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 268/01)

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(English version)

Question for written answer P-013926/13
to the Commission
Nicole Sinclaire (NI)
(6 December 2013)

Subject: Gas supplies during the coming winter months

Ukraine has suspended gas imports from Russia, leaving its reserves lower than required to meet anticipated domestic demand over the coming winter months.

In the context of the failure of Ukraine to sign an association agreement with the EU, what effect does the Commission anticipate that this will have on European consumers who are reliant on the transit of Russian gas through Ukraine?

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

Currently more than half of the Russian gas deliveries to the European Union pass through Ukraine. This route is still the main supply source for the Member States in South-East Europe, notably for Romania, Bulgaria and Greece. Whilst a disruption of gas supplies through Ukraine would have an impact in the EU because of the volumes concerned, there are at present no concrete indications that would point towards such a possible disruption.

The Commission is constantly monitoring all the events that could have an impact on security of supply. The ongoing implementation of Regulation 994/2010 concerning measures to safeguard security of gas supplies increased the preparedness both on national and on European level.

Member States confirmed at the last meeting of the Gas Coordination Group on 17 December 2013 that there currently appear to be no immediate supply risks for their consumers. Member States also reiterated that due to the development of infrastructures — *inter alia* putting in place reverse flows to enable gas deliveries from the Western direction — they are in a better position to manage the situation in case a gas supply disruption from Russia via Ukraine — similar to the one in 2009 — would occur.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013927/13
to the Commission
Nicole Sinclaire (NI)
(6 December 2013)

Subject: EU funding to Ukraine

Could the Commission please provide details of the amount of funding which has been granted by the EU to the Ukrainian government, as well as to NGOs and other civil society actors in Ukraine, since November 2004?

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

From the beginning of 2005 until 2013, the EU committed EUR 1,564 million for assistance to be implemented in cooperation with the Ukrainian government. Bilateral assistance focused mainly on promoting good governance, the rule of law, public administration, energy, transport, environment, trade, border management, migration, local development, and regional development. Moreover assistance has been provided in the area of enhancing nuclear safety.

In addition, since 2004 civil society in Ukraine has benefited from over EUR 31 million in commitment appropriations from a variety of EU programmes and instruments (e.g. related to the promotion of human rights, support to non-state actors, migration and asylum policy, health, gender, the environment, and the Civil Society Facility under the ENPI). From 2004 to 2006, the EU committed about EUR 6 million for civil society projects in Ukraine, while for the period 2007-2013 commitments for civil society increased to EUR 25 million. EU funded activities cover a broad spectrum of issues, including the fight against trafficking and the protection of asylum-seekers, local development, the prevention of torture and ill-treatment, the protection of the rights of children and other vulnerable groups, electoral support, anti-discrimination, strengthening civil society oversight functions and governmental accountability.
The Honourable Member will find detailed information on the following web page:
http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/neighbourhood/country-cooperation/ukraine/ukraine_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer P-013998/13
to the Commission
William (The Earl of) Dartmouth (EFD)
(10 December 2013)

Subject: South Africa requesting access to a duty-free quota to supply EU sugar

In the Commission's response to my question of 16 May 2012 ([1]) on EU sugar imports, I was informed that the EU is currently negotiating with ACP countries under Economic Partnership Agreements ('EPA'). South Africa is an ACP country which is currently requesting access under the Southern African Development Community EPA to a duty-free quota for the supply of sugar to the EU. Imports in the last year have once again fallen more than one million tonnes short of the Commission's recognised requirements.

Has the Commission considered the benefits to EU consumers and cane refiners of granting duty-free access for South African sugar imports?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(14 January 2014)

The imports from the EPA/EBA countries are gradually increasing year by year. Preferential sugar imports from the EPA/EBA countries in marketing year 2012/13 were 1.92 million tonnes, the highest level ever, compared to 1.78 million tonnes in the previous marketing year.

The Commission confirms that in its negotiation of an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the Southern African Development Community EPA Group, in respect of any South African sugar access, it will seek a balanced agreement that takes into account the interests of all EU Member States, industries and consumers.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=WQ&reference=P-2012-005099&language=EN

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013999/13
a la Comisión
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(10 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Respeto de la liberalización del sector ferroviario

Se ha iniciado el proceso de liberalización del transporte ferroviario de pasajeros, pero se están poniendo muchos límites. Así, las empresas estatales SNCF y Renfe han formado la empresa Elypso para operar en España y Francia. Parece que se han pactado límites al tráfico de trenes. Se veta la entrada de los trenes franceses TGV en Madrid y de los AVE en París. Fuentes de Renfe han justificado ese veto por «motivos estrictamente técnicos». Es verdad que hay problemas técnicos relacionados con las diferentes infraestructuras de un país a otro, pero se sospecha que esas restricciones se han impuesto por motivos «estrictamente políticos» y tienen como objeto hacer que sea gradual o limitar el impacto de la entrada de una empresa competidora extranjera en un mercado nacional, es decir, por razones proteccionistas.

Hay que recordar que en el artículo 179 del Tratado de Funcionamiento de la Unión Europea (TFUE) se afirma que los operadores económicos y los entes regionales y locales deben participar plenamente en la creación de un espacio sin fronteras interiores. Añade expresamente que «la Unión contribuirá al establecimiento y al desarrollo de redes transeuropeas en los sectores de las infraestructuras de transportes».

La Comisión también ha desarrollado ampliamente la cuestión de la liberalización del sector ferroviario, en particular en una Comunicación de 11 se septiembre de 1996.

¿Tiene noticia la Comisión de la situación?

¿Considera la Comisión que el posible veto es conforme a las normas europeas relacionadas con la liberalización del sector ferroviario?

¿Piensa la Comisión intervenir de alguna manera para que se cumpla plenamente la liberalización del sector ferroviario?

Respuesta del Sr. Kallas en nombre de la Comisión
(11 de febrero de 2014)

La Comisión está analizando en estos momentos el caso concreto al que se refiere Su Señoría. En esta fase del análisis, parece que la interoperabilidad completa de los servicios se ve obstaculizada por varios motivos: el no establecimiento en ese corredor de Francia del Sistema Europeo de Gestión del Tráfico Ferroviario (ERTMS en sus siglas inglesas), la deficiente calidad de la infraestructura existente en un tramo específico del lado francés y la falta de autorización en Francia de los vehículos españoles que no cumplen plenamente las ETI ([1]). La Comisión, que ha adoptado recientemente seis propuestas legislativas para armonizar en toda la Unión las autorizaciones de vehículos y los certificados de seguridad, seguirá insistiendo en la necesidad de que todos los Estados miembros eliminen los retrasos sufridos y aceleren el despliegue del ERTMS en su territorio.

([1]) Especificaciones Técnicas de Interoperabilidad.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013999/13
to the Commission
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(10 December 2013)

Subject: Liberalisation of the railway sector

The process of liberalising passenger rail transport has begun, but many limits are being imposed. The state-owned companies SNCF and Renfe have created a company called Elypso to operate in Spain and France. However, it appears that an agreement to limit high-speed train traffic has been made. French TGV trains are prohibited from entering Madrid, and AVE trains are prohibited from entering Paris. Sources at Renfe have justified the prohibition as being for 'motivos estrictamente técnicos' ['strictly technical reasons']. It is true that technical problems exist in relation to infrastructure that differs from one country to another, but one suspects that these restrictions have been imposed for 'estrictamente políticos' ['strictly political'] reasons, and their aim is to limit the speed or impact of entry by a foreign competitor into a national market — in other words, for protectionist reasons.

It is important to bear in mind that, according to Article 179 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), economic operators and regional and local bodies should be full participants in the setting up of an area without internal frontiers. Furthermore, the Treaty expressly states that 'the Union shall contribute to the establishment and development of trans-European networks in the areas of transport […] infrastructures'.

The Commission has also addressed at length the issue of liberalisation of the railway sector, particularly in a communication of 11 September 1996.

Is the Commission aware of this situation?

Does the Commission take the view that this possible prohibition is in accordance with European standards on the liberalisation of the railway sector?

Does to Commission plan to take any action to ensure that the liberalisation of the railway sector is fully implemented?

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

The Commission is currently examining the specific case brought to its attention by the Honourable Member. At this stage of the analysis, full interoperability of these services seems to be obstructed by the lack of deployment of the European Rail Traffic Management System on this corridor in France, by the poor quality of infrastructure on a particular French section, as well as by the lack of authorisation of Spanish vehicles in France which are not fully TSI ([1]) compliant. The Commission recently adopted 6 legislative proposals for the harmonisation of vehicle authorisations and safety certificates throughout the Union. In parallel, the Commission will continue to insist that all Member States speed up the delayed deployment of the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS) in their territory.

([1]) Technical Specifications for Interoperability.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014000/13
a la Comisión
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(10 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Campañas en contra de las vacunas en Ucrania

La campaña de inmunización de Ucrania ha puesto a muchos jóvenes en situación de riesgo. Así, mientras que las campañas en contra de las vacunas que llevan a cabo distintos charlatanes están en pleno apogeo, algunos funcionarios están creando obstáculos adicionales a la inmunización. Por ejemplo, funcionarios de la Agencia Estatal de Medicamentos de Ucrania están alargando hasta seis meses e incluso más tiempo el plazo para la concesión de licencias a las vacunas (esta situación representa más del 43 % de todas las vacunas del país).

En consecuencia, cientos de miles de niños ucranianos no han tenido acceso a unas vacunas que son vitales (en particular, tuberculosis, hepatitis B, tos ferina, polio, etc.) en el primer mes de su vida. El sistema inmunitario de estos recién nacidos no tiene la suficiente madurez y, en consecuencia, estos bebés no pueden defenderse con éxito contra varias enfermedades peligrosas. Por otra parte, un diputado al Parlamento de Ucrania ha presentado una solicitud con respecto a una posible venalidad de los funcionarios de la Agencia Estatal de Medicamentos.

Según los representantes de los medios de comunicación de masas ucranianos, 350 000 niños ucranianos no tendrán acceso a estas vacunas vitales.

La OMS y Unicef han estimado que la situación es muy crítica en lo que a la polio se refiere. Se teme que en Ucrania se registre un brote de esta enfermedad, lo que constituiría un serio peligro para Europa.

En un informe al Parlamento Europeo (COM(2013)0443), la Comisión aborda el problema de la disponibilidad insuficiente de ciertos remedios para niños, en particular en lo que se refiere a las vacunas. ¿Conoce la Comisión esa situación? ¿Tiene intención la Comisión de emprender algún tipo de iniciativa para dar seguimiento a dicho informe y garantizar que los niños ucranianos puedan acceder a las vacunas vitales?

Respuesta del Sr. Füle en nombre de la Comisión
(11 de febrero de 2014)

Ucrania se ha visto confrontada a un grave problema con la vacunación contra la poliomelitis. La OMS y la Unicef indican que el 40 % de la población vacunable no lo está y que hay una gran penuria de las vacunas necesarias. Ambas organizaciones han confirmado que este déficit se ha debido a la mala organización de las campañas de vacunación durante los cinco últimos años.

La OMS y la Unicef han puesto en marcha una campaña de alerta rápida y han informado de ello al Consejo de Ministros de Ucrania y al Gabinete del Presidente.

La UE se mantiene en estrecho contacto con la OMS y la Unicef y planteará el tema ante las autoridades ucranianas en coordinación con esos organismos.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014000/13
to the Commission
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(10 December 2013)

Subject: Anti-vaccination campaigns in Ukraine

Ukraine's immunisation campaign has put many children at risk. Even as the anti-vaccination campaigns led by various charlatans are at their full height, some officials are creating additional obstacles to immunisation. For example, officials at Ukraine's State Medicines Agency are increasing the time required for licensing of vaccines to six months and even longer (this situation applies to more than 43% of all vaccines in the country).

In consequence, hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian children have not had access to some vaccines that are vital (in particular, tuberculosis, hepatitis B, whooping cough, polio, etc.) in their first month of life. These newborns' immune systems are not sufficiently developed and, as a result, these babies cannot defend themselves effectively against various dangerous illnesses. Furthermore, a member of the Ukrainian Parliament has made a request regarding possible corruption on the part of officials at the State Medicines Agency.

According to the Ukrainian media, 350 000 Ukrainian children will not have access to these vital vaccines.

The WHO and Unicef believe that the situation is very critical as far as polio is concerned. An outbreak of the illness in Ukraine, which would pose a serious danger to Europe, is feared.

In a report to the European Parliament (COM(2013) 0443), the Commission has addressed the problem of insufficient availability of certain medicines for children, particularly vaccines. Is the Commission aware of this situation? Does the Commission intend to undertake an initiative of some kind to follow up on this report and ensure that Ukrainian children are able to access vital vaccines?

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

Ukraine has been facing a serious problem with polio vaccination. The WHO and Unicef indicate that 40% of the eligible population is not vaccinated, as well as a big shortage of the vaccines needed. Both organisations have confirmed that this gap has appeared due to the poor organisation of vaccination campaigns during the last five years.

WHO and Unicef have launched an early warning campaign and informed the Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers as well as the President's Administration.

The EU is in close contact with WHO and Unicef and it will raise the issue with the Ukrainian authorities in coordination with these agencies.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-014001/13
an die Kommission
Britta Reimers (ALDE) und Alexander Graf Lambsdorff (ALDE)
(10. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: LIFE+ Projekt Düffel

Aktuell ist die Kommission an der Finanzierung des LIFE+-Projekts LIFE11 NAT/DE/000347 (LIFE Project „Düffel") beteiligt.

Mehrmals haben betroffene Akteure vor Ort darauf hingewiesen, dass Grundvoraussetzungen für die Förderfähigkeit des Projektes mit falschen Tatsachen belegt wurden. In ihren Antworten betont die Kommission zwar, dass sie kontinuierlich die Projektumsetzung und Fördervereinbarung evaluiert, weist jedoch die endgültige Verantwortung von sich und nennt ein „unabhängiges Expertenteam" sowie das Land Nordrhein-Westfalen und den NABU als Projekt- und somit Ansprechpartner.

1. Obwohl in der Wiedergabe der Interessenlage lokaler Akteure offensichtlich falsche Tatsachen vorliegen, läuft das Projekt weiter, mit dem Hinweis darauf, dass es nicht üblich sei, Fördervorhaben abzubrechen, solange sich der Projektträger an die Fördervereinbarung hält. Wie kann eine Fördervereinbarung Bestandskraft haben, die auf der Grundlage falscher Informationen unterzeichnet wurde?

2. Im Hinblick auf den oben genannten Punkt sowie auf die infrage gestellte Vereinbarkeit des LIFE+-Projects „Düffel" mit der Wasserrahmenrichtlinie und den Bedingungen für andere Vogelschutzgebiete bezüglich des Aufstellens von Windkraftanlagen verweist die Kommission auf die Bewertung eines „unabhängigen Expertenteams". Wer sind die Mitglieder dieses Expertenteams?

3. Wenn die Fördervereinbarung nach Auffassung der Kommission dennoch Bestandskraft haben sollte, welche Schritte hat die Kommission unternommen, um den berechtigten Anliegen der Stakeholder, deren Positionen bewusst inkorrekt dargestellt werden, Rechnung zu tragen?

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

Der Vorschlag für das Vorhaben LIFE11 NAT DE 347 wurde von einem Team unabhängiger Sachverständiger und von der Kommission beurteilt. Die Kommission hat die von Vertretern der örtlichen Interessengruppen seitdem zusätzlich übermittelten Informationen gründlich geprüft und kann daraus nicht schließen, dass die in dem ursprünglichen Projektvorschlag enthaltenen Informationen falsch waren.

Die Kommission trägt die Endverantwortung für die Beurteilung der eingereichten Vorschläge und kann die Namen der daran als Auftragnehmer beteiligten Sachverständigen nicht bekanntgeben.

Die von den Vertretern der örtlichen Interessengruppen vorgebrachten Bedenken wurden in der Überprüfungsphase des Auswahlverfahrens und bei zwei Sitzungen berücksichtigt, die zu einem späteren Zeitpunkt mit Vertretern der örtlichen Landwirte in Brüssel stattfanden. Zudem hat die Kommission an einer Sitzung in Kranenburg, Deutschland, teilgenommen, um Möglichkeiten zu prüfen, die widersprüchlichen Interessen der Fördermittelempfänger, der deutschen regionalen und nationalen Behörden und der örtlichen Landwirte in Einklang zu bringen. Es liegen keinerlei Beweise dafür vor, dass bewusst falsche Informationen übermittelt wurden.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014001/13
to the Commission
Britta Reimers (ALDE) and Alexander Graf Lambsdorff (ALDE)
(10 December 2013)

Subject: Düffel LIFE+ Project

The Commission is currently helping to fund the LIFE+ Project LIFE11 NAT/DE/000347 ('Düffel' LIFE Project).

On several occasions, local stakeholders have pointed out that incorrect facts were provided to demonstrate the project's fulfilment of the basic eligibility requirements. Although, in its answers, the Commission stresses that it continually evaluates the implementation of the project and the funding agreement, it denies ultimate responsibility and cites an 'independent team of experts' and the federal state of North-Rhine-Westphalia and the German Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union (NABU) as the project partners and therefore the contact points.

1. Although the statement of the interests of local stakeholders clearly contains incorrect facts, the project continues, with the indication that it is not customary to discontinue project funding, as long as the project management abides by the funding agreement. How can a funding agreement that was signed on the basis of incorrect information continue to be valid?

2. With regard to the above point and the contested compatibility of the 'Düffel' LIFE+ Project with the Water Framework Directive and the conditions for other bird protection areas with regard to the erection of wind turbines, the Commission refers to the evaluation of an 'independent team of experts'. Who are the members of the team of experts?

3. If, in the Commission's opinion, the funding agreement is nevertheless valid, what steps has it taken to take account of the legitimate concerns of the stakeholders, whose positions are deliberately falsely represented?

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

The proposal for project LIFE11 NAT DE 347 was evaluated by a team of independent experts as well as by the Commission. The Commission carefully examined the additional information provided since by representatives of the local stakeholders and cannot conclude that the information provided in the original project proposal was incorrect.

The Commission is ultimately responsible for the evaluation of each submitted proposal and cannot disclose the names of the subcontracted experts involved.

The concerns voiced by the representatives of local stakeholders were taken into account during the revision phase of the selection procedure as well as during two later meetings held in Brussels with representatives of the local farmers. The Commission also took part in a meeting in Kranenburg, Germany, aiming to explore how to balance the diverging interests of the project beneficiaries, the German regional and national administrations and the local farmers. No evidence was ever provided proving any deliberate false statement.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014002/13
to the Commission
William (The Earl of) Dartmouth (EFD)
(10 December 2013)

Subject: Inbuilt contradiction in negotiating FTAs with developing nations

Is it the opinion of the Commission that there is an in-built contradiction in negotiating free trade agreements with developing countries, whereby DG Agriculture, rather than DG Trade, is responsible for the mediation of access to the EU market for food and agricultural produce?

Question for written answer E-014003/13
to the Commission
William (The Earl of) Dartmouth (EFD)
(10 December 2013)

Subject: 'Sensitive product' status of sugar in future Free Trade Agreements

Sugar beet quotas will expire in 2017, permitting EU producers to once again export unlimited volumes on the world market. This follows many years of yield and efficiency improvements in beet farming and beet processing, which have made Europe a competitive producer ([1]) of sugar on the world market.

Will the Commission therefore continue to regard sugar as a 'sensitive product' in future Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), given that Thailand, India and Brazil, three competitive producers of raw sugar, are all currently involved in negotiating FTAs with Europe?

Question for written answer E-014004/13
to the Commission
William (The Earl of) Dartmouth (EFD)
(10 December 2013)

Subject: Need for competition and consumer choice within cane sugar refining sector FTA negotiations

The Commission ([2]) has stated on many occasions that the EU sugar market is highly concentrated. Most analysts believe that this concentration will increase in 2017 due to the abolition of the sugar beet quotas, whilst the Commission's own report ([3]) 'Prospects for Agricultural Markets and Income in the EU 2012-2022' forecasts a severe contraction in imports of up to 60%.

Will the Commission take into account the thousands of jobs in the cane refining sector and the need for competition and consumer choice in the sugar sector during the ongoing Free Trade Agreement negotiations?

Joint answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(10 February 2014)

The EU has launched bilateral free trade agreement negotiations with key partners including South Africa within the SADC EPA, Thailand, India and MERCOSUR. Those agreements will encompass improved market access for agricultural products taking into account EU sensitivities. The Commission is fully aware of the sensitivity of the EU sugar market and the diverging interests of the stakeholders of this market, including EU producers, EU processors of cane sugar, EU industry users of sugar, as well as EU consumers. The Commission recognises that when concluding the ongoing Free Trade Agreements, there is a need to seek balanced agreements that take into account the interests of all these stakeholders and the evolution of the EU sugar market.

The Commission avoids divergences in policy alluded to by the Honourable Member by operating on a collegiate basis.

([1]) http://www.lafranceagricole.fr/actualite-agricole/filiere-sucriere-cristal-union-veut-augmenter-de-15-sa-sole-betteraviere-en-quatre-ans-77956.html
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/competition/ecn/food_report_en.pdf
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/markets-and-prices/medium-term-outlook/2012/fullrep_en.pdf

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014005/13
à la Commission
Philippe de Villiers (EFD)
(10 décembre 2013)

Objet: Accord de libre-échange entre l'Union européenne et l'Arménie

La proposition d'accord de libre-échange entre l'Union européenne et l'Arménie a été annulée après que cette dernière lui a préféré la proposition russe d'union douanière eurasienne.

Les relations étroites entretenues par certains États membres de l'Union avec l'Arménie, dont la France, rendent cette décision surprenante.

1. Quel impact ce manque d'attrait de l'Union européenne aura-t-il sur la politique de voisinage européenne?

2. Quels montants l'Union européenne a-t-elle versés, dans le cadre de cette politique de voisinage, à l'Arménie?

3. Quelles seront les conséquences sur les relations commerciales des États membres avec l'Arménie?

Réponse donnée par Mme Ashton, Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante au nom de la Commission
(11 février 2014)

1. L'association politique et l'intégration économique avec l'UE, dans le cadre du partenariat oriental, offrent à long terme des avantages substantiels à nos partenaires. En fin de compte, c'est à eux de décider s'ils acceptent ou rejettent cette offre.

2. Au cours de la dernière période de programmation des interventions de l'UE, 97,4 millions d'euros ont été alloués à l'Arménie de 2007 à 2010 et 157,3 millions d'euros de 2011 à 2013 dans le cadre de l'IEVP.

Après que l'Arménie a annoncé son intention d'adhérer à l'union douanière eurasienne, les aides de l'UE liées à la mise en œuvre de l'accord d'association et de libre-échange complet et approfondi ont été revues à la baisse de 53 millions.

Par contre, la Commission a salué les progrès de l'Arménie en matière de démocratie et de respect des Droits de l'homme en lui accordant deux dotations selon le principe des gains proportionnels aux mises («more for more»), au titre du programme d'intégration et de coopération en faveur des pays du voisinage oriental (15 millions d'euros en 2012 et 25 millions d'euros en 2013).

Si l'on tient compte de la réduction des interventions et des dotations supplémentaires mentionnées ci-dessus, l'aide de l'UE à l'Arménie dans le cadre de l'IEVP s'est élevée à 241,7 millions d'euros au cours de la période 2007-2013.

3. L'écart entre les engagements tarifaires contractés par l'Arménie dans le cadre de l'OMC et ceux de l'union douanière pilotée par la Russie (plus protectionniste) devra être comblé par un compromis sur les droits de douane pour les produits concernés, ce qui implique un processus d'ajustement dans le respect des règles de l'OMC. En outre, les ajustements aux droits de douane plus élevés de l'union douanière eurasienne créeront des entraves aux échanges commerciaux avec la plupart des pays, notamment l'UE, et les coûts seront répercutés sur les importateurs et les consommateurs arméniens.

En tant que membre de l'union douanière eurasienne, l'Arménie ne sera plus juridiquement en mesure de mener et mettre en œuvre une politique commerciale autonome, ni de conclure des accords de libre-échange bilatéraux profitables avec d'autres partenaires importants, comme l'UE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014005/13
to the Commission
Philippe de Villiers (EFD)
(10 December 2013)

Subject: Free trade agreement between the European Union and Armenia

The proposal for a free trade agreement between the European Union and Armenia was cancelled after the latter chose the Russian proposal for a Eurasian Customs Union instead.

This is a surprising decision, given the close relations which some EU Member States, including France, maintain with Armenia.

1. What impact will this lack of attractiveness of the European Union have on the European Neighbourhood Policy?

2. How much funding has the European Union granted to Armenia under the neighbourhood policy?

3. What will the consequences be for trade relations between Member States and Armenia?

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

1. Political association and economic integration with the EU, within the framework of the Eastern Partnership, offer significant long term benefits to our partners. Ultimately, it is for our partners to decide whether or not to take up this offer.

2. During the last programming period for EU assistance, EUR 97.4 million were allocated to Armenia in 2007-2010 and EUR 157.3 million in 2011-2013 under the ENPI.

Following Armenia's announcement to join the Eurasian Customs Union, EU assistance linked to implementation of the AA/DCFTA was revised downwards by EUR 53 million.

On the other hand, following progress in democracy and respect of human rights, the Commission granted two 'more for more' allocations to Armenia from the Eastern Partnership Integration and Cooperation (EaPIC) programme in 2012 (EUR 15 million) and 2013 (EUR 25 million).

Following the reduction and the additional allocations mentioned, the EU assistance to Armenia from the ENPI amounted to EUR 241.7 million in 2007-2013.

3. The gap between Armenia's WTO tariff commitments and those of the Russia-led Customs Union (more protective) would need to be bridged by a compromise for the tariffs on affected products, implying an adjustment process in line with WTO rules.. Moreover, adjustments to the higher tariffs of the CU will raise trade barriers with most of the countries, including the EU and thereby incur costs for Armenian importers and consumers.

As CU member, Armenia will no longer be legally able to conduct and implement an autonomous trade policy. It will no longer be legally able to conclude beneficial bilateral FTAs with other important partners, such as the EU.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014006/13
au Conseil
Philippe de Villiers (EFD)
(10 décembre 2013)

Objet: Directive relative au détachement des travailleurs

Les Français envisagent une explosion sociale. Dans un récent sondage, 76 % estiment certain ou probable son avènement.

Le chômage actuel, très élevé, la crise de la zone euro, le détachement des travailleurs, les manques de perspectives d'amélioration à court et long termes sont évidemment à pointer du doigt.

Dans un pays comme la France, le travail échoit aux travailleurs étrangers détachés, moins chers, dont les salaires et les cotisations sociales sont minimums.

Quelles décisions le Conseil et les États membres qui y siègent comptent-ils prendre afin de contrecarrer les effets négatifs de cette directive relative au détachement des travailleurs?

Réponse
(24 février 2014)

L'Honorable Parlementaire sait certainement que le 9 décembre 2013, le Conseil a dégagé une orientation générale sur la proposition de la Commission, et qu'il a à présent entamé un processus intense de négociations en première lecture avec le Parlement en vue de parvenir à un accord avant la fin de la législature en cours.

L'objectif de la proposition est d'améliorer la surveillance et le respect des règles relatives au détachement de travailleurs figurant dans la directive 96/71/CE, qui réglemente les conditions d'emploi des travailleurs temporairement détachés dans un autre état membre dans le cadre de services transfontières et prévoit que les pays d'accueil devraient veiller à ce que les travailleurs détachés sur leur territoire y bénéficient d'une protection minimale (santé et sécurité, horaire de travail maximal, salaire minimum, etc.).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014006/13
to the Council
Philippe de Villiers (EFD)
(10 December 2013)

Subject: Posting of Workers Directive

The people of France are expecting a social explosion. According to a recent survey, 76% believe it will definitely or probably happen.

The current very high level of unemployment, the euro area crisis, the posting of workers and the lack of short- and long-term prospects for improvement are obviously to blame.

In a country like France, work goes to foreign posted workers who are cheaper and for whom employers pay minimum wages and social contributions.

What decisions do the Council and the Member States which sit on it intend to take in order to offset the negative effects of the Posting of Workers Directive?

Reply
(24 February 2014)

As the Honourable Member is certainly aware, on 9 December 2013 the Council reached a general approach on the Commission proposal and has now started an intensive process of negotiations in first reading with Parliament with the aim of reaching an agreement before the end of the current legislative term.

The objective is to improve the supervision and enforcement of the rules on the posting of workers contained in Directive (96/71/EC). This directive regulates the employment conditions for workers temporarily posted to another Member State in connection with cross-border services and prescribes that host countries should ensure that posted workers have a minimum protection in the host country (health and safety, maximum working hours, minimum wage, etc.).

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014007/13
à la Commission
Philippe de Villiers (EFD)
(10 décembre 2013)

Objet: Situation de Malte

L'île méditerranéenne de Malte a vu arriver sur son territoire plus de 1 200 immigrés depuis le début de l'année.

En proportion avec sa population, Malte a le plus grand nombre de demandeurs d'asile en Europe, avec 21,7 demandeurs pour 1 000 habitants.

1. Le principe de solidarité est au cœur de cette politique d'asile et d'immigration. De quelles aides, financières et techniques, Malte a-t-elle déjà bénéficié dans le cadre de Dublin II?

2. De quels moyens les États membres disposent-ils encore pour tenter de diminuer le flux de migrants dans leurs eaux territoriales?

Réponse donnée par Mme Malmström au nom de la Commission
(11 février 2014)

Malte est l'État membre qui a accueilli le plus de demandeurs d'asile par habitant, même si le nombre de 21,7 demandeurs pour 1 000 habitants est cumulatif et couvre plusieurs années. En 2012, Malte comptait 4,9 demandeurs d'asile pour 1 000 habitants et, tout en étant le plus élevé de l'Union, ce chiffre dépassait de peu celui de la Suède, à savoir 4,6 demandeurs d'asile pour 1 000 habitants.

La Commission convient que le principe de solidarité est au cœur de la politique en matière d'asile et d'immigration. Malte a ainsi reçu la somme de 18,09 millions d'euros du Fonds européen pour les réfugiés 2007-2013. En ce qui concerne l'assistance technique, Malte a bénéficié des projets européens de répartition à partir de Malte (Eurema) qui, combinés aux efforts bilatéraux, ont permis, depuis 2005, la relocalisation de plus de 690 bénéficiaires d'une protection internationale, de Malte vers d'autres États membres et États associés.

Frontex coordonne et cofinance des opérations conjointes le long des frontières maritimes méridionales de l'UE, afin de freiner l'immigration clandestine et d'aider ainsi les États membres concernés. Malte, comme tout autre État membre, peut bénéficier d'un tel soutien opérationnel sur demande. Jusqu'à présent, Malte a décidé de n'accueillir aucune opération conjointe de Frontex.

Plus généralement, dans le cadre de l'approche globale de l'UE sur la question des migrations et de la mobilité, les États membres et l'UE entendent renforcer le dialogue et la coopération avec les pays tiers afin de lutter contre l'immigration clandestine vers l'UE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014007/13
to the Commission
Philippe de Villiers (EFD)
(10 December 2013)

Subject: Situation in Malta

Since the beginning of the year, the Mediterranean island of Malta has seen more than 1 200 immigrants arrive on its shores.

Malta has the highest number of asylum-seekers as a proportion of its population in Europe, with 21.7 asylum-seekers per 1 000 inhabitants.

1. The principle of solidarity is at the heart of this asylum and immigration policy. What financial and technical assistance has Malta already received under Dublin II?

2. What instruments are still available to Member States in order to try to reduce the flow of migrants in their territorial waters?

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

Malta received the largest number of asylum applicants per capita of all Member States, although the figure of 21.7 asylum-seekers per 1000 inhabitants is a cumulative one referring to an intake of several years. The 2012 figure for Malta was 4.9 asylum-seekers per 1000 inhabitants and whilst this figure was the highest in the EU, it was only just ahead of Sweden at 4.6 applicants per 1000 inhabitants.

The Commission agrees that the principle of solidarity is at the heart of asylum and migration policy. Malta received EUR 18.09 million from the European Refugee Fund 2007-13. In terms of technical assistance, Malta has benefited from the European Relocation from Malta (EUREMA) projects that, together with bilateral efforts, have seen more than 690 beneficiaries of international protection relocated from Malta to other EU and Associated States since 2005.

Frontex coordinates and co-finances joint operations along the southern maritime borders of the EU with the objective of curbing irregular immigration thus assisting the affected Member States. Such operational support is available for Malta and any other Member States upon their request. Up to now, Malta has chosen not to host any Frontex joint operation.

More generally, within the framework of the EU Global Approach to Migration and Mobility, the EU and its Member States aim to strengthen dialogue and cooperation with third countries with the objective of fighting irregular migration to the EU.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014009/13
à la Commission
Philippe de Villiers (EFD)
(10 décembre 2013)

Objet: Rapport de la Cour des comptes européenne

Le 5 novembre 2013, la Cour des comptes européenne a dénoncé, dans un nouveau rapport, les problèmes liés au budget de l'Union européenne pour l'exercice 2012. Et, si le budget a été validé, des erreurs importantes n'en subsistent pas moins.

En effet, «dans la plupart des domaines de dépenses du budget de l'UE, la législation en vigueur n'est pas toujours pleinement respectée». Ainsi, la Cour recommande l'optimisation des ressources visées parce que «le taux d'erreur pour les dépenses est de 4,8 % pour 2012 (contre 3,9 % pour 2011)», ce qui correspond à 6,6 milliards d'euros. Ce niveau significatif d'erreur est signe d'une mauvaise gestion.

Face aux problèmes incontestables dans la gestion du budget qui lui est alloué et à la suite des remarques de la Cour des comptes européenne, quelles décisions la Commission compte-t-elle prendre?

Réponse donnée par M. Lewandowski au nom de la Commission
(29 janvier 2014)

En ce qui concerne le taux d'erreur global mentionné dans le rapport annuel de la Cour des comptes, la Commission tient à souligner que ce taux a fortement diminué par rapport aux années antérieures à 2009. Outre les modifications apportées par la Cour à sa méthodologie, la Commission a constaté que la légère augmentation de ce chiffre d'une année à l'autre peut en grande partie s'expliquer par

a. la complexité des règles d'admissibilité;

b. les vérifications insuffisantes effectuées par les États membres sur les dépenses; ainsi que par

c. le non-respect des règles en matière de marchés publics au niveau des États membres.

La Commission a entrepris de remédier à bon nombre de ces lacunes en apportant des améliorations à la réglementation pour la période de financement 2014-2020. Les principaux efforts portent notamment sur l'introduction de mesures de simplification, la protection du budget de l'Union au moyen de mesures préventives/correctrices et le renforcement de la coopération avec les États membres.

La Commission souhaite également souligner que près de 80 % du budget de l'Union relèvent de la gestion partagée et que, dans ce cadre, elle adopte une approche pluriannuelle de la protection du budget de l'UE, en procédant à des corrections et à des recouvrements au cours des années qui suivent l'année durant laquelle les erreurs se produisent. La Cour des comptes suit quant à elle une approche annuelle, faisant abstraction de la plupart de ces corrections ([1]). À ce titre, le taux d'erreur annuel de la Cour ne permet pas de déterminer les montants dépensés de façon irrégulière et la Commission estime que ce taux ne devrait pas être considéré comme le seul indicateur de performance de la gestion et du contrôle pluriannuels des fonds de l'Union.

([1]) Voir également la communication de la Commission sur la protection du budget de l'Union européenne [COM(2013) 682 final], qui fournit de plus amples informations.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014009/13
to the Commission
Philippe de Villiers (EFD)
(10 December 2013)

Subject: Report of the European Court of Auditors

In its new report, published on 5 November 2013, the European Court of Auditors highlighted problems linked to the European Union's budget for the financial year 2012. Though the budget has been signed off, significant errors nonetheless remain.

'In most spending areas of the EU budget … the legislation in force is still not fully complied with'. The Court thus recommends optimising the resources in question because 'the error rate for spending is 4.8% for the 2012 financial year (3.9% in 2011)', which corresponds to EUR 6.6 billion. This significant error rate is indicative of mismanagement.

Given the undeniable problems in the management of the budget allocated to it and in view of the comments of the European Court of Auditors, what decisions will the Commission take?

Answer given by Mr Lewandowski on behalf of the Commission
(29 January 2014)

Concerning the overall error rate reported in the Court's Annual Report, the Commission would like to underline that, this has significantly decreased as compared to the years before 2009. Apart from the Court's changes to its methodology, the Commission has identified that the slight year-on-year increase of the figure can be mainly explained by

(a) complex eligibility rules;

(b) poor verifications of expenditure by Member States (MS); and

(c) non-compliance with public procurement rules at MS level.

The Commission has undertaken to address many of these weaknesses by improving the rules for the 2014-2020 financing period. Main efforts include the introduction of simplification measures, the protection of the EU budget through preventive/corrective measures, and a stronger cooperation with MS.

The Commission would also like to underline that around 80% of the EU budget falls under shared management where it follows a multiannual approach to the protection of EU budget, applying corrections and recoveries in the years following the year in which errors occur. The Court follows an annual approach and does not take into account most of these corrections. ([1]) As such, the Court's annual error rate is not a measure of misspent money and the Commission considers that it should not be seen as the only indicator of performance of the multiannual management and control of EU funds.

([1]) See also the Commission's Communication on the protection of the EU budget (COM(2013) 682) which provides more detailed information.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej P-014010/13
do Komisji
Filip Kaczmarek (PPE)
(10 grudnia 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Przyszłość Punktów Konsultacyjnych Krajowego Systemu Usług w Polsce

Punkty Konsultacyjne Krajowego Systemu Usług (PK KSU) odgrywają unikatową w skali Polski rolę w kreowaniu i wspomaganiu przedsiębiorczości wpisując się w rządowe i ogólnoeuropejskie tendencje ułatwień w tym zakresie. Usługi sieci PK KSU świadczone są od 13 lat. Z pomocy PK KSU od lutego 2012 r. skorzystało ponad 50 tys. osób zamierzających rozpocząć działalność gospodarczą, a dzięki współpracy z PK KSU powstało 4 tys. nowych firm. Świadczone dla nich usługi obejmują m.in. pomoc w przygotowaniu dokumentów niezbędnych do rejestracji działalności gospodarczej, konsultacje nt. profilu planowanej działalności, wsparcie na etapie wyboru formy organizacyjno-prawnej czy podatkowej planowanej działalności gospodarczej, zagadnienia z zakresu prawa zamówień publicznych czy wdrożenia innowacji. Dzięki uzyskanej konsultacji w PK KSU klienci pokonują liczne bariery i problemy, z którymi przyszło im samodzielnie borykać się w codziennej roli przedsiębiorcy. Klientami sieci są w przeważającej mierze mikro i małe przedsiębiorstwa.

Jak obecne, krytyczne uwagi Komisji odnośnie realizowanego projektu PK KSU, który zakończy się z dniem 31.12.2013 r., przełożą się na przyszłą decyzję Komisji w zakresie projektów dotyczących wspierania przedsiębiorczości?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza László Andora w imieniu Komisji
(14 stycznia 2014 r.)

Komisja nie może podjąć decyzji w sprawie działań specjalnych mających na celu udzielenie wsparcia z europejskich funduszy strukturalnych i inwestycyjnych w kolejnym okresie programowania. Zgodnie z zasadami zarządzania dzielonego, państwa członkowskie są odpowiedzialne za wybór projektów. Kolejny okres programowania jeszcze się nie rozpoczął, a władze Polski nie przedstawiły do tej pory żadnego formalnego wniosku w sprawie środków, które mają być współfinansowane przez UE.

Jeżeli władze polskie planują wdrożyć działania na rzecz wsparcia przedsiębiorstw w Polsce (na wzór PK KSU) poprzez europejskie fundusze strukturalne i inwestycyjne, Komisja zwróci się do Polski aby uwzględniła doświadczenia w zakresie skuteczności i efektywności tych środków w trakcie obecnego okresu programowania. Celem takiego działania jest osiąganie lepszych wyników przy planowaniu i wdrażaniu pomocy UE w przyszłości.

Przy tworzeniu nowego systemu zapewniającego wsparcie dla małych, średnich i mikro przedsiębiorstw w Polsce należy również właściwie rozpatrzyć wnioski i uwagi zainteresowanych stron, zgodnie z zasadą partnerstwa.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-014010/13
to the Commission
Filip Kaczmarek (PPE)
(10 December 2013)

Subject: Future of the Consultation Points in the National Services Network in Poland

The Consultation Points in the National Services Network (PK KSU) play a unique role in Poland in creating and promoting entrepreneurship as part of government and European efforts to facilitate enterprise. The PK KSU network has been providing services for 13 years. Since February 2012, over 50 000 people have received help from the PK KSU to start a business, and thanks to cooperation with the PK KSU some 4 000 new firms have been created. The services provided to them include help in preparing the documents needed to register a business, consultancy regarding the planned business profile, support at the stage of selecting the organisational, legal and tax status of the planned business, and issues concerning public contract law and the implementation of innovations. With the aid of the consultancy services provided by the PK KSU, clients are able to overcome the numerous barriers and problems they face every day as entrepreneurs. The majority of the clients are micro and small businesses.

How will the Commission's current criticisms of the PK KSU project, which ends on 31 December 2013, affect its future decision on enterprise support projects?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(14 January 2014)

The Commission is not in a position to decide on special action to provide enterprises with support from the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) in the forthcoming programming period. In accordance with the rules of shared management, the Member States are responsible for selecting the projects. The forthcoming programming period has not yet started and Poland has not put forward any formal proposal to date for measures to be co-financed by the EU.

When the Polish authorities plan to implement activities to support enterprises in Poland (along the lines of PK KSU) through the ESIF, the Commission will ask Poland to take account of experience in the effectiveness and efficiency of such measures during the current programming period. The aim is to achieve better results when programming and implementing EU assistance in the future.

The stakeholders' conclusions and observations should also be duly examined, in line with the partnership principle, when a new system for providing support for small, medium-sized and micro-enterprises in Poland is being prepared.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-014011/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(10 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Αποφάσεις ΕΔΑΔ κατά της Τουρκίας

Έξι χρόνια μετά την τελεσίδικη καταδίκη της Τουρκίας από το ΕΔΑΔ για την υπόθεση «Ξενίδης-Αρέστης» και τρία χρόνια μετά την έκδοση ενδιάμεσου ψηφίσματος από την Επιτροπή Υπουργών του Συμβουλίου της Ευρώπης (ΣτΕ), με το οποίο εκαλείτο η Τουρκία να καταβάλει στους δικαιωθέντες τις επιδικασθείσες αποζημιώσεις, δεν έχει καταβληθεί ακόμη ούτε ένα ευρώ.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Πώς εξηγεί την παράλογη και περιφρονητική προς τις αποφάσεις του ΕΔΑΔ στάση της Τουρκίας, ως υποψήφιας χώρας για ένταξη στην ΕΕ;

2. Γιατί επιτρέπεται στην Τουρκία, τέσσερα χρόνια μετά την καταδίκη της από το ΕΔΑΔ να μην εφαρμόζει την καταδικαστική και τελεσίδικη απόφασή του για την υπόθεση «Βαρνάβας και άλλοι κατά της Τουρκίας»;

3. Γιατί η ΕΕ επιτρέπει σε μια υποψήφια προς ένταξη χώρα να πλήττει τόσο κατάφωρα την αξιοπιστία και το κύρος του ΣτΕ, του ΕΔΑΔ και της ίδιας της ΕΕ;

Απάντηση του κ. Füle εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(12 Φεβρουαρίου 2014)

Η ΕΕ έχει καλέσει επανειλημμένως την Τουρκία να εντείνει τις προσπάθειές της για την πλήρη εφαρμογή όλων των αποφάσεων του Ευρωπαϊκού Δικαστηρίου των Ανθρωπίνων Δικαιωμάτων ως μέρος των διεθνών της υποχρεώσεων.

Η Επιτροπή θέτει αυτά τα θέματα στις τουρκικές αρχές με κάθε ευκαιρία, όπως, μεταξύ άλλων, στις ετήσιες εκθέσεις προόδου για τη χώρα.

Η Επιτροπή παραπέμπει την κα βουλευτή στην έκθεση προόδου για την Τουρκία του Οκτωβρίου 2013 ([1]) για ενημέρωση σχετικά με την πορεία της εκτέλεσης των αποφάσεων του Ευρωπαϊκού Δικαστηρίου των Ανθρωπίνων Δικαιωμάτων για τις υποθέσεις «Ξενίδη-Αρέστη» και «Varnava και άλλοι κατά Τουρκίας».

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/strategy-and-progress-report/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014011/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(10 December 2013)

Subject: ECHR decisions against Turkey

Six years after the final conviction of Turkey by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in the 'Xenidis Arestes' case, and three years after an intermediate vote was issued by the Commission of Ministers of the Council of Europe (CoE), under which Turkey was called upon to pay to the winning parties the specified compensation, not a single euro has yet been paid.

1. How does the Commission explain the unreasonable and contemptuous attitude of Turkey, as an EU accession candidate country, towards the decisions of the ECHR?

2. Why is Turkey allowed, four years after its conviction at the EHCR, to avoid implementing its conviction in the final decision in the case 'Varnava and others v Turkey'?

3. Why does the EU allow a candidate country for accession to attack the credibility and authority of the CoE, the ECHR and the EU itself so blatantly?

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

The EU has repeatedly called on Turkey to strengthen its efforts to fully implement all the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights as part of its international obligations.

The Commission raises these issues with the Turkish authorities on all appropriate occasions including in its annual Progress Reports.

The Commission refers the Honourable Member to the October 2013 Progress Report on Turkey ([1]) for an update on the state of execution of the 'Xenides-Arestis' and 'Varnava and others v Turkey' European Court of Human Rights decisions.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/strategy-and-progress-report/index_en.htm

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-014012/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(10 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Παιδική εργασία

Στο στόχαστρο του Συμβουλίου της Ευρώπης (ΣτΕ) έχει μπει η λιτότητα, αφού σε πρόσφατες δηλώσεις του ο αρμόδιος Επίτροπος Ανθρωπίνων Δικαιωμάτων του ΣτΕ, Νιλς Μουίζνιεκς, έχει ασκήσει σφοδρή κριτική κατά των κυβερνήσεων που, εφαρμόζοντας μέτρα λιτότητας, «έχουν ξεχάσει τις υποχρεώσεις τους για σεβασμό των ανθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων και κυρίως την προστασία των πλέον ευάλωτων ομάδων πληθυσμού». Ο ίδιος πυροβολεί την ΕΕ και την Τρόικα για τους σκληρούς όρους των όρων διάσωσης και την παράλειψη προστασίας των ανθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων.

Ειδικότερα, στηλιτεύει το γεγονός ότι εκατομμύρια οικογένειες υφίστανται τις συνέπειες των περικοπών στα παιδικά βοηθήματα, στις οικογενειακές παροχές, στην υγειονομική περίθαλψη και στην εκπαίδευση, τονίζοντας ιδιαίτερα ότι «ολοένα και αυξάνεται ο αριθμός των παιδιών που εγκαταλείπουν το σχολείο για να βρουν απασχόληση, δημιουργώντας έτσι τις προϋποθέσεις επανεμφάνισης της εκμετάλλευσης της παιδικής εργασίας».

Λαμβάνοντας υπόψη και την απάντηση E007398/2013 της Επιτροπής, όπου επισημαίνεται ότι (α) δεν υπάρχουν επαρκή στοιχεία, ότι (β) οι χώρες μέλη έχουν ενσωματώσει την οδηγία του Συμβουλίου 94/33/ΕΕ στις εθνικές τους νομοθεσίες και (γ) στην έκθεση SEC(2010)1339 που έχει κυκλοφορήσει, καταγράφεται αναφορά για την υλοποίηση της οδηγίας, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Προτίθεται να παρακολουθεί το θέμα και να εκδίδει ετήσιες εκθέσεις;

2. Έχει ορίσει και χρησιμοποιεί συγκεκριμένους δείκτες αξιολόγησης των συνεπειών των πολιτικών λιτότητας και των απαντήσεων της Τρόικας π.χ. στα παιδικά βοηθήματα, στις οικογενειακές παροχές, στην υγειονομική περίθαλψη και στην εκπαίδευση, έτσι ώστε, με πραγματικά συγκριτικά στοιχεία, να είναι σε θέση να διαψεύσει ή να επιβεβαιώσει τις καταπελτικές δηλώσεις του κ. Μουίζνιεκς;

Απάντηση του κ. Andor εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(20 Φεβρουαρίου 2014)

Λαμβάνοντας υπόψη την αξιολόγηση της Επιτροπής ([1]) σχετικά με την εφαρμογή της οδηγίας 94/33/ΕΚ του Συμβουλίου για την προστασία των νέων κατά την εργασία, την απάντησή της στην ερώτηση E-013155/2013 ([2]) και το γεγονός ότι η οδηγία 94/33/ΕΚ καλύπτεται από την πενταετή αξιολόγηση της εφαρμογής της νομοθεσίας της ΕΕ για την υγεία και την ασφάλεια ([3]) από τα κράτη μέλη, η Επιτροπή θεωρεί ότι δεν προκύπτει, στο παρόν στάδιο, ανάγκη εκπόνησης ετήσιων εκθέσεων. Ωστόσο, η Επιτροπή Κοινωνικής Προστασίας έχει καταρτίσει έναν κατάλογο δεικτών που υποστηρίζουν την ετήσια αξιολόγηση των κρατών μελών στο πλαίσιο του Ευρωπαϊκού Εξαμήνου.

Το 2013 εκδόθηκαν ειδικές ανά χώρα συστάσεις ως προς το θέμα αυτό προς 14 κράτη μέλη.

Η Επιτροπή αποδίδει ιδιαίτερη σημασία στις κοινωνικές εξελίξεις και στον κοινωνικό αντίκτυπο των μέτρων που αποφασίζουν τα κράτη μέλη. Σε χώρες του προγράμματος η Επιτροπή προώθησε πάντοτε τον δίκαιο καταμερισμό του αναπόφευκτου διοικητικού φόρτου. Η Επιτροπή υποστήριξε την ανάπτυξη ενός νέου αναλυτικού εργαλείου, που χρησιμοποιείται για την αξιολόγηση του διανεμητικού αντίκτυπου των φορολογικών μεταρρυθμίσεων με την ονομασία EUROMOD, που αποτελεί ένα εναρμονισμένο μοντέλο μικροπροσομοίωσης φόρων-παροχών για το σύνολο της ΕΕ.

([1]) SEC(2010)1339, της 27ης Οκτωβρίου 2010, διαθέσιμο στη διεύθυνση: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=706&langId=en&intPageId=209
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([3]) Δυνάμει του άρθρου 17α παράγραφος 1 της οδηγίας-πλαισίου 89/391/ΕΟΚ σχετικά με την εφαρμογή μέτρων για την προώθηση της βελτίωσης της ασφάλειας και της υγείας των εργαζομένων κατά την εργασία, κάθε πέντε έτη τα κράτη μέλη υποχρεούνται να υποβάλουν ενιαία έκθεση στην Επιτροπή σχετικά με την πρακτική εφαρμογή της οδηγίας-πλαισίου και των 19 επιμέρους οδηγιών, συμπεριλαμβανομένης της οδηγίας 94/33/ΕΚ του Συμβουλίου.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014012/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(10 December 2013)

Subject: Child Labour

Austerity is coming under fire from Council of Europe (CoE), with recent statements from the CoE's Commissioner for Human Rights, Nils Muižnieks, directing harsh criticism towards governments which, 'have forgotten their obligations concerning respect for human rights and, in particular, the protection of the most vulnerable social groups' in implementing austerity measures. He attacks the EU and the Troika for the harsh terms of the rescue and the omission of human rights protection.

More specifically, he is critical of the fact that millions of families are suffering the consequences of cuts to child benefits, family benefits, healthcare and education, pointing out in particular that 'the number of children leaving school in order to find employment continues to rise, thus creating the conditions for a reappearance of exploitative child labour'.

Taking into account the Commission's answer to Written Question E-007398/2013, which stated that (a) there are no data available; (b) Member States already have transposed Council Directive 94/33/EU into their national legislation; and (c) the Commission has already published a report on its application, SEC(2010) 1339, will the Commission say:

1. Does it intend to pursue the matter and issue annual reports in this connection?

2. Has it designated and does it use specific indicators for evaluating the effects of austerity policies and the Troika's responses on child benefits, family benefits, healthcare and education, so that it is able, on the basis of genuinely comparative data, to refute or confirm the very critical statements by Mr Muižnieks?

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

Given the Commission's assessment ([1]) of the application of Council Directive 94/33/EC on the protection of young people at work, its answer to Question E-013155/2013 ([2]), and the fact that directive 94/33/EC is covered by the five-yearly evaluation of the Member States' implementation of EU health and safety legislation ([3]), the Commission considers that there is no need at this stage to produce annual reports. However, the Social Protection Committee worked out a list of indicators that underpins the annual assessment of Member States within the framework of the European Semester.

Country-specific recommendations on the subject were addressed to 14 Member States in 2013.

The Commission is paying great attention to social developments and to the social impact of measures decided in MS. In programme countries, the Commission has always promoted an equitable sharing of the inevitable adjustment burden. The Commission has supported the development of a new analytical tool, used to assess the distributional impact of taxation reforms called EUROMOD, a harmonised tax-benefit micro-simulation model covering the whole EU.

([1]) SEC(2010) 1339 of 27 October 2010, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=706&langId=en&intPageId=209
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([3]) Pursuant to Article 17a(1) of Framework Directive 89/391/EEC on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work, every five years the Member States are to submit a single report to the Commission on the practical implementation of the framework Directive and its 19 individual Directives, including Council Directive 94/33/EC.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-014013/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(10 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Πετρέλαιο από Κούρδους σε Τούρκους, ρωγμές στο Ιράκ

Η Άγκυρα υπέγραψε πρόσφατα εμπορικές συμφωνίες με το Ιρακινό Κουρδιστάν για εισαγωγές πετρελαίου. Οι Κούρδοι προμήθευαν ήδη την Τουρκία με πετρέλαιο, χάρη σε αγωγό προς τα μεσογειακά παράλια, ενώ γίνονται σκέψεις για κατασκευή ενός δεύτερου αγωγού μεγαλύτερης χωρητικότητας.

Το ιρακινό Σύνταγμα ορίζει ότι τα έσοδα από τον ορυκτό πλούτο του Ιράκ, θα πρέπει να μοιράζονται σε όλες τις περιοχές της χώρας και θεωρεί τις συμφωνίες αυτές, αντισυνταγματικές. Την ίδια αντίθεση εκφράζει και η Ουάσινγκτον τονίζοντας ότι οι εξαγωγές πετρελαίου του Ιράκ πρέπει να εξασφαλίζουν την ομόφωνη έγκριση όλων των εμπλεκόμενων πλευρών.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Πώς σχολιάζει τα ανοίγματα αυτά της Τουρκίας προς το Ιρακινό Κουρδιστάν; Συμφωνεί με αυτές τις ενέργειες;

2. Με δεδομένα πως: i) η προσέγγιση της Άγκυρας και του Ιρακινού Κουρδιστάν δημιουργεί μια νέα γεωπολιτική κατάσταση, με στόχο την ενεργειακή απεξάρτηση της Τουρκίας από τις παραδοσιακές της αγορές πετρελαίου και φυσικού αερίου, τη Ρωσία και το Ιράν, και ii) προλειαίνει το έδαφος για πραγμάτωση της πάγιας κουρδικής φιλοδοξίας για ανεξάρτητο κράτος στο βόρειο Ιράκ, με πρωτεύουσα, το Αρμπίλ και τη διάλυση του εύθραυστου πολιτικού οικοδομήματος στο σύγχρονο Ιράκ, πως σχολιάζει αυτή την προοπτική η Επιτροπή;

Απάντηση της Ύπατης Εκπροσώπου/Αντιπροέδρου Ashton εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(4 Φεβρουαρίου 2014)

Η Επιτροπή παρακολουθεί στενά τις σχέσεις μεταξύ της Τουρκίας και του Ιράκ. Τα τελευταία έτη, σημειώνεται διαρκής βελτίωση των σχέσεων της Τουρκίας με την κουρδική περιφερειακή κυβέρνηση στο Ερμπίλ. Η ΕΕ εκφράζει την ικανοποίησή της για την εξέλιξη αυτή, στο πλαίσιο του ευρύτερου πολιτικού διαλόγου ΕΕ-Τουρκίας, ενώ συνεχίζει να τονίζει την ανάγκη βελτίωσης των σχέσεων μεταξύ Άγκυρας και Βαγδάτης. Υπό αυτό το πρίσμα, η πρόσφατη προσέγγιση και οι συναντήσεις υψηλού επιπέδου μεταξύ Άγκυρας και Βαγδάτης συνιστούν θετική εξέλιξη η οποία θα μπορούσε να συμβάλει στην ενίσχυση της περιφερειακής σταθερότητας.

Η ΕΕ παραμένει προσηλωμένη στην στήριξη ενός σταθερού, ενωμένου και δημοκρατικού Ιράκ, του οποίου όλες οι συνιστώσες συμμετέχουν στην πρόοδο της χώρας. Από αυτή την άποψη, η ΕΕ συνεχίζει να ενισχύει τις διμερείς της σχέσεις και τη συνεργασία της με το Ιράκ, η οποία πλέον βασίζεται κυρίως στη συμφωνία εταιρικής σχέσης και συνεργασίας. Η ΕΕ θέτει το ζήτημα της εσωτερικής κατάστασης στο Ιράκ στους εταίρους της στην περιοχή, συμπεριλαμβανομένης της Τουρκίας, και θα συνεχίσει να τονίζει τη σημασία της εδαφικής ακεραιότητας και της εθνικής ενότητας του Ιράκ στο πλαίσιο του ευρύτερου πολιτικού διαλόγου ΕΕ-Τουρκίας.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014013/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(10 December 2013)

Subject: Oil from the Kurds to Turkey, splits in Iraq

Ankara has recently signed trade agreements with Iraqi Kurdistan covering oil imports. The Kurds were already supplying Turkey with oil through a pipeline running to the Mediterranean coast, but plans are afoot for the construction of a second pipeline of larger capacity.

The Iraqi Constitution states that revenues from Iraq's mineral resources must be shared between all regions of the country, and these agreements are accordingly unconstitutional. Washington has voiced similar opposition, pointing out that Iraqi oil exports must secure the unanimous approval of all parties concerned.

1. What does the Commission have to say about these Turkish openings towards Iraqi Kurdistan? Does it agree with these actions?

2. Given that: (i) the rapprochement between Ankara and Iraqi Kurdistan creates a new geopolitical situation aimed at the energy independence of Turkey from its traditional oil and natural gas markets — Russia and Iran — and (ii) it smoothes the way towards realisation of the fixed Kurdish ambition of an independent state in northern Iraq, with a capital at Irbil, and a dismembering of the fragile political edifice of modern Iraq, what does the Commission have to say about such a prospect?

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

The Commission is following closely relations between Turkey and Iraq. Turkey's relations with the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) in Erbil have continued to improve in recent years. The EU has welcomed this development -also in the framework of the EU-Turkey wider political dialogue- while consistently stressing the need to also improve relations between Ankara and Baghdad. In this context, the recent rapprochement and high level visits between Ankara and Bagdad are a welcome development that could help strengthen regional stability.

The EU remains firmly committed to supporting a stable, united and democratic Iraq in which all its constituent parts share in the country's progress. In this respect, the EU is continuing to enhance its bilateral relations and cooperation with Iraq, now based notably on the partnership and cooperation agreement. The EU raises the internal situation in Iraq with partners in the region, including Turkey, and will continue to underline the importance of Iraq's territorial integrity and national unity in the framework of the EU-Turkey wider political dialogue.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-014014/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(10 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Προβλήματα από μεικτούς γάμους με υπηκόους τρίτων χωρών

Με την παγκοσμιοποίηση και την κινητικότητα πολιτών από διάφορες χώρες του τρίτου κόσμου προς χώρες μέλη της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης, γινόμαστε συχνά-πυκνά μάρτυρες προβλημάτων που προκύπτουν από αρπαγές παιδιών από τον ένα γονέα (συνήθως από τον άνδρα) και τη φυγάδευσή τους σε χώρες της Ασίας ή της Μέσης Ανατολής, με αποτέλεσμα να χάνουν την επαφή με το δεύτερο γονέα (που είναι συνήθως η μητέρα).

Στη χώρα μου (Κύπρο) υπάρχουν αρκετές τέτοιες καταγγελίες από μητέρες κυπριακής καταγωγής, ότι δηλαδή οι αλλοδαποί σύζυγοί τους μεταφέρουν τα παιδιά στις χώρες καταγωγής τους (Λίβανο, Λιβύη, Συρία, Αίγυπτο και αλλού). Οι χώρες αυτές δεν έχουν υπογράψει τη Σύμβαση της Χάγης και, ως εκ τούτου, μόνο μέσω της ΕΕ και οργανώσεων ανθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων επιδιώκεται λύση διακανονισμού ώστε τα παιδιά να ξαναγυρίσουν στις μητέρες τους, που έχουν και τη νόμιμη κηδεμονία τους.

Ερωτάται λοιπόν η Επιτροπή:

1. Γνωρίζει το εύρος του συγκεκριμένου προβλήματος;

2. Τι έχει πράξει μέχρι σήμερα ή προτίθεται να πράξει στο άμεσο μέλλον ώστε τέτοιου είδους προβλήματα να μπορούν να διευθετηθούν;

3. Ποίες συμβουλές δίνει σε Ευρωπαίους πολίτες, ώστε να διεκδικήσουν το αναφαίρετο δικαίωμα τους να ασκούν τη νόμιμη κηδεμονία των παιδιών τους, ξεπερνώντας φαινόμενα απαγωγών και παράνομων κατακρατήσεων παιδιών από αλλοδαπούς συζύγους;

4. Υπάρχουν μηχανισμοί επίλυσης τέτοιων προβλημάτων ανάμεσα σε χώρες της ΕΕ και τρίτες χώρες, και, αν ναι, ποίοι;

Απάντηση της κ. Reding εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(18 Φεβρουαρίου 2014)

Η πρόληψη της απαγωγής παιδιών αποτελεί ουσιαστικό μέρος της πολιτικής της ΕΕ για την προώθηση των δικαιωμάτων του παιδιού. Στο επίπεδο της ΕΕ, από το 2005 εφαρμόζεται κανονισμός που θεσπίζει αυστηρούς κανόνες σχετικά με την επιστροφή του παιδιού μετά από απαγωγή ([1]).

Στο πλαίσιο της συνεργασίας της με τρίτες χώρες στον τομέα των οικογενειακών θεμάτων, η ΕΕ εστιάζεται στην ανάπτυξη της δικαστικής συνεργασίας βάσει ήδη υφιστάμενων πολυμερών νομικών πράξεων και, κατά συνέπεια, στην προώθηση της πρόσβασης στις πράξεις αυτές, ιδίως στις συμβάσεις της Χάγης του 1980 για τα αστικά θέματα της διεθνούς απαγωγής παιδιών. Ήδη 90 χώρες παγκοσμίως, συμπεριλαμβανομένων όλων των κρατών μελών της ΕΕ, έχουν προσχωρήσει στη σύμβαση αυτή, η οποία παρέχει σαφές νομικό πλαίσιο για την αντιμετώπιση ευαίσθητων υποθέσεων που αφορούν παιδιά.

Επιπλέον, η Επιτροπή, ως εκπρόσωπος της ΕΕ σε διεθνές επίπεδο, προωθεί ενεργά ειδικές δράσεις που αποσκοπούν να διευκολύνουν την άσκηση των δικαιωμάτων επικοινωνίας, την προσφυγή στη διαμεσολάβηση σε περίπτωση διασυνοριακών οικογενειακών θεμάτων και την εκπαίδευση εξειδικευμένων δικαστών ([2]). Μεταξύ των δράσεων αυτών, πρέπει να υπενθυμιστεί το πρόγραμμα EuroMed Justice ([3]) που υλοποιείται από την Επιτροπή από το 2005 και η λεγόμενη διαδικασία της Μάλτας που δρομολογήθηκε από τη Διάσκεψη της Χάγης για το ιδιωτικό διεθνές δίκαιο ([4]) και έτυχε πλήρους υποστήριξης από την Επιτροπή. Ωστόσο, λόγω της έλλειψης κοινού νομικού πλαισίου και σε περίπτωση μη ικανοποιητικής έκβασης της διαδικασίας διαμεσολάβησης, η αντιμετώπιση διαφορών αυτού του είδους μπορεί να γίνει μόνο μέσω διπλωματικών διαύλων. Το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου θα πρέπει να γνωρίζει ότι η Επιτροπή δεν έχει γενική αρμοδιότητα δράσης σε μεμονωμένες περιπτώσεις που αφορούν τρίτες χώρες.

([1]) Κανονισμός (ΕΚ) αριθ. 2201/2003 του Συμβουλίου για τη διεθνή δικαιοδοσία και την αναγνώριση και εκτέλεση αποφάσεων σε γαμικές διαφορές και διαφορές γονικής μέριμνας (ο «κανονισμός Βρυξελλών IIα»).

([2]) Το 2013, προκειμένου να βελτιωθεί η χρήση της διαμεσολάβησης με τις χώρες της Μεσογείου σε διασυνοριακές διαφορές οικογενειακού δικαίου, η Επιτροπή μετέφρασε τον Οδηγό καλής πρακτικής στο πλαίσιο της σύμβασης της Χάγης, της 25 Οκτωβρίου 1980, για τα αστικά θέματα της διεθνούς απαγωγής παιδιών, επίσης και στα αραβικά, εκτός από όλες τις επίσημες γλώσσες της ΕΕ.

([3]) Βλ. ειδικότερα τη συνιστώσα: Resolution of cross-border family conflicts (Επίλυση διασυνοριακών οικογενειακών διαφορών) http://euromed-justice.eu/home

([4]) http://www.hcch.net/upload/wop/abduct2011pd06e.pdf; http://www.hcch.net/upload/wop/abduct2012info08e.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014014/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(10 December 2013)

Subject: Problems from mixed marriages with third-country nationals

With the globalisation and mobility of citizens from various Third World countries to Member States of the European Union, we increasingly often witness problems arising from child abductions by one parent (usually the man), who then flees to an Asian or Middle Eastern country, resulting in a loss of contact with the second parent (usually the mother).

In my country (Cyprus), there have many complaints by mothers of Cypriot origin about foreign spouses taking children away to their countries of origin (Lebanon, Libya, Egypt and elsewhere). These countries have not signed the Hague Convention, and, as a result, it is only through EU and human rights organisations that solutions can be pursued for the children to return to their mothers, who are also their legal guardians.

1. Does the Commission know the extent of the problem?

2. What has it done to date, and what does it intend to do in the immediate future, so that such problems can be addressed?

3. What advice does it give to European citizens so that they can claim their inalienable right to exercise legal custody in respect of their children, tackling the phenomenon of abduction and wrongful retention of children by foreign spouses?

4. Are there any mechanisms for solving such problems between EU countries and third countries, and, if so, what are they?

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

Prevention of child abduction is an essential part of the EU policy to promote the rights of the child. At EU level, a regulation has been applied since 2005 establishing strict rules concerning the return of the child after abduction ([1]).

In its cooperation in family matters with third countries the EU is focusing on building the judicial cooperation on the basis of already existing multilateral instruments and, consequently, promoting the accession to these instruments, in particular to the 1980 Hague Conventions on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction. Already 90 countries in the world, including all EU Member States, are Parties to this Convention, which gives a clear legal framework in order to deal with sensitive cases involving children.

In addition, the Commission, as representing the EU at the international level, actively promotes specific actions aimed at facilitating the exercise of visiting rights, the use of mediation in cross-border family issues and the training of specialised judges ([2]). Among these actions, it has to be recalled the EuroMed Justice ([3]) project carried out by the Commission since 2005 and the so-called Malta Process initiated by the Hague Conference on Private International Law ([4]) and fully supported by the Commission. However, lacking a common legal framework and when the outcome of mediation is not satisfactory, this kind of dispute can only be dealt with through diplomatic channels. The Honourable Member should be informed that the Commission has no general competence to act in individual cases concerning third countries.

([1]) Council Regulation (EC) No 2201/2003 concerning jurisdiction and the recognition and enforcement of judgments in matrimonial matters and the matters of parental responsibility (the Brussels IIa regulation).

([2]) In 2013, in order to improve the use of mediation with Mediterranean countries in cross-border family disputes, the Commission has translated the Guide to Good Practice under the Hague Convention of 25 October 1980 on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction also in Arabic, beside all EU official languages.

([3]) See in particular the component: Resolution of cross-border family conflicts: http://euromed-justice.eu/home

([4]) http://www.hcch.net/upload/wop/abduct2011pd06e.pdf; http://www.hcch.net/upload/wop/abduct2012info08e.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014015/13
to the Commission
Marian Harkin (ALDE)
(10 December 2013)

Subject: Trade negotiations with Mercosur

Can the Commission provide information on the current status of the trade negotiations with Mercosur, as well as the indicative timeframe for further proposals?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(31 January 2014)

Since the resumption of negotiations in 2010, significant progress has been made with respect to the trade disciplines and rules. However, in order to make further progress towards the conclusion of the negotiation, a new exchange of market access offers (the first and last took place in 2004) is necessary.

At the Trade Ministerial meeting held in Santiago de Chile in January 2013, Commissioner De Gucht and Mercosur Ministers agreed to proceed to an exchange of offers on goods, services and government procurement by the end of 2013. During 2013, both the Commission and Mercosur have been focusing on the preparation of an exchange of tariff liberalisation offers and this work is being currently finalised. Both the EU and Mercosur remain committed to proceed with the exchange of offers early this year. A concrete date for the exchange of offers has not been fixed yet at this stage, pending the finalisation of work on both sides.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-014016/13
aan de Commissie
Kartika Tamara Liotard (GUE/NGL)
(11 december 2013)

Betreft: Huidige fijnstofnormen beschermen volksgezondheid en milieu volstrekt onvoldoende

Nieuw onderzoek van de Universiteit van Utrecht in Nederland toont aan dat de huidige Europese fijnstofnormen, vooral voor zeer fijne deeltjes ($PM_{2,5}$), de volksgezondheid volstrekt onvoldoende beschermen.

1. Heeft de Commissie kennis genomen van het Utrechtse onderzoek „Effects of long-term exposure to air pollution on natural-cause mortality: an analysis of 22 European cohorts within the multicentre ESCAPE project”?

2. Het Utrechtse onderzoek is niet het eerste onderzoek dat aantoont dat de huidige normen niet voorkomen dat mensen ziek worden en voortijdig sterven. Ook de Wereldgezondheidsorganisatie gaf al eerder aan dat de fijnstofnormen in Europa veel te ruim zijn en verlaagd dienen te worden van 25 naar 10 microgram per kubieke meter (m^3). Te ruime normen en daaruit volgende vuile lucht zorgen voor verlies van levenskwaliteit en daarnaast ook voor hogere ziektekosten. Past de Commissie haar beleid aan, als nieuwe onderzoeken aantonen dat de luchtkwaliteit in Europa onvoldoende wordt gewaarborgd of zijn de huidige normen volgens de Commissie het best haalbare?

3. Het Utrechtse onderzoek toont aan dat er significant meer mensen sterven in gebieden waar maar net wordt voldaan aan de maximale, wettelijk toegelaten concentratie $PM_{2,5}$ in vergelijking met schonere gebieden. De Europese strategie voor luchtkwaliteit streeft ernaar om „een luchtkwaliteit te behalen die niet resulteert in onacceptabele gevolgen en risico's voor de menselijke gezondheid en het milieu”. Vindt de Commissie het acceptabel dat er 7 % meer mensen sterven bij een (legale) concentratie van 25 microgram/m3 dan bij een lagere concentratie van 20 microgram/m^3?

4. Gaat de Commissie specifiek actie ondernemen omtrent de kleine fijnstofdeeltjes ($PM_{2,5}$), aangezien steeds vaker wordt aangetoond dat vooral deze gezondheidsproblemen veroorzaken?

5. 2013 staat aangeschreven als „The European Year of Air”. De Commissie kondigde aan in dit jaar „een pakket aan maatregelen” te lanceren dat moet zorgen voor schonere lucht. Waaruit bestaat dit pakket en wanneer wordt het gepresenteerd?

6. Is de Commissie bereid de vragen 1 t/m 4 afzonderlijk te beantwoorden?

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

De Commissie is op de hoogte van de resultaten van het ESCAPE-project. De resultaten zijn veelvuldig gebruikt in de beoordeling van de Wereldgezondheidsorganistatie van het effect van luchtvervuiling op de gezondheid ([1]), die mede ten grondslag ligt aan het voorstel van de Commissie inzake de luchtkwaliteit in de EU van 2013 ([2]).

Dit voorstel is een belangrijke stap in de richting van de langetermijndoelstelling van de EU om luchtvervuiling te verminderen, hetgeen voordelen voor de gezondheid van de burgers oplevert. Daarnaast moeten de huidige normen voor luchtkwaliteit die zijn vastgesteld in de richtlijnen inzake luchtkwaliteit van de EU ten volle door de lidstaten worden toegepast, om de huidige grenswaarden voor PM2,5 voor 2015 te kunnen respecteren en de doelstelling om de blootstelling aan PM2,5 tegen 2020 te verminderen, te kunnen behalen. De Commissie verwijst het geachte Parlementslid wat die kwestie betreft ook naar haar antwoord op de schriftelijke vraag E-013392/2013.

Het voorgestelde beleidspakket voor schone lucht en met name de voorgestelde nieuwe richtlijnen inzake nationale emissieverlaging en inzake kleinschalige verbrandingsinstallaties omvatten aanzienlijke emissieverlagingen en verbeteringen van de luchtkwaliteit, en leveren aanzienlijke voordelen op voor de gezondheid in de EU. Wat betreft PM2,5 wordt verwacht dat de effecten op de gezondheid daarvan tegen 2030 zijn gehalveerd (vergeleken met 2005). De nieuwe strategie inzake luchtverontreiniging benadrukt ook dat het noodzakelijk is om te blijven streven naar een vermindering van de verontreiniging, en de huidige normen voor luchtkwaliteit te blijven herzien. Daarnaast voorziet het recentelijk aangenomen pakket voor stedelijke mobiliteit ([3]) in een aantal aanbevelingen inzake maatregelen tegen problemen in verband met stedelijke mobiliteit, met inbegrip van een aanzienlijke vermindering van verontreinigende emissies in de vervoersector.

([1]) De verslagen van de WHO zijn online beschikbaar op: http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/environment-and-health/air-quality/publications.
([2]) Het beleidspakket voor schone lucht http://ec.europa.eu/environment/air/clean_air_policy.htm
([3]) COM(2013) 913.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014016/13
to the Commission
Kartika Tamara Liotard (GUE/NGL)
(11 December 2013)

Subject: Totally inadequate protection for public health and the environment from current particulate standards

New research conducted by Utrecht University in the Netherlands highlights that current European particulate standards, especially those for fine particles ($PM_{2.5}$), provide totally inadequate protection for public health.

1. Has the Commission noted the Utrecht study entitled 'Effects of long-term exposure to air pollution on natural-cause mortality: an analysis of 22 European cohorts within the multicentre ESCAPE project'?

2. The Utrecht study is not the first to highlight that current standards are failing to prevent people getting ill and dying prematurely. The World Health Organisation has also already indicated that particulate standards in Europe are far too lax and should be lowered from 25 to 10 micrograms per cubic metre (m^3). Overly lax standards and the resulting unclean air result not only in a lower quality of life, but also in higher healthcare costs. Does the Commission adapt its policy if new studies indicate that air quality in Europe is inadequately guaranteed, or does it think that the current standards are the most feasible?

3. The Utrecht study highlights that significantly more people die in areas where the maximum legally permissible $PM_{2.5}$ concentration is just met compared with cleaner areas. The EU's air quality strategy strives 'to achieve levels of air quality that do not result in unacceptable impacts on and risks to human health and the environment'. Does the Commission think it is acceptable that 7% more people die at a (legal) concentration of 25 microgram/m3 than at a lower concentration of 20 microgram/m^3?

4. Is the Commission going to take specific action on small fine particles (PM2.5), given the increasingly frequent indications that they mainly cause health problems?

5. 2013 was declared 'The European Year of Air'. The Commission announced that it would launch 'a package of measures' during this year which needed to deliver cleaner air. What does this package entail and when is it being presented?

6. Is the Commission prepared to answer questions 1 to 4 separately?

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

The Commission is aware of the ESCAPE project results. These have been extensively used in the World Health Organisation review of air pollution health impacts ([1]), which underpins the Commission 2013 EU air quality proposal ([2]).

This proposal is an important step to achieve the EU's long-term objective to cut air pollution and secure benefits for the health of citizens. Moreover, current air quality standards set in the EU Ambient Air Quality Directives will have to be implemented fully by Member States to comply with the current limit values for PM2.5 by 2015 and reach the PM2.5 exposure reduction target by 2020. On this matter, the Commission would also refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-013392/2013.

The proposed Clean Air Policy Package, and in particular the proposed new directives on national emissions reductions and on small scale combustion, entail significant emission reductions and improvements of air quality and result in considerable health benefits within the EU. With regard to PM2.5, a halving of the health impacts is expected by 2030 (compared to 2005). The new Air Strategy also emphasises the need to continue mitigation efforts and keep current air quality standards under review. Furthermore, the recently adopted Urban Mobility Package ([3]) presents a range of recommendations for action in tackling urban mobility-related challenges, including significantly reducing transport pollution emissions.

([1]) The WHO reports are available on the Internet: http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/environment-and-health/air-quality/publications
([2]) The Clean Air Policy Package http://ec.europa.eu/environment/air/clean_air_policy.htm
([3]) COM(2013) 913.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej P-014017/13
do Komisji
Bogusław Liberadzki (S&D)
(11 grudnia 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Tunel pod rzeką Świna

Port w Świnoujściu został włączony do sieci bazowej TEN-T, a dokładniej do korytarza Bałtyk-Adriatyk, finansowanej bezpośrednio z instrumentu „Łącząc Europę” (WRF 2014-2020).

1. Czy tunel drogowy pod Świną będzie kwalifikował się do finansowania z instrumentu „Łącząc Europę”, biorąc pod uwagę fakt, iż port w Świnoujściu jest położony na obydwu brzegach Świny?

2. Czy tunel drogowy/kolejowy będzie kwalifikował się do finansowania z instrumentu „Łącząc Europę”, biorąc pod uwagę fakt, iż port w Świnoujściu jest położony na obydwu brzegach Świny?

3. W jaki sposób należy przedłożyć wniosek o finansowanie z instrumentu „Łącząc Europę”, biorąc pod uwagę pewną niechęć ze strony rządu centralnego, który nie docenia znaczenia portu morskiego w Świnoujściu? Czy wniosek taki mogą złożyć właściwe władze regionu zachodniopomorskiego?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Siima Kallasa w imieniu Komisji
(27 stycznia 2014 r.)

Do finansowania w ramach instrumentu „Łącząc Europę” (CEF) ([1]) nie będzie kwalifikować się tunel kolejowy ani tunel drogowo-kolejowy, ponieważ na zachodnim brzegu rzeki Świna brak jest dróg bądź połączeń kolejowych objętych siecią TEN-T, zarówno na terytorium Polski, jak i na terytorium Niemiec. Zgodnie z informacjami przedstawionymi Komisji, wszystkie obiekty (nabrzeża, terminale) „Portu Handlowego Świnoujście Spółka z o.o.” (portu Świnoujście) znajdują się na wschodnim brzegu rzeki Świna i są podłączone do sieci bazowej TEN-T trasami drogowymi i trasami kolei towarowych. Żaden projekt transgraniczny nie został uwzględniony w załączniku do rozporządzenia CEF.

Zgodnie z art. 9 rozporządzenia CEF każdy wniosek o współfinansowanie ze środków CEF wymaga zgody zainteresowanych państw członkowskich. Jedynie projekty określone jako „będące przedmiotem wspólnego zainteresowania” kwalifikują się do wsparcia zgodnie z art. 7 wytycznych TEN-T ([2]). Zgodnie z art. 3 i 11 rozporządzenia CEF należy wykazać, że realizacja tych projektów wymaga bezwzględnie współfinansowania ze środków TEN-T i stanowi wartość dodaną dla UE.

([1]) Rozporządzenie Parlamentu Europejskiego i Rady (UE) nr 1316/2013 z dnia 11 grudnia 2013 r. ustanawiające instrument „Łącząc Europę”, zmieniające rozporządzenie (UE) nr 913/2010 oraz uchylające rozporządzenia (WE) nr 680/2007 i (WE) nr 67/2010, Dz.U. L 348 z 20.12.2013.

([2]) Rozporządzenie Parlamentu Europejskiego i Rady (UE) nr 1315/2013 z dnia 11 grudnia 2013 r. w sprawie unijnych wytycznych dotyczących rozwoju transeuropejskiej sieci transportowej i uchylające decyzję nr 661/2010/UE, Dz.U. L 348 z 20.12.2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-014017/13
to the Commission
Bogusław Liberadzki (S&D)
(11 December 2013)

Subject: Tunnel under the Świna River

The Port of Świnoujście has been included in the TEN-T core network, specifically in the Baltic-Adriatic corridor, financed directly through the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) (MFF 2014-2020).

1. Will a road tunnel under the Świna River be eligible for CEF funding, given that the Port of Świnoujście is located on both sides of the Świna River?

2. Will a road/rail tunnel be eligible for CEF funding, given that the Port of Świnoujście is located on both sides of the Świna River?

3. How should an application for CEF funding be made, given that there is some reluctance on the part of the central government, which underestimates the importance of the sea port in Świnoujście? Can the relevant authorities in the Zachodniopomorskie region apply?

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

A rail or road/rail tunnel will not be eligible for funding from the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) ([1]) because there is no TEN-T road or rail connection on the western bank of Świna River neither on Polish, nor on German territory. According to the information provided to the Commission all facilities (quays, terminals) of 'Port Handlowy Świnoujście Spółka' (Świnoujście port) are located on the eastern bank of Świna River and are connected to the TEN-T core network via road and rail-freight lines. No cross-border project has been included into the CEF annex.

According to Article 9 of the CEF regulation any application for CEF funding needs the agreement of the Member States concerned. Only projects of 'common interst' are eligible for support according to Article 7 of the TEN-T guidelines ([2]). The projects have — according to Article 3 and 11 of the CEF — to demonstrate the vital need for TEN-T co-funding and EU added value.

([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]) Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network and repealing Decision No 661/2010/EU, OJ L 348, 20/12/2013.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-014019/13
an die Kommission
Jens Geier (S&D)
(11. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Grenzübergang zwischen Kroatien und Bosnien und Herzegowina

Mit dem Beitritt Kroatiens zur EU wurde Berichten zufolge der Grenzübergang zwischen Dvor (Kroatien) und Novi Grad/Bosanski Novi (Bosnien und Herzegowina) geschlossen.

1. Kann die Kommission die Schließung des Grenzübergangs zwischen Dvor (Kroatien) und Novi Grad/Bosanski Novi (Bosnien und Herzegowina) bestätigen? Durch welche Seite wurde die Schließung veranlasst?

2. Sind der Kommission die Gründe für die Schließung des oben genannten Grenzübergangs bekannt und wenn ja, welche Gründe wurden aufgeführt? Sieht die Kommission gegebenenfalls die Möglichkeit, den Schutz der EU-Außengrenze durch Hercule III-Mittel finanziell zu unterstützen, wenn dies die Öffnung des Grenzübergangs ermöglichen würde?

3. Ist der Kommission bekannt, welche Auswirkungen die Schließung des oben genannten Grenzübergangs für die bosnische Seite hat?

Antwort von Herrn Füle im Namen der Kommission
(27. Februar 2014)

Vor seinem Beitritt zur EU musste Kroatien die EU-Rechtsvorschriften über Grenzkontrollen, Zoll, Transitverkehr, Lebensmittelsicherheit sowie Tier- und Pflanzengesundheit umsetzen. Am 19. Juni 2013 schloss Kroatien mit Bosnien und Herzegowina ein Abkommen über Grenzübergangsstellen, das die Kommission insbesondere in Bezug auf die Grenzkontrollen von Personen und Gütern als im Einklang mit dem EU-Besitzstand stehend beurteilte.

Der Grenzübergang Dvor/Novi Grad wurde nicht geschlossen. Er wurde zu einem Grenzübergang für den grenzüberschreitenden Personenfernverkehr. Der Güterfernverkehr über diesen Grenzübergang hinweg ist nicht mehr erlaubt. Stattdessen wurde rund 50 km von Dvor/Novi Grad entfernt der Grenzübergang Jasenovac/Gradina für den grenzüberschreitenden Personen- und Güterverkehr geöffnet. Darüber hinaus wurde ein ständiger Grenzübergang für den kleinen Grenzverkehr, einschließlich des Güterverkehrs, in Hrvatska Dubica/Kozarska Dubica eingerichtet, das rund 40 km vom Dvor/Novi Grad entfernt liegt.

Die Interessen von Bosnien und Herzegowina wurden während der zweijährigen Verhandlungen berücksichtigt, in denen die Kommission als Vermittler auftrat und die zum Abschluss des genannten Abkommens führten. Vereinbart wurden 16 Grenzübergänge für den grenzüberschreitenden Güterfernverkehr. Die Einrichtung weiterer Grenzübergänge kann vereinbart werden, sobald Bosnien und Herzegowina die Standards für Tiergesundheit und Lebensmittelsicherheit erfüllt, die für die Ausfuhr landwirtschaftlicher Erzeugnisse tierischen Ursprungs in die EU gelten.

Die Kommission könnte Zuschüsse aus dem Programm „Hercule III" für Mitgliedstaaten oder bestimmte Drittländer (z. B. die westlichen Balkanländer) zur Bekämpfung von Betrugsdelikten und Unregelmäßigkeiten zum Nachteil der finanziellen Interessen der EU gewähren. Das Programm deckt so auch bestimmte Aspekte des Schutzes der Außengrenzen der EU ab.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014019/13
to the Commission
Jens Geier (S&D)
(11 December 2013)

Subject: Border crossing between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina

According to reports, with the accession of Croatia to the EU, the border crossing between Dvor (Croatia) and Novi Grad/Bosanski Novi (Bosnia and Herzegovina) was closed.

1. Can the Commission confirm the closure of the border crossing between Dvor (Croatia) and Novi Grad/Bosanski Novi (Bosnia and Herzegovina)? Which side instigated the closure?

2. Does the Commission know the reasons for the closure of the aforementioned border crossing, and if so, what reasons were given? Does the Commission see a possibility, where appropriate, of supporting the protection of the EU external border financially using Hercule III funds, if this would allow the border crossing to be opened?

3. Does the Commission know what impact the closure of the aforementioned border crossing is having on the Bosnian side?

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

Before its accession to the EU, Croatia had to implement the EU rules on border controls, customs, transit traffic, food-safety, veterinary and phytosanitary issues. On 19 June 2013 Croatia concluded with Bosnia and Herzegovina (BaH) an Agreement on Border Crossing Points (BCP) that the Commission assessed as in line with the relevant EU acquis, in particular with regard to border controls of persons and goods.

The BCP Dvor/Novi Grad has not been closed. It became a BCP for international road traffic of passengers. The international road traffic of goods is no longer allowed. Instead, the BCP at Jasenovać/Gradina was opened for the international road traffic of persons and goods, around 50 km from Dvor/Novi Grad. In addition, a permanent BCP for local border traffic, including goods, was established at Hrvatska Dubića/Kozarska Dubića, around 40 km from Dvor/Novi Grad.

The interests of BaH were taken into account during a two years process facilitated by the Commission, which led to the above agreement. 16 BCPs were agreed for international road traffic of goods. Additional BCPs may be agreed upon, once BaH fulfils the EU veterinary and food-safety standards to export agricultural products of animal origin to the EU.

The Commission could offer grants from the Hercule III programme to Member States or specific third countries (e.g. Western Balkans) to fight fraud and irregularities affecting the financial interest of the EU. Thus, certain aspects of the protection of the EU external border are covered by the programme.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-014020/13
à Comissão
Ana Gomes (S&D)
(11 de dezembro de 2013)

Assunto: Acusação de branqueamento de capitais à escala da UE formulada contra Rakhat Aliyev

Rakhat Aliyev, antigo embaixador da República do Cazaquistão na Áustria e antigo vice-ministro dos Negócios Estrangeiros do Cazaquistão, está a ser objeto, por parte das autoridades na Áustria, na Alemanha e em Malta, de inquéritos judiciais por alegados crimes de colarinho branco graves. As autoridades austríacas estão ainda a investigar outras acusações graves contra Rakhat Aliyev, incluindo rapto e homicídio.

As investigações à escala da UE relativas às atividades desenvolvidas por Rakhat Aiyev estão a ser conduzidas pelas autoridades judiciais em Viena, na Áustria, em Krefeld e Dusseldorfia, na Alemanha, e em La Valeta, em Malta. O grau das acusações relativas a crimes de colarinho branco que recaem sobre Rakhan Aliyev demonstra, com base nas informações disponíveis, que este assunto releva tanto da competência das autoridades da UE como das autoridades nacionais. Os processos judiciais que há anos decorrem a nível nacional podiam, neste momento, já estar concluídos e ter sido remetidos para julgamento em tribunal.

Tendo em conta o combate ao branqueamento de capitais, à corrupção e à criminalidade de colarinho branco à escala da UE, pensa a Comissão que a apreciação judicial das investigações legais conduzidas contra Rakhat Aliyev a nível nacional poderá ser acelerada se organismos da UE como a Eurojust ou a Europol forem consultados?

Está a Comissão a acompanhar a situação atual das investigações nacionais contra Rakhat Aliyev?

Resposta dada por Cecilia Malmström em nome da Comissão
(10 de fevereiro de 2014)

A Comissão tem conhecimento das investigações de que está a ser alvo Rakhat Aliyev através dos meios de comunicação social, em especial daquelas relacionadas com o branqueamento de capitais.

Embora os factos objeto de investigação possam conter elementos transfronteiriços ou mesmo uma dimensão europeia, a UE não tem competência para realizar investigações penais.

A legislação dos Estados-Membros ainda diverge de forma significativa no que diz respeito à definição de branqueamento de capitais e ao nível das sanções penais para a prática deste crime. A Comissão está atualmente a ponderar propor alterações ao quadro legal existente de combate ao branqueamento de capitais.

A Comissão incentiva de forma sistemática a cooperação entre os Estados-Membros e a Europol e introduziu também na sua proposta de novo regulamento Europol ([1]), uma disposição que obriga os Estados-Membros a disponibilizarem àquela os dados necessários para o cumprimento dos seus objetivos. Além disso, a Comissão e a Europol incentivam a criação de equipas de investigação conjuntas ([2]).

Embora siga a evolução nos Estados-Membros em termos gerais e analise o modo como funciona na prática a cooperação nos processos transfronteiriços, a Comissão não acompanha cada investigação individualmente.

([1]) COM(2013) 173 final.
([2]) Consultar a Decisão-Quadro do Conselho 2002/465/JAI relativa às equipas de investigação conjuntas (JO L 162/1 de 20.6.2002) e o manual da Europol, disponível em: https://www.europol.europa.eu/sites/default/files/st15790-re01.pt11.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014020/13
to the Commission
Ana Gomes (S&D)
(11 December 2013)

Subject: Money laundering accusations at EU level against Rakhat Aliyev

Rakhat Aliyev, the former Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Austria and Kazakhstan's former Deputy Foreign Minister, is being investigated by the authorities in Austria, Germany and Malta in connection with allegations of serious white collar crimes. The Austrian authorities are also investigating other serious accusations against Mr Aliyev, which include abduction and murder.

The EU-wide investigations into Mr Aliyev's activities are being conducted by judicial authorities in Vienna (Austria), Krefeld and Düsseldorf (Germany) and Valletta (Malta). Based on the information available, the scale of the white collar crimes of which Mr Aliyev is accused means that this is a matter for the EU, as well as for the national authorities. Legal proceedings which have been ongoing for a number of years at national level could already have been completed and brought to court by now.

In the light of the EU-wide fight against money laundering, corruption and white collar crime, does the Commission think that the judicial assessment of the legal investigations against Rakhat Aliyev at national level could be accelerated if EU bodies such as Eurojust and Europol were consulted?

Is the Commission monitoring the current status of national investigations against Rakhat Aliyev?

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

The Commission is aware, through media reports, of the investigations conducted against Rakhat Aliyev, notably related to money laundering.

While the facts investigated may have cross-border elements or even a European dimension, the EU has no competence to conduct criminal law investigations.

Member States' legislation still differs significantly when it comes to the definition of money laundering and to the level of criminal sanctions for this offence. The Commission is currently considering proposing changes to the existing legal framework on Anti-Money laundering.

The Commission systematically encourages Member States' cooperation with Europol and has also introduced in its proposal for a new Europol regulation ([1]) a provision obliging Member States to supply Europol with the data necessary for it to fulfil its objectives. In addition, the Commission and Europol encourage the setting up of joint investigation teams ([2]).

While the Commission follows developments in Member States in general terms and looks into how cooperation is functioning in cross-border cases in practice, the Commission is not monitoring individual investigations.

([1]) COM(2013) 173 final.

([2]) See Council Framework Decision 2002/465/JHA on joint investigation teams (OJ L 162/1 of 20.6.2002) and the Europol manual available on: https://www.europol.europa.eu/content/page/joint-investigation-teams-989

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-014021/13
an die Kommission
Peter Liese (PPE)
(11. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Durchsetzung der ETS-Vorschriften in der Luftfahrtbranche

Mit welchen Maßnahmen wird dafür gesorgt, dass die Mitgliedstaaten die ETS-Vorschriften in der Luftfahrtbranche durchsetzen? Haben die Mitgliedstaaten insbesondere Maßnahmen ergriffen, mit denen dafür gesorgt wird, dass gegen Fluggesellschaften gemäß der ETS-Richtlinie aus dem Jahr 2003 (in der geänderten Fassung) Sanktionen und Bußgelder verhängt werden, wenn sie den Berichterstattungspflichten gemäß der Richtlinie nicht nachkommen?

Welche Verjährungsregelungen (d. h. Fristen) gelten in den Mitgliedstaaten für die Einleitung von Verfahren gegen Fluggesellschaften, die gegen die ETS-Vorschriften verstoßen haben? Besteht das Risiko, dass die Verhängung von Geldbußen in den einschlägigen Mitgliedstaaten mithilfe von Verjährungsbestimmungen umgangen wird?

Antwort von Frau Hedegaard im Namen der Kommission
(12. Februar 2014)

Im Luftverkehr der EU wird das Emissionshandelssystem (EHS) in Bezug auf die CO_2-Emissionen gemäß den Rechtsvorschriften von 2012 sehr genau eingehalten. Die Fluggesellschaften haben für mehr als 98 % der Emissionen von Flügen innerhalb Europas Zertifikate zurückgegeben. Leider wird aber — auch von Luftfahrzeugbetreibern aus Drittländern — immer noch gegen die Rechtsvorschriften verstoßen.

Es ist Sache der zuständigen Behörden der Mitgliedstaaten, für die Einhaltung der Vorschriften zu sorgen. Trotz einiger Unterschiede zwischen den konkreten Durchsetzungsverfahren der einzelnen Mitgliedstaaten lassen sich einige allgemeine Schritte feststellen, die in groben Zügen allen Mitgliedstaaten gemeinsam sind:

— Mahnschreiben

— offizielle Mitteilung / Sanktion

— gegebenenfalls Anfechtung durch den Luftfahrzeugbetreiber

— Durchsetzung.

Die Fristen für die einzelnen Schritte betragen in der Regel 2 bis 6 Monate. Die Mitgliedstaaten haben sich für ein abgestimmtes, von der Kommission unterstütztes Durchsetzungsverfahren entschieden. Die meisten Mitgliedstaaten haben den ersten Schritt der Durchsetzung im Juni 2013 durchgeführt, und es wurde vorgeschlagen, im ersten Quartal 2014 mit dem nächsten Schritt fortzufahren.

Was die Verjährungsregelungen für die Einleitung von Verfahren gegen Fluggesellschaften wegen Verstößen gegen die Vorschriften anbelangt, so müssen in einigen Mitgliedstaaten tatsächlich innerhalb eines Jahres nach dem festgestellten Verstoß Bußgelder gezahlt bzw. Verfahren eingeleitet werden.

Die Kommission beobachtet diese Entwicklungen sorgfältig. Im November 2013 hat die GD CLIMA die Ständigen Vertretungen der Mitgliedstaaten angeschrieben, um sie an ihre Verpflichtungen bei der Durchsetzung der Vorschriften zu erinnern und sie aufzufordern, die nächsten Schritte zu ergreifen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014021/13
to the Commission
Peter Liese (PPE)
(11 December 2013)

Subject: Enforcement of ETS regulations in the aviation sector

What measures are being taken to ensure that Member States enforce ETS regulations in the aviation sector? In particular, have Member States taken any action to ensure that penalties and fines are imposed against aviation companies pursuant to the 2003 ETS Directive (as amended) for failing to comply with their reporting obligations under the directive?

What are the limitation periods (i.e. the time allowed) in the Member States for initiating prosecutions against aviation companies which have failed to comply with the ETS regulations? Is there a risk of companies escaping fines by virtue of the operation of limitation periods in the relevant Member State?

Answer given by Ms Hedegaard on behalf of the Commission
(12 February 2014)

The level of compliance with the EU`s aviation ETS in terms of CO_2 emissions covered by the 2012 legislation is very high. Airlines have surrendered allowances for over 98% of emissions from flights within Europe. However, unfortunately some non-compliance — including from third country aircraft operators — exists.

Member States` competent authorities are responsible for ensuring compliance. While concrete enforcement procedures vary to some extent from one Member State to another, some common generic enforcement steps can be identified for all Member States in broad terms, namely:

— Formal notice;

— Official notification / penalty;

— If applicable, appeal by aircraft operator;

— Enforcement.

Timelines for each step are generally between 2-6 months. Member States have chosen to pursue a coordinated enforcement approach facilitated by the Commission. Most Member States carried out the first step of enforcement in June 2013 and it has been proposed to continue with the next enforcement step in the first quarter of 2014.

As regards the process expiry or deadlines for starting proceedings against operators in breach of their obligations, in some Member States indeed fines may need to be served or proceedings need to be started within one year from the breach of obligations.

The European Commission follows these developments closely. In November 2013, DG CLIMA sent letters to the Permanent Representations of the Member States to remind them of their enforcement obligations and to request them to proceed with the next steps.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-014022/13
an die Kommission
Astrid Lulling (PPE), Michel Dantin (PPE), Herbert Dorfmann (PPE), Christa Klaß (PPE), Eric Andrieu (S&D), Sophie Auconie (PPE), Françoise Grossetête (PPE), Giancarlo Scottà (EFD), Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) und Franco Bonanini (NI)
(11. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Rebstockkrankheiten

Die Rebstockkrankheiten, insbesondere die Eutypiose, die Esca-Krankheit und die Black-Dead-Arm-Krankheit, breiten sich in Europa in besorgniserregendem Ausmaß aus und beunruhigen die Winzer zu Recht, da diese Krankheiten das Holz des Rebstocks angreifen und über kurz oder lang zu seinem Absterben führen, ohne dass bisher eine Behandlungsmöglichkeit bekannt wäre.

Die Kontaminationsraten sind zwar von Region zu Region sehr verschieden, in einigen von ihnen sind jedoch mehr als 80 % der Parzellen von der Esca- bzw. der Black-Dead-Arm-Krankheit befallen. Aktuellen Schätzungen zufolge sind auf diese Weise durchschnittlich etwa 12 % der Rebstöcke unproduktiv geworden (erkrankte Wurzelstöcke, die zu Produktionsausfall führen, fehlende Wurzelstöcke und Wurzelstöcke, die gerade ersetzt werden).

Diese Krankheiten gefährden demnach eindeutig die Sicherung und Erhaltung der Produktionsgrundlage zahlreicher Winzer.

Angesichts des Ausmaßes und der zunehmenden Ausbreitung des Phänomens werden in einzelnen Mitgliedstaaten immer mehr Forschungsprojekte durchgeführt, die auf die Verhinderung, die Eindämmung und die Ausrottung dieser Holzkrankheiten ausgerichtet sind.

Kann die Kommission vor diesem Hintergrund erläutern, welche Forschungsbemühungen im Bereich der Bekämpfung dieser Krankheiten bisher auf EU-Ebene durchgeführt bzw. koordiniert wurden?

Welche Elemente der GAP beabsichtigt die Kommission heranzuziehen — bzw. falls sie nicht tätig wird, welche Ressourcen können die Mitgliedstaaten im Rahmen der GAP einsetzen —, um kurzfristig die in dieser Branche erlittenen Verluste zumindest teilweise auszugleichen?

Beabsichtigt die Kommission, neue Forschungsprogramme aufzulegen, die unmittelbar auf EU-Ebene durchgeführt werden, vor allem im Rahmen der Agrardimension des 8. Forschungsrahmenprogramms?

Antwort von Herrn Cioloş im Namen der Kommission
(3. Februar 2014)

Im Rahmen der Stützungsmaßnahmen für den Weinsektor ist gemäß Artikel 49 „Ernteversicherung" in der neuen Verordnung „Einheitliche GMO", Verordnung (EU) Nr. 1308/2013 ([1]), ein finanzieller Beitrag der Europäischen Union zu den Kosten der Versicherungsprämie für die Sicherung der Erzeugereinkommen vorgesehen, wenn es durch Krankheiten oder Schädlingsbefall zu Ausfällen kommt. Außerdem sieht Artikel 46 Absatz 3 Buchstabe c derselben Verordnung Unterstützung für die Wiederbepflanzung von Rebflächen vor, wenn auf Anweisung der zuständigen Behörde des Mitgliedstaats eine obligatorische Rodung von Rebflächen, die von diesen Krankheiten befallen waren, erforderlich war. Die Mitgliedstaaten können diese Maßnahmen in ihre nationalen Stützungsprogramme aufnehmen.

Für die europaweite Koordinierung einzelstaatlich finanzierter Forschungstätigkeiten wurden über das COST-Projekt EU-Finanzmittel bereitgestellt (Maßnahme FA 1303). Darüber hinaus ist im Arbeitsprogramm 2014-2015 des Rahmenprogramms für Forschung und Innovation „Horizont 2020" eine Aufforderung zur Einreichung von Vorschlägen für nachhaltige Systeme der Lebensmittelerzeugung vorgesehen. Unter diese Aufforderung fällt auch das Thema „Praktische Lösungen für von einheimischen und fremden Schädlingen befallene Pflanzen (Maßnahme SFS-3-2014)". Forschungsprojekte über Rebstockkrankheiten wären im Rahmen dieser Maßnahme förderfähig.

([1]) ABl. L 347 vom 20.12.2013.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014022/13
à la Commission
Astrid Lulling (PPE), Michel Dantin (PPE), Herbert Dorfmann (PPE), Christa Klaß (PPE), Eric Andrieu (S&D), Sophie Auconie (PPE), Françoise Grossetête (PPE), Giancarlo Scottà (EFD), Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) et Franco Bonanini (NI)
(11 décembre 2013)

Objet: Maladies du bois de la vigne

Les maladies du bois affectant la vigne, en particulier l'eutypiose, l'esca et le black dead arm (BDA), se développent de façon préoccupante en Europe et inquiètent à juste titre les viticulteurs, car elles touchent la charpente de la souche et conduisent à plus ou moins long terme à la mort du cep, sans possibilité de traitement connu à ce jour.

Si le taux de contamination s'avère très variable selon les régions, certaines d'entre elles voient plus de 80 % de leurs parcelles contaminées par l'esca ou le BDA. Le taux moyen de ceps rendus ainsi improductifs est aujourd'hui estimé à environ 12 % (pieds atteints avec perte de production, pieds manquants et pieds en cours de remplacement).

Ces maladies mettent donc clairement en péril l'outil de production de nombreux viticulteurs, ainsi que sa pérennité.

Devant l'ampleur et la progression du phénomène, les projets de recherche se multiplient dans les différents États membres afin de prévenir, de contenir, voire d'éradiquer ces maladies du bois.

Dans ce contexte, la Commission peut-elle préciser:

Quels moyens de recherche ont été mis en œuvre ou coordonnés à ce jour au niveau européen pour lutter contre ces maladies?

Quels éléments de la PAC elle compte mobiliser — ou, à défaut, quels moyens peuvent être mobilisés par les États membres dans le cadre de la PAC — pour compenser à court terme, au moins en partie, les pertes subies par le secteur?

Si elle compte mettre en œuvre de nouveaux programmes de recherche pilotés directement au niveau européen, notamment au moyen du volet agricole du 8e PCRD?

Réponse donnée par M. Cioloș au nom de la Commission
(3 février 2014)

Dans le cadre des programmes de soutien au secteur vitivinicole, la mesure de l'assurance-récolte visée à l'article 49 du nouveau règlement «OCM unique», à savoir le règlement (UE) n° 1308/2013 ([1]), prévoit une participation financière de l'Union au coût de la prime d'assurance destinée à sauvegarder les revenus des producteurs lorsque ceux-ci subissent des pertes à la suite de maladies ou d'infestations parasitaires. En outre, l'article 46, paragraphe 3, point c), de ce même règlement prévoit une aide à la replantation des vignobles si l'autorité compétente de l'État membre impose l'arrachage obligatoire des vignobles concernés par ces maladies. Les États membres peuvent introduire ces mesures dans leurs programmes d'aide nationaux.

Un financement de l'UE a été alloué pour la coordination d'activités de recherche financées par les États membres, au niveau européen, dans le cadre du projet COST (action FA 1303).

De plus, le programme-cadre pour la recherche et l'innovation «Horizon 2020» prévoit, dans son programme de travail 2014-2015, un appel à projets en faveur des systèmes de production alimentaire durables et dans le cadre de cet appel, un volet portant sur des solutions pratiques destinées à combattre les parasites endogènes et exogènes des plantes (action SFS-3-2014). Les projets de recherche sur les maladies du bois de la vigne pourraient bénéficier d'une aide au titre de cette action.

([1]) JO L 347 du 20.12.2013.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014022/13
alla Commissione
Astrid Lulling (PPE), Michel Dantin (PPE), Herbert Dorfmann (PPE), Christa Klaß (PPE), Eric Andrieu (S&D), Sophie Auconie (PPE), Françoise Grossetête (PPE), Giancarlo Scottà (EFD), Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) e Franco Bonanini (NI)
(11 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Malattie della pianta della vite

Le malattie della pianta che colpiscono la vite, in particolare l'eutipiosi, l'esca e il black dead arm (BDA), si sviluppano in modo preoccupante in Europa e giustamente inquietano i coltivatori in quanto influenzano la struttura del fusto e portano a breve o a lungo termine alla morte del ceppo di vite senza possibilità di trattamento a tutt'oggi conosciuto.

Se è vero che il tasso di infezione è molto variabile a seconda delle regioni, è pur vero che alcune hanno oltre l'80 % dei loro terreni contaminati dall'esca o dal BDA. Il tasso medio dei ceppi così resi improduttivi secondo le stime odierne è di circa il 12 % (ceppi colpiti con perdita di produzione, ceppi mancanti e ceppi in corso di sostituzione).

Queste malattie chiaramente compromettono lo strumento di produzione di molti viticoltori, così come la relativa sostenibilità.

Data l'entità e la progressione del fenomeno, i progetti di ricerca si moltiplicano in molti Stati membri per prevenire, contenere o sradicare queste malattie del legno del fusto.

In questo contesto, può la Commissione precisare:

1. quali metodi di ricerca sono stati finora attuati o coordinati a livello europeo per lottare contro queste malattie?

2. Quali elementi della PAC intende mobilitare, o, altrimenti, quali mezzi possono essere mobilitati dagli Stati membri nel quadro della PAC — per compensare a breve termine o almeno in parte delle perdite subite dal settore?

3. Intende attuare nuovi programmi di ricerca pilotati direttamente a livello europeo, in particolare attraverso il fascicolo agricolo dell'ottavo programma quadro di ricerca e sviluppo (PQRS)?

Risposta di Dacian Cioloş a nome della Commissione
(3 febbraio 2014)

Nell'ambito dei programmi di sostegno nel settore vitivinicolo, la misura dell'assicurazione del raccolto, di cui all'articolo 49 del regolamento (UE) n. 1308/2013 ([1]) recante la nuova organizzazione unica del mercato, prevede la concessione di un contributo finanziario dell'Unione al costo del premio assicurativo a copertura delle perdite dei produttori causate da fitopatie o infestazioni parassitarie. Inoltre, l'articolo 46, paragrafo 3, lettera c) dello stesso regolamento prevede la concessione di un sostegno per il reimpianto di vigneti, qualora l'autorità competente dello Stato membro disponga l'estirpazione obbligatoria del vigneto colpito da tali fitopatie. Gli Stati membri possono inserire tali misure nel loro programma nazionale di sostegno.

Nel quadro del progetto COST (azione FA 1303) sono stati assegnati finanziamenti dell'UE destinati a coordinare a livello europeo le attività di ricerca finanziate a livello nazionale. Inoltre, il programma quadro per la ricerca e l'innovazione, Orizzonte 2020, prevede, nel programma di lavoro 2014-15, un bando relativo a sistemi di produzione alimentare sostenibile, nell'ambito del quale un'azione è specificamente destinata a «Soluzioni pratiche per le fitopatie indigene ed esotiche che colpiscono le piante» (azione SFS-3-2014). In tale azione potrebbero rientrare i progetti di ricerca sulle malattie che colpiscono la vite.

([1]) GU L 347 del 20.12.2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014022/13
to the Commission
Astrid Lulling (PPE), Michel Dantin (PPE), Herbert Dorfmann (PPE), Christa Klaß (PPE), Eric Andrieu (S&D), Sophie Auconie (PPE), Françoise Grossetête (PPE), Giancarlo Scottà (EFD), Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) and Franco Bonanini (NI)
(11 December 2013)

Subject: Vine wood diseases

The incidence of diseases affecting the wood of grapevines in Europe, in particular eutypiosis, esca and black dead arm (BDA), is increasing at a worrying rate. Vine growers are concerned, and rightly so, as these diseases affect the trunk of the vine and sooner or later lead to the death of the vine stock. There is no known treatment at present.

While the rate of infection varies widely from one region to the next, in some regions over 80% of vineyards are infected with esca or BDA. The percentage of vines rendered barren as a result is currently estimated to be approximately 12% (affected vines causing loss of production, missing vines and vines awaiting replacement).

These diseases are therefore clearly jeopardising many growers' production assets and their long-term viability.

The extent and rapid growth of the problem have prompted a number of research projects in the various Member States, aimed at preventing, containing and possibly even eradicating these vine wood diseases.

What research and resources have been mobilised or arranged to date at European level to combat these diseases?

What action will the Commission take under the CAP to offset, at least in part, the losses which the sector has suffered, and failing this what resources can Member States mobilise within the framework of the CAP to do so?

Does the Commission intend to implement new research projects coordinated directly by the European institutions, for example under the agriculture section of the eighth FPRD?

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

Under the support programmes in the wine sector, the measure of harvest insurance in Article 49 of the new Single CMO, Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 ([1]), foresees a Union financial contribution to the cost of the insurance premium for safeguarding producers incomes where there are losses as a consequense of diseases or pest infestations. Furthermore, Article 46(3)(c) of the same Regulation foresees support for replanting of vineyards if the competent authority of the Member State provides for mandatory grubbing up of vineyard affected by those diseases. Member States may introduce those measures in their National Support Programme.

EU funding has been allocated for the coordination of nationally-funded research on a European level via COST project (action FA 1303). In addition, the framework programme for Research and Innovation — Horizon 2020 — foresees in its work programme 2014-2015 a call for sustainable food production systems and under this call a topic dealing with 'Practical solutions for native and alien pest affecting plants (action SFS-3-2014)'. Research projects on vine wood diseases would be eligible under this action.

([1]) OJ L 347, 20.12.2013.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014023/13
à la Commission
Catherine Grèze (Verts/ALE)
(11 décembre 2013)

Objet: Destruction d'un habitat de la tortue cistude d'Europe

Un site majeur de ponte de tortues cistudes d'Europe vient d'être littéralement rasé par les bulldozers. Il est situé sur une zone d'extension de la zone de fret qui jouxte la réserve naturelle nationale des Marais de Bruges (Gironde). Cette destruction a été attestée par la Sepanso, association agréée de protection de l'environnement. Les jeunes ne sortant des nids souvent qu'à l'automne, il est vraisemblable que les engins ont détruit des individus de l'année. Cette population, qui doit subir depuis 60 ans une urbanisation galopante directement responsable de la destruction de 90 % du marais de «Bruges-Bordeaux», cherche des zones hors d'eau et très ensoleillées en marge de la réserve (peu d'endroits sont propices à la ponte dans cette dernière) pour déposer ses œufs. Les deux principales zones de ponte situées sur la frange de la zone de fret avaient déjà été détruites par l'implantation de bâtiments: tout d'abord en 2008, puis en 2013.

Cette destruction intervient alors même qu'un plan national d'actions pour la cistude et qu'un plan régional pour l'Aquitaine sont mis en œuvre.

La cistude d'Europe est une tortue d'eau douce indigène en France. Aujourd'hui, elle est en déclin dans toute son aire de répartition et occupe des zones moins étendues. Cette régression en fait maintenant une espèce menacée qu'il faut sauvegarder. Il ne reste que quelques foyers de population très isolés les uns des autres: dans le Centre (Brenne), en Rhône-Alpes (certaines parties de la vallée du Rhône), sur le littoral charentais, en région Aquitaine, en Poitou-Charentes et sur le littoral méditerranéen et corse.

La cistude d'Europe est une espèce phare du patrimoine naturel européen. À ce titre, elle est strictement protégée par la convention de Berne et est inscrite sous son nom scientifique, «Emys orbicularis», à l'annexe II de la directive européenne «Habitats, Faune, Flore». L'annexe II regroupe des espèces animales et végétales d'intérêt communautaire: les États membres doivent empêcher, par des mesures contractuelles, réglementaires ou administratives appropriées, la détérioration de ces espèces et de leurs habitats.

Qu'entend faire la Commission pour préserver ce site d'importance majeure pour la cistude d'Europe, espèce communautaire?

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

Le site d'importance communautaire (SIC) «Marais de Bruges, Blanquefort et Parampuyre» a été désigné par la France comme zone spéciale de conservation (ZSC FR7200687), notamment pour la conservation de la tortue cistude d'Europe (Emys orbicularis), espèce inscrite aux annexes II et IV de la directive «Habitats» (92/43/CEE ([1])). Par conséquent, l'article 6, paragraphes 1, 2, et 3, et l'article 12 de la directive «Habitats» s'appliquent et devraient contribuer à rétablir cette espèce dans un état de conservation favorable. La Commission vérifiera si ces dispositions ont été respectées sur ce site Natura 2000.

([1]) JO L 206 du 22.7.1992.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014023/13
to the Commission
Catherine Grèze (Verts/ALE)
(11 December 2013)

Subject: Destruction of a European pond turtle habitat

One of the European pond turtle's main nesting sites has literally just been destroyed by bulldozers. It is situated on the site of an extension to the cargo terminal adjacent to the Marais de Bruges national nature reserve (Gironde *département*). The destruction was confirmed by the accredited environmental protection organisation Sepanso. Since the young often do not leave their nests until the autumn, it is likely that the bulldozers have destroyed this year's hatchlings. For the last 60 years, this turtle population has been caught up in the rampant urbanisation directly responsible for the destruction of 90% of the Bruges-Bordeaux marshland and is seeking areas in full sun on the shores around the edge of the reserve to lay its eggs (few areas of the reserve are suited to nesting). The two main nesting areas on the edges of the cargo terminal site had already been destroyed, first in 2008 and then in 2013, when buildings were erected.

This habitat has been destroyed at a time when both a national action plan and an Aquitaine-wide regional plan for the European pond turtle are being implemented.

The European pond turtle is a freshwater turtle indigenous to France. The population is in decline throughout its distribution area and is currently occupying smaller areas. As a result, it is now a threatened species and must therefore be protected. There are only a few remaining population centres and they are all very cut off from each other: central France (Brenne); Rhône-Alpes (some areas of the Rhône valley); the Charentais coast, Aquitaine; Poitou-Charentes and the Mediterranean and Corsican coasts.

The European pond turtle is one of the flagship species of Europe's natural heritage. It is therefore protected under the Berne convention and is listed (under its scientific name *Emys orbicularis*) in Annex II of the Habitats Directive. Annex II lists animal and plant species 'of community interest': Member States must prevent the decline of these species and their habitats, through appropriate contractual, regulatory or administrative measures.

What does the Commission intend to do to preserve this site of major importance to the European pond turtle, a species of community interest?

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

The site of Community importance (SIC) 'Marais de Bruges, Blanquefort et Parampuyre' has been designated by France as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC FR7200687), among others, for the conservation of the European Pond Turtle (Emys orbicularis), a species listed in Annex II and IV of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC ([1])). Therefore Article 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 and 12 of the Habitats Directive apply and should contribute to the restoration of the species at a favourable conservation status. The Commission will enquire if those provisions have been respected on this Natura 2000 site.

([1]) OJ L 206, 22.7.1992.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-014026/13
aan de Commissie (Vicevoorzitter / Hoge Vertegenwoordiger)
Laurence J. A. J. Stassen (NI)
(11 december 2013)

Betreft: VP/HR — EU financiert Palestijnse fantoomambtenaren

Tot zes jaar lang heeft de EU duizenden fantoomambtenaren in de Gazastrook betaald zonder dat zij enig werk verzetten ([1]).

1. Hoe verklaart en verantwoordt de vicevoorzitter / hoge vertegenwoordiger het, dat duizenden Palestijnse fantoomambtenaren in de Gazastrook — tot zes jaar lang — door de EU via het Nabuurschapsbeleid werden betaald voor niet-uitgevoerd / niet-bestaand werk?

2. Hoe heeft de betaling van Palestijnse fantoomambtenaren door de EU zo lang onopgemerkt kunnen blijven? Is de vicevoorzitter / hoge vertegenwoordiger voornemens het door de EU aan de fantoomambtenaren uitbetaalde geld direct terug te vorderen? Zo ja, hoe? Zo neen, waarom niet?

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

Het geachte Parlementslid lijkt te verwijzen naar ambtenaren van de Palestijnse Autoriteit (PA) die in de Gazastrook werken, van wie sommigen wellicht niet in staat zijn om hun taken te vervullen door de politieke situatie.

Zoals werd aangegeven in een verslag dat is gepubliceerd door de Europese Rekenkamer op 11 december 2013, zijn de problemen rond de ambtenaren die niet in Gaza kunnen werken complex wegens de omstandigheden in de Gazastrook, waar objectieve controle moeilijk is. In het verslag wordt niet verwezen naar een exact cijfer van ambtenaren die niet kunnen werken, en het is evenmin mogelijk om precies te weten over welke sectoren het gaat.

De ambtenaren in kwestie zijn geen fantoomambtenaren, maar voldoen aan de toelatingscriteria van het Pegase-mechanisme tussen de EU en de PA. Gezien de politieke omstandigheden zijn de Europese Commissie en de HV/VV van mening dat de PA verder moet gaan met het steunen van haar ambtenaren die in Gaza werken. Dit is van essentieel belang om de eenheid van een toekomstige Palestijnse staat te handhaven en de positie van de PA (de kern van de toekomstige Palestijnse staat) in Gaza te versterken.

([1]) http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/7e6d1c9e-61b8-11e3-aa02-00144feabdc0.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014026/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Laurence J.A.J. Stassen (NI)
(11 December 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — EU funds imaginary Palestinian civil servants

For up to six years, the EU has been paying thousands of imaginary civil servants in the Gaza Strip without them doing any work ([1]).

1. How does the Vice-President/High Representative explain and justify the fact that thousands of imaginary Palestinian civil servants in the Gaza Strip have been paid — for up to six years — by the EU via the neighbourhood policy for work that has not been performed or indeed was non-existent?

2. How could the payment of imaginary Palestinian civil servants by the EU have gone unnoticed for so long? Does the Vice-President/High Representative plan to demand back the money paid by the EU to the imaginary civil servants? If so, how? If not, why not?

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

The Honourable Member seems to be referring to Palestinian Authority (PA) civil servants based in the Gaza Strip, some of whom may be unable to perform their duties due to the political situation.

As outlined in a report published by the European Court of Auditors on 11 December 2013, the issues surrounding the civil servants who may be unable to work in Gaza are complex in the circumstances of the Gaza Strip where objective verification is difficult. The report does not quote a precise figure of civil servants prevented from working, nor is it possible to be known with precision what sectors are most affected.

The civil servants in question are not imaginary but meet the eligibility criteria established under the PEGASE Mechanism between the EU and the PA. In view of the political circumstances, the European Commission and the HR/VP consider that the PA must continue supporting its Gaza-based civil servants as a key element of maintaining the unity of a future Palestinian state and allowing the PA (core of the future Palestinian State) to retain a foothold in the Gaza Strip.

([1]) http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/7e6d1c9e-61b8-11e3-aa02-00144feabdc0.html

(České znění)

Otázka k písemnému zodpovězení P-014027/13
Komisi
Olga Sehnalová (S&D)
(11. prosince 2013)

Předmět: Problém vybíjení potulných psů v Rumunsku

V poslední době dochází v Rumunsku k hromadnému vybíjení potulných psů. Důvodem je velké množství volně pobíhajících psů a jejich častější útoky na lidi. Podle odhadů místní radnice žije jen v Bukurešti asi 64 tisíc těchto psů a oficiální statistiky uvádí, že jen za první čtyři měsíce letošního roku došlo v hlavním městě k napadení více než tisíce lidí. Vše vyvrcholilo nedávnou nešťastnou událostí, kdy po útoku smečky psů zemřel čtyřletý chlapec. Rumunsko tedy přijalo zákon, který umožňuje utratit toulavé psy, o které během dvou týdnů od jejich odchytu nikdo neprojeví zájem.

To je však v rozporu s Evropskou úmluvou o ochraně zvířat v zájmovém chovu, stejně jako s písemným prohlášením Evropského parlamentu 26/2011, ve kterém vyzval členské státy Evropské unie k přijetí komplexní strategie pro nakládání se psí populací.

Evropská komise na Rumunsko, jako člena OIE (World Organisation for Animal Health), apelovala, aby zajistilo respektování doporučení této organizace, že zabíjení potulných psů by mělo být tím nejkrajnějším řešením, pokud všechna ostatní řešení selhala, a v takovém případě má být provedeno humánním způsobem. Také komisař pro zdraví Tonio Borg zaslal dne 1. října 2013 v této věci dopis rumunskému ministru zdravotnictví.

1. Jaká byla zpětná reakce rumunského ministra zdravotnictví?

2. Jaké kroky podnikla rumunská vláda ke změně situace?

3. Jelikož ohlasů veřejnosti, dožadující se zásahu ze strany Evropské unie a napravení této situace, je stále více, bude se Komise rázněji zasazovat o vyřešení tohoto problému a jakým způsobem?

Odpověď Tonia Borga jménem Komise
(23. ledna 2014)

Na dopis Komise týkající se klíčové role, jakou hrají příslušné národní orgány při zajištění toho, aby byla bezvýhradně dodržována doporučení Světové organizace pro zdraví zvířat (OIE) pro kontrolu populací toulavých psů, odpověděl dne 23. října 2013 předseda rumunského Národního veterinárního a potravinářského úřadu.

Ve své odpovědi uvedl, že podle nedávné novely zákona č. 227/2002 o kontrole toulavých zvířat v Rumunsku nyní musí orgány místní správy aktivně vytvářet zvláštní akční plány pro nakládání s populací toulavých psů. Povinností rumunského Národního veterinárního a potravinářského úřadu je tyto plány kontrolovat a sledovat.

Dále platí, že všichni psi v Rumunsku musí být identifikováni a evidováni a sterilizace kříženců a čistokrevných zvířat je povinná. Utrácení psů je třeba považovat za krajní řešení a musí se důsledně provádět podle norem OIE pro dobré životní podmínky zvířat.

Komise vzala toto objasnění na vědomí a požádala rumunské orgány, aby ji informovaly o aktuálním vývoji a dosažených výsledcích.

Pokud jde o způsoby, jakými příslušné národní orgány nakládají s toulavými psi, nemá Komise žádnou zvláštní pravomoc a v této záležitosti neplánuje konkrétní opatření na evropské úrovni.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-014027/13
to the Commission
Olga Sehnalová (S&D)
(11 December 2013)

Subject: Slaughter of street dogs in Romania

The mass slaughter of street dogs has been taking place recently in Romania. The reason for the slaughter is the large number of freely roaming dogs and their increasingly frequent attacks on people. According to estimates from Bucharest City Hall, the city has some 64 000 street dogs, and official statistics show that during the first four months of this year alone more than 1 000 people were attacked by these dogs. These attacks recently culminated in the tragic death of a four-year-old boy, who died after being attacked by a pack of dogs. Romania then passed a law that allows stray dogs to be put down if nobody comes forward to claim or adopt them within two weeks of their seizure.

However, this violates the European Convention for the Protection of Pet Animals and European Parliament Declaration No 26/2011, which calls upon the Member States to adopt comprehensive dog population management strategies.

The Commission urged Romania — as a member of the World Organisation for Animal Health — to uphold that organisation's recommendations stating that the killing of street dogs should be used as a last resort once all other avenues have failed and that it should be carried out in a humane manner. Additionally, Health Commissioner Tonio Borg sent a letter to the Romanian Minister of Health on this matter on 1 October 2013.

1. What was the response of the Romanian Minister of Health?

2. What steps has the Romanian Government taken to address this situation?

3. Given that public calls for the EU to intervene to rectify this situation are becomingincreasingly frequent, will the Commission take more vigorous steps to address thissituation? If so, how?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(23 January 2014)

On 23 October 2013 the President of the Romanian Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Authority replied to a Commission's letter addressing the critical role of the national competent authorities in ensuring the full compliance with the OIE recommendations on stray dog population.

In this reply it was clarified that the recently amended Law 227/2002 regulating the control of stray animals in Romania currently foresees an active involvement of local councils in the development of specific action plans for the management of stray dog population. These plans have to be controlled and monitored by the Romanian National Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Authority.

In addition, all Romanian dogs have to be identified and recorded, and the compulsory sterilization of half breed and purebred animals is also foreseen. Dog euthanasia has to be considered as a last resort option and performed in strict compliance with the OIE animal welfare standards.

The Commission took note of this clarification and invited the Romanian authorities to be informed and updated on the achievements made.

The Commission has no specific role regarding the way stray dogs are managed by the national competent authorities and it does not envisage taking specific actions regarding this issue at European level.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-014028/13
til Kommissionen (Næstformand / Højtstående repræsentant)
Morten Løkkegaard (ALDE) og Marietje Schaake (ALDE)
(11. december 2013)

Om: VP/HR — kulturen i de eksterne forbindelser

Den forberedende foranstaltning »Kulturen i de eksterne forbindelser«, som Europa-Parlamentet har vedtaget, blev lanceret i begyndelsen af januar 2013. Dens formål er at bidrage til indkredsning af strategier og visioner for, hvordan kultur kan bidrage til udviklingen af eksterne forbindelser. »En ny fortælling om Europa«, som Parlamentet ligeledes har vedtaget, undersøger Europas plads i verden, hvordan det opfattes af sine partnere samt kulturens rolle i den europæiske integrationsproces. I forbindelse med ovenstående:

1. Kan næstformanden/den højtstående repræsentant redegøre nærmere for, hvilke skridt EU-Udenrigstjenesten har taget for at integrere en kulturel dimension i sin udenrigspolitik på baggrund af den spirende konsensus mellem medlemsstaterne og civilsamfundet om behovet for at styrke den europæiske dimension i EU's eksterne forbindelser?

2. Er det muligt at udnævne en kontaktperson i EU-Udenrigstjenesten, der konkret har til opgave at koordinere kulturelt diplomati og kulturelle forbindelser med Kommissionen og dens generaldirektorater og Parlamentet med henblik på at supplere det vigtige arbejde, der gøres af medlemsstaterne?

3. Kunne fælles politikudvikling på kulturområdet fremmes med alle relevante aktører fra EU-landene som led i det offentlige diplomati?

4. Hvilke skridt er der truffet for at benytte nye teknologier og online-platforme til at giveinformation om eksisterende EU-kulturprogrammer inden for udenrigsområdet ogkulturelle aktiviteter udviklet af EU's repræsentationer i tredjelande samt til at fremmenetværksarbejde mellem kulturfagfolk, institutioner og civilsamfund?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af den højtstående repræsentant/næstformand Catherine Ashton
(11. februar 2014)

Den højtstående repræsentant/næstformanden går ind for en yderligere integration af den kulturelle dimension i EU's udenrigspolitik. Kultur har et enestående potentiale til at skabe dialog og forsoning, fremme demokratiet, styrke civilsamfundet, skabe samfundsøkonomisk udvikling og forbedre EU's image ude i verden. Udviklingen af eksterne kulturelle forbindelser vil give EU og medlemsstaterne mulighed for at udnytte det fulde potentiale ved et af deres mest værdifulde aktiver.

EU har et verdensomspændende netværk af delegationer, som fungerer som en kilde til initiativ og et centrum for koordinering. Det giver mulighed for at forbedre EU's kulturelle diplomati og styrke dets betydning for de internationale forbindelser.

Den betydning, som den højtstående repræsentant/næstformanden tillægger kulturelle anliggender i EU's eksterne forbindelser, kommer til udtryk gennem udnævnelsen af en koordinator på området i Generalsekretærens kontor. Det vil lette koordineringen med Kommissionen og Europa-Parlamentet og supplere medlemsstaternes arbejde.

Tæt samordning med medlemsstaterne og civilsamfundet vil medføre et mere struktureret samarbejde og en mere effektiv anvendelse af ressourcerne.

Den højtstående repræsentant/næstformanden støtter kulturelt diplomati gennem anvendelsen af digitalt diplomati. Den højtstående repræsentant/næstformanden, EU-Udenrigstjenesten og EU's delegationer har en strategi for sociale medier og anvender sociale medieplatforme. Disse er særligt effektive, når det gælder om at nå ud til den unge generation eller bestemte fag- eller samfundsgrupper. De sociale medier skaber også et offentligt rum til information på lokale sprog.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-014028/13
aan de Commissie (Vicevoorzitter / Hoge Vertegenwoordiger)
Morten Løkkegaard (ALDE) en Marietje Schaake (ALDE)
(11 december 2013)

Betreft: VP/HR — Cultuur in de externe betrekkingen

Begin januari 2013 is de door het Europees Parlement aangenomen voorbereidende actie „Cultuur in de externe betrekkingen" van start gegaan. De actie draagt bij tot het identificeren van strategieën voor en visies op de bijdrage van cultuur aan de ontwikkeling van de externe betrekkingen. Ook in het eveneens door het Parlement goedgekeurde project „Een nieuw verhaal voor Europa" worden vragen aan de orde gesteld over de plaats van Europa in de wereld, hoe Europa wordt gezien door zijn partners en de rol van cultuur in het Europese integratieproces. In dit verband rijzen de volgende vragen:

1. Kan de vicevoorzitter/hoge vertegenwoordiger aangeven en uiteenzetten welke maatregelen de EDEO heeft genomen om in zijn extern beleid een culturele dimensie te integreren die voortbouwt op de nieuwe consensus tussen lidstaten en het maatschappelijk middenveld over de noodzaak om de Europese dimensie in de externe betrekkingen van de EU sterker tot uitdrukking te laten komen?

2. Bestaat de mogelijkheid om binnen de EDEO een contactpunt in te stellen dat specifiek tot taak heeft de culturele diplomatie en de culturele betrekkingen tussen de Commissie en haar directoraten-generaal en het Europees Parlement te coördineren en zo het belangrijke werk van de lidstaten te voltooien?

3. Hoe kan gezamenlijke beleidsontwikkeling met alle betrokken belanghebbenden uit EU-landen op het gebied van cultuur, als onderdeel van publieke diplomatie, worden bevorderd?

4. Welke maatregelen zijn genomen om nieuwe technologieën en online platforms te gebruiken voor informatieverstrekking over bestaande culturele programma's van de EU op het gebied van externe betrekkingen en door de buitenlandse vertegenwoordigingen van de EU ontwikkelde activiteiten, alsook om het netwerken tussen culturele professionals, instellingen en het maatschappelijk middenveld te faciliteren?

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

De HV/VV is vast van plan een culturele dimensie verder te integreren in de externe betrekkingen van de EU. Cultuur biedt unieke mogelijkheden om tot dialoog en verzoening te komen, democratisering te bevorderen, het maatschappelijk middenveld te versterken, de sociaal-economische ontwikkeling te stimuleren en het imago van de EU te verbeteren over de hele wereld. Dankzij de ontwikkeling van de externe culturele betrekkingen kunnen de EU en haar lidstaten het volledige potentieel van één van hun meest waardevolle troeven realiseren.

De EU heeft een wereldwijd netwerk van delegaties dat dienst doet als initiatiefnemer en coördinator. Dit netwerk kan worden gebruikt om de culturele diplomatie van de EU te bevorderen en om meer gewicht in de schaal te leggen bij internationale betrekkingen.

Dat de HV/VV belang hecht aan culturele zaken in de externe betrekkingen van de EU, blijkt uit de aanwijzing van een coördinator die hiervoor verantwoordelijk is op het bureau van de secretaris-generaal. Dit vergemakkelijkt de coördinatie met de Commissie en het Europees Parlement, en moet een aanvulling vormen op de activiteiten van de lidstaten.

Nauwe samenwerking met de lidstaten en het maatschappelijk middenveld kan leiden tot meer gestructureerde samenwerkingsvormen en een doeltreffender gebruik van middelen.

De HV/VV ondersteunt culturele diplomatie door digitale diplomatie. De HV/VV, de EDEO en de EU-delegaties hebben een sociale-mediastrategie en maken gebruik van sociale-mediaplatforms. Deze zijn bijzonder doeltreffend wanneer ze worden gebruikt om de jonge generatie of specifieke professionele/sociale subgroepen aan te spreken. Sociale media creëren ook een plaats waar openbare informatie kan worden gedeeld in plaatselijke talen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014028/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Morten Løkkegaard (ALDE) and Marietje Schaake (ALDE)
(11 December 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Culture in external relations

The preparatory action on 'Culture in External Relations' adopted by the European Parliament was launched in early January 2013. It aims to help identify strategies and visions for culture to contribute to the development of external relations. The New Narrative for Europe, also adopted by Parliament, examines the place of Europe in the world, how it is perceived by its partners and the role of culture in the European integration process. In this connection:

1. Can the Vice-President/High Representative elaborate on the steps taken by the EEAS to integrate a cultural dimension into its external policies, building on the emerging consensus among Member States and civil society regarding the need to strengthen the European dimension in the EU's external relations?

2. Would it be possible to appoint a contact point within the EEAS specifically tasked with coordinating cultural diplomacy and cultural relations with the Commission and its DGs and Parliament, with a view to complementing the important work done by the Member States?

3. Could joint policy development in the field of culture be promoted with all relevant stakeholders from EU countries, as a component of public diplomacy?

4. What steps have been taken to employ new technologies and online platforms to provide information on existing EU cultural programmes in the external relations sphere and cultural activities developed by the EU's foreign representations, as well as to facilitate networking between cultural professionals, institutions and civil society?

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

The HR/VP is committed to further integrating a cultural dimension in the external policies of the EU. Culture has a unique potential to generate dialogue and reconciliation, promote democratization, strengthen civil society, foster socioeconomic development and enhance the EU image around the world. The development of external cultural relations will allow the EU and its Member States to realise the full potential of one of their most valuable assets.

The EU has a worldwide network of Delegations that serves as a source of initiative and a pole of coordination. It provides an entry point for advancing EU cultural diplomacy and strengthening its impact in international relations.

The importance assigned by the HR/VP to cultural matters in EU external relations is manifested through the appointment of a coordinator in this field to the office of the Secretary General. This will facilitate coordination with the Commission and the European Parliament and should complement the work done by Member States.

Close coordination with Member States and civil society would advance more structured forms of cooperation and employ resources in an effective way.

The HR/VP supports cultural diplomacy through the use of digital diplomacy. The HRVP, the EEAS and the EU Delegations have a social media strategy and employ online social media platforms. These are particularly effective when addressing the young generation or specific professional/social subgroups. Social media also create a public information space in local languages.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita P-014029/13
a la Comisión
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(11 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Apología de regímenes autoritarios por parte de instituciones públicas del Estado español

Según recogen diferentes medios de comunicación, el Ministerio de Defensa de España organiza anualmente la Cátedra Kindelán, en honor a Alfredo Kindelán Duany, general de brigada al mando de los Servicios del Aire del ejército que dio el golpe de Estado de 1936 y que instauró un gobierno autoritario a partir de 1939 ([1]). Responsable de numerosas muertes civiles, combatió al lado de la Legión Cóndor alemana y de la aviación fascista (*Squadra Legionaria*) de la Italia de Benito Mussolini. El general Francisco Franco lo condecoró con la Gran Cruz de San Hermenegildo (1941) y la Gran Cruz del Mérito Militar (1944). Nombrado marqués en 1961, desde 1988 el Ministerio de Defensa imparte un seminario con su nombre con el objetivo de fomentar «el debate, estudio, e intercambio de ideas» sobre la experiencia aérea militar. El máximo representante de esta cátedra es el Jefe del Estado, Juan Carlos de Borbón, que en 2011 presidió el seminario.

El Estado español incumple así su propia normativa interna (Ley 57/2007, de Memoria Histórica) y contraviene los principios y valores de la Unión Europea, homenajeando a uno de los protagonistas del golpe de Estado contra el régimen democrático vigente en 1936.

Según la Decisión Marco 2008/913/JAI del Consejo relativa a la lucha contra el racismo y la xenofobia, todos los Estados miembros de la UE están obligados a sancionar penalmente la incitación pública e intencionada a la violencia y al odio contra grupos o personas por su raza, color, religión, ascendencia u origen nacional o étnico.

1. ¿Considera la Comisión la posibilidad de incluir estos hechos en su informe sobre las medidas de aplicación de los Estados en materia de apología de regímenes autoritarios?

2. ¿Incoará la Comisión procedimientos de infracción contra España por inacción en la lucha contra la incitación pública e intencionada al fascismo violento y al odio?

Respuesta de la Sra. Reding en nombre de la Comisión
(28 de enero de 2014)

La Comisión remite a Su Señoría a su respuesta a la pregunta E-11140/13.

([1]) http://www.publico.es/481834/un-curso-del-ministerio-de-defensa-rinde-homenaje-a-un-militar-responsable-de-la-guerra-civil

(English version)

Question for written answer P-014029/13
to the Commission
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(11 December 2013)

Subject: Eulogising of authoritarian regimes by Spanish Government institutions

According to various media reports, each year the Spanish Ministry of Defence organises the Kindelán Chair, in honour of Alfredo Kindelan Duany, Brigadier General and Air Force commander of the army which carried out the coup of 1936, establishing authoritarian rule as from 1939 ([1]). Responsible for numerous civilian deaths, he fought alongside the German Condor Legion and the Italian fascist air force (Squadra Legionaria) of Benito Mussolini. General Francisco Franco awarded him the Grand Cross of St. Hermenegildo (1941) and the Grand Cross of Military Merit (1944). He was made a Marquis in 1961 and, since 1988, the Ministry of Defence holds a seminar in his name with a view to promoting 'debate, study and exchanges of ideas' on the military aeronautical experience. Honorary President of this Chair is the Head of State, King Juan Carlos de Borbón, who chaired the seminar in 2011.

The Spanish Government, by honouring one of the leaders of the coup against the existing democratic regime in 1936, is thus violating its own domestic law (Law 57/2007 — the so-called 'Historical Memory' law) and is contravening the principles and values of the European Union.

Under Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA on combating racism and xenophobia, all EU Member States are required to impose criminal penalties on intentional public incitement to violence or hatred directed against a group of persons or a member of such a group defined by reference to race, colour, religion, descent or national or ethnic origin.

1. Will the Commission consider including these facts in its report on the implementation measures taken by the Member States in respect of the eulogising of authoritarian regimes?

2. Will the Commission initiate infringement proceedings against Spain for its failure to act in order to combat intentional public incitement to violent fascism and hatred?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(28 January 2014)

The Commission refers the Honourable Member to its answer to E-11140/13.

([1]) http://www.publico.es/481834/un-curso-del-ministerio-de-defensa-rinde-homenaje-a-un-militar-responsable-de-la-guerra-civil

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung P-014030/13
an die Kommission
Nadja Hirsch (ALDE)
(11. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Russland und andere Drittstaaten, die Systeme für Fluggastdatensätze (PNR) verwenden

Am 31. Mai 2013 wurde an die Kommission eine Parlamentarische Anfrage zur Datenübermittlung von Fluggastdatensätzen gestellt, die am 9. August 2013 von der Kommission beantwortet wurde.

Gemäß der Antwort der Kommission hat das russische Verkehrsministerium am 1. Juli 2013 beschlossen, die Umsetzung der Verordnung bis zum 1. Dezember 2013 zu verschieben.

Zudem hat die Kommission in ihrer Antwort zugesagt, das Parlament über eine Rahmenvereinbarung mit Russland, die nach europäischem Recht zwingende Rechtsgrundlage für die Weitergabe europäischer Fluggastdaten an Drittstaaten sein muss, auf dem Laufenden zu halten.

Eine weitere Unterrichtung des Parlaments in dieser Sache ist seit dem 9. August 2013 nicht mehr erfolgt.

Gleichzeitig vermeldet die Presse, dass seit dem 1. Dezember 2013 russische Behörden von innerhalb der EU zugelassenen Fluggesellschaften PNR-Daten verlangen.

Daher erlaube ich mir folgende Fragen:

1. Werden derzeit PNR-Daten von europäischen Fluggesellschaften ohne europäische Rechtsgrundlage an russische Behörden übermittelt?

2. Wie weit sind die Verhandlungen mit Russland zu einer Rahmenvereinbarung seit dem 9. August 2013 gediehen?

3. Gedenkt die Kommission, sich an ihre Zusage vom 9. August 2013, dass das Parlament unterrichtet wird, zu halten?

Antwort von Frau Malmström im Namen der Kommission
(22. Januar 2014)

Soviel der Kommission bekannt ist, übermitteln europäische Fluggesellschaften keine PNR-Daten an die russischen Behörden.

Die Kommission verhandelt mit Russland nicht über ein Rahmenabkommen. Die Kommissionsdienststellen haben die russischen Behörden bei zwei Sitzungen auf technischer Ebene über den EU-Rechtsrahmen zur Übermittlung von personenbezogenen Daten unterrichtet.

Der Ausschuss für bürgerliche Freiheiten des Europäischen Parlaments wurde am 28. Juni, 17. September und 9. Dezember 2013 durch Schreiben von Kommissarin Malmström an seinen Vorsitzenden über die Entwicklungen unterrichtet.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-014030/13
to the Commission
Nadja Hirsch (ALDE)
(11 December 2013)

Subject: Russia and other third countries using passenger name record (PNR) systems

A parliamentary question on the transfer of passenger name records (PNRs) was tabled to the Commission on 31 May 2013; it was answered by the Commission on 9 August 2013.

On 1 July 2013, according to the Commission's answer, the Russian Ministry of Transport decided to postpone implementation of a decree in this connection until 1 December 2013.

In its answer the Commission furthermore undertook to keep Parliament informed about a framework agreement with Russia, which, under EC law, must be the basis for any transfer of European PNRs.

Since 9 August 2013, Parliament has been given no further notification on this matter.

At the same time, there are media reports that, since 1 December 2013, Russian authorities have been insisting on PNRs from air carriers licensed in the EU.

Accordingly:

1. Are European carriers' PNRs being transferred to Russian authorities without an EU legal basis?

2. What headway has been made since 9 August 2013 in the negotiations with Russia on a framework agreement?

3. Does the Commission propose to abide by its undertaking, given on 9 August 2013, to notify Parliament?

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

The Commission understands that EU carriers do not transfer PNR data to the Russian authorities.

The Commission is not negotiating a framework agremeent with Russia. The Commission services have informed the Russian authorities about the EU legal framework for transferring personal data in the course of two meetings which took place at technical level.

Parliament's Civil Liberties Committee has been informed of developments through letters sent by Commissioner Malmström to its Chairman dated 28 June, 17 September and 9 December 2013.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung P-014031/13
an die Kommission
Martina Michels (GUE/NGL)
(11. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Bekämpfung von Hasskriminalität und Diskriminierung

Seit einigen Jahren ist eine neue Welle der Intoleranz in der Europäischen Union zu beobachten, die sich in Nationalismus, Antisemitismus, Antiislamismus und anderen Formen des ethnisch motivierten Hasses, in Fremdenfeindlichkeit und verschiedenen Formen von Diskriminierung im Alltagsleben niederschlägt.

Beispielhafte Belege für die genannten Phänomene speziell in Bezug auf das Problem des Antisemitismus und hier insbesondere im Bereich Diskriminierung am Arbeitsmarkt enthält die kürzlich veröffentlichte Studie „Erfahrungen der jüdischen Bevölkerung mit Diskriminierung und Hasskriminalität in den Mitgliedstaaten der Europäischen Union" ([1]).

Welche konkreten Maßnahmen hat die Kommission infolge der Entschließung des Europäischen Parlaments vom 14. März 2013 zur verstärkten Bekämpfung von Rassismus, Fremdenfeindlichkeit und Hassverbrechen ([2]) getroffen?

Wie schätzt die Kommission den Stand der Umsetzung der verschiedenen Instrumente auf EU-Ebene zum Schutz vor Diskriminierung ein?

Plant die Kommission die Erarbeitung eines Vorschlags für eine umfassende Strategie zur Bekämpfung von fremdenfeindlichen Vorurteilen, Diskriminierung, Rassismus und Hasskriminalität?

Welche konkreten Maßnahmen erwägt die Kommission für die kommenden Monate in Auswertung der Ergebnisse der o. g. Studie der Europäischen Grundrechteagentur?

Antwort von Frau Reding im Namen der Kommission
(30. Januar 2014)

Die Kommission hat die Mitgliedstaaten aufgefordert, die EU-Vorschriften gegen Diskriminierung und rassistische und fremdenfeindliche Hassreden und Hassverbrechen umzusetzen, und die Umsetzung im Rahmen von Expertengruppen mit den Mitgliedstaaten regelmäßig überwacht. Sie unterstützt die Arbeit der Agentur der Europäischen Union für Grundrechte, die in diesem Jahr zwei neue Erhebungen veröffentlicht hat, die die Erfahrungen von Lesben, Schwulen, Bisexuellen und Transgendern sowie Juden in Bezug auf Hassreden und Hassverbrechen zum Gegenstand haben.

Die Kommission hat den gemeinsamen Bericht über die Richtlinie zur Anwendung des Gleichbehandlungsgrundsatzes ohne Unterschied der Rasse oder der ethnischen Herkunft (2000/43/EG) und über die Richtlinie zur Festlegung eines allgemeinen Rahmens für die Verwirklichung der Gleichbehandlung in Beschäftigung und Beruf (2000/78/EG) angenommen. In dem Bericht werden die korrekte Umsetzung und Anwendung der beiden Richtlinien sowie mögliche Lücken beim Schutz gegen Diskriminierung über die ganze Bandbreite der Diskriminierungsgründe geprüft. Der Bericht wird ergänzt durch einen Leitfaden für Diskriminierungsopfer, in dem dargelegt wird, wie sie eine Diskriminierung geltend machen können.

Die Kommission plant keine neue Strategie zur Bekämpfung von Diskriminierung sowie rassistischer und fremdenfeindlicher Hassreden und Hassverbrechen, da ein umfassendes Maßnahmenbündel zur Bekämpfung dieser Phänomene auf EU-Ebene bereits besteht.

Die Kommission wird im Januar 2014 den Bericht über die Umsetzung des Rahmenbeschlusses 2008/913/JHA des Rates veröffentlichen, der die Mitgliedstaaten dazu verpflichtet, öffentliche Aufstachelung zu Gewalt oder Hass auf der Grundlage der Rasse, Hautfarbe, Religion, Abstammung, nationalen oder ethnischen Herkunft unter Strafe zu stellen. Die Mitgliedstaaten müssen auch das öffentliche Leugnen, Billigen oder gröbliche Verharmlosen der nationalsozialistischen Verbrechen kriminalisieren, wenn die Handlung in einer Weise begangen wird, die wahrscheinlich zu Gewalt oder Hass aufstachelt, und somit als eine Ausprägung von Antisemitismus anzusehen ist.

([1]) http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2013/discrimination-and-hate-crime-against-jews-eu-member-states-experiences-and
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P7-TA-2013-0090&language=DE&ring=B7-2013-0122

(English version)

Question for written answer P-014031/13
to the Commission
Martina Michels (GUE/NGL)
(11 December 2013)

Subject: Combating hate crime and discrimination

For a number of years, a new wave of intolerance has been witnessed in the EU; it is reflected in nationalism, anti-Semitism, anti-Islamism and other forms of ethnically motivated hatred, and in xenophobia and various forms of discrimination in everyday life.

Cases in point which illustrate those phenomena specifically with regard to the problem of anti-Semitism and in particular, in this context, to labour market discrimination, are set out in the recently published study 'Discrimination and hate crime against Jews in EU Member States: experiences and perceptions of antisemitism' ([1]).

What specific action has the Commission taken to follow up the European Parliament resolution of 14 March 2013 on strengthening the fight against racism, xenophobia and hate crime ([2])?

What is the Commission's assessment of the progress made in implementing the various anti-discrimination instruments at EU level?

Is the Commission planning to draw up a proposal for a comprehensive strategy to combat xenophobic prejudice, discrimination, racism and hate crime?

What specific action is the Commission considering, over the next few months, in the light of the findings of the abovementioned study by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(30 January 2014)

The Commission has called upon Member States to implement ~~of~~ EU legislation against discrimination and racist and xenophobic hate speech and crime, and has continued to monitor its implementation in regular expert groups with Member States. The Commission supports the work of FRA, which has published this year two new surveys focusing on the experiences of hate speech and hate crime by LGBT people and Jews.

The Commission has adopted the joint report on the Racial Equality Directive (2000/43/EC) and Employment Equality Directive (2000/78/EC). It will assess the correct implementation and application of the two directives as well as any potential gaps in protection against discrimination on the different grounds. It will be accompanied by a guidance document for victims of discrimination on how to present a discrimination claim.

The Commission is not planning to launch a new strategy to fight against discrimination, racist and xenophobic violence and hatred as a comprehensive set of measures already exists to combat these phenomena in the EU.

The Commission will publish in January 2014 the implementation report of Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA, which obliges Member States to penalise public incitement to violence or hatred against groups or members of such groups on the basis of race, colour, religion, descent, national or ethnic origin. Member States must also incriminate the public denial, condoning and gross trivialisation of the Nazi crimes when it is likely to incite to violence or hatred, which can be considered as a specific manifestation of antisemitism.

([1]) http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2013/discrimination-and-hate-crime-against-jews-eu-member-states-experiences-and
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P6-TA-2013-0090&language=EN&ring=A6-2013-0122

(English version)

Question for written answer P-014032/13
to the Commission
Paul Murphy (GUE/NGL)
(11 December 2013)

Subject: Human rights impact assessment: EU-Israel agriculture agreement

In 2009 the EU and Israel concluded an agreement on agriculture.

A report entitled 'Farming Injustice' published in February 2013 by a number of Palestinian agricultural organisations finds that Israeli agricultural exports to Europe contribute significantly to violations of human rights and workers' rights, in which Israeli agricultural companies participate.

Many of the major Israeli agricultural companies that export produce to Europe participate in the illegal appropriation of Palestinian water, violate the rights of Palestinian workers and operate inside illegal Israeli settlements. These companies are among the primary beneficiaries of the 2009 EU-Israel agreement on agriculture.

1. Did the Commission conduct a human rights impact assessment of the agreement on agriculture before it was negotiated? If so, what were the conclusions of the impact assessment?

2. Will the Commission conduct an assessment of the human rights impact of its agreement with Israel on agriculture?

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

The benefit of trade preferences for imports into the EU originating from Israel is limited to products originating from the territory of Israel within its pre-1967 borders. As a result, products from the Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories cannot benefit from preferential EU market access.

In this context, no human rights impact assessment of the agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters between the European Community and the State of Israel concerning reciprocal liberalisation measures on agricultural products, processed agricultural products and fish and fishery products [1] was conducted. Also, against this background, a human rights impact assessment of a future agreement on further liberalisation of reciprocal trade in agricultural, processed agricultural and fishery products on the basis of the October 2005 Council mandate is not envisaged.

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(1) OJ L313 of 28.11.2009.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-014035/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)
(11 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Κλείσιμο 3 ελληνικών συνεταιριστικών τραπεζών

Η Τράπεζα της Ελλάδος (ΤτΕ), τηρώντας με μεγάλη αυστηρότητα τις προβλέψεις της σχετικής νομοθεσίας και, παρά τις δικές της καθυστερήσεις στην εκπλήρωση των υποχρεώσεών της, ανακάλεσε τις άδειες λειτουργίας τριών ελληνικών συνεταιριστικών τραπεζών (Δυτικής Μακεδονίας, Δωδεκανήσου και Ευβοίας) ([1]). Δεκάδες χιλιάδες μεριδιούχοι θα υποστούν έτσι εκμηδενισμό της αξίας των μεριδίων τους, πολλές χιλιάδες μικρές τοπικής εμβέλειας επιχειρήσεις, των οποίων τα δάνεια δεν μεταφέρθηκαν σε άλλο φορέα, κινδυνεύουν να βρεθούν προ εκπλήξεων, ενώ πιθανότατα στο μέλλον — λόγω του μεγέθους τους και της μειωμένης πρόσβασης στις χορηγήσεις, μέχρι τουλάχιστον το 2016 — θα είναι μη χρηματοδοτούμενες από τις εμπορικές τράπεζες. Οι συνεταιριστικές τράπεζες στην Ελλάδα αντιμετωπίζονται από την εποπτική αρχή ως μεγάλες εμπορικές τράπεζες, με αποτέλεσμα να αδυνατούν να επιτελέσουν το έργο τους, να διατηρήσουν δηλ. ζωντανή την τοπική οικονομία.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή και η Ευρωπαϊκή Κεντρική Τράπεζα:

1. Δεδομένης και της κρίσης, θεωρητικά, καθήκον των εποπτικών αρχών κάθε χώρας (στην Ελλάδα της ΤτΕ) πρόκειται και για μία παιδευτική διαδικασία κυρίως προς τις μικρότερες τράπεζες, προκειμένου να καταφέρουν να εξυγιανθούν και να λειτουργούν με τα μετά την κρίση δεδομένα. Στο πλαίσιο αυτό θεωρούν πως η ΤτΕ έχει εκπληρώσει αυτό το ρόλο της ικανοποιητικά;

2. Πώς μπορούν οι πολίτες, οι μικρομεσαίες επιχειρήσεις και οι κοινωνικές επιχειρήσεις να έχουν πρόσβαση σε πιστωτικά προϊόντα τη στιγμή που οι εμπορικές τράπεζες έχουν κλείσει την στρόφιγγα χρηματοδότησης της πραγματικής οικονομίας και τώρα κλείνουν συνεταιριστικές τράπεζες;

3. Οι αποφάσεις της εποπτικής αρχής για συρρίκνωση της συνεταιριστικής πίστης στην Ελλάδα είναι συμβατή με την προσπάθεια ανασυγκρότησης της οικονομίας;

4. Δεδομένης της βούλησης του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου ([1]) και της Επιτροπής ([2]) που αναγνωρίζει τη σημαντική συνεισφορά των συνεταιριστικών τραπεζών για την έξοδο από την κρίση και τις προσπάθειες για στήριξη της συνεταιριστικής πίστης, ποιες ενέργειες προτίθεται να προτείνει στην Ελλάδα προς αυτή την κατεύθυνση;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(24 Φεβρουαρίου 2014)

Η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή δεν αξιολογεί τα εκπαιδευτικά προγράμματα των εθνικών εποπτικών αρχών.

Μόνο τα πιστωτικά ιδρύματα και οι συνεταιριστικές τράπεζες που τηρούν τις ενωσιακές και τις εθνικές τραπεζικές κανονιστικές ρυθμίσεις μπορούν να λειτουργούν με άδεια στα κράτη μέλη.

Σκοπός της τραπεζικής νομοθεσίας είναι η εξασφάλιση ασφαλούς και υγιούς χρηματοπιστωτικού συστήματος ικανού να στηρίζει την πραγματική οικονομία.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2013-0301+0+DOC+XML+V0//EL
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/spdoc.do?i=23083&j=0&l=en

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014035/13
to the Commission
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)
(11 December 2013)

Subject: Closure of three Greek cooperative banks

The Bank of Greece, in strict compliance with the provisions of the relevant legislation, and despite its delays in fulfilling its own obligations, has revoked the operating licences of three cooperative banks (the banks of Western Macedonia, the Dodecanese and Evia) ([1]). Tens of thousands of shareholders will see the value of their share fall to zero, while many thousands of small local businesses whose loans have not been transferred to another lender risk surprises, and it is very possible that in the future — due to their size and their reduced access to funding, at least until 2016 — they will not be financed by the commercial banks. The cooperative banks in Greece are being handled by the supervisory authority in the same way as large commercial banks, with the result that they are unable to fulfil their role, which is to keep the local economy running.

1. In the crisis, the duty of the supervisory authorities of each country (in Greece, this is the Bank of Greece) theoretically includes an educational process, mainly with regard to the smaller banks, with a view to enabling them to return to health and to function in the situation following the crisis. Within this framework, do the Commission and the European Central Bank think that the Bank of Greece has fulfilled its role satisfactorily?

2. How can citizens, small and medium-sized enterprises and social enterprises have access to financial products at a time when the commercial banks have closed off the flow of finance to the real economy and the cooperative banks are now closing?

3. Are the decisions of the supervisory authority on shrinking cooperative credit in Greece compatible with the effort to reconstruct the economy?

4. Given the willingness of the European Parliament[1] and the Commission ([2]) to recognise the significant contribution of cooperative banks in securing an exit from the crisis, and the efforts in support of cooperative credit, what do they intend to propose for Greece in this area?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(24 February 2014)

The European Commission does not assess the educational programmes of national supervisory authorities.

Only credit institutions and cooperative banks that fulfil the EU and national banking regulations can operate with a licence in the Member States.

The aim of banking regulation is to ensure a safe and sound financial system that can support the real economy.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2013-0301+0+DOC+XML+V0//EL
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/spdoc.do?i=23083&j=0&l=en

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-014036/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)
(11 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Σχετικά με το κλείσιμο 3 ελληνικών συνεταιριστικών τραπεζών

Στους όρους του Μνημονίου, τέλη 2012, περιλήφθηκε η διατύπωση, «η Τράπεζα της Ελλάδος (ΤτΕ), μέχρι τον Φεβρουάριο 2013, θα συντάξει έκθεση για την κατάσταση των Συνεταιριστικών Τραπεζών και, μέχρι τον Μάιο, θα διαμορφωθεί η πολιτική για τον συνεταιριστικό τομέα των Τραπεζών». Τέλος Ιουλίου η ΤτΕ, με επιστολή στις υποκεφαλαιοποιημένες Τράπεζες, ζητά ανακεφαλαιοποίησή τους μέχρι 31.8.2013. Στη συνέχεια, η ΤτΕ όρισε ως νέο χρονοδιάγραμμα την κατάθεση όλων των ενημερωτικών δελτίων (ΕΔ) μέχρι τις 2 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013, ώστε να εγκριθούν μέχρι το τέλος του μήνα για να ολοκληρωθεί η διαδικασία μέχρι τέλος Οκτωβρίου. Με την καθυστέρηση της έγκρισης των ΕΔ, η ΤτΕ έδωσε πρόσθετη παράταση μέχρι 22.11.2013, αλλά το τελευταίο ενημερωτικό Δελτίο (της μίας εκ των 3 συνεταιριστικών τραπεζών) εγκρίθηκε στις 11.11.2013, με προθεσμία για επίτευξη της κεφαλαιοποίησης την 21.11.2013. Η ΤτΕ, τηρώντας με μεγάλη αυστηρότητα τις προβλέψεις της σχετικής νομοθεσίας, ανακάλεσε στις 8.12.2013 τις άδειες λειτουργίας τριών ελληνικών συνεταιριστικών τραπεζών (Δυτικής Μακεδονίας, Δωδεκανήσου και Ευβοίας) και υποχρέωσε στη μεταφορά όλων των καταθέσεων στην Alpha Bank [1].

Ερωτώνται η Επιτροπή και η Ευρωπαϊκή Κεντρική Τράπεζα:

1. Ποιος ευθύνεται για τη δυσμενή για τους πολίτες και την τοπική οικονομία εξέλιξη με το κλείσιμο των τριών συνεταιριστικών τραπεζών;

2. Πώς κρίνουν ως μέλη της τρόικας, τη μη συμμετοχή του ΤΧΣ στα προγράμματα ανακεφαλαιοποίησης των συνεταιριστικών τραπεζών [2]; Ισχύει πως οι δείκτες κεφαλαιακής επάρκειάς τους, συγκρινόμενοι με τους αντίστοιχους των τραπεζών που τελικά έχουν ανακεφαλαιοποιηθεί μέσω του ΤΧΣ, ήταν σημαντικά καλύτεροι (τη στιγμή που αποφασίστηκε ποιες τράπεζες θα ανακεφαλαιοποιηθούν);

3. Είναι σε θέση να κρίνουν αν, στις εκτιμήσεις επισφαλειών, στους όρους συγκέντρωσης κεφαλαίων, στις διαδικασίες ενημέρωσης των εποπτευόμενων και στις προθεσμίες που όρισαν, έχει τηρηθεί από την εποπτική αρχή η ίδια στάση με τις εμπορικές τράπεζες ή πρόκειται για εφαρμογή δυσμενέστερων όρων;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(24 Φεβρουαρίου 2014)

Η Τράπεζα της Ελλάδος, ως αρμόδια ελεγκτική αρχή, είναι η μόνη αρμόδια για την αξιολόγηση της συμμόρφωσης των τραπεζών με τις σχετικές διατάξεις του τραπεζικού νόμου 3601/2007 που ενσωμάτωσε στην ελληνική νομοθεσία την οδηγία 2006/48/ΕΚ.

Η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή παραπέμπει τον κ. βουλευτή στο μνημόνιο συνεννόησης (ΜΣ) και στο μνημόνιο οικονομικών και χρηματοπιστωτικών πολιτικών (ΜΟΧΠ) που δημοσιεύθηκαν τον Μάρτιο του 2012 [3] και όπου αναφέρεται ότι μόνο οι τράπεζες που υποβάλλουν βιώσιμα σχέδια άντλησης κεφαλαίων έχουν δυνατότητα πρόσβασης σε κεφάλαια μέσω του ελληνικού Ταμείου Χρηματοπιστωτικής Σταθερότητας (ελληνικό ΤΧΣ). Η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή παραπέμπει επίσης τον κ. βουλευτή σε έκθεση που δημοσιεύθηκε τον Δεκέμβριο του 2012 [4]. Η εν λόγω έκθεση [5] αναφέρει ότι η Τράπεζα της Ελλάδος ολοκλήρωσε τη μελέτη των σχεδίων άντλησης κεφαλαίων των τραπεζών και χαρακτήρισε τις τέσσερις βασικές τράπεζες βιώσιμες και, ως εκ τούτου, επιλέξιμες για πρόσβαση σε κρατικά κεφάλαια μέσω του ελληνικού ΤΧΣ. Επομένως, το ελληνικό ΤΧΣ δεν παρείχε κεφάλαια σε συνεταιριστικές τράπεζες.

Ο κ. βουλευτής μπορεί να αποταθεί στην αρμόδια αρχή για πληροφορίες σχετικά με τις διαδικασίες που ακολουθήθηκαν.

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[1] http://www.bankofgreece.gr/Pages/el/Bank/News/PressReleases/DispItem.aspx?Item_ID=4436&List_ID=1af869f3-57fb-4de6-b9ae-bdfd83c66c95&Filter_by=DT
[2] http://www.bankofgreece.gr/BogEkdoseis/%CE%88%CE%BA%CE%B8%CE%B5%CF%83%CE%B7_%CE%B3%CE%B9%CE%B1_%CF%84%CE%B7%CE%BD_%CE%B1%CE%BD%CE%B1%CE%BA%CE%B5%CF%86%CE%B1%CE%BB%CE%B1%CE%B9%CE%BF%CF%80%CE%BF%CE%AF%CE%B7%CF%83%CE%B7.pdf
[3] http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2012/pdf/ocp94_en.pdf
[4] http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2012/pdf/ocp123_en.pdf
[5] Σελίδα 151, παράγραφος 19.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014036/13
to the Commission
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)
(11 December 2013)

Subject: Concerning the closure of three Greek cooperative banks

At the end of 2012, under the wording included in the terms of the Memorandum, 'the Bank of Greece (BG) shall, by February 2013, report on the situation of the cooperative banks and, by May, shall formulate a policy on the cooperative banking sector'. At the end of July, the BG wrote to the undercapitalised banks, requesting recapitalisation by 31 August 2013. Subsequently, the Bank set a new timetable for submitting all prospectuses by 2 September 2013, for approval by the end of the month, so that the process could be completed by the end of October. With the delay in the approval of the prospectuses, the Bank provided a further extension up to 22 November 2013, but the final prospectus (one of the 3 cooperative banks) was approved on 11 November 2013, with a deadline for achieving capitalisation of 21 November 2013. The Bank, in strict compliance with the provisions of the relevant legislation, revoked the operating licences of three Greek cooperative banks on 8 December 2013 (the banks of Western Macedonia, the Dodecanese and Evia) and forced the transfer of all deposits to Alpha Bank ([1]).

1. Who, according to the Commission and the European Central Bank, is responsible for the closure of the three cooperative banks, a move which is unfavourable to citizens and the local economy?

2. How do they assess, as members of the Troika, the non-participation of the 'Television without Frontiers' (TWF) directive in the recapitalisation programmes of the cooperative banks ([2])? Is it true that their capital adequacy ratios compared with the banks that were finally recapitalised through the TWF were significantly better (once it was decided which banks would be recapitalised)?

3. Are they able to judge whether, in respect of bad debt estimates, the terms for raising capital, the procedures for informing those under supervision and the deadlines set, the supervisory authority followed the same approach as with commercial banks, or applied a less favourable one?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(24 February 2014)

The Bank of Greece, as the competent supervisory authority, is solely responsible for the assessment of banks' compliance with the relevant provisions of the banking Law 3601/2007, which has incorporated Directive 2006/48/EC.

The European Commission would like to refer the Honourable Member of the European Parliament to the memorandum of understanding (MoU) and Memorandum on Economic and Financial Policies (MEFP) published in March 2012 ([3]), which states that only banks submitting viable capital raising plans will be able to access capital via the Hellenic Financial Stability Fund (HFSF). The Honourable Member is also referred to a report published in December 2012 ([4]). It states ([5]) that the BoG completed the study of banks' capital raising plans and identified the four core banks as viable and thus eligible to access State capital via the HFSF. Thus, the HFSF did not provide capital to cooperative banks.

The Honourable Member is kindly referred to the competent authority for information on the procedures it has followed.

([1]) http://www.bankofgreece.gr/Pages/el/Bank/News/PressReleases/DispItem.aspx?Item_ID=4436&List_ID=1af869f3-57fb-4de6-b9ae-bdfd83c66c95&Filter_by=DT
([2]) http://www.bankofgreece.gr/BogEkdoseis/%CE%88%CE%BA%CE%B8%CE%B5%CF%83%CE%B7_%CE%B3%CE%B9%CE%B1_%CF%84%CE%B7%CE%BD_%CE%B1%CE%BD%CE%B1%CE%BA%CE%B5%CF%86%CE%B1%CE%BB%CE%B1%CE%B9%CE%BF%CF%80%CE%BF%CE%AF%CE%B7%CF%83%CE%B7.pdf
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2012/pdf/ocp94_en.pdf
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2012/pdf/ocp123_en.pdf
([5]) Page 151, paragraph 19.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-014037/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Andreas Pitsillides (PPE)
(11 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Οικολογική καταστροφή του Πενταδάκτυλου

Ο Πενταδάκτυλος είναι η επιμήκης ασβεστολιθική οροσειρά που εκτείνεται κατά μήκος της βόρειας ακτής της Κύπρου και είναι υπό τουρκική κατοχή. Τα πετρώματα που κυριαρχούν στην κορυφογραμμή του Πενταδακτύλου είναι ιζηματογενή, αλλόχθονα και ανάγονται στη γεωλογική περίοδο του Τριαδικού (πριν 220 εκατομμύρια χρόνια). Στη σημερινή τους θέση ωθήθηκαν πριν από 10 εκατομμύρια χρόνια, οπότε και η οροσειρά αναδύθηκε από το βυθό της θάλασσας. Στον Πενταδάκτυλο υπάρχουν μεγάλες δασικές εκτάσεις, πολλά σπάνια είδη δέντρων, θάμνων και ενδημικών ποωδών φυτών. Στην πανίδα του Πενταδακτύλου περιλαμβάνονται πολλά προστατευόμενα είδη από την ευρωπαϊκή νομοθεσία. Ενδεικτικά αναφέρω ότι η περιοχή διαθέτει παραλίες ωοτοκίας θαλάσσιων χελωνών και ενδιαιτημάτων μεσογειακής φώκιας. Το τελευταίο διάστημα διαπιστώθηκε ότι συντελείται μια άνευ προηγουμένου περιβαλλοντική-οικολογική καταστροφή ένεκα της ανεξέλεγκτης και ασυλλόγιστης λειτουργίας 39 παράνομων λατομείων από τις τουρκικές κατοχικές αρχές. Οι εκτενείς — ανεξέλεγκτες εργασίες των λατομείων καθώς επίσης και η καθημερινή διακίνηση βαρέος τύπου μηχανημάτων, ισοπεδώνουν τις βουνοκορφές και τους πρόποδες της οροσειράς, αλλοιώνοντας και/ή καταστρέφοντας τα πετρώματα και αφανίζοντας ταυτοχρόνως την χλωρίδα και την πανίδα της περιοχής.

Η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση, το 2006, παραχώρησε στις κατοχικές αρχές κονδύλι ύψους 1,7 δισεκατομμυρίων ευρώ για την προστασία των περιοχών αυτών.

Προτίθεται η Επιτροπή να εξετάσει, τις νέες αυτές εγκληματικές ενέργειες του ψευδοκράτους και να προβεί σε όλα τα απαραίτητα διαβήματα ώστε να σταματήσει αυτή η τεράστια περιβαλλοντική καταστροφή;

Προτίθεται η Επιτροπή να παρέμβει για την άμεση αποτύπωση όλων των λατομικών δραστηριοτήτων καθώς και την εφαρμογή προγραμμάτων αποκατάστασης του φυσικού περιβάλλοντος; Προτίθεται η Επιτροπή να παρέμβει για να υιοθετηθούν πρακτικές που να συνάδουν με την ευρωπαϊκή νομοθεσία αναφορικά με την λατόμευση;

Απάντηση του κ. Füle εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(20 Φεβρουαρίου 2014)

Η Επιτροπή παραπέμπει τον κ. βουλευτή στην απάντηση που έδωσε στη γραπτή ερώτηση E-004607/13 [1]. Η Επιτροπή συνεχίζει να παρακολουθεί το θέμα και ανά τακτά χρονικά διαστήματα επισημαίνει στην τουρκοκυπριακή κοινότητα την ανάγκη να εφαρμόζονται κατάλληλα μέτρα διατήρησης και να προστατεύονται οι περιβαλλοντικά ευαίσθητες περιοχές.

Συγκεκριμένα, η Επιτροπή επιβεβαίωσε την παροχή στήριξης στην τουρκοκυπριακή κοινότητα όσον αφορά, αφενός, τον εντοπισμό και τη λήψη των αναγκαίων μέτρων για τον προσδιορισμό της οροσειράς της Κερύνειας ως ειδικά προστατευόμενης περιβαλλοντικά τοποθεσίας και, αφετέρου, όσον αφορά την εφαρμογή των αναγκαίων μέτρων για τον έλεγχο των τρεχουσών και των μελλοντικών δραστηριοτήτων.

Η Επιτροπή επισημαίνει ότι η ΕΕ χορήγησε ενίσχυση ύψους 1,5 εκατ. ευρώ στο πλαίσιο του σχεδίου «Στήριξη προς την τουρκοκυπριακή κοινότητα όσον αφορά τη διαχείριση και την προστασία πιθανών τόπων Natura 2000 στο βόρειο τμήμα της Κύπρου».

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014037/13
to the Commission
Andreas Pitsillides (PPE)
(11 December 2013)

Subject: Environmental disaster in Pentadaktylos

The Pentadaktylos is an elongated limestone ridge extending along the north coast of Cyprus, which is under Turkish occupation. The predominant rocks in the Pentadaktylos ridge are sedimentary and deformed and they date back to the Triassic geological period (220 million years ago). They were pushed into their current position 10 million years ago, when the range rose up from the sea bed. The Pentadaktylos includes large forest areas, with numerous rare species of trees, bushes and herbaceous plants. The fauna of Pentadaktylos includes many species protected by European legislation. For example, the area has beaches providing hatcheries for sea turtles and habitat for Mediterranean seals. It has recently been discovered that an unprecedented environmental and ecological disaster is taking place through the uncontrolled and thoughtless operation of 39 illegal quarries by the Turkish occupying authorities. The extensive and unregulated quarry works and the daily traffic involving heavy machinery are levelling the peaks and valleys of the mountain range by removing the rocks and, at the same time, wiping out the flora and fauna of the region.

In 2006, the European Union granted EUR 1.7 billion to the occupying authorities for the protection of these areas.

Does the Commission intend to examine these new criminal activities of the pseudo-state, and to take the necessary steps to halt this major environmental disaster?

Does the Commission intend to intervene and immediately suspend all quarrying activities, as well as implement restoration programmes for the natural environment? Does the Commission intend to intervene to ensure that practices complying with European legislation on quarrying are adopted?

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

The Commission refers the Honourable Member to its answer to previous Written Question E-012969/13 ([1]). The Commission continues to monitor the issue and regularly raises with the Turkish Cypriot community the need to apply appropriate conservation measures and protect the environmentally sensitive area.

In particular, the Commission reiterated its assistance offer to the Turkish Cypriot community in identifying and proceeding with the steps needed to designate a Special Environment Protected Area for the Kyrenia mountains range and in putting in place the necessary measures to control current and future activities.

The Commission notes that the EU provided EUR 1.5 million assistance under the project 'Support to the Turkish Cypriot community as regards management and protection of potential Natura 2000 sites in the northern part of Cyprus'.

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

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014038/13
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), Karima Delli (Verts/ALE), Franziska Keller (Verts/ALE), Marije Cornelissen (Verts/ALE), Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE), Reinhard Bütikofer (Verts/ALE), Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL), Gabriele Zimmer (GUE/NGL), Paul Murphy (GUE/NGL), Jacky Hénin (GUE/NGL), Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL), Sabine Lösing (GUE/NGL), Sabine Wils (GUE/NGL), Jiří Maštálka (GUE/NGL), Alda Sousa (GUE/NGL) y Kartika Tamara Liotard (GUE/NGL)
(11 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Procedimiento de infracción contra España por su ley hipotecaria

El 14 de marzo de 2013, el Tribunal de Justicia de la Unión Europea dictaminó que la ley hipotecaria española era incompatible con la Directiva 93/13/CEE del Consejo, de 5 de abril de 1993, sobre las cláusulas abusivas en los contratos celebrados con consumidores, puesto que la protección que brindaba a los deudores hipotecarios era «incompleta e insuficiente», especialmente en los casos en los que el inmueble hipotecado fuera la vivienda familiar. Ello debería haber permitido una mayor protección jurídica de las familias amenazadas de desalojo.

El fallo del Tribunal de Justicia debería ser aplicable a todos los casos de desalojo que ha habido en España desde 1995, cuando finalizó el período de transposición de la Directiva. Los tribunales españoles deberían haber considerado ilegales todos los procesos de ejecución hipotecaria de este período, que se tendrían que haber reabierto a fin de proteger los derechos de los consumidores frente a las cláusulas abusivas.

La ley hipotecaria española, de hace más de un siglo, fue modificada por el actual Gobierno, y una nueva ley entró en vigor el 15 de mayo de 2013. Por desgracia, no se tuvieron del todo en cuenta las observaciones del Tribunal de Justicia, y el Gobierno no ha permitido a los deudores hipotecarios denunciar sus procesos de ejecución hipotecaria como ilegales.

Se han llevado a cabo unos quinientos mil desalojos desde 2007 con la anterior ley hipotecaria española, según la cual el propietario de la vivienda, además de ser desalojado, se veía obligado a pagar sus deudas. Ni se han reabierto los casos, ni se ha renegociado la deuda, y eso incluso después de que el Tribunal de Justicia fallara que la ley española era abusiva y contravenía el Derecho de la UE. Se trata de un incumplimiento flagrante del principio de tutela efectiva, un procedimiento ilegal con base en el cual se ha condenado a ciudadanos a una deuda perpetua.

¿Considerará la Comisión la posibilidad de incoar un procedimiento de infracción contra España a causa de esta ley hipotecaria?

¿Por qué no adoptó la Comisión tales medidas para garantizar la adecuada transposición de la Directiva 93/13/CEE con anterioridad al fallo del Tribunal de Justicia de 14 de marzo de 2013?

¿Cómo se asegurará la Comisión de que se condonen o renegocien los créditos hipotecarios concedidos de acuerdo con una ley abusiva, y de que en España se protejan eficazmente los derechos de los consumidores?

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

Tras la sentencia del TJUE en el asunto C-618/10 (Banco Español de Crédito), los servicios de la Comisión entablaron un diálogo estructurado anterior a la infracción con España sobre la forma en que sus normas de procedimiento civil garantizaban la efectividad de los derechos de los consumidores. Inmediatamente después de la sentencia Aziz de marzo de 2013 (asunto C-415/11), la Comisión se mantuvo un estrecho contacto con las autoridades españolas para velar por la introducción de los cambios pertinentes en la legislación española. Los servicios de la Comisión consideran que las modificaciones aprobadas mediante la Ley 1/2013 de 14 de mayo de 2013 representan un paso positivo hacia la mejora de la protección de los consumidores en este ámbito.

Los servicios de la Comisión han seguido evaluando el efecto de la Ley 1/2013 con vistas a nuevas modificaciones legislativas que afecten directa e indirectamente a los deudores hipotecarios.

En concreto, Su Señoría sabrá que, el 28 de septiembre de 2013, España adoptó una disposición que ha permitido eliminar la utilización, a partir del 1 de noviembre de 2013, del índice IRPH excesivamente alto que se empleaba hasta entonces para todos los contratos de crédito hipotecario en España, al tiempo que se mantenían varias disposiciones transitorias problemáticas en el caso de los contratos vigentes que contenían dichos índices y se denegaba a los consumidores el acceso a los tribunales u otros medios de recurso contra dichas disposiciones transitorias.

La Comisión está evaluando la incidencia global y la proporcionalidad de estas enmiendas y actuará en consecuencia.

(České znění)

Otázka k písemnému zodpovězení E-014038/13
Komisi
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), Karima Delli (Verts/ALE), Franziska Keller (Verts/ALE), Marije Cornelissen (Verts/ALE), Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE), Reinhard Bütikofer (Verts/ALE), Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL), Gabriele Zimmer (GUE/NGL), Paul Murphy (GUE/NGL), Jacky Hénin (GUE/NGL), Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL), Sabine Lösing (GUE/NGL), Sabine Wils (GUE/NGL), Jiří Maštálka (GUE/NGL), Alda Sousa (GUE/NGL) a Kartika Tamara Liotard (GUE/NGL)
(11. prosince 2013)

Předmět: Řízení pro nesplnění povinnosti proti Španělsku v souvislosti s právními předpisy týkajícími se hypoték

Evropský soudní dvůr dne 14. března 2013 rozhodl, že španělské právní předpisy týkající se hypoték jsou v rozporu se směrnicí Rady 93/13/EHS ze dne 5. dubna 1993 o nepřiměřených podmínkách ve spotřebitelských smlouvách, protože držitelům hypoték nezaručovaly „plnou a dostatečnou" ochranu, zejména pokud byl hypotékou zatížen rodinný dům či byt. Toto rozhodnutí mělo otevřít cestu ke zlepšení právní ochrany domácností, kterým hrozilo soudní vystěhování.

Rozhodnutí Evropského soudního dvora by se mělo týkat všech případů soudního vystěhování ve Španělsku od roku 1995, kdy vypršela lhůta pro provedení této směrnice do vnitrostátního práva. Španělské soudy měly všechny případy propadnutí majetku v důsledku nesplácení hypotéky, k nimž od té doby došlo, označit za protiprávní a znovu je otevřít, aby mohly bránit práva spotřebitelů proti zneužívajícím klauzulím.

Španělské předpisy týkajících se hypoték jsou více než sto let staré a současná vláda v nich provedla změny. Jejich nové znění vstoupilo v platnost dne 15. května 2013. Návrhy Evropského soudního dvora ale bohužel nebyly zcela zohledněny a vláda neumožnila, aby řízení vedená proti držitelům hypoték ve věci propadnutí jejich majetku v důsledku nesplacení hypotéky byla prohlášena za nezákonná.

Od roku 2007 bylo ve Španělsku na základě předchozích právních předpisů týkajících se hypoték provedeno na 500 000 soudních vystěhování, v jejichž rámci byli majitelé nemovitostí přinuceni své dluhy splatit a zároveň se vystěhovat. K opětovnému otevření těchto případů ani novému jednání o souvisejících dluzích však nedošlo, i přesto, že Evropský soudní dvůr vydal prohlášení, že španělské předpisy jsou nespravedlivé a že jsou v rozporu s právními předpisy EU. Tento postup je jasným porušením platných zásad ochrany občanů, kteří byli na základě protiprávních řízení odsouzeni k tomu, že budou celý život zadluženi.

Uvažuje Komise v souvislosti s těmito předpisy o zahájení řízení pro nesplnění povinnosti proti Španělsku?

Proč Komise tento krok neučinila před vydáním rozsudku Evropského soudního dvora ze dne 14. března 2013, aby řádné provádění směrnice 93/13/EHS zaručila?

Jakým způsobem chce Komise zajistit vypovězení či opětovné projednání hypotečních úvěrů poskytnutých na základě protiprávních předpisů a účinnou ochranu práv spotřebitelů ve Španělsku?

Odpověď Viviane Redingové jménem Komise
(18. února 2014)

V návaznosti na rozsudek Soudního dvora Evropské unie ve věci C-618/10 (Banco Español de Credito) zahájily útvary Komise strukturovaný dialog ve fázi předcházející řízení o nesplnění povinnosti se Španělskem, týkající se způsobu, jakým jeho občanský soudní řád zajišťuje účinnost práv spotřebitelů. Bezprostředně po rozsudku ve věci Aziz z března 2013 (věc C-415/11) byla Komise v úzkém kontaktu se španělskými orgány s cílem zajistit, aby byly provedeny příslušné změny španělských právních předpisů. Útvary Komise usoudily, že změny, které byly přijaty zákonem č. 1/2013 dne 14. května 2013, představují pozitivní krok ke zlepšení ochrany spotřebitelů v této oblasti.

Útvary Komise dále hodnotily dopad zákona č. 1/2013 s ohledem na další legislativní změny, které mají přímé nebo nepřímé důsledky pro držitele hypotečního úvěru.

Páni a paní poslankyně jsou možná informováni o tom, že dne 28. září 2013 Španělsko přijalo právní akt, který od 1. listopadu 2013 zrušil používání mimořádně vysokého indexu „IRPH", který se do té doby uplatňoval na veškeré smlouvy o hypotečním úvěru uzavírané ve Španělsku, přičemž bylo zachováno několik problematických přechodných opatření pro stávající smlouvy, které takové indexy zahrnují, a spotřebitelům se znemožňuje přístup k soudu nebo k jiným opravným prostředkům vůči těmto přechodným ustanovením.

Komise v současnosti posuzuje celkový dopad a přiměřenost těchto změn a bude podle toho jednat.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-014038/13
an die Kommission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), Karima Delli (Verts/ALE), Franziska Keller (Verts/ALE), Marije Cornelissen (Verts/ALE), Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE), Reinhard Bütikofer (Verts/ALE), Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL), Gabriele Zimmer (GUE/NGL), Paul Murphy (GUE/NGL), Jacky Hénin (GUE/NGL), Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL), Sabine Lösing (GUE/NGL), Sabine Wils (GUE/NGL), Jiří Maštálka (GUE/NGL), Alda Sousa (GUE/NGL) und Kartika Tamara Liotard (GUE/NGL)
(11. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Vertragsverletzungsverfahren gegen Spanien wegen seines Hypothekengesetzes

Am 14. März 2013 urteilte der Europäische Gerichtshof (EuGH), dass Spaniens Hypothekengesetz nicht mit der Richtlinie 93/13/EWG des Rates vom 5. April 1993 über missbräuchliche Klauseln in Verbraucherverträgen vereinbar ist, da es Hypothekengläubigern einen „unvollständigen und unzureichenden“ Schutz bietet, insbesondere wenn es sich bei dem mit einer Hypothek belasteten Eigentum um eine Familienwohnung handelt. Dadurch hätte sich der Rechtsschutz für von Räumung bedrohte Haushalte verbessern sollen.

Das Urteil des EuGH sollte für alle Räumungen in Spanien seit 1995 gelten, als der Zeitraum für die Umsetzung der Richtlinie endete. Alle in diesem Zeitraum bearbeiteten Pfändungen hätten von den spanischen Gerichten für unrechtmäßig erklärt werden sollen, und die Fälle hätten wiedereröffnet werden sollen, um Verbraucherrechte angesichts missbräuchlicher Klauseln zu schützen.

Das spanische Hypothekengesetz, das mehr als ein Jahrhundert als ist, wurde von der derzeitigen Regierung geändert, und ein neues Gesetz trat am 15. Mai 2013 in Kraft. Leider wurden die Vorschläge des EuGH nicht vollständig berücksichtigt, und die Regierung hat es Hypothekengläubigern nicht ermöglicht, ihre Pfändungsverfahren für unrechtmäßig zu erklären.

Seit 2007 wurden etwa 500 000 Räumungen im Rahmen des vorherigen spanischen Hypothekengesetzes vorgenommen, demzufolge Hauseigentümer ihre Schulden trotz Zwangsräumung begleichen müssen. Diese Fälle wurden nicht wiedereröffnet und es wurde auch nicht neu über die Schulden verhandelt, selbst nachdem der EuGH das spanische Gesetz für missbräuchlich und im Widerspruch zum EU-Recht stehend erklärt hat. Das ist eine eindeutige Verletzung des Grundsatzes der effektiven Fürsorge, und die Bürger wurden auf der Grundlage eines unrechtmäßigen Verfahrens zu ewigen Schulden verurteilt.

Zieht die Kommission in Erwägung, wegen dieses Hypothekengesetzes ein Vertragsverletzungsverfahren gegen Spanien einzuleiten?

Warum hat die Kommission solche Schritte nicht vor dem Urteil des EuGH vom 14. März 2013 eingeleitet, um die ordnungsgemäße Umsetzung der Richtlinie 93/13/EWG sicherzustellen?

Wie wird die Kommission sicherstellen, dass im Rahmen eines missbräuchlichen Gesetzes vergebene Hypothekenkredite annulliert oder neu verhandelt werden und dass Verbraucherrechte in Spanien effektiv geschützt werden?

Antwort von Frau Reding im Namen der Kommission
(18. Februar 2014)

Nach dem Urteil des Gerichtshofs der Europäischen Union in der Rechtssache C-618/10 (Banco Español de Credito) haben die Kommissionsdienststellen mit Spanien zur Vermeidung eines Vertragsverletzungsverfahrens einen strukturierten Dialog in Bezug auf die Art, wie seine Vorschriften des Zivilprozessrechts die Wirksamkeit der Verbraucherrechte sicherstellen, aufgenommen. Unmittelbar nach dem Urteil in der Rechtssache Aziz von März 2013 (Rs. C-415/11) blieb die Kommission in enger Verbindung mit den spanischen Behörden, um sicherzustellen, dass die erforderlichen Änderungen an den spanischen Rechtsvorschriften vorgenommen wurden. Die Kommissionsdienststellen waren der Ansicht, dass die mit Gesetz 1/2013 vom 14. Mai 2013 angenommenen Änderungen einen Schritt in die richtige Richtung darstellen, um den Verbraucherschutz in diesem Bereich zu verbessern.

Sie haben die Auswirkungen des Gesetzes 1/2013 weiterhin im Hinblick auf zusätzliche Änderungen geprüft, die Hypothekarkreditnehmer direkt und indirekt betreffen.

Insbesondere ist den Damen und Herren Abgeordneten möglicherweise bekannt, dass Spanien am 28. September 2013 ein Gesetz verabschiedet hat, mit dem die Verwendung des übermäßig hohen „IRPH“-Index ab 1. November 2013 verboten wurde. Dieser Index wurde bis dahin für alle in Spanien abgeschlossenen Hypothekarkredite verwendet, wobei einige problematische Übergangsbestimmungen für bestehende Verträge mit diesen Indizes bestehen blieben und den Verbrauchern jeglicher Zugang zur Justiz oder anderen Möglichkeiten des Rechtsschutzes gegen diese Übergangsbestimmungen verwehrt wurde.

Die Kommission bewertet derzeit die allgemeinen Auswirkungen und die Verhältnismäßigkeit dieser Änderungen und wird entsprechende Schritte einleiten.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014038/13
à la Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), Karima Delli (Verts/ALE), Franziska Keller (Verts/ALE), Marije Cornelissen (Verts/ALE), Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE), Reinhard Bütikofer (Verts/ALE), Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL), Gabriele Zimmer (GUE/NGL), Paul Murphy (GUE/NGL), Jacky Hénin (GUE/NGL), Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL), Sabine Lösing (GUE/NGL), Sabine Wils (GUE/NGL), Jiří Maštálka (GUE/NGL), Alda Sousa (GUE/NGL) et Kartika Tamara Liotard (GUE/NGL)
(11 décembre 2013)

Objet: Procédure d'infraction à l'encontre de l'Espagne concernant son droit relatif aux prêts hypothécaires

Le 14 mars 2013, la Cour de justice de l'Union européenne a jugé que le droit espagnol relatif aux prêts hypothécaires était incompatible avec la directive 93/13/CEE du Conseil du 5 avril 1993, concernant les clauses abusives dans les contrats conclus avec les consommateurs, car n'assurant qu'une protection «incomplète et insuffisante» des souscripteurs de crédits hypothécaires, notamment dans les cas où le bien hypothéqué était le domicile familial. Cette décision aurait dû ouvrir la voie au renforcement de la protection juridique des familles menacées d'expulsion.

L'arrêt rendu par la Cour devrait s'appliquer à toutes les affaires d'expulsion survenues en Espagne depuis 1995, date à laquelle la procédure de transposition de la directive a pris fin. Toutes les saisies immobilières réalisées pendant cette période auraient dû être déclarées illégales par les tribunaux espagnols, et les procédures correspondantes de nouveau ouvertes afin de protéger les droits des consommateurs contre les clauses abusives.

La législation espagnole en matière de prêts hypothécaires, qui datait d'il y a plus d'un siècle, a été modifiée sous le gouvernement actuel et remplacée par une nouvelle loi entrée en vigueur le 15 mai 2013. Malheureusement, les suggestions formulées par la Cour n'ont pas été entièrement prises en considération, le gouvernement n'ayant pas autorisé les détenteurs de prêts hypothécaires à dénoncer comme illégales les saisies hypothécaires dont ils avaient été l'objet.

Depuis 2007, près de 500 000 expulsions ont été exécutées en application de l'ancienne loi hypothécaire espagnole, qui permettait non seulement de contraindre les propriétaires d'un logement à rembourser leur dette mais également de les expulser. Il n'y a pas eu de réouverture de ces affaires, ni renégociation de ces dettes, et ce même après que la Cour a déclaré la législation espagnole en la matière abusive et contraire au droit de l'Union. Il s'agit d'une violation pure et simple du principe de protection efficace, qui condamne des citoyens à une dette perpétuelle sur la base d'une procédure illégale.

La Commission envisage-t-elle d'engager une procédure d'infraction à l'encontre de l'Espagne pour sa loi hypothécaire en cause?

Pour quels motifs la Commission n'a-t-elle pas pris de mesures de ce type avant l'arrêt rendu par la Cour le 14 mars 2013, afin de garantir la bonne transposition de la directive 93/13/CEE?

De quelle manière la Commission s'assurera-t-elle que les prêts hypothécaires octroyés en vertu d'une législation abusive seront annulés ou renégociés et que les droits des consommateurs seront effectivement protégés en Espagne?

Réponse donnée par Mme Reding au nom de la Commission
(18 février 2014)

Conformément à l'arrêt rendu par la CJUE dans l'affaire C-618/10 (Banco Español de Credito), les services de la Commission ont entamé avec l'Espagne une discussion structurée préalable à une procédure d'infraction afin de savoir comment les règles espagnoles de procédure civile garantissent efficacement les droits des consommateurs. Immédiatement après l'arrêt Aziz de mars 2013 (affaire C-415/11), la Commission est restée en contact étroit avec les autorités espagnoles afin de s'assurer que les modifications nécessaires étaient apportées à la législation de ce pays. Pour les services de la Commission, les modifications adoptées ensuite par la loi 1/2013 le 14 mai 2013 constituaient une avancée permettant d'améliorer la protection des consommateurs dans ce domaine.

Les services de la Commission continuent d'examiner les incidences de la loi 1/2013 en vue d'autres modifications législatives qui concernent directement ou indirectement les souscripteurs de crédit hypothécaire.

En particulier, l'Honorable Parlementaire n'est probablement pas sans savoir que, le 28 septembre 2013, l'Espagne a adopté une loi qui prévoit la suppression, à compter du 1er novembre 2013, de l'indice «IRPH». Il s'agit d'un indice excessivement élevé qui était jusqu'alors utilisé pour tous les contrats de crédit hypothécaire conclus en Espagne. Toutefois, cette loi maintient certaines mesures transitoires problématiques pour les contrats existants fondés sur de tels indices et refuse l'accès des consommateurs à la justice ou à toute autre voie de recours contre ces dispositions transitoires.

La Commission examine actuellement les incidences générales et la proportionnalité de ces modifications et agira en conséquence.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-014038/13
aan de Commissie
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), Karima Delli (Verts/ALE), Franziska Keller (Verts/ALE), Marije Cornelissen (Verts/ALE), Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE), Reinhard Bütikofer (Verts/ALE), Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL), Gabriele Zimmer (GUE/NGL), Paul Murphy (GUE/NGL), Jacky Hénin (GUE/NGL), Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL), Sabine Lösing (GUE/NGL), Sabine Wils (GUE/NGL), Jiří Maštálka (GUE/NGL), Alda Sousa (GUE/NGL) en Kartika Tamara Liotard (GUE/NGL)
(11 december 2013)

Betreft: Inbreukprocedure tegen Spanje wegens de Spaanse hypotheekwet

Op 14 maart 2013 bepaalde het Europees Hof van Justitie (EHvJ) dat de Spaanse hypotheekwet niet verenigbaar is met Richtlijn 93/13/EEG van de Raad van 5 april 1993 betreffende oneerlijke bedingen in consumentenovereenkomsten, omdat deze wet hypotheekhouders „onvolledige en onvoldoende" bescherming biedt, vooral als het om met een hypotheek bezwaarde gezinswoningen gaat. Dit had het pad moeten effenen voor een betere rechtsbescherming voor huishoudens die met uitzetting worden bedreigd.

Het arrest van het EHvJ zou moeten gelden voor alle uitzettingen in Spanje sinds 1995, toen de periode voor omzetting van de richtlijn afliep. Alle executies die in deze periode hebben plaatsgevonden, hadden door de Spaanse rechtbanken illegaal moeten worden verklaard, en de zaken zouden moeten worden heropend om de rechten van de consumenten gezien de oneerlijke bedingen te beschermen.

De Spaanse hypotheekwet, die al meer dan een eeuw oud is, is door de huidige regering aangepast en op 15 mei 2013 is een nieuwe wet in werking getreden. Helaas zijn de suggesties van het EHvJ niet onverkort overgenomen en heeft de regering hypotheekhouders niet de mogelijkheid gegeven om hun executieprocedure als onrechtmatig aan te vechten.

Sinds 2007 hebben 500 000 uitzettingen plaatsgevonden in het kader van de vorige Spaanse hypotheekwet, die huiseigenaren dwong om hun schulden terug te betalen, terwijl ze ook werden uitgezet. Die zaken zijn niet heropend en evenmin zijn de schulden heronderhandeld, ook niet nadat het Hof de Spaanse wet als oneerlijk en in strijd met het EU-recht had bestempeld. Dit is een duidelijke schending van het beginsel van doeltreffende wetshandhaving, waardoor burgers op grond van een illegale procedure zijn veroordeeld tot levenslange schulden.

Zal de Commissie erover nadenken om wegens deze hypotheekwet een inbreukprocedure tegen Spanje in te stellen?

Waarom heeft de Commissie niet al vóór het arrest van het EHvJ van 14 maart 2013 dergelijke stappen ondernomen om een behoorlijke omzetting van Richtlijn 93/13/EEG te garanderen?

Hoe wil de Commissie erop toezien dat hypotheekleningen die volgens een ondeugdelijke wet zijn verstrekt, worden geannuleerd of heronderhandeld en dat de consumentenrechten in Spanje doeltreffend worden beschermd?

Antwoord van mevrouw Reding namens de Commissie
(18 februari 2014)

Na de uitspraak van het Europees Hof van Justitie in zaak C-618/10 (Banco Español de Credito), zijn de diensten van de Commissie, voorafgaand aan de inbreukprocedure, op een gestructureerde manier met Spanje in dialoog getreden over de wijze waarop de Spaanse bepalingen van burgerlijke rechtsvordering de doeltreffendheid van consumentenrechten waarborgen. Onmiddellijk na het Aziz-arrest van maart 2013 (zaak C-415/11), bleef de Commissie in nauw contact met de Spaanse autoriteiten om erop toe te zien dat relevante wijzigingen werden aangebracht aan de Spaanse wetgeving. De diensten van de Commissie waren van oordeel dat de wijzigingen die toen werden aangenomen bij wet 1/2013 op 14 mei 2013 een stap vooruit waren, ter verbetering om de consumenten in dat gebied beter te beschermen.

De diensten van de Commissie gingen verder met de beoordeling van de gevolgen van wet 1/2013 met het oog op verdere wetswijzigingen die een directe of indirecte invloed kunnen hebben op consumenten met hypothecaire kredieten.

Het geachte Parlementslid is er misschien van op de hoogte dat Spanje op 28 september 2013 een besluit heeft aangenomen waarin de buitensporig hoge „IRPH"-index wordt afgeschaft vanaf 1 november 2013. Tot dan toe werd deze index gebruikt voor alle hypothecaire kredietcontracten die werden afgesloten in Spanje. Er blijven wel enige problematische maatregelen voor bestaande contracten met dergelijke indexen, waardoor consumenten de toegang wordt ontzegd tot de rechter en tot rechtsmiddelen tegen deze overgangsbepalingen.

De Commissie beoordeelt momenteel het totale effect en de evenredigheid van deze wijzigingen en zal dienovereenkomstig handelen.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-014038/13
à Comissão
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), Karima Delli (Verts/ALE), Franziska Keller (Verts/ALE), Marije Cornelissen (Verts/ALE), Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE), Reinhard Bütikofer (Verts/ALE), Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL), Gabriele Zimmer (GUE/NGL), Paul Murphy (GUE/NGL), Jacky Hénin (GUE/NGL), Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL), Sabine Lösing (GUE/NGL), Sabine Wils (GUE/NGL), Jiří Maštálka (GUE/NGL), Alda Sousa (GUE/NGL) e Kartika Tamara Liotard (GUE/NGL)
(11 de dezembro de 2013)

Assunto: Processo por infração contra a Espanha devido à sua legislação sobre o crédito hipotecário

Em 14 de março de 2013, o Tribunal de Justiça da União Europeia (TJUE) deliberou que a legislação espanhola sobre o crédito hipotecário é incompatível com a Diretiva 93/13/CEE do Conselho, de 5 de abril de 1993, relativa às cláusulas abusivas nos contratos celebrados com os consumidores, por conferir uma proteção «incompleta e insuficiente» aos detentores de créditos hipotecários, especialmente nos casos em que a garantia hipotecária é também o lar familiar. Este acórdão deveria ter aberto o caminho a uma melhoria da proteção jurídica das famílias ameaçadas de despejo.

O acórdão do TJUE devia ser aplicado a todos os casos de despejo ocorridos em Espanha desde 1995, data em que o prazo para a transposição da diretiva expirou. Todas as execuções hipotecárias efetuadas neste período deviam ter sido declaradas ilegais pelos tribunais espanhóis e os processos deveriam ser reabertos para garantir a proteção dos direitos dos consumidores contra as cláusulas abusivas.

A legislação espanhola sobre o crédito hipotecário, que tem mais do que um século, foi modificada pelo atual governo e a nova legislação entrou em vigor em 15 de maio de 2013. Infelizmente, as sugestões apresentadas pelo TJUE não foram plenamente tomadas em consideração e o governo não autorizou os detentores de créditos hipotecários a denunciarem a ilegalidade dos processos de execução hipotecária de que foram alvo.

Desde 2007, foram realizadas cerca de 500 000 ações de despejo ao abrigo da anterior legislação espanhola sobre o crédito hipotecário, que obrigava os proprietários de imóveis a pagarem as suas dívidas, para além de consentir o seu despejo. Estes casos não foram reabertos nem as dívidas renegociadas, mesmo após o TJUE ter declarado a legislação espanhola abusiva e contrária à legislação da UE. Trata-se de uma clara violação do princípio de proteção eficaz e os cidadãos foram condenados a pagar uma dívida perpétua com base num procedimento ilegal.

Está a Comissão disposta a lançar um processo por infração contra Espanha em virtude desta legislação sobre o crédito hipotecário?

Por que razão entendeu a Comissão não empreender essas diligências antes do acórdão do TJUE de 14 de março de 2013, por forma a garantir a transposição adequada da Diretiva 93/13/CEE?

De que forma tenciona a Comissão garantir que os créditos hipotecários concedidos ao abrigo de uma legislação abusiva sejam cancelados ou renegociados e que os direitos dos consumidores sejam protegidos de forma eficaz em Espanha?

Resposta dada por Viviane Reding em nome da Comissão
(18 de fevereiro de 2014)

Na sequência do acórdão do TJUE no processo C-618/10 (Banco Español de Credito), os serviços da Comissão iniciaram um diálogo estruturado pré-infração com a Espanha acerca da forma como as suas normas de processo civil garantem a eficácia dos direitos dos consumidores. Imediatamente após o acórdão Aziz de março de 2013 (processo C-415/11), a Comissão manteve um contacto estreito com as autoridades espanholas para assegurar a introdução das alterações necessárias à legislação espanhola. Os serviços da Comissão consideraram que as alterações previstas na Lei 1/2013 de 14 de maio de 2013 representavam uma evolução positiva para aumentar a proteção dos consumidores neste domínio.

Os serviços da Comissão continuaram a avaliar o impacto da Lei 1/2013, tendo em vista ulteriores alterações legislativas que abrangem, direta ou indiretamente, os consumidores com créditos hipotecários.

Além disso, os Senhores Deputados estão provavelmente cientes de que, em 28 de setembro de 2013, a Espanha adotou uma lei que aboliu a utilização, a partir de 1 de novembro de 2013, do índice IRPH demasiado elevado, utilizado até àquela data em todos os contratos de crédito hipotecário celebrados em Espanha, mantendo algumas medidas transitórias problemáticas aplicáveis aos contratos que recorrem a esse índice e negando o acesso dos consumidores aos tribunais ou outras vias de recurso contra essas disposições transitórias.

A Comissão está atualmente a avaliar o impacto global e a proporcionalidade dessas alterações e agirá em conformidade.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014038/13
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), Karima Delli (Verts/ALE), Franziska Keller (Verts/ALE), Marije Cornelissen (Verts/ALE), Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE), Reinhard Bütikofer (Verts/ALE), Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL), Gabriele Zimmer (GUE/NGL), Paul Murphy (GUE/NGL), Jacky Hénin (GUE/NGL), Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL), Sabine Lösing (GUE/NGL), Sabine Wils (GUE/NGL), Jiří Maštálka (GUE/NGL), Alda Sousa (GUE/NGL) and Kartika Tamara Liotard (GUE/NGL)
(11 December 2013)

Subject: Infringement procedure against Spain for its mortgage law

On 14 March 2013, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) ruled that Spain's mortgage law was incompatible with Council Directive 93/13/EEC of 5 April 1993 on unfair terms in consumer contracts, since it provided 'incomplete and insufficient' protection for mortgage holders, especially in those cases where the mortgaged property was a family home. This should have opened the door to improved legal protection for households facing eviction.

The ECJ ruling should apply to all eviction cases in Spain since 1995, when the period for transposition of the directive ended. All foreclosures processed in this period should have been declared illegal by the Spanish courts, and the cases should be reopened in order to protect consumer rights in the face of abusive clauses.

The Spanish mortgage law, which is more than a century old, was modified by the current government and a new law entered into force on 15 May 2013. Unfortunately, the suggestions made by the ECJ were not fully taken into consideration and the government has not allowed mortgage holders to denounce their foreclosure proceedings as unlawful.

Around 500 000 evictions have been carried out since 2007 under the previous Spanish mortgage law, under which homeowners were forced to pay their debts as well as being evicted. Those cases have not been reopened, nor has the debt been renegotiated even after the ECJ declared the Spanish law abusive and contrary to EC law. This is a clear violation of the effective guardianship principle and citizens have been condemned to perpetual debt on the basis of an illegal procedure.

Will the Commission consider launching infringement proceedings against Spain as a result of this mortgage law?

Why did the Commission not take such steps before the ECJ ruling of 14 March 2013, in order to guarantee the proper transposition of Directive 93/13/EEC?

How will the Commission guarantee that mortgage credits granted under an abusive law are cancelled or renegotiated and that consumer rights are effectively protected in Spain?

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

Following the ruling of the CJEU in the Case C-618/10 (Banco Español de Credito), the Commission services have engaged in a structured pre-infringement dialogue with Spain on the way in which its rules of civil procedure ensure the effectiveness of consumer rights. Immediately after the Aziz ruling of March 2013 (Case C-415/11), the Commission stayed in close touch with the Spanish authorities to make sure that relevant changes were made to the Spanish legislation. The Commission services considered that the amendments that were then adopted by Law 1/2013 on 14 May 2013 represented a positive step forward in improving the protection of consumers in this area.

The Commission services have continued to assess the impact of Law 1/2013 in view of further legislative changes which directly and indirectly affect mortgage credit consumers.

In particular, the Honourable Member might be aware that, on 28 September 2013, Spain adopted an Act which has abolished the use, as from 1 November 2013, of the excessively high 'IRPH' index, which was until then used for all mortgage credit contracts concluded in Spain, retaining some problematic transitional measures for existing contracts which contain such indexes, and denying to consumers access to court or other means of redress against these transitional provisions.

The Commission is currently assessing the overall impact and proportionality of these amendments and will act accordingly.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-014039/13
til Kommissionen
Anna Rosbach (ECR)
(11. december 2013)

Om: Brandsikkerhed

Hvert år indlægges mindst 70 000 mennesker i Europa på grund af brandsår eller røgforgiftning.

Mange ansatte i hele EU arbejder i store bygninger, såsom kontorbygninger, indkøbscentre, hoteller, hospitaler eller faciliteter til let fremstillingsvirksomhed. I sådanne lokaliteter er den største trussel mod sikkerhed og sundhed på arbejdspladsen brand i bygningen.

Bygningernes iboende brandsikkerhedsniveauer vil fortsat blive fastlagt af deres arkitekter, ejere og entreprenører. Rammedirektiv 89/391/EØF gør imidlertid arbejdsgivere ansvarlige for at fastlægge en systematisk forebyggelsespolitik, som dækker alle risici.

Der er tre områder, hvor beskyttelse af medarbejderne kan påvirkes i positiv retning på arbejdpladsen:

— tilsikring af ordnede forhold, herunder sikring af, at flugtruter holdes fri, branddøre holdes lukket, og brandforebyggelsesudstyr tjekkes og vedligeholdes regelmæssigt

— udarbejdelse af en evakueringsplan og afholdelse af regelmæssige brandøvelser for alle medarbejdere, herunder sæson- eller skifteholdsarbejdere

— udpegelse og uddannelse af brandsikkerhedsansvarlige i arbejdsstyrken, som kan tage styringen og organisere andre i tilfælde af en nødsituation.

I lyset af ovenstående:

1. Hvilke skridt agter Kommissionen at tage for at sikre, at brandsikkerhed får den nødvendige opmærksomhed i EU's kommende politikramme for sundhed og sikkerhed på arbejdspladsen?

2. Agter Kommissionen at træffe konkrete foranstaltninger under andre kommendeinitiativer med henblik på at øge brandsikkerheden i Europa?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af László Andor
(7. februar 2014)

EU's lovgivning om sundhed og sikkerhed for arbejdstagere indeholder adskillige bestemmelser om brandsikkerhed og evakuering, f.eks. rammedirektivet ([1]) og direktiverne om arbejdsstedet ([2]), byggepladser ([3]) og udvindingsindustrien ([4]), hvori nogle af de spørgsmål, som det ærede medlem omtaler, behandles.

Disse spørgsmål vil blive behandlet som led i det arbejde, der finder sted hvert femte år i henhold til rammedirektivet. I forbindelse hermed vil Kommissionen senest ved udgangen af 2015 udarbejde en rapport på grundlag af en omfattende gennemgang af EU's direktiver om sundhed og sikkerhed på arbejdspladsen, hvor der tages hensyn til direktivernes relevans, forskningen og den nye videnskabelige viden. EU's andre institutioner og interessenter vil kunne finde oplysninger og om nødvendigt anbefalinger med henblik på at forbedre den måde, hvorpå de retlige rammer fungerer.

Indtil resultaterne af den løbende evaluering foreligger, planlægger Kommissionen på nuværende tidspunkt ikke yderligere tiltag i forbindelse med brandsikring på arbejdspladsen.

([1]) Rådets direktiv 89/391/EØF af 12. juni 1989 om iværksættelse af foranstaltninger til forbedring af arbejdstagernes sikkerhed og sundhed under arbejdet, EFT L 183 af 29.6.1989, se artikel 8.
([2]) Rådets direktiv 89/654/EØF af 30. november 1989 om minimumsforskrifter for sikkerhed og sundhed i forbindelse med arbejdsstedet (første særdirektiv i henhold til artikel 16, stk. 1, i direktiv 89/391/EØF), EFT L 393 af 30.12.1989, se bilag I og II.
([3]) Rådets direktiv 92/57/EØF af 24. juni 1992 om minimumsforskrifter for sikkerhed og sundhed på midlertidige eller mobile byggepladser (ottende særdirektiv i henhold til artikel 16, stk. 1, i direktiv 89/391/EØF), EFT L 245 af 26.8.1992, se bilag IV.
([4]) Rådets direktiv 92/104/EØF af 3. december 1992 om minimumsforskrifter vedrørende forbedring af arbejdstagernes sikkerhed og sundhed i udvindingsindustrien over eller under jorden (tolvte særdirektiv i henhold til artikel 16, stk. 1, i direktiv 89/391/EØF), EFT L 404 af 31.12.1992, se artikel 4 og bilaget.

Hvad angår brandsikkerheden på hoteller deltager Kommissionen i en debat om, hvorvidt Rådets henstilling 86/666/EØF om brandsikring af eksisterende hoteller bør opdateres. Bidrag fra relevante interessenter er imidlertid afgørende i alle sådanne betragtninger.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014039/13
to the Commission
Anna Rosbach (ECR)
(11 December 2013)

Subject: Fire safety

Every year at least 70 000 people are hospitalised in Europe because of burns or smoke inhalation.

Many employees across the EU work in large buildings such as office blocks, shopping malls, hotels, hospitals or light manufacturing facilities. In such locations the greatest threat to occupational health and safety is fire in the building.

The inherent fire safety levels of buildings will continue to be established by their architects, owners and contractors. However, Framework Directive 89/391/EEC makes employers responsible for establishing a systematic prevention policy covering all risks.

There are three areas where employee protection can be positively influenced in the workplace:

— Good housekeeping, including ensuring escape routes are kept clear, fire doors closed and fire prevention equipment checked and regularly maintained

— Establishing an evacuation plan and holding regular fire drills for all employees, including seasonal or shift workers

— The appointment and training of fire safety officers from the workforce who can take charge and organise others in an emergency.

In the light of the above:

1. What steps will the Commission take to ensure that fire safety is given the necessary attention in the forthcoming EU occupational safety and health policy framework?

2. Will the Commission take specific measures in other forthcoming initiatives in order to improve fire safety in Europe?

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

EU legislation on health and safety of workers contains several provisions regarding fire safety and evacuation, for example the framework Directive ([1]), and the Workplace ([2]), Construction Sites ([3]) and Extractive Industries ([4]) Directives, addressing, *inter alia*, some of the issues referred to by the Honourable Member.

These issues, among others, will be considered in the context of the new five-yearly exercise under the framework Directive, in which, by the end of 2015 at the latest, the Commission will produce a report based on a comprehensive evaluation of the EU Directives on health and safety at work in terms of their relevance, of research and of new scientific knowledge. It will inform other EU institutions and the stakeholders and, where needed, make recommendations to improve the operation of the regulatory framework.

Pending the results of this ongoing evaluation, the Commission does not envisage proposing at this stage any additional measures in relation to occupational fire safety.

Regarding fire safety specifically in hotels, the Commission is engaged in a debate on whether the existing 86/666/EEC Council Recommendation on Fire Safety in Existing Hotels needs updating. Input from relevant stakeholders is however crucial in any such consideration.

([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, see Article 8.

([2]) Council Directive 89/654/EEC of 30 November 1989 concerning the minimum safety and health requirements for the workplace (first individual directive within the meaning of Article 16 (1) of Directive 89/391/EEC), OJ L 393, 30.12.1989, see Annexes I and II.

([3]) Council Directive 92/57/EEC of 24 June 1992 on the implementation of minimum safety and health requirements at temporary or mobile constructions sites (eighth individual Directive within the meaning of Article 16 (1) of Directive 89/391/EEC), OJ L 245, 26.8.1992, see Annex IV.

([4]) Council Directive 92/104/EEC of 3 December 1992 on the minimum requirements for improving the safety and health protection of workers in surface and underground mineral-extracting industries (twelfth individual Directive within the meaning of Article 16 (1) of Directive 89/391/EEC), OJ L 404, 31.12.1992, see Article 4 and the annex.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014040/13
alla Commissione
Giommaria Uggias (ALDE)
(11 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Rapporti interaziendali Meridiana Fly — Air Italy e violazione delle condizioni contrattuali dei dipendenti

Da diversi anni il gruppo Meridiana versa in un grave stato di crisi aziendale che ha costretto i vertici societari a ricorrere all'istituto della cassa integrazione per migliaia di dipendenti (1350 Meridiana Fly, 180 Air Italy e 170 Meridiana Maintenance). Al fine di garantire la ripresa dell'azienda, nell'autunno del 2011, il gruppo acquisiva il vettore Air Italy, integrandolo nel proprio ramo aziendale. Il nuovo assetto societario avrebbe dovuto rendere maggiormente competitiva e efficiente la compagnia creando al tempo stesso i presupposti per il risanamento aziendale. A due anni di distanza, quella che sembrava essere una missione di salvataggio dell'azienda si configura invece come una vera e propria operazione di dumping. Essa infatti prevede, da una parte, il progressivo spostamento delle attività di volo dal ramo Meridiana Fly a quello Air Italy con la parziale dismissione degli aeromobili in quota Meridiana Fly e la conseguente acquisizione di nuovi aeromobili in quota Air Italy e, dall'altra, l'abbattimento dei costi del personale in quanto Air Italy applica contratti meno onerosi. Già a partire dal 2012, un numero sempre crescente di voli con identificativo IG (Meridiana Fly) sono stati programmati e operati da aeromobili e personale della società Air Italy.

Inoltre, si ha notizia di una comunicazione inviata il 25 novembre 2013 dall'amministratore delegato del gruppo Meridiana, Roberto Scaramella, e indirizzata ai dipendenti del ramo aziendale Meridiana Fly, con la quale si prospetta a tutto il personale navigante la possibilità di cessare il rapporto di lavoro con Meridiana Fly e essere assunti dalla Air Italy, a condizioni imposte dall'azienda con un contratto di lavoro meno oneroso per il vettore e negoziato solo con alcuni sindacati (UIL — AMPAV — AMPAC). Poiché i lavoratori attualmente in cassa integrazione verranno messi in mobilità a partire dalla primavera del 2015, periodo in cui verrà meno la copertura degli ammortizzatori sociali, i dipendenti Meridiana Fly si trovano a dover scegliere tra il futuro licenziamento o l'assunzione presso il secondo vettore del medesimo gruppo a condizioni contrattuali peggiori e più onerose.

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

1. se considera legittima la scelta di Meridiana Fly di ricorrere a aeromobili e equipaggi dell'altro ramo aziendale del gruppo (Air Italy) con il conseguente trasferimento dell'attività produttiva, mentre i propri dipendenti sono collocati in cassa integrazione guadagni straordinaria (CIGS);

2. se un'azienda (Air Italy) che opera in regime di crisi con CIGS dei lavoratori autorizzata dall'INPS possa assumere personale, senza ricorrere preventivamente in modo obbligatorio e non facoltativo al proprio personale posto in CIGS o in subordine al personale del gruppo Meridiana Fly, mantenendo però ferme le tutele previste dal contratto siglato dall'azienda controllante?

Risposta di László Andor a nome della Commissione
(7 febbraio 2014)

1. La Commissione non ha poteri per interferire nelle decisioni specifiche delle imprese. Pertanto, la Commissione non è in condizione di formulare commenti sulle decisioni imprenditoriali di Meridiana Fly.

2. La Commissione non è competente per valutare la compatibilità del comportamento di Air Italy con la legislazione italiana in merito alla cassa integrazione guadagni straordinari (CGIS) né per affermare se un datore di lavoro abbia o meno rispettato le disposizioni nazionali che danno attuazione a pertinenti direttive unionali. Spetta alle autorità nazionali competenti, anche nelle sedi giudiziarie, assicurare che la legislazione nazionale a recepimento delle direttive sia applicata in modo corretto ed efficace dal datore di lavoro in questione tenendo conto delle circostanze specifiche del caso.

Tuttavia, per quanto concerne l'ipotizzato trasferimento di personale da Meridiana Fly a Air Italy, la Commissione osserva che la direttiva 2001/23/CE ([1]), la cui finalità è garantire i diritti dei lavoratori nel caso di trasferimenti di imprese, potrebbe essere di applicazione. Affinché si configuri un trasferimento ai sensi di detta direttiva devono realizzarsi due condizioni: deve esservi un cambiamento di datore di lavoro e l'entità trasferita deve mantenere la propria identità ([2]). Il fatto che il trasferimento avvenga tra due società dello stesso gruppo non osta all'applicazione della direttiva ([3]). In caso di controversia, spetta ai tribunali nazionali stabilire se vi sia stato o meno un trasferimento ai sensi della direttiva.

([1]) Direttiva 2001/23/CE del Consiglio, del 12 marzo 2001, concernente il ravvicinamento delle legislazioni degli Stati membri relative al mantenimento dei diritti dei lavoratori in caso di trasferimenti di imprese, di stabilimenti o di parti di imprese o di stabilimenti, GU L 82 del 22.3.2001.
([2]) Cfr. la relazione della Commissione sulla direttiva 2001/23/CE del Consiglio del 18.6.2007, COM(2007) 334 definitivo.
([3]) Cfr. la causa C-234/98, sentenza della Corte di giustizia europea del 2 dicembre 1999, Allen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014040/13
to the Commission
Giommaria Uggias (ALDE)
(11 December 2013)

Subject: Intercompany relations between Meridiana Fly and Air Italy and breach of employees' terms of employment

The Meridiana group has been in crisis for several years, forcing the group's senior management to lay off thousands of employees (1 350 at Meridiana Fly, 180 at Air Italy and 170 Meridiana Maintenance staff). In order to bring about the company's recovery, the group acquired the carrier Air Italy in autumn 2011, integrating it in its own group division. The new acquisition should have made the company more competitive and efficient, simultaneously creating the conditions for business recovery. Two years on, what appeared to be a company rescue mission has actually turned out to be an exercise in dumping. This has involved flight operations being gradually switched from the Meridiana Fly division to the Air Italy division, with Meridiana Fly aircraft being partially decommissioned and new aircraft consequently being purchased for Air Italy; it has also involved cutting staff costs, as Air Italy issues less onerous contracts. Since 2012, an increasing number of flights with the airline designator IG (Meridiana Fly) have been scheduled and operated using Air Italy staff and aircraft.

Moreover, a memo dated 25 November 2013, sent by Meridiana group' chief executive officer, Roberto Scaramella, to Meridiana Fly employees, sets out the prospect of all aircrews no longer being employed by Meridiana Fly and instead being employed by Air Italy, on terms imposed by the company and with an employment contract that is less onerous for the carrier and negotiated with only a few unions (UIL, AMPAV, AMPAC). Since the workers currently laid off under the wage guarantee fund will start to be made redundant in spring 2015, when there will be less welfare cover, Meridiana Fly employees have to choose between being made redundant or working for the same group's second carrier, on poorer and more onerous terms.

1. Does the Commission think that Meridiana Fly's decision to use aircraft and crews from another division of the group (Air Italy), with the resulting transfer of production activity, is right, while its own employees are laid off under the wage guarantee fund

2. Can a company (Air Italy) in crisis with workers laid off under the special wage guarantee fund, as authorised by the National Institute of Social Insurance, take on staff, without first using its own staff laid down under the special wage guarantee fund, as it is required to, or, failing that, Meridiana Fly group staff, but maintaining all the safeguards provided for by the contract signed by the controlling company?

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

1. The Commission has no powers to interfere in specific company's decisions. Therefore, the Commission is not in a position to comment Meridiana Fly's business decisions.

2. The Commission is not competent to assess the compatibility of Air Italy's behaviour with Italian legislation related to the wage guarantee system 'cassa integrazione guadagni straodinaria (CGIS)', nor to state whether an employer has or has not complied with any national provisions which serve to implement relevant EU Directives. It is for the competent national authorities, including the courts, to ensure that the national legislation transposing these Directives is correctly and effectively applied by the employer concerned, having regard to the specific circumstances of the case.

However, regarding the contemplated transfer of staff from Meridiana Fly to Air Italy, the Commission observes that the directive 2001/23/EC ([1]) — whose purpose is to safeguard employees' rights in case of transfer of undertaking — might be applicable. For a transfer to be deemed to exist within the meaning of the latter, two conditions must be met: there must be a change of employer and the transferred entity must retain its identity ([2]). The fact that the transfer occurs between two societies of the same group is not an obstacle to the application of the directive ([3]). In case of dispute, it is for national courts to rule whether there is a transfer or not within the meaning of the directive.

([1]) Council Directive 2001/23/EC of 12 March 2001 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the safeguarding of employees' rights in the event of transfers of undertakings, businesses or parts of undertakings or businesses, OJ L 82, 22.3.2001.
([2]) See Commission report on Council Directive 2001/23/EC of 18.6.2007, COM(2007) 334 final.
([3]) See Case C-234/98, Judgment of the Court of 2 December 1999, Allen.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-014041/13
adresată Comisiei
Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă (S&D)
(11 decembrie 2013)

Subiect: Femeile în agricultură

În cadrul strategiilor UE de sprijinire a zonelor rurale nu trebuie să se neglijeze faptul că schimbările sociale, schimbările demografice, schimbarea generală a valorilor au modificat radical condițiile de trai și de muncă, mai ales din mediul rural.

Femeile, cu educația, profesionalismul și aptitudinile lor, contribuie la dezvoltarea stilurilor de viață și a modelelor de afaceri tradiționale. Ele sunt, în același timp, factorii de stabilizare și de modernizare ale acestor forme de activitate și de aceea acestea sunt indispensabile pentru dezvoltarea durabilă a zonelor rurale.

Acest lucru este valabil mai ales în agricultură, un domeniu în care femeile au contribuit în mod semnificativ în ultimii ani la diversificarea întreprinderilor și la adaptarea lor la condițiile pieței.

Având în vedere că trebuie să se acorde o atenție deosebită femeilor din Europa în toate domeniile de acțiune și că este nevoie de un acces nerestricționat al femeilor la resursele care susțin agricultura, care este strategia Comisiei în privința asigurării unei protecții sociale adecvate pentru femeile care lucrează în agricultură? Ce măsuri are în vedere Comisia pentru a asigura acestora sisteme de asigurări pe termen mediu, care să contribuie la o îmbunătățire vizibilă a situației sociale a femeilor implicate în agricultura din Europa?

Răspuns dat de dna Reding în numele Comisiei
(14 februarie 2014)

Comisia recunoaște faptul că femeile joacă un rol important în sectorul agricol și că este necesar să se asigure o protecție socială adecvată atât pentru acestea, cât și pentru femeile care lucrează în situații similare sau care desfășoară o activitate independentă.

Directiva 2010/41/UE privind aplicarea principiului egalității de tratament între bărbații și femeile care desfășoară o activitate independentă pune în practică acest principiu în ceea ce privește persoanele care desfășoară o activitate independentă și soțiile/soții acestora sau partenerii lor de viață, atunci când înființează împreună o întreprindere. În acest sens, directiva prevede că nu trebuie să existe nicio discriminare pe motive de sex și dă ca exemplu constituirea, dotarea cu echipamente sau extinderea unei întreprinderi ori lansarea sau extinderea oricărei alte forme de activitate independentă. Directiva prevede, de asemenea, promovarea de acțiuni pozitive, astfel încât statele membre să poată menține sau adopta măsuri în vederea asigurării unei egalități depline în practică, menționând ca exemplu promovarea inițiativelor antreprenoriatului în rândul femeilor. În ceea ce privește concediul de maternitate, directiva prevede un concediu de maternitate cu o durată de minimum 14 săptămâni. Referitor la întrebare, este deosebit de relevant faptul că la articolul 7 din directivă se prevede că, în cazul în care există un sistem național de protecție socială pentru lucrătorii independenți, soțiile/soții acestora sau partenerii lor de viață au dreptul de a beneficia în nume propriu de protecție socială.

Articolele 7 și 8 din această directivă vor intra integral în vigoare la 5 august 2014 și, după această dată, Comisia va efectua o analiză detaliată a punerii în aplicare a directivei în statele membre și va adopta toate măsurile necesare pentru a asigurarea faptului că aceasta a intrat integral în vigoare.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014041/13
to the Commission
Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă (S&D)
(11 December 2013)

Subject: Women in agriculture

As part of the EU strategies for supporting rural areas, it must not be overlooked that social and demographic changes, as well as a general shift in values have radically altered living and working conditions, especial in rural areas.

Well-educated women, with their professionalism and skills, are helping develop traditional lifestyles and ways of doing business. At the same time, they are instrumental in stabilising and modernising these forms of activity, which is why they have an essential role to play in the sustainable development of rural areas.

This is particularly true in agriculture, a sector where women have made a significant contribution in recent years to making enterprises more diverse and adapting them to market conditions.

Given that particular attention needs to be focused on women in Europe in every area of activity and that women need to have unrestricted access to the resources which support agriculture, what strategy does the Commission have to ensure adequate social protection for women working in agriculture? What measures does the Commission intend to take to guarantee these medium-term social security schemes which will help improve perceptibly the social situation of women involved in agriculture in Europe?

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

The Commission recognises the important role that women play in the agricultural sector and the need to ensure adequate social protection for these women as well as women working in similar situations and those working in a self-employed capacity.

Directive 2010/41/EU on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity as self-employed applies the principle of equal treatment to self-employed workers and to their spouses or life partners where they establish a business together. In so doing, it provides that there shall be no discrimination on grounds of sex and gives examples as the establishment, equipment or extension of a business or the launching or extension of any other form of self-employed activity. It also provides for positive action so that Member States may maintain or adopt measures with a view to ensuring full equality in practice and gives the example of promoting entrepreneurship initiatives among women. In relation to maternity leave, the directive provides for a minimum maternity allowance of 14 weeks. Of particular relevance to the question is that Article 7 of the directive provides that where a national social protection system exists for self-employed workers, the spouses or life partners who participate in the activities of the self-employed worker have the right to benefit from social protection in their own name.

Articles 7 and 8 of this directive will come fully into force on 5 August 2014 and after that date the Commission will carry out a detailed examination of the implementation of the directive in individual Member States and take any necessary action to ensure that it is fully in force.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014042/13
a la Comisión
Rosa Estaràs Ferragut (PPE)
(11 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Discapacidad y necesidad de personal especializado

Desde la década de 1970 se sabe que una atención temprana que suponga enriquecer el medio educativo de los niños con discapacidad, tiene efectos muy positivos sobre su desarrollo neuropsicológico.

Considerando que, en los últimos años, la investigación científica se ha centrado en conocer la especificidad de cada síndrome con discapacidad cognitiva o del desarrollo. Estos avances implican investigar qué mutaciones se producen en determinados genes de cada tipo de discapacidad que afectan a la salud, a la memoria, a la percepción, al aprendizaje, al lenguaje. Si conocemos esto, es posible diseñar métodos más directos y eficaces para conocer los problemas de salud o tratar las limitaciones cognitivas y enseñar a pensar, hablar, leer, escribir, comportarse, etc.

Considerando la importancia que tiene en la escuela inclusiva que los profesores y especialmente el personal de apoyo tengan una formación específica en el cuidado y educación de personas con discapacidad (síndrome de Down, autismo, parálisis cerebral, déficit auditivo, etc.);

Considerando que, en la actualidad, la falta de formación de los profesores y del personal de apoyo de personas con discapacidad, es una carencia generalizada del sistema educativo;

Considerando el artículo 20 de la Convención de Naciones Unidas sobre los Derechos de las Personas con Discapacidad;

Considerando la Estrategia Europea sobre Discapacidad 2010-2020;

1. ¿Qué opina la Comisión sobre la formación de personal especializado para dar respuesta a las necesidades educativas de los niños con discapacidad, para que tengan éxito en sus aprendizajes y participen en igualdad de condiciones?

2. ¿Qué medidas piensa adoptar la Comisión para facilitar una formación y un apoyo adecuado a los profesionales que trabajan con menores y adultos con discapacidad?

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

Los Estados miembros son responsables de los contenidos y la organización de sus sistemas educativos y la Comisión apoya sus esfuerzos por modernizarlos y mejorarlos. En este contexto, la Comisión apoya financieramente a la Agencia Europea para el Desarrollo de la Educación Especial ([1]) y coopera con ella. La Agencia proporciona análisis y pruebas de buenas prácticas educativas, hace recomendaciones y desarrolla herramientas para evaluar y supervisar el progreso realizado.

En el marco de la Estrategia Europea sobre Discapacidad 2010-2020 ([2]), la Comisión también promueve la educación y la formación de las personas con discapacidad en el sistema educativo general, que se complementa con la ayuda personalizada. La Comunicación de la Comisión «Mejorar las competencias en el siglo XXI» ([3]) toma nota de las ventajas de una enseñanza adaptada a las necesidades de cada estudiante en escuelas integradoras.

En 2012, el Documento de trabajo de los servicios de la Comisión sobre el apoyo a las profesiones docentes para mejorar los resultados del aprendizaje reconoció el reto de preparar a los profesionales docentes para la educación integradora y subrayó la necesidad de actuar.

Además, las conclusiones del Consejo sobre «Liderazgo educativo eficaz» (noviembre de 2013) han destacado la importancia de formar a los dirigentes educativos para mejorar sus cualificaciones profesionales y pedagógicas.

El nuevo programa Erasmus+ ampliará la ayuda facilitada previamente al amparo de los programas de Aprendizaje Permanente y Juventud en Acción a los grupos que fomentan la participación de los estudiantes con discapacidad en la educación y la formación. También en el periodo 2014-2020, los Estados miembros de la UE pueden movilizar recursos de los nuevos Fondos Estructurales y de Inversión Europeos para apoyar la educación, la formación y el desarrollo de aptitudes de las personas con discapacidad.

([1]) http://www.european-agency.org/
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/disabilities/disability-strategy/index_en.htm
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/education/school21/sec2177_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014042/13
to the Commission
Rosa Estaràs Ferragut (PPE)
(11 December 2013)

Subject: Disability and the need for specialised staff

Since the 1970s, early intervention that enriches the educational environment of children with disabilities has been known to have very positive effects on the neuropsychological development of such children.

In recent years, scientific research has focused on understanding the specific nature of each syndrome involving cognitive or developmental disabilities. These advances involve research into what mutations occur in certain genes in each type of disability, affecting health, memory, perception, learning and language. Understanding this makes it possible to design more direct and effective methods to understand health problems and address cognitive limitations, teaching individuals to think, speak, read, write, behave, etc.

It is very important in inclusive schools for teachers and especially support staff to have specific training in the care and education of individuals with disabilities (Down's syndrome, autism, cerebral palsy, hearing impairment, etc.).

At present, there is a general lack of training among teachers and support staff for individuals with disabilities throughout the education system.

In view of Article 20 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020:

1. What is the Commission's opinion on the training of specialised staff to meet the educational needs of children with disabilities, in order for them to learn successfully and participate on an equal footing?

2. What action does the Commission intend to take to facilitate suitable training and support for professionals who work with children and adults with disabilities?

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

Member States are responsible for the content and organisation of their education systems; the Commission supports their efforts to modernise and improve them. In this context, the Commission supports financially and cooperates with the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education ([1]). The Agency provides analysis and evidence of good educational practices, makes recommendations and develops tools to evaluate and monitor progress.

As part of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 ([2]), the Commission also promotes the education and training of people with disabilities within the general education system, complemented by individualized support. The communication 'Improving competences for the 21st Century' ([3]) notes the benefits of teaching tailored to each learner's needs in inclusive schools.

In 2012, the Commission's Staff Working Document 'Supporting the Teaching Professions for Better Learning Outcomes' acknowledged the challenge of preparing the teaching profession for inclusive education and underlined the need for action.

Furthermore, the Council Conclusions on 'Effective Leadership in Education' (November 2013) stressed the importance of training educational leaders to improve their professional and pedagogical skills.

The new Erasmus+ programme will expand the support previously provided under the Lifelong Learning and Youth in Action programmes to groups promoting the participation of disabled learners in education and training. Also in the period 2014-2020, EU Member States can mobilise resources from the new European Structural and Investment Funds to support the education, training and skills development of people with disabilities.

([1]) http://www.european-agency.org/
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/disabilities/disability-strategy/index_en.htm
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/education/school21/sec2177_en.pdf

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014043/13
a la Comisión
Rosa Estaràs Ferragut (PPE)
(12 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Trastorno por déficit de atención (TDAH)

El trastorno por déficit de atención con o sin hiperactividad (TDAH) es un trastorno que se inicia en la infancia y se caracteriza por dificultades para mantener la atención, hiperactividad, exceso de movimiento e impulsividad o dificultades en el control de los impulsos.

En el mundo actual los problemas de salud mental ocupan un papel cada vez menos prioritario en la agenda política. Esto se debe en parte a la actual crisis económica, que se ha traducido en importantes recortes en los recursos destinados a salud y políticas sociales. Como consecuencia, los sistemas de salud —y en particular los servicios de salud mental— se ven cada vez más mermados.

Entre los trastornos de la salud mental, el trastorno por déficit de atención con hiperactividad es una de las patologías psiquiátricas más ignoradas y menos conocidas. Se estima que afecta aproximadamente a uno de cada veinte niños o adolescentes en Europa, persistiendo en muchos de ellos durante la etapa adulta, a pesar de lo cual muy poca gente afectada por el TDAH recibe el diagnóstico y apoyo adecuados.

La falta de acceso al diagnóstico y al apoyo desemboca frecuentemente en un empeoramiento del problema y un deterioro de la calidad de vida. Ello puede afectar a la relación con otras personas, el rendimiento escolar y el rendimiento profesional.

El TDAH no aparece en un lugar destacado de las agendas políticas de la UE ni de los Estados miembros, a pesar de que cada vez hay más pruebas de su impacto significativo en las personas, las familias y la sociedad.

1. ¿Qué medidas piensa adoptar la Comisión que fomenten la concienciación social sobre el TDAH?

2. ¿Considera la Comisión que las futuras políticas sociales y de sanidad abordan de forma satisfactoria la investigación y el apoyo en relación con esta enfermedad?

3. A la vista de las especificidades de esta discapacidad, ¿considera la Comisión necesario establecer programas de formación de profesores y personal de apoyo que estén en contacto con menores con TDAH?

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

La Comisión no tiene previsto adoptar medidas para fomentar la concienciación social sobre el trastorno por déficit de atención con hiperactividad (TDAH), ya que ello es primordialmente responsabilidad de los Estados miembros.

El paquete de trabajo sobre la salud mental y los centros escolares de la acción común sobre salud mental y bienestar, la acción preparatoria del Parlamento Europeo relativa a una red europea sobre asistencia a los adolescentes con problemas de salud mental, así como proyectos del programa de salud pública de la UE, se centran en la concienciación sobre las cuestiones de salud mental que afectan a niños y jóvenes, y en la mejora de la ayuda a este respecto.

Horizonte 2020, el nuevo Programa Marco de Investigación e Innovación (2014-2020) ([1]) ofrecerá mediante su reto social «salud, cambio demográfico y bienestar» nuevas oportunidades de apoyo a la investigación en este ámbito. Puede encontrarse información sobre las actuales posibilidades de financiación en el portal de participantes de «Investigación e Innovación» ([2]).

Los datos muestran cada vez más que la formación de profesores sobre los problemas de salud mental que afectan a escolares, incluido el TDAH, pueden ayudar a mejorar los resultados de salud, sociales y educativos ([3]). Los contenidos de la enseñanza y la organización de los sistemas de educación y formación son responsabilidad de los Estados miembros. Mediante el método abierto de coordinación, la Comisión apoya a los Estados miembros en sus esfuerzos por mejorar sus sistemas educativos y la formación de los profesores. Por ejemplo, desde 2010 existe un grupo de expertos sobre enseñanza de las matemáticas, las ciencias y la tecnología. El informe preliminar de este grupo señala la necesidad de motivar y formar a los profesores y de apoyar al personal para abordar las necesidades específicas de los niños con discapacidades en general y con TDAH en particular.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0809:FIN:ES:PDF
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/index.html
([3]) Puede encontrarse un breve resumen de estos datos en el siguiente estudio: http://ec.europa.eu/health/mental_health/docs/europopp_full_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014043/13
to the Commission
Rosa Estaràs Ferragut (PPE)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: Attention deficit disorder (ADD)

Attention deficit disorder with or without hyperactivity (ADHD) is a disorder that begins in childhood and is characterised by difficulty maintaining focus, hyperactivity, excessive movement and impulsivity or difficulty controlling impulses.

In today's world, mental health issues are sliding down the list of priorities on the political agenda. This is due in part to the current economic crisis, which has led to significant cuts in resources for health and social policies. In consequence, healthcare systems — and particularly mental health services — are being increasingly cut.

Among mental health disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder is one of the least known and least understood psychiatric conditions. It is estimated to affect approximately one in every 20 children or adolescents in Europe, and in many of them it continues into adulthood. However, very few people with ADHD receive a suitable diagnosis and support.

The lack of access to diagnosis and support frequently results in the problem getting worse and a lower quality of life. That can affect interpersonal relationships, academic performance and professional performance.

ADHD is not a priority on the policy agendas of the EU or of the Member States, in spite of increasing evidence of the significant impact it has on individuals, families and society.

1. What action does the Commission plan to take to raise social awareness of ADHD?

2. Does the Commission think that future social and health policies satisfactorily address research and support in relation to this disorder?

3. In light of the specific nature of this disability, does the Commission think that training programmes should be established for teachers and support personnel who are in contact with children with ADHD?

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

The Commission has no plans for actions to raise social awareness of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) as such action primarily falls under the responsibility of Member States themselves.

The work package on 'Mental Health and Schools' of the Joint Action on Mental Health and Well-being, the Preparatory Action for the European Parliament on a European network on care for adolescents with mental health problems, and also projects under the EU-Health Programme, focus on raising awareness and improving support with regard to mental health issues affecting children and young people.

Horizon 2020, the new Framework Programme for Research and Innovation ([1]) (2014-2020), through its 'Health, demographic change and wellbeing' societal challenge will provide further opportunities to support research in this area. Information on current funding opportunities can be obtained at the Research and Innovation Participant Portal ([2]).

Evidence increasingly suggests that training of teachers on mental health issues in school children, including ADHD, can lead to improve health, social and educational outcomes ([3]). The content of teaching and the organisation of education and training systems is under the responsibility of the Member States. Through the Open Method of Coordination, the Commission supports Member States in their efforts to improve their education systems and the training of teachers. For example, the expert group on Maths, Science and Technology Education has been in place since 2010. The preliminary report of this group points to the need to motivate and train teachers and support personnel to address the specific needs of children with disabilities in general and ADHD in particular.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0809:FIN:EN:PDF
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/index.html
([3]) A brief summary of this evidence can be found in the study under the link: http://ec.europa.eu/health/mental_health/docs/europopp_full_en.pdf

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014044/13
a la Comisión
Rosa Estaràs Ferragut (PPE)
(12 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Educación inclusiva

Las personas con discapacidad permanecen a menudo en situación de desventaja y marginalizadas, especialmente en el ámbito laboral.

Los jóvenes con discapacidad que únicamente tienen la educación secundaria, o incluso inferior titulación, generalmente se ven más afectados por el desempleo, es más probable que dependan de las prestaciones sociales y tienen un mayor riesgo de exclusión social. No obstante, la mejora de las perspectivas de empleo implica la mejora del nivel educativo.

En el grupo comprendido entre los 16 y 19 años la tasa de personas con limitaciones importantes que no prosiguen sus estudios se sitúa en el 37 %, frente a un 25 % de las personas con ciertas limitaciones y un 17 % de las personas sin limitación alguna.

La mejora de la educación posibilita el acceso al empleo y a los sistemas de protección social, sistemas que han de tomar en consideración las necesidades concretas de las personas con discapacidad.

1. ¿Qué medidas estudia plantear la Comisión para fomentar la educación inclusiva durante el periodo 2014-2020?

2. ¿Considera la Comisión necesario ayudar a los jóvenes con discapacidad en la transición de la etapa de educación a la etapa de trabajo o profesional? ¿Qué medidas piensa adoptar a este fin?

3. ¿Piensa aportar la Comisión fondos adicionales que incrementen la movilidad a través de Europa de los estudiantes con necesidades especiales de educación?

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

Todos los Estados miembros de la UE han firmado la Convención de las Naciones Unidas sobre los derechos de las personas con discapacidad ([1]) y 25 de ellos ya la han ratificado. Esta Convención incluye el compromiso de una educación integradora (artículo 24). Como la educación compete principalmente a los Estados miembros, la acción de la Comisión en este ámbito es sobre todo de apoyo. La política de la Comisión para fomentar una educación y formación permanente integradoras se resume en la Estrategia Europea sobre Discapacidad 2010-2020 ([2]). La Comisión ayuda financieramente a Easnie ([3]), que proporciona información sobre la educación integradora en toda Europa, así como recomendaciones estratégicas e instrumentos de seguimiento.

Durante el período comprendido entre 2014 y 2020, el Fondo Social Europeo asignará al menos el 20 % de sus fondos a la integración social. Uno de los objetivos es apoyar en mayor medida a las personas con discapacidad y a otros grupos desfavorecidos a integrarse en la sociedad y el mundo del trabajo.

La Comisión considera que los jóvenes con discapacidad necesitan ayuda en su transición de la educación al trabajo. Un informe de la Comisión publicado en 2012 ([4]) puso de manifiesto algunas de las principales barreras en esta transición y proporcionó orientaciones políticas en la materia. Asimismo, Easnie ha completado un proyecto sobre la medida en que los programas de EFP para los alumnos con discapacidad los preparan para encontrar un puesto de trabajo ([5]).

El nuevo programa Erasmus + proporcionará oportunidades de financiación para fomentar la educación integradora y mejorar la empleabilidad de las personas con discapacidad, y ofrecerá financiación adicional, centrada en sus necesidades específicas, a fin de apoyar la participación de esas personas en todas las acciones de movilidad del programa.

([1]) http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=150
([2]) COM(2010) 636 final.
([3]) European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (Agencia Europea de Necesidades Especiales y Educación Integradora): http://www.european-agency.org/
([4]) Políticas y prácticas en la educación, la formación y el empleo de los estudiantes con discapacidad o con necesidades educativas especiales en la EU.
([5]) Modelos europeos de prácticas de éxito en la educación y formación profesionales.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014044/13
to the Commission
Rosa Estaràs Ferragut (PPE)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: Inclusive education

People with disabilities often find themselves disadvantaged and marginalised, particularly when it comes to work.

Young people with disabilities who have only completed secondary education, or an even lower level of education, are generally more likely to be unemployed, more likely to depend on welfare benefits and are at greater risk of social exclusion. However, improving people's employment prospects entails improving their level of education.

Among young people between 16 and 19 years-old, the rate of non-participation in education is 37% for considerably restricted people, compared with 25% for those restricted to some extent and 17% for those not restricted.

Improving education facilitates access to employment and welfare systems; such systems must take into account the specific needs of individuals with disabilities.

1. What measures is the Commission considering to encourage inclusive education during the period 2014-2020?

2. Does the Commission take the view that young people with disabilities need help to transition from education to the working or professional phase of their lives? What action does it intend to take to this end?

3. Does the Commission intend to provide additional funds to increase the mobility throughout Europe of students with special educational needs?

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

All EU Member States have signed and 25 of them have by now also ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ([1]), which includes a commitment to inclusive education (Article 24). As education is primarily a competence of the Member States, the action of the Commission in this field is mainly supportive. The Commission policy to promote inclusive education and lifelong learning is outlined in the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 ([2]). The Commission supports financially EASNIE ([3]) which provides information on inclusive education across Europe, policy recommendations and monitoring tools.

During the period 2014-2020, the European Social Fund will allocate at least 20% to social inclusion. One of the goals is to support more persons with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups when they integrate into society and the work environment.

The Commission takes the view that young people with disabilities need help for their transition from education to work. A Commission report published in 2012 ([4]) highlighted some key barriers in this transition and provided policy guidance. Also, EASNIE has completed a project ([5]) on the extent to which VET programmes for learners with disabilities prepare them to find a job.

The new Erasmus+ programme will provide funding opportunities to promote inclusive education and to improve the employability of people with disabilities and will offer additional funding, targeted to their specific needs, to support participation of people with disabilities in all of the programme's mobility actions.

([1]) http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=150
([2]) COM(2010) 636 final.
([3]) The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education: http://www.european-agency.org/.
([4]) Education and disability/special needs -policies and practices in education, training and employment for students with disabilities and special educational needs in the EU.
([5]) European Patterns of Successful Practice in Vocational Education and Training.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-014045/13
an die Kommission
Thomas Mann (PPE)
(12. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Wie kann Sozialtourismus verhindert werden?

Gemäß einem Urteil des Landessozialgerichts Nordrhein-Westfalen haben nicht erwerbstätige Unionsbürger aus Rumänien einen Anspruch auf Arbeitslosengeld II (Hartz IV) in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Das Landessozialgericht Niedersachsen-Bremen hat wenige Tage später entschieden, dass kein Anspruch besteht.

In diesem Zusammenhang stellen sich folgende Fragen:

Was schlägt die Kommission vor, um Sozialtourismus und Armutswanderungen aus ärmeren Regionen in der EU nach Deutschland Einhalt zu gebieten?

Stimmt die Kommission mit meiner Auffassung überein, dass Armutswanderungen von EU-Bürgern im europäischen Recht weder berücksichtigt noch ihre Auswirkungen geregelt sind?

Ist es mit den europäischen Verträgen vereinbar, wenn Deutschland in seinem nationalen Sozialrecht klarstellt, dass kein EU-Bürger Hartz IV erhält, der ausschließlich zur Arbeitssuche nach Deutschland kommt?

Wie beurteilt die Kommission die erneute Ablehnung des Beitritts von Rumänien und Bulgarien zum Schengen-Raum durch zahlreiche EU-Mitgliedstaaten?

Antwort von László Andor im Namen der Kommission
(5. Februar 2014)

Die Kommission hat Kenntnis von der in Deutschland geführten Diskussion über „Sozialtourismus“ und „Armutszuwanderung“. In ihrer kürzlich vorgelegten Mitteilung über die Freizügigkeit der EU-Bürger [1] kommt die Kommission jedoch zu dem Schluss, dass die meisten EU-Bürger, die ihren Wohnsitz in einen anderen Mitgliedstaat verlegen, dies tun, um zu arbeiten; zudem geht aus den von den Mitgliedstaaten vorgelegten Zahlen und jüngsten Studien hervor, dass mobile EU-Bürger Sozialleistungen nicht stärker in Anspruch nehmen als die Staatsangehörigen der Aufnahmeländer.

Die Kommission ist der Auffassung, dass im EU-Recht ausreichende Sicherheitsklauseln vorgesehen sind, um Mitgliedstaaten vor unangemessenen finanziellen Belastungen zu schützen und gleichzeitig zu gewährleisten, dass EU-Bürger von ihrem Recht auf Freizügigkeit wirksam Gebrauch machen können. Das EU-Recht enthält auch eine Reihe solider Garantien, die den Mitgliedstaaten bei der Bekämpfung von Rechtsmissbrauch und Betrug helfen. Weitere Einzelheiten werden in der oben genannten Mitteilung dargelegt.

Was die deutsche Bestimmung anbelangt, die EU-Bürger, deren Aufenthaltsrecht sich allein auf die Arbeitssuche stützt, vom Bezug des Arbeitslosengeldes II (Hartz IV) ausschließt, so prüft der Gerichtshof derzeit die Vereinbarkeit dieser Bestimmung mit dem EU-Recht (Vorabentscheidungsersuchen des Sozialgerichts Leipzig C-333/13, Dano).

Die Entscheidung über den Beitritt Bulgariens und Rumäniens zum Schengen-Raum erfordert Einstimmigkeit im Rat. Diese wurde bisher nicht erreicht.

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[1] KOM(2013)837 endg. vom 25. November 2013 — Freizügigkeit der EU-Bürger und ihrer Familien: fünf grundlegende Maßnahmen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014045/13
to the Commission
Thomas Mann (PPE)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: How can 'benefits tourism' be prevented?

According to a judgment handed down by the Higher Social Court of North Rhine-Westphalia, economically inactive EU citizens from Romania are entitled to long-term, lower-level unemployment benefits (Hartz IV) in the Federal Republic of Germany. The Higher Social Court of Lower Saxony-Bremen ruled a few days later that no such entitlement existed.

I should therefore like to ask the following questions:

How does the Commission propose to limit 'benefits tourism' and poverty-driven immigration from poorer regions of the EU to Germany?

Does the Commission agree that EU legislation takes no account of poverty-driven immigration by EU citizens, and fails to regulate its consequences?

Are provisions of German social legislation which stipulate that EU citizens will not be entitled to Hartz IV if they come to Germany with the sole purpose of looking for work compatible with the EU Treaties?

How does the Commission view the fact that a large number of EU Member States have once again said that Romania and Bulgaria should not be allowed to join the Schengen area?

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

The Commission is aware of the debate on 'benefit tourism' and poverty migration in Germany. However, a recent Commission communication ([1]) on free movement of EU citizens finds that most EU citizens moving to another Member State do so to work, and that figures provided by Member States as well as recent studies show that mobile EU citizens use welfare benefits no more intensively than the host countries nationals.

The Commission considers that EC law contains sufficient safeguards to protect Member States from unreasonable financial burdens while ensuring that EU citizens can effectively exercise their right to free movement. It also contains a range of robust safeguards to help Member States fight abuse and fraud. Further details are set out in the above communication.

As to the German provision excluding EU citizens whose right of residence is based on the sole purpose of job seeking from unemployment assistance (also referred to as 'Hartz IV') , the Court of Justice currently examines their compatibility with provisions of EC law, following a request for a preliminary ruling by the Social Court of Leipzig in the case C-333/13, Dano.

The decision on the Schengen accession of Bulgaria and Romania requires unanimity in the Council which has not been reached yet.

([1]) COM(2013) 837 final of 25 November 2013 — Free movement of EU citizens and their families: Five actions to make a difference.

(Hrvatska verzija)

Pitanje za pisani odgovor E-014048/13
upućeno Komisiji
Tonino Picula (S&D)
(12. prosinca 2013.)

Predmet: Zaštita hrvatskog mljekarskog sektora zbog ukidanja kvota za proizvodnju mlijeka

U listopadu 2012. godine na snagu je stupio novi paket mjera Europske komisije na području proizvodnje mlijeka u Europskoj uniji, što će stvoriti nove odnose između gospodarskih subjekata koji se bave proizvodnjom i preradom mlijeka. Glavna značajka novog paketa je postupno povećanje te konačno ukidanje kvota u proizvodnji mlijeka 2015. godine.

Ukidanje proizvodnih kvota dovest će do povećanja obujma proizvodnje u mnogim europskim državama koje posjeduju znatne proizvodne kapacitete, te će zbog veće ponude na tržištima svih zemalja Unije doći do općeg smanjenja cijena mlijeka. Mjere koje Europska komisija predlaže u razdoblju nakon ukidanja kvota u većoj će mjeri biti primjenjive u zemljama koje su veliki proizvođači mlijeka, te kao takve nisu u potpunosti primjenjive na Hrvatsku. Ukidanje kvota uzrokovat će ekonomski udar na proizvođače i zemlje koje se ne mogu prilagoditi te koje sa svojim obujmom proizvodnje nisu u mogućnosti izvoziti. Proizvodnja mlijeka važan je čimbenik hrvatske poljoprivrede. Ona čini 14 % ukupne vrijednosti poljoprivredne proizvodnje te u njoj sudjeluje više od 10 tisuća aktivnih isporučitelja mlijeka. Dok se u nekoliko zemalja postojeće kvote prekoračuju i prije formalnog ukidanja, u Hrvatskoj je zabilježen znatan pad proizvodnje pa se tako broj isporučitelja od 2009. smanjio za 35 %, a samo u prvom polugodištu 2013. godine isporuka mlijeka je smanjena za 19,4 %. Očekuje se da će se nakon ukidanja kvota u Europskoj uniji trend opadanja proizvodnje nastaviti i dodatno ugroziti domaći sektor mljekarstva.

S obzirom na opadajući trend proizvodnje mlijeka u Hrvatskoj, nedavno pristupanje Hrvatske Europskoj uniji i nemogućnost potpunog sudjelovanja u postojećim mjerama prilagodbe zbog skorog ukidanja kvota, koje konkretne mjere Komisija namjerava poduzeti kako bi se ublažio utjecaj ukidanja kvota na hrvatski mljekarski sektor?

Odgovor g. Cioloşa u ime Komisije
(10. veljače 2014.)

Prema „Predviđanjima za poljoprivredna tržišta i prihod u EU-u za razdoblje 2013. — 2023." ([1]) koja je GU AGRI objavio u prosincu 2013., srednjoročna predviđanja za mlijeko i mliječne proizvode povoljna su i na svjetskom tržištu i na domaćim tržištima. Potražnja u svijetu i dalje će biti dinamična, a unatoč ukidanju sustava kvotâ 31. ožujka 2015. predviđa se da će povećanje proizvodnje mlijeka u EU-u i dalje biti ograničeno.

Hrvatski mljekari moći će iskoristiti sljedeće nove odredbe utvrđene u nedavno reformiranoj zajedničkoj poljoprivrednoj politici ([2]):

— u slučaju poteškoća na tržištu hrvatskim proizvođačima bit će dostupna ojačana sigurnosna mreža;

— kako bi pomogla najranjivijim proizvođačima, Hrvatska može primijeniti sustave poput plaćanja na područjima s prirodnim ograničenjima te dobrovoljne proizvodno vezane potpore;

— u cilju rješavanja određenih izazova, uključujući izazove u području proizvodnje mlijeka, Hrvatska može izraditi prilagođene programe ruralnog razvoja. Ovisno o strategiji države članice, pravilima EU-a omogućuju se razni poticaji poput jačeg intenziteta potpora, utvrđivanja prioriteta, tematskih potprograma itd.;

— novi alat za upravljanje rizicima omogućit će Hrvatskoj da ugroženim proizvođačima ponudi dodatnu pomoć;

— dijelovi paketa u području proizvodnje mlijeka i dalje će biti važni za poboljšanje položaja hrvatskih proizvođača u pregovorima i sustava opskrbe u cjelini.

Osim toga, radi boljeg praćenja mljekarskog sektora i predviđanja poteškoća u njegovu funkcioniranju nakon ukidanja kvotâ, osnovat će se indikator tržišta mlijeka (MMO). Cilj je MMO-a veća transparentnost mljekarskog sektora EU-a koja bi se postigla pravovremenim širenjem podataka o tržištu i kratkoročnom analizom.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/markets-and-prices/medium-term-outlook/index_en.htm'.
([2]) Uredba (EU) br. 1308/2013 Europskog parlamenta i Vijeća od 17. prosinca 2013. o uspostavljanju zajedničke organizacije tržišta poljoprivrednih proizvoda i stavljanju izvan snage uredbi Vijeća (EEZ) br. 922/72, (EEZ) br. 234/79, (EZ) br. 1037/2001 i (EZ) br. 1234/2007, SL L 347, 20.12.2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014048/13
to the Commission
Tonino Picula (S&D)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: Protecting the Croatian dairy sector as a result of the removal of milk quotas

In October 2012, a new package of measures by the European Commission for milk production in the European Union, which will create new relationships between economic operators producing and processing milk, came into force. The main feature of the new package is the progressive increase in, and the eventual removal of, milk production quotas by 2015.

The abolition of production quotas will lead to an increase in the production volumes of many European countries with considerable production capacities and milk prices will generally decline because of greater supply in the markets of all EU Member States. The measures proposed by the European Commission for the period following the removal of quotas will largely be applicable in countries that are major producers of milk and, as such, they are not fully applicable to Croatia. The removal of quotas will send an economic shockwave through producers and countries that are not able to adapt or that are not able to export given their production volumes. Milk production is an important factor for Croatian farming. It accounts for 14% of the total value of agricultural production and involves more than 10 000 active milk suppliers. While several countries are exceeding existing quotas even before their formal removal, there has been a significant drop in production in Croatia. The number of suppliers in Croatia has shrunk by 35% since 2009 and, in the first half of 2013 alone, the supply of milk declined by 19.4%. It is expected that the trend of declining production will continue following the removal of quotas and weaken the domestic dairy industry further.

Given the downward trend in milk production in Croatia, its recent accession to the EU, and the fact that the country has not been able to fully participate in existing adaptation measures in response to the imminent removal of quotas, what specific measures does the Commission intend to take in order to mitigate the impact of the removal of quotas on the Croatian dairy industry?

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

According to the 'Prospects for Agricultural Markets and Income in the EU 2013-2023' ([1]) released by DG AGRI in December 2013, the medium-term prospects for milk and dairy commodities are favourable on both the world and domestic markets. World demand would remain dynamic and, despite the end of the quota system on 31 March 2015, the EU milk production expansion is projected to remain limited.

Croatian dairy farmers will benefit from the new provisions set out in the recently reformed CAP ([2]), notably:

— A reinforced safety net will be available for Croatian farmers in case of market difficulties.

— Croatia may apply schemes such as natural constraints payment and voluntary coupled support so as to target support to most fragile farmers.

— Croatia may design tailor-made rural development programmes to address specific challenges, including those of milk production. Depending on the MS strategy, EU rules give possibilities for various incentives such as higher aid intensities, priority targeting, thematic sub-programmes etc.

— A new risk management toolkit will give Croatia the possibility to offer extra help to farmers dealing with risk.

— The elements of the Milk Package will continue to be relevant to improve the bargaining power of Croatian dairy farmers and the structure of the supply chain as a whole.

In addition, to better monitor the milk sector and anticipate disturbances in its functioning when the milk quotas are removed, a Milk Market Observatory (MMO) will be constituted. The aim of the MMO is to provide the EU dairy sector with more transparency by means of disseminating market data and short-term analysis in a timely manner.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/markets-and-prices/medium-term-outlook/index_en.htm
([2]) Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013.
Establishing a common organisation of the markets in agricultural products and repealing Council Regulations (EEC) No 922/72, (EEC) No 234/79, (EC) No 1037/2001 and (EC) No 1234/2007, OJ L347, 20.12.2013.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-014049/13
alla Commissione
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(12 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Concezione inaccettabile dell'educazione alla sessualità infantile

La sezione europea dell'Organizzazione mondiale della sanità ha recentemente pubblicato il documento dal titolo *«Standard for Sexuality Education in Europe»* allo scopo di orientare e dirigere l'insegnamento dell'educazione sessuale per i bambini a partire da 4 anni. Il testo ci sembra inadeguato e pericoloso per varie ragioni, innanzitutto perché incoraggia l'introduzione di comportamenti sessuali moralmente e pedagogicamente discutibili a partire dalla primissima infanzia. Propone ad esempio la masturbazione infantile, la scoperta del proprio corpo e di quello altrui attraverso il «gioco del dottore» a 4 anni e l'esplorazione di relazioni tra individui dello stesso sesso prima dei 6 anni. Inoltre il documento è interamente orientato alla promozione e alla propaganda dell'ideologia gender, secondo una concezione che non ha nulla di scientifico, ma che risponde a evidenti interpretazioni ideologiche. Il testo, infine, è orientato a una rappresentazione semplicista e materialista della vita sessuale, inaccettabile per il senso comune, poiché subordina l'esperienza affettiva e relazionale alle nozioni meramente biologiche e anatomiche apprese nella prima infanzia e trascurando la problematica etica propria della vita sessuale come di ogni azione umana.

La Commissione:

1. che certamente conosce questo testo, ha un'opinione in proposito?

2. Sa che tale testo non è altro che la traduzione in inglese del programma tedesco noto come «Amore e gioco del dottore» ritirato dal ministero tedesco per le corrette e forti critiche dei cattolici germanici, ma riproposto semplicemente con un titolo modificato?

3. Non ritiene che simili iniziative contribuiscano a diffondere nel mondo un'idea falsa e sbagliata della cultura europea, già di per sé debole e in declino, anche nel settore dell'educazione?

4. Quali iniziative intende proporre per combattere una simile visione dell'educazione infantile, che ci sembra inadeguata e fortemente lesiva di una formazione ispirata a una *weltanschauung* meno positivista e più orientata a un'idea più integrale della vita che comprende anche lo spirito e l'affettività?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(24 gennaio 2014)

L'Organizzazione mondiale della sanità (OMS) è l'autorità di gestione e coordinamento della sanità nell'ambito del sistema delle Nazioni Unite. L'UE non è membro dell'OMS. L'assemblea mondiale della sanità e il comitato esecutivo a livello globale, nonché il comitato regionale a livello regionale, sono gli organismi di governance cui risponde il segretariato dell'OMS.

Il segretariato dell'OMS è responsabile delle proprie pubblicazioni. La Commissione europea non era in alcun modo coinvolta nella pubblicazione a cui è fatto riferimento. La Commissione non è stata informata, né consultata in merito alla pubblicazione in questione.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-014049/13
to the Commission
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: Unacceptable approach to child sex education

The European regional office of the World Health Organisation recently published a document entitled ‘Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe’ to provide guidelines on how to teach sex education to children aged four and over. The document is unsuitable and dangerous for a number of reasons, first and foremost because it encourages young children to engage in morally and educationally questionable sexual behaviour. For example, it promotes child masturbation, ‘playing doctor’ at the age of four as a way of discovering one’s own body and those of others, and same-sex relations between children under six years of age. What is more, the document is geared entirely to promoting a gender-based ideology, which is completely unscientific. Ultimately, the document portrays sexual life in a simplistic and materialistic way, which is nonsensical, because it subordinates emotional and relational experience to solely biological and anatomical notions learned during early childhood and overlooks the ethical dimension of not only sexual but all human activities.

1. The Commission is presumably aware of this document. What is its opinion on it?

2. Is it aware that the document is actually the English translation of a German booklet entitled ‘Love, Body and Playing Doctor’, which was withdrawn by the German Ministry for Family Affairs in response to strong and wholly legitimate criticism from German Catholics, but which is now being put forward again under a different title?

3. Does it not agree that initiatives of this kind give people a false idea of European culture, which is already weak and in decline?

4. How does the Commission intend to counter this kind of approach to childhood education, which is unsuitable and detrimental to the development of a more holistic approach based on a less pragmatic world view which looks at life from a broader perspective, allowing room for spiritual and emotional considerations as well?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(24 January 2014)

The World Health Organisation (WHO) is the directing and coordinating authority for health within the United Nations system. The EU is not a member of WHO. The World Health Assembly and the Executive Board at global level, and the Regional Committee at Regional level, are the governance bodies to whom the WHO secretariat responds.

The WHO Secretariat is responsible for its own publications. The European Commission was not in any way involved in the publication referred to. The Commission was not informed, nor consulted about the publication in question.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014051/13
a la Comisión
José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra (PPE) y Santiago Fisas Ayxela (PPE)
(12 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Acuerdo UE-México: Grupo de Trabajo

El 26 de enero de 2013, el presidente Van Rompuy y el presidente Barroso se reunieron con el presidente de México, Peña Nieto, en los márgenes de la cumbre UE-CELAC.

En dicha reunión acordaron el establecimiento de un grupo de trabajo conjunto para evaluar los sectores del actual Acuerdo de Asociación Económica, Concertación Política y Cooperación entre la Unión Europea y México que habrían de ser objeto de revisión, modernización y puesta al día.

En este sentido, ¿podría la Comisión informar sobre cuáles son los resultados logrados hasta hoy por dicho grupo de trabajo, transcurrido casi un año desde la decisión de crearlo?

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014052/13
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra (PPE) y Santiago Fisas Ayxela (PPE)
(12 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: VP/HR — Acuerdo UE-México: Grupo de Trabajo

El 26 de enero de 2013, los presidentes Herman Van Rompuy y José Manuel Barroso se reunieron con el Presidente de México, Enrique Peña Nieto en los márgenes de la Cumbre UE-CELAC.

En dicha reunión acordaron la creación de un grupo de trabajo conjunto destinado a evaluar los sectores que habrían de ser objeto de revisión, modernización y puesta al día del actual Acuerdo de Asociación Económica, Concertación Política y Cooperación entre la Unión Europea y México.

En este sentido, ¿podría el Servicio Europeo de Acción Exterior informar sobre cuáles son los resultados de dicho grupo de trabajo a día de hoy, tras haber casi un año trascurrido desde la decisión de creación del mismo?

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

Tanto la UE como México creen que la posible mejora del Acuerdo del año 2000 entre la Unión y México debe ser global y abarcar los tres pilares que son el diálogo político, la cooperación y el comercio.

Un subgrupo sobre el capítulo comercial inició sus trabajos en octubre de 2013. Las Partes consideran la posibilidad de modernizar el Acuerdo en el ámbito de los aranceles, el comercio de servicios, los derechos de propiedad intelectual (incluidas las indicaciones geográficas), las normas de origen, la facilitación del comercio, las medidas sanitarias y fitosanitarias y los obstáculos técnicos al comercio. En una segunda reunión, las Partes estudiarán los ámbitos de la contratación pública, la competencia, el comercio y la inversión en los servicios energéticos, la protección de las inversiones, los instrumentos de defensa comercial, la solución de diferencias y el desarrollo sostenible.

Por lo que se refiere al diálogo político y la cooperación, en las conversaciones preliminares celebradas con las autoridades mexicanas se han identificado hasta ahora la consolidación de la Asociación Estratégica de 2008, la actualización del marco institucional y la reflexión sobre la nueva cooperación entre la UE y México al amparo del Instrumento de Asociación.

Se está preparando una reunión paralela de los tres subgrupos (diálogo político, cooperación y comercio) para mediados de febrero de 2014 en México.

Como consecuencia de este proceso, se prevé la presentación en el segundo semestre de 2014 de un informe de los tres grupos, con una visión conjunta.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014051/13
to the Commission
José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra (PPE) and Santiago Fisas Ayxela (PPE)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: EU-Mexico Agreement: working group

On 26 January 2013, President Van Rompuy and President Barroso met with the President of Mexico, Enrique Peña Nieto, on the sidelines of the EU-CELAC Summit.

At the meeting, it was agreed to set up a joint working group to assess the areas of the current Economic Partnership, Political Coordination and Cooperation Agreement between the Union and Mexico that need to be reviewed, modernised and updated.

In that regard, could the Commission say what results have been achieved to date by this working group, almost a year after the decision was taken to create it?

Question for written answer E-014052/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra (PPE) and Santiago Fisas Ayxela (PPE)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — EU-Mexico Agreement: working group

On 26 January 2013, President Herman Van Rompuy and President José Manuel Barroso met with the President of Mexico, Enrique Peña Nieto, on the sidelines of the EU-CELAC Summit.

At the meeting, it was agreed to set up a joint working group to assess the areas of the current Economic Partnership, Political Coordination and Cooperation Agreement between the Union and Mexico that need to be reviewed, modernised and updated.

In that regard, could the European External Action Service say what results have been achieved to date by this working group, almost a year after the decision was taken to create it?

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

Both the EU and Mexico believe the possible upgrade of the 2000 EU-Mexico Agreement should be a comprehensive one, encompassing all three pillars: political dialogue; cooperation; and trade.

A subgroup on the trade chapter started its work in October 2013. The Parties considered the potential for modernising the Agreement in the area of tariffs, trade in services, IPRs (including geographical indications), Rules of Origin, trade facilitation, SPS measures and TBTs. In a second meeting, the Parties will explore the areas of government procurement, competition, trade and investment in energy services, investment protection, trade defence instruments, dispute settlement and sustainable development.

As regards political dialogue and cooperation, preliminary discussions which took place with the Mexican authorities have identified so far the consolidation with the 2008 Strategic Partnership, an update of the institutional framework, and the reflection of the new EU-Mexico cooperation set-up under the Partnership Instrument.

A parallel meeting of all three subgroups — on political dialogue, cooperation and trade — is under preparation for mid-February 2014 in Mexico.

As a result of this process, a Joint Vision Report of all three groups is expected to be presented in the second half of 2014.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014054/13
a la Comisión
José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra (PPE) y Santiago Fisas Ayxela (PPE)
(12 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Acuerdo de Asociación con México: reformas realizadas por la contraparte mexicana

México, socio estratégico de la Unión Europea, ha emprendido un decidido curso de reformas en distintos ámbitos, entre los que cabe destacar el político, el educativo, el fiscal, el energético y el de las comunicaciones.

Muchas de estas reformas van dirigidas a introducir mayores dosis de competencias en los sectores concernidos.

Habida cuenta de que, en gran medida y al amparo del anterior Acuerdo, la liberalización en el sector de los servicios no ha podido ser optimizada convenientemente debido a las limitaciones existentes en la legislación mexicana, ¿podría la Comisión manifestar si el sentido de dichas reformas podría redundar en beneficio de los intereses de las empresas europeas?

¿No piensa la Comisión que la UE debería posicionarse lo antes posible mediante una reforma destinada a mejorar los plazos para la renegociación del actual Acuerdo?

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

La Comisión remite a Su Señoría a la respuesta dada a la pregunta escrita E-014055/2013 ([1]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014054/13
to the Commission
José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra (PPE) and Santiago Fisas Ayxela (PPE)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: Association Agreement with Mexico: reforms implemented by Mexico

Mexico, a strategic partner of the Union, has embarked on a determined course of reforms, most importantly in the areas of politics, education, taxes, energy and communications.

Many of these reforms are aimed at giving a greater share of powers to the sectors concerned.

Considering that liberalisation in the services sector under the previous Agreement has, in large part, failed to be optimised appropriately because of limitations in Mexican law, could the Commission state whether the impact of such reforms could be beneficial to the interests of European companies?

Does the Commission not think that the EU should take a stand as soon as possible through a reform to improve the periods for renegotiating the current Agreement?

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

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to the answer to Written Question E-014055/2013 ([1]).

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

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014055/13
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra (PPE) y Santiago Fisas Ayxela (PPE)
(12 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: VP/HR — Acuerdo de Asociación con México: reformas realizadas por la contraparte mexicana

México, socio estratégico de la Unión Europea, ha emprendido un decidido curso de reformas en distintos ámbitos, entre los que cabe destacar el político, el educativo, el fiscal, el energético y el de las comunicaciones.

Muchas de estas reformas van dirigidas a introducir mayores dosis de competencias en los sectores concernidos.

Habida cuenta de que, en gran medida y al amparo del anterior Acuerdo, la liberalización en el sector de los servicios no ha podido ser optimizada convenientemente debido a las limitaciones existentes en la legislación mexicana, ¿podría el Servicio Europeo de Acción Exterior manifestar si el sentido de dichas reformas podría redundar en beneficio de los intereses de las empresas europeas?

¿No piensa el Servicio Europeo de Acción Exterior que la UE debería posicionarse lo antes posible mediante una reforma destinada a mejorar los plazos para la renegociación del actual Acuerdo?

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

La Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta y la Comisión Europea coinciden con Sus Señorías en la valoración de la importancia de las reformas adoptadas por las autoridades mexicanas en el segundo semestre de 2013. De este modo, la firma del «Pacto por México» entre el partido gobernante (PRI) y los principales partidos de la oposición (PAN y PRD) se ha traducido en importantes reformas estructurales en sectores clave de la economía, lo que tiene por consecuencia una mayor competencia y nuevas oportunidades de inversión.

No obstante, las posibilidades concretas para las empresas europeas dependerán, en gran medida, de la legislación derivada que aún debe aprobarse para ejecutar esas reformas, sobre todo en sectores importantes como las telecomunicaciones y la energía.

La Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta y la Comisión Europea seguirán con mucha atención los debates sobre la legislación de aplicación y, a través de la Delegación de la UE y de las misiones de los Estados miembros en la Ciudad de México, se esforzarán por determinar los intereses cruciales de las empresas europeas.

El planteamiento dinámico adoptado por el Gobierno de Peña Nieto desde finales de 2012 es uno de los elementos importantes en que se fundamenta la decisión de estudiar la posible actualización del Acuerdo de 2000 entre la UE y México. Se está llevando a cabo una labor exploratoria en los ámbitos del diálogo político, la cooperación y el comercio. A este respecto, la Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta remite a Sus Señorías a las respuestas a sus preguntas E-14061/13, E-14051/13, E-14052/13, E-14058/13 y E-14060/13.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014055/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra (PPE) and Santiago Fisas Ayxela (PPE)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Association Agreement with Mexico: reforms implemented by Mexico

Mexico, a strategic partner of the Union, has embarked on a determined course of reforms, most importantly in the areas of politics, education, taxes, energy and communications.

Many of these reforms are aimed at giving a greater share of powers to the sectors concerned.

Considering that liberalisation in the services sector under the previous Agreement has, in large part, failed to be optimised appropriately because of limitations in Mexican law, could the European External Action Service state whether the impact of such reforms could be beneficial to the interests of European companies?

Does the European External Action Service not think that the EU should take a stand as soon as possible through a reform to improve the periods for renegotiating the current Agreement?

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

The HR/VP and the European Commission share the Honourable Members' assessment of the importance of the reforms that were adopted by the Mexican authorities in the second half of 2013. Thus, the signing of the '*Pacto por México*' between the ruling party (PRI) and major opposition parties (PAN and PRD), led to major structural reforms in key economic sectors, implying enhanced competition and new investment opportunities.

However, the concrete opportunities for European companies will depend, to a large extent, on the secondary legislation that still needs to be passed to implement these reforms, in particular in important sectors such as telecommunications and energy.

The HR/VP and the European Commission will be following the discussions on the implementing legislation closely and will, through the EU Delegation and Member States' missions in Mexico City, strive to identify the critical interests of European companies.

The proactive approach taken by the Peña Nieto administration since late 2012 is one of the important elements underlying the decision to explore the possible update of the 2000 Agreement between the EU and Mexico. Exploratory work is underway in the fields of political dialogue, cooperation and trade. In this respect, the HR/VP refers the Honourable Members to the answer to their questions E-14051/13, E-14052/13, E-14058/13, E-14060/13, E-14061/13.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014057/13
a la Comisión
José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra (PPE) y Santiago Fisas Ayxela (PPE)
(12 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Acuerdo UE-México en relación con la XVI Reunión de la Comisión Parlamentaria Mixta UE-México

Durante la XVI Reunión de la Comisión Parlamentaria Mixta UE-México, celebrada en Estrasburgo del 19 al 21 de noviembre, se adoptaron las siguientes conclusiones en relación con la revisión del Acuerdo de Asociación Económica, Concertación Política y Cooperación entre la Comunidad Europea y los Estados Unidos Mexicanos:

— La necesidad de una profundización en la relación entre la UE y México, especialmente en los ámbitos de los servicios y las inversiones del Acuerdo Global, junto con un refuerzo del diálogo político y la cooperación mediante una renovación estratégica.

— La CPM insta a la UE y a México a lanzar el primer diálogo político de alto nivel y a establecer, en una fecha próxima, la totalidad de los grupos de reflexión que se crearán en el marco del proceso de actualización del mencionado Acuerdo.

— La CPM reitera su deseo de que la actualización del Acuerdo Global se desarrolle de forma autónoma pero coherente con la negociación del Acuerdo Transatlántico sobre Comercio e Inversión entre la UE y los EE.UU., con el fin de facilitar las relaciones comerciales entre los dos lados del Atlántico, tomando también en consideración la reciente conclusión del Acuerdo de Libre Comercio entre Canadá y la UE.

— La CPM destaca la importancia de que las PYME tengan un mayor protagonismo en la relación comercial entre ambos socios. Ambas partes consideran necesario seguir impulsando proyectos que favorezcan la inserción de las PYME mexicanas y europeas en el comercio bilateral, haciendo énfasis en aquellos países o regiones en los que no se ha aprovechado plenamente el Acuerdo Global.

¿Podría la Comisión explicar qué importancia concede al contenido de dichas conclusiones?

Respuesta del Sr. De Gucht en nombre de la Comisión
(13 de febrero de 2014)

La Comisión remite a Su Señoría a su respuesta a la pregunta escrita E-014058/2013 ([1]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014057/13
to the Commission
José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra (PPE) and Santiago Fisas Ayxela (PPE)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: EU-Mexico Agreement in relation to the 16th Meeting of the EU-Mexico Joint Parliamentary Committee

At the 16th Meeting of the EU-Mexico Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC), held in Strasbourg between 19 and 21 November 2013, the following conclusions were adopted in relation to revision of the Economic Partnership, Political Coordination and Cooperation Agreement between the European Community and Mexico:

— The need to deepen the relationship between the EU and Mexico, especially in the fields of services and investments covered by the Global Agreement, as well as the need to strengthen political dialogue and cooperation through a strategic renewal.

— The JPC urges the EU and Mexico to launch the first high-level political dialogue and to establish, in the near future, all of the study groups that will be created in the context of updating the aforementioned Agreement.

— The JPC reiterates its wish for the Global Agreement to be updated autonomously but in keeping with the negotiation of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Agreement between the EU and the United States, with the aim of facilitating trade relations between the two sides of the Atlantic, while also taking into account the recent conclusion of the free trade agreement between Canada and the EU.

— The JPC underlines the importance of SMEs playing a larger role in the trade relationship between the two partners. Both parties consider it necessary to continue promoting projects that facilitate the involvement of Mexican and European SMEs in bilateral trade, particularly in countries or regions where the potential of the Global Agreement has not been fully tapped.

Can the Commission explain what importance it assigns to the content of these conclusions?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(13 February 2014)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to the answer to Written Question E-014058/2013 ([1]).

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

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014058/13
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra (PPE) y Santiago Fisas Ayxela (PPE)
(12 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: VP/HR — Acuerdo UE-México en relación con la XVI Reunión de la Comisión Parlamentaria Mixta México-UE

Durante la XVI Reunión de la Comisión Parlamentaria Mixta México-UE celebrada en Estrasburgo entre el 19 y el 21 de noviembre, se adoptaron las siguientes conclusiones en relación con la revisión del Acuerdo de Asociación Económica, Concertación Política y Cooperación entre la Unión Europea y México:

— La necesidad de una profundización en la relación entre la UE y México, especialmente en los ámbitos de servicios e inversiones del Acuerdo Global junto con un refuerzo del diálogo político y la cooperación mediante una renovación estratégica.

— La CPM insta a la UE y a México a lanzar el Primer Diálogo Político de alto nivel y a establecer, en una fecha próxima, la totalidad de los Grupos de reflexión que serán creados en el marco del proceso de actualización del mencionado Acuerdo.

— La CPM reitera su deseo de que la actualización del Acuerdo Global se desarrolle de forma autónoma pero coherente con la negociación del Acuerdo Transatlántico sobre Comercio e Inversión entre la UE y los Estados Unidos con el fin de facilitar las relaciones comerciales entre los dos lados del Atlántico, tomando también en consideración la reciente conclusión del acuerdo de libre comercio entre Canadá y UE.

— La CPM destaca la importancia de que las PYMES tengan un mayor protagonismo en la relación comercial entre ambos socios. Ambas partes consideran necesario seguir impulsando proyectos que favorezcan la inserción de las PYMES mexicanas y europeas en el comercio bilateral, haciendo énfasis en aquellas regiones o países donde no se ha aprovechado plenamente el Acuerdo Global.

¿Podría el Servicio Europeo de Acción Exterior explicar qué importancia concede al contenido de dichas conclusiones?

Respuesta de la vicepresidenta/alta representante Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(11 de febrero de 2014)

La Comisión tiene en cuenta las conclusiones de la Comisión Parlamentaria Mixta 2013 a la hora de estudiar las diversas opciones de modernización del Acuerdo Global México-UE, que la Comisión prosigue con carácter prioritario.

Actualmente se están preparando las reuniones paralelas de los subgrupos sobre los tres pilares del Acuerdo —diálogo político, cooperación y comercio— para su celebración a mediados de febrero en México. La Comisión remite a sus Señorías a su respuesta a las preguntas escritas E-14051/2013 y E-14052/2013 en relación con el contenido de esas reuniones.

Mientras tanto, la UE y México realizan un esfuerzo por intensificar sus relaciones a partir del Acuerdo vigente y la Asociación Estratégica. El Primer Diálogo Político de alto nivel tendrá lugar el 27 de enero de 2014 en Bruselas y será una oportunidad para impulsar los intercambios sobre asuntos regionales e internacionales de interés común.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014058/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra (PPE) and Santiago Fisas Ayxela (PPE)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — EU-Mexico Agreement in relation to the 16th Meeting of the Mexico-EU Joint Parliamentary Committee

At the 16th Meeting of the Mexico-EU Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC), held in Strasbourg between 19 and 21 November 2013, the following conclusions were adopted in relation to revision of the Economic Partnership, Political Coordination and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and Mexico:

— The need to deepen the relationship between the EU and Mexico, especially in the fields of services and investments covered by the Global Agreement, as well as the need to strengthen political dialogue and cooperation through a strategic renewal.

— The JPC urges the EU and Mexico to launch the first high-level political dialogue and to establish, in the near future, all of the study groups that will be created in the context of updating the aforementioned Agreement.

— The JPC reiterates its wish for the Global Agreement to be updated autonomously but in keeping with the negotiation of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Agreement between the EU and the United States, with the aim of facilitating trade relations between the two sides of the Atlantic, while also taking into account the recent conclusion of the free trade agreement between Canada and the EU.

— The JPC underlines the importance of SMEs playing a larger role in the trade relationship between the two partners. Both parties consider it necessary to continue promoting projects that facilitate the involvement of Mexican and European SMEs in bilateral trade, particularly in regions or countries where the potential of the Global Agreement has not been fully tapped.

Can the European External Action Service explain what importance it assigns to the content of these conclusions?

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

The conclusions of the 2013 Joint Parliamentary Committee are taken into consideration by the Commission in the process of the exploration of options for modernising the 2000 EU-Mexico Global Agreement, which it pursues as a matter of priority.

Parallel meetings of subgroups on all three pillars of the Agreement — political dialogue, cooperation and trade — are under preparation for mid-February 2014 in Mexico. The Commission refers the Honourable Members to its response to written questions E-14051/2013 and E-14052/2013 as regards the contents of these meetings.

In the meantime, the EU and Mexico are striving to deepen their relations on the basis of the existing Agreement and Strategic Partnership. The first High-Level Political Dialogue will take place on 27 January 2014 in Brussels and will represent an opportunity to enhance the exchanges on international and regional issues of common interest.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014060/13
a la Comisión
José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra (PPE) y Santiago Fisas Ayxela (PPE)
(12 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Prioridad de las negociaciones del Acuerdo de Asociación con México

La Unión Europea está negociando un Acuerdo de Libre Comercio e Inversión con los EE.UU.

Asimismo, prácticamente ha concluido las negociaciones con Canadá.

También está en negociaciones con la India, Tailandia, Vietnam y otros países.

En este contexto, ¿podría la Comisión especificar qué grado de prioridad otorga a las negociaciones para la revisión y puesta al día del actual Acuerdo de Asociación con México?

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014061/13
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra (PPE) y Santiago Fisas Ayxela (PPE)
(12 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: VP/HR — Prioridad de las negociaciones del Acuerdo de Asociación con México

La Unión Europea está negociando un Acuerdo de Libre Comercio e Inversión con los EE.UU.

Asimismo, prácticamente ha concluido las negociaciones con Canadá.

También está en negociaciones con la India, Tailandia, Vietnam y otros países.

En este contexto, ¿podría el Servicio Europeo de Acción Exterior especificar qué grado de prioridad otorga a las negociaciones para la revisión y puesta al día del actual Acuerdo de Asociación con México?

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

La exploración de las opciones para la modernización del Acuerdo Global UE-México 2000, acordadas por los presidentes del Consejo Europeo y la Comisión y Peña Nieto al margen de la Cumbre UE-CELAC de enero de 2013, se está llevando a cabo de forma prioritaria por la alta representante y vicepresidenta y la Comisión Europea. Tanto la UE como México consideran que esta posible mejora debe ser amplia y abarcar los tres pilares del Acuerdo existente: el diálogo político, la cooperación y el comercio.

La Comisión remite a Sus Señorías a la respuesta dada a la pregunta E-10396/2013 ([1]) en lo que se refiere a la situación actual de las negociaciones exploratorias.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014060/13
to the Commission
José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra (PPE) and Santiago Fisas Ayxela (PPE)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: Priority of the negotiations on the new Association Agreement with Mexico

The European Union is negotiating a Free Trade and Investment Agreement with the United States.

In addition, it has nearly concluded negotiations with Canada.

It is also engaged in negotiations with India, Thailand, Vietnam and other countries.

In this context, can the Commission specify what degree of priority it assigns to the negotiations to revise and update the current Association Agreement with Mexico?

Question for written answer E-014061/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra (PPE) and Santiago Fisas Ayxela (PPE)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Priority of the negotiations on the new Association Agreement with Mexico

The European Union is negotiating a Free Trade and Investment Agreement with the United States.

In addition, it has nearly concluded negotiations with Canada.

It is also engaged in negotiations with India, Thailand, Vietnam and other countries.

In this context, can the European External Action Service specify what degree of priority it assigns to the negotiations to revise and update the current Association Agreement with Mexico?

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

The exploration of the options for modernising the 2000 EU-Mexico Global Agreement, agreed by the Presidents of the European Council and the Commission and Peña Nieto in the side-lines of the January 2013 EU-CELAC Summit, is being pursued as a matter of priority by the HR/VP and the European Commission. Both the EU and Mexico believe this possible upgrade should be a comprehensive one, encompassing all three pillars of the existing Agreement: political dialogue; cooperation; and trade.

The Commission would like to refer the Honourable Members to the answer to Question E-10396/2013 ([1]) as regards the current state of the exploratory talks.

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

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014062/13
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(12 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: VP/HR — Destitución alcalde de Bogotá (Colombia)

El pasado 9 de diciembre de 2013, el Procurador General de la República de Colombia, Alejandro Ordóñez, sancionó al alcalde de Bogotá por su vinculación a supuestas irregularidades en la reforma del sistema de recolección de basura ordenada por el alcalde, Gustavo Petro, en diciembre de 2012. Estas irregularidades se basan en la supuesta ilegalidad de que el sector público gestione la recogida de residuos de la capital colombiana.

La Convención Interamericana de Derechos Humanos proclama en su artículo 23 que «todos los ciudadanos deben gozar del derecho de participar en la dirección de los asuntos públicos, directamente o por medio de representantes libremente elegidos». El señor Gustavo Petro habrá sido destituido por el dictamen de un funcionario estatal, el Procurador General, contrario a la voluntad ciudadana expresada en las urnas y, por tanto, a la Convención Interamericana de Derechos Humanos.

La Unión Europea suscribió recientemente el Tratado de Asociación con la República de Colombia, convirtiéndose en un socio comercial y político en la región, aun siendo Colombia el Estado sudamericano que más contraviene los derechos humanos.

1. ¿Considera la Alta Representante/Vicepresidenta que la Unión Europea debe mantener acuerdos comerciales con Estados que vulneran los derechos humanos?

2. ¿Suspenderá la Unión Europea el Tratado de Asociación con Colombia ante esta vulneración de los derechos humanos?

3. ¿Hará la Comisión una declaración pública ante la destitución del señor Gustavo Petro contraria a los criterios de la Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos?

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

La Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta tiene conocimiento de los hechos mencionados en la pregunta de Su Señoría y sus servicios están siguiendo de cerca este asunto. En particular, se les informó de que la Fiscalía General de la Nación ha iniciado una investigación para examinar los motivos de la decisión del Procurador General a la que hace referencia Su Señoría. Además, tal decisión ha generado un amplio debate político en Colombia. La necesidad de una posible intervención adicional por parte de la UE a este respecto deberá considerarse a la luz de los resultados de esta evaluación y de las medidas que puedan adoptar las autoridades colombianas como resultado de este debate.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014062/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Removal of the mayor of Bogota, Colombia

On 9 December 2013, the Attorney General of the Republic of Colombia, Alejandro Ordóñez, sanctioned the mayor of Bogota for his connections to alleged irregularities in the reform of the waste collection system. This reform was ordered by the mayor, Gustavo Petro, in December 2012. The irregularities are based on the alleged illegality of the public sector's managing waste collection in Colombia's capital city.

Article 23 of the American Convention on Human Rights states that 'Every citizen shall enjoy the [right] […] to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives'. Mr Gustavo Petro may have been removed at the order of a government official, the Attorney General, contrary to the will that citizens expressed at the polls and, thus, contrary to the American Convention on Human Rights.

The European Union recently signed the Association Agreement with the Republic of Colombia, which thus became a trade and political partner in the region, even as it continues to be the South American country that most frequently violates human rights.

1. Does the High Representative/Vice-President take the view that the European Union should maintain trade agreements with States that violate human rights?

2. Will the European Union suspend the Association Agreement with Colombia in response to this human rights violation?

3. Will the Commission make a public statement in response to the removal of Mr Gustavo Petro, contrary to the criteria established by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights?

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

The High Representative/Vice-President is aware of the facts referred to in the Honourable Member's question and her services are following this matter closely. In particular, they were informed that the Office of the Attorney General (Fiscalía General de la Nación) has initiated an investigation to review the motives of the decision by the 'Procurador General' to which the Honourable Member refers. In addition, this decision has triggered a broad political debate in Colombia. The need for possible further intervention on the part of the EU in this matter will have to be considered in the light of the results of this review and of the measures that might be taken by the Colombian authorities as a result of this debate.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014063/13
a la Comisión
Salvador Garriga Polledo (PPE)
(12 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Cálculo del déficit

¿Considera la Comisión la posibilidad de excluir temporalmente del cálculo del déficit estructural definido en el Tratado de Estabilidad, Coordinación y Gobernanza de la Unión las contribuciones que adelantan los Estados Miembros para recibir fondos comunitarios, en especial, las relativas a la Iniciativa de Empleo Juvenil?

Respuesta del Sr. Rehn en nombre de la Comisión
(19 de febrero de 2014)

El déficit estructural, calculado en el marco del Pacto de Estabilidad y Crecimiento (que también se aplica al Tratado de Estabilidad, Coordinación y Gobernanza) se basa en la cifra de déficit nominal, que se utiliza para el procedimiento de déficit excesivo (PDE). Este, a su vez, se basa en los conceptos de las cuentas nacionales. En general, el déficit del PDE es diferente, tanto numéricamente como conceptualmente, del saldo activo del Gobierno. En particular, los anticipos financieros realizados por el Gobierno en nombre de la UE a los beneficiarios de los fondos de la UE no constituyen gasto público en las cuentas nacionales, pero sí se registran en las de la UE. Por consiguiente, esos anticipos, aunque consuman temporalmente recursos de la administración pública, no entran en el déficit estructural del Gobierno, por lo que no hay necesidad alguna de ajustar esta última medida.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014063/13
to the Commission
Salvador Garriga Polledo (PPE)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: Estimating the deficit

Is the Commission considering the possibility of excluding temporarily from the structural deficit estimate, as defined in the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Union, advance contributions made by Member States in order to receive EU funds, especially contributions related to the Youth Employment Initiative?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(19 February 2014)

The structural deficit calculated in the context of the Stability and Growth Pact (which also applies to the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance) is based on the nominal deficit figure that is used for the excessive deficit procedure (EDP) which, in turn, is based on national accounts' concepts. Generally, the EDP deficit is different, both numerically and conceptually, from the government's working balance. In particular, financial advances made by the government on behalf of the EU to beneficiaries of EU funds do not constitute government spending in national accounts but they are instead recorded in the accounts of the EU. Consequently, such advances, despite temporarily consuming government resources, do not enter the structural deficit of the government, ruling out any need to adjust this latter measure.

(българска версия)

Въпрос с искане за писмен отговор E-014064/13
до Комисията
Mariya Gabriel (PPE)
(12 декември 2013 г.)

Относно: Фалшифициране на мед

Фалшифицирането на мед се превърна в актуална тема в много страни по света — медът е един от най-често фалшифицираните хранителни продукти. Това накърнява сериозно неговия имидж като естествен здравословен продукт и същевременно има негативен ефект върху производителите и преработвателите на натурален мед.

Постоянно нарастващото фалшифициране на меда и вносът на такъв от трети страни причинява вреда не само на потребителите, но и влияе върху развитието на целия отрасъл на пчеларството. Евтиният фалшифициран мед на европейския пазар води и до намаляване на пчелните семейства, тъй като за пчеларите става неизгодно да се занимават с производството на мед. Резултатът е намаляване на опрашването на растенията, което има негативни последствия за селското стопанство.

В тази връзка:

Разполага ли ЕК със статистика относно разпространението на измамите с фалшифициран мед в рамките на ЕС, както и относно вноса на фалшифициран мед от трети страни?

ЕК наскоро установи измамите с храни като нова област на действие. Смята ли ЕК да предприеме конкретни мерки за ограничаване на измамите с фалшифициран мед?

Регистрират ли се случаите на фалшифициран мед в Системата за бързо предупреждение за храни и фуражи?

Отговор, даден от г-н Борг от името на Комисията
(3 февруари 2014 г.)

Комисията е наясно, че е възможно на пазара да бъдат предлагани продукти, които не отговарят на определението и на критериите за състава на меда, определени в Директива 2001/110/ЕО ([1]).

Тук се включват няколко вида фалшификации или несъответствия със стандартите. Т.нар. фалшифициран мед (най-вече захарен сироп с добавени ароматизанти и оцветители, подвеждащо етикетиран като мед) е един от продуктите в тази категория и вече има сигнали за него.

Няма информация какво е количеството внасян от трети страни фалшифициран мед.

Комисията работи по разработването на специален софтуерен инструмент, подобен на RASFF (Системата за бързо предупреждение за храни и фуражи), който ще даде възможност на компетентните органи в държавите членки бързо да обменят информация и данни за евентуални трансгранични измами.

Комисията е твърдо убедена, че борбата срещу измамите с храните е от съществено значение за поддържането на високо ниво на безопасност на храните и за запазването на доверието на потребителите. След скандала с конското месо през 2013 г. бяха предприети няколко инициативи, за да се повиши информираността относно измамните практики с храните и за усъвършенстване на способността на националните компетентни органи за констатиране на измами с храните и противодействието срещу тях.

Провеждат се дискусии между Комисията и държавите членки за допълнителни действия срещу измамите по хранителната верига. В тази връзка ще бъде обмислена необходимостта от конкретни действия по отношение на меда, координирани на равнище ЕС.

([1]) ОВ L 10, 12.1.2002 г.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014064/13
to the Commission
Mariya Gabriel (PPE)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: Production of imitation honey

The production of imitation honey has become a topical issue in many countries around the world. Honey is one of the most frequently falsified food products. This is seriously undermining its image as a natural healthy product, while also having an adverse impact on the producers and processors of natural honey.

The ever-growing production of imitation honey and its importation from third countries are not only detrimental to consumers, but also have an impact on the development of the apiculture sector as a whole. The availability of cheap imitation honey on the European market also leads to a decrease in the number of bee colonies as it makes it not profitable for beekeepers to produce honey. The upshot of this is a reduction in pollination of plants, which has adverse consequences for agriculture.

In light of the above:

Does the Commission have figures available on how widespread the fraud is involving imitation honey within the EU, and on the importation of imitation honey from third countries?

The Commission will soon establish food fraud as a new area of action. Is it thinking of adopting specific measures to restrict fraud involving imitation honey?

Are the cases involving imitation honey registered in the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed?

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

The Commission is aware that the marketing of products which do not meet the definition and composition criteria of honey as laid down in Directive 2001/110/EC ([1]) may occur.

This situation encompasses several types of adulterations or non-compliances. The so-called imitation honey (mostly sugar syrup added with flavouring and colouring agents, fraudulently labelled as honey) is one of them and has already been reported.

There is no data available on the quantities of imitation honey imported from third countries.

The Commission is working on the development of a dedicated IT tool, similar to the RASFF (Rapid Alert System for Feed and Food), which will enable the competent authorities in the Member States to rapidly exchange information and data on potential cross-border fraud.

The Commission is convinced that combating food fraud is essential to maintain a high level of food safety and to keep the confidence of consumers. Following the horsemeat scandal in 2013 several initiatives have been taken in order to increase the awareness of food fraud and improve the capability of the national competent authorities to detect and counter food fraud.

Discussions are on-going between the Commission and the Member States on further actions against fraud along the food chain. In this context the need for specific action concerning honey coordinated at EU level will be considered.

([1]) OJ L 10, 12.1.2002.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014069/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(12 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Transporte escolar en Aragón

En la respuesta que el Comisario Barnier dio a mi pasada pregunta sobre la decisión del Gobierno Autonómico de la Comunidad de Aragón de suprimir 25 líneas de transporte escolar, numerada como E-008713/2013, la Comisión afirmaba no disponer de información sobre el caso.

La Comisión Europea, como garante del Derecho europeo, tiene el deber de utilizar sus recursos para recabar información sobre este tipo de infracciones. Sin embargo, en su respuesta a la citada pregunta el Comisario sostiene que tan solo estudiará información sobre el caso ante un nuevo aporte de información por mi parte. Las potestades ejecutivas y de control en la aplicación de directivas europeas son de competencia exclusiva de la Comisión y no del Parlamento que es colegislador. De esta forma, con esta respuesta el Comisario podría estar incumpliendo las obligaciones que le son propias de conformidad con el Tratado de la Unión Europea.

Teniendo en cuenta lo anterior, ¿piensa iniciar la Comisión una investigación, como debería hacer, teniendo en cuenta lo estipulado en el Tratado de la Unión Europea?

¿Bajo qué principio jurídico se exonera de la responsabilidad de recabar información sobre el tema del transporte escolar y la aplicación de la Directiva 2004/18/CE?

¿Dispone ya de alguna información sobre el citado caso del transporte escolar en Aragón y sobre el de la Junta de Castilla y León?

Respuesta del Sr. Kallas en nombre de la Comisión
(18 de febrero de 2014)

La situación a la que se refiere Su Señoría parece afectar a la reserva de cierto número de asientos en los servicios de transporte general en autobús prestados en virtud de una concesión de servicio público para las necesidades del transporte escolar. Por lo tanto, en principio y según la información disponible, las Directivas sobre contratación pública no parecen ser de aplicación en este caso.

Las autoridades competentes de los Estados miembros son responsables de la organización y la prestación de servicios públicos en autobús y de transporte escolar, en cumplimiento de la legislación de la UE. La Comisión confirma que, hasta la fecha, no se ha recibido ninguna denuncia sobre una posible infracción de la legislación de la UE por parte de la Comunidad Autónoma de Aragón. Con la información disponible no es posible concluir que exista una violación de la legislación de la UE. Sin embargo, la Comisión se pondrá en contacto con las autoridades españolas con el fin de esclarecer cómo se organiza el transporte escolar en la Comunidad Autónoma de Aragón.

En el otro caso, relativo a determinadas disposiciones de la legislación sobre transporte escolar en Castilla y León, la Comisión ha incoado un procedimiento de infracción contra España en fecha 20 de junio de 2013. Sin embargo, este caso no es semejante a la situación descrita por Su Señoría en la pregunta E-008713/2013 ([1]).

En su escrito de requerimiento de fecha 20 de junio de 2013, dirigido a España, la Comisión consideró que la legislación de Castilla y León es contraria a los principios de igualdad de trato y no discriminación establecidos por la Directiva 2004/18/CE ([2]). Un operador de transporte en autobús que presta servicios de transporte público general en autobús no debe tener preferencia en un procedimiento de adjudicación de contratos para la prestación de servicios de transporte escolar.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/es/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) Directiva 2004/18/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 31 de marzo de 2004, sobre coordinación de los procedimientos de adjudicación de los contratos públicos de obras, de suministro y de servicios (DO L 134 de 30.4.2004, p. 114).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014069/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: School transport in Aragon

In the answer that Commissioner Barnier gave to my previous question regarding the Aragon Regional Government's decision to scrap 25 school bus routes (Question E-008713/2013), the Commission stated that it did not have any information about the case.

The Commission, as the guardian of European law, has a duty to use its resources to gather information about violations of this kind. However, in the answer to the question mentioned above, the Commissioner states that the Commission will examine information about the case only if I provide further information myself. Enforcement and supervision of the implementation of EU directives fall exclusively within the competence of the Commission, and not Parliament, which is co-legislator. Thus, with this answer, the Commissioner may be failing to meet his obligations under the Treaty on European Union.

Does the Commission intend to undertake an investigation, as it should do, bearing in mind the provisions of the Treaty on European Union?

According to what legal principle does it relieve itself of its responsibility to gather information about the subject of school transport and the implementation of Directive 2004/18/EC?

Does it now have any information about this case involving school transport in Aragon, and about the case involving the Castile-Leon Regional Government?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(18 February 2014)

The situation referred to by the Honourable Member seems to concern the reservation of certain number of seats in the general bus transport services provided under a public service concession for the needs of school transport. Therefore, in principle and based on the information available public procurement directives do not seem to be applicable.

The competent authorities of the Member States are responsible for the organisation and the provision of public services by bus and school transport, in compliance with the EU legislation. The Commission confirms that so far it has not received a complaint concerning possible breach of EU legislation by the Autonomous Community of Aragon. With the information available it is not possible to conclude that there would be a violation of EU legislation. However, the Commission will contact the Spanish authorities in order to clarify how the school transport is organised in the Autonomous Community of Aragon.

In the other case, regarding certain provisions of the legislation on school transport in Castilla-León, the Commission has initiated an infringement procedure against Spain on 20th June 2013. This case is however not similar to the factual situation described by the Honourable Member in Question E-008713/2013 ([1]).

In its letter of formal notice of 20th June 2013 addressed to Spain, the Commission considered that the legislation of Castilla-León is contrary to the principles of equality of treatment and non-discrimination established by Directive 2004/18/EC ([2]). A bus transport operator that provides general bus transport services should not be given a preference in a tendering procedure for the provision of school transport.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) Directive 2004/18/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 31 March 2004 on the coordination of procedures for the award of public works contracts, public supply contracts and public service contracts, OJ L 134, 30.4.2004.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014070/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(12 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Expediente de regulación de empleo en la empresa Panrico

El pasado mes de octubre la empresa española Panrico presentaba un expediente de regulación de empleo (ERE) que suponía el despido de 1 914 trabajadores y recortes salariales para el resto de la plantilla que llegan en algunos casos hasta el 45 % del salario.

Este ERE se inscribe en un contexto nacional en el que en España, desde la aprobación de la última reforma laboral, recomendada por la Comisión Europea y puesta en práctica por el Gobierno del Partido Popular, se están declarando ERE prácticamente cada día. La reforma laboral, que supuestamente iba a generar miles de empleos, ha tenido precisamente el resultado contrario, como ya mucho antes de su aplicación numerosas personas habían advertido pero la Comisión no fue capaz de ver.

El caso de esta gran compañía del sector agroalimentario es paradigmático. Con una larga historia de continuo crecimiento, fue adquirida en 2005 por un fondo de capital riesgo, Apax Partners, y en 2010, tras cinco años de gobierno, debido a la incapacidad de hacer frente a sus deudas, este fondo vendió la compañía a otro fondo riesgo, Oaktree. El cúmulo de operaciones financieras especulativas ya dejaba claro que los nuevos dueños no pretenderían recuperar la actividad productiva sino desmantelar y recoger dividendos, como ocurre con todas las actividades de capital riesgo. Ahora se alude a los devastadores efectos de la crisis para realizar este ERE, cuando la empresa había sido adquirida en 2010, momento en que la crisis económica ya impactaba profundamente España y las perspectivas económicas eran nefastas.

¿Tiene conocimiento la Comisión del citado ERE?

¿Cuántos casos conoce de fondos especulativos que adquieren compañías productivas con buen funcionamiento y acaban, en periodos menores a los cinco años, con su capacidad productiva?

¿Qué acciones piensa llevar a cabo la Comisión para evitar que este tipo de fondos de riesgo puedan destruir la capacidad productiva y los puestos de trabajo que tienen compañías como Panrico?

¿Considera que, en el caso de que el fondo propietario y la Administración española impongan finalmente el citado ERE, podría movilizarse el Fondo Europeo de Adaptación a la Globalización para paliar la gravísima situación en que podrían quedar los trabajadores de Panrico?

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

La Comisión está preocupada por las consecuencias económicas y sociales de los despidos en Panrico.

Aunque la Comisión no tiene competencias para interferir en las decisiones de una empresa determinada en lo que respecta a la gestión de sus recursos humanos, sí que pueden actuar el Fondo Social Europeo y el Fondo Europeo de Adaptación a la Globalización (FEAG), entre otros instrumentos financieros de la UE. . Su Señoría, si lo desea, puede dirigirse a la persona de contacto del FEAG en España, para saber si está prevista alguna solicitud en apoyo de los antiguos trabajadores de Panrico. Puede encontrarse información detallada sobre el particular en el sitio web del FEAG ([1]).

En un contexto más amplio, la Comisión está siguiendo de cerca la evolución del mercado laboral español en el marco del semestre europeo. Los análisis más recientes de la Comisión se han resumido en un documento de trabajo de sus servicios ([2]), que se refleja también en las recomendaciones específicas para el país ([3]). A mediados de 2014, se va a remitir a España una nueva serie de recomendaciones teniendo en cuenta la aplicación de las reformas.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=581&langId=es
([2]) COM(2013) 359 http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/nd/swd2013_spain_es.pdf
([3]) Recomendaciones específicas por país dirigidas a España el 19 de junio de 2013. http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/europe-2020-in-your-country/espana/country-specific-recommendations/index_es.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014070/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: Labour Force Adjustment Plan at Panrico

In October, the Spanish company Panrico presented a labour force adjustment plan that entailed the dismissal of 1 914 employees and wage cuts for the remaining staff, of as much as 45% of wages in some cases.

This labour force adjustment plan is coming into being at a time when, in Spain, since the approval of the most recent labour reform-which was recommended by the European Commission and implemented by the Partido Popular administration-labour force adjustment plans are being announced on an almost daily basis. The labour reform, which was supposed to generate thousands of jobs, has had exactly the opposite result, which many people had warned that it would do even before the reform was implemented, but which the Commission was not capable of seeing.

The case of this great company in the agri-food sector is emblematic. The company, with a long history of constant growth, was acquired in 2005 by a venture capital fund, Apax Partners. In 2010, after controlling the company for five years, and unable to continue meeting its debts, Apax Partners sold the company to another venture capital fund, Oaktree. The series of speculative financial transactions had already made clear that the company's new owners would not attempt to restore its productive activity, but instead would dismantle the company and collect dividends, as is always the case when venture capital is involved. Now, the devastating effects of the crisis are being used as a justification for implementing this labour force adjustment plan, even though the company was acquired in 2010, when the economic crisis was already having a profound effect on Spain and the economic outlook was bleak.

Is the Commission aware of this labour force adjustment plan?

How many cases is it aware of involving venture capital funds that acquire productive, well-functioning companies and, within less than five years, ruin the productive capacity of those companies?

What actions does the Commission intend to take in order to prevent venture capital funds of this kind from destroying the productive capacity and jobs that companies like Panrico offer?

Does it take the view that, if the venture capital fund and the Spanish Government ultimately implement this labour force adjustment plan, the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund could be mobilised to ease the very difficult situation in which the employees of Panrico could be left?

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

The Commission is concerned about the economic and social consequences of the redundancies in Panrico.

While the Commission has no powers to interfere in any specific company decisions regarding the management of their human resources, the European Social Fund and the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF), amongst other EU financial instruments can come into play. . The Honourable Member may wish to communicate with the EGF Contact Person in Spain, should he wish to know whether an application is being planned in support of former Panrico workers. The relevant contact details can be found on the EGF website ([1]).

In a broader context, the Commission is closely following the developments of the Spanish labour market in the framework of the European Semester. The Commission's latest analysis has been summarised in a Staff Working Document ([2]) and it is reflected also in the Country Specific Recommendations ([3]). A new round of recommendations will be addressed to Spain in mid-2014 taking in account the implemented reforms.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=581&langId=es
([2]) COM(2013) 359 http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/nd/swd2013_spain_en.pdf
([3]) Country Specific Recommendations addressed to Spain on 19 June 2013. http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/europe-2020-in-your-country/espana/country-specific-recommendations/index_en.htm

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-014071/13
an die Kommission
Norbert Neuser (S&D)
(12. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Boden- und Wasserbewirtschaftungsprojekt in Äthiopien

Bodenerosion und Wasserwirtschaft stellen in den bergigen Regionen Äthiopiens ein großes Problem dar, das sich in Zukunft durch die Auswirkungen des Klimawandels noch verschärfen wird. Die EU finanziert ein Projekt zur nachhaltigen Bodenbewirtschaftung in Äthiopien.

Wie bewertet die Kommission dieses Projekt? Ist es im lokalen Kontext und vor dem Hintergrund des Klimawandels erfolgreich? Beabsichtigt die Kommission das Projekt nach dem Ende des aktuellen Projektzyklus weiter zu finanzieren?

Antwort von Herrn Piebalgs im Namen der Kommission
(3. Februar 2014)

Das wichtigste von der EU geförderte Programm zur nachhaltigen Bodenbewirtschaftung in Äthiopien betrifft ein mit 9,7 Mio. EUR ausgestattetes Projekt, das im Rahmen der Globalen Allianz für den Klimaschutz durchgeführt wird. Mit diesem Projekt wird die ehrgeizige Strategie Äthiopiens für eine klimaresistente „grüne" Wirtschaft (CRGE) unterstützt, die positiv aufgenommen wurde, da sie sowohl Ziele im Bereich Anpassung an den Klimawandel als auch im Bereich Klimaschutz verfolgt. Sie wird vom Landwirtschaftsministerium umgesetzt und zielt darauf ab, im Rahmen von Pilotmaßnahmen, die anschließend andernorts reproduziert und gegebenenfalls in größerem Maßstab durchgeführt werden können, nach geeigneten Möglichkeiten für die Anpassung an den Klimawandel zu suchen. Seit Juni 2012 werden entsprechende Maßnahmen in 34 Bezirken im Flussbecken des Blauen Nils erfolgreich durchgeführt. Die Aktivitäten sind breit gefächert und umfassen Aufforstungstätigkeiten, Maßnahmen zum Erhalt des Bodens und der Wasserressourcen sowie die Einrichtung von Schutzzonen, welche zusammen mit den Initiativen zur Sicherung der Existenzgrundlagen in erheblichem Maße zur Sanierung der Umwelt und zur Verringerung der Bodendegradation beitragen. Die Leistungen des Projekts wurden im Rahmen einer externen Überwachung im Oktober 2013 als „sehr gut" bewertet. In dem Monitoring-Bericht wurde hervorgehoben, dass die Zielgruppen die Unterstützung sehr schätzen und ausgesprochen interessiert daran sind, einen Beitrag zu leisten und dies auch tun, zudem wurde unterstrichen, dass sichtlich alle Beteiligten einen Nutzen aus den Maßnahmen ziehen. Örtliche Landwirte, die an den Pilotmaßnahmen beteiligt sind, zeigen großes Interesse daran, die vorgeschlagenen Maßnahmen zur Anpassung an den Klimawandel und für den Klimaschutz umzusetzen. Auf einer Fläche von mehr als 5 000 Hektar wurden (sowohl physikalische als auch biologische) Maßnahmen zum Erhalt des Bodens und der Wasserressourcen durchgeführt.

Es ist durchaus denkbar, dass die EU ihre Finanzierung der Maßnahmen zur nachhaltigen Bodenbewirtschaftung fortsetzt. In den Diskussionen über das Richtprogramm im Rahmen des 11. EEF (Zeitraum 2014-2020) ist eine umfassende Unterstützung für Maßnahmen zur partizipativen Erhaltung der natürlichen Ressourcen und nachhaltigen Bodenbewirtschaftung im Gespräch.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014071/13
to the Commission
Norbert Neuser (S&D)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: Land/water management project in Ethiopia

Soil erosion and water management is a big problem in the mountainous regions of Ethiopia, and one which will increase in the future with the effects of climate change. The EU is financing a project on sustainable land management in Ethiopia.

What is the Commission's assessment of the project? Is it successful in the local context and given the prospect of climate change? Is the Commission considering continuing to finance the project after the end of the current project cycle?

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

The main EU assisted programme on Sustainable Land Management (SLM) in Ethiopia concerns a EUR 9.7 million project in the framework of the Global Climate Change Alliance. That project supports Ethiopia's ambitious Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) strategy, hailed for addressing both climate change adaptation and mitigation objectives. It is implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and aims to identify suitable options for climate change adaptation through pilot activities which can be replicated elsewhere and upscaled. Since June 2012, activities have been successfully implemented in 34 districts located in the Blue Nile basin. Activities are wide-ranging and include afforestation, soil and water conservation and area closures, which, along with livelihood enhancing initiatives, are significantly contibuting to the rehabilitation of the environment and reduction in land degradation. External monitoring in October 2013 assessed the performance of the project as 'very good'. The monitoring report indicated that target groups are highly appreciative of the support, and keen and committed to contributing and that all appear to be benefiting. Local farmers piloting the activities are showing strong interest in implementing proposed adaptation and mitigation measures. Soil and water conservation measures (both physical and biological) have been implemented on more than 5.000 hectares.

There is a good possibility that SLM activities will continue to be financed by the EU. In the discussions on the 11th EDF indicative programme (2014-2020), substantial support is being considered for participatory natural resources conservation and sustainable land management.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-014074/13
an die Kommission
Hermann Winkler (PPE)
(12. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Europäisches Zentrum für Presse- und Medienfreiheit / ECMPF2013

Mit Schreiben vom 29.11.2013 hat die Generaldirektion für Kommunikationsnetze, Inhalte und Technologien der Europäischen Kommission dem Europäischen Zentrum für Presse- und Medienfreiheit (angesiedelt bei der Medienstiftung der Sparkasse Leipzig) mitgeteilt, dass dessen Bewerbung um eine Förderung im Rahmen des Pilotprojekts „European Centre for Press and Media Freedom" nicht erfolgreich war. Damit wurde der langjährigen und weit fortgeschrittenen Initiative, die von einem breiten Netzwerk namhafter Akteure aus Medien, Wissenschaft und Politik getragen wird, schlagartig der Boden für weitere Planungen entzogen. Das Evaluationsergebnis fällt angesichts der Untergrenze für erfolgreiche Anträge von 47 Punkten mit 46 Punkten denkbar knapp aus. Dies gilt umso mehr, als die Begründungen der Bewertung im Einzelnen nicht durchgängig überzeugen. Vor diesem Hintergrund stellen sich folgenden Fragen:

1. Wie setzt sich das Bewertungsgremium für diese Entscheidung im Detail zusammen und wer hat es berufen?

2. Wurde den Antragstellern die Gelegenheit gegeben, etwaige Unklarheiten in der Antragsbegründung auszuräumen bzw. zu Fragen Stellung zu nehmen?

3. Stimmt die Kommission der Einschätzung zu, dass angesichts des knappen Ergebnisses eine erneute Überprüfung notwendig gewesen wäre? Ist diese erfolgt?

4. Welche Projekte wurden im Ergebnis für die Förderung berücksichtigt?

Antwort von Frau Kroes im Namen der Kommission
(10. Februar 2014)

1. Der Bewertungsausschuss (der „Ausschuss") wurde von der Kommission gemäß der Haushaltsordnung und deren Anwendungsbestimmungen eingesetzt. Seine Zusammensetzung stand im Einklang mit Artikel 204 der Anwendungsbestimmungen. Die Identität seiner Mitglieder wird aufgrund einer Ausnahmeregelung in der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1049/2001 über Transparenz ([1]) nicht bekanntgegeben.

2. Alle Fragen der Antragsteller, die vor dem Einreichungsschluss eingingen, wurden in anonymer Form zusammen mit den entsprechenden Antworten im Internet veröffentlicht, um die Gleichbehandlung aller potenziellen Antragsteller zu gewährleisten ([2]). Nach Einreichungsschluss kann der Bewertungsausschuss die Antragsteller nach Artikel 204 Absatz 3 der Anwendungsbestimmungen um zusätzliche Informationen oder Erläuterungen bitten, sofern sich daraus keine wesentlichen Änderungen an dem Vorschlag ergeben. Bei Vorliegen offensichtlicher Fehler ist der Ausschuss verpflichtet, um diese zusätzlichen Informationen oder Erläuterungen zu bitten ([3]). Der Ausschluss hat die Antragsteller nicht um Erläuterungen gebeten.

3. Nach der Haushaltsordnung sind Vorschläge anhand der in der Aufforderung zur Einreichung von Vorschlägen angegebenen Kriterien objektiv zu bewerten. Besteht kein Grund für Zweifel an der Unparteilichkeit der Bewertung und der ordnungsgemäßen Anwendung der Kriterien, so besteht auch kein Anlass für eine Neubewertung der Vorschläge. Angesichts der Grundsätze der Transparenz und Gleichbehandlung kann diese Vorgehensweise nicht allein deswegen geändert werden, weil ein knappes Ergebnis vorliegt. Im vorliegenden Fall hat der zuständige Anweisungsbefugte den Beschluss auf der Grundlage eines umfassend begründeten Berichts gefasst, der die übereinstimmende Meinung des Ausschusses wiedergab, der die in der Aufforderung zur Einreichung von Vorschlägen dargelegten Kriterien angewandt hatte.

4. Das Vergabeverfahren ist noch nicht abgeschlossen, da die Kommission gerade den Text der Finanzhilfevereinbarungen fertigstellt. Nach deren Abschluss, mit dem in den kommenden Wochen gerechnet wird, werden die ausgewählten Anträge bekanntgegeben.

([1]) Artikel 4 („Schutz der Privatsphäre und der Integrität des Einzelnen").
([2]) Siehe Nr. 5, „Clarifications", unter: http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/news/european-centre-press-and-media-freedom-ecpmf2013-closed
([3]) Artikel 96 der Haushaltsordnung.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014074/13
to the Commission
Hermann Winkler (PPE)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: European Centre for Press and Media Freedom/ECPMF 2013

In a letter dated 29 November 2013, the European Commission's Directorate General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology informed the European Centre for Press and Media Freedom (based at the Media Foundation of the Sparkasse Leipzig) that its application for assistance in connection with the pilot project 'European Centre for Press and Media Freedom' had not been successful. This had the effect of abruptly pulling the rug from beneath the feet of any future plans for an initiative that had been many years in the making and was well advanced, and that enjoys the backing of a broad network of well-known actors from the media, science and politics. At 46 points, the result of the evaluation fell below the lower limit for successful applications of 47 points by the narrowest conceivable margin. This is all the more the case if the details of the reasoning behind the evaluation fail to convince at all points. In this light, the following questions arise:

1. What is the detailed make-up of the evaluation panel that made this decision and who appointed it?

2. Were the applicants given the opportunity to clear up any unclear points in the explanatory statement to the application and to respond to any questions?

3. Does the Commission agree that, given the tightness of the result, the evaluation should be repeated? Has such a re-evaluation taken place?

4. Which projects were considered for assistance in the result?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(10 February 2014)

1. The evaluation committee ('committee') was appointed by the Commission in accordance with the Financial Regulation ('FR') and its Rules of Application ('RAP'). Its composition was in accordance with Article 204 RAP. The identity of its members is not made public due to the exception in Regulation 1049/2001 on Transparency ([1]).

2. All questions received from the applicants before the closure of the call were anonymised and published with the replies on the web to ensure equal treatment for any potential applicant ([2]). After the closure of the call, in accordance with Article 204.3 RAP, the committee may ask applicants to provide additional information or clarification, provided this does not substantially change the proposal. The committee shall do it in the case of obvious clerical errors ([3]). It did not request any clarification from the applicants.

3. The FR requires that proposals are evaluated impartially on the basis of the criteria announced in the call for proposals. If there is no ground to doubt about the impartiality of the evaluation and the proper application of the criteria, there is no ground for the re-evaluation of proposals. In order to preserve the principles of transparency and equal treatment, this approach cannot be changed, on the sole basis of the tightness of the results. In the case at stake, the authorising officer responsible adopted the award decision on the basis of the fully substantiated report reflecting the consensus of the committee which applied the criteria outlined in the call.

4. The award procedure is still ongoing, as the Commission is currently finalising the text of the grant agreements. Following their conclusion, which we expect to take place in the coming weeks, the selected applications will be announced.

([1]) Article 4 ('privacy and integrity of the individual').
([2]) (see point 5, 'clarifications' on http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/news/european-centre-press-and-media-freedom-ecpmf2013-closed).
([3]) Article 96 FR.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-014075/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)
(12 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Υπερβολικές καθυστερήσεις στην αποπληρωμή προγραμμάτων

Συχνά η ελληνική διοίκηση καθυστερεί υπερβολικά την πληρωμή προγραμμάτων που συγχρηματοδοτούνται από ευρωπαϊκά ταμεία. Το τελευταίο διάστημα υλοποιούνται προγράμματα «Δημιουργίας θέσεων απασχόλησης σε τοπικό επίπεδο μέσω προγραμμάτων κοινωφελούς χαρακτήρα» στο πλαίσιο του ΕΠ «Ανάπτυξη Ανθρώπινου Δυναμικού». Στα προγράμματα αυτά απασχολούνται άνεργοι για ένα σύντομο διάστημα. Ανεξαρτήτως της κριτικής που μπορεί να ασκηθεί, για το αν αυτά τα προγράμματα αποτελούν ή όχι ενεργή πολιτική για τη δημιουργία βιώσιμων θέσεων εργασίας, ένα σοβαρό πρόβλημα που προκύπτει είναι ότι η διοίκηση καθυστερεί υπερβολικά την πληρωμή των ανέργων που συμμετέχουν στο πρόγραμμα, δημιουργώντας τους σοβαρά κοινωνικά προβλήματα, ενώ και οι δικαιούχοι φορείς δεν μπορούν να καταβάλουν εγκαίρως τις ασφαλιστικές εισφορές και τις άλλες οικονομικές υποχρεώσεις τους, με κίνδυνο να επιβαρυνθούν με υψηλά πρόστιμα και άλλες διοικητικές κυρώσεις.

Διαπιστώνεται ότι η καταβολή των δόσεων πληρωμής καθυστερεί πολλούς μήνες και δεν ολοκληρώνονται μέσα στην προβλεπόμενη προθεσμία του ενός μήνα, παραβιάζοντας τόσο την Οδηγία 2011/7/ΕΕ της 16ης Φεβρουαρίου 2011 για την αντιμετώπιση των καθυστερήσεων στις εμπορικές συναλλαγές ([1]) όσο και τους όρους της προκήρυξης των προγραμμάτων.

Ερωτάται η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή:

1. Έχει υπόψη της αυτές τις σοβαρές καθυστερήσεις πληρωμής; Ευθύνεται γι' αυτή την καθυστέρηση στις πληρωμές η ίδια ή η ελληνική διοίκηση;

2. Ποιες πρωτοβουλίες προτίθεται να αναλάβει ώστε το κράτος μέλος να συμμορφωθεί προς τις υποχρεώσεις που αναλαμβάνει στο πλαίσιο υλοποίησης των συγχρηματοδοτούμενων προγραμμάτων και να μειωθεί ο χρόνος αποπληρωμής τους, όπως έχει ζητήσει επανειλημμένα το Ευρωκοινοβούλιο και όπως προβλέπει η Οδηγία 2011/7/EU;

Απάντηση του κ. Andor εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(6 Φεβρουαρίου 2014)

1. Σύμφωνα με πληροφορίες που δόθηκαν από τη διαχειριστική αρχή του επιχειρησιακού προγράμματος «Ανάπτυξη ανθρώπινων πόρων» ([2]), το 95% των παρεμβάσεων που υλοποιήθηκαν στο πλαίσιο του προγράμματος δημοσίων έργων κατά την περίοδο 2012-2013 εξοφλήθηκαν έως το τέλος του 2013. Οποιαδήποτε καθυστέρηση πληρωμής ορισμένων δικαιούχων οργανισμών από την αρχή διαχείρισης, οφείλεται στην υποβολή ανακριβών δικαιολογητικών εγγράφων. Εκτός από αυτές τις περιπτώσεις, σύμφωνα με πληροφορίες της Επιτροπής, έχει ολοκληρωθεί η πληρωμή των ανέργων που συμμετέχουν στο πρόγραμμα.

2. Η Επιτροπή γνωρίζει ότι στις προηγούμενες περιόδους προγραμματισμού σημειώθηκαν καθυστερήσεις σε ορισμένα κράτη μέλη όσον αφορά την πληρωμή των δικαιούχων. Επομένως, παρ' όλο που η οδηγία 2011/7/ΕΕ της 16ης Φεβρουαρίου 2011 δεν εφαρμόζεται στην πολιτική συνοχής, ο κανονισμός που καθορίζει τους κανόνες που εφαρμόζονται στα διαρθρωτικά ταμεία για τη νέα περίοδο προγραμματισμού 2014-2020 (κανονισμός περί κοινών διατάξεων ([3])), εισάγει για πρώτη φορά προθεσμία στα κράτη μέλη για πληρωμή των δικαιούχων. Συγκεκριμένα, σύμφωνα με το άρθρο 132, τα κράτη μέλη θα πρέπει να μεριμνήσουν ώστε ο δικαιούχος να λαμβάνει το συνολικό ποσό επιλέξιμων οφειλόμενων δημόσιων δαπανών στο σύνολό τους το αργότερο έως 90 ημέρες από την ημερομηνία υποβολής της αίτησης πληρωμής από τον δικαιούχο.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:048:0001:0010:en:PDF
([2]) Οδός Κοραή 4, GR 105 64, Αθήνα, τηλ.: 210 52 01 200, φαξ: 210 52 41 311, ηλ. ταχυδρ.: eydanad@mou.gr, url: www.epanad.gov.gr
([3]) https://myintracomm-collab.ec.europa.eu/dg/regio/2014-2020/default.aspx

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014075/13
to the Commission
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: Excessive delay in payment of programmes

The Greek administration is often extremely late in paying programmes co-financed from European funds. Programmes to create jobs at local level though public benefit programmes have been implemented recently under the Human Resource Development Operational Programme. These programmes employ unemployed persons for a short period of time. Regardless of any criticism as to whether or not these programmes constitute an active policy for the creation of viable jobs, one serious problem that arises is that the administration is extremely late in paying the unemployed persons involved in the programme, thereby causing them serious social problems. Also, the beneficiary agencies cannot pay insurance contributions and their other financial liabilities on time and thus incur the risk of large fines and other administrative penalties.

Payment instalments are several months in arrears and are not paid by the one-month deadline set, in breach both of Directive 2011/7/EU of 16 February 2011 on combating late payment in commercial transactions ([1]) and the terms of the programme notices.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Is it aware of these serious payment delays? Is it or the Greek administration to blame for these late payments.

2. What initiatives does it intend to take to make the Member State comply with its undertakings in connection with the implementation of co-financed programmes and reduce the time taken to pay them, as repeated demanded by the European Parliament and provided for under Directive 2011/7/EU?

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

1. According to information provided by the Managing Authority of the Operational Programme 'Human Resources Development' ([2]), 95% of the interventions implemented in the context of the Public Works Scheme in the period 2012-2013 had been paid, up until the end of 2013. Any delay in the payment to a few of the beneficiary bodies by the Managing Authority is due to the inaccurate supporting documents that they submitted. Except for these cases, according to Commission information, payment to the unemployed participating in the scheme has been completed.

2. The Commission is aware that in the past programming periods there have been delays, in some Member States, in the payment to beneficiaries. Therefore, although the directive 2011/7/EU of 16 February 2011 is not applicable to cohesion policy, the regulation that lays down the rules applicable to the Structural Funds for the new 2014-2020 programming period (the Common Provisions Regulation ([3])), introduces for the first time, a deadline for payment by the MS to beneficiaries. Concretely, according to Article 132, MS will have to ensure that a beneficiary receives the total amount of eligible public expenditure due in full and no later than 90 days from the date of submission of the payment claim by the beneficiary.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:048:0001:0010:en:PDF
([2]) 4 Korai st, GR 105 64 Athens, Tel: 210-52 01 200, Fax: 210 52 41 311, e-mail: eydanad@mou.gr, url: www.epanad.gov.gr
([3]) https://myintracomm-collab.ec.europa.eu/dg/regio/2014-2020/default.aspx

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-014076/13
aan de Commissie
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(12 december 2013)

Betreft: Onwettige toetreding II

Op 10 december 2013, vijf maanden na de toetreding van het land tot de Europese Unie, heeft de Commissie aan de Raad aanbevolen om tegen Kroatië een procedure bij buitensporige tekorten in te leiden. Dit volgt op het laatste voortgangsverslag van de Commissie van 26 maart 2013, waarin werd gesteld dat Kroatië „nu over het algemeen voldoet aan de verbintenissen en de verplichtingen voor alle hoofdstukken die uit de toetredingsonderhandelingen voortvloeien" ([1]). Jarenlang voldeed Kroatië onder meer niet aan de economische toetredingscriteria. Het tekort van het land bedroeg in 2012 5 % van het bbp. Volgens het verslag van de Commissie aan de Raad van 15 november 2013 betreffende de inbreuk op de tekortregels door Kroatië ([2]) wordt aan deze criteria nog altijd niet voldaan, aangezien „de overschrijding van de drempelwaarde van 3 % van het bbp niet van tijdelijke aard is", en het tekort „niet alleen in 2013 (5,4 % van het bbp), maar ook in 2014 en 2015 aanzienlijk boven de drempelwaarde uit zal komen".

Ieder land dat lid wil worden van de EU dient te voldoen aan de in artikel 49 van het Verdrag betreffende de Europese Unie neergelegde voorwaarden en de in artikel 6, lid 1, van dat verdrag vervatte beginselen. De Europese Raad van Kopenhagen heeft tevens de relevante criteria vastgesteld waaraan alle kandidaat-lidstaten moeten voldoen om lid van de EU te worden, en tot op heden heeft de Commissie de kandidaat-lidstaten op grond van deze criteria beoordeeld. Kan de Commissie in het licht van het bovenstaande de volgende vragen beantwoorden?

1. Kan de Commissie uitleggen waarom zij in haar laatste voortgangsverslag over Kroatië het groene licht heeft gegeven voor de toetreding van het land, terwijl het land niet aan de in het Verdrag vastgelegde economische convergentiecriteria voldeed?

2. Zou de Commissie geen vraagtekens moeten zetten bij de nauwkeurigheid van de in maart uitgevoerde evaluatie van de toetredingsvoorbereidingen van Kroatië?

3. Kan de Commissie duidelijkheid verschaffen over de correcte interpretatie en de legitieme toepassing van de criteria van Kopenhagen?

4. Deelt de Commissie de mening dat de rechtsgeldigheid van de criteria van Kopenhagen verwaarloosbaar is geworden, gegeven dat Kroatië aan geen van deze criteria voldeed ([3])?

5. Hoe denkt de Commissie over de toekomst van de criteria van Kopenhagen? Op welke wijze zullen deze criteria het toetredingsproces van mogelijke kandidaat-lidstaten beïnvloeden? Kunnen deze landen lid van de Europese Unie worden zonder aan de desbetreffende criteria te voldoen?

Antwoord van de heer Füle namens de Commissie
(6 februari 2014)

In haar advies over het verzoek om toetreding tot de EU van de Republiek Kroatië ([4]), heeft de Commissie bevestigd dat Kroatië voldeed aan de politieke criteria van Kopenhagen en dat zij verwachtte dat Kroatië aan de economische criteria en de criteria van het *acquis* zou voldoen en klaar zou zijn voor het lidmaatschap op 1 juli 2013. Volgens de economische toetredingscriteria moet een land een functionerende markteconomie hebben en opgewassen zijn tegen de concurrentiedruk en de marktkrachten binnen de Unie. Zij omvatten geen streefcijfers voor de openbare financiën.

De toetreding van Kroatië was het resultaat van een tienjarige, strenge procedure met strikte voorwaarden in alle stadia, van het verlenen van de status van kandidaat-lidstaat, de start van de toetredingsonderhandelingen en de openings- en sluitingsdatum van de 35 onderhandelingshoofdstukken, tot en met de afronding van de onderhandelingen, de goedkeuring van het Europees Parlement en de ratificering van het Toetredingsverdrag door alle lidstaten.

De criteria van Kopenhagen, die in 1993 zijn vastgesteld door de Europese Raad, blijven de basis voor het uitbreidingsbeleid. De politieke criteria weerspiegelen de fundamentele waarden waarop de EU is gegrondvest: democratie, de rechtsstaat, eerbiediging van de grondrechten. Het voortdurende belang van de economische criteria wordt eveneens onderstreept door de economische uitdagingen waarvoor de EU zich momenteel geplaatst ziet. Zoals aangegeven in haar „Uitbreidingsstrategie en belangrijkste uitdagingen 2013-2014 ([5])", zal de Commissie haar aandacht bij het toetredingsproces meer richten op economische kwesties.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/fule/docs/news/20130326_report_final.pdf
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/economic_governance/sgp/pdf/30_edps/126-03_commission/2013-11-15_hr_126-3_en.pdf
([3]) Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-011370/2012.
([4]) COM(2011) 667 definitief.
([5]) COM(2013) 700 final.

Het uitbreidingsbeleid is gebaseerd op strenge maar eerlijke voorwaarden, waarbij de vorderingen op weg naar het lidmaatschap afhangen van de maatregelen die ieder land neemt om aan de vastgestelde criteria te voldoen. De Commissie blijft duidelijk stellen dat aan de betreffende toetredingscriteria moet worden voldaan vóór zij volgende stappen kan aanbevelen in het toetredingsproces van respectievelijk kandidaat-lidstaten en potentiële lidstaten.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014076/13
to the Commission
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: Unlawful accession II

On 10 December 2013 the Commission recommended that the Council place Croatia under an excessive deficit procedure, five months after the country's accession to the European Union. This follows the Commission's last progress report of 26 March 2013, which stated that the Croatia 'is generally meeting the commitments and requirements arising from the accession negotiations, in all chapters' ([1]). For years Croatia had not been complying with economic accession criteria, among others. Its deficit had reached 5% of GDP in 2012. According to the Commission's report to the Council on the breach of deficit rules by Croatia, published on 15 November 2013 ([2]), these criteria remain unfulfilled, as 'the excess over 3% of GDP reference value is not temporary' but rather 'will remain significantly above the reference value not only in 2013 (at 5.4% of GDP), but also in 2014 and 2015'.

Any country seeking membership of the EU has to comply with the conditions set out by Article 49 and the principles laid down in Article 6(1) of the Treaty on European Union. The Copenhagen European Council also established relevant criteria which all candidate countries must satisfy to become a Member State, and the Commission has evaluated candidate states according to these criteria up to the present. In the light of this:

1. Can the Commission clarify why, in its last progress report on Croatia, it gave the green light for the country's accession, even though it did not fulfil the economic convergence criteria enshrined in the Treaty?

2. Should the Commission not be questioning the accuracy of its March evaluation of Croatia's accession preparation?

3. Can the Commission specify the appropriate interpretation and the legitimate application of the Copenhagen criteria?

4. Does the Commission agree that the legal value of the Copenhagen criteria has become negligible given that Croatia did not fulfil any of them? ([3])

5. What is the Commission's opinion on the future of the Copenhagen criteria? How will they influence the accession procedure for potential candidate states? Could these countries become Member States of the European Union even if they do not comply with the relevant criteria?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(6 February 2014)

In its Opinion on the application for accession to the EU by the Republic of Croatia ([4]), the Commission confirmed that Croatia fulfilled the Copenhagen political criteria and expected Croatia to meet the economic and *acquis* criteria and to be ready for membership by 1 July 2013. The economic criteria prescribe that, to join the EU, a country must have a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with the competitive pressure and market forces within the Union. They do not include numerical targets for public finances.

Croatia's accession was the result of a ten-year, rigorous process, with strict conditionality at all stages, from the granting of candidate status, the launch of negotiations, the opening and closing of the 35 negotiating chapters, to the conclusion of negotiations, consent by the European Parliament and ratification by all Member States of the Accession Treaty.

The Copenhagen criteria, set out by the European Council in 1993 remain the basis for enlargement policy. The political criteria reflect the core values on which the EU is founded: democracy, the rule of law, respect for fundamental rights. The economic challenges currently facing the EU also underline the continued importance of the economic criteria. As set out in its Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges for 2013-2014 ([5]), the Commission is enhancing the focus on economic issues in the accession process.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/fule/docs/news/20130326_report_final.pdf
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/economic_governance/sgp/pdf/30_edps/126-03_commission/2013-11-15_hr_126-3_en.pdf
([3]) Question for written answer E-011370/2012.
([4]) COM(2011) 667 final.
([5]) COM(2013) 700 final.

Enlargement policy is built on strict but fair conditionality with progress towards membership depending on the steps taken by each country to meet the established criteria. The Commission remains clear that the relevant accession criteria must be met for it to recommend next steps in the respective accession process of candidate and potential countries.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014077/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) et Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(12 décembre 2013)

Objet: Transport ferroviaire

Quand la Commission va-t-elle achever la mise en œuvre d'un espace ferroviaire unique européen, et garantir une parfaite transparence dans les flux de fonds entre les gestionnaires d'infrastructures et les entreprises ferroviaires? Où en êtes-vous? Quels obstacles ralentissent l'élaboration de la proposition de la Commission?

La Commission compte-t-elle étudier la possibilité d'adopter une proposition législative établissant un organe de régulation européen qui coopérerait avec les régulateurs nationaux existants et agirait dans le cas en l'absence de tels régulateurs nationaux ou, le cas échéant, lorsque ceux-ci sont inactifs?

Le marché unique dans le secteur du fret ferroviaire est entravé par une transposition incorrecte ou incomplète du droit de l'Union par les États membres et par des obstacles à la mobilité transfrontalière qui nuisent à la concurrence et à la croissance.

La Commission estime-t-elle que les obstacles à l'entrée sur le marché mis en place par les opérateurs ou les aspects techniques qui divergent d'un État membre à l'autre, comme l'écartement des voies, l'approvisionnement énergétique, les systèmes de signalisation et autres obstacles similaires en termes d'interopérabilité et d'accessibilité des infrastructures, peuvent être considérés comme des infractions aux règles en matière de concurrence?

Réponse donnée par M. Kallas au nom de la Commission
(5 février 2014)

La directive 2012/34/UE (refonte) a confirmé les règles existantes en matière de séparation comptable entre les gestionnaires de l'infrastructure et les entreprises ferroviaires et instauré l'obligation de présenter des comptes détaillés à l'organisme de contrôle afin d'éviter les subventions croisées. Cette obligation et le pouvoir de contrôle des organismes de contrôle en matière de séparation comptable devront être mis en place d'ici à juin 2015.

Sur la base de la législation existante, la Commission a engagé un certain nombre de procédures d'infraction pour vérifier la compatibilité des règles nationales relatives à la transparence financière avec la législation de l'UE.

La Commission a en outre proposé dans son quatrième paquet ferroviaire des cloisonnements très stricts (dits «murailles de Chine») pour les entreprises intégrées, qui, si ledit paquet est adopté, auront pour effet de séparer totalement les circuits financiers entre l'infrastructure et le reste de l'entreprise intégrée. Cette mesure va au-delà de la simple interdiction de transférer des fonds publics et entraînera une interdiction totale de tous les flux financiers en vue de faciliter aussi le contrôle des dispositions relatives à la séparation comptable.

La refonte prévoit la présentation par la Commission, d'ici fin 2014, d'un rapport aux colégislateurs sur l'efficacité des dispositifs mis en place par la directive 2012/34/UE pour les organismes de contrôle nationaux, et la nécessité de créer un organe de régulation au niveau de l'UE pourra être examinée à ce moment-là.

Les divergences entre les aspects techniques d'un État membre à un autre existent depuis des années et ne peuvent pas toutes être considérées systématiquement comme une violation des règles en matière de concurrence, bien qu'il ne soit pas exclu que certains de ces divergences techniques aient des finalités anticoncurrentielles. La Commission a pris plusieurs mesures (les STI, par exemple) en vue d'harmoniser les aspects techniques de manière à instaurer des conditions de concurrence équitables pour tous les opérateurs de l'UE, et ces efforts seront renforcés par le pilier technique du quatrième paquet ferroviaire.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014077/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) and Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: Rail transport

When will the Commission complete the implementation of the Single European Railway Area and ensure full transparency in the flows of money between infrastructure managers and railway undertakings? What progress has been made? What is holding up the drafting of a proposal by the Commission?

Doe the Commission plan to study the possibility of adopting a legislative proposal for a European regulatory body that would cooperate with existing national regulators and act where they do not exist or, where appropriate, when they are inactive?

The single market in the rail freight sector is affected by incorrect or incomplete transposition of EC law by Member States and by bottlenecks to cross-border mobility that harm competition and growth.

Doe the Commission believe that the market barriers put in place by operators or technical aspects that differ from one Member State to another, such as track gauges, energy supplies, signalling systems and other similar obstacles concerning the interoperability and accessibility of infrastructure can be considered infringements of competition rules?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(5 February 2014)

Directive 2012/34/EU (the Recast) confirmed the existing rules on separation of accounts between infrastructure managers and railway undertakings, and created the obligation to submit detailed accounts to the regulatory body, with a view to prevent cross-subsidisation. This obligation and the control power for the regulators on account separation will have to be introduced by June 2015.

On the basis of the existing law, the Commission has started a number of infringement procedures to check compatibility of national rules on financial transparency with EU legislation.

In addition, the Commission proposed in its Fourth Rail Package very strict 'Chinese walls' for integrated companies, which will, if adopted, lead to completely separate financial circuits between infrastructure and the rest of the integrated undertaking. This goes beyond the pure prohibition to transfer public funds, and will lead to a complete prohibition of all money flows, also in order to facilitate the control of the provisions on account separation.

The Recast foresees a report from the Commission to the co-legislators by the end of 2014 on the effectiveness of the arrangements put in place by Directive 2012/34/EU for national regulators and the need for an EU regulator may be considered at that time.

Technical aspects that differ from one Member State to another have existed for years and cannot systematically all be considered as infringing of competition rules, although it is not excluded that some of them have anti-competitive purposes. The Commission took a number of actions (e.g. TSIs) to harmonise technical aspects in order to create a level playing field for all EU operators, and the technical pillar of the Fourth Package will further strengthen these efforts.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014078/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) et Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(12 décembre 2013)

Objet: Études d'impact des projets de coopération

La Commission pourrait-elle accéder à la demande du Parlement et réaliser des études d'impact à grande échelle des projets de l'Union en matière de coopération au développement, qui devraient comprendre une analyse de leurs conséquences du point de vue des Droits de l'homme, afin de garantir que les efforts réalisés par l'Union en faveur du développement ne contribuent pas à marginaliser plus encore des groupes victimes de discrimination et que les fonds européens soient répartis de manière équitable entre les différentes régions de chaque pays, en fonction de leurs besoins et de leur niveau de développement?

Réponse donnée par M. Piebalgs au nom de la Commission
(14 février 2014)

Depuis 2011, le programme de l'UE pour le changement ([1]) place explicitement les Droits de l'homme, la démocratie et d'autres principes clés de bonne gouvernance au cœur de la coopération au développement. La prise de décision dans le domaine de la coopération au développement est à présent également guidée par la volonté d'améliorer la cohérence des instruments et des ressources de l'UE, et ce par l'adoption d'une approche globale face aux situations de fragilité, de crise ou de conflit.

La Commission n'applique pas une méthode d'évaluation unique pour ses programmes et projets en matière de coopération au développement étant donné que les divers instruments ont chacun leur cycle de programmation stratégique spécifique en fonction de la zone géographique et du domaine thématique. L'évaluation réalisée présente donc plusieurs facettes. Cela étant, le suivi et l'évaluation font partie intégrante du travail quotidien des délégations de l'UE et des services de la Commission. En 2011, la Commission a publié une analyse indépendante concernant son soutien aux Droits de l'homme, disponible à l'adresse suivante: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/evaluation/evaluation_reports/2011/1298_docs_en.htm.

Les services de la Commission et le SEAE affinent constamment les méthodes utilisées et cherchent à être au fait des meilleures pratiques, en coordination avec la communauté des donateurs internationaux et les États membres de l'UE en particulier. Ainsi, des orientations concernant une approche fondée sur le respect des droits englobant tous les Droits de l'homme dans la coopération au développement de l'UE sont en cours de finalisation. En outre, la récente réforme des opérations d'appui budgétaire, qui intègre désormais pleinement les grandes préoccupations du programme pour le changement, place les valeurs fondamentales au centre des critères d'éligibilité.

([1]) COM(2011) 637 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014078/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) and Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: Impact assessments for cooperation projects

Will the Commission act on Parliament's request to conduct extensive impact assessments of EU development cooperation projects, which should include an assessment of their impact on the human rights situation, in order to ensure that EU development efforts do not contribute to further marginalisation of groups suffering discrimination and that EU funds are distributed fairly among different regions within a country, on the basis of their needs and level of development?

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

Since 2011, the EU Agenda for Change ([1]) has explicitly placed human rights, democracy and other key elements of good governance at the core of EU development cooperation. Decision making in the area of development cooperation is now also guided by the commitment to better coherence of EU instruments and resources through a comprehensive approach to situations of fragility, crisis and conflict.

The Commission does not apply one single assessment methodology for its development cooperation programmes and projects, because the various instruments have their specific geographic and thematic strategic programming cycle. The assessment done is therefore multi-faceted, but monitoring and evaluation is indeed part and parcel of the daily work of EU Delegations and Commission services. In 2011 the Commission published an independent evaluation of its support for human rights which is available at http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/evaluation/evaluation_reports/2011/1298_docs_en.htm

The Commission departments together with the EEAS are constantly refining the methodologies used in an effort to keep abreast with best practices, in coordination with the international donor community and EU MS in particular. For instance, guidance on a Rights Based Approach encompassing all Human Rights in EU development cooperation is being finalised. Moreover, the recent reform of budget support operations, which now fully integrate the key concerns of the Agenda for Change, places fundamental values at the core of eligibility assessments.

([1]) COM(2011) 637 final.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014080/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) et Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(12 décembre 2013)

Objet: Financement du secteur automobile

Comment la Commission compte-t-elle optimiser et renforcer l'utilisation des moyens financiers disponibles afin de stimuler l'investissement dans la mobilité durable, au-delà des subventions publiques, au moyen d'incitations fiscales pour les PME (crédits impôt-recherche, bonus/malus écologique, primes à la casse) et les instruments financiers privés (fonds de capital-risque, «investisseurs providentiels») et publics (Banque européenne d'investissement)?

La Commission pourrait-elle réaliser une étude comparative approfondie de la fiscalité appliquée au secteur automobile dans l'Union, afin de simplifier et de rationaliser la charge fiscale qui pèse aujourd'hui sur la production et sur le commerce de services liés aux véhicules à moteur, ainsi que de réduire la charge bureaucratique?

Réponse donnée par M. Šemeta au nom de la Commission
(11 février 2014)

La Commission n'a pour l'instant aucune intention de stimuler l'investissement dans la mobilité durable au moyen d'incitations fiscales. En vertu du principe de subsidiarité, seuls les États membres auraient la possibilité d'introduire des dispositions nationales relatives à ce domaine.

Cependant, un instrument financier idoine pour les PME (COSME) rendra possibles des opérations de financement en matière de mobilité durable qui, autrement, ne serait pas prise en compte sur le marché. Dans le cadre de l'initiative Horizon 2020, un nouvel instrument consacré aux PME, destiné plus particulièrement aux petites entreprises très innovantes, offrira d'autres possibilités de financement pour la recherche à haut risque en phase initiale et pour la stimulation d'importantes innovations. S'appuyant sur le succès du mécanisme de financement avec partage des risques, la Commission a mis en place en 2011, conjointement avec la BEI, un instrument spécifique avec partage des risques proposant des prêts et des financements aux PME qui mènent des projets de recherche, de développement et d'innovation. Une attention toute particulière a été accordée aux entreprises de taille intermédiaire (ETI) innovantes avec l'initiative de financement de la croissance et l'initiative ETI ([1]).

Par le passé, la Commission a pris des initiatives afin d'établir une structure uniforme à l'échelle de l'UE pour la taxation des voitures particulières. En 2005, la Commission a présenté une proposition de directive (COM(2005) 261) censée imposer aux États membres de restructurer leurs systèmes de taxation des voitures particulières. Cette proposition n'a pas bénéficié du soutien unanime nécessaire des États membres.

En 2012, la Commission a publié une communication et un document de travail interne de la Commission précisant les règles à respecter par les États membres lors de l'imposition de taxes d'immatriculation et de circulation ([2]). À l'heure actuelle, aucune nouvelle initiative n'est envisagée par la Commission dans le domaine de la taxation des véhicules; il n'existe pas non plus d'initiatives spécifiques à un secteur dans le domaine de l'impôt sur les sociétés.

([1]) http://www.eib.org/infocentre/press/news/all/eib-steps-up-support-for-european-smes-and-mid-caps.htm
([2]) Ces documents sont disponibles sur les sites internet suivants:
http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/resources/documents/taxation/other_taxes/passenger_car/com_2012_756_en.pdf
http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/resources/documents/taxation/other_taxes/passenger_car/swd_2012_429_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014080/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) and Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: Funding of the automotive sector

How does the Commission intend to optimise and bolster the use of the financial resources available to stimulate investment in sustainable mobility over and above public subsidies, by means of tax incentives for SMEs (tax credits for research, CO_2 emissions tax-and-rebate schemes, vehicle scrappage schemes) and both private funding instruments (risk capital funds, 'business angels') and public funding instruments (European Investment Bank)?

Will the Commission carry out an in-depth country-comparative study of taxation applied to the automotive sector in the EU, in order to simplify and rationalise the current tax burden on production and on trade in motor vehicle-related services and reduce red tape?

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

The Commission currently has no intention to stimulate investment in sustainable mobility via tax incentives. Under the subsidiarity principle only Member States would have the possibility to introduce relevant national provisions in this area.

However, COSME a dedicated financing instrument for SMEs will permit funding operations in the area of sustainable mobility that would otherwise not receive any attention on the market. Under Horizon 2020, a new dedicated SME instrument designed specifically for highly innovative smaller companies will provide further funding opportunities for early-stage and high-risk research as well as for stimulating breakthrough innovation. Building on the success of the Risk Sharing Finance Facility the Commission in 2011 set up, together with the EIB, the Risk Sharing Instrument Facility providing loans and leases to SMEs undertaking research, development or innovation projects. Further focus has been put on the innovative mid-caps with the Growth Financing Initiative and the Mid-Cap Initiative ([1]).

In the past the Commission has taken initiatives to create an EU structure for passenger cars taxation. In 2005, the Commission presented a proposal for a directive (COM(2005) 261)) that would have required Member States to restructure their passenger car taxation system. This proposal did not receive the required unanimous support of the Member States.

In 2012, the Commission published a communication and a Commission Staff Working Document clarifying the rules Member States should respect when applying registration and circulation taxes ([2]). At the moment there are no new initiatives envisaged by the Commission in the area of vehicles taxation or any sector-specific initiatives in the company tax area.

([1]) http://www.eib.org/infocentre/press/news/all/eib-steps-up-support-for-european-smes-and-mid-caps.htm
([2]) The documents can be found under the following links:.
http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/resources/documents/taxation/other_taxes/passenger_car/com_2012_756_en.pdf
http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/resources/documents/taxation/other_taxes/passenger_car/swd_2012_429_en.pdf

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014081/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) et Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(12 décembre 2013)

Objet: Marchés extérieurs et relations commerciales du secteur automobile

La compétitivité d'une grande partie de nos entreprises automobiles se détériore à cause de la concurrence accrue, et parfois déloyale, des entreprises de pays tiers. Une grande partie de nos entreprises peuvent réussir si on leur donne la possibilité de répondre à la demande croissante sur les nouveaux marchés d'exportation. La Commission doit réorganiser sa politique commerciale.

1. La Commission compte-t-elle coordonner les mesures prises par les États membres pour la promotion des entreprises de l'Union et la défense de leurs produits, des investissements et des droits de propriété intellectuelle et industrielle dans les pays tiers?

2. Pourrait-elle centraliser tous les outils européens destinés à l'exportation, et en particulier ceux axés sur les PME (Small Business, Big World), notamment par la création d'une plateforme numérique complète, accessible et sectorielle?

3. Partage-t-elle notre avis d'imposer progressivement, au cœur de nos relations commerciales, le principe de réciprocité, sous-estimé par la Commission dans «Cars 2020», en insistant sur la nécessité de supprimer les obstacles commerciaux non tarifaires dans le secteur automobile?

4. Comment va-t-elle améliorer le temps de réactivité pour le lancement d'enquêtes et l'application des instruments de protection des échanges commerciaux?

5. Nous rejoint-elle dans la volonté d'inclure la notion de compétitivité du secteur automobile dans ses analyses d'impact ex ante sur les futurs accords commerciaux?

6. Ne devrait-elle pas réaliser de nouvelles études après l'entrée en vigueur et d'établir régulièrement des analyses cumulatives de l'impact des accords, qu'ils soient actuellement en vigueur ou en cours de négociation, selon des critères spécifiques et définis, y compris la manière dont les parties prenantes sont associées?

Réponse donnée par M. De Gucht au nom de la Commission
(12 février 2014)

À travers les négociations menées dans le cadre de la politique commerciale de l'UE, la Commission cherche à donner aux entreprises européennes la possibilité d'exploiter des opportunités de commerce extérieur et d'améliorer leur accès au marché.

La Commission négocie des accords de libre-échange (ALE) qui visent notamment à supprimer les obstacles tarifaires et non tarifaires ou à mettre en place des disciplines en matière de protection des investissements et de la propriété industrielle de l'UE. La Commission s'efforce également d'améliorer les conditions dans lesquelles s'inscrivent les activités des opérateurs européens à l'étranger, par la négociation de traités d'investissement, la tenue de dialogues bilatéraux (sur la propriété industrielle) ou encore l'application de stratégies telles que la stratégie d'accès aux marchés (SAM) ou la future stratégie visant à assurer le respect des droits de propriété intellectuelle à l'étranger. En même temps, elle s'oppose aux tendances protectionnistes et les surveille.

De plus, la Commission évalue régulièrement l'impact de ses politiques. Depuis 2012, les analyses d'impact tiennent compte des effets de toute initiative sur la compétitivité de l'UE, y compris dans le secteur automobile. La Commission lance des analyses d'impact avant et pendant les négociations des ALE et fait examiner les répercussions de ces accords après leur signature. Ces analyses couvrent les effets de l'ensemble des accords en vigueur. En outre, les ALE existants sont régulièrement évalués.

Les accords prévus ne font pas l'objet de travaux d'examen, mais une étude unique a été lancée dans le cadre du plan d'action CARS2020 afin d'analyser les effets cumulés qu'auront sur le secteur automobile les accords signés, négociés ou prévus, et les parties prenantes ont eu l'occasion de s'exprimer sur l'étude en question.

Dans le domaine des procédures de défense commerciale, la Commission a proposé de raccourcir de deux mois le délai prévu pour la prise de mesures provisoires.

Si les mesures visant à encourager les échanges commerciaux relèvent de la compétence des États membres, la Commission offre des services en ligne aux exportateurs, y compris aux PME, par l'intermédiaire de sa page «L'Europe est à vous» ([1]) et de sa base de données relative à l'accès aux marchés ([2]).

([1]) http://europa.eu/youreurope/business/index_fr.htm

([2]) http://madb.europa.eu.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014081/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) and Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: Foreign markets and trade relations in the automotive sector

Many of our automotive firms are becoming less competitive as a result of growing competition — some of it unfair — from non-EU firms. Many of our firms have the potential to become successful if they are allowed to meet the growing demand on new export markets. The Commission must reorganise its trade policy.

1. Does the Commission plan to coordinate Member State measures for promoting EU firms and protecting EU products, investment and intellectual and industrial property rights outside the EU?

2. Could it centralise all EU export instruments, in particular those geared to SMEs (Small Business, Big World), e.g. through the creation of a comprehensive, accessible and sectoral digital platform?

3. Does it agree with us that the principle of reciprocity — to which the Commission pays too little attention in CARS 2020 — should be made a central tenet of our trade relations, pushing for the dismantling of non-tariff barriers in the automotive sector?

4. How will it shorten the time taken to instigate investigations and apply trade defence instruments?

5. Does it share our desire to see its *ex ante* impact assessments on future trade agreements extended to the notion of competitiveness in the automobile sector?

6. Should it not carry out fresh studies following their entry into force, and regularly assess the cumulative impact of agreements, both those currently in force and those subject to ongoing negotiations, based on specific and defined criteria, including the way in which stakeholders are involved?

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

In conducting the EU trade policy through its negotiating, the Commission strives to allow EU firms to tap on foreign market opportunities and enhanced market access.

The Commission negotiates Free Trade Agreements (FTA) to, e.g. dismantle tariffs and non-tariff barriers or set-up disciplines on the protection of EU investments or industrial property. It also improves conditions for EU operators' activities abroad through the negotiation of investment treaties, bilateral dialogues (on industrial property) or strategies such as the Market Access Strategy (MAS) or the future Strategy on Enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights abroad. At the same time it opposes and monitors protectionist tendencies.

The Commission also regularly evaluates its policies' impacts. Since 2012 impact assessments look at the impact of any initiative on EU competitiveness, including in the cars sector. The Commission launches Impact assessments before and during FTA negotiations, and Studies of consequence after signing an FTA. Such analysis includes the effect of all agreements in force. Existing FTAs are also regularly evaluated.

Planned agreements are not subject to studies but in the context of CARS2020 a unique study was launched on the cumulative impact on the cars sector of agreements signed, negotiated or planned, on which stakeholders were able to comment.

As to trade defence proceedings, the Commission proposed to cut the time for taking decisions on provisional measures by 2 months.

While trade promotion is a competence of the EU Member States, the Commission offers online services for exporters, including SMEs, via 'Your Europe [1]' or the Market Access Database [2].

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[1] http://europa.eu/youreurope/business/index_en.htm
[2] http://madb.europa.eu

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014082/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) et Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(12 décembre 2013)

Objet: Relance du secteur automobile

Le déclin général et la crise qui frappent le marché européen sont connus de tous, y compris du secteur automobile.

1. Pourquoi la Commission omet-elle d'analyser les raisons fondamentales de ce déclin, notamment la grande diversité des situations dans le secteur (entreprises, segments et types de marchés, produits, branches) et les nombreuses mutations structurelles (démographiques, sociologiques, comportementales, économiques et techniques) intervenues au niveau de la demande?

2. Quelles sont les réponses différenciées qui existent au niveau européen afin de stimuler la demande?

3. Pourquoi, dans ses derniers rapports, la Commission ne fait-elle aucun cas de la surcapacité de production, un problème pourtant commun à l'ensemble du secteur qui a inévitablement des répercussions à court et à moyen termes (chaîne, emplois, économie régionale)?

4. La Commission compte-t-elle accéder à la demande du Parlement en produisant rapidement:

a) une étude sur l'ampleur de la surcapacité en Europe et sur les bonnes pratiques pour y répondre, notamment hors d'Europe (États-Unis);

b) un plan d'action exposant l'ensemble des instruments politiques disponibles dans ce domaine, en particulier ceux qui se rapportent à la recherche et à l'innovation?

5. Quelles sont les propositions de la Commission en vue d'un soutien plus actif et coordonné aux travailleurs et aux entreprises du secteur automobile pour promouvoir la reconversion des compétences et de l'emploi vers d'autres filières en croissance?

Réponse donnée par M. Tajani au nom de la Commission
(11 février 2014)

La situation actuelle du secteur automobile a été analysée de manière consensuelle dans le cadre du groupe à haut niveau CARS 21 et se reflète dans le plan d'action CARS 2020. Dans le cadre du groupe à haut niveau CARS 2020, la Commission entretient, avec les acteurs concernés, un dialogue permanent sur des problèmes présentant une importance clé.

La stimulation de la demande se concentre essentiellement sur les programmes de mise à la casse et les mécanismes incitatifs utilisés par les États membres pour favoriser l'adoption par le marché de véhicules propres et économes en énergie, améliorer la sécurité et promouvoir la diversification des sources d'énergie. Afin d'éviter le risque de fragmentation du marché intérieur, la Commission a publié en 2013 des lignes directrices ([1]) présentant les principes selon lesquels les États membres devraient recourir à des incitations financières pour accroître le plus efficacement la demande.

Dans le contexte d'une profonde restructuration, les problèmes de surcapacité restent au premier plan des intérêts du groupe à haut niveau CARS 2020. La Commission a l'intention de l'informer des progrès accomplis, y compris dans le domaine de la recherche et de l'innovation, dans un prochain rapport prévu pour ce printemps.

De plus, la task-force sur Ford Genk, créée par la Commission pour atténuer les incidences sociales de la fermeture et préparer la restructuration de la région, pourrait servir d'exemple de bonne pratique dans ce secteur.

La Commission a récemment adopté le cadre de qualité de l'Union européenne pour l'anticipation des changements et des restructurations ([2]) qui invite l'industrie et les autorités publiques à suivre certains principes et bonnes pratiques afin de faciliter l'investissement dans le capital humain et de promouvoir la réaffectation des ressources humaines vers des activités caractérisées par un fort potentiel de croissance et des emplois de qualité. La Commission soutient et cofinance la création d'un conseil sectoriel pour l'emploi et les compétences dans le secteur automobile, prévue d'ici à la fin de 2014.

([1]) SWD(2013) 27 final.
([2]) COM(2013) 882 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014082/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) and Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: Recovery of the automotive sector

It is well known that the European market is in a state of decline and crisis, including the automotive sector.

1. Why has the Commission failed to analyse the fundamental causes of this decline such as the widely varying circumstances in the industry (firms, market segments and types, products, sectors) and the large number of structural changes (of a demographic, sociological, behavioural, economic and technical nature) that are taking place on the demand side?

2. What measures specifically tailored to individual circumstances are there at European level in order to stimulate demand?

3. Why, in its latest reports, does the Commission fail to address the issue of over-capacity, despite the fact that it is a problem shared by the whole of the industry and one that has unavoidable short- and medium-term repercussions (chain, jobs, regional economy)?

4. Will the Commission comply with Parliament's request to submit at the earliest opportunity:

(a) a study on the scale of over-capacity in Europe and the best practice in addressing this problem, including outside the EU (United States);

(b) an action plan setting out all the policy tools available in this area, including in particular those involving research and innovation?

5. What are the Commission's proposals for more active and coordinated support for workers and companies in the automotive sector to promote the reorientation of skills and jobs towards other sectors that are growing?

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

The current state of the automotive sector has been consensually analysed in the context of the CARS 21 High Level Group (HLG) and reflected in the CARS 2020 Action Plan. The Commission is in constant dialogue with stakeholders on issues of key importance in the context of the CARS 2020 HLG.

Demand stimulation primarily concentrates on scrappage and incentives schemes used by the Member States to foster market uptake of clean and energy-efficient vehicles, improve safety and promote diversification of energy sources. With a view to avoiding possible fragmentation of the internal market, the Commission published in 2013 guidelines ([1]) introducing the principles of how Member States should use financial incentives to best increase demand.

In the context of far-reaching restructuring, the issues of overcapacity remain at the forefront of the CARS 2020 HLG interests. The Commission intends to report to the HLG on the progress made including research and innovation in a forthcoming report scheduled for this spring.

In addition, the Task Force on Ford Genk, set up by the Commission to mitigate the social impact of the closure and prepare the restructuring of the region, could serve as an example of best practice in the sector.

The Commission recently adopted the EU Quality Framework for anticipation of change and restructuring ([2]) that calls for certain principles and best practice to be followed by industry and public authorities with a view to facilitating the investment in human capital and promoting the reallocation of human resources to activities with high growth potential and quality of jobs. The Commission supports and co-finances the creation of a Sectoral Employment and Skills Council in the automotive sector, due by end 2014.

([1]) SWD(2013) 27 final.
([2]) COM(2013) 882 final.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014083/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) et Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(12 décembre 2013)

Objet: Otage de Veolia

Nous nous inquiétons du fait que les investisseurs ne cessent de poursuivre les États devant les tribunaux internationaux pour avoir adopté et appliqué des législations et des réglementations d'intérêt public, y compris des procédures par lesquelles des investisseurs poursuivent des États membres de l'UE.

En outre, certains investisseurs implantés dans l'UE poursuivent aussi les autorités de pays en développement.

À titre d'exemple, la multinationale française Veolia poursuit actuellement le gouvernement égyptien, entre autres pour de récentes augmentations du salaire minimum.

Plus tôt en juin, la société suédoise Vattenfall a intenté un procès au gouvernement allemand pour avoir restreint l'utilisation de l'énergie nucléaire.

Les entreprises multinationales utilisent ainsi les règles de protection des investisseurs et le règlement des litiges entre investisseurs et États pour atteindre les objectifs fixés par la société, en augmentant le coût de la défense de la politique et des règles publiques pour le contribuable.

La Commission partage-t-elle notre avis selon lequel cette situation est inacceptable?

Sur le cas de Veolia, la Commission compte-t-elle agir afin de dissuader ou faire dissuader l'entreprise qui veut ni plus ni moins que la suppression du salaire minimum?

Cette entreprise, au-delà du fait qu'elle dénigre totalement le droit des travailleurs et tente d'annihiler un acquis social déterminant, ne ternit-elle pas l'image de l'Europe sur un autre continent?

Les règles de protection des investisseurs ne devraient-elles pas être revues?

Réponse donnée par M. De Gucht au nom de la Commission
(14 février 2014)

La Commission est consciente des préoccupations que certains cas récents de règlement des différends entre investisseurs et États (RDIE) ont suscitées dans l'opinion publique. Depuis 2010, la Commission a par conséquent apporté des modifications au système de protection des investissements et de règlement des différends entre investisseurs et États. Les dispositions de l'UE ne permettent pas à un investisseur de contester avec succès une mesure réglementaire non discriminatoire telle que l'introduction ou l'augmentation d'un salaire minimum.

Les dispositions en matière de règlement des différends entre investisseurs et États ne s'appliqueraient qu'à un nombre très limité d'actes illégaux que les États peuvent commettre à l'égard d'un investisseur, tels qu'une expropriation sans compensation, une discrimination ou un déni d'accès à la justice. Alors que les investissements se déroulent sans heurts dans leur immense majorité, les investisseurs de l'UE rencontrent parfois des problèmes dans le pays hôte. C'est pourquoi les accords bilatéraux d'investissement, dont le nombre dépasse 3 000 — les États membres de l'UE à eux seuls en ont conclu plus de 1 400 — prévoient la possibilité pour un investisseur d'utiliser le règlement des différends entre investisseurs et États.

Les affaires en cours auxquelles les Honorables Parlementaires se réfèrent découlent d'accords d'investissement existants, conclus par les États membres. La Commission n'est pas directement impliquée dans ces affaires et n'est pas en mesure de les commenter.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014083/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) and Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: Blackmail by Veolia

We are concerned that investors are continuing to challenge States in international tribunals for adopting and implementing legislation and regulations in the public interest, including cases in which investors are taking EU Member States to court.

Moreover, some investors based in the EU are also taking the authorities of developing countries to court.

For example, the French multinational Veolia is currently taking the Egyptian Government to court for recently increasing the minimum wage, among other things.

Earlier in June, the Swedish company Vattenfall brought a case against the German Government for restricting the use of nuclear power.

In this way, multinational companies are using investor protection rules and investor-state dispute settlement as a means of achieving corporate aims, increasing the cost to the taxpayer of defending public policy and rules.

Does the Commission agree with us that this situation is unacceptable?

In the case of Veolia, does the Commission plan to deter or discourage the company, which wants nothing less than the abolition of the minimum wage?

Is Veolia, as well as totally disregarding workers' rights and trying to destroy a crucial social asset, not tarnishing Europe's image abroad?

Should investor protection rules not be reviewed?

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

The Commission is aware of the concerns that some recent Investor-State Dispute settlement (ISDS) cases have raised in the eyes of the public. That is why since 2010, the Commission has been making changes to the investment protection and ISDS system. EU provisions will not allow an investor to successfully challenge a non-discriminatory regulatory measure, such as the introduction or increase of a minimum wage.

Investor-State Dispute settlement provisions would apply to only a very limited number of unlawful actions that states may take against an investor such as expropriation without compensation, discrimination or a denial of access to justice. While the vast majority of investments proceed smoothly, EU investors do at times encounter problems in the host state. That is why the more than 3,000 bilateral investment agreements -of which EU Member States alone have signed more than 1400 — include the possibility for an investor to use ISDS.

The ongoing cases the Honourable Members refer to are based on existing investment agreements, signed by EU Member States. The Commission has no direct involvement in these cases and cannot comment on them.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014084/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) et Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(12 décembre 2013)

Objet: Résolution des contreparties centrales et des dépositaires centraux de titres (DCT)

La Commission compte-t-elle, comme le lui demande le Parlement, donner la priorité au redressement et à la résolution des contreparties centrales et des dépositaires centraux de titres (DCT) soumis au risque de crédit?

Au moment d'examiner s'il y a lieu de mettre au point une législation similaire pour les autres institutions financières, la Commission compte-t-elle opérer une distinction appropriée entre chaque type d'institution, en accordant toute l'attention voulue aux établissements qui sont susceptibles d'exposer l'économie à des risques systémiques?

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

Dans la consultation relative à un éventuel cadre de redressement et de résolution pour les établissements financiers autres que les banques publiée par la Commission le 5 octobre 2012, cette dernière a fait part de son intention d'examiner la nécessité d'établir des cadres de redressement et de résolution appropriés pour les établissements financiers non bancaires. Elle a notamment souligné qu'il existait un large consensus sur l'importance systémique des infrastructures de marché financier — les contreparties centrales et les dépositaires centraux de titres. Pour les autres types d'établissements non bancaires, il conviendra de procéder à une étude au cas par cas.

Aucune décision n'a encore été prise au sujet de la nature et de l'étendue d'une initiative future concernant le redressement et la résolution des établissements financiers non bancaires. Le rapport adopté par le Parlement en 2013 constitue une source très utile et sera attentivement examiné lors de l'élaboration de l'initiative de la Commission, qui est actuellement prévue pour la fin de 2014.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014084/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) and Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: Resolution of central counterparties and central securities depositories (CSDs)

Does the Commission, as called upon by Parliament, plan to prioritise recovery and resolution of central counterparties and of those central securities depositories (CSDs) which are exposed to credit risk?

When considering whether it is appropriate to develop similar legislation for other financial institutions, will the Commission differentiate appropriately between each type, giving due consideration to those which have the potential to pose systemic risks to the economy?

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

In the Consultation on a possible recovery and resolution framework for financial institutions other than banks published by the Commission on 5 October 2012, the Commission has indicated its intention to consider the need to develop appropriate recovery and resolution frameworks for non-bank financial institutions. In particular, it noted that there was a widespread agreement on the systemic importance of financial market infrastructures — central counterparties and central securities depositories. For other types of non-bank institutions, a case-by-case analysis is necessary.

No decision has been made yet as to the nature and scope of a future initiative on the recovery and resolution of non-bank financial institutions. The report adopted by the Parliament in 2013 constitutes a very useful source and will be carefully considered in the development of Commission's initiative, currently scheduled for the end 2014.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014085/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) et Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(12 décembre 2013)

Objet: Répartition institutionnelle des missions en ce qui concerne les Roms

La Commission pourrait-elle préciser, comme le lui demande le Parlement, la répartition institutionnelle des missions et des responsabilités des organisations, forums et organes concernés. Pourrait-elle également définir clairement le rôle de ces acteurs, notamment de la *task force* de l'Union sur les Roms, du réseau européen des points de contact nationaux, de la plateforme européenne pour l'inclusion des Roms, de l'Agence des droits fondamentaux de l'Union européenne et de son groupe de travail ad hoc sur l'inclusion des Roms, dans le cadre de la surveillance, du contrôle et de la coordination du cadre européen pour les stratégies nationales d'intégration des Roms?

Réponse donnée par Mme Reding au nom de la Commission
(14 février 2014)

La Commission européenne soutient les États membres dans leurs efforts pour réaliser l'inclusion sociale et économique des Roms, elle réexamine chaque année la mise en œuvre des stratégies nationales d'intégration des Roms et fait rapport au Parlement européen et au Conseil; enfin, elle suit la situation des Roms dans les États membres dans le cadre de la stratégie Europe 2020. À la suite de la proposition de la Commission de juin 2013, la recommandation du Conseil sur les mesures d'intégration effective des Roms dans les États membres a été adoptée à l'unanimité le 9 décembre 2013 ([1]).

La task-force sur les Roms assiste la Commission dans le contrôle de la mise en œuvre du cadre de l'UE pour les stratégies nationales d'intégration des Roms fondées sur la communication de la Commission du 5 avril 2011 ([2]) et les conclusions du Conseil du 19 mai 2011 ([3]).

La Commission soutient les États membres dans l'élaboration de leurs stratégies. À cet effet, un réseau des points de contact nationaux de tous les États membres de l'UE a été mis en place en octobre 2012 afin de leur permettre de partager les résultats de leurs mesures en faveur de l'inclusion des Roms, d'échanger les meilleures pratiques en la matière et d'évaluer mutuellement la mise en œuvre de leurs stratégies.

La plateforme européenne pour l'inclusion des Roms continue à fournir un espace de réflexion où les différents acteurs peuvent échanger leurs points de vue.

L'Agence des droits fondamentaux de l'UE continue de mener des enquêtes dans l'ensemble de l'Union et travaille en étroite collaboration avec les États membres, de façon à les soutenir dans l'élaboration de systèmes de suivi nationaux solides. En 2012, l'Agence a créé un groupe de travail ad hoc pour aider les États membres participants (11) à mettre en place des mécanismes de suivi efficaces afin d'obtenir des résultats comparables et fiables.

([1]) 2013/C 378/01.
([2]) COM(2011) 173 final.
([3]) 10658/11.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014085/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) and Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: Institutional division of tasks in respect of the Roma

Could the Commission specify the institutional division of tasks and responsibilities among involved organisations, forums and bodies, as called upon by Parliament? Could it also clearly define the role of these stakeholders — such as the EC Roma Task Force, the Network of National Contact Points, the European Roma Platform, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights and its ad hoc working group on Roma inclusion — in the supervision, control and coordination of the EU Framework of National Roma Inclusion Strategies?

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

The European Commission supports Member States in their efforts to address the social and economic inclusion of Roma, reviews annually the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategies and reports to the European Parliament and the Council and monitors the situation of Romas in Member States under the framework of the Europe 2020. Following the proposal of the Commission of June 2013, the Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States have been unanimously adopted on 9th December 2013. ([1])

The Roma Task Force supports the Commission in supervising the implementation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies based on the Commission's Communication of 5 April 2011 ([2]) and the Council Conclusions of 19 May 2011 ([3]).

The Commission supports Member States in developing their strategies. To this end, in October 2012 a network of the National Contact Points of all EU Member States was set up to share the results of their measures addressing Roma inclusion, exchange best practices and peer-review the implementation of their strategies.

The European Platform for Roma Inclusion continues to provide a forum for stakeholders to exchange views.

The EU's Fundamental Rights Agency continues its surveys across the EU and work closely with the Member States to support them in developing robust monitoring systems. In 2012, the Agency set up an ad hoc working group to help participating Member States (11) set up effective monitoring mechanisms to obtain reliable and comparable results.

([1]) 2013/C 378/01.
([2]) COM(2011) 173.
([3]) 10658/11.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014086/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) et Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(12 décembre 2013)

Objet: Stratégie d'inclusion des Roms

1. Comment la Commission soutient-elle les stratégies nationales d'inclusion des Roms?

2. Recherche-t-elle des indicateurs communs, comparables et fiables?

3. Met-elle au point un tableau de bord des indicateurs de l'inclusion des Roms dans l'Union, afin de présenter des données claires et sans ambiguïté, permettant de mesurer les progrès accomplis et de remplir l'objectif d'un suivi effectif?

Réponse donnée par Mme Reding au nom de la Commission
(14 février 2014)

La Commission soutient les efforts déployés par les États membres en faveur de l'intégration sociale et économique des Roms dans toute la mesure de ses compétences. Elle fait le point annuellement sur la mise en œuvre des stratégies nationales d'inclusion des Roms et fait rapport à cet égard au Parlement européen et au Conseil, ainsi que dans le cadre de la stratégie Europe 2020.

Le 26 juin 2013, la Commission a adopté sa proposition de recommandation du Conseil visant à améliorer l'efficacité des mesures d'intégration des Roms. Cette recommandation du Conseil, adoptée à l'unanimité le 9 décembre 2013, renforce le cadre de l'UE ainsi doté d'un instrument juridique non contraignant, et fournit des orientations aux États membres pour qu'ils mettent en œuvre leurs stratégies plus efficacement.

La Commission poursuit ses échanges bilatéraux avec les autorités compétentes des États membres ([1]) ainsi qu'avec les organisations de la société civile rom et tous les acteurs concernés. Pour renforcer le soutien financier européen à l'intégration des Roms, le nouveau cadre financier pluriannuel 2014-2020 prévoit des mesures permettant aux États membres d'utiliser plus facilement les fonds de l'UE à cette fin.

Concernant le tableau de bord des indicateurs, l'Agence des droits fondamentaux de l'UE ([2]) poursuit son étude dans l'ensemble de l'Union et sa collaboration avec les États membres afin d'aider ces derniers à établir des systèmes de suivi rigoureux. Les études couvrent la situation des Roms dans les quatre domaines clés du cadre de l'UE, à savoir l'éducation, l'emploi, la santé et le logement, ainsi que des questions ayant trait à la pauvreté et à la discrimination. Il est ainsi possible de comparer la situation des Roms avec les moyennes nationales en ce qui concerne les trois grands critères de référence de la stratégie Europe 2020 que sont le niveau d'emploi, le niveau d'instruction et le pourcentage de personnes menacées de pauvreté ([3]).

([1]) En octobre 2012, la Commission a mis sur pied un réseau de points de contact nationaux pour les Roms (NRCP). Le réseau se réunit régulièrement deux fois par an.
([2]) http://fra.europa.eu/fr/contact
([3]) En 2012, l'Agence a créé un groupe de travail ad hoc pour aider les États membres participants (10) à mettre en place des mécanismes de suivi efficaces afin d'obtenir des résultats fiables et comparables.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014086/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) and Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: Inclusion strategy for Roma

1. How is the Commission supporting National Roma Inclusion Strategies?

2. Is it seeking common, comparable and reliable indicators?

3. Is it developing a scoreboard of indicators relating to the inclusion of Roma in the EU, so that it can present clear, unambiguous data to measure progress and meet the objective of effective monitoring?

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

The Commission supports Member States in their efforts addressing the social and economic inclusion of Roma to the full extent of its powers. The Commission reviews annually the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategies and reports to the European Parliament and the Council, as well as under the framework of the Europe 2020.

On 26 June 2013, the Commission adopted its proposal for Council Recommendation to enhance the effectiveness of measures to achieve Roma integration. The Council Recommendation, adopted unanimously on 9 December 2013, reinforces the EU Framework with a non-binding legal instrument and provides guidance to Member States to implement their strategies more effectively.

The Commission continues to pursue bilateral exchanges with Member States' competent authorities ([1]) as well as with Roma civil society organisations and all stakeholders involved. To reinforce European financial support to Roma inclusion, the new multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020 facilitates for Member States the use of EU funds for Roma integration.

As regards the scoreboard of indicators, the EU's Fundamental Rights Agency ([2]) continues its survey across the EU and work with Member States to support them in developing robust monitoring systems. The surveys cover the situation of Roma in the four key areas of the EU framework: education, employment, health, housing and also questions on poverty and discrimination. Thus it is possible to compare the situation of Roma with national averages as concerns the three important benchmarks of the Europe 2020 strategy: employment levels, educational attainment and the rate of people at risk of poverty ([3]).

([1]) In October 2012, the Commission set up a network of the National Roma Contact Points (NRCP). The network meets regularly twice per year.
([2]) http://fra.europa.eu/en/contact
([3]) In 2012, the Agency set up an ad hoc working group to help participating Member States (10) set up effective monitoring mechanisms to obtain reliable and comparable results.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014088/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) et Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(12 décembre 2013)

Objet: Stratégie de gestion des défaillances

La Commission peut-elle nous assurer que les CCP disposent d'une stratégie de gestion des défaillances pour tous les produits compensés par la CCP, dans le cadre d'un plan de redressement plus large approuvé par l'autorité de surveillance, en mettant tout particulièrement l'accent sur les produits soumis à une compensation centrale, étant donné que la probabilité d'une concentration des risques est plus forte en pareil cas?

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

Le règlement sur l'infrastructure du marché européen (EMIR) et ses règlements délégués de la Commission ([1]) introduisent des exigences prudentielles strictes pour les contreparties centrales.

Ces règlements imposent aux contreparties centrales de mettre au point une stratégie de gestion des défaillances. Ils énoncent également des règles détaillées portant sur tous les aspects pertinents de la gestion des risques par les contreparties centrales, indépendamment des types de produits compensés: risque de crédit de la contrepartie, risque de liquidité, risques d'investissement, risque opérationnel, risques commerciaux et juridiques.

Le règlement EMIR garantit que la contrepartie centrale dispose de suffisamment de ressources pour couvrir les risques de contrepartie et de liquidité résultant de la défaillance des deux principaux membres compensateurs. Les contreparties centrales sont soumises à des exigences minimales obligatoires concernant la taille de leurs fonds de défaillance et la structure de leurs ressources financières. Le règlement EMIR énonce des exigences détaillées en matière de capital afin de garantir qu'une contrepartie centrale est couverte contre tout risque sans lien avec la défaillance d'un participant et qu'elle dispose de suffisamment de ressources pour parvenir à une reprise ou à une liquidation ordonnée des activités.

Le règlement EMIR établit également un cadre de surveillance harmonisé, fondé sur une coopération entre les autorités nationales et un collège des autorités de surveillance. Les modèles de gestion des risques des contreparties centrales doivent être validés par l'autorité compétente.

De plus, suite au rapport d'initiative adopté par le Parlement européen le 10 décembre 2013 et conformément aux travaux menés actuellement par le CSPR et l'OICV au niveau international, la Commission travaille à la mise au point d'un cadre de redressement et de résolution prévoyant notamment la possibilité d'activer des plans de redressement adéquats si toutes les lignes de défense définies dans le cadre actuel devaient s'avérer insuffisantes.

([1]) Règlement n° 648/2012 sur les produits dérivés de gré à gré, les contreparties centrales et les référentiels centraux (JO L 201 du 27.7.2012, p. 1); règlement délégué (UE) n° 152/2013 de la Commission complétant le règlement (UE) n° 648/2012 du Parlement européen et du Conseil par des normes techniques de réglementation concernant les exigences de capital applicables aux contreparties centrales (JO L 52 du 23.2.2013, p. 37) et règlement délégué (UE) n° 153/2013 complétant le règlement (UE) n° 648/2012 du Parlement européen et du Conseil en ce qui concerne les normes techniques de réglementation régissant les exigences applicables aux contreparties centrales (JO L 52 du 23.2.2013, p. 41).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014088/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) and Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: Default management strategy

Can the Commission assure us that CCPs have a default management strategy for all products that are cleared by the CCP as part of a wider recovery plan approved by the supervisor, with a particular focus on those products that are mandated for central clearing, as there is a higher likelihood of risk concentration in these cases?

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

The European Market Infrastructure Regulation (EMIR) and its Commission Delegated Regulations ([1]) introduce stringent prudential requirements for Central Counterparties (CCPs).

These Regulations require CCPs to develop a default management strategy. They also set out detailed rules covering all the relevant aspects of CCPs' risk management irrespective of the types of cleared products: counterparty credit, liquidity, investment, operational, business and legal risks.

EMIR ensures that a CCP has enough resources to cover the counterparty and liquidity risks generated by the default of the 2 biggest clearing members. CCPs are subject to mandatory minimum requirements on the size of their default funds and the structure of its financial resources. EMIR sets out detailed capital requirements to ensure that a CCP is covered against any risks that are unrelated to the default of a participant and that a CCP would have enough resources to ensure an orderly recovery or winding-down.

EMIR also introduces a harmonised supervisory framework based on cooperation between home authorities and a college of supervisors. CCPs risk management models have to be validated by the competent authority.

In addition, further to the own-initiative report adopted by the European Parliament on 10 December 2013 and in line with current international work performed by CPSS-IOSCO, the Commission is working on the development of a recovery and resolution framework including adequate recovery plans that could be activated if all the lines of defence defined under the current framework would prove insufficient.

([1]) Regulation No 648/2012 on OTC derivatives, central counterparties and trade repositories (OJ L 201, 27.7.2012, p. 1); Commission Delegated Regulations 152/2013 supplementing Regulation (EU) No 648/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to regulatory technical standards on capital requirements for central counterparties (OJ L 52, 23.2.2013, p. 37) and 153/2013 supplementing Regulation (EU) No 648/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to regulatory technical standards on requirements for central counterparties (OJ L 52, 23.2.2013, p. 41).

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014090/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) et Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(12 décembre 2013)

Objet: Accord de partenariat stratégique UE-Canada

Dans son rapport contenant la recommandation du Parlement européen au Conseil, à la Commission et au Service européen pour l'action extérieure sur les négociations relatives à un accord de partenariat stratégique UE-Canada, le Parlement européen insiste sur le fait que tout accord entre l'Union européenne et des pays tiers doit contenir des clauses de conditionnalité réciproque et de nature politique portant sur les Droits de l'homme et la démocratie, de manière à réaffirmer ensemble l'engagement mutuel à défendre ces valeurs et ce, quelle que soit la situation en matière de protection des Droits de l'homme dans les pays en question.

Comment se positionne la Commission?

Compte-t-elle faire adopter des garde-fous appropriés pour veiller à ce que le mécanisme de suspension ne fasse l'objet d'abus d'aucune des deux parties?

Compte-elle accéder à notre demande sur le fait que la conditionnalité doit figurer dans l'accord de partenariat stratégique conclu avec le Canada, afin de garantir la cohérence de l'approche commune définie par l'Union européenne dans ce domaine?

Comptez-vous faire en sorte que l'accord contienne l'engagement ferme d'une coopération interparlementaire reconnaissant le rôle important du Parlement européen et du parlement canadien dans les relations entre l'Union européenne et le Canada, notamment par l'intermédiaire de la délégation parlementaire établie de longue date?

Réponse donnée par Mme Ashton, Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante au nom de la Commission
(13 février 2014)

L'UE négocie des accords-cadres ainsi que des accords de partenariat et de coopération (APC) comportant un ensemble de clauses politiques standard, notamment sur les Droits de l'homme, et dont l'objectif est de faire valoir les valeurs fondamentales de l'UE et de les diffuser dans le monde. L'accord de partenariat stratégique UE-Canada est dans la dernière phase de négociations; il renforcera considérablement la politique étrangère et la coopération sectorielle bilatérale. La cohérence de l'«approche commune» reste en effet un objectif général des négociations en cours.

La promotion de la coopération interparlementaire ainsi que des échanges entre les délégations du Parlement européen et du Parlement canadien est l'un des objectifs de l'accord de partenariat stratégique UE-Canada.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014090/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) and Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: EU-Canada Strategic Partnership Agreement

In its report containing the European Parliament's recommendation to the Council, the Commission and the European External Action Service on the negotiations for an EU-Canada Strategic Partnership Agreement, Parliament stresses that all EU agreements with third countries should include reciprocal conditionality and political clauses on human rights and democracy, as a common reaffirmation of the mutual commitment to these values and regardless of the state of protection of human rights in those countries.

What is the Commission's opinion on this?

Will it ensure that appropriate safeguards are adopted so that the suspension mechanism cannot be abused by either side?

Will it grant our request for conditionality to form part of the SPA with Canada, to ensure the consistency of the EU's common approach on the matter?

Will you ensure that the agreement contains a solid commitment to inter-parliamentary cooperation that recognises the important role of the European Parliament and the Canadian Parliament in EU-Canada relations, especially through the long-established inter-parliamentary delegation?

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

The EU negotiates framework agreements/PCAs that contain a set of standard political clauses, notably on human rights, which aim to assert the EU's fundamental values and project them around the world. The EU-Canada Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) is in its last phase of negotiations; the agreement will significantly upgrade EU-Canada foreign policy and sectoral cooperation. One overall objective in these ongoing negotiations remains indeed the consistency of the so-called Common Approach.

Promoting interparliamentary cooperation as well as exchanges of delegations of the European Parliament and the Parliament of Canada is one of the objectives of the EU-Canada Strategic Partnership Agreement.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014091/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(12 décembre 2013)

Objet: EFSA — Aspartame

L'Autorité européenne de sécurité des aliments (EFSA) a conclu, le mardi 10 décembre, que la consommation d'aspartame, un additif controversé destiné à sucrer boissons et aliments, était sans risque au niveau aujourd'hui autorisé en Europe.

«L'aspartame et ses produits de dégradation sont sûrs pour la consommation humaine aux niveaux actuels d'exposition», a affirmé l'EFSA dans un communiqué rendant compte des conclusions d'une «première évaluation complète des risques associés à cet édulcorant de synthèse».

L'Autorité reconnaît toutefois que la phénylalanine, un des composants de l'aspartame, constitue un risque pour les personnes souffrant de phénylcétonurie, une maladie héréditaire du métabolisme, peu courante et diagnostiquée dès la naissance en Europe.

Ces dernières doivent s'abstenir d'en consommer, dans le cadre d'un régime alimentaire strict. «Pour la population générale, la dose journalière acceptable (DJA) actuelle de 40 mg par kg de poids corporel et par jour constitue une protection adéquate», juge l'Agence.

L'aspartame, édulcorant le plus utilisé au monde, se retrouve dans plus de 6 000 produits (du chewing-gum aux boissons allégées), dont plus de 500 produits pharmaceutiques. Selon le Réseau Environnement Santé (RES), qui regroupe des médecins et des chercheurs reconnus, 200 millions de personnes en consommeraient «régulièrement». Chez les enfants et les femmes en âge de procréer, l'absorption quotidienne est estimée entre 2,5 et 5 mg par kg de poids corporel.

1. La Commission compte-t-elle valider les conclusions de l'EFSA? Quelle est sa position vis-à-vis du rapport?

2. Les études sur lesquelles se repose l'EFSA sont-elles référencées et publiées. Dans l'affirmative, où? Dans la négative, pourquoi?

3. Qu'en est-il de la question de l'aspartame comme créateur d'envie? En effet, il est communément reproché à l'aspartame de créer une sensation de faim ce qui va à l'encontre de l'intérêt du consommateur. Cet aspect a-t-il été étudié?

Réponse donnée par M. Borg au nom de la Commission
(25 février 2014)

L'EFSA a conclu que l'aspartame est sûr aux niveaux actuels d'exposition. Par conséquent, la Commission n'a pas l'intention de prendre de nouvelles mesures dans le cadre de la législation de l'UE sur les additifs alimentaires. Les doses maximales d'emploi de l'aspartame seront maintenues ainsi que l'obligation d'étiquetage «Contient une source de phénylalanine» afin d'informer les personnes souffrant de phénylcétonurie.

Dans son avis, l'EFSA explique selon quels critères elle a identifié et sélectionné les données scientifiques prises en considération dans son évaluation. Toutes les références à ces données scientifiques sont incorporées dans le rapport ([1]). L'accès du public à ces études peut être conditionné par les règles de protection des données et de confidentialité du contenu de ces études.

L'article 7 du règlement (CE) nº 1333/2008 du Parlement européen et du Conseil sur les additifs alimentaires ([2]) prévoit des conditions spécifiques pour l'utilisation d'édulcorants. Selon ces conditions, les édulcorants peuvent notamment servir au remplacement des sucres pour la fabrication de denrées alimentaires à valeur énergétique réduite ou sans sucres ajoutés. Lorsque ces produits sont consommés, il faut s'attendre à ce qu'ils créent une sensation de faim. L'EFSA est informée de l'existence d'un certain nombre d'études qui se sont concentrées sur les effets de l'aspartame sur l'appétit, la faim et l'ingestion d'aliments. Les études sur l'effet de l'aspartame (ou d'autres édulcorants à faible teneur en calories) sur le comportement alimentaire ne sont pas pertinentes pour l'évaluation de la sécurité de l'aspartame.

([1]) EFSA Journal (2013); 11(12) 3496.
([2]) JO L 354 du 31.12.2008, p. 16.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014091/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: EFSA — Aspartame

On 10 December, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) concluded that the consumption of aspartame, a controversial additive used to sweeten food and drink, was safe at the level currently authorised in Europe.

'Aspartame and its breakdown products are safe for human consumption at current levels of exposure', EFSA stated in a press release which sets out the findings of its first full risk assessment of this artificial sweetener.

The Authority does, however, acknowledge that phenylalanine, a constituent of aspartame, is dangerous for people suffering from phenylketonuria, an inherited metabolic disorder which is rare and diagnosed at birth in Europe.

Sufferers must avoid consuming it, as part of a strict diet. 'The current Acceptable Daily Intake (ADI) of 40 mg/kg bw/day is protective for the general population', said the Agency.

Aspartame, the most widely used sweetener in the world, is found in over 6 000 products (from chewing gum to diet drinks), including more than 500 pharmaceutical products. According to Réseau Environnement Santé (RES), an association of doctors and recognised researchers, 200 million people consume it 'regularly'. In children and women of childbearing age, daily absorption is estimated between 2.5 and 5 mg per kilo of body weight.

1. Does the Commission intend to validate EFSA's findings? What is its position on the report?

2. Are the studies which EFSA relies upon referenced and published? If so, where? If not, why not?

3. What about the fact that aspartame may cause cravings? Aspartame is often criticised for creating feelings of hunger, which goes against consumers' interests. Has this aspect been studied?

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

EFSA concluded that aspartame is safe at current levels of use. Therefore the Commission does not intend to take further action within the framework of EU food additives legislation. The maximum use levels of aspartame will be maintained, as well as the labelling requirement 'contains a source of phenylalanine' in order to inform people suffering from phenylketonuria.

In its opinion, EFSA explains the identification and selection criteria for the scientific data taken into account for its assessment. All references of that scientific data are in the report ([1]). Public availability of the studies may be linked to Data Protection/Confidentiality content of these studies.

Article 7 of Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council on food additives ([2]) provides specific conditions for use of sweeteners. According to those conditions, sweeteners can in particular serve for the purpose of replacing sugars for the production of energy reduced food or for food with no added sugars. In case such products are consumed, it is to be expected that these may have an effect on the feeling of hunger. EFSA is aware of a number of studies that have focused on the effects of aspartame on appetite, hunger and food intake. Studies on the effect of aspartame (or other low calorie sweeteners) on eating are not relevant for the assessment of the safety of aspartame.

([1]) EFSA Journal 2013;11(12):3496.
([2]) OJ L 354, 31.12.2008, p.16.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-014092/13
aan de Commissie
Cornelis de Jong (GUE/NGL)
(12 december 2013)

Betreft: Boetes voor Janssen-Cilag en Sandoz

De Commissie heeft vastgesteld dat de farmaceutische bedrijven Janssen-Cilag (Tilburg, Nederland) en Sandoz (Almere, Nederland) door onderlinge afspraken de markt voor medicijnen tegen kanker hebben gemanipuleerd en in het bijzonder een goedkoop, generiek alternatief voor de pijnstiller Fentanyl van de markt hebben gehouden.

Daarbij heeft de Commissie uiteindelijk respectievelijk 10 800 000 EUR en 5 500 000 EUR aan boetes opgelegd aan deze bedrijven. Deze boetes dekken de winst die deze bedrijven hebben gemaakt hoogstwaarschijnlijk bij lange na niet, aangezien alleen al in Nederland in 2006 rond 23 000 000 EUR omzet werd geboekt op Fentanyl. Verspreid over heel Europa is dit dus vele malen hoger. De Commissie beroept zich hierbij op de richtlijnen voor de hoogte van boetes uit 2006.

Is de Commissie het ermee eens dat voor de betrokken farmaceutische bedrijven de hoogte van de boetes een farce is, gelet op de winst die ze naar alle waarschijnlijkheid op de verkoop van Fentanyl hebben gemaakt?

Is de Commissie bereid om de richtlijnen zo aan te passen dat in de toekomst dergelijke bedrijven daadwerkelijk moeten bloeden voor de gevolgen van hun onderlinge afspraken?

In het bijzonder, is de Commissie bereid de richtlijnen aan te vullen met een clausule, waarbij de maatschappelijke gevolgen van dergelijke afspraken meewegen bij de hoogte van de boete, zodat de huidige maxima in dergelijke gevallen kunnen worden aangepast?

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

De fentanyl-zaak ([1]) betreft een overeenkomst tussen de partijen over één enkel product (de krachtige pijnstiller fentanyl) op één nationale markt van beperkte omvang (Nederland). De hoogte van de boetes in deze zaak is aanzienlijk gezien de waarde van de verkopen van fentanyl in Nederland ten tijde van de inbreuk (van juli 2005 tot december 2006).

De Commissie is gebonden door het bestaande wettelijke kader, met name artikel 23 van Verordening (EG) nr. 1/2003 ([2]) en de richtsnoeren van de Commissie inzake geldboeten ([3]). Dit wettelijke kader koppelt de hoogte van de geldboete aan de waarde van de hoeveelheid van het verkochte product en aan de duur van de overeenkomst, zodat de geldboete de economische schade als gevolg van de inbreuk weergeeft. Dit gebeurt om de betrokken ondernemingen voldoende te sanctioneren, andere ondernemingen ervan te weerhouden de mededingingsregels te schenden en om ervoor te zorgen dat de geldboete evenredig blijft.

Door de richtsnoeren inzake geldboeten kan de Commissie de geldboete verhogen zodat daarvan een voldoende afschrikkende werking uitgaat. De Commissie kan bijvoorbeeld de geldboete verhogen voor ondernemingen die een bijzonder hoge omzet ([4]) hebben of zij kan ervoor zorgen dat de geldboete hoger uitvalt dan het bedrag van de onrechtmatig gemaakte winst ([5]). De Commissie is daarom van mening dat het niet onmiddellijk noodzakelijk is om de richtsnoeren te wijzigen, met name omdat het Hof tot nog toe alle belangrijke elementen heeft goedgekeurd.

In de fentanyl-zaak heeft de Commissie zich strikt gehouden aan het bestaande wettelijke kader en nauwgezet de methode gevolgd die wordt uiteengezet in de richtsnoeren inzake geldboeten. Het fentanyl-besluit heeft ook de weg vrijgemaakt voor iedereen die is getroffen door het concurrentiebeperkende gedrag in deze zaak om schadevergoeding te eisen voor de rechtbanken van de lidstaten.

([1]) Zaak AT.39685 — Fentanyl. Besluit van de Commissie van 10 december 2013, C (2013) 8870.
([2]) Verordening (EG) Nr. 1/2003 van de Raad van 16 december 2002 betreffende de uitvoering van de mededingingsregels van de artikelen 81 en 82 van het Verdrag, PB L 1 van 4.1.2003, blz. 1.
([3]) Richtsnoeren voor de berekening van geldboeten die uit hoofde van artikel 23, lid 2, onder a), van Verordening (EG) nr. 1/2003 worden opgelegd, PB C 210 van 1.9.2006, blz. 2.
([4]) Punt 30 van de richtsnoeren inzake geldboeten.
([5]) Punt 31 van de richtsnoeren inzake geldboeten.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014092/13
to the Commission
Cornelis de Jong (GUE/NGL)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: Fines for Janssen-Cilag and Sandoz

The Commission has found that the pharmaceuticals firms Janssen-Cilag (Tilburg, the Netherlands) and Sandoz (Almere, the Netherlands) have colluded to manipulate the market for anti-cancer drugs and, in particular, that they kept a cheap, generic alternative for the painkiller Fentanyl off the market.

In the end, the Commission imposed fines of EUR 10 800 000 and 5 500 000 on the respective companies in this connection. It is highly unlikely that these fines even come close to covering the profits made by these two companies, given that, in the Netherlands alone, around EUR 23 000 000 was spent on Fentanyl in 2006. Across the whole of Europe, this amount would thus be many times higher. The Commission based its decision on the guidelines for the level of fines from 2006.

Does the Commission agree that, for the pharmaceutical companies in question, the level of these fines is a farce, given the profits that they have in all likelihood made from Fentanyl sales?

Is the Commission prepared to adjust the guidelines so that, in future, companies like these really have to feel the pain caused by their collusion?

In particular, is the Commission prepared to add to the guidelines a clause stipulating that the social consequences of deals of this kind will also have a bearing on the level of the fine, so that the current ceilings would be adjusted in cases like this?

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

The Fentanyl case ([1]) concerns an agreement between the parties on a single product (a strong pain-killer fentanyl) on one national market of a limited size (the Netherlands). The level of the fines in this case is significant in respect of the value of the fentanyl sales in the Netherlands at the time of the infringement (from July 2005 until December 2006).

The Commission is bound by the existing legal framework, in particular Article 23 of Regulation (EC) No 1/2003 ([2]) and the Commission Guidelines on the fines ([3]). This legal framework links the level of the fine to the value of the company's sales of the product in question and to the duration of the agreement with a view to reflecting the economic harm caused by the infringement. This is in order to sufficiently sanction the undertakings concerned, to deter other undertakings from infringing competition law and to ensure that the fine remains proportionate.

The Guidelines on the fines already allow the Commission to increase the fine in order to achieve a sufficiently deterrent effect. The Commission may, for example, increase the fine for undertakings which have a particularly large turnover ([4]) or increase the fine in order to exceed the amount of gains improperly made ([5]). The Commission does not therefore see an immediate need to modify the Guidelines, particularly as the Court has so far endorsed all the main elements.

In the Fentanyl case, the Commission respected strictly the existing legal framework and followed scrupulously the methodology set out in the Guidelines on the fines. The Fentanyl decision also opened the way to anyone affected by the anti-competitive behaviour in this case to seek damages before the courts of the Member States.

([1]) Case AT.39685 — Fentanyl. Commission decision adopted on 10 December 2013, C(2013) 8870.
([2]) Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2003 of 16 December 2002 on the implementation of the rules on competition laid down in Articles 81 and 82 of the Treaty, OJ L 1, 4.1.2003, p.1.
([3]) Guidelines on the method of setting fines imposed pursuant to Article 23(2)(a) of Regulation (EC) No 1/2003, OJ C 210, 1.9.2006, p. 2.
([4]) Point 30 of the Guidelines on the fines.
([5]) Point 31 of the Guidelines on the fines.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-014093/13
do Komisji
Tomasz Piotr Poręba (ECR)
(12 grudnia 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Podział funduszy europejskich na supregiony

Zaliczenie Mazowsza do najlepiej rozwiniętych regionów UE ma charakter statystyczny wynikający z dominującej w skali całego kraju pozycji Warszawy. Pozostałe jednostki poziomu NUTS 3 regionu mają, wg danych za okres 2008-2010, poziom rozwoju bliski najbiedniejszym polskim województwom. Największe potrzeby rozwojowe zarówno w zakresie podstawowej infrastruktury jak i kapitału ludzkiego występują w szczególności w podregionach: radomskim, ostrołęcko-siedleckim, ciechanowsko-płockim. W przypadku Mazowsza różnice w wielkości PKB per capita pomiędzy Warszawą a najbiedniejszymi powiatami wynoszą ponad 4:1 i są największe spośród wszystkich regionów. Pogłębiające się różnice rozwojowe wynikają z dyskryminującego podziału funduszy na podregiony. Według stanu na koniec 2012 r. Warszawa otrzymała 982,2 mln zł, subregion warszawski – 831,8 mln zł, subregion ciechanowsko-płocki – 587,9 mln zł, subregion ostrołęcko-siedlecki – 690,9 mln zł, subregion radomski – 330,1 mln zł. Oznacza to, że subregion radomski uzyskał 3 razy mniej środków niż Warszawa i ponad 2-krotnie mniej niż pozostałe subregiony województwa mazowieckiego. Konsekwencją takiego podziału funduszy UE jest pogłębianie się wewnątrz regionalnych różnic rozwojowych, o czym dowodzi pozom PKB na mieszkańca w poszczególnych podregionach (dane za 201r., kraj 100 %): Warszawa – 301 %, subregion warszawski zachodni – 123,8 %, subregion warszawski wschodni – 84,2 %, subregion ciechanowsko-płocki – 117,1 %, subregion ostrołęcko-siedlecki – 76,1 %, subregion radomski –74,7 %. Relacja pod tym względem pomiędzy Warszawą, a subregionem radomskim (4:1) i jest głębsza niż ta sama relacja przed członkostwem w UE. Jedną z najbardziej dramatycznych konsekwencji takiego stanu rzeczy jest bardzo wysoki poziom bezrobocia w subregionie radomskim, który jest nie tylko najwyższy w województwie, ale należy do najwyższych w kraju (w większości powiatów subregionu przekracza 30 %, a w powiecie szydłowieckim sięga 40 %).

W związku z powyższym chciałbym zapytać Komisję: na jakiej podstawie prawnej dokonywany jest przydział funduszy na poszczególne subregiony? Jakich kryteriów powinny przestrzegać rządy i samorządy rozdysponowując fundusze europejskie pomiędzy poszczególne subregiony? Czy poziom rozwoju subregionu powinien wg KE decydować o poziomie alokacji funduszy? Na ile wg KE rządy i samorządy zobowiązane są przestrzegać kryterium równoważenia możliwości rozwojowych poszczególnych części regionu?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Johannesa Hahna w imieniu Komisji
(18 lutego 2014 r.)

Ramy regulacyjne na lata 2007-2013 nie zawierają przepisów dotyczących podziału środków UE pomiędzy poszczególne podregiony, w konsekwencji czego to każde państwo członkowskie decyduje o takim podziale.

Na okres lat 2007-2013 Komisja przyjęła decyzje w sprawie wykazu kwalifikujących się regionów oraz ustaliła roczny podział środków UE pomiędzy państwa członkowskie z uwzględnieniem trzech celów polityki spójności. Następnie Komisja wysłała do poszczególnych państw członkowskich pisma przedstawiające indykatywny podział części środków UE przeznaczonej na poziom regionalny (NUTS 2).

Podział regionalny w zakresie celu Konwergencja wynikał bezpośrednio z zastosowania metody ustalonej przez Radę Europejską i zapisanej w Załączniku II do rozporządzenia Rady (WE) nr 1083/2006. Metoda ta opierała się przede wszystkim na wielkości populacji oraz poziomie zamożności i stopie bezrobocia.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014093/13
to the Commission
Tomasz Piotr Poręba (ECR)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: Distribution of EU funds between sub-regions

Mazovia's status as one of the more highly developed regions of the EU is a statistical anomaly arising from the dominant position of Warsaw within Poland as a whole. According to data from the 2008-2010 period, the level of development of the remaining NUTS3 areas in the region is close to that of the poorest Polish provinces. There is a particularly acute need to develop both basic infrastructure and human capital in the sub-regions of Radom, Ostrołęka/Siedlce and Ciechanów/Płock. The difference in GDP per capita between Warsaw and the poorest districts in Mazovia is over 4:1, which is higher than for any other region. These widening discrepancies in levels of development result from the discriminatory distribution of funds between sub-regions. As of the end of 2012 Warsaw had received PLN 982.2 million, while the total for the Warsaw sub-region stood at PLN 831.8 million, that for the Ciechanów/Płock sub-region at PLN 587.9 million, that for the Ostrołęka/Siedlce sub-region at PLN 690.9 million and that for the Radom sub-region at PLN 330.1 million. This means that the Radom sub-region was granted three time less funding than Warsaw, and over two time less than the other sub-regions in the Mazowieckie province. The end effect of this distribution of EU funding has been to exacerbate differences in regional levels of development, evidence of which can be seen in the figures for GDP per citizen for the individual sub-regions (data for 201, whole country = 100%): Warsaw — 301%, Warsaw West sub-region — 123.8%, Warsaw East sub-region — 84.2%, Ciechanów/Płock sub-region — 117.1%, Ostrołęka/Siedlce sub-region — 76.1%, Radom sub-region — 74.7%. The discrepancy between the figures for Warsaw and the Radom sub-region (ratio of 4:1) is worse than it was before Poland joined the EU. One of the most dramatic consequences of this situation is the extremely high level of unemployment in the Radom sub-region, which is not only the highest in the province, but among the highest in the country, since the figure stands at over 30% in most of the sub-region's districts, and up to 40% in the Szydłowiec district.

I would therefore like to ask the Commission the following questions: what is the legal basis for the distribution of funds between the individual sub-regions? What criteria should be taken into account by governments and local authorities when allocating EU funds between the individual sub-regions? Does the Commission believe that the level of development of a sub-region should determine the amount of funding allocated? In the Commission's opinion, to what extent are governments and local authorities obliged to ensure that development opportunities are distributed fairly among the individual areas of a region?

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

The regulatory framework 2007-2013 does not foresee any provisions on the distribution of EU funding between individual sub-regions and this is therefore up to each Member State to decide.

For the 2007-2013 period, the Commission adopted decisions establishing the list of eligible regions and fixing the annual breakdown by Member State of EU funding for the three objectives of cohesion policy. The Commission subsequently sent letters to the Member States providing an indicative breakdown for that part of the EU funding which was allocated at regional (NUTS 2) level.

The regional breakdown for the Convergence objective resulted directly from the method agreed by the European Council and enshrined in Annex II of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006. This method was predominantly based on the size of population as well as the levels of prosperity and unemployment.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-014095/13
aan de Commissie
Esther de Lange (PPE) en Mairead McGuinness (PPE)
(12 december 2013)

Betreft: Zachte landing in zuivelsector voor alle producenten in EU

Wereldwijd stijgt de vraag naar zuivelproducten. De afschaffing van het Europese melkquotum in 2015 is dan ook een kans voor ambitieuze en competitieve zuivelproducenten.

Het melkquotum zorgt er tot 2015 echter voor dat de productie geremd wordt. Bovendien moeten producenten superheffing betalen, die naar verwachting in Ierland meer dan 20 miljoen en in Nederland meer dan 130 miljoen euro kan bedragen. Een record. Dit terwijl het Europese quotum wederom niet vol gemolken wordt, wat duidt op ruimte voor Europese productie.

De Europese Commissie heeft meerdere malen aangegeven maatregelen te nemen om een zachte landing voor alle producenten te garanderen. Tot op heden koersen onder anderen Nederland en Ierland echter af op een hele harde landing.

1. Is de Commissie van mening dat ook Ierse en Nederlandse producenten recht hebben op een zachte landing, conform de beloften die de Commissie in het verleden gedaan heeft?

2. Is de Commissie van mening dat, gezien de huidige vooruitzichten, een zachte landing in onder anderen Nederland en Ierland ver weg is, en dat er urgente aanvullende maatregelen nodig zijn om ook voor deze producenten een zachte landing te garanderen?

3. Is de Commissie van mening dat de kosten van de superheffing (in Nederland meer dan 130 miljoen, in Ierland mogelijk boven de 20 miljoen euro) door producenten beter besteed kunnen worden aan innovatie en duurzame oplossingen dan aan een boete voor een verouderd en concurrentieremmend systeem als melkquota?

4. Welke maatregel of combinatie van maatregelen denkt de Commissie op korte termijn te nemen om dit probleem voor 2015 op te lossen? Een vetcorrectie, een quotumverhoging, Europese verevening of een verlaging van de superheffing?

Antwoord van de heer Cioloş namens de Commissie
(12 februari 2014)

Het begrip „zachte landing" met betrekking tot de melkquotaregeling werd ingevoerd met de doorlichting van het GLB in 2008. Het doel is om te zorgen voor een soepele overgang van een quotaregeling naar een productie die wordt bepaald door marktpotentieel.

De overschotheffing, in combinatie met de „zachte landing"-besluiten uit 2008 (een verhoging van de quota met 1 % per jaar gedurende 5 jaren en bijkomende mogelijkheden door een aanpassing van de correctiefactor voor het vetgehalte), zorgt ervoor dat een geleidelijke aanpassing naar een quotavrije omgeving wordt gegarandeerd door een abrupte toename van de productie te vermijden. Alle betrokkenen zijn sinds 2008 op de hoogte van deze gedragslijn en hebben de nodige tijd gehad om hun bedrijfsbeslissingen dienovereenkomstig aan te passen.

Zoals vermeld in eerdere verslagen aan het Parlement en de Raad ([1]), wijzen zowel de evolutie van de melkproductie ten opzichte van de melkquota als de dalende trend van de quotumprijzen erop dat „zachte landing" op EU-niveau op schema zit. In verreweg de meeste lidstaten zijn quota niet langer de beperkende factor, aangezien de quotaniveaus hoger liggen dan de productie, en de quotumprijzen al tot nul zijn gedaald of daarbij in de buurt komen.

Elk besluit tot wijziging van de doorlichting van het GLB uit 2008 zou een medebeslissingsprocedure tussen de wetgevers nodig maken. De gemeenschappelijke marktordening, waarin de beginselen van de quotaregeling en de „zachte landing" zijn vastgelegd, is onlangs geëvalueerd in het kader van de GLB-hervorming en er werd geen verandering dienstig geacht door de wetgever. De Commissie is niet voornemens verdere wijzigingen voor te stellen in dit stadium.

De Commissie is van plan om een waarnemingspost voor de Europese zuivelmarkt op te richten, met het oog op het verzamelen en het verspreiden van marktgegevens en de kortetermijnanalyse voor de zuivelmarkt. Dit zal gebeuren met de betrokkenheid van deskundigen uit de bevoorradingsketen voor melk en zuivelproducten.

([1]) Verslagen van de Commissie aan het Europees Parlement en de Raad over de evolutie van de marktsituatie en de daaruit volgende voorwaarden voor een vlotte, geleidelijke afschaffing van de melkquotaregeling (COM(2010) 727 definitief van 8.12.2010 & COM(2012) 741 definitief van 10.12.2012).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014095/13
to the Commission
Esther de Lange (PPE) and Mairead McGuinness (PPE)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: Soft landing in the dairy sector for all producers in EU

Global demand for dairy products is rising. The abolition of the European milk quota in 2015 thus represents an opportunity for ambitious and competitive dairy producers.

However, the milk quota ensures that the brakes will be kept on production until 2015. Moreover, producers have to pay a surplus levy, which is expected to potentially amount to over EUR 20 million in Ireland and over EUR 130 million in the Netherlands, which would be a record. Yet this will be taking place while the European quota will once again not be fully exploited, which indicates that there is scope for more production in Europe.

The European Commission has on numerous occasions said that it will be putting measures in place in order to guarantee a soft landing for all producers. So far, however, the Netherlands, Ireland and others are heading for a very hard landing.

1. Does the Commission believe that Irish and Dutch producers, too, are entitled to a soft landing that lives up to the promises previously given by the Commission?

2. Does the Commission believe that, given current forecasts, the Netherlands, Ireland and others are far from heading for a soft landing, and that there is an urgent need for supplementary measures in order to guarantee a soft landing for these producers too?

3. Does the Commission believe that the costs of the surplus levy (over EUR 130 million in the Netherlands and potentially over EUR 20 million in Ireland) could be better spent by producers on innovation and sustainable solutions rather than paying a fine for an antiquated and competition-inhibiting system such as the milk quota?

4. What measure or combination of measures is the Commission planning to put in place in the short term in order to resolve this problem before 2015? Is it considering fat correction, increasing the quota, European equalisation or lowering the surplus levy?

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

The concept of soft landing with regard to the milk quota regime was introduced by the CAP Health Check in 2008. Its objective is to provide for a smooth transition from a quota system towards a production determined by market potential.

The surplus levy, combined with the 2008 soft landing decisions — increase of quotas by 1% a year over 5 years and additional possibilities granted by a change in the fat correction factor — ensures a gradual adjustment to a quota-free environment by avoiding an abrupt upsurge in production. All actors have been aware of this course of action since 2008 and have had the necessary time to adjust their business decisions accordingly.

As concluded in earlier reports to Parliament and Council ([1]), both the evolution of milk production versus milk quotas, and the downward trend in quota prices show that soft landing is on track at the level of the EU. In the vast majority of Member States, quotas are no longer the limiting factor since quota levels are higher than production and quota prices have already reached zero or are coming close.

Any decision to change the 2008 CAP Health Check would require a co-decision procedure between the legislators. The single Common Market Organisation, in which the principles of the quota system and of the soft landing are enshrined, has just been reviewed in the context of the CAP reform and no change was judged appropriate by the legislator. It is not the Commission's intention to propose any further change at this stage.

The Commission is planning to set up a Milk Market Observatory (MMO) with the aim of collecting and disseminating market data and short-term analysis for the dairy market, with the involvement of experts from the milk supply chain.

([1]) Reports from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the Evolution of the market situation and the consequent conditions for smoothly phasing out the milk quota system (COM(2010) 727 final of 8.12.2010 & COM(2012) 741 final of 10.12.2012).

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014096/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(13 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Prevención de incendios forestales en Castilla-La Mancha

El Gobierno de la Junta de Castilla-La Mancha planteó un expediente de regulación de empleo (ERE) en el servicio de prevención y extinción de incendios (Geacam), un servicio público fundamental debido a los graves riesgos y la gran extensión de la Comunidad Autónoma. Dicho ERE ha sido declarado ilegal recientemente, lo que da a entender de qué manera está operando dicho Gobierno autonómico para reducir sus servicios.

Según informaciones extraoficiales, casi tres cuartas partes del presupuesto de Geacam se financian a través de fondos europeos, aunque no existe suficiente información disponible sobre los presupuestos de dicha institución. La Fundación Ciudadana Civio, dedicada a la búsqueda de la transparencia de las instituciones públicas en España, ha denunciado que, en el ámbito de la prevención y extinción de incendios, la mayoría de las comunidades autónomas no cumplen las obligaciones de aportar información estipuladas en la Directiva 2003/4/CE para cumplir con el Convenio de Aarhus de 1998. Asimismo, la mayoría de las comunidades autónomas incumple la propia Ley 27/2006 del Reino de España.

Las políticas de austeridad implementadas por el Gobierno autonómico de Castilla-La Mancha, encarnadas en este ERE, están desmantelando servicios fundamentales, y uno de los más importantes es Geacam, donde se pretende desmantelar la parte fundamental dedicada a la prevención de incendios y mantener tan solo la extinción de incendios.

¿Considera la Comisión que el recorte en los servicios de prevención de incendios forestales se ajusta a lo dispuesto en el Reglamento (CEE) n° 2158/92?

¿Podría indicar la Comisión qué parte del presupuesto de Geacam es financiado a través de fondos europeos? ¿Es posible destinar los fondos europeos asignados para prevención y extinción de incendios forestales tan solo a la extinción, desatendiendo la prevención de los mismos?

¿Considera la Comisión que la Junta de Castilla-La Mancha está cumpliendo lo dispuesto con la Directiva 2003/4/CE?

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

El Reglamento (CEE) n° 2158/92 expiró en 2002 y el Reglamento (CE) n° 2152/2003 (Reglamento «Forest Focus»), a finales de 2006. Desde entonces, no existe ninguna legislación específica de la UE que disponga medidas obligatorias en relación con los incendios forestales.

El Plan de Desarrollo Rural de Castilla-La Mancha para el período 2007-2013, que fue aprobado por la Comisión en el marco del Reglamento de desarrollo rural ([1]), pone de manifiesto que las autoridades han asignado 85 875 200 EUR a la prevención de incendios forestales y a la restauración de zonas quemadas, de los cuales 60 187 502 proceden de fondos de la UE. La asignación de fondos a medidas concretas de desarrollo rural debe ser propuesta por los Estados miembros y puede ser objeto de consulta con la Comisión cuando los planes de desarrollo rural estén en fase de preparación. Esto implica que las autoridades de los Estados miembros pueden destinar fondos de desarrollo rural a la prevención de incendios forestales, a la lucha contra los mismos o a ambas actividades.

Para el período 2014-2020, las posibilidades de ayuda financiera a cargo del presupuesto de la UE serán similares ([2]).

Además, el programa de desarrollo regional prevé 24 886 256 EUR para la prevención del riesgo de incendios, el 80 % de los cuales se concede a través del Fondo Europeo de Desarrollo Regional.

Sobre la base de la información de que dispone actualmente la Comisión, esta no tiene motivos para considerar que no se esté cumpliendo con la Directiva 2003/4/CE.

([1]) Reglamento (CE) n° 1698/2005, de desarrollo rural.
([2]) Reglamento (UE) n° 1305/2013, de desarrollo rural, artículos 21 y 24.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014096/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(13 December 2013)

Subject: Prevention of forest fires in Castile-La Mancha

The Regional Government of Castile-La Mancha proposed a labour force adjustment plan for its fire prevention and fire fighting service, which is an essential public service given the serious risks and the large size of the Autonomous Community of Castile-La Mancha. This labour force adjustment plan was recently declared illegal, which suggests the manner in which this regional government is operating in order to reduce its services.

According to unofficial information, almost three quarters of the budget of the fire prevention and fire fighting service is covered by EU funds, although insufficient information is available about this service's budget. The Civio citizens' organisation, which seeks transparency on the part of public institutions in Spain, has complained that, in the area of fire prevention and fire fighting, the majority of the Autonomous Communities do not comply with the reporting obligations established in Directive 2003/4/EC to comply with the Aarhus Convention of 1998. In addition, the majority of Autonomous Communities also fail to comply with Spain's own Law 27/2006.

The austerity policies implemented by the Regional Government of Castile-La Mancha, which are embodied by this labour force adjustment plan, are dismantling essential services. One of the most important such services is the fire prevention and fire fighting service. The Regional Government is attempting to dismantle the essential component of this service, fire prevention, and maintain only the fire fighting component.

Does the Commission take the view that the cut in forest fire prevention services is in line with Regulation (EEC) No 2158/92?

Could the Commission indicate what part of the budget of the fire prevention and fire fighting service is covered by EU funds? Is it possible to allocate the EU funds earmarked for forest fire prevention and fighting only to fighting forest fires, while neglecting the prevention of such fires?

Does the Commission believe that the Regional Government of Castile-La Mancha is complying with Directive 2003/4/EC?

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

Regulation (EEC) 2158/92 expired in 2002 and the Forest Focus Regulation (EC) 2152/2003 at the end of 2006. Since then, no specific EU legislation contains obligatory measures regarding forest fires.

The 2007-2013 Rural Development Plan of Castile-La Mancha which was approved by the Commission under the Rural Development Regulation ([1]) shows that the authorities have allocated EUR 85 875.200 for the prevention of forest fires and the restoration of burnt areas, out of which EUR 60 187.502 from EU funds. Earmarking of funds for particular rural development measures has to be proposed by Member States and can be subject to consultation with the Commission when rural development plans are being prepared. This implies that Member State authorities can earmark Rural Development funds for forest fire prevention, for fighting forest fires or for both activities.

A similar possibility for financial support from the EU budget will be available for the period 2014-2020 ([2]).

In addition, the regional development programme foresees EUR 24 886.256 for fire risk prevention, 80% of which is delivered through the European Regional Development Fund.

Based on information currently available to the Commission, it has no reason to believe that Directive 2003/4/EC is not complied with.

([1]) Rural Development Regulation (EC) 1698/2005.
([2]) Rural Development Regulation (EU) 1305/2013, Articles 21 and 2.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014097/13
to the Commission
Catherine Stihler (S&D)
(13 December 2013)

Subject: EU COPD Strategy

Can the Commission update Parliament on the progress being made on a comprehensive EU strategy for patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)? Of particular interest is the development being made in the area of pulmonary rehab, as just 18% of EU COPD sufferers have access to this key service.

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

While the Commission does not intend to put forward a specific strategy for patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, it is addressing the key risk factor for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease in its policy on tobacco control, through legislation on Tobacco Products and on their advertising, through monitoring the Council Recommendation on smoke Free Environments, and through awareness raising action.

In addition, the Commission has been co-financing through the health programme a project on 'Indicators for monitoring chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and asthma in the EU', in which indicators on mortality, prevalence, risk factors, clinical management and outcomes have been developed and data gathered ([1]).

Within its broader approach to address chronic diseases, a joint action on chronic diseases 'Chronic diseases and promoting healthy ageing across the life cycle' was launched in January 2014.

Moreover, the Commission is following up the reflection process on chronic diseases by organising an EU summit on chronic diseases in April 2014 to analyse action to date, to continue the discussion in the field of chronic diseases with clear EU added value, and to deliver recommendations on future interventions to tackle the burden of chronic diseases.

With regard to access to pulmonary rehabilitation, the Commission does not compile data on the accessibility of healthcare services for specific patient groups. However, based on the latest data for 2012 from the EU Survey of 'Income and Living Conditions' the overall number of patients in the EU reporting unmet medical needs are less than 6% of respondents.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/projects/database.html?prjno=2005121

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014098/13
to the Commission
Catherine Stihler (S&D)
(13 December 2013)

Subject: Commission's alcohol strategy

Can the Commission explain how it is proceeding with the current alcohol strategy, 'Alcohol Action Plan' and provide the timetable for this action plan?

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

On the basis of the result of the external evaluation results ([1]), the Commission considers the current Alcohol Strategy as a valid framework for action, and apart from existing implementation tools, specific efforts are under way to reinforce action on youth, binge drinking and heavy drinking. Members of the Committee of National Alcohol Policy and Action and of the European Alcohol and Health Forum have been invited to consider how they can contribute to support this focus.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/alcohol/docs/report_assessment_eu_alcohol_strategy_2012_en.pdf

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-014101/13
aan de Commissie
Esther de Lange (PPE)
(13 december 2013)

Betreft: Malafide makelaars in Spanje

Steeds meer mensen krijgen te maken met malafide makelaars in Europa. Europeanen die vakantiewoningen willen kopen in bijvoorbeeld Spanje worden door makelaars opgelicht. Vakantiehuizen worden door de makelaars meerdere malen verkocht en zij strijken daarvoor telkens 10 % van de gevraagde prijs op. Als uiteindelijk puntje bij paaltje komt zijn de makelaars spoorloos verdwenen met het geld van de potentiële koper. De meeste kopers gaan niet procederen, want dat neemt vele jaren in beslag en kost veel geld. Zij vertrekken opgelicht naar huis.

Is de Commissie op de hoogte van de malafide makelaars die veelal in de mediterrane landen opereren?

Deelt de Commissie de mening dat Europeanen beter moeten worden ingelicht door de nationale autoriteiten alvorens een nieuwe woning aan te schaffen en dat de informatie-uitwisseling tussen de lidstaten op dit gebied verbeterd kan worden? Waarom wel of niet?

Is de Commissie van plan samen met de Europese landen een openbare zwarte lijst op te stellen van de malafide makelaars, zodat voorkomen kan worden dat deze opnieuw op de markt gaan opereren? Waarom wel of niet?

Kan de Commissie de lidstaten waar dit herhaaldelijk gebeurt, aansporen betere juridische ondersteuning te verlenen aan de slachtoffers van malafide makelaars? En op welke manier kan de Commissie eraan bijdragen dat dit probleem wordt aangepakt?

Antwoord van mevrouw Reding namens de Commissie
(18 februari 2014)

Het geachte Parlementslid zou moeten weten dat het bij Richtlijn 2005/29/EG ([1]) voor makelaars in onroerend goed en alle andere commerciële exploitanten reeds verboden is om zich in te laten met oneerlijke praktijken tegenover consumenten. In de bepalingen van deze richtlijn worden ondernemers verplicht om te werk te gaan met professionele toewijding en om duidelijk, begrijpelijk en tijdig relevante informatie te verschaffen zodat de consumenten een geïnformeerde aankoopbeslissing kunnen nemen, zoals de voornaamste kenmerken en de prijs van een product.

In de mededeling van de Commissie over de toepassing van Richtlijn 2005/29/EG ([2]) en het begeleidende verslag ([3]) van 14 maart 2013, worden de belangrijkste actiegebieden geïdentificeerd waarop nationale en grensoverschrijdende handhaving moeten worden versterkt, met inbegrip van de vastgoedsector. Bovendien wordt er momenteel een EU-brede bewustmakingscampagne voorbereid om de algemene kennis over het handhaven van consumentenrechten en opties voor handhaving op diverse gebieden te verbeteren.

Het aanbieden van valse vastgoeddiensten met het oog op het verkrijgen van geld van de consument moet normaal gezien worden behandeld als fraude en worden bestraft op basis van het strafrecht van de lidstaten. De slachtoffers van zulke fraude moeten zich wenden tot de bevoegde wetshandhavingsinstanties, die de mechanismen van politiële samenwerking kunnen gebruiken om de overtreders te identificeren en te straffen.

([1]) Richtlijn 2005/29/EG betreffende oneerlijke handelspraktijken van ondernemingen jegens consumenten op de interne markt (PB L149 van 11.6.2005).
([2]) „De verwezenlijking van een hoog niveau van consumentenbescherming — Opbouw van vertrouwen in de interne markt", COM(2013) 138 definitief.
([3]) COM(2013) 139 definitief.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014101/13
to the Commission
Esther de Lange (PPE)
(13 December 2013)

Subject: Crooked estate agents in Spain

Increasing numbers of people are encountering crooked estate agents in Europe. Europeans wishing to buy holiday apartments in Spain, for instance, are being ripped off by estate agents. Holiday homes are being sold by estate agents several times over and they collect 10% of the asking price for them every time. When it finally comes to the crunch, the estate agents have disappeared without trace with the money from the potential buyer in their pocket. Most buyers are not going to take them to court because the process takes many years and costs a great deal. They return home having been ripped off.

Is the Commission aware of crooked estate agents operating mainly in the Mediterranean countries?

Does the Commission agree that Europeans must be better informed by national authorities before purchasing a new residence and that the exchange of information between Member States in this area can be improved? If so, how? If not, why not?

Does the Commission intend to draw up along with the European countries a public blacklist of crooked estate agents, thereby making it possible to prevent them from operating on the market again? If so, how? If not, why not?

Can the Commission encourage Member States where this is a recurring practice to provide better legal support to the victims of crooked estate agents? What contribution can the Commission make to tackling this problem?

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

The Honourable Member should know that directive 2005/29/EC ([1]) already prevents real estate agents and any other commercial operators from engaging in unfair practices towards consumers. Its provisions require traders to operate in accordance with professional diligence and to provide in a clear, intelligible and timely manner material information that consumers need in order to take an informed purchase decision, such as the main characteristics and the price of a product.

The communication on the application of Directive 2005/29/EC ([2]) and its accompanying Report ([3]) adopted on 14 March 2013 identify key areas for actions where national and cross-border enforcement should be stepped up, including the immovable property sector. In addition, an EU-wide awareness raising campaign is currently being prepared in order to increase the overall knowledge of both consumer rights and enforcement options in various areas.

Offering fake real estate services with a view to eliciting money from consumers should normally be treated as fraud and be punishable under criminal laws of the Member States. The victims of such fraud should apply to the competent law enforcement authorities, which can use the available mechanisms of police cooperation to identify and punish the perpetrators.

([1]) Directive 2005/29/EC on unfair business-to-consumer commercial practices in the internal market, OJ L 149, 11.6.2005.
([2]) 'Achieving a high level of consumer protection — Building trust in the internal market' COM(2013) 138 final.
([3]) COM(2013) 139 final.

(Slovenské znenie)

Otázka na písomné zodpovedanie E-014102/13
Komisii
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(13. decembra 2013)

Vec: Obchodné partnerstvo medzi EÚ a Kanadou

V ostatnom období EÚ a Kanada dospeli k dohode v otázke obchodného paktu, ktorý integruje dve z najväčších svetových ekonomík. Mohol by slúžiť ako vzor pri vyjednávaniach s USA. Ide o prvú dohodu Únie s členom skupiny najväčších svetových ekonomík G8. Pred vstupom samotnej dohody do platnosti ju však okrem Európskeho parlamentu a desiatich kanadských provincií musia odobriť taktiež členské štáty EÚ.

Je v možnostiach a kompetenciách Komisie dozrieť na to (príp. členské štáty usmerniť), aby k schváleniu dohody uvedenými stranami a k jej vstúpeniu do platnosti prišlo, takpovediac v prijateľnom časovom horizonte?

Odpoveď pána De Guchta v mene Komisie
(7. februára 2014)

Skôr ako môže dohoda nadobudnúť platnosť, je potrebné vykonať niekoľko procedurálnych krokov.

Po prvé, je potrebné dokončiť rokovania o zostávajúcich neuzavretých technických a právnych otázkach. Po druhé, text sa bude musieť preskúmať v záujme zabezpečenia jeho právnej presnosti. Po tretie, keď bude text ustálený z právneho hľadiska, musí sa zaslať na preklad do všetkých úradných jazykov EÚ. Po štvrté, text dohody bude musieť byť zaslaný Rade, ktorá je zodpovedná za rozhodnutia o jeho podpise (a predbežnom vykonávaní, ak ide o takýto prípad) a o uzatvorení dohody. Rada bude musieť požiadať Európsky parlament o schválenie, keďže uzatvorenie obchodnej dohody si vyžaduje predchádzajúci súhlas Európskeho parlamentu.

Uzavretie dohody by na strane EÚ mohlo od ukončenia rokovaní po prijatie rozhodnutia Radou trvať približne rok a pol. Toto obdobie by bolo podstatne dlhšie, ak by sa charakter dohody považoval za „zmiešaný“, čo by si vyžadovalo ratifikáciu vo všetkých 28 členských štátoch EÚ pred tým, ako by ju mohla Rada uzatvoriť a ako by dohoda nadobudla platnosť.

Komisia vyvinie maximálne úsilie o rýchle dokončenie všetkých potrebných krokov.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014102/13
to the Commission
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(13 December 2013)

Subject: Trade partnership between the EU and Canada

The EU and Canada have recently reached an agreement on the issue of a trade pact, which will integrate two of the largest economies in the world. It could serve as a model for negotiations with the US. This is the first EU agreement with a member of the G8 group of the world's largest economies. Before the agreement can enter into force, however, it will have to be approved by the EU Member States in addition to the European Parliament and the ten provinces of Canada.

Is it within the possibilities and powers of the Commission to see to it (for example, by directing Member States) that the agreement is approved by the above parties and that it enters into force within, so to speak, an acceptable timeframe?

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

Several procedural steps need to be undertaken before the agreement can enter into force.

First, the negotiation on the remaining open technical and legal issues needs to be finalised. Second, the text will have to be reviewed in order to ensure its legal accuracy. Third, once legally stabilised, the text needs to be sent for translation into all EU official languages. Fourth, the agreement's text will have to be sent to the Council, responsible for the decisions on its signature (and provisional application if that is the case) and on the conclusion of the agreement. The Council will have to ask the European Parliament for its approval as the conclusion of trade agreement requires prior consent of the European Parliament.

Concluding the agreement could take approximately one year and a half on the EU side between the end of the negotiations and the adoption of the decision by the Council. This period would be considerably longer if the agreement were considered to be of a 'mixed' nature, thus requiring ratification of all 28 EU Member States before it could be concluded by the Council and enter into force.

The Commission will do its utmost in order to seek a swift completion of all the necessary steps.

(Slovenské znenie)

Otázka na písomné zodpovedanie E-014103/13
Komisii
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(13. decembra 2013)

Vec: Európania a úsporné opatrenia

Z prieskumu verejnej mienky realizovaného v ostatnom období vyplýva, že pomerne značná časť Európanov sa nestotožňuje s myšlienkou, že jediný možný spôsob, ako prekonať krízu, je znižovať náklady. Obzvlášť, podpora úsporných opatrení je veľmi nízka predovšetkým v krízou najviac sužovaných krajinách. Súčasne s pretrvávajúcou hospodárskou krízou možno povedať, že v rámci členských štátov Únie kontinuálne dochádza i k nárastu nezamestnanosti.

Akým vhodným spôsobom by mohla Komisia reagovať na narastajúci nesúhlas európskeho obyvateľstva s úspornými opatreniami? A pokiaľ hovoríme o problematike hospodárskej a menovej únie, má Komisia na zreteli i jej sociálny rozmer?

Odpoveď pána Rehna v mene Komisie
(20. februára 2014)

Tvrdenie, že zníženie výdavkov je jediným možným spôsobom na prekonanie krízy, určite nie je stanoviskom Komisie. Komisia považuje úsilie o dosiahnutie fiškálnej konsolidácie podporujúcej rast za dôležitý, avšak nie jediný prvok stratégie členských štátov zameranej na riešenie dôsledkov krízy a na stimuláciu rastu a zamestnanosti. Ako sa uvádza v ročnom prieskume rastu, ďalšími dôležitými prioritami politiky v súčasnosti sú: obnovenie poskytovania úverov hospodárskym subjektom, podnecovanie rastu a konkurencieschopnosti prostredníctvom štrukturálnej reformy, vysporiadanie sa s nezamestnanosťou a so sociálnymi dôsledkami krízy a modernizácia verejnej správy ([1]).

Komisia berie do úvahy sociálnu dimenziu a nedávno prijala oznámenie o posilnení sociálneho rozmeru hospodárskej a menovej únie ([2]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/2014/ags2014_sk.pdf
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/president/news/archives/2013/10/pdf/20131002_1-emu_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014103/13
to the Commission
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(13 December 2013)

Subject: Europeans and austerity measures

A public opinion poll conducted recently shows that a relatively significant proportion of Europeans do not share the opinion that the only possible way of overcoming the crisis is to cut spending. In particular, support for austerity measures is very low in the countries hardest hit by the crisis. In parallel with the continuing economic crisis, it can be said that there is also a continuous rise in unemployment in the EU Member States.

By what appropriate means could the Commission respond to the growing opposition of the European population to austerity measures? And since we are considering the issue of economic and monetary union, does the Commission also take into account its social dimension?

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

It is certainly not the Commission's opinion that the only possible way of overcoming the crisis is to cut spending. The Commission considers the pursuit of growth-friendly fiscal consolidation an important element, but not the only one, of Member States' strategy to address the consequences of the crisis and to stimulate growth and jobs. As set out in its Annual Growth Survey, other important policy priorities at the moment are: restoring lending to the economy, promoting growth and competitiveness through structural reform, tackling unemployment and the social consequences of the crisis, and modernising public administration. ([1])

The Commission does take into account the social dimension and it has recently adopted a communication on Strengthening the Social Dimension of the Economic and Monetary Union. ([2])

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/2014/ags2014_en.pdf

([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/president/news/archives/2013/10/pdf/20131002_1-emu_en.pdf

(Slovenské znenie)

Otázka na písomné zodpovedanie E-014104/13
Komisii
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(13. decembra 2013)

Vec: Obmedzený pokrok Únie v klimaticko-energetických cieľoch

Veľká väčšina členských štátov, žiaľ, nesmeruje k naplneniu vytýčených klimaticko-energetických cieľov do roku 2020, ako si stanovili. Uspokojivý pokrok bol dosiaľ zaznamenaný len v štyroch členských krajinách. Pre zachovanie objektívnosti je však nutné zároveň dodať, že žiaden z členských štátov nevykazuje vyslovene zlé výsledky.

I napriek tomu, v záujme splnenia záväzkov v otázke klimaticko-energetických cieľov, je možné, aby Komisia určitým spôsobom napomohla členským štátom k ich dosiahnutiu?

Odpoveď pani Hedegaardovej v mene Komisie
(11. februára 2014)

Ako sa spomína v správe Komisie o pokroku pri plnení kjótskych cieľov a cieľov stratégie EÚ 2020 ([1]), EÚ je momentálne na dobrej ceste splniť svoj cieľ týkajúci sa emisií skleníkových plynov, ktorý jej vyplýva zo stratégie EÚ 2020. Podľa najnovších vnútroštátnych prognóz však bude musieť 13 členských štátov vyvinúť ešte väčšie úsilie na to, aby splnili svoje ciele do roku 2020.

V správe o pokroku v oblasti energie z obnoviteľných zdrojov, ktorá bola prijatá 27. marca 2013 ([2]), sa uvádza, že väčšina členských štátov splnila svoje dočasné ciele na roky 2011/2012 už v roku 2010. Údaje z rokov 2011 a 2012 toto zistenie potvrdili. Podiel energie z obnoviteľných zdrojov v EÚ dosiahol v roku 2011 hodnotu 13 % a odhaduje sa, že za rok 2012 bude jeho hodnota 14,4 % ([3]). Komisia sa snaží o to, aby jej ďalšia správa o pokroku v oblasti energie z obnoviteľných zdrojov, v ktorej sa bude posudzovať pokrok jednotlivých členských štátov, vyšla do konca roka 2014.

Pokiaľ ide o cieľ znížiť do roku 2020 spotrebu primárnej energie v rámci EÚ o 20 %, dosiahol sa síce výrazný pokrok, no EÚ pravdepodobne ani napriek tomu nedosiahne svoj orientačný cieľ. V referenčnom scenári EÚ na rok 2013 sa do roku 2020 predpokladajú úspory energie o približne 17 %.

Komisia sa aktívne podieľa na podpore a výmene informácií o vykonávaní klimaticko-energetického balíka členskými štátmi, a to napríklad prostredníctvom výboru pre klimatické zmeny a jeho pracovných skupín. Okrem toho sa členským štátom v rámci európskeho semestra poskytuje aj analýza o pokroku a príslušné odporúčania.

S cieľom urýchliť prechod na nízkouhlíkové hospodárstvo sa takisto poskytuje finančná podpora, dôkazom čoho je napríklad program financovania NER 300 a cieľ venovať aspoň 20 % prostriedkov z viacročného finančného rámca na roky 2014 – 2020 na výdavky spojené s bojom proti klimatickým zmenám v rámci rôznych nástrojov financovania a politík ([4]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/g-gas/docs/com_2013_xxx_en.pdf
([2]) COM(2013) 175. Pozri aj správu SEC(2013) 102, ktorá je k dispozícii na stránke http://ec.europa.eu/energy/renewables/reports/reports_en.htm
([3]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/energy/data/main_tables$, http://www.eurobserv-er.org/pdf/press/year_2013/res/english.pdf, správy o pokroku jednotlivých členských štátov: http://ec.europa.eu/energy/renewables/reports/2013_en.htm
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/finance/budget/docs/pr_2012_03_15_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014104/13
to the Commission
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(13 December 2013)

Subject: Limited progress in EU climate and energy targets

Regrettably, a large majority of Member States is not working towards the fulfilment of the set climate and energy targets by 2020. Satisfactory progress has so far been seen in only four Member States. For the sake of objectivity it should also be added that none of the Member States is showing explicitly bad results.

Despite this, in the interest of meeting commitments on climate and energy targets, is it at all possible for the Commission to assist Member States in achieving them?

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

As mentioned in the Commission's Report on progress towards the Kyoto and EU 2020 objectives ([1]), the EU is currently on track to meet its EU 2020 greenhouse emissions target. However, according to the latest national projections, 13 Member States will need additional efforts to meet their 2020 targets.

The Renewable Energy Progress Report adopted on 27 March 2013 ([2]) stated that most Member States had already achieved their 2011/2012 interim targets in 2010. Latest data for 2011 and for 2012 have confirmed that. The EU renewable share reached 13% in 2011 and is estimated at 14.4% for 2012 ([3]). The Commission intends to issue its next Renewable energy progress report, assessing progress of Member States, by the end of 2014.

As for the 2020 target of saving 20% of the EU's primary energy consumption, significant progress has been made. Nevertheless, the EU is likely to miss its indicative target. The EU Reference Scenario 2013 projects energy savings of some 17% in 2020.

The Commission contributes actively to the support and exchange of information on the implementation by Member States of the climate and energy package, for instance through the Climate Change Committee and its working groups. Furthermore, analysis of progress and appropriate recommendations are provided to Member States as part of the European Semester process

Financial support is also provided to steer the transition to a low-carbon economy, as illustrated by the NER 300 funding programme and the objective to spend at least 20% of the 2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework to climate related spending under the various funding instruments and policies ([4]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/g-gas/docs/com_2013_xxx_en.pdf
([2]) COM(2013) 175. Cf. Also SEC(2013)102, available on: http://ec.europa.eu/energy/renewables/reports/reports_en.htm
([3]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/energy/data/main_tables
http://www.eurobserv-er.org/pdf/press/year_2013/res/english.pdf
Member State 2013 progress reports available on: http://ec.europa.eu/energy/renewables/reports/2013_en.htm
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/finance/budget/docs/pr_2012_03_15_en.pdf

(Slovenské znenie)

Otázka na písomné zodpovedanie E-014105/13
Komisii
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(13. decembra 2013)

Vec: Problematika internetovej ekonomiky

O digitálnom hospodárstve sú vedené intenzívne diskusie na európskej, ale i národnej úrovni mnohých členských štátov Únie. Práve digitálne hospodárstvo totiž v sebe ukrýva veľký potenciál. IT sektor totiž vedel rásť i v období krízy. Ako je zrejmé, informačné technológie sa stali neoddeliteľnou súčasťou každodenného života všetkých, nielen európskych občanov. Predstavujú nové nástroje a spôsoby komunikácie a súčasne tiež otvárajú príležitosti na tvorbu pracovných miest. Možno povedať, že internet predstavuje skoro neobmedzený priestor pre podnikanie a inovácie.

Akým spôsobom podporila Komisia rast internetovej ekonomiky v poslednej dobe?

Odpoveď pána Barniera v mene Komisie
(19. februára 2014)

Komisia súhlasí s tým, že digitálne hospodárstvo má veľký potenciál pre nový rast.

Digitálna agenda pre Európu ako hlavná iniciatíva stratégie Európa 2020 stanovila súbor opatrení, prostredníctvom ktorých bude Komisia podporovať digitálne hospodárstvo. Oznámenie o *„koherentnom rámci na posilnenie dôvery v jednotný digitálny trh elektronického obchodu a online služieb"* ([1]) obsahuje komplexný rámec opatrení na zvýšenie dôvery v jednotný digitálny trh. Komisia v správe ([2]) z 23. apríla 2013 vymenúva činnosti, ktoré sa už realizovali.

Komisia napríklad predložila takzvané usmernenie o uplatňovaní článku 20 ods. 2 ([3]) smernice o službách a oznámenie o obsahu na digitálnom jednotnom trhu ([4]). Okrem toho spoluzákonodarcovia EÚ schválili dva legislatívne návrhy alternatívneho riešenia spotrebiteľských sporov (ARS/RSO) ([5]).

Je však potrebné urobiť ešte viac. O viacerých legislatívnych návrhoch sa v súčasnosti rokuje v Rade a v Európskom parlamente, ako napríklad o návrhu *„prepojeného kontinentu"* ([6]), návrhu smernice o bezpečnosti sietí a informácií, návrhu nariadenia o elektronickej identifikácii a dôveryhodných službách, návrhu na revíziu smernice o platobných službách ([7]) a o prijatí nariadenia o multilaterálnych výmenných poplatkoch ([8]). Okrem toho navrhovaná reforma ochrany údajov v EÚ posilní práva na súkromie v online prostredí a podporí digitálne hospodárstvo Európy.

Plán na dokončenie jednotného trhu pre doručovanie balíkov, ktorý schválila Komisia 16. decembra 2013, obsahuje konkrétne opatrenia na zlepšenie cezhraničnej služby doručovania balíkov v záujme lepšieho fungovania jednotného digitálneho trhu ([9]).

([1]) KOM(2011) 942 v konečnom znení.
([2]) SWD(2013) 153 final.
([3]) SWD(2012) 146 final.
([4]) COM(2012)789 final.
([5]) Smernica 2013/11/EÚ (ARS) a nariadenie č. 524/2013 (RSO).
([6]) COM(2013) 627 final.
([7]) COM(2013) 547 final.
([8]) COM(2013) 550 final.
([9]) COM(2013) 886 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014105/13
to the Commission
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(13 December 2013)

Subject: The issue of the Internet economy

Intensive discussions about the digital economy are taking place at European and national level in many EU Member States. The digital economy holds great potential. The IT sector grew even during the crisis period. It is clear that information technology has become an integral part of the everyday lives of everyone, not just European citizens. It brings new tools and modes of communication, and at the same time, it opens up opportunities for job creation. It could be said that the Internet is an almost limitless space for business and innovation.

How has the Commission supported the growth of the Internet economy recently?

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

The Commission agrees that the digital economy holds great potential for new growth.

The Digital Agenda for Europe as a EU2020 Flagship Initiative identified a set of actions through which the Commission would encourage the digital economy. The communication on 'A coherent framework to build trust in the Digital single market for e-commerce and online services' ([1]) contains a comprehensive framework of actions to increase trust in the Digital Single Market. The Commission's Report ([2]) of 23 April 2013 sets out the actions that have already been implemented.

For example, the Commission has presented so-called Article 20(2) Guidelines ([3]) and a communication on the Content in the Digital Single Market ([4]). Furthermore, two legislative proposals on alternative means to resolve consumer disputes (ADR/ODR) have been agreed by the EU co-legislators. ([5])

However, more remains to be done. Several legislative proposals are currently being negotiated in the Council and the European Parliament, as for example the 'Connected Continent' proposal ([6]), the proposal for a directive on Network and Information Security, the proposal for a regulation on electronic identification and trusted services, the proposal for the revision of the Payment Services Directive ([7]) and the adoption of the regulation on Multilateral Interchange Fees. ([8]) In addition, the proposed EU data protection reform will strengthen online privacy rights and boost Europe's digital economy

Finally, the roadmap for completing the single market for parcel delivery, adopted by the Commission on 16 December 2013, contains concrete actions to improve cross-border parcel delivery services in the interests of a better functioning Digital Single Market. ([9])

([1]) COM(2011) 942 final.
([2]) SWD(2013) 153 final.
([3]) SWD(2012) 146 final.
([4]) COM(2012) 789 final.
([5]) Directive 2013/11/EU (ADR) and Regulation 524/2013 (ODR).
([6]) COM(2013) 627 final.
([7]) COM(2013) 547 final.
([8]) COM(2013) 550 final.
([9]) COM(2013) 886 final.

(Slovenské znenie)

Otázka na písomné zodpovedanie E-014106/13
Komisii
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(13. decembra 2013)

Vec: Plytvanie potravinami

V členských štátoch Európskej únie a v celej Európe sa čoraz väčšie množstvo potravín každý rok stráca v potravinovom dodávateľskom reťazci a stáva sa odpadom. Plytvanie potravinami dorástlo do takých rozmerov, že ho možno považovať za celosvetový problém, ktorý sa prejavuje vo všetkých článkoch poľnohospodársko-potravinárskeho reťazca. Dochádza k nemu v poľnohospodárstve, spracovateľskom priemysle, distribučných spoločnostiach či domácnostiach spotrebiteľov. Potravinami sa plytvá tak v rozvinutých, ako aj v rozvojových krajinách. V tejto súvislosti je teda nanajvýš znepokojujúca skutočnosť, že miliónom ľudí po celom svete hrozí riziku podvýživy. Aj preto sú opodstatnené pochybnosti, či takto bude vôbec možné dosiahnuť vytýčené rozvojové miléniové ciele predpokladajúce, okrem ďalšieho, obmedzenie chudoby a hladu do roku 2015 o polovicu.

Aké opatrenia chce prijať Komisia v snahe zamedziť plytvaniu potravinami, resp. dosiahnuť nápravu?

Odpoveď pána Borga v mene Komisie
(4. februára 2014)

Komisia si dovoľuje odkázať váženú pani poslankyňu na svoju odpoveď na písomnú otázku QE-13588/2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014106/13
to the Commission
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(13 December 2013)

Subject: Wastage of food

In the EU Member States, and across Europe as a whole, an ever-greater quantity of food is lost in the food supply chain every year, becoming waste. Food waste has reached such proportions that it can be considered to be a global problem that is reflected right along the food supply chain. It occurs in agriculture, in the processing industry, in distribution companies and in consumers' homes. Food is wasted both in developed countries and in developing countries. In this light, therefore, it is all the more worrying that millions of people worldwide are at risk of malnutrition. This is one reason why it may be doubted whether it will be possible to achieve the set millennium development goals involving, among other things, the reduction of poverty and hunger by half by 2015.

What measures does the Commission intend to take in order to prevent or remedy the wastage of food?

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

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its reply to written question QE-13588/2013.

(Slovenské znenie)

Otázka na písomné zodpovedanie E-014108/13
Komisii
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(13. decembra 2013)

Vec: Podpora digitálnych inovácií

Koncom októbra sa konal digitálny summit lídrov členských štátov Únie. Súčasťou agendy boli okrem ďalších napríklad i otázky digitálnej ekonomiky, inovácií a výskumu. Poprední európski predstavitelia sa zhodli na skutočnosti, že je dôležité, aby európsky priemysel posilnil digitálne produkty a služby. Práve táto oblasť totiž v sebe skrýva značný potenciál. IT boli i v období pretrvávajúcej krízy jedným z mála odvetví vykazujúcich rast.

Na aké nové investície by bolo, podľa úsudku Komisie, vhodné sústrediť pozornosť v úsilí dosiahnuť ciele vytýčené v ostatnej Digitálnej agende pre Európu?

Odpoveď pani Kroesovej v mene Komisie
(5. februára 2014)

Komisia víta výsledky zasadnutia Európskej rady v októbri 2013, ktoré vyžadujú ďalšie opatrenia v oblasti digitálnej ekonomiky. Je to v úplnom súlade s Digitálnou agendou pre Európu, ktorá podporuje komplexný prístup k digitálnej ekonomike a spoločnosti prostredníctvom radu opatrení v rámci siedmich pilierov. Ide o rôzne opatrenia – od právnych, cez finančné až po jemnejšie politické opatrenia.

Pokiaľ ide o potrebné investície, právne opatrenia a jemnejšie politické opatrenia, ako sú napríklad tie, ktoré boli uvedené na zasadnutí Európskej rady v októbri 2013, sú určené na uľahčenie a podporu investícií súkromných zainteresovaných strán. Predovšetkým prostredníctvom návrhu o prepojenom kontinente, ktorý Komisia prijala v septembri 2013, by sa mal výrazne zlepšiť regulačný rámec v telekomunikačnej oblasti, čo v zásadnej miere prispeje k podnecovaniu investícií do rýchlych internetových sietí. „Start-Up Europe" alebo „veľká koalícia pre digitálne pracovné miesta" sú iniciatívami Komisie, ktoré sú orientované na zainteresované strany a prispievajú k podpore investícií do inovačných MSP v prípade prvej alebo do zručností potrebných pre digitálny vek v prípade druhej iniciatívy.

Čo sa týka verejných investícií, program Horizont 2020 výrazne podporuje priority v digitálnej oblasti vrátane aspektov osobitne uvedených v záveroch Európskej rady z októbra 2013, napr. cloud computing, spracovanie veľkých objemov údajov (big data), elektronickú verejnú správu alebo elektronické zdravotníctvo.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014108/13
to the Commission
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(13 December 2013)

Subject: Promoting digital innovation

In late October, a digital summit of EU Member State leaders was held. The agenda included digital economy, innovation and research issues. The European leaders agreed that it is important that European industry consolidate its digital products and services. It is precisely this area that holds considerable potential. During the period of the prolonged crisis, IT was one of the few sectors showing growth.

In the Commission's judgment, which new investments would it be appropriate to focus on in order to achieve the goals set out in the rest of the Digital Agenda for Europe?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(5 February 2014)

The Commission welcomes the results of the European Council of October 2013, which call for further action on the Digital Economy. This is fully in line with the Digital Agenda for Europe, which promotes a comprehensive approach to the digital economy and society, translated into a series of actions framed in seven pillars; these actions are of a different nature: legal, financial, softer policy.

As to the necessary investments, legal and softer policy measures, such as those mentioned in the European Council of October 2013, are meant to facilitate and encourage investment by private stakeholders; in particular, the connected continent proposal that the Commission adopted in September 2013 should significantly improve the telecoms regulatory framework and thereby decisively contribute to stimulate investments in fast Internet networks. The 'Start-Up Europe' or 'Grand Coalition on Digital Jobs' are stakeholder-driven initiatives launched by the Commission that contribute, respectively, to stimulate investments in innovative SMEs and in the skills necessary for the digital age.

Regarding public investment, the Horizon 2020 programme provides significant support to digital priorities, including aspects specifically mentioned in the conclusions of the European Council of October 2013, such as cloud computing, 'big data', e-government or e-health.

(Slovenské znenie)

Otázka na písomné zodpovedanie E-014109/13
Komisii
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(13. decembra 2013)

Vec: Otázka hospodárskeho oživenia EÚ

Podľa aktuálnych ekonomických údajov za tretí kvartál členské štáty dosiahli v niektorých ukazovateľoch rast, v iných sa zase klesajúca tendencia aspoň spomalila. Hospodárske oživenie je však stále veľmi krehké. Ak hovoríme o otázke financovania hospodárstva, v snahe dospieť k ekonomickému rastu, treba sa usilovať o obnovu poskytovania úverov do hospodárstva, ako aj, v rámci možností, treba uľahčiť financovanie investícií.

Má Komisia k dispozícii nástroje, ktoré by zabraňovali fragmentácií trhu a ktoré by mohli prispievať k obnove európskej ekonomiky?

Odpoveď pána Rehna v mene Komisie
(14. februára 2014)

Viaceré politické opatrenia a iniciatívy Komisie, ktoré pomôžu financovať obnovu a znižovať finančnú fragmentáciu, sú buď už zavedené, alebo sú v procese finalizácie a implementácie.

Po prvé, vytvorenie bankovej únie v konečnom dôsledku zníži finančnú fragmentáciu prostredníctvom jednotného mechanizmu dohľadu a jednotného mechanizmu riešenia krízových situácií.

Po druhé, zdokonaľovanie regulačného rámca pre malé a stredné podniky (MSP) významne pokročilo s tým, ako bolo nariadenie EÚ o rozpočtových pravidlách v posledných troch rokoch podstatne upravené s cieľom uľahčiť financovanie MSP.

Po tretie, v období rokov 2007 – 2013 boli na úrovni EÚ zavedené aj tieto finančné opatrenia, ktoré majú pomôcť pri financovaní hospodárstva:

— z európskych štrukturálnych a investičných fondov (EŠIF) bolo malým a stredným podnikom poskytnuté financovanie prostredníctvom grantov určených pre MSP (55 miliárd EUR) a z finančných nástrojov (8,9 miliardy EUR);

— z finančných nástrojov na úrovni EÚ bolo na úvery pre viac ako 350 000 malých a stredných podnikov poskytnutých približne 1,5 miliardy EUR a na kapitálové investície celkovo približne 500 miliónov EUR.

V novom viacročnom finančnom rámci (2014 – 2020) sa v prípade fondov EŠIF, programu pre výskum Horizont 2020 a programu určeného na podporu MSP (COSME) predpokladá zvýšenie využívania finančných nástrojov a bol predložený návrh novej iniciatívy pre MSP založenej na finančných nástrojoch spoločne financovaných z centrálneho rozpočtu EÚ a z dobrovoľných príspevkov členských štátov do fondov EŠIF. EÚ bude takisto podporovať investície do projektov európskeho záujmu v oblasti dopravy, energetiky a širokopásmového pripojenia v rámci Nástroja na prepájanie Európy.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014109/13
to the Commission
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(13 December 2013)

Subject: The economic recovery of the EU

According to the latest economic data for the third quarter, Member States achieved growth in some indicators, while declining trends at least slowed down in others. Economic recovery is still very fragile, however. With regard to the question of funding the economy, we must strive for a recovery in lending to business in the effort to achieve economic growth, and to facilitate the funding of investments, where possible.

Does the Commission have the tools to prevent fragmentation of the market, and to help towards European economic recovery?

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

Several policy measures and initiatives by the Commission that will help finance the recovery and reduce financial fragmentation are either already in place or in the process of being finalised and implemented.

First, the creation of the banking union will ultimately lessen financial fragmentation through the Single Supervisory Mechanism and the Single Resolution Mechanism.

Second, improving the regulatory framework for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) is well advanced as EU financial regulation has been adapted considerably in the last three years to facilitate the financing of SMEs.

Third, financial measures have also been implemented at the EU level in 2007-2013 to help financing the economy:

— European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) provided financing to SMEs through SME grants (EUR 55 billion) and financial instruments (EUR 8.9 billion);

— EU-level financial instruments contributed some EUR 1.5bn to lending to more than 350 000 SMEs and to equity investments totalling some EUR 500 million.

For the new multiannual financial framework (2014-2020), ESIF, the research programme Horizon 2020, and the programme to boost SMEs (COSME) foresee scaling up of the use of financial instruments and a proposal has been put forward for a new SME initiative, based on financial instruments jointly funded by the EU central budget and voluntary ESIF allocations by Member States. The EU will also promote investment in transport, energy and broadband projects of European interest under the Connecting Europe Facility.

(Slovenské znenie)

Otázka na písomné zodpovedanie E-014110/13
Komisii
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(13. decembra 2013)

Vec: Zaostávanie v prípravách na SEPA

Zavedenie spoločnej európskej meny a jej používanie ako spoločného hotovostného platidla v rámci krajín eurozóny bolo prvotným impulzom myšlienky vytvorenia spoločného priestoru platieb aj v bezhotovostnom platobnom styku. Systém SEPA vytvára priestor, v ktorom podniky a spotrebitelia budú môcť realizovať cezhraničné transakcie v eurách za rovnakých podmienok ako v domovských členských štátoch. Podľa ostatných dostupných údajov však pomerne veľké množstvo spoločností takpovediac zaostáva v prípravách na plynulý prechod a adaptáciu svojich platobných systémov na SEPA.

Je v kompetencii a možnostiach Komisie prispieť k promptnejšiemu a plynulejšiemu prechodu na SEPA?

Odpoveď pána Barniera v mene Komisie
(10. februára 2014)

Nariadenie o SEPA nadobudlo účinnosť 31. marca 2012, čo znamená, že účastníci trhu mali 2 roky na prípravu. V súčasnosti sa vzhľadom na nízke tempo prechodu v niektorých členských štátoch v prípade SEPA úhrad (SCT) a vo väčšine členských štátov v prípade SEPA inkás (SDD) zdá veľmi nepravdepodobné, že prechod na SEPA bude 1. februára 2014 úplne ukončený. Komisia preto prijala návrh na zmenu nariadenia (EÚ) č. 260/2012 zavedením doložky o ochrane predchádzajúceho stavu, ktorá umožní bankám a iným poskytovateľom platobných služieb pokračovať aj po 1. februári 2014 – na obmedzené obdobie 6 mesiacov – v spracúvaní platieb, ktoré nespĺňajú náležitosti systému SEPA, prostredníctvom pôvodných platobných schém popri SEPA úhradách a SEPA inkasách. Jasnou komunikáciou tejto zmeny sa používateľom platobných služieb poskytne istota, že ich platby sa budú naďalej spracúvať aj po 1. februári 2014, a tým, ktorí ešte neuskutočnili prechod, sa umožní urobiť tak čo najskôr. Tým by sa mal umožniť rýchly a plynulý prechod. Toto prechodné obdobie je potrebné na to, aby sa predišlo narušeniam platieb a aby sa zabezpečila právna zrozumiteľnosť a istota.

Súčasne je rozhodujúce, aby používatelia platobných služieb, ktorí ešte nedokončili prechod na formáty SEPA, najmä malé a stredné podniky, malé verejné správy, ako aj niektoré veľké podnikateľské subjekty čo najlepšie využili toto ďalšie prechodné obdobie na zintenzívnenie svojho úsilia v záujme dokončenia prechodu dostatočne včas pred 1. augustom 2014.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014110/13
to the Commission
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(13 December 2013)

Subject: Falling behind in SEPA preparations

The introduction of the common European currency and its use as the common cash form of payment within the euro area were the primary impetus for the idea of creating a common payment area for non-cash payments as well. The SEPA system creates an area in which businesses and consumers will be able to make cross-border transactions in euros under the same conditions as domestic transactions within their Member State. However, according to the available data, a relatively large number of companies are, so to speak, falling behind in their preparations for a smooth transition and the adaption of their payment systems to SEPA.

It is within the powers and possibilities of the Commission to contribute to the swift and smooth transition to SEPA?

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

The SEPA Regulation entered into force on 31 March 2012, giving market participants 2 years to prepare. Today, considering the low migration pace in some Member States for SEPA Credit Transfers (SCT) and in most Member States for SEPA Direct Debits (SDD), it appears very unlikely that the SEPA migration will be fully completed on 1 February 2014. Therefore, the Commission has adopted a proposal to amend Regulation (EU) No 260/2012 by introducing a grandfathering clause allowing banks and other payment service providers to continue also after 1 February 2014, for a limited period of time of 6 months, the processing of non-SEPA compliant payments through their legacy payments schemes alongside SCT and SDD. A clear communication of this amendment will provide certainty to the payment service users that their payments will continue to be processed after 1 February 2014, and it will allow those that have not yet migrated to do so as rapidly as possible. This should allow for a swift and smooth transition. This transitional period is necessary to avoid any payment disruptions and ensure legal clarity and certainty.

At the same time, it is crucial that payment services users that have not yet completed their migration to SEPA formats, notably small and medium-sized companies, small public administrations as well as some big corporates make the most of the additional transition period to increase their efforts in order to be ready well before 1 August 2014.

(Slovenské znenie)

Otázka na písomné zodpovedanie E-014112/13
Komisii
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(13. decembra 2013)

Vec: Antisemitizmus v členských štátoch

Začiatkom novembra Agentúra Európskej únie pre základné práva (FRA) predložila údaje zozbierané v rámci prieskumu, ktoré vypovedajú o skúsenostiach židovského obyvateľstva žijúceho v EÚ, a o antisemitských incidentoch získaných z vládnych i mimovládnych zdrojov. Na základe prieskumu, 66 % respondentov považuje antisemitizmus za veľký problém vo svojej krajine a dokonca až 76 % oslovených uviedlo, že v posledných piatich rokoch sa situácia stáva čoraz naliehavejšou. Je teda zrejmé, že židovskí obyvatelia žijúci v Európskej únii sa stávajú obeťami fyzického aj psychického násilia práve pre svoj pôvod. Takáto situácia je však neprípustná.

Aké konkrétne opatrenia plánuje Komisia prijať v snahe dosiahnuť nápravu čoraz vyhrotenejšej situácie, keď hovoríme o problematike antisemitizmu v EÚ?

Odpoveď pani Redingovej v mene Komisie
(18. februára 2014)

Európska komisia opakovane odmietla a odsúdila všetky prejavy antisemitizmu, rasizmu a xenofóbie, pretože sú nezlučiteľné s hodnotami a zásadami, na ktorých je Európska únia založená.

Komisia je odhodlaná bojovať proti týmto javom, pričom využíva všetky právomoci, ktoré má k dispozícii na základe zmlúv vrátane dôkladného monitorovania vykonávania právnych predpisov EÚ zakazujúcich nenávistné prejavy a trestné činy motivované nenávisťou. Konkrétne možno uviesť monitorovanie vykonávania rámcového rozhodnutia Rady o boji proti niektorým formám a prejavom rasizmu a xenofóbie prostredníctvom trestného práva, ako aj smernice o audiovizuálnych mediálnych službách, ktorou sa zakazujú rasistické prejavy v audiovizuálnych mediálnych službách, napríklad v televíznych vysielaniach a v rámci služieb videa na požiadanie.

Podľa rámcového rozhodnutia je podnecovanie nenávisti na základe rasy, náboženstva alebo etnického pôvodu a odmietanie alebo zľahčovanie holokaustu trestne postihované.

Komisia predložila svoje hodnotenie súladu členských štátov s rámcovým rozhodnutím v správe ([1]) z 27. januára 2014.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/files/com_2014_27_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014112/13
to the Commission
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(13 December 2013)

Subject: Anti-Semitism in the Member States

In early November, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) presented data on the experiences of Jewish people living in the EU and on anti-Semitic incidents, which were obtained from a survey and governmental and non-governmental sources. Based on the survey, 66% of respondents consider anti-Semitism to be a big problem in their country, and no less than 76% of respondents said that the situation has become more acute in the last five years. It is thus clear that Jewish people living in the EU are becoming victims of physical and psychological violence due to their origins. This situation is, however, unacceptable.

What specific measures does the Commission intend to take in order to tackle the ever-more acute situation concerning the issue of anti-Semitism in the EU?

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

The European Commission has repeatedly rejected and condemned all manifestations of antisemitism, racism and xenophobia as these phenomena are incompatible with the values and principles the EU is founded on.

The Commission is committed to fighting these phenomena by making use of all powers available under the Treaties, including by monitoring closely the implementation of EU legislation on hate speech and hate crime, namely the framework Decision on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law, and the Audiovisual Media Services Directive banning racist speech in audiovisual media services, such as TV broadcasts and video-on-demand services.

Under the framework Decision, the incitement to hatred based on race, religion or ethnic origin, and denying or trivialising the Holocaust is punishable by criminal law.

The Commission has presented its assessment of the Member States' compliance with the framework Decision in a report ([1]) of 27 January 2014.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/files/com_2014_27_en.pdf

(Slovenské znenie)

Otázka na písomné zodpovedanie E-014113/13
Komisii
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(13. decembra 2013)

Vec: Pripojenie Poľska k eurozóne

Poľsko v uplynulom období zaznamenalo významný pokrok v prípravách na vstup do eurozóny, ale súčasná vláda, podľa všetkého, tieto snahy pozastavila. Podľa slov popredných poľských predstaviteľov by však pristúpenie do eurozóny so sebou prinášalo štátu ekonomické výhody. Možno existujú štáty, ktoré prijali euro v období, keď naň ešte neboli dostatočne pripravené. Treba však využiť príležitosť a tým zabrániť situácii, že by vstup do eurozóny nastal príliš neskoro.

Plánuje Komisia, vzhľadom na súčasnú situáciu v Poľsku, prijať nejaké opatrenia na podporu úsilia Poľska o vstup do eurozóny?

Odpoveď pána Rehna v mene Komisie
(21. februára 2014)

Poľsko pri svojom vstupe do EÚ v roku 2004 súhlasilo, že v budúcnosti nakoniec zavedie euro. Aby mohol členský štát, pre ktorý platí výnimka, prijať euro ako oficiálnu menu, musí dosiahnuť „vysoký stupeň udržateľnej konvergencie" vymedzený splnením kritérií uvedených v článku 140 ods. 1 Zmluvy o fungovaní Európskej únie.

Výhody prijatia eura závisia od schopnosti členského štátu fungovať bez problémov v rámci menovej únie. To predpokladá zdravé verejné financie a stabilné konkurenčné postavenie na trhu.

Členský štát môže sám rozhodnúť o stratégii svojho vstupu do eurozóny. Komisia v rámci európskeho semestra pozorne sleduje hospodársky a fiškálny vývoj v Poľsku, rovnako ako vo všetkých členských štátoch EÚ, pričom poskytuje podrobnú analýzu jeho návrhov na reformy a navrhuje odporúčania pre jednotlivé krajiny. Okrem toho najmenej každé dva roky alebo na žiadosť členského štátu, pre ktorý platí výnimka, Komisia predkladá Rade správy o pokroku dosiahnutom pri plnení záväzkov týkajúcich sa dosiahnutia hospodárskej a menovej únie ([1]).

([1]) Najnovšia správa o konvergencii za rok 2012 sa nachádza na: http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/european_economy/2012/pdf/ee-2012-3_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014113/13
to the Commission
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(13 December 2013)

Subject: Connection of Poland to the euro area

Poland has recently made considerable progress in preparing for entry into the euro area, but the current government seems to have put these efforts on hold. According to leading Polish officials, however, joining the eurozone would bring economic benefits to the state. Maybe there are states that adopted the euro at a time when they were not yet sufficiently prepared. We should take the opportunity, however, to prevent a situation in which entry into the euro area comes too late.

In view of the current situation in Poland, does the Commission plan to adopt any measures to support Poland's efforts to join the eurozone?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(21 February 2014)

Poland agreed to eventually introduce the euro when it joined the EU in 2004. To adopt the euro as the official currency, a Member State with derogation must achieve a 'high degree of sustainable convergence' as defined by the fulfilment of the criteria listed in Article 140(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

The benefits of the euro depend on the Member State's capacity to operate smoothly inside the monetary union. This means sound public finances and solid competitive position on the market.

It is up to a Member State to decide on the strategy for joining the euro. The Commission is monitoring closely economic and fiscal developments in Poland as in all EU Member States within the framework of the European Semester providing detailed analysis of its reform proposals and proposing country-specific recommendations. Moreover, at least are every two years, or at the request of a Member State with a derogation, the Commission reports to the Council on the progress made in the fulfilment of their obligations regarding the achievement of economic and monetary union [1].

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[1] The latest Convergence Report 2012 is available at: http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/european_economy/2012/pdf/ee-2012-3_en.pdf

(Slovenské znenie)

Otázka na písomné zodpovedanie E-014114/13
Komisii
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(13. decembra 2013)

Vec: Tabaková legislatíva

Fajčenie je hlavnou príčinou zbytočných úmrtí a ochorení v rámci Európskej únie. Podľa dostupných zdrojov fajčí takmer 30 % dospelých. Účinnou pomocou v snahe prestať s týmto neduhom by mohla byť e-cigareta. Ostatná regulácia Európskej komisie definuje elektronické cigarety ako tabakové výrobky (čo však nie sú), zakazuje arómy alebo tiež znovu naplniteľné výrobky (ktoré mnohí konzumenti preferujú). Práve uvedené obmedzenia by sa značne mohli pričiniť o návrat spotrebiteľov k tradičným tabakovým výrobkom.

Je teda, v danom kontexte, v snahách Komisie učiniť kroky potrebné pre nápravu situácie? Ako sa efektívnymi opatreniami vyhnúť tomu, aby ľudia snažiaci sa odvyknúť si od fajčenia nesiahali namiesto e-cigarety po tabakových výrobkoch?

Odpoveď pána Borga v mene Komisie
(4. februára 2014)

Na základe návrhu Komisie na revíziu smernice o tabakových výrobkoch ([1]) sa Európsky parlament a Rada dohodli na regulácii elektronických cigariet v rámci tejto smernice. Dohodu o novej smernici o tabakových výrobkoch musí formálne prijať Európsky parlament a Rada ministrov, čo sa plánuje na jar 2014.

Táto kompromisná dohoda umožňuje, aby elektronické cigarety zostali na trhu ako spotrebné výrobky, pokiaľ nespadajú pod definíciu lieku, a ustanovuje nové pravidlá z hľadiska bezpečnosti, kvality, zložiek a prezentácie spotrebných elektronických cigariet. Dohoda nezakazuje znovu naplniteľné elektronické cigarety – stanovuje dodatočné bezpečnostné požiadavky na zabezpečenie ochrany užívateľov a detí. Arómy elektronických cigariet sa na úrovni EÚ neregulujú.

([1]) SWD(2012) 452 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014114/13
to the Commission
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(13 December 2013)

Subject: Tobacco legislation

Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death and disease in the European Union. According to available sources almost 30% of adults are smokers. E-cigarettes could provide effective assistance in an effort to stop this scourge. Another regulation of the European Commission defines electronic cigarettes as tobacco products (which they are not); it also prohibits flavouring and refillable products (which many consumers prefer). It is precisely these limitations that could provide a great incentive to return consumers to traditional tobacco products.

In this context, therefore, can the Commission take the necessary steps to remedy the situation? How can we use effective measures to enable those seeking to stop smoking to avoid reaching for tobacco products instead of e-cigarettes?

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

On the basis of the Commission's proposal for a revised Tobacco Products Directive ([1]), the European Parliament and the Council have reached an agreement on the regulation of electronic cigarettes within this directive. The agreement on the new Tobacco Products Directive requires formal adoption by the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers, which is due in spring 2014.

This compromise agreement allows electronic cigarettes to remain on the market as consumer products unless they fall under the definition of a medicinal product, and establishes new rules for the safety, quality, ingredients and presentation of consumer electronic cigarettes. The agreement does not forbid refillable electronic cigarettes; it puts in place additional safety requirements to ensure that users and children are protected. Electronic cigarettes' flavours are not regulated at EU-level.

([1]) SWD(2012) 452 final.

(Slovenské znenie)

Otázka na písomné zodpovedanie E-014115/13
Komisii
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(13. decembra 2013)

Vec: Ukrajina a EÚ

Ukrajina v uplynulých dňoch odstúpila od podpísania asociačnej dohody s Európskou úniou. Ukrajinský parlament neschválil ani jeden zo šiestich zákonov, na základe ktorých by bolo možné prepustiť bývalú premiérku Juliu Tymošenkovú a poslať ju na liečenie do Nemecka. Toto však bolo podmienkou Európskej únie. Dohoda sa tak nepodpísala a Ukrajina posilňuje vzťahy s Ruskom.

Dokáže Komisie vyvinúť úsilie, ktorým by sa mohla situácia zmeniť?

Je za súčasných okolností možné, aby sa podnikli kroky na upevnenie Východného partnerstva?

Odpoveď vysokej predstaviteľky a podpredsedníčky Ashtonovej v mene Komisie
(12. februára 2014)

EÚ vzala so sklamaním na vedomie rozhodnutie ukrajinskej vlády pozastaviť proces príprav na podpísanie AA/DCFTA (dohoda o pridružení/prehĺbená a komplexná dohoda o voľnom obchode).

Sme stále presvedčení, že podpísanie AA/DCFTA, najambicióznejšej dohody, akú kedy EÚ ponúkla nečlenskému štátu, by poskytlo ukrajinskej reforme a modernizácii najlepšiu možnú podporu, s cieľom vybudovať prosperujúcu a stabilnú budúcnosť pre ukrajinský ľud.

EÚ je aj naďalej odhodlaná podpísať AA/DCFTA za stanovených podmienok, na rade je však Ukrajina, ktorá si musí ujasniť svoje smerovanie.

Napriek jej rozhodnutiu pozastaviť podpísanie dohody vyzývame Ukrajinu, aby doviedla do úspešného konca prácu, ktorú zatiaľ vykonávala v súlade s očakávaniami EÚ stanovenými v záveroch Rady z 10. decembra 2012, spolu s riešením otázky selektívnej spravodlivosti.

Samit Východného partnerstva vo Vilniuse považujeme za veľmi produktívny. Zaznamenali sme skutočný pokrok a konkrétne výsledky politických záväzkov Východného partnerstva, najmä parafovanie AA/DCFTA s Gruzínskom a Moldavskom a podpísanie niekoľkých ďalších dohôd. Stojí za povšimnutie, že všetky strany súhlasili so spoločným vyhlásením, čím sa stanovilo smerovanie ďalšieho zbližovania partnerstva.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014115/13
to the Commission
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(13 December 2013)

Subject: Ukraine and the EU

Ukraine has recently withdrawn from signing an association agreement with the European Union. The Ukrainian Parliament has not approved any of the six laws that would enable the former prime minister, Yulia Tymoshenko, to be released and sent to Germany for treatment. However, this was a requirement of the EU. The agreement was therefore not signed, and Ukraine is strengthening its relations with Russia.

Will the Commission make every effort to change the situation?

Is it possible under the current circumstances to take steps to consolidate the Eastern Partnership?

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

The EU has taken note with disappointment of the decision by the Government of Ukraine to suspend the process of preparation for signature of the AA/DCFTA.

We remain convinced that the signing of the AA/DCFTA, the most ambitious agreement the EU has ever offered a non-Member State, would have provided the best possible support for Ukraine's reform course and modernisation in view of building a prosperous and stable future for the Ukrainian people.

The EU remains committed to signing the AA/DCFTA, provided conditions are in place, but the ball remains in Ukraine's court to first clarify its intentions.

We call on Ukraine, despite its decision to suspend signature, to bring to a conclusion the good work done so far with regard to the EU's expectations set out in the Council Conclusions of 10 December 2012, including by addressing the issue of selective justice.

The Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius was a productive summit. It demonstrated a real progress and tangible results of the EU's Eastern Partnership policy commitments, notably the initialling of the AA/DCFTAs with Georgia and Moldova and the signing of a number of other agreements. It is notable that the Joint Declaration was agreed by all, setting out the direction for further consolidation of the partnership.

(Slovenské znenie)

Otázka na písomné zodpovedanie E-014116/13
Komisii
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(13. decembra 2013)

Vec: Energeticko-klimatické ciele EÚ do roku 2030

V Európskej únii v súčasnosti prebieha diskusia o energeticko-klimatických cieľoch do roku 2030. Podľa hodnotenia dopadov, ktoré bolo vypracované v súvislosti s prípravou nového legislatívneho balíka, sa zvažoval dopad obmedzenia CO_2 o 35 – 45 % a cieľa pre obnoviteľné zdroje na úrovni 25 – 35 %. Spoločnosti a ich organizácie sa zhodli na potrebe cieľa pre redukciu emisií. Súčasne však zdôrazňovali predovšetkým potrebu rovnako dôrazne pristupovať ku klimatickým cieľom, ako aj k otázke konkurencieschopnosti a súvisiacich nákladov a bezpečnosti dodávok energie.

Ako sa k uvedenej problematike stavia Komisia?

Odpoveď pani Hedegaardovej v mene Komisie
(29. januára 2014)

Dňa 22. januára 2014 predložila Komisia oznámenie o rámci pre politiku v oblasti zmeny klímy a energetiky do roku 2030 ([1]). V tomto rámci je zohľadnená širšia škála cieľov politík EÚ v oblasti zmeny klímy a energetiky, ktoré vychádzajú z dosiahnutého pokroku a skúseností získaných z doterajších výziev.

Komisia si uvedomuje, že pri príprave tohto balíka by sa mal rámec politík do roku 2030 vymedziť tak, aby podporoval trojicu cieľov – udržateľnosť, konkurencieschopnosť a bezpečnosť dodávok energie. K spomínanému oznámeniu je pripojené posúdenie vplyvu, v ktorom sa analyzujú náklady a výhody rôznych možností tohto politického rámca, pričom sa zohľadňuje ich hospodársky, sociálny a environmentálny vplyv. Spolu s návrhmi politík do roku 2030 prijala Komisia aj oznámenie o cenách a nákladoch za energiu ([2]).

([1]) COM(2014) 15 final.
([2]) COM(2014) 21 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014116/13
to the Commission
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(13 December 2013)

Subject: Energy and climate objectives of the EU by 2030

A debate is currently under way in the European Union about energy and climate targets by 2030. According to an impact assessment that has been prepared in connection with the preparation of a new legislative package, the impact of restrictions on CO_2 by about 35-45% and a 25-35% target for renewables has been considered. Companies and their organisations have agreed on the necessity to reduce the emissions reduction target. At the same time, however, they stressed in particular the need for an equal emphasis on the approach to climate objectives, as well as on the issue of competitiveness and related costs and security of supply.

What is the Commission's stance on this issue?

Answer given by Ms Hedegaard on behalf of the Commission
(29 January 2014)

The Commission has submitted a communication on the 2030 framework for climate and energy policies ([1]) on 22 January 2014. The 2030 framework would reflect the broader set of objectives of EU climate and energy policies by building on the progress already made and learning from the challenges encountered.

In preparing the package, the Commission recognises that the 2030 framework should be defined in such a way that it supports a troika of objectives — sustainability, competitiveness and security of supply. The communication is accompanied by an impact assessment that analyses the costs and the benefits of different options for this policy framework, taking into account economic, social and environmental impacts. Together with the 2030 policy proposals, a communication on energy prices and costs has been adopted by the Commission ([2]).

([1]) COM(2014) 15 Final.
([2]) COM(2014) 21 Final.

(Slovenské znenie)

Otázka na písomné zodpovedanie E-014117/13
Komisii
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(13. decembra 2013)

Vec: Výskum na zvieratách

Európska únia je občanmi vyzývaná, aby predložila právne predpisy o úplnom zákaze vedeckých pokusov na zvieratách. Tieto snahy občianskej spoločnosti sú zároveň reakciou na prijatie smernice o ochrane zvierat využívaných na vedecké účely z roku 2010, ktorá pokusy na zvieratách umožňuje. Európska únia sa ale vo svojich politikách súčasne zaviazala rešpektovať zvieratá ako cítiace bytosti.

Plánuje Komisia vynaložiť potrebné úsilie na to, aby sa tyranii a pokusom na zvieratách dalo pomocou vhodných legislatívnych krokov vyhnúť?

Odpoveď pána Potočnika v mene Komisie
(13. februára 2014)

Pokusy na zvieratách na úrovni EÚ od roku 1986 reguluje smernica 86/609/EHS ([1]) o ochrane zvierat používaných na pokusné a iné vedecké účely. V roku 2013 túto smernicu nahradila smernica 2010/63/EÚ ([2]), ktorou sa výrazne zmodernizovala a zlepšila ochrana zvierat používaných na vedecké účely. V týchto právnych predpisoch sa osobitne vyžaduje, aby sa vyhýbalo zbytočnej bolesti, utrpeniu a strachu a, ak je to vedecky možné, aby sa namiesto zvierat siahalo po alternatívnych prístupoch.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:31986L0609:sk:HTML
([2]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:276:0033:0079:sk:PDF

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014117/13
to the Commission
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(13 December 2013)

Subject: Research on animals

Citizens are calling on the European Union to present legislation on the complete prohibition of scientific experiments on animals. These efforts of civil society are also a reaction to the adoption of a directive on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes in 2010, which allows experiments on animals. However, in its policies, the European Union also commits itself to respect animals as sentient beings.

Does the Commission intend to make the necessary efforts to ensure that the mistreatment of animals and experiments on them can be avoided by appropriate legislative means?

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

Animal experimentation has been regulated at the EU level since 1986 by the introduction of Directive 86/609/EEC ([1]) on the protection of animals used for experimental and other scientific purposes. In 2013, this directive was replaced by Directive 2010/63/EU ([2]) which modernised and significantly improved the protection of animals used for scientific purposes. This legislation specifically requires that any unnecessary pain, suffering and distress are eliminated and, wherever scientifically possible, the use of animals is replaced by alternative approaches.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:31986L0609:en:HTML
([2]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:276:0033:0079:en:PDF

(Slovenské znenie)

Otázka na písomné zodpovedanie E-014118/13
Komisii
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(13. decembra 2013)

Vec: Obchodná dohoda EÚ a USA

Európska únia a Spojené štáty americké sa vrátili k rokovaniam o Transatlantickom obchodnom a investičnom partnerstve. Témou rokovaní mali byť predovšetkým investície, energetika či regulácia. Naopak, súčasťou debát nemala byť problematika ochrany dát. V tejto oblasti sú vzťahy medzi EÚ a USA stále značne napäté. V súčasnosti má americká strana len obmedzený prístup k databáze medzinárodných platieb.

Sú podľa názoru Komisie minulé škandály v spojitosti s NSA pre tieto rokovania irelevantné?

Odpoveď pána De Guchta v mene Komisie
(17. februára 2014)

Komisia pripisuje veľký význam právu občanov EÚ na súkromie a na ochranu osobných údajov. Komisia vyjadrila svoje hlboké znepokojenie a od Spojených štátov požaduje dôkladné objasnenie ich spravodajských činností v rozsahu, v akom sa týkajú občanov a priestorov EÚ.

V júli 2013 bola zriadená *ad hoc* pracovná skupina EÚ – USA na riešenie aspektov ochrany údajov v súvislosti s uvedenými odhaleniami. Správa spolupredsedov EÚ tejto skupiny bola uverejnená 27. novembra 2013. Na tomto základe Komisia prijala *Oznámenie o obnovení dôvery v toky údajov medzi EÚ a USA* [COM(2013) 846].

V tomto oznámení sa jasne uvádza, že normy týkajúce sa ochrany osobných údajov sa musia skúmať v náležitom kontexte bez toho, aby boli ovplyvnené ostatné rozmery vzťahov medzi EÚ a USA vrátane prebiehajúcich rokovaní o Transatlantickom obchodnom a investičnom partnerstve.

Komisia by chcela odkázať váženú pani poslankyňu aj na svoje odpovede na písomné otázky 12850/2013 a 13439/2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014118/13
to the Commission
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(13 December 2013)

Subject: EU-US trade agreement

The European Union and the United States have resumed their negotiations on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. The topics discussed should cover, in particular, investment, energy and regulation. On the other hand, the debate is not expected to include the issue of data protection. In this area, relations between the EU and the US are still under considerable strain. At present, the US has only limited access to the international payments database.

In the Commission's view, are the past scandals associated with the NSA relevant to these negotiations?

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

The Commission attaches great importance to the right of EU citizens to privacy and to the protection of personal data. The Commission has expressed its deep concerns and has sought a full clarification from the United States on their intelligence activities to the extent that they concern EU citizens and premises.

An ad-hoc EU-US Working Group was set-up in July 2013 to address the data protection aspects of the revelations. The report of the EU co-chairs of this group was published on 27 November 2013. On this basis, the Commission adopted a communication on Rebuilding trust in EU-US data flows [COM(2013) 846].

This communication makes clear that the standard of protection of personal data must be addressed in its proper context, without affecting other dimensions of EU-US relations, including the on-going negotiations for a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.

The Commission would also refer the Honourable Member to its answers to written questions 12850/2013 and 13439/2013.

(Slovenské znenie)

Otázka na písomné zodpovedanie E-014119/13
Komisii
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(13. decembra 2013)

Vec: Trh s energiami

V uplynulých dňoch hovorili v Bratislave odborníci z európskych i národných inštitúcií a firiem o pokroku, hlavných výzvach a smerovaní energetiky v Únii a regióne strednej Európy. Keďže sú národné riešenia pre energetické výzvy limitované, práve na európskej úrovni možno dospieť k dlhodobým riešeniam. Už Lisabonská zmluva bola základom pre energetickú politiku Únie. Ako je zrejmé, problémy kontinuálne pretrvávajú a vnútorný trh s energiou stále nefunguje optimálne.

Aké opatrenia s cieľom zlepšiť situáciu v rámci zmieňovanej problematiky plánuje Komisia prijať v najbližšej dobe?

Odpoveď pána Oettingera v mene Komisie
(6. februára 2014)

Komisia súhlasí s Vašim názorom, že treba ešte vyriešiť mnohé výzvy, aby sa zlepšilo fungovanie vnútorného trhu s energiou. Tieto výzvy zahŕňajú, nie sú však obmedzené na výzvy, ktoré sú uvedené v akčnom pláne, ako aj v odporúčaniach pre jednotlivé krajiny, ktoré boli súčasťou oznámenia o vnútornom trhu s elektrickou energiou z novembra 2012 ([1]). Vybudovanie infraštruktúry potrebnej na lepšie prepojenie a integráciu trhov a cezhraničného obchodu s energiou ostáva naďalej hlavnou prioritou. Zlepšila by sa tým aj bezpečnosť dodávok. Nevyhnutnou ostáva ďalšia harmonizácia operačných pravidiel, aby sa zabezpečilo dobré fungovanie sietí a trhov. Nakoniec, Komisia súhlasí, že určitými otázkami, ktoré by sa dali najlepšie riešiť na európskej úrovni, sa v súčasnosti zaoberajú vlády členských štátov často oddelene. To môže mať rušivý účinok na fungovanie vnútorného trhu s energiou. Komisia preto uverejnila usmernenia o štátnej intervencii v sektore elektrickej energie a reviduje svoje usmernenia o štátnej pomoci s cieľom optimalizovať spôsob, akým členské štáty zasahujú do trhu s energiou ([2]). V druhom štvrťroku tohto roka má Komisia v úmysle podať správu o pokroku dosiahnutom na ceste k dokončeniu vnútorného trhu s energiou. Správa bude obsahovať posúdenie súčasného stavu každým členským štátom.

([1]) Oznámenie „V záujme lepšieho fungovania vnútorného trhu s energiou", COM/2012/0663 final, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52012DC0663:SK:NOT

([2]) Oznámenie „Realizácia vnútorného trhu s elektrickou energiou a čo najefektívnejšie využívanie verejnej intervencie", C(2013) 7243 final, http://ec.europa.eu/energy/gas_electricity/doc/com_2013_public_intervention_sk.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014119/13
to the Commission
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(13 December 2013)

Subject: Energy market

Experts from European and national institutions and companies have recently spoken in Bratislava of progress made in energy and of the main challenges and directions of the sector in the EU and Central Europe. Since national solutions to the challenges faced by energy are limited, it is at the European level that long-term solutions can be achieved. The Lisbon Treaty was the basis for the EU's energy policy. It is clear that problems continue to persist and that the internal energy market is still not functioning optimally.

What measures to improve the situation regarding this issue does the Commission plan to adopt in the near future?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(6 February 2014)

The Commission shares your view that many challenges are still to be overcome in order to improve the functioning of the internal energy market. These certainly include, but are not limited to, the challenges indicated in the action plan as well as the country-specific recommendations which both were part of the November 2012 Internal Energy Market Communication. ([1]) Installing the infrastructure needed to better connect and integrate markets and make cross-border energy trade possible remains a key priority. This would also improve the security of supply. Also, the further harmonisation of operational rules remains indispensable to ensure that networks and markets function well. Finally, the Commission agrees that certain issues that are best tackled at European level, are today addressed by national governments often in isolation. This can have distortive effects on the functioning of the internal energy market. The Commission has therefore published guidance on state intervention in the electricity sector and is revising its state aid guidelines optimise the way in which Member States intervene in the energy market. ([2]) In the second quarter of this year the Commission intends to report on progress made towards completing the internal energy market. This will entail an assessment of the state of play in each Member States.

([1]) Communication 'Making the internal energy market work', COM/2012/0663 final
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52012DC0663:EN:NOT

([2]) Communication 'Delivering the internal electricity market and making the most of public intervention', C(2013)7243 final
http://ec.europa.eu/energy/gas_electricity/doc/com_2013_public_intervention_en.pdf

(Slovenské znenie)

Otázka na písomné zodpovedanie E-014120/13
Komisii
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(13. decembra 2013)

Vec: Atómové elektrárne a nové modely financovania

V členských krajinách Európskej únie funguje v súčasnosti 132 jadrových reaktorov, čo predstavuje približne 30 % globálnej kapacity atómových elektrární. V rámci Únie z nich pochádza približne 27 % elektriny. Všetky súčasné projekty značne prekročili svoj rozpočet aj harmonogram. Jadrovú energiu v Európe v dnešných dňoch čakajú nové úlohy a perspektívy rozvoja. Doteraz sa takmer všetky atómové elektrárne postavili s podporou štátu. V Európe však dochádza k úprave modelov financovania v prípade nových blokov. Garancie ceny pri jednotlivých projektoch nestačia a potenciálni investori sa združujú v nových formách partnerstiev a v konzorciách.

Bolo by riešením podporiť financovanie na úrovni Únie?

Akým spôsobom môže komisia pomôcť jednotlivým štátom pri riešení problémov v rámci uvedenej problematiky?

Odpoveď pána Oettingera v mene Komisie
(19. februára 2014)

Komisia by chcela odkázať váženú pani poslankyňu na svoju predchádzajúcu odpoveď na písomnú otázku E-009613/2013, pokiaľ ide o financovanie výstavby alebo predĺženia životnosti jadrových elektrární Európskou investičnou bankou, ako aj o potrebu súladu vnútroštátneho financovania s právnymi predpismi EÚ, a na svoju odpoveď na písomnú otázku E-005501/2013, pokiaľ ide o úverový nástroj Euratomu pre investície týkajúce sa priemyselnej výroby elektrickej energie v jadrových elektrárňach v členských štátoch ([1]).

Pokiaľ ide o monitorovanie poskytovania potrebných finančných prostriedkov v záujme plnenia si povinností súvisiacich s jadrovou bezpečnosťou, Komisia sa odvoláva na svoju odpoveď na písomnú otázku E-002085/2013.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014120/13
to the Commission
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(13 December 2013)

Subject: Nuclear power stations and new financing models

There are currently 132 nuclear reactors operating in the EU Member States, which constitutes approximately 30% of the global nuclear power capacity. Within the European Union they produce approximately 27% of electrical power. All projects that are underway have significantly exceeded their budget and schedule. Nuclear energy in Europe today awaits new challenges and prospects for development. So far, almost all nuclear power plants have been built with state support. In Europe, however, there has been a change in the models for the financing of new units. The provision of price guarantees for each project is insufficient and potential investors are organising themselves into new forms of partnerships and consortia.

Would support for financing at EU level be a solution?

How can the Commission help individual Member States to solve the problems within the above issue?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(19 February 2014)

The Commission would like to refer the Honourable Member to its previous replies to written questions E-009613/2013, with relation to European Investment Bank financing for the construction or lifetime extension of nuclear powers plants and the need for national financing to be in line with EU legislation, and E-005501/2013, with relation to the Euratom loan facility for investments concerning industrial production of electricity in nuclear power stations in Member States ([1]).

As regards monitoring of the provision of necessary financial resources to fulfil the obligations with respect to nuclear safety, the Commission refers to its reply to Written Question E-002085/2013.

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

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord P-014123/13
aan de Commissie
Saïd El Khadraoui (S&D)
(16 december 2013)

Betreft: Wegenvignet in Duitsland

Het regeerakkoord in Duitsland tussen de CDU-CSU en de SPD omvat de invoering van een autowegenvignet voor personenwagens. Het systeem zou reeds volgend jaar in voege treden. Voor wagens ingeschreven in Duitsland zou de invoering van een dergelijk vignet gepaard gaan met een daling van de verkeersbelasting, waardoor het nieuwe systeem niet duurder zou zijn dan de huidige kosten voor chauffeurs. Buitenlandse chauffeurs moeten ook een dergelijk vignet aanschaffen. Het is echter nog niet duidelijk hoe dit systeem precies in zijn werk zal gaan.

In tegenstelling tot vrachtvoertuigen van meer dan 3,5 ton, is er geen specifieke Europese wetgeving van toepassing op personenwagens. Daardoor zijn enkel de algemene principes van het Verdrag van toepassing, zijnde non-discriminatie en het beginsel van evenredigheid. De Commissie publiceerde een Communicatie in 2012 waarin ze vermeldt dat er een risico op discriminatie bestaat voor occasionele gebruikers, vooral van weggebruikers uit andere lidstaten die geen kortetermijnvignetten kunnen kopen of alleen tegen een dagtarief dat gevoelig hoger is dan dat van de jaarvignetten die vooral door binnenlandse weggebruikers worden gebruikt. Ze stelt dat dit als disproportioneel kan worden beschouwd.

1. Heeft de Commissie reeds meer informatie ontvangen of opgevraagd over het systeem dat de Duitse regering spoedig zal invoeren? Zo ja, kan zij deze informatie meedelen?

2. Indien de invoering van dit vignet gepaard gaat met een verlaging van de verkeersbelasting en zo geen extra belastingdruk betekent voor Duitse wagens, terwijl buitenlanders wel meer moeten betalen, zal de Commissie dit beschouwen als een vorm van indirecte discriminatie op basis van nationaliteit?

3. Zal de Commissie erop toezien dat er ook korte termijn vignetten, zoals week en zelfs dag-vignetten, tegen een eerlijke prijs beschikbaar zijn?

4. Voorziet de Commissie regels voor te stellen over een slimme kilometerheffing voor vrachtwagens in de nabije toekomst?

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

De Commissie verwijst het geachte Parlementslid naar de antwoorden die reeds zijn gegeven op de soortgelijke vragen E-012734/2013, E-013411/2013 en P-013592/2013. ([1])

Wat betreft vraag 4 over zware vrachtvoertuigen, is de Commissie niet van plan om tijdens het huidige mandaat de zogenaamde „Eurovignet"-richtlijn ([2]) te herzien.

([1]) Beschikbaar op http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) Richtlijn 1999/62/EG van het Europees Parlement en de Raad van 17 juni 1999 betreffende het in rekening brengen van het gebruik van bepaalde infrastructuurvoorzieningen aan zware vrachtvoertuigen, PB L 187 van 20.7.1999.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-014123/13
to the Commission
Saïd El Khadraoui (S&D)
(16 December 2013)

Subject: Motorway toll disc (vignette) in Germany

The government coalition agreement in Germany between the CDU/CSU and the SPD provides for the introduction of a motorway toll disc ('vignette') for private cars. This system is due to enter into force as early as next year. For cars registered in Germany this is to go hand in hand with a cut in road tax, so that the new system will not cost drivers any more than at present. Foreign drivers will also have to purchase a vignette. However, it is not yet clear exactly how this system will work in practice.

Unlike for goods vehicles of more than 3.5 tonnes, there is no specific European legislation in this area that applies to private cars. Accordingly, only the general principles of the Treaty apply, namely non-discrimination and the proportionality principle. In 2012 the Commission published a communication stating that there was a risk of discrimination for occasional users, principally road users from other Member States, who do not have the option of buying short-term vignettes, or only at a daily rate significantly higher than that of the annual vignette which will be used mainly by German road users. It considers that this could be regarded as disproportionate.

1. Has the Commission now received or requested more information about the system shortly to be introduced by the German Government? If so, can it please pass on this information?

2. If the introduction of the vignette is be accompanied by a reduction in road tax, so that it does not lead to any higher taxation burden for German cars, while foreigners do have to pay more, would the Commission regard this as a form of indirect discrimination on the grounds of nationality?

3. Will the Commission see to it that short-term weekly or even daily vignettes are available at a reasonable price?

4. Does the Commission intend to propose legislation in the near future concerning a smart per-kilometre levy for goods vehicles? If so, when?

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

The Commission would like to refer the Honourable Member to the replies already provided to similar questions E-012734/2013, E-013411/2013 and P-013592/2013 ([1]).

As regards question number 4 related to heavy goods vehicles, the Commission is not considering a review of the so-called 'Euro-Vignette' Directive ([2]) under the current mandate.

([1]) Available at http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) Directive 1999/62/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 1999 on the charging of heavy goods vehicles for the use of certain infrastructures, OJ L 187, 20.7.1999.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-014126/13
an die Kommission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(16. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Armutseinwanderung aus Rumänien und Bulgarien

In der Bundesrepublik Deutschland ist die „Armutseinwanderung" zu einem großen politischen Thema geworden, seit Mitte Februar 2013 der Deutsche Städtetag in einem aufsehenerregenden Positionspapier warnte, der soziale Frieden sei in Gemeinden wie Dortmund, Mannheim oder Duisburg durch den weiter zunehmenden Zuzug aus Südosteuropa gefährdet. In Duisburg, einer Stadt im Ruhrpott, die unter riesigen Strukturproblemen leidet, leben nach Auskunft der Stadtverwaltung derzeit rund 6 700 bulgarische und rumänische Staatsbürger, die meisten von ihnen sind Roma. „Wir fühlen uns von Land, Bund und EU im Stich gelassen", sagte Leyla Özmal, die Leiterin des Referats Integration der Stadt Duisburg, in einem Interview.

1. Wie sieht die Kommission das Problem der sogenannten „Armutseinwanderung"?

2. Sieht die Kommission eine Gefährdung des sozialen Friedens?

3. Gedenkt die Kommission Gegenmaßnahmen zu ergreifen, wenn ja, welche?

4. Ist mit 1. Jänner 2014, wenn die Beschränkungen der Arbeitnehmerfreizügigkeit für rumänische und bulgarische Staatsangehörige fallen, mit einem deutlichen Zuzug in wohlhabende Mitgliedstaaten wie Österreich oder Deutschland zu rechnen?

Antwort von László Andor im Namen der Kommission
(17. Februar 2014)

1. Die Kommission weist darauf hin, dass das Recht der Bürgerinnen und Bürger der Union, sich im Hoheitsgebiet der Mitgliedstaaten frei zu bewegen und aufzuhalten, sowohl im Vertrag über die Arbeitsweise der Europäischen Union ([1]) als auch in der EU-Charta der Grundrechte ([2]) verankert ist. Ihr liegen keine Anhaltspunkte dafür vor, dass die Mobilität innerhalb der EU durch Unterschiede in der Höhe der Sozialschutzleistungen zwischen den Mitgliedstaaten bedingt ist ([3]).

2. Laut des jüngsten Berichts über die Entwicklungen in Beschäftigung und Gesellschaft in Europa ([4]) trägt die Mobilität innerhalb der EU dazu bei, die wirtschaftlichen und demographischen Aussichten in der Europäischen Union zu verbessern. Mobile EU-Bürger spielen eine wichtige Rolle bei der Förderung des Wirtschafts- und Beschäftigungswachstums in der ganzen EU, indem sie in Bereichen, in denen eine hohe Nachfrage nach Arbeitskräften besteht, die nicht durch die Staatsangehörigen der betreffenden Mitgliedstaaten gedeckt werden kann, den Arbeitskräftemangel beheben.

3. Der Kommission ist bewusst, dass die Mobilität innerhalb der EU in einigen Mitgliedstaaten Anlass zu Besorgnis gibt und zu lokalen Spannungen führen kann. Sie ist bereit, die nationalen Behörden zu unterstützen, u. a. durch die Bereitstellung von EU-Mitteln, falls dies erforderlich ist.

4. Es ist davon auszugehen, dass das Migrationspotenzial bereits weitgehend erschöpft ist, da Ende 2012 bereits 3,3 Millionen bulgarische und rumänische Staatsangehörige in anderen Mitgliedstaaten wohnten ([5]). Österreich und Deutschland sind nur zwei von neun Mitgliedstaaten, die ihre Arbeitsmärkte dieses Jahr geöffnet haben, während 18 Mitgliedstaaten dies bereits viel früher gemacht haben. Die Erfahrung anlässlich früherer Erweiterungsrunden legt nahe, dass ein massiver Zuzug unwahrscheinlich ist, und bislang gibt es auch keine Anzeichen für einen solchen. Die Gewährung des uneingeschränkten Rechts auf Arbeit für rumänische und bulgarische Staatsangehörige wird dazu beitragen, ihre Eingliederung in die Aufnahmeländer zu fördern und die Wahrscheinlichkeit von Spannungen verringern.

([1]) Artikel 21.
([2]) Artikel 45.
([3]) Europäische Kommission, Employment and Social Developments in Europe 2013 (Bericht über die Entwicklungen in Beschäftigung und Gesellschaft in Europas 2013, nur auf Englisch verfügbar) vom 21. Januar 2014: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=de&catId=89&newsId=2023&furtherNews=yes
([4]) Ibid.
([5]) Schätzungen der Generaldirektion Beschäftigung, Soziales und Integration auf der Grundlage der Eurostat-Migrationsstatistik und der EU-Arbeitskräfteerhebung.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014126/13
to the Commission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(16 December 2013)

Subject: Poverty migration from Romania and Bulgaria

The issue of 'poverty migration' has been the subject of fierce political debate in Germany since mid-February 2013, when the German Association of Cities released a controversial position paper warning that social harmony in some parts of cities such as Dortmund, Mannheim and Duisburg is being jeopardised by the ever-increasing number of immigrants from south-east Europe. According to Duisburg city council, there are currently 6 700 Bulgarian and Romanian citizens, most of them Roma, living in the city, which is situated in the heavily urbanised Ruhr valley and has massive structural problems. 'We feel abandoned by the regional and federal governments and the EU', said Leyla Özmal, head of Duisburg's Department for Integration.

1. What is the Commission's stance on the issue of 'poverty migration'?

2. Does the Commission consider it to be a threat to social harmony?

3. Is the Commission planning to take any steps to halt this trend? If so, what kind of steps?

4. Are wealthy Member States such as Austria and Germany likely to experience a significant influx of immigrants after 1 January 2014, when working restrictions for Romanian and Bulgarian citizens are lifted?

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

1. The Commission would point out that the right of Union citizens to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States is enshrined in both the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union ([1]) and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU ([2]). It has no evidence that intra-EU mobility is driven by differences in the level of social protection benefits among the Member States ([3]).

2. According to the latest issue of *Employment and Social Developments in Europe* review ([4]), intra-EU mobility contributes to improving economic and demographic prospects in the European Union. Mobile EU citizens play a big role in boosting economic and employment growth across the EU by alleviating labour shortages in areas where demand for labour is high and cannot be met by nationals of those Member States.

3. The Commission is aware that intra-EU mobility has become a concern in certain Member States and tension may arise locally. It is ready to help the national authorities, including through the use of EU funds, where this proves necessary.

4. Most of the potential migration has probably already taken place, since 3.3 million Bulgarian and Romanian nationals were living in other Member States at the end of 2012 ([5]). Austria and Germany are but two of nine Member States that opened their labour markets this year, while 18 did so much earlier. Experience during previous enlargements suggests that a massive influx is unlikely, while there is no sign yet of any such 'influx'. Giving Romanian and Bulgarian nationals the unrestricted right to work will assist in furthering their integration in the host countries and will help reduce the likelihood of tension.

([1]) Article 21.
([2]) Article 45.
([3]) European Commission, Employment and Social Developments in Europe 2013, 21 January 2014, http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=2023&furtherNews=yes
([4]) Ibid.
([5]) Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion DG estimates based on Eurostat migration statistics and the EU Labour Force Survey.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-014127/13
an die Kommission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(16. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Organisierte Betteltouren und Roma-Banden

Die Zeitung *News* berichtete von einem großen Schlag der Polizei gegen eine Bande aus Rumänien, die rund 80 Personen nach Wien brachte und hier betteln schickte. „… Für 16 Verdächtige klickten die Handschellen. Die Bettler, allesamt Roma, waren zumeist betagte oder behinderte Personen. Sie mussten selbst im Winter stundenlang in der Kälte stehen, schildert Tatzgern die Umstände. Zwischen 50 und 80 EUR am Tag sollten sie erbetteln. Wer das nicht schaffte, dem drohten Repressalien. Sie wurden geprügelt, getreten und die Haare wurden ihnen ausgerissen. Über Nacht schliefen bis zu 40 Personen auf engstem Raum in einer kleinen Wohnung. Ein Aufpasser übernahm die Führung über rund 20 Personen. Im Monat flossen Gelder in einer Höhe von 20 000 bis 30 000 EUR“, betont der Kriminalist.

Das System der Banden ist ausgeklügelt …: Ein Transporteur bringt die Menschen mit seinem Fahrzeug nach Wien und kassiert dafür ab. Dann teilen die Aufpasser die Leute auf die Bezirke und Gebiete auf. Diese kassieren erneut ab. Und alles ist genauestens durchgeplant. Im Fall der rumänischen Bande gab es einen geregelten Modus… Es war genau festgelegt, welcher Bettler wo eingesetzt wurde, ob er stehen oder im Rollstuhl sitzen sollte und welche Tafel er in die Hand bekommt. Ein weiteres Problem: Viele sehen sich nicht als Opfer. Rund 50 EUR im Monat durften die Bettler behalten. Das ist immer noch mehr Geld als die meisten in ihrer Heimat je verdienen könnten“. Oft schließen sich aber auch Personen zusammen, meistens Familien, Nachbarn und Freunde, um gemeinsam zum Betteln in ein anderes Land zu fahren.

1. Wenn Menschen zum Betteln gezwungen werden, ist dies eine Form von Menschenhandel und damit strafbar. Inwieweit wird dieser Aspekt im Rahmen der EU-Strategien zur Bekämpfung von Menschenhandel berücksichtigt? Und inwieweit im Rahmen der EU-Strategien zur Integration von Roma?

2. Wie steht die Kommission zu organisierten Betteltouren?

Antwort von Frau Malmström im Namen der Kommission
(28. Februar 2014)

Nach Maßgabe der Richtlinie 2011/36/EU ([1]) stellen erzwungene Dienstleistungen, einschließlich Betteltätigkeiten, eine Form der Ausbeutung dar. Gemäß Erwägungsgrund 11 erfüllt die Ausbeutung für Betteltätigkeiten, wozu auch der Einsatz abhängiger Opfer des Menschenhandels als Bettler gehört, daher nur dann die Definition des Menschenhandels, wenn alle Merkmale der Zwangsarbeit oder der erzwungenen Dienstleistung vorhanden sind. Nicht alle Fälle von Betteltätigkeiten sind Fälle von Menschenhandel.

Die Kommission ist weiterhin zutiefst besorgt über jegliche Form des Menschenhandels, einschließlich zum Zwecke von Betteltätigkeiten. Sie wird alle erforderlichen Vorkehrungen treffen, um die ordnungsgemäße Anwendung des EU-Rechts zu gewährleisten, und prüft derzeit, inwieweit die Mitgliedstaaten ihren rechtlichen Verpflichtungen im Rahmen der Richtlinie nachkommen.

Eine der Prioritäten der Strategie der EU zur Beseitigung des Menschenhandels ([2]) lautet Verbesserung der einschlägigen Kenntnisse und effiziente Reaktionen auf neu auftretende Probleme. In Kürze wird eine Studie zu Risikogruppen durchgeführt (derzeit erfolgt die Bewertung der Vorschläge nach den Verfahren für öffentliche Ausschreibungen). In der Strategie werden die Mitgliedstaaten aufgefordert, die strafrechtliche Verfolgung von Menschenhändlern durch intensivierte Ermittlungen, Einrichtung nationaler multidisziplinärer Strafverfolgungseinheiten sowie Verbesserung der grenzüberschreitenden polizeilichen und justiziellen Zusammenarbeit zu verstärken.

Eine von der Kommission finanzierte Studie über Betteltätigkeiten von Kindern (2012) ist auf der EU-Website zum Thema Bekämpfung des Menschenhandels verfügbar ([3]).

([1]) Richtlinie 2011/36/EU des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 5. April 2011 zur Verhütung und Bekämpfung des Menschenhandels und zum Schutz seiner Opfer, ABl. L 101 vom 15.4.2011.

([2]) Die Strategie der EU zur Beseitigung des Menschenhandels 2012-2016; KOM(2012)286 endg.

([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/Publications/Child_Begging_EU

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014127/13
to the Commission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(16 December 2013)

Subject: Organised begging trips and Roma gangs

According to *News* magazine, a large-scale police raid has uncovered the activities of a Romanian gang which brought around 80 people to Vienna in order to send them out begging. '(…) Sixteen suspects were led away in handcuffs. The beggars, who were all Roma, were mostly elderly or disabled. According to Mr Tatzgern, a criminal investigator, they were forced to stand outside in the cold for hours on end, even in the winter. They were supposed to earn between EUR 50 and 80 a day by begging, and those who failed to do so risked punishments such as being beaten, kicked or having their hair pulled out. Up to 40 people would spend the night squashed into a tiny apartment. The supervisors were each responsible for around 20 people. In the words of Mr Tatzgern, "the gang pocketed between EUR 20 000 and 30 000 each month".

The system devised by the gangs is ingenious (…): someone drives the beggars to Vienna in return for payment. The supervisors then divide them up between the various districts and areas. Payment changes hands again, and everything is planned down to the finest detail. The Romanian gang had a well thought-out approach. (…) Decisions were made in advance about which beggars should go where, whether they should stand up or sit in a wheelchair, and which boards they should hold. A further problem is that many of the beggars do not see themselves as victims; they were allowed to keep around EUR 50 per month, which is more than most of them could ever earn at home'. People often travelled together as families or groups of neighbours or friends to go beginning in another country.

1. Forcing people to beg is a form of human trafficking and thus liable for prosecution. What account has been taken of this problem in the EU strategies on the fight against human trafficking and the integration of the Roma?

2. What is the Commission's position on organised begging trips?

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

Directive 2011/36/EU ([1]) lists forced begging as a form of exploitation. Recital 11 highlights that the exploitation of begging, including the use of a trafficked dependent person for begging, falls within the scope of the definition of trafficking in human beings only when all the elements of forced labour or services occur. Not all cases of begging are cases of trafficking in human beings.

The Commission remains deeply concerned with trafficking in human beings for any purpose, including begging. The Commission will take all the necessary measures to ensure the correct application of the EC law and is currently assessing compliance of Member States with their legal obligations under the directive.

One of the priorities of the EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings ([2]) is to increase knowledge and effective responses to emerging concerns. A study on high risk groups will begin shortly (evaluation of proposals is currently under way according to the procedures on public tenders). The strategy also calls on Member States to increase prosecution of traffickers, by stepping up investigations, establishing national multidisciplinary law enforcement units, and by increasing cross-border police and judicial cooperation.

A 2012 Commission-funded study on child begging is available on the EU Anti-Trafficking Website ([3]).

([1]) Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, OJ 15.4.2011, L 101.
([2]) The EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings 2012-2016; COM(2012) 286 final.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/Publications/Child_Begging_EU

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande P-014129/13
till kommissionen
Marita Ulvskog (S&D)
(16 december 2013)

Angående: Meddelarskydd och föreningsrätt

Flygbolaget Ryanair har nyligen stämt ett antal av sina anställda för att ha chattat anonymt om bolaget på en amerikansk webbsida för piloter. Det har åtskilliga gånger rapporterats i media att piloter som kritiserat bolaget eller försökt lyfta missförhållanden, inklusive kritik mot bristande flygsäkerhetsrutiner, direkt eller indirekt har blivit av med jobbet. Bolagets piloter har varit tvungna att starta ett anonymt nätverk för att kunna diskutera fackliga frågor utan att riskera allvarliga konsekvenser.

Detta lyfter ett antal frågor om arbetsrätt, föreningsrätt, integritetsskydd, flygsäkerhet och arbetsmiljö.

Planerar kommissionen att vidta någon typ av åtgärd för att motverka den här typen av allvarliga missförhållanden där företag aktivt motverkar fackliga organisationer och straffar enskilda anställda för att de nyttjar sin yttrandefrihet och föreningsrätt?

Vad gör kommissionen för att skydda samma arbetstagares integritet på dataskyddsområdet när det handlar om IP-adresser i Europa som begärs ut i tredje land?

Anser kommissionen att det finns ett tillräckligt skydd för arbetstagare som vill lyfta allvarliga missförhållanden på sin arbetsplats utan att svartlistas och om inte, vad avser man att göra åt problemet?

Svar från László Andor på kommissionens vägnar
(24 januari 2014)

Kommissionen påminner om att det inte finns någon EU-lagstiftning om villkor för utövandet av föreningsrätten. Artikel 153.5 i EUF-fördraget gäller inte föreningsrätten. Det finns inte heller någon EU-lagstiftning som reglerar yttrandefrihet på arbetsplatsen.

Men enligt direktiv 89/391/EEG ([1]) får arbetstagare eller arbetstagarrepresentanter med särskilt ansvar för arbetstagarnas hälsa och säkerhet inte på något sätt missgynnas på grund av samråd eller diskussioner om arbetsmiljöfrågor med arbetsgivaren ([2]).

När medlemsländerna genomför EU:s lagstiftning måste de följa EU:s stadga om de grundläggande rättigheterna, t.ex. reglerna för skydd av personuppgifter (artikel 8), yttrandefrihet och informationsfrihet (artikel 11) och förhandlingsrätt och rätt till kollektiva åtgärder (artikel 28).

Svartlistning kan vara ett brott mot den nationella dataskyddslagstiftning som bygger på direktiv 95/46/EG ([3]) (personuppgifter om anställda behandlades av Ryanair i EU), om det rör sig om otillåten behandling av de anställdas personuppgifter ([4]). Detsamma gäller om det handlar om en arbetstagares lagliga verksamhet eller utövande av sina grundläggande rättigheter, t.ex. medlemskap i en fackförening eller uppdrag som facklig företrädare.

Utan att det påverkar kommissionens befogenhet som fördragens väktare är det de nationella tillsynsmyndigheternas och domstolarnas uppgift att övervaka och genomföra dataskyddslagstiftningen. Kommissionen har för närvarande inga planer på att föreslå ytterligare lagstiftning om svartlistning.

([1]) Rådets direktiv 89/391/EEG av den 12 juni 1989 om åtgärder för att främja förbättringar av arbetstagarnas säkerhet och hälsa i arbetet (EGT L 183, 29.6.1989).
([2]) Se kommissionens svar på fråga E-2475/13.
([3]) EUT L 281, 23.11.1995.
([4]) I artikel 7 i direktiv 95/46/EG klargörs när behandling av personuppgifter kan tillåtas, t.ex. om behandlingen är nödvändig för att utföra en arbetsuppgift av allmänt intresse eller vid myndighetsutövning. Enligt artikel 6 i direktiv 95/46/EG ska personuppgifter behandlas på ett korrekt och lagligt sätt och samlas in för särskilda, uttryckligt angivna och berättigade ändamål; senare behandling får inte ske på ett sätt som är oförenligt med dessa ändamål. Personuppgifterna ska vara adekvata och relevanta och får inte omfatta mer än vad som är nödvändigt med hänsyn till de ändamål för vilka de har samlats in och för vilka de senare behandlas. Enligt artikel 8 i direktiv 95/46/EG är det i allmänhet förbjudet att behandla känsliga personuppgifter som t.ex. avslöjar medlemskap i en fackförening. Undantagen från förbudet anges i artikel 8.2–8.5, men de ska tolkas restriktivt.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-014129/13
to the Commission
Marita Ulvskog (S&D)
(16 December 2013)

Subject: Protection of whistle-blowers and freedom of association

The airline Ryanair has recently sued a number of its employees for chatting about it anonymously on an American website for pilots. It has been reported in the media a number of times that pilots who have criticised the airline or tried to reveal abuses, or who have criticised inadequate air safety routines, have directly or indirectly forfeited their jobs. The airline's pilots have been compelled to start an anonymous network in order to be able to discuss trade union issues without risking serious consequences.

This gives rise to a number of questions about labour law, freedom of association, the protection of privacy, air safety and the working environment.

Does the Commission intend to take measures of any kind to combat this type of serious abuse whereby undertakings actively thwart trade union organisations and punish individual employees for exercising their freedom of speech and association?

What will the Commission do to afford these employees data protection in relation to IP addresses in Europe which are requested in a third country?

Does the Commission consider that employees who wish to disclose serious abuses at their workplace without being blacklisted are sufficiently protected, and if not, what will the Commission do about the problem?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(24 January 2014)

The Commission recalls that there is no Union law specifically governing the conditions of the exercise of the right of association. Article 153 of the TFEU, pursuant to paragraph 5 thereof, does not apply to the right of association. Nor is there any Union law specifically regulating the right to freedom of expression at the workplace.

However, Directive 89/391/EEC ([1]) provides that workers or workers' representatives with specific responsibilities for the health and safety of workers, may not be placed at a disadvantage because they consult or raise health and safety issues with the employer ([2]).

When implementing EC law, Member States must respect the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, including protection of personal data (Article 8 of the Charter), freedom of expression and information (Article 11 of the Charter) and the right of collective bargaining and action (Article 28 of the Charter).

Blacklisting could be in breach of national data protection laws implementing EU Directive 95/46/EC ([3]) (the personal data of employees were processed by Ryanair in Europe) if based on unlawful processing of the personal data of the employees concerned ([4]). Equally so when arising from lawful activities of the worker or his/her exercise of fundamental rights, including membership of a trade union or acting as a trade union representative.

Without prejudice to the powers of the Commission as guardian of the Treaties,the supervision and enforcement of data protection legislation falls within the competence of national authorities, in particular the data protection supervisory authorities and courts. The Commission does not currently envisage proposing further legislation on the matter of blacklisting.

([1]) Council Directive 89/391/EEC 89/391 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.
([2]) See, in this regard, Commission reply to Question E-2475/13.
([3]) OJ L 281, 23.11.1995.
([4]) Article 7 of Directive 95/46/EC clarifies when processing of personal data is legitimate e.g. if the processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority. According to Article 6 of Directive 95/46/EC data must be processed fairly and lawfully, collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposed and not further processed in a way incompatible with those purposes. The data must be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purposes for which they are collected and further processed. Under Article 8 of Directive 95/46/EC processing of sensitive personal data, i.e. revealing for example trade-union membership is in general prohibited; the exemptions to this prohibition are listed in Article 8 (2) — (5) but must be interpreted restrictively.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014130/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(16 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Emisiones de CO_2 en Europa

Algunas cifras indican que los Estados Unidos, que solían ser uno de los principales consumidores de carbón, han reducido su consumo en los últimos años. Como consecuencia de ello, para la UE resulta ahora más barato adquirir carbón en el mercado internacional que importar gas natural. Existen datos que señalan que la generación de electricidad alimentada con gas se redujo en un 25 % entre 2010 y 2012 y que, en el mismo periodo, la generación de electricidad alimentada con carbón aumentó en un 10 %.

1. ¿Puede explicar la Comisión si la política energética actual es la más eficaz para reducir las emisiones de CO_2 y abaratar la generación de electricidad en la EU y hacerla más competitiva para la industria de la UE?

2. ¿Qué está haciendo la Comisión para revertir el aumento de las emisiones de CO_2 ocasionado, entre otras razones, por la tendencia a una mayor producción de electricidad alimentada por carbón?

3. ¿Puede facilitar la Comisión datos sobre el incremento de las emisiones de CO_2 que se evitó gracias a la producción de energía verde durante el periodo 2010-2102?

4. ¿Puede facilitar la Comisión datos sobre la cantidad de dinero público gastado en la EU para promover la energía verde durante el mismo periodo?

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

1. La reducción de las emisiones de CO_2 es uno de los objetivos prioritarios de la política de la UE en el ámbito del clima y la energía, y el principal instrumento para reducir las emisiones de CO_2 de las centrales eléctricas es el RCDE de la UE. Uno de los atractivos esenciales del RCDE es que se trata de una herramienta para reducir las emisiones de gases de efecto invernadero en condiciones rentables.

2. En su conjunto, las emisiones de CO_2 en la EU no van en aumento. Las emisiones de la EU-28 en 2011 se situaron un 18,3 % por debajo de los niveles de 1990. Las primeras estimaciones indican que también en 2012 se redujeron (en un 1,3 %) ([1]). La tendencia de la EU-28 es similar para las emisiones de CO_2 y para las registradas exclusivamente en el sector eléctrico. Los desequilibrios estructurales entre la oferta y la demanda de derechos de emisión en el RCDE y el consiguiente bajo precio del carbono han beneficiado a la generación eléctrica intensiva en carbono. Ya se ha acordado una primera medida al respecto, a saber, el aplazamiento de la subasta de 900 millones de derechos de emisión al final del tercer periodo de comercio. La Comisión ha presentado también una propuesta legislativa para introducir una reserva de estabilidad del mercado como medida estructural para reformar el RCDE.

3. Los Estados miembros tienen la obligación de notificar a la Comisión el volumen de emisiones de CO_2 evitadas gracias a la producción de energía verde. Los informes correspondientes a 2011-2012 debían haberse enviado a la Comisión para finales de 2013, pero al no haberse recibido aún todos los informes no se ha podido comenzar el análisis.

4. No en todos los Estados miembros de la UE se dispone actualmente de una base de datos global sobre subvenciones a la energía basada en una metodología uniforme, razón por la cual no pueden facilitarse cifras exactas. Está en curso un estudio de la Comisión Europea que arrojará más luz al respecto.

([1]) Véase, por ejemplo, el Informe de la Comisión de 2013 sobre los progresos realizados en la consecución de los objetivos de Kioto y de los objetivos de la Unión Europea para 2020 [COM(2013) 698].

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014130/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(16 December 2013)

Subject: CO_2 emissions in Europe

New figures indicate that the USA, which used to be one of the main consumers of coal, has reduced its consumption in recent years. As a result, coal is now cheaper for the EU to buy on the international market than imported natural gas. There is data indicating that gas-fired power generation decreased by 25% between 2010 and 2012 and that in the same time period, coal-fired power generation increased by 10%.

1. Can the Commission explain whether the current energy policy is the most effective for decreasing CO_2 emissions and making EU power generation cheaper and more competitive for EU industry?

2. What is the Commission doing to reverse the rise in CO_2 emissions created by trends such as increased coal-fired power generation?

3. Can the Commission provide data on the amount of CO_2 emissions avoided through green energy production during the period 2010-2012?

4. Can the Commission provide data on the amount of public money spent in the EU to promote green energy during the same time period?

Answer given by Ms Hedegaard on behalf of the Commission
(20 February 2014)

1. Reductions in CO_2 emissions are a primary objective of EU climate and energy policy, and the main instrument to reduce CO_2 emissions from power stations is the EU ETS. A key attraction of the ETS is that it represents a tool for reducing GHG emissions cost-effectively.

2. Overall, there is no rise in CO_2 emissions in the EU. In 2011, total EU-28 emissions were 18.3% lower compared to 1990 levels. Preliminary estimates indicate that EU-28 emissions further decreased by 1.3% in 2012 ([1]). The EU28 trend is similar for CO_2 emissions and for power sector emissions only. The structural imbalance between supply and demand of allowances in the ETS and resulting low carbon price have been beneficial for carbon intensive power generation. A first measure to backload 900 million allowances to the end of the third trading period has already been decided. The Commission has also proposed a legislative proposal to introduce a market stability reserve as a structural measure to reform the ETS.

3. The Member States are required to report the amount of CO_2 emissions avoided through green energy production to the Commission. Reports for 2011-2012 should have been sent to the Commission by end of 2013, although not all reports have been received in order to begin their analysis.

4. Currently no comprehensive database is available in all EU Member States on energy subsidies, based on a uniform methodology, therefore exact figures cannot be provided. An ongoing study by the European Commission will shed more light on this question.

([1]) See e.g. the 2013 report PROGRESS TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE KYOTO AND EU 2020 OJCTIVES, COM(2013) 698.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014131/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(16 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Competitividad de las empresas europeas

Según un informe sobre las perspectivas energéticas mundiales en 2013 ([1]), el precio del gas natural presenta diferencias muy importantes. La diferencia entre los precios que se pagan en Europa y en los EE.UU. es muy grande. De hecho, en Europa, el precio del gas natural importado es tres veces superior al precio que pagan los consumidores y las empresas de los EE.UU.

Por otra parte, los precios de la electricidad en la EU son el doble de los que se pagan en los EE.UU.

Teniendo en cuenta la estrategia energética para Europa:

1. ¿Podría señalar la Comisión si esta diferencia importante en el precio tiene repercusiones sobre la competitividad de las empresas europeas?

2. ¿Podría indicar la Comisión cuándo considera que se reducirá esta diferencia?

Respuesta del Sr. Oettinger en nombre de la Comisión
(28 de febrero de 2014)

1. Las últimas comunicaciones estratégicas de la Comisión y los informes sobre los precios y costes de la energía ([2]) y sobre la evolución económica de la energía en Europa ([3]) se hacen eco de que las persistentes disparidades de los precios a escala regional pueden dar lugar a cambios en las pautas del comercio mundial, en particular en el caso de industrias con porcentajes elevados de costes de energía y expuestas a la competencia internacional. Entre 2005 y 2011, la industria de fabricación de la UE registró el mayor incremento de los costes de la energía en subsectores en relación con los EE.UU., China y Japón. El sector industrial de la Unión Europea ha registrado algunas mejoras en cuanto a su elevado consumo energético, por lo que ha mantenido su relativamente favorable posición en términos de competencia. Sin embargo, algunos sectores muestran aún una gran vulnerabilidad a los niveles de precios de la energía imperantes debido a la alta proporción de los costes de energía en sus costes de producción, a los elevados costes reales de la unidad de energía o a los índices de crecimiento en una comparación mundial. La Comisión fomenta un mercado interior que funcione correctamente, que es el mejor medio para garantizar la relación coste-eficacia en el sector de la energía. En un mercado de este tipo los usuarios finales competentes, que buscan activamente la oferta más competitiva, pueden contribuir a garantizar que los precios se fijen de la forma más rentable.

2. Europa no tiene más remedio que aceptar los precios en los mercados mundiales de hidrocarburos, que recientemente se van visto impulsados por factores tales como el auge del gas de esquisto en los Estados Unidos y el acusado incremento de la demanda de gas en Japón tras el desastre de Fukushima. Según algunos informes recientes, como el informe *World Energy Outlook 2013* de la AIE, las condiciones de oferta y demanda fundamentales a que hacen frente las diferentes regiones del mundo pueden persistir a corto y medio plazo.

([1]) http://www.worldenergyoutlook.org/
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/energy/doc/2030/20140122_communication_energy_prices.pdf y http://ec.europa.eu/energy/doc/2030/20140122_swd_prices.pdf
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/european_economy/2014/pdf/ee1_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014131/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(16 December 2013)

Subject: Competitiveness of European companies

According to a report entitled 'World Energy Outlook 2013' ([1]), there are major price differences with regard to natural gas. There is a wide gap between the prices paid by Europeans and those paid by Americans. In fact, the price of imported natural gas in Europe is three times higher than the price paid by American consumers and companies.

Furthermore, electricity prices in the EU are twice what they are in the USA.

Taking into account the Energy Strategy for Europe:

1. Can the Commission state whether this wide price gap has an influence on the competitiveness of European companies?

2. Can the Commission state when it believes the price difference will narrow?

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

1. The Commission's recent policy communication and reports on energy prices and costs ([2]) and on energy economic developments in Europe ([3]) acknowledge that persistent regional energy price disparities can cause changes in global trade patterns, especially for industries with a high share of energy costs and exposed to international competition. Between 2005 and 2011, EU manufacturing saw the highest increase in energy costs within subsectors relative to the US, China and Japan. The EU manufacturing sector has seen some energy intensity improvements, thus maintaining its relatively favourable competitive position. However, certain sectors show nevertheless high vulnerability to the prevailing energy price levels because of their high share of energy in production costs, high real unit energy cost levels and/or growth rates in a global comparison. The Commission promotes a well-functioning internal market which is the best means to ensure cost efficiency in the energy sector. In such a market empowered end users who are actively searching for the most competitive offer can help ensure that prices are set in the most cost efficient manner.

2. Europe is a price taker in global hydrocarbon markets, which have recently been driven by factors such as the shale gas boom in the US and sharply increased gas demand in Japan after Fukushima. According to some recent reports, such as the IEA's World Energy Outlook 2013, the fundamental supply and demand conditions facing the different regions of the world may persist in the short to medium horizon.

([1]) http://www.worldenergyoutlook.org/
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/energy/doc/2030/20140122_communication_energy_prices.pdf and http://ec.europa.eu/energy/doc/2030/20140122_swd_prices.pdf
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/european_economy/2014/pdf/ee1_en.pdf

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014132/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(16 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Repercusiones económicas de los precios del gas y la electricidad

En *World Energy Outlook 2013* ([1]) (Perspectivas de la energía en el mundo, *WEO-2013*) se afirma claramente que el hecho de que los precios del gas y la electricidad sean mucho más bajos en los Estados Unidos que en la Unión Europea ha supuesto solo en 2012 un ahorro de 130 000 millones de dólares para las empresas manufactureras estadounidenses.

Teniendo en cuenta la estrategia energética para Europa,

1. ¿Puede facilitar la Comisión las cifras correspondientes a las repercusiones económicas que tiene esta diferencia de precios en los sectores correspondientes?

2. ¿Puede facilitar la Comisión las cifras correspondientes al número de puestos de trabajo en peligro como consecuencia de esta gran diferencia de precios entre la Unión Europea y los Estados Unidos?

Respuesta del Sr. Oettinger en nombre de la Comisión
(27 de febrero de 2014)

1. La Comunicación de la Comisión sobre precios y costes de la energía en Europa y los documentos de trabajo de los servicios de la Comisión que la acompañan ([2]) reconocen que, si bien las diferencias de precios entre regiones siempre han existido, en los últimos años se han observado crecientes disparidades, especialmente en lo que respecta a los precios del gas natural en los Estados Unidos, Europa y Asia. Esta evolución viene determinada por factores tales como el auge del gas de esquisto en los Estados Unidos, el impacto que ha tenido la indexación al petróleo sobre los precios del gas en la EU, y el aumento de la demanda de gas en Japón.

En 2012, los consumidores industriales de la UE pagaban el doble por la electricidad y entre tres y cuatro veces más por el gas natural que las empresas estadounidenses, antes de que se tuvieran en cuenta las exenciones fiscales en algunos Estados miembros. En uno de los documentos de trabajo mencionados ([3]) se compara a la UE y a los Estados Unidos en términos de pautas comerciales y composición industrial y se concluye que, a pesar de las diferencias de los precios de la energía, la UE ha sido capaz, hasta la fecha, de mantener una posición favorable gracias sobre todo a las mejoras en materia de eficiencia energética. Sin embargo, la Unión Europea ha reducido considerablemente la intensidad energética de sus exportaciones en general, mientras que determinadas economías emergentes han aumentado sus exportaciones de componentes intermedios de consumo intensivo de energía. Asimismo, han disminuido, por diversas razones, los niveles de producción de las industrias con un consumo intensivo de energía en Europa.

2. Los documentos de trabajo no incluyen datos referentes al número de puestos de trabajo actualmente en peligro como consecuencia de la diferencia de precios con los Estados Unidos. Sin embargo, uno de ellos ([4]) ahonda en el impacto económico que supondrían las posibles diferencias futuras en los precios de la electricidad y el gas entre la UE y el resto del mundo.

([1]) http://www.worldenergyoutlook.org/
([2]) COM(2014) 21, SWD(2014) 19 y SWD(2014) 20.
([3]) Capítulo 3 de SWD(2014) 20 y SWD(2014) 19.
([4]) SWD(2014) 20.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014132/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(16 December 2013)

Subject: Economic impact of gas and electricity prices

The World Energy Outlook 2013 ([1]) clearly states that since gas and electricity prices in the USA are much lower than in the EU, US manufacturing companies saved USD 130 billion in 2012 alone.

Taking into account the Energy Strategy for Europe,

1. Can the Commission provide figures on the economic impact of this price gap on the relevant sectors?

2. Can the Commission provide figures showing the number of jobs in peril as a result of this significant price difference between the EU and the USA?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(27 February 2014)

1. The Commission's communication on energy prices and costs in Europe and the accompanying Staff Working Documents (SWD) ([2]) acknowledge that while price differences across regions have always existed, the last years saw widening price gaps, in particular regarding prices of natural gas in the US, Europe and Asia. These are driven by factors such as the US shale gas boom, the impact of oil-indexation on gas prices in the EU, and increased gas demand in Japan.

In 2012, EU industrial consumers paid twice the price for electricity and three to four times as much for natural gas as US companies, before taking into account tax and levy exemptions in some Member States. One of the mentioned SWD ([3]) compares the EU and the US in terms of trade patterns and industrial composition and concludes that despite the energy price gap the EU has so far been able to maintain a favourable position thanks mainly to energy efficiency improvements. However, the EU has significantly reduced the energy intensity of its exports overall, whereas certain emerging economies have increased the export of energy intensive intermediate components. Moreover, productions levels of energy intensive industries in Europe have declined, for a variety of reasons.

2. The SWDs do not include data on the number of jobs currently in peril because of the price gap with the US. However, on of them ([4]) explores the economic impacts of possible future price differences for electricity and gas between the EU and the rest of the world.

([1]) http://www.worldenergyoutlook.org/
([2]) COM(2014) 21, SWD (2014) 19 and SWD (2014) 20.
([3]) Chapter 3 and of SWD 2014/20 and SWD 2014/19.
([4]) SWD (2014) 20.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014133/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(16 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Pobreza energética en España

Según datos de Bloomberg, en septiembre de 2013, en España, el precio medio del litro de gasolina era de 1,42 euros ([1]), en tanto que, en el mismo periodo, en los Estados Unidos ascendía a 0,74 euros. En España, comprar un litro de gasolina supone un 2,25 % del salario de un día, mientras que en los Estados Unidos supone el 0,69 %.

En el COM(2008)0384 se afirma claramente: «Los hogares europeos están sufriendo el impacto de la actual subida de precios. Los Estados miembros tienen la posibilidad de atenuar esa carga para los segmentos más vulnerables de la población».

En Cataluña se considera que más de 190 000 ([2]) hogares sufren pobreza energética.

¿Considera la Comisión que España está haciendo todo lo posible para impedir la pobreza energética?

Respuesta del Sr. Oettinger en nombre de la Comisión
(18 de febrero de 2014)

La Comisión no está en condiciones de valorar si España está haciendo o no todo lo posible para evitar la pobreza energética.

La Comisión publicó en su día un documento de orientación del Grupo de trabajo consagrado a los consumidores vulnerables (*Vulnerable Consumer Working Group Guidance Document* ([3])). Ese documento tiene un anexo que ofrece ejemplos de medidas nacionales que podrían imitarse en otros Estados miembros con el fin de atenuar los efectos de la pobreza energética. El documento, además, aborda el tema de la combinación de políticas nacionales al aconsejar, entre otras cosas, a los Estados miembros que garanticen que las inversiones en medidas de eficiencia energética se incentiven con el objetivo a largo plazo de evitar la pobreza y/o vulnerabilidad energética.

([1]) http://www.bloomberg.com/visual-data/gas-prices/#./20133 %3ASpain%3AEUR%3Al
([2]) Datos de la «Enquesta de condicions de vida» correspondiente a 2011, http://www.sindic.cat/site/unitFiles/3530/Informe%20pobresa%20energetica%20definitiu.pdf
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/energy/gas_electricity/doc/forum_citizen_energy/20140106_vulnerable_consumer_report.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014133/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(16 December 2013)

Subject: Energy poverty in Spain

According to Bloomberg data, the average price of a litre of petrol in Spain in September 2013 was EUR 1.42, whereas in the USA in the same period it was EUR 0.74 ([1]). In Spain it takes 2.25% of a day's wages to buy a litre of petrol, whereas in the USA the corresponding figure is 0.69%.

COM(2008) 0384 clearly states that European households are feeling the impact of the current price spike. Member States have the possibility of mitigating the burden on the most vulnerable segments of the population.

In Catalonia, more than 190 000 households ([2]) are considered to be in energy poverty.

Does the Commission believe that Spain is doing its utmost to prevent energy poverty?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(18 February 2014)

The Commission is not in a position to assess whether Spain is doing its utmost to prevent energy poverty.

The Commission published the Vulnerable Consumer Working Group Guidance Document ([3]) governments, and includes an annex providing national examples of measures which can be replicated in other Member States with the aim of mitigating energy poverty. It also addresses the scope of the national policy mix by, *inter alia*, advising Member States to ensure that investment in energy efficiency measures is encouraged with the long-term aim of preventing energy poverty and/or vulnerability.

([1]) http://www.bloomberg.com/visual-data/gas-prices/#./20133%3ASpain%3AEUR%3Al
([2]) Data from 'Enquesta de condicions de vida' 2011, http://www.sindic.cat/site/unitFiles/3530/Informe%20pobresa%20energetica%20definitiu.pdf
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/energy/gas_electricity/doc/forum_citizen_energy/20140106_vulnerable_consumer_report.pdf

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014135/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(16 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Política energética europea

Varios informes indican claramente que la política energética europea ha tenido como resultado costes de energía que dificultan el crecimiento económico, y que las emisiones de gases de efecto invernadero no han disminuido a pesar de la reducción del consumo. De hecho, la demanda europea de gas se ha reducido en un 15 % desde 2008.

1. ¿Puede la Comisión proporcionar cifras relativas a la evolución de las emisiones de gases de efecto invernadero?

2. ¿Puede explicar la Comisión por qué han aumentado las emisiones de gases de efecto invernadero en la EU al tiempo que ha disminuido el consumo de gas natural?

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

1) Según los datos más recientes disponibles, las emisiones se redujeron un 18 % entre 1990 y 2012, y la UE está en el buen camino para cumplir su compromiso en el marco del Protocolo de Kioto (relativo al periodo 2008-2012) y su objetivo de reducir en un 20 % las emisiones de gases de efecto invernadero en 2020 respecto a los niveles de 1990 ([1]).

2) Entre 2008 y 2011, las emisiones de gases de efecto invernadero y el consumo de gas natural descendieron en un 8,1 % ([2]) y un 9,8 % ([3]), respectivamente. Este descenso del consumo de gas natural puede atribuirse a la reducción del consumo total de combustibles fósiles (-8,6 % ([4]) en el mismo periodo) y a una cierta sustitución del gas natural por el carbón al ser más barato este que aquel.

([1]) Informe sobre los progresos de Kioto (Kyoto Progress Report): http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/g-gas/docs/com_2013_698_es.pdf
([2]) Informe sobre los progresos de Kioto (Kyoto Progress Report): http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/g-gas/docs/com_2013_698_es.pdf
([3]) Eurostat : http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/eurostat/home/
([4]) Eurostat : http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/eurostat/home/

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014135/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(16 December 2013)

Subject: European energy policy

A number of reports clearly indicate that the outcome of European energy policy has been energy costs which hamper economic growth, and that greenhouse gas emissions have not fallen despite declining consumption. Indeed, European gas demand is down by 15% since 2008.

1. Can the Commission provide figures regarding the evolution of greenhouse gas emissions?

2. Can the Commission explain why greenhouse gas emissions in the EU have risen at the same time as natural gas consumption has declined?

Answer given by Ms Hedegaard on behalf of the Commission
(20 February 2014)

1. According to the latest data available, emissions decreased by 18% between 1990 and 2012 and the EU is on track to meet its commitment under the Kyoto Protocol (for the period 2008-2012) as well as its target of -20% greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 compared to 1990 ([1]).

2. Between 2008 and 2011, greenhouse gas emissions and natural gas consumption decreased by respectively 8,1% ([2]) and 9.8% ([3]). This decrease in natural gas consumption can be explained by a reduction in total fossil fuel consumption (-8.6% ([4]) during the same period) and by a certain switch from natural gas to coal due to the lower price of coal relative to gas.

([1]) Kyoto Progress Report: http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/g-gas/docs/com_2013_698_en.pdf
([2]) Kyoto Progress Report: http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/g-gas/docs/com_2013_698_en.pdf
([3]) Eurostat: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/eurostat/home/
([4]) Eurostat: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/eurostat/home/

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014137/13
alla Commissione
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(16 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Patto di stabilità e misure volte a prevenire rischi idrogeologici

Sempre più numerosi fatti di cronaca riportano preoccupanti episodi di frane, allagamenti, alluvioni e esondazioni che hanno colpito l'Italia negli ultimi anni.

Le aree a elevata criticità rappresentano il 9,8 % della superficie nazionale e riguardano l'89 % dei comuni, sui cui territori sorgono ben 6.250 scuole e 550 ospedali.

In questo scenario è evidente che la prevenzione rappresenta uno strumento importante per ridurre i danni causati da tali fenomeni.

In Italia, secondo una stima dell'Associazione Nazionale Costruttori Edili, terremoti, frane e alluvioni, dal 1944 al 2012, sono costati 242,5 miliardi di euro, circa 3,5 miliardi all'anno, mentre dal 2010 a oggi, sono stati spesi 20,5 miliardi a causa di un cospicuo incremento dei territori colpiti (in dieci anni l'area italiana dei territori colpiti da alluvioni e frane è raddoppiata, passando da una media di quattro a otto regioni all'anno) e, ancora, sono aumentate in modo esponenziale le concentrazioni di piogge «brevi e intense».

Così stando le cose, può la Commissione far sapere:

1. quali politiche intende promuovere per difendere il suolo, tutelare il territorio e prevenire i rischi idrogeologici;

2. quali misure intende promuovere e quali finanziamenti intende attivare per le amministrazioni locali che devono fronteggiare questi rischi;

3. se intende promuovere misure volte a scorporare dai parametri e dai vincoli del Patto di stabilità tutti gli interventi realizzati soprattutto dagli enti locali per difendere il suolo e mettere in sicurezza scuole e edifici pubblici in quanto elementi strategici delle politiche di prevenzione?

Risposta di Kristalina Georgieva a nome della Commissione
(20 febbraio 2014)

Proteggere dalle catastrofi l'ambiente e i cittadini dell'UE attraverso politiche unionali pertinenti rientra tra le priorità della Commissione.

La direttiva sulle alluvioni ([1]) istituisce un quadro per la valutazione e la gestione del rischio di alluvioni che prevede la predisposizione di mappe della pericolosità e del rischio di alluvioni entro la fine del 2013, nonché di piani di gestione di tale rischio entro la fine del 2015. Compete agli Stati membri fissare obiettivi di riduzione dei rischi concreti e selezionare le misure tenendo conto delle condizioni locali e regionali.

Inoltre, la Commissione sostiene numerose iniziative di prevenzione delle catastrofi, tra cui valutazione del rischio e pianificazione, scambio di buone prassi, verifiche inter pares e sviluppo di norme in materia di raccolta dei dati, in linea con la strategia di adattamento dell'UE del 2013 ([2]). La legislazione relativa al nuovo meccanismo unionale di protezione civile ([3]) impone ulteriori obblighi agli Stati membri in materia di valutazione del rischio e della capacità di gestirlo.

Per il periodo 2007-2013 l'Italia ha beneficiato di una dotazione di 682 milioni di EUR, erogata dal Fondo europeo di sviluppo regionale (FESR) a sostegno di misure di prevenzione delle catastrofi. Quasi l'85 % di tale somma è stata assegnata finora ai progetti selezionati. Per il periodo 2014-2020, l'adattamento e la gestione del rischio rientrano tra gli obiettivi tematici del FESR per i quali verrà definita la strategia dell'Italia nell'accordo di partenariato e nei programmi.

([1]) Direttiva 2007/60/CE, GU L 288 del 6.11.2007, pag. 27.
([2]) COM(2013) 216.
([3]) Decisione n. 1313/2013/UE.

Il patto di stabilità e crescita prevede che gli investimenti pubblici siano tra i fattori rilevanti da prendere in considerazione prima di decidere di avviare la procedura per i disavanzi eccessivi (PDE) nei confronti di uno Stato membro. Inoltre, è stata inserita una «clausola d'investimento» che consente agli Stati membri di discostarsi temporaneamente dall'obiettivo a medio termine o dal percorso di aggiustamento per tenere conto di programmi d'investimento cofinanziati dall'UE, purché siano presenti determinate condizioni, ad esempio una crescita negativa o un ampio divario negativo tra prodotto effettivo e potenziale e se lo Stato membro non è sottoposto alla procedura per i disavanzi eccessivi.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014137/13
to the Commission
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(16 December 2013)

Subject: Stability and Growth Pact and measures to prevent hydrogeological risks

Increasingly, newspapers are carrying worrying reports of landslides, flash floods and flooding which have affected Italy in recent years.

High-risk areas account for 9.8% of national territory and 89% of municipalities are affected; 6 250 schools and 550 hospitals are located in such areas.

Given this situation, it is clear that prevention is a significant tool for reducing the damage caused by these events.

According to an estimate by the National Association of Building Contractors, earthquakes, landslides and floods cost EUR 242.5 billion in Italy between 1944 and 2012, amounting to around EUR 3.5 billion per year, while since 2010 EUR 20.5 billion has been spent because of a significant increase in the areas affected. Over the past 10 years, the area of Italy affected by floods and landslides has doubled, from an average of four to eight regions per year. Furthermore, there has been an exponential increase in concentrations of 'brief but intense' rainstorms.

1. What policies does the Commission intend to promote to protect the land, safeguard the regions and prevent hydrogeological risks?

2. What steps does it intend to take and what funding does it intend to make available for the local authorities that have to deal with these risks?

3. Does the Commission intend to take measures to exempt from the parameters and constraints of the Stability and Growth Pact all interventions by local bodies, in particular, to protect the land and to make schools and public buildings safe, since these are strategic elements of prevention policies?

Answer given by the Commissioner Georgieva on behalf of the Commission
(20 February 2014)

The Commission considers a priority the protection of the EU citizens and the environment against disasters through relevant EU policies.

The Floods Directive ([1]) establishes the framework for the assessment and management of flood risks, requiring flood hazard and risk maps by end of 2013 and flood risk management plans by end of 2015. The setting of concrete risk reduction objectives and selection of measures is up to the Member States (MS) based on local and regional circumstances.

Moreover, the Commission supports several disaster prevention initiatives including risk assessment and planning, exchange of good practices, peer reviews, development of data collection standards in synergies with the 2013 EU adaptation strategy ([2]). The new Union Civil Protection Mechanism legislation ([3]) further obliges MS to develop risk assessments and assessments of risk management capabilities.

During 2007-2013, Italy was allocated EUR 682 million under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to support disaster prevention measures with almost 85% allocated so far to selected projects. For 2014-2020, adaptation and risk management are one of the ERDF thematic objectives for which Italy's strategy will be defined in its Partnership Agreement and programmes.

The Stability and Growth Pact foresees that public investments are among the relevant factors to be considered before a decision is taken to place a MS in Excessive Deficit Procedure (EDP). Moreover, an 'investment clause' has been devised which allows MS to temporarily deviate from the Medium-Term-Objective or the adjustment path to accommodate EU co-funded investment programmes, subject to certain conditions, including negative growth or largely negative output gap and being out of the EDP.

([1]) Directive 2007/60/EC, OJ L 288, 6.11.2007, p.27.
([2]) COM(2013) 216.
([3]) Decision No 1313/2013/EU.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014138/13
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(16 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Migliori pratiche e acquisizione dati in oncologia

Recentemente sono stati diffusi i primi risultati dello studio «Eurocare-5» pubblicati sulla rivista The Lancet Oncology. Eurocare-5 è la più vasta indagine sulla sopravvivenza per tumore, che copre oltre il 30 % della popolazione europea adulta (461 milioni) e il 77 % di quella infantile (59 milioni). Secondo questo studio in Europa, nonostante i miglioramenti nella diagnosi precoce e nel trattamento dei tumori dell'ultimo decennio, la sopravvivenza varia notevolmente a seconda del Paese in cui si vive. In particolare, in Europa occidentale la sopravvivenza risulta più elevata rispetto ai paesi dell'Europa orientale.

Il numero di adulti che sopravvivono almeno 5 anni dopo una diagnosi di tumore è aumentato costantemente nel tempo in tutta Europa e questo, secondo quanto dichiarato dagli autori dello studio, è in gran parte da attribuirsi all'incrementata diffusione dei programmi di screening e ai progressi dei protocolli di cura. Tuttavia continuano a sussistere grandi differenze di sopravvivenza tra le regioni europee, differenze che si vanno riducendo per alcuni tumori, in particolare per mammella, colon retto, prostata e melanoma della pelle, ma anche ampliando per altri, come ad esempio i linfomi.

Poiché il secondo programma di azione comunitaria per la Sanità stilato dalla Commissione indica tra i suoi obbiettivi l'individuazione di «migliori pratiche» in campo sanitario e l'identificazione, la raccolta e l'utilizzo dei HCQI (gli indicatori di qualità della gestione sanitaria) al fine di promuovere e migliorare l'assistenza sanitaria nei diversi Stati membri, può la Commissione riferire:

1. se intende acquisire i risultati dello studio menzionato;

2. se intende esprimere un parere riguardo alle politiche da porre per incoraggiare e promuovere la diffusione delle migliori pratiche negli Stati che più lo necessitano?

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

La Commissione è impegnata attivamente nello sviluppo di orientamenti europei sulle pratiche ottimali in oncologia, in particolare per quanto concerne l'implementazione di programmi di diagnosi precoce. Tali orientamenti sono disponibili per il cancro della mammella, della cervice e colorettale.

EUROCARE è un progetto avviato nel 1989 e basato sui registri del cancro in cui si raccolgono dati sui tassi di sopravvivenza e sul trattamento dei malati di cancro in Europa. Esso ha ricevuto finanziamenti dal primo programma «L'Europa contro il cancro» e le sue attività e i suoi risultati sono strettamente interconnessi e vengono attualmente monitorati dalla Commissione. L'attuale quinta edizione, EUROCARE-5, comprende dati relativi a più di 21 milioni di diagnosi forniti da 116 registri del cancro in 30 paesi europei e contenenti le stime di sopravvivenza per i pazienti diagnosticati nel periodo 2000-2007.

In cooperazione con altri stakeholder come la Rete europea dei registri del cancro e l'Agenzia internazionale per la ricerca sul cancro, il gruppo EUROCARE contribuisce alla definizione di un sistema europeo di informazione sul cancro che sarà gestito dal Centro comune di ricerca della Commissione europea al fine di migliorare il coordinamento a livello europeo, in modo da meglio sostenere le attività di controllo e di ricerca sul cancro.

Inoltre, come previsto nella decisione di esecuzione della Commissione del 28 novembre 2012 sul piano di lavoro 2013 del programma Salute dell'UE, la Commissione intende avviare una nuova azione congiunta onde elaborare una guida europea per il miglioramento della qualità del controllo globale del cancro. Il Centro comune di ricerca sta a sua volta definendo un insieme di requisiti essenziali di qualità per il trattamento del cancro della mammella in Europa e porterà avanti congiuntamente le due fasi di sviluppo di una nuova edizione degli orientamenti europei per lo screening e la diagnosi del cancro della mammella unitamente ad una piattaforma europea per gli orientamenti basati su evidenze.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014138/13
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(16 December 2013)

Subject: Best practices and data collection in oncology

The first results from the 'Eurocare-5' study were recently published in the journal The Lancet Oncology. Eurocare-5 is the largest study of cancer survival, covering over 30% of the adult European population (461 million) and 77% of the child population (59 million). According to the study, despite improvements in the early diagnosis and treatment of cancer in the last decade, survival varies considerably from country to country. In particular, survival rates are higher in western Europe than in eastern European countries.

The number of adults who survive at least five years after a cancer diagnosis has steadily increased over time throughout Europe. According to the study's authors, this is in large part due to screening programmes becoming more widespread and progress in treatment. However, there are still major differences in survival rates between European regions. These differences are decreasing for some cancers, such as breast cancer, colon cancer, prostate cancer and skin melanoma, but are increasing for others, such as lymphoma.

Since the aims of the second programme of Community action in the field of health drawn up by the Commission include the identification of 'best practices' in healthcare and the identification, collection and use of healthcare quality indicators (HCQIs) with a view to promoting and improving healthcare in the various Member States:

1. Does the Commission intend to obtain the results of the abovementioned study?

2. Does it intend to issue an opinion on the policies to be put in place to encourage and promote the dissemination of best practices in the Member States most in need of them?

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

The Commission is actively engaged in the development of European guidelines on best practices on oncology, in particular the implementation of screening programmes. Such guidelines are available for breast, cervical and colorectal cancers.

EUROCARE is a cancer-registry-based project on survival and care of cancer patients in Europe set up in 1989. It has received funding from the first Europe against Cancer Programme and its activities and results are closely connected and currently monitored by the Commission. The current fifth edition, EUROCARE-5, includes data on more than 21 million diagnoses provided by 116 Cancer Registries in 30 European countries with survival estimates for patients diagnosed during 2000-2007.

In cooperation with other stakeholders such as the European Network of Cancer Registries, the International Agency for Research on Cancer, the EUROCARE group is contributing to the definition of a European Cancer Information System, to be managed by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre aimed at improving coordination at European level to better support cancer control and research activities.

In addition, as foreseen in the Commission Implementing Decision of 28 November 2012 on the Work Plan 2013 of the EU Health Programme, the Commission intends to launch a new Joint Action to produce a European Guide on Quality Improvement in Comprehensive Cancer Control. The Joint Research Centre is also establishing a set of essential quality requirements for breast cancer healthcare across Europe and will cover jointly the two stages of developing a new edition of the European Guidelines for Breast Cancer Screening and Diagnosis together with a European platform for evidence-based guidelines.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014139/13
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(16 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Eccessivo consumo di sodio da parte della popolazione in Unione europea

Un'indagine condotta di recente in Francia prendendo in esame 341 prodotti presenti sugli scaffali della grande distribuzione e dei discount ha messo in luce che gli alimenti pronti contengono un quantitativo eccessivo di sale. Una situazione simile si riscontra anche in Italia.

Secondo l'Organizzazione mondiale della sanità la corretta assunzione giornaliera di sale oscilla tra 5-6 grammi. In Italia in generale se ne consuma 10-12 grammi al giorno.

Occorre notare che nelle tabelle nutrizionali degli alimenti confezionati si trova spesso la dicitura «sodio» che potrebbe risultare poco chiara per i consumatori. Non tutti, infatti, sono a conoscenza che un grammo di sodio equivale a circa 2,5 grammi di sale.

Si ricorda, inoltre, che il sale è coinvolto nei meccanismi di regolazione della pressione sanguigna, per cui se si assume un quantitativo elevato di sale da un lato si affaticano i reni, dall'altro si attiva una serie di meccanismi che possono portare all'ipertensione, un importante fattore di rischio per lo sviluppo di malattie cardiovascolari.

Nel 2005 il gruppo di esperti scientifici dell'Autorità europea per la sicurezza alimentare (EFSA) sui prodotti dietetici, l'alimentazione e le allergie (NDA) aveva pubblicato un parere sulla determinazione di un apporto massimo tollerabile di sodio, riscontrando come l'assunzione abituale di tale alimento da parte delle popolazioni europee fosse superiore al fabbisogno nutrizionale.

Poiché, da quanto si evince dalla ricerca effettuata in Francia, a distanza di 8 anni la situazione non risulta migliorata, può la Commissione riferire se:

1. ha intenzione di organizzare una campagna di sensibilizzazione e educazione alimentare in tema di corretta assunzione di sodio;

2. ritiene importante lavorare sulle etichettature degli alimenti, rendendo chiaro per il consumatore quale sia il rapporto sodio/sale;

3. considera opportuno stimolare i produttori di alimenti a prestare maggiore attenzione all'impatto di tale elemento sulla salute dei consumatori?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(18 febbraio 2014)

L'educazione alla salute rientra nelle competenze degli Stati membri. La Commissione sostiene gli sforzi nazionali.

Il regolamento (UE) n. 1169/2011 relativo alla fornitura di informazioni sugli alimenti ai consumatori ([1]) introdurrà entro il 13 dicembre 2016 l'obbligo dell'etichettatura nutrizionale tra cui l'obbligo di fornire informazioni sul tenore di sale/sodio. Per agevolare la comprensione da parte dei consumatori l'informazione dovrà essere fornita in forma di «contenuto di sale». Queste nuove regole dovrebbero consentire ai cittadini di fare scelte alimentari informate senza essere indotti in confusione da terminologie usate nelle etichette e nell'ambito dell'educazione alla salute in cui si da spesso riferimento al «sale».

La Commissione ha collaborato intensamente, a partire dal 2008, con gli Stati membri nell'ambito del Gruppo ad alto livello sulla dieta e l'attività fisica e della piattaforma d'azione europea su dieta, attività fisica e salute in merito alla riduzione dell'assunzione di sodio/sale nell'UE e rinvia l'Onorevole deputato, per ulteriori particolari, alla propria risposta all'interrogazione scritta E- 011642/2013 ([2]).

([1]) GU L 304 del 22.11.2011, pag. 18.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014139/13
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(16 December 2013)

Subject: Excessive consumption of sodium by the population of the EU

A recent study in France that looked at 341 products on the shelves of supermarkets and discount stores highlighted the fact that ready-to-eat foods contain an excessive amount of salt. The situation is similar in Italy.

According to the World Health Organisation, the correct daily intake of salt is between 5 and 6 grams. In Italy, average salt consumption is 10-12 grams per day.

It should be noted that the word 'sodium' often appears in the nutritional tables of pre-packaged foods, and this could be unclear to consumers. Not everyone is aware that one gram of sodium is equivalent to approximately 2.5 grams of salt.

It should also be remembered that salt is involved in the mechanisms that regulate blood pressure, and so if a high quantity of salt is consumed, the kidneys are put under strain and a series of mechanisms are activated that may lead to high blood pressure, which is a significant risk factor in the development of cardiovascular disease.

In 2005, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) panel on dietetic products, nutrition and allergies (NDA) published an opinion on the tolerable upper intake level of sodium, and found that the average intakes of populations in Europe were higher than dietary needs.

Since, as can be seen from the research carried out in France, the situation has not improved eight years on:

1. Does the Commission intend to organise a food awareness-raising and educational campaign regarding the correct intake of sodium?

2. Does it think work should be done on food labelling, to make it clear to consumers what the relationship is between sodium and salt?

3. Does it think it would be a good idea to encourage food producers to pay more attention to the impact of this element on consumer health?

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

Health education is within the competence of Member States. The Commission is supporting national efforts.

Regulation (EU) 1169/2011 on food information to consumers [1] will introduce mandatory nutrition labelling by 13 December 2016, including mandatory information about the salt/sodium content. In order to facilitate consumer understanding, the information will have to be provided as salt content. These new rules should enable citizens to make informed dietary choices without being confused about different terminologies on the labels and in health education, where often 'salt' is referred to.

The Commission has worked since 2008 intensively with Member States in the High Level Group on Diet and Physical Activity and the EU Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health on the reduction of sodium/salt intakes in the EU and, for more details, would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-011642/2013 [2].

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(1) OJ L 304, 22.11.2011, p. 18.
(2) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014140/13
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(16 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Impatto delle condizioni di povertà sui minorenni in Italia

Un rapporto presentato recentemente da un'organizzazione internazionale segnala che in Italia oltre un milione di minori vive in condizione di povertà assoluta, il che rappresenta il 30 % in più rispetto al 2012. Si tratta di bambini e adolescenti che crescono in contesti segnati da disagio abitativo e alti livelli di dispersione scolastica. Oltre a ciò, sono 650.000 i minori che vivono in comuni falliti o sull'orlo della bancarotta, in quanto le amministrazioni pubbliche sono costrette a innalzare le tasse per le prestazioni fondamentali o ridurre alcuni servizi cruciali, come si evince dal calo del numero di bambini iscritti agli asili comunali.

È evidente la stretta relazione tra povertà economica e povertà educativa che alimenta un circolo perverso: le famiglie meno abbienti risparmiano spesso nell'istruzione (libri, lezioni private, rette), destinando appena 11 euro al mese a cultura, tempo libero e gioco. Questo deficit di spesa educativa delle famiglie più povere non è compensato da investimenti pubblici su welfare e educazione. Infatti, mentre nei paesi Ocse l'investimento per scuola primaria e secondaria è aumentato del 62 % dal 1995 al 2010, in Italia la spesa procapite per gli studenti è rimasta pressoché invariata.

In definitiva, la problematica principale risiede nel fatto che l'intensa povertà, che si traduce in carenze educative e culturali, implica per i minori una riduzione di libertà di scelta, una privazione di opportunità e una chiusura di orizzonti.

La comunicazione della Commissione dal titolo «Educazione e cura della prima infanzia: consentire a tutti i bambini di affacciarsi al mondo di domani nelle condizioni migliori» indica come obiettivi prioritari quello di ricondurre il tasso di abbandono scolastico al di sotto del 10 % e di liberare 20 milioni di persone dalle condizioni di povertà.

Dato che in una relazione pubblicata il 3 giugno 2013 dalla Commissione si afferma che solo otto Stati membri hanno conseguito entrambi gli «obiettivi di Barcellona» su disponibilità e accessibilità dei servizi di assistenza all'infanzia e l'Italia non è tra questi paesi, può la Commissione indicare:

1. quali azioni sono state poste in essere per raggiungere i suddetti obiettivi di Barcellona;

2. quali piani di azioni sono previsti per il futuro onde migliorare la drammatica condizione in cui versano numerosi minorenni italiani e europei?

Risposta di László Andor a nome della Commissione
(18 febbraio 2014)

1. Nel giugno 2013 la Commissione ha pubblicato un'analisi dei progressi compiuti nel perseguimento degli obiettivi di Barcellona, con indicazioni di elementi di fatto ed esempi di politiche ([1]). La Commissione ha raccolto e condiviso le migliori prassi ([2]) anche via EPIC. Inoltre, nel periodo 2007-13 un importo stimato di 2,6 miliardi di euro dai Fondi strutturali è stato destinato all'assistenza ai bambini e alla partecipazione delle donne al mercato del lavoro.

2. Nella sua raccomandazione intitolata «Investire nell'infanzia per spezzare il circolo vizioso dello svantaggio sociale» ([3]), la Commissione europea ha invitato gli Stati membri a incrementare la lotta contro la povertà infantile. La Commissione sta mobilitando una serie di strumenti UE per sostenere gli sforzi degli Stati membri. Quattordici Stati membri, compresa l'Italia, hanno ricevuto nel 2013 raccomandazioni specifiche per paese. Nella sua analisi annuale della crescita 2014 ([4]) la Commissione ribadisce il suo invito agli Stati membri ad investire in servizi di assistenza all'infanzia di elevata qualità e sostenibili. La Commissione chiede inoltre agli Stati membri di utilizzare in questa direzione i finanziamenti, come quelli provenienti dal Fondo sociale europeo e dal Fondo di aiuti europei agli indigenti. Secondo la bozza di accordo di partnership ricevuta dalla Commissione, l'Italia intende investire circa 3,8 miliardi di euro — dei quali 2 miliardi di euro di risorse FSE — per promuovere l'inclusione sociale nel prossimo periodo di programmazione; il 30 % di questo importo si concentrerà sull'infanzia e sull'assistenza di lungo periodo.

([1]) COM(2013) 322 http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/documents/130531_barcelona_en.pdf
([2]) La Commissione europea ha inoltre organizzato uno scambio di buone prassi in Francia nel 2013 (COLLEGAMENTO?).
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1044&langId=en
([4]) COM(2013) 800 http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/2014/ags2014_en.pdf

La Commissione fornisce inoltre orientamenti sulle politiche da seguire attraverso le sue attività nell'ambito del Metodo aperto di coordinamento con gli Stati membri, al fine di garantire l'investimento in servizi di qualità. Un gruppo di lavoro comprendente rappresentanti degli Stati membri sta esaminando la possibilità di sviluppare la qualità dei servizi in Europa e sta mettendo a punto una proposta per un Quadro europeo della qualità nella custodia e nell'educazione della prima infanzia (CEPI).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014140/13
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(16 December 2013)

Subject: Impact of poverty on children in Italy

According to a recent report by an international organisation, more than 1 million children in Italy are living in absolute poverty, which is a 30% increase on 2012. These children and adolescents grow up in environments in which housing problems and high school dropout rates are the norm. Furthermore, 650 000 children live in municipalities that are either bankrupt or going bankrupt, since the public authorities are having to raise taxes to pay for essential services or to cut some of those services, as the fall in the number of children enrolled in council-run nurseries shows.

There is clearly a close relationship between poverty and lack of education, and it perpetuates a vicious circle: the poorest families often save money on education (books, private lessons and fees), spending a mere EUR 11 per month on culture, recreation and entertainment. This shortfall in education spending by the poorest families is not being made up by public investment in welfare and education. Indeed, while investment in primary and secondary education in the OECD countries increased by 62% between 1995 and 2010, in Italy expenditure per student remained virtually the same.

Ultimately, the main problem is that extreme poverty, and the lack of education and cultural awareness that goes with it, restricts children's freedom of choice, deprives them of opportunities and limits their horizons.

The Commission Communication 'Early Childhood Education and Care: Providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow' cites the headline targets of reducing early school leaving to below 10% and lifting 20 million people out of poverty.

Given that a Commission report published on 3 June 2013 claims that only eight Member States have met both Barcelona targets on availability and accessibility of childcare facilities, and that Italy is not one of those countries, can the Commission say:

1. what action has been taken to achieve the abovementioned Barcelona targets;

2. what action plans are envisaged for the future in order to improve the terrible situation of many children in Italy and across Europe?

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

1. In June 2013 the Commission released an analysis of progress towards the Barcelona targets, providing evidence and examples of policies ([1]). The Commission has collected and shared best practices ([2]) such as via EPIC. Moreover, in the 2007-13 period, an estimated EUR 2.6 billion from the Structural Funds was dedicated to childcare and women's labour market participation

2. In its Recommendation 'Investing in Children -Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage' ([3]), the European Commission urged the Member States to step up their fight against child poverty. The Commission is mobilising a range of EU instruments to support Member States' efforts. 14 Member States, including Italy, have received relevant Country Specific Recommendations in 2013. In its Annual Growth Survey 2014 ([4]), the Commission reiterates its call on Member States to invest in affordable and high quality childcare services. Besides, the Commission is calling on the Member States to use funding, such as the European Social Fund and Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived in this view. According to the draft Partnership Agreement received by the Commission, Italy intends to invest about EUR 3.8 billion — of which EUR 2 billion of ESF resources — to promote social inclusion over the next programming period, 30% of which focusing on child and long-term care.

Besides, the Commission is giving policy guidance through its work with Member States within the Open Method of Coordination to ensure investment in the quality of services. A working group of Member States representatives is looking at the development of quality of services across Europe and is finalising a proposal for a European Quality Framework on ECEC.

([1]) COM(2013) 322; http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/documents/130531_barcelona_en.pdf
([2]) The European Commission also organised an exchange of good practices in France in 2013 (LINK?).
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1044&langId=en
([4]) COM(2013) 800; http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/2014/ags2014_en.pdf

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014142/13
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(16 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Riconoscimento universale della endometriosi come malattia invalidante

Per endometriosi si intende la presenza di endometrio e stroma di endometrio al di fuori della cavità uterina in altre zone del corpo femminile, normalmente nella pelvi. Questa malattia può colpire le donne dalla prima mestruazione e eccezionalmente anche prima del primo ciclo mestruale nella infanzia, normalmente dal tempo del suo primo periodo alla menopausa, anche se dopo i 40 anni la crescita del tessuto endometriale presente fuori dalla cavità uterina sembra più lenta. È una malattia che colpisce circa il 10 % delle donne in Europa, è causa di circa il 30-40 % dei casi di infertilità femminile e nei casi più avanzati provoca ripercussioni sulla sfera fisica, psicologica e lavorativa e impedisce a chi ne è afflitto di poter godere di una buona qualità di vita. Le prime associazioni che si occupano di questa patologia sono di recente formazione (intorno al 2000) e con esse anche il processo per portare le istituzioni a conoscenza dei problemi e delle gravi situazioni che è costretto a vivere chi ne soffre, in particolare tramite il riconoscimento della patologia come malattia invalidante e il supporto istituzionale alla ricerca scientifica per le cure necessarie.

Nel gennaio 2006, l'endometriosi è entrata nel piano di lavoro del programma comunitario di salute pubblica dell'UE, mentre in Italia proprio in queste settimane sono oggetto di attenta valutazione da parte dell'Amministrazione le richieste finalizzate a dare riconoscimento agli effetti invalidanti di tale patologia, tanto che è stata inclusa, nei suoi diversi stadi clinici, nelle tabelle dell'invalidità civile in via di approvazione.

Può la Commissione riferire:

1. se intende delineare un quadro uniforme di riconoscimento di tale patologia a livello europeo e

2. se intende esprimersi riguardo a eventuali quadri di assistenza al welfare per queste patologie che colpiscono solo le donne?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(14 febbraio 2014)

Conformemente al trattato sul funzionamento dell'Unione europea la definizione delle politiche sanitarie e l'organizzazione e la fornitura di servizi sanitari e di assistenza medica rientrano precipuamente nelle competenze dei singoli Stati membri. La Commissione non è pertanto in condizione di sviluppare un quadro uniforme per il riconoscimento dell'endometriosi a livello europeo.

Inoltre, la Commissione non è in condizione di esprimere il proprio punto di vista su eventuali sistemi di welfare per patologie come l'endometriosi poiché ciò rientrerebbe nelle responsabilità degli Stati membri.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014142/13
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(16 December 2013)

Subject: Universal recognition of endometriosis as a debilitating disease

Endometriosis is a condition in which the endometrium and endometrial stroma are found outside the uterine cavity in other parts of the female body, normally the pelvis. It can affect women from their first period and even before their first menstrual cycle in childhood in some exceptional cases. It normally occurs between a woman's first period and the menopause, although the growth of endometrial tissue outside the uterine cavity appears to slow down after the age of 40. The condition affects around 10% of women in Europe, and is the cause of some 30-40% of female infertility cases. In the most serious cases, it affects sufferers physically, psychologically and in the workplace, and stops them enjoying a good quality of life. The first associations dedicated to this condition were established recently (in around 2000), and with them the process for informing institutions of the problems and serious situations that sufferers have to face. This process involves, in particular, institutions recognising the condition as a debilitating disease and providing support for scientific research into the necessary cures.

In January 2006, endometriosis was included in the work plan for the implementation of the programme of Community action in the field of public health, while in recent weeks the Italian Government has been carefully assessing the requests for it to recognise the debilitating effects of the condition, to the extent that it has included the various clinical stages in the civilian disability tables currently being adopted.

1. Does the Commission intend to develop a uniform framework for recognising this condition at European level?

2. Does it intend to state its position on possible welfare support frameworks for conditions which only affect women?

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

According to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the definition of health policies and the organisation and delivery of health services and medical care is primarily the responsibility of individual Member States. The Commission is therefore not in a position to develop a uniform framework for recognising endometriosis at European level.

In addition, the Commission is not in the position to state its views on possible welfare support frameworks for conditions such as endometriosis, as this would fall under Member States' responsibility.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-014144/13
aan de Commissie
Laurence J. A. J. Stassen (NI)
(16 december 2013)

Betreft: Erdoğan erkent huidige grenzen Thracië niet

Thracië is een regio die het noordoosten van Griekenland, het zuiden van Bulgarije en het noordwesten van Turkije gedeeltelijk beslaat. De premier van Turkije, Erdoğan, heeft gezegd dat Thracië echter óók Thessaloniki en Xanthi (Griekenland), Deliorman en Kardzhali (Bulgarije), Skopje en Vardar (Macedonië) en Pristina (Kosovo) zou omvatten. Hij noemde Thracië, inclusief bovengenoemde plekken die feitelijk níet tot Thracië behoren, „deel van de Turkse geschiedenis": „Deze regio representeert onze hele Turkse geschiedenis." Bulgarije en Griekenland hebben fel gereageerd.

1. Is de Commissie bekend met genoemde uitspraken van premier Erdoğan ([1])?

2. Hoe beoordeelt/interpreteert de Commissie de uitspraken van premier Erdoğan dat Thracië groter zou zijn dan feitelijk het geval is en dat hij daarmee aldus de huidige Bulgaars-Grieks-Turkse grenzen van Thracië niet erkent?

Het is niet de eerste keer dat Turkije „moeite" heeft met bepaalde grenzen/gebieden: zo erkent Turkije EU-lidstaat Cyprus niet ([2]) — onlangs nog eens door premier Erdoğan bevestigd — én zint Turkije op een hernieuwd Ottomaans rijk (zie schriftelijke vragen E-010872/2012 en E-001690/2013).

3. Hoe garandeert de Commissie dat premier Erdoğan, premier van een kandidaat-EU-lidstaat, met zijn uitspraken over Thracië géén gebiedsuitbreiding nastreeft?

4. Deelt de Commissie de mening dat Turkije, door bepaalde grenzen/gebieden niet te erkennen resp. gebiedsuitbreiding na te streven, herhaaldelijk aantoont níet in de EU thuis te horen? Is de Commissie dientengevolge ertoe bereid onmiddellijk de toetredingsonderhandelingen met én alle EU-geldstromen naar Turkije voor eens en voor altijd te beëindigen? Zo neen, hoe lang wil de Commissie nog doormodderen met het peperdure gebed zonder einde, genaamd „imperialistisch Turkije"?

Antwoord van de heer Füle namens de Commissie
(21 februari 2014)

De Commissie kan niet reageren op elke verklaring van de leden van de Turkse regering die in de media aandacht krijgt.

Zoals is aangegeven in het voortgangsverslag van 2013 van de Commissie ([3]) en de conclusies van de Raad van december 2013 over de uitbreiding en het stabilisatie- en associatieproces ([4]), dient Turkije zich ondubbelzinnig in te zetten voor goed nabuurschap en voor de vreedzame regeling van geschillen conform het Handvest van de Verenigde Naties en, indien nodig, door een beroep te doen op het Internationaal Gerechtshof.

([1]) http://www.novinite.com/articles/156341/.
([2]) http://www.cyprusnewsreport.com/?q=node/7170.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2012/package/tr_rapport_2012_en.pdf
([4]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/genaff/140142.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014144/13
to the Commission
Laurence J.A.J. Stassen (NI)
(16 December 2013)

Subject: Erdoğan does not recognise current borders of Thrace

Thrace is a region that extends over parts of north-eastern Greece, southern Bulgaria and north-western Turkey. The Prime Minister of Turkey, Mr Erdoğan, has said, however, that Thrace should also include Thessaloniki and Xanthi (Greece), Deliorman and Kardzhali (Bulgaria), Skopje and Vardar (Macedonia) and Pristina (Kosovo). He said that Thrace, including the abovementioned places — which actually do not form part of Thrace — was 'part of Turkish history'. 'This region is representative of our entire history,' he said

Bulgaria and Greece have reacted fiercely.

1. Is the Commission aware of these comments by Mr Erdoğan ([1])?

2. How does the Commission assess/interpret the comments by the Turkish Prime Minister that Thrace is bigger than is actually the case and the fact that he thus does not recognise the current Bulgarian/Greek/Turkish borders of Thrace?

This is not the first time that Turkey has had 'difficulties' with particular borders/territories: Turkey does not, for example, recognise the EU Member State of Cyprus ([2]) — as recently confirmed by Mr Erdoğan once again — and is intent on a renewed Ottoman Empire (see written questions E-010872/2012 and E-001690/2013).

3. How can the Commission guarantee that Mr Erdoğan, the prime minister of a candidate country for EU membership, is not angling, with his comments about Thrace, for territorial aggrandisement?

4. Does the Commission share the view that, by failing to recognise certain borders/territories and by seeking territorial aggrandisement, Turkey has repeatedly demonstrated its unsuitability for EU membership? Is the Commission prepared, as a result, to immediately put a stop to the accession negotiations and all EU money flowing into Turkey once and for all? If not, how long will the Commission continue to muddle along with the exorbitant prayer without end that is 'imperialist Turkey'?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(21 February 2014)

The Commission is not in position to comment on every statement made by members of the Turkish government as reported by the media.

As set out in the Commission's 2013 Progress Report ([3]) and the December 2013 Council Conclusions on Enlargement and Stabilisation and Association Process ([4]), Turkey needs to commit itself unequivocally to good neighbourly relations and to the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the United Nations Charter, having recourse, if necessary, to the International Court of Justice.

([1]) http://www.novinite.com/articles/156341/
([2]) http://www.cyprusnewsreport.com/?q=node/7170
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2012/package/tr_rapport_2012_en.pdf
([4]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/genaff/140142.pdf

(Suomenkielinen versio)

Kirjallisesti vastattava kysymys E-014147/13
komissiolle
Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE)
(16. joulukuuta 2013)

Aihe: Toimenpidesuunnitelma veropetosten, veronkierron ja veroparatiisien torjunnasta

Keväällä 2013 parlamentti hyväksyi päätöslauselman veropetosten, veronkierron ja veroparatiisien torjunnasta annetusta komission toimenpidesuunnitelmasta (P7_TA(2013)0205).

Parlamentin mietinnön keskeisimpiin kohtiin lukeutui vaatimus EU-maille yhteisestä veroparatiisin määritelmästä, jonka perusteella tällaisiksi luokitellut alueet asetettaisiin EU:n yhteiselle mustalle listalle. Mustalle listalle joutumisesta seuraisi mm. se, että jäsenmaiden olisi pidättäydyttävä kaikista valtiontuista veroparatiiseista käsin toimiville yrityksille ja evättävä niiltä oikeus osallistua julkisiin hankintoihin.

Tämän lisäksi parlamentti vaati EU:n laajuisen, henkilökohtaisten verotunnisteiden järjestelmän (TIN) nopeaa käyttöönottoa, jotta voidaan helpottaa verovelvollisten yksilöintiä.

Kuinka komissio on edistynyt parlamentin esiin nostamien – erityisesti yllämainittujen – painopisteiden osalta veropetosten, veronkierron ja veroparatiisien torjunnassa?

Algirdas Šemetan komission puolesta antama vastaus
(17. helmikuuta 2014)

Komissio katsoo, että EU-mailla olisi oltava yhteinen kanta sellaisiin oikeudenkäyttöalueisiin, jotka eivät sovella asianmukaisia hyvän hallintotavan vaatimuksia verotusalalla. Tästä syystä komissio on antanut erityisiä suosituksia (ks. suositus (C(2012) 8805)) ([1]).

Komissio katsoo, että tässä vaiheessa jäsenvaltioilla on parhaat mahdollisuudet kartoittaa nk. veroparatiisit ja laatia niistä luettelot.

EU:n verotunnisteen (EU TIN) mahdollisesta käyttöönotosta järjestettiin julkinen kuuleminen vuonna 2013 jäsenvaltioiden kanssa pidetyn Fiscalis-seminaarin yhteydessä. Kuten toimintaohjelmassa ilmoitettiin, nyt on tilattu toteutettavuustutkimus, jonka avulla pyritään selvittämään eri vaihtoehdot EU:n verotunnisteelle ja mahdolliset muut toimintatavat. Tutkimuksen tulosten perusteella toteutetaan lisätoimenpiteitä mahdollisten hallintomallien hahmottelemiseksi ja kustannus-hyötyanalyysin suorittamiseksi. Tältä pohjalta komissio voi tarvittaessa esittää lainsäädäntöehdotuksia, jotta rajat ylittävää toimintaa harjoittavat Euroopan veronmaksajat voidaan helpommin tunnistaa.

Komission edistymisestä veropetosten, veronkierron ja veroparatiisien torjunnassa on julkaistu 6. joulukuuta 2013 lehdistötiedote ”Fighting Tax Evasion and Avoidance: A year of progress” ([2]).

([1]) C(2012)8805 lopullinen.
([2]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-1096_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014147/13
to the Commission
Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE)
(16 December 2013)

Subject: Action plan on the fight against tax fraud, tax evasion and tax havens

In spring 2013, Parliament adopted a resolution on the Commission action plan on the fight against tax fraud, tax evasion and tax havens (P7_TA(2013)0205).

Among the main points in Parliament's report was the requirement that EU countries should have a common definition of the term 'tax haven', with reference to which areas so classified would be placed on a common EU blacklist. One result of being blacklisted would be that Member States would have to refrain from granting any state aid to companies operating from tax havens and deny them access to public procurement.

In addition, Parliament called for the speedy introduction of a pan-European Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) in order to facilitate the identification of taxpayers.

What progress has the Commission made in the fight against tax fraud, tax evasion and tax havens in the priority areas highlighted by Parliament, and particularly those mentioned above?

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

The Commission considers that EU countries should have a common position in relation to jurisdictions that do not apply appropriate standards of good governance in taxation. For this reason, the Commission has made specific recommendations (see recommendation (C(2012)8805)) ([1]).

The Commission believes that at this point in time Member States are best placed to identify and establish lists of so called 'tax havens'.

As regards the possible introduction of an EU Tax identification number (EU TIN), a public consultation was carried out in 2013 in parallel to a Fiscalis seminar with Member States. As announced in the action plan, a feasibility study has now been commissioned which aims at identifying the possible options for an EU TIN as well as possible alternatives. Depending on the results of this study, further steps will be taken in order to define possible governance models and undertake an appropriate cost-benefit analysis. On that basis the Commission may, if appropriate, present legislative proposals in order to improve the identification of European taxpayers engaged in cross-border operations.

On the progress the Commission has made in the fight against tax fraud, tax evasion and tax havens, the Honourable Member is referred to press release of 6 December 2013 'Fighting Tax Evasion and Avoidance: A year of progress' ([2]).

([1]) C (2012) 8805 final.
([2]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-1096_en.htm

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014148/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(16 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Expediente de regulación de empleo de Catalunya Banc

En su respuesta a la pregunta E-010699/2013, la Comisión declara que «no monitorea específicamente los programas de despidos en el contexto de la reestructuración bancaria en España».

En la condición número 2 del memorando de entendimiento se pedía la elaboración de planes de reestructuración para las entidades del llamado grupo 1 del sector bancario español, entre las que se encuentra Catalunya Banc.

¿Podría indicar la Comisión la razón por la que no monitorea la aplicación de una política de reestructuración que ha sido la causa de los despidos en Catalunya Banc?

¿Por qué acepta la Comisión un programa de despidos de Catalunya Banc, ligado a la recepción de ayudas de Estado, pero se muestra contraria a evaluar cómo se ha llevado a cabo este programa de despidos?

Respuesta del Sr. Almunia en nombre de la Comisión
(10 de febrero de 2014)

Como se indica en la respuesta a la pregunta E-010699/2013, la Comisión supervisa la aplicación de los planes de reestructuración de los bancos españoles que han recibido ayudas estatales. Estos planes incluyen, entre otras cosas, objetivos en cuanto a las sucursales, los niveles de empleo y la estructura de costes, que deben alcanzarse en unos plazos concretos. La función de la Comisión es evaluar la adecuación de los objetivos incluidos en el plan de reestructuración presentado por el Estado miembro y el banco a fin de garantizar que bastarán para recuperar la viabilidad del banco, limitar la carga para los contribuyentes y mantener en un mínimo el falseamiento de la competencia.

En el caso de Catalunya Bank, la Comisión aprobó su plan de reestructuración en noviembre de 2012 y ahora está controlando la ejecución de estos objetivos y velando por que se cumplan en los plazos acordados. El modo operativo en el que cada institución se ajusta a los objetivos que figuran en los planes de reestructuración, lo que puede traducirse en la aplicación de expedientes de regulación de empleo, depende de las consideraciones y decisiones de gestión concretas y no entra en el ámbito de competencia de la Comisión.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014148/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(16 December 2013)

Subject: Redundancies at Catalunya Banc

In its answer to Question E-010699/2013, the Commission stated that 'it does not specifically monitor redundancy programmes related to the restructuring of Spanish banks'.

Condition No 2 of the memorandum of understanding called for restructuring plans to be drawn up for banks in 'group 1' of the Spanish banking sector, which includes Catalunya Banc.

Could the Commission explain why it is not monitoring the implementation of a restructuring policy which has led to redundancies at Catalunya Banc?

Why does the Commission accept a redundancy programme at Catalunya Banc, which has received state aid, but is averse to assessing how this redundancy plan has been implemented?

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

As mentioned in answer to Question E-010699/2013, the Commission monitors the implementation of restructuring plans from Spanish banks that received state aid. Those plans include, among other things, targets in terms of branches, employment levels and cost structure, which are to be achieved by specific deadlines. The role of the Commission is to assess the adequacy of the targets included in the restructuring plan presented by the Member State and the bank, to ensure that they will be sufficient to return the bank to viability, to limit the burden on taxpayers and to keep distortion of competition to the minimum.

In the case of Catalunya Bank, the Commission has approved its restructuring plan in November 2012 and is now monitoring the implementation of such targets and makes sure they are achieved by the agreed deadlines. The operational manner in which each institution achieves the targets included in the restructuring plans — which may lead internally to the implementation of redundancy plans — depends on the specific management considerations and decisions, and does not fall within the Commission's competence.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014149/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(16 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Crédito en el Estado español

Según el informe de la Troika sobre el rescate bancario en el Estado español, el crédito a empresas no financieras ha caído un 11 % durante 2013 y el crédito a los hogares un 5 %. Mientras tanto, el crédito al sector público ha aumentado en un 10 %.

El Parlamento Europeo, en su informe de competencia, pedía que los bancos que han recibido ayudas públicas «no aumenten su exposición a la deuda pública, especialmente si al mismo tiempo reducen el crédito a las PYME y a los hogares».

A la luz de lo anterior:

1. ¿Piensa la Comisión tener en cuenta la propuesta del Parlamento Europeo en cuanto alcrédito en los bancos que han recibido ayudas estatales?

2. ¿Piensa la Comisión incluir en el futuro condiciones para que las ayudas de Estado alsector bancario sirvan para aumentar o, por lo menos, mantener el crédito a la economíareal?

Respuesta del Sr. Almunia en nombre de la Comisión
(10 de febrero de 2014)

Al parecer, Su Señoría se refiere a la sección 19 de un informe publicado por la Comisión Europea en coordinación con el BCE, en la que figuran las cifras citadas ([1]). No obstante, esta sección trata de la evolución de la situación de todo el sector bancario español, que es un segmento mucho más amplio que los bancos que han recibido ayudas estatales. De ahí que no se esté en condiciones de deducir el comportamiento de dichos bancos españoles.

En cuanto a la primera pregunta, la Comisión tiene realmente en cuenta la propuesta del Parlamento sobre la concesión de créditos por los bancos subvencionados por el Estado. Un objetivo fundamental de las medidas de la Comisión en materia de reestructuración bancaria es recuperar la viabilidad de los bancos para que puedan conceder préstamos a la economía real de manera sostenible y sin hacer que los contribuyentes tengan que soportar de nuevo costes indebidos.

En cuanto a la segunda pregunta, la Comisión ya aplica la política de fomentar la concesión de préstamos a la economía real por parte de los bancos receptores de ayudas estatales. La Comisión se esfuerza por reorientar el modelo empresarial de estos bancos subvencionados hacia una menor asunción de riesgos y el crédito a la economía real.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2013/pdf/ocp163_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014149/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(16 December 2013)

Subject: Lending in Spain

According to the Troika report on the bank bailout in Spain, lending to non-financial companies fell by 11% in 2013 and lending to households by 5%. Meanwhile, lending to the public sector has increased by 10%.

Parliament, in its competition report, called on banks which had received state aid 'not to increase their exposure to public debt, especially if they are reducing the credit flow to SMEs and households at the same time'.

1. Does the Commission intend to take into account Parliament's proposal regarding lending by banks which have received state aid?

2. Does the Commission intend to include in the future a requirement whereby state aid to the banking sector should serve to increase or, at least, maintain lending to the real economy?

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

The Honourable Member is apparently referring to Section 19 of a report published by the European Commission in liaison with the ECB, where the cited figures are mentioned. ([1]) That section, however, discusses developments in the whole Spanish banking sector, which is a much broader segment than state aided banks. From this, therefore, one is not in a position to infer the lending behaviour of Spanish state aided banks.

As regards the first question, the Commission does indeed take into account the proposal from the Parliament about lending by banks which have received state aid. A primary goal of the Commission action in bank restructuring is to return the banks to viability, so that they will be able to lend to the real economy in a sustainable way and without imposing again undue costs on the taxpayer.

As regards the second question, it is already the Commission's policy to encourage lending to the real economy of state aided banks. The Commission strives to refocus the business model of state aided banks towards de-risking and lending to the real economy.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2013/pdf/ocp163_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014150/13
to the Commission
Geoffrey Van Orden (ECR)
(16 December 2013)

Subject: Use of hazardous substances

At the moment, the UK seems to be the only Member State that has enacted and enforced the rules on the maximum lead levels as per the 'Restriction of the use of certain hazardous substances' (RoHS and the RoHS 2) Directive.

Can the Commission confirm this? What action, if any, is being taken to ensure timely compliance by Member States of these restrictions?

Is any compensation available for industries which are complying with the restrictions under national law and which have therefore suffered costs that industries in other Member States have avoided through non-compliance?

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

Most Member States had transposed RoHS 2 by October 2013 and there is no evidence of systemic gaps in the implementation of RoHS 2 in Member States. National authorities work together in the UK-chaired RoHS enforcement network, in which the Commission also participates.

No financial compensation is available for compliance with the law.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014151/13
to the Commission
Jean Lambert (Verts/ALE)
(16 December 2013)

Subject: EU-level action on schizophrenia

Across the world, at least 26 million people are affected by schizophrenia. This condition can affect an individual's mood, behaviour and psychosocial functioning and has huge psychosocial consequences, for patients and their families.

Therapy and medication help to change the lives of people with schizophrenia, but many patients still experience social isolation, unemployment, homelessness or imprisonment, poor quality of life, premature death and suicide, prejudice and discrimination.

Research has shown that improving quality of life for people living with schizophrenia is a realistic goal. To reach this goal, we need:

— an integrated team approach to ensure timely diagnosis and appropriate treatment, including psychotherapy, psychoeducation, self-help and medication

— collaboration with those affected by the condition, their families and other sources of support

— adequate funding

— multi-stakeholder engagement, i.e. policy-makers at every level, clinicians and public agencies.

Given the personal and societal impact of schizophrenia:

1. Can the Commission provide information on how schizophrenia is currently being addressed by EU-level health initiatives e.g. the Health for Growth Programme 2014-2020 and the joint actions on chronic disease and on mental health and well-being?

2. How could actions to address this condition form part of the EU social agenda, (e.g. initiatives on social inclusion, health in the work place and the Social Innovation agenda)?

3. Does Horizon 2020 provide possibilities for specific research on the causes and impact of schizophrenia, and ways of managing patient aid (e.g. treatment, inclusion, integration, community care)?

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

One of the objectives of the Joint Action Mental Health and Well-being ([1]) under the Health Programme is to develop a framework for action on community-based and socially inclusive approaches to mental health in Europe, with a focus on transition from institutional care to community care for people with severe mental disorders. This work addresses the needs of people experiencing schizophrenia. As regards the Joint Action on Chronic Diseases referred to, this focuses on horizontal aspects of chronic diseases without being disease-specific.

The new Health Programme 2014-2020 will be adopted in spring 2014 and will be implemented on the basis of annual work plans.

Horizon 2020, the new EU programme for research and innovation (2014-2020) ([2]), will offer further funding opportunities for research in this area, in particular through the societal challenge 'Health, demographic change and well-being'. Information on current funding opportunities can be obtained at the EC Research and Innovation Participant Portal ([3]).

In the field of health and safety at work the Commission has commissioned a study on Mental Health in the Workplace. The study will: assess EU legal framework and efficiency of its implementation; develop a range of scenarios helping to consider policy options; prepare a guidance document for employers and workers. The study will also look at equality legislation and mental health at the workplace, especially in relation to non-discrimination on the grounds of health or disability. The finalisation of the report is expected by the 2nd quarter of 2014.

([1]) http://www.mentalhealthandwellbeing.eu/#
([2]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0809:FIN:EN:PDF
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/index.html

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014153/13
alla Commissione
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(16 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Misteriosa ecatombe di tartarughe marine comuni (Caretta caretta) spiaggiate lungo alcune coste italiane del mar Adriatico

Nei mesi di ottobre e novembre 2013 si è verificata una vera e propria ecatombe di tartarughe marine comuni (Caretta caretta) nel mar Adriatico: più di 200 esemplari sono stati rinvenuti soprattutto lungo le coste dell'Emilia-Romagna e in misura minore in quelle del Friuli-Venezia Giulia e delle Marche ([1]). Trattasi di un fenomeno del tutto anomalo e preoccupante sia per l'elevato numero di esemplari (sei volte superiore rispetto alla media) sia per il ristretto lasso di tempo e la fascia circoscritta di territorio in cui ciò si è verificato. Gli animali morti sono stati trasportati dalle correnti marine sulle spiagge, in molti casi in avanzato stato di decomposizione.

Le cause del fenomeno rimangono ancora ignote e sono oggetto di studio da parte di un gruppo di esperti che si riunisce presso l'Istituto di Veterinaria dell'Università degli Studi di Padova ([2]). Parte dei decessi può essere sicuramente ricollegato alla pesca: le tartarughe rimangono impigliate nelle reti dei pescatori e, una volta liberate, sono incapaci di sopravvivere a causa delle lesioni subìte.

Secondo Sauro Pari, Presidente della Fondazione Cetacea Onlus di Riccione, infatti, si rende necessario sperimentare i sistemi di pesca previsti nel contesto del programma UE «Life +», con reti studiate per consentire alle tartarughe di uscire indenni e altresì opportuno realizzare un marchio comunitario di qualità da assegnarsi al prodotto pescato attraverso tali metodi ([3]). Il sorprendente numero di esemplari morti, tuttavia, porta a ritenere che accanto all'attività di pesca abbiano operato una o più concause. Alcuni esami necrologici effettuati hanno riscontrato, in particolare in alcuni esemplari deceduti, la totale assenza di flora batterica intestinale ([4]). Tale circostanza potrebbe essere collegata a esempio all'agente antibiotico utilizzato per abbattere le schiume organiche prodotte nel mar Adriatico dall'attività del rigassificatore di Porto Viro in provincia di Rovigo (in merito al quale si rinvia all'interrogazione n. E- 012367/2013 presentata dallo scrivente). Si ricorda, infine, che nell'Adriatico è in corso un'attività di ricerca subacquea di idrocarburi che potrebbe perturbare la fauna marina (come descritto nell'interrogazione n. E- 13366/2013 presentata sempre dal sottoscritto).

Sulla base di quanto esposto, può la Commissione riferire:

1. se è a conoscenza del fenomeno descritto;

2. se intende approfondirne le cause, prendendo contatto con le autorità competenti;

3. in quali modi, nel contesto del programma UE «Life +» o attraverso altre iniziative, ritiene che l'UE debba sostenere i metodi di pesca rispettosi della fauna marina?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(26 febbraio 2014)

La Commissione è a conoscenza dei casi anomali di mortalità di tartarughe marine registrati tra ottobre e novembre 2013 nel mar Adriatico. La Commissione è altresì a conoscenza di un fenomeno analogo nelle acque al largo dell'Egitto segnalato il 20 dicembre 2013 da Medasset (http://medasset.org/).

La Commissione è in contatto con il Centro di attività regionale della convenzione di Barcellona responsabile per la biodiversità (SPA/RAC), che sta monitorando l'attuazione di un piano d'azione a favore delle tartarughe marine del Mediterraneo.

Per ridurre le catture accessorie di specie non commerciali, in particolare delle specie protette, dovrebbero essere sviluppati metodi di pesca più selettivi. La riduzione dell'impatto delle attività di pesca sull'ambiente marino è uno degli elementi fondamentali della nuova politica comune della pesca (regolamento (UE) n. 1380/2013) ([5]). Nell'ambito di questo nuovo quadro si prevede che tecniche più efficaci permetteranno di garantire la conservazione delle tartarughe marine e di altre componenti della biodiversità del Mediterraneo.

([1]) Non vi è notizia, invece, di ritrovamenti lungo le coste del Veneto, e nemmeno in Croazia e Slovenia.
([2]) Si tratta dell'unità operativa del progetto «Netcet», il network di monitoraggio di cetacei e tartarughe, che riunisce gli esperti delle regioni del Friuli-Venezia Giulia, del Veneto e dell'Emilia Romagna e di Slovenia, Croazia, Montenegro e Albania.
([3]) La Fondazione Cetacea Onlus di Riccione collabora con alcuni pescatori, che stanno sperimentando tali sistemi alternativi.
([4]) Secondo quanto contenuto nei referti n. 56273-56274-56275-56284-56300-56301-56344-56365-56366-56367 del 15.11.2013 del Dipartimento di Biomedicina Comparata e Alimentazione dell'Università degli Studi di Padova.
([5]) GU L 354 del 28.12.2013.

Inoltre, numerosi progetti LIFE, oltre a prevedere iniziative di sensibilizzazione rivolte ai pescatori, hanno già dimostrato che sono disponibili metodi di pesca alternativi meno dannosi per le specie protette.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014153/13
to the Commission
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(16 December 2013)

Subject: Large number of dead loggerhead sea turtles (Caretta caretta) mysteriously washed up along the Italian Adriatic coast

In October and November 2013, a huge number of loggerhead sea turtles (*Caretta caretta*) died in the Adriatic Sea; over 200 turtles were found, mainly along the coast of Emilia-Romagna and, to a lesser extent, along the coasts of Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Marche ([1]). This is a highly unusual and worrying phenomenon, both in terms of the high number of dead turtles (six times the average) and the short period of time and the small geographical area in which the phenomenon occurred. The dead animals had been carried by sea currents on to the beaches, and were in many cases in an advanced state of decomposition.

The causes of the phenomenon are still unknown and an investigation is being carried out by a group of experts, meeting at the Veterinary Institute of the University of Padua ([2]). Some of the deaths may, of course, be connected to fishing: turtles get tangled up in fishermen's nets and, once freed, are unable to survive because of the injuries they have suffered.

According to Sauro Pari, President of the non-profit organisation Fondazione Cetacea, based in Riccione, Italy, there is a need to test the fisheries systems laid down in the EU 'Life +' programme, with nets designed to allow turtles to escape unharmed, and it would also be a good idea to create an EU quality mark to be affixed to products that are caught using these methods ([3]). The alarming number of dead turtles, however, points to the possibility that one or more contributing factors have been at play, in addition to fishing activity. Post-mortem examinations have revealed, in some of the dead turtles in particular, a total absence of gut flora ([4]). This fact could be connected, for example, to the antibiotic used to reduce the organic foam produced in the Adriatic sea by the Porto Viro regasification plant in Rovigo province (on this subject, see my Question E-012367/2013). Finally, I would like to point out that underwater prospecting for hydrocarbons is taking place in the Adriatic, which could adversely affect marine fauna (as described in my Question E-13366/2013).

1. Is the Commission aware of the phenomenon described above?

2. Does it intend to examine the causes in more detail, by contacting the relevant authorities?

3. In what ways, within the framework of the EU 'Life +' programme or through other initiatives, does the Commission believe the EU ought to support fishing methods that are not damaging to marine fauna?

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

The Commission is aware of the unusual mortality of loggerhead sea turtles that occurred in the Adriatic Sea in October and November 2013. Moreover, the Commission is also aware of another similar event in the waters off Egypt announced on 20 December 2013 by Medasset (http://medasset.org/).

The Commission is in contact with the Regional Activity Centre of the Barcelona Convention dealing with biodiversity (SPA/RAC), which is overseeing the implementation of an action plan for Mediterranean sea turtles.

More selective fishing methods should be developed in order to reduce by-catch of non-commercial species, particularly protected species. Reducing the impact of fisheries activities on the marine environment is one of the most important features of the newly adopted Common Fisheries Policy (EU No 1380/2013 ([5])). Within this new framework it is expected that more effective technical measures will ensure the conservation of the Mediterranean turtles and other biodiversity components.

Moreover, several LIFE projects have demonstrated that alternative fishing methods are available that are less harmful for protected species and include awareness-raising activities for fishermen.

([1]) However, there are no reports of any such finds along the Veneto coast, or in Croatia or Slovenia.

([2]) This is the operational unit of the Netcet project. Netcet is the network for monitoring cetaceans and sea turtles, which brings together experts from the regions of Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Veneto and Emilia Romagna, as well as from Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro and Albania.

([3]) The non-profit Fondazione Cetacea in Riccione is working with some fishermen, who are testing these alternative systems.

([4]) According to reports Nos 56273-56274-56275-56284-56300-56301-56344-56365-56366-56367 of 15.11.2013 by the Department of Comparative Biomedicine and Food Science of the University of Padua.

([5]) OJ L 354, 28.12.2013.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-014154/13
aan de Commissie
Laurence J. A. J. Stassen (NI)
(16 december 2013)

Betreft: Kinderhuwelijken in Turkije

Prinses Mabel van Oranje-Nassau heeft in haar hoedanigheid van initiatiefnemer en voorzitter van „Girls Not Brides: The Global Partnership to End Child Marriage" Istanbul bezocht. Zij stelt dat kinderhuwelijken in Turkije een feit, maar tegelijkertijd een taboe zijn: 28% van de Turkse huwelijken betreft kinderhuwelijken.

1. Is het de Commissie bekend dat er in Turkije kinderhuwelijken worden gesloten ([1])?

2. Hoe reageert de Commissie op de stelling dat 28% van de Turkse huwelijken kinderhuwelijken betreft?

In antwoord op schriftelijke vraag E-007727/2012 schrijft hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter Ashton namens de Commissie: „Kinderhuwelijken zijn een schending van de mensenrechten van meisjes, omdat zij zelf geen stem krijgen bij de keuze van de huwelijksleeftijd en de huwelijkspartner. Kinderhuwelijken zijn in strijd met de grondrechten die door verschillende internationale verdragen worden erkend. Met name wordt het recht om vrij en volledig in te stemmen met een huwelijk erkend in de universele verklaring van de rechten van de mens. In artikel 16 van het Verdrag inzake de uitbanning van alle vormen van discriminatie van vrouwen (CEDAW) wordt het recht op bescherming tegen kinderhuwelijken genoemd. Huwelijken van kinderen zijn ook onverenigbaar met het VN-Verdrag inzake de rechten van het kind en de twee facultatieve protocollen daarbij".

3. Deelt de Commissie aldus de mening dat in Turkije, door het sluiten van kinderhuwelijken, de mensenrechten worden geschonden?

4. Welke gevolgen hebben de in Turkije gesloten kinderhuwelijken voor de toetredingsonderhandelingen? Deelt de Commissie de mening dat de schending van de mensenrechten, door kinderhuwelijken te sluiten, de toetredingsonderhandelingen volstrekt ongepast maakt? Is de Commissie aldus voornemens de toetredingsonderhandelingen te beëindigen? Zo neen, waarom niet?

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-014319/13
aan de Commissie
Philip Claeys (NI)
(18 december 2013)

Betreft: Grootschalig probleem van huwelijken met minderjarige meisjes in Turkije

De Nederlandse prinses Mabel, die de internationale organisatie „Girls not Brides" voorzit, bracht onlangs een bezoek aan Turkije ([2]), waar ze het taboe van de kinderhuwelijken aankaartte. Volgens haar gegevens, die ook gedeeld worden door Unicef en de Sabancı Foundation, is in 28% van de huwelijken in Turkije een minderjarig meisje betrokken. In de oostelijke en zuidoostelijke gebieden van Turkije loopt dat cijfer op tot 41%.

Het Turkse parlement stelde in 2009 een rapport op over het probleem, maar verder is er weinig of niets gebeurd.

Kaartte de Commissie dit probleem al aan bij de Turkse regering? Zo ja, wat waren de conclusies? Zo neen, waarom niet?

Is het grootschalig (meestal gearrangeerd en vaak zelfs geforceerd) uithuwelijken van minderjarige meisjes, en het gebrek aan maatregelen vanwege de Turkse regering, volgens de Commissie in overeenstemming met de normen en waarden vervat in de criteria van Kopenhagen en het acquis communautaire?

Antwoord van de heer Füle namens de Commissie
(14 februari 2014)

De Commissie is zich bewust van het probleem dat door het geachte Parlementslid aan de orde is gesteld en van de gegevens in kwestie.

De Commissie verwijst het geachte Parlementslid naar haar antwoord op de parlementaire vraag P-008130/2011 ([3]).

([1]) http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/child-marriage-a-taboo-for-turkey-dutch-princess-says.aspx?pageID=238&nID=59488&NewsCatID=338.
([2]) http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/PrintNews.aspx?PageID=383&NID=59488.
([3]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

Zoals zij heeft aangegeven in haar voortgangsverslag over Turkije van 2013 ([4]), merkt de Commissie op dat de kwestie van vroegtijdige en gedwongen huwelijken een ernstig probleem blijft. Als kandidaat voor toetreding tot de EU moet Turkije verdere aanhoudende inspanningen verrichten om wetgeving met betrekking tot de rechten van de vrouw in de praktijk om te zetten, waaronder het aanpakken van het probleem van vroegtijdige en gedwongen huwelijken.

([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/strategy-and-progress-report/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014154/13
to the Commission
Laurence J.A.J. Stassen (NI)
(16 December 2013)

Subject: Child marriage in Turkey

In her capacity as founder and chair of 'Girls Not Brides: The Global Partnership to End Child Marriage', Princess Mabel of Orange-Nassau recently visited Istanbul. She says that child marriage is a fact in Turkey, but that it remains taboo: 28% of all marriages in Turkey are child marriage.

1. Is the Commission aware that child marriages are taking place in Turkey ([1])?

2. What is the Commission's reaction to the claim that 28% of Turkish marriages are child marriages?

In answer to Written Question E-007727/2012, High Representative/Vice-President Ashton wrote, on behalf of the Commission, that 'Child marriage violates girls' human rights by excluding them from decisions regarding the timing of marriage and choice of spouse. It goes against fundamental rights recognised by several international instruments. In particular, the right to free and full consent to marriage is recognised in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Convention on the elimination of all Forms of discrimination against Women (CEDAW) also mentions, in Article 16, the right to protection from child marriage. Child marriage is also incompatible with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols'.

3. Does the Commission thus agree that, as a result of child marriages being conducted in Turkey, human rights are being violated there?

4. What consequences will the child marriages conducted in Turkey have for its accession negotiations? Does the Commission share the view that the violation of human rights by conducting child marriages renders the accession negotiations completely inappropriate? Does the Commission therefore intend to terminate the accession negotiations? If not, why not?

Question for written answer E-014319/13
to the Commission
Philip Claeys (NI)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Major problem of marriages involving underage girls in Turkey

Princess Mabel of the Netherlands, who chairs the international organisation 'Girls Not Brides' recently visited Turkey ([2]), where she broached the taboo issue of child marriage. According to her data, which have also been shared by UNICEF and the Sabancı Foundation, 28% of marriages in Turkey involve an underage girl. In the eastern and south-eastern parts of the country, that figure rises to 41%.

The Turkish Parliament produced a report on the issue in 2009, but little else has happened.

Has the Commission brought up this issue with the Turkish Government? If so, what were the conclusions? If not, why not?

Does the Commission believe that the large-scale (mostly arranged and often even forced) marrying off of underage girls and the lack of measures to tackle this on the part of the Turkish Government are in line with the standards and conditions set out in the Copenhagen criteria and the *acquis communautaire*?

Joint answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(14 February 2014)

The Commission is aware of the problem raised by the Honourable Members and of the data in question.

([1]) http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/child-marriage-a-taboo-for-turkey-dutch-princess-says.aspx?pageID=238&nID=59488&NewsCatID=338
([2]) http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/PrintNews.aspx?PageID=383&NID=59488

The Commission refers the Honourable Member to its answer given to Parliamentary Question P-008130/2011 ([3]).

As indicated in its 2013 Progress Report on Turkey ([4]), the Commission notes that the issue of early and forced marriages remains a serious concern. As a candidate country for EU accession, Turkey needs to make further sustained efforts to turn legislation into reality as regards women's rights, including tackling early and forced marriages.

([3]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/strategy-and-progress-report/index_en.htm

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-014155/13
adresată Comisiei
Elena Băsescu (PPE)
(16 decembrie 2013)

Subiect: Proiectul prioritar nr. 7 din cadrul rețelei TEN-T

Recent, Guvernul României a făcut public un plan de dezvoltare a infrastructurii rutiere, care definește prioritățile în privința construcției de autostrăzi din România.

Din documentul prezentat lipsește un tronson care a fost inclus anterior în toate proiectele similare la nivel național: autostrada Pitești-Sibiu. Acest tronson de autostradă este inclus, de asemenea, în proiectul prioritar nr. 7 din cadrul rețelei centrale TEN-T, ceea ce înseamnă că ar putea fi finanțat din fonduri europene.

Conform analizelor făcute până în prezent, atât la nivel național, cât și european, utilitatea acestui tronson nu poate fi pusă în discuție, motiv pentru care a fost inclus în cadrul proiectului prioritar nr. 7. Mai mult, eliminarea proiectului de pe lista de priorități a Guvernului a generat reacții negative la nivelul unor producători importanți, care ar fi direct afectați de o astfel de decizie. De asemenea, prin renunțarea la acest proiect există riscul ca întregul coridor din care face parte segmentul Pitești-Sibiu să fie afectat.

Autoritățile de la București au afirmat că se dorește modificarea acestui proiect prioritar, urmând a se iniția discuții cu reprezentanți ai Comisiei Europene în acest sens. Poate informa Comisia cu privire la posibilitatea de a modifica proiectul prioritar nr. 7, prin înlocuirea tronsonului Pitești-Sibiu cu o altă secțiune de autostradă, și disponibilitatea de a face acest lucru?

În ce măsură există o analiză economică a costurilor pe care le-ar implica o astfel de decizie de renunțare la construcția unui tronson inclus într-un proiect prioritar?

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

Tronsonul Sibiu-Pitești este situat pe coridorul rețelei centrale Rin-Dunăre, astfel cum este definit prin noile regulamente privind orientările TEN-T și Mecanismul pentru interconectarea Europei (MIE) ([1]).

Tronsonul Sibiu-Pitești a fost inclus în rețeaua centrală, pe baza unei metodologii convenite, ca o legătură corespunzătoare între două „noduri”, și anume Timișoara și București.

În conformitate cu dispozițiile regulamentelor menționate anterior, România are obligația de a stabili o legătură adecvată între Sibiu și Pitești până în 2030.

Modificarea rețelei centrale sau unui coridor al rețelei centrale, astfel cum a sugerat distinsul membru, ar necesita o modificare a regulamentului privind noile orientări TEN-T.

Autoritățile române competente sunt responsabile cu selectarea și punerea în aplicare a unui proiect și cu evaluarea oricărui impact financiar al alegerilor făcute în acest sens.

([1]) Regulamentul (UE) nr. 1315/2013 al Parlamentului European și al Consiliului din 11 decembrie 2013 privind orientările Uniunii pentru dezvoltarea rețelei transeuropene de transport și de abrogare a Deciziei nr. 661/2010/UE, JO L 348, 20/12/2013 și Regulamentul (UE) nr. 1316/2013 al Parlamentului European și al Consiliului din 11 decembrie 2013 de instituire a Mecanismului pentru Interconectarea Europei, de modificare a Regulamentului (UE) nr. 913/2010 și de abrogare a Regulamentului (CE) nr. 680/2007 și (CE) nr. 67/2010, JO L 348, 20/12/2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014155/13
to the Commission
Elena Băsescu (PPE)
(16 December 2013)

Subject: Priority Project 7 in TEN-T network

The Romanian Government recently unveiled a plan for developing the road infrastructure, which defines the priorities in terms of motorway construction in Romania.

The document submitted does not feature a section which was previously included in all similar national projects: the Pitești-Sibiu motorway. This motorway section is also included in Priority Project 7 as part of the central TEN-T network, which means that it could have been financed using European funds.

Based on both national and European analyses carried out so far, there can be no doubt about the benefit of this section, which is why it was included as part of Priority Project 7. Furthermore, the project's removal from the government's list of priorities has provoked adverse reactions from some major manufacturers which would be directly affected by such a decision. There is also the risk in abandoning this project of a knock-on effect for the whole corridor which includes the Pitești-Sibiu section.

The authorities in Bucharest have confirmed that modifications are intended to be made to this priority project, with discussions due to start on this matter with representatives from the Commission. Can the Commission advise about the possibility of a modification to Priority Project 7 involving the replacement of the Pitești-Sibiu section with another motorway section, and about the willingness to do this?

To what extent is there a financial analysis available of the costs which would be incurred by such a decision to abandon the construction of a section included in a priority project?

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

The section Sibiu-Pitesti is situated on the Core Network Corridor Rhine-Danube, as defined by the new Regulations on the TEN-T Guidelines and the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) ([1]).

The section Sibiu-Pitesti has been included on the Core network, based on an agreed methodology, as an appropriate connection between two 'nodes', namely Timisoara and Bucharest.

According to the provisions of the abovementioned Regulations, Romania has the obligation to establish a proper connection between Sibiu and Pitesti by 2030.

Changing the Core Network or a Core Network Corridor as suggested by the Honourable Member would require an amendment to the regulation of the new TEN-T guidelines.

The competent Romanian authorities are responsible for the selection and the implementation of a project and for the evaluation of any financial impact of the choices made in this regard.

([1]) Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network and repealing Decision No 661/2010/EU, OJ L 348, 20/12/2013 and 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.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse P-014156/13
til Kommissionen
Morten Løkkegaard (ALDE)
(16. december 2013)

Om: EU's udbudsregler og statsstøtteregler

Den danske avis Børsen bragte d. 26. november 2013 en artikel om barrierer for det indre marked i form af overtrædelse af EU's udbudsregler og statsstøtteregler.

Artiklen fremhæver i den forbindelse en række klagesager fra Tyskland, Østrig og Spanien, som er indbragt for DG Markt og DG Comp. De pågældende sager har sagsnumre: SA.37182(2013/CP) og SA.37061(2013/CP).

Overholdelse af EU's udbudsregler og statsstøtteregler har stor principiel betydning for nedbrydelse af markedsbarrierer i EU og for udviklingen af EU's indre marked.

Jeg skal derfor bede Kommissionen oplyse, hvorvidt man oplever flere klager over brud på disse regler, samt om eventuelle brud på reglerne særligt vedrører enkelte medlemsstater som anført i den nævnte avisartikel?

Desuden vil jeg gerne høre, hvornår Kommissionen forventer at træffe en afgørelse i de nævnte sager?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Joaquin Almunia
(27. januar 2014)

Kommissionen bekræfter, at den har indledt to sager på grundlag af en klage, og at de er registreret som SA.37182 (2013/CP) og SA.37061 (2013/CP). Det hævdes i klagen, at reglerne for offentlige indkøb og statsstøtte er blevet overtrådt af de offentlige myndigheder i Tyskland og Østrig inden for akut medicinsk assistance. Kommissionen har indtil videre ikke modtaget yderligere klager over brud på reglerne for offentlige indkøb og/eller statsstøtte inden for sektoren for akut medicinsk assistance.

Derudover undersøger Kommissionens tjenestegrene for øjeblikket en klage over en påstået overtrædelse af EU's regler for offentlige indkøb i Spanien.

Alle sagerne undersøges for øjeblikket og er derfor omfattet af reglerne om fortrolighed.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-014156/13
to the Commission
Morten Løkkegaard (ALDE)
(16 December 2013)

Subject: EU rules on procurement and state aid

On 26 November 2013, the Danish newspaper '*Børsen*' published an article on barriers to the internal market in the form of breaches of the EU's rules on procurement and state aid.

The article highlights a number of complaints from Germany, Austria and Spain which have been submitted to DG Markt and DG Comp. These cases have been given case numbers SA.37182 (2013/CP) and SA.37061 (2013/CP).

Compliance with EU rules on procurement and state aid is of fundamental importance for dismantling market barriers in the EU and for the development of the EU internal market.

Can the Commission therefore say whether more complaints are being received concerning breaches of those rules, and whether any such breaches specifically relate to individual Member States, as stated in the aforementioned newspaper article?

Can the Commission also say when it expects to reach a decision on the above cases?

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

The Commission confirms that it opened two cases, registered as SA.37182 (2013/CP) and SA.37061 (2013/CP), on the basis of a complaint. The complaint alleges violations of public procurement and state aid rules by public authorities in Germany and Austria in the emergency medical services sector. The Commission has not, until now, received further complaints regarding breaches of public procurement and / or state aid rules in the emergency medical services sector.

Moreover, based on a complaint, the Commission services are currently investigating an alleged violation of EU public procurement rules in Spain.

The analysis in all those cases is ongoing and therefore rules on confidentiality apply.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-014157/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Derek Vaughan (S&D)
(16 December 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Bangladesh

With regard to the upcoming elections in Bangladesh, what action is the European Union taking to ensure free and fair elections in the country?

Furthermore, to what extent has the European Union been involved in discussions regarding political prisoners in Bangladesh, and can the High Representative provide any information on this issue?

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

The EU has been following the complex political and security situation in Bangladesh very closely and with great concern. Along with other partners, we had invited the parties to engage in a constructive dialogue in view of finding an acceptable arrangement for holding peaceful, inclusive, transparent and credible elections. Unfortunately the elections held on 5 January were one-sided elections and accompanied by violence. The EU had announced that it would not be in a position to observe such elections. HR/VP declaration on behalf of the EU was issued on 9 January calling for 'genuine dialogue' to create conditions for holding 'transparent, inclusive and credible' elections.

We have also expressed our concerns, both in our bilateral contacts with the Bangladeshi authorities as well as in public, about the arrest of politicians and human rights defenders. We continue to urge Bangladesh to respect human rights and democratic principles, and to ensure full respect for the rights of detainees.

We will continue, along with other international partners, to follow the situation in Bangladesh closely and to urge all parties to find a constructive way out of the current stalemate to ensure a democratic future for the country.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-014158/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(16 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Ρύπανση από εξασθενές χρώμιο στα Οινόφυτα και μεταφορά βιομηχανικών αποβλήτων στον βιολογικό καθαρισμό λυμάτων της Αθήνας

Το πρόβλημα της ρύπανσης του ποταμού Ασωπού στον δήμο Οινοφύτων είναι γνωστό από χρόνια. Η Ελλάδα έχει καταδικαστεί από το Ευρωπαϊκό Δικαστήριο για την μη διαχείριση των επικίνδυνων αποβλήτων και για την μη εφαρμογή της Οδηγίας 60/2000/ΕΚ (Οδηγία Πλαίσιο για τα Ύδατα). Πρόσφατα, για την ρύπανση του Ασωπού με εξασθενές χρώμιο, καταδικάστηκε και από την Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή Κοινωνικών Δικαιωμάτων (ΕΕΚΔ) του Συμβουλίου της Ευρώπης.

Τον Απρίλιο του 2013, το ΙΓΜΕΜ (Ινστιτούτο Γεωλογικών και Μεταλλευτικών Ερευνών και Μελετών) εκπόνησε υδρογεωλογική και υδροχημική αξιολόγηση, η οποία κατέληξε στο συμπέρασμα ότι η ρύπανση προέρχεται από άμεση απόρριψη αποβλήτων από συγκεκριμένες βιομηχανίες. Επίσης, τον Ιούλιο του 2013, το Εθνικό Μετσόβιο Πολυτεχνείο (ΕΜΠ), στα πλαίσια του προγράμματος LIFE-CHARM, διαπίστωσε πολύ υψηλές συγκεντρώσεις του εξασθενούς χρωμίου που φτάνουν ως και 7 200 μg/L (ppb), οι οποίες είναι αποτέλεσμα της δράσης συγκεκριμένων βιομηχανικών εγκαταστάσεων. Σημειώνουμε ότι και οι δυο αυτές μελέτες-αξιολογήσεις χαρακτηρίστηκαν περιέργως εμπιστευτικές, παρά την μεγάλη σημασία τους για την δημόσια υγεία και την προστασία του περιβάλλοντος.

Σύμφωνα με δημοσιεύματα του Ελληνικού Τύπου, το Υπουργείο Περιβάλλοντος συζητεί την μεταφορά βιομηχανικών αποβλήτων από την βιομηχανική περιοχή του Ασωπού, με βυτιοφόρα στο Κέντρο Επεξεργασίας Λυμάτων (ΚΕΛ) της ΕΥΔΑΠ στην Μεταμόρφωση και από εκεί, μέσω του δικτύου αποχέτευσης, στον βιολογικό καθαρισμό της Ψυτάλλειας!! Σημειώνουμε ότι η επιλογή μιας τέτοιας λύσης είναι παράνομη με βάση την οδηγία 2008/98 (άρθρα 7 και 18), αφού επέρχεται αραίωση των επιβαρυνόμενων με βαρέα μέταλλα αποβλήτων με τα λύματα του λεκανοπεδίου της Αττικής στο ΚΕΛ Ψυτάλλειας, που έχει σχεδιαστεί για να δέχεται μόνο αστικά λύματα και προσομοιάζοντα με αυτά. Τέλος, η μεταφορά αυτών με βυτιοφόρα σε απόσταση μεγαλύτερη των 50 χλμ, δημιουργεί σοβαρά ερωτηματικά ως προς την ασφάλεια και προστασία του περιβάλλοντος, την εφαρμογή της αρχής της εγγύτητας και την συνεισφορά του εγχειρήματος στην επιβάρυνση της ατμόσφαιρας με ρύπους. Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

Κρίνεται επαρκής η πρόοδος που έχει σημειωθεί ως προς την προστασία του ποταμού Ασωπού και της διαχείρισης βιομηχανικών αποβλήτων στην Ελλάδα;

Γνωρίζει η Επιτροπή την πρόθεση της ελληνικής κυβέρνησης για μεταφορά βιομηχανικών αποβλήτων από τα Οινόφυτα στο ΚΕΛ Ψυτάλλειας (και άρα αραίωσή τους); Θα ήταν κάτι τέτοια σύννομο με το κοινοτικό δίκαιο;

Απάντηση του κ. Potočnik εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(20 Φεβρουαρίου 2014)

Η Επιτροπή γνωρίζει ότι οι προκλήσεις που αντιμετωπίζει η Ελλάδα όσον αφορά τον ποταμό Ασωπό προέκυψαν λόγω μόλυνσης επί μακρό χρονικό διάστημα. Πρόσφατα η Ελλάδα εισήγαγε μέτρα για την αντιμετώπιση της ρύπανσης του εν λόγω ποταμού και την καθιέρωση κατάλληλης διαχείρισης όλων των επικίνδυνων αποβλήτων. Είναι πολύ νωρίς για να αξιολογηθεί η αποτελεσματικότητά τους. Η Επιτροπή παρακολουθεί εκ του σύνεγγυς το θέμα αυτό και θα ζητήσει από τις ελληνικές αρχές περισσότερες πληροφορίες σχετικά με τη μεταφορά των βιομηχανικών αποβλήτων. Επιπλέον, η Επιτροπή αξιολογεί επί του παρόντος τις πληροφορίες που περιλαμβάνονται στα πρώτα σχέδια διαχείρισης της λεκάνης απορροής ποταμών που υπέβαλε πρόσφατα η Ελλάδα στην Επιτροπή. Κατά την αξιολόγηση η Επιτροπή θα δώσει ιδιαίτερη προσοχή στην αναφερόμενη κατάσταση και στα μέτρα που προβλέπονται για τον ποταμό Ασωπό.

Επιπλέον, η Επιτροπή επισημαίνει ότι τα απόβλητα που έχουν ταξινομηθεί ως επικίνδυνα πρέπει να μεταφέρονται σύμφωνα με τις τεχνικές και διοικητικές διατάξεις της οδηγίας 2008/68/ΕΚ ([1]) σχετικά με τις εσωτερικές μεταφορές επικίνδυνων εμπορευμάτων. Οι ελληνικές αρχές δεσμεύονται να εξασφαλίζουν την τήρηση των διατάξεων αυτών.

([1]) Οδηγία 2008/68/ΕΚ του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου και του Συμβουλίου, της 24ης Σεπτεμβρίου 2008, σχετικά με τις εσωτερικές μεταφορές επικίνδυνων εμπορευμάτων (ΕΕ L 260 της 30.9.2008).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014158/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(16 December 2013)

Subject: Pollution from depleted chromium in Oinofyta and transportation of industrial wastewater to biological treatment plant in Athens

The problem of pollution of the River Asopos in the Municipality of Oinofyta has been in the news for years. Greece has been convicted by the Court of Justice for failing to manage hazardous waste and for failing to apply Directive 60/2000/EC (Water Framework Directive). It was also convicted recently by the European Committee of Social Rights of the Council of Europe for pollution of the River Asopos with depleted chromium.

In April 2013, the Institute of Geology and Mineral Exploration prepared a hydrogeological and hydrochemical assessment, which concluded that the pollution had been caused by direct disposal of waste by certain industrial plants. Similarly, in July 2013, within the framework of the LIFE-CHARM programme, the National Technical University of Athens identified very high concentrations of depleted chromium of up to 7200 μg/L (ppb), caused by action by certain industrial plants. Curiously, both those studies/assessments were classified as confidential, despite their major importance in terms of public health and environmental protection.

According to articles in the Greek press, the Ministry of the Environment is discussing the transportation of industrial waste by tanker lorry from the industrial region of Asopos to the waste treatment centre of the Athens Water Supply and Wastewater Company in Metamorphosis and from there, via the wastewater system, to the biological treatment plant in Psytalleia. The choice of such a solution is unlawful based on Directive 2008/98/EC (Articles 7 and 18), as waste polluted with heavy metals is mixed with and treated as wastewater from the Attica basin in the Psytalleia waste treatment centre, which is designed for urban waste only. Finally, transportation of that waste by tanker lorry over distances of over 50 km gives rise to serious concerns in terms of environmental safety and protection, application of the guarantee principle and the additional atmospheric pollution caused by the exercise. In view of the above, will the Commission say:

Does it consider that sufficient progress has been made in terms of protection of the River Asopos and industrial waste management in Greece?

Does the Commission know that the Greek Government intends to transport industrial waste from Oinofyta to the Psytalleia waste treatment plant (and thus mix it)? Is this compatible with Community law?

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

The Commission knows that the challenges faced by Greece as regards the River Asopos have arisen as a result of contamination over an extended period. Greece has recently introduced measures to tackle the pollution of this river and to establish an adequate management for all hazardous waste. It is too early to assess their effectiveness. The Commission is following this issue closely and will ask the Greek authorities for more information on its transport of industrial waste. Moreover, the Commission is currently assessing the information included in Greece's first River Basin Management Plans, recently submitted to the Commission. The Commission will pay particular attention in its assessment to the status reported and the measures proposed for the River Asopos.

Furthermore, the Commission points out that waste classified as a dangerous good must be carried in conformity with the technical and administrative provisions of Directive 2008/68/EC ([1]) on the inland transport of dangerous goods. The Greek authorities are bound to ensure that these provisions are complied with.

([1]) Directive 2008/68/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 September 2008 on the inland transport of dangerous goods OJ L 260, 30.9.2008.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-014160/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Stavrakakis (S&D)
(16 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Επίπεδο πληρωμών στις 30 Νοεμβρίου 2013

Μετά από την έγκριση του σχεδίου διορθωτικού προϋπολογισμού αριθ. 6/2012, η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή, κατόπιν αιτήματος της αρμόδιας για τον προϋπολογισμό αρχής, υπέβαλε το σχέδιο διορθωτικού προϋπολογισμού αριθ. 2/2013, ύψους 11,2 δισ. ευρώ, ώστε να γίνει δυνατή η κάλυψη όλων των νόμιμων υποχρεώσεων πληρωμών οι οποίες εκκρεμούσαν στα τέλη του 2012, καθώς και εκείνων που προκύπτουν πριν από το τέλος του 2013, εντός του προϋπολογισμού του τρέχοντος έτους.

Κατά τη συνεδρίαση του Συμβουλίου Ecofin της 14ης Μαΐου 2013, επιτεύχθηκε πολιτική συμφωνία για την παροχή της επιπρόσθετης χρηματοδότησης για τον προϋπολογισμό του 2013 σε δύο δόσεις, με την πρώτη να ανέρχεται σε 7,3 δισ. ευρώ, ενώ οι υπουργοί δεσμεύθηκαν να επανέλθουν στο θέμα αργότερα εντός του έτους. Ωστόσο, δεν υπήρξε επίσημη δέσμευση για το υπολειπόμενο ποσό των 3,9 δισεκατομμυρίων του σχεδίου διορθωτικού προϋπολογισμού 2/2013.

Μετά από την πολιτική συμφωνία της 27ης Ιουνίου 2013 που επιτεύχθηκε από τα θεσμικά όργανα σχετικά με το ΠΔΠ 2014-2020, το Συμβούλιο Ecofin ενέκρινε στις 9 Ιουλίου 2013 τη συμπληρωματική χρηματοδότηση ύψους 7,3 δισεκατομμυρίων για τον προϋπολογισμό του 2013 και δεσμεύθηκε να λάβει όλα τα απαραίτητα πρόσθετα μέτρα για να διασφαλισθεί η πλήρης τήρηση των υποχρεώσεων της Ένωσης για το 2013. Στο πλαίσιο αυτό, βάσει πρότασης που πρόκειται να υποβάλει η Επιτροπή στις αρχές του φθινοπώρου, με βάση τις πιο πρόσφατες επικαιροποιημένες εκτιμήσεις όσον αφορά τις πιστώσεις πληρωμών, το Συμβούλιο δεσμεύεται να αποφασίσει, χωρίς καθυστέρηση, σχετικά με πρόσθετο σχέδιο διορθωτικού προϋπολογισμού, προκειμένου να αποφευχθούν οποιεσδήποτε ελλείψεις στις αιτιολογημένες πιστώσεις πληρωμών. Στις 26 Σεπτεμβρίου η Επιτροπή κατέθεσε το σχέδιο διορθωτικού προϋπολογισμού αριθ. 8/2013 για τα υπόλοιπα 3,9 δισ. ευρώ. Η έγκριση του σχεδίου διορθωτικού προϋπολογισμού αριθ. 8/2013 και του σχεδίου διορθωτικού προϋπολογισμού αριθ. 9/2013 (400,5 εκατομμύρια για την κινητοποίηση του Ταμείου Αλληλεγγύης της ΕΕ) αποτέλεσε μέρος των εργασιών της επιτροπής συνδιαλλαγής για τον προϋπολογισμό του 2014. Τόσο τα δύο αυτά σχέδια προϋπολογισμού όσο και ο προϋπολογισμός της ΕΕ για το 2014 εγκρίθηκαν από τη σύνοδο ολομέλειας του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου τον Νοέμβριο του 2013.

Λαμβάνοντας υπόψη όλα όσα εκτέθηκαν ανωτέρω και δεδομένου ότι το επίπεδο πληρωμών για τον προϋπολογισμό του 2013 είναι κατά 5 δισεκατομμύρια ευρώ χαμηλότερο από τις εκτιμήσεις της Επιτροπής για τις ανάγκες πληρωμών στο σχέδιο προϋπολογισμού της για το 2013, θα μπορούσε η Επιτροπή να παράσχει λεπτομερείς πληροφορίες σχετικά με το επίπεδο των πληρωμών που έχουν καταβληθεί μέχρι τις 30 Νοεμβρίου 2013;

Ειδικότερα, θα μπορούσε η Επιτροπή να γνωστοποιήσει τις πληρωμές που έχουν καταβληθεί τους μήνες Ιανουάριο, Φεβρουάριο, Μάρτιο, Απρίλιο, Μάιο, Ιούνιο, Ιούλιο, Αύγουστο, Σεπτέμβριο, Οκτώβριο και Νοέμβριο του 2013, αναλυτικά ανά κράτος μέλος και ανά τομέα/πρόγραμμα πολιτικής;

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

Η αναλυτική κατανομή των έγκυρων αιτήσεων πληρωμών ([1]) που υποβλήθηκαν τον Νοέμβριο για τα χρηματοδοτούμενα από το ΕΚΤ, το ΕΤΠΑ και το ΤΣ επιχειρησιακά προγράμματα της περιόδου 2007-2013 παρατίθεται στο παράρτημα I της παρούσας απάντησης, ενώ τα στοιχεία σχετικά με το ΕΤΑ και το ΕΓΤΑΑ παρατίθενται στο παράρτημα II. Τα αριθμητικά στοιχεία του πίνακα προκύπτουν από τη σύγκριση των αιτήσεων πληρωμών που υποβλήθηκαν έως το τέλος Νοεμβρίου 2013 με εκείνες που υποβλήθηκαν έως το τέλος Οκτωβρίου 2013. Η Επιτροπή μπορεί να αποφασίσει την αλλαγή χαρακτηρισμού μιας αίτησης πληρωμής από «Αποδεκτή» σε «Πλήρως απορριφθείσα» ή «Επιστραφείσα προς διόρθωση» και, συνεπώς, τα αριθμητικά στοιχεία των παραρτημάτων της παρούσας απάντησης ενδέχεται να αποτελέσουν αντικείμενο περαιτέρω προσαρμογών. Τα αρνητικά υπόλοιπα του ΕΚΤ για την Ισπανία, για παράδειγμα, είναι αποτέλεσμα τέτοιας αλλαγής χαρακτηρισμού.

Ανάλογα στοιχεία για τους μήνες Ιανουάριο, Φεβρουάριο, Μάρτιο, Απρίλιο, Μάιο, Ιούνιο, Ιούλιο, Αύγουστο, Σεπτέμβριο και Οκτώβριο 2013 δόθηκαν από την Επιτροπή σε απάντηση των ερωτήσεων E-1090/2013, E-3237/2013, E-3928/2013, E-4903/2013, E-6405/2013, E-8097/2013, E-9846/2013, E-11168/2013 και E-12567/2013, αντίστοιχα ([2]).

([1]) Με εξαίρεση τα ποσά που έχουν απορριφθεί πλήρως.
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014160/13
to the Commission
Georgios Stavrakakis (S&D)
(16 December 2013)

Subject: Level of payments as of 30 November 2013

After the approval of Draft Amending Budget No 6/2012, the Commission, at the request of the Budgetary Authority, submitted Draft Amending Budget No 2/2013, amounting to EUR 11.2 billion, that will allow all legal payment obligations left pending at the end of 2012, as well as those arising before the end of 2013, to be covered in this year's budget.

At the Ecofin meeting of 14 May 2013, a political agreement was reached to provide the extra funding for the 2013 Budget in two tranches, with the first amounting to EUR 7.3 billion, while the Ministers undertook to return to the issue later in the year. However, there has been no formal commitment on the remaining EUR 3.9 billion of Draft Amending Budget 2/2013.

After the political agreement of 27 June 2013 reached by the institutions on the 2014-2020 multiannual financial framework, the Ecofin Council, on 9 July 2013, approved the EUR 7.3 billion top-up for the 2013 Budget and undertook to take all necessary additional steps to ensure that the Union's obligations for 2013 were fully honoured. In this respect, on the basis of a proposal to be made by the Commission in early autumn, based on the latest updated estimates regarding payment appropriations, the Council undertook to decide, without delay, on a further draft amending budget to avoid any shortfall in justified payment appropriations. On 26 September 2013, the Commission issued Draft Amending Budget 8/2013 for the remaining EUR 3.9 billion. The approval of Draft Amending Budget 8/2013 and of Draft Amending Budget 9/2013 (EUR 400.5 million for the mobilisation of the EU Solidarity Fund) featured on the agenda of the conciliation committee's deliberations on the 2014 Budget. Both these draft budgets and the 2014 EU Budget were adopted at Parliament's part-session in November 2013.

Taking all the above into consideration and given the fact that the level of payments for the 2013 EU Budget is EUR 5 billion lower than the Commission's estimates for payment needs in its 2013 Draft Budget, could the Commission provide detailed information on the level of payments received by 30 November 2013?

More specifically, could the Commission provide information on payments received in the months of January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October and November 2013, broken down by Member State and policy area/programme?

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

A detailed breakdown of the valid payment claims ([1]) received in November for the 2007-2013 ESF, ERDF and CF-funded operational programmes is provided in Annex I to this reply while for EFF and EAFRD the data is included in Annex II. The figures in the table result from comparing valid payment claims submitted until the end of November 2013 with those submitted until the end of October 2013. The Commission may decide to change the status of a payment claim from 'Accepted' to 'Fully rejected' or 'Returned for corrections' and therefore the figures presented in the annexes to this reply could still undergo further adjustments. A negative ESF balance for Spain, for instance, is the result of such changes in status.

Similar data for the months of January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September and October 2013 were provided by the Commission in response to Questions E-1090/2013, E-3237/2013, E-3928/2013, E-4903/2013, E-6405/2013, E-8097/2013, E-9846/2013, E-11168/2013 and E-12567/2013, respectively ([2]).

([1]) Excluding fully rejected amounts.
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014161/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(16 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Revisión de las directrices de la UE sobre la financiación pública de aeropuertos y las ayudas estatales de puesta en marcha destinadas a compañías aéreas

El 3 de julio de 2013 la Comisión publicó un proyecto de revisión de las directrices de la UE sobre la financiación pública de aeropuertos y las ayudas estatales de puesta en marcha destinadas a compañías aéreas. Las nuevas directrices tratan de facilitar ayuda bien diseñada destinada a impulsar el crecimiento económico y otros objetivos de interés común europeo, y disuadir las ayudas perjudiciales que no aportan un valor añadido real y que falsean la competencia en el mercado único.

El apartado 125 establece que las nuevas directrices son aplicables con carácter retroactivo a todos los casos pendientes de ayudas de funcionamiento destinadas a aeropuertos y compañías aéreas.

Según el Tribunal de Justicia de la UE (asuntos C-74/00 P, C-75/00 P y T-92/11), el principio de seguridad jurídica se opone a que el punto de partida de la aplicación temporal de un acto comunitario se fije en una fecha anterior a la de su publicación salvo si el objetivo perseguido lo exige y se respeta debidamente la confianza legítima de los interesados.

El objetivo de las actuales directrices es el mismo que el de las directrices de 2005. Los aeropuertos que concedieron ayudas económicas a compañías aéreas, así como las compañías que se beneficiaron de estas ayudas, siempre fueron conscientes de que estas ayudas eran muy controvertidas. Por ello, legítimamente no podían esperar estar exentos de control bajo las directrices de 2005.

¿Es compatible con la legislación de la UE que las nuevas directrices sobre ayudas estatales sean aplicadas con carácter retroactivo a los casos pendientes?

Respuesta del Sr. Almunia en nombre de la Comisión
(20 de febrero de 2014)

La Comisión ha decidido modificar la normativa de la Unión de 2005 sobre las ayudas a los aeropuertos y las compañías aéreas con el fin de tener en cuenta la evolución del sector desde 2005.

Esta nueva normativa especificará las condiciones en que los aeropuertos y las compañías aéreas podrían acogerse, en su caso, a ayudas estatales compatibles.

Las disposiciones de la nueva normativa serán directamente aplicables a las ayudas que se puedan conceder a las compañías aéreas. La Comisión reflexiona sobre las condiciones en que se podrían aplicar a las ayudas de funcionamiento concedidas anteriormente a los aeropuertos. Por el momento, no se ha adoptado una posición definitiva. La Comisión tendrá en cuenta, naturalmente, la jurisprudencia del Tribunal sobre el ámbito de aplicación temporal de los textos de la Unión.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014161/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(16 December 2013)

Subject: Revised state aid guidelines for the public funding of airports and start-up aid to airlines

On 3 July 2013, the Commission published a revised draft of its state aid guidelines for the public funding of airports and start-up aid to airlines. The new guidelines focus on facilitating well-designed aid intended to boost economic growth and to further other objectives of common European interest, while discouraging harmful aid that does not bring real added value and distorts competition in the single market.

Paragraph 125 states that the new guidelines are retroactively applicable to all cases concerning operating aid to airports and airlines.

According to the European Court of Justice (cases C-74/00 P, C-75/00 P and T-92/11), the principle of legal certainty precludes a Community measure from taking effect from a point in time before its publication, unless the purpose to be achieved so demands and the legitimate expectations of those concerned are duly respected.

The purpose of the existing guidelines is the same as that of the 2005 guidelines. Airports which granted financial aid to airlines, and the airlines benefiting from such aid, were always aware that such aid was highly controversial. Therefore, they could not legitimately expect to be exempt from scrutiny under the 2005 guidelines.

Is it compatible with EC law that the new state aid guidelines will be applied retroactively to pending cases?

(Version française)

Réponse donnée par M. Almunia au nom de la Commission
(20 février 2014)

La Commission a décidé de modifier l'encadrement communautaire de 2005 sur les aides aux aéroports et aux compagnies aériennes afin de prendre en considération le développement du secteur depuis 2005.

Ce nouvel encadrement précisera les conditions dans lesquelles les aéroports et les compagnies aériennes peuvent éventuellement bénéficier d'aides d'État compatibles.

Les dispositions de ce nouvel encadrement seront directement applicables aux éventuelles aides octroyées aux compagnies aériennes. La Commission réfléchit aux conditions qui pourraient être applicables aux aides au fonctionnement octroyées dans le passé aux aéroports. Pour l'instant une position définitive n'a pas été arrêtée. La Commission prendra bien sûr en considération la jurisprudence de la Cour sur l'application dans le temps des textes communautaires.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014162/13
to the Commission
David Martin (S&D)
(16 December 2013)

Subject: University tuition fees in an independent Scotland

As, I expect, the Commission is aware, within the UK, students residing in Scotland receive free university tuition at Scottish universities, while those from England, Northern Ireland and Wales wishing to study at a Scottish university must pay fees.

Can the Commission advise me whether, in the event of Scotland becoming an independent state and negotiating its entry into the European Union, it would be allowed to continue charging students from the UK (the remainder of the UK — England, Northern Ireland and Wales) to attend Scottish universities?

Can the Commission advise me if there are any other EU Member States that have a practice of charging different university tuition fees for students from outwith their own territory?

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

It is not the role of the Commission to express a position on questions of internal organisation relating to the constitutional arrangements of a particular Member State.

In general terms, the Commission recalls that the conditions of access to education, including tuition fees, fall within the scope of EC law and any discrimination on grounds of nationality is prohibited in such matters (Case 293/83 Gravier, paragraphs 19 and 25). According to EU case law (Case C-73/08 Bressol and Others, paragraph 40), any differences in treatment based on other, apparently neutral, criteria (such as residence requirements) must be seen as a covert form of discrimination on grounds of nationality if they lead in fact to the same result. Unless justified by objective considerations independent of the nationality of the persons concerned and proportionate to the legitimate aim pursued, such measures must in fact be regarded as indirectly discriminatory if they are intrinsically liable to affect citizens of other Member States more than nationals and if there is a risk that they will place the former at a particular disadvantage (Bressol and Others, paragraph 41).

According to the information available to the Commission, no Member State is charging different university tuition fees to EU students not residing within its territory.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita P-014163/13
a la Comisión
Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo (S&D)
(16 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Definición de almadraba

El pasado 23 de octubre, el Pleno del Parlamento Europeo aprobó la definición de la almadraba como «técnica tradicional pesquera extractiva basada en redes fijas ancladas en el lecho marino durante varios meses, que consiste en un grupo de cercos, redes, hilos de pescar y anclas situado cerca de la costa para interceptar especies migratorias de peces (atunes y especies parecidas al atún) y conducirlas hacia una zona cerrada desde la que se extraen» en el artículo 3, apartado 2, punto 18 ter, de la propuesta modificada de Reglamento del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo relativo al Fondo Europeo Marítimo y de Pesca.

Esta diputada quisiera saber si la Comisión apoya la inclusión de esta definición y, de ser así, que explicara las gestiones realizadas en los diálogos tripartitos que están teniendo lugar entre el Consejo, la Comisión y el Parlamento Europeo para que dicha definición sea finalmente incluida en el texto que se está negociando.

Asimismo, se pregunta si la Comisión comparte la idea propuesta por el sector almadrabero de que este pueda obtener financiación del Fondo Europeo Marítimo y de Pesca para convertir las almadrabas en un observatorio científico del atún y mejorar así la recolección de datos científicos sobre el atún rojo.

Respuesta de la Sra. Damanaki en nombre de la Comisión
(29 de enero de 2014)

Su Señoría hace referencia a la votación sobre el Fondo Europeo Marítimo y de Pesca (FEMP) celebrada en la sesión plenaria del Parlamento Europeo del día 23 de octubre de 2013. El FEMP sigue siendo objeto de debate por parte de los colegisladores y, a falta de un acuerdo final, resulta imposible prever si se va a incluir una definición de la almadraba en el texto definitivo.

La propuesta original de la Comisión sobre el FEMP no incluyó una definición de la almadraba, dado que el FEMP no prevé ninguna referencia o medida concreta en relación con este tipo de arte.

En cuanto al tratamiento específico de las almadrabas para la recogida de datos científicos con vistas a la gestión pesquera, sería más apropiado plantear esta cuestión en el marco de la revisión prevista del Reglamento (CE) n° 199/2008 del Consejo, que regula la recopilación de datos para la gestión pesquera. El 16 de enero de 2014 se celebró una reunión con las partes interesadas sobre la revisión de dicho Reglamento, en la cual fueron invitados a participar los diputados del Parlamento Europeo.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-014163/13
to the Commission
Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo (S&D)
(16 December 2013)

Subject: Definition of tuna trap

At its plenary sitting of 23 October 2013, the European Parliament approved the definition of tuna trap as a 'traditional extractive fishing technique based on fixed nets anchored to the bottom for several months, which consists of a group of vessels, nets, fishing wires and anchors located near the coastline to intercept migratory fisheries (tuna and tunalike species) and lead them to an enclosed area where they are extracted', in Article 3(2)(18b) of the amended proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund.

Does the Commission support this definition's inclusion? If so, what steps are being taken in the tripartite dialogues between the Council, the Commission and the European Parliament to ensure that this definition is included in the final text that is currently being negotiated?

Does the Commission endorse the idea put forward by the tuna trap fishing sector that it could be given funding from the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund to convert tuna traps into a scientific tuna observatory, thereby improving the collection of scientific data on bluefin tuna?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(29 January 2014)

The Honourable Member refers to the plenary vote on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) at the European Parliament on 23 October 2013. The EMFF is still being discussed by the co-legislators, and in the absence of a final agreement it is not possible to anticipate whether a definition on tuna traps will be included in the final text.

The Commission's original proposal for the EMFF did not include a definition of tuna traps since the EMFF does not foresee any specific reference or measure to this type of gear.

As for a specific treatment of tuna traps for the collection of scientific data for fisheries management purposes, it would be more appropriate to raise this suggestion in the context of the planned revision of Council Regulation (EC) No 199/2008 governing data collection for fisheries management purposes. A stakeholder meeting on the revision of Regulation has been held on 16 January 2014. Honourable Members of the European Parliament have been invited to participate in this meeting.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-014164/13
alla Commissione
Rita Borsellino (S&D)
(16 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Isola delle Correnti

Premesso che:

L'Isola delle Correnti e Capo Passero rappresentano l'estremo sud della Sicilia e tale particolare configurazione geografica fa sì che la zona sia stata dichiarata Sito di interesse comunitario e contestualmente Zona di protezione speciale.

La valutazione d'incidenza nella Regione Siciliana è normata dalla Legge regionale del 8.5.2007 n. 13 che affida ai Comuni nel cui territorio insistono i siti SIC e ZPS tale valutazione.

Si può affermare con certezza che gli organi preposti alla valutazione d'incidenza sia in ambito comunale che regionale sono privi di qualsiasi indipendenza e spesso di competenza, cosa che si è in grado di dimostrare.

È stato dato il permesso di fare opere che comportano un impatto sul sistema protetto distruggendolo e che, in violazione dell'articolo 75 del TFUE, il Comune di Portopalo già formulava un parere favorevole tre mesi prima dell'inizio dell'iter di valutazione. La circostanza che siano le autorità ad essere responsabili delle violazioni rende legittimo il sospetto che le informazioni che le stesse forniranno saranno parziali ed inidonee all'accertamento delle eventuali violazioni delle norme comunitarie.

Sulla base di quanto sopra esposto si chiede di conoscere quali iniziative vorrà prendere la Commissione per salvaguardare i predetti siti di importanza comunitaria e ripristinare il diritto dei cittadini alla tutela dell'ambiente, attraverso la costituzione di una vera e propria autorità ambientale che risponda ai requisiti di indipendenza e competenza per quanto attiene la Sicilia?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(28 gennaio 2014)

Qualsiasi progetto che possa avere un'incidenza negativa su zone di protezione speciale o siti di importanza comunitaria deve formare oggetto di una valutazione appropriata a norma dell'articolo 6 della direttiva sugli habitat ([1]). Spetta alle autorità competenti valutare, caso per caso, se un determinato progetto possa avere effetti negativi per le specie e gli habitat interessati e autorizzarlo dopo aver accertato che non pregiudicherà l'integrità del sito. Se si accerta che il progetto avrà un'incidenza negativa sul sito, esso potrà essere realizzato soltanto se risultano soddisfatte le condizioni a cui è subordinata la deroga, specificate all'articolo 6, paragrafo 4, della direttiva.

Per aiutare gli Stati membri e capire e ad applicare correttamente le disposizioni dell'articolo 6, la Commissione ha elaborato un certo numero di documenti contenenti orientamenti interpretativi e metodologici generali ([2]).

La responsabilità di attuare e far rispettare la normativa ambientale dell'UE incombe in primo luogo agli Stati membri e alle loro autorità amministrative e giudiziarie. Il trattato non conferisce alla Commissione il potere di sostituirsi alle autorità degli Stati membri o di intervenire nella loro pianificazione e organizzazione amministrativa.

([1]) Direttiva 92/43/CEE del Consiglio, del 21 maggio 1992, relativa alla conservazione degli habitat naturali e seminaturali e della flora e della fauna selvatiche, GU L 206 del 22.7.1992.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/guidance_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer P-014164/13
to the Commission
Rita Borsellino (S&D)
(16 December 2013)

Subject: Isola delle Correnti

Isola delle Correnti and Capo Passero lie at the southernmost point of Sicily. Owing to their special geography, the zone in which they are located has been declared a site of Community importance (SCI) and at the same time a special protection area (SPA).

Impact evaluations conducted in Sicily are governed by Regional Government Act No 13 of 8 June 2007 which awards responsibility for such evaluations to the municipalities in which the respective SCIs and SPAs are located.

It is safe to say, and easy to demonstrate, that the bodies in charge of conducting impact evaluations, be it at municipal or regional level, are in no way independent and often non-competent.

Authorisation has been granted for works whose impact on the protected ecosystem will be to destroy it, and on which, in violation of Article 75 TFEU, the municipality of Portopalo had already issued a favourable opinion three months before the start of the evaluation process. The fact that the authorities are responsible for the violations in question arouses legitimate concerns that the information they are providing is biased and does not offer the best means of ascertaining whether Community rules have been infringed.

In view of the above, can the Commission state what action it will take to safeguard the aforesaid site of Community importance and to reinstate the public's right to environmental protection, by means of establishing a bona fide environmental authority for Sicily which fulfils the criteria of being independent and properly competent?

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

Any project likely to have adverse effects on Special Protection Areas or Sites of Community Importance must be subject to an appropriate assessment according to Art. 6 of the Habitats Directive ([1]). It is up to the competent national authorities to assess, on a case by case basis, whether a certain project could cause significant negative effects on the relevant species and habitats and to authorise it after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site. If it is determined that the project will adversely affect the site then it may proceed only if the derogation conditions, set out in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, are met.

In order to assist Member States in the understanding and correct application of Article 6 provisions, the Commission has produced a number of general interpretative and methodological guidance documents ([2]).

The responsibility for implementing and enforcing EU environmental legislation lies primarily with Member States and their administrative and judicial authorities. The Commission has no powers under the Treaty to act in place of Member States' authorities or to intervene in their planning activities and administrative organisation.

([1]) Council Directive 92/43//EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora. OJ L 206, 22.7.1992.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/guidance_en.htm

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014165/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(16 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: El Gobierno rescata el aeropuerto de Murcia con un crédito de 200 millones — Compatibilidad con Directrices UE sobre las ayudas estatales a los aeropuertos regionales

El Gobierno central ha puesto a disposición de la Región de Murcia un crédito del Instituto de Crédito Oficial (ICO) para evitar que los bancos acreedores del aeropuerto de Murcia ejecuten un aval concedido por el Gobierno regional a los promotores del aeródromo. «Es verdad que asumimos un aval de 200 millones que se convierte en préstamo del Gobierno», dijo ayer el presidente de la Región de Murcia, Ramón Luis Valcárcel, en una entrevista en Radio Nacional de España. «Una vez que la concesionaria retome los trabajos para la apertura de ese aeropuerto, lo primero que hace es asumir y descargar a la Región de Murcia de ese préstamo», afirmó Valcárcel, que agregó que no veía peligro de que en algún momento el rescate produjera un agujero en los presupuestos públicos ([1]). El presidente murciano aseguró que el aeropuerto de Corvera —cuyas obras están paralizadas desde hace dos años— no ha costado, ni va a costar, un euro a los murcianos y achacó a los retrasos en la puesta en marcha de la infraestructura a la crisis económica que sufría el Estado español durante los últimos años. El Aeropuerto Internacional de Murcia, cuya construcción comenzó en 2008, tendrá teóricamente capacidad para unos 3 millones de pasajeros al año. No obstante, sigue paralizado desde hace dos años y no cuenta con los corredores de espacio aéreo necesarios para recibir aviones sumándose a la lista de aeródromos fantasma que se crearon en el Estado español durante el boom inmobiliario. Aun así, Valcárcel dijo que el aeropuerto se va a abrir a comienzos de 2014. La actual concesionaria del aeropuerto de Corvera está en manos de un grupo compuesto por Sacyr, dos entidades financieras regionales y varias empresas locales. El aeropuerto de Corvera se encuentra a 40 kilómetros del aeropuerto militar-civil de Murcia (San Javier) y también cerca de los aeropuertos de Alicante y Almería. En octubre, Valcárcel indicó que estaban muy próximos de firmar un acuerdo con AENA para el cierre civil del aeropuerto militar de San Javier (un millón de pasajeros) y que, a partir de ahí, le corresponde a la comunidad autónoma convocar un concurso y adjudicar la apertura y explotación del aeropuerto de Corvera por un plazo de concesión de entre 35 y 40 años.

A la luz de lo anterior y teniendo en cuenta la Directiva sobre tasas aeroportuarias 2009/12/CE:

1. ¿Está la Comisión informada sobre esta ayuda pública?

2. ¿Dicho crédito de 200 millones es compatible con las Directivas de la UE sobre ayudas estatales a los aeropuertos regionales?

3. ¿Cree la Comisión que este aeropuerto conllevará más tasas a los usuarios de los otros aeropuertos gestionados centralizadamente por el ente AENA?

Respuesta del Sr. Almunia en nombre de la Comisión
(20 de febrero de 2014)

La Comisión está al corriente del plan de las autoridades españolas de conceder una garantía de préstamo de 200 millones EUR para la financiación de la construcción de este aeropuerto. La garantía es objeto de la Decisión de la Comisión Europea N63/2010 «Garantía estatal para la construcción del aeropuerto de Murcia» ([2]).

En esta Decisión, la Comisión no planteó objeciones a una propuesta notificada por las autoridades españolas para que la Región de Murcia pudiera conceder una garantía estatal sobre un préstamo pendiente de reembolso a la Sociedad Concesionaria Aeropuerto de Murcia. La Comisión no planteó ninguna objeción, porque la propuesta notificada era compatible con el mercado interior de conformidad con el artículo 107, apartado 3, letra c), del TFUE. El hecho de que la garantía estatal pueda hacerse efectiva, por el motivo que sea, no altera la evaluación de la ayuda que figura en la Decisión N63/2010.

El modo de financiación de esta garantía a escala regional o nacional dentro del Estado español incumbe a las autoridades españolas.

La Comisión no dispone de información suficiente para determinar si este nuevo aeropuerto acarreará un aumento de las tasas cobradas a los usuarios de los demás aeropuertos gestionados centralmente por AENA.

([1]) http://es.reuters.com/article/topNews/idESMAE9BB01Z20131212
([2]) DO C 217 de 11.8.2010.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014165/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(16 December 2013)

Subject: Spanish Government bailout of Murcia airport with a loan of EUR 200 million — compatibility with EU guidelines on state aid for regional airports

Spanish Central Government has made a loan available to the Region of Murcia from the public finance body Instituto de Crédito Oficial (Official Credit Institute), to stop the banks that are creditors of Murcia airport from enforcing a guarantee provided by the regional government to the airport developers. Ramón Luis Valcárcel, President of the Region of Murcia, said in an interview with Spanish national radio yesterday that the regional government had provided a guarantee of EUR 200 million, which was being converted into a loan from the government. Mr Valcárcel stated that once the contractor resumed work with a view to the opening of the airport, the first thing it would do would be to take on the loan and release the Region of Murcia from it, adding that he did not see any risk of the bailout leading to a hole in public finances at any time ([1]). The President of the Region of Murcia stated that Corvera airport — where works have been at a standstill for the past two years — had not cost and would not cost the people of Murcia anything, and he blamed the delays in getting the infrastructure in place on the economic crisis experienced by Spain in recent years. Construction began on Murcia international airport in 2008, and in theory it will have capacity for some 3 million passengers a year. However, for the last two years construction has been at a standstill and the airspace corridors required to receive planes are not available. The airport has joined the list of ghost airports built in Spain during the construction boom. Even so, Mr Valcárcel has said that the airport will open in early 2014. The current contractor for Corvera airport is owned by a group made up of Sacyr, two regional financial bodies and various local businesses. Corvera airport is 40 kilometres from Murcia's joint military and civilian airport (San Javier) and is also close to Alicante and Almería airports. In October, Mr Valcárcel said that they were very close to signing an agreement with the State-run airport operator Aeropuertos Españoles y Navegación Aérea (AENA) for the closure of the civilian part of the San Javier military airport (carrying a million passengers) and that, from that point onwards, it would be for the Autonomous Community to launch a call for tenders and award the contract to open and operate Corvera airport, with a contract length of between 35 and 40 years.

With regard to Directive 2009/12/EC on airport charges:

1. Is the Commission aware of this state aid?

2. Is the abovementioned loan of EUR 200 million compatible with EU directives on state aid for regional airports?

3. Does the Commission believe that this airport will involve higher charges for users of the other airports centrally managed by AENA?

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

The Commission is aware of the plan of the Spanish authorities to grant a EUR 200 million loan guarantee related to the financing of the construction of this airport. The guarantee is the subject of European Commission Decision N63/2010, 'State guarantee for the construction of Murcia Airport'. ([2])

In this decision, the Commission raised no objections to a notified proposal of the Spanish authorities for the Region of Murcia to grant a State guarantee on an outstanding loan to the 'Sociedad Concesionaria Aeropuerto de Murcia'. The Commission raised no objections on the grounds that the notified proposal was compatible with the internal market under Article 107(3) (c) TFEU. The fact that the state guarantee may be called upon, for whatever reason, does not change the assessment of the aid in decision N63/2010.

How this guarantee is financed within the Spanish state at a regional or national level is a question for the Spanish authorities.

The Commission does not have sufficient information to determine whether this new airport will involve higher charges for users of the other airports centrally managed by AENA.

([1]) http://es.reuters.com/article/topNews/idESMAE9BB01Z20131212
([2]) OJ C 217, 11.08.2010.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014166/13
to the Commission
Catherine Bearder (ALDE)
(16 December 2013)

Subject: International flights with a transfer in the EU

I have been contacted by a constituent who had a problem during a flight from Tokyo to London with a transfer at Helsinki. He purchased a bottle of Saki, Japanese rice wine, in the duty free airport but was not allowed to take it through Helsinki airport. I understand this is because there is no guarantee that liquids have been controlled and are secure.

However, it has been brought to my attention that if the flight does not have a transfer and goes directly from a non-EU country to an EU country, any duty-free liquids purchased are permitted. It also seems that sometimes passengers do get through interim airports with duty-free goods.

In light of this, can the Commission state whether these rules are explained to passengers and whether they are uniform across the EU? If they are not uniform, can the Commission explain why this is the case and whether there are plans to standardise the rules across the EU through legislation?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(18 February 2014)

The EU aviation security legislation on liquids, aerosols, and gels applies to all EU Member States and is applied across them in a uniform manner. However, while the situation described may have occurred in the past, as of January 2014 EU airports are obliged to control foreign duty free purchases packed in tamper evident bags with appropriate detection equipment. Consequently all duty free purchases cleared after such controls will be accepted at EU airports for transfer flights.

For reference to information to air travellers on the subject of liquids, aerosols and gels, the Commission would invite the Honourable Member to visit the Commission website: http://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/air/security/info_travellers_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014167/13
to the Commission
Emma McClarkin (ECR)
(16 December 2013)

Subject: Toxin levels in farmed salmon

It has been brought to my attention that within the European Union the maximum allowable dioxin level in chicken is three picograms per gram of fat but that the allowable dioxin level in farmed salmon is 41.6 picograms. This means that the allowable dioxin level in salmon is almost 14 times that in chicken.

Can the Commission tell me why this massive difference exists?

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

Regulations setting MLs (1) of dioxins and DL-PCBs (2) in feed and food have been established at EU level since 2001 in order to reduce human exposure to dioxins and DL-PCBs and to ensure a high level of human health protection.

In 2001, the EC (3) set for the first time MLs for dioxins, which were extended to DL-PCBs in 2006. Regulation (EU) 1259/2011 and Regulation (EU) 277/2012 recently updated them and set MLs for non-DL-PCBs in food and feed respectively. These regulations took account of recent data on the presence of dioxins and PCBs in food and feed published in two EFSA (4) scientific monitoring reports in 2010, as well as an EFSA scientific opinion on the presence of non-DL-PCBs in feed and food (5).

In order to reduce human exposure the MLs are set at a level ALARA (6), without jeopardising human health.

The feed for chickens is mainly composed of cereals, containing very low levels of dioxins, and the lifetime of a fattening chicken before slaughter is short, resulting in lower levels of dioxins in chicken meat.

The ML in fish applies to farmed and wild caught fish. Wild caught fish, with sometimes long lifetimes and living in certain cases in polluted waters, can accumulate significant amounts of dioxins in the muscle meat. The feed for farmed salmon contains significant amounts of fish oil and fish meal, necessary to fulfil the nutritional requirements of salmon. Fish oil and fish meal contain higher levels of dioxins than certain other main feed materials such as cereals.

Therefore, MLs are set per animal species ALARA by applying good practices, taking into account the differences, amongst others, in feeding habits, composition of the feed, production conditions and lifetime between the animal species. This clarifies the differences between the different MLs set.

(1) MLs = maximum levels.
(2) DL-PCBs = Dioxin-Like Polychlorinated Biphenyls.
(3) EC = European Commission.
(4) EFSA = European Food Safety Authority.
(5) Available the 29.1.2014 at http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/1385.htm and http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/1701.htm
(6) ALARA: As Low As Reasonably Achievalbe.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014168/13
alla Commissione
Barbara Matera (PPE)
(16 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Situazione di disagio dei cittadini siriani rifugiati in Bulgaria

Un numero sempre maggiore di cittadini siriani in fuga dalla guerra civile sceglie la Bulgaria come meta di rifugio e come porta d'ingresso verso l'Unione europea.

Il numero dei rifugiati giunti nel paese balcanico attraverso la Turchia, dall'inizio del 2013, ha ormai raggiunto quasi le diecimila unità.

Tale flusso ha messo a dura prova le capacità di risposta da parte del governo di Sofia, che, sebbene abbia provveduto a creare un certo numero di centri di accoglienza, non è riuscito a garantire uno standard accettabile di vivibilità all'interno degli stessi.

La situazione è critica soprattutto nel campo inaugurato a novembre ad Harmanli, nella Bulgaria sud-orientale, che ospita oggi più di 1200 rifugiati, pur potendone accogliere soltanto 450.

A seguito di una recente visita, «Medici senza frontiere» ha definito «spaventosa» la condizione dei campi bulgari, denunciando la mancanza di cure sanitarie regolari e la scarsità del cibo.

Con il fine di fronteggiare l'emergenza, e di limitare il numero di arrivi, il governo di Sofia ha reso nota la propria volontà di costruire, entro il prossimo marzo, una barriera di trenta chilometri al confine con la Turchia.

Nel frattempo, in attesa della sua realizzazione, l'esecutivo ha già schierato più di mille poliziotti a guardia della frontiera.

1. È la Commissione a conoscenza di una tale situazione di disagio subita da parte cittadini siriani rifugiati in Bulgaria?

2. Intende la Commissione mediare con la Bulgaria, affinché la barriera che il governo di Sofia intende innalzare al fine di bloccare i flussi migratori provenienti dalla Siria, non venga costruita, in quanto diventerebbe un simbolo di chiusura e ostilità?

Risposta di Cecilia Malmström a nome della Commissione
(24 febbraio 2014)

Nel 2013 sono state fermate circa 11 158 persone mentre cercavano di attraversare la frontiera bulgaro-turca; il picco di afflussi è stato registrato nel periodo agosto-novembre. Nel 2013, stando ai dati Eurostat, circa 5 230 di queste persone hanno chiesto asilo in Bulgaria. Dal dicembre 2013 il numero di nuovi arrivi è in diminuzione.

La Commissione sta seguendo la situazione sul campo, in collaborazione con l'EASO ([1]), e insieme alle autorità bulgare, ha individuato le misure che potrebbero essere prese per prevenire un ulteriore peggioramento della situazione. La Commissione ha stanziato circa 8 milioni di euro in finanziamenti d'urgenza a favore della Bulgaria, per sostenere il paese nella gestione del maggior numero di richiedenti asilo e per migliorare la loro situazione e quella dei migranti. I finanziamenti saranno in particolar modo utilizzati per aumentare e migliorare le capacità di accoglienza e di alloggio per i richiedenti asilo. Inoltre, l'EASO ha firmato un piano operativo con la Bulgaria, che prevede l'invio di esperti distaccati da altri Stati membri per sostenere le autorità bulgare sul campo. I gruppi di esperti sono già operativi. Infine, a seguito di una richiesta di assistenza delle autorità bulgare, il 16 ottobre 2013 è stato attivato il meccanismo di protezione civile dell'Unione europea e finora sei Stati membri, sotto la guida del centro di coordinamento della risposta alle emergenze della Commissione europea, hanno offerto assistenza in natura alla Bulgaria; un settimo Stato membro ha fornito lo stesso tipo di assistenza ma su base bilaterale.

L'eventuale costruzione di opere di ingegneria ai fini della protezione delle frontiere e/o della gestione dei flussi migratori è una scelta a discrezione di ciascuno Stato membro. Nel caso della Bulgaria, la Commissione non intende sostenere il progetto dal punto di vista finanziario.

([1]) Ufficio europeo di sostegno per l'asilo.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014168/13
to the Commission
Barbara Matera (PPE)
(16 December 2013)

Subject: Hardship suffered by Syrian refugees in Bulgaria

An ever greater number of Syrian citizens fleeing the civil war are choosing Bulgaria as their point of refuge and entry point into the European Union.

Since the start of 2013, the number of refugees arriving in the country through Turkey has reached almost 10 000.

This flow is severely testing the response capacities of the Bulgarian Government, which, although it has set up a number of reception centres, has not managed to guarantee acceptable standards of living there.

The situation is especially critical in the camp set up in November in Harmanli, in south-eastern Bulgaria, which now houses over 1 200 refugees, even though it only has facilities for 450.

Following a recent visit, Doctors Without Borders described the situation in the Bulgarian camps as 'appalling', highlighting the absence of systematic medical care and the lack of food.

In order to tackle this emergency and restrict the number of arrivals, the Bulgarian Government has expressed its intention to build a 30-kilometre-long wall along its border with Turkey before March of next year.

In the meantime, as the Government awaits the completion of the wall, it has deployed over 1 000 police officers to guard the border.

1. Is the Commission aware of the hardship suffered by Syrian refugees in Bulgaria?

2. Does the Commission intend to mediate with Bulgaria to prevent the construction of the wall which the Bulgarian Government intends to build to block the flows of migrants coming from Syria, since this would be a symbol of isolation and hostility?

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

In 2013, some 11158 persons were apprehended trying to cross the Bulgarian-Turkish border, the largest numbers arriving in the period August-November. According to Eurostat, of this group some 5230 persons requested asylum in Bulgaria in 2013. Since December 2013, the number of new arrivals is decreasing.

The Commission, together with EASO ([1]), is following the situation on the ground. Together with the Bulgarian authorities it has identified the measures that could be taken in order to avert further deterioration of the situation. The Commission has provided some EUR 8 million in emergency funding to Bulgaria to support the country in managing the increased influx of asylum-seekers and to improve the situation of migrants and asylum-seekers. The funding will notably be used to increase and improve reception and accommodation capacity for asylum-seekers. In addition, EASO has signed an Operational Plan with Bulgaria, allowing for the deployment of experts seconded by other Member States to support the Bulgarian authorities on the ground. The teams of experts are already operational. Finally, following a request for assistance from the Bulgarian authorities the European Union's Civil Protection Mechanism was activated on 16 October 2013 and six Member States have offered, so far, in kind assistance to Bulgaria. This assistance was coordinated by the Commission's Emergency Response Coordination Centre. A seventh Member State provided in kind assistance on a bilateral basis.

Construction of any engineering structures for the purpose of border protection and/or migration management is at the discretion and choice of each Member State concerned. In the case of Bulgaria, the Commission will not support this project financially.

([1]) European Asylum Support Office.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014170/13
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Barbara Matera (PPE)
(16 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Abusi contro donne manifestanti in Egitto

A partire dalla delegittimazione dell'ex presidente egiziano Morsi, una serie di proteste a suo supporto sono iniziate all'interno del paese.

Stando alle nuove norme in materia, i manifestanti egiziani devono ora chiedere un permesso alle autorità prima di riunirsi. Allo stesso tempo, le stesse norme hanno conferito alla polizia il diritto di annullare le manifestazioni e di boicottarle con la forza.

Il 31 di ottobre 2013, a seguito di una manifestazione pacifista a favore di Morsi, 21 manifestanti di sesso femminile hanno subito violenza sessuale, sono state condannate e imprigionate.

Stando a quanto riportato da Amnesty International, molte di esse sono state picchiate con l'impugnatura delle pistole, violentate e schiaffeggiate.

È importante che il governo egiziano si comporti secondo quanto stabilito dagli obblighi internazionali, assicurando agli uomini e alle donne la protezione dei propri diritti economici, sociali, culturali e civili, così come garantito dalla Convenzione sull'Eliminazione di tutte le Forme di Discriminazione contro le donne (CEDAW) e dal Patto sui Diritti Civili e Politici.

1. In che termini l'Alto Rappresentante sta gestendo la questione della violenza contro le giovani manifestanti egiziane e il problema del mancato rispetto, da parte dell'Egitto, dei propri obblighi internazionali?

2. Cosa è stato fatto con il fine di assicurare che le autorità egiziane evitino di perpetrare violenze contro i manifestanti?

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

L'Unione europea è impegnata da lungo tempo a promuovere la parità uomo-donna e a lottare contro tutte le forme di violenza contro le donne, sul suo territorio e nel resto del mondo.

L'UE è a conoscenza della situazione delle donne in Egitto. La delegazione dell'UE a Cairo è in costante contatto con le organizzazioni locali della società civile e segue da vicino le denunce di casi di violenze contro le donne. L'UE segue da vicino questi sviluppi, fra cui l'attuazione delle nuova legislazione in materia di diritto di riunirsi e manifestare.

L'UE condanna categoricamente tutte le forme di violenza contro le donne e altri gruppi vulnerabili. L'AR/VP solleva periodicamente la questione con la autorità egiziane. Soprattutto dopo la recente ratifica della nuova costituzione, che sancisce la parità fra uomo e donna, l'UE auspica che la nuova amministrazione egiziana ad interim rispetti gli impegni in materia di diritti umani, compresi quelli riguardanti le donne, assunti nel contesto dell'accordo di associazione concluso con l'Egitto. La promozione della parità di genere è sempre stata una delle priorità dell'azione dell'UE in Egitto, che quest'ultima cerca di attuare sostenendo con spirito proattivo le iniziative della società civile a favore dei diritti delle donne.

L'UE nutre serie preoccupazioni circa le continue violenze in Egitto. L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente ha rilasciato diverse dichiarazioni in cui invita tutte le parti interessate ad agire con moderazione e sottolinea la necessità di condividere la convinzione che l'Egitto si stia adoperando per garantire un futuro pacifico al paese. La delegazione dell'UE a Cairo segue gli sviluppi sul terreno e intrattiene un dialogo costante con le controparti egiziane in proposito.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014170/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Barbara Matera (PPE)
(16 December 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Abuses committed against female protesters in Egypt

Since the removal of Mohamed Morsi, a series of protests in support of the former Egyptian President have been held in the country.

Under new legislation, Egyptian protesters must now request a permit from the authorities before assembling. At the same time, this legislation authorises the police to cancel demonstrations and prevent them with force.

On 31 October 2013, following a peaceful pro-Morsi demonstration, 21 female protesters were subjected to sexual violence, convicted and imprisoned.

According to Amnesty International reports, many of these women were beaten with pistol butts, molested and slapped.

It is important for the Egyptian Government to respect its international obligations, ensuring that both men and women's economic, social, cultural and civil rights are protected, as enshrined in the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

1. How is the High Representative handling the issue of violence committed against young, female protesters in Egypt and Egypt's failure to comply with its international obligations?

2. What has been done to ensure that the Egyptian authorities refrain from committing acts of violence against the protesters?

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

The EU has a long-standing commitment to promote gender equality and combat all forms of violence against women within and outside its borders.

The EU is well aware of the situation of women in Egypt and the EU Delegation in Cairo is in regular contact with local Civil Society Organisations and closely monitors reported cases of violence against women. The EU is following the developments closely, including the implementation of the new legislation regarding the right to assembly and demonstration.

The EU strongly condemns all forms of violence against women and other vulnerable groups and the HR/VP raises the issue regularly with the Egyptian authorities. Even more so in light of the recent ratification of the new Constitution which enshrines gender equality, the EU expects that the new Egyptian interim administration will respect the Human rights commitments, including the rights for women, undertaken under the Association Agreement concluded with Egypt. Promoting gender equality has been a longstanding priority of the EU's action in Egypt. The EU seeks to promote gender equality in Egypt by proactively supporting civil society initiatives that promote women's rights.

The EU is highly concerned regarding the continuous violent events in Egypt. The HR/VP issued several statements asking all sides to exercise restraint and highlighting the need for confidence in the shared belief that Egypt is for all Egyptians working peacefully for the country's future. The EU Delegation in Cairo is following the developments closely on the ground and is in constant dialogue with its Egyptian counterparts in this regard.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014171/13
alla Commissione
Rita Borsellino (S&D)
(16 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Modifica traduzione Gazzetta ufficiale UE

La Classificazione internazionale delle professioni (ISCO-8) (2009/824/EC), pubblicata nella Gazzetta ufficiale dell'Unione europea del 10 novembre 2009, nella versione tradotta in italiano, inglese, svedese e portoghese, non cita per errore la professione sanitaria dell'ortottista.

La Gazzetta ufficiale UE nelle suddette lingue riporta la seguente dicitura:

English 2267 Optometrists and ophthalmic opticians

Italian 2267 Optometristi e oftalmologi

Swedish 2267 Optiker

Portuguese 2267 Optometristas e ópticos oftálmicos

Quando invece è corretto:

English 2267 Optometrists and ophthalmic and orthoptist

Italian 2267 ottico e ortottista assistente in oftalmologia

Swedish 2267 Optiker and orthoptist

Portuguese 2267 Optometristas e ópticos oftálmicos e Orthoptist

Di questo grave errore di traduzione sono vittime gli ortottisti italiani che rischiano di non vedersi più riconosciuta la loro professione nonostante il riconoscimento dell'OCE, l'organismo che rappresenta gli ortottisti europei.

Sulla base di queste considerazioni la Commissione non ritiene necessario un suo intervento per sanare al più presto questo grave errore di traduzione?

Risposta di Algirdas Šemeta a nome della Commissione
(14 febbraio 2014)

Il custode (detentore) della Classificazione internazionale delle professioni (ISCO-08), è l'Organizzazione internazionale del lavoro (ILO).

Per assicurare la comparabilità tra le statistiche europee delle professioni e le statistiche del resto del mondo, la raccomandazione 2009/824/CE della Commissione raccomanda che il sistema statistico europeo faccia uso di tale classificazione. L'allegato della raccomandazione contiene pertanto le voci dei gruppi Major, Sub-major, Minor e Unit di cui all'ISCO-08.

L'ISCO 08 è stata messa a punto dall'ILO in soltanto tre delle lingue ufficiali dell'Unione. La voce che figura nello Unit Group 2267 è, in inglese, «*Optometrists and ophthalmic opticians*», in francese «*Optométristes*» e in spagnolo «*Optometristas*». Questa voce è stata tradotta nelle altre lingue europee nel modo più corretto possibile.

Ciascun gruppo di professioni comprende un gran numero di denominazioni professionali. Pertanto, la classificazione non si prefigge di menzionare tutte queste denominazioni alla voce che caratterizza il gruppo in questione. Questa maniera di procedere è ricorrente in tutte le classificazioni statistiche. Tuttavia, per quanto riguarda il caso più particolare degli ortoptisti citato dall'Onorevole deputata, essi sono esplicitamente menzionati nella nota esplicativa dell'ISCO 2008 quale esempio delle professioni classificate nel gruppo Unit 2267.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014171/13
to the Commission
Rita Borsellino (S&D)
(16 December 2013)

Subject: Modification of the translation of the *Official Journal of the European Union*

The International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-8) (2009/824/EC), published in the *Official Journal of the European Union* on 10 November 2009, mistakenly fails to include the healthcare profession of 'orthoptist' in the Italian, English, Swedish and Portuguese translations.

The *Official Journal of the European Union* in the aforementioned languages uses the following wording:

English 2267 Optometrists and ophthalmic opticians

Italian 2267 Optometristi e oftalmologi

Swedish 2267 Optiker

Portuguese 2267 Optometristas e ópticos oftálmicos.

However, the correct versions should be:

English 2267 Optometrists and ophthalmic opticians and orthoptists

Italian 2267 Ottico e ortottista assistente in oftalmologia

Swedish 2267 Optiker och orthoptist

Portuguese 2267 Optometristas e ópticos oftálmicos e Orthoptist

Italian orthoptists are victims of this serious translation error, since they risk their profession no longer being recognised, despite the recognition of the OCE, the body which represents European orthoptists.

Based on these considerations, does the Commission not believe it necessary to take action to correct this serious translation error as soon as possible?

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

The custodian (owner) of the International Standard Classification of Occupations, version 2008 (ISCO 08), is the International Labour Office (ILO).

In order to ensure comparability between European statistics on occupations and the statistics for the rest of the world, this classification is recommended for use by the European Statistical System by Commission Recommendation 2009/824/EC. The annex to the recommendation contains thus the headings of the Major, Sub-major, Minor and Unit Groups as provided for by ISCO 08.

ISCO 08 has been established by the ILO in only three of the official languages of the Union. The heading of Unit Group 2267 is in English: '*Optometrists and ophthalmic opticians*', in French '*Optométristes*' and in Spanish '*Optometristas*'. This heading has been translated into the other European Union languages as correctly as possible.

Each group of occupations includes a large number of job titles. It is therefore not the objective of the classification to mention all of these job titles in the heading of the group concerned. Such a manner of proceeding is customary in all statistical classifications. Nevertheless, regarding more specifically the case of orthoptists raised by the Honourable Member, they are explicitly mentioned in the explanatory notes of ISCO 2008 as an example of occupations classified under Unit group 2267.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014172/13
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE) y Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo (S&D)
(17 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Gestión del agua en la EU — Presión de los embalses

En noviembre de 2013, los grupos Ecologistas en Acción, Aigua és Vida, Som lo que Sembrem, Grup de Defensa del Ter, Plataforma de Defensa del Ebro, Marea Azul del Sur, Red Agua Pública e Ingenieros sin Fronteras presentaron el documento «Propuestas para la mejora de la gestión del agua en la EU».

El «Plan para salvaguardar los recursos hídricos de Europa» afirma que las principales alteraciones sufridas por las masas de agua vienen producidas por la construcción de embalses y diques de todo tipo, ya que los embalses son una de las infraestructuras existentes más impactantes, sobre el medio hídrico y los ecosistemas fluviales.

Dicho Plan presenta como solución la necesidad de construir escalas para peces y hacer evaluaciones de impacto ambiental correctas.

¿Considera la Comisión que tendría que estar incluido en la normativa comunitaria que:

1. antes de construirse un embalse u otra infraestructura hidráulica se elabore un informe que justifique su viabilidad ambiental, social, técnica, económica y que certifique que el proyecto cumple con el principio de recuperación de costes establecido en el artículo 9 de la Directiva 2000/60/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 23 de octubre de 2000, por la que se establece un marco comunitario de actuación en el ámbito de la política de aguas, así como con todo lo establecido en el resto de directivas comunitarias; y que dicho informe deba ser sometido a información pública, y revisado cada seis años;

2. las nuevas centrales hidroeléctricas no puedan interrumpir el flujo natural de los cursos de agua, permitiéndose únicamente las de tipo fluyente (sin embalse), consistentes en el desvío de una porción del caudal del cauce para la producción de electricidad, y con una devolución posterior al mismo cauce aguas abajo, siempre que se mantenga en el cauce natural el cauce ambiental;

3. en un período de máximo de 5 años se proceda a la demolición de todas aquellas presas hidroeléctricas que ya no se utilicen para la producción de electricidad, ni para otros fines;

4. en periodo máximo de 10 años se proceda a dotar a todas las presas dedicadas a la producción hidroeléctrica de las correspondientes escalas para peces?

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

El artículo 4, apartado 7, de la Directiva marco del agua (DMA, 2000/60/CE) ([1]) dispone que cualquier proyecto que pueda impedir la consecución de un buen estado ecológico o provoque un deterioro del estado de las masas de agua solo podrá llevarse a cabo si se cumplen las condiciones establecidas en dicho artículo. Una de estas condiciones es que los motivos del proyecto sean de interés público superior y/o que los beneficios que suponga el logro de los objetivos de la DMA se vean compensados por los beneficios del proyecto. Asimismo, debe demostrarse que los beneficios obtenidos con el proyecto no pueden conseguirse por otros medios que constituyan una opción medioambiental significativamente mejor. Los motivos del proyecto deben quedar recogidos y explicados en los planes hidrológicos de cuenca contemplados en la DMA y, por tanto, están sujetos a la participación del público, tal como se establece en el artículo 14 de esa Directiva.

La fauna de peces es uno de los indicadores de calidad biológica utilizados para la evaluación de un buen estado ecológico. Así pues, por lo general, debe mantenerse y recuperarse la continuidad fluvial si se quiere alcanzar el buen estado ecológico. La situación hidrológica y medioambiental varía mucho de unas zonas a otras de UE y, por tanto, la Directiva no contempla soluciones fijas para todas las cuencas en cuanto al modo de alcanzar los objetivos medioambientales.

La obligación que se establece en la DMA es la de recuperar el buen estado ecológico de las masas de agua de aquí a 2015. La infraestructura existente que impida la consecución de un buen estado ecológico debe ser derruida y la masa de agua restablecida a menos que esta infraestructura tenga un uso provechoso y se cumplan las condiciones establecidas en el artículo 4, apartado 3, de la DMA, de modo que la masa de agua pueda ser designada como «muy modificada». En este caso, deben fijarse objetivos alternativos para dicha masa de agua (buen potencial ecológico).

([1]) DO L 357 de 22.12.2000, p. 1.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014172/13
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE) and Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo (S&D)
(17 December 2013)

Subject: Water management in the EU — pressure from dams

In November 2013, the groups Ecologistas en Acción, Aigua és Vida, Som lo que Sembrem, Grup de Defensa del Ter, Plataforma de Defensa del Ebro, Marea Azul del Sur, Red Agua Pública and Ingenieros sin Fronteras presented the document entitled 'Proposals for improved water management in the EU'.

According to the Blueprint to safeguard Europe's water resources, the main changes to water bodies are caused by the construction of dams and dykes of all kinds, given that dams are one of the existing infrastructures that have the greatest impact on the water environment and river ecosystems.

As a solution, the Blueprint proposes constructing fish passes and carrying out proper environmental impact assessments.

Does the Commission think that EU legislation should include provisions laying down that:

1. Before constructing a dam or other hydroelectric infrastructure, a report be drawn up justifying its viability in environmental, social, technical and economic terms and certifying that the project complies with the principle of cost recovery laid down by Article 9 of Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy, as well as all the provisions of other EU directives, and that this report should be made public and revised every six years?

2. New hydroelectric power plants may not interfere with the natural flow of waterways, only allowing run-of-the-river plants (no dam), whereby the flow of the watercourse is partially diverted for electricity generation, and subsequently returned to the same watercourse downstream, provided that the environmental watercourse is kept in the natural watercourse?

3. In no more than five years, all hydroelectric dams that are not used for electricity generation or for other purposes be demolished?

4. In no more than 10 years, all hydroelectric dams be accordingly fitted with fish passes?

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

Article 4(7) of the Water Framework Directive (WFD, 2000/60/EC) [1] establishes that any project that is liable to cause failure to achieve Good Ecological Status (GES) or deterioration of status of water bodies can only be implemented if the conditions set out in that article are fulfilled. These conditions include that the reasons for the project are of overriding public interest and/or the benefits of achieving the WFD objectives are outweighed by the benefits of the project. In addition, it has to be proved that the beneficial objectives served by the project cannot be achieved by other means which are significantly better environmentally. The reasons for the project need to be set out and explained in the WFD River Basin Management Plans and are therefore subject to public participation as set out in WFD Article 14.

Fish fauna is one of the biological quality elements used to assess GES. Therefore, generally river continuity should be maintained and restored to achieve GES. Hydrological and environmental situations are very diverse across the EU and therefore the directive does not prescribe fixed solutions for all basins on how to achieve the environmental objectives.

The WFD obligation is to restore the water bodies to GES by 2015. Existing infrastructure which prevents the achievement of GES should be demolished and the water body restored unless the infrastructure serves a beneficial use and the conditions in WFD Article 4(3) are fulfilled so that the water body can be designated as heavily modified. In that case alternative objectives (good ecological potential) should be set for that water body.

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(1) OJ L 357, 22.12.2000, p.1.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014173/13
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE) y Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo (S&D)
(17 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Gestión del agua en la EU — Reducción de fugas

En noviembre de 2013, los grupos Ecologistas en Acción, Aigua és Vida, Som lo que Sembrem, Grup de Defensa del Ter, Plataforma de Defensa del Ebro, Marea Azul del Sur, Red Agua Pública e Ingenieros sin Fronteras presentaron el documento «Propuestas para la mejora de la gestión del agua en la EU».

El «Plan para salvaguardar los recursos hídricos de Europa» considera que las pérdidas en las redes de distribución «solo se podrán resolver caso por caso y convendrá estimar las ventajas medioambientales y económicas de la reducción de las fugas».

Las pérdidas en las redes de distribución son generalmente muy elevadas, con independencia de los usos, en la mayoría de los Estados miembros de la UE, siendo generalmente mayores cuanto mayor disponibilidad de recursos existe.

Las distribuciones de agua potable efectuadas por operadores privados reflejan unos índices de pérdidas mucho más elevados que las gestionadas por operadores públicos.

¿Considera la Comisión que tendría que estar incluido en la normativa comunitaria que:

1. los Estados miembros deban determinar de forma fiable las pérdidas existentes en las redes de distribución para los diferentes usos del agua;

2. se deban reducir las pérdidas en las redes de distribución (redes principales y secundarias) por debajo del 15 % en los abastecimientos urbanos e industriales, y por debajo del 20 % en el regadío;

3. se establezcan desde la UE ayudas económicas encaminadas a reducir las pérdidas en las redes de distribución principales y secundarias;

4. las compañías de abastecimiento, así como las industrias y las comunidades de regantes que no hayan reducido sus pérdidas por debajo de los niveles antes indicados, deban ser sancionadas por parte de las administraciones del agua?

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

La Comisión remite a Su Señoría a la respuesta conjunta que dio a las preguntas escritas E-14175/2013 y E-14177/2013. Dentro de los límites del marco jurídico de la UE, las diferencias medioambientales, sociales y económicas que se encuentran en la EU requieren enfoques adaptados por los Estados miembros para tratar ciertos asuntos. En relación con las pérdidas de las redes de distribución de agua, el análisis que desembocó en el Plan estableció que no sería útil imponer unos objetivos uniformes. Las medidas deberían centrarse en las áreas en las que las pérdidas planteen un problema considerable y en las que los costes económicos y ambientales de reducir tales pérdidas no superen los beneficios potenciales.

La Comisión está trabajando con el sector europeo del agua y con los Estados miembros a fin de elaborar y difundir las mejores prácticas para determinar y reducir los niveles de las pérdidas. Ya se dispone de posibilidades de financiación para reducir las pérdidas de las redes de distribución y de irrigación en el marco de los fondos de la UE y a través de préstamos del Banco Europeo de Inversiones.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014173/13
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE) and Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo (S&D)
(17 December 2013)

Subject: Water management in the EU — reduction of leakages

In November 2013, the groups Ecologistas en Acción, Aigua és Vida, Som lo que Sembrem, Grup de Defensa del Ter, Plataforma de Defensa del Ebro, Marea Azul del Sur, Red Agua Pública and Ingenieros sin Fronteras presented the document entitled 'Proposals for improved water management in the EU'.

The Blueprint to safeguard Europe's water resources considers that leakage from water distribution networks 'can only be tackled on a case-by-case basis to assess the environmental and economic benefits of reducing the leakage levels'.

Leakage levels in water distribution networks are generally very high, irrespective of use, in most EU Member States. Leakage levels generally go up in line with increased availability of resources.

Leakage levels are much higher in privately operated drinking water distribution networks than in state-run distribution networks.

Does the Commission think that EU legislation should include provisions laying down that:

1. Member States should reliably determine existing leakage levels in distribution networks for different water uses?

2. Leakage levels in water distribution networks should be cut (primary and secondary networks) below 15% in urban and industrial supplies, and below 20% in irrigation?

3. The EU should establish financial aid to reduce leakage levels in primary and secondary water distribution networks?

4. Supply companies, as well as industry and irrigation associations that have not reduced their leakage levels below the above levels should be penalised by the water authorities?

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

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its joint answer to written questions E-14175/2013 and E14177/2013. Within the parameters of the EU legal framework, environmental, social and economic differences in the EU call for approaches tailored by the Member States to deal with specific issues. On leakage from water distribution networks, the analysis leading to the Blueprint established that uniform targets would not be useful. Measures should target the areas where leakage poses a significant challenge and where the economic and environmental costs of reducing it do not exceed the potential benefits.

The Commission is working with the European water industry and the Member States to develop and spread best practices to determine and reduce leakage levels. Funding opportunities to reduce leakage from distribution and irrigation systems exist under EU funds and through loans from the Europan Investment Bank.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014174/13
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE) y Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo (S&D)
(17 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Gestión del agua en la EU — Políticas de tarificación

En noviembre de 2013, los grupos Ecologistas en Acción, Aigua és Vida, Som lo que Sembrem, Grup de Defensa del Ter, Plataforma de Defensa del Ebro, Marea Azul del Sur, Red Agua Pública e Ingenieros sin Fronteras presentaron el documento «Propuestas para la mejora de la gestión del agua en la EU».

En lo que se refiere a las políticas de tarificación, el «Plan para salvaguardar los recursos hídricos de Europa» cita el artículo 9 de la Directiva por la que se establece un marco comunitario de actuación en el ámbito de la política de aguas, en el que se hace referencia a la recuperación de los costes de los servicios relacionados con el agua y se proponer profundizar su aplicación y ejecución.

Las excepciones contempladas en dicha directiva en relación con la recuperación de los costes hacen prácticamente inoperante este artículo.

Los Estados pueden modificar los datos referentes a la recuperación de los costes, repartiendo éstos entre una serie de usos «ambientales y sociales» y reduciendo así el porcentaje que le corresponde a la actividad productiva a la que realmente responde la construcción de determinada infraestructura.

¿Considera la Comisión que tendría que estar incluido en la normativa comunitaria que:

1. se restrinjan al máximo las excepciones actualmente existentes en lo que se refiere a la recuperación de los costes de los servicios relacionados con el agua, para lo que se deberá modificar el artículo 9 de la directiva mencionada anteriormente, concretamente los apartados 1 y 4;

2. de acuerdo con el derecho humano al agua potable y al saneamiento, se deba garantizar a toda persona un mínimo indispensable de agua que cubra el factor de la disponibilidad, sin que se le pueda privar de este mínimo en caso de incapacidad de pago de los costes del abastecimiento de agua y de sus servicios e instalaciones;

3. para reducir los efectos de posibles manipulaciones al recuperar los costes de los servicios relacionados con el agua, los Estados miembros establezcan un coste económico mínimo del agua utilizada para usos consuntivos y otro para los usos no consuntivos;

4. los recursos recaudados mediante la aplicación de tarifas solamente podrán utilizarse para la explotación, el mantenimiento y la mejora o ampliación de los servicios de distribución de agua y saneamiento, así como en la mejora de las condiciones ambientales de los recursos hídricos y de los ecosistemas fluviales, pudiendo recibir financiación comunitaria adicional complementaria para alcanzar estos objetivos?

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

La Comisión remite a Su Señoría a su respuesta conjunta a las preguntas escritas E-14175/2013 y E-14177/2013 ([1]).

La Comisión velará por que los Estados miembros apliquen correctamente el artículo 9 de la Directiva marco sobre el agua por medio de una serie de instrumentos, como orientaciones sobre recuperación de los costes y tarificación del agua, recomendaciones sobre los planes hidrológicos de cuenca y medidas de ejecución. Corresponde a los Estados miembros calcular las tasas de recuperación aplicables a todos los usos del agua y asignar los recursos necesarios para financiar adecuadamente las infraestructuras hidráulicas y las medidas en el ámbito de la política de aguas.

La Comisión apoya el derecho humano al agua, reconocido por las Naciones Unidas. En el marco de la primera Iniciativa Ciudadana Europea, presentada en diciembre de 2013 ([2]), analizará más detenidamente su impacto en el Derecho de la UE.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/es/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/initiatives/finalised/submitted

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014174/13
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE) and Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo (S&D)
(17 December 2013)

Subject: Water management in the EU — pricing policies

In November 2013, the groups Ecologistas en Acción, Aigua és Vida, Som lo que Sembrem, Grup de Defensa del Ter, Plataforma de Defensa del Ebro, Marea Azul del Sur, Red Agua Pública and Ingenieros sin Fronteras presented the document entitled 'Proposals for improved water management in the EU'.

With regard to pricing policies, the Blueprint to safeguard Europe's water resources cites Article 9 of the directive establishing a framework for the Community action in the field of water policy, referring to the recovery of the costs of water services, and proposes that more should be done to apply and enforce it.

The exceptions provided for in the aforementioned directive in relation to cost recovery make the article practically devoid of force.

Member States may change the data relating to the recovery of costs, distributing them between various 'environmental and social' uses, thus reducing the percentage corresponding to production to what is actually required for the construction of specific infrastructure.

Does the Commission believe that EU legislation should include provisions requiring that:

1. The current exceptions in relation to the recovery of the costs of water services be reduced as much as possible, so that Article 9 of the abovementioned directive is amended, and specifically paragraphs 1 and 4 thereof?

2. In accordance with the human right to drinking water and sanitation, every person be guaranteed the minimum amount of water required, which covers the availability factor; no person be deprived of this minimum amount in the event of them being unable to pay the costs of water supply and water services and installations?

3. In order to reduce the effects of possible manipulations on recovery of the costs of water services, Member States establish a minimum economic cost for water used for consumption purposes, and another cost for non-consumption purposes?

4. The resources recovered through charging be usable only for the operation, maintenance, improvement or expansion of water supply and sanitation services, and for the improvement of the environmental conditions of water resources and river ecosystems, and additional complementary EU funding be available for achieving these objectives?

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

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its joint answer to written questions E-14175/2013 and E-14177/2013. ([1])

The Commission will ensure the correct application of the provisions of the article 9 of the Water Framework Directive by Member States through a range of instruments, including guidance on cost-recovery and water pricing, recommendations on the River Basin Management Plans and enforcement action as necessary. It falls to Member States to calculate cost-recovery rates for all water uses and to allocate the necessary resources to adequately finance water infrastructure and water policy measures.

The Commission supports the human right to water as recognised at UN level. It will further examine its impact on EC law in the framework of the first European Citizens' Initiative submitted in December 2013 ([2]).

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/initiatives/finalised/submitted

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014175/13
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE) y Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo (S&D)
(17 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Gestión del agua en la EU — Uso racional del agua

En noviembre de 2013, los grupos Ecologistas en Acción, Aigua és Vida, Som lo que Sembrem, Grup de Defensa del Ter, Plataforma de Defensa del Ebro, Marea Azul del Sur, Red Agua Pública e Ingenieros sin Fronteras presentaron el documento «Propuestas para la mejora de la gestión del agua en la EU».

El «Plan para salvaguardar los recursos hídricos de Europa» propone limitar los recursos que se asignan a los diferentes usos humanos y productivos en aquellas cuencas que sufran o puedan sufrir estrés hídrico.

En la normativa europea no se establece un orden de preferencia de usos, como de hecho existe en las normativas de algunos Estados.

¿Considera la Comisión que tendría que estar incluido en la normativa comunitaria que:

1. para poder alcanzar el equilibrio químico, los usos consuntivos no puedan superar a los recursos renovables disponibles en las cuencas;

2. para acceder a los recursos hídricos disponibles, una vez descontados los caudales ambientales, se establece el siguiente orden de preferencia de usos:

a) abastecimiento a poblaciones,

b) sector servicios y pequeña industria,

c) regadíos, usos agrarios e industrias,

d) acuicultura,

e) producción hidroeléctrica,

f) usos recreativos,

g) navegación y transporte acuático,

h) otros aprovechamientos;

y que dicho orden pueda ser modificado por los Estados miembros en función de las características propias de cada Estado, y con la adecuada justificación, salvo en el caso de los usos a y b, que deberán mantener siempre esas posiciones?

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014177/13
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE) y Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo (S&D)
(17 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Gestión del agua en la EU — Captación excesiva de agua

En noviembre de 2013, los grupos Ecologistas en Acción, Aigua és Vida, Som lo que Sembrem, Grup de Defensa del Ter, Plataforma de Defensa del Ebro, Marea Azul del Sur, Red Agua Pública e Ingenieros sin Fronteras presentaron el documento «Propuestas para la mejora de la gestión del agua en la EU».

El «Plan para salvaguardar los recursos hídricos de Europa» considera que la segunda mayor presión existente sobre el estado ecológico de la UE se deriva de la captación excesiva de agua, y que esta puede ser debida a «la asignación de una cantidad excesiva de agua a los usuarios de una cuenca debido a una sobreestimación de las cantidades disponibles o a presiones económicas o políticas», así como a la denominada «captación ilegal».

En vista de que la UE no dispone de una definición de «caudal ecológico», dicho Plan señala la necesidad de determinar dicho caudal, que define como «la cantidad de agua que necesita el ecosistema acuático para seguir proporcionando los servicios indispensables».

En lo que a «captación ilegal» se refiere, el Plan indica que corresponde a los Estados miembros atajarla.

Teniendo en cuenta lo anterior, ¿considera la Comisión que tendría que estar incluido en la normativa comunitaria que:

1. la Directiva Marco sobre el Agua (DMA) incorpore una definición de caudal ecológico fácil de entender, comprobar y aplicar, que considere «caudales ecológicos» aquellos que permitan alcanzar el buen estado ecológico de los cursos de agua y mantener como mínimo la vida piscícola y vegetación de ribera asociada;

2. se deban determinar y respetar los caudales ecológicos, al margen de los diferentes usos del agua (es decir, que no se considere un uso más, sino una restricción previa al resto de usos, a excepción del abastecimiento básico a las poblaciones ya asentadas);

3. se considere obligatorio detectar y erradicar las captaciones ilegales;

4. los Estados miembros mantengan una estructura de datos espaciales, de pleno acceso público, en la que se identifiquen los perímetros de riego, los recursos hídricos asignados a estos y su procedencia, de forma que cualquier ciudadano pueda verificar la existencia, extensión, asignación de agua y características de cualquier perímetro?

Respuesta conjunta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión

(20 de febrero de 2014)

Tras una evaluación exhaustiva de su política vigente, la Comisión publicó en 2012 un Plan ([1]) que esbozaba una serie de medidas para preservar los recursos hídricos de Europa y exponía el análisis de la Comisión sobre la política de la UE en el ámbito del agua. La Comisión no puede más que reiterar que el marco jurídico actual de la UE sobre las aguas es amplio, flexible y básicamente adecuado para resolver los desafíos a que se enfrenta el medio acuático. La Comisión no tiene previsto modificar la legislación de la UE en materia de aguas para incluir disposiciones más específicas, pero insiste en que dicha legislación debe aplicarse mejor y en que debe reforzarse la integración de los objetivos de la política de aguas en otras áreas de actuación.

El Plan subrayaba la necesidad de definir el concepto de caudal ecológico —es decir, la cantidad de agua requerida para el ecosistema acuático— en tanto que herramienta para resolver la posible asignación excesiva. En el marco de la Estrategia Común de Aplicación de la Directiva Marco del agua ([2]), la Comisión está trabajando con las partes interesadas y los Estados miembros para acordar una definición de caudal ecológico que sea común para toda la UE y un método para calcularlo, así como para determinar las buenas prácticas en relación con su aplicación. Este trabajo se plasmará en un documento orientativo para uso de los Estados miembros en la aplicación del próximo ciclo de los planes hidrológicos de cuenca.

La asignación del agua, la determinación de usuarios prioritarios y la resolución del problema de la captación ilegal son asuntos de competencia nacional. En cuanto a los permisos de extracción, los Estados miembros deben cumplir las obligaciones de transparencia que les impone la Directiva sobre el acceso público a la información medioambiental ([3]).

([1]) Comunicación de la Comisión al Parlamento Europeo, al Consejo, al Comité Económico y Social Europeo y al Comité de las Regiones. Plan para salvaguardar los recursos hídricos de Europa [COM(2012) 673 final] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2012:0673:FIN:ES:PDF

([2]) Directiva 2000/60/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 23 de octubre de 2000, por la que se establece un marco comunitario de actuación en el ámbito de la política de aguas (DO L 327 de 22.12.2000).

([3]) Directiva 2003/4/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 28 de enero de 2003, relativa al acceso del público a la información medioambiental y por la que se deroga la Directiva 90/313/CEE del Consejo (DO L 41 de 14.2.2003).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014175/13
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE) and Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo (S&D)
(17 December 2013)

Subject: Water management in the EU — rational water use

In November 2013, the groups Ecologistas en Acción, Aigua és Vida, Som lo que Sembrem, Grup de Defensa del Ter, Plataforma de Defensa del Ebro, Marea Azul del Sur, Red Agua Pública and Ingenieros sin Fronteras presented the document entitled 'Proposals for improved water management in the EU'.

The Blueprint to safeguard Europe's water resources proposes limiting the resources allocated to different human and production uses in those river basins that suffer or may suffer from water stress.

European legislation lays down no order of preference for uses of water, as provided for in the legislation of some Member States.

Does the Commission think that EU legislation should include provisions laying down that:

1. In order to achieve chemical balance, consumption may not exceed renewable resources available in river basins?

2. In order to access available water resources, once environmental flows have been discounted, an order of preference for water uses be drawn up:

(a) public supply,

(b) service sector and small industry,

(c) irrigation, agriculture and industrial use,

(d) aquaculture,

(e) hydropower generation,

(f) recreational uses,

(g) navigation and water transport,

(h) other uses

and this order may be amended by Member States in line with the specific features of each Member State, with suitable justification, except in the case of uses (a) and (b), which should always remain in those positions?

Question for written answer E-014177/13
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE) and Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo (S&D)
(17 December 2013)

Subject: Water management in the EU — over-abstraction of water

In November 2013, the groups Ecologistas en Acción, Aigua és Vida, Som lo que Sembrem, Grup de Defensa del Ter, Plataforma de Defensa del Ebro, Marea Azul del Sur, Red Agua Pública and Ingenieros sin Fronteras presented the document entitled 'Proposals for improved water management in the EU'.

According to the Blueprint to safeguard Europe's water resources, the second most common pressure on EU ecological status stems from over-abstraction of water, and this may be due to 'over-allocating water to users in a river basin due to an overestimation of the available amounts, or to economic or political pressure', as well as to 'illegal abstraction'.

Since there is no EU definition of 'ecological flow', the plan points to the need to determine ecological flow, which it defines as 'the amount of water required for the aquatic ecosystem to continue to thrive and provide the services we rely upon'.

With regard to 'illegal abstraction' the plan states that it is for Member States to address this.

Does the Commission believe that EU legislation should include provisions requiring that:

1. The Water Framework Directive (WFD) include a definition of ecological flow that is easy to understand, verify and apply, and that 'ecological flows' should refer to flows that make it possible to achieve good ecological status of watercourses and to maintain at least the fish life and vegetation of the associated banks?

2. Ecological flows be determined and complied with, without regard to the different uses of the water (i.e. that no use should be given more consideration than others, except for a restriction prior to other uses, with the exception of basic supply to populations that are already established)?

3. It be considered mandatory to detect and eliminate instances of illegal abstraction?

4. Member States maintain an information record of spatial data, which is fully accessible to the public, identifying irrigation perimeters, the water resources allocated to them and their origin, so that any citizen may check on the existence, extent and allocation of water and the characteristics of any perimeter?

Joint answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission

(20 February 2014)

Following an extensive evaluation of its existing policy, the Commission published in 2012 a Blueprint ([1]) which outlines actions to safeguard Europe's water resources and sets forth the Commission's assessment of the EU water policy. The Commission can only reiterate that the current EU legal framework on water is extensive, flexible and essentially fit to address the challenges faced by the aquatic environment. The Commission does not intend to amend the EU water legislation to include more specific provisions but stresses the need for better implementation and increased integration of water policy objectives into other policy areas.

The Blueprint stressed the need to define ecological flow, i.e. the amount of water required for the aquatic ecosystem, as a tool to address potential over-allocation. As part of the Common Implementation Strategy of the Water Framework Directive ([2]), the Commission is working with stakeholders and Member States to agree on an EU definition of ecological flow, a method to calculate it, and to identify good practices for its application. This work will result in a guidance document to be used by Member States in the implementation of the next cycle of River Basin Management Plans.

Water allocation, prioritisation between different users and addressing illegal abstraction are matters of national competence. As for abstraction permits, Member States must comply with their transparency obligations under the Access to Environmental Information Directive ([3]).

([1]) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions A Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water Resources (COM/2012/0673 final) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2012:0673:FIN:EN:PDF

([2]) Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy (OJ L 327, 22.12.2000).

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

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014176/13
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE) y Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo (S&D)
(17 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Gestión del agua en la EU —Vulnerabilidad de las aguas

En noviembre de 2013, los grupos Ecologistas en Acción, Aigua és Vida, Som lo que Sembrem, Grup de Defensa del Ter, Plataforma de Defensa del Ebro, Marea Azul del Sur, Red Agua Pública e Ingenieros sin Fronteras presentaron el documento «Propuestas para la mejora de la gestión del agua en la EU».

El «Plan para salvaguardar los recursos hídricos de Europa» hace mención a los efectos derivados del cambio climático centrándose en las sequías y las inundaciones y señala que las actuaciones propuestas pueden considerarse insuficientes para reducir las consecuencias negativas de ambos efectos.

Como consecuencia de los efectos del cambio climático, se están reduciendo sustancialmente los recursos hídricos disponibles y está aumentando el consumo ocasionado por las plantas en los cultivos (debido al aumento de las temperaturas).

Las sequías son fenómenos recurrentes en el sur de Europa por lo que más adecuado es adaptarse a ellas y adoptar medidas para minimizar sus efectos.

Ante el aumento de las inundaciones, los esfuerzos se deberán centrar en dejar libres de construcciones de todo tipo los cauces y las zonas de influencia directa de los mismos.

El bosque ribereño palía los efectos de las inundaciones ya que reduce la velocidad del agua y favorece la infiltración.

¿Considera la Comisión que tendría que estar incluido en la normativa comunitaria que:

1. los Estados miembros deban calcular las aportaciones medias a los cauces en régimen natural en relación con todas sus cuencas hidrográficas teniendo en cuenta los valores de los últimos años para que, en caso de detección de reducciones significativas, se proceda a recalcular las asignaciones de agua a los diferentes usos;

2. la reutilización de aguas residuales para el regadío y la industria siempre deban llevarse a cabo, con independencia de que existan o no situaciones de sequía;

3. los Estados miembros elaboren y aprueben planes de sequía para cada una de las cuencas hidrográficas para determinar en cada momento la distribución de los recursos y las diferentes medidas que deberán adoptarse para minimizar sus efectos, garantizando la conservación de los ecosistemas hídricos;

4. una medida para prevenir las inundaciones es dejar libres los cauces y las zonas de influencia de los mismos de construcciones de todo tipo;

5. una vez que se proceda a la eliminación de estas construcciones, se deba proceder a la restauración ambiental de esas áreas con vegetación autóctona y bosque ribereño;

6. los Estados miembros deban delimitar todas las zonas inundables teniendo en cuenta un periodo de retorno de al menos 500 años?

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

La Comisión no tiene previsto de momento modificar la Directiva marco del agua ([1]), ya que el plan de los recursos hídricos ([2]) determinó recientemente que el marco jurídico de la UE es adecuado para proteger las aguas de la Unión. Las diferencias ambientales, sociales y económicas en la EU aconsejan que cada Estado miembro establezca un enfoque a su medida, siempre dentro de los parámetros de la UE.

([1]) Directiva 2000/60/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 23 de octubre de 2000, por la que se establece un marco comunitario de actuación en el ámbito de la política de aguas (DO L 327 de 22.12.2000).
([2]) Comunicación de la Comisión al Parlamento Europeo, al Consejo, al Comité Económico y Social Europeo y al Comité de las Regiones. Plan para salvaguardar los recursos hídricos de Europa [COM(2012) 673 final]. http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2012:0673:FIN:ES:PDF

La Directiva marco del agua ya contiene disposiciones sobre una gestión cuantitativa y de las sequías adecuada. Compete a los Estados miembros desarrollar y aplicar esas disposiciones sobre el terreno en el marco de sus planes hidrológicos de cuenca.

La reutilización segura de las aguas residuales tiene un potencial considerable, y la Comisión está analizando las posibilidades de facilitarla en aquellas áreas donde resultaría útil hacerlo.

En el marco de la Directiva sobre inundaciones ([3]), los Estados miembros desarrollan planes de gestión de los riesgos de inundación que deben considerar las repercusiones de las políticas de uso de la tierra. Ahora bien, dejar libres de construcciones todas las zonas expuestas a inundaciones podría ser desproporcionado, mientras que la restauración de las zonas ribereñas es necesaria.

En el contexto de la Directiva sobre inundaciones, los Estados miembros elaboran mapas de peligrosidad por inundaciones que reflejan, como mínimo, la probabilidad baja o media de inundación. El periodo de retorno lo eligen las autoridades nacionales.

([3]) Directiva 2007/60/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 23 de octubre de 2007, relativa a la evaluación y gestión de los riesgos de inundación (DO L 288 de 6.11.2007).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014176/13
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE) and Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo (S&D)
(17 December 2013)

Subject: Water management in the EU — vulnerability of water

In November 2013, the groups Ecologistas en Acción, Aigua és Vida, Som lo que Sembrem, Grup de Defensa del Ter, Plataforma de Defensa del Ebro, Marea Azul del Sur, Red Agua Pública and Ingenieros sin Fronteras presented the document entitled 'Proposals for improved water management in the EU'.

The Blueprint to safeguard Europe's water resources mentions the effects of climate change, focusing on droughts and floods, and states that the actions proposed may be could be considered insufficient to reduce the negative consequences of both effects.

As a result of the effects of climate change, available water resources are falling significantly and consumption by planted crops is increasing (because of the rise in temperatures).

Droughts are recurrent phenomena in southern Europe, so it is better to adapt to them and to take steps to minimise their effects.

In view of the increase in flooding, efforts should focus on leaving channels and areas with a direct impact on them free of construction of any kind.

Riverbank woodland used to mitigate the effects of floods, since it reduces the speed of the water and encourages the water to drain into the soil.

Does the Commission believe that EU legislation should include provisions requiring that:

1. Member States calculate the average contributions to the channels under natural conditions in relation to all their water catchment areas, taking into account the values for recent years so that, in the event that significant drops are identified, water allocations for different uses may be recalculated?

2. waste water always be re-used for irrigation and industry, irrespective of whether or not a drought situation exists?

3. Member States draw up and adopt drought plans for each of the water catchment areas to determine the distribution of resources at all times, and the various measures that should be taken to minimise their effects, guaranteeing the conservation of water ecosystems?

4. as a flood prevention measure, channels and areas with an impact on them be left free of construction of any kind?

5. once these structures are removed, environmental restoration of these areas be undertaken, with native vegetation and riverbank trees?

6. Member States demarcate all flood-risk areas, using a recurrence interval of at least 500 years?

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

The Commission does not envisage at this stage changes to the Water Framework Directive (WFD) [1] as the Water Blueprint [2] recently found that the EU legal framework is fit to protect EU waters. Environmental, social and economic differences in the EU call for tailored approaches by Member States (MS) within EU parameters.

The WFD already includes provisions addressing the issues of proper quantitative management and drought management. Those provisions should be fleshed out and implemented on the ground by Member States in the framework of their River Basin Management Plans.

[1] Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy (OJ L 327, 22.12.2000).

[2] COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS A Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water Resources (COM/2012/0673 final) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2012:0673:FIN:EN:PDF

Safe waste water reuse has an important potential and the Commission is looking into ways of facilitating it in those areas where it would be useful.

Under the Floods Directive (FD) ([3]) MS develop flood risk management plans which should consider the impacts of land use policies. However, clearing all flood-prone areas from constructions could be disproportionate while restoration of riparian areas should be pursued.

Under the FD, MS develop flood hazard maps for at least low and medium probability events. The return period is chosen by national authorities.

([3]) Directive 2007/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2007 on the assessment and management of flood risks (OJ L 288, 6.11.2007).