IV

(Informacje)

INFORMACJE INSTYTUCJI, ORGANÓW I JEDNOSTEK ORGANIZACYJNYCH UNII EUROPEJSKIEJ

PARLAMENT EUROPEJSKI

PYTANIA PISEMNE Z ODPOWIEDZIĄ

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

(2013/C 66 E/01)

Treść **Strona**

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011670/11
al Consiglio
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(14 dicembre 2011)

Oggetto: PCE/PEC — Piano del governo tedesco di ritorno al marco e stampa di moneta di nuovo conio

Negli ultimi tempi sono circolate sulla stampa europea e internazionale voci di un presunto piano del governo tedesco di uscita dall'euro e conseguente ritorno al marco.

A rivelare l'esistenza di questo piano è stata poche settimane fa Philippa Malmgren, presidente della Principalis Asset Management ed ex consigliera economica del presidente G.W. Bush e della Deutsche Bank.

Secondo Malmgren, il governo tedesco non si limiterebbe a studiare un piano di ritorno al marco come moneta di corso legale, ma avrebbe già iniziato ad attuarlo, avendo dato mandato a una società tedesca operante in Svizzera di cominciare a stampare marchi di nuovo conio.

Nelle ultime settimane, queste voci si sono fatte sempre più insistenti e diffuse sulla stampa, arrivando a citare fonti interne governative e dell'intelligence.

Il Presidente del Consiglio europeo è al corrente di un piano del governo tedesco di ritorno al marco e, in particolare, dell'inizio di operazioni di ristampa di marchi tedeschi?

La Germania ha comunicato qualcosa al riguardo al Presidente del Consiglio europeo?

Come valuta il Presidente del Consiglio europeo l'eventualità dell'uscita della Germania dell'area euro?

Risposta
(8 febbraio 2012)

Al Consiglio non compete rispondere alle interrogazioni riguardanti il presidente del Consiglio europeo, essendo quest'ultima un'istituzione distinta dal Consiglio.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011670/11
to the Council
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(14 December 2011)

Subject: PCE/PEC — German Government's plan to return to the Deutschmark and print new currency

Rumours have recently been circulating in the European and international press that the German Government might be planning to leave the euro and reintroduce the Deutschmark.

The existence of this plan was revealed a few weeks ago by Philippa Malmgren, President of Principalis Asset Management and former economic adviser to President George W. Bush and Deutsche Bank.

According to Dr Malmgren, the German Government is apparently not confining itself to merely studying a plan to reintroduce the Deutschmark as legal tender, but has already begun to implement it and has asked a German company operating in Switzerland to begin printing new Deutschmarks.

In recent weeks, these rumours have become increasingly insistent and widespread in the press, which has even cited sources from within the government and intelligence agencies.

Is the President of the European Council aware of any plan by the German Government to return to the Deutschmark (DM) and, in particular, to start printing DM again?

Has Germany informed the President of the European Council of anything relating to this?

What is the President of the European Council's view on the possibility of Germany exiting the euro?

Reply
(8 February 2012)

It is not for the Council to answer questions concerning the President of the European Council, since the European Council is a separate institution.

(българска версия)

Въпрос с искане за писмен отговор E-011807/11
до Комисията
Димитър Стоянов (NI) и Слави Бинев (NI)
(14 декември 2011 г.)

Относно: Относно: Реакцията на обществото спрямо националните стратегии за интеграция на ромите

В изпълнение на поетия към Европейския съюз ангажимент за изготвяне на план за интеграция на ромите до края на 2011 г. българското правителство представи проект на национална стратегия за интегриране на ромите в България за периода 2011-2020 г. Реакциите на обществеността спрямо тази поредна инициатива за приобщаване на ромската малцинствена група са изключително негативни. В медийното пространство бяха споделени мнения, че реализирането на стратегията е невъзможно, тъй като самите роми не желаят да положат усилия, за да променят своя социален статус. В коментарите си гражданите се възмущават от големите суми, които ще бъдат предоставени с цел интеграция на тази малцинствена група, и от социалните придобивки, предвидени за ромите. Това недоволство породи убеждението, че българските граждани с ниски доходи са дискриминирани за сметка на ромите, които получават безвъзмездна помощ. Нужно е да подчертаем, че за да е успешна една такава стратегия, е необходимо мерките, включени в нея, да не бъдат единствено от вида на социалните помощи, а да насърчават ромите да полагат сами усилия за интегриране, например да се включат в пазара на труда. Още повече че за да се осъществи крайната цел на националната стратегия, а именно интегрирането на ромите, те трябва да бъдат приети от обществото. С основание българското общество отказва да приеме, че към настоящия момент интегрирането на ромите е възможно. Това е така, защото докато биват подпомагани, без от тях да се изисква да полагат усилия за приобщаване, те няма да имат мотивация да се интегрират. Предвид изложеното се обръщам към Вас с въпросите:

1. Счита ли Комисията, че е необходимо изменение на рамката на ЕС за национални стратегии за интегриране на ромите за периода до 2020 г., в което да залегнат ясни критерии, така че процесът на интеграция да бъде двустранен?

2. Каква оценка би дала Комисията, в духа на т. 31 от рамката на ЕС за национални стратегии за интегриране на ромите за периода до 2020 г. (2011/C 258/04), на националната стратегия за интегриране на ромите в България от гледна точка на липсата на двустранност в процеса?

Отговор, даден от г-жа Рединг от името на Комисията
(14 февруари 2012 г.)

В рамката на ЕС за национални програми за интегриране на ромите се посочва, че постоянното икономическо и социално маргинализиране на ромите е недопустимо. Необходими са решителни действия, в активен диалог с ромите, на местно, регионално и национално равнище, както и на равнище ЕС. Въпреки че основната отговорност за тези действия се носи от публичните органи, това продължава да е предизвикателство, като се има предвид, че социалното и икономическото интегриране на ромите е двустранен процес, който изисква промяна в нагласите както на мнозинството, така и на членовете на ромските общности.

При извършването на оценка на националните стратегии за интегриране на ромите, включително тази на България, Европейската комисия ще обърне също така внимание дали при изработването на стратегиите са участвали активно всички заинтересовани страни, включително ромите, и дали е предвидено тясно сътрудничество с тези заинтересовани страни в прилагането и наблюдаването на стратегиите.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011807/11
to the Commission
Dimitar Stoyanov (NI) and Slavi Binev (NI)
(14 December 2011)

Subject: Public reaction to national Roma integration strategies

The Bulgarian Government has presented its draft national strategy for the integration of the Roma for the period 2011-2020 in order to fulfil its commitment to the European Union to draw up a Roma integration plan by the end of 2011. This fresh initiative to incorporate the Roma minority into society has met with a very negative response from the public. There is widespread conviction in the media that the strategy cannot be implemented because the Roma themselves do not want to make efforts to improve their social status. Members of the public have expressed indignation at the large sums to be allocated for the integration of that minority and at the social benefits envisaged for the Roma.

This discontent has given rise to the belief that low-income Bulgarians are being discriminated against in favour of the Roma, who are receiving free assistance. It should be stressed that if such a strategy is to work, the measures of which it consists should not be limited to the granting of social assistance, but that the Roma should also be encouraged to make efforts themselves towards integration, such as by participating in the labour market. What is more, if the end goal of the national strategy — i.e. integration of the Roma — is to be achieved, they must be accepted by society. However, Bulgarian society has good reasons for refusing to accept that integration of the Roma is possible at the current time. This is due to the fact that as long as the Roma continue to receive support without having to make any efforts to integrate, they will have no motivation to integrate. In the light of the above, can the Commission:

1. state whether it sees a need to amend the EU framework for national Roma integration Strategies up to 2020 by laying down clear criteria that make integration a two-way process;

2. assess the national Roma integration strategy adopted in Bulgaria, in the spirit of paragraph 31 of the EU framework for national Roma integration strategies up to 2020, from the standpoint of the lack of such a two-way process?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(14 February 2012)

The EU Framework for national Roma integration strategies spells out that there is no room for the persistent economic and social marginalisation of Roma people. Determined action, in active dialogue with Roma people, is needed at local, regional, national and EU level. While primary responsibility for that action rests with public authorities, it remains a challenge, given that the social and economic integration of Roma people is a two-way process which requires a change of mindset of the majority population as well as members of the Roma communities.

When assessing the national Roma integration strategies, including that of Bulgaria, the European Commission will also examine whether all stakeholders, including Roma people have been closely involved in the design of the strategies and whether a close cooperation with all these stakeholders has been foreseen in the implementation and monitoring of the strategies.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012014/11
to the Commission
Peter Skinner (S&D)
(5 January 2012)

Subject: Dog meat in the Philippines

Given that the EU-Philippine relationship will further deepen with the pending adoption of the already initialled Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), which incorporates a five-year programme of financial assistance to the Philippines from the EU and calls for negotiations towards a Free Trade Agreement (FTA), will the Commission ensure that animal welfare issues are raised within the context of the FTA negotiations?

Answer given by Mr Dalli on behalf of the Commission
(1 February 2012)

The Commission attaches great importance to animal welfare. Animals are recognised as sentient beings by Article 13 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and the Union institutions are obliged to pay full regard to the welfare requirements of animals.

Although a considerable body of EU legislation for the protection of farm animals has been adopted, the issue of welfare of companion animals is not governed at EU level and therefore remains under the responsibility of the Member States. As regards third countries, the Commission is not entitled to intervene in their domestic legislation or its enforcement.

The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with the Philippines contains special provisions on cooperation on animal welfare. In the implementation of the PCA, the Commission will continue working to increase awareness and create a greater consensus on animal welfare issues as well as to increase the capacity of the competent authorities of the Philippines responsible for animal welfare.

The Commission will ensure that animal welfare issues are raised in the context of the ongoing Free Trade Agreement negotiations.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-012064/11
do Komisji
Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)
(5 stycznia 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Wiceprzewodnicząca/Wysoka Przedstawiciel – Zatrzymanie rosyjskiego blogera

6 grudnia, dwa dni po wyborach parlamentarnych w Rosji, na 15 dni więzienia skazany został znany z walki z korupcją bloger Aleksiej Nawalny. Przez prawie dobę nie wiadomo było, co dzieje się z tym znanym aktywistą społecznym. Rodzina ani przyjaciele nie mieli z nim żadnego kontaktu. Nawalny trafił do więzienia za złamanie prawa podczas poniedziałkowej – największej od lat – demonstracji w Moskwie przeciwko sfałszowaniu przez rząd Władimira Putina wyborów do rosyjskiej Dumy Państwowej. Demonstrację rozbiły siły specjalne rosyjskiej policji OMON, które aresztowały ponad 250 osób. Po trzecim dniu protestów policja znów aresztowała dziesiątki działaczy, w tym znanych dziennikarzy i polityków.

Niedopuszczalne jest, by u jednego z największych i najważniejszych sąsiadów Unii Europejskiej dochodziło do łamania praw wyborczych i praw człowieka. Aresztowano człowieka, który większość swojego życia poświęcił na ujawnianie afer korupcyjnych w rosyjskim biznesie. Czy w związku z tym Wysoka Przedstawiciel Unii do Spraw Zagranicznych i Polityki Bezpieczeństwa Catherine Ashton ma zamiar podjąć jakieś działania zmierzające do natychmiastowego wypuszczenia Aleksieja Nawalnego z więzienia i zakończenia szykan względem niego?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wysoką Przedstawiciel i Wiceprzewodniczącą Komisji Catherine Ashton w imieniu Komisji
(1 marca 2012 r.)

Aleksiej Nawalny został w międzyczasie zwolniony z aresztu.

Komisja udzielała już Szanownemu Panu Posłowi informacji na temat swego stanowiska w sprawie nieprawidłowości dotyczących praworządności i praw człowieka w Rosji i wyjaśniła sposób, w jaki odniosła się do tych kwestii w stosunkach z tym krajem. W skrócie, kwestie nadużyć i naruszania prawa są stale podnoszone przez Komisję na różnych szczeblach i w różnej postaci, w szczególności w ramach szczytów UE-Rosja i odbywających się co dwa lata konsultacji na temat praw człowieka.

Podczas debaty parlamentarnej na posiedzeniu plenarnym w dniu 13 grudnia 2011 r. poświęconej przygotowaniom do szczytu UE-Rosja – w trakcie której Szanowny Pan Poseł również zabrał głos – Wysoka Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodnicząca wyjaśniła swoje zastrzeżenia w tym względzie, wyrażając szczególne zaniepokojenie przetrzymywaniem uczestników demonstracji na rzecz wolnych i uczciwych wyborów oraz doniesieniami o przemocy stosowanej przez policję wobec działaczy, dziennikarzy i zwykłych obserwatorów. Kwestie, których dotyczyły zastrzeżenia, zostały następnie omówione z prezydentem Miedwiediewem podczas spotkania na szczycie.

UE i Rosja podjęły wspólne zobowiązania w ramach ONZ, Rady Europy i OBWE. Jednocześnie przyszły rozwój instytucji demokratycznych w Rosji zależy od samych Rosjan i dokonywanych przez nich wyborów. W tym względzie należy odnotować masowe demonstracje, które odbyły się w wielu miastach Rosji w dniach 10 i 24 grudnia 2011 r. Należy również podkreślić, że w przeciwieństwie do wcześniejszych restrykcji władze zezwoliły na te pokojowe i szeroko zakrojone demonstracje, których nie zakłóciły interwencje policji czy masowe aresztowania.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012064/11
to the Commission
Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)
(5 January 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Detention of a Russian blogger

On 6 December, two days after the parliamentary elections in Russia, Alexei Navalny, a blogger well-known for fighting corruption, was sentenced to 15 days in jail. For almost a day nothing was known about what was happening to this well-known social activist. Family and friends were unable to make contact with him. Mr Navalny was sent to jail for breaking the law during Monday's demonstration in Moscow against Vladimir Putin's government falsifying the election to the State Duma. This was the biggest demonstration to be held for many years. The demonstration was broken up by the OMON special forces of the Russian police, which arrested over 250 people. After the third day of protests, the police again arrested dozens of activists, including well-known journalists and politicians.

It is not acceptable that voting rights and human rights are violated in one of the largest and most important neighbouring countries of the European Union. A man who has devoted most of his life to disclosing corruption scandals in Russian business has been arrested. Does the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton intend to take any action aimed at ensuring the immediate release of Alexei Navalny from prison and an end to harassment against him?

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

Mr Navalny has in the meantime been released.

The Honourable Member has been informed on earlier occasions about the Commission's position on shortcomings regarding rule of law and human rights in Russia and how the Commission addresses these issues in its relations. In brief, such violations and abuses are consistently being raised by the Commission at various levels and in several formats, most notably the EU-Russia Summits and the biannual Human Rights Consultations.

During Parliament's plenary debate on 13 December 2011 on the preparations of the EU-Russia Summit, where the Honourable Member also intervened, the High Representative/Vice-President (HR/VP) shared her concerns in this regard, in particular at the detention of protesters demonstrating for free and fair elections, and reports of police violence against activists, journalists and mere observers. These concerns were subsequently raised with President Medvedev at the Summit.

The EU and Russia have undertaken joint commitments in the UN, the Council of Europe and the OSCE frameworks. At the same time, the future development of democratic institutions in Russia depends on the Russian people and their choices. In this regard the mass demonstrations held in many Russian cities on 10 and 24 December 2011 were most noteworthy. One should also underline that the authorities, in contrast to earlier restrictions, allowed these peaceful and large-scale demonstrations to take place without police interference or mass arrests.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-012065/11
do Komisji
Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)
(5 stycznia 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Wiceprzewodnicząca/Wysoka Przedstawiciel – Zatrzymania powyborcze w Rosji

5 grudnia około 4 tys. zwolenników ugrupowań demokratycznych zebrało się na Czystych Prudach, aby w pokojowy sposób zaprotestować przeciwko sfałszowaniu rezultatów wyborów parlamentarnych do rosyjskiej Dumy Państwowej na korzyść kierowanej przez premiera Władimira Putina partii Jedna Rosja.

Demonstrację rozbiły siły specjalne rosyjskiej policji OMON, które aresztowały ponad 250, a według niektórych źródeł ponad 300 osób. 6 grudnia na 15 dni aresztu skazano jednego z liderów opozycyjnego ruchu Solidarność Ilję Jaszyna. Ponadto, zatrzymano wielu znanych dziennikarzy i polityków. Wśród nich znaleźli się liderzy liberalnej Solidarności i demokratycznej partii Jabłoko – Borys Niemcow i Siergiej Mitrochin, szef stowarzyszenia Memoriał Oleg Orłow oraz lider partii Inna Rosja – Eduard Limonow. Zatrzymano także deputowanego do Dumy z partii Sprawiedliwa Rosja – Ilję Ponomariowa. Ponadto, do aresztu trafiło kilkoro dziennikarzy, m.in. Jelena Kostiuczenko z „Nowej Gaziety", Bożena Ryńska z portalu gazeta.ru i Aleksandr Czernych z „Kommiersanta". Ostatni został dotkliwie pobity.

Wysoka Przedstawiciel Catherine Ashton w swoim oświadczeniu wydanym 6 grudnia podkreśliła potrzebę przestrzegania przez władze rosyjskie wolności zgromadzeń i słowa. Jakie w związku z tym będą dalsze działania Unii Europejskiej względem władz rosyjskich w kontekście licznych naruszeń praw człowieka?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wysoką Przedstawiciel i Wiceprzewodniczącą Komisji Catherine Ashton w imieniu Komisji
(19 marca 2012 r.)

Komisja udzielała już Szanownemu Panu Posłowi informacji na temat swego stanowiska w sprawie nieprawidłowości dotyczących praworządności i praw człowieka w Rosji i wyjaśniła sposób, w jaki odnosi się do tych kwestii w stosunkach z tym krajem. W skrócie, kwestie nadużyć i naruszania prawa są stale podnoszone przez Komisję na różnych szczeblach i w różnej postaci, w szczególności w ramach szczytów UE-Rosja i odbywających się co dwa lata konsultacji na temat praw człowieka.

Podczas debaty parlamentarnej na posiedzeniu plenarnym w dniu 13 grudnia poświęconej przygotowaniom do szczytu UE-Rosja – w trakcie której Szanowny Pan Poseł również zabrał głos – po raz kolejny wyjaśniłam swoje zastrzeżenia w tym względzie, wyrażając szczególne zaniepokojenie przetrzymywaniem uczestników demonstracji na rzecz wolnych i uczciwych wyborów oraz doniesieniami o przemocy stosowanej przez policję wobec działaczy, dziennikarzy i zwykłych obserwatorów. Kwestie, których dotyczyły zastrzeżenia, zostały następnie omówione z prezydentem Miedwiediewem podczas spotkania na szczycie.

UE i Rosja podjęły wspólne zobowiązania w ramach ONZ, Rady Europy i OBWE. Jednocześnie przyszły rozwój instytucji demokratycznych w Rosji zależy od samych Rosjan i dokonywanych przez nich wyborów. W tym względzie należy odnotować masowe demonstracje, które odbyły się w wielu miastach Rosji w dniach 10 i 24 grudnia. Należy również podkreślić, że wbrew wcześniejszym restrykcjom władze zezwoliły na te pokojowe i szeroko zakrojone demonstracje, których nie zakłóciły interwencje policji czy masowe aresztowania.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012065/11
to the Commission
Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)
(5 January 2012)

Subject: VP/HR Post-election detentions in Russia

On 5 December approximately four thousand democratic group supporters gathered at Clean Ponds to peacefully protest against the falsification of results of the parliamentary elections to the State Duma in favour of the One Russia party led by Prime Minister Vladimir Putin.

The demonstration was broken up by the OMON special forces of the Russian police, which arrested over 250 individuals, and according to some sources over 300 people. On 6 December one of the leaders of the opposition Solidarity movement — Ilya Yashin — was sentenced to 15 days in jail. Furthermore, many other well-known journalists and politicians were detained. These included leaders of the liberal Solidarity movement and the Yabloko democratic party: Boris Nemtsov and Sergey Mitrokhin, the chair of the Memorial society Oleg Orlov and the leader of the Other Russia party — Eduard Limonov. Also detained was Ilya Ponomarev — a member of the Duma from the Just Russia party. Furthermore, several journalists were arrested including Elena Kostyuchenko from *Novaya Gazeta*, Bozena Rynska from an online newspaper *gazeta.ru* and Aleksandr Czernych from *Kommersant*. The latter was severely beaten.

In a statement issued on 6 December High Representative Catherine Ashton stressed the need for the Russian authorities to respect freedom of association and of speech. What, further action is the European Union therefore going to take regarding the Russian authorities in the context of numerous human rights violations?

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

The Honourable Member has been informed on earlier occasions about the Commission's position on shortcomings regarding rule of law and human rights in Russia and how the Commission addresses these issues in our relations. In brief, such violations and abuses are consistently being raised by the Commission at various levels and in several formats, most notably the EU-Russia Summits and the biannual Human Rights Consultations.

During Parliament's plenary debate on 13 December on the preparations of the EU-Russia Summit, where the Honourable Member also intervened, I again shared my concerns in this regard, in particular at the detention of protesters demonstrating for free and fair elections, and reports of police violence against activists, journalists and mere observers. These concerns were subsequently raised with President Medvedev at the Summit.

The EU and Russia have taken joint commitments in the UN, the Council of Europe and the OSCE frameworks. At the same time, the future development of democratic institutions in Russia depends on the Russian people and their choices. In this regard the mass demonstrations held in many Russian cities on 10 and 24 December were most noteworthy. One should also underline that the authorities, in contrast to earlier restrictions, allowed these peaceful and large-scale demonstrations to take place without police interference or mass arrests.

(Slovenské znenie)

Otázka na písomné zodpovedanie E-012066/11
Komisii
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(5. januára 2012)

Vec: Kriminalizácia bezdomovstva

V Maďarsku vstúpil do platnosti zákon, ktorý umožňuje kompetentným orgánom trestať bezdomovstvo. V hlavnom meste Maďarska sa nachádza približne 10 tisíc bezdomovcov a schválenie tohto zákona je pokusom maďarskej vlády o boj proti tomuto problému. Zákon napríklad umožňuje policajtovi, aby po predchádzajúcom napomenutí pokutoval človeka, ktorého nájde spať na ulici. Do úvahy prichádza dokonca aj inštitút väzby. Zákon explicitne zakazuje užívanie verejných priestranstiev na účely, ktoré k tomu nie sú určené. Tento zákon je nemorálny a nehumánny. Úroveň chudoby v Európe dosahuje hrozivé rozmery, zakázať ju je však smiešne a absolútne neúčinné. Zákon je navyše prakticky nevymožiteľný, bezdomovec pri sebe vo väčšine prípadov nebude mať finančné prostriedky na zaplatenie pokuty.

Sú tieto opatrenia Maďarska v súlade s programom EU o boji proti chudobe?

Plánuje Komisia s ohľadom na rešpektovanie základných práv a ľudských práv revidovať existujúcu legislatívu v tejto oblasti?

Odpoveď pani Redingovej v mene Komisie
(23. februára 2012)

Z informácií, ktoré predložila vážená pani poslankyňa, nevyplýva, že by v uvedených veciach príslušný členský štát konal v rámci implementácie právnych predpisov EÚ. Komisia sa preto k tomu nemôže bližšie vyjadrovať.

Opatrenia na riešenie bezdomovstva sú primárnou zodpovednosťou vnútroštátnych regionálnych a miestnych orgánov. V spoločnej správe o sociálnej ochrane a sociálnom začlenení za rok 2010 sa vyžaduje vypracovanie a implementácia vnútroštátnych alebo regionálnych plánov na riešenie bezdomovstva a boli určené niektoré aspekty, ktoré je potrebné do týchto plánov zahrnúť. Konkrétne opatrenie, na ktoré sa vážená pani poslankyňa sťažuje, k nim nepatrilo. Cieľom opatrení prijatých na európskej úrovni je dopĺňať opatrenia prijaté v členských štátoch a informovať o nich. Európske fondy podporujú lepšie porozumenie a ocenenie nových prístupov a pomáhajú pri podpore siete MVO v tejto oblasti. Okrem toho Komisia odporúča lepšie využívanie fondov EFRR a ESF na riešenie otázok bývania a bezdomovstva. Zvažuje aj iné spôsoby, v rámci ktorých môže úsilie na európskej úrovni priniesť pridanú hodnotu a podporiť úsilie členských štátov pri riešení tejto extrémnej formy sociálneho vylúčenia.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012066/11
to the Commission
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(5 January 2012)

Subject: Criminalisation of homelessness

A law has entered into force in Hungary that allows the competent authorities to punish homelessness. There are some 10 000 homeless persons in the Hungarian capital, and the adoption of this law is an attempt by the Hungarian Government to combat the problem. The law enables, for example, a police officer to fine someone found sleeping on the street after a previous warning. Even imprisonment may be involved. The law explicitly prohibits the use of public spaces for purposes for which they are not intended. This law is immoral and inhumane. The level of poverty in Europe is reaching frightening proportions, but to forbid it is absurd and utterly pointless. The law, moreover, is practically unenforceable as, in most cases, a homeless person will not have the funds to pay the fine.

Are these measures taken by Hungary in line with the EU's programme for combating poverty?

Does the Commission plan to revise existing legislation in this area with a view to ensuring that fundamental rights and human rights are respected?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(23 February 2012)

On the basis of the information provided by the Honourable Member, it does not appear that, in the matters referred to, the Member State concerned acted in the course of implementation of EC law. Therefore, the Commission is not in a position to comment further.

Measures to tackle homelessness are primarily the responsibility of national regional and local authorities. The 2010 Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion called for the development and implementation of national or regional plans for action on homelessness and identified some aspects for them to include. The specific measure the Honourable Member complains about was not among these. Action at European level aims to complement and inform that in Member States. European funds support improved understanding, evaluation of new approaches, and help to support the NGO network for this field. Furthermore, the Commission advocates better use of the ERDF and ESF to tackle issues of housing and homelessness. It is also considering other ways in which effort at European level can help to add value and encouragement to Member States' efforts to tackle this most extreme form of social exclusion.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-012288/11
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(6. Januar 2012)

Betrifft: US-amerikanischer Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA)

Derzeit erörtert der US-amerikanische Kongress den „Stop Online Piracy Act" (SOPA — Gesetz über die Online-Piraterie). Ein weitreichender Teil der globalen Infrastruktur, die das Funktionieren des Internets ermöglicht, befindet sich in den USA und untersteht direkter oder indirekter Kontrolle der amerikanischen Regierung.

Medienberichten zufolge sind die Formulierungen des SOPA so weit ausgelegt, dass es weitreichende Zensur ermöglicht, Internetunternehmen durch Sperranfragen großen Schaden zufügen könnte und Whistleblowing sowie freie Meinungsäußerung unterbinden könnte.

Könnte das SOPA nach Kenntnis der Kommission derartige Auswirkungen auch für Unternehmen und Privatpersonen innerhalb der EU haben?

Welche Effekte könnte das SOPA auf die Möglichkeiten der freien Meinungsäußerung innerhalb der EU haben?

Könnte dieser US-Rechtsakt auch EU-Unternehmen gefährden, insbesondere solche, die im oder über das Internet handeln oder Dienste anbieten? Wenn ja, welche Maßnahmen wird die Kommission vorschlagen, um dieser Gefahr zu begegnen?

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000599/12
an die Kommission
Lambert van Nistelrooij (PPE) und Wim van de Camp (PPE)
(26. Januar 2012)

Betrifft: Bedrohung des offenen Internet durch das US-amerikanische SOPA-Gesetz

Derzeit wird in den USA die SOPA-Gesetzesvorlage geprüft, die den Schutz für Inhaber von Urheberrechten an Online-Inhalten verbessern soll. Nach diesem Gesetz wäre beispielsweise die Anzeige von durch ein amerikanisches Urheberrecht geschütztem Material über eine Suchmaschine wie Google oder ein soziales Netzwerk wie Facebook strafbar. Dies würde das Funktionieren von Suchmaschinen, sozialen Netzwerken und anderen innovativen Internetbasierten Leistungen unmöglich machen und das wirtschaftliche Potenzial des Internet einschränken. Es würde auch dem Internet als innovativem Ökosystem erheblichen Schaden zufügen. In den Niederlanden werden beispielsweise 25 % aller neuen Arbeitsplätze im Sektor des elektronischen Geschäftsverkehrs geschaffen. Angesichts dieser Sachlage stellen sich folgende Fragen:

1. Kennt die Kommission die US-amerikanische SOPA-Gesetzesvorlage?

2. Stimmt die Kommission der Einschätzung zu, dass solche Maßnahmen unverhältnismäßig und daher nicht wünschenswert sind, und kann die Kommission bestätigen, dass es keine derartigen Pläne für Europa gibt bzw. ausgearbeitet werden sollen?

3. Stimmt die Kommission der Einschätzung zu, dass neue europäische Rechtsvorschriften in diesem Bereich ein ausgewogenes Verhältnis zwischen den Interessen der Inhaber der Urheberrechte und dem öffentlichen Interesse an einem offenen Internet schaffen müssen?

4. Wann wird die Kommission ihre Vorschläge zu diesem Thema vorlegen?

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung P-000648/12
an die Kommission
Ioannis A. Tsoukalas (PPE)
(26. Januar 2012)

Betrifft: Standpunkt der Europäischen Union zum US-amerikanischen Gesetzesentwurf gegen Online-Piraterie (SOPA)

In den letzten Tagen haben sich viele große Websites und Internetfirmen sowie Millionen von Nutzern an Protestkampagnen gegen den SOPA-Gesetzesentwurf („Stop Online Piracy Act"), der im US-amerikanischen Repräsentantenhaus eingereicht wurde, sowie gegen den entsprechenden Gesetzesentwurf im Senat („Protect IP Act") beteiligt.

Zudem haben führende Persönlichkeiten der Internet-Gemeinschaft und zuverlässige technologische und wissenschaftliche Stellen erhebliche Zweifel an diesen Rechtsvorschriften geäußert und davor gewarnt, dass sie die betriebliche Stabilität des Internet auf der ganzen Welt erheblich beeinträchtigen und die derzeitigen Versuche zur Bekämpfung der Cyberkriminalität und der Verbreitung illegaler gefährlicher Software behindern könnten.

Eine Einmischung der EU in die Legislativverfahren der USA wäre unter allen anderen Umständen zwar nicht rechtmäßig, doch das Internet ist eine öffentliche internationale Infrastruktur von wesentlicher Bedeutung für wirtschaftliche und gesellschaftliche Aktivitäten, und einseitige Maßnahmen sind zu vermeiden (diese Rechtsvorschriften bedeuten, dass die USA weiterhin die Verwaltung des Internet in erheblichem Umfang kontrollieren werden). Daher kann sich die Europäische Union nicht im Hintergrund halten, sondern muss rasch einen klaren Standpunkt einnehmen.

1. Ist die Kommission mit dem Versuch der USA einverstanden, das Internet gesetzlich zu kontrollieren? Wie ist die Haltung der Kommission dazu?

2. Hat die Kommission gegenüber den USA öffentlich und formell Einwände gegen diese Rechtsvorschriften erhoben? Beabsichtigt sie dies zu tun?

Antwort von Michel Barnier im Namen der Kommission
(17. Februar 2012)

In der EU sieht insbesondere die Richtlinie zur Durchsetzung der Rechte des geistigen Eigentums ([1]) wirksame Rechtsinstrumente gegen mutmaßliche Rechtsverletzer vor, die in bestimmten Fällen auch auf Mittler und somit grundsätzlich auf Website-Betreiber anwendbar sind. Diese Richtlinie wird gegenwärtig überprüft, und die Kommission könnte zum Ende des Jahres Änderungen vorschlagen, die der weiteren Verbesserung der Möglichkeiten zur Durchsetzung der Rechte des geistigen Eigentums dienen, gleichzeitig aber mit der Breitbandpolitik vereinbar sind und die Interessen der Verbraucher wie auch die Grundrechte wahren ([2]). Schon nach derzeitiger Rechtsprechung müssen in der EU bei der Durchsetzung der Rechte des geistigen Eigentums die Grundrechte gewahrt bleiben, z. B. die Freiheit, Informationen zu erhalten oder weiterzugeben, die unternehmerische Freiheit und der Schutz personenbezogener Daten ([3]).

([1]) Richtlinie 2004/48/EG zur Durchsetzung der Rechte des geistigen Eigentums.
([2]) Mitteilung der Kommission, „Ein Binnenmarkt für Rechte des geistigen Eigentums", KOM(2011)287 endg. vom 24.5.2011.
([3]) Urteile des Gerichtshofs vom 29. Januar 2008 in der Rechtssache C 275/06, Promusicae, und vom 24. November 2011 in der Rechtssache C 70/10, Scarlett/SABAM.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-012288/11
προς την Επιτροπή
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(6 Ιανουαρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Ο νόμος των ΗΠΑ για τον τερματισμό της διαδικτυακής πειρατείας «Stop Online Piracy Act» (SOPA)

Αυτό το διάστημα, το αμερικανικό Κογκρέσο συζητεί τον νόμο «Stop Online Piracy Act» (SOPA — νόμος για την πειρατεία στο διαδίκτυο). Μεγάλο μέρος της παγκόσμιας υποδομής που καθιστά δυνατή τη λειτουργία του διαδικτύου βρίσκεται στις ΗΠΑ και υπόκειται σε άμεσο ή έμμεσο έλεγχο από την αμερικανική κυβέρνηση.

Σύμφωνα με αναφορές των μέσων ενημέρωσης, οι διατυπώσεις του SOPA είναι τόσο ευρείες ώστε καθιστά δυνατή την άσκηση εκτεταμένης λογοκρισίας· θα μπορούσε δε να προκαλέσει μεγάλες ζημίες σε διαδικτυακές επιχειρήσεις μέσω αιτημάτων αποκλεισμού τους και θα μπορούσε να παρεμποδίσει την καταγγελία δυσλειτουργιών (whistleblowing) και την ελεύθερη έκφραση απόψεων.

Θα μπορούσε ο SOPA, εξ όσων γνωρίζει η Επιτροπή, να έχει τέτοιες επιπτώσεις και για επιχειρήσεις και ιδιώτες εντός της ΕΕ;

Ποιες επιδράσεις θα μπορούσε να έχει ο SOPA στις δυνατότητες ελεύθερης έκφρασης γνώμης εντός της ΕΕ;

Θα μπορούσε αυτή η νομική πράξη των ΗΠΑ να θέσει σε κίνδυνο και επιχειρήσεις της ΕΕ, ιδίως εκείνες που διεξάγουν εμπόριο ή προσφέρουν υπηρεσίες μέσω διαδικτύου; Εάν ναι, ποια μέτρα θα προτείνει η Επιτροπή για την αντιμετώπιση αυτού του κινδύνου;

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-000599/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Lambert van Nistelrooij (PPE) και Wim van de Camp (PPE)
(26 Ιανουαρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Το ανοιχτό διαδίκτυο απειλείται από τον νόμο των ΗΠΑ για την εξάλειψη της τηλεματικής πειρατείας (SOPA)

Ο νόμος SOPA, που στοχεύει στην προστασία των επιγραμμικού περιεχομένου δικαιωμάτων δημιουργού, βρίσκεται σήμερα υπό εξέταση στις ΗΠΑ. Για παράδειγμα, η εμφάνιση, μέσω μηχανών αναζήτησης όπως το Google ή κοινωνικών δικτύων όπως το Facebook, υλικού που προστατεύεται από αμερικανικά δικαιώματα πνευματικής ιδιοκτησίας τιμωρείται δυνάμει του ανωτέρω νόμου. Αυτό αφενός καθιστά αδύνατη τη λειτουργία των μηχανών αναζήτησης, των κοινωνικών δικτύων και των άλλων καινοτόμων υπηρεσιών που βασίζονται στο διαδίκτυο και αφετέρου εμποδίζει την ανάπτυξη του οικονομικού δυναμικού του διαδικτύου. Επίσης, ενδέχεται να βλάψει σοβαρά το διαδίκτυο το οποίο θεωρείται ένα καινοτόμο οικοσύστημα. Στις Κάτω Χώρες για παράδειγμα, το 25 % των νέων θέσεων εργασίας δημιουργείται στον τομέα του ηλεκτρονικού εμπορίου. Λαμβάνοντας υπόψη τα ανωτέρω, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Γνωρίζει την ύπαρξη του αμερικανικού νόμου SOPA;

2. Συμφωνεί μαζί μας ότι τέτοιας μορφής μέτρα είναι υπερβολικά και, ως εκ τούτου, ανεπιθύμητα, και προτίθεται μήπως να αποκλείσει παρεμφερή σχέδια ή και την ανάπτυξη τέτοιων σχεδίων με απώτερο σκοπό την εφαρμογή τους στην Ευρώπη;

3. Συμφωνεί μαζί μας ότι η νέα ευρωπαϊκή νομοθεσία στον τομέα αυτόν θα πρέπει, σε ένα ανοικτό διαδίκτυο, να εξισορροπεί τα συμφέροντα των δικαιωμάτων δημιουργού με το δημόσιο συμφέρον;

4. Πότε σκοπεύει η Επιτροπή να υποβάλει την δική της πρόταση επ' αυτού του θέματος;

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης P-000648/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Ioannis A. Tsoukalas (PPE)
(26 Ιανουαρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Ευρωπαϊκή θέση απέναντι στη σχεδιαζόμενη από τις ΗΠΑ νομοθεσία SOPA για την καταπολέμηση της δικτυακής πειρατείας

Τις τελευταίες ημέρες, πολλές μεγάλες ιστοσελίδες και εταιρείες του Διαδικτύου, καθώς και εκατομμύρια μεμονωμένοι χρήστες έλαβαν μέρος σε εκστρατείες διαμαρτυρίας κατά του «Stop Online Piracy Act» που προωθείται στην Βουλή των Αντιπροσώπων των ΗΠΑ και του αντίστοιχου «Protect IP Act» που προωθείται στην Γερουσία των ΗΠΑ.

Παράλληλα, ηγετικές προσωπικότητες του Διαδικτύου, έγκυροι τεχνολογικοί και επιστημονικοί φορείς έχουν εκφράσει σοβαρές αμφιβολίες για τη νομοθεσία αυτή, προειδοποιώντας ότι μπορεί να έχει σημαντικές αρνητικές επιπτώσεις στη λειτουργική σταθερότητα του Διαδικτύου παγκοσμίως και να αποτελέσει εμπόδιο σε υφιστάμενες προσπάθειες για την καταπολέμηση του κυβερνοεγκλήματος και της διάδοσης παράνομου και επικίνδυνου λογισμικού.

Μια παρέμβαση στην νομοθετική διαδικασία των ΗΠΑ εκ μέρους της ΕΕ, σε κάθε άλλη περίπτωση δεν θα ήταν θεμιτή, ωστόσο το Διαδίκτυο αποτελεί μια κοινή, παγκόσμια υποδομή ζωτικής σημασίας για την οικονομική και κοινωνική δραστηριότητα και θα πρέπει να αποφεύγονται μονομερή μέτρα (σημειώνεται ότι οι ΗΠΑ εξακολουθούν να διατηρούν σημαντικό έλεγχο επί της διακυβέρνησης του Διαδικτύου). Ως εκ τούτου, η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή δεν μπορεί να παρακολουθεί τις εξελίξεις αμέτοχη και οφείλει τάχιστα να λάβει καθαρή θέση.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Συμφωνεί με την προσπάθεια νομοθετικού ελέγχου του Διαδικτύου εκ μέρους των ΗΠΑ; Ποια είναι η θέση της;

2. Έχει εκφράσει δημοσίως και επισήμως προς τις ΗΠΑ ενστάσεις για τη νομοθεσία; Προτίθεται να το κάνει;

Κοινή απάντηση του κ. Barnier εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(17 Φεβρουαρίου 2012)

Στην ΕΕ, ιδίως η οδηγία σχετικά με την επιβολή των δικαιωμάτων διανοητικής ιδιοκτησίας (ΔΔΙ) ([1]) προβλέπει αποτελεσματικά εργαλεία εναντίον υποτιθέμενων παραβατών και, σε ορισμένες περιπτώσεις, ενδιαμέσων, καλύπτοντας έτσι κατ'αρχήν και τους φορείς εκμετάλλευσης δικτυακών τόπων. Η εν λόγω οδηγία επανεξετάζεται επί του παρόντος και η Επιτροπή πιθανώς να προτείνει τροποποιήσεις σε αυτήν έως το τέλος του τρέχοντος έτους, με στόχο την περαιτέρω βελτίωση των δυνατοτήτων επιβολής των ΔΔΙ, ενώ αυτές θα πρέπει ταυτόχρονα να είναι συμβατές με τις πολιτικές ευρείας ζώνης και να σέβονται τα συμφέροντα των καταναλωτών και τα θεμελιώδη δικαιώματα ([2]). Ήδη, με βάση την πάγια νομολογία, τα μέτρα επιβολής των ΔΔΙ στο πλαίσιο της ΕΕ πρέπει να συνάδουν με τα θεμελιώδη δικαιώματα, όπως η ελευθερία λήψης ή μετάδοσης πληροφοριών, το δικαίωμα ανάπτυξης επιχειρηματικών δραστηριοτήτων και η προστασία των προσωπικών δεδομένων ([3]).

([1]) Οδηγία 2004/48/ΕΚ σχετικά με την επιβολή των δικαιωμάτων διανοητικής ιδιοκτησίας.
([2]) Ανακοίνωση της Επιτροπής σχετικά με την Ενιαία Αγορά για τα δικαιώματα Διανοητικής Ιδιοκτησίας, COM (2011) 287 τελικό, της 24.05.2011.
([3]) Αποφάσεις του Δικαστηρίου στην υπόθεση C-275/06, Promusicae, της 29ης Ιανουαρίου 2008, και στην υπόθεση C-70/10, Scarlett v SABAM, της 24ης Νοεμβρίου 2011.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-012288/11
aan de Commissie
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(6 januari 2012)

Betreft: Amerikaanse Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA)

Momenteel behandelt het Amerikaanse Congres de „Stop Online Piracy Act" (SOPA — Wet tegen online-piraterij). Een groot deel van de wereldwijde infrastructuur, die ervoor zorgt dat internet functioneert, bevindt zich in de VS en staat onder directe of indirecte controle van de Amerikaanse regering.

Volgens berichten in de media zijn de formuleringen van de SOPA zo ruim uitgelegd, dat dit vergaande censuur in de hand werkt, dat internetbedrijven door verzoeken tot sluiting van hun websites schade kan worden toegebracht en klokkenluiden en vrije meningsuiting de das om kunnen worden gedaan.

Kan de SOPA-wet, voor zover de Commissie weet, ook voor bedrijven en privépersonen in de EU dergelijke gevolgen hebben?

Welke effecten kan de SOPA-wet hebben op de vrije meningsuiting in de EU?

Kan deze VS-wetgeving ook EU-bedrijven in gevaar brengen, in het bijzonder bedrijven die op of via het internet handelen of diensten aanbieden? Zo ja, welke maatregelen zal de Commissie voorstellen om dit gevaar te beperken?

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-000599/12
aan de Commissie
Lambert van Nistelrooij (PPE) en Wim van de Camp (PPE)
(26 januari 2012)

Betreft: Open internet wordt bedreigd door SOPA wet VS

In de VS wordt momenteel het SOPA wetsvoorstel behandeld om de rechten van houders van online auteursrechten beter te beschermen. Het laten zien, bijvoorbeeld via een zoekmachine zoals Google of via een sociaal netwerk zoals Facebook, van materiaal waarop een Amerikaans copyright rust, zou daarmee strafbaar worden. Dit maakt het functioneren van zoekmachines, sociale netwerken en andere innovatieve op internet gebaseerde diensten onmogelijk, en belemmert het economische potentieel van het Internet. Ook loopt het internet als innovatief ecosysteem daarmee grote schade op. In Nederland ontstaan bijvoorbeeld 25 % van alle nieuwe banen in de E-commerce sector. In het licht hiervan de volgende vragen:

1. Is de Commissie op de hoogte van het Amerikaans SOPA wetsvoorstel?

2. Vindt de Commissie met ons dat dergelijke maatregelen disproportioneel en daarom ongewenst zijn, en kan de Commissie uitsluiten vergelijkbare plannen voor toepassing in Europa te hebben of te ontwikkelen?

3. Is de Commissie met ons van mening dat nieuwe Europese wetgeving op dit terrein de balans moet vinden tussen de belangen van auteursrechthebbenden en het publieke belang van het open internet?

4. Wanneer komt de Commissie met eigen voorstellen terzake?

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord P-000648/12
aan de Commissie
Ioannis A. Tsoukalas (PPE)
(26 januari 2012)

Betreft: Europees standpunt over de geplande SOPA-wetgeving (Stop Online Piracy Act) van de VS ter bestrijding van online piraterij

De voorbije dagen hebben veel grote websites, internetbedrijven en miljoenen gebruikers deel genomen aan campagnes tegen de „Stop Online Piracy Act", die in het Amerikaanse Huis van Afgevaardigden werd ingediend, en tegen de tegenhanger bij de Senaat, de „Protect IP Act".

Daarenboven hebben leidersfiguren in de internetwereld en betrouwbare technologische en wetenschappelijke instanties ernstige twijfels geuit over deze wetgeving en hebben zij gewaarschuwd dat zij grote negatieve gevolgen kan hebben voor de operationele stabiliteit van het wereldwijde internet en dat zij de huidige pogingen ter bestrijding van cybercrime en de verspreiding van illegale, gevaarlijke software kan belemmeren.

Een inmenging van de EU in wetgevingsprocedures van de VS zou in geen enkele andere omstandigheid gewettigd zijn, maar het internet is als publieke, internationale infrastructuur van vitaal belang voor economische en sociale activiteiten en bijgevolg moeten unilaterale maatregelen voorkomen worden (door deze wetgeving zullen de VS een grote controle op het beheer van het internet behouden). Daarom mag de Europese Unie niet aan de zijlijn blijven staan, maar moet zij spoedig een duidelijk standpunt innemen.

1. Gaat de Commissie akkoord met de poging van de VS om het internet onder wettelijke controle te plaatsen? Wat is het standpunt van de Commissie?

2. Heeft de Commissie publiekelijk en formeel tegen de VS haar bezwaren geuit met betrekking tot deze wetgeving? Is zij van plan dit te doen?

Antwoord van de heer Michel Barnier namens de Commissie
(17 februari 2012)

In de EU biedt met name de richtlijn betreffende de handhaving van intellectuele-eigendomsrechten (IER) ([1]) doeltreffende instrumenten om op te treden tegen vermoedelijke inbreukmakers en, in sommige gevallen, tussenpersonen, waardoor in beginsel dus ook websitebeheerders worden bestreken. Deze richtlijn wordt momenteel geëvalueerd. Het is niet uitgesloten dat de Commissie tegen het einde van dit jaar wijzigingen in de richtlijn voorstelt die erop gericht zijn de handhavingsmogelijkheden van de IER verder te verbeteren, maar waarbij tegelijkertijd.d. verenigbaarheid met het breedbandbeleid wordt gewaarborgd en de consumentenbelangen en de grondrechten worden gerespecteerd ([2]). Het is reeds vaste rechtspraak in de EU dat IER-handhavingsmaatregelen moeten stroken met de grondrechten, zoals de vrijheid om informatie te ontvangen of te verstrekken, de vrijheid van ondernemerschap en de bescherming van persoonsgegevens ([3]).

([1]) Richtlijn 2004/48/EG betreffende de handhaving van intellectuele-eigendomsrechten.
([2]) Commissiemededeling over een eengemaakte markt voor intellectuele-eigendomsrechten, COM(2011) 287 definitief van 24.5.2011.
([3]) Arresten van het Hof van 29 januari 2008 in zaak C-275/06, Promusicae, en van 24 november 2011 in zaak C-70/10, Scarlett/SABAM.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012288/11
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(6 January 2012)

Subject: US Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA)

The US Congress is currently debating the Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA). A considerable part of the global infrastructure that allows the Internet to operate is located in the USA and is under the direct or indirect control of the US Government.

According to media reports, the wording in SOPA is so broad that it may permit extensive censorship, could seriously harm Internet companies through lock requests and could inhibit whistleblowing and the freedom of expression.

To the Commission's knowledge, could SOPA also have such an impact on companies and individuals within the EU?

What effects could SOPA have on freedom of expression within the EU?

Could this US Act also pose a threat to EU companies, especially those trading or offering services on or via the Internet? If so, what measures will the Commission propose to counter this threat?

Question for written answer E-000599/12
to the Commission
Lambert van Nistelrooij (PPE) and Wim van de Camp (PPE)
(26 January 2012)

Subject: Open Internet is under threat from US SOPA law

The SOPA bill, which aims to improve protection for online copyright owners, is currently being considered in the USA. The displaying, for example through a search engine such as Google or a social network such as Facebook, of material protected by an American copyright would be punishable under this law. This would make the functioning of search engines, social networks and other innovative Internet-based services impossible and hinder the Internet's economic potential. It would also seriously damage the Internet as an innovative ecosystem. In the Netherlands, for example, 25 % of all new jobs are generated in the e-commerce sector. The following questions are put in the light of this:

1. Is the Commission aware of the American SOPA bill?

2. Does the Commission agree with us that such measures are disproportionate and thus undesirable, and can the Commission rule out similar plans or their development for application in Europe?

3. Does the Commission agree with us that new European legislation in this area must strike a balance between the interests of copyright owners and the public interest in an open Internet?

4. When will the Commission present its own proposals on this issue?

Question for written answer P-000648/12
to the Commission
Ioannis A. Tsoukalas (PPE)
(26 January 2012)

Subject: European position regarding the USA's planned SOPA legislation to combat online piracy

Over the last few days, many large websites and Internet companies, as well as millions of individual users, have taken part in campaigns to protest against the 'Stop Online Piracy Act' introduced in the US House of Representatives, and its Senate counterpart, the 'Protect IP Act'.

In addition, leading figures in the Internet world and reliable technological and scientific bodies have expressed serious doubts about this legislation, warning that it may have significant negative impacts on the operational stability of the Internet worldwide and obstruct existing attempts to combat cybercrime and the spread of illegal, dangerous software.

While an intervention in US legislative procedures by the EU would not be legitimate under any other circumstance, but the Internet is a public, international infrastructure of vital importance for economic and social activity and unilateral measures must be avoided (this legislation means that the USA will continue to have significant control over the governance of the Internet). Therefore, the European Union cannot stand on the sidelines but must rapidly adopt a clear position.

1. Does the Commission agree with the USA's attempt to place legislative controls on the Internet? What is the Commission's position?

2. Has the Commission publicly and formally expressed objections to the USA regarding the legislation? Does it intend to do so?

Joint answer given by Michel Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(17 February 2012)

In the EU, in particular the directive on the enforcement of IPR ([1]) provides for effective tools against alleged infringers and, in certain cases, intermediaries, thus covering in principle also operators of websites. This directive is currently being reviewed and the Commission may propose amendments to it by the end of this year, aiming at further improving IPR enforcement possibilities, while being compatible with broadband policies and respecting the interest of consumers and fundamental rights ([2]). Already under established case-law, within the EU, IPR enforcement measures must be consistent with fundamental rights, such as the freedom to receive or impart information, to conduct business, and the protection of personal data ([3]).

([1]) Directive 2004/48/EC on the enforcement of intellectual property rights.
([2]) Communication from the Commission on a Single Market for Intellectual Property Rights, COM(2011) 287 final, 24.5.2011.
([3]) Judgments of the Court in Case C-275/06, *Promusicae*, of 29 January 2008; and in Case C-70/10, *Scarlett* v *SABAM*, of 24 November 2011.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-012304/11
an die Kommission
Jens Geier (S&D) und Petra Kammerevert (S&D)
(11. Januar 2012)

Betrifft: Ernennung eines Beraters von Kommissionsmitglied Kroes

Am 12. Dezember 2011 hat Kommissionsmitglied Kroes einen Berater zu der Frage, wie Internetnutzer, Blogger und Cyberaktivisten in autoritär regierten Ländern auf Dauer unterstützt werden können, im Rahmen der „No disconnect"-Strategie vorgestellt. Frau Kroes umschrieb den Inhalt der Beratertätigkeit u. a. mit der Aufnahme von Verbindungen zu Mitgliedstaaten, Drittländern und Nichtregierungsorganisationen, die sich in diesem Bereich engagieren. Außerdem solle der Berater die Strategie koordinieren und auf wirksame Weise voranbringen. Nach eigenen Angaben werde für diese Beratertätigkeit kein Entgelt durch die Kommission oder andere EU-Institutionen gezahlt, allerdings sollen Reisekosten und weitere Spesen übernommen werden.

Mit welchem Betrag werden die Kosten veranschlagt, die durch diese konkrete Beratertätigkeit jährlich durch Ausgaben für Reisen und Spesen entstehen? Welche Ausgaben werden genau übernommen? Gibt es eine Höchstgrenze für diese Kosten, und wenn ja, wie hoch ist diese?

Welche Haushaltslinie wird für die Kosten dieser Beratertätigkeit verwendet, und auf welche Höhe beläuft sich diese?

Gab es bezüglich der Auswahl des Beraters für Frau Kroes Alternativvorschläge, und wenn ja, welche Personen waren im Gespräch? Gab es eine interne oder öffentliche Ausschreibung für die Beratertätigkeit, oder erfolgte die Besetzung ausschließlich über die persönliche Benennung durch Kommissionsmitglied Kroes?

Antwort von Frau Kroes im Namen der Kommission
(22. Februar 2012)

Die Ernennung von Herrn zu Guttenberg zum Berater im Rahmen der „No Disconnect Strategy" (NDS) erfolgte aufgrund der persönlichen Entscheidung von Vizepräsidentin Kroes unter Berücksichtigung seiner Fähigkeiten, seiner weit gespannten Kontakte und seiner langjährigen Erfahrung in einschlägigen Bereichen wie der internationalen Sicherheit und auswärtigen Angelegenheiten.

Für diese Tätigkeit erhält Herr zu Guttenberg keine Vergütung. Reisekosten in angemessener Höhe werden ihm im Einklang mit den Vorschriften der Kommission erstattet.

Die genaue Höhe der mit seiner Beratertätigkeit verbundenen Kosten ist schwer vorherzusagen, aber die Arbeit wird grundsätzlich so kosteneffizient wie möglich organisiert. Die Gesamtkosten werden von der Entwicklung der „No Disconnect Strategy" abhängen.

Die Kosten externer Sachverständiger werden im Rahmen der Haushaltslinie 09.010211.00.02.20 erstattet.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012304/11
to the Commission
Jens Geier (S&D) and Petra Kammerevert (S&D)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: The appointment of an adviser to Commissioner Kroes

On 12 December 2011, Commissioner Kroes introduced an adviser on the matter of how Internet users, bloggers and cyberactivists in countries under authoritarian rule can be offered sustained support under the 'no disconnect' strategy. Ms Kroes indicated that the adviser's job would include establishing contact with Member States, third countries and non-governmental organisations involved in this area. In addition, the adviser was to coordinate strategy and develop it in an effective way. According to the information provided by Ms Kroes, no fee is to be paid by the Commission or any other EU institution for this advisory work, although travel costs and other expenses are to be covered.

What costs are expected to arise each year for travel and expenses incurred as part of this specific advisory task? Precisely what expenditure is to be reimbursed? Is there an upper limit for these costs, and, if so, what is this upper limit?

What budget line is to be used for the costs arising from this advisory work, and how high will this be?

Were alternative candidates proposed when it came to the selection of the adviser for Ms Kroes, and, if so, who were the people under consideration? Was there an internal or public invitation for applications, or was the post filled solely through a personal appointment by Commissioner Kroes?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(22 February 2012)

The decision to ask Mr zu Guttenberg to advise on the No Disconnect Strategy was a personal decision of Vice-President Kroes, taking into account his abilities, his extensive network of contacts and his longstanding experience in relevant areas, such as international security and foreign affairs.

For this activity, Mr zu Guttenberg will not receive any remuneration. Reasonable travel-related allowances will be reimbursed according to Commission rules.

It is difficult to predict the exact costs related to his work as advisor, but as a general rule, work will be organised as cost efficiently as possible. The overall cost will depend on how the 'No Disconnect Strategy' develops.

The budget line that is used for reimbursement of expenses by external experts is 09.010211.00.02.20.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-012392/11
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(6. Januar 2012)

Betrifft: Kriminalisierung von Obdachlosigkeit in der EU

Medienberichten zufolge hat die ungarische Regierung am 14. November 2011 ein Gesetz erlassen, das Obdachlosigkeit kriminalisiert. Ab dem 1. Dezember werden demnach Personen, die nach einer Verwarnung innerhalb von 6 Monaten ein weiteres Mal schlafend auf der Straße angetroffen werden, mit einer Strafe von bis zu 150 000 Forint belegt. Wer die Strafe nicht zahlen kann, kann inhaftiert werden.

Welche anderen Mitgliedstaaten, Länder, Regionen, Städte, Kreise oder Bezirke in der EU kriminalisieren nach Kenntnis der Kommission Obdachlosigkeit in dieser oder ähnlicher Form?

Welche Möglichkeiten sieht die Kommission, um Ungarn bei der Bekämpfung der Obdachlosigkeit mehr zu unterstützen?

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000164/12
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(18. Januar 2012)

Betrifft: Kriminalisierung von Obdachlosigkeit in Ungarn

Medienberichten zufolge hat die ungarische Regierung am 14. November 2011 ein Gesetz erlassen, das Obdachlosigkeit kriminalisiert. Ab dem 1. Dezember werden demnach Personen, die nach einer Verwarnung innerhalb von 6 Monaten ein weiteres Mal schlafend auf der Straße gefunden werden, mit einer Strafe von bis zu 150 000 Forint belegt. Wer die Strafe nicht zahlen kann, kann inhaftiert werden.

Ist die Kommission über das entsprechende Gesetz und die Implikationen unterrichtet?

Wie bewertet die Kommission das Gesetz, insbesondere im Hinblick auf die auch für Ungarn verbindliche Charta der Grundrechte der Europäischen Union sowie die Europäische Menschenrechtskonvention? Sieht die Kommission speziell einen Verstoß gegen die Artikel 1, 6, 7, 21, 25, 26, 34, 45 oder 49 Absatz 3?

Wird die Kommission Ungarn um Rechtfertigung des Gesetzes ersuchen?

Wird die Kommission ein Verfahren oder Sanktionen gegen Ungarn einleiten?

Antwort von Frau Reding im Namen der Kommission
(5. März 2012)

Die Charta der Grundrechte der Europäischen Union ist nicht auf jeden Fall von mutmaßlicher Grundrechtsverletzung anwendbar. Sie bindet die Mitgliedstaaten nur, soweit diese Unionsrecht durchführen. Nach Kenntnis der Kommission steht das Handeln des betreffenden Mitgliedstaats nicht im Zusammenhang mit der Durchführung von Unionsrecht.

Maßnahmen zur Bewältigung des Problems der Obdachlosigkeit in einem Mitgliedstaat sind zu allererst Sache des Staates, der Regionen und der Kommunen. Der gemeinsame Bericht über Sozialschutz und soziale Eingliederung aus dem Jahr 2010 regte die Entwicklung und Durchführung nationaler oder regionaler Aktionspläne gegen Obdachlosigkeit an und nannte einige Punkte, die in diesen Aktionsplänen enthalten sein sollten.

Maßnahmen auf europäischer Ebene sind dazu da, um die Tätigkeiten in den Mitgliedstaaten zu ergänzen. Die EU beteiligt sich finanziell beispielweise an der Bewertung von Wohnraumstrategien zur Bekämpfung von Obdachlosigkeit oder einer Studie über den Zusammenhang zwischen Obdachlosigkeit und Migration oder fördert die Zusammenarbeit von NRO in europäischen Netzwerken.

Die Kommission befürwortet eine gezieltere Verwendung der EFRE— und ESF-Mittel, unterstützt den Dialog zwischen wichtigen Akteuren und fördert die Bemühungen der Mitgliedstaaten um Eindämmung dieser extremsten Form der sozialen Ausgrenzung im Rahmen der Europäischen Plattform zur Bekämpfung der Armut und der sozialen Ausgrenzung.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012392/11
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(6 January 2012)

Subject: Criminalisation of homelessness in the EU

On 14 November 2011, according to media reports, the Hungarian Government adopted legislation criminalising homelessness. As of 1 December 2011, people found sleeping in the street for a second time within six months of having received a warning not to do so are liable to be fined up to HUF 150 000. Those who cannot pay face arrest.

To the Commission's knowledge, what other Member States, federal states, regions, municipalities or districts in the EU make homelessness a criminal offence in this way or similarly?

What scope does the Commission see for giving Hungary additional support to combat homelessness?

Question for written answer E-000164/12
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(18 January 2012)

Subject: Criminalisation of homelessness in Hungary

On 14 November 2011, according to media reports, the Hungarian Government adopted legislation criminalising homelessness. As of 1 December 2011, people found sleeping in the street for a second time within six months of having received a warning not to do so are liable to be fined up to HUF 150 000. Those who cannot pay face arrest.

Has the Commission been informed about this legislation and its implications?

What is the Commission's assessment of the legislation, particularly in the light of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, which is binding on Hungary as on the other Member States, and the European Convention on Human Rights? Specifically, does the Commission consider Hungary to be in breach of Articles 1, 6, 7, 21, 25, 26, 34, 45 or 49(3)?

Will the Commission ask Hungary to justify this legislation?

Will the Commission initiate proceedings against, or impose any penalty on, Hungary?

Joint answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(5 March 2012)

The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union does not apply to each specific situation of an alleged violation of fundamental rights. It is addressed to the Member States only when they are implementing EC law. On the basis of the information available, it does not appear that, the Member State concerned acted in the course of implementation of EC law.

Measures to tackle homelessness in a Member State are primarily the responsibility of national regional and local authorities. The 2010 Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion called for the development and implementation of national or regional plans for action on homelessness and identified some aspects for them to include.

Action at European level is designed to complement activity in Member States. European funds support activities such as evaluating housing-led policies to tackle homelessness, a study on the links between homelessness and migration, or European NGO networks.

The Commission advocates better use of the ERDF and ESF, **facilitates a dialogue among key actors and encourages Member States' efforts to tackle this most extreme form of social exclusion within the framework of the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion.**

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012448/11
to the Commission
Nessa Childers (S&D)
(12 January 2012)

Subject: Modern Languages Programme cuts

It has recently emerged that primary school pupils in Ireland will no longer be able to learn German, Spanish and French in school after the Irish government cut its Modern Languages Programme. Pupils in 550 schools across Ireland will now have to wait until the age of 12 before they can learn a second major European language. Additionally, 250 teachers and 50 employees of the Modern Languages Programme (which has been in place since 1998) will lose their jobs nationwide.

The study of foreign languages and cultures is crucial to ensuring greater integration and cultural exchange between Ireland and the rest of the EU. Ireland already lags behind in the teaching of languages at primary school level: in many EU countries, children start learning other commonly spoken EU languages from the day they start school and are fluent at a young age. It is easier to learn languages when still young, so it makes sense to start as early as possible. However, this rarely happens in Ireland. In terms of language policy, Ireland is already years behind on the commitments it made under the Barcelona Agreement and the Lisbon strategy to facilitate the early learning of at least two foreign languages by 2010.

In the spirit of European solidarity, for the sake of Ireland's future competiveness and, most of all, for the knowledge and personal fulfilment of the pupils affected, I would ask the Commission to help reverse this cut.

Can the Commission indicate what EU funding the Modern Languages Programme in Ireland could draw on in order to continue its work, or give a commitment that it will look into making funding available for programmes of this nature?

Question for written answer E-012617/11
to the Commission
Nessa Childers (S&D)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: European language programmes

During the recently announced Irish budget for 2012, the modern languages programme, which helps teach children European languages such as German, Spanish and French, was discontinued.

Are there any similar language programmes which the EU provides for, which could be used to help Irish people learn other European languages?

Joint answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(14 February 2012)

The Commission is aware of the measures recently adopted in Ireland to discontinue funding for modern language teaching in primary schools.

The Commission is doing all within its remit to encourage language learning and teaching from an early age in accordance with the objective set by Member States in Barcelona in 2002 that all pupils should learn at least two languages in addition to their mother tongue.

However, it has to be stressed that in accordance with Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the organisation of education systems falls entirely within the competence of the Member States; it is not the role of European programmes to substitute for gaps in national educational provisions.

Under Comenius, a sub-programme of Lifelong Learning Programme the Commission funds international bilateral school partnerships specifically focused on language learning, while eTwinning offers ICT tools, advice, training, support, and a secure Internet platform for collaborative projects. Schools may apply to host a Comenius Assistant (a student teacher or newly educated teacher from a different European country) to take part in daily life at the school.

The National Agency for the Lifelong Learning Programme in Ireland can provide further information concerning the possibilities for Irish schools within the Comenius programme:

Léargas the Exchange Bureau
189, Parnell Street
IE-Dublin 1
Tel: (353) 1 8731411
Fax: (353) 1 8731316
E-mail: lifelonglearning@leargas.ie
Website: http://www.llp.ie

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012450/11
to the Commission
Nessa Childers (S&D)
(10 January 2012)

Subject: EU Directive 2005/36/EC

The Architects' Alliance of Ireland has recently been in touch regarding differing interpretations of EU Directive 2005/36/EC. The Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI) has claimed that an amendment to the Building Control Act (BCA) 2007 introduced by John O'Donoghue in 2010 (which permitted the introduction of a Grandfather clause) would be unlawful, and contrary to the said Directive.

The Architects' Alliance of Ireland maintains that the bill was indeed lawful as regards European law. The Royal Institute's view is based on a widely circulated legal opinion that it acquired. However, that opinion is actually contradicted by its subsequent action in creating an 'Ireland only' class of membership within their own ranks (the making of such a class is inconceivable according to its own legal opinion). In fact, the new MRIAI(IRL) class facilitates an indisputably European-compliant Grandfather Clause Amendment to the BCA 2007 — quite apart from the argument presented in a legal opinion prepared for the Alliance.

The Alliance view is also supported by correspondence from the European Commission, but a specific answer is what we need — ideally given formally by Europe to a government party MEP. John O'Donoghue's bill expired with the last government and, instead, the making of a better drafted bill, albeit with the same purpose, is anticipated.

However, the discussion over introducing a Grandfather Clause to Part 3 of the BCA 2007 is being successfully undermined by the pretence that John O'Donoghue's bill was in conflict with the directive.

Clarification is urgently sought on the following question:

Was John O'Donoghue's bill lawful as regards European law, especially Directive 2005/36/EC?

Question for written answer E-000673/12
to the Commission
Marian Harkin (ALDE)
(30 January 2012)

Subject: Registration of the title 'architect' resulting from the introduction of the Irish Building Control Act 2007

With the introduction of the Irish Building Control Act 2007, registration of the professional title of 'architect' became compulsory. In order to be registered, architects are required to pass a technical assessment examination which is set at a high bar (with compulsory academic achievement). The effect of this is to discriminate against self-taught architects, many of whom have decades of practical experience which have yielded high quality and unblemished service.

A bill amending this act, known as the Building Control (Amendment) Bill 2010, has been introduced in Dáil Éireann by John O'Donoghue. This bill, if passed into law, will effectively provide for a 'grandfather clause' in the Building Control Act, and allow anyone who can prove that they have been making their living as an architect for seven years or more to be entered in the Register of Architects automatically. The bill provides an equitable basis for resolving this entire matter.

Is the proposed Irish Amendment Bill 2010, allowing for a 'grandfather clause' in the Building Control Act (2007), lawful under European Union law in the context of Directive 2005/36/EC?

Joint answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(21 February 2012)

The Commission cannot take a position on the conformity with Union law of legislation not yet adopted by Member States. The response to the Honourable Member's question must, therefore, be limited to general observations on the applicable Union law and in particular relevant provisions of Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications.

Directive 2005/36/EC facilitates the free movement of architects in the single market by establishing rules according to which Member States which limit access to the profession of architect to holders of particular qualifications must recognise qualifications which were obtained in another Member State. Article 46 of the directive defines minimum training requirements for architects. Qualifications which meet these requirements are listed in Annex V of the directive. Their holders can benefit from automatic recognition when they move to another Member State.

The minimum training requirements referred to in Article 46 are not binding on Member States. In other words, the directive does not prohibit Member States from granting access to the profession of architect on their own territory to persons whose qualifications do not meet the article 46 requirements, including any persons whose qualifications would be subject to a grandfathering clause. However, these persons would not be able to benefit from the automatic recognition of their qualifications in another Member State. They would be subject to the General System of recognition, in accordance with Article 10 of the directive, which entails the comparison of their qualifications with those required in the host Member State.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012592/11
to the Commission
Kay Swinburne (ECR)
(10 January 2012)

Subject: Embryonic stem cell research

The recent judgment by the European Court of Justice (ECJ) pertaining to the patentability of embryonic stem cell lines (Press Release No 112/2011) has been interpreted by some in the European Parliament as being a reason to prohibit all existing and future EU funding for embryonic stem cell research. As the ECJ judgment seems to suggest an interpretation of Directive 98/44/EC which may limit funding of future valuable research projects, can the Commission clarify whether it:

1. agrees that this judgment should be interpreted as only applying to the patentability of the resulting stem cell lines;

2. it has plans in hand to review Directive 98/44/EC to ensure that the unintended consequences of this judgment will not adversely affect ongoing research in the EU;

3. what other measures it intends to take, if any, to ensure that R & D and biomedical companies which are active in medical research in the EU continue to consider it a stable regulatory stable in which to invest?

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

1. The judgment referred to by the Honourable Member relates to Case C-34/10 of 18 October 2011. The judgment gives an interpretation of Article 6(2)c of the directive, in particular with regard to the concept of a human embryo, which is not explicitly defined in the directive. In its judgment the Court has highlighted that it must restrict itself to a legal interpretation of the relevant provision of the directive and 'that the purpose of the directive is not to regulate the use of human embryos in the context of scientific research'. ([1]) This implies that the ruling focuses on the question of patentability of inventions related to embryonic stem cells. It does not rule out research in this field.

2. The Courts judgment as such does not require a modification of the Biotechnology Directive as it interprets the Biotechnology Directive on hitherto undefined points. No EU research project has been suspended or cancelled as a result of this judgment. Nevertheless, the Commission will carefully examine and analyse the implications of the ruling. This in-depth analysis will form part of the Commission's forthcoming report under Article 16(c) of the Biotechnology Directive on the development and implications of patent law in the field of biotechnology which will be issued by end 2012.

3. The legislative proposals for Horizon 2020, adopted by the Commission on 30 November 2011, address funding for research involving human embryonic stem cells and also place considerable emphasis on support to industry.

([1]) See paragraphs 30 and 40 of the judgment in this regard.

(Slovenské znenie)

Otázka na písomné zodpovedanie E-012593/11
Komisii
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(10. januára 2012)

Vec: Podpredsedníčka Komisie/vysoká predstaviteľka — Národná rada v Sýrii

Francúzska republika formálne uznala legitimitu opozičnej Národnej rady v Sýrii a vyhlásila, že medzinárodná pomoc v oblasti ochrany civilného obyvateľstva v krajine je nevyhnutná. Valné zhromaždenie Organizácie Spojených národov prijalo uznesenie, v ktorom vyzýva úrady v Sýrii, aby chránili svoje civilné obyvateľstvo, čím udelilo krajinám západnej Európy politický mandát pre činnosť. Vytvorenie bezpečnej zóny pre civilistov a humanitárnych pracovníkov v krajine je nevyhnutné. V snahe zmeniť politickú situáciu v Sýrii diplomati Európskej únie vyhlásili, že na krajinu uvalia tvrdé ekonomické sankcie, ktoré majú spočívať v zákaze investícií do sýrskych štátnych dlhopisov, zákaze úverovania súkromného sektora a v zákaze obchodovania so sýrskym zlatom.

Mieni vysoká predstaviteľka nasledovať príklad Francúzska a formálne uznať legitimitu Národnej rady v Sýrii?

Odpoveď vysokej predstaviteľky/podpredsedníčky Komisie Ashtonovej v mene Komisie
(30. mája 2012)

Európska únia podporuje sýrsku opozíciu v jej boji za slobodu, dôstojnosť a demokraciu sýrskeho ľudu. EÚ je pripravená zintenzívniť dialóg so všetkými zástupcami sýrskej opozície, ktorí sú proti násiliu a za začlenenie a demokratické hodnoty pri budovaní inkluzívnej platformy. Sýrska národná rada, ktorú EÚ uznáva ako legitímneho zástupcu Sýrčanov, a ostatní zástupcovia opozície sa teraz musia zjednotiť v rámci nenásilného boja za novú Sýriu, kde bude panovať demokracia, pluralita, stabilita, kde bude zaručené dodržiavanie ľudských práv vrátane práv osôb patriacich k menšinám a kde všetci občania budú mať rovnaké práva bez ohľadu na to, k akej skupine patria, bez ohľadu na ich etnickú príslušnosť, vieru alebo pohlavie. Na tento účel EÚ nalieha na všetkých zástupcov opozície, aby vytvorili inkluzívny koordinačný mechanizmus pod dohľadom Ligy arabských štátov a aby sa dohodli na súbore spoločných zásad realizácie usporiadanej a pokojnej transformácie.

Niekoľko krokov podniknutých na pôde OSN prinieslo veľmi pozitívne výsledky. Rezolúcia Valného zhromaždenia OSN o situácii v oblasti ľudských práv v Sýrii z 22. novembra a rezolúcia Rady OSN pre ľudské práva z 2. decembra boli prijaté za širokej podpory, a to aj zo strany arabských štátov. EÚ pokračuje vo vyvíjaní tlaku na Sýriu, aby splnila požiadavky medzinárodného spoločenstva, aby ukončila násilie, vojenské obliehanie miest, prepustila väzňov a poskytla prístup medzinárodným pozorovateľom, médiám a pozorovateľom z oblasti ľudských práv či humanitárnej oblasti. EÚ takisto nalieha na členov Bezpečnostnej rady, aby sa dohodli na dôrazných opatreniach OSN voči Sýrii. Vzhľadom na závažnosť situácie v Sýrii je prijatie rezolúcie Bezpečnostnej rady OSN naliehavé.

Humanitárne koridory sú bezpečné priechody, ktorými je možné dostať sa k civilným obetiam konfliktu, ktoré potrebujú pomoc. Je potrebné o nich vopred rokovať s bojujúcimi frakciami alebo ich priamo na mieste vytýčiť a chrániť vojenskými silami. Rokovania o vytvorení humanitárnych koridorov sú však často ťažké alebo nemožné a ich vytýčenie a ochrana na mieste je len málokedy realizovateľným riešením pre humanitárne spoločenstvo, ktoré poskytuje pomoc pri súčasnom dodržiavaní humanitárnych zásad nestrannosti, nezávislosti a neutrality. Keďže Sýria je krajinou s rozlohou viac ako 180 000 km² a obyvateľstvo zasiahnuté konfliktom sa nachádza vo veľkých mestách pozdĺž osi, ktorá sa tiahne z juhu na sever (Damask, Homs, Hama, Aleppo), mali by sa vyriešiť praktické otázky, pretože humanitárnym cieľom naďalej ostáva dostať pomoc k ľuďom, ktorí ju potrebujú.

Európska únia mobilizovala 8 mil. EUR na humanitárnu pomoc (3 mil. EUR z rozpočtu EÚ na humanitárnu pomoc a asi 5 mil. EUR pochádza od členských štátov). Tieto finančné prostriedky budú slúžiť na pomoc určenú na záchranu životov tých, ktorí boli zranení alebo donútení utiecť pred násilím v krajine.

EÚ odsúdila zabitie Dr Abd-al-Razzaq Jbeira, ktorý bol generálnym sekretárom Sýrsko-arabského červeného polmesiaca a prezidentom Sýrsko-arabského červeného polmesiaca v Idlibe. Bol zastrelený 25. januára počas cesty v jasne označenom vozidle Sýrsko-arabského červeného polmesiaca blízko mesta Khan Shaykhun na diaľnici vedúcej z Damasku do Aleppa.

EÚ prijala v máji 2011 cielené reštriktívne opatrenia voči sýrskemu režimu, ktoré boli doteraz desaťkrát rozšírené. Sankcie EÚ majú za cieľ maximalizovať požadovaný účinok a súčasne minimalizovať možný dosah na obyvateľstvo. Jedným z prvkov týchto reštriktívnych opatrení EÚ, ktoré majú za cieľ zastaviť násilie, je zbavenie vlády jej príjmov, ktoré by mohla použiť na financovanie brutálneho zásahu. Prvotným cieľom zostáva aj naďalej pomoc sýrskemu ľudu, aby naplnil svoje legitímne úsilie o pokojnú transformáciu smerom k demokracii.

Ak budú pokračovať represie voči civilnému obyvateľstvu, EÚ prijme ďalšie a prísnejšie opatrenia voči režimu.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012593/11
to the Commission
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(10 January 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — National Council in Syria

France has formally recognised the legitimacy of the Syrian National Council and declared that international aid must be provided to protect the civilian population in Syria. The UN General Assembly has adopted a resolution calling on the authorities in Syria to protect their civilian population, thereby giving the countries of Western Europe a political mandate for action. The creation of a secure zone for civilians and humanitarian workers in the country is essential. In an attempt to influence the political situation in Syria, EU diplomats have declared that drastic economic sanctions will be imposed on the country, including a ban on investment in Syrian sovereign bonds, a ban on private-sector bank loans and a ban on trading Syrian gold.

Does the Vice-President/High Representative intend to follow France's example and formally recognise the legitimacy of the Syrian National Council?

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

The European Union supports the Syrian opposition in its struggle for freedom, dignity and democracy for the Syrian people. The EU stands ready to step up its engagement with all representative members of Syrian opposition which adhere to non-violence, inclusiveness and democratic values as they make progress to form a broad and inclusive platform. The Syrian National Council, recognised by the EU as a legitimate representative of Syrians, and other representatives of the opposition must unite now in the peaceful struggle for a new Syria that is democratic, pluralistic, stable and guarantees human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, and where all citizens enjoy equal rights regardless of their affiliations, ethnicity, belief or gender. To this end, the EU urges all representative members of the opposition to set up an inclusive coordination mechanism under the auspices of the League of Arab States and to agree on a set of shared principles for working towards an orderly and peaceful transition.

Several processes at UN level have produced very positive results: the UN General Assembly's resolution on the human rights situation in Syria on 22 November and the UN Human Rights Council resolution on 2 December adopted with a wide support, including from Arab States. The EU continues to press on Syria to meet the demands of the international community including the end of violence, military siege of cities, release of prisoners and access to international observers, media and human rights/humanitarian observers. The EU also urges members of the Security Council to agree on strong UN action towards Syria. In light of the serious developments in Syria, a UN Security Council resolution is urgent.

Humanitarian corridors are safe passages to reach civilians victims of conflict in need of assistance. They have to be pre-negotiated in advance with the fighting factions, or forcibly traced and protected by military forces on the ground. The former solution is often difficult or impossible to negotiate and the latter is rarely a viable solution for the humanitarian community which provides aid while respecting the humanitarian principles of impartiality, independence and neutrality. For Syria, the practicalities in a country of more than 180,000 square km and the concerned populations living in large cities stretching all along the country's South-North axis (Damascus, Homs, Hama, Aleppo) would have to be resolved since the humanitarian objective remains to reach all people in need.

The European Union has mobilised EUR 8 million in humanitarian aid (EUR 3 million from the EU humanitarian budget and about EUR 5 million from Member States). This funding will cover life-saving assistance to those who have been wounded or forced to flee the ongoing violence in the country.

The EU has condemned the killing of Dr Abd-al-Razzaq Jbeiro, Secretary General of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent and President of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent's Idlib branch. He was shot and killed on 25 January while travelling in a clearly marked Syrian Arab Red Crescent vehicle near Khan Shaykhun on the Damascus-Aleppo highway.

The EU introduced targeted restrictive measures against the Syrian regime in May 2011, which have been expanded ten times by now. The EU sanctions are designed to maximise the desired effect while minimising the potential impact on the population. Depriving the government of revenues, which could be used for financing the brutal crackdown, is one element of EU restrictive measures aiming at stopping the violence. The ultimate goal remains to assist the Syrian people to achieve their legitimate aspirations for a peaceful transition to democracy.

The EU will impose further and more comprehensive measures against the regime as long as the repression of the civilian population continues.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-012594/11
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (NI)
(16. Januar 2012)

Betrifft: Folgeanfrage zum Direkthandel mit Nord-Zypern: Transport

In ihrer Antwort auf die Anfrage E-4689/2010 erläutert die Kommission, dass der Vorschlag der Kommission für eine Verordnung des Rates über Sonderregelungen für den Handel mit den Landesteilen der Republik Zypern, in denen die Regierung der Republik Zypern keine tatsächliche Kontrolle ausübt, nicht auf den Transport abzielt, sondern auf die Schaffung von Handelszugeständnissen.

Wie in der Anfrage E-4869/2010 bereits ausgeführt, sind die See— und Flughäfen in Nordzypern geschlossen.

Hat die Kommission für die Transportfrage bereits einen Lösungsansatz, der nötig wird, wenn oben genannte Verordnung in Kraft tritt?

Antwort von Herrn Füle im Namen der Kommission
(23. Februar 2012)

Die Kommission ist nicht der Auffassung, dass Transportfragen ein Hindernis für ihren 2004 vorgelegten Vorschlag für eine Verordnung über Sonderregelungen für den Handel mit den Landesteilen der Republik Zypern, in denen die Regierung der Republik Zypern keine tatsächliche Kontrolle ausübt, darstellen. Die Gründe wurden in der Antwort auf die schriftliche Anfrage E-4901/2007 ([1]) dargelegt. Der Vorschlag liegt derzeit dem Parlament vor, das durch den Vertrag von Lissabon Mitentscheidungsbefugnisse in Handelsfragen erhalten hat.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/QP-WEB/home.jsp

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012594/11
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (NI)
(16 January 2012)

Subject: Follow-up question on direct trade with Northern Cyprus: Transport

In its reply to Question E-4689/2010, the Commission explains that the Commission's proposals for a Council Regulation on special rules for trade with those parts of the Republic of Cyprus in which the Government of the Republic of Cyprus has no genuine control do not relate to transport but rather the establishment of trade concessions.

As already explained in Question E-4869/2010, the sea ports and airports of Northern Cyprus are closed.

Does the Commission already have a suitable solution to the transport question, as will be required when the aforementioned Regulation comes into force?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(23 February 2012)

The Commission does not consider transportation issues an obstacle to its 2004 proposal for a regulation on special conditions for trade with those areas of the Republic of Cyprus in which the Government of the Republic of Cyprus does not exercise effective control. The reasons have been presented in the reply to Written Question E-4901/2007 ([1]). The proposal is currently pending with the Parliament which acquired co-decision powers on trade issues through the Lisbon Treaty.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/QP-WEB/home.jsp

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-012597/11
aan de Commissie
Judith A. Merkies (S&D) en Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE)
(10 januari 2012)

Betreft: Europese Innovatiepartnerschappen

Met het kerninitiatief „Innovatie-Unie" wil de Europese Commissie het mededingingsvermogen van Europa vergroten en maatschappelijke uitdagingen aanpakken via onderzoek en innovatie. Een manier om dat te bereiken, is via Europese Innovatiepartnerschappen (EIP's) die de zwakke punten in het Europese stelsel voor onderzoek en ontwikkeling moeten aanpakken. Het eerste Europese Innovatiepartnerschap betreffende actief en gezond ouder worden werd begin 2011 gelanceerd.

1. In zijn resolutie van 11 november 2010 verheugt het Europees Parlement zich over het proefproject over actief en gezond ouder worden en roept het de Commissie ertoe op om het Parlement op de hoogte te houden en het te betrekken bij alle fasen van de uitvoering van het partnerschap. Het Europees Parlement heeft de Commissie eveneens in staat gesteld om een EIP te lanceren voor elk van de drie grote maatschappelijke uitdagingen, plus twee extra EIP's.

Wanneer zal de Commissie verslag uitbrengen aan het Europees Parlement over het proefproject over actief en gezond ouder worden?

Wanneer zal de Commissie een nieuw partnerschap lanceren en aan welke voorwaarden moet daarvoor voldaan worden?

2. In de beoordeling van het proefproject over actief en gezond ouder worden dat naar de Europese Raad gestuurd werd, kwam men tot de conclusie dat het concept EIP onvoldoende duidelijk is. Welke maatregelen zal de Commissie nemen om het verband tussen de EIP's en andere beleidsinitiatieven en financieringsinstrumenten te verduidelijken?

3. Hoe zal de Commissie een nauwere samenwerking tussen het Europees Parlement, de Raad en de Commissie verzekeren gedurende de verschillende fasen van een partnerschap?

4. Uit de beoordeling van het proefproject over actief en gezond ouder worden, bleek dat het EIP bijzonder succesvol was in het mobiliseren van belanghebbenden tijdens de voorbereidende fase. Hoe zal de Commissie garanderen dat die belanghebbenden ook bij de volgende fasen van het project betrokken worden?

Antwoord van mevrouw Geoghegan-Quinn namens de Commissie
(10 februari 2012)

In de Stand van zaken rond.d. Innovatie-Unie 2011 ([1]) is verslag gedaan over de vooruitgang met betrekking tot de Europese innovatiepartnerschappen (EIP's).

De Europese Commissie werkt voor het proef-EIP inzake actief en gezond ouder worden nauw samen met nationale overheden, regio's en een breed veld van belanghebbenden om het strategisch implementatieplan (SIP) op de rails te krijgen.

Tijdens de eerste maanden van 2012 zal zij oproepen tot medewerking lanceren en een onlinemarktplaats voor innovatieve ideeën in het leven roepen om belanghebbenden bij het proces te betrekken en de verwezenlijking van de prioriteiten en acties in het kader van het SIP te ondersteunen. Daarna zal de Commissie erover waken dat de belanghebbenden die tijdens de voorbereidende fase bij het proces zijn betrokken ook bij het verdere verloop van het EIP worden betrokken.

Eind februari publiceert de Commissie een mededeling aan het Parlement en de Raad waarin het SIP wordt geëvalueerd en gefiatteerd, en een selectie van acties op EU-niveau ter ondersteuning van het EIP wordt voorgesteld die tot de bevoegdheden en verantwoordelijkheden van de Commissie behoren. In deze mededeling zal ook aandacht worden besteed aan de bijdrage van bestaande financieringsinstrumenten en toekomstige EU-programma's en EU-initiatieven, en zullen regelingen inzake governance, monitoring en e.a.uatie voor de volgende fases van het EIP in worden voorgesteld. De Commissie zou graag zien dat het Parlement het proces op de voet volgt op basis van deze mededeling om de verwezenlijking van het EIP te sturen en te bevorderen.

([1]) COM(2011) 849 van 2.12.2011.

Daarnaast wordt gewerkt aan andere EIP's met betrekking tot uitdagingen als grondstoffen, productiviteit en duurzaamheid in de landbouw, waterefficiëntie en slimme steden. Deze moeten voldoen aan de in het kader van de Innovatie-Unie [2] bepaalde EIP-selectiecriteria en voorwaarden voor welslagen. De feedback van de Raad en het Parlement en de ervaringen die inzake actief en gezond ouder worden zijn opgedaan, moeten worden meegenomen. Deze EIP's zullen in de eerste helft van 2012 worden voorgesteld.

[2] COM(2010) 546 van 6.10.2010.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-012597/11
à Comissão
Judith A. Merkies (S&D) e Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE)
(10 de Janeiro de 2012)

Assunto: Parcerias Europeias de Inovação

Com a iniciativa emblemática União da Inovação, a Comissão Europeia visa melhorar a competitividade europeia e resolver os desafios sociais através da investigação e inovação. Uma forma de o alcançar é através das Parcerias Europeias de Inovação (PEI) que abordarão as debilidades no sistema europeu de investigação e inovação. A primeira Parceria Europeia da Inovação sobre o Envelhecimento Ativo e Saudável (EAS) foi lançada no início de 2011.

1. Na sua resolução de 11 de novembro de 2010, o Parlamento Europeu congratulou-se com a Parceria Piloto EAS e instou a Comissão a que informasse o Parlamento e o envolvesse em todas as fases da sua implementação. O Parlamento Europeu também autorizou a Comissão a lançar uma PEI para cada um dos três grandes desafios sociais, mais dois suplementares.

Quando é que a Comissão vai informar o Parlamento Europeu sobre a Parceria Piloto EAS?

Quando é que a Comissão vai lançar uma nova Parceria e quais as condições da mesma?

2. A avaliação da PEI-piloto sobre Envelhecimento Ativo e Saudável, que foi enviada para o Conselho Europeu, concluiu que falta clareza ao conceito de PEI. Que medidas vai a Comissão tomar para clarificar a sua relação com outras iniciativas políticas e instrumentos de financiamento?

3. De que modo vai a Comissão assegurar uma cooperação mais forte entre o Parlamento Europeu, o Conselho e a Comissão ao longo das diferentes fases de uma parceria?

4. Segundo a avaliação da PEI-piloto sobre Envelhecimento Ativo e Saudável, esta parceria teve bastante sucesso na mobilização de partes interessadas durante a fase preparatória. De que modo vai a Comissão assegurar que estas partes interessadas também se envolverão em fases posteriores do projeto?

Resposta dada por Máire Geoghegan-Quinn em nome da Comissão
(10 de Fevereiro de 2012)

O relatório sobre o estado da União da Inovação 2011 ([1]) comunicou os progressos alcançados no domínio das parcerias europeias de inovação (PEI).

No respeitante à parceria-piloto «Envelhecimento Ativo e Saudável», a Comissão Europeia está a trabalhar estreitamente com os governos nacionais, as regiões e uma vasta gama de interessados com o objetivo de implementar o plano estratégico de execução.

Nos primeiros meses de 2012, lançaremos convites à apresentação de propostas, bem como um mercado na Internet para as ideias inovadoras, com o objetivo de envolver os interessados e apoiar a implementação das prioridades e ações do plano estratégico de execução. O acompanhamento deverá garantir que os interessados mobilizados na fase preparatória se empenhem também nas fases posteriores da PEI.

Simultaneamente, a Comissão prepara uma comunicação ao Parlamento Europeu e ao Conselho, a apresentar no final de fevereiro de 2012, que avaliará e aprovará o plano estratégico de execução, propondo uma seleção de ações a nível da UE em apoio à PEI, no contexto das competências e responsabilidades da Comissão. Essa comunicação abordará também a contribuição dos instrumentos financeiros existentes, bem como os futuros programas e iniciativas da UE, e proporá disposições em matéria de governança, acompanhamento e avaliação para as próximas fases da PEI. A Comissão congratular-se-ia com um acompanhamento estreito por parte do Parlamento com base na referida comunicação, de forma a orientar e incentivar a implementação da PEI.

Paralelamente, encontram-se em preparação outras PEI, nos domínios «matérias-primas», «produtividade agrícola e sustentabilidade», «eficiência dos recursos hídricos» e «cidades inteligentes». Estas PEI, que devem cumprir os critérios de seleção e as condições de êxito estabelecidas na União da Inovação ([2]) e incorporar os contributos do Conselho e do Parlamento, bem como os ensinamentos da parceria-piloto «Envelhecimento Ativo e Saudável», serão apresentadas no primeiro semestre de 2012.

([1]) COM(2011)849 de 2.12.2011.
([2]) COM(2010)546 de 6.10.2010.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012597/11
to the Commission
Judith A. Merkies (S&D) and Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE)
(10 January 2012)

Subject: European Innovation Partnerships

With the Innovation Union flagship the European Commission aims to improve European competitiveness and tackle societal challenges through research and innovation. One way of achieving this is through European Innovation Partnerships (EIPs) that will address weaknesses in the European research and innovation system. The first European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing (AHA) was launched at the beginning of 2011.

1. In its resolution of 11 November 2010, the European Parliament welcomed the AHA Pilot Partnership and called on the Commission to report to Parliament and involve it in all stages of its implementation. The European Parliament also allowed the Commission to launch an EIP on each of the three grand societal challenges, plus two extra ones.

When will the Commission report to the European Parliament on the AHA Pilot Partnership?

When will the Commission launch a new Partnership and what are the conditions therefore?

2. The evaluation of the pilot EIP on Active and Healthy Ageing that was sent to the European Council came to the conclusion that the EIP concept lacks clarity. What measures will the Commission take to clarify its relationship to other policy initiatives and funding instruments?

3. How will the Commission ensure stronger cooperation between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission throughout the different stages of a partnership?

4. The evaluation of the pilot EIP on Active and Healthy Ageing suggested that it was very successful in mobilising stakeholders during the preparatory phase. How will the Commission ensure that these stakeholders are also engaged in further stages of the project?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(10 February 2012)

A progress report on European Innovation Partnerships (EIPs) was provided in the State of the Innovation Union 2011 report ([1]).

For the pilot EIP on Active and Healthy Ageing (AHA), the European Commission (EC) is now working closely with national governments, regions and a wide range of stakeholders to move the Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP) forward.

During the first months of 2012 it will launch invitations for commitment and a web-based marketplace for innovative ideas to involve stakeholders and support implementation of the SIP priorities and actions. The follow-up should ensure that the stakeholders mobilised during the preparatory phase are also engaged in the further stages of the EIP.

At the same time, the EC is preparing a communication to the Parliament and the Council for end of February 2012 that will assess and endorse the SIP and propose a selection of EU level actions in support of the EIP, within the EC's competences and responsibilities. This communication will also address the contribution of existing funding instruments and future EU programmes and initiatives, and propose governance, monitoring and assessment arrangements for the next stages of the EIP. The Commission would welcome a close follow-up from the Parliament based on this communication in order to steer and encourage the implementation of the EIP.

In parallel, other EIPs are under preparation for challenges related to 'Raw Materials', 'Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability', 'Water-efficiency', and 'Smart Cities'. These must meet the EIP selection criteria and conditions for success set out in the Innovation Union ([2]) and incorporate feedback from Council and the Parliament and the lessons learnt from AHA. They should all be presented during the first half of 2012.

([1]) COM(2011) 849, 2.12.2011.
([2]) COM(2010) 546, 6.10.2010.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-012598/11
adresată Consiliului
Adrian Severin (NI)
(17 ianuarie 2012)

Subiect: PCE/PEC — Nesemnarea de către UE a Acordului de asociere cu Ucraina

În cadrul ultimului summit UE-Ucraina, UE nu a semnat Acordul de asociere cu țara respectivă, deși negocierile au fost finalizate și s-a declarat că asocierea politică, integrarea economică și convergența instituțională sunt în interesul ambelor părți.

Principalul motiv al ignorării intereselor UE în acest sens a fost deteriorarea democrației și a statului de drept în Ucraina sub actuala guvernare și, în special, procesul și condamnarea fostului prim-ministru, Iulia Timoșenko.

A lega semnarea acordului de un anumit rezultat al procedurii judiciare care o vizează pe doamna Timoșenko reprezintă o încercare din partea UE, prin orice mijloc, de a exercita o presiune politică asupra justiției din Ucraina. Aceasta contravine valorilor noastre, care impun independența justiției.

În acest context, ați putea să oferiți anumite clarificări ca răspuns la următoarele întrebări:

1. Cum pot fi reconciliate solicitările politice ale UE față de justiția din Ucraina, în special în ceea ce privește o anumită cauză care este încă examinată de instanța judecătorească, cu valorile UE privind statul de drept?

2. Pe baza căror argumente specifice (fapte și date) v-ați întemeiat concluzia conform căreia statul de drept, democrația și, în special, situația justiției s-au deteriorat în ultimii ani? De asemenea, ați putea să precizați în ce măsură situația era mai bună în timpul mandatului guvernului anterior?

3. Care au fost sursele (presupus obiective) care v-au furnizat aceste informații?

4. Având în vedere că ne-ați avertizat cu privire la existența anumitor partide ucrainene antieuropene, ce măsuri specifice veți adopta pentru a vă asigura că amânarea semnării Acordului de asociere nu este în avantajul euroscepticilor?

Răspuns
(5 martie 2012)

Delegația Uniunii Europene la Kiev a urmărit îndeaproape, împreună cu ambasadele statelor membre ale UE, evoluțiile în ceea ce privește procedurile penale îndreptate împotriva unor înalți funcționari din fostul guvern al Ucrainei, inclusiv a dnei Iulia Timoșenko. Delegația a observat toate procedurile judiciare și a raportat concluziile sale. În acest context, Înaltul Reprezentant Catherine Ashton a făcut o declarație în numele Uniunii Europene, la 11 octombrie 2011, prin care exprima dezamăgirea profundă a UE față de verdictul Tribunalului Districtual Pecersk din Ucraina în cazul dnei Iulia Timoșenko. Verdictul a urmat unui proces care nu a respectat normele internaționale în ceea ce privește procedurile judiciare echitabile, transparente și independente.

Cea de a 15-a reuniune la nivel înalt Ucraina-UE a avut loc la Kiev la 19 decembrie 2011. Ucraina a fost reprezentată de Președintele Viktor Ianukovici. Uniunea Europeană a fost reprezentată de dl Herman Van Rompuy, Președintele Consiliului European, și de dl José Manuel Durão Barroso, Președintele Comisiei Europene.

Liderii au luat act cu satisfacție de faptul că negociatorii-șefi au ajuns la o înțelegere comună cu privire la întregul text al acordului de asociere care va stabili viitoarea bază contractuală a relațiilor UE-Ucraina. Calea este în prezent deschisă către finalizarea tehnică a versiunii definitive consolidate a acordului, inclusiv a zonei de liber schimb aprofundate și cuprinzătoare prevăzute de acesta, în vederea parafării acordului cât mai curând posibil.

Liderii au reamintit că acordul de asociere prevede un angajament comun față de o relație strânsă și durabilă care se bazează pe valori comune, în special pe deplina respectare a principiilor democratice, a statului de drept, a bunei guvernanțe, a drepturile omului și a libertăților fundamentale, inclusiv drepturile persoanelor aparținând minorităților naționale, nediscriminarea persoanelor care aparțin minorităților și respectul pentru diversitate și demnitatea umană.

Ei au ajuns la o înțelegere comună potrivit căreia performanța Ucrainei, în special în ceea ce privește respectarea valorilor comune și a statului de drept, va fi de o importanță crucială pentru rapiditatea asocierii politice și integrării economice a Ucrainei în UE, inclusiv în contextul încheierii acordului de asociere și al punerii sale în aplicare ulterioare.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012598/11
to the Council
Adrian Severin (NI)
(17 January 2012)

Subject: PCE/PEC — EU's failure to sign the Association Agreement with Ukraine

During the recent EU-Ukraine Summit, the EU failed to sign the Association Agreement with that country despite the fact that the negotiations had been finalised and political association, economic integration and institutional convergence were declared to be in both parties' interests.

The main reason for ignoring the interests of the EU in this way was the deterioration of democracy and the rule of law in Ukraine under the present government and, specifically, the trial and sentencing of the former Prime Minister, Yulia Tymoshenko.

To link the signature of the Agreement to a certain outcome of the judicial procedure in which Ms Tymoshenko is involved represents, by any measure, an attempt by the EU to exert political pressure on the judiciary in Ukraine. This runs counter to our values, which demand the independence of the judiciary.

Against this background, could you provide some clarifications in response to the following questions:

1. How can the EU's political requests to the Ukrainian judiciary, particularly concerning a specific case which is still under the Court's consideration, be reconciled with EU values in relation to the rule of law?

2. On what specific arguments (facts and data) did you base your conclusion that the rule of law and democracy, and in particular the state of the judiciary, have deteriorated in recent years? Could you also specify to what extent the situation was better during the previous government's term of office?

3. What were the (supposedly objective) sources that provided you with this information?

4. Given that you have warned us of the existence of certain anti-European Ukrainian parties, what specific measures are you going to adopt in order to ensure that postponing the signature of the Association Agreement does not play into the hands of the Eurosceptics?

Reply
(5 March 2012)

The European Union delegation in Kyiv, together with the EU Member States' embassies, has closely followed developments in the criminal proceedings against senior officials of the former Government of Ukraine, including Ms Yulia Tymoshenko. The delegation observed all court proceedings and reported its conclusions. Against this background High Representative Catherine Ashton issued a declaration on behalf of the European Union on 11 October 2011 expressing the EU's deep disappointment with the verdict of the Pechersk District Court in Ukraine in the case of Ms Yulia Tymoshenko. The verdict came after a trial which did not respect international standards as regards fair, transparent and independent legal process.

The 15th Ukraine-EU Summit took place in Kyiv on 19 December 2011. Ukraine was represented by President Viktor Yanukovych. The European Union was represented by Mr Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council, and Mr José Manuel Durão Barroso, President of the European Commission.

The leaders noted with satisfaction that the chief negotiators had reached a common understanding on the full text of the Association Agreement which will establish the future contractual basis of EU-Ukraine relations. The way is now open for technical completion of the final consolidated version of the Agreement, including its deep and comprehensive free trade area, with a view to its initialling as soon as possible.

The leaders recalled that the Association Agreement provides for a shared commitment to a close and lasting relationship that is based on common values, in particular full respect for democratic principles, rule of law, good governance, human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, non-discrimination of persons belonging to minorities and respect for diversity and human dignity.

They reached a common understanding 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.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-012600/11
adresată Comisiei
Adrian Severin (NI)
(13 ianuarie 2012)

Subiect: Nesemnarea de către UE a Acordului de asociere cu Ucraina

În cadrul ultimului summit UE-Ucraina, UE nu a semnat Acordul de asociere cu țara respectivă, deși negocierile au fost finalizate și s-a declarat că asocierea politică, integrarea economică și convergența instituțională sunt în interesul ambelor părți.

Principalul motiv al ignorării intereselor UE în acest sens a fost deteriorarea democrației și a statului de drept în Ucraina sub actuala guvernare și, în special, procesul și condamnarea fostului prim-ministru, Iulia Timoșenko.

A lega semnarea acordului de un anumit rezultat al procedurii judiciare care o vizează pe doamna Timoșenko reprezintă o încercare din partea UE, prin orice mijloc, de a exercita o presiune politică asupra justiției din Ucraina. Aceasta contravine valorilor noastre, care impun independența justiției.

În acest context, ar putea Comisia să ofere anumite clarificări ca răspuns la următoarele întrebări:

1. Cum pot fi reconciliate solicitările politice ale UE față de justiția din Ucraina, în special în ceea ce privește o anumită cauză care este încă examinată de instanța judecătorească, cu valorile UE privind statul de drept?

2. Pe baza căror argumente specifice (fapte și date) Comisia și-a întemeiat concluzia conform căreia statul de drept, democrația și, în special, situația justiției s-au deteriorat în ultimii ani? De asemenea, ar putea Comisia să precizeze în ce măsură situația era mai bună în timpul mandatului guvernului anterior?

3. Care au fost sursele (presupus obiective) care i-au furnizat Comisiei aceste informații?

4. Având în vedere că am fost avertizați de către Comisie cu privire la existența anumitor partide ucrainene antieuropene, ce măsuri specifice va adopta pentru a se asigura că amânarea semnării Acordului de asociere nu este în avantajul euroscepticilor?

Răspuns dat de dl Füle în numele Comisiei
(1 martie 2012)

Necesitatea asigurării democrației, a drepturilor omului și a statului de drept se află în centrul Parteneriatului estic. În declarația reuniunii la nivel înalt UE-Ucraina se recunoaște faptul că performanța Ucrainei, în special în ceea ce privește respectarea valorilor comune și a statului de drept, va avea o importanță crucială în stabilirea vitezei asocierii sale politice la UE și a integrării economice în UE, inclusiv în contextul Acordului de asociere și, ulterior, al punerii acestuia în aplicare. Cu puțin timp înainte de summit, negociatorii șefi din partea UE și a Ucrainei au ajuns la un acord comun privind textul integral al acordului, însă termenul precis privind eventuala semnare și ratificare a acordului va fi depinde, în consecință, de ritmul reformelor politice din Ucraina.

Cu privire la cercetările penale efectuate împotriva unor înalți funcționari din fostul guvern al Ucrainei, inclusiv împotriva doamnei Iulia Timoșenko, UE a subliniat cu insistență că autoritățile Ucrainei ar trebui să asigure un proces juridic echitabil, transparent și imparțial. Acest lucru nu înseamnă exercitarea unei presiuni pentru adoptarea unei anumite concluzii în cadrul procedurii. Cauzele au fost urmărite îndeaproape de către diplomați ai UE la Kiev, împreună cu experți în drept, inclusiv experți din societatea civilă și din organizațiile internaționale cu experiență recunoscută în domeniul procedurilor judiciare. Aceștia au monitorizat toate procedurile judiciare și au raportat concluziile lor.

Înaltul Reprezentant/Vicepreședintele și Comisia analizează în permanență evoluțiile din țările învecinate Uniunii Europene. Principalele concluzii ale acestui proces sunt prezentate în rapoartele anuale privind progresele înregistrate de fiecare țară, care sunt disponibile la adresa internet: http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/documents_en.htm.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012600/11
to the Commission
Adrian Severin (NI)
(13 January 2012)

Subject: EU's failure to sign the Association Agreement with Ukraine

During the recent EU-Ukraine Summit, the EU failed to sign the Association Agreement with that country despite the fact that the negotiations had been finalised and political association, economic integration and institutional convergence were declared to be in both parties' interests.

The main reason for ignoring the interests of the EU in this way was the deterioration of democracy and the rule of law in Ukraine under the present government and, specifically, the trial and sentencing of the former Prime Minister, Yulia Tymoshenko.

To link the signature of the Agreement to a certain outcome of the judicial procedure in which Ms Tymoshenko is involved represents, by any measure, an attempt by the EU to exert political pressure on the judiciary in Ukraine. This runs counter to our values, which demand the independence of the judiciary.

Against this background, could the Commission provide some clarifications in response to the following questions:

1. How can the EU's political requests to the Ukrainian judiciary, particularly concerning a specific case which is still under the Court's consideration, be reconciled with EU values in relation to the rule of law?

2. On what specific arguments (facts and data) did the Commission base its conclusion that the rule of law and democracy, and in particular the state of the judiciary, have deteriorated in recent years? Could the Commission also specify to what extent the situation was better during the previous government's term of office?

3. What were the (supposedly objective) sources that provided the Commission with this information?

4. Given that the Commission has warned us of the existence of certain anti-European Ukrainian parties, what specific measures is it going to adopt in order to ensure that postponing the signature of the Association Agreement does not play into the hands of the Eurosceptics?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(1 March 2012)

The need to secure democracy, human rights and the rule of law lies at the very heart of the Eastern Partnership. The EU-Ukraine Summit declaration recognised that Ukraine's performance, notably in relation to respect for common values and the rule of law, will be of crucial importance in determining the speed of its political association and economic integration with the EU, including in the context of the Association Agreement and its subsequent implementation. While the EU and Ukrainian chief negotiators were able to reach a common understanding on the full text of the Agreement shortly before the Summit, the precise timing of its eventual signature and ratification will therefore be determined by the pace of political reforms in Ukraine.

With regard to the criminal investigations against senior officials of the former Government of Ukraine, including Ms Yulia Tymoshenko, the EU's insistence has been that the Ukrainian authorities should ensure a fair, transparent and impartial legal process. This does not imply pressure towards a particular conclusion in the proceedings. The cases have been closely followed by EU diplomats in Kyiv together with legal experts, including those from civil society and from international organisations with recognised expertise in the area of legal proceedings. They have observed all Court proceedings and reported their conclusions.

The High Representative/Vice-President and the Commission keep developments in the countries of the European Neighbourhood under continuous review. The main conclusions of this process are presented in the yearly country progress reports which are available online at: http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/documents_en.htm

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-012601/11
adresată Comisiei
Adrian Severin (NI)
(13 ianuarie 2012)

Subiect: Poziția UE privind progresele înregistrate de România în lupta împotriva corupției

După șapte ani de investigații și procese, Înalta Curte de Casație și Justiție a României a dat verdictul „nevinovat" în unul dintre procesele intentate împotriva lui Adrian Năstase, un fost prim-ministru al României.

În legătură cu acest eveniment, mass-media din România a susținut că, cu ceva timp înainte de hotărârea Curții, oficialilor Comisiei Europene prezenți în România în cadrul Mecanismului de cooperare și verificare li s-a spus de către judecătorii de la Înalta Curte că domnul Năstase nu va fi niciodată condamnat. Un articol publicat în presa românească a precizat că, potrivit celei mai credibile surse, în cadrul reuniunii cu avocații Comisiei Europene prezenți la București pentru a evalua stadiul reformei justiției din România, judecătorii de la Înalta Curte au afirmat că nu îl vor condamna niciodată pe domnul Năstase. Reprezentanții Comisiei ar fi părăsit atunci rapid România — majoritatea dintre ei fiind convinși că statul de drept nu funcționează în mod corespunzător în această țară.

Având în vedere aceste circumstanțe, în spiritul obligației Comisiei de a asigura transparența și pentru progresul în domeniul statului de drept din România, poate Comisia:

1. Să confirme sau să respingă declarațiile din mass-media românească?

2. În cazul în care aceste declarații sunt confirmate, să informeze Parlamentul cu privire la care judecători români au afirmat că Adrian Năstase nu va fi condamnat, indiferent de circumstanțele cazului?

3. Să confirme că verdictul „nevinovat" al Curții în cazul fostului prim-ministru român constituie, pentru UE, un etalon în definirea progreselor înregistrate în reforma justiției române ca insuficiente?

4. Să ofere Parlamentului, dacă este cazul, explicații de ce poziția UE în cazul fostului prim-ministru ucrainean, Iulia Timoșenko, este complet opusă față de cea în cazul fostului prim-ministru român?

Răspuns dat de dl Barroso în numele Comisiei
(15 februarie 2012)

Comisia a fost însărcinată să monitorizeze și să prezinte rapoarte privind progresele realizate de România în îndeplinirea angajamentelor asumate la momentul aderării în cadrul mecanismului de cooperare și verificare în domeniul reformelor judiciare și al luptei împotriva corupției. Lupta împotriva corupției la nivel înalt constituie unul dintre obiectivele definite în mecanismul de cooperare și verificare. În cadrul monitorizării eforturilor României de a îndeplini acest obiectiv, Comisia evaluează eficacitatea acțiunilor de depistare, investigare și soluționare de către instanțele judecătorești a cazurilor de corupție la nivel înalt. Cu toate acestea, Comisia nu examinează și nici nu emite observații privind rezultatele unor cauze individuale. În acest context, Comisia nu consideră că este necesar să facă comentarii cu privire la articolul publicat în presa românească.

Informații suplimentare privind rapoartele periodice ale Comisiei privind progresele realizate de România în cadrul mecanismului de cooperare și verificare sunt disponibile la următoarea adresă de internet:
http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/secretariat_general/cvm/index_ro.htm.

În ceea ce privește procesul intentat dnei Tymoshenko, fostul prim-ministru ucrainean, precum și alte procese împotriva unor membri ai fostului guvern, UE îndeamnă Ucraina să asigure desfășurarea unor proceduri juridice, independente și transparente pentru a respecta valorile democratice fundamentale și angajamentele internaționale asumate, de exemplu în ceea ce privește statul de drept, respectarea drepturilor și libertăților fundamentale și garantarea existenței unui sistem judiciar independent.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012601/11
to the Commission
Adrian Severin (NI)
(13 January 2012)

Subject: EU's position on the progress made in the fight against corruption in Romania

After seven years of investigation and trial, the Romanian Supreme Court of Justice has issued a 'not guilty' verdict in one of the cases brought against Adrian Nastase, a former Romanian Prime Minister.

In relation to this event, the Romanian media claimed that, some time before the Court's decision, the European Commission's officials present in Romania under the Mechanism for Cooperation and Verification were told by Supreme Court judges that Mr Nastase would never be convicted. An article published in the Romanian press stated that, according to the most credible of sources, at the meeting with the European Commission lawyers present in Bucharest in order to evaluate the state of the justice reform in Romania, the Supreme Court judges stated that they would never convict Mr Nastase. The Commission's representatives then allegedly swiftly left Romania — with most of them convinced that the rule of law does not operate properly in that country.

Given these circumstances, in the spirit of the Commission's obligation to ensure transparency and for the sake of progress in the area of the rule of law in Romania, can it:

1. Confirm or reject the allegations made in the Romanian media?

2. If these are confirmed, inform Parliament which Romanian judges it was who stated that Adrian Nastase would not be convicted, irrespective of the circumstances of the case?

3. Confirm that the Court's verdict of 'not guilty' in the case of the former Romanian Prime Minister constitutes, for the EU, a yardstick for defining as insufficient the progress made in the reform of the Romanian judiciary?

4. Provide Parliament, if such is the case, with explanations as to why the position of the EU in the case of the former Ukrainian Prime Minister, Yulia Tymoshenko, is completely the opposite of that in the case of the former Romanian Prime Minister?

Answer given by Mr Barroso on behalf of the Commission
(15 February 2012)

The Commission has been tasked to monitor and report on Romania's progress in achieving its accession commitments under the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism in the area of judicial reforms and the fight against corruption. The fight against high level corruption constitutes one of the objectives defined under the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism. In monitoring Romania's efforts to meet this objective, the Commission evaluates how effectively high level corruption cases are uncovered, investigated and tried by courts. However, the Commission does not examine or comment on merits of individual cases. In this context, the Commission does not consider it appropriate to comment on the article published in the Romanian media.

Further information on the Commission's regular reports on Romania's progress under the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism are available at the following website: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/secretariat_general/cvm/index_en.htm

As regards the trial against Ms Tymoshenko, the former Ukrainian Prime Minister, as well as other trials against member of the former Government, the EU urges Ukraine to ensure fair, independent and transparent legal processes in order to uphold the fundamental democratic values and international commitments it has committed to, such as regards the rule of law, respect of fundamental rights and freedoms and guaranteeing the existence of independent judiciary.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-012603/11
til Kommissionen
Bendt Bendtsen (PPE)
(10. januar 2012)

Om: Mezzaninfinansering — dansk mezzaninkautionsmodel

Den danske Vækstfond har indsendt en ansøgning til Kommissionen for at få godkendt en mezzaninkautionsmodel i starten af 2011. Hvor er vi henne i processen? Hvornår kan vi forvente en afgørelse?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Joaquín Almunia
(22. februar 2012)

Den 17. maj 2011 anmeldte de danske myndigheder beregningsmetoden for den udvidede vækstkautionsordning, som forvaltes af Vækstfonden, til Kommissionen. Metoden blev godkendt af Kommissionen den 4. august 2011 ([1]).

De danske myndigheder har endnu ikke officielt anmeldt en beregningsmetode for Vækstfondens mezzaninkautionsordning. I henhold til procedurekravene skal Kommissionen træffe den relevante afgørelse inden for to måneder fra modtagelsen af en fuldstændig anmeldelse.

([1]) Sag SA.33022, EUT C 271 af 14.9.2011, s. 4.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012603/11
to the Commission
Bendt Bendtsen (PPE)
(10 January 2012)

Subject: Mezzanine financing — Danish mezzanine surety model

At the beginning of 2011, the Danish Growth Fund [Vækstfond] submitted an application to the Commission for approval of a mezzanine surety model. What stage of the process are we at? When can we expect a decision?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(22 February 2012)

On 17 May 2011, the Danish authorities notified to the Commission the calculation methodology for the Large Growth Guarantee Scheme managed by Vaekstfonden. The methodology was approved by the Commission on 4 August 2011 ([1]).

To date the Danish authorities did not officially notify a calculation methodology for the Vaekstfonden's Mezzanine Guarantee Scheme. In accordance with the procedural requirements, the Commission is bound to adopt the relevant decision within two months from the date of receipt of a complete notification.

([1]) Case SA.33022; OJ C 271, 14.9.2011, p. 4.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-012604/11
til Kommissionen
Bendt Bendtsen (PPE)
(10. januar 2012)

Om: Mezzaninfinansering — medlemsstaternes forskellige modeller

Ud over EU's mezzaninfinanseringsfacilitet, der administreres af EIB, hvilke (og hvor mange og i hvilke lande findes de) nationale modeller er der så, der giver Europæiske virksomheder mulighed for at adgang til mezzaninkapital?

Har Kommissionen lavet en undersøgelse af de forskellige modellers »effektivitet« i forhold til både i hvor stor grad de anvendes, og i hvilken grad de på sigt giver mere vækst for europæiske virksomheder?

Hvad er kriterierne for, at medlemsstaterne selv kan igangsætte programmer med mezzaninkapital?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Antonio Tajani
(21. februar 2012)

Der blev i 2011 afholdt en workshop med henblik på at undersøge, hvordan det europæiske mezzaninmarked for små og mellemstore virksomheder har udviklet sig gennem de seneste år. Det er klart, at mezzaninfinansiering er en nyttig supplerende kilde til gælds- og egenkapitalfinansiering. Men mezzanininstrumenter er for øjeblikket nicheprodukter og bruges ikke så meget i forhold til lånefinansiering.

Niveauet for mezzaninfinansieringsmarkedets udvikling varierer i hele Europa. Små og mellemstore virksomheder har ofte problemer med at få adgang til denne type finansiering. På nuværende tidspunkt er der ikke megen mezzaninfinansiering af mindre beløb (250 000 EUR eller derunder) til rådighed for små og mellemstore virksomheder. Flere lande har alligevel programmer, der tager sigte på at støtte små og mellemstore virksomheders adgang til mezzaninprodukter. Dertil hører for eksempel Tyskland (*KfW*: www.kfw.de), Frankrig (*Oséo*: www.oseo.fr) og Østrig (*Austria Wirtschaftsservice*: www.awsg.at). Der findes også mezzaninfinansiering udelukkende fra den private sektor, der tilbydes små og mellemstore virksomheder som f.eks. *DZ Equity* i Tyskland (www.dzep.de).

Det er imidlertid ofte investeringsfremmende banker, der dækker den nedre ende af mezzaninmarkedet for de små og mellemstore virksomheder. Mange har ikke direkte kontakt med den endelige modtager (små og mellemstore virksomheder) og udbetaler deres produkter gennem finansielle formidlere såsom lokale banker. Rækken af udbudte produkter er bredt, lige fra gældsmezzaniner (ofte subordinerede lån) til egenkapitalmezzaniner. Betingelserne er normalt attraktive for små og mellemstore virksomheder. De dækker vigtige aktivitetsområder: virksomhedsetableringer, innovation og forskning og virksomhedsoverdragelse.

På europæisk plan giver de finansielle instrumenter under rammeprogrammet for konkurrenceevne og innovation (2007-2013) mulighed for en reduceret finansiering af mezzanin-typen gennem et af vinduerne i sin garantifacilitet for små og mellemstore virksomheder (det såkaldte »*Equity Guarantee Window*«), og den Europæiske Fond for Regionaludvikling giver mulighed for, at medlemsstaterne/regionerne kan finansiere lignende instrumenter.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012604/11
to the Commission
Bendt Bendtsen (PPE)
(10 January 2012)

Subject: Mezzanine financing — Member States' different models

Apart from the EU's mezzanine financing facility, administered by EIB, what national models have been developed (how many are there and in which countries are they found) to give European companies the opportunity to access mezzanine capital?

Has the Commission conducted an examination of the 'effectiveness' of the different models in relation both to the extent to which they are used and the extent to which they provide greater growth for European companies in the long term?

What are the criteria for Member States to implement mezzanine capital programmes themselves?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(21 February 2012)

A workshop was organised in 2011 to review how the European mezzanine market for SMEs has developed over the past years. Clearly mezzanine finance is a useful complementary source to debt and equity financing. Yet mezzanine instruments are currently niche products and are little used compared to loan financing.

The level of development of the mezzanine financing market varies across Europe. SMEs often face difficulties in accessing this type of financing. At present there is little mezzanine financing of smaller amounts (EUR 250 000 or below) available to smaller SMEs. Several countries nonetheless have programmes aimed at supporting SMEs' access to mezzanine products. These include, for example, Germany (KfW: www.kfw.de), France (Oséo: www.oseo.fr) and Austria (Austria Wirtschaftsservice: www.awsg.at). There is also purely private sector mezzanine financing offered to SMEs such as that of DZ Equity in Germany (www.dzep.de).

It is, however, often promotional banks that have to cover the lower end of the SME mezzanine market. Many do not have direct contact with the final beneficiary (SME) and disburse their products through financial intermediaries such as local banks. The range of products offered is wide, ranging from debt mezzanine (often subordinated loans) to equity mezzanine. The terms are usually attractive to SMEs. They cover vital areas of activity: company start-ups, innovation and research and business transfer.

At European level, the financial instruments of the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (2007-2013) offer the possibility of smaller ticket sizes of mezzanine type financing through one of the windows of its SME Guarantee Facility (the 'Equity Guarantee Window') and the European Regional Development Fund provides the opportunity for Member States/Regions to finance similar instruments.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-012606/11
adresată Comisiei
Cătălin Sorin Ivan (S&D)
(10 ianuarie 2012)

Subiect: Protecția consumatorilor față de abuzurile cluburilor de fitness

Anul acesta, justiția britanică a condamnat sectorul cluburilor de fitness pentru încălcarea drepturilor consumatorilor.

Problema aceasta nu se limitează însă la cazul Marii Britanii. În multe state membre consumatorii se plâng de contracte foarte complicate, cu condiții defavorabile consumatorului. Cele mai mari dificultăți apar în cazul în care consumatorul dorește să rezilieze contractul. Penalitățile cerute de cluburile de fitness depășesc cu mult eventualele pagube pe care le-ar putea ocaziona rezilierea contractului pentru acestea, apărând astfel problema disproporționalității.

În plus, există și suspiciuni de practici anti-concurența (fixarea prețurilor) între marile lanțuri de cluburi de fitness.

În iunie 2011, Comisia a lansat comunicarea sa privind sportul, în care sublinia caracterul benefic al acestuia pentru cetățenii europeni. Însă, atât timp cât consumatorii nu sunt protejați cum se cuvine față de abuzurile cluburilor de fitness, aceștia riscă să renunțe la practicarea sportului, cluburile de fitness fiind una din activitățile sportive cele mai importante în cadrul urban.

A efectuat Comisia până la ora actuală un studiu în acest domeniu, atât în ceea ce privește protecția drepturilor consumatorilor, cât și practicile anti-concurențiale? Și dacă nu, în ce măsură consideră Comisia că este necesară o supraveghere mai atentă a sectorului?

Răspuns dat de dna Reding în numele Comisiei
(15 februarie 2012)

Până în prezent, Comisia nu a primit nicio plângere formală sau informală în acest sens. Însă, Comisia este întotdeauna vigilentă în ceea ce privește comportamentele anticoncurențiale practicate pe piață. Comisia Europeană și instanțele Uniunii Europene au consacrat demult faptul că, în măsura în care sportul constituie o activitate economică, intră în sfera de aplicare a dreptului UE, inclusiv a normelor UE în materie de concurență care interzic coluziunea (articolul 101 din Tratatul privind funcționarea Uniunii Europene, TFUE) și abuzul de poziție dominantă (articolul 102 din TFUE) în cazul în care pot fi afectate schimburile comerciale între statele membre. De la intrarea în vigoare a Regulamentului (CE) nr. 1/2003, la 1 mai 2004, autoritățile naționale din domeniul concurenței au competența de a analiza orice problemă care poate apărea în acest domeniu, în lumina dreptului concurenței al Uniunii Europene.

De asemenea, după cum probabil știți, conform dispozițiilor Directivei 1993/13/CEE privind clauzele abuzive în contractele încheiate cu consumatorii ([1]), clauzele contractuale trebuie scrise într-un limbaj clar și inteligibil, iar acele clauze contractuale care duc la un dezechilibru important între părți în detrimentul consumatorului sunt considerate ca neechitabile, și prin urmare, nu au forță juridică obligatorie.

Presupusa încălcare a dispozițiilor directivei trebuie adusă în atenția autorităților și instanțelor naționale care răspund în primul rând pentru punerea în aplicare a acestei legislații. Victimele practicilor neloiale în ceea ce privește consumatorii ar trebui să comunice cazul lor autorităților competente relevante, ale căror date de contact pot fi obținute la următoarea adresă de internet:
http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/empowerment/cons_networks_en.htm

([1]) JO L 095, 21.4.1993.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012606/11
to the Commission
Cătălin Sorin Ivan (S&D)
(10 January 2012)

Subject: Consumer protection on fitness clubs' abuse

This year, the British justice system has condemned the fitness clubs' sector for breaching consumer rights.

However, this problem is not unique to the UK. In many other Member States, consumers are complaining about very difficult contracts with unfavourable terms for them. The greatest difficulties arise when the consumer wishes to terminate the contract. The penalties required by the fitness clubs exceed considerably any loss they could be caused by a termination of the contract and, thus, the problem of disproportionality arises.

Moreover, the large chains of fitness clubs are suspected of anti-competitive practices (price fixing).

In June 2011, the Commission launched its communication on sport, which emphasised its benefits for European citizens. However, as long as consumers are not properly protected against fitness clubs' abuse, there is a risk they might give up practising sports, as fitness clubs represent one of the most important sports activities in urban environments.

Until the present time, has the Commission carried out a study in this field, both in respect of consumer rights protection and anti-competitive practices? If not, to what extent does the Commission consider that a closer supervision of this sector is needed?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(15 February 2012)

So far the Commission has not received any formal or informal complaints in this regard. This being said, the Commission has always been vigilant as regards the adoption of anticompetitive behaviour by market players. It has been long established by the European Commission and the Courts of the European Union that insofar as sport constitutes an economic activity, it falls within the scope of EC law, including EU competition rules which prohibit collusion (Article 101 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, TFEU) and the abuse of a dominant position (Article 102 of the TFEU) where trade between Member States may be affected. Since the entry into force of EC Regulation No 1/2003 on 1 May 2004, national competition authorities have competence to examine any issue which may arise in this area , in the light of EU competition law.

In addition, the Honourable Member might be aware that under the provisions of Directive 1993/13/EEC on unfair terms in consumer contracts ([1]), contract terms must be written in a plain and intelligible language and a contract term causing a significant imbalance between the parties to the detriment of the consumer shall be regarded as unfair and, as such, shall not be binding.

Any alleged breach of the directive should be brought to the attention of national authorities and courts which are primarily responsible for the enforcement of this legislation. Victims of unfair consumer practices should report their case to the relevant competent authorities, whose contact details can be found using the following link: http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/empowerment/cons_networks_en.htm

([1]) OJ L 095, 21.4.1993.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012607/11
to the Commission
George Lyon (ALDE)
(10 January 2012)

Subject: Commission audit inspection and penalties

With respect to the fines imposed by the Commission on Scotland for its misinterpretation of the definition of eligible land areas, can the Commission clarify whether the figure of GBP 40 million, set aside by the Scottish Government as an estimation of the anticipated fine for the 2007-2009 financial period, accurately reflects the actual amount of the penalty imposed by the Commission?

Does the Commission envisage that Scotland will be further exposed to financial penalties under the 2009-2011 accounting period following a visit by the EU auditors earlier this year?

What is the proposed timescale for payment of these penalties?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(17 February 2012)

With respect to the implementation of the Area based premia for the claim years 2007, 2008 and 2009 in Scotland, which was found to be not in conformity with Community rules, a financial correction is being proposed by the Commission in accordance with Article 31 of Regulation (EC) No 1290/2005 ([1]). The figure of GBP 40 million quoted by the Honourable Member would cover the correction proposed.

The shortcomings identified will continue to form the basis for financial corrections to be applied in respect of expenditure affected until suitable corrective measures are implemented. Thus, whether corrections for the claim year 2010 onwards will be proposed or not, will depend on the results of the remedial action as regards the weaknesses in the Land Parcel Identification System/ Geographical Information System (LPIS-GIS) taken by the United Kingdom authorities.

The final decision regarding the financial correction for the claim years 2007, 2008 and 2009 is expected to be taken by the Commission towards the end of 2012 or early 2013.

([1]) Council Regulation (EC) No 1290/2005 of 21 June 2005 on the financing of the common agricultural policy (OJ L 209, 11.8.2005, p. 1).

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-012609/11
à Comissão
Carlos Coelho (PPE)
(10 de Janeiro de 2012)

Assunto: Passaportes biométricos

Desde a introdução dos passaportes biométricos em França, no final de outubro de 2008, o número de passaportes em circulação nesse Estado-Membro já se eleva a cerca de 6,5 milhões.

Foi denunciado, hoje, pela imprensa francesa que cerca de 500 000 a 1 000 000 desses passaportes biométricos em circulação são falsos, tendo sido obtidos com base em documentos (os chamados «breeder documents») obtidos de forma fraudulenta.

Pode a Comissão indicar se tem conhecimento dessas alegações, bem como da existência de factos que possam comprovar ou desmentir essas alegações?

Enquanto Relator do Parlamento Europeu para o Regulamento de 2004 relativo à introdução dos dados biométricos nos passaportes e subsequente alteração em 2008, alertei para o facto de existirem grandes disparidades entre Estados-Membros relativamente aos documentos que deverão ser apresentados (por ex. certidões de nascimento, cartas de condução, cédula pessoal, etc.), bem como à forma como eles são emitidos. Uma vez que o nível de segurança utilizado nesses documentos é inferior ao utilizado na elaboração dos passaportes contendo dados biométricos protegidos por sistemas mais rigorosos (PKI systems), existe o risco de estarem mais facilmente sujeitos a falsificação ou contrafação.

A segurança dos passaportes não se esgota no passaporte em si; todo o processo que tem início com a apresentação dos documentos necessários para a emissão dos passaportes, seguido da recolha dos dados biométricos e terminando com a verificação e «matching» nos postos de controlo transfronteiriços é relevante. Faz pouco sentido aumentar o nível de segurança existente nos passaportes se permitirmos a existência de «pontos fracos» nos outros elementos da cadeia.

Tendo em conta a cláusula de revisão prevista no Regulamento, pode a Comissão indicar se já está disponível o estudo comparativo relativo aos índices de erro registados no processo de «matching», contendo igualmente uma análise relativa à necessidade de se criarem regras comuns em relação aos «breeder documents»? Caso se justifique, tenciona a Comissão apresentar as propostas legislativas necessárias?

Resposta dada por Cecilia Malmström em nome da Comissão
(17 de Fevereiro de 2012)

A Comissão tem conhecimento de fraudes que envolvem os documentos que devem ser apresentados para a emissão de bilhetes de identidade e documentos de viagem em geral. Desde a introdução de identificadores biométricos, o problema agravou-se na medida em que é difícil detetar se o passaporte biométrico foi obtido de forma fraudulenta.

No passado, o Conselho solicitou à Comissão, assistida pelo Comité criado pelo artigo 6.° do Regulamento n.° 1683/95 que estabelece um modelo-tipo de visto, que desenvolvesse normas mínimas de segurança para os bilhetes de identidade. Neste âmbito, foram igualmente incluídas normas mínimas para os procedimentos de emissão dos bilhetes de identidade, reconhecendo-se assim a sua importância. Estas foram posteriormente adotadas sob a forma de «Conclusões do Conselho» pelo Conselho «Justiça e Assuntos Internos» de 1/2 de dezembro de 2005.

Considerando a importância do problema da falsificação da identidade, em dezembro de 2011, a Comissão lançou um estudo sobre a usurpação da identidade, que inclui esta questão dos documentos necessários para a emissão de documentos de identidade.

Além disso, a Organização da Aviação Civil Internacional (ICAO) inscreveu a questão da segurança dos documentos necessários para a emissão de documentos de identidade na sua ordem de trabalhos e irá elaborar um relatório técnico sobre o modo como deverá ser estabelecida a identidade original, que servirá de orientação para os Estados. A Comissão está ativamente envolvida nesta iniciativa.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012609/11
to the Commission
Carlos Coelho (PPE)
(10 January 2012)

Subject: Biometric passports

Since biometric passports were introduced in France at the end of October 2008, the number of passports in circulation in this Member State is now around six and a half million.

Today it was reported in the French press that between 500 000 and 1 000 000 of the biometric passports in circulation are false, having been obtained on the basis of documents (the so-called 'breeder documents') obtained fraudulently.

Could the Commission say whether it is aware of these allegations, and also of any elements which might support or disprove these allegations?

As Rapporteur of the European Parliament for the 2004 Regulation on incorporating biometric data in passports and its subsequent amendment in 2008, I drew attention to the fact that there were major disparities between Member States in terms of the documents that needed to be presented (e.g. birth certificates, driving licences, identity cards, etc.), as well as the way in which these were issued. Whenever the level of security of these documents is less stringent than that involved in the issue of passports containing biometric data protected by more rigorous (PKI) systems, there is a risk that they can be more easily forged or counterfeited.

Passport security is not confined to the passport itself: the whole process, beginning with the presentation of the documents needed for a passport to be issued, followed by the collection of the biometric data and ending with checking and 'matching' at border control posts, is relevant. There is little point in increasing the level of passport security if we continue to allow 'weak points' in other parts of the chain.

Taking into account the revision clause provided for in the regulation, could the Commission confirm whether the comparative study of error rates in the 'matching' process, is now available, including analysis of the need for common rules on 'breeder documents'? In the event that this is justified, does the Commission intend to introduce the necessary legislative proposals?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(17 February 2012)

The Commission is aware of fraud with breeder documents in the issuing process for identity and travel documents in general. Since the introduction of biometric identifiers the importance of this problem has increased as it is difficult to detect that the biometric passport has been obtained fraudulently.

In the past, the Council has requested the Commission, assisted by the committee created by Article 6 of Regulation 1683/95 laying down a uniform visa, to develop minimum security standards for ID cards. In this framework minimum standards for issuing procedures for ID cards were also included recognising their importance. These were subsequently adopted as 'Council conclusions' by the Justice and Home Affairs Council on 1/2 December 2005.

Considering the importance of the issue of Identity fraud, the Commission launched in December 2011 a 'Study on Identity Theft' including this subject of breeder documents.

Furthermore, the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) has recognised the subject of security of breeder (source) documents as a work item and will establish a technical report as a guidance for States on how to establish identity at foundational level. The Commission is actively involved in this work.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-012610/11
à la Commission
Philippe Juvin (PPE) et Brice Hortefeux (PPE)
(10 janvier 2012)

Objet: Qualité de l'air intérieur

Le rapport «Air pur pour l'Europe» (CAFE), publié en 2005, estime à 310 000 le nombre d'Européens qui meurent prématurément chaque année en raison de la pollution de l'air.

Au-delà de l'impact négatif de la pollution atmosphérique, de nombreux rapports nationaux établissent un lien entre la pollution dans les bâtiments et l'augmentation des risques de dégradation de la santé humaine. Par exemple, un rapport du ministère français de la santé et des sports de 2010 insiste sur le fait que les polluants de l'air intérieur peuvent avoir des effets variés sur la santé des individus, tels que l'irritation de la peau, des nausées, des céphalées, des pathologies respiratoires, neurologiques et le développement de certains cancers.

Le premier plan d'action en matière d'environnement et de santé adopté en 2004 reconnaissait pour la première fois le lien entre la pollution de l'air et les problèmes de santé publique. Il préconisait notamment la mise en place de mesures en matière de qualité de l'air intérieur, sur une base volontaire. Ce plan d'action est arrivé à son terme en 2010 et sa reconduite n'est pour l'instant pas véritablement envisagée.

Lors du Conseil environnement du 10 octobre 2011, les ministres de l'Union européenne ont invité la Commission à promouvoir la santé au travers de la politique environnementale par l'élaboration d'un second plan d'action en matière d'environnement et de santé début 2012.

1. La Commission tiendra-t-elle compte de la demande du Conseil concernant l'élaboration d'un second plan d'action en matière d'environnement et de santé dès 2012? Et incluera-t-elle dans ce plan d'action des mesures relatives à la qualité de l'air intérieur?

2. Quelles sont les mesures que la Commission a prises par le passé pour combattre les maladies provoquées par une mauvaise qualité de l'air intérieur, et en particulier celles dues à l'infiltration et l'accumulation, dans les bâtiments, de la pollution de l'air ambiant?

3. La Commission prévoit-elle la promotion d'une meilleure qualité de l'air au travers d'autres instruments législatifs ou normatifs? La Commission a annoncé l'adoption d'un paquet législatif en 2013 — année de la qualité de l'air. L'amélioration de la qualité de l'air intérieur fera-t-elle partie de ce paquet législatif?

Réponse donnée par M. Potočnik au nom de la Commission
(28 février 2012)

1. La Commission prend note de l'invitation du Conseil à présenter un deuxième plan d'action en faveur de l'environnement et de la santé. Toute décision concernant de nouvelles mesures en la matière serait fondée sur une évaluation du plan d'action initial, qui tient compte des problèmes qui sont apparus dans l'intervalle. Un consultant indépendant a déjà réalisé une évaluation de la mise en œuvre des objectifs axés sur la recherche du plan d'action en faveur de l'environnement et de la santé et celle-ci a été publiée ([1]).

2. Les projets relatifs à la qualité de l'air à l'intérieur des bâtiments et financés par la Commission ont été intégrés dans le programme de santé ([2]), qui a financé, entre autres, une analyse des actions en faveur d'un air intérieur sain; ces projets ont été publiés en juin 2011 ([3]). Une série de projets de recherche visant à fournir de nouvelles connaissances dans ce domaine et à soutenir l'élaboration de politiques ont été financés au titre des 6e et 7e programmes-cadres de l'UE pour la recherche et le développement technologique ([4]). Plus particulièrement, les projets Officair ([5]) et HITEA ([6]) étudient les polluants de l'air intérieur dans les immeubles modernes et les écoles ainsi que leur incidence sur la santé de la population exposée.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/environment/pdf/cowi_study.pdf#view=fit&pagemode=none
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/healthy_environments/projects/index_en.htm
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/healthy_environments/docs/env_iaiaq.pdf
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/environment/index_en.cfm?pg=projects&area=all&fptab=all#fp7
([5]) http://www.officair-project.eu/
([6]) http://www.hitea.eu/

3. 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 ([7]). Ce réexamen portera essentiellement sur l'amélioration de la qualité de l'air ambiant, qui pourrait donner lieu indirectement à des améliorations de la qualité de l'air à l'intérieur des bâtiments.

4. La Commission a chargé le comité européen de normalisation (CEN — mandat M/366) de mettre au point des méthodes d'essai harmonisées pour le rejet de substances dangereuses dans l'air à l'intérieur des bâtiments. Actuellement, ces normes sont soumises à des essais pour analyser la solidité/reproductibilité de leurs résultats et deviendront des spécifications techniques en 2012-2013.

([7]) Pour de plus amples informations, consulter le site suivant: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/air/review_air_policy.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012610/11
to the Commission
Philippe Juvin (PPE) and Brice Hortefeux (PPE)
(10 January 2012)

Subject: Indoor air quality

The CAFE report, 'Clean Air for Europe', published in 2005, estimated that 310 000 Europeans die prematurely every year as a result of air pollution.

In addition to the negative effect of atmospheric pollution, many national reports have established a link between pollution in buildings and the aggravated risk of deteriorating human health. For example, a report from the French Ministry of Health and Sport in 2010 ([1]) maintains that indoor air pollutants may have varying effects on the health of individuals, such as skin irritation, nausea, headaches, respiratory and neurological pathologies and the development of certain cancers.

The first EU Environment and Health Action Plan 2004-2010 was the first to recognise the link between air pollution and public health problems. In particular, it advocated the implementation, on a voluntary basis, of measures related to indoor air quality. This Action Plan came to an end in 2010 and currently there are no real plans to renew it.

At the Environment Council on 10 October 2011, European Union ministers called on the Commission to promote health through environment policy by drawing up a second Environment and Health Action Plan at the beginning of 2012.

1. Will the Commission take note of the Council's request to draw up a second Environment and Health Action Plan starting from 2012? Will it include measures relating to indoor air quality in this action plan?

2. What measures has the Commission taken in the past to combat illnesses caused by poor quality indoor air, in particular those due to the infiltration and accumulation of ambient air pollution in buildings?

3. Does the Commission envisage promoting better air quality by means of other legislative or regulatory instruments? The Commission has announced that it will be adopting a legislative package in 2013 — the Year of Air. Will improving the quality of indoor air form part of this legislative package?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(28 February 2012)

1. The Commission notes the Council's invitation to present a second Environment and Health Action Plan (EHAP). Any decision on further policy steps would be based on an appraisal of the original Action Plan, taking into account relevant issues that have emerged meanwhile. An assessment of the implementation of the research-orientated objectives of EHAP has been already carried out by an independent consultant and published.

2. Commission-funded projects on indoor air quality have been included in the Health Programme ([2]), which financed for example an analysis of actions promoting healthy indoor air, published in June 2011 ([3]). A series of research projects aimed at providing new knowledge in this field and at supporting policy development have been funded under the 6th and the 7th EU Framework Programmes for Research and Technological Development ([4]). In particular the projects OFFICAIR ([5]) and HITEA ([6]) are investigating indoor air pollutants in modern buildings and in schools and their health impact on the exposed population.

3. The Commission has launched a comprehensive review of EU air quality policies, to be completed in 2013 ([7]). This review will focus on improving ambient air quality, which can be expected to result indirectly in improvements of indoor air quality.

([1]) Gestion de la qualité de l'air intérieur, établissements recevant du public, ministère de la santé et des sports et instituts de veille sanitaire, 2010 [Air quality management inside buildings open to the public, Ministry of Health and Sports and Public Health Surveillance, 2010].
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/healthy_environments/projects/index_en.htm
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/healthy_environments/docs/env_iaiaq.pdf
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/environment/index_en.cfm?pg=projects&area=all&fptab=all#fp7
([5]) http://www.officair-project.eu/
([6]) http://www.hitea.eu/
([7]) More information can be found on: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/air/review_air_policy.htm

4. The Commission mandated the European Committee for Standardisation (CEN - mandate M/366) to develop harmonised test methods for the release of dangerous substances into indoor air. Currently, these standards are tested for their robustness/reproducibility of results and should be ready as technical specifications in 2012/2013.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-012611/11
à Comissão
Nuno Teixeira (PPE)
(10 de Janeiro de 2012)

Assunto: Modo de implementação do Fundo Social Europeu

Em junho de 2011, a Comissão Europeia (CE) apresentou as suas propostas para o Quadro Financeiro Plurianual 2014/2020 e, recentemente, publicou os regulamentos da Política de Coesão para o mesmo período de programação;

A proposta apresentada pela CE ao Parlamento Europeu e ao Conselho sobre o Fundo Social Europeu (FSE), COM(2011)0607 final de 6 de outubro de 2011, tem como principal objetivo a «redução das profundas disparidades regionais existentes em toda a União Europeia em termos de níveis de desenvolvimento (PIB per capita), produtividade, emprego, nível de escolaridade e pobreza, devendo estar em consonância com os ambiciosos objetivos da estratégia Europa 2020»;

O ponto 1, do artigo 10.° da proposta que estabelece o FSE, refere que a CE pretende estimular projetos que promovam a aprendizagem mútua, devendo os Estados-Membros selecionar temas com base numa lista publicada pela Comissão e aprovada pelo Comité do FSE;

Salienta ainda que a «Comissão elabora um quadro de execução coordenado» no intuito de facilitar a cooperação transnacional entre Estados-Membros.

Pergunta-se à Comissão:

1. Quando serão publicados os temas que estão consagrados na proposta do FSE? Quais os temas que deverão ser tidos em conta pelos Estados-Membros?

2. Pretende a Comissão estruturar em conjunto com os Estados-Membros o «quadro de execução coordenado» da mesma forma que com os contratos de parceria existentes no Quadro Estratégico Comum ou serão estes impostos às regiões europeias?

3. Como se irá conjugar a implementação dos projetos de cooperação transnacional do FSE com os projetos de cooperação territorial europeia?

Resposta dada por László Andor em nome da Comissão
(20 de Fevereiro de 2012)

Como afirmado na proposta de regulamento da Comissão relativo a um novo Fundo Social Europeu (FSE) ([1]), os temas para a cooperação transnacional podem ser selecionados com base numa lista proposta pela Comissão e aprovada pelo Comité do FSE, tendo em conta as prioridades e os grandes objetivos da estratégia Europa 2020, bem como as orientações integradas para as políticas económicas e de emprego dos Estados-Membros e as recomendações do Conselho relativas aos programas nacionais de reforma. Estes temas serão acordados em tempo oportuno entre os Estados-Membros e a Comissão, através do grupo *ad-hoc* sobre cooperação transnacional e inovação, que funciona no âmbito do Comité do FSE.

Por quadro de execução conjunto, a Comissão entende uma plataforma comum para facilitar o intercâmbio de experiências e boas práticas, em especial um calendário de execução comum, critérios e procedimentos de acompanhamento e avaliação comuns dos projetos transnacionais, uma base de dados para pesquisa transnacional de parceiros e a organização de eventos e fóruns comuns. Um primeiro projeto estará disponível no primeiro semestre de 2012.

A cooperação transnacional no quadro do FSE tem por objetivo a aprendizagem mútua, a fim de aumentar a eficácia das políticas apoiadas pelos programas operacionais do FSE. Os programas ao abrigo do objetivo da Cooperação Territorial Europeia, pelo contrário, são programas em separado, executados conjuntamente pelos Estados-Membros e pelas regiões em causa, financiados pelo FEDER e que fornecem um quadro para a execução de ações conjuntas e políticas de intercâmbio, a fim de contrabalançar os efeitos negativos das fronteiras e incentivar o desenvolvimento territorial integrado.

A possibilidade de uma sobreposição parece, assim, bastante limitada, tendo de ser abordada, em qualquer caso, ao nível de Estado-Membro/região/programa em causa.

([1]) COM(2011)0607 final de 6.10.2011.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012611/11
to the Commission
Nuno Teixeira (PPE)
(10 January 2012)

Subject: Implementing the European Social Fund

In June 2011, the European Commission (EC) put forward proposals for the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020 and, more recently, published Cohesion Policy Regulations for the same programming period;

The main objective of the Commission's proposal to the European Parliament and the Council on the European Social Fund (ESF), COM(2011) 0607 final of 6 October 2011, is the 'reduction of major regional disparities within the whole European Union in terms of levels of development (GNP *per capita*), productivity, employment, level of education and poverty, in accordance with the ambitious goals of the Europe 2020 strategy';

Article 10 point 1 of the proposal setting up the FSE refers to EC encouragement of projects promoting mutual learning, and Member States being able to select themes for transnational cooperation from a list proposed by the Commission and endorsed by the ESF Committee;

It also states that the 'Commission shall develop a coordinated implementation framework with a view to facilitating transnational cooperation between Member States'.

1. When will the Commission publish the themes selected in the ESF proposal? Which themes should be taken into account by Member States?

2. Will the Commission draw up, in conjunction with Member States, the 'coordinated implementation framework' in the same way as for partnership contracts within the Common Strategic Framework or will these imposed on the European regions?

3. How will the implementation of ESF transnational cooperation projects be linked with that of geographical European cooperation projects?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(20 February 2012)

As stated in the Commission's proposal for the new European Social Fund (ESF) Regulation ([1]), the themes for transnational cooperation may be selected from a list proposed by the Commission and endorsed by the ESF Committee, taking into account the priorities of Europe 2020 strategy and its headline targets as well as the integrated guidelines for the economic and employment policies of Member States and the Council Recommendations on the National Reform Programmes. These themes will be agreed in due course between the Member States and the Commission through the Ad-Hoc Group on Transnational Cooperation and Innovation operating under the ESF Committee.

By common implementation framework, the Commission means a common platform to facilitate exchange of experience and good practice, in particular common implementation timing, criteria and procedures for monitoring and evaluation of transnational projects, a database for transnational partner search and organisation of common events and forums. A first draft will be available in the first semester 2012.

Transnational cooperation in the ESF framework aims at mutual learning in order to increase effectiveness of policies supported by ESF operational programmes. Programmes under the European territorial cooperation goal, on the contrary, are separate programmes implemented jointly by the Member States and regions concerned, financed by the ERDF and providing a framework for the implementation of joint actions and policy exchanges in order to counter negative effects of borders and foster integrated territorial development. The scope for overlap would therefore appear rather limited and would in any case have to be addressed at the level of the Member State/region/programme concerned.

([1]) COM(2011) 0607 final of 6.10.2011.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-012613/11
a la Comisión
Gabriel Mato Adrover (PPE)
(12 de enero de 2012)

Asunto: Grupos de acción local en Canarias

En Canarias prácticamente todos los grupos de acción local están teniendo grandes dificultades para acceder a los fondos de Desarrollo Rural. Las inversiones previstas se encuentran al día de hoy paralizadas ante la negativa de las autoridades autonómicas a concederles un aval del Estado para adelantar las ayudas procedentes del programa regional. El pasado 14 de julio se aprobó una modificación del Reglamento (CE) n° 1974/2006 por el que se establecen disposiciones de aplicación del Reglamento (CE) n° 1698/2005 relativo a las ayudas procedentes del Feader. Dicha modificación incluye la posibilidad de conceder avales de Estado como alternativa a las garantías bancarias, más difíciles de obtener en estos momentos de crisis económica.

¿Tiene noticias la Comisión de esta situación? ¿Qué acciones podría emprender el Ejecutivo comunitario para solventar el problema?

Respuesta del Sr. Cioloş en nombre de la Comisión
(14 de febrero de 2012)

La Comisión, la autoridad de gestión del programa de desarrollo rural de las Islas Canarias y representantes del Ministerio de Agricultura han debatido recientemente los problemas de liquidez a que se enfrentan los grupos de acción local que aplican las estrategias de desarrollo local en las Canarias en el contexto de la última reunión anual de examen, celebrada en Madrid el 28 de noviembre de 2011. En dicha ocasión, la Comisión dejó claro que no existe ninguna disposición jurídica a escala de la Unión que impida que fondos regionales o nacionales, no declarados como Feader en el momento en que se abonan a los grupos, se asignen a los grupos de acción local a fin de aplicar las medidas de los programas de desarrollo rural contemplados en sus estrategias. En cualquier caso deben cumplirse las normas sobre las ayudas estatales. La Comisión también está al corriente de que varias autoridades regionales ya destinan fondos regionales a los grupos de acción local para evitar dificultades de tesorería.

Los anticipos Feader a los beneficiarios de la inversión se ajustarán a las disposiciones del artículo 56 del Reglamento (CE) n° 1974/2006 de la Comisión ([1]), incluida la constitución de un garantía bancaria o de una garantía equivalente. A este respecto, los grupos de acción local, como organismo responsable de la ejecución de las operaciones de inversión, también se consideran beneficiarios a tenor de la definición del artículo 2 del Reglamento (CE) n° 1698/2005 del Consejo ([2]).

Por último, debe tenerse presente que, de conformidad con el principio de subsidiariedad, compete a los Estados miembros elaborar las disposiciones de prefinanciación necesarias para que los grupos de acción local apliquen sus estrategias de desarrollo local.

([1]) Reglamento (CE) n° 1974/2006 de la Comisión, de 15 de diciembre de 2006, por el que se establecen disposiciones de aplicación del Reglamento (CE) n° 1698/2005 del Consejo relativo a la ayuda al desarrollo rural a través del Fondo Europeo Agrícola de Desarrollo Rural (Feader) (DO L 368 de 23.12.2006, p. 15).

([2]) Reglamento (CE) n° 1698/2005 del Consejo, de 20 de septiembre de 2005, relativo a la ayuda al desarrollo rural a través del Fondo Europeo Agrícola de Desarrollo Rural (Feader) (DO L 277 de 21.10.2005, p. 1).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012613/11
to the Commission
Gabriel Mato Adrover (PPE)
(12 January 2012)

Subject: Local action groups in the Canary Islands

In the Canary Islands almost all the local action groups are having difficulty accessing rural development funding. The investments that were anticipated are today paralysed by the regional authorities' failure to give them a State guarantee in order to release the financial assistance provided by the regional programme. On 14 July 2011, an amendment was adopted to Regulation (EC) No 1974/2006 laying down detailed rules for the application of Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 on support by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). That amendment includes the possibility of granting State guarantees as an alternative to bank guarantees, which are more difficult to obtain during this time of economic crisis.

Does the Commission have any news on this situation? What action could the Commission take to resolve this issue?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(14 February 2012)

The liquidity problems being faced by local action groups implementing local development strategies in the Canary Islands have been recently discussed between the Commission, the Managing Authority of the Rural Development Programme of the Canary Islands, and representatives of the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, in the context of the last annual review meeting, held in Madrid on 28 November 2011. At that occasion, the Commission made clear that there is no legal provision at Union level which prevents that regional/national funds, not declared as EAFRD the moment they are paid to the groups, are made available to local action groups in order to implement the RDP measures included in their strategies. In any case, state aid rules must be respected. The Commission is also aware that several regional authorities already make available regional funds to the local action groups to prevent treasury difficulties.

EAFRD advance payments to beneficiaries of investment shall respect the provisions of Article 56 of Commission Regulation (EC) 1974/2006 ([1]), including the establishment of a bank or an equivalent guarantee. In this respect, local action groups, as responsible bodies for the implementation of investment operations, are also considered as beneficiaries, according to the definition provided in Article 2 of Council Regulation (EC) 1698/2005 ([2]).

Finally, please note that in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, it is the responsibility of Member States to design the pre-financing arrangements necessary for the local action groups to implement their local development strategies.

([1]) Commission Regulation (EC) 1974/2006 of 15 December 2006 laying down detailed rules for the application of Council Regulation (EC) 1698/2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), OJ L 368, 23.12.2006, p. 15.

([2]) Council Regulation (EC) 1698/2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), OJ L 277, 21.10.2005, p. 1.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012614/11
to the Commission
Nessa Childers (S&D)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: EU assistance in the event of excessive snowfall

The levels of snow over the past two winters have been very high by modern standards. As such, many national and local authorities have struggled to meet the demands brought about by this new weather phenomenon, and the public has been disrupted accordingly.

As we enter a new snow season, are there any programmes available to help national or local authorities react to excessive snowfall, such as funding for salt or even a coordinated salt-distribution scheme among Member States?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(22 February 2012)

In the field of civil protection, any country inside or outside the Union affected by a major disaster overwhelming their response capacity can request assistance through the Commission's Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC). The MIC acts as a communication hub facilitating the coordination of emergency assistance offered by Member States in response to disasters. In December 2011, the Commission adopted a legislative proposal to review the Union's Civil Protection Mechanism, which aims to establish a pre-planned, pre-arranged and predictable response system ([1]). Two cornerstones of the proposal are the development a European Emergency Response Capacity in the form of a voluntary pool of Member States' assets on standby and the establishment of a 24/7 Emergency Response Centre (ERC). The proposal also includes provisions to improve the planning arrangements, in particular as concerns national risk assessments, and an EU overview of risks, the latter due by end 2012. Furthermore, if adopted as proposed, Member States would have to communicate their risk management plans to the Commission.

Regarding European funding, cohesion policy can contribute to the prevention of natural disasters in Member States and regions. In the 2007-2013 period, EUR 5.8 billion is planned for 'risk prevention' type of interventions. On the basis of the principle of 'shared management', Member States are responsible for the selection and implementation of specific measures on 'risk prevention' in the framework of the priorities set in their programmes.

([1]) COM(2011) 934 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012615/11
to the Commission
Nessa Childers (S&D)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Financing for theatre companies

The historic Moat Drama Theatre in Naas, Ireland, faces closure unless it receives aid to meet its day-to-day costs. Despite efforts to cut bills and maximise incoming revenue, the 200-seat venue is currently EUR 26 000 in the red.

Most theatre companies do not operate in profit, but aspire to break even, and as such rely heavily on funding to continue.

Are there any EU funding programmes which would help the Moat Drama Theatre to continue to break even financially?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(15 February 2012)

The Commission fully understands the Honourable Member's concern about the potential closure of the Moat Drama Theatre in Naas, Ireland. It should be recalled, however, that the protection and upkeep of cultural heritage a national responsibility.

Through the Culture Programme, the European Commission supports cross-border cultural activities. Projects should be based on cooperation between a minimum of three cultural organisations from three different participating countries.

All the necessary information about the Commission's support in the cultural field (including a Programme guide detailing the conditions for participation, and the applications forms) is available at:
http://ec.europa.eu/culture/index_en.htm

The Moat Drama Theatre might want to get in touch with the Irish Cultural Contact point, which is responsible for assisting applicants and facilitating access to the Programme. Please find below the details of the Cultural contact point in Ireland:

Cultural Contact Point Ireland
The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaion
70 Merrion Square
IRL-Dublin 2
Ireland
Tel. (353-1) 6180 200 (Reception)
Tel. (353-1) 6180 248 (Direct)
Fax (353-1) 6761 302
E-mail: ccp@artscouncil.ie
E-mail: niamh.mccabe@artscouncil.ie
http://www.artscouncil.ie
http://www.ccp.ie

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012616/11
to the Commission
Nessa Childers (S&D)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Examples of EU Culture Programme funding

Can the Commission please provide examples of Irish and UK projects funded under the EU Culture Programme 2006 to 2012, and give detailed examples of the type of projects which will be suitable for funding under the forthcoming Creative Europe 2014-2020 programme?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(14 February 2012)

Information on projects with Irish and UK project leaders that have been funded under the Culture Programme 2007-2013 is provided in annex, sent directly to the Honourable Member and to Parliament's Secretariat.

The Commission would also like to draw the attention of the Honourable Member to the project databases accessible on the websites of the Cultural Contact Points in Ireland and in the United Kingdom: http://www.ccp.ie/ and http://www.culturefund.eu/ respectively. As the Contact Points are responsible for promoting the programme and facilitating access to it, they can help project promoters in shaping their initiatives according to Commission requirements and procedures.

Concerning opportunities under the forthcoming Creative Europe programme (2014-2020), the Commission would like to remind the Honourable Member that it is currently under scrutiny by the Parliament and the Council. Nonetheless, the Commission can inform the Honourable Member that the new programme has been designed with a view to being adapted as much as possible to the real needs of project promoters, including cultural and creative SMEs. More information about the Creative Europe programme can be found at: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/creative-europe

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012619/11
to the Commission
Nessa Childers (S&D)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Europe for Citizens programme

Regarding the Europe for Citizens programme, which aims to increase citizens' awareness and understanding of the European Union, will the Commission please state, for the period 2014 to 2020, what the budget for Ireland will be, how much will be allocated to town twinning in Ireland and if there has been an increase in the programme budget?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(15 February 2012)

The Commission's proposal for the Europe for Citizens Programme for the period 2014-2020 is endowed with a budget of EUR 229 million in current prices. As part of the Multiannual Financial Framework Package negotiations, it remains at the same level as the current programme. The implementation of the programme is made through open calls for proposals and calls for tender. Hence, it is not foreseen to allocate predefined amounts per Member State, or to reserve a specific part of the financial resources for town-twinning activities.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-012620/11
aan de Commissie
Lambert van Nistelrooij (PPE) en Ivo Belet (PPE)
(11 januari 2012)

Betreft: Sleuteltechnologieën

Onlangs heeft de deskundigengroep op hoog niveau voor sleuteltechnologieën zijn eindverslag voorgesteld. In de belangrijkste conclusies worden de beleidsmakers ertoe opgeroepen om een enkele, alomvattende benadering te hanteren ten aanzien van sleuteltechnologieën (ST's) via beleidsdoelstellingen die de kritieke vaardigheden en capaciteit in Europa houden, en Europa zo een concurrentievoordeel opleveren. Het sleuteltechnologieëninitiatief vormt een goed antwoord op de behoefte aan Europees leiderschap op het vlak van wetenschap en technologie, en kan er ook toe bijdragen dat excellentie in de hele waardeketens en innovatieketens op een effectieve en efficiënte manier wordt benut, om het concurrentiële leiderschap te verzekeren. In het verslag werden echter wel een aantal punten over het hoofd gezien die van essentieel belang zijn voor het toekomstige welslagen van de EU als leider op het vlak van innovatie.

Gelet op het bovenstaande, willen wij de Commissie de volgende vragen stellen:

1. Is de Commissie op de hoogte van het onlangs gepubliceerde verslag van de deskundigengroep op hoog niveau?

2. Het verslag is blijkbaar toegespitst op de standpunten en belangen van de grote Europese landen. In welke mate zullen de kleinere Europese landen hier deel van kunnen uitmaken?

3. Als Europa in de komende decennia een voorloper op het vlak van industriële innovatie wil worden, zal het van cruciaal belang zijn dat alle excellentie in heel Europa zo doeltreffend mogelijk benut wordt en dat er, waar gepast en waar mogelijk, gezocht wordt naar synergieën. Is de Commissie het ermee eens dat het verslag over de ST's aangeeft dat de grote landen de klus alleen kunnen klaren, waardoor de kleinere lidstaten en de in die lidstaten gevestigde excellentiecentra een secundaire rol toebedeeld krijgen? Wat denkt de Commissie te doen om alle lidstaten in gelijke mate bij dit proces te betrekken?

4. In welke mate staat zij ervoor open om Europese financiering als aanvulling op de financiering uit de nationale agenda aan te bevelen? Leidt dit niet tot een gebrek aan participatie van de nieuwere lidstaten?

5. In welke mate denkt de Commissie zich toe te spitsen op grensoverschrijdende samenwerking en het op touw zetten van supranationale initiatieven om de valorisatie van kennis en de output van onderzoek uit te breiden en te intensiveren?

Antwoord van de heer Tajani namens de Commissie
(20 februari 2012)

De groep van deskundigen op hoog niveau is opgericht op basis van de mededeling van de Commissie ([1]). De Commissie is dan ook op de hoogte van het eindverslag van de groep.

Het ST-beleid gaat niet alleen over het beheersen van technologie, maar ook over het toepassen van die technologieën bij op ST's gebaseerde producten. Deze producten komen voor in de meeste sectoren, voo.a. in de sectoren waar kleinere landen een competitief voordeel hebben. Hoewel het beheersen van technologie voo.a. de grotere landen betreft, is de toepassing ervan in het belang van alle EU-landen.

Het ST-beleid tracht niet alleen technologische excellentie in grote landen te versterken, maar wil ook de kleinere landen helpen toegang te verkrijgen tot de knowhow van de grote landen. In het voorstel voor het cohesiebeleid ([2]) werden de ST's aangestipt als een prioriteit van het Europees Fonds voor Regionale Ontwikkeling (EFRO) ([3]). ST's worden eveneens opgenomen in het kader van de strategieën voor slimme specialisatie. De regio's zullen dus hun niche in de waardeketens van de EU vaststellen en financiële middelen toewijzen. Strategieën voor slimme specialisatie zijn opgevat als een voorafgaande voorwaarde voor het gebruik van het EFRO.

([1]) COM(2009) 512.
([2]) 2014-2020.
([3]) Artikel 5.

Gezien de hoge investeringskosten van sommige ST-projecten is het cruciaal om gebruik te van synergieën tussen de fondsen. Het voorstel voor de algemene verordening betreffende structuurfondsen bepaalt dat voor een concrete actie steun uit een of meer … instrumenten van de Unie mag worden ontvangen, op voorwaarde dat wordt voldaan aan de algemene regels inzake staatssteun ([4]). Dan worden projecten in alle stadia van de ontwikkeling van ST-producten gefinancierd door middel van EU-fondsen ([5]) of nationale/regionale fondsen.

Omdat vraag en aanbod voor ST's geografische over de gehele EU verspreid zijn, moet samenwerking aangemoedigd worden. Slimme specialisatie zal de regio's helpen om hun behoeften te bepalen en om transnationale samenwerking te starten. De Commissie zal dit aanmoedigen met territoriale samenwerkingsprogramma's, macroregionale strategieën en samenwerking tussen clusters.

([4]) Artikel 55, lid 8.
([5]) (bijv. Horizon 2020, EFRO of EIB).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012620/11
to the Commission
Lambert van Nistelrooij (PPE) and Ivo Belet (PPE)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Key enabling technologies

Recently, the High Level Expert Group on Key Enabling Technologies presented its final report. The main conclusions call on decision-makers to adopt a single and comprehensive approach to key enabling technologies (KETs) via policy objectives that retain critical capability and capacity in Europe, and hence a competitive edge. The KETs initiative is a good response to the need for European scientific and technological leadership and can also be an effective and efficient uptake of excellence throughout the value chains and innovation chains in order to guarantee competitive leadership. The report does, however, seem to have missed some vital points for future European success in innovation leadership.

Against this background, we would like to ask the Commission the following questions:

1. Is the Commission familiar with the High Level Expert Group's recently published report?

2. The report appears to have focused on the visions and interests of the large European countries. To what extent are the smaller European countries taken into account to become part of this?

3. For Europe to be a forerunner in industrial innovation in the next decades, it will be crucial that all excellence, throughout Europe, is being used as efficiently as possible and that synergies are sought, wherever valid and possible. Does the Commission agree that the KETs report indicates that the big countries can do the job alone, giving a secondary role to smaller Member States and the centres of excellence based there? What is the Commission planning to do to incorporate all Member States equally?

4. To what extent is it sensible to increase the push towards European top-up funding on top of national agendas' funding? Does this not lead to a lack of participation for the newer Member States?

5. To what extent is the Commission planning to focus on extending cross-border collaboration and initiating supranational initiatives to extend and intensify the valorisation of knowledge and output of research?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(20 February 2012)

The High Level Group was established based on the Commission communication ([1]). The Commission is therefore aware of the Group's final report.

The KETs' policy concerns not only the mastering of technology but also the deployment of these technologies to KETs based products. Those products apply to most sectors, especially to those where smaller countries have a competitive advantage. Although mastering of technologies would mainly concern the bigger countries, their deployment is of interest to all EU countries.

The KETs' policy not only aims at reinforcing technological excellence in big countries but also helping smaller Member States access the technological know-how of the big countries. In the proposal for cohesion policy ([2]), KETs were singled out as a priority in the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) ([3]). KETs will also be included in the context of strategies for smart specialisation. Thus, Regions will identify their niche in EU value chains and allocate funding. Smart specialisation strategies were set as ex-ante conditionality for the use of the ERDF.

Given the high investment costs of some KETs projects, it is critical to use synergies between funds. The proposal for the General Regulations on Structural Funds states that 'an operation may receive support from one or more (…) Union instrument provided that general state aid rules are obeyed' ([4]). Projects would be then financed at all stages of KETs' product development, from either EU ([5]) or national/regional funds.

([1]) COM(2009) 512.
([2]) 2014-2020.
([3]) Article 5.
([4]) Article 55(8).
([5]) (e.g. Horizon 2020, ERDF or EIB).

Given the dispersion of supply and demand in KETs across EU, collaboration has to be encouraged. Smart specialisation will help regions to identify their needs and start transnational cooperation. The Commission will encourage this through territorial cooperation programmes, macro-regional strategies and cooperation between clusters.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012621/11
to the Commission
Ashley Fox (ECR)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Definition of illegal gambling

The definition of an illegal online gambling operator at present differs from Member State to Member State. Despite EU internal market rules, an operator legally licensed in one Member States may be considered an illegal operator in another. This not only undermines the provisions of the EU Treaty, it also makes quantification of the sector's contribution to growth and competitiveness difficult.

In the first half of 2012 the Commission is due to publish a follow-up communication to its recent Green Paper on online gambling. How does the Commission intend to ensure that definitions of legal and illegal operators that are based on national legislation comply with the EU Treaty without proposing secondary legislation that defines legal gambling?

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

In the communication referred to by the Honourable Member the Commission intends to contribute to a clarification of the issue of the compatibility of national gambling regulations with EC law, as well as that of the extent to which a activity which is legal in a given Member State may be considerated illicit in another. The applicable case law of the Court, which has evolved over the past few years, will serve as a primary basis in this respect. Furthermore, the Commission will rely o the large amount of information gathered in the framework of the Green paper consultation on online gambling, and through the frequent exchanges with the Member States taking place in particular in the context of the notification of national gambling reforms under ([1]).

([1]) Directive 98/34/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 June 1998 laying down a procedure for the provision of information in the field of technical standards and regulations and of rules on Information Society services, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/consleg/1998/L/01998L0034-20070101-en.pdf

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-012623/11
do Komisji
Michał Tomasz Kamiński (ECR)
(13 stycznia 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Planowane zmiany w dyrektywie tytoniowej 2001/37/WE

W polskich mediach pojawiły się informacje oceniające wpływ planowanych przez komisyjną Dyrekcję Generalną ds. Zdrowia i Konsumentów (DG SANCO) zmian w dyrektywie tytoniowej (2001/37/WE) na wiele sektorów gospodarki: plantatorów i producentów tytoniu oraz drobny i średni handel.

Nowe zapisy mają m.in. na celu wyeliminowanie substancji dodawanych do tytoniu w trakcie produkcji papierosów, mających w szczególności podnosić ich atrakcyjność. Taka regulacja uniemożliwi uprawianie niektórych odmian, jak np. burley. Polska jest drugim największym producentem tytoniu w Europie, a 40 % polskiego tytoniu to właśnie burley. Z uprawy tytoniu żyje w Polsce ok. 60 tys. osób. Zmiana uprawy na inną odmianę wymagałaby kosztownych inwestycji w inne technologie i może się okazać niemożliwa ze względów klimatycznych. Ponadto w razie takiej zmiany przewiduje się wzrost przemytu papierosów zza wschodniej granicy, który już dziś stanowi 15 % rynku. Społeczne konsultacje wykazały, że większość pytanych jest przeciw takim zmianom.

W związku z powyższym pragnę zwrócić się do Komisji z następującymi pytaniami:

1. Jakie wiadomości posiada Komisja o stanie wdrażania powyższych zmian do dyrektywy tytoniowej?

2. Jak Komisja ocenia wpływ tych zmian na rynki tytoniowe w Europie, w tym na rynek polski?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Johna Dallego w imieniu Komisji
(23 lutego 2012 r.)

Przedstawiciele producentów i plantatorów tytoniu oraz podmiotów prowadzących handel detaliczny wyrobami tytoniowymi uczestniczyli aktywnie w procesie konsultacji dotyczących trwającego przeglądu dyrektywy w sprawie wyrobów tytoniowych ([1]), a Komisja zdaje sobie sprawę z ich obaw.

W obecnie przygotowywanej ocenie skutków uwzględniono szeroki wachlarz wariantów, w ramach których poddaje się regulacji niektóre dodatki zwiększające atrakcyjność wyrobów tytoniowych i uzależnienie od nich. Ocena skutków zawiera wnikliwą analizę skutków gospodarczych, społecznych i zdrowotnych, jak również skutków dla rynku wewnętrznego. Skutki dla wszystkich zainteresowanych stron są w tej analizie dogłębnie rozważane, włącznie z potencjalnymi szczególnymi skutkami dla konkretnych państw członkowskich lub regionów.

Sprawozdanie z oceny skutków zostanie opublikowane razem z wnioskiem ustawodawczym dotyczącym zmiany dyrektywy w sprawie wyrobów tytoniowych. Komisja przewiduje przedstawienie wniosku w drugiej połowie 2012 r.

([1]) Dyrektywa 2001/37/WE Parlamentu Europejskiego i Rady z dnia 5 czerwca 2001 r. w sprawie zbliżenia przepisów ustawowych, wykonawczych i administracyjnych państw członkowskich, dotyczących produkcji, prezentowania i sprzedaży wyrobów tytoniowych (Dz.U. L 194 z 18.7.2001).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012623/11
to the Commission
Michał Tomasz Kamiński (ECR)
(13 January 2012)

Subject: Planned amendments to the Tobacco Directive 2001/37/EC

There has been information in the Polish media assessing the impact of planned changes by the Directorate-General for Health and Consumers (DG SANCO) relating to the Tobacco Directive (2001/37/EC) with regard to many sectors of the economy: tobacco growers and producers, as well as the small and medium trade.

Among other things, new regulations aim to eliminate substances that are added to tobacco during cigarette production, which are particularly designed to make them more attractive. Such a regulation will make it impossible to grow some varieties, such as burley. Poland is the second biggest producer of tobacco in Europe, and 40 % of Polish tobacco consists of burley. In Poland c. 60 000 people make their living by growing tobacco. The change of culture would involve costly investments in other technologies and may prove to be impossible because of the climate. Moreover, smuggling cigarettes from behind the Eastern frontier would increase as a result of such a change. Today, it already constitutes 15 % of the market. Public consultations revealed that most of the people asked were against such changes.

I would like to ask the Commission two following questions in relation to the above:

1. What information does the Commission have on the status of implementing the abovementioned changes to the tobacco directive?

2. How does the Commission assess the influence of these changes on the tobacco markets in Europe, including the Polish market?

Answer given by Mr Dalli on behalf of the Commission
(23 February 2012)

Representatives of tobacco manufacturers, growers and retailers have participated actively in the consultation process on the ongoing review of the Tobacco Products Directive ([1]) and the Commission is aware of their concerns.

The impact assessment that is currently being prepared addresses a wide spectrum of options to regulate certain additives which increase the attractiveness and addictiveness of tobacco products. The impact assessment includes a thorough analysis of the economic, social and health impact, as well as impacts on the internal market. The impact on all stakeholders is being carefully considered within this analysis, including any potential particular impact on specific Member States and/or regions.

The impact assessment report will be published together with the legislative proposal for the revision of the Tobacco Products Directive. The Commission envisages to present the proposal in the second half of 2012.

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

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-012624/11
do Komisji
Michał Tomasz Kamiński (ECR)
(11 stycznia 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Zatrzymanie protestujących na Białorusi

W poniedziałek, 19 grudnia br., w Mińsku doszło do zatrzymania kilkudziesięciu osób podczas próby uczczenia rocznicy zdławienia protestu po wyborach prezydenckich na Białorusi z 19 grudnia 2010 r.

W związku z powyższym pragnę zapytać:

— czy sprawa jest znana Komisji?

— czy Komisja ma informacje co do tożsamości zatrzymanych osób i postawionych im zarzutów?

— czy Komisja zamierza interweniować w tej sprawie u białoruskich władz?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Štefana Fülego w imieniu Komisji
(21 lutego 2012 r.)

Komisja jest nadal głęboko zaniepokojona trwającymi na Białorusi represjami wobec opozycji politycznej, społeczeństwa obywatelskiego oraz niezależnych mediów.

Według dostępnych informacji dnia 19 grudnia 2011 r. zatrzymano w Mińsku 46 osób, z których 32 oskarżono następnie o popełnienie czynów niedozwolonych, a jednego ze studentów wydalono z uniwersytetu. Dnia 18 grudnia 2011 r. Wysoka Przedstawiciel i Wiceprzewodnicząca Komisji Catherine Ashton oraz sekretarz stanu USA Hillary Clinton wydały wspólne oświadczenie ([1]) wyrażające zaniepokojenie sytuacją w zakresie praw człowieka na Białorusi. Wezwały również ponownie do natychmiastowego zwolnienia i rehabilitacji wszystkich więźniów politycznych i wyraziły poważne obawy co do dalszego ograniczania podstawowych swobód obywatelskich: wolności zgromadzeń, zrzeszania się i wypowiedzi.

UE wprowadziła w życie szereg środków ograniczających w odniesieniu do władz białoruskich, w tym wielu osób odpowiedzialnych za naruszanie praw człowieka i represje wobec społeczeństwa obywatelskiego. UE wyraźnie zadeklarowała swoją gotowość rozważenia dalszych ukierunkowanych środków we wszystkich obszarach współpracy.

Jednocześnie UE nadal wspiera działania białoruskich organizacji społeczeństwa obywatelskiego: ostatnio, w dniu 25 stycznia 2012 r., komisarz ds. rozszerzenia i europejskiej polityki sąsiedztwa, Štefan Füle, spotkał się z grupą ważnych białoruskich obrońców praw człowieka. UE udziela ponadto wsparcia ofiarom represji i ich rodzinom.

([1]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/127034.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012624/11
to the Commission
Michał Tomasz Kamiński (ECR)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Detention of protesters in Belarus

On Monday, 19 December 2011, in Minsk, several dozen people were arrested during an attempt to celebrate the anniversary of suppressed protests following presidential elections in Belarus on 19 December 2010.

Therefore, I would like to ask the following:

— Is the issue known to the Commission?

— Does the Commission have information on the identity of the people who were arrested and their charges?

— Is the Commission going to intervene with regard to this matter with the Belarusian authorities?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(21 February 2012)

The Commission remains deeply concerned about the ongoing repression of the political opposition, civil society, and the independent media in Belarus.

According to the information available, 46 people were apprehended in Minsk on 19 December 2011, 32 of them have subsequently been charged with civil offences, and one student has been expelled from the university. On 18 December 2011, the High Representative/Vice-President and US Secretary of State Clinton issued a joint statement ([1]) expressing concerns about the human rights situation in Belarus. They also reiterated calls for all political prisoners to be immediately released and rehabilitated and expressed grave concern over further restriction of citizens' fundamental freedoms of assembly, association and expression.

The EU is also implementing a range of restrictive measures against the Belarusian authorities, including against a number of individuals responsible for human rights violations and the repression of civil society. The EU has made clear that it stands ready to consider further targeted measures in all areas of cooperation.

At the same time, the EU continues to support Belarusian civil society organisations in their work. Most recently, on 25 January 2012, Commissioner Füle, responsible for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, met with a number of key Belarusian human rights activists. In addition, the EU continues to provide support to the victims of repression and their families.

([1]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/127034.pdf

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-012627/11
προς την Επιτροπή
Michail Tremopoulos (Verts/ALE)
(11 Ιανουαρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Μειωμένοι συντελεστές ΦΠΑ και νησιωτικότητα

Εξαιτίας των ποικίλων μειονεκτημάτων τους, και ιδιαιτέρως της απομόνωσης ή του περιορισμένου μεγέθους τους, τα νησιά είναι περιοχές που δεν ευνοούνται σε εδαφικό επίπεδο, και πολύ συχνά σε οικονομικό και κοινωνικό. Το άρθρο 174 της Συνθήκης της Λισαβόνας ([1]), που καθορίζει το αντικείμενο της οικονομικής, κοινωνικής και εδαφικής συνοχής, αναγνωρίζει αυτό το γεγονός και τονίζει ότι ειδική προσοχή πρέπει να δοθεί στα νησιά, με δράσεις που θα μειώσουν την καθυστέρηση στην ανάπτυξη αυτών των λιγότερο ευνοημένων περιοχών και θα συμβάλουν στην κοινωνική συνοχή.

Στην Ελλάδα, ως τώρα, σύμφωνα με το αρ. 17, παρ. 4 του Ν. 2093/1992 ([2]), σε όλα τα νησιά των περιφερειών Νοτίου και Βορείου Αιγαίου καθώς και στα νησιά των Βορείων Σποράδων, τη Σκύρο, τη Σαμοθράκη και τη Θάσο, εφαρμόζονται συντελεστές ΦΠΑ μειωμένοι κατά 30 % σε σχέση με αυτούς της υπόλοιπης Ελλάδας. Σύμφωνα με δημοσιεύματα ([3]) ([4]), το Υπουργείο Οικονομικών προσανατολίζεται στην κατάργηση των μειωμένων συντελεστών ΦΠΑ για τα νησιά του Αιγαίου καθώς και όλων των ευνοϊκών φορολογικών ρυθμίσεων για τους φορολογούμενους που διαμένουν μόνιμα σε μικρά ελληνικά νησιά με πληθυσμό μέχρι 3 100 κατοίκους.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Αποτελεί θέση της Επιτροπής και του εκπροσώπου της στην τρόικα η κατάργηση των μειωμένων συντελεστών ΦΠΑ και των ειδικών φορολογικών ρυθμίσεων στα νησιά του Αιγαίου;

2. Έχουν μελετηθεί οι επιπτώσεις από μια τέτοια κίνηση σε θέματα τοπικής οικονομίας, τουρισμού, κοινωνικής συνοχής και απασχόλησης;

3. Σε τι περαιτέρω ενέργειες προτίθεται να προβεί για τη στήριξη των νησιωτικών κοινωνιών που πλήττονται ιδιαίτερα στην κρίσιμη αυτή περίοδο της οικονομικής κρίσης;

Απάντηση του κ. Šemeta εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(2 Μαρτίου 2012)

1. Σύμφωνα με το άρθρο 120 της οδηγίας για το ΦΠΑ ([5]), η Ελλάδα επιτρέπεται να εφαρμόζει συντελεστές έως 30 % χαμηλότερους από τους αντιστοίχως επιβαλλόμενους στην ηπειρωτική Ελλάδα, για τους νομούς Λέσβου, Χίου, Σάμου, Δωδεκανήσου και Κυκλάδων και στα νησιά Θάσος, Βόρειες Σποράδες, Σαμοθράκη και Σκύρος.

Δεδομένου του προαιρετικού χαρακτήρα της εν λόγω διάταξης, εμπίπτει στην αρμοδιότητα των ελληνικών αρχών να αποφασίσουν κατά πόσο θα συνεχίσουν να κάνουν χρήση της.

2. Αυτή η ερώτηση πρέπει να απευθυνθεί στις εθνικές αρχές.

Σε γενικές γραμμές, οι μειωμένοι συντελεστές ΦΠΑ αποδείχθηκαν λίαν περιορισμένης εμβέλειας μέσο αναδιανομής ([6]). Επιπλέον, όταν αναφέρονται σε συγκεκριμένη περιοχή, θα μπορούσαν να οδηγήσουν σε διαιτησία κατά την αγορά αγαθών και υπηρεσιών. Οι άμεσες και καλά στοχευμένες μεταβιβάσεις μπορεί να είναι αποτελεσματικότερος τρόπος για την αντιμετώπιση των περιφερειακών εισοδηματικών ανισοτήτων.

3. Τα νησιά αντιπροσωπεύουν το 4,3 % του συνολικού πληθυσμού της ΕΕ και είναι δύσκολο να διατυπωθούν γενικεύσεις για όλα τους δεδομένου ότι αντιμετωπίζουν διαφορετικές προκλήσεις. Το άρθρο 174 της ΣΛΕΕ δεν σημαίνει κατ'ανάγκη την αυτόματη απόδοση της πρόσθετης χρηματοδοτικής στήριξης από την Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση. Στοιχεία όπως η χρηστή διακυβέρνηση, η ολοκληρωμένη χωροταξική ανάπτυξη και η καλύτερη δυνατή αξιοποίηση του ιδίου χωροταξικού δυναικού είναι ζωτικής σημασίας. Η πρόταση της Επιτροπής για τη μελλοντική πολιτική συνοχής ορίζει ότι το κοινοτικό Στρατηγικό Πλαίσιο και οι συμβάσεις εταιρικής σχέσης θα πρέπει να εντοπίζουν τις βασικές χωροταξικές προκλήσεις. Το άρθρο 10 της πρότασης κανονισμού για το ΕΤΠΑ ορίζει ότι τα επιχειρησιακά προγράμματα που καλύπτουν περιοχές με σοβαρά και μόνιμα μειονεκτήματα πρέπει να αποδίδουν ιδιαίτερη προσοχή στην αντιμετώπιση των ειδικών δυσκολιών των εν λόγω περιοχών. Τα νεοσυσταθέντα κοινοτικά εργαλεία τοπικής ανάπτυξης θα μπορούσαν επίσης να διευκολύνουν περαιτέρω την ανάπτυξη στα νησιά.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:083:0047:0200:EL:PDF
([2]) http://nomothesia.ependyseis.gr/eu-law/getFile/%CE%9D+2093+1992.pdf?bodyId=372109
([3]) http://www.forologikanea.gr/news/sto-trapezi-i-katargisi-tou-meiomenou-fpa-sta-nisia/
([4]) http://www.tanea.gr/latestnews/article/?aid=4679676
([5]) Οδηγία 2006/112/ΕΚ του Συμβουλίου, της 28ης Νοεμβρίου 2006, σχετικά με το κοινό σύστημα φόρου προστιθέμενης αξίας, ΕΕ 2006, L 347/1.
([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/resources/documents/common/publications/studies/report_evaluation_vat.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012627/11
to the Commission
Michail Tremopoulos (Verts/ALE)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Reduced VAT rates and islands

Because of their various disadvantages, especially their isolation or limited size, islands are areas that are disadvantaged at territorial level or, often, at economic and social level ([1]). Article 174 of the Treaty of Lisbon, which defines the purpose of economic, social and territorial cohesion, recognises this fact and emphasises that special attention must be paid to islands, with actions to reduce the backwardness of the least favoured regions and contribute towards social cohesion.

In Greece, to date, according to Article 17(4) of Law ([2])2093/1992, in all the islands in the regions of the North and South Aegean and on the islands of the Northern Sporades, Skyros, Samothrace and Thasos, VAT rates are reduced by 30 % compared with the rest of Greece ([3]) ([4]). According to articles published recently, the Ministry of Finance is moving towards the abolition of reduced VAT rates on the Aegean islands and of all tax benefits for taxpayers habitually domiciled on small Greek islands with a population of up to 3 100 inhabitants.

Will the Commission answer the following:

1. Is the abolition of reduced VAT rates and tax benefits on the Aegean islands representative of the position of the Commission and its representative in the Troika?

2. Have the repercussions of such a move on the local economy, tourism, social cohesion and employment been considered?

3. What further action does it intend to take to support island communities which have been particularly hard hit by the current economic crisis?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(2 March 2012)

1. According to Article 120 of the VAT Directive ([5]), Greece may apply rates up to 30 % lower than the corresponding rates applied in the mainland Greece in the departments of Lesbos, Chios, Samos, the Dodecanese and the Cyclades, and on the islands of Thassos, the Northern Sporades, Samothrace and Skiros.

Given the optional character of this provision, it falls within the competence of the Greek authorities to decide whether to continue to make use of it or not.

2. This question should be addressed to the national authorities.

In general, reduced VAT rates have been found to be a rather poor instrument for redistribution ([6]). Moreover, when region-specific, they could lead to arbitrage in the purchase of goods and services. Direct and well-targeted transfers might be a more effective way of addressing regional income disparities.

3. Islands represent 4.3 % of the total EU population and it is difficult to generalise about them given the different challenges they face. Article 174 TFEU does not necessarily mean the automatic attribution of additional financial support from the European Union. Elements like good governance, integrated territorial development, and making the best use of the region's own territorial capital are crucial elements. The Commission proposal for future cohesion policy sets out that Community Strategic Framework and the Partnership contracts will have to identify key territorial challenges. Art 10 of ERDF regulation proposal establishes that operational programmes covering areas with severe and permanent handicaps shall pay particular attention to addressing the specific difficulties of those areas. Newly established Community local development tools could also be beneficial to facilitate islands development.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:083:0047:0200:EL:PDF
([2]) http://nomothesia.ependyseis.gr/eu-law/getFile/%CE%9D+2093+1992.pdf?bodyId=372109
([3]) http://www.forologikanea.gr/news/sto-trapezi-i-katargisi-tou-meiomenou-fpa-sta-nisia/
([4]) http://www.tanea.gr/latestnews/article/?aid=4679676
([5]) Council Directive 2006/112/EC of 28 November 2006 on the common system of value added tax, OJ 2006 L 347/1.
([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/resources/documents/common/publications/studies/report_evaluation_vat.pdf

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-012629/11
προς την Επιτροπή
Michail Tremopoulos (Verts/ALE)
(11 Ιανουαρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Ζητήματα βιωσιμότητας που προκύπτουν από τη βιομηχανική παραγωγή ζωικού κεφαλαίου

Η βιομηχανική παραγωγή ζωικού κεφαλαίου στηρίζεται στη διατροφή των ζώων με μεγάλες ποσότητες σιτηρών. Σύμφωνα με στοιχεία της Επιτροπής, περίπου το 58 % της παραγωγής σιτηρών της ΕΕ χρησιμοποιείται ως ζωοτροφή.

Η διατροφή των ζώων με σιτηρά είναι ανεπαρκής, καθώς μεγάλο μέρος της διατροφικής αξίας των σιτηρών χάνεται κατά τη μετατροπή της φυτικής ύλης σε ζωική. Η θρεπτική αξία που προσφέρεται στα ζώα κάθε φορά που τρέφονται με μια συγκεκριμένη ποσότητα σιτηρών είναι πολύ υψηλότερη από εκείνη που λαμβάνουν οι άνθρωποι καταναλώνοντας το κρέας που παράγεται από τα συγκεκριμένα ζώα ([1]). Σύμφωνα με το ερευνητικό πρόγραμμα European Nitrogen Assessment (ENA) 2011, προκύπτει ότι οι καλλιέργειες απορροφούν μόνο το 30-60 % του αζωτούχου λιπάσματος που χρησιμοποιείται σε αυτές και ότι μόνο το 10-50 % του αζώτου που περιέχεται στη ζωοτροφή διατηρείται από το ζώο. Η ποσότητα του αζώτου που δεν απορροφάται από τις καλλιέργειες και τα ζώα χάνεται στο περιβάλλον, γεγονός το οποίο, σύμφωνα με το ερευνητικό πρόγραμμα ENA, συνιστά απειλή για την ποιότητα του νερού, του εδάφους και του αέρα, καθώς και για το ισοζύγιο αερίων θερμοκηπίου, τα οικοσυστήματα και τη βιοποικιλότητα.

Σύμφωνα με την έκθεση του προγράμματος Foresight «Το μέλλον των τροφίμων και της γεωργίας», τονίζεται ότι, ανά θερμίδα, η παραγωγή κρέατος από ζώα που τρέφονται με σιτηρά απαιτεί πολύ περισσότερους πόρους από ό,τι η παραγωγή άλλων τροφίμων ([2]), ενώ, σύμφωνα με το ερευνητικό πρόγραμμα ENA, «η χρήση ζωικού κεφαλαίου από τον άνθρωπο στην Ευρώπη, και η συνακόλουθη ανάγκη για μεγάλες ποσότητες ζωοτροφής, αποτελεί, συνεπώς, τον κυριότερο ανθρώπινο παράγοντα που αλλοιώνει τον κύκλο του αζώτου στην Ευρώπη».

Το ερευνητικό πρόγραμμα ENA καταλήγει στο συμπέρασμα ότι η μείωση της κατανάλωσης ζωικής πρωτεΐνης στην ΕΕ στο επίπεδο που συνιστούν οι εμπειρογνώμονες στον τομέα της υγείας θα είχε οφέλη τόσο για το περιβάλλον όσο και για την ανθρώπινη υγεία, εφόσον το υψηλό επίπεδο κατανάλωσης κρέατος που έχει καταστεί εφικτό χάρη στη βιομηχανική γεωργία σχετίζεται με αυξημένο κίνδυνο πρόκλησης καρδιαγγειακών παθήσεων, παχυσαρκίας και ορισμένων τύπων καρκίνου ([3]).

Σε ποιες ενέργειες σκοπεύει να προβεί η Επιτροπή, προκειμένου να μετριάσει την παραγωγή και την κατανάλωση κρέατος προερχόμενου από ζώα που τρέφονται με σιτηρά στην ΕΕ, προς το συμφέρον της αποδοτικότητας των πόρων, του περιβάλλοντος και της ανθρώπινης υγείας;

Απάντηση του κ. Ciolos εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(27 Ιανουαρίου 2012)

Θα πρέπει να υπογραμμιστεί ότι το ζωικό κεφάλαιο έχει μεγάλη σημασία για την επισιτιστική ασφάλεια εκατομμυρίων ανθρώπων εντός και εκτός της ΕΕ και ότι θα αποκτήσει ακόμη μεγαλύτερη σημασία κατά τις επόμενες δεκαετίες. Η μελλοντική πρόκληση είναι να αναπτυχθούν περαιτέρω καινοτόμες λύσεις για την κτηνοτροφία, φιλικές προς το περιβάλλον, οι οποίες θα συμβάλουν στην παραγωγή ζωικής πρωτεΐνης υψηλής αξίας με μικρότερες ποσότητες τροφής, νερού και καυσίμων.

Προκειμένου να καλυφθούν οι εν λόγω ανάγκες για τεχνολογικές βελτιώσεις, η Επιτροπή στηρίζει την τεχνολογική πλατφόρμα για την αειφόρο εκτροφή και αναπαραγωγή ζώων. Οι επενδύσεις σε φιλικά προς το περιβάλλον συστήματα παραγωγής ζώων αποτελούν μέρος της πολιτικής της ΕΕ για την αγροτική ανάπτυξη και η Επιτροπή αναπτύσσει επί του παρόντος μια ευρωπαϊκή σύμπραξη καινοτομίας για τη γεωργική παραγωγικότητα και αειφορία με στόχο την προώθηση ανταγωνιστικής και αειφόρου γεωργίας και δασοκομίας.

Η ανακοίνωση της Επιτροπής με θέμα «Χάρτης πορείας για μια αποδοτική, από πλευράς πόρων, Ευρώπη» (COM(2011)571 τελικό) αναγνωρίζει το δυναμικό για τη βελτίωση της αποδοτικότητας των πόρων σε όλο το μήκος της τροφικής αλυσίδας, με θετικές πτυχές για το περιβάλλον και τη δημόσια υγεία. Στο πλαίσιο των ενεργειών που συμβάλλουν στην επίτευξη του στόχου αυτού, η Επιτροπή θα εξετάσει τρόπους για τη μείωση των περιβαλλοντικών επιπτώσεων που έχουν οι μέθοδοι παραγωγής τροφίμων και οι καταναλωτικές συνήθειες και θα αναπτύξει μεθοδολογία όσον αφορά τα κριτήρια βιωσιμότητας για τα βασικά αγαθά στον τομέα των τροφίμων.

([1]) Lundqvist, J., de Fraiture, C. Molden, D., 2008. Saving Water: From Field to Fork — Curbing Losses and Wastage in the Food Chain. Εγκύκλιος πολιτικής SIWI. SIWI. http://www.siwi.org/documents/Resources/Policy_Briefs/PB_From_Filed_to_Fork_2008.pdf

([2]) Γραφείο της κυβέρνησης του ΗΒ για την επιστήμη, 2011. The future of food and farming: challenges and choices for global sustainability: executive summary. http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/bispartners/foresight/docs/food-and-farming/11-546-future-of-food-and-farming-report

([3]) Westhoek H., Rood T., van den Berg M., Janse J., Nijdam D., Reudink M. και Stehfest E., 2011. The protein puzzle: the consumption and production of meat, dairy and fish in the European Union. PBL — Ολλανδική Υπηρεσία Περιβαλλοντικής Αξιολόγησης. http://www.sciencedomain.org/download.php?f=1318660269-Westhoeketal_2011EJFRR892.pdf&aid=262

Η παχυσαρκία δεν οφείλεται κατά κύριο λόγο στην κατανάλωση κρέατος αλλά, συχνά, στον ανθυγιεινό τρόπο ζωής. Η Επιτροπή έχει ασχοληθεί με το θέμα αυτό στο πλαίσιο πολιτικών πρωτοβουλιών της, όπως η Λευκή Βίβλος του 2007 με θέμα «Ευρωπαϊκή Στρατηγική για θέματα υγείας που έχουν σχέση με τη Διατροφή, το Υπερβολικό Βάρος και την Παχυσαρκία» και το ευρωπαϊκό σχέδιο δράσης της Παγκόσμιας Οργάνωσης Υγείας (ΠΟΥ) για μια πολιτική για τα τρόφιμα και τη διατροφή 2007-2012. Σχετικά με το θέμα αυτό, θα πρέπει επίσης να αναφέρουμε το πρόγραμμα της ΕΕ για την προώθηση της κατανάλωσης φρούτων στα σχολεία.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012629/11
to the Commission
Michail Tremopoulos (Verts/ALE)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Sustainability issues arising from industrial livestock production

Industrial livestock production is dependent on feeding substantial quantities of grain to animals. Commission data show that around 58 % of EU cereal production is used as animal feed.

Feeding cereals to animals is inefficient as much of their food value is lost during conversion from plant to animal matter. The nutritional value consumed by animals in eating a given quantity of cereals is much greater than that delivered for humans by the resultant meat ([1]). The 2011 European Nitrogen Assessment (ENA) states that crops only take up 30-60 % of the nitrogen fertiliser applied to them and that only 10-50 % of the nitrogen in animal feed is retained by the animal. The nitrogen that is not absorbed by the crops and the animals is lost to the environment where, according to ENA, it poses threats to the quality of water, soil and air as well as to the greenhouse balance, ecosystems and biodiversity.

The Foresight report on 'The future of food and farming' stresses that, per calorie, grain-fed meat requires considerably more resources to produce than other food items ([2]), while the ENA states that 'Human use of livestock in Europe, and the consequent need for large amounts of animal feed, is therefore the dominant human driver altering the nitrogen cycle in Europe'.

The ENA concludes that lowering consumption of animal protein in the EU to the level recommended by health experts would benefit both the environment and human health, since the high levels of meat consumption that have been made possible by industrial farming are associated with an increased risk of heart disease, obesity and certain cancers ([3]).

What steps does the Commission plan to take to moderate the production and consumption of grain-fed meat in the EU in the interests of resource efficiency, the environment and human health?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(27 January 2012)

It should be underlined that livestock are important to the food security of millions of people within and outside the EU and will be even more important in the coming decades. The future challenge is to further develop innovative solutions for livestock farming that are environmentally friendly and produce high value animal protein with less feed, water and fuel.

To address these needs for technological improvements the Commission supports the Sustainable Farm Animal Breeding & Reproduction Technology Platform. Investments into environmentally friendly animal production systems are part of the EU's rural development policy and the Commission is currently developing a European Innovation Partnership for agricultural productivity and sustainability with the aim of fostering a competitive and sustainable agriculture and forestry.

The Commission Communication on a Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe (COM(2011)571 final) recognises the potential for improving resource efficiency along the food chain, with positive aspects for the environment and public health. As part of the actions contributing to this, the Commission will consider ways to lower the environmental impact of food production and consumption patterns and develop a methodology for sustainability criteria for key food commodities.

Obesity is not primarily caused by the consumption of meat but often by an unhealthy lifestyle. The Commission has addressed this through policy initiatives such as the 2007 White Paper 'A strategy for Europe on nutrition, overweight and obesity related health issues' and the WHO European Action Plan for Food and Nutrition Policy 2007-12. The EU school fruit scheme promotes fruit and vegetable consumption by children.

([1]) Lundqvist, J., de Fraiture, C. Molden, D., 2008. Saving water: From field to fork — Curbing losses and wastage in the food chain. SIWI Policy Brief. SIWI; http://www.siwi.org/documents/Resources/Policy_Briefs/PB_From_Filed_to_Fork_2008.pdf

([2]) UK Government Office for Science, 2011. The future of food and farming: challenges and choices for global sustainability: executive summary; http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/bispartners/foresight/docs/food-and-farming/11-546-future-of-food-and-farming-report

([3]) Westhoek H., Rood T., van den Berg M., Janse J., Nijdam D., Reudink M. and Stehfest E., 2011. The protein puzzle: the consumption and production of meat, dairy and fish in the European Union. PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency; http://www.sciencedomain.org/download.php?f=1318660269-Westhoeketal_2011EJFRR892.pdf&aid=262

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-012630/11
an die Kommission
Reinhard Bütikofer (Verts/ALE)
(11. Januar 2012)

Betrifft: Lebenszyklusuntersuchungen

Lebenszyklusanalysen (Life cycle assessments, LCA) sind ein wichtiges Instrument, mit dem maßgebliche Umweltauswirkungen eines Produkts über seine Wertschöpfungskette festgestellt werden können. Dadurch können sich Unternehmen sowie politische Entscheidungsträger mit diesen Auswirkungen befassen und sie minimieren, so dass in vielen Fällen die Effizienz gesteigert und gleichzeitig die Wirtschaftlichkeit eines Produkts verbessert werden kann. Auch das Verbraucherbewusstsein lässt sich durch Lebenszyklusanalysen verbessern, da die Verbraucher so die Möglichkeit erhalten, entsprechend der Ökobilanz zwischen verschiedenen Produkten zu wählen.

Da Lebenszyklusanalysen ein wichtiges Instrument für die Industrie sind, das sehr stark von zuverlässigen Methoden abhängig ist, möchte ich die folgenden Fragen stellen, die an mich herangetragen wurden:

Für welchen Zeitpunkt und in welcher Form sieht die Kommission eine Beteiligung interessierter Kreise bei der Entwicklung eines Verfahrens für den ökologischen Fußabdruck von Unternehmen und Produkten voraus?

Vor dem Hintergrund, dass Lebenszyklusanalysen von zuverlässigen Daten abhängen, und angesichts der Tatsache, dass es für viele wichtige Rohstoffe keine Statistik gibt, unterstützt die Kommission die Erhebung von Daten für Hightech-Metalle (z. B. Nebenerzeugnisse) etwa über eine internationale Ressourcenbeobachtungsstelle?

Antwort von Herrn Potočnik im Namen der Kommission
(15. Februar 2012)

Zahlreiche Interessenträger wurden über verschiedene Mechanismen an der Entwicklung von zwei Methoden für die Ermittlung des ökologischen Fußabdrucks von Erzeugnissen und Organisationen beteiligt ([1]):

— Die Methodenentwürfe wurden im Internet veröffentlicht, und alle Interessenträger erhielten die Gelegenheit, der Kommission ihre Anmerkungen zu übermitteln.

— Die Methodenentwürfe wurden auf dem Workshop vom 29. und 30. November 2011 in Brüssel besprochen. Der Workshop wurde von mehr als 100 Teilnehmern besucht (Unternehmen, Industrieverbände, Vertreter aus den Mitgliedstaaten und aus Drittländern, internationale Organisationen, Vertreter aus Forschung und Wissenschaft sowie von NRO).

— Beide Methoden wurden von rund 20 Unternehmen getestet.

— Die öffentliche Anhörung zu möglichen Strategieoptionen im Zusammenhang mit beiden Methoden findet vom 11. Januar bis zum 3. April 2012 statt und ist für alle interessierten Kreise zugänglich.

Zum zweiten Teil der Anfrage: Die Kommission ist sich darüber im Klaren, dass die Verfügbarkeit hochwertiger Lebenszyklusdaten ein entscheidender Faktor ist, der sich auf die Durchführung der Lebenszyklusanalyse (LCA) auswirkt. Die Kommission prüft derzeit verschiedene Optionen, wie der Zugang zu LCA-Daten verbessert werden kann. Was Hightech-Metalle angeht, dürften weitere Daten zu kritischen Rohstoffen im Rahmen der Ökodesign-Richtlinie für Produkte verfügbar werden, für die vorbereitende Studien über eine neue Methodik für Ökodesign durchgeführt werden (http://www.meerp.eu/), zu denen auch ein Lebenszyklusauswirkungsindikator für kritische Rohstoffe gehört, der auf der Mitteilung der Kommission über Grundstoffmärkte und Rohstoffe ([2]) basiert. Die Gemeinsame Forschungsstelle der Kommission unterhält ein Online-Informationsverzeichnis (http://lct.jrc.ec.europa.eu/assessment/directories), das Zugang zu bestehenden Dienstleistungen, Instrumenten und Datenbanken für Lebenszyklusinformationen bietet.

([1]) Alle diesbezüglichen Informationen finden sich unter: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/product_footprint.htm
([2]) KOM(2011)25 endg.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012630/11
to the Commission
Reinhard Bütikofer (Verts/ALE)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Life-cycle assessments

Life-cycle assessments (LCA) are an important tool to identify relevant environmental impacts of a given product along its value chain. This allows companies as well as policymakers to address these impacts and minimise them, which in many cases raises efficiency and concurrently improves the economics of a given product. Consumer awareness can also be improved via life-cycle assessments allowing consumers to choose between different products according to the life-cycle balance.

As LCA is an important tool for industry that very much depends on a sound methodology, I would like to pose the following questions, which have been brought to my attention:

When and what kind of stakeholder involvement does the Commission foresee on its development of an environmental footprint methodology for companies and products?

Considering that life-cycle assessments depend on robust data and given the fact that statistics for many critical raw materials are missing, does the Commission intend to support the collection of data on high-tech metals (e.g. by-products), for example via an international resource observatory?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(15 February 2012)

Numerous stakeholders have been involved in the development of two methodologies for the Environmental Footprint of Products and Organisations through different mechanisms ([1]):

— The draft methodologies have been published on the Internet and all interested parties have been given the possibility to send comments to the Commission.

— The draft methodologies were discussed during the workshop held on 29-30 November 2011 in Brussels. The workshop was attended by more than 100 participants (companies, industrial associations, Member States and non-EU countries' representatives, international organisations, representatives from academia/research organisations, and NGOs).

— Both methodologies are being road-tested by about 20 companies.

— The public consultation addressing the possible policy options related to the application of both methodologies is open for comments from the public from 11 January until 3 April 2012.

Concerning the second part of the question, the Commission is aware that the availability of high quality life-cycle data is a key factor that will influence the application of LCA. The Commission is currently evaluating different options on how the access to LCA data can be improved. When it comes to high-tech metals, more data on Critical Raw Materials may become available in the context of the Ecodesign Directive for products subject to preparatory studies applying the new ecodesign methodology (http://www.meerp.eu/), which includes a Life Cycle Impact Indicator on Critical Raw Materials based on the Commission's Raw Material Communication ([2]). The Commission's Joint Research Centre maintains an online resource directory (http://lct.jrc.ec.europa.eu/assessment/directories) providing access to existing services, tools and databases of life-cycle information.

([1]) All information related to this activity is available at: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/product_footprint.htm
([2]) COM(2011)25 final.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-012631/11
aan de Commissie
Bas Eickhout (Verts/ALE)
(11 januari 2012)

Betreft: Belangenvermenging bij EFSA

EFSA werkt aan een initiatiefadvies over TTC, de toxicologische drempelwaarde. TTC is een eenvoudig instrument om chemische stoffen waarvan de toxiciteit onbekend is, in te delen als veilige stof wanneer de blootstelling onder de gekozen drempel blijft. Er hoeven geen verdere tests uitgevoerd te worden en er kan eenvoudig toegang tot de markt verleend worden, wat de kosten voor de industrie enorm beperkt.

TTC werd ontwikkeld door de lobbyclub voor de chemische sector, ILSI, en wordt al vele jaren gepromoot door de sector ([1]). De EFSA TTC-werkgroep heeft tot nu toe 17 vergaderingen gehouden en naar aanleiding daarvan 17 bijgewerkte ontwerpen opgesteld. Het eindontwerp werd in augustus 2011 ingediend ter raadpleging en het advies wordt verwacht in februari 2012. Gezien deze voorgeschiedenis zou men van EFSA verwachten dat het verzekert dat de beoordeling onafhankelijk verloopt om te voorkomen dat het instrument bepaalde partijen bevoordeelt.

Bent u op de hoogte van het feit dat 10 van de 13 leden van de EFSA-werkgroep voor de beoordeling van TTC in het verleden betrokken waren bij het ontwikkelen of het promoten van het instrument, samen met de sector of de lobbyclub van de sector, ILSI?

Bent u van mening dat de lobbyclub van de sector, ILSI, als een neutraal wetenschappelijk instituut beschouwd kan worden?

Vindt u de beoordeling van EFSA gepast, nu blijkt dat 10 van de 13 leden van de EFSA-werkgroep TTC hebben helpen ontwikkelen of promoten, meestal samen met de sector ([2])?

Bent u van mening dat EFSA zijn zelfverklaarde onafhankelijkheid schendt nu het een dergelijke mate van belangenvermenging toestaat in deze TTC-werkgroep?

Bent u het ermee eens dat de werkzaamheden van de EFSA TTC-werkgroep stopgezet moeten worden, aangezien het resultaat ervan hoe dan ook sterk vooringenomen zal zijn?

Bent u het ermee eens dat het ongepast is dat EFSA vergaderingen organiseert met ILSI en ondernemingen waaraan enkel op uitnodiging kan worden deelgenomen, waardoor bepaalde belangengroepen uitgesloten worden ([3])?

Bent u het ermee eens dat het onaanvaardbaar is dat personeelsleden van EFSA deel uitmaken van een task force uit de sector?

Bent u het ermee eens dat EFSA zijn onafhankelijkheid schaadt als het toestaat dat zijn personeelsleden gunstige publicaties uitbrengen over een thema dat nog beoordeeld wordt door EFSA ([4])?

Kunt u toelichten welke stappen de Commissie zal ondernemen om de werking van EFSA te verbeteren?

Antwoord van de heer Dalli namens de Commissie
(15 februari 2012)

De toxicologische drempelwaarde (TTC) is in de jaren tachtig ontwikkeld door de Amerikaanse Food and Drug Administration (FDA), en niet, zoals aangegeven, door het Internal Life Sciences Institute (ILSI). Overeenkomstig de normale wetenschappelijke praktijk is die aanpak door de inbreng van een groot aantal wetenschappers, waaronder die welke werken onder auspiciën van het ILSI, sindsdien echter verder ontwikkeld, verfijnd en bijgewerkt.

De leden van de wetenschappelijke panels en van het wetenschappelijk comité van de Europese Autoriteit voor voedselveiligheid (EFSA) moeten jaarlijks een verklaring omtrent hun belangen afleggen, die wordt gepubliceerd op de website van de EFSA.

([1]) http://www.pan-europe.info/Resources/index.html
([2]) http://www.pan-europe.info/News/PR/111219.html
([3]) Dit deed zich voor bij de vergadering van EFSA/ILSI in 2005 over genotoxische stoffen, opnieuw in 2007 bij een Colloquium over cumulatieve risicobeoordeling en onlangs opnieuw bij een vergadering van EFSA/ILSI over TTC in juni 2010.
([4]) M. Feigenbaum, afdelingshoofd bij EFSA, en een aantal van zijn collega's hebben in 2011 een gunstige publicatie uitgebracht over TTC, op advies van aan ILSI verbonden panelleden van EFSA als Barlow, Crebelli en Lhugenot.

De TTC-aanpak is ontwikkeld ter beoordeling van de veiligheid van de blootstelling van mensen aan zeer kleine hoeveelheden chemische stoffen, die door de gevoeliger analysemethoden steeds beter kunnen worden opgespoord.

Het wetenschappelijk comité van de EFSA wijst er in haar ontwerpadvies ook op dat die aanpak niet wordt gevolgd indien er een wettelijke verplichting tot indiening van gegevens over de toxiciteit bestaat en dat hij derhalve geen middel kan zijn om een veiligheidsonderzoek te vermijden of de toegang tot de markt te vergemakkelijken.

De grotere analytische gevoeligheid en de TTC-aanpak vergemakkelijken de beoordeling van chemische residuen, die vroeger onmogelijk zou zijn geweest, en verbeteren dus de bescherming van de consument.

Wat belangenconflicten betreft, verwijst de Commissie het geachte Parlementslid naar haar antwoord op schriftelijke vraag E-04782/20111 ([5]) betreffende de onafhankelijkheid en belangenconflicten in het geheel van de activiteiten van de EFSA. De Raad van bestuur van de EFSA heeft onlangs een nieuw beleid inzake onafhankelijkheid en wetenschappelijke besluitvormingsprocessen goedgekeurd, dat kan worden geraadpleegd op de website van de EFSA.

([5]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/QP-WEB

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012631/11
to the Commission
Bas Eickhout (Verts/ALE)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Conflict of interest in EFSA

EFSA is working on an own-initiative opinion on TTC, the threshold of toxicological concern. TTC is a simple tool to qualify chemicals of unknown toxicity as safe if the exposure is below the chosen threshold. No testing is needed any more and easy market access is granted, bringing huge cost reductions to industry.

TTC was developed by the industry lobby club ILSI and has been promoted for many years by industry ([1]). The EFSA TTC working group has organised 17 meetings up to now and subsequently produced 17 updated drafts. The final draft was submitted for consultation in August 2011 and the opinion is expected in February 2012. Given this history one would expect EFSA to make sure the assessment is done in an independent way to prevent any bias in the tool.

Are you aware of the fact that 10 out of 13 members of the EFSA working group for the assessment of TTC were involved in developing or promoting the tool in the past, together with industry or the industry lobby club ILSI?

Do you think the industry lobby club ILSI can be seen as a neutral scientific institute?

Do you feel the EFSA assessment is adequate now it appears that 10 out of 13 members of the EFSA working group have been developing or promoting TTC in the past, generally with industry ([2])?

Would you feel EFSA is violating its self-declared independence now it allows this level of conflict of interest in this TTC working group?

Do you agree the work of the EFSA TTC working group should be stopped since the outcome cannot be but heavily biased?

Do you agree it is improper if EFSA organises invitation-only meetings with ILSI and companies, excluding public interest groups ([3])?

Do you agree it is unacceptable if EFSA staff is part of an industry taskforce?

Do you agree EFSA is damaging its independence if it allows its staff members to publish favourably on a topic which is still being assessed by EFSA ([4])?

Could you explain what the Commission will do to improve the functioning of EFSA?

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

The Threshold of Toxicological Concern (TTC) was developed by the US Food and Drug Administration (US FDA) in the 1980s and not by Internal Life Sciences Institute (ILSI) as stated. However consistent with normal scientific method the approach has since been developed, refined and updated with the input of many scientists including those working under the auspices of ILSI.

Members of the European Food Safety Authority's (EFSA) Scientific Panels and Scientific Committee are required to complete an annual declaration of interests which are published on the EFSA website.

The TTC approach was developed to address the safety of exposure to chemicals at levels that would result in exceedingly small human exposures which has become increasingly apparent due to improvements in the sensitivity of analytical methods.

([1]) http://www.pan-europe.info/Resources/index.html
([2]) http://www.pan-europe.info/News/PR/111219.html
([3]) This happened in the 2005 EFSA/ILSI-meeting on genotoxic substances, again in 2007 in a Colloquium on cumulative risk assessment, and recently again in an EFSA/ILSI meeting on TTC in June 2010.
([4]) M. Feigenbaum, EFSA head of unit, and colleagues published favourably on TTC in 2011, advised by ILSI-linked EFSA panel-members like Barlow, Crebelli and Lhugenot.

The EFSA Scientific Committee also makes it clear in its draft opinion that the approach would not be applied when there is a legislative requirement for submission of toxicity data and therefore it could not result in a means to avoid safety testing nor to facilitate easy access to the market.

The availability of increased analytical sensitivity and the TTC approach facilitates the assessment of chemical residues that would have not been possible previously and thereby increases consumer protection.

With regard to the issue of conflict of interest, the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its reply to Written Question E-04782/2011 ([5]) which deals with independence and conflicts of interest which apply across all the activities of EFSA. The EFSA Management Board recently adopted the Authority's new Policy on independence and scientific decision-making processes which may be consulted on the EFSA website.

([5]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/QP-WEB

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-012634/11
an die Kommission
Elisabeth Köstinger (PPE)
(11. Januar 2012)

Betrifft: Lebensmittelkontaminierung durch Desinfektionsmittel

Ein österreichisches Unternehmen, welches auf die Herstellung und Vermarktung von Naturprodukten aus biologischem Anbau spezialisiert ist, hat sich über Jahre hinweg einen guten Ruf im EU-Binnenmarkt aufgebaut. Dieser scheint nun gefährdet:

In einem Exportland wurde vor Kurzem beanstandet, dass auf Pfeffer und anderen Gewürzen des Unternehmens Spuren von Desinfektionsmitteln gefunden wurden. Die Verunreinigung der biologischen Produkte ist mit hoher Wahrscheinlichkeit beim Transport mit desinfizierten Containern entstanden, da im Zuge einer Kontrolle bestätigt wurde, dass das Unternehmen Desinfektionsmittel der gefundenen Art nicht aktiv einsetzt. Trotzdem wurde eine Mahnung ausgesprochen.

Gemäß Anhang II Kapitel IV „Beförderung" der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 852/2004 über Lebensmittelhygiene müssen Transportbehälter und/oder Container zur Beförderung von Lebensmitteln sauber und instand gehalten werden, damit die Lebensmittel vor Kontamination geschützt sind.

1. Sind der Kommission solche Vorfälle bereits bekannt?

2. Gibt es Toleranz- bzw. Grenzwerte für Rückstände von Desinfektionsmitteln auf Nahrungsmitteln, deren Transport in Containern erfolgt, die zuvor mit Desinfektionsmittel gesäubert wurden?

3. Welche Maßnahmen können seitens der Kommission, aber auch der Unternehmer ergriffen werden, um solchen Situationen vorzubeugen?

Antwort von Herrn Dalli im Namen der Kommission
(14. Februar 2012)

Nach Anhang II Kapitel IV der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 852/2004 des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 29. April 2004 über Lebensmittelhygiene ([1]) müssen Transportbehälter und/oder Container zur Beförderung von Lebensmitteln sauber und instand gehalten werden, damit die Lebensmittel vor Kontamination geschützt sind, und müssen erforderlichenfalls so konzipiert und gebaut sein, dass eine angemessene Reinigung und/oder Desinfektion möglich ist. Außerdem sind Lebensmittel in Transportbehältern und/oder Containern so zu platzieren und zu schützen, dass das Kontaminationsrisiko so gering wie möglich ist. Es obliegt den Lebensmittelunternehmern, diese Bestimmungen einzuhalten und zur Vermeidung von Kontamination geeignete Container zu verwenden.

Der Kommission ist der von Ihnen angesprochene Fall nicht bekannt.

Die Verordnung (EG) Nr. 852/2004 des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 29. April 2004 über Lebensmittelhygiene enthält keine Rückstandshöchstgehalte für die bei der Reinigung von Transportbehältern verwendeten Desinfektionsmittel.

([1]) ABl. L 139 vom 30.4.2004.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012634/11
to the Commission
Elisabeth Köstinger (PPE)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Contamination of food by disinfectants

An Austrian business specialising in the production and marketing of natural products made from organic produce has succeeded in building up an excellent reputation in the EU single market over the years. This reputation now seems to be under threat:

A complaint was recently made in one of the countries to which the business exports that traces of disinfectant were found on pepper and other spices produced by the company. The contamination of the organic products most probably occurred during transport in disinfected containers, as it was confirmed during an inspection that the company does not actively use disinfectants of the type found. Nonetheless, a warning was issued.

According to Annex II Section IV 'Transport' of Council Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs, containers used in transporting foodstuffs must be kept clean and maintained in good repair and condition in order to protect foodstuffs from contamination.

1. Is the Commission already aware of such incidents?

2. Are there tolerance or limit values for residue from disinfectants on foodstuffs transported in containers previously cleaned using disinfectants?

3. What steps can the Commission take by the Commission and by traders to prevent such situations?

Answer given by Mr Dalli on behalf of the Commission
(14 February 2012)

According to Chapter IV of Annex II to Regulation (EC) 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs ([1]), conveyances and/or containers used for transporting foodstuffs are to be kept clean and maintained in good repair and condition to protect foodstuffs from contamination and are, where necessary, to be designed and constructed to permit adequate cleaning and/or disinfection. Furthermore, foodstuffs in conveyances and/or containers are to be so placed and protected as to minimise the risk of contamination. It is the duty of food business operators to ensure they comply with these provisions including making use of suitable containers to avoid contamination.

The Commission is not aware of the specific incident.

Regulation (EC) 852/2004 of the Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs does not include residue limits for the disinfectants used in the cleaning of transport containers.

([1]) OJ L 139, 30.4.2004.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-012635/11
an die Kommission
Elisabeth Köstinger (PPE)
(11. Januar 2012)

Betrifft: Handelsinitiative „Alles außer Waffen"

In Phnom Penh (Kambodscha) werden laut Zeitungsberichten jährlich Zehntausende Menschen von ihren Grundstücksparzellen vertrieben, um Platz für lukrativen Bau- oder Plantagengrund zu machen. Frauen seien dabei besonderen Gefahren ausgesetzt, berichtete die Menschenrechtsorganisation Amnesty International.

In dem Bericht wird weiter ausgeführt, dass infolge der Handelsinitiative „Alles außer Waffen" der EU teilweise einzelne Dörfer geräumt werden, weil Investoren von den Handelserleichterungen profitieren wollen.

1. Sind der Kommission solche Vorfälle in Kambodscha bekannt?

2. Sind der Kommission andere, vergleichbare Missstände in Ländern bekannt, die von der Initiative „Alles außer Waffen" der EU profitieren?

3. Welche Schritte und Lösungsansätze sind seitens der Kommission denkbar, um solchen Missständen entgegenzuwirken?

Antwort von Herrn De Gucht im Namen der Kommission
(17. Februar 2012)

Die Kommission ist der Ansicht, dass das Problem der unrechtmäßigen Landvergabe in Kambodscha aus einer weiter gefassten Perspektive verantwortungsvoller Staatsführung betrachtet werden sollte. Der Schutz der Rechte der örtlichen Gemeinschaften hängt mit einem funktionierenden System zur Verwaltung der Landtitel und der korrekten Anwendung der bereits geltenden Rechtsvorschriften für Landkonzessionen zusammen.

Bei den Beziehungen zur Königlichen Regierung Kambodschas hat das Landmanagement eine der höchsten politischen Prioritäten. Gemeinsam mit anderen Gebern und Entwicklungspartnern wird die Kommission die Behörden weiterhin dazu anhalten, entsprechende Maßnahmen zum Schutz der Rechte der örtlichen Gemeinschaften zu ergreifen. Die EU hat dieses Thema bei den Behörden schon mehrfach auf höchster Ebene zur Sprache gebracht. Sie hat die Verantwortung der kambodschanischen Regierung hervorgehoben, eine gerechte sozialökonomische Entwicklung sicherzustellen, seine natürlichen Ressourcen transparent zu verwalten und die vollständige Durchführung und Durchsetzung der Rechtsvorschriften für das Landmanagement zu gewährleisten.

So wird die Kommission weiterhin mit der kambodschanischen Regierung zusammenarbeiten, um zu einer besseren Achtung der in relevanten UN-Konventionen festgelegten Grundsätze zu gelangen, aber auch, um sicherzustellen dass die Rechtsvorschriften zur Verwaltung der Landkonzessionen vollständig durchgeführt und durchgesetzt werden, um die Rechte der örtlichen Gemeinschaften zu schützen, die bereits auf einem Landabschnitt angesiedelt sind.

Der Kommission ist bisher nicht bekannt, dass Landrechte in anderen von Handelserleichterungen der Initiative „Alles außer Waffen" begünstigten Ländern missbraucht worden wären.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012635/11
to the Commission
Elisabeth Köstinger (PPE)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: The 'Everything but arms' (EBA) trade initiative

According to newspaper reports, every year tens of thousands of people are driven off their small landholdings in Phnom Penh (Cambodia) to make room for lucrative construction sites or plantations. Human rights organisation Amnesty International reported that this development puts women at particular risk.

The report further states that, as a result of the EU's EBA ('Everything but arms') trade initiative, whole villages are sometimes cleared as investors seek to profit from the relaxed trading regulations.

1. Is the Commission already aware of such incidents in Cambodia?

2. Is the Commission aware of similar irregularities in other countries that benefit from the EU's 'Everything but arms' initiative?

3. What steps and solutions could the Commission conceivably implement to combat such irregularities?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(17 February 2012)

The Commission considers that the issue of land violations in Cambodia should be looked at from a broader governance perspective. Protecting the rights of local communities relates to a proper system for administration of land titles and the correct application of the legislation already in force governing land concessions.

Land management is one of the highest political priorities in the relations with the Royal Government of Cambodia and together with other donors and development partners the Commission will continue to urge the authorities to take appropriate action to protect the rights of local communities. The EU has raised this issue repeatedly at the highest level with the authorities. It has underlined the responsibility of the Cambodian Government to ensure equitable social-economic development, to manage its natural resources in a transparent way and to ensure the full implementation and enforcement of Land Management legislation.

In light of this, the Commission will continue to engage with the Cambodian Government to advance towards a better respect of the principles enshrined in relevant UN conventions, and in particular to ensure the full implementation and enforcement of its Land Management Concessions legislation in order to protect the rights of local communities already living on the land.

The Commission has not received information on abuse of land rights in other EBA-beneficiary countries.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-012636/11
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(11 Ιανουαρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Σίτιση μαθητών στα σχολεία

Η οικονομική κρίση που πλήττει την Ελλάδα έχει, μεταξύ άλλων, ως συνέπεια την εμφάνιση φαινομένων υποσιτισμού μαθητών. Πρόσφατα, το Δημοτικό βρεφοκομείο της Αθήνας αποφάσισε να διανέμει σε καθημερινή βάση περίπου 67 γεύματα σε παιδικούς σταθμούς του Δήμου σε μία προσπάθεια κάλυψης των αναγκών σίτισης των παιδιών, αφού πλέον αυτές δεν μπορούν να καλυφθούν στο σπίτι τους. Παράλληλα, έχει προταθεί η έκδοση κουπονιών από την πολιτεία προκειμένου μαθητές που αντιμετωπίζουν το φάσμα της ασιτίας να τρέφονται δωρεάν στα σχολικά κυλικεία.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Με ποιό τρόπο θα μπορούσε η ΕΕ να συμβάλει στην αντιμετώπιση του φαινομένου;

2. Προτίθεται να αξιολογήσει θετικά ενδεχόμενο αίτημα της Ελλάδας για κοινοτική βοήθεια ώστε να καλυφθούν οι ανάγκες σίτισης μαθητών στις οποίες οι οικογένειες τους δεν μπορούν να ανταποκριθούν εξαιτίας της οικονομικής κρίσης;

Απάντηση του κ. Cioloş εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(21 Φεβρουαρίου 2012)

Ορισμένα μέσα διαθέσιμα σε ευρωπαϊκό επίπεδο θα ήταν δυνατό να συμβάλουν στην αντιμετώπιση του προβλήματος υποσιτισμού παιδιών στην Ελλάδα.

Το ευρωπαϊκό πρόγραμμα επισιτιστικής βοήθειας για τα πλέον άπορα άτομα, αν και δεν εστιάζει άμεσα σε παιδιά, θα μπορούσε να βοηθήσει στη μείωση της επισιτιστικής ανασφάλειας για τα παιδιά στην Ελλάδα. Τα κράτη μέλη διαθέτουν σημαντική διακριτική ευχέρεια υλοποίησης του μέτρου, όπου περιλαμβάνονται η επιλογή δικαιούχων, με την ευρεία έννοια, όπως ορίζει ο κανονισμός (ΕΚ) αριθ. 807/2010 ([1]).

Επίσης θα μπορούσε να συμβάλει το σχέδιο προώθησης της κατανάλωσης φρούτων στα σχολεία. Αυτό το σχέδιο απευθύνεται σε παιδιά που φοιτούν σε εκπαιδευτικά ιδρύματα, από νηπιαγωγεία μέχρι σχολεία δευτεροβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης. Τα κράτη μέλη μπορούν να επιλέγουν τα ίδια συγκεκριμένη ηλικιακή ομάδα και να εστιάζουν σε περιοχές/σχολεία με κοινωνικοοικονομικές δυσκολίες.

Μέσω του ευρωπαϊκού προγράμματος διανομής γάλακτος στα σχολεία, τα παιδιά μπορούν να λαμβάνουν επιδοτούμενα υγιεινά γαλακτοκομικά προϊόντα, που περιέχουν σημαντικές βιταμίνες και ιχνοστοιχεία. Στο πρόγραμμα έχουν πρόσβαση όλα τα κράτη μέλη. Λεπτομερείς πληροφορίες σχετικά με το πρόγραμμα διανομής γάλακτος στα σχολεία περιέχονται στον κανονισμό (ΕΚ) αριθ. 657/2008 της Επιτροπής ([2]).

Αυτά τα μέσα συμβάλλουν στην επισιτιστική βοήθεια και σε συνήθειες για υγιεινότερη σίτιση σε ευρωπαϊκό επίπεδο, αλλά δεν μπορεί να αποτελέσουν τη μοναδική απόκριση στην αυξανόμενη ανάγκη επισιτιστικής βοήθειας στην Ελλάδα. Ύψιστη σημασία για την αντιμετώπιση των αιτιών της ανεπαρκούς σίτισης αποδίδεται επίσης σε πολιτικές περισσότερο διαθρωτικού χαρακτήρα, τόσο σε επίπεδο ΕΕ όσο και σε εθνικό επίπεδο, καθώς και στην κινητοποίηση της κοινωνίας των πολιτών και σε τοπικές πρωτοβουλίες. Μεταξύ άλλων, η καταπολέμηση της φτώχιας και του κοινωνικού αποκλεισμού έχει αναγνωστεί ως προτεραιότητα στη στρατηγική «Ευρώπη 2020». Σε αυτό το πλαίσιο, εντός του έτους 2012 η Επιτροπή θα εκδώσει σύσταση για τη φτώχια των παιδιών, που θα στηρίξει τις προσπάθειες της ΕΕ και των κρατών μελών για την αποτροπή και την αντιμετώπιση της φτώχιας των παιδιών.

([1]) ΕΕ L 242 της 15.09.2010, σ. 9-20.
([2]) ΕΕ L 183 της 11.07.2008, σ. 17-26.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012636/11
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Feeding children at school

The financial crisis in Greece has led, *inter alia*, to the emergence of child malnutrition. Recently, Athens Municipal Nursery decided to distribute some 67 meals a day to municipal kindergartens in a bid to feed those children whose families are no longer able to do so. It has also been proposed that the State issue food vouchers so that children facing starvation can be fed free of charge at school canteens.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. How could EU help tackle this problem?

2. Does it intend to respond positively should Greece ask for Community assistance to feed those children whose families are unable to do so as owing to the financial crisis?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(21 February 2012)

A number of existing European instruments could help tackling the problem of child malnutrition in Greece.

The European Food Aid programme for the most deprived persons, although not directly focusing on children, could help reducing food insecurity of Greek children. Member States dispose of significant discretion to implement the measure, including the selection of beneficiaries, within the large definition laid down by Regulation (EC) 807/2010 ([1]).

The School Fruit Scheme could also contribute. This scheme targets children in educational establishments, from nurseries to secondary schools. Member States can choose their specific target (age) group and focus on areas/schools with socio/economic difficulties.

Through the European School Milk Scheme children can receive subsidised healthy dairy products containing important vitamins and minerals. The scheme is available for every Member State. Detailed information on the School Milk Scheme can be found in Commission Regulation (EC) 657/2008 ([2]).

These instruments contribute to the food aid and more healthy eating habits at European level, but they can not be the sole response to the growing need for food aid in Greece. Policies of a more structural nature, both at EU and national level, as well as the mobilisation of civil society and local initiatives are of utmost importance to tackle the causes of food poverty. Among others, the fight against poverty and social exclusion was acknowledged as a priority of the Europe 2020 strategy. In this context, the Commission will adopt in 2012 a recommendation on child poverty, which will support the EU and Member States' efforts to prevent and tackle child poverty.

([1]) OJ L 242, 15.9.2010, p. 9-20.
([2]) OJ L 183, 11.7.2008, p. 17-26.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-012637/11
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(11 Ιανουαρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Διατηρητέα κτίσματα στην Αθήνα και την υπόλοιπη Ελλάδα

Το ελληνικό νομικό πλαίσιο για τα διατηρητέα νεοκλασικά κτίσματα της Αθήνας αλλά και για τα υπόλοιπα κτίσματα πολιτιστικής αξίας στην ελληνική επικράτεια αποδεικνύεται μη αποτελεσματικό. Ο κάτοχος ενός ακινήτου, το οποίο δεσμεύεται, μπορεί να αντλήσει χρήματα μέσω της δανειοδότησης προκειμένου να το αποκαταστήσει και να το εκμεταλλευτεί (ως κατοικία ή επαγγελματική στέγη). Ωστόσο, η άρνηση των χρηματοπιστωτικών ιδρυμάτων να χορηγήσουν σχετικά δάνεια λόγω της οικονομικής κρίσης, η αδυναμία των ιδιοκτητών να επιβαρυνθούν οικονομικά εξαιτίας της δύσκολης οικονομικής κατάστασης, αλλά και σε πολλές περιπτώσεις το περίπλοκο καθεστώς ιδιοκτησίας (π.χ. συνιδιοκτησία), έχουν ως αποτέλεσμα κτήρια μοναδικής πολιτιστικής αξίας σε όλη την χώρα να εγκαταλείπονται και να καταρρέουν.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Με ποιο τρόπο μπορεί να συνδράμει στη διατήρηση και αναστήλωση των κτηρίων διατηρητέου χαρακτήρα στην Ελλάδα; Μπορούν να διατεθούν κοινοτικοί πόροι για αυτόν τον σκοπό;

2. Προτίθεται η Επιτροπή να προτείνει την κινητοποίηση πόρων μέσω της Ευρωπαϊκής Τράπεζας Επενδύσεων προκειμένου να αυξηθεί η ρευστότητα προς τις ελληνικές τράπεζες που χορηγούν τα σχετικά δάνεια;

3. Διαθέτει η Επιτροπή καλές πρακτικές από άλλα κράτη μέλη για τη συντήρηση, διατήρηση και αναστήλωση κτηρίων τα οποία θα μπορούσε να εφαρμόσει η Ελλάδα;

4. Καθώς οι ιδιώτες κάτοχοι των εν λόγω κτηρίων φαίνονται απρόθυμοι λόγω της οικονομικής κρίσης να επενδύσουν σε αυτά τα κτήρια, είναι σε θέση η Επιτροπή να παρέχει ή να προτείνει συγκεκριμένα κίνητρα;

Απάντηση του κ. Hahn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(17 Φεβρουαρίου 2012)

Η πολιτική συνοχής μπορεί να υποστηρίξει επενδύσεις σε πολιτιστικές εκδηλώσεις τόσο για να καταστούν οι περιφέρειες πιο ελκυστικοί τόποι για επενδυτές και εργαζομένους όσο και κινητήριος τροχός για μια κοινωνικοοικονομική ανάπτυξη, ιδίως για την προώθηση βιώσιμου πολιτιστικού τουρισμού. Στο εν λόγω πλαίσιο, για την περίοδο 2007-2013, από το Ευρωπαϊκό Ταμείο Περιφερειακής Ανάπτυξης (ΕΤΠΑ) χορηγήθηκαν στα κράτη μέλη 6 δισεκατομμύρια ευρώ για την γραμμή του προϋπολογισμού «Πολιτισμός», συμπεριλαμβανομένων 3 δισεκατομμυρίων ευρώ για την προστασία και τη διατήρηση της πολιτισμικής κληρονομιάς.

1. Σε συμφωνία με τις αρχές της επιμερισμένης διαχείρισης, οι εθνικές αρχές είναι αρμόδιες για την επιλογή και την υλοποίηση των επιλέξιμων σχεδίων για τη χορήγηση συγχρηματοδότησης από την ΕΕ στην Ελλάδα.

2. Η Επιτροπή συνεργάζεται με τις ελληνικές αρχές και με την Ευρωπαϊκή Τράπεζα Επενδύσεων για τη δημιουργία νέου ταμείου εγγυήσεων, με βάση την επιμερισμένη διαχείριση, και με στόχο την αντιμετώπιση των αναγκών ρευστότητας των ΜΜΕ σε ευρύ φάσμα τομέων.

3. Υπάρχουν αρκετά παραδείγματα ορθής πρακτικής που εφαρμόστηκαν στη διάρκεια της περιόδου 2000-2006 στα κράτη μέλη και ιδίως στην Ελλάδα, όπως η αναστήλωση και η συντήρηση των μνημείων της Ακρόπολης. Παραδείγματα σχεδίων υπάρχουν στον παρακάτω δικτυακό τόπο:
ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/projects/stories/index_en.cfm

4. Ιδιώτες ιδιοκτήτες δεν είναι επιλέξιμοι ως άμεσοι δικαιούχοι συγχρηματοδότησης από το ΕΤΠΑ.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012637/11
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Listed buildings in Athens and the rest of Greece

The Hellenic legal framework on neoclassical listed buildings in Athens as well as the rest of buildings having cultural value in the Greek territory is revealed to be ineffective. Owners of regulated buildings may obtain funds through lending to restore and operate the same (as residential or commercial installations). However the refusal of financial institutions to grant the necessary loans in light of the financial crisis, the landowners' inability to make the necessary disbursements due to the current hardship and — in many cases — the complex ownership situation (e.g. joint ownership) result in the abandonment and deterioration of buildings of unique cultural value throughout the country.

Will the Commission answer the following:

1. In what way may the Commission assist in preserving and restoring listed buildings in Greece? May Community funds be allocated for that purpose?

2. Does the Commission intend to propose the mobilisation of funds through the European Investment Bank to increase cash flows to the Hellenic banks that supply such loans?

3. Is the Commission aware of any good practices applied in other Member States for the maintenance, preservation and restoration of buildings, which could be applied by Greece?

4. As private owners of such buildings seem reluctant to invest in such buildings, in light of the financial crisis, is the Commission able to provide or propose specific incentives?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(17 February 2012)

Cohesion policy can support culture-related investments both for making regions more attractive places to invest and work and as a driver for socioeconomic development, in particular for fostering sustainable cultural tourism. In this framework, for the 2007-2013 period, Member States have allocated from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) EUR 6 billion for the 'Culture' heading, including EUR 3 billion for the protection and preservation of cultural heritage.

1. In line with the principles of shared management, national authorities are responsible for the selection and the implementation of eligible projects to receive EU co-financing in Greece.

2. The Commission is working closely with the Greek authorities and the European Investment Bank to establish a new guarantee fund, under shared management, with the view to meeting the liquidity needs of SMEs across a broad range of sectors.

3. There are a certain number of examples of good practices implemented during the 2000-2006 period in the Member States and in particular in Greece, such as the restoration and maintenance of the monuments of Acropolis. Examples of projects can be found here: ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/projects/stories/index_en.cfm

4. Private owners are not eligible as direct beneficiaries of ERDF co-financing.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-012638/11
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(11 Ιανουαρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Ευρωπαϊκή συνεργασία με τον Λίβανο για την πάταξη της φοροδιαφυγής

Η λιβανική οικονομία είναι βασισμένη στον τραπεζικό κλάδο. Στον Λίβανο σήμερα δραστηριοποιούνται περισσότερες από 65 τράπεζες, 53 εμπορικές και 12 επενδυτικές, οι οποίες έχουν ενοποιημένα στοιχεία ενεργητικού 138 δισ. ευρώ. Ένα μεγάλο μέρος των εισροών αφορά εξωτερικά κεφάλαια, κάποια από τα οποία φοροδιαφεύγουν από τη χώρα τους, προερχόμενα κυρίως από την Ευρώπη.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

Σκοπεύει να αναπτύξει συμφωνίες ελέγχου της νομιμότητας των ευρωπαϊκών κεφαλαίων που κατευθύνονται στον Λίβανο; Συνεργάζεται σήμερα και, αν ναι, σε ποιο βαθμό με τον Λίβανο, προκειμένου να ελέγχονται φοροδιαφεύγοντα κεφάλαια;

Απάντηση του κ. Šemeta εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(29 Φεβρουαρίου 2012)

Η Επιτροπή δεν είχε υπόψη της τα στοιχεία που αναφέρονται στην ερώτηση.

Η ευρωμεσογειακή συμφωνία προβλέπει την ελευθέρωση των πληρωμών και της διακίνησης κεφαλαίων μεταξύ της ΕΕ και του Λιβάνου. Η Επιτροπή δεν προετοιμάζει επί του παρόντος καμία απόφαση με στόχο τον έλεγχο της ροής κεφαλαίων προς τον Λίβανο.

Ένα σχέδιο δράσης στο πλαίσιο της Ευρωπαϊκής Πολιτικής Γειτονίας (ΕΠΓ) προβλέπει τη συνεργασία στον τομέα της πρόληψης της νομιμοποίησης εσόδων από παράνομες δραστηριότητες η οποία περιλαμβάνει, μεταξύ άλλων, την ενίσχυση της συνεργασίας και την προώθηση της ανταλλαγής πληροφοριών μεταξύ των υπηρεσιών που είναι αρμόδιες για την επιβολή του νόμου και μεταξύ διεθνών οργανισμών και οργανισμών του Λιβάνου και, επίσης, του συστήματος χρηματοοικονομικών πληροφοριών του Λιβάνου, με ιδιαίτερη έμφαση στην παρακολούθηση των κινήσεων ρευστών διαθεσίμων και των ηλεκτρονικών μεταφορών χρηματικών ποσών στο εξωτερικό. Η ΕΕ πραγματοποιεί τακτικές συναντήσεις με τις λιβανικές αρχές με σκοπό την παρακολούθηση της συνεργασίας στον τομέα της νομιμοποίησης εσόδων από παράνομες δραστηριότητες, μεταξύ άλλων θεμάτων.

Όσον αφορά τη φορολογία, η Επιτροπή προωθεί τις αρχές της χρηστής διακυβέρνησης στον φορολογικό τομέα (διαφάνεια, ανταλλαγή πληροφοριών και θεμιτό φορολογικό ανταγωνισμό) για την πάταξη της φοροδιαφυγής και της φοροαποφυγής παγκοσμίως.

Οι υπηρεσίες της Επιτροπής γνωρίζουν ότι ο Λίβανος έχει συνάψει συμβάσεις για την αποφυγή της διπλής φορολόγησης με 14 κράτη μέλη, αλλά το ζήτημα της εφαρμογής του διεθνούς προτύπου για την ανταλλαγή πληροφοριών και τη διαφάνεια φαίνεται ότι αποτελεί ένα από τα κυριότερα εμπόδια για τη σύναψη των συμφωνιών που εκκρεμούν. Η Επιτροπή προέτρεψε τις λιβανικές αρχές να αναλάβουν δεσμεύσεις όσον αφορά την εφαρμογή των εν λόγω προτύπων. Ο Λίβανος συμμετείχε πρόσφατα στο παγκόσμιο φόρουμ του ΟΟΣΑ για τη διαφάνεια και την ανταλλαγή πληροφοριών για φορολογικούς σκοπούς και σύντομα θα διενεργηθεί αξιολόγηση του Λιβάνου, από ομότιμους, στο πεδίο της συμμόρφωσης.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012638/11
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: European cooperation with Lebanon for combating tax evasion

The Lebanese economy is based on the banking sector. Currently there are more than 65 banks — 53 commercial and 12 investment banks — having activities in Lebanon. Their consolidated assets amount to EUR 138 billion. A substantial part of their input refers to foreign funds and some of these, mainly sourced from Europe, evade taxation in their countries.

Will the Commission answer the following:

Is it the intent of the Commission to develop agreements on the control of legitimacy of European funds directed to Lebanon? Is the Commission currently working with Lebanon — and if affirmative, to what extent — to control funds evading taxation?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(29 February 2012)

The Commission was not aware of the facts mentioned in the question.

The Euro-Mediterranean Agreement provides for the liberalisation of payments and capital movements between the EU and Lebanon. The Commission is currently not preparing any decision which would have as an objective the control of capital flows to Lebanon.

An Action Plan under the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) foresees cooperation in the field of money laundering prevention including i. a.: intensify cooperation and promote the exchange of information among law enforcement agencies and between Lebanon and international organisations, and strengthen Lebanon's system of financial information with particular emphasis on the monitoring of cash movements and wire transfers abroad. The EU holds regular meetings with the Lebanese authorities to review cooperation in preventing money laundering, among other issues.

As regards taxation the Commission tackles tax evasion and tax avoidance by promoting the principles of good governance in the tax area (transparency, exchange of information and fair tax competition) worldwide.

The Commission services are aware that Lebanon has concluded double tax conventions with 14 Member States but the question of the implementation of the international standard on exchange of information and transparency appears to be one of the major obstacles to concluding the pending agreements. The Commission has encouraged the Lebanese authorities to commit themselves to these standards. Lebanon has recently engaged with the OECD Global Forum on transparency and exchange of information for tax purposes and there will shortly be a peer review examination of Lebanon to assess compliance.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012639/11
to the Commission
Marina Yannakoudakis (ECR)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Complete ban on 'backscatter' body scan machines due to alleged health concerns

Would the Commission recommend a complete ban on 'backscatter' body scan machines due to alleged health concerns through exposure to radiation? Further to this, does the Commission agree that EU citizens are entitled to an opt-out option in the form of a physical search when passing through security at European Union Member State airports?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(15 February 2012)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-011635/2011 ([1]).

The Commission adopted a legislative package on 10, 11 and 14 November 2011 ([2]) which enables the use of security scanners at EU Airports, if the security scanner does not use ionising radiation as a method for the screening of passengers. In respect of ionising radiation the Commission is following the Euratom treaty and legislation which links the use of ionising radiation to strict conditions. Several Member States have prohibited the use of ionising radiation equipment for all purposes other than medical in view of the possible negative health impacts of radiation.

The Commission has therefore requested its Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks to assess the possible effects of security scanners which use ionising radiation on people's health. This Committee is expected to deliver an opinion in April 2012. Until the results of this opinion are received and assessed, the Commission is not in a position to provide more information on the health concerns associated with the use of backscatter scanners for security screening.

The Honourable Member is kindly reminded that according to Point 4.1.1.10 of Commission Regulation (EU) No 185/2010 of 4 March 2010 laying down detailed measures for the implementation of the common basic standards on aviation security, passengers shall be entitled to opt out from a security scanner. Indeed, in case of an opt-out, the passenger must be screened by an alternative screening method, which may consist of a physical search ('pat down'), in order to enter to the security restricted area of the airport.

([1]) Available at http://www.europarl.europa.eu/QP-WEB/application/search.do

([2]) Regulation (EU) No 1141/2011 of 10 November 2011 amending Regulation (EC) No 272/2009 supplementing the common basic standards on civil aviation security as regards the use of security scanners at EU airports, OJ L 293, 11.11.2011, p. 22-23, and Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1147/2011 of 11 November 2011 amending Regulation (EU) No 185/2010 implementing the common basic standards on civil aviation security as regards the use of security scanners at EU airports, OJ L 294, 12.11.2011, p. 7-11. A Commission implementing decision of 14 November 2011 with security elements on the same subject has not been published but been sent directly to Member States.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012641/11
to the Commission
Marina Yannakoudakis (ECR)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Ending the 35-year-old conflict in Western Sahara

What efforts has the European External Action Service undertaken, or will it undertake, to help protect the rights of victims and make progress towards ending the 35-year-old conflict in Western Sahara?

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

The High Representative/Vice-President is following closely the situation in the Western Sahara and in the region overall.

The EU supports the efforts of the UN Secretary General aiming at finding a just, lasting and mutually-acceptable solution that allows for the self— determination of the Sahrawi people, in accordance with the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions.

The issue of respect for international human rights obligations is addressed regularly in the framework of the EU-Morocco Subcommittee on Human Rights, Democracy and Governance. As regards the issue of Western Sahara, the issue is raised regularly in our dialogue with the authorities notably in political dialogue and/or of Association Council meetings.

Moreover, the EU continues to intervene on humanitarian grounds through the provision of significant humanitarian aid in favour of the Sahrawi population living in refugee camps in Algeria.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012642/11
to the Commission
Marina Yannakoudakis (ECR)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — EEAS information budget spending

The EEAS spends millions of euros a year on information budgets in third countries. Could the EEAS please provide details of the EEAS information budget spending, especially in the USA, Switzerland, Japan and China?

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

The two operational budget lines of the EU's information and communication budget in the field of external relations are managed by the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI).

This funding supports activities managed at Headquarters as well as in EU Delegations in third countries. The overall amount of the budgets in 2011 was just over EUR 11.9 million.

Expenditure at Headquarters was on:

— developing and improving websites for the EEAS and the EU Delegations;

— press visits for third country journalists to Brussels and for EU journalists to ENP countries;

— audiovisual products highlighting the EU's role in external relations;

— supporting the Euronews farsi language channel;

— producing press materials for EU Summits with third countries.

In Delegations, the press and information activities include the organisation of open door events, seminars, school visits, film festivals and production of information materials. There is also a significant amount of work done in Delegations in the field of public diplomacy that does not have any cost implications such as social media work, website maintenance, contacts with local journalists and building networks among university students.

The press and information budgets vary from country to country with some budgets below EUR 10 000. In 2011, the overall budget allocated for EU Delegations in third countries was EUR 5 583 676. Of this amount, the Washington Delegation received EUR 640 000, Berne EUR 45 000, Tokyo EUR 470 000 and Beijing EUR 315 637.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012643/11
to the Commission
Kay Swinburne (ECR)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Continued non-compliance with the EU Zoo Directive — 1999/22/EC

A number of constituents have contacted me regarding the continued non-compliance with the EU Zoo Directive (1999/22/EC) by a number of Member States. Inquiries by the Born Free Foundation have highlighted that many zoos across the EU are substandard and do not meet EU animal welfare standards. I am concerned that, despite a European Court of Justice ruling in December 2010 that the Commission should take immediate action against those Member States that had not complied with the directive, and despite this concern having been raised by a number of MEPs, non-compliance still remains an issue almost a year later.

It would therefore be helpful if the Commission could provide an update as to:

1. Which EU Member States are still non-compliant with this directive?

2. What action will the Commission be taking?

3. What deadline has the Commission set for non-compliant Member States to rectify this grave situation?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(16 February 2012)

The Commission is aware of the discussion undertaken by the Born Free Foundation with the countries concerned by its ongoing inquiry in relation to the implementation of the Zoos' Directive ([1]) and the follow-up given to address problems identified in its investigation.

The Commission is following this matter closely and where there is clear evidence of a failure to address gaps in transposition and implementation of the directive it will take the necessary legal action. So far this happened in relation to Spain.

In this context, the Commission is currently assessing the report submitted by the Spanish authorities on the measures taken to comply with the Court of Justice's judgment of 9 December 2010 ([2]). Spanish authorities have submitted their observations reporting on the measures taken to comply with the Court of Justice's judgment of 9 December 2010. The Commission will monitor the full implementation of the Court judgment and will not hesitate to take the necessary steps should evidence be produced in relation to lack of compliance with the Zoos' Directive in other Member States.

([1]) Council Directive 1999/22/EC of 29 March 1999 relating to the keeping of wild animals in zoos, OJ 1999 L 94.
([2]) Judgment of the Court of 9 December 2010 (Case C-340/09), OJ 19.2.2011 C 55/12.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012645/11
to the Commission
David Martin (S&D)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Data exclusivity in the EU-India FTA

As the Commission is aware, Parliament's resolution of 12 July 2007 on the TRIPS Agreement and access to medicine (P6_TA(2007)0353) specifically requested that the Commission does not seek the inclusion of data exclusivity in bilateral free trade agreements with developing countries such as India.

The potentially damaging effects of data exclusivity on the production of generic medicines in India has been well documented and raised with the Commission on many occasions. I am particularly concerned that the inclusion and enforcement of data exclusivity would impose huge costs on generic companies and in effect prevent the manufacturing and distribution of generic medicines. This would have a huge impact on India's position as the 'pharmacy of the developing world' and of the distribution of life-saving drugs in the world's poorest countries.

While the Commission has stated that it would insert a clause into the FTA to lift data exclusivity if a compulsory licence was issued, I am concerned that this would not cover all medicines. Given the public health safeguards in India's intellectual property laws which limit the award of patents to very new and innovative medicines, does the Commission accept that in cases where a patent and therefore compulsory licence was not issued, data exclusivity poses a significant danger to the production of certain generics?

In his response of 7 April 2011 (P-002242/2011), Commissioner De Gucht confirmed that the EU was not currently negotiating data exclusivity in the FTA.

Can the Commission confirm that this is still the case, and it is not seeking the inclusion of data exclusivity in the EU-India FTA?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(28 February 2012)

The Commission reassures the Honourable Member that any Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with India will not contain an obligation to introduce data exclusivity for pharmaceutical products. Taking into account India's specific role as a major producer of generic medicines for the developing world, the EU and India have agreed that the FTA will reflect and consolidate both sides' legislative developments and comply with WTO commitments. At present, India does not provide for data exclusivity and it appears unlikely that India will have introduced such system by the time of concluding this agreement.

When India adopts a system of data exclusivity, the Commission would accept that India lifts data exclusivity rules in order to use compulsory licensing for manufacture and export of medicines to other developing countries facing public health crises. In such cases where no patent exists in the first place, the Commission will also not object to exceptions to data exclusivity necessary to address the public health needs identified and ensure access to medicines, including for domestic purposes.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012648/11
to the Commission
Charles Tannock (ECR)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Riots in western Kazakhstan

The High Representative may be aware of the recent rioting in western Kazakhstan that has reportedly left 14 people dead. The provenance of the large-scale protests was believed to be the economic mismanagement of oil revenues and the alleged financial irregularities in the handling of these revenues by the Kazakh authorities. A state of emergency has been declared in Zhanozen province: it is reported that communications facilities such as Internet and telephone links have been restricted by the authorities, and that large numbers of soldiers have been deployed to restore order and prevent the violence spreading.

Will the High Representative monitor the Kazakh Government's decision to set up a commission of enquiry into the violence, chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Shukeev, and call for this commission to ensure that those guilty of causing the deaths are brought to justice and that no excessive or disproportionate punitive measures are taken against legitimate peaceful protesters in the region, being mindful of Kazakhstan's commitment to maintaining basic human rights by virtue of its OSCE membership?

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

The High Representative/Vice-President (HR/VP) Ashton and her services have been closely following the situation in the Zhanaozen district of Kazakhstan. As soon as the events broke out, the spokesperson of the HR/VP published a statement expressing the HR/VP's concerns about the situation and calling for an immediate investigation of the events, as well as for a peaceful solution to be found to the problems faced by the striking oil workers, through social dialogue.

The European External Action Service and the EU Delegation in Astana have been in regular contact with the Kazakhstani authorities to call on Kazakhstan to uphold its international obligations and commitments, especially those undertaken within the OSCE, in the fields of freedom of expression, association and assembly, and are pressing for the immediate start of the investigation to the events.

In line with the calls from the EU, Kazakhstan has established a Governmental Commission to look into the reasons behind the unrest and to resolve the social and economic problems of the town of Zhanaozen. Additionally, the Prosecutor General of Kazakhstan has launched criminal investigations to identify those responsible for the outbreak of violence and to examine the use of force by local police. The authorities have expressed their firm commitment that the investigations will be conducted rigorously and in keeping with the laws of Kazakhstan and international standards.

In doing so, the authorities have also announced that they will seek help from the United Nations to identify international observers to oversee the investigation. The HR/VP and her services will follow the investigation procedure, in close contact with the UN and Kazakhstani authorities, through the EU Delegation in Astana.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-012650/11
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Frances Silvestris (PPE)
(11 gennaio 2012)

Oggetto: Programmi per fondi diretti — Città di Bari

Gli enti territoriali, quali Comuni e Province, sono tra i primi possibili beneficiari dei fondi diretti programmati ed erogati dalle Direzioni generali della Commissione europea. Tra i fondi disponibili si possono ad esempio citare: il programma «Cultura», il programma per l'occupazione e la solidarietà sociale «Progress», il programma volto a promuovere la cittadinanza «Europa per i cittadini», il programma per l'ambiente «Life+», il programma per gestire i flussi migratori «Gestione dei flussi migratori», il programma dedicato alle risorse umane «Investire nelle persone», e tanti altri.

In merito a questi e ad altri programmi disponibili, può la Commissione indicare:

1. se ci sono programmi per i quali la città di Bari ha fatto richiesta;

2. in caso affermativo, quali sono i progetti che hanno avuto accesso a fondi europei e con quali risultati i suddetti progetti sono stati portati a termine?

Risposta data da Janusz Lewandowski a nome della Commissione
(22 febbraio 2012)

Dalle informazioni che la Commissione ha assunto per poter rispondere all'interrogazione dell'onorevole parlamentare è emerso che la città di Bari non ha mai chiesto finanziamenti nel quadro dei programmi citati.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012650/11
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Frances Silvestris (PPE)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Programmes for direct funding — The City of Bari

Local and regional authorities, such as municipalities and provinces, are among the first possible direct beneficiaries of the funds which are being planned and are set to be implemented by the Directorates General of the European Commission. Among the available funds are, for example, the 'Culture' programme, the 'Progress' programme for employment and social solidarity, the 'Europe for Citizens' programme aimed at the promotion of citizenship, the 'Life+' programme for the environment, the 'Management of migration flows' programme aimed at managing migration flows, the 'Investing in People' programme dedicated to human resources, and many others.

With regard to these and other available programmes, can the Commission specify:

1. whether there are any programmes for which the city of Bari has applied;

2. if so, which projects were given access to European funds, and what results did these projects obtain once they were completed?

Answer given by Mr Lewandowski on behalf of the Commission
(22 February 2012)

Research was undertaken by the Commission on the question from the Honourable Member and revealed that the City of Bari never applied for funding in the programmes mentioned.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite P-012652/11
à la Commission
Patrick Le Hyaric (GUE/NGL)
(10 janvier 2012)

Objet: VP/HR — Situation de Marwan Barghouti, membre du conseil législatif palestinien

Le nombre total de prisonniers libérés suite à l'accord entre les Palestiniens et Israël sur l'échange de prisonniers du 11 octobre dernier s'élève à 1 027; plus de 5 000 autres croupissent toujours dans les geôles israéliennes, et certains d'entre eux sont mineurs.

Israël refuse de libérer Marwan Barghouti, membre du conseil législatif palestinien, arrêté et enlevé illégalement à Ramallah par l'armée israélienne en avril 2002. Il a été condamné en 2004 à cinq fois la prison à vie, de même que des dizaines de dirigeants politiques.

Au vu de l'article 2 de l'Accord d'association UE-Israël qui mentionne que la relation entre l'UE et Israël sera fondée sur le respect des Droits de l'homme et des principes démocratiques, qui guident leurs politiques internes et externes en tant qu'élément essentiel de l'Accord,

1. La Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante est-elle au courant de la situation de M. Barghouti? Ne considère-t-elle pas que la non-libération d'un membre du conseil législatif palestinien constitue une violation flagrante du droit international?

2. La Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante n'estime-t-elle pas qu'il y a là responsabilité internationale à œuvrer d'urgence et de façon équilibrée à la libération des prisonniers palestiniens, en particulier des prisonniers et détenus avant la signature des accords d'Oslo, des personnes malades et handicapées, des femmes, des enfants et des membres du parlement palestinien élus comme Marwan Barghouti, Ahmad Saadat, Hassan Youssef et d'autres?

3. Comment la Commission et le SEAE pourraient-ils contribuer au lancement d'une campagne pour la libération des prisonniers et l'envoi de missions d'enquête dans les prisons de l'occupation afin de déterminer les conditions inhumaines subies par les prisonniers, en violation de tous les principes et valeurs du droit international humanitaire?

4. Quelles interventions seront mises en place pour mettre fin aux poursuites contre des ex-détenus et aux restrictions imposées concernant leurs déplacements et leur travail et pour permettre la levée de toutes les mesures arbitraires prises contre les détenus palestiniens dans les prisons israéliennes comme le confinement et l'isolement, le droit de visite à la population de la bande de Gaza, le droit aux études universitaires des prisonniers et le rétablissement des autres droits humains dont ils ont été privés?

Réponse donnée par la Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante Ashton au nom de la Commission
(10 avril 2012)

Le respect des Droits de l'homme est un pilier des politiques de l'UE à l'égard d'Israël et des Palestiniens. À plusieurs reprises, l'UE a condamné les violations du droit international par les deux parties.

Le Comité international de la Croix-Rouge (CICR) exécute actuellement le mandat qui lui a été confié de rendre visite aux Palestiniens détenus en Israël. L'UE maintient des contacts étroits avec le CICR sur ces questions, dans les limites de la confidentialité prévue dans le mandat du CICR. En tant que telle, une mission spécifique de l'UE du type suggéré n'est pas de mise.

L'UE est consciente du cas de M. Barghouti et des autres prisonniers palestiniens. Dans le cadre de son dialogue avec le gouvernement israélien, l'UE ne cesse de soulever la question de la situation des prisonniers palestiniens détenus dans les prisons israéliennes, en particulier pour ce qui est des conditions de détention et du lieu de détention, du recours à la détention administrative sans accusation formelle ainsi que du respect des Droits de l'homme.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-012652/11
to the Commission
Patrick Le Hyaric (GUE/NGL)
(10 January 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Situation of Marwan Barghouti, member of the Palestinian Legislative Council

The total number of prisoners freed following the agreement between the Palestinians and Israel over the exchange of prisoners of 11 October increased to 1 027; more than 5 000 others are still rotting in Israeli jails and some of them are minors.

Israel refuses to free Marwan Barghouti, a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, arrested in Ramallah and illegally taken away by the Israeli army in April 2002. In 2004 he was given five life sentences, as were dozens of political leaders.

With regard to Article 2 of the EU-Israeli Association Agreement which mentions that the relationship between the EU and Israel will be based on respect for human rights and democratic principles which guide their internal and external policies as an essential element of the Agreement,

1. Is the Vice-President/High Representative up-to-date on the situation of Mr Barghouti? Does she not consider that the failure to free a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council constitutes a flagrant violation of international law?

2. Does the Vice-President/High Representative not consider that the international community has a responsibility to urgently and level-headedly work towards freeing Palestinian prisoners, in particular prisoners and those detained before the signature of the Oslo agreements, those who are ill and handicapped, women, children and elected members of the Palestinian Parliament such as Marwan Barghouti, Ahmad Saadat, Hassan Youssef and others?

3. How might the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) help launch a campaign to free prisoners and send fact-finding missions into the occupation prisons in order to determine the inhumane conditions to which the prisoners are subject in violation of all of the principles and values of international humanitarian rights?

4. What interventions will be implemented to put a stop to the prosecutions against former prisoners and to the restrictions imposed on their ability to travel and their work, and in order to allow the removal of all arbitrary measures taken against Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails such as confinement and isolation, visiting rights for the population of the Gaza Strip, the right of prisoners to university education and the reestablishment of other human rights of which they have been deprived?

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

Respect for human rights is a cornerstone of the EU's policies towards Israel and the Palestinian people. The EU has, on a number of occasions, condemned violations of international law by both parties.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is currently carrying out its mandate to visit Palestinian prisoners in Israeli detention. The EU maintains close contact with the ICRC on these matters, within the limits of confidentiality foreseen in ICRC's mandate. As such a specific EU mission of the type suggested is not required.

The EU is aware of the case of Mr Barghouti and of other Palestinian prisoners. In the framework of its dialogue with the government of Israel, the EU constantly raises the issue of the situation of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails, particularly with regard to detention conditions and their location, the use of administrative detention without formal charge, and respect for human rights.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita P-012653/11
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(10 de Janeiro de 2012)

Assunto: Sistema Integrado Multimunicipal de Águas Residuais da Península de Setúbal — ETAR Barreiro/Moita (III)

Em pergunta anteriormente formulada sobre este mesmo assunto (P-007516/2011), na qual era feita referência a um pedido de modificação da Decisão de 9 de dezembro de 2005, relativa ao projeto 2005 PT 16 C PE 002 (ETAR Barreiro/Moita), apresentado pelas autoridades portuguesas, questionei a Comissão sobre se poderia equacionar uma alteração ou adenda ao texto da cláusula restritiva da Decisão em vigor (cláusula restritiva n.° 13 da Decisão, envolvendo ações que ultrapassam a área de intervenção do executor).

Em resposta a esta pergunta (em 5.9.2011), a Comissão confirma «a receção de um pedido das autoridades portuguesas, de 23 de novembro de 2010», que solicita «a modificação da cláusula restritiva do ponto 13 do anexo I da decisão». Nesta resposta, a Comissão refere o seguinte: «atualmente, encontra-se em fase de instrução um projeto de decisão modificativa. A questão suscitada pelo Senhor Deputado (artigo 13.°) faz parte das modificações propostas. A Comissão considera que as referidas modificações permitirão responder às expectativas das autoridades portuguesas. A Comissão gostaria de salientar que a decisão relativa ao projeto em causa tem como destinatário o Estado-Membro e não o beneficiário da ajuda».

Todavia, contrariando o afirmado e acima citado, na Decisão de 21 de novembro de 2011, a Comissão não introduziu uma única modificação na redação inicial do ponto 13. Esta decisão continua, lamentavelmente, a penalizar a Região de Setúbal e o beneficiário da ajuda (a Simarsul), a quem se obriga o cumprimento desta Decisão, por ações pelas as quais não pode ser responsabilizado.

Em face do exposto, solicito à Comissão que me informe sobre o seguinte:

1. Porque razão, na Decisão de 21 de novembro de 2011, não introduziu uma única modificação na redação inicial do ponto 13, contrariando o que afirmou na sua resposta de 5 de setembro de 2011?

2. Considera a possibilidade de ter efetivamente em conta e responder «às expectativas das autoridades portuguesas», modificando finalmente a referida Decisão e, concretamente, esta cláusula restritiva, de modo a não penalizar a Região de Setúbal e o beneficiário da ajuda, (a Simarsul), por ações pelas as quais não pode ser responsabilizado?

Resposta dada por Johannes Hahn em nome da Comissão
(10 de Fevereiro de 2012)

Na resposta à pergunta escrita P-007516/2011, a Comissão não afirmou que o artigo 13.° seria retirado da Decisão, mas apenas que o pedido de alteração da Decisão estava a ser tratado. Todavia, o artigo 13.° incluía duas secções, tendo a Comissão, a pedido das autoridades portuguesas, suprimido a secção 13.2.

A secção 13.1 obriga as autoridades nacionais a garantirem o pré-tratamento das águas residuais provenientes de explorações de suinicultura, antes de serem submetidas a tratamento no sistema Simarsul. Esta secção foi mantida na Decisão alterada e, para que o projeto realize com êxito os seus objetivos, será necessário cumprir essa obrigação.

Trata-se de uma obrigação já prevista na Decisão de 2005 que concede o apoio do Fundo de Coesão ao projeto e que reflete o compromisso formal assumido pelas autoridades nacionais no sentido de adotarem uma solução global, que responda simultaneamente ao problema das águas residuais urbanas e de tratamento das águas residuais provenientes de cerca de 130 explorações de suinicultura na zona, que, caso não seja tratado, tornar-se-á num importante risco para o ambiente.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-012653/11
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(10 January 2012)

Subject: Integrated Combined Municipal Waste Water System in the Setúbal Peninsula — ETAR Barreiro/Moita (III)

In a previously formulated question on this same subject (P-007516/2011), in which reference was made to a request for the modification of the decision of 9 December 2005, relating to project 2005 PT 16 C PE 002 (ETAR Barreiro Moita), presented by the Portuguese authorities, I asked the Commission whether it could make an alteration or addendum to the text of the restrictive clause of the decision in force (restrictive clause no. 13 of the decision, involving actions that exceed the area of intervention of the executor).

In response to this question (on 5 September 2011), the Commission acknowledges 'the reception of a request from the Portuguese authorities, of 23 November 2010', requesting 'the amendment of the restrictive clause in point 13 of Annex I of the decision'. In that response, the Commission refers to the following: 'currently, a draft amending Decision is being investigated. The question raised by the Honourable Member (Article 13) forms part of the proposed changes. The Commission believes that these amendments will address the expectations of the Portuguese authorities. The Commission should like to point out that the decision on the project concerned is addressed to the Member State and not to the beneficiary of the aid'.

However, contrary to what has been asserted and stated above, in the decision of 21 November 2011, the Commission did not make a single change to the wording of point 13. This decision, regrettably, continues to penalise the Setúbal Region and the beneficiary of the aid (SIMARSUL), who is forced to comply with this decision, for actions in respect of which it cannot be held responsible.

Considering the above, can the Commission respond to the following:

1. Why did it not, in the decision of 21 November 2011, make any changes to the original wording of point 13, contrary to what it stated in its response of 5 September 2011?

2. Is it really considering taking into account and responding 'to the expectations of the Portuguese authorities', by finally amending the said Decision and, in particular, this restrictive clause, so as not to penalise the Setúbal Region and the beneficiary of the aid (SIMARSUL), for actions in respect of which it cannot be held responsible?

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

The Commission, in its answer to Written Question P-007516/2011, did not state that Article 13 would be removed from the decision, but that the request for a decision modification was being processed. Nevertheless, Article 13 had 2 sections and the Commission, upon the request of the Portuguese authorities, removed Section 13.2.

Section 13.1 refers to the obligation of the national authorities regarding the pre-treatment of polluted water from the pig farms before undergoing further treatment in the Simarsul system. This section has been kept in the amended decision and, for the project to successfully fulfil its objectives, it will have to comply with this obligation.

This obligation was already included in the 2005 decision granting the Cohesion Fund support to this project and reflects the formal commitment taken by the national authorities in order to implement a comprehensive solution which would deal both with urban waste water and ensure the treatment of the waste water from the roughly 130 pig farms in the area, which, if untreated, becomes an important environmental hazard.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-012654/11
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE) και Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(11 Ιανουαρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Αντιμετώπιση της ανεργίας των νέων στην Ελλάδα

Την Τρίτη 20 Δεκεμβρίου 2011 η Επιτροπή ανακοίνωσε μία νέα πρωτοβουλία με τίτλο «Ευκαιρίες για τους νέους» με στόχο την ανάληψη αποφασιστικής δράσης για την αντιμετώπιση της ανεργίας των νέων που βρίσκεται επίμονα άνω του 20 % στην ΕΕ. Η Επιτροπή, μεταξύ άλλων, παροτρύνει τα κράτη μέλη να αξιοποιήσουν καλύτερα το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινωνικό Ταμείο το οποίο εξακολουθεί να διαθέτει 30 δισεκατομμύρια ευρώ που δεν έχουν ακόμη δεσμευτεί για συγκεκριμένα έργα.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Την τελευταία διετία, και στο πλαίσιο της υπάρχουσας γενιάς προγραμμάτων για την αντιμετώπιση της νεανικής ανεργίας, ποιο είναι το ύψος των πόρων που η Ελλάδα έχει απορροφήσει από το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινωνικό Ταμείο;

2. Καθώς η οικονομική κρίση δημιουργεί διαφορετικά δεδομένα σε σχέση με τη περίοδο σχεδιασμού της τρέχουσας γενιάς προγραμμάτων, και καθώς η ανεργία στις νεαρές ηλικίες υπερβαίνει το 40 % στην Ελλάδα (το δεύτερο μεγαλύτερο ποσοστό στην ΕΕ μετά την Ισπανία), προτίθεται η Επιτροπή να καταστήσει περισσότερο ευέλικτη για τα κράτη μέλη την απορρόφηση πόρων από το ΕΚΤ για την αντιμετώπιση της νεανικής ανεργίας;

Απάντηση του κ. Andor εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(21 Φεβρουαρίου 2012)

1. Η Επιτροπή αποδίδει ιδιαίτερη σημασία στην ένταξη των ανέργων, συμπεριλαμβανομένων και των νέων, στην αγορά εργασίας. Τα Διαρθρωτικά Ταμεία της ΕΕ, και ιδίως το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινωνικό Ταμείο (ΕΚΤ), παρέχουν στην Ελλάδα σημαντική βοήθεια για να διευκολύνουν την πρόσβαση των ανέργων στην απασχόληση.

Η συνολική χρηματοδότηση του ΕΚΤ προς την Ελλάδα για την περίοδο 2007-13 ανέρχεται σε 4,364 δισεκατομμύρια ευρώ. Η προώθηση της απασχόλησης των νέων αποτελεί ειδικό στόχο του επιχειρησιακού προγράμματος για την «Ανάπτυξη του Ανθρώπινου Δυναμικού», η χρηματοδότηση του οποίου ανέρχεται σε 2,26 δισεκατομμύρια ευρώ. Η παροχή βοήθειας για την προώθηση της ένταξης των νέων στην αγορά εργασίας περιλαμβάνει κατάρτιση, συστήματα μαθητείας και επιδοτήσεις θέσεων εργασίας.

Το επιχειρησιακό πρόγραμμα «Εκπαίδευση και Διά Βίου Μάθηση», η χρηματοδότηση του οποίου ανέρχεται σε 1,44 δισεκατομμύρια ευρώ, επιδιώκει μεταξύ άλλων να διευκολύνει την ένταξη των νέων στην αγορά εργασίας.

Αυτή τη στιγμή το ποσοστό των πόρων που έχουν απορροφηθεί είναι 28,9 % για το επιχειρησιακό πρόγραμμα «Ανάπτυξη του Ανθρώπινου Δυναμικού» και 24,5 % για το επιχειρησιακό πρόγραμμα «Εκπαίδευση και Διά Βίου Μάθηση». Για περισσότερες πληροφορίες σχετικά με τα ποσά που έχουν επενδυθεί στο πλαίσιο του ΕΚΤ από την Ελλάδα ειδικά για την προώθηση της απασχόλησης των νέων, οι κύριοι βουλευτές θα πρέπει να επικοινωνήσουν με την ΕΥΣΕΚΤ ([1]), την ειδική υπηρεσία συντονισμού παρακολούθησης δράσεων του ευρωπαϊκού κοινωνικού ταμείου, στην Ελλάδα.

2. Εντός του 2012 αναμένονται αλλαγές σε ορισμένα επιχειρησιακά προγράμματα στο εθνικό στρατηγικό πλαίσιο αναφοράς της Ελλάδας. Αυτό μπορεί να σημαίνει και επανεξέταση από την πλευρά των ελληνικών αρχών των εθνικών τους προτεραιοτήτων και πρόταση προς την Επιτροπή για χορήγηση περισσότερων κονδυλίων με στόχο την προώθηση της ένταξης των νέων στην αγορά εργασίας στο πλαίσιο των επιχειρησιακών προγραμμάτων του ΕΚΤ.

Σύμφωνα με την πρόταση πρωτοβουλίας της Επιτροπής για τη νεολαία, θα δημιουργηθεί για την Ελλάδα μια ομάδα δράσης, το έργο της οποίας θα συντονίζει η Γενική Γραμματεία της Επιτροπής, με σκοπό να προσδιοριστούν τα αναγκαία στοιχεία ενός σχεδίου για την απασχόληση των νέων, μεταξύ των οποίων και η βελτίωση της χρήσης των Διαρθρωτικών Ταμείων για προτεραιότητες της νεολαίας.

([1]) Κοραή 4, 105 64, Αθήνα τηλ.: +30 210 5271400 φαξ: +30 210 5271420 δικτυακός τόπος: www.esfhellas.gr; διεύθ. ηλεκ. ταχ.: eysekt@mou.gr.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012654/11
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE) and Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Combating youth unemployment in Greece

On Tuesday, 20 December 2011, the Commission announced a new 'Youth Opportunities Initiative', which seeks to take decisive action to tackle youth unemployment, which remains stubbornly above the 20 % mark in the EU. The Commission also urges the Member States to make better use of the European Social Fund, which still has EUR 30 billion of funding uncommitted to projects.

I would like to ask the Commission:

1. How much has Greece taken up from the European Social Fund over the last two years within the framework of the existing generation of programmes to tackle youth unemployment?

2. As, due to the economic crisis, the situation is very different now compared to when the current generation of programmes was planned and as the youth unemployment rate is over 40 % in Greece, which is the second highest rate in the EU after Spain, does the Commission intend to give the Member States greater flexibility in the take-up of funds from the ESF in order to tackle youth unemployment?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(21 February 2012)

1. The Commission attaches great importance to promoting the labour market integration of unemployed persons, including young people. The EU Structural Funds, and in particular the European Social Fund (ESF), provide Greece with significant assistance to facilitate access to employment for the unemployed.

The total ESF allocation to Greece for the 2007-13 period amounts to EUR 4.364 billion. Promoting the employment of young people is a specific objective of the Human Resources Development operational programme (HRD OP), funding for which amounts to EUR 2.26 billion. Assistance to promote the labour market integration of young people include*s training, apprenticeship schemes and employment subsidies*.

The Education and Lifelong Learning operational programme (EDULL OP), funding for which amounts to EUR 1.44 billion, seeks *inter alia* to facilitate the labour market integration of young people.

T*ake-up of funding currently stands at 28.9 % for the HRD OP and 24.5 % for the* EDULL OP. For information on the amounts spent under the ESF in Greece to promote youth employment in particular, the Honourable Member should contact EYSEKT ([1]), the coordination and monitoring authority for ESF actions in Greece.

2. Changes to certain OPs in the Greek National Strategic Reference Framework are expected in 2012. This may involve a reconsideration by the Greek authorities of their national priorities and a proposal to the Commission to allocate more funds to promoting the labour market integration of young people under the ESF OPs.

In line with the Commission's Youth Initiative Proposal, an action team coordinated by the Secretariat General of the Commission will be created for Greece to identify the necessary elements of a youth employment plan, including by proposing an enhanced use of structural funds for youth priorities.

([1]) 4 Korai Street, 10564 Athens; tel.: +30 210-5271400; fax: +30 210-5271420; website: www.esfhellas.gr; email: eysekt@mou.gr.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012657/11
to the Commission
Chris Davies (ALDE)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Mobile air conditioning

1. Further to the Commission's answer of 11 March 2011 (E-000509/2011), and in view of the alleged difficulty that vehicle manufacturers are having in obtaining supplies of HFC1234fy, is the Commission satisfied that no new types of motor vehicles placed on the EU market since 1 January 2011 are making use of refrigerants in mobile air-conditioning systems that have a global warming potential higher than 150?

2. What action will the Commission take if evidence is produced that some vehicle manufacturers have not respected the requirements of the legislation and are using non-compliant refrigerants?

3. Is the Commission involved in efforts to address the alleged problems of supply shortages of HFC1234fy?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(15 February 2012)

The Commission has very recently been informed of the referred problems of supply of the refrigerant HFC-1234fy. However, the Commission cannot, for the moment, confirm the allegation that 'no new types of motor vehicles placed on the EU market since 1 January 2011 are making use of refrigerants in mobile air-conditioning systems that have a global warming potential higher than 150', given that there is information that a limited quantity of that refrigerant is available. Nevertheless, the Commission can confirm that, as from 1 January 2011, no new type-approval can be granted for vehicles with mobile air-conditioning system using, as a refrigerant, fluorinated greenhouse gases with a global warming potential higher than 150.

Given the acknowledged supply problems of the refrigerant, the Commission has requested from the stakeholders further information on the problem and its amplitude. Based on the information that is currently being collected, the Commission will consult with the European Parliament and the Member States regarding the options of action by the Union. These options are expected to be presented still in the first months of 2012.

The information available points to an explanation to the supply shortages which relates to the registration procedures of chemical products in one third country. Given that this issue is related to the activity of private companies in third countries, the Commission does not consider a direct involvement for its resolution.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-012658/11
alla Commissione
Mario Borghezio (EFD)
(11 gennaio 2012)

Oggetto: Mancato riconoscimento del genocidio armeno

Secondo l'agenzia Anadolu, il Premier turco Recep Tayyip Erdogan, in una lettera indirizzata al Presidente francese Nicolas Sarkozy, minaccia, qualora il parlamento di Parigi approvi il progetto di legge che riconosce come reato la negazione del genocidio armeno, il congelamento della cooperazione bilaterale in tutti i campi e avverte che se questo processo dovesse arrivare fino alla fine, le conseguenze sulle relazioni politiche, economiche, culturali e in tutti i settori saranno gravi, sostenendo che detto progetto di legge prende di mira direttamente la Repubblica di Turchia, la nazione turca e la comunità turca in Francia.

La stessa fonte rivela che il Premier turco si rivolge a Nicolas Sarkozy in questi termini: «Spero che manterrai la promessa di far fallire ogni iniziativa di questo genere e di impedire passi che potrebbero avere conseguenze irreparabili».

Come giudica la Commissione le esternazioni del Premier turco sul genocidio armeno? È la Commissione a conoscenza di precedenti accordi o promesse Sarkozy-Erdogan sulla questione armena? Non ritiene la Commissione che sia opportuno bloccare il processo di adesione della Turchia all'UE dopo queste ennesime minacce ed esternazioni? Perché nella comunicazione della Commissione presentata il 12.10.2011 (COM(2011)0666), nelle sezioni dedicate alla Turchia, non si trova menzione del genocidio degli armeni e quindi questo non è ritenuto un ostacolo da superare?

Risposta data da Štefan Füle a nome della Commissione
(29 febbraio 2012)

La Commissione non può fare ipotesi sulle eventuali reazioni della Turchia in merito alla questione menzionata dall'onorevole parlamentare. Il riconoscimento di fatti avvenuti in passato non costituisce un requisito dei negoziati di adesione con la Turchia, i quali si svolgono conformemente al mandato negoziale approvato da tutti gli Stati membri nel 2005 e in linea con il quadro di negoziazione e le conclusioni del Consiglio del dicembre 2006.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012658/11
to the Commission
Mario Borghezio (EFD)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Failure to recognise the Armenian genocide

According to the Anadolu news agency, in a letter to French President Nicolas Sarkozy, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has threatened to freeze bilateral cooperation in all areas should the French Parliament approve a draft law recognising the denial of the Armenian genocide as being an illegal act, and warns that if this process were to be carried out to its full extent, the resulting consequences on political, economic and cultural relations, as well as on all other sectors, will be serious. Erdogan claims that the draft law is aimed directly at the Republic of Turkey, at the Turkish people and at the Turkish community in France.

The same source reveals that the Turkish Prime Minister overtly communicated to Nicholas Sarkozy: 'I hope you will keep your promise of halting any such initiatives, and that you will not allow any steps to be taken that could lead to irreparable consequences.'

What are the Commission's views regarding the opinions expressed by the Turkish Prime Minister about the Armenian genocide? Is the Commission aware of any previous agreements or promises made between Sarkozy and Erdogan regarding the Armenian issue? Following these latest threats and remarks, does the Commission not consider it appropriate to stop Turkey's EU membership process? Why is there no mention of the Armenian genocide in the parts of the Commission's communication presented on 10/12/2011 (COM(2011) 0666) referring to Turkey, thus leading to this as not being seen as an obstacle which is to be overcome?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(29 February 2012)

The Commission cannot speculate on possible reactions of Turkey on the referred issue. The recognition of facts of the past, referred to in the question, is not a pre-condition in the accession negotiations with Turkey, which take place in line with the negotiation mandate agreed by all Member States in 2005, and in line with the Negotiating Framework and the Council conclusions of December 2006.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-012659/11
à la Commission
Patrick Le Hyaric (GUE/NGL)
(11 janvier 2012)

Objet: VP/HR — Projet israélien de train à haute vitesse reliant Jérusalem à Tel Aviv

La société Pizzarotti & C. S.p.A. est l'une des sociétés contractantes qui participent à la réalisation du projet israélien de construction de ce nouveau train à haute vitesse.

Selon le tracé prévu, le nouveau train devrait relier Tel Aviv à Jérusalem en traversant les Territoires Palestiniens occupés sur 6,5 km, en violation flagrante des lois internationales et des lois sur les Droits de l'homme. C'est le cas, notamment, de la confiscation illégale par les autorités israéliennes des terres palestiniennes appartenant aux habitants des villages de Beit Iksa et Beit Sourik.

De plus, la mise en place du centre logistique et du réseau de routes empruntées par les équipements massifs servant à creuser un tunnel et à évacuer la terre et autres matériaux retirés des endroits excavés par Pizzarotti provoquent la destruction des anciennes oliveraies et des terres agricoles que la Cour suprême israélienne a reconnues en estimant que ces ressources constituaient une «source de subsistance fondamentale» pour les communautés palestiniennes.

Par ailleurs, l'article 53 de la quatrième Convention de Genève interdit à la puissance occupante de détruire les biens physiques ou personnels des populations occupées, sauf en cas d'absolue nécessité militaire.

En mars 2011, les chemins de fer allemands, sur recommandation du ministère du transport de leur pays, se sont retirés du projet A1.

1. La Commission a-t-elle connaissance de ce projet dans lequel interviendraient plusieurs sociétés européennes? Si oui, quels sont les pays ou les sociétés contractantes qui participent à la réalisation de ce projet?

2. La Commission a-t-elle reçu des demandes de subventions ou octroyé des aides pour la réalisation de ce projet? Si oui, à qui?

Réponse donnée par Mme Ashton, Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante au nom de la Commission
(25 avril 2012)

Le projet auquel l'Honorable Parlementaire fait référence ne relève pas de l'Union européenne et n'implique aucune institution ni aucun fonds de l'UE. Le SEAE ne dispose d'aucune information relative à une éventuelle participation d'entreprises européennes à ce projet.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012659/11
to the Commission
Patrick Le Hyaric (GUE/NGL)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Israeli high-speed train project linking Jerusalem to Tel Aviv

Société Pizzarotti & C. S.p.A. is one of the contracting firms which are participating in the realisation of the Israeli construction project for this new high speed train.

According to the planned route, the new train would link up Tel Aviv and Jerusalem by crossing over 6.6 km of occupied Palestinian Territories, in flagrant violation of international and human rights laws. This is particularly the case in the illegal confiscation by the Israeli authorities of the Palestinian lands belonging to the inhabitants of the villages of Beit Iksa and Beit Sourik.

Moreover, the installation of the logistics centre and the road network borrowed by the massive equipment used to dig a tunnel and for evacuating the earth and other materials withdrawn from places excavated by Pizzarotti bring about the destruction of old olive orchards and farmlands that the Israeli Supreme Court admitted by considering that these resources made up a 'basic source of food' for the Palestinian communities.

Moreover, Article 53 of the fourth Geneva Convention prohibits the occupying power from destroying the physical assets or personal property of the occupied populations, except in the event of absolutely military necessity.

The German railways, on the recommendation of the Ministry of Transport, withdrew from the A1 project in March 2011.

1. Is the Committee aware of this project in which several European firms might intervene? If yes, which are the countries or contracting firms that are participating in the realisation of this project?

2. Did the Commission receive requests for subsidies or grant assistance for the realisation of this project? If yes, from whom?

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

The project referred to by the Honourable Member is not an EU project and does not involve any EU institution or fund. The EEAS does not have information about European companies that might or might not participate in this project.

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande E-012661/11
till rådet
Christian Engström (Verts/ALE)
(11 januari 2012)

Angående: Varför antogs ACTA av fiskerådet?

Den 14 maj 2008 beslöt fiskerådet att inleda förhandlingar om ACTA-avtalet, som handlar om att bekämpa varuförfalskningar och upphovsrättsintrång på internet. Förra veckan, den 16 december 2011, fattade fiskerådet beslutet att ge klartecken för att underteckna det framförhandlade ACTA-avtalet.

1. Varför ansågs just fiskerådet vara det mest lämpliga rådet för att ta de två besluten om ACTA?

2. Vid båda tillfällena togs besluten som så kallade "A-punkter", det vill säga, de klubbades igenom som en formalitet utan någon diskussion. Med tanke på hur kontroversiellt ACTA-avtalet är, både i många av EU:s medlemsstater och internationellt, undrar jag hur det kommer sig att både besluten om att inleda förhandlingarna och att godkänna resultatet togs utan någon diskussion på ministernivå?

Svar
(12 mars 2012)

Rådet är en enda institution som sammanträder i olika konstellationer (artikel 2.1 i rådets arbetsordning). Det finns sålunda endast ett råd.

I artikel 3.6 i rådets arbetsordning anges följande:

"De punkter som tas upp i var och en av dessa båda delar av den preliminära dagordningen ska delas in i –ch B-punkter. Punkter där rådet kan besluta om godkännande utan överläggning ska tas upp som A-punkter, vilket dock inte hindrar att någon rådsmedlem eller kommissionen uttrycker sin mening vid godkännandet av dessa punkter och låter ta uttalanden till protokollet."

A-punkter kan därför antas utan överläggning vid vilket rådsmöte som helst, oavsett vilken konstellation som sammanträder. Detta var fallet när det gällde förslaget till beslut om att underteckna Acta-avtalet vilket vidarebefordrades som en A-punkt efter att först ha diskuterats i handelspolitiska kommittén.

Ordförandeskapet hade för avsikt att lägga fram förslaget till beslut om att underteckna Acta-avtalet för antagande vid mötet i utrikesrådet (handel) i Genève den 14 december 2011 i anslutning till WTO:s åttonde ministerkonferens, men antagandet fick skjutas upp till mötet i rådet (jordbruk och fiske) den 15-16 december 2011 för att göra det möjligt att slutföra de nödvändiga politiska och rättsliga förfarandena.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012661/11
to the Council
Christian Engström (Verts/ALE)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Why was ACTA approved by the Agriculture and Fisheries Council?

On 14 May 2008, the Agriculture and Fisheries Council decided to begin consultation on the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA), which aims to tackle counterfeit goods and copyright infringement on the Internet. Last week, on 16 December 2011, the Agriculture and Fisheries Council decided to give the go-ahead for the agreed ACTA to be signed.

1. Why exactly was the Agriculture and Fisheries Council considered the most appropriate council to make the two rulings on ACTA?

2. On both occasions, the rulings were made as what are commonly known as 'A' items, that is, they were pushed through as a formality without a debate. Given the controversial nature of ACTA, both in many of the EU's Member States and internationally, I wonder why it is that both the decision to enter consultation and the decision to approve the result were taken without a debate at the ministerial level?

Reply
(12 March 2012)

The Council is a single institution which meets in different configurations (Article 2(1) of the Council Rules of Procedures). There is only one Council therefore.

Article 3(6) of the Rules of Procedure of the Council states that:

'The items appearing in each part of the provisional agenda shall be divided into "A" items and "B" items. Items for which approval by the Council is possible without discussion shall be entered as "A" items, but this does not exclude the possibility of any member of the Council or of the Commission expressing an opinion at the time of the approval of these items and having statements included in the minutes.'

Accordingly, 'A' items can be adopted without discussion at any Council meeting, irrespective of the configuration. This was the case for the proposal for a decision to sign ACTA, which was forwarded as an 'A' item following prior discussion in the Trade Policy Committee.

Although the intention of the Presidency was to submit the proposal for a decision to sign ACTA for adoption in the Foreign Affairs Council (Trade) held in Geneva on 14 December 2011 in the margins of the 8th WTO Ministerial Conference, the adoption had to be postponed to the Agriculture and Fisheries Council on 15-16 December 2011 to allow for the necessary political, legal and procedural steps to be completed.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης P-012662/11
προς την Επιτροπή
Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE)
(13 Ιανουαρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Διμερείς συμφωνίες για τη φορολόγηση αποταμιεύσεων σε τρίτες χώρες

Ο Επίτροπος για θέματα Φορολογίας, Τελωνειακής Ένωσης και Καταπολέμησης της Διαφθοράς κ. Algirdas Semeta, με αφορμή τις διμερείς συμφωνίες μεταξύ Ελβετίας και Μεγάλης Βρετανίας, Γερμανίας για τη φορολόγηση των καταθέσεων, αλλά και με αφορμή την τροποποίηση της σχετικής Οδηγίας 2003/48/ΕΚ ([1]) δήλωσε ([2]) πως η προσπάθεια «για μία φιλόδοξη συμφωνία της Επιτροπής δεν θα πρέπει να υπονομευτεί από διμερείς συμφωνίες … η Επιτροπή δεν θα διστάσει να προχωρήσει σε διορθωτικές κινήσεις αν καλύπτονται από αυτές τις διμερείς συμφωνίες θέματα αρμοδιότητας της ΕΕ … απαιτείται συντονισμένη ευρωπαϊκή προσέγγιση προς τις τρίτες χώρες …» και «… τα κράτη μέλη θα πρέπει να διασφαλίσουν πως όποια διμερής συμφωνία δεν θα πρέπει να καλύπτει θέματα κοινοτικής αρμοδιότητας».

Δεδομένης της αδυναμίας επίτευξης συμφωνίας σε ευρωπαϊκό επίπεδο έως τώρα, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Πώς αντιμετωπίζει την προετοιμασία υπογραφής σχετικού πρωτοκόλλου συνεργασίας ([3]) μεταξύ Ελβετίας και Ελλάδας δεδομένων των μειωμένων φορολογικών εσόδων και της αυξημένης εκροής ελληνικών κεφαλαίων εκτός Ελλάδας;

2. Συμμετέχει στις διεργασίες μεταξύ Ελλάδας και Ελβετίας για το εν λόγω ζήτημα;

3. Αν ναι, με ποιο τρόπο και στόχους;

4. Θεωρεί πως ανάλογες διμερείς συμφωνίες με σεβασμό των προϋποθέσεων που θέτει το άρθρο 64 ή 65 της Συνθήκης της Λισαβόνας θα μπορούσαν να δικαιολογηθούν για τις υπερχρεωμένες ευρωπαϊκές οικονομίες για τις οποίες η φυγή κεφαλαίων συνιστά ζωτικό πρόβλημα;

Απάντηση του κ. Šemeta εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(8 Φεβρουαρίου 2012)

Το πρωτόκολλο συνεργασίας στο οποίο αναφέρεται το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου είναι στην πραγματικότητα η αναθεωρημένη συμφωνία διπλής φορολόγησης που υπέγραψαν οι Ελληνικές και οι Ελβετικές αρχές τον Νοέμβριο 2010 και η οποία αποσκοπούσε, μεταξύ άλλων, στην εισαγωγή ενισχυμένων διατάξεων σχετικά με την ανταλλαγή πληροφοριών στην από μακρού υφιστάμενη σύμβαση περί διπλής φορολόγησης μεταξύ της Ελλάδας και της Ελβετίας. Αποτελεί ζήτημα των δύο υπόψη κρατών, υπό την προϋπόθεση ότι το αντικείμενο της σύμβασης δεν παραβιάζει το δίκαιο της ΕΕ, συμπεριλαμβανομένης και της αποκλειστικής αρμοδιότητας της ΕΕ. Η Επιτροπή δεν διατύπωσε αντιρρήσεις όσον αφορά την κύρωση του συγκεκριμένου πρωτοκόλλου από την Ελληνική Βουλή.

Κατά τους τελευταίους μήνες, ορισμένα κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ ανακοίνωσαν την πρόθεσή τους να συνάψουν διμερείς φορολογικές συμφωνίες με την Ελβετία που καλύπτουν ποικιλία φορολογικών ζητημάτων και οι οποίες, σε αντίθεση με το προαναφερθέν πρωτόκολλο, δεν συνδέονται άμεσα με τη συνεργασία στο πλαίσιο των υφιστάμενων συμβάσεων περί διπλής φορολόγησης. Η Επιτροπή προσέγγισε τα οικεία κράτη μέλη, συμπεριλαμβανομένης και της Ελλάδας, μέσω τακτικών επαφών μεταξύ της ομάδας δράσης της Επιτροπής και των ελληνικών αρχών, για να εξασφαλίσει ότι το τελικό περιεχόμενο τυχόν τέτοιας συμφωνίας δεν θα παραβιάζει το δίκαιο της ΕΕ, ιδίως στον τομέα της φορολόγησης των αποταμιεύσεων, και για να λάβει διαβεβαιώσεις από τα υπόψη κράτη ότι στηρίζουν ανεπιφύλακτα τις προσπάθειες της Επιτροπής για ενίσχυση της οδηγίας της ΕΕ σχετικά με τη φορολόγηση των αποταμιεύσεων και των συναφών συμφωνιών φορολόγησης των αποταμιεύσεων, προς όφελος και των 27 κρατών μελών.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2003:157:0038:0048:el:PDF
([2]) http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/11/709&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=el
([3]) http://www.hellenicparliament.gr/Nomothetiko-Ergo/Anazitisi-Nomothetikou-Ergou?law_id=83721aaf-fcce-415a-85f7-c0006bae06c4

(English version)

Question for written answer P-012662/11
to the Commission
Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE)
(13 January 2012)

Subject: Bilateral agreements on taxation of savings in third countries

The Commissioner for Taxation, Customs Union, Audit and Anti-Fraud , Mr Algirdas Semeta, referring to the bilateral agreements between Switzerland and Great Britain and Germany on the taxation of savings and to the amendment to Council Directive 2003/48/EC ([1]), stated ([2]) that the Commission's 'ambition' should not be 'undermined by bilateral agreements…..Insofar as the bilateral agreements may prove to cover areas of exclusive EU competence, the Commission would not hesitate to take the corrective steps'. Mr Semeta also stated his conviction that a coordinated EU approach' is needed towards third countries and that 'Member States must ensure that any bilateral negotiations do not cover aspects which are a matter of exclusive EU competence'.

Given that it has not been possible to date to reach agreement at EU level, I would like to ask the Commission:

1. How has it responded to preparations by Switzerland and Greece to sign a protocol of agreement ([3]), given the reduction in tax revenues and increase in Greek capital leaving Greece?

2. Is it party to the procedure between Greece and Switzerland on this matter?

3. If it is, how is it involved and to what end?

4. Does it consider that similar bilateral agreements, subject to the conditions laid down in Article 64 or 65 of the Treaty of Lisbon, might be justified for over-indebted European economies in which capital flight is a very serious problem?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(8 February 2012)

The protocol of cooperation to which the Honourable Member refers is in fact the revised Double Taxation Agreement which was signed by the Greek and Swiss authorities in November 2010 and which is *inter alia* designed to introduce enhanced provisions on exchange of information into the long-standing Double Taxation Convention between Greece and Switzerland. It is a matter for the two States concerned, provided its subject matters do not infringe EC law, including as regards exclusive EU competence. The Commission has not raised any objections to the ratification by the Hellenic Parliament of this particular protocol.

In recent months, a small number of EU Member States have announced their intentions to conclude bi-lateral tax agreements with Switzerland covering a variety of tax issues and, unlike the above protocol, not directly related to cooperation in the framework of existing Double Tax Conventions. The Commission has approached the States concerned, including Greece through regular contacts between the Commission Task Force and the Greek authorities, to ensure that the final contents of any such agreement do not infringe EC law, notably in the area of savings taxation, and to seek assurances from those States that they unreservedly support the Commission's drive to enhance the EU Savings Taxation Directive and the related savings taxation agreements, to the benefit of all 27 Member States.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2003:157:0038:0048:el:PDF
([2]) http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/11/709&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN
([3]) http://www.hellenicparliament.gr/Nomothetiko-Ergo/Anazitisi-Nomothetikou-Ergou?law_id=83721aaf-fcce-415a-85f7-c0006bae06c4

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse P-012663/11
til Kommissionen
Jens Rohde (ALDE)
(12. januar 2012)

Om: Europagt

Siden den politiske aftale om en ny europagt om strukturelt balancerede nationale budgetter, som vil medføre automatiske sanktioner og nye forpligtelser, har det danske Folketing debatteret en eventuel dansk indtrædelse i pagten set i forhold til det danske euroforbehold. Spørgsmålet drejer sig om, hvorvidt Danmark vil kunne tiltræde pagten uden at bryde med sit euroforbehold, og om en tiltrædelse ville medføre suverænitetsafgivelse i henhold til den danske Grundlovs paragraf 20. I den forbindelse har Kommissionsformand Barroso i et fælles interview til tre danske morgenaviser bragt lørdag d. 17. december sagt, at »dette vil ikke medføre nogen som helst nye forpligtelser for Danmark, fordi I har et euroforbehold«.

Kan Kommissionsformand Barroso uddybe, hvordan det vil være i overensstemmelse med ånden i pagten at undtage Danmark fra de automatiske sanktioner, idet de udgør kernen heraf?

Mener Kommissionsformanden, at det er forsvarligt at lade nogle lande botanisere i aftalen? Risikerer vi ikke blot med en botanisering at udhule europagten?

Mener Kommissionsformanden ligeledes ikke, at en botanisering af europagten befordrer »luksuseuropæere«, som ser fællesskabet som et tag-selv-bord uden at være villig til at tage del i ansvaret?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Olli Rehn
(20. februar 2012)

Sanktionerne i stabilitets- og vækstpagten, som i højere grad er blevet gjort »automatiske« ved hjælp af den såkaldte »six-pack« og også gennem en særlig bestemmelse om proceduren i forbindelse med uforholdsmæssigt store underskud i traktaten om stabilitet, koordinering og styring i Den Økonomiske og Monetære Union, er baseret på artikel 136 i traktaten om Den Europæiske Unions funktionsmåde. Denne artikel gælder specifikt for medlemsstater, der har euroen som valuta, og kan ikke anvendes til en forordning, der også skal gælde andre medlemsstater.

Traktaten om stabilitet, koordinering og styring i Den Økonomiske og Monetære Union vil gælde fuldt ud for medlemsstater, der har euroen som valuta, og som har ratificeret denne traktat. På grund af de tættere økonomiske forbindelser mellem de medlemsstater, der har euroen som valuta, er der på visse områder behov for en mere dybtgående integration disse medlemsstater imellem, som ikke bør undergrave det indre markeds integritet.

Traktaten om stabilitet, koordinering og styring i Den Økonomiske og Monetære Union finder anvendelse på de kontraherende parter med dispensation eller med en undtagelse, jf. protokol nr. 16 om visse bestemmelser vedrørende Danmark, der har ratificeret den fra og med den dato, hvor afgørelsen om at ophæve dispensationen eller undtagelsen får virkning, medmindre den pågældende kontraherende part erklærer at ville være bundet af alle eller nogle af bestemmelserne i traktatens afsnit III og IV fra en tidligere dato.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-012663/11
to the Commission
Jens Rohde (ALDE)
(12 January 2012)

Subject: The Pact for the Euro

Following the political agreement on a new euro pact for structurally balanced national budgets, which will imply automatic sanctions and new obligations, the Danish Parliament has debated possible Danish entry into the pact, seen in the light of the Danish non-adoption of the euro. The question is to what extent Denmark can join the Pact without breaking with its policy of non-adoption of the euro and whether joining will imply loss of sovereignty with regard to Paragraph 20 of the Danish Constitution. In connection with this, the President of Commission, Mr Barroso, said in a joint interview with three Danish morning papers on Saturday 17 December that 'this will not imply any new obligations for Denmark whatsoever because you have opted not to use the euro'.

Can the Commission explain how excluding Denmark from automatic sanctions could be reconciled with the spirit of the Pact, as sanctions are at its core?

Does the Commission think that it is responsible to let some Member States cherry-pick parts of the agreement? Does cherry-picking not risk undermining the Pact for the Euro?

Does the Commission not also think that cherry-picking parts of the Pact for the Euro encourages 'fair-weather Europeans' who favour an *à la carte* EU without being willing to share responsibility?

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

The sanctions under the Stability and Growth Pact, which have been made more 'automatic' through the six-pack and also through a specific provision regarding the Excessive Deficit Procedure in the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union are based on Article 136 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. This article is specific to Member States whose currency is the euro and cannot be used for a regulation that extends to the other Member States.

The Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union shall apply in full to every Member State whose currency is the euro and which has ratified this Treaty. Due to the closer economic links between Member States whose currency is the euro, deeper integration among these Member States is necessary in some policy areas, but should not undermine the integrity of the single market.

The Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance shall apply to the Contracting Parties with a derogation, or with an exemption as defined in Protocol No°16 on certain provisions related to Denmark, which have ratified it as from the day when the decision abrogating that derogation or exemption takes effect, unless the Contracting Party concerned declares its intention to be bound at an earlier date by all or part of the provisions in Titles III and IV of this Treaty.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse P-012664/11
til Kommissionen
Søren Bo Søndergaard (GUE/NGL)
(10. januar 2012)

Om: Opfølgning forurening fra afbrænding af flybrændstof i de europæiske lufthavne

I forlængelse af mit spørgsmål af 20. december 2010 om forurening fra afbrænding af flybrændstof i de europæiske lufthavne (P-011302/2010) og af, at den endelige rapport, som nu foreligger, bekræfter delrapportens konklusioner ([1]), bedes Kommissionen besvare følgende:

Hvilke konkrete initiativer vil Kommissionen iværksætte for at beskytte arbejdstagerne i lufthavnene?

Agter Kommissionen på baggrund af rapporten at fremskynde evalueringen fra Det Videnskabelige Udvalg vedrørende Grænseværdier for Erhvervsmæssig Eksponering (SCOEL) og i givet fald til hvornår?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af László Andor
(1. februar 2012)

Kommissionen ønsker at henlede det ærede medlems opmærksomhed på sine svar på spørgsmål E-001326/2010 og P-011302/2010 ([2]) og navnlig det faktum, at rammedirektiv 89/391/EØF ([3]) om iværksættelse af foranstaltninger til forbedring af sikkerheden og sundheden på arbejdspladsen, direktivet om kemiske agenser 98/24/EF ([4]) og direktiv 2004/37/EF ([5]) om kræftfremkaldende stoffer og mutagener finder anvendelse i forbindelse med beskyttelse af arbejdstagere, der arbejder i nærheden af brændende flybrændstof. De kompetente nationale myndigheder (i dette tilfælde de danske myndigheder) er ansvarlige for at sikre, at direktiverne gennemføres korrekt i national lovgivning, og at passende kontrol og tilsyn med deres anvendelse er gennemført.

Kommissionen ønsker også at påpege, at Den Internationale Organisation for Civil Luftfart har sat grænser for flymotorers udstødning, med henblik på at kontrollere luftfartens indvirkning på den lokale luftkvalitet og miljø. Overholdelse af disse grænser fra fabrikanter af flymotorers side bør bidrage til at afbøde eventuelle skadelige virkninger af sådanne emissioner fra udstødningen på sundheden hos arbejdstagerne i lufthavne.

Det Videnskabelige Udvalg vedrørende Grænseværdier for Erhvervsmæssig Eksponering er, sammen med Kommissionens Fælles Forskningscenter, i øjeblikket i færd med at kontrollere den tilgængelige videnskabelige litteratur, der er nødvendig for en behørig risikovurdering. Når dette er sket, og afhængigt af deres konklusioner, kan disse anbefale, at der fastsættes specifikke faglige grænser for specifikke kemikalier i den kontekst, som det ærede medlems spørgsmål henviser til.

([1]) Undersøgelse af luftforureningen på forpladsen i Københavns lufthavn Kastrup i relation til arbejdsmiljø. Aarhus Universitet, Teknisk rapport fra DCE — Nationalt Center for Miljø og Energi nr. 5 2011 (http://www2.dmu.dk/Pub/TR5.pdf).
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/QP-WEB/home.jsp
([3]) EFT L 183 af 29.6.1989.
([4]) EFT L 131 af 5.5.1998.
([5]) EUT L 204 af 4.8.2007.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-012664/11
to the Commission
Søren Bo Søndergaard (GUE/NGL)
(10 January 2012)

Subject: Follow-up on pollution from aviation fuel burn at European airports

Further to my question of 20 December 2010 on pollution from aviation fuel burn at European airports (P-011302/2010) and in view of the fact that the final report, which is now available, confirms the conclusions of the interim report ([1]), could the Commission please answer the following questions:

What concrete measures will the Commission put in place to protect employees at airports?

Does the Commission intend to bring forward the evaluation by the Scientific Committee on Occupational Exposure Limit Values (SCOEL) and if so, to when?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(1 February 2012)

The Commission would draw the Honourable Member's attention to its answers to questions E-001326/2010 and P-011302/2010 ([2]), and in particular the fact that Framework Directive 89/391/EEC ([3]) on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work, the Chemical Agents Directive 98/24/EC ([4]) and the Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive 2004/37/EC ([5]) apply as regards the protection of workers engaged in the vicinity of burning aviation fuel. The competent national authorities (the Danish authorities in this case) are responsible for ensuring that the directives are transposed properly into national law and that adequate controls and supervision of their application are carried out.

The Commission would also point out that the International Civil Aviation Organisation has set limits on aircraft engine exhaust emissions with a view to controlling the aviation industry's impact on local air quality and the environment. Compliance with such limits by the aircraft engine manufacturers should help mitigate any detrimental effects of such exhaust emissions on the health of workers at airports.

The Scientific Committee on Occupational Exposure Limits, in conjunction with the Commission Joint Research Centre, is currently checking the available scientific literature needed for a proper risk assessment. Once this has been done and depending on their conclusions, they may recommend that specific occupational limits be set for specific chemicals in the context to which the Honourable Member's question refers.

([1]) Investigation of air pollution at Copenhagen Kastrup airport apron in relation to the working environment. Aarhus University, DCE [Danish National Centre for Environment and Energy] Technical Report No 5 2011 (http://www2.dmu.dk/Pub/TR5.pdf)
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/QP-WEB/home.jsp
([3]) OJ L 183, 29.6.1989.
([4]) OJ L 131, 5.5.1998.
([5]) OJ L 204, 4.8.2007.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord P-012665/11
aan de Commissie
Frieda Brepoels (Verts/ALE)
(13 januari 2012)

Betreft: Staatswaarborg voor Arco-coöperanten

Op zaterdag 17 december berichtte de krant Het Laatste Nieuws dat de Europese Commissie België al op 6 december heeft opgedragen om de uitvoering van de staatswaarborg voor de coöperatieve aandeelhouders van de Arco-groep „onmiddellijk stop te zetten" en af te zien van elke uitbetaling, tot de Commissie heeft uitgemaakt of het al dan niet gaat om onwettige staatssteun. De krant bericht dit op basis van een brief die ze kon inkijken van het directoraat-generaal Mededinging.

Naar verluidt kreeg België tien werkdagen om te antwoorden, i.e. tot 19 december. De brief zou vermelden dat het risico dat de Commissie de staatswaarborg voor de Arco-coöperanten zal verbieden, reëel is omdat de maatregel onverenigbaar zou zijn met de interne marktwerking. De Commissie zou desnoods dreigen met een formele inbreukprocedure tegen België.

In die context graag volgende vragen aan de Commissie:

1. Kan de Commissie bevestigen dat op 6 december een brief werd gestuurd aan de Belgische regering?

2. Kan de Commissie bevestigen dat in deze brief gevraagd werd.d. uitvoering van de staatswaarborg voor de coöperatieve aandeelhouders van de Arco-groep „onmiddellijk stop te zetten" en af te zien van elke uitbetaling, tot de Commissie heeft uitgemaakt of het al dan niet gaat om onwettige staatssteun?

3. Heeft de Commissie een antwoord gekregen van de Belgische regering op haar brief? Zo ja, wanneer en met welke inhoud? Zo neen, welke maatregelen zal de Commissie in voorkomend geval nemen? Heeft de Commissie in de tussentijd contact gehad met de Belgische regering over dit dossier?

4. Kan de Commissie de precieze status van het Arco-dossier toelichten?

— Welk onderzoek wordt momenteel gevoerd?

— Wanneer neemt de Commissie een beslissing?

— Welke maatregelen wil de Commissie nemen?

Antwoord van de heer Almunia namens de Commissie
(1 februari 2012)

Op 7 november 2011 heeft België de uitbreiding van de beschermingsregeling voor deposito's en financiële instrumenten tot aandeelbewijzen van particuliere vennoten in alle erkende coöperatieve vennootschappen aangemeld. Deze maatregel heeft als doel de aandeelhouders van Groep ARCO te beschermen.

Aangezien België de maatregel heeft aangemeld, zijn de normale procedures voor aangemelde steun van toepassing. Derhalve zal de Commissie de maatregel moeten onderzoeken uit het oogpunt van staatssteun en, wanneer zij tot een conclusie is gekomen, daarover een besluit nemen.

De Commissie wenst eveneens het bestaan van de zogeheten standstill-verplichting op het gebied van staatssteun in herinnering te brengen. De lidstaten mogen niet met de concrete tenuitvoerlegging van de steunmaatregel doorgaan, zolang de Commissie haar goedkeuring niet heeft gegeven.

Aangezien de zaak momenteel wordt onderzocht, kan de Commissie hierop — in dit stadium — niet nader ingaan.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-012665/11
to the Commission
Frieda Brepoels (Verts/ALE)
(13 January 2012)

Subject: State guarantee for Arco cooperative shareholders

It was reported on Saturday, 17 December in the newspaper *Het Laatste Nieuws* that the European Commission already ordered Belgium on 6 December 'to immediately cease' providing the State guarantee to the cooperative shareholders of the Arco Group and to discontinue any payment until the Commission has established whether this is illegal state aid or not. The newspaper's report is based on a letter which was seen from the Directorate-General for Competition.

It is claimed that Belgium was given 10 working days to reply, which meant by 19 December. The letter apparently mentioned that there was a genuine risk that the Commission would ban the State guarantee for the Arco cooperative shareholders because this measure was apparently incompatible with the operation of the internal market. The Commission would, if necessary, threaten Belgium with formal infringement proceedings.

In light of this, I would like to ask the Commission the following questions:

1. Can the Commission confirm that a letter was sent to the Belgian Government on 6 December?

2. Can the Commission confirm that a request was made in this letter 'to immediately cease' providing the State guarantee to the cooperative shareholders of the Arco Group and to discontinue any payment until the Commission has established whether this is illegal state aid or not?

3. Has the Commission received a reply from the Belgian Government to its letter? If so, when and what does it say? If not, what measures will the Commission take, where relevant? Has the Commission contacted the Belgian Government in the meantime about this dossier?

4. Can the Commission advise on the exact status of the Arco dossier?

What inquiry is being conducted at the moment?

When will the Commission make a decision?

What action does the Commission wish to take?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(1 February 2012)

On 7 November 2011, Belgium notified the extension of the protection scheme for deposits and financial instruments to share certificates held by individual partners in all recognised cooperatives. The measure has been developed to grant protection to the holders of share certificates in the ARCO Group.

As Belgium has notified the measure, the normal procedures for notified aid apply. Thus the Commission will have to investigate the measure from a state aid perspective and once it has reached a conclusion, the Commission will be obliged to take a decision.

The Commission also wants to recall the existence of the so-called 'standstill obligation' in state aid matters. Member States are obliged not to proceed with the concrete implementation of an aid measure until the Commission has given its approval.

As the case is currently under investigation, the Commission is — at this stage — not in a position to comment further.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord P-012666/11
aan de Commissie
Peter van Dalen (ECR)
(10 januari 2012)

Betreft: Systematische foltering en sterfgevallen in gevangenschap in India

Het rapport „Torture in India 2011", onlangs gepubliceerd door het Asian Centre for Human Rights en medegefinancierd door de Europese Commissie, stelt dat in de periode 2001/2 tot 2009/10 14 231 personen in politionele en justitiële hechtenis zijn omgekomen. Dit cijfer is afkomstig van de gevallen gemeld aan de Indiase Natio.a. Human Rights Commission (NHRC). Volgens het rapport zijn de meeste gevallen een direct gevolg van foltering in gevangenschap en bovendien slechts het topje van de ijsberg, aangezien de meeste sterfgevallen als gevolg van foltering niet aan de NHRC worden gemeld. Ook heeft de NHRC geen jurisdictie over de strijdkrachten en registreert het NHRC geen gevallen van foltering die niet leiden tot de dood.

India heeft de VN Conventie Tegen Foltering (UNCAT) nog niet geratificeerd en heeft geen anti-folteringswet. Hoewel door de competente commissie in de Rajya Sabha voorbereid, is een dergelijke wet nog niet door de regering bij het parlement ingediend.

1. Wat heeft de Commissie tot nu toe gedaan om de kwestie van systematische foltering en sterfgevallen in gevangenschap bij de Indiase autoriteiten en in internationale overlegorganen aan te kaarten?

2. Is de Commissie bereid.d. kwestie van systematische foltering en sterfgevallen in gevangenschap op het hoogste niveau en met de hoogste urgentie bij de Indiase regering aan te kaarten?

3. Is de Commissie bereid deze kwestie bij de eerstvolgende EU-India Top in februari 2012 te agenderen en tot overeenstemming te komen betreffende te nemen maatregelen tegen foltering in India?

4. Is de Commissie bereid om, gebaseerd op het rapport „Torture in India 2011" en verschillende andere publicaties, een onderzoek in het kader van de GSP-verordening (waarvan India de voornaamste begunstigde is) te starten, om vast te stellen of er inderdaad bewijs is van systematische mensenrechtenschendingen, en indien dat het geval is, India's handelspreferenties in te trekken?

5. Is de Commissie bereid om deze kwestie aan te kaarten in het kader van de onderhandelingen voor een EU-India handelsverdrag en om voortgang in deze kwestie (onder andere de aanname van een anti-folteringswet in overeenstemming met UNCAT) een voorwaarde te maken voor succesvolle afronding van de onderhandelingen.

Antwoord van hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter Ashton namens de Commissie
(28 februari 2012)

De hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter heeft deze zaak van nabij gevolgd en is op de hoogte van het rapport van het Asian Centre for Human Rights.

Gevallen van foltering en overlijden in gevangenschap zijn geregeld aan bod gekomen in de jaarlijkse lokale mensenrechtendialoog tussen de EU en India. Tijdens de meest recente dialoog in 2011 werd het wetsvoorstel voor de preventie van foltering en de rehabilitatie van slachtoffers van marteling besproken en lieten de autoriteiten weten dat het na goedkeuring door het Lagerhuis in behandeling was bij het Hogerhuis. Als het door het Hogerhuis wordt goedgekeurd, zou het wetsvoorstel vervolgens worden aangenomen, waarna de ratificatie van het VN-verdrag tegen foltering zou volgen. Het wetsvoorstel is nog steeds niet goedgekeurd en de zaak zal opnieuw worden besproken tijdens de volgende dialoog op 22 maart 2012.

Wat betreft het stelsel van algemene preferenties (SAP) kunnen verleende preferenties worden ingetrokken in geval van „ernstige en systematische schending" van de beginselen van de belangrijkste internationale verdragen inzake mensenrechten en sociale en arbeidsrechten, op basis van de bevindingen van de internationale toezichthoudende instanties. Hoewel India het VN-verdrag tegen foltering niet heeft geratificeerd, bestaan er instanties die op basis van het VN-Handvest het recht hebben om mensenrechtensituaties in specifieke landen te bestuderen, te controleren en erover te rapporteren.

Wat de besprekingen over een vrijhandelsovereenkomst betreft, is het aannemen van een antifolteringswet geen deel van of voorwaarde voor het afronden van de onderhandelingen. De EU wil in de vrijhandelsovereenkomst een hoofdstuk over duurzame ontwikkeling opnemen. Dit moet gebaseerd zijn op arbeidsgerelateerde mensenrechtenkwesties in verband met de „Agenda voor waardig werk" van de IAO en de grondrechten met betrekking tot werk. De EU-aanpak van duurzame ontwikkeling is gebaseerd op dialoog en samenwerking, gekoppeld aan een mechanisme voor het maatschappelijk middenveld. Een meer algemene clausule inzake mensenrechten is opgenomen in de huidige samenwerkingsovereenkomst.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-012666/11
to the Commission
Peter van Dalen (ECR)
(10 January 2012)

Subject: Torture and deaths during detention in India

The report 'Torture in India 2011', recently published by the Asian Centre for Human Rights and co-financed by the European Commission, states that 14 231 persons died in police and judicial detention between 2001/2002 and 2009/2010. This figure is based on cases reported to the Indian National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). According to the report, the majority of cases are a direct consequence of torture during detention. Moreover, this only represents the tip of the iceberg given that most deaths resulting from torture are not reported to the NHRC. The NHRC also does not have any jurisdiction over the armed forces and does not register cases of torture which do not result in death.

India has not yet ratified the UN Convention against Torture (UNCAT) and does not have any anti-torture legislation. Although a law on this matter has been drafted by the relevant committee in the Rajya Sabha (Upper House of the Indian Parliament), it has not yet been presented by the Government to parliament.

1. What has the Commission done so far to raise the issue of systematic torture and deaths in detention with the Indian authorities and in international advisory bodies?

2. Is the Commission prepared to raise the issue of systematic torture and deaths in detention at the highest level and as a matter of utmost urgency with the Indian Government?

3. Is the Commission prepared to put this item on the agenda of the next EU-India Summit in February 2012 and to reach agreement on anti-torture measures to be adopted in India?

4. Is the Commission prepared, based on the report 'Torture in India 2011' and various other publications, to launch an investigation in the context of the GSP Regulation (of which India is the main beneficiary) aimed at establishing whether there is actually proof of systematic human rights violations, and if so, to withdraw India's trade preferences?

5. Is the Commission prepared to raise this issue as part of the negotiations for an EU-India trade agreement and to make progress on this issue (including the adoption of an anti-torture law in accordance with UNCAT) a condition for the successful conclusion of the negotiations?

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

The High Representative/Vice-President has been following this matter closely and is aware of the Asian Centre for Human Rights' report.

Torture and custodial deaths have been regularly addressed at the annual local EU-India Human Rights Dialogue. During the last Dialogue in 2011, the Prevention of Torture and Rehabilitation of Victims of Torture Bill was discussed and the authorities informed that following its adoption by the Lower House, it was pending with the Upper House. If approved by the Upper House, the Bill would subsequently be adopted and ratification of the UN Convention against Torture would follow. The adoption of the Bill is still awaited and the matter will again be discussed at the next Dialogue on 22 March 2012.

As regards the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP), preferences granted can be withdrawn in cases of 'serious and systematic violations' of principles laid down in the core international conventions on human, social and labour rights, on the basis of the conclusions of the international monitoring bodies. Although India has not ratified the UN Convention against Torture, there are UN charter-based bodies that have rights to examine, monitor and report on human rights situations in specific countries.

As regards discussions on a Free Trade Agreement (FTA), the adoption of an anti-torture law is not part of or a pre-condition for concluding the negotiations. The EU aims to include in the FTA a chapter on sustainable development. This should be based on labour-related human rights issues with reference to the ILO's Decent Work Agenda and fundamental rights at work. The EU's approach to sustainable development is based on dialogue and cooperation, coupled with a civil society mechanism. A more general human rights clause is included in the current Cooperation Agreement.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-012667/11
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (NI)
(11. Januar 2012)

Betrifft: EU-Fördergelder für das pakistanische Bildungssystem

In ihrer Antwort auf die Anfrage E-008878/2011 gab die Kommission an, dass die Fördergelder aus dem Finanzierungsinstrument für die Entwicklungszusammenarbeit (DCI) für Pakistan unter anderem im Bildungsbereich eingesetzt werden.

Eine vom *International Center for Religion and Diplomacy* (ICRD) durchgeführte Studie kam jedoch zu dem Ergebnis, dass an öffentlichen Schulen Pakistans durch Lehrkräfte und Lehrmaterialien ein negatives Bild von Minderheiten vermittelt wird, das Diskriminierung und Gewalt gegenüber Angehörigen dieser Minderheiten fördert.

1. Für welche konkreten Projekte im Bildungsbereich werden die EU-Gelder aufgewendet? Werden diese Projekte kontrolliert und überwacht? Wenn ja, sind die Ergebnisse der Kontrollen öffentlich verfügbar?

2. In der Antwort auf die Anfrage E-010222/2010 gab die Kommission im Januar 2011 an, dass 44 von 88 Themen im Unterrichtsmaterial der Provinzen Sindh und Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Hinblick auf minderheitenfeindliches Gedankengut überprüft und entsprechend abgeändert wurden. Wie sieht der diesbezügliche Fortschritt fast ein Jahr später aus?

3. Kann die Kommission garantieren, dass in den mit EU-Geldern geförderten Schulen und anderen Bildungseinrichtungen kein minderheitenfeindliches Gedankengut verbreitet wird und Kinder, die religiösen Minderheiten angehören, die gleiche Behandlung wie muslimische Kinder erhalten?

Antwort von Herrn Piebalgs im Namen der Kommission
(9. März 2012)

1. Die Unterstützung der EU für das pakistanische Bildungswesen umfasst gegenwärtig zwei sektorbezogene Budgethilfeprogramme, eines in der Provinz Sindh und eines in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

Die EU-Delegation steht mit den Provinzverwaltungen im regelmäßigen Dialog zu Fortschritten und Ergebnissen und führt Kontrollbesuche durch. Sie überwacht turnusmäßig die Programme und die Durchführungspartner werden einer Evaluierung unterzogen.

Die Berichte über die Kontrollbesuche und die Überprüfungen werden zwar nicht veröffentlicht, sind aber im Einklang mit den Vorschriften über den Zugang der Öffentlichkeit zu Dokumenten der Kommission ([1]) auf Anfrage erhältlich.

2. Von den 88 unter föderaler Verantwortung stehenden Themen wurden 63 überprüft. In der Provinz KP wurden 12 hinsichtlich der Darstellung ethnischer und religiöser Minderheiten überprüfte Bücher veröffentlicht. Ihre Zahl wird 2012 auf ungefähr 25 steigen. In der Provinz Sindh werden gegenwärtig 58 Schulbücher im Rahmen des neuen Lehrplans fertiggestellt.

3. Der neue Lehrplan (nach der Reform 2006/2007) kann insgesamt als tolerant und Minderheiten achtend eingestuft werden. Er sieht das Fach „Ethik" für nichtmuslimische Schüler vor, so dass diese nicht gezwungen sind, am Islamunterricht ([2]) teilzunehmen.

Die EU unterstützt den oben erwähnten Reformprozess. Es kann jedoch nicht garantiert werden, dass jede Lehrkraft sich Minderheiten gegenüber korrekt verhält. Die von der EU und ihren Partnern durchgeführten Maßnahmen tragen zur Toleranz gegenüber Minderheiten bei, wie beispielsweise die Lehrerfortbildung in der Provinz KP, die ein Modul „Living together" enthält, in dem es um die Erziehung zu Frieden und Werten geht und das an ausgewählten Schulen eingeführt werden soll.

([1]) Artikel 4 der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1049/2001 des Parlaments und des Rates vom 30. Mai 2001 über den Zugang der Öffentlichkeit zu Dokumenten des Europäischen Parlaments, des Rates und der Kommission, ABl. L 145 vom 31. Mai 2001.

([2]) Der Islamunterricht konzentriert sich auf die Rechte, Verhaltensweisen, Rituale und die Verantwortung von Muslimen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012667/11
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (NI)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: EU funding for the Pakistani education system

In its reply to Question E-008878/2011, the Commission stated that funding from the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) for Pakistan has been allocated to education, amongst other areas.

However, a study carried out by the International Centre for Religion and Diplomacy (ICRD) came to the conclusion that, in Pakistan's state schools, teaching staff and teaching materials convey a negative image of minorities and promote discrimination and violence against members of these minorities.

1. On which specific education projects are EU funds being spent? Are these projects inspected and monitored? If so, are the results of inspections publicly available?

2. In its reply to Question E-010222/2010, the Commission stated in January 2011 that 44 out of 88 topics in the teaching materials of the Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces have been revised in terms of anti-minority ideas and changed as a result. What progress in this regard has been made one year on?

3. Can the Commission guarantee that schools and other educational institutions receiving EU funding are not spreading anti-minority ideas and that children from religious minorities are being treated in the same way as Muslim children?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(9 March 2012)

1. Currently the EU support to Education in Pakistan consists of two sector budget support programmes, one in Sindh Province and one in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

The EU Delegation has a regular dialogue with the provincial governments about progress and results and conducts review missions. The programmes are regularly monitored by the EU Delegation and its implementing partners and will be evaluated.

The reports from the review missions and the monitoring reports are not published but they are made available upon request, in line with the rules regarding public access to Commission documents ([1]).

2. Under federal responsibility, 63 out of 88 subjects had been reviewed. In KP province 12 revised books (checked for the presentation of ethnic and religious minorities) came out and this number will rise to approximately 25 in 2012. Sindh province is still finalising 58 textbooks that are being prepared under the new curriculum.

3. The new curriculum (following the 2006/2007 reform) can be seen as being generally tolerant and respectful. It includes the subject Ethics for non-Muslim students so they are not forced to study Islamiat ([2]).

The EU is supporting the abovementioned ongoing reform processes. However there can be no guarantee that every teacher will display a minority-friendly attitude. The activities implemented by the EU and its partners contribute to tolerance towards minorities, including the teacher-training in KP that includes a peace/values education module called 'Living Together' which will be introduced in selected schools.

([1]) Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 of Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2001 regarding public access to Parliament, Council and Commission documents, OJ L 145, 31.5.2001.

([2]) Islamiat focuses on the rights, behaviours, rituals and responsibilities of Muslims.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-012668/11
προς την Επιτροπή
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE) και Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(11 Ιανουαρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Οι επιπτώσεις των μεταρρυθμίσεων στην ελληνική αγορά εργασίας

Η πρόσφατη απορρύθμιση των εργασιακών σχέσεων που δρομολογήθηκε στην Ελλάδα, ως απόρροια των διαπραγματεύσεων της Ελληνικής Κυβέρνησης και της Τρόικα (μεταξύ άλλων η αναστολή του μηχανισμού επέκτασης των κλαδικών συμβάσεων και της ρήτρας της ευνοϊκότερης διάταξης) έχουν επιφέρει θεαματική αύξηση της υπογραφής ατομικών συμβάσεων στην ελληνική αγορά εργασίας, με αποτέλεσμα να υπάρχει έντονος κίνδυνος καταστρατήγησης κεκτημένων εργασιακών δικαιωμάτων, καθώς επιδεινώνουν τη θέση των εργαζομένων σε μια σχέση ετεροβαρή όπως είναι η εργασιακή.

Με τη θέσπιση, μάλιστα, της δυνατότητας διαπραγμάτευσης σε επιχειρησιακό επίπεδο, ενώσεων προσώπων — που δεν διαθέτουν επαρκή γνώση, συνδικαλιστική και διαπραγματευτική παιδεία — αυξάνονται οι περιπτώσεις παραβίασης εργασιακών δικαιωμάτων και πλήττεται ο θεσμός του κοινωνικού διαλόγου. Ταυτόχρονα, και ενώ χρειάζεται να αναληφθεί δράση προς την κατεύθυνση της ενδυνάμωσης της ανταγωνιστικότητας της χώρας, της διατήρησης των θέσεων απασχόλησης, της δημιουργίας νέων καθώς και της διαφύλαξης επαρκούς ασφάλειας και ποιότητας στην εργασία, φαίνεται ότι τα εν λόγω μέτρα και η υλοποίησή τους δεν εξυπηρετούν αυτούς τους στόχους. Σε αυτό το πλαίσιο ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Διαθέτει στοιχεία για τις επιπτώσεις των μεταρρυθμίσεων στην εργασία στις εργασιακές σχέσεις, τον κοινωνικό διάλογο, την ανταγωνιστικότητα της χώρας, τη βιωσιμότητα της επιχειρηματικής δραστηριότητας, τα ποσοστά ανεργίας και τα επίπεδα φτώχειας;

— Πιστεύει ότι απαιτούνται διορθωτικές κινήσεις προκειμένου να αντιμετωπιστούν τα κενά που έχουν δημιουργηθεί στη νομοθεσία λόγω πλημμελούς σχεδιασμού των μεταρρυθμίσεων και για την επίτευξη της ισορροπίας μεταξύ της ευελιξίας και της ασφάλειας στην αγορά εργασίας;

— Πρόκειται να απευθύνει σχετικές συστάσεις στην Ελλάδα αναφορικά με τη λειτουργία και το ρυθμιστικό πλαίσιο των εργασιακών σχέσεων;

Απάντηση του κ. Andor εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(23 Φεβρουαρίου 2012)

Τα μέτρα τα οποία ενθαρρύνει η Επιτροπή αποσκοπούν στη βελτίωση της δημοσιονομικής, οικονομικής και κοινωνικής κατάστασης της Ελλάδας. Οι εκτεταμένες μεταρρυθμίσεις που πραγματοποιεί η Ελλάδα στο πλαίσιο αυτό έχουν σίγουρα εκτενείς επιπτώσεις, οι οποίες πρέπει να παρακολουθούνται και να εξετάζονται τακτικά.

Η Επιτροπή θεωρεί ότι χρειάζονται περισσότερα διορθωτικά μέτρα για τη βελτίωση της αγοράς εργασίας και για την αποκατάσταση της ανταγωνιστικότητας της Ελλάδας. Στις διαπραγματεύσεις στο πλαίσιο του προγράμματος οικονομικής προσαρμογής που συμμετείχαν όχι μόνον η κυβέρνηση αλλά και οι κοινωνικοί εταίροι και αποτέλεσαν το έναυσμα για μια εθνική συζήτηση με τη συμμετοχή των κοινωνικοοικονομικών εταίρων. Ο συνεχής διάλογος μεταξύ της ελληνικής κυβέρνησης και των κοινωνικών εταίρων σχετικά με τις μεταρρυθμίσεις για την ανάπτυξη της ανταγωνιστικότητας της χώρας θα βοηθήσει στην επίτευξη του εν λόγω στόχου.

Η Επιτροπή δεσμεύεται να προωθήσει τον κοινωνικό διάλογο σε όλη την Ένωση, λαμβάνοντας δεόντως υπόψη την ποικολομορφία των εθνικών συστημάτων εργασιακών σχέσεων. Η Επιτροπή προτείνει στο Συμβούλιο τη διατύπωση συστάσεων προς τα κράτη μέλη στο πλαίσιο της στρατηγικής «Ευρώπη 2020»/Ευρωπαϊκού εξαμήνου. Για να αποφευχθεί η διπλή επιτήρηση, το πρόγραμμα οικονομικής αναπροσαρμογής για κράτη μέλη όπως η Ελλάδα είναι το μοναδικό σημείο αναφοράς για όλες τις συστάσεις πολιτικής και αυτά τα κράτη μέλη καλούνται κατ' αρχήν να εφαρμόσουν το εν λόγω πρόγραμμα.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012668/11
to the Commission
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE) and Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: The impact of Greek labour market reforms

The recent deregulation of industrial relations which began in Greece as a result of the negotiations between the Greek Government and the Troika (including the suspension of collective agreement extension mechanisms and the clause under the more favourable provision) have led to a dramatic increase in the signing of individual contracts in the Greek labour market. As a result, there is a serious risk of circumvention of acquired working rights, as these contracts worsen the situation of employees in a unilateral relationship such as a working relationship.

With the establishment of negotiations on an operational level bringing together people who do not have satisfactory knowledge, training in trade unions and negotiations, infringements of working rights are increasing and the institution of social dialogue is affected. At the same time, and although action must be taken to strengthen the country's competitiveness, to keep workers in employment, to create new and maintain existing job security and quality, it seems that these measures and the implementation of these measures do not meet these objectives. In this context, will the Commission answer the following:

Does it have information on the impact of labour reforms on industrial relations, social dialogue, the country's competitiveness, business sustainability, unemployment and poverty levels?

Does it believe that corrective measures are required to deal with the gaps created in the legislation as a result of the inadequate planning of the reforms and to achieve balance between flexibility and security in the labour market?

Does it intend to issue recommendations to Greece on the functioning and regulatory framework of industrial relations?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(23 February 2012)

The measures which the Commission encourages are designed to improve Greece's financial, economic and social situation. The comprehensive reforms that Greece is enacting in this context have of course wide-ranging impacts which need to be monitored and reviewed regularly.

The Commission considers that further corrective measures are needed to improve the functioning of the labour market and to restore Greece's competitiveness. The negotiations in the context of the economic adjustment programme have been involving not only the government but also the social partners and triggered a national debate involving all socioeconomic stakeholders. The ongoing dialogue between the Greek Government and the social partners on reforms enhancing the country's competitiveness should help in meeting that objective.

The Commission is committed to promoting social dialogue throughout the Union, with due regard for the diversity of national industrial relations systems. The Commission proposes to the Council to issue recommendations to Member States in the framework of the Europe 2020 strategy/European Semester. To avoid double surveillance, the economic adjustment programme for Member States such as Greece is the single reference point for all policy recommendations and these Member States are primarily called upon to implement that programme.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-012669/11
do Komisji
Michał Tomasz Kamiński (ECR)
(11 stycznia 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Wietnam: prześladowania katolików

W 2011 r. rząd Wietnamu rozpoczął prześladowania działaczy religijnych, ukierunkowane głównie na katolickich duchownych. Fala aresztowań rozpoczęła się w dniu 30 lipca 2011 r., gdy policja aresztowała trzech działaczy katolickich na lotnisku Tan Son Nhat w mieście Ho Chi Minh. W ciągu następnych siedmiu tygodni władze aresztowały kolejnych 12 działaczy religijnych. Postawiono im zarzut naruszenia art. 79 kodeksu karnego – działalność przeciwko administracji – za które grozi wyrok 5-15 lat więzienia za „współudział" i od 12 lat do dożywocia lub kary śmierci dla osób uznanych „organizatorów" lub osób, których działania miały „poważne skutki". Duchowni informują, że znajdują się pod stałym dozorem policyjnym i są zastraszani. W sierpniu 2011 r. nabrała rozgłosu sprawa profesora Pham Minh Hoanga, obywatela Francji i Wietnamu, który został skazany na 3 lata więzienia, a następnie oddany pod dozór kuratora na kolejne 3 lata aresztu domowego.

Z uwagi na to, że Wietnam i Unia Europejska prowadzą obecnie negocjacje dotyczące nowej umowy o partnerstwie i współpracy (UPiW), która będzie stanowić kompleksową i ambitną podstawę dwustronnych relacji, jakie działania podjęła Komisja w 2011 r. (i planuje podjąć w 2012 r.), aby wymóc na rządzie Wietnamu przerwanie represji wobec religijnych dysydentów? Czy prawa katolików i innych mniejszości religijnych są brane pod uwagę podczas negocjacji w sprawie UPiW?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wysoką Przedstawiciel i Wiceprzewodniczącą Komisji Catherine Ashton w imieniu Komisji
(17 lutego 2012 r.)

UE podziela zaniepokojenie Szanownego Pana Posła pojawiającymi się w ostatnich miesiącach sygnałami świadczącymi o zaostrzeniu polityki rządu wietnamskiego w zakresie wolności religii i wyznania. Stoi to w sprzeczności z pewnymi pozytywnymi działaniami, które Wietnam podejmował od 2005 r. w celu ustanowienia przejrzystych i bardziej otwartych ram regulacyjnych dla działalności religijnej, jak również kłóci się to z niedawnymi wysiłkami, aby wznowić dialog z Watykanem.

UE wyraziła swoje zaniepokojenie, podejmując szczególne interwencje dyplomatyczne, jak również przy okazji ostatniej rundy dialogu UE-Wietnam na temat praw człowieka, która odbyła się dnia 12 stycznia 2012 r. w Hanoi. W sierpniu 2011 r. Wysoka Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodnicząca wezwała publicznie do uwolnienia profesora Pham Minh Hoanga, który w konsekwencji został uwolniony dnia 15 stycznia 2012 r. po postępowaniu apelacyjnym.

UE zachęcała również rząd Wietnamu do zaproszenia specjalnego sprawozdawcy ONZ ds. wolności religii i wyznania do złożenia wizyty w tym kraju.

Delegatura UE w Hanoi jak również ambasady państw członkowskich nadal bardzo uważnie monitorują sytuację w Wietnamie.

Nowa umowa o partnerstwie i współpracy między UE a Wietnamem, parafowana w październiku 2010 r., zawiera istotne klauzule polityczne, obejmujące zobowiązania w zakresie praw człowieka, praworządności oraz Międzynarodowego Trybunału Karnego, które pozwolą UE na prowadzenie pogłębionego dialogu i współpracy, służących propagowaniu praw człowieka w Wietnamie.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012669/11
to the Commission
Michał Tomasz Kamiński (ECR)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Vietnam: persecution of Catholics

In 2011, the Vietnamese government implemented a crackdown on religious activists, largely targeting Catholic priests. A wave of arrests began on 30 July 2011, when the police arrested three Catholic activists at Tan Son Nhat airport in Ho Chi Minh City. During the next seven weeks, the authorities arrested 12 more religious activists. They had been charged with violating penal code Article 79, subversion of the administration, which carries a 5-to-15-year sentence for being an 'accomplice' and 12 years to life, or the death penalty, for those designated as 'organisers' or those whose actions have 'serious consequences.' Priests report that they suffer from regular police surveillance and harassment. In August 2011, there was also the case of Professor Pham Minh Hoang, a French and Vietnamese national, who was sentenced to three years' imprisonment followed by three years of probation under house arrest.

Bearing in mind that Vietnam and the European Union are in the process of negotiating a new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), which would provide a comprehensive and ambitious framework for bilateral ties, what has the Commission done in 2011 (and intends to do in 2012) to exert pressure on the government of Vietnam to cease its repression against religious dissidents? Are the rights of Catholics, and other religious minorities, taken into consideration during the PCA negotiations?

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

The EU shares the concern of the Honourable Member about signs, in recent months, of a more hard-line approach from the Government of Vietnam to freedom of religion or belief. This contrasts with some of the positive measures, which Vietnam had taken since 2005 to establish a transparent and more open regulatory framework for religious activities, as well as with recent efforts to restore dialogue with the Vatican.

The EU has raised its concerns through specific diplomatic démarches as well as on the occasion of the last round of the EU-Vietnam Dialogue on Human Rights held on 12 January 2012 in Hanoi. In August 2011, the High Representative/Vice-President called publicly for the release of Professor Pham Minh Hoang, who was subsequently released on 15 January 2012 further to an appeal trial.

The EU has also encouraged the Government of Vietnam to invite the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief to visit the country.

The EU Delegation in Hanoi as well as Embassies of Member States continue to monitor the issue very closely.

The new EU-Vietnam Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) initialled in October 2010 includes significant political clauses, including commitments on Human Rights, the Rule of Law and the International Criminal Court (ICC), which will allow the EU to intensify dialogue and cooperation aimed at promoting Human Rights in Vietnam.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-012670/11
do Komisji
Michał Tomasz Kamiński (ECR)
(11 stycznia 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Angola: brakujące fundusze rządowe

W ostatnim raporcie Międzynarodowego Funduszu Walutowego dotyczącym Angoli ujawniono, że środki rządowe były w latach 2007-2010 wydawane i przekazywane, choć nie zostały odpowiednio udokumentowane w budżecie. Suma tych środków jest równa jednej czwartej produktu krajowego brutto tego kraju. Według MFW ostatnie działania Ministerstwa Finansów Angoli dotyczące dokładniejszego nadzoru nad państwową spółką paliwową Sonnagol po reformie prawa z 2010 r. doprowadziły do wykrycia przepływów finansowych na zagraniczne rachunki powiernicze, których nie można wytłumaczyć zobowiązaniami Angoli w zakresie obsługi długu. Łączna wartość dotychczas niewyjaśnionych przelewów wynosi 7,1 mld dolarów. Rząd prowadzi dochodzenie w sprawie wycieku tych funduszy oraz próbuje ustalić, co stało się z pozostałymi 24,9 mld dolarów, które prawdopodobnie są przyczyną niewyjaśnionych rozbieżności na rachunkach rządowych.

Z uwagi na to, że w nowym krajowym dokumencie strategicznym UE-Angola na lata 2008-2013 przewidziane jest dofinansowanie w wysokości 214 mln euro, jakie działania podejmuje Komisja, aby upewnić się, że fundusze UE wykorzystywane są z korzyścią dla ludności Angoli a nie sprzeniewierzane lub niesłusznie przywłaszczane przez władze lub skorumpowanych urzędników?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wysoką Przedstawiciel i Wiceprzewodniczącą Komisji Catherine Ashton w imieniu Komisji
(1 marca 2012 r.)

W trakcie ostatniej sesji informacyjnej zorganizowanej niedawno ze wspólnotą międzynarodową w Luandzie, przedstawiciele MFW sformułowali wstępny wniosek, że poruszony przez Szanownego Pana Posła problem wynika z „niedopasowania księgowego", a nie ze sprzeniewierzenia funduszy lub nadużyć. Fundusze paliwowe przekazane przez Sonangol do Ministerstwa Finansów są kwotami netto odpowiadającymi parafiskalnej działalności tego przedsiębiorstwa, która nie została uwzględniona w budżecie państwa (budowa infrastruktury, subwencje paliwowe, płatności w ramach linii kredytowych itp.), natomiast Ministerstwo Finansów ujmuje na koncie budżetowym szacunki dotyczące ropy naftowej faktycznie otrzymanej przez Sonangol od koncesjonowanych przedsiębiorstw naftowych. Kolejne sprawozdania MFW powinny przedstawić ostateczne wnioski po przeanalizowaniu wszystkich danych zebranych w Angoli.

Aby dostarczyć dodatkowych informacji na temat przyczyn wspomnianych rozbieżności oraz uzgodnić całkowite kwoty, rząd utworzył międzyagencyjną grupę obejmującą Ministerstwo Finansów, Ropy Naftowej, Ministerstwo Planowania i przedsiębiorstwo Sonangol. Stwierdził on jednocześnie, że w przyszłości Sonangol nie będzie odpowiedzialne za działalność parafiskalną. W celu dalszego wzmocnienia wiarygodności pożyczkowej i udzielenia wsparcia dla starań tego kraju na rzecz zwiększenia przejrzystości i kontroli fiskalnej, wspólnota międzynarodowa zaleca kontynuację prac MFW z Angolą po wygaśnięciu ważności aktualnej promesy kredytowej, które ma miejsce na początku 2012 r.

Polegająca na projektach pomoc UE dla Angoli nie jest przekazywana poprzez budżet krajowy i podlega ścisłej kontroli ustanowionej w unijnych przepisach umownych i finansowych.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012670/11
to the Commission
Michał Tomasz Kamiński (ECR)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Angola: missing government funds

A recent report by the International Monetary Fund on Angola revealed that government funds were spent or transferred from 2007 through 2010 without being properly documented in the budget. The sum is equivalent to one-quarter of the country's gross domestic product. According to the IMF, recent actions by the Angolan Finance Ministry to monitor more closely the state oil company, Sonangol, following a 2010 legal reform have led to the discovery of financial flows into foreign escrow accounts beyond what can be explained by Angola's debt service obligations. Such as-yet-unexplained transfers account for USD 7.1 billion. The government is investigating those outflows, as well as trying to identify what happened to the remaining USD 24.9 billion that appears as an unexplained discrepancy in government accounts.

Bearing in mind that the new 2008-2013 EU-Angola Country Strategy Paper (CSP) reaches a total financing of EUR 214 million, what is the Commission doing to make sure that EU funds are used for the benefit of the Angolan people and are not misused or wrongly appropriated by the authorities or corrupt officials?

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

In a recently held de-briefing session with the international community in Luanda, the IMF representatives said that they came to the preliminary conclusion that the problem stems from an accounting mismatch and not from diversion of funds or fraud. The oil funds transferred by Sonangol to the Ministry of Finance are net of their quasi-fiscal activities not included in the State Budget (building of infrastructure, fuel subsidies, payment of credit lines, etc.), while the Ministry of Finance registers in the Budget account the estimates of crude oil actually received by Sonangol from concessioned oil companies. Subsequent IMF reports should contain definitive conclusions after analysis of all the data collected in Angola.

The Government created an inter-agency group integrating the Ministries of Finance, Petroleum, Planning and Sonangol, to shed further light on the reasons for the discrepancies and reconcile the cumulative amounts, while at the same time stating that, in the future, Sonangol will not be in charge of para-fiscal activities. The international community recommends the continuity of IMF's work with Angola after the end of the current Stand-by Agreement (SBA) ending in early 2012, for further lending credibility and support to Angolan efforts towards greater transparency and fiscal control.

EU project based aid to Angola is not allocated through the national budget and is subject to tight controls as established in the EU contractual and financial rules.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-012671/11
do Komisji
Michał Tomasz Kamiński (ECR)
(13 stycznia 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Dyskryminacja Gruzinów i łamanie praw człowieka w Abchazji

Choć Abchazja jest w przeważającym stopniu nieuznawanym państwem, nie wyklucza to wynikających z prawa międzynarodowego zobowiązań jej de facto władz do przestrzegania praw człowieka, w tym prawa osób pochodzenia gruzińskiego do nieograniczonego powrotu do domów należących do nich przed wojną. Abchazja jednak tego nie uczyniła. Około 47 tys. osób powróciło do rejonu Gali, jednak z przeprowadzonych obserwacji wynika, że władze abchaskie utrudniają im korzystanie z podstawowych praw obywatelskich i politycznych. Pojawiły się doniesienia o przypadkach stosowania dyskryminujących procedur przy wydawaniu dokumentów tożsamości, utrudniania swobodnego przepływu przez granicę administracyjną z Gruzją oraz ograniczania praw osób powracających do pobierania nauki w języku gruzińskim.

Czy Komisja zdaje sobie sprawę z problemów, z jakimi borykają się Gruzini w separatystycznym regionie Abchazji? Co UE planuje zrobić w związku z tą sytuacją?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Štefana Füleg o w imieniu Komisji
(7 marca 2012 r.)

UE z ogromną uwagą śledzi sytuację w dwóch separatystycznych regionach Gruzji, Abchazji i Południowej Osetii, w tym w zakresie przestrzegania praw człowieka i praw mniejszości. Jednak od czasu rozpoczęcia działań wojennych w sierpniu 2008 r. współpraca z tymi regionami jest trudna, a UE ma tam żadnej stałej delegatury.

W tych wymagających warunkach UE prowadzi politykę nieuznawania i zaangażowania. W sierpniu 2011 r. Wysoka Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodnicząca powołała nowego specjalnego przedstawiciela Unii Europejskiej ds. Południowego Kaukazu i kryzysu w Gruzji. Przedstawiciel ten wraz z ONZ i Organizacją Bezpieczeństwa i Współpracy w Europie (OBWE) współprzewodniczy międzynarodowym rozmowom w Genewie, gdzie regularnie omawia się sytuację humanitarną , przy wsparciu ze strony agencji międzynarodowych i organizacji pozarządowych, a także kwestię dostępu humanitarnego do Południowej Osetii. W kontekście genewskich rozmów omawia się również ewentualne monitorowanie sytuacji w zakresie przestrzegania praw człowieka. UE wspiera również kontakty pomiędzy zwykłymi ludźmi, programy wymian studenckich i inne środki umacniające zaufanie poprzez instrument stabilności, a także zapewnia znaczące wsparcie wewnętrznym przesiedleńcom przebywającym obecnie na obszarze Gruzji administrowanym przez Tbilisi.

Proces zbliżenia Gruzji do UE stwarza nowe możliwości w zakresie polityki zaangażowania. UE bada obecnie te możliwości w celu znalezienia pokojowego i długoterminowego rozwiązania wspomnianych konfliktów w Gruzji.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012671/11
to the Commission
Michał Tomasz Kamiński (ECR)
(13 January 2012)

Subject: Discrimination against Georgians and violations of human rights in Abkhazia

Although Abkhazia is largely an unrecognised state, this does not rule out the de facto authorities' obligations under international law to respect human rights, including the right of ethnic Georgians to return unhindered to their pre-war homes. Abkhazia has failed to do this. About 47 000 people have returned to the Gali district, but research shows that the Abkhaz authorities hinder their basic civil and political rights. Instances have been reported of discriminatory procedures in obtaining identity papers, restrictions on free movement across the administrative boundary line with Georgia, and limits on the rights of returnees to be educated in the Georgian language.

Is the Commission aware of the difficulties faced by Georgians in the breakaway region of Abkhazia? What is the EU doing in this regard?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(7 March 2012)

The EU follows with great attention the situation in the two Georgian breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, including the respect for Human Rights and the rights of minorities. However, since the war in August 2008, cooperation with the regions has been difficult and the EU has no permanent presence there.

Under these challenging conditions the EU is pursuing a non-recognition and engagement policy. In August 2011 the High Representative/Vice-President appointed a new European Union Special Representative (EUSR) for South Caucasus and the Crisis in Georgia. Together with the United Nations (UN) and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the EUSR co-chairs the Geneva International Discussions, where the humanitarian situation is regularly discussed between the participants, including assistance by international agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and humanitarian access to South Ossetia. The possible monitoring of the Human Rights situations is also discussed in the Geneva context. The EU also supports people-to-people contacts, student exchange programs and other confidence-building measures through its Instrument for Stability (IfS) as well as providing substantial support to the Internally Displaced Persons currently residing in the Tbilisi administered area of Georgia.

The EU approximation process with Georgia provides new avenues for the engagement policy. The EU is currently exploring those opportunities with the aim of finding a peaceful and long term solution to the conflicts in Georgia.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-012672/11
do Komisji
Michał Tomasz Kamiński (ECR)
(11 stycznia 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Uzbekistan: Tortury i naruszanie habeas corpus

Istnieją niezbite dowody na to, że tortury, w tym elektrowstrząsy i duszenie, są powszechnym zjawiskiem w uzbeckim systemie prawa karnego. ONZ zwróciła uwagę na to, że tortury są zarówno „powszechne", jak i „systematycznie stosowane". Działacze na rzecz praw człowieka są więzieni, a niezależne społeczeństwo obywatelskie jest bezwzględnie tłumione. Human Rights Watch udokumentowało przypadki, w których przedstawiciele władz oblewali aktywistów wrzącą wodą podczas przesłuchania, bili zatrzymanych gumowymi pałkami i butelkami wypełnionymi wodą, wieszali zatrzymanych za nadgarstki i kostki, gwałcili ich i upokarzali seksualnie, a także dusili ich plastikowymi torbami i maskami gazowymi. Rząd skutecznie doprowadził do zniesienia niezależności zawodu prawnika, pozbawiając uprawnień najbardziej krytycznych prawników w Uzbekistanie, i ciągle odmawia zatrzymanym prawa do porady prawnej. Rząd Uzbekistanu przyjął w 2008 r. habeas corpus. Rządy europejskie i UE powoływały się na ten przykład jako przejaw „postępu", gdy podejmowały decyzję o zniesieniu sankcji w 2009 r. Według Human Rights Watch sytuacja w Uzbekistanie pod względem tortur i innych przypadków naruszenia prawa nie uległa poprawie od czasu przyjęcia habeas corpus, a wręcz pod pewnymi względami się pogorszyła. Ponadto nowe prawo przekształcające zawód prawnika jest niezgodne z konstytucją Uzbekistanu i międzynarodowymi standardami dotyczącymi niezależności prawników.

Jakie działania podejmuje Komisja, aby wymóc na rządzie Uzbekistanu zaprzestanie powszechnego stosowania tortur? Czy istnieją dowody na to, że zniesienie sankcji w 2009 r. przyniosło pożądane skutki?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wysoką Przedstawiciel i Wiceprzewodniczącą Komisji Catherine Ashton w imieniu Komisji
(28 lutego 2012 r.)

UE podziela większość obaw dotyczących sytuacji w zakresie praw człowieka w Uzbekistanie, co znajduje odzwierciedlenie w jej polityce. Strategia UE wobec Azji Środkowej, przyjęta przez szefów państw UE w 2007 r., odzwierciedla wysiłki Unii na rzecz zwiększonego długoterminowego zaangażowania i współpracy z tym regionem. W tym zakresie żadna kwestia indywidualna nie może jednak przeważać nad innymi, dlatego też UE stara się zapewnić kompleksowe podejście uwzględniające całość problematyki.

Stosunki między UE a Uzbekistanem rozwijają się zgodnie ze wspomnianą strategią, w ramach której promowanie praw człowieka jest nieodłączną częścią dialogu i współpracy. Podjęto regularny dialog na temat praw człowieka na poziomie ekspertów, podniesiono również kwestię doniesień dotyczących stosowania tortur lub prawa do obrony. Działania te są zgodne z polityką Unii Europejskiej, określoną w konkluzjach Rady z dnia 25 października 2010 r.

Pewne szczególne zastrzeżenia przedstawił również Przewodniczący Komisji José Manuel Barroso w trakcie spotkania z prezydentem Isłamem Karimowem, które odbyło się 24 stycznia 2011 r. Podobne zastrzeżenia zostały zgłoszone podczas kolejnych posiedzeń Rady Współpracy UE-Uzbekistan.

Dialog polityczny i współpraca są sprawą zasadniczą, a UE rozwija współpracę z Uzbekistanem w ramach unijnej inicjatywy na rzecz praworządności. Ponadto jednym z priorytetowych obszarów krajowego programu orientacyjnego na lata 2011-2013 jest wspieranie reformy sądownictwa. Warto również wspomnieć o wprowadzonym niedawno przez UE programie reformy wymiaru sprawiedliwości w sprawach karnych, w tym systemu penitencjarnego, jak również o gotowości UE do rozważenia – na prośbę Taszkientu – projektu dotyczącego zapobiegania torturom.

Dzięki otwarciu przedstawicielstwa UE w Taszkiencie (w toku) UE będzie z pewnością mogła uważniej śledzić rozwój sytuacji politycznej w tym kraju.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012672/11
to the Commission
Michał Tomasz Kamiński (ECR)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Uzbekistan: Torture and violations of habeas corpus

There is ample evidence that torture in Uzbekistan's criminal justice system, including electric shocks and asphyxiation, is a widespread phenomenon. The United Nations has noted that torture is both 'widespread' and 'systematic'. Human rights activists are put in prisons and independent civil society is ruthlessly suppressed. Human Rights Watch documented cases in which authorities poured boiling water on an activist during an interrogation, beat detainees with rubber truncheons and water-filled bottles, hung detainees by their wrists and ankles, subjected them to rape and sexual humiliation, and asphyxiated them with plastic bags and gas masks. The government has effectively destroyed the independent legal profession, disbarring some of Uzbekistan's most outspoken lawyers and routinely denies detainees' access to legal counsel. The Uzbek government in 2008 adopted habeas corpus. European governments and the EU cited this as a sign of 'progress' when they decided to drop sanctions in 2009. According to Human Rights Watch, Uzbekistan's record on torture and other serious rights abuses has not improved since the adoption of habeas corpus and in several respects has worsened. In addition, the new law restructuring the legal profession violates the Uzbek Constitution and international standards on the independence of lawyers.

What is the Commission doing to put pressure on the Uzbek government to end the widespread use of torture? Is there evidence that the dropping of sanctions in 2009 has given the desired results?

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

Concerns regarding the situation of human rights in Uzbekistan are widely shared by the EU and are reflected in its policy. The strategy for Central Asia adopted by the EU Heads of State in 2007 reflects its commitment for enhanced long-term engagement and cooperation with the region. In this respect, no single issue can take precedence over the others and the EU takes a comprehensive approach to work on all in parallel.

EU-Uzbek relations are developing in the context of this Strategy, in which the promotion of human rights is part and parcel of the dialogue and cooperation. A regular process of dialogue on human rights at expert level has been launched and reports of the use of torture or the rights of defence have been raised. This is in line with the European Union's policy set out in the Council's conclusions of 25 October 2010.

In this light, President Barroso also raised some specific concerns when he met President Karimov of Uzbekistan on 24 January 2011, and similar concerns were raised during the subsequent EU-Uzbek Cooperation Council.

Both political dialogue and cooperation are essential and the EU has been promoting cooperation with Uzbekistan under the EU's Rule of Law initiative. Support to the judiciary reform is also one of the focal sectors of the National Indicative Programme 2011-2013. Worth mentioning are also a recent EU programme on criminal justice reform, including prison reform, as well as the EU's readiness to consider, upon Tashkent's request, a project on the prevention of torture.

With the current process of opening of an EU Delegation in Tashkent the EU will certainly be in a position to follow even more closely the political developments.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012673/11
to the Commission
Catherine Stihler (S&D)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Breast implants

In 2003 Parliament voted on a report which I had authored on breast implants. Since then there have been numerous cases of ruptured implants, most recently reported by the BBC. In France the authorities are soon to decide whether women should have implants supplied by the company Poly Implant Prothese (PIP) removed.

Is the Commission aware of the situation?

Given the cross-border nature of the problem and the different positions being taken by Member States, will the Commission issue advice?

Does the Commission plan to review the safety of breast implants in the future?

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

The Commission is aware of the situation.

The French authorities found that a French manufacturer fraudulently made use of low-quality silicone different from that declared for conformity assessment.

The Commission and national authorities have been in contact since March 2010 when France signalled the issue. The product was then removed from the EU market.

There is today no common approach in terms of risk management within the Member States. Some of them have recommended the preventive removal of these implants. Others have not advised such removal but that women who received these implants should be closely monitored and a decision to be taken on a case-by-case basis.

To facilitate risk management decisions by the Member States, the Commission has asked the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks for its opinion on the safety of the implants concerned.

In 2003, the Commission reclassified breast implants in the highest risk class in order to reinforce the safety of these products. The Commission will closely monitor any scientific evidence on the safety of breast implants in order to take further measures, if appropriate.

The Commission is in the process of thoroughly analysing the present case to identify possible shortcomings in the regulatory framework and address them in the context of the revision of the medical device legislation foreseen in 2012.

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande E-012675/11
till kommissionen
Christofer Fjellner (PPE)
(11 januari 2012)

Angående: Efterlevnad av EU-rätten hos den svenska lagen om spel på internet

I april 2006 inledde kommissionen sitt första mål om fördragsbrott mot Sverige. Ett andra mål följde i januari 2008.

I juli 2010 fastslogs i två avgöranden från EU-domstolen, Aftonbladet och Expressen, att fördraget inte ger rätt till hårdare sanktioner mot främjandet av spel som anordnas i en annan medlemsstat än mot främjandet av spel som drivs inom det nationella territoriet. Den svenska tidningen Aftonbladet meddelade nyligen att man var redo att flytta sin verksamhet utanför Sverige, eftersom det svenska förbudet mot främjande av spel påverkade dess kommersiella livskraft.

En studie av Henrik Jordhal från Stockholms institut för näringslivsforskning om nätspelssektorn i Sverige i mars 2011 innehöll en beräkning av värdet på industrin om 2,2 miljarder euro med en nettointäkt på 2 455 euro, samt att den sysselsätter 4 500 personer (varav 3 500 i Sverige), en siffra som fortfarande växer.

Trots flera studier och vissa samråd om reformen av den svenska spellagstiftningen (senast i mars 2009) har inga ändringar gjorts av den svenska lagstiftningen. Kommissionen har vidare inte fört målen om fördragsbrott vidare, och har avstått från att ta Sverige till EU-domstolen för underlåtenheten att uppfylla EU-rätten.

Som fördragens väktare, vilka åtgärder kommer kommissionen att vidta mot Sverige för att säkerställa att EU-rätten efterlevs i spelsektorn?

Svar från Michel Barnier på kommissionens vägnar
(16 februari 2012)

Kommissionen konstaterar att de överträdelseförfaranden som inletts när det gäller hasardspel online fram till nu har lett till att man i ett antal fall har sett över den nationella lagstiftningen, och att en konstruktiv dialog förs med medlemsstaterna. För pågående överträdelseförfaranden, bl.a. de svenska ärendena, utgör domstolens rättspraxis den ram inom vilken kommissionen och medlemsstaterna kan bedöma huruvida nationella åtgärder som vidtas på området är proportionella och överensstämmer med EU-rätten. Genom de 260 svaren på samrådet om grönboken ([1]) har kommissionen fått ytterligare fakta om marknaden samt ingående information om de syften av allmänt intresse som eftersträvas av medlemsstaterna. Kommissionen kommer även att beakta dessa nya fakta och denna nya information när den granskar nationell lagstiftning vid pågående överträdelseförfaranden, och den kommer att vidta åtgärder i fråga om nationella bestämmelser där det står klart att dessa inte överensstämmer med domstolens rättspraxis. Kommissionen kommer samtidigt att fortsätta att föra en öppen och konstruktiv dialog med medlemsstaterna om eventuella reformer av den nationella lagstiftningen.

([1]) Grönbok om onlinespel på den inre marknaden, KOM(2011) 128 slutlig.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012675/11
to the Commission
Christofer Fjellner (PPE)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Compliance of the Swedish law on online gambling with EC law

In April 2006 the Commission opened its first infringement case against Sweden. A second case followed in January 2008.

In July 2010 two European Court of Justice rulings, *Aftonbladet* and *Expressen*, stated that the Treaty does not allow more severe sanctions on the promotion of gambling organised in another Member State than on the promotion of gambling operated on national territory. The Swedish newspaper *Aftonbladet* recently announced its readiness to move its operations out of Sweden, as the Swedish prohibition on the promotion of gaming was affecting its commercial viability.

In March 2011, a study by Henrik Jordhal from the Stockholm Research Institute of Industrial Economics on the online gambling sector in Sweden estimated the value of the industry at EUR 2.2 billion, with a net gaming revenue of EUR 2 455 million and employing 4 500 people (including 3 500 in Sweden), a figure which is still growing.

Despite several studies and some consultations on the reform of the Swedish gaming law (most recently in March 2009), no changes have been made to the Swedish legislation. In addition, the Commission has not pursued the infringement cases and has refrained from taking Sweden to the European Court of Justice for failing to comply with EC law.

As the guardian of the Treaties, what measures will the Commission take against Sweden to ensure compliance with EC law in the gambling sector?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(16 February 2012)

The Commission notes that the infringement proceedings initiated in the field of online gambling have so far resulted in a number of national regulatory reviews and a constructive dialogue with Member States. For the open infringement cases, including the Swedish cases, the jurisprudence of the Court provides the framework in which the Commission and Member States can assess the proportionality and the consistency of national measures taken in that field. The 260 responses to the Green paper consultation ([1]) provide the Commission with further facts relating to the market and with in-depth information on the relevant public interest objectives pursued by Member States. The Commission will also rely on those new facts and information in its ongoing assessment of national legislation in pending infringement cases, and it will take action in respect of national rules clearly not complying with the Court's jurisprudence. It will continue, at the same time, an open and constructive dialogue with Member States in view of potential reforms of national regulatory systems.

([1]) Green Paper on online gambling in the internal market, COM(2011) 12 final.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-012676/11
alla Commissione
Cristiana Muscardini (PPE)
(11 gennaio 2012)

Oggetto: Stop alla vivisezione in USA

L'Istituto nazionale americano della salute ha finalmente deciso di sospendere tutte le sovvenzioni destinate alla ricerca scientifica che riguarda le scimmie. Il direttore del «NewYork Times» Francis Collins ha sottolineato che «come parenti più stretti dell'uomo (i primati) meritano particolare attenzione e rispetto». In realtà, tutti gli animali meritano rispetto, soprattutto quando a non rispettarli è la «scienza nera» della vivisezione. L'interruzione dei test sui primati negli USA è un avvenimento di grande portata, nella speranza che vengano impedite le sperimentazioni anche su altre specie, per giungere infine alla sospensione totale della vivisezione.

1. Qual è l'opinione della Commissione in proposito?

2. Può dirci se tali divieti esistono anche negli Stati dell'UE e in quali?

3. Non ritiene opportuno riprendere iniziative contro la vivisezione e finanziare progetti per la ricerca in vitro?

Risposta data da Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(27 febbraio 2012)

La Commissione è al corrente della dichiarazione rilasciata dall'Istituto nazionale di sanità americano, che ha deciso di sospendere le nuove sovvenzioni destinate alla ricerca sugli scimpanzé in attesa che l'Agenzia elabori politiche in materia. L'annuncio ha fatto seguito alla pubblicazione di uno studio commissionato dall'Istituto nazionale di sanità e realizzato dall'Istituto di medicina americano in collaborazione con il Consiglio nazionale delle ricerche. Lo studio, intitolato Chimpanzees in Biomedical and Behavioral Research: Assessing the Necessity, verte esclusivamente sull'uso degli scimpanzé a fini di ricerca.

La nuova legislazione sulla protezione degli animali utilizzati a fini sperimentali o ad altri fini scientifici — la direttiva 2010/63/UE ([1]), che sarà pienamente applicabile a partire dal 1º gennaio 2013 — rafforza e migliora in misura significativa la normativa in materia di sperimentazione animale nell'UE. La direttiva vieta l'utilizzo di scimmie antropomorfe nelle procedure scientifiche, fatta salva una clausola di salvaguardia che consente agli Stati membri di autorizzare a titolo eccezionale l'utilizzo di tali animali qualora sia in gioco la sopravvivenza stessa della specie o in caso di comparsa improvvisa nell'uomo di affezioni debilitanti o potenzialmente letali.

La Commissione ritiene che l'approccio più pragmatico per ridurre gli esperimenti sugli animali consista nell'introdurre metodi alternativi destinati, a termine, a sostituire tale pratica. Ove ciò non fosse possibile si promuoverà lo sviluppo di metodi che consentano di ridurre il numero di animali utilizzati o di arrecare il minor danno possibile agli animali. Coerentemente con questo impegno, nell'ultimo ventennio l'Unione europea ha stanziato circa 200 milioni di euro a favore della ricerca sul principio delle 3 R (Replacement, Reduction, Refinement — sostituzione, riduzione, perfezionamento).

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:276:0033:0079:IT:PDF

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012676/11
to the Commission
Cristiana Muscardini (PPE)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Putting an end to vivisection in the USA

The US National Institutes of Health has finally decided to stop all grants destined for scientific research involving monkeys. The director of the *New York Times*, Francis Collins, stressed that 'as man's closest relatives (primates) deserve special attention and respect'. In fact, all animals deserve respect, especially when lack of respect is brought about mainly by the 'dark science' of vivisection. The halting of tests on primates in the U.S. is an event of major significance, and one which raises hopes that experiments on other species will also be banned, thus leading to the total discontinuation of all vivisection practices.

1. What is the Commission's view regarding this matter?

2. Can you tell us whether such prohibitions exist in EU Member States, and, if so, in which?

3. Would it not be appropriate to take action against vivisection and fund projects for *in vitro* research?

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

The Commission is aware of the announcement by the US National Institutes of Health (NIH) to halt new grants for research using chimpanzees while the agency develops policies on such studies. The announcement followed a publication of the report 'Chimpanzees in Biomedical and Behavioral Research: Assessing the Necessity' prepared by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) in collaboration with the National Research Council at the request of NIH. The report addresses only the use of chimpanzees.

The new legislation on the protection of animals used for experimental and other scientific purposes, Directive 2010/63/EU ([1]) (which takes full effect on 1 January 2013) goes a long way towards strengthening, and significantly improving of the legislation in the area of animal experimentation in the EU. It introduces a ban on the use of great apes in scientific procedures, however, with a safeguard clause stating that only when survival of the species itself is at stake, or in the case of an unexpected outbreak of a life-threatening or debilitating disease in human beings, can a Member State exceptionally be granted permission for their use.

The Commission considers that the most pragmatic approach to reducing experiments on animals is to introduce alternative methods that eventually replace animal testing. Whenever replacement is not possible, the development of methods which use fewer animals or cause least harm to the animals is supported. In line with this commitment, over the last 20 years, the financial EU contribution to Three Rs (replacement, reduction, refinement) research amounts to some EUR 200 million.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:276:0033:0079:EN:PDF

(Tekstas lietuvių kalba)

Klausimas, į kurį atsakoma raštu, Nr. E-012677/11
Tarybai
Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D)
(2012 m. sausio 11 d.)

Tema: Dėl Europos Sąjungos Tarybos reglamento (EB) Nr. 2252/2004

Atsižvelgiant į Daktiloskopinių duomenų registro tikslus ir tai, kad įgyvendinant Europos Parlamento reglamentą (EB) Nr. 2252/2004 yra pereita prie biometrinės pasų kontrolės, pasai yra išduodami nuskaitant dešinės ir kairės rankų dviejų pirštų antspaudus.

Reikėtų atkreipti dėmesį į tai, kad sujungus pasų išdavimo sistemą su Daktiloskopinių duomenų registru, registro ir pasų išdavimo sistemos sąveika padėtų efektyviau identifikuoti policijos ieškomus, įtariamus ir kaltinamus asmenis. Tačiau asmens dokumentų biometrinių duomenų panaudojimą riboja 2004 m. gruodžio 13 d. Tarybos reglamentas (EB) Nr. 2252/2004 dėl valstybių narių išduodamų pasų ir kelionės dokumentų apsauginių savybių ir biometrikos standartų, kuriame nustatyti konkretūs minėtų dokumentų panaudojimo tikslai. Šio reglamento 4 straipsnio 3 punkte nustatyta, kad pagal šį reglamentą biometrinės savybės pasuose ir kelionės dokumentuose naudojamos tik patikrinti: dokumento autentiškumą ir savininko asmens tapatybę pagal tiesiogiai prieinamas palyginamas savybes, kai pasą ar kitus kelionės dokumentus reikalaujama pateikti pagal teisės aktus.

Tai reiškia, kad biometrinių duomenų įrašymo į asmens dokumentus tikslas – užtikrinti patikimą sąsają tarp tikrojo asmens dokumento savininko ir dokumento (kaip nurodyta minėto reglamento preambulėje). Joks minėtų duomenų lyginimas su registruose tvarkomais duomenimis neatliekamas, nes jis nėra būtinas, siekiant įsitikinti, ar dokumentą pateikęs asmuo yra tikrasis to dokumento savininkas.

Ar Taryba nemano, kad turi būti sudaryta galimybė biometrinę pasų išdavimo sistemą sujungti su kitų duomenų registrais (gyventojų, policijos ieškomų, neatpažintų lavonų ir nežinomų bejėgių asmenų, įtariamųjų, kaltinamųjų ir teistų asmenų), kuriuose kaupiami, apdorojami ir sisteminami rankų ar rankų pirštų atspaudai, kad būtų įmanoma atlikti palyginimo bei kitus reikalingus veiksmus, siekiant efektyvesnės nusikalstamų veikų kontrolės ir prevencijos?

Atsakymas
(2012 m. vasario 27 d.)

2009 m. gegužės 6 d. Europos Parlamento ir Tarybos reglamento (EB) Nr. 444/2009, iš dalies keičiančio Tarybos reglamentą (EB) Nr. 2252/2004 dėl valstybių narių išduodamų pasų ir kelionės dokumentų apsauginių savybių ir biometrikos standartų ([1]), 5 konstatuojamojoje dalyje nurodyta, kad *„Reglamente (EB) Nr. 2252/2004 reikalaujama, kad biometriniai duomenys būtų renkami ir saugomi pasų ir kelionės dokumentų, kurie vėliau bus išduoti, laikmenoje. Tai nedaro įtakos kitokiam šių duomenų naudojimui ir saugojimui laikantis valstybių narių nacionalinių teisės aktų. Reglamente (EB) Nr. 2252/2004 nepateikiama duomenų bazių, skirtų saugoti tokius duomenis valstybėse narėse, kūrimo ir priežiūros teisinio pagrindo – tai visiškai priklauso nacionalinės teisės sričiai.“*

Todėl klausimas, ar *„turi būti sudaryta galimybė biometrinę pasų išdavimo sistemą sujungti su kitų duomenų registrais“*, priklauso valstybių narių kompetencijai.

([1]) OL L 142, 2009 6 6, p. 1.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012677/11
to the Council
Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Council Regulation (EC) No 2252/2004

With regard to the aims of the Register of Dactyloscopic Data and to the fact that the switch has been made to biometric passport control in the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 2252/2004, passports are issued after scanning the fingerprints of two fingers of the right and left hands.

Attention should be drawn to the fact that, if the passport issuance system were linked to the Register of Dactyloscopic Data, the link between the Register and the passport issuance system would help identify persons wanted by the police, as well as suspected and accused persons, more effectively. However, the use of biometric data from identity documents is limited by Council Regulation (EC) No 2252/2004 of 13 December 2004 on standards for security features and biometrics in passports and travel documents issued by Member States, which provides specific purposes of the use of the said documents. Article 4(3) of this regulation provides that, for the purpose of this regulation, the biometric features in passports and travel documents shall only be used for verifying the authenticity of the document and the identity of the holder by means of directly available comparable features when the passport or other travel documents are required to be produced by law.

This means that the aim of recording biometric data in identity documents is to ensure a reliable link between the genuine holder of the identity document and the document (as indicated in the Preamble of the said regulation). No comparison of the said data to data stored in registers is performed because this is not necessary in order to ascertain that a person presenting a document is the genuine holder of that document.

Does the Council not consider that the possibility should be created to link the biometric passport issuance system to registers of other data (those of residents; of persons wanted by the police, unrecognised bodies and unknown helpless persons; and of suspected, accused and convicted persons), where palm prints or fingerprints are stored, processed and systematised, in order to make possible the performance of comparison and other needed actions with a view toward more effective control and prevention of criminal acts?

Reply
(27 February 2012)

Recital 5 of Regulation (EC) 444/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 May 2009 amending Council Regulation (EC) 2252/04 on standards for security features and biometrics in passports and travel documents issued by Member States ([1]) states that 'Regulation (EC) No 2252/2004 requires biometric data to be collected and stored in the storage medium of passports and travel documents with a view to issuing such documents. This is without prejudice to any other use or storage of these data in accordance with national legislation of Member States. Regulation (EC) No 2252/2004 does not provide a legal base for setting up or maintaining databases for storage of those data in Member States, which is strictly a matter of national law'.

The question of whether 'the possibility should be created to link the biometric passport issuance system to registers of other data' therefore falls within the competence of Member States.

([1]) OJ L 142, 6.6.2009, p. 1.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-012678/11
aan de Commissie
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(11 januari 2012)

Betreft: Grenzen sluiten voor werkzoekenden uit Roemenië en Bulgarije vindt navolging

Het Nederlandse besluit om de grenzen gesloten te houden voor Bulgaren en Roemenen wordt in de rest van Europa enthousiast gevolgd. Inmiddels hebben zeven andere EU-landen besloten werkzoekenden uit die lidstaten nog twee jaar buiten de deur te houden. Bulgaren en Roemenen mogen tot 1 januari 2014 niet alleen in Nederland, maar ook in Duitsland, Frankrijk, het Verenigd Koninkrijk, België, Ierland, Oostenrijk en Malta niet zonder werkvergunning aan de slag.

1. Is de Commissie bekend met het bericht „Sluiten grenzen voor werkzoekenden vindt navolging" ([1])?

2. Is de Commissie met de PVV van mening dat het uiterst verstandig is dat Duitsland, Frankrijk, het Verenigd Koninkrijk, België, Ierland, Oostenrijk en Malta het Nederlands voorbeeld volgen door eveneens de grenzen voor werkzoekenden uit Roemenië en Bulgarije gesloten te houden, en hoopt de Commissie derhalve met de PVV dat nog méér EU-lidstaten dit zullen doen? Zo neen, waarom niet?

3. Is de Commissie met de PVV van mening dat elk land, en dus ook elke EU-lidstaat, om welke reden en op welk moment dan ook, zijn grenzen moet kunnen sluiten? Zo neen, waarom niet?

Antwoord van de heer Andor namens de Commissie
(14 februari 2012)

1. Nee.

2. Ter voorkoming van verstoringen van de arbeidsmarkt als gevolg van een plotselinge toevloed van werknemers voorziet de Akte van toetreding van Bulgarije en Roemenië in overgangsregelingen. Op grond hiervan mogen de lidstaten het vrije verkeer van Bulgaarse en Roemeense werknemers voor een periode van maximaal zeven jaar vanaf de datum van toetreding aan banden leggen. Wil een lidstaat de toegang tot de arbeidsmarkt voor de laatste twee jaar van de periode van zeven jaar na 31 december 2011 blijven beperken, dan moet hij beoordelen of er sprake is van een ernstige verstoring of dreigende ernstige verstoring van zijn arbeidsmarkt en de Commissie daarvan in kennis stellen. Beslissingen om dergelijke beperkingen ook verder toe te passen, moeten derhalve gebaseerd zijn op de feitelijke situatie op de arbeidsmarkt in de betrokken lidstaat.

De Commissie onderstreept het belang van het vrije verkeer van werknemers, dat een van de fundamentele vrijheden naar EU-recht en een hoeksteen van de interne markt is. Samen met de andere fundamentele vrijheden levert het voordelen voor burgers en bedrijven op in een door concurrentie gekenmerkte open context. Deze voordelen zijn de voornaamste drijvende kracht geweest achter de groei waardoor de EU de grootste economie ter wereld is geworden.

Vrij verkeer van werknemers is goed voor de economie. Zelfs in tijden van economische achteruitgang moeten de lidstaten mobiele werknemers blijven aantrekken om te voldoen aan de vraag naar arbeidskrachten in bepaalde sectoren waar een tekort aan lokale werknemers bestaat. De ervaring met eerdere overgangsregelingen leert dat beperkingen schadelijke neveneffecten kunnen hebben, zoals een toename van zwartwerk of schijnzelfstandigheid.

3. Na het einde van de overgangsregelingen mogen aan het vrije verkeer van werknemers geen verdere beperkingen worden opgelegd.

([1]) De Telegraaf, 21.12.2011.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012678/11
to the Commission
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Dutch decision to close borders to labour migrants from Romania and Bulgaria imitated elsewhere

The Dutch decision to keep the borders closed to Bulgarians and Romanians is enthusiastically imitated in the rest of Europe. In the meantime, seven other EU-member states have decided to keep out labour migrants from those member states for two more years. Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Ireland, Austria and Malta are the countries where, just like in the Netherlands, Bulgarian and Romanian nationals will not be allowed to work without a work permit until 1 January 2014.

1. Is the Commission familiar with the report 'Decision to close borders for labour migrants imitated' ([1])?

2. Does the Commission believe, just like the PVV, that it is totally reasonable for Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Ireland, Austria and Malta to follow the Dutch example and keep the borders closed to labour migrants from Romania and Bulgaria and does it hope, just like the PVV, that even more EU —member states will do the same? If not, why?

3. Does the Commission believe, just like the PVV, that any country, including any EU— member state, should be able to close its borders, for any reason and at any time? If not, why?

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

1. No.

2. To prevent labour market disturbances arising from a sudden inflow of workers, the Act of Accession of Bulgaria and Romania provides for transitional arrangements. These allow the Member States to restrict the free movement of Bulgarian and Romanian workers for a maximum of seven years after accession. To continue to restrict labour market access for the final two years of the seven-year period after 31 December 2011, a Member State must assess whether it is undergoing, or is threatened by, a serious labour market disturbance and notify the Commission accordingly. Any decision to continue to apply such restrictions must therefore be based on the factual situation on the labour market in the individual Member State.

The Commission would stress the importance of free movement of workers, which is one of the fundamental freedoms of EC law and a cornerstone of the internal market. Together with the other fundamental freedoms, it creates advantages for citizens and businesses in an open and competitive environment. Those advantages have been the main driving force behind the growth that has made the EU the world's biggest economy.

Free movement of workers is good for the economy. Even in an economic downturn, Member States continue to need to attract mobile workers to meet labour demand that cannot be met by local workers in certain sectors. Experience with previous transitional arrangements shows that restrictions may have negative side effects, such as an increase in undeclared work or bogus self-employment.

3. No further restrictions may be placed on the free movement of workers once the transitional arrangements end.

([1]) *De Telegraaf*, 21.12.2011.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-012679/11
aan de Commissie
Frieda Brepoels (Verts/ALE)
(11 januari 2012)

Betreft: Herstructurering Dexia

Naar aanleiding van de tweede herstructureringsoperatie en nationalisatie van Dexia (2011), werd in het Belgisch federaal parlement een bijzondere commissie opgericht. Deze commissie heeft als opdracht na te gaan wat er precies is foutgelopen bij Dexia. Vanzelfsprekend komt ook de eerste herstructurering aan bod in deze discussies.

In het bijzonder wil ik het overleg tussen de Belgische regering en de Europese Commissie (i.e. commissaris Kroes, in die periode bevoegd voor mededinging) over het eerste reddingsplan in herinnering brengen.

In die context graag volgende vragen aan de Commissie:

1. Welke procedure heeft commissaris Kroes gevolgd bij het uitnodigen van de regeringen van België en Frankrijk voor de bespreking van het herstructureringsplan Dexia in 2009-2010?

— Hoe beoordeelt de commissaris het feit dat de heer Jean-Luc Dehaene, voorzitter van de raad van bestuur van Dexia, deelnam aan deze bespreking in plaats van toenmalig eerste minister Leterme of minister van Financiën Reynders?

— Heeft de Belgische regering ooit aan de Commissie meegedeeld dat de heer Dehaene als officiële vertegenwoordiger namens België de onderhandelingen mocht voeren? Zo ja, wanneer en op welke manier? Zo neen, heeft de commissaris hierover navraag gedaan en met welk resultaat?

2. Werden van de onderhandelingen tussen commissaris Kroes, mevrouw Lagarde en de heer Dehaene verslagen opgemaakt? Kunnen deze worden ingekeken? Zo ja, op welke manier? Zo neen, waarom niet?

Antwoord van de heer Almunia namens de Commissie
(16 februari 2012)

Hoe staatssteunprocedures verlopen, is geregeld in Verordening (EG) nr. 659/1999 ([1]). Lidstaten moeten de Commissie correct in kennis stellen van alle steun die zij willen verlenen, zij moeten de Commissie bij haar onderzoek hun medewerking verlenen en ook alle informatie verschaffen die nodig is om het onderzoek te kunnen voeren. De Commissie kan ook informatie ontvangen van andere belanghebbenden. Zij kan ook contacten hebben met een aantal partijen nadat een diepgaand onderzoek is ingeleid. Wel richt de Commissie haar besluit uitsluitend tot de lidstaat die de steun verleent.

In de zaak-Dexia waren drie lidstaten (België, Frankrijk en Luxemburg) bij dit staatssteunonderzoek betrokken. Voor België was de gesprekspartner van de Commissie niet de heer Jean-Luc Dehaene, maar wel vertegenwoordigers van de Belgische overheid. Net als bij ieder ander staatssteunonderzoek hebben de diensten van de Commissie regelmatig contacten op technisch niveau gehad met de Belgische autoriteiten en hun vertegenwoordigers.

Daarnaast heeft Commissaris Kroes rechtstreekse contacten gehad met zowel de Belgische minister van Financiën, de heer Reynders, als zijn Franse ambtsgenoot, mevrouw Lagarde. In de eindfase van de staatssteunprocedure C 9/2009, die uiteindelijk leidde tot het besluit van de Commissie van 26 februari 2010 ([2]), heeft mevrouw Kroes een ontmoeting gehad met de heer Reynders (in januari 2010) en twee telefoongesprekken gevoerd met mevrouw Lagarde (in februari 2010).

Zij had ook twee telefoongesprekken met de heer Dehaene ([3]) (in december 2009 en februari 2010) en heeft hem ook kort gesproken in het Europees Parlement in januari 2010. Het overleg tussen Commissaris Kroes en de heer Dehaene verving de formele procedurele kanalen met België niet. De Belgische vertegenwoordigers waren trouwens volledig op de hoogte van dit informele overleg. In februari 2010 had mevrouw Kroes ook een bijeenkomst met de Europese ondernemingsraad van Dexia. Van de telefoongesprekken tussen mevrouw Kroes en mevrouw Lagarde of de heer Dehaene bestaan geen aantekeningen.

([1]) PB L 83 van 27.3.1999, blz. 1.
([2]) PB L 274 van 19.10.2010, blz. 54.
([3]) Lid van het Europees Parlement.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012679/11
to the Commission
Frieda Brepoels (Verts/ALE)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Dexia restructuring

A special commission has been set up at the Belgian federal parliament in connection with the second restructuring operation and nationalisation of Dexia (2011). The commission's task is to establish what exactly has gone wrong at Dexia. The first restructuring operation will also be discussed by the commission as a matter of course.

I would like to refer here in particular to the consultation concerning the first rescue plan between the Belgian government and the European Commission (i.e. Kroes, then Commissioner for Competition).

In this context, I would like to put the following questions to the Commission:

1. Which procedure has Commissioner Kroes followed when inviting the Belgian and the French governments to discuss the Dexia restructuring plan in 2009-2010?

— What is the Commissioner's view of the fact that it was Mr Jean-Luc Dehaene, chairman of Dexia's board of directors, and not the then Prime Minister Leterme or Finance Minister Reynders who took part in those discussions?

— Has the Belgian government ever informed the Commission that Mr Dehaene was authorised to conduct the negotiations as Belgium's official representative? If so, when and in which manner? If not, has the commissioner made inquiries into this matter and with what result?

2. Have any reports been drawn up on the negotiations between Commissioner Kroes, Mrs Lagarde and Mr Dehaene? Is it possible to have access to them? If so, how? If not, why?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(16 February 2012)

State aid procedures are governed by the Council Regulation No 659/1999 ([1]). It is the duty of Member States to duly notify to the Commission any aid that they intend to grant and to collaborate with the Commission and provide all the necessary information for its investigation. The Commission can receive information from any interested party and have a series of contacts with a number of parties after the opening of an in-depth investigation. However the Commission addresses its decision only to the Member State granting the aid.

In the case of Dexia, three Member States (Belgium, France and Luxembourg) were subjects of the state aid investigation. For Belgium, the interlocutor of the Commission was not Mr Jean-Luc Dehaene but rather representatives of the Belgian government. The Commission services have had regular contacts at technical level with the Belgian authorities and their representatives, as is the case for any state aid investigation.

In addition, Commissioner Kroes had direct contacts with the Belgian Finance Minister Mr Reynders as well as with the French Finance Minister Ms Lagarde. In the latest stage of the procedure C 9/2009, which led to the Commission decision of 26 February 2010 ([2]), she had a meeting with Mr Reynders (in January 2010) and two telephone calls with Ms Lagarde (in February 2010).

She also had two telephone contacts with Mr Dehaene ([3]), (December 2009, February 2010) and briefly met him in the European Parliament in January 2010. Discussions between Commissioner Kroes and Mr Dehaene did not substitute for the official procedural channels with Belgium, and Belgian representatives were fully aware of these informal discussions. Commissioner Kroes also had a meeting with the European Workers Council of Dexia in February 2010. There are no minutes of the telephone conversations between Commissioner Kroes and Mrs Lagarde and Mr Dehaene.

([1]) OJ L 83, 27.3.1999, p. 1.
([2]) OJ L 274, 19.10.2010, p. 54.
([3]) Member of the European Parliament.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-012681/11
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(11 de Janeiro de 2012)

Assunto: Apoios à orizicultura biológica

As aplicações de produtos químicos, inerentes ao modo de produção convencional do arroz, normalmente efetuadas por via aérea, podem provocar a pulverização e a dispersão atmosférica dos químicos utilizados.

Solicito à Comissão que me informe sobre o seguinte:

1. Dispõe de informação relativa aos efeitos, no ambiente e na saúde pública, desta prática?

2. Que programas e medidas comunitárias — existentes ou a criar — poderão apoiar a transição para modos de produção que dispensem ou reduzam substancialmente a aplicação destes tratamentos químicos, como a orizicultura biológica?

Resposta dada por Dacian Cioloş em nome da Comissão
(29 de Fevereiro de 2012)

A Comissão não dispõe de elementos específicos que lhe permitam responder de forma substanciada no que respeita à informação sobre os efeitos no ambiente e na saúde pública das práticas atualmente utilizadas na orizicultura convencional na UE e à comparação com as práticas abrangidas pelo Regulamento Agricultura Biológica ([1]). Os efeitos positivos da agricultura biológica no ambiente em geral são, contudo, amplamente reconhecidos, sendo apoiados por um grande número de estudos.

Em termos gerais, a Diretiva 2009/128/CE, que estabelece um quadro de ação a nível comunitário para uma utilização sustentável dos pesticidas ([2]), proíbe a pulverização aérea. Apenas em casos especiais, se não existirem alternativas viáveis, podem ser concedidas derrogações, sujeitas ao cumprimento de condições estritas e a uma avaliação de riscos específica.

O segundo pilar da PAC (desenvolvimento rural) proporciona a possibilidade de conceder apoio financeiro à transição para métodos de produção que reduzam o recurso a tratamentos químicos nos arrozais, mediante o apoio à agricultura biológica e a adoção de práticas agrícolas integradas. No contexto do quadro legislativo em vigor ([3]), a conversão para a agricultura biológica ou a manutenção desta podem ser objeto de apoio através de medidas agroambientais voluntárias. As regiões de Valência (Espanha) e do Piemonte (Itália), nomeadamente, apoiam a orizicultura biológica. Existem também exemplos de medidas agroambientais destinadas a reduzir a utilização de pesticidas por recurso a práticas agrícolas integradas.

Nas propostas para a reforma da política agrícola comum que se encontram atualmente em debate, a Comissão reconhece a importância da agricultura biológica, prevendo a concessão de pagamentos diretos, nomeadamente no âmbito da componente «ecológica» e através de medidas específicas de cultura biológica no contexto do desenvolvimento rural.

([1]) Regulamento (CE) n.° 834/2007 do Conselho.
([2]) JO L 309 de 24.11.2009.
([3]) Regulamento (CE) n.° 1698/2005 do Conselho.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012681/11
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Support for organic rice cultivation

The application of chemical products which is inseparable from conventional methods of rice production, and which is normally carried out from the air, may lead to the pulverisation and dispersal of the chemicals used.

Can the Commission tell me the following:

1. Does it have information on the effects on the environment and on public health of this practice?

2. What community programs and means — existing or yet to be created — might support the transition to production methods which obviate or substantially reduce the use of such chemical treatments, such as organic production?

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

About information on the effects on the environment and public health of the practices which are currently used for conventional rice cultivation in the EU and a comparison with the practices which are governed by the organic farming regulation ([1]), the Commission does not have at disposal specific elements which would allow for a substantiated reply. It is however widely recognised, and supported by numerous studies, that organic agriculture does have a positive effect on environment in general.

As a general rule, Directive 2009/128/EC establishing a framework for Community action to achieve the sustainable use of pesticides ([2]) prohibits aerial spraying. Derogations can only be applied in special cases, where no viable alternatives exist and are subject to restricted conditions and specific risk assessment.

Regarding supporting a transition to production methods which would reduce the use of chemical treatment on rice fields, the second pillar of the CAP — rural development — offers the possibility to grant financial aid for such transitions through supporting organic farming as well as integrated farming practices. In the current legal framework ([3]) voluntary agri-environment measures can provide support for conversion to but also maintenance of organic farming. For instance the regions of Valencia (Spain) and Piedmont (Italy) support the organic production of rice. Moreover, there are also examples of agri-environment measures aimed at reducing the pesticides use through application of integrated farming practices.

In the proposals for a reform of the common agricultural policy, which are discussed at present, the Commission recognises the importance of organic farming through direct payments, especially the 'greening' component and through specific organic farming measures in rural development.

([1]) Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007.
([2]) OJ L 309, 24.11.2009.
([3]) Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005.

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande E-012682/11
till kommissionen
Christofer Fjellner (PPE)
(11 januari 2012)

Angående: Friskvårdsbidragens undantag

I Sverige finns ett regelverk som ger arbetsgivare rätt att, mot avdrag för skatt, subventionera friskvård hos anställda. Träning-ller motionsaktiviteter kan generellt subventioneras, vilket är till gagn för både de anställa och arbetsgivaren genom en förbättrad hälsa och minskad sjukfrånvaro. Systemet är populärt och används av stora delar av arbetskraften.

Det finns dock fyra stora undantag som inte omfattas av detta. Ridsport, utförsåkning, segling och golf är undantagna och utövarna måste bekosta allt själva, trots stora hälsovinster hos de aktiva. Detta uppfattas som mycket orättvist av dem som är aktiva inom några av Sveriges största sporter: varför ska de bekosta allt själva, när andra får hjälp av en subvention? Undantaget finns eftersom det anses vara för exklusiva sporter. Sporterna kan givetvis vara dyra, men det går också att skaffa en grundläggande golfutrustning för ungefär 1 000 svenska kronor, något som är väl under kostnaderna för andra sporter. Detta skapar en snedvriden konkurrens, som är orättvis för vissa sporter. Sporterna, tillverkarna av utrustningen och de aktiva missgynnas av att deras sporter har andra villkor än andra sporter.

Anser kommissionen att detta är snedvridande av konkurrens, och vad avser kommissionen i så fall att göra i frågan?

Svar från Joaquín Almunia på kommissionens vägnar
(21 februari 2012)

Denna fråga har redan tagits upp i ett klagomål som sändes till kommissionen i juli 2008. Enligt klaganden beviljades olagligt statligt stöd genom diskriminering av de sporter som inte berättigar till skattebefrielse enligt systemet (t.ex. golf).

Kommissionen vidarebefordrade därför klagomålet till de svenska myndigheterna för att ge dem tillfälle att inkomma med synpunkter på påståendet om statligt stöd. De svenska myndigheterna betonade i sitt svar att det huvudsakliga målet med ovannämnda skattebefrielse var att bibehålla en hög nivå av hälsa och välbefinnande på arbetsplatsen för samtliga arbetstagare. De angav att tillämpningen av skattebefrielsen, enligt vilken inte alla idrottsaktiviteter (t.ex. golf) berättigar till befrielse, liksom alla dess eventuella indirekta fördelar, motiverades av inkomstskattesystemets logik. Enligt de svenska myndigheterna är träning på gym eller träningslokal en aktivitet so– verensstämmelse med lagstiftningens syfte-an utövas av samtliga arbetstagare, medan golf eller ridning är exempel på aktiviteter som vanligen bedrivs av personer som har dem som hobby.

Efter de inledande kontakterna med kommissionen beslutade klaganden att dra tillbaka sina påståenden rörande statligt stöd. Kommissionen avslutade därför ärendet utan att fatta något formellt beslut. Inga ytterligare klagomål på detta område har inkommit till kommissionen.

Kommissionen stöder målet att främja en god hälsa hos samtliga arbetstagare.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012682/11
to the Commission
Christofer Fjellner (PPE)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Exemptions from health promotion contributions

Sweden has a system of regulations which entitle employers to subsidise the promotion of their employees' health against a deduction for tax. Exercise or physical activity can generally be subsidised, proving beneficial for both employees and employers due to employees' improved health and reduced sickness absence. The system is popular and is used by large sections of the workforce.

However, there are four major exemptions which are not covered by this scheme. Horse riding, skiing, sailing and golf are excluded and practitioners of these sports must pay for everything themselves, despite their major associated health benefits. This is perceived as extremely unfair by those who actively pursue what are some of Sweden's biggest sports: why should they pay for everything themselves, when others are helped with a subsidy? The exemptions exist because these sports are considered to be exclusive. They can certainly be expensive, but it is also possible to buy basic golf equipment for around SEK 1 000, which is well below the cost of other sports. The exemptions also create an uneven playing field, which is unfair to these sports. The exempt sports, their practitioners and equipment manufacturers are all at a disadvantage because they are subject to different conditions than those of other activities.

Does the Commission find that these exemptions distort competition, and what does the Commission intend to do about this issue in that case?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(21 February 2012)

This issue has already been raised in a complaint, which was submitted to the Commission in July 2008. The complainant alleged that illegal state aid was granted through the discrimination against sports that are not eligible for exemption under the scheme (e.g. golf).

Consequently, the Commission forwarded the complaint to the Swedish authorities in order to give them an opportunity to provide their comments in relation to the alleged involvement of state aid raised. In their reply, the Swedish authorities underlined that the primary objective of the abovementioned tax exemption was to maintain a high level of welfare and comfort at work for all the employees. They indicated that the application of that exemption, whereby not all sports activities (e.g. golf) qualify for the exemption as well the potential indirect benefits resulting from that could be justified by the logic of the income tax system. According to the Swedish authorities, training in a gym or fitness centre is an activity which can be pursued — in line with the aim of the measure — by all the employees while golf or horse riding are examples of activities, which are typically pursued by those having such sports as a personal hobby.

Following preliminary contacts with the Commission, the complainant decided to withdraw his allegations concerning the alleged state aid and therefore the Commission closed the file without taking a formal decision. In this respect, no further complaints have been submitted to the Commission.

The Commission supports the objective of stimulating fitness for all employees.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης P-012685/11
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)
(10 Ιανουαρίου 2012)

Θέμα: VP/HR — Εμπρησμοί σε ελληνικά δάση υποκινούμενοι απο την Τουρκία

Σύμφωνα με πρόσφατες δηλώσεις του πρώην πρωθυπουργού της Τουρκίας Μεσούτ Γιλμάζ στην εφημερίδα «Μπιργκιούν», η χώρα του χρηματοδοτούσε εμπρησμούς σε ελληνικά δάση τη δεκαετία του '90.

Στο εν λόγω άρθρο, ο πρώην πρωθυπουργός της Τουρκίας παραδέχτηκε ωμά ότι με τη χρηματοδότηση μέσω μυστικών κονδυλίων, τουλάχιστον την εποχή της πρωθυπουργίας Τσιλέρ (1995-1997), τούρκοι πράκτορες έκαιγαν τα ελληνικά δάση προκαλώντας ανυπολόγιστες καταστροφές.

1. Είναι ενήμερη για αυτές τις δηλώσεις;

2. Δεδομένου ότι οι πληροφορίες αυτές είναι πολύ σοβαρές και για τις διμερείς σχέσεις Ελλάδας-Τουρκίας σκοπεύει να ελέγξει την εγκυρότητα τους;

3. Στην περίπτωση που αληθεύουν οι πληροφορίες, δεδομένου ότι πρόκειται για κατάφωρη παραβίαση της εθνικής κυριαρχίας και επίθεση εναντίον κράτους μέλους, ποια μέτρα προτίθεται να λάβει εναντίον της Τουρκίας;

Προτίθεται να περιορίσει ή και να καταργήσει για ένα διάστημα την χορήγηση προ-ενταξιακής βοήθειας;

Άλλως, ποια εναλλακτικά κατασταλτικά και προληπτικά μέτρα προτίθεται να λάβει για τη στοιχειώδη συμμόρφωση της Τουρκίας με το κοινοτικό κεκτημένο και το Διεθνές Δίκαιο;

Απάντηση της Ύπατης Εκπροσώπου/Αντιπροέδρου Ashton εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(3 Μαΐου 2012)

Η ΥΕ/ΑΠ δεν σχολιάζει δημοσιεύματα του Τύπου.

Η ΥΕ/ΑΠ επιθυμεί να τονίσει ότι η Τουρκία, ως υποψήφια χώρα, πρέπει να υιοθετήσει τις αξίες και τους στόχους της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης, όπως ορίζονται στις Συνθήκες.

Στα πρόσφατα συμπεράσματά του, της 5ης Δεκεμβρίου 2011, το Συμβούλιο υπογράμμισε ότι, σύμφωνα με το πλαίσιο διαπραγμάτευσης και προηγούμενα συμπεράσματα του Ευρωπαϊκού Συμβουλίου και του Συμβουλίου, η Τουρκία πρέπει να δεσμευθεί κατηγορηματικά υπέρ των σχέσεων καλής γειτονίας και του ειρηνικού διακανονισμού διαφορών βάσει του Χάρτη των Ηνωμένων Εθνών, προσφεύγοντας κατά περίπτωση στο Διεθνές Δικαστήριο. Στο πλαίσιο αυτό, η Ένωση εκφράζει σοβαρές ανησυχίες και απευθύνει έκκληση για την αποφυγή κάθε απειλής ή ενέργειας κατά ενός κράτους μέλους, ή αιτίας προστριβών ή ενεργειών που μπορούν να βλάψουν τις σχέσεις καλής γειτονίας και τον ειρηνικό διακανονισμό διαφορών.

Στο πλαίσιο αυτό, διαβεβαιώνουμε το Αξιότιμο Μέλος ότι θα συνεχίσουμε να παρακολουθούμε στενά το ζήτημα των σχέσεων καλής γειτονίας και να το θίγουμε αρμοδίως σε όλα τα επίπεδα, ως κριτήριο προόδου της Τουρκίας κατά τις διαπραγματεύσεις.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-012685/11
to the Commission
Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)
(10 January 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Acts of arson in Greek forests instigated by Turkey

According to recent statements made by the former Turkish Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz in the newspaper *Birgun*, his country funded acts of arson in Greek forests in the 1990s.

In this article, the former Turkish Prime Minister openly admitted that using funding from secret payments during the time of Prime Minister Ciller (1995-1997), Turkish agents set fire to Greek forests causing immeasurable damage.

1. Is the Commission aware of these statements?

2. Given that these facts are very serious, does it intend to check their validity for the purposes of bilateral Greek-Turkish relations?

3. In the event that the facts are proven to be true, given that this is a serious breach of sovereignty and an attack against a Member State, what measures does it intend to take against Turkey?

Does it intend to restrict and suspend financial support?

Failing this, what alternative repressive and preventative measures does it intend to take in order for Turkey to comply with the Community *acquis* and international law?

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

The HR/VP does not comment on press articles.

The HR/VP would like to stress that Turkey as a candidate country must share the values and objectives of the European Union as set out in the Treaties.

In its recent conclusions of 5 December 2011, the Council underlined that, in line with the Negotiating Framework and previous European Council and Council conclusions, Turkey needs to commit itself unequivocally to good neighbourly relations and to the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the United Nations Charter, having recourse, if necessary, to the International Court of Justice. In this context, the Union expresses serious concern and urges the avoidance of any kind of threat or action directed against a Member State, or source of friction or actions, which could damage good neighbourly relations and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Against this background, the Honourable Member can rest assured that the issue of good neighbourly relations will continue to be closely followed and raised on all levels as appropriate, as one of the requirements against which Turkey's progress in the negotiations will be measured.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-000001/12
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(10 gennaio 2012)

Oggetto: Il caso della «Ditec S.p.A.» con sede a Quarto d'Altino (Veneto)

L'azienda svedese Assa Abloy, leader mondiale nel settore dei sistemi di automazione delle porte, ha deciso di procedere alla chiusura della filiale «Ditec S.p.A.» operante a Quarto d'Altino, in Veneto, per delocalizzarne entro il 2013 tutta l'attività produttiva — ovvero circa il 75 % dell'intera produzione aziendale — nella Repubblica Ceca e in Cina.

Preso atto che la «Ditec S.p.A.» è un'azienda sana che nell'ultimo biennio, nonostante la crisi economica, ha registrato importanti profitti, chiudendo quest'anno il proprio bilancio con un incremento del 12 %, e considerato che la modifica del piano industriale dell'azienda svedese interessa ben 90 dei 105 impiegati della «Ditec S.p.A.» con sede a Quarto d'Altino, i quali improvvisamente, senza preavviso né preventivo dialogo della dirigenza con le parti sociali, si ritroveranno senza un lavoro, può la Commissione indicare come intende combattere il persistere in Europa dei fenomeni di dumping sociale, fondati tanto sulle enormi differenze del costo del lavoro tra gli Stati Membri quanto sulle violazioni dei diritti umani che abbassano i costi dei produttori cinesi?

Considerata la revisione in atto dei regolamenti che disciplinano il funzionamento dei Fondi strutturali nonché dei Programmi a gestione diretta, ha pensato la Commissione a nuove regole per bloccare i finanziamenti verso le imprese che, dopo aver fruito delle risorse comunitarie, invece di sostenere l'occupazione nel territorio in cui operano, decidono comunque di delocalizzare le proprie attività?

È la Commissione a conoscenza di finanziamenti comunitari, diretti o indiretti, erogati a favore di questa multinazionale?

Per quanto concerne il diritto di informazione dei lavoratori nelle imprese con più di 50 dipendenti, come intende agire la Commissione per evitare che, senza alcun preavviso e senza voce in capitolo, gli impiegati di tali imprese si ritrovino improvvisamente disoccupati?

Intende la Commissione introdurre, in occasione della prossima programmazione e della revisione del FSE, un Fondo di emergenza destinato a sostenere lavoratori come quelli della «Ditec S.p.A.»?

Ritiene la Commissione che nel caso della «Ditec S.p.A.» sia ravvisabile la violazione dei codici di comportamento dettati dall'OIL e dall'OCSE, piuttosto che della normativa dell'UE?

Risposta data da László Andor a nome della Commissione
(6 febbraio 2012)

La Commissione è consapevole delle conseguenze negative che la ristrutturazione di un'azienda può avere sui lavoratori, sulle loro famiglie e sulle regioni interessate.

La legislazione dell'Unione può riguardare aspetti connessi alla ristrutturazione delle aziende e ai relativi licenziamenti collettivi, in particolare, considerata la dimensione transnazionale del presente caso, le direttive relative all'informazione e alla consultazione dei lavoratori ([1]), ai licenziamenti collettivi ([2]) e ai comitati aziendali europei ([3]).

Le autorità nazionali competenti, inclusi i tribunali, devono garantire l'applicazione corretta ed efficace delle norme relative all'informazione e alla consultazione dei lavoratori e dell'assolvimento degli obblighi dei datori di lavoro in merito.

([1]) Direttiva 2002/14/CE, GU L 80 del 23.3.2002, pagg. 29-34.
([2]) Direttiva 98/59/CE del Consiglio, GU L 225 del 12.8.1998, pagg. 16-21.
([3]) Direttiva 2009/38/CE, GU L.122 del 16.5.2009, pag. 28.

Se i licenziamenti presso la Ditec S.p.A. derivano da mutevoli correnti commerciali mondiali, l'Italia potrebbe chiedere sostegno al Fondo europeo di adeguamento alla globalizzazione (FEG) ([4]), tenendo conto dei suoi criteri di intervento.

La Commissione non è a conoscenza di alcun sostegno fornito alla Ditec S.p.A. dall'FSE. La Commissione chiederà alle autorità regionali (Veneto) incaricate dell'applicazione di tale programma di fornire le necessarie informazioni su questo aspetto specifico.

I Fondi strutturali non dovrebbero essere utilizzati per sovvenzionare la delocalizzazione delle imprese. L'articolo 57 del regolamento generale recita che uno Stato membro conserva il contributo dei Fondi soltanto se l'operazione finanziata dall'UE non subisce modifiche di rilievo fino a cinque anni dopo il completamento dell'operazione.

La proposta per l'FEG per il periodo 2014-2020 estende il suo campo di applicazione a perturbazioni causate da una crisi imprevista. Non è previsto un fondo di emergenza per l'FSE.

Spetterebbe all'OIL e all'OCSE decidere se il presente caso violi o meno le loro norme CSR.

([4]) Regolamento (CE) n. 1927/2006, GU L 48 del 22.2.2008, pag. 82 e regolamento (CE) n. 546/2009 che modifica il regolamento (CE) n. 1927/2006, GU L 167 del 29.6.2009, pag. 26. Affinché l'UE possa continuare a far fronte a importanti licenziamenti imprevisti nell'ambito del quadro finanziario pluriennale 2014-2020, la Commissione ha anche formulato la proposta COM(2011)608 del 6.10.2011, di regolamento sull'FEG per tale periodo.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-000001/12
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(10 January 2012)

Subject: Case of Ditec S.p.A., located in Quarto d'Altino (Veneto)

The Swedish company Assa Abloy, global leader in the door automation systems sector, has decided to close the subsidiary Ditec S.p.A., operating at Quarto d'Altino in Veneto, with the aim of relocating its entire production activity — or around 75 % of its entire company production — to the Czech Republic and China by 2013.

Noting that Ditec S.p.A. is a sound company which has posted large profits during the last two years, in spite of the economic crisis, ending this year with a 12 % increase in its own balance sheet, and given that the amendment to the Swedish company's business plan affects a good 90 of the 105 employees from Ditec S.p.A., located at Quarto d'Altino, who will suddenly find themselves out of work, without any notice or prior dialogue between management and the social partners, can the Commission specify how it intends to combat the persistent instances of social dumping in Europe, based both on the huge disparities in labour costs between Member States and on the human rights violations resulting in lower costs for Chinese manufacturers?

Bearing in mind the current review of the regulations governing the operation of the Structural Funds as well as of the direct management programmes, has the Commission devised new rules for blocking funding for businesses which, after benefiting from EU resources, decide nevertheless to relocate their activities, instead of supporting employment in the area where they operate?

Is the Commission aware of EU funding, direct or indirect, which has been granted to this multinational?

With regard to the right to information enjoyed by workers in businesses with more than 50 employees, what action does the Commission intend to take to prevent employees in such businesses suddenly finding themselves unemployed, without being given any notice and without any employee participation?

Does the Commission envisage introducing during the next programming period and ESF review an emergency fund intended to support workers like those employed at Ditec S.p.A.?

Does the Commission consider that the Ditec S.p.A. case highlights a breach of the codes of conduct laid down by the ILO and OECD rather than of EU legislation?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(6 February 2012)

The Commission is aware of the negative consequences that company restructuring may have on concerned workers, their families and regions.

Issues related to company restructuring and associated collective dismissals may be covered by Union law, in particular the directives on information and consultation of employees ([1]), collective redundancies ([2]) and European Works Councils ([3]), considering the transnational dimension of the present case.

The competent national authorities including courts have to ensure the correct and effective implementation of the rules on workers' information and consultation and the fulfilment of the employer's duties in this regard.

If redundancies in Ditec S.p.A. occur as a result of changing world trade patterns, Italy could apply for support from the EGF ([4]), taking account of its intervention criteria.

The Commission is not aware of any support given to Ditec S.p.A. through the ESF. The Commission will ask the regional authorities (Veneto) in charge of the implementation of this programme to provide the necessary information on this specific issue.

([1]) Directive 2002/14/EC, OJ L 80, 23.3.2002, p. 29-34.
([2]) Council Directive 98/59/EC, OJ L 225, 12.8.1998, p. 16-21.
([3]) Directive 2009/38/EC, OJ L 122, 16.5.2009, p. 28.
([4]) Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006, OJ L 48, 22.2.2008, p. 82 and Regulation (EC) No 546/2009 amending Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006, OJ L 167, 29.6.2009, p. 26. In order for the EU to continue to be able to respond to unexpected large redundancies under the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020, the Commission has also made the proposal COM(2011) 608 of 6.10.2011 for a regulation on the EGF in that period.

The Structural Funds should not be used to subsidise the relocation of businesses. Article 57 of the General Regulation states that a Member State retains the contribution from the Funds only if the EU funded operation does not undergo a substantial modification up to five years after the completion of the operation.

The proposal for the EGF in 2014-2020 broadens its scope to disruptions caused by an unexpected crisis. An ESF emergency fund is not foreseen.

It would be for the ILO and the OECD to give a view on whether this case breaches their CSR standards or not.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000002/12
a la Comisión
Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE)
(11 de enero de 2012)

Asunto: Sobre restricciones de caza de paloma torcaz en Euskadi y Navarra

Diversas organizaciones de cazadores de las comunidades autónomas de Euskadi y Navarra nos han hecho llegar su inquietud por determinadas restricciones en el aprovechamiento cinegético de la paloma torcaz, una especie no catalogada y en progresión, que no nidifica ni inverna en la zona. En principio se captura durante cuatro o cinco días en el mes de octubre mientras sobrevuela estas dos regiones en viaje hacia su lugar de invernada.

La caza en «contrapasa» permitiría capturar esta especie durante los escasos días de marzo en que se concentra el retorno de las palomas hacia el norte. Los cazadores creen que no es una mera ampliación del periodo de caza porque en estas regiones se podría cazar durante muchos menos días que en los territorios en los que la especie nidifica o inverna. Es una modalidad de caza tradicional porque se realiza desde puestos de los que se tiene noticia desde la edad media. Es además social porque las plazas se adjudican por riguroso sorteo y pagan derechos que rondan los cuatro euros por plaza y día. La caza se realiza en condiciones estrictamente controladas (limitación de número de permisos diarios, cupo diario de ejemplares abatidos y posterior control de la jornada de caza de cada cazador). Estas restricciones permiten un aprovechamiento prudente de este recurso cinegético cifrado en un cupo máximo de 3 000 capturas por temporada. Por ello creen que no tienen incidencia en el estado de conservación de la especie.

Por esas razones consideran que la contrapasa encaja en la excepción determinada en el artículo 9.1.c) de la Directiva Comunitaria 2009/147/CEE — Directiva de Aves. A la vista de la prohibición de la contrapasa, quisiéramos saber:

¿Considera la Comisión que autorizar como excepción la caza a contrapasa de la paloma torcaz en las condiciones descritas puede interpretarse como «solución satisfactoria» (artículo 9.1 de la Directiva Comunitaria 2009/147/CEE — Directiva de Aves) especialmente si se contrapone con el hecho de que en el sur de la península ibérica, donde inverna, puede cazarse desde octubre hasta enero?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(27 de febrero de 2012)

El Tribunal de Justicia Europeo ya ha confirmado en su sentencia en el asunto C-135/04 ([1]) que la caza primaveral de las palomas torcaces migratorias (*Columba palumbus L.*) en la provincia de Guipúzcoa (que pertenece al País Vasco) no es compatible con los requisitos de protección de la Directiva 2009/147/CE ([2]), relativa a la conservación de las aves silvestres.

Como el Tribunal de Justicia ha dado una interpretación definitiva sobre este tema, la Comisión considera que la Directiva 2009/147/CE debe aplicarse de plena conformidad con esta sentencia y no tiene razones para creer que la misma no sea aplicable a la zona geográfica más amplia de las regiones del País Vasco y Navarra.

([1]) http://curia.europa.eu/juris/showPdf.jsf?text=&docid=58347&pageIndex=0&doclang=es&mode=doc&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=375278
([2]) Directiva 2009/147/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 30 de noviembre de 2009, relativa a la conservación de las aves silvestres (DO L 20 de 26.1.2010), 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-000002/12
to the Commission
Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: On restrictions to hunting wood pigeon in the Basque Country and Navarre

Various hunting organisations in the Autonomous Communities of the Basque Country and Navarre have expressed their disquiet to us at certain restrictions to the hunting of the wood pigeon. The species is not listed, is increasing in number, and neither nests nor overwinters in the area. In principle, it is hunted for four or five days in October as it flies over these two regions on its way to its wintering grounds.

The hunting of returning migratory birds would allow the species to be captured during the few days in March when the pigeons mainly return north. The hunters believe that this is not a mere extension of the hunting season because in these regions it would be possible to hunt for many fewer days than in those territories where the species nests or overwinters. This is a traditional form of hunting as it takes place from stations known to exist since the Middle Ages. Furthermore, it is a social activity as places are assigned by the strict drawing of lots and fees of around EUR 4 are paid per place per day. Hunting takes place under strictly controlled conditions (limited number of daily licenses, daily quota of birds shot and subsequent monitoring of each hunter's day's hunting). These restrictions mean that there is appropriate use of this hunting resource with a maximum seasonal quota of 3 000 captures. On account of this, they believe that they have no impact on the conservation status of the species.

On account of these reasons, they believe that the return of migrating birds falls under the exception contained in Article 9.1.c) of Community Directive 2009/147/CEE — Birds Directive. In the light of the prohibition of hunting returning migratory birds, we would like to know:

Does the Commission consider that the exceptional authorisation of hunting returning migratory wood pigeon under the aforementioned circumstances can be interpreted as a 'satisfactory solution' (Article 9.1 of Community Directive 2009/147/CEE — Birds Directive) especially seen in contrast with the fact that in the south of the Iberian Peninsula, where it overwinters, it can be hunted from October to January?

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

The European Court of Justice has already confirmed in its judgment on Case C-135/04 ([1]) that the spring hunting of migratory wood pigeons (*Columba palumbus L.*) in the province of Guipúzcoa, (belonging to the Basque Country region) is not compatible with the protection requirements of Directive 2009/147/EC ([2]) on the conservation of wild birds.

As the Court of Justice has provided a definitive interpretation on this matter, the Commission considers that the directive 2009/147/EC must be applied in full conformity with this ruling and it has no basis to conclude that this ruling is not applicable to the wider geographic area of the Basque Country and Navarre regions.

([1]) http://curia.europa.eu/juris/showPdf.jsf?text=&docid=58347&pageIndex=0&doclang=en&mode=doc&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=375278

([2]) Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (OJ L 20/7, 26.1.2010) that codifies the Council Directive 79/409/EEC of 2 April 1979 on the conservation of wild birds (OJ L 103, 25.4.1979).

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000003/12
a la Comisión
Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE)
(11 de enero de 2012)

Asunto: Sobre la ruptura de las negociaciones para el acuerdo pesquero con Mauritania

En los últimos días hemos tenido conocimiento de que se han roto las conversaciones que las autoridades europeas y mauritanas mantenían para renovar el acuerdo pesquero con este país africano. Según las informaciones disponibles había consenso entre las partes sobre el desembarque de capturas, la composición de las tripulaciones, las limitaciones en millas de las zonas de pesca hábiles y los porcentajes de entrega según especies. Parece ser que el desacuerdo se ha producido al abordar las cuestiones financieras.

Aunque faltan seis meses aún para que concluya el acuerdo en vigor, representantes de la flota europea que faena en la zona han manifestado su inquietud ante la perspectiva de que finalmente no se alcance un acuerdo. A la vista de la información disponible, nos gustaría saber:

1. ¿Es cierto que el principal obstáculo en las negociaciones es el capítulo financiero?

2. ¿Podría hacer la Comisión una valoración de los acuerdos alcanzados en torno a las cuestiones técnicas del convenio?

3. ¿Considera la Comisión insuperables las diferencias económicas que actualmente separan a las partes?

4. ¿Qué expectativas considera la Comisión que existen para renovar el acuerdo?

Respuesta de la Sra. Damanaki en nombre de la Comisión
(15 de marzo de 2012)

La Comisión confirma que el principal problema pendiente en la negociación para la renovación del acuerdo de asociación en el sector pesquero es el importe de la contribución financiera abonada por el presupuesto de la UE. Mauritania considera que la oferta de la UE es demasiada baja.

La Comisión está dispuesta a negociar un precio justo por unas posibilidades de pesca fundadas en las nociones de sostenibilidad y de superávit y cree que debe alcanzarse una buena relación calidad-precio.

Se ha alcanzado un acuerdo provisional entre ambas partes sobre cuestiones pendientes tales como el transbordo obligatorio de especies pelágicas, el desembarque obligatorio en el caso de las pesquerías demersales, más marinos mauritanos a bordo de los buques de la UE (60 %), el sistema de localización de buques vía satélite, nuevas zonas de pesca que permitan una mejor protección de las especies en peligro (alachas y gambas) y los márgenes de tolerancia en cuanto al peso. Estos cambios se han debatido con los Estados miembros y han sido objeto de un acuerdo general.

La Comisión considera que las posiciones de las dos partes todavía podrían conciliarse a tiempo, antes de la expiración del Protocolo vigente. A este respecto, sigue considerando posible alcanzar un acuerdo satisfactorio para ambas partes.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000003/12
to the Commission
Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: On the breakdown in negotiations on the fisheries agreement with Mauritania

Over recent days, we have learnt that conversations have broken down between the European and Mauritanian authorities on the renewal of the fisheries agreement with this African country. According to available information, both parties agreed on landing catch, composition of crews, limits in miles of working fishing zones and percentages of catch by species. It would appear that the disagreement arose when it came to financial matters.

Although the current agreement does not expire for a further six months, representatives of the European fleet fishing in the area have expressed their disquiet at the prospect that an agreement may not finally be reached. In light of the information available, we would like to know:

1. Is it true that the main obstacle in the negotiations is the financial section?

2. Could the Commission provide an evaluation of the agreements reached on the technical matters in the agreement?

3. Does the Commission find the economic differences which currently divide both parties insuperable?

4. What expectation is there, in the view of the Commission, that the agreement will be renewed?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(15 March 2012)

The Commission confirms that the main remaining issue in the negotiation for the renewal of the FPA is the level of financial contribution paid by the EU budget. Mauritania considers the EU offer as being too low.

The Commission is keen to negotiate a fair price for fishing opportunities that must be based on the concept of sustainability and surplus and considers that good value for money should be achieved.

The provisional consent of both parties on technical pending issues was reached, such as compulsory transhipments for pelagics, compulsory landings for demersal fisheries, more Mauritanian seamen on board of EU vessels (60 %), VMS (Vessel monitoring system), new fishing zones allowing better protection of threatened species (sardinellas and shrimps) and margins of weight tolerance. These changes had been discussed with Member States and generally agreed upon.

The Commission considers that the positions of the two parties could still be reconciled in time before the expiry of the current Protocol. In this regard, it still considers that a mutually satisfactory deal can be reached.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000004/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Sir Graham Watson (ALDE)
(18 January 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Mercosur ban on Falkland Islands flagged vessels

The United Kingdom Government claims responsibility for the Falkland Islands following continuous administration since 1833 (apart from the Argentine military occupation in 1982) as well as the islanders' right to self-determination, which includes their right to remain British if that is their wish.

In a statement on 18 May 2010 recalling the EU position on the Falkland Islands, High Representative Catherine Ashton affirmed that 'the Falkland Islands are associated with the European Union as an overseas territory of the UK in accordance with Articles 198/204 of Part Four of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union'. Article 198 TFEU states that 'association shall serve primarily to further the interests and prosperity of the inhabitants of these countries and territories in order to lead them to the economic, social and cultural development to which they aspire'.

In December, in week 51, the four South American states which are members of Mercosur agreed to close their ports to ships flying the Falkland Islands flag. Such a move is likely to isolate the people of the Falkland Islands and damage citizens' livelihoods and the islands' economy.

1. Is the High Representative aware of this decision by Mercosur members, which could be damaging to the territory's inhabitants and economy?

2. What representations has the High Representative made on behalf of the EU to Mercosur on this issue?

3. What representations has the High Representative made to each Mercosur member state government on this issue?

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

1. The High Representative/Vice-President is well aware of the decision taken by the Mercosur Member States to close their ports to ships flying the Falkland Islands flag and is following the situation in close contact with the British authorities and other EU partners.

2. Issues of sovereignty are matters for Member States. Therefore, no representations on behalf of the EU have been made.

3. The High Representative/Vice-President has not made any representations on the issue, but has requested the Heads of the EU Delegations in the whole region to monitor developments further to the recent decision and report to her regularly.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000005/12
to the Commission
Sir Graham Watson (ALDE)
(12 January 2012)

Subject: Laying Hens Directive implementation (Council Directive 1999/74/EC)

The Protection of Laying Hens Directive (Council Directive 1999/74/EC) came into full effect on 1 January 2012. I note the Commission's response to my parliamentary Question E-009040/2011 on 7 December 2011, in which it maintained it does not intend to postpone the directive's implementation.

As of 28 November 2011 the Commission noted that 11 Member States would not be able to comply fully with the directive on 1 January 2012.

1. Will the Commission now initiate infringement procedures against those who are not complying with the directive?

2. If so, will the Commission confirm what action it intends to take and its timetable for action?

3. In the UK farmers have spent GBP 400 million to ensure compliance ahead of the deadline. Can the Commission confirm whether Member States are able to introduce a ban on egg products that originate either from Member States that have not implemented the directive or from specific producers who are not compliant with the directive?

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

1-2. In November 2011 the Commission contacted the Member States which, according to the data available, would probably not be compliant on 1 January 2012. Based on their replies, and as considered appropriate, the Commission is currently initiating infringement procedures. Letters of formal notice were on 26 January 2012 sent to 13 non-compliant Member States. Furthermore, based on statements made by the United Kingdom competent authorities as to their inability to phase out unenriched cages by the deadline, an investigation was launched on the 12 January 2012. On the basis of the outcome of this investigation it will be decided whether infringement proceedings will be launched against that Member State. Inspections by the Commission's inspection service will be carried out to support the legal process.

Moreover, the Commission will continue to discuss the state of implementation of the directive regularly during the meetings of the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health.

3. As regards eggs produced in non-compliant systems, the Commission has discussed at several meetings with Member States in October, November and December 2011 and January 2012 actions to be undertaken by Member States to achieve compliance.

Eggs produced in non-compliant systems are illegal as of 1 January 2012. Member States are responsible for implementing the directive and to ensure, through national efficient controls and traceability systems, the respect of the current legislation.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-000007/12
aan de Commissie
Esther de Lange (PPE)
(11 januari 2012)

Betreft: Multiresistente tuberculose

In 2009 telde de Europese regio van de WHO 284 693 tuberculosepatiënten, waarvan er meer dan 62 000 overleden zijn. De toename van het aantal gevallen van multiresistente tuberculose (MDR-TB) is bijzonder onrustwekkend. De negen landen ter wereld boven aan de lijst (waarbij het in meer dan 12 procent van de nieuwe tbc-gevallen om MDR-TB gaat) bevinden zich in de Europese regio van de WHO. Vijf van de 15 landen die de hoogste prioriteit hebben gekregen in de Europese regio zijn lidstaten van de EU. In 2008 waren er 81 000 patiënten in de Europese regio van de WHO. In de Europese regio van de WHO werd slechts een derde van de gevallen van MDR-TB opgespoord en slechts een derde daarvan werd afdoende behandeld. Naast de onaanvaardbare menselijke tragedie bestaat er het risico dat het aantal MDR-TB-gevallen in West-Europa aanzienlijk zal toenemen. Het percentage geslaagde behandelingen van MDR-TB in West-Euro.a. 32 procent, ligt zorgwekkend lager dan de 65 procent in Oost-Europa.

Er wordt geschat dat de behandeling van een MDR-TB-patiënt 100 keer meer kost dan het behandelen van iemand met medicamenteus behandelbare tbc. In West-Europa worden de kosten voor de behandeling van een patiënt met MDR-TB bijvoorbeeld geraamd op 200 000 euro. Preventie bij de bron (in het bijzonder in het oostelijke deel van de Europese regio) zou goedkoper zijn dan een paar jaar later een epidemie te moeten bestrijden in het westen.

In het „Actieplan voor de preventie en beheersing van MDR-TB 2011-2015" van WHO Europa dat in september 2011 werd goedgekeurd, wordt heel duidelijk aangegeven hoe MDR-TB doeltreffend kan worden aangepakt. De tenuitvoerlegging ervan hangt af van het Wereldfonds voor de bestrijding van aids, tuberculose en malaria (GFATM). De huidige financiële crisis bij GFATM zal de financiering voor de Europese regio van de WHO aanzienlijk beperken. Negen landen in de Europese regio lopen het acute risico hun begroting voor de programmering van de beheersing van tbc, die door het GFATM gefinancierd wordt, aanzienlijk te zien dalen. In deze regio zal er de volgende jaren waarschijnlijk geen toegang zijn tot nieuwe GFATM-financiering voor de beheersing van MDR-TB.

1. Welke beleidslijnen en programma's worden er op EU-niveau uitgewerkt om deze dreiging voor de volksgezondheid, zowel in de EU als buiten de Europese grenzen, aan te pakken, gelet op het feit dat de kosten voor het genezen van MDR-TB 100 keer hoger liggen dan die voor de behandeling van tbc zonder complicaties en dat het aanpakken van tbc bij de bron kostenefficiënt is?

2. Erkent de Commissie het belang van EU-leiderschap, ook buiten de grenzen van de EU, en in het bijzonder in de Europese regio van de WHO?

3. Hoe denkt de Commissie een praktische bijdrage te leveren tot de tenuitvoerlegging van het actieplan van de WHO en welke rol denkt zij te spelen in die tenuitvoerlegging?

Antwoord van de heer Dalli namens de Commissie
(13 februari 2012)

In november 2011 heeft de Commissie een actieplan tegen het gevaar van antimicrobiële resistentie ([1]) goedgekeurd om het probleem van resistentie tegen geneesmiddelen aan te pakken, met inbegrip van multiresistente tuberculose. Er zijn ook specifieke maatregelen getroffen om tuberculose binnen en buiten de Unie aan te pakken.

Tuberculose is een van de ziekten die in de gehele EU onder surveillance staan ([2]) en de EU en de Europese regio van de WHO hebben een gemeenschappelijk netwerk opgezet om de surveillance van tuberculose in Europa te coördineren.

Het Europees Centrum voor ziektepreventie en –bestrijding heeft in 2007 op verzoek van de Commissie een kaderactieplan voor de bestrijding van tuberculose in de EU ([3]) opgesteld. In het kader van het gezondheidsprogramma van de EU ([4]) worden nog steeds projecten gesteund om de lidstaten te helpen tuberculose beter te bestrijden.

([1]) COM(2011) 748 definitief van 15.11.2011.
([2]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2000:028:0050:0053:NL:PDF
([3]) http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/0803_SPR_TB_Action_plan.pdf
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/programme/policy/index_en.htm

Het EU-kaderprogramma voor onderzoek steunt bovendien de ontwikkeling van nieuwe vaccins, geneesmiddelen en diagnostische instrumenten tegen tuberculose met een budget van 125 miljoen euro in de afgelopen 10 jaren.

Op internationaal niveau steunt de Commissie ontwikkelingslanden met name via het Wereldfonds ter bestrijding van aids, tuberculose en malaria, waaraan zij sinds 2002 al 872,5 miljoen euro aan financiële steun heeft bijgedragen.

De WHO-strategie voor Europa om de lasten van resistente tuberculose te verminderen, vult de maatregelen van de EU aan.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000007/12
to the Commission
Esther de Lange (PPE)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Multi-drug resistant tuberculosis

In 2009, the WHO European region counted 284 693 TB patients, of whom more than 62 000 died. The increase in multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) is alarming. The top nine countries in the world (in which MDR-TB exceeds 12 % of new TB cases) are in the WHO European region. Five of the 15 high priority countries in the Europe region are EU Member States. In 2008 there were 81 000 patients in the WHO European region. In the WHO European region, only one third of MDR-TB cases were detected and only one third of these received effective treatment. Besides the unacceptable personal tragedy, there is a risk of a tangible increase in MDR-TB in Western Europe. The 32 %-successful treatment of MDR-TB in Western Europe is alarmingly far below the 65 % in Eastern Europe.

The treatment of an MDR-TB patient is estimated to be 100 times more expensive than a case of drug-sensitive TB. For instance, in Western Europe, the cost of treating one patient with MDR-TB is estimated at EUR 200 000. Prevention at source (principally in the eastern part of the European region) would be less costly than fighting an epidemic a few years later in the west.

The WHO Europe 'Action Plan to prevent and control MDR-TB 2011-2015' adopted in September 2011 is clear on how to address MDR-TB effectively. Implementation hinges on the Global Fund to Fight Aids Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM). The current financial crisis at GFATM will largely cut off funding for the WHO European region. Nine European region countries acutely risk substantial budget reductions in their Global Fund-financed TB control programming. Access to new GFATM funding for MDR-TB control will not be forthcoming in this region for some years.

1. Taking into account that the costs of curing MDR-TB are 100 times those of uncomplicated TB and that addressing TB at source is cost effective, which policies and programmes at EU level are being put in place to tackle this public health threat, both within the EU and beyond its borders?

2. Does the Commission recognise the importance of EU leadership, including beyond EU borders and in the WHO Europe region in particular?

3. How will the Commission make a practical contribution to and engage in the implementation of the WHO Action Plan?

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

In November 2011, the Commission adopted an Action Plan against the threat of antimicrobial resistance ([1]) to address the issue of drug resistance including multi-resistant tuberculosis. Specific actions have also been taken to address tuberculosis within and outside the Union.

At EU level, tuberculosis is one of the diseases under EU-wide surveillance ([2]) and a joint network between the EU and the WHO Europe region was established to coordinate tuberculosis surveillance in Europe.

At the request of the Commission, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control developed, in 2007, an EU Framework Action Plan to fight tuberculosis ([3]). The EU Health Programme ([4]) further supports projects to help Member States step up their capacity to address tuberculosis.

Additionally, the EU Research Framework Programme supports the development of new vaccines, drugs and diagnostic tools against tuberculosis with EUR 125 million allocated to it over the past 10 years.

At international level, the Commission supports developing countries notably through the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria with a financial contribution of EUR 872.5 million since 2002.

The WHO Europe strategy towards the goal of reducing the burden of drug resistant tuberculosis complements EU action.

([1]) COM(2011) 748 final of 15.11.2011.
([2]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2000:028:0050:0053:EN:PDF
([3]) http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/0803_SPR_TB_Action_plan.pdf
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/programme/policy/index_en.htm

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-000010/12
do Komisji
Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)
(11 stycznia 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Zatrzymania w rocznicę manifestacji po sfałszowanych wyborach na Białorusi

19 grudnia, w rocznicę aresztowań opozycjonistów, którzy pokojowo protestowali przeciwko sfałszowanym wyborom prezydenckim na Białorusi, w wielu miastach odbywały się akcje solidarności i manifestacje w obronie białoruskich więźniów politycznych. Mimo pokojowego charakteru wszystkich akcji społecznych zatrzymano kilkadziesiąt osób, w tym fotoreporterów, którzy dokumentowali protesty.

Siły specjalne prewencyjnie aresztowały dziennikarzy i nie dopuszczały do składania zniczy w miejscach ubiegłorocznych aresztowań, aby nie dopuścić do pokojowych demonstracji w tym roku.

Europejska polityka sąsiedztwa zakłada wysiłki w zakresie demokratyzacji i przestrzegania praw człowieka w państwach nią objętych. Działania władz na Białorusi wciąż urągają standardom demokratycznym. Czy w tej sytuacji Komisja zamierza podjąć stosowne działania, by zatrzymać falę represji wobec działaczy społecznych i politycznych oraz rażące łamanie fundamentalnych praw człowieka? Jakie działania podejmie Komisja, aby uwolniono zatrzymanych?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Štefana Fülego w imieniu Komisji
(29 lutego 2012 r.)

Unia Europejska pozostaje głęboko zaniepokojona represjami wobec opozycji politycznej, społeczeństwa obywatelskiego oraz niezależnych mediów na Białorusi.

Według dostępnych informacji w trakcie przygotowań do obchodów rocznicy 19 grudnia 2011 r. zatrzymano w Mińsku 46 osób, z których 32 oskarżono następnie o popełnienie czynów niedozwolonych, a jednego ze studentów wydalono z uniwersytetu.

Dnia 18 grudnia 2011 r. Wysoka Przedstawiciel i Wiceprzewodnicząca Komisji Catherine Ashton oraz sekretarz stanu USA Hillary Clinton wydały wspólne oświadczenie ([1]) wyrażające zaniepokojenie sytuacją w zakresie praw człowieka na Białorusi. Wezwały również ponownie do natychmiastowego zwolnienia i rehabilitacji wszystkich więźniów politycznych i wyraziły poważne obawy co do dalszego ograniczania podstawowych swobód obywatelskich: wolności zgromadzeń, zrzeszania się i wypowiedzi.

UE wprowadziła również szereg środków ograniczających w odniesieniu do władz białoruskich, w tym osób odpowiedzialnych za naruszanie praw człowieka i represje wobec społeczeństwa obywatelskiego. UE wyraźnie zadeklarowała swoją gotowość rozważenia dalszych ukierunkowanych środków we wszystkich obszarach współpracy. Jednocześnie UE nadal wspiera działania białoruskich organizacji społeczeństwa obywatelskiego: ostatnio, w dniu 25 stycznia 2012 r., komisarz ds. rozszerzenia i europejskiej polityki sąsiedztwa Štefan Füle spotkał się z grupą ważnych białoruskich obrońców praw człowieka. UE udziela ponadto wsparcia ofiarom represji i ich rodzinom.

([1]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/127034.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000010/12
to the Commission
Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Detention during the anniversary of the protests following falsified elections in Belarus

On the anniversary of the arrest of oppositionists who had peacefully protested against falsified presidential elections in Belarus on 19 December, many solidarity actions and protests were held in many towns to support Belarusian political prisoners. In spite of the peaceful character of all community actions, several dozen people were arrested, including the press photographers who were documenting the protests.

Preventive special forces arrested journalists and did not allow anybody to put votive candles in places where people were arrested last year, in order not to admit peaceful demonstrations this year.

The European Neighbourhood Policy sets out efforts with regard to democratisation and observance of human rights in countries, in which it is binding. The Belorussian authorities' actions carry on defying democratic standards. In light of this situation, is the Commission going to undertake relevant actions in order to stop repressions against community and political activists, as well as terrible violations of fundamental human rights? What actions is the Commission going to undertake so that the arrested people are released?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(29 February 2012)

The European Union remains deeply concerned about the ongoing repression of the political opposition, civil society, and the independent media in Belarus.

According to information available, 46 people were apprehended in Minsk in the run up to the anniversary of 19 December 2011, 32 of them have been subsequently charged with civil offences and one student has been expelled from the university.

On 18 December 2011, the High Representative/Vice-President and US Secretary of State Clinton issued a joint statement ([1]) expressing concerns about the human rights situation in Belarus. They also reiterated calls for all political prisoners to be immediately released and rehabilitated and expressed grave concern over further restriction of citizens' fundamental freedoms of assembly, association and expression.

The EU is also implementing a range of restrictive measures against the Belarusian authorities, including against a number of individuals responsible for human rights violations and the repression of civil society. The EU has made clear that it stands ready to consider further targeted measures in all areas of cooperation. At the same time, the EU continues to support Belarusian civil society organisations in their work. Most recently, on 25 January 2012, Commissioner Füle, responsible for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, met with a number of key Belarusian human rights activists. In addition, the EU continues to provide support to the victims of repression and their families.

([1]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/127034.pdf

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-000011/12
do Komisji
Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)
(11 stycznia 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Porwanie ukraińskich aktywistek przez białoruskie służby specjalne

19 grudnia, w rocznicę wydarzeń na Placu Niepodległości w Mińsku – rozgromienia przez OMON i Specnaz pokojowej demonstracji przeciwko sfałszowaniu wyborów na prezydenta Białorusi – w wielu miastach odbywały się akcje solidarności i pikiety w obronie białoruskich więźniów politycznych.

Jedna z takich pikiet została zorganizowana przed siedzibą KGB w Mińsku przez działaczki ukraińskiej organizacji FEMEN. Aktywistki trzymały plakaty z napisami „Wolność dla więźniów politycznych" i „Niech żyje Białoruś".

Po akcji aktywistki zostały zatrzymane przez funkcjonariuszy KGB i milicji na dworcu kolejowym w Mińsku. Zawiązano im oczy, a później przez całą noc wożono autobusem, by w końcu wywieźć do lasu. Tam aktywistki zostały pobite, rozebrane, oblane olejem, a jedną z nich ogolono na łyso. W takim stanie zostawiono je w lesie.

Te wydarzenia potwierdzają jedynie, że białoruskie władze nie przejmują się ostrzeżeniami Unii Europejskiej ani groźbami sankcji płynącymi z całego świata i nadal stosują represje wobec działaczy społecznych, opozycjonistów i przedstawicieli społeczeństwa obywatelskiego.

Projekt Partnerstwa Wschodniego nakłada na Unię Europejską obowiązek monitorowania przestrzegania praw człowieka na Białorusi. W związku z tym pragnę zapytać Komisję, czy ma zamiar podjąć interwencję w sprawie porwania i pobicia aktywistek na Białorusi?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Štefana Füleго w imieniu Komisji
(15 marca 2012 r.)

W uzupełnieniu informacji przedstawionych w odpowiedzi na pytanie pisemne E-000010/2012 ([1]) poniżej zamieszczam dodatkowe informacje do wiadomości Szanownego Pana Posła.

Komisja i Europejska Służba Działań Zewnętrznych znają sprawę porwania na Białorusi ukraińskich działaczek organizacji feministycznej, do której nawiązuje Szanowny Pan Poseł. Jest to niewątpliwie wysoce niepokojące wydarzenie i delegatura UE w Mińsku uważnie śledzi rozwój sytuacji. Mamy również świadomość, że władze Białorusi wszczęły obecnie prowadzone formalne dochodzenie w tej sprawie.

Potrzeba zapewnienia postępu w kwestii podstawowych praw i wolności pozostaje istotą Partnerstwa Wschodniego, a UE w dalszym ciągu zdecydowanie potępia trwające represje wobec społeczeństwa obywatelskiego, opozycji politycznej i niezależnych mediów na Białorusi. W dniu 23 stycznia 2012 r. Rada do Spraw Zagranicznych przyjęła środki służące wzmocnieniu istniejących sankcji UE wobec Białorusi, rozszerzając kryteria pozwalające na objęcie środkami ograniczającymi osoby i podmioty. Dzięki temu działania skierowane przeciwko osobom odpowiedzialnym za poważne naruszenia praw człowieka i akty represji będą skuteczniejsze. UE wyraźnie zadeklarowała też swoją gotowość do rozważenia, w razie potrzeby, dalszych ukierunkowanych środków we wszystkich obszarach współpracy.

Ponadto UE będzie nadal wspierać działania organizacji społeczeństwa obywatelskiego na Białorusi, również poprzez udzielanie dalszej pomocy ofiarom represji i ich rodzinom.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000011/12
to the Commission
Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Kidnapping of Ukrainian female activists by the Belarusian intelligence agency

During an anniversary of events at the Independence Square in Minsk on 19 December — a crushing defeat of a peaceful demonstration against falsification of presidential elections in Belarus by OMON and Spetsnaz — solidarity actions and pickets were held in many towns to defend Belarusian political prisoners.

One of such pickets was organised in front of KGB in Minsk by female activists from the Ukrainian organisation called FEMEN. The activists were holding posters that read 'Freedom for political prisoners' and 'Long live Belarus'.

Following the action, the activists were arrested by KGB and militia officers at the railway station in Minsk. They were blindfolded and then transported by bus all night long to be finally brought to a forest. There they were beaten, undressed, oil was poured on them, and one of them was completely shaved. They were left in such a state in the forest.

These events only confirm that the Belarusian authorities do not care about EU warnings or sanction threats coming from all over the world, and keep repressing community activists, oppositionists and representatives of the civil society.

The Eastern Partnership project requires that the EU monitor observance of human rights in Belarus. Therefore, I would like to ask the Commission if it is going to intervene in the case of kidnapping and beating up the female activists in Belarus?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(15 March 2012)

Complementary to the information provided to the Honourable Member in reply to Written Question E-000010/2012 ([1]), the following information can be provided:

The Commission and the European External Action Service are aware of the case of the kidnapping of Ukrainian female activists in Belarus to which the Honourable Member refers. It is clearly deeply concerning, and the EU Delegation in Minsk is continuing to follow the situation closely. We are also aware that the Belarusian authorities have launched a formal probe into the case which is currently ongoing.

The need to secure progress on basic rights and freedoms remains at the very heart of the Eastern Partnership, and the EU continues to strongly condemn the ongoing repression of civil society, the political opposition and the independent media in Belarus. On 23 January 2012, the Foreign Affairs Council adopted measures to strengthen existing EU sanctions towards Belarus by broadening the criteria by which individuals and entities can be subjected to restrictive measures. This will ensure that they are more effectively able to target those responsible for serious human rights violations and acts of repression. The EU has also made clear that it stands ready to consider further targeted measures in all areas of cooperation if required.

In addition, the EU will continue its efforts to support the work of civil society organisations in Belarus, including through continued assistance to victims of repression and their families.

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

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-000012/12
do Komisji
Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)
(11 stycznia 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Białoruskie władze więzienne nie zezwalają działaczowi na udział w pogrzebie ojca

24 grudnia zmarł ojciec białoruskiego obrońcy praw człowieka, Alesia Bialackiego, skazanego pod koniec listopada na 4,5 r. kolonii karnej o zaostrzonym rygorze. Władze więzienne Białorusi nie zezwoliły Bialackiemu na udział w pogrzebie ojca. Mimo starań rodziny, władze nie wyraziły również zgody na to, by działacz mógł spotkać się z nim, gdy ten leżał na łożu śmierci.

Wprawdzie sąd w Mińsku za każdym razem zezwalał na udanie się Bialackiego do umierającego ojca, ale władze więzienne ignorowały te pozwolenia, tłumacząc, że zgodnie z prawem osoby, wobec których wyrok sądowy nie uprawomocnił się, nie mogą być wypuszczane na widzenia czy pogrzeby.

W związku z tym zwracam się do Komisji z pytaniem, czy ma zamiar podjąć interwencję w sprawie oczywistych represji władz więziennych Białorusi wobec Alesia Bialackiego?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Štefana Fülego w imieniu Komisji
(5 marca 2012 r.)

UE jest nadal głęboko zaniepokojona trwającymi na Białorusi represjami wobec opozycji politycznej, społeczeństwa obywatelskiego oraz niezależnych mediów.

Delegatura UE w Mińsku wielokrotnie apelowała do białoruskiego ministerstwa spraw zagranicznych, aby zezwoliło uwięzionemu obrońcy praw człowieka Alesiowi Bialackiemu na pożegnanie się z jego ojcem, który zmarł w dniu 24 grudnia 2011 r.

UE będzie nadal zdecydowanie potępiać dalsze akty represji, jakie mają miejsce na Białorusi. Dnia 18 grudnia 2011 r. Wysoka Przedstawiciel UE/Wiceprzewodnicząca Komisji, Catherine Ashton oraz sekretarz stanu USA Hilary Clinton we wspólnym oświadczeniu ([1]) wezwały do niezwłocznego uwolnienia i rehabilitacji wszystkich więźniów politycznych. UE wdrożyła również szereg środków ograniczających wobec osób odpowiedzialnych za prześladowania na Białorusi.

Ponadto UE będzie nadal wspierać działania organizacji społeczeństwa obywatelskiego na Białorusi, również poprzez udzielanie dalszej pomocy ofiarom represji i ich rodzinom. W ostatnim czasie, w dniu 25 stycznia 2012 r. Štefan Füle, komisarz odpowiedzialny za kwestie rozszerzenia i europejskiej polityki sąsiedztwa, spotkał się z grupą ważnych białoruskich aktywistów oraz z członkami organizacji praw człowieka „Viasna", której przewodniczącym jest Ales Bialacki.

([1]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/127034.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000012/12
to the Commission
Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: The Belarusian prison authorities do not allow a political activist to attend his father's funeral

The father of Ales Bialiatski died on 24 December. Ales Bialiatski is a Belarusian defender of human rights, sentenced at the end of November to 4.5 years in a maximum-security prison camp. The Belarusian prison authorities did not allow Bialiastki to attend his father's funeral. Despite his family's efforts, the authorities did not allow the activist to see his father when he was on his deathbed, either.

Although the court in Minsk allowed Bialiatski to visit his dying father every time, the prison authorities ignored these permits, explaining that according to the law, persons whose sentence did not come into force may not be released for visits or funerals.

Therefore, I ask the Commission if it is going to intervene in the case of evident persecutions of the Belarusian prison authorities towards Ales Bialiatski?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(5 March 2012)

The EU remains deeply concerned about the ongoing repression of the political opposition, civil society, and the independent media in Belarus.

The EU Delegation in Minsk has repeatedly called on the Belarusian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to make it possible for imprisoned human rights defender Ales Bialiatski to pay a final tribute to his father who died on 24 December 2011.

The EU will continue to strongly condemn the continued acts of repression in Belarus. On 18 December 2011, the EU High Representative/Vice-President Ashton and US Secretary of State Clinton called in a joint statement ([1]) for all political prisoners to be immediately released and rehabilitated. The EU has also implemented a range of restrictive measures against those responsible for the crackdown in the country.

In addition, the EU will continue its efforts to support the work of civil society organisations in Belarus, including through continued assistance to victims of repression and their families. Most recently, on 25 January 2012, Commissioner Füle, responsible for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, met with a number of key Belarusian activists, including members of Mr Bialiatski's human rights organisation Viasna.

([1]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/127034.pdf

(Slovenské znenie)

Otázka na písomné zodpovedanie E-000013/12
Komisii
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(11. januára 2012)

Vec: Cezhraničná aktivita fondov rizikového kapitálu

Európska komisia predložila reguláciu, ktorá má pomôcť pri cezhraničnej aktivite fondov rizikového kapitálu, aby tak dokázali dosahovať čo najvyšší objem a nemuseli čeliť rôznym požiadavkám členských štátov. Regulácia sa opiera o nariadenie stanovujúce pravidlá o uvádzaní fondov rizikového kapitálu na trh. Potrebu zavedenia regulácie, ktorá by mala uľahčiť cezhraničnú aktivitu investorov rizikového kapitálu, preukázal výskum Európskej komisie, podľa ktorého sú firmy s dlhodobou investíciou rizikového kapitálu oveľa úspešnejšie ako tie, ktoré sa spoliehajú len na krátkodobé financovanie bánk.

Plánuje Komisia takýmto spôsobom zaviazať aj ostatné relevantné inštitúcie Európskej únie, napr. Európsku investičnú banku?

Odpoveď pána Barniera v mene Komisie
(19. marca 2012)

Cieľom návrhu nariadenia Európskej komisie o fondoch rizikového kapitálu je väčšia základňa súkromných investorov dostupná pre rizikové fondy, ktoré sú na základe navrhovaného nariadenia takto kvalifikované. Toto nariadenie by sa malo vzťahovať len na správcov fondov, ktorí sa rozhodnú prevádzkovať takéto „kvalifikované“ fondy rizikového kapitálu. „Kvalifikovaný“ fond rizikového kapitálu je subjekt, ktorý investuje v prvom rade do nových začínajúcich podnikov tak, že takýmto podnikom poskytne akcie alebo kvázi akcie. Tieto kvalitatívne znaky odlišujú fond rizikového fondu od širšej skupiny kolektívnych investičných fondov.

Správcovia fondov, ktorých fondy spĺňajú navrhované požiadavky na kvalitu, získajú prístup k celoeurópskemu uvádzaniu na trh podľa nariadenia a k pasu „umiestňovania produktov“.

Návrhom nariadenia Európskej komisie sa nezavádzajú žiadne záväzky pre žiadnu inú inštitúciu Európskej únie, ako napríklad Európska investičná banka.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000013/12
to the Commission
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Cross-border activity of venture capital funds

The European Commission has proposed a regulation that is supposed to facilitate cross-border activity of venture capital funds, in order that it achieves the highest possible volume and does not need to meet the requirements of different Member States. The regulation is based on the regulation establishing rules for the placing of venture capital funds on the market. The need to introduce regulation that would facilitate cross-border activity of venture capital has been shown by research carried out by the European Commission, according to which companies with long-term venture capital are much more successful than those that rely only on short-term bank financing.

Does the Commission intend in this way to obligate other relevant institutions of the European Union, for example the European Investment Bank?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(19 March 2012)

The European Commission's proposal for a regulation on venture capital funds aims for an increased private investor base available to venture capital funds that qualify as such under the proposed Regulation. The regulation would only apply to fund managers opting to operate such 'qualifying' venture capital funds. A 'qualifying' venture capital fund is a vehicle that invests primarily in young start-up companies by injecting equity or quasi-equity in such ventures. These quality features distinguish a venture capital fund from the wider population of collective investment funds.

Fund managers whose funds comply with the proposed quality requirements will get access to the regulation's EU-wide marketing and 'product placement' passport.

The Commission's proposal for a regulation does not impose any obligations on any other institution of the European Union, such as the European Investment Bank.

(Slovenské znenie)

Otázka na písomné zodpovedanie E-000014/12
Komisii
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(11. januára 2012)

Vec: Európska environmentálna politika

Na klimatickej konferencii OSN v Durbane dosiahla Európska únia zhodu s Alianciou malých ostrovných štátov (AOSIS) a Najmenej rozvinutými krajinami (LDCs), na základe ktorej bolo vyhlásené spoločné stanovisko týchto troch blokov krajín. Zo stanoviska vyplýva potreba čo najskoršieho prijatia právne záväznej dohody. Je teda nevyhnutné stanoviť presné záväzky a termíny. Je potrebné zosúladiť dátumy a presnú právnu formu dohody. Vyjednávači z USA sú však stále proti určeniu špecifických cieľov, pretože nemajú mandát podpísať záväznú dohodu.

Akým spôsobom chce Komisia presadiť, aby sa na medzinárodných rokovaniach na klimatickej konferencii OSN v Durbane určili právne záväzné a presné záväzky a termíny?

Odpoveď pani Hedegaardovej v mene Komisie
(27. februára 2012)

17. konferencia o zmene klímy, ktorá sa konala minulý december, bola významným krokom vpred vo vývoji silnejšieho medzinárodného režimu na boj proti zmene klímy. EÚ s podporou strategických partnerov a predovšetkým najmenej rozvinutých krajín a Aliancie malých ostrovných štátov dosiahla svoje hlavné ciele, keďže konferencia vyústila do dohody, a to aj s USA, o „Durbanskej platforme“, ktorá pozostáva:

— z plánu smerujúceho k novému právnemu rámcu zahŕňajúceho všetky strany, ktorý sa má dokončiť do roku 2015 a nadobudnúť účinnosť najneskôr v roku 2020,

— z pracovného plánu účinnejších opatrení a ambícií v oblasti zmierňovanie klimatických zmien v prechodnom období, konkrétne od roku 2012 do roku 2020.

Durbanská platforma sa teda bude zaoberať úsilím o znižovanie emisií po roku 2020 a do roku 2020 umožní diskusie o zmierňovaní rozdielu medzi súčasnými záväzkami v oblasti zmierňovania klimatických zmien a úsilím o obmedzenie priemerného globálneho zvýšenia teploty na 2°C, pričom zohľadní najmä výsledky preskúmania za roky 2013/2015 a piatu hodnotiacu správu Medzivládneho panelu o zmene klímy (IPCC), ktorá má byť hotová v roku 2014. Je všeobecne uznávané, že všetci hlavní emitenti skleníkových plynov musia vynaložiť oveľa väčšie úsilie, ak chceme globálne zvyšovanie teploty obmedziť na menej ako 2°C v porovnaní s predindustriálnymi úrovňami.

Tak ako v minulosti sa EÚ bude aj naďalej zasadzovať za právne záväzný režim, aby sa zaistila environmentálna integrita a účinnosť, ako aj silný systém založený na pravidlách, ktorý je nevyhnutný na dosiahnutie nášho environmentálneho cieľa a na zaručenie nevyhnutných rovnakých podmienok.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000014/12
to the Commission
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: European environmental policy

At the UN climate conference in Durban, the European Union reached an agreement with the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs) under which a common position of these three blocks of countries was declared. From this position stems the need for the earliest possible adoption of a legally binding agreement. It is therefore necessary to establish precise commitments and deadlines, and it is necessary to align the dates and the exact legal form of the agreement. US negotiators however still opposed specific targets because they had no mandate to sign up to a legally binding deal.

How does the Commission intend to ensure that the international climate negotiations at the UN conference in Durban determine accurate and legally binding commitments and deadlines?

Answer given by Mrs Hedegaard on behalf of the Commission
(27 February 2012)

The 17th Climate Change Conference of last December was an important step forward in the development of a stronger international regime to fight climate change. The EU, with the support of strategic partners, and notably of Least Developed Countries and Alliance of Small Island States, has achieved its main objectives since the Conference ended up with agreement, including with the US, on a 'Durban platform' which consists of:

— A roadmap towards a new legal framework covering all Parties, to be completed by 2015 and to enter into force at the latest in 2020,

— A work plan for enhanced mitigation action and ambition during the transition period, namely between 2012 and 2020.

The Durban Platform will therefore address emission reduction efforts after 2020, and it will allow until 2020 for discussions on the mitigation gap between current mitigation pledges and being on track to limit the global average temperature increase to 2°C, taking notably into account the outcomes of the 2013/2015 review and the fifth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) due in 2014. It is widely recognised that significantly more efforts are needed by all major greenhouse gas emitters if we want to limit global temperature increase to less than 2°C compared to pre-industrial levels.

As it did in the past, the EU will continue to argue in favour of a legally binding regime to ensure the environmental integrity and effectiveness and a strong rule based system, which is critical to achieve our environmental objective and ensure the necessary level playing field.

(Slovenské znenie)

Otázka na písomné zodpovedanie E-000015/12
Komisii
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(11. januára 2012)

Vec: Európska investičná banka a životné prostredie

Skupina environmentálnych organizácií vydala správu, v ktorej kritizuje politiku Európskej investičnej banky v súvislosti so životným prostredím. Od roku 2007 požičala banka 16 miliárd eur na projekty rozvoja fosílnych palív. Investície Európskej investičnej banky do fosílnych palív sa v období 2007 – 2011 zvýšili z 2,8 miliardy EUR na 5 miliárd EUR. Takáto značná podpora pre fosílne palivá podkopáva klimatické ciele EÚ, ktoré by mala Európska investičná banka podľa svojej misie presadzovať.

Aký má Komisia názor na takúto politiku Európskej investičnej banky?

Mieni v tomto smere podniknúť nejaké kroky?

Odpoveď pána Rehna v mene Komisie
(19. marca 2012)

Politika EÚ v oblasti energetiky sa zameriava na konkurencieschopnú, udržateľnú a bezpečnú energiu. Činnosť EIB ([1]) je plne v súlade s prioritami uvedenej stratégie EÚ tým, že podporuje tieto oblasti: energiu z obnoviteľných zdrojov; energetickú účinnosť; výskum, vývoj a inovácie v oblasti energetiky; bezpečnosť a diverzifikáciu dodávok vrátane transeurópskej energetickej siete (TEN-E).

Podpora udržateľnej energie zo strany EIB sa za ostatných niekoľko rokov výrazne zintenzívnila. V roku 2010 dosiahlo financovanie energie z obnoviteľných zdrojov Európskou investičnou bankou vyše 6 miliárd EUR, t. j. 34 % celkových pôžičiek EIB sektoru energetiky (oproti 10 % v roku 2006). Zostávajúci podiel pôžičiek EIB na generovanie energie smerovalo poväčšine do efektívnych plynových elektrární CCGT (kombinovaného paroplynového cyklu). Plyn bude i naďalej, v dlhodobejšom horizonte, zohrávať kľúčovú úlohu v rámci bezpečnosti energetických dodávok EÚ.

Elektrárne na uhlie a lignit sú aj naďalej oprávnené prijímať podporu EIB kvôli bezpečnosti dodávok, hoci pre ne platia veľmi reštriktívne kritériá výberu — musia nahradiť existujúce staršie a neefektívne prevádzky a súčasne zabezpečiť zníženie intenzity oxidov uhlíka najmenej o 20 % a musia byť pripravené na zachytávanie a ukladanie oxidu uhličitého (CCS). V dôsledku toho predstavovali v roku 2010 pôžičky elektrárňam na uhlie/lignit menej než 3 % pôžičiek EIB v oblasti energetiky.

Pôžičky EIB energetickým sieťam (elektrické/plynové siete) predstavovali takmer 50 % celkových pôžičiek do energetiky za ostatných päť rokov. Veľká časť týchto pôžičiek (44 %) bola na podporu projektov TEN-E, pričom zostávajúce percento bolo na podporu distribučných sietí a integrácie obnoviteľných zdrojov energie. Pôžičky na energetickú účinnosť výrazným spôsobom rástli z hodnoty 730 miliónov v roku 2008 na 2,3 miliardy v roku 2010.

Napokon do konca roku 2010 dostali v rámci Finančného nástroja na zdieľanie rizík (RSFF), zriadeného spoločne Komisiou a EIB, projekty na inovácie v energetike takmer 900 miliónov EUR v pôžičkách EIB, ktoré boli smerované najmä do obnoviteľných zdrojov energie.

([1]) Európska investičná banka.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000015/12
to the Commission
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: The European Investment Bank and the environment

A group of environmental organisations has issued a report which criticises the policy of the European Investment Bank in connection with the environment. Since 2007 the Bank has provided EUR 16 billion in loans for the development of fossil fuel projects. The European Investment Bank's investment in fossil fuels over the 2007-11 period increased from EUR 2.8 billion to EUR 5 billion. Such broad support for fossil fuels undermines the EU's climate targets that the European Investment Bank should, in accordance with its mission, push forward.

What is the Commission's opinion of this policy of the European Investment Bank?

Doe it intent to take action in this respect?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(19 March 2012)

The EU energy policy focuses on a competitive, sustainable and secure energy. The EIB ([1]) activity is fully aligned to the above EU strategy priorities by supporting these areas: renewable energy; energy efficiency; energy research, development and innovation; security and diversification of supply, including TEN-E.

EIB support to sustainable energy has substantially increased over the last years. In 2010, EIB renewable energy financing reached over EUR 6 billion, i.e. 34 % of total EIB lending to the energy sector up from 10 % in 2006. The remaining share of EIB lending to power generation went mostly to efficient gas fired CCGT plants. Gas will continue to play a key role in the EU energy security of supply also in the longer term.

Coal and lignite fuelled power stations remain eligible for EIB support due to security of supply considerations, though very restrictive screening criteria are applied — they must replace existing older and ineffective plants while providing a decrease of at least 20 % in the carbon intensity and must be CCS ready. As a result, lending to coal/lignite power stations represented less than 3 % of EIB energy lending in 2010.

EIB lending to energy networks (electricity/gas grids) represented close to 50 % of its total lending to energy over the last five years. A large part of these loans (44 %) supported TEN-E projects, with the remainder supporting distribution grids and integration of renewable energy sources. Energy efficiency lending grew significantly from EUR 730 million in 2008 to EUR 2.3 billion in 2010.

Finally, until end 2010, under the Risk Sharing Finance Facility jointly set up by the Commission and the EIB, energy innovation projects had received close to EUR 900 million of EIB loans, which were mostly dedicated to renewable energies.

([1]) European Investment Bank.

(Slovenské znenie)

Otázka na písomné zodpovedanie E-000016/12
Komisii
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(11. januára 2012)

Vec: Medzivládna dohoda krajín eurozóny

Európski lídri sa zhodli na posilnení rozpočtovej disciplíny, ale postoj všetkých členských štátov k prípadným zmenám zmlúv nie je jednotný. Keďže medzivládnu dohodu všetkých člnov EÚ sa o tejto otázke nepodarilo uzavrieť, zmluvy sa nemajú zmeniť pre celú Európsku úniu, ale iba pre 17 štátov eurozóny a pre tých, ktorí sa k nim chcú pridať. Takýto postup reálne vytvorí dvojrýchlostnú Európsku úniu. Stály predseda Európskej rady Herman Van Rompuy potvrdil, že 17 + 6 krajín bude spolupracovať na základe takejto medzivládnej dohody.

Je takáto medzivládna dohoda v súlade s právom Európskej únie?

Aký má Komisia názor na takéto delenie Únie?

Odpoveď pána Rehna v mene Komisie
(12. marca 2012)

Zmluvné strany zaistili, aby záväzky stanovené v medzinárodnej dohode boli v súlade so zmluvami EÚ.

Komisia by uprednostnila dohodu medzi 27 členskými štátmi a v rámci metódy Spoločenstva. Oceňuje však záväzok hláv štátov alebo predsedov vlád členských štátov eurozóny a ostatných členských štátov Európskej únie prijať potrebné opatrenia na začlenenie ustanovení Zmluvy o stabilite, koordinácii a správe v hospodárskej a menovej únii do právneho rámca Európskej únie v priebehu najviac piatich rokov od nadobudnutia platnosti tejto zmluvy.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000016/12
to the Commission
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Intergovernmental agreement between euro area Member States

European leaders have agreed on measures to strengthen fiscal discipline, but the attitude of all Member States towards any changes in the treaties is not uniform. Since it has not been possible to conclude an intergovernmental agreement between all EU Member States, the treaties should not be changed for the entire EU, but only for the 17 euro area countries and for those who wish to join them. In reality such an approach will create a two-speed European Union. The permanent European Council President Herman Van Rompuy confirmed that 17 + 6 countries will cooperate on the basis of such an intergovernmental agreement.

Is such an intergovernmental agreement in accordance with EC law?

What is the opinion of the Commission on such a division of the Union?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(12 March 2012)

The contracting parties have ensured that the commitments laid down in the international agreement are compatible with the EU Treaties.

The Commission would have favoured an agreement between the 27 Member States and within the Community method. However it welcomes the commitment of the Heads of State or Government of the euro area Member States and of other Member States of the European Union to take the necessary steps to incorporate the provisions of the Treaty on stability, coordination and governance in the economic and monetary union into the legal framework of the European Union within five years at most following the entry into force of this Treaty.

(Slovenské znenie)

Otázka na písomné zodpovedanie E-000018/12
Komisii
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(11. januára 2012)

Vec: Riešenie dlhovej krízy v eurozóne

Európski lídri sa majú opäť stretnúť na summite EÚ, ktorý bude zameraný na boj Únie s dlhovou krízou eurozóny. Stály predseda Európskej rady Herman Van Rompuy v tejto súvislosti predstavil svoje návrhy na riešenie situácie. Vyjadril potrebu kvalitatívnych zmien s cieľom vytvoriť fiškálnu úniu a presvedčiť trhy o tom, že v budúcnosti nedôjde k ďalšiemu zlyhaniu. Navrhuje dva spôsoby tvorby fiškálnej únie: zavedenie zlatého pravidla do ústav členských krajín podľa limitov stanovených v Pakte stability a rastu — 3 % pre deficit a 60 % pre dlh, pričom dohľad nad implementáciou pravidla na národnej úrovni by mal Súdny dvor Európskej únie, alebo priamou modifikáciou častí zmluvy o fiškálnej disciplíne v eurozóne (článok 136), pričom Komisia by mohla dostať právomoc skúmať a prípadne odmietať návrhy rozpočtov ešte skôr, ako ich schvália národné parlamenty. Toto totiž súčasné pravidlá nedovoľujú.

Sú podľa názoru Komisie tieto dva navrhované postupy v súlade s právom Európskej únie?

Odpoveď pána Barrosa v mene Komisie
(19. marca 2012)

Zmluvu o stabilite, koordinácii a správe v hospodárskej a menovej únii podpísalo 25 členských štátov 2. marca 2012.

Obsahuje tzv. „zlaté pravidlo“, ktoré od zmluvných strán vyžaduje, aby mali rozpočtovú pozíciu vyrovnanú alebo prebytkovú, pričom Súdny dvor má právomoc dohliadať na prijímanie vnútroštátnych zákonov zo strany zmluvných strán, ktoré sú potrebné na implementáciu zlatého pravidla. Túto právomoc má Súdny dvor v súlade s článkom 273 Zmluvy o fungovaní EÚ.

Táto zmluva neposkytuje Komisii právomoc skúmať a prípadne odmietnuť návrhy rozpočtov pred ich schválením v národných parlamentoch.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000018/12
to the Commission
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Solving the debt crisis in the euro area

European leaders are to meet once again at the EU summit, which will focus on the Union's battle with the debt crisis in the euro area. The permanent European Council President Herman Van Rompuy has, in this context, presented his proposals to address the situation. He expressed the need for qualitative changes towards a fiscal union and to convince markets that future failures will not happen. He proposes two options for moving towards a fiscal union: Introducing a 'golden rule' in the Member States' constitutions to keep countries within the limits of the Stability and Growth Pact, which caps public debt and deficits at 60 % and 3 % of GDP respectively. The Court of Justice of the EU would supervise the implementation of this rule into national law, or a straight modification of the treaty provisions on fiscal discipline in the euro area (Article 136); this could allow the Commission to examine and possibly reject draft budgets before they are voted on in national parliaments. This is a measure that the current treaties do not allow.

In the opinion of the Commission, are the two proposed procedures in accordance with EC law?

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

The Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union was signed by the 25 contracting Member States on 2 March 2012.

It contains a so-called 'Golden Rule' requiring the contracting parties i.e. to have a budgetary position balanced or in surplus and the Court of Justice is empowered to supervise the adoption by the contracting parties of the provisions of national law necessary for implementing this Golden Rule. This competence is given to the Court in accordance with Article 273 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU.

By contrast this Treaty does not give competence to the Commission to examine and possibly reject draft budgets before they are voted on in national parliaments

(Slovenské znenie)

Otázka na písomné zodpovedanie E-000019/12
Komisii
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(11. januára 2012)

Vec: Detská obezita

Približne 22 miliónov detí v EÚ má nadváhu alebo je obéznych. Podľa Európskej komisie každý rok pribudne 400 tisíc detí s týmto problémom. OECD nedávno publikovalo správu, ktorá poukazuje na skutočnosť, že 13,3 % detí medzi 11. a 15. rokom života má nadváhu, alebo je obéznych. Tieto čísla rastú najmä u chlapcov. 58 % chlapcov a 1/3 dievčat medzi 13. a 16. rokom života nemá dostatok pohybu — to znamená aspoň 60 minút miernej až intenzívnej aktivity denne. Európska únia sa problém snaží riešiť podporou špecializovaných kampaní a podujatí propagujúcich zdravé stravovanie. Tieto snahy však nie sú dostatočne účinné, počet obéznych detí v Únii neustále narastá. Významnú úlohu v boji s týmto problémom by pritom mali zohrávať školy. V školských jedálňach by sa mal klásť väčší dôraz na to, čo sa deťom servíruje na tanier. Hodiny telesnej výchovy by nemali pre študentov predstavovať iba nutné zlo. Potraviny v školských bufetoch by mali podliehať prísnej kontrole.

Plánuje Komisia prijať v roku 2012 opatrenia, ktoré by zabezpečili inovatívny prístup škôl a výchovných zariadení, v ktorých trávia deti väčšinu času, k riešeniu problému detskej obezity?

Odpoveď pána Dalliho v mene Komisie
(15. februára 2012)

V stratégii Komisie s názvom „Stratégia riešenia zdravotných problémov súvisiacich s výživou, nadváhou a obezitou v Európe“ ([1]) sú vymedzené opatrenia, ktoré môže vykonať Komisia v spolupráci s členskými štátmi a príslušnými zainteresovanými stranami na riešenie problému obezity a nadváhy. Deti sú jednou z prioritných skupín. Niektoré príklady nedávnych opatrení sú uvedené v správe o vykonávaní stratégie z roku 2010 ([2]). Jedným z iniciatív je „EU Pledge“ ([3]), v rámci ktorej sa skupina popredných spoločností podnikajúcich v oblasti potravín a nápojov zaviazala obmedziť v celej EÚ reklamu na potraviny a nápoje, pokiaľ ide o deti do 12 rokov. Medzi ďalšie príklady patria EPODE ([4]) alebo „Shape up“ ([5]), prístupy založené na partnerskom princípe, spolufinancované v rámci programu v oblasti zdravia, ktoré podporujú vyvážené stravovanie a telesný pohyb tak v prípade detí, ako aj dospievajúcich, a zahŕňajú občiansku spoločnosť pod vedením miestnych a/alebo školských subjektov.

Komisia takisto zahrnula opatrenia do pracovného plánu v rámci programu v oblasti zdravia na rok 2012 s cieľom podporiť projekt ([6]), ktorý by rozvíjal inovačné činnosti v školách zamerané na predchádzanie nadváhe a obezite u detí a dospievajúcich.

([1]) KOM(2007) 279.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/docs/implementation_report_en.pdf
([3]) http://www.eu-pledge.eu/
([4]) http://www.epode.org
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/phea_ami/pdbview40/printing/print_prjdet.cfm?prjno=2005316
([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/programme/docs/wp2012_sk.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000019/12
to the Commission
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Childhood obesity

Approximately 22 million children in the EU are overweight or obese. According to the European Commission the number of children with this problem will increase by 400 thousand every year. The OECD has recently published a report that points to the fact that 13.3 % of children between 11 and 15 years of age are overweight or are obese. These numbers are growing, especially in boys. 58 % of boys and 1/3 of girls between the age of 13 and 16 years are not getting enough exercise — that means at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous daily activity. The European Union is attempting to address the issue through support for specialised events and campaigns promoting healthy eating. These efforts are not effective enough, however, and the number of obese children in the Union continues to grow. Schools should play an important role in combating this problem. In school cafeterias there should be greater emphasis on what children are served on their plates. Physical education should not only represent for students a necessary evil. Food in school cafeterias should be subject to strict scrutiny.

Does the Commission plan in 2012 to adopt measures that would ensure an innovative approach by schools and educational facilities where children spend most of their time in order to address the problem of childhood obesity?

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

The Commission's 'Strategy for Europe on nutrition, overweight and obesity-related health issues' ([1]) defines actions which the Commission, in cooperation with Member States and relevant stakeholders, can take to address obesity and overweight. Children are one of the priority groups. Some examples of recent actions are presented in the 2010 report on the implementation of the strategy ([2]). One example is the EU Pledge ([3]) — where a group of leading food and beverages companies have committed to restrict food and beverage advertising to children under the age of 12 across the EU. Other examples include the EPODE ([4]) or Shape up ([5]) partnership approaches, co-funded under the Health Programme which promote balanced diet and physical activity for both children and adolescents and involve civil society under the leadership of local and/or school authorities.

The Commission has also included provisions in the 2012 workplan of the Health Programme to support a project ([6]) that would develop innovative initiatives in schools to prevent overweight and obesity among children and adolescents.

([1]) COM(2007) 279.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/docs/implementation_report_en.pdf
([3]) http://www.eu-pledge.eu/
([4]) http://www.epode.org
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/phea_ami/pdbview40/printing/print_prjdet.cfm?prjno=2005316
([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/programme/docs/wp2012_en.pdf

(Slovenské znenie)

Otázka na písomné zodpovedanie E-000020/12
Komisii
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(11. januára 2012)

Vec: Inovácie v európskom systéme zdravotníctva

V súvislosti s inováciami v zdravotníctve členských krajín Európskej únie hrajú významnú úlohu digitálne technológie. Rôzne druhy technických prístrojov by v budúcnosti napríklad mohli umožniť obyvateľom Únie kontrolovať si hladinu stresu, alebo by ľudia so zdravotným postihnutím mohli komunikovať bez pohnutia. Riešenie potrieb starnúcej populácie patrí medzi priority Európskej únie. A z tohto hľadiska by mohli byť digitálne technológie obrovským prínosom. Bežnou súčasťou domácností môže byť v budúcnosti napríklad systém senzorov napojený na software a centrálny počítač schopný upozorniť, že starší človek, ktorý žije doma sám, spadol. Systém tiež umožňuje nemocnici na diaľku monitorovať stav ľudí s Parkinsonovou alebo inou chronickou chorobou. Európska únia však k medzinárodnému trhu s takýmito technológiami pristupuje veľmi opatrne. Prístup Únie k zdravotníckym partnerstvám v inováciách bol už viackrát kritizovaný.

Chystá Komisia v dohľadnom čase nejaké projekty, ktorými by sa EÚ zapojila do projektov inovácií v zdravotnej starostlivosti na medzinárodnej úrovni?

Odpoveď pána Dalliho v mene Komisie
(29. februára 2012)

Komisia prikladá veľký význam širokému používaniu všetkých rôznych druhov technologických inovácií v oblasti zdravotnej a sociálnej starostlivosti. Táto politika je založená na dosahovaní lepších výsledkov pre ľudí ako aj zlepšenej efektívnosti a zvýšenej produktivite systémov zdravotnej a sociálnej starostlivosti a vytváraní nových trhov a rastu.

Na spoločnosť so zvyšujúcim sa počtom starších ľudí sa stále viac nazerá ako na budúcu príležitosť pre Európu. Prejavuje sa to v komplexnom, multidisciplinárnom prístupe k inováciám s účasťou mnohých zainteresovaných strán a výrazným zapojením užívateľov, regiónov a členských štátov, s cieľom zabezpečiť, aby nové riešenia plnili ich ciele a umožňovali šírenie dobrej praxe v celej Európe. Inovácie môžu takýmto spôsobom pomôcť zabezpečiť, aby boli budúce systémy starostlivosti — naďalej založené na spoločných hodnotách univerzálnosti, dostupnosti kvalitnej starostlivosti, rovnosti a solidarite — schopné prispôsobiť sa novým podmienkam vrátane potreby trvalej udržateľnosti systémov starostlivosti.Túto iniciatívu podporujú finančné programy, akými sú program verejného zdravia, 7. rámcový program a program pre konkurencieschopnosť a inovácie. Očakáva sa, že uvedené európske partnerstvo v oblasti inovácií prinesie tomuto úsiliu pridanú hodnotu prostredníctvom spojeného úsilia, prekonávania odstupu medzi verejnými a súkromnými činnosťami a nástrojmi, uľahčenia šírenia výsledkov a zlepšovania rámcových podmienok prostredníctvom, okrem iného, budovania systémov zdravotnej starostlivosti na modeloch integrovanej starostlivosti vrátane monitorovania pacientov na diaľku a riešenia chronických zdravotných problémov.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000020/12
to the Commission
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Innovation in the European healthcare system

Digital technology plays an important role in European Union Member States in the context of innovation in healthcare. Different kinds of technical equipment would for example in the future allow citizens of the EU to control their stress levels, or would allow people with disabilities to communicate without moving. Addressing the needs of an ageing population is one of the priorities of the European Union, and in this regard digital technology could be a tremendous boon. For example, in the future a system of sensors connected to software and a central computer which is able to provide alerts that an elderly man who lives at home alone has fallen may become a regular part of the household. The system will also allow the hospital to remotely monitor the status of people with Parkinson's disease or any other chronic illness. However, the European Union's approach to the international market with such technology is very cautious. The European Union's approach to healthcare partnerships in innovation has often been criticised.

Is the Commission preparing in the foreseeable future any projects by which the EU would be involved in innovation projects in healthcare at an international level?

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

The Commission attaches great importance to the wide-use in the care sector of all different kinds of innovations in technology. The policy is based on better outcomes for people as well as improved efficiency and increased productivity of health and social care systems and creation of new markets and growth.

The ageing society is being recognised as a future opportunity for Europe and is pursued with a holistic, multi-disciplinary, multi-stakeholder approach to innovation with strong involvement of users, regions and Member States to ensure that new solutions meet their objectives and to allow for sharing of good practice across Europe. In this way innovation can help to ensure that future care systems — while continuing to be based on the common values of universality, access to good quality care, equity and solidarity — will be able to accommodate new realities including the need for sustainable care systems. The Commission has several ongoing initiatives to foster innovation within the European Union such as the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing. This is supported by financial programmes like the Public Health Programme, the 7th Framework Programme, and the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme. The European Innovation Partnership is expected to bring added value by: joining up efforts, bridging the gaps between public and private actions and instruments, facilitating scaling up of results and improving the framework conditions by, among other things, building health systems on integrated care models, including remote patient monitoring and management of chronic conditions.

(Slovenské znenie)

Otázka na písomné zodpovedanie E-000022/12
Komisii
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(11. januára 2012)

Vec: Spoločný európsky patent

25 členských štátov Európskej únie sa v marci 2011 dohodlo, že chcú v rámci posilnenej spolupráce zaviesť spoločný európsky patent. Odporcom takéhoto postupu bolo Španielsko a Taliansko, a to z dôvodu navrhovaného jazykového režimu. Krajiny sa dokonca obrátili na Súdny dvor Európskej únie a namietali, že takýto druh posilnenej spolupráce by bol v rozpore so zásadami jednotného trhu. Obávajú sa totiž, v rámci navrhovaného jazykového režimu by boli zvýhodnené francúzske, anglické a nemecké firmy. V oboch krajinách však nedávno došlo k výmene vlád, a to by mohlo znamenať zmenu pozície.

Ako sa však Komisia zachová v prípade, že sa postoj nových vlád v Španielsku a Taliansku k návrhu na vytvorenie spoločného európskeho patentu nezmení?

Odpoveď pána Barniera v mene Komisie
(2. marca 2012)

Komisia by chcela potvrdiť váženej pani poslankyni, že v súlade s článkom 328 Zmluvy o fungovaní Európskej únie (ďalej len „ZFEÚ“) posilnená spolupráca v oblasti jednotnej ochrany patentov zostáva prístupná pre všetky členské štáty, ak splnia podmienky účasti. Ak sa jeden z nezúčastnených členských štátov rozhodne pripojiť k posilnenej spolupráci, uplatní sa postup podľa článku 331 ZFEÚ. Konkrétne úmysel pripojiť sa treba predovšetkým oznámiť Komisii a Rade. Komisia má potom štyri mesiace na to, aby potvrdila splnenie podmienok účasti a aby prijala všetky potrebné prechodné opatrenia alebo aby určila, aké opatrenia je nutné prijať na splnenie týchto podmienok.

V súčasnosti však Taliansko a Španielsko neoznámili svoj zámer pripojiť sa k posilnenej spolupráci. Naopak, oba tieto členské štáty začali s opatreniami na zrušenie rozhodnutia Rady 2011/167/EÚ, ktorým sa povoľuje posilnená spolupráca, pred Súdnym dvorom Európskej únie. O veci C-274/11 a veci C-295/11 sa v súčasnosti rozhoduje.

Za týchto okolností sa posilnená spolupráca uskutočňuje v 25 zúčastnených členských štátoch. Zatiaľ čo jednotná ochrana patentov vzťahujúca sa na celú Úniu by bola najžiaducejším výsledkom, Komisia je presvedčená, že takáto ochrana na území 25 členských štátov už prináša významné výhody pre používateľov patentového systému v Európe.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000022/12
to the Commission
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Common European patent

In March 2011 25 Member States of the European Union agreed that they wish to establish a common European patent under enhanced cooperation. Spain and Italy opposed such a procedure because of the proposed language regime. These countries even turned to the European Court of Justice and argued that this type of enhanced cooperation would be contrary to the principles of the single market. They are afraid because under the proposed language regime French, English and German companies would be placed at an advantage. In both countries however there have been recent changes in government, and this could mean a change in their positions.

How, though, will the Commission act if the attitude of the new governments in Spain and Italy towards the proposal to create a common European patent does not change?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(2 March 2012)

The Commission would like to confirm to the Honourable Member that in conformity with Article 328 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), enhanced cooperation in the area of unitary patent protection remains open to all Member States, subject to compliance with the conditions of participation. If one of the non-participating Member States decided to join the enhanced cooperation, the procedure under Article 331 TFEU would apply. Namely, the intention to join would first of all need to be notified to the Commission and to the Council. The Commission would then have four months to confirm that the conditions of participation are fulfilled and adopt any transitional measures necessary or to indicate the arrangements to be adopted to fulfil those conditions.

However, currently Italy and Spain have not expressed their intention to join the enhanced cooperation. To the contrary, both Member States launched actions for annulment of the Council Decision authorising enhanced cooperation 2011/167/EU before the Court of Justice of the European Union. Cases C-274/11 and C-295/11 are currently pending.

In these circumstances, the enhanced cooperation goes ahead with the 25 participating Member States. While the unitary patent protection covering the whole Union would be the most desirable outcome, the Commission is convinced that such protection for the territories of 25 Member States already brings substantial benefits to the users of the patent system in Europe.

(Slovenské znenie)

Otázka na písomné zodpovedanie E-000023/12
Komisii
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(11. januára 2012)

Vec: Európsky hospodársky rast a recyklácia

Európska environmentálna agentúra zverejnila správu s názvom Príjmy, pracovné miesta a inovácia: rola recyklovania v zelenej ekonomike, v ktorej sa zaoberá problematikou recyklácie. Správa poukazuje na skutočnosť, že recyklácia má okrem mnohých environmentálnych prínosov (napr. znižovanie skládkovania a emisií skleníkových plynov) takisto obrovský hospodársky význam. Pomáha uspokojiť dopyt po surovinách v priemyselnej výrobe a zároveň sa zužitkovaním druhotnej suroviny predchádza negatívnym environmentálnym vplyvom spojeným s ťažbou a spracovávaním primárnych surovín. Recykláciou odpadu vznikajú nielen nové výrobné suroviny, ale aj pracovné miesta, obchodné príležitosti a inovácie. Tieto skutočnosti sú dôležité v súvislosti s prechodom na zelený rast, ktorý patrí medzi priority Európskej únie.

Aké opatrenia na podporu recyklácie sa chystá Komisia prijať v roku 2012?

Odpoveď pána Potočnika v mene Komisie
(21. februára 2012)

Mnoho akcií je naplánovaných na podporu recyklácie v Európskej únii. Sú podrobne opísané v časti „zmena odpadu na zdroje“ Plánu pre Európu efektívne využívajúcu zdroje ([1]) prijatého v septembri 2011 a v oznámení v súvislosti s komoditnými trhmi a trhmi s nerastnými surovinami z februára 2011.

Patria medzi ne návrhy na zabezpečenie úplnej a včasnej implementácie existujúcich právnych predpisov (vrátane cieľov v oblasti recyklácie, hierarchie odpadového hospodárstva a pravidiel prepravy odpadu), na revíziu existujúcich cieľov v oblasti recyklácie, na zabezpečenie intenzívnejšieho využívania rôznych typov nástrojov na podporu recyklácie a na stimuláciu trhov s druhotnými surovinami, na preskúmanie spôsobov zabezpečovania dosahovania vyššej kvality recyklácie a toho, že viac surovín, najmä kritických surovín alebo surovín s významným vplyvom na životné prostredie, sa recykluje. Návrhy týchto, ale aj iných akcií uvedených v pláne sa budú realizovať odteraz do roku 2014.

Okrem toho Komisia plánuje v rámci nariadenia o preprave odpadu prijať v roku 2012 návrhy na vykonávanie inšpekcií odpadu a iné aspekty týkajúce sa presadzovania uvedeného nariadenia. Pomohlo by to zabezpečiť, že odpad v EÚ sa bude recyklovať environmentálne vhodným spôsobom.

([1]) KOM(2011) 571 v konečnom znení.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000023/12
to the Commission
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: European economic growth and recycling

The European Environment Agency published a report titled 'Earnings, jobs and innovation: the role of recycling in a green economy', which deals with the issue of recycling. The report points out that in addition to having many environmental benefits (e.g. reducing landfill and greenhouse gases), recycling is also of great economic importance. It helps to satisfy the demand for raw materials in manufacturing, whilst recovery of secondary raw materials prevents the negative environmental impact associated with the mining and processing of primary raw materials. It is not only new production raw materials that are generated through waste recycling, but also jobs, business opportunities and innovation. These facts are important in connection with the transition to green growth, which is one of the priorities of the European Union.

What measures for the promotion of recycling does the Commission intend to adopt in 2012?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(21 February 2012)

Many actions are planned to promote recycling in the European Union. These are detailed in the 'turning waste into a resource' section of the Roadmap on Resource Efficiency ([1]) adopted in September 2011 and in Commodity Markets and Raw Materials Communication of February 2011.

These includes proposals to ensure the full and timely implementation of existing legislation (including recycling targets, the waste hierarchy and waste shipment rules), to review the existing recycling targets, to ensure more intense use of various types of instruments to favour recycling and that secondary raw materials markets are stimulated, to investigate ways to ensure that higher quality recycling is achieved and that more raw materials, especially those which are critical raw materials or have a significant impact on the environment, are recycled. Proposals on these and other actions outlined in the Roadmap will be put forward between now and 2014.

In addition, within the Waste Shipment Regulation, in 2012 the Commission plans to adopt proposals on waste inspections and other aspects related to this regulation's enforcement. This would help ensure that EU waste will be recycled in an environmentally sound manner.

([1]) COM(2011) 571 final.

(Slovenské znenie)

Otázka na písomné zodpovedanie E-000024/12
Komisii
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(11. januára 2012)

Vec: Výrobcovia áut a životné prostredie

Európsky parlament a Rada schválili v roku 2009 záväzné štandardy palivovej účinnosti pre automobilové emisie CO_2 na úroveň 120 g/km. Od začiatku roku 2012 bude pre nové osobné autá platiť strop 130 g/km, pričom 100 nových áut každého výrobcu má túto hodnotu dosiahnuť do roku 2015. Ak automobilky nesplnia jednotlivé úrovne od roku 2012, môžu dostať pokutu za každé registrované vozidlo. Podľa údajov Európskej environmentálnej agentúry klesli emisie CO_2 z nových áut v Únii v roku 2010 na 140 g/km, pričom ešte v roku 2007 dosahoval priemer emisií na kilometer úroveň takmer 160g CO_2. Podľa návrhov Komisie by sa mali emisie CO_2 automobilov do roku 2020 obmedziť na 95 g/km. V súvislosti s týmto návrhom sa nedávno v Bruseli stretli zástupcovia európskych automobiliek, na jednotnom stanovisku k návrhom Komisie sa však nezhodli.

Aký má Komisia názor na skutočnosť, že automobilové spoločnosti naďalej otáľajú s predstavením spoločnej pozície sektora?

Nemyslí si Komisia, že zo strany automobiliek ide o určitý druh obštrukčného konania?

Odpoveď pani Hedegaardovej v mene Komisie
(6. februára 2012)

Nariadením (ES) č. 443/2009, ktorým sa stanovujú výkonové emisné normy nových osobných automobilov ako súčasť integrovaného prístupu Spoločenstva na zníženie emisií CO_2 z ľahkých úžitkových vozidiel, sa stanovujú dva záväzné ciele: krátkodobý cieľ vo výške 130 g CO_2/km, ktorý sa má v plnej miere dosiahnuť v roku 2015, a dlhodobý cieľ vo výške 95 g CO_2/km, ktorý sa má dosiahnuť v roku 2020. Vzhľadom na zníženia emisií CO_2, ktoré sa dosiahli počas uplynulých dvoch rokov v oblasti nových osobných automobilov, Komisia má za to, že výrobcovia automobilov prijímajú opatrenia potrebné na včasné splnenie týchto cieľov.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000024/12
to the Commission
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Car manufacturers and the environment

In 2009 the European Parliament and the Council adopted mandatory fuel efficiency standards for automobile emissions of 120g of CO_2/km. Emissions from new cars will be capped at 130 g/km from the beginning of 2012, whereby 100 new cars produced by each manufacturer should achieve this figure by 2015. If the car manufacturers fail to comply with each level from 2012, they can be fined for each registered vehicle. According to data from the European Environment Agency CO_2 emissions from new cars in the EU decreased in 2010 to 140 g/km, whilst in 2007 the average emissions per kilometre was almost 160 grams of CO_2. According to the Commission's proposals automobile CO_2 emissions would be capped at 95 grammes per kilometre (g/km) by 2020. In connection with this proposal, representatives of European car manufacturers recently met in Brussels, however they failed to reach a unanimous opinion regarding the Commission's proposals.

What is the Commission's opinion on the fact that the automotive companies continue to drag their feet with the presentation of a common sector position?

Does the Commission believe that there is some kind of obstructive action on the part of the automobile industry?

Answer given by Ms Hedegaard on behalf of the Commission
(6 February 2012)

Regulation (EC) No 443/2009 setting emissions performance standards for new passenger cars as part of the Community's integrated approach to reduce CO_2 emissions from light-duty vehicles sets two mandatory targets: a short term target of 130gCO_2/km to be achieved fully in 2015 and a long term target of 95gCO_2/km to be achieved in 2020. Considering the reductions in CO_2 emissions that have been achieved in the past two years from new passenger cars, the Commission considers that car manufacturers are taking the measures required for meeting those targets in a timely manner.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-000026/12
til Kommissionen
Ole Christensen (S&D)
(11. januar 2012)

Om: Den frie bevægelighed og socialsikringsaftaler mellem EU og Schweiz

EU samarbejder med Schweiz på flere områder. Et af områderne er retten til fri bevægelighed. Eksempelvis har en dansk pensionist ret til at udnytte den schweiziske sygesikring på den danske stats regning. Omvendt kan en schweizisk pensionist i Danmark benytte dansk sygesikring på Schweiz regning. Forudsætningen er, at man ikke har indtægter i bopælslandet, kun pension m.m. fra hjemlandet og/eller et andet EU-land. Har man imidlertid i Schweiz den mindste indtægt, nægtes man som EU-borger retten til at anvende EU-sygesikringsordningen, og man skal betale til en schweizisk sygekasse. Det betyder i praksis, at en pensionist fra et EU land, der bor i Schweiz med en beskeden indtægt, skal betale medlemskab af en privat sygekasse, også selvom om udgiften til sygekassen langt overstiger indtægten.

Schweiz har endnu ikke ratificeret forordning 883/2004.

Kan Kommissionen oplyse, hvorvidt forordning 883/2004 snart implementeres i Schweiz? Vil Kommissionen vurdere, hvorvidt artikel 17a i forordning (EØF) Nr. 1408/71, er implementeret korrekt Schweiz? Vil Kommissionen arbejde for, at der i Schweiz indføres en indkomstbagatelgrænse, så EU-borgere, hvis indkomst ligger under denne grænse, ikke skal betale fuldt medlemskab af en schweizisk sygekasse?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af László Andor
(14. februar 2012)

Der er i bilag II til aftalen mellem Det Europæiske Fællesskab og dets medlemsstater på den ene side og Det Schweiziske Forbund på den anden side om fri bevægelighed for personer fastsat bestemmelser om koordinering af sociale sikringsordninger. Dette bilag skal opdateres, således at forordning (EF) nr. 883/2004 kommer til at finde anvendelse på forholdet mellem EU og Schweiz som erstatning for forordning (EØF) nr. 1408/71.

Den Europæiske Union har over for Schweiz i Det Blandede Udvalg fremsat forslag om, at Det Blandede Udvalgs afgørelse om opdatering af bilag II til Rådets afgørelse godkendes ved skriftlig procedure, jf. Rådets afgørelse af 16. december 2011 ([1]). Den schweiziske delegation har endnu ikke reageret formelt på forslaget.

I henhold til artikel 11, stk. 3, litra a), i forordning (EF) nr. 883/2004 (og tidligere artikel 13, stk. 2, litra a), i forordning (EØF) nr. 1408/71) er personer, der udøver erhvervsmæssig virksomhed, omfattet af de sociale sikringsordninger i den medlemsstat, hvor de udøver den erhvervsmæssige virksomhed. En pensionist, der udøver erhvervsmæssig virksomhed, uanset hvor lille den er, i en anden medlemsstat end den, hvorfra han eller hun modtager pension, er derfor underkastet lovgivningen om sygesikring i førstnævnte medlemsstat ([2]) og skal betale bidrag i henhold til dennes nationale lovgivning. Medlemsstaterne kan frit bestemme, hvilke bidrag der skal betales, og eventuelt at der ikke skal betales bidrag under en vis indkomstgrænse.

([1]) EUT L 341 af 22.12.2011, s. 1.
([2]) Dette bekræftes implicit ved artikel 17a i forordning (EØF) nr. 1408/71.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000026/12
to the Commission
Ole Christensen (S&D)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Freedom of movement and social security agreements between the EU and Switzerland

The EU cooperates with Switzerland in several areas. One of them is the right to free movement. For example, a Danish pensioner is entitled to use Swiss health insurance at the Danish government's expense. Conversely, a Swiss pensioner in Denmark can use Danish health insurance at Switzerland's expense. The prerequisite for this is that you do not have income in your country of residence, only pension etc. from your home country and/or another EU Member State. However, if EU citizens in Switzerland receive a minimum income, they are denied the right to use the European Health Insurance Scheme, and they must contribute to a Swiss health insurance fund. In practice, that means that a pensioner from an EU Member State who lives in Switzerland on a modest income must pay membership of a private health insurance fund, even if the cost of medical insurance far exceeds their income.

Switzerland has not yet ratified Regulation 883/2004.

Can the Commission clarify whether Regulation 883/2004 will be implemented in Switzerland before long? Will the Commission assess whether Article 17a of Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71 has been implemented properly in Switzerland? Will the Commission seek to ensure Switzerland introduces a lower threshold limit for income, so that EU citizens whose income is below this threshold do not have to pay full membership of a Swiss health insurance fund?

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

Annex II of the Agreement between the European Community and its Member States, of the one part, and the Swiss Confederation, of the other, on the free movement of persons lays down rules on the coordination of social security schemes. This annex needs to be updated so that regulation (EC) 883/2004 will apply in the relations between the EU and Switzerland, replacing Regulation (EEC) 1408/71.

In line with the Council Decision of 16 December 2011 ([1]), the European Union proposed to Switzerland, in the Joint Committee, to approve, by written procedure, the draft Joint Committee Decision updating Annex II, annexed to the Council Decision. The Swiss Delegation has not yet formally reacted to this proposal.

According to Article 11(3)(a) of Regulation (EC) 883/2004 (and previously Article 13(2)(a) of Regulation (EEC) 1408/71), persons exercising a professional activity are subject to the social security legislation of the Member State where they exercise such activity. A pensioner exercising a professional activity, however small it may be, in another Member State than in the one in which he or she receives a pension is therefore subject to the legislation on sickness insurance of the former Member State ([2]) and is obliged to pay contributions in line with its national legislation. Member States are free to determine the contributions to be paid and to lay down possible income thresholds below which no contributions are due.

([1]) OJ L 341, 22.12.2011, p. 1.
([2]) This is implicitly confirmed by Article 17a of Regulation (EEC) 1408/71.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000027/12
an den Rat
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(11. Januar 2012)

Betrifft: Bestechungsvorwürfe im Kosovo

Immer wieder werden im Kosovo Vorwürfe laut, wonach die Vertreter von Pristina sich die Gunst der internationalen Vertreter mit Frauen oder Geld kaufen. Laut der serbischen Zeitschrift *Vesti* (http://www.vesti-online.com/Vesti/Srbija/183527/Albanci-dali-Kforovcu-350000-evra-za-napad-na-Srbe) wurde beispielsweise Geld an einen Vertreter der deutschen KFOR gezahlt.

1. Sind die Bestechungsvorwürfe bekannt?

2. Welche Untersuchungen wurden (mit welchen Ergebnissen) in diesem Zusammenhang durchgeführt bzw. sind geplant?

3. Falls sich die Bestechungsvorwürfe erhärtet haben, welche Konsequenzen wurden gezogen?

Antwort
(26. März 2012)

Es ist nicht Sache des Rates, zu einzelnen Presseberichten Stellung zu nehmen.

Der Rat erinnert jedoch an die Stellungnahme der KFOR, dass die Bestechungsvorwürfe gegen den ehemaligen KFOR-Kommandeur General Bühler gegenstandslos sind.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000027/12
to the Council
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: Allegations of bribery in Kosovo

Allegations are repeatedly being made in Kosovo suggesting that representatives of Pristina have been purchasing the favour of international representatives with women or money. According to the Serbian magazine Vesti (http://www.vesti-online.com/Vesti/Srbija/183527/Albanci-dali-Kforovcu-350000-evra-za-napad-na-Srbe), one example involves money being paid to a representative of the German Kosovo Force.

1. Are the allegations of bribery known about?

2. What investigations have been undertaken (and with what results) or are planned in this connection?

3. If the allegations have been corroborated, what consequences have ensued?

Reply
(26 March 2012)

The Council is not in a position to comment on individual media reports.

Nonetheless, the Council would like to recall KFOR's position that the allegations of bribery against former COMKFOR General Bühler are without any substance.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000028/12
an die Kommission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(11. Januar 2012)

Betrifft: Arabische Revolution — Mittelmeerunion

Die Mittelmeerunion stützte sich im Wesentlichen auf die persönlichen Beziehungen zwischen dem französischen Präsidenten und den Diktatoren Mubarak und Ben Ali.

1. Welche Änderungen wurden im Zuge der arabischen Revolution an der Mittelmeerunion durchgeführt?

2. Ergeben sich auch Änderungen hinsichtlich der finanziellen Ausstattung dieses Projektes durch EU-Gelder?

3. Laufen mit den Nachfolgeregierungen Gespräche hinsichtlich der Mittelmeerunion bzw. sind solche geplant?

Antwort von Herrn Füle im Namen der Kommission
(8. März 2012)

Seit dem Beginn der Umwälzungen in der Region finden die Zusammenkünfte der Union für den Mittelmeerraum (UfM) auf Ebene der Minister bzw. hoher Beamter weiterhin statt; dies zeigt die Bedeutung eines regionalen Ansatzes und eines partnerschaftlichen Dialogs für die Bewältigung der wirtschaftlichen und sicherheitspolitischen Herausforderungen im Mittelmeerraum.

Die EU unterstützt weiterhin herausragende Projekte etwa in den Bereichen Solarenergie, Bekämpfung der Verschmutzung des Mittelmeers sowie Entwicklung von Autobahnen und Meeresautobahnen, Hochschulwesen, Forschung und Unternehmertum. Außerdem stellt sie dem in Barcelona ansässigen Sekretariat der Union für den Mittelmeerraum finanzielle und technische Hilfe zur Verfügung. In Bezug auf die EU-Fördermittel wurden keine Änderungen vorgenommen.

Am 11.-12. Mai 2011 in Malta und am 9.-10. November 2011 in Straßburg wurden erfolgreiche UfM-Ministertagungen zu den Themenbereichen Industrie bzw. Stadtentwicklung abgehalten.

Auf der Ebene hoher Beamter findet ein regelmäßiger politischer Dialog statt über die sozioökonomischen Auswirkungen der Umwälzungen in der arabischen Welt, die derzeitigen Bemühungen zur Wiederbelebung des Nahost-Friedensprozesses, die Maßnahmen der EU zur Krisenbewältigung im Rahmen ihrer Partnerschaft für Demokratie und gemeinsamen Wohlstand, die geänderte Nachbarschaftspolitik und das Programm SPRING sowie die Intensivierung des Austauschs mit der Zivilgesellschaft.

Ägypten hat erklärt, dass es seine Rolle als südlicher Ko-Präsident der Union für den Mittelmeerraum aufgeben werde. Am 27. Februar hat der Rat der Europäischen Union beschlossen, die nördliche Ko-Präsidentschaft den EU-Organen zu übertragen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000028/12
to the Commission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: The Arab revolution — The Mediterranean Union

In essence, the Mediterranean Union was based on the personal relationships between the French President and the dictators Mubarak and Ben Ali.

1. What changes have been made to the Mediterranean Union in the wake of the Arab revolution?

2. Have these changes resulted in any differences regarding the EU funding towards this project?

3. Is the EU in talks with the successor governments regarding the Mediterranean Union, or are there are any plans to hold such talks?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(8 March 2012)

Since the beginning of the upheavals in the region, Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) meetings, at Ministerial and Senior Official level, have continued, highlighting the importance of the regional approach and of dialogue among partners in addressing the political economic and security challenges currently facing the Mediterranean region.

The EU has pursued support to relevant UfM flagship projects in areas such as solar energy, de-pollution of the Mediterranean, development of Motorways of the Sea and land highways, Higher Education and research and Business Development. It has also been providing financial and technical support to the Secretariat of the UfM in Barcelona. No change in EU funding has been made.

Two successful UfM Ministerial meetings were held on Industry on 11-12 May 2011, in Malta, and on Urban Development on 9-10 November 2011, in Strasbourg.

At Senior Official level, regular political dialogue continued focusing on the socioeconomic impact of the Arab upheavals, the ongoing efforts to revive the Middle East Peace Process, the EU efforts to address the crisis through its Partnership for Democracy and Shared prosperity offer, its revised Neighbourhood Policy and SPRING programme including its increased engagement with civil society.

Egypt has announced that it would relinquish its role as the Southern co-Presidency of the UfM. On 27 February, the EU Council decided to transfer the Northern co-Presidency to the EU institutions.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000029/12
an die Kommission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(11. Januar 2012)

Betrifft: Gesundheitsgefährdung durch Halal-Fleisch

Beim „rituellen Schlachten", das durchgeführt wird, damit Fleisch für Muslime akzeptabel ist, wird dem Schlachttier der gesamte Hals bis auf die Wirbelsäule durchtrennt, und das Tier blutet ohne Betäubung aus. Nach der EU-Richtlinie für Schlachthygiene ist diese Praxis verboten — beim Ausbluten dürfen die Luftröhre und die Speiseröhre nicht verletzt werden. Schließlich können dadurch Krankheitserreger leicht ins Blut gelangen und sich während des Todeskampfes im ganzen Körper verteilen. Während das Tier langsam unter großen Schmerzen verendet, kommt es auch zu heftigen Krämpfen, wodurch das gesamte Schlachtareal mit Urin und Kot verunreinigt wird.

Für Schlachtbetriebe ist es rentabler, nur eine Schlachtmethode (Halal-Schlachtung) anzuwenden. Muslime konsumieren nur bestimmte Fleischstücke, der Rest wird nicht weggeworfen, sondern regulär verkauft — oft soll halal geschlachtetes Fleisch ohne entsprechende Kennzeichnung im Handel landen.

1. Wie steht die Kommission zu dem Vorwurf, dass Halal-Schlachtungen in der Praxis so durchgeführt werden, dass sie den EU-Vorschriften für Schlachthygiene widersprechen?

2. In welchem Maße wird die Einhaltung der Hygienevorschriften bei Halal-Schlachtungen seitens der Mitgliedstaaten kontrolliert, und wer führt diese Kontrollen durch?

3. Wird auf EU-Ebene dem Vorwurf nachgegangen, wonach ungekennzeichnetes Halal-Fleisch angeblich im Handel landet?

Antwort von Herrn Dalli im Namen der Kommission
(21. Februar 2012)

Nach den EU-Rechtsvorschriften über die Lebensmittelhygiene ([1]) dürfen Luft- und Speiseröhre beim Entbluten nicht verletzt werden. Diese Bestimmung gilt nicht für die Schlachtung nach religiösen Gebräuchen. In den EU-Rechtsvorschriften zum Tierschutz ([2]) ist außerdem eine Ausnahme für das Betäuben bei der Schlachtung nach religiösen Gebräuchen vorgesehen. Auch wenn von der Ausnahme Gebrauch gemacht wird, muss das Entbluten unverzüglich und auf eine Art und Weise erfolgen, dass das Fleisch nicht verunreinigt wird. Dementsprechend müssen die Lebensmittelunternehmer, die die Ausnahmeregelung nutzen, dafür sorgen, dass eine Verunreinigung vermieden wird.

Die zuständigen Behörden in den Mitgliedstaaten müssen durch geeignete amtliche Kontrollen sicherstellen, dass die Lebensmittelunternehmer die Bestimmungen der EU-Rechtsvorschriften befolgen. Vor allem müssen sie überprüfen, dass Hygienevorschriften und -verfahren stets eingehalten werden.

Die Rechtsvorschriften der EU für die Lebensmittelkennzeichnung ([3]) gelten für alle zur Abgabe an den Endverbraucher bestimmten Lebensmittel, auch Halal-Fleisch. Allerdings ist nicht vorgeschrieben, die Methode anzugeben, nach der die zur Herstellung solcher Lebensmittel genutzten Tiere geschlachtet wurden. In Erwägungsgrund 50 der vor kurzem erlassenen Verordnung betreffend die Information der Verbraucher über Lebensmittel ([4]) heißt es, dass im Rahmen einer künftigen Strategie der Union für den Tierschutz und das Wohlergehen der Tiere die Durchführung einer Studie in Betracht gezogen werden sollte, in der die Möglichkeiten geprüft werden, die Verbraucher über die Betäubung der Tiere zu informieren.

Die Kommission hat inzwischen die erwähnte Strategie ([5]) beschlossen und plant eine solche Studie für 2013.

([1]) Verordnung (EG) Nr. 853/2004 des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 29. April 2004 mit spezifischen Hygienevorschriften für Lebensmittel tierischen Ursprungs, ABl. L 139 vom 30.4.2004, S. 55.

([2]) Richtlinie 93/119/EG des Rates vom 22. Dezember 1993 über den Schutz von Tieren zum Zeitpunkt der Schlachtung oder Tötung, ABl. L 340 vom 31.12.1993, S. 21.

([3]) Richtlinie 2000/13/EG zur Angleichung der Rechtsvorschriften der Mitgliedstaaten über die Etikettierung und Aufmachung von Lebensmitteln sowie die Werbung hierfür, ABl. L 109 vom 6.5.2000.

([4]) Verordnung (EU) Nr. 1169/2011 des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 25. Oktober 2011 betreffend die Information der Verbraucher über Lebensmittel und zur Änderung der Verordnungen (EG) Nr. 1924/2006 und (EG) Nr. 1925/2006 des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates und zur Aufhebung der Richtlinie 87/250/EWG der Kommission, der Richtlinie 90/496/EWG des Rates, der Richtlinie 1999/10/EG der Kommission, der Richtlinie 2000/13/EG des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates, der Richtlinien 2002/67/EG und 2008/5/EG der Kommission und der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 608/2004 der Kommission, ABl. L 304 vom 22.11.2011, S. 18.

([5]) Mitteilung über die Strategie der EU für den Schutz und das Wohlergehen von Tieren 2012-2015, KOM(2012)6.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000029/12
to the Commission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(11 January 2012)

Subject: A danger to health posed by halal meat

The 'ritual' slaughter practised to ensure that meat is acceptable to Muslims involves severing the entire neck save for the spinal column and draining blood from the animal without anaesthetization. Under EU guidelines on hygiene standards with regard to slaughter, this practice is forbidden. The trachea and oesophagus should not be harmed during bleeding. This type of ritual slaughter allows pathogens to enter the blood easily and spread through the body of the animal whilst it is in its death throes. Whilst the creature is slowly dying and suffering it can be suffer strong convulsions which mean that the entire slaughter area becomes contaminated with urine and excrement.

Slaughterhouses run more profitably if they use only one method of slaughter (halal slaughter). Muslims consume only certain cuts of meat and the rest is not discarded but often sold — with halal slaughtered meat apparently ending up on the market without relevant labelling.

1. What is the position of the Commission with regard to the allegation that halal slaughtering is practiced in a manner which contravenes EU regulations on hygiene standards with regard to slaughter?

2. To what extent is the meeting of hygiene requirements during halal slaughter monitored by the Member States, and who conducts the inspections?

3. Is the allegation being looked into at EU level that halal meat is supposedly being sold without labelling?

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

EU legislation on food hygiene ([1]) provides that the trachea and oesophagus must remain intact during bleeding. This rule is not applicable when slaughter takes place according to a religious custom. In addition EU legislation on animal welfare ([2]) provides for an exception from stunning in the case of religious slaughter. However, even if the exception is applied, bleeding must always be carried out without undue delay and in a manner that avoids contaminating the meat. It is therefore the responsibility of food business operators using the derogation to ensure that contamination does not occur.

It is the responsibility of the Competent Authorities in the Member States to carry out appropriate official controls to ensure that food business operators comply with the requirements of EU legislation. In particular they must verify that hygienic rules and procedures are always respected.

The EU legal framework for food labelling ([3]) covers all foods to be delivered as such to the ultimate consumer, including halal meats. However, there is no legal obligation to indicate the method of slaughter of animals used in the production of such foods. The recently adopted Regulation on the provision of food information to consumers ([4]) indicates in its Recital 50 that a study on the opportunity to provide the consumer with information on the stunning of animals should be considered in the context of a future Union strategy for the protection and welfare of animals.

The Commission has now adopted this strategy ([5]) and plans to carry out this study in 2013.

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 laying down specific hygiene rules for food of animal origin (OJ L 139, 30.4.2004, p. 55).
([2]) Council Directive 93/119/EC of 22 December 1993 on the protection of animals at the time of slaughter or killing (OJ L 340, 31.12.1993, p. 21).
([3]) Directive 2000/13/EC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to labelling, presentation and advertising of foodstuffs, OJ L 109, 6.5.2000.
([4]) Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011 on the provision of food information to consumers, amending Regulations (EC) No 1924/2006 and (EC) No 1925/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and repealing Commission Directive 87/250/EEC, Council Directive 90/496/EEC, Commission Directive 1999/10/EC, Directive 2000/13/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, Commission Directives 2002/67/EC and 2008/5/EC and Commission Regulation (EC) No 608/2004, OJ L 304, 22.11.2011, p. 18.
([5]) Communication on the EU strategy for the protection and welfare of animals 2012-2015, COM(2012) 6.