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 375/01)

Treść Strona

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-004156/14
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 avril 2014)

Objet: Fabricants de pots d'échappement

La Commission européenne a mené des inspections surprises sur des sites de plusieurs fabricants de systèmes d'échappement pour l'industrie automobile. Ces inspections ont eu lieu le 25 mars «dans plusieurs États membres», car la Commission «craint que les entreprises concernées n'aient violé les règles européennes qui interdisent les ententes et les pratiques commerciales restrictives, et/ou l'abus de position dominante», explique un communiqué.

Les entreprises concernées fabriquent notamment des pots catalytiques, des collecteurs d'échappement et, pour les véhicules diesel, des catalyseurs d'oxydation et des filtres à particules.

1. Quels sont les résultats de cette opération?

2. Quels ont été les moyens mis en œuvre?

Réponse donnée par M. Almunia au nom de la Commission
(16 mai 2014)

À ce stade de l'enquête, la Commission n'est pas en mesure de tirer des conclusions sur les résultats des inspections du 25 mars 2014. Après avoir réalisé ces inspections, elle examine à présent attentivement les informations en sa possession. Si, à un stade ultérieur, la Commission décide de continuer à examiner cette affaire, elle ouvrira formellement la procédure et rédigera des conclusions préliminaires, qui seront présentées aux parties afin qu'elles puissent exercer leurs droits de défense.

Les inspections de la Commission ont eu lieu dans les locaux de plusieurs entreprises situées dans différents États membres. Sur chaque site, l'inspection a été effectuée par une équipe composée de membres du personnel de la Commission (environ six par équipe) et de représentants des autorités nationales compétentes.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004156/14
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: Exhaust pipe manufacturers

The Commission has performed surprise inspections at the premises of several manufacturers of exhaust pipes for the car industry. These took place on 25 March 'in several Member States', because, according to a communiqué from the Commission, it feared that the undertakings concerned might have breached European rules prohibiting anti-competitive agreements, restrictive business practices and/or abuse of dominant positions.

The undertakings concerned particularly manufacture catalytic converters, exhaust manifolds and, in the case of diesel vehicles, oxidation catalysts and particulate filters.

1. What were the results of this operation?

2. What resources were deployed?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(16 May 2014)

At this stage of its investigation, the Commission is not in a position to draw conclusions on the results of the inspections of 25 March 2014. Following the inspections, the Commission is carefully reviewing the information in its possession. If at a later stage the Commission decides to pursue the case further, it will formally open proceedings and prepare preliminary conclusions, which will be submitted to the parties so they can exercise their rights of defence.

The Commission's inspections took place at the premises of several undertakings located in different Member States. At each location, the inspection was carried out by a team composed of Commission staff members (around six per team) and representatives of the relevant national authorities.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-004157/14
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 avril 2014)

Objet: Statut du loup

À en croire certaines sources, la Commission européenne s'apprêterait à enquêter pour vérifier que le statut d'espèce strictement protégée est toujours d'actualité.

1. Est-ce vrai?

2. Dans l'affirmative, n'y a-t-il pas un problème entre le fait de décréter cette espèce «protégée» puis «nuisible», et ce, sans phase de transition?

3. Dans chaque pays européen, est-il prévu de réaliser un comptage des loups, ce afin de vérifier que l'espèce est toujours en voie de disparition?

Réponse donnée par M. Potočnik au nom de la Commission
(22 mai 2014)

La Commission n'envisage pas de modifier le régime juridique de protection du loup.

L'article 17 de la directive «Habitats» ([1]) impose aux États membres de présenter des rapports périodiques sur la mise en œuvre de la directive, incluant des évaluations de l'état de conservation des espèces protégées telles que le loup. La deuxième évaluation couvrant la période 2007-2012 est en cours. La Commission évalue actuellement les rapports que lui ont transmis les États membres et publiera son rapport de synthèse en 2015.

([1]) 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, p. 7).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004157/14
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: Status of wolves

If certain reports are to be believed, the Commission is on the verge of carrying out an investigation to establish whether wolves should remain a protected species.

1. Is this true?

2. If so, is there not something wrong with suddenly changing the status of a species straight from 'protected' to 'vermin' with no transition phase?

3. Are there plans to count the number of wolves in each EU country with a view to ascertaining whether the species is still endangered?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(22 May 2014)

The Commission is not planning to change the legal protection regime of the wolf.

Article 17 of the Habitats Directive ([1]) requires Member States to provide periodic reports on the implementation of the directive, including assessments of the conservation status of protected species such as wolves. The second assessment covering the years 2007-2012 is currently underway. The reports submitted by the Member States to the Commission are being assessed and the Commission report will be published in 2015.

([1]) 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.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-004158/14
à la Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(3 avril 2014)

Objet: Demandeurs d'asile

Selon le règlement Dublin II, un seul État membre est responsable de l'examen d'une demande d'asile, afin d'éviter tout abus du système, comme la présentation de plusieurs demandes d'asile par une seule personne. Pourtant, ce système ne fonctionne que difficilement, et les États membres situés aux frontières de l'Union européenne sont submergés par le flux de migrants. Il est vrai également que de nombreux migrants illégaux utilisent ce système pour rester le plus longtemps possible en Europe.

1. La Commission peut-elle nous informer sur le nombre de demandeurs d'asile par État membre ainsi que sur le pourcentage de demandes approuvées?

2. La Commission est-elle d'avis que le règlement Dublin II a permis de répondre, même partiellement, à la régulation des flux de migrants illégaux sur le territoire de l'Union?

3. Prévoit-elle une modification de ce règlement?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Malmström au nom de la Commission
(23 mai 2014)

1. Les informations sur le nombre de demandes d'asile par État membre et sur les décisions concernant ces demandes sont disponibles sur le site internet d'Eurostat à l'adresse suivante:
http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/eurostat/home/

Pour 2013, les données chiffrées sont présentées dans la publication intitulée «Asylum applicants and first instance decisions on asylum applications: 2013» (Demandeurs d'asile et décisions en première instance afférentes aux demandes d'asile: 2013), disponible à l'adresse suivante:
http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/product_details/publication?p_product_code=KS-QA-14-003

2. Le système de Dublin a été mis sur pied avec un double objectif: garantir l'accès effectif à la procédure d'asile pour toutes les demandes d'asile présentées sur le territoire de l'UE et empêcher l'utilisation abusive des procédures d'asile consistant en la présentation, par une même personne, de multiples demandes d'asile dans plusieurs États membres, dans le seul but de prolonger son séjour dans l'Union européenne. Le système contribue à prévenir ce type d'abus, notamment par la détection, à l'aide du système Eurodac, des demandes multiples.

Des informations spécifiques sur les demandes d'asile multiples dans l'UE sont disponibles dans les rapports annuels au Parlement européen et au Conseil sur les activités de l'unité centrale d'Eurodac [le plus récent étant celui de juin 2013, COM(2013) 485 final].

3. Le règlement Dublin II ([1]) a été remplacé par le règlement Dublin III ([2]) en juin 2013, après quatre ans et demi de négociations en codécision entre le Parlement européen et le Conseil, sur la base d'une proposition de la Commission datant de décembre 2008.

([1]) Règlement (CE) nº 343/2003 du Conseil du Conseil du 18 février 2003 établissant les critères et mécanismes de détermination de l'État membre responsable de l'examen d'une demande d'asile présentée dans l'un des États membres par un ressortissant d'un pays tiers (JO L 50 du 25.2.2003, p. 1).

([2]) Règlement (UE) nº 604/2013 du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 26 juin 2013 établissant les critères et mécanismes de détermination de l'État membre responsable de l'examen d'une demande de protection internationale introduite dans l'un des États membres par un ressortissant de pays tiers ou un apatride (JO L 180 du 29.6.2013, p. 31).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004158/14
to the Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: Asylum-seekers

Under the Dublin II regulation, each asylum application is considered by only one Member State, in an effort to prevent the system from being abused, for example by individuals submitting more than one application. As a result, however, Member States with an external EU border are overwhelmed with applications, and the system can barely cope. What is more, many irregular migrants are exploiting these problems in order to stay in Europe for as long as they can.

1. Can the Commission tell us how many asylum applications are submitted per Member State, and what percentage of these are approved?

2. Does it think that the Dublin II regulation has provided even a partial response to the problem of regulating the movements of irregular migrants in the EU?

3. Does the Commission plan to revise the regulation?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(23 May 2014)

1. Information on the number of asylum applications per Member State and the decisions on these applications is available via the Eurostat website at the following address: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/eurostat/home/

For 2013, figures are available in the publication 'Asylum applicants and first instance decisions on asylum applications: 2013' available via the following link:
http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/product_details/publication?p_product_code=KS-QA-14-003

2. The Dublin system was set up with a dual purpose: to guarantee effective access to the asylum procedure for all asylum applications lodged on EU territory and to prevent the abuse of asylum procedures in the form of multiple applications submitted by the same person in several Member States with the sole aim of extending his/her stay in the European Union. The system contributes to preventing abuse of asylum procedures, notably by detecting, through the Eurodac system, multiple applications.

Specific information on multiple asylum applications in EU is available in the Annual reports to the Council and the European Parliament on the activities of the Eurodac Central Unit (the most recent in June 2013, COM(2013) 485 final).

3. The Dublin II Regulation ([1]) was replaced by the Dublin III Regulation ([2]) in June 2013, after four and a half years of negotiations in co-decision between the European Parliament and the Council, on the basis of a Commission proposal of December 2008.

([1]) Council Regulation (EC) No 343/2003 establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an asylum application lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national (OJ L 50, 25.2.2003, p. 1).

([2]) Regulation (EU) No 604/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an application for international protection lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national or a stateless person (OJ L 180, 29.6.2013, p. 31).

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-004159/14
à la Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(3 avril 2014)

Objet: Marché intérieur de l'énergie

La récente initiative de la Commission concernant le lancement d'un projet pilote de marché commun de l'électricité dans l'Europe du Nord-Ouest représente une étape considérable dans l'avènement d'un marché intérieur de l'énergie. Dans sa communication du 15 novembre 2012, la Commission avait programmé l'achèvement du marché intérieur de l'énergie en 2014. Cet objectif me parait très optimiste. Pourtant, nous le voyons, l'Union a urgemment besoin d'une stratégie énergétique commune afin de réduire notre dépendance, notamment vis-à-vis de la Russie. La Commission pourrait-elle répondre aux questions suivantes:

1. Excepté le projet pilote susmentionné, quels autres projets font état d'une quelconque avancée vers la communautarisation de l'énergie?

2. La Commission peut-elle faire l'inventaire des différents progrès réalisés dans la mise en commun de l'énergie?

Réponse donnée par M. Oettinger au nom de la Commission
(28 mai 2014)

1. En juin 2014, la Commission présentera un rapport sur les progrès accomplis dans l'achèvement du marché intérieur de l'énergie, une priorité sur laquelle le Conseil européen a fortement insisté. L'intégration du marché est en train de se faire, notamment au niveau régional, et produit des résultats concrets. Parmi les réussites contribuant à l'achèvement du marché intérieur de l'énergie, figure le projet de couplage du marché, mentionné par l'Honorable Parlementaire. Un autre projet du même type est la mise en place de la plateforme d'enchères PRISMA, qui facilite les échanges internationaux de gaz et favorise l'intégration du marché. D'importants progrès ont également été enregistrés dans la réalisation des investissements nécessaires en matière d'infrastructures. À titre d'exemple, des interconnexions indispensables (telles que Estlink 2 ([1])) ont été créées ces dernières années, souvent avec le soutien financier de l'Union européenne. En outre, les premiers grands codes de réseau paneuropéens ont été adoptés. Dans la plupart des cas, l'approche régionale a grandement contribué à la progression de l'intégration du marché de l'énergie.

2. Pour que les marchés fonctionnent au bénéfice de la sécurité d'approvisionnement et de la compétitivité des prix, il leur faut être suffisamment attrayants afin d'inciter les acheteurs et les vendeurs à y participer activement, en nombre suffisant. Les efforts en matière de libéralisation européenne ont eu pour conséquence directe, ces dernières années, un essor considérable des marchés liquides (bourses d'échange d'électricité et nœuds gaziers), où se fait, par-delà les frontières, le négoce de l'énergie, pour une livraison l'année suivante, le jour suivant, ou encore, le jour même. Ils permettent de relier des zones dont les bouquets énergétiques sont complémentaires et donc, de renforcer le système énergétique face aux variations de l'offre et de la demande, ce qui est de plus en plus important à un moment où la part des énergies renouvelables intermittentes dans le bouquet énergétique augmente rapidement.

([1]) http://estlink2.elering.ee/home/.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004159/14
to the Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: Internal energy market

The recent initiative by the Commission concerning the launch of a pilot project for a common electricity market in north-west Europe constitutes a significant stage in the advent of an internal energy market. In its communication of 15 November 2012, the Commission said that completion of the internal energy market was scheduled for 2014. This strikes me as being very optimistic. However, we can see that the European Union is in urgent need of a common energy strategy in order to reduce our energy dependence, particularly in regard to Russia. Could the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Apart from the aforementioned pilot project, what other projects demonstrate progress of some kind towards the establishment of an internal energy market?

2. Can the Commission give details of the various ways in which progress has been made towards pooling energy?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(28 May 2014)

1. In June 2014 the Commission will report on progress made towards completing the internal energy market, a priority emphasised strongly by the European Council. Market integration is happening, in particular at a regional level, and is delivering concrete results. Success stories that contribute to the completion of the internal energy market include the market coupling project mentioned by the Honourable Member. Another similar project is the establishment of the Prisma auctioning platform, which facilitates cross-border gas flows and trade and fosters market integration. Important progress has also been achieved in realising the necessary investments in infrastructure, as key missing interconnectors have been constructed in recent years (e.g. Estlink2 ([1])), often with EU financial support. Moreover, the first important pan-European network codes have been adopted. The regional approach has been key in driving forward this integration of the energy market in the majority of cases.

2. In order for markets to function to the benefit of security of supply and competitive prices they need to be attractive enough for a sufficient number of buyers and sellers to become active. As a direct result of European liberalisation efforts, recent years have seen an enormous development of liquid market places (gas hubs and power exchanges) where energy is traded, across borders, for delivery the next year, the next day or even the same day. They make it possible to connect areas with complementary energy mixes and hence make the energy system more resilient to swings in demand or supply, which is increasingly important at a time where the share of intermittent renewables in the energy mix increases rapidly.

([1]) http://estlink2.elering.ee/home/

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-004160/14
à la Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(3 avril 2014)

Objet: Taxe carbone aux frontières de l'UE

L'Union européenne impose des normes environnementales de plus en plus drastiques à ses entreprises en comparaison avec le reste du monde. Les entreprises européennes doivent répondre à ces contraintes accrues. Mais nous devons prendre en considération que les entreprises de pays tiers qui exportent leurs produits vers l'Union ne se donnent pas tant de mal. Elles n'ont souvent pas les mêmes contraintes et sont donc plus compétitives, avec des coûts de production moindres. Pour protéger la compétitivité de nos entreprises et pour que ces efforts écologiques n'endommagent pas l'économie européenne, il serait opportun de mettre en place une taxe carbone aux frontières de l'Europe. L'équilibre compétitif entre les entreprises serait alors rétabli.

1. Les demandes du Parlement européen ont-elles été entendues par la Commission?

2. Concernant le secteur sidérurgique, touché par ces normes environnementales diminuant son potentiel de compétitivité face au reste du monde, la Commission a-t-elle une stratégie qui irait dans ce sens?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Hedegaard au nom de la Commission
(3 juin 2014)

La Commission a analysé en détail la question des ajustements à la frontière pour le carbone dans une analyse d'impact ([1]) en 2010. La Commission estime que si des ajustements à la frontière pour le carbone restent une solution possible, ils ne devraient pas être mis en œuvre à ce stade. Jusqu'à présent, le système en vigueur d'allocations à titre gratuit, complété par les règles sur les fuites de carbone, a bien fonctionné, notamment pour l'industrie sidérurgique.

La Commission a collaboré étroitement avec l'industrie sidérurgique européenne pour apporter des solutions aux défis structurels auxquels ce secteur est confronté, et plus récemment dans le cadre de l'élaboration du plan d'action pour l'acier ([2]) intitulé «plan d'action pour une industrie sidérurgique compétitive et durable en Europe». La Commission met rapidement en œuvre son plan d'action et a publié une feuille de route ([3]). Un groupe spécialisé de haut niveau ([4]) sur l'acier a été créé et suit la mise en œuvre du plan d'action.

([1]) Voir la section 6.4 dans http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/package/docs/sec_2010_650_part2_en.pdf
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/metals-minerals/files/steel-action-plan_fr.pdf
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/metals-minerals/steel/high-level-roundtable/index_fr.htm
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=2972&NewSearch=1&NewSearch=1&Lang=FR

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004160/14
to the Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: Carbon tax on imports into the EU

The EU is requiring its firms to comply with environmental standards which are increasingly stringent by comparison with those in force in the rest of the world. Non-EU companies that export their goods to the Union have it easier: they seldom face the same constraints and are therefore more competitive, as their production costs are lower. In order to safeguard the competitiveness of our businesses and ensure that our commitment to the environment does not prove detrimental to the EU economy, a carbon tax should be introduced on imports into the EU. This would re-establish a level playing field.

1. Has the Commission been listening to Parliament on this issue?

2. Does the Commission have a strategy to help the steel sector, which has seen its ability tocompete with the rest of the world undermined by the EU's strict environmentalstandards?

Answer given by Ms Hedegaard on behalf of the Commission
(3 June 2014)

The Commission analysed the issue of border carbon adjustments in detail in an impact assessment ([1]) in 2010. The Commission considers that while border carbon adjustments remain a possible option, they should not be implemented at this stage. So far, the existing system of free allocation, complemented by the rules on carbon leakage, has worked well, including for the steel industry.

The Commission has been working closely with the European steel industry to bring solutions for the structural challenges that the industry is facing, most recently in the context of elaborating the Steel Action plan ([2]) for competitive and sustainable steel in Europe. The Commission is swiftly implementing its action plan and has published a roadmap ([3]). A dedicated High Level Group ([4]) on steel has been created and is monitoring the implementation of the Steel Action Plan.

([1]) See Section 6.4 in http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/package/docs/sec_2010_650_part2_en.pdf
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/metals-minerals/files/steel-action-plan_en.pdf
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/metals-minerals/steel/high-level-roundtable/index_en.htm
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=2972&NewSearch=1&NewSearch=1

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-004161/14
à la Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(3 avril 2014)

Objet: Droits des passagers ferroviaires

Le Parlement européen a récemment œuvré afin de renforcer la protection des passagers aériens et de garantir le respect de leurs droits. Cela constitue une très grande avancée dans ce domaine. Pourtant, nous ne pouvons pas faire la même conclusion s'agissant des passagers ferroviaires. Au même titre que les passagers aériens, ceux-ci doivent se voir garantir la protection de leurs droits.

La Commission peut-elle faire l'état des lieux de la législation actuelle en ce qui concerne les passagers ferroviaires?

Réponse donnée par M. Kallas au nom de la Commission
(28 mai 2014)

Le règlement (CE) nº 1371/2007 sur les droits et obligations des voyageurs ferroviaires est entré en vigueur le 3 décembre 2009. Il s'applique à tous les services de transport de voyageurs (internationaux, nationaux, régionaux, urbains et suburbains) fournis dans l'Union européenne par les entreprises ferroviaires ayant obtenu une licence, les États membres pouvant appliquer des périodes de transition et dispenser temporairement certains services.

Conformément à l'article 36 dudit règlement, la Commission a adopté, le 14 août 2013, un rapport au Parlement européen et au Conseil sur l'application du règlement (CE) nº 1371/2007 ([1]). Il ressort de ce rapport que, dans l'ensemble, l'application et les contrôles du respect du règlement sont satisfaisants. Cependant, le fait que les États membres aient recours aux dispenses d'application de manière abondante est une entrave à la réalisation des objectifs du règlement et à son application uniforme.

D'ici la fin de l'année 2014, c'est-à-dire la fin de la première période de cinq ans depuis l'entrée en vigueur du règlement, la Commission présentera un aperçu des dispenses accordées par les États membres.

Enfin, la Commission travaille actuellement à la rédaction de lignes directrices interprétatives afin d'améliorer et de faciliter encore l'application du règlement. Ces lignes directrices seront élaborées en étroite collaboration avec les États membres, l'industrie ferroviaire et des parties prenantes du côté des consommateurs.

([1]) COM(2013) 587 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004161/14
to the Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: Rail passenger rights

Parliament recently took action to improve protection for air passengers and ensure that their rights are upheld — a huge step forward. Rail passenger rights need to be safeguarded in the same way, however, as no such progress has been made in this sector.

Could the Commission give us an indication of the current state of play as regards legislation on rail passengers?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(28 May 2014)

Regulation (EC) No 1371/2007 on rail passengers' rights and obligations entered into force on 3 December 2009. It applies to all rail passenger services (international, domestic, regional, urban and suburban) within the EU provided by licensed railway undertakings, although Member States may apply transitional periods and grant exemptions to certain services.

In accordance with Article 36 of the regulation, the Commission adopted on 14 August 2013 a Report to the European Parliament and to the Council on the application of Regulation (EC) No 1371/2007 ([1]). This Report concludes that the overall application and enforcement of the regulation is satisfactory, although the extensive use of exemptions by Member States hampers the fulfilment of the regulation's objectives and its uniform application.

By the end of 2014, i.e. the end of the first 5 year period since the entry into force of the regulation, the Commission will provide an overview of the exemptions granted by Member States.

Finally, the Commission is currently working on the preparation of interpretative guidelines to further improve and facilitate the application of the regulation. The guidelines will be prepared in close cooperation with Member States, the railway industry and stakeholders from the consumer side.

([1]) COM(2013) 587 final.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-004163/14
à la Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(3 avril 2014)

Objet: Aide à l'exportation pour les PME

Les PME sont sources d'innovation pour l'économie européenne. En ces temps de crise, elles constituent un élément important de relance économique. Nous devons tout faire pour assurer aux PME la protection de leur potentiel de compétitivité face à une concurrence mondiale trop souvent déloyale. Aider les PME, c'est reconstruire l'économie de l'Europe tout entière. Des aides particulières, tant au niveau de la législation qu'au niveau du financement, doivent être apportées aux PME afin qu'elles puissent subsister dans un milieu international parfois hostile. L'Union européenne l'a bien compris et a œuvré dans ce sens grâce à un Parlement sans cesse demandeur de facilitations pour ces entreprises. Les PME doivent être compétitives, non seulement à l'intérieur des frontières de l'Europe, mais également à l'extérieur.

1. Dans cette perspective, la Commission européenne peut-elle nous expliquer ce qui est prévu dans la législation européenne en termes d'aide à l'exportation pour les PME européennes?

2. La Commission envisage-t-elle d'améliorer l'aide aux exportations pour ces entreprises?

Réponse donnée par M. Tajani au nom de la Commission
(12 juin 2014)

Les actions de la Commission visent à faciliter l'accès au marché en fournissant des informations pertinentes, en supprimant de manière effective les obstacles à l'entrée sur le marché par des négociations avec les pays tiers et en apportant un soutien à des programmes qui sont complémentaires des cadres d'appui existants fournis par les États membres ou organisations privées.

Un soutien financier est accordé spécifiquement aux PME dans le cadre de deux programmes principaux: COSME et Horizon 2020. En effet, respectivement 1,4 et 2,7 milliards d'euros des budgets consacrés à ces programmes sont destinés à leur assurer l'accès au crédit et au financement sur fonds propres.

Le programme COSME vise à améliorer l'accès aux marchés à l'intérieur de l'Union européenne et dans le monde.

La Commission continuera à soutenir le réseau Entreprise Europe. Elle poursuivra également les actions visant à encourager le commerce et la coopération industrielle à l'échelle internationale, y compris le dialogue sur les aspects industriels et réglementaires avec des partenaires stratégiques, en vue de réduire les différences en matière de réglementation et d'améliorer l'environnement des entreprises.

En outre, la Commission soutient une quantité considérable d'initiatives en cours en aidant les PME européennes à s'internationaliser. Un certain nombre de centres européens fournissant aux PME des conseils sur la manière d'investir et de tirer parti des débouchés commerciaux offerts par la Chine, par l'Inde et par la Thaïlande sont financés par la Commission. Des bureaux d'assistance en matière de DPI, situés en Chine, dans les pays de l'ANASE ou du Mercosur, viennent compléter ces initiatives.

La Commission soutient aussi la coopération transnationale et internationale entre les clusters, par l'intermédiaire de l'«European Cluster Collaboration Platform» et de l'organisation de manifestations visant à mettre en relation des clusters internationaux au sein de pays tiers.

Enfin, la Commission encourage fortement l'internationalisation au moyen des «missions pour la croissance».

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004163/14
to the Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: Helping SMEs to export

SMEs are a force for innovation in the European economy. At this time of crisis, they have an important role to play in our economic recovery. We should do everything we can to nurture their potential in the face of competition on world markets which is often simply unfair. By helping SMEs we help the European economy as a whole. We need to offer SMEs tailored assistance, in the form of both specific legislative provisions and funding, so that they can survive in what is sometimes a hostile international environment. The EU has grasped this imperative and acted on it, backed by a Parliament which is constantly seeking ways of helping these firms. SMEs must be competitive, both inside and outside the EU.

1. With that aim in view, could the Commission outline what forms of export assistance SMEs may currently be given under EC law?

2. Does the Commission intend to step up that assistance?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(12 June 2014)

The Commission's actions focus on facilitating market access by providing relevant information, effective resolution of market-entry barriers through negotiations with third countries, and supporting programmes that are complementary to existing support frameworks provided by Member States and private organisations.

Dedicated financial support for SMEs is earmarked in two significant programmes; EUR 1.4 billion of the COSME (SMEs) and EUR 2.7 billion of the Horizon 2020 programme budgets are guaranteed for mobilising loans and equity financing.

The COSME programme aims to improve access to markets inside the European Union and globally.

The Commission will continue to support the Enterprise Europe Network. It will also maintain actions to foster international business and industrial cooperation, including industrial and regulatory dialogues with strategic partners, with the objective of reducing regulatory differences and improving the business environment.

The Commission also supports a number of on-going initiatives helping EU SMEs to internationalise. A number of EU business Centres that advice SMEs on how to invest and take advantage of business opportunities in China, India and Thailand are financed by the Commission. These initiatives are complemented by a number of IPR Helpdesks, currently located in China, ASEAN and Mercosur regions.

The Commission also supports transnational and international cooperation between clusters, through the European Cluster Collaboration Platform and the organisation of international cluster match-making events in third countries.

The Commission strongly promotes internationalisation through 'Missions for Growth'.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-004164/14
à la Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(3 avril 2014)

Objet: Délits financiers

Le marché unique et l'élimination des obstacles favorisent les activités légitimes des entreprises, mais peuvent également constituer un terrain propice aux délits financiers. Les législateurs européens ont mis un point d'honneur à adopter des règles strictes en matière de délits financiers. Ces règles ne peuvent produire un effet bénéfique que si les services bancaires coopèrent entre eux. Force est de constater également la présence au sein du continent européen d'États, non membres de l'Union, qui optent pour des politiques fiscales particulièrement avantageuses. Ceci peut avoir pour conséquence d'endommager l'équilibre financier au sein de l'Union. Dans cette optique, la Commission européenne peut-elle nous expliquer:

1. Quelle est sa stratégie en matière de coopération bancaire?

2. Quelle est sa stratégie en matière de coopération avec les petits États fiscalement avantageux?

Réponse donnée par M. Barnier au nom de la Commission
(10 juin 2014)

1. La coopération entre les autorités de surveillance bancaire est régie par la directive 2013/36/UE. Le mécanisme de surveillance unique, instauré par le règlement (UE) n° 1024/2013, devrait encore améliorer la coopération au sein de la zone euro.

La directive 2013/36/UE dispose qu'aux fins de l'appréciation de l'honorabilité des administrateurs et des membres de l'organe de gestion, un système efficace d'échange d'informations est nécessaire, dans le cadre duquel l'ABE devrait détenir une banque de données centrale concernant les éléments relatifs aux sanctions administratives, qui soit accessible aux autorités compétentes. Des informations sur les condamnations pénales sont échangées conformément à la décision-cadre 2009/315/JAI et à la décision 2009/316/JAI telles que transposées en droit national, ainsi qu'à d'autres dispositions pertinentes du droit national.

En ce qui concerne la criminalité financière, le sous-comité anti-blanchiment (AMLC) des autorités européennes de surveillance aide ces dernières à assurer une mise en œuvre cohérente de la législation de l'Union européenne pertinente. Il est tout particulièrement nécessaire que les autorités coopèrent dans le domaine du blanchiment de capitaux et du financement du terrorisme, qui présente souvent un caractère transfrontalier. L'AMLC est une enceinte qui permet d'échanger des informations et de discuter des expériences relatives aux activités de surveillance.

2. Dans le cadre de son paquet de décembre 2012 contre la fraude et l'évasion fiscales, la Commission a adopté une recommandation relative à des mesures visant à encourager les pays tiers à appliquer des normes minimales de bonne gouvernance dans le domaine fiscal. Celle-ci inclut l'élimination des mesures fiscales dommageables analogues à celles évoquées dans la question.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004164/14
to the Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: Financial crime

As well as encouraging legitimate business activity, the single market and the removal of barriers can be conducive to financial crime. European law-makers have pledged to adopt strict rules on financial crime. These, however, can do no good unless banking services work together. It is also an inescapable fact that some European countries, not members of the EU, are choosing to follow polices based on tax breaks. This could undermine financial stability within the EU. That being the case:

1. What strategy is the Commission pursuing as regards banking cooperation?

2. What strategy is it pursuing as regards cooperation with small countries that offer tax breaks?

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

1. Cooperation between banking supervisors is governed by Directive 2013/36/EU. Further improvement in cooperation within the Euro-area is expected through the Single Supervisory Mechanism, established by Regulation (EU) No 1024/2013.

Directive 2013/36/EU lays down that for the purposes of assessing the good repute of directors and members of a management body, an efficient system of exchange of information is required where EBA should maintain a central database containing details of administrative penalties, which is accessible to competent authorities. Information about criminal convictions are exchanged in accordance with Framework Decision 2009/315/JHA and Decision 2009/316/JHA, as transposed into national law, and with other relevant provisions of national law.

As regards financial crime, the European Supervisory Authorities' Sub Committee on Anti- Money Laundering (AMLC) assists the European Supervisory Authorities to ensure a consistent implementation of the relevant EC law. Especially in the area of money laundering and terrorist financing, which is frequently cross-border oriented, it is necessary for authorities to cooperate. The AMLC provides for a forum to exchange information and discuss experiences of supervisory activities.

2. As part of its December 2012 package against tax fraud and evasion, the Commission adopted a recommendation regarding measures to encourage third countries to apply minimum standards of good governance in tax matters. This includes the removal of harmful tax measures similar to those mentioned in the question.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004166/14
alla Commissione
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(3 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Healing gardens

Gli Healing gardens sono nati negli Stati Uniti dove hanno avuto grande sviluppo. Si tratta di spazi verdi, inaugurati recentemente anche a Milano, che sono facilmente accessibili e progettati per avere effetti benefici su chi vi accede, in particolare persone malate. Benefici resi evidenti da analisi cliniche su dati fisiologici come battiti cardiaci, pressione, tensione muscolare, con l'80 % dei pazienti che certifica come aria e sole siano fondamentali nel processo di guarigione, in particolare per patologie come Alzheimer, autismo e cardiopatie. A fianco delle cure con la fauna, si inaugurano dunque anche quelle con la flora, l'ortoterapia, trattata in alcuni pionieristici corsi di laurea triennale e in altri più specialistici. Altre ricerche hanno dimostrato che le attività all'aria aperta rendono i pazienti più attivi e meno conflittuali, cambiandone anche la visione della malattia e garantendo una maggiore serenità.

La Commissione:

1. È a conoscenza degli Healing gardens?

2. È in possesso di dati scientifici o statistici che supportino il successo dell'ortoterapia?

3. Non ritiene di dover favorire, tramite il Fondo Sociale europeo, lo sviluppo di questi spazi verdi, anche in luoghi pubblici, ove sia possibile, quali aree adiacenti ai municipi, per la cura di gravi patologie che colpiscono un enorme numero di persone nell'UE?

4. In che modo ritiene di poter aiutare gli atenei europei a sviluppare corsi che approfondiscano gli studi medici e la progettazione di tali aree?

5. Non ritiene che gli edifici sede delle istituzioni dell'Unione europea debbano essere dotati di maggiori aree verdi e di svago, per permettere ai propri dipendenti di ridurre lo stress accumulato, che peggiora rimanendo all'interno «dell'eurobolla», e per garantire anche migliori prestazioni lavorative?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(12 giugno 2014)

La Commissione non dispone di informazioni specifiche sui cosiddetti «healing gardens». La Commissione è consapevole del fatto che gli spazi verdi hanno un effetto benefico sulla salute fisica e psicologica.

Il programma di ricerca unionale PQ-7 finanzia il progetto «Plant-words and the transformation of personhood in Masikoro healing practices in Madagascar (PLAWOMAD) ([1])». La ricerca intende mettere a punto una metodologia per sviluppare e raffinare le piante da usarsi nei trattamenti.

Il Fondo sociale europeo non può sostenere il tipo di intervento suggerito, esso può intervenire soltanto a sostegno di investimenti nel capitale umano.

Il programma Erasmus+ sostiene la cooperazione tra le università in merito a un'ampia gamma di tematiche tra cui lo sviluppo di curriculum. Esso potrebbe pertanto sostenere lavori volti a integrare lo studio sugli effetti benefici per la salute derivanti dagli spazi verdi nei pertinenti programmi universitari.

La Commissione concorda sul fatto che giardini e spazi verdi potrebbero avere un'influenza positiva sul suo personale. Ove possibile, sia a Bruxelles che a Lussemburgo, la Commissione assicura la manutenzione degli spazi verdi attorno ai suoi edifici.

([1]) http://cordis.europa.eu/projects/rcn/95959_en.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004166/14
to the Commission
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: Healing gardens

Healing gardens first started in the United States, where they have now become widespread, and one has recently opened in Milan. These green areas are easily accessible and designed to have beneficial effects on visitors, particularly people who are ill. The benefits have been revealed by clinical analyses of physiological data such as heart rate, blood pressure and muscle tension, with 80% of patients attesting to the fact that fresh air and sunshine are essential to the healing process, in particular for conditions such as Alzheimer's, autism and heart disease. Alongside therapies involving animals, we now also have therapies using plants — horticultural therapy — which is taught in some pioneering three-year degree courses and other, more specialist courses. Other research has shown that open-air activities can make patients more active and less antagonistic, change their attitudes towards their conditions and give them greater peace of mind.

1. Does the Commission know about healing gardens?

2. Does it have scientific or statistical data to confirm the success of horticultural therapy?

3. Does it believe it should use the European Social Fund to encourage the development of this kind of green area, not least wherever possible in public spaces, such as in areas next to municipal offices, so as to treat serious diseases that affect a huge number of people in the European Union?

4. How does it think it can help European universities develop in-depth courses on medical research and planning in such areas?

5. Does it not believe that the buildings housing the EU institutions should have larger green and leisure areas where their workers can let go of their built-up stress — which gets worse if they stay inside the 'Eurobubble' — so they can also perform better at work?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(12 June 2014)

The Commission has no specific information about so called 'healing gardens'. The Commission is aware that green areas are beneficial for physical and psychological health.

The EU Research Programme FP-7 funds the project 'Plant-words and the transformation of personhood in Masikoro healing practices in Madagascar (Plawomad) ([1])'. The research aims to establish a methodology to develop and refine plants to be used in treatment.

The European Social Fund cannot support the type of intervention suggested; it can only intervene to support investments in human capital.

The Erasmus+ programme supports cooperation between universities on a range of issues, including in the areas of curriculum design. It would therefore be able to support work to integrate the study of the beneficial health effects of green spaces into relevant university programmes.

The Commission agrees that gardens and green areas may have positive influence on its staff. Whenever possible, both in Brussels and Luxembourg, the Commission preserves the green area in the vicinity of its buildings.

([1]) http://cordis.europa.eu/projects/rcn/95959_en.html

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004168/14
alla Commissione
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(3 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: La fabbrica dei «derivati» che fa chiudere le fabbriche

Un'indagine della Procura di Bari avrebbe rilevato delle importanti responsabilità dell'istituto bancario Unicredit nel fallimento dell'industria produttrice di divani «Divania», un'azienda sana che dava lavoro a 430 operai. 16 dirigenti di Unicredit sono accusati di aver falsamente presentato 203 «derivati-trappola» a Divania, proponendoli come contratti a costo zero; tali derivati hanno invece esposto l'azienda a rischi illimitati, portando a oltre 15 milioni di euro di perdita e costringendo la fabbrica alla chiusura e al fallimento. Il sistema dei «derivati» ha finora portato ad accuse lievi, come quella di «aver aggravato» la situazione di aziende, quali Parmalat e Cirio, già in crisi per la gestione di pessimi dirigenti. Ma l'inchiesta della Procura di Bari rende invece chiaro come la responsabilità di Unicredit nel fallimento di «Divania» sia totale, dal momento che l'azienda non aveva problemi di gestione interna.

Alla luce di quanto esposto, può la Commissione far sapere se:

1. È a conoscenza di questo sistema truffaldino di vendita dei «derivati» e se può illustrare altri esempi avvenuti all'interno degli Stati membri?

2. Ritiene che il nuovo sistema di controllo bancario comune sia in grado di limitare casi analoghi?

3. Non crede che sia giunto il momento di operare finalmente una netta divisione tra banche commerciali e banche d'affari, per limitare lo strapotere e le derive della finanza creativa da parte delle banche nei confronti del sistema produttivo?

4. Si è coordinata con il governo italiano e la regione Puglia al fine di utilizzare il Fondo sociale europeo a tutela dei lavoratori di Divania che hanno perso il posto?

Risposta di Michel Barnier a nome della Commissione
(10 giugno 2014)

La vendita e la raccomandazione di investimenti sono disciplinate come servizi di investimento a norma della direttiva 2004/39/CE relativa ai mercati degli strumenti finanziari (MiFID 1) ([1]), la quale prevede varie misure a tutela degli investitori. Questa tutela è ulteriormente aumentata dalla direttiva riveduta (MiFID 2) ([2]), che rafforza altresì i poteri di vigilanza delle autorità competenti conferendo loro il diritto di vietare o limitare la commercializzazione, la distribuzione e la vendita di strumenti finanziari che sollevino seri dubbi in tema di tutela degli investitori.

La Commissione non ha il potere di esercitare direttamente la vigilanza sulle banche o sulle imprese d'investimento relativamente alla prestazione dei servizi di investimento o alla condotta di mercato né di vigilare sullo stesso mercato finanziario europeo, responsabilità che incombono alle competenti autorità nazionali.

Se sul mercato circolano prodotti indesiderabili o si seguono pratiche inopportune, spetta alla competente autorità nazionale intervenire a tutela degli investitori facendo rispettare la normativa applicabile. Alcune competenze di vigilanza (monitoraggio) sono altresì conferite all'Autorità europea degli strumenti finanziari e dei mercati.

Quanto alla separazione tra banche commerciali e banche d'affari, la Commissione europea ha presentato a gennaio una proposta di misure strutturali nel settore bancario per proibire alle banche di svolgere attività di negoziazione per conto proprio. Le nuove norme conferirebbero altresì alle autorità di vigilanza il potere d'imporre a tali banche di separare alcune attività di negoziazione dalla funzione di raccolta di depositi, se l'esercizio di tali attività compromette la stabilità finanziaria.

Nel rispetto dei principi di gestione concorrente che si applicano al Fondo sociale europeo, i progetti sono selezionati dalle autorità regionali abilitate a tal fine. Risulta alla Commissione che la Regione Puglia non abbia fatto ricorso a tale fondo per i lavoratori della Divania.

([1]) Direttiva 2004/39/CE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 21 aprile 2004, relativa ai mercati degli strumenti finanziari, che modifica le direttive 85/611/CEE e 93/6/CEE del Consiglio e la direttiva 2000/12/CE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio e che abroga la direttiva 93/22/CEE del Consiglio — GU L 145 del 30.4.2004.

([2]) Pubblicazione nella Gazzetta ufficiale prevista per il giugno 2014 — http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-14-129_en.htm?locale=en.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004168/14
to the Commission
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: Fabricated 'derivatives' leading to the closure of manufacturing companies

An investigation carried out by the public prosecutor's office in Bari appears to hold the banking giant UniCredit strongly accountable for the collapse of the sofa manufacturer Divania, which had once been a healthy company that employed 430 people. Some 16 directors at UniCredit have been accused of deceitfully handing over 203 'booby-trapped derivatives' to Divania by passing them off as no-cost contracts. These derivatives in fact exposed Divania to unlimited liability, and resulted in the company losing more than EUR 15 million before it was forced to close and file for bankruptcy. The 'derivatives' system has so far only been on the receiving end of minor accusations, such as 'having further aggravated' the situation of companies (for instance, Parmalat and Cirio) that were already in crisis owing to terrible management practices. However, it is clear from the investigation carried out by the public prosecutor's office in Bari that UniCredit is entirely to blame for the collapse of Divania, since the company had not had any prior internal management problems.

1. Is the Commission aware of the deceitful practice of selling fake 'derivatives' as described above, and can it give examples of any other similar cases having taken place in Member States?

2. Does it believe that the new EU bank supervisory system will be able to limit such practices?

3. Does it not feel that the time has come to finally separate commercial banks from corporate banks, in order to limit the effects and impacts on the manufacturing sector stemming from the 'creative accounting' of banks?

4. Is it working alongside the Italian Government and the Region of Puglia by using the European Social Fund to support the people who lost their jobs after Divania closed down?

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

The sale or recommendation of investments are regulated as investment services, subject to Directive 2004/39/EC (MiFID 1) ([1]), which provides for a number of measures to protect investors. MiFID 2 ([2]) further increases the protection and it also reinforces the supervisory powers of competent authorities by granting them the right to prohibit or restrict the marketing, distribution and sale of any financial instrument giving serious concerns regarding investor protection.

The Commission does not have the authority to directly supervise banks or investment firms as regards provision of investment services or market conduct, or to supervise the European financial market itself. These responsibilities fall to the competent national authorities.

If there are undesirable practices or products in the market, it is for the national competent authority to intervene to protect investors by enforcing the relevant laws. The European Securities and Markets Authority is also entrusted with certain supervisory (monitoring) responsibilities.

As regards the separation of commercial banks from investment banking, in January the European Commission put forward a proposal for bank structural measures that would prohibit banks from engaging in proprietary trading. It would also give supervisors the power to require those banks to separate certain trading activities, from their deposit-taking business if the pursuit of such activities compromises financial stability.

According to the principles of shared management, which apply to the European Social Fund, the selection of projects is made by the empowered regional authorities. The Commission understands that the Puglia region did not use this fund to the benefit of workers from 'Divania'.

([1]) Directive 2004/39/EC (http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32004L0039:EN:NOT) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21.4.2004 on markets in financial instruments amending Council Directives 85/611/EEC and 93/6/EEC and Directive 2000/12/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and repealing Council Directive 93/22/EEC, OJ L 145 of 30.4.2004.

([2]) Expected to be published in the Official Journal in June 2014 — http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-14-129_en.htm?locale=en

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004171/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) e Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(3 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Lotta ai crimini contro il patrimonio culturale

L'Italia gode di un patrimonio culturale enorme e invidiato da ogni altro paese al mondo, ma questo patrimonio è ogni giorno minacciato da furti di beni culturali. Nel 2013 è stato riscontrato un dato positivo in merito, vale a dire un crollo di questo genere di furti del 24 % rispetto al 2012, anno in cui sono stati registrati 891 furti, contro i 676 del 2013. Nonostante ciò, gli scavi clandestini sono aumentati a 49, il 32 % in più rispetto all'anno precedente. I dati sono stati rilasciati dal Comando Tutela Patrimonio Culturale dei Carabinieri, secondo cui le chiese si confermano come l'obiettivo più colpito dai ladri, anche se anche in questo caso si è registrata una flessione, passando dai 424 furti del 2012 ai 295 del 2013.

Il patrimonio culturale italiano rappresenta una fonte di ricchezza molto proficua e lo stesso vale per molti altri Stati membri che custodiscono tesori culturali inestimabili, motivo per cui la loro protezione, preservazione e pubblicizzazione sono azioni indispensabili.

In merito a quanto detto, dispone la Commissione di dati analoghi a quelli sopra elencati relativi agli altri Stati membri dell'UE? Ritiene la Commissione che un'azione coordinata delle forze di polizia degli Stati membri, possibilmente in seno all'Europol, possa dare un ulteriore contributo alla lotta contro questo fenomeno, che spesso sfocia nel traffico internazionale di manufatti antichi e oggetti d'arte?

Risposta di Cecilia Malmström a nome della Commissione
(16 giugno 2014)

La Commissione concorda sul fatto che, per combattere il traffico illecito di beni culturali, sia necessario garantire la cooperazione transfrontaliera fra le autorità di contrasto competenti degli Stati membri, che sono le principali autorità a poter raccogliere informazioni statistiche sulla portata di questo fenomeno. Nelle sue conclusioni sulla prevenzione e il contrasto dei reati a danno dei beni culturali, del dicembre 2011 ([1]), il Consiglio ha riconosciuto l'importante ruolo delle autorità di contrasto — Europol e Interpol a questo riguardo.

Europol attualmente fornisce supporto alle indagini in corso, facilita lo scambio di informazioni sui reati commessi e sui beni culturali rubati e ricercati, e individua gli accadimenti simili, il modus operandi e le analogie nell'UE. Alcuni aspetti relativi alla cooperazione operativa nel campo della lotta al traffico di beni culturali rientrano nel ciclo programmatico dell'UE per contrastare la criminalità organizzata e le forme gravi di criminalità, nel quadro della priorità relativa ai reati organizzati contro il patrimonio. Europol incoraggia gli Stati membri a ricorrere all'apposita banca dati di Interpol sulle opere d'arte rubate. Interpol ha difatti creato un'unità speciale incaricata della lotta contro il traffico illecito di beni culturali, i cui membri cooperano, fra l'altro, con le autorità di contrasto degli Stati membri dell'UE.

([1]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/jha/126866.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004171/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) and Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: Combating the theft of cultural property

Italy enjoys a vast cultural heritage that is like no other anywhere else in the world, and yet every day this heritage is being targeted by thieves. In 2013, 676 thefts of cultural property were recorded, which represented an improvement (by 24%) over 2012, when 891 thefts were committed. However, the number of illegal excavations rose to 49, 32% more than the previous year. These figures, which were published by the Cultural Heritage Protection Unit of the *Carabinieri*, also revealed that thieves predominantly targeted churches, but that here too there had been a fall in the number of thefts committed in 2013 (295, compared to 424 in 2012).

Italy's cultural heritage represents an extremely lucrative source of wealth, and the same applies for many other Member States who are the guardians of priceless cultural treasures. Consequently, it is absolutely vital to protect, preserve and publicise these artefacts.

In light of the above, does the Commission have any similar data to hand regarding the other Member States of the EU? Does it believe that a coordinated effort between the police forces of the Member States, possibly carried out under the aegis of Europol, could further contribute to combating this phenomenon, which often results in ancient artefacts and works of art being trafficked to all four corners of the globe?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(16 June 2014)

The Commission agrees that ensuring cross-border cooperation between the relevant law enforcement authorities of the Member States is necessary to combat illicit trafficking in cultural goods. They are the main authorities that can collect statistical information about the extent of this phenomenon. In its conclusions on preventing and combating crime against cultural goods of December 2011 ([1]), the Council acknowledged the important role of the enforcement authorities, Europol and Interpol in this respect.

Europol currently provides support to ongoing investigations, facilitates the exchange of information about committed offences, stolen and sough-after cultural property, and identifies similar incidents, modus operandi and matches in the EU. Some aspects related to operational cooperation in the field of combating trafficking of cultural property are carried out under the EU policy cycle against serious and organised crime in the framework of the organised property crime priority. Europol encourages Member States to make use of Interpol's dedicated database on Stolen Works of Arts. In fact, Interpol has established a special unit dedicated to the fight against illicit trafficking in cultural goods whose members cooperate amongst others with the EU Member States enforcement authorities.

([1]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/jha/126866.pdf

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004172/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) e Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(3 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Giornata mondiale dell'autismo

I disturbi dello spettro autistico sono una condizione cronica che interessa lo sviluppo del sistema nervoso centrale, causando una disabilità complessa che coinvolge diversi ambiti, da quello sociale a quello comunicativo e comportamentale. Essendo una patologia che si sviluppa in maniera precoce, nei primi anni di vita, la prevenzione è uno strumento fondamentale per combatterla. Il 2 aprile 2014 è stata indetta la Giornata mondiale dell'autismo, nell'ambito della quale sono state avviate diverse iniziative volte a sensibilizzare la cittadinanza in merito a questa grave patologia.

Può la Commissione fornire informazioni riguardo a:

1. il finanziamento di iniziative organizzate nel quadro di questa giornata;

2. eventi e iniziative direttamente organizzati dalle istituzioni europee?

Risposta di Johannes Hahn a nome della Commissione
(5 giugno 2014)

La Commissione desidera attirare l'attenzione dell'onorevole parlamentare sulle risposte alle interrogazioni E-001268/2014 e E-003532/2014.

La Commissione dedica particolare interesse all'autismo in quanto grave forma di disabilità e promuove la sensibilizzazione in merito: nel 2014 l'organizzazione non governativa Autism Europe ([1]) ha ottenuto un finanziamento dell'UE per un programma di lavoro che comprende azioni di sensibilizzazione ([2]). I membri di Autism-Europe hanno organizzato una serie di manifestazioni ([3]) e attività in tutta Europa per celebrare la Giornata Mondiale di sensibilizzazione sull'Autismo.

Il 2 aprile 2014, Giornata Mondiale di sensibilizzazione sull'Autismo, la Commissione ha pubblicato la relazione ([4]) sui risultati dei quattro progetti pilota avviati in seguito all'invito a presentare proposte sull'occupazione delle persone affette da questa disabilità. Un comunicato stampa è stato inoltre pubblicato alla stessa data ([5]).

La relazione è stata presentata dalla Commissione al gruppo ad alto livello sulla disabilità l'8 aprile 2014 e sarà distribuita in occasione di altre manifestazioni pertinenti. La Commissione esorta inoltre datori di lavoro e organizzazioni della società civile ad avvalersi appieno dei risultati dei progetti pilota.

([1]) http://www.autismeurope.org/
([2]) http://www.autismeurope.org/activities/world-autism-awareness-day/autism-and-work-together-we-can/
([3]) http://www.autismeurope.org/activities/world-autism-awareness-day/
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/document/index_en.htm#h2-5
Sotto il titolo «studi e relazioni».
([5]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-14-253_it.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004172/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) and Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: World Autism Awareness Day

Autistic spectrum disorders are chronic conditions that impact on the development of the central nervous system, giving rise to a complex disability that affects a person's behaviour and how they communicate and socially interact with others. Since the condition develops at a very early age, often in the first few years of a person's life, prevention is a key tool for combating it. With this in mind, World Autism Awareness Day was held on 2 April 2014, with various initiatives being launched to raise public awareness of this serious condition.

1. Can the Commission give any details relating to the funding of the initiatives that were organised as part of this day?

2. Can it also give details of the events and initiatives that have been directly organised by European institutions?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(5 June 2014)

The Commission would like to draw the Honourable Member's attention to the replies given to questions E-001268/2014 and 003532/2014.

The Commission pays specific attention to autism as an important form of disability and also raises awareness about it. In 2014, the non-governmental organisation, Autism Europe ([1]), received an EU grant for a work plan including awareness raising actions ([2]). Autism-Europe members also organised a wide range of events ([3]) and activities across Europe to mark the World Autism Awareness Day.

On 2 April 2014, the World Autism Awareness Day, the Commission published the report ([4]) on the results of the four pilot projects that were launched following the call for proposals on employment of persons with autism. A press release was also published on the same date ([5]).

The report was presented by the Commission to the EU Disability High Level Group on 8 April 2014 and it will be distributed at other appropriate events. The Commission will also encourage employers and civil society organisations to make use of the findings of the pilot projects.

([1]) http://www.autismeurope.org/
([2]) http://www.autismeurope.org/activities/world-autism-awareness-day/autism-and-work-together-we-can/
([3]) http://www.autismeurope.org/activities/world-autism-awareness-day/
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/document/index_en.htm#h2-5 under the title 'Studies and reports'.
([5]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-14-253_en.htm

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004173/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) e Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(3 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Riforme e lotta alla corruzione in Ucraina — ruolo dell'OLAF

Nel contesto dell'accordo di associazione UE-Ucraina e in seguito alla crisi che ha portato a un cambiamento di governo a Kiev, l'UE sta investendo molto nel riformare la base economica del paese orientale, debilitata da un alto grado di corruzione. Per fare fronte a questa importante sfida, una delle principali dell'UE, il commissario europeo per l'Allargamento si è recato diverse volte in Ucraina e ora la Commissione intende anche avvalersi dell'esperienza maturata dall'Ufficio europeo per la lotta antifrode, l'OLAF.

In merito a quanto detto, può la Commissione spiegare in maniera più dettagliata secondo quali modalità l'OLAF procederà ad accompagnare il processo di riforme in Ucraina?

Risposta di Algirdas Šemeta a nome della Commissione
(6 giugno 2014)

La lotta contro la frode e la corruzione rappresenta una priorità per le autorità ucraine. È in corso la creazione di un'autorità nazionale permanente anticorruzione, che avrà il compito di individuare i casi di corruzione, svolgere le relative indagini e rinviarli alle autorità giudiziarie. Nel corso della visita a Kiev dei commissari Füle e Lewandowski (25-26 marzo), l'Ufficio europeo per la lotta antifrode (OLAF) si è offerto di fornire consulenza per l'istituzione di una siffatta autorità. Tale consulenza sarà messa a disposizione attraverso il gruppo di sostegno per l'Ucraina, recentemente creato dalla Commissione.

L'UE sorveglierà inoltre l'effettiva erogazione degli aiuti dell'UE e di altre risorse di bilancio per garantire che i finanziamenti dell'Unione europea siano utilizzati per i progetti e gli obiettivi previsti. A tal fine, la Commissione sta discutendo con le autorità ucraine la creazione di un apposito organismo misto indipendente UE-Ucraina incaricato di indagare su questioni collegate a frodi e corruzione, alla luce dello straordinario impegno finanziario profuso dall'UE a favore dell'Ucraina e della necessità di tutelare gli interessi finanziari dell'Unione.

Gli onorevoli deputati possono trovare ulteriori informazioni nella nota della Commissione contenente l'aggiornamento sul sostegno dell'Unione europea a favore dell'Ucraina, pubblicata il 9 aprile 2014 ([1]).

La Commissione invita inoltre gli onorevoli deputati a consultare la risposta all'interrogazione parlamentare E-3304/14.

([1]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-14-279_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004173/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) and Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: OLAF's role in the reforms and anti-corruption initiatives in Ukraine

Within the context of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, and following the crisis that has led to a change of government in Kiev, the EU is doing a great deal to reform the eastern country's economic system, which has been weakened by high levels of corruption. In order to face up to this significant challenge, the European Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy — one of the figureheads of the EU — has made several visits to Ukraine, and the Commission is now also seeking to involve the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and make best use of its vast levels of experience.

In light of the above, can the Commission provide a more detailed explanation of how exactly OLAF will be involved in the reform process in Ukraine?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(6 June 2014)

The fight against fraud and corruption is a priority for the Ukrainian authorities, and the setting-up of a permanent national anti-corruption authority is currently underway. The institution will deal with the detection, investigation and deferral to the judicial authorities of cases of corruption. During the visit to Kiev of Commissioners Füle and Lewandowski on 25-26 March, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) offered to provide expertise for the establishment of such an authority. This expertise will be channelled through the Support Group for Ukraine which has been recently established by the Commission.

Furthermore, the EU will monitor the effective disbursement of EU aid and other budgetary resources to ensure that EU funding reaches the intended projects and purposes. To this end, the Commission is discussing with Ukrainian authorities the creation of an ad-hoc joint EU-UA, independent body to investigate fraud and corruption-related matters, in the light of the extraordinary financial efforts deployed by the EU to assist Ukraine and the need to protect the EU financial interests.

The Honourable Members can find further information in the Commission MEMO on 'European Union's support to Ukraine — update' which was published on 9 April 2014 ([1]).

The Commission would also like to invite the Honourable Members to consult the reply to the Parliamentary Questions E-3304/14.

([1]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-14-279_en.htm

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004174/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) e Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(3 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Rafforzamento della posizione delle donne e dei giovani afgani nella vita politica del paese

Al termine del periodo di registrazione per le elezioni presidenziali in Afghanistan, è stato constatato un aumento delle donne nelle liste degli elettori. La condizione della donna ha conosciuto un certo miglioramento nel paese, soprattutto grazie all'azione congiunta dei paesi occidentali e, proprio per questo, secondo alcuni analisti le donne stanno ora cercando di proteggere queste conquiste. D'altro canto, è anche aumentato il numero di donne che concorrono per alcune cariche (si parla di circa trecento donne per le sole elezioni provinciali e di tre candidate alla vicepresidenza). Un ruolo importante nell'affermazione democratica del paese potrà anche essere rappresentato dall'oltre 60 % di popolazione afgana con meno di 25 anni d'età, che rappresentano il futuro e la crescita del paese.

Può la Commissione chiarire se l'UE ha avviato azioni in favore della partecipazione attiva delle donne e dei giovani afgani alla vita politica del paese?

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

L'UE promuove la partecipazione delle donne e dei giovani afghani ai processi politici attraverso un intenso dialogo con il governo, il parlamento e la società civile dell'Afghanistan su come migliorare le condizioni di tale partecipazione. Durante la preparazione delle elezioni presidenziali, l'UE ha sostenuto diverse misure che consentono una maggior partecipazione delle donne, tra cui le addette alle perquisizioni ai seggi. L'UE caldeggia il pieno rispetto delle quote rosa in Parlamento e nelle assemblee provinciali.

Attraverso un nuovo progetto realizzato insieme al PNUS, l'UE sostiene le parlamentari che chiedono una riforma del quadro amministrativo e giuridico del Parlamento, nel cui ambito dovrà essere trattato il tema fondamentale delle donne e delle questioni di genere. Per sostenere i regimi di governance a livello subnazionale, l'UE promuove inoltre l'elaborazione di quadri specifici per far sì che la pianificazione e la procedura di bilancio in ambito provinciale e comunale tengano conto delle questioni di genere.

I progetti EIDHR svolgono un ruolo importante, in quanto promuovono diverse iniziative con componenti di genere, come le attività di ricerca della verità e il sostegno alle vittime, e permettono ai giovani e alle donne afghani di partecipare alla vita politica. L'EIDHR stanzia attualmente circa 2,7 milioni di EUR per favorire l'integrazione delle questioni di genere. Nel 2011-2013 sono stati assegnati altri 6 milioni di EUR a sostegno degli attori non statali. Questo programma promuove in particolare il ruolo attivo delle donne nello sviluppo dell'Afghanistan, compresi i processi politici, la costruzione della pace e gli sforzi finalizzati alla riconciliazione, specialmente a livello locale e subnazionale.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004174/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) and Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: The emergence of Afghan women and young people in the country's political landscape

At the end of the registration period for the presidential elections in Afghanistan, an increase in the number of women on the electoral roll was observed. The situation of women in the country has improved markedly in recent times, thanks in particular to initiatives led by Western countries, and it is precisely for this reason that several analysts believe that women are now seeking to consolidate the progress that has been made so far. There was also an increase in the number of women actually competing for certain political positions (around 300 women were listed as candidates in the regional elections alone, and there were a further three female candidates for the vice-presidency). In addition, Afghanistan's next generation (young people aged 25 and under), which makes up over 60% of the population, will be able to play an important role in establishing democracy in the country, and represents its future and continued development.

Could the Commission indicate whether the EU has launched any initiatives to promote the active participation of Afghan women and young people in the country's political landscape?

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

The EU promotes the participation of Afghan women and young people in political processes pursuing a close political dialogue with the Afghan government, the parliament and civil society on how to further improve the conditions of women and youth participating in the political arena. In preparing the Presidential elections, the EU has been supporting various measures which allow a higher female participation, including female searchers at polling stations. It advocates the full implementation of quota for women in parliament and provincial assemblies.

In a new project, and together with UNDP, the EU supports women parliamentarians to advocate reforms of the administrative and legal framework of the Parliament where women and gender issues will be a major area to tackle. In support of sub-national governance schemes, the EU further promotes the design of specific frameworks for gender responsive provincial and municipal planning and budgeting.

EIDHR projects play an important role promoting for various initiatives with gender components, including activities such as truth-seeking and victim support and empowering Afghan youth and women to participate in political life. Currently, the EIDHR promotes gender mainstreaming with a foreseen allocation of around EUR 2.7 million. In 2011-13, additional EUR 6 million have been allocated in support of Non-State-Actors. This programme particularly encourages the active role of women in the development of Afghanistan, including political processes, peace building and reconciliation efforts, especially at the local and sub-national levels.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004175/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) e Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(3 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Rischi legati ai farmaci ipnotici

L'assunzione di farmaci ipnotici come sonniferi, psicofarmaci o ansiolitici è stata di recente associata da uno studio scientifico britannico a un raddoppiamento del rischio di morte precoce. Anche se, suggeriscono molta cautela nella lettura dei dati raccolti, gli stessi autori della ricerca raccomandano la massima attenzione nell'utilizzo di questi farmaci e la piena comprensione del loro impatto sulla salute. In particolare mettono in guardia dal rischio di dipendenza da questo genere di farmaci, che può essere tanto psicologica quanto fisica, con effetti di intossicazione dell'organismo.

In merito a questa ricerca, può la Commissione chiarire:

1. se esistono dati relativi all'assunzione di farmaci ipnotici da parte dei cittadini europei;

2. se esistono dati relativi allo sviluppo di dipendenza da questi farmaci da parte dei cittadini europei?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(13 giugno 2014)

Conformemente alla legislazione farmaceutica ([1]) un'autorizzazione all'immissione in commercio è concessa a un prodotto medicinale soltanto dopo che ne sia stata valutata la qualità, la sicurezza e l'efficacia e si sia giunti alla conclusione che vi è un bilancio positivo in termini di rischi/benefici. L'informazione sul prodotto, approvata dalle autorità competenti nel contesto dell'autorizzazione, contiene informazioni sul suo uso (indicazione, dosaggio) e sui rischi (reazioni avverse, avvertimenti, ad esempio, sui rischi di dipendenza). Successivamente al rilascio dell'autorizzazione, il medicinale è soggetto, lungo il suo intero ciclo di vita, a una sorveglianza post-commercializzazione. Le autorizzazioni alla commercializzazione dei farmaci ipnotici sono state concesse essenzialmente dagli Stati membri, anche se le segnalazioni di sicurezza ad essi relative sono state discusse pure a livello di UE in seno al comitato di valutazione dei rischi per la farmacovigilanza (PRAC) ([2]) facente capo all'Agenzia europea per i medicinali. In caso di criticità per la sicurezza la legislazione farmaceutica prevede gli strumenti legali per modificare l'informazione sul prodotto o ritirare l'autorizzazione alla commercializzazione. Tra i prodotti discussi di recente vi sono il trazodone ([3]) e lo zolpidem ([4]), in relazione ai quali il PRAC ha raccomandato modifiche dell'informazione sul prodotto che saranno attuate dagli Stati membri.

L'Osservatorio europeo delle droghe e delle tossicodipendenze (EMCDDA) ([5]) fornisce informazioni sulla prevalenza dell'uso nell'UE dei farmaci controllati, tra cui gli ipnotici. Ad esempio, i dati riportati nel rapporto 2010 dell'International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) indicano che il più alto consumo pro capite di barbiturici di tipo antiepilettico soggetti a prescrizione (in cui rientrano per l'essenziale barbiturici, ma anche benzodiazepine) è stato segnalato dalla Bulgaria, dall'Ucraina e dalla Lettonia.

([1]) Regolamento (CE) n. 726/2004 del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 31 marzo 2004, che istituisce procedure comunitarie per l'autorizzazione e la sorveglianza dei medicinali per uso umano e veterinario, e che istituisce l'agenzia europea per i medicinali, GU L 136 del 30.4.2004, e successive modifiche; direttiva 2001/83/CE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 6 novembre 2001, recante un codice comunitario relativo ai medicinali per uso umano, GU L 311 del 28.11.2001, e successive modifiche.

([2]) http://www.ema.europa.eu/ema/index.jsp?curl=pages/regulation/document_listing/document_listing_000375.jsp&mid=WC0b01ac0580727d1c

([3]) http://www.ema.europa.eu/docs/en_GB/document_library/Minutes/2013/06/WC500144716.pdf

([4]) http://www.ema.europa.eu/ema/index.jsp?curl=pages/medicines/human/referrals/Zolpidem-containing_medicines/human_referral_prac_000030.jsp&mid=WC0b01ac05805c516f

([5]) http://www.emcdda.europa.eu

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004175/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) and Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: Risks associated with hypnotic drugs

According to a recent British scientific study, taking hypnotic drugs such as sleeping pills, psychotropic drugs and sedatives could potentially double the risk of early death. Although the authors of the study say that the results should be interpreted with a great deal of caution, they also advise people to pay maximum attention when using these drugs, and to fully understand what impacts they could have on their health. They particularly warn against the dangers of becoming dependent on these types of drugs, whether physically or psychologically, and highlight the intoxicating effects they could have on the body.

1. In light of this study, can the Commission indicate whether there are any official statistics concerning to what extent hypnotic drugs are taken by European citizens?

2. Are there any official statistics concerning the growing dependency of European citizens on these types of drugs?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(13 June 2014)

According to the pharmaceutical legislation ([1]) a marketing authorisation is granted to a medicinal product only after its quality, safety and efficacy have been evaluated and a positive benefit-risk balance related to its use has been concluded. Product information, approved by the competent authorities as part of the marketing authorisation, contains information about its use (indication, dosing) and risks (adverse reactions, warnings e.g. about dependence). After the authorisation, the medicinal product is subject to a post-marketing surveillance during its whole life-cycle. Marketing authorisations for hypnotics have been granted mostly by the Member States, however, safety signals related to them have been discussed also at EU level by the Pharmacovigilance Risk Assessment Committee (PRAC) ([2]) of the European Medicines Agency. In case of a safety concern the pharmaceutical legislation provides for legal tools to modify the product information or to withdraw the marketing authorisation. Products recently discussed are e.g. trazodone ([3]) and zolpidem ([4]), the PRAC has recommended amendments of the product information, which will be implemented by the Member States.

The European Centre for Drugs and Drug Addition (Emcdda) ([5]) provides Information regarding the prevalence of use of controlled drugs in the EU, including that of hypnotics. For example, data from the 2010 International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) report show that the highest per capita consumption of prescribed barbiturates of the anti-epileptic type (including mainly barbiturates but also benzodiazepines) has been reported by Bulgaria, Ukraine and Latvia.

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 726/2004 laying down Community procedures for the authorisation and supervision of medicinal products for human and veterinary use and establishing a European Medicines Agency, OJ L 136, 30.4.2004, as amended, Directive 2001/83/EC on the Community code relating to medicinal products for human use, OJ L 311, 28.11.2001, as amended.

([2]) http://www.ema.europa.eu/ema/index.jsp?curl=pages/regulation/document_listing/document_listing_000375.jsp&mid=WC0b01ac0580727d1c

([3]) http://www.ema.europa.eu/docs/en_GB/document_library/Minutes/2013/06/WC500144716.pdf

([4]) http://www.ema.europa.eu/ema/index.jsp?curl=pages/medicines/human/referrals/Zolpidem-containing_medicines/human_referral_prac_000030.jsp&mid=WC0b01ac05805c516f

([5]) http://www.emcdda.europa.eu

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004176/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) e Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(3 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Terremoto e tsunami in Cile

La scorsa notte un violento terremoto di magnitudo 8,2 ha colpito la costa settentrionale del Cile, provocando uno tsunami con onde superiori ai 2 metri. Finora i soccorsi hanno accertato il decesso di cinque persone, grazie alla preventiva evacuazione delle aree più a rischio di inondazione, ma il bilancio potrebbe aumentare.

È la Commissione in grado di chiarire se tra le vittime, i feriti o gli sfollati siano presenti cittadini europei?

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

Stando alle informazioni fornite dall'ONEMI (Ufficio nazionale cileno per le emergenze), tra le vittime non vi sono cittadini dell'UE. La delegazione dell'UE a Santiago è rimasta in stretto contatto con i consolati degli Stati membri in Cile, che in caso di emergenza hanno il compito di fornire l'assistenza necessaria ai loro cittadini.

In caso di necessità, la Commissione era pronta a fornire assistenza emergenziale attraverso il Meccanismo di protezione civile dell'Unione. Le autorità cilene, tuttavia, non hanno fatto appello all'assistenza internazionale, a dimostrazione dell'elevato livello di preparazione delle diverse autorità e comunità nazionali. Dopo l'ultimo terremoto di magnitudo analoga, che ha colpito il Cile nel 2010, la Commissione ha fornito assistenza attraverso il programma DIPECHO per preparare le comunità, potenziare il sistema di allarme rapido e aumentare la capacità delle autorità locali di prepararsi a terremoti e tsunami e di gestire i rischi connessi.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004176/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) and Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: Earthquake and tsunami in Chile

Last night, the western coastline of Chile was hit by a massive earthquake measuring 8.2 on the Richter scale, which sparked a tsunami with waves over two metres high. The emergency services have so far confirmed that five people have died (a figure that would undoubtedly have been higher had the areas most at risk from the waves not been evacuated as a precaution), but the death toll could rise in the coming days.

Does the Commission know if any European citizens have been killed or injured, or forced to evacuate their homes?

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

On the basis of the information received from the the ONEMI (Chilean National Office for Emergencies) no casualties were reported among the EU citizens. The EU Delegation in Santiago stayed in close contact with the EU consulates in Chile who are responsible for providing necessary assistance for the EU citizens in case of emergency.

The Commission, through the Union Civil Protection Mechanism, was ready to provide emergency assistance to Chile in case of a need. However, Chilean Authorities did not ask for international assistance, demonstrating a high level of preparedness among authorities and communities. Since the last earthquake of similar magnitude in Chile in 2010, the Commission, through its Dipecho programme, has been providing assistance to prepare communities, strengthen the Early Warning System and the capacity of local authorities to prepare for earthquakes and tsunamis and to manage the risks related thereto.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004177/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) e Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(3 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Rischio dell'effetto Crimea in Ossetia

In una precedente interrogazione parlamentare la Commissione è stata richiesta di esprimersi in merito al rischio di estensione dell'effetto Crimea a altre aree geografiche nella sfera di influenza europea, in particolare alla Transnistria. Ciò potrebbe in effetti scatenare un effetto domino su altri conflitti territoriali «sopiti», ma mai risolti in maniera definitiva. Tra questi, occorre ricordare anche la Transcaucasia e in particolare l'Ossetia meridionale, entità indipendente de facto dalla Georgia, regione in cui il partito «Ossetia Unita» auspica da tempo un referendum per l'unificazione di tutti gli osseti all'interno della Federazione Russa, ipotesi finora congelata da Mosca. Il referendum per l'indipendenza della Crimea potrebbe però ridestare i desideri irredentisti nella regione, che sono già tornati a essere argomenti di dibattito politico.

In merito a questa situazione, ha motivo la Commissione di ritenere che la situazione dell'Ossetia possa tornare a scaldarsi e, di conseguenza, portare una nuova ondata di instabilità nell'area, anche alla luce dei precedenti interventi delle forze armate russe nella regione?

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

La situazione è seguita attentamente sin dal momento del riconoscimento, da parte della Federazione russa, delle due entità secessioniste della Georgia nell'agosto 2008. Nel contesto delle discussioni internazionali di Ginevra, il rappresentante speciale dell'Unione europea per il Caucaso meridionale e la crisi in Georgia è in contatto costante con le autorità de facto dell'Abkhazia e dell'Ossezia meridionale e la missione di osservazione dell'UE monitorizza con attenzione la situazione sul posto.Sebbene la Federazione russa svolga già un ruolo importante in entrambe le entità tramite la presenza di forze armate e di guardie di frontiera russe in loco e mediante il sostegno di bilancio, non vi sono attualmente indicazioni del fatto che in Ossezia meridionale e in Abkhazia si potrebbero avere sviluppi simili all'annessione della Crimea.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004177/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) and Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: Risk of the situation in Crimea spreading to Ossetia

In a previous parliamentary question, the Commission was asked to express an opinion on the risk of the situation in Crimea spreading to other regions within the European sphere of influence, and in particular Transnistria. If the unrest does spread, then this could potentially have a domino effect on other territorial disputes that have been 'soothed' but not definitively resolved, including those in Transcaucasia and especially in South Ossetia, a state that has gained unofficial independence from Georgia, and where the 'United Ossetia' party has long campaigned for a referendum to unify the whole of Ossetia with the Russian Federation. Up to now, Moscow has distanced itself from such a move, but the independence referendum in Crimea could rekindle long-held irredentist ambitions in the region, which have already sparked much political debate.

In light of the scenario described above, does the Commission have any reason to believe that the situation in Ossetia could become inflamed and thus lead to a new wave of instability in the region, also bearing in mind how Russian troops have previously intervened in the area?

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

The situation is being followed very carefully since the recognition by the Russian Federation of the two breakaway entities in Georgia in August 2008. In the context of the Geneva International Discussions the EU Special Representative for South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia is in regular contact with the de facto authorities of both Abkhazia and South Ossetia and the EU Monitoring Mission is closely observing the situation on the ground. Although the Russian Federation already plays a strong role in both entities — through the presence of Russian border guards and armed forces on the ground as well as budgetary support — there are currently no indications that a development like the annexation of Crimea is in the making in South Ossetia or Abkhazia.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004178/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) e Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(3 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Strategia europea per le malattie croniche

Nell'Unione europea un cittadino su dieci soffre di Broncopneumopatia cronica ostruttiva, vale a dire la quinta principale causa di morte al mondo.

In generale, le malattie croniche in Europa hanno un impatto fortissimo, rappresentando il 77 % del totale delle malattie e l'86 % delle morti, oltre al fatto che provocano effetti negativi sullo sviluppo economico e sociale europeo. Sono dati estremamente preoccupanti, in particolare se si considera che gran parte delle malattie croniche possono essere fortemente alleviate e addirittura sconfitte tramite la prevenzione.

Di fronte a questa realtà, è sconfortante vedere come in realtà gli Stati membri spendano, in media, solo il 3 % del proprio bilancio sanitario per misure di prevenzione. Occorre dunque finanziare misure di prevenzione per ridurre i principali fattori di rischio, che potrebbero potenzialmente decurtare dell'80 % l'incidenza di questo genere di malattie.

In merito alla lotta contro le malattie croniche, può la Commissione far sapere:

1. come intende agire;

2. se ritiene opportuno stabilire un coordinamento strategico a livello europeo?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(30 maggio 2014)

La Commissione è consapevole del grave problema rappresentato dalle malattie croniche e dal loro impatto sui sistemi sanitari e sociali in Europa.

In questo contesto, la Commissione ha organizzato consultazioni con gli Stati membri e i soggetti interessati nel 2012 ([1]), e, nell'aprile 2014, ha inoltre organizzato il primo «vertice dell'UE sulle malattie croniche» ([2]) al fine di esplorare nuove idee per un'azione con valore aggiunto a livello di UE che contribuisca a rispondere alle malattie croniche.

La Commissione ha inoltre avviato all'inizio di quest'anno un'azione comune con gli Stati membri volta a promuovere l'invecchiamento in buona salute e ad affrontare le malattie croniche (4,6 milioni di euro, cofinanziati dall'UE). Questa azione comune riunisce 23 Stati membri con lo scopo di migliorare il coordinamento e la cooperazione nello scambio di buone prassi per affrontare le malattie croniche.

Oltre ai progetti finanziati attraverso i programmi di sanità, istruzione e ricerca, pertinenti per la prevenzione, la diagnosi e la cura delle malattie croniche, e alle politiche specifiche in materia di cancro, tabacco ([3]), alimentazione e attività fisica ([4]) o danni provocati dall'alcol ([5]), la Commissione sta attualmente sviluppando l'idea di una «coalizione sulle malattie croniche», che è stata discussa al vertice riguardante le suddette malattie ([6]). Tali riflessioni chiariranno la strada da intraprendere ai fini della risposta alle malattie croniche a livello di UE.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/major_chronic_diseases/reflection_process/index_it.htm
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/major_chronic_diseases/events/ev_20140403_en.htm
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/tobacco/products/index_it.htm
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/archive/ph_determinants/life_style/nutrition/documents/nutrition_wpit.pdf
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/alcohol/policy/index_it.htm
([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/major_chronic_diseases/docs/ev_20140403_mi_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004178/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) and Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: European strategy for chronic diseases

In the European Union, one person in every ten suffers from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, which is the fifth highest cause of death across the entire world.

Chronic diseases generally have an extremely severe impact in Europe: they account for 77% of all illnesses and 86% of all deaths, and are also detrimental to the continent's economic and social development. These figures are highly alarming, especially considering that the vast majority of chronic diseases can be greatly alleviated or even eradicated through prevention.

Faced with this very worrying situation, it is rather disconcerting to see that Member States on average spend just 3% of their health budget on preventative measures. Such measures need to be funded in order to reduce the principal risk factors, which could potentially cut the number of instances of these types of diseases by 80%.

1. What actions does the Commission intend to take in the fight against chronic diseases?

2. Does it consider it appropriate to establish a coordinated strategy on a European scale?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(30 May 2014)

The Commission is aware of the burden of chronic diseases and its impact on health and social systems in Europe.

In this context, the Commission organised consultations with Member States and stakeholders in 2012 ([1]), and the first 'EU summit on chronic diseases' in April 2014 ([2]) to explore ideas for added value action at EU level to contribute to a response to chronic diseases.

The Commission has further launched earlier this year a joint action with Member States on promoting healthy ageing and addressing chronic diseases (EUR 4.6 million co-funded by the EU). This joint action brings together 23 Member States to improve coordination and cooperation on the exchange of good practice to address chronic diseases.

In addition to projects funded through the Health, Education and Research Programmes with relevance for the prevention, detection and treatment of chronic diseases, and the specific policies on cancer, tobacco ([3]), nutrition and physical activity ([4]) or alcohol related harm ([5]), the Commission is currently developing the idea of a 'coalition on chronic diseases', which was discussed at the summit on chronic diseases ([6]). These discussions will clarify the way forward in the response to chronic diseases at EU level.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/major_chronic_diseases/reflection_process/index_en.htm
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/major_chronic_diseases/events/ev_20140403_en.htm
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/tobacco/products/index_en.htm
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/archive/ph_determinants/life_style/nutrition/documents/nutrition_wp_en.pdf
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/alcohol/policy/index_en.htm
([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/major_chronic_diseases/docs/ev_20140403_mi_en.pdf

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004179/14
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) e Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(3 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Stallo dei negoziati in Medio Oriente

Il presidente dell'Autorità nazionale palestinese ha deciso, la scorsa settimana, di presentare formale adesione a 15 organizzazioni dell'Onu, violando l'impegno preso circa un anno fa con Israele di congelare ogni ulteriore pretesa di rappresentanza in sede Onu all'avvio delle trattative con lo stato ebraico. La decisione è stata presa in seguito agli scarsi progressi che, secondo l'Anp, sono stati raggiunti nei negoziati.

Questa decisione potrebbe essere un duro colpo per il processo di pace in Medio Oriente, anche perché il segretario di Stato americano ha deciso di annullare la propria tappa nella regione, a Ramallah, assottigliando le possibilità di raggiungere un accordo entro il 29 aprile, come auspicato dall'amministrazione Obama.

In merito a questa impasse, può il Vice-presidente/Alto Rappresentante indicare:

1. quale posizione intende prendere rispetto alla decisione palestinese?

2. quali passi intende muovere per evitare uno stallo definitivo dei negoziati?

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

L'AR/VP è estremamente preoccupata per i recenti sviluppi, che rischiano di compromettere i negoziati israelo-palestinesi iniziati ad agosto 2013. L'AR/VP continua ad appoggiare tutti gli sforzi profusi dagli Stati Uniti e dalle parti in causa per prolungare i negoziati oltre il termine iniziale del 29 aprile e ribadisce che l'UE è disposta a fornire a entrambe le parti un pacchetto di sostegno senza precedenti nel contesto di un accordo sullo status definitivo. Il primo ministro Netanyahu e il presidente Abbas dovrebbero continuare a impegnarsi in buona fede nei negoziati adottando le decisioni e i difficili compromessi necessari per cogliere questa opportunità unica di pace.

L'AR/VP ha preso atto delle richieste palestinesi di adesione a 15 trattati e convenzioni internazionali presentate all'inizio di aprile (dopo il mancato rilascio, da parte di Israele, del quarto gruppo di prigionieri palestinesi contrariamente a quanto concordato all'inizio dei negoziati) e invita le parti a rispettare tutti gli impegni assunti e a continuare a dar prova della volontà politica, della determinazione e della leadership necessarie per condurre in porto i negoziati.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004179/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) and Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Peace talks stalling in the Middle East

Last week, the President of the Palestinian National Authority applied for his country to officially join 15 UN-affiliated organisations, thereby breaking the pledge made to Israel around a year ago which led to the latest talks between the two sides taking place, namely that the Palestinians would halt any attempts to seek UN representation. The decision was taken following the lack of any tangible progress being made in the negotiations, in the eyes of the PNA.

This move could prove to be a severe blow to the Middle East peace process, which has recently been further hit by the US Secretary of State's decision to cancel his visit to Ramallah, thus making it even less likely that an agreement will be reached by 29 April, as the Obama administration had originally hoped.

1. In light of this current stalemate, what stance does the Vice-President/High Representative intend to take over Palestine's decision?

2. How does she intend to prevent the peace talks from grinding to a complete halt?

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

The HR/VP has been greatly concerned at recent developments threatening the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations which started in August 2013. She continues to support all efforts deployed by the US and by the parties to prolong the negotiations beyond the initial deadline of 29 April and she reiterates that the EU stands ready to provide an unprecedented support package to both sides in the context of a final status agreement. Both PM Netanyahu and President Abbas should continue to engage in good faith in the negotiations and make the difficult compromises and decisions needed to seize this unique opportunity for peace.

The HR/VP has taken note of the Palestinian applications to accede to 15 international treaties and conventions in the beginning of April this year (which followed the Israeli failure to release the fourth group of Palestinian prisoners, as agreed at the start of the negotiations) and she urges the parties to respect all commitments made and to continue showing the political will, determination and leadership needed for a successful outcome to the negotiations.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-004180/14
à Comissão
Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE)
(3 de abril de 2014)

Assunto: Restrições ao transporte de líquidos, aerossóis e géis

Os Açores são uma região ultraperiférica, pelo que o transporte aéreo é rigorosamente o único meio de acesso de passageiros ao arquipélago. Neste contexto particular, as restrições colocadas ao transporte aéreo de líquidos, aerossóis e géis tiveram um impacto bastante negativo na economia da região e mantêm-se como um constrangimento significativo, sobretudo, na produção de vinhos, aguardentes e licores, bem como de compotas tradicionais.

Com efeito, a predominância de estadas de curta duração em cada uma das nove ilhas do arquipélago, com os visitantes (entre os quais muito estrangeiros) a viajarem apenas com bagagem na cabine, inviabilizam a compra de muitos dos mais típicos produtos da região, com prejuízo para os produtores e para a economia das ilhas, bem como para o desiderato de um maior conhecimento do arquipélago além-fronteiras e a sua promoção turística.

As atuais restrições ao transporte aéreo de líquidos, que se justificam em grandes aeroportos internacionais, têm reduzida pertinência em aeroportos regionais, de reduzida dimensão, atuando menos com carácter preventivo e mais como entrave à promoção económica e social do arquipélago. Estas são as razões, aliás, que justificam as atuais exceções a estas regras, designadamente para a Croácia.

Neste contexto, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Realizou um estudo de impacto destas medidas restritivas nas regiões mais vulneráveis, como as regiões ultraperiféricas e, designadamente, os Açores?

2. Pondera alargar as exceções ao transporte aéreo de líquidos como estratégia de desenvolvimento para regiões remotas que apenas dispõem de aeroportos de pequena dimensão, como os Açores?

3. Pondera o levantamento das restrições ao transporte aéreo de líquidos em situações como a descrita antes da data prevista de 2016?

Resposta dada por Siim Kallas em nome da Comissão
(16 de maio de 2014)

Os explosivos líquidos continuam a representar uma ameaça para a aviação civil. Essa ameaça tem vindo a ser minorada em conformidade com o Regulamento (UE) n.° 300/2008 (capítulo 4.1) e com os seus atos de execução ([1]). A aplicação plena do Regulamento em toda a Europa é essencial para garantir a segurança do sistema europeu de transportes aéreos e manter um controlo de segurança único e muitas outras vantagens. Por conseguinte, não há derrogações para nenhum aeroporto no que respeita ao transporte e ao rastreio de LAG.

Dada a ameaça imediata para a aviação verificada à época e o impacto potencial da ocorrência de um ataque terrorista, não foi elaborado qualquer relatório formal sobre custos e impactos previamente à aplicação de restrições pela Comissão, assentando estas antes na análise e avaliação de riscos dos Estados-Membros.

O levantamento da proibição que incide sobre os líquidos e os géis esteve sempre associado ao desenvolvimento de equipamento de rastreio adequado e depende da sua viabilidade operacional. Com as tecnologias atualmente disponíveis, a proibição de transportar líquidos não pode ser inteiramente levantada sem criar graves problemas operacionais, que podem ter impactos nos fluxos de tráfego. É por conseguinte necessário adotar uma abordagem faseada. Estas conclusões baseiam-se na experiência de parceiros nossos internacionais (EUA, Canadá e Austrália), com os quais concordámos em levantar a proibição por fases.

O primeiro passo nesse sentido foi dado em 31 de janeiro de 2014, quando os aeroportos passaram a ser obrigados a rastrear os líquidos adquiridos nas zonas restritas de segurança dos aeroportos e fechados em sacos invioláveis (STEB) ou que sejam exigidos por razões médicas ou necessidade de dieta especial durante a viagem. A Comissão Europeia continua a trabalhar na introdução de novas medidas com vista ao levantamento total da proibição que incide nos líquidos e géis, com base em soluções técnicas que não comprometam a segurança dos cidadãos.

([1]) Regulamento (CE) n.° 300/2008 do Parlamento Europeu e do Conselho, de 11 de março de 2008, relativo ao estabelecimento de regras comuns no domínio da segurança da aviação civil e que revoga o Regulamento (CE) n.° 2320/2002 (JO L 97 de 9.4.2008).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004180/14
to the Commission
Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: Restrictions on the transport of liquids, aerosols and gels

The Azores being an outermost region, air transport is the sole viable means of passenger access to the islands. This means that the restrictions placed on the carriage of liquids, aerosols and gels on planes have had a fairly negative impact on the region's economy and represent a significant constraint on the production of wines, spirits and liqueurs and traditional compotes.

In most cases, visitors (many of them foreign tourists) stay for a short time in each of the nine islands and travel with cabin baggage only, which means that they are unable to purchase many of the region's most typical products. This harms producers and the islands' economy, and makes it more difficult to promote the Azores internationally as a source of local specialities and a tourist destination.

The current restrictions on the carriage of liquids on flights, which are justified at large international airports, are less relevant at small regional airports where they are not so much a preventive measure but more of an obstacle to economic and social development. This was the reason that was seen as justification for the current exceptions to these rules, notably for Croatia.

1. Has the Commission carried out an impact assessment on these restrictions in the mostvulnerable regions, such as the outermost regions and the Azores in particular?

2. Is it considering extending the exceptions to the carriage of liquids on flights as adevelopment strategy for remote regions that only have small airports, as is the case forthe Azores?

3. Is it considering lifting the restrictions on the carriage of liquids on flights in such casesbefore the planned ending of the restrictions in 2016?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(16 May 2014)

Liquid explosives remain a threat to civil aviation that is being mitigated according to Chapter 4.1 of Regulation (EU) 300/2008 and its implementing acts ([1]). The full implementation of the regulation across Europe is essential to guarantee a secure European aviation system and maintain One Stop Security and many other advantages. Therefore, there are no exceptions to any airports with respect to the carriage and screening of LAGs.

Given the immediate threat to aviation at the time and the potential impact of a successful attack, no formal cost and impact report was established prior to implementing the restrictions by the Commission, but was based on the analysis and risk assessment of Member States.

The lifting of the ban on liquids and gels has always been linked to the development of appropriate screening equipment, and is subject to operational feasibility. With the currently available technology, the ban on liquids cannot be fully lifted without causing severe operational difficulties that may impact the flow of traffic. A phase approach is needed. These finding are mirrored by the experiences of our international partners (US, Canada and Australia) with whom we agreed to lift the ban in a step by step approach.

The first step of this lifting has been introduced as of 31st January 2014, when airports are obliged to screen liquids that are purchased within the security restricted area of an airport and sealed in a STEB (Security Tampered Evidence Bag), or that are required for medical purposes or a special dietary requirement during the trip. The European Commission continues to work on introducing new steps towards the full lifting of the ban on liquids and gels, based on technical solutions without jeopardising the security and safety of citizens.

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 300/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2008 on common rules in the field of civil aviation security and repealing Regulation (EC) No 2320/2002, OJ L 97, 9.4.2008.

(České znění)

Otázka k písemnému zodpovězení E-004181/14
Komisi
Pavel Poc (S&D)
(3. dubna 2014)

Předmět: Dobré životní podmínky hospodářských zvířat vyvážených do třetích zemí

Do třetích zemí je z EU každoročně vyváženo velké množství hospodářských zvířat. Nové záběry přinášejí důkazy o hrůzných podmínkách, ve kterých jsou porážena zvířata vyvážená z EU do Libanonu, Jordánska, oblasti západního břehu Jordánu, pásma Gazy a Turecka. Tyto podmínky jsou v rozporu se standardy Světové organizace pro zdraví zvířat (OIE) o řádném zacházení se zvířaty při porážce.

Proč Komise nenásleduje příkladu Austrálie a nevyžaduje, aby byly metody zacházení se zvířaty a jejich porážení v zemi dovozu v souladu se standardy OIE?

Proč Komise nepřevezme iniciativu a nenabídne zemím dovozu praktickou pomoc s plněním standardů OIE?

Je Komise toho názoru, že vyvážet zvířata z EU do zemí, u kterých je pravděpodobné, že v nich zvířata budou porážena způsobem, který pro ně bude znamenat utrpení a který je v rozporu se standardy OIE, je v souladu s článkem 13 SFEU, dle kterého by měly být plně zohledněny požadavky na dobré životní podmínky zvířat?

Odpověď T. Borga jménem Komise
(3. června 2014)

Standardy pro dobré životní podmínky zvířat zformulované Světovou organizací pro zdraví zvířat (OIE) jsou pro členské státy pouze zásady, a nejsou tedy právně vymahatelné.

S Austrálií je Komise v pravidelném kontaktu prostřednictvím fóra spolupráce na téma dobrých životních podmínek zvířat (Animal Welfare Cooperation Forum). Tento rok se fórum bude konat pošesté. Mezi stálé body pořadu jednání patří výměna informací, jež by mohla zahrnovat debatu o australském systému zabezpečení dodavatelských řetězců vývozců (Exporter Supply Chain Assurance System), o kterém je Komise informována.

Komise silně podporuje práci Světové organizace pro zdraví zvířat a standardy, které v oblasti dobrých životních podmínek zvířat formulovala. V současné době práce zahrnuje vybudování regionální platformy OIE zaměřené na dobré životní podmínky zvířat v Evropě, a to s finančním příspěvkem od Komise. Pro regionální platformu byl schválen tříletý akční plán na období 2014-2016, který zahrnuje vzdělávací kurzy o řádném zacházení se zvířaty během přepravy a porážky.

V kontextu současného práva EU nemá Komise pravomoc zastavit vývoz živých zvířat do třetích zemí. Rozhodnutí vyvážet činí soukromé subjekty v členských státech. Článek 13 Smlouvy o fungování Evropské unie (SFEU) vyžaduje, aby Unie a členské státy při stanovování a provádění určitých politik Unie plně zohledňovaly požadavky na dobré životní podmínky zvířat ([1]). Působnost článku 13 SFEU nezahrnuje společnou obchodní politiku, a proto se nevztahuje na vývoz do třetích zemí.

([1]) Patří mezi ně politiky Unie v oblasti zemědělství, rybolovu, dopravy, vnitřního trhu, výzkumu, technologického rozvoje a vesmíru.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004181/14
to the Commission
Pavel Poc (S&D)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: Welfare of farm animals exported to third countries

Many farm animals are exported each year from the EU to third countries. New film evidence shows the dreadful slaughter conditions facing EU animals exported to Lebanon, Jordan, the West Bank, Gaza and Turkey. These conditions are in breach of the international World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) standards on the welfare of animals at slaughter.

Why is the Commission unwilling to follow Australia's example of requiring that when its animals reach the importing country they are handled and slaughtered in conformity with OIE standards?

Why is the Commission unwilling to take the initiative in offering practical assistance to help importing countries meet OIE standards?

Does the Commission believe that Article 13 TFEU, which requires full regard to be paid to animal welfare, is being complied with when the EU exports animals to countries where it knows that they are likely to be slaughtered in ways that cause extreme suffering and that are in breach of OIE standards?

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

The animal welfare standards developed by the World Organisation for Animal Health are guidelines for Member States and are therefore not enforceable by law.

The Commission has regular contacts with Australia via the Animal Welfare Cooperation Forum. This forum will hold its sixth meeting this year and standing agenda items include information exchange, which could include a discussion into Australia's Exporter Supply Chain Assurance System, of which the Commission is already aware.

The Commission strongly supports the work of the World Organisation for Animal Health and the standards it has developed on animal welfare. Current work includes the establishment of an OIE Regional Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe with financial contributions from the Commission. A three year action plan 2014-2016 for the Regional Platform has been agreed and includes training on animal welfare during transport and slaughter.

The Commission has no competence to stop the export of live animals to third countries under current EC law. The decision to export is taken by private operators in Member States. Article 13 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) requires that the Union and Member States pay full regard to the welfare requirements of animals in formulating and implementing certain policies of the Union ([1]). The scope of Article 13 TFEU does not extend to the Common Commercial Policy and consequently does not cover exports to third countries.

([1]) These are the Union's agriculture, fisheries, transport, internal market, research and technological development and space policies.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-004182/14
à la Commission
Anne Delvaux (PPE)
(3 avril 2014)

Objet: Exclusion de la Suisse des programmes «Horizon 2020» et «Erasmus +»

Suite à la votation suisse du 9 février dernier, en faveur de la limitation de l'immigration de masse, l'UE a décidé de suspendre la participation suisse aux programmes européens de recherche et d'échanges académiques. Si nous ne pouvons effectivement pas transiger sur la libre circulation au sein de l'UE et avec d'autres pays partenaires, il est toutefois regrettable que les sanctions, qui visent la Suisse, touchent à la coopération scientifique et à l'éducation.

Nos universités et hautes écoles s'inquiètent fortement des conséquences négatives de ces décisions. En effet, les collaborations scientifiques et académiques avec leurs homologues suisses portent sur des programmes d'excellence, et la qualité des institutions suisses participent à la poursuite de l'excellence scientifique par nos propres universités.

Le risque est grand de voir la qualité de nos recherches scientifiques pâtir de ces décisions et de voir la Suisse se tourner vers d'autres pays et régions du monde pour leurs collaborations futures. Dès lors, la Commission peut-t-elle préciser les raisons pour lesquelles les mesures prises par l'UE touchent aux secteurs de la coopération scientifique et à l'éducation?

Si la réponse devait être d'ordre financier, certains instituts suisses ont déjà annoncé pouvoir financer eux-mêmes leurs participations à des projets de recherche européens. Pourquoi dès lors les exclure purement et simplement?

N'y a-t-il pas d'autres accords bilatéraux sur lesquels revenir avec la Suisse et qui seraient moins dommageables pour nos universités et centres de recherche?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Geoghegan-Quinn au nom de la Commission
(2 juin 2014)

Le Conseil de l'Union européenne a subordonné la conclusion des négociations sur l'association de la Suisse au programme «Horizon 2020» et sur sa participation au programme «Erasmus+» à la conclusion par le gouvernement suisse du protocole étendant à la Croatie l'accord entre l'UE et la Suisse relatif à la libre circulation des personnes. À la suite du référendum du 9 février, le gouvernement suisse a indiqué qu'il n'était pas en mesure de signer ni de conclure ce protocole. Par conséquent, la Commission a suspendu les négociations concernant ces accords et d'autres.

Cette décision n'empêche toutefois pas les chercheurs et les organisations suisses à participer, avec un statut de «non-associé», au programme «Horizon 2020», lequel est ouvert aux scientifiques et aux organisations de recherche du monde entier. La coopération scientifique et technique qui lie l'UE et la Suisse existe depuis bien longtemps et peut se poursuivre dans le contexte de l'accord-cadre de coopération scientifique et technique entre les Communautés européennes et la Confédération suisse de 1986, qui reste en vigueur.

En ce qui concerne le programme «Erasmus+», la Suisse peut participer à ce type d'actions, ouvertes aux pays partenaires. En outre, le Conseil fédéral suisse a annoncé des mesures transitoires relatives au financement de la mobilité entrante et sortante pour la période 2014-2015. Cette solution est très semblable à l'avant 2011, lorsque la Suisse ne faisait pas encore partie du programme pour l'éducation et la formation tout au long de la vie.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004182/14
to the Commission
Anne Delvaux (PPE)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: Switzerland's exclusion from the 'Horizon 2020' and 'Erasmus +' programmes

Following Switzerland's vote to limit mass immigration on 9 February of this year, the EU decided to suspend Swiss participation in European research and academic exchange programmes. If we are not actually able to reach a compromise on free movement within the EU and with other partner countries, then it is nevertheless regrettable that the sanction, which is targeted at Switzerland, affects scientific cooperation and education.

Our universities and other higher education institutions are very concerned about the negative consequences of these decisions, because the scientific and academic collaboration undertaken with their Swiss counterparts involves programmes of excellence, and the quality of the Swiss institutions plays a part in our own universities' pursuit of scientific excellence.

There is a significant risk that the quality of our scientific research will suffer on account of these decisions and that Switzerland will seek out other countries and regions of the world with which to collaborate in future. Therefore, can the Commission state the reasons why the measures taken by the EU relate to the sectors of scientific cooperation and education?

If the answer was of a financial nature, a number of Swiss institutions have already announced that they are able to finance their participation in European research projects themselves. So why should they simply be excluded?

Are there no other bilateral agreements with Switzerland that we could look at that would cause less damage to our universities and research centres?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(2 June 2014)

The Council of the European Union made the conclusion of negotiations on Swiss association to Horizon 2020 and participation in Erasmus+ dependent on the conclusion by Switzerland of the Protocol extending the Free Movement of Persons Agreement between the EU and the Swiss Confederation to Croatia. Following the popular vote of 9 February, the Swiss Government has indicated that it is not in a position to sign or conclude this protocol. The Commission has consequently put negotiations on these, and other agreements, on hold.

This decision, however, does not prevent Swiss researchers and organisations from participating with a non-associated status in Horizon 2020, which is open to scientists and research organisations worldwide. The EU has a long history of scientific and technical cooperation with Switzerland, which can continue in the context of the framework Agreement for Scientific and Technical Cooperation between the European Communities and the Swiss Confederation of 1986, which still applies.

Regarding Erasmus+, Switzerland can participate in those actions open to partner countries. In addition, the Swiss Federal Council announced transitory measures for the financing of in-coming and out-going mobility in 2014/15. This solution is very similar to what was happening before 2011, when Switzerland was not part of the Lifelong Learning Programme.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004183/14
alla Commissione
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(3 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Cuccioli ammassati in un camion

220 cuccioli di cane, di varie razze, trasportati in condizioni igieniche pessime in un camion affollato. Una situazione che non sarebbe accettabile nei paesi del Terzo Mondo, figuriamoci in uno Stato membro dell'Unione europea. I cuccioli sono stati intercettati dalla polizia stradale italiana, in seguito ad una segnalazione dell'Ente Nazionale per la Protezione degli Animali. I cani provenivano dall'Ungheria ed erano diretti nel Casertano. L'autista e due accompagnatori sono stati denunciati per maltrattamento di animali e importazione illegale di esemplari domestici, i documenti sanitari non erano in regola e i cuccioli, che ora si trovano in strutture di accoglienza, soffrivano di problemi respiratori dovuti al sovraffollamento. È molto probabile che i cani fossero destinati ad un traffico illegale.

Alla luce di quanto precede, può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

1. Non ritiene di dovere implementare le normative sul trasporto degli animali?

2. Dopo aver regolamentato la libera circolazione delle persone e delle merci, può chiarire in che modo si applica la libera circolazione degli animali tra gli Stati membri?

3. Dispone di dati relativi all'effettiva applicazione della normativa sul trasporto degli animali?

4. Come contrasta il traffico illegale di animali?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(22 maggio 2014)

1. Il regolamento (CE) n. 1/2005 del Consiglio sulla protezione degli animali durante il trasporto ([1]) è in vigore dal 2007 e si applica in tutti gli Stati membri dell'UE. Gli Stati membri sono essi stessi i principali responsabili della sua applicazione quotidiana. La Commissione assiste gli Stati membri nell'attuazione organizzando riunioni periodiche con i punti di contatto nazionali.

2. I principi di funzionamento del mercato interno sanciti nei trattati non ostano alle norme relative ai movimenti degli animali, ove giustificate da motivi di salute pubblica. I movimenti di cani tra Stati membri sono sottoposti alle condizioni di polizia sanitaria previste dalla direttiva 92/65/CEE ([2]) per quanto concerne il commercio di cani all'interno dell'Unione e dal regolamento (CE) n. 998/2003 ([3]) per quanto concerne i movimenti a carattere non commerciale di cani che accompagnano il loro proprietario.

3. A norma dell'articolo 27 del regolamento (CE) n. 1/2005, gli Stati membri sono tenuti a presentare alla Commissione relazioni annuali in merito alle rispettive ispezioni del trasporto di animali vivi e a fornire un'analisi delle principali carenze riscontrate e i piani d'azione per porvi rimedio.

4. La Commissione rimanda alle sue risposte alle interrogazioni scritte: E-004525/2008, E-003787/2009, E-006868/2010, E-008449/2010, E-002270/2011, E-003343/2011, E-006602/2011, E-006808/2011, P-002142/2012, E-004247/2012, E-004656/2012, E-007168/2012 ed E-004938/2013 ([4]).

([1]) Regolamento (CE) n. 1/2005 del Consiglio sulla protezione degli animali durante il trasporto e le operazioni correlate che modifica le direttive 64/432/CEE e 93/119/CE e il regolamento (CE) n. 1255/97 (GU L 3 del 5.1.2005, pag. 1).

([2]) Direttiva 92/65/CEE del Consiglio, del 13 luglio 1992, che stabilisce norme sanitarie per gli scambi e le importazioni nella Comunità di animali, sperma, ovuli e embrioni non soggetti, per quanto riguarda le condizioni di polizia sanitaria, alle normative comunitarie specifiche di cui all'allegato A, sezione I, della direttiva 90/425/CEE (GU L 28 del 14.9.1992).

([3]) Regolamento (CE) n. 998/2003 del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 26 maggio 2003, relativo alle condizioni di polizia sanitaria applicabili ai movimenti a carattere non commerciale di animali da compagnia e che modifica la direttiva 92/65/CE (GU L 146 del 13.6.2003), abrogato e sostituito dal regolamento (UE) n. 576/2013 del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio (GU L 178 del 28.6.2013, pag. 1), dal 29 dicembre 2014.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004183/14
to the Commission
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: Puppies crammed in a lorry

Some 220 puppies of various breeds have been found crammed inside a lorry in atrocious conditions of hygiene. That would not be acceptable in third-world countries, let alone in an EU Member State. The puppies were found by the Italian highway police after a tip-off from the country's animal protection society. The dogs were on their way from Hungary to the Caserta area in southern Italy. The driver and two passengers have been charged with mistreating animals and illegally importing domestic animals. The health documents were not in order and the puppies, which have now been placed in rescue centres, were suffering from respiratory problems caused by their overcrowded conditions. The dogs were most probably intended for illegal trafficking.

In view of the above, can the Commission please answer the following questions?

1. Does it not believe the animal transport regulations should be implemented?

2. Now that regulations on the free movement of people and goods have been introduced, can the Commission explain how the free movement of animals among the Member States works?

3. Does it have data on the actual application of the animal transport regulations?

4. How is it controlling the illegal traffic in animals?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(22 May 2014)

1. Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport ([1]) has been in force since 2007 and applies in all EU Member States. The Member States themselves are primarily responsible for its daily implementation. The Commission assists Member States with implementation by holding regular meetings with the National Contact Points.

2. The principles of the functioning of the internal market enshrined in the Treaties do not preclude rules on the movement of animals when they are justified on health grounds. The movements of dogs between Member States are subjected to the health conditions laid down in Directive 92/65/EEC ([2]) as regards intra-Union trade in dogs and Regulation (EC) No 998/2003 ([3]) as regards non-commercial movements of dogs accompanying their owner.

3. According to Article 27 of Regulation (EC) No 1/2005, Member States are required to submit annual reports to the Commission detailing their inspections of the transport of live animals and to provide an analysis of the major deficiencies detected and actions plans to address them.

4. The Commission would refer to its replies to Written Questions E-004525/2008, E-003787/2009, E-006868/2010, E-008449/2010, E-002270/2011, E-003343/2011, E-006602/2011, E-006808/2011, P-002142/2012, E-004247/2012, E-004656/2012, E-007168/2012 and E-004938/2013 ([4]).

([1]) Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport and related operations and amending Directives 64/432/EEC and 93/119/EC and Regulation (EC) No 1255/97 (OJ L 3, 5.1.2005, p. 1).

([2]) Council Directive 92/65/EEC of 13 July 1992 laying down animal health requirements governing trade in and imports into the Community of animals, semen, ova and embryos not subject to animal health requirements laid down in specific Community rules referred to in Annex A(I) to Directive 90/425/EEC (OJ L 28, 14.9.1992).

([3]) Regulation (EC) No 998/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 May 2003 on the animal health requirements applicable to the non-commercial movement of pet animals and amending Directive 92/65/EC (OJ L 146, 13.6.2003) — repealed and replaced by Regulation (EU) No 576/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council (OJ L 178, 28.6.2013, p. 1) as of 29 December 2014.

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

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung P-004184/14
an die Kommission
Jürgen Creutzmann (ALDE)
(3. April 2014)

Betrifft: Bahnverkehr und Lärmschutzmaßnahmen

Der Bahnverkehr in Europa nimmt stetig zu, was aus wirtschaftlichen und umweltpolitischen Gründen grundsätzlich zu befürworten ist. Leider steigen mit dem Verkehr auch die Belastungen für Anwohner. Auf einigen Trassen hat sich der Bahnverkehr in den letzten 10 Jahren verdoppelt, jedoch ohne, dass ausreichend Maßnahmen getroffen wurden, um den negativen Folgen entgegenzuwirken. Daher stellen sich folgende Fragen:

1. Von welcher europäischen Güterverkehrsentwicklung ist langfristig auszugehen, insbesondere im Güterverkehrskorridor Genua — Amsterdam?

2. In welchem Umfang wird sich die Verkehrsbelastung der Mittelrheinregion nach Inbetriebnahme des Gotthard-Tunnels verändern? Der Gotthard-Tunnel ist für die Aufnahme von 50 Mio. t Güter ausgelegt — werden diese Mengen durch das Mittelrheintal befördert werden?

3. Werden technische Veränderungen am rollenden Material zur Reduzierung der Umweltbelastungen durch den Bahnverkehr in der Europäischen Union durchgesetzt? Wann und mit welchen Werten greifen diese?

4. Die Unesco hat bereits bei der Vergabe des Welterbestatus für den Mittelrhein deutlich gemacht, dass der Bahnlärm zu reduzieren ist. Inzwischen hat die Anzahl der Züge deutlich zugenommen, und sie wird weiter zunehmen, die gemessenen Lärmwerte betragen bis zu 107 dB(A). Wie wird die EU die Vorgaben der Unesco zur Reduzierung der Lärm- und Erschütterungswerte unterstützen?

5. Wie steht die EU zu Betriebsbeschränkungen, um die Auswirkungen auf die Anwohner und die Natur zu begrenzen?

Antwort von Herrn Kallas im Namen der Kommission
(2. Mai 2014)

1. Im Durchführungsplan für den Güterverkehrskorridor 1 wird für Deutschland eine jährliche Zunahme des Schienengüterverkehrs von 2.4 % in diesem Korridor veranschlagt.

2. Gemäß dem Durchführungsplan dürfte die Zahl der Güterzüge in der Mittelrhein- Region zwischen 2020 und 2025 um 3 % bis 15 % zunehmen.

3. Derzeit werden in der EU technische Änderungen zur Reduzierung der Lärmbelastung vorgenommen, insbesondere durch die Nachrüstung der vorhandenen Güterwagen mit geräuscharmen Bremsklötzen, die den Lärmpegel um bis zu 10 dB senken. In Deutschland und in den Niederlanden wurden durch die Einführung lärmabhängig Wegeentgelte Anreize für solche Maßnahmen geschaffen. Die Kommission hat die Absicht, 2014 einen Vorschlag für einen Durchführungsrechtsakt gemäß der Richtlinie 2012/34/EU ([1]) vorzulegen, um diese Entgelte in allen Mitgliedstaaten, die sie anwenden wollen, zu vereinheitlichen.

4. Die Kommission hat außerdem folgende Maßnahmen ergriffen:

— 2011 wurde eine neue technische Spezifikation für die Interoperabilität (TSI) zum Thema Lärm ([2]) mit Grenzwerten für die Lärmentwicklung neuer Schienenfahrzeuge angenommen.

— Nach der CEF-Verordnung ([3]) kann die Nachrüstung von Güterwagen mit geräuscharmen Bremsklötzen mit EU-Mitteln finanziell gefördert werden.

Im Auftrag der Kommission wird derzeit eine zusätzliche Folgenabschätzung für die Minderung der Lärmbelästigung durch Güterwagen bis 2020-2022 durchgeführt, sie soll Ende 2014 vorgelegt werden. Pläne, die die Verringerung der Erschütterungen betreffen, bestehen gegenwärtig nicht.

([1]) Richtlinie 2012/34/EU des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 21. November 2012 zur Schaffung eines einheitlichen europäischen Eisenbahnraums (ABl. L 343 vom 14.12.2012).
([2]) Beschluss 2011/229/EU:. http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:099:0001:0039:DE:HTML.
([3]) Verordnung (EU) Nr. 1316/2013 des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 11. Dezember 2013 zur Schaffung der Fazilität „Connecting Europe", zur Änderung der Verordnung (EU) Nr. 913/2010 und zur Aufhebung der Verordnungen (EG) Nr. 680/2007 und (EG) Nr. 67/2010 (ABl. L 348 vom 20.12.2013).

5. Was den Schienenverkehrslärm anbetrifft, vertritt die Kommission die Auffassung, dass die nationalen Maßnahmen zur Bekämpfung der Geräuschemissionen von Güterzügen nicht gegen den Grundsatz des freien Verkehrs von Dienstleistungen und Waren verstoßen, wenn sie gleichermaßen für alle Betreiber von Güterzügen gelten. Daher müssen nationale Regelungen einzeln auf ihre Vereinbarkeit mit dem Unionsrecht geprüft werden.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-004184/14
to the Commission
Jürgen Creutzmann (ALDE)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: Rail traffic and noise abatement measures

Rail traffic in Europe is increasing all the time, which is to be welcomed from an economic and environmental standpoint. However, the increase in traffic is also accompanied by the increased nuisance suffered by residents. Rail traffic on some routes has doubled in the last 10 years without adequate measures being taken to offset the negative impact.

1. By how much is freight traffic likely to increase in Europe in the long term — in particular in the Genoa-Amsterdam freight corridor?

2. How will the volume of traffic in the Middle Rhine region change once the Gotthard tunnel is in use? The tunnel is designed to take 50 million tonnes of freight. Will all this be moved through the Middle Rhine Valley?

3. Are technical modifications being made to rolling stock with the aim of reducing the environmental problems caused by rail traffic in the EU? When will these come into effect, and what will the parameters be?

4. When Unesco awarded the Middle Rhine world heritage status, it made it clear that the railway noise must be reduced. Since then the number of trains has risen significantly and will continue to do so. Noise levels of up to 107 dB(A) have been recorded. What support will the EU give to Unesco's requirements for a reduction in the noise and vibration levels?

5. What view is taken by the EU of operational restrictions to limit the impact on residents and the environment?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(2 May 2014)

1. In Germany the transport performance of rail freight is expected to increase by an annual rate of 2.4% along the corridor, according to the Implementation Plan (IP) of Rail Freight Corridor 1.

2. According to this IP, an increase of the number of freight trains between 3% and 15% could be expected on the Middle Rhine region between 2020 and 2025.

3. The technical modifications concerning noise- in particular retrofitting of existing wagons with low-noise brake blocks reducing the noise levels up to 10dB — are being made in the EU. Noise-differentiated track access charges, in place in Germany and in the Netherlands, provide incentives for such actions. The Commission plans to propose, in 2014, an implementing act under Directive 2012/34/EU ([1]) harmonising these charges in the EU for those Member States that opt in.

4. The Commission has also put forward the following measures:

— A new Technical Specification for Interoperability on Noise ([2]) was adopted in 2011. It sets maximum levels of noise produced by new railway vehicles;

— CEF Regulation ([3]) allows the EU to co-fund retrofitting of existing freight wagons with silent brake blocks.

The Commission currently manages an additional impact assessment on the reduction of noise generated by railway freight wagons by 2020-2022 to be completed by end 2014. There are no plans to tackle vibrations at the moment.

5. Concerning railway noise, the Commission argues that national operational measures to fight against the noise of freight trains do not violate the principle of free movement of services and goods if they apply equally to all operators of freight trains. In this regard, any national scheme must be analysed individually as to its compatibility with the EC law.

([1]) Directive 2012/34/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 November 2012 establishing a single European railway area, OJ L 343, 14.12.2012.
([2]) Decision 2011/229/EU http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:099:0001:0039:en:PDF
([3]) Regulation (EU) No 1316/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing the Connecting Europe Facility, amending Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 and repealing Regulations (EC) No 680/2007 and (EC) No 67/2010, OJ L 348, 20.12.2013.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord P-004185/14
aan de Commissie
Wim van de Camp (PPE)
(3 april 2014)

Betreft: Paspoortafgifte in hotel

Uit de praktijk is gebleken dat toeristen in met name de laatst toegetreden landen tot de EU problemen ondervinden met het afgeven van hun paspoort in een hotel. Bij het inchecken zijn zij verplicht hun paspoorten af te geven en kunnen hun paspoort pas de volgende ochtend weer ophalen, hetgeen gemakkelijk tot criminaliteit kan leiden. Beter zou zijn deze paspoorten direct na inchecken terug te geven.

1. Heeft de Commissie reeds kennis genomen van deze problematiek?

2. Kan de Commissie aangeven hoe hier mee om te gaan in het kader van vrij reizen binnen de EU?

3. Kan de Commissie aangeven hoe hier mee om te gaan in het kader van criminaliteitsbestrijding?

4. Kan de Commissie aangeven of er reeds maatregelen genomen zijn?

Antwoord van mevrouw Malmström namens de Commissie
(2 juni 2014)

Volgens artikel 45 van de Overeenkomst ter uitvoering van het Akkoord van Schengen van 14 juni 1985 moeten

hoofden van logiesverstrekkende bedrijven erop toezien dat gasten aan wie zij logies verstrekken, afgezien van bepaalde uitzonderingen, eigenhandig de hotelfiches invullen en ondertekenen en zich daarbij identificeren door overlegging van een geldig identiteitsdocument. Dit betekent niet dat die hoofden dergelijke documenten tot de volgende ochtend moeten bijhouden of dat reizigers die documenten tot de volgende ochtend moeten afgeven.

Het is niet de taak van de Commissie om toezicht te houden op de manier waarop logiesverstrekkende bedrijven de registratie van gasten organiseren. Het is de verantwoordelijkheid van de nationale rechtshandhavingsinstanties om te oordelen of er hierbij misbruik van dergelijke documenten wordt gemaakt voor criminele doeleinden.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-004185/14
to the Commission
Wim van de Camp (PPE)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: Surrender of passports at hotels

There are reports of tourists encountering problems, particularly in the countries which have acceded to the EU most recently, because they are required to hand in their passports when checking into a hotel. They are compelled to surrender the documents and can only retrieve them the morning after, which readily lends itself to crime. It would be better if their passports were returned immediately after check-in.

1. Is the Commission aware of this problem?

2. Can the Commission indicate what approach should be adopted to it when exercising freedom of movement within the EU?

3. Can the Commission indicate what approach should be adopted to it from the point of view of fighting crime?

4. Can the Commission indicate whether any measures have been taken?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(2 June 2014)

Article 45 of the Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement of 14 June 1985 requires managers of establishments providing accommodation to make sure that guests accommodated therein, apart from certain exceptions, personally complete and sign registration forms and confirm their identity by producing a valid identity document. This does not include any obligation for the managers to keep, or for travellers to render such documents overnight.

It is not for the Commission to supervise how establishments providing accommodation organise the registration of guests. It is the responsibility of national law enforcement authorities to assess any potential abuse of such documents in this context for criminal purposes.

(българска версия)

Въпрос с искане за писмен отговор E-004186/14
до Комисията
Slavi Binev (EFD)
(3 април 2014 г.)

Относно: Продължение на незаконен строеж на депо

Във връзка с проекта за изграждане на сметище в непосредствена близост до с. Баня, България, чиито безброй нередности вече сигнализирах, желая да сигнализирам, че местните граждани са потресени от факта, че се подготвя стартирането на проекта, без съдът да се е произнесъл окончателно, без да се е разнищил случаят докрай поради нашите съмнения, че еврокомисар Поточник е бил подведен от българското правителство по случая, като му е предоставена непълна/неточна информация.

Настоявам да се изиска спиране на стартирането на проекта, докато не се изясни случаят напълно. Ако не се спре навреме този проект, вековна гора ще бъде унищожена, ще бъде замърсена река, която снабдява с питейна вода населени места в България и Гърция, и ще бъдат нанесени много други непоправими щети. Това е крайно несъразмерно с оглед на последиците от спирането на проекта. За съжаление нито министър Михайлова, нито еврокомисар Поточник откликнаха на искането ми да сравним предоставената на еврокомисаря информация с реалната. Дори да съм очаквал това от министър Михайлова, учуден съм от бездействието на еврокомисар Поточник.

Моите въпроси са:

1. Дали европейските институции ще спрат, макар и временно, един крайно безполезен и вреден за околната среда и хората проект?

2. Кога ще се изясни въпросът дали ЕК е била заблудена от българското правителство по случая с цел да се даде положителна оценка на проекта?

Отговор, даден от г-н Поточник от името на Комисията
(2 юни 2014 г.)

Комисията може да се намесва само в случаите, когато проектите не отговарят на разпоредбите на съответното законодателство на Съюза. За проекта е изготвена оценка на въздействието върху околната среда (ОВОС) в съответствие с изискванията на Директива 2011/92/ЕС ([1]). Процедурата по изготвянето на ОВОС е приключила с Решение № БД-3/2009 ([2]), издадено от Регионалната инспекция по околната среда и водите — Благоевград. Решението е обжалвано през 2012 г. и 2013 г. Окончателното решение на Върховния административен съд (№ 14450 от 5 ноември 2013 г. ([3])) потвърждава законосъобразността на процедурата по изготвянето на ОВОС и на решението.

Службите на Комисията разгледаха внимателно фактите и аргументите, представени от уважаемия член на Европейския парламент и от българските органи, и не бяха в състояние да установят нарушение на правото на Съюза. Няма нови данни, които да сочат, че информацията, предоставена на Комисията от българските органи, е неточна и не отговаря на действителността.

([1]) Директива 2011/92/ЕИО относно оценката на въздействието на някои публични и частни проекти върху околната среда (ОВ L 26, 28.1.2012 г.).
([2]) http://riosvbl.org/index.php/2013-10-16-16-09-59/ovos1
([3]) http://www.sac.government.bg/court22.nsf/d6397429a99ee2afc225661e00383a86/ffab3b51a59b55adc2257c130036a642?OpenDocument

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004186/14
to the Commission
Slavi Binev (EFD)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: Continuing illegal construction of a waste depot

Concerning the project to construct a waste disposal facility in the immediate vicinity of the village of Banya in Bulgaria, in respect of which I have already reported numerous irregularities, I wish to point out that local residents are shocked that preparations are being made to start work on the project without a definitive ruling being issued by the courts and without the matter being thoroughly investigated on account of our suspicions that Commissioner Potočnik was misled by the Bulgarian Government on this matter and given incomplete/incorrect information.

I would urge the Commission to request that the start of the project be suspended until this matter has been fully clarified. If the project is not stopped in time, a centuries-old forest will be destroyed, a river that provides drinking water for population centres in Bulgaria and Greece will be polluted and many other forms of irreparable damage will be occasioned. The consequences of stopping the project are nothing in comparison to this. Unfortunately, neither Minister Mihailova nor Commissioner Potočnik have responded to my request to compare the information provided to the Commission with the actual situation. Although I expected this from Minister Mihailova, I am astonished that Commissioner Potočnik has done nothing.

Can the Commission state:

1. whether the EU institutions will stop, albeit only temporarily, a project that is totally unbeneficial and harmful to man and the environment;

2. when the issue will be clarified of whether the Commission was misled by the Bulgarian Government in order to secure its approval of the project?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(2 June 2014)

The Commission may interfere only in cases where projects are not in compliance with the relevant Union legislation. The project was made subject to an environmental impact assessment (EIA) in accordance with the requirements of Directive 2011/92/EU ([1]). The EIA procedure was concluded by the decision No BD-3/2009 ([2]) issued by the Regional Inspectorate for Environment and Water — Blagoevgrad. The decision was appealed in 2012 and 2013. A final ruling of the Supreme Administrative Court (No 14450 of 5 November 2013 ([3])) confirmed the legality of the EIA procedure and decision.

The Commission services have carefully examined the facts and arguments presented by both the Honourable Member and the Bulgarian authorities and have not been able to identify a breach of Union law. There is no new evidence to indicate that the information provided by the Bulgarian authorities to the Commission is incorrect and does not correspond to the actual situation.

([1]) Directive 2011/92/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (OJ L 26, 28.1.2012).
([2]) http://riosvbl.org/index.php/2013-10-16-16-09-59/ovos1
([3]) http://www.sac.government.bg/court22.nsf/d6397429a99ee2afc225661e00383a86/ffab3b51a59b55adc2257c130036a642?OpenDocument

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004187/14
to the Commission
David Martin (S&D)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: Potential status of Scottish citizens in the EU post-independence

The Commission will be aware that on 18 September 2014 there will be a referendum in Scotland over its continued membership of the United Kingdom.

Is the Commission aware that the UK Government has not committed to offering all Scots dual UK/Scottish citizenship in the case of a yes vote? Does the Commission believe that if Scotland were to vote for independence, resulting in Scots living in England and elsewhere in Europe potentially becoming Scottish and not UK citizens, then they could lose out on fundamental European rights, including the right to free movement, the right to work in other Member States and access to free healthcare in Member States?

Could the Commission also please confirm what it has stated in previous answers, i.e. that Scotland would start off life as an independent country outside of the EU?

Answer given by Mr Barroso on behalf of the Commission
(19 May 2014)

The Commission refers the Honourable Member to its replies to parliamentary questions E-008133/2012, P-009756/2012, and P-009862/2012 ([1]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004189/14
to the Commission
Marina Yannakoudakis (ECR)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: Commission forecast regarding EU and world sugar prices post 2017

A recent Commission forecast ('Prospects for Agricultural Markets and Income in the EU 2013-2023', December 2013) predicts that the world sugar price and the EU sugar price 'will merge' following the expiry of the EU quota system in 2017, while import volumes will drastically fall.

European cane refiners currently pay a 'CXL duty' of EUR 98 per tonne on approximately 30% of their raw material imports from countries such as Australia, Brazil and Cuba.

1. Does the Commission accept that CXL imports could become a redundant source of raw cane sugar supply if EU and world sugar prices converge?

2. Does the Commission plan to abolish the EUR 98 CXL duty, given that it artificially inflates the price of raw cane sugar, making it an uncompetitive source of raw material for refiners?

3. Moreover, what is the justification for keeping the CXL duty post 2017, thereby restricting cane refiners' ability to compete once the EU sugar production quotas for beet and isoglucose cease to exist?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(19 May 2014)

1. The developments of the EU sweetener industry after the end of quotas in 2017 depends on the relative competitiveness of beet sugar production, isoglucose production and imports and refining of raw cane sugar. As such the CXL import quotas at reduced duties can serve as a useful source of supply depending on the market situation.

2. The end of the sugar production quotas in 2017 was decided by the European Parliament and the Council in 2013. The import tariffs and import quotas in the sugar sector were not modified on that occasion. The in-quota tariff of 98 Euro per tonne, charged on sugar imported through the CXL quotas, is part of the World Trade Organisation concessions. It can be amended by either multilateral negotiation, such as the Doha development Agenda, or Article XXVIII negotiations.

3. So far CXL quotas are always used, which does not give the impression that the in-quota tariff of EUR 98 per tonne is prohibitive.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-004190/14
lill-Kummissjoni
Marlene Mizzi (S&D)
(3 ta' April 2014)

Suġġett: Sikurezza tal-prodotti

Il-prodotti tal-moda u l-ġugarelli jibqgħu l-aktar prodotti perikolużi fl-UE, u jirrappreżentaw 25 % tal-miżuri korrettivi. Skont il-kategorija, x'jikkostitwixxi l-parti l-kbira tal-75 % li jkun għad fadal?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Mimica f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(26 ta' Mejju 2014)

L-għadd totali ta' notifiki RAPEX dwar prodotti perikolużi li tressqu mill-awtoritajiet nazzjonali tal-Istati Membri fl-2013 kien ta' 2,364. Ħames kategoriji ta' prodotti l-aktar innotifikati ammontaw għal 70% tan-notifiki kollha fl-2013. Dawn kienu ħwejjeġ tal-ilbies, tessuti u oġġetti tal-moda (25%), ġugarelli (25%), tagħmir u apparat elettriku (9%), vetturi bil-mutur (7%) u kożmetiċi (4%).

Għal aktar informazzjoni ddettaljata dwar id-distribuzzjoni tan-notifiki RAPEX fl-2013 skont il-kategorija ta' prodotti, il-Kummissjoni tirreferi lill-Onorevoli Membru għat-tabelli 6 u 7 fil-paġni 7 u 8 tad-dokument "Attività RAPEX fl-2013" ([1]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/safety/rapex/reports/docs/rapex_activity_2013_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004190/14
to the Commission
Marlene Mizzi (S&D)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: Product safety

Fashion items and toys continue to be the most dangerous products in the EU, accounting for 25% of corrective measures. By category, what constitutes the bulk of the remaining 75%?

Answer given by Mr Mimica on behalf of the Commission
(26 May 2014)

The total number of RAPEX notifications on dangerous products submitted by the Member States' national authorities in 2013 was 2.364. Five most often notified product categories accounted for 70% of all notifications in 2013. These were clothing, textiles and fashion items (25%), toys (25%), electrical appliances and equipment (9%), motor vehicles (7%) and cosmetics (4%).

For more detailed information on distribution of RAPEX notifications in 2013 by product category, the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to figures 6 and 7 on pages 7 and 8 of the document 'RAPEX Activity in 2013' ([1]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/safety/rapex/reports/docs/rapex_activity_2013_en.pdf

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-004191/14
lill-Kummissjoni
Marlene Mizzi (S&D)
(3 ta' April 2014)

Suġġett: Il-kummerċ ħieles jew l-investiment ibbilanċjat bejn l-UE u ċ-Ċina

L-UE għandha dilemma rigward il-kummerċ u ċ-Ċina. Fl-opinjoni tal-Kummissjoni, x'ikun l-aktar ta' benefiċċju għall-UE u ċ-Ċina: il-kummerċ ħieles jew l-investiment bilaterali?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur De Gucht f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(14 ta' Mejju 2014)

Fis-16-il Samit bejn l-UE u ċ-Ċina tal-21 ta' Novembru 2013, l-UE u ċ-Ċina nedew formalment in-negozjati għal Ftehim ta' Investiment komprensiv bejn l-UE u ċ-Ċina. B'konformità mad-direttivi ta' negozjati approvali mill-Kunsill Affarijiet Barranin tat-18 ta' Ottubru 2013, in-negozjati għal dan il-ftehim ikopru aspetti ta' aċċess għas-suq u ħarsien għall-investiment kif ukoll ċerti dixxiplini u regoli relatati mat-twaqqif u t-tħaddim ta' investimenti. Il-prijorità għalissa hija li jiġi nnegozjat u konkluż ftehim ta' investiment ambizzjuż maċ-Ċina. L-interess tagħna huwa prinċipalment it-tneħħija tar-restrizzjonijiet għall-investiment fis-suq Ċiniż. Huwa biss wara li n-negozjati dwar ftehim ta' investiment bħal dan ikunu konklużi b'suċċess li l-Kummissjoni tista' tkun lesta tqis li tidħol f'negozjati kummerċjali usa', ladarba l-kundizzjonijiet ikunu tajbin, bħala perspettiva għat-terminu t-twil.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004191/14
to the Commission
Marlene Mizzi (S&D)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: EU-China free trade or balanced investment

The EU has a dilemma regarding trade and China. In the Commission's opinion, what would be the most beneficial for the EU and for China: free trade or bilateral investment?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(14 May 2014)

At the 16th EU-China Summit of 21 November 2013, the EU and China formally launched negotiations for a comprehensive EU-China Investment Agreement. In line with the negotiating directives approved by the Foreign Affairs Council of 18 October 2013, the negotiations for this agreement cover aspects of market access and protection for investment as well as certain disciplines and rules related to the establishment and operation of investments. The priority for the time being is to negotiate and conclude an ambitious investment agreement with China. Our interest lies in particular in the elimination of restrictions to investment in the Chinese market. Only after having successfully concluded negotiations on such an investment agreement could the Commission potentially be ready to consider engaging in broader trade negotiations, once the conditions are right, as a longer term perspective.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-004192/14
lill-Kummissjoni
Marlene Mizzi (S&D)
(3 ta' April 2014)

Suġġett: Antitrust

Wara r-rejd li sar fuq il-manifatturi Ewropej tas-sistemi tal-egżost tal-karozzi, il-Kummissjoni walset għal xi konklużjoni dwar jekk il-kartell jeżistix jew le?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Almunia f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(16 ta' Mejju 2014)

F'dan l-istadju tal-investigazzjoni tagħha, il-Kummissjoni mhix f'pożizzjoni li toħroġ b'konklużjonijiet dwar ir-riżultati tal-ispezzjonijiet tal-25 ta' Marzu 2014. B'segwitu għall-ispezzjonijiet, il-Kummissjoni qed teżamina mill-ġdid bir-reqqa l-informazzjoni fil-pussess tagħha. Jekk fi stadju aktar tard il-Kummissjoni tiddeċiedi li ssegwi aktar dan il-każ, hija tiftaħ formalment proċedimenti u tipprepara konklużjonijiet preliminari, li jiġu sottomessi lill-partijiet biex ikunu jistgħu jeżerċitaw id-drittijiet tagħhom ta' difiża.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004192/14
to the Commission
Marlene Mizzi (S&D)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: Antitrust

Following the raid on European manufacturers of car exhaust systems, has the Commission come to any conclusion as to whether or not the cartel exists?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(16 May 2014)

At this stage of its investigation, the Commission is not in a position to draw conclusions on the results of the inspections of 25 March 2014. Following the inspections, the Commission is carefully reviewing the information in its possession. If at a later stage the Commission decides to pursue the case further, it will formally open proceedings and prepare preliminary conclusions, which will be submitted to the parties so they can exercise their rights of defence.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-004193/14
lill-Kummissjoni
Marlene Mizzi (S&D)
(3 ta' April 2014)

Suġġett: Regoli tal-UE dwar ix-xogħol mal-aġenziji

Ir-regoli tal-UE dwar ix-xogħol mal-aġenziji kif jistgħu jiġu infurzati?

L-Istati Membri kkonformaw b'mod ġenerali mal-liġi tal-UE tal-2008 mfassla biex tipproteġi lill-ħaddiema permezz ta' aġenzija, iżda l-UE kif se tipproċedi fil-każijiet ta' nonkonformità?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Andor f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(28 ta' Mejju 2014)

Fil-livell tal-UE, l-aġenziji tax-xogħol temporanju huma rregolati bid-Direttiva 2008/104/KE ([1]), li ilha applikabbli bis-sħiħ minn Diċembru 2011. Id-Direttiva ttejjeb il-kwalità tax-xogħol temporanju permezz tal-aġenziji u l-protezzjoni tal-ħaddiema kkonċernati, b'mod partikolari billi tipprovdi għal trattament ugwali, u tikkontribwixxi għall-iżvilupp tas-settur tal-aġenziji tax-xogħol temporanju bħala għażla flessibbli għall-kumpaniji u l-ħaddiema.

Rapport tal-Kummissjoni ([2]) dwar l-applikazzjoni tad-Direttiva fl-Istati Membri jsib li kollha kemm huma ttrasponew id-Direttiva u li, b'mod ġenerali, id-dispożizzjonijiet tagħha jidhru li ġew implimentati u applikati korrettament, għalkemm l-għanijiet tagħha għadhom ma ntlaħqux kompletament.

Il-Kummissjoni, flimkien mal-awtoritajiet tal-Istati Membri u l-imsieħba soċjali fil-livell tal-UE, se tkompli ssegwi mill-qrib l-applikazzjoni tad-Direttiva. Se tittratta kwalunkwe problemi ta' implimentazzjoni bil-mezzi xierqa, inkluż billi tniedi proċeduri ta' ksur kontra l-Istati Membri, fejn ikun hemm bżonn. Ilmenti mressqa lill-Kummissjoni, petizzjonijiet u talbiet lill-Qorti tal-Ġustizzja tal-UE għal deċiżjonijiet preliminari jikkostitwixxu sors ewlieni ta' informazzjoni dwar miżuri jew prattiki nazzjonali li jistgħu jkunu inkompatibbli mad-Direttiva.

Huwa f'idejn l-awtoritajiet tal-Istati Membri, inklużi l-qrati, li jiżguraw li d-dispożizzjonijiet nazzjonali li jimplimentaw id-Direttiva jiġu infurzati. L-Istati Membri għandhom jipprovdu penali effettivi, proporzjonati u dissważivi fil-każ ta' ksur ta' dawk id-dispożizzjonijiet. Għandhom ukoll jipprovdu għal miżuri xierqa fil-każ li aġenziji tax-xogħol temporanju jew kumpaniji li jużaw l-aġenziji ma jikkonformawx ma' din id-Direttiva.

([1]) Id-Direttiva 2008/104/KE tal-Parlament Ewropew u tal-Kunsill tad-19 ta' Novembru 2008 dwar xogħol temporanju permezz ta' aġenzija, ĠU L 327, 5.12.2008.
([2]) Rapport dwar l-applikazzjoni tad-Direttiva 2008/104/KE dwar xogħol temporanju permezz ta' aġenzija (COM(2014) 176 final u SWD (2014) 108 final tal-21 ta' Marzu 2014).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004193/14
to the Commission
Marlene Mizzi (S&D)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: EU rules on agency work

How can the EU rules on agency work be enforced?

The Member States have broadly complied with 2008 EC law designed to protect agency workers, but how will the EU proceed in cases of non-compliance?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(28 May 2014)

Agency work is governed at EU level by Directive 2008/104/EC ([1]), which has been fully applicable since December 2011. The directive improves the quality of temporary agency employment and the protection of the workers concerned, in particular by providing for equal treatment, and contributes to the development of the agency work sector as a flexible option for companies and workers.

A Commission report ([2]) on the application of the directive in the Member States finds that the latter have all transposed the directive and that, in general, its provisions seem to have been correctly implemented and applied, although its goals have not yet been fully achieved.

The Commission, in conjunction with the Member State authorities and the social partners at EU level, will continue to monitor the application of the directive closely. It will tackle any implementation problems by the appropriate means, including where necessary by initiating infringement procedures against the Member States. Complaints lodged with the Commission, petitions and requests to the Court of Justice of the EU for preliminary rulings constitute a major source of information on national measures or practices that may be incompatible with the directive.

It is for the Member State authorities, including the courts, to ensure that national provisions implementing the directive are enforced. The Member States must provide for effective, proportionate and dissuasive penalties in the event of infringements of those provisions. They must also provide for appropriate measures in the event of a failure by temporary-work agencies or user undertakings to comply with the directive.

([1]) Directive 2008/104/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on temporary agency work, OJ L 327, 5.12.2008.
([2]) Report on the application of Directive 2008/104/EC on temporary agency work (COM(2014) 176 final and SWD(2014) 108 final of 21 March 2014).

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004194/14
alla Commissione
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(3 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Sottrazione internazionale di minore in Slovacchia — Mancato rientro

L'ufficio del Mediatore del Parlamento europeo per i casi di sottrazione internazionale di minori ha ricevuto un caso relativo alla sottrazione e al trattenimento di minori in Slovacchia.

In base alle informazioni ricevute, dall'unione di un cittadino italiano e di una cittadina slovacca è nata una bambina (nel 2005) in Italia, dove la coppia aveva stabilito la propria residenza.

In seguito alla separazione della coppia, il Tribunale per i minorenni di Campobasso emanava un decreto con cui disponeva l'affido condiviso con dimora prevalente presso la madre.

Nel 2010 la madre porta illegalmente la bambina in Slovacchia senza il consenso del padre e contravvenendo al decreto che prescriveva alla madre stessa di garantire la permanenza della bambina in Italia.

Dopo una prima pronuncia del Tribunale di Bratislava in cui decretava il non rimpatrio del minore, lo stesso Tribunale, dopo il ricorso in appello presentato dal padre, disponeva il rientro del minore in Italia in considerazione del mancato assenso del padre al soggiorno della bambina in Slovacchia. La madre ricorreva a sua volta in appello e si disponeva l'ascolto del minore rinviando al primo grado di giudizio.

Intanto la Corte d'appello di Campobasso riconosceva al padre l'affidamento esclusivo della minore e la decadenza della potestà genitoriale per la madre. Tale sentenza dovrebbe essere riconosciuta in base al regolamento (CE) n. 2201/2003.

Il 18 febbraio 2014 il Tribunale distrettuale di Bratislava ha decretato il rientro della minore in Italia, non riconoscendo tuttavia la provvisoria esecuzione.

Ciò ha permesso un ulteriore ricorso in appello e, dunque, un ulteriore ritardo nella procedura di rientro.

Il caso in questione configura l'ennesima difficoltà nell'ottenere, da parte delle autorità slovacche competenti, la corretta applicazione del regolamento (CE) n. 2201/2003 e della Convenzione dell'Aia del 25 ottobre 1980 sugli aspetti civili della sottrazione internazionale dei minori.

Può la Commissione precisare se il caso in questione può dare adito alla richiesta di aprire una procedura di infrazione contro la Slovacchia?

Risposta data da Viviane Reding a nome della Commissione
(5 giugno 2014)

La Commissione rinvia l'onorevole parlamentare alla risposta data all'interrogazione scritta E-4078/14.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004194/14
to the Commission
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: International abduction of a child to Slovakia — still unresolved

The office of the European Parliament Mediator for International Parental Child Abduction has been contacted with regard to a case involving the abduction and retention of a child in Slovakia.

From the information received, it emerges that an Italian man and a Slovakian woman had a daughter together who was born in 2005 in Italy, where the couple had set up their home.

Following their separation, the Children's Court of Campobasso issued a decree that allowed both parents to have joint custody of the child, who would predominantly live with her mother.

In 2010, the mother illegally took the child to Slovakia without the father's permission, and in doing so breached the terms of the decree, which expressly prohibited the mother from taking the child out of Italy.

The first ruling issued by the Court of Bratislava decreed that the child could remain in Slovakia. Following an appeal lodged by the father, the same Court then ordered that the child be returned to Italy, since the father was being denied access to the child while she was living in Slovakia. The mother subsequently lodged an appeal of her own, and the case was then referred to the local court of first instance.

In the meantime, the Campobasso Court of Appeal granted sole custody of the child to the father and removed all parental authority from the mother. This judgment should be recognised in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 2201/2003.

On 18 February 2014, the District Court of Bratislava ordered that the child be returned to Italy, but failed to order provisional enforcement.

As a result, yet another appeal has been lodged, which will further prolong the repatriation process.

The case in question is the latest in a long line of instances where the competent Slovakian authorities have failed to properly apply Regulation (EC) No 2201/2003 and the Hague Convention of 25 October 1980 on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction.

Can the Commission indicate whether the case in question could give rise to infringement proceedings being initiated against Slovakia?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(5 June 2014)

The Commission refers the Honourable Member to the response given to Parliamentary Question E-4078/14.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004195/14
to the Commission
Julie Girling (ECR)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: Follow-up on moratorium on neonicotinoids

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 485/2013 restricting the use of three neonicotinoid pesticides has been in force since December 2013. This implementing regulation was proposed in response to a scientific report by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), which identified 'high acute risks' for bees due to exposure to these pesticides.

However, at the same time, the EFSA report identified a number of 'data gaps' which meant that it was not possible to perform complete risk assessments for all authorised uses of these pesticides.

The Commission has proposed to review the conditions of approval of the three neonicotinoids after two years, so as to take into account relevant scientific and technical developments.

Can the Commission confirm what action it is taking to evaluate the impact of the moratorium? It would be useful to know if, and to what extent, the moratorium is proving effective in improving bee health.

In addition, since the moratorium began, farmers have been forced to apply alternative pesticides to crops. Can the Commission confirm that there will be an assessment of the impact of these alternatives on bee health? Since the use of alternatives is a direct impact of the moratorium, such a study is surely necessary in order to contribute to the overall assessment of its effectiveness.

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(2 June 2014)

The measures taken for the neonicotinoids were based on the conclusion that the approval criteria in Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 ([1]) were no longer satisfied regarding the risk to bees. The Commission is committed, in accordance with Implementing Regulation (EU) No 485/2013 ([2]), to review the measures taken within two years after entry into force of that regulation. The Commission will ask the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) to review the new scientific information which may be submitted by the applicants, the Member States and any other relevant stakeholders.

Regulation (EU) No 485/2013 requires that Member States initiate monitoring programmes for the uses of neonicotinoids that are still allowed, as appropriate.

Alternative pesticides used by farmers are those available on the market. These have been authorised by Member States' authorities based on a risk assessment which concluded that the uses applied for would cause no unacceptable risk to bees. The surveillance programme Epilobee, funded by the Union, monitors the evolution of bees' mortalities.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:309:0001:0050:EN:PDF
([2]) Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 485/2013 of 24 May 2013 amending Implementing Regulation (EU) No 540/2011, as regards the conditions of approval of the active substances clothianidin, thiamethoxam and imidacloprid, and prohibiting the use and sale of seeds treated with plant protection products containing those active substances.

(Hrvatska verzija)

Pitanje za pisani odgovor E-004196/14
upućeno Komisiji
Biljana Borzan (S&D), Zita Gurmai (S&D) i Brian Simpson (S&D)
(3. travnja 2014.)

Predmet: Mogućnost korištenja fondova EU-a za izgradnju infrastrukture na prometnom koridoru Vc

Paneuropski koridor Vc ili europski pravac E73 europska je prometnica klase A koja se proteže sa sjevera na jug i povezuje Mađarsku i istočnu Hrvatsku s Bosnom i Hercegovinom te završava na jadranskoj obali Republike Hrvatske.

Mađarska dionica pravca E73 počinje na kružnoj autocesti Budimpešte i završava na graničnom prijelazu Udvar/Duboševica, gdje cesta ulazi u Hrvatsku.

Pravac E73 kroz Hrvatsku počinje na graničnom prijelazu Duboševica i završava na graničnom prijelazu Slavonski Šamac s Bosnom i Hercegovinom. Koridor tada prolazi kroz Bosnu i Hercegovinu prema južnoj granici s Hrvatskom i nastavlja još 11 km do Opuzena. Ondje se povezuje s europskim pravcem E65 koji završava u luci Ploče.

E73 je važan prometni pravac koji povezuje dvije države članice i prelazi jednu unutarnju i dvije vanjske granice Unije. Veći dio ceste kroz Mađarsku i Hrvatsku sastoji se od autocesta, no neki dijelovi, posebno na graničnim prijelazima, i dalje su dvosmjerne ceste. To je trenutačno točka zakrčenja na važnoj prometnici EU-a. E73 također je najkraća veza između istočne Hrvatske i dubrovačke regije na samom jugu zemlje, koja nije teritorijalno povezana s ostatkom EU-a.

U pogledu Bosne i Hercegovine taj je koridor strateška prometna poveznica koja se proteže cijelom zemljom, no samo 36 km od njegove ukupne dužine od 396 km sastoji se od autocesta. Zalaganjem EU-a za poboljšanje infrastrukture moglo bi se utjecati na političare Bosne i Hercegovine u pogledu prijeko potrebnih reformi te bi ono moglo poslužiti kao sredstvo dugoročne stabilnosti.

Može li Komisija prokomentirati mogućnost da se Instrument za povezivanje Europe ili drugi fondovi EU-a koriste za modernizaciju infrastrukture na koridoru Vc? Mogu li Mađarska i Hrvatska računati na pomoć Komisije za modernizaciju otprilike 50 kilometara prometnice E73 koji se još sastoje od dvosmjernih cesta?

Odgovor g. Kallasa u ime Komisije
(23. svibnja 2014.)

Dionice pravca E73 u Mađarskoj i Hrvatskoj koje su spomenuli uvaženi zastupnici dio su sveobuhvatne Transeuropske prometne mreže (TEN-T). Projekti gradnje cesta koji su dio sveobuhvatne mreže TEN-T ispunjavaju uvjete za financiranje u okviru Instrumenta za povezivanje Europe ([1]) (CEF) ako se odnose na prekogranične dionice te se mogu financirati samo iz njegovih općih sredstava (14,9 milijardi EUR). Uvjete za financiranje iz sredstava u iznosu od 11,3 milijardi EUR koji su u CEF prebačeni iz Kohezijskog fonda ispunjavaju samo projekti osnovne mreže TEN-T.

U skladu s tim, ako se predmetnih 50 km pravca E73 odnosi na prekograničnu dionicu, tada je moguće financiranje studija iz sredstava CEF-a u visini do 50 % troškova, a radova u visini do 10 %. Projekti bi također trebali ispunjavati sljedeće uvjete: 1) postojanje pisanog sporazuma između dotičnih dviju država, 2) prekograničnim dionicama mora se osigurati nastavak projekta od zajedničkog interesa od granice do prvoga gospodarski važnog urbanog područja ([2]), 3) financirana aktivnost mora uključivati barem jednu prekograničnu točku.

Dionica pravca E73 u Bosni i Hercegovini dio je sveobuhvatne mreže Prometnog opservatorija za jugoistočnu Europu (SEETO), kao i indikativne mreže TEN-T za treće zemlje. U skladu s čl.7. Uredbe o CEF-u određeni projekti u trećim zemljama mogli bi ispunjavati uvjete za financiranje iz općih sredstava CEF-a, uz stope sufinanciranja do 10 % za radove i 50 % za studije. Projekti namijenjeni nadogradnji infrastrukture koridora Vc također bi se mogli financirati iz drugih mehanizama potpore EU-a kao što su Instrument pretpristupne pomoći (IPA) ili Okvir za investicije na Zapadnom Balkanu (WBIF). Oba mehanizma osmišljena su u svrhu financiranja studija i pripremnih radova za buduća infrastrukturna ulaganja.

([1]) Uredba (EU) br. 1316/2013 Europskog parlamenta i Vijeća od 11. prosinca 2013. o uspostavi Instrumenta za povezivanje Europe, izmjeni Uredbe (EU) br. 913/2010 i stavljaju izvan snage uredaba (EZ) br. 680/2007 i (EZ) br. 67/2010, SL L 348, 20.12.2013.

([2]) U skladu s definicijama iz čl. 3. Uredbe (EU) br. 1315/2013.

(Magyar változat)

Írásbeli választ igénylő kérdés E-004196/14
a Bizottság számára
Biljana Borzan (S&D), Gurmai Zita (S&D) és Brian Simpson (S&D)
(2014. április 3.)

Tárgy: Az V/c. közlekedési folyosó infrastruktúrája kiépítéséhez uniós források felhasználásának lehetősége

Az V/c. páneurópai folyosó, más néven az E73-as európai út A. osztályú észak-déli irányú európai útvonal, amely Magyarországot és Horvátország keleti részét köti össze Bosznia-Hercegovinával, és Horvátország adriai partjainál ér véget.

Az E73-as út magyar szakasza a budapesti körgyűrűnél kezdődik, és az Udvar-Duboševica határátkelőnél ér véget, ahol az út átlép Horvátország területére.

Az E73-as út horvátországi szakasza Duboševica határátkelőtől Slavonski Šamac határállomásig, Bosznia-Hercegovina határáig tart. A folyosó ezután átszeli Bosznia-Hercegovinát annak Horvátországgal közös déli határáig, innen pedig még 11 km-en át tart, Opuzenig. Ezen a ponton összekapcsolódik az E65-ös európai úttal, amely Ploče kikötőjénél ér véget.

Az E73-as jelentős szállítási útvonal, amely két tagállamot köt össze és az Unió egyik belső, illetve két külső határát lépi át. Az útvonal – Magyarországot és Horvátországot átszelő – nagy része autópályákból áll, ám egyes szakaszai, különösen a határátkelők, még mindig kétsávos közutak. Jelenleg ez szűkületi pontot képez egy fontos uniós közlekedési útvonalon. Az E73-as út egyben a legrövidebb összeköttetés Kelet-Horvátország és az ország legdélebbre fekvő, Dubrovnik körüli régiója között, amely területi szempontból nem kapcsolódik az Unió többi részéhez.

Ami Bosznia-Hercegovinát illeti, a folyosó stratégiai jelentőségű közlekedési kapcsolatot jelent, amely keresztülszeli az egész országot, ám 396 kilométeréből csak 36 km autópálya. Az infrastruktúra javítására irányuló bármely uniós kötelezettségvállalás felhasználható lenne Bosznia-Hercegovina politikusainak ösztönzésére a régóta szükséges reformok irányába, valamint a hosszú távú stabilitás eszközéül szolgálhatna.

Tudná-e elemezni a Bizottság az Európai Hálózatfinanszírozási Eszköz vagy más uniós alapok a V/c. folyosó infrastruktúrájának fejlesztésére való felhasználásának lehetőségét? Számíthat-e Magyarország és Horvátország a Bizottság segítségére az E73-as út nagyjából 50 km-es, továbbra is kétsávos közútból álló szakaszának fejlesztése tekintetében?

Siim Kallas válasza a Bizottság nevében
(2014. május 23.)

Az E73-as útnak a tisztelt képviselők által említett magyarországi és horvátországi szakaszai a TEN-T átfogó hálózatának részét képezik. A TEN-T átfogó úthálózat projektjei – amennyiben azok határokon átnyúló szakaszokat érintenek – az Európai Hálózatfinanszírozási Eszköz ([1]) keretében jogosultak támogatásra, és az eszköznek csak az általános keretén belül támogathatók (14,9 milliárd EUR). Csak a TEN-T törzshálózatát érintő projektjei támogathatók a Kohéziós Alapból az Európai Hálózatfinanszírozási Eszközhöz átcsoportosított 11,3 milliárd EUR összegű keretből.

Ennek megfelelően, amennyiben az E73-as útnak a kérdésben hivatkozott 50 km-es szakasza határokon átnyúló szakaszokat érint, az Európai Hálózatfinanszírozási Eszköz keretében a tanulmányok az elszámolható költségek 50%-áig, a kivitelezési munkák pedig azok 10%-áig támogathatók. A projekteknek meg kell felelniük a következő feltételeknek is: 1) írásbeli megállapodás a két érintett ország között; 2) a határokon átnyúló szakaszoknak biztosítaniuk kell a közös érdekű projektnek a határtól az első gazdasági jelentőségű városi környezetig tartó folytonosságát ([2]); 3) a finanszírozás tárgyának tartalmaznia kell legalább a határkeresztezési pontot.

Az E73-as út Bosznia-Hercegovinában vezető szakasza része a Délkelet-európai Közlekedési Megfigyelő Állomás átfogó hálózatának, valamint a harmadik országok indikatív TEN-T hálózatának. Az Európai Hálózatfinanszírozási Eszköz létrehozásáról szóló rendelet 7. cikkének megfelelően harmadik országok bizonyos projektjei támogathatók az Európai Hálózatfinanszírozási Eszköz általános keretén belül, a kivitelezés esetében 10%-ig, a tanulmányok esetében 50%-ig terjedő arányban. Az V/c. folyosó infrastruktúrájának fejlesztését célzó projektek más uniós támogatási mechanizmusokból is részesülhetnek, mint például az Előcsatlakozási Támogatási Eszközből (IPA) vagy a nyugat-balkáni beruházási keretből (WBIF). Mindkét mechanizmust azzal a céllal hozták létre, hogy biztosítsák a jövőbeli infrastrukturális beruházásokhoz kapcsolódó tanulmányok és előkészítő munkák finanszírozását.

([1]) Az Európai Parlament és a Tanács 2013. december 11-i 1316/2013/EU rendelete az Európai Hálózatfinanszírozási Eszköz létrehozásáról, a 913/2010/EU rendelet módosításáról és a 680/2007/EK és a 67/2010/EK rendelet hatályon kívül helyezéséről, HL L 348., 2013.12.20.

([2]) Az 1315/2013/EU rendelet 3. cikkében található meghatározásokkal összhangban.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004196/14
to the Commission
Biljana Borzan (S&D), Zita Gurmai (S&D) and Brian Simpson (S&D)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: Possibility of using EU funds to build infrastructure on the Vc transport corridor

The pan-European corridor Vc, or European route E73, is a class A north-south European route that connects Hungary and eastern Croatia to Bosnia and Herzegovina and ends on Croatia's Adriatic coast.

The Hungarian section of the E73 starts at the Budapest ring motorway and ends at the Udvar/Dubošević border crossing, where the route crosses into Croatia.

The E73 route through Croatia starts at the Dubošević border crossing and ends at the Slavonski Šamac border crossing with Bosnia and Herzegovina. The corridor then goes through Bosnia and Herzegovina to the southern border with Croatia, and continues for another 11 km until Opuzen. There, it connects with European route E65, ending at Ploče port.

The E73 is an important transport route linking two Member States and crossing one internal and two external borders of the Union. Most of the length of the road going through Hungary and Croatia consists of motorways, but some parts, especially at the border crossing, are still two-lane roads. At present, this is a choke point on an important EU transport route. The E73 is also the shortest link between eastern Croatia and its southernmost Dubrovnik region, which is territorially not connected with the rest of the EU.

Regarding Bosnia and Herzegovina, the corridor is a strategic transport link spanning the length of the country, but only 36 km of its 396 km length consists of motorways. Any EU commitment to upgrading the infrastructure could be used to leverage Bosnia and Herzegovina's politicians with regard to much-needed reforms and serve as a tool for long-term stability.

Can the Commission elaborate on the possibility of using the Connecting Europe Facility or other EU funds to upgrade the infrastructure on the Vc corridor? Can Hungary and Croatia count on the Commission's help to upgrade some 50 kilometres of the E73 that still consist of two-lane roads?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(23 May 2014)

In Hungary and Croatia, the E73 sections mentioned by the Honourable Members are part of the TEN-T comprehensive network. Projects on the road TEN-T comprehensive network are eligible for funding under the Connecting Europe Facility ([1]) (CEF) insofar as they concern cross-border sections and are eligible only for the general envelope of the CEF (EUR 14.9 billion). Only projects on the TEN-T core network are eligible under the EUR11.3bn envelope transferred from the Cohesion Fund (CF) to the CEF.

Therefore, if the 50 km of E73 referred to in the question concern the cross-border section, then studies could be eligible under the CEF for up to 50% of the eligible costs and works for up to 10%. The projects should also comply with the following conditions:

1. A written agreement between the two countries concerned;

2. The cross-border sections must ensure the continuity of a project of common interest from the border to the first urban area of economic importance ([2]);

3. The action to be financed must include at least the cross-border point.

The E73 section in Bosnia and Herzegovina is part of the South East Europe Transport Observatory (SEETO) comprehensive network, as well as of the indicative TEN-T network for third countries. Pursuant to Art.7 of the CEF Regulation, certain projects in third countries could be eligible for the general envelope of the CEF, with co-funding rates of up to 10% for works and 50% for studies. Projects aimed at upgrading infrastructure on the VC corridor could also benefit from other EU support mechanisms, such as the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) or the Western Balkan Investment Framework (WBIF). Both mechanisms are designed to finance studies and preparatory works for future infrastructure investments.

([1]) Regulation (EU) No 1316/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing the Connecting Europe Facility, amending Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 and repealing Regulations (EC) No 680/2007 and (EC) No 67/2010 , OJ L 348, 20.12.2013.

([2]) In line with the definitions in Art. 3 of the regulation (EU) No 1315/2013.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-004197/14
an die Kommission
Ingeborg Gräßle (PPE)
(3. April 2014)

Betrifft: Mögliche Verbindlichkeiten im Bereich Altersversorgung nach einem Referendum im Vereinigten Königreich

Im Vereinigten Königreich wird es während der nächsten Legislaturperiode des Europäischen Parlaments wahrscheinlich ein Referendum geben. Dieses Referendum könnte zur Folge haben, dass das Vereinigte Königreich aus der Europäischen Union austritt.

1. Wie hoch sind derzeit die Verbindlichkeiten im Bereich Altersversorgung für EU-Beamte, die Staatsbürger des Vereinigten Königreichs sind?

2. Wie hoch wäre angesichts der Tatsache, dass man keine Rückstellungen dafür gebildet hat und die Mitgliedstaaten die Zahlung der Verbindlichkeiten im Bereich Altersversorgung „kollektiv garantieren", ein „gerechter Anteil" an den gesamten Verbindlichkeiten (für die Ruhegehälter der Bediensteten aus allen Mitgliedstaaten), den das Vereinigte Königreich zu entrichten hätte, falls das Land aus der Europäischen Union austreten sollte?

Antwort von Herrn Barroso im Namen der Kommission
(28. Mai 2014)

Da die Kommission sich nicht mit hypothetischen Ereignissen befasst, kann Unterfrage 2 nicht beantwortet werden.

Bezüglich Unterfrage 1, und unabhängig vom jeweiligen Kontext: Die Verbindlichkeiten für Ruhegehälter der Bediensteten beliefen sich im Jahr 2013 auf 40,4 Mrd EUR. Sie werden für die Gesamtheit der EU-Bediensteten berechnet, dementsprechend gibt es keine gesonderten Angaben über den Anteil der britischen Bürgerinnen und Bürger.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004197/14
to the Commission
Ingeborg Gräßle (PPE)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: Possible pension liabilities after a potential UK referendum

The United Kingdom is likely to propose a referendum during the European Parliament's next term. The outcome of this referendum could cause the UK to leave the EU. In this context, could the Commission answer the following questions:

1. What is the pension liability currently owed to EU officials who are UK citizens?

2. Since the pension liability has not been provisioned, and given that the Member States 'collectively guarantee' payment of the pension liability as staff retire, what would be the 'fair share' of the total pension liability (pensions owed to staff of all nationalities) that the UK would be expected to cover in the event that the country leaves the EU?

Answer given by Mr Barroso on behalf of the Commission
(28 May 2014)

As the Commission does not speculate about hypothetical events, it is not able to provide an answer to sub-question 2.

As to sub-question 1, and independently of any particular context, in 2013 the staff pension liabilities amounted to EUR 40.4 billion. They are calculated for all EU staff, the share owed to UK citizens is not specified.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004198/14
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD) e Mario Borghezio (NI)
(3 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Tutela della basilica cristiana rinvenuta nel lago di Nicea

In seguito a scavi archeologici nel lago di Nicea sono stati rinvenuti i resti di una basilica risalente almeno al 500 d.C. Nella comunicazione «Strategia di allargamento e sfide principali per il periodo 2013-2014» COM(2013) 0700 def., del 16.10.2013, si dichiara che: «la Turchia dovrà infine garantire il pieno rispetto dei diritti di proprietà, in particolare per quanto riguarda i beni delle comunità religiose non musulmane».

Alla luce di quanto precede, può la Commissione indicare se e come intende monitorare la salvaguardia del sito da parte delle autorità turche?

Risposta di Štefan Füle a nome della Commissione
(27 maggio 2014)

La Commissione segue da vicino le questioni relative ai diritti fondamentali, tra cui la libertà di religione e il diritto di proprietà. A tale riguardo, nelle opportune occasioni la Commissione incoraggia anche le autorità turche a garantire il pieno rispetto di tutti i diritti di proprietà, in particolare per quanto riguarda i beni delle comunità religiose non musulmane.

Tuttavia, il caso sollevato riguarda non tanto il diritto di proprietà quanto la cultura. Ai sensi dell'articolo 167 del TFUE, «l'Unione contribuisce al pieno sviluppo delle culture degli Stati membri nel rispetto delle loro diversità nazionali e regionali, evidenziando nel contempo il retaggio culturale comune». È vero che la Turchia sarà vincolata dal Trattato dell'UE soltanto al momento dell'adesione, ma nel frattempo la Commissione cerca di incoraggiare il paese, come anche tutti i paesi candidati, a preservare il proprio patrimonio culturale nello spirito dell'articolo 167.

La Commissione rinvia gli onorevoli deputati alla propria risposta all'interrogazione scritta E-001305/2014 ([1]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004198/14
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD) and Mario Borghezio (NI)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: Protection of Christian basilica found in the lake of Nicaea

As a result of archaeological excavations in the lake of Nicaea, the remains of a basilica dating back to at least 500 AD have been found. In its communication 'Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2013-2014', COM(2013) 0700 final of 16 October 2013, the Commission states that: 'Turkey needs to ensure full respect for all property rights, including those of non-Muslim religious communities'.

Can the Commission therefore say whether and how it intends to monitor the preservation of the site by the Turkish authorities?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(27 May 2014)

The Commission follows closely issues related to fundamental rights, including freedom of religion and right to property. In this respect, on all appropriate occasion, the Commission also encourages the Turkish authorities to ensure full respect for all property rights, including those of non-Muslim religious communities.

The concrete issue raised however relates to culture rather than right to property. Under Article 167 of the TFEU, 'The Union shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore'. While it will only be bound by the EU Treaty upon accession, the Commission nevertheless encourages Turkey, as well as all candidate countries, in the spirit of Article 167, to preserve its cultural heritage.

The Commission refers the Honourable Members also to its reply to written question E-001305/2014 ([1]).

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

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004199/14
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD) e Mario Borghezio (NI)
(3 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Progressi della Turchia nell'attuazione di un quadro legislativo per una maggiore tutela dei diritti delle donne

La Turchia, in quanto paese candidato, è tenuta a osservare l'Acquis comunitario e a impegnarsi per il rispetto dei diritti umani, inclusi i diritti delle donne.

Può la Commissione riferire in merito ai progressi di tale Stato nell'attuazione di un quadro legislativo che garantisca un'equa partecipazione delle donne alla vita sociale, economica e politica?

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004201/14
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD) e Mario Borghezio (NI)
(3 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Applicazione di «Prospettiva 2020 per le donne» in Turchia

Il 22 Maggio 2012, con la risoluzione 2011/2066 (INI) «Prospettiva 2020 per le donne in Turchia», il Parlamento europeo richiedeva che la Turchia si attivasse per sviluppare maggiori iniziative volte a sensibilizzare il paese nella lotta alla violenza contro le donne in tutte le sue forme.

Può la Commissione riferire:

1. se effettivamente la Turchia abbia attivato le iniziative richieste dalla risoluzione e, in caso di risposta positiva, può fornire una valutazione dell'impatto da esse ottenuto?

2. circa i progressi effettuati in ambito legislativo volti a una maggiore ed efficace tutela delle donne dalle violenze di ogni genere, comprese quelle domestiche?

Risposta congiunta di Štefan Füle a nome della Commissione
(8 luglio 2014)

La Turchia sta elaborando un piano d'azione per l'uguaglianza di genere e la commissione parlamentare turca per le pari opportunità tra uomini e donne è chiamata a esprimersi sui progetti legislativi. Non è stato invece ancora istituito il comitato per la lotta alla discriminazione e per la parità.

Nel 2013 è stata creata la piattaforma «Equality at Work», in collaborazione con il ministero per la Famiglia e le Politiche sociali ed il settore privato, che svolge attività volte a colmare il divario di genere nei campi della partecipazione alle attività economiche e delle pari opportunità. Anche organizzazioni femminili della società civile e alcune associazioni di categoria locali si impegnano per migliorare la condizione femminile.

Per quel che riguarda la partecipazione femminile alla vita sociale, politica ed economica, le donne continuano a essere sottorappresentate nelle posizioni decisionali del settore pubblico. Si osservano invece miglioramenti nel settore privato. Inoltre il numero di candidate è aumentato in tutti i principali partiti politici nelle elezioni locali di marzo 2014: ben tre donne sono state elette sindaco in grandi città. Nessuna riforma sul fronte legislativo per promuovere l'inclusione, la rappresentanza e la partecipazione delle donne alla vita politica.

Sono tutt'ora in corso di attuazione sia la legge sulla protezione della famiglia e la prevenzione della violenza contro le donne del marzo 2012, sia il piano di azione nazionale per combattere la violenza contro le donne del ministero per la Famiglia e le Politiche sociali (2012-2015). Sono in totale 123 i ricoveri per donne vittime di violenza domestica, con una capacità di 2190 posti. La violenza contro le donne rimane ancora un problema serio e diffuso.

La Commissione riferirà nel dettaglio riguardo alle questioni sopra menzionate ad ottobre 2014 nella relazione sulla Turchia.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004199/14
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD) and Mario Borghezio (NI)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: Turkey's progress in implementing a legislative framework for better protection of the rights of women

As a candidate country, Turkey is required to comply with the *acquis communautaire* and undertake to respect human rights, including those of women.

Can the Commission report on Turkey's progress in implementing a legislative framework that guarantees the fair participation of women in social, economic and political life?

Question for written answer E-004201/14
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD) and Mario Borghezio (NI)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: Implementation of the '2020 perspective for women' in Turkey

On 22 May 2012, in its resolution 2011/2066 (INI) on 'a 2020 perspective for women in Turkey', the European Parliament called on the Turkish authorities to do more to raise public awareness in that country of the need to prevent all forms of violence against women.

In view of this:

1. Can the Commission say whether Turkey has taken the measures called for in the resolution and, if so, can it assess the impact thereof?

2. Can it indicate what progress has been made regarding the adoption of legislation for the more effective protection of women against all forms of violence, including domestic violence?

Joint answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(8 July 2014)

Turkey is developing a Gender Equality Action Plan and the Parliamentary Committee on Equal Opportunities between Men and Women issues opinions on draft legislation. An anti-discrimination and equality board has not yet been established.

The 'Equality at Work' platform was established in 2013 in partnership with the Ministry of Family and Social Policies and the private sector. It carries out activities aiming to close the gender gap in economic participation and opportunities. Women's civil society organisations and some local business organisations also made efforts to empower women.

Regarding women's participation in social, political and economic life, women continue to be underrepresented in decision-making positions in the public sector. There is some improvement in this respect in the private sector. Moreover, the number of female candidates increased for all main political parties in the March 2014 local elections. Three metropolitan mayor posts are now held by women. No legislative changes have been introduced to promote women's inclusion, representation and participation in politics.

The Law on the Protection of Family and Prevention of Violence against Women of March 2012 as well as the Ministry for Family and Social Policies' National Action Plan to Combat Violence against Women (2012-15) continue to be implemented. There are a total of 123 shelters for women who are victims of domestic violence, with a capacity of 2190. Violence against women still remains a serious and widespread problem.

The Commission will report on the above issues in detail in its Progress Report on Turkey in October 2014.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004200/14
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD) e Mario Borghezio (NI)
(3 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Visti facili per il turismo in Europa

La Commissione ha annunciato oggi che saranno avviate procedure semplificate per facilitare l'ottenimento dei visti turistici a chi ne faccia richiesta. «Abbiamo bisogno di una politica dei visti più intelligente per attirare più turisti, ricercatori e uomini d'affari», hanno dichiarato i commissari Cecilia Malmström e Antonio Tajani, «le nuove regole sui visti sono la risposta».

In una fase storica come quella attuale in cui terrorismo e immigrazione clandestina mettono a dura prova i sistemi di welfare e la sicurezza dei cittadini europei, la Commissione:

1. Ritiene che una politica «dei visti facili» sia la risposta più coerente alle richieste dei cittadini inglesi, tedeschi o olandesi che hanno scritto in questi mesi all'UE proprio per chiedere di valutare la possibilità di bloccare temporaneamente le loro frontiere alla stessa immigrazione intra-comunitaria?

2. Con quali mezzi intende garantire che le richieste di visti semplificati per il turismo non nascondano intenzioni fraudolente come quelle del turismo del welfare o, peggio ancora, il terrorismo?

Risposta di Cecilia Malmström a nome della Commissione
(6 giugno 2014)

La proposta relativa al codice dei visti dell'Unione europea ([1]) tiene conto della maggiore enfasi politica attribuita all'impatto economico della politica dei visti sull'economia dell'Unione europea nel suo complesso, e in particolare sul turismo, in modo da assicurare una maggiore coerenza con gli obiettivi di crescita della strategia Europa 2020 ([2]).

La proposta intende facilitare gli spostamenti dei viaggiatori in regola ed evitare che le procedure stesse diventino un ostacolo a tal fine.

La Commissione ha concepito le proposte in modo tale da prestare specifica attenzione agli aspetti della sicurezza e da garantire il buon funzionamento della zona Schengen. Quando — secondo le previsioni — il nuovo codice dei visti entrerà in vigore, il VIS ([3]) sarà operativo a livello mondiale. Il VIS dà agli Stati membri accesso a tutti i dati relativi ai dossier dei richiedenti il visto, e sarà facile distinguere tra il richiedente «sconosciuto» che chiede il visto per la prima volta e non è ancora registrato nel VIS, e il richiedente i cui dati sono già registrati, comprese le informazioni sulle decisioni adottate (visto rilasciato o rifiutato, annullamento o revoca di un visto). Secondo la proposta, le domande relative al primo visto saranno sottoposte a un controllo approfondito, mentre alle persone che hanno dimostrato, in un determinato (recente) periodo di tempo, di soddisfare le condizioni d'ingresso, compresa l'intenzione di rientrare nel paese di partenza, devono essere offerte alcune facilitazioni procedurali.

La Commissione desidera far notare che la politica comune in materia di visti si applica ai soggiorni di breve durata (soggiorni non superiori a 90 giorni in un periodo di 180 giorni) di cittadini di paesi terzi soggetti all'obbligo del visto, e che il Regno Unito non partecipa a detta politica.

([1]) Proposta di regolamento del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio relativo al codice dei visti dell'Unione (codice dei visti), COM (2014) 164.
([2]) Cfr. Comunicazione della Commissione «Attuazione e sviluppo della politica comune in materia di visti per stimolare la crescita nell'Unione europea», COM(2012) 649 final.
([3]) Sistema di informazione visti (VIS).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004200/14
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD) and Mario Borghezio (NI)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: Straightforward tourist visa formalities in Europe

The introduction of simplified tourist visa procedures was today announced by the Commission. In this connection, Commissioners Cecilia Malmström and Antonio Tajani observed that 'we need a more intelligent visa policy to attract tourists, researchers and businessmen', adding that 'new visa rules are the answer'.

Given that European welfare systems and arrangements for the security of European citizens are coming under massive strain as a result of the terrorism and clandestine migration currently making their mark on our history:

1. Does the Commission consider that a 'simplified visa' policy is the best means of allaying the concerns of British, German or Dutch citizens who have, on the contrary, been writing to the EU over the last few months, asking it to envisage a temporary closure of their borders to intra-Community migration?

2. How does the Commission intend to ensure that simplified tourist visa applications are not misused for the purposes of unscrupulous activity such as welfare tourism or, worse still, terrorism?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(6 June 2014)

The proposal on the Union Code on Visas ([1]) takes into account the increased political emphasis given to the economic impact of visa policy on the EU economy, and in particular on tourism, to ensure greater consistency with the growth objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy ([2]).

The proposal, will facilitate travel for legitimate travellers, and prevent that procedures constitute an obstacle in themselves.

The Commission has designed the proposals in such a manner that security concerns are given specific attention and that the good functioning of the Schengen area will be ensured. By the time the new Visa Code could be expected to apply, the VIS ([3]) will be operational worldwide. This gives Member States access to all data related to applicants' visa history, and it will be easy to distinguish between the first-time, 'unknown' applicant not yet registered in the VIS, and the applicant whose data are already registered including decisions taken (visa issued or refused, and annulment or revocation of a visa). According to the proposal, first time applications will undergo a thorough scrutiny whereas persons who have in a given (recent) period of time proved that they fulfil the entry conditions, incl. those regarding the will to return, should be offered certain procedural facilitations.

The Commission would point out that the common visa policy covers short stays (i.e. stays of no more than 90 days in any 180 days period) for third-country nationals who are under the visa obligation and that the UK does not participate in this policy.

([1]) Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Union Code on Visas (Visa Code), COM(2014) 164.
([2]) Cf. Commission's communication Implementation and development of the common visa policy to spur growth in the European Union. COM(2012) 649 final.
([3]) Visa Information System (VIS).

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004202/14
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD) e Mario Borghezio (NI)
(3 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Fondi destinati alla Turchia in quanto paese in preadesione per il periodo 2014-2020

La Commissione può fornire una stima dell'ammontare dei fondi destinati alla Turchia in quanto paese candidato per il periodo 2014-2020?

Risposta di Štefan Füle a nome della Commissione
(27 maggio 2014)

L'assegnazione indicativa a favore della Turchia per il periodo 2014-2020 sarà stabilita con l'adozione del documento di strategia indicativo per la Turchia, attualmente previsto per settembre 2014.

Nel quadro dello strumento europeo di vicinato (ENI) e IPA II (strumento di preadesione) dialogo strategico presso il Parlamento europeo il 18 marzo 2014, una prima ripartizione indicativa è stata comunicata alla commissione AFET, alla quale la Commissione fa riferimento.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004202/14
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD) and Mario Borghezio (NI)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: Funds for Turkey as a pre-accession country for the period 2014-2020

Can the Commission give an estimate of the amount of funding to be granted to Turkey, as a candidate country, for the period 2014-2020?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(27 May 2014)

The indicative allocation for Turkey for the period 2014-2020 will be established through the adoption of the Indicative Strategy Paper for Turkey, which is currently foreseen for September 2014.

In the context of the ENI (European Neighbourhood Instrument) and IPA II (Instrument for Pre-Accession) Strategic Dialogue held with the European Parliament on 18 March 2014, a preliminary indicative allocation has been provided to the AFET Committee, to which the Commission would like to refer.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-004204/14
do Komisji
Arkadiusz Tomasz Bratkowski (PPE), Jarosław Kalinowski (PPE), Jarosław Leszek Wałęsa (PPE), Danuta Jazłowiecka (PPE), Zbigniew Zaleski (PPE), Jerzy Buzek (PPE), Jan Kozłowski (PPE), Jacek Protasiewicz (PPE), Andrzej Grzyb (PPE), Jacek Saryusz-Wolski (PPE) oraz Jolanta Emilia Hibner (PPE)
(3 kwietnia 2014 r.)

Przedmiot: Zarzut audytu DG EMPL wobec Fundacji na rzecz Nauki Polskiej kwestionujący prawidłowość jej postępowania przy udzielaniu zamówień

Fundacja na rzecz Nauki Polskiej (FNP) pomimo jej niezależności finansowej i organizacyjnej od jednostek finansów publicznych, przy okazji audytu (2007PL051PO001) Programu Operacyjnego Kapitał Ludzki, w ramach którego FNP realizuje projekt (od 2011 r.) przeprowadzanego przez DG EMPL (2013 r.), spotkała się z zarzutem niestosowania przez nią ustawy Prawo Zamówień Publicznych. Ustalenia audytu podważają wcześniejsze ustalenia krajowych i wspólnotowych organów kontrolnych. Krajowa instytucja audytująca, Urząd Kontroli Skarbowej, przeprowadziła audyt innego projektu w FNP ze środków ERDF i stwierdziła, iż FNP nie należy do podmiotów objętych obowiązkiem stosowania ustawy. Stanowisko to nie zostało podważone przez audytorów KE (2009/PL/REGION/J4/804/7), którzy w 2010 r. nie przedstawili FNP żadnych zarzutów.

Z jakich powodów KE naraża podmiot o tego rodzaju renomie na niepewną sytuację prawną i ewentualne ryzyko związanych z tym konsekwencji finansowych, przy istnieniu poważnych argumentów prawnych uzasadniających niestosowanie przez Fundację ustawy o zamówieniach publicznych?

Czy stosowane przez KE argumenty prawne rozpatrują identyczne lub zbliżone podmiotowo lub przedmiotowo do statusu i działań Fundacji stany faktyczne i są dostatecznie ugruntowane w orzecznictwie TSUE?

Czy KE zna inne przypadki nałożenia obowiązku stosowania przepisów o zamówieniach publicznych na podmiot prywatny promujący badania naukowe, który nie jest wpisany w załączniku III do dyrektywy 2004/18/WE?

Czy KE podczas przeprowadzonego audytu dopełniła należytej staranności co do weryfikacji doświadczenia kadry zewnętrznej zaangażowanej do przeprowadzenia tego audytu?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza László Andora w imieniu Komisji
(28 maja 2014 r.)

Zgodnie z art. 72 rozporządzenia Rady nr 1083/2006 Komisja ma obowiązek upewnienia się, że procedury zarządzania i kontroli w państwach członkowskich funkcjonują skutecznie przez cały okres wdrażania programów operacyjnych. W tym kontekście Komisja przeprowadza własne audyty obejmujące również audyty losowo wybranych operacji. W odniesieniu do audytu dotyczącego programu operacyjnego współfinansowanego przez Europejski Fundusz Społeczny (2007PL051PO001), przeprowadzonego w 2013 r., w toku jest postępowanie kontradyktoryjne. Obecnie Komisja dokładnie bada wszystkie argumenty prawne, informacje i dokumenty dostarczone przez państwo członkowskie, w tym dodatkowe elementy związane z Fundacją na rzecz Nauki Polskiej (FNP). Dopiero pod koniec tego procesu wydane zostanie ostateczne stanowisko Komisji. Chociaż każdy przypadek wskazany w sprawozdaniu z audytu ma charakter indywidualny, Komisja należycie uwzględnia wyniki poprzednich audytów i orzecznictwo Trybunału Sprawiedliwości, aby zapewnić w swoich decyzjach proporcjonalność i równe traktowanie podmiotów poddanych audytowi.

Komisja przywiązuje duże znaczenie do profesjonalizmu swoich pracowników. Jak dotąd nie wpłynęły żadne skargi na urzędników Komisji ani na personel zewnętrzny, którzy prowadzą działania audytowe w Polsce. Wszystkich pracowników reprezentujących Komisję w państwach członkowskich i państwach trzecich obowiązują najwyższe standardy zawodowe oraz zasady etyki zawodowej.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004204/14
to the Commission
Arkadiusz Tomasz Bratkowski (PPE), Jarosław Kalinowski (PPE), Jarosław Leszek Wałęsa (PPE), Danuta Jazłowiecka (PPE), Zbigniew Zaleski (PPE), Jerzy Buzek (PPE), Jan Kozłowski (PPE), Jacek Protasiewicz (PPE), Andrzej Grzyb (PPE), Jacek Saryusz-Wolski (PPE) and Jolanta Emilia Hibner (PPE)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: DG EMPL audit accuses the Polish Foundation for Science of procurement irregularities

The Polish Foundation for Science (FNP) is independent, both financially and in terms of its organisation, from public finance bodies. Despite this, however, in an audit (2007PL051PO001) carried out in 2013 by DG EMPL on the Human Capital operational programme, as part of which the FNP has been involved in a project since 2011, the FNP was accused of failing to apply public procurement legislation. The findings of EMPL's audit call into question those of previous audits carried out by national and EU audit bodies. Poland's national audit authority, the Office of Fiscal Control (UKS), audited another FNP project using ERDF funding and asserted that the FNP was not one of the bodies covered by the obligation to apply the legislation. This was not called into question by the Commission's auditors in 2010, who levelled no accusations against the FNP (2009/PL/REGION/J4/804/7).

Why is the Commission exposing such a reputable organisation to legal uncertainty, and possibly to the risk of financial consequences, when there are convincing legal arguments that establish that the FNP is not obliged to apply public procurement legislation?

Are the legal arguments used by the Commission informed by facts that are, in a subjective or objective way, identical or similar to the facts in the case relating to the status and activities of the FNP? Are these arguments sufficiently grounded in ECJ case-law?

Is the Commission aware of other cases in which an obligation to apply public procurement legislation has been imposed on a private entity promoting scientific research that is not listed in Annex III to Directive 2004/18/EC?

When carrying out the audit, did the Commission exercise due diligence with regard to checking the experience of external staff employed to carry out the audit?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(28 May 2014)

In line with Art.72 of Council Regulation no 1083/2006 the Commission is obliged to satisfy itself that the management and control procedures in the Member States function effectively during the whole period of implementation of operational programmes. In this context the Commission carries out its' audit activities including audits of randomly selected operations. For the audit on the operational programme co-financed by the European Social Fund (2007PL051PO001) carried out in 2013, the contradictory procedure is still on-going. At present the Commission thoroughly examines all legal arguments, information and documents provided by the Member State including additional elements related to the Polish Foundation for Science (FNP). It is only at the end of this process that the Commission's final position will be issued. Although each case indicated in the audit report is individual, the Commission is giving due consideration to the results of previous audits and ECJ case law in order to ensure the proportionality in its decisions and equal treatment of auditees.

The Commission attaches the utmost importance to the professionalism of its personnel. Up to now, no complaints have been filed with regard to the Commission's staff and external personnel carrying out audit activities in Poland. The highest professional and ethical standards apply to all personnel representing the Commission in the Member States and third countries.

(българска версия)

Въпрос с искане за писмен отговор P-004205/14
до Комисията
Dimitar Stoyanov (NI)
(3 април 2014 г.)

Относно: Създаване на фонд „Убежище и миграция“

На 13 март 2014 г. Европейският парламент гласува на първо четене своята позиция по предложения от Комисията регламент на Европейския парламент и на Съвета за създаване на фонд „Убежище и миграция“.

С настоящия регламент Комисията предлага сливане в един финансов инструмент на трите съществуващи фонда, а именно: Европейски фонд за бежанци, Европейски фонд за интеграция на граждани на трети страни и Европейски фонд за връщане.

Безпокойство буди фактът, че не става ясен механизмът, по който се изчислява размерът на финансиране, предвиден за отделните държави членки за периода 2014—2020 г.

В тази връзка следва да се отбележи, че през 2013 г. България беше сериозно засегната от бежанската вълна вследствие на конфликта в Сирия. Дневно около 100 лица от Сирия навлизаха на територията на Европейския съюз през българо-турската граница през лятото на 2013 г., като се очаква тази тенденция да продължи и през тази година.

В предложението за регламент за България е предвидена сума в размер на само 11 492 853 евро за периода 2014—2020 г. Тези средства са абсолютно недостатъчни предвид повишената необходимост от финансово подпомагане на България в областта на процедурите по предоставяне на убежище и статут на бежанец на лица от трети държави. За сравнение, според индикативната многогодишна разбивка по държави членки за Гърция се отпуска сума, която е 22 пъти по-висока от тази за България (260 226 050 евро). На Австрия и Чехия, които пък са страни без външна граница, са предвидени също значително по-високи средства съответно по 68 223 378 евро и 29 608 422 евро.

Поради гореизложеното се обръщам към Комисията със следните въпроси:

1. Как е определен размерът на финансиране, който се отпуска за България?

2. Взето ли е под внимание при определянето на сумата, предвидена за България в новосъздадения фонд, обстоятелството, че страната е една от държавите членки, която в най-голяма степен е засегната от увеличения бежански поток вследствие на кризата в Сирия?

3. Възнамерява ли Комисията да коригира предвидената за България сума в новия фонд „Убежище и миграция“ с оглед повишените нужди на страната в съответната област?

Отговор, даден от г-жа Малмстрьом от името на Комисията
(8 май 2014 г.)

Приложение I към предложението за регламент на Европейския парламент и на Съвета за създаване на фонд „Убежище, миграция и интеграция“ (ФУМИ) заделя за България основна сума в размер 10 006 777 EUR за периода 2014—2020 г. Европейският парламент одобри това предложение през март, а Съветът — на 14 април 2014 г ([1]).

Основните суми, заделени за държавите членки, са изчислени въз основа на сумите, получени за периода 2011—2013 г. по линия на Европейския бежански фонд, Европейския фонд за интеграция на граждани на трети страни и Европейския фонд за връщане.

Приемането на по-голям брой лица в резултат на криза в съседна държава извън ЕС може в някои случаи да доведе до ситуация, при която може да бъде поискано спешно подпомагане по линия на ФУМИ, включително от България. Например през 2013 г. България е получила 8 613 794 EUR спешно подпомагане от предишните фондове по линия на „Солидарност и управление на миграционните потоци“.

([1]) Предстои публикуването на регламента в Официален вестник.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-004205/14
to the Commission
Dimitar Stoyanov (NI)
(3 April 2014)

Subject: Creation of the Asylum and Migration Fund

On 13 March 2014, the European Parliament adopted, at first reading, its position on the Commission's proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Asylum and Migration Fund. Under that regulation, the Commission proposes that three already-existing funds — the European Refugee Fund, the European Fund for the Integration of Third Country Nationals and the European Return Fund — be merged into one financial instrument.

The lack of clarity over the method used to calculate how much funding is to be allocated to each Member State for the period 2014-2020 is a cause for concern. One should emphasise, in this regard, that Bulgaria was seriously affected in 2013 by the wave of refugees escaping the conflict in Syria. In the summer of 2013, around 100 people originating from Syria entered the EU each day across the border between Turkey and Bulgaria, and this trend is expected to continue in 2014.

Under the proposal for a regulation, Bulgaria is allocated an amount of just EUR 11 492 853 for the period 2014-2020. That sum is totally inadequate in view of Bulgaria's increasing need for financial support in the area of procedures for granting asylum and refugee status to third-country nationals. By way of comparison, the indicative multiannual breakdown per Member State shows that Greece has been granted a sum (EUR 260 226 050) which is 22 times higher than that for Bulgaria. Significantly higher amounts have also been allocated to Austria and the Czech Republic (EUR 68 223 378 and EUR 29 608 422 respectively), even though these countries do not lie on the EU's external borders.

In the light of the above, can the Commission state:

1. what exact amount of financing is being granted to Bulgaria;

2. whether the fact that Bulgaria is one of the Member States most affected by the surge in the number of refugees from Syria was taken into account when calculating the amount Bulgaria would receive from the newly-established fund;

3. whether it intends to adjust the amount allocated to a Bulgaria under the new Asylum and Migration Fund, in view of that country's increasing needs in this area?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(8 May 2014)

Annex I of the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) allocates to Bulgaria a basic amount of EUR 10 006 777 for the period 2014-2020. The European Parliament approved this proposal in March and the Council on 14 April 2014 ([1]).

The basic amounts allocated to Member States were calculated on the basis of the allocations received for the years 2011-2013 under the European Refugee Fund, the European Fund for the Integration of third-country nationals and the European Return Fund.

Increased reception figures resulting of a crisis in a neighbouring country outside the EU may in some cases amount to a situation for which emergency assistance could be requested under AMIF, including by Bulgaria. For example, in 2013, Bulgaria received EUR 8 613 794 of emergency assistance under the previous 'Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows' funds.

([1]) Publication of the regulation in the Official Journal is pending.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub P-004206/14
lill-Kummissjoni
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(4 ta' April 2014)

Suġġett: Definizzjoni tad-drittijiet tas-saħħa sesswali u riproduttiva

Il-kunċett tad-drittijiet tas-saħħa sesswali u riproduttiva jidher li huwa interpretat b'modi differenti fit-trattati internazzjonali u fil-leġiżlazzjoni nazzjonali.

Tista' l-Kummissjoni tipprovdi analiżi ta' kif l-Istati Membri jinterpretaw il-kunċett tad-drittijiet tas-saħħa sesswali u ripproduttiva?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Borg f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(12 ta' Mejju 2014)

Il-Kummissjoni hija konxja li ma teżisti ebda opinjoni komuni fl-Istati Membri tal-UE dwar id-drittijiet sesswali u riproduttivi. Fil-Kummissjoni reċenti tan-Nazzjonijiet Uniti dwar il-Popolazzjoni u l-Iżvilupp mis-7 sal-11 ta' April, l-UE ma stgħetx tippreżenta pożizzjoni magħquda dwar is-saħħa u d-drittijiet sesswali u riproduttivi.

L-Organizzazzjoni Dinjija tas-Saħħa tiddefinixxi s-saħħa sesswali bħala stat ta' benessri fiżiku, emozzjonali, mentali u soċjali marbut mas-sesswalità. Is-saħħa riproduttiva tindirizza l-proċessi, il-funzjonijiet u s-sistema riproduttiva fl-istadji kollha tal-ħajja.

Is-saħħa sesswali u riproduttiva hija mħarsa permezz tad-drittijiet sesswali u riproduttivi. Fil-Pjattaforma għall-Azzjoni ta' Beijing (1995) huwa ddikjarat li dawk id-drittijiet huma bbażati fuq id-drittijiet tal-bniedem tal-ugwaljanza u d-dinjità u jinkludu d-dritt li wieħed ikun infurmat dwar metodi għar-regolazzjoni tal-fertilità sikuri, effettivi u bi prezz raġonevoli tal-għażla tagħhom u jkollu aċċess għalihom.

Ir-Riżoluzzjoni tal-Parlament Ewropew tal-4 ta' Diċembru 2013 dwar is-saħħa u d-drittijiet sesswali u riproduttivi tgħid li "l-formulazzjoni u l-implimentazzjoni ta' politiki dwar is-Saħħa u d-Drittijiet Sesswali u Riproduttivi u dwar l-edukazzjoni sesswali fl-iskejjel hija kompetenza tal-Istati Membri".

L-Istati Membri huma responsabbli għad-definizzjoni tal-politika tas-servizzi tas-saħħa tagħhom u għall-organizzazzjoni u l-provvediment ta' servizzi tas-saħħa u tal-kura medika. Bħala tali, id-drittijiet sesswali u riproduttivi jaqgħu taħt ir-responsabbiltà esklużiva tal-Istati Membri.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-004206/14
to the Commission
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(4 April 2014)

Subject: Definition of sexual and reproductive health rights

The notion of sexual and reproductive health rights appears to be interpreted in varying ways in international treaties and national legislation.

Can the Commission provide an analysis of how Member States interpret the notion of sexual and reproductive health rights?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(12 May 2014)

The Commission is aware that no common view exists in the EU Member States regarding sexual and reproductive rights. In the recent United Nations Commission on Population and Development on 7-11 April, the EU was not in a position to present a united position on sexual and reproductive health and rights.

The World Health Organisation defines sexual health as a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality. Reproductive health addresses the reproductive processes functions and system at all stages of life.

Sexual and reproductive health is safeguarded by sexual and reproductive rights. In the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) it is stated that those rights are based on human rights of equality and dignity and include the right to be informed of and to have access to safe, effective, affordable and acceptable methods of fertility regulation of their choice.

The European Parliament Resolution on sexual and reproductive health and rights of 4 December 2013 notes that 'the formulation and implementation of policies on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and on sexual education in schools is a competence of the Member States'.

Member States are responsible for the definition of their health services policy and for the organisation and delivery of health services and medical care. As such, sexual and reproductive rights fall under the exclusive responsibility of Member States.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-004207/14
a la Comisión
Salvador Sedó i Alabart (PPE)
(4 de abril de 2014)

Asunto: Empleo y situación social en Europa

Es evidente que la crisis económica ha afectado a la economía de todos los países de la Unión Europea, como también lo es que no ha afectado a todos los Estados de la Unión de la misma manera.

El último estudio trimestral sobre «Empleo y Situación Social» elaborado por la Comisión Europea constata que las medidas del Gobierno español para combatir la crisis han afectado especialmente a los hogares más pobres que son lo que han experimentado una mayor reducción de ingresos, debido sobre todo al incremento impositivo tanto del IRPF como del IVA, es decir de los «impuestos universales».

Recientemente también un informe de Cáritas alertaba del incremento de la pobreza en España, informe que por cierto fue ninguneado por el ministro de Hacienda, Cristóbal Montoro.

A la vista de las conclusiones de su último estudio trimestral, ¿ha previsto la Comisión la posibilidad de nuevas directrices que apoyen a la población más desprotegida frente a la pobreza?

¿Cree que sería aconsejable modificar la política económica en aquellos Estados de la Unión donde más se han incrementado las bolsas de pobreza, y donde más se han acentuado las desigualdades?

¿Cree necesaria la adopción de medidas de carácter extraordinario para paliar la dificilísima situación económica que atraviesan miles de familias y que han visto aún más deteriorada su economía doméstica por las subidas fiscales?

Respuesta del Sr. Andor en nombre de la Comisión
(28 de mayo de 2014)

La Comisión está totalmente de acuerdo con la importancia de abordar los graves y crecientes niveles de pobreza de la UE, así como la tarea de protección social para prevenir y reducir la pobreza. Esta es la razón por la que la reducción de la pobreza es uno de los cinco objetivos principales de la Estrategia Europa 2020.

En su Paquete de Inversión Social, de febrero de 2013, la Comisión proporcionó orientaciones a los Estados miembros sobre cómo la protección social puede modernizarse mediante líneas de inversión social, con el fin de mejorar su efectividad y eficacia en el desempeño de sus funciones, en particular en la reducción de la pobreza. En ellas se destaca la necesidad de una prestación social sostenible, adecuada y bien enfocada para abordar la pobreza, junto con las inversiones sociales que permitan a más europeos evitar los riesgos que puedan llevarles a la pobreza en su ciclo de vida. En particular, se está trabajando en la definición de una metodología común para diseñar presupuestos de referencia que ayuden a los Estados miembros a ofrecer un apoyo adecuado a la renta.

Al menos el 20 % del Fondo Social Europeo para el período 2014-2020 se utilizará para medidas de inclusión social. Además, el recién creado Fondo de Ayuda Europea para las Personas Más Desfavorecidas (FEAD) financia medidas de los países de la UE destinadas a proporcionar asistencia material a las personas más desfavorecidas. Dicha asistencia consiste en alimentos, ropa y otros artículos esenciales de uso personal.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004207/14
to the Commission
Salvador Sedó i Alabart (PPE)
(4 April 2014)

Subject: EU employment and social situation

The economic crisis has clearly affected the economy of all EU countries, but just as clearly, it has not affected them all in the same way.

The European Commission's latest Employment and Social Situation Quarterly Review observes that the Spanish Government's attempts to combat the crisis have particularly hit the poorest homes, whose incomes have been most affected by rises in so-called 'universal taxes': VAT and personal income tax.

Caritas has also drawn attention to Spain's rising poverty in a recent report, which Finance Minister Cristóbal Montoro naturally dismissed out of hand.

In light of the conclusions drawn in the quarterly review, is the Commission planning new guidelines to help protect the most vulnerable sections of society against poverty?

Does it think that economic policy should be amended in the EU States that have seen the biggest increase in the number of pockets of poverty and widening gaps between rich and poor?

Does it believe that more extreme measures are needed to relieve the difficulties faced by thousands of families whose economic situation has further deteriorated because of tax increases?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(28 May 2014)

The Commission fully agrees with the importance of addressing the serious and growing levels of poverty in the EU, and the task of social protection in preventing and reducing poverty. This is why reducing poverty is one of the five headline goals of the Europe 2020 strategy.

In its Social Investment Package of February 2013, the Commission provided guidance to the Member States on how social protection can be modernised along social investment lines, to improve its effectiveness and efficiency in carrying out its functions, notably in reducing poverty. It stresses the need for sustainable, adequate and well-targeted social provision to address poverty, alongside social investments enabling more Europeans to avoid the risks that can lead to poverty in the course of the life cycle. In particular, it is working on the definition of a common methodology for reference budgets, to support Member States in providing adequate income support.

At least 20% of the European Social Fund for the 2014-2020 period will be used for social inclusion measures. In addition, the newly-established Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) supports EU countries' actions to provide material assistance to the most deprived. This includes food, clothing and other essential items for personal use.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-004208/14
a la Comisión
Salvador Sedó i Alabart (PPE)
(4 de abril de 2014)

Asunto: La salud de la cultura en Europa

Una de las características de la construcción europea ha sido la certeza de que las diferencias culturales no nos separan, sino que nos enriquecen por compartir unos valores fundamentales que nos unen como son la democracia, la libertad y el respeto hacia la diversidad cultural.

Desde la misma Comisión se ha reivindicado la importancia de la cultura en todo el proceso de construcción y cohesión de la Unión Europea, ya que es la que permite dar «alma» a Europa. La crisis económica ha obligado a importantes recortes en numerosos campos en los países de la Unión que se han visto en una situación más comprometida. Estos recortes también han afectado a la cultura, especialmente en España.

A partir de 2011, ha habido descensos significativos y continuados que, en algunos casos —como el de la Secretaría de Estado de Cultura—, alcanzan cuotas del 50 % de recorte en los presupuestos. En lo que se refiere al Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte, la reducción global de financiación es del 48,1 % entre 2009 y 2013.

También se han reducido las aportaciones realizadas a la cultura de las comunidades autónomas con lengua propia, como es el caso de Cataluña. Todo ello agravado al decidir el Gobierno español un incremento del IVA cultural del 8 al 21 %.

Ante esta situación ¿qué medidas cree la Comisión que se deben tomar para que la crisis no perjudique de una manera tan notable la salud de la cultura en los países más castigados por la misma?

¿Tiene previsto la Comisión estudiar una equiparación del IVA cultural en los distintos Estados de la Unión para que la cultura tenga la misma igualdad de oportunidades en toda la UE?

¿Cree la Comisión suficientes los actuales fondos europeos para el apoyo de la lenguas minoritarias en los Estados miembros?

Respuesta de la Sra. Vassiliou en nombre de la Comisión
(16 de junio de 2014)

La Comisión está de acuerdo en que la cultura desempeña un papel crucial en la vida de las personas y que contribuye a la cohesión social y al crecimiento económico.

Las competencias de la UE en este ámbito son limitadas; la financiación nacional en materia de cultura y patrimonio cultural es competencia exclusiva de los Estados miembros. Los programas de financiación de la UE, como el programa Europa Creativa, se añaden, pero no sustituyen, a los presupuestos nacionales. El presupuesto de Europa Creativa, el programa de financiación de la UE para los sectores cultural y creativo, se ha incrementado para el período 2014-2020 en un 9 % en comparación con el anterior período de financiación. Asimismo, COSME, Erasmus+ y Horizonte 2020 ofrecen oportunidades de financiación para los sectores culturales.

El tratamiento actual a efectos del IVA de los bienes y servicios culturales está regulado por la Directiva del IVA ([1]), que establece algunas excepciones y ofrece a los Estados miembros la posibilidad de aplicar el tipo reducido a una serie de ofertas culturales. En 2011, la Comisión adoptó una Comunicación sobre el futuro del IVA ([2]), en la que anunció una revisión de la estructura de tipos ([3]), que continúa en curso.

La UE no ha asignado fondos para apoyar las lenguas minoritarias en los Estados miembros. Sin embargo, en el marco de su amplio apoyo al multilingüismo, las actividades que promueven el intercambio y el aprendizaje mutuo relacionados con las lenguas minoritarias pueden optar a financiación de Erasmus+.

([1]) Directiva 2006/112/CE del Consejo, de 28 de noviembre de 2006, relativa al sistema común del impuesto sobre el valor añadido (Directiva del IVA) (DO L 347 de 11.12.2006, p. 1).
([2]) COM(2011) 851 final, Comunicación sobre el futuro del IVA. Hacia un sistema de IVA más simple, robusto, eficaz y adaptado al mercado único.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/common/consultations/tax/2012_vat_rates_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004208/14
to the Commission
Salvador Sedó i Alabart (PPE)
(4 April 2014)

Subject: Health of the cultural sector in Europe

One of the features of European integration has been the knowledge that, rather than divide us, our cultural differences enrich us through the sharing of certain fundamental values which bring us together, such as democracy, freedom and respect for cultural diversity.

The Commission itself has stressed the importance of culture in the entire EU integration and cohesion process because culture is what gives Europe its 'soul'. The economic crisis has forced many of the EU's most affected countries to make substantial cuts in many areas. These cuts have also had an impact on culture, especially in Spain.

Since 2011, there have been significant and sustained cuts, which in some cases, such as the Department of Culture, have been as high as 50% of the budget. For the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, the overall budget reduction between 2009 and 2013 was 48.1%.

The autonomous communities with their own language, such as Catalonia, have also cut back their funding for culture. The situation has been made worse by the Spanish Government's decision to increase VAT on cultural services from 8% to 21%.

What measures does the Commission believe should be taken to prevent the crisis having such a major impact on the health of the cultural sector in the countries hardest hit?

Will the Commission consider bringing in a uniform VAT rate on cultural services in the different EU countries so that culture can enjoy a level playing field throughout the EU?

Does the Commission believe that existing EU funds to support minority languages in the Member States are sufficient?

Answer given by Ms. Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(16 June 2014)

The Commission agrees that culture plays a crucial role in people's lives and that it contributes to social cohesion and economic growth.

EU competences in this field are limited; national funding for culture and cultural heritage is an exclusive competence of Member States. EU funding programmes, such as Creative Europe, come in addition to, but not as a replacement of, national budgets. The budget of Creative Europe, the EU funding programme for the cultural and creative sectors, has been increased by 9% for 2014-2020 as compared to the past funding period. Also, COSME, Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020 offer funding opportunities for the cultural sectors.

The current VAT treatment of cultural goods and services is regulated by the VAT Directive ([1]) which provides some exemptions and which gives Member States the possibility to apply reduced VAT rates to a number of cultural supplies. In 2011, the Commission adopted a communication on the future of VAT ([2]), which announced a review of the VAT rates structure ([3]) which is still ongoing.

The EU has not earmarked any funds for supporting minority languages in Member States. However, as part of its broad support for multilingualism, activities promoting exchange and mutual learning related to minority languages are eligible for support under Erasmus+.

([1]) Council Directive 2006/112/EC of 28 November 2006 on the common system of value added tax (the VAT Directive) — (OJ L 347, 11.12.2006, p.1).
([2]) COM(2011) 851 final — Communication on the future of VAT — Towards a simpler, more robust and efficient VAT system tailored to the single market.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/common/consultations/tax/2012_vat_rates_en.htm

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-004209/14
an die Kommission
Barbara Lochbihler (Verts/ALE) und Franziska Keller (Verts/ALE)
(4. April 2014)

Betrifft: Freihandelsabkommen EU-Kolumbien/Peru

Am 11. Februar 2014 beantwortete die Hohe Vertreterin im Namen der Kommission bereits eine Anfrage der Fragestellerin zu obigem Thema. Die Fragestellerin kommt hiermit auf die offen gebliebenen Fragen im Hinblick auf Überwachungsmechanismen der Menschenrechtslage im Kontext des Freihandelsabkommens zurück. Dieser Mechanismus sieht die Einrichtung von Domestic Advisory Groups (DAG) vor.

Nach welchen Kriterien werden die zivilgesellschaftlichen Mitglieder der DAG auf der EU-Seite ausgewählt? Kennt die EU die Kriterien im Falle von Kolumbien und Peru und behält sie sich vor zu reagieren, wenn ausreichende Anzahl, Diversität und Unabhängigkeit von der Regierung nicht gewährleistet sind, oder enthält sich die EU in jedem Falle einer Bewertung und Intervention?

In welcher Weise trägt der in der Antwort genannte Menschenrechtsdialog der Tatsache Rechnung, dass mit dem provisorischen Inkrafttreten des Freihandelsabkommens neue Bereiche und Kriterien in die Beobachtung der Menschenrechtslage einbezogen werden müssen? Hat der Menschrechtsdialog seine Agenda entsprechend geändert oder wird er dies tun? Welches sind genau die neuen Themen? Wird entsprechend auch der Kreis der Teilnehmer an diesem Dialog sowie an der lokalen Arbeitsgruppe „Menschenrechte“ ausgeweitet?

Seit drei Jahren steigt die Zahl der Morde an Menschenrechtsverteidigern beständig an (49 im Jahre 2011, 69 im Jahre 2012 und 78 im Jahre 2013), gleichzeitig die Zahl der ermordeten Gewerkschafter jährlich bei etwa 30 (27 im Jahre 2013). Diese Situation ist keinesfalls akzeptabel. Warum gibt es keine öffentliche Reaktion der Kommission im Rahmen der Menschenrechtsklausel?

Antwort von Frau Ashton — Hohe Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin im Namen der Kommission
(27. Mai 2014)

Das Handelsabkommen sieht vor, dass jede Vertragspartei interne Ausschüsse oder Gruppen konsultiert, die sich mit Fragen aus den Bereichen Arbeit, Umwelt oder nachhaltige Entwicklung befassen, oder solche Ausschüsse oder Gruppen einsetzt, falls noch keine existieren. Dem Abkommen zufolge müssen in diesen Ausschüssen oder Gruppen repräsentative Einrichtungen der oben genannten Bereiche in einem ausgewogenen Verhältnis vertreten sein.

Die EU hat eine interne beratende Gruppe eingerichtet, die sich aus Mitgliedern des EWSA sowie sonstigen Vertretern europäischer Gewerkschaften, Berufsverbände und NRO zusammensetzt, die sich im Rahmen einer Aufforderung zur Interessenbekundung der Kommission beworben haben. Kolumbien und Peru stützen sich auf bestehende interne Konsultationsverfahren zu Umwelt- und Beschäftigungsfragen. Jede Vertragspartei kann alle Fragen im Zusammenhang mit der Umsetzung des Abkommens mit der anderen Partei erörtern, einschließlich der Frage, ob die in Artikel 281 festgelegten Kriterien tatsächlich eingehalten wurden.

Die EU beobachtet weiterhin die Entwicklungen im Bereich der Menschenrechte in Kolumbien und Peru und nutzt dabei alle zur Verfügung stehenden Politik- und Kooperationsinstrumente sowie ihre ständigen Kontakte zu Organisationen der Zivilgesellschaft. Ein grundlegendes Instrument ist der mit Kolumbien geführte hochrangige politische Dialog über Menschenrechtsfragen, dessen Agenda die Prioritäten der EU und die wichtigsten Anliegen im Bereich der Menschenrechtslage im Land widerspiegelt, wie z. B. die Lage von Menschenrechtsverteidigern und Gewerkschaftern sowie Fragen im Zusammenhang mit der Umsetzung des Handelsabkommens.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004209/14
to the Commission
Barbara Lochbihler (Verts/ALE) and Franziska Keller (Verts/ALE)
(4 April 2014)

Subject: EU-Colombia/Peru Free Trade Agreement

On 11 February 2014 the High Representative replied, on behalf of the Commission, to a question from the author on this subject. The author wishes to refer to the unanswered questions relating to the mechanism for monitoring the human rights situation in the context of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA). The mechanism provides for Domestic Advisory Groups (DAGs) to be set up.

How will the civil-society members of the DAGs be selected on the EU side? Is the EU aware of the criteria in the case of Columbia and Peru? Does it reserve the right to react if the requirements governing the sufficient number, diversity and independence from the government are not safeguarded, or will it refrain from evaluating and intervening in each case?

How does the human rights dialogue mentioned in the reply take into account the fact that the provisional entry into force of the FTA will entail the inclusion of new areas and criteria in the monitoring of the human rights situation? Has the human rights dialogue changed its agenda accordingly, or will it make such a change? If so, what exactly are the new topics? Will there be more participants in the dialogue and in the local 'human rights' working party?

The number of deaths of human rights activists has been steadily rising for three years (49 in 2011, 69 in 2012 and 78 in 2013), and the number of trade unionists murdered stands at around 30 a year (27 in 2013). This situation is completely unacceptable. Why has there been no clear reaction from the Commission by invoking the human rights clause?

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

The Trade Agreement sets out that each Party shall consult existing, or shall create, domestic labour and environment or sustainable development committees or groups with the task of advising on the implementation of the title on trade and sustainable development. In accordance with the Agreement these committees or groups are to be composed of a balanced representation of organisations active in the abovementioned sectors.

The EU has set up a domestic advisory group composed of members of the EESC as well as other representatives of EU trade unions, business associations and NGOs that responded to a Commission call for expressions of interest. Colombia and Peru build on existing domestic consultative mechanisms covering environmental and labour issues. All Parties to the Agreement can raise any issue related to the implementation with the other Party, including on whether the criteria set out in Article 281 have been effectively observed.

The EU continues to monitor the developments in the human rights in Colombia and Peru by making use of all available policy and cooperation instruments as well as continuous contacts with civil society organisations. A fundamental instrument is the high level policy dialogue on Human Rights with Colombia, whose agenda reflects the priorities of the EU well as the main issues of concern that emerges in the human rights situation of the country, including the situation of human rights defenders and trade unionists and issues pertaining to the implementation of the Trade Agreement.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-004210/14
an die Kommission
Paul Rübig (PPE) und Angelika Niebler (PPE)
(4. April 2014)

Betrifft: Korrekte Umsetzung des dritten Energiepakets

Im Rahmen der Bewertung der nationalen Reform- und Anpassungsprogramme bestimmter Mitgliedstaaten hat die Kommission kürzlich Arbeitsdokumente mit Empfehlungen unter anderem für Polen (SWD(2013)0371) und Bulgarien (SWD(2013)0352) veröffentlicht. Vor allem in Bezug auf die Umsetzung des dritten Energiepakets stellt die Kommission in Polen einen nur beschränkten Wettbewerb unter den etablierten Energieversorgern, unzureichende Verknüpfung mit den anderen Mitgliedstaaten und hohe Energiepreise aufgrund überalterter Energie-Erzeugungseinrichtungen fest. Die wichtigsten Empfehlungen für Bulgarien umfassen transparente und objektive Auswahlverfahren für die Ernennung von Personal für die SEWRC (staatliche Regulierungsbehörde für Wasser und Energie), eine Verbesserung des Regelungsrahmens für die Umsetzung des dritten Energiepakets und Fortschritte bei der Schaffung der notwendigen Voraussetzungen für das dritte Energiepaket hinsichtlich der Entflechtung der Übertragungsnetzbetreiber (TSO) und der Abnahmeverpflichtungen der nationalen Elektrizitätsgesellschaft NEK.

Verschiedenen Medienberichten zufolge wurde einigen Energie-Endversorgern kürzlich der Verlust ihrer Lizenzen als öffentliche Stromversorger in Bulgarien angedroht. Der ursprüngliche Auslöser für diese Situation ist eine anhaltende Diskussion unter den Energiegesellschaften über eine Ankaufverpflichtung für erneuerbare Energien. Lizenzentzug erscheint als unverhältnismäßiger Schritt, könnte schwerwiegende Probleme in der Sicherheit der Energieversorgung für die Bürger bedeuten und steht wohl auch nicht in Einklang mit den Empfehlungen der Kommission für eine korrekte Umsetzung des dritten Energiepakets.

Die Kommission wird in diesem Zusammenhang um folgende Informationen ersucht:

1. Wurden in den oben genannten Mitgliedstaaten hinsichtlich der in den Berichten der Kommission enthaltenen Empfehlungen Fortschritte erzielt?

2. Welche Maßnahmen wurden ergriffen, um die jeweiligen Regierungen bei der Lösung ihrer Probleme zu unterstützen?

3. Könnten die anhaltenden internationalen und nationalen Dispute (z. B. Entzug der Lizenzen von Stromversorgungsunternehmen) als Anzeichen dafür verstanden werden, dass die nationalen Bemühungen um Stabilisierung dieses Sektors bislang ungenügend waren?

4. Steht die erste Ankündigung der bulgarischen Regierung hinsichtlich des Entzugs von Lizenzen in Widerspruch zu der im dritten Energiepaket geforderten Unabhängigkeit der Regulierungsbehörde?

5. Wie wird die Kommission diese Entwicklungen im Weiteren verfolgen und welche Durchsetzungsmaßnahmen beabsichtigt sie zu ergreifen, um die vollständige Umsetzung des gemeinschaftlichen Besitzstandes in den besagten Ländern zu erreichen?

Antwort von Herrn Oettinger im Namen der Kommission
(16. Juni 2014)

1. Die Kommission prüft derzeit die Fortschritte aller Mitgliedstaaten bei der Schaffung eines funktionierenden Energiebinnenmarkts, einschließlich Polens und Bulgariens. Im Rahmen des Europäischen Semesters wurden in diesem Zusammenhang auch Arbeitspapiere der Kommissionsdienststellen mit aktuellen Analysen sowie länderspezifische Empfehlungen veröffentlicht.

2. Die Kommission hat alle Mitgliedstaaten bei der Umsetzung der Richtlinien des dritten Energiepakets unterstützt und mit den zwei genannten Mitgliedstaaten Gespräche über ihre Umsetzungsmaßnahmen geführt. Zudem hat sie gemeinsam mit der Weltbank eine Bewertung des bulgarischen Energiemarktes vorgenommen und wird die Umsetzung der Empfehlungen gemeinsam mit den bulgarischen Behörden auch weiterhin verfolgen.

3. Die Kommission beobachtet das von der bulgarischen Regulierungsbehörde SERWC eingeleitete Lizenzentzugsverfahren aufmerksam und achtet dabei unter anderem darauf, dass die Behörde völlig unabhängig handelt und die Rechte der einzelnen Marktakteure wahrt.

4. Die SERWC hat die Aufgabe, die Anwendung der sektorspezifischen Energieregulierung in Bulgarien sicherzustellen. Dazu muss sie unter anderem die Einhaltung der mit den Lizenzen verbundenen Anforderungen durch die Energieunternehmen überwachen. Die SERWC muss ihre Aufgaben völlig unabhängig von Regierungs- oder Marktinteressen wahrnehmen. Zudem muss sie unparteiisch und transparent handeln und die Rechte der beteiligten Unternehmen in vollem Umfang wahren. Ihre Entscheidungen müssen verhältnismäßig sein und ordnungsgemäß begründet werden.

5. Die Kommission hat Kontakt mit den bulgarischen Behörden aufgenommen, um weitere Informationen einzuholen. Sie wird prüfen, ob ein Verstoß gegen EU-Recht vorliegt. Sollte dies der Fall sein, wird sie geeignete Verfahren einleiten.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004210/14
to the Commission
Paul Rübig (PPE) and Angelika Niebler (PPE)
(4 April 2014)

Subject: Proper implementation of the third energy package

In the framework of assessing the national reform and convergence programmes of certain Member States, the Commission has recently published working documents with recommendations *inter alia* for Poland (SWD(2013)0371) and Bulgaria (SWD(2013)0352). Specifically with regard to the implementation of the third energy package, the Commission notes that in Poland, limited competition among incumbent electricity suppliers, insufficient interconnections with other Member States and ageing energy generation capacity keep energy prices high. The main recommendations for Bulgaria include a transparent and objective selection procedure for the appointment of staff of the regulator SEWRC, improvement of the regulatory framework in terms of the implementation of the third energy package and progress in achieving the preconditions for the third package as regards the unbundling of TSO and the off-take obligations of the national electricity company NEK.

According to various media reports, several energy end suppliers have been threatened recently with losing their licences as public suppliers of electricity in Bulgaria. The initial background to this situation is an ongoing discussion among energy companies about a purchase commitment for renewable energies. Withdrawal of the licences seems disproportionate, may cause serious problems in the security of energy supply to citizens and does not appear to be in line with some of the Commission's recommendations on proper implementation of the third package.

Could the Commission please inform us of the following:

1. Whether any progress has been made concerning the recommendations of the Commission's reports in the abovementioned Member States?

2. What measures have been taken to support the respective governments in tackling the problems?

3. If the ongoing international and national disputes (e.g. licence withdrawal proceedings for electricity supply companies) might be a hint that national efforts to stabilise the energy sector have been insufficient?

4. Whether the first announcement by the Bulgarian Government to withdraw licences contradicts the requested independence of the regulatory authority as laid down in the third package?

5. How the Commission will further monitor these developments and what enforcement measures are intended to fully implement the *acquis communautaire* in the countries in question?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(16 June 2014)

1. The Commission is currently assessing the progress of all Member States in creating a functioning internal market for energy, including for Poland and Bulgaria. In the context of the European Semester, staff working documents containing an up-to-date analysis and country-specific recommendations have been published where appropriate.

2. The Commission has assisted all Member States in the transposition of the third energy package Directives and had discussions with the two Member States mentioned on their transposition measures. In addition, the Commission together with the World Bank carried out an assessment of the Bulgarian energy market and continues to follow up on these recommendations with the Bulgarian authorities.

3. The Commission follows closely the licence withdrawal procedure initiated by the Bulgarian regulator SERWC *inter alia* with a view to ensure that it acts in full independence and respects the rights of individual market actors

4. SERWC has to ensure the application of sector-specific energy regulation in Bulgaria. This includes monitoring that energy companies comply with their license requirements. SEWRC must exercise its tasks in full independence of government and of market interests. SERWC must do so impartially and transparently, with due respect to the rights of the companies concerned. Its decisions must be proportionate and properly motivated.

5. The Commission has contacted the Bulgarian authorities in order to obtain further information. The Commission will assess whether there has been an infringement of EC law. Should this be the case the appropriate procedures will be started.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-004211/14
an die Kommission
Lara Comi (PPE), Andreas Schwab (PPE) und Marielle Gallo (PPE)
(4. April 2014)

Betrifft: Geschäftsgeheimnisse

Die Kommission hat im November 2013 einen Entwurf für eine Richtlinie angenommen, die eine allgemeine Definition von Geschäftsgeheimnissen sowie Möglichkeiten enthält, wie Opfer einer widerrechtlichen Aneignung von Geschäftsgeheimnissen zu ihrem Recht kommen können. Als Mitglieder der EVP-Fraktion des Parlaments betrachten wir die diese künftigen Rechtsvorschriften als einen wichtigen Schritt in Richtung einer Innovationsunion und als wirkungsvolles Instrument, das kleinen und mittleren Unternehmen (KMU) aus Europa hilft, auf den globalen Märkten bestehen zu können. Wir fordern daher eine beschleunigte Annahme des Richtlinienentwurfs durch das nächste Parlament, damit die wirtschaftlichen Rahmenbedingungen weiter verbessert und Investitionen in Wissen, Forschung, Entwicklung und Innovation im Einklang mit der Strategie Europa 2020 befördert werden. Nach unserer Auffassung wird die Beantwortung der folgenden Fragen für das nächste Parlament bei der Bewertung des Kommissionsentwurfs hilfreich sein.

1. Im Titel des Kommissionsvorschlags wird [in der englischen Fassung] der Begriff „undisclosed" [Anmerkung: in der deutschen Fassung im Titel mit dem Begriff „vertraulich" und an einer anderen Textstelle mit dem Begriff „nicht offenbart" übersetzt] anstelle von „confidential" [Anmerkung: in der deutschen Fassung ebenfalls mit „vertraulich" übersetzt] verwendet. Kann die Kommission Auskunft darüber geben, ob dieser Begriff dazu führen könnte, dass man vertrauliche [„confidential"] Informationen, die aus Gründen der Regulierungstransparenz offenbart werden, vom Schutz ausschließt?

2. Kann die Kommission dem Parlament gegenüber klare Angaben darüber machen, welche Unterschiede es zwischen den einzelnen Ländern im Hinblick auf die wirtschaftlichen, juristischen und sprachlichen Gegebenheiten gibt, insbesondere, was die Begriffe „gesetzliche Vertreter", „belanglose Informationen", „angemessene Maßnahmen" und „leicht zugänglich" anbelangt?

3. Wie kann der Gesetzgeber dafür sorgen, dass die Einschränkungen gemäß Artikel 4 Absatz 2 die Ziele der Richtlinie nicht gefährden, indem man Antragstellern einen unfairen Wettbewerbsvorteil verschafft?

4. Wie kann der Gesetzgeber die Regeln in Bezug auf die Beweisaufnahme für die Inhaber von Geheimnissen weiter vereinfachen, um dadurch für einen wirksameren Rechtsschutz von Unternehmen und vor allem von KMU zu sorgen?

Antwort von Herrn Barnier im Namen der Kommission
(17. Juni 2014)

1. Die Formulierung „undisclosed information" („nicht offenbarte Informationen") stammt aus Teil 2 Abschnitt 7 des TRIPS-Abkommens ([1]). Die Definition des Begriffs „Geschäftsgeheimnis" in Artikel 2 Absatz 1 des Vorschlags stimmt voll und ganz mit Artikel 39 Absatz 2 des TRIPS-Abkommens überein.

Die Verwendung des Begriffs „undisclosed information" (im Deutschen an dieser Stelle mit „vertraulich" wiedergegeben) im Titel bedeutet aber nicht, dass Informationen, die aus Gründen der Regulierungstransparenz offenbart werden, von dem im Vorschlag vorgesehenen Schutz (beispielsweise vor einem Eindringen Dritter in die Register der öffentlichen Verwaltung) ausgenommen sind. Die aus Gründen der Regulierungstransparenz erfolgende Offenlegung von Informationen gegenüber Behörden und die anschließende Weitergabe dieser Informationen durch Behörden an interessierte Kreise oder die Öffentlichkeit fällt allerdings unter andere Rechtsinstrumente.

2. Die dem Vorschlag beigefügte Folgenabschätzung gibt einen Überblick über die rechtlichen Bestimmungen zum Schutz von Geschäftsgeheimnissen. Weitere Informationen sind einer Studie zu Geschäftsgeheimnissen und vertraulichen Geschäftsinformationen im Binnenmarkt („Study on trade secrets and confidential business information in the internal market") zu entnehmen ([2]).

3. Die in Artikel 4 Absatz 2 des Vorschlags vorgesehenen Ausnahmen verschaffen keiner Partei einen unfairen Vorteil. Sie zielen im Gegenteil darauf ab, den notwendigen Ausgleich zwischen den Interessen des Geschäftsgeheimnisinhabers und den Rechten, Pflichten und Interessen anderer Parteien zu schaffen.

([1]) Übereinkommen über handelsbezogene Aspekte der Rechte des geistigen Eigentums.
([2]) Beides ist abrufbar unter: http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/iprenforcement/trade_secrets/index_de.htm

4. Die Kommission schlägt in ihrer Initiative keine Harmonisierung der nationalen Vorschriften über die Beweisaufnahme vor. Die grenzüberschreitende Aufnahme von Beweisen ist in der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1206/2001 des Rates ([3]) geregelt. Die Kommission bereitet derzeit eine Evaluierung dieser Verordnung vor. Je nach deren Ausgang werden möglicherweise weitere Schritte zur Verbesserung der grenzübergreifenden Beweisaufnahme eingeleitet, wozu auch die Verankerung von Mindeststandards im nationalen Recht zählen kann.

([3]) Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1206/2001 des Rates über die Zusammenarbeit zwischen den Gerichten der Mitgliedstaaten auf dem Gebiet der Beweisaufnahme in Zivil- oder Handelssachen (ABl. L 174 vom 27.6.2001, S. 1).

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-004211/14
à la Commission
Lara Comi (PPE), Andreas Schwab (PPE) et Marielle Gallo (PPE)
(4 avril 2014)

Objet: Secrets d'affaires

En novembre 2013, la Commission a adopté une proposition de directive qui introduit une définition commune des secrets d'affaires et qui permet aux victimes de l'appropriation illicite des secrets d'affaires d'obtenir réparation. En tant que membres du groupe PPE du Parlement, nous considérons cette future législation comme une étape cruciale vers la réalisation de l'Union de l'innovation et un instrument puissant de renforcement de la compétitivité des petites et moyennes entreprises européennes (PME) dans des marchés mondiaux. Nous appelons à une approbation de la proposition de directive par le prochain Parlement dans les meilleurs délais, afin de renforcer la faveur du climat d'affaires et d'encourager l'investissement dans la connaissance, la recherche, le développement et l'innovation, conformément aux objectifs de la stratégie Europe 2020. Nous sommes convaincus que les réponses aux questions suivantes aideront le prochain Parlement à évaluer la proposition de la Commission.

1. Dans le titre de la proposition de directive, le terme «non divulgués» est utilisé plutôt que «confidentiels». La Commission peut-elle préciser si ce terme pourrait être synonyme de non protection des informations confidentielles qui sont divulguées pour des raisons de transparence réglementaire?

2. La Commission peut-elle fournir au Parlement des données précises sur les différences nationales qui existent dans les structures économiques et juridiques ainsi qu'en termes de langues, notamment en ce qui concerne les concepts de «représentants légaux», «informations courantes», «dispositions raisonnables» et «aisément accessible»?

3. Comment le législateur peut-il garantir que les exceptions prévues par l'article 4, paragraphe 2, ne mettent pas en péril les objectifs de la directive en donnant un avantage concurrentiel injuste aux plaignants?

4. Comment le législateur pourrait-il simplifier davantage les règles en ce qui concerne l'obtention de preuves par les détenteurs de secrets, afin de garantir une protection juridique plus efficace pour les entreprises, et en particulier les PME?

Réponse donnée par M. Barnier au nom de la Commission
(17 juin 2014)

1. Le terme «renseignements non divulgués» est utilisé dans le titre de la section 7 de la partie II de l'accord ADPIC ([1]). La notion de secret d'affaires est définie à l'article 2, paragraphe 1, de la proposition en totale concordance avec l'article 39, paragraphe 2 de l'accord ADPIC.

L'utilisation du terme «renseignements non divulgués» dans le titre n'exclut pas l'information fournie à des fins de transparence réglementaire du champ d'application de la protection prévue par la proposition (par exemple, contre l'intrusion d'un tiers dans les référentiels centraux de l'administration publique). Toutefois, la divulgation d'informations aux autorités publiques à des fins de transparence réglementaire et toute divulgation ultérieure de ces informations aux parties intéressées ou au public par les autorités publiques sont régies par d'autres actes juridiques.

2. L'analyse d'impact qui accompagne la proposition fournit un aperçu du cadre juridique en matière de protection des secrets d'affaires. De plus amples informations sont disponibles dans «l'Étude sur les secrets d'affaires et les informations commerciales confidentielles dans le marché intérieur» ([2]).

3. Les exceptions prévues à l'article 4, paragraphe 2, de la proposition ne fournissent aucun avantage déloyal à l'une ou l'autre des parties. Au contraire, elles visent à trouver le juste équilibre nécessaire entre les intérêts du détenteur du secret d'affaires et les droits, obligations et intérêts des autres parties.

4. L'initiative de la Commission ne propose pas d'harmoniser les règles nationales en matière d'administration de la preuve. La Commission note que l'obtention de preuves dans les affaires transfrontalières est réglementée par le règlement (CE) nº 1206/2001 ([3]) du Conseil. La Commission prépare actuellement une évaluation du présent règlement. En fonction du résultat, des mesures supplémentaires pourraient être prises afin d'améliorer la réalisation d'actes d'instruction transfrontaliers, et notamment la fixation de normes minimales dans le droit national.

([1]) Accord sur les aspects des droits de propriété intellectuelle qui touchent au commerce.
([2]) Ces deux documents sont accessibles à l'adresse internet suivante: http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/iprenforcement/trade_secrets/index_fr.htm
([3]) Règlement (CE) nº 1206/2001 du Conseil relatif à la coopération entre les juridictions des États membres dans le domaine de l'obtention des preuves en matière civile ou commerciale, JO L 174 du 27.06.2001, pp. 1-24.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004211/14
alla Commissione
Lara Comi (PPE), Andreas Schwab (PPE) e Marielle Gallo (PPE)
(4 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Segreti commerciali

Nel novembre 2013 la Commissione ha adottato una proposta di direttiva volta a introdurre una definizione comune di segreti commerciali e a offrire strumenti attraverso i quali le vittime dell'appropriazione indebita di segreti commerciali possono ottenere giustizia. In qualità di membri del Gruppo PPE del Parlamento, riteniamo che questa normativa futura sia un importante passo verso il raggiungimento dell'Unione dell'innovazione e uno strumento efficace per aiutare le piccole e medie imprese (PMI) europee a competere nei mercati internazionali. Richiediamo una procedura di approvazione accelerata della proposta di direttiva da parte del prossimo Parlamento, al fine di migliorare il contesto operativo delle imprese e promuovere gli investimenti nella scienza, nella ricerca, nello sviluppo e nell'innovazione, in linea con gli obiettivi della strategia Europa 2020. Riteniamo che le risposte alle domande in appresso possano aiutare il prossimo Parlamento a valutare la proposta della Commissione.

1. Nel titolo della proposta, la Commissione ha utilizzato il termine «riservato» anziché il termine «confidenziale». Può la Commissione chiarire se tale termine esclude la tutela delle informazioni confidenziali divulgate ai fini della trasparenza normativa?

2. Può la Commissione fornire al Parlamento dati chiari sulle differenze nazionali sussistenti nelle strutture economiche e giuridiche e in termini di lingua, in particolare in relazione ai concetti di «rappresentanti legali», «informazioni trascurabili», «misure adeguate» e «facilmente accessibili»?

3. Come può il legislatore garantire che le limitazioni di cui all'articolo 4, paragrafo 2, non mettano a repentaglio gli obiettivi della direttiva, fornendo un vantaggio competitivo ingiusto agli attori?

4. Come può il legislatore semplificare ulteriormente le norme riguardanti l'assunzione delle prove per i detentori dei segreti, al fine di garantire una tutela giuridica più efficace alle società, in particolare alle PMI?

Risposta di Michel Barnier a nome della Commissione
(17 giugno 2014)

1. L'espressione «informazioni segrete» figura nel titolo della parte II, sezione 7, dell'accordo TRIPS ([1]); il concetto di «segreto commerciale» definito all'articolo 2, punto (1), della proposta è perfettamente allineato a quello dell'articolo 39, paragrafo 2, dell'accordo TRIPS.

Il fatto che nel titolo figuri l'aggettivo «riservato» non esclude dalla tutela prevista dalla proposta le informazioni divulgate ai fini della trasparenza normativa (ad es., tutela dall'intrusione di terzi nei registri della pubblica amministrazione). Altri strumenti giuridici disciplinano tuttavia la divulgazione di informazioni alle autorità pubbliche ai fini della trasparenza normativa e la loro eventuale successiva divulgazione, da parte di tali autorità, agli interessati o al pubblico.

2. La valutazione d'impatto che accompagna la proposta presenta un quadro generale della normativa sulla tutela dei segreti commerciali e ulteriori informazioni sono disponibili nello *Study on trade secrets and confidential business information in the internal market* ([2]).

3. Le eccezioni previste all'articolo 4, paragrafo 2, della proposta non conferiscono alcun indebito vantaggio a nessuna parte; mirano al contrario a segnare il necessario equilibrio tra gli interessi del detentore del segreto commerciale e i diritti, obblighi e interessi delle altre parti.

4. L'iniziativa della Commissione non tende all'armonizzazione delle norme nazionali sull'assunzione delle prove, che, per le cause transfrontaliere, è disciplinata dal regolamento (CE) n. 1206/2001 del Consiglio ([3]), di cui la Commissione sta preparando la valutazione. In esito a tale valutazione potranno essere avviate ulteriori iniziative per migliorare l'assunzione delle prove nel contesto transfrontaliero, tra cui la fissazione di norme minime nel diritto nazionale.

([1]) Accordo sugli aspetti dei diritti di proprietà intellettuale attinenti al commercio.
([2]) I due documenti sono consultabili su Internet al seguente indirizzo: http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/iprenforcement/trade_secrets/index_en.htm
([3]) Regolamento (CE) n. 1206/2001 del Consiglio, del 28 maggio 2001, relativo alla cooperazione fra le autorità giudiziarie degli Stati membri nel settore dell'assunzione delle prove in materia civile o commerciale (GU L 174 del 27.6.2001, pag. 1).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004211/14
to the Commission
Lara Comi (PPE), Andreas Schwab (PPE) and Marielle Gallo (PPE)
(4 April 2014)

Subject: Trade secrets

In November 2013 the Commission adopted a proposal for a directive introducing a common definition of trade secrets and offering means through which victims of trade secret misappropriation can obtain redress. We, as members of Parliament's EPP Group, regard this future legislation as a major step towards the achievement of the Innovation Union and a powerful tool to help European small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) compete in global markets. We call for the expedited approval of the proposed directive by the next Parliament in order to enhance the favourability of the business climate and foster investment in knowledge, research, development and innovation in line with the targets of the Europe 2020 strategy. We believe that answers to the questions below will help the next Parliament in assessing the Commission's proposal.

1. In the title of the Commission proposal the term 'undisclosed' has been used rather than 'confidential'. Could the Commission clarify whether or not this term could exclude from protection confidential information that is disclosed for purposes of regulatory transparency?

2. Could the Commission provide Parliament with clear data on the national differences that exist in economic and legal structures and in terms of languages, in particular as regards the concepts of 'legal representatives', 'trivial information', 'reasonable steps' and 'easily accessible'?

3. How can the legislator ensure that the limitations provided for under Article 4(2) do not endanger the objectives of the directive by providing an unfair competitive advantage to claimants?

4. How could the legislator further simplify the rules concerning the taking of evidence for secret holders so as to ensure more effective legal protection for companies, in particular SMEs?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(17 June 2014)

1. The term 'undisclosed information' is used in the title of Section 7 of Part II, of the TRIPS Agreement ([1]). The concept of trade secret is defined in Art. 2(1) of the proposal in full alignment with Art. 39(2) of the TRIPS Agreement.

The fact that the title uses the term 'undisclosed' does not mean that information that is disclosed for purposes of regulatory transparency is excluded from the protection provided for by the proposal (e.g. against a third party intrusion in the public administration's repositories). However, the disclosure of information to public authorities for regulatory transparency purposes and any subsequent disclosure of such information by public authorities to interested parties or to the public is governed by other legal instruments.

2. The impact assessment accompanying the proposal provides an overview of the legal framework on the protection of trade secrets. Further information is available in a 'Study on trade secrets and confidential business information in the internal market' ([2]).

3. The exceptions foreseen in Article 4(2) of the proposal do not provide any unfair advantage to any of the parties. On the contrary they aim at striking the necessary balance between the interests of the trade secret holder and the rights, obligations and interests of other parties.

4. The Commission's initiative does not propose to harmonise national rules on the taking of evidence. The Commission notes that the taking of evidence in cross-border cases is regulated by Council Regulation (EC) No 1206/2001 ([3]) The Commission is currently preparing an evaluation of this regulation. Depending on its outcome, further steps may be taken to improve the cross-border taking of evidence, including the setting of minimum standards in national law.

([1]) Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights.
([2]) Both documents are available in the following Internet address: http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/iprenforcement/trade_secrets/index_en.htm
([3]) Council Regulation (EC) No 1206/2001 on cooperation between the courts of the Member States in the taking of evidence in civil or commercial matters OJ L 174, 27.6.2001, p. 1-24.

(Suomenkielinen versio)

Kirjallisesti vastattava kysymys E-004212/14
komissiolle
Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE)
(4. huhtikuuta 2014)

Aihe: Eläinlääke diklofenaakki ja EU-lainsäädäntö

Diklofenaakki on kotieläimiin käytetty tulehduskipulääke, joka on osoittautunut erittäin haitalliseksi korppikotkille. Koska lääke säilyy eläimessä sen kuoleman jälkeen, korppikotkat ovat suuressa vaarassa, jos ne syövät lääkettä sisältävän raadon. Arvioiden mukaan tämän lääkkeen käyttö on johtanut siihen, että korppikotkapopulaatiot ovat Intiassa supistuneet äärimmilleen jopa 99 prosentilla. Intia on kieltänyt tämän lääkkeen käytön.

Tästä huolimatta diklofenaakin käyttö on sallittu sekä Italiassa että Espanjassa, joissa noin 80 prosenttia Euroopan korppikotkista elää. EU:n lintudirektiivillä asetetaan korppikotkia koskeva suojeluvelvoite.

Onko komissio tietoinen tämän eläinlääkkeen vaarallisuudesta?

Mitä komissio aikoo edellä esitetyn valossa tehdä varmistaakseen, että unionin lintudirektiivin vaatimukset täytetään tältä osin?

Tonio Borgin komission puolesta antama vastaus
(2. kesäkuuta 2014)

Komissio on tietoinen arvoisan parlamentin jäsenen mainitsemasta asiasta.

Komissio haluaa kiinnittää arvoisan parlamentin jäsenen huomion vastaukseen, joka annettiin parlamentin jäsenen Nuno Melon kysymykseen E-3382/2014.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004212/14
to the Commission
Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE)
(4 April 2014)

Subject: Veterinary drug Diclofenac and EU legislation

Diclofenac, a veterinary anti-flammatory drug used in domestic animals, has proved in the past to be extremely hazardous for vultures. As the drug stays in an animal after it has died, vultures are at great risk if they eat the contaminated carcass. According to estimates, the use of this drug has contributed to the extreme decline of some 99% of vulture populations in the Indian subcontinent. India has banned the use of this drug.

Despite this, Diclofenac has been authorised for use in both Italy and Spain, where about 80% of Europe's vultures are to be found. The EU birds directive lays down an obligation to conservation as regards vultures.

Is the Commission aware of the hazards posed by this veterinary drug?

In the light of the above, what actions does the Commission intend to take to ensure that the requirements of the EU birds directive are met in this respect?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(2 June 2014)

The Commission is aware of the issue mentioned by the Honourable Member.

The Commission would like to refer the Honourable Member to the reply to Question E003382/2014 by the Honourable Member Nuno Melo.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-004213/14
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Salvador Sedó i Alabart (PPE)
(4 de abril de 2014)

Asunto: VP/HR — Nivel de aplicación de las Directrices de la UE sobre la promoción de la observancia del Derecho internacional humanitario (formación)

En su Resolución de 11 de diciembre de 2013 sobre el Informe anual sobre los derechos humanos y la democracia en el mundo (2012) ([1]), el Parlamento expresó su especial preocupación por la inadecuada aplicación de las directrices de la UE sobre la promoción de la observancia del Derecho internacional humanitario ([2]) y recomendó la formación adicional y la sensibilización del personal del Servicio Europeo de Acción Exterior (SEAE), el personal de las delegaciones de la UE y los diplomáticos de los Estados miembros. También pidió a la VP/AR y al SEAE que efectuaran una revisión política exhaustiva de los trágicos acontecimientos acaecidos en Siria, Libia y Mali y en otros conflictos recientes, con objeto de revisar las Directrices de la UE sobre el Derecho humanitario y velar por una aplicación más eficaz de las mismas (apartado 63).

1. Desde la última actualización de las Directrices en 2009, ¿puede decir la VP/AR qué esfuerzos se han hecho para mejorar la comunicación sobre su existencia y la importancia de su aplicación, así como para aumentar el conocimiento de los grupos de trabajo pertinentes del Consejo, los departamentos del SEAE, las delegaciones de la UE y los servicios diplomáticos de los Estados miembros?

2. ¿Han efectuado la VP/AR y el SEAE una revisión exhaustiva de los conflictos mencionados en la resolución y han tenido en cuenta la posibilidad de revisar las Directrices y velar por una aplicación más eficaz de las mismas?

Respuesta de la alta representante y vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(11 de junio de 2014)

Como importante defensora del Derecho humanitario internacional (DHI), la UE considera esencial la formación y la educación en materia de DHI para crear una cultura de la observancia de este Derecho, tanto en la EU como fuera de ella.

La UE sigue facilitando formación profesional en materia de DHI El curso de formación más reciente tuvo lugar en marzo de 2014 y se llevó a cabo en colaboración con el Comité Internacional de la Cruz Roja (CICR).

Por otra parte, y de conformidad con el apartado 15, inciso i), de las Directrices de la UE sobre Derecho humanitario internacional, la UE financia la formación y educación en DHI en terceros países, incluso en el marco de programas más amplios de fomento del Estado de Derecho. A modo de ejemplo, la UE apoya dos propuestas de difusión del DHI, una del CICR y otra de la acción suiza contra las minas (FSD)/Llamamiento de Ginebra. El proyecto del CICR contribuye a mejorar la capacidad del CICR para proporcionar formación y difusión en materia de DHI, especialmente para 14 000 miembros de las fuerzas de seguridad y grupos armados no estatales en los principales países afectados por conflictos, tales como Irak, Colombia y la República Democrática del Congo. En el marco del proyecto de FSD-Llamamiento de Ginebra, se celebrarán en Sudán cuatro sesiones de formación de los agentes armados no estatales sobre el DHI.

La UE también desea continuar siguiendo estrechamente y evaluando la situación de Siria, Libia y Mali. La UE sigue comprometida a continuar mejorando la aplicación de las Directrices de la UE. Por ejemplo, en su Marco Estratégico y el Plan de Acción de la UE sobre Derechos Humanos y Democracia de 2012, la UE se comprometió a recurrir más sistemáticamente al diálogo político y a campañas para animar a los terceros países a que ratifiquen y apliquen los principales instrumentos de DHI y a que observen las obligaciones en esta materia.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P7-TA-2013-0575
([2]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:303:0012:0017:EN:PDF

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004213/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Salvador Sedó i Alabart (PPE)
(4 April 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Level of implementation of the EU guidelines on the promotion of compliance with international humanitarian law (training)

In its resolution of 11 December 2013 on the Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World 2012 ([1]), Parliament expressed particular concern over the inadequate implementation of the EU guidelines on the promotion of compliance with international humanitarian law ([2]) and recommended additional training and awareness raising among the European External Action Service (EEAS), EU delegation staff and Member State diplomats. It also called on the VP/HR and the EEAS to conduct a thorough policy review of the tragic events in Syria, Libya and Mali, and other recent conflicts in order to revise the EU guidelines on humanitarian law and to seek the more effective implementation thereof (paragraph 63).

In view of the above,

1. Since the most recent update of the guidelines in 2009, what efforts have been made to improve communication on their existence and the importance of their implementation, as well as to build expertise in the area in relevant Council working parties, EEAS departments, EU delegations, and Member State diplomatic services?

2. Have the VP/HR and the EEAS conducted a thorough review of the conflicts mentioned in the resolution and considered revising the guidelines and seeking the more effective implementation thereof?

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

As a major advocate for International Humanitarian Law ('IHL'), the EU considers training and education on IHL essential to create a culture of compliance with IHL, both inside the EU and beyond.

The EU continues to provide staff training on International Humanitarian Law. The most recent training course took place in March 2014 and was held in cooperation with the ICRC.

In addition and in accordance with paragraph 15 (i) of the EU Guidelines on IHL, the EU is funding training and education in IHL in third countries including within the framework of wider programmes to promote the rule of law. By way of example, the EU is supporting two proposals concerning IHL dissemination, one implemented by the ICRC and the other by Swiss Mine Action (FSD)/Geneva Call: The ICRC project contributes to enhancing ICRC's capacity to provide IHL training and dissemination, notably for 14 000 members of regular security forces and armed non-state groups in key conflict affected countries including Iraq, Colombia and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Under the Geneva Call-FSD project, four trainings of armed non-state actors on IHL will take place in Sudan.

The EU will also contiue to closely follow and assess the situation in Syria, Libya and Mali.

The EU remains committed to further improve the implementation of the EU Guidelines. By way of example, in its 2012 Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy, the EU pledged to make more systematic use of political dialogue and demarche campaigns to encourage third countries to ratify core IHL instruments and implement IHL obligations.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P7-TA-2013-0575
([2]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:303:0012:0017:EN:PDF

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-004214/14
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Salvador Sedó i Alabart (PPE)
(4 de abril de 2014)

Asunto: VP/HR — Nivel de aplicación de las Directrices de la UE sobre la promoción de la observancia del Derecho internacional humanitario (configuración institucional)

Las Directrices de la UE sobre la promoción de la observancia del Derecho internacional humanitario (DIH) ([1]) establecen unos instrumentos operativos para que las instituciones de la UE y los Estados miembros, actuando en el marco de la UE, promuevan la observancia del DIH. La elaboración de las Directrices se encomienda al Grupo de Trabajo sobre Derecho Internacional Público (COJUR), que se reúne dos veces durante cada Presidencia. El 19 de junio de 2013, con ocasión de un intercambio de puntos de vista con el Parlamento sobre el DIH y el apoyo de la UE a la Corte Penal Internacional (CPI), el Sr. Kingston, antiguo Presidente de COJUR, afirmó que COJUR no tiene una función de supervisión precisa con respecto a las Directrices y no se ocupa de la aplicación particular del Derecho internacional humanitario en conflictos específicos. En su Resolución de 11 de diciembre de 2013 sobre el Informe anual sobre los derechos humanos y la democracia en el mundo (2012) ([2]), el Parlamento expresó su especial preocupación por la inadecuada aplicación de las Directrices del Derecho internacional humanitario (apartado 21).

1. Con el fin de promover de manera adecuada el Derecho internacional humanitario, ¿puede decir la VP/AR si en los documentos de referencia para las reuniones de la UE relativas a situaciones de conflicto armado y ocupación se incluye sistemáticamente un análisis de la aplicabilidad del DIH, según lo dispuesto en las Directrices de la UE sobre la promoción de la observancia del Derecho internacional humanitario (véase el apartado 15, letra c)) ([3])? En particular, ¿cómo se aseguran los Estados miembros que participan en las reuniones preparatorias del grupo de trabajo de que cuentan con asesoramiento adecuado sobre las cuestiones de Derecho internacional humanitario?

2. ¿Puede informar la VP/AR qué coordinación se lleva a cabo entre COJUR, los grupos de trabajo PESC pertinentes en el Consejo y el SEAE para garantizar la promoción de la observancia del DIH en todas las situaciones de conflicto armado y de ocupación, de conformidad con las Directrices? ¿Puede decir si COJUR y los grupos de trabajo geográficos tratan de forma sistemática y simultánea las situaciones de conflicto concretas, las cuestiones de aplicación del DIH y la puesta en práctica de las Directrices? En caso negativo, ¿por qué no?

3. ¿Por qué nunca se ha pedido a COJUR la presentación de sugerencias sobre la acciónfutura de la UE conforme a lo dispuesto en las Directrices de la UE sobre la promoción dela observancia del Derecho internacional humanitario (véase el apartado 15, letra c))?

Respuesta de la Alta Representante/Vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(10 de junio de 2014)

La UE es una firme defensora del Derecho Internacional Humanitario (DIH) y de los principios humanitarios, y sigue aplicando las Directrices de la UE sobre el DIH, adoptadas en 2005 y actualizadas en 2009, que constituyen un instrumento para fomentar el cumplimiento del DIH por los terceros Estados y los agentes no estatales.

En este contexto y de conformidad con el apartado 15, letra c), de las Directrices de la UE, los documentos de referencia para las reuniones de la UE incluyen, efectivamente, cuando procede, un análisis de la aplicabilidad del DIH que también permite a los Estados miembros que participan en dichas reuniones asegurarse de que cuentan con el asesoramiento adecuado sobre las cuestiones de DIH que se planteen. Por tanto, de conformidad con el apartado 15, letra c), de las Directrices de la UE, al Grupo de Trabajo sobre Derecho Internacional se le puede encargar, cuando sea oportuno y factible, la tarea de presentar propuestas de acción futura de la UE a los órganos competentes de la UE, incluidos otros grupos de trabajo competentes.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:303:0012:0017:EN:PDF
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P7-TA-2013-0575
([3]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:303:0012:0017:EN:PDF

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004214/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Salvador Sedó i Alabart (PPE)
(4 April 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Level of implementation of the EU Guidelines on Promotion of International Humanitarian Law (institutional setting-up)

The EU Guidelines on Promotion of Compliance with International Humanitarian Law (IHL) ([1]) set out operational tools for the EU institutions and Member States, acting in the framework of the EU, to promote compliance with IHL. The formulation of the Guidelines is entrusted to the Working Party on Public International Law (COJUR) which meets twice under each Presidency. On 19 June 2013, during an exchange of views with Parliament on IHL and EU support for the International Criminal Court (ICC), Mr J. Kingston, former Chairman of COJUR, affirmed that 'COJUR does not have a precise oversight role with respect to the Guidelines' and does not 'discuss the particular implementation of IHL in specific conflicts'. In its resolution of 11 December 2013 on the Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World in 2012 ([2]), Parliament expressed its particular concern about the inadequate implementation of the IHL guidelines (c.f. paragraph 21).

In view of the above, the Vice-President/High Representative is invited to answer the following:

1. In order adequately to promote IHL, do background papers for EU meetings concerning situations of armed conflict and occupation systematically include an analysis of the applicability of IHL as provided for in the EU Guidelines on Promotion of Compliance with International Humanitarian Law (c.f. paragraph 15(c)) ([3])? Specifically, how do Member States participating in preparatory working party meetings ensure that they draw on appropriate advice on IHL issues?

2. What coordination takes place between COJUR, the relevant CSFP geographical Working Parties in the Council and the EEAS to ensure that compliance with IHL is promoted in all situations of armed conflict and occupation in accordance with the Guidelines? Are particular conflict situations, issues of IHL implementation and implementation of the Guidelines systematically discussed simultaneously in COJUR and the geographical working parties? If not, why not?

3. Why has COJUR never been tasked to make suggestions of future EU action as provided for in the EU Guidelines on Promotion of Compliance with International Humanitarian Law (c.f. paragraph 15(c))?

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

The EU is a major advocate for International Humanitarian Law ('IHL') and humanitarian principles and continues to implement the EU Guidelines on IHL, adopted in 2005 and updated in 2009, which serve as a tool to promote compliance with IHL by third states and non-state actors.

In this context and in accordance with paragraph 15 (c) of the EU Guidelines, background papers for EU meetings indeed include, where appropriate, an analysis on the applicability of IHL, also to enable Member States participating in such meetings to ensure that they are able to draw on advice as necessary on IHL issues arising. If appropriate and feasible, the Council Working Group on International Law can then in accordance with paragraph 15 (c) of the EU Guidelines also be tasked to make suggestions of future EU action to relevant EU bodies, including other relevant Working Groups.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:303:0012:0017:EN:PDF
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P7-TA-2013-0575
([3]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:303:0012:0017:EN:PDF

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-004216/14
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Salvador Sedó i Alabart (PPE)
(4 de abril de 2014)

Asunto: VP/HR — Nivel de aplicación de las Directrices de la UE sobre la promoción de la observancia del Derecho internacional humanitario (integración del Derecho internacional humanitario en la política de derechos humanos de la UE)

El actual plan de acción sobre derechos humanos y democracia ([1]) incluye cuatro acciones en materia de promoción de la observancia del Derecho internacional humanitario (DIH). El actual plan de acción pide, entre otras cosas, esfuerzos para seguir apoyando la difusión del Derecho internacional humanitario a todas las partes en conflicto, incluidos los grupos armados no estatales (apartado 21, letra b)), así como la utilización sistemática del diálogo político y de campañas diplomáticas para alentar a los terceros países a que ratifiquen los instrumentos de Derecho internacional humanitario y pongan en práctica las obligaciones fundamentales de dicho derecho (apartado 21, letra c)).

1. ¿Qué acciones se han llevado a cabo en materia de difusión del DIH a las partes en conflicto y en qué conflictos específicos?

2. ¿Qué instrumentos y situaciones de conflicto se han priorizado para las campañas diplomáticas? ¿Qué seguimiento se realiza de los países que se niegan a cumplir sus obligaciones en virtud del Derecho internacional humanitario y/o se niegan a ratificar los instrumentos de Derecho internacional humanitario fundamentales?

3. Con el fin de limitar las consecuencias de los conflictos armados para la población civil y prevenir violaciones de los derechos humanos en situaciones de conflicto, ¿considerará el SEAE la posibilidad de incluir otros medios de acción para reflejar las recomendaciones incluidas en las Directrices de la UE sobre la promoción de la observancia del DIH ([2]) en el próximo plan de acción sobre derechos humanos y democracia? En particular, ¿incluirá la UE medidas específicas relacionadas con las campañas para el público en general sobre conflictos específicos (véase el apartado 16, letra c)), la cooperación con otros organismos internacionales (véase el apartado 16, letra e)) y la promulgación de legislación penal nacional que sancione las violaciones del Derecho internacional humanitario (véase el apartado 16, letra g))?

Respuesta de la Alta Representante/Vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(10 de junio de 2014)

La UE es una firme defensora del Derecho Internacional Humanitario (DIH) y de los principios humanitarios, y sigue aplicando las Directrices de la UE sobre el DIH, adoptadas en 2005 y actualizadas en 2009, que constituyen un instrumento para fomentar el cumplimiento del DIH por los terceros Estados y los agentes no estatales.

En cuanto al objetivo específico de promover el cumplimiento del DIH y garantizar el acceso de la ayuda humanitaria [apartado 21, letra b), del Marco Estratégico y el Plan de Acción de la UE sobre Derechos Humanos y Democracia de 2012], la UE sigue apoyando la difusión del DIH en todas las partes en conflicto, incluidos los grupos armados no estatales. Un ejemplo concreto, entre otros, es la ayuda financiera de la UE a un proyecto, aplicado por la Fundación Suiza de Desminado y el Llamamiento de Ginebra, para impartir formación a los grupos armados no estatales en Derecho internacional humanitario y otras normas relacionadas. Además, la UE presta actualmente ayuda financiera a un proyecto que aumenta la capacidad del CICR para impartir formación en DIH y difundirlo en las fuerzas armadas y de seguridad, así como en grupos armados no estatales en los principales países afectados por conflictos: Irak, Colombia y la RDC. La UE también financia actualmente a la Fundación Suiza de Desminado y el Llamamiento de Ginebra para un proyecto de actividades de formación en DIH que tendrán lugar en Sudán para grupos armados no estatales.

En aplicación del apartado 21, letra c), del Marco Estratégico y el Plan de Acción sobre Derechos Humanos y Democracia, la UE dirige una campaña para la ratificación de los Protocolos adicionales I y II.

El actual Plan de Acción finaliza técnicamente en diciembre de 2014, por lo que la UE ha iniciado un proceso de reflexión con los Estados miembros sobre cómo renovar y seguir mejorando la experiencia que hemos adquirido hasta la fecha. Corresponderá al próximo Alto Representante apoyar cualquier decisión a este respecto.

([1]) https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/131181.pdf
([2]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:303:0012:0017:EN:PDF

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004216/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Salvador Sedó i Alabart (PPE)
(4 April 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Level of implementation of the EU guidelines on the promotion of compliance with international humanitarian law (mainstreaming of international humanitarian law in EU human rights policy)

The current action plan on human rights and democracy ([1]) includes four actions as regards the promotion of compliance with international humanitarian law (IHL). The current action plan calls, *inter alia*, for efforts 'to continue to support IHL dissemination to all warring parties, including armed non-State actors' (paragraph 21(b)) and provides for the 'systematic use of political dialogue and demarche campaigns to encourage third countries to ratify core IHL instruments and implement IHL obligations' (paragraph 21 (c)).

1. What actions have been implemented as regards IHL dissemination to warring parties and in which specific conflicts?

2. What instruments and conflict situations have been prioritised for demarche campaigns? What follow-up is carried out vis-à-vis countries refusing to fulfil their obligations under IHL and/or refusing to ratify core IHL instruments?

3. In order to limit the effects of armed conflict on civilians and prevent human rights violations in conflict situations, will the Council consider including other means of action to reflect the recommendations outlined in the EU guidelines on the promotion of compliance with IHL ([2]) in the next action plan on human rights and democracy? In particular, will the EU consider including specific actions relating to campaigns to the general public on specific conflicts (see paragraph 16(c)), cooperation with other international bodies (see paragraph 16(e)) and the promotion of enactment of national penal legislation punishing violations of IHL (see paragraph 16(g))?

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

The EU is a major advocate for International Humanitarian Law ('IHL') and humanitarian principles and continues to implement the EU Guidelines on IHL, adopted in 2005 and updated in 2009, which serve as a tool to promote compliance with IHL by third states and non-state actors.

For the specific purpose of promoting compliance with IHL and safeguarding humanitarian access (paragraph 21(b) of the 2012 Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy), the EU continues to support IHL dissemination to all warring parties, including armed non-State actors. Concrete examples include EU financial support to a project, implemented by the Swiss Foundation for Mine Action and Geneva Call, to provide training in international humanitarian law and related humanitarian norms to armed non-state actors. In addition, the EU is currently providing financial support to a project enhancing ICRC's capacity to provide IHL training and dissemination for military/security forces and armed non-state actors in key conflict affected countries: Iraq, Colombia and DRC. The EU is also currently funding the Swiss Foundation for Mine Action and Geneva Call for a project under which trainings of armed non-state actors on IHL will take place in Sudan.

In implementation of paragraph 21 (c) of its 2012 Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy, the EU is conducting a campaign for the ratification of Additional Protocols I and II.

With the current Action Plan coming technically to an end in December 2014, the EU has started a reflection with Member States on how to renew and further improve our experience so far. It will be up to the next High representative to endorse any decision in this respect.

([1]) https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/131181.pdf
([2]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:303:0012:0017:EN:PDF

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004217/14
to the Commission
Nicole Sinclaire (NI)
(4 April 2014)

Subject: Touring visas

Will the new Commission proposal regarding touring visas apply also to non-Schengen Member States?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(21 May 2014)

The new Commission proposal regarding touring visas will not apply to non-Schengen Member States. The proposal is based on Article 77 of the TFEU which is the legal basis of the common visa policy. Ireland and the UK do not take part in this policy: they are not bound by or subject to the application of the visa *acquis*. They will not issue touring visas and they will not recognise touring visas issued by Schengen Member States as valid visas to Ireland/the UK.

As explained in the explanatory memorandum of the proposal ([1]), the touring visa will be very similar to a uniform 'Schengen' visa as, in principle, it will be valid for the territory of all Schengen Member States and associated countries. Due to the two-phase application of the Schengen acquis, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus and Romania will only start issuing touring visas as from their full Schengen accession. However, until that date, these countries may consider touring visas issued by Schengen Member States as equivalent to their national visas, for transit through or intended stays on their territory not exceeding 90 days (cf. footnote 22 of the proposal).

([1]) COM(2014) 163 final, 1.4.2014.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004218/14
to the Commission
Nicole Sinclaire (NI)
(4 April 2014)

Subject: Consumer programme 2014-2020 budget increase

While the consumer programme 2007-2013 had a budget of EUR 156.8 million, the new programme will have a budget of EUR 188.8 million. Could the Commission point out the budget lines that were increased and what was the rationale behind this increase?

Answer given by Mr Mimica on behalf of the Commission
(30 May 2014)

The Consumer Programme is funded through one operational and two administrative budget lines. The amount of the 2014-2020 Programme amounts to EUR 167.3 million in 2011 prices, which equals EUR 188.8 million under consideration of inflation. The increase concerns the operational line.

The main actions for which funding has been increased and the rationale behind this increase are outlined below:

— Co-financing of the European Consumers Centres, in order to cope with more complaints as cross-border e-shopping develops;

— Actions to further strengthen consumer rights linked to the new legislation on Alternative Dispute Resolution and Online Dispute Resolution, such as the development of a Union-wide online dispute resolution platform and its maintenance, to operate in all official EU languages;

— Joint actions in coordinating the Consumer Protection Cooperation network, working towards more consistent enforcement of consumer protection rules across the Union;

— Joint actions in the area of safety, following the need to reinforce coordination of national enforcement authorities and to address the risks linked to the globalisation of the production chain;

— Support to bodies recognised by Union legislation for the coordination of enforcement actions between Member States in the area of safety;

— Maintenance and further development of databases on cosmetics added to the Consumer Programme previously financed from a different budget line.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004219/14
to the Commission
Nicole Sinclaire (NI)
(4 April 2014)

Subject: Consumer programme 2014-2020

While the consumer programme 2007-2013 had a budget of EUR 156.8 million, the new programme will have a budget of EUR 188.8 million. Could the Commission tell me how much of this budget is allocated to the UK?

Answer given by Mr Mimica on behalf of the Commission
(4 June 2014)

The Consumer Programme does not include any pre-allocated envelopes by Member State. It is therefore impossible to identify *ex ante* any amounts allocated to specific Member States.

The actions of the Consumer Programme focus on EU added value and come as a complement to the national actions. Indeed a great part of the financing, in particular the grants, goes to actions involving many Member States. However the total amount allocated to each Member State cannot be anticipated, as it depends on the applications coming from that Member State for (co-) financing by the Commission.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-004220/14
lill-Kummissjoni
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(4 ta' April 2014)

Suġġett: In-nisa u l-qasam tal-IT

Fit-13 ta' Marzu 2014 it-*Times of Malta* ppubblikat stqarrija għall-istampa tal-Kummissjoni li tqajjem il-kwistjoni tar-rwol tan-nisa fis-settur tal-ekonomija diġitali u tal-applikazzjonijiet (apps) Ewropew, settur li qed jikber b'rata mgħaġġla ħafna.

L-istqarrija għall-istampa tippreżenta stampa diżappuntanti tar-rwol tan-nisa fl-ekonomija diġitali. Skont il-Kummissjoni, in-nisa jammontaw biss għal 9 % tal-iżviluppaturi tal-applikazzjonijiet Ewropej, 19 % tal-maniġers fl-ICT (meta mqabbel ma' 45 % f'setturi tas-servizzi oħrajn), 19 % tal-imprendituri fl-ICT (meta mqabbel ma' 54 % f'setturi tas-servizzi oħrajn) u anqas minn 30 % tal-forza tax-xogħol fl-ICT, filwaqt li l-għadd tal-gradwati nisa fil-qasam tal-kompjuters qed jonqos (3 % tal-gradwati nisa mqabbla ma' 10 % tal-gradwati rġiel). L-istqarrija għall-istampa tal-Kummissjoni tgħid li l-attirar ta' aktar nisa lejn karrieri fit-teknoloġija hu imperattiv ekonomiku jekk l-UE trid tkabbar il-PDG tagħha.

Skont studju reċenti, li kieku n-nisa kellhom xogħlijiet diġitali b'mod frekwenti daqs l-irġiel, il-PDG Ewropew jista' jingħata spinta ta' bejn wieħed u ieħor EUR 9 biljun fis-sena. L-organizzazzjonijiet li jinkludu aktar lin-nisa fil-maniġment jiksbu 35 % aktar f'redditi azzjonarji u 34 % aktar f'redditi totali għall-azzjonisti minn organizzazzjonijiet komparabbli oħrajn.

Il-Kummissarju Kroes, responsabbli għall-Aġenda Diġitali tal-UE, insistiet li "It-teknoloġija hija wisq importanti biex titħalla għall-irġiel biss! […] Kull ġimgħa niltaqa' ma' aktar u aktar nisa involuti fit-teknoloġija li huma sors ta' ispirazzjoni. L-ICT m'għadhiex biss għal ftit 'geeks' — hija xi ħaġa cool, u hija l-futur! Disa' fil-mija biss tal-iżviluppaturi tal-applikazzjonijiet huma nisa? Ejjew! Ippruvaw il-kodifika u araw kemm tista' tkun interessanti!"

Il-Kummissjoni nediet kampanja ([1]) biex issib u tiċċelebra mudelli biex tinkoraġġixxi nisa żgħażagħ u bniet jistudjaw u jaqbdu karrieri fl-ICT. Il-Kummissjoni qed tistieden nisa (u rġiel) biex joħolqu filmati u jaqsmu l-istejjer ta' suċċess diġitali tagħhom biex jispiraw bniet u nisa jaħsbu dwar it-teknoloġija. Il-kampanja tibni fuq studju tal-Kummissjoni dwar nisa fis-settur tal-ICT li sab li l-aħjar mod ta' kif tħajjar aktar nisa għal xogħlijiet fit-teknoloġija huwa billi tingħata viżibbiltà lill-professjonisti fit-teknoloġija li jispiraw, u b'hekk dawn isiru mudelli.

1. Dan huwa l-uniku sforz tal-Kummissjoni biex tattira n-nisa lejn is-settur tal-ICT?

2. Il-Kummissjoni kemm taħseb li ħa tattira nisa permezz ta' din il-kampanja?

3. Il-Kummissjoni xi proġetti qed tippjana biex tappoġġa lil studenti femminili li qed ifittxu li jkomplu l-istudji tagħhom fil-qasam tal-ICT?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sinjura Kroes f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(27 ta' Mejju 2014)

L-iżvilupp ta' mudelli eżemplari diġitali li jħeġġu lill-bniet u lin-nisa żgħażagħ biex isegwu karrieri fl-ICT hija waħda mill-attivitajiet li qed jitwettqu permezz tal-paġna Every Girl Digital u din l-attività tikkumplimenta sforzi oħra li l-Kummissjoni twettaq f'dan il-qasam. Primarjament, dawn huma: Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs, li hija sħubija multilaterali maħsuba biex tindirizza n-nuqqas ta' ħiliet diġitali fl-Ewropa; il-kampanja Science, it's a girl thing li tinspira lill-bniet biex isegwu karrieri fix-xjenza; u Erasmus+, li għandha l-għan li żżid il-ħiliet u l-impjegabilità kif ukoll li timmodernizza l-edukazzjoni, it-taħriġ u x-xogħol taż-żgħażagħ. Barra minn hekk, membri ta' gruppi ta' esperti tal-Kummissjoni, bħalma huma Digital Champions u Young Advisors, jippromwovu l-kwistjoni ta' kif jistgħu jiġu attirati aktar nisa f'impjiegi diġitali. Pereżempju, bejn il-11 u s-17 ta' Ottubru dawn se jkunu qed jappoġġjaw l-EU Code Week, li hija sħubija Ewropea ta' coding workshops u avvenimenti ta' taħriġ bil-għan li turi liż-żgħażagħ (inklużi n-nisa) li l-kodifika hija ħila diġitali importanti u tista' tkun kreattiva.

Fir-rigward tal-għadd ta' nisa li ġew imnebbħa mill-Every Girl Digital, il-messaġġ wasal sistematikament għand madwar 110,000 organizzazzjoni, persuna u multiplikaturi tal-midja soċjali; l-impatti se jiġu analizzati f'Settembru 2014.

([1]) http://ictladies.com/

Il-Kummissjoni tappoġġja l-istudenti nisa li jridu jkomplu jistudjaw fil-qasam tal-ICT u fis-suġġetti tax-xjenza, tat-teknoloġija, tal-inġinerija u tal-matematika. Qed jiġi żviluppat proġett tal-UE li jiġbor materjal ta' referenza dwar il-kompetenzi diġitali tal-istudenti, li jkun jippermetti kemm l-awtovalutazzjoni miċ-ċittadini kif ukoll l-iżvilupp, minn istituzzjonijiet edukattivi, ta' curriculum abbażi ta' kompetenzi. Barra minn hekk, l-inizjattiva "Nifthu l-Edukazzjoni" ([2]) tipprovdi direzzjoni politika favur il-modernizzazzjoni tal-edukazzjoni u t-taħriġ permezz ta' teknoloġiji ġodda u l-aċċess tar-riżorsi edukattivi għal kulħadd.

([2]) Il-Komunikazzjoni Nifthu l-Edukazzjoni; http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-859_mt.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004220/14
to the Commission
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(4 April 2014)

Subject: Women and the IT sector

On 13 March 2014 the *Times of Malta* published a Commission press release which raises the question of the role of women in Europe's booming digital economy and app sector.

The press release presents a disappointing picture of the role of women in the digital economy. According to the Commission, women account for only 9% of European app developers, 19% of ICT managers (as compared to 45% in other service sectors), 19% of ICT entrepreneurs (as compared to 54% in other service sectors) and less than 30% of the ICT workforce, and the number of female computing graduates is falling (3% of female graduates compared to 10% of male graduates).The Commission press release states that attracting more women to tech careers is an economic imperative if the EU is to increase its GDP.

According to a recent study, if women held digital jobs as frequently as men, the European GDP could be boosted annually by around EUR 9 billion. Organisations which are more inclusive of women in management achieve a 35% higher return on equity and 34% better total return to shareholders than other comparable organisations.

Commissioner Kroes, responsible for the EU's Digital Agenda, insists that 'Tech is too important to be left to men alone! […] Every week I meet more and more inspiring women in tech. ICT is no longer for the geeky few — it is cool, and it is the future! Only nine per cent of app developers are women? Come on! Give coding a try, see what fun it can be!'

The Commission has launched a campaign ([1]) to find and celebrate role models to encourage young women and girls to study and pursue careers in ICT. The Commission is inviting women (and men) to create videos and share their own digital success story to inspire girls and women to think about tech. The campaign builds on a Commission study on women in the ICT sector which found that the best way to get more women into tech jobs is by giving visibility to inspiring tech professionals, thus turning them into role models.

1. Is this the Commission's only effort to attract women to the ICT sector?

2. How many women does the Commission think it will attract with this campaign?

3. What projects does the Commission envisage to support female students seeking to further their studies in the area of ICT?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(27 May 2014)

Digital role modelling to encourage girls and young women to pursue careers in ICT is one of the activities running via the Every Girl Digital page and complements other efforts of the Commission in this field. These are notably: Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs, a multi-stakeholder partnership to tackle the lack of digital skills in Europe; Science, it's a girl thing campaign, which inspires girls to pursue careers in science; and Erasmus+, which aims to boost skills and employability as well as modernise education, training and youth work. In addition, members of the Commission's expert groups, such as Digital Champions and Young Advisors, champion the issue of getting more women into digital jobs. For example, on 11-17 October 2014 they will support EU Code Week, a European partnership of coding workshops and training events with an objective of showing young people (including women) that coding is an important digital skill and can be creative.

As regards the number of women that Every Girl Digital has reached out to, the message has reached organically so far around 110 000 multipliers, organisations and people; the impacts will be analysed in September 2014.

The Commission supports female students seeking to further their studies in the area of ICT and into STEM education. An EU project to collect reference material for digital competences for learners is being developed, enabling self-assessment by citizens as well as competence-based curriculum building by educational institutions. Furthermore, the Opening up education initiative ([2]) provides policy steering to modernise education and training through new technologies and open up educational resources for all.

([1]) http://ictladies.com/
([2]) Opening up Education Communication; http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-859_en.htm

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-004221/14
lill-Kummissjoni
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(4 ta' April 2014)

Suġġett: Il-kapaċità konjittiva ta' persuni foqra

Anandi Mani et al., fl-istudju tagħhom li jġib l-isem "Poverty Impedes Cognitive Function", ippubblikat fir-revista "*Science*" f'Awwissu 2013, iffukaw fuq il-kapaċitajiet konjittivi ta' persuni foqra. L-istudju jissuġġerixxi li l-foqra sikwit iġibu ruħhom b'modi anqas kapaċi u dan jista' jipperpetwa aktar il-faqar. Mani et al. jikkwotaw diversi studji li jirreferu għal korrelazzjoni bejn il-faqar u l-imġiba kontroproduttiva. Madankollu, Mani et al. jgħidu li l-preokkupazzjonijiet dwar ħassib baġitarju urġenti jħallu anqas riżorsi konjittivi disponibbli biex jiggwidaw l-għażla u l-azzjoni.

Mani et al. waslu għall-konklużjoni li l-faqar ma jfissirx biss li trid tkampa b'nuqqas ta' flus , iżda wkoll b'nuqqas konkorrenti ta' riżorsi konjittivi. F'dawn iċ-ċirkostanzi, huma jissuġġerixxu li dawk li jfasslu l-politika għandhom jagħrfu u jwieġbu għall-varjazzjoni naturali fil-kapaċitajiet konjittivi tal-istess persuna, u meta jkunu qed ifasslu l-politiki għandhom iżommu f'moħħhom ċerti fatturi li jdgħajfu lill-foqra, bħal pereżempju proċeduri kkumplikati, il-mili ta' formoli twal u fatturi oħra.

1. X'inhuma r-reazzjonijiet tal-Kummissjoni għal dan l-istudju u l-konklużjonijiet tiegħu?

2. Il-Kummissjoni hija tal-istess opinjoni li dawn il-konklużjonijiet għandhom implikazzjonijiet għall-politiki dwar il-faqar?

3. Il-Kummissjoni se tikkunsidra r-rakkomandazzjonijiet tar-riċerkaturi, li jgħinu lill-foqra jevitaw imġiba kontroproduttiva li tista' tipperpetwa aktar il-faqar?

4. Jekk iva, x'azzjoni se tittieħed f'dan ir-rigward?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Andor f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(28 ta' Mejju 2014)

1. Il-Kummissjoni tirrikonoxxi dan l-istudju li jikkontribwixxi għall-fehim aħjar tar-rabtiet kumplessi bejn il-faqar, l-istress u s-saħħa b'mod aktar ġenerali, u l-ħiliet konjittivi.

2. L-evidenza mir-riċerka tista' żżid l-għarfien dwar oqsma ta' politika speċifiċi u, għalhekk, hija strument importanti għall-gwida politika. Madankollu, id-differenzi fil-ħiliet konjittivi, li mhumiex l-uniċi determinanti tar-rendiment, aktarx diġà huma kkunsidrati fl-azzjonijiet politiċi indipendentament mill-oriġini tagħhom.

3. Il-Kummissjoni hija interessata li tkompli tinvestiga r-riżultati ta' dan l-istudju. Reċentement, il-Pakkett ta' Investiment Soċjali (SIP) ([1]) enfasizza l-ħtieġa li jkun hemm enfasi fuq miżuri ta' appoġġ soċjali sempliċi, immirati u kondizzjonali li għandhom natura ta' investiment. Dan ifisser li għandha tingħata attenzjoni lill-karatteristiċi speċifiċi ta' benefiċjarji individwali. Dan jinkludi l-kunsiderazzjoni tal-possibbiltà li l-kapaċità konjittiva tagħhom tkun temporanjament inibita. Il-pakkett jitlob ukoll għal azzjonijiet li jistgħu jipprovdu lit-tfal b'akkomodazzjoni u ambjent sikuri u adegwati. Flimkien mal-appoġġ lill-ġenituri u l-iskejjel tat-tfal żvantaġġati, dan jista' jgħin biex jinkiser iċ-ċiklu tal-iżvantaġġi ([2]).

4. Ir-riżultati ppreżentati fl-istudju huma preliminari u kwalunkwe azzjoni speċifika bbażata fuqhom tidher prematura.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1044&.
([2]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32013H0112:EN:NOT.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004221/14
to the Commission
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(4 April 2014)

Subject: Poor people's cognitive capacity

In their study entitled 'Poverty Impedes Cognitive Function', published in Science in August 2013, Anandi Mani et al. focus on the cognitive capacities of poor people. The study suggests that the poor often behave in less capable ways, which can further perpetuate poverty. Mani et al. quote various studies which point to a correlation between poverty and counterproductive behaviour. However, Mani et al. claim that preoccupations with pressing budgetary concerns leave fewer cognitive resources available to guide choice and action.

Mani et al. came to the conclusion that being poor means coping not just with a shortfall of money, but also with a concurrent shortfall of cognitive resources. In these circumstances, they suggest that policymakers should recognise and respond to the natural variation in the same person's cognitive capacities, and when designing policies they should keep in mind certain factors that undermine the poor, such as complicated procedures, filling in long forms and so on.

1. What are the Commission's reactions to this study and its conclusions?

2. Does the Commission share the view that these conclusions have implications for policies on poverty?

3. Will the Commission consider the researchers' recommendations, which will help the poor avoid engaging in counterproductive behaviour which can further perpetuate poverty?

4. If so, what action will be taken in this regard?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(28 May 2014)

1. The Commission acknowledges this study which contributes to better understand the complex links between poverty, stress and health more generally, and cognitive skills.

2. Research evidence might add insight on specific policy areas and is therefore an important tool for policy guidance. Differences in cognitive skills, which are not the sole determinants of performances, are however likely to be already considered in policy actions independently from their origin.

3. The Commission is interested to further investigate the results of this study. Recently, the Social Investment Package (SIP) ([1]) has emphasised the need to focus on simple, targeted and conditional social support measures that have an investment nature. This means that attention must be paid to the specific characteristics of individual beneficiaries. This would include allowing for their possibly temporary inhibited cognitive capacity. The SIP also calls for actions that can provide children with a safe, adequate housing and living environment. Together with support for the parents and schools of disadvantaged children this can help to break the cycle of disadvantage ([2]).

4. The results presented in the study are preliminary and any specific action based on them seems premature.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1044&
([2]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32013H0112:EN:NOT

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-004222/14
lill-Kummissjoni
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(4 ta' April 2014)

Suġġett: It-traġedja tal-Baħar Aral

Il-Kunsill tal-Ministri tal-UE, fil-konklużjonijiet tiegħu tas-27 ta' Lulju 2013 dwar id-diplomazija tal-UE fil-qasam tal-ilma, esprima tħassib dwar is-sitwazzjoni tal-iskarzezza tal-ilma f'ħafna partijiet tad-dinja u fl-Asja Ċentrali b'mod partikolari.

B'referenza għat-traġedja tal-Baħar Aral, x'inhi tagħmel il-Kummissjoni biex tindirizza t-theddida għall-iżvilupp sostenibbli f'dak ir-reġjun?

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-004871/14
lill-Kummissjoni
Marlene Mizzi (S&D)
(16 ta' April 2014)

Suġġett: Id-diżastru ambjentali u ekoloġiku fir-reġjun tal-Baħar Aral fl-Uzbekistan

X'qiegħda tagħmel l-UE biex tgħin tirrimedja d-diżastru ambjentali u ekoloġiku fir-reġjun tal-Baħar Aral fl-Uzbekistan?

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-005480/14
lill-Kummissjoni
Marlene Mizzi (S&D)
(24 ta' April 2014)

Suġġett: Id-diżastru ambjentali u ekoloġiku fir-reġjun tal-Baħar Aral fl-Uzbekistan

X'qiegħda tagħmel l-UE biex tipprovdi għajnuna wara d-diżastru ambjentali u ekoloġiku fir-reġjun tal-Baħar Aral fl-Uzbekistan?

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-005481/14
lill-Kummissjoni
Marlene Mizzi (S&D)
(24 ta' April 2014)

Suġġett: Assistenza lir-reġjun tal-Baħar Aral

Il-Kummissjoni taħseb li l-UE qiegħda tagħmel biżżejjed fir-rigward tad-diżastru ekoloġiku, ekonomiku u tas-saħħa fir-reġjun tal-Baħar Aral?

Tweġiba konġunta mogħtija mis-Sur Piebalgs f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(2 ta' Ġunju 2014)

Il-Konklużjonijiet tal-Kunsill ta' Lulju 2013 stiednu l-Kummissjoni u r-Rappreżentant Għoli biex ikomplu l-isforzi, flimkien mal-Istati Membri, biex jippromwovu l-kooperazzjoni fuq il-ġestjoni sostenibbli u ekwa tal-ilmijiet transfruntieri. L-Asja Ċentrali, fost erba' reġjuni oħrajn, kienet imsemmija bħala prijorità.

Il-Kummissjoni talloka riżorsi sinifikanti lis-Settur tal-Ilma u l-Ambjent fl-Asja Ċentrali.

Fil-programmi reġjonali tagħha, il-Kummissjoni qed tiffinanzja l-Programm EURECA (Programm Ambjentali Reġjonali għall-Asja Ċentrali) b'baġit ta' EUR 9.2 miljun.

Hemm żewġ komponenti ta' dan il-Programm li speċifikament jindirizzaw il-problemi tal-Baħar Aral :

1) Il-koordinazzjoni u appoġġ Reġjonali għall-Ambjent u l-Ilma (WECOOP) fejn l-IFAS (Il-Fond Internazzjonali għall-Baħar Aral) huwa benefiċjarju prinċipali.

Waħda mill-attivitajiet biex tissaħħaħ il-kooperazzjoni għall-mitigazzjoni ta' u l-adattament għall-bidla fil-klima, kif ukoll koordinazzjoni ma' donaturi oħrajn;

2) Sħubija dwar il-ġestjoni tal-ilma u organizzazzjonijiet tal-baċiri fl-Asja Ċentrali (WMBOCA).

Attivitajiet speċifiċi jinkludu sessjonijiet ta' ħidma u żjarat ta' studju biex jappoġġjaw il-kooperazzjoni bejn organizzazzjonijiet tal-baċiri u t-tisħiħ tal-istrutturi ta' ġestjoni tal-ilma interstatali l-Kummissjoni Interstatali għall-Koordinazzjoni tal-Ilma tal-Asja Ċentrali (ICWC) u l-Kumitat Eżekuttiv tal-IFAS.

Se jiġu żviluppati moduli ta' taħriġ fuq il-Ġestjoni ta' Riżorsi tal-Ilma Transfruntieri u Integrata kif ukoll il-Liġi tal-Ilma.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004222/14
to the Commission
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(4 April 2014)

Subject: Aral Sea tragedy

The EU Council of Ministers, in its conclusions of 27 July 2013 on EU water diplomacy, expressed concern about the water security situation in many parts of the world and in Central Asia in particular.

With reference to the tragedy of the Aral Sea, what is the Commission doing to address the threat to sustainable development in that region?

Question for written answer E-004871/14
to the Commission
Marlene Mizzi (S&D)
(16 April 2014)

Subject: Environmental and ecological disaster in the Aral Sea region in Uzbekistan

What is the EU doing to help remedy the environmental and ecological disaster in the Aral Sea region in Uzbekistan?

Question for written answer E-005480/14
to the Commission
Marlene Mizzi (S&D)
(24 April 2014)

Subject: Environmental and ecological disaster in the Aral Sea region of Uzbekistan

What is the EU doing to in terms of providing assistance following the environmental and ecological disaster in the Aral Sea region of Uzbekistan?

Question for written answer E-005481/14
to the Commission
Marlene Mizzi (S&D)
(24 April 2014)

Subject: Assistance to the Aral Sea region

Does the Commission think that the EU is doing enough as regards the ecological, economic and health disaster in the Aral Sea region?

Joint answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(2 June 2014)

The Council Conclusions of July 2013 invited the Commission and the High Representative to continue efforts, together with Member States, to promote cooperation on the sustainable and equitable management of trans-boundary waters. Central Asia, amongst other 4 regions, was mentioned as a priority.

The Commission allocates significant resources to the Water and Environment Sector in Central Asia.

Under its regional programmes the Commission is funding the Eureca Programme (Regional Environmental Programme for Central Asia) with a budget of EUR 9.2 million.

There are two components of this Programme that specifically address the problems of the Aral Sea :

1. The Regional coordination and support for Environment and Water (Wecoop) where IFAS (International Fund for the Aral Sea) is a major beneficiary.

One of the activities is to reinforce cooperation for mitigation of and adaptation to climate change, as well as coordination with other donors;

2. A partnership on water management and basin organisations in Central Asia (Wmboca).

Specific activities include workshops and study tours to support cooperation between basin organisations and the strengthening of inter-state water management structures Interstate Commission for Water Coordination of Central Asia (ICWC) and IFAS Executive Committee.

Training modules will be developed on Integrated and Transboundary Water Resources Management as well as Water Law.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-004224/14
lill-Kummissjoni
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(4 ta' April 2014)

Suġġett: L-intraprenditorjat femminili fl-UE

Filwaqt li l-Ewropa m'għandhiex biżżejjed intraprendituri li jsegwu l-ideat tagħhom biex jibdew negozju, l-għadd ta' intraprendituri nisa hu saħansitra sproporzjonatament iżgħar minn dak tal-irġiel. Minkejja li kien hemm żieda inkoraġġanti fl-għadd ta' nisa li jiġġestixxu l-impriżi f'dawn l-aħħar għaxar snin, jeħtieġ isir ħafna aktar biex jingħelbu l-fatturi speċifiċi li jiskoraġġixxu n-nisa b'mod partikolari milli jistabbilixxu jew jieħdu f'idejhom impriżi żgħar. Illum, l-intraprendituri nisa fl-Ewropa jammontaw għal 30% biss tal-intraprendituri kollha, u għaldaqstant jeħtieġ li jiġu studjati modi ġodda biex jiġu megħluba d-diversi fatturi li jiskoraġġixxu n-nisa milli jsiru intraprendituri.

1. Il-Kummissjoni kienet ippjanat li tippubblika komunikazzjoni dwar l-intraprenditorjat femminili waqt is-sajf tal-2012, li kellha tinkludi fiha diversi proposti u suġġerimenti biex jgħinu għadd ikbar ta' nisa biex jibdew negozju. Tista' l-Kummissjoni tispjega għalfejn din il-komunikazzjoni ma ġietx ippubblikata?

2. Il-Kummissjoni meta biħsiebha tippubblikaha?

3. Xi strateġija tal-politika qed tiġi implimentata biex tinkoraġġixxi aktar nisa jsiru intraprendituri?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Tajani f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(12 ta' Ġunju 2014)

1 & 2. Il-Kummissjoni kienet qiegħda tikkunsidra li toħroġ Komunikazzjoni dwar l-intraprenditorija tan-nisa fl-2012; eventwalment, il-kwistjonijiet ewlenin rigward l-appoġġ għall-intraprenditorija tan-nisa ġew inklużi fil-Pjan ta' Azzjoni usa' dwar l-Intraprenditorija għall-2020 ([1]).

3. Il-Pjan ta' Azzjoni (§4.2.1) jinnota li n-nisa jirrappreżentaw riżerva kbira ta' potenzjal intraprenditorjali, u jfassal approċċ ta' politika biex jiżgura li l-intraprendituri nisa potenzjali jsiru konxji tal-opportunitajiet ta' appoġġ u finanzjament għan-negozju. Il-Pjan ta' Azzjoni jistieden lill-Istati Membri jimplimentaw, fost l-oħrajn, strateġiji nazzjonali għall-intraprenditorija tan-nisa, sabiex ikabbru l-proporzjon tal-kumpaniji mmexxija min-nisa.

L-inizjattiva ewlenija tal-Kummissjoni fil-qafas tal-Pjan ta' Azzjoni mmirat lejn in-nies hija l-ħolqien ta' Pjattaforma fuq l-internet għall-intraprenditriċi, li se tkun punt uniku ta' servizz għan-nisa ta' kull età li jixtiequ joħolqu, imexxu u jkabbru negozju, billi toffri lin-nisa mal-Ewropa kollha opportunijiet ta' tagħlim, mentoring, konsulenza u negozju. Din il-Pjattaforma hi skedata li titlesta fl-2015.

Il-Kummissjoni ħadmet ukoll biex tiffaċilita l-aċċess tan-nisa għan-netwerks, bit-twaqqif fl-2009 tan-Netwerk Ewropew tal-Ambaxxaturi għall-Intraprendituri Nisa (ENFEA), biex iservu ta' xempju u ispirazzjoni lin-nisa li jixtiequ joħolqu n-negozji proprji tagħhom ([2]). Barra minn hekk, in-Netwerk Ewropew ta' Mentors għall-Intraprendituri Nisa pprovda gwida u appoġġ lill-intraprenditriċi fil-varar, il-funzjonament u t-tkabbir tal-intrapriżi tagħhom fl-istadji bikrija ta' operat tagħhom (l-ewwel sentejn sa erba' snin ta' intrapriża ġdida mmexxija minn mara) ([3]).

Miżuri oħra jinkludu n-Netwerk Ewropew għall-Promozzjoni tal-Intraprenditorija tan-Nisa ([4]). Il-WES huwa magħmul minn rappreżentanti governattivi responsabbli għall-promozzjoni tal-intraprenditorija tan-nisa; dan jgħin biex jidentifika prattiki tajbin, u jipprovdi gwida dwar id-direzzjoni tal-politika fil-futur.

([1]) Jannar 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/entrepreneurship-2020/index_en.htm

([2]) Fl-ewwel Netwerk qed jieħdu sehem 300 ambaxxatur fi 22 pajjiż Ewropew. Dawn il-pajjiżi huma: l-Albanija, il-Belġju, il-Kroazja, Ċipru, id-Danimarka, Franza, il-Ġermanja, il-Greċja, l-Ungerija, l-Iżlanda, l-Italja, l-Irlanda, il-Polonja, il-Portugall, ir-Rumanija, il-Lussemburgu, Malta, in-Norveġja, is-Serbja, is-Slovakkja, l-Iżvezja u r-Renju Unit.

([3]) Illum, 17-il pajjiż tal-Programm Kwadru għall-Kompetittività u l-Innovazzjoni (CIP) jiffurmaw in-Netwerk tal-Mentors, li jħaddan xi 200 mentor. Dawn il-pajjiżi huma: l-Albanija, il-Belġju, Ċipru, FYROM, il-Greċja, l-Ungerija, l-Irlanda, l-Italja, il-Montenegro, il-Pajjiżi l-Baxxi, ir-Rumanija, is-Serbja, is-Slovakkja, is-Slovenja, Spanja, it-Turkija u r-Renju Unit.

([4]) WES.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004224/14
to the Commission
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(4 April 2014)

Subject: Female entrepreneurship in the EU

While Europe does not have enough entrepreneurs following through on their ideas to set up in business, there are disproportionately even fewer women than men entrepreneurs. Although there has been an encouraging upturn in women running businesses in the past decade or so, much more needs to be done to overcome the specific factors which discourage women in particular from starting or taking over small firms. Today, women entrepreneurs in Europe amount only to 30% of all entrepreneurs, and new ways to overcome the numerous factors which discourage women from taking up the option of entrepreneurship therefore need to be explored.

1. The Commission had planned to publish a communication on female entrepreneurship during the summer of 2012, which was supposed to take on board numerous proposals and suggestions to help more women set up in business. Can the Commission explain why this communication was not published?

2. When is the Commission planning to publish it?

3. What policy strategy is being implemented to encourage more women to become entrepreneurs?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(12 June 2014)

1 and 2. The Commission considered a communication on women's entrepreneurship in 2012; the key issues regarding the support of women's entrepreneurship were ultimately included in the broader Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan ([1]).

3. The action plan (§4.2.1) notes that women represent a large pool of entrepreneurial potential and lays out a policy approach to ensure that potential women entrepreneurs are made aware of business support and funding opportunities. It invites Member States, *inter alia*, to implement national strategies for women's entrepreneurship to increase the share of women-led companies.

The main Commission initiative under the action plan targeting women is the creation of an online e-Platform for women entrepreneurs, which will be a one-stop shop for women of all ages who want to start, run and grow a business, offering educational, mentoring, advisory and business networking opportunities for women across Europe. The platform is scheduled to be set up in 2015.

The Commission has also worked to facilitate access to networks for women with the creation of the European Network of Female Entrepreneurship Ambassadors in 2009, to serve as role models and inspire women to set up their own businesses ([2]). In addition, the European Network of Mentors for Women Entrepreneurs has provided advice and support to women entrepreneurs on the starting-up, functioning and growth of their enterprises in the early stages of operation (years 2-4 of a new woman-led enterprise) ([3]).

Other measures include the European Network to Promote Women's Entrepreneurship ([4]). WES is composed of government representatives responsible for promoting female entrepreneurship; it helps identify good practice and provides guidance on future policy direction.

([1]) January 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/entrepreneurship-2020/index_en.htm
([2]) There are 300 ambassadors in 22 European countries taking part in the network. These countries are: Albania, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Ireland, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Luxembourg, Malta, Norway, Serbia, Slovakia, Sweden and the United Kingdom.
([3]) Today 17 CIP countries form the Mentors' Network which has currently around 200 mentors .These countries are: Albania, Belgium, Cyprus, FYROM, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey and the United Kingdom.
([4]) WES.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite P-004225/14
à la Commission
Isabelle Thomas (S&D)
(4 avril 2014)

Objet: Pratique de la pêche électrique

Les différentes études scientifiques menées au cours des vingt dernières années démontrent que la pêche électrique peut causer des retards de croissance chez les poissons électrocutés, provoquer une baisse de fertilité et des dommages au système nerveux, avoir des effets sur le système immunitaire des poissons juvéniles et accroître leur mortalité, pour ne citer que quelques exemples des séquelles que ce type de pêche peut avoir sur les poissons. De surcroît, le choc électrique mortel pour les poissons ciblés ne distingue pas les juvéniles des adultes. Ce problème rend incompatible la pêche électrique avec la politique commune de la pêche (PCP).

Or, les Pays-Bas viennent d'obtenir une dérogation de la Commission européenne leur permettant de doubler le nombre de chaluts à perche équipés de câbles à courant électrique, ce qui a fait passer de 42 à 84 le nombre de navires pratiquant la pêche électrique. Au-delà des effets de cette pêche rapportés par la communauté scientifique, les pêcheurs qui opèrent dans la zone nous font savoir qu'ils capturent dans leurs filets un nombre croissant de poissons abîmés.

1. La Commission peut-elle expliquer en quoi cette pratique de pêche est compatible avec la sélectivité, notamment des juvéniles, prévue dans la PCP?

2. La Commission peut-elle préciser sur quelle base juridique cette dérogation a été octroyée? Est-ce qu'autoriser 10 % d'un métier à utiliser ce type d'engin correspond à ce que l'on appelle la pêche expérimentale?

3. La Commission peut-elle préciser comment le principe de précaution a été appliqué à cette situation, notamment sur les conséquences sur les écosystèmes marins vulnérables?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Damanaki au nom de la Commission
(22 mai 2014)

Le comité scientifique, technique et économique de la pêche (CSTEP) a rendu une appréciation positive ([1]) concernant la technique de la pêche électrique, en précisant que «le courant électrique impulsionnel présente un certain nombre d'avantages économiques, écologiques et biologiques importants, tels que la réduction de la consommation de carburant, la diminution de la mortalité par pêche sur les espèces cibles et une faible incidence sur les habitats».

La base juridique du projet pilote lancé par les Pays-Bas est l'article 14 du règlement n° 1380/2013. Il s'agit d'une nouvelle disposition dans le cadre de la politique commune de la pêche (PCP), qui vise à soutenir les initiatives destinées à réduire les captures indésirées et à limiter les incidences sur l'écosystème et les ressources.

En vertu de l'article 14, la Commission n'est pas tenue d'accorder une dérogation ou d'autoriser les projets pilotes. L'article ne définit pas d'échelle ni de taille spécifiques pour les projets pilotes. Les Pays-Bas appliquent le projet pilote à un nombre spécifique de navires, et la Commission a été informée que ce processus sera soumis à un contrôle rigoureux et accompagné d'une évaluation scientifique et de la recherche. Les Pays-Bas ont présenté leur projet au Conseil consultatif régional pour la mer du Nord (CCR mer du Nord) en avril. Le groupe de travail sur les ressources démersales du CCR mer du Nord l'examine actuellement. Le projet pilote sur la pêche électrique sera inscrit à l'ordre du jour de sa prochaine réunion au mois de juillet.

Le principe de précaution est l'un des objectifs principaux de la PCP et la Commission a suivi le développement de cette technique de pêche. Depuis 2006, elle a demandé au Conseil international pour l'exploration de la mer (CIEM) et au CSTEP de rendre compte de son évolution à un certain nombre d'occasions.

([1]) TdR 6 du RAPPORT de la 39e SESSION PLENIERE DU COMITE SCIENTIFIQUE, TECHNIQUE ET ECONOMIQUE DE LA PECHE (PLEN-12-01), http://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/43805/319250/2012-04_PLEN+12-01_JRC70759.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer P-004225/14
to the Commission
Isabelle Thomas (S&D)
(4 April 2014)

Subject: Electrofishing

Various scientific studies over the last 20 years have shown that electrofishing may be having an adverse effect on fish, resulting in retarded growth, reduced fertility, damage to the nervous system, damage to the immune system of juvenile fish and increased mortality, to name but a few. Furthermore, the electrical charge used is fatal for adult and juvenile fish alike, making it incompatible with the common fisheries policy (CFP).

Despite this, the Netherlands has recently been granted an exemption by the Commission, which has authorised it to double from 42 to 84 the number of vessels using electrical beam trawls. In addition to concerns expressed by scientists, local fishermen have been reporting increasing numbers of damaged fish in their catches.

1. Can the Commission indicate how this method of fishing is compatible with the CFP principle of selectivity and the protection of juvenile fish?

2. On what legal basis has this exemption been granted? Can this practice really be considered experimental if 10% of fishing vessels are authorised to engage in it?

3. How has the principle of precaution been applied in this situation, particularly regarding the impact on vulnerable marine ecosystems?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(22 May 2014)

The Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) has given a positive assessment ([1]) of the electric pulse-trawl fishing technique, indicating that 'the pulse trawl offers a number of significant biological, ecological and economic benefits, such as reduction of fuel consumption, decrease in fishing mortality on the target species and reduced impact on habitats'.

The legal basis for the Dutch pilot project is Article 14 of Regulation 1380/2013. This is a new provision in the common fisheries policy (CFP), meant to support initiatives to reduce unwanted catches and limit impacts on the ecosystem and resources.

Under Article 14 the Commission is not required to provide an exemption or authorise the pilot projects. The article does not define a specific scale or size for the pilot projects. The Netherlands is applying the pilot to a specific number of vessels, and the Commission was informed that this will be strictly monitored and accompanied by research and scientific assessment. The Netherlands presented its project to the North Sea Advisory Council (NSAC) in April. The NSAC Demersal Working Group is examining it. The pulse fishing pilot project will be placed on the agenda for its next meeting in July.

The precautionary principle is a key objective of the CFP and the Commission has been monitoring the development of this fishing technique. Since 2006 it has asked the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) and STECF to report on its development on a number of occasions.

([1]) TOR 6 of the 39th Plenary Meeting Report of the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (PLEN-12-01), http://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/43805/319250/2012-04_PLEN+12-01_JRC70759.pdf

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-004226/14
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(4 avril 2014)

Objet: Règlement relatif à la production biologique: réduction des coûts administratifs

Dans le prolongement de la consultation démarrée en 2012, la Commission vient de présenter une proposition de nouveau règlement relatif à la production biologique et à l'étiquetage des produits biologiques.

La proposition expose plusieurs objectifs: maintenir la confiance des consommateurs, conserver celle des producteurs et faciliter l'accès des agriculteurs à la filière biologique. Le but est de veiller à ce que l'agriculture biologique reste fidèle à ses principes et à ses objectifs, de façon à répondre aux attentes du public pour ce qui est du respect de l'environnement et de la qualité. La Commission propose de simplifier la législation afin de réduire les coûts administratifs pour les agriculteurs et d'accroître la transparence.

1. La Commission peut-elle développer sa proposition?

2. Dans quelle mesure la Commission estime-t-elle pouvoir réduire les coûts administratifs?

Réponse donnée par M. Cioloş au nom de la Commission
(3 juin 2014)

Afin de soutenir sa proposition, la Commission a réalisé une analyse d'impact comprenant un chapitre sur les coûts administratifs résultant de l'application de la législation en vigueur. Les coûts administratifs comportent deux éléments, les coûts incompressibles et les charges administratives. Les charges administratives sont fixées en termes de nombre d'obligations d'information pour les opérateurs, les organismes de contrôle et les administrations nationales dans l'Union et dans les pays tiers. L'analyse détaillée de ces charges montre que l'option la plus avantageuse pour les réduire est celle retenue par la proposition de la Commission, qui suppose notamment de mettre fin aux exceptions et aux dérogations qui sont actuellement autorisées et qui sont liées à de nombreuses obligations d'information. Par conséquent, 37 obligations d'information seraient supprimées sur un total de 135 obligations en vigueur.

Étant donné que la redevance de certification est un coût incompressible important dans le coût total de la certification biologique, elle serait réduite grâce à la proposition de contrôle fondé sur les risques. Plutôt que de contrôler physiquement tous les opérateurs une fois par an comme c'est le cas aujourd'hui, les opérateurs exerçant des activités à faible risque seront moins souvent contrôlés que les opérateurs à haut risque.

La certification électronique et la proposition de certification de groupe permettront également de simplifier les exigences administratives pour les opérateurs.

Enfin, en ce qui concerne les importations, la mise en place de la conformité pour les organes de contrôle qui opèrent dans les pays tiers remplacera les 61 ensembles de règles appliqués actuellement par un ensemble de règles unique, simplifiant ainsi considérablement l'administration et les contrôles.

La proposition de la Commission sera examinée avec le Parlement européen dans le cadre de la procédure législative ordinaire.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004226/14
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(4 April 2014)

Subject: Regulation on organic production: reduction of administrative costs

Continuing the consultation that was launched in 2012, the Commission has just presented a proposal for a new regulation on organic production and the labelling of organic products.

The proposal sets out a number of objectives: maintaining the confidence of consumers and producers, and making it easier for farmers to access the organic sector. It aims to ensure that organic farming remains true to its principles and objectives so that it can meet the public's expectations in relation to the environment and quality. The Commission proposes to simplify the legislation in order to reduce administrative costs for farmers and increase transparency.

1. Can the Commission say more about its proposal?

2. To what extent does the Commission believe it will be able to reduce administrative costs?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(3 June 2014)

To support its proposal the Commission conducted an impact assessment which includes a chapter on administrative costs resulting from the application of the current legislation. The administrative costs have two components, the business-as-usual costs and the administrative burden. Administrative burden are assessed in terms of numbers of information obligations for operators, control bodies, national administrations in the Union and in Third countries. The detailed screening and analysis of this burden show that the most advantageous option for reducing them is the option followed by the Commission's proposal which involves in particular putting an end to exceptions and derogations that are currently possible and which are linked to numerous information obligations. As a result, 37 information obligations would be removed out of the total 135 existing obligations.

Given that the certification fee is a major business-as-usual cost item in the total cost of organic certification, it would be reduced with the proposed risk-based control. Rather than physically controlling all operators once per year as is the case today, low-risk operators will be controlled less often than high-risk operators.

Electronic certification and the proposed group certification will also bring simplified individual administrative requirements for operators.

Finally, as concerns imports, the introduction of compliance for control bodies operating in third countries will replace the 61 sets of rules being applied currently with a single set of rules thus greatly simplifying administration and controls.

The Commission's proposal will be discussed with the European Parliament under the ordinary legislative procedure.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-004227/14
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D), Franco Frigo (S&D) et Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(4 avril 2014)

Objet: Titrisation

La Commission propose de relancer le marché des produits titrisés afin de développer l'économie européenne, sans dépendre des seules banques. Bien encadré, ce marché aurait le potentiel de débloquer des sources de financements supplémentaires pour l'économie réelle.

La Commission peut-elle nous en dire plus à ce sujet?

Peut-elle illustrer cette théorie?

Ces opérations financières — qui consistent à regrouper des prêts sous forme de titres portant intérêt — gardent mauvaise réputation: elles sont à l'origine de la crise des prêts immobiliers américains — les fameux *subprimes* —, titrisés pour être revendus dans la plus parfaite opacité, au point de susciter la chute, en septembre 2008, de la banque Lehman Brothers et de précipiter la crise des dettes européennes.

La Commission a-t-elle dès lors anticipé tous les paramètres qui pourraient nous faire revivre une pareille crise?

Réponse donnée par M. Rehn au nom de la Commission
(6 juin 2014)

Grâce à la titrisation, les banques peuvent refinancer des prêts en les mettant en commun et en les transformant en titres, avec la possibilité de partager les risques avec des investisseurs non bancaires. Cet instrument permet aux banques de libérer des ressources en capital et d'améliorer leur capacité de prêt à l'économie. Aux investisseurs institutionnels, les titres ainsi créés ouvrent des possibilités d'investissements liquides dans des classes d'actifs dans lesquelles ils n'investissent pas directement, telles que les crédits aux PME ou les prêts immobiliers.

Certains modèles de titrisation, notamment le marché des subprimes aux États-Unis, ont été insuffisamment réglementés et ont contribué à la crise financière. La réforme financière que l'Union a menée par la suite a remédié aux faiblesses de ces modèles. Des exigences en matière de rétention du risque s'appliquent aux banques de l'Union depuis 2011 et ont été étendues à l'ensemble des secteurs financiers. Les obligations d'information ont été durcies pour permettre aux investisseurs d'acquérir une connaissance approfondie des instruments dans lesquels ils investissent.

D'après la communication sur le financement à long terme de l'économie européenne ([1]), l'approche réglementaire doit mieux refléter les risques et les caractéristiques de chaque produit de titrisation, en opérant une distinction entre d'une part les produits de «grande qualité», caractérisés par une structure simple et des actifs sous-jacents bien identifiés, transparents et aux performances prévisibles, et d'autre part des produits présentant une structure complexe et opaque tels que ceux liés à la crise financière ([2]). Étant donné que la titrisation, si elle est sainement conçue, peut soutenir l'activité de prêt à l'économie, la Commission s'attachera, avec les organismes internationaux de normalisation, à appliquer un traitement réglementaire opérant une telle distinction. Par exemple, le rapport technique de l'AEAPP à la Commission sur les actes délégués relevant de Solvabilité II a proposé un traitement prudentiel différencié des produits de titrisation de grande qualité. Il est probable que cette approche sera largement intégrée dans les dispositions d'exécution de Solvabilité II.

([1]) COM(2014) 168 du 27.3.2014.
([2]) Voir aussi la récente étude de la BCE et de la Banque d'Angleterre: «The impaired EU securitisation market: causes, roadblocks and how to deal with them», www.ecb.europa.eu/pub/pdf/other/ecb-boe_impaired_eu_securitisation_marketen.pdf

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004227/14
alla Commissione
Marc Tarabella (S&D), Franco Frigo (S&D) e Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(4 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Cartolarizzazione

La Commissione propone di rilanciare il mercato dei prodotti cartolarizzati al fine di sviluppare l'economia europea senza dipendere soltanto dalle banche. Se bene inquadrato, questo mercato avrebbe un potenziale per sbloccare finanziamenti supplementari per l'economia reale.

Può la Commissione esporre dati più dettagliati in materia?

Può essa articolare l'ipotesi teorica?

Simili operazioni finanziarie — che consistono nel raggruppare prestiti sotto forma di titoli che generano interessi — hanno una brutta reputazione: sono infatti all'origine della crisi dei presti immobiliari americani — i famosi *subprime* — cartolarizzati per essere rivenduti nella massima opacità, al punto di provocare nel settembre 2008 lo schianto della banca *Lehman Brothers* e accelerare la crisi dei debiti in Europa.

Al riguardo, ha la Commissione provveduto ad anticipare tutti i parametri che potrebbero rigettarci in una simile crisi?

Risposta di Olli Rehn a nome della Commissione
(6 giugno 2014)

Tramite le cartolarizzazioni le banche possono rifinanziare attività mettendole in comune e convertendole in titoli, in modo da ripartire i rischi con investitori extrabancari. Le banche potrebbero liberare così risorse di capitale e migliorare la capacità di erogare credito all'economia. Per gli investitori istituzionali i titoli possono costituire l'apertura di possibilità di investimenti liquidi in classi di attività su cui non operano direttamente, ad esempio piccole e medie imprese o mutui ipotecari.

La regolamentazione inadeguata di alcuni modelli di cartolarizzazione, in particolare del mercato statunitense dei *subprime*, ha contribuito alla crisi finanziaria. Con la successiva riforma della disciplina finanziaria l'UE ha affrontato il problema delle carenze insite in questi modelli: gli obblighi di conservazione del rischio si applicano dal 2011 alle banche dell'UE e sono ora estesi a tutti i settori finanziari, mentre sono stati inaspriti gli obblighi d'informativa in modo che gli investitori potessero comprendere bene gli strumenti proposti.

La comunicazione sul finanziamento a lungo termine ([1]) invita a rispecchiare maggiormente nell'approccio normativo i rischi e le caratteristiche di ciascun prodotto di cartolarizzazione, distinguendo tra le strutture complesse e opache della crisi finanziaria e le cartolarizzazioni di «alta qualità», dalla struttura semplice e con attività sottostanti chiaramente definite, trasparenti e prevedibili nelle prestazioni ([2]). Poiché le cartolarizzazioni sane sono in grado di sostenere l'erogazione di prestiti all'economia, la Commissione collaborerà con gli organismi internazionali di normazione per definire una disciplina regolamentare su tale distinzione. Nella relazione tecnica trasmessa alla Commissione in merito agli atti delegati relativi alla «solvibilità 2», ad esempio, l'Autorità europea delle assicurazioni e delle pensioni aziendali e professionali ha proposto una disciplina prudenziale differenziata per le cartolarizzazioni di «alta qualità», approccio che, probabilmente, sarà integrato nelle grandi linee negli atti di esecuzione in materia.

([1]) COM(2014) 168 del 27.3.2014.
([2]) Cfr. anche il recente documento di BCE e Banca d'Inghilterra, The impaired EU securitisation market: causes, roadblocks and how to deal with them, www.ecb.europa.eu/pub/pdf/other/ecb-boe_impaired_eu_securitisation_marketen.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004227/14
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D), Franco Frigo (S&D) and Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(4 April 2014)

Subject: Securitisation

The Commission is proposing to relaunch the market in securitised products in order to promote Europe's economy without having to rely on the banks alone. If properly supervised, this market would have the potential to unlock additional sources of finance for the real economy.

Can the Commission tell us more about this subject?

Can it provide illustrations for the theory behind this?

These financial transactions, which consist in grouping together loans in the form of interest-bearing securities, have a bad reputation: they were responsible for the crisis relating to mortgages in the US — the infamous 'subprimes' — that were securitised and then resold with a total lack of transparency, and they ended up bringing about the fall of Lehman Brothers bank in September 2008 and precipitating the European debt crisis.

Therefore, has the Commission taken into account all of the factors that could take us back to another crisis of a similar nature?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(6 June 2014)

Securitisations enable banks to refinance assets by pooling and converting them into securities that allow for risk-sharing with non-bank investors. For banks, this could unlock capital resources and can improve their ability to lend to the economy. For institutional investors the securities can offer liquid investment opportunities in asset classes they do not invest in directly, e.g. SMEs or mortgages.

Some securitisation models in particular the US subprime market were inadequately regulated and contributed to the financial crisis. The weaknesses of these models were addressed in subsequent EU financial reform. Risk retention requirements apply to EU banks since 2011 and have been widened to all financial sectors. Disclosure obligations were reinforced to allow investors a thorough understanding of the instruments.

The long-term financing Communication ([1]) suggested that the regulatory approach should better reflect the risks and characteristics of each securitisation product, differentiating between 'high-quality' securitisation with simple structures and well-identified, transparent underlying assets with predictable performance and the complex and opaque structures of the financial crisis ([2]). As robust securitisation can support lending to the economy, the Commission will work, with international standard setters, on regulatory treatment making such distinction. For instance, the technical report from EIOPA to the Commission on the Solvency 2 delegated acts proposed a differentiated prudential treatment to high quality securitisation. This approach will probably be broadly incorporated into the Solvency 2 implementing acts.

([1]) COM(2014) 168, 27.3.2014.
([2]) See also the recent paper by the ECB and the Bank of England: 'The impaired EU securitisation market: causes, roadblocks and how to deal with them', www.ecb.europa.eu/pub/pdf/other/ecb-boe_impaired_eu_securitisation_marketen.pdf

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-004228/14
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D), Franco Frigo (S&D) et Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(4 avril 2014)

Objet: Changer les heures

Dans un courrier adressé à l'Association contre l'heure d'été double (ACHED), le commissaire estime que le «bilan global [en matière d'économies d'énergie suite au changement d'heure] s'avère probablement plutôt neutre».

En 1976, c'était pourtant la raison avancée pour mettre en place ce système. Suite au choc pétrolier et à l'embrasement des tarifs de l'énergie, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing avait décidé de décaler nos montres de deux heures l'été par rapport à l'heure du méridien de Greenwich, contre une heure de décalage seulement en hiver.

1. Le commissaire confirme-t-il cette position?

2. Si la position est neutre, pourquoi encore changer les heures?

3. La Commission compte-t-elle inciter les pays européens à arrêter de changer les heures?

Réponse donnée par M. Kallas au nom de la Commission
(22 mai 2014)

C'est dans les années 70 que la plupart des États membres ont adopté leur propre régime d'heure d'été. Ces décisions autonomes ont abouti à des régimes divergents entre les États membres et elles ont eu des répercussions sur le fonctionnement du marché intérieur. C'est la raison pour laquelle la Commission a présenté, et les législateurs ont adopté, une série de directives concernant les dispositions relatives à l'heure d'été, la dernière en date étant la directive 2000/84/CE ([1]) du 19 janvier 2001, qui harmonise le début et la fin de la période de l'heure d'été sur tout le territoire de l'UE.

Dans sa réponse à l'ACHED, la Commission citait un rapport, adopté en 2007 ([2]), sur l'incidence de l'actuel régime d'heure d'été. Ce rapport avait été établi, conformément à la directive 2000/84/CE, sur la base des informations, notamment des études, communiquées par les États membres, mais aussi d'autres informations disponibles. Le rapport concluait que, outre le fait d'encourager la pratique de toutes sortes de loisirs en soirée et de réaliser quelques économies d'énergie, l'heure d'été n'avait guère d'incidence. Or rien n'indique que la situation ait évolué depuis la publication de ce rapport.

La Commission continue de croire que le régime d'heure d'été, tel qu'instauré par la directive 2000/84/CE, reste approprié, comme elle l'a déclaré dans ses réponses aux questions écrites antérieures sur le sujet E-004523/2013, H-103/2010, E-009802/2011 et E-9209/2011 ([3]). Pour toutes ces raisons, la Commission n'envisage pas de présenter une proposition de modification de ladite directive.

([1]) Directive 2000/84/CE du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 19 janvier 2001 concernant les dispositions relatives à l'heure d'été, JO L 31 du 2.2.2001, p. 21 et 22.
([2]) Communication de la Commission au Conseil, au Parlement européen et au Comité économique et social européen conformément à l'article 5 de la directive (CE) nº 84/2000 concernant les dispositions relatives à l'heure d'été, COM(2007)739 du 23.11.2007.
([3]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/fr/parliamentary-questions.html

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004228/14
alla Commissione
Marc Tarabella (S&D), Franco Frigo (S&D) e Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(4 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Cambiare l'orario

In una lettera indirizzata all'Associazione contro la doppia ora legale, il Commissario indica che «il bilancio generale [in termini di risparmio energetico a seguito del cambiamento di orario] si rivela probabilmente piuttosto neutro».

Eppure, nel 1976, questo era il motivo alla base dell'attuazione di questo sistema. Dopo la crisi petrolifera e l'impennata dei prezzi dell'energia, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing aveva deciso di spostare, durante l'estate, i nostri orologi di due ore rispetto al meridiano di Greenwich, a fronte di un'ora di scarto solo in inverno.

1. Il Commissario conferma questa posizione?

2. Se la posizione è neutrale, perché modificare ancora gli orari?

3. Intende la Commissione incoraggiare i paesi europei a smettere di cambiare gli orari?

Risposta di Siim Kallas a nome della Commissione
(22 maggio 2014)

Negli anni '70 la maggior parte degli Stati membri ha introdotto normative proprie sull'ora legale. Trattandosi di decisioni autonome, in un primo momento l'ora legale era regolata da sistemi diversi a seconda degli Stati membri, con ripercussioni sul funzionamento del mercato interno. Questo spiega il perché delle direttive sull'ora legale, proposte dalla Commissione e approvate dai legislatori, confluite poi nella direttiva 2000/84/CE, del 19 gennaio 2001, che armonizza le disposizioni sulle date di inizio e di fine dell'ora legale in tutta l'UE ([1]).

La replica della Commissione a ACHED fa riferimento a una relazione sugli effetti del regime di ora legale introdotto nel 2007 e attualmente in vigore ([2]). Secondo quanto previsto dalla direttiva 2000/84/CE, la relazione è stata elaborata in base a informazioni e studi degli Stati membri e a altri dati disponibili. Nella relazione si legge che, a parte incoraggiare ogni tipo di attività di svago in serata e generare qualche risparmio energetico, l'ora legale ha un impatto minimo. Dalla pubblicazione della relazione non risulta che la situazione sia cambiata.

La Commissione continua a ritenere che le disposizioni sull'ora solare emanate dalla direttiva 2000/84/CE conservino la loro validità, come già spiegato in risposta alle interrogazioni scritte E-004523/2013, H-103/2010, E-009802/2011 e E-9209/2011 ([3]). Per questi motivi la Commissione non ritene opportuno proporne la modifica.

([1]) Direttiva 2000/84/CE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 19 gennaio 2001, concernente le disposizioni relative all'ora legale, GU L 31 del 2.2.2001, pag. 21.
([2]) Comunicazione della Commissione al Consiglio, al Parlamento Europeo e al Comitato economico e sociale europeo in conformità dell'articolo 5 della direttiva 2000/84/CE concernente le disposizioni relative all'ora legale, COM(2007) 739 del 32 novembre 2007.
([3]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/it/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004228/14
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D), Franco Frigo (S&D) and Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(4 April 2014)

Subject: Changing the clocks

In a letter to ACHED, a French association that campaigns against 'double summer time', the Commissioner stated that in terms of energy saving the overall impact of changing the clocks was 'probably fairly neutral'.

Back in 1976, however, this was the reason given for introducing the practice. After the oil crisis and with energy prices skyrocketing, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing decided that in summer the clocks should be set two hours ahead of GMT, and just one hour ahead in the winter.

1. Can the Commissioner confirm this position?

2. If the impact of changing the clocks is neutral, why continue to do it?

3. Is the Commission planning to encourage Member States to stop changing the clocks?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(22 May 2014)

Most Member States introduced their own summertime arrangements in the 1970's. These autonomous decisions resulted in different summertime arrangements being applied across the Member States and had an impact on the functioning of the internal market. Therefore, the Commission proposed and the legislators adopted a series of Directives on the summertime arrangements resulting in Directive 2000/84/EC ([1]) of 19 January 2001 which harmonised the start and end of the summertime period across the EU.

In its answer to ACHED the Commission quoted a report on the impact of the current summer time regime adopted in 2007 ([2]). The report was prepared, as foreseen by Directive 2000/84/EC, on the basis of information, including studies, received from the Member States, but also other information available. The report concluded that besides the fact that it encourages the practice of all kinds of leisure in the evening and that it generates some small energy savings — there is little impact of summertime. There are no indications that the situation has changed since the report.

The Commission continues to believe that the summer time arrangements as established by Directive 2000/84/EC remain suitable, as explained in the answers to previous written questions E-004523/2013, H-103/2010, E-009802/2011 and E-9209/2011 ([3]). For these reasons, the Commission does not intend to propose any modifications to this directive.

([1]) Directive 2000/84/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 January 2001 on summer-time arrangements, OJ L31/21-22, 2.2.2001.
([2]) Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament and the European Economic and Social Committee under Article 5 of Directive 2000/84/EC on summer-time arrangements, COM(2007)739, 23.11.2007.
([3]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-004229/14
à la Commission (Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante)
Marc Tarabella (S&D), Franco Frigo (S&D) et Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(4 avril 2014)

Objet: VP/HR — Présence européenne en Algérie

Le rapport de la Commission européenne sur la politique de voisinage fait ressortir des remarques peu élogieuses concernant l'Algérie. La Commission observe en effet que «le processus de réforme constitutionnelle n'a pas progressé». Pis, le rapport constate que le processus d'achèvement des dispositions législatives de base par des textes d'application (y compris des décrets d'application) est resté «lent». Certaines de ces dispositions législatives — telles que la loi sur les associations — présentent en outre «des lacunes manifestes par rapport aux règles et normes internationales». Le document précise également que le rapport rendu public lors des élections législatives de 2012 n'a pas été suivi d'effet par les autorités algériennes. De toutes les réformes engagées en 2011, celle qui concerne les associations a suscité l'intérêt particulier des Européens. Ces derniers relèvent notamment les difficultés que rencontrent les organisations non gouvernementales lorsqu'elles veulent venir en Algérie. Pour parler de la situation des Droits de l'homme, la Commission ne fait pas dans la demi-mesure. Elle constate essentiellement l'absence d'indépendance de la justice. «On a l'impression d'une absence constante d'indépendance du pouvoir judiciaire». La situation semble détériorée en ce qui concerne la liberté d'association et de réunion. Sur le plan politique, le constat n'est pas non plus meilleur que sur le plan économique. La Commission relève que «le problème de la corruption s'est accentué de manière substantielle au cours des dernières années et, jusqu'à présent, le gouvernement ne s'y est pas suffisamment attaqué». «Les entrées d'investissements directs étrangers sont limitées, en raison principalement du contexte régional et des limitations récemment imposées en matière d'accès à la propriété étrangère et de rapatriement de bénéfices», lit-on encore.

1. Madame la Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante compte-t-elle rencontrer prochainement les autorités algériennes pour évoquer ce rapport?

2. Sa présence est-elle prévue à la fin des élections?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Ashton, Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante au nom de la Commission
(12 juin 2014)

Les relations entre l'Algérie et l'Union européenne reposent sur l'accord d'association, signé en 2005. Dans ce contexte, et dans le cadre de la politique européenne de voisinage (PEV), les autorités algériennes et l'UE entretiennent des contacts politiques réguliers, visant à renforcer leur relation bilatérale. Le plan d'action de la PEV, qui aborde un large éventail de questions allant de la politique à l'économie en passant par le social, est actuellement en cours de négociation. Une fois ce plan d'action adopté, les mémorandums de la Commission européenne seront remplacés par des rapports de suivi par pays.

Les consultations avec les autorités algériennes se poursuivent à un haut niveau, mais aucune visite de la Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante en Algérie n'est actuellement prévue.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004229/14
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Marc Tarabella (S&D), Franco Frigo (S&D) e Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(4 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Presenza europea in Algeria

La relazione della Commissione europea sulla politica di vicinato contiene commenti poco lusinghieri sull'Algeria. La Commissione, infatti, osserva che il processo di riforma costituzionale non ha compiuto progressi. Peggio ancora, la relazione rileva che il processo di completamento delle disposizioni legislative di base mediante regolamenti di attuazione (compresi decreti di applicazione) è rimasto «lento». Alcune di queste disposizioni legislative, come la legge sulle associazioni, presentano inoltre evidenti carenze rispetto alle norme e agli standard internazionali. Il documento precisa altresì che la relazione pubblicata in occasione delle elezioni legislative del 2012 non ha avuto seguito da parte delle autorità algerine. Di tutte le riforme avviate nel 2011, quella che riguarda le associazioni ha suscitato il particolare interesse degli europei che rilevano, segnatamente, le difficoltà registrate dalle organizzazioni non governative che vogliono recarsi in Algeria. Per parlare della situazione dei diritti umani, la Commissione non usa mezze misure. Constata essenzialmente l'assenza di indipendenza della giustizia. «Si ha l'impressione di una costante assenza di indipendenza del potere giudiziario». La situazione sembra peggiorata per quanto riguarda la libertà di associazione e di riunione. Sul fronte politico, la situazione non è migliore di quella economica. La Commissione osserva che il problema della corruzione è notevolmente aumentato negli ultimi anni e che, a tutt'oggi, il governo non lo ha affrontato in modo sufficiente. L'afflusso di investimenti diretti esteri è limitato, soprattutto a causa del contesto regionale e delle limitazioni recentemente imposte in materia di accesso alla proprietà estera e di rimpatrio dei profitti.

1. Intende la signora Vicepresidente incontrare presto le autorità algerine per discuteredi questa relazione?

2. È la sua presenza prevista alla fine delle elezioni?

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

Le relazioni tra l'Algeria e l'Unione europea si basano sull'accordo di associazione firmato nel 2005. In questo contesto e nell'ambito della politica europea di vicinato (PEV) le autorità algerine e l'UE hanno contatti politici regolari per rafforzare le loro relazioni bilaterali. Si sta negoziando il piano d'azione PEV, che affronta numerose questioni di natura politica, economica e sociale. Una volta adottati, i memorandum della Commissione europea saranno sostituiti da relazioni sui progressi compiuti dai singoli paesi.

Le consultazioni con le autorità algerine proseguono ad alto livello, ma ora come ora non sono in programma visite dell'AR/VP in Algeria.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004229/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Marc Tarabella (S&D), Franco Frigo (S&D) and Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(4 April 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — European presence in Algeria

The European Commission's report on neighbourhood policy contains a number of rather critical remarks regarding Algeria. For example, the Commission observes that 'the process of constitutional reform has not progressed'. Even worse, the report finds that the process of completion of basic laws by subsidiary legislation (including decrees for application) has remained 'slow'. Some of these laws — such as the law on associations — also have 'clear shortcomings compared to international norms and standards'. The document goes on to state that the recommendations in the report published during the legislative elections in 2012 have not been implemented by the Algerian authorities. Of all the reforms to which a commitment was made in 2011, the reform in relation to associations has sparked the most interest among Europeans, who have in particular highlighted the difficulties faced by non-governmental organisations wishing to travel to Algeria. On the subject of the human rights situation, the Commission does not mince its words. It essentially finds that there is 'a continued lack of judicial independence and the situation seems to have deteriorated with respect to the freedom of association and assembly'. From a political perspective, the findings are just as negative as from an economic standpoint. The Commission notes that 'the problem of corruption increased substantially over recent years and it has been so far insufficiently addressed by the government'. It goes on to say that 'foreign direct investment inflows are limited, mainly due to the regional context and to the limitations to foreign ownership and profit repatriation recently imposed'.

1. Does the Vice-President intend to meet with the Algerian authorities in the near future in order to discuss this report?

2. Is it envisaged that she will be present at the end of the elections?

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

Relations between Algeria and the European Union are based on the Association Agreement, signed in 2005. In this framework, and in the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), the Algerian authorities and the EU hold regular political contacts, aimed at strengthening their bilateral relationship. The ENP Action Plan, which tackles a wide array of issues ranging from political to economic and social, is currently under negotiation. Once adopted, the European Commission's Memorandums will be replaced by Country Progress Reports.

Consultations with the Algerian authorities continue at a high level, but there are currently no planned visits by the HR/VP to Algeria.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-004230/14
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D), Franco Frigo (S&D) et Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(4 avril 2014)

Objet: Algérie

Le rapport de la Commission européenne sur la politique de voisinage fait ressortir des remarques peu élogieuses concernant l'Algérie. La Commission observe en effet que «le processus de réforme constitutionnelle n'a pas progressé». Pis, le rapport constate que le processus d'achèvement des dispositions législatives de base par des textes d'application (y compris des décrets d'application) est resté «lent». Certaines de ces dispositions législatives — telles que la loi sur les associations — présentent en outre «des lacunes manifestes par rapport aux règles et normes internationales». Le document précise également que le rapport rendu public lors des élections législatives de 2012 n'a pas été suivi d'effet par les autorités algériennes. De toutes les réformes engagées en 2011, celle qui concerne les associations a suscité l'intérêt particulier des Européens. Ces derniers relèvent notamment les difficultés que rencontrent les organisations non gouvernementales lorsqu'elles veulent venir en Algérie. Pour parler de la situation des Droits de l'homme, la Commission ne fait pas dans la demi-mesure. Elle constate essentiellement l'absence d'indépendance de la justice. «On a l'impression d'une absence constante d'indépendance du pouvoir judiciaire». La situation semble détériorée en ce qui concerne la liberté d'association et de réunion. Sur le plan politique, le constat n'est pas non plus meilleur que sur le plan économique. La Commission relève que «le problème de la corruption s'est accentué de manière substantielle au cours des dernières années et, jusqu'à présent, le gouvernement ne s'y est pas suffisamment attaqué». «Les entrées d'investissements directs étrangers sont limitées, en raison principalement du contexte régional et des limitations récemment imposées en matière d'accès à la propriété étrangère et de rapatriement de bénéfices», lit-on encore.

Quelles sont les actions que la Commission envisage pour améliorer la situation?

Réponse donnée par M. Füle au nom de la Commission
(11 juin 2014)

Les relations entre l'Algérie et l'Union européenne reposent sur l'accord d'association signé en 2005. Dans le cadre de cet accord, et dans le contexte de la politique européenne de voisinage (PEV), les deux parties se rencontrent régulièrement pour assurer le suivi de leurs engagements et discuter de toute une série de questions, et notamment du processus actuel de réformes. L'UE a exprimé un certain nombre de préoccupations soulevées par les Honorables Parlementaires à l'occasion du conseil d'association du 13 mai 2014. D'autres réunions de haut niveau sont par ailleurs programmées courant 2014. Les deux parties y aborderont certainement les questions mentionnées dans le rapport de la Commission.

Par ailleurs, l'UE et l'Algérie négocient actuellement un plan d'action dans lequel elles s'accordent sur leurs tâches mutuelles et, dans ce contexte, l'Union espère que l'Algérie s'engagera à prendre les mesures nécessaires pour s'attaquer aux points problématiques.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004230/14
alla Commissione
Marc Tarabella (S&D), Franco Frigo (S&D) e Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(4 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Algeria

La relazione della Commissione europea sulla politica di vicinato contiene commenti poco lusinghieri sull'Algeria. La Commissione, infatti, osserva che il processo di riforma costituzionale non ha compiuto progressi. Peggio ancora, la relazione rileva che il processo di completamento delle disposizioni legislative di base mediante regolamenti di attuazione (compresi decreti di applicazione) è rimasto «lento». Alcune di queste disposizioni legislative, come la legge sulle associazioni, presentano inoltre evidenti carenze rispetto alle norme e agli standard internazionali. Il documento precisa altresì che la relazione pubblicata in occasione delle elezioni legislative del 2012 non ha avuto seguito da parte delle autorità algerine. Di tutte le riforme avviate nel 2011, quella che riguarda le associazioni ha suscitato il particolare interesse degli europei che rilevano, segnatamente, le difficoltà registrate dalle organizzazioni non governative che vogliono recarsi in Algeria. Per parlare della situazione dei diritti umani, la Commissione non usa mezze misure. Constata essenzialmente l'assenza di indipendenza della giustizia. «Si ha l'impressione di una costante assenza di indipendenza del potere giudiziario». La situazione sembra peggiorata per quanto riguarda la libertà di associazione e di riunione. Sul fronte politico, la situazione non è migliore di quella economica. La Commissione osserva che il problema della corruzione è notevolmente aumentato negli ultimi anni e che, a tutt'oggi, il governo non lo ha affrontato in modo sufficiente. L'afflusso di investimenti diretti esteri è limitato, soprattutto a causa del contesto regionale e delle limitazioni recentemente imposte in materia di accesso alla proprietà estera e di rimpatrio dei profitti.

Quali azioni prevede la Commissione per migliorare la situazione?

Risposta di Štefan Füle a nome della Commissione
(11 giugno 2014)

Le relazioni tra l'Algeria e l'Unione europea si basano sull'accordo di associazione firmato nel 2005. Le parti si incontrano periodicamente in questo contesto e nell'ambito della politica europea di vicinato (PEV) per valutare l'adempimento dei rispettivi impegni e discutere un'ampia gamma di questioni, tra cui il processo di riforma in corso. L'UE ha sollevato diverse questioni a cui si riferiscono gli onorevoli deputati in occasione del Consiglio di associazione del 13 maggio 2014. Nel 2014 sono inoltre in programma riunioni ad alto livello durante le quali le parti affronteranno sicuramente le questioni menzionate nella relazione della Commissione.

L'UE e l'Algeria stanno inoltre negoziando un piano d'azione nel cui ambito convengono di ottenere risultati reciprocamente vantaggiosi e in questo contesto l'UE si augura che l'Algeria si impegni a prendere provvedimenti per affrontare le questioni problematiche.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004230/14
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D), Franco Frigo (S&D) and Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(4 April 2014)

Subject: Algeria

The European Commission's report on neighbourhood policy contains a number of rather critical remarks regarding Algeria. For example, the Commission observes that 'the process of constitutional reform has not progressed'. Even worse, the report finds that the process of completion of basic laws by subsidiary legislation (including decrees for application) has remained 'slow'. Some of these laws — such as the law on associations — also have 'clear shortcomings compared to international norms and standards'. The document goes on to state that the recommendations in the report published during the legislative elections in 2012 have not been implemented by the Algerian authorities. Of all the reforms to which a commitment was made in 2011, the reform in relation to associations has sparked the most interest among Europeans, who have in particular highlighted the difficulties faced by non-governmental organisations wishing to travel to Algeria. On the subject of the human rights situation, the Commission does not mince its words. It essentially finds that there is 'a continued lack of judicial independence and the situation seems to have deteriorated with respect to the freedom of association and assembly'. From a political perspective, the findings are just as negative as from an economic standpoint. The Commission notes that 'the problem of corruption increased substantially over recent years and it has been so far insufficiently addressed by the government'. It goes on to say that 'foreign direct investment inflows are limited, mainly due to the regional context and to the limitations to foreign ownership and profit repatriation recently imposed'.

What action does the Commission plan to take in order to improve the situation?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(11 June 2014)

Relations between Algeria and the European Union are based on the Association Agreement, signed in 2005. In this framework, and in the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), the two parties meet regularly to follow-up on their commitments and discuss a wide range of issues, including the current process of reforms. The EU raised a number of concerns mentionned by the Honourable Members of Parliament on the occaision of the Association Council that took place on 13 May 2014. Moreover, additional high-level meetings are scheduled to take place during 2014, in which both sides will undoubtedly tackle the issues mentioned in the Commission's report.

The EU and Algeria are likewise engaged in the negotiation of an Action Plan, in which both sides agree on mutual deliverables and, in this context, the EU hopes that Algeria will commit to take steps to tackle problematic issues.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-004231/14
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D), Franco Frigo (S&D) et Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(4 avril 2014)

Objet: Loi Major

La loi Major, en vigueur depuis plus de quarante ans, dispose que les travailleurs engagés dans la zone portuaire doivent bénéficier d'un statut avantageux.

1. À quel propos précisément la Commission mène-t-elle une enquête?

2. Sur plainte de qui?

Réponse donnée par M. Kallas au nom de la Commission
(28 mai 2014)

1. Dans sa lettre de mise en demeure, la Commission considère que les règles et pratiques de la Belgique en matière de travail pourraient enfreindre le principe de la liberté d'établissement. Le traité s'oppose à toute mesure nationale qui gêne ou rend moins attrayant l'exercice de la liberté d'établissement, même si cette mesure n'introduit pas de discrimination fondée sur la nationalité.

2. La Commission a reçu trois plaintes officielles représentant cinq entreprises qui utilisent des ports belges. L'un des plaignants est Katoen Natie NV/Logisport. Les autres ont sollicité le traitement confidentiel de leur plainte.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004231/14
alla Commissione
Marc Tarabella (S&D), Franco Frigo (S&D) e Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(4 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Legge Major

La legge *Major*, in vigore da quarant'anni, prevede per i lavoratori impegnati in zone portuarie di uno statuto specifico agevolato.

1. In materia sta la Commissione effettuando un'indagine?

2. Da chi proviene il ricorso?

Risposta di Siim Kallas a nome della Commissione
(28 maggio 2014)

1. Nella sua lettera di costituzione in mora la Commissione ha sostenuto che la legislazione del lavoro belga e le prassi in questo ambito potrebbero violare il principio della libertà di stabilimento. Il trattato vieta l'adozione di misure nazionali che, pur non essendo discriminatorie sul piano della nazionalità, ostacolano o rendono meno attraente l'esercizio della libertà di stabilimento.

2. La Commissione ha ricevuto tre denunce ufficiali emananti da cinque società che utilizzano i porti belgi. Uno dei denuncianti è la società Katoen Natie NV/Logisport. Gli altri denuncianti hanno chiesto che la loro identità non fosse rivelata.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004231/14
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D), Franco Frigo (S&D) and Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(4 April 2014)

Subject: Belgian law on port labour (loi Major)

The *loi Major*, a Belgian law on port labour stipulating that port workers must be afforded a favourable employment status, has been in force for 40 years now.

1. On what basis exactly is the Commission conducting an inquiry?

2. Who has made a complaint?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(28 May 2014)

1. In its letter of formal notice, the Commission considers that the Belgian labour rules and practices could infringe the principle of freedom of establishment. The Treaty precludes any national measure which, even though not discriminatory on grounds of nationality, hinders or renders less attractive the exercise of the freedom of establishment.

2. The Commission received three formal complaints, representing five companies which use Belgian ports. One of the complainants is Katoen Natie NV/Logisport. The other complaints requested a confidential treatment of their complaint.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-004232/14
à la Commission (Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante)
Marc Tarabella (S&D), Franco Frigo (S&D) et Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(4 avril 2014)

Objet: VP/HR — Peine de mort en Afrique

Le niveau inquiétant du recours à la peine de mort dans un petit groupe de pays s'est traduit par une augmentation de plus de 50 % du nombre d'exécutions en Afrique en 2013 par rapport à l'année précédente.

La vaste majorité des États d'Afrique a cessé de recourir à la peine capitale, tandis qu'un petit groupe isolé d'États continue de procéder à des exécutions.

L'augmentation choquante des exécutions ne concerne qu'un tout petit nombre de pays, constat d'autant plus décevant que de réels progrès vers l'abolition ont été observés ailleurs dans la région ces dernières années.

Trois pays — le Nigeria, le Soudan et la Somalie — ont totalisé plus de 90 % des 64 exécutions signalées en Afrique en 2013. Ils étaient également responsables des deux tiers de l'ensemble des condamnations à mort prononcées dans la région, avec des hausses spectaculaires au Nigeria et en Somalie.

La Somalie, tout particulièrement, a présenté une forte hausse du recours à la peine de mort, le nombre d'exécutions recensées passant de six en 2012 à 34 en 2013. Plus de la moitié des condamnations à mort ont été appliquées dans la région semi-autonome du Puntland, et concernaient bien souvent des membres présumés du groupe al Shabab.

Le Nigeria a repris les exécutions pour la première fois depuis sept ans, envoyant quatre hommes au gibet en juin. Dans des déclarations très inquiétantes, le président Goodluck Jonathan avait donné le feu vert à la reprise des exécutions, mettant en péril plus de 1 000 condamnés à mort.

1. Des rencontres sont-elles prévues prochainement avec les autorités de ces 3 pays?

2. La peine de mort y est-elle juste évoquée ou vraiment abordée afin qu'elle disparaisse?

3. Quels sont les résultats de ces réunions?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Ashton, Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante au nom de la Commission
(13 juin 2014)

L'UE est bien consciente de la situation qui règne en Afrique en matière de peine de mort. Bien que plus d'un tiers des pays africans aient supprimé la peine capitale et que des pays plus nombreux encore appliquent un moratoire de fait ou de droit sur les exécutions, quelques-uns persistent à maintenir cette sentence cruelle et inhumaine dans leur système pénal.

L'UE s'oppose au recours à la peine de mort par des démarches ciblées, des déclarations publiques et durant les dialogues politiques et les dialogues sur les Droits de l'homme qu'elle mène avec les pays tiers, dans le cadre desquels elle presse les autorités de mettre un terme aux exécutions et d'appliquer un moratoire comme première étape vers l'abolition.

La déclaration publique la plus récente, qui a été faite le 25 juin 2013, concernait la levée d'un moratoire de sept ans au Nigeria en vue de l'exécution de quatre prisonniers dans l'État d'Edo. L'UE a aussi eu recours à des démarches ciblées et est interventue par la voie diplomatique publique et privée au niveau fédéral et au niveau de l'État d'Edo. La question a par ailleurs été abordée durant les dialogues politiques et les dialogues sur les Droits de l'homme en 2013 et lors de l'examen périodique universel d'octobre 2013 à Genève.

Dans le cas du Soudan, où les exécutions ne font pas l'objet d'une annonce publique, l'UE est intervenue avec succès, par l'entremise de sa délégation à Khartoum, pour empêcher trois exécutions prononcées en vertu de la Charia. La présence de diplomates de l'UE dans les tribunaux et la fourniture de conseils juridiques ont par ailleurs permis à l'UE de faire annuler des jugements et de relancer les procédures au niveau d'un tribunal de première instance après un appel.

En Somalie, l'UE soulève régulièrement la question de la peine de mort auprès des autorités somaliennes et elle a convenu avec la Mission d'assistance des Nations unies en Somalie (UNSOM) de presser conjointement le gouvernement d'adopter un moratoire sur la peine de mort.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004232/14
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Marc Tarabella (S&D), Franco Frigo (S&D) e Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(4 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Pena di morte in Africa

L'inquietante livello di ricorso alla pena di morte in un piccolo gruppo di paesi si è tradotto in un aumento di oltre il 50 % del numero di esecuzioni avvenute in Africa nel 2013 rispetto all'anno precedente.

La stragrande maggioranza degli Stati africani ha smesso di usare la pena capitale, mentre un piccolo gruppo isolato di paesi continua ad eseguire condanne a morte.

L'aumento scioccante delle esecuzioni riguarda solo un piccolo numero di paesi, constatazione ancor più deludente visto che, negli ultimi anni, sono stati rilevati reali progressi verso l'abolizione in altre zone della regione.

Tre paesi — Nigeria, Sudan e Somalia — hanno totalizzato oltre il 90 % delle 64 esecuzioni segnalate in Africa nel 2013. In tali paesi sono stati inoltre pronunciati due terzi dell'insieme delle condanne a morte della regione, con aumenti spettacolari in Nigeria e in Somalia.

La Somalia, in particolare, ha evidenziato un forte aumento del ricorso alla pena di morte, con un numero di esecuzioni che è passato da sei nel 2012 a 34 nel 2013. Più della metà delle condanne a morte sono state applicate nella regione semi-autonoma del Puntland e riguardavano spesso presunti membri del gruppo al-Shabab.

La Nigeria ha ripreso le esecuzioni per la prima volta da sette anni, mandando quattro uomini al patibolo nel mese di giugno. Con dichiarazioni molto inquietanti, il presidente Goodluck Jonathan ha dato il via libera alla ripresa delle esecuzioni, mettendo in pericolo più di 1.000 condannati a morte.

1. Sono, nel prossimo futuro, previsti incontri con le autorità dei tre paesi?

2. La pena di morte vi è appena accennata o affrontata in modo tale che scompaia?

3. Quali sono i risultati di queste riunioni?

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

L'UE è perfettamente consapevole della situazione riguardante la pena di morte in Africa. Nonostante più di un terzo dei paesi africani abbia abolito la pena di morte e molti altri applichino una moratoria di fatto o di diritto sulle esecuzioni, alcuni obiettori persistenti continuano a mantenere questa punizione inumana e crudele nei rispettivi sistemi di giustizia penale.

L'Unione europea si oppone al ricorso alla pena di morte mediante apposite iniziative diplomatiche e dichiarazioni pubbliche, e in occasione di dialoghi politici e sui diritti umani con i paesi terzi esorta le autorità a porre fine alle esecuzioni e ad applicare una moratoria come primo passo verso la sua abolizione.

La più recente dichiarazione pubblica trasmessa il 25 giugno 2013 riguardava la cessazione di una moratoria di 7 anni in Nigeria, che ha comportato l'esecuzione di 4 prigionieri nello Stato di Edo. L'UE ha inoltre affrontato la questione della pena di morte mediante iniziative mirate e procedure diplomatiche di natura pubblica e privata a livello federale e statale. La questione è stata inoltre sollevata nel 2013 durante i dialoghi politici e sui diritti umani nonché in occasione del processo di riesame periodico universale tenutosi a Ginevra nella sessione di ottobre 2013.

Nel caso del Sudan, dove le esecuzioni delle condanne a morte non sono annunciate pubblicamente, l'Unione europea è riuscita, mediante la sua delegazione a Khartoum, a bloccare l'esecuzione di tre pene capitali comminate in conformità alla legge della Sharia. Tramite la presenza di diplomatici dell'UE nei tribunali e le prestazioni di consulenza legale, l'UE è inoltre riuscita a far ribaltare la sentenza di primo grado in sede di appello.

In Somalia, l'UE solleva regolarmente la questione della pena di morte con le autorità e a tale riguardo ha concordato con la missione di assistenza dell'ONU in Somalia (UNSOM) di esercitare pressioni congiunte sul governo affinché questo emetta una moratoria contro la pena di morte.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004232/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Marc Tarabella (S&D), Franco Frigo (S&D) and Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(4 April 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Death penalty in Africa

The alarming degree to which a small group of countries are using the death penalty is demonstrated by the fact that the number of executions carried out in Africa increased by over 50% in 2013 as compared to the previous year.

The vast majority of African countries have ceased to use the death penalty, but a small, isolated group of countries continue to carry out executions.

The shocking increase in the number of executions only concerns a very small number of countries, a fact that is even more discouraging given the real progress towards abolition that has been observed elsewhere in the region in recent years.

Three countries — Nigeria, Sudan and Somalia — accounted for over 90% of the 64 executions reported in Africa in 2013. They were also responsible for two thirds of all the death penalties handed down in the region, with dramatic increases being observed in Nigeria and Somalia.

Somalia, in particular, exhibited a sharp increase in the use of the death penalty, with the number of executions accounted for rising from six in 2012 to 34 in 2013. Over half of the death sentences were given in the semi-autonomous region of Puntland and often involved alleged members of the al-Shabab group.

Nigeria carried out executions for the first time in seven years, sending four men to the gallows in June. In some highly disconcerting statements, President Goodluck Jonathan gave the green light to the reintroduction of the death penalty, leaving over 1 000 people who are condemned to death in peril.

1. Have any meetings with the authorities of these three countries been scheduled to take place in the near future?

2. Is the subject of the death penalty being merely broached in these meetings, or is it being genuinely tackled with a view to abolishing it?

3. What has resulted from these meetings?

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

The EU is well aware of the death penalty situation in Africa. Although more than a third of the African countries have done away with the capital punishment and many more apply a *de facto* or *de jure* moratorium on executions, some persistent objectors still retain this cruel and inhumane punishment in their criminal system.

The EU objects to the use of the death penalty through targeted demarches, public statements, and during the political/human rights dialogues with third countries where the EU urges the authorities to halt executions and apply a moratorium as a first step towards abolition.

The most recent public statement made on 25 June 2013 concerned the break of a 7-year moratorium in Nigeria when 4 prisoners were executed in the Edo state. The EU has additionally addressed the subject through targeted demarches and through public and private diplomacy at federal and state level. The issue was also raised during the political and human rights dialogues in 2013 and at the Universal Periodic Review session in October 2013 in Geneva.

In the case of Sudan, where the executions of death sentences are not publicly announced, the EU through its Delegation in Khartoum has successfully intervened to stop three executions of capital punishments under Sharia law. Through the presence of EU diplomats in courts and the provision of legal advice, the EU has furthermore succeeded in reversing cases back to first instance after appeal.

In Somalia, the EU raises regularly the issue of the death penalty with the Somali authorities and has agreed with the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) on jointly pressing the government to issue a moratorium against the death penalty.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-004233/14
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D), Franco Frigo (S&D) et Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(4 avril 2014)

Objet: Loi et blasphème

Au Pakistan, un balayeur de confession chrétienne habitant à Lahore a été condamné pour blasphème à la peine de mort par pendaison, ainsi qu'à une amende de 200 000 roupies. Il a été arrêté le 6 mars 2013 après qu'un ami l'ait accusé d'avoir tenu des propos blasphématoires au cours d'une dispute. C'est une parodie de justice. De sérieux doutes existent quant à l'équité de son procès, et une dispute entre deux amis ne suffit pas à envoyer quelqu'un à la potence. Savan Masih doit être libéré immédiatement et sans condition.

Les lois relatives au blasphème, formulées en termes vagues, ainsi que les enquêtes lacunaires des autorités et les actes d'intimidation imputables à la population et à certains groupes religieux, favorisent la constitution de milices d'autodéfense au Pakistan, en particulier dans l'État du Pendjab (nord-est).

Aux termes de la législation pakistanaise, le blasphème est passible de mort, même s'il ne satisfait pas aux critères définissant les «crimes les plus graves» — seuls crimes pour lesquels le recours à la peine capitale est autorisé par le droit international.

Quelle est la position de la Commission sur la loi contre les blasphèmes?

Réponse donnée par la Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante, M^me^ Ashton au nom de la Commission
(26 mai 2014)

Les lois pakistanaises sur le blasphème constituent une préoccupation majeure en matière de liberté de religion et de conviction. Une préoccupation connexe tient au fait que ces lois sont souvent utilisées de façon abusive pour régler des comptes personnels ou saisir des biens. Les juridictions inférieures, en présence de cas de blasphèmes présumés, continuent de prononcer de très lourdes peines, y compris des condamnations à mort. Le Pakistan observe toutefois un moratoire de fait sur la peine de mort. Il convient de noter que, bien que les cas qui attirent l'attention de la communauté internationale concernent généralement des chrétiens ou d'autres minorités, la plupart des affaires opposent des musulmans.

La haute représentante/vice-présidente a fait part à maintes reprises de ses inquiétudes concernant le risque d'utilisation abusive des lois sur le blasphème et a demandé aux autorités pakistanaises de prendre des mesures appropriées pour prévenir les incidents liés à l'hostilité religieuse, afin de protéger les droits de tous les citoyens et de rendre les pratiques des pouvoirs publics conformes aux engagements pris par le pays à l'égard des instruments internationaux en matière de Droits de l'homme. L'UE a également appelé le gouvernement à traduire en justice tous les groupes et individus qui incitent à commettre des actes terroristes ou se rendent coupables de tels actes. Pour exercer un effet de dissuasion, il est essentiel que les auteurs de tels actes aient à en répondre.

Il est clair que les lois sur le blasphème constituent une question politiquement très sensible au Pakistan: des hommes politiques de premier plan ayant plaidé pour des réformes ont été pris pour cible, voire tués dans des attentats terroristes. La position de l'UE consiste à continuer de plaider en faveur de réformes, s'il s'avère impossible d'obtenir l'abrogation des lois sur le blasphème. En outre, nous avons attiré l'attention sur le caractère dommageable, pour le développement du pays, d'un climat d'intimidation et de violence.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004233/14
alla Commissione
Marc Tarabella (S&D), Franco Frigo (S&D) e Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(4 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Legge contro la blasfemia

In Pakistan, un netturbino di confessione cristiana residente a Lahore, accusato di blasfemia, è stato condannato alla pena di morte per impiccagione e a una pena pecuniaria di 200 000 rupie. L'arresto è avvenuto il 6 marzo dietro l'accusa da parte di un amico di aver tenuto discorsi blasfemi nel corso di una lite. Più che di giustizia, si tratta di una farsa. Esistono seri dubbi in merito all'equità del processo, senza contare che non è sufficiente una lite tra amici per essere mandati alla forca. Savan Masih deve essere liberato immediatamente e in maniera incondizionata.

Le leggi sulla blasfemia, formulate in termini vaghi, unitamente alle indagini lacunose da parte delle autorità e alle intimidazioni messe in atto dalla popolazione e da determinati gruppi religiosi favoriscono il costituirsi di milizie di autodifesa in Pakistan, in particolare nello Stato del Punjab (nord-est).

In base alla legislazione del Pakistan, la blasfemia è punibile con la morte benché non rientri nella categoria dei «delitti più gravi», i soli per i quali il diritto internazionale consente il ricorso alla pena capitale.

Qual è la posizione della Commissione sulla legge contro la blasfemia?

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

Le leggi pakistane sulla blasfemia sono giudicate estremamente preoccupanti in termini di libertà di religione e di credo. Si teme inoltre che in molti casi vengano utilizzate per vendette personali o per la confisca di beni. I tribunali di grado inferiore continuano a infliggere condanne molto gravi, compresa la pena capitale, nei presunti casi di blasfemia, anche se in Pakistan vige una moratoria di fatto della pena di morte. Va osservato che, sebbene l'attenzione internazionale si concentri generalmente sui casi riguardanti cristiani o altre minoranze, la maggioranza delle persone coinvolte è musulmana.

L'AR/VP ha espresso più volte preoccupazione per i potenziali abusi legati alle leggi sulla blasfemia e ha esortato le autorità pakistane a prendere opportuni provvedimenti per prevenire incidenti causati dall'ostilità di stampo religioso, tutelare i diritti di tutti i cittadini e allineare le prassi del governo ai suoi impegni in conformità degli strumenti internazionali sui diritti umani. L'UE ha inoltre invitato il governo ad assicurare alla giustizia tutti i gruppi e le persone che compiono atti terroristici o incitano a farlo. Solo una chiara definizione delle responsabilità può garantire un effetto deterrente.

Le leggi sulla blasfemia sono indubbiamente una questione molto delicata in Pakistan: eminenti politici che ne caldeggiavano la riforma sono stati oggetto di attentati terroristici. Se l'abrogazione di queste leggi dovesse risultare inattuabile, l'UE continuerà ad adoperarsi in favore della riforma. L'Unione ha espresso peraltro preoccupazione per gli effetti negativi che un clima di intimidazione e di violenza può avere per lo sviluppo del paese.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004233/14
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D), Franco Frigo (S&D) and Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(4 April 2014)

Subject: Law and blasphemy

In Pakistan, a Christian roadsweeper living in Lahore has been sentenced to death by hanging for blasphemy, and fined PKR 200 000. He was arrested on 6 March 2013 after a friend accused him of making blasphemous remarks during an argument. This is a parody of justice. There are serious doubts surrounding the fairness of his trial, and an argument between two friends is not enough to send somebody to the gallows. Savan Masih must be freed immediately and unconditionally.

The laws relating to blasphemy, which are vaguely worded, as well as the inadequate investigations of the authorities and the acts of intimidation attributable to the population and to certain religious groups, are encouraging the formation of self-defence militia groups in Pakistan, particularly in the state of Punjab (North-East).

Under Pakistani legislation, blasphemy carries the death penalty even if it does not satisfy the criteria that define the 'most serious crimes' — the only crimes for which use of the death penalty is authorised by international law.

What stance does the Commission take on the law against blasphemy?

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

Pakistan's blasphemy laws are a key concern when it comes to freedom of religion and belief. A related concern is that the laws are often misused to settle personal scores or seize property. In response to presumed cases, very harsh punishments, including the death sentence, continue to be handed out by the lower courts. Nevertheless Pakistan has a *de facto* moratorium on the death penalty. It should be noted that while the cases that receive international attention generally concern Christians or other minorities, most cases are between Muslims.

The HR/VP has repeatedly expressed concern at the potential for abuse of the blasphemy laws, and has called on the Pakistani authorities to take adequate measures to prevent incidents of religious hostility, to protect the rights of all citizens and to align government practice with its commitments to international human rights instruments. The EU has also called on the government to bring to justice all groups and individuals responsible for inciting and carrying out acts of terror. Accountability is vital to deter perpetrators.

It is clear that the blasphemy laws are a politically very sensitive issue in Pakistan: prominent politicians who have advocated reforms have been targeted if not killed in terrorist attacks. The EU's position continues to be to push for reform if repeal of the blasphemy laws is not achievable. Moreover we have conveyed concern at the damage that a climate of intimidation and violence does to the country's development.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-004234/14
à la Commission (Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante)
Marc Tarabella (S&D), Franco Frigo (S&D) et Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(4 avril 2014)

Objet: VP/HR — Meurtre d'un chrétien au Pakistan

Un balayeur de confession chrétienne habitant à Lahore, a été condamné à la peine de mort par pendaison, ainsi qu'à une amende de 200 000 roupies, pour blasphème au Pakistan. Il a été arrêté le 6 mars 2013 après qu'un ami l'ait accusé d'avoir tenu des propos blasphématoires au cours d'une dispute. C'est une parodie de justice. De sérieux doutes existent quant à l'équité de son procès, et une dispute entre deux amis ne suffit pas à envoyer quelqu'un à la potence. Savan Masih doit être libéré immédiatement et sans condition.

Les lois relatives au blasphème, formulées en termes vagues, ainsi que les enquêtes lacunaires des autorités et les actes d'intimidation imputables à la population et à certains groupes religieux, favorisent la constitution de milices d'autodéfense au Pakistan, en particulier dans l'État du Pendjab (Nord-est).

Aux termes de la législation pakistanaise, le blasphème est passible de mort, même s'il ne satisfait pas aux critères définissant les «crimes les plus graves» — seuls crimes pour lesquels le recours à la peine capitale est autorisé par le droit international.

1. Quelle est la position européenne dans ce dossier?

2. Madame la Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante compte-t-elle faire pression afin que les autorités pakistanaises libèrent immédiatement ce chrétien condamné à mort en vertu de la législation du pays relative au blasphème et fassent annuler sa condamnation?

Réponse donnée par la Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante Ashton au nom de la Commission
(6 juin 2014)

1. La Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante renvoie l'Honorable Parlementaire à la réponse E-004233/2014.

2. La Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante renvoie l'Honorable Parlementaire à la réponse E-008959/2013.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004234/14
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Marc Tarabella (S&D), Franco Frigo (S&D) e Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(4 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Uccisione di un cristiano in Pakistan

Uno spazzino di confessione cristiana di Lahore è stato condannato alla pena di morte per impiccagione nonché a una multa di 200 000 rupie per blasfemia in Pakistan. È stato arrestato il 6 marzo 2013 dopo la denuncia di un amico che l'ha accusato di aver pronunciato blasfemie nel corso di un litigio. Si tratta di una parodia della giustizia. Sussistono forti dubbi sull'equità del processo e una litigio tra amici non basta per spedire qualcuno sul patibolo. Savan Masih deve essere scarcerato immediatamente e senza condizioni.

Le leggi sulla blasfemia, formulate in termini vaghi, nonché le indagini incomplete delle autorità e gli atti intimidatori attribuiti alla popolazione e ad alcuni raggruppamenti religiosi, favoriscono la costituzione di milizie di autodifesa in Pakistan, specialmente nello Stato del Punjab (nord-est).

Secondo la legislazione pachistana, la blasfemia è passibile di pena capitale, anche se non corrisponde ai criteri che definiscono i «crimini più gravi», ovvero gli unici per i quali il diritto internazionale permette il ricorso alla pena capitale.

1. Qual è la posizione europea in materia?

2. Intende il VP/HR esercitare pressioni affinché le autorità pachistane dispongano l'immediata liberazione di questo cristiano condannato a morte in virtù della legislazione del paese in materia di blasfemia e procedano all'annullamento della condanna?

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

1. L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente rinvia gli onorevoli parlamentari alla risposta data all'interrogazione scritta E- 004233/2014.

2. L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente rinvia gli onorevoli parlamentari alla risposta data all'interrogazione scritta E- 008959/2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004234/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Marc Tarabella (S&D), Franco Frigo (S&D) and Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(4 April 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Murder of a Christian in Pakistan

A Christian roadsweeper living in Lahore has been sentenced to death by hanging and fined PKR 200 000 for blasphemy in Pakistan. He was arrested on 6 March 2013 after a friend accused him of making blasphemous remarks during an argument. This is a parody of justice. There are serious doubts surrounding the fairness of his trial, and an argument between two friends is not enough to send somebody to the gallows. Savan Masih must be freed immediately and unconditionally.

The laws relating to blasphemy, which are vaguely worded, as well as the inadequate investigations of the authorities and the acts of intimidation attributable to the population and to certain religious groups, are encouraging the formation of self-defence militia groups in Pakistan, particularly in the state of Punjab (North-East).

Under Pakistani legislation, blasphemy carries the death penalty even if it does not satisfy the criteria that define the 'most serious crimes' — the only crimes for which use of the death penalty is authorised by international law.

1. What stance does Europe take in this case?

2. Does the Vice-President intend to apply pressure with a view to the Pakistani authorities immediately freeing this Christian who is condemned to death under the country's legislation in relation to blasphemy and having his conviction overturned?

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

1. The HR/VP refers the honourable members to reply E-004233/2014.

2. The HR/VP refers the honourable members to reply E-008959/2013.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-004235/14
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D), Franco Frigo (S&D) et Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(4 avril 2014)

Objet: Frères musulmans — Égypte

Ce lundi 24 mars, un tribunal égyptien a condamné à mort des centaines de partisans de Mohamed Morsi (l'ex-président déchu de ses fonctions).

Gamal Eid, expert juridique à la tête du Réseau arabe pour l'information sur les Droits de l'homme, a déploré, à propos de ce jugement historique, «une catastrophe, une mascarade et un scandale qui aura des conséquences pour l'Égypte pendant des années».

Quelle est la réaction de la Commission européenne sur ce dossier?

Réponse donnée par Madame Ashton,Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante au nom de la Commission
(11 juin 2014)

La Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante a exprimé la plus vive préoccupation de l'UE concernant la nouvelle de la condamnation à mort massive décrétée par un tribunal pénal d'Al-Minya, en Moyenne-Égypte, publiée dans un communiqué du 24 mars dernier. Madame Ashton a réitéré avec force cette préoccupation lors de sa rencontre avec le ministre égyptien des affaires étrangères, Nabil Fahmi, le 31 mars dernier à Bruxelles, ainsi que lors de réunions avec l'ensemble des autorités compétentes au cours de sa mission au Caire, du 9 au 11 avril derniers.

L'UE déplore également l'absence de respect du droit dans cette procédure sommaire expédiée en deux jours, au cours de laquelle les prévenus ont été jugés collectivement plutôt que sur la base de dossiers individuels, ce qui est contraire aux normes fondamentales de justice. L'UE estime en outre que rien ne peut justifier la peine capitale et que chacun a droit à un procès équitable et à des conditions de détention adéquates.

L'UE assure un suivi étroit de cette affaire depuis Le Caire, en demandant aux autorités intérimaires d'entreprendre toutes les actions nécessaires pour garantir un procès équitable fondé sur des accusations claires, des mesures d'enquête sérieuses et indépendantes et le droit pour les accusés de faire appel à un avocat et de voir leurs proches.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004235/14
alla Commissione
Marc Tarabella (S&D), Franco Frigo (S&D) e Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(4 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Fratelli musulmani — Egitto

Lunedì 24 marzo, un tribunale egiziano ha condannato a morte centinaia di sostenitori di Mohamed Morsi (l'ex presidente decaduto dalle proprie funzioni).

Gamal Eid, giurista a capo della Rete araba per l'informazione sui diritti umani, ha espresso la sua riprovazione definendo tale sentenza storica come «una catastrofe, una mascherata e uno scandalo le cui conseguenze saranno avvertite in Egitto per anni».

Qual è la reazione della Commissione europea in merito?

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

In una dichiarazione del 24 marzo l'AR/VP ha espresso la profonda preoccupazione dell'UE riguardo alla condanna a morte di massa emessa dal tribunale di Minya nell'Alto Egitto. Questa posizione è stata fermamente ribadita dall'AR/VP al ministro degli Esteri egiziano Nabil Fahmi il 31 marzo a Bruxelles e in occasione di incontri con tutte le autorità competenti nell'ambito della sua missione al Cairo del 9-11 aprile.

L'UE deplora inoltre l'assenza di un processo equo nelle due giornate di procedimenti sommari, in cui gli imputati sono stati processati come gruppo e non sulla base dei meriti dei singoli casi, senza quindi rispettare i più elementari principi di giustizia. L'UE ritiene altresì che la pena di morte non possa essere giustificata in alcun caso e che un processo equo e adeguate condizioni di detenzione debbano essere sempre garantiti.

L'Unione europea segue da vicino il caso in questione al Cairo, invitando le autorità provvisorie a intraprendere tutte le misure necessarie per garantire un processo equo basato su accuse precise, indagini corrette e indipendenti, nonché il diritto di accesso e di contatto con gli avvocati e i familiari.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004235/14
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D), Franco Frigo (S&D) and Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(4 April 2014)

Subject: Muslim Brotherhood — Egypt

On Monday, 24 March, an Egyptian court sentenced to death hundreds of adherents of Mohamed Morsi (the ousted ex-President).

In relation to this historic judgment, Gamal Eid, a legal expert and head of the Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, has deplored 'a disaster, a masquerade and a scandal which will affect Egypt for years'.

What is the Commission's reaction to this case?

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

The HR/VP expressed utmost concern by the EU regarding the news of the mass death sentence issued by a criminal court in Minya in upper Egypt in a statement issued on 24 March. These concerns were firmly reiterated by the HR/VP during her face-to-face meeting with the Egyptian Foreign Minister Nabil Fahmi in Brussels on 31 March, as well as during meetings with all the relevant authorities in the course of her mission to Cairo between 9 and 11 April.

The EU also deplores the lack of due process in the two-day summary proceedings in which the defendants were tried as a group rather than on the merits of individual cases, against the most basic standards of justice. The EU further believes that capital punishment can never be justified, and that a fair trial must always be ensured, as well as adequate detention conditions.

The EU is closely following up this case in Cairo, asking the interim authorities to undertake all the necessary steps to guarantee a fair trial based on clear charges and proper and independent investigations, as well as the right of access and contact to lawyers and family members.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-004236/14
à la Commission
Rachida Dati (PPE)
(4 avril 2014)

Objet: L'alliance européenne pour l'apprentissage doit se fixer des objectifs précis

Le chômage des jeunes a atteint ces dernières années des proportions très inquiétantes. Ainsi, plus d'un jeune chômeur sur cinq ne parvient pas à trouver un emploi et le taux de chômage pour cette catégorie représente le double de celui des adultes. Ces chiffres sont en partie dus à une inadéquation des compétences sur le marché du travail. Face à cette situation évidemment dommageable financièrement pour les jeunes, mais également porteuse d'exclusion sociale, l'apprentissage apparaît comme une solution efficace pour préparer les jeunes européens aux emplois de demain.

L'apprentissage prépare à un métier et fournit une qualification. Il débouche par ailleurs dans la plupart des cas sur un emploi. Il est manifeste que, dans les États membres disposant de systèmes d'enseignement et de formation professionnels solides et accordant une large part à l'apprentissage, le chômage des jeunes est le plus faible.

La Commission avait pris conscience de l'importance de l'apprentissage dans le cadre de son «Paquet emploi jeunes» en 2012 en prévoyant une «garantie pour la jeunesse». Avec la création de l'alliance européenne pour l'apprentissage en juillet 2013, elle s'est engagée à se concentrer rapidement sur cette problématique, particulièrement au moyen d'un dialogue resserré avec syndicats et employeurs. Dans une communication intitulée «Œuvrer ensemble pour les jeunes Européens», elle s'est également positionnée en faveur de l'adoption de mesures encourageant l'offre de contrats d'apprentissage de haute qualité — notamment dans les PME — et à remédier aux pénuries de qualifications, plus particulièrement dans les secteurs des technologies de l'information et de la communication (TIC), des soins de santé et de l'économie verte. Malgré ces multiples engagements, le sort des jeunes sur le marché du travail européen reste préoccupant.

La Commission peut-elle faire part des résultats et des objectifs attendus en termes de création de postes en apprentissage, en particulier dans ces secteurs d'avenir, dans le cadre de l'alliance européenne pour l'apprentissage?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Vassiliou au nom de la Commission
(3 juin 2014)

La Commission convient avec l'Honorable Parlementaire que les pays dotés de systèmes d'EFP solides et attractifs, notamment ceux qui disposent de systèmes d'apprentissage bien établis, tendent à afficher de meilleurs résultats en termes d'emploi des jeunes. Aussi a-t-elle lancé l'alliance européenne pour l'apprentissage, dont l'objectif est d'améliorer la qualité et l'offre d'apprentissages dans l'ensemble de l'UE et de changer les mentalités en faveur de formations centrées sur l'apprentissage.

Actuellement, aucun objectif spécifique quant au nombre de postes d'apprentissage n'a été fixé au niveau européen. Cependant, les États membres ont approuvé une déclaration du Conseil ([1]) qui soutient l'alliance européenne pour l'apprentissage et dans laquelle ils s'engagent à fournir une description des mesures qu'ils envisagent de prendre pour augmenter l'offre, la qualité et l'attrait des apprentissages. À la suite de cette déclaration, la Commission a invité les États membres à fournir un aperçu des mesures prises à cet égard et à fixer des objectifs et des indicateurs de réussite. Jusqu'à présent, 21 États membres ont fait état d'engagements en ce sens mais seuls quelques-uns de ces engagements comportent des objectifs quantifiables. Les réponses seront publiées sous peu sur le site internet de l'alliance ([2]).

Les informations concernant les réformes en matière d'EFP, en particulier pour ce qui est de la formation par le travail, de l'apprentissage et des secteurs d'avenir, seront publiées dans le cadre de la méthode ouverte de coordination dans le domaine de l'éducation et de la formation ainsi que dans le contexte du Semestre européen. La Commission a aussi prodigué des conseils aux États membres sur la réforme des apprentissages et en ce qui concerne la conception des garanties pour la jeunesse et des plans de mise en œuvre y relatifs.

([1]) http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=FR&f=ST%2014986%202013%20INIT
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/eduction/policy/vocational-policy/alliance_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004236/14
to the Commission
Rachida Dati (PPE)
(4 April 2014)

Subject: The European Alliance for Apprenticeships must set specific targets

In recent years, youth unemployment has reached alarming levels. More than one in five young people cannot find a job and the unemployment rate in this category is twice as high as the rate among adults. These figures are partly down to the lack of appropriate skills for the labour market. In view of this situation, which obviously has a financial impact on young people but also leads to social marginalisation, apprenticeships seem to offer an effective solution for preparing young Europeans for the jobs of tomorrow.

Apprenticeships provide training for a particular profession and result in a qualification. More often than not, they also lead to a job. It is plain to see that youth unemployment rates are lowest in Member States which have professional education and training systems with a solid foundation and in which apprenticeships are a major factor.

The Commission showed its awareness of the importance of apprenticeships in its 2012 Youth Employment Package, by providing for a 'youth guarantee'. With the creation of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships in July 2013, the Commission made a commitment to quickly taking action to address this problem, in particular by means of a close dialogue with trade unions and employers. In a communication entitled 'Working together for Europe's young people', the Commission also came out in favour of taking measures for promoting the range of high-quality apprenticeships contracts on offer — in particular at SMEs — and for remedying shortages of qualifications, most especially in the information and communication technologies (ICT), healthcare and green economy sectors. Despite these various commitments, the future for young people on the European labour market still remains cause for concern.

Can the Commission share the results and targets that have been achieved in terms of the creation of apprenticeship positions, in particular in these sectors that are highly relevant for the future, in the context of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(3 June 2014)

The Commission concurs with the Honourable Member that countries with strong and attractive VET systems, and notably those with well-established apprenticeship systems, tend to perform better in terms of youth employment. Therefore it has launched the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA) with the objectives to improve the quality and supply of apprenticeships across the EU and to change mind-sets towards apprenticeship-type learning.

At present, no specific targets at European level have been fixed on the number of apprenticeship positions. However, Member States agreed on a Council Declaration ([1]) in support of the EAfA, in which they declare that they would make a pledge that describes their intended actions to increase the supply, quality and attractiveness of apprenticeships. As a follow-up to the Declaration, the Commission invited Member States to provide an overview of measures taken in this regard; and to set out targets and indicators of success. 21 Member States have reported commitments so far, but only few include quantifiable targets. The responses will be published shortly on the EAfA's website ([2]).

VET reforms, in particular with regard to work-based learning, apprenticeships and prospective sectors, will be reported on within the Open Method of Coordination for Education and Training and in the context of the European Semester. The Commission also advised Member States on the reform of apprenticeships and on regarding the design of the Youth Guarantees and related implementation plans.

([1]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/139011.pdf
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/vocational-policy/alliance_en.htm

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-004237/14
à la Commission
Rachida Dati (PPE)
(4 avril 2014)

Objet: Pour un soutien ferme des AOP européennes en vue de la signature du partenariat transatlantique

L'appellation d'origine protégée (AOP) est une indication géographique protégeant «la dénomination d'un produit dont la production, la transformation et l'élaboration doivent avoir lieu dans une aire géographique déterminée avec un savoir-faire reconnu et constaté». La signature prochaine du partenariat transatlantique de commerce et d'investissement implique une augmentation des exportations des deux côtés de l'Atlantique, particulièrement celles agricoles. La libéralisation des échanges prévue par le partenariat a peu de chance de régler le différend, qui nous oppose aux États-Unis en matière de labellisation de nos produits agricoles, si elle n'est pas encadrée. Au moment où nous entrons dans l'ultime phase de négociation du partenariat, la préservation de l'authenticité de nos produits agricoles est menacée.

On se souvient de l'épisode du jambon de Parme vendu sous l'appellation «le jambon original» car détenue par une société canadienne. On déplore de la même façon l'existence d'un «champagne» californien. En effet, la législation américaine ne reconnaît pas l'existence des AOP car seule la marque privée, dont l'entreprise est propriétaire, est protégée. Les cas d'utilisation abusive et de détournement de notoriété ont ainsi émaillé nos relations avec les États-Unis et ont nui à la gastronomie européenne. Si la protection des indications géographiques est essentielle pour le rayonnement de nos terroirs, elle joue également un rôle majeur dans la survie des exploitations européennes. Le partenariat transatlantique est à l'origine conçu pour stimuler la croissance et créer des emplois. En cédant du terrain aux États-Unis sur la protection des indications géographiques, c'est l'effet inverse qui se produira dans le secteur agricole. L'Europe doit défendre son savoir-faire, et elle doit le faire avec fermeté.

Nous demandons une protection maximale des indications géographiques. De nombreux agriculteurs européens ont soulevé la nécessité d'obtenir une reconnaissance du système européen d'indications géographiques.

La Commission peut-elle nous préciser comment elle compte défendre les indications géographiques — donc les AOP — dans le cadre des négociations?

Réponse donnée par M. Ciolos au nom de la Commission
(2 juin 2014)

La Commission est consciente de l'impact économique qui résulte de l'absence de protection rencontrée sur le marché des États-Unis pour un grand nombre de produits de qualité de l'Union portant l'appellation d'origine protégée ou l'indication géographique protégée sur le territoire de l'Union européenne. La Commission sait donc qu'il est important de garantir une meilleure protection des indications géographiques de l'UE dans le cadre des négociations bilatérales en cours avec les États-Unis. Le marché américain est l'un des plus importants pour les exportations de produits alimentaires de qualité et d'origine européenne. Une meilleure protection de leurs dénominations contribuerait certainement à favoriser une croissance soutenue de ces flux d'exportation avec une incidence positive sur l'emploi dans les zones rurales.

Par conséquent, la Commission continuera à rechercher un résultat ambitieux pour les indications géographiques de l'Union européenne dans le cadre des négociations en cours avec les États-Unis. Afin d'atteindre cet objectif, l'UE recherche activement des règles concrètes qui garantissent un niveau de protection approprié et une application effective de cette protection pour certaines listes des indications géographiques. Ces listes pourraient comprendre des indications géographiques de l'UE et des États-Unis.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004237/14
to the Commission
Rachida Dati (PPE)
(4 April 2014)

Subject: The need for robust support for European PDOs in view of the signing of the transatlantic partnership

A protected designation of origin (PDO) is a geographical indication protecting the name of a product which is produced, processed and prepared in a given geographical area using recognised know-how. The upcoming signing of the transatlantic trade and investment partnership will mean an increase in exports from both sides of the Atlantic, in particular agricultural exports. The liberalisation of trade provided for by the partnership has little chance of settling the disagreement between Europe and the United States of America regarding the labelling of our agricultural products, if there are no controls put in place. Now that we are entering into the final phase of negotiations with regard to the partnership, the preservation of the authenticity of our agricultural products is under threat.

Let's not forget the incident of the Parma ham sold under the name 'original ham' which was owned by a Canadian company. Likewise, the existence of Californian 'champagne' is to be deplored. In fact, American laws do not recognise the existence of PDOs, because protection is only granted to private labels owned by businesses. Our relationship with the USA has therefore been peppered with instances of abuse and misappropriation of products' reputations, which have a harmful effect on European gastronomy. While the protection of geographical indications is essential for distribution within our own borders, it also plays a pivotal role in the survival of European businesses. The original concept at the heart of the transatlantic partnership was to stimulate growth and create jobs. By conceding ground to the USA in relation to the protection of geographical indications, the opposite effect will occur in the agricultural industry. Europe must defend its know-how, and do so robustly.

We are asking for maximum protection for geographical indications. Many European farmers have highlighted the need for recognition of the European system of geographical indications.

Can the Commission tell us how it intends to defend geographical indications (i.e. PDOs) in the context of the negotiations?

Answer given by Mr Ciolos on behalf of the Commission
(2 June 2014)

The Commission is aware of the economic impact resulting from the lack of protection experienced in the U.S. market by an important number of EU quality products bearing the PDO/PGI protection in the EU territory. The Commission is therefore aware of the importance to secure an enhanced protection for EU geographical indications in the context of bilateral negotiations under way with the U.S. The U.S. market is one of the most significant for the export of EU quality and origin food products. An enhanced protection of their names would certainly contribute to foster a sustained growth of those export flows with a positive impact in employment in rural areas.

Therefore, the Commission will continue to pursue an ambitious outcome for EU geographical indications within the framework of the ongoing negotiations with the U.S. In order to achieve this objective, the EU is pragmatically but firmly looking for rules guaranteeing an appropriate level of protection and an appropriate enforcement of that protection for selected lists of geographical indications. These lists could include EU and U.S. geographical indications.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-004239/14
à Comissão
Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL)
(4 de abril de 2014)

Assunto: Riscos do trabalho no setor automóvel

A indústria automóvel moderna, tanto na produção de componentes como na montagem, reflete na maioria dos casos a mais avançada automatização. Isto implica investimentos elevados que as empresas tentam rentabilizar com tempos de trabalho cada vez mais curtos e mais operações.

A divisão do trabalho e os ritmos impostos têm implicações profundas não só no aumento da produtividade e da mais-valia, mas também na vida das trabalhadoras e dos trabalhadores.

No sector automóvel, como em todos os sectores de produção em série, é reconhecido que as doenças profissionais, nomeadamente as lesões músculo-esqueléticas, são um problema grave. Estas lesões estão relacionadas diretamente com o processo produtivo, com a realização de tarefas repetitivas e/ou posições ergonomicamente erradas.

Num momento em que tanto se discute a reindustrialização da Europa, urge pensar nos trabalhadores e trabalhadoras e promover medidas que defendam a organização da produção e do trabalho de forma a evitar estes riscos.

Face ao exposto, porque não considera a Comissão Europeia que esta é uma profissão de desgaste rápido?

Que medidas está a Comissão a planear para evitar estes riscos?

Pretende a Comissão contribuir para a promoção da saúde dos trabalhadores do sector automóvel, nomeadamente exigindo às empresas que adaptem as tarefas em função das idades e do estado de saúde dos trabalhadores?

Que meios pondera a Comissão disponibilizar, a fim de ressarcir os trabalhadores já afetados?

Resposta dada por László Andor em nome da Comissão
(28 de maio de 2014)

A Comissão gostaria de chamar a atenção da Senhora Deputada para o facto de a Diretiva 89/391/CEE do Conselho (diretiva-quadro) ([1]) estabelecer os princípios gerais relativos à prevenção dos riscos profissionais em todos os setores de atividade, incluindo a indústria automóvel.

Nos termos do artigo 6.° da diretiva-quadro, os empregadores são obrigados a avaliar os riscos que não possam ser evitados, independentemente do seu nível, e a desenvolver uma política de prevenção coerente, que integre a técnica, a organização do trabalho, as condições de trabalho, as relações sociais e a influência dos fatores o ambientais no trabalho.

As obrigações gerais definidas no artigo 6.° da diretiva-quadro incluem igualmente o respeito pelo princípio de ergonomia de adaptar o trabalho ao homem, especialmente no que se refere à conceção dos postos de trabalho, bem como à escolha dos equipamentos de trabalho e dos métodos de trabalho e de produção.

A Comissão recorda que os sistemas de indemnização para trabalhadores afetados por doenças relacionadas com o trabalho são regidos por disposições nacionais e que a Comissão não tem qualquer meio de indemnizar os trabalhadores que tenham sofrido um prejuízo.

([1]) Diretiva 89/391/CEE do Conselho, de 12 de junho de 1989, relativa à aplicação de medidas destinadas a promover a melhoria da segurança e da saúde dos trabalhadores no trabalho, JO L 183 de 29.6.1989, p. 1.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004239/14
to the Commission
Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL)
(4 April 2014)

Subject: Occupational hazards in the motor industry

In the motor industry, both in component manufacturing and in assembly, automation has, in the main, been taken to the most advanced level. This entails substantial investment, on which firms attempt to secure a return by continually shortening working time and increasing the numbers of operations.

The division of labour and the enforced working pace have far-reaching implications not just in terms of increased productivity and higher added value, but also for workers lives.

In the motor industry, as in every mass production sector, occupational diseases, and especially musculoskeletal injuries, are recognised to be a serious problem. These injuries are linked directly to the production process, the performance of repetitive tasks, and/or ergonomically bad work positions.

At a time when there is so much discussion about the reindustrialisation of Europe, it is essential to think of workers and promote measures enabling production and work to be organised in such a way as to avert occupational hazards.

In the light of the foregoing, why does the Commission not consider work in the motor industry to be a stressful, physically demanding occupation entailing an exceptionally high degree of risk?

What measures will the Commission take to avert the occupational hazards in question?

Will it help to protect the health of motor industry workers, for instance by requiring firms to adjust tasks according to workers' ages and their state of health?

What means is the Commission thinking of providing in order to indemnify workers who have been harmed?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(28 May 2014)

The Commission would draw the Honourable Member's attention to the fact that Council Directive 89/391/EEC (the framework Directive) ([1]) sets out general principles concerning the prevention of occupational risks in all sectors of activity, including the motor industry.

Employers are required under Article 6 of the framework Directive to evaluate risks which cannot be avoided, irrespective of their level, and to develop a coherent prevention policy which covers technology, organisation of work, working conditions, social relationships and the influence of factors relating to the working environment.

General obligations under Article 6 of the framework Directive also include complying with the ergonomic principle of adapting the work to the individual, especially as regards the design of workplaces and the choice of work equipment and working and production methods.

The Commission would point out that compensation systems for workers affected by work-related diseases are governed by Member State provisions and that the Commission has no means of indemnifying workers who have been harmed.

([1]) 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 L 183, 29.6.1989, p. 1.

(Suomenkielinen versio)

Kirjallisesti vastattava kysymys E-004240/14
komissiolle
Hannu Takkula (ALDE)
(4. huhtikuuta 2014)

Aihe: Erasmus+ -ohjelman matkatukikorvaukset

Uusi Erasmus+ -ohjelma toi mukanaan paljon positiivisia uudistuksia, mutta viime aikoina olen saanut huolestuneita yhteydenottoja Youth in Action -nuorisovaihdon matkatukiasiassa. Erasmus+ -ohjelmassa matkatuet on nuorisovaihdon osalta standardoitu siten, että matkakustannukset lasketaan etäisyyksien mukaan. Jostain syystä yhdessä hanketyypissä, Youth in Action -alaohjelman nuorisovaihdoissa, on eri matkatukikertoimet. Etäisyyden mukaan myönnettävät matkatuet eivät tällä hetkellä vastaa kohtuudella kustannuksia, ja kyseinen laskentamalli suosii suurkaupungeissa asuvia ja syrjii esimerkiksi maaseudulla asuvia nuoria. Nykyisen mukainen matkatukimalli vaarantaa nuorisovaihdon tarkoituksen heikentäen tasa-arvoisia liikkumismahdollisuuksia. Lisäksi perusteluita kaivataan sille, miksi yhden ohjelman osalta myönnetään pienempiä matkatukia muihin ohjelmiin verrattuna, vaikka matkat maksavat saman verran riippumatta siitä, ostaako lipun vaihtoon lähtevä korkeakouluopiskelija vai nuorisovaihtoon lähtevä nuori.

Yhteydenottojen myötä voin esittää konkreettisen esimerkin Suomussalmella (28.91E, 64.88N) asuvasta suomalaisesta nuoresta, joka tahtoo nuorisovaihtoon Saksaan Aurichiin (7.48E, 53.47N). Kaupunkien etäisyys kartalla on 1 744 kilometriä, mutta todellisuudessa matka taitetaan monivaiheista reittiä Suomussalmi–Helsinki–Bremen–Aurich, jolloin tämänhetkisen taulukon mukainen matkakorvaus jää marginaaliseksi.

Tämän epäkohdan korjaaminen on ehdottoman tärkeätä ja se tulisi oikaista mahdollisimman pian. Syrjäseuduilla asuvien nuorten mahdollisuutta nuorisovaihtoon on tuettava, ja komission on huomioitava kaukana kansainvälisistä lentokentistä asuvien nuorten käytännön ongelmat liikenneyhteyksien osalta.

Matkatukien määrät ja myöntämisperusteiden määrittely kuuluu teknisluontoisena asiana komission toimivaltaan. Uuden asiakokonaisuuden hiominen vie ymmärrettävästi aikaa, ja uskon komission jo havainneen tämän epäkohdan.

1. Mitä komissio aikoo tehdä kyseisen laskentamallin korjaamiseksi ja kohtuullistamiseksi?

2. Onko näitä korjaustoimia mahdollisesti jo aloitettu?

Androulla Vassilioun komission puolesta antama vastaus
(3. kesäkuuta 2014)

Yksinkertaistamisen ja helppouden vuoksi Erasmus+ -ohjelman yhteydessä ohjelmaan osallistujille aiheutuvista matkakustannuksista maksettava korvaus lasketaan taulukoiden perusteella. Komissio vahvistaa, että avaintoimesta 3 tuettaviin nuorisovaihtoon ja nuorisotapaamisiin liittyviin matkakustannuksiin sovelletaan eri taulukkoa kuin muihin nuorisoalan tai muiden alojen liikkuvuustoimiin. Komissio katsoo aiempien kokemusten perusteella asianmukaiseksi kattaa nuorisovaihtoon ja nuorisotapahtumiin liittyvät matkakustannukset heti, kun välimatka on vähintään 10 km (100 km:n asemesta). Toisaalta komission soveltamilla taulukoilla varmistetaan yleisesti uuden lähestymistavan mukainen talousarvion neutraliteetti verrattuna aikaisemman Youth in Action -nuorisotoimintaohjelman yhteydessä sovellettuun käytäntöön: muiden toimien osalta vahvistettujen taulukoiden soveltaminen rajoittaisi tuettavan liikkuvuuden määrää.

Komissio seuraa tarkkaan näiden taulukoiden soveltamista Erasmus+ -ohjelman ensimmäisten toteutusvuosien aikana. Se voi tarvittaessa hyväksyä korjaavia toimenpiteitä ja tarkistaa siten laskentajärjestelmää tulevaisuudessa, mikäli se osoittautuu tarpeelliseksi.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004240/14
to the Commission
Hannu Takkula (ALDE)
(4 April 2014)

Subject: Reimbursements of travel expenses under the Erasmus+ programme

The new Erasmus+ programme has introduced many positive innovations, but recently I have been receiving communications from people who are concerned about the travel grant aspect of Youth in Action exchanges. Travel grants for youth exchanges under Erasmus+ have been standardised in such a way that the amount is calculated on the basis of distance. For some reason, in one type of project — youth exchanges under the Youth in Action subprogram — different coefficients apply to travel grants. At present the grants payable on the basis of distance do not fairly correspond to the costs, and the calculation method being used favours those living in cities while, for example, discriminating against young people living in rural areas. The method being used for this at present jeopardises the aim of youth exchanges, rendering opportunities for travel unequal. Moreover, justifications are needed for why smaller travel grants should be awarded under one programme than others despite the fact that the cost of travel is the same irrespective of whether the young person buying a ticket in order to go on an exchange is a college student or is going on a youth exchange.

On the basis of the communications I have received, I can give a concrete example concerning a young Finnish person living in Suomussalmi (28.91°E, 64.88°N) who wishes to go on a youth exchange to Aurich in Germany (7.48°E, 53.47°N). On the map, the distance between the towns is 1 744 km, but in reality the journey has to be made in several stages via the route Suomussalmi-Helsinki–Bremen-Aurich, so that the travel grant calculated under the present system is marginal.

It is absolutely essential to remedy this defect, and it should be put right as soon as possible. Opportunities for young people living in remote areas to go on youth exchanges deserve support, and the Commission should take into account the practical transport problems faced by young people who live a long way from international airports.

The amounts of travel grants and the determination of the principles on the basis of which they are set, being technical matters, are the responsibility of the Commission. It will naturally take some time to establish a reformed system, and I believe that the Commission has already observed the problem.

1. What will the Commission do to improve the calculation system and make it fairer?

2. Has it perhaps already started work on this?

(Version française)

Réponse donnée par Mme Vassiliou au nom de la Commission
(3 juin 2014)

Pour des raisons de simplification et de convivialité, le programme Erasmus+ prévoit que la subvention qui couvre les frais de voyages exposés par les participants au programme soit calculée sur la base de barèmes. La Commission confirme que, pour les échanges de jeunes et pour les rencontres de jeunes soutenues au titre de l'action clé 3, la grille des barèmes pour les frais de voyage est différente de celle retenue pour les autres actions de mobilité du secteur jeunesse et pour les actions de mobilité des autres secteurs. S'appuyant sur l'expérience passée, la Commission estime en effet approprié, pour les échanges et rencontres de jeunes, de couvrir les frais de voyage dès que la distance à parcourir atteint 10 km (et non 100 km). D'autre part, les barèmes retenus par la Commission assurent globalement la neutralité budgétaire de la nouvelle approche par rapport à celle qui prévalait sous Jeunesse en Action: appliquer les barèmes retenus pour les autres actions conduirait à réduire le nombre des mobilités financées.

Durant les premières années du programme Erasmus+, la Commission suivra attentivement l'utilisation de ces barèmes. Elle pourra le cas échéant adopter des mesures correctrices et donc revoir le système de calcul dans le futur si nécessaire.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-004241/14
a la Comisión
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(4 de abril de 2014)

Asunto: ¿Un regulador único europeo en el mercado eléctrico?

El presidente de la multinacional eléctrica vasca Iberdrola, Ignacio Sánchez Galán, ha reclamado públicamente a la Unión Europea la armonización de la regulación del mercado eléctrico y ha criticado el actual fraccionamiento normativo, al cual achaca el alto coste de la electricidad y la falta de interés inversor.

¿Comparte la Comisión la opinión del Sr. Sánchez Galán sobre la necesidad de armonizar el mercado eléctrico en la Unión?

¿Cree la Comisión que el fraccionamiento normativo es la causa del alto coste de la electricidad en el conjunto de la Unión y, concretamente, en el Reino de España?

Respuesta del Sr. Oettinger en nombre de la Comisión
(20 de junio de 2014)

La falta de armonización de las normas de mercado entre los Estados miembros puede dar lugar a un segmentación del mercado y a costes de transacción más elevados. En este contexto, el tercer paquete de la legislación del mercado interior de la energía supuso un gran paso adelante pues, entre otras cosas, armonizó y reforzó los requisitos y las atribuciones de las autoridades nacionales de reglamentación, creó organismos de ámbito europeo como la Agencia de Cooperación de los Reguladores de la Energía y proporcionó códigos de red armonizados. La Comisión sigue trabajando para que las medidas que se apliquen a escala nacional no desemboquen en una fragmentación del mercado interior de la energía. Así, por ejemplo, en la Comunicación de noviembre de 2013 titulada «Realizar el mercado interior de la electricidad y sacar el máximo partido de la intervención pública», la Comisión expuso orientaciones en ese sentido para los mercados de la electricidad en las que abordaba, en particular, los regímenes nacionales de ayuda a la energía renovable y las medidas tendentes a garantizar la adecuación de la generación de electricidad.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004241/14
to the Commission
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(4 April 2014)

Subject: Single European power regulator?

José Ignacio Sánchez Galán, Chairman and CEO of Iberdrola, the Basque multinational electric utility, has publicly called on the European Union to harmonise power supply regulations, criticising current legal disparities which he blames for the high cost of electricity and lack of investor interest.

Does the Commission agree with Mr Sánchez Galán regarding the need for EU harmonisation of power supply regulations?

Does it agree that legal disparities in this sector are the cause of high electricity costs throughout the Union, in particular Spain?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(20 June 2014)

The absence of harmonisation of market rules across Member States may lead to market segmentation and higher transaction costs. In this respect, the Third package of internal energy market legislation represented an important step forward, in particular by harmonising and strengthening the requirements and powers of national regulatory authorities, by creating Europe-wide bodies such as the Agency for Cooperation of Energy Regulators and by providing for harmonised Network Codes, among other measures. The Commission keeps working to ensure that measures implemented at national level do not lead to a fragmentation of the internal energy market. For example, in the communication of November 2013 on making the most of public intervention the Commission has laid out guidelines to that effect for electricity markets, addressing in particular national support schemes for renewable energy and measures to ensure generation adequacy.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-004242/14
a la Comisión
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(4 de abril de 2014)

Asunto: Transparencia en las contrataciones, discriminación de trabajadores por nacionalidad

Hemos tenido conocimiento de que el alcalde de Yuncos, municipio de la provincia de Toledo, ha decidido sortear puestos de trabajo municipales entre los vecinos de nacionalidad española, excluyendo a ciudadanos de otros países de la Unión Europea y otras nacionalidades que tienen permiso de residencia y trabajo en España. Esta actuación va sin duda en contra del principio de transparencia en las contrataciones públicas y atenta contra la libre circulación de trabajadores, al tiempo que es contraria a los postulados de no racismo que marcan las políticas de la Unión.

Además, en dicha convocatoria no se permite que participen en el sorteo varios miembros de una unidad familiar, lo que sin duda supone una clara discriminación indirecta de las mujeres y vulnera las directrices de la Unión en materia de género.

¿Tiene conocimiento la Comisión de estas actuaciones racistas y machistas?

¿Qué opinión le merecen a la Comisión estos hechos?

¿Piensa la Comisión tomar alguna medida para que los derechos fundamentales de la Unión y, en concreto, los derechos de los trabajadores y de las mujeres garantizados por las normas de la Unión no sean vulnerados?

Respuesta del Sr. Andor en nombre de la Comisión
(3 de junio de 2014)

La Comisión no tenía conocimiento del sorteo de puestos de trabajo al que hace referencia Su Señoría y no puede pronunciarse por falta de más información. Si se excluyera de participar en este sorteo a ciudadanos de la UE procedentes de Estados miembros distintos a España debido a su nacionalidad, y si no fuera aplicable la excepción prevista en el artículo 45, apartado 4, del TFUE, en relación con los empleos en la administración pública, los trabajadores de la Unión y los miembros de sus familias tendrían derecho a invocar el principio de igualdad de trato que se establece en dicho artículo y en el Reglamento (UE) n° 492/2011 ([1]).

Debido a que un juez nacional ha dictado una orden de suspensión contra la convocatoria a que hace referencia Su Señoría, la Comisión no tiene intención de tomar ninguna medida adicional en la fase actual.

Cualquier trabajador de la Unión que sea excluido del sorteo por motivos injustificables puede invocar su derecho a la libre circulación directamente ante las autoridades o tribunales nacionales. Corresponde a las autoridades nacionales competentes evaluar los hechos y los aspectos jurídicos en casos como el sorteo en cuestión y garantizar el respeto del derecho a la libre circulación de los trabajadores. Solamente los tribunales nacionales, que deben aplicar la legislación de la UE, pueden dictar órdenes a los órganos administrativos y anular sus decisiones.

([1]) Reglamento (UE) n° 492/2011 del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 5 de abril de 2011, relativo a la libre circulación de los trabajadores dentro de la Unión (DO L 141 de 27.5.2011, p. 1).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004242/14
to the Commission
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(4 April 2014)

Subject: Transparency regarding recruitment — discrimination against workers based on nationality

It has come to our attention that the Mayor of Yuncos, a municipality in the province of Toledo, has decided to organise a municipal jobs lottery, for which only local residents of Spanish nationality are eligible, excluding holders of residence and work permits in Spain who are nationals of other EU Member States or third countries. This is undeniably at odds with the principle of public contracting transparency, free movement of workers and EU anti-racist policy.

Furthermore, only certain family members are allowed to participate, which undeniably results in indirect discrimination against women, thereby infringing EU gender equality directives.

Is the Commission aware of this form of racism and gender discrimination?

What view does the Commission take of the above?

Will it take action to prevent the infringement of EU fundamental rights, specifically the rights of workers and of women, which are guaranteed under EC law?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(3 June 2014)

The Commission was not aware of the job lottery to which the Honourable Member refers and cannot comment in the absence of further details. If EU citizens from Member States other than Spain were to be excluded from participating on account of their nationality and if the exception provided for in Article 45(4) TFEU regarding employment in the public service were not applicable, Union workers and their family members would be entitled to invoke the equal treatment principle laid down in that Article and in Regulation (EU) No 492/2011 ([1]).

As the call to which the Honourable Member refers has been subject to a suspension order issued by a national judge, the Commission does not intend to take any further action at the current stage.

Any Union worker excluded from the lottery for unjustifiable reasons can invoke his or her right of free movement directly before the national authorities or courts. It is for the competent national authorities to assess the facts and the legal aspects in such cases as the lottery in question and to ensure that the right of free movement of workers is respected. Only national courts, which must apply EC law, can issue orders to administrative bodies and annul their decision.

([1]) Regulation (EU) No 492/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5.4.2011 on freedom of movement for workers within the Union, OJ L 141, 27.5.2011, p. 1.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-004243/14
aan de Commissie
Mark Demesmaeker (Verts/ALE)
(4 april 2014)

Betreft: Verenigbaarheid voetbalstadion met de mededingingsregels

Individuele voetbalclubs maar ook verenigingen van voetbalclubs, zoals de Koninklijke Belgische Voetbalbond (KBVB), vallen onder de EU-mededingingsregels omdat zij economische activiteiten ontwikkelen (b.v. onderhandelen over de collectieve verkoop van uitzendrechten; afsluiten van reclameovereenkomsten, tegen betaling organiseren van sportcompetities). Daarbij streven de EU-regels voor staatssteun een level playing field voor alle Europese voetbalclubs na, waarbij geen enkele club door enige overheidsinstantie voordelen krijgt toegekend waarover concurrerende clubs niet kunnen beschikken.

Het geplande Belgische nationaal stadion, dat gebouwd zou worden op gronden die eigendom zijn van de overheid (m.n. de stad Brussel), zou niet enkel het kader vormen voor de thuiswedstrijden van de Belgische nationale ploeg, maar zou ook de nieuwe thuishaven worden van RSC Anderlecht. Het selectieve voordeel dat deze club hierdoor zou verkrijgen — m.n. het gebruikrecht over het nationaal stadion dat in geen verhouding staat tot de bijdrage van die club in de investering — en de daaruit voortvloeiende (kans op) economische en sportieve ontplooiing van die club, kan de concurrentie met andere voetbalclubs zowel in België als in de EU verstoren.

Ik vernam dan ook graag of de Commissie dit project voor een Belgisch nationaal stadion en het daarbij horende voordeel dat één bepaalde club zou verkrijgen terwijl zij dit onder normale marktomstandigheden niet kan verkrijgen, al dan niet in overeenstemming acht met de EU-mededingingsregels.

Antwoord van de heer Almunia namens de Commissie
(28 mei 2014)

De Commissie heeft geen gedetailleerde informatie over het project voor een Belgisch nationaal voetbalstadion. Bijgevolg kan en kon zij zich niet uitspreken over de verenigbaarheid van het project met de mededingingsregels van het Verdrag.

In juli 2013 bracht België de Commissie op de hoogte van een staatssteunregeling voor Vlaamse voetbalstadions. Deze regeling werd door de Commissie goedgekeurd op 20 november 2013
(zie http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/cases/249493/ 249493_1510283_165_2.pdf).

De Commissie vertrouwt erop dat België haar van zijn plannen op de hoogte zal brengen als de bouw van een nationaal voetbalstadion zou gepaard gaan met staatssteun.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004243/14
to the Commission
Mark Demesmaeker (Verts/ALE)
(4 April 2014)

Subject: Compatibility of football stadium with competition rules

Individual football clubs, and also associations of football clubs, such as the Royal Belgian Football Federation, are governed by EU competition rules because they engage in economic operations (e.g. negotiating the collective sale of broadcasting rights; concluding agreements on advertising; organising sports competitions in return for payment). The EU rules are designed to achieve a level playing field for all European football clubs, so that no club receives from any government body favourable treatment which is not available to competing clubs.

There are plans for building a new Belgian national stadium on land belonging to the public authorities (particularly the City of Brussels), which would not only be used for home matches involving the Belgian national team but would also double as the new home ground of RSC Anderlecht. The selective advantage which this club would derive from this — particularly the right to use the national stadium, which is in no way proportionate to the club's contribution towards the investment involved — and the resultant (possible) economic and sporting development of the club could distort competition with other football clubs, both in Belgium and in the EU.

Does the Commission consider that this project for a Belgian national stadium and the associated benefits which would accrue to a single club (and which that club would not stand to gain under normal market conditions) accords with EU competition law, or does it not?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(28 May 2014)

The Commission does not have detailed information about the project for a Belgian national football stadium. Consequently it cannot and has not formed an opinion regarding the compatibility of the project with the competition rules of the Treaty.

In July 2013 Belgium notified to the Commission a state aid scheme regarding Flemish football stadiums. The scheme was approved by the Commission on 20 November 2013
(see http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/cases/249493/249493_1510283_165_2.pdf).

The Commission is confident that Belgium will notify its plans if construction of a national football stadium should also involve aid.

(Tekstas lietuvių kalba)

Klausimas, į kurį atsakoma raštu, Nr. P-004244/14
Komisijai
Rolandas Paksas (EFD)
(2014 m. balandžio 7 d.)

Tema: ES mokėjimo kortelių rinka

ES yra siekiama suvienodinti mokėjimo kortelių rinką į ją įtraukiant ir komercines korteles. Tokiu būdu komercinės kortelės bus suvienodinamos su vartotojams skirtomis kortelėmis.

Pažymėtina, kad komercinės kortelės negali būti lyginamos su vartotojų kortelėmis, nes skiriasi jų funkcijos. Jos supaprastina įmonių apskaitos mechanizmą ir padidina smulkaus ir vidutinio verslo piniginius srautus, kadangi suteikia jiems kreditą.

Kokią įtaką mokėjimų kortelių rinkos suvienodinimas darys vartotojams ir smulkiam verslui?

Ar buvo atliktas tyrimas siekiant išnagrinėti, koks galimas komercinių bei vartotojams skirtų kortelių suvienodinimo poveikis bus daromas ES šalių rinkai?

Ar, Komisijos nuomone, ES mastu reglamentuojant komercines korteles, kaip ir bet kokias kitas korteles, tinkamai atsižvelgiama į specifinę kiekvienos valstybės narės rinkos padėtį? Kokiomis priemonėmis taip reglamentuojant bus prisidėta prie šešėlinės ekonomikos mažinimo?

J. Almunios atsakymas Komisijos vardu
(2014 m. gegužės 14 d.)

2013 m. liepos mėn. Komisija pasiūlė reglamentą dėl tarpbankinių mokesčių už kortele grindžiamas mokėjimo operacijas, kuriame nustatomos 0,2 % ir 0,3 % tarpbankinių mokesčių už sandorį viršutinės ribos, atitinkamai taikomos vartotojo debeto ir kredito kortelėms. Vartotojų kortelės plačiai naudojamos Europoje, o prekiautojai iš esmės negali atsisakyti jų priimti arba taikyti pridėtinio mokesčio norintiesiems jomis naudotis. Į pasiūlymą neįtraukta komercinėms kortelėms taikytino mokesčio už sandorį viršutinė riba.

Vis dėlto remiantis šiuo pasiūlymu keisti kortelių sistemų verslo taisykles bus privalu. Visų pirma bus leidžiama nustatyti pridėtinius mokesčius už naudojimąsi kortelėmis (įskaitant ir komercines), kurių tarpbankinių atsiskaitymų mokesčių aukščiausios ribos nenustatytos. Taip bus užtikrinta, kad sąnaudas prekiautojai galėtų perkelti šių kortelių naudotojams, taip pat bus skatinama veiksminga šių kortelių konkurencija ir konkurencinis jų kainų spaudimas.

Taip būtų užtikrintas didesnis visų kortelių pasirinkimas ir konkurencija ir skatinamos inovacijos ES mokėjimų rinkose. Komisija kruopščiai įvertino pasiūlymo poveikį, be kita ko, poveikį vartotojams ir MVĮ, ir atsižvelgė į konkrečią rinkos padėtį kiekvienoje valstybėje narėje.

Komisija atkreipia dėmesį į balandžio 3 d. Europos Parlamento plenarinėje sesijoje priimtą sprendimą pirmiau nurodytas viršutines ribas taikyti ir komercinėms kortelėms.

Šiuo metu daug smulkiųjų prekiautojų kortelių nepriima dėl didelių mokesčių, kuriuos turi mokėti aptarnaujančiosioms įmonėms. Mažinant mokesčius aptarnaujančiosioms įmonėms (arba leidžiant prekiautojams nustatyti pridėtinius mokesčius už naudojimąsi brangiomis kortelėmis) būtų galima pasiekti, kad vartotojai kortelėmis naudotųsi dažniau. Taigi šiuo reglamentu būtų skatinama dažniau naudotis elektroninėmis mokėjimo priemonėmis ir mažinamas šešėlinės ekonomikos vaidmuo.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-004244/14
to the Commission
Rolandas Paksas (EFD)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: EU payment card market

The EU is seeking to harmonise the payment card market by including commercial cards. In this way, commercial cards and consumer cards will be placed on a single standard footing.

It should be noted that commercial cards are not comparable to consumer cards, because they have different functions. They simplify a corporate accounting mechanism and increase cash flows of small and medium businesses, as they give them credit.

What impact will the standardisation of credit cards have on consumers and small businesses?

Has a study been carried out on the possible impact of the standardisation of credit and consumer cards on the EU market?

In the Commission's view, is the specific market situation of each Member State being properly taken into account in the EU-wide regulation of commercial cards in the same way as any other cards? By what means will such regulation contribute to reducing the informal economy?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(14 May 2014)

The Commission proposed in July 2013 a regulation on interchange fees for card-based payments including caps of 0.2% and 0.3% per transaction for interchange fees applicable to consumer debit and credit cards respectively. Consumer cards are widely used in Europe, and merchants generally cannot refuse them or impose a surcharge on consumers who wish to use such cards. The proposal did not include a cap on fees for transactions with commercial cards.

Nevertheless, under the proposal, card schemes will be obliged to modify their business rules. In particular, surcharging will be allowed on cards — including commercial ones — whose interchange fees are not capped. This will ensure that merchants can pass the costs on to these card users, promoting effective competition for these cards and competitive pressure on their prices.

This approach would ensure a degree of choice and competition for all cards and would promote innovation in the payment markets in the EU. The proposal was subject to a rigorous impact assessment by the Commission, including on consumers and SMEs and considering the specific market situation in each Member State.

The Commission takes note of the vote by the European Parliament in its plenary of 3 April to include commercial cards under the caps referred to above.

Currently, many small merchants do not accept card payments because of the high fees they are charged by their acquirers. Reducing these — or allowing merchants to surcharge expensive cards — would allow consumers to use their cards more widely. The regulation would therefore contribute to the wider use of electronic means of payment, and to reducing the role of the black economy.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-004245/14
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Gianni Pittella (S&D)
(7 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Violenze in Venezuela

Appaiono particolarmente preoccupanti le notizie che arrivano dal Venezuela riguardo ai violenti scontri tra forze dell'ordine e manifestanti, nel corso delle proteste che in questi mesi interessano il Paese.

La situazione negli ultimi giorni sembra peggiorare e molte associazioni che si battono per la difesa dei diritti umani in Venezuela denunciano torture e abusi sessuali operati dalle forze militari contro i civili. Si utilizza così la violenza per limitare la libertà di espressione degli studenti, dei giornalisti, dei leader dell'opposizione e degli attivisti pacifici, che dall'inizio delle manifestazioni sono sistematicamente perseguitati e arrestati.

Una situazione questa che non può lasciare indifferente l'Unione europea, anche in considerazione della presenza di una numerosa collettività d'origine europea nel Paese.

Si chiede pertanto all'Alto Rappresentante dell'Unione per gli affari esteri e la politica di sicurezza, Baronessa Ashton, di condannare ufficialmente tutti gli atti di violenza verificatisi durante le manifestazioni e di ricordare al governo venezuelano che è tenuto a garantire la sicurezza di tutti i cittadini del Paese, a prescindere dalle opinioni e affiliazioni politiche.

Si chiede infine all'Alto Rappresentante di riflettere su quali misure concrete possano essere prese nel caso in cui il governo venezuelano perseverasse nel non rispetto delle libertà civili, continuando così a minare la sicurezza dei tanti cittadini europei residenti in Venezuela.

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

L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente è al corrente di quanto è accaduto in Venezuela. Il 27 febbraio (2014/2600(RSP)) ha dichiarato in Parlamento:

«siamo allarmati per la detenzione di studenti e leader politici tra cui Leopoldo López, il leader del partito socialdemocratico Voluntad Popular. Varie organizzazioni riconosciute della società civile hanno dichiarato di non riscontrare alcuna prova che dimostri la fondatezza delle accuse. Ci uniamo all'invito che l'Alto commissario delle Nazioni Unite per i diritti umani ha rivolto alle autorità competenti chiedendo loro di garantire l'imparzialità delle indagini condotte in relazione alle accuse rivolte contro tali persone incarcerate, di statuire sulla legittimità della loro detenzione o di ordinarne il rilascio.»

Per quanto riguarda gli sforzi attualmente prodigati da una delegazione ministeriale dell'UNASUR, il 28 marzo Catherine Ashton ha dichiarato che:

«[…] sostiene l'impegno regionale per intavolare negoziati tra tutte le parti del Venezuela al fine di porre immediatamente termine agli atti di violenza e ai disordini;

[…] accoglie con favore la dichiarazione che ha fatto seguito alla missione ministeriale dell'UNASUR di questa settimana a sostegno di un dialogo inclusivo tra il governo, tutti i partiti politici e la società civile;

[…] si unisce alla richiesta dell'UNASUR di moderare i termini e rispettare tutti i diritti umani e accoglie con favore la decisione della stessa di nominare un "testimone di buona fede" per rendere più facile il dialogo;

[…] confida che il gruppo dei ministri stranieri nominato dall'UNASUR per portare avanti il processo opererà al fine di garantire che il dialogo sia effettivamente inclusivo, in una forma e con un ordine del giorno accettabili da tutte le parti.

La delegazione dell'UE monitora costantemente la situazione per quanto riguarda la sicurezza dei cittadini dell'UE residenti in Venezuela e altrettanto fanno le Ambasciate degli Stati membri a Caracas che tengono informate le rispettive autorità.»

(English version)

Question for written answer P-004245/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Gianni Pittella (S&D)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Violence in Venezuela

The news reports which have been emerging from Venezuela over the past few months concerning violent clashes between demonstrators and the police and army are particularly worrying.

The situation seems to have worsened in the last few days and many Venezuelan human rights associations are now issuing statements condemning acts of torture and sexual abuse perpetrated by members of the armed forces against civilians. Violence is thus being used as a means of curtailing the freedom of expression of students, journalists, opposition leaders and peaceful activists. Indeed, members of all these groups have been systematically persecuted and arrested ever since the demonstrations began.

The European Union cannot simply ignore this state of affairs, not least in view of the presence of many communities of European origin in Venezuela.

Will the High Representative officially condemn all the acts of violence shown to have been committed during the demonstrations and remind the Venezuelan Government that it has a duty to guarantee the safety of all Venezuelan citizens, regardless of their political views and affiliations?

Will she consider the practical measures which might be taken should the Venezuelan Government continue to disregard civil liberties, thereby jeopardising the safety of many EU citizens resident in Venezuela?

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

The HR/VP is aware of the events that occurred in Venezuela. In her statement to the Parliament on 27 February (2014/2600(RSP)), she stated that:

'[we] are alarmed about the detention of students and political leaders including Leopoldo López, the leader of the social democratic party, Voluntad Popular. Reputable international civil society organisations have indicated that they have not seen any evidence to substantiate these charges. We join the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in calling upon the relevant authorities to ensure that the accusations brought against those detained are impartially investigated, to decide on the lawfulness of their detention, or to order their release.'

On the currents efforts undertaken by a ministerial delegation from Unasur in a further statement on 28 March, she stated that she:

'[…] supports regional efforts to bring all Venezuelan parties to the table so as to put an immediate stop to violence and unrest […] welcomes the statement following this week's Unasur ministerial mission in support of an inclusive dialogue between the government, all political parties and civil society […] joins Unasur's call to moderate the discourse and to respect all human rights and welcomes Unasur's decision to appoint a witness of good faith to facilitate dialogue [and] […] trusts the group of foreign ministers appointed by Unasur to pursue the process will work to ensure the dialogue will be truly comprehensive, in a format and with an agenda agreeable to by all parties.'

The safety of EU citizens resident in Venezuela is being kept under constant review by the EU Delegation as well as the Member State Embassies present in Caracas who report to the respective authorities.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-004246/14
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(7 de abril de 2014)

Asunto: Suspensión de las obras del Paseo de San Telmo en el Puerto de la Cruz (Islas Canarias)

Como ya denunciara en mi pregunta E-000684/2014 en el Puerto de la Cruz se pretende llevar a cabo un proyecto en el Paseo de San Telmo que implicará una serie de impactos negativos en el municipio, como la eliminación de un muro de piedra de importante valor histórico que protege el paseo de las fuertes mareas, así como la destrucción de una de las obras del reconocido artista César Manrique. De hecho, por estos motivos un tribunal ha decidido paralizar de forma cautelar atendiendo a circunstancias de «especial urgencia» el derribo del Muro de San Telmo, al considerar que el Cabildo de Tenerife, promotor de las obras, no ha considerado los últimos informes que le han sido remitidos que demuestran la importancia patrimonial e histórica del mismo.

La obra paralizada proyecta sustituir el muro de piedra histórico por materiales como madera y metal que no protegerán ni a los paseantes ni a las viviendas colindantes. Todo esto en uno de los puntos de riesgo de inundación de la isla. Por otra parte, el proyecto carece de una evaluación de impacto ambiental y no se han estudiado los impactos que el tránsito de camiones tendría sobre una ermita histórica colindante.

En su respuesta a mi pregunta, la Comisión señala que «de conformidad con un informe preparado por el Cabildo de Tenerife […] se han respetado los requisitos de accesibilidad de las personas con movilidad reducida y se han tenido en cuenta todas las peticiones, ya fueran individuales o colectivas». Sin embargo, me consta que al menos dos asociaciones de discapacitados han denunciado que el proyecto no respeta las medidas de accesibilidad establecidas al mantenerse las escaleras, considerándolo discriminatorio e instando a la certificación de accesibilidad del mismo. Además, las alrededor de dos mil alegaciones presentadas por los vecinos fueron desestimadas sin justificación. De hecho, este sábado 5 de abril los vecinos se manifestarán de nuevo para mostrar su rechazo al proyecto.

Ante lo expuesto, ¿no considera la Comisión Europea que el proyecto requiere de una evaluación de impacto ambiental? Asimismo, ¿puede comunicar la Comisión Europea sobre qué base afirman las autoridades que los requisitos de accesibilidad y la opinión de los vecinos han sido tenidos en cuenta? ¿Tiene prevista la Comisión hacer público el informe del Cabildo de Tenerife al que se refiere?

Respuesta del Sr. Hahn en nombre de la Comisión
(6 de junio de 2014)

En opinión del Cabildo de Tenerife, de conformidad con la legislación vigente el proyecto «Mejora y acondicionamiento del paseo de San Telmo» no requiere de una evaluación de impacto ambiental, ya que las obras se realizan en suelo urbano ([1]).

Como ya se indicó en la respuesta de la Comisión a la pregunta escrita de Su Señoría E-684/14, el Cabildo de Tenerife ha facilitado un informe explicativo que demuestra que se han tenido en cuenta los requisitos de accesibilidad y las opiniones de los vecinos.

Se adjunta aquí el informe elaborado por el Cabildo de Tenerife.

([1]) La legislación a la que se hace referencia la conforman los artículos 5 y 8 de la Ley 11/1990, de 13 de julio, de Prevención del Impacto Ecológico, y el artículo 3 de la Ley de Evaluación de Impacto Ambiental de proyectos, aprobada por el Real Decreto Legislativo 1/2008, de 11 de enero.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004246/14
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Suspension of work on the Paseo de San Telmo in Puerto de la Cruz (Canary Islands)

As already reported in my Question E-000684/2014, the planned Paseo de San Telmo project in Puerto de la Cruz will have a series of adverse effects on the town. These include the removal of a stone wall which has significant historical value and protects the road from strong tides, and the destruction of a work by the renowned artist César Manrique. Because of this in fact, a court has halted provisionally demolition of the San Telmo wall, citing circumstances of 'special urgency', as it felt that the developer, Cabildo de Tenerife, had not taken into consideration the most recent reports sent to it demonstrating the wall's importance in terms of history and heritage.

Although work has been suspended, the plan is to replace the historic stone wall with materials such as wood and metal which will not protect — at one of the island's known flood-risk points — passers-by or the adjacent dwellings. What is more, the project has not been assessed on its environmental impact and no studies have been conducted into the impact the movement of lorries will have on an adjoining historic hermitage.

In its answer to my question, the Commission stated that: 'According to a report prepared by the Cabildo de Tenerife […] the accessibility requirements of persons with reduced mobility have been fulfilled and all individual and collective claims have been taken into consideration'. However, it is my understanding that at least two associations for the disabled have reported that as the staircase will remain in place, the project does not comply with established accessibility measures. They regard it as discriminatory and are pressing for certification of its accessibility. Furthermore complaints filed by some two thousand residents were dismissed without explanation. Residents will hold another protest on 5 April to demonstrate their opposition to this project.

Does the Commission not agree that there should be an environmental impact assessment for this project? Similarly, could the Commission say on what basis the authorities can claim that accessibility requirements and residents' opinions have been taken into account? Does the Commission intend to make available the report by Cabildo de Tenerife to which it referred?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(6 June 2014)

According to the regional authority 'Cabildo de Tenerife', this project 'Mejora y acondicionamiento del Paseo de San Telmo' does not require an environmental impact assessment according to current legislation, since the works to be implemented are on urban land ([1]).

As already stated in the Commission's answer to the Honourable Member's Written Question E-684/14, an explanatory report has been provided by the Cabildo de Tenerife proving that the accessibility requirements and residents' opinions have been taken into account.

The report prepared by the Cabildo de Tenerife is attached.

([1]) The referred legislation is Articles 5 and 8 of the law 11/1990 of 13 July on ecological impact prevention, and Article 3 of the law of environment impact assessment of projects, approved by the 'Real Decreto Legislativo 1/2008' of 11 January.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-004248/14
a la Comisión
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(7 de abril de 2014)

Asunto: La UEFA y el sentimiento ciudadano europeo

El jueves 27 de marzo, la UEFA aprobó poner en marcha en 2018 una liga, denominada Liga de Naciones, en la cual participarán las 54 selecciones nacionales europeas de fútbol. Esta se celebraría además de la actual Eurocopa.

Teniendo en cuenta que el deporte, en general, y el fútbol, en particular, son vehículo de reafirmación de los sentimientos nacionales y patrióticos de nuestras sociedades modernas, y dado el avance del euroescepticismo, la idea de la no Europa y el nacionalismo estatal excluyente en los Estados miembros:

— ¿Considera la Comisión que esa Liga de Naciones es positiva para fortalecer el espíritu europeo y el sentimiento de pertenencia a la Unión en la ciudadanía de los Estados miembros?

— ¿Cree la Comisión que dicha liga podría acelerar, promover y reforzar los sentimientos antieuropeos y debilitar y devaluar el sentimiento europeo de la ciudadanía de los Estados miembros?

— ¿Cree la Comisión que esa liga favorece o desfavorece el proyecto político europeo?

Respuesta de la Sra. Vassiliou en nombre de la Comisión
(5 de junio de 2014)

La Comisión acoge con satisfacción la creación por la UEFA de la Liga de Naciones, un nuevo torneo entre las selecciones de países europeos. La Comisión considera que el deporte tiene un importante papel que contribuye a la inclusión social y que puede ser motivo de unión. El Tratado de Lisboa lo reconoce (art. 165 del TFUE) y establece lo siguiente: «La Unión contribuirá a fomentar los aspectos europeos del deporte, teniendo en cuenta sus características específicas, sus estructuras basadas en el voluntariado y su función social y educativa.»

El nuevo capítulo del programa Erasmus+ dedicado al deporte ([1]) incluye entre sus objetivos la necesidad de luchar contra las amenazas transfronterizas a la integridad del deporte, como la violencia, y todo tipo de intolerancia y discriminación.

([1]) http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/actions/sport

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004248/14
to the Commission
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: UEFA and EU public sentiment

On 27 March 2014, UEFA gave the go-ahead to the creation of the 'Nations League', which will see football teams representing 54 European countries competing against each other from 2018. The tournament is set to run alongside the existing European Championship.

Given that sport in general and football in particular are used in modern society as vehicles to express national identity and patriotism, and in view of the rise of Euroscepticism, hostility to the very concept of the EU and closed-door state nationalism in the Member States:

— Does the Commission believe that the Nations League is a positive way of strengthening European spirit and people's sense of belonging to the EU in the Member States?

— Does the Commission believe that the League might hasten, incite and consolidate anti-EU sentiment and weaken and undermine pro-EU sentiment among members of the public?

— Does the Commission believe that the League is a help or a hindrance to the Europeanproject?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(5 June 2014)

The Commission welcomes the creation by UEFA of a Nations League, a new competition which will take place between European countries. The Commission believes that sport has a role to play in contributing to social inclusion and that sport can be a unifier. This has been recognised in the Lisbon Treaty (art.165 TFEU) which states: 'The Union shall contribute to the promotion of European sporting issues, while taking account of the specific nature of sport, its structures based on voluntary activity and its social and educational function.'

The new sport chapter of the Erasmus+ programme ([1]) includes among its objectives the need to tackle cross-border threats to the integrity of sport, such as violence, as well as all kind of intolerance and discrimination.

([1]) http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/actions/sport

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-004249/14
προς την Επιτροπή
Kriton Arsenis (S&D)
(7 Απριλίου 2014)

Θέμα: Απαλλαγή της «Lamda Development ΑΕ» από κάθε μορφή φορολογίας σχετικά με την επένδυση στο πρώην αεροδρόμιο του Ελληνικού και στον Άγιο Κοσμά

Το ΤΑΙΠΕΔ ανακοίνωσε στις 31 Μαρτίου την πώληση του 100% των μετοχών της εταιρείας «Ελληνικό ΑΕ» στην εταιρεία «Lamda Development ΑΕ». Σύμφωνα με την απόφαση της Διυπουργικής Επιτροπής Αποκρατικοποιήσεων με αριθμό 225/7-1-2013, παραχωρήθηκε από το ελληνικό δημόσιο στο ΤΑΙΠΕΔ το δικαίωμα επιφάνειας για 99 χρόνια και το 30% της πλήρους κυριότητας, νομής και κατοχής της περιοχής του Αγίου Κοσμά, καθώς και του πρώην Αεροδρομίου Ελληνικού. Κατά συνέπεια, αντικείμενο της συναλλαγής του ΤΑΙΠΕΔ με την εταιρεία «Lamda Development ΑΕ» είναι, μέσω της πώλησης των μετοχών της «Ελληνικό ΑΕ», η πώληση του δικαιώματος επιφάνειας για 99 χρόνια και το 30% της πλήρους κυριότητας, νομής και κατοχής της παραπάνω περιοχής. Η εταιρεία «Lamda Development ΑΕ», μέσω της «Ελληνικό ΑΕ», θα εκμεταλλευτεί την παραπάνω έκταση για 99 χρόνια και στη συνέχεια θα την επιστρέψει στο ελληνικό δημόσιο, που συνεχίζει να έχει την κυριότητα κατά 70%. Επιπλέον, στο άρθρο 42 του νόμου 3943/2011 που αφορά στη σύσταση της «Ελληνικό ΑΕ» ορίζεται ότι η εταιρεία «απαλλάσσεται από κάθε φόρο, τέλος ή αμοιβή, συμπεριλαμβανομένου του φόρου εισοδήματος για το κάθε μορφής εισόδημα που προκύπτει από τη δραστηριότητά της, φόρου μεταβίβασης για οποιαδήποτε αιτία, φόρου συγκέντρωσης κεφαλαίου (…)». Με βάση τα ανωτέρω, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

Συνιστά η πλήρης απαλλαγή της εταιρείας με το άρθρο 42 παρ. 6 του νόμου 3943/2011 από την καταβολή φόρου παράνομη κρατική ενίσχυση υπό την έννοια του άρθρου 107 της Συνθήκης Λειτουργίας της ΕΕ; Επιπλέον, σύμφωνα με δημοσιεύματα του ελληνικού Τύπου, έγγραφο που υπογράφεται από τον τότε πρόεδρο και διευθύνοντα σύμβουλο της εταιρείας «Ελληνικό ΑΕ» σημειώνει ότι «η κατώτατη εύλογη αξία των δικαιωμάτων της εταιρείας ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟ ΑΕ επί του ακινήτου ανέρχεται σε 1,239 δισ. ευρώ». Είναι ενήμερη η Επιτροπή για την συγκεκριμένη αποτίμηση; Συνιστά παράνομη κρατική ενίσχυση η πώληση σε τιμή χαμηλότερη της πραγματικής του αποτίμησης; Συνιστά η πώληση του 100% της εταιρείας «Ελληνικό ΑΕ» δημόσια σύμβαση παραχώρησης υπαγόμενη στις διατάξεις της οδηγίας 2004/18 δεδομένου ότι η «Lamda Development ΑΕ» θα εκμεταλλευτεί για 99 χρόνια τη συγκεκριμένη έκταση με το ελληνικό δημόσιο να έχει την κυριότητα; Έχουν τηρηθεί τα προβλεπόμενα από τις διατάξεις της συγκεκριμένης οδηγίας;

Απάντηση του κ. Almunia εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(19 Ιουνίου 2014)

Η Ελλάδα δεν έχει κοινοποιήσει το αναφερόμενο μέτρο φορολογικής απαλλαγής. Η Επιτροπή δεν διαθέτει επαρκείς πληροφορίες ώστε να αξιολογήσει κατά πόσον αυτό συνιστά κρατική ενίσχυση. Η Επιτροπή θα ζητήσει από την Ελλάδα διευκρινήσεις επί του θέματος.

Η Επιτροπή δεν έχει υπόψη της την αποτίμηση στην οποία αναφέρεται ο ελληνικός τύπος. Προκειμένου να προσδιορισθεί εάν η πώληση έγγειας ιδιοκτησίας από μέρους των δημοσίων αρχών συνιστά κρατική ενίσχυση, πρέπει να εφαρμόζεται το κριτήριο του φορέα της ελεύθερης οικονομίας. Όπως προκύπτει από την ανακοίνωση της Επιτροπής σχετικά με στοιχεία κρατικής ενίσχυσης στις πωλήσεις γηπέδων-οικοπέδων και κτιρίων από δημόσιες αρχές, η ύπαρξη κρατικής ενίσχυσης μπορεί να αποκλειστεί ([1]), εφόσον η γη πωλείται είτε μέσω μιας άνευ όρων ανοικτής και διαφανούς διαδικασίας υποβολής προσφορών είτε σε τιμή η οποία συνάδει με αποτίμηση ανεξάρτητου εμπειρογνώμονα. Με βάση τις δημόσια διαθέσιμες πληροφορίες, φαίνεται ότι η εταιρεία Lamda Development ΑΕ επελέγη μετά από ανοικτή πρόσκληση για υποβολή εκδήλωσης ενδιαφέροντος για την εξαγορά του μετοχικού κεφαλαίου της εταιρείας Ελληνικό ΑΕ.

Σύμφωνα με τη νομολογία της ΕΕ, μια «πράξη πώλησης» θα ενεργοποιούσε την εφαρμογή των κανόνων της ΕΕ για τις δημόσιες συμβάσεις, εφόσον χαρακτηριζόταν ως «έργο πολεοδομικής ανάπτυξης» μεταξύ δημόσιας αρχής και εργολήπτη και επληρούντο ορισμένα κριτήρια (βλ. υπόθεση C-451/08). Απαιτείται αξιολόγηση κατά περίπτωση, με βάση το σύνολο και τον εν γένει χαρακτήρα της συναλλαγής.

Από τις διαθέσιμες πληροφορίες δεν φαίνεται να προκύπτουν προβληματισμοί σχετικά με την εφαρμογή των κανόνων της ΕΕ περί δημόσιων συμβάσεων στη συναλλαγή, η οποία είχε ως αποτέλεσμα την πώληση της εταιρείας Ελληνικό ΑΕ.

([1]) Επίσημη Εφημερίδα αριθ. C 209 της 10.07.1997, σ. 0003 - 0005.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004249/14
to the Commission
Kriton Arsenis (S&D)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Exemption of Lamda Development SA from any form of taxation relating to investments in the former Hellinikon Airport and Agios Kosmas

On 31 March, the HRADF announced the sale of 100% of Hellinikon SA shares to Lamda Development SA. According to decision No 225/7-1-2013 of the Inter-Ministerial Privatisation Committee, the Greek Government has ceded to the HRADF the right in rem for 99 years and 30% of the full ownership, possession and occupation of the area of Agios Kosmas and the former Hellinikon Airport. In other words, in selling the Hellinikon SA shares to Lamda Development SA, the HRADF has sold to it the right in rem for 99 years and 30% of the full ownership, possession and occupation of the above areas. Lamda Development SA, through Hellinikon SA, will be exploiting the above area for 99 years and will then return it to the Greek state, which still owns 70% of it. Moreover, Article 42 of Law 3943/2011 concerning the establishment of Hellinikon SA states that the company 'shall be exempt from any tax, duty or fee, including income tax in respect of any form of income derived from its business, of transfer tax for any reason, capital accumulation tax (…)'.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

Does the complete exemption from taxation of the company under Article 42, paragraph 6, of Law 3943/2011 constitute the payment of illegal state aid within the meaning of Article 107 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union? Moreover, according to Greek press reports, a document signed by the then president and managing director of Hellinikon SA notes that 'the minimum fair value of the rights to the real estate in question of Hellinikon SA would be EUR 1 239 billion'. Is the Commission aware of this valuation? Does selling real estate at a price below its real value constitute illegal state aid? Does the sale of 100% of Hellinikon SA constitute a public concession subject to the provisions of Directive 2004/18, given that Lamda Development SA will be exploiting the area in question for 99 years with the Greek state owning it? Have the provisions of this directive been respected?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(19 June 2014)

Greece has not notified the alleged tax exemption measure. The Commission does not have sufficient information to assess whether it constitutes state aid. The Commission will ask Greece to provide clarifications on the issue.

The Commission is not aware of the alleged valuation the Greek press refers to. To determine whether the sale of land by public authorities constitutes state aid, the market economy operator test must be applied. It follows from the Commission Communication on state aid elements in sales of land and buildings by public authorities ([1]) that state aid can be excluded if the land is either sold through an unconditional open and transparent bidding procedure or at a price which is in line with an independent expert's valuation. On the basis of publicly available information, it appears that Lamda Development SA was selected after an open invitation to submit an expression of interest in the acquisition of the share capital of Hellinikon SA.

According to EU case law, a 'sale transaction' could trigger the application of EU public procurement rules if it could qualify as a 'land development project' between a public authority and a developer,and if it met several criteria (see C-451/08). A case-by-case assessment would be required, based on the totality and overall nature of the transaction.

Available information does not point to the existence of concerns relating to the application of EU public procurement rules to the transaction resulting in the sale of Hellinikon SA.

([1]) OJ C 209, 10.7.1997, p. 0003-0005.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-004250/14
lill-Kummissjoni
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(7 ta' April 2014)

Suġġett: Iż-żieda fil-faqar u l-malnutrizzjoni fost it-tfal minħabba miżuri ta' awsterità

Statistika ppubblikata reċentement ikkonfermat li fl-UE-28, 19 % tat-tfal jinsabu f'riskju ta' faqar. 15 % tat-tfal li jitilqu mill-edukazzjoni formali jagħmlu dan qabel ma jlestu l-edukazzjoni sekondarja. Iċ-ċifri jissuġġerixxu wkoll li r-rata ta' qgħad fost iż-żgħażagħ hija madwar id-doppju tar-rata ta' qgħad medja u hemm komunitajiet fejn il-qgħad huwa n-norma. Il-gruppi prinċipali ta' tfal li huma f'riskju ta' faqar jew esklużjoni soċjali huma tfal f'familji b'ġenitur wieħed, tfal li jitrabbew f'familji kbar, tfal li l-ġenituri tagħhom huma qiegħda, tfal ta' minoranzi etniċi u persuni b'diżabbiltà.

Iż-żieda fil-faqar fost it-tfal f'diversi Stati Membri ġiet investigata wkoll mill-UNICEF, li f'rapport intitolat "Child Well-being in Rich Countries: A comparative overview" (Il-benesssri tat-tfal f'pajjiżi sinjuri: Ħarsa ġenerali) li ffoka fuq is-sitwazzjoni fi Spanja, ikkonkluda li l-kundizzjonijiet soċjoekonomiċi li qed jeħżienu kienu riżultat tal-miżuri ta' awsterità li ġew imposti.

1. Il-Kummissjoni tista' tipprovdi l-aktar ċifri riċenti dwar in-numru ta' tfal fl-UE-28 li huma kkunsidrati foqra jew f'riskju ta' faqar?

2. X'passi qed jittieħdu biex jimpedixxu ż-żieda fil-faqar u l-malnutrizzjoni fost it-tfal f'dawk il-pajjiżi fejn it-Trojka imponiet miżuri ta' awsterità?

3. X'passi qed jittieħdu biex jgħinu lil familji Ewropej li attwalment qed jaffaċċjaw diffikultajiet finanzjarji minħabba l-kriżi ekonomika?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Andor f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(6 ta' Ġunju 2014)

1. Iċ-ċifri mitlubin mill-Onorevoli Membru ngħataw bi tweġiba għall-mistoqsija E-003293/2014.

2 u 3. Fil-kuntest tal-programmi ta' aġġustament proposti mit-Trojka, il-gvernijiet ikkonċernati huma mħeġġa li jimplimentaw ir-riformi b'mod li jnaqqas kemm jista' jkun it-tbatija soċjali, anki billi jibqgħu jsostnu l-familji u t-tfal li qegħdin f'riskju tal-faqar. Il-programmi ta' sostenn soċjali huma l-kompetenza tal-Istati Membri, filwaqt li l-Kummissjoni qiegħda tappoġġjahom bil-pariri politiċi u bil-finanzjament tal-UE bħall-Fond Soċjali Ewropew.

Wieħed mill-għanijiet tal-istrateġija Ewropa 2020 huwa t-tnaqqis tar-riskji tal-faqar u tal-esklużjoni soċjali. Il-Kummissjoni tissorvelja attentament l-iżvilupp tal-faqar, anki tal-faqar fost it-tfal, fl-Istati Membri. Ir-reviżjoni riċenti ta' nofs it-term tal-Istrateġija vvalutat l-iżviluppi u l-azzjonijiet tal-UE biex jinkiseb it-tkabbir intelliġenti, sostenibbli u inklużiv, fid-dawl tal-kriżi finanzjarja, ekonomika u soċjali ([1]). Barra minn hekk, biex tifhem aħjar ir-riskji ta' żbilanċ fejn għandu x'jaqsam mal-qgħad u l-faqar, il-Kummissjoni daħħlet tabella ta' valutazzjoni tal-indikaturi ewlenin soċjali u tal-impjiegi, u saħħet il-koordinazzjoni tal-politiki soċjali u tal-impjieg fis-Semestru Ewropew anki fir-rigward tal-faqar fost it-tfal.

Fuq proposta tal-Kummissjoni, il-Parlament u l-Kunsill adottaw ir-regolament ([2]) li jistabbilixxi l-Fond għall-Għajnuna Ewropea għall-Persuni l-Aktar fil-Bżonn, b'baġit totali ta' EUR 3.4 biljun (fi prezzijiet tal-2011) għall-perjodu 2014 sa 2020. Il-Fond se jgħin l-iskemi tal-Istati Membri biex itaffu l-għar forom ta' faqar billi jagħtu l-ikel u/jew għajnuna materjali bażika lil dawk li huma l-iżjed fil-bżonn, speċjalment it-tfal, kif ukoll attivitajiet ta' inklużjoni soċjali bil-mira li jiġu integrati soċjalment l-aktar nies fil-bżonn.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/europe2020stocktaking_mt.pdf
([2]) Ir-Regolament (UE) Nru 223/2014 tal-Parlament Ewropew u tal-Kunsill tal-11 ta' Marzu 2014 dwar il-Fond għal Għajnuna Ewropea għall-Persuni l-Aktar fil-Bżonn (ĠU L 72, 12.3.2014, p. 1).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004250/14
to the Commission
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Rise in child poverty and malnutrition due to austerity measures

Statistics recently published confirmed that across the EU-28, 19% of children are at risk of poverty. 15% of children who leave formal education do so without completing secondary education. The figures also suggest that the youth unemployment rate is about twice the average unemployment rate and there are communities where joblessness is the norm. The main groups of children who are at risk of poverty or social exclusion are children in lone-parent families, children who are brought up in large families, children whose parents or carers are unemployed, children of ethnic minorities and the disabled.

The rise in child poverty in various Member States was also investigated by Unicef, who, in a report entitled 'Child Well-being in Rich Countries: A comparative overview' which focused on the Spanish situation, concluded that the worsening socioeconomic conditions were the result of the imposed austerity measures.

1. Can the Commission provide the latest figures on the number of children in the EU-28 who are considered to be poor or at risk of poverty?

2. What steps are being taken to prevent the rise of child poverty and malnutrition in those countries where the Troika imposed austerity measures?

3. What steps are being taken to help European families who are currently facing financial difficulties owing to the economic crisis?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(6 June 2014)

1. The figures requested by the Honourable Member were provided in reply to E-003293/2014.

2 and 3. In the context of adjustment programmes proposed by the Troika, the governments concerned are encouraged to implement reforms in such a way as to minimise social hardship, including by maintaining support for families and children at risk. The competence for social support programmes lies with the Member States, while the Commission is backing them with policy advice and EU funding such as the European Social Fund.

Reducing the risk of poverty and social exclusion is one of the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy. The Commission closely monitors the development of poverty, including child poverty, in the Member States. The recent mid-term review of the strategy took stock of developments and EU-actions to achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, taking into account the financial, economic and social crisis ([1]). Furthermore, to better understand the risk of imbalances, in terms of unemployment, poverty, the Commission introduced a scoreboard of key employment and social indicators and strengthened the coordination of employment and social policies in the European semester, including as regards child poverty.

Upon Commission's proposal the Parliament and the Council adopted the regulation ([2]) setting up the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived with an overall budget of EUR 3.4 billion (in 2011 prices) for the period 2014 to 2020. The Fund will support Member State schemes to alleviate the worst forms of poverty by providing the neediest, and in particular children, with food and/or basic material assistance, as well as social inclusion activities aiming at the social integration of the most deprived persons.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/europe2020stocktaking_en.pdf
([2]) Regulation (EU) No 223/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11.3.2014 on the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived, OJ L 72, 12.3.2014, p. 1.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004251/14
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(7 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Pakistan e violenze sulle donne

Le donne pakistane hanno subito nella storia e subiscono tuttora ogni genere di discriminazione e sono frequentemente vittime di stupri e di brutali uccisioni. L'uxoricidio, il rogo della donna, gli sfregi inferti con l'acido, le percosse e le minacce rientrano nel quadro delle violenze domestiche, mentre Karachi, città più popolosa dello Stato, si qualifica come uno dei luoghi con il più alto numero di violenze in tutto il Paese. Recentemente una giovane infermiera di 22 anni è stata sequestrata, stuprata e bruciata viva: il suo corpo carbonizzato è stato ritrovato sulla riva del torrente Lyari.

In Pakistan si registrano una media di oltre 4 casi di donne bruciate vive ogni settimana, 3 su 4 con conseguente morte. Nella sola Islamabad si stima che 4 mila donne siano state date alle fiamme.

Preso atto che delitti d'onore, rapimenti, torture restano piaghe preoccupanti e i carnefici rimangono prevalentemente impuniti; considerato che le aggressioni fisiche contro le donne non vengono perseguite se effettuate da membri della famiglia di sesso maschile, così come gli omicidi o i tentati omicidi in famiglia;

può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

1. è al corrente dei fatti sopra descritti?

2. Come intende agire per tutelare la vita e la sicurezza delle donne che in Pakistan non hanno nessuna voce?

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

I diritti delle donne sono un tema prioritario del dialogo sui diritti umani tra l'UE e il Pakistan. L'UE ha regolarmente condannato la violenza nei confronti delle donne e ha esortato il governo pakistano ad adottare misure urgenti per garantire la tutela dei loro diritti, appellandosi inoltre alle autorità perché garantiscano l'incolumità fisica e la protezione dei diritti di tutti i cittadini.

Attraverso i suoi strumenti di cooperazione allo sviluppo l'UE finanzia una serie di progetti e attività di sensibilizzazione per aumentare la capacità degli organi di contrasto di individuare, prevenire e rispondere agli atti criminali contro le donne. L'UE collabora inoltre con le autorità e la società civile per garantire la riabilitazione delle donne sopravvissute alla violenza e promuovere l'empowerment e i diritti sociali ed economici delle donne, nonché il loro ruolo nella costruzione della pace. Per quanto riguarda il tema specifico della violenza nei confronti delle donne, l'UE ha finanziato, tra l'altro, un progetto contro la tortura praticata sulle donne in custodia cautelare e sta valutando proposte relative ad altre attività volte a combattere la violenza contro le donne e a promuoverne l'empowerment, in particolare i diritti sociali ed economici.

L'UE collabora con il Parlamento federale del Pakistan e estenderà il suo sostegno ai parlamenti provinciali al fine di migliorare il funzionamento delle istituzioni democratiche del paese. L'assistenza fornita in tale ambito riguarderà anche la legislazione in materia di genere e il relativo controllo.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004251/14
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Pakistan and violence against women

Pakistani women suffered throughout history and continue to suffer today from discrimination of every kind. They are frequently raped or brutally killed. Uxoricide, suttee, disfigurement inflicted with acid, beatings and threats, all are forms of domestic violence, while Karachi, the country's most heavily populated city, is also known as one of the places with the highest number of violent attacks in the whole country. Recently a 22-year-old nurse was abducted, raped and burnt alive: her charred corpse was found on the banks of the Lyari River.

On average in Pakistan more than four cases of women being burnt alive are recorded every week, three or four of them with fatal consequences. It is estimated that 4 000 women have been set on fire in Islamabad alone.

The curse of honour crimes, abductions and torture continue to be a serious cause for concern and in most cases the perpetrators go unpunished. Physical attacks on women are not prosecuted if carried out by male members of the family, as is also the case for cases of murder or attempted murder within the family.

1. Is the Commission aware of the aforementioned facts?

2. What action will it take to protect the lives and safety of women who have no voice in Pakistan?

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

Women's rights are a priority in the EU's human rights dialogue with Pakistan. The EU has regularly condemned violence against women and encouraged the Government of Pakistan to take urgent measures to ensure protection for the rights of women and has called on the authorities to ensure the physical security and protect the rights of all its citizens.

Through its development cooperation instruments the EU funds a range of projects and awareness raising activities to increase the capacity of law enforcement agencies to detect, prevent and respond to crimes against women. The EU also works with the authorities and civil society to rehabilitate women survivors of violence and to promote women's social and economic empowerment and rights, as well as women's role in peace building. On the specific theme of violence against women, the EU has, among many others, financed a projects against torture on women in custody and is at present evaluating proposals for the implementation of further activities for addressing violence against women and promoting their empowerment, in particular in their social and economic rights.

The EU works with the Pakistan Federal Parliament and will extend its assistance to the Provincial Parliaments with the aim of enhancing the functioning of Pakistan's democratic institutions. This includes assistance in the area of gender-related legislation and oversight.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004252/14
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(7 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Morte di una fotoreporter in Afghanistan

Il 4 aprile nella provincia di Khost, nell'est dell'Afghanistan, al confine col Pakistan, è stata uccisa la fotoreporter tedesca Anja Niedringhaus ed è stata gravemente ferita la collega canadese Katthy Gannon.

L'attentatore era un talebano che indossava una divisa delle forze di sicurezza governative.

La Commissione:

— è a conoscenza di quanto sopra esposto?

— Può fornire dati sul numero di giornalisti e reporter feriti ed uccisi dall'inizio del conflitto ad oggi?

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

L'AR/VP deplora il terribile incidente in cui la giornalista Anja Niedringhaus è rimasta uccisa e la sua collega Kathy Gannon ha riportato gravi ferite.

A quanto risulta l'attentatore non sarebbe un combattente talebano vestito da poliziotto, ma un agente della polizia nazionale che è stato arrestato e posto in custodia cautelare durante le indagini. I talebani negano il coinvolgimento del gruppo nell'attentato contro le giornaliste straniere.

Diverse ONG come l'Afghanistan Journalist Safety Committee (http://www.ajsc.af), il Committee to Protect Journalists (https://cpj.org) o il NAI Media Institute (http://nai.org.af/en) stimano a circa 26 il numero di giornalisti uccisi dal 2001 in Afghanistan.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004252/14
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Death of a photographer in Afghanistan

On 4 April, Anja Niedringhaus, a German photographer, was killed and *Kathy Gannon, her* Canadian colleague, seriously injured in the province of Khost in eastern Afghanistan near the Pakistani border.

The perpetrator was a Taliban fighter in police uniform.

Is the Commission aware of this?

Can it provide information concerning the total number of journalists and reporters killed and injured since the outbreak of war?

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

The HR/VP condems the terrible incident in which the journalist Anja Niedringhaus was killed and her colleague Kathy Gannon seriously injured.

The perpetrator has not been confirmed as 'a Taliban fighter in police uniform', but was allegedly an Afghan National Police Officer who was arrested and taken into custody for investigation. The Taliban denied the group's involvement in targeting the foreign journalists.

Different NGOs like the Afghanistan Journalist Safety Committee (http://www.ajsc.af), the Committee to Protect Journalists (https://cpj.org) or the the or NAI Media Institute (http://nai.org.af/en) indicate total numbers of around 26 journalists who have been killed since 2001 in Afghanistan.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004253/14
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(7 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Suicidio di un'adolescente a Cittadella (PD): chiusura di Ask.fm

Nella risposta alla mia interrogazione E-001649/2014, in cui portavo all'attenzione dell'UE la drammatica vicenda del suicidio di un'adolescente a Cittadella (PD), la Commissione europea afferma che «il sito e le sue funzioni di sicurezza sono stati sottoposti a una verifica completa e indipendente, in seguito alla quale Ask.fm ha informato la Commissione delle modifiche apportate e del lancio del centro di sicurezza. Ask.fm ha inoltre dichiarato che i suoi moderatori gestiscono tutte le denunce di atti di bullismo, molestie o domande inopportune entro 24 ore dalla segnalazione. Il pulsante blocca-utente permette di bloccare la ricezione di domande o commenti cattivi da un determinato utente».

Considerando che gli avvenimenti di Cittadella sono intercorsi dopo questa verifica della Commissione europea, che si rivela quindi insufficiente a garantire l'incolumità degli adolescenti europei, e che numerose associazioni di consumatori hanno ripetutamente denunciato che proprio i moderatori richiamati dalla Commissione nella sua risposta non riescono a gestire e controllare tutto quanto accade su Ask.fm (basti pensare che non risultano commenti contenenti insulti o minacce di morte che siano stati cancellati), può dire la Commissione se, dopo la tragedia dell'adolescente di Cittadella, che mette chiaramente in luce che Ask.fm è un social network non sicuro per gli adolescenti, intende procedere con una nuova verifica completa e indipendente sul social network? In caso affermativo e qualora risultino insanabili falle di sicurezza, cosa intende fare? In caso negativo, come intende proteggere tutti quegli adolescenti che, nonostante il suo centro di sicurezza e i suoi moderatori inefficaci, sono comunque messi a grave rischio proprio dalla sua operatività?

Risposta di Neelie Kroes a nome della Commissione
(28 maggio 2014)

La Commissione ribadisce la condanna di tutte le forme di comportamento dannoso e offensivo online; riconosce anche che esistono cause molteplici e complesse che sottendono ai suicidi e che le misure volte a prevenire i suicidi dovrebbe adottare approcci omnicomprensivi ([1]). Lo sviluppo di un quadro di azione per prevenire i suicidi è uno degli obiettivi dell'azione congiunta tra gli Stati membri sulla salute mentale e il benessere ([2]), che la Commissione sta sostenendo attraverso il programma dell'UE sulla salute. Una lotta efficace contro il ciberbullismo dipende anche da diversi fattori e richiede un approccio integrato ([3]), che combini la sensibilizzazione, la formazione l'istruzione, i sistemi di autoregolamentazione e gli strumenti tecnici nonché l'esecuzione delle pertinenti disposizioni di legge, paragonabile a quello esistente per i messaggi di odio.

L'audit su Ask.fm di cui abbiamo riferito nella precedente risposta è stato condotto da Ask.fm stesso e le informazioni trasmesseci da Ask.fm sul completamento delle iniziative prese per dare attuazione ai risultati dell'audit e per migliorare i suoi servizi risalgono al 1°marzo 2014.

La Commissione dovrebbe tenere conto del fatto che i meccanismi di segnalazione e di blocco possono funzionare quando i minori e i giovani ne siano informati e ne facciano uso, ma la ricerca ha rilevato che, sebbene siano a conoscenza degli strumenti di segnalazione, i minori non ne fanno uso ([4]). Attraverso la coalizione CEO, le aziende del settore delle TIC si sono adoperate per rendere i meccanismi di segnalazione più accessibili e visibili ai minori, e per migliorarne il feedback. La Commissione intende includere un numero maggiore di organizzazioni nel forum della coalizione CEO, che costituirà un canale di feedback sull'effettiva efficacia delle diverse misure di sicurezza.

([1]) Ulteriori informazioni: Documento di base per il convegno tematico dell'UE (10 — 11 dicembre 2009): Preventing of Depression and Suicide— Making it Happen (La prevenzione di depressione e suicidio — Passiamo all'azione), http://ec.europa.eu/health/mental_health/docs/depression_background_en.pdf Cfr. anche la letteratura scientifica, ad esempio Zoltan Rihmer, et al.: Strategies for suicide prevention, (Strategie di prevenzione dei suicidi), in: Psychiatry (2002) 15: 83 ± 87 o più di recente D. Wasserman et al.: The European Psychiatric Association (EPA) guidance on suicide treatment and prevention (Orientamenti dell'Associazione psichiatrica europea sul trattamento e la prevenzione dei suicidi), in: European Psychiatry 27 (2012) 129-141.

([2]) http:// www.mentalhealthandwellbeing.eu/

([3]) La «Strategia europea per un'internet migliore per i ragazzi» propone azioni che dovranno essere intraprese congiuntamente dalla Commissione, dagli Stati membri e dall'industria.

([4]) http://www.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline/EU%20Kids%20III/Reports/EUKidsOnlinereportfortheCEOCoalition.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004253/14
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Teenage suicide in Cittadella (Padua): closure of Ask.fm

In its answer to my Question E-001649/2014, in which I drew the EU's attention to the tragic teenage suicide case in Cittadella (Padua), the Commission stated that 'Ask.fm underwent a full and independent audit of its site and its safety features, and has informed the Commission about the implemented changes and the launch of their (sic) safety centre. Ask.fm further reported that their moderators are committed to dealing with any reports of bullying, harassment or inappropriate questions within 24-hours of a report being made. With the *Block User Button* users can opt out from receiving nasty questions or comments'.

Given that the events in Cittadella took place after the audit, which is thus not serving to protect European teenagers from harm, and that many consumer organisations have repeatedly complained that the moderators, on whom the Commission, according to its answer, likewise appears to be relying, are failing to deal with and control everything that happens on Ask.fm (suffice it to say that insulting comments and death threats have not been deleted), and in the light of the tragic case of the Cittadella teenager, which clearly shows that Ask.fm is an unsafe social network for teenagers, will the Commission have another full and independent audit carried out? If so, if the safety loopholes prove impossible to close, what will it do? If not, how will it protect all those teenagers who, notwithstanding Ask.fm's safety centre and its (ineffectual) moderators, will, in any event, be placed in jeopardy for as long as the site remains in operation?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(28 May 2014)

The Commission reiterates our condemnation of all forms of offensive and harmful behaviour online and also recognises that there are many complex drivers underlying suicides, and that measures to prevent suicides should adopt comprehensive approaches ([1]). The development of a framework for action to prevent suicides is one of the objectives of the Joint Action on Mental Health and Well-being ([2]) with the Member States which the Commission is supporting through the EU-Health Programme. Effective combatting of cyberbullying is also dependent on different factors and requires a joined-up approach ([3]), combining awareness-raising, training and education, self-regulation and technical tools as well as enforcement of relevant legal provisions such as exist for hate messages.

The audit on ask.fm referred to in our previous reply was instigated by ask.fm itself and ask.fm's information to us on the completion of actions taken to implement the audit findings and to improve its services dates from 1 March 2014.

The Commission should bear in mind that reporting and blocking mechanisms can work when children and young people both are aware of and make use of them, but research has found that although children are aware of reporting tools they do not use them ([4]). Through the CEO Coalition, ICT companies have worked to make reporting more available and visible for children, and to improve feedback. The Commission intends to include more organisations in the CEO Coalition forum which will provide a vehicle for feedback on how effective different safety provisions are.

([1]) Further information in: Background document for the EU thematic conference (10th — 11th December 2009): Preventing of Depression and Suicide- Making it Happen, http://ec.europa.eu/health/mental_health/docs/depression_background_en.pdf See also the scientific literature, such as Zoltan Rihmer,et al: Strategies for suicide prevention, in:Psychiatry .(2002) 15:83±87or more recently D. Wasserman et al: The European Psychiatric Association (EPA) guidance on suicide treatment and prevention, in: European Psychiatry 27 (2012) 129-141.

([2]) http://www.mentalhealthandwellbeing.eu/

([3]) The 'Strategy for a Better Internet for Children' proposes actions to be undertaken jointly by the Commission, Member States and Industry.

([4]) http://www.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline/EU%20Kids%20III/Reports/EUKidsOnlinereportfortheCEOCoalition.pdf

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004254/14
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(7 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Libertà religiosa negli Stati Uniti

Negli ultimi anni si è assistito a un continuo aumento delle violazioni commesse da attori sia governativi che non governativi contro individui e gruppi sociali sulla base della loro appartenenza religiosa o della loro fede. A una bambina americana di cinque anni, che a scuola voleva recitare una preghiera prima di mangiare, è stato detto «non puoi farlo, è una cosa brutta». Negli Stati Uniti quello alla libertà religiosa rimane un diritto a geometria variabile, soprattutto nelle scuole. All'Università di Princeton, per la prima volta, è stato riconosciuto un gruppo studentesco di ispirazione religiosa denominato «Princeton Fede e Azione». Dopo un primo rifiuto opposto senza dare spiegazioni, le autorità del College hanno ceduto alle motivazioni addotte dalla Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, che invitava a garantire un pari trattamento a credenti e a non credenti. Preso atto che una decisione del Consiglio UE, del 2013, ha stabilito la necessità di varare delle linee guida per la tutela del diritto alla libertà di religione nel mondo, la Commissione:

1. è al corrente dei fatti sopra descritti?

2. come valuta la situazione della libertà religiosa negli Stati Uniti?

3. come valuta la situazione dei Cristiani?

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

L'UE monitora il rispetto della libertà di religione o di credo nei paesi terzi conformemente ai suoi orientamenti sulla promozione e sulla tutela della libertà di religione o di credo del 24 giugno 2013. Negli Stati Uniti la libertà religiosa è tutelata dalle costituzioni e dalle leggi federali e statali e garantita da un sistema sgiudiziario solido e indipendente. L'UE discute regolarmente delle questioni connesse alle libertà di religione o di credo nell'ambito delle sue consultazioni sui diritti umani con gli Stati Uniti.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004254/14
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Religious freedom in the United States

Individuals and social groups have in recent years been increasingly subjected to violence — institutional and otherwise — on account of their religious background or beliefs. When a 5-year-old American girl tried to say grace before eating her lunch at school, she was stopped and told that 'it's wrong to pray'. In the United States religious freedom is a right that still means different things from one case to another. Princeton University has, for the first time, officially recognised a religious-based student organisation (the group concerned is called 'Princeton Faith and Action'). The university authorities began by refusing to approve the group, without explaining why, but eventually yielded to the reasoning of the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, which had called for believers and non-believers to be treated in the same way. A 2013 Council decision called for guidelines to be adopted with a view to protecting freedom of religion throughout the world. Bearing that point in mind:

1. Is the Commission aware of the facts described above?

2. How does it view the state of religious freedom in the United States?

3. How does it view the situation of Christians?

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

The EU monitors respect for freedom of religion or belief in third countries in accordance with the EU Guidelines on the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief of 24 June 2013. Religious freedom in the US is protected by the country's federal and state Constitutions and laws, and guaranteed by a robust and independent judicial system. The EU discusses matters related to the freedom of religion or belief in its regular human rights consultations with the US.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004255/14
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(7 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Manifestazione interrotta a Hong Kong

A Hong Kong, durante la manifestazione contro l'apertura di un nuovo impianto petrolchimico a Maoming (Guangdong,) la polizia paramilitare cinese è intervenuta in modo violentissimo per reprimere la folla, accusando i manifestanti di essere «gruppi di malviventi».

Il bilancio conta due morti, decine di feriti e numerosi arresti. Nelle comunità democratiche i cittadini hanno il diritto di manifestare pacificamente e questo non lascia spazio ad azioni di violenza ingiustificate da parte della polizia.

Alla luce di quanto precede, può la Commissione far sapere:

— se è al corrente dei fatti sopra descritti,

— come intende muoversi per tutelare il diritto di manifestare di tali persone?

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

L'AR/VP è a conoscenza della manifestazione che si è svolta nell'aprile 2014 contro l'apertura di un impianto di paraxilolo nelle vicinanze di un'area abitata nella città di Maoming, situata nella provincia di Guangdong a sud della Cina, e dell'azione di repressione che ne è seguita. L'Unione europea solleva regolarmente la questione del diritto alla libertà di espressione e di manifestazione pacifica con le autorità cinesi, in particolare nell'ambito del dialogo UE-Cina sui diritti umani.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004255/14
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Demonstration in Hong Kong broken up

During a demonstration in Hong Kong against the opening of a new petrochemical plant in Maoming (Guangdong), the Chinese paramilitary police acted with extreme violence in restraining the crowd, accusing demonstrators of being 'a band of criminals'.

The final toll was two dead, dozens injured and a large number of arrests. In democratic societies, the general public enjoys the right to peaceful protest and this leaves no room for unjustified police violence.

— Is the Commission aware of the aforementioned facts?

— What action will it take to protect such people's right to protest?

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

The HR/VPis aware of the demonstration that took place in April 2014 opposing the opening of a paraxylene plant near a residential area in Maoming City in southern China's Guangdong Province and the repression that ensued. The right to freedom of expression and peaceful protest is regularly raised by the EU with the Chinese authorities, in particular during the regular EU-China Human Rights Dialogues.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004256/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Berlato (PPE)
(7 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Libera circolazione dei lavoratori sportivi nell'Unione europea

La Federazione Italiana Pallacanestro (FIP), nella stagione sportiva 2013/2014, ha apportato modifiche ai campionati, prevedendo un solo campionato professionistico e tre campionati nazionali dilettanti.

Nel primo campionato nazionale dilettanti è stata introdotta la possibilità di tesserare 2 atleti stranieri per squadra, schierando, su 10 giocatori previsti, almeno 7 atleti in possesso della formazione italiana.

Nei campionati nazionali dilettanti DNB e DNC è possibile tesserare soltanto atleti che abbiano una formazione italiana, escludendo quindi i giocatori che si siano formati nel loro paese di origine.

Pur essendo legittime le norme create a tutela dei vivai giovanili che impongono una quota minima nelle squadre riservata agli atleti cosiddetti formati, una norma che introduce uno sbarramento assoluto al tesseramento di altri atleti, quale l'attuale regolamento della FIP per i campionati DNB e DNC, si pone in conflitto con i principi di parità e di libera circolazione.

La giurisprudenza comunitaria ha stabilito che un atleta, anche se formalmente dilettante, nel momento in cui percepisce una regolare retribuzione che sia superiore al semplice rimborso spese, va considerato un lavoratore con tutte le conseguenze del caso.

I giocatori di basket che partecipano ai campionati nazionali dilettanti concludono con le società un accordo economico che prevede il pagamento di un compenso mensile, oltre a eventuali premi.

Considerando quindi che vi è una diretta violazione delle norme UE sulla libera circolazione dei cittadini e dei lavoratori, si chiede alla Commissione:

— di segnalare alla Federazione Italiana Pallacanestro, pur nel rispetto delle norme poste a tutela dei vivai giovanili di cui alla delibera del CONI n. 1276 del 15.7.2004, la necessità di consentire la partecipazione, in tutti i campionati nazionali dilettanti, degli atleti comunitari che siano stati formati in altri Paesi dell'Unione.

Risposta di László Andor a nome della Commissione
(3 giugno 2014)

La Commissione europea sta dialogando con le autorità italiane in merito alle norme della Federazione Italiana Pallacanestro che impongono, nelle squadre di giocatori professionisti, una quota riservata agli atleti formati localmente. All'Italia è stato chiesto di fornire una giustificazione per tale quota, compresa la sua idoneità a conseguire gli obiettivi perseguiti di interesse pubblico, adeguatezza e necessità.

La posizione della Commissione sulla questione dello sport e della libera circolazione è stata espressa nella comunicazione COM(2011) 12 definitivo, del 18 gennaio 2011, e nel documento di lavoro dei servizi della Commissione allegato «Sport and Free movement» SEC(2011)66 final, disponibili in EUR-Lex e sul sito web della Commissione.

La Commissione sottolinea inoltre che i diritti UE in materia di libera circolazione dei lavoratori sono direttamente applicabili in tutti gli Stati membri e che ogni persona interessata può ricorrere, per singoli problemi, alle istituzioni o ai giudici nazionali competenti. Spetta in primo luogo ai giudici nazionali valutare gli aspetti di diritto e di fatto di ogni singolo caso e decidere in merito all'adeguatezza e alla proporzionalità, alla luce del diritto UE in materia di libera circolazione, delle quote di giocatori formati localmente applicate dalle federazioni sportive nazionali o internazionali.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004256/14
to the Commission
Sergio Berlato (PPE)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Free movement of sports workers in the European Union

The Italian Basketball Federation (the 'FIP') introduced changes to the championships in the 2013-2014 season, making provision for just one professional championship and three national amateur championships.

In the top national amateur championship it became possible for each team to register two foreign players, fielding a line-up in which at least seven of the ten players named had trained in Italy.

In the DNB and DNC national amateur championships only players who trained in Italy may join clubs, thereby excluding players who trained in their country of origin.

The rules introduced to protect youth sports training centres, which state that a minimum number of team places shall be reserved for players trained in Italy, are legitimate. However, a rule which bars completely other players from joining clubs, as FIP regulations do at present in the DNB and DNC championships, conflicts with the principles of equality and free movement.

It has been established in EU case-law that when any athlete, even if officially an amateur, begins to receive a regular payment which is higher than a simple reimbursement of expenses incurred, he shall be considered as a worker with all the repercussions this entails.

Basketball players who take part in national amateur championships come to a financial agreement with companies which provides for payment of a monthly fee, in addition to any prizes.

In view of the fact, therefore, that there is a direct breach of EU legislation on the free movement of citizens and workers:

— Will the Commission point out to the Italian Basketball Federation that, whilst abiding by the rules protecting youth sports training centres in resolution No 1276 of 15 July 2004 of the Italian National Olympic Committee, it has to allow EU players who have trained in other EU countries to take part in all national amateur championships?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(3 June 2014)

The European Commission is in dialogue with Italian state authorities concerning Italian Basketball Federation rules on 'locally trained players' quota for professional basketball players. Italy has been requested to provide justification for the quota, including its suitability to achieve the pursued objectives of public interest, appropriateness and necessity.

The Commission's position on the issue of sports and free movement was expressed in its communication COM(2011) 12 final of 18 January 2011 and the attached Staff Working Document 'Sport and Free movement' SEC(2011) 66 final, which are available in EUR-Lex and on the Commission's website.

The Commission in addition emphasises that EU rights on free movement of workers are directly applicable in all Member States and every person concerned can take recourse, in case of an individual problem, to the appropriate national institutions or courts. It is primarily for the national courts to assess the factual and legal aspects of each case and to decide on the appropriateness and proportionality of locally trained players' quotas enacted by national or international sports federations in the light of EC law on free movement.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse P-004257/14
til Kommissionen
Ole Christensen (S&D)
(7. april 2014)

Om: EU's strategi for sikkerhed og sundhed på arbejdspladsen

EU's strategi for sikkerhed og sundhed på arbejdspladsen udløb den 1. januar 2013 ([1]). På trods af utallige opfordringer fra Europa-Parlamentet ([2]) har Kommissionen endnu ikke fremlagt en ny strategi ([3]). I Europa-Parlamentet og i EFS (Den Europæiske Faglige Sammenslutning) har der været en forventning om offentliggørelse af en ny europæisk strategi for sikkerhed og sundhed på arbejdspladsen den 28. april 2014.

Kommissionen har givet klart udtryk for, at strategien for sundhed og sikkerhed på arbejdspladsen 2007-2012 har haft en positiv indvirkning overalt i EU, og Kommissionen har desuden givet udtryk for, at der i de kommende år er behov for at tage fat på en række udfordringer på området for sundhed og sikkerhed på arbejdspladsen.

Nu forlyder det imidlertid, at en ny strategi alligevel ikke vil blive fremlagt i slutningen af april.

Kan Kommissionen redegøre for årsagerne bag denne prioritering? Kan Kommissionen desuden oplyse, hvornår den vil fremlægge en ny strategi?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af László Andor
(16. maj 2014)

Der er blevet gennemført grundige analyser med henblik på at udarbejde en EU-rammepolitik for arbejdsmiljø for fremtiden. Dette har omfattet en grundig evaluering af den tidligere EU-strategi for sundhed og sikkerhed på arbejdspladsen (2007-12), høring af berørte parter som f.eks. Det Rådgivende Udvalg for Sikkerhed og Sundhed på Arbejdspladsen og Udvalget af Arbejdstilsynschefer samt behandling af feedback fra den offentlige høring, som blev indledt den 31. maj 2013.

Den store konference om arbejdsvilkår, som Kommissionen afholdt i Bruxelles den 28. april 2014, omfattede en workshop om sundhed og sikkerhed på arbejdspladsen, som havde til formål at indkredse og drøfte de vigtigste udfordringer og de mål og tiltag, der er nødvendige for at forbedre sundhed og sikkerhed på arbejdspladsen. Den gav de berørte parter lejlighed til at fremlægge forslag til EU's kommende strategiske ramme for sundhed og sikkerhed på arbejdspladsen for 2014-20, som Kommissionen agter at vedtage i juni 2014.

([1]) Højere kvalitet og produktivitet i arbejdet: en fællesskabsstrategi for sundhed og sikkerhed på arbejdspladsen 2007-2012.
([2]) Europa-Parlamentets beslutning af 15. december 2011 om midtvejsevalueringen af den europæiske strategi for sundhed og sikkerhed på arbejdspladsen 2007-2012 (2011/2147(INI)).
([3]) Europa-Parlamentets beslutning af 12. september 2013 om den europæiske strategi for sundhed og sikkerhed på arbejdspladsen (2013/2685(RSP)).

(English version)

Question for written answer P-004257/14
to the Commission
Ole Christensen (S&D)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: EU strategy on health and safety at work

The EU strategy on health and safety at work came to an end on 31 December 2012 ([1]). Despite countless calls by Parliament ([2]) the Commission has still not submitted a new strategy ([3]). Parliament and the European Trade Union Confederation have been expecting a new European strategy on health and safety at work to be published on 28 April 2014.

The Commission has made it clear that the 2007-2012 strategy on health and safety at work had a positive impact across the EU and that a number of challenges in the area of occupational health and safety need to be addressed in the years ahead.

It is now being reported, however, that no new strategy will be submitted at the end of April after all.

Can the Commission say why that is the case? Can it furthermore say when it intends to submit a new strategy?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(16 May 2014)

Thorough analysis work has been undertaken with a view to drafting an EU occupational safety and health policy framework for the future. This has included an in-depth evaluation of the previous EU Strategy on Health and Safety at Work (2007-12), the consulting of such stakeholders as the Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work and the Senior Labour Inspectors' Committee, and consideration of feedback from the public consultation opened on 31 May 2013.

The major conference that the Commission held on working conditions in Brussels on 28 April 2014 involved a workshop on occupational health and safety to identify and discuss the key challenges and the objectives and action needed to improve health and safety at the workplace. It provided an opportunity for stakeholders to present suggestions for the forthcoming EU strategic framework on health and safety at work for 2014-20, which the Commission plans to adopt in June 2014.

([1]) Improving quality and productivity at work: Community strategy 2007-2012 on health and safety at work.
([2]) European Parliament resolution of 15 December 2011 on the mid-term review of the European strategy 2007-2012 on health and safety at work (2011/2147(INI)).
([3]) European Parliament resolution of 12 September 2013 on the European strategy on health and safety at work (2013/2685(RSP)).

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-004259/14
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(7 Απριλίου 2014)

Θέμα: Ανάγκη προσαρμογής της πολιτικής ανταγωνισμού της ΕΕ στις συνθήκες της παγκοσμιοποίησης

Στην πρόταση ψηφίσματος σχετικά με την ετήσια έκθεση για την πολιτική ανταγωνισμού της ΕΕ (2013/2075(INI)), το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο συμπεραίνει ότι, «η πολιτική ανταγωνισμού πρέπει να τροποποιηθεί προκειμένου να ανταποκρίνεται καλύτερα στις προκλήσεις που θέτει η παγκοσμιοποίηση·» (παρ. 6).

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Συμφωνεί με την εκτίμηση του Κοινοβουλίου ότι υπάρχει πρόβλημα προσαρμογής της πολιτικής ανταγωνισμού της ΕΕ στις προκλήσεις της παγκοσμιοποίησης;

2. Αν ναι, τι προτίθεται να πράξει ώστε να διαμορφωθεί μια νέα πολιτική ανταγωνισμού στην Ένωση, η οποία να ανταποκρίνεται καλύτερα στις συνθήκες της παγκοσμιοποιημένης αγοράς;

Απάντηση του κ. Almunia εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(13 Ιουνίου 2014)

Εντός του σταθερού πλαισίου της Συνθήκης, η πολιτική ανταγωνισμού ήταν σε θέση καθ' όλη τη διάρκεια της ύπαρξή της να εξελίσσεται και να αντιμετωπίζει τις σημαντικές εξελίξεις στο περιβάλλον της. Η σταδιακή ολοκλήρωση της παγκόσμιας οικονομίας δημιουργεί επίσης προκλήσεις όσον αφορά την επιβολή των κανόνων του ανταγωνισμού. Οι αρχές ανταγωνισμού, συμπεριλαμβανομένης της Επιτροπής, πρέπει να αντιμετωπίζουν τις αντιανταγωνιστικές συμπεριφορές και τις συγχωνεύσεις, τα αποτελέσματα των οποίων έχουν όλο και περισσότερο διασυνοριακό, ακόμη και παγκόσμιο χαρακτήρα. Επίσης, το γεωγραφικό πεδίο των διασυνοριακών υποθέσεων στρέφεται όλο και περισσότερο προς νέους οικονομικούς παράγοντες στην Ασία, την Αφρική και τη Λατινική Αμερική. Η απότομη αύξηση του αριθμού των καθεστώτων ανταγωνισμού σε ολόκληρο τον κόσμο υπογραμμίζει την ανάγκη να βρεθεί σε παγκόσμιο επίπεδο κοινή βάση προκειμένου να αποφεύγονται διαφορετικοί κανόνες και διαφορετικά πρότυπα επιβολής των κανόνων.

Στο πλαίσιο αυτό, η ικανότητα της Επιτροπής για την προστασία του ανταγωνισμού και τη διασφάλιση της αποτελεσματικής επιβολής της νομοθεσίας εξαρτάται από την ικανότητά της να συνεργάζεται με άλλες αρχές ανταγωνισμού, και να δημιουργεί σε παγκόσμιο επίπεδο κοινή βάση. Η Επιτροπή συνεργάζεται επί του παρόντος με οργανισμούς εκτός της ΕΕ στο 30% των περιπτώσεων κατάχρησης δεσπόζουσας θέσης, περίπου στο ήμισυ των κύριων ερευνών σε υποθέσεις συγκέντρωσης και στο 60% των αποφάσεων που εκδίδει σε υποθέσεις συμπράξεων. Η Επιτροπή συνεχίζει να διευρύνει και εντατικοποιεί τις πολυμερείς (ΟΟΣΑ, Διεθνές Δίκτυο Ανταγωνισμού, και ΔΔΗΕΑ) και διμερείς συνεργασίες της ως πρωταρχική απάντηση στην πρόκληση της παγκοσμιοποίησης. Τα τελευταία έτη, το διεθνές δίκτυο αρχών ανταγωνισμού έχει επεκταθεί περαιτέρω, η τάση δε αυτή θα συνεχιστεί. Το 2013, η Επιτροπή υπέγραψε μνημόνιο συνεννόησης με την Ινδία, σε συνέχεια αυτών που υπογράφηκαν τα προηγούμενα έτη με τη Βραζιλία, την Κίνα και τη Ρωσία.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004259/14
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Need to adjust EU competition policy to the conditions of globalisation

In its motion for a resolution on the Annual Report on EU Competition Policy (2013/2075(INI)), the European Parliament concludes that 'competition policy should be adjusted so as to better respond to the challenges posed by globalisation' (paragraph 6).

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Does it agree with Parliament's estimate that there is a problem in adapting EU competition policy to the challenges of globalisation?

2. If so, what does it intend to do to develop a new competition policy in the EU which is better able to respond to the conditions of a globalised market?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(13 June 2014)

Against the background of a stable Treaty framework, competition policy has throughout its existence been able to evolve and cope with considerable evolutions in its environment. The progressive integration of the world economy also raises challenges when it comes to competition enforcement. Competition agencies, including the Commission, have to respond to anti-competitive conduct and mergers whose effects are increasingly cross-border, even global. Also, the geographical scope of cross-border cases is shifting more and more towards new economic players in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The steep increase in the number of competition regimes around the world highlights the need to find global common ground, in order to avoid diverging rules and enforcement standards.

In this context, the Commission's ability to protect competition and ensure effective enforcement depends on its capacity to cooperate with other competition agencies and establish global common ground. The Commission currently works with agencies outside the EU in 30% of its abuse of dominant position cases, about half of its major merger investigations and 60% of its cartel decisions. The Commission continues to extend and intensify its multilateral cooperation (OECD, the International Competition Network, and Unctad) and bilateral cooperation as its priority response to the challenge of globalisation. In the past few years, the international network of competition agencies has expanded further and this trend will continue. In 2013, the Commission signed a memorandum of understanding with India, following those established in previous years with Brazil, Russia and China.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-004261/14
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(7 Απριλίου 2014)

Θέμα: Απαράδεκτες αποκλίσεις στις τιμές προϊόντων στα διάφορα κράτη μέλη της Ένωσης

Στην Πρόταση ψηφίσματος σχετικά με την ετήσια έκθεση για την πολιτική ανταγωνισμού της ΕΕ (2013/2075(INI)), το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο συμπεραίνει ότι, «οι τιμές των προϊόντων εξακολουθούν να παρουσιάζουν σημαντικές αποκλίσεις μεταξύ τους στα διάφορα κράτη μέλη, για παράδειγμα οι τιμές των φαρμάκων, λόγω της ύπαρξης διαφορετικών συμφωνιών μεταξύ των κρατών μελών και της φαρμακευτικής βιομηχανίας· καλεί την Επιτροπή να ασχοληθεί με το πρόβλημα και να διατυπώσει προτάσεις για τη δημιουργία διαφανέστερης εσωτερικής αγοράς, όπου θα αποφεύγονται οι περιττές διαφορές στις τιμές, προς το συμφέρον των καταναλωτών·» (παρ. 11).

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Συμφωνεί με τις πιο πάνω διαπιστώσεις του Κοινοβουλίου;

2. Είναι σε γνώση της ότι οι φαρμακευτικές εταιρείες συνάπτουν διαφορετικές συμφωνίες, οι οποίες έχουν ως συνέπεια την ύπαρξη τεράστιων διαφορών στις τιμές των φαρμάκων μεταξύ κρατών μελών;

3. Είναι ενήμερη ότι σε μικρά κράτη μέλη, όπως π.χ. η Κύπρος, οι τιμές κάποιων φαρμάκων είναι πολλαπλάσιες από αυτές που ισχύουν σε άλλα κράτη μέλη;

4. Θεωρεί ότι η συμπεριφορά και οι πρακτικές που εφαρμόζουν οι φαρμακευτικές εταιρείες είναι συμβατές με την πολιτική ανταγωνισμού της Ένωσης;

5. Σε ποιους άλλους τομείς της εσωτερικής αγοράς παρατηρούνται παρόμοια φαινόμενα;

6. Τι προτίθεται να πράξει για την εξομάλυνση της κατάστασης;

Απάντηση του κ. Almunia εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(13 Ιουνίου 2014)

Σύμφωνα με το άρθρο 168 παράγραφος 7 της ΣΛΕΕ, τα κράτη μέλη είναι υπεύθυνα για την οργάνωση των συστημάτων τους υγειονομικής περίθαλψης, καθώς και για την παροχή υγειονομικών υπηρεσιών και ιατρικής περίθαλψης, συμπεριλαμβανομένης της κατανομής των πόρων που διατίθενται για τις υπηρεσίες αυτές. Κάθε κράτος μέλος μπορεί, ως εκ τούτου, να λάβει μέτρα για τη ρύθμιση των τιμών τους ή για τη θέσπιση των όρων χρηματοδότησής τους με δημόσιους πόρους προς το συμφέρον της οικονομικής ισορροπίας των συστημάτων τους ασφάλισης υγείας.

Στο πλαίσιο αυτό, οι διαπραγματεύσεις μεταξύ παρασκευαστών φαρμάκων και συστημάτων υγειονομικής περίθαλψης πραγματοποιούνται σε εθνικό επίπεδο. Οι διαθέσιμες πληροφορίες δείχνουν ότι η κατάσταση αυτή μπορεί να οδηγήσει σε μεγάλες διαφορές στην τιμή οι οποίες αντανακλούν τη διαπραγματευτική ισχύ της προσφοράς και της ζήτησης, καθώς και άλλους εθνικούς παράγοντες.

Η αξιολόγηση, βάσει του δικαίου περί ανταγωνισμού, της συμπεριφοράς και των πρακτικών των φαρμακευτικών εταιρειών πρέπει να γίνεται κατά περίπτωση, απαιτεί δε ενδεχομένως σύνθετη ανάλυση των σχετικών πραγματικών στοιχείων. Καθώς οι διαφορές στην τιμή μπορούν να αποδοθούν στις δυνάμεις της αγοράς που δεν έχουν σχέση με ενδεχόμενη παράνομη συμπεριφορά από πλευράς φαρμακευτικών εταιρειών, δεν είναι δυνατόν να δοθεί οριστική απάντηση χωρίς λεπτομερή εξέταση των σχετικών γεγονότων.

Υπάρχουν πολλά προϊόντα ή υπηρεσίες ως προς τα οποία εξακολουθούν να υφίστανται ευρείες διαφορές στην τιμή σε ολόκληρη την Ευρώπη. Ωστόσο, εφόσον αυτές οφείλονται στις δυνάμεις της αγοράς και όχι σε αντιανταγωνιστικές συμπεριφορές των συμμετεχόντων στην αγορά, η Επιτροπή δεν έχει αρμοδιότητα, βάσει των κανόνων ανταγωνισμού της ΕΕ, να διορθώσει την κατάσταση αυτή.

Με βάση τους κανόνες του ανταγωνισμού, η Επιτροπή δύναται απλώς να διαπιστώνει το ασυμβίβαστο ορισμένων συμπεριφορών με την εσωτερική αγορά. Δεν μπορεί να διορθώσει μια γενική κατάσταση που δημιουργήθηκε από τη Συνθήκη και τα εθνικά ρυθμιστικά πλαίσια.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004261/14
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Unacceptable variations in the prices of products in the various Member States of the Union

In its motion for a resolution on the Annual Report on EU Competition Policy (2013/2075(INI)), the European Parliament considers that 'the prices of products still vary from one Member State to another, e.g. as regards medicines, due to different agreements between Member States and the pharmaceutical industry; calls on the Commission to look into this problem and to come up with proposals to create a more transparent internal market, avoiding any unnecessary price differences, in the interest of consumers' (Paragraph 11).

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Does it agree with Parliament's views set out above?

2. Is it aware that pharmaceutical companies conclude different agreements that create huge differences in the prices of medicines between Member States?

3. Is it aware that in small Member States, such as Cyprus, the prices of some medicines are many times those in other Member States?

4. Does it consider that the conduct and practices of pharmaceutical companies are compatible with the Union's competition policy?

5. In what other areas of the internal market do similar phenomena exist?

6. What will it do to remedy the situation?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(13 June 2014)

Pursuant to Article 168(7) of the TFEU, Member States are responsible for the organisation of their healthcare systems and for the delivery of health services and medical care, including the allocation of resources assigned to them. Each Member State can therefore take measures to regulate their prices or establish the conditions of their public funding in view of promoting the financial stability of their health insurance system.

In this framework, negotiations between pharmaceutical manufacturers and healthcare systems take place on the national level. The information available shows that this may lead to large price differences that reflect the bargaining power of supply and demand and other national factors.

The assessment under competition law of the conduct and practices of pharmaceutical companies has to be made on a case-by-case basis and would require complex analysis of relevant factual elements. As price differences may be attributed to market forces independent of any illegal behaviour by pharmaceutical companies, it is not possible to give a definitive answer without an in-depth examination of the relevant facts.

There are many products or services for which there are still wide price differences across Europe. However, as long as these are attributable to market forces and not to anti-competitive behaviour by market participants, the Commission has no competence under EU competition rules to remedy this situation.

Under competition rules the Commission can only find incompatibility of certain behaviours with the internal market. It cannot remedy a general situation established by the Treaty and national regulatory frameworks.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-004262/14
προς το Συμβούλιο
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(7 Απριλίου 2014)

Θέμα: Διαφορές στα επιτόκια που πληρώνουν οι ΜΜΕ στις χώρες της ευρωζώνης

Στην πρόταση ψηφίσματος σχετικά με την ετήσια έκθεση για την πολιτική ανταγωνισμού της ΕΕ (2013/2075(INI)), το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο εκφράζει τη λύπη του, «για το γεγονός ότι οι ΜΜΕ των κρατών μελών που υπόκεινται σε προγράμματα προσαρμογής έχουν δυσκολίες στην πρόσβαση σε τραπεζική πίστωση και υποχρεώνονται να πληρώνουν υψηλότερα επιτόκια μόνο και μόνο λόγω της θέσης τους στην ευρωζώνη, με αποτέλεσμα να δημιουργούνται στρεβλώσεις στην ενιαία αγορά·» (παρ. 48).

Στην Κύπρο, π.χ., οι ΜΜΕ αντιμετωπίζουν ανυπέρβλητα εμπόδια στην πρόσβαση σε τραπεζικές πιστώσεις. Παράλληλα, το μέσο επιτόκιο που αναγκάζονται να πληρώνουν για τα δάνειά τους είναι σχεδόν τρεις ποσοστιαίες μονάδες υψηλότερο από το αντίστοιχο των χωρών της ευρωζώνης. Το γεγονός αυτό πλήττει καίρια την ανταγωνιστική τους ικανότητα.

Ερωτάται το Συμβούλιο:

1. Ασπάζεται την άποψη του Κοινοβουλίου ότι οι ΜΜΕ των χωρών μελών που υπόκεινται σε προγράμματα προσαρμογής υποχρεώνονται να πληρώνουν υψηλότερα επιτόκια, με αποτέλεσμα να δημιουργούνται στρεβλώσεις στην ενιαία αγορά;

2. Θεωρεί υγιή την κατάσταση που δημιουργήθηκε στις χώρες του Μνημονίου στον τομέα της τραπεζικής πίστης, ως αποτέλεσμα των μέτρων που επέβαλε η Τρόικα;

3. Τι προτείνει για την αντιμετώπιση της κατάστασης, η οποία οδηγεί σε παραπέρα απόκλιση των οικονομιών των χωρών της ευρωζώνης, αντί σε σύγκλιση;

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-005422/14
προς το Συμβούλιο
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(23 Απριλίου 2014)

Θέμα: Βελτίωση της μακροπρόθεσμης χρηματοδότησης των ΜΜΕ μέσω της ΕΤΕπ

Το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο, στην έκθεσή του σχετικά με τη μακροπρόθεσμη χρηματοδότηση της ευρωπαϊκής οικονομίας (2013/2175(INI)), συνιστά, μεταξύ άλλων, στην Ευρωπαϊκή Τράπεζα Επενδύσεων (ΕΤΕπ) «να συγκροτήσει έναν ειδικό κλάδο για τη χρηματοδότηση ΜΜΕ με εξατομικευμένους δανειακούς όρους» (Παράγραφος 37).

Ερωτάται το Συμβούλιο:

1. Πιστεύει ότι η συγκρότηση ενός τέτοιου κλάδου στην ΕΤΕπ είναι υλοποιήσιμη και επωφελής για την ευρωπαϊκή οικονομία, και ιδιαίτερα τις Μικρομεσαίες Επιχειρήσεις;

2. Προτίθεται να υποστηρίξει τη σύσταση του Κοινοβουλίου και να προωθήσει τις αναγκαίες διαδικασίες για την υλοποίηση της;

Κοινή απάντηση
(30 Ιουνίου 2014)

Μετά την έκκληση του Ευρωπαϊκού Συμβουλίου του Μαρτίου 2013 για ανάληψη δράσης σχετικά με τις μικρομεσαίες επιχειρήσεις (ΜΜΕ), οι Υπουργοί του Ecofin, συνελθόντες στις 12 Απριλίου 2013, κάλεσαν την Οικονομική και Δημοσιονομική Επιτροπή να συγκροτήσει ομάδα εμπειρογνωμόνων υψηλού επιπέδου (ΟΕΥΕ) με εξειδικευμένη πραγματογνωμοσύνη όσον αφορά την αγορά. Η ΟΕΥΕ δημοσίευσε την έκθεση σχετικά με τις ΜΜΕ και τη χρηματοδότηση έργων υποδομής στις 11 Δεκεμβρίου 2013. Η έκθεση είναι διαθέσιμη στο Διαδίκτυο ([1]).

([1]) http://europa.eu/efc/working_groups/hleg_report_2013.pdf

Στα συμπεράσματά του της 19ης και 20ής Δεκεμβρίου 2013 ([2]), το Ευρωπαϊκό Συμβούλιο τόνισε ότι η αποκατάσταση της κανονικής δανειακής ροής στην οικονομία, και ειδικότερα στις ΜΜΕ, παραμένει προτεραιότητα και εξέφρασε ικανοποίηση για την εφαρμογή της αύξησης κεφαλαίου της ΕΤΕπ που επιτρέπει στην τράπεζα να αυξήσει τον δανεισμό σε όλη την ΕΕ κατά 38%, δηλαδή μέχρι 62 δισεκ. το 2013. Εξέφρασε επίσης ικανοποίηση για τη στήριξη του Ομίλου ΕΤΕπ, κατά το 2013, ύψους 23,1 δισεκ. ευρώ, για ΜΜΕ και εταιρείες μεσαίας κεφαλαιοποίησης στην ΕΕ των 28. Ο Όμιλος της Ευρωπαϊκής Τράπεζας Επενδύσεων (ΕΤΕπ) αποτελείται από την ΕΤΕπ και το Ευρωπαϊκό Ταμείο Επενδύσεων (ΕΤΕ). Το ΕΤΕ, το οποίο ιδρύθηκε το 1994, υπάγεται στην ΕΤΕπ και ειδικεύεται στη χρηματοδότηση ΜΜΕ, ιδίως με τη χορήγηση ιδίων κεφαλαίων και εγγυήσεων.

Προκειμένου να ενισχυθούν περαιτέρω οι δυνατότητες του ΕΤΕ με την αύξηση των κεφαλαίων του, με σκοπό την επίτευξη τελικής συμφωνίας μέχρι τον Μάιο του 2014, όπως ζήτησε το Ευρωπαϊκό Συμβούλιο, το Συμβούλιο ενέκρινε σε πρώτη ανάγνωση, στις 6 Μαΐου 2014, τη θέση του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου σχετικά με την απόφαση για τη συμμετοχή της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης στην αύξηση του κεφαλαίου του Ευρωπαϊκού Ταμείου Επενδύσεων ([3]).

Επιπλέον, η ΕΤΕπ δημιούργησε ένα νέο χρηματοδοτικό σχήμα συνολικού ύψους 4 δισ. ευρώ για την επόμενη 7ετία, το λεγόμενο «EIB Group Risk Enhancement Mandate (EREM)», ως συμπλήρωμα της προσφοράς εγγυήσεων και τόνωσης πιστώσεων του ΕΤΕ, προκειμένου να ανακουφιστούν τα προβλήματα χρηματοδότησης των ΜΜΕ και να προωθηθεί η ευρωπαϊκή οικονομία.

([2]) EUCO 217/13.

([3]) Η απόφαση αριθ. 562/2014/ΕΕ του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου και του Συμβουλίου, της 15ης Μαΐου 2014, για τη συμμετοχή της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης στην αύξηση του κεφαλαίου του Ευρωπαϊκού Ταμείου Επενδύσεων δημοσιεύθηκε στην ΕΕ L 156 της 24.5.2014.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004262/14
to the Council
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Differences in the interest rates paid by SMEs in eurozone countries

In its motion for a resolution on the Annual Report on EU Competition Policy (2013/2075(INI)), the European Parliament deplores the fact that 'SMEs undergoing adjustment programmes in the Member States have difficulties in accessing credit from banks and are obliged to pay higher interest rates solely on account of their location in the eurozone, creating distortions in the single market' (Paragraph 48).

In Cyprus, for example, SMEs face insurmountable obstacles in accessing credit from banks. Meanwhile, the average interest rate they are required to pay on their loans is nearly three percentage points higher than the rate in other eurozone countries. This severely undermines their competitive ability.

In view of the above, will the Council say:

1. Does it espouse Parliament's view that SMEs in Member States subject to the adjustment programmes are forced to pay higher interest rates, which creates distortions in the single market?

2. Does it consider healthy the situation created in the MoU countries as regards bank credit as a result of the measures imposed by the Troika?

3. What proposals does it have for addressing this situation which is leading to a further divergence — instead of a convergence — between the economies of the eurozone countries?

Question for written answer E-005422/14
to the Council
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(23 April 2014)

Subject: Improvement in the long-term funding of SMEs though the EIB

In its report on long-term financing of the European economy (2013/2175(INI)), the European Parliament 'recommends that the EIB set up a special branch for SME funding with tailor-made loan conditions' (paragraph 37).

In view of the above, will the Council say:

1. Does it consider that the setting-up of a special branch of this kind in the EIB is feasible and would be of benefit to the European economy and in particular SMEs ?

2. Will it support Parliament's recommendation and promote the necessary measures to implement it?

Joint reply
(30 June 2014)

After the European Council in March 2013 called for action with respect to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the Ecofin Ministers, meeting on 12 April 2013, invited the Economic and Financial Committee to set up a High Level Expert Group (HLEG), benefiting from specialised market expertise. The HLEG published the report on SME and infrastructure financing on 11 December 2013. The report is available on the Internet ([1]).

In its conclusions of 19 and 20 December 2013 ([2]), the European Council underlined that restoring normal lending to the economy, in particular to SMEs, remains a priority and welcomed the implementation of the EIB capital increase enabling the Bank to step up its lending across the EU by 38%, to EUR 62 billion in 2013. It also welcomed the support by the EIB Group in 2013 of EUR 23.1 billion for SME businesses and mid-cap companies throughout the EU 28. The European Investment Bank (EIB) Group consists of the EIB and the European Investment Fund (EIF). The EIF, which was set up in 1994, is a subsidiary of the EIB and specialises in SME financing, particularly through the provision of equity and guarantees.

([1]) http://europa.eu/efc/working_groups/hleg_report_2013.pdf
([2]) EUCO 217/13.

In order to further enhance the EIF capacity through an increase in its capital with a view to reaching final agreement by May 2014, as requested by the European Council, on 6 May 2014 the Council approved at first reading the European Parliament's position on the decision on the participation of the European Union in the capital increase of the European Investment Fund ([3]).

In addition, a new mandate, the EIB Group Risk Enhancement Mandate totalling EUR 4 billion, has been put in place by the EIB to complement the EIF's guarantee and credit enhancement product over the next seven years, to alleviate the financing problems of SMEs and stimulate Europe's economy.

([3]) Decision No 562/2014/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15.5.2014 on the participation of the European Union in the capital increase of the European Investment Fund was published in OJ L 156, 24.5.2014.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-004263/14
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(7 Απριλίου 2014)

Θέμα: Διαφορές στα επιτόκια που πληρώνουν οι ΜΜΕ στις χώρες της ευρωζώνης

Στην πρόταση ψηφίσματος σχετικά με την ετήσια έκθεση για την πολιτική ανταγωνισμού της ΕΕ (2013/2075(INI)), το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο εκφράζει τη λύπη του, «για το γεγονός ότι οι ΜΜΕ των κρατών μελών που υπόκεινται σε προγράμματα προσαρμογής έχουν δυσκολίες στην πρόσβαση σε τραπεζική πίστωση και υποχρεώνονται να πληρώνουν υψηλότερα επιτόκια μόνο και μόνο λόγω της θέσης τους στην ευρωζώνη, με αποτέλεσμα να δημιουργούνται στρεβλώσεις στην ενιαία αγορά·» (παρ. 48).

Στην Κύπρο, π.χ., οι ΜΜΕ αντιμετωπίζουν ανυπέρβλητα εμπόδια στην πρόσβαση σε τραπεζικές πιστώσεις. Παράλληλα, το μέσο επιτόκιο που αναγκάζονται να πληρώνουν για τα δάνειά τους είναι σχεδόν τρεις ποσοστιαίες μονάδες υψηλότερο από το αντίστοιχο των χωρών της ευρωζώνης. Το γεγονός αυτό πλήττει καίρια την ανταγωνιστική τους ικανότητα.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Ασπάζεται την άποψη του Κοινοβουλίου ότι οι ΜΜΕ των χωρών μελών που υπόκεινται σε προγράμματα προσαρμογής (μνημόνια) υποχρεώνονται να πληρώνουν υψηλότερα επιτόκια, με αποτέλεσμα να δημιουργούνται στρεβλώσεις στην ενιαία αγορά;

2. Θεωρεί υγιή την κατάσταση που δημιουργήθηκε στις χώρες του Μνημονίου στον τομέα της τραπεζικής πίστης, ως αποτέλεσμα των μέτρων που επέβαλε η Τρόικα;

3. Τι προτείνει για την αντιμετώπιση της κατάστασης, η οποία οδηγεί σε παραπέρα απόκλιση των οικονομιών των χωρών της ευρωζώνης, αντί σε σύγκλιση;

Απάντηση του κ. Almunia εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(13 Ιουνίου 2014)

Η Επιτροπή αναγνωρίζει ότι τα επιτόκια και οι όροι που προτείνονται τώρα στις ΜΜΕ από τα χρηματοπιστωτικά ιδρύματα που ανήκουν σε κράτη μέλη που υπόκεινται σε προγράμματα οικονομικής προσαρμογής μπορεί να διαφέρουν σημαντικά από τα επιτόκια και τους όρους που εφαρμόζονται στις ΜΜΕ από τράπεζες που ανήκουν σε άλλες χώρες της ευρωζώνης.

Όταν οι τράπεζες χορηγούν δάνεια σε ΜΜΕ, οφείλουν να καλύπτουν τουλάχιστον το δικό τους κόστος χρηματοδότησης, το κόστος του κινδύνου αδυναμίας αποπληρωμής και τα διοικητικά τους έξοδα.

Από την έναρξη της κρίσης, ως συνέπεια της κρίσης του δημόσιου χρέους και/ή της ανάληψης μη ενδεδειγμένων κινδύνων από τις τράπεζες, το κόστος χρηματοδότησης των προβληματικών τραπεζών αυξήθηκε σημαντικά. Παρομοίως, η επιδείνωση του μακροοικονομικού περιβάλλοντος είχε αρνητική επίπτωση στην ικανότητα των ΜΜΕ να αποπληρώσουν τα δάνειά τους, προκαλώντας τοιουτοτρόπως υψηλές ζημίες στα χρηματοπιστωτικά ιδρύματα και αυξάνοντας το δικό τους κόστος κινδύνου.

Κατά συνέπεια, οι τράπεζες προσάρμοσαν τους όρους που εφαρμόζουν όσον αφορά τις ΜΜΕ σε αυτούς τους αυξημένους κινδύνους και στο υψηλότερο κόστος χρηματοδότησης ζητώντας υψηλότερα επιτόκια.

Εντούτοις, τα προγράμματα οικονομικής προσαρμογής που συμφωνήθηκαν μεταξύ των κρατών μελών, της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής, της Ευρωπαϊκής Κεντρικής Τράπεζας και του Διεθνούς Νομισματικού Ταμείου έχουν ως στόχο την αντιμετώπιση των οικονομικών, δημοσιονομικών και διαρθρωτικών προκλήσεων με αποφασιστικό τρόπο και οφείλουν να επιτρέψουν στα επωφελούμενα κράτη μέλη να επιστρέψουν σε κατάσταση βιώσιμης ανάπτυξης.

Σύμφωνα με το πρόγραμμα προσανατολισμού, η σταθερότητα του δημοσίου θα έχει θετικά αποτελέσματα στα μακροοικονομικά και χρηματοδοτικά περιβάλλοντα, μειώνοντας κατά τον τρόπο αυτό το κόστος αναχρηματοδότησης, περιορίζοντας τη χρεωκοπία επιχειρήσεων, επαναφέροντας την πραγματική οικονομία σε πορεία πιο βιώσιμης ανάπτυξης και περιορίζοντας τον κατακερματισμό της αγοράς.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004263/14
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Differences in the interest rates paid by SMEs in eurozone countries

In its motion for a resolution on the Annual Report on EU Competition Policy (2013/2075(INI)), the European Parliament deplores the fact that 'SMEs undergoing adjustment programmes in the Member States have difficulties in accessing credit from banks and are obliged to pay higher interest rates solely on account of their location in the eurozone, creating distortions in the single market' (Paragraph 48).

In Cyprus, for example, SMEs face insurmountable obstacles in accessing credit from banks. Meanwhile, the average interest rate they are required to pay on their loans is nearly three percentage points higher than the rate in other eurozone countries. This severely undermines their competitive ability.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Does it espouse Parliament's view that SMEs in Member States subject to the adjustment programmes (MoUs) are forced to pay higher interest rates, which creates distortions in the single market?

2. Does it consider healthy the situation created in the MoU countries as regards bank credit as a result of the measures imposed by the Troika?

3. What proposals does it have for addressing this situation which is leading to a further divergence — instead of a convergence — between the economies of the eurozone countries?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(13 June 2014)

The Commission acknowledges that interest rates and conditions currently offered to SMEs by financial institutions incorporated in countries under economic adjustment programmes could diverge significantly from interest rates and conditions applied to SMEs by banks incorporated in other Eurozone countries.

When granting loans to SMEs, banks should at least cover their cost of funding, the cost of risk in case of default, and their administrative costs.

Since the beginning of the crisis, as a consequence of the sovereign crisis and/or inappropriate risk-taking by banks, the cost of funding for distressed banks has significantly increased. Similarly, deterioration of the macroeconomic environment had a detrimental effect on the ability of SMEs to repay their loans, thus generating high losses for financial institutions and increasing their cost of risk.

Consequently banks have adapted the conditions they apply to SMEs to these increased risks and funding costs by asking higher interest rates.

However, economic adjustment programmes agreed among Member States, the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund aim to address the financial, fiscal and structural challenges facing the economy in a decisive manner and should allow benefitting Member States to return to sustainable growth.

Under programme guidance, restoring sovereign solidity will have positive effects on the macroeconomic and financing environments, thus progressively lowering refinancing costs, limiting corporate default, bringing the real economy back to a more sustainable growth path and limiting market fragmentation.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-004264/14
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(7 Απριλίου 2014)

Θέμα: Αύξηση συγκέντρωσης και ολιγοπωλιακών καταστάσεων στον τραπεζικό τομέα

Στην πρόταση ψηφίσματος σχετικά με την ετήσια έκθεση για την πολιτική ανταγωνισμού της ΕΕ (2013/2075(INI)), το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο καλεί την Επιτροπή «να παρακολουθεί στενά τις αγορές του τραπεζικού τομέα στις οποίες η συγκέντρωση είναι υψηλή ή αυξάνεται, ιδίως λόγω αναδιάρθρωσης ως απόκρισης στην κρίση· υπενθυμίζει ότι οι ολιγοπωλιακές αγορές είναι ιδιαίτερα επιρρεπείς σε πρακτικές που αντίκεινται στον ανταγωνισμό· φοβάται ότι η συγκέντρωση αυτή μπορεί τελικά να αποβεί εις βάρος των καταναλωτών· τονίζει ότι μια υπερβολικά μεγάλη συγκέντρωση θέτει σε κίνδυνο τόσο τον χρηματοπιστωτικό τομέα όσο και την πραγματική οικονομία» (παρ. 41).

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Κατά την άποψή της, έχουν παρατηρηθεί τα τελευταία χρόνια στον χρηματοπιστωτικό τομέα της Ένωσης πρακτικές που αντίκεινται στον ανταγωνισμό;

2. Αν ναι, πώς αντιμετωπίστηκαν;

3. Πώς αξιολογεί η Επιτροπή τις εξελίξεις στον χρηματοπιστωτικό τομέα της Κύπρου, ως αποτέλεσμα της σημειούμενης μεγάλης αύξησης της συγκέντρωσης, η οποία οφείλεται στην εφαρμογή των όρων του Μνημονίου;

4. Δεν είναι οι εξελίξεις αυτές αντίθετες με την ευρωπαϊκή πολιτική ανταγωνισμού και δεν δημιουργούν αυξημένους κινδύνους για την κυπριακή οικονομία;

Απάντηση του κ. Almunia εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(11 Ιουνίου 2014)

Η Επιτροπή έχει λάβει γνώση ορισμένων βάσιμων καταγγελιών αναφορικά με αντιανταγωνιστικές πρακτικές στον τομέα των χρηματοπιστωτικών υπηρεσιών και προβαίνει στην αντιμετώπισή τους.

Στις 4 Δεκεμβρίου 2013, η Επιτροπή επέβαλε πρόστιμο σε τράπεζες ύψους 1,71 δισ. ευρώ για συμμετοχή σε συμπράξεις στον κλάδο των παραγώγων επιτοκίων. Στο πλαίσιο της ίδιας έρευνας, η Επιτροπή επεκτείνεται σε άλλες διαδικασίες.

Η Επιτροπή ερευνά ορισμένες από τις μεγαλύτερες τράπεζες επενδύσεων όσον αφορά εικαζόμενες αντιανταγωνιστικές πρακτικές στην αγορά των συμβάσεων ανταλλαγής κινδύνου αθέτησης.

Η Επιτροπή παρακολουθεί στενά λοιπά στοιχεία της αγοράς χρηματοπιστωτικών υπηρεσιών, όπως είναι η αγορά πληρωμών μέσω διαδικτύου, και επιβάλλει διορθωτική δράση όταν τούτο αρμόζει, όπως στις πρόσφατες δεσμεύσεις για τις πολυμερείς διατραπεζικές προμήθειες.

Στο μνημόνιο συνεννόησης (ΜΣ) δεν προβλέπεται μεγαλύτερη συγκέντρωση του χρηματοπιστωτικού τομέα στην Κύπρο. Είναι αλήθεια ότι η Τράπεζα Κύπρου εξαγόρασε τις εγχώριες δραστηριότητες της Λαϊκής Τράπεζας. Ωστόσο, η εξαγορά αυτή πραγματοποιήθηκε στο πλαίσιο απόφασης που έλαβε η Λαϊκή, η οποία δεν ήταν βιώσιμη σε αυτόνομη βάση. Δεδομένου ότι δεν υπήρξε άλλος πιθανός αγοραστής, η εν λόγω μερική συγχώνευση ήταν αναγκαία για τη διαφύλαξη της χρηματοπιστωτικής σταθερότητας της χώρας.

Λαμβανομένου υπόψη ότι η εξαγορά του εγχώριου τμήματος της Λαϊκής από την Τράπεζα Κύπρου δεν συνεπάγετο κρατική ενίσχυση, υπολειπόταν δε των κατώτατων ορίων της ΕΕ για τον έλεγχο των συγκεντρώσεων, οι κανόνες ανταγωνισμού της ΕΕ δεν εφαρμόζονταν στην εν λόγω συναλλαγή.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004264/14
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Increased concentration and oligopolistic practices in the banking sector

In its motion for a resolution on the Annual Report on EU Competition Policy (2013/2075(INI)), the European Parliament urges the Commission 'to monitor closely those markets in the banking sector where concentration is high or growing, in particular as a result of restructuring in response to the crisis; recalls that oligopolistic markets are particularly prone to anticompetitive practices; fears that this concentration may ultimately harm consumers; stresses that excessive concentration poses a risk for both the financial industry and the real economy' (paragraph 41).

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. In its view, have anticompetitive practices been observed in recent years in the Union's financial sector?

2. If so, how have they been addressed?

3. How does it assess developments in the financial sector in Cyprus as a result of the great increase in concentration which is due to the application of the terms of the MoU?

4. Are these developments not contrary to European competition policy and do they not create increased risks for the economy of Cyprus?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(11 June 2014)

The Commission is aware of certain substantiated allegations of anti-competitive practices in financial services and is addressing them.

On 4 December 2013, the Commission fined banks EUR 1.71 billion for participating in cartels in the interest rate derivatives industry. In the context of the same investigation, the Commission is continuing with other proceedings.

The Commission is investigating some of the world's largest investment banks regarding alleged anti-competitive practices in the market for credit default swaps.

The Commission closely monitors other elements of the financial services market such as the online payment market and imposes remedial action where approriate, as in recent commitments for multilateral interchange fees.

The MoU has not prescribed a more concentrated financial sector in Cyprus. It is true that Bank of Cyprus (BoC) acquired Laiki's domestic activities. However, this acquisition took place in the context of the resolution of Laiki, which was not viable on a stand-alone basis. Since no other capable acquirer was identified, this partial merger was necessary to preserve the country's financial stability.

BoC's acquisition of Laiki's domestic parts did not involve state aid and fell short of the EU merger control thresholds, so EU competition rules did not apply to this transaction.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-004265/14
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(7 Απριλίου 2014)

Θέμα: Πρακτικές αθέμιτου ανταγωνισμού σε δημόσιο και ιδιωτικό τομέα

Στην πρόταση ψηφίσματος σχετικά με την ετήσια έκθεση για την πολιτική ανταγωνισμού της ΕΕ (2013/2075(INI)), το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο ασκεί κριτική στην Επιτροπή και «εκφράζει τη λύπη του για το γεγονός ότι, στην έκθεσή της για το 2012 σχετικά με την πολιτική ανταγωνισμού, η Επιτροπή επικεντρώνεται σε μεγάλο βαθμό στις πρακτικές αθέμιτου ανταγωνισμού που προκύπτουν από κρατικές πρακτικές, ενώ δίνει σχετικά μικρή σημασία στις αθέμιτες πρακτικές που οφείλονται στη συγκέντρωση επιχειρήσεων στην ενιαία αγορά·» (παρ. 2).

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Συμφωνεί με την πιο πάνω εκτίμηση του Κοινοβουλίου ότι δεν δόθηκε η αναγκαία σημασία στις αθέμιτες πρακτικές που οφείλονται στη συγκέντρωση επιχειρήσεων στην ενιαία αγορά;

2. Θεωρεί η Επιτροπή ότι υπάρχει πραγματική διαφορά μεταξύ των αθέμιτων κρατικών πρακτικών και των αθέμιτων πρακτικών που οφείλονται στη συγκέντρωση επιχειρήσεων στην ενιαία αγορά;

3. Τι προτίθεται να πράξει ώστε να υπάρχει μελλοντικά αποτελεσματική αντιμετώπιση των αθέμιτων πρακτικών τόσο στον κρατικό όσο και στον ιδιωτικό τομέα;

Απάντηση του κ. Almunia εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(4 Ιουνίου 2014)

Η Επιτροπή έλαβε υπόψη της το γεγονός ότι το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο έκρινε ότι η ετήσια έκθεση ελέγχου (ΕΕΕ) για το 2012 επικεντρώθηκε περισσότερο στις αθέμιτες κρατικές πρακτικές και λιγότερο σε άλλα μέσα επιβολής των κανόνων ανταγωνισμού.

Ωστόσο, η ανισορροπία που διαπιστώνεται στην έκθεση, δεν αντιστοιχεί σε ανισορροπία ως προς το επίκεντρο των δράσεων της Επιτροπής. Πράγματι, η Επιτροπή εφαρμόζει σθεναρά τις πολιτικές στους τομείς της αντιμονοπωλιακής νομοθεσίας, των συμπράξεων και των συγκεντρώσεων για την αντιμετώπιση των αντιανταγωνιστικών πρακτικών των επιχειρήσεων και παρουσίασε μια ισόρροπη περιγραφή των δράσεών της στην έκθεση για την πολιτική ανταγωνισμού της ΕΕ για το 2012 (COM(2013)257 τελικό) και στο έγγραφο εργασίας των υπηρεσιών της Επιτροπής (SWD(2013)159 τελικό) που επισυνάπτεται στην έκθεση.

Η έκθεση της Επιτροπής, η οποία εγκρίθηκε από το σώμα των επιτρόπων, περιείχε μια ενδεικτική αναφορά των κύριων δράσεων που έχουν αναληφθεί στον τομέα του ανταγωνισμού το 2012, ενώ κατά την παράθεσή τους τις ενέταξε σε ένα ευρύτερο πολιτικό πλαίσιο. Το 2012, είχε το εξής θέμα: «Η πολιτική ανταγωνισμού για τη στήριξη μιας καλώς λειτουργούσας ενιαίας αγοράς». Το έγγραφο εργασίας των υπηρεσιών της Επιτροπής που επισυνάπτεται στην έκθεση, παρέχει λεπτομερέστερες πληροφορίες σχετικά με τις κυριότερες εξελίξεις στην ασκούμενη πολιτική και τις δραστηριότητες που λαμβάνουν χώρα σε βασικούς τομείς.

Η Επιτροπή αντιμάχεται κάθε είδους αθέμιτες και στρεβλωτικές πρακτικές ανεξάρτητα από την προέλευσή τους.

Η Επιτροπή θα συνεχίσει να χρησιμοποιεί όλα τα μέσα και τις εξουσίες που διαθέτει προκειμένου να διασφαλίσει ότι οι αθέμιτες πρακτικές δεν προκαλούν στρεβλώσεις στην ενιαία αγορά.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004265/14
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Unfair competition practices in the public and private sectors

In its motion for a resolution on the Annual Report on EU Competition Policy (2013/2075(INI)), the European Parliament criticises the Commission and 'regrets the fact that in its 2012 report on competition policy the Commission focuses heavily on unfair competition practices resulting from State practices, while it pays relatively little attention to unfair practices due to the concentration of companies in the Single Market' (Paragraph 2).

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Does it agree with the above view of Parliament that insufficient attention has been paid to unfair practices due to the concentration of companies in the Single Market?

2. Does it consider that there is a real difference between unfair State practices and unfair practices due to the concentration of companies in the Single Market?

3. What will it do to ensure that in future unfair practices are effectively addressed both in the State and private sectors?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(4 June 2014)

The Commission took note of the fact that the European Parliament found that the ACR 2012 focused more on unfair State practices and less on other instruments of competition enforcement.

This perceived imbalance in the reporting does not, however, correspond to an imbalance in the focus of the Commission's actions. Indeed, the Commission has fiercely enforced antitrust, cartel and merger policies that address anti-competitive practices by undertakings and provided a balanced account of its actions in the report on EU Competition Policy 2012 (COM(2013) 257 final), and in the Staff Working Document (SWD(2013) 159 final) attached to the report.

The report from the Commission, adopted by the College, presented a non-exhaustive selection of major actions undertaken in the field of competition in 2012 and placed them in a narrative within a broader political context. In 2012, it carried the theme 'competition policy in support of a well-functioning Single Market'. The Staff Working Document attached to the report provided more details about main policy developments and activities pursued in key sectors.

The Commission is fighting all unfair and distortive practices regardless of their origin.

The Commission will continue to use all its tools and powers to ensure that unfair practices do not distort the Single Market.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-004266/14
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(7 Απριλίου 2014)

Θέμα: Σύνδεση χορήγησης κρατικής ενίσχυσης σε τράπεζες με τη χορήγηση δανείων σε ΜΜΕ

Στην πρόταση ψηφίσματος σχετικά με την ετήσια έκθεση για την πολιτική ανταγωνισμού της ΕΕ (2013/2075(INI)), το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο αναφέρει ότι η Επιτροπή «θα πρέπει να εξετάσει τη δυνατότητα να εξαρτά μερικές φορές τη χορήγηση κρατικής ενίσχυσης σε τράπεζες από τη χορήγηση δανείων σε ΜΜΕ» (παρ. 45).

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Δεδομένων και των δυσκολιών που αντιμετωπίζουν οι μικρομεσαίες επιχειρήσεις στην εξασφάλιση κατάλληλης χρηματοδότησης, θεωρεί λογική και υλοποιήσιμη την πιο πάνω εισήγηση του Κοινοβουλίου;

2. Προτίθεται να λάβει μέτρα προς αυτή την κατεύθυνση και ποια;

Απάντηση του κ. Almunia εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(5 Ιουνίου 2014)

Βασικός στόχος των κρατικών ενισχύσεων σε τράπεζες υπό αναδιάρθρωση είναι κυρίως η διασφάλιση ότι ο δικαιούχος θα επιστρέψει σε μακροπρόθεσμη βιωσιμότητα χωρίς ανάγκη περαιτέρω κρατικής στήριξης. Στο πλαίσιο αυτό, η Επιτροπή δέχεται ότι ένα συγκεκριμένο κράτος μέλος μπορεί να θέτει στόχους (αλλά όχι υποχρεώσεις) για δανεισμό των ΜΜΕ συγκεκριμένα, ή πιο αυστηρές υποχρεώσεις σε σχέση με την πραγματική οικονομία στο σύνολό της.

Ωστόσο, οι στόχοι αυτοί εξαρτώνται από τη διαβεβαίωση του κράτους μέλους ότι η αποκατάσταση της βιωσιμότητας της αναδιαρθρωμένης τράπεζας δεν επηρεάζεται από τις εν λόγω απαιτήσεις.

Αξίζει να σημειωθεί ότι οι τράπεζες που έχουν ανάγκη κρατικών ενισχύσεων είναι εξ ορισμού οι πλέον αδύναμες τράπεζες, και κύριό τους μέλημα πρέπει να είναι η επιστροφή στη βιωσιμότητα.

Είναι σημαντικό να σημειωθεί ότι υπάρχουν ειδικοί κανόνες για τις κρατικές ενισχύσεις προς διευκόλυνση της χρηματοδότησης των ΜΜΕ, όπως οι κατευθυντήριες γραμμές για τα κεφάλαια κινδύνου ή ορισμένες διατάξεις του γενικού κανονισμού απαλλαγής κατά κατηγορία, και ότι η Επιτροπή καταρτίζει επί του παρόντος κατάλληλα προγράμματα για τη χρηματοδότηση των ΜΜΕ. Οι κανόνες που εφαρμόζονται στα μέτρα κρατικών ενισχύσεων τα οποία στοχεύουν στην αναδιάρθρωση προβληματικών τραπεζών είναι διαφορετικοί από αυτούς που εφαρμόζονται στα μέτρα τα οποία αποσκοπούν να ενισχύσουν την πρόσβαση των ΜΜΕ στη χρηματοδότηση, ενίοτε με τη συμμετοχή των τραπεζών ως ενδιάμεσων φορέων.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004266/14
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Link between the granting of state aid to banks and the granting of credit to SMEs

In its motion for a resolution on the Annual Report on EU Competition Policy (2013/2075(INI)), the European Parliament states that the Commission 'should consider the possibility of state aid to banks sometimes being made conditional on credit being granted to SMEs' (paragraph 45).

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Given the difficulties which SMEs face in securing adequate funding, does it consider that the above recommendation by Parliament is reasonable and feasible?

2. Will it take steps to implement it and, if so, what steps?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(5 June 2014)

State aid for banks undergoing restructuring is primarily required to ensure that the beneficiary returns to long-term viability without the need for further State support. In that context, the Commission accepts that a particular Member State sets targets (but not obligations) for SME-lending in particular, or more firm obligations in relation to the real economy as a whole.

However, these targets are conditional on the Member State showing that the return to viability of the restructured bank is not affected by such requirements.

It is worth recalling that banks requiring state aid are by definition the weakest banks, and first and foremost they have to focus on returning to viability.

It is important to note that there are specific state aid rules for facilitating SME financing, such as the Risk Finance Guidelines, or certain provisions of the General Block Exemption Regulation, and that the Commission currently is designing appropriate schemes for financing SMEs. Different rules apply to state aid measures targeted at restructuring ailing banks, and measures designed to boost SMEs' access to finance, sometimes involving banks as intermediaries.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-004267/14
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(7 Απριλίου 2014)

Θέμα: Ύψος Κρατικών ενισχύσεων προς τον χρηματοπιστωτικό τομέα από την αρχή της κρίσης

Στην πρόταση ψηφίσματος σχετικά με την ετήσια έκθεση για την πολιτική ανταγωνισμού της ΕΕ (2013/2075(INI)), το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο ζητεί από την Επιτροπή «να παρέχει τακτικά λεπτομερή στατιστικά στοιχεία για τις κρατικές ενισχύσεις που έχουν χορηγηθεί στον χρηματοπιστωτικό τομέα από την αρχή της κρίσης, τις συνολικές ζημίες και την εξέλιξη των επιστροφών, αναλυτικά ανά χώρα και ανά πιστωτικό ίδρυμα, και να δημοσιεύει τα σχετικά αποτελέσματα στον ιστότοπό της, προκειμένου να εξασφαλίζεται πλήρης διαφάνεια σχετικά με την έκταση της δημόσιας παρέμβασης από την έναρξη της κρίσης, και τις επιπτώσεις της στους φορολογούμενους·» (παρ. 38).

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Διαθέτει και θα μπορούσε να με εφοδιάσει με τα στοιχεία στα οποία αναφέρεται το Κοινοβούλιο, αναλυτικά ανά χώρα και ανά πιστωτικό ίδρυμα;

2. Προτίθεται μελλοντικά να δημοσιεύει τέτοια στοιχεία, όπως ζητά το Κοινοβούλιο;

3. Θα μπορούσε η Επιτροπή να με εφοδιάσει με τα στοιχεία αυτά όσον αφορά την κρατική ενίσχυση που δόθηκε στη Λαϊκή Τράπεζα της Κύπρου και να αναφέρει κατά πόσον η ενίσχυση αυτή ήταν συμβατή με την πολιτική ανταγωνισμού της Ένωσης;

Απάντηση του κ. Almunia εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(18 Ιουνίου 2014)

Η Επιτροπή δημοσιεύει τακτικά στον δικτυακό της τόπο πίνακα αποτελεσμάτων, ο οποίος περιέχει λεπτομερή στατιστικά στοιχεία σχετικά με τις κρατικές ενισχύσεις που χορηγήθηκαν στον χρηματοπιστωτικό τομέα, ανά χώρα και ανά είδος ενίσχυσης ([1]).

Για συγκεκριμένες πληροφορίες σχετικά με τις κρατικές ενισχύσεις που χορηγήθηκαν σε χρηματοπιστωτικά ιδρύματα, διατίθεται, στον δικτυακό τόπο της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής, πίνακας, που περιλαμβάνει όλες τις αποφάσεις, ανά χώρα και ανά δικαιούχο: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-14-126_en.htm

Πιο συγκεκριμένα, η χορηγηθείσα στη Λαϊκή Τράπεζα Κύπρου ανακεφαλαιοποίηση διάσωσης, ύψους 1,8 δισ. ευρώ, κρίθηκε συμβατή με το άρθρο 107 παράγραφος 3 στοιχείο β) της ΣΛΕΕ, στις 13 Σεπτεμβρίου 2012 ([2]). Ομοίως, η Λαϊκή έλαβε ενίσχυση ενός 1 δις ευρώ στο πλαίσιο του καθεστώτος κρατικών εγγυήσεων για τις κυπριακές τράπεζες, η οποία εγκρίθηκε από την Επιτροπή στις 6 Νοεμβρίου 2012 ([3]).

([1]) Τα στατιστικά αυτά στοιχεία είναι διαθέσιμα στην παρακάτω σελίδα: http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/scoreboard/financial_economic_crisis_aid_en.html
([2]) Η απόφαση για την ανακεφαλαιοποίηση διάσωσης της Λαϊκής Τράπεζας Κύπρου: http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/cases/245846/245846_1367342_82_1.pdf
([3]) Η απόφαση σχετικά με το καθεστώς κρατικών εγγυήσεων για τις κυπριακές τράπεζες: http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/cases/246278/246278_1384709_106_1.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004267/14
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Size of state aid to the financial sector since the beginning of the crisis

In its motion for a resolution on the Annual Report on EU Competition Policy (2013/2075(INI)), the European Parliament calls on the Commission 'regularly to provide detailed country- and organisation-specific statistics on the state aid granted to the financial sector since the onset of the crisis, on consolidated losses and on developments in the repayments made, and to publish the results on the Commission's website in order to ensure total transparency on the scale of public intervention since the beginning of the crisis and its impact on taxpayers' (paragraph 38).

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Does it have available — and could it forward to me — the statistics referred to by Parliament, broken down by country and by credit institution?

2. Does it intend in future to publish such statistics, as Parliament has requested?

3. Could it provide me in particular with statistics regarding state aid given to the Laiki Bank in Cyprus and indicate whether this aid was compatible with the Union's competition policy?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(18 June 2014)

The Commission regularly publishes a scoreboard on its website which provides detailed statistics on state aid granted to the financial sector by country and by type of aid instrument ([1]).

For specific information about State Aid granted to financial institutions, a table listing all decisions by country and by beneficiary is available on the European Commission website: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-14-126_en.htm

More specifically, the rescue recapitalisation worth EUR 1.8 billion granted to Cyprus Popular Bank (Laiki) was deemed compatible with Article 107(3)(b) TFEU on 13 September 2012 ([2]). Similarly, Laiki also benefitted from EUR 1 billion in aid under the State guarantee scheme for Cypriot banks approved by the Commission on 6 November 2012 ([3]).

([1]) These statistics are available here: http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/scoreboard/financial_economic_crisis_aid_en.html
([2]) Decision on Rescue Recapitalisation of Cyprus Popular Bank: http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/cases/245846/245846_1367342_82_1.pdf
([3]) Decision on State Guarantee Scheme for Cypriot Banks: http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/cases/246278/246278_1384709_106_1.pdf

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-004269/14
an die Kommission (Vizepräsidentin/Hohe Vertreterin)
Barbara Lochbihler (Verts/ALE)
(7. April 2014)

Betrifft: VP/HR — Menschenrechtsaktivisten in Kolumbien

Nach Angaben von „Programa Somos Defensores“ ([1]) (Programm „Wir sind Verteidiger“) wurden 2013 in Kolumbien 366 Einzelpersonen und 185 Organisationen zur Verteidigung der sozialen Grundrechte und der Menschenrechte Opfer von Übergriffen. Damit hat die Zahl der Übergriffe im Vergleich zu den letzten 10 Jahren einen neuen Höchstwert erreicht. In 50 % der Fälle gehören die mutmaßlichen Täter paramilitärischen Verbänden an, und in 33 % der Fälle sind sie unbekannt. Für 14 % der Übergriffe sind Angehörige der staatlichen Sicherheitskräfte verantwortlich, 3 % gehen auf das Konto der Guerilla. Die Zahl der ermordeten Menschenrechtsaktivisten ist seit 2010 von damals 32 Opfern auf 49 Opfer im Jahr 2011, dann im Jahr 2012 auf 69 und schließlich im Jahr 2013 auf 78 Opfer gestiegen. Ein Anstieg ist 2013 gegenüber 2012 aber auch bei Bedrohungen (von 202 auf 209), bei der willkürlichen Anwendung des Strafrechtssystems (von 1 auf 10) und beim Diebstahl von Informationen (von 3 auf 7) zu verzeichnen.

Ursachen dieser Entwicklung sind fehlende Präventions- und Schutzmaßnahmen. 2013 wurde in Kolumbien durchschnittlich alle vier Tage ein Menschenrechtsaktivist ermordet.

In dem aktuellen Bericht, der dem Menschenrechtsrat der Vereinten Nationen am 10. März 2014 von der VN-Sonderberichterstatterin zur Situation von Menschenrechtsverteidigern vorgelegt wurde, hebt die Sonderberichterstatterin hervor, dass das größte, systematisch auftretende Problem, auf das sie während ihrer Amtszeit im Zusammenhang mit Verstößen gegen die Rechte von Menschenrechtsaktivisten wiederholt hingewiesen habe, das Problem der Straffreiheit der Täter sei. In vielen Fällen würden Ermittlungen ohne Nennung von Gründen eingestellt, oder es fänden gar keine Ermittlungen statt, wenn Menschenrechtsaktivisten wegen mutmaßlicher Verstöße gegen ihre Rechte Beschwerde erheben. Sie habe wiederholt darauf hingewiesen, dass der Straffreiheit der Täter endlich ein Ende gesetzt werden müsse, da nur so für den Schutz und die Sicherheit von Menschenrechtsverteidigern gesorgt werden könne ([2]).

Hat die Vizepräsidentin/Hohe Vertreterin die Absicht, angesichts dieser Situation in Kolumbien öffentlich ihre Bedenken zu äußern und die Umsetzung der von den Vereinten Nationen unterbreiteten Empfehlungen zu fordern? Im Rahmen welcher Programme begegnet die Kommission der Verschlechterung dieser Situation?

Antwort von Frau Ashton — Hohe Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin im Namen der Kommission
(10. Juni 2014)

Die Hohe Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin ist sich der schwierigen Situation der Menschenrechtsverteidiger und Gewerkschafter in Kolumbien vollauf bewusst und sie unterstützt uneingeschränkt die Empfehlungen des Sonderberichterstatters für Menschenrechtsverteidiger.

Die Situation von Menschenrechtsverteidigern und Gewerkschaftern ist eine der obersten Prioritäten der EU-Tätigkeit zur Förderung der Menschenrechte in Kolumbien.

Auf politischer Ebene kommen die zuständigen Dienststellen, sowohl der EU-Delegation in Kolumbien als auch in der Kommissionszentrale, regelmäßig mit Menschenrechtsverteidigern zusammen, um sich aus erster Hand über die Probleme, mit denen diese konfrontiert sind, und ihre Forderungen zu informieren. Darüber hinaus finden Treffen mit führenden NRO und dem Büro des Hohen Kommissars der Vereinten Nationen für Menschenrechte statt. Die Situation der Menschenrechtsverteidiger wird regelmäßig im Rahmen der lokalen Arbeitsgruppe für Menschenrechte erörtert. Grundsatzfragen sowie bedenkliche Einzelfälle werden von EU-Missionen in Kolumbien mit den zuständigen Behörden (einschließlich der Staatsanwaltschaft und der Abteilung für nationalen Schutz des Innenministeriums) sowie mit der Regierung im Rahmen des Menschenrechtsdialogs erörtert.

([1]) http://mpcindigena.org/ddefensa-2013.pdf
([2]) http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session25/Documents/A-HRC-25-55_en.doc

Die konkrete Verbesserung der Lage der Menschenrechtsverteidiger ist auch eines der wichtigsten Ziele der Maßnahmen der EU zur Förderung der Menschenrechte in Kolumbien im Rahmen des EIDHR. Insbesondere wurden im Jahr 2013 zwei wichtige Projekte auf diesem Gebiet eingeleitet: ein Projekt „Förderung, Einfluss und Schutz von Menschenrechtsverteidigern und Menschenrechtsorganisationen in Kolumbien im Hinblick auf die Schutzmechanismen, die Stärkung der Kapazitäten und Nachhaltigkeit“ (verwaltet von CAFOD) und ein Projekt „Stärkung der Achtung der Menschenrechte und Grundfreiheiten von kolumbianischen Gewerkschaftern“ (verwaltet von Stichting CNV Internationaal). Darüber hinaus stellt die EU finanzielle und politische Unterstützung für die „Escuela Nacional Sindical“ bereit, der wichtigsten Struktur, die die Aktivitäten und die Arbeit der Gewerkschaften in Kolumbien unterstützt. Ein weiteres Projekt von Intermon Oxfam, das im Rahmen des EU-Instruments für Stabilität finanziert wird, befasst sich mit dem spezifischen Bedarf von Menschenrechtsverteidigern, die sich für die Rückgabe enteigneten Landes engagieren.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004269/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Barbara Lochbihler (Verts/ALE)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Human rights defenders in Colombia

In 2013, the 'We are Defenders' programme (Programa Somos Defensores ([1])) recorded 366 attacks against individuals and 185 against social and human rights organisations in Colombia. This is the highest number of attacks for at least 10 years. In 50% of the cases the alleged perpetrators are paramilitary groups, while in 33% of the cases the perpetrators are unknown. Members of the state security forces are directly responsible for 14% of these attacks, and the guerrilla for 3%. Since 2010, murders of human rights defenders have increased, from 32 in 2010 to 49 in 2011, 69 in 2012 and 78 in 2013. An increase was also observed with regard to threats (from 202 to 209 cases), arbitrary use of the criminal justice system (from 1 to 10 cases) and theft of information (from 3 to 7 cases) in 2013 compared to 2012.

This is the result of a lack of prevention and protection. In 2013, one human rights defender was murdered every four days on average in Colombia.

The last report presented to the United Nations Human Rights Council on 10 March 2014 by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders insisted that 'during her mandate, one of the major and systematic concerns raised by the Special Rapporteur in relation to violations against defenders is the question of impunity. In many cases, complaints by defenders about alleged violations of their rights are not investigated or are dismissed without justification. (…) The Special Rapporteur has repeatedly reiterated that ending impunity is an essential condition for ensuring the protection and safety of defenders.' ([2])

Is the Vice-President/High Representative planning to publicly express her concern about this situation in Colombia and call for the implementation of the recommendations made by the United Nations? Which programmes is the Commission working with to tackle the deterioration of the situation?

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

The HR/VP is well aware of the difficult situation of human rights defenders and trade unionists in Colombia as well as of the recommendations made by the Special rapporteur on human rights defenders, which she shares.

The situation of human rights defenders and trade unionists is a top priority in the EU's work on human rights in Colombia.

At political level, relevant services, both in the EU Delegation to Colombia and at Headquarters, regularly meet with human rights defenders to obtain first-hand information about the problems they face and their demands, as well as with leading NGOs and the Office of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. The situation of human rights defenders is discussed regularly in the framework of the local human rights working group. Issues of principle as well as individual cases of concern are raised by EU missions in Colombia with the relevant authorities (including the Prosecutor's office and the Ministry of Interior's Protection Unit) and with the Government in the framework of the Human Rights Dialogue.

Improving the situation of human rights defenders in concrete terms is also one of the main goals of EU assistance in the area of human rights in Colombia in the framework of the EIDHR. In particular, two important projects in this area were launched in 2013: a project on 'Promotion, influence and protection of human rights defenders and human rights organisations in Colombia in terms of protection mechanisms, reinforcement of capacities and sustainability', managed by CAFOD, and another project on 'Increasing respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Colombian trade unionists' managed by Stichting CNV Internationaal. In addition, the EU is lending financial and political support to the 'Escuela Nacional sindical', the main structure supporting the activities and the work of trade unions in Colombia. Furthermore, another project run by Intermón Oxfam and funded under the EU Instrument for Stability is addressing the specific needs of human rights defenders involved in the land restitution process.

([1]) http://mpcindigena.org/ddefensa-2013.pdf
([2]) http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session25/Documents/A-HRC-25-55_en.doc

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004270/14
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (PPE) e Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(7 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Decontaminazione alimentare con ossido di etilene (ETO): distorsione del mercato e sicurezza dei consumatori

La Commissione sta attualmente elaborando una nuova iniziativa legislativa in materia di decontaminazione alimentare. Al momento nell'ambito della decontaminazione alimentare trovano applicazione due provvedimenti normativi, ovvero la direttiva 1999/2/CE relativa al ravvicinamento delle legislazioni degli Stati membri concernenti gli alimenti e i loro ingredienti trattati con radiazioni ionizzanti (la «direttiva quadro»), e la direttiva 1999/3/CE che stabilisce un elenco comunitario di alimenti e loro ingredienti trattati con radiazioni ionizzanti (la «direttiva di attuazione»). La direttiva quadro stabilisce le condizioni per l'impiego delle radiazioni sulla base di un «elenco positivo» istituito dalla direttiva di attuazione, che autorizza il trattamento di irradiazione a livello di UE per una sola categoria alimentare — ovvero erbe aromatiche essiccate, spezie e condimenti vegetali. Tuttavia, conformemente all'articolo 4, paragrafo 6, della direttiva quadro, alcuni Stati membri autorizzano tale trattamento per una quantità ben superiore di prodotti alimentari. Facendo riferimento a un particolare elenco stilato in base a questo articolo, si riportano qui di seguito alcuni esempi di alimenti e ingredienti alimentari che godono attualmente del trattamento di irradiazione in alcuni Stati membri: frutta e verdura (tra cui ortaggi a radici); cereali (tra cui fiocchi di cereali e farina di riso); specie e condimenti; pesce (tra cui molluschi); carni fresche, pollame e cosce di rana; latte crudo, camembert, caseine/caseinati e albumi; gomma arabica; prodotti sanguigni. Tra tutti gli Stati membri non sono state ancora armonizzate le condizioni, nonostante gli sforzi compiuti negli ultimi 13 anni in tal senso, e ciò ha consentito lo sviluppo di norme non omogenee nel mercato interno. Al momento la Commissione sta anche indagando su due altri processi di decontaminazione: la decontaminazione alimentare chimica mediante l'ETO e il cosiddetto procedimento ad alta pressione. La decontaminazione alimentare chimica mediante l'ETO è stata abolita nell'UE, anche se la Commissione, sotto la pressione degli USA e nel contesto del Partenariato transatlantico sul commercio e gli investimenti, starebbe valutando la possibilità di abolire il divieto.

Quali misure intende adottare la Commissione per garantire che i procedimenti di decontaminazione alimentare e le condizioni vengano armonizzati nel mercato interno e far sì che siano applicate norme omogenee?

Quali dati e prove scientifiche sta prendendo in considerazione per stabilire le pratiche e i metodi migliori in materia di decontaminazione alimentare? Quali consultazioni si sono svolte finora e quali parti interessate sono state coinvolte?

Per quanto concerne la possibilità di abolire il divieto sulla decontaminazione alimentare chimica mediante l'ETO, quali sono le prove scientifiche utilizzate per giustificare che tale metodo è sicuro per i consumatori e che i precedenti timori sulla sicurezza, che hanno condotto al divieto, non sono più validi?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(6 giugno 2014)

L'irradiazione ionizzante degli alimenti e la decontaminazione chimica negli alimenti di origine animale sono armonizzate all'interno dell'UE, in conformità alle direttive 1999/2/CE e 1999/3/CE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio ([1]) e all'articolo 3, paragrafo 2, del regolamento (CE) n. 853/2004 del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio ([2]). La decontaminazione per i prodotti di origine non animale rientra effettivamente nei poteri discrezionali degli Stati membri, ma tende a conformarsi alle prescrizioni armonizzate del pacchetto sull'igiene degli alimenti.

Prima di adottare decisioni sulla decontaminazione degli alimenti, la Commissione chiede un parere scientifico all'Autorità europea per la sicurezza alimentare, l'agenzia di riferimento dell'UE in materia di valutazione del rischio.

L'autorizzazione dell'ossido di etilene è soggetta alla procedura di autorizzazione definita all'articolo 3, paragrafo 2, del regolamento 853/2004. Per il momento non è pervenuta alcuna richiesta di autorizzazione di tale sostanza.

([1]) GU L 066 del 13.3.1999, pagg. 16 e 24.
([2]) GU L 226 del 25.6.2004, pag. 22.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004270/14
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (PPE) and Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Ethylene Oxide (ETO) food decontamination: market distortion and consumer safety

The Commission is currently in the process of establishing a new legislative initiative as regards food decontamination. At present two pieces of legislation apply to the physical decontamination of food, namely Directive 1999/2/EC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States concerning foods and food ingredients treated with ionising radiation (the 'Framework Directive'), and Directive 1999/3/EC on the establishment of a Community list of foods and food ingredients treated with ionising radiation (the 'Implementing Directive'). The framework Directive lays down rules on the conditions for the application of irradiation providing for a 'positive list' established by the Implementing Directive, which authorises irradiation treatment at EU level for just one food category — dried aromatic herbs, spices and vegetable seasonings. However, individual Member States authorise such treatment for a far higher number of food products in accordance with Article 4(6) of the framework Directive. Drawing on one particular list established under this article, the following are examples of food and food ingredients currently authorised for irradiation treatment in certain Member States: fruit and vegetables (including root vegetables); cereals (including cereal flakes and rice flour); spices and condiments; fish (including shellfish); fresh meat, poultry and frog legs; raw milk, camembert, casein/caseinates and egg whites; gum arabic; and blood products. Harmonisation of the requirements across all Member States has not yet been achieved despite the efforts made over the past 13 years to do so, thereby allowing for different standards within the internal market. The Commission is currently also investigating two other decontamination processes: ETO chemical food decontamination and the so-called high pressure processing. ETO chemical food decontamination has been banned in the EU, but it appears, under pressure from the USA and in the context of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, that the Commission is considering the removal of the ban.

What steps will the Commission take to ensure that food decontamination procedures and requirements are harmonised within the internal market and that equal standards are applied?

What data and scientific evidence is the Commission considering in establishing best practices and methods in food decontamination? What consultations have taken place thus far and what stakeholders have been involved?

Regarding the possibility of lifting the ban on ETO chemical food decontamination, what scientific evidence is being used to justify that such a method is safe for consumers and that the previous safety concerns that resulted in the ban are no longer valid?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(6 June 2014)

Ionising irradiation of foodstuffs and chemical decontamination in food of animal origin are harmonised within the EU in accordance with Directives 1999/2/EC and 1999/3/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council ([1]) and Article 3(2) of Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council ([2]). Decontamination for food of non-animal origin is indeed left to the discretion of MS but aims at achieving compliance with the harmonised requirements of the food hygiene package.

Before taking decisions on food decontamination, the Commission calls for a scientific opinion provided by the European Food Safety Authority, which is the EU reference in terms of risk assessment.

Authorisation of Ethylene Oxide is subject to the authorisation procedure laid down in Article 3(2) of the regulation 853/2004. At the moment, no request for authorisation of this substance has been received.

([1]) OJ L 066, 13.3.1999, p.16 and 24.
([2]) OJ L 226, 25.6.2004, p. 22.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004271/14
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (PPE) e Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(7 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Cambiamento climatico: obiettivi irrealistici sul breve termine

Recentemente il Gruppo intergovernativo di esperti sul cambiamento climatico (IPCC) delle Nazioni Unite ha pubblicato un rapporto con la valutazione completa degli effetti dei cambiamenti climatici sul nostro pianeta. Il Gruppo ha suonato il campanello d'allarme: l'aumento delle emissioni di gas a effetto serra amplificherebbe il rischio di guerre, carestie, alluvioni e migrazioni di massa in questo secolo.

Quello che emerge, con un consenso quasi unanime da parte della comunità scientifica, è che il tempo per agire è limitato. Le politiche di adattamento al cambiamento climatico sono ancora inesistenti o troppo contenute e l'impegno nel taglio delle emissioni da parte dei governi mondiali è ben lontano dall'ambizione necessaria.

Secondo gli esperti, il livello crescente di aumenti della temperatura comporta inevitabilmente una maggiore probabilità di impatti «gravi, pervasivi e irreversibili», per i quali, senza interventi adeguati, si rischia di dover sborsare migliaia di miliardi di euro per danni ai beni e agli ecosistemi e per aumentare le difese dalle catastrofi naturali. In base alle previsioni riportate nel documento, la temperatura globale salirà di 0,3-4,8 gradi Celsius in questo secolo, mentre il livello del mare si innalzerà tra i 26 e gli 82 centimetri entro il 2100. È stato calcolato che un riscaldamento di circa 2 gradi Celsius rispetto ai livelli preindustriali potrebbe costare circa lo 0,2-2,0 % del PIL globale annuo.

Considerato che questo rapporto ha lo scopo di orientare i governi che hanno promesso di concordare un patto climatico nel 2015, può la Commissione riferire, in base alle relazioni del Working Group I e III (rispettivamente di settembre 2013 e di prossima pubblicazione ad aprile 2014), quali azioni verranno intraprese in base ai nuovi dati emersi?

Risposta di Connie Hedegaard a nome della Commissione
(11 giugno 2014)

Il Gruppo intergovernativo di esperti sul cambiamento climatico delle Nazioni Unite (IPCC) ha finora pubblicato tre delle quattro relazioni che formano il quinto rapporto di valutazione dell'IPCC e che confermano, nel loro insieme, lo stato attuale delle conoscenze su cui si fonda la politica climatica dell'UE. Il più recente rapporto pubblicato dal gruppo di lavoro III dell'IPCC mostra inoltre come sia ancora possibile conseguire l'obiettivo, concordato a livello internazionale, di contenere l'aumento della temperatura mondiale entro i 2° C rispetto ai valori preindustriali, e quanto sia fondamentale intervenire con urgenza su scala mondiale.

Alla luce di quanto esposto, la Commissione europea sta cercando insistentemente di raggiungere un accordo ambizioso e giuridicamente vincolante entro il 2015, applicabile a tutti i paesi. L'UE ha concordato che entro il 2050 le emissioni globali debbano essere ridotte del 50 % rispetto ai livelli del 1990, come confermano le ultime conclusioni dell'IPCC. Il rapporto del gruppo di lavoro III dell'IPCC afferma che per riuscire a mantenere la temperatura mondiale al di sotto dei 2° C, entro il 2050 è necessario ridurre le emissioni globali del 40-70 % rispetto ai livelli del 2010, vale a dire del 20-60 % rispetto al 1990; ciò dimostra che l'obiettivo dell'UE si colloca nell'intervallo più ambizioso della scala.

Nel gennaio di quest'anno, all'interno del quadro per le politiche dell'energia e del clima all'orizzonte 2030, la Commissione europea ha proposto di raggiungere entro quest'ultima data una riduzione delle emissioni nazionali del 40 % rispetto al 1990.

Infine, il rapporto del gruppo di lavoro II mostra che i cambiamenti climatici avranno ripercussioni negative in quasi tutti i settori e ravvisa l'esigenza di adottare approcci differenziati nei diversi paesi europei. Su questi dati fattuali si fonda l'approccio della strategia di adattamento dell'Unione europea, che mira a promuovere e a sostenere l'adattamento ai cambiamenti climatici in tutto il territorio dell'UE, vale a dire mediante strategie di adattamento nazionali e locali.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004271/14
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (PPE) and Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Climate change: unrealistic short-term objectives

The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has recently published a report that gives a full assessment of the effects of climate change on our planet. The report paints an alarming picture, with rising greenhouse gas emissions predicted to increase the risk of war, famine, floods and mass migrations during the 21st century.

What is apparent, with the scientific community virtually in full agreement, is that we only have a limited time in which to act. Policies for adapting to climate change either have not yet been drawn up or, where they have, still do not go far enough, and the pledge made by the world's governments to cut down on emissions is a long way off from what we need to aim for.

According to the IPCC, increased levels of global warming will inevitably lead to a greater risk of 'severe, pervasive and irreversible' impacts which, if left unchecked, could result in us having to pay thousands of billions of euros to repair the damage caused to property and ecosystems and to improve our defences against natural disasters. Based on the predictions given in the report, the temperature of the planet will increase by 0.3 °C to 4.8 °C this century, while sea levels will rise by 26 to 82 centimetres by 2100. It has been calculated that a temperature rise of around 2 °C compared to pre-industrial levels could end up costing approximately 0.2% to 2.0% of annual global GDP.

Given that this report aims to provide guidance to those governments that have pledged to sign an international climate change treaty in 2015, can the Commission state, based on the reports of Working Groups I and III (respectively, published in September 2013 and due to be published in April 2014), what actions it is going to take now that these new figures have emerged?

Answer given by Ms Hedegaard on behalf of the Commission
(11 June 2014)

To date, the IPCC has published three of the four reports that form its Fifth Assessment Report and together they confirm the state of knowledge which forms the basis of EU climate policy. The most recently published report from the IPCC's Working Group III also shows that achieving the internationally-agreed goal to limit global temperature to below 2°C relative to pre-industrial levels is still possible, but requires immediate action at a global scale.

Thus, the European Commission is pushing for an ambitious legally-binding agreement in 2015 that is applicable to all countries. The EU has agreed that global emissions should be reduced by 50% in 2050 compared with levels in 1990, and this is supported by the latest findings of the IPCC. The Working Group III report says that to achieve a likely chance of staying below 2°C, global emissions in 2050 must be reduced by between 40% and 70% relative to 2010 levels which is equivalent to around 20% to 60% relative to 1990, clearly showing that the EU's target lies within the ambitious end of this range.

In January this year, the European Commission proposed that domestic emissions are reduced by 40% relative to 1990 by 2030 as part of the 2030 Framework for climate and energy policies.

Finally, the Working Group II report shows that climate change will have adverse impacts in nearly all sectors, and that there is a need for differentiated approaches across Europe. This evidence underpins the approach of our EU adaptation strategy, which aims to foster and support climate change adaptation across EU territory, i.e. through national and local adaptation strategies.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004272/14
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (PPE) e Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(7 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Il problema degli ungulati: gravi danni per l'agricoltura italiana

Il problema dell'aumento incontrollato ed esponenziale della popolazione dei cinghiali è ormai una questione ingestibile e un'emergenza ambientale. L'elevata presenza di caprioli e cinghiali sta danneggiando gravemente l'intero territorio provinciale: coinvolge tutta Italia, in particolar modo le province di Alessandria e Asti, il parco del Ticino tra Novarese e Varesotto e la Valle d'Aosta.

I danni da capriolo e cinghiale si riscontrano prevalentemente nei vigneti e nei frutteti, ma anche su tutte le colture, compresi i boschi: gli ungulati stanno aumentando in zone che non sono il loro habitat naturale. Per i frutticoltori è impossibile sostituire le piante più vecchie perché quelle nuove vengono brucate e scortecciate dalla fauna selvatica: i cinghiali creano problemi sempre maggiori a un settore già duramente colpito dalla crisi economica e che attende da ormai troppo tempo il rimborso dei danni subiti.

Inoltre le vigne sono colpite da flavascenza dorata, una malattia che si combatte da anni senza soluzioni e che comporta grandi costi per le aziende.

Andando nello specifico, le lamentele che il mondo agricolo manifesta nei confronti dei danni arrecati dalla fauna selvatica traggono origine da tre ordini di ragioni:

— i danni risultano molto più gravi di un tempo a causa delle caratteristiche delle nuove specie presenti sul territorio regionale che li procurano;

— la riduzione delle rese agricole e il dover far fronte a prestiti e mutui accesi in passato per investimenti che oggi risultano sempre meno redditizi determinano problemi che vengono ulteriormente aggravati dal fenomeno dannoso;

— gli interventi di controllo attuati in alcune province risultano poco incisivi.

L'emergenza si pone:

— a livello economico per quanto riguarda i danni, il mancato sviluppo dell'agricoltura e per l'economia del turismo, che in queste zone è trainato dallo stesso prodotto agricolo danneggiato;

— in termini di sicurezza, essendoci il costante pericolo per la popolazione delle zone colpite da questo fenomeno di imbattersi in un branco, spesso con il rischio di incidenti stradali.

Può la Commissione esprimere un parere su quanto sopraesposto?

Risposta di Dacian Cioloş a nome della Commissione
(3 giugno 2014)

1. Le Regioni italiane hanno denunciato alla Commissione in diverse occasioni i danni alla produzione agricola causati dalla fauna selvatica.

2. Il regolamento (CE) n. 1698/2005 ([1]) sullo sviluppo rurale prevede la possibilità di sostenere «investimenti non produttivi» per la prevenzione della predazione e dei danni alle colture agricole. Analoga disposizione è stata prevista nell'ambito del regolamento sullo sviluppo rurale (UE) n. 1305/2013 ([2]) per il periodo di programmazione 2014-2020. Le autorità regionali possono includere nei loro rispettivi programmi di sviluppo rurale questo tipo di sostegno.

3. In numerose decisioni in materia di aiuti di Stato la Commissione ha autorizzato misure nazionali di indennizzo dei danni causati da animali selvatici protetti. La Commissione sta inoltre esaminando la possibilità di inserire disposizioni specifiche nei futuri orientamenti per gli aiuti di Stato nel settore agricolo ([3]). Inoltre, gli Stati membri possono concedere indennizzi entro i margini previsti dal regolamento *de minimis* ([4]) cioè fino a 15 000 EUR per ciascun beneficiario nell'arco di un determinato triennio.

([1]) GU L 277 del 21.10.2005.
([2]) GU L 347 del 20.12.2013.
([3]) Draft European Union Guidelines for State aid in the agricultural and forestry sectors and in rural areas 2014 to 2020 (progetto di orientamenti per gli aiuti di Stato nei settori agricoli e forestali e nelle aree rurali 2014-2020, disponibile sul sito: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/stateaid/policy/feedback-gl/index_en.htm).
([4]) Regolamento (UE) n. 1408/2013 della Commissione, del 18 dicembre 2013, relativo all'applicazione degli articoli 107 e 108 del trattato sul funzionamento dell'Unione europea agli aiuti «de minimis» nel settore agricolo, GU L 352 del 24.12.2013.

4. La Commissione è inoltre consapevole dei rischi alle colture derivanti da malattie alle piante come la «flavascenza dorata». A questo proposito, nell'attuale periodo di programmazione sono stati concessi contributi del FEASR per il reimpianto nell'ambito delle misure concernenti gli investimenti nelle aziende agricole. Nel periodo di programmazione 2014-2020 i contributi del FEASR possono essere concessi mediante diverse misure o operazioni per i seguenti scopi: investimenti, ripristino del potenziale produttivo agricolo, gestione dei rischi, progetti di cooperazione e innovazione mirati alla lotta alle malattie delle piante, servizi di consulenza o formazione sulla gestione delle specie nocive forniti agli agricoltori.

Inoltre, in quanto parte della ristrutturazione e della conversione delle vigne ai sensi del regolamento (UE) n. 1308/2013 ([5]), può essere concesso ai sensi dell'articolo 46, paragrafo 3, lettera c), il sostegno per il reimpianto di vigneti per ragioni sanitarie o fitosanitarie.

([5]) GU L 347 del 20.12.2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004272/14
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (PPE) and Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Ungulate animals causing major damage to Italian farmers

The problems linked with the uncontrolled and soaring rise in the wild boar population have now reached unmanageable proportions, and sparked an environmental emergency. The increased numbers of deer and wild boars are severely damaging the entire Italian countryside, especially in the regions of Alessandria and Asti, Ticino Natural Park (between Novara and Varese), and the Aosta Valley.

Vineyards and fruit orchards bear the brunt of the damage caused by deer and wild boars, but all cultivated areas, including forests, are now at risk, with ungulate animals now becoming more widespread in areas outside their natural habitat. Many fruit growers now find themselves unable to replace their old plants and trees with new ones, since these have been gnawed at or stripped clean by wild animals. Wild boars are posing increasingly greater problems to fruit growers, who have already been severely hit by the financial crisis and have been waiting to be compensated for their losses for far too long.

To make matters worse, grape vines have also been struck by a wave of *flavescence dorée*, a disease that has been fought against for many years without success, and which is costing vineyards a great deal of money.

More specifically, there are three main reasons behind the grievances being expressed by the agricultural sector over the damage caused by wild animals:

— the damage is now much more severe than it once was, owing to the characteristics of the new animal species now populating the regions and causing this damage;

— there is much less money in farming today, with farmers having to pay back loans that they took out in the past for investments that are now generating increasingly less profit, and these problems are only exacerbated by the damage being caused;

— the control measures implemented in some regions are not decisive enough.

Moreover, the issue is not only affecting farmers:

— the damage is also harming the economy, owing to the lack of any agricultural development, and the tourism industry, which in these regions is reliant on the agricultural produce that is being damaged;

— in terms of safety, there is a constant danger that people living in the regions affected by the phenomenon may come across a herd whilst driving, which often results in road accidents.

Can the Commission please give its opinion on the matters expressed above?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(3 June 2014)

1. Damages to agricultural production caused by wildlife have been reported several times to the Commission by Italian Regions.

2. The Rural Development (RD) Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 ([1]) allows providing support for 'non-productive investments' preventing predation and damages to valuable agricultural crops. The same has been included in the RD Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 ([2]) for the 2014-2020 programming period. Regional authorities can include in their respective RD Programmes this type of support.

([1]) OJ L 277, 21.10.2005.
([2]) OJ L 347, 20.12.2013.

3. In several State Aid decisions, the Commission has authorised national measures compensating for damages caused by protected wild animals. The Commission is also considering specific provisions in the future Guidelines for agricultural State Aid ([3]). Moreover, the Member States may compensate such damages within the margins available under the *de minimis* Regulation ([4]), i.e. EUR 15 000 per beneficiary over any given period of three fiscal years.

4. The Commission is also aware of the risks to crops posed by phytopathogens such as the *flavescence dorée*. In this respect, in the current programming period, the EAFRD support was allowed for replanting under farm investment measures. In the 2014-2020 programming period, EAFRD support may be granted through several measures or operations for: investments, restoring agricultural production potential, risk management, cooperation and innovation projects aimed at fighting plant disease, advisory services or training on pest management provided to farmers.

In addition, as part of the restructuring and conversion of vineyards under Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 ([5]), support for replanting of vineyards for health or phytosanitary reasons may be provided in accordance with Art. 46.3.c.

([3]) Draft European Union Guidelines for state aid in the agricultural and forestry sectors and in rural areas 2014 to 2020, available at http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/stateaid/policy/feedback-gl/index_en.htm

([4]) Commission regulation (EU) No 1408/2013 of 18.12.2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to *de minimis* aid in the agriculture sector, OJ L 352, 24.12.2013.

([5]) OJ L 347, 20.12.2013.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004273/14
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (PPE) e Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(7 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: In Gran Bretagna, bambini bombardati dalla pubblicità di «junk food» tra le otto e le nove di sera

Recentemente, da una ricerca condotta dall'Università di Liverpool per conto del gruppo coordinato dalla BHF (British Heart Foundation) «Action on Junk Food Marketing», è emerso che in Gran Bretagna i piccoli telespettatori sono bombardati da pubblicità di junk food nei programmi a loro specificamente dedicati tra le ore 20 e le 21, ossia nella fascia televisiva di maggior ascolto familiare e di più alta presenza di bambini davanti allo schermo. Un quarto delle pubblicità riguarda prodotti alimentari e almeno undici spot l'ora promuovono cibi non salutari da parte di supermarket, catene di fast food, produttori di cioccolato e dolciumi.

Il promotore della pubblicità è a conoscenza che a quell'ora la presenza di un pubblico giovane davanti alla tv è molto alta e, infatti, gli spot puntano su temi divertenti, con bambini come protagonisti, invece che sul costo e la convenienza dei prodotti.

Considerando che i bambini non dovrebbero essere sfruttati commercialmente e che l'industria pubblicitaria dovrebbe assumersi le proprie responsabilità per aiutare ad affrontare il crescente problema dell'obesità infantile,

può la Commissione far sapere se non ritenga che i messaggi contenuti negli avvisi pubblicitari inducano i consumatori, soprattutto i bambini, ad avere un'idea distorta di prodotti alimentari non salutari?

Risposta di Neelie Kroes a nome della Commissione
(22 maggio 2014)

Le disposizioni della direttiva sui servizi di media audiovisivi (direttiva SMA) ([1]) prevedono che gli Stati membri e la Commissione incoraggino i fornitori di servizi di media a elaborare codici di condotta concernenti le comunicazioni audiovisive commerciali relative a prodotti alimentari poco sani per i bambini. Mentre alcuni Stati membri hanno vietato questo tipo di comunicazioni (ad esempio Belgio, Finlandia, Polonia, Portogallo e Regno Unito) durante i programmi per bambini e negli orari in cui tali programmi vengono trasmessi, altri paesi hanno introdotto regimi di coregolamentazione appoggiati dalle autorità di regolamentazione (ad esempio Francia, Irlanda e Romania) o sistemi di autoregolamentazione. Nel Regno Unito, i programmi trasmessi tra le 20 e le 21 non rientrano nella fascia oraria protetta. Il problema pertanto non risiede nell'applicazione delle norme bensì nell'efficacia delle stesse.

L'efficacia della direttiva SMA per la protezione dei minori sarà valutata nella seconda relazione sull'applicazione, prevista per maggio 2015, che analizzerà in particolare l'efficacia delle attività di applicazione e l'idoneità allo scopo delle norme.

La Commissione integra gli sforzi nazionali volti a promuovere l'adozione di stili di vita sani nell'ambito della strategia sugli aspetti sanitari connessi all'alimentazione, al sovrappeso e all'obesità ([2]), agevolando lo scambio di buone prassi grazie al Gruppo ad alto livello sulla nutrizione e l'attività fisica ([3]) e incoraggiando l'azione tramite la piattaforma d'azione europea per l'alimentazione, l'attività fisica e la salute ([4]), un forum che raggruppa varie parti interessate. La Commissione sostiene inoltre il piano d'azione sull'obesità infantile ([5]). I programmi dell'Unione «Frutta e verdura nelle scuole» e «Latte nelle scuole» ([6]) ([7]) contribuiscono ulteriormente a promuovere abitudini alimentari più sane tra gli alunni ([8]).

([1]) Direttiva 2010/13/UE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 10 marzo 2010, relativa al coordinamento di determinate disposizioni legislative, regolamentari e amministrative degli Stati membri concernenti la fornitura di servizi di media audiovisivi (direttiva sui servizi di media audiovisivi), GU L 95 del 15.4.2010, pag. 1.
([2]) COM(2007) 279.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/high_level_group/index_it.htm
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/platform/index_it.htm
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/docs/childhoodobesity_actionplan_2014_2020_en.pdf
([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sfs/index_it.htm
([7]) http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/milk/school-milk-scheme/index_en.htm
([8]) Il 30 gennaio 2014 la Commissione ha adottato una proposta (COM(2014) 32) volta a consolidare la dimensione educativa dei due programmi al fine di aumentarne l'efficacia.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004273/14
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (PPE) and Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Children in the UK bombarded by junk food adverts between 20.00 and 21.00

A study recently carried out by the University of Liverpool on behalf of Action on Junk Food Marketing (the group led by the British Heart Foundation) has revealed that every evening, younger television viewers in the United Kingdom are being bombarded by junk food adverts that appear during breaks in programmes specifically aimed at them between 20.00 and 21.00, which is the television slot that draws most families and higher numbers of children. A quarter of the adverts are for food products, with at least eleven an hour promoting unhealthy foods sold by supermarkets, fast food chains, and chocolate or sweet companies.

The companies behind the adverts are fully aware that the 20.00-21.00 time slot attracts very high numbers of younger viewers; indeed, instead of highlighting the convenience or low cost of the food products, the adverts focus on fun themes and even have children appearing in them.

Given that children should not be commercially exploited, and that the advertising industry must play its part in tackling the growing problem of childhood obesity, does the Commission not believe that the messages conveyed by such adverts may give consumers, and especially children, a distorted view of unhealthy food products?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(22 May 2014)

The provisions of the Audiovisual Media Service Directive (AVMSD) ([1]) state that the Member States and the Commission shall encourage media service providers to set up codes of conduct on audiovisual commercial communications of unhealthy foods for children. While some Member States banned this kind of audiovisual commercial communications (e.g. BE FL, PL, PT, UK) in and around children's programmes, other countries introduced co-regulatory regimes backed by the regulatory authorities (e.g. France, Ireland, Romania) or self-regulatory schemes. In the UK, the 20h-21h viewing time is not part of the protected times in and around children's programmes. Therefore, the issue is not about the enforcement of the rules but rather about their effectiveness.

The effectiveness of the AVMSD for the protection of minors, in particular the effectiveness of the enforcement activities and whether the rules in place are fit for the purpose, will be assessed in the 2nd Application Report due in May 2015.

The Commission complements national efforts to promote healthy lifestyles choices under the strategy on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity-related Health Issues ([2]) by facilitating good practices exchanges at the High Level Group for Nutrition and Physical Activity ([3]) and encouraging action through the stakeholders' EU Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health ([4]). It also supports the action plan on Childhood Obesity ([5]).The EU School Fruit and Vegetables and School Milk Schemes ([6]), ([7]) further contribute to establishing healthier eating habits among school children ([8]).

([1]) Directive 2010/13/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 March 2010 on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media services (Audiovisual Media Services Directive). OJ L 95, 15.4.2010, p.1.
([2]) COM(2007) 279.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/high_level_group/index_en.htm
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/platform/index_en.htm
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/docs/childhoodobesity_actionplan_2014_2020_en.pdf
([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sfs/index_en.htm
([7]) http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/milk/school-milk-scheme/index_en.htm
([8]) On 30 January 2014, the Commission adopted a proposal (COM(2014) 32) that aims at strengthening the educational dimension of the two schemes in order to increase their effectiveness.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004275/14
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (PPE) e Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(7 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: SLA, ricercatori italiani scoprono un nuovo gene che causa la malattia

Recentemente è stato identificato da un gruppo di ricercatori italiani un nuovo gene, principale causa della SLA (Sclerosi laterale amiotrofica — morbo di Lou Gehrig). Il gene, denominato Matrin3 e localizzato sul cromosoma 5, è stato scoperto in diverse ampie famiglie con più membri affetti da SLA e da demenza frontotemporale.

La scoperta di un nuovo gene implicato nell'eziologia della SLA fornisce informazioni utili per l'identificazione dei meccanismi della degenerazione dei motoneuroni ed avvicina la possibilità di nuove terapie mirate, grazie all'individuazione di vie cellulari suscettibili di interventi terapeutici. La scoperta è stata possibile grazie all'utilizzazione di nuove tecniche di sequenziamento dell'intero esoma («exome sequencing»), cioè della parte del DNA che codifica per le proteine.

La proteina Matrin3 è una proteina che lega il DNA e condivide domini strutturali con altre proteine che legano l'RNA, come FUS e TDP43, che sono anch'esse implicate nella SLA. Lo studio è stato eseguito su 108 casi. Per accertare l'assenza di mutazioni in soggetti sani, il gene Matrin3 è stato poi sequenziato in circa 5 190 controlli sani, 1 242 dei quali italiani.

Considerando che:

— la ricerca è stata anche finanziata dall'Unione europea nell'ambito del 7° Programma quadro;

— la scoperta del nuovo gene rappresenta una svolta per la comprensione di questa patologia ed offre prospettive per l'identificazione di terapie per il suo trattamento;

può la Commissione far sapere:

1. se è a conoscenza del nuovo studio;

2. quali risultati crede che possa generare;

3. quali piani di finanziamento sono attualmente previsti dall'Unione europea per la ricerca nella cura della SLA?

Risposta di Máire Geoghegan-Quinn a nome della Commissione
(22 maggio 2014)

1. La Commissione è a conoscenza dello studio a cui l'onorevole Deputato fa riferimento, pubblicato su Nature Neuroscience del 30 marzo 2014 ([1]), che ha ricevuto un sostegno dal progetto EuroMOTOR, finanziato dal Settimo programma quadro per le attività di ricerca, sviluppo tecnologico e dimostrazione (7° PQ 2007-2013).

2. Negli ultimi anni, scoperte scientifiche fondamentali come questa hanno portato a identificare svariati geni associati alla sclerosi laterale amiotrofica (SLA), una malattia fatale tuttora incurabile. Prima che queste scoperte si traducano in trattamenti effettivi occorrerà arrivare ad una migliore comprensione della fisiopatologia della malattia.

3. Tramite il 7° PQ la Commissione sostiene diversi progetti di ricerca collaborativa nell'ambito del Programma sanità, volti a studiare i meccanismi della degenerazione dei motoneuroni ([2]). EuroMOTOR ([3]) ne è un esempio calzante perché istituisce un partenariato multidisciplinare di clinici, scienziati di base e bioinformatici e mira a scoprire nuovi geni e circuiti genetici e a individuare bersagli adeguati per interventi terapeutici d'avanguardia.

([1]) http://www.nature.com/neuro/journal/vaop/ncurrent/full/nn.3688.html
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/health/medical-research/brain-research/projectsfp7_en.html
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/health/large-scale/systems-medicine/projects-fp7-sm_en.html

Altre opportunità per sostenere la ricerca in questo settore si potrebbero reperire nell'ambito di Orizzonte 2020, il programma quadro di ricerca e innovazione (2014-2020) ([4]), in particolare nei programmi di lavoro pubblicati per il periodo 2014-2015 della sfida per la società «Salute, cambiamento demografico e benessere» ([5]). Le informazioni sulle attuali possibilità di finanziamento sono reperibili sul portale dell'UE dedicato alla ricerca e all'innovazione ([6]).

([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/calls/h2020-phc-2015-two stage.html#tab2
([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/index.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004275/14
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (PPE) and Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Italian scientists discover a new gene that causes amyotrophic lateral sclerosis

A group of Italian scientists has recently identified a new gene as the principal cause of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease). The gene, which has been called Matrin3 and is located on chromosome 5, has been discovered in many large families in which several members suffer from ALS and frontotemporal dementia.

The discovery of a new gene that is implicated in the aetiology of ALS has provided useful information for identifying the mechanisms involved in motor neuron degeneration, and has brought the possibility of devising new targeted treatments one step closer, following the identification of cellular pathways that could be used for therapeutic interventions. The discovery has been made possible by using new exome sequencing techniques (the exome being the protein-coding part of the gene).

The Matrin3 protein is a DNA-binding protein that shares structural domains with other RNA-binding proteins, such as FUS and TDP-43, which are also implicated in ALS. The study was carried out on 108 subjects. To check that there were no mutations in healthy individuals, the Matrin3 gene was then sequenced in around 5 190 healthy control subjects, 1 242 of whom were Italian.

Given that:

— the study was also financed by the European Union under the Seventh Framework Programme;

— the discovery of the new gene marks a watershed moment in our understanding of this disease, and offers us real hope that we will one day identify new ways of treating it;

can the Commission please answer the following questions:

1. Is it aware of this recent study?

2. What benefits does it believe this study could have?

3. What EU funding programmes are currently available for research studies concerning the treatment of ALS?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(22 May 2014)

1. The Commission is aware of the study referred to by the Honourable Member, which was published in Nature Neuroscience on 30th March 2014 ([1]), and which received support from the EuroMOTOR project funded by the Seventh Framework Programme for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration Activities (FP7, 2007-2013).

2. In the course of the last decade, seminal scientific discoveries, such as the one referred to, have led to the identification of several amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) associated genes involved in this fatal but still untreatable disease. There is a need to better understand the pathophysiology of the disease before these discoveries can be directly translated into patient treatments.

3. Under FP7, the Commission supports several collaborative research projects in the Health programme that aim to understand the motor neuron degeneration processes ([2]). EuroMOTOR ([3]) is a good example of these projects because it unites a multidisciplinary partnership of clinicians, basic scientists and bioinformaticians, and aims to discover new causative genes and pathways and to deliver robust targets for novel therapeutic interventions.

([1]) http://www.nature.com/neuro/journal/vaop/ncurrent/full/nn.3688.html
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/health/medical-research/brain-research/projectsfp7_en.html
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/health/large-scale/systems-medicine/projects-fp7-sm_en.html

Horizon 2020, the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020) ([4]), may provide further opportunities to support research in this area, especially under the already published Work Programmes 2014-2015 for its Societal Challenge 'Health, demographic change and wellbeing' ([5]). Information on current funding opportunities can be obtained through the EU Research and Innovation Participant Portal ([6]).

([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/calls/h2020-phc-2015-two stage.html#tab2
([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/index.html

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004276/14
alla Commissione
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(7 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Possibili finanziamenti per la realizzazione di un Centro Servizi per garantire consulenza e assistenza tecnica ai cittadini della Regione Lazio

Un gruppo di giovani professionisti della periferia della città di Roma, specializzati in diversi settori lavorativi, sta sviluppando un progetto destinato a realizzare un Centro Servizi per garantire ai cittadini un unico «sportello» al servizio del cittadino. L'area di competenza si estenderebbe all'intera Regione Lazio. Gli ambiti di competenza si dividono in due categorie, quella delle consulenze e quella tecnica. Nella prima rientrano la consulenza legale, il CAF, il servizio mutui e tutto quanto concerne l'ambito assicurativo. Della seconda fanno parte diversi servizi, quali l'assistenza per le certificazioni, l'edilizia, l'impiantistica, la manutenzione e cura del verde, la disinfestazione e allestimenti floreali per manifestazioni. Il cliente avrà a disposizione un numero gratuito, al quale rivolgersi per una pluralità di esigenze e necessità. L'obiettivo primario del progetto è il rilancio e lo sviluppo del lavoro giovanile.

Alla luce di quanto premesso, può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

1. Quali finanziamenti o bandi europei sono previsti per la realizzazione di tale progetto?

2. Quali sono i finanziamenti previsti nella nuova programmazione 2014-2020 per la realizzazione di progetti per il rilancio e lo sviluppo del lavoro giovanile?

Risposta di László Andor a nome della Commissione
(28 maggio 2014)

1. Nel periodo di programmazione 2007-13, il Fondo sociale europeo (FSE) ([1]) sostiene iniziative in settori il cui obiettivo ad esempio è «migliorare l'accesso all'occupazione e l'inclusione sostenibile nel mercato del lavoro per persone in cerca di lavoro e per quelle inattive, prevenire la disoccupazione, in particolare la disoccupazione di lunga durata e la disoccupazione giovanile», promuovendo tra l'altro il lavoro autonomo e la creazione di imprese. La Commissione ricorda che, conformemente al principio della gestione concorrente, i programmi dei fondi strutturali sono gestiti a livello nazionale o regionale sotto la responsabilità di un'autorità di gestione. Per maggiori informazioni sulle possibilità di finanziamento, si invita l'onorevole parlamentare a contattare l'autorità di gestione dell'FSE nella regione interessata ([2]).

2. Nel periodo di programmazione 2014-20, l'FSE ([3]) sosterrà priorità di investimento quali l'integrazione sostenibile dei giovani nel mercato del lavoro e il lavoro autonomo, l'imprenditorialità e la creazione di imprese. L'iniziativa a favore dell'occupazione giovanile (YEI), integrata nella programmazione dell'FSE, sosterrà la lotta alla disoccupazione giovanile e sarà rivolta a tutti i giovani senza lavoro o non iscritti a corsi d'istruzione o di formazione, residenti nelle regioni ammissibili. Per quanto concerne l'importo del finanziamento, l'onorevole parlamentare può far riferimento al sito web dedicato ([4]).

([1]) Regolamento (CE) n. 1081/2006 del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio del 5 luglio 2006.
([2]) http://www.regione.lazio.it/rl_fse/?vw=contenutidettaglio&id=144
([3]) Regolamento (UE) n. 1304/2013 del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 17 dicembre 2013.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/what/future/eligibility/index_it.cfm — «Stanziamenti».

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004276/14
to the Commission
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Possible funding for setting up a Service Centre to provide consultancy and technical assistance services to the citizens of the Lazio region

A group of young professionals based in the outskirts of Rome, who work in a broad range of sectors, are developing a project for setting up a Service Centre to provide a unique 'portal' to citizens, which they hope to extend across the whole Lazio region. The Service Centre will offer two types of services: consultancy and technical assistance. The former will encompass legal advice, tax advice, money lending and everything relating to insurance, while the latter will consist of a wide range of services, including certification assistance, buildings, plant design, looking after and tending to plants, and debugging and trimming flowers for shows. Customers will be given access to a freephone number, which they can call with a whole host of different needs and requirements. The primary aim of the project is to kick-start and develop youth employment.

In light of the above, can the Commission please answer the following questions:

1. What European funding has been allocated to this project, and what European calls for proposals have been launched in support of it?

2. What funding is provided for in the new 2014-20 programming period for implementing projects for kick-starting and developing youth employment?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(28 May 2014)

1. In the 2007-13 programming period the European Social Fund (ESF) ([1]) supports initiatives in areas such as 'enhancing access to employment and the sustainable inclusion in the labour market of job seekers and inactive people, preventing unemployment, in particular long-term and youth unemployment', including self-employment and business creation. The Commission recalls that, according to the principle of shared management, structural fund programmes are managed at national or regional level, under the responsibility of a managing authority. For more information about funding possibilities, the Honourable Member is invited to contact the ESF Managing Authority in the concerned region ([2]).

2. In the 2014-20 programming period the ESF ([3]) shall support investment priorities such as sustainable integration into the labour market of young people and self-employment, entrepreneurship and business creation. The Youth Employment Initiative (YEI), integrated into the ESF programming, shall support the fight against youth unemployment, targeting all young persons not in employment, education or training, residing in eligible regions. For the amount of funding the Honourable Member can refer to the dedicated website ([4]).

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5.7.2006.
([2]) http://www.regione.lazio.it/rl_fse/?vw=contenutidettaglio&id=144
([3]) Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17.12.2013.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/what/future/eligibility/index_en.cfm — 'Allocations'.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004277/14
alla Commissione
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(7 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Possibili finanziamenti per un progetto che prevede l'organizzazione di tours turistici nella città di Roma e in altre località italiane

Un gruppo di giovani ha realizzato un progetto con l'obiettivo di valorizzare e promuovere le bellezze storico-artistiche e paesaggistiche dell'Italia e le tradizioni della cucina e dell'artigianato locale attraverso l'organizzazione di tours guidati nella città di Roma e in altre località italiane. Nello specifico, si tratta di «day tours», organizzati secondo due modalità differenti per rispondere meglio alle esigenze del turista. La prima riguarda la possibilità di organizzare visite di gruppo, pensate in particolare per famiglie o gruppi di giovani. La seconda riguarda l'opportunità di organizzare tours privati, su misura per il cliente. L'obiettivo principale del progetto è lo sviluppo del lavoro giovanile attraverso la creazione di opportunità di impiego nel settore del turismo per giovani diplomati e laureati. Inoltre, per l'attività svolta nella città di Roma, è prevista l'organizzazione di eventi gastronomici per riscoprire le tradizioni della cucina locale e di rievocazioni storiche di scenari e ambientazioni dell'epoca dell'antica Roma.

Alla luce di quanto esposto, può la Commissione far sapere:

1. quali sono i finanziamenti o i bandi europei previsti per il sostegno di tale progetto?

2. se esistono esperienze simili o *best practices* a livello UE?

3. quali sono i finanziamenti previsti nella nuova programmazione 2014-2020 per la realizzazione di progetti a favore dello sviluppo del settore turistico?

Risposta di Antonio Tajani a nome della Commissione
(19 giugno 2014)

La Commissione sostiene diverse iniziative per promuovere il turismo mediante confinanziamenti unionali diretti e indiretti.

La Commissione cofinanzia direttamente progetti soltanto in base a inviti a presentare proposte. Pertanto un progetto può essere valutato soltanto una volta che sia stato presentato nell'ambito di una procedura aperta.

La Commissione indice annualmente inviti a presentare proposte ([1]) per sostenere lo sviluppo di iniziative turistiche transnazionali in Europa come percorsi, sentieri, itinerari basati, tra l'altro, sul patrimonio culturale, industriale o naturale ([2]).

Per quanto concerne le opportunità indirette di finanziamento (ad esempio tramite i Fondi strutturali) l'impresa interessata farebbe bene a contattare le autorità locali/regionali nel proprio paese.

Inoltre, nel 2014 la Commissione assieme alla Commissione europea del turismo (CET) ha inaugurato un portale specifico ([3]) a promozione della gastronomia quale elemento del patrimonio culturale intangibile europeo. Si tratta di un nuovo strumento di comunicazione per aiutare i turisti a meglio pianificare i loro viaggi. Gli uffici turistici nazionali, regionali e locali possono caricare sul portale informazioni in merito ai loro eventi e festival gastronomici per dar loro maggiore visibilità.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/contracts-grants/calls-for-proposals/index_it.htm
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/sustainable-tourism/index_it.htm; http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/cultural-routes/index_it.htm
([3]) www.tastingeurope.com

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004277/14
to the Commission
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Possible funding for projected tours in the city of Rome and other Italian localities

A group of young people are planning to organise guided day tours in the city of Rome and other Italian localities in order to enhance and promote Italy's historical and artistic heritage, as well as its landscapes, cuisine and local crafts. Two different types of tour are being planned, depending on customer preferences, that is to say, group excursions, intended mainly for families or young visitors, and private tours tailored to individual needs. The principal objective is to alleviate youth unemployment by providing jobs for qualified graduates in the tourist sector, while giving tourists visiting Rome the opportunity of rediscovering local gastronomical specialities and culinary traditions and enjoying historical re-enactments of the life and times of ancient Rome.

In view of this:

1. Can the Commission indicate what EU funding or publicity can be provided for such projects?

2. Are similar experiments or exchanges of best practice being carried out at EU level?

3. What funding has been earmarked under the new 2014-2020 programme for projects to promote tourism?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(19 June 2014)

The Commission supports a number of initiatives to promote tourism through direct and indirect EU funding.

The Commission directly co-finances projects only through calls for proposals. Therefore a project can be assessed only once it is submitted through an open procedure.

The Commission launches annual calls for proposals ([1]) to support the development of transnational tourism initiatives in Europe such as routes, trails, itineraries based, amongst others, on cultural, industrial or natural heritage ([2]).

For indirect funding opportunities (e.g. Structural Funds), the interested company is advised to contact local/regional authorities in their country.

Lastly, in 2014, the Commission together with the European Travel Commission (ETC) launched a dedicated portal ([3]) to promote gastronomy as part of Europe's intangible cultural heritage. It is a new communication tool to help tourists to better plan their trips. National, regional and local tourism offices can upload information on their food fairs and festivals to achieve better visibility.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/contracts-grants/calls-for-proposals/index_en.htm
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/sustainable-tourism/index_en.htm — http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/cultural-routes/index_en.htm
([3]) www.tastingeurope.com

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004278/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) e Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(7 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Dipendenza energetica dalla Russia e strategie alternative

Il rischio che la Russia decida di ridurre le forniture di energia a diversi paesi europei potrebbe divenire più concreto se la situazione ucraina non dovesse trovare una rapida soluzione. In realtà diversi paesi europei hanno un portafoglio energetico piuttosto differenziato, con risorse provenienti ad esempio da Norvegia, Olanda, Algeria, Nigeria, Qatar, Trinidad e Tobago o Egitto. La Russia certo gioca un ruolo importante nei portafogli energetici dei paesi europei e, in assenza di una politica energetica comune, questi potrebbero trovarsi in difficoltà di fronte alle minacce di Mosca.

Alla luce di tale situazione, la Commissione:

1. Ritiene che le minacce russe di bloccare le forniture di energia siano credibili e possibili?

2. Ritiene che una maggiore cooperazione euro-mediterranea in campo energetico possa giocare un ruolo chiave nel ridurre la dipendenza europea dalle fonti energetiche russe?

Risposta di Günther Oettinger a nome della Commissione
(11 giugno 2014)

1. L'interdipendenza energetica tra l'UE e la Russia è un fatto da tempo conosciuto. Nel 2013 il 39 % delle importazioni in volume di gas dell'UE proveniva dalla Russia. D'altro canto, le entrate derivanti dalle esportazioni di energia verso l'Europa svolgono un ruolo importante per l'economia russa: secondo l'Agenzia internazionale per l'energia, nel 2013 il 3 % del PIL russo consisteva nei proventi delle esportazioni di gas verso l'Europa. Ciò corrobora l'opinione della Commissione secondo la quale l'energia non deve essere usata come strumento politico.

2. Promuovere la cooperazione energetica nella regione mediterranea fa parte degli obiettivi che la Commissione europea ha individuato al fine di diversificare le fonti di approvvigionamento energetico europeo ([1]). La politica esterna europea in materia di energia è finalizzata non solo all'attuale cooperazione tra l'Unione europea e i paesi vicini del Mediterraneo ([2]) nei settori delle energie rinnovabili, delle interconnessioni e degli idrocarburi, ma anche alla creazione di un partenariato UE-Mediterraneo in materia di energia ([3]).

([1]) COM(2011) 539 definitivo.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/energy/international/euromed_en.htm
([3]) COM(2013) 638 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004278/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) and Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Energy dependency on Russia and alternative strategies

The danger that Russia may decide to reduce its supplies of energy to various EU countries could become more of a reality should a solution to the situation in Ukraine not be found quickly. In actual fact, many EU countries have spread their energy portfolio fairly widely, with supplies coming for instance from Norway, the Netherlands, Algeria, Nigeria, Qatar, Trinidad and Tobago or Egypt. It is true that Russia plays an important role in the energy portfolio of EU countries and, in the absence of a common energy policy, threats from Moscow could cause these countries problems.

1. Does the Commission consider Russia's threats to block energy supplies to be credible and possible?

2. Does it believe that greater Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in the energy field may play a key role in reducing European dependence on Russian sources of energy?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(11 June 2014)

1. The energy interdependency between the EU and Russia is a long-standing factor. In 2013, 39% of EU gas imports by volume came from Russia. On the other hand, revenues from energy exports to Europe play an important role for the Russian economy: According to the International Energy Agency, Russia earned 3% of its GDP from its European gas exports in 2013. This reinforces the Commission's opinion that energy should not be used as a political tool.

2. Fostering energy cooperation in the Mediterranean area is part of the objectives the European Commission has identified in order to diversify the sources of European energy supply ([1]). In addition to the on-going cooperation between the European Union and its Mediterranean neighbourhood ([2]) in the fields of renewables, interconnections and hydrocarbons, the European external energy policy also aims at the creation of an EU-Mediterranean Energy Partnership ([3]).

([1]) COM(2011) 539 final.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/energy/international/euromed_en.htm
([3]) COM(2013) 638 final.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004279/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) e Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(7 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Emergenza rifugiati in Libano

L'ultimo rapporto del Commissariato dell'ONU per i rifugiati lancia l'allarme Libano, dove un milione di profughi dalla Siria rischia di provocare il collasso del paese. Di questi, circa 400 mila sono bambini che vivono in condizioni precarie, tanto che solo un quarto di loro è in grado di frequentare la scuola.

I rifugiati cercano di raggiungere le città e prendere in affitto misere stanzette a prezzi altissimi, cercando lavoro ad esempio nei campi o nei ristoranti. Rappresentando una forza lavoro a basso costo per posti non qualificati, i rifugiati rischiano anche di estremizzare le tensioni sociali in Libano, visto e considerato inoltre che sono sia alawiti che sunniti. A peggiorare la situazione vi sono poi le condizioni sanitarie, la fame dilagante e il rischio di malattie infettive, peggiorati dalla scarsità di acqua. La situazione è anche legata al fatto che il Libano, per ragioni storiche, rifiuta la presenza di campi profughi dell'UNHCR.

In merito a questo dramma umanitario, intende la Commissione fornire il proprio supporto alle autorità libanesi e ai rifugiati siriani?

Risposta di Kristalina Georgieva a nome della Commissione
(28 maggio 2014)

La Commissione europea e gli Stati membri sono alla guida della risposta internazionale alla crisi siriana in termini umanitari e di sviluppo e hanno mobilitato un sostegno complessivo di oltre 2,8 miliardi di EUR. Più del 26 % dei finanziamenti umanitari erogati dalla Commissione in risposta alla crisi serve a coprire il fabbisogno all'interno del territorio libanese.

La Commissione ha stanziato più di 358 milioni di EUR per aiutare il Libano a gestire le conseguenze della crisi siriana. Questo importo è così ripartito: 160 milioni di EUR dalla DG ECHO per l'assistenza umanitaria, 27,6 milioni di EUR dall'IfS per l'assistenza sanitaria e 170,8 milioni di EUR dall'ENPI sotto forma di aiuti allo sviluppo per l'istruzione, la creazione di condizioni di sussistenza e le infrastrutture locali.

Dall'inizio del 2014 fino ad ora la Commissione ha stanziato 165 milioni di EUR per aiuti supplementari umanitari e di sviluppo in risposta alla crisi. Il Libano sarà il secondo paese a beneficiare di questo stanziamento dopo la Siria.

La Commissione monitora da vicino la situazione dei rifugiati siriani in Libano e negli altri paesi vicini alla Siria, in particolare mediante il suo ufficio a Beirut e il suo ufficio regionale per la risposta umanitaria alla crisi siriana ad Amman.

I finanziamenti umanitari mobilitati dalla Commissione a favore del Libano sono destinati agli interventi medici di emergenza per salvare vite umane, alla fornitura di farmaci essenziali, prodotti alimentari e nutrizionali, acqua potabile e impianti igienico-sanitari, nonché alla distribuzione di prodotti di base non alimentari e di strutture di protezione, comprese le sovvenzioni per gli affitti. Vengono inoltre attuati programmi di protezione per le donne e i bambini, che prevedono anche un sostegno psicologico. Inoltre in tutte le sedi disponibili, la Commissione invita a rispettare i diritti umani nel contesto della crisi siriana e difende attivamente i diritti dei bambini siriani, ad esempio tramite l'iniziativa «No Lost Generation».

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004279/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) and Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Refugee emergency in Lebanon

The latest UNHCR report has expressed alarm about Lebanon, which is being strained almost to collapsing point by a million Syrian refugees. About 400 000 of the refugees are children living in precarious conditions: so much so that only a quarter of them are able to attend school.

Refugees head for the towns and cities, where they rent wretched little rooms for exorbitant prices. They look for work in the fields, say, or in restaurants. Because they are a source of cheap labour that can be employed in unskilled jobs, there is a danger that the refugees might heighten social tensions in Lebanon, especially as there are both Alawites and Sunnis among them. The situation is being made worse by the health conditions, the spread of hunger, and the risk of infectious diseases, exacerbated by water shortages. Another problem is that Lebanon, for historical reasons, does not allow UNHCR refugee camps on its soil.

In view of this humanitarian emergency, will the Commission provide support to the Lebanese authorities and the Syrian refugees?

Answer given by Ms Georgieva on behalf of the Commission
(28 May 2014)

The European Commission with Member States have spearheaded the international humanitarian and development response to the Syria crisis and mobilised over EUR 2.8 billion. More than 26% of the Commission's humanitarian funding to this crisis goes to responding to needs inside Lebanon.

The Commission has committed over EUR 358 million to support Lebanon in handling the consequences of the Syria crisis (EUR 160 million humanitarian assistance from ECHO, EUR 27.6 million for health assistance from IfS and EUR 170.8 million of development-oriented support from ENPI, addressing education, livelihood creation and local infrastructure).

In 2014 the Commission has, so far, pledged EUR 165 million in additional humanitarian and development assistance for the crisis. Lebanon will be the second main recipient country under this allocation after Syria.

The Commission is closely monitoring the situation of Syrian refugees in Lebanon and in the other countries neighbouring Syria, in particular through its office in Beirut and its regional office for the humanitarian response to the Syria crisis located in Amman.

The Commission's humanitarian funding in Lebanon provides Syrian refugees with life-saving medical emergency responses, essential drugs, food and nutritional items, safe water, sanitation and hygiene, distribution of basic non-food items and shelter; the latter including rental support. The funding also comprises protection programmes for women and children, which includes the provision of psychological support. Moreover, the Commission is constantly calling for the respect of human rights with regards to the Syria crisis in all available forums and is an active advocate for Syrian children through e.g. the No Lost Generation initiative.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004280/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) e Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(7 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Giardini verticali

La pratica dei «giardini verticali» si sta diffondendo in diverse aree urbane nel mondo. Si tratta di ricoprire le facciate di edifici (generalmente palazzi o grattacieli) con piante (non solo) rampicanti al fine di migliorare l'aspetto estetico di una determinata area urbana e donare un polmone verde ai centri abitati affollati, dove si concentrano maggiormente le emissioni nocive. La creazione di giardini verticali ha comportato diversi anni di ricerca per sviluppare idee, tecnologie e tecniche di creazione, che hanno portato però a risultati strabilianti, come ad esempio un famoso giardino verticale a Medellin, in Colombia, alto 92 metri: in questo caso si tratta di un enorme tappeto verde di piante autoctone e d'importazione, posizionate in modo da non danneggiarsi l'un l'altra e da resistere al vento.

Può la Commissione comunicare se:

1. nell'UE è già diffusa questa pratica?

2. i giardini verticali possono partecipare ad obiettivi di recupero urbano e riduzione dello smog nei centri abitati?

3. progetti di questo genere siano stati finanziati prima d'ora da fondi europei?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(1º giugno 2014)

I giardini verticali offrono significativi vantaggi economici, sociali e ambientali, come rilevato dalla strategia dell'UE per le infrastrutture verdi ([1]). Sono già in fase di adozione nell'UE, ma non ancora su scala molto grande. Per agevolarne la diffusione sarebbe opportuno adottare misure più efficaci di promozione, integrazione e finanziamento.

Da un unico giardino verticale non si ottengono vantaggi su larga scala. Tuttavia, un certo numero di questi giardini in combinazione con altri elementi di infrastruttura urbana verde, quali giardini pensili, boschi urbani, cinture verdi e sistemi metropolitani di aree verdi, può recare una serie di benefici, fra cui un miglioramento significativo della qualità dell'aria in città, la riduzione dell'effetto «isola di calore», la ritenzione delle acque piovane, la riduzione dei livelli di CO_2 nell'atmosfera, la creazione di habitat per la conservazione della biodiversità e il benessere umano associato alla prossimità di aree verdi. Da queste considerazioni hanno preso il via progetti di riabilitazione per mezzo di infrastrutture verdi, in particolare in quartieri socialmente svantaggiati, con esiti positivi.

La Commissione ha pubblicato orientamenti tecnici sull'integrazione delle infrastrutture verdi in altre politiche e sulle modalità di finanziamento attraverso i principali strumenti dell'UE. Gli orientamenti riguardano la politica regionale e di coesione e le politiche in materia di assetto idrologico. Sono in preparazione orientamenti relativi all'adattamento ai cambiamenti climatici ([2]). In collaborazione con la Banca europea per gli investimenti, si sta istituendo uno strumento di finanziamento del capitale naturale volto a finanziare, mediante prestiti e strumenti di capitale, progetti di infrastrutture verdi per promuovere la conservazione del capitale naturale e generare utili o realizzare risparmi. Tale strumento dovrebbe diventare operativo verso la fine del 2014.

([1]) COM(2013) 249 def.
([2]) Tutte le informazioni in merito si trovano su: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/ecosystems/index_en.htm e http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/ecosystems/background.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004280/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) and Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Green walls

The planting of green walls, which have enjoyed a recent surge of popularity in urban environments throughout the world, involves covering the outside walls of buildings (generally blocks of flats or skyscrapers) with climbing plants and other types of vegetation to enhance their appearance and provide a green lung for crowded residential centres affected by the highest concentrations of harmful emissions. Several years have been devoted to the development of this concept, combining creativity, technology and know-how to produce some truly astounding results, one of the most famous being the Medellin green wall in Colombia which is 92 metres high, consisting of an enormous carpet of native and imported plants arranged in such a way as not to harm each other and to withstand high winds.

In view of this:

1. Can the Commission say whether such practices are common in the EU?

2. Could green walls be a way of helping to achieve urban rehabilitation and smog reduction in residential centres?

3. Has EU funding already been earmarked for such projects?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(1 June 2014)

Green walls have the potential to deliver significant economic, social and environmental benefits, as highlighted in the EU Green Infrastructure Strategy ([1]). They are already being deployed in the EU, but not yet at a very wide scale. Their further deployment would benefit from better promotion, integration and financing measures.

A single green wall will not deliver large-scale benefits. But a number of green walls, in conjunction with further urban green infrastructure elements, such as green roofs, city forests, business parks, green belts or metropolitan park systems, can deliver multiple benefits. Such benefits include significant improvement of air quality in cities, as well as reducing the heat island effect, retaining rain water, reducing carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere, creating habitats to conserve biodiversity and human well-being associated with closeness to green areas. This has led to successful rehabilitation projects using green infrastructure, including in socially deprived neighbourhoods.

The Commission has published technical guidance on how green infrastructure will be integrated in other policies and how it can be funded under major EU instruments. This includes guidance related to regional and cohesion policy, as well as water and floods policies; further guidance related to climate change adaptation is in preparation ([2]). Together with the European Investment Bank, a Natural Capital Financing Facility (NCFF) is being set up to finance through loans and equity instruments green infrastructure projects that promote the preservation of natural capital and are revenue generating or cost-saving. This facility is expected to be operational towards the end of 2014.

([1]) COM(2013) 249 final.
([2]) All information is available on http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/ecosystems/index_en.htm and on http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/ecosystems/background.htm

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004281/14
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) e Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(7 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Giornalista tedesca assassinata in Afghanistan

Una fotografa tedesca e una giornalista canadese sono state investite da una raffica di arma da fuoco nell'est dell'Afghanistan. La prima ha perso la vita, mentre la seconda è rimasta gravemente ferita. Pare che i colpi siano stati esplosi da un uomo con una divisa da poliziotto, probabilmente un talebano, dal momento che poche ore prima era stato lanciato un comunicato in cui si afferma che gli attacchi terroristici sarebbero aumentati in occasione del voto «fasullo» del 5 aprile.

È il vice-presidente/Alto Rappresentante in grado di fornire ulteriori informazioni sulla dinamica dell'attentato? Può il vice-presidente/Alto Rappresentante chiarire se altri cittadini europei siano rimasti coinvolti?

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

L'AR/VP deplora il terribile incidente in cui la giornalista Anja Niedringhaus è rimasta uccisa e la sua collega Kathy Gannon ha riportato gravi ferite.

A quanto risulta l'attentatore non sarebbe un combattente talebano vestito da poliziotto, ma un agente della polizia nazionale afghana che è stato arrestato e posto in custodia cautelare durante le indagini. I talebani negano il coinvolgimento del gruppo nell'attentato contro le giornaliste straniere. Nell'incidente non sono stati coinvolti altri cittadini europei.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004281/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) and Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — German photographer killed in Afghanistan

A German photographer was killed and a Canadian journalist seriously injured in hail of gunfire in eastern Afghanistan, the shots apparently having been fired by an individual in police uniform, thought to be a Taliban fighter, given that a warning had been issued a few hours earlier that terrorist attacks would be stepped up in the wake of the 'sham' election of 5 April.

Can the Vice-President/High Representative give any further details regarding the attack? Can she say whether any other European citizens were involved?

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

The HR/VP condemns the terrible incident in which the journalist Anja Niedringhaus was killed and her colleague Kathy Gannon seriously injured.

The perpetrator has not been confirmed as 'a Taliban fighter in police uniform', but was allegedly an ANP Officer who was arrested and taken into custody for investigation. The Taliban denied the group's involvement in targeting the foreign journalists. No other European citizens were involved in this incident.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004282/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) e Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(7 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Ipotesi di colpo di Stato militare in Afghanistan

Diversi analisti ipotizzano da alcune settimane il rischio di un colpo di Stato da parte delle forze armate regolari in Afghanistan, in vista delle elezioni presidenziali che si terranno di qui a poche settimane. Negli ultimi anni, le forze armate del paese sono aumentate e divenute più forti e, per tale motivo, alcuni le ritengono una minaccia più credibile rispetto ai talebani stessi.

Partendo dal fatto che il rafforzamento di un esercito in Afghanistan è stato un elemento chiave nella ricostruzione e stabilizzazione del paese, e che definirlo come una minaccia per il paese va contro i principi che hanno mosso l'azione della missione internazionale ISAF, gli analisti ritengono che, in termini di capacità, un'organizzazione più strutturata e dotata di mezzi, quale può essere un esercito regolare, abbia maggiori possibilità di portare a segno un colpo di Stato rispetto a un'organizzazione «fluida» come Al Qaeda o i diversi gruppi talebani che operano in Medio Oriente.

Questi studi si fondano anche su alcuni dati, secondo cui il 93 % degli afghani ritiene che l'esercito sia «onesto e leale», l'81 % che abbia avuto un ruolo importante nel migliorare la sicurezza del paese e l'88 % che ha piena fiducia nelle istituzioni. Da questi dati emerge quindi che un'azione dell'esercito potrebbe anche essere sostenuta dal popolo.

Ciò premesso, la Commissione dispone di dati o d'informazioni che diano credito a queste analisi e rendano plausibile l'ipotesi di un colpo di Stato militare in Afghanistan? Quali ripercussioni potrebbe avere tale eventualità sulle relazioni UE-Afghanistan?

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

L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente non dispone di informazioni concrete che confermino queste ipotesi. Il processo elettorale in corso procede bene ed è appoggiato da gran parte della popolazione afghana. L'Unione europea continuerà a dimostrarsi un partner affidabile, affiancando il popolo afghano in quello che potrebbe essere il primo trasferimento pacifico dei poteri nella storia recente del paese. Non vi sono indicazioni specifiche riguardo a possibili tentativi di un rovesciamento incostituzionale del governo.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004282/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) and Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Potential likelihood of a military-led coup d'état in Afghanistan

For several weeks now, various analysts have been discussing the risk of Afghanistan's regular armed forces leading a coup d'état in the country, in view of the presidential elections that will be taking place in a few weeks' time. Afghanistan's armed forces have increased in size and grown more powerful over the last few years, which is why some people now see them as being a more credible threat than the Taliban themselves.

Even though a stronger army in Afghanistan was one of the key elements in the strategy for rebuilding and stabilising the country, and viewing this army as now being a threat to the country appears to go against the guiding principles of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), the analysts nevertheless maintain that, in terms of capacity, a well-organised and well-equipped group, such as a regular army, is more likely to initiate a coup d'état than a 'fluid' organisation like Al-Qaeda or the various Taliban groups at large in the Middle East.

These views are also based on various surveys, according to which 93% of Afghans consider the army to be 'honest and loyal', 81% believe that it has played an important role in improving the country's security, and 88% trust it completely. These figures therefore reveal that a military-led coup d'état would most likely be supported by the Afghan population.

In light of the above, does the Commission have any data or information to hand that could lend further support to these opinions, and thus make it plausible that a military-led coup d'état could take place in Afghanistan? What repercussions could such an event have on the relationship between the EU and Afghanistan?

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

The High Representative/Vice-President Ashton has no concrete information at hand which would confirm these speculations. The current electoral process progresses well and is supported by large parts of the Afghan population. The European Union will continue to be a reliable partner accompanying the Afghan people in this possibly first peaceful transfer of power in modern Afghan history. There are no specific indications for any attempts of unconstitutional changes of power.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004284/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) e Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(7 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Problematiche legate alla dieta vegetariana

Uno studio austriaco ha rivelato che la dieta vegetariana è nociva per la salute. Secondo lo studio, chi evita la carne ha il 50 % di possibilità in più di ammalarsi di cancro o di soffrire un infarto.

La ricerca riconosce che i vegetariani hanno un indice di massa corporea inferiore e abitudini migliori: ad esempio, esercitano più attività fisica, bevono meno alcool e non fumano, e, tra l'altro, godono di uno status socioeconomico in media superiore agli altri.

Nonostante ciò, le persone che non consumano carni e grassi animali sono anche più esposte alla depressione e all'ansia. Secondo lo studio, la dieta sbilanciata a sfavore di grassi animali influisce su questi aspetti della salute umana.

Può la Commissione chiarire se dispone di ulteriori dati a conferma di questa tesi?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(30 maggio 2014)

La Commissione non rilascia commenti su risultati di ricerche individuali non relative alle sue attività di finanziamento nell'ambito del programma quadro dell'UE per la ricerca.

Giova tuttavia ricordare che nella sezione di discussione di tale studio, in cui ne vengono descritti i limiti, gli autori informano che il progetto di indagine trasversale non permette di formulare alcuna ipotesi riguardo all'esistenza di nessi causali.

Carni e grassi animali non rappresentano le uniche fonti di sostanze nutritive necessarie per un'alimentazione sana ed equilibrata. Tutte le sostanze nutritive essenziali per una dieta equilibrata possono far capo a fonti diverse. Quando includono tutte le sostanze nutritive essenziali le diete vegetariane (come altri tipi di diete) possono quindi contribuire a uno stile di vita sano.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004284/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) and Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Problems associated with vegetarian diets

An Austrian study has revealed that vegetarian diets are bad for people's health. According to the study's finding, those who avoid eating meat are 50% more likely to contract cancer or suffer a heart attack.

The study acknowledges that vegetarians generally have a low body mass index and healthier lifestyle: most vegetarians exercise more, drink less alcohol and do not smoke, for example, and their socioeconomic status is higher than average.

Despite all that, people who do not eat meat and animal fat are also more prone to suffer bouts of depression and anxiety, which, according to the study, are conditions that stem from an imbalanced diet containing no animal fat.

Can the Commission indicate whether it has any other data to hand that could confirm these findings?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(30 May 2014)

The Commission does not comment on individual research results which are not related to its funding activities under the EU Framework Research Programme.

Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that under the discussion section of the referred paper, where the limitations of the study are described, the authors of the paper inform that the cross-sectional survey design does not allow for statements to be made concerning the existence of causal relationships.

Meat and animal fat are not the exclusive sources of nutrients needed in a balanced and healthy diet. All essential nutrients for a balanced diet can be found in sources other than meat or animal fat. When including all essential nutrients, vegetarian diets — as other types of diets — can therefore contribute to a healthy lifestyle.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004285/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) e Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(7 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Riviste propagandistiche di Al Qaeda che incitano alla violenza

Al-Qaeda nella penisola Araba (AQAP) ha recentemente pubblicato il dodicesimo volume di un magazine nel quale esamina il ruolo della «Open Source Jihad», intesa come strumento di propaganda ed incitazione nei confronti dei jihadisti e di addestramento alla jihad per chi voglia organizzare attentati suicidi esplosivi.

La pubblicazione prende in esame nei minimi dettagli la programmazione ed esecuzione di attentati con il palese obiettivo di favorire l'emulazione da parte di ulteriori jihadisti. Una sorta di «approfondimento tematico» spiega poi come realizzare una bomba artigianale con strumenti di fortuna, come bombole a gas o chiodi. La rivista suggerisce anche tempi e spazi in cui effettuare gli attacchi, suggerendo non più luoghi fortemente simbolici o strategici, ma basati sulla massimizzazione del numero delle vittime e dei feriti, come ad esempio luoghi abitualmente frequentati nei weekend in occasioni mondane.

Questo genere di pubblicazioni non può che lasciare scioccati, soprattutto perché non vi è alcun ostacolo alla loro diffusione, fatto che le rende ancora più pericolose, in quanto strumenti di propaganda e di «soft power» qaedista, volto all'arruolamento spontaneo e alla proliferazione di un network di cellule difficilmente rintracciabili.

In merito a questo genere di pubblicazione, può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

1. È a conoscenza del magazine in questione?

2. Esistono strumenti nell'azione esterna europea volti a smantellare questo tipo di attività propagandistiche? Quali risultati hanno ottenuto sino ad oggi?

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

La Commissione è al corrente dell'esistenza della rivista Inspire sin dalla pubblicazione del primo numero nel luglio 2010. Va osservato che in alcuni Stati membri il fatto di possedere Inspire è considerato un reato.

La rivista mira alla radicalizzazione e all'incitamento alla violenza. Oltre a sostenere le misure antiradicalizzazione nei paesi terzi, l'UE promuove le buone pratiche in questo campo, come ha fatto ad esempio durante la recente revisione della strategia globale delle Nazioni Unite contro il terrorismo.

In questo contesto, si fa riferimento anche alla recente comunicazione della Commissione dal titolo «Prevenire la radicalizzazione che porta al terrorismo e all'estremismo violento: rafforzare la risposta dell'UE» (COM(2013) 941), che prevede l'intensificazione degli sforzi volti allo sviluppo delle capacità di paesi terzi. Stiamo contribuendo anche all'attuale revisione della strategia dell'Unione europea volta a combattere la radicalizzazione e il reclutamento nelle file del terrorismo.

Il primo progetto di sviluppo delle capacità attuato dall'UE in questo settore, che rivolge particolare attenzione al Corno d'Africa, è stato avviato all'inizio del 2014, e quindi è troppo presto per valutarne l'impatto. Va segnalato altresì che dal 19 maggio 2014 l'UE aiuta la Nigeria a combattere il terrorismo, anche attraverso attività di antiradicalizzazione e deradicalizzazione.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004285/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) and Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Magazines spreading Al-Qaeda propaganda and inciting violence

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) has recently published the twelfth edition of a magazine that examines the role of 'Open Source Jihad', which is understood to be a propaganda device aimed at inciting jihadi and providing guidance to anyone seeking to launch a suicide bomb attack in the name of jihad.

The edition cited above examines in great detail how terrorist attacks are planned and carried out, with the clear intention of inspiring more jihadi to follow in the footsteps of their 'brothers in arms'. A variation of an 'in-depth analysis report' then explains how to make a home-made bomb by using everyday items such as gas cylinders and nails. The magazine also gives advice on when and where to carry out attacks, with its suggested targets no longer being highly symbolic or strategic buildings and areas, but instead places where the number of people killed and injured can be maximised, such as social events that usually attract many people during the weekend.

These types of publications can only arouse shock and disgust, and the fact that there is nothing to prevent them from being circulated makes them even more dangerous. They are propaganda devices that form part of Al-Qaeda's 'soft power' strategy, and seek to compel their readers to drop everything and join the terrorist organisation, and thereby spread its network of cells that are already proving highly difficult to track down.

1. Is the Commission aware of the magazine in question?

2. Are there any bodies within the European External Action Service that are tasked with stamping out these types of propaganda activities? What results have they achieved to date?

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

The Commission is aware of the existence of *Inspire* magazine since the first issue was published in July 2010. It is worth noting that possession of *Inspire* is a criminal offence in some Member States.

The magazine seeks to both radicalise and incite to violence. The EU is committed to supporting work in third countries to counter radicalisation. We are also active in promoting good practices in this regard, for example during the recent review of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

In this context I would also refer to the recent Commission Communication on Preventing Radicalisation to Terrorism and Violent Extremism (COM(2013) 941), and increasing external capacity-building efforts. We are also contributing to the on-going review of the EU Strategy to Combat Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terrorism.

The EU's first capacity building project dedicated to work in this area and focusing on the Horn of Africa was launched at the beginning of 2014. It is too soon to assess impact. It is also worth signalling EU support (starting on 19 May 2014) to Nigeria in its efforts to tackle terrorism, including through activities on counter radicalisation and de-radicalisation.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004286/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) e Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(7 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Sospetti di brogli elettorali in Turchia

Il risultato elettorale turco ha sorpreso parte dell'opinione pubblica turca e internazionale, ma da Ankara il premier si ritiene soddisfatto e null'affatto sorpreso dell'esito delle elezioni. In seguito alla vittoria sono però giunte una serie di denunce relative a brogli e irregolarità che si sarebbero registrate a urne chiuse. Alcuni giornali hanno pubblicato diverse foto di schede elettorali che sono state gettate tra i rifiuti.

Il candidato dell'opposizione nella capitale ha presentato un ricorso formale, ma diversi sostenitori del partito hanno scatenato una serie di scontri con le forze di polizia.

Alla luce di quanto precede, può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

1. Ha la Commissione motivo di credere che le accuse di brogli possano avere un fondamento reale?

2. Dispone di informazioni che possano fare luce sulla questione?

Risposta di Štefan Füle a nome della Commissione
(28 maggio 2014)

La Commissione ha seguito con attenzione gli sviluppi precedenti e successivi alle elezioni comunali del 30 marzo. Il partito al governo e i partiti dell'opposizione hanno presentato un gran numero di ricorsi per contestare i risultati preliminari. Una volta esaminati tutti i ricorsi, i risultati definitivi saranno annunciati dal Consiglio elettorale supremo, un organo giudiziario responsabile per lo svolgimento delle elezioni.

La Commissione ribadisce la necessità di fugare ogni dubbio circa l'esito delle elezioni affinché sia accettato da tutti i cittadini turchi. Occorre quindi intervenire in modo trasparente e inclusivo per dare seguito alle denunce di irregolarità.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004286/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) and Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Suspected vote rigging in Turkey

The results of the Turkish elections have raised some eyebrows amongst both the Turkish and international public, and yet in Ankara the Turkish Prime Minister has expressed his satisfaction over the outcome and claimed that it did not shock him in the slightest. However, after the victory was announced, a series of allegations came to light of vote rigging and other irregularities, which had been made shortly after voting had closed. Several newspapers have published photographs of ballot papers that were thrown away with the rubbish.

The opposition candidate in Ankara has lodged a formal appeal, and there have already been several clashes between supporters of his party and the police.

1. In light of the above, does the Commission have any reason to believe that the accusations of vote rigging could be well-founded?

2. Does it have any information to hand that could shed some light on the situation?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(28 May 2014)

The Commission has been following the situation before and after the municipal elections of 30 March closely. The preliminary results have been contested with a high number of appeals lodged by both the ruling party and the opposition parties. Once all the appeals are considered, the final results will be announced by the Supreme Board of Elections, a judicial body responsible for the conduct of elections.

The Commission reiterates that the outcome of the elections should leave no doubt. This is crucial for the acceptance of the results by all Turkish citizens. Allegations of irregularities should therefore be followed-up in a transparent and inclusive manner.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004287/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) e Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(7 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Trasparenza nel settore industriale della difesa

Il consiglio di amministrazione di un noto gruppo industriale italiano, attivo soprattutto nel settore dell'alta tecnologia e della difesa, ha esaminato nei giorni scorsi la relazione di un comitato ad hoc, nominato il 15 aprile 2013, con il compito di individuare misure e azioni in grado di elevare ulteriormente i principi e gli standard etici ai quali uniformarsi nella conduzione del business. Il comitato ha, in particolare, raccomandato al consiglio di amministrazione: di redigere un codice per l'integrità e anticorruzione e di attribuirne la supervisione a un organo indipendente; di proseguire nell'attività di rafforzamento dell'audit interno; di dare corso a un sistematico processo di formazione dei dipendenti che operano nelle aree aziendali più esposte al rischio.

Il settore industriale della difesa e degli armamenti è in effetti spesso caratterizzato da poca trasparenza, motivo per cui le azioni di questo tipo non possono che essere le benvenute. A tale proposito si chiede alla Commissione se, a livello europeo, siano mai state promosse iniziative non vincolanti volte a rafforzare la governance e la trasparenza delle imprese operanti in questo settore, con particolare riferimento alle grandi imprese e ai grandi gruppi industriali.

Risposta di Antonio Tajani a nome della Commissione
(6 giugno 2014)

Vi è un'iniziativa europea in materia di trasparenza e di governance nel settore della difesa, di cui la Commissione è a conoscenza, relativa alla prevenzione della corruzione e all'integrità delle imprese. Tale iniziativa è stata elaborata dal settore dell'industria aerospaziale e della difesa, rappresentati in seno all'Associazione europea per i settori aerospaziale e della difesa (ASD), tramite i cosiddetti «Common Industry Standards» (CIS — Principi comuni). Tale codice di condotta volontario si basa sulle norme anticorruzione incorporate nella normativa nazionale di attuazione della convenzione dell'OCSE del 1997 ed è stato finora adottato da oltre 400 imprese europee del settore aerospaziale e della difesa.

La proposta di direttiva riguardante la comunicazione di informazioni di carattere non finanziario e di informazioni sulla diversità da parte di talune società e di taluni gruppi di grandi dimensioni (COM/2013/0207), per la quale il Parlamento europeo ha adottato la propria posizione in prima lettura il 15 aprile 2014, è applicabile ai grandi enti di interesse pubblico con oltre 500 dipendenti. In base alla direttiva tali imprese avranno l'obbligo di comunicare informazioni sulle politiche seguite, sui rischi e sui risultati ottenuti per quanto riguarda le questioni ambientali, sociali e attinenti al personale, il rispetto dei diritti umani, la lotta contro la corruzione attiva e passiva e la diversità nella composizione del proprio consiglio di amministrazione.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004287/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) and Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Transparency of the defence industry

The board of directors of a well-known Italian industrial group that is particularly active in the high-tech and defence sectors has, over the past few days, examined the report of an ad-hoc committee set up on 15 April 2013, which was tasked with identifying any measures and actions that could further raise the principles and ethical standards that the group follows whenever it conducts business. The committee in particular advised the board of directors to draw up an anti-corruption and integrity code and have it supervised by an independent body, to continue bolstering its internal audit procedures, and to introduce a systematic training programme for all its staff working in its sectors of interest that were most exposed to risk.

The defence and weapons industry is in fact often regarded as having low levels of transparency, which means that initiatives such as the one described above can only be welcomed.

In light of the above, can the Commission indicate whether any other initiatives have been launched on a European scale to improve the governance and transparency of companies operating in this sector, especially major corporations and large industrial groups?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(6 June 2014)

A European initiative regarding transparency and governance in the defence sector that the Commission is aware of concerns the prevention of corruption and business integrity. This initiative has been developed by the aerospace and defence industry sector represented in the AeroSpace and Defence Industries Association of Europe (ASD) through the so-called Common Industry Standards (CIS). This voluntary code of conduct is based on anti-corruption rules embedded in national legislation implementing the 1997 OECD Convention and until now has been adopted by more than 400 European companies in the aerospace and defence sectors.

The proposed Directive on disclosure of non-financial and diversity information by certain large companies and groups (COM/2013/0207), for which the European Parliament adopted its first reading on 15 April 2014, is applicable to large public-interest entities with more than 500 employees. It will require such companies to disclose information on policies, risks and outcomes as regards environmental matters, social and employee-related aspects, respect for human rights, anti-corruption and bribery issues, and diversity in their board of directors.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-004291/14
aan de Commissie
Laurence J. A. J. Stassen (NI)
(7 april 2014)

Betreft: Huisideoloog Erdoğan: „Turkse integratie in EU is onaanvaardbaar" (vervolgvraag)

Hayrettin Karaman is de huisideoloog van de Turkse premier Erdoğan en diens AK-partij. Op 13 februari 2014 heeft Karaman in zijn column geschreven: „Vrome moslims kunnen een integratie van Turkije in de EU niet aanvaarden. Het verzet tegen alles wat christelijk-westers is, is voor ons een geloofspunt ([1])." Op 4 april 2014 heeft de heer Füle namens de Commissie antwoord gegeven op schriftelijke vraag E-002112/2014 over voornoemde uitlatingen van Karaman. Daarin schrijft de heer Füle afwimpelend: „De Commissie wenst niet te reageren op elke verklaring die in de pers wordt gepubliceerd."

1. Hoe verklaart de Commissie het dat zij „niet op elke verklaring die in de pers wordt gepubliceerd wenst te reageren"? Wanneer reageert zij wél en wanneer reageert zij níet? Impliceert de Commissie dat een door haar al dan niet te geven reactie afhangt van de inhoud van de betreffende verklaring (die haar mogelijk onwelgevallig is)? Zo neen, waarom wenst de Commissie dan niet op de uitlatingen van Karaman te reageren?

2. Trekt de Commissie de authenticiteit van de (vermeende) uitlatingen van Karaman in twijfel? Zo neen, zijn de betreffende uitlatingen dan te pijnlijk voor de Commissie, omdat deze niet stroken met haar geliefde „Turkijeproject"?

Voorts schrijft de heer Füle: „De Commissie heeft er nota van genomen dat premier Erdoğan nogmaals zijn engagement voor het toetredingsproces heeft bevestigd tijdens zijn bezoek aan Brussel […]."

3. Is de Commissie zich ervan bewust dat — afgezien van Erdoğans in Brussel zogenaamd bevestigde „engagement voor het toetredingsproces" — andere uitspraken van Erdoğan (zie bijvoorbeeld E-009929/2013, E-010872/2012 en E-001041/2013) en betreurenswaardige ontwikkelingen in Turkije (zie bijvoorbeeld E-002724/2014, E-000040/2014, E-011263/2013, E-010834/2013 en E-010763/2013) erop wijzen dat Turkije allesbehalve tot de EU wenst toe te treden? Waarom sluit de Commissie haar ogen voor de realiteit en blijft zij in haar eigen naïviteit geloven?

4. Waarop baseert de Commissie zich als zij impliceert dat zij Erdoğan klaarblijkelijk volledig op zijn woord kan geloven — wetende dat uitspraken van Karaman, nota bene zijn eigen huisideoloog, in schril contrast staan met Erdoğans zogenaamde „engagement voor het toetredingsproces" waarop de Commissie zich in dezen beroept?

Antwoord van de heer Füle namens de Commissie
(16 juni 2014)

Na nota te hebben genomen van de bijkomende punten die het geachte Parlementslid aanhaalt, is de Commisie van mening dat haar antwoord op vraag E-002112/2014 ([2]) geldig blijft.

De Commissie volgt de ontwikkelingen in Turkije en stelt haar gedetailleerde beoordeling voor in de vorm van een jaarlijks voortgangsverslag. Indien er zich belangrijke ontwikkelingen voordoen, reageert de Commissie op een ad-hocbasis en in het licht van de toetredingscriteria, en geeft hierbij zowel positieve als negatieve kritiek wanneer deze gerechtvaardigd is.

Wat betreft de ontwikkelingen waarnaar het geachte Parlementslid verwijst, heeft de Commissie zich reeds herhaaldelijk en via verschillende fora uitgesproken over de vrijheid van meningsuiting, de vrijheid van de media, de vrijheid van vereniging en de rechtsstaat in Turkije.

([1]) http://yenisafak.com.tr/yazarlar/HayrettinKaraman/dostlugun-ve-desteklemenin-sarti/50283.
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/nl/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004291/14
to the Commission
Laurence J.A.J. Stassen (NI)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Prime Minister Erdoğan's ideologue says that the integration of Turkey with the EU is unacceptable (follow-up question)

Hayrettin Karaman, the ideologue selected by Prime Minister Erdoğan and his AK Party, wrote in his column on 13 February 2014 that 'pious Muslims cannot accept the integration of Turkey with the European Union and that opposition to all Christian and Western values are a matter of belief' ([1]). On 4 April 2014, in answer to Written Question E-002112/2014 regarding Mr Karaman's utterances, Commissioner Füle dismissively stated that 'The Commission does not wish to react to each and every statement published in the press'.

1. What does the Commission mean by saying that it 'does not wish to react to each and every statement published in the press'? When does it react and when does it not? Is the Commission implying that its reaction or absence thereof depends on the substance of the statement (which it may not like)? If not, why is the Commission refusing to react to the utterances by Mr Karaman?

2. Does the Commission doubt the authenticity of the (alleged) utterances by Mr Karaman? If not, is it simply that they do not sit well with the Commission or its cherished 'Turkish accession' project?

Mr Füle goes on to state 'The Commission noted the commitment to the accession process which Prime Minister Erdoğan confirmed once more during his visit to Brussels …'.

3. Is the Commission aware that, aside from Mr Erdoğan's confirmed 'commitment to the accession process in Brussels', he has issued other statements (questions for written answer E-009929/2013, E-010872/2012 and E-001041/2013) that are anything but enthusiastic about EU membership, as confirmed by other regrettable developments in Turkey (questions for written answer E-002724/2014, E-000040/2014, E-011263/2013, E-010834/2013 and E-010763/2013). Why is the Commission naively continuing to bury its head in the sand?

4. What are the Commission's grounds for assuming that it can blithely take Mr Erdoğan at his word, given that the utterances by Mr Karaman, his own ideologue, are in stark contrast to Mr Erdoğan's so-called 'commitment to the accession process' referred to by the Commission here?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(16 June 2014)

Having taken note of the additional points raised by the Honourable Member, the Commission confirms that its answer to Question E-002112/2014 ([2]) is still valid.

The Commission monitors developments in Turkey and presents its detailed assessment in an annual Progress Report. In case of significant developments, the Commission reacts on an ad hoc basis in the light of the criteria for accession, giving credit where credit is due and raising concerns when justified.

As regards the developments referred to by the Honourable Member, the Commission has expressed repeatedly in different fora its opinion on the situation of freedom of expression and freedom of the media, freedom of assembly, and the rule of law in Turkey.

([1]) http://yenisafak.com.tr/yazarlar/HayrettinKaraman/dostlugun-ve-desteklemenin-sarti/50283
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-004292/14
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) e Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(7 de abril de 2014)

Assunto: Rendas excessivas — Contratos Aquisição de Eletricidade/Custos de Manutenção do Equilíbrio Contratual (CAE/CMEC)

Na resposta, dada por Joaquín Almunia em nome da Comissão, à pergunta CAE/CMEC (E-000589/2014, 24.3.2014), afirma-se: «a Comissão não encontrou qualquer indício de uma utilização abusiva dos auxílios nem de lucros excessivos resultantes da implementação da medida» (medida = decisão da CE que autorizou CAE/CMEC).

1. Como é isto conciliável com a posição da Troica e, logo, da CE, que, de cada vez que faz um exame da aplicação do Pacto de Agressão, dito Memorando de Entendimento, fala em «rendas excessivas» das empresas produtoras de energia elétrica?

2. Quanto à informação analisada para a reavaliação do sistema, levantada pela denúncia registada no processo SA.35429, teve a Comissão em conta o estudo externo pedido pelo Governo português à Universidade de Cambridge e os documentos referentes aos cortes nos CAE/CMEC pelo Estado, resultantes desse mesmo estudo, que confirma as «rendas excessivas»?

Resposta dada por Joaquín Almunia em nome da Comissão
(5 de junho de 2014)

Para a avaliação da queixa recebida pela Comissão em 2012, e registada no processo SA. 35429, a Comissão teve em conta todas as informações de que dispunha nesse momento.

Como já foi indicado anteriormente, a Comissão não encontrou qualquer indício de uma utilização abusiva dos auxílios, nem de lucros excessivos resultantes da implementação da medida. As receitas obtidas pelas empresas de eletricidade dos CAE/CMEC são apenas um dos elementos que determinam os lucros dessas empresas. O nível de lucro é influenciado, em larga medida, por outras receitas e pelos custos globais destas empresas.

A Comissão aprova medidas de auxílio notificadas pelos Estados-Membros, com base numa avaliação *ex ante*. Pode acontecer por vezes que, devido a circunstâncias económicas diferentes das que estavam previstas, os efeitos da medida de auxílio sejam diferentes do esperado mesmo quando ela é corretamente implementada. Os Estados-Membros são obrigados a verificar os efeitos das medidas de auxílio e a fazer ajustamentos, se necessário (por exemplo, quando se verifica um risco de sobrecompensação). Se a Comissão tiver conhecimento de que uma medida de auxílio aprovada conduz a uma sobrecompensação, pode solicitar ao Estado-Membro que ajuste a medida de auxílio existente.

No caso em apreço, com base nas informações disponíveis, a Comissão concluiu que Portugal aplicou corretamente a medida de auxílio aprovada. Além disso, acompanhou a execução, e considerou a adoção de medidas de ajustamento, como se pode ver nas informações facultadas pelo Senhor Deputado (por exemplo, o Governo português fez ajustamentos com base no estudo elaborado pela Universidade de Cambridge).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004292/14
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) and Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Excessive profits — Power Purchase Agreements/Costs for the Maintenance of Contractual Equilibrium (PPAs/CMECs)

The answer given by Joaquin Almunia on behalf of the Commission to the question on PPAs/CMECs (E-000589/2014, 24.3.2014) states that 'the Commission has not found any indication of misuse of aid, and no indication of excessive profits being generated as a result of implementation of the approved measure' (this measure being the Commission decision authorising PPAs/CMECs).

1. How can this be reconciled with the position consistently taken by the Troika, and hence by the Commission, in their assessments of the implementation of the Aggression Pact known as the memorandum of understanding, all of which refer to 'excessive profits' made by electricity companies?

2. With regard to the information analysed with a view to re-assessing the system following the complaint registered under case SA.35429, did the Commission take account of the external study drawn up for the Portuguese Government by Cambridge University, and the documents relating to cuts to PPAs/CMECs made by the government as a result of this study, which confirmed the 'excessive profits'?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(5 June 2014)

For the assessment of the complaint received by the Commission in 2012, and registered under case SA.35429, the Commission has taken into account all the information available to it at that stage.

As previously indicated, the Commission has not found any indication of misuse of aid, and no indication of excessive profits being generated as a result of implementation of the approved measure. The revenues obtained by the electricity companies from the PPAs/CMECs are only one of the elements determining the profits of these companies. The level of profit is largely influenced by other revenues and by the overall costs of these companies.

The Commission approves aid measures notified by Member States based on an *ex ante* assessment. It can sometimes happen that due to economic circumstances different from those anticipated, the effects of the aid measure turn out differently than expected, even when correctly implemented. Member States are obliged to monitor the effects of the aid measures and make adjustments if necessary (e.g. when a risk of overcompensation is perceived). If the Commission becomes aware that an approved aid measure leads to overcompensation, it can request the Member State to adjust the existing aid measure.

In the case at hand, based on the information available, the Commission concluded that Portugal implemented correctly the approved aid measure. Moreover, it monitored the implementation, and considered adopting adjustment measures, as can be seen from the information provided by the Honourable Members (e.g. the Portuguese Government made adjustments based on the study drawn up by Cambridge University).

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-004295/14
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(7 Απριλίου 2014)

Θέμα: Έρευνες OLAF στην Ελλάδα

Σύμφωνα με δημοσιογραφικές πληροφορίες (ΒΗΜΑ, 23.3.2014), που η εφημερίδα χαρακτηρίζει ως αποκλειστικές, κλιμάκιο της OLAF παρέμεινε για 2 μήνες στην Ελλάδα, διερευνώντας εις βάθος τον αναπτυξιακό νόμο, τη χορήγηση ευρωπαϊκών επιδοτήσεων και το καθεστώς των κρατικών ενισχύσεων για τα τελευταία 15 χρόνια σε μια σειρά υπό ιδιωτικοποίηση δημόσιων επιχειρήσεων, όπως ΛΑΡΚΟ, ΕΛΤΑ, ΔΕΗ, ΕΛΒΟ, ΕΑΣ. Είχαν μάλιστα προηγηθεί επισκέψεις κλιμακίων των Γενικών Διευθύνσεων Ανταγωνισμού και Περιφερειών, υπαγόμενα απ' ευθείας στον πρόεδρο της Επιτροπής, που έλεγξαν εξονυχιστικά «ολόκληρο το φάσμα της εφαρμογής των συνδεδεμένων με την ΕΕ πράξεων περί επιδοτήσεων και κρατικών ενισχύσεων». Η εφημερίδα τονίζει ότι κυβερνητικές πηγές, που δεν κατονομάζει, καταλογίζουν ευθύνες στον Αντιπρόεδρο της Επιτροπής και αρμόδιο Επίτροπο για τον Ανταγωνισμό, για τον έλεγχο των κρατικών ενισχύσεων στις υπό ιδιωτικοποίηση ΔΕΚΟ, δεδομένου ότι «η Ελλάδα εγκαλείται για καθυστερήσεις στις αποκρατικοποιήσεις οι οποίες όμως οφείλονται στις ίδιες τις αυτεπάγγελτες παρεμβάσεις των κοινοτικών Αρχών που παγώνουν το όποιο επενδυτικό ενδιαφέρον».

Οι «κυβερνητικές πηγές» υποστηρίζουν ότι πίσω από τις πρωτοβουλίες αυτές της Επιτροπής διακρίνουν «δυσπιστία» εις βάρος της Ελλάδας αλλά και την «επιδίωξη μερίδας των δανειστών να συνεχίσουν τον ασφυκτικό έλεγχο της Ελλάδας με διαφορετικό τρόπο», αφού με τον εντοπισμό συστημικού προβλήματος στην κατανομή των κοινοτικών κονδυλίων, οι ευρωπαϊκοί πόροι θεωρούνται de facto ανακτήσιμοι. Ερμηνεύουν μάλιστα τις έρευνες αυτές, ως «έναν ακόμη μοχλό πίεσης προκειμένου η Ελλάδα να παραμείνει στον ορθό δρόμο των μεταρρυθμίσεων που θέλουν οι πιστωτές», καθώς επίσης, ότι οι έλεγχοι αυτοί εξυπηρετούν άλλες επιδιώξεις και συμφέροντα, αφού όλες οι υποτιθέμενες εσφαλμένες πράξεις έγιναν εις γνώση και με την έγκριση των εκάστοτε αρμόδιων Επιτρόπων.

Ανεξάρτητα από τη γνώμη που κάποιος έχει για την ιδιωτικοποίηση των ΔΕΚΟ, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Μπορεί να βεβαιώσει ότι γίνονται έρευνες σε βάρος των υπό ιδιωτικοποίηση εταιριών; Ποια είναι τα στοιχεία που την ώθησαν να προχωρήσει σε αυτό τον εξονυχιστικό έλεγχο; Σε ποια άλλα κράτη μέλη έχουν γίνει ανάλογης έντασης και χρονικής έκτασης (15 ετών) έλεγχοι;

2. Πώς θα πείσει τον ελληνικό λαό ότι οι έλεγχοι αυτοί και μάλιστα σε βάθος 15ετίας, δεν αποσκοπούν στη συνέχιση του ασφυκτικού ελέγχου της Ελλάδας με διαφορετικό τρόπο, ακόμα και μετά το τέλος του Μνημονίου;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(13 Ιουνίου 2014)

Όλα τα κράτη μέλη πρέπει να συμμορφώνονται με τις διατάξεις της Συνθήκης σχετικά με τις κρατικές ενισχύσεις, ανεξαρτήτως εάν ακολουθούν πρόγραμμα οικονομικής προσαρμογής. Στο πλαίσιο αυτό, υπάρχουν δύο εταιρείες που συμμετείχαν στη διαδικασία ιδιωτικοποίησης στην Ελλάδα και αποτέλεσαν αντικείμενο επίσημης διαδικασίας έρευνας κρατικών ενισχύσεων, ήτοι η Γενική Μεταλλευτική και Μεταλλουργική ΑΕ «ΛΑΡΚΟ» και τα Ελληνικά Αμυντικά Συστήματα ΑΕ. Ως προς τις λοιπές αναφερόμενες εταιρίες (ΕΛΤΑ, ΕΛΒΟ, ΔΕΗ), τυχόν ανακύπτοντα ζητήματα κρατικής ενίσχυσης αποτελούν αντικείμενο ανταλλαγών μεταξύ των υπηρεσιών της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής και των ελληνικών αρχών, σύμφωνα με τους διαδικαστικούς κανόνες που διέπουν τις κρατικές ενισχύσεις.

Η Επιτροπή εφαρμόζει τις διατάξεις της Συνθήκης για τις κρατικές ενισχύσεις κατά τον ίδιο τρόπο σε όλα τα κράτη μέλη. Επιπλέον, η αποσαφήνιση ζητημάτων κρατικής ενίσχυσης συνιστά κομβικό στοιχείο για την εξασφάλιση βεβαιότητας στη διαδικασία ιδιωτικοποίησης.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004295/14
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: OLAF investigations in Greece

According to an 'exclusive' press report published in To VIMA on 23 March 2014, an OLAF team spent two months in Greece thoroughly investigating the development law, the granting of EU subsidies and the arrangements governing state aid over the last 15 years in connection with a series of public enterprises undergoing privatisation, such as LARKO, ELTA, PPC, ELVO and EAS. These investigations had been preceded by visits by Competition and Regional Policy DG teams, which were directly answerable to the Commission President and which had meticulously checked the way in which the entire range of EU-related subsidies and state aid had been implemented. The newspaper points out that unnamed government sources blame the Commission Vice-President and Competition Commissioner for the controls being carried out on state aid to public utility enterprises undergoing privatisation: Greece is the subject of legal proceedings for delays in the process of privatisation which are in fact due to interventions by Community authorities which are deterring potential investors.

The abovementioned 'government sources' claim that these Commission initiatives are motivated by a lack of trust in Greece and the desire of a portion of the country's creditors to continue their asphyxiating controls on Greece by different means, as the identification of a systemic problem in the distribution of Community funds would mean that these funds could in practice be recovered. They thus interpret these investigations as another way of putting pressure on Greece to continue faithfully to implement the reforms sought by the creditors and believe that these controls serve other aims and interests, since all the supposed irregularities in fact took place with the knowledge and the approval of the relevant Commissioners.

Whatever one may think about the privatisation of the public utility enterprises, will the Commission say:

1. Can it confirm that investigations are being carried out into the companies undergoing privatisation? What prompted it to undertake these checks? In which other Member States have such intense checks been carried out covering such a long period of time (15 years)?

2. How will it be able to convince the Greek people that these checks covering a period of 15 years are not being carried out in order to be able to continue the asphyxiating controls on Greece by different means after the end of the MoU?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(13 June 2014)

All Member States must comply with the provisions of the Treaty regarding state aid, irrespective of whether they are under an economic adjustment programme. In this context, there are two companies involved in the privatisation process in Greece which have been concerned by a formal state aid investigation, namely Larco General Mining and Metallurgical Company S.A. and Hellenic Defence Systems S.A. As for the other companies mentioned (ELTA, ELVO, PPC), any state aid issues that have been raised have been the subject of exchanges between the European Commission services and the Greek authorities, in line with the procedural rules concerning state aid.

The Commission applies the Treaty provisions on state aid equally to all Member States. Moreover, the clarification of any state aid issues is key for ensuring certainity in the privatisation process.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-004304/14
an die Kommission
Hiltrud Breyer (Verts/ALE)
(7. April 2014)

Betrifft: Gefahr für die Demokratie durch Investitionsschutzbestimmungen im TTIP

Mehrere Mitgliedstaaten werden seit der Finanzkrise von Investoren auf der Grundlage des Investitionsschutzes auf Millionenbeträge verklagt. Dazu gehören Zypern, das von der Marfin Investment Group auf 823 Mio. EUR , und auch Spanien, das von 22 Firmen und Hedgefonds auf mehr als 700 Mio. EUR verklagt wird, wobei bei erfolgreicher Klage der Steuerzahler aufkommen muss.

1. Wie erklärt die Kommission, dass trotz hoher finanzieller Risiken für die Staaten und guter Rechtssysteme jeweils in den USA und der EU im TTIP bisher an einem Investitionsschutz festgehalten wird?

2. Erkennt die Kommission die Gefahr für die Demokratie, die sich aus dem Investitionsschutz im TTIP ergibt?

Antwort von Herrn De Gucht im Namen der Kommission
(11. Juni 2014)

Die Kommission weist die Frau Abgeordnete auf die Antworten E-306/14, E-13215/13 und E-13048/13 hin.

Die Investitionsbestimmungen, die die EU in der Transatlantischen Handels- und Investitionspartnerschaft (Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, TTIP) aushandeln möchte, betreffen grundlegende Prinzipien im Zusammenhang mit Nichtdiskriminierung, ordnungsgemäßen Verfahren, Fairness und Entschädigungen bei unrechtmäßigen Enteignungen. Diese Prinzipien sind Teil der Verfassungstradition aller EU-Mitgliedstaaten und stellen keinerlei Gefahr für die Demokratie dar.

Nach der Praxis der EU und der USA lassen sich in Freihandelsabkommen enthaltene Investitionsschutzstandards nicht unmittelbar vor heimischen Gerichten durchsetzen; deshalb muss im Abkommen selbst ein Durchsetzungsmechanisums verankert werden.

Die EU verfolgt mit ihrem Investitionsschutzansatz das Ziel, hohe Schutzstandards aufrechtzuerhalten, gleichzeitig aber die Mängel des bestehenden Systems zu beheben. EU-Abkommen, und so auch das TTIP-Abkommen, werden Sicherheitsklauseln enthalten, die gewährleisten, dass die Möglichkeiten der Staaten, Regelungen im öffentlichen Interesse zu treffen, nicht beschnitten werden. In den EU-Abkommen wird der Wortlaut der Schutzstandards präzisiert, so dass sie nicht willkürlich ausgelegt werden können. Ferner wird darin das Regelungsrecht der Staaten ausdrücklich bekräftigt und es werden Ausnahmen vom Investitionsschutz vorgesehen, die auch für Maßnahmen in Krisenzeiten gelten. In der öffentlichen Konsultation, die die Kommission zum Thema Investitionsschutz und Investor-Staat-Streitbeilegung im TTIP-Abkommen eingeleitet hat, haben wir darüber hinaus erläutert, wie die Sicherheitsmaßnahmen funktionieren werden. Außerdem haben wir zur Veranschaulichung den Wortlaut der Bestimmungen aus den Verhandlungen zwischen der EU und Kanada vorgelegt.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004304/14
to the Commission
Hiltrud Breyer (Verts/ALE)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Democracy under threat from investment protection provisions in TTIP

Several Member States have been sued by investors because of investment protection running into millions of euros since the beginning of the financial crisis. They include Cyprus, which is being sued for EUR 823 million by the Marfin Investment Group, and Spain, which is being sued by 22 companies and hedge funds for more than EUR 700 million. If the suits are successful, it is the taxpayers who will have to pay up.

1. How does the Commission explain the situation whereby, in spite of high financial risks for the countries involved and good legal systems in the USA and the EU, the TTIP still includes investment protection?

2. Does the Commission acknowledge the threat to democracy which results from investment protection in the TTIP?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(11 June 2014)

The Commission refers the honourable member to replies E-306/14, E-13215/13 and E-13048/13.

The investment provisions that the EU seeks to negotiate in the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) concern fundamental principles, relating to non-discrimination, due process, fairness, and compensation for unlawful expropriations. Those principles are common to the constitutional traditions of all EU Member States and do not pose any threat to democracy.

Under EU and US practice, investment protection standards incorporated into free trade agreements are not directly enforceable before domestic courts; hence an enforcement mechanism has to be in place under the agreement itself.

The EU's approach to investment protection aims at maintaining high standards of protection while addressing the shortcomings of the existing system. EU agreements, including TTIP, will be endowed with the necessary safeguards to ensure that the States' capacity to regulate in the public interest is not compromised. EU agreements will clarify the language of the standards so that they are not subject to arbitrary interpretations, will explicitly confirm the right of States to regulate and will provide exceptions to protection, including for measures taken in times of crisis. In the public consultation launched by the Commission on investment protection and Investor-state dispute settlement in TTIP, we also explained how these safeguards will work and we included, as examples, the text of the provisions developed in the EU-Canada negotiations.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-004305/14
adresată Comisiei
Daciana Octavia Sârbu (S&D)
(7 aprilie 2014)

Subiect: Infrastructura ecologică
Organizația Mondială a Sănătății raportează că șapte milioane de persoane au murit în 2012 ca urmare a expunerii la poluarea atmosferică ([1]).

Una din modalitățile de combatere a poluării atmosferice o reprezintă infrastructura ecologică, infrastructură care asigură purificarea aerului și o varietate de alte servicii ecologice, precum și beneficii legate de sănătate.

În Comunicarea sa din 6 mai 2013 privind infrastructurile ecologice (COM(2013)0249, Comisia s-a angajat:

1. să înființeze până în 2014 un mecanism de finanțare al UE pentru a sprijini persoanele care vor se dezvolte proiecte de infrastructură ecologică și

2. să elaboreze orientări tehnice privind modul în care infrastructurile ecologice vor fi integrate în politicile regionale, de coeziune, cele din domeniul schimbărilor climatice și al mediului.

Dată fiind nevoia urgentă de a combate poluarea atmosferică, ar putea Comisia să prezinte progresele înregistrate în direcția obiectivelor menționate mai sus și să precizeze termenul la care se așteaptă a fi îndeplinite?

Răspuns dat de dl Potočnik în numele Comisiei
(2 iunie 2014)

Noul instrument LIFE ([2]) oferă noi oportunități pentru finanțarea proiectelor de infrastructură ecologică, atât prin intermediul granturilor tradiționale, cât și prin intermediul unui instrument financiar specific: Mecanismul de finanțare a capitalului natural (MFCN). În conformitate cu acțiunile prevăzute în strategia privind infrastructura ecologică, MFCN va finanța, prin acordarea de împrumuturi și prin intermediul instrumentelor de capital, proiecte precum infrastructura ecologică, care promovează conservarea capitalului natural și care generează venituri sau economii. MFCN va fi gestionat de către Banca Europeană de Investiții și se estimează că primele proiecte vor fi finanțate spre sfârșitul anului 2014.

Comisia a publicat orientări tehnice ([3]) privind modul în care infrastructura ecologică va fi integrată și finanțată în cadrul politicii regionale și de coeziune și al politicii în domeniul apei și inundațiilor. De asemenea, vor fi publicate orientări cu privire la politicile în domeniul agriculturii și cele de adaptare la schimbările climatice. Toate documentele vor evidenția beneficiile infrastructurii verzi în ce ceea privește calitatea aerului, dacă va fi cazul.

([1]) http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2014/air-pollution/en/
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/about/
([3]) Toate informațiile sunt disponibile pe următoarele pagini web: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/ecosystems/index_en.htm și http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/ecosystems/background.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004305/14
to the Commission
Daciana Octavia Sârbu (S&D)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Green infrastructure

The World Health Organisation reports that 7 million people died in 2012 as a result of exposure to air pollution ([1]).

One of the ways to combat air pollution is through green infrastructure, which provides natural air purification and a variety of other eco-services and health benefits.

In its communication of 6 May 2013 on green infrastructure (COM(2013)0249), the Commission undertook to:

1. set up an EU financing facility by 2014 to support people seeking to develop GI projects and;

2. develop technical guidance setting out how green infrastructure will be integrated into regional, cohesion, climate change and environmental policies.

Given the urgent need to combat air pollution, can the Commission outline what progress has been made towards the abovementioned goals and say when they are expected to be achieved?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(2 June 2014)

The new LIFE instrument ([2]) provides new opportunities for financing green infrastructure projects, both through traditional grants and through a dedicated financial instrument: the Natural Capital Financing Facility (NCFF). In line with the actions spelt out in the Green Infrastructure Strategy, the NCFF will finance, through loans and equity instruments, projects such as green infrastructure, which promote the preservation of natural capital and are revenue-generating or cost-saving. The NCFF will be managed by the European Investment Bank and the first projects are expected to be financed towards the end of 2014.

The Commission has published technical guidance ([3]) on how green infrastructure will be integrated into, and financed in, regional, cohesion, water and flood policies. Guidance will also be provided on agriculture and climate change adaptation policies. All documents will highlight the air quality benefits of green infrastructure where relevant.

([1]) http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2014/air-pollution/en/
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/about/
([3]) All information is available on http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/ecosystems/index_en.htm and on http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/ecosystems/background.htm

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-004306/14
lill-Kummissjoni
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(7 ta' April 2014)

Suġġett: Ħaddiema fl-UE li għandhom bejn il-55 u l-64 sena

L-Aġenda ta' Lisbona tiddefinixxi "ħaddiem kbir fl-età" bħala kwalunkwe persuna b'età tax-xogħol ta' bejn il-55 u l-64 sena. Fl-2012, ir-rata ta' impjieg fl-Unjoni Ewropea għal persuni ta' bejn il-55 u l-64 sena kienet anqas minn 50 %. Din it-tendenza tista' tirriżulta minn numru ta' fatturi bħal pereżempju ħiliet u kwalifiki li m'għadhomx validi, l-attitudnijiet ta' min iħaddem lejn ħaddiema kbar fl-età, diffikultajiet rigward ir-rikonċiljazzjoni bejn ix-xogħol u l-familja, u problemi tas-saħħa.

Fatturi bħal tixjiħ tal-popolazzjoni, kundizzjonijiet tax-xogħol li jinbidlu, inċentivi għal irtirar bikri, il-kriżi finanzjarja u bidliet fix-xejriet tal-produzzjoni, kif ukoll id-domanda għaż-żieda fil-kompetittività, jitolbu azzjoni aktar b'saħħitha sabiex il-ħaddiema kbar fl-età ikunu jistgħu jibqgħu attivi fis-suq tax-xogħol, anke meta jkunu jixtiequ jagħmlu dan wara l-età tal-irtirar. Forza tax-xogħol akbar fl-età u ħajjiet tax-xogħol itwal jistgħu jikkontribwixxu b'mod pożittiv għall-irkupru u għat-tkabbir fil-futur.

1. Il-Kummissjoni tista' tipprovdi statistika aktar reċenti dwar in-numru ta' persuni bejn il-55 u l-64 sena li għandhom impjieg bi ħlas, maqsuma skont il-ġeneru u l-Istat Membru?

2. Waħda mill-problemi ewlenin li tostakola lill-ħaddiema kbar fl-età milli jkollhom impjieg bi ħlas huwa l-fatt li l-ħiliet u l-kwalifiki tagħhom jistgħu ma jkunux għadhom validi. Il-Kummissjoni liema strateġiji qed timplimenta sabiex tippromwovi t-tagħlim tul il-ħajja fl-UE-28, biex b'ħekk dawn in-nies ikunu jistgħu jaġġornaw il-ħiliet tagħhom jew jiksbu kwalifiki ġodda?

3. Il-Kummissjoni x'qed tagħmel biex tiġġieled id-diskriminazzjoni fuq bażi ta' età kontra ħaddiema mdaħħlin aktar fiż-żmien?

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-004703/14
lill-Kummissjoni
Roberta Metsola (PPE)
(15 ta' April 2014)

Suġġett: Programmi ta' impjieg għall-ħaddiema li huma mdaħħla fl-età

Li żżid ir-rata ta' mpjieg tal-ħaddiema mdaħħla fl-età hija waħda mill-għanijiet strateġiċi tal-UE.

Tista' l-Kummissjoni tagħti tagħrif dwar il-programmi ta' impjieg li hemm disponibbli għall-ħaddiema mdaħħla fl-età, u dwar jekk dawn il-programmi huma jew mhumiex ta' għajnuna?

Tweġiba konġunta mogħtija mis-Sur Andor f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(3 ta' Ġunju 2014)

1. Id-dejta armonizzata tkun disponibbli fil-websajt tal-Eurostat taħt "Stħarriġ dwar il-forza tax-xogħol tal-UE" ([1]). Fl-2012 ir-rata ta' impjieg tal-irġiel li għandhom bejn il-55 u l-64 sena kienet ta' 56,3 % u dik tan-nisa 41,7 %. Fl-aħħar tliet xhur tal-2013, ir-rata tal-impjieg tal-irġiel li għandhom bejn il-55 u l-64 sena kienet telgħet għal 58,3 % madwar l-UE b'mod ġenerali, u 44,0 % għan-nisa. Hemm differenzi qawwijin fost l-Istati Membri, b'rata ta' impjieg ta' 77,6 % għall-irġiel fl-Isvezja, iżda 41,9 % fil-Kroazja; u b'rata ta' impjieg ta' 74,5 % għan-nisa fl-Isvezja u 17,8 % f'Malta.

2. L-istrateġija Ewropa 2020 tirrikonoxxi li l-mira ta' rata ta' impjieg ta' 75 % tista' tintlaħaq biss billi, fost l-oħrajn, ir-rata tal-impjieg ta' nies aktar imdaħħlin fiż-żmien tiżdied, filwaqt li l-Linji Gwida tal-Impjieg jiddikjaraw li t-tagħlim tul il-ħajja għandu jiffoka fost l-oħrajn fuq "it-titjib tal-impjegabbiltà ta' ħaddiema aktar imdaħħlin fiż-żmien".

Aktar speċifikament, ir-Rakkomandazzjonijiet Speċifiċi għall-Pajjiżi tal-2013 jindirizzaw il-kwistjoni tal-impjegabbiltà ta' persuni mdaħħlin fiż-żmien għal bosta Stati Membri (jiġifieri AT, BE, BG, CZ, FI, FR, LT, LU, MT, NL, PL, RO). L-Istħarriġ Annwali dwar it-Tkabbir tal-2014 jenfasizza li ħajjiet tax-xogħol aktar twal u aktar sodisfaċenti jeħtieġu ħiliet adegwati u tagħlim tul il-ħajja, u ambjenti tax-xogħol li jippermettu din il-possibbiltà.

3. Id-Direttiva 2000/78/KE tipprojbixxi d-diskriminazzjoni abbażi tal-età fl-impjieg u fix-xogħol ([2]).

([1]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/search_database (Table codes lfsq_ergan and lfsa_ergan.).
([2]) Id-Direttiva tal-Kunsill 2000/78/KE tas-27 ta' Novembru 2000 li tistabbilixxi qafas ġenerali għal trattament ugwali fl-impjieg u fuq ix-xogħol, ĠU L 303, 02.12.2000, p. 16.

Id-Direttiva ġiet trasposta fl-Istati Membri kollha. Il-Kummissjoni wettqet skrutinju tal-leġiżlazzjoni tat-traspożizzjoni nazzjonali, għadha għaddejja bis-sorveljanza fl-Istati Membri u tibda proċedimenti ta' ksur meta jkun meħtieġ ([3]).

Ir-rapport reċenti tal-Kummissjoni dwar l-applikazzjoni tad-Direttivi 2000/43/KE u 2000/78/KE ([4]) adottat f'Jannar 2014 jagħmel enfasi speċjali dwar id-diskriminazzjoni relata mal-età.

([3]) Eż. il-każ li nbeda kontra l-Ungerija dwar it-tnaqqis f'daqqa tal-età tal-irtirar obbligatorju għall-imħallfin, il-prosekuturi u n-nutara li rriżulta fis-sentenza tal-Qorti tal-Ġustizzja tal-Unjoni Ewropea tal-6 ta' Novembru 2012 (il-kawża C— 286/12 Il-Kummissjoni v l-Ungerija) fejn instab li kien hemm ksur tal-liġi.

([4]) COM(2014) 2 final u SWD (2014) 5 final (Annessi).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004306/14
to the Commission
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Workers aged 55 to 64 in the EU

The Lisbon Agenda defines an 'older worker' as any person of working age between 55 and 64 years old. In 2012, the employment rate for people aged between 55 and 64 was less than 50% in the European Union. This trend could be the result of a number of factors such as outdated skills and qualifications, employers' attitudes towards older workers, difficulties with reconciling professional and family life, and health problems.

Factors such as population ageing, changing working conditions, incentives for early retirement, the financial crisis and changes in production patterns, as well as demand for increasing competitiveness, call for strong responses to enable older workers to remain active in the labour market, including when they wish to do so beyond retirement age. An older labour force and longer working lives can make a positive contribution to recovery and future growth.

1. Can the Commission provide more recent statistics on the number of people aged between 55 and 64 who are in paid employment, broken down by gender and Member State?

2. One of the major problems which hinders older people from engaging in paid employment is the fact that their skills or qualifications may be outdated. What strategies are being implemented by the Commission to promote lifelong learning in the EU-28, thereby enabling these people to update their skills or gain new qualifications?

3. What is the Commission doing to fight age discrimination against older workers?

Question for written answer E-004703/14
to the Commission
Roberta Metsola (PPE)
(15 April 2014)

Subject: Employment programmes for older workers

Increasing the employment rate of older workers is one of the EU's strategic goals.

Can the Commission provide information on the employment programmes available for older workers, and whether or not they are proving to be helpful?

Joint answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(3 June 2014)

1. Harmonised data are available on the website of Eurostat under the heading 'EU Labour Force Survey' ([1]). In 2012 the employment rate of men between 55 and 64 was 56.3% and that of women 41.7%. In the last quarter of 2013, the employment rate of men between 55 and 64 years had risen to 58.3% in the EU as a whole, and 44.0% for women. There are strong differences across Member States, with an employment rate of 77.6% for men in Sweden, but 41.9% in Croatia; and with an employment rate of 74.5% for women in Sweden and 17.8% in Malta.

2. The Europe 2020 strategy recognises that the 75% employment rate target can only be achieved by raising the employment rate of *inter alia* older people, while the Employment Guidelines state that lifelong learning should focus *inter alia* on 'increasing the employability of older workers'.

More specifically, the 2013 Country Specific Recommendations address the issue of employability of older people for several Member States (i.e. AT, BE, BG, CZ, FI, FR, LT, LU, MT, NL, PL, RO). The 2014 Annual Growth Survey stresses that longer and more fulfilling working lives require adequate skills and lifelong learning, and enabling working environments.

3. Directive 2000/78/EC prohibits discrimination based on age in employment and occupation ([2]).

([1]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/search_database (Table codes lfsq_ergan and lfsa_ergan).
([2]) Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27.11.2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation, OJ L 303, 2.12.2000, p. 16.

The directive has been transposed in all Member States. The Commission has scrutinised the national transposing legislation, continues to monitor developments in the Member States and brings infringement proceedings when necessary ([3]).

The recent Commission report concerning the application of Directives 2000/43/EC and 2000/78/EC ([4]) adopted in January 2014 places a special focus on age discrimination.

([3]) E.g. the case brought against Hungary regarding the sudden lowering of the compulsory retirement age of judges, prosecutors and notaries leading to the judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Union of 6.11.2012 (Case C-286/12 Commission v. Hungary) finding an infringement.

([4]) COM(2014) 2 final and SWD(2014) 5 final (annexes).

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-004307/14
lill-Kummissjoni
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(7 ta' April 2014)

Suġġett: Żwieġ tat-tfal

It-Tlieta 19 ta' Marzu, il-Kumitat għad-Drittijiet tan-Nisa u l-Ugwaljanza bejn is-Sessi u s-Sottokumitat għad-Drittijiet tal-Bniedem organizzaw smigħ pubbliku biex jiddiskutu l-kwistjoni taż-żwieġ tat-tfal, kemm bħala ksur tad-drittijiet tal-bniedem kif ukoll bħala ostaklu għall-iżvilupp.

Fil-pajjiżi li qed jiżviluppaw, huwa stmat li waħda minn kull tliet tfajliet jiġu mġiegħla jiżżewġu qabel ma jagħlqu t-18-il sena, u waħda minn kull disgħa qabel ma jagħlqu l-15-il sena. L-analisti jipproġettaw li jekk it-tendenzi attwali jkomplu, 142 miljun tifla se jiżżewġu qabel ma jsiru adulti f'dan id-deċennju.

Iż-żwieġ tat-tfal huwa ksur tad-drittijiet tal-bniedem u għandu konsegwenzi devastanti għall-iżvilupp tat-tfajliet. It-tfajliet li jiġu mġiegħla jiżżewġu kmieni jiġu miċħuda mill-opportunità li jilħqu l-potenzjal tagħhom peress li jiġu sfurzati jitilqu mill-iskola biex jiffokaw fuq ix-xogħol tad-dar u x'aktarx jinqabdu tqal mingħajr ma jkunu lesti fiżikament jew mentalment.

1. Il-Kummissjoni xi strateġija qed tadotta biex tgħin lit-tfajliet f'pajjiżi li qed jiżviluppaw jittardjaw l-età taż-żwieġ u jinvestu fil-futur tagħhom permezz tal-edukazzjoni?

2. Il-pjan ta' azzjoni tal-UE dwar l-ugwaljanza bejn is-sessi ("EU gender action plan") li ġie adottat fl-2010, jitlob li l-ugwaljanza bejn is-sessi għandu jkun prinċipju jew objettiv sinifikanti għal tal-anqas 75 % tal-proġetti ġodda kollha ffinanzjati mill-UE. Attwalment, hemm biss 14 % tal-proġetti li b'mod konxju jindirizzaw l-ugwaljanza bejn is-sessi. Il-Kummissjoni x'se tagħmel biex tinvesti f'żieda fid-data, diżaggregata skont is-sess, biex tiżgura li din il-mira tintlaħaq?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Piebalgs f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(2 ta' Ġunju 2014)

Sabiex jiġu evitati ż-żwiġijiet tat-tfal, l-UE tħeġġeġ b'mod attiv għal approċċ koerenti biex tipproteġi d-drittijiet tat-tfal abbażi ta' azzjoni sistemika. Id-drittijiet tat-tfal ingħataw prijorità fl-Istrateġiji tal-Pajjiż dwar id-Drittijiet tal-Bniedem f'sittin Delegazzjoni tal-UE madwar id-dinja kollha. Il-Pjan ta' Azzjoni tal-UE fil-Qafas Strateġiku tal-UE dwar id-Drittijiet tal-Bniedem u d-Demokrazija u l-Istrument ta' Kooperazzjoni tal-Iżvilupp ([1]) taw prijorità lil azzjonijiet konkreti li jimmiraw li jwaqqfu prattiki tradizzjonali ta' ħsara u normi soċjali, li jinkludu t-tfal, żwieġ bikri jew sfurzat.

L-Onorevoli Membru se ssib iktar informazzjoni dettaljata fit-tweġiba mogħtija għall-mistoqsija E-3531/2014 ([2]).

L-UE tinsab 'il bogħod milli tilħaq l-għan ta' 75% ta' programmi ġodda li huma mmarkati bħala li jimmiraw b'mod sinifikanti jew prinċipalment l-ugwaljanza bejn is-sessi, iżda l-progress jinsab għaddej. L-aħħar rapport tal-Organizzazzjoni għall-Kooperazzjoni u l-Iżvilupp Ekonomiku OECD dwar l-użu tal-Għodda li Tindika Kwistjonijiet tas-Sessi fl-Għajnuna Uffiċjali għall-Iżvilupp (ODA — dejta tal-2012), jiddikjara li r-rata tal-ipprogrammar konxju tal-ugwaljanza tas-sessi jew iffokat fuq l-ugwaljanza tas-sessi żdied minn 14% għal 21% mill-2010 sal-2012. Dan juri l-effiċjenza tal-istrateġija implimentata mill-UE għal kwistjonijiet ta' integrazzjoni tas-sessi fil-kooperazzjoni ta' żvilupp inklużi: l-implimentazzjoni li tgħaqqad tal-Pjan ta' Azzjoni tal-UE u l-proviżjoni ta' għodod u opportunitajiet ta' taħriġ għall-persunal tagħha kemm fuq livell ta' kwartieri ġenerali u kemm fuq livell lokali. L-isforzi għandhom ikomplu jintegraw l-ugwaljanza bejn is-sessi fil-programmi ta' kooperazzjoni ta' żvilupp ġodda. L-inklużjoni ta' miri speċifiċi relatati mal-ugwaljanza bejn is-sessi u indikaturi diżaggregati skont is-sess ġiet promossa fis-setturi kollha waqt l-eżerċizzju ta' programmar, sabiex jiġi żgurat li l-aspetti tal-ugwaljanza bejn is-sessi jkunu koperti kif xieraq u biex il-monitoraġġ u l-evalwazzjoni tal-progress miksub ikunu possibbli.

([1]) Il-programm dwar il-Beni u l-Isfidi Pubbliċi Globali.
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/fr/parliamentary-questions.html;jsessionid=987EC3257DF4C7A682B41123ABBD3EED.node1.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004307/14
to the Commission
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Child marriage

On Tuesday 19 March, the European Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality and Subcommittee on Human Rights held a public hearing to discuss the issue of child marriage, as both a human rights violation and a barrier to development.

Across developing countries, an estimated one in three girls is married before turning 18, and one in nine before 15. Analysts project that if current trends continue, 142 million girls will marry before adulthood within this decade.

Child marriage is a human rights violation and has devastating consequences for girls' development. Girls who are married young are denied the opportunity to fulfil their potential as they are forced to drop out of school to focus on housework, and are likely to fall pregnant before they are physically or mentally ready.

1. What strategy is the Commission adopting to help girls in developing countries to delay the age of marriage and invest in their future through education?

2. The EU gender action plan which was adopted in 2010, calls for gender to be a principle or significant objective of at least 75% of all new EU-funded projects. At present, only 14% of projects are rated as gender aware. What will the Commission do to invest in increased data, disaggregated by sex, to ensure this target is met?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(2 June 2014)

In order to prevent child marriages, the EU actively advocates for a coherent approach to protect the rights of the child based on a systematic action. Children's rights have been prioritized in the Human Rights Country Strategies in 60 EU Delegations worldwide. The EU Action Plan under the EU Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy and the Development Cooperation Instrument ([1]) have prioritized concrete actions aiming to prevent traditional harmful practices and social norms, encompassing child, early and forced marriage.

The Honourable Member will find more detailed information in the reply provided to the Question E-3531/2014 ([2]).

The EU is far from reaching the 75% objective of new programs being marked as significantly or mainly targeting gender equality, but progresses are on-going. The last Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development OECD report on the use of the Gender Marker in Official Development Assistance (ODA — 2012 data), states that the rate of Commission gender aware or gender focused programming has increased from 14 to 21% from 2010 to 2012. This demonstrates the efficiency of the strategy implemented by the EU to mainstreaming gender issues in its development cooperation including: the binding implementation of the EU Action Plan and the provision of tools and training opportunities for its staff both at Headquarter and field level. Efforts must continue to better integrate gender equality in the new development cooperation programmes. The inclusion of specific gender equality related targets and sex disaggregated indicators has been promoted in all sectors during the programming exercise, to ensure the gender aspects are duly covered and to enable monitoring and evaluation of the progress obtained.

([1]) Global Public Goods and Challenges programme.
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/fr/parliamentary-questions.html;jsessionid=987EC3257DF4C7A682B41123ABBD3EED.node1

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-004308/14
lill-Kummissjoni
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(7 ta' April 2014)

Suġġett: Rati ta' suwiċidji fl-UE-28

Artikolu ppubblikat fit-*Times of Malta* fis-7 ta' April 2014 intitolat "Rata ta' suwiċidju ogħla fost l-irġiel milli n-nisa" ([1]) kkwota figuri riċenti tal-pulizija li juru li kien hemm madwar 26 suwiċidju fis-sena f'Malta f'dawn l-aħħar ħames snin. L-iżgħar vittma ta' suwiċidju kienet ta' 14-il sena u l-ikbar kienet ta' 98 sena. Il-figuri wrew li l-ikbar numru ta' vittmi — 120 minn total ta' 131 bejn l-2009 u l-2013 — kienu rġiel. Din id-differenza bejn is-sessi hi komuni f'pajjiżi oħrajn, u data nazzjonali reċenti fir-Renju Unit uriet li l-irġiel għandhom probabilità tliet darbiet ogħla min-nisa li jikkommettu suwiċidju. Il-kuxjenza dwar is-suwiċidju qed tiżdied wara sensiela ta' suwiċidji fir-Renju Unit marbuta mal-bullying fuq l-internet fuq Ask.fm, netwerk soċjali popolari mal-adoloxxenti. F'Awwissu li għadda, gazzetti rrapportaw ir-rabà mwiet f'sena fir-Renju Unit marbut ma' dan is-sit. F'dak ix-xahar stess, Ask.fm iddikkjara li se jrażżan il-bullying wara li ġie kkritikat bil-qawwa minn kampanji dwar is-sigurtà tat-tfal.

1. Il-Kummissjoni tistà tipprovdi l-aħħar statistiki dwar in-numru ta' suwiċidji fl-UE-28 matul dawn l-aħħar 5 snin, kategorizzati skont is-sess, l-età u l-Istat Membru?

2. Il-Kummissjoni x'qed tagħmel biex tipproteġi lit-tfal u liż-żgħażagħ mill-bullying fuq l-internt?

3. Il-Kummissjoni qed tikkunsidra li tieħu azzjoni, fil-limiti tal-kompetenzi tagħha, kontra s-siti ta' netwerking soċjali li mhumiex irażżnu l-bullying fuq l-internet?

4. Liema strateġija qed tiġi implimentata biex titqajjem kuxjenza dwar is-suwiċidju u biex titneħħa l-istigma soċjali li għadha marbuta ma' din il-problema soċjali?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Borg f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(11 ta' Ġunju 2014)

Il-Kummissjoni Ewropea tiġbor dejta dwar il-kawżi tal-mewt fil-livell tal-UE ([2]). L-għadd ta' mwiet minħabba suwiċidju, skont is-sess u skont l-età, matul il-perjodu 2006-2010, huwa ppreżentat fl-anness.

Il-Kummissjoni tikkofinanzja netwerk pan-Ewropew ta' Ċentri għal Internet Aktar Sikur li jipprovdi appoġġ permezz ta' netwerks nazzjonali ta' linji telefoniċi għall-għajnuna u jippromovi l-għarfien dwar il-ġestjoni ta' riskji differenti onlajn. Il-linji telefoniċi għall-għajnuna joffru pariri lil minorenni, ġenituri u għalliema dwar ir-riskji onlajn, inkluż il-bullying fuq l-Internet.

Il-Kummissjoni għandha l-għan li tgħin biex l-internet isir post aħjar għat-tfal permezz ta' inizjattivi awtoregolatorji bħall-Koalizzjoni tas-CEO.

Il-Kummissjoni tappoġġa wkoll Azzjoni Konġunta mal-Istati Membri dwar il-Benesseri u s-Saħħa Mentali mill-Programm tas-Saħħa tal-UE. Wieħed mill-pakketti ta' ħidma tagħha huwa l-identifikazzjoni ta' prattiki tajba u l-iżvilupp ta' rakkomandazzjonijiet għall-prevenzjoni tas-suwiċidju. Hemm evidenza li tindika li iktar ma jkun hemm kuxjenza dwar id-dipressjoni, u iktar ma n-nies affettwati minn sintomi marbuta mad-dipressjoni jfittxu l-għajnuna, iktar jonqos l-għadd ta' suwiċidji. L-"Alleanza Ewropea kontra d-Dipressjoni" ([3]), b'appoġġ mill-Programm tal-UE dwar is-Saħħa, żviluppat mudell ta' intervent li ġie implimentat f'madwar 100 reġjun tal-UE. Reċentement tnediet l-għodda ta' awtoġestjoni online "iFightDepression" ([4]), fil-kuntest tal-Alleanza.

([1]) http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20140407/local/Suicide-rate-much-higher-among-men-than-women.513890
([2]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/health/causes_death
([3]) http://www.eaad.net/
([4]) http://www.predi-nu.eu/dissemination/

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004308/14
to the Commission
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Suicide rates in the EU-28

An article published in *The Times of Malta* on 7 April 2014 entitled 'Suicide rate much higher among men than women' ([1]) quoted recent police figures which show that there were around 26 suicides per year in Malta over the past five years. The youngest victim of suicide was aged 14 and the eldest was aged 98. The figures showed that the largest number of victims — 120 out of a total of 131 between 2009 and 2013 — were male. This gender gap is common in other countries, and recent national data in the UK showed that men are three times more likely than women to commit suicide. Awareness about suicide is increasing following a string of suicides in the UK linked to cyber bullying on Ask.fm, a social network popular with teenagers. Last August, newspapers reported the fourth death in the UK linked to this site in a year. That same month, Ask.fm announced it would clamp down on bullying after coming under fire from child safety campaigners.

1. Can the Commission provide the latest statistics on the number of suicides in the EU-28 during the last 5 years, broken down by gender, age and Member State?

2. What is the Commission doing to protect children and teenagers from cyber bullying?

3. Is the Commission considering taking any action, within its competences, against social networking sites which are not clamping down on cyber bullying?

4. What strategy is being implemented to raise awareness on suicide and remove the social stigma that is still attached to this social problem?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(11 June 2014)

The European Commission collects data on causes of death at EU level ([2]). The number of deaths due to suicide, by gender and by age group, over the period 2006-2010, is presented in annex.

The Commission co-funds a pan-European network of Safer Internet Centres that provides support through national networks of helplines and promotes awareness of how to manage different risks online. Helplines offer advice to minors, parents and teachers on online risks, including cyber-bullying.

The Commission aims to help make the Internet a better place for children through self-regulatory initiatives such as the CEO Coalition.

The Commission further supports a Joint Action with Member States on Mental Health and Well-being from the EU Health Programme. One of its work packages is identifying good practices and developing recommendations for preventing suicide. There is evidence that raising awareness about depression and encouraging help-seeking behaviour of people experiencing depressive symptoms can reduce the number of suicidal acts. The 'European Alliance Against Depression' ([3]) has developed, with support from the EU-Health Programme, an intervention model which is implemented in about 100 EU-regions. Recently, the online self-management-tool 'iFightDepression' ([4]) was launched in the context of the alliance.

([1]) http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20140407/local/Suicide-rate-much-higher-among-men-than-women.513890
([2]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/health/causes_death
([3]) http://www.eaad.net/
([4]) http://www.predi-nu.eu/dissemination/

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-004309/14
lill-Kummissjoni
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(7 ta' April 2014)

Suġġett: Id-drittijiet tal-bniet

Fid-19 ta' Diċembru 2011, l-Assemblea Ġenerali tan-Nazzjonijiet Uniti adottat ir-Riżoluzzjoni 66/170 filwaqt li ddikkjarat il-11 ta' Ottubru bħala l-Jum Internazzjonali tal-Bniet u rrikonoxxiet id-drittijiet tal-bniet u l-isfidi unċi li l-bniet madwar id-dinja jaffaċċjaw. Għat-tieni osservazzjoni tagħha, il-Jum ta' dis-sena se tiffoka fuq l-"Innovazzjoni għall-Edukazzjoni tal-Bniet".

It-twettiq tad-dritt tal-bniet għall-edukazzjoni l-ewwel u qabel kollox hu obbligu u imperattiv morali. Hemm evidenza sostanzjali li l-edukazzjoni tal-bniet, speċjalment fil-livell sekondarju, hi qawwa trasformattiva b'saħħita għas-soċjetajiet u għall-bniet innifishom: Hija l-uniku fattur determinanti pożittiv konsistenti prattikament ta' kull eżitu ta' żvilupp mistenni, inkluż it-tnaqqis fl-imwiet u l-fertilità, it-tnaqqis fil-faqar, it-tkabbir ekwu, il-bidla fin-norma soċjali u d-demokratizzazzjoni.

Filwaqt li kien hemm progress sinifikanti fit-titjib tal-aċċess għall-edukazzjoni tal-bniet matul dawn l-aħħar għoxrin sena, ħafna bniet, partikolarment dawk l-aktar marġinalizzati, għadhom jiġu mċaħħda minn dan id-dritt fundamentali. Il-bniet f'ħafna pajjiżi għadhom ma jistgħux imorru l-iskola u jispiċċaw l-edukazzjoni tagħhom minħabba ostakli ta' sikurezza, finanzjarji, istituzzjonali u kulturali. Anke meta l-bniet ikunu fl-iskola, dħul perċepit bħala baxx b'riżultat ta' edukazzjoni ta' kwalità baxxa, aspirazzjonijiet baxxi, jew faċendi tad-dar u responsabbiltajiet oħrajn iwaqqfuhom milli jattendu l-iskola jew milli jiksbu eżiti adegwati ta' tagħlim. Il-potenzjal ta' trasformazzjoni għal bniet u s-soċjetajiet mwieġħd permezz tal-edukazzjoni tal-bniet għad irid jiġi realizzat.

1. Il-Kummissjoni kif bihsiebha tinterpreta u tagħti tifsira għall-Jum Internazzjonali tal-Bniet ta' din is-sena?

2. Il-Kummissjoni xi proġetti għandha ppjanati biex tinkoraġġixxi t-trasformazzjoni tan-normi kulturali fl-Ewropa u lil'hinn minnha?

3. Kemm hemm bniet fl-UE taħt l-età ta' tmintax?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sinjura Reding f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(17 ta' Ġunju 2014)

1. Il-Kummissjoni u l-SEAE jilqgħu l-inizjattiva tan-NU li tiddikjara l-11 ta' Ottubru l-Jum Internazzjonali tal-Bniet u jirrikonoxxu l-isfidi speċifiċi li l-bniet jaffaċċjaw.

2. Il-Kummissjoni organizzat skambji ta' prattiki tajbin fuq għażliet edukattivi mhux sterjotipiċi għall-bniet u s-subien ([1]). Il-Komunikazzjoni tal-Kummissjoni "Reviżjoni tal-Edukazzjoni" rrakkomandat sforzi ikbar biex tingħata prijorità lill-ħiliet STEM u biex dan il-qasam isir iktar attraenti għan-nisa. Il-Programm ROMED għall-2013-2014 ta l-opportunità lill-ommijiet biex ikunu jistgħu jwasslu l-valur tal-edukazzjoni lit-tfal tagħhom, speċjalment lill-bniet. Erasmus+ se jagħti attenzjoni speċjali għall-parteċipazzjoni ta' nisa minn barra l-UE fil-komponent tal-edukazzjoni ogħla internazzjnonali. Ir-Rakkomandazzjoni tal-Kunsill tal-2011 dwar pjanijiet politiċi biex jitnaqqas it-tluq bikri mill-iskola ([2]) jagħti qafas biex jitnaqqas it-tluq bikri mill-iskola, billi tirreferi speċifikament għal tfal b'passat żvantaġġat soċjoekonomikament, ta' immigrazzjoni jew tar-Roma.

L-UE tirrikonoxxi wkoll li l-edukazzjoni tirfed il-miri kollha ta' żvilupp u tappoġġa l-edukazzjoni bażika. L-edukazzjoni tal-bniet hija enfasi f'ħafna programmi ta' edukazzjoni ffinanzjati mill-UE. F'Myanmar, qed nappoġġaw il-Programm ta' Edukazzjoni Bażika ta' Kwalità u rieżami tas-settur komprensiv biex nippreparaw għal pjan nazzjonali ġdid għall-edukazzjoni. Fin-Niġerja qed naħdmu mal-UN Women u l-UNICEF fuq proġett ibbażat fuq is-sessi b'element ta' edukazzjoni. Fis-Somalja, ġew stabbiliti spazji favorevoli għall-bniet, fejn il-bniet tal-iskola jistgħu jistudjaw b'mod sigur, bi kmamar tal-banju biex ma jkollhomx għalfejn joħorġu iktar mill-iskola kmieni biex jaċċessaw latrini pubbliċi.

3. Skont iċ-ċifri l-iktar riċenti disponibbli mill-Eurostat, fl-1 ta' Jannar 2013 fl-UE-28 kien hemm madwar 46.5 miljun tifla b'età inqas minn 18 ([3]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/other-institutions/good-practices/index_en.htm
([2]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/MT/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32011H0701(01)&from=MT.
([3]) Dejta dettaljata tista' tinsab hawnhekk.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004309/14
to the Commission
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Girls' rights

On 19 December 2011, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 66/170 declaring 11 October as the International Day of the Girl Child and recognising girls' rights and the unique challenges girls face around the world. For its second observance, this year's Day will focus on 'Innovating for Girls' Education'.

The fulfilment of girls' right to education is first and foremost an obligation and a moral imperative. There is also overwhelming evidence that girls' education, especially at secondary level, is a powerful transformative force for societies and girls themselves: it is the one consistent positive determinant of practically every desired development outcome, including reductions in mortality and fertility, poverty reduction, equitable growth, social norm change and democratisation.

While there has been significant progress in improving girls' access to education over the last two decades, many girls, particularly the most marginalised, continue to be deprived of this basic right. Girls in many countries are still unable to attend school and complete their education owing to safety-related, financial, institutional and cultural barriers. Even when girls are in school, perceived low returns as a result of poor-quality education, low aspirations, or household chores and other responsibilities keep them from attending school or from achieving adequate learning outcomes. The transformative potential for girls and societies promised through girls' education is yet to be realised.

1. How does the Commission intend to interpret and give meaning to this year's International Day of the Girl Child?

2. What projects does the Commission have in place to encourage the transformation of cultural norms inside and outside the EU?

3. How many girls are there in the EU under the age of 18?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(17 June 2014)

1. The Commission and EEAS welcome the UN initiative to declare 11 October the International Day of the Girl Child and recognise the specific challenges girls face.

2. The Commission has organised exchanges of good practices on non-stereotypical educational choices for girls and boys ([1]). The Commission Communication 'Rethinking Education' advocated greater efforts to prioritise STEM skills and to make this field more attractive to women. The ROMED Programme for 2013-2014 has given priority to mothers to enable them to convey the value of education to their children, especially to girls. Erasmus+ will pay special attention to the participation of women from outside the EU in the international higher education component. The 2011 Council Recommendation on policies to reduce early school leaving ([2]) gives a framework to reduce early school leaving, referring specifically to children with socioeconomically disadvantaged, migrant or Roma background.

The EU also recognises that education underpins all development goals and supports basic education. Girls' education is a focus in many education programmes financed by the EU. In Myanmar, we are supporting the Quality Basic Education Programme and a comprehensive sector review to prepare for a new national plan for education. In Nigeria we are working with UN Women and Unicef on a gender project with an education element. In Somalia, girl-friendly spaces have been established, where school girls can study safely, with washrooms so they no longer have to leave school early to access private toilets.

3. According to the most recent figures available from Eurostat, on 1 January 2013 there were in the EU-28 around 46.5 million girls aged less than 18 ([3]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/other-institutions/good-practices/index_en.htm
([2]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32011H0701(01)&from=EN
([3]) Detailed data can be found here.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-004310/14
lill-Kummissjoni
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(7 ta' April 2014)

Suġġett: Il-femminizzazzjoni tal-faqar

It-terminu "femminizzazzjoni tal-faqar" ifisser li n-nisa għandhom inċidenza ogħla ta' faqar mill-irġiel, li l-faqar tagħhom huwa aktar gravi minn dak tal-irġiel, u li l-faqar fost in-nisa qiegħed jiżdied. Il-prevenzjoni u t-tnaqqis tal-faqar fost in-nisa, u forsi saħansitra wkoll l-eradikazzjoni tiegħu, huma parti importanti mill-prinċipju fundamentali tas-solidarjetà soċjali li d-dinja hija impenjata favurih.

Data statistika turi li n-nisa fl-UE attwalment jaqilgħu madwar 17 % inqas mill-irġiel. Dan ifisser li mara fl-Ewropa trid taħdem 418-il ġurnata sabiex taqla' daqs kemm jaqla' raġel f'sena. Din ix-xejra allarmanti baqgħet ma nbidlet kważi xejn għal dawn l-aħħar 15-il sena, irrispettivament minn kif ġiet iffurmata l-istatistika jew minn kif ġew ifformulati l-mistoqsijiet.

1. Il-Kummissjoni kif tiddefinixxi l-femminizzazzjoni tal-faqar?

2. X'hini l-istima għall-għadd ta' nisa li jinsabu fil-faqar fil-5 snin li ġejjin?

3. Il-Kummissjoni x'qed tagħmel biex tindirizza din il-problema?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Hahn f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(6 ta' Ġunju 2014)

Il-Kummissjoni ma tiddefinixxix il-"feminizzazzjoni tal-faqar", iżda hija konxja tar-rata ogħla ta' faqar li jeżisti fost in-nisa meta mqabbel mal-irġiel.

Il-Kummissjoni ma għandhiex stima jew tbassir tal-għadd ta' nisa fil-faqar fil-futur. Fir-Rapport tagħha dwar il-Progress fl-ugwaljanza bejn in-nisa u l-irġiel ([1]), il-Kummissjoni tanalizza x-xejriet riċenti tal-faqar. Fl-2012, in-nisa ta' età avvanzata kienu f'riskju ħafna ikbar ta' faqar jew ta' esklużjoni soċjali mill-irġiel ta' età avvanzata (22% imqabbel ma' 16.3 %). Matul l-aħħar 5 snin, is-sitwazzjoni tal-irġiel u tan-nisa ta' età avvanzata tjiebet, u d-distakk bejn is-sessi tnaqqas. L-impatt tal-kriżi fuq il-livell tal-UE huwa aktar viżibbli għall-grupp fl-età tax-xogħol, fejn iż-żieda fil-faqar jew fl-esklużjoni soċjali tidher li hi marbuta ma' tnaqqis fid-distakk bejn is-sessi, l-iktar minħabba d-deterjorament tas-sitwazzjoni tal-irġiel matul il-kriżi.

Ir-Rapport dwar il-Progress fl-ugwaljanza bejn in-nisa u l-irġiel jiddeskrivi l-miżuri li ttieħdu biex jiġi promoss l-impjieg tan-nisa, biex jitnaqqas id-distakk bejn is-sessi, u biex jiġu indirizzati aħjar il-faqar u l-esklużjoni soċjali.

Barra minn hekk, fil-kuntest tas-Semestru Ewropew, il-Kummissjoni analizzat kull sena l-progress fil-ġlieda kontra l-faqar u fil-promozzjoni tal-impjieg. Il-Kummissjoni ħarġet rakkomandazzjonijiet speċifiċi għal kull pajjiż biex jindirizzaw il-faċilitajiet għall-kura tat-tfal, ir-rikonċiljazzjoni u l-assistenza soċjali. Il-fondi tal-UE jistgħu jintużaw biex jappoġġjaw ir-riżultati permezz tal-allokazzjoni ta' 25% għall-inklużjoni soċjali mill-Fond Soċjali Ewropew. Matul l-aħħar 7 snin, huwa stmat li EUR 3.2 biljun mill-Fondi Strutturali ġew allokati bħala investiment fil-promozzjoni tal-parteċipazzjoni tan-nisa fis-suq tax-xogħol, li hija l-aqwa mod kif jevitaw il-faqar.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/swd_2014_142_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004310/14
to the Commission
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Feminisation of poverty

The term 'feminisation of poverty' means that women have a higher incidence of poverty than men, that their poverty is more severe than that of men, and that poverty among women is on the increase. Preventing and reducing poverty among women, if not eradicating it, is an important part of the fundamental principle of social solidarity to which the world is committed.

Statistical data show that women in the EU-28 currently earn around 17% less than men. This means that a woman in Europe needs to work 418 days in order to earn as much as a man earns in a year. This alarming trend has remained almost unchanged for the past 15 years, no matter how the statistics have been formed or how the questions have been phrased.

1. How does the Commission define feminisation of poverty?

2. What is the estimate for the number of women in poverty in the next 5 years?

3. What is the Commission doing to address this problem?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(6 June 2014)

The Commission does not define the 'feminisation of poverty', however it is aware of the higher rate of poverty amongst women compared to men.

The Commission does not estimate or forecast the number of women in poverty in the future. In its Report on Progress on equality between women and men ([1]), the Commission analyses recent trends in poverty. In 2012, older women were much more at risk of poverty or social exclusion than older men (22% versus 16.3%). Over the last 5 years, the relative situation of older men and women improved, and the gender gap has shrunk. The impact of the crisis at EU-level is more visible for the working-age group, where the rise in poverty or social exclusion appears to be associated with a closing of the gender gap mainly due to the worsening position of men during the crisis.

The report on Progress on equality between women and men describes the measures taken to promote female employment, to close the gender gap and to better adress poverty and social exclusion.

Furthermore, in the context of the European Semester, the Commission has annually assessed the progress regarding fighting poverty and promoting employment. It has issued country specific recommendations to address childcare facilities, reconciliation and social assistance. EU funds can be used to support delivery through the 25% earmarking on social inclusion from the European Social Fund. Over the past 7 years, an estimated EUR 3.2 billion from the Structural Funds was allocated to invest in promoting women's participation in the labour market which is the best way to avoid poverty.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/swd_2014_142_en.pdf

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-004311/14
lill-Kummissjoni
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(7 ta' April 2014)

Suġġett: Bilanċ bejn ix-xogħol u l-ħajja privata għall-ommijiet

FL-2011, MMM Europe wettqet studju intitolat "X'inhu Importanti għall-Ommijiet fl-Ewropa" ([1]). Dan l-istudju kien iffukat fuq stħarriġ li fih ipparteċipaw aktar minn 11 000 omm mill-Ewropa kollha. Dan wassal għall-konklużjoni li l-maġġoranza tal-ommijiet Ewropej jippreferu li jikkombinaw l-impjieg part-time mal-kura tal-familja. Wera wkoll li għall-maġġoranza tal-ommijiet (89 %), il-fatt li jieħdu ħsieb il-familji tagħhom huma stess huwa prijorità għolja. L-istudju kkonkluda li l-maġġoranza tal-ommijiet Ewropej jixtiequ jkollhom aktar ħin biex jgħadduh ma' wliedhom.

1. Meta omm tagħżel li tiddedika l-ħin tagħha biex tieħu ħsieb uliedha, hi tkun qed tpoġġi f'riskju l-pensjoni futura tagħha. Din il-problema tista' tissolva bl-introduzzjoni ta' xi forma ta' remunerazzjoni għall-ommijiet. X'inhi l-pożizzjoni tal-Kummissjoni dwar dan?

2. Il-Kummissjoni sa liema punt qed tinkoraġġixxi strateġiji li jippermettu lill-ommijiet joħorġu minn impjieg full-time biex irabbu lill-uliedhom u jerġgħu lura għax-xogħol aktar tard f'ħajjithom, meta wliedhom ikunu kibru?

3. L-ommijiet kif qed jiġu mgħejuna u mħeġġa jintegraw xogħolhom mal-ħajja tal-familja fl-istituzzjonijiet Ewropej?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sinjura Reding f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(12 ta' Ġunju 2014)

Il-Kummissjoni tippromwovi l-indipendenza ekonomika ugwali għan-nisa u l-irġiel li hija l-ewwel prijorità tal-istrateġija tagħha għall-ugwaljanza bejn in-nisa u l-irġiel għas-snin 2010-2015 ([2]). Kif intqal fir-rapport dwar l-adegwatezza tal-pensjonijiet, il-parteċipazzjoni fis-suq tax-xogħol għadha l-għodda ewlenija li tbassar il-livell ta' sigurtà fix-xjuħija, għalhekk il-linji ta' politika li jippromwovu l-ugwaljanza fis-suq tax-xogħol jibqgħu kruċjali għal ugwaljanza akbar bejn is-sessi fejn jidħlu l-pensjonijiet ([3]). L-espansjoni tas-servizzi għat-tfal u l-anzjani dgħajfa, (l-għajnuna fid-dar u l-kura, is-servizzi ta' għajnuna għal min jagħti l-kura b'mod informali) hija wkoll kruċjali ([4]). Huma wkoll meħtieġa linji ta' politika biex jiġu ekwalizzati l-kundizzjonijiet bejn is-sessi fil-post tax-xogħol u fil-prattiki tas-suq tax-xogħol.

Id-Direttiva 97/81 KE ([5]) titlob lill-Istati Membri sabiex jiżguraw trattament ugwali bejn dawk li jaħdmu full time u dawk li jaħdmu part time. Din kien fis-seħħ sabiex tiġi żgurata l-kwalità tal-impjiegi part time u biex jiġi ffaċilitat l-aċċess għal xogħol part time għall-irġiel u n-nisa sabiex, fost affarijiet oħra, jkunu jistgħu jlaħħqu aħjar mal-impenji tagħhom professjonali u tal-familja.

L-istrateġija dwar l-opportunitajiet indaqs fi ħdan il-Kummissjoni ([6]) għandha l-għan li tippromwovi ambjent tax-xogħol flessibbli li jwassal biex ikun hemm bilanċ tajjeb bejn ix-xogħol u l-ħajja privata. Ir-Regolamenti tal-Persunal jistipulaw drittijiet statutorji dwar l-arranġamenti tal-ħin tax-xogħol, bħal ma huma part time jew liv tal-ġenituri, għall-persunal, kemm għan-nisa kif ukoll għall-irġiel, taħt ċerti kundizzjonijiet. Barra minn hekk, il-Kummissjoni, b'mod gradwali, toffri arranġamenti tax-xogħol flessibbli, inklużi l-flessibilità tal-ħin tax-xogħol u t-telexogħol. Mill-1 ta' Ġunju 2014, il-ħin flessibbli sar is-sistema normali tal-ħin tax-xogħol għall-persunal tal-Kummissjoni. Il-Kummissjoni, flimkien mal-Istituzzjonijiet l-oħra tal-UE, investiet matul l-aħħar 40 sena fl-iżvilupp ta' faċilitajiet għall-kura tat-tfal fil-ħin tax-xogħol, u anki għal wara l-ħin tal-iskola, u anki faċilitajiet ta' kampijiet tal-btajjel għat-tfal tal-persunal tagħha.

([1]) http://www.mmmeurope.org/ficdoc/2011-MMM_BROCHURE_What_Matters_Mothers_Europe.pdf
([2]) COM(2010) 491.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=7105&type=2&furtherPubs=yes
([4]) Dan jgħodd b'mod speċjali fil-każ ta' tfal taħt it-tliet snin, b'sigħat twal u flessibbli, u għall-kura ta' wara l-iskola.
([5]) Dwar ix-xogħol part time.
([6]) SEC (2010) 1554/3.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004311/14
to the Commission
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Work-life balance for mothers

In 2011, MMM Europe carried out a study entitled 'What Matters to Mothers in Europe' ([1]). This study was focused on a survey which saw the participation of over 11 000 mothers from all over Europe. It concluded that the majority of European mothers prefer to combine part-time employment with family care. It also showed that for the majority of mothers (89%), personally caring for their families is a high priority. The study concluded that the majority of European mothers would like to have more time to spend with their children.

1. When a mother chooses to give her time to care for her children, she does so at the risk of her future pension. This problem could be solved by introducing some form of remuneration for mothers. What is the Commission's position on this?

2. To what extent is the Commission encouraging strategies enabling mothers to get out of full-time employment to raise their children and return to employment later on in their life, when their children are grown up?

3. In what ways are mothers helped and encouraged to integrate their work with family life in the European institutions?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(12 June 2014)

The Commission promotes equal economic independence for women and men which is the first priority of its strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015 ([2]). As stated in the Pension Adequacy report ([3]) labour market participation continues to be the main predictor of old age security, therefore policies to foster labour market equality remain key to greater gender equality in pension outcomes. Expanding services for children ([4]) and frail elderly (home help & care, relief services for informal carers) is also crucial. Policies to equalise gender conditions in work place and labour market practices are needed as well.

Directive 97/81 EC ([5]) calls upon the Member States to ensure equal treatment of full-timers and part-timers. This was in place to increase the quality of part-time jobs and to facilitate access to part-time work for men and women in order to *inter alia* better reconcile professional and family life.

The strategy on equal opportunities within the Commission's ([6]) aims at promoting a flexible working environment which is conducive to a good work-life balance. The Staff Regulations provides for statutory rights to working time arrangements, such as part time or parental leave, for staff, women and men alike, under certain conditions. In addition, the Commission has gradually offered flexible working arrangements, including working time flexibility and telework. As of 1 June 2014, flexitime will become the default working time regime for Commission's staff. The Commission, along with the other Institutions of the EU, has invested over the past 40 years in developing nurseries and also afterschool childcare and holiday camp facilities for the children of its staff.

([1]) http://www.mmmeurope.org/ficdoc/2011-MMM_BROCHURE_What_Matters_Mothers_Europe.pdf
([2]) COM(2010)491.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=7105&type=2&furtherPubs=yes
([4]) Especially for children under three, with flexible and long hours, and after school care.
([5]) On part-time work.
([6]) SEC(2010) 1554/3.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-004312/14
alla Commissione
Barbara Matera (PPE)
(7 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Emergenza rifiuti e inquinamento ambientale nella provincia di Foggia

I Carabinieri del Comando provinciale di Foggia hanno redatto dei rapporti in merito dell'individuazione di siti improvvisati quali discariche di rifiuti pericolosi e tali da creare una precaria situazione igienico-sanitaria e di degrado ambientale.

Questi rapporti hanno evidenziato che la situazione di degrado ambientale riguarda in primis la città di Foggia, dove sono stati individuati 19 siti improvvisati quali discariche, ma anche altri comuni (per l'esattezza, 13: Cerignola, Accadia, Ordona, Deliceto, Castelluccio dei Sauri, Carapelle, Orta Nova, Panni, Troia, Anzano di Puglia, Candela, Monteleone di Puglia e Rocchetta Sant'Antonio) per un totale di 44 aree inquinate in tutta la provincia.

Le aree sono caratterizzate da abbandono o deposito incontrollato di rifiuti di ogni sorta.

Spesso i rifiuti sono abbandonati lungo i corsi d'acqua, come accertato dal comune di Carapelle, oppure in prossimità di campi sportivi (comune di Candela), di ospedali (Anzano di Puglia), o ancora nei pressi di strade statali e di campi coltivati, all'interno di capannoni abbandonati o a pochi chilometri dagli ingressi cittadini.

Nel comune di Ordona, che conta appena 2 600 residenti, nel disinteresse generale e delle istituzioni preposte alla tutela della salute pubblica, si stanno verificando molteplici casi di tumore, che colpiscono in particolare persone giovani. L'opinione pubblica, a ragion veduta, ritiene che ciò possa essere attribuito allo sversamento indiscriminato di rifiuti tossici e pericolosi nei campi agricoli, messo in atto da diverso tempo nella zona.

Si pongono le seguenti domande alla Commissione:

1. La Commissione è a conoscenza di questa grave situazione di degrado ambientale e sociale creatasi nella provincia di Foggia?

2. Quali strumenti di pressione potrebbe adottare la Commissione per fare più luce su questi abusi ambientali? Quali iniziative potrebbe adottare la Commissione, in accordo con enti provinciali e regionali, per evitare che la situazione peggiori ulteriormente?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(22 maggio 2014)

La Commissione non era a conoscenza dei rapporti dei Carabinieri descritti dall'onorevole deputata.

Ai sensi del diritto dell'Unione, gli Stati membri adottano le misure necessarie per garantire che la gestione dei rifiuti, in particolare la bonifica delle discariche abusive, sia effettuata senza danneggiare la salute umana e l'ambiente. Le autorità competenti dello Stato membro interessato hanno la responsabilità primaria della prevenzione del degrado ambientale legato ai rifiuti e delle minacce sanitarie nel loro territorio. La Commissione può tuttavia ricorrere alle vie legali qualora abbia prova che le autorità nazionali competenti non abbiano adottato le azioni correttive necessarie per un periodo di tempo prolungato.

A tale riguardo, nell'ambito della procedura di infrazione 2003/2077 relativa alle discariche abusive in tutta l'Italia, la Commissione ha adito la Corte dell'UE per la seconda volta nell'aprile 2013 poiché, dieci anni dopo l'avvio della procedura d'infrazione, l'Italia non aveva ancora bonificato tutte le discariche oggetto del caso, tra cui vari siti in Puglia. Il caso è ancora pendente dinanzi alla Corte.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004312/14
to the Commission
Barbara Matera (PPE)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Waste and environmental pollution emergency in Foggia province, Italy

The Carabinieri police in Foggia province have produced reports identifying sites that are being used unofficially as hazardous waste dumps, causing a danger to public health as well as environmental degradation.

The reports show that the environmental degradation primarily affects the city of Foggia, where 19 unofficial dumps have been identified, as well as other municipalities (13 to be exact: Cerignola, Accadia, Ordona, Deliceto, Castelluccio dei Sauri, Carapelle, Orta Nova, Panni, Troia, Anzano di Puglia, Candela, Monteleone di Puglia and Rocchetta Sant'Antonio), making a total of 44 polluted areas throughout the province.

The areas are characterised by the dumping or uncontrolled tipping of all kinds of waste.

Waste is often dumped along watercourses, as seen in Carapelle municipality, or next to sports grounds (Candela) or hospitals (Anzano di Puglia), on roadsides, in fields, in disused sheds or a few kilometres from the edges of towns.

Ordona municipality, which has only 2 600 inhabitants and suffers from general neglect, not least from the public health authorities, has seen a number of cases of tumours affecting young people in particular. Public opinion believes, with good reason, that they may be due to the indiscriminate tipping of toxic and hazardous waste on farmers' fields, which has been happening for a long time in that area.

1. Is the Commission aware of the serious harm that is being caused to the environment and society in Foggia province?

2. What pressure could the Commission exert to shed more light on these environmental abuses? What initiatives could the Commission adopt, in conjunction with provincial and regional bodies, to prevent the situation from getting any worse?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(22 May 2014)

The Commission was not aware of the police reports described by the Honourable Member.

Under EC law, Member States shall take the necessary measures to ensure that waste management, including the clean-up of illegal landfills, is carried out without endangering human health and the environment. The competent authorities of the Member State concerned are primarily responsible for the prevention of waste-related environmental degradation and health threats in their territory. Nevertheless, the Commission may take legal steps where it has evidence that the competent national authorities are not taking the necessary remedial action for a protracted period of time.

In this respect, within the infringement procedure 2003/2077 concerning illegal landfilling in the whole of Italy, the Commission applied to the EU Court for the second time in April 2013 because, 10 years after the launching of the infringement procedure, Italy had still not cleaned up all the landfills covered by the case, including several sites in Puglia. The case is still pending before the Court.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-004313/14
to the Commission
Martin Callanan (ECR)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Implementation of Commission Recommendation 2013/473/EU and Commission Regulation (EU) No 920/2013 as regards the auditing of subcontractors

Under Commission Recommendation 2013/473/EU and Commission Regulation (EU) No 920/2013 as regards the auditing of subcontractors, notified bodies now have to carry out unannounced audits of subcontractors despite many of them being ISO 13485-accredited and having successful track records spanning many years, during which time they have provided well-established devices without any quality-related issues arising.

With respect to the new approach, can the Commission confirm the following:

1. How is a notified body to carry out an unannounced audit to assess the manufacture of a certain product when the company under audit cannot possibly know more than a month or so in advance as to when it will order or manufacture said product?

2. Is it correct that if a team of auditors arrives and is unable to carry out an audit (owing, for example, to the machine in question being repaired, there being a power cut or flood, or the machine operator being away due to illness), the company will still be made to pay?

3. If the above is true, will the EU refund the costs of the audits in such instances?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(15 May 2014)

The recommendation referred to by the Honourable Member is part of an action plan that was agreed between the Commission and the Member States in response to the PIP incident. The company PIP had marketed fraudulent breast implants over many years which remained undetected because no unannounced audit of this company had taken place.

Fulfilment of requirements contained in the standard ISO 13485 does not guarantee that all quality system requirements are fulfilled. In the case of the most frequently applied conformity assessment procedure under Union legislation ([1]), the standard covers only about half of the legal requirements. Accordingly, certification under this standard does not allow assuming full compliance with all legal requirements.

Notified bodies should as a principle remain informed about the use of critical subcontractors and crucial suppliers and therefore be able to plan for unannounced audits. A successful unannounced audit does not necessarily require that devices or components thereof are physically produced at the moment of the audit. There is other information that can be usefully obtained as a part of the audit, such as controls of previously produced product samples if available, verifications of the traceability of critical components and materials and the manufacturers system for traceability and post-market surveillance of his production as well as reviews of technical documentation and previous test protocols and results.

The contractual arrangements between the notified body and the manufacturer should take into account possible different situations and should contain provisions with regard to the costs of such audits.

([1]) Annex II of Council Directive 93/42/EEC of 14 June 1993 concerning Medical Devices (OJ L 169, 12.7 1993, p.1).

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-004314/14
alla Commissione
Franco Bonanini (NI)
(7 aprile 2014)

Oggetto: Liberalizzazione domini web «.wine» e «.vin»

Considerando le notizie di stampa secondo le quali appare imminente una decisione definitiva dell'ICANN (*Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers*) relativamente alla possibile liberalizzazione e, dunque, alla possibile vendita a livello globale e senza alcuna restrizione o condizione dei domini web «.wine» e «.vin»;

considerando che tale decisione comporterebbe la libera attribuzione di domini web contenenti riferimenti a specifiche indicazioni geografiche (IG) dell'Unione europea (ad esempio «chianti.wine» o «champagne.vin») senza che questo tenga minimamente conto della effettiva corrispondenza alle reali indicazioni geografiche e ai loro reali produttori;

considerando che tale decisione autorizzerebbe, nei fatti, uno sfruttamento improprio delle denominazioni europee e incoraggerebbe pratiche di concorrenza sleale ed informazioni fraudolente nei confronti dei consumatori, oltreché generare un danno irreparabile nei confronti del settore vitivinicolo europeo;

può la Commissione comunicare quali iniziative e quali misure stia intraprendendo in via urgente e presso tutte le sedi competenti a livello internazionale, anche di concerto con le altre istituzioni dell'Unione e con i governi degli Stati membri, per scongiurare l'adozione da parte dell'ICANN della decisione in oggetto e tutelare così le indicazioni geografiche europee e la produzione di qualità europea, che sarebbe danneggiata in modo irreparabile da una siffatta decisione?

Risposta di Neelie Kroes a nome della Commissione
(12 maggio 2014)

Fin dall'avvio del nuovo programma gTLD ([1]) dell'ICANN la Commissione persegue fattivamente, in stretta collaborazione con gli Stati membri, l'adozione di una serie di garanzie da applicare ai nomi a dominio che potrebbero altrimenti indurre in errore il consumatore circa prodotti che non hanno di fatto alcun rapporto legittimo con indicazioni geografiche protette oppure violare la normativa dell'Unione europea o degli Stati membri vigente nel settore dei diritti di proprietà intellettuale e in materia di protezione delle indicazioni geografiche ([2]).

Dei gTLD *.wine* e *.vin* si è discusso vivacemente in sede di comitato governativo consultivo dell'ICANN, nel quale la Commissione si è eretta a difesa delle indicazioni geografiche del vino di fronte alle richieste di domini che mettevano a rischio l'integrità di questo importante settore.

In risposta alla recente decisione dell'ICANN di assegnare le stringhe senza prevedere garanzie adeguate, la Commissione europea è stata, insieme agli Stati membri dell'UE, ferma nel chiedere una revisione totale della decisione. Questa posizione ha permesso di ottenere, il 4 aprile 2014, che l'ICANN rinviasse la decisione sulle estensioni *.wine* e *.vin*, concedendo alle parti ([3]) un ulteriore termine di 60 giorni per negoziare in buona fede una soluzione accettabile da tutti. La Commissione ha accolto pubblicamente con favore tale decisione in un comunicato stampa ([4]). È inoltre intervenuta a livello sia politico sia procedurale presso il presidente dell'ICANN presentando una richiesta di riesame ([5]).

Sulla questione la Commissione resta attentamente all'ascolto dei portatori d'interesse ed è attiva nella facilitazione dei negoziati tra i titolari dei diritti sulle indicazioni geografiche e i richiedenti dei domini *.wine* e *.vin*. La Commissione continuerà a seguire attentamente gli sviluppi in questo settore, compreso nel contesto dell'attuale dibattito mondiale sulla *governance* di Internet, al fine di garantire la tutela dell'interesse pubblico globale.

([1]) Domini di primo livello generici.
([2]) La Commissione ha tenuto informato il Parlamento europeo attraverso la commissione interparlamentare sul vino.
([3]) Titolari dei diritti sulle indicazioni geografiche e richiedenti dei nuovi gTLD.
([4]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-14-108_en.htm
([5]) http://www.icann.org/en/groups/board/governance/reconsideration/14-13

(English version)

Question for written answer P-004314/14
to the Commission
Franco Bonanini (NI)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Liberalisation of Internet top level domain names '.wine' and '.vin'

According to press reports, a final decision by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) on release of the top level domain names '.wine' and '.vin' for general use seems imminent. Their liberalisation would make their sale worldwide possible, without any restrictions or conditions being imposed.

Such a decision would mean that Internet domain names containing references to specific EU geographical indications (e.g. 'chianti.wine' or 'champagne.vin') could be freely allocated with no consideration given at all as to whether there is a real connection to the genuine geographical indication and genuine producers in these regions.

Such a decision would, in actual fact, permit improper use of EU designations and would encourage unfair competitive practices and the provision of fraudulent information to consumers, as well as doing irreparable damage to the EU wine growing and producing sector.

What initiatives and measures is the Commission instituting as a matter of urgency with all bodies concerned at international level, as well as in collaboration with the other EU institutions and the governments of the Member States, to ensure ICANN does not adopt said decision, thereby protecting EU geographical indications and the production of quality EU products which would be jeopardised irreparably by a decision of this kind?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(12 May 2014)

Since the launch of ICANN's new gTLD ([1]) programme, the Commission, in close cooperation with EU Member States, has been actively pursuing a set of safeguards for domain names which could, without such safeguards, mislead the consumer on products which in fact have no legitimate relationship with protected Geographical Indications (GIs) or infringe European Union and national laws in the area of Intellectual Property Rights and protection of GIs ([2]).

The gTLDs .wine and .vin have been heavily debated in the Government Advisory Committee of ICANN, where the Commission has been advocating the protection of Geographical Indications for wine from domain name claims that put at risk the integrity of this important sector.

In reaction to ICANN recent decision to delegate the strings without proper safeguards, the European Commission, together with EU Member States, has taken a strong stance demanding the full revision of such decision. As a consequence, on 4 April 2014 ICANN postponed the .wine and .vin extensions, granting 60 additional days for the parties ([3]) to negotiate in good faith towards an agreeable solution. The Commission publicly welcomed this decision in a press statement ([4]). Furthermore, the Commission has taken action at political and procedural level with ICANN's President, introducing of a Reconsideration Request ([5]).

The Commission carefully listens to the stakeholders affected by the issue and is actively facilitating the negotiations between right-holders of GIs and the applicants of .vin and .wine. The Commission will continue to attentively monitor developments in this area, including in the context of the on-going global debate on Internet Governance, in order to ensure that the global public interest is safeguarded.

([1]) Generic Top Level Domain names.
([2]) The Commission regularly informed the European parliament through the inter-Parliamentary Committee on Wine.
([3]) The right holders of GIs and the applicants for the new gTLDs.
([4]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-14-108_en.htm
([5]) http://www.icann.org/en/groups/board/governance/reconsideration/14-13

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-004315/14
a la Comisión
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(7 de abril de 2014)

Asunto: Plan de gestión para los buques de los censos del Caladero Nacional del Cantábrico y Noroeste

El Reglamento (UE) n° 1380/2013 sobre la Política Pesquera Común tiene como objetivo fundamental garantizar que las actividades de la pesca sean sostenibles y se gestionen de forma coherente, y que contribuyan a la disponibilidad de productos alimenticios. En concreto, los artículos 16 y 17 hacen referencia a las asignaciones de posibilidades de pesca a los Estados miembros.

El martes 18 de marzo se publicó en el Boletín Oficial del Estado español la Orden AAA/417/2014, de 17 de marzo, por la que se establece un Plan de gestión para los buques de los censos del Caladero Nacional del Cantábrico y Noroeste. La Orden fija los porcentajes de caballa y jurel que corresponden a los buques de cerco de cada provincia, que por comunidad autónoma en el caso del caballa quedarían repartidos de la siguiente forma: País Vasco 48,11 % (69 barcos), Galicia 24,86 % (153 barcos), Cantabria 24,03 % (44 barcos) y Asturias 3 % (11 barcos).

En relación a lo anterior, me permito preguntar a la Comisión:

1. ¿Considera equitativo que a los buques de cerco de Galicia les corresponda un 24,86 % de las capturas de jurel, cuando son el 55 % de los buques? ¿No considera más equitativo y proporcional un método de reparto de acuerdo al número de tripulantes?

2. ¿Por qué motivo las capturas históricas de los años 2002 a 2011 son la base del 70 % del reparto, cuando el sector gallego está regulado desde el año 1982? ¿Por qué se eliminan del cómputo de las capturas históricas los años 2012 y 2013, en los que la flota gallega y la vasca tenían el mismo límite?

Respuesta de la Sra. Damanaki en nombre de la Comisión
(10 de junio de 2014)

La Comisión desea recordar a Su Señoría el principio general de que la asignación de las posibilidades de pesca entre las flotas nacionales se considera competencia de los Estados miembros, según lo dispuesto en el artículo 16, apartado 6, del Reglamento (UE) n° 1380/2013. El artículo 17 de ese mismo Reglamento dispone que, al asignar las posibilidades de pesca que tengan a su disposición, los Estados miembros deben aplicar criterios transparentes y objetivos, incluidos criterios de carácter medioambiental, social y económico, y que esos criterios pueden incluir, entre otros, el impacto de la pesca en el medio ambiente, el historial de cumplimiento, la contribución a la economía local y los niveles históricos de captura.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004315/14
to the Commission
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(7 April 2014)

Subject: Management plan for vessels registered to operate in the Cantabrian and North West Fishery

The fundamental purpose of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 on the common fisheries policy is to ensure that fishing activities are sustainable and consistently managed, and that they help provide food supplies. Articles 16 and 17 are particularly relevant as they refer to the allocation of fishing opportunities to Member States.

On 18 March, the Spanish Government published Order AAA/417/2014 of 17 March in their Official Bulletin, establishing a management plan for vessels registered to operate in the Cantabrian and North West Fishery. The Order determines the percentages of mackerel and horse mackerel opportunities allocated to seine boats in each region. Mackerel opportunities are shared out between the autonomous communities as follows: 48.11% to the Basque Country (69 vessels), 24.86% to Galicia (153 vessels), 24.03% to Cantabria (44 vessels) and 3% to Asturias (11 vessels).

1. Does the Commission believe it is fair to allocate seine boats from Galicia just 24.86% ofhorse mackerel catches when they make up 55% of the vessels operating there? Would itnot be fairer and more proportionate to divide catches according to crew numbers?

2. Why are 70% of allocations granted according to catch figures from 2002 to 2011, whenthe Galician sector has been regulated since 1982? Why are the figures for 2012 and2013, when Galician and Basque fleets had the same limit, omitted from the count?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(10 June 2014)

The Commission would like to refer the Honourable Member to the general principle that the allocation of fishing opportunities among national fleets is considered a matter for Member States in accordance with Article 16 (6) of Regulation (EU) n° 1380/2013. Article 17 of that regulation provides that when allocating the fishing opportunities available to them, Member States shall use transparent and objective criteria including those of an environmental, social and economic nature. These criteria may include, *inter alia*, the impact of fishing on the environment, the history of compliance, the contribution to the local economy and historic catch levels.