però ancora risposto. Lo studio ha inoltre dimostrato che le aziende calzaturiere europee che seguono una politica attiva di responsabilità sociale d'impresa si limitano a impegnarsi soprattutto in questioni di tipo ambientale.

È il Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante disposto a sollevare la questione della responsabilità sociale d'impresa e della difesa dei diritti umani nell'ambito delle relazioni dell'UE con i paesi che producono calzature per il mercato europeo — in particolare Cina, India, Vietnam e Brasile — e a cercare di coinvolgere i governi di tali paesi per trovare soluzioni?

È il Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante disposto ad avviare ulteriori ricerche in materia di diritti umani e di diritto del lavoro (minorile) nell'industria calzaturiera mondiale che rifornisce il mercato europeo di scarpe in pelle?

Integrerà il Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante tali ricerche con raccomandazioni in modo tale che tutte le parti interessate possano elaborare delle soluzioni?

Risposta congiunta di Karel De Gucht a nome della Commissione
(12 settembre 2012)

La Commissione si adopera per eliminare le forme proibite di lavoro minorile in base alle conclusioni del Consiglio del 2010 sul lavoro minorile, alla Comunicazione sul programma dell'UE per i diritti dei minori del 2011 e al programma internazionale dell'OIL sull'eliminazione del lavoro minorile. L'UE affronta le cause fondamentali, quali la povertà e le carenze dell'istruzione, attraverso l'istituzione di un quadro normativo generale e promuove la ratifica dei due protocolli opzionali alla Convenzione sui diritti dell'infanzia e delle convenzioni dell'OIL n. 182 e 183. Il Quadro strategico e piano d'azione dell'UE per i diritti umani del 2012 prevede la partecipazione dell'UE alla conferenza globale sul lavoro minorile nel 2013, nonché la promozione dell'aggiornamento degli elenchi di lavori pericolosi figuranti nella convenzione dell'OIL n. 182. Il lavoro minorile figura tra le problematiche dei diritti umani seguite dall'UE in India finanziando appositi progetti e promuovendo il dialogo sui diritti umani. L'India sta modificando la propria normativa sul lavoro minorile per preparare la strada alla ratifica delle convenzioni OIL.

La Commissione mira ad inserire il tema della responsabilità sociale delle imprese nelle negoziazioni dedicate a commercio e investimenti, come già avvenuto negli accordi di libero scambio con Corea, Cariforum e Colombia/Peru. Tali accordi stimolano l'adesione a strumenti riconosciuti a livello internazionale quali le linee guida dell'OCSE per le imprese multinazionali, sostenute dalla rete dei Punti di contatto nazionali, ossia agenzie aventi il mandato di contribuire alla soluzione di problemi come quelli indicati. La Commissione si avvale della partecipazione di parti interessate quali l'industria europea per applicare tale impostazione, ritenendola fondata su una sufficiente comprensione della responsabilità sociale da parte delle imprese, senza ravvisare quindi la necessità di ulteriori ricerche al momento. La Commissione ha pubblicato un invito alla costituzione di «Piattaforme europee a pluralità di partecipanti sulla responsabilità sociale delle imprese nei rispettivi settori di attività» aperto a tutti i settori imprenditoriali e continua ad operare in collaborazione con imprese e parti interessate allo sviluppo di indirizzi circa i diritti umani.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-007450/12
aan de Commissie
Ria Oomen-Ruijten (PPE), Thijs Berman (S&D), Franziska Keller (Verts/ALE), Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE) en Esther de Lange (PPE)
(25 juli 2012)

Betreft: Kinderarbeid en schoenenproductie

Onlangs publiceerde de Stichting Onderzoek Multinationale Ondernemingen (SOMO) het verslag „Waar de schoen wringt — Kinderarbeid in de productie van leren merkschoenen". Daarin wordt aangetoond dat bij de productie van lederen schoenen en ander schoeisel in India voor Europese bedrijven en in de uitgebreide internationale toeleveringsketen voor deze in de EU gevestigde bedrijven vaak kinderarbeid en schendingen van arbeidsrechten voorkomen ([1]).

De campagne „Stop Kinderarbeid — School, de beste werkplaats" heeft onlangs een enquête over de productie van schoenen verricht, maar de meeste bedrijven hebben niet op de vragenlijst gereageerd. Uit de enquête blijkt bovendien dat Europese schoenenbedrijven met een actief beleid inzake maatschappelijk verantwoord ondernemen (MVO) zich meestal tot milieukwesties beperken.

Is de Commissie bereid om deze MVO- en mensenrechtenkwestie aan de orde te stellen in de betrekkingen van de EU met landen die schoeisel voor de Europese markt produceren — met name China, India, Vietnam en Brazilië — en om na te gaan hoe de regeringen van die landen kunnen worden betrokken bij het werken aan oplossingen?

Is de Commissie, tegen de achtergrond van het feit dat zij de Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights van de VN en de herziene richtsnoeren voor multinationale ondernemingen van de OESO heeft onderschreven, bereid het gesprek met de Europese schoenenbedrijven aan te gaan, teneinde in deze sector tot transparantie in de volledige toeleveringsketen te komen, en haar convocatiemacht te gebruiken om met het bedrijfsleven een concreet actieplan uit te werken gericht op het uitbannen van schendingen van arbeidsnormen en de mensenrechten?

Is de Commissie bereid deze kwestie ter sprake te brengen tijdens de onderhandelingen over de vrijhandelsovereenkomst EU-India, inclusief de mogelijkheid van een geschilbeslechtingsmechanisme en de participatie van het maatschappelijk middenveld?

Wat kan en wil de Commissie in het licht van de nieuwe EU-strategie voor maatschappelijk verantwoord ondernemen 2011-2014 ([2]) doen voor het bestrijden van kinderarbeid en andere mensenrechtenschendingen in schoenenbedrijven die in de EU gevestigde bedrijven bevoorraden?

Is de Commissie bereid het initiatief te nemen voor meer onderzoek naar (kinder)arbeid en andere mensenrechtenkwesties in de mondiale schoenenindustrie die lederen schoeisel voor de Europese markt produceert?

Zal de Commissie dit onderzoek aanvullen met aanbevelingen over hoe alle betrokkenen samen aan oplossingen kunnen werken?

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-007451/12
aan de Commissie (Vicevoorzitter — Hoge Vertegenwoordiger)
Ria Oomen-Ruijten (PPE), Thijs Berman (S&D), Franziska Keller (Verts/ALE), Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE) en Esther de Lange (PPE)
(25 juli 2012)

Betreft: VP/HR — Kinderarbeid en schoenenproductie

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([1]) Voor het verslag, zie: http://www.stopkinderarbeid.nl/Stop-Kinderarbeid/NIEUWS/Schoenenbedrijven-zwijgen-over-kinderarbeid
([2]) COM(2011) 0681.
([3]) Voor het verslag, zie: http://www.stopkinderarbeid.nl/Stop-Kinderarbeid/NIEUWS/Schoenenbedrijven-zwijgen-over-kinderarbeid

De campagne „Stop Kinderarbeid — School, de beste werkplaats" heeft onlangs een enquête over de productie van schoenen verricht, maar de meeste bedrijven hebben niet op de vragenlijst gereageerd. Uit de enquête blijkt ook dat Europese schoenenbedrijven met een actief beleid inzake maatschappelijk verantwoord ondernemen (MVO) zich meestal tot milieukwesties beperken.

Is de hoge vertegenwoordiger bereid om deze MVO- en mensenrechtenkwestie aan de orde te stellen in de betrekkingen van de EU met landen die schoeisel voor de Europese markt produceren — met name China, India, Vietnam en Brazilië — en om na te gaan hoe de regeringen van die landen kunnen worden betrokken bij het werken aan oplossingen?

Is de hoge vertegenwoordiger bereid om aanvullend onderzoek te laten uitvoeren naar (kinder)arbeids- en andere mensenrechtenkwesties in de wereldwijde schoeiselindustrie, die lederen schoeisel aan de Europese markt levert?

Zal de hoge vertegenwoordiger dit onderzoek combineren met aanbevelingen over hoe alle betrokkenen samen aan oplossingen kunnen werken?

Antwoord van de heer De Gucht namens de Commissie
(12 september 2012)

De Commissie zet zich ervoor in om verboden vormen van kinderarbeid uit de wereld te helpen. Zij doet dat op basis van de in 2010 aangenomen conclusies van de Raad over kinderarbeid, de in 2011 goedgekeurde *mededeling van de Europese Commissie over een EU-agenda voor de rechten van het kind*, en het internationale programma van de ILO voor de uitbanning van kinderarbeid. De EU maakt gebruik van een veelomvattend kader om de grondoorzaken zoals armoede en onderwijs aan te pakken, en zij bevordert de ratificering van twee facultatieve protocollen bij het Verdrag inzake de rechten van het kind, en van de ILO-Verdragen nr. 182 en 138. In 2012 zijn het strategisch EU-kader en het EU-actieplan inzake mensenrechten vastgesteld. Daarin staat dat de EU zal deelnemen aan de Wereldconferentie tegen kinderarbeid in 2013 en het opstellen van actuele lijsten van gevaarlijk werk in het kader van ILO-Verdrag nr. 182 zal bevorderen. Kinderarbeid staat, met de financiering van projecten en een dialoog inzake mensenrechten, op de EU-agenda inzake mensenrechten in India. India wijzigt momenteel zijn wet op kinderarbeid en effent op die manier het pad voor de ratificering van de ILO-verdragen.

De Commissie tracht maatschappelijk verantwoord ondernemen (MVO) op te nemen in onderhandelingen over handel en investeringen, zoals zij gedaan heeft in het kader van de vrijhandelsovereenkomsten met Korea, Cariforum en Colombia/Peru. Daarbij wordt de toetreding tot internationaal erkende instrumenten zoals de OESO-richtsnoeren voor multinationale ondernemingen aangemoedigd, in verbinding met het netwerk van nationale contactpunten — organen die als opdracht hebben bij te dragen aan de oplossing van dergelijke vraagstukken. De Commissie betrekt stakeholders zoals het Europese bedrijfsleven bij deze aanpak, die volgens haar gebaseerd is op een voldoende goed begrip van MVO en momenteel geen verder onderzoek vereist. De Commissie heeft een tot alle bedrijfssectoren gerichte oproep voor het opzetten van „Europese multistakeholderplatforms over MVO in relevante bedrijfssectoren" gepubliceerd en werkt samen met ondernemingen en stakeholders om richtsnoeren op het gebied van mensenrechten te ontwikkelen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007450/12
to the Commission
Ria Oomen-Ruijten (PPE), Thijs Berman (S&D), Franziska Keller (Verts/ALE), Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE) and Esther de Lange (PPE)
(25 July 2012)

Subject: Child labour and shoe production

Recently a report entitled 'Where the Shoe Pinches — Child Labour in the Production of Leather Shoes', by the Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO), provided evidence that child labour and violations of labour rights frequently occur in the production of leather shoes and other footwear in India for European companies and in the extended international supply chain of these EU-based companies ([1]).

The 'Stop Child labour — School is the best place to work' campaign carried out a survey on the production of shoes, but most companies did not respond to the questionnaire. Moreover, the survey results show that European shoe companies with an active corporate social responsibility (CSR) policy confine themselves mostly to environmental issues.

Is the Commission willing to raise this CSR and human rights issue in its relations with countries producing footwear for the European market — in particular China, India, Vietnam and Brazil — and to look for ways to involve the governments of these countries in working on solutions?

Is the Commission, in view of its endorsement of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the revised OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, willing to engage with the European footwear industry in order to achieve full supply-chain transparency in this sector and to use its convening power to work on a concrete plan of action with the industry in order to tackle labour and other human rights violations throughout the supply chain?

Is the Commission willing to raise this issue in the context of the EU-India free trade negotiations, including the possibility of a dispute settlement mechanism and the involvement of civil society?

In the light of the new 2011-2014 EU strategy for corporate social responsibility ([2]), what else can and will the Commission do to combat child labour and other human rights violations in the footwear industry supplying EU-based companies?

Is the Commission willing to initiate additional research into (child) labour and other human rights issues in the worldwide footwear industry, which supplies leather footwear to the European market?

Will the Commission combine this research with recommendations as to how all relevant stakeholders can work on solutions?

Question for written answer E-007451/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Ria Oomen-Ruijten (PPE), Thijs Berman (S&D), Franziska Keller (Verts/ALE), Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE) and Esther de Lange (PPE)
(25 July 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Child labour and shoe production

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Is the High Representative willing to raise this CSR and human rights issue in the EU's relations with countries producing footwear for the European market — in particular China, India, Vietnam and Brazil — and to look for ways to involve the governments of those countries in working on solutions?

Is the High Representative willing to initiate additional research into (child) labour and other human rights issues in the worldwide footwear industry, which supplies leather footwear to the European market?

Will the High Representative combine this research with recommendations as to how all relevant stakeholders can work on solutions?

Joint answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(12 September 2012)

The Commission works towards elimination of prohibited forms of child labour, based on the 2010 Council conclusions on Child Labour, the 2011 Communication on an EU Agenda for the Rights of the Child and the ILO International Programme on Elimination of Child Labour. EU addresses root causes such as poverty and education through a comprehensive framework and promotes ratification of two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and ILO Conventions Nos. 182 and 138. The 2012 EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights foresee EU participation in the 2013 Global Conference on Child Labour and promotion of updated hazardous work lists under ILO Convention No 182. Child labour is on EU's human rights agenda in India with project financing and Human Rights Dialogue. India is amending its Child Labour Act paving way for ratification of the ILO conventions.

In trade/investment negotiations, the Commission aims at incorporating Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), as done in Free Trade Agreements with Korea, Cariforum and Colombia/Peru. They encourage adherence to internationally recognised instruments such as the OECD Guidelines for multinational enterprises linked to the network of National Contact Points — agencies mandated to contribute to resolving issues like these questions. The Commission pursues this approach involving stakeholders like the European industry and considers it founded on sufficient understanding of CSR without the need for further research at present. The Commission has published a call for building up 'European multi-stakeholder platforms on CSR in relevant business sectors', open to all industry sectors, and works with enterprises and stakeholders to develop human rights guidance.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007452/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Nessa Childers (S&D)
(25 July 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Ignoring Parliament in relation to human rights abuses

At this week's meeting of the EU-Israel Association Council the European Council moved to strengthen economic ties with Israel. How can the High Representative justify such a blatant ignoring of Parliament's will in relation to this human rights issue?

Parliament passed a resolution earlier this month demanding an immediate halt to new Israeli settlements and a moratorium on products from the Occupied Territories being accepted by the EU. This is happening during the continued expansion of Israeli settlements in Palestine and the continued brutal military occupation of the Palestinian people's territory.

How does the High Representative believe the EU can be taken seriously in the world if it is totally unwilling to leverage its extensive economic power to further its often-cited values and ideals?

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

The HR/VP has taken note of the Parliament's recent resolution on the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

The EU/Israel Association Council on 24 July 2012 reviewed the main common achievements of the past year. Domestic developments in the area of human rights and democratic freedoms in Israel were also reviewed. The EU made no move to upgrade relations with Israel, rather it reiterated the position established in 2009 that although we continue to implement the current action plan with Israel, any upgrade — originally mooted in 2008 — is on hold.

As set out in paragraph 2 of the EU's statement to the Association Council, the EU simply 'takes note' of a range of activities mutually identified for further EU-Israel cooperation but where the EU will only take a political position on the implementation of these 'when the conditions for proceeding towards an upgrade of bilateral relations are met'.

The conditions for proceeding to such an upgrade are extremely clear: 'That upgrade must be based on the shared values of both parties, and particularly on democracy and respect for human rights, the rule of law and fundamental freedoms, good governance and international humanitarian law. The upgrade needs also to be, and to be seen, in the context of the broad range of our common interests and objectives. These notably include the resolution of the Israel-Palestinian conflict through the implementation of the two-state solution, the promotion of peace, prosperity and stability in the Middle East and the search for joint answers to challenges which could threaten these goals'.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007453/12
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(25 luglio 2012)

Oggetto: Eventuali secessioni in uno Stato membro e conseguenze per i cittadini

Con il documento C(2012)3689 la Commissione rigettava la proposta di iniziativa dei cittadini dal titolo «Fortalecimiento de la participación ciudadana en la toma de decisiones sobre la soberanía colectiva», in quanto i contenuti eccedevano i suoi poteri.

L'obiettivo dell'iniziativa era di garantire ai cittadini del nuovo Stato risultante dall'eventuale secessione della Catalogna dalla Spagna il mantenimento dello status di cittadini europei. La Commissione ha rilevato che, oltre a non aver trovato basi giuridiche né all'interno dei trattati né all'interno del diritto derivato per appoggiare tale iniziativa, ai sensi dell'articolo 20 del TFUE, solo le persone aventi la cittadinanza di uno Stato membro hanno anche quella europea, essendo quest'ultima complementare e non sostitutiva.

La Commissione ha inoltre affermato che, in caso di secessione in uno Stato membro, la soluzione andrebbe trovata in una negoziazione all'interno del diritto internazionale.

Alla luce di queste valutazioni, può la Commissione rispondere a quanto segue:

1. È vero che nell'articolo 20 del TFUE è previsto che la cittadinanza europea sia complementare a quella di uno Stato membro e che in caso di secessione i cittadini perdono immediatamente lo status di «cittadino europeo» e i diritti e i doveri da esso derivanti?

2. Ritiene la Commissione che si debba comunque tutelare il cittadino in caso di un'eventuale secessione in uno Stato membro attraverso il ricorso al diritto internazionale? Se sì, in che termini?

Risposta di José Manuel Barroso a nome della Commissione
(28 agosto 2012)

La Commissione conferma che, ai sensi dell'articolo 20 del trattato sul funzionamento dell'Unione europea (TFUE), la cittadinanza europea si aggiunge alla cittadinanza nazionale (ossia la cittadinanza di uno Stato membro dell'UE) e non la sostituisce. La Commissione conferma inoltre che, nel caso ipotetico di una secessione in uno Stato membro, si dovrà trovare e negoziare la soluzione ricorrendo all'ordinamento giuridico internazionale. Altre considerazioni sulle conseguenze di tale eventualità sarebbero di carattere meramente congetturale.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007453/12
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(25 July 2012)

Subject: Possibility of secession in a Member State and impact on citizens

In document C (2012) 3689, the Commission rejected the proposed citizens' initiative entitled 'Fortalecimiento de la participación ciudadana en la toma de decisiones sobre la soberanía colectiva', on the grounds that its substance was outside the Commission's powers.

The aim of the initiative was to ensure that citizens of a new state that might result from a possible secession of Catalonia from Spain would maintain their status as EU citizens. The Commission pointed out that, in addition to not finding any legal basis either in the Treaties or in secondary legislation by which it could support this initiative, under Article 20 TFEU only persons holding the nationality of a Member State were also citizens of the Union, since citizenship of the Union was additional to and did not replace national citizenship.

The Commission also stated that in case of secession within a Member State, the solution would have to be found through negotiations under international law.

In the light of the above, can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Is it true that Article 20 TFEU stipulates that EU citizenship is additional to that of a Member State and that, in case of secession, citizens would immediately lose their status as EU citizens and the resultant rights and obligations?

2. Does the Commission not agree that citizens should nevertheless be protected in the event of a possible secession within a Member State through the use of international law? If so, how?

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

The Commission confirms that, in accordance with Article 20 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), EU citizenship is additional to and does not replace national citizenship (that is, the citizenship of an EU Member State). It also confirms that in the hypothetical event of a secession of a part of an EU Member State, the solution would have to be found and negotiated within the international legal order. Any other consideration related to the consequences of such event would be of a conjectural nature.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007454/12
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(25 luglio 2012)

Oggetto: Futuro della cooperazione territoriale in Europa

La coesione territoriale si è aggiunta agli obiettivi che definiranno le politiche europee oltre alla coesione sociale ed economica.

Le diversità territoriali all'interno dell'Unione europea devono rappresentare un valore aggiunto da sfruttare al massimo e delle quali tenere conto nelle future programmazioni politiche dell'UE.

Si assiste alla creazione di strategie macroregionali che tendono a riunire Stati o parte di essi con l'obiettivo di ottenere sinergie economico-politiche di cooperazione più efficaci tra di essi, quali ad esempio la macroregione del Mar Baltico e del Danubio.

Può la Commissione indicare quale sarà il futuro della cooperazione territoriale in Europa, in particolare per il periodo 2014-2020?

Risposta di Johannes Hahn a nome della Commissione
(13 settembre 2012)

La Cooperazione territoriale europea costituisce uno degli obiettivi della politica di coesione proposti dalla Commissione per il periodo 2014-2020. Le problematiche incontrate dagli Stati membri e dalle regioni prescindono sempre più dalle frontiere nazionali e/o regionali ed esigono interventi comuni e collaborativi al livello territoriale adeguato. In tale contesto la Cooperazione territoriale può apportare un importante contributo al conseguimento dei nuovo obiettivo della coesione territoriale stabilito dal Trattato.

La Commissione ha proposto un regolamento specifico ([1]) per la Cooperazione territoriale al fine di provvedere un quadro normativo su misura per i programmi di cooperazione. Gli indirizzi operativi generali della futura politica di coesione sono applicabili anche nel contesto della Cooperazione territoriale. Il regolamento proposto contribuisce pertanto al raggiungimento degli obiettivi della Strategia Europa 2020, contiene elementi tali da accrescere l'efficacia degli interventi sostenuti dal Fondo e introduce un'impostazione operativa sostanzialmente semplificata.

Nelle proprie proposte legislative la Commissione intende garantire che nella programmazione dei fondi del QSC si tengano in debito conto gli obiettivi delle strategie macroregionali, assicurando in tal modo che tali fondi contribuiscano al conseguimento degli obiettivi delle strategie.

La proposta della Commissione per il Quadro Finanziario Pluriennale prevede un importo di 11,7 miliardi di euro per la Cooperazione territoriale, il che rappresenta un aumento di un terzo rispetto al periodo 2007-2013. Il regolamento proposto indica la seguente suddivisione dei fondi tra le diverse componenti della cooperazione:

— 8,6 miliardi di euro per la cooperazione transfrontaliera;

— 2,4 miliardi di euro per la cooperazione transnazionale;

— 700 milioni di euro per la cooperazione interregionale.

([1]) COM(2011)611 definitivo/2.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007454/12
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(25 July 2012)

Subject: Future of territorial cooperation in Europe

Territorial cohesion has been added to the objectives that are to determine EU policies over and beyond social and economic cohesion.

The territorial differences within the European Union must represent added value which should be exploited to the full and which should be taken into account in future EU policy programming.

Macro-regional strategies, which tend to bring together Member States, or parts thereof, are currently being established. The aim is to achieve economic and political cooperation synergies that are more effective, such as the macro-region of the Baltic Sea and the Danube.

Can the Commission say what the future of territorial cooperation in Europe will be, in particular for the period 2014-2020?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(13 September 2012)

European Territorial Cooperation is one of the goals of cohesion policy as proposed by the Commission for the 2014-2020 period. The challenges faced by Member States and regions increasingly cut across national/regional boundaries and require joint, cooperative action at the appropriate territorial level. Territorial Cooperation can thus provide an important contribution to fostering the new Treaty objective of territorial cohesion.

The Commission has proposed a separate regulation ([1]) for Territorial Cooperation in order to provide a more tailor-made framework for cooperation programmes. The overarching policy orientations for future cohesion policy are also applicable in the context of Territorial Cooperation. The proposed regulation therefore contributes to achieving the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy, contains elements increasing the effectiveness of Fund interventions and introduces an overall simplified approach to implementation.

In its legislative proposals, the Commission aims to ensure that the objectives of macro-regional strategies are appropriately taken into account in the programming of the CSF funds, thus ensuring that these Funds shall contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the strategies.

The Commission's proposal for the Multi-Annual Financial Framework foresees an amount of EUR 11.7 billion for Territorial Cooperation, which is an increase of one-third compared to 2007-2013. The proposed regulation sets out the division of the funding between the different cooperation components as follows:

— EUR 8.6 billion for cross-border cooperation;

— EUR 2.4 billion for transnational cooperation;

— EUR 700 million for interregional cooperation.

([1]) COM(2011) 611 final/2.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007455/12
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(25 luglio 2012)

Oggetto: Strategia macroregionale nella programmazione 2014-2020

Nella politica di programmazione territoriale sono state incluse le entità geografiche che rientrano nelle definizioni date dagli articoli 174 e 349 del TFUE. Si ritiene che un approccio di tipo macroregionale capace di integrare e raggruppare tali entità in base a strategie fondate su schemi ben definiti possa garantire una massimizzazione dello sfruttamento delle risorse economiche disponibili. Questo è quanto è emerso dalle conclusioni del Consiglio Affari esteri del 21 febbraio 2011.

Può la Commissione spiegare in base a quali parametri si costituisce una macroregione?

Come intende la Commissione sviluppare la strategia macroregionale nell'ambito della futura programmazione 2014-2020?

Risposta di Johannes Hahn a nome della Commissione
(12 settembre 2012)

Non esistono criteri prestabiliti per istituire una macroregione. Le strategie macroregionali sono impostate a livello sovranazionale e comprendono aree contraddistinte da caratteristiche e problematiche comuni. Le strategie macroregionali esistenti coordinate dalla Commissione comprendono l'area del Mar Baltico e il bacino del Danubio. Si tratta di strategie che comprendono una pluralità di aspetti e sono mirate ad affrontare problematiche comuni della rispettiva macroregione. Tali strategie non ricevono finanziamenti addizionali dall'UE ma viene loro prestato sostegno per mezzo di un approccio integrato a carico delle risorse già disponibili. Ne consegue che gli Stati fanno uso dei fondi che ricevono dalla politica di coesione dell'UE, da altri programmi e strumenti finanziari dell'UE e da diverse istituzioni finanziarie internazionali.

Nelle sue proposte legislative per il periodo 2014-2020 la Commissione intende garantire nella programmazione dei fondi del QSC si tenga debito conto degli obiettivi delle strategie macroregionali e che tali fondi contribuiscano pertanto al conseguimento degli obiettivi delle suddette strategie.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007455/12
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(25 July 2012)

Subject: Macro-regional strategy for the 2014-2020 programming period

Territorial planning policy includes geographical entities which fall under the definitions given in Articles 174 and 349 TFEU. The current view is that a macro-regional approach that is able to integrate and group these entities together, based on strategies that follow well-established patterns can make the most of available economic resources. This, at least, is what emerged from the conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council meeting of 21 February 2011.

Can the Commission explain what criteria will be used to establish a macro-region?

How does the Commission intend to develop its macro-regional strategy in the future 2014-2020 programming period?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(12 September 2012)

There are no pre-established criteria for a macro-region. Macro-regional strategies are set up at supranational level and cover areas which share common features and challenges. Existing macro-regional strategies coordinated by the Commission cover the Baltic Sea area and the Danube river basin. These are comprehensive strategies aimed at addressing common challenges for the relevant macro-region. These strategies are not provided with additional EU funding, but are supported, via an integrated approach, by the resources which are already available. Countries therefore make use of the funding they receive through EU cohesion policy, other EU programmes and financial instruments, and various international financial institutions.

In its legislative proposals for the 2014-2020 period, the Commission aims to ensure that the goals of macro-regional strategies are appropriately taken into account in the programming of the CSF Funds and that these Funds shall therefore contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the strategies.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-007456/12
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente / Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(25 de julho de 2012)

Assunto: VP/HR — Morte trágica de Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas

Morreu no passado dia 23 de julho de 2012, na sequência de um acidente de trânsito, em circunstâncias ainda por apurar, o democrata cubano Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas, figura eminente da oposição pacífica à ditadura comunista de Fidel e Raul Castro, galardoado pelo Parlamento Europeu com o Prémio Sakharov 2002.

As informações conhecidas acerca do seu falecimento são contraditórias. Algumas fontes citam os filhos de Oswaldo Payá, que denunciam que este tinha vindo a receber numerosas ameaças de morte e que o veículo de aluguer em que seguia teria sido abalroado por diversas vezes até sair da estrada.

O Movimento Cristão de Libertação, fundado por Payá, bem como diversas personalidades cubanas e internacionais, exigiram já um esclarecimento cabal acerca dos trágicos acontecimentos que levaram à morte deste insigne lutador pela democracia e pelos direitos humanos em Cuba.

Assim, pergunto novamente à Alta Representante:

1. Dispõe de informações acerca da morte de Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas?

2. Contactou as autoridades cubanas, a oposição democrática e a família de Oswaldo Payá a este propósito?

3. Que respostas obteve?

4. Pretende homenagear a vida e obra de Payá? Por que formas?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(4 de setembro de 2012)

A AR/VP está plenamente informada da morte de Oswaldo Payá. O SEAE, na sua sede e através da Delegação da UE em Havana, está a acompanhar a questão de perto, recorrendo a todas as informações fiáveis disponíveis.

O SEAE está permanentemente em contacto com todos os intervenientes relevantes sobre a situação, em Cuba e na Europa. Está em curso uma investigação sobre o trágico acidente, encontrando-se atualmente a questão a ser tratada nos tribunais.

A AR/VP reconheceu o trabalho efetuado por Oswaldo Payá através da declaração que o seu porta-voz proferiu após a sua morte em 23 de julho de 2012, em que expressou o seu profundo pesar pela perda de um acérrimo defensor da causa da democracia e dos direitos humanos em Cuba, reconheceu a importância do seu projeto Varela e recordou que o Parlamento Europeu lhe atribuiu o Prémio Sakharov em especial pela iniciativa pacífica referida.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007456/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(25 July 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Tragic death of Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas

The Cuban democrat Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas, one of the leaders of the non-violent opposition to the Communist dictatorship of Fidel and Raúl Castro and the 2002 winner of Parliament's Sakharov Prize, was killed in a road accident on 23 July 2012, in circumstances that have yet to be explained.

There are conflicting versions of Oswaldo Payá's death. Some sources mention his children, who claim that he received many death threats and that the rented car in which he was travelling was rammed several times before going off the road.

The Christian Liberation Movement, which Payá founded, and a number of eminent Cuban and international figures have already called for an investigation in order to shed full light on the tragic events that led to the death of this outstanding campaigner for democracy and human rights in Cuba.

1. Does the High Representative have any information about the death of Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas?

2. Has she been in touch with the Cuban authorities, the democratic opposition, and Oswaldo Payá's family?

3. What replies has she received?

4. Will she pay tribute to Payá's life and work? If so, in what form?

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

The HR/VP is fully informed of the death of Mr Oswaldo Payá. The EEAS, at its Headquarter and through the EU Delegation in Havana, is following the matter closely taking recourse to all reliable information available.

The EEAS is in regular contact with all relevant stakeholders on the situation, in Cuba and in Europe. Investigation is ongoing on the tragic accident and the matter is nowadays within the realm of the courts.

The HR/VP has recognised Oswaldo Payá's work in the statement her spokesperson made after his death on 23 July 2012, where she expressed her deep regret at the loss of a staunch defender of the cause of democracy and human rights in Cuba, acknowledged the importance of his Varela Project and recalled that he was awarded by the European Parliament the Sakharov prize in particular for that peaceful initiative mentioned.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita P-007457/12
à Comissão
Nuno Teixeira (PPE)
(25 de julho de 2012)

Assunto: Vaga de incêndios em zonas florestais e urbanas da Região Autónoma da Madeira

Considerando que:

— No passado dia 17 de julho tiveram início um conjunto de fogos florestais de grandes dimensões, que começaram na zona oeste da ilha, no concelho da Calheta e Ribeira Brava, mas rapidamente alastraram a outras zonas da Região Autónoma da Madeira;

— Os incêndios atingiram severamente o concelho do Funchal, onde alastraram a áreas urbanas e amplamente habitadas, mas também os concelhos de Santa Cruz, Machico e Porto Moniz, onde, para além de terem consumido vastas áreas florestais, destruíram dezenas de habitações, veículos automóveis, explorações agrícolas e pequenos estabelecimentos comerciais, que, na esmagadora maioria dos casos, representam a única forma de sustento das famílias atingidas, que se encontram desalojadas e permanecem em zonas de acolhimento provisório providenciadas pelas autoridades regionais;

— Os incêndios estão ainda em fase de rescaldo e de monitorização por parte das autoridades de proteção civil, que se mantêm nos locais afetados, uma vez que se podem ainda verificar reacendimentos;

Pergunta-se à Comissão:

1. É possível recorrer a medidas de derrogação administrativa, nomeadamente, o recurso a mecanismos de derrogação e flexibilização dos prazos e normas no âmbito de modos de produção e de apoios comunitários e nacionais?

2. É possível recorrer a medidas comunitárias de antecipação do pagamento das ajudas diretas comunitárias à produção vegetal e animal, bem como das ajudas diretas no âmbito do Proderam?

3. É possível o recurso a apoios extraordinários a disponibilizar pela Comissão para minimizar os prejuízos? Em caso afirmativo, quais?

Resposta dada por Dacian Çioloş em nome da Comissão
(30 de agosto de 2012)

A problemática dos incêndios florestais insere-se, em princípio, no quadro do Fundo de Solidariedade. A concessão de um auxílio financeiro por parte deste Fundo teria de ser avaliado pela Comissão, com base num pedido das autoridades portuguesas, apresentado no prazo de dez semanas a contar do início dos incêndios. Até à data, as autoridades portuguesas não transmitiram qualquer pedido.

No âmbito da política de desenvolvimento rural ([1]), está previsto o apoio da UE ao restabelecimento do potencial silvícola e a medidas de prevenção (medida 226), assim como ao restabelecimento do potencial de produção agrícola (medida 126). No entanto, a utilização dos fundos da UE e a escolha das ações a financiar são da competência dos Estados-Membros.

No que respeita ao apoio à produção agrícola local no âmbito do programa POSEI, em 25 de julho de 2012, o Comité de Gestão dos Pagamentos Diretos votou a favor de um regulamento que permitirá adiantar até 50 % de todos os pagamentos diretos, a partir de 16 de outubro de 2012. Prevê-se que este regulamento seja formalmente adotado pela Comissão nos próximos meses, o que significa que, sob condição de se efetuarem os necessários controlos, poderá proceder-se ao pagamento de adiantamentos relativamente a quaisquer medidas do programa POSEI português que envolvam pagamentos diretos.

([1]) Regulamento (CE) n.° 1698/2005 do Conselho, JO L 277 de 21.10.2005, p. 1.

Quanto aos auxílios estatais, os Estados-Membros podem conceder auxílios *de minimis* até 7 500 euros por beneficiário, no setor da produção agrícola, durante três exercícios financeiros. Partindo do princípio de que esses auxílios *de minimis* observam o previsto no respetivo regulamento ([2]), não é necessário cumprir nenhuma formalidade específica, apenas a inscrição no registo «*de minimis*». Os auxílios para compensação de danos podem igualmente ser concedidos ao abrigo do Regulamento de isenção por categoria aplicável às PME que se dedicam à produção de produtos agrícolas ([3]) ou, na sequência de uma decisão da Comissão, em aplicação das orientações relativas aos auxílios estatais no setor agrícola ([4]).

([2]) Regulamento (CE) n.° 1535/2007.
([3]) Regulamento (CE) n.° 1857/2006.
([4]) JO C 319 de 27.12.2006.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-007457/12
to the Commission
Nuno Teixeira (PPE)
(25 July 2012)

Subject: Spate of fires in woodland and urban areas in the Autonomous Region of Madeira

On 17 July 2012 several large-scale forest fires broke out in the west of Madeira, in the municipalities of Calheta and Ribeira Brava, and spread rapidly to other parts of the island.

As well as densely populated urban areas in Funchal, the fires have severely damaged the municipalities of Santa Cruz, Machico, and Porto Moniz, where they have destroyed not only vast expanses of forest, but also dozens of homes, vehicles, farms, and small shops, which almost invariably constitute the only means of livelihood for the families affected, who have been made homeless and are now living in makeshift accommodation organised by the regional authorities.

The fires are being damped down, and the civil protection services are continuing to monitor the situation on the ground, as there is still a possibility of fresh outbreaks.

1. Could exceptions be made to administrative procedures, in particular with a view to introducing greater flexibility into the time-frames and rules applying to production systems and EU and national aid?

2. Is it possible under EU measures to bring forward the payment of direct aid for crop production and stock-farming and direct aid under the rural development programme for the Autonomous Region of Madeira (ProderAM)?

3. Could the Commission provide special aid to minimise the damage? If so, in what forms?

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

Forest fires fall in principle within the scope of the Solidarity Fund. Whether financial aid from this Fund could be granted would have to be assessed by the Commission on the basis of an application to be presented by the Portuguese authorities within ten weeks of the start of the fires. Until now Portuguese authorities have not sent any request.

In the framework of Rural Development policy ([1]), it is foreseen EU support for restoring forestry potential and prevention actions (Measure 226) and restoring the agricultural production potential (Measure 126). However, the use of EU funds and the choice of measures to be funded is a competence of the Member State.

Concerning the support to the local agricultural production under the POSEI programme, on 25 July 2012 the Management Committee on Direct Payments voted in favour of a regulation to allow up to 50% of all Direct Payments to be paid in advance from 16 October 2012. This regulation is expected to be formally adopted in the coming months and means that, subject to the necessary controls having been carried out, advance payments can be made for any measures involving direct payments of the POSEI programme for Portugal.

Concerning national aids, Member States may grant *de minimis* aid up to EUR 7 500 per beneficiary in the agricultural production sector over a period of three fiscal years. Assuming such *de minimis* aid complies with the conditions of the *de minimis* Regulation ([2]) it requires no particular formality but the registration in the '*de minimis*' register. Aid for the damage may also be granted under the block exemption regulation applicable to SMEs active in the production of agricultural products ([3]), or, following Commission decision, in application of the Agricultural State Aid Guidelines ([4]).

([1]) Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 , OJ L 277, 21.10.2005, pp. 1-40.
([2]) Regulation (EC) No 1535/2007.
([3]) Regulation (EC) No 1857/2006.
([4]) OJ C 319, 27.12.2006.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007458/12
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(25 de julio de 2012)

Asunto: VP/HR — Fallecimiento del líder opositor cubano, Oswaldo Payá

El pasado domingo, 22 de julio de 2012, falleció el líder de la oposición cubana, Oswaldo Payá, en un accidente de tráfico en la provincia de Granma ([1]). Payá se configuró como el líder de la disidencia cubana tras promover el llamado Proyecto Varela, con el que propuso un referéndum para iniciar una transición democrática. En el 2002, el Parlamento rechazó su propuesta y en octubre de ese mismo año, el Parlamento Europeo le concedió el premio Andrei Sájarov a los Derechos Humanos y la Libertad de Pensamiento en reconocimiento en su lucha pacífica por la democracia en la isla. Además, ha estado nominado cinco veces al Premio Nóbel de la Paz.

En el accidente también perdió la vida un miembro del Movimiento Cristiano de Liberación y resultaron heridos dos europeos. La hija de Oswaldo Payá ha denunciado que, según el testimonio de los supervivientes, un segundo coche les embistió varias veces hasta que los sacó de la carretera ([2]).

La Asamblea de la Resistencia Cubana ha solicitado que se lleve a cabo una investigación internacional sobre el accidente para esclarecer las «extrañas circunstancias» y ha pedido «protección inmediata» para los dos heridos europeos, que se encuentran ingresados en el hospital Carlos Manuel Céspedes, aunque ambos están fuera de peligro. Aunque los cónsules español y sueco ya han visitado a los heridos ¿tomará o pedirá la Alta Representante algún tipo de medida de seguridad extraordinaria?

¿Pedirá la Alta Representante explicaciones a las autoridades cubanas para esclarecer las circunstancias de este accidente?

Respuesta de la Alta Representante/Vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(7 de septiembre de 2012)

Los dos ciudadanos europeos han podido establecer contacto y recibir ayuda de sus respectivas misiones diplomáticas y oficinas consulares, y no se han solicitado ni han sido necesarias medidas extraordinarias de seguridad. El ciudadano sueco ya fue autorizado a salir de Cuba.

Es de interés común que mediante un proceso totalmente transparente se determinen las causas exactas del accidente. La investigación ya se está llevando a cabo.

El SEAE, en su sede y a través de la Delegación de la UE en La Habana, está siguiendo el caso de cerca, haciendo uso de la información fiable de la que se dispone sobre la situación y recopilada de varias fuentes, tanto en Cuba como en el exterior.

([1]) http://www.lavanguardia.com/internacional/20120723/54328446672/muere-oswaldo-paya.html
([2]) http://www.lavanguardia.com/local/madrid/20120723/54328600279/el-dirigente-de-nngg-accidentado-en-cuba-habia-entrado-como-turista-en-la-isla-junto-a-un-colega-sue.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007458/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(25 July 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Death of the leader of the Cuban opposition, Oswaldo Payá

On Sunday 22 July 2012, Cuban opposition leader Oswaldo Payá died in a traffic accident in the province of Granma ([1]). Payá became leader of the Cuban dissident movement after promoting the so-called Varela Project, in which he proposed a referendum with a view to initiating a transition towards democracy. In 2002, the Cuban Parliament rejected his proposal and in October of that year, the European Parliament awarded him the Sakharov Prize for Human Rights and Freedom of Thought in recognition of his peaceful struggle for democracy on the island. He has also been nominated five times for the Nobel Peace Prize.

The accident also killed a member of the Christian Liberation Movement and wounded two Europeans. Oswaldo Payá's daughter has reported that, according to the survivors, a second car rammed them several times until it drove them off the road ([2]).

The Assembly of the Cuban Resistance has called for an international investigation to be conducted into the accident to clarify the 'strange circumstances' and called for 'immediate protection' for the two injured Europeans, who have been admitted to the Carlos Manuel Cespedes hospital, although both are out of danger. Even though the Spanish and Swedish consuls have already visited the injured survivors, will the High Representative take or request any kind of extraordinary security measures?

Will the High Representative ask the Cuban authorities to clarify the circumstances of this accident?

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

The two European citizens have been able to count on their respective Diplomatic Missions and Consulates' access and assistance, and no extraordinary security measures have been requested nor made necessary. The Swedish citizen has already been allowed to leave Cuba.

It is in the interest of all that a fully transparent process determines the exact causes of the accident. An investigation is ongoing.

The EEAS, at its Headquarter and through the EU Delegation in Havana, is following the matter closely, taking recourse to the reliable information available on the situation, compiled from various sources, in Cuba and outside.

([1]) http://www.lavanguardia.com/internacional/20120723/54328446672/muere-oswaldo-paya.html
([2]) http://www.lavanguardia.com/local/madrid/20120723/54328600279/el-dirigente-de-nngg-accidentado-en-cuba-habia-entrado-como-turista-en-la-isla-junto-a-un-colega-sue.html

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007460/12
alla Commissione
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(25 luglio 2012)

Oggetto: Libertà di prestazione di servizi da parte degli sportivi

L'ASD Volley Club Frascati è un'associazione sportiva dilettantistica di pallavolo che si allena e gioca in prossimità dell'Università di Tor Vergata (Roma). Proprio la vicinanza con tale università fa sì che capiti spesso che giovani partecipanti al programma Erasmus chiedano di poter giocare con la squadra durante il periodo di permanenza in Italia.

La stessa richiesta arriva spesso anche da figli di cittadini comunitari che lavorano in Italia.

Ai fini del regolamento della Federazione italiana pallavolo, il tesseramento degli atleti stranieri (già tesserati da una federazione straniera) residenti a vario titolo in Italia è consentito, purché:

— la federazione sportiva nazionale del paese di provenienza attesti che da quattro annate sportive antecedenti quella della richiesta di tesseramento l'atleta non abbia preso parte ad attività ufficiali,

— l'interessato presenti una dichiarazione con la quale attesta di non aver partecipato ad attività agonistiche con altre federazioni nelle ultime quattro annate sportive antecedenti quella in cui si richiede il tesseramento.

Per quanto il settore dello sport sia di competenza nazionale, l'UE, in base all'art. 165 TFUE, ha competenza di coordinamento e sostegno.

Può la Commissione far sapere:

1. se la norma del regolamento FIPAV è compatibile con la libertà di circolazione, di stabilimento e di prestazione di servizi che si applicano anche agli sportivi professionisti e semi-professionisti (in qualità di lavoratori);

2. qual è il quadro generale della situazione?

Risposta di Androulla Vassiliou a nome della Commissione
(4 settembre 2012)

Il diritto dell'UE proibisce qualsiasi discriminazione in base alla nazionalità (articolo 18 del TFUE) e garantisce a ogni cittadino dell'Unione il diritto di circolare e soggiornare liberamente nel territorio degli Stati membri, fatte salve le limitazioni e le condizioni previste dai trattati stessi e dalle disposizioni adottate in applicazione di questi ultimi (articolo 21 TFUE). Conformemente inoltre alla legislazione dell'UE sulla libera circolazione dei lavoratori (articolo 45 del TFUE e regolamento n. 492/2011, in particolare articolo 7, paragrafo 2) i lavoratori migranti nell'UE e i membri delle loro famiglie godono degli stessi benefici sociali dei lavoratori nazionali.

Nel campo dello sport ne consegue che qualsiasi norma comportante una discriminazione diretta in base alla nazionalità non è compatibile con il diritto dell'UE. Le norme che comportano indirettamente una discriminazione o che, anche se applicate indipendentemente dalla nazionalità, limitano la libertà di movimento di sportivi che intendono esercitare la propria attività in un altro Stato membro possono ritenersi compatibili con il diritto dell'UE solo se necessarie e proporzionate al raggiungimento di obiettivi legittimi. Il principio della parità di trattamento si applica tanto agli sportivi professionisti quanto ai dilettanti.

Alla luce dei principi suindicati, la Commissione prenderà contatto con le autorità italiane per determinare se le norme FIPAV sono compatibili con il diritto dell'UE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007460/12
to the Commission
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(25 July 2012)

Subject: Freedom to provide services by sportspersons

The ASD Frascati Volleyball Club is an amateur volleyball association which trains and plays volleyball near the University of Tor Vergata (Rome). Its proximity to the university means that young participants in the Erasmus programme often ask whether they can play with the team during their stay in Italy.

The same request is regularly made by children of EU nationals working in Italy.

Under the rules of the Italian Volleyball Federation (FIPAV), foreign athletes who are resident in Italy in various capacities (and who are already members of a foreign federation) may enrol, provided that:

— the national sports federation of their country of origin certifies that for four sports years before the year of application for membership, the athlete has not taken part in any official activities;

— the individual in question submits a statement certifying that he/she has not taken part in competitive activities with other federations in the four years preceding the year in which he/she is applying for membership.

Although sport is a matter for the national authorities, under Article 165 TFEU the EU is responsible for coordinating and providing support.

Can the Commission:

1. say whether the FIPAV rules are compatible with the freedom of movement, of establishment and freedom to provide services which also apply to professional and semi-professional athletes (as workers);

2. give an overview of the situation?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(4 September 2012)

EC law forbids any discrimination on grounds of nationality (Article 18 TFEU) and grants every citizen of the Union the right to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States, subject to those limitations and conditions that are laid down in the Treaties themselves and in the measures adopted to give them effect (Article 21 TFEU). Moreover, under EC law on free movement of workers (Article 45 TFEU and Regulation (EU) No 492/2011, in particular under its Article 7(2), EU migrant workers and members of their families shall enjoy the same social advantages as national workers.

In the field of sport, this entails that rules leading to direct discrimination on grounds of nationality are not compatible with EC law. Rules leading to indirect discrimination or which, even if applied without regard to nationality, restrict the freedom of movement of sportspeople who wish to pursue their activity in another Member State, may be considered compatible with EC law only if they are necessary and proportionate to the achievement of legitimate objectives. The principle of equal treatment applies both to professional and to amateur sportspeople.

In the light of the principles stated above, the Commission will contact the Italian authorities in order to determine whether the FIPAV rules are compatible with EC law.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007461/12
alla Commissione
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(25 luglio 2012)

Oggetto: Standard di sicurezza connessi all'utilizzo di parabeni

Sebbene i parabeni vengano utilizzati da molti anni come conservanti in numerosi cosmetici (si possono infatti trovare negli shampoo, nelle creme idratanti, nei deodoranti, nei gel da barba, nei farmaci topici, nelle creme solari, nei prodotti per l'igiene dei bambini e nel dentifricio o come additivi nei cibi), la sicurezza di tali composti rappresenta ancora una questione dal carattere controverso. Uno studio scientifico pubblicato nel 2004 (Darbre, in «the Journal of Applied Toxicology») ha evidenziato la capacità dei parabeni di mimare il comportamento degli estrogeni, che hanno un ruolo importante nella patogenesi del tumore al seno. Lo studio ha inoltre rilevato la presenza di parabeni nel tessuto mammario di 18 pazienti su 20 che soffrivano di tumore al seno. Sulla base del dibattito in corso nella comunità scientifica internazionale, il 3 maggio 2011 è stata adottata in Francia una proposta di legge che vieta l'uso degli ftalati, dei parabeni e degli alchilfenoli, tre categorie di sostanze che interferiscono con il sistema endocrino.

L'industria cosmetica assicura che i parabeni sono assolutamente sicuri e sostiene che è necessaria un'approfondita ricerca che provi il contrario.

D'altro canto, però, non sono mai stati condotti studi sugli effetti di lungo periodo.

Quali azioni intende la Commissione apportare per finanziare studi sugli effetti di lungo periodo delle sostanze perturbatrici del sistema endocrino?

In virtù del principio di precauzione, può essa far sapere se, sulla base delle informazioni già in suo possesso, verranno o meno apportate modifiche all'attuale concentrazione massima prevista per i parabeni e se misure come quelle adottate in Francia siano auspicabili in tutti gli Stati membri?

Risposta di John Dalli a nome della Commissione
(20 settembre 2012)

Il Comitato scientifico dei prodotti di consumo (CSPC) è giunto alla conclusione nel 2005 ([1]) che non sussiste nessuna prova di un rischio dimostrabile per lo sviluppo del cancro della mammella derivante dall'uso di parabeni. Analogamente, uno studio recente condotto in Francia sulla tossicità riproduttiva del propilparabene non ha indicato effetti per quanto concerne i parametri riproduttivi; esso pertanto non ha confermato le conclusioni di studi precedenti i quali suggerivano effetti negativi per la riproduzione. Poiché tale studio può però avere un impatto sulle conclusioni del Comitato scientifico della sicurezza dei consumatori (CSSC), la Commissione intende chiedere al CSSC di procedere a una nuova valutazione dei propil e butilparabeni.

Nel frattempo la Commissione sta valutando di vietare i parabeni la cui sicurezza non possa essere accertata per mancanza di dati.

Per quanto concerne gli effetti di lungo periodo delle sostanze perturbatrici del sistema endocrino la Commissione sta riesaminando l'attuale strategia comunitaria sui perturbatori endocrini.

La Commissione rinvia inoltre l'onorevole deputato alla propria risposta alle interrogazioni parlamentari E-008969/2011 e E-005524/2011 ([2]).

([1]) SCCP/0874/05, http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_risk/committees/04_sccp/docs/sccp_o_00d.pdf
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007461/12
to the Commission
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(25 July 2012)

Subject: Safety standards in relation to the use of parabens

Although parabens have been used for years as a preservative in many cosmetics (they are found in shampoos, moisturising creams, deodorants, shaving gels, topical medications, sunscreens, childcare products and toothpaste, or as additives in foods), the safety of these compounds is still a matter of controversy. A scientific study published in 2004 (Darbre, Journal of Applied Toxicology) highlighted the ability of parabens to mimic the behaviour of oestrogens, which play an important role in the pathogenesis of breast cancer. The study also detected the presence of parabens in the breast tissue of 18 patients out of 20 who were suffering from breast cancer. On the basis of the ongoing debate in the international scientific community, on 3 May 2011 France adopted a bill prohibiting the use of phthalates, parabens and alkylphenols, three categories of substances that disrupt the endocrine system.

The cosmetics industry assures that parabens are completely safe and argues that in-depth research that proves otherwise is needed.

However, no studies on the long-term effects have ever been carried out.

What action will the Commission take to finance studies on the long-term effects of endocrine disruptors?

In accordance with the precautionary principle, can it say whether, on the basis of the information it already has, any changes will be made to the current maximum permitted level for parabens and whether measures such as those taken in France should be adopted in all Member States?

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

The Scientific Committee on Consumers Products (SCCP) concluded in 2005 ([1]) that there is no evidence of demonstrable risk for the development of breast cancer caused by the use of parabens. Similarly, a recent study carried out in France on the reproductive toxicity of propylparaben showed no effects on the reproductive parameters; therefore it did not confirm the conclusions of previous studies that pointed towards negative effects on reproduction. However, as this study may have an impact on the conclusions of the Scientific Committee for Consumers Safety (SCCS), the Commission intends to ask the SCCS to reassess propyl and butylparabens.

In the meantime, the Commission is considering to ban the parabens whose safety could not be assessed for lack of data.

Regarding the long-term effects of endocrine disruptors, the Commission is currently reviewing the existing Community Strategy on endocrine disruptors.

Finally, the Commission invites the Honourable Member to refer to its response to Parliamentary Question E-008969/2011 and E-005524/2011 ([2]).

([1]) SCCP/0874/05, http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_risk/committees/04_sccp/docs/sccp_o_00d.pdf
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-007462/12
aan de Commissie
Esther de Lange (PPE)
(25 juli 2012)

Betreft: ETS voor glastuinbouwbedrijven

Vanaf 1 januari 2013 gaat de nieuwe fase in van het Europese systeem voor handel in emissierechten (ETS), die van 2013 tot 2020 zal lopen. Verschillende sectoren vallen vanaf 2013 voor het eerst onder het ETS, waaronder ook bij voorbeeld warmte- en stroomvoorzieningen van verschillende land- en tuinbouwsectoren. De tuinbouwsector is niet aangewezen als een sector van de bedrijfstakken en deeltakken die worden geacht te zijn blootgesteld aan een significant CO_2-weglekrisico, ondanks de grote verschillen tussen open grondteelt en teelt in kassen.

Bedrijven in deze sector vallen onder het ETS als hun installaties een thermisch vermogen hebben dat groter is dan 20 MW. In Nederland valt hierdoor vanaf 2013 een gedeelte van de glastuinbouwsector onder het ETS, een ander gedeelte niet.

Doordat slechts een gedeelte van de glastuinbouwsector onder het ETS valt, wordt daarmee een concurrentienadeel geschapen voor de bedrijven die installaties hebben met een groter thermisch vermogen dan 20 MW, terwijl deze bedrijven juist vaak energie-efficiënter werken door het gebruik van grotere installaties. Deze bedrijven zien zich in sommige gevallen genoodzaakt om uit kostenoverwegingen hun bedrijf te verkleinen en installaties te verkopen.

1. Zijn er volgens de Commissie lidstaten die de glastuinbouwsector geheel dan wel gedeeltelijk hebben vrijgesteld van het ETS? Zo ja, hoe is dat geregeld?

2. Indien deze sector geheel is vrijgesteld, houdt dat in dat ook de bedrijven met een thermisch vermogen van boven de 20 MW vrijgesteld zijn?

3. Is de Commissie bekend met het feit dat er door het toepassen van het ETS binnen de glastuinbouwsector een concurrentienadeel bestaat voor bedrijven die beschikken over installaties met een groter thermisch vermogen dan 20 MW?

4. Vindt de Commissie het een gewenst effect van het ETS dat bedrijven die geïnvesteerd hebben in schaalgrootte en energie-efficiënte energievoorzieningen, nu hun schaal moeten verkleinen en gebruik moeten maken van het vaak meer vervuilende ketelgas?

Antwoord van mevrouw Hedegaard namens de Commissie
(23 augustus 2012)

1. Er zijn geen andere lidstaten die installaties van de tuinbouwsector welke onder het toepassingsgebied van de ETS-richtlijn vallen, expliciet hebben uitgesloten.

2. Voor de derde handelsperiode (2013-2020) kunnen enkel installaties die minder dan 25 kton CO_2-equivalent uitstoten en, indien zij verbrandingsactiviteiten verrichten, een nominaal thermisch ingangsvermogen van minder dan 35 MW hebben, van de EU-ETS worden uitgesloten.

3. De Commissie is er niet van op de hoogte dat de toepassing van de ETS tot een concurrentienadeel heeft geleid. In de tweede handelsperiode (2008-2012), de enige periode waarin de installaties van de tuinbouwsector in Nederland tot op heden onder de EU-ETS vielen, waren de aan deze installaties voor de jaren 2008-2011 toegewezen emissierechten ongeveer gelijk aan de emissies.

4. De bedoeling is dat de ETS voornamelijk van toepassing is op grotere installaties, terwijl kleinere installaties onder nationale maatregelen zouden moeten vallen. De lijn moet dus ergens worden getrokken. De ETS dwingt de grotere installaties niet in te krimpen en er is geen reden om aan te nemen dat zij tot het gebruik van meer broeikasgasuitstotende technologieën zal leiden.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007462/12
to the Commission
Esther de Lange (PPE)
(25 July 2012)

Subject: Application of the ETS to greenhouse horticulture

From 1 January 2013 the European Emissions Trading System (ETS) will enter a new phase, to run from 2013 to 2020. From 2013 several sectors will be covered by the ETS for the first time, including heating and electricity supplies to various agricultural and horticultural sectors. Horticulture is not listed as one of the sectors and subsectors which are deemed to be exposed to a significant risk of carbon leakage, in spite of the wide differences between open field cultivation and cultivation in greenhouses.

Firms in this sector are covered by the ETS if their installations have a thermal input exceeding 20 MW. In the Netherlands this means that from 2013 some undertakings in the greenhouse horticulture sector will be covered by the ETS, while others will not.

Because only part of the greenhouse horticulture sector is covered by the ETS, a competitive disadvantage is thus created for firms with a thermal input exceeding 20 MW, in spite of the fact that it is often precisely these firms that are more energy-efficient owing to their use of larger installations. These firms will in some cases be forced to reduce the size of their operations and sell some installations for reasons of cost.

1. To the Commission's knowledge, are there any Member States that have exempted all or part of their greenhouse horticulture sector from the ETS? If so, how is this regulated?

2. If the whole sector is exempt, does this mean that firms with a thermal input of over 20 MW are also exempt?

3. Is the Commission aware that the application of the ETS has led to a competitive disadvantage within the greenhouse horticulture sector for firms whose installations have a thermal input exceeding 20 MW?

4. Does the Commission consider it a desired effect of the ETS that firms which have invested in large-scale, energy-efficient heat and power supply installations now have to downsize and will have to make use of gas-fired boilers which are often more polluting?

Answer given by Ms Hedegaard on behalf of the Commission
(23 August 2012)

1. No other Member States have explicitly excluded installations from the horticultural sector that fall under the scope of the ETS Directive.

2. For the third trading period (2013-2020) only installations emitting less than 25 kton CO_2-equivalent and, if they carry out combustion activities, have a rated thermal input of less than 35 MW, can be excluded from the EU ETS.

3. The Commission is not aware that the application of the ETS has led to a competitive disadvantage. In the second trading period (2008-2012), which is the only period in which, until now, the installations from the horticultural sector in the Netherlands were covered by the EU ETS, the allowances allocated to these installations for the years 2008-2011 were approximately equal to the emissions.

4. The intention is that the ETS mainly covers larger installations while smaller installations should be covered by national measures. The delimitation must therefore be drawn somewhere. The ETS does not force the larger installations to downsize, and there is no reason to believe it will lead to the use of more greenhouse gas emitting technologies.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007463/12
to the Commission
Emma McClarkin (ECR)
(25 July 2012)

Subject: Extra tax

One of my constituents was charged an extra tax when he purchased a Danish wood burner for heating purposes for his second home in France. It was explained to him that this tax was added because his house in France was not his primary dwelling.

Can the Commission advise me on the precise situation under EU legislation, and whether the fireplace dealer my constituent bought the burner from had any right to impose this extra tax?

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

The information provided is insufficient to give a thorough assessment of the situation but on the basis of that information, it seems that the 'extra-tax' invoked would be an indirect tax paid upon the purchase of a heater ('wood burner') in France. EC law generally allows Member States to introduce national indirect taxes other than VAT ([1]), provided that these non-harmonised taxes meet certain legal conditions. In particular they should not favour domestic products, nor give rise, in trade between Member States, to formalities connected with the crossing of frontiers, nor should they discriminate on grounds of nationality. The Commission services are however not aware of the existence of such an 'extra-tax' as described. It would therefore suggest that your constituent verifies the nature of the tax that he has been charged.

([1]) Article 401 of Council Directive 2006/112/EC.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-007464/12
aan de Commissie
Judith Sargentini (Verts/ALE)
(25 juli 2012)

Betreft: ETNO en de netneutraliteit — Vervolgvragen

Het antwoord van de Commissie op mijn vraag E-005879/2012 over het door de European Telecommunications Network Operators Association (ETNO) bij de Internationale Telecommunicatie-Unie ingediende plan om online dienstverleners mee te laten betalen aan de kosten voor internetverkeer laat een aantal vragen onbeantwoord en roept nieuwe vragen op. Vandaar deze vervolgvragen:

1. Hoe verhoudt het voorstel van ETNO om de doorgifte van een website of internetdienst afhankelijk te maken van de vraag of deze bereid is te betalen voor het gegenereerde internetverkeer — met als consequentie dat telco's bepaalde websites of diensten zullen blokkeren — zich tot de stelling van de Commissie dat „een open internet van hoge kwaliteit gegarandeerd moet worden" en tot de bestaande bepalingen over netneutraliteit in het telecompakket van 2009?

2. Kan dit voorstel ertoe leiden dat internetdienstverleners ervoor kiezen om mensen uit arme landen niet langer toegang te geven tot hun diensten, omdat de baten niet opwegen tegen de kosten?

3. Kan datzelfde lot ook arme mensen of gebieden in de EU treffen, waardoor, in weerwil van het streven van de Commissie om iedere Europese burger toegang tot breedbandinternet te bieden, een nieuwe vorm van ongelijkheid wordt bevorderd, omdat niet iedere burger toegang krijgt tot het hele internet?

4. Zal dit voorstel leiden tot vermindering van de concurrentie en innovatie onder internetbedrijven, bijvoorbeeld wanneer nieuwkomers niet in staat zijn de extra kosten op te brengen of wanneer de „gedifferentieerde kwaliteit van dienstverlening" gevestigde internetdienstverleners in staat stelt voorrang te kopen voor hun diensten?

5. Onderschrijft de Commissie de reactie van de Nederlandse regering op het plan van ETNO: „Afgiftetarieven (…) kunnen voor aanbieders van diensten en toepassingen een drempel vormen om hun diensten aan te blijven bieden en nieuwe diensten te ontwikkelen. Tevens levert een verrekeningssystematiek waarin kosten via afgiftetarieven in rekening worden gebracht, naar verwachting economisch minder efficiënte uitkomsten dan tarieven die direct aan eigen eindgebruikers in rekening worden gebracht ([1])."

6. Wanneer komt het Commissievoorstel voor een gemeenschappelijk EU-standpunt voor de Wereldconferentie over internationale telecommunicatie (WCIT)?

Antwoord van mevrouw Kroes namens de Commissie
(5 september 2012)

De Commissie benadrukt dat zij zich blijft inzetten voor een open internet van hoge kwaliteit. Concurrentie is van groot belang om de consument keuzevrijheid, goede dienstverlening en redelijke prijzen te kunnen bieden. Beheerde diensten kunnen leiden tot een betere gebruikerservaring en in combinatie met de nodige transparantie en keuzevrijheid tot gunstige voorwaarden voor innovatie en nieuwe zakelijke modellen. De Commissie is echter van mening dat concurrentie er niet toe mag leiden dat zulke diensten het leveren van „best effort"-internet door ISP's ([2]) in de weg staan: alle burgers, ongeacht hun inkomen en woonplaats, dienen in overeenstemming met de DAE-doelstellingen toegang te krijgen tot breedbandinternet en tot informatie, en de mogelijkheid te hebben informatie te verspreiden, alsmede de vrijheid om zelf te bepalen welke toepassingen en diensten zij willen gebruiken. De Commissie bereidt momenteel een aanbeveling inzake netneutraliteit voor om de transparantie en keuzevrijheid uit te breiden. Als gevolg daarvan zal de rechtszekerheid toenemen en dat is bevorderlijk voor de nodige investeringen in snel internet. Daarnaast kunnen de nationale regelgevende instanties minimumeisen voor de kwaliteit van de dienstverlening vastleggen als zij van mening zijn dat het dienstverleningsniveau van operators daalt of als die het verkeer binnen netwerken belemmeren of langzamer maken.

([1]) Antwoorden van minister Verhagen van 6 juli 2012 op Kamervragen over netneutraliteit, http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/ministeries/eleni/documenten-en-publicaties/kamerstukken/2012/07/06/beantwoording-kamervragen-over-netneutraliteit.html

([2]) Internet Service Provider (internetprovider).

De Commissie stelt zich ten doel er tijdens de WCIT ([3]) voor te zorgen dat eventuele wijzigingen van het ITR ([4]) in overeenstemming zijn met het acquis van de EU. Aangezien het regelgevingskader van de EU is gericht op het bevorderen van concurrentie en innovatie, onder meer op internetgerelateerde markten, zal de Commissie bij elk voorstel nauwkeurig bestuderen wat de effecten ervan zijn. De Commissie betwijfelt tevens of het ITR een geschikt instrument is voor het vaststellen van verrekenings- en tariefsystemen. Het voorstel van de Commissie voor een besluit van de Raad inzake het standpunt van de EU betreffende de herziening van het ITR tijdens de WCIT of door de voorbereidende instanties daarvan is op 2 augustus goedgekeurd en overgedragen aan de Raad.

([3]) Wereldconferentie over internationale telecommunicatie.
([4]) Internationaal Telecommunicatiereglement.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007464/12
to the Commission
Judith Sargentini (Verts/ALE)
(25 July 2012)

Subject: ETNO and net neutrality — follow-up questions

The Commission's answer to my Question E-005879/2012, on the proposal by the European Telecommunications Network Operators' Association (ETNO) to the International Telecommunication Union to charge online service providers part of the cost of Internet traffic, leaves a number of questions unanswered and gives rise to further questions. I should therefore like to put some follow-up questions:

1. How is ETNO's proposal to make the delivery of a website or Internet service dependent on the willingness of the provider to pay for the Internet traffic generated — which will lead to telecoms firms blocking certain websites or services — to be reconciled with the Commission's statement that 'a high-quality open Internet should be ensured' and with the existing rules on net neutrality in the 2009 Telecoms Package?

2. Could this proposal result in ISPs choosing no longer to allow people from poor countries access to their services because the benefits do not outweigh the costs?

3. Could the same fate befall poor people or regions in the EU, leading — contrary to the Commission's efforts to ensure that that every European citizen has access to broadband Internet — to the promotion of a new form of inequality, because not every citizen will have access to the whole Internet?

4. Will the proposal result in a reduction of competition and innovation among Internet companies, for example when newcomers are unable to pay the extra costs or when 'differentiated service quality' enables established ISPs to buy priority for their services?

5. Does the Commission agree with the Dutch Government's response to ETNO's proposal: 'Termination tariffs may constitute an obstacle to the suppliers of services and applications continuing to offer their services and developing new services. At the same time an automatic deduction system whereby costs are passed on by means of termination tariffs is likely to result in economically less efficient outcomes than tariffs charged directly to end users'. ([1])

6. When is the Commission's proposal for a common EU position for the World Conference on International Telecommunications expected to appear?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(5 September 2012)

The Commission underlines its commitment to an open and high-quality Internet. Competition plays a key role in ensuring consumer choice, quality of service and affordable prices. Managed services can enhance the user experience and, as long as there is transparency and choice, they could be beneficial and enable innovation and new business models. However, the Commission considers that competition should ensure that such services will not displace the provision of best efforts Internet by ISPs ([2]), so that all citizens, irrespective of their income or residence, have access to broadband Internet in accordance with the DAE targets and the ability to access and distribute information or run applications and services of their choice. The Commission is preparing a recommendation on net neutrality issues which will enhance transparency and choice; the resulting increase in legal certainty should support the necessary investments in high speed Internet. Moreover, national regulators set minimum quality of service requirements if they consider that operators are engaging in service degradation and hindering or slowing down traffic over networks.

([1]) Answers by Minister Verhagen of 6 July 2012 to questions in the Dutch Parliament on net neutrality: http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/ministeries/eleni/documenten-en-publicaties/kamerstukken/2012/07/06/beantwoording-kamervragen-over-netneutraliteit.html

([2]) Internet Service Provider.

The Commission's objective at the WCIT ([3]) will be to ensure that any changes to the ITR ([4]) will be compatible with the EU *acquis*. As the EU regulatory framework aims at fostering competition and innovation, including in Internet markets, the Commission will carefully evaluate the effect of any proposal in this respect. The Commission also questions the appropriateness of ITRs for setting compensation and tariff systems. The Commission's proposal for a Council decision on the EU Position for the review of the ITR at the WCIT or its preparatory instances has been adopted on 2 August and transmitted to the Council.

([3]) World Conference on International Telecommunications.
([4]) International Telecommunications Regulations.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007465/12
an die Kommission
Horst Schnellhardt (PPE)
(26. Juli 2012)

Betrifft: Energiesteuerbefreiung für die Verbrennung von Altöl in der mineralogischen Wirtschaft in Deutschland

In Artikel 21 der Richtlinie 2008/98/EG ist vorgesehen, dass Altöl gemäß der in Artikel 4 festgelegten Abfallhierarchie behandelt wird, wonach Wiederverwertung und stofflichem Recycling der Vorrang vor einer sonstigen Verwendung, wie etwa der energetischen Verwendung, eingeräumt wird. Gemäß Artikel 13 der Richtlinie ergreifen die Mitgliedstaaten die erforderlichen Maßnahmen, um sicherzustellen, dass die Abfallbewirtschaftung ohne Gefährdung der menschlichen Gesundheit oder der Umwelt erfolgt. Ferner müssen nach Erwägungsgrund 6 der Richtlinie 2003/96/EG Erfordernisse des Umweltschutzes einbezogen werden.

Gemäß §51 EnergieStG werden in Deutschland Unternehmen für die Verbrennung von Altöl zur Herstellung von mineralogischen Produkten von der Energiesteuer befreit.

Kann die Kommission dazu folgende Fragen beantworten:

1. Wie beurteilt die Kommission diese Steuerbefreiung unter Berücksichtigung der geltenden EU-Abfallgesetzgebung?

2. Welche Schritte sieht die Kommission vor, um zu gewährleisten, dass Altöl entsprechend der in der Richtlinie 2008/98/EG festgelegten Abfallhierarchie behandelt wird?

Antwort von Herrn Potočnik im Namen der Kommission
(1. Oktober 2012)

Gemäß Artikel 4 Absatz 1 der Richtlinie 2008/98/EG ([1]) über Abfälle sollte das Recycling von Abfällen gegenüber der energetischen Verwertung Priorität haben. Artikel 4 Absatz 2 besagt jedoch, dass die Mitgliedstaaten bei Anwendung der Abfallhierarchie Maßnahmen treffen, um diejenigen Optionen zu fördern, die insgesamt das beste Ergebnis unter dem Aspekt des Umweltschutzes erbringen. Dies kann bedeuten, dass bei bestimmten Abfallströmen von der Abfallhierarchie abgewichen werden muss, wenn dies aufgrund einer Lebenszyklusanalyse der Gesamtauswirkungen gerechtfertigt ist. Außerdem berücksichtigen die Mitgliedstaaten die allgemeinen Umweltschutzgrundsätze der Vorsorge und der Nachhaltigkeit, der technischen Durchführbarkeit und der wirtschaftlichen Vertretbarkeit, des Schutzes von Ressourcen und die Gesamtauswirkungen auf die Umwelt und die menschliche Gesundheit sowie die wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Folgen.

Die Kommission ist der Auffassung, dass die deutschen Rechtsvorschriften für Altöl und die Besteuerung von Mineralölen gemäß dem Energiesteuergesetz mit der Richtlinie 2008/98/EG im Einklang stehen. Die deutschen Behörden haben zudem Daten übermittelt, die dies bestätigen und beweisen, dass Altöle zum großen Teil aufbereitet werden. Bis zum Vorliegen gegenteiliger Anhaltspunkte hält es die Kommission daher nicht für erforderlich, tätig zu werden.

([1]) ABl. L 312 vom 22.11.2008.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007465/12
to the Commission
Horst Schnellhardt (PPE)
(26 July 2012)

Subject: Energy tax exemption for the incineration of waste oil in the mineral oil industry in Germany

Article 21 of Directive 2008/98/EC stipulates that waste oil is to be treated in accordance with the waste hierarchy laid down in Article 4, giving priority to re-use and recycling over other uses such as energy recovery. Under Article 13 of the directive, Member States must take the necessary measures to ensure that waste management is carried out without endangering human health or the environment. Environmental protection requirements must also be integrated pursuant to Recital 6 of Directive 2003/96/EC.

Under Article 51 of the German energy tax law, undertakings enjoy an energy tax exemption for the incineration of waste oil when producing mineral oil products.

Can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. What is its assessment of this tax exemption, bearing in mind current EU legislation on waste?

2. What steps will the Commission take to ensure that waste oil is treated in accordance with the waste hierarchy laid down in Directive 2008/98/EC?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(1 October 2012)

According to Article 4(1) of Directive 2008/98/EC on waste ([1]), waste recycling should take priority over energy recovery. However, Article 4(2) states that when applying the waste hierarchy, Member States shall take measures to encourage the options that deliver the best overall environmental outcome. This may require for specific waste streams to depart from the hierarchy where this is justified by life-cycle assessment of the overall impacts. In addition, Member States shall take into account the general environmental protection principles of precaution and sustainability, technical feasibility and economic viability, protection of resources as well as the overall environmental, human health, economic and social impacts.

The Commission considers that German legislation on waste oils and the taxation on mineral oils established in the Energy Tax Law are in accordance with Directive 2008/98/EC. This is also confirmed by data provided by the German authorities proving that a large majority of waste oils are regenerated. Therefore, in the absence of evidence to the contrary the Commission does not consider it necessary to take any action.

([1]) OJ L 312 , 22.11.2008.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007466/12
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(26. Juli 2012)

Betrifft: Regionen Valencia und Murcia

Nun sind auch die spanischen Regionen Murcia und Valencia in finanzieller Not und haben „Schlagseite".

Kann die Kommission bereits mitteilen, ob angesichts des hohen Schuldenstands die Gefahr besteht, dass Mittel aus den verschiedenen regionalen Fördermaßnahmen der EU unwiederbringlich verloren gehen. Wenn ja, um welche Beträge handelt es sich dabei?

Auch im Falle Spaniens gibt es schon — nach Sizilien — Vorwürfe von Korruption. Inwieweit sind von diesen Vorwürfen auch EU-Mittel aus den verschiedenen Fördermaßnahmen betroffen?

Antwort von Herrn Hahn im Namen der Kommission
(4. Oktober 2012)

1. Zur besseren Verwendung von EU-Mitteln wurde der Beihilfesatz für Maßnahmen in Valencia, welche durch den Europäischen Fonds für regionale Entwicklung (EFRE) und den Europäischen Sozialfonds (ESF) kofinanziert werden, auf 80 % erhöht. Dies entspricht dem für diese Regionen festgelegten Förderhöchstsatz.

Bis Juni 2012 gaben Murcia und Valencia die gesamten bis 2010 gebundenen EFRE-Mittel aus. Diese gebundenen Mittel beliefen sich für Murcia auf 305 Mio. EUR und für Valencia auf 896 Mio. EUR. Derzeit besteht bei beiden Programmen keinerlei Gefahr einer Aufhebung von Mittelbindungen.

Bis August 2012 zahlte die Kommission 39 Mio. EUR an Murcia. Da sich die gebundenen Mittel für das Jahr 2010 auf insgesamt 49 Mio. EUR belaufen, besteht zurzeit die Gefahr einer Aufhebung von Mittelbindungen in Höhe von etwa 10 Mio. EUR. An Valencia zahlte die Kommission 113 Mio. EUR. Bei gebundenen Mitteln von 134 Mio. EUR für das Jahr 2010 besteht daher die Gefahr einer Aufhebung von Mittelbindungen in Höhe von etwa 21 Mio. EUR.

In Bezug auf den Beitrag aus dem Europäischen Landwirtschaftsfonds für die Entwicklung des ländlichen Raums erhöhte Murcia im Jahre 2012 die Kofinanzierungssätze für die Schwerpunkte 1 und 2 seines Entwicklungsprogramms für den ländlichen Raum. Trotz dieser Änderung besteht die Gefahr einer Aufhebung von Mittelbindungen. Die Ausführungsrate beträgt 37 % und liegt somit unter dem spanischen Durchschnitt von 45 %. Die Ausführungsrate von Valencias Entwicklungsprogramm für den ländlichen Raum beträgt 43 % und die Gefahr einer Aufhebung von Mittelbindungen ist eher gering.

2. Die nationalen Behörden meldeten der Kommission insgesamt 74 Fälle von Unregelmäßigkeiten ([1]), und zwar für sämtliche Programmplanungszeiträume ([2]) und im EU-Gesamtbetrag von 17 075 960 EUR. Bisher wurden 5 236 375 EUR wiedereingezogen. In keinem dieser Fälle bestand Verdacht auf Betrug. Was das Thema Korruption anbelangt, möchte die Kommission die Frau Abgeordnete auf ihre Antwort auf Frage E-7403/2012 ([3]) verweisen.

([1]) „Unregelmäßigkeit" wird in Artikel 2 Absatz 7 der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1083/2006 definiert.
([2]) Also 1989-1993, 1994-1999, 2000-2006, 2007-2013.
([3]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/de/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007466/12
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(26 July 2012)

Subject: The Valencia and Murcia regions

Now the Spanish regions of Valencia and Murcia too are in financial trouble and are starting to look shaky.

Can the Commission yet state whether, owing to the high level of debt, there is a risk of funds from the EU's various regional support programmes being lost for ever? If so, what amounts are involved?

In Spain, as earlier in Sicily, there are already accusations of corruption, To what extent are these accusations also being levelled at EU funding from the various support programmes?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(4 October 2012)

1. In order to boost the implementation of EU funds, the aid rate for European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF) co-financed actions in Valencia has been increased to 80%, i.e. the maximum ceiling applicable for these regions.

As of June 2012, Murcia and Valencia have spent the ERDF total amount committed up to 2010. Murcia's total commitment is EUR 305 million. Valencia's total commitment is EUR 896 million. There is currently no risk of decommitment of the funds for either programme.

As of August 2012, the Commission has paid Murcia EUR 39 million and the total committed to 2010 is EUR 49 million. There is currently a risk of decommitment of about EUR 10 million. The Commission has paid Valencia EUR 113 million and the total committed to 2010 is EUR 134 million. Therefore, there is a risk of decommitment of some EUR 21 million.

As regards the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development contribution, Murcia increased the co-financing rates in 2012 for axes 1 and 2 of its rural development programme (RDP). Despite that modification, a risk of decommitment exists. The execution rate is 37%, lower than the Spanish average of 45%. Concerning Valencia, the execution rate of its RDP is 43% and the risk of decommitment is rather low.

2. A total of 74 cases of irregularities ([1]) involving a total EU amount of EUR 17 057 960 were reported to the Commission by national authorities for all programming periods ([2]). Up to now, an amount of EUR 5 236 375 has been recovered. None of these cases contained suspicions of fraud. As far as the issue of corruption is concerned, the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its reply to Question E-7403/12 ([3]).

([1]) The term 'irregularity' is defined in Article 2(7) of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006.
([2]) i.e. 1989-1993; 1994-1999; 2000-2006; 2007-2013.
([3]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007467/12
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(26. Juli 2012)

Betrifft: Drohende Pleite Siziliens

Die autonome Insel Sizilien ist in finanzieller Schieflage: Fünf Mrd. EUR braucht die Region.

1. Inwieweit hat die Kommission Kenntnis davon, dass Fördergelder aus dem EU-Haushalt in Sizilien missbräuchlich verwendet wurden?

2. Um welche Beträge aus welchen Fonds handelt es sich dabei? (Bitte um genaue Auflistung.)

3. Welche Pläne hat die Kommission, um diese aus europäischen Fördergeldern missbräuchlich verwendeten Beträge angesichts des Schuldenstandes zurückzubekommen?

4. Unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der allseits gegenwärtigen Krisensituation in der EU: Welche unmittelbaren Sofortmaßnahmen kann die Kommission in diesem Falle ergreifen, damit nicht noch mehr EU-Gelder nach Sizilien fließen, welche am Ende erst nicht widmungsgemäß verwendet werden würden?

Antwort von Herrn Hahn im Namen der Kommission
(25. September 2012)

1. und 2. Im Rahmen des IMS ([1]) meldeten die nationalen Behörden der Kommission insgesamt 523 Fälle von Unregelmäßigkeiten ([2]) bei Maßnahmen, die in über zwei Jahrzehnten ([3]) durch EU-Fonds (EAGFL-Ausrichtung, Fischerei, EFRE und ESF) in Sizilien kofinanziert wurden. Diese Unregelmäßigkeiten betreffen einen EU-Betrag von insgesamt 165 177 928 EUR, von dem etwa 75 % bereits wieder eingezogen wurden. ([4])

3. Die Kommission stellt die Einziehung unrechtmäßig verwendeter EU-Mittel im Einklang mit den einschlägigen Verordnungen sicher. Im Rahmen der geteilten Mittelverwaltung obliegt es in erster Linie dem Mitgliedstaat (MS), Unregelmäßigkeiten zu vermeiden und aufzudecken sowie Finanzkorrekturen vorzunehmen. Der MS sorgt dafür, dass die betreffenden Beträge berichtigt werden, entweder indem die betroffenen Ausgaben unmittelbar aus dem Programm herausgenommen oder die unrechtmäßig verwendeten Beträge bei einer neuen Ausgabenerklärung abgezogen werden, wenn die Einziehung beim Begünstigten vor Ort abgeschlossen ist. Die Mitgliedstaaten übermitteln der Kommission Jahresberichte mit Angaben zu den herausgenommenen Beträgen, eingezogenen Beträgen und noch ausstehenden Einziehungen. Bei Programmabschluss prüft die Kommission, ob der MS allen Unregelmäßigkeiten ordnungsgemäß nachgegangen ist.

4. Die Kommission ergreift alle erforderlichen Maßnahmen, um zu gewährleisten, dass die EU-Mittel im Einklang mit sämtlichen geltenden Rechtsvorschriften verwendet werden. Dazu gehören regelmäßige Prüfungen der Verwaltungs- und Kontrollsysteme in den Mitgliedstaaten, mit denen ein wirksamer Einsatz der EU-Mittel sichergestellt werden soll. Die Kommission hat so nach den Prüfungen im Jahr 2011 schwerwiegende Mängel bei der Verwaltung und Kontrolle des EFRE-Regionalprogramms in Sizilien festgestellt und daraufhin die Zahlungsfrist für Zwischenzahlungen zugunsten des Programms bis zur Behebung dieser Mängel unterbrochen.

([1]) Berichterstattungssystem für Unregelmäßigkeiten.
([2]) Der Begriff „Unregelmäßigkeit" wird in Artikel 2 Absatz 7 der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1083/2006 definiert.
([3]) Programmplanungszeiträume 1994-1999, 2000-2006 und 2007-2013.
([4]) Etwa 25 % betreffen aktuelle Fälle; die entsprechenden Beträge werden spätestens am Ende des derzeitigen Programmplanungszeitraums wieder eingezogen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007467/12
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(26 July 2012)

Subject: Sicily facing bankruptcy

The autonomous region of Sicily is facing serious financial problems and needs assistance totalling EUR 5 billion.

1. On the basis of the information available to the Commission, how much funding provided from the EU budget has been misappropriated in Sicily?

2. Exactly what sums and exactly what funds are involved?

3. How does the Commission plan to recover these misappropriated EU funds, given Sicily's severe indebtedness?

4. In the light of the omnipresent financial crisis in the EU, what immediate measures can the Commission take in an effort to ensure that no more EU funds find their way to Sicily simply in order to be misappropriated?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(25 September 2012)

1. and 2. A total of 523 cases of irregularities ([1]) have been reported to the Commission from the national authorities through the IMS ([2]) system in respect of actions co-financed over more than two decades ([3]) by EU funds (FEOGA Guidance, Fisheries, ERDF and ESF) in Sicily. These irregularities involve a total EU amount of EUR 165 177 928, out of which around 75% has been already recovered ([4]).

3. The Commission ensures the recovery of any irregularly spent EU funds in accordance with the provisions of relevant regulations. Within the shared management framework, it is the Member State (MS) which has the obligation to prevent and detect irregularities and to make financial corrections in the first place. The MS ensures that the concerned amounts are corrected, either by immediate withdrawal of the affected expenditure from the programme or by offsetting the irregular amounts against a new expenditure claim, once the recovery from the beneficiary on the ground has been completed. The Commission receives annual reports from the Member States on these withdrawals, recoveries and on the situation of pending recoveries. At programme closure, the Commission verifies all irregularities have been duly adressed by the MS.

4. The Commission takes all necessary measures to ensure that the EU funding is spent in accordance with all applicable legal requirements. This includes regular audits on the management and control systems in Member States in order to ensure an efficient use of EU funds. This is why, following audits in 2011, the Commission has discovered serious deficiencies in the management and control of the Sicilian ERDF regional programme and has interrupted the payment deadline for interim payments to the programme until these deficiencies were adressed.

([1]) The term 'irregularity' is defined in Article 2(7) of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006.
([2]) Irregularity Management System.
([3]) Programming periods 1994-99, 2000-2006 and 2007-2013.
([4]) Around 25% are related to recent cases, whose amounts will be recovered at the latest at the end of the current programming period.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007468/12
an die Kommission
Bernd Lange (S&D)
(26. Juli 2012)

Betrifft: Qualität der Postdienstleistungen im Binnenmarkt

Mit der Postrichtlinie (2008/6/EG) soll der Binnenmarkt der Postdienstleistungen vollendet und eine hohe Qualität der Postdienstleistungen sichergestellt werden. Ein wichtiges Qualitätsmerkmal von Postdienstleistungen sind kurze Zustellzeiten.

Von der Kommission wird die korrekte Umsetzung des Regulierungsrahmens geprüft und sichergestellt; gegebenenfalls schlägt sie zur Erreichung der langfristigen postpolitischen Ziele der Gemeinschaft auch Änderungen dieses Regulierungsrahmens vor.

Kann die Kommission dazu folgende Fragen beantworten:

1. Wie bewertet es die Kommission, wenn Zeitungsnachsendungen von Deutschland nach Italien gar nicht ankommen oder die Sendungen vier bis fünf Tage brauchen?

2. Inwiefern sieht die Kommission die Notwendigkeit, den Regulierungsrahmen für Postdienstleistungen anzupassen, um bessere Bedingungen für eine hohe Qualität der Postdienstleistungen (einschließlich kurzer Zustellzeiten) im Binnenmarkt zu schaffen?

Antwort von Herrn Barnier im Namen der Kommission
(3. September 2012)

Nach einschlägigem EU-Recht (Artikel 3 der Postrichtlinie ([1])) gilt die Universaldienstverpflichtung für Postsendungen von bis zu 2 kg, für Postpakete von bis zu 10 kg sowie für Einschreib- und Wertsendungen, die den Kunden an mindestens fünf Arbeitstagen pro Woche im gesamten Hoheitsgebiet zuzustellen sind. Für die Zustellung von Zeitungen sieht die Richtlinie dagegen keine Verpflichtung der Mitgliedstaaten zur Aufnahme in den Universaldienst vor, und für diesen Dienst gibt es auch keine verbindlichen harmonisierten Qualitätsnormen. Die Qualitätsnormen für die Zeitungszustellung können sich daher in den einzelnen Mitgliedstaaten unterscheiden. Für die Qualitätssicherung und -kontrolle dieses Dienstes sind die nationalen Postdienstleister und die einschlägigen nationalen Regulierungsbehörden verantwortlich.

Vor dem Hintergrund der EU-Postreform mit der schrittweisen Marktöffnung, die bis zum 31. Dezember 2012 in allen Mitgliedstaaten vollständig abgeschlossen sein muss, und angesichts der Qualitätsentwicklungen weisen mehrere Studien und Erhebungen darauf hin, dass sich der Universaldienst und die Qualität der Postdienste insgesamt in den letzten Jahren deutlich verbessert haben. Die Kundenzufriedenheit im Postsektor ist im Vergleich zu anderen Netzindustrien hoch. Dessen ungeachtet setzt die Kommission die Überwachung des Postsektors fort und wird ihre Ergebnisse gemäß Artikel 23 der Postrichtlinie bis Ende 2013 in ihrem 5. Bericht über die Anwendung der Richtlinie veröffentlichen. Darin wird sie gegebenenfalls auch Folgemaßnahmen aufführen, die sie für Verbesserungen des bestehenden EU-Rechts und seiner Anwendung für erforderlich hält.

([1]) Richtlinie 97/67/EG, geändert durch die Richtlinien 2002/39/EG und 2008/6/EG.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007468/12
to the Commission
Bernd Lange (S&D)
(26 July 2012)

Subject: Quality of postal services on the internal market

The Postal Directive (Directive 2008/6/EC) is intended to complete the internal market in postal services and guarantee a high standard of quality. One hallmark of quality as far as postal services are concerned is short delivery times.

The Commission ensures and ascertains that the regulatory framework is being implemented properly; in order to achieve the EU's long-term postal policy aims, it can propose to amend the framework as and where required.

1. What does the Commission think of the fact that newspapers forwarded from Germany to Italy might not reach the recipient at all or else they take four to five days to arrive?

2. How far does it see a need to adjust the postal service regulatory framework so as to create conditions more likely to produce high-quality postal services (with short delivery times) on the internal market?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(3 September 2012)

According to relevant EC law, Article 3 of the Postal Services Directive ([1]), the universal service obligation (USO) includes the delivery of postal items up to 2 kg, postal packages up to 10 kg and services for registered and insured items to consumer premises at least five working days a week and across the whole territory. The directive does not, however, oblige Member States (MS) to include newspaper delivery in the USO and there is no mandatory harmonised quality standard for newspaper delivery. Therefore, quality standards for newspaper delivery may vary between MS. The quality assurance and control of this specific service is the responsibility of the national postal operators and the responsible national regulatory authorities.

In view of the EU postal reform with its gradual market opening (requiring full market opening by all MS by 31 December 2012) and quality developments, various studies and surveys have pointed to considerable improvements as regards the USO and the overall quality of postal services over recent years. Overall, postal sector consumer satisfaction is ranked high compared to other network industries. Nevertheless, the Commission is continuing the monitoring of the postal sector and will publish its findings in a 5th Application Report by the end of 2013, as required by Article 23 of the Postal Services Directive. The report will include, as appropriate, possible follow-up measures necessary to improve existing EC law and its application.

([1]) Directive 97/67/EC as amended by Directives 2002/39/EC and 2008/6/EC.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007469/12
to the Commission
Phil Prendergast (S&D)
(26 July 2012)

Subject: Cost of SMS texts using diacritics

When using characters with diacritics in SMS texts sent via mobile telephony providers, European consumers incur an additional cost equivalent to that of three 160-character SMS texts. Could the Commission indicate whether this is in compliance with the *acquis communautaire* governing telecommunications?

Could it further explain the role of the European Telecommunications Standards Institute in setting the GSM SMS standards in use in the EU, and how it relates to the *acquis communautaire* in the field of telecommunications?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(19 September 2012)

The issues raised in the Honourable Member's question are related to technical industry self-regulation standards that set a 140 bytes limit for a SMS, which are governed by a European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) standard. SMS can be encoded using a variety of alphabets: the default 7-bit alphabet, the 8-bit alphabet, and the 16-bit alphabet. Depending on the alphabet used this leads to the maximum individual SMS sizes of 160 7-bit characters, 140 8-bit characters, or 70 16-bit characters. Support of the 7-bit alphabet is mandatory for GSM handsets and network elements, but characters in languages using characters outside the standard 7-bit alphabet are encoded using the 16-bit character encoding. Characters outside the default 7-bit alphabet use Unicode characters, and each of these takes 2 bytes, thus allowing only 70 characters per SMS. As soon as a single letter with a diacritical letter is used in an SMS the telephone switches from the basic 7-bit alphabet to Unicode and one SMS then only has 70 symbols instead of 160. However, there are no indications that these standards are incompatible with the *acquis communautaire* governing telecommunications.

ETSI is an independent, not-for-profit organisation dealing *inter alia* with telecommunications services such as SMS. ETSI members produce market-driven, voluntary and consensus-based standards that are intended for use by the market and meet the specific needs of the European market. It is recognised as a European standardisation body under Directive 98/34/EC of 22 June 1998 laying down a procedure for the provision of information in the field of technical standards and regulations.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007470/12
to the Commission
Phil Prendergast (S&D)
(26 July 2012)

Subject: Treatment of colostomy bag users by airlines

Can the Commission indicate whether airline staff are entitled, under any circumstances, to demand that a passenger lift his or her clothes to expose a colostomy bag, either in private or while queuing at a boarding gate?

Can it indicate the means of redress available to a passenger who has been forced to expose his or her body and such a medical device in public at the demand of airline staff?

Can the Commission further clarify whether an airline can, under any circumstances, refuse to allow a passenger to bring a spare colostomy bag to change on board, even where the passenger can show a signed letter from a doctor?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(11 September 2012)

Only security staff trained according to the requirements of point 11.2.3.1 to the annex of Regulation (EU) No 185/2010 is authorised to screen passengers for aviation security reasons. This screening might include, as required, a hand search, which consists of an examination of the body and clothing by running the hands over the body and clothing. When a hand search is performed it shall be carried out so as to reasonably ensure that the person is not carrying prohibited articles. Extra attention should therefore be given to unusual items discovered.

Passengers have the option to ask for the screening to be performed in a separated area, such as a private screening booth.

In case a passenger is not satisfied about the way he is treated by aviation security staff, he or she can make a formal complaint according to the laws of the Member State where the treatment took place.

The European legislation does not consider a spare colostomy bag as a prohibited article.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007471/12
to the Commission
Gay Mitchell (PPE)
(26 July 2012)

Subject: Flight-time limitations and pilot fatigue

Why is the European Aviation Safety Agency advocating longer limits on working/flying hours for pilots and cabin crew in the development of new legislation? It is thereby ignoring the scientific research it had commissioned, the findings of which were published in the January 2009 Moebus Report, which clearly pointed to a need to tighten the limits on the amount of time a pilot should be able to fly?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(10 September 2012)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-003346/2012 ([1]).

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

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-007472/12
aan de Commissie
Esther de Lange (PPE)
(26 juli 2012)

Betreft: Schengenverklaring medicijnen

Patiënten die reizen met medicijnen die opiaten bevatten, zoals sterke pijnstillers of Ritalin, moeten hiervoor een verklaring aanvragen voordat ze naar het buitenland gaan, zodat ze kunnen aantonen dat ze de medicijnen nodig hebben.

Voor het reizen binnen de Schengenzone is een zogenaamde Schengenverklaring voor medicijnen vereist, waar onder andere de data van heen- en terugreis vermeld moeten staan. Deze verklaring moet bij de behandelend arts van de patiënt en de nationale verantwoordelijke autoriteit aangevraagd worden voorafgaand aan de reis. Voor elke reis moet in principe opnieuw de aanvraagprocedure worden doorlopen. Deze procedure duurt vaak een aantal weken en de verklaring is slechts geldig voor 30 dagen. Het is in Nederland weliswaar mogelijk per keer 6 verklaringen aan te vragen, maar het blijft een hoge drempel voor veel burgers, waaronder chronisch zieken, om op reis te gaan, zeker wanneer de reis *ad hoc* gebeurt. Dit geldt ook zeker voor burgers in grensstreken die bijvoorbeeld naar een begrafenis of voor een medische behandeling net over de grens gaan.

Voor reizen buiten de Schengenzone is de procedure voor het aanvragen van een verklaring uitgebreider, onder andere vanwege de verplichting tot het legaliseren van documenten, maar daar staat tegenover dat zo'n verklaring 1 kalenderjaar geldig is.

1. Is de Commissie op de hoogte van de praktische problemen waar Europese patiënten mee te maken krijgen wanneer zij op korte termijn naar een andere lidstaat willen reizen? Is dit geen inbreuk op het vrij verkeer van personen en patiënten?

2. Wat is de gemiddelde verwerkingstijd van een aanvraag van een Schengenverklaring in de lidstaten van de Schengenzone?

3. Is de Commissie op de hoogte van verschillen in aanpak tussen de lidstaten?

4. Is het volgens de Commissie mogelijk en wenselijk de geldigheidsduur van de Schengenverklaring te verlengen, bijvoorbeeld naar 1 jaar zoals reeds geldt voor verklaringen die door sommige EU-lidstaten worden uitgegeven voor reizen met medicijnen buiten de Schengenzone?

Antwoord van mevrouw Reding namens de Commissie
(14 september 2012)

De Commissie weet dat in de lidstaten verschillende werkwijzen en procedures worden gevolgd ten aanzien van patiënten die geneesmiddelen met psychoactieve stoffen meenemen op reis. Dat is het gevolg van het feit dat een belangrijk deel van de bevoegdheden op het gebied van het drugsbeleid bij de lidstaten berust.

De Schengenlidstaten hebben een Schengenverklaring voor medicijnen ingevoerd, die in elke lidstaat door de bevoegde autoriteiten wordt afgegeven aan burgers die naar een ander Schengenland willen reizen en tijdens hun reis geneesmiddelen moeten nemen die onder toezicht gestelde verdovende middelen of psychotrope stoffen bevatten. De verklaring wordt door de bevoegde autoriteiten afgegeven of gewaarmerkt op basis van een medisch voorschrift en is maximaal 30 dagen geldig.

De verklaring is bedoeld om het vrij verkeer van personen tussen de Schengenlanden te beschermen. Omdat de wetgeving per lidstaat verschilt, kan ook de beschikbaarheid van en het toezicht op deze geneesmiddelen verschillen.

De Schengenverklaring is ingevoerd om oneigenlijk gebruik van geneesmiddelen die onder toezicht gestelde verdovende middelen en psychotrope stoffen bevatten, te voorkomen en dus drugshandel tegen te gaan, en tegelijkertijd het vrij verkeer van patiënten met geneesmiddelen in het Schengengebied te waarborgen.

De geldigheidstermijn van de Schengenverklaring is door de lidstaten op 30 dagen vastgesteld om ervoor te zorgen dat patiënten alleen geneesmiddelen meenemen voor eigen gebruik.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007472/12
to the Commission
Esther de Lange (PPE)
(26 July 2012)

Subject: Schengen declaration for medicines

Patients who travel with medicines containing opiates, such as strong painkillers or Ritalin, are required to apply for a declaration before travelling abroad, so that they can demonstrate that they need the medicines.

For travel within the Schengen area, a 'Schengen declaration for medicines' is required, which must *inter alia* state the dates of travel in both directions. The declaration must be requested from the patient's doctor and from the national authority responsible before setting out on a journey. In principle, the application procedure has to be undergone afresh before each journey. This procedure often takes several weeks, while the declaration is only valid for 30 days. In the Netherlands, it is admittedly possible to apply for six declarations at a time, but it still seriously discourages many citizens, including those who are chronically ill, from travelling, particularly on an ad hoc basis. This particularly applies to those in border areas who wish to travel a short distance across the border to attend a funeral or receive medical treatment.

For travel outside the Schengen area, the procedure for obtaining a declaration is more involved, *inter alia* because of the requirement to seek authentication of documents, but on the other hand the declaration is valid for one year.

1. Is the Commission aware of the practical problems facing European patients if they wish to travel to another Member State at short notice? Does this not constitute a breach of the principle of free movement of persons and patients?

2. How long, on average, does it take to process an application for a Schengen declaration in the Schengen Member States?

3. Is the Commission aware of differences of approach between Member States?

4. Would it be possible and desirable, in the Commission's view, to extend the period of validity of the Schengen declaration, for example to 1 year, which is already the period of validity of the declarations issued by some EU Member States for travel with medicines outside the Schengen area?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(14 September 2012)

The Commission is aware of the different approaches and procedures in Member States regarding patients who travel with medicines containing psychoactive substances. These result from the fact that drugs policy is an area where Member States retain significant competence.

The Schengen Member States have introduced a Schengen declaration for medicines, which authorities in each Member State issue to its residents who wish to travel to another Schengen State and who need to take medicinal products composed of controlled narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances during this period. The certificate is issued or authenticated by the competent authorities on the basis of a medical prescription and is valid for a maximum period of 30 days.

The certificate is aimed at safeguarding the free movement of travellers between the Schengen countries. Due to differences in national legislation, the availability and control of some of these medicinal products may vary between the Member States.

The Schengen certificate was introduced to prevent the diversion of medicinal products composed of controlled narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, and therefore combat drug trafficking, while ensuring the free movement of patients with their medication in the Schengen area.

The 30-day validity time limit for the Schengen Certificate was deemed appropriate by the Member States to ensure that medication carried over by patients remains for their own use.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-007473/12
aan de Commissie
Esther de Lange (PPE)
(26 juli 2012)

Betreft: Export van fokvee naar Rusland

Door de nasleep van het Schmallenbergvirus is de export van fokvee naar Rusland vrijwel stil komen te liggen. De Russen geven aan dat er onvoldoende officiële documenten overgelegd worden die de afwezigheid van enig risico van deze ziekte bij het vee bekrachtigen, en houden daarom de grens gesloten voor fokvee. De Russen wijzen tevens op de mogelijkheid om via een bijlage bij veterinaire certificaten belemmeringen te overkomen.

Met het tegemoetkomen aan de Russische eisen door middel van officiële documenten kan de export naar dit belangrijke exportland weer op gang komen. Tot op heden blijkt dit echter niet te gebeuren.

1. Wat doet de Commissie op dit moment om de export van fokvee naar Rusland weer op gang te laten komen?

2. Waarom is het officiële document over afwezigheid van enig risico van deze ziekte nog niet in handen van Russische diensten?

3. Kan de Commissie de leden van de Douane-unie de ruimte geven die nodig is om een bijlage op te stellen bij het veterinaire certificaat voor de export van fokvee, waarin opgenomen kan worden onder welke voorwaarden landen die getroffen zijn door het Schmallenbergvirus weer levend fokvee kunnen exporteren?

4. Kan de Commissie zo snel mogelijk de benodigde informatie aan de leden van de Douane-unie leveren om een bijbehorende bijlage te kunnen opstellen?

Antwoord van de heer Dalli namens de Commissie
(19 september 2012)

Nadat het schmallenbergvirus (SBV) in de EU was opgedoken, hebben de Russische autoriteiten de invoer van levende herkauwers uit een aantal lidstaten tijdelijk opgeschort. Sinds januari 2012 heeft de Commissie regelmatig contact met de Russische autoriteiten. In een groot aantal brieven en bijeenkomsten, en met name tijdens een bezoek aan een laboratorium in februari 2012 en een internationaal wetenschappelijk symposium in april 2012 is alle beschikbare informatie over SBV in volle openheid met de Russische autoriteiten gewisseld.

Uit nieuwe wetenschappelijke inzichten, de ontwikkeling van de epidemiologische situatie en rapporten van de Europese Autoriteit voor voedselveiligheid en het Europees Centrum voor ziektepreventie en -bestrijding blijkt dat deze infectie een beperkte impact heeft. In de huidige veterinaire certificaten voor fokrunderen wordt al geëist dat de uitgevoerde dieren klinisch gezond zijn. Verdergaande certificatievoorschriften zouden niet in overeenstemming zijn met de beginselen van de SPS-Overeenkomst van de Wereldhandelsorganisatie (WTO), namelijk wetenschappelijke rechtvaardiging, evenredigheid en non-discriminatie.

In de conclusies van de algemene vergadering van de Werelddiergezondheidsorganisatie (OIE) van mei 2012 wordt gesteld dat deze infectie niet meer als opkomende ziekte kan worden beschouwd en gezien het geringe risico niet voldoet aan de criteria om op de OIE-lijst te worden opgenomen, zodat specifieke internationale handelsnormen niet geboden zijn.

Aangezien Rusland lid van de OIE en inmiddels ook van de WTO is, heeft de Commissie erop aangedrongen — en dat zal zij blijven doen — dat Rusland de conclusies opvolgt. Die bieden immers een voldoende basis om alle WTO-landen die handelsbeperkingen in verband met SBV instellen, te verzoeken hier onmiddellijk een einde aan te maken.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007473/12
to the Commission
Esther de Lange (PPE)
(26 July 2012)

Subject: Export of livestock to Russia for breeding purposes

In the aftermath of the outbreak of disease caused by Schmallenberg virus, exports of livestock to Russia for breeding purposes have virtually ceased. The Russians state that not enough official documents are being submitted to confirm the absence of any risk of this disease in the livestock, and they are therefore keeping their border closed to livestock intended for breeding purposes. The Russians also point to the possibility of overcoming obstacles by means of an annex to veterinary certificates.

If the Russians' requirements regarding official documents are met, exports to that important destination can resume. However, to date these requirements are not being met.

1. What is the Commission currently doing to enable exports of livestock to Russia for breeding purposes to resume?

2. Why have the Russian authorities not yet received the official document on the absence of any risk of this disease?

3. Can the Commission make it possible for members of the Customs Union to draw up an annex to the veterinary certificate for exports of livestock for breeding purposes in which it can be indicated under what conditions countries affected by Schmallenberg virus can again begin to export live animals for breeding purposes?

4. Can the Commission supply the requisite information to the members of the Customs Union as quickly as possible so that an appropriate annex can be drawn up?

Answer given by Mr Dalli on behalf of the Commission
(19 September 2012)

Following the emergence of the Schmallenberg virus (SBV) in the EU, the Russian authorities have temporarily suspended import of live ruminants from several Member States. Since January 2012 the Commission has been in regular contacts with the Russian authorities. In numerous letters and meetings, notably in an on-site laboratory visit in February 2012 and in an international scientific seminar in April 2012, all available information on SBV has been shared in full transparency with the Russian authorities.

New scientific findings, the evolution of the epidemiological situation and reports published by the European Food Safety Authority and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control demonstrate the limited impact of this infection. Existing veterinary certificates for breeding ruminants already foresee that the animals exported are clinically healthy. Any additional certification requirement would not be in line with principles enshrined in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) SPS Agreement, namely scientific justification, proportionality and non-discrimination.

The conclusions of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) General Session of May 2012 highlight that the conditions to consider this infection as an emerging disease are no longer met and that, given the limited risk involved, it does not meet the criteria to be listed by the OIE and hence does not deserve laying down specific international standards for trade.

As Russia is a member of OIE and now a member of the WTO, the Commission has and will continue insisting that Russia follows these conclusions which provide sufficient justification to request that all WTO Members imposing trade restrictions related to SBV remove them without delay.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-007474/12
aan de Commissie
Esther de Lange (PPE)
(26 juli 2012)

Betreft: Toepassing van opblaasmuur in kuikenstal

Veehouders die overschakelen op het mesten van kuikens op een diervriendelijke manier krijgen te maken met andere normen. Scharrelkuikens worden via handelsnormen voor pluimveevlees (Verordening (EG) nr. 1234/2007) naar aantal genormeerd, terwijl normale kuikens per kg worden genormeerd.

Aanpassingen in de betreffende kuikenstallen zoals lichtplaten in het dak voor meer daglicht en een uitloop bevorderen het dierenwelzijn van de kuikens. Veehouders die deze aanpassingen doorvoeren krijgen echter te maken met zeer hoge stookkosten; de lichtplaten evenals de uitloop zorgen voor tocht. Ook zitten er minder kilo's aan kuikens in de stal en is er dus meer brandstof nodig om de stal te verwarmen dan bij traditionele kuikens. Vooral in het begin van de mestperiode zijn de stookkosten groot, aangezien de temperatuur in de eerste week op 30-36 graden ligt.

Een opblaasbare muur in de stal kan de stookruimte verkleinen en zodoende het energieverbruik flink doen afnemen. De besparingen liggen tussen de 70 en 80 % wanneer de ruimte door middel van een opblaasbare muur verkleind wordt tot 60 % van de oorspronkelijke omvang.

De huidige regelgeving verbiedt echter het tijdelijk meer kuikens plaatsen per m^2 (gezien de normen „aantal scharrelkuikens"). Uit onderzoek van de Universiteit Wageningen is gebleken dat het welzijn van kuikens hier niet onder lijdt.

Als gedurende de eerste 21 dagen een maximum van 20 kg kuikens per m^2 gehanteerd zou kunnen worden, dan is de opblaasbare muur zowel een oplossing voor het enorme energieverbruik (waardoor het concept zonder subsidie rendabel is) als een motivatie voor boeren om over te stappen op deze diervriendelijke methode van kuikens mesten.

Overweegt de Commissie voorstellen te doen om in deze gevallen de normen voor het aantal kuikens en/of het aantal kg kuikens per m^2 aan te passen? Zo ja, op welke termijn? Zo nee, waarom niet, en hoe denkt de Commissie in de toekomst dit soort diervriendelijke en energiebesparende technieken een kans te kunnen geven wanneer de normen dit niet toe laten?

Antwoord van de heer Cioloş namens de Commissie
(19 september 2012)

Verordening (EG) nr. 543/2008 van de Commissie van 16 juni 2008 houdende uitvoeringsbepalingen voor Verordening (EG) nr. 1234/2007 van de Raad wat betreft de handelsnormen voor vlees van pluimvee ([1]) bevat onder meer facultatieve kwaliteitsnormen voor bepaalde houderijmethoden en refereert niet aan de conventionele productie van kippenvlees. Landbouwers die willen overschakelen naar de productie van vlees dat aan striktere kwaliteitsnormen voldoet en tegen een hogere prijs aan de eindconsument wordt verkocht, moeten voldoen aan kwaliteitsvoorschriften die inderdaad veeleisender zijn dan de minimumeisen van Richtlijn 2007/43/EG van de Raad ([2]) tot vaststelling van minimumvoorschriften voor de bescherming van vleeskuikens.

Wat de parameters betreft die in de reeds genoemde verordening zijn vastgesteld voor de scharrelhouderij: het maximaal per vierkante meter toegestane aantal dieren of levend gewicht is bepaald in de punten c), d) en e), van bijlage V bij Verordening (EG) nr. 543/2008.

De Commissie is in dit stadium niet van plan de parameters voor de bezettingsdichtheid te wijzigen.

([1]) PB L 157 van 17.6.2008, blz. 46.
([2]) PB L 182 van 12.7.2007, blz. 19.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007474/12
to the Commission
Esther de Lange (PPE)
(26 July 2012)

Subject: Use of inflatable walls in chick-fattening sheds

Farmers who switch to fattening chicks in a way which respects animal welfare requirements have to comply with different standards. Under trading standards for poultrymeat (Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007), free-range chicks are subject to standards which limit numbers of birds, whereas normal chicks are subject to limits defined by weight.

Alterations to the sheds in which they are kept, such as windows in the roof to admit more daylight and an outdoor run communicating with the shed, promote the chicks' welfare. However, farmers who make these alterations incur very large heating bills, as both the windows and the runs cause draughts. There are also fewer kilos of chicks in the shed, and accordingly more fuel is needed to heat the shed than in the case of conventionally raised chicks. Particularly at the beginning of the fattening period, fuel costs are high because during the first week the temperature has to be kept at 30-36°C.

An inflatable wall in the shed can reduce the size of the area to be heated and thus substantially reduce energy consumption. The savings range from 70 to 80% if the area is reduced to 60% of the original area in this way.

However, the existing rules do not allow a larger number of chicks per m^2 to be housed temporarily (as the standards refer to numbers of free-range chicks). Research by Wageningen University has shown that this does not impair the chicks' welfare.

If a limit of 20 kg chicks per m^2 could be applied during the first 21 days, inflatable walls would both be a solution to the problem of the enormous energy consumption (as a result of which the concept is not viable without a subsidy) and motivate farmers to switch to fattening chicks by means of this method which promotes animal welfare.

Will the Commission make proposals for amending the standards for numbers of chicks and/or numbers of kg of chicks per m^2 in these cases? If so, how soon? If not, why not, and how will the Commission in future create opportunities for the use of these techniques, which promote animal welfare and save energy, if the standards do not permit them?

Answer given by Mr Çioloş on behalf of the Commission
(19 September 2012)

Commission Regulation (EC) No 543/2008 ([1]) of 16 June 2008 laying down detailed rules for the application of Council Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007 as regards the marketing standards for poultrymeat, includes voluntary quality standards on particular farming methods and does not refer to the conventional production of chicken meat. Therefore, if farmers wish to switch to producing higher standard quality meat sold at a higher price to the final consumer, they have to comply with the quality rules, which are indeed more demanding than the minimal requirements established in Council Directive 2007/43/EC ([2]) for the protection of chickens kept for meat production.

As regards the parameters established in the said marketing regulation for those farming methods called 'free range', the maximum number of birds or live weight per square meter are fixed in points (c), (d) and (e) of Annex V to Regulation (EC) No 543/2008.

The Commission does not have the intention, at this stage, to amend the density parameters.

([1]) OJ L 157, 17.6.2008, pp. 46-87.
([2]) OJ L 182, 12.7.2007, p. 19.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-007475/12
do Komisji
Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)
(26 lipca 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Kara grzywny za wezwania do sankcji

24 lipca były kandydat na prezydenta Białorusi Dzmitrij Wus został skazany przez miński sąd na karę grzywny w wysokości 2 milionów białoruskich rubli za wzywanie Unii Europejskiej do rozszerzenia sankcji wobec Białorusi, w tym do wprowadzenia sankcji gospodarczych.

W marcu i kwietniu Wus dwukrotnie zwracał się do Rady Unii Europejskiej i do Wysokiej Przedstawiciel Unii do spraw Zagranicznych i Polityki Bezpieczeństwa Catherine Ashton. Przekonywał, że jedynie sankcje mogą doprowadzić do reform gospodarczych i politycznych w kraju, poprawy sytuacji w sferze praw człowieka i liberalizacji kodeksu wyborczego.

Władze białoruskie wywierają coraz większą presję wobec przedstawicieli społeczeństwa obywatelskiego. Przypominam, że dnia 22 maja sąd skazał za wzywanie do sankcji innego przedstawiciela opozycji, Wiktara Iwaszkiewicza. W związku z tym zwracam się z zapytaniem, czy Komisja posiada informacje na temat pociągania do odpowiedzialności karnej działaczy opozycyjnych za nawoływanie do sankcji i czy ma zamiar podjąć interwencję w sprawie wyroku dla Dzmitrija Wusa?

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

Komisji znane są rzeczywiście oba sygnalizowane przez Pana Posła przypadki.

Pan Wus został ukarany przez sąd grzywną w wysokości ok. 240 USD na podstawie doniesienia złożonego przez brygadzistę zakładów chemicznych AAT Hrodna Azot za „moralną szkodę" spowodowaną rzekomo przez jego wzywanie do sankcji gospodarczych wobec rządu białoruskiego. Pan Iwaszkiewicz ukarany został grzywną w wysokości ok. 60 USD w podobnym postępowaniu, na podstawie doniesienia złożonego przez pracownika rafinerii ropy naftowej Mazyr.

Na podstawie art. 60 konstytucji każdy obywatel może domagać się (przed sądem) odszkodowania za szkody moralne. Szczegółowo określone jest to w kodeksie cywilnym (art. 152), a nie w kodeksie karnym.

Dyplomaci UE w Mińsku wykorzystują każdą okazję, aby zwrócić uwagę władz Białorusi na przypadki szykanowania działaczy opozycji, społeczeństwa obywatelskiego i niezależnych dziennikarzy, jak również na inne przypadki łamania praw człowieka. Te i inne wydarzenia na Białorusi omawiane będą przez ministrów spraw zagranicznych UE w październiku 2012 r., kiedy to UE ma dokonać przeglądu środków ograniczających skierowanych przeciwko Białorusi.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007475/12
to the Commission
Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)
(26 July 2012)

Subject: Imposition of a financial penalty for calling for sanctions

On 24 July 2012, former Belarusian presidential candidate Dzmitry Vus was ordered by a court in Minsk to pay a fine of BYR 2 million for calling on the EU to step up its sanctions against Belarus, including by introducing economic sanctions.

Dzmitry Vus made calls on two occasions — in March and April 2012 — to the Council and to Catherine Ashton, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. He argued that only sanctions could bring about economic and political reforms, improvements in the human rights situation and liberalisation of the electoral code in Belarus.

The Belarusian authorities are placing civil society representatives under increasing pressure. On 22 May 2012, a court sentenced another opposition activist, Viktar Ivashkevich, for calling for sanctions. Is the Commission aware that opposition activists are being held criminally liable for making calls for the imposition of sanctions, and does it intend to take action in response to the sentencing of Dzmitry Vus?

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

The Commission is indeed aware of both cases mentioned by the Honourable Member.

Mr Vus was fined approximately USD 240 in a suit filed by a shop foreman of chemical company AAT Hrodna Azot for 'moral harm' allegedly caused by his calls for economic sanctions against the Belarusian Government. Mr Ivashkevich was fined approximately USD 60 in a similar suit filed by an employee of Mazyr Oil Refinery.

Every citizen may claim (in court) the moral damage based on Article 60 of the Constitution, and detailed in the Civil Code (Article 152), not the Criminal Code.

EU diplomats in Minsk use every opportunity to draw the attention of the Belarusian authorities to cases of harassment of opposition and civic society activists and independent journalists, as well as to other human rights violations. These and other developments in Belarus will be considered by the EU Foreign Ministers in October 2012 when the EU is set to review its restrictive measures against Belarus.