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

(2014/C 263/01)

Treść Strona

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-013583/13
à la Commission
Patrick Le Hyaric (GUE/NGL)
(2 décembre 2013)

Objet: Moyens nécessaires pour une véritable garantie jeunesse

Le Conseil européen qui s'est tenu au mois d'avril 2013 s'est donné pour objectif d'offrir à tous les jeunes de moins de 25 ans, qu'ils soient inscrits au chômage ou non, une offre d'emploi, de formation ou de stage dans les quatre mois suivant la fin de leur scolarité ou la perte de leur emploi. Effectivement, le niveau de chômage des jeunes est extrêmement inquiétant et douloureux pour celles et ceux qui le subissent. Il atteint 25 % dans l'Union européenne et 50 % dans les pays les plus touchés par la crise.

Le budget envisagé pour cette garantie jeunesse, au départ fixé à 6 milliards d'euros, a été annoncé par M. Herman Van Rompuy, président du Conseil, à 8 milliards, en anticipant les redistributions de crédits provenant des fonds structurels non utilisés. Sur ces 6 milliards annoncés par la Commission, l'essentiel doit être débloqué au cours des deux premières années.

1. Comment la Commission compte-t-elle exactement mettre en place cette garantie dans un délai aussi court?

2. Quel objectif en termes de réduction du nombre de jeunes chômeurs et d'entrée de ceux-ci dans un mécanisme de sécurité sociale professionnelle la Commission se fixe-t-elle et dans quel délai?

3. Comment la Commission compte-t-elle financer le fonctionnement de la garantie jeunesse après les deux premières années?

4. L'Organisation internationale du travail estime que l'Union européenne aura besoin de 21 milliards d'euros pour la mise en place effective de cette ambition. La Commission valide-t-elle ces chiffres et compte-t-elle privilégier certaines actions?

Réponse donnée par M. Andor au nom de la Commission
(10 février 2014)

Le Conseil européen a adopté des conclusions sur la promotion de l'emploi des jeunes dans la perspective de la réalisation de l'objectif de la stratégie Europe 2020 de porter le taux d'emploi à 75 % d'ici à 2020. Compte tenu de la situation très difficile des jeunes, il est urgent de mettre en place des programmes nationaux de garantie pour la jeunesse. Toutefois, ces programmes devraient constituer un élément permanent de réforme structurelle. Ils nécessitent un engagement ferme des États membres dans la durée et un soutien budgétaire de ceux-ci. Pour compléter leurs dotations budgétaires, les États membres peuvent avoir recours au Fonds social européen et à l'initiative pour l'emploi des jeunes. En 2013, les États membres admis au bénéfice de cette initiative ont présenté leurs plans de mise en œuvre de la garantie pour la jeunesse. La Commission suivra le déroulement de ces plans dans le cadre du semestre européen.

La création de l'initiative pour l'emploi des jeunes est une composante essentielle de la réponse de l'Union à la priorité urgente de lutter contre le chômage des jeunes dans les régions les plus touchées de son territoire. Mais si cette initiative est un instrument important pour lutter contre le chômage des jeunes, elle ne doit pas être considérée comme l'unique source de financement de la garantie pour la jeunesse. Les États membres devraient mobiliser leurs ressources nationales et d'autres du FSE et les affecter à la mise en place de la garantie pour la jeunesse. Par ailleurs, même si l'allocation destinée à l'initiative pour la jeunesse sera imputée sur les deux premières années de programmation, la mise en œuvre de cette initiative se poursuivra au-delà de 2015.

En juillet 2012, l'Organisation internationale du travail a estimé les coûts de mise en œuvre du programme de garantie pour la jeunesse dans la zone euro à environ 21 milliards d'euros, sur la base du modèle suédois. Comme le programme en question de l'UE a une portée plus grande que celle du programme de la Suède, le coût réel dépendra des situations nationales. Les frais de mise en place de la garantie pour la jeunesse seront plus élevés dans les pays qui enregistrent des niveaux plus élevés de chômeurs ne suivant aucun enseignement ni aucune formation (NEET) ou des taux supérieurs de chômage des jeunes. Dans ces pays, il pourrait être envisagé d'appliquer progressivement la garantie pour la jeunesse.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013583/13
to the Commission
Patrick Le Hyaric (GUE/NGL)
(2 December 2013)

Subject: Funding needed for an effective implementation of the Youth Guarantee

The European Council held in April 2013 set the goal of offering everyone under the age of 25, whether unemployed or not, the chance of a job, further education or work-focused training no later than four months after leaving education or losing a job. The level of unemployment among young people is extremely worrying and distressing for those concerned, standing at 25% in the European Union as a whole and 50% in the countries most affected by the crisis.

A budget of EUR 6 billion was initially earmarked for the Youth Guarantee, but Mr Herman Van Rompuy, President of the Council, has announced that the scheme will receive EUR 8 billion, some of which will come from unallocated Structural Funds. Most of the EUR 6 billion announced by the Commission will be released over the next two years.

1. How exactly does the Commission intend to implement the Youth Guarantee within such a short deadline?

2. What objective has the Commission set itself in terms of reducing the level of youth unemployment and increasing young people's membership of occupational social security schemes, and with what deadline?

3. How does the Commission intend to fund the operation of the Youth Guarantee after the first two years?

4. The International Labour Organisation believes that the European Union will need EUR 21 billion to implement this scheme properly. Can the Commission confirm these figures, and does it intend to prioritise certain measures?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(10 February 2014)

The European Council adopted conclusions on promoting youth employment in order to achieve the Europe 2020 objective to raise the employment rate to 75% by 2020. The setting up of national Youth Guarantee (YG) schemes is urgent in view of the dire situation of young people. However, YG schemes should represent a permanent, structural reform. They require a firm commitment from Member States (MS) over time and national budgetary support. To complement national budget allocations, MS can draw on the European Social Fund and the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI). MS eligible for the YEI submitted YG Implementation Plans in 2013. The Commission will monitor implementation within the framework of the European Semester.

Creating the YEI is a key part of the EU answer to the urgent priority to address youth unemployment in the Union's most affected regions. But while the YEI is an important instrument to tackle youth unemployment, it should not be regarded as the single source of funding to the YG. MS should mobilise their national and other ESF resources to the implementation of the YG. Moreover, although the YEI allocation shall be committed in the first two years of the programming period, implementation of YEI shall continue beyond 2015.

In July 2012, the International Labour Organisation estimated the costs of implementing the YG scheme in the Eurozone at about EUR 21 billion, based on the Swedish model. As the EU YG goes beyond the Swedish model, the real cost will depend on national circumstances. The costs of implementing the YG will be higher in those countries experiencing higher levels of people not in employment, education or training (NEET) or youth unemployment rates. In these countries, gradual implementation could also be considered.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-013640/13
aan de Commissie (Vicevoorzitter / Hoge Vertegenwoordiger)
Philip Claeys (NI)
(2 december 2013)

Betreft: VP/HR — Waarschijnlijke ontvoering van Hamed Abdel-Samad in Egypte

De Duitse staatsburger Hamed Abdel-Samad is op zondag 24 november verdwenen in Caïro. Volgens zijn broer is deze islamcriticus, die al meermaals doodsbedreigingen ontving, wellicht ontvoerd door radicale islamisten ([1]).

Namen de diensten van de hoge vertegenwoordiger contact op met de Egyptische autoriteiten over de vermoedelijke ontvoering van Hamed Abdel-Samad? Is de hoge vertegenwoordiger van oordeel dat de Egyptische regering voldoende doet om de veiligheid van mensen zoals Abdel-Samad te garanderen?

Werd bezorgdheid geuit over de veiligheid van islamkritische personen, en niet-moslims in het algemeen in Egypte?

Antwoord van hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter Ashton namens de Commissie
(18 februari 2014)

De HV/VV was op de hoogte van de ontvoering van de Duitse staatsburger Hamad Abdel-Samad eind november 2013. Twee dagen na zijn verdwijning daagde de heer Abdel-Samad opnieuw ongedeerd op.

De EU maakt zich ernstig zorgen over de veiligheid van critici en politieke activisten in Egypte. Derhalve heeft de EU-delegatie in Caïro over deze aangelegenheid regelmatig contact met de voorlopige autoriteiten.

([1]) http://www.welt.de/politik/ausland/article122228476/Deutscher-Publizist-in-Aegypten-verschwunden.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013640/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Philip Claeys (NI)
(2 December 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Probable kidnapping of Hamed Abdel-Samad in Egypt

On Sunday 24 November the German citizen Hamed Abdel-Samad disappeared in Cairo. According to his brother, this critic of Islam, who has already received multiple death threats, has probably been kidnapped by radical Islamists ([1]).

Have the offices of the High Representative been in contact with the Egyptian authorities about the suspected kidnapping of Mr Abdel-Samad? Does the High Representative believe that the Egyptian Government is doing enough to guarantee the security of people like Mr Abdel-Samad?

Have concerns been raised about the safety of critics of Islam, and of non-Muslims in general, in Egypt?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(18 February 2014)

The HR/VP was aware of the abduction of the German citizen Hamad Abdel-Samad in late November 2013. Two days after Mr Abdel-Samad disappeared, he turned up unharmed.

The EU is highly concerned about the security of critics and political activists in Egypt. The EU Delegation in Cairo is therefore in regular contact with the interim authorities on this issue.

([1]) http://www.welt.de/politik/ausland/article122228476/Deutscher-Publizist-in-Aegypten-verschwunden.html

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-013641/13
adresată Comisiei
Silvia-Adriana Ţicău (S&D)
(2 decembrie 2013)

Subiect: Reducerea poluării în orașele europene

Conform evaluărilor realizate de Agenția Internațională pentru Cercetare în Domeniul Cancerului (IARC), poluarea aerului este printre cauzele de mediu principale ale deceselor provocate de cancer. Cele mai recente date arată că, în 2010, din cauza poluării aerului s-au înregistrat 223 000 de decese de cancer pulmonar. IARC a subliniat că poluarea aerului crește riscurile pentru o gamă largă de boli, cum ar fi afecțiunile respiratorii și cardiace.

Aș dori să întreb Comisia care sunt măsurile pe care intenționează să le adopte pentru a reduce poluarea în orașele europene?

Are în vedere Comisia sprijinirea campaniilor de informare și prevenire a cetățenilor europeni privind riscurile asociate poluării? Dacă da, prin ce instrumente financiare?

Răspuns dat de dl Potočnik în numele Comisiei
(10 februarie 2014)

Comisia a prezentat o nouă strategie de reducere a poluării atmosferice la 18 decembrie 2013. În această strategie se anunță propuneri legislative privind noi plafoane naționale de emisii și noi standarde de emisii pentru principalii poluanți, precum particulele în suspensie. De asemenea, în strategie se reiterează faptul că Comisia va urmări deplina conformitate cu legislația actuală, în special cu legislația UE în materie de calitate a aerului ([1]), cu legislația UE privind sursele staționare și mobile ([2]). Una dintre politicile-cheie pentru mediul urban este pachetul legislativ privind mobilitatea urbană, adoptat de Comisie la 17 decembrie 2013, care prezintă o serie de inițiative și recomandări la nivelul UE pentru acțiuni menite să sporească eficiența și durabilitatea mobilității urbane. Acest pachet abordează în special provocările legate de mediu, cum ar fi reducerea semnificativă a emisiilor de poluanți generate de sectorul transporturilor.

Comisia și Agenția Europeană de Mediu vor continua să informeze cetățenii UE cu privire la calitatea aerului în orașele europene prin rapoarte, comunicări și comunicate de presă emise periodic. Statele membre au, de asemenea, obligația de a informa și, după caz, de a-i avertiza pe cetățeni cu privire la poluarea aerului și la riscurile aferente, astfel cum se precizează în Directiva 2008/50/CE.

În plus, propunerea Comisiei referitoare la pachetul legislativ privind politica de coeziune în perioada 2014-2020 a consolidat sprijinul acordat de fondurile de investiții și structurale europene pentru strategiile de dezvoltare urbană care ar trebui să abordeze în mod integrat diferite provocări, inclusiv poluarea aerului. În cele din urmă, ca parte a programului LIFE + ([3]), proiectele integrate vor fi finanțate, printre altele, în funcție de prioritățile tematice pentru calitatea aerului și emisiile din mediul urban.

([1]) Directivele 2008/50/CE și 2004/107/CE.
([2]) Directiva 2010/75/.
([3]) Regulamentul (UE) nr. 1293/2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013641/13
to the Commission
Silvia-Adriana Ţicău (S&D)
(2 December 2013)

Subject: Reducing pollution in Europe's cities

According to the assessments carried out by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), air pollution is one of the main environmental causes of deaths from cancer. The most recent data indicate that in 2010, 223 000 deaths from lung cancer resulted from air pollution. The IARC has stressed that air pollution increases risks for a wide range of diseases such as respiratory and heart conditions.

What measures does the Commission intend to take to reduce pollution in Europe's cities?

Does the Commission intend to support the campaigns informing and warning European citizens about pollution-related risks? If so, which financial instruments are being used?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(10 February 2014)

The Commission put forward a new Strategy to reduce air pollution on 18 December 2013. This strategy sets forth legislative proposals for new national emission ceilings and emission standards for key pollutants like particulate matter. It also confirms that the Commission will pursue full compliance with current legislation, in particular the air quality legislation ([1]), source-related EU legislation on stationary ([2]) and mobile sources. One key policy for the urban environment is the Urban Mobility Package adopted by the Commission on 17 December 2013, which presents a range of EU-level initiatives and recommendations for action aimed at rendering urban mobility more efficient and sustainable. That Package in particular tackles environmental challenges, such as significantly reducing transport emissions of pollutants.

The Commission and the European Environment Agency will continue to inform EU citizens about air quality in European cities through regular updates of reports, communications and press releases. The Member States also have the obligation to inform, and where appropriate warn, its citiziens about air pollution and it risks, as outlined in EU Directive 2008/50/EC.

Furthermore, the Commission proposal on the legislative package for 2014-2020 cohesion policy has strengthened the support of European Structural and Investment (ESI) funds for strategies for urban development which should address in integrated way various challenges — including air pollution. Finally, as part of the Life+ programme ([3]), integrated projects will be financed, *inter alia* on the thematic priorities for air quality and emissions in the urban environment.

([1]) EU Directives 2008/50/EC and 2004/107/EC.
([2]) EU Directive 2010/75/.
([3]) Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-013642/13
adresată Comisiei
Silvia-Adriana Ţicău (S&D)
(2 decembrie 2013)

Subiect: Data de expirare a medicamentelor

Directiva 2001/83/CE de instituire a unui cod comunitar cu privire la medicamentele de uz uman reunește într-un act unic totalitatea dispozițiilor în vigoare în materie de autorizare pentru introducerea pe piață, fabricarea, etichetarea, clasificarea, distribuția și publicitatea medicamentelor de uz uman. Conform acesteia, pe ambalajul exterior al medicamentelor sau, în cazul în care nu există ambalaj exterior, pe ambalajul direct trebuie să figureze informații referitoare la data expirării medicamentului. Aceste informații trebuie să fie ușor de citit și de înțeles și rezistente la ștergere. Cu toate acestea, mulți cetățeni europeni ne sesizează în legătură cu faptul că pe multe medicamente este greu de citit data expirării, informația fiind neinteligibilă, întrucât aceasta este inscripționată fie cu litere foarte mici, fie ștanțate, ceea ce face dificilă citirea sa, în special de către persoanele vârstnice.

Aș dori să întreb Comisia dacă are în vedere adoptarea unor măsuri, inclusiv legislative, în sensul unei etichetări mai clare și ușor de citit a datei de expirare a medicamentului?

Răspuns dat de dl Borg în numele Comisiei
(3 februarie 2014)

Directiva 2001/83/CE prevede că data expirării trebuie să figureze, în termeni clari (lună/an), fie pe ambalajul exterior al medicamentelor, fie pe ambalajul direct, în cazul în care nu există un ambalaj exterior (articolul 54). Articolul 55 precizează, la rândul său, că data expirării trebuie să figureze atât pe ambalajele directe sub formă de blister, cât și pe ambalajele directe de dimensiuni mici. Prospectul însoțitor trebuie și el să conțină o trimitere la data expirării, însoțită de un avertisment împotriva utilizării medicamentului după această dată și, dacă este necesar, de măsuri speciale de precauție privind depozitarea, precum și de un avertisment privind anumite semne vizibile de deteriorare (articolul 59).

În conformitate cu documentul intitulat „Commission Guideline on the Readability of the Labelling and Package Leaflet of Medicinal Products for Human Use" (Orientarea Comisiei privind lizibilitatea etichetei și a prospectului produselor medicamentoase de uz uman) ([1]), se consideră acceptabilă aplicarea numărului lotului și a datei expirării la unul dintre capetele blisterului. Dacă este tehnic posibil, trebuie avută în vedere aplicarea acestor informații la ambele capete, pe fiecare blister. În plus, este încurajată includerea datei expirării în Braille, deși este recunoscut faptul că acest lucru s-ar putea să nu fie întotdeauna posibil.

Lizibilitatea informațiilor destinate pacienților este evaluată în prezent în cadrul unui studiu focalizat. Acest studiu se concentrează însă, în principal, pe prospect și pe rezumatul caracteristicilor produsului.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/files/eudralex/vol-2/c/2009_01_12_readability_guideline_final_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013642/13
to the Commission
Silvia-Adriana Ţicău (S&D)
(2 December 2013)

Subject: Expiry date of medicinal products

Directive 2001/83/EC on the Community code relating to medicinal products for human use brings together, in a single instrument, all the provisions in force governing marketing authorisation, production, labelling, classification, distribution and advertising of medicinal products for human use. According to this, the outer packaging of medicinal products or, if there is no outer packaging, the immediate packaging must feature information about the product's expiry date. This information must be easy to read and understand, as well as be indelible. However, many European citizens contact us to say that they find the expiry date on many medicinal products illegible, as it is unintelligible because it is printed in very small letters and stamped, which makes it difficult to read, especially for the elderly.

Does the Commission intend to adopt measures, including legislation, aimed at producing labelling which is clearer and makes it easier to read the medicinal product's expiry date?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(3 February 2014)

Directive 2001/83/EC stipulates that the expiry date in clear terms (month/year) shall appear on the outer packaging of medicinal products or, where there is no outer packaging, on the immediate packaging (Article 54). Article 55 further stipulates that the expiry date shall appear on immediate packagings which take the form of blister packs and on small immediate packaging units. A reference to the expiry date is also compulsory in the package leaflet with a warning against using the product after that date and, if necessary, special storage precautions and a warning concerning certain visible signs of deterioration (Article 59).

According to the Guideline on the Readability of the Labelling and Package Leaflet of Medicinal Products for Human Use ([1]), it is acceptable to apply the batch number and expiry date to the end of the blister strip. If technically possible, applying this information to both ends of each strip is to be considered. Moreover, the inclusion of the expiry date in Braille is encouraged, although it is acknowledged that this may not always be feasible.

The readability of the patient information leaflet is currently being assessed within a targeted study. However, this study focuses on the patient information leaflet and the summary of product characteristics.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/files/eudralex/vol-2/c/2009_01_12_readability_guideline_final_en.pdf

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-013643/13
adresată Comisiei
Silvia-Adriana Ţicău (S&D)
(2 decembrie 2013)

Subiect: Prospectele medicamentelor

Directiva 2001/83/CE de instituire a unui cod comunitar cu privire la medicamentele de uz uman reunește într-un act unic totalitatea dispozițiilor în vigoare în materie de autorizare pentru introducerea pe piață, fabricarea, etichetarea, clasificarea, distribuția și publicitatea medicamentelor de uz uman.

Conform acesteia este obligatorie includerea unui prospect în ambalajul tuturor medicamentelor, cu excepția cazului în care toate informațiile cerute figurează direct pe ambalajul exterior sau pe ambalajul direct.

Prospectul trebuie să includă anumite informații, inclusiv:

— informațiile referitoare la identificarea medicamentului;

— indicațiile terapeutice;

— informațiile necesare înainte de luarea medicamentului;

— instrucțiunile uzuale și necesare pentru utilizarea corespunzătoare;

— o descriere a efectelor indezirabile care pot apărea în timpul utilizării normale a medicamentului;

— o trimitere la data expirării indicată pe etichetă;

— data ultimei revizuiri a prospectului.

Mulți cetățeni europeni ne sesizează în legătură cu faptul că multe prospecte sunt greu de citit deoarece sunt scrise cu litere foarte mici, ceea ce face dificilă citirea acestora, în special de către persoanele vârstnice.

Aș dori să întreb Comisia dacă are în vedere adoptarea unor măsuri, inclusiv legislative, în sensul impunerii unui standard de format pentru prospectele medicamentelor, astfel încât accesul la informațiile conținute de acestea să fie garantat pentru toate persoanele?

Răspuns dat de dl Borg în numele Comisiei
(3 februarie 2014)

Conform prevederilor articolului 59 alineatul (3) din Directiva 2001/83/CE ([1]), astfel cum a fost modificat, prospectul însoțitor trebuie să reflecte rezultatele consultărilor cu grupurile țintă de pacienți, pentru a asigura lizibilitatea, claritatea și ușurința folosirii.

În conformitate cu documentul intitulat „Commission Guideline on the Readability of the Labelling and Package Leaflet of Medicinal Products for Human Use" (Orientarea Comisiei privind lizibilitatea etichetei și a prospectului produselor medicamentoase de uz uman) ([2]), dimensiunea caracterelor ar trebui să fie cât se poate de mare, pentru a veni în sprijinul utilizatorilor. O dimensiune a caracterelor de 9 puncte, măsurată în fontul „Times New Roman" neîngustat, cu un spațiu între linii de cel puțin 3 mm, ar trebui considerată un minim. Cu toate acestea, în ceea ce privește cererile de autorizații de introducere pe piață formulate până la 1 februarie 2011, poate fi acceptată ca minim absolut o dimensiune de 8 puncte, măsurată în fontul „Times New Roman" neîngustat, cu un spațiu între linii de cel puțin 3 mm.

Lizibilitatea informațiilor destinate pacienților este evaluată în prezent în cadrul unui studiu focalizat. Pe baza rezultatelor și a calității acestei evaluări, s-ar putea avea în vedere aplicarea unor eventuale măsuri în domeniu, inclusiv o actualizare a orientării menționate mai sus.

([1]) Directiva 2001/83/CE a Parlamentului European și a Consiliului din 6 noiembrie 2001 de instituire a unui cod comunitar cu privire la medicamentele de uz uman, JO L 311, 28.11.2001.

([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/files/eudralex/vol-2/c/2009_01_12_readability_guideline_final_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013643/13
to the Commission
Silvia-Adriana Ţicău (S&D)
(2 December 2013)

Subject: Patient information leaflets

Directive 2001/83/EC on the Community code relating to medicinal products for human use brings together, in a single instrument, all the provisions in force governing marketing authorisation, production, labelling, classification, distribution and advertising of medicinal products for human use.

According to this, the packaging of all medicinal products must contain a package leaflet, unless all the information required features directly on the outer packaging or on the immediate packaging.

The package leaflet must contain certain information, including:

— details permitting identification of the medicinal product

— therapeutic indications

— information required before taking the medicinal product

— the necessary and usual instructions for proper use

— a description of the adverse reactions which may occur under normal use of the medicinal product

— a reference to the expiry date on the packaging

— the date on which the package leaflet was last updated

Many European citizens contact us to say that many package leaflets are illegible as they are written in very small letters, making them difficult to read, especially for the elderly.

Does the Commission intend to adopt measures, including legislation, aimed at establishing a standard format for patient information leaflets so that everyone is guaranteed access to the information they contain?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(3 February 2014)

Article 59 of Directive 2001/83/EC ([1]), as amended, stipulates that the package leaflet shall reflect the results of consultations with target patient groups to ensure that it is legible, clear and easy to use.

According to the Commission Guideline on the Readability of the Labelling and Package Leaflet of Medicinal Products for Human Use ([2]), the type size should be as large as possible to aid readers. A type size of 9 points, as measured in font 'Times New Roman', not narrowed, with a space between lines of at least 3 mm, should be considered as a minimum. However, for marketing authorisation applications until 1 February 2011, a type size of 8 points, as measured in font 'Times New Roman', not narrowed, with a space between lines of at least 3 mm, is acceptable as an absolute minimum.

The readability of the patient information leaflet is currently being assessed within a targeted study. Possible action in this field, including an update of the abovementioned guideline, could be considered based on the outcome and the quality of that assessment.

([1]) Directive 2001/83/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 November 2001 on the Community code relating to medicinal products for human use, OJ L 311, 28.11.2001.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/files/eudralex/vol-2/c/2009_01_12_readability_guideline_final_en.pdf

(Suomenkielinen versio)

Kirjallisesti vastattava kysymys E-013644/13
komissiolle
Sari Essayah (PPE)
(2. joulukuuta 2013)

Aihe: Palestiinalaisalueelle suunnattujen kehitysyhteistyövarojen käyttö ja seuranta

Euroopan Unioni on pitkään tukenut kehitysyhteistyötä Palestiinalaisalueella. Esimerkiksi vuonna 2011 EU:n myönsi yhteensä 459 miljoonaa euroa palestiinalaisille eri sektoreihin kohdistuvina avustuksina. Aluksi EU:n myöntämä tuki kohdistui kehitysyhteistyöhön mutta toisen palestiinalaisten kansannousun jälkeen taloudellista tukea on myönnetty suoraan palestiinalaishallinnolle. Myös monet EU:n jäsenvaltiot, esimerkiksi Suomi, tukevat kehitysyhteistyötä Palestiinalaisalueella.

Viimeisten kymmenen vuoden aikana EU on myös tukenut Yhdistyneiden Kansakuntien palestiinalaispakolaisten avustusjärjestöä (UNRWA) jopa miljardilla eurolla. Yksi UNRWA:n tavoitteista on tukea opetussektoria ja taata palestiinalaislapsille laadukas koulutus, jonka arvopohja rakentuu ihmisarvosta, suvaitsevaisuudesta, kulttuuri-identiteetistä, sukupuolten tasa-arvosta ja ihmisoikeuksista. Lisäksi UNRWA on mm. kesällä 2013 järjestänyt ”Summer Fun Weeks” -lastenleirejä, joiden tarkoituksena on tarjota gazalaislapsille tauko konfliktista ja heitä ympäröivästä köyhyydestä järjestämällä virkistys- ja toimintaohjelmaa kesäloman aikana. Leirien ohjelman tavoitteena on ehkäistä radikalisoitumista lasten keskuudessa vahvistamalla suvaitsevaisuutta. Yhdistyneiden Kansakuntien järjestönä UNRWA:n keskeisiin arvoihin kuuluu puolueettomuus.

On esitetty epäilyjä että ”Summer Fun Weeks” -leireillä on myös järjestetty aktiviteetteja, jotka ovat vastoin UNRWA:n puolueettomuuden ja suvaitsevaisuuden arvoja, ja lietsottu Israeliin ja israelilaisiin kohdistuvaa vihamielisyyttä. On myös väitetty, että gazalaiskouluissa käytetyt koulukirjat ovat vahvasti puolueellisia ja Hamasin ideologian sävyttämiä. On erityisen tärkeää valvoa, ettei vastuulliseen ja hyväksyttävään toimintaan tarkoitettuja varoja päädy heikon valvonnan johdosta kyseenalaisen toiminnan tukemiseen.

Miten EU tukee koulujen neutraliteettia Palestiinalaisalueella?

Miten EU valvoo Palestiinalaisalueella myöntämänsä taloudellisen tuen käyttöä, etenkin sitä ettei rahoja käytetä terroristijärjestöksi luokitellun Hamasin arvojen edistämiseksi, edes epäsuorasti?

Štefan Fülen komission puolesta antama vastaus
(30. tammikuuta 2014)

Palestiinan kansalle sekä palestiinalaishallinnon että Yhdistyneiden Kansakuntien palestiinalaispakolaisten avustusjärjestön (UNRWA) kautta annetun EU:n taloudellisen tuen tavoite on perustaa palestiinalaisten oma valtio, joka eläisi Israelin kanssa sovussa ja rauhanomaisesti. EU toimittaa suoraa taloudellista tukea palestiinalaishallinnolle, jotta se voi maksaa opettajien palkat Länsirannalla ja Gazan kaistalla. EU toimittaa tukea myös UNRWA:n yleisrahastolle, jonka tarkoitus on kattaa UNRWA-koulujen kulut. Nämä koulut tarjoavat opetusta noin kolmelle neljäsosalle lapsista Gazan kaistalla, ja ne noudattavat opetuksessaan palestiinalaista opetussuunnitemaa. Ensimmäiseen kysymyksen osalta komissio vahvistaa, että se on rahoittanut 3,5 miljoonalla eurolla vuosina 2009–2012 hanketta nimeltä ”Laadukkaita opettajia laadukkaisiin kouluihin”, jonka UNRWA on toteuttanut yhdessä opetusministeriön kanssa.

EU:n tarjoama tuki UNRWA:n Gazan kaistalla järjestämille kesäleireille vuosina 2010–2012 oli enimmillään miljoona euroa. Kesäleirien ansiosta 250 000 lasta osallistui toimintaan, joka sisälsi urheilua, taidetta ja käsitöitä, teatteria, musiikkia ja kansanperinnettä. Toimintaan ei kuulunut minkäänlaista suvaitsemattomuuteen kannustamista, minkä vuoksi Hamas-vastarintaliike suhtautui leireihin jokseenkin vihamielisesti.

PEGASE-rahoitusmekanismi tarjoaa varoja valtiovarainministeriölle, jotta se voi huolehtia maksuista nimetylle joukolle tukeen oikeutettuja virkamiehiä ja eläkeläisiä sekä tarjota sosiaalietuuksia heikossa asemassa oleville palestiinalaisperheille. Maksunsaajien soveltuvuuden määrittämiseksi ja maksujen oikeanlaisen toimeenpanon varmistamiseksi tehdään ennakko- ja jälkitarkastuksia. Lisäksi komissio toimittaa jokaisen maksun osalta kaikki siihen liittyvät nimet tarkastettavaksi tunnustetussa tietokannassa, joka sisältää luettelon kaikista terroristijärjestöjen toimintaan yhdistetyistä henkilöistä. Tarkastuksessa tietokannasta löytynyt nimi poistetaan automaattisesti tuensaajien luettelosta.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013644/13
to the Commission
Sari Essayah (PPE)
(2 December 2013)

Subject: Use and monitoring of development cooperation funds for the Palestinian Territory

For some time, the European Union has provided support for development cooperation in the Palestinian Territory. For example, in 2011, the EU granted EUR 459 million to the Palestinians in the form of assistance for various sectors. At first, EU aid went on development cooperation, but following the second Palestinian uprising, financial aid was granted directly to the Palestinian National Authority. Furthermore, many EU Member States, Finland for example, support development cooperation in the Palestinian Territory.

In the past 10 years, the EU has also given as much as a billion euros to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). One of the aims of UNRWA is to provide support for the education sector and guarantee a first-rate education for Palestinian children, one whose values are built on human dignity, tolerance, cultural identity, gender equality and human rights. In addition, in the summer of 2013, UNRWA organised the 'Summer Fun Weeks' children's camps, whose purpose is to give the children of Gaza a break from the conflict and the poverty that engulfs them, with a programme of recreation and activities taking place during the summer holiday. The objective is to prevent radicalisation among the children by encouraging tolerance. As a United Nations organisation, one of UNRWA's key values is impartiality.

Misgivings have been expressed, however, that the 'Summer Fun Weeks' camps have also been the setting for activities that are contrary to UNRWA's values of impartiality and tolerance, and have stirred up feelings of hostility towards Israel and the Israelis. It has also been claimed that the text books used in schools in Gaza are strongly biased and smack of Hamas ideology. It is most important to ensure that funds intended for responsible and acceptable activities do not end up being used to support questionable activities as a result of poor monitoring.

How does the EU support the neutrality of schools in the Palestinian Territory?

How does the EU oversee the use of the financial aid it grants in the Palestinian Territory, and ensure, in particular, that the money is not used to promote the values of Hamas, which is classified as a terrorist organisation, even indirectly?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(30 January 2014)

The objective of the EU's financial assistance to the Palestinian people, both to the Palestinian Authority (PA) and United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), is the establishment of a Palestinian State living with Israel in peace and security. The EU provides direct financial support to the PA to cover the salaries of teachers in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. It also provides support to UNRWA's General Fund, used to cover the costs of UNRWA schools, which provide education for around ¾ of children in the Gaza Strip and teach the PA curriculum. Regarding question one, the Commission confirms that it financed a project from 2009-2012, carried out by UNRWA with the Ministry of Education, worth EUR 3.5 million entitled 'Quality Teachers for Quality Schools'.

The EU made a maximum of EUR 1 million available for UNRWA's Summer Games in the Gaza Strip in 2010-12. The games allowed 250 000 children to participate in sports, arts and crafts, theatre, music and folklore activities. Far from being used to stir up hatred, they were considered by Hamas with some hostility.

The PEGASE mechanism provides funds to the Ministry of Finance to pay a nominative list of eligible civil servants and pensioners, as well as social allocations to vulnerable Palestinian families. In addition to the *ex-ante* and *ex-post* controls carried out to determine eligibility and to verify that payments were correctly executed. The Commission submits all names for each payment for verification within a recognised data-base of names of persons listed as being associated with terrorist organisations. Any name which is flagged by this check is automatically deleted from the list of beneficiaries.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013645/13
a la Comisión
Teresa Riera Madurell (S&D)
(2 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Formación en tecnología para un capital humano más cualificado

El Gobierno español ha reformado el sistema educativo en España a través de la nueva Ley Orgánica para la mejora de la calidad educativa (LOMCE).

Esta reforma podría ser muy perjudicial para la formación en tecnología de los colegios de educación secundaria, dado que las dos asignaturas principales relacionadas con ella, «Tecnología» e «Informática», ya no son obligatorias. Los diferentes centros de enseñanza estarán capacitados en lo sucesivo para decidir si ofrecen o no estas dos asignaturas a los estudiantes. Las modificaciones afectarán a alumnos de educación secundaria (de entre 12 y 16 años), así como a estudiantes de bachillerato (de entre 16 y 18 años). Con esta reforma, la población española puede alcanzar los 18 años sin haber recibido ningún tipo de formación en tecnología.

La ley española se ha promulgado en un momento en el que las principales conclusiones de iniciativas reconocidas, como el proyecto *Relevance of Science Education* (ROSE), advierten de que los escolares de los países ricos no muestran mucho interés por la ciencia y la tecnología. Muchos expertos consideran primordial atraer el interés de los jóvenes estudiantes hacia la ciencia y la tecnología en una fase temprana de su formación.

Asimismo, una de las preocupaciones de la Comisión Europea, señalada en su publicación «Resultados en materia de investigación e innovación en España 2013», en el marco del informe sobre «la Evolución de la Innovación en la Unión a nivel estatal», es que España tiene una menor proporción de nuevos licenciados en ciencias e ingeniería que la media de la UE. Por otro lado, uno de los principales ámbitos de actuación en España que la Comisión ha señalado en este informe es avanzar hacia un capital humano de gran calidad.

¿Considera la Comisión que la reforma educativa española podría agravar el problema que se presenta en este informe en relación con la baja proporción de nuevos licenciados en ciencias e ingeniería en España?

¿Cree la Comisión que aumentar los conocimientos de las tecnologías de la información y las comunicaciones y las habilidades tecnológicas es fundamental para avanzar hacia un capital humano más cualificado?

Respuesta de la Sra. Vassiliou en nombre de la Comisión
(7 de febrero de 2014)

Su Señoría estará al corriente de que, de conformidad con el artículo 165 del Tratado de Funcionamiento de la Unión Europea, las responsabilidades en cuanto a los contenidos de la enseñanza y a la organización del sistema educativo corresponden a los Estados miembros.

Mediante el método abierto de coordinación, la Comisión apoya a los Estados miembros en sus esfuerzos por mejorar sus sistemas educativos. Por ejemplo, desde 2010 existe un grupo de expertos sobre enseñanza de las matemáticas, las ciencias y la tecnología. Su objetivo consiste en definir las políticas que puedan ayudar a los Estados miembros a reducir los niveles de abandono escolar. Sin embargo, el propio grupo decidió excluir la «tecnología» de sus análisis, ya que el significado de este término difiere según las jurisdicciones y contextos y no existen orientaciones claras e internacionalmente aceptadas para evaluar la enseñanza de la tecnología.

La Comisión considera que aumentar el conocimiento de los estudiantes en TIC y capacidades tecnológicas es fundamental para mejorar la calidad del capital humano. Esta postura se refleja en la Recomendación del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo sobre «competencias básicas para el aprendizaje permanente» ([1]), y en varios documentos de la Comisión, en concreto «Rethinking Education» (Replantear la educación) ([2]) y «Opening Up Education» (Abrir la educación al mundo) ([3]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/publ/pdf/ll-learning/keycomp_en.pdf
([2]) https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/news/communication-rethinking-education
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/doc/openingcom_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013645/13
to the Commission
Teresa Riera Madurell (S&D)
(2 December 2013)

Subject: Technological education for a more qualified human capital

The Spanish Government has reformed the educational system in Spain with the new Organic Law for the Improvement of Educational Quality (LOMCE).

This reform could be seriously detrimental to technological education in secondary schools, since the two main tech-related subjects, 'Technology' and 'Computing' will no longer be compulsory. Individual educational establishments will henceforth hold the power to decide whether or not to offer these two subjects to students. The changes will affect pupils in compulsory secondary education (aged 12 to 16) as well as Spanish Baccalaureate students (aged 16 to 18). With this reform, Spanish people could reach age 18 without receiving any kind of technological education.

This Spanish law has been introduced at a time when key findings from recognised initiatives such as the Relevance of Science Education (ROSE) Project indicate that school pupils in wealthy countries are not enthusiastic about science and technology. Many experts consider it fundamental to get young students interested in science and technology at an early stage in their education.

In addition, one of the European Commission's concerns, explained in its publication 'Research and Innovation Performance in Spain 2013' in the 'Innovation Union Progress at Country Level' report, is that Spain has a lower share of new graduates in science and engineering than the EU average. Moreover, one of the key areas for action in Spain identified by the Commission in this report is to advance towards a high-quality human capital.

Does the Commission think that the Spanish educational reform could exacerbate the problem highlighted in its report regarding the low share of new graduates in science and engineering in Spain?

Does the Commission believe that increasing students' information and communications technology knowledge and technological skills is fundamental in order to advance towards a more qualified human capital?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(7 February 2014)

The Honourable Member will be aware that, in accordance with Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the responsibility for the content and organisation of education and training systems rests entirely with Member States.

Through the Open Method of Coordination, the Commission supports Member States in their efforts to improve their education systems. For example, since 2010 there has been an expert group on Maths, Science and Technology Education. Its goal is to identify policies that might help Member States reduce levels of low achievement. However, the group itself decided to exclude 'technology' from its analyses, because the meaning of this term differs among jurisdictions and contexts, and there are no clear and internationally agreed guidelines for assessing technology education.

The Commission believes that increasing students' ICT knowledge and technological skills is essential for improving the quality of human capital. This stance is reflected in the recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council on 'Key Competences for Life Long Learning' ([1]), and several Commission documents, notably 'Rethinking Education' ([2]) and 'Opening Up Education' ([3]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/publ/pdf/ll-learning/keycomp_en.pdf
([2]) https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/news/communication-rethinking-education
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/doc/openingcom_en.pdf

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord P-013646/13
aan de Commissie
Bart Staes (Verts/ALE)
(3 december 2013)

Betreft: EU-steun (TEN-T programma) voor de verbreding van de Brusselse ring

Op haar website kondigde de Commissie op 20 november aan dat de EU 1 miljoen euro uittrekt van het TEN-T programma voor studies in het kader van de „optimalisering van de Brusselse ring". Op haar website geeft de Commissie aan studiewerk te financieren voor de aanpassing van de ring, waarvan het doel is „het scheiden van het lokaal en doorgaand verkeer, zonder bestaande weginfrastructuur uit te breiden". De Vlaamse regering besloot eind vorige maand (25.10.2013) weliswaar tot een verbreding van de ring rond Brussel met extra rijstroken. De mobiliteits- en milieu-impactstudies die aan de basis liggen van de beslissing van de Vlaamse regering gaan weldegelijk uit van bijkomende infrastructuur op ten minste delen van de ring. Dit terwijl het milieueffectenrapport over de verbreding van de ring aantoont dat hierdoor de Europese grenswaarden voor stikstofdioxide (Richtlijn 2008/50/EG) zelfs tegen 2020 niet gehaald zullen worden. Ook de uitstoot van fijn stof en broeikasgassen zou aanzienlijk verhogen. Bovendien gaat een verbreding van de Brusselse ring in tegen de logica van het transportwitboek dat de Commissie in 2011 voorstelde, dat inzet op duurzame stedelijke mobiliteit door middel van intelligente tolheffingen, investeringen in openbaar vervoer en betere stadsplanning.

1. Hoe komt het dat de Commissie het op haar website heeft over een aanpassing van de ring, „zonder bestaande weginfrastructuur uit te breiden", terwijl de Vlaamse regering heeft besloten tot een verbreding van de Brusselse ring? Kan het dat de Commissie niet volledig/juist geïnformeerd is over de plannen van de Vlaamse regering?

2. Indien dit het geval is, is de Commissie dan nog bereid 1 miljoen euro uit te trekken voor studies over een verbreding van de Brusselse ring, terwijl dit ingaat tegen de doelstellingen van de EU op het vlak van luchtkwaliteit, klimaat en mobiliteit?

Antwoord van de heer Kallas namens de Commissie
(21 januari 2014)

Het besluit van de Commissie ([1]) tot toekenning van financiële bijstand van de Unie voor studies met het oog op de „optimalisering van de Brusselse Ring" in het kader van het trans-Europees vervoersnetwerk (TEN-T) heeft tot doel bij te dragen tot vlotter verkeer en een betere verkeersveiligheid op de Brusselse ringweg overeenkomstig artikel 9 van de TEN-V-richtsnoeren ([2]). De studies omvatten, onder meer een nieuw ontwerp van de verkeersknooppunten, een gedeeltelijke verbreding van de ringweg en een milieu-effectbeoordeling (MER), die in 2014 wordt aangevat als voortzetting van de reeds zonder EU-steun uitgevoerde strategische milieustudies. In het MER zal bijzondere aandacht worden besteed aan de impact van de voorgestelde ingrepen, met name op het gebied van geluid, luchtkwaliteit, landschap en mensen.

De informatie op de website moest duidelijk maken dat het subsidiebesluit betrekking heeft op de voorbereidende studies en niet op eigenlijke werkzaamheden. De formulering zal worden verduidelijkt.

([1]) C(2013) 7881 final van 8.11.2013.
([2]) Besluit nr. 661/2010/EU van 7.7.2010.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-013646/13
to the Commission
Bart Staes (Verts/ALE)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: EU aid (via the TEN-T programme) for the widening of the Brussels Ring Road

On 20 November 2013 the Commission announced on its website that the EU will be paying out EUR 1 million from the TEN-T programme for a study to 'optimise the Brussels Ring Road'. On its site the Commission states that it is funding studies for work on the Ring Road aiming to 'separate local and transit traffic, without extending the existing road infrastructure'. It is true that, at the end of the previous month (25 October 2013), the Flemish government decided to widen the Brussels Ring Road, adding new lanes. However, the mobility and environmental impact studies which underlie the Flemish government's decision do indeed assume additional infrastructure at least on parts of the Ring Road. And yet the environmental impact report on the widening of the Ring Road shows that this would result in European limit values for nitrogen oxides (Directive 2008/50/EC) being exceeded as early as 2020. Particulate and greenhouse gas emissions would also rise significantly. Furthermore, the widening of the Brussels Ring Road runs counter to the arguments in the Transport White Paper presented by the Commission in 2011, which is committed to sustainable urban mobility through smart tolls, investments in public transport and better town planning.

1. How is it that the Commission refers on its website to optimising the Ring Road 'without extending the existing road infrastructure', while the Flemish government has decided to widen the Brussels Ring Road? Is it possible that the Commission is not fully (or correctly) informed about the Flemish government's plans?

2. If so, is the Commission still prepared to pay out EUR 1 million for studies on the widening of the Brussels Ring Road, when this goes against the EU's objectives in terms of air quality, climate protection and mobility?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(21 January 2014)

Commission Decision ([1]) granting Union aid to studies for the 'Optimisation of the Brussels Ring Road' under the trans-European transport network (TEN-T) programme aims at contributing to improved traffic flows and road safety on the Brussels Ring Road in compliance with Article 9 of the TEN-T Guidelines ([2]). The studies include, *inter alia*, junction redesign and targeted widening, and an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to start in 2014, which is a continuation of previous environmental studies already carried out at strategic level without Union support. This EIA will pay specific attention to the impact of the proposed interventions, notably on noise, air quality, landscape and people.

The information on the website was meant to explain that the grant decision concerned studies and not works. The wording will be clarified.

([1]) C(2013) 7881 final of 8.11.2013.
([2]) Decision n°661/2010/EU of 7.7.2010.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita P-013647/13
à Comissão
Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL)
(3 de dezembro de 2013)

Assunto: Estaleiros Nacionais de Viana do Castelo

O Governo português anunciou, através do seu Ministro da Defesa, José Aguiar Branco, que anulou o processo de reprivatização dos Estaleiros Nacionais de Viana do Castelo (ENVC) e optou por «um concurso público para a venda quer do Atlântida, quer de material que existe nos estaleiros» e pela «subconcessão dos terrenos que atualmente são ocupados pelos estaleiros». O processo dos ENVC e respetivas ilegalidades é já bem conhecido pela Comissão Europeia, nomeadamente através do processo SA.35546 da DG Concorrência. Aliás, é precisamente a decisão desse processo que é invocada pelo Governo português para justificar a decisão agora tomada. «Não é uma vontade do Governo, resulta desse processo aberto pela União Europeia, porque lesou a concorrência, insistiu [o Ministro da Defesa Português], realçando que "não há condições", atualmente, para devolver os 180 milhões de euros reclamados, o que evitaria o fecho de uma empresa que tem quase 70 anos».

Esta decisão determina o despedimento dos 618 trabalhadores atuais e não garante sequer que se mantenha a atividade que a ENVC sempre desenvolveu naquele local, uma vez que a subconcessão é relativa apenas aos terrenos. Como contrapartida deste contrato, o Estado português deverá receber um total de 7,05 milhões de euros em rendas que serão pagas pela Martifer até 2031, mas terá de pagar, até janeiro de 2014, cerca de 30 milhões de euros para despedir os trabalhadores, sendo público e conhecido que a Martifer tem atualmente uma dívida que ascende a 378 milhões de euros.

Acresce ainda que o próprio Governo português anuncia também que é preciso dar início à construção de dois navios asfalteiros, para não entrar em incumprimento em relação à empresa de petróleos da Venezuela (PDVSA), que os encomendou. É certo que, sem trabalhadores nem estaleiros, não o poderá fazer.

Assiste-se, assim, a um negócio ruinoso para Portugal, para os trabalhadores dos ENVC, mas muito vantajoso para a empresa que vai assumir a subconcessão dos terrenos por ajuste direto — a Martifer.

1. Exigiu a Comissão a devolução dos 180 milhões de euros, na sequência do processo SA.35546 da DG Concorrência?

2. Está a Comissão a par destes desenvolvimentos e desta subconcessão por ajuste direto dos terrenos dos Estaleiros de Viana do Castelo?

3. Está a Comissão a par deste despedimento coletivo levado a cabo pelo Estado Português?

4. Pretende a Comissão tomar alguma medida em tempo útil?

Resposta dada por Joaquín Almunia em nome da Comissão
(15 de janeiro de 2014)

A Comissão ainda não adotou uma decisão final no processo SA.35546. Por conseguinte, a Comissão não ordenou a Portugal a recuperação de qualquer auxílio estatal concedido aos Estaleiros Navais de Viana do Castelo (ENVC).

Tal como indicou nas suas respostas às perguntas E-5205/2013 e E-11396/2013, desde a abertura do procedimento formal de investigação no processo SA.35546, a Comissão efetuou diversas trocas de correspondência com as autoridades portuguesas e está a acompanhar de perto a evolução mais recente da situação dos ENVC. Neste contexto, as autoridades portuguesas informaram a Comissão das medidas a que se refere o Senhor Deputado e do resultado do procedimento de subconcessão, bem como das medidas subsequentes que planeiam adotar em relação aos trabalhadores dos ENVC por cartas de outubro e novembro de 2013.

A Comissão continuará a sua avaliação do processo SA.35546 e a supervisionar atentamente a evolução da situação dos ENVC.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-013647/13
to the Commission
Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Estaleiros Nacionais de Viana do Castelo

The Portuguese Government, represented by the Minister of Defence, José Aguiar Branco, has announced that it has cancelled the privatisation of Estaleiros Nacionais de Viana do Castelo (ENVC) and opted for competitive bidding for the sale of the ferry *Atlântida* and of the shipyard materials and for subconcession of the land currently occupied by the shipyards. The Commission is already familiar with the developments — and illegalities — in the ENVC case, which was the subject of its Competition DG's procedure SA.35546. The Portuguese Government, moreover, maintains that the outcome of that procedure is the reason for its latest decision, which, in the words of the Defence Minister, has been taken not from choice, but because of the EU procedure arising from the breach of competition. The Minister also says that it is not possible at present to pay back the EUR 180 million being claimed; the return of the money would entail the closure of a company established for almost 70 years.

As a result of the government decision the present 618 workers are to be made redundant, and there is no guarantee even that the shipyard will continue to operate as it always has done under ENVC, given that the subconcession relates only to the land. Under the subconcession agreement Portugal is to receive a total of EUR 7.05 million in rent to be paid by Martifer until 2031, but by January 2014 it will have to pay out approximately EUR 30 million to finance the redundancies, as it is common knowledge that Martifer now has a debt amounting to EUR 378 million.

Furthermore, according to the Portuguese Government, work needs to begin on two asphalt ships so as to avoid defaulting on obligations to the party that has ordered them, the Venezuelan state-owned oil and natural gas company PDVSA. Clearly, without workers or shipyards, the ships cannot be built.

The arrangement in question is thus ruinous for Portugal and the ENVC workers, but highly advantageous for the company to which the land subconcession has been awarded directly, namely Martifer.

1. Has the Commission asked for the EUR 180 million to be paid back in the light of theCompetition DG procedure SA.35546?

2. Does it know about the abovementioned developments and the direct subconcessionagreement concerning the ENVC land?

3. Does it know about the collective redundancy measure to be taken by the Portugueseauthorities?

4. Does it intend to take any action in due course?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(15 January 2014)

The Commission has not yet adopted a final decision in case SA.35546. Therefore, the Commission has not ordered Portugal to recover any possible state aid granted to ENVC.

As indicated in its replies to questions E-5205/2013 and E-11396/2013, since the opening of the formal investigation procedure in case SA.35546, the Commission has had several exchanges of correspondence with the Portuguese authorities and is closely following the latest developments in relation to ENVC. In this context, the Portuguese authorities informed the Commission of the measures referred to by the Honourable Member and the outcome of the sub-concession procedure, as well as of the next steps they plan to undertake in relation to the employees of ENVC, by correspondence dated October and November 2013.

The Commission will continue its assessment of case SA.35546 and will closely monitor the developments in relation to ENVC.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013648/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Contribución de la importación internacional de productos agrarios a los objetivos de la PAC

El desarrollo de la Política Agraria Común en la Unión Europea ha sido uno de los principales pilares políticos desde la fundación de la Comunidad Europea, otorgando un lugar de importancia a la agricultura europea dentro de la Unión.

Las importaciones de productos agrícolas que llegan a los Estados miembros suponen aproximadamente unos 60 000 millones de euros anuales, convirtiendo al continente en el mayor importador mundial de productos alimentarios. Analizando dichas importaciones, podemos llegar a la conclusión de que no existe un comercio complementario con respecto al tipo de bienes que producen los agricultores europeos, sino que estas importaciones son de bienes que podrían ser producidos en el continente y se importan debido a sus menores costes.

Aproximadamente la mitad de los bienes agroalimentarios que importa la Unión Europea proviene de EE.UU., y los siguientes países en función de su importancia son Japón, Australia y Canadá. Buena parte de estos se localizan en las zonas climáticas templadas del planeta, lo que supone que los bienes agroalimentarios que exportan hacia Europa son en su mayoría cultivo o ganado que podrían cultivarse o criarse en el continente. En un contexto de continua desaparición de agricultores y despoblación de numerosas áreas del medio rural europeo, el comercio internacional de bienes agrícolas continúa inundando los mercados europeos, bajando los precios y provocando la precaria situación de agricultores así como el desempleo rural, a la vez que se contribuye al calentamiento global, puesto que el transporte intercontinental de bienes que podrían ser producidos en Europa supone un coste ambiental que no resulta contabilizado en los balances de las compañías importadoras.

¿Conoce la Comisión el porcentaje de importaciones alimentarias que podrían ser producidas en Europa?

¿No considera la Comisión que la importación de productos agroalimentarios de zonas climáticas similares va en contra de la realización del objetivo de la PAC de fijar población en el medio rural europeo? ¿Considera que dicho tipo de comercio contribuye a la generación de empleo en el medio rural europeo?

¿No considera que la importación de los citados productos agroalimentarios contribuya al deterioro de la sostenibilidad ambiental, teniendo en cuenta la contaminación que supone el transporte innecesario de bienes?

Respuesta del Sr. Cioloș en nombre de la Comisión
(7 de febrero de 2014)

Los sucesivos cambios políticos hacia una mayor apertura comercial y una orientación de mercado han reforzado la competitividad del sector agroalimentario de la UE, lo que queda bien reflejado en la mejora de la balanza comercial de la UE en los últimos años. Además, la estructura del comercio agrícola pone de manifiesto un aumento de las exportaciones de la UE de productos acabados con un valor más elevado, mientras que, en gran parte, el incremento de las importaciones se da en forma de materias primas y productos intermedios; lo que aporta un valor añadido a la UE a través de la utilización (de piensos, por ejemplo) o la transformación en productos acabados, con la obtención de unos claros beneficios económicos.

En lo que respecta a las posibilidades de producción de los bienes que la UE importa en la actualidad y a los aspectos económicos y medioambientales de las pautas comerciales actuales, del reciente excedente comercial neto de la UE puede desprenderse que esta sí estaría en disposición de producir determinadas mercancías, aunque esto implicaría desventajas económicas y medioambientales. Encontramos un caso ilustrativo al respecto en las importaciones de proteaginosas para el sector ganadero de la UE, a través de las cuales el sector puede obtener piensos ricos en proteínas procedentes de terceros países con ventajas en materia de costes, mientras que los productores de cultivos herbáceos de la UE sacan una mayor rentabilidad a los cultivos alternativos. Por lo que se refiere a las consecuencias medioambientales, la rotación de cultivos de proteaginosas aporta un claro valor añadido, teniendo en cuenta que el inferior rendimiento de las proteaginosas en comparación con los cereales conllevaría la necesidad de un aumento de las superficies a fin de producir cantidades equivalentes de proteaginosas, lo que supondría una carga adicional a la limitación del terreno y de otros recursos naturales de la UE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013648/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: The contribution to CAP objectives of agricultural products imported from outside the Union.

Developing the European Union's common agricultural policy has been a main pillar of policy since the foundation of the European Community, giving agriculture a position of importance in the Union.

Imports of agricultural products to Member States account for approximately EUR 60 billion a year, making the continent the world's largest importer of food products. We can conclude from an analysis of these imports that no complementary trade exists with respect to the type of goods produced by European farmers, but that the goods imported could be produced within the continent and are imported due to their lower costs.

Approximately half of the agri-food imported by the EU comes from the USA, followed, in order of importance, by Japan, Australia and Canada. Many of these are located in temperate climate zones, meaning that the agri-food products exported to Europe are mostly crops and livestock that could be farmed or reared in the continent. In the context of falling numbers of farmers and depopulation in many of Europe's rural areas, internationally traded agricultural goods continue to flood European markets, lowering prices and causing a precarious situation for farmers and rural unemployment. This also contributes to global warming, since intercontinental transport of goods that could be produced in Europe has an environmental cost not accounted for in the balance sheets of importing companies.

Does the Commission know what percentage of imported food could be produced in Europe?

Does the Commission not believe that importing agri-food products from similar climate zones runs counter to the CAP objective of maintaining population in European rural areas? Does the Commission believe that this type of trade contributes to job creation in rural Europe?

Does it not believe that imports of the abovementioned agri-food products contribute to deterioration in environmental sustainability, taking into account the pollution caused by the unnecessary transport of goods?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(7 February 2014)

Consecutive policy changes towards more trade opening and market orientation have improved the competitiveness of the EU agro-food sector that is well reflected in the improved EU trade balance over recent years. Furthermore, the structure of agricultural trade reveals an increase in EU exports of finished products with a higher value, while most of the increase in imports are in the form of raw commodities and intermediate products; hence allowing for value to be added within the EU through utilisation (as feed for example) or processing into finished goods with clear economic benefits.

Regarding the scope for producing currently imported goods in the EU and the economic and environmental considerations of current trade patterns, it could be assumed from the recent EU net trade surplus that the EU could indeed produce certain commodities; however, this would come at an economic and environmental disadvantage. This can be illustrated through the case of protein imports for the EU livestock sector, whereby the sector can procure protein rich feed from third countries at a cost advantage while EU arable producers benefit from higher returns of alternative crops. In terms of environmental implications, protein crops in rotation have a clear added value, taking into account that the lower yields of protein crops *vis-à-vis* cereals implies that increased areas would be needed to produce equivalent quantities of protein crops, placing additional burden on the limited land and other natural resources of the EU.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013649/13
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: VP/HR — Situación de los trabajadores agrarios en Honduras

Según han denunciado en repetidas ocasiones numerosas ONGs, el Gobierno de Honduras no está implementando en una manera adecuada un sistema de control sobre las condiciones laborales de los trabajadores del medio agrario. Así, el 34 % de los trabajadores del país, según datos de 2012, se enfrentan a condiciones inhumanas víctimas del miedo y las desiguales relaciones de poder entre propietarios de tierras y jornaleros de escasos recursos.

La propia FAO señaló en 2012 que 15 personas mueren diariamente en las zonas rurales del país debido a problemas relacionados con una mala alimentación. Por un salario promedio de aproximadamente unos 146 dólares, los trabajadores agrícolas del país ponen en riesgo sus vidas, siendo comúnmente rociados con pesticidas tóxicos, aceptando terribles condiciones de hacinamiento, jornadas de trabajos interminables, etc. Estas condiciones de los trabajadores son plena responsabilidad del Gobierno de Honduras, que no pone a disposición de los sistemas de control de la legislación laboral los recursos necesarios para realizar inspecciones de trabajo.

Sin un sistema de control de la aplicación tanto del derecho laboral nacional como de las convenciones internacionales de la OIT que Honduras ha firmado, el Estado no está en condiciones de garantizar que la producción de materias primas que el país comercia en el mercado internacional cumple dichas legislaciones. Según las informaciones disponibles, parece que la realidad de los trabajadores agrarios dista mucho de las normas que regulan dicho ámbito en el país, generando situaciones de absoluto abandono y barbarie de estos trabajadores, que soportan condiciones que —en algunas ocasiones— son propias de sistemas de producción esclavistas. La situación es más grave aún para las mujeres del medio rural, que carecen de derecho alguno por maternidad y se enfrentan al despido ante un embarazo.

¿Conoce la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante los escandalosos datos sobre las terribles condiciones que afrontan diariamente en Honduras los trabajadores agrarios?

Teniendo en cuenta el marco de la implementación del Acuerdo de Asociación con América Central, ¿piensa instar a Honduras que realice un control efectivo de las condiciones laborales de los trabajadores agrarios e implemente de manera efectiva los convenios de la OIT que ha ratificado, así como sus propias leyes en el ámbito laboral?

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013650/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Situación de los trabajadores agrarios en Honduras

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¿Conoce la Comisión los escandalosos datos sobre las terribles condiciones que afrontan diariamente en Honduras los trabajadores agrarios? ¿De qué instrumentos dispone el Acuerdo de asociación UE-América Central para controlar que este tipo de importaciones realizadas a la Unión Europea cumplan los convenios de la OIT así como la propia legislación de Honduras? ¿Planteará sistemas de trazabilidad para garantizar la visibilidad de las condiciones laborales en origen de los productos importados desde Honduras? ¿Se plantea exigir a Honduras un sistema de inspecciones viable para asegurar que se cumplen los derechos laborales y los convenios de la OIT?

Respuesta conjunta de la Alta Representante/vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(21 de febrero de 2014)

El control de los compromisos internacionales en material de normas laborales se realiza en el marco de la Organización Internacional del Trabajo (OIT), con la que la UE trabaja estrechamente para promover la ratificación y la aplicación efectiva de los Convenios fundamentales de la OIT en material laboral, así como el Programa de Trabajo Decente. Las inspecciones de trabajo contribuyen a la mejora del cumplimiento de la legislación laboral. La UE dialoga sobre las políticas sociales y de empleo, incluida la salud y la seguridad en el trabajo y otras normas laborales, con una serie de regiones y países socios. Tal diálogo suele ir acompañado de proyectos de asistencia para el desarrollo de las capacidades administrativas y del marco político y administrativo a fin de mejorar el respeto de las normas laborales y las condiciones de trabajo.

La UE sigue de cerca la situación en Honduras. La protección de los derechos humanos, incluidos los derechos laborales, es una de las prioridades del diálogo político y la cooperación con Honduras. La UE se propone fomentar el empleo decente y el respeto de las leyes y normas laborales, la mejora del marco jurídico y el refuerzo de las instituciones competentes.

El Acuerdo de Asociación UE-Centroamérica no prevé ningún mecanismo de trazabilidad específico de los productos importados de Honduras. No obstante, a través de su Título sobre Comercio y Desarrollo Sostenible y de los mecanismos de control relacionados, la UE dispondrá de un instrumento adicional para fomentar e impulsar el progreso continuo de los derechos laborales en Honduras

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013649/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Situation of agricultural workers in Honduras

According to a series of reports by a number of NGOs, the Honduran Government is not properly monitoring the working conditions of agricultural labourers. Data from 2012 showed that 34% of workers in Honduras were working in inhumane conditions, were victims of intimidation and had no way of standing up to the landowners who employed them.

In 2012 the Food and Agricultural Organisation revealed that 15 people die every day in rural areas of Honduras from problems linked to malnutrition. The country's agricultural workers face repeated exposure to toxic pesticides, desperately overcrowded living conditions and endlessly long working days, thus putting their lives at risk, all for an average monthly wage packet of a paltry USD 146. These conditions are the direct result of the Honduran Government's failure to provide labour law enforcement authorities with the resources needed to carry out inspections.

Without a system to monitor the application of national labour law and ILO international agreements to which Honduras is party, the government is unable to ensure that production of the raw materials traded by Honduras on the international market meets the relevant provisions. According to the information available, national employment rules seem quite simply not to apply to agricultural labourers, with the result that the latter are forced to endure conditions that sometimes amount to slavery, characterised by neglect and mistreatment. The situation is even worse for women in rural areas, who have no maternity rights and face dismissal if they become pregnant.

Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware of the data concerning the scandalous conditions faced daily by agricultural workers in Honduras?

In view of the implementation of the Association Agreement with Central America, does the Vice-President/High Representative intend to call on Honduras to monitor effectively the working conditions of agricultural labourers and to implement properly national labour legislation and the ILO agreements it has ratified?

Question for written answer E-013650/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Situation of agricultural workers in Honduras

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Is the Commission aware of the data concerning the scandalous conditions faced daily by agricultural workers in Honduras? What instruments are provided for under the EU-Central America Association Agreement to verify that imports into the Union from Honduras comply with ILO agreements and Honduran law? Will the Commission consider setting up traceability systems for products imported from Honduras with a view to guaranteeing the visibility of working conditions at source? Will it consider calling on Honduras to introduce a workable system of inspections for the purpose of ensuring compliance with labour rights and ILO agreements?

Joint answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(21 February 2014)

Monitoring of international commitments on labour standards takes place within the framework of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), with whom the EU works closely in order to promote the ratification and the effective implementation of ILO fundamental labour Conventions as well as the Decent Work Agenda. Labour inspections form an integral part of improving compliance with labour legislation. The EU conducts policy dialogues on employment and social policy, including health and safety at work and other labour standards with a number of partner countries and regions. They are often accompanied by assistance projects aiming at development of administrative capacity, policy and legislative framework to improve respect of labour standards and working conditions.

The EU is closely following the situation in Honduras. The promotion of human rights protection, including labour rights, is one of the priorities of the political dialogue and cooperation with Honduras. The EU plans to promote decent employment and respect for labour laws and standards, the improvement of the legal framework and strengthening the institutions in charge.

The EU-Central America Association Agreement does not foresee a specific traceability mechanism for products imported from Honduras. However, through its Trade and Sustainable Development Title and related monitoring mechanisms, it will provide the EU with an additional instrument to promote and leverage continued progress on labour rights in Honduras.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013651/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Financiación europea de líneas de AVE casi en desuso

Según datos publicados recientemente por la prensa española, uno de cada cuatro trayectos del AVE (tren español de alta velocidad), se realizan con un único pasajero diario. Esto supone que el programa de inversiones multimillonarias realizadas por el Gobierno de España carezca absolutamente de todo interés para la población.

Ya existían voces críticas en el momento de su construcción, pero el impulso que el anterior Gobierno dio a la alta velocidad en el país y los millones de euros que fueron a parar a las manos de los grandes grupos constructores del país impusieron su finalización. A la luz de los últimos escándalos de corrupción en España, donde estas mismas empresas han financiado a los partidos políticos en el poder a cambio de recibir contratos públicos, se puede comprender un posible motivo para la construcción de cientos de kilómetros de líneas que son usados por una persona al día. Muchos directivos de las empresas que se han beneficiado de los contratos de construcción de la red del AVE se encuentran actualmente sometidos a procedimientos judiciales en relación con los casos de corrupción.

Más allá de las posibles implicaciones penales que puedan darse, existen casos en los que la cofinanciación de los fondos de la Unión Europea ha contribuido a la construcción de dichas infraestructuras. La cofinanciación de este tipo de proyectos debe ser aprobada tras cumplirse los supuestamente exigentes requisitos que impone el Derecho europeo. Sin embargo, vemos cómo la evaluación previa del impacto y la utilidad pública de dichos proyectos ha sido cuando menos errónea, si es que no es posible demostrar actitudes que podrían haber sido hasta delictivas.

¿Cuántos millones de euros procedentes de los fondos europeos han cofinanciado, y están cofinanciando actualmente, la construcción de los tramos de AVE que apenas se usan hoy en día en España?

¿Qué criterios han sido aplicados en la evaluación de la pertinencia o no de financiación europea y la utilidad de dichos proyectos con un usuario al día?

¿Quién ha sido el responsable de dicha evaluación? ¿Piensa la Comisión exigir responsabilidades por el despilfarro de fondos en estas líneas de AVE?

Respuesta del Sr. Hahn en nombre de la Comisión
(12 de febrero de 2014)

Mejorar la accesibilidad es esencial para reforzar las economías regionales y lograr la competitividad y la cohesión territorial. Entre 2000 y 2013 se han destinado al desarrollo de la red ferroviaria española de alta velocidad unos 11,6 millones EUR del Fondo Europeo de Desarrollo Regional (FEDER), el Fondo de Cohesión y la RTE-T. Por lo que se refiere a las inversiones en la infraestructura de transportes, incluida la red ferroviaria de alta velocidad, la Comisión, en el marco del semestre europeo de 2013, insistió en que «la infraestructura de transporte es abundante, pero hay margen para que la selección de las inversiones sea más estricta y se dé prioridad al mantenimiento eficiente de las redes existentes».

Las normas de la política de cohesión y del Mecanismo «Conectar Europa» exigen un análisis de costes y beneficios (ACB) de todos los grandes proyectos de inversión que solicitan ayuda. Así pues, la autoridad española de gestión debe facilitar este análisis para los grandes proyectos que se financiarán en el marco de sus programas. El ACB, es decir, la evaluación financiera y económica de los proyectos, que incluye la evaluación del riesgo, es fundamental para tomar decisiones sobre los grandes proyectos cofinanciados por la UE.

El ACB del tren de alta velocidad tiene en cuenta un mínimo de veinte a veinticinco años de actividad y debe examinar el rendimiento financiero y económico en todo el país y en la EU. Al evaluar la red de alta velocidad española debe tenerse en cuenta el valor añadido europeo derivado de la integración de España en la RTE-T a través de líneas interoperables aptas para el tráfico mixto.

En el caso de proyectos que han demostrado no ser funcionales, la Comisión puede proceder a recuperar los fondos asignados al proyecto en su conjunto. Si el Estado miembro no está de acuerdo con la recuperación, la Comisión puede proceder a una corrección financiera.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013651/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: EU financing of AVE high-speed railway lines that are almost in disuse

According to information recently published in the Spanish press, one of every four legs of routes covered by the AVE (Spanish high-speed train) carries one passenger a day. This means that the Spanish Government's multimillion investment programme is completely irrelevant to the population.

Some people already voiced criticism when it was being constructed, but the impetus given by Spain's previous government to high-speed rail and the millions of euros that found their way into the hands of large construction groups ensured that it was completed. In light of recent corruption scandals in Spain, these same companies having funded political parties in power in exchange for public contracts, one can see one possible reason for the construction of hundreds of kilometres of lines that are used by one person a day. Many managers of companies that benefited from construction contracts for the AVE network are now the subject of legal proceedings related to corruption cases.

Beyond any possible criminal implications, there are cases in which the construction of such infrastructures was co-financed by the EU. Co-financing of projects of this kind can only be approved after the supposedly strict requirements of European law have been met. However, we see that prior assessments of the impact and public utility of such projects were — even if criminal attitudes cannot be demonstrated — at the very least incorrect.

How many millions of euros of EU funds have co-financed, and continue to co-finance, the construction of AVE sections hardly used today in Spain?

What criteria have been applied to assess the appropriateness or otherwise of EU funding and the utility of these projects with one user a day?

Who was responsible for making this assessment? Will the Commission demand accountability for the funds wasted on these AVE lines?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(12 February 2014)

Enhancing accessibility is essential in order to strengthen regional economies and achieving both competitiveness and territorial cohesion. Around EUR 11.6 billion from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Cohesion Fund and TEN-T has gone into the development of the Spanish high-speed rail network between 2000 and 2013. With regard to the investments in transport infrastructure, including the high-speed rail network, the Commission has stressed in the framework of the 2013 EU Semester that 'transport infrastructure is abundant but there is a scope to make the selection of investments more stringent and prioritize efficient maintenance of existing networks'.

Cohesion policy and Connecting Europe Facility rules require a cost-benefit analysis (CBA) of all major investment projects applying for assistance. The Spanish managing authority is therefore required to provide such analysis for major projects to be financed under their programmes. The CBA, i.e. financial and economic project appraisal, including risk assessment, is essential for decision-making on major projects co-financed by the EU.

The CBA analysis of the high speed train takes into consideration at least 20-25 years of activity and has to consider the financial and economic returns to the whole country and the EU. When assessing the Spanish high-speed network, the European added value arising from integration of Spain in the TEN-T network, through interoperable lines suitable for mix traffic, should be considered.

In case of projects proven to be non-functional, the Commission could proceed with the recovery of the funds allocated to the whole project. If the Member State does not agree with the recovery, the Commission can proceed with a financial correction.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013652/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: El papel de las grandes compañías en el cambio climático

En un reciente artículo publicado el pasado 14 de octubre en la revista Climatic Change por el reconocido científico Richard Heede se llega a afirmar que 90 compañías multinacionales son responsables del 63 % de las emisiones de dióxido de carbono y metano a la atmósfera.

Estas conclusiones, muy compartidas entre buena parte de la comunidad científica, surgen de un estudio en profundidad del impacto de las grandes compañías sobre las emisiones de gases de efecto invernadero. Con una evidencia empírica relativa a quienes suponen los principales actores que están contribuyendo al cambio climático, no existen incentivos para continuar empleando enfoques de trabajo orientados a la acción a escala estatal que han demostrado tener muy escaso éxito. Este estudio permite señalar a los principales culpables del calentamiento global y debe obligar la Comisión a considerar un cambio de metodología de trabajo que suponga poner en el punto de mira a las grandes compañías emisoras.

En la actualidad se trata de reducir el nivel de emisiones cambiando los comportamientos de los consumidores, con acciones como eficiencia energética en los hogares, empleo de nuevas formas de transporte, etc., aunque estas medidas han fracasado al no lograr reducir aceleradamente el nivel de emisiones. Sin embargo, la contaminación se realiza en la producción, y sólo actuando firmemente sobre las empresas será posible detener estas emisiones. Los derechos de emisión no son suficientes y es necesaria la acción sobre las grandes compañías emisoras para detener de una forma efectiva el cambio climático.

¿Conoce la Comisión el citado estudio?

A la luz de lo contenido en el citado artículo, ¿considera necesario centrar la acción internacional sobre las compañías multinacionales citadas en él?

¿Qué medidas está tomando la Comisión en los foros internacionales para focalizar los puntos de negociación en la acción sobre las grandes compañías emisoras?

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013720/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: El papel de las grandes compañías en el cambio climático

En un reciente artículo publicado el pasado 14 de octubre en la revista *Climatic Change* por el reconocido científico Richard Heede se llega a afirmar que 90 compañías multinacionales son responsables del 63 % de las emisiones de dióxido de carbono y metano a la atmósfera.

Estas conclusiones, muy compartidas entre buena parte de la comunidad científica, surgen de un estudio en profundidad del impacto de las grandes compañías sobre las emisiones de gases de efecto invernadero. Con una evidencia empírica relativa a quienes suponen los principales actores que están contribuyendo al cambio climático, no existen incentivos para continuar empleando enfoques de trabajo orientados a la acción a escala estatal que han demostrado tener muy escaso éxito. Este estudio permite señalar a los principales culpables del calentamiento global y debe obligar a la Comisión Europea a considerar un cambio de metodología de trabajo que suponga un pase de los enfoques orientados a los Estados miembros a un enfoque orientado a las grandes compañías emisoras.

En la actualidad se trata de reducir el nivel de emisiones cambiando los comportamientos de los consumidores, con acciones como eficiencia energética en los hogares, empleo de nuevas formas de transporte, etc. Estas medidas han fracasado al no lograr reducir aceleradamente el nivel de emisiones. Sin embargo, la contaminación se realiza en la producción, y solo actuando firmemente sobre las empresas será posible detener estas emisiones. Los derechos de emisión no son suficientes y es necesaria la acción sobre las grandes compañías emisoras para detener de una forma efectiva el cambio climático.

¿Conoce la Comisión el citado estudio?

¿Dispone la Comisión de algún sistema de información para conocer cuáles son las empresas europeas con mayor nivel de emisiones de dióxido de carbono y metano?

¿Piensa hacer pública información de este tipo para que los ciudadanos europeos esté totalmente informados sobre cuáles son las compañías que más contaminan, atendiendo a lo establecido en la Directiva 2003/4/CE y en el Convenio de Aahrus?

Respuesta conjunta de la Sra. Hedegaard en nombre de la Comisión
(13 de febrero de 2014)

La Comisión tiene conocimiento de este estudio, pero no está de acuerdo con las conclusiones extraídas por Su Señoría. En la UE y en los tres Estados del EEE (Islandia, Liechtenstein y Noruega), el régimen de comercio de derechos de emisión de la UE (RCDE UE) fija un «tope», o límite, decreciente con respecto a la cantidad total de determinados gases de efecto invernadero que pueden emitir más de 11 000 instalaciones que realizan un gran consumo energético para la producción de electricidad y la industria manufacturera. De este modo, el régimen engloba aproximadamente el 45 % de las emisiones de gases de efecto invernadero de la UE. Desde su puesta en marcha en 2005, este ha propiciado constantemente reducciones de las emisiones.

Con arreglo al RCDE UE, las empresas deben informar cada año de sus emisiones, lo que es comprobado por un verificador independiente, y entregar los suficientes derechos de emisión para cubrir todas sus emisiones. El registro de la Unión, una base de datos en línea ([1]), garantiza que la contabilidad se lleve de manera exacta conforme al RCDE UE. Este registro consigna las emisiones verificadas anuales de todas las instalaciones, así como la conciliación anual de los derechos de emisión y las emisiones verificadas. Por tanto, la información sobre las empresas europeas que generan el mayor nivel de emisiones está a disposición del público.

Por último, aunque los esfuerzos por parte de las empresas multinacionales más contaminantes son, sin duda, importantes, la Comisión opina que la transición a una economía hipocarbónica no tendrá éxito si no se produce una transformación social más general en la que haya un mayor compromiso por parte de las empresas, los ciudadanos y las partes interesadas, incluso aunque no sean los «principales contribuidores» en cuanto a emisiones.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/ets/registry/links_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013652/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: The role of major companies in climate change

A recent article by renowned scientist Richard Heede, published on 14 October in the journal *Climatic Change*, goes so far as to claim that 90 multinational companies are responsible for 63% of carbon dioxide and methane emissions into the atmosphere.

These conclusions, very much shared by the scientific community, are the result of a thorough study of the impact of large companies on greenhouse gas emissions. With empirical evidence about who are the main actors contributing to climate change, there is no incentive to continue using approaches aimed at taking action at state level, which has been shown to have very little success. This study allows the main culprits of global warming to be identified and should compel the Commission to consider changing the methodology so as to spotlight the companies that are major emitters.

The current methodology attempts to reduce emissions by changing consumer behaviour, with action such as energy efficiency in homes, use of new forms of transport and so on. However, these measures have failed to achieve a rapid reduction in emission levels. In fact, pollution occurs in production, and only by taking firm action on companies can these emissions be stopped. Emission allowances are not enough. In order to be effective in stopping climate change, action has to be taken on the companies that are major emitters.

Is the Commission aware of this study?

In light of this article's content, does the Commission consider it necessary to focus international action on the multinational companies mentioned in the study?

What measures is the Commission taking in international forums to direct points of negotiation towards action on companies that are major emitters?

Question for written answer E-013720/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: The role of large companies in climate change

According to a recent article published on 14 October 2013 in the journal *Climatic Change* by renowned scientist Richard Heede, 90 multinational companies are responsible for 63% of emissions of carbon dioxide and methane into the atmosphere.

These conclusions are very much shared by most of the scientific community and are based on a thorough study into the impact of large companies on greenhouse gas emissions. As there is empirical evidence showing who are main culprits contributing to climate change, there is no reason to keep using State-level, action-oriented work approaches, which have proven to be largely unsuccessful. This study makes it possible to identify the main culprits of global warming and should make the Commission consider changing the methodology of its work so as to shift from Member State-oriented approaches to an approach focused on companies that are major emitters.

Currently, the aim is to reduce emissions levels by changing consumer behaviour with measures such as energy efficiency in homes, using of new forms of transport, etc. These measures have failed to rapidly reduce emission levels. However, it is manufacturing that causes pollution, and these emissions can only be stopped by taking firm action with businesses. Emission allowances are not enough, and action needs to be taken against the major emitting companies to effectively stop climate change.

Is the Commission aware of this study?

Does the Commission have an information system to determine which European businesses produce the highest level of carbon dioxide and methane emissions?

Does the Commission intend to disclose this kind of information so that European citizens are fully informed about which companies pollute the most according to the provisions of Directive 2003/4/EC and the Aarhus Convention?

Joint answer given by Ms Hedegaard on behalf of the Commission
(13 February 2014)

The Commission is aware of this study, but does not agree with the conclusions drawn by the Honourable Member. In the EU and the three EEA states (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) puts a declining 'cap', or limit, on the total amount of certain greenhouse gases that can be emitted from more than 11 000 heavy energy-using installations in power generation and manufacturing industry. The system thereby covers around 45% of the EU's greenhouse gas emissions. Since its start in 2005, the system has continuously delivered emission reductions.

Under the EU ETS, a company must each year report its emissions — verified by an independent verifier — and surrender enough emission allowances to cover all its emissions. Accurate accounting under the EU ETS is ensured by the Union registry, an online database ([1]). The registry records the annual verified emissions from all installations as well as the annual reconciliation of allowances and verified emissions. Information on which European businesses produce the highest level of emissions is therefore publicly available.

Finally, while efforts by the most polluting multinational companies are of course important, the Commission is of the view that the transition to the low-carbon economy will not be successful without a broader societal transformation that engages companies, citizens and stakeholders more widely, also if they are not among the 'top contributors' in terms of emissions.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/ets/registry/links_en.htm

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013653/13
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: VP/HR — Derechos de los trabajadores de la construcción en Qatar

Amnistía Internacional ha publicado un informe titulado «The Dark Side of Migrations: Sportlight on Qatar's construction sector ahead of the World Cup» en el que acusa a dicho país de gravísimas violaciones de los derechos de los trabajadores en el sector de la construcción.

La ola de la construcción que ha supuesto la elección de Qatar como sede de la Copa del Mundo para el año 2020 está atrayendo a miles de trabajadores procedentes de diferentes países de Asia con la promesa de encontrar empleo. La Copa del Mundo requiere la construcción de un elevado número de infraestructuras deportivas pero, a su vez, de infraestructuras auxiliares como una red eficiente de transporte, así como un significativo incremento de la capacidad hotelera del país. Ante esta ola constructiva son miles los inmigrantes que llegan al país con la promesa de un empleo en el sector, pero esta promesa termina convirtiéndose en una trampa.

Se trata a estos trabajadores extranjeros en condiciones cercanas a la esclavitud: se les quita el pasaporte, impidiendo su salida del país, y se les obliga a aceptar condiciones infrahumanas, así como sueldos muy inferiores a lo acordado en sus respectivos países de origen. El informe de Amnistía Internacional presenta escalofriantes testimonios de trabajadores atrapados en el país que sufren esta realidad, mientras los cuerpos diplomáticos de muchos Estados miembros de la Unión Europea felicitan al país por la celebración del Copa del Mundo.

¿Conoce la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante la situación de los trabajadores extranjeros en Qatar?

¿Ha solicitado en alguna ocasión a las autoridades cataríes que garanticen los derechos y las libertades fundamentales de los trabajadores extranjeros en el país?

¿Piensa congelar la cooperación en materia de comercio e inversiones con Qatar a través del Consejo de Cooperación del Golfo hasta que dicho país respete los derechos humanos de los citados trabajadores y los convenios de la OIT que ha ratificado?

Respuesta de la alta representante y vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(12 de febrero de 2014)

La Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta es muy consciente de la cuestión de los derechos de los trabajadores migrantes en Qatar y, más en general, en la región del Golfo. La Delegación de la UE en Riad (acreditada en Qatar) y las misiones diplomáticas de la UE en Doha siguen muy de cerca la situación de los derechos humanos y, en particular, la situación de los derechos de los trabajadores migrantes.

El respeto de la dignidad humana es un valor central de la UE. La UE ha abogado permanentemente por que nuestros socios del Golfo adopten una legislación y medidas de ejecución más decisivas para abordar la situación de los trabajadores migrantes que, a pesar de los innegables avances de los últimos años, todavía requiere mejoras de conformidad con las normas internacionales del trabajo y en colaboración con los países de origen de los trabajadores extranjeros, especialmente en lo que se refiere a la aplicación de la legislación existente.

Para más detalles sobre la posición de la UE en este asunto, puede remitirse a la respuesta dada a las preguntas escritas E-011091/2013, P-011553/2013, E-011648/2013 y E-011649/2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013653/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Construction workers' rights in Qatar

Amnesty International has published a report entitled 'The dark side of migration: Spotlight on Qatar's construction sector ahead of the World Cup', which accuses this country of very serious violations of workers' rights in the construction sector.

The wave of construction resulting from Qatar being chosen to host the 2020 World Cup is attracting thousands of workers from various Asian countries with the promise of finding employment. The World Cup requires a large number of sports facilities to be built, but also ancillary infrastructures, an efficient transport network and a significant increase in the country's hotel capacity. This wave of construction is leading thousands of migrants to enter the country with the promise of finding employment in the sector, but this promise turns out to be a trap.

These foreign workers are treated in conditions close to slavery: their passports are taken away, preventing them from leaving the country, and they are forced to accept inhumane conditions and much lower wages than those agreed in their countries of origin. The Amnesty International report presents chilling testimonies from workers trapped in the country under these conditions, while diplomats from many Member States congratulate the country on hosting the World Cup.

Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware of the situation of foreign construction workers in Qatar?

Has she, on any occasion, asked the Qatar authorities to ensure the rights and fundamental freedoms of foreign workers in the country?

Does she intend to suspend cooperation on trade and investment with Qatar through the Gulf Cooperation Council until that country respects the human rights of these workers and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions it has ratified?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(12 February 2014)

The HR/VP is well aware of the issue of migrant workers' rights in Qatar and more broadly in the Gulf region. The EU Delegation in Riyadh (accredited to Qatar) and EU diplomatic missions in Doha are closely following the human rights situation, including the situation of migrant workers' rights.

The respect of human dignity is at the core of EU values. The EU has consistently advocated for more decisive legislation and enforcement measures to be taken by our Gulf partners in order to address the situation of migrant workers which, in spite of undeniable progress in recent years, still deserves improvements in accordance with International Labour Organisation conventions and in collaboration with the countries of origin of foreign workers- in particular as regards implementation of existing legislation.

Please refer to the answer given to written questions E-011091/2013, P-011553/2013, E-011648/2013 and E-011649/2013 for more details on the EU's position on the issue.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013654/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Empresas europeas y derechos de los trabajadores de la construcción en Qatar

Amnistía Internacional ha publicado un informe titulado «The Dark Side of Migrations: Sportlight on Qata's construction sector ahead of the World Cup», en el que acusa a dicho país de gravísimas violaciones de los derechos de los trabajadores en el sector de la construcción.

La ola de la construcción que ha supuesto la elección de Qatar como sede de la Copa del Mundo para el año 2020 está atrayendo a miles de trabajadores procedentes de diferentes países de Asia con la promesa de encontrar un empleo. La Copa del Mundo requiere la construcción de un elevado número de infraestructuras deportivas pero, a su vez, de infraestructuras auxiliares como una red eficiente de transporte así como un significativo incremento de la capacidad hotelera del país. Ante esta ola constructiva son miles los inmigrantes que llegan al país con la promesa de un empleo en el sector, pero esta promesa termina convirtiéndose en una trampa.

Se trata a estos trabajadores extranjeros en condiciones cercanas a la esclavitud: se les quita el pasaporte, impidiendo su salida del país, y se les obliga a aceptar trabajos en condiciones infrahumanas, así como sueldos muy inferiores a lo acordado en sus respectivos países de origen. El informe de Amnistía Internacional presenta escalofriantes testimonios de trabajadores atrapados en el país que sufren esta realidad, mientras los cuerpos diplomáticos de muchos Estados miembros de la Unión Europea felicitan al país por la celebración del Copa del Mundo.

¿Conoce la Comisión la situación de los trabajadores extranjeros en Qatar?

¿Existen empresas europeas del sector de la construcción o de los servicios auxiliares que estén realizando inversiones en el país arábigo? ¿Podría enumerarlas?

¿De qué mecanismos dispone la Comisión para garantizar que las empresas europeas no estén contratando bajo las condiciones laborales esclavistas que permite Qatar, y que las subcontratas de las empresas europeas respeten los derechos fundamentales de los trabajadores?

Respuesta de la alta representante y vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(7 de febrero de 2014)

La alta representante y vicepresidenta es muy consciente de la cuestión de los derechos de los trabajadores migrantes en Qatar y, más en general, en la región del Golfo. La Delegación de la UE en Riad (acreditada en Qatar) y las misiones diplomáticas de la UE en Doha siguen muy de cerca la situación de los derechos humanos, en particular la situación de los derechos de los trabajadores migrantes.

La UE sigue estos problemas, especialmente en el marco de la Organización Internacional del Trabajo (OIT). La UE apoya el Programa de Trabajo Decente y la ratificación y aplicación efectiva de los convenios de la OIT, en particular por lo que respecta a las normas fundamentales del trabajo, y coopera con la OIT en este sentido.

El respeto de la dignidad humana se encuentra en el núcleo de los valores de la UE. La UE aboga permanentemente porque nuestros socios del Golfo adopten una legislación y medidas de ejecución más decisivas para abordar la situación de los trabajadores migrantes que, a pesar de los innegables avances de los últimos años, todavía requiere mejoras de conformidad con las normas internacionales del trabajo (en particular, los convenios de la OIT n° 111 y 81, que han sido ratificados por Qatar) y en colaboración con los países de origen de los trabajadores extranjeros, especialmente en lo que se refiere a la aplicación de la legislación existente.

La Comisión no dispone de información sobre las empresas de la UE que operan en terceros países. La UE fomenta la responsabilidad social de las empresas, tal como señala en su estrategia en este ámbito, en particular el cumplimiento por las empresas de la UE de los principios y directrices reconocidos internacionalmente, como las Líneas Directrices de la OCDE para Empresas Multinacionales y los principios rectores de las Naciones Unidas sobre Empresas y Derechos Humanos.

Para más detalles sobre la posición de la UE en este asunto, puede remitirse a la respuesta dada a las preguntas escritas E-11091/2013, P-11553/2013, E-11648/2013 y E-11649/2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013654/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: European companies and construction workers' rights in Qatar

Amnesty International has published a report entitled 'The dark side of migration: Spotlight on Qatar's construction sector ahead of the World Cup', which accuses this country of very serious violations of workers' rights in the construction sector.

The wave of construction resulting from Qatar being chosen to host the 2020 World Cup is attracting thousands of workers from various Asian countries with the promise of finding employment. The World Cup requires a large number of sports facilities to be built, but also ancillary infrastructures, an efficient transport network and a significant increase in the country's hotel capacity. This wave of construction is leading thousands of migrants to enter the country with the promise of finding employment in the sector, but this promise turns out to be a trap.

These foreign workers are treated in conditions close to slavery: their passports are taken away, preventing them from leaving the country, and they are forced to accept jobs with inhumane conditions and much lower wages than those agreed in their countries of origin. The Amnesty International report presents chilling testimonies from workers trapped in the country under these conditions, while diplomats from many Member States congratulate the country on hosting the World Cup.

Is the Commission aware of the situation of foreign construction workers in Qatar?

Are any EU companies in the construction or ancillary service sectors investing in this Arab country? Can the Commission list them?

What mechanisms does the Commission have to ensure that EU companies are not hiring workers under the slave labour conditions tolerated by Qatar and that subcontracting by EU companies respects workers' fundamental rights?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(7 February 2014)

The HR/VP is well aware of the issue of migrant workers' rights in Qatar and more broadly in the Gulf region. The EU Delegation in Riyadh (accredited to Qatar) and EU diplomatic missions in Doha are closely following the human rights situation, including the situation of migrant workers' rights.

The EU follows these issues notably under the framework of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The EU supports the Decent Work Agenda and the ratification and effective implementation of ILO Conventions, in particular with regard to core labour standards, and cooperates with the ILO in this respect

The respect of human dignity is at the core of EU values. The EU consistently advocates for more decisive legislation and enforcement measures to be taken by our Gulf partners in order to address the situation of migrant workers which, in spite of undeniable progress in recent years, still deserves improvements in accordance with international international labour standards (in particular ILO conventions No 111 and No 81 which have been ratified by Qatar) and in collaboration with the countries of origin of foreign workers- in particular as regards implementation of existing legislation.

The Commission does not have information concerning individual EU companies operating in third countries. The EU promotes Corporate Social Responsibility as outlined in its CSR strategy , including the adherence of EU companies to internationally recognised principles and guidelines, such as the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises (MNEs) and the UN Guiding Principles on business and human rights.

Please refer to the answer given to Written Questions E-11091/2013, P-11553/2013, E-11648/2013 and E-11649/2013 for more details on the EU's position on the issue.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013655/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Expulsiones ilegales de inmigrantes en Melilla

El pasado 18 de noviembre, un importante periódico español publicaba una noticia referente a cómo la Guardia Civil expulsa, de manera absolutamente ilegal, a personas inmigrantes llegadas a Melilla, a quienes devuelve a Marruecos haciéndoles cruzar la valla, sin respetar ninguno de los procedimientos legales que España debe observar.

Según la información publicada, la Guardia Civil, en la Ciudad Autónoma de Melilla, emplea la puerta del sector A-13 para expulsar a los inmigrantes subsaharianos. Dichas expulsiones ilegales violan lo establecido en la Directiva relativa al retorno de inmigrantes (2008/115/CE) y la propia legislación española, puesto que no se respeta ningún tipo de procedimiento legal, ni se vela por la seguridad o los riesgos para la vida de los inmigrantes que se expulsan de esta forma. Los efectivos de la Guardia Civil realizan estas expulsiones a escondidas para no alertar a la opinión pública española de la violación de los derechos de los inmigrantes que estas expulsiones suponen. Según la información presentada, entre un 20 % y un 30 % de los inmigrantes que entran en Melilla de manera irregular son devueltos sin ser conducidos a una comisaría, tal y como establecen la legislación española y la propia Convención sobre el Estatuto de los Refugiados firmada por España.

Las autoridades españolas deben aclarar en qué nivel de la jerarquía se han dado las órdenes para realizar este tipo de expulsiones haciendo caso omiso a toda la legislación vigente. España está endureciendo su política migratoria en la Ciudad Autónoma de Melilla, a través de las expulsiones masivas, la instalación de la alambrada de cuchillas, etc., en muchas ocasiones incumpliendo sus propias leyes. Esta situación no puede ser permitida por las instituciones europeas, que gozan de mecanismos para garantizar que los Estados miembros cumplan la legislación europea.

¿Conoce la Comisión la actuación ilegal de la Guardia Civil en Melilla?

¿Considera que dicha actuación de la Guardia Civil española se ajusta a lo establecido en la Directiva 2008/115/CE? ¿Considera que España garantiza, con este tipo de acciones, lo establecido en la Convención sobre el Estatuto de los Refugiados?

¿Qué acciones piensa llevar a cabo para obligar a España a terminar con este tipo de expulsiones ilegales?

Respuesta de la Sra. Malmström en nombre de la Comisión
(3 de febrero de 2014)

La noticia a que Su Señoría parece referirse («La Guardia Civil expulsa ilegalmente a inmigrantes de Melilla a Marruecos», El País del 18 de noviembre de 2013) describe la supuesta práctica de las autoridades españolas de Melilla de devolver directamente a las autoridades marroquíes a los inmigrantes que entran irregularmente en territorio español, sin la expedición previa de una decisión oficial de devolución.

Con arreglo al artículo 2, apartado 2, letra a), de la Directiva sobre el retorno ([1]), los Estados miembros pueden decidir no aplicar la Directiva a los inmigrantes interceptados con ocasión del cruce irregular de la frontera exterior de un Estado miembro. No obstante, el artículo 4, apartado 4, prevé que pese a todo, debe respetarse el principio de no devolución, también en el caso de las personas excluidas con arreglo al artículo 2, apartado 2, letra a).

Por tanto, la supuesta práctica no representaría —como tal— una infracción de la Directiva sobre el retorno. No obstante, las autoridades españolas deben respetar las salvaguardias mínimas enumeradas en el artículo 4, apartado 4.

Por otra parte, el código de fronteras Schengen ([2]) debe aplicarse sin perjuicio de los derechos de los refugiados y de las personas que solicitan protección internacional, en particular en lo que se refiere a la no devolución. Esto significa que, al realizar labores de control fronterizo, los Estados miembros deben respetar sus obligaciones en el marco del principio de no devolución y, en su caso, garantizar el acceso efectivo al procedimiento de asilo de conformidad con lo dispuesto en la Directiva sobre los procedimientos de asilo ([3]).

Al tiempo que toma nota del artículo a que se refiere Su Señoría, la Comisión considera que la noticia en cuestión no presenta datos probados sobre el respeto o no de dichas salvaguardias.

([1]) Directiva 2008/115/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 16 de diciembre de 2008, relativa a normas y procedimientos comunes en los Estados miembros para el retorno de los nacionales de terceros países en situación irregular. DO L 348 de 24.12.2008, p. 1.

([2]) Reglamento (CE) n° 562/2006 del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo de 15 de marzo de 2006 por el que se establece un Código comunitario de normas para el cruce de personas por las fronteras (Código de fronteras Schengen); DO L 105 de 13.4.2006, pp. 1-32.

([3]) Directiva 2005/85/CE del Consejo, de 1 de diciembre de 2005 , sobre normas mínimas para los procedimientos que deben aplicar los Estados miembros para conceder o retirar la condición de refugiado. DO L 326 de 13.12.2005, pp. 13-34.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013655/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Illegal expulsion of immigrants in Melilla

On 18 November a leading Spanish newspaper published an article on how the Guardia Civil is breaching all the applicable legal procedures in Spain by expelling immigrants arriving in Melilla and sending them back to Morocco by forcing them to cross the border fence.

According to the article, the Guardia Civil in Melilla is using the sector A-13 gateway to expel Sub-Saharan immigrants. These illegal expulsions violate not only Spanish legislation but also Directive 2008/115/EC on common standards and procedures in Member States for returning illegally staying third-country nationals, by failing to observe legal procedures or to monitor the physical safety and security of these immigrants. The Guardia Civil is carrying out the expulsions in secret to prevent the Spanish public from becoming aware that they are breaching the immigrants' rights. According to the information provided, 20-30% of immigrants who enter Melilla illegally are returned without being taken to a police station as required by Spanish legislation and indeed by the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, of which Spain is a signatory.

The Spanish authorities must clarify at what level orders were given to carry out this type of expulsion, disregarding all the relevant legislation. Spain is tightening its migration policy in Melilla by carrying out large-scale expulsions and installing razor wire, etc., much of the time in breach of its own laws. This situation cannot be allowed by the European institutions, which have mechanisms to ensure that Member States comply with European legislation.

Is the Commission aware of the Guardia Civil's illegal actions in Melilla?

Does it consider that these actions are in line with Directive 2008/115/EC? Does it consider Spain to be upholding the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees?

What action does it intend to take in order to force Spain to end this kind of illegal expulsion?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(3 February 2014)

The media report to which the Honourable Member appears to be referring ('La Guardia Civil expulsa ilegalmente a inmigrantes de Melilla a Marruecos' in El Pais of 18 November 2013) describes an alleged practice of Spanish authorities in Melilla of passing back irregularly entering migrants directly to Moroccan authorities, without previous issuing of a formal return decision.

Under Article 2(2)(a) of the Return Directive ([1]), Member States may decide not to apply the directive to migrants who are apprehended in connection with the irregular crossing of the external border of a Member State. Article 4(4) provides, however, that nevertheless, in each case the principle of non-refoulement must be respected — also with regard to persons excluded under Article 2(2)(a).

The alleged practice would therefore not — as such — infringe the Return Directive. However, the Spanish authorities must respect the minimum safeguards listed in Article 4(4).

Further, the Schengen Borders Code ([2]) applies without prejudice to the rights of refugees and persons requesting international protection, in particular as regards non-refoulement. This means that when carrying out border control activities, Member States must respect their obligations under the principle of non-refoulement and, where appropriate, ensure effective access to the asylum procedure in accordance with the Asylum Procedures Directive ([3]).

While it takes note of the article referred to by the Honourable Member, the Commission considers that no substantiated information on the respect or not of these safeguards can be found in the media report.

([1]) Directive 2008/115/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on common standards and procedures in Member States for returning illegally staying third-country nationals; OJ L 348, 24.12.2008.

([2]) Regulation (EC) No 562/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2006 establishing a Community Code on the rules governing the movement of persons across borders (Schengen Borders Code); OJ L 105, 13.4.2006, p. 1-32.

([3]) Council Directive 2005/85/EC of 1 December 2005 on minimum standards on procedures in Member States for granting and withdrawing refugee status; OJ L 326, 13.12.2005, p. 13-34.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013657/13
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: VP/HR — Caso Snowden en Francia, papel de la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante de la UE

El Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores del Gobierno de Francia, Laurent Fabius, ha anunciado que convocará al Embajador de los EE.UU. en Francia, Charles Rivkin, para pedir explicaciones por la información publicada por el periódico Le Monde, que sostiene que, según los datos en poder de Edward Snowden, Francia fue espiada, habiéndose interceptado más de 70 millones de llamadas telefónicas en un mes.

El Gobierno francés ha sido el primer gobierno europeo que exige una comparecencia a un embajador de los EE.UU. para tratar exclusivamente los temas relacionados con las informaciones filtradas por el ex analista de la NSA. La intolerable actitud de los Gobiernos de los EE.UU. y el Reino Unido, que espían sistemáticamente a la práctica totalidad de la población de un país como Francia que, como demanda la lógica y el derecho de sus ciudadanos, exige ahora la comparecencia de los EE.UU.

A las diferentes preguntas que he presentado a la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante de la Unión Europea, la Sra. Ashton ha respondido siempre que no hace declaraciones en lo concerniente al Caso Snowden. Dicha representante actúa ridiculizando la imagen internacional de la Unión Europea al no haber exigido rendición de cuentas alguna a la administración de los EE.UU., pese a que dicho país ha violado el derecho a la intimidad de millones de ciudadanos así como de instituciones de carácter estratégico. Esta situación en la que la Alta Representante está ignorando las violaciones perpetradas en contra de los pueblos europeos es a todas luces insostenible.

¿Conoce la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante la convocatoria por parte de Francia del embajador de los EE.UU.? ¿Ha solicitado la comparecencia oficial del embajador de los EE.UU. ante la UE para tratar el caso de la escuchas en los mismos términos? ¿Está solicitando información o investigando el número exacto de violaciones que han cometido las autoridades estadounidenses en contra de los derechos y los intereses de los ciudadanos europeos? ¿Piensa congelar las negociaciones del Acuerdo Transatlántico de Comercio e Inversiones para garantizar que el espionaje no perjudique los intereses europeos en dicho Acuerdo?

Respuesta de la Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(11 de febrero de 2014)

La Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta se toma muy en serio los informes sobre la vigilancia que ejercen los Estados Unidos sobre los ciudadanos y las instituciones de la UE y reaccionó rápidamente expresando su preocupación antes las autoridades de aquel país y pidiéndoles explicaciones cuando se produjeron esas revelaciones por primera vez. A este respecto, el Secretario General Ejecutivo del Servicio Europeo de Acción Exterior convocó al Embajador estadounidense ante la UE, William Kennard, el 1 de julio de 2013. El mismo día, la Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta planteó el asunto directamente ante el Secretario de Estado de los EE UU, John Kerry. También manifestó su preocupación por teléfono a la Consejera de Seguridad Nacional de los Estados Unidos, Susan Rice. La UE ha mantenido el tema constantemente en el orden del día de las reuniones con los homólogos estadounidenses pertinentes y ha seguido recabando explicaciones y garantías a los Estados Unidos por los canales apropiados.

En julio de 2013, se creó un grupo de trabajo UE-EE UU *ad hoc* para estudiar el asunto. El informe de las conclusiones de los copresidentes de la UE de este grupo de trabajo ([1]) incluye las explicaciones y otros datos aportados por los EE UU, al tiempo que aclara el marco jurídico estadounidense al respecto. El 27 de noviembre de 2013, la Comisión publicó una Comunicación titulada «Restablecer la confianza en los flujos de datos entre la UE y EE.UU.» ([2]), en la que se indican la postura y las expectativas de la Comisión en un intento de recuperar la confianza en los flujos de datos transatlánticos.

Por lo que se refiere a la incidencia en las negociaciones de cara a la Asociación Transatlántica de Comercio e Inversión (ATCI), la Comisión remite a Su Señoría a la Comunicación mencionada y a las respuestas dadas a las preguntas escritas 12850/13 y 13439/13.

La Delegación de la UE en Washington ha desempeñado un papel importante en la transmisión y explicación de las preocupaciones de los ciudadanos y las instituciones de la UE a diversas partes interesadas de los Estados Unidos en el marco de la revisión de la inteligencia de señales que dio lugar al discurso del Presidente Obama de 17 de enero de 2014.

([1]) Disponible en: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/data-protection/files/report-findings-of-the-ad-hoc-eu-us-working-group-on-data-protection.pdf
([2]) COM(2013) 846.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013657/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Repercussions of the Snowdon affair in France — role of Vice-President/High Representative of the EU

French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius has announced his intention of summoning Charles Rivkin, US ambassador to France, to seek an explanation regarding allegations by Edward Snowdon published in '*Le Monde*' to the effect that France has been targeted by spying operations, with over 70 million telephone calls intercepted in just one month.

The French Government is the first in Europe to summon a US ambassador for discussions relating solely to leaks by the former NSA analyst. The actions of the US and UK in systematically spying on almost the entire population of a country such as France are totally inadmissible. It is therefore only reasonable for the US to be held to account and for individual rights to be upheld.

In reply to my questions regarding this matter, the Vice-President/High Representative of the European Union, Baroness Ashton, has consistently indicated that no statements will be issued concerning the Snowdon affair. Her failure to call the US administration to account in any way, despite the fact that it has breached the privacy of millions of citizens and a number of strategic organisations, is making the European Union appear ridiculous at international level and the decision of the High Representative to ignore this is clearly untenable.

Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware that France has summoned the US Ambassador? Has she officially summoned the US ambassador to the EU to discuss the interceptions also? Is she seeking information or carrying out investigations into the precise number of breaches committed by the US authorities undermining the rights and interests of European citizens? Is she envisaging the suspension of negotiations for the transatlantic trade and investment agreement in a bid to ensure that European interests in this connection are not in any way undermined by acts of espionage?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(11 February 2014)

HR/VP takes very seriously reports of US surveillance on EU citizens and institutions and moved swiftly to raise concerns and seek clarifications from US authorities when these revelations were first made. In this regard, the Executive Secretary General of the European External Action Service summoned US Ambassador to the EU William Kennard on 1 July 2013. On the same day, HR/VP raised the issue directly with US Secretary of State John Kerry. She also raised concerns at that time during a telephone conversation with the US National Security Advisor Susan Rice. The EU has maintained the issue consistently on the agenda of meetings with relevant US counterparts and has continued to seek clarifications and assurances from the US through appropriate channels.

In July 2013, an ad hoc EU-US Working Group was set up to examine these issues. The report on the findings by the EU Co-chairs of this working group ([1]) entails the clarifications and further information given by the US, while shedding light on the US legal framework in this field. On 27 November 2013 the Commission issued a communication on Rebuilding Trust in EU-US Data Flows ([2]), which outlines the Commission's position and expectations in a bid to restore trust in transatlantic data flows.

As regards the impact on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) negotiations, the Commission refers the Honorable Member to the abovementioned communication and to the answers provided to written questions 12850/13 and 13439/13.

The EU Delegation in Washington has played an important role in conveying and explaining the concerns of EU citizens and institutions to various US stakeholders, in the context of the review of signals intelligence that led to President Obama's speech of 17 January 2014.

([1]) Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/data-protection/files/report-findings-of-the-ad-hoc-eu-us-working-group-on-data-protection.pdf
([2]) COM(2013) 846.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013658/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Caso Snowden en Francia y protección de los consumidores

El Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores del Gobierno de Francia, Laurent Fabius, ha anunciado que convocará al Embajador de los EE.UU. en Francia, Charles Rivkin, para pedirle explicaciones por las informaciones publicadas en el periódico Le Monde en las que se señala que, según los datos en poder de Edward Snowden, Francia fue espiada y que en dicho país se interceptaron más de 70 millones de llamadas telefónicas en un mes.

El Gobierno francés ha sido el primer Gobierno europeo en exigir una comparecencia a un embajador de los EE.UU. para tratar exclusivamente sobre los temas relacionados con las informaciones filtradas por el ex analista de la NSA. La intolerable actitud de los Gobiernos de EE.UU. y Gran Bretaña, que espían sistemáticamente a la práctica totalidad de la población de un país como Francia exige ahora, como impone la lógica y el derecho de sus ciudadanos, que comparezcan los EE.UU.

A las diferentes preguntas que he presentado a la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante de la Unión Europea, la Sra. Ashton, ha respondido siempre que no tiene intención de hacer declaraciones en relación con el caso Snowden. La Sra. Ashton ridiculiza la imagen internacional de la Unión Europea al no haber exigido rendición de cuentas alguna al Gobierno de los EE.UU. pese a que este país ha violado el derecho a la intimidad de millones de ciudadanos así como de instituciones de carácter estratégico.

En lo referente a la protección de los consumidores europeos, son numerosas las compañías que han colaborado en esta violación masiva de los derechos de los consumidores. Además del caso conocido de la empresa Belgacom, todo parece indicar que cientos de empresas de telecomunicaciones han violado las cláusulas de respeto del derecho a la intimidad de sus contratos desde el momento en que han colaborado con el Gobierno de los EE.UU.

¿Conoce la Comisión el número de empresas europeas de telecomunicaciones que han colaborado con las autoridades de los EE.UU. en los casos de espionaje llevados a cabo por la NSA? ¿Está investigando el número exacto de violaciones que han cometido estas empresas tanto en Francia como en toda Europa para exigir compensaciones por esta conducta ilegal? ¿Tiene intención de hacer público el listado de estas empresas para advertir a los consumidores de cuáles son las que no respetan su intimidad? ¿Se planta la Comisión la posibilidad de vetar a estas empresas del mercado europeo de telecomunicaciones para garantizar la protección del derecho a la protección de la intimidad de los consumidores europeos?

Respuesta de la Sra. Reding en nombre de la Comisión
(25 de febrero de 2014)

El 27 de noviembre de 2013, la Comisión expuso las medidas que es preciso adoptar para restablecer la confianza en los flujos de datos entre la UE y los Estados Unidos. La Comisión ha publicado, entre otras cosas: 1) la Comunicación de la Comisión al Parlamento Europeo y al Consejo «Restablecer la confianza en los flujos de datos entre la UE y EE.UU.» ([1]); 2) la Comunicación de la Comisión al Parlamento Europeo y al Consejo sobre el funcionamiento del puerto seguro desde la perspectiva de los ciudadanos de la UE y las empresas establecidas en la EU ([2]); 3) el informe de las conclusiones de los copresidentes de la UE del grupo de trabajo UE-EE.UU. *ad hoc* sobre protección de datos ([3]).

Por lo que respecta en particular al «puerto seguro», que es un instrumento utilizado para las transferencias de datos comerciales a Estados Unidos, la Comisión hizo trece recomendaciones para mejorar el funcionamiento del régimen «puerto seguro», basado en un análisis ([4]) que concluyó que el funcionamiento del régimen era deficiente en varios aspectos. Las soluciones deben fijarse antes del verano de 2014. La Comisión estudiará el funcionamiento del régimen basándose en la aplicación de esas trece recomendaciones.

Si bien la Comisión es el garante de los Tratados, corresponde a las autoridades nacionales, incluidas las autoridades de control de la protección de datos, garantizar la correcta aplicación y observancia de la legislación de la UE en materia de protección de datos con respecto a los organismos públicos y privados de la Unión Europea. El Grupo de trabajo del Artículo 29 sobre la protección de las personas en el procesamiento de datos de carácter personal, que es el órgano consultivo independiente en materia de protección de datos que reúne a los representantes de las autoridades de control de la protección de datos de los Estados miembros de la UE, trabaja actualmente en un dictamen sobre la vigilancia.

([1]) COM(2013) 846.
([2]) COM(2013) 847.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/data-protection/files/report-findings-of-the-ad-hoc-eu-us-working-group-on-data-protection.pdf
([4]) COM(2013) 847.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013658/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Implications of the Snowdon affair in France and consumer protection

French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius has announced his intention of summoning Charles Rivkin, US ambassador to France, to seek an explanation regarding allegations by Edward Snowdon published in '*Le Monde*' to the effect that France has been targeted by spying operations, with over 70 million telephone calls intercepted in just one month.

The French Government is the first in Europe to summon a US ambassador for discussions relating solely to leaks by the former NSA analyst. The actions of the US and UK in systematically spying on almost the entire population of a country such as France are totally inadmissible. It is therefore only reasonable for the US to be held to account and for individual rights to be upheld.

In reply to my questions regarding this matter, the Vice-President/High Representative of the European Union, Baroness Ashton, has consistently indicated that she intends to issue no statements concerning the Snowdon affair. Her failure to call the US administration to account in any way, despite the fact that it has breached the privacy of millions of citizens and a number of strategic organisations, is making the European Union appear ridiculous at international level.

Concerning the protection of European consumers, numerous companies have collaborated in this massive infringement of their rights. In addition to the widely publicised Belgacom affair, it would appear that hundreds of telecommunications companies, through their collaboration with the US administration, have infringed the privacy clauses of their contracts.

Does the Commission know how many European telecommunications companies have been illegally complicit in acts of espionage by the NSA? Is it investigating the precise number of breaches committed by these companies both in France and throughout Europe with a view to seeking damages? Does it intend to publish a list of offending companies with a view to alerting consumers? Will it consider banning these companies from the European telecommunications market so as to ensure that European consumers' rights to privacy can be protected?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(25 February 2014)

On 27 November 2013, the Commission set out the actions that need to be taken to restore trust in data flows between the EU and the US. The Commission published, *inter alia*:

1. A communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on Rebuilding Trust in EU-US Data Flows ([1]);

2. A communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the Functioning of the Safe Harbour from the Perspective of EU Citizens and Companies Established in the EU ([2]);

3. A Report on the findings by the EU Co-chairs of the ad hoc EU-US Working Group on Data Protection ([3]).

In particular with respect to the Safe Harbour, which is an instrument used for commercial data transfers to the US, the Commission made thirteen recommendations to improve the functioning of the Safe Harbour scheme, after an analysis ([4]) that found the functioning of the scheme deficient in several respects. Remedies should be identified by summer 2014. The Commission will then review the functioning of the scheme based on the implementation of these thirteen recommendations.

While the Commission is guardian of the Treaties, it is for national authorities, including data protection supervisory authorities, to ensure the correct implementation and enforcement of EU data protection legislation vis-à-vis public and private bodies in the European Union. The article 29 Working Party on the Protection of Individuals with regard to the Processing of Personal Data, which is the independent advisory body on data protection bringing together representatives from the data protection supervisory authorities of the EU Member States, is currently working on an opinion on surveillance.

([1]) COM(2013) 846.
([2]) COM(2013) 847.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/data-protection/files/report-findings-of-the-ad-hoc-eu-us-working-group-on-data-protection.pdf
([4]) COM(2013) 847.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013659/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Malas prácticas del grupo empresarial García Carrión

El pasado mes de enero la compañía vitivinícola García Carrión dio un fuerte golpe a los productores españoles de vino con la importación de 17 millones de litros de vino procedentes de Chile en un barco cisterna que arribó al puerto de Cartagena.

La compañía vitivinícola alegó el elevado precio de la pasada temporada del vino español para importar y embotellar el producto en España. Sin embargo, tal volumen de importación supone un golpe a los productores españoles y un engaño a los consumidores al emplear una marca típicamente española. El grupo García Carrión es el grupo vitivinícola más grande del país, lo que le convierte en casi un monopsonio para miles de productores que abusa de su posición de poder, dejando claro su carácter de explotador de agricultores y del medio rural.

Observando sus prácticas en contra de productores y en contra del sector vitivinícola, esta compañía, primera bodega de Europa y quinta del mundo, no ha dejado de recibir millones de euros procedentes de los fondos de la política agrícola común (PAC), incluido dinero destinado al desarrollo rural. Esta compañía, que obra claramente en contra de los objetivos establecidos en dicha política europea, está siendo financiada con los fondos de la PAC mientras actúa como una multinacional importando vino de otras regiones del planeta y arruinando al medio rural.

¿Conoce la Comisión la cantidad exacta de fondos procedentes de la PAC que percibe el grupo García Carrión? ¿Cuánto percibe de los fondos destinados al desarrollo rural?

¿Considera que dicho grupo vitivinícola ejerce un abuso de mercado sobre los diferentes productores de vino al poder desplazar su demanda a otros países?

¿Considera que la compañía desarrolla prácticas que pueden producir la desinformación del consumidor al comercializar el vino procedente de Chile con una marca típicamente española?

A la vista de las prácticas de abuso de mercado así como de la importación del vino, ¿considera necesario retirar cualquier tipo de fondo que la empresa reciba en concepto de ayuda al desarrollo rural?

Respuesta del Sr. Cioloş en nombre de la Comisión
(17 de febrero de 2014)

Los Estados miembros tienen la obligación de publicar la información relativa a las personas jurídicas beneficiarias de los pagos de la PAC. La información relativa a España está disponible en el siguiente sitio web:
http://www.fega.es/PwfGcp/es/accesos_directos/datos_abiertos/index.jsp

Se invita a Su Señoría a consultar ese sitio web.

Por otro lado, sobre la base de la información recibida y en el marco de sus responsabilidades, la Comisión no está en condiciones de responder con precisión a las tres últimas preguntas.

Ahora bien, sí puede precisar lo siguiente:

— Está autorizada la importación en la Unión de vinos procedentes de terceros países, incluidos los destinados a ser embotellados y comercializados en el mercado interior.

— Puede utilizarse una marca española para comercializar esos vinos, a condición de que no se engañe a los consumidores.

— Compete, en principio, a las autoridades españolas comprobar si ha habido engaño a los consumidores, particularmente en lo que respecta a la indicación del origen del producto.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013659/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Malpractice, García Carrión business group

Last January, wine business García Carrión dealt Spanish wine producers a heavy blow by importing 17 million litres of Chilean wine in a tanker which docked at Cartagena.

The company alleged that it was importing and bottling the product in Spain because of recent price increases in Spanish wines. However, importing on such a large scale is a blow for Spanish producers and misleading for consumers who believe they are buying a typical Spanish brand. The García Carrión group is the largest winemaker in the country, which gives it a monopsony position over thousands of producers whom it abuses. It is clearly exploiting farmers and the countryside.

Despite its damaging practices in respect of the wine sector and producers, this company, which is Europe's leading winery and the fifth largest in the world, is still receiving millions of euros from the common agricultural policy (CAP), including money intended for rural development. This company is being financed with CAP funds while operating in clear contravention of the objectives of that European policy and acting like a multinational, importing wines from other world regions and ruining the countryside.

Is the Commission aware of the exact amount of CAP funding that the García Carrión group is receiving? How much rural development funding is it receiving?

Does the Commission consider that this winemaking group is guilty of market abuse in respect of producers, in its ability to take its business to other countries?

Does the Commission consider that this company's practices could be misleading consumers by marketing Chilean wine under a typically Spanish brand?

Does the Commission consider that all funding intended for rural development should be withdrawn from this company in view of its abuse of the market and of wine importation?

(Version française)

Réponse donnée par M. Cioloş au nom de la Commission
(17 février 2014)

Les États membres ont l'obligation de publier les informations relatives aux personnes légales bénéficiaires des paiements de la PAC. Pour l'Espagne, l'information est disponible sur le site internet suivant:
http://www.fega.es/PwfGcp/es/accesos_directos/datos_abiertos/index.jsp

L'Honorable Parlementaire devrait trouver des informations sur ce site.

Par ailleurs, sur base des informations fournies et de ses responsabilités, la Commission n'est pas en mesure de répondre précisément aux trois dernières questions.

La Commission peut toutefois préciser que :

— l'importation de vins en provenance des pays tiers dans l'Union est autorisée, y compris en vue de leur embouteillage et de leur commercialisation dans le marché intérieur;

— une marque espagnole peut être utilisée pour commercialiser ces vins à condition notamment qu'il n'y ait pas tromperie du consommateur;

— c'est, en principe, aux autorités espagnoles qu'il revient de vérifier s'il y a, le cas échéant, tromperie du consommateur en particulier concernant l'indication de l'origine du produit.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013662/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Incumplimiento por parte de España de la normativa europea en el ámbito de residuos

El pasado mes de enero la Comisión Europea emitió un dictamen que obligaba al Ministerio de Agricultura, Alimentación y Medio Ambiente a intervenir para ajustar a Derecho la situación de 22 vertederos repartidos por toda la geografía del país.

La Comisión Europea solicitó a las autoridades españolas que tomasen las medidas pertinentes para evitar la apertura de un procedimiento judicial por el incumplimiento de la legislación europea en dicho ámbito. La Comisión denunció que varios vertederos de España estaban violando la legislación comunitaria y declaró que, si no se tomaban medidas correctivas, iniciaría un procedimiento de sanción.

La iniciativa «Retorna», en la que participan diferentes asociaciones ecologistas, y ONG como Ecologistas en Acción han impulsado la lucha contra la ilegalidad de los citados vertederos españoles, en los que se almacena más del 70 % de los residuos sólidos producidos por los españoles, presentando una pregunta al Ministerio sobre cuáles son los vertederos que incumplen dicha directiva. El Ministerio nunca ha respondido a la misma, pudiendo incumplir la Directiva sobre el acceso a la información ambiental, 2003/4/CE. Los efectos ambientales de una gestión inadecuada de 22 vertederos son gravísimos y pueden suponer consecuencias a muy largo plazo para los residentes de las zonas cercanas.

¿Considera la Comisión que las autoridades españolas están incumpliendo la Directiva 2003/4/CE al no informar sobre los citados vertederos?

¿Podría indicar la Comisión cuáles son los vertederos españoles que, según ella, incumplían la normativa europea en el ámbito de residuos en 2009?

¿Cuáles de estos vertederos continúan incumpliendo la normativa europea?

¿Piensa multar a España por continuar con los citados incumplimientos?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(3 de febrero de 2014)

En todos los casos en los que la normativa de la UE contiene disposiciones sobre los procedimientos de recurso —como, por ejemplo, en conexión con las solicitudes de acceso a información medioambiental ([1]) que se denieguen (en todo o en parte) sin fundamento o que no se respondan o se respondan inadecuadamente o que no se traten de cualquier otra forma de acuerdo con las disposiciones vigentes—, es preciso utilizar esos procedimientos de recurso. En esos casos, la Comisión no adopta medidas alternativas para no restar eficacia a los mecanismos de resolución de litigios.

En lo que respecta a los vertederos a los que se refiere la pregunta que nos ocupa, la Comisión remite a Su Señoría a la respuesta que ya diera en su día a la pregunta escrita E-001783-13 ([2]).

La Comisión está evaluando en estos momentos la información que han presentado las autoridades y, sobre esta base, decidirá los pasos que deban darse.

([1]) Artículo 6 de la Directiva 2003/4/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 28 de enero de 2003, relativa al acceso del público a la información medioambiental y por la que se deroga la Directiva 90/313/CEE del Consejo (DO L 41 de 14.2.2003).
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2013-001783&language=EN

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013662/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Spain's non-compliance with European regulations on waste

Last January the Commission provided an opinion obliging Spain's Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment to bring 22 landfill sites across the country into line with legislation.

The Commission requested that the Spanish authorities take the necessary steps to avoid legal proceedings for non-compliance with relevant European legislation. The Commission alleged that a number of landfill sites in Spain were in breach of Community legislation and announced it would start a penalty procedure unless the sites took corrective measures.

The 'Retorna' ('Turnaround') initiative, which involves various ecological associations as well as NGOs like Ecologistas en Acción has raised the profile of the fight against these illegal landfills, which store over 70% of Spain's solid waste, by asking the Ministry which ones are failing to comply with the directive in question. The Ministry never responded, which possibly leaves it in breach of Directive 2003/4/EC on public access to environmental information. The environmental effects of poor management at 22 landfill sites are extremely serious and could result in very long-term consequences for local residents.

Does the Commission consider that in failing to provide information on these sites the Spanish authorities are breaching Directive 2003/4/EC?

Could the Commission specify which of the sites, in its opinion, were failing to comply with European waste regulations in 2009?

Which of the sites are still failing to comply?

Is it considering fining Spain for failing to rectify this non-compliance?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(3 February 2014)

Where EU legislation includes provisions on appeal procedures, such as in connection with access to environmental information ([1]) for requests for information ignored, wrongfully refused (whether in full or in part), inadequately answered or otherwise not dealt with in accordance with the provisions, these review procedures need to be used. In such cases the Commission will not take alternative action to avoid undermining the efficiency of the redress mechanisms.

As regards the landfill sites referred to in this Question, the Commission refers the Honourable Member to the reply given to Written Question E-001783-13. ([2])

The Commission is now assessing the information submitted by the authorities and will decide accordingly on the appropriate course of action.

([1]) Article 6 of Directive 2003/4/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2003 on public access to environmental information and repealing Council Directive 90/313/EEC. OJ L 41, 14.2.2003.

([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2013-001783&language=EN

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-013663/13
alla Commissione
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(3 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Compagnie aeree e fisco dei piloti

Stando ad alcune indagini di tribunali europei e a quanto riportano fonti giornalistiche, parrebbe che la nota compagnia low cost Ryanair aggiri il fisco di molti Stati membri con strumenti fiscali e pensionistici «fantasiosi». Un centinaio di piloti che lavorano stabilmente in Italia, ad esempio, sarebbero stati costretti ad aprire una Società a responsabilità limitata (SRL) uni-personale con sede a Dublino. Tali SRL fatturano ad una seconda società, la quale a sua volta fattura a Ryanair. I piloti, così facendo, si ritrovano sprovvisti di copertura pensionistica in Italia e soprattutto si trovano in difficoltà quando devono pagare le tasse, non sapendo come e in quale paese dichiarare il proprio reddito. Un pilota anonimo dichiara che questi colleghi «liberi professionisti» pongono la sede delle loro SRL in paesi dalla fiscalità agevolata come Irlanda, Slovacchia, Cipro, Malta e l'Isola di Man. Nel 2012 il Ministero allo Sviluppo italiano aveva inserito nel Decreto Sviluppo un articolo specifico sulle compagnie aeree con basi stabili in Italia, specificando che lì avrebbero dovuto pagare le tasse.

La Commissione:

1. È al corrente di questa situazione e ha riscontrato casi analoghi in altri Stati membri?

2. Come valuta di dover combattere le pratiche elusive del fisco e che vanno in netto contrasto agli ordinamenti di buona parte degli Stati membri?

3. Con quali misure comunitarie ritiene di poter garantire equità per i piloti sia nella riscossione delle imposte che nei servizi di previdenza sociale dai quali si trovano esclusi de facto?

4. Come valuta l'impiego da parte di compagnie aeree di personale locale, che però è soggetto a contratti di lavoro stranieri e dunque a regimi fiscali di altri Stati membri diversi da quello in cui lavorano?

Risposta di Algirdas Šemeta a nome della Commissione
(28 gennaio 2014)

1. La Commissione non dispone di informazioni precise sull'entità del problema sollevato nell'interrogazione in relazione ai piloti e agli equipaggi di cabina dell'UE. Il gruppo di lavoro per il personale di volo del comitato di dialogo settoriale europeo per l'aviazione civile ha avviato un dialogo sul fenomeno dell'outsourcing a lavoratori autonomi per quanto concerne il personale di volo. Nel dicembre 2013, le parti sociali settoriali dell'UE hanno ricevuto una sovvenzione per svolgere ulteriori ricerche su tale questione.

2.-3. L'UE non ha la competenza di intervenire nei singoli casi relativi a questioni di previdenza sociale ed evasione fiscale; spetta infatti agli Stati membri applicare il diritto nazionale. Se le pratiche in questione hanno un carattere «di puro artificio» ([1]) possono essere applicate le disposizioni antiabuso nazionali. La direttiva 2011/16/UE sullo scambio di informazioni tra le amministrazioni fiscali potrebbe essere uno strumento utile a questo riguardo. La piattaforma per una buona governance fiscale, la pianificazione fiscale aggressiva e la doppia imposizione, che ha recentemente avviato le proprie attività, assisterà la Commissione nello sviluppo di iniziative adeguate. Il regolamento (UE) n. 465/2012 relativo al coordinamento dei sistemi di sicurezza sociale ([2]) ha fissato norme specifiche per il personale di volo assoggettandolo alle norme di sicurezza sociale applicabili alla loro «base di servizio» ([3]).

4. In assenza di misure armonizzate o uniformate a livello UE, gli Stati membri conservano la facoltà di definire, in via convenzionale o unilaterale, i criteri per ripartire tra loro il rispettivo potere impositivo, in particolare al fine di eliminare la doppia imposizione, a condizione che tali norme non siano in contrasto con il diritto dell'Unione europea. Il trattamento fiscale dei dipendenti delle compagnie aeree sarà, di norma, disciplinato da trattati bilaterali sulla doppia imposizione tra gli Stati membri interessati.

([1]) Cfr. sentenza nella causa C-196/04, Cadbury Schweppes.
([2]) GU L 149 dell'8.6.2012, pagg. 4-10.
([3]) Definito come il luogo di lavoro abituale dal quale il membro dell'equipaggio solitamente inizia e dove conclude un periodo di servizio o una serie di periodi di servizio.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013663/13
to the Commission
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Airlines and taxation of pilots

According to news reports and a number of European court investigations, the well-known low-cost airline Ryanair is apparently circumventing the tax systems of several Member States by using 'imaginative' fiscal and pension instruments. Around a hundred pilots who work permanently in Italy, for example, have allegedly been forced to open a single-member private limited liability company (LLC) based in Dublin. These LLCs bill a second company, which in turn bills Ryanair. By doing this, the pilots have no pension coverage in Italy and, above all, get into trouble when it comes to paying tax, as they do not know how, and in which country, to declare their income. An anonymous pilot has declared that these 'freelance' colleagues are establishing the headquarters of their LLCs in countries with lower tax rates, such as Ireland, Slovakia, Cyprus, Malta and the Isle of Man. In 2012, the Italian Ministry for Development included in its Development Decree a specific article on airlines which have stable bases in Italy, specifying that they should pay their taxes there.

1. Is the Commission aware of this situation and has it found any similar cases in otherMember States?

2. How does it think it can combat tax avoidance practices which are clearly in breach of thelaws of most Member States?

3. What EU measures can be taken to ensure fairness for pilots, as regards both the collection of taxes and the social security services from which they find themselves excluded?

4. What is its view of airlines' use of local staff who are subject to overseas employment contracts and thus to the tax systems of Member States other than the one in which they actually work?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(28 January 2014)

1. The Commission does not have information on the precise extent to which pilots and cabin crews in the EU are in the situation described in the question The air crew working group of the European sectoral dialogue committee for civil aviation has started a dialogue on the phenomenon of outsourcing to self-employed workers in air crew. In December 2013 the EU sectoral social partners received a grant to conduct further work on that specific issue.

2 and 3. The EU does not have competence to act in relation to individual cases of social security and tax avoidance. It is for the Member States to apply their national law. If the practices at issue are of a 'purely artificial' ([1]) character, national anti-abuse provisions could apply. Directive 2011/16/EU on exchange of information between tax administrations will be a useful tool in this respect. The Platform for Tax Good Governance, Aggressive Tax Planning and Double Taxation which recently started its work will assist the Commission in developing appropriate initiatives. Regulation 465/2012 on the coordination of social security systems ([2]) has laid down specific rules for air crews that make them subject to the social security rules applicable at their 'home base' ([3]).

4. In the absence of unifying or harmonised EU measures, Member States retain the power to define by treaty or unilaterally the criteria for allocating their power of taxation between them, particularly with a view to eliminating double taxation as long as those rules do not conflict with EC law. The tax treatment of airline workers will usually be governed by bilateral double taxation treaties between the Member States concerned.

([1]) See judgment in Case C-196/04, Cadbury Schweppes.
([2]) OJ L 149, 8.6.2012, p. 4-10.
([3]) Defined as the usual workplace where the crew member normally starts and ends a duty period or a series of duty periods.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej P-013664/13
do Komisji
Janusz Władysław Zemke (S&D)
(3 grudnia 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Zasady zatrudniania w Europejskiej Agencji Zarządzania Współpracą Operacyjną na Zewnętrznych Granicach Państw Członkowskich (FRONTEX)

Powstała w 2005 r. agencja FRONTEX ma wzmacniać bezpieczeństwo granic i koordynować działalność państw członkowskich w zakresie zarządzania granicami zewnętrznymi Unii Europejskiej. W związku z wydarzeniami na zewnątrz UE, znaczenie FRONTEX-u rośnie. Szczególne istotna w tej sytuacji jest zatem jakość kadr zatrudnianych przez Agencję.

Proszę w związku z tym o odpowiedź na 2 pytania:

1. Jaki jest obecnie stan etatowy Agencji i jaki wzrost zatrudnienia przewiduje się w latach 2014-2015?

2. Jakie są zasady i kryteria naboru kadr do Agencji FRONTEX oraz w jakich terminach w 2014 i 2015 r. planowane są kolejne konkursy dla przyszłych pracowników Agencji?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarz Cecilię Malmström w imieniu Komisji
(20 stycznia 2014 r.)

Komisja zwróciła się do Europejskiej Agencji Zarządzania Współpracą Operacyjną na Zewnętrznych Granicach Państw Członkowskich (FRONTEX) o odpowiedź na kwestie poruszone przez Szanownego Pana Posła. Odpowiedź agencji zostanie wysłana przez Komisję do Szanownego Pana Posła tak szybko, jak to będzie możliwe.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-013664/13
to the Commission
Janusz Władysław Zemke (S&D)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Rules on recruitment to the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders (Frontex)

The objective of the Frontex agency, which was formed in 2005, is to strengthen border security and to coordinate activities between Member States concerning the EU's external borders. In view of events taking place outside the EU, the importance of Frontex is growing. The quality of staff recruited by the agency is therefore of particular importance.

1. How many people are currently employed on a full-time basis by Frontex, and whatincrease in recruitment is anticipated for 2014-2015?

2. What are the rules and criteria for the selection of staff for Frontex, and what are theplanned timeframes for the next round of competitions for future Frontex employeesin 2014 and 2015?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(20 January 2014)

The Commission has asked the Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (Frontex) to provide a response to the questions raised by the Honourable Member. The Agency's reply will be sent by the Commission to the Honorable Member as soon as possible.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-013665/13
an die Kommission
Hiltrud Breyer (Verts/ALE)
(3. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Riskcycle: Kontamination von Recyclingkreisläufen mit POPs und chemischen Additiven

Viele möglicherweise gefährliche Stoffe werden als Chemikalien gehandelt oder als Zusätze zu Produkten hinzugesetzt. Deren Freisetzung in die Umwelt gibt nach Ansicht der Europäischen Kommission (KOM), der Vereinten Nationen (UN), der Weltgesundheitsorganisation (WHO) sowie der Organisation für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (OECD) Anlass zu großer Sorge. Das EU-finanzierte Forschungsprojekt „Risk-based management of chemicals and products in a circular economy at a global scale" (RISKCYCLE, FP7-226552) stellte der Öffentlichkeit Informationen zu den Risiken von Gefahrstoffen und Zusätzen sowie Maßnahmen zur Risikominderung von Substanzen zur Verfügung.

1. Teilt die Kommission die Besorgnis der Forscher, die auf die erhebliche Kontamination von Recyclingkreisläufen mit POPs und chemischen Additiven hinweisen?

2. Plant die Kommission, diesen Forschungsbereich in den nächsten Jahren durch weitere Aktivitäten zu vertiefen? Was sind aus Sicht der Kommission die wesentlichen Ursachen, dass sich die Recyclingströme zunehmend mit Schadstoffen anreichern und die Wirtschaft beim stofflichen Recycling immer stärker vor Zielkonflikte mit dem Umwelt- und Verbraucherschutz stellt?

3. Welche Recyclingströme sind nach Auffassung der Kommission besonders gefährdet, und wo sieht sie den höchsten Handlungsbedarf?

4. Teilt sie die Auffassung des Fragestellers, dass nur über eine Reduzierung des Eintrags besonders problematischer Stoffe wie POPs oder SVHC-Chemikalien in die Primärprodukte die Sekundärprodukte geschützt werden können?

Antwort von Herrn Potočnik im Namen der Kommission
(20. Februar 2014)

Einer der Schwerpunkte des Siebten Umweltaktionsprogramms ist die Feststellung ([1]) „langfristige[r] Maßnahmen … die auf eine schadstofffreie Umwelt ausgerichtet sind". Das Recycling sollte keine unannehmbaren Risiken für die menschliche Gesundheit und die Umwelt mit sich bringen, und die Förderung einer Recycling-Gesellschaft muss Hand in Hand gehen mit dem allmählichen Aus-dem-Verkehr-ziehen schädlicher Chemikalien und ihrer Ersetzung durch weniger schädliche Alternativen, sofern dies wirtschaftlich und technisch machbar ist. Besondere Bedeutung hat hierbei die Änderung der POP-Verordnung ([2]), an der die Kommission zurzeit arbeitet, um Obergrenzen für die Konzentrationen neu aufgelisteter persistenter organischer Stoffe (POP) festzusetzen, damit sichergestellt wird, dass mit POP belastete Abfälle nicht recycelt werden. Außerdem strebt die Kommission an, gefährliche Stoffe in Primärprodukten zu ersetzen, um die Mengen an diesen Stoffen in den Abfallströmen zu reduzieren.

Der erste Aufruf zur Einreichung von Vorschlägen im Rahmen von Horizont 2020, dem Rahmenprogramm der Kommission für Forschung und Innovation (2014-2020), umfasst auch ein Vorhaben mit dem Titel „Call-Waste" ([3]), das Forschungs- und Innovationstätigkeiten unterstützen könnte, die darauf abzielen, die Schadstoffemissionen in den Produktions- und Verbrauchszyklen durch Abfallvermeidung, Gestaltung der Verfahrensabläufe und Produkte im Hinblick auf die Rezyklierfähigkeit, Wiederverwendung oder Abfallbewirtschaftung zu verringern.

Bezüglich des Recyclings von Kunststoffen, die mit Lebensmitteln in Berührung kommen, sieht die Verordnung (EG) Nr. 282/2008 ([4]) vor, dass nur Materialien aus Kunststoffen verwendet werden dürfen, die nach den Bestimmungen der Kunststoffverordnung ([5]) hergestellt wurden, und dies nur unter strenger Qualitätskontrolle innerhalb zugelassener Recyclingverfahren.

([1]) Beschluss Nr. 1386/2013/EU des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 20. November 2013 über ein allgemeines Umweltaktionsprogramm der Union für die Zeit bis 2020 „Gut leben innerhalb der Belastbarkeitsgrenzen unseres Planeten".

([2]) Verordnung (EG) Nr. 850/2004 des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 29. April 2004 über persistente organische Schadstoffe und zur Änderung der Richtlinie 79/117/EWG.

([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/calls/h2020-waste-2014-two-stage.html

([4]) Verordnung (EG) Nr. 282/2008 der Kommission vom 27. März 2008 über Materialien und Gegenstände aus recyceltem Kunststoff, die dazu bestimmt sind, mit Lebensmitteln in Berührung zu kommen, und zur Änderung der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 2023/2006.

([5]) Verordnung (EU) Nr. 10/2011 vom 14 Januar 2011 über Materialien und Gegenstände aus Kunststoff, die dazu bestimmt sind, mit Lebensmitteln in Berührung zu kommen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013665/13
to the Commission
Hiltrud Breyer (Verts/ALE)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Risk cycle: contamination of recycling systems with POPs and chemical additives

Many potentially hazardous substances are sold as chemicals or added as additives to products. The release of these substances into the environment gives cause for concern according to the Commission, the United Nations, the World Health Organisation and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. The EU-funded research project 'Risk-based management of chemicals and products in a circular economy at a global scale' (RISKCYCLE, FP7-226552) provides the general public with information on the risks associated with hazardous substances and additives and measures to minimise the risk from substances.

1. Does the Commission share the concern of researchers who point to the significant contamination of recycling systems with POPs and chemical additives?

2. Is it planning to intensify this area of research over the next few years by adding further activities? In the Commission's view, what are the main reasons why contaminants are increasingly accumulating in the recycling streams and the material recycling industry is increasingly faced with conflicting objectives between environmental protection and consumer protection?

3. Which recycling streams does it believe are particularly at risk, and where does it see the greatest need for action?

4. Does it agree with the author that it is only by reducing the input of particularly problematic substances such as POPs or substances of very high concern (SVHCs) in the primary products that these substances can be kept out of secondary products?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(20 February 2014)

The 7th Environmental Action Programme ([1]) sets among its priorities the identification of 'long-term actions with a view to reaching the objective of a non-toxic environment'. Recycling should not create an unacceptable risk to human health and the environment and promoting a recycling society needs to go hand in hand with the phase out of harmful chemicals and their substitution by safer alternatives where economically and technically viable. As a matter of priority, the Commission is preparing an amendment to the POP Regulation ([2]) to establish concentration limits for the newly listed POPs, in order to ensure that wastes contaminated with POPs are not recycled. The Commission is also striving for the substitution of hazardous substances in primary products to reduce the presence of hazardous substances in waste streams.

The first call for proposals in the context of Horizon 2020, the Commission Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020) comprises Call-Waste ([3]) which could support research and innovation aiming to reduce pollutants emissions in the production and consumption cycles, from waste prevention and the design of process and products for recyclability to reuse and waste management.

For the recycling of plastic materials for food contact, Regulation (EC) No 282/2008 ([4]) sets out that only materials originating from plastics manufactured in accordance with the Plastics Regulation ([5]) can be used under strict quality control within authorised recycling processes.

([1]) Decision No 1386/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the council of 20 November 2013 on a General Union Environment Action Programme to 2020 'Living well, within the limits of our planet'.
([2]) Regulation (EC) No 850/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on persistent organic pollutants and amending Directive 79/117/EEC.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/calls/h2020-waste-2014-two-stage.html
([4]) Commission Regulation (EC) No 282/2008 of 27 March on recycled plastic materials and articles intended to come into contact with foods and amending Regulation (EC) No 2023/2006.
([5]) Commission Regulation (EU) No 10/2011 of 14 January 2011 on plastic materials and articles intended to come into contact with food.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-013667/13
an die Kommission
Hiltrud Breyer (Verts/ALE)
(3. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Riskcycle: Flammschutzmittel für Kunststoffprodukte

1. Wie beurteilt die Kommission den Vorschlag, die in Forschungsvorhaben ermittelten unter dem Gesichtspunkt des Riskcycle relevanten Stoffe/chemischen Additive bezüglich ihrer REACH-Relevanz zu prüfen?

2. Wie ausführlich behandeln die Registrierdossiers dieser Stoffe (wie beispielsweise die relevanten Flammschutzmittel für Kunststoffprodukte) diesen Abfallaspekt?

3. Welche Konzepte verfolgt die Kommission, um Produkte aus recyceltem „Polystyrol" zukünftig vor dem Flammschutzmittel Hexabromocyclododekan (HBCD) zu schützen?

Antwort von Herrn Potočnik im Namen der Kommission
(14. Februar 2014)

1. Wenn die Europäische Chemikalienagentur und ihre Ausschüsse im Auftrag der Kommission besonders besorgniserregende Stoffe identifizieren oder Beschränkungen vorschlagen, berücksichtigen sie die Studien und Forschungsprojekte von Interessenträgern, wissenschaftlichen Einrichtungen und Sachverständigen sowie die neuesten wissenschaftlichen Erkenntnisse.

2. Im Rahmen des Registrierungsverfahrens müssen die Unternehmen Stoffsicherheitsbeurteilungen durchführen, die auch Expositionsszenarien umfassen. In diesen Expositionsszenarien ist gemäß Anhang I der REACH-Verordnung zu beschreiben, wie der Stoff hergestellt oder während seines Lebenszyklus verwendet wird. Um die Chemikalien-Exposition von Mensch und Umwelt bei der Entsorgung und/oder Wiederverwertung eines Stoffes zu verringern oder ganz zu vermeiden, müssen die Unternehmen auch Abfallbehandlungsmaßnahmen in Erwägung ziehen.

3. HBCD ist zulassungspflichtig gemäß der REACH-Verordnung, weshalb der Stoff nach dem 21. August 2015 nur auf zugelassene Weise verwendet werden darf. HBCD wurde zudem mit dem Beschluss SC-6/13 auf der sechsten Konferenz der Vertragsparteien des Stockholmer Übereinkommens vorbehaltlich bestimmter Ausnahmen verboten. Als Vertragspartei dieses Übereinkommens wird die EU diesen Beschluss umsetzen, wobei sie sowohl das Ergebnis des REACH-Zulassungsverfahrens als auch die Ausnahmeregelungen im Rahmen des Stockholmer Übereinkommens berücksichtigen wird.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013667/13
to the Commission
Hiltrud Breyer (Verts/ALE)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Risk cycle: flame retardants for plastic products

1. What is the Commission's view of the proposal to examine substances/chemical additives identified in research projects and relevant from the point of view of the risk cycle in respect of their REACH relevance?

2. In how much detail do the registration dossiers for these substances (such as the relevant flame retardants for plastic products) deal with this waste aspect?

3. What approach is the Commission taking in order to keep the flame retardant hexabromocyclododecane (HBCD) out of products made from recycled polystyrene in future?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(14 February 2014)

1. In identifying substances of very high concern and substances for restriction, the European Chemicals Agency upon request of the Commission, and its relevant Committees (together with its committees) take into account studies and research projects from stakeholders, institutions and experts in the field, and also the use of the most up-to-date knowledge.

2. As part of the registration process, the companies have to elaborate chemical safety assessments which include exposure scenarios. The exposure scenarios should describe how the substance is manufactured or used during its life-cycle as described in the Annex I of REACH. In order to reduce or avoid exposure of humans and the environment to the chemical substance during waste disposal and/or recycling, the companies shall also consider waste management measures.

3. HBCD is subject to Authorisation process under REACH, therefore only authorised uses of the substance will be allowed beyond 21 August 2015. HBCD was also banned, subject to exemptions, by Decision SC-6/13 taken at the sixth meeting of Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention. The EU, as a Party to that Convention, will transpose the decision, aligning it with the outcome of the REACH authorisation process and considering the exemptions of the Stockholm Convention.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-013668/13
an die Kommission
Hiltrud Breyer (Verts/ALE)
(3. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Riskcycle: illegaler Export von Abfall — Prüfung von REACH-Dossiers

Riesige Mengen an importierten Elektronikmüll und Blei landen illegal in Asien und Afrika und belasten dort vor allem Boden und Menschen. Nur ein Bruchteil wird dort umweltgerecht recycelt. Entsprechende Studien (des deutschen Umweltbundesamts bzw. der Vereinten Nationen) belegen die Dimension illegaler Exporte von Elektroaltgeräten.

1. Teilt die Kommission die Auffassung, dass bei der Prüfung der Registrierdossiers nach der REACH-Verordnung die reale Recyclingpraxis beispielsweise bei Elektronikschrott in Afrika oder Asien herangezogen werden muss und es nicht genügt, wenn von den Registrierpflichtigen nur die europäische Praxis bei der Berechnung von Expositionsszenarien herangezogen wird?

2. Liegen der ECHA Fälle vor, bei denen es aufgrund der Riskcycle-Problematik überhaupt zur Ermittlung von Expositionsszenarien gekommen ist?

3. Sind der Kommission Studien bekannt bzw. hat die Kommission selbst Studien zu dieser Problematik in Auftrag gegeben?

Antwort von Herrn Potočnik im Namen der Kommission
(12. Februar 2014)

In der REACH-Verordnung sind alle Stufen des Lebenszyklus eines Stoffes aus einem Herstellungsprozess aufgeführt, und bei der Stoffsicherheitsbeurteilung müssen die festgestellten Verwendungszwecke berücksichtigt werden. Dies umfasst auch Maßnahmen zur Abfallbewirtschaftung wie das Recycling in der Europäischen Union. Es ist nicht zwingend vorgeschrieben, Recyclingpraktiken in Drittländern in einem REACH-Expositionsszenario zu dokumentieren.

ECHA hat in einigen Fällen Expositionsszenarien im Zusammenhang mit dem Abfall-Lebenszyklus bewertet; wo es notwendig war, wurden Maßnahmen im Rahmen von REACH getroffen. Die ECHA-Leitlinien R18 ([1]) enthalten Hinweise darüber, wie die Bewertung des Abfall-Lebenszyklus durchgeführt werden sollte.

Seit 2009 unterstützt die Kommission gemeinsam mit anderen Geldgebern das Programm zur Ermittlung toxischer Standorte (Toxic Sites Identification Programme). Bei den Arbeiten, die in beinahe 50 Entwicklungsländern durchgeführt werden, wurden tausende Standorte gefunden, die mit Chemikalien kontaminiert sind. Die weltweite Allianz für Gesundheit und gegen Umweltverschmutzung (Global Alliance on Health and Pollution (GAHP)), an deren Gründung im Jahr 2012 die Kommission mitgewirkt hat, hilft Ländern mit niedrigen und mittleren Einkommen bei der Lösung von Problemen mit Abfall und toxischer Verunreinigung.

Der Vorschlag der Kommission ([2]) zur Änderung der Verordnung über die Verbringung von Abfällen hat zum Ziel, die Koordinierung, Effizienz und Wirksamkeit der Kontrollen durch die Mitgliedstaaten zu verbessern. Ein Großteil dieser Ausfuhren sind Elektro- und Elektronik-Altgeräte, die häufig in irreführender Weise als zur Wiederverwertung bestimmt eingestuft werden. Der Vorschlag sieht eine Umkehr der Nachweispflicht vor, so dass die zuständigen Behörden von den Ausführern Belege dafür verlangen können, dass die ausgeführten Geräte für die Wiederverwendung geeignet und voll funktionsfähig sind, oder im Falle von Abfall Nachweise darüber fordern können, welche Abfallbehandlungsmethoden im Bestimmungsland angewandt werden. Der Vorschlag wird derzeit vom Europäischen Parlament geprüft.

([1]) http://echa.europa.eu/documents/10162/13632/r18_v2_final_en.pdf (nur in Englisch).
([2]) KOM(2013)516 vom 11.7.2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013668/13
to the Commission
Hiltrud Breyer (Verts/ALE)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Risk cycle: illegal export of waste — examination of REACH dossiers

Huge quantities of illegally imported waste electronics and lead end up in Asia and Africa, where, in particular, they contaminate the soil and are harmful to people. Only a fraction of this is recycled there in an environmentally sound way. Relevant studies (by the German Federal Environment Agency and the United Nations) provide evidence of the scale of the illegal export of waste electrical equipment.

1. Does the Commission agree that, in connection with checking the registration dossiers in accordance with the REACH Regulation, the recycling practice actually followed must be used in the calculation of exposure scenarios, for example in connection with electronics waste in Africa or Asia, and it is not sufficient for the registrants to simply use the European practice?

2. Does the European Chemicals Agency have any cases where, on account of the risk cycle problem, it has actually been possible to identify exposure scenarios?

3. Is the Commission aware of any studies, or has it commissioned studies itself, concerning this problem?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(12 February 2014)

REACH sets out that all the stages of the life-cycle of a substance resulting from the manufacture and identified uses must be taken into account in the chemical safety assessment. This includes waste management measures such as recycling within the European Union. It is not compulsory to document recycling practices in third countries in a REACH exposure scenario.

A number of cases of exposure scenario related to the waste life cycle stage have been evaluated by ECHA and, where necessary, actions have been taken within the framework of REACH. ECHA Guidance R 18 ([1]) provides information on how the assessment of the waste life cycle stage should be performed.

Since 2009, under the Development Cooperation Instrument, the Commission along with other donors, supports the Toxic Sites Identification Program. The effort, underway in nearly 50 developing counties, has identified and assessed thousands of sites contaminated by chemicals. Formed in 2012, the Global Alliance on Health and Pollution (GAHP), co-founded by the Commission, assists low and middle-income countries to address the problem of waste and toxic pollution.

The Commission proposal ([2]) amending the regulation on Shipments of Waste aims to make Member States inspections and controls more coordinated, efficient and effective. Many such exports are of waste electrical and electronic equipment, often misleadingly classed as being for re-use. The proposal includes a change in the burden of proof enabling competent authorities to require shippers to prove that equipment being exported is fully functional and for re-use, or where it is waste to require evidence of the treatment methods in the destination country. The proposal is currently under consideration by the Parliament.

([1]) Available at: http://echa.europa.eu/documents/10162/13632/r18_v2_final_en.pdf
([2]) COM(2013) 516 of 11.7.2013.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-013669/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(3 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Συμφωνία επανεισδοχής ΕΕ-Τουρκίας

Σε μετωπική σύγκρουση με τη Λευκωσία φαίνεται να προσανατολίζεται η κυβέρνηση Ερντογάν. Δρομολογεί την υπογραφή και την υλοποίηση Συμφωνίας Επανεισδοχής Παρανόμων Μεταναστών στην ΕΕ, στα κράτη μέλη της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης, εξαιρώντας, ωστόσο, την Κυπριακή Δημοκρατία. Αυτό ακριβώς έπραξε και στην περίπτωση της εφαρμογής του Πρωτοκόλλου. Ως γνωστόν μια πανομοιότυπη «τουρκική συνταγή» ακολούθησε η Άγκυρα προς τις Βρυξέλλες το 2004-2005, διασφαλίζοντας την τελωνειακή της ένωση με όλα τα κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ, πλην της Κυπριακής Δημοκρατίας. Ως αποτέλεσμα, οι τουρκικοί λιμένες εξακολουθούν έκτοτε να είναι κλειστοί για κυπριακά σκάφη, γεγονός που παραβιάζει τη συμφωνία Τουρκίας-ΕΕ.

Ερωτάται λοιπόν η Επιτροπή:

1. Γνωρίζει αν τελικά η Τουρκία θα υλοποιήσει τη Συμφωνία Επανεισδοχής με όλα ανεξαιρέτως τα κράτη μέλη, περιλαμβανομένης και της Κύπρου;

2. Δρομολογείται η σύσταση μιας «κοινής επιτροπής» επανεισδοχής για να παρακολουθεί την ορθή υλοποίηση της συμφωνίας με όλες τις χώρες μέλη της ΕΕ;

3. Τι προτίθεται να πράξει η Επιτροπή ώστε να υλοποιηθεί στην πράξη η δήλωση της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής της 24ης Φεβρουαρίου 2011), όπου τονίζεται σαφώς, πως «η Συμφωνία Επανεισδοχής θα εφαρμοστεί σ' ολόκληρη την επικράτεια έκαστου κράτους μέλους της Ένωσης … και θα εφαρμοστεί χωρίς δυσμενείς διακρίσεις σ' όλα τα κράτη μέλη»

4. Τι προτίθεται να πράξει αν η Τουρκία εξαιρέσει τελικά την Κυπριακή Δημοκρατία;

Απάντηση της κ. Malmström εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(11 Φεβρουαρίου 2014)

Η συμφωνία επανεισδοχής μεταξύ της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης και της Τουρκίας την οποία υπέγραψε η Επίτροπος Malmström στις 16 Δεκεμβρίου 2013 δεν ισχύει για την Κυπριακή Δημοκρατία. Η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή προσβλέπει στην πλήρη και αποτελεσματική εφαρμογή της συμφωνίας έναντι όλων των κρατών μελών της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης.

Σύμφωνα με το άρθρο 19 της συμφωνίας, πρόκειται να συσταθεί μικτή επιτροπή επανεισδοχής ώστε να επιτραπεί στις δύο πλευρές η παροχή αμοιβαίας συνδρομής κατά την εφαρμογή και την ερμηνεία της συμφωνίας. Η Επιτροπή σκοπεύει να συγκροτήσει την εν λόγω επιτροπή χωρίς καθυστέρηση μόλις αρχίσει να ισχύει η συμφωνία. Η εν λόγω επιτροπή θα αποτελέσει το πρώτο και κυριότερο όργανο για την αντιμετώπιση οποιουδήποτε ζητήματος ενδέχεται να προκύψει κατά την εφαρμογή της συμφωνίας.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013669/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: EU-Turkey readmission agreement

The Erdogan Government seems to be heading for a confrontation with Nicosia. It is working towards signing and implementing an agreement on the readmission of illegal immigrants in the EU — in the Member States of the Union — with the exception of the Republic of Cyprus. This is exactly what it did with the Protocol. It is no secret that a similar 'Turkish formula' was applied by Ankara with regard to Brussels in 2004-2005, securing Turkey's customs union with all EU Member States except for the Republic of Cyprus. As a result, Turkish ports have been closed to Cypriot vessels since then, which is an infringement of the EU-Turkey agreement.

1. Does the Commission know whether Turkey will finally implement the Readmission Agreement with all of the Member States, including Cyprus?

2. Are moves under way to set up a 'joint commission' on readmission, in order to monitor the correct implementation of the agreement with all EU Member States?

3. What does it intend to do in order to ensure implementation of its statement of 24 February 2011, which makes it clear that 'the Readmission Agreement will be implemented in the whole territory of each Member State of the Union, and will be implemented without discrimination in all Member States'?

4. What does it intend to do if Turkey continues to exclude Cyprus?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(11 February 2014)

The European Union-Turkey readmission agreement, which Commissioner Malmström signed on 16 December 2013, does apply to the Republic of Cyprus. The Commission looks forward to the full and effective implementation of the Agreement vis-à-vis all the Member States of the European Union.

In accordance with Article 19 of the Agreement, a Joint Readmission Committee will be set up to allow the two sides to provide each other with mutual assistance in the application and interpretation of the Agreement. The Commission plans to establish this Committee without delay once the Agreement enters into force. The Committee will provide the first and main platform to address any issue which may arise in the implementation of the Agreement.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-013670/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(3 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Χειραγώγηση στην αγορά συναλλάγματος

Τα τελευταία χρόνια διεξάγονται έρευνες σε σειρά μεγάλων τραπεζών, ανάμεσα στις οποίες συγκαταλέγονται οι γαλλικές Credit Agricole και Société Générale, η γερμανική Deutsche Bank, οι Βρετανικές HSBC Holdings και Royal Bank of Scotland, για χειραγώγηση των επιτοκίων διατραπεζικής, Libor του Λονδίνου και Euribor της Ευρωζώνης.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Είναι ενημερωμένη για τη σχετική έρευνα;

2. Έχει εκτιμήσει τις επιπτώσεις από την χειραγώγηση των επιτοκίων στην ευρωπαϊκή αγορά και αν ναι, ποιες είναι και πόσο επηρεάζουν την ανταγωνιστικότητα στην κοινή αγορά και τις οικονομίες στις χώρες μέλη της ΕΕ και της Ευρωζώνης;

3. Γνωρίζει κατά πόσον οι πιο πάνω τράπεζες ή άλλες εμπλέκονται και σε ένα ακόμη σκάνδαλο, που αφορά στη χειραγώγηση της αγοράς συναλλάγματος και που οδηγούνται οι σχετικές έρευνες;

Απάντηση του κ. Barnier εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(10 Φεβρουαρίου 2014)

Η Επιτροπή είναι ενήμερη για τις έρευνες που διεξάγονται σχετικά με την παραποίηση των διατραπεζικών επιτοκίων δανεισμού Libor και Euribor και έχει αντιδράσει κατάλληλα.

Η πρόταση κανονισμού της Επιτροπής σχετικά με την κατάχρηση αγοράς και η πρόταση οδηγίας σχετικά με ποινικές κυρώσεις σε περίπτωση καταχρηστικών πρακτικών στην αγορά, οι οποίες αποτέλεσαν αντικείμενο πολιτικής συμφωνίας του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου και του Συμβουλίου τον Ιούνιο και τον Δεκέμβριο του 2013 αντιστοίχως, απαγορεύουν την παραποίηση των δεικτών αναφοράς.

Επιπλέον, στις 18 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013, η Επιτροπή πρότεινε σχέδιο κανονισμού σχετικά με τους δείκτες που χρησιμοποιούνται ως σημεία αναφοράς σε χρηματοπιστωτικά μέσα και σε χρηματοοικονομικές συμβάσεις ([1]), το οποίο έχει στόχο να εξασφαλίσει σταθερούς, ακριβείς και αξιόπιστους δείκτες αναφοράς. Η εν λόγω πρόταση συνοδεύεται από εκτίμηση επιπτώσεων, η οποία αξιολογεί τον αντίκτυπο που ενδέχεται να έχει η παραποίηση των δεικτών αναφοράς, όπως των Libor και Euribor, στους επενδυτές, την πραγματική οικονομία και την εμπιστοσύνη στις χρηματοπιστωτικές αγορές. Αξιολογεί επίσης την ανάγκη καθιέρωσης ενός ρυθμιστικού πλαισίου σε επίπεδο Ένωσης για τους δείκτες αναφοράς, ώστε να εξασφαλίζεται η εύρυθμη λειτουργία της εσωτερικής αγοράς καθώς και υψηλό επίπεδο προστασίας των καταναλωτών και των επενδυτών. Η πρόταση της Επιτροπής εξετάζεται επί του παρόντος από το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο και το Συμβούλιο στο πλαίσιο της συνήθους νομοθετικής διαδικασίας.

Η Επιτροπή γνωρίζει ότι ορισμένες αρμόδιες αρχές διεξάγουν έρευνες σχετικά με την παραποίηση ορισμένων δεικτών αναφοράς του χρηματιστηρίου. Ωστόσο, η διεξαγωγή των ερευνών αυτών εμπίπτει στην αρμοδιότητα των οικείων αρμόδιων αρχών και, συνεπώς, η Επιτροπή δεν μπορεί να τοποθετηθεί επί του προσανατολισμού των ερευνών.

Μολονότι είναι νωρίς για να εκφέρει γνώμη, η Επιτροπή εξετάζει το θέμα από πλευράς πολιτικής ανταγωνισμού, υπό την έννοια ότι η παραποίηση δεικτών αναφοράς του χρηματιστηρίου από διαχειριστές της αγοράς ενδέχεται να συνιστά παραβίαση των κανόνων ανταγωνισμού της ΕΕ.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/securities/benchmarks/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013670/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Foreign exchange market manipulation

Investigations have been conducted at a number of major banks in recent years, including Credit Agricole and Société Générale of France, Deutsche Bank of Germany and the UK's HSBC Holdings and Royal Bank of Scotland, concerning manipulation of the Libor and Euribor interbank lending rates.

1. Is the Commission aware of the investigations?

2. Has it evaluated the impact of the interest rate manipulation on the European market, and if so, what is the impact, and how much does it influence competitiveness in the common market and in EU and euro area Member State economies?

3. Is it aware of the extent to which the above banks or others are involved in another scandal relating to foreign exchange market manipulation, and of where the investigations in question are heading?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(10 February 2014)

The Commission is aware of the investigations concerning manipulation of the Libor and Euribor interbank lending rates and has responded accordingly.

Commission's proposals for a regulation on Market Abuse and for a directive on Criminal Sanctions for Market Abuse, politically agreed by the European Parliament and the Council in June and December 2013 respectively, prohibit the manipulation of benchmarks.

Moreover, on 18 September 2013 the Commission proposed a draft Regulation on indices used as benchmarks in financial instruments and financial contracts ([1]) which aims to ensure benchmarks are robust, accurate and reliable. This proposal is accompanied by an impact assessment which evaluates the impact that the manipulation of benchmarks such as Libor and Euribor may have on investors, the real economy and confidence in financial markets. It also assesses the need for a regulatory framework for benchmarks at Union level to ensure the proper functioning of the internal market and ensure a high level of consumer and investor protection. The Commission proposal is now being considered by the European Parliament and the Council under the ordinary legislative procedures.

The Commission is aware that a number of competent authorities are investigating the manipulation of certain foreign exchange benchmarks. However the conduct of these investigations is the responsibility of the relevant competent authorities and the Commission therefore cannot comment on where these investigations are heading.

While it is too early to pronounce on the matter, the Commission is looking into it from a competition policy perspective, since manipulations of the forex exchange rates by market operators may constitute violations of EU competition rules.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/securities/benchmarks/index_en.htm

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-013671/13
aan de Commissie
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(3 december 2013)

Betreft: Marokkaans verbod op contacten met Israëli's

Een grote meerderheid van de Marokkaanse wetgevers heeft een wetsvoorstel ingediend op grond waarvan elk contact met Israëli's wordt verboden. In het voorstel wordt beoogd ieder economisch, politiek, cultureel, artistiek of andersoortig contact met een natuurlijke persoon of een rechtspersoon die het Israëlische staatsburgerschap heeft of ingezetene is van de Israëlische entiteit, te bestraffen met twee tot vijf jaar gevangenisstraf en te beboeten met circa 10 000 tot 100 000 euro. Tevens biedt het voorstel de mogelijkheid om de persoon die het contact heeft gelegd het recht op pensioen te ontzeggen, te ontslaan of het Marokkaans staatsburgerschap te ontnemen ([1]).

1. Is de Commissie op de hoogte van dit voorstel?

2. Wat vindt de Commissie van deze maatregel, die ernstig inbreuk maakt op alle internationale overeenkomsten en verdragen inzake mensenrechten, met inbegrip van de Universele Verklaring van de Rechten van de Mens?

3. Heeft dit voorstel juridische gevolgen voor de buitenlandse betrekkingen van de EU met Marokko wanneer het wet wordt?

4. Welke gevolgen heeft het voorstel voor de onderhandelingen over een diepgaande en uitgebreide vrijhandelszone tussen de EU en Marokko, die net in maart 2013 zijn geopend? Is het voorstel een reden om de onderhandelingen af te breken?

5. Beschikt de Commissie over informatie waaruit blijkt dat ook andere staten contacten met natuurlijke en rechtspersonen op soortgelijke wijze inperken?

Antwoord van hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter Ashton namens de Commissie
(11 februari 2014)

De EU is op de hoogte van dit recente voorstel, maar het is onwaarschijnlijk dat het bij wet zal worden vastgesteld. Als dit wel het geval zou zijn, zal het vanuit verschillende invalshoeken grondig worden onderzocht.

([1]) http://www.eurojewcong.org/morocco/10351-moroccan-jews:-law-banning-contact-with-israelis-wont-pass.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013671/13
to the Commission
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Morocco outlaws contacts with Israelis

A large majority of the Moroccan parliament has proposed a bill that would outlaw all contacts with Israelis. The bill proposes that any economic, political, cultural, artistic or other contact with natural persons holding Israeli citizenship or resident in Israel or with Israeli legal persons be punished by two to five years imprisonment, a fine of approximately EUR10 000 to 100 000 and the possibility of losing the right to a pension, being dismissed from work or losing Moroccan citizenship. ([1])

1. Is the Commission aware of this proposal?

2. Does the Commission think that this measure could seriously undermine all international covenants and treaties on Human Rights, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?

3. Will this proposal, if it becomes law, have legal consequences for the EU's relations with Morocco?

4. How will this proposal affect the negotiations for a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area between the EU and Morocco, which were only launched in March 2013? Could it constitute a motive for terminating the negotiations?

5. Is the Commission aware of any other states with similar restrictions for natural and legal persons?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(11 February 2014)

The EU is aware of this recent proposal, although it is unlikely that it will be enacted. However, should this be a case, it will be thoroughly examined, from different perspectives.

([1]) http://www.eurojewcong.org/morocco/10351-moroccan-jews:-law-banning-contact-with-israelis-wont-pass.html

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013672/13
a la Comisión
Teresa Riera Madurell (S&D) y Ricardo Cortés Lastra (S&D)
(3 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Las relaciones científicas UE-México en el nuevo programa Horizonte 2020

Ya desde comienzos de la década de los años 60, un gran número de proyectos para la formación de investigadores en Europa han sido financiados por México. Como resultado, muchos científicos mexicanos que recibieron formación en Europa regresaron posteriormente a México para continuar su trabajo científico. Actualmente, México es uno de los grandes protagonistas de Latinoamérica en el campo de la ciencia y la tecnología, y, desde el Sexto Programa Marco, sus investigadores han participado activamente en los programas marco de investigación financiados por la Comisión. Además, la Comisión ha firmado acuerdos bilaterales de cooperación con el Gobierno mexicano. Dicha cooperación internacional ha sido de importancia estratégica para el desarrollo de la ciencia, la tecnología y la innovación en México.

La actual situación económica implica que México se haya agrupado con los denominados países MIST (México, Indonesia, Corea del Sur y Turquía), por lo que la Comisión ha modificado las condiciones para la participación de los grupos de investigación mexicanos en el programa Horizonte 2020. Ahora México tendrá que aportar una parte de la financiación.

¿Considera la Comisión que este cambio afectará de manera significativa a la participación de los grupos mexicanos en los proyectos del programa marco?

De ser así, ¿qué medidas tomará la Comisión para remediar, mantener y, si fuese necesario, mejorar nuestra cooperación científica y tecnológica con México? ¿Qué iniciativas adoptará la Comisión para garantizar que las universidades europeas continúen siendo un destino prioritario para la juventud mexicana en busca de una formación científica de gran calidad?

Respuesta de la Sra. Geoghegan-Quinn en nombre de la Comisión
(5 de febrero de 2014)

En el marco del nuevo enfoque estratégico de la cooperación internacional en investigación e innovación, las actividades de cooperación con México se verán incrementadas gracias a la apertura general de las convocatorias de Horizonte 2020, que se complementará con actividades de cooperación internacional específicas, desarrolladas sobre la base del interés común y el beneficio mutuo, una escala y un alcance óptimos, así como asociaciones y sinergias.

Asimismo, tanto las autoridades mexicanas como la Comisión han evaluado positivamente la cooperación en ciencia y tecnología en el contexto del 7PM ([1]). Con motivo de la sexta reunión del Comité Directivo Conjunto México-Unión Europea organizada en Bruselas por la Comisión el 28 de noviembre de 2013, ambas delegaciones acordaron intensificar la cooperación en los ámbitos clave de: investigación sobre energía geotérmica y tecnologías de la información y la comunicación. La cooperación también se verá reforzada con el Consejo Europeo de Investigación y el Centro Común de Investigación en tres áreas prioritarias: medio ambiente y clima, energía, y seguridad alimentaria. El Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones mexicano ha anunciado su compromiso de proporcionar financiación a las instituciones y a los investigadores mexicanos participantes en las convocatorias de Horizonte 2020, con lo que demuestra el interés de México por mantener la actual cooperación con la UE en materia de ciencia, tecnología e innovación.

Además, los investigadores mexicanos particulares pueden optar a financiación a través de las acciones Marie Skłodowska-Curie de Horizonte 2020, que brindan atractivas oportunidades de desarrollo de carreras de investigación en cualquier ámbito, incluida la movilidad hacia o desde Europa. No obstante, puede ocurrir que las organizaciones mexicanas solo reciban financiación para acoger investigadores Marie Skłodowska-Curie si esta participación se considera fundamental para la ejecución de la acción.

([1]) El Séptimo Programa Marco para acciones de investigación, desarrollo tecnológico y demostración (7PM, 2007-2013).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013672/13
to the Commission
Teresa Riera Madurell (S&D) and Ricardo Cortés Lastra (S&D)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: EU-Mexico scientific relations in the new H2020 programme

Since the early 1960s, a great many projects for training researchers in Europe have been funded by Mexico. As a result, many Mexican scientists who have received training in Europe have subsequently returned to Mexico to continue their scientific work. Today, Mexico is one of Latin America's key players in the field of science and technology and since FP6 its researchers have actively participated in the research framework programmes funded by the Commission. In addition, the Commission has signed bilateral cooperation agreements with the Mexican Government. This bilateral cooperation has been strategically important for the development of science, technology and innovation in Mexico.

The prevailing economic situation means that Mexico is now grouped with the so-called MIST countries, and as such the Commission has changed the conditions for the participation of Mexican research groups in H2020. Mexico will now have to provide a part of the funding.

In this context,

Does the Commission consider that this change will significantly affect the participation of Mexican groups in framework programme projects?

If so, what steps will the Commission take to remediate, maintain and, where necessary, improve our scientific and technological cooperation with Mexico? What initiatives will the Commission take to ensure that European universities remain a priority destination for young Mexicans seeking high-quality scientific training?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(5 February 2014)

In the context of the New Strategic Approach on International Cooperation in Research and Innovation, cooperation activities with Mexico will be enhanced by the general openness of Horizon 2020 calls complemented with targeted international cooperation activities, developed on the basis of common interest and mutual benefit, optimal scale and scope, partnership and synergy.

Furthermore, both the Mexican authorities and the Commission have appraised positively the state of S&T cooperation under FP7 ([1]). On the occasion of the 6th EU-Mexico Joint Steering Committee meeting hosted by the Commission in Brussels on 28 November 2013, both delegations agreed to step up cooperation in the following key areas: Geothermal energy research and Information and Communication Technologies. Cooperation will also be stepped up with the European Research Council and with the Joint Research Centre in three priority areas: environment and climate; energy; and food security. The Mexican National Research Council announced its commitment to finance Mexican institutions and researchers participating in the Horizon 2020 calls showing the interest of Mexico in maintaining the ongoing cooperation with the EU in Science, Technology and Innovation.

In addition, individual Mexican researchers are eligible for funding by the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions in Horizon 2020 offering attractive research career development opportunities in any field, and including mobility to or from Europe. However, Mexican organisations may only be funded for hosting Marie Skłodowska-Curie researchers if the participation is deemed essential for carrying out the action.

([1]) The Seventh Framework Programme for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration Activities (FP7, 2007-2013).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013673/13
to the Commission
Nessa Childers (NI) and Marian Harkin (ALDE)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Putting attention deficit hyperactivity disorder on the EU mental health agenda

A recently published European Expert White Paper on attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) — entitled 'ADHD: making the invisible visible' — has revealed that ADHD affects 1 in 20 children and adolescents in Europe. The paper shows that ADHD can have significant negative long-term consequences on multiple aspects of an individual's life, along with wide-ranging associated costs, especially for national healthcare and education systems. The White Paper shows that the annual healthcare costs arising from ADHD currently range from EUR 716 to EUR 2 134 per patient in many EU countries. Unfortunately, awareness and recognition of this mental health condition are still very limited across the Member States. As a result, many of those affected by ADHD do not benefit from adequate treatment and support facilities or, even worse, are left to cope with their condition by themselves.

1. Given the prevalence, impact and societal cost of ADHD, can the Commission indicate whether, and how, ADHD currently features on its health agenda, e.g. as part of the Joint Action on Mental Health and Well-being or of the Health for Growth programme (2014-2020)?

2. Will the Commission take prompt action — or encourage the Member States to do so — to address ADHD in children, particularly in schools, to increase awareness of ADHD among education professionals and to provide suitable information/guidance to families of people with ADHD?

3. Will the Commission encourage closer cross-border cooperation at EU level in researching the causes of ADHD, its diagnosis and management options, e.g. as part of Horizon 2020?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(7 February 2014)

The Commission has no specific policy on attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). However, it addresses this issue, together with the other mental disorders which may affect children and young people, through its work on mental health and disorders under the European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being. The work package on 'Mental Health and Schools' of the Joint Action on Mental Health and Well-being ([1]) intends to address ADHD indirectly in the context of work on the prevention of psycho-social distress, especially in adolescence, that may lead to psychopathological diseases in adulthood. ADHD Europe network is a collaborating partner in this work package.

In addition, the Commission is implementing a preparatory action for the European Parliament to create a European network of experts on adapted care for adolescents with mental health problems. This action will consider the usefulness and transferability of specific settings which offer a range of support services to adolescents with mental health problems, including ADHD.

Through the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7, 2007-2013), the Commission has fostered cross-border research on ADHD with an overall budget of EUR 26 million, addressing in particular the molecular and cellular mechanisms underlying ADHD and possible treatments.

Horizon 2020 ([2]), the new Framework Programme for Research and Innovation ([3]) (2014-2020), through its 'Health, demographic change and wellbeing' societal challenge will provide further opportunities to support research in this area, including in the bottom-up activities, e.g. the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions.

The Commission has at present no plans for further actions explicitly targeting ADHD.

([1]) http://www.mentalhealthandwellbeing.eu/
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/index.html
([3]) COM(2011) 808 final, COM(2011) 811 final.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-013677/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(3 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: India: persecuzione dei cristiani nello stato di Karnataka

In India, nello stato di Karnataka, in cima alle classifiche per episodi di violenza anticristiana, un gruppo indù che opera per lo sviluppo delle popolazioni tribali ha presentato alla polizia una denuncia contro i missionari cristiani, accusandoli di aver convertito oltre mille famiglie tribali al cristianesimo. Un gruppo di missionari cristiani è stato accusato di «convertire in modo fraudolento e con la forza» le popolazioni tribali dei villaggi nel distretto di Mysore e di altri distretti vicini.

Da tempo vi sono casi di persecuzioni e attacchi durante servizi liturgici o incontri di preghiera organizzati da comunità tribali cristiane.

Può dire la Commissione:

1. se è a conoscenza di queste circostanze?

2. come intende tutelare i cristiani che, anche in India, subiscono continuamente attacchi e persecuzioni?

Risposta dell'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente Catherine Ashton a nome della Commissione
(10 febbraio 2014)

L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente è a conoscenza delle questioni sollevate dall'onorevole parlamentare nella sua interrogazione. Per quanto riguarda l'India, infatti, i problemi delle comunità cristiane dello stato del Karnataka sono gli stessi che si incontrano in altre regioni.

L'Unione europea è molto sensibile alla necessità di tutelare i diritti umani e le libertà fondamentali in India; le forme di discriminazione, le questioni di genere, i diritti delle donne e le libertà di religione e di credo sono alcuni dei principali temi che vengono regolarmente affrontati nei contatti con le autorità indiane. Discussioni approfondite sulla situazione in India avvengono anche a livello multilaterale, in particolare in sede di Consiglio per i diritti umani delle Nazioni Unite a Ginevra.

Anche il dialogo UE-India sui diritti umani rappresenta una buona occasione per uno scambio regolare di opinioni in materia; l'ultimo di questi incontri si è svolto il 27 novembre 2013. Inoltre, la delegazione dell'UE in India è regolarmente in contatto con i membri del Consiglio nazionale per l'integrazione, nonché con la Commissione nazionale per le minoranze, organismi che sono stati istituiti per garantire che incidenti come quelli in questione, che sono violano i principi della libertà di religione e di credo sanciti dalla Costituzione indiana, vengano segnalati alle autorità competenti e che queste ultime adottino le misure del caso.

In India, l'UE sostiene anche progetti in materia di diritti umani e libertà fondamentali, in particolare attraverso lo Strumento europeo per la democrazia e i diritti umani (EIDHR).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013677/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: India: persecution of Christians in the state of Karnataka

In the Indian state of Karnataka, which tops the list for acts of violence against Christians, a Hindu group working for the development of tribal populations has lodged a complaint with the police against Christian missionaries, accusing them of having converted over 1 000 tribal families to Christianity. A group of Christian missionaries has been accused of 'fraudulently and forcibly converting' the tribal people of the villages in the district of Mysore and other neighbouring districts.

There have long been instances of persecution and attacks during church services and prayer meetings organised by Christian tribal communities.

1. Is the Commission aware of these circumstances?

2. How does it intend to protect Christians who are continually being attacked and persecuted in India, too?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(10 February 2014)

The HR/VP is aware of the issues mentioned by the Honourable Member in her question. Indeed, as regards to India, the problems Christian communities face in Karnataka are the same encountered in other regions.

The European Union pays great attention to the necessity of protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms in India; non-discrimination, gender issues and women's rights, freedom of religion and belief are some of the most relevant topics that are regularly raised with Indian authorities. Thorough discussions on the situation in India also take place at the multilateral level, in particular at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva.

The EU-India Human Rights Dialogue also provides a good opportunity to exchange views on these matters at regular intervals; the latest such meetings took place on 27 November 2013. Moreover, the EU Delegation in India is regularly in touch with members of the National Integration Council as well as with the National Commission for Minorities, bodies which were set up to ensure that incidents of such nature, which run counter the principles of Freedom of Religion and Belief enshrined in the Indian Constitution, are reported and dealt with by the relevant authorities

The EU also supports projects on human rights and fundamental freedoms in India, especially through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR).

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-013678/13
aan de Commissie
Philippe De Backer (ALDE)
(3 december 2013)

Betreft: Uitleg naar aanleiding van overheidsinvesteringen in hernieuwbare energie

Electrawinds is een Belgisch energiebedrijf dat internationaal actief is in de hernieuwbare energie. Het ontwikkelt en beheert projecten met windenergie, biomassa en de productie van biodiesel.

Opstarten van groene-energieprojecten is kapitaalintensief. In de loop van de jaren investeerden de Vlaamse en Federale overheid in totaal 160 miljoen euro in het bedrijf. Dit gebeurde via investeringsvehikels waarover de overheid direct of indirect controle heeft: Gimv, de Federale Participatie- en Investeringsmaatschappij, de Participatiemaatschappij Vlaanderen, Gigarant en het Vlaamse energieagentschap, de Gemeentelijke Holding en Belfius bank. Deze kapitaalinjecties gebeurden in de vorm van achtergestelde leningen en kapitaalsgaranties. Ondertussen kent Electrawinds financiële problemen en wordt de aard van de overheidsinvesteringen in vraag gesteld.

Vandaar de volgende vragen:

1. Welke richtlijnen bestaan er voor het verlenen van staatssteun voor hernieuwbare energie?

2. Waren de investeringen in Electrawinds door de verschillende overheden in lijn met deze regulering?

3. Zal de Commissie een onderzoek starten nu Electrawinds (bijna) failliet is?

4. Zijn er contacten geweest tussen de Commissie en de verschillende participatiemaatschappijen?

Antwoord van de heer Almunia namens de Commissie
(17 februari 2014)

Volgens Richtlijn 2009/28/EG ([1]) zijn de lidstaten verplicht om bindende doelstellingen te halen voor het aandeel van hernieuwbare energie in hun totale energieverbruik. In artikel 3, lid 3, van de richtlijn wordt bepaald dat lidstaten o.a. steunregelingen mogen gebruiken om deze doelstellingen te behalen. Overeenkomstig artikel 108, lid 3, VWEU moeten de lidstaten bovendien opgezette steunregelingen voor de productie van hernieuwbare energie bij de Commissie aanmelden wanneer die regelingen staatssteun inhouden. De Commissie beoordeelt de aangemelde regelingen aan de hand van de richtsnoeren inzake staatssteun ten behoeve van het milieu (mededeling 2008/C 82/01 van de Commissie) of de beschikkingspraktijk wanneer de richtsnoeren niet van toepassing zijn. Wanneer de Commissie een steunregeling heeft goedgekeurd in het kader van de richtsnoeren, moet steun aan een specifiek project in het kader van de regeling bij de Commissie worden aangemeld als die steun bepaalde grenswaarden overschrijdt.

Het is mogelijk dat Electrawinds dergelijke steun heeft gekregen, ofwel in België (zie bijvoorbeeld Beschikking N 14/2002 van de Commissie over overheidssteun voor windparken op zee en hernieuwbare energiebronnen in het algemeen, Beschikking N 550/2000 van de Commissie over een systeem van groenestroomcertificaten in het Vlaams Gewest, Beschikking N 415/A/01 en N 415/B/01 van de Commissie over een systeem van groenestroomcertificaten in het Waals Gewest en Beschikking N 608/04 van de Commissie over een systeem voor certificaten ter bevordering van warmtekrachtkoppeling en warmteproductie), ofwel in andere EU-landen. De Commissie is echter niet op de hoogte van enige specifieke steun aan Electrawinds.

De Commissie beschikt momenteel niet over informatie die een nieuw onderzoek naar Electrawinds zou rechtvaardigen en is niet in contact geweest met de participatiemaatschappijen waarnaar wordt verwezen.

([1]) Richtlijn (EG) 2009/28 van het Europees Parlement en van de Raad van 23 april 2009 ter bevordering van het gebruik van energie uit hernieuwbare bronnen en houdende wijziging en intrekking van Richtlijn (EG) 2001/77 en Richtlijn (EG) 2003/30, PB L 140 van 5.6.2009, blz. 16-62.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013678/13
to the Commission
Philippe De Backer (ALDE)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Explanation in response to public investment in renewable energy

Electrawinds is a Belgian energy company with international operations in renewable energy. It develops and manages projects relating to wind energy, biomass and the production of biodiesel.

Starting up green energy projects is capital intensive. In the course of the years, the Flemish and the Federal governments invested a total of EUR 160 million in the company. This was done through investment vehicles which the government directly or indirectly controlled: Gimv, the Federal Holding and Investment Company, de Participatiemaatschappij Vlaanderen, Gigarant and the Flemish Energy Agency, de Gemeentelijke Holding and Belfius Bank. These capital injections were made in the form of subordinated loans and capital guarantees. Meanwhile, Electrawinds has faced financial problems and the nature of public investment has been questioned.

Hence the following questions:

1. What directives are there for the granting of state aid for renewable energy?

2. Were investments in Electrawinds by the various authorities in line with this legislation?

3. Will the Commission launch an inquiry now that Electrawinds is (nearly) bankrupt?

4. Have there been any contacts between the Commission and the various private equity firms?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(17 February 2014)

Directive 2009/28/EC ([1]) obliges Member States to achieve binding targets for the share of renewable energy in their overall energy consumption. Article 3(3) of the directive provides that Member States may i.a. use support schemes to reach those targets. Moreover, support schemes for renewable energy production set up by Member States have to be notified to the Commission pursuant to Article 108(3) TFEU insofar as they involve state aid. The Commission assesses the notified schemes on the basis of the Guidelines on State Aid for Environmental Protection (Commission Notice 2008/C 82/01) or case practice where the Guidelines do not apply. Once an aid scheme has been approved by the Commission under the Guidelines, aid under the scheme to a specific project only has to be notified to the Commission if it exceeds certain thresholds.

It is possible that Electrawinds has obtained support from such renewables support schemes either in Belgium (cf. for instance Commission Decision N 14/2002 relating to federal support to off-shore wind farms and generally to renewables, Commission Decision N 550/2000 regarding a green certificates system in the Flemish Region, Commission Decisions N 415/A/01 and N 415/B/01 regarding a green certificates system in the Walloon Region and Commission Decision N 608/04 regarding a certificates system supporting Cogeneration and Heat Production) or in other Member States. However, the Commission is not aware of any specific support to Electrawinds.

The Commission currently does not have information that would justify launching an inquiry into Electrawinds and has not been in contact with the private equity firms referred to.

([1]) Directive 2009/28/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2009 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources and amending and subsequently repealing Directives 2001/77/EC and 2003/30/EC, OJ L 140, 5.6.2009, p. 16-62.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-013679/13
aan de Commissie
Bart Staes (Verts/ALE)
(3 december 2013)

Betreft: De impact van de geplande verbreding van de Brusselse ring door Vlaanderen en de Europese luchtkwaliteitsnormen

Om de luchtvervuiling tegen te gaan en de daaraan verbonden schadelijke gevolgen voor de volksgezondheid en het milieu tot een minimum in te perken, voert de EU sinds 1996 beleid rond schonere lucht voor Europa. De in Richtlijn 2008/50/EG vastgelegde grenswaarden voor schadelijke stoffen dienen sinds 2010 nageleefd te worden. De Commissie keurde op 6 juli 2012 voor Vlaanderen een aanvraag goed tot 5 jaar uitstel voor het halen van de grenswaarden voor stikstofdioxide (NO_2) op basis van een luchtkwaliteitsplan dat uitstippelt hoe Vlaanderen de normen in 2015 wél zal halen. Vlaanderen houdt zich echter niet aan dit luchtkwaliteitsplan. De belangrijkste maatregel van het plan (ongeveer 80 % van de geplande vermindering van de NO_2-uitstoot), namelijk een kilometerheffing voor vrachtverkeer, werd uitgesteld van 2013 tot 2016. Bovendien besliste de Vlaamse regering op 25 oktober 2013 tot een verbreding van de ring rond Brussel. De verbreding van de ring is niet opgenomen in het luchtkwaliteitsplan. Dit terwijl het milieueffectenrapport over de verbreding van de ring aantoont dat hierdoor de Europese luchtkwaliteitsnormen zelfs tegen 2020 niet gehaald zullen worden. Vlaanderen bereidt deze plannen sinds 2008 voor en had de Commissie reeds bij de uitstelaanvraag op de hoogte kunnen brengen. Brussel is in permanente overschrijding van de grenswaarden voor stikstofdioxide.

1. Is de Commissie op de hoogte van het niet uitvoeren van belangrijke maatregelen van het Vlaamse luchtkwaliteitsplan en van de beslissing van de Vlaamse regering om de Brusselse ring uit te breiden en de bijhorende effecten voor het halen van de stikstofgrenswaarden?

2. Wat is de Commissie bereid te doen aan het niet naleven van de gemaakte afspraken met de Commissie door Vlaanderen en de permanente overschrijding van de grenswaarden door Brussel? Kan de Commissie het toegestane uitstel voor Vlaanderen intrekken?

Antwoord van de heer Potočnik namens de Commissie
(11 februari 2014)

1. De Commissie is alleen op de hoogte van het voornemen om een nieuw ontwerp van overbelaste knooppunten en daaraan gerelateerde verbreding van bepaalde wegen te onderzoeken, maar niet van een definitief besluit. Een verbreding van de ring zou een milieueffectbeoordeling (MER) moeten ondergaan, waarvan de uitvoering volgens bij de Commissie beschikbare informatie gepland staat voor 2014. Bij de MER moet specifiek aandacht worden besteed aan verwachte effecten, in het bijzonder op geluidsoverlast, luchtkwaliteit, landschap en mensen. Verder verwijst de Commissie het geachte Parlementslid naar haar antwoord op schriftelijke vraag P-13646/13 ([1]).

2. Het besluit van de Commissie waarnaar het geachte Parlementslid verwijst, is alleen van toepassing op de haven en de agglomeratie van Antwerpen. Het stelt Vlaanderen noch de regio Brussel vrij van hun verplichtingen volgens Richtlijn 2008/50/EG ([2]). Als de jaarlijkse grenswaarden voor NO_2 worden overschreden, zal de Commissie de kwestie onderzoeken en passende maatregelen vaststellen, zoals zij al heeft gedaan voor de PM10-daggrenswaarde.

([1]) Beschikbaar op: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/nl/parliamentary-questions.html;jsessionid=7083A04DF5C6DD1878744E6A7E9CA839.node2#sides Form
([2]) PB L 152 van 11.6.2008.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013679/13
to the Commission
Bart Staes (Verts/ALE)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: The impact of the planned widening of the Brussels Ring Road by Flanders and European air quality standards

In order to combat air pollution and minimise the associated harmful effects on human health and the environment, the EU has been pursuing a policy for cleaner air for Europe since 1996. Since 2010 we have had limit values for pollutants laid down in Directive 2008/50/EC that need to be observed. On 6 July 2012, the Commission granted an application by Flanders for a 5-year extension for achieving the limit values for nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) on the basis of an air quality plan that maps out how Flanders will reach the standards by 2015. However, Flanders is not complying with this air quality plan. The centrepiece of the plan (accounting for around 80% of the planned reduction of NO_2 emissions), a toll for heavy goods vehicles, to be specific, was deferred from 2013 to 2016. In addition, the Flemish Government decided on 25 October 2013 to widen the Brussels Ring Road. However, the widening is not included in the air quality plan. And this at a time when the environmental impact assessment on the widening of the Ring Road has shown that these European air quality standards will not even be achieved by 2020. The Flanders has been preparing these plans since 2008 and could have already notified the Commission when it applied for the deferral. Brussels has continuously been exceeding limit values for nitrogen dioxide.

1. Is the Commission aware of the failure to carry out key measures of the Flemish Air Quality Plan and of the Flemish Government's decision to widen the Brussels Ring Road and the associated implications for the achievement of the nitrogen limits?

2. What is the Commission prepared to do to address non-compliance by Flanders with the agreements it made with the Commission and continuous exceedance of limit values by Brussels? Can the Commission withdraw the deferral it granted to Flanders?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(11 February 2014)

1. The Commission is only aware of the intention to study the redesign of congested junctions and associated targeted widening, and not of a final decision. Widening of the ring would have to undergo the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), which according to information available to the Commission is planned to be carried out in 2014. The EIA should pay specific attention to expected impacts, notably on noise, air quality, landscape and people. In addition the Commission refers the Honourable member to the reply to Question P-13646/13 ([1]).

2. The Commission decision referred to by the Honourable Member only applies to the port and agglomeration of Antwerp. It does not exempt Flanders nor the Brussels region from their obligations under Directive 2008/50/EC ([2]). If the annual limit values for NO_2 are exceeded, the Commission will examine the issue and decide on an appropriate course of action, as it already did for the PM10 daily limit value.

([1]) Available at http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html;jsessionid=7083A04DF5C6DD1878744E6A7E9CA839.node2#sidesForm
([2]) OJ L 152, 11.6.2008.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-013680/13
adresată Comisiei
Daciana Octavia Sârbu (S&D)
(3 decembrie 2013)

Subiect: Rolul vitaminei D în prevenirea cancerului

În 2008, un studiu efectuat de cercetători canadieni a dus la concluzia că pacientele care aveau un nivel suficient de vitamina D în organism prezentau un risc de două ori mai mic de îmbolnăvire de cancer la sân decât pacientele care prezentau un deficit de vitamina D, iar studii efectuate în Norvegia și Germania au ajuns la concluzii asemănătoare.

Deficitul de vitamina D poate crește riscul instalării bolilor cronice, inclusiv osteoporoza, bolile de inimă, unele forme de cancer și de scleroză, precum și a bolilor infecțioase, cum ar fi tuberculoza și chiar gripa sezonieră, conform Școlii de Sănătate Publică de la Harvard.

Având în vedere cele relatate mai sus:

1. Poate spune Comisia dacă ar găsi oportună finanțarea unei campanii de conștientizare în legătură cu rolul important al vitaminei D în menținerea sănătății?

2. Cum poate Comisia încuraja o alimentație bogată în vitamina D?

Răspuns dat de dl Borg în numele Comisiei
(3 februarie 2014)

Comisia este în favoarea unei abordări integrate, care să implice actori de la nivel local, regional, național și european, pentru a promova o alimentație sănătoasă, cu un consum corespunzător de fructe și legume, care să permită un aport echilibrat al tuturor substanțelor nutritive utile în prevenirea cancerului. Strategia din 2007 a UE pentru Europa privind problemele de sănătate legate de alimentație, excesul de greutate și obezitate ([1]) promovează o alimentație echilibrată și un stil de viață activ în rândul cetățenilor UE.

La solicitarea Comisiei Europene, Grupul pentru produse dietetice, nutriție și alergii din cadrul Autorității Europene pentru Siguranța Alimentară (EFSA) a fost invitat să reevalueze siguranța vitaminei D și să stabilească, dacă este necesar, doze maxime tolerabile (DMT) revizuite de vitamina D, pentru toate categoriile de populație vizate ([2]). Informațiile privind aportul de vitamina D, rezultate în urma unor anchete desfășurate în 14 țări europene, indică faptul că, pentru toate categoriile de populație, consumul de vitamina D se situează sub nivelul dozei maxime tolerabile revizuite. Nu a fost demonstrată explicit nicio legătură între consumul de vitamina D și reducerea riscului de cancer.

În mod similar, Institutul Oncologic American nu recomandă utilizarea de suplimente de vitamina D pentru a reduce riscul de cancer colorectal, cancer la sân sau orice alt tip de cancer ([3]). Concluzii asemănătoare se regăsesc în studiul „Vitamine D and cancer" al Agenției Internaționale de Cercetare în domeniul Cancerului ([4]).

Prin urmare, în prezent, Comisia nu are în vedere acțiuni specifice de sensibilizare a populației cu privire la consumul de vitamina D pentru prevenirea cancerului.

([1]) COM(2007) 279.
([2]) http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/doc/2813.pdf
([3]) http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/prevention/vitamin-D
([4]) http://www.iarc.fr/en/publications/pdfs-online/wrk/wrk5/Report_VitD.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013680/13
to the Commission
Daciana Octavia Sârbu (S&D)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Role of vitamin D in cancer prevention

In 2008 a study conducted by researchers in Canada reached the conclusion that female patients who had a sufficient level of vitamin D in their body had a two times lower risk of having breast cancer than patients with vitamin D deficiency. Studies conducted in Norway and Germany also reached similar conclusions.

Vitamin D deficiency may increase the risk of the onset of chronic conditions such as osteoporosis, heart diseases, some forms of cancer and sclerosis, as well as of infectious diseases such as tuberculosis and even seasonal flu, according to the Harvard School of Public Health.

Taking into consideration the above,

1. Can the Commission say whether it would consider it appropriate to fund a campaign to raise awareness about the important role vitamin D plays in keeping healthy?

2. How can the Commission encourage people to eat food rich in vitamin D?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(3 February 2014)

The Commission advocates an integrated approach, involving stakeholders at local, regional, national and European levels, to promote a healthy diet, with suitable fruit and vegetable consumption, permitting a balanced intake of all nutrients useful to prevent cancer. The 2007 EU Strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity-related Health Issues ([1]) promotes a balanced diet and active lifestyles among EU citizens.

Following a request from the European Commission, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) Panel on Dietetic Products, Nutrition and Allergies) was asked to re-evaluate the safety of vitamin D and to provide, if necessary, revised Tolerable Upper Intake Levels (ULs) of vitamin D for all relevant population groups ([2]). Data on vitamin D intake from surveys in 14 European countries indicate that intake is below the revised Upper Intake Levels for vitamin D for all population groups. No association between higher intakes of vitamin D and reduction of risk cancer has been explicitly demonstrated.

Similarly, the US National Cancer Institute does not recommend, the use of vitamin D supplements to reduce the risk of colorectal, breast or any other type of cancer ([3]). Similar conclusions can be found in the study 'Vitamin D and cancer' from the International Agency on Research on Cancer ([4]).

On this basis, the Commission does not envisage at this moment specific actions on awareness on intake of vitamin D for cancer prevention.

([1]) COM(2007) 279.
([2]) http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/doc/2813.pdf
([3]) http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/prevention/vitamin-D
([4]) http://www.iarc.fr/en/publications/pdfs-online/wrk/wrk5/Report_VitD.pdf

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite P-013682/13
à la Commission
Catherine Grèze (Verts/ALE)
(3 décembre 2013)

Objet: Artificialisation des sols liée au projet Val Tolosa

Val Tolosa est un projet de mégacentre commercial à Plaisance du Touch, en Haute-Garonne, en proche banlieue toulousaine. Le projet s'étend sur près de 115 000 m^2 et nécessiterait pour sa mise en œuvre la réalisation de nouvelles infrastructures routières et la destruction de plus de 44 hectares de terres naturelles. Il rencontre une forte opposition parmi la population depuis plus de huit ans; l'argument de l'intérêt public majeur pour sa réalisation est contesté en raison de son intérêt purement financier et spéculatif.

Selon le Conseil national des centres commerciaux, plus de 50 centres commerciaux sont actuellement en construction en France, alors que le pays en compte déjà plus de 740. Le rythme de création des implantations commerciales ne cesse de s'accélérer depuis 10 ans. D'après l'Assemblée des communautés de France, qui fédère les élus d'intercommunalités, «tous les ans, la surface commerciale augmente de plus de 3 %, alors que la consommation évolue à moins de 1 %». Tous situés en périphérie urbaine ou en milieu rural, ces centres commerciaux contribuent très fortement à l'artificialisation des terres.

À l'échelle européenne, c'est l'équivalent d'un département de surfaces agricoles qui disparaît chaque année. C'est pourquoi la Commission européenne a placé la lutte contre ce phénomène parmi ses priorités: elle a publié, le 12 avril 2012, de nouvelles lignes directrices contre l'imperméabilisation des sols.

Au sein de ces lignes directrices figurent les assertions et engagements suivants: «l'imperméabilisation des sols peut être freinée par un aménagement avisé de l'espace et par la limitation de l'étalement urbain»; «la limitation de l'imperméabilisation des sols est toujours prioritaire par rapport aux mesures d'atténuation ou de compensation, car l'imperméabilisation des sols est un processus quasiment irréversible»; «la Commission européenne est résolue à œuvrer en faveur d'une utilisation plus durable des terres et du sol».

1. La Commission est-elle informée du projet Val Tolosa et de l'artificialisation de terres qu'il entraînerait?

2. Compte-t-elle agir pour interdire ce projet?

3. Comment la Commission compte-t-elle faire appliquer par les États membres ses lignes directrices contre l'imperméabilisation des sols?

4. La Commission peut-elle demander à l'État membre de lui fournir les arguments détaillés qui l'ont amené à considérer que ce projet relevait de l'intérêt public majeur?

Réponse donnée par M. Potočnik au nom de la Commission
(15 janvier 2014)

1. La Commission n'est pas informée du projet Val Tolosa.

2. Les décisions d'aménagement du territoire relèvent de la responsabilité des autorités nationales et la Commission ne prend des mesures que s'il existe des preuves d'une infraction à la législation de l'UE.

3. Les lignes directrices sur l'imperméabilisation des sols ([1]) contiennent des exemples de bonnes pratiques appliquées dans le cadre de mesures nationales, régionales et locales pour limiter, atténuer ou compenser l'imperméabilisation des sols lors de leur occupation. Il s'agit d'un outil qui peut être utilisé par les autorités compétentes lors de l'évaluation des multiples incidences de l'imperméabilisation des sols sur l'environnement et l'économie locale. Ces lignes directrices ne sont toutefois pas contraignantes.

4. Conformément à la directive 2011/92/UE ([2]), un tel projet s'inscrit dans le cadre de l'annexe II, paragraphe 10, point b, et devrait être soumis à une procédure de vérification. Cette procédure est menée par les autorités nationales compétentes avant l'octroi de l'autorisation et vise à déterminer si le projet est susceptible d'avoir des incidences notables sur l'environnement.

([1]) Lignes directrices [SWD(2012) 101 final/2].
([2]) Directive 2011/92/UE concernant l'évaluation des incidences de certains projets publics et privés sur l'environnement (JO L 26 du 28.1.2012).

En outre, lorsque le projet est susceptible d'avoir des incidences significatives sur un site Natura 2000, une évaluation appropriée est nécessaire, en vertu de l'article 6, paragraphe 3, de la directive «Habitats» ([3]). Si l'évaluation est négative, l'autorité compétente peut décider d'autoriser le projet, pour autant que les conditions de l'article 6, paragraphe 4, soient remplies, y compris l'existence de raisons impératives d'intérêt public majeur. Dans ce cas, la Commission doit être informée par les autorités compétentes des mesures de compensation adoptées et est alors en mesure de poser des questions en cas de besoin, en particulier s'il existe des preuves d'une infraction à la législation de l'UE. En ce qui concerne le projet en cause, il n'existe aucune preuve de ce type et la Commission n'a pas l'intention, sur la base des informations disponibles, d'ouvrir une enquête.

Des informations en matière d'environnement peuvent être demandées conformément à la directive 2003/4/CE ([4]).

([3]) Directive 92/43/CEE du Conseil du 21 mai 1992 concernant la conservation des habitats naturels ainsi que de la faune et de la flore sauvages (JO L 206 du 22.7.1992).

([4]) Directive 2003/4/CE du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 28 janvier 2003 concernant l'accès du public à l'information en matière d'environnement et abrogeant la directive 90/313/CEE du Conseil (JO L 41 du 14.2.2003).

(English version)

Question for written answer P-013682/13
to the Commission
Catherine Grèze (Verts/ALE)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Land take in connection with the Val Tolosa plan

Val Tolosa is a plan to build a massive shopping centre in Plaisance du Touch (Haute-Garonne), in the inner suburbs of Toulouse. It will stretch over an area of almost 115 000 m^2; new road infrastructure will need to be built and over 44 hectares of natural land destroyed. The local population has fought strongly against the plan for over eight years. The argument that its construction is of overriding public interest is disputed on the grounds that the interest is purely financial and speculative.

According to the CNCC, France's National Council for shopping centres, more than 50 shopping centres are under construction at present in France, which already has more than 740 across the country. For 10 years now, retail outlets have been springing up at an ever increasing rate. The 'Assemblée des communautés de France', an inter-municipal association of elected municipal councillors, says that the amount of land occupied by shopping centres rises every year by more than 3% but consumption rises by less than 1%. These shopping centres, all sited on the edge of towns and cities or in rural areas, are responsible for a large share of land take.

At European level, this is equivalent to seeing a whole French 'département' of agricultural land disappear every year. This is why the Commission has made combating this phenomenon one of its priorities: on 12 April 2012 it published new guidelines to limit soil sealing.

The guidelines contain the following assertions and commitments — 'soil sealing can be limited through smart spatial planning and limiting urban sprawl' and 'limiting soil sealing always has priority over mitigation or compensation measures, since soil sealing is an almost irreversible process' — as well as declaring that the Commission is determined to work towards a more sustainable use of land and soil.

1. Does the Commission know about the Val Tolosa plan and the land take this will entail?

2. Will it take action to stop this plan?

3. How will the Commission ensure Member States apply its guidelines to limit soil sealing?

4. Could the Commission ask the Member State to furnish it with the detailed arguments that led it to consider this project to be of overriding public interest?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(15 January 2014)

1. The Commission is not aware of the Val Tolosa plan.

2. Planning decisions are the responsibility of national authorities and the Commission only takes action if there is evidence of a breach of EU legislation.

3. The Soil Sealing Guidelines ([1]) contain best practice examples of national, regional and local measures to limit, mitigate or compensate soil sealing in case of land take. They are a tool which may be used by competent authorities in considering the many impacts that soil sealing has on the environment and the local economy. However, they are not binding.

4. According to Directive 2011/92/EU ([2]), such a project falls under Annex II.10.b and should be made subject to a screening procedure. This procedure is carried out by the relevant national authorities before consent is given and aims to determine whether the project is likely to have significant effects on the environment.

([1]) Guidelines to (SWD(2012) 101 final/2).
([2]) On the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (OJ L 26, 28.1.2012).

In addition, if the project is likely to have a significant impact on a Natura 2000 site, an appropriate assessment will be required under Article 6.3 of the Habitats Directive ([3]). If the assessment is negative the competent authority may decide to authorise the project, provided that the conditions of Article 6.4 are met, including the existence of imperative reasons of overriding public interest. In that case the Commission has to be informed by the competent authorities of the compensation measures adopted and is then in a position to ask questions if necessary, in particular if there is evidence of a breach of EU legislation. With regard to the project at stake, there is no such evidence and the Commission does not intend, on the basis of the information available, to open an investigation.

Environmental information can be requested in accordance with Directive 2003/4/EC ([4]).

([3]) Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (OJ L 206, 22.7.1992).

([4]) Directive 2003/4/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2003 on public access to environmental information and repealing Council Directive 90/313/EEC (OJ L 41, 14.2.2003).

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης P-013683/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Theodoros Skylakakis (ALDE)
(3 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Σύνδεση ταμειακών μηχανών με Γενική Γραμματεία Πληροφορικών Συστημάτων στην Ελλάδα

Ο ελληνικός νόμος 3943 και συγκεκριμένα το αρθρο 26 παράγραφος 8, που ψηφίστηκε την 31η Μαρτίου 2011, υποχρέωνε τους επιτηδευματίες που εκδίδουν αποδείξεις λιανικής πώλησης ή παροχής υπηρεσιών με χρήση φορολογικών ταμειακών μηχανών να διαβιβάζουν ηλεκτρονικά τα δεδομένα των φορολογικών στοιχείων που εκδίδονται σε βάση δεδομένων της Γενικής Γραμματείας Πληροφοριακών Συστημάτων (ΓΓΠΣ).

Ο σκοπός του άρθρου ήταν η πάταξη της φοροκλοπής του ΦΠΑ στην Ελλάδα, που εκτιμάται ότι κυμαίνεται μεταξύ 8-10 δισεκατομμυρίων ευρώ, καθώς και ο μετριασμός της διαφθοράς που προκύπτει από τον φορολογικό έλεγχο με την φυσική παρουσία εφοριακών.

Ύστερα από καθυστέρηση 30 μηνών, διάστημα κατά το οποίο το άρθρο 26 παρ. 8 του 3943 ουδέποτε εφαρμόστηκε, το Υπουργείο Οικονομικών εξέδωσε ανακοίνωση σύμφωνα με την οποία «η υποχρέωση αποστολής online αναλυτικών στοιχείων ανά συναλλαγή δεν θα υλοποιηθεί προς το παρόν».

Δεδομένου ότι η απόφαση αυτή αναβάλλει εκ νέου και επ' αόριστον την πλήρη εφαρμογή του νόμου 3943, που θα μπορούσε να βοηθήσει σημαντικά στην βελτίωση των δημοσίων οικονομικών της Ελλάδας, μέσω της πάταξης της φοροδιαφυγής, της φοροκλοπής του ΦΠΑ και της διαφθοράς στην δημόσια διοίκηση,

Δεδομένου ότι ομάδα εργασίας του Υπουργείου Οικονομικών είχε βρει τεχνική λύση για να εφαρμοστεί πλήρως το άρθρο 26 παράγραφος 8 ήδη μέσα στο 2012, ενώ η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή άμεσα ενέκρινε τις σχετικές τεχνικές προδιαγραφές,

Δεδομένου ότι η Επιτροπή έχει δηλώσει ότι η φοροδιαφυγή και όχι η αύξηση της φορολογίας που υλοποιείται σήμερα, θα έπρεπε να αποτελεί προτεραιότητα του προγράμματος δημοσιονομικής προσαρμογής, καθώς επίσης και ότι οι πολιτικές της ελληνικής κυβέρνησης δεσμεύονται από το μνημόνιο συμφωνίας μεταξύ της Ελλάδας και της τρόικα, μέλος της οποίας είναι η Επιτροπή,

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Ποια θέση παίρνει απέναντι στην ανακοίνωση του υπουργείου οικονομικών;

2. Η τρόικα έχει συμφωνήσει στην εκ νέου αναβολή εφαρμογής του νόμου;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(18 Φεβρουαρίου 2014)

Το δελτίο Τύπου του Υπουργείου Οικονομικών κάνει λόγο για μια σημαντική απλοποίηση του ελληνικού συστήματος παρακολούθησης των λογιστικών και των φορολογικών στοιχείων. Στο παρελθόν, το σύστημα αυτό χαρακτηριζόταν ως δύσκαμπτο και πολύπλοκο, απέκλινε από τις διεθνείς βέλτιστες πρακτικές και επιβάρυνε υπερβολικά τους οικονομικούς φορείς χωρίς κάποιο θετικό αντίκρυσμα στη φορολογική συμμόρφωση. Επομένως, η Επιτροπή εκφράζει την ικανοποίησή της για το προαναφερθέν ολοκληρωμένο σχέδιο για την απλοποίηση του συστήματος. Το εγχείρημα ανταποκρίνεται τόσο σε πάγιο αίτημα των ελληνικών και διεθνών επιχειρήσεων όσο και στην ανάγκη εναρμόνισης με τις διεθνείς βέλτιστες πρακτικές.

Όσον αφορά την υποχρεωτική χρήση Μητρώων Ηλεκτρονικών Συναλλαγών από όλους τους φορολογούμενους και τη συστηματική διαβίβαση στο Υπουργείο Οικονομικών αναλυτικών δεδομένων κάθε συναλλαγής, παραδείγματα άλλων χωρών δείχνουν ότι η συστηματική διαβίβαση των σχετικών δεδομένων στις φορολογικές αρχές δεν αρκεί για την αντιμετώπιση της απάτης στον τομέα του ΦΠΑ. Εξίσου απαραίτητη είναι η ενίσχυση της διοικητικής ικανότητας.

Για τον σκοπό αυτό, η Επιτροπή πρότεινε την παροχή εκτενούς τεχνικής βοήθειας, προκειμένου να περιοριστούν οι κίνδυνοι εφαρμογής και να βελτιωθεί η διοικητική ικανότητα.

Η Επιτροπή έχει πλήρη επίγνωση του οικονομικού διακυβεύματος που συνδέεται με την εφαρμογή του ΦΠΑ στην Ελλάδα, όπως περιγράφεται σε πρόσφατη αναφορά της ΓΔ TAXUD, η οποία συγκρίνει το έλλειμμα ΦΠΑ σε κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ ([1]). Η καταπολέμηση της απάτης στον τομέα του ΦΠΑ αποτελεί προτεραιότητα της Επιτροπής και πρόκειται να απασχολήσει έντονα τις υπηρεσίες της Επιτροπής τόσο στο πλαίσιο των συζητήσεων που διεξάγονται σχετικά με την τέταρτη επανεξέταση του δεύτερου προγράμματος οικονομικής προσαρμογής όσο και στο πλαίσιο παροχής τεχνικής υποστήριξης.

Επιπλέον, η ομάδα δράσης για την Ελλάδα προωθεί τη συνεργασία με το Βέλγιο στον τομέα αυτόν, καθώς η χώρα διαθέτει μακρόχρονη πείρα στην καταπολέμηση της απάτης στον τομέα του ΦΠΑ και ιδίως στις αποκαλούμενες αλυσιδωτές απάτες ΦΠΑ (carousel).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/resources/documents/common/publications/studies/vat-gap.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer P-013683/13
to the Commission
Theodoros Skylakakis (ALDE)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Link between cash registers and the General Secretariat for Information Systems in Greece

Greek Law No 3943, in particular Article 26, paragraph 8, thereof, which was adopted on 31 March 2011, required traders who issue receipts for retail sales or the provision of services with fiscal cash registers to transmit electronically the tax data issued to a database of the General Secretariat for Information Systems.

The purpose of this Article was to combat VAT tax fraud in Greece, which is estimated at between EUR 8 and 10 billion, and to reduce the corruption arising from tax audits involving the physical presence of tax inspectors.

After a period of thirty months, during which Article 26, paragraph 8, of Law No 3943 has never been implemented, the Finance Ministry has issued a notice stating that 'the obligation to send online detailed data per transaction will not be enforced at present.'

Given that this decision has again postponed — indefinitely — the full implementation of Law No 3943, which could significantly help to improve Greece's public finances by combating tax evasion, VAT tax fraud and corruption in the public administration;

Given that a working group in the Ministry of Finance had found a technical solution back in 2012 allowing the full implementation of Article 26, paragraph 8, and the Commission had immediately approved the relevant technical specifications;

Given that the Commission has declared that tax evasion, and not the tax increases being implemented today, should be a priority of the fiscal adjustment programme, and that the Greek government's policies are bound by the Memorandum of Agreement between Greece and the Troika, of which the Commission is a member;

Will the Commission say:

1. What position is it adopting vis-à-vis the announcement by the Ministry of Finance?

2. Has the Troika agreed to a further postponement in the application of the Law?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(18 February 2014)

The press release of the Ministry of Finance announced a major simplification of the accounting and tax recording framework in Greece. In the past, this framework has been characterised as being very cumbersome and detailed, out of step with international best practice and imposing excessive burden on economic actors with no positive impact on tax compliance. The Commission therefore welcomes such comprehensive plan for the simplification. This corresponds both to a longstanding request by Greek and international businesses and to an alignment with international best practices.

Regarding the mandatory use of Electronic Transaction Registers by all taxpayers and the systematic transmission to the Ministry of Finance of detailed data on all transactions, examples of other countries indicate that systematic transmission of such data to the tax administration is not on its own sufficient to deal with VAT fraud. The administrative capacity also needs to be strengthened.

Hence, Commission has proposed extensive technical assistance so as to limit implementation risks and improve the administration capacity.

The Commission is fully aware of the financial stakes linked to the application of VAT in Greece, as outlined in a recent report from DG TAXUD comparing the VAT gap across EU MS ([1]). Fight against VAT fraud is a priority for the Commission and this will be a major concern for Commission services both in the ongoing discussions on the forth review of Second Economic Adjustment Programme and in terms of provision of technical assistance support.

The Task Force for Greece is also facilitating cooperation in this field with Belgium which has a very strong experience in fighting VAT fraud and notably so-called VAT carousel fraud.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/resources/documents/common/publications/studies/vat-gap.pdf

(Slovenska različica)

Vprašanje za pisni odgovor P-013684/13
za Komisijo
Romana Jordan (PPE)
(3. december 2013)

Zadeva: Povečevanje izpustov iz potrošnje v Evropski uniji

Na plenarnem zasedanju 21. 10. 2013 sem v svojem govoru omenila, da v Evropski uniji izpuste povečujemo, če upoštevamo izpuste, ki jih ustvarimo z uporabo izdelkov in storitev. To trditev sem podprla s podatki iz študije Stevena J. Davisa in Kena Caldeire z naslovom „Consumption-based accounting of CO_2 emission“. ([1]) Avtorja študije namreč pokažeta, da so se izpusti v Evropi med letoma 2000 in 2008 povečevali za 3,4 % na leto–1, kar je občutno povišanje glede na rast izpustov v 90. letih, ki je znašala 1,0 % na leto–1.

Komisarka Hedegaardova me je zato presenetila s svojo reakcijo, da Evropska unija izpuste zmanjšuje tudi celostno gledano.

Zato želim komisarko vprašati, na katerih podatkih je utemeljila svojo trditev.

Odgovor Connie Hedegaard v imenu Komisije
(14. januar 2014)

V Poročilu o napredku EU ([2]) so bile emisije v EU v letu 2012 ocenjene na 18 % pod ravnmi iz leta 1990. EU ločuje svoje emisije od rasti, saj je njen BDP v obdobju 1990–2011 zrasel za 45 %, predelovalni sektor pa v obdobju 1995–2009 za 2,2 % letno ([3]).

EU meri svoje emisije s seznami glede na smernice UNFCCC o poročanju in pregledu ([4]), kar velja za vse stranke. Ti seznami so posodobljeni, pregledni, dosledni in preverljivi nizi podatkov. Temeljijo na podatkih o neposrednih emisijah kot najbolj zanesljivem viru podatkov, ki je pogosto proizvodnja. Mednarodno dogovorjena metodologija poročanja omogoča vsem strankam ukrepe za zmanjšanje emisij, ki nastajajo na njihovem ozemlju.

Komisija se zaveda objave, ki jo omenja spoštovani poslanec. Za opis svetovne proizvodnje so potrebne posebne predpostavke (npr. nizi gospodarskih podatkov za leto 2004). Mednarodno dogovorjena in zanesljiva računovodska metodologija na podlagi potrošnje ne obstaja. Sedmi okvirni program EU za raziskave podpira raziskovanje podatkov o emisijah, potrošnji in trgovini, da bi se povečalo znanje o takšnih metodologijah ter njihova natančnost in razumevanje ([5]).

Spremembe v smislu potrošnje in emisij CO_2 so v značilni korelaciji z globalizacijo in spreminjajočimi se trgovinskimi tokovi, ki se razvijajo ne glede na podnebne politike. Politike za trajnostno potrošnjo in učinkovito rabo virov bi lahko prispevale k zmanjšanju emisij toplogrednih plinov vzdolž dobavne verige porabljenih izdelkov.

([1]) http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2010/02/23/0906974107.abstract
([2]) Glej: COM(2013)0698 final – Poročilo Komisije Evropskemu parlamentu in Svetu – Napredek pri doseganju kjotskih ciljev in ciljev EU 2020.
([3]) Industrijska struktura EU 2011 – Trendi in uspešnost – http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/industrial-competitiveness/competitiveness-analysis/eu-industrial-structure/index_en.htm
([4]) EU združuje svoj seznam v skladu z Uredbo (EU)525/2013 na podlagi dokumenta UNFCCC FCCC/CP/2002/8.
([5]) Glej na primer: Svetovna baza vhodnih-izhodnih podatkov – sporazum o dodelitvi nepovratnih sredstev št.: 225 281 www.wiod.org; Carbon-CAP – Sporazum o dodelitvi nepovratnih sredstev št.: 603386 (Zmanjševanje emisij ogljika z računovodstvom in politiko na podlagi potrošnje) – http://www.4cmr.group.cam.ac.uk/research/projects/carbon-cap

(English version)

Question for written answer P-013684/13
to the Commission
Romana Jordan (PPE)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Increase in consumption-related emissions in the EU

Speaking at the plenary sitting of 21 October 2013, I made the point that emissions in the EU are increasing, assuming that we take into account those produced by the consumption of goods and services. That statement was supported by data from the study by Steven J. Davis and Ken Caldeira entitled 'Consumption-based accounting of CO_2 emissions' ([1]), in which the two authors show that emissions in the EU increased by 3.4% a year between 2000 and 2008, a substantial rise compared with the 1990s, when the annual growth rate amounted to 1%.

That being the case, I found it surprising that Commissioner Hedegaard should have responded by saying that the EU is reducing emissions, even when these are viewed as a whole.

On what data, therefore, did the Commission base its assertion?

Answer given by Ms Hedegaard on behalf of the Commission
(14 January 2014)

The EU Progress Report ([2]) has estimated EU emissions in 2012 at 18% below 1990 levels. The EU is decoupling its emissions and growth, with GDP growing by 45% in 1990-2011 and its manufacturing sector by 2.2%/year in 1995-2009 ([3]).

The EU measures its emissions through inventories following the UNFCCC guidelines on reporting and review ([4]), as do all parties. Such inventories are up-to-date, transparent, consistent, and verifiable datasets. These are based on direct emission data as the most robust data source, which is often production. The internationally agreed reporting methodology enables all parties' action to reduce the emissions occurring on their territory.

The Commission is aware of the publication mentioned by the Honourable Member. It takes specific assumptions to describe global production (e.g. 2004 economic datasets). There is no internationally agreed and robust consumption-based accounting methodology. The EU 7th Research Framework Programme supports research on emissions, consumption and trade data to advance knowledge, accuracy and understanding of such methodologies ([5]).

Changes in terms of consumption and CO_2 emissions are significantly correlated to changing trade patterns and globalisation, which are developing irrespective of climate policies. Policies for sustainable consumption and resource efficiency could help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions along the supply chain of consumed products.

([1]) http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2010/02/23/0906974107.abstract
([2]) See: COM(2013) 698 final — Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council — Progress towards achieving the Kyoto and EU 2020 objectives.
([3]) EU industrial structure 2011 — Trends and performance — http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/industrial-competitiveness/competitiveness-analysis/eu-industrial-structure/index_en.htm
([4]) The EU compiles its inventory according to Regulation (EU)525/2013, based on UNFCCC Document FCCC/CP/2002/8.
([5]) See for instance: World Input-Output Database — Grant Agreement no: 225 281 www.wiod.org
Carbon-CAP — Grant agreement no: 603386 (Carbon emission mitigation by Consumption-based Accounting and Policy) — http://www.4cmr.group.cam.ac.uk/research/ projects/carbon-cap

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013685/13
a la Comisión
Luis de Grandes Pascual (PPE)
(3 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Evaluación de impacto del proyecto Eastside

Se están llevando a cabo en Gibraltar una serie de rellenos con piedra y hormigón para ganar terreno al mar y construir espigones. La Directiva 2011/92/UE, relativa a la evaluación de las repercusiones de determinados proyectos públicos y privados sobre el medio ambiente, establece los requisitos y procedimientos para la realización de evaluaciones de impacto ambiental antes de la aprobación de cualquier proyecto susceptible de afectar al medio ambiente.

En su artículo 7, la Directiva obliga a enviar toda la documentación disponible relativa a proyectos que afecten a otro Estado miembro. Además, el Estado miembro en cuyo territorio se vaya a llevar a cabo el proyecto debe conceder al Estado miembro afectado un plazo de tiempo razonable para pronunciarse sobre su participación en los trámites ambientales pertinentes.

España afirma que ni ha sido consultada ni dispone de la información relevante sobre el proyecto. Un proyecto como este puede suponer alteraciones graves de la dinámica litoral, incidencia en los hábitats que lo rodean, así como un aumento de la presión humana sobre el medio marino (por vertidos, aguas residuales, etc.).

Además, el artículo 6, apartado 3, de la Directiva 92/43/CEE, relativa a la conservación de los hábitats naturales y de la fauna y flora silvestres, establece la obligación de someter a evaluación de impacto ambiental todos los proyectos que tengan repercusiones en las zonas protegidas.

¿Ha comprobado la Comisión las alegaciones españolas? ¿Se ha realizado una evaluación de impacto ambiental antes de la autorización del proyecto? ¿Supondría la realización del proyecto *Eastside* una infracción del derecho de la UE? ¿Qué medidas de reparación deberían tomar las autoridades competentes responsables?

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013686/13
a la Comisión
Luis de Grandes Pascual (PPE)
(3 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Rellenos para el proyecto Eastside

Según las medidas de conservación aprobadas para la Zona Especial de Conservación (ZEC) «Estrecho Oriental», la realización de rellenos está prohibida. Estas son las medidas de conservación obligadas, de acuerdo con lo dispuesto en el artículo 6, apartado 1, de la Directiva 92/43/CEE, relativa a la conservación de los hábitats naturales y de la fauna y flora silvestres.

La realización de rellenos en esta zona supone una eliminación de parte de los hábitats designados y una clara disminución de la superficie marina. Estos rellenos supondrían un deterioro del hábitat y una clara alteración del ecosistema en el que habitan las especies que motiva la designación de la ZEC, en claro incumplimiento del artículo 6, apartado 2, de la citada Directiva. Entre estas especies, figura una en peligro de extinción, la *Patella ferruginea*.

¿Considera la Comisión que se está incumpliendo el Derecho de la UE? ¿Qué medidas legales y de reparación se van a tomar para que este proyecto no siga adelante si no cumple con la legislación de la UE para la protección del medio ambiente?

Puesto que el proyecto afecta a las aguas de otro Estado miembro, en este caso España, ¿qué medidas va a adoptar la Comisión, de acuerdo con el artículo 15 de la Directiva 2008/56/CE (Directiva marco sobre la estrategia marina)?

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013687/13
a la Comisión
Luis de Grandes Pascual (PPE)
(3 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Actividades de abastecimiento de combustible de barco a barco (bunkering) en Gibraltar

La Zona de Especial Conservación (ZEC) «Estrecho Oriental» (ES6120032) fue declarada por España, previa aprobación de la Comisión Europea. El artículo 6, apartado 1, de la Directiva 92/43/CEE, relativa a la conservación de los hábitats naturales y de la fauna y flora silvestres, impone a los Estados miembros la obligación de aprobar medidas de conservación y planes de gestión para las zonas protegidas. Mediante la publicación del Real Decreto 1620/2012, España ha establecido las medidas de conservación de la ZEC mencionada. Entre estas medidas se encuentra la prohibición de las actividades de abastecimiento de combustible de barco a barco (bunkering).

Además, la Directiva 2008/56/CE, Directiva marco sobre la estrategia marina, establece normas para garantizar una adecuada protección del mar que permita, al mismo tiempo, la explotación sostenible de los recursos marinos. En su artículo 15, apartado 1, los Estados miembros tienen la obligación de informar a la Comisión de aquellos problemas que inciden en el estado ambiental de sus aguas marinas, si las medidas nacionales no son suficientes. Según la definición del buen estado ambiental que España ha desarrollado para la Demarcación Marina del Estrecho y Alborán, la actividad de abastecimiento de combustible de barco a barco (*bunkering*) compromete el logro del buen estado ambiental de las aguas españolas.

¿Cree la Comisión que una actividad de alto riesgo, como es el abastecimiento de combustible de barco a barco (*bunkering*), puede practicarse en zonas protegidas? ¿Está incumpliendo Reino Unido con sus obligaciones al no haber establecido ninguna restricción a estas actividades en la zona protegida mencionada?

De acuerdo con lo dispuesto en el artículo 15, apartados 1 y 2, de la Directiva 2008/56/CE, ¿qué medidas va a tomar la Comisión para resolver el problema ambiental planteado?

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013688/13
a la Comisión
Luis de Grandes Pascual (PPE)
(3 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Vertido de bloques de hormigón en la bahía de Algeciras

Durante el mes de julio se produjo el vertido de 70 bloques de hormigón en la bahía de Algeciras en las proximidades de la Zona Especial de Conservación (ZEC) «Estrecho Oriental». Dicho vertido forma parte de un proyecto para la formación de un arrecife al lado de Gibraltar. Es muy probable que la presencia de los bloques de hormigón altere de forma sustancial las condiciones hidrográficas de la bahía, incluida la ZEC.

España no ha sido informada del proyecto por parte de las autoridades competentes. Por tanto, no han podido tenerse en cuenta los efectos transfronterizos del proyecto, en claro incumplimiento del artículo 2 de la Directiva 2008/56/CE por la que se establece un marco de acción comunitaria para la política del medio marino.

En la definición de «contaminación» que figura en la Directiva se incluyen los «obstáculos a las actividades marítimas, especialmente a la pesca […] y demás usos legítimos del mar». Como consecuencia de los vertidos de bloques de hormigón, la actividad pesquera en la bahía de Algeciras se ha visto seriamente impedida. Este concepto es clave en la Directiva, ya que la prevención de los vertidos y la eliminación de la contaminación deben inspirar la elaboración de las estrategias marinas por parte de los Estados miembros.

Además, el vertido de los bloques se ha llevado a cabo sin haber realizado antes una evaluación de impacto ambiental del proyecto en la ZEC colindante.

¿Podría indicar la Comisión si el vertido de estos bloques de hormigón es compatible con la protección del medio ambiente marino? ¿Tiene la Comisión constancia de que se haya realizado la correspondiente evaluación de impacto ambiental? Teniendo en cuenta el artículo 15 de la Directiva 2008/56/CE, ¿qué acciones tiene previsto emprender la Comisión?

Respuesta conjunta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(10 de febrero de 2014)

La Comisión ya planteó la cuestión del proyecto «Eastside» a las autoridades del Reino Unido en 2011. Se llevó a cabo una evaluación de impacto ambiental de conformidad con la Directiva 2011/92/UE ([1]) antes de conceder al proyecto la correspondiente autorización de ejecución. El Reino Unido informó a la Comisión de que no se había puesto en marcha el procedimiento dispuesto en el artículo 7 de la citada Directiva dado que la evaluación concluyó que el proyecto, tal como fue finalmente autorizado, no iba a tener un impacto transfronterizo significativo sobre el medio ambiente.

Recientemente, la Comisión ha solicitado al Reino Unido aclaraciones adicionales en relación con este proyecto y con otras actividades llevadas a cabo en las aguas en torno a Gibraltar, en particular en lo que respecta a su conformidad con las Directivas 2011/92/UE, 2008/56/CE ([2]) y 92/43/CEE ([3]). En estos momentos, la Comisión está a la espera de la respuesta del Reino Unido.

([1]) Directiva 2011/92/UE, relativa a la evaluación de las repercusiones de determinados proyectos públicos y privados sobre el medio ambiente (DO L 26 de 28.1.2012) (versión codificada).

([2]) Directiva 2008/56/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 17 de junio de 2008, por la que se establece un marco de acción comunitaria para la política del medio marino (Directiva marco sobre la estrategia marina) (DO L 164 de 25.6.2008).

([3]) Directiva 92/43/CE del Consejo, de 21 de mayo de 1992, relativa a la conservación de los hábitats naturales y de la fauna y flora silvestres (DO L 206 de 22.7.1992) (modificada).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013685/13
to the Commission
Luis de Grandes Pascual (PPE)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Impact assessment of the Eastside project

A series of stone and concrete fillings is under way in Gibraltar to reclaim land and build jetties. Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment establishes the requirements and procedures for undertaking environmental impact assessments before approving any project which could affect the environment.

Under Article 7 of the directive, Member States are required to forward all available documentation on projects affecting another Member State. Furthermore, the Member State in whose territory the project is to be carried out must allow the affected Member State reasonable time to decide whether it wishes to participate in the relevant environmental procedures.

Spain claims that it has not been consulted on the project, nor has it been given access to the relevant information. A project like this could significantly change the coastal dynamic, impact on surrounding habitats and increase human pressure on the marine environment (through discharges, waste water, etc.).

In addition, according to Article 6(3) of Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, all projects affecting protected areas must be subject to an environmental impact assessment.

Has the Commission verified Spain's allegations? Was an environmental impact assessment undertaken before approving the project? Is the Eastside project in breach of EC law? What reparation measures should the competent authorities take?

Question for written answer E-013686/13
to the Commission
Luis de Grandes Pascual (PPE)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Land reclamation for the Eastside project

According to the conservation measures adopted for the 'Eastern Strait' Special Area of Conservation (SAC), land reclamation is prohibited. These are the compulsory conservation measures adopted under the provisions of Article 6(1) of Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora.

Reclaiming land in this area would involve destroying some of the designated habitats and a clear reduction in the size of the marine area. Such land reclamation would involve a deterioration of the habitat and clear disturbance of the ecosystem in which the species for which the SAC was designated live, in flagrant breach of Article 6(2) of the aforementioned Directive. One of these species, *Patella ferruginea*, is endangered.

Does the Commission think that there is a breach of EC law here? What legal and reparation measures will it take to stop this project going ahead if it does not comply with EU environmental protection legislation?

Given that the project involves the waters of another Member State, Spain, what action will the Commission take under Article 15 of Directive 2008/56/EC (Marine Strategy Framework Directive)?

Question for written answer E-013687/13
to the Commission
Luis de Grandes Pascual (PPE)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Fuel bunkering activities in Gibraltar

Spain declared the 'Eastern Strait' (ES6120032) a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), subject to European Commission approval. According to Article 6(1) of Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, Member States must approve conservation measures and management plans for protected areas. Spain's Royal Decree 1620/2012 established conservation measures for the abovementioned SAC, including the prohibition of fuel bunkering activities.

In addition, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive 2008/56/EC establishes regulations to guarantee adequate marine protection while allowing the sustainable exploitation of marine resources. Under Article 15(1), Member States have a duty to inform the Commission of any issues with the environmental status of their waters which cannot be tackled with measures adopted at national level. Based on the definition of good environmental status that Spain developed for the Marine Demarcation of the Strait and Alborán, fuel bunkering activities are a threat to that status in Spanish waters.

Does the Commission think that a high-risk activity like fuel bunkering should be permitted in protected areas? Is the UK in breach of its obligations by making no attempt to restrict these activities in the abovementioned protected area?

In line with Article 15(1) and (2) of Directive 2008/56/EC, what action does the Commission intend to take to resolve this environmental issue?

Question for written answer E-013688/13
to the Commission
Luis de Grandes Pascual (PPE)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Concrete blocks dumped in Algeciras Bay

In July, 70 concrete blocks were dumped in Algeciras Bay, near the 'Eastern Strait' Special Area of Conservation (SAC). They are part of a project to form a reef beside Gibraltar. It is highly likely that their presence will substantially change hydrographical conditions in the bay, including the SAC.

The competent authorities did not inform Spain about this project. Therefore, it was not possible to take account of the project's cross-border impact, in clear contravention of Article 2 of Directive 2008/56/EC, which establishes a Community action framework for marine environmental policy.

The directive's definition of 'pollution' includes 'the hindering of marine activities, including fishing … and other legitimate uses of the sea.' Fishing activity in Algeciras Bay has been seriously impaired by the concrete blocks dumped there. This is a key concept in the directive, as Member States' marine strategies should be guided by the need to prevent discharges and eliminate pollution.

Furthermore, the blocks were dumped without any assessment of the project's environmental impact on the adjacent SAC.

Can the Commission indicate whether dumping these concrete blocks is consistent with protecting the marine environment? Does the Commission have any record of the corresponding environmental impact assessment having been made? What action does the Commission intend to take in relation to Article 15 of Directive 2008/56/EC?

Joint answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(10 February 2014)

The Commission already raised the Eastside project with the United Kingdom authorities in 2011. An environmental impact assessment was carried out under Directive 2011/92/EU ([1]) before development consent for this project was granted. The United Kingdom informed the Commission that the procedure required under Article 7 of this directive had not been triggered because the assessment concluded that the project, as finally authorised, would not have a significant transboundary impact on the environment.

The Commission has recently asked the United Kingdom to provide further clarifications on this project and on other activities carried out in the waters around Gibraltar, and particularly regarding their compliance with Directives 2011/92/EU, 2008/56/EC ([2]) and 92/43/EEC ([3]). The Commission is now waiting for a reply from the United Kingdom.

([1]) Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment, OJ L 26, 28.1.2012 (codified version).
([2]) Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy (Marine Strategy Framework Directive), OJ L 164, 25.6.2008.
([3]) Council Directive 92/43/EC, of 21 May 1992, on the protection of natural habitats and wild fauna and flora, OJ L 206, 22.7.1992 (as amended).

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013689/13
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: VP/HR — Protección del campesinado de la Franja de Gaza durante el periodo de siembra

Al haber comenzado la temporada de lluvias, los campesinos de la Franja de Gaza han iniciado las labores de siembra y, lamentablemente, tal y como viene ocurriendo en los últimos años, los ataques y agresiones a los agricultores de la Franja de Gaza por parte del Ejército de Israel se incrementan.

Trágicamente, el período de siembra del año pasado se saldó con cuarto campesinos muertos por disparos de las fuerzas de ocupación y más de un centenar de heridos. Tras apenas una semana de siembra, se han perpetrado varios ataques contra agricultores palestinos y se han registrado acciones de intimidación para evitar el cultivo, en particular en los campos cercanos a la verja que cerca la Franja de Gaza y que la separa de parte de los territorios palestinos ocupados por Israel.

Estos ataques no son un hecho aislado sino que se inscriben en el marco de una política deliberada de Israel de continuación de la ocupación ilegal de tierras a través, en este caso, de una política de terror y miedo para evitar las escasas actividades económicas que, debido al ilegal e inhumano bloqueo, todavía pueden llevar a cabo los palestinos para sobrevivir.

De hecho, tal y como ya expresé en mi pregunta E-003977/2013, durante la primera semana del mes de abril una delegación española de solidaridad, de la que formé parte, fue testigo de la actitud beligerante del ejército israelí contra la población de la Franja de Gaza, en particular contra los campesinos. Así, cuando la delegación se acercó a unos 300 metros de las vallas fronterizas para permitir a los campesinos recoger su cosecha, los soldados israelíes dispararon a cinco metros de la delegación, claramente desarmada, para intimidarla.

Observamos que estos ataques se repiten, con total impunidad, contra los pescadores que maniobran en las aguas de Gaza así como que los disparos contra civiles mientras cultivan o salen a pescar son una actividad habitual en los puestos fronterizos israelíes.

¿Está al corriente la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante de esta política de las autoridades israelíes basada en sembrar terror y miedo con el objetivo de imposibilitar la vida «normal» en la Franja de Gaza? ¿Tiene intención la Alta Representante de condenar y denunciar públicamente los ataques contra los campesinos palestinos y exigir a las autoridades israelíes que respeten el desarrollo de las limitadas actividades económicas —agricultura y pesca— que escapan del criminal e ilegal bloqueo que mantienen sobre la Franja de Gaza?

Respuesta de la Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(4 de febrero de 2014)

Tal y como figura en las conclusiones del Consejo de Asuntos Exteriores sobre el proceso de paz en Oriente Próximo de mayo de 2012, la UE destaca la aplicabilidad del Derecho internacional humanitario y la Cuarta Convención de Ginebra relativa a la protección de los civiles en los Territorios Palestinos Ocupados, incluido su derecho a llevar una vida lo más normal posible.

En las conclusiones del Consejo de Asuntos Exteriores de 16 de diciembre de 2013, la UE transmite su gran preocupación por la situación humanitaria en Gaza. A través de su mecanismo PEGASE, la UE dirige recursos fundamentales a la población de Gaza, incluida la entrega de prestaciones sociales a familias palestinas vulnerables. La ayuda humanitaria de la UE consiste en preparación para emergencias, ayuda alimentaria (en efectivo y en especie), intervenciones en el ámbito del agua, el saneamiento y la higiene, así como servicios médicos y psicosociales de urgencia. Casi el 60 % del presupuesto humanitario de la UE para Palestina se dedica a Gaza. En su calidad de principal donante del OOPS, la UE también apoya a los refugiados, que constituyen el 70 % de la población.

La UE concede gran importancia a la entrega sin trabas de su ayuda humanitaria y seguirá insistiendo en que así sea. La Unión ha pedido repetidamente la apertura inmediata, sostenida e incondicional de pasos para el flujo de ayuda humanitaria, mercancías y personas a y desde Gaza.

La UE seguirá utilizando todas las oportunidades que ofrezca el diálogo que se mantiene a distintos niveles en el marco del Acuerdo de Asociación UE-Israel para plantear las cuestiones que susciten preocupación.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013689/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — 'Let the rain bring life, not blood' campaign in response to attacks by the Israeli army: protection for subsistence farmers in the Gaza Strip during seeding time

The rainy season has started in the Gaza Strip and its subsistence farmers have begun seeding the land. Unfortunately, as has been the case in recent years, Israeli Army attacks on farmers in the Gaza Strip are on the increase.

Tragically, last year's seeding saw four killed and over a hundred wounded, having been fired upon by occupying forces. Over barely one week of seeding there were numerous attacks on Palestinian farmers and acts of intimidation to bring cultivation to a halt, especially in the countryside near the perimeter fence surrounding the Gaza Strip and partly separating it from the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories.

These are not isolated attacks; they are part of a deliberate Israeli policy to continue its illegal occupation by, in this case, terrorising Palestinians into giving up the scarce economic activities to which the unlawful, inhumane blockade has reduced them but from which they can still eke out a living.

Indeed, as I have already pointed out in my Question E-003977/2013, in the first week of April I was part of a Spanish solidarity delegation that witnessed the belligerent attitude of the Israeli Army towards residents of the Gaza Strip and in particular the subsistence farmers. When the delegation positioned itself around 300 metres from the border fence so that the farmers could harvest their crops, Israeli soldiers opened intimidatory fire some five metres away from us despite the fact that were clearly unarmed.

We observed that these attacks also go on with complete impunity against fishermen who operate in Gaza's waters, and that firing on civilians tending crops or going out to fish is habitual at Israeli border posts.

Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware that the Israeli authorities are pursuing this policy which aims to make 'normal' life impossible on the Gaza Strip by basically sowing terror and fear? Does the High Representative intend to publicly condemn and denounce attacks on Palestinian subsistence farmers and to demand that the Israeli authorities respect the development of the limited economic activities of fishing and farming which escape their ongoing illegal, criminal blockade in the Gaza Strip?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(4 February 2014)

As stated in the Foreign Affairs Council conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process of May 2012, the EU underlines the applicability of international humanitarian law and the fourth Geneva Convention relative to the protection of civilians in the occupied Palestinian territory, including their right to live as normal a life as possible.

In the Foreign Affairs Council conclusions of 16 December 2013, the EU conveys its grave concern with the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza. Through its PEGASE mechanism, the EU directs crucial resources to the population of Gaza, including the provision of social allowances to vulnerable Palestinian families. EU Humanitarian assistance consists of emergency preparedness, food assistance (cash and in-kind), interventions in the field of water, sanitation and hygiene and emergency medical and psycho-social services. . Almost 60% of the EU's humanitarian budget for Palestine is dedicated to Gaza. As UNRWA's main donor, the EU also supports the refugees, who make up 70% of the population.

The EU attaches great importance and will continue to insist on the unimpeded delivery of this humanitarian assistance. The EU has repeatedly called for an immediate, sustained and unconditional opening of crossings for the flow of humanitarian aid, commercial goods and persons to and from Gaza.

The EU will continue to use all opportunities afforded by the dialogue that takes place at different levels within the framework of the EU-Israel Association Agreement to raise issues of concern.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013690/13
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: VP/HR — Seguimiento a la pregunta E-003977/2013: Aclaraciones ante el ataque intimidatorio que sufrió una delegación española en la Franja de Gaza por parte de las autoridades israelíes

En su respuesta, de 17 de junio de 2013, a mi pregunta E-003977/2013, relativa a la intimidación a una delegación política española en la Franja de Gaza, la Alta Representante afirmaba haber pedido al Jefe de Delegación de la UE ante el Estado de Israel que solicitara aclaraciones sobre el incidente específico planteado en esa pregunta.

¿Puede la Alta Representante comunicarme las aclaraciones sobre este ataque intimidatorio que sufrimos? ¿Ha solicitado la Alta Representante la depuración de responsabilidades ante la justicia de los autores materiales y responsables políticos de los ataques intimidatorios?

Si —tal y como afirma en la misma respuesta— la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante está *«de acuerdo con la afirmación de que "el Gobierno israelí esté masacrando a la población palestina a su antojo"»*, ¿qué medidas concretas está llevando a cabo la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante para evitar esta masacre? ¿Piensa la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante exigir la congelación inmediata del acuerdo preferencial que la UE mantiene con Israel?

Respuesta de la alta representante y vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(18 de febrero de 2014)

Como respuesta a una solicitud de información hecha por la Delegación de la UE en Tel Aviv, el Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores de Israel declaró no haber recibido ninguna denuncia relativa al supuesto incidente de abril y señaló que agradecería cualquier comunicación directa sobre las actuaciones de autoridades israelíes que hayan incidido en las visitas de delegaciones, incluidas las de diputados del Parlamento Europeo. Por lo tanto, aunque no estaba en condiciones de abordar concretamente el incidente en cuestión, recordó las medidas y procedimientos de seguridad israelíes en vigor en el perímetro de la Franja de Gaza. La Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta puede confirmar que las autoridades israelíes gestionan una zona de acceso prohibido a una distancia de 300 metros del vallado perimetral que es bien conocida por las Naciones Unidas y otros organismos.

En la respuesta a la pregunta E-003977/2013 se declaró que «la Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta no está de acuerdo con la afirmación de que el Gobierno israelí esté masacrando a la población palestina a su antojo».

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013690/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Follow-up to Question E-003977/2013: clarifications regarding the intimidating attack by the Israeli authorities against a Spanish delegation in the Gaza Strip

In her reply of 17 June 2013 to my Question E-003977/2013 on the intimidation of a Spanish political delegation in the Gaza Strip, the High Representative stated that she had asked the EU Head of Delegation to the State of Israel to seek clarifications concerning the specific incident raised in that question.

Can the High Representative say what clarifications she has received concerning this intimidating attack against us? Has the High Representative called for the perpetrators and politicians responsible for the intimidating attacks to be brought to justice?

If, as she states in the same reply, the High Representative/Vice-President accepts 'the suggestion that "the Israeli Government is massacring the Palestinian population at will"', what specific measures is the High Representative/Vice-President taking to prevent this massacre? Does the High Representative/Vice-President intend to call for the immediate freezing of the preferential agreement that the EU has with Israel?

Answer given by High-Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(18 February 2014)

In response to an enquiry by the EU Delegation in Tel Aviv, the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) said it had not received any complaint about any such incident in April and underlined it would be happy to receive directly any communication regarding actions by Israeli authorities impacting visits of delegations, such as those including members of the European Parliament. Without, therefore, being in a position to address specifically the incident in question, it nevertheless drew attention to the Israeli security measures and procedures in force on the perimeter of the Gaza Strip. The HR/VP can confirm that the Israeli authorities operate a 'no-go' area within 300m of the Gaza perimeter fence which is well publicised by the UN and other agencies.

In the reply to Question E-003977/2013 it was stated that the 'HR/VP does not accept the suggestion that the Israeli Government is massacring the Palestinian population at will.'

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-013692/13
lill-Kummissjoni
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(3 ta' Diċembru 2013)

Suġġett: Is-saħħa u s-sikurezza fuq il-Post tax-xogħol

Bejn Mejju u Awwissu 2013, il-Kummissjoni nediet konsultazzjoni pubblika dwar il-qafas ta' politika ġdid tal-UE dwar is-sikurezza u s-saħħa okkupazzjonali. L-għan ewlieni ta' din il-konsultazzjoni kien li jinġabru l-għarfien u l-kontribuzzjonijiet tal-pubbliku wara l-evalwazzjoni tal-Istrateġija Ewropea dwar is-Saħħa u s-Sikurezza fuq il-Post tax-Xogħol 2007-2012. Din kellha tgħin biex jiġu identifikati sfidi attwali u futuri fil-qasam tas-sikurezza u s-saħħa okkupazzjonali, u jiġu identifikati modi dwar kif jistgħu jiġu indirizzati dawn l-isfidi.

1. Il-Kummissjoni tista' tipprovdi skeda taż-żmien għat-tnedija tal-istrateġija mġedda li jmiss?

2. Wara l-konsultazzjoni pubblika, il-Kummissjoni tista' telenka l-prijoritajiet ewlenin tal-istrateġija mġedda li jmiss?

3. Il-Kummissjoni x'miżuri ser tieħu biex tissorvelja l-implimentazzjoni tal-istrateġija mġedda fl-Istati Membri?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Andor f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(7 ta' Frar 2014)

1. Sar xogħol ta' analiżi bir-reqqa bil-ħsieb li jitħejja l-qafas futur tal-politika tal-UE dwar is-Saħħa u s-Sigurtà fuq il-post tax-xogħol Dan kien jinkludi evalwazzjoni fil-fond tal-Istrateġija preċedenti tal-UE dwar is-Saħħa u s-Sigurtà fuq il-Post tax-Xogħol 2007-2012, konsultazzjoni mal-partijiet interessati rilevanti bħall-Kumitat Konsultattiv dwar is-Saħħa u s-Sigurtà fuq il-Post tax-Xogħol u l-Kumitat tal-Ispetturi Għolja tax-Xogħol, u l-ġbir ta' feedback mill-pubbliku permezz ta' konsultazzjoni pubblika mnedija fil-31 ta' Mejju 2013.

L-elementi kollha msemmija hawn fuq jipprovdu kontribut siewi ħafna fir-rigward tal-adozzjoni ta' qafas politiku ġdid tal-UE dwar is-saħħa u s-sigurtà fuq il-post tax-xogħol li jistgħu jkunu previsti matul l-ewwel kwart tal-2014.

2. Il-Kummissjoni qed tistħarreġ fil-fond aktar minn 500 tweġiba li rċeviet wara l-konsultazzjoni pubblika dwar il-qafas ta' politika l-ġdid tal-UE dwar is-saħħa u s-sigurtà okkupazzjonali. In-numru sinifikanti ta' tweġibiet juri l-interess f'din il-kwistjoni. It-tweġibiet ikopru firxa kbira ta' partijiet interessati, inklużi l-gvernijiet, l-imsieħba soċjali, l-NGOs, u kumpaniji u ċittadini individwali. Analiżi preliminari tat-tweġibiet turi li l-konsultazzjoni tipprovdi lill-Kummissjoni b'indikazzjonijiet utli ħafna dwar il-prijoritajiet u l-azzjonijiet biex tkompli ttejjeb il-politika tal-UE dwar is-saħħa u s-sigurtà fuq il-post tax-xogħol. Il-Kummissjoni se tqis ir-riżultati tal-konsultazzjoni pubblika meta tistabbilixxi l-prijoritajiet ewlenin tal-qafas futur tal-politika tal-UE dwar is-sikurezza u s-saħħa fuq il-post tax-xogħol.

3. Il-modalitajiet biex tissorvelja l-implimentazzjoni tal-qafas politiku futur imsemmi jiġu definiti fi stadju aktar tard.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013692/13
to the Commission
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Health and safety at work

Between May and August 2013, the Commission launched a public consultation on the new EU occupational safety and health policy framework. The main purpose of this consultation was to gather insights and contributions from the public further to the evaluation of the European Strategy on Safety and Health at Work 2007-2012. This should have helped to identify current and future challenges in the area of occupational safety and health, and to identify ways of addressing these challenges.

1. Can the Commission provide a timeline for the future renewed strategy launch?

2. Following the public consultation, can the Commission list the main priorities of the future renewed strategy?

3. What measures will the Commission take to oversee the implementation of the renewed strategy in Member States?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(7 February 2014)

1. With a view to preparing the future EU Occupational Safety and Health policy framework, a thorough analysis work has been undertaken. This included an in-depth evaluation of the previous EU Strategy on Health and Safety at Work 2007-2012, consultation of relevant stakeholders such as the Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work and Senior Labour Inspectors' Committee, and gathering feedback from the public through public consultation launched on 31st May 2013.

All the abovementioned elements provide very valuable input as regards the adoption of a new EU policy framework on health and safety at work which could be envisaged during the first quarter of 2014.

2. The Commission is analysing in-depth more than 500 replies received further to the public consultation on the new EU Occupational Safety and Health policy framework. The significant number of replies demonstrates the interest in this issue. The responses cover a large span of stakeholders, including governments, social partners, NGOs, individual companies and citizens. A preliminary analysis of the replies shows that the consultation provides the Commission with very useful indications on priorities and actions in order to further improve the health and safety at work EU policy. The Commission will take into account the results of the public consultation when establishing the main priorities of the future EU policy framework on Occupational Safety and Health.

3. The modalities to oversee the implementation of the above future policy framework will be defined at a later stage.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-013693/13
lill-Kummissjoni
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(3 ta' Diċembru 2013)

Suġġett: L-assenteiżmu fl-iskejjel primarji u sekondarji

Huwa essenzjali li l-livelli ta' tluq bikri mill-iskola jonqsu sabiex jintlaħqu numru ta' għanijiet ewlenin fl-istrateġija Ewropa 2020, peress li dan hu wieħed mill-fatturi ta' riskju primarji għall-qgħad, il-faqar u l-esklużjoni soċjali.

Fatturi magħrufin li jwasslu għal tluq bikri mill-iskola huma r-riżultati ħżiena u l-problemi soċjali jew dawk relatati mal-familja. Madankollu, dawn il-kawżi diġà jagħtu lok għal assenteiżmu fl-iktar stadji bikrin tal-edukazzjoni, din hi problema frekwenti li mhijiex riċerkata b'mod estensiv. Sabiex jiġi miġġieled l-assenteiżmu f'dawn l-istadji bikrin tal-edukazzjoni, xi pajjiżi, bħal Malta, għandhom leġiżlazzjoni li żżomm lill-ġenituri responsabbli tal-assenteiżmu tat-tfal tagħhom fl-iskejjel primarji u sekondarji pubbliċi, iżda għall-maġġoranza tal-Istati Membri l-oħra dan mhuwiex il-każ. Ġew stabbiliti miri nazzjonali sabiex jonqos it-tluq bikri mill-iskola, iżda mhux għal assenteiżmu fi stadji iktar bikrin.

Fid-dawl ta' dan;

1. Il-Kummissjoni tista' tipprovdi data dwar l-assenteiżmu fl-iskejjel primarji u sekondarji fl-Istati Membri?

2. Il-Kummissjoni tħaddan il-fehma li l-kawżi tat-tluq bikri mill-iskola għandhom ikunu miġġielda fi stadji iktar bikrin tal-edukazzjoni?

3. Il-Kummissjoni, xi programmi u strateġiji biħsiebha tintroduċi sabiex tonqos il-problema tal-assenteiżmu fl-edukazzjoni primarja u sekondarja?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sinjura Vassiliou f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(30 ta' Jannar 2014)

1. L-Istati Membri għandhom responsabbiltà sħiħa għall-organizzazzjoni u l-evalwazzjoni tas-sistemi edukattivi tagħhom. Dan jinkludi li jiddefinixxu r-regoli dwar l-attendenza obbligatorja, kif ukoll li jistipulaw ir-responsabbiltajiet tal-iskejjel, tal-għalliema, u tal-awtoritajiet fil-monitoraġġ ta' din l-attendenza. Is-sistemi għas-sorveljanza tal-assenteiżmu jvarjaw minn pajjiż għal ieħor, u għalhekk ma hemmx dejta paragunabbli disponibbli fuq livell Ewropew.

2. Il-Kummissjoni tirrikonoxxi li l-assenteiżmu mill-iskola huwa problema serja li tista' tabilħaqq tindika li student ikun beda t-triq tan-niżla lejn tluq bikri mill-iskola (ESL). Rakkomandazzjoni tal-Kunsill tal-2011 ([1]) tistieden lill-Istati Membri jadottaw strateġiji komprensivi bbażati fuq l-evidenza u li jinkludu miżuri ta' prevenzjoni, intervent u kumpens biex jiġi miġġieled it-tluq bikri mill-iskola. F'dan il-kuntest, miżuri ta' prevenzjoni li jindirizzaw l-iżvilupp ta' tipi ta' mġiba li tista' twassal għal tluq bikri mill-iskola huma importanti.

3. L-azzjonijiet ta' politika żviluppati fil-livell Ewropew fi ħdan l-istrateġija tal-2020 għall-Edukazzjoni u t-Taħriġ għandhom l-għan li jappoġġjaw lill-Istati Membri biex itejbu s-sistemi tagħhom tal-edukazzjoni, permezz ta' tagħlim bejn il-pari u evalwazzjonijiet bejn il-pari ta' politiki nazzjonali biex jiġi miġġieled it-tluq bikri mill-iskola. Dan ix-xogħol ta' kooperazzjoni ta' politika u ta' kondiviżjoni tal-aħjar prattiki se jkompli. Barra minn hekk, il-programm Erasmus+ il-ġdid se joffri ħafna possibbiltajiet biex partijiet interessati li huma attivi fil-qasam tal-edukazzjoni jiżviluppaw proġetti li jindirizzaw kwistjonijiet ta' tħassib komuni bħall-assenteiżmu mill-iskola.

([1]) IR-RAKKOMANDAZZJONI TAL-KUNSILL tat-28 ta' Ġunju 2011 dwar il-politiki biex jitnaqqas it-tluq bikri mill-iskola.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013693/13
to the Commission
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Absenteeism in primary and secondary schools

It is essential that levels of early school leaving are reduced in order to achieve a number of key objectives in the Europe 2020 strategy, as this is one of the primary risk factors for unemployment, poverty and social exclusion.

Known factors that cause early school leaving are poor results and social or family-related problems. However, these causes already give rise to absenteeism at earlier stages of schooling, a frequent but less extensively researched problem. In order to combat absenteeism during these earlier phases of schooling, some countries, such as Malta, have legislation in place that holds parents responsible for their children's absenteeism from public primary and secondary school, but this is not the case in most other Member States. National targets have been set to reduce early school leaving, but not for absenteeism in earlier phases.

In light of this;

1. Can the Commission provide data on absenteeism in primary and secondary schooling in the Member States?

2. Does the Commission share the view that the causes of early school leaving should be combated in earlier phases of schooling?

3. What programmes and strategies could the Commission introduce with a view to reducing the problem of absenteeism in primary and secondary schooling?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(30 January 2014)

1. Member States have full responsibility for the organisation and evaluation of their education systems. This includes defining rules about compulsory attendance, as well as stipulating the responsibilities of schools, teachers, and authorities in monitoring this attendance. Systems to monitor absenteeism vary between countries and therefore there is no comparable data available at European level.

2. The Commission acknowledges that school absenteeism is a serious problem which may indeed signal the start of a pupil's slide towards early school leaving (ESL). A 2011 Council Recommendation ([1]) asks Member States to adopt evidence-based, comprehensive strategies to combat ESL, encompassing prevention, intervention and compensation measures. In this context, preventive measures which address the emergence of behaviours which may lead to early school leaving are important.

3. Policy actions developed at European level within the Education and Training 2020 strategy are aimed at supporting Member States to improve their education systems, through peer learning and peer review of national policies to combat ESL. This work of policy cooperation and sharing of best practices will continue. In addition, the new Erasmus+ programme will offer a wealth of possibilities for education stakeholders to develop projects which address issues of shared concern such as school absenteeism.

([1]) COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION of 28 June 2011 on policies to reduce early school leaving.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-013694/13
à Comissão
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL) e João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(3 de dezembro de 2013)

Assunto: Temporais na Madeira

A parte nordeste da ilha da Madeira foi afetada nos passados dias 28 e 29 de novembro por fortes intempéries que causaram elevados danos.

As consequências foram inundações, enxurradas, derrocadas, habitações e viaturas destruídas, localidades isoladas, estradas danificadas, intransitáveis e encerradas, cortes nos serviços de fornecimento de água potável e energia elétrica, saneamento básico e telecomunicações, zonas de produção agrícola completamente devastadas, equipamentos e infraestruturas públicas incapacitadas. Uma noite de chuvas fortes trouxeram a destruição a zonas predominantemente rurais dos concelhos de Santana, Machico e Santa Cruz, zonas essas que tinham escapado relativamente incólumes aos últimos temporais que afetaram a Região Autónoma da Madeira nos tempos mais recentes.

A dimensão dos prejuízos e a gravidade da destruição provocada por estas últimas intempéries, bem como os seus impactos para as populações, requer a urgente disponibilização de apoios com vista à imediata reconstrução, recuperação e revitalização das zonas mais afetadas.

Assim, solicitamos à Comissão que nos informe:

1. Que medidas de emergência e apoios excecionais às zonas afetadas e às populações atingidas por esta catástrofe podem ser desde já mobilizados?

2. Que programas e medidas poderão apoiar a recuperação das infraestruturas danificadas?

3. Foi, até à data, efetuada alguma diligência por parte do governo português junto da Comissão, tendo em conta a ocorrência desta catástrofe?

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-013921/13
à Comissão
Edite Estrela (S&D), Luis Manuel Capoulas Santos (S&D), Elisa Ferreira (S&D), Luís Paulo Alves (S&D) e Ana Gomes (S&D)
(6 de dezembro de 2013)

Assunto: Temporal na ilha da Madeira

Uma vez mais, os habitantes da Ilha da Madeira (Portugal) foram fustigados por chuvas torrenciais que provocaram inundações, deslizamentos de terras, derrocadas de muros e destruíram várias habitações, equipamentos sociais e vias de comunicação.

Tendo em conta os enormes estragos provocados pelo temporal e o facto de que, de acordo com estimativas provisórias, só os custos das obras de recuperação nas freguesias de Porto da Cruz e de Santo António da Serra, no Concelho de Machico, se elevam a mais de quatro milhões de euros, um valor muito superior às capacidades financeiras das autoridades locais, pergunto à Comissão:

— De que forma poderão as autoridades locais beneficiar de apoios comunitários para a recuperação das zonas atingidas por esta intempérie?

Resposta conjunta dada por Johannes Hahn em nome da Comissão
(29 de janeiro de 2014)

O Fundo de Solidariedade da UE foi criado para ajudar os Estados-Membros atingidos por catástrofes de grandes proporções. Em relação aos danos cobertos, o limiar aplicável a Portugal em 2014 para ativar o Fundo é de 963 milhões de euros. Em catástrofes de menor dimensão, o Fundo só pode ser ativado em circunstância muito excecionais, nos casos em que a maioria da população da região atingida pela catástrofe seja afetada e tenham sido demonstradas repercussões graves e prolongadas nas condições de vida e na economia. Os pedidos devem ser apresentados pelas autoridades nacionais no prazo de 10 semanas após a ocorrência da catástrofe. Se as autoridades portuguesas tiverem em vista recorrer à ajuda do Fundo de Solidariedade, a Comissão está pronta para dar orientações e aconselhamento.

Até à data, a Comissão não recebeu qualquer pedido de assistência com vista à recuperação ou a reparações na sequência da tempestade, nem projetos que possam ser considerados elegíveis no âmbito do atual Fundo Europeu de Desenvolvimento Regional ou do Fundo de Coesão de 2007-2013.

No contexto da execução do Quadro de Referência Estratégico Nacional de 2007-2013, a identificação, seleção, implementação e o acompanhamento de projetos individuais é da responsabilidade das autoridades nacionais e regionais pertinentes. A fim de dispor de mais informações importantes no respeitante a projetos apoiados no âmbito dos atuais programas para a Região Autónoma da Madeira, a Comissão sugere que os Senhores Deputados contactem diretamente a autoridade de gestão:

Instituto de Desenvolvimento Regional da Região Autónoma da Madeira (IDR-RAM)
Travessa do Cabido, 16
Funchal — Madeira
Tel (00 351) 291 214 000
E-mail: idr-srpf@gov-madeira.pt
www.idr.gov-madeira.pt

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013694/13
to the Commission
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL) and João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Storms in Madeira

The north-eastern part of the island of Madeira was hit by fierce storms on 28 and 29 November and suffered considerable damage.

The storms led to flash floods and landslides. Buildings and vehicles were destroyed, and several areas were cut off. Roads were damaged, impassable and closed. Drinking water, electricity supplies, basic sanitation and telecommunication services were disrupted. Farming areas were devastated., and public equipment and infrastructure were disabled. One night of heavy rain brought destruction to the predominantly rural municipalities of Santana, Machico and Santa Cruz, which had escaped relatively unscathed from the previous storms that hit the Autonomous Region of Madeira recently.

The scale of the damage and the severity of the destruction caused by these latest storms, and their impact on the population, require the urgent mobilisation of aid for the immediate rebuilding, repair and recovery of the most affected areas.

1. What emergency measures and exceptional aid can be immediately mobilised for the affected areas and the populations hit by this catastrophe?

2. What programmes and measures are available to aid the repair of the damaged infrastructure?

3. Has any investigation of this catastrophe been undertaken by the Portuguese Government and the Commission?

Question for written answer E-013921/13
to the Commission
Edite Estrela (S&D), Luis Manuel Capoulas Santos (S&D), Elisa Ferreira (S&D), Luís Paulo Alves (S&D) and Ana Gomes (S&D)
(6 December 2013)

Subject: Storm in Madeira

Once again, the residents of Madeira (Portugal) have been battered by torrential rain that has caused flooding and landslides, brought down walls and destroyed a number of homes, social amenities and lines of communication.

In view of the tremendous damage caused by the storm and the fact that, according to provisional estimates, repairs in the parishes of Porto da Cruz and Santo António da Serra, in the municipality of Machico, alone are going to cost over EUR 4 million, much more than the local authorities can afford:

How could the local authorities benefit from EU aid for repairs in the areas affected by this storm?

Joint answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(29 January 2014)

The EU Solidarity Fund was set up to assist Member States affected by a major disaster. The damage threshold applicable to Portugal in 2014 for activating the Fund is EUR 963 million. For smaller disasters, the Fund can only be activated very exceptionally if the majority of the population in the disaster-stricken region is affected and serious and lasting repercussions on living conditions and the economy have been demonstrated. Applications have to be submitted by the national authorities within 10 weeks of the occurrence of the disaster. If the Portuguese authorities consider applying for Solidarity Fund aid, the Commission stands ready to give further guidance and advice.

The Commission has not received to date any request for supporting recovery or repairs following the storm or projects that could be considered eligible under the on-going 2007-2013 European Regional Development Fund or Cohesion Fund.

In the context of the implementation of the 2007-2013 Portuguese National Strategic Reference Framework, the identification, selection, implementation and follow-up of individual projects is the responsibility of the relevant regional and national authorities. In order to have more substantial information on projects supported under the current programmes for the Autonomous Region of Madeira. Therefore, the Commission suggests the Honourable Members to contact directly the managing authority:

Instituto de Desenvolvimento Regional da Região Autónoma da Madeira (IDR-RAM)
Travessa do Cabido, 16
Funchal — Madeira
Tel. (00.351) 291 214 000
Email: idr-srpf@gov-madeira.pt
www.idr.gov-madeira.pt

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-013695/13
à Comissão
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL) e João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(3 de dezembro de 2013)

Assunto: Trabalhadores portugueses explorados na Bélgica

O Governo belga aprovou um plano de ação contra a utilização abusiva do mecanismo europeu de destacamento de trabalhadores estrangeiros, tendo sido referido como exemplo um grupo de 60 portugueses pagos a 2,6 euros à hora. Em notícias recentes foi revelado que um empregador foi alvo de um processo verbal, uma vez que fazia trabalhar 60 não-belgas, neste caso portugueses, por um salário de 2,6 euros à hora.

A diretiva relativa ao destacamento de trabalhadores refere que é da inteira responsabilidade do país de acolhimento garantir a proteção e os direitos aos trabalhadores destacados, sendo o país em causa obrigado a adotar medidas para evitar que as normas mínimas sejam contornadas, dando origem a situações de verdadeira discriminação, que, afinal, afetam todos os trabalhadores — os destacados e os do país de acolhimento.

Assim, solicito à Comissão que nos informe:

1. Tem conhecimento da situação citada? Como a avalia?

2. Que medidas tomou ou considera tomar visando obter uma informação completa sobre esta inadmissível discriminação de trabalhadores portugueses na Bélgica?

3. Mediante a clara insuficiência na aplicação da Diretiva de destacamento de trabalhadores, existe ou está a considerar elaborar alguma avaliação das irregularidades em matéria de aplicação da diretiva relativa ao destacamento de trabalhadores (Diretiva 96/71/CE do Parlamento Europeu e do Conselho, de 16 de Dezembro de 1996) e das recomendações da OIT em matéria de trabalho em regime de subcontratação, país por país?

4. Que medidas considera oportunas para defender a aplicação da igualdade de direitos destes trabalhadores portugueses?

Resposta dada por László Andor em nome da Comissão
(5 de fevereiro de 2014)

1. e 2. A Comissão não tem conhecimento do caso específico referido pelos Senhores Deputados.

Embora partilhe a preocupação relativa à exploração dos trabalhadores, a Comissão não está a considerar a possibilidade de tomar medidas no caso vertente e relembra que o acompanhamento e a execução concretos das condições de trabalho e de emprego estabelecidas na Diretiva relativa ao destacamento de trabalhadores ([1]) são da competência dos Estados-Membros. Os Estados-Membros dispõem de organismos especializados, nomeadamente as inspeções do trabalho, para efetuar controlos e determinar as medidas corretivas necessárias. Por conseguinte, cabe às autoridades belgas avaliar a situação descrita e adotar as medidas eventualmente necessárias.

3. A Comissão apresentou avaliações gerais da execução e aplicação levadas a cabo nos Estados-Membros da Diretiva relativa ao destacamento de trabalhadores, no âmbito dos respetivos relatórios de execução ([2]). Além disso, a Comissão supõe que a pergunta se refere à Recomendação R198 da OIT. ([3]) Não cabe à Comissão acompanhar a aplicação dos instrumentos da OIT. No entanto, a UE tomou parte ativa e contribuiu para a adoção desta recomendação.

4. Ciente de que a aplicação, o cumprimento e a execução da Diretiva relativa ao destacamento de trabalhadores devem ser melhorados em múltiplos aspetos, a Comissão adotou, em março de 2012, uma proposta ([4]) de diretiva de execução precisamente com esse objetivo. Essa proposta, que se encontra atualmente em exame pelo Conselho e o Parlamento, permitiria melhorar os instrumentos à disposição dos Estados-Membros com vista ao acompanhamento e à execução das disposições em matéria de condições de emprego.

([1]) Diretiva 96/71/CE do Parlamento Europeu e do Conselho, de 16 de dezembro de 1996, relativa ao destacamento de trabalhadores no âmbito de uma prestação de serviços, JO L 18 de 21.1.1997.

([2]) Por exemplo:Comunicação da Comissão — Aplicação da Diretiva 96/71/CE COM(2003) 458 final. Estão disponíveis outros relatórios no seguinte endereço: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=471&langId=en

([3]) R198 — Recomendação sobre as relações laborais, 2006 (N.° 198).

([4]) COM(2012) 131 final de 21 de março de 2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013695/13
to the Commission
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL) and João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Portuguese workers exploited in Belgium

The Belgian Government has approved an action plan to stop abuses of the EU mechanism for the posting of workers, citing the example of a group of 60 Portuguese workers paid EUR 2.60 per hour. It was recently reported that an employer had been given a verbal warning for employing 60 non-Belgians, in this case Portuguese workers, at a rate of EUR 2.60 per hour.

The directive concerning the posting of workers states that it is the sole responsibility of the host country to ensure that posted workers and their rights are protected. The host country is required to adopt measures to prevent minimum standards being violated, as this leads to discrimination that impacts on all workers, both those posted and those from the host country itself.

1. Is the Commission aware of this situation? What is its assessment of it?

2. What measures has it taken, or is it considering taking, to obtain full details about this unacceptable discrimination against Portuguese workers in Belgium?

3. Given that the directive concerning the posting of workers (European Parliament and European Council Directive 96/71/EC of 16 December 1996) is clearly failing, are the irregularities in the application of this directive and the ILO recommendations on subcontracting labour currently being assessed on a country by country basis, or will such assessment be considered?

4. What measures does it believe are appropriate to ensure that these Portuguese workers have equal rights?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(5 February 2014)

1 and 2. The Commission was not aware of the specific case referred to by the Honourable Members.

As much as the Commission shares the concern as regards exploitation of workers, with respect to the particular example referred to, the Commission is not considering taking any measures, as it recalls that the monitoring and enforcement in practice of the working and employment conditions laid down in the posting of workers Directive ([1]) fall within the competence of the Member States. They have specialised bodies, such as labour inspectorates, to carry out checks and determine the corrective measures required. It is therefore for Belgian authorities to assess the situation described and to initiate any necessary actions.

3. General assessments of the Member States' implementation and application of the Posting of Workers Directive have been submitted by the Commission in their implementation reports. ([2]) The Commission further presumes that the question refers to the ILO recommendation R198 ([3]). It is not the role of the Commission to monitor the application of ILO instruments. However, the EU took active part in, and contributed to, the adoption of this recommendation.

4. The recognition that the implementation, application and enforcement of the posting of workers Directive should be improved on several points is the reason why the Commission in March 2012 adopted a proposal ([4]) for an enforcement directive aimed at achieving just that. The proposal, which is currently before the Council and Parliament, would improve the instruments available to the Member States for monitoring, and enforcing provisions on, employment conditions.

([1]) Directive 96/71/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 1996 concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services, OJ L 18, 21.1.1997.
([2]) For instance: Commission Communication — The implementation of Directive 96/71/EC COM(2003) 458 final. Other reports available at: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=471&langId=en
([3]) R198 — Employment Relationship Recommendation, 2006 (No 198).
([4]) COM(2012) 131 final of 21 March 2012.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013696/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Experimentos con organismos transgénicos

Un grupo de asociaciones ecologistas y agrarias de España, entre ellas Amigos de la Tierra, COAG, Ecologistas en Acción, etc., ha publicado un mapa con la información relativa a la localización de los experimentos con organismos transgénicos que ha facilitado el Ministerio de Agricultura, Alimentación y Medio Ambiente del Gobierno de España.

Dichas organizaciones, que han dispuesto dicho mapa para hacer más accesible la información facilitada por el Ministerio, han denunciado que la mayoría de los experimentos sobre los que ha informado ya han terminado, con lo cual no se ha respetado la obligación de informar a tiempo sobre los riesgos a los que se expone a otros agricultores o ciudadanos que habitan en las zonas cercanas a dichos experimentos. Asimismo, dichas organizaciones han denunciado que la información ofrecida tan solo es una estimación que el Ministerio nunca ha controlado y se encuentra por debajo del 70 % de la superficie real cultivada. Como consecuencia de los experimentos con cultivos transgénicos se han denunciado numerosos casos de externalidades negativas que han afectado a agricultores de zonas cercanas a dichos experimentos: desde miel ecológica que pierde su valor al contener una mínima parte de polen transgénico, hasta variedades tradicionales de maíz contaminadas por transgénicos cercanos.

La Directiva 2003/4/CE introduce en el acervo jurídico de la Unión Europea la obligación de facilitar información pertinente y permitir la participación en la toma de decisiones sobre proyectos que tengan efectos medioambientales, como los citados experimentos con transgénicos. La directiva introduce en el Derecho europeo las obligaciones adquiridas en el Convenio de Aarhus de 1998 y, por tanto, obliga a que se adapten en las legislaciones nacionales de los Estados miembros. En el caso de España, los agricultores próximos a dichos experimentos han podido sufrir contaminaciones que reducen el valor de sus producciones. El Gobierno es el encargado de autorizar cada uno de los experimentos y, por tanto, disponía de toda la información relativa a la localización de los cultivos de transgénicos, tan solo no la publicó hasta que terminó la mayoría de ellos.

¿Sabe la Comisión que las autoridades españolas han publicado la información sobre la localización de los cultivos transgénicos cuando ya habían terminado dichos experimentos? ¿Considera que España ha cumplido la Directiva 2003/4/CE en el caso de la información relativa a los cultivos transgénicos experimentales realizados en el país? ¿Tiene la intención de sancionar a España por incumplir la citada Directiva?

Respuesta del Sr. Borg en nombre de la Comisión
(11 de febrero de 2014)

Sobre la base de la información recibida de la autoridad competente española, la Comisión confirma que es consciente de que la localización de OMG cultivados con arreglo a la parte B de la Directiva 2001/18/CE ([1]) se registra en España en un registro nacional gestionado por el Consejo Interministerial de OMG (CIOMG) y que la información relativa a la localización de experimentos con OMG está a disposición del público durante los mismos a petición a la autoridad competente española. La Comisión también es consciente de que las autoridades españolas facilitan la información relativa a la localización de OMG cultivados con arreglo a la parte B de la Directiva 2001/18/CE en el informe final sobre el experimento, que se publica después de este haya tenido lugar.

La Comisión considera que todo ello se ajusta a la Directiva 2003/4/CE ([2]), relativa al acceso del público a la información medioambiental, en particular su artículo 3, sobre el acceso a la información medioambiental previa solicitud, y su artículo 7, sobre la difusión de la información medioambiental. El artículo 7, apartado 3, afirma que «sin perjuicio de cualquier obligación específica de informar derivada del Derecho comunitario», los Estados miembros publicarán informes sobre el estado del medio ambiente.

([1]) DO L 106 de 17.4.2001, p. 1.
([2]) DO L 41 de 14.2.2003, p. 26.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013696/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Experiments with transgenic organisms

A group of environmentalists and agricultural associations in Spain, including Friends of the Earth, COAG, Ecologists in Action, etc., has published a map showing information, provided by the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment, on the locations of experiments with transgenic organisms.

These organisations, which have provided the map to make the information provided by the Ministry more accessible, have complained that most of the experiments about which information was given have already been completed. Therefore, the obligation to provide timely information on risks to farmers and other people living in areas close to these experiments has not been respected. The organisations have also complained that the information provided is only an estimate, never controlled by the Ministry, and is below 70% of the actual area under cultivation. Numerous cases have been reported of farmers in areas close to these experiments being affected by negative externalities resulting from experiments with transgenic crops: from organic honey that loses its value because it includes a minimum part of transgenic pollen, to traditional varieties of maize contaminated by nearby transgenic crops.

Directive 2003/4/EC introduced into the Union's legal *acquis* the obligation to provide relevant information and to allow participation in decision-making on projects with environmental effects, such as the abovementioned transgenic experiments. The directive introduces into European law the obligations acquired under the 1998 Aarhus Convention and, therefore, requires Member States' national laws to be adapted. In Spain's case, farmers nearby these experiments may have suffered from contaminations that reduce the value of their production. The Government is responsible for authorising all of these experiments. Therefore, it had all the information on the location of transgenic crops, and simply did not publish it until most of them had ended.

Is the Commission aware that the Spanish authorities published information about the location of transgenic crops only after these experiments were finished? Does it believe that Spain has complied with Directive 2003/4/EC in the case of the information on experimental transgenic crops grown in the country? Does it intend to sanction Spain for violating this directive?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(11 February 2014)

Based on the information received from the Spanish Competent Authority, the Commission confirms that it is aware that the location of GMOs grown under Part B of Directive 2001/18/EC ([1]) is recorded in Spain in a national Register managed by the Inter-ministerial Council on GMOs (CIOMG) and that information regarding the location of GMO trials is available to the public during the trial upon a request made to the Spanish Competent Authority. The Commission is also aware that the Spanish authorities make the information regarding the location of GMOs grown under Part B of Directive 2001/18/EC available in the final report for the trial which is published after the trial has taken place.

The Commission considers that this is in line with Directive 2003/4/EC ([2]) on public access to environmental information, in particular Article 3 on access to environmental information upon request and Article 7 on the dissemination of environmental information. Article 7(3) says that 'without prejudice to any specific reporting obligations laid down by Community legislation' Member States shall publish reports on the state of the environment.

([1]) L106/1, 17.04.2001.
([2]) L41/26, 14.02.2003.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013697/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Programa europeo de ayuda alimentaria en 2013 y el próximo periodo presupuestario

En su respuesta a mi pregunta E-006388/2011, el Comisario de Agricultura, Dacian Cioloş, expresaba, en nombre de la Comisión, su preocupación sobre la necesidad de un acuerdo político para garantizar la existencia del programa europeo de ayuda alimentaria para 2013, así como el proyecto de la Comisión de garantizar una partida para el periodo 2014-2020.

Ante la gravísima situación que está viviendo la población en los países del sur de Europa, resulta necesario garantizar la cobertura alimentaria de las masas de población que están siendo sumidas en la pobreza. Las políticas de austeridad impulsadas desde la misma Comisión en el ámbito financiero están provocando el incremento del porcentaje de población que vive bajo los umbrales de la pobreza hasta unos niveles que, en el caso de España, llegan al 20,7 %, según datos de Eurostat para 2012.

Estos niveles de pobreza están aumentando desde el inicio de la crisis y la población no puede aceptar una respuesta de las instituciones europeas que solo trata de salvar al sector financiero. Al menos, la Unión no puede reducir aún más los escasos recursos que destina a la ayuda alimentaria en una situación en la que su política económica está destruyendo empleos y condenando a millones de personas a la escasez de recursos económicos. Los bancos de alimentos en Estados miembros como España no son capaces de cubrir las necesidades de la población y se necesitarían muchos más recursos para hacer frente a la alimentación de la población necesitada.

¿Podría indicar la Comisión qué fondos se han destinado al programa de ayuda alimentaria de la Unión Europea para el ejercicio 2013? ¿Cuáles son los recursos financieros que han quedado a disposición del citado programa para el periodo 2014-2020? ¿Considera la Comisión que son suficientes para abordar la alimentación de las personas empobrecidas de la Unión Europea ante las perspectivas de crecimiento de la pobreza? ¿Qué medidas alternativas piensa adoptar la Comisión para garantizar la cobertura de las necesidades alimentarias de todos los ciudadanos europeos?

Con respecto al funcionamiento, ¿se plantea la Comisión la coordinación de dicho programa con los proyectos de gasto social para reducir la carga administrativa y garantizar un funcionamiento que permita satisfacer las necesidades sociales de cada Estado miembro en cada momento?

Respuesta del Sr. Andor en nombre de la Comisión
(6 de febrero de 2014)

El Programa europeo de ayuda alimentaria a las personas más necesitadas (PEAD) ascendió a 500 millones de euros en 2013, y el marco financiero plurianual prevé para el nuevo Fondo de Ayuda Europea para los Más Necesitados (FEAD) un presupuesto que se halla entre 2 500 y 3 500 millones de euros en el período 2014-2020, a precios constantes 2011. El importe exacto, que se especifica en el propio reglamento, será determinado por ambos colegisladores.

Si bien su objetivo no es responder por sí solo a las condiciones de privación de los ciudadanos europeos más vulnerables, el Fondo de Ayuda Europea para los Más Necesitados sí debería contribuir respaldando o catalizando los dispositivos nacionales que prestan una asistencia no financiera a las personas que se hallan en condiciones de extrema pobreza. Se prevén dos tipos de ayuda para los Estados miembros: ya sea una ayuda alimentaria o material, ya sea una ayuda a la inclusión social.

Además de que el presupuesto para el período 2014-2020 seguirá estable comparado con las dotaciones de los últimos años, el nuevo instrumento garantizará al mismo tiempo una gran previsibilidad de los recursos y una gran flexibilidad. En efecto, el Fondo lo pondrían en marcha los Estados miembros a través de programas plurianuales. Cada país tendría, pues, la posibilidad de dar prioridad a una de las formas de asistencia o bien de combinarlas, para afrontar las situaciones nacionales de la mejor manera posible.

El Fondo de Ayuda Europea para los Más Necesitados complementa los instrumentos de la política de cohesión, en particular el Fondo Social Europeo (FSE), que es —y seguirá siendo— un instrumento fundamental para la inclusión social.

Además, la puesta en práctica del FEAD será similar a la del FSE, de modo que permitirá sinergias a fin de reducir la carga administrativa.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013697/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: The European food aid programme in 2013 and the next budget period

In his answer to my question E-006388/2011, the Agriculture Commissioner, Dacian Cioloş expressed concern about the need for a political agreement to ensure the existence of the European food aid programme for 2013 and about the Commission's proposal to ensure provision for the period of 2014-2020.

The dire situation faced by the population in southern European countries makes it necessary to ensure food coverage for the masses of people who are being pushed into poverty. Austerity policies, promoted by the Commission itself in the financial sector, are causing an increase in the percentage of the population living below the poverty line, reaching 20.7% in Spain, according to Eurostat data for 2012.

These poverty levels have been increasing since the start of the crisis and the population cannot accept a response from European institutions that only looks at saving the financial sector. In a situation where economic policy is destroying jobs and condemning millions of people to live with scarce economic resources, the Union must at least ensure that it does not further reduce the limited resources allocated to food aid. Food banks in Member States like Spain are unable to meet the population's necessities and many more resources would be required to feed the population in need.

Could the Commission indicate what funds have been allocated to the Union's food aid programme for 2013? What financial resources have been made available to this programme for the period of 2014-2020? Does the Commission believe they are sufficient to deal with feeding impoverished people in the Union given the prospect of growing poverty? What complementary measures will the Commission take to ensure that the food needs of all European citizens are covered?

Regarding how the programme works, does the Commission intend to coordinate it with social expenditure projects in order to reduce the administrative burden and ensure that it operates to meet the social needs of all Member States at all times?

(Version française)

Réponse donnée par M. Andor au nom de la Commission
(6 février 2014)

Le Programme européen d'aide aux plus démunis (PEAD) s'est élevé à 500 millions d'euros en 2013 et le cadre financier pluriannuel prévoit pour le nouveau Fonds Européen d'aide aux plus démunis (FEAD) un budget compris entre 2,5 et 3,5 milliards d'euros sur la période 2014-2020, en prix constant 2011. Le montant exact, spécifié dans le règlement lui-même, sera déterminé par les deux co-législateurs.

S'il ne saurait avoir pour ambition de répondre à lui seul au dénuement des citoyens européen les plus vulnérables, le Fonds européen d'aide aux plus démunis devrait néanmoins y contribuer en soutenant ou en catalysant les dispositifs nationaux qui fournissent une assistance non-financière aux personnes confrontées à la très grande pauvreté. Deux types d'aide sont envisagés pour les États-membres: soit une aide alimentaire ou matérielle, soit une aide à l'inclusion sociale.

Outre que le budget pour la période 2014-2020 restera stable comparé aux dotations de ces dernières années, le nouvel instrument assurera à la fois une grande prévisibilité des ressources et une grande flexibilité. En effet, le Fonds serait mis en œuvre par les États membres à travers des programmes multi-annuels. Chaque pays serait donc en mesure d'adapter l'assistance en privilégiant une des formes d'assistance ou en les combinant, afin de répondre au mieux aux situations nationales.

Le Fonds européen d'aide aux plus démunis vient compléter les instruments de la politique de cohésion, en particulier le Fonds social européen (FSE) qui est, et restera un instrument essentiel pour l'inclusion sociale.

En outre, la mise en œuvre du FEAD sera similaire à celle du FSE, permettant ainsi des synergies visant à une réduction de la charge administrative.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013931/13
a la Comisión
Salvador Sedó i Alabart (PPE)
(6 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Posible cierre de Presseurop

La pervivencia de Presseurop, el portal multilingüe financiado con fondos europeos que traduce y publica artículos de noticias relacionadas con Europa desde 2009, pende de un hilo a raíz de la decisión de la Comisión Europea de cancelar la financiación de dicho portal, aduciendo motivos presupuestarios.

La principal misión de Presseurop es facilitar y promover el debate público sobre una amplia gama de cuestiones relacionadas con el proyecto europeo, acercando así la Unión Europea a los ciudadanos europeos.

A tan solo medio año de las elecciones tal vez más importantes de la historia de la Unión Europea, la confianza de los ciudadanos en la EU ha alcanzado su punto más bajo.

Proyectos como Presseurop contribuyen a fomentar el interés y a potenciar el conocimiento sobre qué es y cómo funciona la UE.

¿Cómo valora la Comisión la labor de Presseurop a la hora de combatir el déficit democrático de la UE?

¿Qué ha llevado a la Comisión Europea a tomar dicha decisión? ¿Qué opina de los resultados de la evaluación independiente publicados el pasado 13 de noviembre?

¿Qué proyectos considera la Comisión prioritarios en el ámbito de la comunicación de cara al período 2014-2020?

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita P-014325/13
a la Comisión
Ricardo Cortés Lastra (S&D)
(19 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Clausura del portal Presseurop el próximo 20 de diciembre

Lamento la decisión de la Comisión Europea de suspender la financiación del portal informativo *Presseurop*. En una época en la que la comunicación con el ciudadano sobre el trabajo que se realiza desde Europa urge más que nunca, en un contexto democrático en el que se aproximan las elecciones al Parlamento Europeo y en un momento en el que fortalecer la cohesión de Europa con el apoyo de los medios de comunicación es crucial, es intolerable que la Comisión haya decidido no renovar la financiación a *Presseurop*.

Presseurop, fundado en 2009, es un sitio web innovador que ha abierto en la red un gran camino para difundir la actualidad europea. Al estar dicha información disponible en diez idiomas, la utilidad y la necesidad de esta web, para que la ciudadanía europea tome el pulso de nuestras decisiones, están más que probadas.

En este contexto:

1. ¿Considera la Comisión que con esta decisión se coarta el derecho a la información de los ciudadanos europeos?

2. ¿Está considerando la Comisión otras alternativas para subvencionar este portal web?

Respuesta conjunta de la Sra. Reding en nombre de la Comisión
(17 de enero de 2014)

La Comisión remite a Su Señoría a la respuesta dada a la pregunta escrita E-011724/2013 ([1]).

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

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-013700/13
à la Commission
Constance Le Grip (PPE)
(3 décembre 2013)

Objet: Fin du contrat liant la Commission européenne à Presseurop

Le 12 juillet dernier, la Commission européenne a retiré l'appel d'offres auquel avait postulé le site d'information Presseurop. Cette décision de la Commission implique la fin du contrat qui la lie à Presseurop, et donc l'arrêt des financements nécessaires au fonctionnement de ce site.

Presseurop, de par son indépendance éditoriale, son multilinguisme et la variété de ses publications, a su trouver une audience toujours grandissante et prouver son utilité en permettant à de nombreux Européens d'avoir accès, dans leur langue, à des articles de la presse européenne et internationale.

1. La Commission compte-t-elle trouver un moyen de maintenir l'activité de Presseurop et de ses 70 journalistes?

2. La situation présente, dans laquelle Presseurop sera contraint de fermer dès le 20 décembre 2013, n'est-elle pas en contradiction avec les objectifs fixés par la Commission « d'accroître le sentiment d'adhésion des citoyens européens au processus d'intégration et d'identité européennes, et favoriser la citoyenneté active dans le contexte de l'UE»? N'est-ce pas entre autres au moyen de sites d'information tels que Presseurop que les citoyens européens peuvent justement accroître la connaissance de leurs voisins et donc leur sentiment d'appartenance à l'Union?

3. À quelques mois des élections européennes, la Commission ne craint-elle pas d'envoyer un signal très négatif à nos concitoyens en laissant Presseurop fermer, privant ainsi beaucoup d'entre eux d'une source d'information appréciée?

Réponse commune donnée par M^me^ Reding au nom de la Commission
(17 janvier 2014)

La Commission invite l'Honorable Parlementaire à prendre connaissance de sa réponse à la question écrite E-011724/2013 ([1]).

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

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-013812/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(5 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Chiusura di Presseurope

Presseurope è un sito di informazione che ripropone il meglio della rassegna stampa europea, in lingua italiana e altre 9 lingue. Dopo un lungo e costante lavoro al servizio dell'approfondimento dell'informazione europea cominciato nel 2009, il sito adesso lancia l'allarme. Nonostante un aumento costante dei suoi visitatori, almeno 600.000 al mese, e nonostante il fatto che una valutazione indipendente abbia raccomandato alla Commissione di continuare questo progetto, Presseurope chiuderà i battenti alla fine del mese e circa 70 persone — giornalisti, editori e traduttori — perderanno il lavoro.

Può la Commissione, attraverso la Direzione generale della comunicazione, che dipende dal Vicepresidente Viviane Reding, chiarire perché non intende andare avanti con un progetto molto apprezzato dai cittadini europei, stante che le motivazioni finanziarie addotte contrastano con la circostanza per la quale il Parlamento europeo ha votato un aumento del bilancio UE per il 2014 onde assegnare alla Commissione risorse finanziarie supplementari da dedicare ai progetti di comunicazione come Presseurope?

Risposta congiunta di Viviane Reding a nome della Commissione
(17 gennaio 2014)

La Commissione rimanda l'onorevole parlamentare alla sua risposta all'interrogazione scritta E-011724/2013 ([1]).

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

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-013780/13
à Comissão
Edite Estrela (S&D)
(4 de dezembro de 2013)

Assunto: Cessação do contrato com o projeto Presseurop

Tendo em conta que:

— o contrato da Comissão Europeia com o Presseurop termina brevemente e que a Comissão anunciou que não dará continuidade ao projeto, por razões orçamentais,

— o Parlamento Europeu votou, no entanto, um aumento do orçamento da União Europeia para 2014 para atribuir recursos financeiros suplementares à Comissão para os projetos de «media», dos quais faz parte o Presseurop,

— que o Presseurop é um dos principais sítios de informação independentes sobre a União Europeia, disponibilizando aos seus leitores uma seleção criteriosa da imprensa europeia e internacional, em dez línguas, numa plataforma que permite a partilha de conteúdos e o debate sobre questões europeias e que é apreciada tanto pelos cidadãos comuns como pelos especialistas em assuntos europeus e os jornalistas,

solicito à Comissão que esclareça as razões que estão na base de uma possível cessação do contrato com o projeto Presseurop, uma vez que os recursos financeiros para os projetos de «media» foram reforçados.

Resposta conjunta dada por Viviane Reding em nome da Comissão
(17 de janeiro de 2014)

A Comissão remete o Senhor Deputado para a resposta que deu à pergunta escrita E-011724/2013 ([1]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013700/13
to the Commission
Constance Le Grip (PPE)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: End of the Commission's contract with Presseurop

On 12 July 2013, the Commission withdrew the invitation to tender to which the information website Presseurop had responded. The Commission's decision spells the end of its contract with Presseurop and hence of the funding needed to run the site.

Because of its editorial independence, multilingualism and variety of publications, Presseurop has managed to attract an ever growing audience and to prove its worth by enabling scores of Europeans to access European and international press articles in their own language.

1. Will the Commission find a way of keeping Presseurop and its 70 journalists in business?

2. Does the present situation, in which Presseurop will be forced to close on 20 December 2013, not contradict the Commission's objectives of 'develop[ing] for European citizens a sense of ownership of European integration and of European identity and enabl[ing] civic participation in the EU context'? Is it not, inter alia, through information websites such as Presseurop that European citizens can actually get to know their neighbours better and hence feel more a part of the European Union?

3. With the European elections a few months away, is the Commission not afraid of sending a very negative signal to our fellow citizens by allowing Presseurop to close down and thus depriving many of them of a valued source of information?

Question for written answer E-013780/13
to the Commission
Edite Estrela (S&D)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: Termination of the contract with the Presseurop project

The Commission's contract with Presseurop ends soon and the Commission has announced that it will not continue with the project, for budgetary reasons.

Parliament, meanwhile, has voted in favour of increasing the EU's budget for 2014 to allocate additional funds to the Commission for 'media' projects, including Presseurop.

Presseurop is one of the main independent sources of information on the European Union, providing its readers with carefully selected articles from the European and international press, in 10 languages, on a platform that allows content-sharing and discussion of European issues; it is valued by citizens, specialists in EU affairs and journalists alike.

Can the Commission clarify on what grounds it might terminate the contract with the Presseurop project, given that funding for 'media' projects has been increased?

Question for written answer E-013812/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(5 December 2013)

Subject: Closure of Presseurop

Presseurop is a news site which republishes the best European press articles in Italian and another nine languages. After prolonged and continuous service providing in-depth European news since 2009, the site has now sounded the alarm. Despite a steady increase in visitor numbers — almost 600 000 a month — and despite an independent assessment recommending that the Commission continue this project, Presseurop will close at the end of the month with around 70 journalists, editors and translators losing their jobs.

Can the Commission clarify — via the DG for Communication, which is controlled by Vice-President Viviane Reding — why it does not intend to press ahead with a project that enjoys substantial support among EU citizens, given that the financial reasons for the decision are inconsistent with Parliament's vote to increase the EU's 2014 budget in order to allocate additional funding to the Commission for communication-related projects such as Presseurop?

Question for written answer E-013931/13
to the Commission
Salvador Sedó i Alabart (PPE)
(6 December 2013)

Subject: Potential closure of Presseurop

The survival of Presseurop, the multilingual portal financed with European funds that has been translating and publishing news articles concerning Europe since 2009, is hanging by a thread as a result of the Commission decision to cancel its funding, citing budgetary reasons.

The primary aim of Presseurop is to facilitate and provoke public debate on a wide range of matters relating to the European project, thus bringing the European Union closer to European citizens.

With just half a year until perhaps the most important elections in the history of the European Union, the confidence of EU citizens has reached its lowest point.

Projects such as Presseurop contribute to boosting interest and strengthening knowledge of the EU and how it works.

What is the Commission's assessment of the work of Presseurop at this time of combating the EU's democratic deficit?

What has led the Commission to taking this decision? What is its opinion of the results of the independent assessment published on 13 November of this year?

What projects does the Commission consider to be a priority in the area of communications with regard to the period 2014-2020?

Question for written answer P-014325/13
to the Commission
Ricardo Cortés Lastra (S&D)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: Closure of the Presseurop portal on 20 December 2013

I deplore the Commission's decision to suspend funding for the *Presseurop* news portal. At a time when it is more important than ever to provide citizens with information about the work being done at European level, within the democratic context of the approaching elections to the European Parliament and at a moment when it is crucial to strengthen European cohesion with support from the media, it is intolerable that the Commission should have decided not to renew funding for *Presseurop*.

Presseurop was set up in 2009 and is an innovative website which has provided a major online source of information about current affairs in Europe. With information provided in 10 languages, the need for this portal and its usefulness in enabling European citizens to take stock of our decisions has been amply demonstrated.

In light of this:

1. Does the Commission see this decision as curtailing European citizens' right to information?

2. Is the Commission looking at alternative means of funding this website?

Joint answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(17 January 2014)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to written question E-011724/2013 ([1]).

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

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-013702/13
alla Commissione
Lara Comi (PPE)
(3 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Norme sull'indicazione d'origine dei prodotti e tracciabilità

Premesso che:

— la proposta di regolamento COM(2005) 0661 è stata ritirata di fronte alla contrarietà in seno al Consiglio, nonostante il Parlamento avesse raggiunto una propria posizione;

— nella procedura legislativa per l'adozione del regolamento COM(2009) 0031, in tema di etichettatura nel settore tessile, non è stato trovato alcun accordo per introdurre norme vincolanti sull'indicazione d'origine, sempre per la contrarietà in seno al Consiglio;

— il testo finale del regolamento sul tessile ((UE) n. 1007/2011) prevedeva che, entro il 30 settembre 2013, la Commissione avrebbe presentato una relazione al Parlamento e al Consiglio riguardante possibili nuovi obblighi di etichettatura di origine da introdurre a livello di Unione;

— il 25 settembre 2013, la Commissione ha adottato la relazione COM(2013) 0656 ma, pur riconoscendo l'interesse dei cittadini, ha di fatto rimandato il problema, affermando che è in corso la procedura legislativa sulla proposta di regolamento in tema di sicurezza dei prodotti di consumo, con la quale si intende introdurre un sistema «intersettoriale su scala UE» che tenga conto del paese di origine e di altri aspetti relativi alla tracciabilità;

— i lavori negoziali al Consiglio su questo ultimo fascicolo mostrano, però, che la contrarietà di taluni Stati è ancora attuale e che vi sono seri rischi che anche stavolta l'indicazione d'origine non sia adottata;

può dire la Commissione:

1. se non ritiene che, seppur senza una nuova proposta legislativa, l'approfondimento dell'indicazione di origine nell'ambito della relazione COM(2013) 0656, attraverso un'adeguata consultazione di tutte le parti interessate, avrebbe rappresentato una spinta positiva per l'approvazione di queste norme?

2. quali iniziative intende intraprendere, nel caso che all'interno del Consiglio permanga la contrarietà ad adottare norme sull'indicazione di origine relativamente ai lavori sul Consumer Product Safety, per superare questa barriera e assicurare una adeguata normativa sull'indicazione di origine? Non ritiene che questa sia una questione di democrazia molto importante, come il Parlamento europeo ha affermato in più occasioni, perché ce lo richiedono i cittadini europei e le imprese?

Risposta di Antonio Tajani a nome della Commissione
(12 febbraio 2014)

La Commissione è consapevole dell'importanza che i consumatori attribuiscono alle informazioni relative al paese d'origine, fatto che è stato confermato da un'indagine condotta tra i consumatori e dalle consultazioni con gli stakeholder. La Commissione è altresì consapevole del sostegno del Parlamento europeo alle sue proposte passate e presenti, volte a istituire regole con validità unionale per le denunce relative al paese d'origine.

La Commissione è impegnata ad assicurare condizioni di equità tra le imprese dell'UE e i concorrenti di paesi terzi, come anche con i partner commerciali e si adopera anche per assicurare la tutela dei consumatori contro indicazioni, etichettature o marchi relativi all'origine dei prodotti che siano fuorvianti e ingannevoli, non comprovati e fraudolenti.

In tale contesto la Commissione porta rigorosamente avanti le sue iniziative per contribuire a raggiungere un consenso su regole comuni in merito all'indicazione del paese d'origine applicabili non solo ai tessuti, ai pellami e alle calzature, ma anche agli altri prodotti di consumo (non alimentari) nel quadro del neoproposto regolamento sulla sicurezza dei prodotti di consumo (COM(2013) 78).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013702/13
to the Commission
Lara Comi (PPE)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Rules on indication of origin and traceability of products

Proposal for a regulation COM(2005) 0661 has been withdrawn by the Commission following opposition from the Council, even though Parliament had adopted its own position on the matter.

In the legislative procedure concerning the adoption of Regulation COM(2009) 0031, on the labelling of textile products, no agreement was reached on the introduction of binding rules on indication of origin, again, because of opposition from the Council.

The final text of the regulation on textiles ((UE) No 1007/2011) stipulated that by 30 September 2013 the Commission would have submitted a report to Parliament and the Council concerning possible new labelling requirements to be introduced at EU level.

On 25 September 2013 the Commission adopted COM(2013) 0656. However, whilst acknowledging the public interest, in actual fact it postponed the issue, stating that the legislative procedure relating to the proposal for a regulation on consumer product safety was currently under way, and that this proposal sought to introduce an EU-wide cross-sector scheme which took account of the country of origin and other traceability-related aspects.

Negotiations in the Council on this latter dossier show, however, that some countries are still opposing it and there are serious risks that once again the indication of origin rules will not be adopted.

Can the Commission therefore answer the following questions:

1. Does it not think that even without a new legislative proposal, a greater focus on indication of origin in the report COM(2013 0656, through proper consultation of all stakeholders, would have given positive momentum to the adoption of these rules?

2. What measures does it intend to take, should the Council remain opposed to adopting rules on indication of origin in relation to the Consumer Product Safety proceedings, to overcome this barrier and ensure that there is adequate legislation on indication of origin? Does it not agree that this is a very important matter of democracy, as Parliament has stated on several occasions, because it is what European citizens and businesses are asking us for?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(12 February 2014)

The Commission is aware of the importance that consumers attach to information on country of origin, which was confirmed by a consumer survey and consultations with stakeholders, and is mindful of the support of the European Parliament to its past and current proposals for establishing EU-wide rules for country of origin-related claims.

The Commission is engaged in preserving a level playing field between EU enterprises and competitors from third countries and trade partners and ensuring consumers' protection against misleading and deceptive, unsubstantiated and fraudulent claims, labelling or marking of the origin of products.

In this context, the Commission is actively pursuing its efforts to facilitate reaching a consensus on common rules for the indication of the country of origin that would be applicable not only to textiles, leather and footwear, but also to other (non-food) consumer products, in the framework of the recently proposed Consumer Product Safety Regulation (COM(2013) 78).

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013703/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Creación de activos por impuestos diferidos en el sector financiero español

El pasado 29 de noviembre, el Ministro de Economía del Gobierno de España anunció una medida que permitirá a los bancos españoles constituir una cantidad de 30 000 millones de euros como activos por impuestos diferidos (DTA por sus siglas en inglés).

Esta forma de creación de activos supone, en la práctica, un préstamo que el Estado hace a los bancos a través de una modificación del impuesto de sociedades. Es un crédito fiscal que dichos bancos deberán pagar a la administración del Estado en los próximos dieciocho años. De esta forma, el Gobierno presta dinero a los bancos renunciando a la justa recaudación de impuestos y difiriendo su recaudación en un momento de máxima necesidad de ingresos públicos. Debemos recordar cómo está actuando el Gobierno con millones de ciudadanos en total bancarrota que no están recibiendo ningún trato de favor por parte de la hacienda pública.

En el sector bancario español empieza a ser habitual la puesta a disposición de los fondos públicos para garantizar el «funcionamiento de la economía en su conjunto». Sin embargo, todos estos préstamos y ayudas se están realizando a costa de los servicios públicos, lo que está produciendo el hundimiento de la economía española. Este nuevo trasvase de fondos públicos a la banca —a cambio de intereses mucho menores que los del mercado— se hace justo antes de la implementación de la directiva que convierte en obligatorios los acuerdos Basilea III, lo que supone una reestructuración de todo el sector financiero del continente.

¿Conoce la Comisión la ayuda DTA que el Gobierno de España ha concedido al sector bancario?

¿Cuál estima la Comisión que es la cantidad total de fondos públicos puestos a disposición de los bancos españoles?

¿Considera que esta ayuda pública, la última de otras tantas, supone una distorsión de la competencia en el sector financiero europeo en favor de los bancos españoles?

¿Piensa que la drástica reducción de ingresos públicos que supondrá esta decisión permitirá a España cumplir alguno de sus objetivos económicos?

Respuesta del Sr. Rehn en nombre de la Comisión
(30 de enero de 2014)

Su Señoría se refiere al Real Decreto-Ley 14/2013, aprobado en noviembre de 2013, que modifica la Ley del impuesto sobre sociedades (Real Decreto Legislativo 4/2004, de 5 de marzo). El mismo permite a los bancos y a otras empresas transformar sus activos de impuestos diferidos (*deferred tax assets*, DTA) en créditos fiscales directos reembolsables en tres supuestos concretos: DTA procedentes de las dotaciones para insolvencias crediticias, activos embargados y fondos de pensiones para los empleados de la empresa. En estos casos, las solicitudes de crédito reales solo se plantean si la empresa no puede generar los beneficios suficientes para compensar el resto de los DTA en el plazo de 18 años, la insolvencia o liquidación de la empresa o las pérdidas contables al final de un ejercicio determinado. En virtud del nuevo Reglamento de la UE sobre los requisitos de capital ([1]), los bancos no tendrán que deducir, gracias a esta reforma, esos DTA de sus fondos propios. En todos los bancos españoles, los DTA equivalen a unos 30 000 millones EUR. Los efectos presupuestarios de la reforma, no obstante, se espera que sean mucho menores, ya que la misma se limita a los tres casos mencionados.

En lo que respecta a la tercera pregunta, la Comisión entiende que la legislación se modificó para todas las empresas y que no se limita a los bancos. En los casos de fiscalidad, solo existe ayuda estatal si una medida confiere, de hecho o de derecho, una ventaja selectiva a determinadas empresas o la producción de determinados bienes. Las medidas fiscales que se aplican real e indistintamente a todas las situaciones no constituyen ayudas estatales. En este caso concreto, las autoridades españolas consideran que la medida no es constitutiva de ayuda estatal y, por el momento, no han pedido a la Comisión que adopte una decisión al respecto. A juzgar por la información disponible, la Comisión no tiene datos que indiquen que se trata de una ayuda estatal, pero está dispuesta naturalmente a volver a examinar la situación sobre la base de nuevos indicios.

([1]) Reglamento (UE) n° 575/2013 del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 26 de junio de 2013, sobre los requisitos prudenciales de las entidades de crédito y las empresas de inversión, y por el que se modifica el Reglamento (UE) n° 648/2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013703/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Creation of deferred tax assets in the Spanish financial sector

On 29 November 2013, the Spanish Minister for the Economy announced a measure that would allow Spanish banks to hold EUR 30 billion as deferred tax assets (DTA).

In practice, this form of asset creation constitutes a loan that the State makes to banks by modifying corporation tax. It is a tax credit that these banks have to pay the State over the next 18 years. Thus, the government lends money to banks by giving up fair tax collection and deferring it at a time when public revenue is most needed. We should bear in mind that the government is acting this way while millions of citizens are utterly bankrupt and are not receiving any preferential treatment from the Treasury.

It is starting to become common to provide the Spanish banking sector with public funds to ensure that 'the whole economy works'. However, all of these loans and grants are being made at the expense of public services, which are in turn causing the Spanish economy to collapse. This new transfer of public funds to banks, which is at a much lower interest rate than the market rates, is taking place just before the implementation of the directive that would make the Basel III agreements binding, which involves restructuring Europe's entire financial sector.

Is the Commission aware of the DTA assistance that the Spanish Government has given the banking sector?

What does the Commission believe is the total amount of public funds made available to Spanish banks?

Does the Commission think that this public assistance, the latest in a series assistance measures, distorts competition in the European financial sector to the benefit of Spanish banks?

Does the Commission think that the drastic reduction in government revenue that this decision will cause will enable Spain to meet any of its economic goals?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(30 January 2014)

The Honourable Member refers to Royal-Decree Law 14/2013 approved in November 2013 that amends the Law on Corporate Income Tax (RDL 4/2004 of 5 March). It allows banks and other companies to transform deferred tax assets (DTAs) into direct refundable tax credits from January 2014 in three specific cases: DTAs stemming from provisioning for credit insolvencies, foreclosed assets and pension funds for the company's employees. For these cases, actual credit claims only arise if the company cannot generate sufficient profits to offset remaining DTAs within an 18-year period, insolvency or liquidation procedure of the company, or accounting losses at the end of a specific year. Under the new EU Capital Requirement Regulation ([1]), due to this reform banks will not have to deduct from own funds these DTAs. These DTAs amount to an estimated EUR 30 billion across Spanish banks. The fiscal impact of that reform is, however, expected to be considerably lower, as it is limited to the three cases abovementioned.

As regards the third question, it is the Commission understanding that the legislation was changed for all companies, and not limited to banks. In taxation cases, there is state aid only where a measure grants, de jure or de facto, a selective advantage to certain undertakings or the production of certain goods. Taxation measures which genuinely apply across the board do not constitute state aid. In the specific case, the Spanish authorities consider the measure as not constituting state aid, and for the time being have not asked the Commission to take a decision on it. Based on the available information, the Commission has no elements showing that state aid is involved, but is of course ready to re-examine the situation based on new evidence.

([1]) Regulation (EU) No 575/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on prudential requirements for credit institutions and investment firms and amending Regulation (EU) No 648/2012.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013704/13
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(3 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: VP/HR — El fútbol español en Guinea Ecuatorial da alas a su dictador

Durante semanas, los medios de comunicación de ámbito nacional e internacional dieron publicidad al partido de fútbol celebrado el pasado 16 de noviembre en Malabo, capital de Guinea Ecuatorial, donde se enfrentaron en un encuentro amistoso la selección guineana y la española.

La Real Federación Española de Fútbol (RFEF) es el organismo rector del fútbol en España y quien se encarga de diseñar el calendario de partidos amistosos de la selección española, actual campeona del mundo. Al acceder a que la selección española participe en este evento deportivo, está satisfaciendo los deseos del dictador Obiang, máximo mandatario en Guinea Ecuatorial desde que alcanzó el poder en 1979 previo golpe de estado.

La RFEF es una asociación de utilidad pública que se encuentra bajo la supervisión del Consejo Superior de Deportes, órgano de la Administración General del Estado de España. El hecho de que el Gobierno español hiciera posible la celebración de este partido amistoso en Guinea Ecuatorial ha ofrecido una imagen pobre de España y, por tanto, de la Unión Europea.

La Unión Europea debe ser contundente y mostrar su reprobación ante este tipo de comportamientos. Es inadmisible que, habiendo tantos países en el mundo que desea albergar un evento deportivo de estas características, se elija uno donde los derechos y las libertades son inexistentes y un dictador brutal es quien decide sobre todo y sobre todos. Por otra parte, es lamentable que la celebración del encuentro se haya convertido para el dictador en motivo de orgullo, considerándolo un éxito de su régimen.

Por todo lo expuesto, pregunto a la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante:

¿Qué impacto considera que la celebración de un evento deportivo como este en Guinea Ecuatorial puede tener en la estrategia de la Unión Europea en defensa de los derechos humanos y de la democratización de este país?

Respuesta de la Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(24 de enero de 2014)

Guinea Ecuatorial firmó el Acuerdo de Cotonú el 23 de junio de 2000. El Acuerdo fue modificado por primera vez el 25 de junio de 2005. Aunque Guinea Ecuatorial firmó dicho Acuerdo revisado, depositó un instrumento de ratificación con una reserva que fue rechazado por la Unión y sus Estados miembros. En consecuencia, la ratificación no fue validada y, por tanto, Guinea Ecuatorial no recibe fondos procedentes del 10° Fondo Europeo de Desarrollo. Al mismo tiempo, un diálogo político sobre la base del artículo 8 del Acuerdo de Cotonú se celebró el 15 de octubre de 2013; este diálogo ofreció a la Unión Europea la oportunidad de discutir las consecuencias de una serie de hechos recientes, incluida la nueva constitución y las últimas elecciones.

La Unión Europea concede la máxima importancia a la protección de los derechos humanos y al fomento de la democracia en Guinea Ecuatorial y ha expresado su especial preocupación en lo relativo a la falta de respeto del Estado de Derecho y de las garantías procesales, incluidos los límites impuestos a la libertad de expresión, de prensa y reunión; a las detenciones y encarcelamientos arbitrarios; a la impunidad de los funcionarios sospechosos de haber cometido abusos; y a la corrupción generalizada.

Los principales objetivos de la UE han sido lograr una moratoria oficial para la pena de muerte, mejorar las condiciones de la libertad de expresión, hacer realidad el pluralismo político y apoyar a la sociedad civil. La UE seguirá de cerca los resultados del «examen periódico universal» de Guinea Ecuatorial, que está previsto en 2014.

La Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta no fue consultada sobre los planes de la Real Federación Española de Fútbol (RFEF). La celebración del partido no tiene ninguna incidencia sobre la determinación de la UE de prestar la debida atención y de dar prioridad al fomento de los derechos humanos y la democracia, en interés de todos los ciudadanos de Guinea Ecuatorial.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013704/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Spanish football in Equatorial Guinea supports the country's dictator

For weeks the international and national media have been publicising the friendly football match between the Equatorial Guinean and Spanish national teams, played on 16 November 2013 in the country's capital Malabo.

The Royal Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) is Spanish football's governing body and is responsible for scheduling friendly matches for the Spanish squad, the current world champions. The dictator Teodoro Obiang, who has been Equatorial Guinea's leader since taking power in a 1979 *coup d'état*, wanted the Spanish team to take part in this sporting event.

The RFEF is a non-profit association under the supervision of the Sports Council, a body of the Spanish Central Government. The fact that the Spanish Government would allow this friendly match to take place in Equatorial Guinea reflects poorly on Spain and, therefore, on the European Union.

The European Union must be strong and show its disapproval of such behaviour. It is unacceptable that, despite so many countries in the world wanting to host a sporting event of this nature, a country was chosen where rights and freedoms are non-existent and where a brutal dictator rules over everything and everybody. Moreover, it is unfortunate that the match became a point of pride for the dictator as he considers this a success for his regime.

What impact does the Vice-President/High Representative think holding a sporting event like this in Equatorial Guinea could have on the EU's strategy for defending human rights and for the democratic process in that country?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(24 January 2014)

Equatorial Guinea signed the Cotonou Agreement on 23 June 2000. The Agreement was amended for a first time on 25 June 2005. While Equatorial Guinea signed the revised Cotonou Agreement, it deposited an instrument of ratification with a reservation — an instrument that was rejected by the Union and its Member States. As a result, the ratification is not valid and, thus, Equatorial Guinea does not receive funding from the 10th European Development Fund. At the same time, a political dialogue based on Article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement took place on 15 October 2013 — this was an opportunity for the European Union to discuss the implications of a number of recent developments including the new Constitution and the recent elections.

The EU attaches the highest importance to the protection of human rights and the promotion of democracy in Equatorial Guinea. The EU has expressed particular concern on disregard for the rule of law and due process, including limits to the freedom of speech, press and assembly, arbitrary arrest and detention, impunity of officials who allegedly committed abuses and widespread corruption.

Principal aims for the EU have been the achievement of an official moratorium on the death penalty, the improvement of conditions for freedom of expression, effective political pluralism and the support to civil society. The EU will follow closely the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review exercise for Equatorial Guinea which is scheduled for 2014.

The HR-VP was not consulted on the plans of the Royal Spanish Football Federation (RFEF). The holding of the match has no impact on the EU's determination to give due attention and priority to encouraging human rights and democracy, in the interests of all citizens of Equatorial Guinea.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013706/13
a la Comisión
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(3 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Indulto de condena por delito medioambiental

El empresario canario Miguel Ángel Ramírez fue condenado por construir ilegalmente en el paraje natural protegido del Pino Santo (Las Palmas, Islas Canarias). El pasado 31 de octubre fue indultado por el Ministerio de Justicia del Reino de España.

¿Conoce la Comisión este asunto?

¿Considera la Comisión que la actuación del Gobierno español indultando a personas condenadas por delitos medioambientales está en conformidad con las políticas de protección del medio ambiente impulsadas por la Unión?

Respuesta de la Sra. Reding en nombre de la Comisión
(13 de febrero de 2014)

La Comisión se ha comprometido a garantizar que el medio ambiente esté lo suficientemente protegido, mediante el Derecho penal inclusive. A este respecto, la Comisión propuso la Directiva 2008/99/CE, relativa a la protección del medio ambiente mediante el Derecho penal, que entró en vigor el 26 de diciembre de 2008 y que debía incorporarse a los ordenamientos jurídicos nacionales antes del 26 de diciembre de 2010. La Directiva obliga a los Estados miembros a tipificar los comportamientos muy perjudiciales para el medio ambiente y a prever sanciones efectivas, proporcionadas y disuasorias en el Derecho nacional.

La Comisión no tiene competencias para intervenir en la ejecución de las condenas y la concesión de indultos en los distintos Estados miembros.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013706/13
to the Commission
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Pardoning environmental crime

The businessman Miguel Ángel Ramírez from the Canary Islands has been convicted of illegally building on the protected natural area of Pino Santo (Las Palmas, Canary Islands). On 31 October 2013 he was pardoned by the Spanish Ministry of Justice.

Is the Commission aware of this matter?

Does the Commission believe that the Spanish Government's action of pardoning people convicted of environmental crimes is in line with the environmental protection policies promoted by the Union?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(13 February 2014)

The Commission is committed to ensuring that the environment is sufficiently protected, including by means of criminal law. Against this background, the Commission has proposed Directive 2008/99/EC on the protection of the environment through criminal law, which entered into force on 26 December 2008 and had to be implemented by 26 December 2010. The directive requires Member States to criminalise behaviour that is seriously detrimental to the environment and to provide for effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions in national legislation.

The Commission has no competence to intervene in the enforcement of convictions and the granting of pardons in any individual Member State.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-013707/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(3. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Mögliche Auswirkungen des Konflikts zwischen Japan und China

Im November 2013 hat sich der Streit zwischen Japan und China um eine unbewohnte Inselgruppe besorgniserregend verschärft. Auch angesichts der Antwort der Kommission auf die Anfrage E-005641/2013, in der mitgeteilt wird, die EU unterstütze die friedliche Beilegung von Streitfällen im Raum des Südchinesischen Meeres, wird die Kommission um eine Stellungnahme hinsichtlich der folgenden Fragestellung gebeten:

1. Wie bewertet die Kommission die Lage in diesem territorialen Streit zwischen China und Japan?

2. Welche Vorgehensweise bzw. welche Strategie zieht die Kommission für den Umgang mit diesem Konflikt vonseiten der Europäischen Union in Betracht?

3. Erwartet die Kommission gerade auch angesichts der Parteinahme der USA Auswirkungen auf den globalen Handel bzw. auf die Import- und Exportraten im Handel mit China im Besonderen?

Antwort von Frau Ashton — Hohe Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin im Namen der Kommission
(4. Februar 2014)

Die EU verfolgt die Entwicklungen im nordostasiatischen Raum aufmerksam. Die Situation im Ostchinesischen Meer ist besonders besorgniserregend. Die EU nimmt zu den jeweiligen Forderungen nicht Stellung, ist jedoch darüber besorgt, dass eine weitere Eskalation die Sicherheit in einer Region zu beeinträchtigen droht, in der die EU bedeutende wirtschaftliche Interessen hat.

Die EU setzt sich stets für Frieden und Stabilität in der Region ein. Sie nutzt alle verfügbaren Kommunikationskanäle zur Förderung einer friedlichen und gerechten dauerhaften Lösung der Differenzen in maritimen Fragen durch einen Dialog auf der Grundlage des Völkerrechts, insbesondere des Seerechtsübereinkommens der Vereinten Nationen, in Übereinstimmung mit dem Grundsatz der friedlichen Beilegung von Streitigkeiten gemäß der Charta der Vereinten Nationen. Die EU hat dieses Ansinnen mehrmals den betroffenen Ländern deutlich gemacht. Ferner gab sie am 28. November 2013 eine öffentliche Erklärung über die von China eingerichtete Flugüberwachungszone im Ostchinesischen Meer ab. Darin wurde die Besorgnis zum Ausdruck gebracht, dass dieser Schritt die Gefahr einer Eskalation erhöht und zu zunehmenden Spannungen in der Region beigetragen hat.

Der Sprecher der Hohen Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin erklärte am 26. Dezember 2013 in einer Mitteilung zum Besuch des Yasakuni-Schreins durch den japanischen Premierminister Shinzō Abe, dass dieser Besuch weder für einen Abbau der Spannungen in der Region noch für die Verbesserung der Beziehungen zu Japans Nachbarländern förderlich war.

Die EU beteiligt sich außerdem am Erfahrungsaustausch in Bezug auf die Beilegung von Streitigkeiten und die gemeinsame Verwaltung maritimer Ressourcen, zum Beispiel beim Seminar EU-ASEAN zur Gefahrenabwehr im Seeverkehr in Jakarta am 18. und 19. November 2013. Auch bei kommenden Zusammentreffen (strategischer Dialog zwischen der EU und China, politischer Dialog mit Japan) wird die EU weiterhin alle Beteiligten ermutigen, Sicherheitsherausforderungen anzugehen, um Stabilität, Berechenbarkeit und Wohlstand zu schaffen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013707/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Potential impact of the conflict between Japan and China

In November 2013, the dispute between Japan and China over an uninhabited group of islands intensified to worrying levels. In view of the above and also the Commission's answer to Question E-005641/2013, which stated that the EU supports a peaceful settlement of disputes in the South China Sea area, could the Commission answer following questions:

1. What is the Commission's assessment of the situation in this territorial dispute between China and Japan?

2. What approach or strategy is the Commission considering for dealing with this conflict on behalf of the European Union?

3. In particular in view of the partisanship of the US, does it expect this conflict to have an impact on global trade or on the import and export rates in trade with China in particular?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(4 February 2014)

The EU is following developments in North-East Asia closely. The situation in the East China Sea has been especially worrying. The EU takes no position regarding the respective claims, but is concerned that further escalation risks undermining security in a region where the EU has significant economic interests.

The EU is constantly promoting peace and stability in the region, using all available channels of communication to encourage a peaceful and equitable long-term resolution of the differences on maritime issues through dialogue and based on international law, in particular the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea in line with the principle of the pacific settlement of disputes of the UN Charter. The EU has made this point several times to the countries concerned. It also issued, on 28 November 2013, a public statement on the establishment by China of an 'East China Sea Air Defence Identification Zone', expressing the concern that this step heightened the risk of escalation and has contributed to raising tensions in the region.

The Spokesperson of the HR/VP also, on 26 December 2013, issued a statement on the visit of PM Abe to the Yasukuni Shrine, indicating that this visit was not conducive to lowering tensions in the region or to improving relations with Japan's neighbours.

The EU is also engaged in sharing its experience regarding dispute settlement and the joint management of maritime resources, as was the case with the EU-ASEAN Seminar on maritime security organised in Jakarta on 18-19 November 2013. In our upcoming contacts (the EU's Strategic Dialogue with China and political dialogue with Japan), the EU will continue to encourage all sides to address security challenges in pursuit of stability, predictability and prosperity.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-013708/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(3. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Atomgespräche — Iran

Obwohl der Iran einer der Unterzeichnerstaaten des Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons ist, ist international bekannt, dass der Iran weiterhin an seinem Atomprogramm festhält und es als ziviles Programm bezeichnet. Die Atomgespräche in Genf wurden von EU-Außenbeauftragter Catherine Ashton angeführt und als Erfolg gewertet. Der Iran gibt an, Uran nicht mit mehr als fünf Prozent anzureichern und das höher verdichtete U-235 wieder zu verdünnen, um es somit waffenuntauglich zu machen. Des Weiteren werde die Entwicklung der Plutonium-Bombe nicht weiter angestrebt. Uran, das bereits auf 20 % angereichert war, solle so verdünnt oder verändert werden, dass es nicht für militärische Zwecke eingesetzt werden könne. Der Plutonium-Reaktor in Arak dürfe weitergebaut, aber nicht in Betrieb genommen werden.

1. Wie kann überprüft werden, dass die Anreicherung von Uran tatsächlich reduziert beziehungsweise gestoppt wird?

2. Wie kann überprüft werden, dass bereits angereichertes Plutonium wieder verdünnt wird?

3. Wie kann überprüft werden, dass der Iran die Entwicklung der Plutonium-Bombe nicht doch weiterverfolgt, wenn der Plutonium-Reaktor fertiggestellt werden darf?

4. Auf welche Richtlinien wird EU-Außenbeauftragte Catherine Ashton gemeinsam mit der 5+1 Gruppe bestehen, um sicherzustellen, dass das zivile Atomprogramm nicht trotzdem als Deckmantel missbraucht wird, um weiterhin Atomwaffen zu entwickeln und herzustellen?

5. Wie kann sichergestellt werden dass der Iran die Lockerung der wirtschaftlichen Sanktionen nicht ausnutzt.

Antwort von Frau Ashton — Hohe Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin im Namen der Kommission
(20. Februar 2014)

Durch die am 24. November 2013 von der 5+1-Gruppe und Iran in Genf erzielte Vereinbarung (gemeinsamer Aktionsplan) werden die Weiterentwicklung des iranischen Atomprogramms gestoppt und Teile des Programms rückgängig gemacht. Die in dem gemeinsamen Aktionsplan vereinbarten Einschränkungen betreffen sämtliche Tätigkeiten Irans im Nuklearbereich, insbesondere die Anreicherung, Produktion und Lagerung von Uran sowie die Weiterentwicklung des Schwerwasserreaktors in Arak, die auf Eis gelegt werden soll (keine Ausrüstung mit weiteren Komponenten, keine Herstellung und Prüfung von Brennelementen).

Ein besonderer Schwerpunkt des gemeinsamen Aktionsplans sind Maßnahmen zur Erhöhung der Transparenz sowie ein Stufenplan zur Überwachung und Überprüfung der von Iran eingegangenen Verpflichtungen durch die IAEO — bevor im Gegenzug die Sanktionen gelockert werden.

Insbesondere werden alle im gemeinsamen Aktionsplan genannten Nukleartätigkeiten in den sechs Monaten der ersten Phase von der IAEO überwacht und überprüft. Iran hat der Organisation im Rahmen des gemeinsamen Aktionsplans eine größere Rolle bei der Überprüfung der Sicherungsmaßnahmen zugestanden, die über seine derzeitige Zusammenarbeit mit der IAEO hinausgeht. Somit ist letztere in der Lage, die Maßnahmen Irans zur Einhaltung seiner Verpflichtungen zu überwachen und zu überprüfen. Die IAEO wird regelmäßig über die Umsetzung dieser Maßnahmen im Nuklearbereich berichten.

Die Lockerung der Sanktionen, zu der sich die 5+1-Gruppe verpflichtet hat, steht im Verhältnis zu den Maßnahmen Irans zur Einschränkung seines Atomprogramms. Die Lockerungen sind jedoch begrenzt, gezielt und umkehrbar, und die wichtigsten Sanktionen im Finanz- und Erdölsektor bleiben bestehen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013708/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Nuclear talks — Iran

Although Iran is a signatory state to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the world is well aware that Iran is continuing with its nuclear programme and describing it as a civilian programme. The nuclear talks in Geneva were led by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs, Baroness Ashton, and were considered a success. Iran states that it will not enrich uranium by more than 5% and will re-dilute the more highly compressed U-235, thereby making it unsuitable for use as a weapon. It will also no longer seek to develop the plutonium bomb. Uranium that had already been enriched to 20% is to be diluted or modified so as to be unusable for military purposes. Construction of the plutonium reactor in Arak can continue, but it cannot be put into operation.

1. How can it be verified that the enrichment of uranium is actually reduced or stopped?

2. How can it be verified that plutonium that has already been enriched is re-diluted?

3. How can it be verified that Iran will not continue to develop the plutonium bomb if work on the plutonium reactor is allowed to be completed?

4. What directives will the High Representative, Baroness Ashton, and the 5+1 group insist on in order to ensure that the civilian nuclear programme is not still used as a cover to continue to develop and produce nuclear weapons?

5. How can it be ensured that Iran does not exploit the relaxing of the economic sanctions?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(20 February 2014)

Under the agreement (Joint Plan of Action- JPA) reached by the E3/EU+3 and Iran in Geneva on the 24 of November 2013, Iran's nuclear activities are halted and parts of it will be rolled back. The limitations agreed in the JPA are addressing all of Iran's nuclear activities, in particular its enrichment, production, stockpile and freeze further advances in the development of the Heavy Water Reactor at Arak (no installation of further components, no production and testing of fuel).

The JPA lays particular emphasis on transparency measures and a gradual, step-by-step approach in which the commitments undertaken by Iran are monitored and verified by the IAEA before any sanctions are lifted in return.

Notably, all the nuclear-related measures agreed in the JPA will be monitored and verified by the IAEA in the six months of the first step. Under the JPA, Iran agreed to a broader safeguards verification role for the organisation, which goes beyond its current cooperation with the IAEA. Based on this the IAEA will be able to monitor and verify Iran's commitments. The IAEA will provide regular updates on the implementation of the nuclear-related measures.

The sanctions the E3/EU+3 committed to suspend are proportionate to the nuclear measures taken by Iran. However, they are limited, targeted and reversible and the core sanctions on financial and oil will remain in place.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-013709/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(3. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Maßnahmen gegen die Inhaftierung von Julija Timoschenko

Julija Timoschenko, die ehemalige Ministerpräsidentin der Ukraine, befindet sich seit August 2011 in ukrainischer Haft, nachdem ihr Amtsmissbrauch vorgeworfen wurde. Timoschenko jedoch bezeichnet das Verfahren gegen sie als Versuch der Regierung, die Opposition zu entkräften. Die EU-Außenminister haben nun das ukrainische Assoziierungsabkommen mit der EU an die Freilassung Timoschenkos gebunden, weil die Inhaftierung Timoschenkos und deren Umstände als Verletzung der Menschenrechte gewertet werden kann und somit auch den Stand der Rechtsstaatlichkeit der Ukraine aufzeigt.

1. Gedenken die EU-Außenminister noch weitere Schritte zu unternehmen, um die Freilassung von Timoschenko zu unterstützen?

2. Wird die EU Sanktionen gegen die Ukraine in Erwägung ziehen, falls Timoschenko weiterhin inhaftiert bleibt?

3. Werden weitere Verhandlungsrunden bezüglich des Assoziierungsabkommens mit der Ukraine, trotz möglicher nicht-Freilassung von Timoschenko, erfolgen?

Antwort von Frau Ashton — Hohe Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin im Namen der Kommission
(12. Februar 2014)

1. Die Schlussfolgerungen des Rates zur Ukraine vom 10. Dezember 2012 gelten weiterhin, einschließlich der Notwendigkeit, das Problem des selektiven Vorgehens der Justiz anzugehen und Wiederholungsfälle zu verhindern. Die EU beobachtet die Lage aufmerksam und wird dies auch weiterhin tun.

2. Sanktionen der EU gegenüber der Ukraine werden derzeit nicht in Erwägung gezogen.

3. Mit der Paraphierung des Assoziierungsabkommens am 30. März 2012 wurden die Verhandlungen über das Abkommen abgeschlossen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013709/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Action against the detention of Yulia Tymoshenko

Yulia Tymoshenko, the former Prime Minister of Ukraine, has been in a Ukrainian prison since August 2011, after she was accused of abuse of office. However, Ms Tymoshenko describes the proceedings against her as an attempt by the government to weaken the opposition. The EU Foreign Ministers have now tied the Ukrainian Association Agreement with the EU to the release of Ms Tymoshenko, as her imprisonment and the circumstances surrounding it can be considered a violation of human rights and thus also a demonstration of the state of the rule of law in Ukraine.

1. Do the EU Foreign Ministers intend to take further steps to support the release of Ms Tymoshenko?

2. Will the EU consider sanctions against Ukraine if Ms Tymoshenko continues to remain in prison?

3. Will further negotiation rounds in respect of the Association Agreement with Ukraine take place despite the potential failure to release Ms Tymoshenko?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(12 February 2014)

1. The Council Conclusions on Ukraine of 10 December 2012 remain valid, including the need to address the issue of selective justice and prevent its recurrence. The EU has monitored the situation and will continue to do so.

2. EU sanctions against Ukraine are not currently under active consideration.

3. The initialling of the Association Agreement on 30 March 2012 concluded the negotiations of the Agreement.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-013710/13
an die Kommission
Evelyn Regner (S&D)
(3. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Geschlechtergerechte Beschilderungen an Flughäfen

In der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 562/2006 des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 15. März 2006 über einen Gemeinschaftskodex für das Überschreiten der Grenzen durch Personen (Schengener Grenzkodex) wird im Anhang III (Artikel 9) die englische Bezeichnung „Citizen“ verwendet. Ins Deutsche wurde der Begriff mit „Bürger“ übersetzt. Aus diesem Grund findet man im Transferbereich deutscher und österreichischer Flughäfen Beschilderungen mit der Aufschrift „EU-Bürger“.

1. Ist die Kommission der Ansicht, dass die Gleichstellung der Geschlechter durch geschlechtergerechte Sprache zum Ausdruck gebracht werden sollte?

2. Zieht die Kommission in Erwägung, eine Änderung der deutschen Fassung der Verordnung vorzuschlagen, im Zuge welcher der Begriff „EU-Bürger“ durch „EU-BürgerInnen“ ersetzt wird?

Antwort von Frau Reding im Namen der Kommission
(18. Februar 2014)

Die Kommission stimmt zu, dass die geschlechtergerechte Sprache wichtig ist.

Was die in der Anfrage angesprochene Verordnung aus dem Jahr 2006 betrifft, so könnte die Korrektur einer Sprachversion nur von den beiden Legislativorganen durchgeführt werden.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013710/13
to the Commission
Evelyn Regner (S&D)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Gender-neutral signs at airports

In Annex III (Article 9) to Regulation (EC) No 562/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2006 establishing a Community Code on the rules governing the movement of persons across borders (Schengen Borders Code), the English term 'citizen' is used. This term is translated into German as 'Bürger' [citizen (male)]. Therefore, in the transit area of German and Austrian airports, there are signs containing the text 'EU-Bürger' [EU Citizens (male)].

1. Does the Commission believe that gender equality should be expressed by the use of gender-neutral language?

2. Is the Commission considering proposing an amendment to the German version of the regulation to replace the term 'EU-Bürger' [EU Citizens (male)] with 'EU-BürgerInnen' [EU Citizens (male and female)]?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(18 February 2014)

The Commission agrees that gender-neutral language is important.

As regards the regulation referred to in the question, which was adopted in 2006, a correction to a linguistic version of the text could only be done by co-legislators.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013711/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Sir Graham Watson (ALDE)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Azerbaijan

Ahead of the October 2013 presidential elections in Azerbaijan, European Union representatives noted with concern the continued pressure on a number of opposition activists, civil society and the independent media, in the form of, for example, intimidation, arrests on dubious charges, detention and sentencing without proper respect for international standards or for the rights of the accused.

Since the elections, the Azerbaijani authorities have imposed numerous penalties on the independent *Azadliq* newspaper and restricted its access to its bank account.

Three citizens have been sentenced as prisoners of conscience: blogger Rashad Ramazanov, editor of the *Nota* newspaper, Sardar Alibeyli and theologian Tale Bagirzade received prison sentences of nine years, four years and two years, respectively.

In addition, the Serious Crimes Investigation Department has launched investigations into the activities of the Election Monitoring and Democracy Studies Centre (EMDSC). This NGO has been charged with tax evasion and abuse of office after publicly disclosing evidence of vote rigging at numerous polling stations.

1. Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware of these developments?

2. What representations are being made:

— To ensure freedom of the press?

— On behalf of the aforementioned prisoners of conscience?

— On behalf of the EMDSC?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(30 January 2014)

The EEAS is carefully following developments in Azerbaijan, paying particular attention to matters relating to human rights, democracy, and the rule of law, including cases such as those referred to by the Honourable Member. The EU reports regularly on human rights and democracy issues in its annual European Neighbourhood Policy Progress Reports. The next Progress Report for Azerbaijan is planned to be published in March 2014.

The EU regularly raises human rights and democracy issues, including individual cases, with the Azerbaijani authorities. Where appropriate, the EU issues public statements in order to express its concern over individual cases. Most recently, on 20 December 2013, the spokespersons of HRVP Ashton and Commissioner Füle issued a joint statement expressing concern over the arrest of Mr Anar Mammadli, Chairman of the Election Monitoring and Democracy Studies Centre (EMDSC).

The EU-Azerbaijan Sub-committee on Justice, Freedom, Security and Human Rights and Democracy will next meet on 4 February 2014 and will provide an opportunity to raise these cases. At the recent meeting of the EU-Azerbaijan Cooperation Council on 9 December 2013, Azerbaijan reaffirmed its intention to continue cooperation with the Venice Commission on the preparation of a new law on defamation.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013712/13
to the Commission
Sir Graham Watson (ALDE)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Cypriot property

In reply to Parliamentary Question E-006305/2013 regarding Cypriot property deeds, the Commission highlighted the importance of Section 5.4 of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) concluded between the Commission, acting on behalf of the European Stability Mechanism (ESM), and the Republic of Cyprus, which aims to eliminate the title deed issuance backlog.

Section 5.4 includes the requirement for the Cypriot authorities to 'publish quarterly progress reviews of the issuance of building and planning permits, certificates, and title deeds, as well as title deed transfers and related mortgage operations throughout the duration of the programme'.

1. Can the Commission state how may progress reports have been published and how many it has received?

2. In addition, can the Commission disclose the number of building and planning permits, certificates and title deeds which have been issued, and the number of title deed transfers which have taken place so far?

3. Is the Commission aware that some Cypriot banks are informing buyers that title deeds will not be transferred unless they pay thousands of euros towards outstanding debts incurred by developers?

4. Is the Commission satisfied that all the requirements under Section 5.4 of the MoU are being met by the Cypriot authorities?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(3 February 2014)

Since July 2013, the Cypriot authorities (Ministry of Interior) are publishing data and reviews on the issuance of building and planning permits, certificates, and title deeds, title deed transfers and related mortgaged data, in accordance with the ESM MoU requirement under Article 5.4. These data and reviews are published on a quarterly basis and they are available to the public at the Ministry of Interior's website ([1]). In addition, the Commission would like to refer the Honourable Member of the European Parliament to the First ([2]) and the Second ([3]) Review of the Economic Adjustment programme for Cyprus. The Commission is well aware of the unresolved issue of the pending title deeds in Cyprus and it attaches priority to resolving it in the interest of the Cypriot economy, the European taxpayer, and the EU citizens affected by the problem. As the issue of the title deeds and the encumbrances attached to them is a complex one, the cooperation among a number of Cyprus' public administration units is also required.

([1]) http://www.moi.gov.cy/moi/moi.nsf/All/93A053FB23A64321C2257BDD0039FFF9 and http://www.moi.gov.cy/moi/dls/dls.nsf/dmldata_en/dmldata_en?OpenDocument
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2013/pdf/ocp161_en.pdf
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2013/pdf/ocp169_en.pdf

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013713/13
a la Comisión
Paolo De Castro (S&D), Patrizia Toia (S&D), Pier Antonio Panzeri (S&D), Luis Manuel Capoulas Santos (S&D), Iratxe García Pérez (S&D), Eric Andrieu (S&D), Carlo Fidanza (PPE), Oreste Rossi (PPE), Michel Dantin (PPE), Esther Herranz García (PPE), Franck Proust (PPE) y Dominique Vlasto (PPE)
(3 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Las importaciones de arroz procedentes de los países menos avanzados

El sector del arroz representa un motor socioeconómico para regiones europeas enteras. A partir de 2009, el rápido aumento de las importaciones exentas de aranceles procedentes de los países menos avanzados (PMA) ha ejercido presión sobre los precios de la UE, poniendo en grave peligro el mantenimiento de los cultivos de arroz de la variedad Indica.

En el período comprendido entre 2009 y 2010, las importaciones de arroz cultivado procedente de los países menos avanzados se triplicaron en comparación con 2008. Entre 2012 y 2013, estas importaciones superaron a las procedentes de Tailandia, país que durante años había sido el principal exportador de arroz cultivado a la UE. Durante los primeros siete meses de 2013, de un total de aproximadamente 169 000 toneladas de importaciones procedentes de los países menos avanzados, 161 000 toneladas tenían su origen en Camboya (el 95 % de las importaciones procedentes de los países menos avanzados), de las cuales 41 000 toneladas estaban ya empaquetadas.

Si se ajustara el precio del arroz de la UE al mismo nivel que el precio de las importaciones procedentes de Camboya, los cultivadores de arroz no conseguirían cubrir ni los costes de producción, hecho que tendría graves repercusiones económicas, sociales y medioambientales.

El artículo 22 del Reglamento (UE) n° 978/2012 establece que, a partir del 1 de enero de 2014, si el incremento de las importaciones exentas de aranceles procedentes de los países menos avanzados «causen o amenacen con causar dificultades considerables», «podrán restablecerse los derechos normales del arancel aduanero común para ese producto» (cláusula de salvaguardia del artículo 20 del Reglamento (CE) n° 732/2008). El artículo 24 del Reglamento (UE) n° 978/2012 establece que, si existen indicios razonables suficientes de que se cumplan las condiciones del artículo 22, anteriormente citado, «la Comisión estudiará la conveniencia de reintroducir los derechos del arancel aduanero común». El Reglamento (UE) n° 1083/2013 contempla el inicio de la investigación de oficio por parte de la Comisión si «dispone de indicios razonables suficientes de que se reúnen las condiciones establecidas en el artículo 22, apartado 1, del Reglamento SPG para imponer medidas de salvaguardia».

¿Está de acuerdo la Comisión con que los actuales precios del arroz paddy en la EU no cubren los costes de producción de los agricultores?

¿Es consciente la Comisión de que el drástico aumento de las importaciones provenientes de Camboya está perturbando el mercado del arroz cultivado en la EU, reduciendo la rentabilidad de los productores y provocando una disminución drástica de la superficie dedicada al cultivo de arroz en la EU de cara a la próxima cosecha (febrero de 2014)?

¿Piensa la Comisión intervenir con carácter de urgencia, recurriendo a todas las medidas previstas por la legislación de la UE (cláusula de salvaguardia, mecanismos de vigilancia, investigaciones, etc.), para garantizar que el régimen especial del sistema de preferencias generalizadas (SPG), aplicado a favor de los países menos avanzados (en particular con respecto a Camboya) no continúe causando graves dificultades a los productores de arroz de la Unión Europea?

Respuesta del Sr. Cioloş en nombre de la Comisión
(12 de febrero de 2014)

Como acertadamente señalan Sus Señorías, Camboya y Myanmar se han convertido en los principales proveedores de arroz para la UE desde que, a fecha de 1.9.2009, el régimen «Todo menos armas» (TMA) concediera a los PMA ([1]) un acceso libre de derechos y contingentes al mercado del arroz de la UE. No obstante, conviene recordar que aproximadamente un 40 % del consumo anual de arroz de la UE queda cubierto por las importaciones y que, además, Camboya y Myanmar disponen, precisamente, de importantes excedentes exportables de estos productos, concretamente de las variedades Índica (de largo «B») y de arroz partido, de los cuales la UE no puede autoabastecerse. Además, el aumento de las exportaciones de arroz de los PMA a la UE simplemente ha compensado la disminución de las cuotas de mercado de otros terceros países, mientras que, por el contrario, el total de las importaciones de la UE ha permanecido estable en términos generales.

([1]) Países menos avanzados.

Asimismo, los precios de producción en la EU no se sitúan considerablemente por debajo de sus niveles habituales. Cuando la nueva cosecha llegó a los mercados a finales de 2013, los precios del arroz Japónica se mantuvieron estables (en torno a 300 EUR/t, esto es, a un 200 % del umbral de referencia). Los precios del Índica, en correlación con la tendencia general del mercado mundial, descendieron de alrededor de 290 a 250-260 EUR/t. Cabe también señalar que estos precios se sitúan todavía por encima de los de 2009 y 2010.

El Reglamento (UE) n° 978/2012 ([2]) precisa que la condición que se tiene que dar para aplicar la cláusula de salvaguardia es que los productores de la Unión experimenten graves dificultades debido al régimen preferencial. Al estudiar esta cuestión, la Comisión debe tener en cuenta, entre otras cosas, el flujo de importaciones y la evolución de los precios. De lo anterior se desprende claramente que en este momento no se reúnen estas condiciones. No obstante, la Comisión seguirá vigilando estrechamente la evolución del régimen comercial TMA y sus posibles efectos en los mercados de la UE y se sigue comprometiendo a mantener un equilibrio de mercado satisfactorio en este importante sector.

([2]) Reglamento (CE) n° 978/12 del Consejo, de 25 de octubre de 2012 (DO L 303 de 31.10.2013, p. 1).

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-013713/13
à la Commission
Paolo De Castro (S&D), Patrizia Toia (S&D), Pier Antonio Panzeri (S&D), Luis Manuel Capoulas Santos (S&D), Iratxe García Pérez (S&D), Eric Andrieu (S&D), Carlo Fidanza (PPE), Oreste Rossi (PPE), Michel Dantin (PPE), Esther Herranz García (PPE), Franck Proust (PPE) et Dominique Vlasto (PPE)
(3 décembre 2013)

Objet: Les importations de riz provenant des pays les moins avancés

Le secteur du riz est un moteur socio-économique pour des régions entières en Europe. Depuis 2009, l'augmentation rapide des importations en franchise de douane en provenance des pays les moins avancés (PMA) comprime les prix de l'Union, nuisant sérieusement au maintien de la culture du riz Indica.

Au cours de la période 2009-2010, les importations de riz cultivé originaire des PMA ont triplé par rapport à 2008. Pour 2012-2013, ces importations ont pris le pas sur celles de la Thaïlande, qui, pendant des années, est restée le principal exportateur de riz cultivé vers l'Union européenne. Durant les sept premiers mois de 2013, sur un total d'environ 169 000 tonnes originaires des PMA, 161 000 venaient du Cambodge (95 % du total des importations en provenance des PMA), dont 41 000 étaient déjà emballées.

Si les prix du riz de l'Union européenne venaient à être ajustés sur les prix des produits importés depuis le Cambodge, les rizicultures de l'Union ne seraient même pas en mesure de couvrir les coûts de production, ce qui aurait de graves conséquences sur les plans économique, social et environnemental.

L'article 22 du règlement (UE) n° 978/2012 dispose qu'à partir du 1er janvier 2014, «si un produit originaire» des PMA «est importé dans des volumes et/ou à des prix tels que des difficultés graves sont ou risquent d'être causées aux producteurs de l'Union fabriquant des produits similaires ou directement concurrents, les droits du tarif douanier commun peuvent être rétablis pour ce produit» (clause de sauvegarde prévue à l'article 20 du règlement (CE) n° 732/2008). L'article 24 du règlement (UE) n° 978/2012 prévoit que, dans le cas où une telle situation se présente clairement, «la Commission mènera une enquête pour déterminer s'il y a lieu de rétablir les droits du tarif douanier commun». Selon le règlement (UE) no 1083/2013, «la Commission peut ouvrir une enquête pour déterminer s'il y a lieu de rétablir les droits du tarif douanier commun lorsque des éléments de preuve suffisants attestant à première vue que les conditions énoncées à l'article 22, paragraphe 1 du règlement SPG, sont remplies».

La Commission convient-elle que les prix du paddy dans l'Union européenne ne couvrent pas le coût de production?

La Commission est-elle consciente du fait que la forte augmentation des importations en provenance du Cambodge perturbe le marché du riz cultivé en Union européenne, empêchant les producteurs de générer du bénéfice et entraînant une diminution importante des surfaces occupées par la riziculture dans l'Union européenne pour la prochaine saison (février 2014)?

La Commission a-t-elle l'intention d'intervenir d'urgence, en ayant recours à toutes les mesures prévues par la législation de l'Union (clause de sauvegarde, mesures de surveillance, enquêtes, etc.), afin de garantir que le régime particulier prévu pour le système de préférences généralisées appliqué en faveur des PMA (particulièrement en ce qui concerne le Cambodge) ne continue pas à porter gravement atteinte à la situation des producteurs de riz de l'Union?

Réponse donnée par M. Ciolos au nom de la Commission
(12 février 2014)

Comme l'Honorable Parlementaire l'a souligné à juste titre, le Cambodge et le Myanmar sont devenus des fournisseurs de riz importants pour l'UE depuis que le régime «Tout sauf les armes» (TSA) a accordé, le 1/9/2009, aux pays les moins avancés (PMA) ([1]), un accès en franchise de droits et sans contingent aux marchés de l'UE. Toutefois, il convient de rappeler que 40 % de la consommation annuelle de riz de l'UE est couverte par des importations et que le Cambodge et le Myanmar disposent d'importants excédents exportables, précisément, de ces produits, c'est-à-dire des variétés de riz Indica (long «B») et de brisures de riz, pour lesquels l'UE n'est pas autosuffisante. De plus, la progression des exportations de riz réalisées par les PMA vers l'UE a seulement remplacé la diminution des parts de marché d'autres pays tiers Au contraire, les importations totales de l'UE sont restées stables dans leur ensemble.

En outre, les prix à la production dans l'UE ne sont pas nettement inférieurs à leur niveau habituel. Lorsque la nouvelle récolte est arrivée sur les marchés à la fin de 2013, les prix du Japonica sont restés stables (à environ 300 euros/t c'est-à-dire à 200 % du seuil de référence). Les prix du riz Indica ont suivi la tendance générale du marché mondial en affichant une diminution, passant d'environ 290 à 250-260 euros/t. Il convient également de rappeler que ces prix sont tout de même supérieurs aux prix de 2009 et de 2010.

([1]) Les pays les moins avancés.

Le règlement (UE) nº 978/2012 ([2]) stipule qu'une mesure de sauvegarde ne peut être adoptée qu'à la condition que les producteurs de l'Union connaissent de graves difficultés en raison du régime préférentiel. Lors de l'examen de cette demande, la Commission tient compte, entre autres, des flux d'importation et de l'évolution des prix. Il ressort clairement de ce qui précède que ces conditions ne sont actuellement pas remplies. La Commission continuera néanmoins de suivre de près l'évolution des échanges dans le cadre de l'initiative TSA ainsi que ses effets éventuels sur les marchés de l'UE et reste déterminée à assurer un équilibre de marché satisfaisant dans ce secteur important.

([2]) Règlement (UE) n° 978/2012 du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 25 octrobre 2012 (JO L 303 du 31.10.2013, p. 1).

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-013713/13
alla Commissione
Paolo De Castro (S&D), Patrizia Toia (S&D), Pier Antonio Panzeri (S&D), Luis Manuel Capoulas Santos (S&D), Iratxe García Pérez (S&D), Eric Andrieu (S&D), Carlo Fidanza (PPE), Oreste Rossi (PPE), Michel Dantin (PPE), Esther Herranz García (PPE), Franck Proust (PPE) e Dominique Vlasto (PPE)
(3 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Importazioni di riso dai paesi meno sviluppati

Il settore del riso è un fattore socioeconomico determinante per intere regioni europee. Dal 2009 il rapido aumento delle importazioni esenti da dazi dai paesi meno sviluppati (PMS) comprime i prezzi dell'UE, mettendo quindi in serio pericolo il mantenimento delle colture di riso indica.

Nel 2009-2010 le importazioni di riso coltivato provenienti dai PMS sono triplicate rispetto al 2008. Nel 2012-2013 tali importazioni hanno superato quelle della Thailandia, che per anni era stata il principale esportatore di riso coltivato verso l'Unione europea. Nei primi sette mesi del 2013, su un totale di circa 169 000 tonnellate di importazioni dai paesi meno sviluppati, 161 000 tonnellate provenivano dalla Cambogia (il 95 % del totale importato dai PMS), di cui 41 000 tonnellate erano già state confezionate.

Se il prezzo del riso dell'UE fosse adeguato a quello delle importazioni provenienti dalla Cambogia, i produttori di riso non sarebbero neppure in grado di coprire i costi della produzione, con conseguenti gravi ripercussioni di carattere economico, sociale e ambientale.

L'articolo 22 del regolamento (UE) n. 978/2012 prevede che, a partire dal 1° gennaio 2014, qualora le importazioni di un prodotto esenti da dazi e provenienti dai paesi meno sviluppati aumentino in modo tale da «causare o rischiare di causare gravi difficoltà», «i normali dazi della tariffa doganale comune possono essere ripristinati per detto prodotto» (clausola di salvaguardia, articolo 20 del regolamento (CE) n. 738/2008). L'articolo 24 stabilisce che, se esistono sufficienti elementi di prova al riguardo, «la Commissione avvia un'inchiesta per determinare se è necessario ristabilire i normali dazi della tariffa doganale comune». Il regolamento (UE) n. 1083/2013 consente l'apertura d'ufficio dell'inchiesta da parte della Commissione qualora vi siano «elementi di prova sufficienti a dimostrare che sono soddisfatte le condizioni di istituzione della misura di salvaguardia di cui all'articolo 22, paragrafo 1, del regolamento SPG».

Conviene la Commissione sul fatto che gli attuali prezzi del riso dell'UE non coprono i costi della produzione a carico dei produttori?

È consapevole del fatto che il drammatico aumento delle importazioni dalla Cambogia sta turbando il mercato del riso coltivato nell'UE, oltre a danneggiare la redditività dei produttori e provocare un drastico calo delle aree coltivate a riso dell'Unione nella prossima stagione (febbraio 2014)?

Intende intervenire con urgenza e utilizzare tutti gli strumenti a disposizione nell'ambito della legislazione dell'UE (clausola di salvaguardia, misure di sorveglianza, indagini ecc.), per assicurare che gli accordi speciali per il sistema generalizzato di preferenze applicati a beneficio dei PMS (in particolare per quanto concerne la Cambogia) non continuino a essere fonte di gravi difficoltà per i produttori di riso dell'Unione?

Risposta di Dacian Cioloş a nome della Commissione
(12 febbraio 2014)

Come giustamente sottolineato dagli onorevoli deputati, la Cambogia e il Myanmar sono diventati importanti fornitori di riso all'Unione europea a decorrere dall'1.9.2009 quando, grazie all'iniziativa «Everything but Arms» (Tutto tranne le armi), i paesi meno sviluppati hanno iniziato a usufruire di un accesso al mercato del riso interamente esente da dazi e contingenti. Tuttavia, è opportuno ricordare che circa il 40 % del consumo annuale di riso dell'Unione europea è coperto dalle importazioni e, inoltre, che la Cambogia e il Myanmar dispongono di una quantità significativa di eccedenze esportabili proprio di tali prodotti, vale a dire di riso «Indica» (a grani lunghi B) e di rotture di riso, per i quali l'UE non è autosufficiente. Inoltre, l'aumento delle esportazioni di riso dai paesi meno sviluppati all'Unione europea ha soltanto compensato la diminuzione delle quote di mercato di altri paesi terzi, mentre le importazioni totali dell'UE sono rimaste grosso modo stabili.

Inoltre, il livello dei prezzi alla produzione nell'UE non è significativamente al di sotto del livello abituale. Quando il nuovo raccolto è stato messo sul mercato alla fine del 2013, i prezzi del riso «Japonica» sono rimasti stabili (intorno ai 300 EUR/t, pari al 200 % della soglia di riferimento). I prezzi del riso «Indica», invece, denotano un calo rispetto alla tendenza generale del mercato mondiale e sono passati da 290 a 250-260 EUR/t. Va tuttavia osservato che questi prezzi sono comunque più alti di quelli del 2009 e del 2010.

Il regolamento (CE) n. 978/2012 ([1]) precisa che l'adozione di misure di salvaguardia è subordinata alla condizione che i produttori dell'Unione incontrino difficoltà gravi causate dal regime preferenziale. Nel considerare l'eventuale esistenza di un deterioramento della situazione economica dei produttori, la Commissione tiene conto, tra l'altro, dei flussi di importazione e dell'andamento dei prezzi. Da quanto precede emerge chiaramente che attualmente queste condizioni non sussistono. In ogni modo, la Commissione monitorerà da vicino l'evoluzione degli scambi commerciali a titolo dell'iniziativa EBA e i suoi possibili effetti sui mercati dell'Unione europea e si impegna a fare in modo che sia mantenuto un equilibrio soddisfacente del mercato in questo settore importante.

([1]) Regolamento (CE) n. 978/12 del Consiglio del 25 ottobre 2012 (GU L 303 del 31.10.2013, pag. 1).

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-013713/13
à Comissão
Paolo De Castro (S&D), Patrizia Toia (S&D), Pier Antonio Panzeri (S&D), Luis Manuel Capoulas Santos (S&D), Iratxe García Pérez (S&D), Eric Andrieu (S&D), Carlo Fidanza (PPE), Oreste Rossi (PPE), Michel Dantin (PPE), Esther Herranz García (PPE), Franck Proust (PPE) e Dominique Vlasto (PPE)
(3 de dezembro de 2013)

Assunto: Importações de arroz dos países menos avançados

O setor do arroz constitui um motor socioeconómico para regiões europeias inteiras. Desde 2009 que o aumento rápido das importações isentas de direitos aduaneiros dos países menos avançados (PMA) tem pressionado os preços da UE, comprometendo seriamente a manutenção das culturas de arroz indica.

No período de 2009 a 2010, as importações de arroz cultivado dos PMA triplicaram, em comparação com 2008. Em 2012-2013, essas importações excederam as da Tailândia que, durante anos, tinha sido o principal exportador de arroz cultivado para a UE. Nos primeiros sete meses de 2013, num total de importações dos PMA de aproximadamente 169 mil toneladas, 161 mil toneladas provieram do Camboja (95 % do total de importações dos PMA), 41 mil toneladas das quais já estavam embaladas.

Se o preço do arroz da UE fosse ajustado ao mesmo nível que o preço das importações do Camboja, os orizicultores nem conseguiriam cobrir os custos de produção, o que teria graves repercussões económicas, sociais e ambientais.

Nos termos do artigo 22.° do Regulamento (UE) n.° 978/2012, a partir de 1 de janeiro de 2014, caso aumentos nas importações dos PMA isentas de direitos aduaneiros «causem, ou ameacem causar, dificuldades graves», «os direitos normais da Pauta Aduaneira Comum podem ser restabelecidos relativamente a esse produto» (cláusula de salvaguarda do artigo 20.° do Regulamento (CE) n.° 732/2008). O artigo 24.° prevê que, sempre que seja feita prova suficiente de que estão reunidas estas condições, «a Comissão investiga se os direitos normais da Pauta Aduaneira Comum devem ser reintroduzidos». O Regulamento (UE) n.° 1083/2013 permite que a Comissão possa dar início a um inquérito ex officio, se existirem «elementos de prova prima facie suficientes que atestem estarem reunidas as condições para instituir as medidas de salvaguarda enunciadas no artigo 22.°, n.° 1, do Regulamento SPG».

Não concorda a Comissão que os preços atuais do arroz *paddy* da UE não cobrem os custos de produção dos orizicultores?

Está a Comissão ciente de que o aumento acentuado das importações do Camboja está a perturbar o mercado do arroz cultivado na UE, reduzindo a rentabilidade dos produtores e conduzindo a uma diminuição drástica das áreas de cultivo de arroz na UE na próxima época (fevereiro de 2014)?

Tenciona a Comissão intervir, com caráter de urgência, utilizando todas as medidas previstas pela legislação da UE (a cláusula de salvaguarda, medidas de vigilância, inquéritos, etc.) de forma a garantir que o regime especial do sistema de preferências generalizadas aplicado em favor dos PMA (especialmente no que toca ao Camboja) não continue a causar graves dificuldades aos orizicultores da União?

Resposta dada por Dacian Ciolos em nome da Comissão
(12 de fevereiro de 2014)

Tal como sublinhado pelos Senhores Deputados, o Camboja e Mianmar tornaram-se os principais fornecedores de arroz da União Europeia desde que, graças à iniciativa Tudo Menos Armas (TMA), os PMD ([1]) passaram a beneficiar de um acesso aos mercados de arroz da UE isento de direitos aduaneiros e sem contingentes em 1 de setembro de 2009. Convém, no entanto, recordar que cerca de 40 % do consumo anual de arroz na UE é coberto por importações e que o Camboja e Mianmar dispõem de importantes excedentes exportáveis precisamente destes produtos, ou seja, das variedades de arroz índica (grão longo B) e de trincas de arroz, para as quais a UE não é autossuficiente. Além disso, o aumento das exportações de arroz dos PDM para a União Europeia apenas serviu para substituir a diminuição das quotas de mercado de outros países terceiros, contrariamente às importações totais da UE que, de um modo geral, permaneceram estáveis.

Por outro lado, os preços de produção na UE não se situam muito abaixo dos seus níveis habituais. Quando a nova colheita chegou ao mercado em final de 2013, os preços do arroz japónica permaneceram estáveis (cerca de 300 EUR/t, ou seja, 200 % do limiar de referência). Os preços do índica, relativamente à tendência no mercado mundial, diminuíram de cerca de 290 para 250-260 EUR/t. Recorde-se que estes preços ainda se situam acima dos níveis de 2009 e 2010.

([1]) Países Menos Desenvolvidos.

O Regulamento (UE) n.° 978/2012 ([2]) estipula que são adotadas medidas de salvaguarda caso os produtores da União enfrentem dificuldades graves devido a um regime preferencial. Ao examinar se tal situação se verifica, a Comissão deve ter em conta fatores como o fluxo das importações e a evolução dos preços. Dos elementos acima expostos, decorre claramente que não existe atualmente uma situação deste tipo. A Comissão acompanhará de perto a evolução das trocas comerciais no quadro da iniciativa TOMA e as suas eventuais repercussões nos mercados da União Europeia e compromete-se a manter um equilíbrio satisfatório do mercado neste importante setor.

([2]) Regulamento (UE) n.° 978/2012, de 25 de outubro de 2012 (JO L 303 de 31.10.2013).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013713/13
to the Commission
Paolo De Castro (S&D), Patrizia Toia (S&D), Pier Antonio Panzeri (S&D), Luis Manuel Capoulas Santos (S&D), Iratxe García Pérez (S&D), Eric Andrieu (S&D), Carlo Fidanza (PPE), Oreste Rossi (PPE), Michel Dantin (PPE), Esther Herranz García (PPE), Franck Proust (PPE) and Dominique Vlasto (PPE)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Rice imports from Least Developed Countries

The rice sector is a socioeconomic driver for entire European regions. From 2009 the rapid increase in zero duty imports from Least Developed Countries (LDCs) has been compressing EU prices, seriously jeopardising the maintenance of Indica rice crops.

In 2009-2010, imports of cultivated rice from LDCs tripled compared to 2008. In 2012-2013, these imports exceeded those of Thailand, which for years had been the top exporter of cultivated rice to the EU. In the first seven months of 2013, out of a total import from LDCs of approximately 169 000 tonnes, 161 000 tonnes came from Cambodia (95% of the import total from LDCs), 41 000 tonnes of which was already packaged.

If the price of EU rice were to be adjusted to the same level as the price of imports from Cambodia, rice growers would not even be able to cover the costs of production, which would have serious economic, social and environmental repercussions.

Article 22 of Regulation (EU) No 978/2012 provides that from 1 January 2014 if increases in duty-free imports from LDCs 'cause or threaten to cause serious difficulties', 'normal Common Customs Tariff duties on that product may be reintroduced' (the safeguard clause in Article 20 of Regulation (EC) No 732/2008). Article 24 provides that where there is sufficient evidence for this, 'the Commission shall investigate whether the normal Common Customs Tariff duties should be reintroduced'. Regulation (EU) No 1083/2013 allows for the ex officio initiation of investigations by the Commission if there is 'sufficient prima facie evidence that the conditions for imposing the safeguard measure set out in Article 22(1) of GSP Regulation are met'.

Does the Commission agree that the current EU paddy prices do not cover the cost of production to growers?

Is the Commission aware that the dramatic increase in imports from Cambodia is creating disturbances in the market for rice cultivated in the EU, undermining the profitability of producers and leading to a drastic decrease in the area under rice cultivation in the EU in the next season (February 2014)?

Does the Commission intend to intervene as a matter of urgency, using all the measures provided for under EU legislation (the safeguard clause, surveillance measures, investigations, etc.), to ensure that the special arrangements for the generalised system of preferences applied in favour of LDCs (especially with regard to Cambodia) do not continue to cause serious difficulties for Union rice producers?

Answer given by Mr Ciolos on behalf of the Commission
(12 February 2014)

As the Honourable Members rightly pointed out, Cambodia and Myanmar have become major rice suppliers to the EU since the Everything But Arms (EBA) regime granted duty and quota free access to the EU rice markets to the LDCs ([1]) on 1/9/2009. However, it is worth recalling that some 40% of the annual rice consumption of the EU is covered from imports and also that Cambodia and Myanmar have significant exportable surpluses of precisely those products, i.e. of Indica (long 'B') varieties and broken rice, of which the EU is not self-sufficient. Moreover, increasing rice exports from the LDCs to the EU merely replaced the diminishing shares of other third countries: On the contrary, total imports of the EU have remained broadly stable.

Furthermore, producer prices in the EU are not significantly below their usual levels. When the new crop reached the markets in the end of 2013, Japonica prices remained stable (at around 300 EUR/t, i.e. 200% of the reference threshold). Indica prices, in correlation with the general world market trend, showed a decrease from around 290 to 250-260 EUR/t. It is also worth mentioning that these prices are still above 2009 and 2010 prices.

Regulation (EU) No 978/2012 ([2]) specifies that the condition for triggering the safeguard is that Union producers experience serious difficulties due to the preferential arrangement. In examining this, the Commission shall take account, *inter alia*, of the import flow and the evolution of prices. It is clear from the above that these conditions are currently not in place. Nevertheless, the Commission will closely monitor the evolution of the EBA trade and its possible effects on the EU markets, and remains committed to maintaining a satisfactory market balance in this important sector.

([1]) Least Developed Countries.
([2]) Council Regulation (EC) No 978/12 of 25 October 2012 (OJ L 303, 31.10.2013, p. 1.).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013714/13
to the Commission
David Martin (S&D)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Inclusion of animal welfare clauses in Vietnam FTA

The Commission will be aware that in June 2012 the EU and Vietnam launched negotiations for a comprehensive free trade agreement. Vietnam has amended its legislation on the WTO agreement on sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures, but no regulations or legal norms are being developed on the welfare of farm animals in Vietnam. Both the EU-Chile free trade agreement (FTA) and the EU-Korea FTA successfully included animal welfare provisions and have set a precedent for them to be included in all FTAs.

Does the Commission agree that it is unacceptable that there has been a failure to reach an agreement on the inclusion of animal welfare in the SPS chapter? Could the Commission clarify in which chapter of the EU-Vietnam FTA it aims to include provisions on animal welfare? Finally, how is the Commission developing cooperation on animal welfare with Vietnam? Would the European Trade Policy and Investment Support Project (EU-MUTRAP) be another mechanism via which to include a project on animal welfare, with the aim of providing market opportunities for small-scale farmers in Vietnam?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(4 February 2014)

In June 2012, the EU and Vietnam launched negotiations for a comprehensive free trade agreement with a view to ensuring an effective environment for trade and investment relations. These negotiations are ongoing. The discussions on the inclusion of animal welfare provisions in the agreement are also still ongoing. The Commission cannot predict the final outcome of the negotiations but will continue to pursue the inclusion of animal welfare provisions in the agreement.

The recent EU-Vietnam Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, which was signed on 27 June 2012, already foresees as necessary to cooperate on animal welfare, including technical assistance and capacity building for the development of animal welfare standards.

Finally, the European Trade Policy and Investment Support Project (EU- MUTRAP) supports Vietnam to facilitate sustainable international trade and investment. The possibility of a project on animal welfare enhancing market access opportunities for small-scale farmers could be considered.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013715/13
to the Commission
Phil Bennion (ALDE)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Preventing suicide

A new organisation, Suicide Response, has been established in my constituency to address issues around suicide and to work within communities to reach out to people who are experiencing or have experienced suicidal thoughts.

The organisation is now seeking funding to expand its service within community centres in order to access all vulnerable members of the community.

Reflecting on the priority given to preventing depression and suicide within the European Pact for Mental Health, which was launched in 2008, can the Commission outline what assistance it is continuing to provide to Member States to help prevent suicide and support organisations such as Suicide Response across the EU?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(6 February 2014)

The organisation and delivery of health services and medical care itself is a matter falling under the responsibility of Member States themselves. The Commission supports Member States in their actions to improve mental health and prevent depression and suicide through the policy dialogue in the Group of Governmental Experts on Mental Health and Well-being, which meets twice per year, and through the Joint Action on Mental Health and Well-being ([1]). A work package of the Joint Action has the objective to agree on a common framework of action against depression and to prevent suicides, including the use of eHealth solutions for this purpose. In addition, the Commission financed a study ([2]) describing mental health systems in EU-Member States with a focus on prevention and promotion of mental health. The Commission also informs Member States about projects under the EU-Health Programme which address suicide prevention, such as the PREDI-NU-project ([3]).

To the extent mental health may be affected by social difficulties — unemployment, social exclusion, low access to services, including healthcare etc. — the European Social Fund (ESF) supports Member States in tackling these problems. It funds measures for the social and professional integration of vulnerable groups (e.g. immigrants, disabled persons, long-term unemployed). In the 2014-20 programming period, Member States have to allocate at least 20% of their ESF budgets towards social inclusion measures.

In addition the Commission, through the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 ([4]), will continue supporting Member States to promote mental health services and the development of early intervention by providing them with analysis, guidance, information exchange and other support.

([1]) http://www.mentalhealthandwellbeing.eu/
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/mental_health/docs/europopp_full_en.pdf
([3]) http://www.predi-nu.eu/
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/disabilities/disability-strategy/index_en.htm

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-013716/13
do Komisji
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD), Jacek Olgierd Kurski (EFD) oraz Tadeusz Cymański (EFD)
(3 grudnia 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Zakaz palenia węglem w województwie małopolskim

W ubiegłym tygodniu Sejmik Województwa Małopolskiego uchwalił zakaz używania paliw stałych, w tym węgla kamiennego, do ogrzewania domów i mieszkań w Krakowie.

Podnieść należy, że wprowadzanie tego typu zakazów będzie rodziło w dalszej konsekwencji likwidację dziesiątek tysięcy miejsc pracy w Polsce u producentów urządzeń grzewczych. Odnosząc się w tym zakresie do decyzji radnych warto wskazać chociażby na zakład Defro ze Strawczyna w województwie świętokrzyskim. Obecnie firma daje zatrudnienie ponad 500 osobom. Tego typu decyzje, jak radnych z Krakowa, będą skutkowały redukcją zatrudnienia w Defro, a w dalszej kolejności stanowią realne zagrożenie do likwidacji zakładu. I taki los podzieli wiele firm z branży.

Dyrektywa 98/70/WE zezwala państwom członkowskim na wprowadzenie surowszych niż określone dyrektywą wymagań jakościowych w odniesieniu do paliw spalinowych na określonych obszarach terytorium państw członkowskich. Możliwość taka jest jednak traktowana jako odstępstwo uzasadnione ochroną zdrowia ludności w określonej aglomeracji lub środowiska w określonej strefie ekologicznie wrażliwej, jeżeli zanieczyszczenie powietrza lub wód gruntowych stanowi poważny i groźny problem dla zdrowia ludzkiego i środowiska lub jeśli obawy, że może stanowić ono taki problem, są uzasadnione. Zgodnie z art. 6 tej dyrektywy państwo członkowskie, które chce wprowadzić takie odstępstwo, zobowiązane jest z wyprzedzeniem przedłożyć KE wniosek. W uzasadnieniu tego wniosku musi ono wykazać, że odstępstwo nie narusza zasady proporcjonalności i że nie zakłóca ono swobodnego przepływu osób i towarów. Musi także dostarczyć KE dane dotyczące środowiska dla danej aglomeracji lub danego obszaru, jak również przewidywanych skutków proponowanych środków dla środowiska.

W związku z powyższym, w nawiązaniu do decyzji radnych Sejmiku Małopolskiego, którzy podjęli uchwałę o zakazie używania paliw stałych w Krakowie, proszę odpowiedzieć, czy Komisji Europejskiej został w myśl art. 6 dyrektywy 98/70/WE przedłożony specjalny wniosek uzasadniający przedmiotowe odstępstwo?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarz Connie Hedegaard w imieniu Komisji
(7 lutego 2014 r.)

Komisja pragnie zwrócić uwagę Szanownych Panów Posłów na fakt, że dyrektywą 98/70/WE odnoszącą się do jakości benzyny i olejów napędowych ([1]) określono specyfikacje zdrowotne i środowiskowe dla benzyny i oleju napędowego wykorzystywanych w silnikach pojazdów drogowych i maszyn jezdnych nieporuszających się po drogach. Chociaż art. 6 dyrektywy faktycznie przewiduje możliwość odstępstwa w kwestii wprowadzania do obrotu paliw spełniających bardziej surowe kryteria środowiskowe niż kryteria zawarte w dyrektywie, nie ma on zastosowania do paliw stałych, w tym węgla, do ogrzewania gospodarstw domowych. W związku z tym Komisja może potwierdzić, że nie otrzymała wniosku o udzielenie odstępstwa od władz polskich w tej sprawie, i że nie spodziewa się otrzymania takiego wniosku.

([1]) Dz.U. L 350 z 28.12.1998.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013716/13
to the Commission
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD), Jacek Olgierd Kurski (EFD) and Tadeusz Cymański (EFD)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Ban on coal burning in the Małopolskie province

The local parliament of the Małopolskie province introduced a ban last week on the use of solid fuels, including coal, for domestic heating purposes in Kraków.

Bans of this kind will lead to tens of thousands of job losses at Polish heating appliance manufacturers. A good example of a plant which would be affected by a decision of the kind taken by the members of the Małopolskie local parliament is Defro, which is based in Strawczyn in the Świętokrzyskie province and currently employs over 500 people. Quite apart from job cuts, there is a real risk that such a decision could close Defro down, a fate that will be shared by many companies in this sector.

Directive 98/70/EC allows the Member States to introduce more stringent quality specifications for fuels in specific areas of the Member State than those provided for in the directive. This is however only possible by way of a derogation, with a view to protecting the health of the population in a specific agglomeration or the environment in a specific ecologically sensitive area, or if atmospheric or groundwater pollution constitutes or may reasonably be expected to constitute a serious and recurrent problem for human health or the environment. Pursuant to Article 6 of this directive, Member States wishing to make use of such a derogation shall submit a request to the Commission in advance. The justification to be included with such a request shall include evidence that the derogation respects the principle of proportionality and that it will not disrupt the free movements of persons and goods. The Member States involved shall provide the Commission with data on the environment in the agglomeration or area in question as well as the predicted environmental impacts of the measures proposed.

In connection with the above, and following the decision by the members of the Małopolskie local parliament to introduce a ban on the use of solid fuels in Kraków, I would like to ask whether a special request was submitted to the Commission including a justification for this derogation, as required by Article 6 of Directive 98/70/EC?

Answer given by Ms Hedegaard on behalf of the Commission
(7 February 2014)

The Commission would draw the Honourable Members' attention to the fact that directive 98/70/EC, relating to the quality of petrol and diesel fuels ([1]), sets health and environmental specifications for petrol and diesel used in engines in road vehicles and non-road mobile machinery. While Article 6 of the directive does foresee the possibility of derogations for the marketing of fuels with more stringent environmental criteria than those contained in the directive, it does not apply to solid fuels, including coal, for use in domestic heating. The Commission can therefore confirm that it has not received a derogation request from the Polish authorities in this case, nor would it expect to so do.

([1]) OJ L 350, 28.12.1998.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-013717/13
à Comissão
Edite Estrela (S&D) e António Fernando Correia de Campos (S&D)
(3 de dezembro de 2013)

Assunto: Encerramento dos Estaleiros Navais de Viana do Castelo, S.A.

De acordo com a imprensa portuguesa, o Ministro da Defesa Nacional anunciou o despedimento coletivo dos 609 trabalhadores dos Estaleiros Navais de Viana do Castelo SA (ENVC,SA), que justificou com a investigação lançada pela Comissão sobre as ajudas públicas atribuídas à empresa entre 2006 e 2011;

Considerando que a Comissão solicitou ao Estado Português a apresentação de esclarecimentos que contribuam para a apreciação final da compatibilidade dos auxílios estatais prestados com as regras comuns da União Europeia que permitem auxílios de emergência ou reestruturação;

Considerando que idênticos procedimentos foram adotados pela Comissão em Espanha, França e Holanda;

Pergunta-se à Comissão:

1. Apresentou o Estado Português a justificação da natureza da intervenção no âmbito dos auxílios de emergência e de reestruturação concedidos a empresas em dificuldade?

2. Tomou a Comissão alguma decisão sobre o procedimento relativo à execução da política de concorrência pelo Estado Português no que respeita às ajudas públicas aos ENVC,SA?

3. Quais as decisões assumidas pela Comissão em relação a procedimentos congéneres nos estaleiros espanhóis, franceses e holandeses?

Resposta dada por Joaquín Almunia em nome da Comissão
(31 de janeiro de 2014)

Tal como indicado na resposta à pergunta E-5205/13, Portugal apresentou as suas observações sobre a decisão de iniciar o procedimento formal de investigação no caso SA.35546 (2013/C) — Medidas anteriores a favor dos Estaleiros Navais de Viana do Castelo S.A. (ENVC), por carta de 12 de março de 2013. Além disso, a Comissão e as autoridades portuguesas procederam a uma troca de correspondência e organizaram teleconferências em diversas ocasiões, como em qualquer outro procedimento formal de investigação. As observações das autoridades portuguesas não estão à disposição do público.

Tal como indicado na sua resposta à pergunta P-13647/2013, a Comissão ainda não adotou uma decisão final no caso SA. 35546.

A Comissão procedeu a investigações sobre os sistemas de arrendamento fiscal espanhol, francês e neerlandês, e não relativos a auxílios estatais a estaleiros navais. No que respeita à Espanha, a Comissão adotou uma decisão final em 17 de julho de 2013, que será publicada durante as próximas semanas. Relativamente à França e aos Países Baixos, as investigações ainda estão em curso.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013717/13
to the Commission
Edite Estrela (S&D) and António Fernando Correia de Campos (S&D)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Closure of the shipyard Estaleiros Navias de Viana do Castelo, S.A.

According to reports in the Portuguese press, the Portuguese Ministry of Defence has announced the collective dismissal of 600 workers at the Estaleiros Navais de Viana do Castelo, S.A. (ENVC S.A.) on the basis of the investigation launched by the Commission into state aid to the firm between 2006 and 2011.

The Commission asked the Portuguese Government to provide clarification to enable it to make its final decision on the compatibility of the state aid that had been provided with common EU rules that allow emergency or restructuring aid.

Identical procedures were instigated by the Commission in Spain, France and Holland.

1. Can the Commission confirm whether the Portuguese Government presented its justification for state aid for rescuing and restructuring firms in difficulty?

2. Has the Commission come to a decision about the competition policy investigation of Portuguese Government state aid to the shipyard Estaleiros Navais de Viana do Castelo S.A. (ENVC S.A.)?

3. What decisions has the Commission made with regard to the parallel investigations into Spanish, French and Dutch shipyards?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(31 January 2014)

As indicated in the reply to Question E-5205/13, Portugal provided its comments to the decision to open the formal investigation procedure in case SA.35546 (2013/C) — *Past measures in favour of Estaleiros Navais de Viana do Castelo S.A. (ENVC)* by letter of 12 March 2013. In addition, the Commission and the Portuguese authorities have exchanged correspondence and held conference calls on several occasions, as in any other formal investigation procedure. The comments of the Portuguese authorities are not publicly available.

As indicated in its reply to Question P-13647/2013, the Commission has not yet adopted a final decision in case SA.35546.

The Commission has carried out investigations concerning the Spanish, French and Dutch tax lease systems, and not concerning state aid to shipyards. As regards Spain, the Commission adopted a final decision on 17 July 2013, which will be published in the coming weeks. As regards France and the Netherlands, the investigations are still ongoing.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013719/13
a la Comisión
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(3 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Mercado interior de la electricidad

Considerando y coincidiendo con el contenido de la pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita a la Comisión n° E-011671/2013, de 14 de octubre de 2013, formulada por Raül Romeva i Rueda en relación con el aumento de la pobreza energética en España.

¿Considera la Comisión que el Gobierno español está aplicando adecuadamente las Directivas 2009/72/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 13 de julio de 2009, sobre normas comunes para el mercado interior de la electricidad (y específicamente los apartados 7 y 8 de su artículo 3) y 2009/73/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 13 de julio de 2009, sobre normas comunes para el mercado interior del gas natural (específicamente los apartados 3 y 4 de su artículo 3), tras expirar el 3 de marzo de 2011 el plazo fijado para su cumplimiento?

Respuesta del Sr. Oettinger en nombre de la Comisión
(5 de febrero de 2014)

La Comisión está llevando a cabo controles del cumplimiento de las dos Directivas mencionadas en la pregunta de Su Señoría a fin de comprobar la exhaustividad y la calidad de la transposición en los Estados miembros. Los controles del cumplimiento relativos a España se hallan en curso. Si la Comisión detecta una inconformidad de la legislación de los Estados miembros con el acervo de la UE, se pueden incoar procedimientos de infracción, en los casos en que estén justificados.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013719/13
to the Commission
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Internal market in electricity

This concerns and coincides with Question for written answer E-011671/2013 submitted to the Commission on 14 October 2013 by Raül Romeva i Rueda on the rise of energy poverty in Spain.

Does the Commission believe that the Spanish Government is properly implementing Directive 2009/72/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 concerning common rules for the internal market in electricity (specifically Article 3(7) and (8)) and Directive 2009/73/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 concerning common rules for the internal market in natural gas (specifically Article 3(3) and (4)), since the deadline for complying with these Directives expired on 3 March 2011?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(5 February 2014)

The Commission is conducting compliance checks of both directives mentioned in the question of the Honourable Member in order to verify the completeness and quality of transposition in the Member States. The compliance checks for Spain are currently ongoing. If the Commission identifies non-conformity of the Member States' legislation with the EU acquis, infringement proceedings can be launched when justified.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-013721/13
an die Kommission
Hiltrud Breyer (Verts/ALE)
(3. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Erkrankungen des zentralen Nervensystems als Folge von Vergiftungen

Verschiedene medizinische Studien deuten insbesondere bei neurologischen Krankheiten auf eine multifaktorielle Krankheitsentstehung mit Beteiligung von Umwelteinflüssen bzw. toxische Chemikalien als Auslöser hin. Ebenso gibt es gewichtige Argumente für die Beteiligung eines Umweltfaktors bei Kindern und Jugendlichen, der zur späteren Erkrankung führt. Ebenfalls kann die langanhaltende Exposition gegenüber giftigen Wirkstoffen im fortschreitenden Alter Ursache für Vergiftungserscheinungen und eine Schädigung der menschlichen Gesundheit sein.

1. Welche Forschungsergebnisse über die Auswirkungen von Giftstoffen auf die menschliche Gesundheit, insbesondere betreffend zerebrale Beeinträchtigungen bzw. Schädigungen des zentralen Nervensystems, sind der Kommission bekannt, wie sie z. B. bei Demenz, Alzheimer, Parkinson und Multipler Sklerose (MS) auftreten?

2. Welche Erkenntnisse liegen der Kommission über den Zusammenhang von besonders problematischen Stoffen wie POPs oder SVHC-Chemikalien und Erkrankungen des zentralen Nervensystems vor, und welche Erkenntnisse gibt es über Schädigungen der menschlichen Gesundheit durch Aluminiumverbindungen?

3. Welche Bestrebungen verfolgt die Kommission hinsichtlich der Ursachenforschung der häufigsten neurologischen Krankheiten, wie z. B. bei MS, die aktuell durch eine Zunahme bei jungen Erwachsenen von erheblicher sozialmedizinischer Bedeutung sind?

4. Stellt die Kommission Forschungsgelder für die Aufdeckung der vergiftungsbezogenen Ursachen von Demenz zur Verfügung?

5. Welche Reduktionsziele umfasst die EU-Strategie bis 2018 für eine giftfreie Umgebung in Bezug auf potentiell für Erkrankungen des zentralen Nervensystems relevante Chemikalien, und wie sollen diese Ziele erreicht werden?

6. Welche Hindernisse gibt es bei der Notifizierung von Hochrisikostoffen, und welchen Handlungsbedarf sieht die Kommission hier?

Antwort von Frau Geoghegan-Quinn im Namen der Kommission
(10. Februar 2014)

Zu Frage 1. und 2. Einschlägige Erkenntnisse und Forschungsergebnisse zu den möglichen Auswirkungen einer Exposition gegenüber Umweltschadstoffen wie z. B. langlebigen organischen Schadstoffen (POP) und besonders besorgniserregenden Stoffen (SVHC) auf das zentrale Nervensystem finden sich in öffentlichen Datenbanken wie PubMed sowie in Projektkatalogen ([1]). Die Kommission hat im Zuge ihrer Forschungsrahmenprogramme multizentrische Forschungs-Kooperationsprojekte wie EURO-MOTOR ([2]), BREATHE ([3]) und GEOPARKINSON ([4]) gefördert, die sich auf die gesundheitlichen Auswirkungen verschiedener Umweltschadstoffe konzentrieren, auch hinsichtlich der Entwicklung des Nervensystems bei Kindern und neurodegenerativer Krankheiten bei Erwachsenen. Aluminium gilt — außer bei hoher Exposition — nicht als gesundheitsschädlich ([5]).

Zu Frage 3. Die Kommission hat seit 2007 mehr als 800 Mio. EUR in die Forschung zu neurologischen und neurodegenerativen Krankheiten investiert. Im Laufe des 7. Forschungsrahmenprogramms wurden über 67 Mio. EUR für Forschungsprojekte im Bereich der neuroinflammatorischen Krankheiten wie Multipler Sklerose (MS) bereitgestellt ([6]). Dazu zählten 20 internationale Forschungsprojekte zu MS ([7]).

([1]) http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed
http://ec.europa.eu/research/environment/index_en.cfm?pg=health
http://ec.europa.eu/research/health/medical-research/human-development-and-ageing/projects_en.html

([2]) http://www.euromotorproject.eu
Das Vorhaben konzentriert sich auf die Hauptfaktoren für eine Anfälligkeit für amytrophe Lateralsklerose (ALS) und das Fortschreiten der Krankheit, wobei auch die Chemikalien- und Pestizid-Exposition im beruflichen und privaten Umfeld berücksichtigt wird.

([3]) http://www.creal.cat/programes-recerca/en_projectes-creal/111/programes-recerca/en_efectes-contaminants.html
Den Schwerpunkt des Projekts bilden mögliche Auswirkungen von Luftschadstoffen auf das pränatale Wachstum und die geistige Entwicklung.

([4]) http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2078401
Das Projekt konzentriert sich auf das Risiko für die Entwicklung der Parkinson-Krankheit im Zusammenhang mit einer Pestizid-Exposition.

([5]) http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/phs/phs.asp?id=1076&tid=34

([6]) Siebtes Rahmenprogramm für Forschung, technologische Entwicklung und Demonstration (2007-2013, RP7).

([7]) SYBILLA: Systems biology of T-cell activation in health and disease (Systembiologie der Aktivierung von T-Zellen im Hinblick auf Gesundheit und Krankheit)
http://www.sybilla-t-cell.de

Zu Frage 4. Im Zuge des neuen Rahmenprogramms für Forschung und Innovation (2014-2020) „Horizont 2020“ ([8]) könnten insbesondere im Zusammenhang mit der gesellschaftlichen Herausforderung „Gesundheit, demografischer Wandel und Wohlergehen“ Forschungsvorhaben gefördert werden, die sich mit den gesundheitlichen Auswirkungen einer Giftstoff-Exposition befassen ([9]).

Zu Frage 5. Wie im Siebten Umweltaktionsprogramm dargelegt, arbeitet die Kommission derzeit an der Entwicklung einer Unionsstrategie für eine nichttoxische Umwelt ([10]), in der diese Fragen beantwortet werden sollen.

Zu Frage 6. Für die Stoffe gilt eine Registrierungspflicht gemäß der REACH-Verordnung ([11]) sowie — bei gefährlichen Stoffen — eine Meldepflicht gemäß der CLP-Verordnung ([12]). Der Kommission sind keine Hindernisse hinsichtlich der Meldung von „Hochrisikostoffen“ bekannt, da im Rahmen der REACH- und der CLP-Verordnung Mechanismen eingerichtet wurden, um die Stoffe zu überwachen und gegebenenfalls erforderliche Maßnahmen zu treffen.

([8]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index_en.cfm

([9]) Im Rahmen der derzeit laufenden Aufforderung zur Einreichung von Vorschlängen könnte eine Förderung hinsichtlich mehrerer relevanter Themen beantragt werden: z. B. PHC 1 — 2014: Understanding health, ageing and disease: determinants, risk factors and pathway (Gesundheit, Altern und Krankheit: Determinanten, Risikofaktoren und Entwicklungswege), oder HCO 7 — 2014: ERA-NET: Establishing synergies between the Joint Programming on Neurodegenerative Diseases Research and Horizon 2020 (Schaffung von Synergien zwischen der Gemeinsamen Programmplanung für die Forschung zu neurodegenerativen Krankheiten und Horizont 2020).

([10]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:354:0171:0200:DE:PDF

([11]) Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1907/2006 des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 18. Dezember 2006 zur Registrierung, Bewertung, Zulassung und Beschränkung chemischer Stoffe.

([12]) Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1272/2008 über die Einstufung, Kennzeichnung und Verpackung von Stoffen und Gemischen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013721/13
to the Commission
Hiltrud Breyer (Verts/ALE)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Diseases of the central nervous system as a result of poisoning

In connection with neurological diseases in particular, various medical studies point to a multifactorial pathogenesis with the involvement of environmental factors or toxic chemicals as triggers. There are also strong arguments for the involvement of an environmental factor where children and young people are concerned leading to disease later in life. Extended exposure to toxic agents can also be the cause of signs of toxicity and damage to human health in later life.

1. What research results is the Commission aware of concerning the effects of toxic substances on human health, in particular with regard to cerebral impairment or damage to the central nervous system, as seen, for example in dementia, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and multiple sclerosis (MS)?

2. What findings are available to the Commission concerning the connection between particularly problematic substances, such as POPs or substances of very high concern (SVHCs), and diseases of the central nervous system, and what findings exist concerning damage to human health caused by aluminium compounds?

3. What efforts is it making with regard to research into the causes of the most common neurological diseases, such as MS, which are currently extremely important in socio-medical terms on account of an increase in cases among young adults?

4. Is it making research funding available in order to discover the toxicological causes of dementia?

5. What reduction targets does the EU strategy for a non-toxic environment include, to be achieved by 2018, in relation to chemicals that are potentially relevant to diseases of the central nervous system, and how are these targets to be achieved?

6. What obstacles to the notification of high-risk substances exist, and where does the Commission see a need for action in this regard?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(10 February 2014)

1 and 2. Relevant findings and research results on the possible effects of exposure to environmental pollutants such as POPs ([1]) and SVHCs ([2]) on the central nervous system are available in public databases such as PubMed and project catalogues ([3]). Through its research Framework Programmes, the Commission has funded collaborative multi-centre research projects such as EURO-MOTOR ([4]), BREATHE ([5]), and GEOPARKINSON ([6]) focusing on the impact of various environmental pollutants on human health including neurodevelopmental effects in children and neurodegenerative diseases in adults. Aluminium is not considered harmful to human health except at high exposure levels ([7]).

3. Since 2007, the Commission has invested over EUR 800M in research on neurological diseases including neurodegenerative diseases. On neuroinflammatory diseases such as multiple sclerosis (MS) over EUR 67M has been invested throughout FP7. ([8]) This support includes 20 international research projects on MS (e.g., SYBILLA ([9])).

4. In Horizon 2020, the new Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020) ([10]), research on the health impacts of exposure to toxicants could be funded especially from the 'Health, Demographic Change and Wellbeing' Societal Challenge ([11]).

([1]) Persistent Organic Pollutants.
([2]) Substances of very high concern.
([3]) http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed; http://ec.europa.eu/research/environment/index_en.cfm?pg=health
http://ec.europa.eu/research/health/medical-research/human-development-and-ageing/projects_en.html
([4]) http://www.euromotorproject.eu. Focuses on the key drivers for susceptibility and progression of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis including exposure to chemicals and pesticides in both occupational and recreational contexts.
([5]) http://www.creal.cat/programes-recerca/en_projectes-creal/111/programes-recerca/en_efectes-contaminants.html
Focuses in particular on the possible effects of residential air pollution on prenatal growth and mental development.
([6]) http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2078401
Focused on risk for developing Parkinson's disease related to pesticide exposure.
([7]) http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/phs/phs.asp?id=1076&tid=34
([8]) Seventh Framework Programme for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration Activities (FP7, 2007-2013).
([9]) Systems biology of T-cell activation in health and disease — http://www.sybilla-t-cell.de
([10]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index_en.cfm
([11]) In the currently open call for proposals there are several relevant topics from which funding could be sought: e.g., PHC 1 — 2014: Understanding health, ageing and disease: determinants, risk factors and pathways or HCO 7 — 2014: ERA-NET: Establishing synergies between the Joint Programming on Neurodegenerative Diseases Research and Horizon 2020.

5. The Commission is currently working on developing a Union strategy on a non-toxic environment, as set out in the Seventh Environmental Action Programme ([12]), which will provide the answers to such questions.

6. Substances must be registered pursuant to REACH ([13]) and those that are hazardous must be notified in accordance with CLP ([14]). The Commission is not aware of obstacles as regards the notification of 'high risk substances' as there are mechanisms under REACH/CLP allowing for the monitoring of these substances and taking action.

([12]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:354:0171:0200:EN:PDF
([13]) Regulation (EC) no 1907/2006 concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restrictions of Chemicals.
([14]) Regulation (EC) No 1272/2008 on classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-013722/13
an die Kommission
Hiltrud Breyer (Verts/ALE)
(3. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Hormonell wirksame Stoffe in Lebensmittelverpackungen

In PET-Kunststoffflaschen sind hormonell wirksame Schadstoffe enthalten. Auch das als Katalysator bei der PET-Herstellung benutzte Schwermetall Antimon, welches ebenfalls hormonell wirksam ist, konnte in Mineralwasser aus PET-Flaschen nachgewiesen werden.

Durch hormonell wirksame Stoffe werden möglicherweise Fortpflanzungsfähigkeit und Immunsystem geschädigt und es wird möglicherweise Krebs ausgelöst.

1. Sind der Kommission Studien bekannt, oder wurden Studien in Auftrag gegeben, die diese Problematik untersuchen?

2. Wann plant die Kommission auf die Belastung durch hormonelle Schadstoffe zu reagieren?

Antwort von Tonio Borg im Namen der Kommission
(29. Januar 2014)

Die Kommission verweist die Frau Abgeordnete auf ihre Antwort auf die schriftliche Anfrage E-5010/2010.

Für Antimon hat die Kommission in ihrer Verordnung (EG) Nr. 10/2011 ([1]) auf Grundlage einer Bewertung ([2]) durch die Europäische Behörde für Lebensmittelsicherheit einen Migrationsgrenzwert für Kunststoffe von 0,04 mg/kg Lebensmittel festgelegt.

([1]) Verordnung (EU) Nr. 10/2011 der Kommission vom 14. Januar 2011 über Materialien und Gegenstände aus Kunststoff, die dazu bestimmt sind, mit Lebensmitteln in Berührung zu kommen, ABl. L 12 vom 15.1.2011, S. 1.

([2]) Opinion of the Scientific Panel on food additives, flavourings, processing aids and materials in contact with food (AFC) on a request from the Commission related to a 2nd list of substances for food contact materials, The EFSA Journal (2004) 24, 1-13
http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/scdocs/doc/24a.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013722/13
to the Commission
Hiltrud Breyer (Verts/ALE)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Endocrine disruptors in food packaging

PET plastic bottles contain harmful endocrine disrupting substances. It has also been possible to detect the heavy metal antimony, used as a catalyst in the manufacture of PET and also an endocrine disruptor, in mineral water from PET bottles.

Endocrine disruptors can potentially impair fertility and the immune system and possibly trigger cancer.

1. Is the Commission aware of any studies, or have studies been commissioned, that examine this problem?

2. When does it plan to take action in respect of exposure to hormonal pollutants?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(29 January 2014)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its reply to written questions QE-5010/2010.

As concerns the presence of antimony the Commission has in its Regulation (EC) 10/2011 ([1]) set a migration limit for plastic materials of 0.04 milligram per kilogram food on the basis of an evaluation by the European Food Safety Authority ([2]).

([1]) Commission Regulation (EU) No 10/2011 of 14 January 2011 on plastic materials and articles intended to come into contact with food, OJ L12, 15.1.2011, p.1.
([2]) Opinion of the Scientific Panel on food additives, flavourings, processing aids and materials in contact with food (AFC) on a request from the Commission related to a 2nd list of substances for food contact materials, The EFSA Journal (2004) 24, 1-13, http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/scdocs/doc/24a.pdf

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita P-013723/13
a la Comisión
Salvador Garriga Polledo (PPE)
(4 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Censo de Deportes Tradicionales

El 2 de febrero de 2012, el Parlamento Europeo aprobó el Informe Fisas de la Comisión de Cultura y Educación sobre la dimensión europea en el deporte, en el que se pedía a la Comisión que fomentase el deporte como instrumento de su política de desarrollo, así como que desarrollase nuevas iniciativas en este ámbito.

Asimismo, se invitaba a la Comisión a respaldar los deportes locales, tradicionales y autóctonos, que forman parte de la rica diversidad cultural e histórica de la UE y simbolizan el lema «Unida en la diversidad», aumentando la conciencia sobre estos juegos así como a apoyar el trabajo de los Estados miembros sobre recogida de datos e investigación a fin de intercambiar las mejores prácticas.

¿Posee la Comisión algún tipo de censo sobre los llamados deportes tradicionales europeos? En caso negativo, ¿considera la Comisión que debe llevarse a cabo para, de esta manera, cumplir con el mandato del Parlamento?

Respuesta de la Sra. Vassiliou en nombre de la Comisión
(15 de enero de 2014)

Tal como la Comisión contestó no hace mucho al Sr. Junqueras Vies (E-004920/2011), al ajustarse al concepto de «deporte» establecido en la definición del Consejo de Europa (como confirmó en 2007 el Libro Blanco de la Comisión sobre el deporte), los juegos y los deportes tradicionales entran claramente en el ámbito de aplicación de las posibles iniciativas de la UE relacionadas con el deporte. En consecuencia, la Comisión incluyó la prioridad «Promoción de los juegos y deportes tradicionales europeos» en la acción preparatoria de 2013 «Asociaciones europeas en el ámbito del deporte» (convocatoria abierta de propuestas EAC/S03/2013). Se seleccionaron cuatro proyectos, que serán cofinanciados en 2014, cuyas organizaciones líderes son la Asociación Internacional de Deporte para Todos (TAFISA, Alemania), Vlaamse Traditionele Sporten (VlaS, Bélgica), Federazione Italiana Giochi e Sport Tradizionali (FIGeST, Italia) y la organización de interés general Dimofelia de la ciudad de Kavala (Grecia). Estos proyectos arrojarán nueva luz sobre la pertinencia de la financiación de la UE en relación con este tipo de actividades.

Cabe esperar que de estos proyectos se obtenga más información, que se difundirá, en su caso, sobre los juegos y deportes tradicionales en Europa. No obstante lo dicho, la Comisión no dispone de ningún censo sobre los deportes tradicionales europeos, ni tiene la intención de crear uno.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-013723/13
to the Commission
Salvador Garriga Polledo (PPE)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: Register of traditional sports

On 2 February 2012, Parliament adopted the Fisas resolution tabled by the Committee on Culture and Education on the European dimension in sport, in which it called on the Commission to promote sport as an instrument of its development policy and to launch new initiatives in this field.

In the same vein, it called on the Commission to support local, traditional and indigenous sports by raising awareness of these games which form part of the EU's rich cultural and historic diversity and which symbolise the motto 'United in diversity'. It also asked the Commission to support Member States' work on data collection and research in order to exchange best practice.

Does the Commission have a register of any kind of traditional European games? If not, does the Commission believe one should be produced in order to comply thereby with Parliament's resolution?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(15 January 2014)

As the Commission replied recently to Mr Junqueras Vies (E-004920/2011), by adhering to the concept of 'sport' laid down in the definition of the Council of Europe-as confirmed in the Commission's 2007 White Paper on Sport-traditional sports and games are clearly within the scope of potential EU sport-related initiatives. Accordingly, the Commission included the priority 'Promoting traditional European sports and games' in the 2013 Preparatory Action: European Partnership on Sports (open call for proposals EAC/S03/2013). Four projects were selected, which will be co-financed in 2014. The lead organisations are the Association for International Sport for All (TAFISA-in Germany), Vlaamse Traditionele Sporten (VLAS-in Belgium), Italian Federation for Traditional Sports and Games (FIGEST-in Italy), and the City of Kavala (Dimofelia) in Greece. These projects will shed new light on the relevance of EU funding in relation to this type of activities.

More information on traditional sports and games in Europe may result from these projects and will be disseminated where appropriate. The Commission does not, however, have a register of traditional European games, nor does it have the intention to establish one.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita P-013724/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(4 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Estudio sísmico en el Proyecto de almacenamiento de gas en Doñana

A lo largo de todo el presente año, en concreto, desde que el 29 de enero el Ministerio de Agricultura, Alimentación y Medio Ambiente del Gobierno de España diese el visto bueno al proyecto de almacenamiento de gas de la compañía Petroleum Oil Gas-España en pleno Parque Nacional de Doñana, he advertido de los posibles riesgos que supondría el desarrollo de dicho proyecto en el interior del Parque Nacional.

Los primeros días de octubre de este mismo año, comenzaban a producirse una serie de movimientos sísmicos en el límite entre las Comunidades autónomas de Valencia y Cataluña. Dichos movimientos han sido provocados por las operaciones de la planta de almacenamiento de gas del proyecto Castor situada a unos kilómetros de la costa. El proyecto de almacenamiento de gas que se pretende desarrollar en Doñana es básicamente similar al de la planta Castor y, por tanto, es absolutamente innegable a raíz de los últimos sucesos que dicho tipo de planta acarrea riesgos sísmicos.

Sin embargo, la evaluación de impacto ambiental presentada por Petroleum Oil Gas-España, filial de Gas Natural Fenosa, no incluye información suficiente sobre los riesgos sísmicos que acarrea este tipo de proyectos de almacenamiento de gas, tras la experiencia del proyecto Castor. Sin un pormenorizado estudio de los riesgos sísmicos del proyecto, no se garantiza que la evaluación de impacto ambiental recoja todos los riesgos existentes y, por tanto, la declaración de impacto ambiental debería poder revisar su resultado en función de la nueva información ambiental que se evalúe.

Teniendo en cuenta los movimientos sísmicos producidos a causa del proyecto Castor, ¿considera que la evaluación de impacto ambiental de este proyecto debería incluir un estudio pormenorizado de los riesgos sísmicos antes de autorizar el citado proyecto?

¿Ha facilitado el Gobierno de España una evaluación de los riesgos sísmicos en este proyecto? ¿Piensa exigirlo?

¿Considera que el proyecto cumple con lo estipulado en la Directiva 2004/35/CE en lo referente a la acción preventiva ante los daños medioambientales?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(4 de febrero de 2014)

El objetivo fundamental de la Directiva de Evaluación de Impacto Ambiental ([1]) es garantizar que, antes de autorizar su realización, los proyectos que puedan tener un impacto ambiental significativo, en particular debido a su naturaleza, sus dimensiones o su localización, se sometan a una evaluación en lo que se refiere a sus repercusiones ambientales.

El promotor del proyecto a que se refiere Su Señoría se ha comprometido a estudiar la exposición sísmica específica de la zona y a identificar y describir las potenciales fallas sísmicas activas durante las fases de construcción y desarrollo del proyecto.

La Comisión ha recordado a las autoridades españolas la necesidad de examinar todos los efectos probables del proyecto sobre el medio ambiente durante la evaluación de impacto ambiental y, en cualquier caso, antes de autorizar el proyecto.

La Comisión controlará detenidamente la conformidad del proyecto con toda la legislación de la UE en el momento de su autorización y, si resulta necesario, tomará medidas para hacer que se cumpla.

([1]) Directiva 2011/92/UE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 13 de diciembre de 2011, relativa a la evaluación de las repercusiones de determinados proyectos públicos y privados sobre el medio ambiente (DO L 26 de 28.1.2012, p. 1).

(English version)

Question for written answer P-013724/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: Seismic study on the Doñana gas storage project

Throughout this year, more precisely since 29 January, when the Spanish Ministry for Agriculture, Food, and the Environment approved the gas storage project to be carried out by Petroleum Oil Gas-España in the middle of Doñana National Park, I have been warning of the risks that might arise if the project were sited in the national park.

Early in October there were a number of seismic shocks on the border between the autonomous communities of Valencia and Catalonia. These were caused by the operation of the Castor gas storage plant a few kilometres from the coast. The future gas storage project in Doñana is essentially similar to the Castor plant; given recent events, it is undeniably the case that plants of this type pose seismic risks.

However, the environmental impact assessment submitted by Petroleum Oil Gas-España, a subsidiary of Gas Natural Fenosa, does not contain the necessary information about the seismic risks entailed in this type of gas storage project, taking into account the experience of the Castor project. Without a detailed study of the seismic risks involved in the project, it cannot be guaranteed that the environmental impact assessment will cover every risk; that being the case, the findings of the environmental impact statement should be open to revision in the light of the new environmental information to be assessed.

Bearing in mind the seismic shocks caused by the Castor project, does the Commission believe that the environmental impact assessment of the Doñana project should include a detailed study of the seismic risks and the project should not be authorised until such a study has been produced?

Has the Spanish Government supplied an assessment of the seismic risks posed by in the project? Will the Commission ask for such a study?

Does the Commission consider the project to comply with Directive 2004/35/EC as regards preventive action to avert environmental damage?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(4 February 2014)

The fundamental objective of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive ([1]) is that, before development consent is given, projects likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue, *inter alia*, of their nature, size or location should be made subject to an assessment with regard to their environmental effects.

As regards the project referred to by the Honourable Member, the project developer has committed to study the specific seismic exposure of the area and to identify and describe potential active seismic faults during the project construction and development phase.

The Commission has reminded the Spanish authorities about the need to assess all the likely effects of the project on the environment during the environmental impact assessment stage and, in any case, before development consent is given.

The Commission will closely monitor the compliance by this project with all EU legislation at the time of the project approval and will take steps to enforce existing EC law if necessary.

([1]) Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (OJ of 28.1.2012 -L 26/1) (codification).

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung P-013725/13
an die Kommission
Evelyn Regner (S&D)
(4. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Schwulen- und lesbenfeindliche Politik in Russland

Russland ist derzeit geprägt von einer diskriminierenden Gesetzgebung gegen Lesben und Schwule. Mit der Verabschiedung des Antipropgaganda-Gesetzes häufen sich die Meldungen aus Russland über die Zunahme gewalttätiger Angriffe gegen Homosexuelle. Lesben und Schwule werden auf offener Straße attackiert, beschimpft und sind auch restriktiver staatlicher Gewalt ausgesetzt.

Håkon Haugli (Norwegen, SOC), Generalberichterstatter der Parlamentarischen Versammlung des Europarates (PACE), hat in einem Bericht vom 6.9.2013 festgestellt:

„Nach der eklatanten Verletzung der Meinungs- und Versammlungsfreiheit durch das Gesetz über sogenannte homosexuelle Propaganda ist nun das Recht auf Achtung des Privat- und Familienlebens bedroht. Diese Legalisierung der Diskriminierung aufgrund der sexuellen Orientierung und Geschlechtsidentität widerspricht den internationalen Verpflichtungen der Russischen Föderation und birgt die Gefahr, dass homophobe und transphobe Haltungen und Gewalt legitimiert und gefördert werden".

Das Europäische Parlament hat zuletzt im Juni 2013 die russische Gesetzgebung scharf kritisiert.

Kann die Kommission dazu folgende Fragen beantworten:

1. Was gedenkt die Kommission zu tun, um Russland ausdrücklich und unmissverständlich klar zu machen, dass die Gesetzgebung in Russland nicht toleriert wird?

2. Welche Regelung wird die Kommission treffen, wenn russische Staatsbürger aufgrund ihrer Homosexualität Schutz in der EU suchen?

3. Wird die Kommission gegenüber den Mitgliedstaaten die Empfehlung abgeben, Lesben und Schwule aus Russland Asyl bzw. einen temporären Aufenthalt zu gewähren?

4. Welche Maßnahmen plant die Kommission, um russische Vereine im LGBTI-Sektor oder wichtige Aktivisten zu unterstützen?

Antwort von Frau Ashton — Hohe Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin im Namen der Kommission
(21. Januar 2014)

1. Die Hohe Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin verfolgt die Entwicklungen, auf die sich die Frau Abgeordnete bezieht, aufmerksam und hat in mehreren Erklärungen auf regionaler und nationaler Ebene öffentlich ihrer Enttäuschung über die Annahme von Gesetzen zum Verbot „homosexueller Propaganda" Ausdruck verliehen. Diese Gesetze führen zu einer Stigmatisierung bestimmter Gruppen und Einzelpersonen sowie zu diskriminierenden Praktiken und Diskursen. Sie stehen im Widerspruch zur Europäischen Menschenrechtskonvention (EMRK). Die EU hat alle Gelegenheiten wahrgenommen, Russland sowohl bilateral als auch in allen relevanten internationalen Menschenrechtsforen dazu aufzufordern, die Gesetze aufzuheben.

2. Im Einklang mit dem EU-Besitzstand wird allgemein angenommen, dass eine Person aufgrund ihrer sexuellen Ausrichtung oder der Geschlechtsidentität die Definition eines Flüchtlings erfüllen kann. Dies spiegelt sich auch in der Praxis und Rechtsprechung der Mitgliedstaaten wider. Es ist Aufgabe der zuständigen Behörden der Mitgliedstaaten zu beurteilen, ob ein aus diesen Gründen Asylsuchender alle notwendigen Voraussetzungen erfüllt. Es wurden bereits Fälle russischer Staatsangehöriger registriert, die aus diesen Gründen um Schutz in EU-Mitgliedstaaten ersucht haben.

3. Die Kommission erlässt keine spezifischen Leitlinien für einzelne Gruppen. Es ist Aufgabe der zuständigen Behörden der Mitgliedstaaten zu beurteilen, ob eine begründete Furcht besteht.

4. Die EU unterstützt die Zivilgesellschaft in Russland, einschließlich LGBTI-Organisationen, insbesondere durch das EIDHR, und wird dies auch weiterhin tun. Die Notfall-Fazilität für Menschenrechtsverteidiger, die aufgrund von Artikel 9 der EIDHR-Verordnung eingerichtet wurde, ermöglicht es der Europäischen Kommission, auf vertraulicher Basis Soforthilfe für gefährdete Menschenrechtsverteidiger zu leisten. Diese Zuschüsse decken verschiedene Schutzbedürfnisse ab, einschließlich des raschen Transports von gefährdeten Menschenrechtsverteidigern an einen sicheren Ort in ihrem Land oder im Ausland.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-013725/13
to the Commission
Evelyn Regner (S&D)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: Russian anti-homosexual policies

Anti-homosexual laws introduced in Russia are creating a climate of hostility towards the gay and lesbian community. Following the adoption of a law banning homosexual propaganda, more and more reports are emerging of an increase in the number of violent attacks against homosexuals. The individuals concerned are abused and attacked in broad daylight, and are also victims of state repression.

In a report adopted on 6 September 2013, Håkon Haugli (Norway, SOC), general rapporteur for the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), stated the following:

'After the blatant violations of freedom of expression and assembly represented by the legislation of the so-called homosexual propaganda, the right to private and family life is now under threat. This pattern of legalising discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity runs against the international obligations of the Russian Federation and risks legitimising and encouraging homophobic and transphobic attitudes and violence.'

Parliament has sharply criticised these Russian laws, most recently in June 2013.

1. How does the Commission intend to make it clear to Russia in no uncertain terms that this legislation is unacceptable?

2. What steps will it take if Russian citizens seek protection in the EU because of their sexuality?

3. Will it issue a recommendation that Member States grant asylum or temporary residence to homosexuals from Russia?

4. What steps is it planning to take to support Russian LGBTI organisations and key activists?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(21 January 2014)

1. The HR/VP has been following closely the developments referred to by the Honourable Member, expressing publically her disappointment with the adoption of bills prohibiting 'homosexual propaganda', at regional and at national level through several statements. These laws lead to the stigmatisation of particular groups and individuals and to discriminatory practices and discourse against them. They are in contradiction with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). The EU has taken all opportunities to call upon Russia to repeal them, bilaterally and in all relevant Human Rights international fora.

2. Under the EU acquis, it is widely assumed and reflected in the practice and case law of Member States that sexual orientation and gender identity can place a person under the definition of a refugee. It is for the competent authorities of the Member States to assess whether a person claiming asylum on these grounds fulfils all the necessary conditions. Cases of Russian citizens claiming protection in EU Member States on these grounds have been registered.

3. The Commission does not issue specific guidelines for specific groups: It is for the competent authorities of the Member States to assess whether there is any founded fear.

4. The EU supports civil society in Russia, including LGBTI organisations, notably through the EIDHR and will continue to do so. The emergency facility for human rights defenders set up on the basis of Art. 9 of the EIDHR Regulation allows the European Commission to provide urgent assistance to human rights defenders at risk, on a confidential basis. These small grants cover a variety of protection needs, including urgently relocating human rights defenders in danger to safe places inside their country or abroad.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita P-013727/13
a la Comisión
Pablo Zalba Bidegain (PPE)
(4 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Financiación del BEI a las PYME

Los mercados financieros están sufriendo una fragmentación que afecta especialmente al empleo. En este sentido, las PYME son las que más sufren, sobre todo las de los países periféricos que no pueden acceder al crédito, no tanto por su situación como por su ubicación.

Una de nuestras mayores prioridades a corto plazo es restaurar el crédito a la economía real. En los últimos meses se han diseñado muchos planes y proyectos enfocados a la financiación; aun así, considero que el BEI debería implicarse más.

En los últimos Consejos se han hecho propuestas importantes sobre el BEI, como pueden ser:

1. La intensificación de los esfuerzos realizados por el BEI para apoyar los préstamos a la economía real mediante la plena utilización del reciente aumento de 10 000 millones de euros en su capital.

2. Expansión de instrumentos financieros de riesgo compartido entre la Comisión Europea y el BEI para apalancar las inversiones del sector privado y los mercados de capital en las PYME.

3. Mayor cooperación entre los bancos nacionales de desarrollo y el BEI para aumentar las oportunidades de cofinanciación.

Aún así, considero que podemos ser más ambiciosos de lo que hemos sido hasta el momento.

¿Considera la Comisión que se están aplicando correctamente las propuestas del Consejo para aprovechar todo el potencial del BEI o considera que se puede hacer más?

¿Qué otras medidas considera la Comisión que se podrían proponer, además de las que ya están encima de la mesa, para que finalmente el crédito fluya a las pequeñas y medianas empresas y así fortalecer las primeras señales de recuperación?

Respuesta del Sr. Rehn en nombre de la Comisión
(12 de febrero de 2014)

El volumen crediticio adicional posibilitado por la ampliación de capital del BEI se facilitará a través de un Mecanismo de Crecimiento y Empleo. La financiación suplementaria al amparo de ese Mecanismo se distribuirá aproximadamente por igual entre los cuatro ámbitos siguientes, por un importe total de 60 millones EUR en el período 2013-2015:

i) innovación y cualificación

ii) acceso de las PYME a la financiación

iii) eficiencia de los recursos

iv) infraestructuras estratégicas.

Por lo que se refiere a las PYME, el grupo BEI, que comprende el Banco Europeo de Inversiones y el Fondo Europeo de Inversiones, suministra financiación en condiciones atractivas para apoyar a las PYME y a las empresas de capitalización media en toda la UE. También ampliará la gama completa de productos financieros existentes para apoyar el programa «Inversión en el empleo y la cualificación de los jóvenes» y se esforzará por adaptar los instrumentos de financiación a fin de fomentar las inversiones en el sector. Los beneficios derivados de la reducción de los costes de captación de recursos del BEI se transfieren a las PYME. Los intermediarios a través de los cuales llegan a sus beneficiarios finales los préstamos del BEI han de complementar el importe de los préstamos del BEI con recursos propios, lo que hace aún más importante el apoyo del BEI a las PYME.

El grupo BEI ya ha aumentado sus préstamos concedidos al amparo del objetivo de las PYME e incrementado la meta anual de 13 000 millones EUR a un compromiso de 21 000 millones EUR. El Consejo Europeo ha instado a los Estados miembros a participar en la iniciativa PYME, propuesta por la Comisión y el BEI en junio de 2013, para su oportuna aplicación en 2014. El inicio incluye la puesta en común de recursos de los Fondos Estructurales, del Programa COSME, del Programa Horizonte 2020 y del Grupo del BEI, con el objetivo de aumentar la financiación de las PYME.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-013727/13
to the Commission
Pablo Zalba Bidegain (PPE)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: EIB's financing of SMEs

Financial markets are currently undergoing a fragmentation that is affecting employment in particular. In this regard, SMEs are the ones suffering the most, especially those in peripheral countries that are unable to access credit, not so much because of their situation but because of their location.

One of our highest short-term priorities is to restore credit for the real economy. In recent months, many funding-oriented plans and projects have been drawn up; however, I still believe that the EIB should become more involved.

In recent Council meetings some significant proposals have been made with regard to the EIB, such as:

1. the stepping up of efforts by the EIB to support lending to the real economy by makingfull use of its recent EUR 10 000 million increase in capital;

2. expanding risk-sharing financial instruments between the Commission and the EIB toleverage private sector investment and capital markets for SMEs;

3. improving cooperation between national development banks and the EIB to increaseco-financing opportunities.

However, we could be more ambitious than we have been so far.

— Does the Commission believe that the Council's proposals to exploit the full potential ofthe EIB are being properly implemented, or does it think that more could be done?

— What other measures does the Commission think could be proposed, in addition to theones already on the table, so that credit can finally start flowing down to small andmedium-sized businesses and thus strengthen the early signs of recovery?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(12 February 2014)

The additional lending enabled by the EIB capital increase will be delivered through a Growth and Employment Facility. Extra lending under the Facility will be more or less evenly split between the following four areas, totalling EUR 60 billion between 2013-2015:

(i) Innovation and skills

(ii) SME access to finance

(iii) Resource efficiency

(iv) Strategic infrastructure

Regarding SMEs, the EIB Group, comprising the European Investment Bank and the European Investment Fund provides finance at attractive conditions to support SMEs and mid-caps across the EU. It will also extend the full range of existing financial products to support the 'Investing for Youth-Skills and Jobs' programme, and will work to tailor financing instruments to foster investment in the sector. The benefits arising from the lower funding cost for the EIB are passed on to the SMEs. The intermediaries through which the EIB loans are reaching out to final beneficiaries have to match the amount of the EIB loan amount with own resources which makes the EIB support to SMEs even more significant.

The EIB Group has already stepped up its lending under the SME objective and increased the annual target from EUR 13bn to a commitment of EUR 21bn. The European Council has called on Member States to participate in the SME initiative, proposed by the Commission and the EIB in June 2013, for timely implementation in 2014. The initiate encompasses pooling resources from structural funds, COSME, HORIZON 2020 and of the EIB group, aiming to enhance SME finance.

(České znění)

Otázka k písemnému zodpovězení P-013728/13
Komisi
Jan Březina (PPE)
(4. prosince 2013)

Předmět: Možnost zavedení celounijní minimální mzdy

Francouzská vláda představila plán na změnu směrnice o vysílání pracovníků tak, aby byla více ochranářská. Konkrétně by to znamenalo posílení spolupráce mezi orgány inspekce práce a zavedení minimální mzdy v každém členském státě. První diskuse o francouzské iniciativě se uskuteční na zasedání ministrů sociálních věcí EU, které je naplánováno na dny 9. a 10. prosince.

Jaký je názor Komise na tuto iniciativu? Má EU pravomoc rozhodovat o minimální mzdě ve členských státech?

Má Komise nějaké důkazy o tom, že směrnice o vysílání pracovníků není správně prováděna? Pokud ano, ve kterých členských státech?

Je Komise toho názoru, že směrnice o vysílání pracovníků nepostačuje a že je proto třeba vytvořit nové nařízení, aby se předešlo tzv. sociálnímu dumpingu? Souhlasí Komise s termínem „sociální dumping" a domnívá se, že se dá použít jako záminka pro zavedení nového ochranného nařízení?

Odpověď komisaře Andora jménem Komise
(14. ledna 2014)

Komise nemá podle článku 153 Smlouvy o fungování Evropské unie (SFEU) pravomoc rozhodovat o minimální mzdě ve členských státech. Rada však může na návrh Komise přijmout doporučení týkající se mezd pro jednotlivé země včetně minimální mzdy v rámci správy ekonomických záležitostí EU založených na integrovaných hlavních směrech hospodářské politiky a politiky zaměstnanosti.

Komise si dovoluje odkázat pana poslance na svá sdělení a zprávy o provádění ([1]) a posouzení dopadů ([2]) připojené k návrhu Komise ([3]) na směrnici o prosazování s cílem zlepšit způsob, jakým je směrnice 96/71/ES ([4]) prováděna, uplatňována a prosazována členskými státy v praxi. V nich jsou popsány nedostatky při provádění směrnice a nutnost přijmout směrnici o prosazování pro odstranění těchto nedostatků.

Pokud jde o termín „sociální dumping", je Komise toho názoru, že dochází a skutečně došlo k několika případům špatného zacházení s pracovníky v souvislosti s nadnárodním poskytováním služeb, kde je použití tohoto termínu oprávněné. Je však zároveň třeba podotknout, že tento termín může ztratit svou konotaci, použije-li se bez většího rozmyslu pro označení řádného provozování volného pohybu přeshraničních služeb.

([1]) Sdělení Komise Radě, Evropskému parlamentu, Evropskému.
hospodářskému a sociálnímu výboru a Výboru regionů – Vysílání pracovníků.
v rámci poskytování služeb – co nejlepší využití výhod a příležitostí a současné zajištění .
ochrany pracovníků, KOM(2007) 304 v konečném znění; pracovní dokument útvarů Komise, SEK(2007) 747.
Sdělení Komise – Provádění směrnice 96/71/ES COM(2003) 458 final.

([2]) SWD(2012) 63 final. Posouzení dopadů. Průvodní dokument k návrhu směrnice Evropského parlamentu a Rady o prosazování směrnice 96/71/ES o vysílání pracovníků v rámci poskytování služeb.

([3]) Návrh směrnice Evropského parlamentu a Rady o prosazování směrnice 96/71/ES o vysílání pracovníků v rámci poskytování služeb (COM (2012) 131 final ze dne 21. března 2012).

([4]) Směrnice Evropského parlamentu a Rady 96/71/ES ze dne 16. prosince 1996 o vysílání pracovníků v rámci poskytování služeb, Úř. věst. L 18, 21.1.1997.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-013728/13
to the Commission
Jan Březina (PPE)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: Prospects to impose an EU-wide minimum wage

The French Government has unveiled a plan to amend the Posted Workers Directive to make it more protective. Specifically, this would mean strengthening cooperation between labour inspection authorities and introducing a minimum wage in each Member State. An initial discussion regarding this French initiative will take place at a meeting of EU social affairs ministers, scheduled for 9 and 10 December.

What is the position of the Commission on this initiative? Does the EU have the authority to impose a minimum wage in each Member State?

Does the Commission have any evidence to the effect that the Posted Workers Directive is being wrongly implemented, and if so, in which Member States?

Does the Commission think that the Posted Workers Directive is insufficient and that a new regulation is therefore required to prevent so-called social dumping? Does the Commission agree with the term social dumping and does it think it should be used to justify the introduction of a new protective regulation?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(14 January 2014)

The Commission has no competence in imposing a minimum wage in Member States, following Art. 153 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). However, the Council may adopt, on a proposal of the Commission, country-specific recommendations on wages, including on minimum wages, as part of EU economic governance based on the employment and the integrated broad economic policy guidelines.

The Commission would like to refer the Honourable Member to its communications and implementation reports ([1]), and the impact assessment ([2]) accompanying the Commission's proposal ([3]) for an enforcement directive to improve the way Directive 96/71/EC ([4]) is implemented, applied and enforced in practice by the Member States. They explain the shortcomings in the implementation of the directive, and the need for an enforcement directive to remedy these inadequacies.

As regards the term 'social dumping', the Commission holds the view that there are and have indeed been several examples of ill-treatment of workers in the context of transnational provision of services where the use of this term is justified. At the same time, the term risks losing its connotation if it is used indiscriminately to cover any lawful exercise of the freedom to provide cross-border services.

([1]) Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions — Posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services: maximising its benefits and potential while guaranteeing the protection of workers, COM(2007)304 final; Commission staff working document, SEC(2007) 747.
Commission Communication — The implementation of Directive 96/71/EC COM(2003) 458 final.

([2]) SWD(2012) 63 final. Impact Assessment. Accompanying the document Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the enforcement of Directive 96/71/EC concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services.

([3]) Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the enforcement of Directive 96/71/EC concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of service (COM(2012) 131 final of 21 March 2012).

([4]) Directive 96/71/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 1996 concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services, OJ L 18, 21.1.1997.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-013730/13
to the Commission
Glenis Willmott (S&D)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: Youth Employment Initiative

In answer to a recent written question in the UK Parliament, the British Government said:

'The European Commission is encouraging Member States to use the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) to implement the Youth Guarantee, but this remains a non-binding EU recommendation. (…) We will instead be using the YEI money in England on other interventions designed to tackle youth unemployment.'

Can the UK use the funds for initiatives other than the Youth Jobs Guarantee?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(14 January 2014)

The Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) will support action under Article 3(1)(a)(ii) of the European Social Fund Regulation for 2014-20 ([1]), that is 'Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people, in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee.'

Recital 11 of that regulation states that:

By targeting individual persons rather than structures, the YEI should aim to complement other ESF-funded operations and national actions targeting NEET, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee in line with the Council's Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on Establishing a Youth Guarantee, which provides that young persons should receive a good-quality offer of either employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or of leaving formal education. The YEI may also support actions to combat early school leaving.

The Commission points out that *ex-ante* conditionality 8.6 relating to the YEI in Annex XI to the Common Provisions Regulation ([2]) for the 2014-20 period refers to 'The existence of a strategic policy framework for promoting youth employment including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee'. The Commission will assess the extent to which the relevant criteria are met when deciding on the adoption of the operational programmes proposed by Member States to be co-financed by the ESF and YEI in 2014-20.

([1]) Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013 of 17 December 2013, OJ EU L 347/470.
([2]) Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of 17 December 2013, OJ EU L 347/320.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013731/13
a la Comisión
Agustín Díaz de Mera García Consuegra (PPE)
(4 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Medidas para el empleo joven — agilización de sistemas

El desempleo juvenil en la Unión Europea está cifrado aproximadamente en 5,5 millones. En los últimos años se han tomado iniciativas por parte de los Gobiernos y de la UE destinadas a financiar programas globales que intenten paliar este problema. Sin embargo, y en un plano más práctico, se ha detectado la dificultad con la que se encuentran los desempleados en el momento de presentar su candidatura para las diferentes ofertas de trabajo existentes en las empresas privadas y muy especialmente en las administraciones públicas. Se trata de procedimientos largos y complicados, muy distintos entre ellos, que, aunque persiguen el mismo objetivo, utilizan herramientas complejas que dificultan el simple proceso de solicitud.

Los diferentes estudios ponen de relieve que una de las principales quejas de los jóvenes en la búsqueda de un puesto de trabajo es la complejidad de este tipo de procedimientos, que en muchas ocasiones obligan a repetir e introducir una y otra vez la misma información aunque sea para un mismo empleador. Así ocurre, en muchas ocasiones, incluso con la propia plataforma EPSO.

Es por ello que pregunto a la Comisión si tiene prevista alguna iniciativa dirigida a agilizar y simplificar los procedimientos utilizados en las ofertas de empleo que se realicen en la Unión Europea.

Respuesta del Sr. Andor en nombre de la Comisión
(11 de febrero de 2014)

A escala de la UE, la Comisión Europea contribuye a facilitar la presentación transfronteriza de solicitudes de empleo a través de su portal de la movilidad profesional EURES. A través del portal EURES (http://eures.europa.eu) y de la red de Consejeros nacionales EURES en los servicios públicos de empleo de los Estados miembros, los demandantes de empleo pueden obtener información y asesoramiento con respecto a las oportunidades de trabajo en el Espacio Económico Europeo, así como ayuda en la preparación de sus solicitudes.

Por otra parte, el Europass (http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/home) ayuda a los demandantes de empleo a presentar sus candidaturas utilizando modelos multilingües europeos en los que describen sus capacidades, competencias, cualificaciones y resultados profesionales.

Los procedimientos para la presentación de candidaturas a nivel nacional son competencia de los Estados miembros, incluidos los procedimientos en el sector público.

Con respecto a la Oficina Europea de Selección de Personal, los candidatos deben cumplimentar un nuevo formulario de candidatura para cada procedimiento de selección, con arreglo al anexo III del Estatuto del Personal.

Por lo que respecta al acceso a las profesiones reguladas, la Directiva 2005/36/CE relativa al reconocimiento de las cualificaciones profesionales, recientemente modificada, permitirá una mayor transparencia de las profesiones reguladas, los requisitos documentales y los procesos de reconocimiento. Generaliza la utilización de procedimientos electrónicos en este ámbito y prevé la introducción de la Tarjeta Profesional Europea para determinadas profesiones a fin de facilitar el reconocimiento de las cualificaciones profesionales.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013731/13
to the Commission
Agustín Díaz de Mera García Consuegra (PPE)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: Youth employment measures — simplifying systems

Around 5.5 million young people are unemployed in the European Union. In recent years, national governments and the EU have taken action to fund global programmes to resolve this problem. However, on a more practical level, jobseekers face difficulties when applying for various jobs in the private sector and particularly in the public sector. Procedures are long and complicated, no two are alike and, although they all have the same goal, they employ complex tools that make simply applying difficult.

According to various studies, one of the main complaints young people have when looking for work is that these procedures are complicated and that they are very often required to duplicate and repeatedly enter the same information, even for the same employer. This is often the case even with the European Personnel Selection Office's own platform.

Is the Commission planning any initiatives to improve and simplify job application procedures in the EU?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(11 February 2014)

At EU level, the European Commission contributes to facilitating cross border applications through its Job Mobility Portal EURES. EURES informs and provides advice to job seekers on job opportunities in the European Economic Area and on preparing job applications through its web portal (http://eures.europa.eu), as well as through its network of National EURES Advisers located in the Public Employment Service offices of the Member States.

Furthermore, Europass (http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/home) supports jobseekers in their job applications by providing European multilingual templates for outlining their skills, competences, qualifications and professional achievements.

Job application procedures at national level are competence of the Member States, including job application procedures in the public sector.

With regard to the European Personnel Selection Office, candidates must complete a new application form for each selection procedure in accordance with Annex III of the Staff Regulations.

Regarding the access to regulated professions, the recently amended Directive 2005/36/EC on recognition of professional qualifications will provide for more transparency of the regulated professions, document requirements and recognition processes. It generalises the use of e-procedures in the field and foresees the introduction of European Professional Card for certain professions, which will facilitate the recognition of professional qualifications.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013732/13
a la Comisión
Agustín Díaz de Mera García Consuegra (PPE)
(4 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Derecho de Familia

En los últimos años hemos visto como están proliferando distintas fórmulas jurídicas que permiten la adopción de menores, ya sean éstas de carácter europeo o internacional. Ello está originando multitud de problemas para aquellos progenitores que, a pesar de ser reconocidos como tales en los países de nacimiento de los menores, no lo son en su Estado miembro, con la incertidumbre jurídica que ello conlleva.

Por ello, quisiera saber ¿qué medidas legales está desarrollando la Comisión para evitar estas inseguridades legales y, sobre todo, para garantizar los derechos de los menores que se encuentran en esta situación?

Respuesta de la Sra. Reding en nombre de la Comisión
(18 de febrero de 2014)

La Comisión recuerda que, en la actualidad, no existe legislación de la Unión Europea en materia de adopción. Son las legislaciones nacionales y los convenios internacionales los que regulan esta cuestión.

Como miembro de la Conferencia de La Haya de Derecho Internacional Privado desde 2007, la Unión Europea ha participado activamente en la creación y el fomento de instrumentos jurídicos multilaterales para la protección de los derechos de los niños. En particular, la Comisión supervisa en general los avances en relación con el Convenio de La Haya de 1993 sobre la protección de los niños y la cooperación en materia de adopción internacional, en el que son partes todos los Estados miembros de la Unión Europea ([1]). De conformidad con el artículo 23 del Convenio, las adopciones certificadas por la autoridad competente del Estado de adopción como realizadas de conformidad con lo dispuesto en el Convenio se reconocerán de pleno derecho en los demás Estados contratantes.

A escala europea, la Comisión puso en marcha en 2010 el Libro Verde «Menos trámites administrativos para los ciudadanos: promover la libre circulación de los documentos públicos y el reconocimiento de los efectos de los certificados de estado civil» ([2]). Posteriormente, la Comisión adoptó el 24 de abril de 2013 una propuesta de Reglamento por el que se facilita la libertad de circulación de los ciudadanos y de las empresas, simplificando la aceptación de determinados documentos públicos en la Unión Europea ([3]), cuyo objetivo es suprimir la burocracia y los costes para los ciudadanos y las empresas que presenten en un Estado miembro un documento público expedido en otro Estado miembro para gozar de un derecho o quedar sujeto a una obligación. Sin embargo, la propuesta solo trata de la autenticidad de los documentos, no del reconocimiento de sus efectos. De momento, la Comisión se centra en facilitar la adopción de esta propuesta.

([1]) Hasta la fecha, 93 Estados de todo el mundo son Partes Contratantes en el Convenio de La Haya de 1993: http://www.hcch.net/index_en.php?act=conventions.status&cid=69

([2]) COM(2010) 747 final de 14.12.2010.

([3]) Propuesta de Reglamento el que se facilita la libertad de circulación de los ciudadanos y de las empresas, simplificando la aceptación de determinados documentos públicos en la Unión Europea, y por el que se modifica el Reglamento (UE) n° 1024/2012 [COM(2013) 228 final de 24.4.2013].

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013732/13
to the Commission
Agustín Díaz de Mera García Consuegra (PPE)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: Family law

In recent years we have seen how different European and international legal forms for adopting children have increased. This creates many problems for parents who, despite being recognised as such in the countries where the children were born, are not recognised as parents in their Member State, with the legal uncertainty that that situation entails.

In this connection, what legal measures is the Commission developing to avoid these legal uncertainties and particularly to safeguard the rights of children who are in this situation?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(18 February 2014)

The Commission would like to point out that there is currently no European Union legislation on adoption. This matter is regulated by national laws and international conventions.

As a member of the Hague Conference on Private International Law since 2007, the European Union is actively involved in developing and promoting multilateral legal instruments for the protection of children's rights. In particular, the Commission monitors in general the developments in relation to the 1993 Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Inter-country Adoption, to which all the Member States of the European Union are Party ([1]). Under Article 23 of the Convention, an adoption certified by the competent authority of the State of the adoption as having been made in accordance with the Convention shall be recognised by operation of law in the other Contracting States.

At the European level, the Commission launched in 2010 the Green Paper 'Less bureaucracy for citizens: promoting free movement of public documents and recognition of the effects of civil status records' ([2]). As a follow-up, the Commission adopted on 24 April 2013 a proposal for a regulation containing concrete simplification measures for the acceptance of certain public documents in the EU ([3]), aimed at abolishing red tape and costs for citizens and companies that present in a Member State a public document issued in another Member State in order to benefit from a right or comply with an obligation. However, the proposal only deals with the authenticity of the documents, but not with the recognition of their effects. The Commission is now focused on facilitating the adoption of this proposal.

([1]) To date, 93 States all over the world are Contracting Parties to the 1993 Hague Convention: http://www.hcch.net/index_en.php?act=conventions.status&cid=69
([2]) COM(2010) 747 final, 14.12.2010.
([3]) Proposal for a regulation on promoting the free movement of citizens and businesses by simplifying the acceptance of certain public documents in the European Union, COM(2013) 228 final, 24.4.2013).

(българска версия)

Въпрос с искане за писмен отговор E-013734/13
до Комисията
Mariya Gabriel (PPE)
(4 декември 2013 г.)

Относно: Наддоговаряне по мярка 321 „Основни услуги за населените места в селските райони“ на Програмата за развитие на селските райони (ПРСР) в България

От изслушвания в Комисията по земеделие и храни в Народното събрание на Република България през последните дни стана ясно, че българският управляващ орган на Програмата за развитие на селските райони 2007—2013 г. възнамерява да осъществи процедура по наддоговаряне по мярка 321 „Основни услуги за населените места в селските райони“ и да изплати авансово 50 % от стойността на договорите на общините, преди да са проведени обществени поръчки по реда на Закона за обществени поръчки. Последното ще се осъществява с цел предотвратяване на загуба на средства по ПРСР за периода 2007—2013 г. по правилото N+2.

Във връзка с това може ли ЕК да каже допустими ли са подобни действия и ако не са, какви ще бъдат последствията за България?

Съществува ли вероятност всички разходи, направени в България за авансови плащания в размер на 50 % на общини по мярка 321 през 2013 г., да бъдат изключени от финансиране от ЕС в съответствие с член 31 от Регламент (ЕО) № 1290/2005?

Специфичната ситуация в България може ли да бъде основание за прилагане на допълнителни финансови корекции по осъществени разходи, докато се приложат подходящи коригиращи мерки?

Отговор, даден от г-н Cioloş от името на Комисията
(6 февруари 2014 г.)

Правилата на ЕС за развитие на селските райони предоставят на държавите членки възможността да плащат при поискване авансово суми на бенефициерите, които получават инвестиционно подпомагане. Размерът на тези авансови плащания не трябва да надхвърля 50 % от публичната помощ, свързана с отделните инвестиции.

Що се отнася до мярка 321 „Основни услуги за икономиката и населението в селските райони“ от българската програма за развитие на селските райони (ПРСР) 2007—2013 г., към днешна дата Комисията е възстановила на България 51 % от бюджета по мярката (285 млн. EUR), по-голямата част от които представляват авансови плащания. Комисията е информирана относно решението на българските власти да увеличат свръхдоговарянето по мярка 321 с цел гарантиране на пълното реализиране на наличните ресурси, както и относно ускореното напоследък договаряне на проекти по мярката, за да бъде ограничен рискът, произтичащ от правилото n+2 за ПРСР в края на 2013 г. Що се отнася конкретно до българската ПРСР, Комисията смята, че в съответствие с принципа на доброто финансово управление българските власти следва да подсигурят, че плащанията по линия на ЕЗФРСР, съответстващи на авансови плащания, не надхвърлят разумен дял от бюджета по мярка 321, като се има предвид посоченото по-горе ограничение от 50 %.

Комисията ще продължи да проверява изпълнението на българската ПРСР. Ако при одитите бъде установено, че някои разходи не са направени в съответствие със законодателството на ЕС, за съответните суми може да бъде отказано финансиране от ЕС.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013734/13
to the Commission
Mariya Gabriel (PPE)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: Negotiation on measure 321 'Basic services for the economy and rural population' of the Rural Development Programme (RDP) in Bulgaria

It has become clear from the hearings in the Agriculture and Food Committee of the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria over the past few days that the Bulgarian managing authority for the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 intends to implement a negotiated procedure on measure 321 'Basic services for the economy and rural population' and to pay 50% of the contract value of the municipalities in advance, before carrying out public procurement under the Public Procurement Act. The latter will be carried out in order to prevent the loss of funds under the RDP 2007-2013 under the n+2 rule.

Can the Commission say whether such actions are permitted, and if not, what the consequences would be for Bulgaria?

Will any costs incurred in Bulgaria for the advance payments of 50% of municipalities under measure 321 in 2013 be excluded from EU funding in accordance with Article 31 of Regulation (EC) No 1290/2005?

Could the specific situation in Bulgaria justify implementing additional financial corrections to incurred expenses, until appropriate corrective measures have been implemented?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(6 February 2014)

The EU rural development rules give Member States the possibility to pay, upon request, advances to beneficiaries of investment support. The amount of such advances shall not exceed 50% of the public aid related to the individual investment.

As regards Measure 321 'Basic services for the economy and rural population' of the Bulgarian Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2007-2013, to date the Commission has reimbursed to Bulgaria 51% of the measure budget (EUR 285 million), the majority of which represents advances. The Commission has become aware of the Bulgarian authorities' decision to increase the over-contracting under Measure 321 aiming at guaranteeing fuller execution of funding available, and of the recent acceleration in project contracting under the measure for reducing the n+2 risk for the RDP at the end of 2013. In the specific context of the Bulgarian RDP, the Commission considers that in line with the principle of sound financial management, the Bulgarian authorities should ensure that EAFRD payments corresponding to advances do not exceed a reasonable proportion of the Measure 321 budget, taking into consideration the 50% limit for advances indicated above.

The Commission will continue to audit the implementation of the Bulgarian RDP. If such audits show that certain expenditure has not been spent in conformity with EC law, the amounts in question may be refused from EU financing.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-013737/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)
(4 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Οι δαπάνες για την παιδεία να εξαιρεθούν από τον υπολογισμό του ελλείμματος

Η εξυγίανση των δημόσιων οικονομικών σε διάφορες χώρες οδηγεί σε σημαντικές περικοπές στην παιδεία, χωρίς να αξιολογούνται οι επιπτώσεις στην εκπαίδευση, την καινοτομία, τη γνώση, αλλά και στην μείωση των ανισοτήτων και του κοινωνικού αποκλεισμού μέσω της εκπαίδευσης. Περικοπές στην παιδεία, τα τελευταία 3 χρόνια, έγιναν σε 20 χώρες της ΕΕ. Ο προϋπολογισμός της παιδείας σε Ελλάδα, Ιταλία, Λετονία, Λιθουανία, Ουγγαρία, Πορτογαλία, Ρουμανία και Κροατία μειώθηκε κατά 5%, ενώ σε άλλες 12 χώρες από 1-5%. Η επένδυση στην παιδεία ανά μαθητή μειώνεται σταθερά. Η κρίση και οι πολιτικές λιτότητας πλήττουν τους νέους και πολύ περισσότερο τους ανειδίκευτους και όσους δεν έχουν επαρκή προσόντα. Η εκπαίδευση μπορεί να συμβάλει καθοριστικά στη μείωση των ανισοτήτων, την δημιουργία ευκαιριών απασχόλησης, την ανάπτυξη προσόντων και δεξιοτήτων που χρειάζονται για να βρει κάποιος δουλειά, αλλά και για να αναπτύξει την προσωπικότητά του και να συμμετάσχει ενεργά στο κοινωνικό γίγνεσθαι. Ήδη πριν την κρίση διαπιστώνονταν, σύμφωνα με τα στοιχεία του Eurostat Regional Yearbook και της έκθεσης «Mind the gap -education inequality across EU regions» (Sep 2012), ότι οι ευκαιρίες και τα οφέλη από την εκπαίδευση και τη γνώση ήταν δυσανάλογα κατανεμημένα στις διάφορες περιφέρειες. Όμως το μέλλον της ΕΕ και των περιφερειών της εξαρτάται απόλυτα από την ικανότητά της να καινοτομεί και να μαθαίνει, σύμφωνα και με τους στόχους της Στρατηγικής Ευρώπη 2020 και της «έξυπνης, περιεκτικής και βιώσιμης ανάπτυξης».

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή;

1α. Υπάρχουν στοιχεία για τις επιπτώσεις της κρίσης και των πολιτικών λιτότητας στο θέμα των ανισοτήτων, ιδιαίτερα μέσω της εκπαίδευσης, στις διάφορες ευρωπαϊκές περιφέρειες;

β. Έχει εκπονηθεί νέα μελέτη «Mind the gap -education inequality across EU regions» που να βασίζεται σε πρόσφατα δεδομένα και αξιολογήσεις;

γ. Σκοπεύει να περιλάβει στους μακρο-οικονομικούς δείκτες και δείκτες που περιγράφουν την συμβολή της εκπαίδευσης στη μείωση των μακροοικονομικών ανισοτήτων και την ενίσχυση της κοινωνικής συνοχής;

2. Είναι πρόθυμη να αναλάβει πρωτοβουλία, όπως ζητούν πολλοί φορείς, ώστε οι δαπάνες για την παιδεία, να μην υπολογίζονται στο έλλειμμα των χωρών που κάθε χώρα επενδύει στην παιδεία, αν αυτές υπολείπονται του μέσου όρου των τελευταίων 5 ετών των δαπανών της Ευρωζώνης για την παιδεία;

3. Σκοπεύει να συνεργαστεί με τα κράτη μέλη στα οποία διαπιστώνεται αύξηση των ανισοτήτων και μείωση του προϋπολογισμού για την παιδεία, ώστε τα υπολειπόμενα ποσά για την παιδεία να προέλθουν από τα Ευρωπαϊκά Διαρθρωτικά κι Επενδυτικά Ταμεία, αλλά πιθανώς και από τον Ευρωπαϊκό Μηχανισμό Σταθερότητας (ESM), αφού μελέτες, μεταξύ άλλων του ΟΟΣΑ, δείχνουν ότι η επένδυση στην εκπαίδευση γυρίζει πίσω το κεφάλαιο που επενδύθηκε και μάλιστα με τόκο, ενώ συνεισφέρει και στη μείωση του δημοσιονομικού ελλείμματος μεσοπρόθεσμα;

Απάντηση της κ. Βασιλείου εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(18 Φεβρουαρίου 2014)

Η Επιτροπή δεν διαθέτει συστηματική ενημέρωση ή αποδεικτικά στοιχεία σχετικά με τις επιπτώσεις των περικοπών στον προϋπολογισμό για την παιδεία στις διάφορες περιφέρειες της ΕΕ. Τα πλέον πρόσφατα διαθέσιμα στοιχεία για τις επενδύσεις στην παιδεία σε εθνικό επίπεδο παρατίθενται μέσα στην έκθεση «Παρακολούθηση της εκπαίδευσης και της κατάρτισης 2013» ([1]).

Η Επιτροπή δεν έχει εκδώσει ενημέρωση της έκθεσης του 2012 «Mind the Gap -education inequality across EU regions».

Η Επιτροπή υποστηρίζει το ρόλο της παιδείας στη μακροπρόθεσμη ανάπτυξη και έχει επανειλημμένως παροτρύνει τα κράτη μέλη να διατηρήσουν την επένδυσή τους στην εκπαίδευση και την κατάρτιση, ακόμη και κατά την εξυγίανση των δημόσιων οικονομικών τους. Η Επιτροπή παρακολουθεί τις δαπάνες που σχετίζονται με την εκπαίδευση μέσω της ετήσιας επιτήρησης, ιδίως στο πλαίσιο του ευρωπαϊκού εξαμήνου.

Το πλαίσιο της ΕΕ για τη δημοσιονομική εποπτεία δεν επιτρέπει τη διαφοροποίηση των επιμέρους στοιχείων δαπανών κατά τον υπολογισμό του σχετικού μεγέθους του ελλείμματος. Η έκθεση των υπηρεσιών της Επιτροπής του 2012 σχετικά με την ποιότητα των δημόσιων δαπανών στην ΕΕ προβάλλει μια σειρά από επιχειρήματα κατά της εξαίρεσης συγκεκριμένων κατηγοριών δημοσίων επενδύσεων από τον υπολογισμό του ελλείμματος ([2]).

([1]) ec.europa.eu/education/monitor
([2]) Βλ. http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2012/pdf/ocp125_en.pdf

Η Επιτροπή διαπραγματεύεται επί του παρόντος με τα κράτη μέλη το περιεχόμενο των συμφωνιών εταιρικής σχέσης και των επιχειρησιακών προγραμμάτων για τα νέα ευρωπαϊκά διαρθρωτικά και επενδυτικά ταμεία (2014-2020). Τα κράτη μέλη μπορούν να κινητοποιήσουν πόρους από τα Ταμεία, προκειμένου να μειωθούν οι ανισότητες στην εκπαίδευση και την κατάρτιση.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013737/13
to the Commission
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: Non-inclusion of education spending in calculating the deficit

The consolidation of public finances in a number of countries has led to significant cuts in education, without any assessment taking place of the impact on education, innovation, knowledge, and the reduction of inequality and social exclusion brought about by education. There have been cuts in education, over the last three years in 20 EU Member States. The education budgets in Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Portugal, Romania and Croatia have fallen by 5%, while in 12 other countries the figure is 1-5%. Investment in education per pupil is steadily falling. The crisis and the austerity policies affect young people, in particular the unskilled and those who do not have sufficient qualifications. Education can contribute significantly to reducing inequality, creating job opportunities, developing the qualifications and skills young people need to find a job, but also to developing their personalities and helping them to participate actively in society. Even before the crisis, according to data from the Eurostat Regional Yearbook, in particular the report 'Mind the Gap — Education Inequality across EU Regions' (Sep 2012), the opportunities and benefits conferred by education and knowledge were disproportionately distributed in the various regions. However, the future of the EU and its regions depends entirely on their ability to innovate and learn, in line with the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy and 'smart, sustainable and inclusive growth'.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1a. Is there any evidence for the impact of the crisis and the austerity policies on the issue of inequality, especially through education, in the various EU regions?

b. Has a new study 'Mind the Gap — Education Inequality across EU Regions' been drawn up based on recent data and evaluations?

c. Does it intend to include in the macroeconomic indicators those indices that describe the contribution of education to reducing macroeconomic imbalances and strengthening social cohesion?

2. Is it prepared to take an initiative, as many organisations are demanding, to ensure that spending on education is not included in calculating the deficit of those Member States whose spending is below the average of eurozone country spending on education over the last 5 years?

3. Will it to work together with those Member States in which there has been an increase of inequality and a reduction in the budget for education, to ensure that the shortfall in funds for education is made up from the European Structural and Investment Funds, and possibly also from the European Stability Mechanism (ESM), since studies, including by the OECD, show that investment in education more than repays the outlay and contributes to a reduction in the financial deficit in the medium term?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(18 February 2014)

The Commission does not have any systematic information or evidence on the impact of education budget cuts in the various EU regions. The latest available information on investment in education at national level can be found in the 'Education and Training Monitor 2013' ([1]).

The Commission has not produced an updated edition of the 2012 study 'Mind the Gap -education inequality across EU regions'.

The Commission supports the role of education in long-term growth, and has consistently encouraged Member States to maintain their investment in education and training even as they consolidate their public finances. The Commission is monitoring education-related spending through its annual surveillance, notably in the context of the European Semester.

The EU framework for budgetary surveillance does not allow the differentiation of spending items when calculating the relevant deficit figure. The Commission Services' 2012 Report on the quality of public expenditure in the EU put forward a number of arguments against excluding particular categories of public investment from deficit figures ([2]).

The Commission is currently negotiating with Member States the content of Partnership Agreements and Operational Programmes for the new European Structural and Investment Funds (2014-2020). Member States can mobilise resources from the funds to reduce inequalities in education and training.

([1]) ec.europa.eu/education/monitor
([2]) See http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2012/pdf/ocp125_en.pdf

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-013738/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)
(4 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Μεταρρύθμιση του ασφαλιστικού συστήματος

Σύμφωνα με έκθεση του Ινστιτούτου Εργασίας της ΓΣΕΕ «Επιπτώσεις της γήρανσης του πληθυσμού στο ασφαλιστικό σύστημα της Ελλάδος 2013-2050» που εκπονήθηκε από το ΙΝΕ/ ΓΣΕΕ για λογαριασμό της Οικονομικής και Κοινωνικής Επιτροπής (ΟΚΕ), και θα παρουσιαστεί συνοπτικά την άλλη εβδομάδα, το 2015 είναι το τελευταίο έτος κατά το οποίο διατηρείται η οριακή ισορροπία του ασφαλιστικού. Από το 2016 αρχίζει η κατάρρευση, ως συνέπεια της υψηλής ανεργίας, των περικοπών στους μισθούς, την υψηλή εισφοροδιαφυγή και την μαύρη εργασία, που κοστίζουν 20 δις ευρώ. Τα δε χρέη του δημοσίου προς το ασφαλιστικό σύστημα υπολογίζονται στα 12 δις ευρώ. Σύμφωνα με την έκθεση, κατά την περίοδο των μνημονίων, οι περικοπές των κύριων και επικουρικών συντάξεων ανήλθαν συνολικά στο επίπεδο των 4,2 δις ευρώ, ενώ μόνο για την περίοδο 2013-2014 οι περικοπές κύριων, επικουρικών συντάξεων, εφάπαξ και κοινωνικών επιδομάτων αντιστοιχούν στο 43% του συνολικού ποσού της δημοσιονομικής λιτότητας, ήτοι 5,5 δις ευρώ από τα 11,6 δις ευρώ.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Έχει δικές της εκτιμήσεις ως προς τη βιωσιμότητα του ασφαλιστικού συστήματος της Ελλάδος; Συμφωνούν τα συμπεράσματά της με αυτά της έκθεσης του ΙΝΕ ΓΣΕΕ;

2. Πώς θα διασφαλίσει σε συνεργασία με το κράτος μέλος ότι δεν θα υπάρξει κατάρρευση του ασφαλιστικού συστήματος μετά το 2016;

3. Με δεδομένο ότι οι περικοπές σε μισθούς και συντάξεις και η υψηλή ανεργία, στο όνομα της δημοσιονομικής εξυγίανσης, οδηγούν σε επιδείνωση της κατάστασης των ασφαλιστικών ταμείων, δημιουργώντας μεγαλύτερα ακόμα δημοσιονομικά κενά, προτίθεται να επανεξετάσει τα μέτρα αυστηρής λιτότητας και να συζητήσει την αναθεώρηση του προγράμματος δημοσιονομικής προσαρμογής όχι μόνο με την κυβέρνηση αλλά και με τους κοινωνικούς φορείς, ώστε να είναι αυτό ισορροπημένο, κοινωνικά δίκαιο, αποτελεσματικό και να μην πλήττει το ασφαλιστικό σύστημα;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(11 Φεβρουαρίου 2014)

Σύμφωνα με την έκθεση για τη δημογραφική γήρανση 2012, οι δημόσιες συνταξιοδοτικές δαπάνες στην Ελλάδα προβλέπεται να αυξηθούν κατά την περίοδο 2010-2060 κατά 1,0 ποσοστιαία μονάδα του ΑΕΠ, ποσοστό σαφώς χαμηλότερο από τον μέσο όρο της ΕΕ (+1,5%) ([1]). Η έκθεση για τη δημογραφική γήρανση 2012 λαμβάνει υπόψη τις μεταρρυθμίσεις που υλοποιήθηκαν έως τον Σεπτέμβριο του 2011. Τα πιο πρόσφατα μέτρα θα ενσωματωθούν στις νέες προβλέψεις της Εθνικής Αναλογιστικής Αρχής στο πλαίσιο επικαιροποιημένης σειράς μακροοικονομικών παραδοχών οι οποίες θα δημοσιευθούν στην προσεχή έκθεση για τη δημογραφική γήρανση 2015.

Η μεταρρύθμιση του συνταξιοδοτικού συστήματος στην Ελλάδα είχε διάφορους στόχους ([2]): εξασφάλιση της δημοσιονομικής βιωσιμότητας του συστήματος· απλοποίηση του έντονα κατακερματισμένου συστήματος· βελτίωση της διαφάνειας και αύξηση της δικαιοσύνης με την ενίσχυση της σχέσης μεταξύ των καταβληθεισών συνεισφορών και των παροχών που λαμβάνουν οι συνταξιούχοι, αφενός, και με την καθιέρωση ελάχιστης βασικής σύνταξης, αφετέρου. Οι μεταρρυθμίσεις ήταν απαραίτητες προκειμένου να διασφαλιστούν μακροπρόθεσμα επαρκείς συντάξεις, ενώ οι περικοπές αφορούν τις υψηλότερες κύριες και επικουρικές συντάξεις. Ο κατάλογος των επικίνδυνων επαγγελμάτων εξορθολογίστηκε σύμφωνα με τις βέλτιστες διεθνείς πρακτικές.

([1]) Η Επιτροπή παραπέμπει την κ. βουλευτή στην έκθεση η οποία είναι διαθέσιμη στην ακόλουθη διεύθυνση: http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/european_economy/2012/2012-ageing-report_en.htm

([2]) Εγκρίθηκε τον Ιούλιο του 2010.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013738/13
to the Commission
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: Reform of the Pensions System

According to a report on 'The Impact of the Ageing of the Population on the Social Security System of Greece 2013-2050' which was drawn up by the Institute of Labour of the Greek General Confederation of Labour (INE-GSEE) on behalf of the Economic and Social Committee (ESC) and will be presented briefly next week, 2015 will be the last year in which the social security system will be just balanced. From 2016, it will begin collapsing as a result of high unemployment, cuts in wages, the high rate of contribution evasion and undeclared work, which together cost EUR 20 billion. The public sector debt to the pensions system is estimated at EUR 12 billion. According to the report, during the period in which Greece has been subject to the Memoranda, cuts in principal and supplementary pensions have amounted to a total of EUR 4.2 billion, while for the period 2013-2014 alone, cuts in principal and supplementary pensions, lump sum payments and social benefits will have accounted for 43% of the total amount of cuts made as part of budgetary austerity measures, i.e. EUR 5.5 billion out of EUR 11.6 billion.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Does it have its own estimates as to the viability of the Greek pension system? Do its conclusions tally with those of the INE-GSEE report?

2. How will it ensure, in cooperation with the Member State in question, that the pensions system will not collapse after 2016?

3. Given that the cuts in wages and pensions and the high unemployment rate, undertaken in the name of budgetary consolidation, are leading to a deterioration in the state of pension funds, creating even larger budget deficits, will it reconsider the swingeing austerity measures currently in place and discuss a revision of the financial adjustment programme, not only with the government, but also with social organisations, so that it is balanced, socially equitable and effective and does not affect the pensions system?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(11 February 2014)

According to the 2012 Ageing Report ([1]), public pension expenditures in Greece are projected to increase between 2010 and 2060 by 1.0 p.p. of GDP, which is clearly below the EU average (+1.5 p.p.). The 2012 Ageing Report takes into account the reform measures implemented by September 2011. The more recent measures will be incorporated in new projections that will be carried out by the National Actuarial Authority under an updated set of macroeconomic assumptions and published in the forthcoming 2015 Ageing Report.

The Greek pension reform ([2]) had several objectives: ensure the fiscal sustainability of the system; simplify the highly fragmented system; enhance transparency and increase fairness by strengthening the link between contributions paid and pension benefits received and introducing a minimum pension. Reforms were needed to provide adequate and safe pensions over the long run and cuts were directed to the highest main and supplementary pensions. The list of hazardous professions was streamlined in line with best international practice.

([1]) The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to the following website where the report can be downloaded: http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/ publications/european_economy/2012/2012-ageing-report_en.htm

([2]) Adopted in July 2010.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-013739/13
til Kommissionen
Christel Schaldemose (S&D)
(4. december 2013)

Om: Hårfarve

Over de senere år er en række hårfarver blevet undersøgt i forbindelse med EU's hårfarvestrategi. Trods mange og veldokumenterede skadelige effekter er visse ekstremt sensibiliserende farver — som indgår i såkaldte oxidative hårfarver, bl.a. p-phenylenediamine — stadig tilladte.

Det er veldokumenteret, at frisørfagets kemiske belastning fører til mange arbejdsskader. Derfor forsøger mange frisører at undgå de oxidative hårfarver ved at anvende andre metoder, som for eksempel omfatter »direkte farver« og plantebaserede farver. Disse hårfarver har gjort hårfarvning mulig for allergiramte frisører og kunder.

Imidlertid har EU's videnskabelige komite udtrykt betænkelighed ved visse af disse farvestoffer. Der er tale om plantefarverne lawsonia inermis (pga. stoffet Lawson) og indigofera tinctoria samt farvestofferne acid black 1 og acid orange 7. Men i modsætning til flere af de oxidative hårfarver er der få eller ingen kliniske tilfælde af skader forårsaget af disse fire farver. De fungerer i stedet som alternativer for rigtig mange personer med allergi eller åndedræt-skader (forårsaget af hårfarver).

Mit spørgsmål til Kommissionen er derfor:

Vil Kommissionen foretage en undersøgelse af, om disse fire farver kan tillades under kosmetikforordningen?

Der er jo netop ikke dokumenteret skadevirkninger på mennesker ved brugen af farverne, og i praksis findes der stort set ingen rapporterede kliniske tilfælde.

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Neven Mimica
(29. januar 2014)

Hårfarver er kosmetiske produkter reguleret ved forordning (EF) nr. 1223/2009 om kosmetiske produkter ([1]). I henhold til forordningen skal et kosmetisk produkt, der gøres tilgængeligt på EU-markedet, være sikkert for menneskers sundhed, når det anvendes under normale betingelser eller under betingelser, som med rimelighed kan forudses, under hensyntagen til dets præsentationsmåde, mærkning, anvisninger vedrørende anvendelse og bortskaffelse og alle andre angivelser eller oplysninger fra den ansvarlige person.

I forbindelse med vurderingen af de nødvendige sikkerhedskrav til hårfarver anvendt i Unionen undersøgte Den Videnskabelige Komité for Forbrugersikkerhed de stoffer, som det ærede medlem omtaler. Hvad angår plantefarven indigofera tinctoria og farvestofferne acid black 1 og acid orange 7 konkluderede komitéen i tre udtalelser (SCCS/1439/11 ([2]), SCCS/1492/12 ([3]), SCCS/1382/10 ([4])), at de ikke er sikre til anvendelse i hårfarvningsmidler af årsager, der ikke hænger sammen med potentialet for sensibiliserende farver.

Stoffet lawsonia inermis (pga. stoffet Lawson) er fundet sikkert på visse betingelser (SCCS/1511/13 ([5])).

På grundlag af ovennævnte videnskabelige udtalelser er Kommissionen i gang med at undersøge passende foranstaltninger til at regulere stofferne forsvarligt under kosmetikforordningen.

([1]) OJ L342, 22.12.2009, p.59.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/consumer_safety/docs/sccs_o_110.pdf
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/consumer_safety/docs/sccs_o_124.pdf
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/consumer_safety/docs/sccs_o_057.pdf
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/consumer_safety/docs/sccs_o_140.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013739/13
to the Commission
Christel Schaldemose (S&D)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: Hair dye

In recent years, a number of hair dyes have been examined in connection with the EU hair dye strategy. Despite many well-documented harmful effects, certain extremely sensitising dyes — in the category of oxidative hair dyes, including p-phenylenediamine — are still permitted.

It is well documented that exposure to chemicals in the hairdressing profession results in many occupational injuries. Therefore, many hairdressers try to avoid the oxidative hair dyes by using other methods, including 'direct dyes' and plant-based dyes, for example. These hair dyes have made hair dying possible for hairdressers and customers suffering from allergies.

However, the EU's scientific committee has expressed concern about some of these dyes. These are the plant dyes *Lawsonia inermis* (on account of the substance Lawsone) and *Indigofera tinctoria* as well as the colouring agents acid black 1 and acid orange 7. However, in contrast to several of the oxidative hair dyes, there are few or no clinical cases of injuries caused by these four dyes. Instead, they serve as alternatives for a large number of people with allergies or respiratory problems (caused by hair dyes).

Will the Commission examine whether these four dyes can be permitted under the Cosmetics Regulation?

There are certainly no documented adverse effects on people from use of the dyes, and in practice there are virtually no reported clinical cases.

Answer given by Mr Mimica on behalf of the Commission
(29 January 2014)

Hair dyes are cosmetic products regulated through Cosmetics Regulation (EC) No 1223/2009 ([1]). According to the regulation, a cosmetic product made available on the EU market must be safe for human health when used under normal or reasonably foreseeable conditions of use, taking into account its presentation, labelling instructions for use and disposal, and any other indication or information provided by the responsible person.

In the process of assessing the necessary safety requirements for hair dyes used in the Union, the Scientific Committee on Consumers Safety looked at the substances referred to by the Honourable Member. Regarding the plant dye Indigofera tinctoria as well as the colouring agents Acid black 1 and Acid orange 7 the Committee concluded in three opinions (SCCS/1439/11 ([2]), SCCS/1492/12 ([3]), SCCS/1382/10 ([4])) that they are not safe for use in hair dye product for reasons not linked to the sensitising dyes potential.

The substance Lawsonia inermis (on account of the substance Lawsone) has been found safe under certain conditions (SCCS/1511/13 ([5])).

Based on above scientific opinions, the Commission is currently considering appropriate measures to adequately regulate the substances under the Cosmetic Regulation.

([1]) OJ L342, 22.12.2009, p.59.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/consumer_safety/docs/sccs_o_110.pdf
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/consumer_safety/docs/sccs_o_124.pdf
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/consumer_safety/docs/sccs_o_057.pdf
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/consumer_safety/docs/sccs_o_140.pdf

(Magyar változat)

Írásbeli választ igénylő kérdés E-013741/13
a Bizottság számára
Peter van Dalen (ECR), Cornelis de Jong (GUE/NGL), Surján László (PPE) és Hannu Takkula (ALDE)
(2013. december 4.)

Tárgy: Tanzánia/Zanzibár

Két keresztény vezető felderítetlenül maradt meggyilkolásával, további vezetőknek küldözgetett halálos fenyegetésekkel és templomok feltüzelt tömegek általi lerombolásával fokozódott Zanzibár szigetén a vallási megkülönböztetés. Hasonlóképpen, a tanzániai szárazföldön is megöltek idén két keresztény vezetőt. A vallási erőszak – amennyiben nem megfelelően kezelik – elősegítheti a büntetlenség kultúrájának kialakulását, amely viszont aláásható a nemzeti kohéziót és megkönnyítheti a valláshoz kötődő terrorizmus beágyazódását.

1. Tisztában van-e az EU/a főképviselő ezekkel az aggasztó fejleményekkel?

2. Milyen lépéseket tesz vagy tervez tenni az EU azért, hogy előmozdítsa a vallás és meggyőződés szabadságát, illetve emlékeztesse a kormányt a tanzániai alkotmány 19. cikkéből eredő kötelezettségeire?

Catherine Ashton alelnök/főképviselő válasza a Bizottság nevében
(2014. február 7.)

A 2012 és 2013 során történt erőszakos vallási incidensek nyomán az EU és tagállamai a Tanzániára vonatkozó kiemelt emberi jogi célkitűzéseiken belül kitüntetett figyelmet szenteltek a vallás és meggyőződés szabadságának. Tavaly ősz óta nem érkezett hír újabb hasonló esetekről. Az EU ennek ellenére továbbra is éberen figyeli a helyzet alakulását, és a vallás és meggyőződés szabadsága napirendre fog kerülni az EU és Tanzánia közötti, a Cotonoui Megállapodás keretében hamarosan sorra kerülő párbeszéden, amelyen Kikwete elnök is részt vesz.

A Tanzániában tapasztalható vallási feszültségeket és a megfelelő uniós intézkedéseket illetően a tisztelt képviselők nézzenek utána az E-001751/2013 kérdésre ([1]) adott válasznak.

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

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-013741/13
aan de Commissie
Peter van Dalen (ECR), Cornelis de Jong (GUE/NGL), László Surján (PPE) en Hannu Takkula (ALDE)
(4 december 2013)

Betreft: Tanzania/Zanzibar

Op het eiland Zanzibar neemt discriminatie op grond van godsdienst de laatste tijd toe, getuige de onopgeloste moord op twee christelijke leiders, de regelmatige doodsbedreigingen aan het adres van andere leiders en de vernietiging van kerkgebouwen door groepen personen. Ook op het vasteland van Tanzania zijn dit jaar al twee christelijke leiders vermoord. Indien een passende reactie op deze misdrijven uitblijft, kan dit religieus geïnspireerd geweld het ontstaan van een cultuur van geweldloosheid in de hand werken, waarmee uiteindelijk mogelijkerwijs de nationale eenheid in gevaar komt en religiegerelateerd terrorisme voet aan de grond krijgt.

1. Is de hoge vertegenwoordiger van de EU op de hoogte van deze verontrustende ontwikkelingen?

2. Welke maatregelen neemt of plant de EU op dit moment om de vrijheid van godsdienst en/of geloofsovertuiging te bevorderen, en wat doet de EU om de regering van Tanzania te herinneren aan haar verplichtingen uit hoofde van artikel 19 van de grondwet van het land?

Antwoord van hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter Ashton namens de Commissie
(7 februari 2014)

Naar aanleiding van de gewelddadige religieuze incidenten van 2012-2013 hebben de EU en haar lidstaten een hogere prioriteit verleend aan de vrijheid van godsdienst of overtuiging binnen hun prioritaire doelstellingen voor mensenrechten in Tanzania. Sinds de herfst van vorig jaar zijn er geen verdere meldingen geweest van dergelijke incidenten. Toch blijft de EU de situatie goed in de gaten houden. Vrijheid van godsdienst of overtuiging zal ook aan de orde komen tijdens de komende politieke dialoog in het kader van de Overeenkomst van Cotonou tussen de EU en Tanzania, waaraan president Kikwete zal deelnemen.

Voor meer informatie over de religieuze spanningen in Tanzania en de overeenkomstige EU-actie, worden de geachte Parlementsleden ook verwezen naar het antwoord op vraag E-001751/2013 ([1]).

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

(Suomenkielinen versio)

Kirjallisesti vastattava kysymys E-013741/13
komissiolle
Peter van Dalen (ECR), Cornelis de Jong (GUE/NGL), László Surján (PPE) ja Hannu Takkula (ALDE)
(4. joulukuuta 2013)

Aihe: Tansania/Zanzibar

Sansibarin saarella esiintyy enenevässä määrin uskonnollista syrjintää, mikä on johtanut kahden kristityn uskonnollisen johtajan selvittämättömään murhaan, toistuvien murhauhkausten lähettämiseen muille johtajille sekä siihen, että väkijoukot ovat tuhonneet kirkkoja. Kaksi kristittyjen johtajaa on murhattu tämän vuoden aikana myös mantereella Tansaniassa. Jos tilanteeseen ei puututa asianmukaisesti, uskonnollinen väkivalta saattaa edistää rankaisemattomuuden yleistymistä, mikä saattaa vaarantaa kansallisen yhteenkuuluvuuden ja edistää uskonnollisen terrorismin yleistymistä.

1. Onko korkea edustaja / varapuheenjohtaja tietoinen mainitusta huolestuttavasta tilanteesta?

2. Mihin toimiin unioni on ryhtynyt tai aikoo ryhtyä edistääkseen uskonnon- ja uskonvapautta ja muistuttaakseen Tansanian hallitusta sen Tansanian perustuslain 19 artiklan mukaisista velvoitteista?

Korkean edustajan / varapuheenjohtaja Catherine Ashtonin komission puolesta antama vastaus
(7. helmikuuta 2014)

EU ja sen jäsenvaltiot ovat nostaneet Tansanian-suhteissaan uskonnon ja omantunnon vapauden ihmisoikeuslistan kärkeen vastauksena vuosien 2012 ja 2013 uskonnolliseen väkivaltaan. Viime syksyn jälkeen ei ole raportoitu uusista väkivallanteoista. EU jatkaa kuitenkin tilanteen tarkkailemista, ja uskonnon ja omantunnon vapautta on tarkoitus käsitellä myös Cotonoun sopimuksen nojalla pian käytävässä poliittisessa vuoropuhelussa EU:n ja Tansanian välillä. Vuoropuheluun osallistuu maan presidentti Kikwete.

Mitä tulee uskonnollisiin jännitteisiin Tansaniassa ja toimiin, joihin EU on niiden johdosta ryhtynyt, arvoisia parlamentin jäseniä kehotetaan tutustumaan myös kysymykseen E-001751/2013 ([1]) annettuun vastaukseen.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013741/13
to the Commission
Peter van Dalen (ECR), Cornelis de Jong (GUE/NGL), László Surján (PPE) and Hannu Takkula (ALDE)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: Tanzania/Zanzibar

There has been an increase in religious discrimination on the island of Zanzibar, with the unresolved murders of two Christian leaders, the sending of regular death threats to other leaders and the destruction of churches by mobs. Similarly, two Christian leaders have been murdered this year on the Tanzanian mainland. If inadequately addressed, religious violence could facilitate the emergence of a culture of impunity that may in turn undermine national cohesion and facilitate the entrenchment of religion-related terrorism.

1. Is the EU/HR aware of these worrying developments?

2. What measures is the EU currently taking or planning to take in order to promote freedom of religion or belief and to remind the government of its obligations under Article 19 of Tanzania's constitution?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(7 February 2014)

In response to the 2012-2013 violent religious incidents, the EU and its Member States upgraded the freedom of religion or belief within their prioritized human rights objectives for Tanzania. Since autumn last year, there have been no further reports of such incidents. The EU nonetheless remains watchful of the situation and freedom of religion or belief will also be addressed at the occasion of the forthcoming political dialogue under the Cotonou Agreement between the EU and Tanzania, with the participation of President Kikwete.

Concerning religious tension in Tanzania and corresponding EU action, the Honourable Members are also referred to the answer for the Question E-001751/2013 ([1]).

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

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013742/13
a la Comisión
Santiago Fisas Ayxela (PPE)
(4 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Ley del cine de la Generalitat de Catalunya

En el año 2010 se presentó la pregunta n° E-007389/2010, donde se preguntaba a la Comisión qué medidas pensaba adoptar ante las manifiestas violaciones del Derecho de la UE en que incurría la Ley del cine de la Generalitat de Catalunya, aprobada el 30 de junio de 2010. El 19 de octubre de 2010, la Comisión respondió por escrito a la pregunta en el sentido de que «la Comisión se encuentra examinando en estos momentos la información facilitada por las autoridades españolas y, atendiendo a los resultados de ese examen, estudiará los pasos que, en su caso, hayan de darse».

En julio de 2011, se formuló una segunda pregunta con n° E-007567/2011 en la que se preguntaba a la Comisión Europea sobre las razones por las cuales no se había iniciado todavía el procedimiento de infracción relativo a este asunto y cuándo pensaba la Comisión Europea pronunciarse sobre el mismo. El 7 de septiembre de 2011, la Comisión Europea respondió por escrito a la pregunta indicando que la citada ley todavía no se estaba aplicando y que el análisis de la Comisión finalizaría ese otoño, que sería cuando podría adoptar una postura sobre la denuncia.

En julio de 2012, la Comisión Europea dirigió al Reino de España un dictamen motivado al amparo del artículo 258 del TFUE en el que le invitaba a que, en un plazo de dos meses desde la recepción del dictamen, adoptara las medidas oportunas para ajustarse al mismo. El Reino de España dio curso de tal invitación al Gobierno de la Comunidad Autónoma correspondiente, en este caso la Generalitat de Cataluña, responsable de la adopción y, en su caso, de la modificación de dicha norma.

Transcurridos 15 meses desde el envío de dicho dictamen motivado, no se han adoptado las medidas que se indicaban en el mismo, y la Comisión Europea no ha puesto en marcha la siguiente fase del procedimiento de infracción.

La falta de toma de posición de la Comisión daña gravemente a las empresas del sector que, ante un horizonte jurídico incierto, ven dificultados sus planes de negocio y, en particular, el acceso al crédito, en un momento económico especialmente difícil. Pero, más allá de ello, el comportamiento de la Comisión Europea engendra el riesgo de menoscabar su papel esencial de «guardiana de los Tratados» y comprometer gravemente su independencia y neutralidad ante los Estados miembros.

Por tanto:

1. Transcurridos de sobra los dos meses que la Comisión puso de plazo para la adopción de las medidas que se indicaban en el dictamen motivado sin que estas se hayan tomado, ¿qué medidas piensa tomar la Comisión para exigir su cumplimiento?

2. ¿Cuándo piensa la Comisión tomar una decisión sobre si llevar o no el caso al Tribunal de Justicia o cerrarlo?

Respuesta del Sr. Barnier en nombre de la Comisión
(19 de febrero de 2014)

A raíz de su dictamen motivado de julio de 2012, la Comisión fue informada en agosto de 2012 por las autoridades españolas de que el Gobierno de Cataluña tenía previsto introducir disposiciones encaminadas a modificar la Ley del cine de 2010 para ajustarla al Derecho de la UE.

Este compromiso fue confirmado por los representantes del nuevo Gobierno elegido en Cataluña. La Comisión sabe que se está elaborando una propuesta legislativa por la que se modifica la Ley del cine y ha solicitado que se la informe sobre el contenido y los progresos de dicha propuesta.

En el caso de que en el texto legislativo propuesto por el que se modifica la Ley del cine no se atiendan las preocupaciones de la Comisión manifestadas en su dictamen motivado, esta tomará las medidas necesarias para seguir adelante con un procedimiento de infracción.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013742/13
to the Commission
Santiago Fisas Ayxela (PPE)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: The Autonomous Government of Catalonia's Law on the Cinema

In 2010, Question E-007389/2010 asked what measures the Commission intended to adopt in response to gross violations of EC law found in the Autonomous Government of Catalonia's Law on the Cinema, adopted on 30 June 2010. In a written response, on 19 October 2010, the Commission stated that it was 'currently reviewing the information provided by the Spanish authorities and, depending on the outcome of that review, will consider what steps, if any, to take'.

In July 2011, a second question — E-007567/2011 — asked the Commission to explain why infringement procedures with regard to this matter had not yet been initiated and when the Commission intended to issue an opinion. On 7 September 2011, in a written answer to the question, the Commission indicated that the law referred to was not yet being applied and that the Commission would complete its analysis of the matter that autumn, when it would adopt a position with regard to the complaint.

In July 2012, the Commission issued a reasoned opinion to Spain, under Article 258 of the TFEU, asking it take appropriate measures to comply with the opinion within two months of receiving the opinion. Spain duly passed this request to the Government of the responsible Autonomous Region — in this case Catalonia — for its measures to be adopted and, if appropriate, for the legislation to be modified.

15 months after this reasoned opinion was issued, the measures indicated therein have not been adopted, and the Commission has not initiated the next stage of the infringement procedure.

The Commission's failure to adopt a position leads to a situation of legal uncertainty that seriously damages companies in the sector, hampering their business plans and, in particular, their access to credit, especially in these difficult economic times. Beyond that, the Commission's behaviour risks undermining its essential role as 'guardian of the Treaties' and seriously jeopardises its independence and neutrality before Member States.

Therefore:

1. The two months given by the Commission for adoption of the measures indicated in the reasoned opinion having long passed, without them having been adopted, what action will the Commission take to enforce them?

2. When will the Commission decide whether to take the case to the Court of Justice or to close it?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(19 February 2014)

Following the issuing of its reasoned opinion in July 2012, the Commission was informed by the Spanish authorities in August 2012 that the Government of Catalonia intended to introduce measures to amend the 2010 Cinema Act in order to bring it into compliance with EC law.

This commitment was confirmed by representatives of the newly elected government in Catalonia. The Commission understands that a legislative proposal amending the Cinema Act is under preparation and has requested to be fully informed on the content and progress of this proposal.

In the event that the proposed legislative text amending the Cinema Act does not address the Commission's concerns, as set out in its reasoned opinion, it will take the necessary steps as regards further pursuit of infringement proceedings.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-013743/13
aan de Commissie
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(4 december 2013)

Betreft: Hoe de EU van depositohouders uit derde landen in Cyprus eigenaars heeft gemaakt

Lang voordat de Cypriotische autoriteiten om een financiële injectie vroegen, noemde de Wereldbank het eiland eind 2011 al een van's werelds belangrijkste centra van witwaspraktijken ([1]). Bij de herstructurering van Bank of Cyprus in juli 2013 werden deposito's gedwongen in aandelen omgezet en als gevolg hiervan kreeg een groep depositohouders uit derde landen — voornamelijk Russen — een meerderheidsbelang in de bank ([2]). In haar antwoord van 7 januari 2013 op mijn vraag van 7 november 2012 ([3]) over een geheim Duits rapport over Russische witwaspraktijken op Cyprus gaf de Commissie aan dat zij „in samenwerking met haar partners van de trojka en met de Cyprische autoriteiten alles in het werk stelt om ervoor te zorgen dat het in Cyprus bestaande kader ter bestrijding van het witwassen van geld en van de financiering van terrorisme robuust blijft".

Kan de Commissie tegen deze achtergrond antwoord geven op de volgende vragen:

1. Is de Commissie op de hoogte van het feit dat de bail-in van Cyprische banken er in de praktijk toe heeft geleid dat een groot aantal depositohouders van Bank of Cyprus uit derde landen aandeelhouders van de bank zijn geworden?

2. Zo ja, kan de Commissie, in de wetenschap dat in het laatste rapport van het Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (Moneyval) van de Raad van Europa over Cyprus een aantal achterdeurtjes met betrekking tot „due diligence"-maatregelen in de sector douane — zoals o.a. vastgelegd in de derde Anti-witwas richtlijn ([4]) — aan het licht werd gebracht, aangeven of voorafgaand aan de omzetting van ongedekte deposito's in aandelen een gedegen controle van de herkomst van de betrokken financiële middelen heeft plaatsgevonden?

3. Is de Commissie ervan op de hoogte dat Bank of Cyprus de belangrijkste financiële instelling van het land is en dat onderdanen van derde landen dus een meerderheidsbelang hebben in een „systeemrelevante financiële instelling"?

4. Realiseert de Commissie zich dat, indien zo'n gedegen controle van de herkomst van de deposito's niet heeft plaatsgevonden, de aandelen van een „systeemrelevante financiële instelling" in ieder geval gedeeltelijk zouden kunnen bestaan uit geld met een illegale herkomst?

5. Zo ja, is de Commissie tevreden over deze uitkomst? Heeft de Commissie een dergelijke uitkomst voorzien voorafgaand aan de goedkeuring van het macro-economische aanpassingsprogramma voor Cyprus?

Antwoord van de heer Barnier namens de Commissie
(24 februari 2014)

De Commissie geeft geen commentaar op beweringen met betrekking tot bijzonderheden van de aandeelhoudersstructuur van de Bank of Cyprus en het totale belang van aandeelhouders uit derde landen in deze bank. In beginsel wordt in de EU echter geen onderscheid gemaakt wat de nationaliteit van aandeelhouders van ondernemingen betreft.

Volgens de informatie waarover de Commissie thans beschikt, is de grootste individuele aandeelhouder van de Bank of Cyprus na de omzetting van de deposito's bij de Bank of Cyprus in aandelen Laiki Legacy met een belang van 18%. Laatstgenoemde instelling wordt vertegenwoordigd door een speciale bewindvoerder die door de Cypriotische regering is aangewezen en via de afwikkelingsautoriteit door haar wordt gecontroleerd.

In het tussen het Europees stabiliteitsmechanisme (ESM) en Cyprus overeengekomen memorandum van overeenstemming over de specifieke economische beleidsvoorwaarden en het daaraan gehechte actieplan ter bestrijding van het witwassen van geld is rekening gehouden met de bevindingen van het Moneyval-rapport „Special Assessment of the Effectiveness of Customer Due Diligence Measures in the Banking Sector in Cyprus". Daarnaast heeft een onafhankelijke auditor een evaluatie uitgevoerd van de maatregelen die bepaalde Cypriotische banken hebben genomen om te voorkomen dat criminelen de uiteindelijke gerechtigden van cliëntendeposito's zijn.

([1]) http://euobserver.com/justice/114121.
([2]) http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/22/world/europe/russians-still-ride-high-in-cyprus-after-bailout.html?_r=0.
([3]) Question for written answer E-010075-12, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+WQ+E-2012-010075+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=en.
([4]) Richtlijn 2005/60/EG inzake het gebruik van het financiële stelsel met het doel geld wit te wassen of terrorisme te financieren. Volgens het Moneyval rapport van 2013 hierover was in geen van de onderzochte banken een algemeen onderzoek gedaan naar het risico hiervan.

Cyprus heeft zich ertoe verbonden een reeks maatregelen te treffen om te garanderen dat banken de klantenonderzoeksvereisten (customer due diligence) naar behoren toepassen. De Central Bank of Cyprus is belast met de follow-up van zakelijke relaties waarvan bij de door Deloitte verrichte evaluatie is gebleken dat er van potentiële complianceproblemen sprake is. In het memorandum van overeenstemming is ook bepaald dat Cyprus de transparantie van de informatie over de uiteindelijke gerechtigden zal verbeteren.

Samen met de andere partners van de trojka zal de Commissie de tenuitvoerlegging van het actieplan ter bestrijding van het witwassen van geld op de voet blijven volgen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013743/13
to the Commission
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: How the EU has turned non-EU depositors in Cyprus into owners

Long before the Cypriot authorities formally asked for a bailout, the World Bank named the island as one of the world's leading destinations for money launderers in late 2011 ([1]). When Bank of Cyprus was restructured in July 2013, deposits were forcibly converted into shares and, as a consequence, a group of non-EU — mostly Russian — depositors have ended up with a controlling stake ([2]). In the Commission's answer on 7 January 2013 to my question of 7 November 2012 ([3]) on secret German reports on money laundering in Cyprus, the Commission stated that it was 'working with its Troika partners and the Cypriot authorities to ensure that the anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing framework in Cyprus' would continue 'to be robust'.

In the light of this:

1. Is the Commission aware that the bail-in of Cypriot banks has actually turned many non-EU depositors in Bank of Cyprus into shareholders of the bank?

2. If so, given that the last report on Cyprus by the Council of Europe Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (MONEYVAL) highlighted several loopholes in respect of customer due diligence measures — such as those regulated by the Third Anti-Money Laundering Directive ([4]) — can the Commission state whether proper control on the provenance of the money was carried out before uninsured deposits were converted into shares?

3. Is the Commission aware that Bank of Cyprus is the most important financial institution in the country, and that non-EU citizens have therefore taken control of a 'systemically important financial institution'?

4. Is the Commission aware that, should proper control of the provenance of deposits not have been carried out, the shares of a 'systemically important financial institution' may possibly be at least partly composed of money of illicit provenance?

5. If so, is the Commission satisfied with this outcome? Did the Commission foresee such an outcome before the macroeconomic adjustment programme for Cyprus was approved?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(24 February 2014)

The Commission does not comment on allegations as regards details of the shareholder structure of the Bank of Cyprus and the total stake held by non-EU shareholders. However, in principle no distinction is made within the EU as far as the nationality of shareholders in companies is concerned.

The information at the disposal of the Commission is that after the conversion of the deposits at the Bank of Cyprus into equity, the largest individual shareholder in Bank of Cyprus is Laiki legacy with a stake of 18%, which is represented by the special administrator who is appointed and controlled by the Cypriot government through the resolution authority.

The findings of Moneyval's 'Special Assessment of the Effectiveness of Customer Due Diligence Measures in the Banking Sector in Cyprus' have been taken into account in the memorandum of understanding on Specific Economic Policy Conditionality (MoU) agreed by the ESM and Cyprus and the Anti-Money Laundering (AML) Action Plan attached to the MoU. In addition, a review has been carried out by an independent auditor to assess the actions taken by certain Cypriot banks to prevent criminals from being the beneficial owners of customer deposits.

Cyprus has committed to a range of measures to ensure that banks adequately apply customer due diligence. The Central Bank of Cyprus has been tasked with following up on business relationships revealed as posing potential compliance issues in the Deloitte review. The MoU also specifies that Cyprus will enhance the transparency of beneficial owner information.

The Commission will continue to closely monitor the implementation of the AML Action Plan together with the Troika partners.

([1]) http://euobserver.com/justice/114121
([2]) http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/22/world/europe/russians-still-ride-high-in-cyprus-after-bailout.html?_r=0
([3]) Question for written answer E-010075-12, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+WQ+E-2012-010075+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=en
([4]) Directive 2005/60/EC on the prevention of the use of the financial system for the purpose of money laundering and terrorist financing. According to the special assessment of customer due diligence measures in the banking sector in Cyprus, carried out by MONEYVAL in 2013, 'none of the banks interviewed had made an overall assessment to determine the level of money laundering and financing of terrorism risk' (http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/moneyval/Evaluations/CY_eurogroup_rep2013.pdf).

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-013744/13
aan de Commissie
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(4 december 2013)

Betreft: Verdere vertraging voor de belasting op financiële transacties

Volgens een artikel dat op 1 december 2013 in de Wall Street Journal is gepubliceerd wordt de belasting op financiële transacties (BFT) met verdere vertragingen geconfronteerd door de verdeeldheid van de deelnemende landen over de belangrijkste elementen van de heffing ([1]). Duitsland schijnt druk uit te oefenen voor een belasting die valutatransacties omvat, hoewel het voorstel formeel bepaalt dat „valutatransacties op contante markten buiten het toepassingsgebied vallen van de FTT, hetgeen het vrij verkeer van kapitaal in stand houdt".

Kan de Commissie aan de hand van deze informatie haar standpunt verduidelijken over de belasting op valutatransacties?

Antwoord van de heer Šemeta namens de Commissie
(28 januari 2014)

De Commissie heeft voorgesteld om valutatransacties op contante markten buiten het toepassingsgebied van de FTT te houden, omdat EU-voorschriften in die zin op gespannen voet zouden staan met artikel 63 VWEU, aangezien zij ertoe zouden leiden dat grensoverschrijdende investeringen of betalingen een minder gunstige behandeling krijgen dan investeringen of betalingen binnen één enkele lidstaat (of binnen een zone met één enkele munteenheid, namelijk de eurozone).

([1]) http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304579404579231730343028774.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013744/13
to the Commission
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: Further delays for the Financial Transaction Tax

According to an article published on 1 December 2013 in The Wall Street Journal, the Financial Transaction Tax (FTT) is facing further delays as participating governments remain divided on key details of the levy ([1]). Germany seems to be pushing for a tax that would cover currency transactions, even though the proposal formally states that 'currency transactions on spot markets are outside the scope of the FTT, which preserves the free movement of capital'.

In the light of this:

Can the Commission clarify its stance on the taxation of currency transactions?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(28 January 2014)

The Commission proposed that currency transactions on spot markets would be outside the scope of FTT, because Union rules to this effect would be in conflict with Article 63 TFEU since they would lead to less favourable treatment of cross-border investment or payments compared with investment or payments made within a single Member State (or within a single currency zone, that is the Eurozone).

([1]) http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304579404579231730343028774

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013745/13
to the Commission
James Nicholson (ECR)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: PISA test results

The results of the latest Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests, an international test system for 15-year-old pupils on the basis of maths, reading and science, show that Europe is some way behind Asian countries in terms of academic performance. Many Member States are hovering around or below the average test scores, with my own constituency unfortunately below the average. Finland represents somewhat of an exception for the EU, as the only European country in any of the top five lists.

While education is and must remain a Member State competence, what strategies does the Commission have in place to encourage national school authorities within the EU to improve their performances so that European schools do not lag further behind their Asian counterparts in the future? Furthermore, how does the Commission plan to address the imbalances in levels of education within the EU?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(30 January 2014)

Improving basic skills is essential for developing key competences for lifelong learning and social inclusion, and for reaching the EU 2020 objectives of smart and inclusive growth. Therefore, in 2010 Education Ministers adopted the Education and Training 2020 work programme, which included a benchmark to reduce the number of low achievers in reading, maths, and science to below 15% by 2020.

The 2012 PISA results would suggest that Member States' efforts to improve achievements in basic skills are paying off. The EU as a whole is on its way to meeting the below-15% target for science and literacy, while maths needs further improvement. Through the cooperative exchanges undertaken in the Open Method of Coordination for Education and training, the Commission supports Member States in their efforts to improve their education systems. Through the country-specific recommendations it has addressed to Member States annually as part of the Europe 2020 and European Semester process, the Commission urges them to address weaknesses in their educational performance. However, it must at all times be borne in mind that Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union prescribes that Member States are responsible for action to improve the content and organisation of their systems.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013746/13
to the Commission
James Nicholson (ECR)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: Rural development budget

A recent report by the European Court of Auditors noted that 'Member States and the Commission have not done enough to show that the EUR 100 billion rural development budget is well spent.' The report pointed to flaws in monitoring and evaluation arrangements, which have failed to provide information needed to inform decisions on the most effective and efficient measures for the next rural development policy. The report is critical of a focus on spending, rather than achieving results, with criticism aimed at the Commission for accepting Member States' plans with objectives that are too 'vague' and 'open-ended'. In my own constituency, Northern Ireland, we have received funding without sufficient accountability that would ensure this money has been being spent properly.

Given these findings, what specific measures has the Commission taken to ensure that monitoring and evaluation arrangements are improved, and further that a culture of continuous improvement with regard to identifying the most effective and efficient measures is embedded in the next rural development policy?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(5 February 2014)

For the period 2014-2020, the provisions on monitoring and evaluation (M&E) have been significantly strengthened in the legal framework.

Firstly, in order to ensure that key information needed for M&E is correctly reported and followed up for all operations, Member States have the obligation to record and maintain this information electronically as laid down in Article 70 of Regulation (EC) No 1305/2013 ([1]) (EAFRD Regulation).

Secondly, timely availability of the monitoring information will be ensured. In addition to the submission of the Annual Implementation Reports (from 2016 onwards), monitoring data will be provided by the Member States twice a year for all operations selected for funding as required in Article 66(1)(b) of EAFRD Regulation. Moreover, financial information broken down by Union priorities and Focus Areas will be reported in the quarterly declarations of expenditure. The second requirement is planned to be introduced in the implementing act for Regulation (EC) No 1306/2013 ([2]).

Thirdly, to ensure a common approach to the M&E structured around the Union priorities, a new annex was added to the draft Implementing Act for the EAFRD regulation with a list of 'Common evaluation questions for rural development'. Moreover, reinforced common sets of indicators — capturing the contribution of RDPs to each of the Focus Areas of the Union priorities — will be introduced in the Implementing act of EAFRD regulation.

All the abovementioned new mechanisms aim at harmonising the M&E framework and at providing the Member States and the rural development stakeholders with timely monitoring information to allow continuous improvement end early identification of most effective and efficient measures embedded in RD policy.

([1]) Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013.

([2]) Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the financing, management and monitoring of the common agricultural policy and repealing Council Regulations (EEC) No 352/78, (EC) No 165/94, (EC) No 2799/98, (EC) No 814/2000, (EC) No 1290/2005 and (EC) No 485/2008, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013747/13
to the Commission
James Nicholson (ECR)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: Olive oil

Despite withdrawing controversial measures proposing to ban refillable olive oil bottles, the Commission has nevertheless moved ahead with plans to improve the standards of EU olive oil in the domestic and global market by eliminating fraud and boosting quality. One of the methods for doing so has been to change the labelling of olive oil products to include the complete sales name, optimal storage conditions, and voluntary indication of the harvest year if 100% of the olive oil indicated on the label comes from the same harvest.

While I am supportive of the Commission's efforts to improve the standards of EU olive oil, what assurances can the Commission give that labelling changes will not increase the administrative burden on small producers of olive oil, and provoke a backlash similar to the one that occurred earlier this year?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(30 January 2014)

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1335/2013 ([1]) amending Regulation (EU) No 29/2012 ([2]) on marketing standards for olive oil is indeed aimed at boosting olive oil quality and combating fraud in the interests of both producers and consumers in the EU.

It received a favourable opinion from the Management Committee for the Common Organisation of Agricultural Markets and in particular from all the producer Member States. No Member State opposed the new proposal, unlike the previous version, which included the so-called hospitality sector proposal prohibiting the use of refillable containers.

Specific marketing standards for olive oil are laid down at retail level. Consequently, they are applied at the bottling stage and do not therefore entail an additional administrative burden in the case of most producers.

([1]) OJ L 335, 14.12.2013.
([2]) OJ L 12, 14.1.2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013749/13
to the Commission
James Nicholson (ECR)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: Research on bees and honey production

A recent Commission report has evaluated the effectiveness and efficiency of the six measures under the common agricultural policy supporting the general conditions for the production and marketing of apiculture products. While the report recommends maintaining these six measures, it also suggests that 'greater synergies should be realised between the various bee-related research initiatives funded by the EU', and that this could be facilitated by the Directorates-General of the Commission.

In light of the report's findings, how does the Commission plan to act on these recommendations to ensure that better synergies in bee-related research are achieved and that the levels of production are maintained at a sustainable rate?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(5 February 2014)

With the common agricultural policy (CAP) reform, measures regarding the aid to the apiculture sector have been updated and completed in order to improve the general conditions for the production and marketing of apiculture products. The new Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 establishing a common organisation of the markets in agricultural products ([1]) is applicable since 1 January 2014 and lays down the reformed rules regarding the aid to the apiculture sector. Cooperation with specialised bodies for the implementation of applied research programmes in the field of beekeeping and apiculture products is still one of the measures that can be supported by the EU.

The Commission works constantly to facilitate the diffusion of knowledge on EU funded research projects within and outside the Commission. Within the Commission, exchange of information on research projects is done in the meetings of the Bee Inter-Services Group which involves the Directorates General of the Commission concerned and will continue to be done in the coming years.

An overview of the EU on-going funded research projects is planned to be presented to the main stakeholders representatives at the next advisory group on honey which will take place on 25 February 2014.

On 7 April 2014, the Commission will organise a large scale conference on Bee Health. Part of the conference will be dedicated to discussions on how the sector can better put into application the results of scientific research.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:347:0671:0854:EN:PDF

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013750/13
to the Commission
James Nicholson (ECR)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: Victims of cartels claiming compensation

The Commission has proposed to make it easier for victims of cartels to claim compensation, whilst nevertheless maintaining the ban on claimants gaining access to incriminating statements submitted by 'whistleblowers' to the Commission as part of their applications for leniency. MEPs have taken a different view, asking that victims of cartels have full disclosure of these documents for any compensation claim they make.

Given the difficult balance to be struck between transparency and the needs of the victims of cartels, what measures will the Commission take to ensure that its largely successful leniency programme will be retained in these proposals without compromising the needs of victims?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(5 February 2014)

One of the main objectives of the proposal for a directive on antitrust damages actions (the proposal) is to optimise the overall effective enforcement of EU competition law by regulating the interaction between public enforcement by the Commission and national competition authorities on the one hand, and private enforcement by national courts on the other.

Leniency programmes have proven an essential tool in uncovering and punishing secret cartels. Leniency programmes therefore also benefit the victims of those secret cartels, who would otherwise never have been aware of their existence and thus not be able to exercise their right to compensation. The proposal seeks to ensure the effectiveness of leniency programmes to the benefit of public enforcement and of victims seeking compensation.

In order to ensure the effectiveness of leniency programmes, the proposal protects leniency corporate statements from disclosure in actions for damages. This provision aims to ensure that companies that assist the competition authorities in proving and dismantling cartels are not worse off than non-cooperating companies and remain willing to cooperate, including in the future. At the same time, it does not adversely affect victims' rights to compensation, since the proposal also provides that all other evidence related to the cartel (pre-existing information) is accessible when considered relevant to substantiate the damages action. This other evidence should be sufficient to enable victims to exercise effectively their right to full compensation.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013751/13
to the Commission
James Nicholson (ECR)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: Animal cloning and labelling

A report from a meeting of the College of Commissioners last month suggests that the Commission is considering the labelling of fresh beef from first-generation offspring of cloned animals. Although the Commission plans to retain a suspension of the use of clone breeding techniques for EU cattle, horses, pigs, sheep and goats for a five-year period, it appears willing to consider labelling fresh beef derived from the progeny of cloned cattle, as food can be segregated at slaughterhouse and cutting plant level without additional cost.

In light of the controversies surrounding the use of cloning techniques, particularly in the context of ongoing Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership negotiations between the Commission and US representatives, what steps will the Commission take to assure EU farmers that they will not be at a competitive disadvantage compared with US exports if the Commission does decide to label fresh beef from the first-generation offspring of cloned animals?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(12 February 2014)

On 18 December 2013 the Commission adopted two proposals ([1]) for directives on cloning. These directives would prohibit the use of the cloning technique in the Union for farm animals (bovine, ovine, caprine, porcine and equine species), imports of animal clones and the marketing of their food in the Union.

([1]) COM(2013) 893 final and COM(2013) 892 final.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-013754/13
à Comissão
Nuno Teixeira (PPE)
(4 de dezembro de 2013)

Assunto: Marine KIC

Tendo em conta que:

— As Comunidades de Conhecimento e Inovação, mais conhecidas como KIC, pretendem impulsionar, num modelo transfronteiriço, a criação de redes de conhecimento e inovação, de que fazem parte universidades, centros de pesquisa, pequenas e médias empresas e outros atores, que tenham como tema desafios societais;

— O triângulo do conhecimento tem como um dos seus instrumentos as KIC, pelo que o Instituto Europeu de Inovação e Tecnologia (EIT) criou as primeiras em 2010, com o objetivo de colocar em rede comunidades de conhecimento, estando já em atividade a «KIC InnoEnergy» sobre energia sustentável, a «Climate KIC», para responder às mudanças climáticas e propor medidas de mitigação e adaptação e a «EIT ICT Labs», referente ao domínio da sociedade da informação e da comunicação;

— As definições das novas KIC já foram aprovadas pelo Parlamento (A7-0422/2012), tendo sido estabelecidas as seguintes até 2018: Envelhecimento Ativo e uma Vida Saudável, Recursos Naturais, Comida para o Futuro, Indústria como valor acrescentado, Mobilidade urbana;

— Os temas para as KIC são selecionados, conjuntamente, pelo EIT e a Comissão Europeia, tendo em conta o potencial de inovação que um determinado tópico poderá oferecer;

— A União Europeia tem apresentado um conjunto de estratégias e medidas para impulsionar o crescimento azul, uma vez que existe um enorme potencial neste setor para a economia europeia, caso haja uma aposta coordenada e concertada da União e dos Estados-Membros.

Pergunta-se à Comissão:

1. Uma vez que, em várias das propostas apresentadas sobre o Crescimento Azul, a Comissão sublinha a importância do mesmo, porque não apresentar uma KIC na área do crescimento azul?

2. Não vislumbra o potencial referido, designadamente em termos de criação de emprego, crescimento numa base sustentável, e uma oportunidade para o posicionamento a nível mundial neste domínio?

3. Tem conhecimento da criação da Iniciativa «Marine Kic» em 2010 por um grupo de excelência, que reúne universidades, institutos e «clusters» da área?

4. Será possível implementar uma KIC na área do crescimento azul ainda dentro do quadro financeiro plurianual para o período 2014-2020? Em caso afirmativo, em que data pensa a Comissão lançar a proposta?

Resposta dada por Maria Damanaki em nome da Comissão
(12 de fevereiro de 2014)

Uma melhor base de conhecimentos, o aumento da divulgação de conhecimentos e a procura de soluções inovadoras, com base na melhor educação, investigação e tecnologia de toda a Europa, teriam um papel fundamental para uma utilização sustentável e o desenvolvimento dos nossos mares e oceanos.

De acordo com a Agenda de Inovação Estratégica do Instituto Europeu de Inovação e Tecnologia («IET»), formalmente aprovada pelo Parlamento Europeu e pelo Conselho em dezembro de 2013, deverão ser criadas cinco CCI ([1]) no período de 2014 a 2020 ([2]). A seleção destes domínios temáticos baseia-se na proposta da Comissão de 2011 para um Programa Estratégico de Inovação, que teve em conta os resultados de uma consulta pública, a proposta do próprio IET e uma análise dos domínios temáticos que oferecem um verdadeiro potencial de inovação.

([1]) Comunidades de Conhecimento e Inovação [em inglês, KCI].
([2]) Em 2014, o IET selecionará duas CCI nos domínios da inovação para uma vida saudável e envelhecimento ativo e das matérias-primas. Em 2016, serão selecionadas duas CCI nos domínios da alimentação para o futuro (Food4Future) e do fabrico com valor acrescentado. E, em 2018, espera-se que venha a ser selecionada pelo IET uma CCI sobre a mobilidade urbana.

A Comissão está atualmente a estudar formas para avaliar em que medida o conceito das CCI poderia contribuir melhor para o desenvolvimento da «economia azul» no futuro. Foi recentemente lançado um estudo a ter em conta no processo de avaliação. Tal estudo, que deverá ser concluído no primeiro semestre de 2014, identificará a melhor forma de as atuais ou novas CCI apoiarem e reforçarem o crescimento da «economia azul» da UE, abordando ao mesmo tempo o elemento educativo, que é fundamental. A Comissão vai ponderar os passos a dar em seguida de acordo com esta perspetiva.

A Comissão tem conhecimento de que foi lançada em 2010 uma iniciativa das partes interessadas para uma CCI no domínio marinho, centrada no desenvolvimento sustentável dos recursos marinhos.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013754/13
to the Commission
Nuno Teixeira (PPE)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: Marine KIC

— Knowledge and Innovation Communities, better known as KICs, are intended to promote the cross-border creation of knowledge and innovation networks, comprising universities, research centres, small and medium-sized enterprises and other stakeholders, focusing on societal challenges.

— KICs are one of the instruments of the triangle of knowledge, the first of which the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) created in 2010, with the aim of networking knowledge communities; already active are 'KIC InnoEnergy' on sustainable energy, 'Climate KIC' to address climate change and propose mitigation and adaptation measures, and 'EIT ICT Labs', on the information society and communication.

— The themes for the new KICs have already been approved by Parliament (A7-0422/2012), the following having been established for 2018: healthy living and active ageing, natural resources, food for the future, added-value manufacturing, and urban mobility.

— The themes of KICs are jointly chosen by the EIT and the Commission, in view of the potential innovation that a given subject could offer.

— The European Union has presented a series of strategies and measures to promote blue growth, as this sector holds great potential for the European economy, if there is a coordinated and concerted commitment by the Union and the Member States.

1. Considering that, in several proposals it has presented on blue growth, the Commission stresses how important it is, why not propose a KIC on blue growth?

2. Does the Commission not see the aforementioned potential, namely in terms of job creation, sustainable growth and a chance to become a global player in this area?

3. Is the Commission aware of the creation of the 'Marine KIC' initiative in 2010 by an exceptional group made up of universities, institutes and 'clusters' in the field?

4. Will it be possible to create a KIC on blue growth under the multiannual financial framework for the period 2014-2020? If so, when does the Commission plan to make this proposal?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(12 February 2014)

A better knowledge base, increased knowledge diffusion and the search for innovative solutions, based on the best education, research and technology from across Europe would make a major contribution to sustainable use and development of our seas and oceans.

According to the Strategic Innovation Agenda of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), formally approved by the European Parliament and Council in December 2013, five KICs ([1]) are expected to be created in the period from 2014 to 2020 ([2]). The selection of these thematic areas is based on the 2011 Commission proposal for a Strategic Innovation Agenda which took into account the results of a public consultation, the EIT's own proposal and an analysis of the thematic areas offering a true innovation potential.

The Commission is currently considering ways to assess the extent to which the KIC concept could best contribute to the development of the 'blue economy' in the future. A study has recently been launched to feed into the assessment process. The study, which is to be completed in the first half of 2014, will identify how existing or new KICs could best underpin and strengthen the growth of the EU's blue economy while addressing the educational element which is core. The Commission will consider the next steps on this basis.

The Commission is aware that a stakeholder initiative for a marine KIC focusing on sustainable development of marine resources was launched in 2010.

([1]) Knowledge and Innovation Communities.

([2]) In 2014, the EIT will select two KICs in the areas of Innovation for Healthy Living and Active Ageing and Raw Materials. In 2016, two KICs will be selected in the areas of Food4Future and Added Value Manufacturing. And in 2018, a KIC on urban mobility is expected to be selected by the EIT.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-013755/13
à Comissão
Nuno Teixeira (PPE)
(4 de dezembro de 2013)

Assunto: Estado das negociações do Acordo União Europeia — Mercosul

Tendo em conta que:

— as negociações com o Mercosul foram relançadas em 2010 pela Presidência Espanhola, e que não está previsto uma data-limite para a conclusão das mesmas, sendo este acordo um elemento essencial para a estabilidade e crescimento de ambas as partes;

— o Mercosul é o quarto bloco económico do mundo, no qual aparecem economias emergentes com grande potencial de crescimento, como o Brasil, a Argentina, o Chile (como Estado associado);

— comparativamente à Europa, a crise económica e financeira teve um menor impacto nesta região, tendo, contudo, havido um abrandamento do processo de integração regional;

— o Brasil tem demonstrado intenções de romper com o Mercosul e de alinhar num acordo de livre comércio com a União;

— em junho de 2012 foi criada a Aliança do Pacífico, que engloba o Peru, o Chile, o México e a Colômbia, países com um crescimento económico marcante e um clima de estabilidade política, contando com 40 % do PIB da América Latina.

Pergunta-se à Comissão:

1. Qual é o estado das negociações entre a União e o Mercosul e as perspetivas de conclusão?

2. Considera a criação da Aliança do Pacífico como mais um obstáculo à concretização de um acordo UE-Mercosul? Ou, contrariamente, vê como uma ferramenta para acelerar o processo de negociações?

3. Qual a posição da União, quando o Brasil sublinha que pretende avançar para um Acordo de comércio livre com ou sem os parceiros do Mercosul?

4. Está a União pronta para negociar um acordo de livre comércio só com o Brasil?

Resposta dada por Karel De Gucht em nome da Comissão
(3 de fevereiro de 2014)

A Comissão continua empenhada nas negociações UE-Mercosul. A próxima etapa dessas negociações é o intercâmbio de propostas de acesso ao mercado, tal como acordado em Santiago do Chile, em janeiro de 2013. Trata-se de uma etapa importante das negociações comerciais, sendo a primeira etapa desse intercâmbio desde o reatamento das negociações em 2010.

Os trabalhos sobre a finalização das propostas encontram-se numa fase avançada em ambas as partes, que irão proceder a uma troca de propostas logo que se concretizem as circunstâncias para o êxito de um intercâmbio.

Não houve indicações por parte das autoridades brasileiras quanto à sua intenção de negociar um acordo bilateral de comércio livre com a UE. Com efeito, as autoridades brasileiras não questionaram, até agora, a abordagem regional dessas negociações. Pelo contrário, em declarações recentes, confirmaram a sua intenção de continuar a negociar com a UE, juntamente com outros países do Mercosul em bloco.

No entanto, a Comissão está disposta a considerar eventuais sugestões provenientes do Mercosul que permitam que diversos países do Mercosul negociem ou adiram ao acordo segundo ritmos diferentes, tendo em conta, por exemplo, a recente adesão da Venezuela ao Mercosul, desde que tal contribua para a conclusão bem sucedida de um acordo ambicioso, abrangente e equilibrado.

No que diz respeito à Aliança do Pacífico, remete-se o Senhor Deputado para a resposta dada à pergunta E-13756/13.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013755/13
to the Commission
Nuno Teixeira (PPE)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: State of play in the negotiations on the agreement between the European Union and Mercosur

— Negotiations with Mercosur were relaunched in 2010 by the Spanish Presidency and no time limit has been established for their conclusion; the projected agreement is an essential factor for stability and growth for both sides.

— Mercosur is the fourth-largest economic bloc in the world and includes emerging economies with great growth potential, such as Brazil, Argentina and Chile (as an associate member).

— Although the economic and financial crisis has had a lesser impact on this region than in Europe, it has caused the regional integration process to slow down.

— Brazil has expressed its intention to break away from Mercosur and to conclude a free trade agreement with the EU.

— The Pacific Alliance was created in June 2012, made up of Peru, Chile, Mexico and Colombia, politically stable countries with significant economic growth, accounting for 40% of Latin America's GDP.

1. What is the state of play in the negotiations between the EU and Mercosur and the prospects for their conclusion?

2. Does the Commission think that the creation of the Pacific Alliance is another obstacle to concluding an EU-Mercosur agreement? Or, conversely, does it see it as a way of speeding up the negotiation process?

3. What is the EU's position as regards Brazil's stated intention to go ahead with a free trade agreement with or without its Mercosur partners?

4. Is the EU prepared to negotiate a free trade agreement with Brazil alone?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(3 February 2014)

The Commission remains committed to EU-Mercosur negotiations. The next step in these negotiations is the exchange of market access offers, as agreed in Santiago de Chile in January 2013. This is an important step in this trade negotiation, as the first such exchange since the resumption of negotiations in 2010.

Work on the finalisation of the offers is well advanced on both sides and both sides will proceed to an exchange of offers as soon as the conditions are there for a successful exchange.

There has been no indication by Brazilian authorities of their intention to negotiate a bilateral free trade agreement with the EU. Indeed, Brazilian authorities have not questioned so far the region-to-region approach of these negotiations. On the contrary, in recent statements, they have confirmed their intention to continue negotiating with the EU together with other Mercosur countries as a bloc.

This being said, the Commission is ready to consider possible suggestions from Mercosur that would allow different Mercosur countries to negotiate or to join the Agreement at different speeds, given, for example, the recent accession of Venezuela to Mercosur, as long as this contributes to the successful conclusion of a balanced, comprehensive and ambitious Agreement.

With respect to the Pacific Alliance, the Honourable Member is referred to the reply to Question E-13756/13.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-013756/13
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Nuno Teixeira (PPE)
(4 de dezembro de 2013)

Assunto: VP/HR — A União Europeia e a Aliança do Pacífico

Tendo em conta que:

— em junho de 2012 foi criada a Aliança do Pacífico entre o Peru, o Chile, o México e a Colômbia, países com um crescimento económico marcante e um clima de estabilidade política, contando já com 40 % do PIB da América Latina, sendo o segundo maior bloco da América Latina;

— segundo o último relatório da Organização Mundial do Comércio, as exportações totais destes quatros países já ultrapassaram as do Mercosul;

— os países da Aliança do Pacífico pretendem ser uma alternativa de investimento e de negócios dos seus congéneres Mercosul e Unasul (União de Nações Sul-Americanas), colocando-se fora da esfera de influência brasileira;

— o potencial de crescimento deste bloco comercial, com a possível entrada da Costa Rica ainda este ano, e tendo como países observadores Austrália, Canadá, Equador, Espanha, França, Guatemala, Honduras, Japão, Nova Zelândia, Panamá, Portugal, Paraguai, República Dominicana, El Salvador e Uruguai;

— este bloco comercial pretende estabelecer tratados de livre comércio com outros blocos económicos e países, e num longo prazo, para além da livre circulação de mercadorias, visa também a livre circulação de serviços, capitais e pessoas,

pergunta-se à Alta Representante da UE para os Negócios Estrangeiros e a Política de Segurança:

1. Será que a União já iniciou algum contacto com este novo bloco económico ou se continua a negociar país a país? Caso a resposta seja afirmativa, de que tipo de conversações estamos a falar?

2. Considera importante a criação desta organização no espaço da América Latina, a par de outras já existentes, como o Mercosul, o Unasul, com o objetivo principal de integrar o mercado regional da América Latina? Em caso afirmativo, quais os benefícios para a União deste novo bloco económico?

3. Será que, contrariamente, a criação desta aliança não irá causar uma desintegração do mercado na América Latina?

Resposta dada por Karel De Gucht em nome da Comissão
(3 de fevereiro de 2014)

1. A UE concluiu acordos com os membros atuais da Aliança do Pacífico, México, Chile, Colômbia e Peru, e com os países candidatos, Costa Rica e Panamá. Como tal, e enquanto um dos principais investidores e parceiros comerciais na Aliança do Pacífico, a UE já beneficia de acesso preferencial aos seus mercados e deverá beneficiar do crescimento económico que uma maior integração regional pode trazer para esta zona.

A União Europeia esteve representada, enquanto «convidada especial», pelo Embaixador da UE na Cimeira da Aliança do Pacífico de Cali (Colômbia) realizada em maio de 2013. Por conseguinte, a UE deverá aprofundar as relações com a Aliança do Pacífico, através do diálogo e do intercâmbio de experiências sobre temas específicos do comércio e do investimento.

2. A Comissão congratula-se com as iniciativas que, como a Aliança do Pacífico, visam promover o crescimento, o desenvolvimento e a competitividade dos seus membros, tendo em vista a livre circulação de bens, serviços, capitais e pessoas entre os seus membros, bem como a prossecução de integração económica e comercial com o resto do mundo.

A UE continuará a acompanhar os progressos realizados pela Aliança do Pacífico no sentido de cumprir os seus objetivos ambiciosos, que (se forem alcançados) deverão beneficiar os investidores e operadores comerciais no quadro do bloco e junto dos seus parceiros. Os objetivos e a natureza da iniciativa são totalmente coerentes com o apoio de longa data da UE aos regimes de integração económica regional em matéria de comércio na América Latina.

3. Existe um potencial significativo para uma maior integração dos mercados da América Latina, a liberalização do comércio e a integração regional. Experiências como a Aliança do Pacífico, fortemente orientadas para o comércio e o investimento com países terceiros, podem contribuir para uma maior integração, e não para uma desintegração, na América Latina.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013756/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Nuno Teixeira (PPE)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — The European Union and the Pacific Alliance

— In June 2012, the Pacific Alliance was created. It is made up of Peru, Chile, Mexico and Colombia, politically stable countries with significant economic growth, and, as the second largest bloc in Latin America, accounts for 40% of Latin America's GDP.

— According to the latest report by the World Trade Organisation, these four countries' total exports have already exceeded those of Mercosur.

— The Pacific Alliance countries seek to offer an alternative to their peers Mercosur and Unasur (Union of South American Nations) for investment and business, beyond the influence of Brazil.

— This trade bloc has growth potential, with Costa Rica possibly joining this year. Its observer countries are Australia, Canada, Ecuador, Spain, France, Guatemala, Honduras, Japan, New Zealand, Panama, Portugal, Paraguay, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador and Uruguay.

— This trade bloc is seeking to conclude free trade treaties with other economic blocs and countries and, in the long term, in addition to the free movement of goods, it seeks to implement the free movement of services, capital and people.

1. Has the EU already entered into contact with this new economic bloc or is it still negotiating with countries on an individual basis? If so, what kind of talks are going on?

2. Does the VP/HR think that the creation of this organisation in Latin America, alongside other existing organisations, such as Mercosur or Unasur, with the main aim of integrating Latin America's regional market, is important? If so, what benefits does this new economic bloc have for the EU?

3. Conversely, will the creation of this alliance not lead to disintegration of the market in Latin America?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(3 February 2014)

1. The EU has agreements both with the current members of the Pacific Alliance (PA): Mexico, Colombia, Peru, Chile and with applicant countries: Costa Rica, Panama. As such, and as one of the main investors and trade partners in the PA, the EU already enjoys preferential access to their markets and stands to benefit from the economic growth of this area that further regional integration could bring.

The EU was represented as a 'special guest', at EU ambassador level, at the PA Summit held in Cali (Colombia) in May 2013. Hence, the EU is likely to engage further with the PA through dialogue and the exchange of experience on specific trade and investment topics.

2. The Commission welcomes processes, such as the PA, that aim at promoting growth, development and competitiveness of its members by seeking to achieve the free movement of goods, services, capital and people among its members and by pursuing economic and trade integration with the world.

The EU will keep monitoring progress by the PA towards meeting its ambitious goals, which (if achieved) stand to benefit investors and trade players both within the bloc and from their partners. The objectives and nature of the initiative are fully consistent with the EU's long-standing support for pro-trade regional economic integration schemes in Latin America.

3. There is significant potential for further integration of Latin American markets, trade liberalisation and regional integration. Experiences such as the PA, with its strong focus on trade and investment with third countries can contribute to more integration, rather than disintegration, in Latin America.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-013757/13
à Comissão
Ana Gomes (S&D)
(4 de dezembro de 2013)

Assunto: Concessão dos Estaleiros Navais de Viana do Castelo (ENVC)

O Governo português decidiu conceder a exploração dos Estaleiros Navais de Viana do Castelo (ENVC) a uma empresa privada, a Martifer. Os ENVC representam um interesse estratégico de Portugal no domínio da construção e reparação naval, de importância substancial para a região em que se insere, para a economia portuguesa e, no limite, para a segurança marítima de Portugal e da União Europeia. O governo português alega uma decisão da Comissão Europeia no seguimento do Processo de Infração SA.35546, aberto em janeiro de 2013.

1. Sabe a Comissão que o governo de Portugal invoca uma inexistente decisão da Comissão para justificar a concessão dos ENVC a uma empresa privada, abrindo assim mão do interesse estratégico de Portugal na manutenção da exploração dos ENVC no Estado?

2. Na comunicação ao Estado português, aquando da abertura do Processo de Infração SA.35546, deu a Comissão parâmetros para o cumprimento das disposições legais relativas à anulação da alegada ajuda de estado concedida pelo estado português aos ENVC? Informou a Comissão dos montantes a serem devolvidos por Portugal a Bruxelas no âmbito do Processo de Infração?

3. Recebeu a Comissão uma resposta da parte do governo de Portugal sobre a abertura do Processo de Infração? Poderá a Comissão elucidar sobre o conteúdo da eventual resposta?

4. Chegou a Comissão a uma conclusão sobre o Processo de Infração aberto em janeiro de 2013?

5. Sabe a Comissão que a negociação das contrapartidas associadas ao contrato de aquisição de dois submarinos para a Marinha portuguesa envolvia projetos a beneficiar os ENVC num valor que excedia seiscentos milhões de euros — mais de metade do valor total das referidas contrapartidas — que tinham por fim resgatar a viabilidade financeira dos ENVC, para agora conceder a exploração da estrutura ao privado? Pode a Comissão elucidar sobre a eventual violação das regras da Concorrência e do Mercado Interno na atribuição de contrapartidas que, embora não totalmente executadas, poderão beneficiar agora uma empresa privada?

Resposta dada por Joaquín Almunia em nome da Comissão
(12 de fevereiro de 2014)

Como já indicado na sua resposta às perguntas E-1868/2013 e E-1870/2013, a Comissão decidiu, em 23 de janeiro de 2013, dar início a uma investigação formal no processo SA.35546 (2013/C) — *Medidas anteriores a favor dos Estaleiros Navais de Viana do Castelo S.A. (ENVC),* tendo em vista analisar se a assistência financeira que os ENVC receberam de Portugal no passado é conforme com as regras da UE em matéria de auxílios estatais ([1]).

Na sua decisão de 23 de janeiro de 2013, a Comissão apresentou em pormenor as suas dúvidas iniciais quanto à eventual violação das regras da UE em matéria de auxílios estatais no que se refere às medidas concedidas aos ENVC no passado. Como indicado na sua resposta à pergunta P-13647/2013, a Comissão ainda não adotou uma decisão final relativamente ao processo SA.35546 e, por isso, não instou Portugal a recuperar qualquer auxílio estatal concedido aos ENVC.

Conforme referido na resposta à pergunta E-5205/13, Portugal apresentou, por carta de 12 de março de 2013, as suas observações sobre a decisão de dar início ao procedimento formal de investigação. Além disso, a Comissão e as autoridades portuguesas procederam a uma troca de correspondência e realizaram teleconferências em diversas ocasiões, como em qualquer outro procedimento formal de investigação. As observações das autoridades portuguesas não estão disponíveis ao público.

A Comissão está ciente do facto de o Governo português, após concurso público, ter decidido proceder a uma subconcessão dos terrenos em que os ENVC operam a um consórcio liderado pela Martifer.

A Comissão tem conhecimento de que os ENVC estavam envolvidos em projetos para a Marinha Portuguesa. No entanto, com base nas informações de que dispõe, a Comissão não pôde identificar qualquer violação da concorrência (auxílios estatais) e/ou das regras do mercado interno.

([1]) Versão não confidencial disponível em: http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/cases/247488/247488_1409345_33_2.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013757/13
to the Commission
Ana Gomes (S&D)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: Sale of Viana do Castelo Shipyard (ENVC)

The Portuguese Government has decided to sell Viana do Castelo Shipyard (ENVC) to a private company, Martifer. ENVC is one of Portugal's strategic interests in the field of shipbuilding and repair and is vitally important for the region in which it is based, for the Portuguese economy and, ultimately, for the maritime safety of Portugal and the European Union. The Portuguese Government claims the Commission issued a decision following infringement proceeding SA.35546, opened in January 2013.

1. Is the Commission aware that the Portuguese Government is invoking a non-existent Commission decision to justify selling ENVC to a private company, thus giving up Portugal's strategic interest in keeping ENVC State-operated?

2. In its communication to Portugal when it opened infringement proceeding SA.35546, did the Commission provide any parameters for complying with the legal provisions relating to cancellation of the state aid allegedly granted by Portugal to ENVC? Has the Commission announced how much Portugal is to pay back to Brussels under the infringement proceeding?

3. Has the Commission received any response from the Portuguese Government on the opening of infringement proceedings? Could the Commission give details of any response?

4. Has the Commission reached a conclusion on the infringement proceeding opened in January 2013?

5. Is the Commission aware that negotiation of the compensation relating to the contract to purchase two submarines for the Portuguese Navy involves projects to benefit ENVC, worth more than EUR 600 million — more than half the total value of the aforementioned compensation — with the aim of making ENVC financially viable again, only for the running of the facility now to be handed over to a private company? Can the Commission give details of any breach of competition and internal market rules resulting from awarding compensation that, while not granted in full, could now benefit a private company?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(12 February 2014)

As already indicated in its reply to questions E-1868/2013 and E-1870/2013, the Commission decided on 23 January 2013 to open a formal investigation in case SA.35546 (2013/C) — Past measures in favour of Estaleiros Navais de Viana do Castelo S.A. (ENVC) to ascertain whether the financial assistance ENVC received from Portugal in the past is in line with EU state aid rules. ([1])

The Commission outlined in detail its preliminary doubts about the possible breach of EU state aid rules in relation to the measures granted to ENVC in the past in its decision of 23 January 2013. As indicated in its reply to Question P-13647/2013, the Commission has not yet adopted a final decision in case SA.35546 and therefore has not ordered Portugal to recover any possible state aid granted to ENVC.

As indicated in the reply to Question E-5205/13, Portugal provided its comments to the decision to open the formal investigation procedure by letter of 12 March 2013. In addition, the Commission and the Portuguese authorities have exchanged correspondence and conference calls on several occasions, as in any other formal investigation procedure. The comments of the Portuguese authorities are not publicly available.

The Commission is aware of the fact that the Portuguese Government, after a public tender, decided to grant a sub-concession of the land on which ENVC operates to a consortium led by Martifer.

The Commission is aware of the fact that ENVC was involved in projects for the Portuguese Navy. However, based on the information available to it, the Commission was not able to identify any breach of competition (state aid) and/or internal market rules.

([1]) Non-confidential version accessible at http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/cases/247488/247488_1409345_33_2.pdf

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-013758/13
adresată Comisiei
Sebastian Valentin Bodu (PPE)
(4 decembrie 2013)

Subiect: Proceduri oficiale de constatare a neîndeplinirii obligației la adresa României

Având în vedere că, la 1 ianuarie 2007, România a devenit stat membru al Uniunii Europene și această calitate implică atât drepturi, cât și obligații ce decurg din tratatele și legislația adoptate de Uniunea Europeană, aș dori să formulez următoarea întrebare:

Care este numărul procedurilor oficiale de constatare a neîndeplinirii obligației lansate de către Comisie la adresa României de la data aderării până în prezent?

Răspuns dat de dl Barroso în numele Comisiei
(24 ianuarie 2014)

De la data aderării României la Uniunea Europeană, Comisia a inițiat 435 de proceduri de constatare a neîndeplinirii obligațiilor de către România.

Informații privind deciziile adoptate de Comisie privind încălcarea dreptului UE sunt disponibile la următoarea adresă: http://ec.europa.eu/eu_law/infringements/infringements_decisions_ro.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013758/13
to the Commission
Sebastian Valentin Bodu (PPE)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: Official infringement procedures against Romania

Given that on 1 January 2007 Romania became a Member State of the European Union and that this position entails both rights and obligations arising from the Treaties and the legislation adopted by the European Union, I would like to ask the following question:

How many official infringement procedures have been initiated by the Commission against Romania since the date of its accession until now?

Answer given by Mr Barroso on behalf of the Commission
(24 January 2014)

From the date of accession of Romania to the European Union, 435 infringements procedures have been initiated by the Commission against Romania.

Information about the decisions taken by the Commission on breaches of EC law that can be accessed at the following website address: http://ec.europa.eu/eu_law/infringements/infringements_decisions_en.htm

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013761/13
a la Comisión
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(4 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Nuevas formas de esclavitud en Europa: la tragedia de Prato (Italia)

El polígono industrial Macrolotto en Prato, una población italiana de 185 000 habitantes, alberga 2 600 talleres textiles en manos de ciudadanos chinos que se han hecho ricos gracias al negocio de la confección. Para que en sus naves industriales se produzca ropa rápidamente y a precios muy bajos, hace falta contar con una mano de obra barata. Sus dueños han conseguido que miles de ciudadanos chinos, la mayor parte engañados e indocumentados, trabajen 16 horas diarias, 7 días a la semana, cobrando 1 euro/hora.

Los ciudadanos chinos que trabajan en estos talleres textiles están en situación irregular, siendo explotados laboralmente y confinados en esos lugares en régimen de semiesclavitud. Estas personas viven y trabajan en lugares inseguros e insalubres, aislados y privados de libertad. Fue en estas condiciones en las que se produjo el incendio de un taller textil en Prato (Italia) el pasado domingo, en el que fallecieron siete personas.

La desgracia ha ocurrido en Italia, pero podía haber tenido lugar en España. En municipios como Fuenlabrada (Madrid) o Carrús (Elche) se concentra un elevado número de negocios chinos en los que trabajan miles de ciudadanos de esa nacionalidad en esas condiciones. La mayor parte de las veces estas personas llegan engañadas a sus destinos, en el marco de operaciones de tráfico y trata de personas procedentes de China, para ser explotadas laboralmente y obligadas a vivir y trabajar en condiciones infrahumanas.

La Unión Europea cuenta con normativa específica en materia de prevención y lucha contra la trata de seres humanos, la Directiva 2011/36 UE, y, en el ámbito laboral, con la Directiva marco sobre salud y seguridad en el trabajo, la Directiva 89/391 CEE. A la vista de lo ocurrido en Prato (Italia), ambas Directivas podrían estar incumpliéndose, lo que pondría en peligro la vida de otras personas que se encuentran en la misma situación.

Por todo lo expuesto, pregunto a la Comisión:

¿Considera necesario realizar algún tipo de investigación ante los brotes de esclavitud que se están viviendo en territorio de la Unión? ¿Ve oportuno preguntar a países como Italia o España si está utilizando los instrumentos necesarios para controlar este tipo de prácticas?

Respuesta de la Sra. Malmström en nombre de la Comisión
(6 de febrero de 2014)

La Comisión comparte la preocupación de Su Señoría en cuanto a la situación de la trata de seres humanos con fines de explotación laboral en la EU.

Según los Tratados y la legislación de la UE, sus Estados miembros son responsables de mantener la ley y el orden a nivel nacional. Según la Directiva 2011/36/UE ([1]), los Estados miembros tienen que evaluar las tendencias de todas las formas de trata de seres humanos y adoptar las medidas adecuadas para darle solución.

El 21 de noviembre de 2013, la Comisión solicitó formalmente a Italia, España y otros dos Estados miembros que garantizaran el pleno cumplimiento de la Directiva mediante el envío de dictámenes motivados ([2]). Además, la Comisión evaluará el grado en que todos los Estados miembros han tomado las medidas necesarias para ajustarse a la Directiva para el 6 de abril de 2015 ([3]).

En virtud de la Directiva 2011/52/CE ([4]), los Estados miembros tienen que implantar sanciones y medidas contra los empleadores de nacionales de terceros países en situación irregular y llevar a cabo inspecciones eficaces y suficientes para controlar el empleo de nacionales de terceros países en situación irregular. La Comisión está evaluando la ejecución de la Directiva en los Estados miembros y, en casos de no conformidad, se reserva el derecho de tomar las medidas oportunas.

([1]) Artículo 20 de la Directiva 2011/36/UE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 5 abril de 2011, relativa a la prevención y lucha contra la trata de seres humanos y a la protección de las víctimas y por la que se sustituye la Decisión marco 2002/629/JAI del Consejo, DO L 101 de 15.4.2011.

([2]) Chipre, Italia, Luxemburgo y España. El plazo de incorporación era el 6 de abril de 2013.

([3]) Artículo 23, apartado 1, de la Directiva 2011/36/UE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 5 abril de 2011, relativa a la prevención y lucha contra la trata de seres humanos y a la protección de las víctimas y por la que se sustituye la Decisión marco 2002/629/JAI del Consejo, DO L 101 de 15.4.2011.

([4]) Directiva 2009/52/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 18 de junio de 2009, por la que se establecen normas mínimas sobre las sanciones y medidas aplicables a los empleadores de nacionales de terceros países en situación irregular, DO L 168 de 30.6.2009, p. 24.

La Directiva 89/391/CEE ([5]) contiene principios generales relativos, especialmente, a la prevención de los riesgos profesionales, la protección de la seguridad y de la salud y la eliminación de los factores de riesgo y accidente. En virtud de esta Directiva, los Estados miembros adoptarán las disposiciones necesarias para garantizar que los empresarios, los trabajadores y los representantes de los trabajadores estén sujetos a las disposiciones jurídicas necesarias para la aplicación de dicha Directiva, en particular, garantizando un control y una vigilancia adecuados.

([5]) Directiva 89/391/CEE del Consejo, de 12 de junio de 1989, relativa a la aplicación de medidas para promover la mejora de la seguridad y de la salud de los trabajadores en el trabajo, DO L 183 de 29.6.1989.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013761/13
to the Commission
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: New forms of slavery in Europe: the Prato tragedy (Italy)

The Macrolotto industrial estate in Prato, an Italian town with 185 000 inhabitants, is home to 2 600 textile workshops run by Chinese citizens who have made a fortune from the clothing industry. To churn out clothing at rock-bottom prices in their industrial buildings, they need cheap labour. The owners have managed to procure thousands of Chinese citizens, most of whom have been duped and have no papers, who work 16 hours a day, 7 days a week, for EUR 1 per hour.

The Chinese citizens employed in these workshops are illegal immigrants who are being exploited and confined to these locations in semi-slavery. These individuals are living and working in unsafe, dirty premises, in isolation, and deprived of their freedom. It was in such conditions that a fire broke out in a textile workshop in Prato last Sunday, claiming seven lives.

This misfortune happened in Italy but it could just as easily have been Spain. There are thousands of Chinese citizens working in these conditions for a multitude of Chinese businesses in districts like Fuenlabrada (Madrid) or Carrús (Elche). In the majority of cases, these people are tricked into their destination as part of trafficking and smuggling operations bringing people from China for the purpose of exploiting them as labour and forcing them to live and work in subhuman conditions.

Directive 2011/36/EU lays down specific European Union regulations on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings, as does Framework Directive 89/391/EEC on safety and health at work. The events in Prato suggest that both directives are being neglected, endangering the lives of others in the same situation.

Therefore, I would like to ask the Commission:

Does it consider that there should be some kind of investigation into current outbreaks of slave labour on EU territory? Does it feel that this is the time to ask countries like Italy or Spain if they are using the necessary means to bring these kinds of practices under control?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(6 February 2014)

The Commission shares the concerns of the Honourable Member about the situation of trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation in the EU.

According to the EU Treaties and legislation, EU Member States are responsible for the maintenance of law and order at national level. According to the directive 2011/36/EU ([1]), Member States need to assess trends on all forms of trafficking in human beings and take appropriate actions to better address it.

On 21st November 2013, the Commission has formally requested Italy, Spain and two other Member States to ensure full compliance with the directive by sending them reasoned opinions ([2]). Further, the Commission will assess the extent to which all the Member States have taken the necessary measures in order to comply with the directive by 6 April 2015 ([3]).

Under Directive 2009/52/EC ([4]), Member States need to have in place sanctions and measures against employers of irregularly-staying third-country nationals, and to carry out effective and adequate inspections to control the employment of irregularly-staying third-country nationals. The Commission is currently assessing the implementation of the directive in the Member States, and in cases of non-conformity, reserves its right to take the necessary action.

Directive 89/391/EEC ([5]) contains general principles concerning, notably, the prevention of occupational risks, the protection of safety and health, and the elimination of risk and accident factors. Under this directive, Member States shall take the necessary steps to ensure that employers, workers and workers' representatives are subject to the legal provisions necessary for the implementation of the mentioned Directive, in particular, ensuring adequate controls and supervision.

([1]) Article 20, Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA. OJ 15.4.2011, L 101.

([2]) Cyprus, Italy, Luxembourg, Spain. Deadline for transposition was 06 April 2013.

([3]) Article 23-1, Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA. OJ 15.4.2011, L 101.

([4]) Directive 2009/52/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 providing for minimum standards on sanctions and measures against employers of illegally staying third-country nationals, OJ 30.6.2009, L 168/24.

([5]) Council Directive 89/391/EEC of 12 June 1989 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work OJ, 29.6.1989, L 183.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013762/13
a la Comisión
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(4 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Agencia europea de calificación crediticia

Recientemente el supervisor bursátil europeo (ESMA) ha publicado un informe ([1]) relativo a las ineficiencias existentes en el proceso de calificación crediticia soberana llevado a cabo por tres agencias: Fitch Ratings, Moody's Investors Service y Standard & Poor's. El informe señala cuatro problemas compartidos por las agencias: existencia de conflictos de interés, dudosa confidencialidad, fechas escogidas para la publicación de las calificaciones y falta de recursos dedicados a la evaluación de las deudas soberanas.

Son numerosas las ocasiones en las que este diputado se ha dirigido a la Comisión (P-2093/2010, E-007227/2011 y E-009728/2012) para denunciar los efectos que el mal funcionamiento de estas agencias puede tener. En alguna de las preguntas citadas, he advertido de la necesidad de establecer una agencia europea de calificación crediticia, propuesta que será evaluada por la Comisión antes del 31 de diciembre de 2016.

Sin embargo, en vista de la relevancia de estas agencias crediticias y de los riesgos que calificaciones equívocas pueden plantear a la economía europea, este diputado se permite preguntar lo siguiente:

1. ¿En qué estado se encuentra el proceso?

2. Dada la problemática que rodea a las principales agencias crediticias actuales, ¿no considera la Comisión oportuno adelantar los plazos establecidos?

3. ¿Ha considerado la Comisión la posibilidad de que algún órgano de la Unión evalúe la deuda soberana hasta que la agencia europea de calificación crediticia se ponga en funcionamiento?

Respuesta conjunta del Sr. Barnier en nombre de la Comisión
(24 de febrero de 2014)

Las agencias de calificación crediticia (ACC) son supervisadas por la Autoridad Europea de Valores y Mercados (AEVM) en la EU. Como paso siguiente a su informe sobre los procesos de calificación de la deuda soberana en las agencias de calificación crediticia, la AEVM evaluará si lo revelado en el informe es constitutivo de infracción del Reglamento sobre las agencias de calificación crediticia y, en su caso, tomará las medidas oportunas ([2]).

La revisión de la normativa sobre las ACC ([3]) incluye nuevas normas sobre las calificaciones de la deuda soberana al efecto de mejorar la transparencia y la calidad de las calificaciones. Estas normas entraron en vigor en junio de 2013, a la mitad de la investigación de la AEVM. Las ACC también publicaron por primera vez los calendarios de sus calificaciones soberanas a finales de 2013. Por lo tanto, el efecto y la aplicación de estas normas debe evaluarse antes de proponer nuevas medidas sobre las calificaciones de la deuda soberana y se podrán tener en cuenta en la elaboración del informe que presentará la Comisión a finales de este año sobre la idoneidad del desarrollo de un sistema europeo de evaluación de la solvencia de la deuda soberana.

En lo que respecta a una ACC europea, la Comisión estudió la necesidad de establecer un organismo de ese tipo como parte de la evaluación de impacto en su última revisión del Reglamento sobre las agencias de calificación crediticia ([4]). Este análisis puso de manifiesto que la creación de una agencia de calificación podría suscitar dudas en cuanto a su independencia y credibilidad de cara a los inversores si se financiara con fondos públicos. La conveniencia y la viabilidad de apoyar una ACC europea dedicada a la evaluación de la solvencia de la deuda soberana de los Estados miembros o una Fundación Europea de Calificación Crediticia para las demás calificaciones crediticias serán valoradas de nuevo por la Comisión en un informe previsto para finales de 2016 a la luz de la incidencia de las nuevas normas en las calificaciones de la deuda soberana. La evaluación podría examinar, si procede, una perspectiva racional y a largo plazo de evaluación de la deuda soberana por una entidad de este tipo.

([1]) http://www.esma.europa.eu/content/ESMA-identifies-deficiencies-CRAs-sovereign-ratings-processes.

([2]) Reglamento (CE) n° 1060/2009 del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 16 de septiembre de 2009, sobre las agencias de calificación crediticia (DO L 302 de 17.11.2009).

([3]) Reglamento (UE) n° 462/2013 del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 21 de mayo de 2013, por el que se modifica el Reglamento (CE) n° 1060/2009 sobre las agencias de calificación crediticia (DO L 146 de 31.05.2013).

([4]) Evaluación de impacto adjunta a la propuesta de Reglamento por el que se modifica el Reglamento (CE) n° 1060/2009, sobre las agencias de calificación crediticia, y a la propuesta de Directiva por la que se modifican la Directiva 2009/65/CE, por la que se coordinan las disposiciones legales, reglamentarias y administrativas sobre determinados organismos de inversión colectiva en valores mobiliarios (OICVM), y la Directiva 2011/61/UE, relativa a los gestores de fondos de inversión alternativos [SEC(2011) 1354].

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014079/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) et Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(12 décembre 2013)

Objet: Agence de notation publique

1. La Commission compte-t-elle présenter une proposition sur la création d'une agence de notation publique, qui serait la seule agence autorisée à évaluer la dette souveraine au sein de l'Union européenne?

2. N'estime-t-elle pas utile que, n'étant pas un acteur du marché, cette agence de notation publique ait une perspective plus rationnelle et à long terme dans l'évaluation de la dette publique et de la stabilité financière de l'Union en général?

3. Pourquoi la Commission n'a-t-elle encore rien proposé à ce sujet? Quand compte-t-elle le faire?

Réponse commune donnée par M. Barnier au nom de la Commission
(24 février 2014)

Les agences de notation de crédit dans l'UE sont supervisées par l'Autorité européenne des marchés financiers (AEMF). À la suite de son rapport relatif aux procédures de notation des dettes souveraines par les agences de notation, l'AEMF vérifiera si les constatations de ce rapport révèlent l'existence d'infractions aux dispositions du règlement sur les agences de notation ([1]) et prendra alors les mesures appropriées.

Le cadre juridique révisé des agences de notation de crédit ([2]) comprend de nouvelles règles sur les notations souveraines, visant à en améliorer la transparence et la qualité. Ces règles sont entrées en vigueur en juin 2013, soit à mi-chemin du déroulement de l'enquête de l'AEMF. Les agences de notation ont également publié pour la première fois les calendriers des notations souveraines à la fin de 2013. Avant que de nouvelles mesures portant sur les notations de dette souveraine puissent être proposées, il convient d'évaluer l'impact et l'application de ces règles. Ces derniers peuvent par ailleurs être pris en compte dans le rapport que la Commission présentera dès la fin de cette année et qui porte sur l'opportunité de créer un outil européen d'évaluation de la qualité du crédit pour les dettes souveraines.

En ce qui concerne la création d'une agence de notation européenne, la nécessité de mettre en place un tel organisme a été évaluée par la Commission lors de la dernière révision du règlement sur les agences de notation dans le cadre de l'analyse d'impact ([3]). Cette analyse a montré que la création d'une telle agence de notation pourrait, si celle-ci est financée par des fonds publics, susciter des inquiétudes quant à sa crédibilité vis-à-vis des investisseurs et à son indépendance. D'ici la fin de 2016, la Commission élaborera un rapport réexaminant, à la lumière de l'impact des nouvelles règles relatives aux notations des dettes souveraines, l'opportunité et la faisabilité de soutenir la création d'une agence de notation européenne chargée d'évaluer la qualité de crédit des émetteurs souverains de l'Union ou la mise en place d'une fondation européenne de notation du crédit pour toutes les autres notations de crédit. Cette évaluation consisterait à examiner, le cas échéant, une perspective rationnelle et à long terme pour l'évaluation de la dette souveraine par une telle entité.

([1]) Règlement (CE) nº 1060/2009 du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 16 septembre 2009 sur les agences de notation de crédit, JO L 302 du 17.11.2009.
([2]) Règlement (UE) nº 462/2013 du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 21 mai 2013 modifiant le règlement (CE) nº 1060/2009 sur les agences de notation de crédit, JO L 146 du 31.5.2013.
([3]) Analyse d'impact accompagnant la proposition de règlement modifiant le règlement (CE) nº 1060/2009 sur les agences de notation de crédit et proposition de directive modifiant la directive 2009/65/CE portant coordination des dispositions législatives, réglementaires et administratives concernant certains organismes de placement collectif en valeurs mobilières (OPCVM) et la directive 2011/61/UE sur les gestionnaires de fonds d'investissement alternatifs, SEC(2011) 1354.

(Slovenské znenie)

Otázka na písomné zodpovedanie E-013864/13
Komisii
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(5. decembra 2013)

Vec: Dôveryhodnosť ratingových agentúr

Európsky orgán pre cenné papiere a trhy, ktorý je zodpovedný za dohľad nad ratingovými agentúrami členských štátov Európskej únie, nedávno zverejnil výsledky vyšetrovania, ktorého predmetom bol spôsob, ako vybrané agentúry zostavovali ratingy štátnych dlhopisov v období od februára do októbra 2013. V správe sa kritizuje meškanie, ku ktorému došlo pri zverejňovaní ratingových zmien, ako aj veľmi slabá kontrola dôveryhodnosti. Vyšetrovanie teda odhalilo významné nedostatky v procese suverénneho ratingu. V správe sa uvádza, že táto skutočnosť predstavuje vysoké riziko, pokiaľ ide o kvalitu a nezávislosť ratingových procesov.

Akým konkrétnym spôsobom sa chce Komisia pričiniť o odstránenie takýchto nedostatkov ratingu a ratingových procesov agentúr členských štátov Európskej únie?

Spoločná odpoveď pána Barniera v mene Komisie
(24. februára 2014)

Ratingové agentúry (*credit rating agencies* – CRA) v EÚ sú pod dohľadom Európskeho orgánu pre cenné papiere a trhy (ESMA). ESMA v nadväznosti na správu o postupoch ratingu štátov v ratingových agentúrach posúdi, či závery správy obsahujú porušenia nariadenia o ratingových agentúrach ([1]), a následne prijme primerané opatrenia.

Revidovaný právny rámec o ratingových agentúrach ([2]) zahŕňa nové pravidlá týkajúce sa ratingov štátov zamerané na zvýšenie transparentnosti a kvality týchto ratingov. Tieto pravidlá nadobudli účinnosť v júni 2013, t. j. v polovici obdobia vyšetrovania, ktoré ESMA uskutočňovala. Ratingové agentúry takisto po prvýkrát zverejnili harmonogram týkajúci sa ratingov štátov na konci roku 2013. Vplyv a uplatňovanie týchto pravidiel sa musia posúdiť predtým, ako sa navrhnú ďalšie opatrenia týkajúce sa ratingov štátov, a môžu byť zohľadnené v správe o vhodnosti vypracovania európskeho posúdenia úverovej bonity štátnych dlhov, ktorú Komisia predloží už na konci tohto roka.

Čo sa týka európskej ratingovej agentúry, Komisia počas poslednej revízie nariadenia o ratingových agentúrach ako súčasť posúdenia vplyvu ([3]) posudzovala potrebu zriadenia takéhoto orgánu. Z analýzy vyplynulo, že vytvorenie takej ratingovej agentúry by mohlo viesť k zvýšeniu obáv týkajúcich sa dôveryhodnosti ratingových agentúr voči investorom a ich nezávislosti v prípade, že by boli financované z verejných peňazí. Vhodnosť a uskutočniteľnosť podpory európskej ratingovej agentúry, ktorá by mala posudzovať úverovú bonitu štátneho dlhu členských štátov, alebo európskej nadácie pre úverový rating pre všetky ostatné úverové ratingy Komisia znovu posúdi so zreteľom na vplyv nových pravidiel na ratingy štátov vo svojej správe do konca roka 2016. V tomto posúdení by v prípade potreby mohla preskúmať racionálne a dlhodobé hľadisko posudzovania štátnych dlhov zo strany takýchto subjektov.

([1]) Nariadenie Európskeho parlamentu a Rady (ES) č. 1060/2009 zo 16. septembra 2009 o ratingových agentúrach, Ú. v. EÚ L 302, 17.11.2009.

([2]) Nariadenie Európskeho parlamentu a Rady (EÚ) č. 462/2013 z 21. mája 2013, ktorým sa mení nariadenie (ES) č. 1060/2009 o ratingových agentúrach, Ú. v. EÚ L 146, 31.5.2013.

([3]) Posúdenie vplyvu priložené k návrhu nariadenia na zmenu nariadenia (ES) č. 1060/2009 o ratingových agentúrach, návrh smernice, ktorou sa mení smernica 2009/65/ES o koordinácii zákonov, iných právnych predpisov a správnych opatrení týkajúcich sa podnikov kolektívneho investovania do prevoditeľných cenných papierov (PKIPCP) a smernica 2011/61/EÚ o správcoch alternatívnych investičných fondov, SEC (2011) 1354.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013762/13
to the Commission
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: European credit rating agency (CRA)

The European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) recently published a report ([1]) on deficiencies in the sovereign credit-rating process operated by three agencies — Fitch Ratings, Moody's Investors Service and Standard & Poor's. The report found four issues common to all three: the existence of conflicts of interest, questionable confidentiality, selectivity in dates for publishing ratings, and a lack of dedicated resource for evaluating sovereign debt.

I have already addressed the Commission several times (P-002093/2010, E-007227/2011 and E-009728/2012) to complain about the potential impact of the unsatisfactory way in which these agencies are operating. In one of those questions I warned of the need to put in place a European credit rating agency, a proposal that the Commission is set to evaluate by 31 December 2016.

However, in view of the importance of these agencies and the risks posed to the European economy by incorrect ratings, I would like to ask:

1. What is the current status of the proposal evaluation?

2. Given the issues surrounding the main CRAs, would the Commission not consider it opportune to bring forward those timescales?

3. Has the Commission considered the possibility of an EU body evaluating sovereign debt until the European CRA is operational?

Question for written answer E-013864/13
to the Commission
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(5 December 2013)

Subject: Credibility of rating agencies

The European Securities and Markets Authority, which is responsible for overseeing the credit rating agencies of the EU Member States, has recently published the results of an investigation into the means by which selected agencies established government bond ratings during the period from February to October 2013. The report criticises delays that occurred in the publication of rating changes and very poor credibility checks. The investigation thus revealed significant shortcomings in the sovereign rating process. The report states that this represents a high risk in terms of the quality and independence of the rating processes.

By what specific means does the Commission intend to press for the elimination of these deficiencies in the ratings and rating agencies of the EU Member States?

Question for written answer E-014079/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) and Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: Public rating agency

1. Is the Commission planning to present a proposal for the creation of a public rating agency which would be the only agency allowed to assess sovereign debt within the European Union?

2. Doe it not think that it would be a good idea for this public rating agency, as a non-market player, to have a more rational and long-term perspective in the assessment of the public debt and financial stability of the EU in general?

3. Why has the Commission not yet put forward any proposals in this respect? When does it intend to do so?

([1]) http://www.esma.europa.eu/content/ESMA-identifies-deficiencies-CRAs-sovereign-ratings-processes

Joint answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(24 February 2014)

Credit rating agencies (CRAs) in the EU are supervised by the European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA). As a next step to its report on sovereign rating processes in CRAs, ESMA will assess whether the findings of the report constitute infringements of the CRA Regulation ([2]) and then take the appropriate actions.

The revised CRA legal framework ([3]) includes new rules on sovereign ratings aimed at increasing transparency and the quality of these ratings. These rules entered into force in June 2013, halfway through the ESMA investigation. CRAs have also for the first time published calendars for sovereign ratings at the end of 2013. The impact and application of these rules needs to be assessed before proposing any further measures on sovereign ratings and can be taken into account in the report the Commission will submit already at the end of this year on the appropriateness of the development of a European creditworthiness assessment for sovereign debt.

Regarding a European CRA, during the last revision of the CRA Regulation, the Commission assessed the need for establishing such a body as part of the impact assessment ([4]). This analysis showed that the setting up of such a CRA could raise concerns regarding the CRA's credibility towards investors and independence if funded with public money. The appropriateness and feasibility of supporting a European CRA dedicated to assessing the creditworthiness of Member States' sovereign debt or a European Credit Rating Foundation for all other credit ratings will be re-assessed by the Commission, in light of the impact of the new rules on sovereign ratings in a report by the end of 2016. The assessment could explore, if appropriate, a rational and long term perspective for assessing sovereign debt by any such entity.

([2]) Regulation (EC) No 1060/2009 on credit rating agencies of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 September 2009 on credit rating agencies, OJ L 302, 17.11.2009.

([3]) Regulation (EU) No 462/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 May 2013 amending Regulation (EC) No 1060/2009 on credit rating agencies, OJ L 146, 31.05.2013.

([4]) Impact Assessment, accompanying the proposal for a regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 1060/2009 on credit rating agencies and a Proposal for a directive amending Directive 2009/65/EC on coordination on laws, regulations and administrative provisions relating to undertakings for collective investment in transferable securities (UCITS) and Directive 2011/61/EU on Alternative Investment Fund Managers, SEC(2011)1354.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013763/13
a la Comisión
Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE)
(4 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Reforma de la Ley de Seguridad Ciudadana en España

La Comisión Europea ha mostrado en varias ocasiones su preocupación por reformas legales en los Estados miembros, especialmente cuando afectan a derechos fundamentales y comprometen principios contenidos en los Tratados. España se encuentra ahora ante una modificación de su Ley de Seguridad Ciudadana que puede afectar seriamente a cuestiones como la libertad de expresión, manifestación y reunión. Su contenido, además, no se ha compartido con las autoridades regionales que, en el Estado español, tienen atribuidas competencias en materia de seguridad pública. Las reformas planteadas, además de incorporar conceptos indeterminados como «ofensas a España y sus comunidades autónomas», cuya definición y apreciación queda en manos de las autoridades gubernativas, los asocia a sanciones económicas que pueden alcanzar los 600 000 euros. Los contenidos de esta reforma incurren en tales excesos, que el Comisario de Derechos Humanos del Consejo de Europa, Nils Muižnieks, considera la propuesta altamente problemática en el marco de una sociedad democrática. El Comisario ha señalado textualmente que necesita que «alguien me convenza de que una multa de 600 000 euros por manifestarse sin autorización delante de una sede institucional es una sanción equilibrada». Esta preocupación se suma a las críticas emitidas por el Consejo de Europa contra la excesiva e improcedente utilización de la fuerza que venía percibiéndose en el reino de España para controlar y reprimir las manifestaciones contra los recortes sociales provocados por la crisis económica.

Ante la evidencia de que esta reforma puede ser contradictoria con los principios plasmados en la Carta de los Derechos Fundamentales de la Unión Europea, incorporada en el Tratado de Lisboa,

1. ¿Dispone la Comisión de información oficial sobre los contenidos de esta reforma de la Ley de Seguridad Ciudadana en España?

2. ¿Está siguiendo la Comisión el trámite de esta propuesta legislativa?

3. ¿Ha mantenido algún contacto con las autoridades españolas sobre este proyecto?

Respuesta de la Sra. Reding en nombre de la Comisión
(24 de febrero de 2014)

Como ya se ha explicado en la respuesta a la pregunta E-013929/2013 ([1]), la Comisión siempre ha estado firmemente comprometida, dentro de sus competencias, con el respeto estricto de las libertades de expresión y de reunión, porque ambas constituyen la base misma de una sociedad libre, democrática y pluralista. Sin embargo, la Comisión no tiene una competencia general en lo que respecta a los derechos fundamentales. Con arreglo al artículo 51, apartado 1, de la Carta de los Derechos Fundamentales, sus disposiciones están dirigidas a los Estados miembros únicamente cuando apliquen el Derecho de la Unión.

El mantenimiento del orden público y la salvaguardia de la seguridad interior en los Estados miembros son competencias nacionales y quedan, por lo tanto, fuera del ámbito del Derecho de la Unión (artículo 72 del TFUE).

No obstante, esto no significa que no exista ninguna protección de los derechos fundamentales en asuntos no contemplados por el Derecho de la Unión. En esos casos, las autoridades nacionales tienen la responsabilidad de garantizar el cumplimiento de las obligaciones relativas a los derechos fundamentales, derivadas de acuerdos internacionales y del Derecho interno.

España, como los demás Estados miembros de la UE, está obligada a respetar el Convenio para la protección de los derechos humanos y de las libertades fundamentales, que consagra la libertad de expresión y la libertad de reunión.

La Comisión confía plenamente en la voluntad de las autoridades españolas de garantizar el respeto de todos los derechos fundamentales, como exigen su propia Constitución y sus obligaciones internacionales.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013763/13
to the Commission
Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: Reform of Spain's Citizen Security Act

The Commission has repeatedly expressed concern about legal reforms in Member States, especially when they affect fundamental rights and jeopardise principles set out in the Treaties. Spain is about to modify its Citizen Security Act in a way that may seriously affect issues such as freedom of speech, demonstration and assembly. Moreover, the content of the modification has not been prepared with the regional authorities, which in Spain have powers in matters of public security. The proposed reforms, as well as incorporating vague concepts such as 'offences to Spain and its autonomous communities', the definition and assessment of which are left in the hands of Government authorities, carry financial penalties as high as EUR 600 000. The contents of this reform are so excessive that the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Nils Muižnieks, considered the proposal highly problematic in the framework of a democratic society. The Commissioner stated that he needed 'someone to convince me that a fine of EUR 600 000 for demonstrating without authorisation outside an institution's headquarters is a proportionate penalty'. His concern comes on top of criticism from the Council of Europe about the excessive and inappropriate force that it saw being used in Spain to control and suppress demonstrations against social cutbacks caused by the economic crisis.

Given the evidence that this reform may contradict principles embodied in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, incorporated in the Lisbon Treaty,

1. Does the Commission have any official information about the contents of this reform of Spain's Citizen Security Act?

2. Is the Commission monitoring the procedures of this legislative proposal?

3. Has the Commission had any contact with the Spanish authorities about this proposal?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(24 February 2014)

As already explained in reply to Question E-013929/2013 ([1]), the Commission, within its competences, has always been strongly committed to ensuring that freedom of expression and freedom of assembly are strictly respected since they lie at the very base of a free, democratic and pluralist society. However, the Commission does not have a general competence as regards fundamental rights. According to its Article 51, the Charter of Fundamental Rights is addressed to the Member States only when they are implementing Union law.

The maintenance of law and order and the safeguarding of internal security in the Member States fall within national competence and thus outside Union law (Article 72 TFEU).

However this does not mean that there is no fundamental rights protection in issues falling outside Union law. In these cases, it is for the national authorities to ensure that their obligations regarding fundamental rights — as resulting from international agreements and from internal legislation — are respected.

Spain, like all the other EU Member States, is bound to respect the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, which enshrines freedom of expression and freedom of assembly.

The Commission has full confidence in the willingness of Spanish authorities to ensure the respect for all fundamental rights as required by their own constitutions and international obligations.

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

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013765/13
a la Comisión
Antolín Sánchez Presedo (S&D)
(4 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: AOD de la UE para el Sáhara Occidental

¿Podría la Comisión precisar la cantidad de la que vienen disponiendo la UE y sus Estados miembros en concepto de Ayuda Oficial al Desarrollo (AOD) con destino a la población del Sáhara Occidental, así como su evolución anual, desglosada por Estado miembro, desde 1986?

¿Podría especificar qué otro tipo de contribuciones realizan la UE y los Estados miembros en relación con el Sáhara Occidental: acogida de niños saharauis, intercambios, etc.?

Respuesta del Sr. Piebalgs en nombre de la Comisión
(21 de febrero de 2014)

La UE apoya los esfuerzos del Secretario General de las Naciones Unidas por lograr una solución política justa, duradera y mutuamente aceptable que contemple la autodeterminación de la población del Sahara Occidental en el marco de la Carta de las Naciones Unidas. La UE manifiesta su preocupación por la duración y las consecuencias de este conflicto en la seguridad.

No se dispone de información detallada de cada uno de los Estados miembros en lo que se refiere a apoyo al Sahara Occidental desde 1986. La información que obra en nuestro poder es la siguiente:

La ayuda humanitaria de la UE en favor de los refugiados saharauis que viven en campamentos en Argelia asciende actualmente a 10 millones EUR al año. Entre 1993 y 2013, se dedicaron a la crisis de los refugiados saharauis 193 millones EUR.

Hasta 2010, España fue el mayor país donante de ayuda al pueblo saharaui. No obstante, su ayuda al desarrollo se redujo a la mitad entre 2011 y 2013. La AOD española ascendió a 16,3 millones EUR en 2011 (−26 % respecto a 2010) y disminuyó también en 2012.

Italia y Suecia también prestan asistencia a los refugiados saharauis. Ambos países ofrecen financiación a las agencias de las Naciones Unidas que trabajan en los campos (el Programa Mundial de Alimentos, el Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas para los Refugiados y la Unicef). En 2013, Italia facilitó 900 000 EUR de ayuda a los refugiados saharauis y Suecia, un millón EUR.

Casi toda la cooperación entre los Estados miembros de la UE y el Sahara Occidental la ejecutan directamente organizaciones territoriales (municipios, regiones, etc.) u organizaciones no gubernamentales, por lo que resulta difícil tener una visión de conjunto de sus actividades.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013765/13
to the Commission
Antolín Sánchez Presedo (S&D)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: EU ODA for the Western Sahara

Could the Commission specify the annual figures for EU Official Development Aid (ODA) to the people of the Western Sahara since 1986, broken down by Member State?

Could it specify what other kinds of contributions the EU and Member States make to the region, such as hosting Saharawi children, exchanges and so on?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(21 February 2014)

The EU supports the UN Secretary-General's efforts to achieve a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution, which will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara in the context of the UN Charter. The EU is concerned about the duration and security implications of this conflict.

Detailed information is not available regarding each Member State's support to Western Sahara since 1986. The information available to us is as follows:

The EU humanitarian contribution in favour of Sahrawi refugees living in camps in Algeria is currently EUR 10 million/year. From 1993 to 2013, EUR 193 million was devoted to the Sahrawi refugee crisis.

Up to 2010, Spain was the most important donor of assistance to the Sahrawi people. However, its development assistance has diminished by half between 2011 and 2013. Spanish ODA amounted to EUR 16.3 million in 2011 (-26% compared to 2010) and decreased further in 2012.

Italy and Sweden also provide assistance to Sahrawi refugees. Both provide funding to UN agencies active in the camps (the World Food Programme, UN High-Commission for Refugees and Unicef). In 2013, Italy provided EUR 900 000 in support to Sahrawi refugees and Sweden provided EUR 1 million.

Most cooperation between EU Member States and Western Sahara is implemented directly by territorial organisations (municipalities, regions, etc…) or non-governmental organisations, and it is therefore difficult to have a comprehensive overview of their activities.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013766/13
a la Comisión
Antolín Sánchez Presedo (S&D)
(4 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Proyecto «Pousadas» con fondos FEDER en la Provincia de Pontevedra (Galicia)

El proyecto «Pousadas» de la Diputación Provincial de Pontevedra (Galicia, España) promueve la creación de cuatro hoteles («pousadas») totalmente accesibles para personas con minusvalías.

El proyecto cuenta con financiación del Programa FEDER. Aunque su presupuesto inicial era de 9,4 millones de euros de los que 6,1 millones de euros correspondían al FEDER, al parecer finalmente se ha incrementado en otros 6,4 millones de euros.

Después de siete años los edificios están terminados y se ha convocado un concurso público para su explotación conjunta por un plazo entre diez y veinte años, con establecimientos de tres, cuatro o cinco estrellas que deben estar abiertos un mínimo de 220 días.

¿Está la Comisión al corriente del desarrollo del programa? ¿Puede precisar las ayudas del FEDER recibidas, si se ha ejecutado conforme a lo previsto y si la convocatoria para su explotación privada se ajusta a la normativa comunitaria?

Respuesta del Sr. Hahn en nombre de la Comisión
(20 de febrero de 2014)

1. Dos proyectos relativos al proyecto «Pousadas» han recibido financiación del Fondo Europeo de Desarrollo Regional (FEDER) en el marco del programa Galicia 2007-2013, por unos importes de 1,5 millones y 2,9 millones de euros, respectivamente.

2. En virtud del principio de gestión compartida, la selección de los proyectos corresponde a las autoridades nacionales o regionales, que también son responsables de la puesta en práctica. Por este motivo, la Comisión sugiere a Su Señoría que se ponga directamente en contacto con la autoridad de gestión:

Ministerio de Hacienda y Administraciones Públicas
Dirección General de Fondos Comunitarios, Subdirección General de Administración del FEDER
Paseo de la Castellana, 162
28071 Madrid
Subdirector General de Administración del FEDER
Tel.: +34 915835223
Fax.: +34 915835290

3. La convocatoria de un concurso para la explotación privada de instalaciones públicas no representa ningún incumplimiento de la normativa que rige la política de cohesión.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013766/13
to the Commission
Antolín Sánchez Presedo (S&D)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: The 'Pousadas' project, with ERDF funds, in the province of Pontevedra (Galicia)

The 'Pousadas' project of the Provincial Government of Pontevedra (Galicia, Spain) promotes the creation of four hotels (known as '*pousadas*' in Galician) that are fully accessible to disabled people.

The project has European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) funding. It appears that its initial budget of EUR 9.4 million, of which EUR 6.1 million were from the ERDF, has finally increased by a further EUR 6.4 million.

After seven years, the buildings have been completed and a public call for tender has been made for them to be run as a group for a period of between ten and twenty years. The group to be run comprises three-, four- and five-star hotels, all of which must remain open for at least 220 days a year.

Is the Commission aware of this project being undertaken? Can it specify the amount of ERDF aid it has received, whether it was executed as planned and whether the call for tender for it to be privately run complies with Community rules?

(Version française)

Réponse donnée par M. Hahn au nom de la Commission
(20 février 2014)

1. Deux projets relatifs aux Pousadas ont reçu des financements du Fonds Européen de Développement Régional (FEDER) dans le cadre du programme Galice 2007-2013 avec des montants, respectivement de 1,5 millions d'euros et 2,9 millions d'euros.

2. En vertu du principe de gestion partagée, les projets sont sélectionnés par les autorités nationales/régionales lesquelles sont aussi responsables de la mise en œuvre. Pour cette raison, la Commission suggère à l'Honorable Parlementaire de contacter directement l'autorité de gestion:

Ministerio de Hacienda y Administraciones Públicas
Dirección General de Fondos Comunitarios, Subdirección General de Administración del FEDER
Paseo de la Castellana, 162
28071 Madrid
Subdirector General de Administración del FEDER
Tel.: +34 91 5835223
Fax.: +34 91 5835290

3. La mise à disposition d'installations publiques pour son exploitation n'est pas en contradiction avec les règlements de la politique de cohésion.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013767/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(4 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Obras en Yésero (Aragón, España) sin autorización

Dos administraciones públicas del Reino de España ubicadas en la Comunidad Autónoma de Aragón, concretamente la Diputación Provincial de Huesca y el Ayuntamiento de Yésero (Huesca), promueven unas obras consistentes en la apertura de una pista forestal y posterior captación de agua en manantial e instalación de tubería de agua para suministro municipal.

Las citadas obras han sido objeto de denuncia al juzgado por haberse realizado sin los correspondientes permisos del Departamento de Medio Ambiente del Gobierno de Aragón, que en al menos dos ocasiones formuló informe negativo a las mismas.

En esta línea, el mismo consejero de Medio Ambiente del Gobierno autónomo, informó en las Cortes de Aragón el día 15 de noviembre de 2013 en respuesta a la pregunta realizada, de que las obras no contaban con los permisos necesarios y que se había comenzado a instruir un expediente informativo que pudiera dar paso al sancionador.

Para mayor gravedad de los hechos, las obras realizadas afectan a la rana pirenaica, una especie catalogada como «sensible a la alteración de su hábitat», y están ubicadas en la ZEPA «Viñamala» ES0000278, en el LIC ES2410029 «Tendeñera» y en Zona de Conservación del Quebrantahuesos, por lo que las mismas estarían vulnerando directivas europeas.

¿Qué información tiene la Comisión de los hechos relatados?

¿Ha abierto la Comisión o piensa abrir algún tipo de expediente sancionador, con respecto a la posibilidad de incumplimientos de Directivas europeas por la realización de estas obras?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(5 de febrero de 2014)

La Comisión no dispone de información detallada sobre las cuestiones planteadas por Su Señoría.

De acuerdo con el artículo 6, apartado 3, de la Directiva de Hábitats ([1]), cualquier plan o proyecto que pueda afectar de forma significativa a un lugar Natura 2000 ha de someterse a una adecuada evaluación teniendo en cuenta los objetivos de conservación de dicho lugar. La responsabilidad de garantizar el cumplimiento de estas disposiciones corresponde principalmente a los Estados miembros.

Según la información facilitada por Su Señoría, los hechos señalados se refieren a actividades ilegales para las cuales no se han concedido los permisos necesarios. Asimismo, se han iniciado procedimientos judiciales contra el proyecto y se ha abierto una investigación por parte de las autoridades regionales.

Considerando que las autoridades nacionales competentes ya están llevando a cabo investigaciones en estos momentos, la Comisión no tiene intención de emprender, en este punto, acción alguna en relación con el asunto.

([1]) Directiva 92/43/CEE del Consejo, de 21 de mayo de 1992, relativa a la conservación de los hábitats naturales y de la fauna y flora silvestres (DO L 206 de 22.7.1992).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013767/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: Unauthorised works in Yésero (Aragon, Spain)

Two Spanish Government bodies in the Autonomous Community of Aragon, namely the Provincial Council of Huesca and the Town Council of Yésero (Huesca province), are promoting works to open a forest track and subsequently to abstract spring water and install water pipes for the municipal supply.

Legal proceedings have been brought against the abovementioned works for being carried out without permits from the Regional Government of Aragon's Environment Department, which has issued at least two unfavourable reports about them.

On 15 November 2013, the Regional Government's Director of the Environment, responding to a question, informed the Aragon Regional Parliament that the works did not have the necessary permits and that an investigation had been opened that could result in sanctions being brought.

To make matters worse, the works affect the Pyrenean frog, a species listed as 'sensitive to habitat disturbance', and are located in Special Protection Area ES0000278, 'Viñamala', in site of Community importance ES2410029, 'Tendeñera', and in a bearded vulture conservation area. They are therefore in breach of European directives.

What information does the Commission have about the facts reported here?

Has Commission opened, or does it plan to open, any kind of infringement proceedings with respect to possible breaches of European directives in carrying out these works?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(5 February 2014)

The Commission does not possess detailed information on the issues raised by the Honourable Member.

In accordance with Article 6.3 of the Habitats Directive ([1]) any plan or project likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site must be subject to an appropriate assessment in view of the sites conservation objectives. The responsibility to ensure compliance with this provisions lies primarily with Member States.

According to the information provided by the Honourable Member, the facts reported concern illegal activities for which the necessary permits have not been granted. It also appears that legal procedures have been brought against the project and that an investigation has been opened by the regional authorities.

Considering that investigations are currently being carried out by the relevant national authorities, the Commission does not intend to undertake, at this stage, any action concerning this case.

([1]) Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora. (OJ L 206, 22.7.1992).

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-013768/13
an die Kommission
Thomas Ulmer (PPE)
(4. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Anpassung der rechtlichen Regelungen für homöopathische und anthroposophische Arzneimittel

Der Gebrauch von sowie die Nachfrage nach homöopathischen und anthroposophischen Arzneimitteln nehmen stetig zu. Dennoch zeigt die aktuelle Studie der ECHAMP „The Availability of Homeopathic and Anthroposophic Medicinal Products in the EU", dass die Verfügbarkeit dieser Produkte ungenügend ist. Die Anzahl der registrierten Arzneimittel stellt nur einen kleinen Anteil der verfügbaren homöopathischen und anthroposophischen Arzneimittel dar. Derzeitige Auflagen für eine Zulassung sind nicht tragbar, um der Nachfrage zufriedenstellend nachzukommen. Die Umsetzung und Durchführung der rechtlichen Regelungen sind für den Sektor der homöopathischen und anthroposophischen Arzneimittel unvollständig.

1. Wie beurteilt die Kommission die bisherige Umsetzung der rechtlichen Regelungen bezüglich der Verfügbarkeit von registrierten und autorisierten homöopathischen und anthroposophischen Arzneimittel?

2. Wäre eine Änderung der Richtlinie 2001/83/EG sinnvoll, falls sich die bisherigen Maßnahmen als ungenügend erweisen? Welche Änderungen der Richtlinie könnten in Betracht gezogen werden, um weitere Maßnahmen zu ermöglichen?

3. Wie könnte ein eigenes europäisches Regelwerk für homöopathische und anthroposophische Arzneimittel gestaltet sein, falls keine Änderungen der Richtlinie 2001/83/EG in Betracht gezogen werden? Wann könnte man mit einem eigenen Regelwerk rechnen, falls dieses sinnvoll erscheint?

Antwort von Tonio Borg im Namen der Kommission
(29. Januar 2014)

1. Alle Mitgliedstaaten haben die EU-Rechtsvorschriften über die vereinfachten Registrierungsverfahren für homöopathische Arzneimittel ([1]) umgesetzt.

2. Die Kommission hat derzeit keine Pläne, die Richtlinie 2001/83/EG ([2]) zu ändern.

3. Die Kommission beabsichtigt derzeit nicht, einen eigenen neuen EU-Rechtsrahmen für homöopathische Arzneimittel oder getrennte Rechtsvorschriften für anthroposophische Arzneimittel einzuführen.

([1]) Titel III Kapitel 2 der Richtlinie 2001/83/EG vom 6. November 2001 zur Schaffung eines Gemeinschaftskodexes für Humanarzneimittel, ABl. L 311 vom 28.11.2001, S. 67
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2001:311:0067:0128:DE:PDF

([2]) Richtlinie 2001/83/EG vom 6. November 2001 zur Schaffung eines Gemeinschaftskodexes für Humanarzneimittel, ABl. L 311 vom 28.11.2001, S. 67
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2001:311:0067:0128:DE:PDF

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013768/13
to the Commission
Thomas Ulmer (PPE)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: Adaptation of the regulatory arrangements for homeopathic and anthroposophic medicinal products

The use of, and demand for, homeopathic and anthroposophic medicinal products are constantly increasing. Nevertheless, the current study by ECHAMP 'The Availability of Homeopathic and Anthroposophic Medicinal Products in the EU' shows that there is insufficient availability of these products. The number of registered medicinal products represents just a small proportion of the homeopathic and anthroposophic medicinal products that are available. Current requirements for approval are untenable for satisfactorily meeting demand. The transposition and implementation of the legal arrangements are incomplete for the homeopathic and anthroposophic medicinal products sector.

1. What is the Commission's view of the current level of transposition of the legal arrangements with regard to the availability of registered and authorised homeopathic and anthroposophic medicinal products?

2. Would it make sense to amend Directive 2001/83/EC should the current measures prove unsatisfactory? What amendments to the directive could be considered in order to enable further measures to be taken?

3. If no amendments to Directive 2001/83/EC are considered, how could a separate European regulatory framework for homeopathic and anthroposophic medicinal products be structured? Should this be a sensible approach, when could we expect a separate regulatory framework?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(29 January 2014)

1. All Member States have transposed the EU legislation on the simplified registration procedure for homeopathic medicinal products. ([1])

2. The Commission has currently no plans to amend Directive 2001/83/EC. ([2])

3. The Commission has currently no plans to introduce a new separate EU regulatory framework for homeopathic medicinal products or a separate one for anthroposophic medicinal products.

([1]) Title III, Chapter 2 of Directive 2001/83/EC of 6 November 2001 on the Community code relating to medicinal products for human use, OJ L 311, 28.11.2001, p. 67 (http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2001:311:0067:0128:EN:PDF).

([2]) Directive 2001/83/EC of 6 November 2001 on the Community code relating to medicinal products for human use, OJ L 311, 28.11.2001, p. 67 (http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2001:311:0067:0128:EN:PDF).

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-013769/13
an die Kommission
Thomas Ulmer (PPE)
(4. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Exportverbot von Arzneimitteln

Aktuell häufen sich in Europa Fälle, in denen Mitgliedstaaten versuchen, den Export von Arzneimitteln zu behindern, zu erschweren oder für bestimmte Medikamente ganz zu verbieten. Begründet wird dieses Vorgehen mit einer Verknappung der Arzneimittel für den nationalen Markt.

Diese Verknappung konnte bisher nicht nachgewiesen werden; in Griechenland musste ein Exportverbot zurückgenommen werden. Derzeit werden Exportbeschränkungen unter anderem in Spanien, Portugal, Bulgarien und Estland diskutiert.

Die Beschränkung des Exports widerspricht dem freien Warenverkehr innerhalb der Europäischen Union.

Welche Maßnahmen wird die Kommission ergreifen, um den freien Warenverkehr von Arzneimitteln weiterhin zu gewährleisten? Welche Maßnahmen sollen zukünftig Exportverbote aufgrund nicht nachgewiesener Knappheit verhindern?

Antwort von Herrn Tajani im Namen der Kommission
(3. Februar 2014)

Der Parallelhandel ist eine legale Handelsform im Binnenmarkt. Ausfuhrbeschränkungen für Arzneimittel könnten somit gegen die Bestimmungen des AEUV über den freien Warenverkehr verstoßen. Die Mitgliedstaaten können jedoch in bestimmten Fällen aus den im Vertrag oder in der Rechtsprechung des Europäischen Gerichtshofs genannten Gründen den Handel beschränken.

Was die Exportverbote betrifft, prüft die Kommission vor dem Hintergrund der Artikel 34 bis 36 AEUV jede eingehende Beschwerde und Information von Fall zu Fall. Wie in der Anfrage des Herrn Abgeordneten dargelegt, wurden die Probleme in Griechenland im Rahmen der Kontakte zwischen der Kommission und Griechenland gelöst. Die Kommission prüft alle eingehenden Beschwerden. Sollten die Probleme ungelöst bleiben, kann die Kommission dem Europäischen Gerichtshof den Fall vorlegen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013769/13
to the Commission
Thomas Ulmer (PPE)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: Export ban on medicinal products

There is currently an increasing number of cases in Europe of Member States attempting to obstruct, hinder or, in certain cases, entirely prohibit the export of medicinal products. The justification given for this action is a shortage of medicinal products for the national market.

This shortage is yet to be demonstrated; in Greece, an export ban had to be withdrawn. Export restrictions are currently being discussed in other countries, including Spain, Portugal, Bulgaria and Estonia.

The restriction of exports is contrary to the free movement of goods within the European Union.

What steps will the Commission take to continue to ensure the free movement of medicinal products? What measures would prevent future export bans on account of unproven shortages?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(3 February 2014)

Parallel trade is a lawful form of trade within the internal market. Restrictions on the export of pharmaceutical products could therefore represent an obstacle violating the Treaty provisions on free movement of goods. However, Member States may in certain cases impose restrictions to trade on the basis of justifications stated in the Treaty or in the jurisprudence of the Court of Justice.

As regards export bans, the Commission is examining each complaint and information that it receives on a case-by-case basis against the background of Articles 34-36 TFEU. In this respect, as indicated by the Honourable Member, the problems in Greece have been resolved in the course of contacts the Commission had with Greece. The Commission examines all complaints it receives and if the problems remain unresolved it could refer a case to the Court of Justice.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013770/13
to the Commission
Glenis Willmott (S&D)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: Anti-competitive behaviour by Apple

The Commission may be aware of a recent dispute between Apple and HMV regarding the sale of an iOS version of an HMV app.

The app in question allowed people to purchase MP3 downloads directly from HMV's digital music store. It was removed from the Apple App Store until this feature had been deleted and then relaunched without the purchase/download function. Apple have said that this was because the app violated App Store guidelines, which state that 'apps using IAP to purchase physical goods or goods and services used outside of the application will be rejected'.

Given that this would mean that Apple iPhone users would only be able to purchase and download music from Apple's own iTunes, does the Commission believe that Apple may have violated EU competition rules?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(10 February 2014)

The Commission is aware of the fact that Apple restricts the download of software on the iPhone through its App store.

Such unilateral conduct could fall foul of Article 102 TFEU which prohibits the abuse of a dominant market position if the requirements of Article 102 TFEU were met.

To determine if there has been a violation of Article 102 TFEU, a range of factual, legal and economic elements would have to be assessed. It would require, *inter alia*, that Apple hold a dominant position on the relevant market with its mobile devices and/or with its mobile operating systems. It is not clear that Apple has attained a dominant position with its mobile devices at this stage. In addition, Apple does not seem to hold a dominant position on the market for mobile operating systems. It appears therefore that the practice referred to does not violate EU competition law.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-013771/13
aan de Commissie
Philippe De Backer (ALDE) en Andrew Duff (ALDE)
(4 december 2013)

Betreft: Equity-instrumenten in Horizon 2020

Zoals bekend is het al lang de ambitie van de Commissie om een doeltreffende Europese markt voor risicokapitaal tot stand te brengen. Volgens commissaris Barnier werd in 2011 echter slechts 2% van de financieringsbehoefte van kmo's door risicokapitaal ingevuld, tegenover 14% in de Verenigde Staten. Daarnaast was in 2012 40%(!) van de Europese risicokapitaalfinanciering afkomstig van de publieke sector.

Horizon 2020 omvat een aantal financiële instrumenten voor schuldgarantieprogramma's en equity-investeringen. Hoewel deze beide even belangrijk zijn, richten ze zich op verschillende beleidsuitdagingen. Het lijkt erop dat de Commissie wil dat veruit de meeste middelen van deze financiële instrumenten naar garantieprogramma's toevloeien.

Kan de Commissie tegen deze achtergrond antwoord geven op de volgende vragen:

1. Welk deel van het budget van Horizon 2020 zal aan equity-instrumenten worden toegewezen?

2. Welke maatregelen zullen er worden genomen om ervoor te zorgen dat het budget van Horizon 2020 aanvullende investeringen van de privésector aantrekt?

3. Welk deel van het totale budget van Horizon 2020 kan voor financiële instrumenten worden ingezet, teneinde ervoor te zorgen dat de doelstellingen van Europa 2020 worden verwezenlijkt?

Antwoord van mevrouw Geoghegan-Quinn namens de Commissie
(29 januari 2014)

1. Het Horizon 2020-programma bevat een onderdeel dat gewijd is aan „Toegang tot risicofinanciering" (3,69% van de totale Horizon 2020-begroting of 2,725 miljard EUR) ([1]). Dit onderdeel bestaat uit twee financiële instrumenten: een schuldfaciliteit en een eigenvermogensfaciliteit (vooral gericht op early stage-financiering).

Voor early stage-risicokapitaal is in het kader van Horizon 2020 een indicatieve begroting van 430 miljoen euro vastgesteld. Er moet worden benadrukt dat de early stage-eigenvermogensfaciliteit van Horizon 2020 deel uitmaakt van het enkel eigenvermogensinstrument van de EU ter ondersteuning van de groei van Europese ondernemingen die investeren in onderzoek, innovatie en groei, dat ook een eigenvermogensfaciliteit voor groei en expansie omvat. Voor dat deel wordt ongeveer 690 miljoen EUR ([2]) uit het COSME-programma verstrekt. De gecombineerde EU-begrotingsmiddelen voor het enkel eigenvermogensinstrument van de EU zullen ongeveer 1,12 miljard EUR (primaire kredieten) bedragen. Dat is een stijging van 90% ten opzichte van de EU-begrotingssteun voor eigen vermogen in het kader van het vorige CIP-programma ([3]).

2. De financiële instrumenten van Horizon 2020 leggen sterk de nadruk op het hefboomeffect van de EU-bijdrage, met name door investeringen van de particuliere sector aan te trekken. Wat betreft het eigenvermogensinstrument van de EU wordt dit weerspiegeld in de richtsnoeren voor het beleggingsbeleid, waarin onder meer wordt bepaald om alleen te beleggen in fondsen waarvan (minstens) 30% van het kapitaal wordt geleverd door particuliere investeerders.

3. De rechtsgrondslag van Horizon 2020 biedt de mogelijkheid om begrotingsmiddelen te (her-)besteden voor financiële instrumenten (zowel schuld als eigen vermogen), hetzij binnen Horizon 2020, hetzij uit andere programma's van het meerjarig financieel kader.

([1]) Het onderdeel „Toegang tot risicofinanciering" van Horizon 2020 telt 1,2 miljard euro minder in vergelijking met het oorspronkelijke voorstel van de Commissie voor financiële instrumenten in het kader van Horizon 2020, dat 4 miljard EUR bedroeg (4,5 % van 87,7 miljard EUR).

([2]) De geplande totale begroting voor de financiële instrumenten van COSME is 1,379 miljard EUR, waarvan naar schatting de helft naar schuld en de helft naar eigen vermogen gaat. De uiteindelijke begrotingsmiddelen voor eigen vermogen kunnen variëren afhankelijk van de marktvraag.

([3]) Met ingang van 31/12/2013 wordt verwacht dat de definitieve toezeggingen door het EIF in het kader van de CIP-GIF-faciliteiten (GIF 1 en GIF 2) ongeveer 580 miljoen EUR zullen bedragen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013771/13
to the Commission
Philippe De Backer (ALDE) and Andrew Duff (ALDE)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: Equity instruments in Horizon 2020

It is a long-stated ambition of the Commission to make 'an efficient European venture capital market a reality'. However, according to Commissioner Barnier, in 2011 only 2% of Europe's SME financing requirement was met by venture capital, as opposed to 14% in the United States. Furthermore, in 2012 as much as 40% of European venture capital funding came from the public sector.

Horizon 2020 offers a series of financial instruments covering debt guarantee programmes and equity investments. While both are of equal importance, they address different policy challenges. It appears that the Commission intends a significant majority of the financial instruments budget to go to debt guarantee programmes.

In the light of the above, could the Commission state:

1. What proportion of the Horizon 2020 budget will be allocated to equity instruments?

2. What measures will be taken to ensure that the Horizon 2020 budget attracts additional private sector investment?

3. What is the potential to reallocate elements of the entire Horizon 2020 budget to financial instruments to ensure that Europe 2020 targets are met?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(29 January 2014)

1. The Horizon 2020 programme includes a dedicated 'Access to Risk Finance' part (3.69% of the total Horizon 2020 budget equalling EUR 2.725 billion) ([1]) which comprises two financial instruments: one for debt finance and one for equity (mainly focusing on early-stage finance).

For early-stage equity finance, an indicative budget of EUR 430 million is foreseen under Horizon 2020. It has to be underlined that the Horizon 2020 early-stage equity facility is part of a common Single EU Equity financial instrument in support of EU enterprises investing in Research & Innovation and Growth which also comprises an equity facility for growth and expansion. This part will be provided through budgetary resources of approximately EUR 690 million ([2]) from the COSME programme. The combined EU budgetary resources for the Single EU Equity Financial Instrument will amount to approximately EUR 1.120 billion (primary credits), an increase of 90% compared to the EU's budget support for equity under the previous CIP programme ([3]).

2. The financial instruments of Horizon 2020 put strong emphasis on leveraging the EU budget contribution, notably by mobilising private sector investments. For the EU Equity financial instrument, this will be reflected in the investment policy guidelines that will include a provision to only invest into funds having a (minimum) share of 30% of private investors in their capital.

3. The legal basis of Horizon 2020 allows the (re-)allocation of budget, either within Horizon 2020 or from other programmes of the Multi-Annual Financial Framework, to financial instruments (both debt and equity).

([1]) The Access to Risk Finance part of Horizon 2020 is about EUR 1.2 billion less compared to the original Commission proposal for financial instruments under Horizon 2020 which amounted to EUR 4 billion (4.5% of EUR 87.7 billion).

([2]) The foreseen total budget for COSME financial instruments is EUR 1.379 billion, with an estimated split of 50:50 between debt and equity. Ultimate budgetary resources available for equity may vary depending on market demand.

([3]) As of 31/12/2013, it is expected that the final commitments made by the EIF under the CIP-GIF facilities (GIF 1 and GIF 2) would amount to around EUR 580 million.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013772/13
to the Commission
Chris Davies (ALDE)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: UK Thalidomide Trust

Will the Commission agree in principle to meet representatives of UK Thalidomide Trust to discuss matters that may be within the relevant Commissioner's remit?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(29 January 2014)

The Commission regularly involves persons with disabilities, their families, their European representative organisations and other relevant stakeholders in the development and implementation of its disability policies. This is one of the principles of the EU Disability Strategy ([1]).

The first contact is often in the Unit for the rights of persons with disabilities of DG Justice, which can meet with representatives of UK Thalidomide Trust to discuss matters falling in its remit.

To obtain such a meeting, a request with a description of the items for discussion can be sent to JUST-D3-UNITE@ec.europa.eu

([1]) COM(2010) 636 final, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0636:FIN:EN:PDF

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-013773/13
à la Commission
Gaston Franco (PPE)
(4 décembre 2013)

Objet: Politique de cohésion: des indicateurs sur la spécialisation intelligente

Les règlements concernant la politique de cohésion viennent d'être adoptés par le Parlement européen. La spécialisation intelligente y est définie comme conditionnalité ex-ante pour bénéficier des fonds structurels. Dans ses rapports intitulés «The goals of Smart Specialisation» et «Smart specialisation programmes and implementation» publiés en 2013, le Centre commun de recherche de la Commission européenne note la nécessité d'établir des indicateurs pertinents en la matière.

1. Le CCR a-t-il progressé dans la recherche d'indicateurs concernant la spécialisation intelligente? Quand seront-ils proposés?

2. Le critère de la durabilité sera-t-il pris en compte dans les indicateurs concernant les villes? De quelle manière?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Geoghegan-Quinn au nom de la Commission
(10 février 2014)

Conformément au nouveau cadre réglementaire relatif à la politique de cohésion, des conditions ex ante ont été définies pour garantir une utilisation efficiente et efficace des fonds de l'UE. Par conséquent, les stratégies nationales ou régionales pour une spécialisation intelligente, nécessaires pour soutenir les priorités en matière de recherche et d'innovation des programmes du FEDER, doivent tout particulièrement contenir un mécanisme de contrôle. Il appartient ensuite aux États membres ou aux régions de définir les indicateurs qualitatifs et/ou quantitatifs applicables en fonction de leurs priorités stratégiques.

La Commission a lancé un certain nombre d'initiatives concernant les problèmes d'ordre méthodologique que les indicateurs posent aux autorités régionales et nationales. L'objectif de la Commission est de mettre en commun les connaissances et les expériences des régions et des États membres dans ce domaine en favorisant l'établissement d'un système d'assurance qualité fondé sur une approche structurée d'examen par les pairs qui faciliterait l'échange d'expériences à travers l'UE ([1]), au moyen de séminaires ([2]), et en fournissant des conseils sur les approches et méthodes existantes ([3]).

En ce qui concerne les indicateurs qui ont trait à la durabilité et aux villes, des indicateurs pertinents pourraient être sélectionnés par les États membres, en liaison avec les objectifs finaux qu'ils se sont fixés pour leurs stratégies. Chaque État membre pourra inclure des objectifs en lien avec la durabilité, englobant éventuellement des sous-catégories concernant les villes et présenter ensuite des indicateurs correspondants.

([1]) http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/cases
([2]) http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu//groningen-workshop
([3]) http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=f60c3abd-523c-4056-b053-254f31fc1b61&groupId=11299

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013773/13
to the Commission
Gaston Franco (PPE)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: Cohesion policy: smart specialisation indicators

Parliament recently adopted a package of regulations on cohesion policy. These regulations refer to smart specialisation as an *ex-ante* condition for Structural Fund eligibility. The Commission's Joint Research Centre published two reports in 2013 entitled 'The goals of smart specialisation' and 'Smart specialisation programmes and implementation', which state that suitable indicators are needed in this area.

1. Has the JRC made any progress with research into smart specialisation indicators? When will relevant proposals be put forward?

2. Will the sustainability criterion be incorporated into indicators for urban settings? If so, how?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(10 February 2014)

As part of the new regulatory framework on Cohesion Policy, *ex ante* conditionalities have been designed to ensure effective and efficient achievements of EU funding. In view of this, national or regional smart specialisation strategies, which are required to support research and innovation priorities in ERDF programmes, shall especially contain a monitoring mechanism. It is then up to Member States or regions to identify the relevant qualitative and/or quantitative indicators in line with their strategy priorities.

The Commission has organised a number of initiatives on the methodological challenges facing regional and national authorities when dealing with indicators. The aim of the Commission is to make the knowledge and experiences of regions and Member States in this field available to their peers by means of supporting the development of a quality assurance system by using a structured peer-review approach that facilitates the exchange of experience across the EU ([1]), through seminars ([2]), and by providing guidance on existing approaches and methods ([3]).

Regarding sustainability and urban settings indicators, relevant indicators might be selected by Member States, in conjunction with the ultimate objectives they set for their strategies. Sustainability-related objectives, possibly encompassing sub-categories on urban settings, may be included by individual States, and corresponding indicators would be then put forth by those States.

([1]) http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/cases
([2]) http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu//groningen-workshop
([3]) http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=f60e3abd-523c-4056-b053-254f31fc1b61&groupId=11299

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-013774/13
à la Commission
Tokia Saïfi (PPE) et Ivo Belet (PPE)
(4 décembre 2013)

Objet: Patrouilles mixtes aux frontières intérieures dans l'espace Schengen

L'accord de Tournai est un accord bilatéral entre la France et la Belgique en vigueur depuis 2001 qui régit la coopération entre les forces de police le long de la frontière entre les deux pays. Révisé en 2013, il donne plus de pouvoirs opérationnels aux patrouilles mixtes et augmentent considérablement leur nombre. Le principal avantage de ces patrouilles mixtes réside dans le fait qu'elles disposent de pleins pouvoirs des deux côtés de la frontière, leur permettant ainsi de s'adapter rapidement aux situations d'urgence.

La Commission européenne:

1. reconnaît-elle les avantages que présentent les patrouilles mixtes le long des frontières dans l'espace Schengen en termes opérationnels?

2. peut-elle indiquer comment l'Union européenne pourrait soutenir de telles patrouilles?

3. serait-elle prête, notamment, à soutenir un projet pilote qui évaluerait le fonctionnement des patrouilles mixtes?

4. est-elle disposée à examiner la nécessité d'une législation européenne sur le déploiement de patrouilles conjointes le long des frontières intérieures de l'espace Schengen?

Réponse donnée par M[me] Malmström au nom de la Commission
(21 février 2014)

La Commission reconnaît les avantages opérationnels que présentent les patrouilles mixtes le long des frontières intérieures de l'espace Schengen, tout en soulignant la nécessité de respecter l'acquis de l'UE, en particulier l'acquis de Schengen.

Les patrouilles mixtes permettent de partager des compétences et des informations, de créer une confiance et de développer la coopération transfrontalière entre les forces de police. L'Union européenne soutient ces patrouilles au moyen d'instruments normatifs, tels que la décision 2008/615/JAI du Conseil ([1]) relative à l'approfondissement de la coopération transfrontalière, notamment en vue de lutter contre le terrorisme et la criminalité transfrontalière, et la décision 2008/616/JAI du Conseil ([2]) concernant la mise en œuvre de la décision 2008/615/JAI du Conseil. La législation européenne relative aux équipes communes d'enquête ([3]) et aux équipes communes d'enquête spéciale (douanes) ([4]) a également trait aux patrouilles mixtes. La législation comporte donc déjà des dispositions concernant le déploiement de patrouilles conjointes le long des frontières intérieures de l'espace Schengen. Un tel déploiement doit respecter intégralement le code frontières Schengen ([5]). Ce code permet l'exercice des compétences de police par les autorités compétentes de l'État membre en vertu du droit national, y compris dans les zones frontalières, dans la mesure où l'exercice de ces compétences n'a pas un effet équivalent à celui des vérifications aux frontières. Le code définit des critères pour permettre d'apprécier si de telles mesures de police ont un effet équivalent à celui des vérifications aux frontières.

L'existence et l'utilisation de patrouilles mixtes sont évaluées dans le cadre des évaluations Schengen. Il existe des manuels de l'UE sur la coopération opérationnelle transfrontalière qui contiennent des informations sur les patrouilles communes. Des propositions de projets en faveur du développement des patrouilles communes peuvent être présentées en vue d'obtenir un financement européen par le futur Fonds pour la sécurité intérieure. Ces propositions seront évaluées en fonction de leurs mérites, y compris l'intérêt du ou des projets pour tous les États membres de l'UE.

([1]) Décision 2008/615/JAI du Conseil du 23 juin 2008 relative à l'approfondissement de la coopération transfrontalière, notamment en vue de lutter contre le terrorisme et la criminalité transfrontalière, JO L 210 du 6.8.2008, p. 1.

([2]) Décision 2008/616/JAI du Conseil du 23 juin 2008 concernant la mise en œuvre de la décision 2008/615/JAI relative à l'approfondissement de la coopération transfrontalière, notamment en vue de lutter contre le terrorisme et la criminalité transfrontalière, JO L 210 du 6.8.2008, p. 12.

([3]) Décision-cadre 2002/465/JAI du Conseil du 13 juin 2002 relative aux équipes communes d'enquête, JO L 162 du 20.6.2002, p. 1.

([4]) Acte 98/C 24/01 du Conseil du 18 décembre 1997 établissant, sur la base de l'article K.3 du traité sur l'Union européenne, la convention relative à l'assistance mutuelle et à la coopération entre les administrations douanières, JO C 24 du 23.1.1998, p. 1.

([5]) Article 21, point a), du règlement (CE) nº 562/2006 établissant un code communautaire relatif au régime de franchissement des frontières par les personnes, JO L 105 du 13.4.2006, p. 1.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-013774/13
aan de Commissie
Tokia Saïfi (PPE) en Ivo Belet (PPE)
(4 december 2013)

Betreft: Gemengde patrouilles aan de binnengrenzen in het Schengengebied

De overeenkomst van Doornik („l'accord de Tournai") is een bilateraal akkoord tussen Frankrijk en België dat in werking trad in 2001 en waardoor de samenwerking tussen de politiediensten langs de grens tussen de twee landen wordt geregeld. In 2013 werd de overeenkomst herzien, waardoor de gemengde patrouilles meer operationele bevoegdheden kregen en hun aantal aanzienlijk werd verhoogd. Het voornaamste voordeel van deze gemengde patrouilles is het feit dat zij aan beide zijden van de grens over volledige bevoegdheden bezitten, waardoor zij zich snel kunnen aanpassen aan noodsituaties.

Zal de Europese Commissie:

1. de operationele voordelen erkennen van gemengde patrouilles aan de grenzen in het Schengengebied?

2. aangeven hoe de Europese Unie dergelijke patrouilles kan ondersteunen?

3. meer bepaald bereid zijn een pilootproject te ondersteunen waardoor de werking van de gemengde patrouilles wordt geëvalueerd?

4. bereid zijn de noodzaak van gemengde patrouilles aan de binnengrenzen in het Schengengebied te onderzoeken?

Antwoord van mevrouw Malmström namens de Commissie
(21 februari 2014)

De Commissie erkent de operationele voordelen van gemengde patrouilles langs de Schengen-binnengrenzen, maar benadrukt ook dat het EU-acquis, en met name het Schengenacquis, moet worden nageleefd.

Gemengde patrouilles helpen bij het uitwisselen van deskundigheid en informatie, het opbouwen van vertrouwen en het ontwikkelen van grensoverschrijdende samenwerking tussen rechtshandhavingsinstanties. De Europese Unie ondersteunt dergelijke patrouilles via wetgeving, met name Besluit 2008/615/JBZ van de Raad ([1]) inzake de intensivering van de grensoverschrijdende samenwerking, in het bijzonder ter bestrijding van terrorisme en grensoverschrijdende criminaliteit en Besluit 2008/616/JBZ van de Raad ([2]) betreffende de uitvoering van Besluit 2008/615/JBZ van de Raad. In verband met gemengde patrouilles is er ook EU-wetgeving over de oprichting van gemeenschappelijke onderzoeksteams ([3]) en gemeenschappelijke bijzondere onderzoeksteams (douane) ([4]). Er is dus al wetgeving beschikbaar inzake het inzetten van gezamenlijke patrouilles langs de Schengen-binnengrenzen. Het inzetten van dergelijke patrouilles moet volledig in overeenstemming zijn met de Schengengrenscode ([5]). Op grond van deze code kunnen de bevoegde instanties van de lidstaten politiebevoegdheid uitoefenen overeenkomstig de nationale wetgeving, onder meer in de nabijheid van de binnengrenzen, voor zover de uitoefening van die bevoegdheid niet hetzelfde effect heeft als grenscontroles. De code bevat criteria aan de hand waarvan kan worden vastgesteld of politiële maatregelen al dan niet hetzelfde effect hebben als grenscontroles.

Het bestaan en het gebruik van gemengde patrouilles wordt beoordeeld in het kader van Schengenevaluaties. Er zijn EU-handleidingen over grensoverschrijdende operationele samenwerking met onder andere informatie over gezamenlijke patrouilles. Projectvoorstellen voor de ontwikkeling van gezamenlijke patrouilles kunnen worden ingediend voor EU-financiering in het kader van het toekomstige Fonds voor binnenlandse veiligheid. Dergelijke voorstellen zullen op hun merites worden beoordeeld met inbegrip van het belang van het project/de projecten voor alle lidstaten van de EU.

([1]) Besluit 2008/615/JBZ van de Raad van 23 juni 2008 inzake de intensivering van de grensoverschrijdende samenwerking, in het bijzonder ter bestrijding van terrorisme en grensoverschrijdende criminaliteit (PB L 210 van 6.8.2008, blz. 1-11).

([2]) Besluit 2008/616/JBZ van de Raad van 23 juni 2008 betreffende de uitvoering van Besluit 2008/615/JBZ inzake de intensivering van de grensoverschrijdende samenwerking, in het bijzonder ter bestrijding van terrorisme en grensoverschrijdende criminaliteit (PB L 210 van 6.8.2008, blz. 12-72).

([3]) Kaderbesluit van de Raad 2002/465/JHA van 13 juni 2002 inzake gemeenschappelijke onderzoeksteams.

([4]) Akte van de Raad 98/C 24/01 van 18 december 1997 tot vaststelling van de overeenkomst op grond van artikel K3 van het Verdrag betreffende de Europese Unie, inzake wederzijdse bijstand en samenwerking tussen de douaneadministraties (PB C 24 van 23.1.1998, blz. 1-22).

([5]) Artikel 21, onder a), van Verordening (EG) nr. 562/2006 tot vaststelling van een communautaire code betreffende de overschrijding van de grenzen door personen (PB L 105 van 13.4.2006, blz. 1).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013774/13
to the Commission
Tokia Saïfi (PPE) and Ivo Belet (PPE)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: Mixed patrols along internal Schengen borders

The Tournai Agreement is a bilateral agreement between France and Belgium which dates back to 2001 and which governs cooperation between the police forces along the border between the two countries. The 2013 revision of this Agreement granted greater operational powers to mixed patrols and significantly boosted their numbers. The main advantage of these mixed patrols is that they are fully authorised to act on both sides of the border, allowing them to respond rapidly to emergencies.

I would like to ask the Commission the following questions:

1. Does it acknowledge the operational benefits of deploying mixed patrols along Schengen borders?

2. Can it suggest how the European Union could support such patrols?

3. In particular, would it be willing to support a pilot project aimed at evaluating the work of mixed patrols?

4. Is it willing to examine the need for European legislation on the deployment of joint patrols along internal Schengen borders?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(21 February 2014)

The Commission acknowledges the operational benefits of mixed patrols along Schengen-internal borders while also stressing the need to respect the EU acquis, in particular the Schengen *acquis*.

Mixed patrols help in sharing expertise and information, in building trust and in developing cross-border cooperation between law enforcement authorities. The European Union supports such patrols through legislation, notably Council Decision 2008/615/JHA ([1]) on the stepping up of cross-border cooperation, particularly in combating terrorism and cross-border crime and Council Decision 2008/616/JHA ([2]) implementing Council Decision 2008/615/JHA. There is also EU legislation related to mixed patrols on setting up Joint Investigation Teams ([3]) and Joint Special Investigation Teams (Customs) ([4]). Legislation is therefore already available on the deployment of joint patrols along internal Schengen borders. Such deployment needs to be in full compliance with the Schengen Borders Code ([5]). The Code allows the exercise of police powers by the competent Member States authorities under national law including in areas near internal borders, insofar as it does not have an effect equivalent to border checks. The Code includes criteria which allow assessing if such police measures have an effect equivalent to border checks or not.

The existence and use of mixed patrols is assessed in the context of Schengen evaluations. There are EU manuals on cross border operational cooperation which include information on joint patrols. Project proposals to develop joint patrols can be submitted for EU funding under the future Internal Security Fund; such proposals will be assessed on their merits including the significance of the project(s) for all EU Member States.

([1]) Council Decision 2008/615/JHA of 23 June 2008 on the stepping up of cross-border cooperation, particularly in combating terrorism and cross-border crime; OJ L 210, 6.8.2008, p. 1-11.
([2]) Council Decision 2008/616/JHA of 23 June 2008 on the implementation of Decision 2008/615/JHA on the stepping up of cross-border cooperation, particularly in combating terrorism and cross-border crime; OJ L 210, 6.8.2008, p. 12-72.
([3]) Council Framework Decision 2002/465/JHA of 13 June 2002 on joint investigation teams. OJ L. 162, 20.6.2002, p. 1-3.
([4]) Council Act 98/C 24/01 of 18 December 1997 drawing up, on the basis of Article K3 of the Treaty on European Union, the Convention on mutual assistance and cooperation between customs administrations, OJ C 24, 23.01.1998, p. 1-22.
([5]) Article 21(a) of Regulation (EC) N. 562/2006 establishing a Community Code on the rules governing the movement of persons across borders, OJ L 105 of 13.4.2006, p.1.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-013775/13
à la Commission
Ivo Belet (PPE) et Tokia Saïfi (PPE)
(4 décembre 2013)

Objet: Échange d'informations dans le cadre du système d'information Schengen II

Dans la mesure où il n'y a plus de frontières intérieures dans l'espace Schengen, il est essentiel que les États membres puissent partager leurs informations relatives à la criminalité. Le système d'information Schengen II (SIS II) est donc une base de données essentielle, qui permet de combiner le traitement de données personnelles de citoyens impliqués dans des actes criminels. Le système modernisé est opérationnel depuis avril 2013, et les États membres peuvent dorénavant y introduire des informations.

La Commission

1. voudrait-elle indiquer quelles données peuvent être recensées via le SIS II et quels États membres entrent déjà régulièrement ces données?

2. a-t-elle conscience des questions techniques liées à l'échange d'informations entre États membres et est-elle prête à prendre des initiatives afin de les résoudre?

3. a-t-elle examiné si tous les États membres interprètent les détails qui peuvent être incorporés dans le SIS II de la même manière, c'est-à-dire si des incohérences pourraient apparaître dans la saisie de données?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Malmström au nom de la Commission
(24 février 2014)

1. Le SIS II est actuellement utilisé par 24 États membres ainsi que par les pays associés à l'espace Schengen aux fins du contrôle des frontières et à des fins répressives. Quatre États membres (Croatie, Chypre, Irlande et le Royaume-Uni) ne sont pas encore reliés au SIS II. Les articles 24 à 26 du règlement SIS II ([1]) et les articles 26 à 38 de la décision SIS II ([2]) déterminent les catégories de signalements pouvant être saisies par les États membres.

3. En outre, les données constituant les signalements sont obligatoirement décrites dans les instruments juridiques relatifs au SIS II et doivent être saisies par les États membres dans un format normalisé. Toute donnée non conforme est automatiquement rejetée par le système. Le SIS II assure ainsi une application uniforme des champs pertinents dans tous les États Schengen. La Commission surveille étroitement la mise en œuvre nationale du SIS II tant en entretenant un dialogue intensif avec les États membres au sein du comité désigné par les instruments juridiques du SIS II, qu'au moyen du mécanisme d'évaluation de Schengen, afin de garantir une homogénéité de l'utilisation du système.

2. L'accent est actuellement placé sur la mise en œuvre des nouvelles catégories de signalements et fonctionnalités fournies par le SIS II. La Commission collabore étroitement avec les États membres en vue de l'exploitation maximale des capacités du SIS II et de la bonne application des dispositions des instruments juridiques SIS II. Si cela s'avérait nécessaire, la Commission n'hésiterait pas à utiliser les pouvoirs que lui confère le traité en la matière, y compris en lançant des procédures d'infraction.

([1]) Règlement (CE) nº 1986/2006 du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 20 décembre 2006 sur l'établissement, le fonctionnement et l'utilisation du système d'information Schengen de deuxième génération (SIS II) (JO L 381 du 28.12.2008, p. 4).

([2]) Décision 2007/533/JAI du Conseil du 12 juin 2007 sur l'établissement, le fonctionnement et l'utilisation du système d'information Schengen de deuxième génération (SIS II) (JO L 63 du 7.8.2007, p. 63).

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-013775/13
aan de Commissie
Ivo Belet (PPE) en Tokia Saïfi (PPE)
(4 december 2013)

Betreft: Informatie-uitwisseling in het kader van het Schengeninformatiesysteem (SIS II)

In zoverre er geen binnengrenzen meer zijn in het Schengengebied, moeten de lidstaten hun informatie over criminaliteit kunnen delen. Het Schengeninformatiesysteem (SIS II) is dus een essentiële database waardoor de persoonsgegevens van bij criminele handelingen betrokken burgers kunnen worden behandeld. De gemoderniseerde versie is sinds april 2013 operationeel en de lidstaten kunnen sindsdien informatie invoeren.

Kan de Commissie

1. aangeven welke gegevens via SIS II kunnen worden opgenomen en welke lidstaten reeds regelmatig deze gegevens invoeren?

2. Is de Commissie op de hoogte van de technische kwesties in verband met de informatie-uitwisseling tussen de lidstaten en is zij bereid initiatieven te nemen om deze op te lossen?

3. Heeft de Commissie onderzocht of alle lidstaten de details die in SIS II kunnen worden opgenomen, op dezelfde manier interpreteren en of deze incoherenties in de gegevensopslag kunnen opduiken?

Antwoord van mevrouw Malmström namens de Commissie
(24 februari 2014)

1. SIS II wordt momenteel voor grensbewakings- en rechtshandhavingsdoeleinden gebruikt door 24 lidstaten en de geassocieerde Schengenlanden. Vier lidstaten (Ierland, Kroatië, Cyprus en het Verenigd Koninkrijk) zijn nog niet op SIS II aangesloten. In de artikelen 24-26 van de SIS II-verordening ([1]) en de artikelen 26-38 van het SIS II-besluit ([2]) is bepaald welke signaleringscategorieën de lidstaten kunnen invoeren.

3. De gegevens die in de signaleringen zijn opgenomen, zijn in de rechtsinstrumenten inzake SIS II op bindende wijze beschreven en moeten door de lidstaten in een gestandaardiseerd formaat worden ingevoerd. Niet-gestandaardiseerde invoer wordt door het systeem automatisch geweigerd. SIS II zorgt er zo voor dat de relevante gegevensvelden in alle Schengenstaten consequent worden gebruikt. Om de uniforme toepassing van het systeem te waarborgen, houdt de Commissie de nationale tenuitvoerlegging van SIS II nauwlettend in het oog. Zij doet dat door middel van een intensieve dialoog met de lidstaten in het comité dat bij de rechtsinstrumenten inzake SIS II is ingesteld, en door middel van het Schengenevaluatiemechanisme.

2. De nadruk ligt momenteel op de implementatie van de nieuwe signaleringscategorieën en functies die met SIS II zijn ingevoerd. De Commissie houdt nauw contact met de lidstaten om te zorgen dat de capaciteit van SIS II volledig wordt benut en dat de bepalingen van de rechtsinstrumenten inzake SIS II correct worden uitgevoerd. Mocht het nodig zijn, dan zal de Commissie zeker gebruikmaken van de bevoegdheden die het Verdrag haar op dit terrein verleent, wat ook tot inbreukprocedures kan leiden.

([1]) Verordening (EG) nr. 1987/2006 van het Europees Parlement en de Raad van 20 december 2006 betreffende de instelling, de werking en het gebruik van het Schengeninformatiesysteem van de tweede generatie (SIS II) (PB L 381 van 28.12.2008, blz. 4).

([2]) Besluit 2007/533/JBZ van de Raad van 12 juni 2007 betreffende de instelling, de werking en het gebruik van het Schengeninformatiesysteem van de tweede generatie (SIS II) (PB L 63 van 7.8.2007, blz. 63).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013775/13
to the Commission
Ivo Belet (PPE) and Tokia Saïfi (PPE)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: Exchange of information via the Schengen Information System II

The abolition of internal borders within the Schengen area means that it is essential for Member States to share information on crime. The Schengen Information System II (SIS II) is therefore a vital database insofar as it allows the joint processing of personal data on citizens involved in criminal activity. The updated system has been operational since April 2013 and the Member States can now enter information into it.

I would like to ask the Commission the following questions:

1. Which data can be collected via SIS II, and which Member States are already entering such data on a regular basis?

2. Is it aware of the technical problems affecting the exchange of information between Member States, and is it willing to take steps to resolve these problems?

3. Has it looked into the issue of whether the rules governing the information to be entered into SIS II have been interpreted by all the Member States in the same way, or in other words whether there are likely to be any inconsistencies in terms of data entered?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(24 February 2014)

1. SIS II is currently used by 24 Member States as well as the Schengen associated countries for border control and law enforcement purposes. Four Member States (Croatia, Cyprus, Ireland and the United Kingdom) are not yet connected to SIS II. Articles 24-26 of the SIS II Regulation ([1]) and Articles 26-38 of the SIS II Decision ([2]) determine the alert categories which can be entered by Member States.

2. The data constituting the alerts are also mandatorily described in the SIS II legal instruments and have to be entered by the Member States in a standardised format. Non-compliant data is automatically rejected by the system. SIS II thus ensures the consistent application of the relevant data fields throughout the Schengen States. The Commission closely monitors the national implementation of SIS II by conducting an intensive dialogue with Member States in the committee designated by the SIS II legal instruments and through the Schengen evaluation mechanism in order to ensure homogenous use of the system.

3. The current emphasis is on the implementation of the new alert categories and functionalities provided by SIS II. The Commission is in close contact with Member States to ensure that SIS II is used to its full capacity and that the provisions of the SIS II legal instruments are correctly implemented. Should it prove necessary, the Commission would not hesitate to use its powers under the Treaty in this respect, including infringement proceedings.

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 1986/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 on the establishment, operation and use of the second generation of the Schengen Information System (SIS II) (OJ 381, 28.12.2008, p. 4).

([2]) Council Decision 2007/533/JHA of 12 June 2007 on the establishment, operation and use of the second generation of the Schengen Information System (SIS II) (OJ 63, 7.8.2007, p. 63).

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-013776/13
à la Commission
Astrid Lulling (PPE)
(4 décembre 2013)

Objet: TVA allemande sur les voitures de société luxembourgeoises utilisées par les travailleurs frontaliers

La décision des autorités allemandes d'appliquer la TVA allemande sur les voitures de société luxembourgeoises utilisées par les travailleurs frontaliers allemands pose de graves problèmes aux salariés concernés et aux entreprises luxembourgeoises. Une telle interprétation du Paquet TVA est juridiquement contestable et ce à divers titres. Une double voire une triple imposition est opérée: en vertu de l'article 16b de la loi TVA luxembourgeoise et la régularisation en amont déduite par l'employeur, une imposition en Allemagne du fait de ladite circulaire et la taxation de l'avantage en nature au niveau de l'impôt sur les revenus des salariés.

Cela est pareillement attentatoire à la libre circulation des travailleurs alors que non seulement l'employé doit déclarer son moindre déplacement privé mais au surplus, il se retrouve discriminé en raison de son lieu de résidence, les autres salariés dans une même situation n'étant pas soumis à cette surcharge fiscale. La jurisprudence est claire sur ce point: toutes dispositions nationales qui empêchent ou dissuadent un ressortissant d'un État membre de quitter son pays d'origine pour exercer son droit à la libre circulation constituent une entrave à cette liberté. Divers arrêts ont déjà traité du sujet dont un particulièrement similaire en l'affaire C-232/03 Commission contre Finlande où la notion d'entrave a été retenue. La qualification de la transaction est par ailleurs elle-même erronée alors qu'il y a une assimilation entre une location d'un moyen de transport à long terme entre employeur et employé et la mise à disposition. La CJUE a pareillement tranché cette question en refusant une assimilation dans une décision C-210/11 et C-211/11. Pourtant les autorités allemandes n'en tiennent pas compte.

Comment la Commission compte-t-elle réagir face à la mauvaise application du paquet TVA par l'Allemagne? Compte-t-elle intervenir afin de mettre fin à cette atteinte manifeste à la libre circulation des travailleurs?

Réponse donnée par M. Šemeta au nom de la Commission
(27 janvier 2014)

L'article 26, paragraphe 1, point a), de la directive TVA ([1]) prévoit que, dans les cas où les salariés se voient accorder la possibilité d'utiliser pour des besoins privés des biens qui continuent de faire partie des actifs de l'employeur, l'utilisation à des fins privées par le salarié est assimilée à une prestation de services effectuée à titre onéreux. Toutefois, cette disposition ne s'applique pas lorsque l'utilisation à des fins privées d'une voiture de l'employeur par un membre du personnel est plutôt considérée comme une prestation de services à titre onéreux au sens de l'article 2, paragraphe 1, point c), de la directive TVA. Le service constitue alors une location de moyen de transport. Cela pourrait être le cas si l'utilisation à des fins privées par un salarié implique soit un paiement par celui-ci, soit une réduction de son salaire ou des avantages qu'il perçoit.

Aux fins de l'article 26, paragraphe 1, point a), de la directive TVA, le lieu des prestations suit la règle prévue à l'article 45, et la prestation sera imposée à l'endroit où le prestataire a établi le siège de son activité économique. En vertu de l'article 56, paragraphe 2, de la directive TVA, le lieu des prestations de services de location de longue durée de moyens de transport fournies aux salariés est généralement soit le lieu où le salarié est établi, soit le lieu où il a son domicile ou sa résidence habituelle.

Lors de la prochaine réunion du comité de la TVA ([2]), les délégations des États membres seront invitées à exprimer leur avis sur le point abordé dans la question. À la lumière de ces discussions, la Commission tirera une conclusion définitive sur cette question.

([1]) Directive 2006/112/CE du Conseil du 28 novembre 2006 relative au système commun de taxe sur la valeur ajoutée (JO L 347 du 11.12.2006, p. 1).
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=1843&Lang=FR

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013776/13
to the Commission
Astrid Lulling (PPE)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: German VAT on Luxembourg company cars used by cross-frontier workers

The decision by the German authorities to impose German VAT on Luxembourg company cars used by German cross-frontier workers represents a major problem for the employees affected and for Luxembourg companies. From a legal point of view, this interpretation of the VAT package is questionable for a number of reasons. It will result in VAT being imposed twice or even three times: in Luxembourg pursuant to Article 16b of the country's VAT Act as a deduction at source by employers, and in Germany on the basis of the circular containing the above decision and as a result of employees being liable for income tax on benefits in kind.

This also represents an attack on the freedom of movement of workers; as well as having to declare even the shortest private journeys, employees will be discriminated against on the grounds of their place of residence, since other employees holding similar jobs will not be liable for this extra tax. Case law makes it quite clear that any national provision which prohibits or dissuades citizens of a Member State from leaving their country of origin to exercise their right to freedom of movement represents an obstacle to this freedom. Various rulings have already been handed down on this subject, and particular similarities can be seen with case C-232/03 (Commission v Finland), where the existence of an obstacle was confirmed. What is more, Germany's classification of such situations is also flawed since it equates the long-term leasing of a means of transport between an employer and an employee with making the vehicle available for an employee's use. ECJ rulings on this issue, such as Decisions C-210/11 and C-211/11, have confirmed that this approach is incorrect, but the German authorities have failed to take this into account.

How does the Commission intend to respond to this misapplication of the VAT package by Germany? Does it intend to intervene in order to put a stop to this blatant attack on the free movement of workers?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(27 January 2014)

Article 26(1)(a) of the VAT Directive ([1]) stipulates that where employees are granted the possibility to use goods which continue to be part of the assets of the employer for private use, the private use by the employee is treated as a supply of services for consideration. However, this provision does not apply when the use of an employer's car by a staff member for private purposes is instead regarded as a supply of services for consideration under Article 2(1)(c) of the VAT Directive. Then the service constitutes hiring of means of transport. That could be the case if the private use by an employee involves a payment by him or a reduction of his salary or in the benefits he receives.

For Article 26(1)(a) of the VAT Directive, the place of supply follows the rule in Article 45 and the supply will be taxed where the supplier has established his business. Under Article 56(2) of the VAT Directive, the place of supply for the long-term hiring of means of transport to employees is generally the place where the employee is established has his permanent address or usually resides.

At the next meeting of the VAT Committee ([2]), Member States' delegations will be invited to express their views on the subject matter raised in the question. In the light of these discussions, the Commission will reach a final conclusion on the issue.

([1]) Council Directive 2006/112/EC of 28 November 2006 on the common system of value added tax (OJ L 347, 11.12.2006, p. 1).
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=1843

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-013777/13
alla Commissione
Matteo Salvini (EFD)
(4 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Chiarimenti in merito alla sicurezza alimentare nella «Terra dei Fuochi»

La «Terra dei Fuochi» è una vasta area situata nell'Italia meridionale, tra le province di Caserta e di Napoli, caratterizzata dalla copiosa presenza di roghi di rifiuti tossici. La maggior parte dei rifiuti dati alle fiamme sono speciali, trattandosi di materiali pericolosi lasciati in prossimità di allevamenti e aziende agricole.

In questa zona l'acqua è contaminata, l'aria è avvelenata dalla diossina e aumentano con maggiore frequenza le patologie tumorali e la mortalità. La «Terra dei Fuochi» va a ledere l'attività produttiva agroalimentare, il comparto più importante dell'economia campana e simbolo d'eccellenza del «Made in Italy», il che ha determinato un crollo delle vendite del 30-40 %. Questo disastro ambientale e umano continua da molti anni senza politiche di prevenzione primaria. Nelle aree più inquinate, l'introduzione del divieto di vendita di prodotti alimentari deve essere tassativo e per le aziende interessate vanno introdotte politiche di sostegno.

Può la Commissione far sapere:

— se è a conoscenza della gravità di questo disastro ambientale; se le aziende coinvolte rispettano i dovuti parametri di sicurezza alimentare; se, visti gli articoli 168 (protezione della salute) e 169 (protezione dei consumatori) del trattato sul funzionamento dell'Unione europea può sollecitare lo Stato italiano ad adottare concrete e tempestive risposte al problema.

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(14 febbraio 2014)

Nell'ambito del procedimento d'infrazione 2007/2195 (gestione dei rifiuti in Campania), la Commissione ha esortato le autorità italiane ad adottare le misure necessarie per contrastare lo smaltimento illegale dei rifiuti pericolosi e, più in particolare, la combustione incontrollata dei rifiuti nella cosiddetta «Terra dei fuochi» nelle province di Napoli e Caserta. Successivamente la Commissione è stata informata del fatto che, nel novembre 2012, il governo italiano ha nominato un commissario straordinario per prevenire e contrastare lo smaltimento illegale di rifiuti e, il 3 dicembre 2013, ha approvato un decreto legge che rende la combustione di rifiuti un reato. Secondo le informazioni ricevute, i terreni agricoli in prossimità di siti utilizzati per bruciare rifiuti saranno immediatamente controllati per evitare intossicazioni alimentari e circa 600 milioni di euro sono stati stanziati per le attività di decontaminazione.

Il programma operativo 2007-2013 per la Campania, cofinanziato dal Fondo europeo di sviluppo regionale, comprende anche misure mirate alla bonifica di siti contaminati secondo il principio «chi inquina paga», a condizione che i progetti siano coperti dal «Piano bonifiche» approvato dalla regione.

Ai sensi della normativa dell'Unione europea ([1]) gli operatori del settore alimentare devono rispettare le pertinenti disposizioni legislative comunitarie e nazionali relative al controllo dei rischi nella produzione primaria e nelle operazioni associate, comprese le misure di controllo della contaminazione derivante, tra l'altro, dall'aria, dal suolo e dall'acqua. Le autorità competenti sono tenute a controllare il rispetto di tali norme e, se necessario, ad adottare le misure opportune.

([1]) Regolamento (CE) n. 852/2004 del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 29 aprile 2004, sull'igiene dei prodotti alimentari (GU L 139 del 30.4.2004).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013777/13
to the Commission
Matteo Salvini (EFD)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: Request for information regarding food safety in the 'Terra dei Fuochi' area

The 'Terra dei Fuochi' (Land of Fire) is a vast area in southern Italy between the provinces of Caserta and Naples, the site of countless toxic waste bonfires. Most of the waste that is burned is special waste, consisting of hazardous materials, which is left near farms.

The water in this region is contaminated, the air is poisoned by dioxin, and cancer and death rates are on the increase. The Terra dei Fuochi is harming agri-food production, the most important economic sector in the Campania region and a symbol of excellence among 'Made in Italy' products, leading to a 30-40% fall in sales. This environmental and human disaster has been ongoing for many years with no primary prevention policies. In the most severely polluted areas, it is imperative to implement a ban on the sale of foodstuffs, and policies to support the farms concerned must be introduced.

Is the Commission aware of the severity of this environmental disaster?

Do the farms concerned comply with the relevant food safety criteria?

Having regard to Articles 168 (health protection) and 169 (consumer protection) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, can the Commission press the Italian State to adopt practical and timely solutions to the problem?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(14 February 2014)

In the framework of infringement procedure 2007/2195 (waste management in Campania), the Commission urged the Italian authorities to take the necessary measures against the illegal disposal of hazardous waste, and more particularly the uncontrolled burning of waste in the so-called 'Land of Fires' of the Naples and Caserta provinces. The Commission has since been informed that the Italian Government appointed in November 2012 a special commissioner to prevent and remedy the illegal disposal of waste and approved on 3 December 2013 a Decree-Law which makes the burning of waste a criminal offence. According to information received, agricultural plots in the vicinity of sites used to burn waste will immediately be checked to avoid food poisoning and about 600 million euros have been earmarked for decontamination activities.

The 2007-2013 Operational Programme for Campania, co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund, also includes measures aimed at cleaning up contaminated sites according to the 'polluter pays' principle, provided that the projects are covered by the 'Piano bonifiche' approved by the region.

According to Community legislation ([1]), food business operators are to comply with appropriate Community and national legislative provisions relating to the control of hazards in primary production and associated operations including measures to control contamination arising *inter alia* from the air, soil and water, competent authorities are responsible to control compliance with these rules and if needed, take the appropriate measures.

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs (OJ L 139, 30.4.2004).

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-013778/13
aan de Commissie
Lucas Hartong (NI) en Patricia van der Kammen (NI)
(4 december 2013)

Betreft: Subsidie spoortraject Maastricht-Lanaken

Op 30 september 2011 werd het gerenoveerde spoortraject van Maastricht (NL) naar Lanaken (BE) geopend ([1]). De totale kosten voor de „revitalisatie" van deze lijn bedroegen 28 miljoen euro. Vanuit het Europees Fonds voor regionale ontwikkeling (EFRO) werd ook bijgedragen. Voor het Vlaamse gedeelte bedroeg de subsidie 2,1 miljoen euro en voor het Nederlandse gedeelte 2,5 miljoen euro. Vanaf de oplevering tot op heden hebben er in totaal 12 treinen retour over dit traject gereden. Hierover de volgende vragen:

1. Is de Commissie bekend met het feit dat er sinds de opening slechts 12 treinen retour hebben gereden, waarvan 10 in het openingsjaar 2011 en 2 in het jaar 2013?

2. Wat vindt de Commissie van deze bedroevend lage gebruikscijfers?

3. Is de Commissie van mening dat bijna 400 000 euro EFRO-investering per retourbeweging, betaald uit belastinggeld, een verantwoorde investering is?

4. Vindt de Commissie dat er sprake is van een bevredigende „return on investment"? Wat was de beoogde en wat is de uiteindelijk aangetoonde „Europese meerwaarde" van dit project?

5. Waren er specifieke voorwaarden verbonden aan de verleende subsidie? Zo ja, welke? Zo nee, waarom niet?

6. Is de Commissie het met de PVV eens dat het onderzoeksrapport van bureau Buck Consultants International (2005) ([2]) een veel te rooskleurig beeld heeft geschetst van de potentie van dit spoortraject?

7. Kan de Commissie aangeven of er subsidies zullen worden teruggevorderd, aangezien dit spoortraject het zoveelste voorbeeld is van verkwanseld belastinggeld?

Antwoord van de heer Hahn namens de Commissie
(19 februari 2014)

1. De cijfers zijn bevestigd door de beheersautoriteit voor het programma.

2, 3, 4, 6. Het project van de revitalisering van het spoor tussen Lanaken en Maastricht ([3]) had tot doel deze spoorlijn opnieuw in gebruik te nemen en zo het grensoverschrijdende goederenvervoer via een „modal shift" (verschuiving tussen vervoerswijzen) te bevorderen. Dit doel is bereikt. Het theoretische potentieel van het goederenvervoer per spoor tot 2030 ([4]) heeft zich tot dusver echter niet geconcretiseerd en het aantal reizen van goederentreinen op de lijn ligt lager dan gepland. Dit is voor een deel toe te schrijven aan de moeilijke internationale economische situatie. Het goederenvervoer zal naar verwachting toenemen wanneer de economie zich herstelt en er aanvullende inspanningen worden gedaan om logistieke bedrijven en ondernemingen met activiteiten die samenhangen met water- en spoorwegen, ertoe te bewegen zich op het bedrijventerrein langs de spoorlijn te vestigen.

De Europese toegevoegde waarde bestond in de gezamenlijke planning, financiering en uitvoering en het gezamenlijke gebruik door partners aan weerszijden van de grens. Het opnieuw in gebruik nemen van het goederentraject en de multimodale toegang tot het grensoverschrijdende bedrijventerrein moeten de werkgelegenheid bevorderen. Aangezien de uitvoeringsfase van het project pas op 1 juli 2013 is afgesloten, is het nog te vroeg om conclusies te trekken over de resultaten van de investering.

5. De Commissie mengt zich niet in de selectie van projecten (tenzij het om grote projecten gaat). Dit behoort namelijk tot de bevoegdheid van de programma-autoriteiten, op voorwaarde dat hun keuzes in overeenstemming zijn met de programmeringsdocumenten en aan de geldende wetgeving voldoen.

([1]) http://www.ersvlimburg.be/content/content/record.php?ID=431.
([2]) http://o.b5z.net/i/u/10008185/i/Spoorstudie.pdf
([3]) Grensoverschrijdende samenwerking „Vlaanderen-Nederland".
([4]) Buck Consultants International, zie: http://o.b5z.net/i/u/10008185/i/Spoorstudie.pdf

Het project „Modal shift" werd goedgekeurd in het kader van het programma Interreg IV A Vlaanderen-Nederland. De Commissie stelt voor dat het Parlementslid voor meer details rechtstreeks contact opneemt met de beheersautoriteit ([5]).

7. De Commissie is niet van mening dat de bijdrage uit het EFRO moet worden teruggevorderd.

([5]) Provincie Antwerpen, Departement Welzijn, Economie en Plattelandsbeleid, Koningin Elisabethlei 22, B-2018 Antwerpen en het gezamenlijk technisch secretariaat voor het programma Interreg Vlaanderen-Nederland, Albert Building, Belpairestraat 20 B 10, B-2600 Antwerpen (Berchem), tel. +32 (0)32406920, info@grensregio.eu.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013778/13
to the Commission
Lucas Hartong (NI) and Patricia van der Kammen (NI)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: Subsidy for Maastricht-Lanaken rail link

On 30 September 2011 the renovated rail link was opened between Maastricht in the Netherlands and Lanaken in Belgium ([1]). The total cost of 'revamping' this line was EUR 28 million. This included a contribution from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The subsidy for the Flemish section was EUR 2.1 million and EUR 2.5 million for the section in the Netherlands. In the period between its delivery and now, a total of 12 trains have made return journeys on this route. We have the following questions about this:

1. Is the Commission aware that, since the link was opened, only 12 trains have made return journeys, with 10 in 2011, the year it opened, and two in 2013?

2. What is the Commission's view of these pitifully low usage figures?

3. Does the Commission think that a sum of almost EUR 400 000 from the ERDF per return journey, paid by taxpayers, is a responsible investment?

4. Does the Commission feel that this is a satisfactory return on investment? What was the intended and what is the final European added value shown for this project?

5. Were there specific terms linked to the subsidy granted? If so, please specify. If not, why not?

6. Does the Commission agree with the PVV that the study report produced by Buck Consultants International in 2005 ([2]) painted an overly rosy picture of the potential offered by this rail link?

7. Can the Commission indicate whether subsidies should be recovered, given that this rail link is the umpteenth example of squandered taxpayers' money?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(19 February 2014)

1. The figures were confirmed by the managing authority of the programme.

2, 3, 4, 6. The aim of the project 'Revitalisering spoorlijn Lanaken-Maastricht' ([3]) was to reactivate this railway line to facilitate cross-border freight transport via 'modal shift'. This has been achieved. However, the theoretical rail freight potential up until 2030 ([4]) has up to now not materialised and the number of rail freight journeys is lower than planned. This is partially due to the difficult global economic situation. Freight transport should increase with economic recovery and with extra efforts to attract logistics companies and businesses with water and rail-connected activities to the adjacent industrial zones.
The European added value was the joint planning, financing, implementing and operating by partners across the border. The re-activation of the freight route and the multimodal access to the cross-border industrial zones should strengthen employment. The project implementation period ended only on 1 July 2013, so it is too early for conclusions on the outcome of the investment.

5. The Commission does not intervene in the selection of projects (except for major projects), as this is the competence of the programme authorities, provided that their choices are in line with the programming documents and comply with current legislation.
The project 'Modal Shift' was approved under the Interreg IVA 'Vlaanderen Nederland' programme. For more details, the Commission suggests that the Honourable Member contact directly the managing authority ([5]).

7. The Commission does not consider that the ERDF contribution should be recovered.

([1]) http://www.ersvlimburg.be/content/content/record.php?ID=431
([2]) http://o.b5z.net/i/u/10008185/i/Spoorstudie.pdf
([3]) Cross-Border Cooperation 'Vlaanderen-Nederland'.
([4]) Buck Consultants International, see: http://o.b5z.net/i/u/10008185/i/Spoorstudie.pdf
([5]) Provincie Antwerpen,Departement Welzijn, Economie en Plattelandsbeleid,Koningin Elisabethlei 22,B-2018 Antwerpen and Joint technical sectretariat of the programme: Interreg Vlaanderen-Nederland,Albert Building,Belpairestraat 20 B 10, B-2600 Antwerpen (Berchem), Tel. +32 (0)3 240 69 20, info@grensregio.eu

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013779/13
to the Commission
Marina Yannakoudakis (ECR)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: Burden of childhood influenza: a critical situation

Seasonal influenza is a serious disease and a major cause of morbidity and mortality, with significant direct and indirect costs for healthcare systems. Children have been recognised as the main transmitters of influenza in the community. By vaccinating children against influenza, we may be able directly to protect children, and indirectly to protect society, by achieving herd immunity (i.e. immunity that occurs when the vaccination of a significant portion of a population provides a measure of protection for individuals who are not vaccinated, as the likelihood of coming into contact with a carrier is greatly reduced). The vaccination of children will ultimately reduce the overall influenza burden on healthcare systems.

In the last year there has been greater recognition of the burden of paediatric influenza, and the rationale for including children as a focus for annual vaccination has increased. Children have been recognised as a risk group for seasonal influenza by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in its 'Vaccines against Influenza' position paper. In addition, the burden of disease faced by healthy children has been recognised by the scientific report of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) on seasonal influenza vaccination of children and pregnant women. In 2006, Parliament adopted a resolution that recognised the need to immunise against seasonal influenza as a means of preparing against a pandemic outbreak, by building the necessary vaccination infrastructure in case of an emergency. Lastly, the UK has adopted an innovative vaccination policy and is currently engaged in the gradual rollout of a seasonal influenza vaccination programme for children.

However, Council Recommendation 2009/1019/EU of 22 December 2009 on seasonal influenza vaccination makes no reference to children as a risk group. The recommendation is centred on achieving vaccination coverage rates among risk groups (defined as the elderly and people with specific health conditions) and healthcare workers. Updating the recommendation to include children as a risk group would make it possible further to protect both children and the overall population in a cost-effective manner.

In light of this, would the Commission consider updating the recommendation to reflect the WHO's position and the increasing recognition by the ECDC and the Member States of the burden of paediatric influenza?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(6 February 2014)

Council Recommendation on seasonal influenza vaccination (2009/1019/EU) ([1]) proposes to extend the target of a vaccination coverage rate of 75% for 'older age groups' to the risk group people with chronic conditions (e.g. chronic respiratory diseases, chronic cardiovascular diseases, chronic metabolic diseases, deficient immunity, etc.) and to 'other risk groups' including young children and pregnant women.

A recent interim analysis of the state of play of the implementation on the progress of the Council Recommendation 2009/1019/EU addressed current shortcomings and ideas for improvement of the status quo (http://ec.europa.eu/health/vaccination/ policy/index_en.htm). Under Decision 1082/2013/EU ([2]) of the European Parliament and the Council on serious cross-border threats to health, the Commission and the Member States will work together to improve the prevention and control of the spread of communicable diseases, including influenza. In this context, the Commission will contribute to increase stakeholder's awareness and understanding of the value of immunisation. Any change of scientific evidence regarding new prioritisations to be followed in the area of vaccination will be reflected in the update of scientific and technical guidance provided by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:348:0071:0072:EN:PDF
([2]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:293:0001:0015:EN:PDF

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-013781/13
an die Kommission
Britta Reimers (ALDE)
(5. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: ELER (Leader) Förderung für mobile Mostereien

Um in Deutschland eine Mosterei zu betreiben, ist normalerweise eine mehrjährige Ausbildung vonnöten, um sicherzustellen, dass Hygienevorschriften gemäß Verordnung (EG) 852/2004 und weitere Qualitätsstandards eingehalten werden. Um zur Bedienung einer mobilen Mosterei zugelassen zu werden, bedarf es jedoch lediglich einer mehrstündigen Einweisung. Gleichwohl bewegen sich beide Beispiele im selben Gewerbe und können durchaus ähnliche Betriebsstrukturen eines Mikrounternehmens aufweisen.

1. Wie bewertet die Kommission die unterschiedlichen Anforderungen hinsichtlich des Betreibens einer Mosterei, auch im Hinblick auf die zweifelsohne höheren Risiken bezüglich der Einhaltung von Hygiene- und Qualitätsvorschriften bei mobilen Mostereien?

2. Sieht die Kommission die Bezuschussung mobiler Mostereien unter dem in der ersten Frage angesprochenen Gesichtspunkt als gerechtfertigt an?

Antwort von Herrn Cioloş im Namen der Kommission
(10. Februar 2014)

In Bezug auf Punkt 1 enthält Anhang II der Verordnung über Lebensmittelhygiene ([1]) die allgemeinen Hygienevorschriften für alle Lebensmittelunternehmer wie beispielsweise Mostereien. Die Vorschriften für Lebensmittelbetriebe sind unterschiedlich, je nachdem, ob die Betriebsstätten ortsveränderlich sind (Kapitel III) oder nicht (Kapitel I und II). Diese Vorschriften unterscheiden sich nicht wesentlich voneinander, aber in Kapitel III wird die spezifische Situation der ortsveränderlichen Betriebsstätten berücksichtigt. Alle anderen Hygienevorschriften in Anhang II gelten für beide Arten von Betriebsstätten, z. B. für die Beförderung, Ausrüstung, Abfallentsorgung, Wasserversorgung, persönliche Hygiene, die Lebensmittel selbst, die Umhüllung und Verpackung, die Wärmebehandlung (falls zutreffend) und die Schulung des Personals. Daher gibt es für die angeführten Unterschiede in Ausbildung und Schulung keine Grundlage.

In Bezug auf Punkt 2 sind die Mitgliedstaaten verantwortlich für die Verwaltung der Programme für die Entwicklung des ländlichen Raums, die von der Kommission genehmigt wurden. Für den Teil der Programme, der über Leader umgesetzt wird, erteilt die Verordnung über die Entwicklung des ländlichen Raums ([2]) lokalen Aktionsgruppen eine Entscheidungsbefugnis innerhalb eines bestimmten territorialen Bereichs, um die Ziele der in der gleichen Verordnung vorgesehenen Aktionen und Maßnahmen zu erreichen. Die Projekte werden von den lokalen Aktionsgruppen innerhalb dieses Rechtsrahmens ohne Beteiligung der Kommission ausgewählt.

([1]) Verordnung (EG) Nr. 852/2004 des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 29. April 2004 über Lebensmittelhygiene (ABl. L 139 vom 30.4.2004, S. 1).
([2]) Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1698/2005 des Rates vom 20. September 2005 über die Förderung der Entwicklung des ländlichen Raums durch den Europäischen Landwirtschaftsfonds für die Entwicklung des ländlichen Raums (ELER) (ABl. L 277 vom 21.10.2005, S. 1).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013781/13
to the Commission
Britta Reimers (ALDE)
(5 December 2013)

Subject: EAFRD (Leader) funding for mobile cider presses

In order to run a cider-making business in Germany, several years of training is normally required in order to ensure that hygiene standards pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 and other quality standards are complied with. In order to be approved to run a mobile cider press, however, only a few hours of instruction are required. Nevertheless, both examples are in the same industry and may well have similar micro-enterprise business structures.

1. What is the Commission's view of the different requirements in respect of running a cider-making business, including with regard to the undoubtedly higher risks in relation to compliance with hygiene and quality standards in the case of mobile cider presses?

2. Does it consider the subsidising of mobile cider presses to be justified in light of the issue raised in question 1?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(10 February 2014)

Regarding point 1, the Annex II to the regulation on hygiene of foodstuffs ([1]) lays down the requirements for all food business operators such as producers of cider. The requirements for food premises are different depending whether these premises are movable (Chapter III) or not (Chapter I and II). These requirements are not substantially different but Chapter III takes into account the specific situation that the premises are movable. All other hygiene requirements in Annex II apply to both types of establishments e.g. on the transport, equipment, waste management, water supply, personal hygiene, the foodstuff itself, the wrapping and packaging, the heat treatment (when applicable) and the training of staff. There is therefore no basis for the quoted differences in training and education.

Regarding point 2, Member States are responsible for managing the Rural Development Programmes which have been approved by the Commission. For the part of the programmes which is implemented via Leader, the regulation on rural development ([2]) confers a decision-making power for local action groups (LAGs) within their defined territorial area with a view to achieving the objectives of the actions and measures foreseen in the same regulation. The projects are selected by the LAGs within this legal framework, without any involvement of the Commission.

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs (OJ L 139 30.4.2004, p. 1).
([2]) Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 of the Council of 20 September 2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) (OJ L 277, 21.10.2005, p. 1).

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite P-013783/13
à la Commission
Philippe Lamberts (Verts/ALE)
(5 décembre 2013)

Objet: Incidence du TTIP sur les PME européennes

Il ressort d'une analyse que le commerce bilatéral entre l'Union européenne et les États-Unis est essentiellement de type intra-branche et qu'il est centré sur quatre secteurs principaux: machines et équipements, équipements de transport, produits chimiques et produits électroniques.

Étant donné:

— que 1 % des entreprises américaines qui exportent sont à l'origine de 82 % des exportations,

— que ces entreprises sont de grande taille et, en moyenne, de plus grande taille que leurs homologues européennes (les grandes entreprises américaines emploient en moyenne 1 700 travailleurs contre 1 000 pour les européennes),

— qu'elles sont particulièrement présentes dans les quatre secteurs susmentionnés,

— que les exportations des PME européennes vers les États-Unis n'ont pas augmenté depuis 2000.

La Commission n'estime-t-elle pas que l'entrée en vigueur du TTIP risque de contrarier son ambition de porter de 13 % à 25 % le pourcentage de PME européennes qui exportent au-delà du marché intérieur et, de manière générale, d'affaiblir le tissu de PME (qu'elles exportent ou non)?

Quels sont les résultats des analyses d'impact à ce sujet? La Commission dispose-t-elle d'une analyse par États membres, par secteurs, etc.?

(Sources: DG «Entreprises et industrie», *Opportunities for the internationalisation of European SMEs*, 2011; United States International Trade Commission Investigation, *Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises: Characteristics and Performance*, 2010)

Réponse donnée par M. De Gucht au nom de la Commission
(14 janvier 2014)

Selon une étude indépendante du *Centre for Economic Policy Research* ([1]), un ambitieux partenariat transatlantique de commerce et d'investissement (TTIP) devrait rapporter 119 milliards d'euros par an à l'Union européenne. Les exportations de biens et de services vers les États-Unis devraient progresser de 187 milliards d'euros, c'est-à-dire de 28 %. Quant aux exportations, elles devraient augmenter dans presque tous les secteurs, dont les véhicules à moteur, les produits métalliques, les aliments transformés, les produits chimiques, les produits manufacturés et les équipements de transport.

Les PME tireraient d'un tel partenariat des bénéfices considérables: elles représentent en effet plus de 99 % des entreprises de l'Union et appartiennent à la plupart des chaînes d'approvisionnement intégrées. Elles occupent une place de premier plan dans les secteurs les plus avantagés par le TTIP, tels les produits alimentaires transformés, les machines et les pièces détachées pour automobiles.

Plutôt que les tarifs douaniers, déjà très faibles, ce sera en particulier la réduction des obstacles non tarifaires — dispositions réglementaires et normes techniques, par exemple — qui constituera le principal moteur d'un accroissement des échanges. Étant donné que les obstacles non tarifaires sont plus dommageables pour les PME que pour les entreprises de plus grande taille (en raison d'un chiffre d'affaires plus faible, de frais généraux plus élevés et de ressources humaines et financières limitées), leur atténuation pourrait générer proportionnellement un potentiel d'exportation plus favorable pour les PME que pour les grandes entreprises.

En outre, comme le montre le «Résumé de l'analyse d'impact sur l'avenir des relations commerciales entre l'UE et les États-Unis» ([2]), les PME tireront également profit du TTIP du fait que les États-Unis sont leur principal débouché (18 % des exportations de l'UE-27 vers les marchés extérieurs à l'Union européenne en 2010).

Enfin, les PME bénéficieront d'un marché transatlantique plus vaste et libre d'obstacles sur lequel les produits de niche et les innovations pourront être vendus à un plus grand nombre de clients et de chaînes d'approvisionnement. Cela aura une influence significative sur le développement de leur compétitivité internationale.

([1]) Reducing Transatlantic Barriers to Trade and Investment — An Economic Assessment — Mars 2013, Centre for Economic Policy Research, Londres, R-U.
([2]) Document de travail des services de la Commission SEC(2013) 68 du 12.3.2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-013783/13
to the Commission
Philippe Lamberts (Verts/ALE)
(5 December 2013)

Subject: Impact of the TTIP on European SMEs

An analysis of EU-US bilateral trade has shown that it consists essentially of intra-branch trade and is concentrated in four main sectors: machinery and equipment, transport equipment, chemicals and electronic products.

Given that:

— The top 1% of US exporting companies accounts for 82% of exports,

— These are large companies, on average larger than European companies (large US companies employ 1 700 workers on average compared to 1 000 for European companies),

— They are particularly strongly represented in the four abovementioned sectors,

— European SMEs have not increased their exports to the US since the year 2 000.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

Is there not a risk that the entry into force of the TTIP may endanger the realisation of the Commission's ambition to increase the percentage of European SMEs that export beyond the internal market from 13% to 25%? More generally, will it not weaken the fabric of SMEs (whether or not they export)?

What are the results of the impact analyses on this issue? Does it have available an analysis distinguishing between Member States, sectors, etc.?

(*Sources:* DG Enterprise and Industry, Opportunities for the Internationalisation of European SMEs, 2011; United States International Trade Commission Investigation, Small and Medium -Sized Enterprises: Characteristics and Performance, 2010)

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(14 January 2014)

An independent study of the Centre for Economic Policy Research ([1]) concludes that economic gains of an ambitious TTIP would reach EUR 119 billion a year for the EU. Exports of goods and services to the US would go up by an additional EUR 187 billion or 28%. It is estimated that exports would increase in almost all sectors, notably motor vehicles, metal products, processed foods, chemicals, manufactured goods and transport equipment.

SMEs would benefit hugely as they represent more than 99% of EU companies and are part of most integrated supply chains. They are prominent in sectors benefiting most from the TTIP, such as processed food, machinery and car parts.

It is in particular the reduction of non-tariff barriers (rather than customs tariffs, which are already low), such as regulatory issues and technical standards, that will be the main trigger for increased trade. Since non-tariff barriers are more damageable to SMEs compared to larger companies (due to their lower turnover, higher relative overhead costs, and limited personnel and financial resources), their reduction could generate, in proportion, a higher export potential for SMEs than for large companies.

Moreover, as shown in the 'Impact Assessment Report on the future of EU-US trade relations' ([2]), SMEs will also gain from TTIP since the US is their most important market (18% of EU-27 exports to non-EU markets in 2010).

Finally, SMEs will benefit from a larger transatlantic market without barriers where niche products and innovations can be sold to a wider range of clients and supply chains. This will have a significant impact on their international competitiveness.

([1]) 'Reducing Transatlantic Barriers to Trade and Investment — An Economic Assessment', March 2013, Centre for Economic Policy Research, London, UK.
([2]) Commission staff working document, SWD(2013) 68 of 12.3.2013.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-013784/13
an die Kommission
Norbert Neuser (S&D) und Birgit Schnieber-Jastram (PPE)
(5. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: G8-Programm „Neue Allianz für Ernährungssicherung in Afrika"

Wie will die Kommission sicherstellen, dass die beabsichtigte Wirkung des G8-Programms „Neue Allianz für Ernährungssicherung in Afrika" eintritt, 50 Millionen Menschen bis 2022 von Armut zu befreien? Mit welchen Armuts-Indikatoren, Monitoring- und Evaluationsverfahren soll dies erhoben werden? Wie werden die Wirkungen auf Kleinbauern beobachtet, insbesondere bezüglich Gender, Zugang zu Land und Saatgut? Ist eine Halbzeitüberprüfung vorgesehen, falls nein, warum nicht?

Antwort von Herrn Piebalgs im Namen der Kommission
(5. Februar 2014)

Zur Überwachung der Fortschritte und zur Messung der Ergebnisse und der Auswirkungen auf die Nahrungsmittel- und Ernährungssicherheit wurde im September 2013 auf der Tagung des Leadership Council der G8 ein Rahmen für die Rechenschaftslegung der Neuen Allianz gebilligt. Dieser Rahmen ist vollständig in den Ergebnisrahmen des Umfassenden Landwirtschaftlichen Entwicklungsprogramms für Afrika (CAADP) integriert.

Die Integrationswirkung wird anhand einer Reihe von Indikatoren wie der Anzahl der Kleinlandwirte, die infolge von Investitionen des Privatsektors zusätzlich in Wertschöpfungsketten eingebunden oder durch Dienstleistungen erreicht werden oder anhand der Anzahl der durch Privatinvestitionen geschaffenen Arbeitsplätze und der Agrararbeitsproduktivität beurteilt. Diese Indikatoren werden auch nach Geschlecht und Art der Tätigkeit aufgeschlüsselt.

Alle G8-Mitglieder haben sich zur Unterstützung der Umsetzung der Freiwilligen Leitlinien zum verantwortungsvollen Umgang mit dem Besitz von Land und zur Annahme der Prinzipien für verantwortungsvolle landwirtschaftliche Investitionen verpflichtet. Der Rahmen für die Rechenschaftslegung, der zur Kontrolle der Einhaltung der G8-Verpflichtungen eingerichtet wurde, enthält einen besonderen Indikator für die Überwachung der Fortschritte in dieser Hinsicht.

Die Überwachung der Neuen Allianz der G8 wird in Verbindung mit der Überprüfung des CAADP jedes Jahr durchgeführt. Es wurde keine Halbzeitüberprüfung vorgesehen. Im Leadership Council, bestehend aus afrikanischen Regierungen, G8-Mitgliedern und Vertretern des Privatsektors (einschließlich Landwirten und Organisationen der Zivilgesellschaft) kann jedoch eine Halbzeitbewertung im Jahr 2016 beschlossen werden. Dieser Zeitpunkt entspricht auch dem Ende der Investitionszusagen des Privatsektors.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013784/13
to the Commission
Norbert Neuser (S&D) and Birgit Schnieber-Jastram (PPE)
(5 December 2013)

Subject: G8 programme 'New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition in Africa'

How does the Commission intend to ensure that the intended effect of the G8's New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition in Africa of lifting 50 million people out of poverty by 2022 is achieved? What poverty indicators and monitoring and evaluation methods are to be used to ascertain this? How will the effects on small-scale farmers be observed, in particular with regard to gender, access to land and seed? Is a mid-term review planned? If not, why not?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(5 February 2014)

In order to monitor progress made and measure the outcome and impact on food and nutrition security, a New Alliance accountability framework was endorsed by the G8 Leadership council in September 2013. This framework is fully integrated into the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Results Framework.

Inclusiveness will be assessed based on a series of indicators such as: number of additional smallholder farmers included in value chains or reached through services as a result of private sector investment; number of jobs created from private investments and agricultural labour productivity. These indicators will also be disaggregated by gender and type of activity.

All G8 Members are committed to supporting the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance for Land Tenure and to adopting principles for Responsible Agriculture Investment. The accountability framework which has been established to follow up on G8 commitments includes a specific indicator to monitor progress made in this respect.

Monitoring of the G8 New Alliance, coupled with the CAADP review, is to be carried out every year. No mid-term review has been foreseen. However, the Leadership Council, comprising African governments, G8 Members and the private sector (including farmer and civil society organisations) may decide to carry out a mid-term evaluation in 2016. This date will correspond to the end of private sector investment pledges.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013785/13
to the Commission
William (The Earl of) Dartmouth (EFD)
(5 December 2013)

Subject: Dilution of the EU visa application process for Georgia

In response to the proposal concerning the implementation of the Visa Liberalisation Plan in Georgia, has the Commission assessed the potential impact of relaxing the system for Georgian citizens to obtain visas for the EU on the social services provided by the current Member States?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(14 February 2014)

Currently there is no legislative proposal to establish a visa free regime for Georgian citizens.

Enhancing the mobility of citizens in a secure and well-managed environment is a shared objective of the EU and Georgia. Since June 2006, EU citizens are allowed to travel to Georgia without visas.

In June 2012, the EU and Georgia started a visa liberalisation dialogue aimed at examining all relevant conditions for visa-free travel for Georgian citizens to the Schengen area for short stays (90/180 days). In February 2013, the Commission handed over to Georgia an Action Plan on Visa Liberalisation (VLAP) listing benchmarks in four areas: document security; integrated border management, migration management, asylum; public order and security; and external relations and fundamental rights.

The Commission regularly assesses the progress made by Georgia and informs the European Parliament and the Council of its findings. The first progress report was published on 15 November 2013 ([1]). Once the implementation of the VLAP by Georgia is more advanced, the Commission will present an assessment of possible migratory and security impacts of the future visa-free regime.

Whether a person traveling to an EU Member State on a short stay visa can benefit from social services is a matter of national legislation of the Member State. In principle, people who travel for a short term visit (with or without visa) do not qualify for social benefits. Should the purpose of the short stay be work, common EU rules will apply in respect of seasonal workers once legislation based on the Commission's proposal ([2]) is adopted by co-legislators. However, this is without prejudice to the right of the Member States to set the volumes of admission in accordance with Article 79(5) of the TFEU.

([1]) COM(2013) 808 final.
([2]) COM(2010) 379 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013786/13
to the Commission
William (The Earl of) Dartmouth (EFD)
(5 December 2013)

Subject: Dilution of the EU visa application process for Belarus

In view of the proposal to implement the 'Visa Liberalisation Plan' in Belarus, has the Commission assessed the impact that relaxing the system for Belarusian citizens to obtain EU visas could have on the social services of current EU Member States?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(11 February 2014)

No visa liberalisation plan exists for Belarus and there is no legislative proposal to establish a visa free regime for Belarusian citizens.

In February 2011 the Council adopted negotiating directives for visa facilitation and readmission agreements with Belarus. The EU has reiterated on several occasions (e.g. Council Conclusions in March and October 2012) its readiness to launch negotiations for these agreements with Belarus and the Commission sent a formal letter inviting Belarus to start negotiations in June 2011. The Belarusian authorities responded positively to the Commission's invitation in January 2014.

The visa facilitation agreement in particular would enhance people-to-people contacts to the benefit of the Belarusian population at large.

Whether a person traveling to an EU Member State on a short stay visa can benefit from social services is a matter of national legislation of the Member State. In principle, people who travel for a short term visit (with or without visa) do not qualify for social benefits. Should the purpose of the short stay be work, common EU rules will apply in respect of seasonal workers once legislation based on the Commission's proposal ([1]) is adopted by co-legislators. However, this is without prejudice to the right of the Member States to set the volumes of admission in accordance with Article 79(5) of the TFEU.

([1]) COM(2010) 379 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013787/13
to the Commission
William (The Earl of) Dartmouth (EFD)
(5 December 2013)

Subject: Dilution of the EU visa application process for Ukraine

In view of the fact that fingerprints are no longer required in order to obtain a Schengen visa, and of the proposal to create a visa-free regime with Ukraine, has the Commission assessed the potential impact of relaxing the system for Ukrainian citizens to obtain visas for the EU on the social services of the current Member States?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(27 February 2014)

Currently there is no legislative proposal to create a visa free regime for Ukrainian citizens. Short stay visas for citizens of Ukraine are regulated by the Visa Code and the amended Visa Facilitation Agreement. Enhancing the mobility of citizens in a secure and well-managed environment is a shared objective of the EU and Ukraine. Since 2005, EU citizens can travel to Ukraine without visas.

In 2008, the EU and Ukraine began a visa dialogue on the relevant conditions for visa-free travel for Ukrainian citizens to the Schengen area for short stays (90/180 days). It became operational with a Visa Liberalisation Action Plan in 2010, with precise conditions for Ukraine. The Commission regularly reports on the process, most recently in November 2013 ([1]). Once implementation is more advanced, the Commission will present an assessment of possible migratory and security impacts of a future visa-free regime.

For the Visa Information System (VIS), applicants are required to provide their fingerprints. The VIS is being progressively rolled-out; the start of operations in Ukraine is tentatively projected for end 2014/early 2015, after which Member States will be required to collect Schengen visa applicants' fingerprints.

Whether a person traveling to an EU Member State on a short stay visa can benefit from social services is a matter for national legislation. In principle, those on a short term visit (with or without visa) do not qualify for social benefits. Should the short stay be for work, common EU rules will apply in respect of seasonal workers once legislation based on the Commission's proposal ([2]) is adopted by the co-legislators. This is without prejudice to the right of Member States to set volumes of admission in accordance with Article 79(5) of the TFEU.

([1]) COM(2013) 809 final.
([2]) COM(2010) 379 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013788/13
to the Commission
William (The Earl of) Dartmouth (EFD)
(5 December 2013)

Subject: Belarus and European Union membership

Is it the Commission's position that it will endorse Belarus' application for EU membership?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(4 February 2014)

Belarus has never submitted any application for EU membership.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013790/13
to the Council (President of the European Council)
William (The Earl of) Dartmouth (EFD)
(5 December 2013)

Subject: PCE/PEC — President Van Rompuy and the auditing of the EU accounts

Does the President have any plans to retract the statement quoted below, which he made in regard to the European Union Court of Auditors?

'Given this media handling of information, and its impact on public opinion in some countries, the court might want to give some further thought as to how it can encourage more nuanced reporting.'

Reply
(3 February 2014)

The President continues to believe that accurate media reporting is preferable to inaccurate reporting.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013791/13
to the Commission
William (The Earl of) Dartmouth (EFD)
(5 December 2013)

Subject: Cooperation between the UK and the EU in criminal matters

It has been reported in the British press that the UK Government is involved in 35 areas of criminal justice cooperation with the EU (source: the *Guardian* (London), 'Britain to keep European arrest warrant but to try to reform it', 8.7.2013). However, the UK has an opt-out from Justice and Home Affairs matters. In the light of this, how and why is the UK involved in matters linked to the JHA mandate? Could the Commission provide the legal basis for this cooperation?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(18 February 2014)

The Commission refers the Honourable Member to Protocols 21 and 36 attached to the Treaties.

Protocol 21 deals with acts adopted pursuant to Title V of Part Three TFEU since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. The UK does not take part in their adoption, unless it decides to opt in.

Article 10 of Protocol 36 deals with transitional provisions concerning the around 130 acts adopted in the field of police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters before the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty (former 'third pillar' acts) which have not yet been amended and to which no opt-out possibility has so far applied. Those include the European Arrest Warrant.

Pursuant to Article 10(1) of Protocol 36, the powers of the Commission to pursue infringements by Member States and the powers of the Court of Justice shall remain unchanged during the first five years of application of the Lisbon Treaty (until 30 November 2014).

Under Article 10(4) of Protocol 36 the UK may notify that it does not accept the powers of the Commission and of the Court of Justice as they will apply as of 1 December 2014 for the former third pillar acts. The UK made this notification on 24 July 2013. As a consequence, the acts concerned will cease to apply to the UK as of 1 December 2014.

Pursuant to Article 10(5) of the same Protocol, the UK may at any time afterwards notify its wish to participate again in acts which have ceased to apply.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013792/13
to the Council
William (The Earl of) Dartmouth (EFD)
(5 December 2013)

Subject: Milli Görüş activities

The Turkish diaspora group Milli Görüş is active in several EU countries. However, the German authorities have banned the activity of the associated charity IHH due to concerns over links to Hamas. Given that there was sufficient cause to ban one organisation, does the Council feel that Milli Görüş should face similar restrictions? The Council should refer to Council Common Position of 27 December 2001 on the application of specific measures to combat terrorism (2001/931/CFSP) which clearly states that anyone even indirectly linked to terrorist acts could face sanction.

Reply
(24 February 2014)

The group is not currently included in the list of entities to which EU restrictive counter-terrorism measures apply (Common Position 2001/931/CFSP). Any proposal to list an entity must be based on the decision by a Competent National Authority that the entity fulfils the criteria set out in the Common Position, and must be agreed by consensus in the Council. The Council keeps the issue of current and potential listings of entities in Common Position 2001/931/CFSP under review.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013793/13
to the Commission
William (The Earl of) Dartmouth (EFD)
(5 December 2013)

Subject: Reassessing Turkey's potential membership of the European Union

In light of the recent statement made by Turkish deputy parliamentary speaker Sadık Yakut when he said 'Turkey made an historic mistake in allowing the education of male and females students at the same schools in moves toward Westernisation', and other events relating to the government's conservative rhetoric emboldening the Turkish pious majority and provoking tensions with more liberal sections of society in Turkey, will the Commission be reconsidering the possible accession of Turkey to the EU?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(17 February 2014)

The Commission recalls that a core element of the democratisation package announced in September 2013 by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was the protection of the lifestyles and private choices of every citizen. The Commission welcomed this position.

In the absence of European standards regulating the matter referred to by the Honourable Member, different practices exist among the EU Member States and even within each Member State. This is an issue for Turkish society to solve, on the basis of an inclusive consultation process taking the views of all stakeholders into account.

The EU remains fully committed to the negotiating process on the basis of the 2005 negotiating framework and as reaffirmed by the November 2013 decision of the Council to open a new chapter in the negotiations, namely Chapter 22 on Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments.

(Hrvatska verzija)

Pitanje za pisani odgovor E-013794/13
upućeno Vijeću
Biljana Borzan (S&D)
(5. prosinca 2013.)

Predmet: Prevođenje službenih dokumenata i publikacija EU-a na hrvatski jezik

U srpnju 2013. godine Hrvatska je postala 28. članica, a hrvatski 24. službeni jezik Europske unije. Jezični paritet je ugrađen u sve ključne ugovore EU-a, a u člancima 21. i 22. Povelje Europske unije o temeljnim pravima izričito se zabranjuje bilo kakva diskriminacija na osnovi jezika.

U praksi to znači da službeni dokumenti i publikacije tijela i institucija EU-a moraju biti na hrvatskom jeziku dostupni hrvatskim građanima, institucijama, tvrtkama i organizacijama.

Svjesna sam da se nije moglo očekivati da će posao prevođenja na hrvatski već biti gotov, no od 1. srpnja prošlo je pola godine. Sudeći prema situaciji u Europskom parlamentu, može se pretpostaviti kako ni u drugim europskim institucijama poput Komisije, Vijeća itd. svi dokumenti i publikacije još uvijek nisu prevedeni na hrvatski jezik. Stoga postavljam sljedeća pitanja:

1. Kako napreduje uvođenje hrvatskog jezika u Vijeće EU-a i koji su problemi?

2. U kojoj su mjeri ispunjeni planovi kadrovskog popunjavanja prevodilačkih službi, prevođenja i komunikacije na hrvatskom jeziku?

3. Kakva napreduje objavljivanje priopćenja Vijeća EU-a na hrvatskom jeziku u Hrvatskoj?

Odgovor
(24. veljače 2014.)

Vijeće je započelo sa zapošljavanjem prevoditelja za hrvatski jezik u lipnju 2012. s ciljem pripreme pristupanja Hrvatske Europskoj uniji. Odjel za hrvatski jezik Glavnog tajništva Vijeća popunjen je u siječnju 2014. te će uskoro moći isporučivati hrvatske verzije svih dokumenata Vijeća kao i sve informacije koje izlaze na ostala 23 jezika.

Od 1. srpnja 2013. tekstovi u Službenom listu Europske unije i sve nove općenite publikacije Vijeća koje izlaze na ostala 23 jezika također su objavljeni na hrvatskom jeziku. Nadalje, većina postojećih publikacija Vijeća već je prevedena na hrvatski te se one od 1. srpnja 2013. postupno objavljuju. Informacije o općim publikacijama Vijeća te jezične verzije dostupne su na internetskoj stranici Vijeća. Distribucijski kanali i postupci vezani uz publikacije Vijeća isti su za sve dostupne jezične verzije.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013794/13
to the Council
Biljana Borzan (S&D)
(5 December 2013)

Subject: Translation of EU official documents and publications into Croatian

In July of this year, 2013, Croatia became the 28th EU Member State, and Croatian, the EU's 24th official language. Linguistic parity is built into every one of the founding EU Treaties, and Articles 21 and 22 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights expressly prohibit any discrimination based on language.

What this means in practice is that Croatian citizens, institutions, businesses, and organisations have to have access to official documents of EU institutions and bodies written in Croatian.

I realise that it was not possible to expect the work of translating into Croatian to have been already completed, but 1 July was almost six months ago. Judging from the situation in Parliament, it can be assumed, as far as the Commission, the Council, and other European institutions are concerned, that the documents and publications have still not all been translated into Croatian. Can the Council therefore say:

1. What progress is being made as regards the introduction of Croatian in the Council, and what are the problems?

2. To what extent have the plans been fulfilled regarding the recruitment of staff to the translation services for Croatian-language translation and communication?

3. How is Council information in Croatian being disseminated across Croatia?

Reply
(24 February 2014)

The Council started recruiting translators for the Croatian language in June 2012 to prepare for the accession of Croatia to the European Union. The Croatian language unit of the General Secretariat of the Council reached its full staff complement in January 2014 and will soon be able to deliver Croatian versions of all Council documents and information also produced in the other 23 languages.

Since 1 July 2013, texts in the *Official Journal of the European Union* and all new general Council publications that are produced in the other 23 languages are also published in Croatian. Furthermore, most of the existing Council publications have been translated into Croatian and, since 1 July 2013, are gradually being issued. Information about general Council publications and language versions is available on the Council website. Dissemination channels and procedures for Council publications are the same for all available language versions.

(Hrvatska verzija)

Pitanje za pisani odgovor E-013795/13
upućeno Komisiji
Biljana Borzan (S&D)
(5. prosinca 2013.)

Predmet: Prevođenje službenih dokumenata i publikacija EU-a na hrvatski jezik

U srpnju 2013. godine Hrvatska je postala 28. članica, a hrvatski 24. službeni jezik Europske unije. Jezični paritet je ugrađen u sve ključne ugovore EU-a, a u člancima 21. i 22. Povelje Europske unije o temeljnim pravima izričito se zabranjuje bilo kakva diskriminacija na osnovi jezika.

U praksi to znači da službeni dokumenti i publikacije tijela i institucija EU-a moraju biti dostupni hrvatskim građanima, institucijama, tvrtkama i organizacijama na hrvatskom jeziku.

Svjesna sam kako se nije moglo očekivati da će posao prevođenja na hrvatski već biti gotov, no od 1. srpnja prošlo je pola godine. Sudeći prema situaciji u Europskom parlamentu, može se pretpostaviti kako ni u drugim europskim institucijama poput Komisije, Vijeća itd. svi dokumenti i publikacije još uvijek nisu prevedeni na hrvatski jezik. Stoga postavljam sljedeća pitanja:

1. Kako napreduje uvođenje hrvatskog jezika u Vijeće EU-a i koji su problemi?

2. U kojoj su mjeri ispunjeni planovi kadrovskog popunjavanja prevodilačkih službi, prevođenja i komunikacije na hrvatskom jeziku?

3. Kako napreduje objavljivanje priopćenja Vijeća EU-a na hrvatskom jeziku u Hrvatskoj?

Odgovor gđe Vassiliou u ime Komisije
(29. siječnja 2014.)

1. Služba za hrvatski jezik pri Europskoj komisiji radi od 1. srpnja 2013. i u potpunosti je uključena u redovit prevoditeljski rad. U rijetkim je prilikama nekoliko hrvatskih prevoditelja malo kasnilo zbog određenih odgoda u prevođenju pravne stečevine Unije. Hrvatske su vlasti bile odgovorne za prijevod pravne stečevine do datuma pristupanja Uniji.

Što se tiče prevođenja internetskih stranica, najvažnije informacije na stranici Komisije EUROPA dostupne su na hrvatskom, uz manje iznimke, koje postoje i za druge jezike. Manje značajne stranice prevode se na hrvatski prema svojoj relativnoj važnosti te uzimajući u obzir pravne obveze i političke prioritete Komisije.

2. Služba za hrvatski jezik već broji 39 prevoditelja i 8 asistenata. Očekuje se da će do 2015., kad završe aktualni natječaji i zapošljavanje, imati traženi broj prevoditelja.

3. Predstavništvo Komisije u Hrvatskoj ima svoju internetsku stranicu na hrvatskom, a prisutno je i u društvenim medijima. Informacijski centar Europskog doma u Zagrebu građanima pruža pristup informacijama o institucijama i politikama EU-a na hrvatskom jeziku. Ured Predstavništva Komisije u Hrvatskoj organizira manifestacije i okrugle stolove o politikama EU-a, prevodi dokumente na hrvatski i lokalizira informacije o pitanjima EU-a. „Glasnik Europske komisije”, koji sadržava kratke vijesti iz Komisije, svakodnevno prima 250 osoba iz svih sektora hrvatskog društva. Zasad su uspostavljena četiri regionalna informacijska centra (EDICS), u Karlovcu, Slavonskom Brodu, Novoj Gradiški i Dubrovniku. Tijekom 2014. planira se otvaranje još oko šest EDICS-a diljem zemlje.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013795/13
to the Commission
Biljana Borzan (S&D)
(5 December 2013)

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3. How is Commission information in Croatian being disseminated across Croatia?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(29 January 2014)

1. The Commission's Croatian language department has been operational as from 1 July 2013 and is fully integrated in the regular translation workflow. On rare occasions, some Croatian translations were slightly behind schedule because of some delays in translation of the relevant *acquis communautaire*. It was the responsibility of the Croatian authorities to translate the *acquis* by the accession date.

As regards web translation, the top-level pages of the Commission's Europa website are online in Croatian, with few exceptions that apply also to other languages. Lower-level pages are being translated into Croatian according to their relative priority and taking into account the Commission's legal obligations and political considerations.

2. The Croatian language department already consists of 39 translators and 8 assistants. Targeted staffing levels are expected to be reached by 2015 once ongoing selection and recruitment procedures are completed.

3. The Commission Representation in Croatia maintains its website in Croatian and is also present on social media. The Info Centre of Europe House in Zagreb provides citizens with access to information related to the EU institutions and EU policies in Croatian. The Commission's Representation office organises events and round tables on EU policies, translates documents in Croatian and localises information on EU matters. An 'EC newsletter' containing flash news from the Commission is disseminated on a daily basis to about 250 recipients from all sectors of Croatian society. To date, four Regional information centres (EDICS) have been established, in Karlovac, Slavonski Brod, Nova Gradiška and Dubrovnik. About six additional EDICS are set to open in 2014 throughout the country.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-013796/13
alla Commissione
Lara Comi (PPE)
(5 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Aiuti alle zone colpite dall'alluvione in Sardegna

Alcune zone della Sardegna lo scorso 18 novembre sono state colpite da un'alluvione che ha causato 17 morti, costretto oltre 2700 persone ad andare via di casa per rifugiarsi altrove e arrecato danni incalcolabili alle persone, alle case, alle infrastrutture e al territorio.

Lo Stato Italiano sta valutando la possibilità di erogare aiuti, come è opportuno in una situazione di questo genere.

Può la Commissione far sapere:

1. se esistono fondi che possono essere destinati agli enti locali per agevolare il ritorno alla normalità e prevenire ulteriori problemi di questo genere;

2. in caso affermativo, e nell'ottica della prevenzione, se ritiene che tali fondi debbano essere subordinati alla presentazione di certificazioni di impatto ambientale degli immobili danneggiati;

3. se ritiene che dette certificazioni possano costituire una buona pratica da adottare d'ora in avanti?

Risposta di Johannes Hahn a nome della Commissione
(29 gennaio 2014)

I servizi della Commissione seguono da vicino la situazione in Sardegna e hanno già informato le autorità sarde della possibilità di usare i Fondi strutturali nel quadro del programma regionale Sardegna 2007-2013 in linea con gli obiettivi e con la strategia del programma al fine di mitigare gli effetti delle inondazioni. A tutt'oggi le autorità sarde non hanno trasmesso alla Commissione nessuna richiesta formale in tal senso.

La Commissione opera inoltre a stretto contatto con le autorità sarde e nazionali italiane che preparano attualmente una richiesta di assistenza finanziaria a valere sul Fondo di solidarietà dell'UE.

Per quanto concerne le problematiche ambientali sollevate dall'onorevole deputato, la Commissione desidera rammentare che tutti i progetti cofinanziati dall'UE devono ottemperare alla legislazione unionale vigente, compresa quella relativa agli aspetti ambientali. Gli Stati membri sono responsabili di assicurare l'ottemperanza a tali norme.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-013796/13
to the Commission
Lara Comi (PPE)
(5 December 2013)

Subject: Help for flood-stricken areas in Sardinia

On 18 November 2013 some parts of Sardinia were hit by a flood that caused 17 fatalities, forced more than 2 700 people to flee their homes and seek refuge elsewhere and caused untold damage to people, homes, infrastructure and land.

The Italian Government is considering the possibility of providing aid, as is appropriate in a situation of this kind.

Can the Commission say:

1. whether there are any funds that can be allocated to local authorities to help the areas in question return to normal and to prevent further problems of this kind;

2. if so, and with a view to prevention, whether such funding would be subject to the submission of environmental impact certification for the damaged buildings;

3. whether it believes that such certification might be a good practice to adopt from now on?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(29 January 2014)

The Commission services are closely following the situation in Sardinia and have already informed the Sardinian authorities of the possibility to use Structural Funds within the framework of the Sardinian 2007-2013 regional programme in line with the objectives and strategy of the programme to alleviate the effects of the floods. So far, no official request by the Sardinian authorities has been transmitted to the Commission in this respect.

The Commission is also in close contact with the Sardinian and national Italian authorities who are currently preparing an application for financial assistance from the EU Solidarity Fund.

With respect to the environmental issues raised by the Honourable Member, the Commission wishes to recall that any EU co-funded project needs to comply with all EU applicable legislation including environmental aspects. Member States are responsible for compliance with these laws.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej P-013797/13
do Komisji
Jarosław Kalinowski (PPE)
(5 grudnia 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Skuteczność całkowitego zakazu uboju rytualnego na terenie Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej

W świetle art. 4 ust. 1 Rozporządzenia Rady (WE) nr 1099/2009 z dnia 24 września 2009 r. w sprawie ochrony zwierząt podczas ich uśmiercania (Dz. Urz. UE L 2009, nr 303, str. 1) zwierzęta mogą być uśmiercane wyłącznie po ich ogłuszeniu. Równocześnie art. 4 ust. 4 Rozporządzenia dopuszcza stosowanie uboju rytualnego, w tym uboju bez uprzedniego ogłuszenia, w przypadku zwierząt poddawanych ubojowi według szczególnych metod wymaganych przez obrzędy religijne. Jak wskazano w preambule, Rozporządzenie „respektuje wolność wyznania i prawo do uzewnętrzniania religii lub przekonań poprzez uprawianie kultu, nauczanie, praktykowanie i uczestniczenie w obrzędach, co zapisano w art. 10 Karty praw podstawowych Unii Europejskiej" (pkt. 18 Preambuły).

Zgodnie z art. 26 ust. 1 Rozporządzenia, Rozporządzenie nie uniemożliwia państwom członkowskim utrzymania przepisów krajowych, które służą zapewnieniu dalej idącej ochrony zwierząt podczas ich uśmiercania, pod warunkiem powiadomienia Komisji o takich przepisach przed dniem 1 stycznia 2013 r.

W świetle powyższej regulacji oraz wobec powoływania się Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej na obowiązywanie całkowitego zakazu uboju rytualnego na terenie Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej zgodnie z art. 34 ust. 1 ustawy z dnia 21 sierpnia 1997 r. o ochronie zwierząt (tekst jedn. Dz.U. z 2013 r., poz. 856 ze zm.), rodzi się następujące pytanie:

1. Czy całkowity zakaz uboju rytualnego bez uprzedniego ogłuszenia może być uznany za regulację służącą zapewnieniu „dalej idącej ochrony zwierząt" w rozumieniu art. 26 ust. 1 Rozporządzenia?

2. Czy całkowity zakaz uboju rytualnego pozostaje w zgodzie z art. 10 Karty praw podstawowych Unii Europejskiej?

3. Czy pismo Ministra Rolnictwa i Rozwoju Wsi z dnia 27 grudnia 2012 r. spełnia warunki wynikające z art. 26 ust. 1 Rozporządzenia i umożliwia Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej powołanie się na całkowity zakaz uboju rytualnego?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Tonia Borga w imieniu Komisji
(31 stycznia 2014 r.)

W art. 4 ust. 4 rozporządzenia Rady (WE) nr 1099/2009 ([1]) przewidziano wyjątek od przepisu zobowiązującego państwa członkowskie do zapewnienia, aby zwierzęta były uśmiercane wyłącznie po uprzednim ogłuszeniu zgodnie z pewnymi metodami i wymogami określonymi w załączniku do tego rozporządzenia. W przypadku zwierząt poddawanych ubojowi według szczególnych metod wymaganych przez obrzędy religijne obowiązek określony w art. 4 ust. 1 nie ma zastosowania, pod warunkiem że ubój ma miejsce w rzeźni. Unijny prawodawca przewidział ten wyjątek, aby zapewnić poszanowanie wolności religii (art. 10 Karty). Krajowe środki, które ograniczają zastosowanie wyjątku przewidzianego w art. 4 ust. 4, muszą być zgodne z art. 10 Karty.

Aby ustalić, jakie wymogi dotyczące uśmiercania zwierząt wynikają z prawa do wolności religii, należy dokonać złożonej analizy. W szczególności należy stwierdzić, czy bezprawność stosowania określonych metod uśmiercania zwierząt uniemożliwia członkom pewnych wspólnot religijnych spożywanie mięsa zwierząt poddanych ubojowi zgodnie z nakazami religijnymi, do których stosują się te wspólnoty. Komisja nie posiada dostatecznych informacji o wprowadzonym w Polsce zakazie uboju bez ogłuszania ani o jego skutkach dla poszczególnych wspólnot religijnych. Komisja nie może zatem dokonać oceny prawnej kwestii przedstawionych w pytaniu Pana Posła, w szczególności nie ma możliwości ustalenia, czy sposób, w jaki polskie władze powiadomiły Komisję o zakazie uboju bez ogłuszania w Polsce, spełnia wymogi art. 26 ust. 1 wspomnianego rozporządzenia.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:303:0001:0030:PL:PDF

(English version)

Question for written answer P-013797/13
to the Commission
Jarosław Kalinowski (PPE)
(5 December 2013)

Subject: Validity of outright ban on ritual slaughter in Poland

Under Article 4(1) of Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 of 24 September 2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing (EU Official Journal L 303, 18.11.2009, p. 1), animals may be killed only after stunning. However, paragraph 4 of that article permits ritual slaughter without prior stunning in the case of animals subject to particular methods of slaughter prescribed by religious rites. Furthermore, Recital 18 states that 'this regulation respects the freedom of religion and the right to manifest religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance, as enshrined in Article 10 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union'.

Under Article 26(1) of the regulation Member States may maintain any national rules aimed at ensuring more extensive protection of animals at the time of killing, provided that they inform the Commission about such rules before 1 January 2013.

Poland is continuing to apply the outright ban on ritual slaughter established within the country by Article 34(1) of the Act of 21 August 1997 on the protection of animals (consolidated text, Polish Official Journal 2103, item 856, as amended).

1. Can an outright ban on ritual slaughter without prior stunning be considered a measure 'aimed at ensuring more extensive protection of animals' within the meaning of Article 26(1) of the above regulation?

2. In such a ban in keeping with Article 10 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union?

3. Did the letter of 27 December 2012 from the Polish Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development meet the requirements laid down in Article 26(1) of the regulation, thus enabling Poland to maintain the outright ban on ritual slaughter?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(31 January 2014)

Article 4(4) of Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 ([1]) provides an exception to the obligation of Member States to ensure that animals are only be killed after stunning in accordance with certain methods and requirements set out in an annex to that regulation. In the case of animals subject to particular methods of slaughter prescribed by religious rites, the obligation set out in Article 4(1) shall not apply provided that the slaughter takes place in slaughterhouses. This exception was inserted by the Union legislator to respect the freedom of religion (Article 10 of the Charter). National measures limiting the use of the exception under Article 4(4) must comply with Article 10 of the Charter

Determining the requirements flowing from the right to freedom of religion in relation to the killing of animals requires a complex assessment. In particular, it falls to determine whether the illegality of performing certain methods of killing of animals makes it impossible for members of certain religious communities to eat meat from animals slaughtered in accordance with the religious prescriptions they consider applicable. The Commission has not been provided with sufficient information on the ban of slaughter without stunning in Poland, including its effects on the religious communities concerned. It therefore cannot provide a legal assessment in the context of this parliamentary question, including as regards the issue of whether the way the Polish authorities have notified to the Commission the ban of slaughter without stunning in Poland fulfils the requirement of Article 26(1) of the said Regulation.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:303:0001:0030:EN:PDF

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013798/13
a la Comisión
Vicente Miguel Garcés Ramón (S&D)
(5 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Importación de cítricos contaminados procedentes de Sudáfrica

Se han dado casos recurrentes, publicados en los medios de comunicación, de envíos de productos cítricos en mal estado fitosanitario procedentes de Sudáfrica, contaminados con la enfermedad «Guignardia citricarpa», también denominada «mancha negra», que puede tener, según las asociaciones de agricultores, un efecto devastador para los cultivos europeos, de vital importancia en las exportaciones de varias regiones de la Unión.

Por este motivo, la Comisión advirtió, en noviembre de 2012, a Sudáfrica de que, en la circunstancia de que se volvieran a detectar cinco casos de envíos de cítricos contaminados, se prohibirían las importaciones desde ese país. Los medios de comunicación españoles han publicado que el Ministerio de Agricultura de Sudáfrica y los comerciantes de cítricos de dicho país han optado por suspender sus exportaciones a la Unión Europea, excepto las procedentes de áreas consideradas libres de la «mancha negra».

Ante estas informaciones se formulan a la Comisión las siguientes preguntas:

1. ¿Tiene constancia la Comisión de que Sudáfrica haya adoptado medidas cautelares de suspensión de sus exportaciones de cítricos a la Unión Europea?

2. ¿Qué previsión ha realizado la Comisión para la próxima campaña citrícola 2014-2015?

3. ¿Tiene la Comisión previsto un plan de actuación a medio plazo para evitar los efectos nocivos de importaciones al espacio europeo de cítricos afectados por este tipo de plaga?

Respuesta del Sr. Borg en nombre de la Comisión
(3 de febrero de 2014)

Mediante la Decisión 2013/754 de la Comisión ([1]), se han establecido medidas de urgencia para abordar el problema de los cítricos procedentes de Sudáfrica contaminados con la mancha negra de los cítricos. Las medidas eran aplicables a los cítricos sudafricanos producidos durante el período vegetativo 2012/13 y solo permitían la entrada en la EU de cítricos originarios de zonas de Sudáfrica libres de la plaga de la mancha negra de los cítricos.

Actualmente, la legislación fitosanitaria, es decir, la Directiva 2000/29/CE del Consejo ([2]), regula la mancha negra de los cítricos para evitar su introducción a partir de terceros países y su propagación en la EU. La Autoridad Europea de Seguridad Alimentaria está realizando un análisis del riesgo de plaga de mancha negra de los cítricos a fin de evaluar los requisitos actuales de la UE. Se espera que la Autoridad Europea de Seguridad Alimentaria emita su dictamen en el primer trimestre de 2014. Sobre la base de los requisitos de esta evaluación, los requisitos fitosanitarios actuales se revisarán, si es necesario.

([1]) DO L 334 de 13.12.2013, p. 44.
([2]) DO L 169 de 10.7.2000, p. 1.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013798/13
to the Commission
Vicente Miguel Garcés Ramón (S&D)
(5 December 2013)

Subject: Import of contaminated citrus products from South Africa

The media have reported recurrent cases of shipments from South Africa of citrus products in a poor state of plant health. They are contaminated with the *Guignardia citricarpa* disease, also known as 'black spot', which, according to farmers' associations, may have a devastating effect on European crops of vital importance to the exports of various regions of the Union.

For this reason, in November 2012, the Commission warned South Africa that if five more cases of contaminated citrus shipments were found, imports from the country would be banned. The Spanish media have reported that South Africa's Ministry of Agriculture and the country's citrus product traders have chosen to suspend exports to the European Union, except for products grown in areas considered free of 'black spot'.

In view of the above, I would like to ask the Commission the following questions:

1. Can the Commission confirm that South Africa has taken the precautionary measure of suspending its citrus exports to the Union?

2. What precautions has the Commission taken for the coming citrus season of 2014-2015?

3. Does the Commission have a medium-term action plan to prevent harm to the EU area from citrus products affected by this kind of disease?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(3 February 2014)

Emergency measures to tackle citrus fruit from South Africa contaminated with citrus black spot have been introduced with Commission Decision 2013/754/EU ([1]). The measures applied for South African citrus fruit produced during the 2012-2013 growing season, allowing only the entrance into the EU of citrus fruit originating in South African pest free areas for citrus black spot.

Currently, the EU plant health legislation, i.e. Council Directive 2000/29/EC ([2]), regulates citrus black spot in order to avoid its introduction from third countries and spread within the EU. A pest risk analysis of citrus black spot is being carried out by the European Food Safety Authority in order to evaluate the present EU requirements. The opinion of the European Food Safety Authority is expected to be delivered in the first quarter of 2014. Based on the outcome of this evaluation, the current phytosanitary requirements will be revised, if needed.

([1]) OJ L 334, 13.12.2013, p.44.
([2]) OJ L 169, 10.7.2000, p.1.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013799/13
a la Comisión
Vicente Miguel Garcés Ramón (S&D)
(5 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Programa Juventud en Acción en la Comunidad Valenciana (España)

Recientemente, diferentes medios de comunicación de España han publicado que en el presente año la Comunidad Valenciana (España) ha ingresado 722 221 euros procedentes de proyectos europeos incluidos en el programa Juventud en Acción. Los mismos medios han asegurado que la cantidad asignada procedente del mismo programa fue de 444 884 euros en el año 2012.

El director general de Juventud de la Comunidad Valenciana (España) ha destacado recientemente que el 70 % de estos proyectos aprobados se engloban en el capítulo 2 del mencionado programa, «Servicio voluntario europeo», y que cada vez surgen más proyectos en la Comunidad Valenciana (España).

A la luz de esta información se formulan a la Comisión las siguientes preguntas:

1. ¿Puede facilitarnos la Comisión el importe exacto que recibió la Comunidad Valenciana (España) desde el programa Juventud en Acción de la UE durante el año 2012?

2. ¿Puede facilitarnos la Comisión el importe exacto que recibió la Comunidad Valenciana (España) desde el programa Juventud en Acción de la UE durante los meses transcurridos del año 2013?

3. ¿Tiene información la Comisión del desglose por capítulos del importe destinado a la Comunidad Valenciana (España) procedente del programa de la UE Juventud en Acción?

4. ¿Puede facilitarnos la Comisión el número de proyectos pertenecientes al programa Juventud en Acción aprobados para la Comunidad Valenciana (España) en 2012 y 2013?

5. De estos proyectos aprobados, ¿puede facilitarnos la Comisión el listado de destinatarios y el importe de estos proyectos?

6. ¿Tiene la Comisión constancia de que el Gobierno de la Comunidad Valenciana (España) realice algún tipo de campaña de información a la ciudadanía sobre estos proyectos?

Respuesta de la Sra. Vassiliou en nombre de la Comisión
(12 de febrero de 2014)

En 2012, el programa La Juventud en Acción concedió ayudas a cuarenta y siete proyectos presentados por solicitantes establecidos en la Comunidad Valenciana. Estos proyectos recibieron 726 985 EUR de financiación. En 2013, del número provisional de proyectos subvencionados ascendió a setenta y tres, lo que correspondió a 1 003 512 EUR de financiación.

En el anexo figuran los cuadros que muestran el desglose por acción y la lista de beneficiarios de los proyectos aprobados, así como los importes asignados.

El programa La Juventud en Acción está muy descentralizado; la mayoría de las acciones del programa se aplican en los treinta y tres países participantes en el mismo. Las agencias nacionales no solo son responsables de seleccionar y gestionar los proyectos, sino también de realizar actividades relacionadas con el suministro de información, la comunicación y la difusión de los resultados de los proyectos. En el caso de España, la Agencia Nacional también ha recibido apoyo de una red de corresponsales regionales que lleva a cabo actividades complementarias de información, comunicación y difusión.

La Comisión puede confirmar que el corresponsal regional de la Comunidad Valenciana del programa La Juventud en Acción ha facilitado, a través de su sitio web, información sobre los resultados provisionales del año 2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013799/13
to the Commission
Vicente Miguel Garcés Ramón (S&D)
(5 December 2013)

Subject: Youth in Action programme in the Autonomous Community of Valencia (Spain)

According to recent reports in the Spanish media, the Autonomous Community of Valencia has received EUR 722 221 this year from European projects included in the Youth in Action programme. According to the same reports, the amount allocated from this programme in 2012 was EUR 444 884.

The Director-General of Valencia's Youth Council recently highlighted that 70% of the approved projects are included in action 2 of this programme — the 'European Voluntary Service' — and that the number of new projects of this kind in Valencia is on the increase.

1. Can the Commission say exactly how much the Autonomous Community of Valencia received from the EU's Youth in Action programme in 2012?

2. Can it say exactly how much Valencia has received from the EU's Youth in Action programme so far in 2013?

3. Does the Commission have a breakdown per action of the amount allocated to Valencia from the EU's Youth in Action programme?

4. Can the Commission say how many projects under the Youth in Action programme have been approved for Valencia in 2012 and 2013?

5. Can the Commission provide a list of these approved projects' recipients and the amounts allocated?

6. Does the Commission have any evidence of the Government of the Autonomous Community of Valencia undertaking any kind of campaign to inform the public about these projects?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(12 February 2014)

In 2012, the Youth in Action Programme supported 47 projects submitted by applicants established in the Autonomous Community of Valencia. These projects received EUR 726 985 in funding. In 2013, the provisional number of granted projects rose to 73, corresponding to EUR 1 003 512 in funding.

The tables showing the breakdown per action and the list of approved projects' beneficiaries and amounts allocated can be found in the annex .

The Youth in Action Programme is largely decentralised; most Programme actions are implemented within the 33 Programme Countries. National Agencies are not only responsible for selecting and managing projects, but also for carrying out activities related to information provision, communication, and the dissemination of projects' results. In the case of Spain, the National Agency is also supported by a network of regional correspondents that carry out additional information, communication and dissemination activities.

The Commission can confirm that the Youth in Action regional correspondent of the Autonomous Community of Valencia has provided information about the provisional results of the year 2013 through its website.

(Slovenské znenie)

Otázka na písomné zodpovedanie E-013802/13
Komisii
Anna Záborská (PPE)
(5. decembra 2013)

Vec: Financovanie potratov prostredníctvom rozvojovej pomoci EÚ – Analýza politiky EÚ v oblasti sexuálneho a reprodukčného zdravia

Mimovládna organizácia European Dignity Watch (EDW) zverejnila správu o Financovaní potratov prostredníctvom rozvojovej pomoci EÚ – Analýza politiky EÚ v oblasti sexuálneho a reprodukčného zdravia, v ktorej tvrdí, že rozpočty EÚ na rozvojovú pomoc a verejné zdravie sa využívali na financovanie potratov v rozvojových krajinách. Európska iniciatíva občanov (EIO) Jeden z nás zozbierala takmer 1,9 milióna podpisov pod petíciu, v ktorej sa navrhuje úprava nariadenia EÚ o rozpočtových pravidlách, aby sa zabránilo zneužívaniu peňazí EÚ, či už priamo, alebo nepriamo, na financovanie potratov. Komisia dňa 22. októbra zverejnila výzvu na predloženie návrhov na tému Podpora sexuálneho a reprodukčného zdravia a práv – Všeobecný prístup k reprodukčnému zdraviu. V tejto výzve na predkladanie návrhov sa podľa všetkého vyslovene nevylučuje financovanie projektov, ktoré zahrnujú vykonávanie alebo podporu potratov v príslušných krajinách. Mohla by Komisia, na základe uvedených informácií, prosím, odpovedať na tieto otázky:

Vypracovala Komisia niekedy komentár k správe EDW? Ak nie, mohla by to urobiť teraz?

Vzhľadom na úspech EIO Jeden z nás uvažuje Komisia o nejakých dočasných opatreniach, ako je moratórium, s cieľom zabezpečiť, aby sa nijaké finančné prostriedky EÚ nepoužili na projekty zahrnujúce vykonávanie alebo podporu potratov v príslušných krajinách?

Komisia, podľa zistení, skutočne financovala mimovládne organizácie, ktoré poskytovali služby na prerušenie ťarchavosti v tretích krajinách v tretích krajinách, kde potraty podliehajú ústavnými obmedzeniam. Aká je politika Komisie v otázke rešpektovania národnej zvrchovanosti tretích krajín, čo sa týka rozvojovej pomoci?

Ak Komisia, na rozdiel od zistení EDW, nikdy nefinancovala potraty v tretích krajinách – či už vedome, alebo z nedbalosti – a ak nie je jej zámerom financovať ich v budúcnosti, prečo mimovládne organizácie, ktoré vykonávajú potraty, sa stále môžu uchádzať o programy týkajúce sa sexuálneho a reprodukčného zdravia a práv a o financovanie a prečo výzvy na akcie vyslovene neuvádzajú vylúčenie činností súvisiacich s potratmi ako podmienku vo všetkých budúcich výzvach na predkladanie návrhov týkajúcich sa sexuálneho a reprodukčného zdravia a práv?

Odpoveď pána Piebalgsa v mene Komisie
(7. februára 2014)

Komisia pripomína, že otázka váženej pani poslankyne je podobná tej, ktorú už poslanci položili. Komisia by preto chcela váženú pani poslankyňu odkázať na svoje odpovede na otázky E-12531/2013, E-005275/2012 a E-005269/2012 ([1]), ktoré objasňujú politiku EÚ v oblasti financovania umelého prerušenia tehotenstva a naše rešpektovanie politík a právnych predpisov partnerských krajín v tomto ohľade.

Čo sa týka správy mimovládnej organizácie European Dignity Watch, je založená na mylnej analýze politiky EÚ v oblasti financovania zdravotnej starostlivosti a umelého prerušenia tehotenstva v tretích krajinách a zahŕňa nepresný výklad Medzinárodnej konferencie o populácii a rozvoji (ICPD). Komisia nemá v úmysle sa viac k tejto správe vyjadrovať.

Európska iniciatíva občanov *„Jeden z nás“* (ECI(2012)000005) v súčasnosti podlieha overovaniu vyhlásení o podpore príslušnými vnútroštátnymi orgánmi. Po úradnom doručení ho Komisia riadne preskúma. Neboli naplánované žiadne dočasné opatrenia.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013802/13
to the Commission
Anna Záborská (PPE)
(5 December 2013)

Subject: Funding of abortion through EU development aid — An analysis of EU Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy

In 2012, the NGO European Dignity Watch (EDW) published a report on 'The Funding of Abortion Through EU Development Aid — An Analysis of EU Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy', in which it claimed that the EU's Development Aid and Public Health budgets were being used to fund abortion in developing countries. The European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) 'One of Us' collected almost 1.9 million signatures for a petition that proposes a modification of the EU Financial Regulation in order to prevent EU money being used, either directly or indirectly, to finance abortion. On 22 October, the Commission published a call for proposals on 'Promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights — Universal Access to Reproductive Health'. This call for proposals does not appear to explicitly exclude the financing of projects that involve the provision or promotion of abortion in the countries concerned. Against this backdrop, could the Commission please respond to the following:

Has the Commission ever commented on the EDW report? If not, could it do so now?

Given the success of the ECI 'One of Us', is the Commission contemplating any interim measures, such as a moratorium, to ensure that no EU funds are used for projects involving the provision or promotion of abortion in the countries concerned?

According to the findings, the Commission did indeed fund NGOs providing abortion services in third countries where abortion is subject to constitutional restrictions. What is the Commission's policy on respecting the national sovereignty of third countries when dealing with development aid?

If, contrary to EDW's findings, the Commission has never funded abortions in third countries — either consciously or through negligence — and if it has no intention of doing so in the future, why are NGOs which provide abortions still able to apply for SRHR programmes and funding, and why do the calls for action not explicitly mention the exclusion of abortion-related activities as a condition in any future call for proposals relating to sexual and reproductive health and rights?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(7 February 2014)

The Commission notes that the question from the Honourable Member is similar to questions already asked by fellow parliamentarians. To this end the Honourable Member is kindly referred to the replies to questions E-12531/2013, E-005275/2012 and E-005269/2012 ([1]) which clarify the EU's financing policy on abortion and our respect for partner countries' policies and legislation in this matter.

As to the European Dignity Watch report, it is founded on erroneous analysis of the EU's policies on funding healthcare and abortion in third countries and includes inaccurate interpretation of the International conference on population and development (ICPD). The Commission does not intend to comment further on this report.

The European citizen's initiative 'One of Us' (ECI(2012)000005) is currently subject to verification of statements of support by the competent national authorities. Once it has been officially received by the Commission, it will be examined according to the appropriate procedure. No interim measures have been planned.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013803/13
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(5 December 2013)

Subject: Coordination of social security systems and national pension entitlement ages

Could the Commission indicate whether under Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the coordination of social security systems, an EU citizen or resident in receipt of an old-age pension in the Member State in which they live would be entitled to an old-age pension from another Member State with a higher national pension entitlement age where they had been insured during their working life?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(6 February 2014)

1. EC law provides for the coordination and not the harmonisation of social security systems. This means that each Member State remains free to determine the details of its own social security system, including which benefits shall be provided, the conditions of eligibility (e.g. pensionable age), how these benefits are calculated and how contributions should be paid. The law of the European Union establishes common rules and principles which must be observed by all national authorities when applying national law.

2. According to EC law which regulates the coordination of social security systems ([1]), all Member States in which a citizen has been insured will have to pay a retirement pension when he/she reaches national retirement age. For example, if a citizen has worked in three Member States, he/she should receive three separate old-age pensions when he/she reaches national retirement age. These pensons will be calculated according to the insurance record in each Member State. The amount received from each of the Member States depends on the duration of coverage in each state.

([1]) Regulation (EC) n. 883/2004 on the coordination of social security systems and Regulation (EC) 987/2009 laying down the procedure for implementing Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 on the coordination of social security systems.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013804/13
to the Commission
Peter Skinner (S&D)
(5 December 2013)

Subject: Commission representation in third countries

Could the Commission list, in order of both size of population and GDP, the countries in which the EU has no full delegation or office presence?

Could the Commission list all the countries where the EU does have a full delegation which are smaller in both population and GDP than the largest of the countries where it does not?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(11 February 2014)

You will find attached a list of third countries, where EU is present either through an EU delegation, an office or is accredited from another EU delegation in the region. Apart from four countries, the list includes UN members; data on size of population and GDP have been taken from the United Nations Statistics Division, and GDP has been converted from USD to EUR for ease of reference.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-013805/13
aan de Commissie
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(5 december 2013)

Betreft: OESO-oproep tot verlaging van de Griekse schuld

Op 27 november 2013 zei de secretaris-generaal van de Organisatie voor Economische Samenwerking en Ontwikkeling (OESO), de heer José Ángel Gurría Treviño, tijdens een bijeenkomst met de Griekse premier Antonis Samaras dat de schuld van diens land „zo snel mogelijk" moet worden verlaagd ([1]). In haar antwoord op mijn schriftelijke vraag van 6 juni 2013 verklaarde de Commissie echter dat „de herstructurering van de schulden in de privésector tot een besmetting van het systeem had kunnen leiden en het programma dus ernstig zou hebben ondermijnd" ([2]). Wat daarnaast de staatsschuld betreft, verklaarde de Commissie in haar antwoord op een van mijn andere schriftelijke vragen (d.d. 30 oktober 2012) dat „de lidstaten van de eurozone op hun bijeenkomsten op 26/27 november 2012 en 13 december 2012 overeenstemming hebben bereikt over een reeks schuldverminderende maatregelen, waaronder uitstel van rentebetalingen op EFSF-leningen, een verlaging van de rentemarge van de Griekse kredietfaciliteit en de overmaking van een bedrag dat gelijk is aan de SMP-inkomsten van de nationale centrale banken" ([3]).

1. Is de Commissie het tegen deze achtergrond eens met de verklaring van de heer Gurría? Is de Commissie van oordeel dat Griekenland nog meer schuldverlichting nodig heeft? Is in het geval van Griekenland in de ogen van de Commissie sprake van een houdbare staatsschuld?

2. Wat de schulden in de privésector betreft, geldt nog altijd de zienswijze van de Commissie zoals verwoord in haar antwoord op mijn vraag E-006524/2013?

Antwoord van de heer Rehn namens de Commissie
(11 februari 2014)

1. In het kader van het tweede economische aanpassingsprogramma voor Griekenland wordt aanzienlijke vooruitgang geboekt bij de waarborging van de houdbaarheid van de Griekse schuld. Zoals aangegeven in het conformiteitsverslag ([4]) dat werd opgesteld door de Europese Commissie in het kader van de derde herziening van het programma, wordt verwacht dat de schuldquote de neerwaartse tendens in 2014 zal hervatten en in 2021 minder dan 120% zal bedragen, ervan uitgaande dat de volledige uitvoering van het economische aanpassingsprogramma wordt voortgezet.

In november 2012 heeft de Eurogroep verklaard dat de lidstaten van de eurozone, indien nodig, verdere maatregelen en bijstand zouden overwegen wanneer Griekenland een jaarlijks primair overschot boekt, mits alle voorwaarden van het programma volledig zijn vervuld, om ervoor te zorgen dat Griekenland tot een schuldquote van 124% van het bbp kan komen in 2020 en tot een schuldquote die aanzienlijk lager dan 110% ligt in 2022. In de verklaring van 2012 was de Eurogroep „verheugd met de resultaten van de terugkoop van schulden, die zullen leiden tot een aanzienlijke verbetering van de Griekse schuldquote. De Eurogroep heeft herbevestigd dat deze operatie, samen met de op 27 november door de Eurogroep overeengekomen initiatieven en de volledige uitvoering van het aanpassingsprogramma, de Griekse overheidsschuld weer op een duurzame weg moet brengen naar 124% van het bbp in 2020. Griekenland en de andere lidstaten van de eurozone zijn bereid om, indien nodig, aanvullende maatregelen te nemen om ervoor te zorgen dat deze doelstelling wordt verwezenlijkt."

2. De Commissie wenst niets toe te voegen of te veranderen aan haar antwoord op de vragen waarnaar het geachte Parlementslid verwijst.

([1]) http://www.ekathimerini.com/4dcgi/_w_articles_wsite2_1_27/11/2013_529785.
([2]) Vraag voor schriftelijke beantwoording E-006524/2013, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+WQ+E-2013-006524+0+DOC+ XML+V0//EN&language=en.
([3]) Vraag voor schriftelijke beantwoording E-009920/2012, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+WQ+E-2012-009920+0+DOC+XML+V0// EN&language=en.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2013/pdf/ocp159_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013805/13
to the Commission
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(5 December 2013)

Subject: OECD calls for reduction of Greek debt

On 27 November 2013 the Secretary-General of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Mr José Ángel Gurría Treviño, said in a meeting with Greek Prime Minister Antonis Samaras that the country's debt should be reduced 'as soon as possible' ([1]). However, the Commission stated in its answer to my written question of 6 June 2013 that 'private sector debt restructuring would have certainly risked systemic contagion and would also have severely undermined the programme' ([2]). Furthermore, with regard to public debt, the Commission stated in its answer to another of my written questions, dated 30 October 2012, that 'in the meetings of 26/27 November 2012 and 13 December 2012, euro area Member States have agreed on a set of debt-reducing measures which include deferral of interest payments on EFSF loans, reductions of the Greek Loan Facility (GLF) interest margin and transfer of amount equivalent to the income on the SMP portfolio accruing to their National Central Banks' ([3]).

In the light of this:

1. Does the Commission agree with Mr Gurría's statement? Does the Commission think that Greece needs further debt relief? Does the Commission deem Greek public debt to be sustainable?

2. With regard to private-sector debt, is the opinion the Commission expressed in its answer to Question E-006524/2013 still valid?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(11 February 2014)

1. In the context of the 2nd Economic Adjustment Programme for Greece, significant progress is being made towards securing the sustainability of the Greek debt. As indicated in the Compliance Report ([4]) elaborated by the European Commission following the 3rd review of the programme, the debt-to-GDP ratio is forecast to resume a declining path in 2014, and should become lower than 120% by 2021, assuming that the economic adjustment programme continues to be fully implemented.

In November 2012, the Eurogroup stated that euro area Member States will consider further measures and assistance, if necessary, when Greece reaches an annual primary surplus, conditional on full implementation of all conditions contained in the programme in order to ensure that Greece can reach a debt-to-GDP ratio of 124% of GDP in 2020, and a debt-to-GDP ratio substantially lower than 110% in 2022. In its December 2012 Statement, the Eurogroup 'welcomed the result of the debt buy back operation, which will lead to a substantial reduction of the Greek debt-to-GDP ratio. The Eurogroup reaffirmed that this, together with the initiatives agreed by the Eurogroup on 27 November and full implementation of the adjustment programme, should bring Greece's public debt back on a sustainable path, to 124% of GDP in 2020. Greece and the other euro area Member States are prepared to take additional measures, if necessary, to ensure that this objective is met.'

2. The Commission does not wish to make any additions or changes to its reply to the questions referred to by the Honourable Member.

([1]) http://www.ekathimerini.com/4dcgi/_w_articles_wsite2_1_27/11/2013_529785
([2]) Question for written answer E-006524/2013, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+WQ+E-2013-006524+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=en
([3]) Question for written answer E-009920/2012, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+WQ+E-2012-009920+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=en
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2013/pdf/ocp159_en.pdf

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-013806/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(5 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Strumenti per il sostegno e la prevenzione delle violenze sui minori

Da un recente studio promosso da Università Bocconi, Terre des Hommes e Coordinamento italiano dei servizi contro il maltrattamento all'infanzia (Cismai) risulta che in Italia il costo dei maltrattamenti sui minori ammonta a circa 13 miliardi di euro ogni anno, ovvero lo 0,84 % del Pil.

Può la Commissione dire se:

1. è a conoscenza dei fatti sopra esposti;

2. è in grado di indicare se altri studi simili sono stati condotti negli Stati membri e se sì con quali risultati;

3. intende intervenire fornendo linee guida comuni per tutti gli Stati volte a migliorare le pratiche di sostegno a supporto dei minori e la prevenzione di questi fenomeni;

4. intende istituire strumenti specifici per supportare finanziariamente gli Stati membri nel sostegno dei minori vittime di violenza?

Risposta di Viviane Reding a nome della Commissione
(18 febbraio 2014)

1.-2. L'Organizzazione mondiale della sanità ha elaborato diverse relazioni e studi sul maltrattamento dei minori dai quali emerge, al di là delle conseguenze sanitarie e sociali, un aspetto economico che comprende i costi relativi al ricovero ospedaliero, alle cure psichiatriche e al benessere generale dei minori, nonché le spese sanitarie a più lungo termine.

3.-4. La Commissione è fortemente impegnata nel tutelare i bambini e gli adolescenti contro tutte le forme di violenza. La comunicazione della Commissione dal titolo «Agenda dell'UE sui diritti dei minori» ([1]) si incentra su una serie di azioni concrete nei settori in cui l'UE può apportare un reale valore aggiunto, quali la giustizia a misura di minore, la protezione dei minori in situazioni di vulnerabilità e la lotta contro la violenza nei confronti dei bambini, sia all'interno che all'esterno dell'Unione europea. Al di là della legislazione UE che contiene disposizioni intese a proteggere i bambini e a fornire soluzioni durevoli ([2]), si segnala che la Commissione sta compiendo sforzi per promuovere la necessità di una maggiore collaborazione tra i vari attori e tra i diversi settori, tra cui i ministeri nazionali. La Commissione sta attualmente elaborando orientamenti sui sistemi di protezione dei minori, con l'obiettivo di promuovere un approccio integrato in materia.

La Commissione mira inoltre a sostenere le autorità nazionali nella realizzazione di servizi efficaci ed efficienti, come indicato nella raccomandazione della Commissione dal titolo «Investire nell'infanzia per spezzare il circolo vizioso dello svantaggio sociale» ([3]).

Si osservi inoltre che la Commissione si pone l'obiettivo di contribuire alla protezione dei bambini, degli adolescenti e delle donne contro tutte le forme di violenza attraverso i programmi Daphne, giunti alla terza generazione.

([1]) Programma UE per i diritti dei minori COM/2011/0060 definitivo, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52011DC0060:it:NOT.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/files/eu_acquis_2013_it.pdf
([3]) C(2013) 778 final http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/files/c_2013_778_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013806/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(5 December 2013)

Subject: Instruments to support victims of child abuse and for its prevention

According to a recent study carried out by the Bocconi University, Terre des Hommes and CISMAI (Italian Network of Agencies against Child Abuse), the cost of child abuse in Italy amounts to approximately EUR 13 billion each year, equivalent to 0.84% of GDP.

1. Is the Commission aware of the above?

2. Can it state whether any similar studies have been carried out in the Member States and if so, what the results were?

3. Does it intend to provide common guidelines for all the States to improve the support offered to children and to prevent this phenomenon?

4. Will it establish specific instruments to provide financial assistance to the Member States to help them support the victims of child abuse?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(18 February 2014)

1 and 2. The World Health Organisation has developed several reports and studies on child maltreatment highlighting that beyond the health and social consequences of child maltreatment, there is an economic impact, including costs of hospitalisation, mental health treatment, child welfare, and longer-term health costs.

3 and 4. The Commission is strongly committed to the protection of children and young people against all forms of violence. The Commission's communication 'EU Agenda on the Rights of the Child' ([1]) focuses on a number of concrete actions in areas where the EU can bring real added value, such as child-friendly justice, protecting children in vulnerable situations and fighting violence against children both inside the European Union and externally. Aside from EU legislation including provisions to protect children and to provide durable solutions ([2]), the Commission is undertaking efforts to promote the need for stronger collaboration among different actors and across sectors, including various national ministries. The Commission is currently developing guidelines on child protection systems with the aim of promoting an integrated approach towards child protection.

The Commission also aims to support national authorities in delivering effective and efficient services as outlined in the Commission Recommendation 'Investing in children: Breaking the cycle of disadvantage' ([3]).

It should also be noted that the Commission has aimed to contribute to the protection of children, young people and women against all forms of violence through its three generations of Daphne Programmes.

([1]) An EU Agenda for the Rights of the Child COM/2011/0060 final, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52011DC0060:en:NOT
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/files/eu_acquis_2013_en.pdf
([3]) C(2013) 778 final http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/files/c_2013_778_en.pdf

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-013807/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(5 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Turismo del Welfare e libera circolazione dei cittadini bulgari e rumeni

In seguito alla sentenza della Corte del Nord Reno-Westfalia, che ha stabilito che una coppia di cittadini romeni, che non erano riusciti a trovare un lavoro, mantenevano comunque il diritto ai sussidi di disoccupazione, in Germania si è acceso il dibattito sui pericoli legati al turismo del welfare.

L'esperto legale del partito di Angela Merkel ha dichiarato «*vogliamo chiarire che la nostra legislazione di sicurezza sociale non può permettere ad ogni cittadino europeo che è arrivato in Germania per trovare lavoro di ricevere i benefici alla disoccupazione*».

Una recente indagine ha stabilito che già un decimo dei cittadini bulgari e romeni presenti in Germania beneficiano dei sussidi alla disoccupazione, in aumento del 2,1 % rispetto all'anno precedente.

In un sondaggio condotto da Maurice de Hond oltre l'80 % dei cittadini olandesi non pensa che a bulgari e romeni dovrebbe essere permesso di viaggiare liberamente in Olanda per lavorare dal primo gennaio quando tutte le restrizioni verranno abolite.

Ha la Commissione valutato la possibilità di introdurre già dal prossimo gennaio, quando tutte le restrizioni alla libera circolazione di cittadini bulgari e romeni verranno abolite, un blocco temporaneo per coloro che non possono di mostrare di avere la prospettiva di trovare un lavoro? Se no, come intende affrontare il problema del turismo del welfare, già denunciato da alcuni Stati membri e che rischia di acuirsi con il venir meno di queste restrizioni?

Risposta di László Andor a nome della Commissione
(29 gennaio 2014)

Le misure transitorie relative all'accesso dei lavoratori di Bulgaria e Romania ai mercati del lavoro degli Stati membri sono giunte a scadenza il 1° gennaio 2014. Il principio della libera circolazione dei lavoratori si applica ora appieno nell'UE anche ai lavoratori di tali paesi.

Le regole unionali prevedono che le persone in cerca di lavoro abbiano il diritto di risiedere in un altro Stato membro senza sottostare a condizioni per un periodo di sei mesi. Esse hanno diritto di risiedere anche più a lungo se continuano a cercare lavoro e hanno «buone possibilità» di trovarlo. Durante tutto questo periodo gli Stati membri ospitanti non sono tenuti ad offrire prestazioni sociali. La Commissione non ravvisa la necessità di eventuali ulteriori regole unionali nel merito.

Infine, per quanto concerne le asserzioni sul «turismo del welfare», la recente comunicazione della Commissione sulla libera circolazione dei cittadini nell'Unione delinea cinque misure volte a contribuire all'efficace applicazione delle regole unionali in tema di libera circolazione, tra cui valide salvaguardie per lottare contro gli abusi ([1]). È importante tener presente al riguardo che la maggior parte dei cittadini unionali che si spostano in un altro Stato membro lo fanno per lavoro e che, stando alle cifre fornite dagli Stati membri e alle risultanze di studi recenti, i cittadini unionali mobili si avvalgono delle prestazioni del welfare con non maggiore intensità dei cittadini dei paesi ospitanti.

([1]) «Libera circolazione dei cittadini dell'Unione e dei loro familiari: cinque azioni fanno la differenza» (COM(2013) 837 final del 25 novembre 2013).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013807/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(5 December 2013)

Subject: Welfare tourism and the free movement of Bulgarian and Romanian citizens

The ruling of a court in North Rhine-Westphalia, which established that a Romanian couple who had not managed to find jobs were in any case entitled to unemployment benefits, has ignited a debate on the dangers of welfare tourism in Germany.

The legal expert for Angela Merkel's party said 'we want to make it clear that our social security law cannot allow each EU citizen who has come to Germany to find work to receive unemployment benefits'.

A recent survey found that a tenth of Bulgarian and Romanian citizens in Germany receive unemployment benefits, an increase of 2.1% on the previous year.

In a poll carried out by Maurice de Hond, over 80% of Dutch citizens believe that Bulgarian and Romanian citizens should not be allowed to travel freely in the Netherlands in order to work from 1 January 2014, the date when all the restrictions will be abolished.

Has the Commission considered the possibility of introducing a temporary block on those who cannot prove that they are likely to find employment, starting in January when all the restrictions to the free movement of Bulgarian and Romanian citizens will be lifted? If not, how does it plan to address welfare tourism, an issue which has already been reported by some Member States and which could worsen following the lifting of these restrictions?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(29 January 2014)

The transitional measures concerning access by workers from Bulgaria and Romania to Member States' labour markets were lifted on 1 January 2014. The principle of the free movement of workers now applies fully within the EU to workers from these countries.

EU rules provide that job seekers have a right to reside in another Member State without any conditions for a period of six months. They have a right to reside even longer if they continue to seek employment and have a 'genuine chance' of getting work. During this entire period, the host Member States are not obliged to grant social assistance. The Commission sees no need for any further EU rules on this matter.

Finally, with regard to claims about 'welfare tourism', the Commission's recent Communication on free movement of EU citizens outlined five measures to help the effective application of EU free movement rules, including the robust safeguards available to help fight abuse ([1]). It is important to keep in mind in this respect that most EU citizens moving to another Member State do so to work, and that, according to figures provided by the Member States and recent studies, mobile EU citizens use welfare benefits no more intensively than the host countries' nationals.

([1]) 'Free movement of EU citizens and their families: Five actions to make a difference' (COM(2013) 837 final of 25 November 2013).