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 294/01)

Treść Strona

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-013235/13
aan de Commissie (Vicevoorzitter / Hoge Vertegenwoordiger)
Marietje Schaake (ALDE)
(21 november 2013)

Betreft: VP/HR — Offensieve capaciteiten van de EU

De Europese Unie breidt momenteel haar militaire capaciteiten op een aantal gebieden van moderne technologie uit, in het bijzonder op de gebieden cyberveiligheid en „remotely piloted aircraft systems" (RPAS), ook wel drones genaamd. Het kan goed zijn dat dergelijke technologieën in de context van het gemeenschappelijk buitenlands en veiligheidsbeleid een belangrijke rol spelen, maar vooralsnog ontbreekt het aan een juridisch en democratisch kader voor toezicht op het offensieve gebruik ervan. Het is onduidelijk of de EU bezig is met het ontwikkelen van offensieve cybercapaciteiten. In het onlangs gepubliceerde verslag van de VP/HR over de toekomst van het GBVB wordt gesproken over de „operationele capaciteiten" van drones, en naar verluidt vallen hieronder ook offensieve capaciteiten ([1]). Democratisch toezicht en duidelijkheid met betrekking tot deze ontwikkelingen zijn van cruciaal belang.

1. Kan de VP/HR aangeven of de EU bezig is met het ontwikkelen van offensieve cybercapaciteiten en zo ja, op welke wijze voor democratisch toezicht hierop wordt gezorgd?

2. Wat is de reactie van de VP/HR op het volgende citaat uit de Nederlandse nationale Cyber Security Research agenda: „in de meeste ontwikkelde landen […] neemt de belangstelling voor een proactieve aanvalsmacht toe"?

3. Kan de VP/HR verduidelijken wat bedoeld wordt met de operationele capaciteit van RPAS en of hieronder ook gewapend optreden valt en zo niet, waarom niet?

4. Hoe zal het misbruik van het gebruik van geweld, van toezicht en het verzamelen van inlichtingen worden voorkomen?

5. Op welke wijze gaat de VP/HR zich inzetten voor een Europese benadering van het ontwikkelen van RPAS, zoals wordt aangegeven in het verslag over de toekomst van het GBVB?

6. Wie zou bevoegd zijn voor het geven van toestemming van het gebruik van offensieve capaciteiten door de EU?

7. Hoe gaat de VP/HR het Europees Parlement informeren over en betrekken bij het thema offensieve capaciteiten?

8. Hoe verhouden de hierboven bedoelde offensieve capaciteiten zich tot de ontwikkeling van een Europees leger en tot NAVO-samenwerking?

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

1.-2. De doelstellingen van de EU in verband met cyberspace zijn gericht op de versterking van de weerbaarheid van de communicatie- en informatiesystemen die het gemeenschappelijk veiligheids- en defensiebeleid ondersteunen. De cyberdefensie-activiteiten in het kader van het gemeenschappelijk veiligheids- en defensiebeleid concentreren zich op de ontwikkeling van de capaciteit om gesofisticeerde cyberbedreigingen op te sporen, te beantwoorden en ervan te herstellen. Bijgevolg bestaan er op EU-niveau geen initiatieven om offensieve capaciteiten te ontwikkelen op het gebied van cyberbeveiliging. De hv/vv verkeert niet in de positie om de juistheid te bepalen van het citaat in kwestie van de Nederlandse Nationale Cyber Security Research Agenda, die wordt uitgegeven door een privaat Nederlands innovatieplatform.

3.-8. De Europese Raad stemde voor de oprichting van een gemeenschap rond de zogenaamde Medium Altitude, Long Endurance (MALE) Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA). Dit vormt de eerste verkennende stap in het ontwikkelen van mogelijk dubbel gebruik van deze toestellen. De gesprekken over RPA's bevinden zich echter nog niet in het stadium dat er een operationele capaciteit wordt bepaald, laat staan een specifiek gebruik. Er zijn bestaande nationale, Europese en internationale normen betreffende het gebruik van geweld, elektronisch toezicht en gegevensbescherming. Het standpunt van de EU is dat zij dienen te worden gerespecteerd.

([1]) http://eeas.europa.eu/statements/docs/2013/131015_02_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013235/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Marietje Schaake (ALDE)
(21 November 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — EU offensive capabilities

The European Union is in the process of expanding its military capabilities in a number of technologically advanced areas, most notably cyber security and remotely piloted aircraft systems (RPAS), or drones. While the role that such technologies could play within the framework of the common foreign and security policy may be important, the legal and democratic framework to provide proper oversight over the offensive use of such systems is lacking. It remains unclear whether the EU is developing offensive cyber capabilities. The VP/HR's recent report on the future of CFSP refers to the 'operational capacities' of drones: presumably this would also include offensive capabilities. ([1]) Democratic oversight and clarity on these developments are crucial.

1. Can the VP/HR clarify whether the EU is developing an offensive cyber capability? If so, how is democratic oversight of this capability ensured?

2. How does the VP/HR view the following quote, from the Dutch National Cyber Security Research Agenda, 'in most advanced countries […] interest in a pro-active strike force is growing'?

3. Can the VP/HR clarify what is meant by the operational capacity of RPAS and whether this would include armed action? If not, why not?

4. How will abuse of the use of force, surveillance and intelligence-gathering be prevented?

5. How does the VP/HR plan to promote a European approach for developing RPAS, as stated in the report on the future of CFSP?

6. Who would authorise the use of any offensive capabilities on behalf of the EU?

7. How will the VP/HR inform and involve the European Parliament with regard to offensive capabilities?

8. How do the abovementioned offensive capabilities relate to the development of a European army, and to NATO cooperation?

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

1.-2. The EU objectives in the cyber domain focus on strengthening the resilience of communication and information systems supporting the Common Security and Defence Policy. Cyber defence activities within the Common Security and Defence Policy concentrate on capability development in detecting, responding to and recovering from sophisticated cyber threats. Accordingly there are no initiatives at the EU level aimed at developing any offensive cyber capabilities. The HR/VP is not in a position to assess the validity of the specific quote from the Dutch National Cyber Security Research Agenda, which is edited under the responsibility of a private Dutch innovation platform.

3.-8. The European Council endorsed the establishment of a proposed establishment of a Medium Altitude, Long Endurance (MALE) Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) community This is a first exploratory step in the development of a potential dual use RPA Discussions are not yet at the stage of defining operational capability, let alone specific uses. There are existing national, EU and international norms regarding the use of force, surveillance and data protection. The EU's position is that they must be respected.

([1]) http://eeas.europa.eu/statements/docs/2013/131015_02_en.pdf

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014141/13
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(16 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Pericolo deflazionistico e interventi possibili

Il taglio inatteso del tasso di riferimento per i mercati finanziari da parte della BCE all'inizio di novembre ha portato all'attenzione degli analisti il problema che maggiormente minaccia la situazione finanziaria globale, europea e italiana in particolare: il rischio di deflazione, cioè la riduzione continuata e persistente nel tempo del livello generale dei prezzi. Fino a prima del fallimento di Lehman Brothers, le banche centrali si preoccupavano di mantenere bassa l'inflazione in un quadro di stabilità della crescita macroeconomica. Ancora nell'estate 2008, con una decisione passata alla storia come un terribile errore, la BCE di Jean Claude Trichet aumentò i tassi di riferimento per fronteggiare l'inflazione al 4 % causata dalla temporanea salita del prezzo del petrolio a 147$ al barile. Dopo il 15/09/2008, però, la deflazione è divenuta il pericolo maggiore e per combatterla alla fine del 2008 le banche centrali hanno azzerato i tassi sotto il loro controllo e hanno successivamente iniettato liquidità nell'economia mondiale acquistando direttamente titoli pubblici e privati a più lunga scadenza, in modo da sostenere il corso dei mercati obbligazionari e offrire così ossigeno ai bilanci delle banche commerciali, senza preoccuparsi troppo dell'effetto collaterale di queste politiche, cioè quello di alimentare sempre nuove bolle sui mercati finanziari. Nonostante questo, è stato registrato in Italia un calo record nell'erogazione del credito a famiglie e imprese. A ottobre i prestiti delle banche al settore privato hanno infatti visto una contrazione su base annua del 3,7 % dopo il -3,5 % di settembre, segnando la maggior flessione storica, secondo le statistiche di Bankitalia. Nel dettaglio, i prestiti alle famiglie sono scesi dell'1,3 % sui dodici mesi (-1,1 % a settembre), mentre quelli alle società non finanziarie sono crollati del 4,9 % (-4,2 % a settembre).

Secondo sempre più numerosi illustri analisti e accademici l'avanzato welfare dei Paesi europei è la sola caratteristica che ci separa dalla grande depressione americana.

Alla luce di tutto ciò, può la Commissione riferire:

1. se intende supportare tali misure della BCE con politiche più incisive destinate a rinforzare il welfare degli Stati membri;

2. se ritiene necessario promuovere misure parallele per facilitare l'erogazione del credito a imprese e privati?

Risposta di Olli Rehn a nome della Commissione
(28 marzo 2014)

La Commissione è consapevole delle conseguenze sociali della recessione economica e le segue da vicino. Nell'ambito del semestre europeo 2013 il Consiglio, su proposta della Commissione, ha raccomandato all'Italia di assicurare l'efficacia dei trasferimenti sociali, in particolare tramite un orientamento più mirato delle prestazioni, specie per le famiglie a basso reddito con figli, e per combattere la disoccupazione giovanile. L'Italia sta adottando alcune azioni per alleviare la povertà, compresa l'introduzione di una nuova «social card». Per contrastare il crescente tasso di disoccupazione giovanile, l'Italia ha predisposto una «garanzia per i giovani» e ha presentato un piano di attuazione, al momento in esame da parte della Commissione. L'attuazione rapida ed efficace della riforma del mercato del lavoro del 2012, in particolare per quanto riguarda l'estensione della copertura delle prestazioni di disoccupazione, consentirà inoltre di attenuare l'impatto sociale della crisi.

La Commissione finanzia vari strumenti politici che prevedono finanziamenti alle PMI attraverso diversi canali, tra cui sovvenzioni e strumenti finanziari. L'Italia beneficia ampiamente di questi strumenti: tra il 2007 e il giugno 2013 circa 50 000 PMI italiane hanno ricevuto quasi 2 miliardi di EUR di garanzie sul debito dal Fondo europeo per gli investimenti. Ulteriori conferimenti di capitale sono sostenuti dal bilancio centrale dell'UE attraverso la Banca europea per gli investimenti (BEI), i cui strumenti per stimolare il settore privato e incentivare gli investimenti nel mercato dei capitali nelle PMI sono stati rafforzati. Su proposta della Commissione, il Consiglio ha infine raccomandato all'Italia di promuovere ulteriormente lo sviluppo dei mercati dei capitali, di diversificare e migliorare l'accesso delle imprese ai finanziamenti, in particolare al capitale, e di promuoverne la capacità di innovazione e la crescita.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014141/13
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(16 December 2013)

Subject: Deflation threat and possible countermeasures

In early November 2013, the European Central Bank (ECB) unexpectedly cut the reference rate for financial markets, drawing analysts' attention to the problem posing the greatest threat to the global financial situation, and to that of Europe and Italy in particular: the risk of deflation, or the continued and persistent reduction of the general level of prices over time. Up until the collapse of Lehman Brothers, central banks were concerned with keeping inflation low within a context of stable macroeconomic growth. In the same summer of 2008, the ECB under Jean-Claude Trichet made what would go down in history as a terrible mistake when it increased the reference rates to counter the 4% inflation rate caused by the temporary increase in the price of oil to USD 147 per barrel. After 15 September 2008, however, deflation became the greatest threat. To combat it, central banks cut the rates under their control to rock-bottom levels at the end of that year. They then injected money into the global economy by directly buying up longer-term public and private securities in order to support the bond markets and thus boost commercial banks' balance sheets, without worrying too much about the effect that these policies would have in terms of fuelling more stock market bubbles. Despite this, lending to families and businesses in Italy has fallen to a record low. Lending by banks to the private sector fell by 3.7% year-on-year in October, following the -3.5% drop in September, which marks the steepest decline on record, according to Bank of Italy data. In particular, loans to families fell by 1.3% over the 12-month period (-1.1% in September), while loans to non-financial corporations plummeted by 4.9% (-4.2% in September).

An increasing number of leading analysts and academics maintain that European countries' advanced welfare systems are the only thing that separates us from America's Great Depression.

In view of the above, can the Commission say:

1. whether it intends to supplement these ECB measures with more robust policies to strengthen Member States' welfare systems;

2. whether it considers it necessary to promote parallel measures to encourage lending to businesses and private individuals?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(28 March 2014)

The Commission acknowledges and monitors the social consequences of the economic downturn. Within the context of the 2013 European Semester, the Council, upon proposal of the Commission, recommended Italy to ensure effectiveness of social transfers, notably through better targeting of benefits, especially for low income households with children, and to address youth unemployment. Italy is taking some action on poverty, including the introduction of a new social card. To tackle the increasing youth unemployment rate, Italy has established a Youth Guarantee and brought forward an implementation plan, currently under scrutiny by the Commission. The swift and effective implementation of the 2012 labour market reform, in particular with regard to the extension of the coverage of unemployment benefits, will also help cushioning the social impact of the crisis.

The Commission supports various policy instruments that provide financing to SMEs through different channels, including grants and financial instruments. Italy benefits extensively from these instruments: between 2007 and June 2013 about 50.000 Italian SMEs received almost EUR 2bn of debt guarantees granted through the European Investment Fund. Additional equity investments are supported from the central EU budget funds through the European Investment Bank (EIB), whose tools aiming at leveraging the private sector and incentivise capital market investments in SMEs are being enhanced. Finally, the Council, upon proposal by the Commission, recommended Italy to promote further the development of capital markets to diversify and enhance firms' access to finance, especially into equity, and in turn foster their innovation capacity and growth.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014273/13
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Fiorello Provera (EFD) e Charles Tannock (ECR)
(18 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Premio Nobel per la pace invita alla prudenza nel dialogo con l'Iran

All'inizio del novembre 2013, il premio Nobel per la pace Shirin Ebadi ha invitato gli Stati Uniti e l'Unione europea a vietare all'Iran l'utilizzo dei satelliti occidentali per trasmettere quella che definisce la «propaganda della Repubblica islamica». Attualmente, l'Iran trasmette via satellite programmi in più di dieci lingue in tutto il mondo. Shirin Ebadi ha affermato la necessità di proibire al governo dell'Iran l'utilizzo dei satelliti, sottolineando che tale divieto permetterebbe di spegnere i «microfoni della propaganda governativa». Ha inoltre invitato a imporre un divieto di viaggio agli alti funzionari del governo e a confiscare i beni di coloro che hanno depositato fondi presso banche europee e americane.

Shirin Ebadi afferma che era convinta che il presidente Hassan Rouhani avrebbe cambiato le cose una volta salito al potere, ma tutto è invece rimasto come prima. Un portavoce della missione dell'Iran alle Nazioni Unite, Alireza Miryousefi, ha dichiarato che l'Iran, specialmente dopo l'elezione del presidente Rouhani, ha ribadito il proprio impegno risoluto a favore della promozione e della tutela di tutti i diritti umani all'interno e all'esterno del paese.

Shirin Ebadi osserva tuttavia che, secondo la Federazione internazionale per i diritti umani (FIDH), tra il 14 giugno e il 1º ottobre 2013 sono state giustiziate oltre 200 persone, tra cui quattro minorenni. Il numero delle esecuzioni è doppio rispetto a quelle che hanno avuto luogo nello stesso periodo nel 2012. Shirin Ebadi ha invitato i paesi europei a non accelerare la ripresa delle relazioni con il governo di Teheran se prima non si registreranno miglioramenti nella situazione dei diritti umani in Iran.

1. Qual è la posizione della Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante in merito all'utilizzo da parte del governo iraniano dei satelliti europei per la trasmissione di programmi finanziati dal governo?

2. Quali misure è la Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante disposta ad adottare affinché si effettui un esame più approfondito della situazione dei diritti umani?

3. Considerato il numero di esecuzioni che hanno avuto luogo, qual è la posizione della Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante in merito alla gestione della problematica dei diritti umani in Iran da parte del presidente Hassan Rouhani?

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

L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente è a conoscenza dell'invito rivolto dal premio Nobel Shirin Ebadi all'UE affinché vieti all'Iran di utilizzare i satelliti europei per trasmettere determinati programmi. Si tratta, tuttavia, di una decisione commerciale e non spetta all'UE vietare o proibire l'uso di satelliti europei per alcuni utilizzatori o programmi.

Per quanto riguarda la situazione dei diritti umani in Iran, l'Unione europea è preoccupata per l'assenza di progressi sostanziali, anche dopo gli impegni assunti nel 2013 dal presidente Hassan Rouhani.

Il ricorso alla pena di morte e l'elevatissimo numero di esecuzioni nel 2013, proseguite nel 2014, preoccupano notevolmente l'UE. L'onorevole deputato può pertanto esser certo che l'Unione europea continuerà a seguire attentamente l'evoluzione della situazione, sperando che tutte le autorità iraniane collaborino per riesaminare il ricorso alla pena di morte. A tale riguardo, l'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente rammenta la posizione dell'UE contro l'applicazione della pena capitale e il suo invito all'Iran ad introdurre una moratoria sulla pena di morte e a sospendere tutte le esecuzioni.

Quanto all'esame approfondito cui viene fatto riferimento, è opportuno rilevare che l'Unione europea sostiene il rinnovo del mandato del relatore speciale delle Nazioni Unite per i diritti umani in Iran e ha ripetutamente invitato l'Iran ad autorizzare quest'ultimo a visitare il paese affinché possa adempiere al mandato conferitogli dalle Nazioni Unite.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014273/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Fiorello Provera (EFD) and Charles Tannock (ECR)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Nobel Peace laureate calls for caution regarding engagement with Iran

In early November 2013, Nobel Prize laureate Shirin Ebadi called for the USA and EU to ban Iran from using western satellites to broadcast what she described as Islamic Republic propaganda. Iran currently broadcasts programmes in more than a dozen languages around the globe via satellite. Ms Ebadi said that the government of Iran had to be prevented from using satellites and that such a ban would serve to shut off the 'propaganda microphones of the government'. She also called for senior government officials to face travel bans and for those who have funds deposited with European and American banks to have their assets confiscated.

Ms Ebadi says she believed that President Hassan Rouhani would make changes once in power, but that nothing has changed. A spokesman for Iran's mission to the UN, Alireza Miryousefi, has claimed that 'Iran, especially after the election of President Rouhani, has put a new emphasis on the unwavering dedication towards the promotion and protection of all human rights inside and outside the country'.

Ms Ebadi notes, however, that according to the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), over 200 people, including four minors, were executed between 14 June and 1 October 2013. This is double the number of executions that took place in the same period in 2012. She has warned EU nations not to rush to restore ties with the government in Tehran without improvements to Iran's human rights record.

1. What is the position of the Vice-President/High Representative regarding the Iranian Government's use of European satellites to broadcast state-sponsored programmes?

2. What steps is the Vice-President/High Representative prepared to adopt to push for greater scrutiny of Iran's human rights record?

3. In light of the number of executions which have taken place, what is the position of the Vice-President/High Representative regarding President Hassan Rouhani's handling of human rights issues in Iran?

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

The HR/VP is familiar with the proposal made by Nobel Prize laureate Shirin Ebadi regarding her call on the EU to forbid Iran to broadcast certain programmes from European satellites. It is, however, a commercial decision and not for the EU to forbid or ban the use of European satellites for certain users or programmes.

As for the human rights situation in Iran, the European Union is concerned that no substantial progress have been materialising, even after the commitments made in 2013 by President Hassan Rouhani.

The use of the death penalty and the very high number of executions in 2013, which has continued into 2014, are major issues of concern for the EU. The Honourable Member can therefore rest assured that the EU continues to closely follow developments, hoping that all Iranian authorities will work together and review the use of the death penalty. In this respect, the HR/VP recalls the EU's position against the use of the death penalty and its call on Iran to introduce a moratorium on the use of the death penalty and to put a halt on all pending executions.

In terms of scrutinising, it is also worth noting that the European Union supports the renewal of the UN mandate for the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Iran and that the Union repeatedly has called on Iran to let him visit the country in order for him to fulfil his UN mandate.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-000005/14
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(3 Ιανουαρίου 2014)

Θέμα: Αποκαλύψεις Eurobserver

Σύμφωνα με το κοινοτικό έντυπο EurObserv'er, την ίδια ώρα που οι λαοί στον Ευρωπαϊκό Νότο υποφέρουν από τα σκληρά μέτρα λιτότητας, στις χώρες του μνημονίου ένας πακτωλός χρημάτων εισρέει στα ταμεία των «Συμβούλων» που έχουν οριστεί από την Τρόικα. Προβληματίζει ιδιαίτερα το γεγονός ότι αυτό γίνεται κρυφά και χωρίς να έχει προηγηθεί διαγωνισμός για την επιλογή των συμβούλων.

Σύμφωνα με το σχετικό δημοσίευμα, οι Σύμβουλοι Alvarez & Marsal, BlackRock, Oliver Wyman και Pimco, ως χρηματοοικονομικοί σύμβουλοι που έχουν διαδραματίσει καταλυτικό ρόλο στις χώρες της κρίσης, έχουν κοστίσει στους φορολογούμενους σε Κύπρο, Ελλάδα, Ιρλανδία, Πορτογαλία και Ισπανία, πολλά εκατομμύρια ευρώ. Μάλιστα, αυτοί οι «ανεξάρτητοι» ειδικοί, χρησιμοποιούνται από την τρόικα, προκειμένου να εκπονήσουν μελέτες για τις κεφαλαιακές ανάγκες των τραπεζών, ή μιας χώρας, προκειμένου να αποφευχθεί η χρεοκοπία. Προκύπτουν πολλά και εύλογα ερωτήματα.

Ερωτάται λοιπόν η Επιτροπή εάν, ως μέλος της Τρόικας, γνωρίζει:

— Ποιος έχει πρόσβαση σε εμπιστευτικές πληροφορίες που εξασφαλίζουν αυτοί οι «Σύμβουλοι»;

— Πώς χρησιμοποιούνται αυτές οι εμπιστευτικές πληροφορίες όταν οι πιο πάνω Εταιρείες «Συμβούλων» προσλαμβάνουν υπεργολάβους;

— Πώς ελέγχει να μην υπάρχει ένας κλειστός κύκλος από μια μικρή ομάδα μεγάλων εταιρειών που έχουν ουσιαστικά de facto μονοπώλιο στη διαχείριση των ευρωπαϊκών διασώσεων;

— Πώς διασφαλίζει τη μη σύγκρουση συμφερόντων, ότι δηλαδή οι πιο πάνω τέσσερις εταιρείες δεν δραστηριοποιούνται παράλληλα στις αγορές των χωρών που υποτίθεται πως ελέγχουν και συμβουλεύουν;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(1 Απριλίου 2014)

Ο σχεδιασμός ενός προγράμματος δημοσιονομικής προσαρμογής είναι ένα περίπλοκο έργο, το οποίο πρέπει να εκτελείται σε σχετικά σύντομο χρονικό διάστημα. Σε ορισμένες περιπτώσεις, λόγω του υψηλού επιπέδου εμπειρογνωσίας που απαιτείται προκειμένου να αντιμετωπιστούν πολύ συγκεκριμένα οικονομικά θέματα, η εθνική κυβέρνηση αναγκάζεται να προσφεύγει σε εξωτερικές εταιρείες συμβούλων.

Οι έλεγχοι της ποιότητας των στοιχείων του ενεργητικού (AQR) είναι εποπτικά καθήκοντα και εναπόκειται στην τελική ευθύνη των οικείων κρατών μελών να συνάψουν σύμβαση παροχής συμβουλευτικών υπηρεσιών. Αυτό ισχύει επίσης για τον χειρισμό της διαδικασίας επιλογής, η οποία είναι πλήρως υπό τον έλεγχο των κυβερνήσεων των δικαιούχων κρατών μελών, και για κάθε συμφωνία σχετικά με την αμοιβή αλλά, όπως και σε κάθε άλλη περίπτωση, η Επιτροπή ανέκαθεν επιμένει για την ενδελεχή εφαρμογή των κανόνων της ΕΕ περί δημοσίων συμβάσεων. Οι εξωτερικοί σύμβουλοι δεν συμμετέχουν στον σχεδιασμό των επακόλουθων μέτρων πολιτικής, εντός ή εκτός του πλαισίου του προγράμματος.

Η σχετική εμπειρογνωμοσύνη είναι συνήθως διαθέσιμη εντός των αντίστοιχων εθνικών εποπτικών αρχών. Ωστόσο, στο πλαίσιο της σοβαρής κρίσης στον τραπεζικό τομέα, οι συμμετέχοντες στην αγορά συνήθως αμφισβητούν τις ικανότητες και την αμεροληψία της προληπτικής εποπτείας των αρμόδιων εποπτικών αρχών. Οι εν λόγω αμφιβολίες ενδέχεται να οδηγήσουν σε μείζονα μακροοικονομικό κίνδυνο. Ενώ οι εταίροι της τρόικας δεν έχουν κατ' ανάγκη την ικανότητα που απαιτείται για την ταχεία διενέργεια μεγάλης κλίμακας αξιολογήσεων του τραπεζικού τομέα, η χρήση εξωτερικών εμπειρογνωμόνων εξασφαλίζει έναν βαθμό ανεξαρτησίας της αξιολόγησης ο οποίος είναι αναγκαίος προκειμένου να υπάρχει μια σαφής και έγκαιρη αξιολόγηση των κυριότερων προβλημάτων των πιστωτικών ιδρυμάτων και να βεβαιωθούν οι συμμετέχοντες στην αγορά και το ευρύτερο κοινό όσον αφορά την αμεροληψία της εν λόγω αξιολόγησης.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000005/14
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(3 January 2014)

Subject: EurObserv'er disclosures

According to the EU newspaper EurObserv'er, while the citizens of the southern European countries to which the memorandum of understanding applies are suffering from harsh austerity measures, large sums are flowing into the pockets of the 'consultants' appointed by the Troika. The fact that this is being done behind closed doors and without a public tender for the selection of the consultants, is a particular cause for concern.

According to the article, the financial consultants Alvarez & Marsal, BlackRock, Oliver Wyman and Pimco, which have played a key role in all the countries that were hit by the crisis, have so far cost the taxpayers in Cyprus, Greece, Ireland, Portugal and Spain several million euros. As a matter of fact, their 'independent' expertise is used by the Troika to carry out studies on the capital needs of the banks or of a country, in order to prevent a default. Several reasonable questions arise from these facts.

Therefore, can the Commission, as member of the Troika, provide the following information:

— Who has access to the confidential information collected by these 'consultants'?

— How is this confidential information handled when these 'consulting' Firms hire subcontractors?

— How can the Commission ensure that there is not a closed, small group of large companies having a *de facto* monopoly over the management of the European bailouts?

— How does the Commission avoid conflicts of interest and ensure that the abovementioned four firms are not active in the markets of the countries that they are supposed to audit and advise?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(1 April 2014)

Designing a financial adjustment programme is a complex task which has to be carried out in a relatively short period of time. In some cases, the high level of expertise needed to address very specific financial issues required national government to resort to external consultancies.

Asset Quality Reviews (AQRs) are supervisory tasks and it is the ultimate responsibility of the Member States concerned to contract for advisory services. This also applies to the handling of the selection process which is fully under the control of the governments of beneficiary Member States and any agreement on fees involved, but, as in any other case, the Commission always insist on the thorough application of EU procurement rules. External consultants are not involved in the design of the ensuing policy response within, or outside, the context of the programme.

Relevant expertise is normally available within respective national supervisors. But in the context of a severe crisis of the banking sector market participants typically question the quality and impartiality of prudential oversight of competent supervisors. Such doubts may give rise to major macro-financial risk. While Troika partners do not have the necessary capacity to necessarily quickly carry out large-scale banking sector assessments, the use of external consultants provides for a degree of independence of appreciation that is necessary to obtain a clear and timely assessment of the main problems in credit institutions and to reassure market participants and the broader public of the impartiality of such assessment.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000061/14
to the Commission
Roger Helmer (EFD)
(7 January 2014)

Subject: Issuing passports to citizens of non-EU countries

The Commission will have seen press reports indicating that some Member States, and especially Bulgaria and Romania, have been issuing their national passports to citizens of non-EU countries including Macedonia, Moldova, Turkey, Serbia and Ukraine ([1]). It is reported that tens of thousands of such passports have been issued by Bulgaria alone.

Is the Commission aware of these allegations? Does it believe they are true? Does it agree with me that if so, these Member States are making a mockery of the EU's free movement rules, and undermining any pretence of EU border controls? What action will the Commission take to address this problem? Does the Commission agree with me that existing Member States should be able to close their borders to immigrants from the countries implicated until the matter is investigated and resolved?

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

According to settled case-law of the Court of Justice of the EU, it is for each Member State, having due regard to Union law, to lay down the conditions for acquisition and loss of nationality. In accordance with Article 20 TFEU, granting Member State nationality also means granting EU citizenship and hence strong additional rights. Naturalisation decisions by a Member State are therefore not neutral with regard to other Member States and the EU.

The Commission expects Member States to use their prerogative to award nationality in a spirit of sincere cooperation with other Member States and the EU. Account should be taken of the norms and obligations by which they are bound under international law and the criteria upon which Member States traditionally build their nationality laws. The existence of a genuine link between the applicant and the country or its people should be a prerequisite for obtaining naturalisation.

The facilitated naturalisation procedure in Bulgaria referred to by the Honourable Member requires that the applicant is of Bulgarian origin and holds a certificate to attest of such origin ([2]). The facilitated naturalisation procedure in Romania applies to applicants who have lost their Romanian citizenship for reasons not imputable to them, and to their descendants up to the third degree ([3]). This is to be distinguished from situations where naturalisation is granted without the applicant having a genuine link with the country or its people.

Eurostat collects data on the naturalisation of third-country nationals by the Member States ([4]).

([1]) http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/immigration/10545457/Non-EU-citizens-will-be-able-to-work-in-Britain-after-Bulgarian-restrictions-lifted.html

([2]) Certificates of Bulgarian origin are issued by the State Agency for the Bulgarians Abroad, based on the merits of the application. See Article 15 of the Bulgarian Citizenship Law.

([3]) Article 11 of the Romanian Citizenship Law.

([4]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Acquisition_of_citizenship_statistics#Further_Eurostat_information
It for instance appears that in 2011 Bulgaria has naturalised around 600 non-EU nationals, mainly from FYROM (44.4%) and Moldova (14.2%): http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php?title=File:Five_main_previous_citizenships_of_persons_acquiring_citizenship_in_the_EU-27,_EFTA_and_candidate_countries,_2011.png&filetimestamp=20131220085813

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-000073/14
aan de Commissie
Lucas Hartong (NI)
(7 januari 2014)

Betreft: Beëindiging subsidies windmolens- en zonnepanelenindustrie

In een artikel van 2 januari jl. in de Engelse krant „The Telegraph" ([1]) gaf de Commissie aan dat „the current level of state support for renewable energy sources must be phased out by the end of the decade". Subsidies uit belastinggeld aan windmolen- en zonnepanelenindustrie moeten worden afgebouwd, aldus de Commissie. Eurocommissaris Connie Hedegaard hierover: „The eventual aim was the end of state aid for wind power. One of the things Europe has to do better is how we subsidise renewables. That is why the commission is reviewing state aid guidelines for energy, including renewables. (…) If they can manage themselves why have state aid?" Daarenboven verleende de Commissie afgelopen december miljoenen euro's subsidie vanuit het Europees globaliseringsfonds aan de bedrijven Vestas en FirstSolar voor een afvloeiingsregeling van ontslagen werknemers ([2]). In dat kader de volgende vragen:

1. Verbiedt de Commissie hiermee onomwonden staatssteun middels subsidies aan de windmolen- en zonnepanelenindustrie? Per direct? Zo nee, waarom niet?

2. Waarom wenst de Commissie aan de ene kant de genoemde subsidies te stoppen, terwijl aan de andere kant subsidie wordt gegeven aan bedrijven in deze sector die personeel moeten ontslaan?

3. Kan de Commissie garanderen dat er bij stopzetting van genoemde subsidies ook als directe consequentie niet langer bijdragen uit het globaliseringsfonds naar deze sector gaan, daar het faillissement niet ligt aan de globalisering, maar aan het wegvallen van subsidie?

4. Is de Commissie bereid per direct te stoppen met het subsidiëren van deze bedrijfssectoren met belastinggeld?

Antwoord van de heer Almunia namens de Commissie
(20 maart 2014)

De Commissie is niet voornemens om subsidies voor de windmolen- en zonnepanelenindustrie te verbieden. Lidstaten zouden deze technologieën moeten kunnen steunen om de 2020-doelstellingen te halen. Wel is de Commissie voornemens om steun minder verstorend te maken, zodat hernieuwbare energie niet wordt „overgecompenseerd" en beter wordt geïntegreerd in de interne energiemarkt. De Commissie wil voor een soepele overgang zorgen, zodat lidstaten hun regelingen in dat verband kunnen aanpassen. Over het gedetailleerde voorstel voor herziene richtsnoeren voor energie- en milieusteun liep er tot 14 februari jl. een publieke consultatie. De goedkeuring van deze nieuwe richtsnoeren staat momenteel gepland voor april ([3]).

Artikel 6, lid 1, van Verordening (EG) nr. 1927/2006 verbiedt uitdrukkelijk dat het Europees fonds voor aanpassing aan de globalisering („het EFG") de herstructurering van bedrijven of bedrijfstakken meefinanciert. Wel geeft het EFG steun aan individuele werknemers die worden ontslagen als gevolg van structurele veranderingen, om hen te helpen bij hun herintegratie.

Wanneer het ontslag van de werknemers in verband kan worden gebracht met handelsgerelateerde globalisering of de wereldwijde financieel-economische crisis, kunnen lidstaten bij het EFG een steunaanvraag indienen. In de EFG-verordening voor de periode 2014-2020 ([4]) zijn meer details te vinden over de nieuwe regels die vanaf begin 2014 voor dit fonds gelden.

In lijn met de Verdragsbepalingen en de desbetreffende richtsnoeren blijft de Commissie verder nauwgezet erop toezien dat alle staatssteunmaatregelen verenigbaar blijven met de interne markt.

([1]) http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/energy/renewableenergy/10548157/Europe-wants-to-block-UK-wind-farm-subsidies.html
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/nl/news-room/content/20131206IPR30023/html/EU-aid-worth-%E2 %82 %AC18.4-million-for-redundant-workers-in-Denmark-Finland-and-Germany.
([3]) Beschikbaar op: http://ec.europa.eu/competition/consultations/2013_state_aid_environment/index_en.html
([4]) Verordening (EU) nr. 1309/2013, PB L 347 van 20.12.2013, blz. 855.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000073/14
to the Commission
Lucas Hartong (NI)
(7 January 2014)

Subject: End of subsidies for onshore wind and solar power industries

On 2 January 2014, *The Telegraph* ([1]) published an article reporting on the Commission's view that 'the current level of state support for renewable energy sources must be phased out by the end of the decade.' Taxpayer subsidies for onshore wind and solar power industries should be cut, according to the Commission. European Commissioner Connie Hedegaard stated that 'the eventual aim was the end of state aid for wind power. "One of the things Europe has to do better is how we subsidise renewables […] That is why the Commission is reviewing state aid guidelines for energy, including renewables. […] If they can manage themselves why have state aid?"' In addition, last December the Commission granted millions of euros in subsidies from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund to the companies Vestas and FirstSolar for schemes to help redundant employees ([2]). This raises the following questions:

1. Does the Commission intend to absolutely forbid state aid in the form of subsidies for onshore wind and solar power industries? Will this ban come into effect immediately? If not, why not?

2. Why does the Commission wish to stop the aforementioned subsidies on the one hand, while on the other hand subsidies are being given to companies in this sector which are forced to make redundancies?

3. Can the Commission guarantee that, as a direct consequence of stopping the aforesaid subsidies, companies in this sector will also no longer receive aid from the Globalisation Adjustment Fund, since any bankruptcy would be the result not of globalisation but of the withdrawal of subsidies?

4. Is the Commission prepared to put an immediate stop to the subsidisation of these business sectors with taxpayers' money?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(20 March 2014)

The Commission has no intention of prohibiting subsidies to onshore wind and solar power industries. Member States should be able to support these technologies to achieve the 2020 targets. The Commission intends, however, to make such support less distortive to ensure that renewable energies do not get overcompensated and integrate better into the internal energy market. The Commission wants to ensure a smooth transition for Member States to adapt their schemes in this respect. The detailed proposal for revised state aid Guidelines for Energy and the Environment was under public consultation until 14 February and is currently planned for adoption in April ([3]).

Article 6.1 of Regulation (EC) 1927/2006 expressly prohibits the EGF from co-financing the restructuring of companies or sectors. The EGF instead provides support for individual workers made redundant as a result of structural changes in world trade patterns to facilitate their re-integration into employment.

Provided that the workers' redundancies can be linked to trade-related globalisation or to the global financial and economic crisis, Member States can apply for support from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF). The EGF Regulation (2014-2020) ([4]) provides more details on the new rules of this Fund from the beginning of 2014.

In line with the Treaty provisions and the relevant Guidelines, the Commission is and will remain vigilant to ensure that all state aid measures remain compatible with the internal market.

([1]) http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/energy/renewableenergy/10548157/Europe-wants-to-block-UK-wind-farm-subsidies.html
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/nl/news-room/content/20131206IPR30023/html/EU-aid-worth-%E2%82%AC18.4-million-for-redundant-workers-in-Denmark-Finland-and-Germany
([3]) Available on http://ec.europa.eu/competition/consultations/2013_state_aid_environment/index_en.html
([4]) Regulation (EC) No 1309/2013, OJ L 347 of 20.12.2013, p 855.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-000099/14
à la Commission (Vice-Présidente/Haute Représentante)
Marc Tarabella (S&D) et Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(8 janvier 2014)

Objet: VP/HR — Crise au Cambodge

Des grévistes tués par balles, des bonzes battus à la matraque, des manifestations interdites et réprimées, les leaders de l'opposition convoqués par la justice, etc. La spirale de la violence et de la répression semble sans limites dans un Cambodge en plein tumulte. Les événements des derniers jours indiquent que le royaume traverse l'une de ses plus graves crises politiques, si ce n'est une crise de régime. Alors que le «pays du sourire» s'apprête à célébrer demain le 35e anniversaire de la chute des Khmers rouges, le pouvoir de l'autoritaire Premier ministre Hun Sen, en place depuis 1985, est de plus en plus contesté. Les forces de sécurité ont été déployées massivement, témoignant de la fébrilité d'un régime sur les nerfs.

Au lendemain de la répression d'une manifestation d'ouvriers du textile, qui a fait au moins trois morts, la police, l'armée et des gros bras en civil ont investi le parc de la Démocratie. Dans ce parc situé au cœur de Phnom Penh, où l'opposition se rassemble pour réclamer de nouvelles élections, les militants du Parti du sauvetage national du Cambodge (CNRP) ont été dispersés à coups de barres de fer. Ensuite, le gouverneur de la capitale, Pa Socheatvong, a interdit tout rassemblement.

1. Comment la Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante de l'Union pour les affaires étrangères et la politique de sécurité compte-t-elle dénoncer ces pratiques autoritaires?

2. La Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante compte-t-elle rencontrer d'urgence les autorités du pays et discuter des modalités de mise en place d'une vraie démocratie?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Ashton, Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante au nom de la Commission
(26 mars 2014)

1. Après les manifestations de janvier, l'UE, dans une déclaration locale publiée le 4 janvier, a exprimé ses profondes préoccupations quant à l'usage excessif de la force. Depuis les élections législatives de juillet, elle a maintenu des contacts réguliers avec le gouvernement, appelant à une gestion pacifique des nombreuses manifestations se déroulant dans le pays. Depuis janvier, elle plaide en faveur du rétablissement de la pleine liberté de réunion.

2. La délégation de l'Union européenne au Cambodge suit de près la situation des Droits de l'homme dans le pays et prend régulièrement des mesures à ce sujet, soutenant prioritairement les défenseurs des Droits de l'homme arrêtés ou menacés. Ces mesures comportent notamment des contacts réguliers de haut niveau avec le gouvernement en vue de l'exhorter au respect du droit international et national.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000099/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Marc Tarabella (S&D) and Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(8 January 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Crisis in Cambodia

Strikers shot dead, monks clubbed with batons, demonstrations banned or broken up, opposition leaders hauled before the courts, etc. Cambodia is in turmoil, amidst a seemingly unending spiral of violence and repression. The events of the past few days show that the kingdom is undergoing one of the most serious political crises in its history, with the potential to bring down the government. As the 'country of smiles' prepares for tomorrow's 35th anniversary celebration of the fall of the Khmer Rouge, the grip on power of its authoritarian Prime Minister Hun Sen, in office since 1985, is increasingly coming under attack. The security forces have been deployed en masse, testifying to the agitation of a regime on edge.

The day after a demonstration by textile workers was broken up with at least three deaths, the police, army and thugs in civilian dress surrounded Freedom Park in central Phnom Penh. Inside the park, where the opposition is rallying to call for new elections, iron bars were used to disperse militants of the Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP), after which all public assemblies were banned by the governor of the capital, Pa Socheatvong.

1. How does the Vice-President of the European Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy intend to condemn these authoritarian moves?

2. Does the Vice-President/High Representative intend to meet with the country's authorities as a matter of urgency and discuss ways to introduce real democracy?

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

1. After the January demonstrations, the EU, in a local statement published on 4 January, expressed its deep concern about the excessive use of force. Since the July parliamentary elections, the EU has been in regular contact with the government, calling for a peaceful management of the many demonstrations taking place. Since January, the EU has called for the restoration of full freedom of assembly.

2. The EU Delegation in Cambodia closely follows the human rights situation in the country and is taking regular actions to address the issues — focusing its priorities on human rights defenders arrested or at risk. Actions include regular and high level contacts with the government to urge for respect of international and national laws.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-000174/14
au Conseil
Véronique Mathieu Houillon (PPE)
(9 janvier 2014)

Objet: Réactivation d'armes à feu

Le Conseil pourrait-il indiquer le nombre de réactivations d'armes à feu dans un État membre, lesquelles avaient été désactivées dans un État membre?

Réponse
(24 mars 2014)

Le Conseil ne dispose pas de l'information demandée par l'Honorable Parlementaire.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000174/14
to the Council
Véronique Mathieu Houillon (PPE)
(9 January 2014)

Subject: Reactivation of firearms

Can the Council say how many firearms which had previously been deactivated in one Member State have been reactivated in another Member State?

Reply
(24 March 2014)

The information requested by the Honourable Member is not available to the Council.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-000208/14
aan de Commissie
Philippe De Backer (ALDE)
(10 januari 2014)

Betreft: Invoeren van een sorteerlogo op Europees niveau

In België woedt al geruime tijd de discussie over het invoeren van een sorteerlogo op de PMD-zakken, zodat de burger weet wat niet en wel in de PMD-zak mag. In het Vlaams Parlement zijn daarover al enkele vragen gesteld. Argumentatie is dat de consument dan eindelijk weet welk afval in welke zak of container gesorteerd moet worden, waardoor ook voor de vuilnisophaal- en sorteerdiensten het werk een stuk eenvoudiger wordt. De bevoegde minister antwoordde dat er tegen één sorteerlogo juridische en praktische bezwaren bestaan. Alles wat productnormering betreft, is immers een federale bevoegdheid. Maar als België dat zou invoeren, zou dat volgens de bevoegde minister een verstoring van de Europese interne markt betekenen. Een regeling op Europees niveau dringt zich volgens haar dan ook op.

Vandaar de volgende vragen:

1. Erkent de Commissie dit probleem?

2. Plant de Commissie maatregelen om een Europees sorteerlogo in te voeren?

Antwoord van de heer Potočnik namens de Commissie
(26 maart 2014)

Op grond van de afvalstoffenrichtlijn ([1]) moeten de lidstaten uiterlijk in 2015 systemen invoeren voor de gescheiden inzameling van ten minste papier, metaal, kunststof en glas. De lidstaten mogen zelf bepalen welke inzamelingsmaatregelen zij treffen om de gewenste scheiding van recycleerbare afvalstoffen tot stand te brengen, afhankelijk van hun specifieke situatie.

De invoering van een sorteerlogo op afvalzakken voor recycleerbaar afval is een van de mogelijkheden, al mogen daarbij geen ongerechtvaardigde beperkingen van het vrije verkeer van goederen worden ingevoerd, bijvoorbeeld door te verlangen dat op producten of verpakkingen het nationale sorteerlogo moet worden aangebracht.

Aangezien in de lidstaten uiteenlopende afvalbeheersystemen zijn opgezet, plant de Commissie momenteel geen maatregelen om een Europees sorteerlogo in te voeren.

([1]) Richtlijn 2008/98/EG betreffende afvalstoffen. PB L 312 van 21.11.2008.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000208/14
to the Commission
Philippe De Backer (ALDE)
(10 January 2014)

Subject: Introduction of a sorting logo at European level

In Belgium, debate has been raging for some time about the idea of introducing a sorting logo on bags for disposing of recyclable waste, so that the public know what they can put in the bags and what they cannot. Questions have been asked about the matter in the Flemish Parliament. The argument is that consumers will then finally know which rubbish should be placed in which bag or container after sorting, which will also make life a good deal simpler for refuse collectors and sorters. The minister responsible has replied that there are legal and practical objections to a single sorting logo. Anything which has a bearing on product standards is a federal responsibility in Belgium. But if Belgium were to introduce such a logo, the minister says that it would distort the European internal market. She therefore considers it a matter of urgency for European rules on the subject to be adopted.

1. Does the Commission acknowledge this problem?

2. Is the Commission planning measures to introduce a European sorting logo?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(26 March 2014)

The Waste Framework Directive ([1]) requires Member States to set up systems for the separate collection of at least paper, metal, plastic and glass by 2015. It is up to Member States to choose the specific separate collection measures that best fit their particular situation to achieve the desired sorting of recyclable waste.

Introduction of a sorting logo on bags for disposing of recyclable waste could be one such measure but it must not lead to unjustified restrictions on the free movement of goods by, for instance, requiring products or packaging to bear that national sorting logo.

As different waste management systems have been set up in different Member States, the Commission is currently not planning measures to introduce a European sorting logo.

([1]) Directive 2008/98/EC on waste. OJ L 312 of 21.11.2008.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000231/14
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(10 de enero de 2014)

Asunto: Cambio de medidas compensatorias financiadas por la UE en lugar de ser financiadas por el promotor

Existe una Declaración de Impacto Ambiental (DIA) del año 2005 ([1]).

A petición del promotor ante una falta de incumplimiento de medida compensatoria, es modificada por las autoridades españolas en 2012 ([2]).

La nueva resolución permite la afección a la Red Natura 2000-ZEC para construir un Centro de Investigación de la Migración y Cambio Climático (urbanización) sin aplicación de la Directiva Hábitats (alternativas, análisis pormenorizado de la afección ZEC).

La encargada por el promotor de ejecutar las medidas compensatorias de ambas resoluciones es una fundación privada compuesta por distintas administraciones y el propio promotor.

Hasta la fecha, esta fundación ha solicitado fondos europeos a las autoridades regionales por la cantidad de 1 198 108,45 euros, habiéndose concedido ya en mayo 462 891,06 euros ([3]) y siendo competencia del promotor.

El Ayuntamiento de Tarifa, miembro de la fundación, resolvió la autorización de las obras ([4]) sin evaluación ambiental de este «nuevo» centro que se está ejecutando. La Consejería de Medio Ambiente, miembro de la fundación, es conocedora de la irregularidad medioambiental.

Las obras se están ejecutando a pesar de la existencia de quejas abiertas ante el Defensor del Pueblo español, entre otras, por la supuesta cesión irregular de los terrenos militares donde se está construyendo.

¿Está informada la Comisión del cambio de medidas compensatorias de la DIA de 2005 en 2012? ¿Permitió la Comisión la modificación de la DIA de 2005? ¿Qué acciones adoptará la Comisión ante este tipo de modificaciones irregulares que convierten la DIA en un mero formalismo? ¿Está informada la Comisión de la financiación de medidas compensatorias con fondos europeos? ¿Está de acuerdo la Comisión con la financiación pública europea siendo responsable el promotor?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(27 de marzo de 2014)

En 2011, la Comisión abrió una investigación sobre el segundo circuito de la interconexión eléctrica entre España y Marruecos y sobre la aplicación de medidas compensatorias y mitigadoras elaboradas para este proyecto. La Comisión no pudo comprobar que se hubiese cometido infracción alguna de la normativa medioambiental de la UE en este caso.

Con motivo de esta investigación, la Comisión fue informada de los cambios realizados en 2012 a la Declaración de Impacto Ambiental ([5]). Las autoridades españolas han facilitado pruebas de que se aplicaron todas las medidas necesarias y garantizado que el proyecto no ha afectado negativamente la integridad de los sitios de la red Natura 2000.

Las medidas compensatorias y mitigadoras pueden ser parte de los costes subvencionables de un proyecto cofinanciado por el Fondo Europeo de Desarrollo Regional (FEDER) o el Fondo de Cohesión. Con todo, la Comisión ha realizado una comprobación con la autoridad de gestión de estos fondos en España y las medidas compensatorias de este proyecto no han sido cofinanciadas por la política regional de la UE.

([1]) http://cocn.tarifainfo.com/conservacion/remo/DIA_REMO.pdf
([2]) http://www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2012-340
([3]) http://cocn.tarifainfo.com/ca-morro/comparacion3.jpg
([4]) https://www.bopcadiz.org/BOP_PDF/BOP008_14-01-13.pdf#page=1
([5]) http://www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2012-340

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000231/14
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(10 January 2014)

Subject: Change of countervailing measures financed by the EU instead of by the sponsor

There is an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) dated 2005 ([1]).

At the request of the sponsor, following failure to comply with the countervailing measure, the statement was amended by the Spanish authorities in 2012 ([2]).

The new resolution allows the area to be made part of the Natura 2000-ZEC network in order to build a Migration and Climate Change Research Centre (urbanisation) without the Habitats Directive being applied (alternatives, detailed analysis of the granting of ZEC status).

The organisation charged by the sponsor with executing the countervailing measures under both resolutions is a private foundation consisting of various administrations and the sponsor itself.

To date, this foundation has requested European funds from the regional authorities to the value of EUR 1 198 108.45, with EUR 462 891.06 having been granted in May ([3]) in cases which are the responsibility of the sponsor.

The town council of Tarifa, which is a member of the foundation, approved the works ([4]) without carrying out an environmental assessment of this 'new' centre which is being built. The Consejería de Medio Ambiente [Environmental Advisory Council], which is a member of the foundation, is well aware of the environmental irregularity.

The works are being carried out despite the existence of unresolved complaints with the Spanish Ombudsman, among others, relating to alleged irregularities in the transfer of the military land where the building is taking place.

Is the Commission aware of the change made in 2012 to the countervailing measures in the 2005 EIS? What actions will the Commission take in relation to this type of irregular amendment which makes a mere formality of the EIS? Is the Commission aware that countervailing measures are being financed using European funds? Does the Commission agree with European public funds being used for financing when the liability rests with the sponsor?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(27 March 2014)

In 2011, the Commission opened an investigation concerning the second circuit of the electrical interconnection between Spain and Morocco and the implementation of the compensatory and mitigation measures defined for this project. The Commission could not identify any breach of EU environmental law in this case.

In the framework of this investigation, the Commission was informed of the changes made in 2012 to the Environmental Impact Statement ([5]). The Spanish authorities have provided evidence that all necessary measures were implemented, ensuring that the integrity of the Natura 2000 sites has not been negatively affected by the project.

Mitigation and compensation measures can be part of the eligible costs of a project to be co-funded under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) or the Cohesion Fund. However, the Commission has verified with the managing authority of these funds in Spain and the compensatory measures of this project have not been co financed by the EU regional policy.

([1]) http://cocn.tarifainfo.com/conservacion/remo/DIA_REMO.pdf
([2]) http://www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2012-340
([3]) http://cocn.tarifainfo.com/ca-morro/comparacion3.jpg
([4]) https://www.bopcadiz.org/BOP_PDF/BOP008_14-01-13.pdf#page=1
([5]) http://www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2012-340

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000261/14
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(13 de enero de 2014)

Asunto: Posible abuso de mercado e intrusión en datos privados de Google

Google ha presentado una nueva función de Gmail que está siendo objeto de críticas ya que puede suponer una invasión de la privacidad. Así, una persona que posea una cuenta en Google + y que quiera contactar con otra podrá enviarle un correo electrónico si figura en algún círculo sin necesidad de que la persona destinataria le haya dado su dirección ([1]).

La notificación oficial de Google al respecto se encuentra en http://gmailblog.blogspot.com.es/2014/01/reach-people-you-know-more-easily.html

Como se puede comprobar con los ejemplos de Facebook y Twitter, la adhesión a una red social no implica que un individuo acepte hacer pública su dirección de correo electrónico.

Por otra parte, la Directiva 95/46/EC regula la protección de datos de los ciudadanos europeos.

¿No cree la Comisión que los usuarios de Gmail deberían tener derecho a una cláusula de exclusión voluntaria de esta posibilidad, que aparezca en pantalla como ventana emergente, que les sirva para proteger sus datos personales y su intimidad?

¿Considera la Comisión que está acción de Gmail es compatible con la Directiva 95/46/EC?

¿Cree la Comisión que esta situación puede suponer un abuso de mercado por parte de Google?

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

La Comisión desea señalar que, de conformidad con la Directiva 95/46/CE ([2]), los datos personales deben recopilarse exclusivamente con fines determinados, explícitos y legítimos, y su tratamiento ulterior no debe efectuarse de forma incompatible con dichos fines ([3]).

El tratamiento de los datos personales solo puede llevarse a cabo amparándose en uno de los motivos especificados en el artículo 7 de la Directiva.

La Directiva 95/46/CE confiere a los titulares de los datos diversos derechos, como, por ejemplo, el de oponerse en determinados casos al tratamiento de sus datos personales ([4]). De acuerdo con la información disponible ([5]), parece existir ya la posibilidad de evitar el tratamiento, en concreto modificando la configuración en Gmail. La Directiva 95/46/CE no especifica modalidades técnicas para el ejercicio del derecho de oposición.

Por otro lado, con arreglo a la Directiva sobre protección de la intimidad en el ámbito de las comunicaciones electrónicas ([6]), los denominados *cookies* solo pueden almacenarse en el ordenador u otro dispositivo digital del usuario a condición de que este último haya dado su consentimiento.

Sin perjuicio de las competencias de la Comisión Europea en su calidad de guardiana de los Tratados, la supervisión y el control del cumplimiento de la legislación sobre protección de datos se inscribe entre las competencias de las autoridades nacionales, en particular de las autoridades de supervisión de la protección de datos y de los órganos jurisdiccionales.

A fin de determinar si se ha producido una infracción de las normas de competencia de la Unión Europea, es preciso evaluar en cada caso concreto toda una serie de aspectos legales, económicos y factuales. Si bien por el momento la Comisión no tiene ningún indicio de que la conducta de Google en este ámbito infrinja las normas de competencia, está efectuando un seguimiento muy estrecho del curso de los acontecimientos en el mercado.

([1]) http://www.naciodigital.cat/canaldigital/noticia/15790/critiques/google/nova/opcio/gmail
([2]) Directiva relativa a la protección de las personas físicas en lo que respecta al tratamiento de datos personales y a la libre circulación de estos datos, DO L 281 de 23.11.1995, p. 31.
([3]) Artículo 6, letra b), de la Directiva.
([4]) Artículo 14 de la Directiva.
([5]) http://gmailblog.blogspot.nl/2014/01/reach-people-you-know-more-easily.html
([6]) Directiva 2009/136/CE, DO L 337 de 18.12.2009.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000261/14
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(13 January 2014)

Subject: Possible market abuse and intrusion into private data by Google

Google is facing criticism over a new Gmail feature which may constitute an invasion of privacy. Google+ account holders can now email other users in their extended circles without knowing their email address ([1]).

Google's official notification of this feature can be found at http://gmailblog.blogspot.com/2014/01/reach-people-you-know-more-easily.html

By joining a social network an individual does not consent to having their email address made public, a principle respected by Facebook and Twitter.

Data protection for EU citizens is governed by Directive 95/46/EC.

Does the Commission not agree that Gmail users should have the right to a voluntary opt-out clause, accessible through a pop-up window, in order to protect their personal data and privacy?

Does the Commission consider that this Gmail feature is compatible with Directive 95/46/EC?

Does the Commission think that this situation could constitute market abuse by Google?

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

The Commission would like to signal that in accordance with Directive 95/46/EC ([2]) personal data should be collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed in a way incompatible with those purposes ([3]).

Personal data may be processed only if based on one of the grounds set out in Article 7 of the directive.

Various rights have been conferred on the data subjects under Directive 95/46/EC, including the right to object in certain cases to the processing of their personal data ([4]). On the basis of the available information ([5]) it seems that a certain form of opt-out is already provided, namely by changing the settings in Gmail. Directive 95/46/EC does not specify the technical modalities of the right to object.

Moreover, under the e-Privacy Directive ([6]), so called 'cookies' can be stored on a user's computer or other digital device only on the condition that this user has given its consent.

Without prejudice to the competence of the European 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.

In order to establish a violation of EU competition rules, a whole range of legal, economic and factual details have to be assessed in every case. Whilst the Commission does not have indications at this stage that Google's conduct in the area specified violates EU competition rules, it closely monitors market developments.

([1]) http://www.naciodigital.cat/canaldigital/noticia/15790/critiques/google/nova/opcio/gmail
([2]) Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 1995 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, OJ L 281, 23.11.1995, p. 31-50.
([3]) Article 6(b) of the directive.
([4]) Article 14 of the directive.
([5]) http://gmailblog.blogspot.nl/2014/01/reach-people-you-know-more-easily.html
([6]) Directive 2009/136/EC, OJ L 337, 18.12.2009.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-000369/14
aan de Commissie
Saïd El Khadraoui (S&D)
(15 januari 2014)

Betreft: Illegale jacht op bedreigde trekvogels in Libanon

Sinds midden jaren negentig mag er in Libanon niet meer gejaagd worden op vogels. Deze ban wordt helaas niet nageleefd en bedreigt Europese conservatieprojecten van bedreigde trekvogelsoorten. Aangezien Libanon geen jaagwet heeft, treden de ordediensten niet op. Illegale jagers blijven dus massaal trekvogels doden, zelfs de bedreigde vogelsoorten ontsnappen er niet aan.

Ook jagen de Libanese jagers het hele jaar door waardoor zelfs tijdens de broedperiode gedood wordt. Vaak worden deze vogels gebruikt ter consumptie. Deze traditie mag dus ook niet zo maar aan banden gelegd worden maar zou zodanig beperkt dienen te worden dat de jacht onze Europese projecten ter bescherming van bedreigde trekvogels niet in het gedrang brengt.

Tot voor kort jaagden de Egyptische en Libische jagers met vangnetten waardoor ook bedreigde trekvogels in hun netten kwamen vast te zitten en uiteindelijk stierven. Maar eind november 2013 vond daarom een internationale ontmoeting plaats in Bonn, Duitsland, tussen nationale en internationale gouvernementele en niet-gouvernementele organisaties om dit punt aan te pakken. Er werd een actieplan opgezet.

In verband hiermee de volgende vragen aan de Commissie:

1. Heeft u zicht op de negatieve impact van dergelijke praktijken in Libanon op de Europese trekvogels? Wat is de impact van het jagen op onze bedreigde Europese trekvogels? Hoeveel subsidies spendeert Europa aan onze conservatieprojecten en hoeveel Europees geld gaat er verloren door de Libanese jacht?

2. Kan u Libanon aanzetten tot het stoppen van deze praktijken? Welke acties denkt u te ondernemen om de jacht op zeldzame trekvogels te beperken?

Antwoord van de heer Potočnik namens de Commissie
(31 maart 2014)

De Commissie verwijst het geachte Parlementslid naar haar gecombineerd antwoord op de schriftelijke vragen E-000109/14, E-000057/14, E-000425/14 ([1]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000369/14
to the Commission
Saïd El Khadraoui (S&D)
(15 January 2014)

Subject: Illegal hunting of endangered migratory birds in Lebanon

The hunting of birds has been banned in Lebanon since the mid-1990s. Unfortunately, this ban has not been observed, threatening European conservation projects for endangered species of migratory birds. Since Lebanon has no law on hunting, the authorities do not act to prevent it. Illegal hunters therefore continue to kill migratory birds on a massive scale, and even endangered bird species are not safe from this.

The Lebanese hunters also hunt for the whole year, which means that birds are killed even during the nesting period. These birds are often killed for consumption. This tradition should therefore not just be curbed, but should be restricted in such a way that the hunting does not jeopardise our European projects to protect endangered migratory birds.

Until recently, Egyptian and Libyan hunters hunted using nets, as a result of which endangered migratory birds were also caught in these nets and eventually died. However, at the end of November 2013, an international gathering took place in Bonn, Germany, where national and international governmental and non-governmental organisations met to resolve this matter and draw up an action plan.

I therefore have the following questions for the Commission on this matter:

1. Do you have an idea of the negative impact that such practices in Lebanon have on European migratory birds? What is the impact of hunting on our endangered European migratory birds? How much money does Europe pay to subsidise our conservation projects and how much European money is lost as a result of hunting in Lebanon?

2. Can you urge Lebanon to stop these hunting practices? What measures are you considering to limit the hunting of rare migratory birds?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(31 March 2014)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its joint answer to written questions E-000109/14, E-000057/14, E-000425/14 ([1]).

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

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000386/14
alla Commissione
Fabrizio Bertot (PPE)
(16 gennaio 2014)

Oggetto: Costi del partenariato orientale

Nel giugno 2008 il Consiglio d'Europa ha approvato la creazione del partenariato orientale, il programma di associazione che l'Unione europea ha avviato con Armenia, Azerbaigian, Georgia, Moldavia, Ucraina e Bielorussia nel quadro della politica europea di vicinato. Tale progetto di avvicinamento di questi paesi, ex membri dell'Unione Sovietica, ha goduto fino al 2013 di uno stanziamento pari a circa 600 milioni di EUR.

La politica di partenariato orientale ha provocato quasi una crisi diplomatica con la Russia. L'Ucraina ha sospeso i preparativi per l'associazione all'UE, preferendo un legame più stretto con la Russia. Inoltre, questa decisione ha provocato aspre reazioni e contestazioni politiche e di piazza.

1. Ciò premesso, può la Commissione far sapere come sono stati spesi o come si intende spendere gli stanziamenti destinati al partenariato orientale?

2. Quali effetti può avere il nuovo accordo fra Russia e Ucraina nel quadro dei rapporti tra l'UE e il governo di Kiev?

Risposta di Štefan Füle a nome della Commissione
(28 marzo 2014)

1. Nel 2010-2013 sono stati stanziati quasi 2,5 miliardi di EUR, nell'ambito dello strumento europeo di vicinato e partenariato (ENPI), per la cooperazione con i paesi del partenariato orientale. I fondi sono stati destinati a programmi bilaterali, regionali e interregionali per promuovere le riforme in settori fondamentali quali la giustizia e i diritti umani, il commercio, il settore privato e la creazione di posti di lavoro, l'agricoltura e lo sviluppo rurale o la gestione delle frontiere. È stato inoltre fornito un consistente sostegno alla società civile e ai contatti tra le persone (ad esempio gli scambi di studenti). Nell'ambito del Fondo d'investimento per la politica di vicinato, altri 4,1 miliardi di EUR sono stati erogati dalle istituzioni finanziarie europee a favore di grandi progetti di investimento nella regione.

Lo strumento europeo di vicinato sarà il principale strumento finanziario dell'UE per la cooperazione con tutti i paesi del vicinato nel periodo 2014-2020. La sua dotazione complessiva ammonta a 15,4 miliardi di EUR. La Commissione continuerà a sostenere le riforme nei paesi del partenariato orientale attraverso lo strumento europeo di vicinato, concentrandosi sull'assistenza a livello settoriale, sull'allineamento con l'acquis dell'UE e sul principio «more for more» ([1]).

Il 5 marzo la Commissione ha adottato un pacchetto di sostegno a favore dell'Ucraina. La combinazione di tutte queste misure potrebbe portare il sostegno globale per i prossimi sette anni a 11 miliardi di EUR (di cui 1,4 milioni di EUR provenienti dallo strumento europeo di vicinato) ([2]).

2. Il pacchetto di accordi tra la Russia e l'Ucraina concluso il 17 dicembre 2013 prevede, tra l'altro, una riduzione del prezzo del gas naturale e investimenti in titoli di Stato ucraini finanziati dal Fondo nazionale russo per il welfare. Non ci risulta che quest'assistenza sia vincolata a condizioni ufficiali. Secondo Gazprom, la riduzione del prezzo del gas a favore dell'Ucraina cesserà di applicarsi a partire dall'aprile 2014. La Russia sembra orientata a sospendere gli investimenti nei titoli di Stato ucraini.

([1]) per i paesi che progrediscono verso una democrazia radicata e sostenibile, compreso il rispetto dei diritti umani, e la realizzazione degli obiettivi concordati in materia di riforme.

([2]) Comunicato stampa della Commissione europea — IP/14/219 del 5.3.2014.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000386/14
to the Commission
Fabrizio Bertot (PPE)
(16 January 2014)

Subject: Cost of the Eastern Partnership

In June 2008, the Council of Europe sanctioned the creation of the Eastern Partnership, the agenda for political association that the European Union has begun with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy. This project, which seeks to forge stronger links with these post-Soviet states, has benefitted from funding of approximately EUR 600 million up to the end of 2013.

The Eastern Partnership policy has provoked a near diplomatic crisis with Russia. Ukraine has frozen preparations to join the EU, favouring closer ties with Russia. This decision has also prompted fierce reaction, as well as political dissent and street protests.

1. In light of the above, can the Commission disclose how the funding earmarked for the Eastern Partnership has been spent in the past and how future monies will be spent?

2. What effect might the new agreement between Russia and Ukraine have on the relationship between the EU and the government in Kiev?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(28 March 2014)

1. Under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership instrument (ENPI), nearly EUR 2.5 billion has been allocated for cooperation with the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries in 2010-2013. Funding has been earmarked for bilateral, regional and interregional programmes to support reforms in key sectors such as justice and human rights, trade, private sector and job creation, agriculture and rural development, border management. Civil society and contacts between people (e.g. students' exchanges) have also been strongly supported. Through the Neighbourhood Investment Facility, further EUR 4.1 billion has been leveraged from European Financial Institutions for large investment projects in the region.

The European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) will be the main EU financial instrument for the cooperation with all neighbouring countries during the period 2014-2020. Its total budget is EUR 15.4 billion. The Commission will continue to accompany reforms in the EaP countries through the ENI, focusing on sector assistance, alignment to EU *acquis* and the 'more for more' principle ([1]).

On 5 March, the Commission adopted a support package for Ukraine. All the measures combined could bring overall support of EUR 11 billion for next seven years (including EUR 1.4 million from the ENI) ([2]).

2. The package of agreements between Russia and Ukraine, reached on 17 December 2013, includes *inter alia* a decreased natural gas price and investments by the Russian National Wealth fund in Ukrainian government bonds. No official conditions have been attached to this assistance to our knowledge. According to Gazprom the gas price discount for Ukraine will be cancelled as of April 2014. Russia seems to discontinue its investments in Ukrainian government bonds.

([1]) for countries making progress towards deep and sustainable democracy, including respect for human rights, and implementation of agreed reform objectives contributing to that goal.
([2]) Press release, European Commission — IP/14/219 05/03/2014.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000412/14
a la Comisión
Rosa Estaràs Ferragut (PPE)
(16 de enero de 2014)

Asunto: Preocupación por el ascenso de las fuerzas políticas extremistas en Europa

En la respuesta a la pregunta parlamentaria E-001447/2013 relativa a la preocupación por el ascenso de las fuerzas políticas extremistas en Europa se hace referencia a la Decisión marco 2008/13/JAI del Consejo.

Al margen de las conductas tipificadas como delito en la mencionada Decisión marco, ¿es consciente la Comisión de que dichas fuerzas políticas extremistas adoptan conductas desviadas o comportamientos incívicos contra los valores europeos, los derechos y el Estado de Derecho?

¿Qué posición o medidas va a adoptar la Comisión con miras a las elecciones al Parlamento Europeo de 2014?

¿Podría señalar la Comisión si las conductas contrarias a los valores europeos, sus derechos y, en general, el Estado de Derecho europeo van a ser elementos suficientes para excluir a dichos partidos?

Respuesta de la Sra. Reding en nombre de la Comisión
(27 de marzo de 2014)

La Comisión remite a Su Señoría a la intervención de la vicepresidenta Reding en la sesión plenaria del Parlamento Europeo, el 9 de octubre de 2013, sobre el aumento de los movimientos de extrema derecha, en la que declaró inequívocamente que «el aumento del extremismo y el populismo es una preocupación común para el conjunto de la UE, ya que desemboca en racismo, negación del ser humano e intolerancia en todas sus formas, y pone en peligro la aceptación de otros ciudadanos y la libertad de circulación. Asimismo, pone en peligro los valores en los que está basada la Unión, lo que significa que destruye nuestras sociedades y destruye la Europa de todos. Por eso todos, colectiva e individualmente, tenemos la responsabilidad de combatirlos sin hacer concesiones».

Tras la publicación, el 27 de enero de 2014, día de conmemoración del Holocausto, del primer informe de la Comisión sobre la aplicación por los Estados miembros de la Decisión marco 2008/913/JAI, relativa a la lucha contra el racismo y la xenofobia, la Comisión anunció que iniciará diálogos bilaterales con los Estados miembros durante 2014, para garantizar la incorporación íntegra y correcta de esta Decisión marco al Derecho nacional.

En referencia concreta a las elecciones europeas, la Comisión señala que, de conformidad con el Reglamento (CE) n° 2004/2003 ([1]), los partidos políticos a escala europea deben respetar, en particular en su programa y en sus actividades, «los principios en los que se basa la Unión Europea: la libertad, la democracia, el respeto de los derechos humanos y de las libertades fundamentales, así como el Estado de Derecho». Esta es una de las cuatro condiciones que deben cumplir los partidos políticos a escala europea para solicitar financiación de la UE. El Reglamento establece un procedimiento específico para comprobar que esta condición se sigue cumpliendo.

([1]) Reglamento (CE) n° 20042004/2003 del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 4 de noviembre de 2003, relativo al estatuto y la financiación de los partidos políticos a escala europea.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000412/14
to the Commission
Rosa Estaràs Ferragut (PPE)
(16 January 2014)

Subject: Concern about the rise of extreme political forces in Europe

In response to parliamentary Question E-001447/2013 on concern about the rise of extreme political forces in Europe, reference is made to Council Framework Decision 2008/13/JHA.

Apart from the behaviour categorised as an offence in the aforementioned Framework Decision, is the Commission aware that these extreme political forces are adopting deviant or antisocial behaviour which goes against European values, rights and the rule of law?

What position or measures is the Commission going to adopt bearing in mind the upcoming 2014 elections to the European Parliament?

Could the Commission indicate if behaviour contrary to European values, its rights and the European rule of law in general is going to be reason enough to exclude these parties?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(27 March 2014)

The Commission refers the Honourable Member to Vice-President Reding's intervention in the European Parliament Plenary debate on The Rise of Right-wing Extremism on 9 October 2013 where she unequivocally stated that, 'The rise of extremism and populism is a common concern to the whole of the EU because it leads to racism, to the negation of the human being, to all forms of intolerance, and it endangers the acceptance of other citizens and freedom of movement. It also endangers the values on which our Union is based, which means it simply destroys our societies. It destroys our Europe. That is why we all, collectively and individually, have the responsibility to fight it without compromise'.

Following the publication, on 27 January 2014, Holocaust Remembrance Day, of the first Commission report on the implementation of Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA on racism and xenophobia by Member States, the Commission announced that it will enter into bilateral dialogues with Member States, in the course of 2014, with a view to ensuring full and correct transposition of this legislation into national law.

As regards European elections specifically, the Commission notes that according to Regulation (EC) 2004/2003 ([1]), political parties at European level must observe, in particular in their programme and in their activities, 'the principles on which the European Union is founded, namely the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedom, and the rule of law'. This is one of the four conditions political parties at European level must satisfy in order to apply for EU funding. The regulation provides for a specific procedure to verify that that this condition continues to be met.

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 2004/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 November 2003 on the regulations governing political parties at European level and the rules regarding their funding.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-000441/14
au Conseil
Jean-Pierre Audy (PPE)
(17 janvier 2014)

Objet: Audition du Conseil par le Parlement européen — application de l'article 230, paragraphe 3, du traité sur le fonctionnement de l'Union européenne

L'article 230, paragraphe 3, du traité sur le fonctionnement de l'Union européenne (TFUE) prévoit que «[le] Conseil européen et le Conseil sont entendus par le Parlement européen dans les conditions prévues par le règlement intérieur du Conseil européen et par celui du Conseil».

Or, ni le règlement intérieur du Conseil, ni, d'ailleurs, celui du Conseil européen, ne semblent prévoir de dispositions en application de cet article 230 du TFUE.

C'est dans ce contexte que le député européen soussigné a l'honneur de saisir le Conseil à l'effet de lui demander sa position à l'égard de l'application de l'article 230, paragraphe 3, du TFUE.

Réponse
(24 mars 2014)

L'Honorable Parlementaire est invité à se reporter à l'article 26 du règlement intérieur du Conseil et à l'article 5 du règlement intérieur du Conseil européen.

Par ailleurs, conformément à la déclaration solennelle sur l'Union européenne, signée à Stuttgart en 1983, le Conseil fait régulièrement rapport au Parlement européen, notamment en répondant à des questions orales ou en faisant des déclarations lors des débats en séance plénière.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000441/14
to the Council
Jean-Pierre Audy (PPE)
(17 January 2014)

Subject: Hearing of the Council by the European Parliament — application of Article 230, paragraph 3, of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

Article 230, paragraph 3, of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) provides that '[T]he European Council and the Council shall be heard by the European Parliament in accordance with the conditions laid down in the Rules of Procedure of the European Council and those of the Council'.

And yet neither the Rules of Procedure of the Council nor, moreover, those of the European Council seem to contain provisions in application of Article 230 TFEU.

Against this background, I would respectfully ask the Council what is its position with regard to the application of Article 230, paragraph 3, TFEU?

Reply
(24 March 2014)

The Honourable Member is invited to read Article 26 of the Council's Rules of Procedure, and Article 5 of the Rules of Procedure of the European Council.

Moreover, in keeping with the 1983 Solemn Declaration of Stuttgart on the European Union, the Council regularly reports to the European Parliament, in particular by responding to oral questions or by making statements in plenary debates.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000463/14
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(20 gennaio 2014)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Attentati in Thailandia

Nelle prime settimane di gennaio, le proteste antigovernative lungo le strade di Bangkok, iniziate lo scorso novembre, hanno cominciato a subire un'escalation di violenza preoccupante. Dapprima il 15 gennaio, quando un ordigno esplosivo è stato lanciato contro la villa del leader dell'opposizione thailandese, fortunatamente provocando solo lievi danni materiali all'edificio. Poi il 17 gennaio, quando un secondo ordigno è stato fatto esplodere durante una manifestazione dove presenziava il leader della protesta, l'ex vicepremier, provocando una decina di feriti.

Relativamente a questa escalation di violenza, può il Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante precisare quanto segue:

1. si è messa in contatto con le autorità thailandesi per monitorare l'evolvere della situazione?

2. Esistono seri rischi per l'incolumità dei cittadini europei presenti in Thailandia?

3. L'instabilità politica del paese rischia di avere ripercussioni negative sugli operatori economici europei che operano nel paese?

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

L'UE segue costantemente con attenzione la situazione cui si fa riferimento. L'Alta rappresentante/Vicepresidente Ashton si è recata a Bangkok il 13 novembre 2013. L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente e il SEAE hanno esortato sistematicamente, e al più alto livello, tutte le parti affinché si astengano da atti di violenza e cerchino una soluzione negoziata basata su principi democratici.

La sicurezza dei singoli cittadini dell'UE rientra nell'ambito d'applicazione della tutela consolare, di competenza degli Stati membri. Nel momento in cui viene formulata la presente risposta, il SEAE non ritiene che la sicurezza dei cittadini dell'UE in Thailandia corra gravi rischi. È tuttavia consigliabile una certa prudenza, dato che la situazione può cambiare, e i cittadini dell'UE devono consultare i consigli per i viaggiatori rilasciati e regolarmente aggiornati dagli Stati membri.

L'instabilità politica ha già inciso negativamente sulla situazione economica, in particolare sul turismo e sugli investimenti esteri diretti, con una revisione al ribasso delle previsioni di crescita economica. Di tale situazione risentono altresì alcuni operatori economici europei attivi in Thailandia.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000463/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(20 January 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Attacks in Thailand

In the first weeks of January, a worrying escalation of violence has begun to be seen in the anti-government protests in the streets of Bangkok, which started last November. Firstly on 15 January, when an explosive device was thrown at the Thai opposition leader's villa, fortunately only causing slight material damage to the building. Then on 17 January, when a second device exploded during a demonstration attended by the leader of the protest, the former deputy prime minister, injuring around a dozen people.

With regard to this escalation of violence, can the Vice-President/High Representative answer the following questions:

1. Has she been in contact with the Thai authorities to monitor developments in the situation?

2. Are there serious risks to the safety of European citizens in Thailand?

3. Is the political instability of the country likely to have negative repercussions on European economic operators doing business there?

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

The EU is continuously monitoring the situation closely. HR/VP Ashton was in Bangkok on 13 November 2013. The HR/VP and the EEAS have systematically and at the highest level called on all parties to refrain from violence and to seek a negotiated settlement based on democratic principles.

The safety of individual EU citizens falls under consular protection which is a Member State competence. At the time of writing it is not the EEAS' assessment that there are serious risks to the safety of EU citizens in Thailand. However, caution is advisable as the situation can change, and EU citizens need to keep themselves informed of the travel advice issued and regularly updated by their Member States.

The political instability has already had a negative impact on the economic situation, especially the tourism industry and foreign direct investment, with expected economic growth revised downwards. The situation also has an impact on some European economic operators active in Thailand.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-000471/14
aan de Commissie
Philip Claeys (NI)
(20 januari 2014)

Betreft: Verlies van hospitalisatieverzekering bij niet-naleven domicilieverplichting

Burgers van België kopen geregeld bij hun pensionering een klein eigendom in Spanje om daar te gaan wonen. Vaak beschikken zij via hun werkgever over een hospitalisatieverzekering waarvoor zij al vele decennia bijdragen betalen.

Het blijkt evenwel dat vele van deze hospitalisatieverzekeraars als voorwaarde stellen dat men zijn domicilie in België moet houden. Bij een verhuizing naar Spanje verliest men alle rechten. In Spanje aangekomen blijkt aansluiten bij een Spaanse hospitalisatieverzekering onmogelijk of onbetaalbaar. Zelfs verzekeringsgroepen, die zowel in België als Spanje actief zijn, passen dit toe: verhuizing betekent verlies van alle rechten, aansluiting in Spanje is onmogelijk.

Meent de Commissie dat dit verenigbaar is met het vrij verkeer van personen zoals vastgelegd in de verdragen?

Welke richtlijnen zijn van toepassing op de sector van de hospitalisatieverzekeringen om er daar voor te zorgen dat het vrij verkeer van personen wordt geëerbiedigd?

Is het wettig dat een hospitalisatieverzekeraar domicilie houden in één lidstaat als voorwaarde stelt om aangesloten te kunnen blijven?

Wanneer een Belgisch burger vele jaren lang bijdragen betaald heeft aan een hospitalisatieverzekeraar in België, dient deze dan ook geen prestaties in Spanje te waarborgen, ongeacht de woonkeuze van de betrokken EU-burger?

Antwoord van de heer Barnier namens de Commissie
(20 maart 2014)

Particuliere hospitalisatieverzekeringen vallen onder de schadeverzekeringsrichtlijnen ([1]). Deze richtlijnen zijn gebaseerd op het beginsel van de locatie van risico's, hetgeen betekent dat een verzekeraar risico's kan verzekeren in een lidstaat waar de verzekeringnemer zijn/haar gewone verblijfplaats heeft en waar de verzekeraar officieel erkend of actief is in het kader van de voorschriften inzake de vrijheid van vestiging of het vrij verrichten van diensten. De richtlijnen zijn eveneens gebaseerd op het beginsel van de contractvrijheid waaronder verzekeraars en consumenten het eens kunnen worden over een verscheidenheid aan contractuele voorwaarden, met inbegrip van het geografische dekkingsgebied van de polis.

Indien een verzekeringnemer verhuist naar een andere lidstaat, zal zijn/haar polis slechts geldig zijn indien de verzekeraar in die lidstaat actief is volgens de voorschriften inzake de vrijheid van vestiging of het vrij verrichten van diensten. De polis moet ook verenigbaar zijn met de regels die zijn ontworpen met het oog op het algemeen belang in het verzekeringsbedrijf van die lidstaat ([2]).

De Commissie is zich bewust van de noodzaak om obstakels voor het vrij verkeer van EU-burgers weg te werken en erkent dat er een spanning bestaat tussen de contractvrijheid en de wens om verzekeringsovereenkomsten te laten doorlopen wanneer burgers verhuizen naar andere lidstaten. De diensten van de Commissie analyseren momenteel de situatie met het oog op eventuele verbeteringen van de bestaande EU-wetgeving.

([1]) PB L 228 van 16.8.1973 blz. 3-19; PB L 172 van 4.7.1988 blz. 1-2; PB L 228 van 11.8.1992 blz. 1-23.
([2]) Interpretatieve mededeling van de Commissie over het vrij verrichten van diensten en het algemeen belang in het verzekeringsbedrijf, PB C 43, 16.2.2000, blz. 5.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000471/14
to the Commission
Philip Claeys (NI)
(20 January 2014)

Subject: Loss of hospitalisation insurance if domicile obligation is not met

Upon reaching retirement, many Belgian citizens purchase a small property in Spain in order to move there. Their employers often provide hospitalisation insurance, into which they have paid contributions for many decades.

However, it would appear that many of these hospitalisation insurers impose the condition that the insured parties must reside in Belgium. Moving to Spain results in the loss of all rights. Once in Spain, it seems to be impossible or unaffordable to join a Spanish hospitalisation insurance scheme. Even insurance groups which operate in both Belgium and Spain impose this condition: moving to another country means a loss of all rights, and joining another scheme in Spain is impossible.

Does the Commission think that this is compatible with the free movement of persons as laid down in the treaties?

What guidelines apply to the hospitalisation insurance sector to ensure that the free movement of persons is respected?

Is it lawful for hospitalisation insurers to set the condition of residing in one Member State in order for insurance cover to continue?

If a Belgian citizen has paid contributions to a hospitalisation insurer in Belgium for many years, is said insurer therefore not obliged to guarantee any services in Spain, regardless of the choice of residence of the EU citizen in question?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(20 March 2014)

Private hospitalisation insurance is covered by the Non-life Insurance Directives ([1]). The directives are based on the principle of the location of risks which means that an insurer can insure risks in a Member State where the given policy-holder has his/her habitual residence and where the insurer is officially authorised or active under the rules on freedom of establishment or the free provision of services. The directives are also based on the principle of the freedom of contract under which insurers and consumers can agree on a variety of contractual terms and conditions, including geographical scope of the given policy.

Should a policy-holder relocate to another Member State, his/her current policy will only be valid if the insurer is active in that Member State under the rules on freedom of establishment or the free provision of services. The policy will have to be compatible with the rules designed to protect the general good in the insurance sector of that Member State ([2]).

The Commission is conscious of the need to eliminate obstacles to the free movement of EU citizens and recognises the tension between the freedom of contract and the desire to continue insurance policies when citizens relocate to other Member States. The Commission services are analysing the situation with a view to assessing possible improvements of the existing EU insurance legislation.

([1]) OJ L 228, 16.8.1973, p. 3-19; OJ L 172, 4.7.1988, p. 1-2; OJ L 228, 11.8.1992, p. 1-23.
([2]) Commission Interpretative Communication on Freedom to provide services and the general good in the insurance sector, OJ C 43, 16.2.2000, p. 5.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000495/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(20 gennaio 2014)

Oggetto: Ripresa industriale

Il fatturato dell'industria italiana è ritornato a crescere, segnando nel novembre 2013 un aumento dello 0,4 % rispetto all'anno precedente, segnando un dato positivo dopo 22 mesi di flessione, con un calo dell'1,8 % sul mercato interno e un incremento del 4,8 % su quello estero.

Gli indici destagionalizzati del fatturato segnano incrementi congiunturali per i beni strumentali (+3,0 %), per i beni intermedi e per l'energia (+0,7 % per entrambi), mentre i beni di consumo registrano una flessione (-0,4 %). L'indice grezzo del fatturato cala, in termini tendenziali, del 2,7 %: il contributo più ampio a tale flessione viene dalla componente interna dell'energia. Per il fatturato l'incremento tendenziale più rilevante si registra nella produzione di prodotti farmaceutici (+8,3 %), mentre la maggiore diminuzione riguarda la fabbricazione di coke e prodotti petroliferi raffinati (-16,2 %).

Alla luce dei dati sopra citati, può la Commissione:

1. Fornire dati aggiornati sulla variazione del fatturato industriale degli altri Stati membri?

2. Fornire un dato aggiornato complessivo sulla variazione del fatturato industriale europeo?

Risposta di Antonio Tajani a nome della Commissione
(17 marzo 2014)

Il fatturato industriale nell'UE28 è aumentato dell'1,3 % nel novembre 2013 rispetto al mese precedente e dell'1,5 % su base annua. Tra i paesi che hanno maggiormente contribuito a questo aumento vi sono la Germania, con un tasso di crescita annua del 4,1 %, la Francia (+1,9 %), il Regno Unito (+0,9 %), la Repubblica ceca (+9,3 %) e la Polonia (+2,5 %). Di converso il fatturato, industriale è calato maggiormente a Cipro (-17,4 %), in Belgio (-11 %), in Grecia (-10,5 %), in Croazia (-8,9 %), a Malta e in Irlanda (entrambe -5,3 %).

Se si esaminano le componenti del fatturato dell'UE28 rispetto a un anno fa, nel novembre 2013 si sono registrati aumenti nelle vendite di beni strumentali (+6,6 %), beni intermedi (+0,4 %) e beni di consumo (+1,4 %), ma le vendite di energia hanno registrato un calo (-10,6 %).

Sempre su base annua, il fatturato domestico si è contratto dello 0,3 % mentre il fatturato non domestico è aumentato del 3,9 %.

Dati più dettagliati relativamente a diversi Stati membri e all'UE possono essere scaricati dal seguente sito web (si noti che gli aggregati del fatturato industriale per l'UE e l'eurozona sono aggiornati ogniqualvolta sono disponibili nuovi dati):
http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/search_database (nomi delle variabili: sts_intv_m, sts_ind_tovtd e sts_ind_tovtn)

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000495/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(20 January 2014)

Subject: Industrial recovery

There was a 0.4% year-on-year increase in Italian industrial turnover in November 2013, the first rise after 22 months of decline. Domestic turnover fell by 1.8%, whilst non-domestic turnover increased by 4.8%.

Seasonally adjusted turnover indicators show cyclical increases for capital goods (+3.0%), intermediate goods and energy (+0.7% for both), although sales of consumer goods fell (-0.4%). In overall terms, the raw turnover indicator fell by 2.7%, a drop accounted for primarily by the domestic energy component. The sharpest rise in turnover was seen in the pharmaceuticals sector (+8.3%), and the steepest downturn in the coke and refined petroleum products industry (-16.2%).

In the light of the above figures, can the Commission:

1. Provide up-to-date figures on the trend in industrial turnover in other Member States?

2. Provide aggregate up-to-date figures on the trend in industrial turnover at EU level?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(17 March 2014)

Industrial turnover in the EU28 increased by 1.3% in November 2013 compared to the previous month and by 1.5% on a year-on-year basis. Amongst the main contributors to this increase were Germany, with a rate of annual growth of 4.1%, France (+1.9%), United Kingdom (+0.9%), the Czech Republic (+9.3%) and Poland (+2.5%). On the contrary, industrial turnover decreased most in Cyprus (-17.4%), Belgium (-11%), Greece (-10.5%), Croatia (-8.9%), Malta and Ireland (both -5.3%).

Looking at components of EU28 turnover, compared to a year ago, in November 2013 there were increases in sales of capital goods (+6.6%), intermediate goods (+0.4%) and consumer goods (+1.4%), but energy sales fell (-10.6%).

Always on a yearly basis, domestic turnover fell by 0.3%, while non-domestic turnover increased by 3.9%.

More detailed data for a number of Member States and the EU can be downloaded from the following website (note that EU and euro area aggregates of industrial turnover are updated whenever new data becomes available):
http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/search_database (variables names: sts_intv_m, sts_ind_tovtd and sts_ind_tovtn)

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-000496/14
aan de Commissie
Kathleen Van Brempt (S&D)
(20 januari 2014)

Betreft: Vrij verkeer

In de plenaire zitting van januari keurde het Europees Parlement met een grote meerderheid zijn resolutie over de eerbiediging van het fundamentele recht van vrij verkeer in de Europese Unie goed. Uit een rapport dat de Europese Commissie in januari publiceerde blijkt dat het sociaal toerisme dat populistische politici graag inroepen als reden om het vrij verkeer aan banden te leggen, zo goed als niet bestaat. Vooral arbeidsmobielen uit de nieuwere lidstaten worden in de populistische retoriek geviseerd. De groep burgers die interne migratie in de EU als een last zien, groeit. Dit is een groot probleem dat negatieve gevolgen heeft voor het vrij verkeer dat op die manier als hoeksteen van de Europese Unie wordt aangetast.

Plant de Commissie acties om de burgers van de EU beter te informeren over de voordelen van het vrij verkeer en om de bestaande vooroordelen tegen arbeidsmobiele werknemers — in het bijzonder deze uit de nieuwe lidstaten — weg te nemen?

Is de Commissie het met me eens dat acties op deze terreinen zowel nodig als dringend zijn en dus best zo snel mogelijk opgestart worden? Wat is de timing hiervoor?

Behoort een grootschalige informatie- en sensibiliseringscampagne in alle EU lidstaten om de EU burgers correct te informeren tot de mogelijkheden?

Antwoord van de heer Andor namens de Commissie
(13 maart 2014)

De Commissie is bekend met de wijze waarop het vrij verkeer, een van de fundamentele vrijheden vastgelegd in artikel 45 van het Verdrag betreffende de werking van de Europese Unie, momenteel ter discussie wordt gesteld, en zoals het geachte Parlementslid opmerkt, is er steeds naar gestreefd om feiten en cijfers voor te leggen, met het oog op een meer op feiten gebaseerd publiek debat. In november 2013 heeft de Commissie een mededeling ([1]) gepubliceerd waaruit blijkt dat de meeste EU-burgers die naar een andere lidstaat verhuizen dat doen om te werken, en uit cijfers van de lidstaten en uit recente studies blijkt dat mobiele EU-burgers niet méér een beroep doen op sociale voorzieningen dan de onderdanen van de gastlanden.

De Commissie wil het verzamelen en het analyseren van statistische gegevens over het vrij verkeer van werknemers, en over de werkwijze van de EU- regels over de coördinatie van de socialezekerheidsstelsels van de lidstaten blijven ondersteunen en verbeteren. De Commissie wil ook, in samenwerking met de autoriteiten van de lidstaten, haar inspanningen voortzetten om het bewustzijn te vergroten en de communicatie en informatie over deze kwestie te verbeteren, zodat het publiek beter geïnformeerd wordt.

([1]) „Het recht van vrij verkeer van EU-burgers en hun gezinsleden: vijf stappen die een verschil maken" (COM(2013) 837 final van 25 november 2013).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000496/14
to the Commission
Kathleen Van Brempt (S&D)
(20 January 2014)

Subject: Freedom of movement

At the January part-session, the European Parliament adopted by a large majority its resolution on respect for the fundamental right to freedom of movement in the European Union. According to a report published by the Commission in January, 'benefit tourism', which populist politicians like to invoke as a reason to restrict freedom of movement, is virtually non-existent. Populist rhetoric is particularly directed against people moving from the newer Member States to work elsewhere. A growing number of people in the EU regard internal migration as a burden. This attitude is a serious problem, adversely affecting freedom of movement, whose status as a cornerstone of the European Union is eroded as a result.

Is the Commission planning action to inform EU citizens better about the advantages of freedom of movement and to eliminate the existing prejudices against worker mobility, and particularly against workers from the new Member States?

Does the Commission agree that action in these fields is both necessary and urgent and ought therefore to begin as soon as possible? What is the timetable for this?

Would it be possible to launch a large-scale information and awareness-raising campaign in all EU Member States in order to inform EU citizens correctly?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(13 March 2014)

The Commission is aware of the way free movement, one of the fundamental freedoms enshrined in Article 45 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, is currently being challenged, and as the Honourable Member notes, it has constantly endeavoured to provide facts and figures with a view to a more evidence-based public debate. In November 2013 it published a communication ([1]) which points out that most EU citizens moving to another Member State do so to work, and that, according to figures provided by the Member States and recent studies, mobile EU citizens draw welfare benefits no more intensively than the host countries' nationals.

The Commission intends to continue supporting and improving the collecting and analysis of statistical data on the free movement of workers and on the way the EU rules on the coordination of Member States' social security systems function. It also intends, in cooperation with the Member State authorities, to continue with its efforts to raise awareness and improve communication and information on the subject, so that the public is better informed.

([1]) 'Free movement of EU citizens and their families: Five actions to make a difference' (COM(2013) 837 final of 25 November 2013).

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub P-000498/14
lill-Kunsill
David Casa (PPE)
(21 ta' Jannar 2014)

Suġġett: Bejgħ ta' passaporti

Rigward il-bejgħ ta' passaporti Maltin, il-Kummissarju Reding qalet li l-Kunsill jista' jiddeċiedi dwar sett ta' rekwiżiti minimi għall-għoti taċ-ċittadinanza.

Wara l-votazzjoni massiva favur ir-riżoluzzjoni dwar "Iċ-ċittadinanza tal-UE għall-bejgħ", il-Kunsill jista' jiddikjara jekk huwiex beħsiebu jiddiskuti l-possibbiltà li jistabbilixxi tali standards minimi?

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-000499/14
lill-Kunsill
David Casa (PPE)
(21 ta' Jannar 2014)

Suġġett: Il-bejgħ ta' passaporti

Wara d-dibattitu fil-Parlament dwar "Ċittadinanza tal-UE għall-bejgħ" tal-15 ta' Jannar 2014 u l-vot b'maġġoranza enormi favur ir-riżoluzzjoni korrispondenti tas-16 ta' Jannar 2014 ([1]), il-Kunsill jista' jiddeskrivi l-pożizzjoni tiegħu rigward l-intenzjoni tal-Gvern Malti li jbigħ il-passaporti?

Tweġiba konġunta
(24 ta' Marzu 2014)

Il-Kunsill ma ddiskutiex il-kwistjoni speċifika mqajma mill-Onorevoli Membru. Madankollu, b'mod aktar ġenerali, l-Istati Membri għandhom il-kompetenza li jistabbilixxu regoli li jirregolaw l-akkwist tan-nazzjonalità, kif intqal mill-Presidenza tal-Kunsill fid-dibattitu "Iċ-ċittadinanza tal-UE għall-bejgħ" (sessjoni plenarja tal-PE tal-15 ta' Jannar 2014).

Barra minn hekk, l-Artikolu 9 TUE u l-Artikolu 20(1) TFUE jagħmluha ċara li ċ-ċittadinanza tal-UE hija addizzjonali għaċ-ċittadinanza nazzjonali u ma tissostitwixxihiex. It-Trattati tal-UE ma fihom ebda bażi legali li tippermetti lill-UE tarmonizza l-liġijiet nazzjonali f'dan il-qasam.

([1]) Testi adottati, P7_TA(2014)0038.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-000498/14
to the Council
David Casa (PPE)
(21 January 2014)

Subject: Sale of passports

On the subject of the sale of Maltese passports, Commissioner Reding has said that the Council could decide on a set of minimum requirements for granting citizenship.

Following the overwhelming vote in favour of the resolution on 'EU citizenship for sale', could the Council state whether it intends to discuss the possibility of establishing such minimum standards?

Question for written answer E-000499/14
to the Council
David Casa (PPE)
(21 January 2014)

Subject: Sale of passports

Following the debate in Parliament on 'EU citizenship for sale' on 15 January 2014 and the overwhelming vote in favour of the corresponding resolution on 16 January 2014 ([1]), can the Council outline its position on the Maltese Government's intentions to sell passports?

Joint reply
(24 March 2014)

The Council has not discussed the specific matter raised by the Honourable Member. However, more generally, the competence to lay down rules governing the acquisition of nationality belongs to the Member States, as was stated by the Council Presidency in the debate 'EU citizenship for sale' (EP plenary session on 15 January 2014).

Moreover, Article 9 TEU and Article 20(1) TFEU make it clear that EU citizenship is additional to and does not replace national citizenship. The EU Treaties do not contain any legal basis that would enable the EU to harmonise national laws in this field.

([1]) Texts adopted, P7_TA(2014)0038.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000502/14
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(21 de enero de 2014)

Asunto: Ataque a la sede de Izquierda Unida en Chamberí

El pasado martes 14 de enero, un grupo de aproximadamente diez encapuchados de ideología de extrema derecha atacaba la sede que la organización Izquierda Unida tiene en el barrio madrileño de Chamberí. Los neonazis lanzaban amenazas de muerte contra sus militantes mientras destrozaban el equipamiento de la citada sede.

Este ataque se suma a los distintos ataques que ha sufrido la organización en diferentes puntos de la citada Comunidad. Izquierda Unida no es el único objetivo de estos grupos; también atacaron la Delegación de la Generalitat de Cataluña en Madrid, diferentes movimientos sociales, etc. Este incremento de la acción de grupos de extrema derecha se está produciendo al mismo tiempo que numerosos cargos públicos del Partido Popular enaltecen el fascismo desde sus posiciones oficiales.

El incremento de los ataques violentos contra las organizaciones y personas que muestran públicamente su desacuerdo con las políticas del gobierno, es perfectamente constatable en la Comunidad de Madrid. Esto pone en peligro las aspiraciones de participación política de muchos ciudadanos, que ahora tienen miedo de expresar sus opiniones políticas, su pertenencia a fuerzas políticas alternativas o su participación en movimientos sociales. Las autoridades parecen hacer la vista gorda y, en todo caso, se vanaglorian de los mejores tiempos del fascismo desde muchas de sus tribunas públicas.

¿Conoce el reciente ataque a la citada sede de Izquierda Unida?

La Comisión está desarrollando un informe sobre la implementación en España de la Decisión Marco 2008/913/JAI relativa a la lucha contra determinadas formas y manifestaciones de racismo y xenofobia mediante el Derecho penal. ¿Considera dicho informe recomendaciones específicas para la Comunidad de Madrid?

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

Es competencia de los Estados miembros investigar y perseguir los delitos cometidos en su territorio de conformidad con su legislación nacional.

Tras la publicación de 27 de enero de 2014, día de conmemoración del Holocausto, del primer informe de la Comisión sobre la aplicación por los Estados miembros de la Decisión marco 2008/913/JAI, relativa a la lucha contra el racismo y la xenofobia, la Comisión anunció que iniciará diálogos bilaterales con los Estados miembros durante 2014, con el fin de garantizar la incorporación íntegra y correcta de esta Decisión marco al Derecho nacional.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000502/14
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(21 January 2014)

Subject: Attack upon the United Left headquarters in Chamberí

Last Tuesday, 14 January, a group of approximately ten extreme right-wing hooded activists attacked the United Left headquarters in Madrid's Chamberí district. The neo-Nazis shouted death threats at its members while destroying the headquarters' equipment.

This attack is yet another in a series of attacks suffered by the organisation in different places in the Community of Madrid. The United Left is not the only target of these groups. There have also been attacks on the Delegation of the Government of Catalonia and various social movements. While activity by extreme right-wing groups is increasing, various public figures from the People's Party are extolling fascism from their positions of authority.

The increase in violent attacks against organisations and individuals publicly displaying their disagreement with government policies is well documented in the Community of Madrid. It is discouraging many citizens from engaging in politics, as they are now fearful of expressing their political opinions, their affiliation with alternative political forces or their engagement in social movements. The authorities seem to be turning a blind eye and are instead lauding the good old days of fascism from many of their public forums.

Is the Commission aware of this recent attack on the headquarters of the United Left?

The Commission is drawing up a report on the implementation in Spain of Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law. Does it regard this report as presenting specific recommendations for the Community of Madrid?

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

It is a competence of the Member States to investigate and, eventually prosecute any criminal acts on their territory in line with their national legislation.

Following the publication on 27 January 2014, Holocaust Remembrance Day, of the first Commission report on the implementation of Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA on racism and xenophobia by Member States, the Commission announced that it will enter into bilateral dialogues with the Member States in the course of 2014, with a view to ensuring full and correct transposition of this legislation into national law.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000503/14
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(21 de enero de 2014)

Asunto: Legislación de la UE

Con relación a la pregunta E-003482/2013, el Sr. Barnier respondió en nombre de la Comisión: «En cuanto a los procedimientos de infracción incoados tras los dictámenes del Tribunal de Justicia de las Comunidades Europeas, a 1 de abril de 2013 son ocho las sentencias de dicho Tribunal, de las cuales solamente una se refiere a uno de los sectores clave citados (el transporte), pendientes de ejecución por parte del Reino de España».

Pasados nueve meses, ¿podría decir la Comisión si el Estado español ha ejecutado las ocho sentencias pendientes del Tribunal europeo?

En caso negativo, ¿qué medidas tiene previsto tomar la Comisión para que dicho Estado miembro cumpla la legislación europea?

En caso negativo, ¿cuantas sentencias están pendientes de ejecución?

Respuesta del Sr. Barnier en nombre de la Comisión
(14 de marzo de 2014)

En relación con los ocho asuntos mencionados, tres ya se han archivado o se archivarán en breve, ya que el Reino de España ha tomado medidas para cumplir la sentencia del Tribunal de Justicia de la Unión Europea emitida el 1 de abril de 2013.

En relación con los cinco asuntos restantes, la Comisión actuará convenientemente conforme a lo dispuesto en el artículo 260 del Tratado de Funcionamiento de la Unión Europea, para garantizar el cumplimiento pleno de las respectivas resoluciones del TJUE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000503/14
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(21 January 2014)

Subject: EU legislation

In response to Question E-003482/2013, Mr Barnier answered on behalf of the Commission: 'As regards infringement cases open after the European Court of Justice has ruled, as of 1 April 2013, there are still eight cases for which the Kingdom of Spain needs to comply with the judgment of the European Court of Justice. Only one of these cases falls within one of the mentioned key areas (transport).'

Nine months on, can the Commission say whether Spain has complied with the eight outstanding judgments of the European Court of Justice?

If it has not, what action does the Commission propose to take to ensure that this Member State complies with European legislation?

If it has not, how many of the judgments have yet to be enforced?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(14 March 2014)

As regards the eight cases mentioned, three have been or will soon be closed, as the Kingdom of Spain has taken action in order to comply with the judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Union, delivered on 1 April 2013.

As regards the remaining five cases, the Commission will take appropriate action within the framework of Article 260 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to ensure full compliance of the respective rulings by the CJEU.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000504/14
an die Kommission
Franz Obermayr (NI)
(21. Januar 2014)

Betrifft: Veruntreuung europäischer Steuergelder in Ägypten

Die EU hat Ägypten im Förderzeitraum 2007 bis 2012 finanzielle Mittel von über einer Million Euro zur Verbesserung der Demokratie und zur Wahrung der Menschenrechte zukommen lassen. Medienberichten zufolge kommt ein unabhängiges Gutachten zu dem Schluss, dass die angestrebten Ziele nicht erreicht wurden und 60 % der Gelder verschwunden seien und bis jetzt noch nicht zurückverfolgt wurde, was damit geschehen ist.

1. Wie steht die Kommission zu diesen Behauptungen?

2. Wie und in welcher Höhe gedenkt die Kommission künftig Demokratie und Menschenrechte in Ägypten zu fördern und gleichzeitig darauf zu achten, dass diese Gelder auch dafür eingesetzt werden?

3. Gedenkt die Kommission, den verschwundenen Fördermitteln nachzugehen und etwaige Veruntreuungen aufzudecken? Wenn ja, mit welchen Konsequenzen? Wenn nein, warum nicht?

4. Welche Maßnahmen gedenkt die Kommission künftig gegen die missbräuchliche Verwendung von EU-Geldern in Ägypten zu ergreifen?

Antwort von Herrn Füle im Namen der Kommission
(18. März 2014)

Die Kommission verweist den Herrn Abgeordneten auf ihre Antworten auf die schriftlichen Anfragen E-07098/2013, E-07109/2013, E-07124/2013, E-07261/2013, E-07646/2013, E-07918/2013, P-08768/2013, E-09928/2013, E-12221/13 und E-13575/13 zu demselben Thema ([1]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000504/14
to the Commission
Franz Obermayr (NI)
(21 January 2014)

Subject: Misappropriation of European tax money in Egypt

In the eligibility period 2007 to 2012, the EU sent over EUR 1 million in funds to Egypt to improve democracy and to protect human rights. According to media reports, an independent survey concludes that the intended goals were not achieved, that 60% of the funds disappeared and that so far what happened to the funds has not been traced back.

1. What is the Commission's position regarding these claims?

2. How and to what degree does the Commission intend to promote democracy and human rights in Egypt in the future and simultaneously to ensure that these funds are also used for this purpose?

3. Does the Commission intend to investigate the missing development funds and to uncover any misappropriations? If yes, with what consequences? If not, why not?

4. What actions is the Commission considering taking in the future against the misuse of EU funds in Egypt?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(18 March 2014)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answers to written questions E-07098/2013, E-07109/2013, E-07124/2013, E-07261/2013, E-07646/2013, E-07918/2013, P-08768/2013, E-09928/2013, E-12221/13 and E-13575/13 on the same subject. ([1])

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000506/14
to the Commission
Catherine Bearder (ALDE)
(21 January 2014)

Subject: Hovercraft standards

I have been informed by a constituent that both the Machinery Directive and the Recreational Craft Directive are preventing businesses in the south-east of England from accessing the EU markets.

I understand that hovercraft are exempt from the regulations under both directives. However, hovercraft manufacturers are unable to opt in to the regulations and are therefore unable to market their products across the single market as they do not have a declaration of conformity.

In light of this, what does the Commission intend to do to enable British hovercraft manufacturers to gain full access to the European market?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(19 March 2014)

Hovercraft, also known as air cushion vehicles, are considered waterborne transport craft and this category of vehicles is excluded from the Machinery Directive 2006/42/EC by Article 1.2.

The Recreational Craft Directive 94/25/EC exempts hovercraft from the scope by Article 1.2. This directive excludes from its scope craft specifically intended to be crewed and to carry passengers for commercial purposes and, in addition, air cushion vehicles are excluded because their physical characteristics are not consistent with the Essential Requirements of the directive.

Directive 2009/45/EC on safety rules and standards for passenger ships applies the International Maritime Organisation's High Speed Craft Codes of 1994 and 2000 to craft used on domestic voyages. The Codes are also applicable to Air Cushion Vehicles (hovercraft). Hence there is a set of rules recognised at EU level, which might be appropriate in this instance: use as a passenger ship and on domestic voyages. In this case, Directive 2009/45/EC provides for the issuing of passenger ship safety certificates by the administration of the flag State, which ensures access to the single market. Furthermore, as soon as hovercraft are passenger ships, Directive 1996/98/EC, as amended, which defines standards to ensure the safety and quality of marine equipment carried on board ships, may also apply. These standards ensure the free movement of marine equipment within the internal market.

For craft for which no harmonised rules at EU level apply, Articles 34 - 36 TFEU ensuring the free movement of goods apply. The Commission has not received any complaint specifying difficulties of access of air cushion vehicles to the EU market.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000507/14
alla Commissione
Giancarlo Scottà (EFD) e Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(21 gennaio 2014)

Oggetto: Mancata traduzione del programma Erasmus+

Il 2014 è l'anno di entrata in vigore di numerosi programmi comunitari. Tra questi figurano il nuovo modello del programma denominato Erasmus+, che permette agli studenti universitari europei di effettuare periodi di soggiorno, studio e formazione in un altro paese dell'Unione.

Nonostante la prima scadenza utile per la presentazione dei progetti nel quadro di Erasmus+ sia stata fissata al 17 marzo 2014, il nuovo programma guida è stato finora pubblicato soltanto in lingua inglese. A quanto risulta, inoltre, la traduzione del testo nelle altre 23 lingue ufficiali dell'Unione non sarà disponibile prima di aprile 2014.

Da questa situazione traggono un grande e ingiusto vantaggio paesi come Regno Unito e Irlanda, parlanti inglese come lingua madre. I fondi destinati al programma Erasmus+ (circa 14 miliardi di euro) non sono stati tuttavia versati soltanto dai madrelingua inglese, ma da tutti i cittadini europei.

Alla luce di ciò, può la Commissione riferire:

1. se intende rivedere il calendario stabilito, accelerando i tempi necessari per la traduzione e rivedendone le scadenze, in maniera da garantire a tutti gli Stati membri un iter equo ai fini della selezione e della candidatura;

2. se intende rivedere le proprie politiche in materia di diffusione dei documenti ufficiali, attivandosi affinché le informazioni vengano pubblicate in tempi più ristretti in tutte e 24 le lingue dell'UE?

Risposta di Androulla Vassiliou a nome della Commissione
(11 marzo 2014)

La Commissione può confermare di avere indetto l'invito a presentare proposte per Erasmus+ nelle 23 lingue ufficiali dell'UE. La pubblicazione è avvenuta il 12/12/2013, il giorno successivo all'adozione del nuovo regolamento Erasmus+ da parte del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio.

La Commissione ha dato istruzioni a tutte le agenzie nazionali chiamate ad attuare per suo conto il programma Erasmus+ a livello nazionale di fornire ai potenziali richiedenti, nelle rispettive lingue, tutte le necessarie informazioni sull'invito a presentare proposte. Le candidature possono essere presentate in una qualsiasi delle lingue ufficiali. Pertanto la Commissione non ritiene che alcun gruppo di candidati potenziali sia stato posto in una situazione di svantaggio.

La Guida del programma Erasmus+, che fornisce informazioni dettagliate su tutte le azioni previste nell'ambito del programma, è per il momento disponibile soltanto in inglese. È un documento lungo attualmente in via di traduzione ad opera dei servizi della Commissione che stanno traducendo simultaneamente guide analoghe in relazione ad altri nuovi programmi dell'UE. La Guida sarà messa a disposizione in tutte le lingue il prima possibile.

Considerato che l'invito presentare proposte per Erasmus+ è stato tradotto in tutte le lingue ufficiali dell'UE e considerato l'aiuto che possono fornire le agenzie nazionali, la Commissione non ha ravvisato nessun motivo per ritardare il primo invito in attesa della traduzione della Guida del programma. In effetti, un simile ritardo avrebbe un impatto negativo sostanziale sui cittadini e sulle organizzazioni dell'UE che desiderino partecipare al programma.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000507/14
to the Commission
Giancarlo Scottà (EFD) and Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(21 January 2014)

Subject: Failure to translate the Erasmus+ programme

2014 is the year when many Community programmes come into force. These include the new model of the programme known as Erasmus+, which enables European university students to spend time in another EU country for study and training purposes.

Despite the fact that the first deadline for submission of projects under Erasmus+ has been set at 17 March 2014, the new programme guide has only been published in English so far. It appears, moreover, that translation of the text into the other 23 official EU languages will not be available before April 2014.

This situation implies a major and unfair advantage for countries like the United Kingdom and Ireland where English is the mother tongue. Funds intended for the Erasmus+ programme (around 14 billion euros) have, however, not been paid solely by English native speakers but by all European citizens.

In the light of this, can the Commission state:

1. whether it intends to review the established timetable, speeding up the time needed for translation and revising the deadlines, so as to ensure that all Member States have an equal chance in selection and candidature;

2. whether it intends to review its own policies on dissemination of official documents, taking action to ensure that information is published more quickly in all 24 EU languages?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(11 March 2014)

The Commission can confirm that it launched the call for proposals for Erasmus+ in the 23 official EU languages. This launch took place on 12.12.2013, the day after the adoption by the European Parliament and Council of the new Erasmus+ Regulation.

The Commission has instructed all National Agencies, which implement Erasmus+ on behalf of the Commission at national level, to provide potential applicants with all necessary supporting information on the call in their own language. Applications can be submitted in any official language. Thus the Commission does not consider that any group of potential applicants has been put at a disadvantage.

The Erasmus+ Programme Guide, which provides detailed information about all actions under the Programme, is as yet only available in English. It is a long document that is currently being translated by the Commission's services, which are also simultaneously translating similar guides in respect of the other new EU programmes. The Guide will be made available in all languages as soon as possible.

Given that the Erasmus+ call for proposals was translated into all official EU languages and given the support available from National Agencies, the Commission saw no justification for revising the deadlines of the first call while awaiting translation of the Programme Guide. Indeed, any such delay would have had a substantial negative impact on EU citizens and organisations wishing to participate in the programme.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000510/14
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(21 de enero de 2014)

Asunto: Intervención de la Comisión Europea en la crisis del Canal de Panamá

Según el Vicepresidente de la CE y responsable de Industria, Antonio Tajani, la Comisión Europea (CE) ha aceptado mediar en el conflicto entre las autoridades de Panamá y el consorcio de tres empresas europeas, entre las que se encuentra Sacyr, que llevan a cabo las obras del canal de Panamá ([1]).

También ha dicho el Comisario Tajani que hablará con los responsables del Banco Europeo de Inversiones (BEI) y con las autoridades panameñas. Por otro lado, el Ministro de Asuntos Sociales y Cooperación español, José Manuel García-Margallo, ha matizado que la CE no tendrá un papel de «mediador» en el conflicto abierto sobre los costes de las obras de ampliación del canal de Panamá, sino que su objetivo es hallar una «solución financiera».

Mientras tanto, el crédito a familias y pymes cae en diversos Estados de Europa y el crédito al sector público aumenta.

A la luz de lo expuesto:

¿No cree la Comisión que el BEI debería centrarse en la reactivación del crédito a las pymes solventes de la Unión Europea?

¿Piensa la Comisión utilizar dinero público europeo para facilitar los negocios del conglomerado de empresas del Grupo Unidos por el Canal (GUPC) en el Estado de Panamá?

¿No cree la Comisión que una actuación tal puede crear riesgo moral para otras empresas que consigan contratos fuera de la UE y presenten ofertas sabiendo que, en caso de apuros, la UE las va a ayudar financieramente?

Respuesta del Sr. Tajani en nombre de la Comisión
(26 de marzo de 2014)

La ampliación del Canal de Panamá es un proyecto único de gran importancia para la economía mundial. Las obras las lleva a cabo en nombre de la ACP ([2]) un consorcio ([3]) en el que participan tres empresas europeas. El procedimiento de adjudicación y la gestión del contrato son responsabilidad de la ACP.

Como consecuencia de un litigio entre las partes, principalmente debido a la existencia de sobrecostes, GUPC anunció el 30 de diciembre de 2013 que iba a suspender las obras en un plazo de 21 días debido a la imposibilidad de prefinanciar la finalización de las mismas.

Habida cuenta de la singular importancia del proyecto, y a petición de las empresas, el Vicepresidente de la Comisión responsable de Industria hizo una declaración pública el 19 de enero de 2014 en la que exhortaba a las partes a continuar las obras y a que hiciesen todo lo posible por encontrar una solución de compromiso. Tras este anuncio, las obras continuaron y se reanudaron las negociaciones.

El 23 de enero de 2014, se organizó una reunión de la Comisión en Bruselas con la participación de las tres empresas europeas y representantes de los Gobiernos de España, Italia y Bélgica, así como del BEI. La participación del BEI estaba relacionada con un préstamo de 500 millones de dólares que se concedió en 2008 a la ACP para el proyecto de ampliación ([4]). También se efectuaron contactos con las autoridades de Panamá.

A pesar de una interrupción temporal de las negociaciones a principios de febrero, las partes parecen haber avanzado hacia una solución de su litigio, tal como indican los artículos de prensa más recientes. Si se confirmara este extremo, esto permitiría la finalización del proyecto en los plazos establecidos.

La finalización de la ampliación del canal impulsará el comercio internacional, lo que redundará en beneficio de la UE tanto a nivel de las empresas como de los ciudadanos.

No se ha estudiado la posibilidad de conceder ayuda financiera a las empresas en forma de fondos de la UE en este caso.

([1]) http://www.eleconomista.es/empresas-finanzas/noticias/5470811/01/14/La-CE-ha-aceptado-ser-mediador-en-el-conflicto-de-Sacyr-en-el-Canal-de-Panama.html?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter
([2]) Autoridad del Canal de Panamá (ACP).
([3]) Grupo Unidos por el Canal (GUPC).
([4]) El préstamo del BEI formaba parte de un paquete de financiación por un total de 2 300 millones de dólares, concedido por cinco grandes instituciones financieras internacionales.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000510/14
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(21 January 2014)

Subject: Commission intervention in the Panama Canal crisis

According to its Vice-President responsible for industry, Antonio Tajani, the Commission has agreed to mediate in the dispute between the Panamanian authorities and the consortium of three European firms, one of which is Sacyr, carrying out works at the Panama Canal ([1]).

Commissioner Tajani has also promised to talk to senior officials of the European Investment Bank (EIB) and to the Panamanian authorities. However, the Spanish Minister for Social Affairs and Cooperation, José Manuel García-Margallo, has explained that, rather than acting as a mediator in the dispute over the cost of the Panama Canal expansion works, the Commission will be aiming to find what he called a financial solution.

Meanwhile, credit for households and SMEs is shrinking, and credit for the public sector is rising.

Does not the Commission believe that the EIB should concentrate on reactivating credit for solvent EU-based SMEs?

Does it think that European public money should be used to facilitate the business operations of the GUPC consortium ('United for the Canal') in Panama?

Does it not believe that behaviour of the kind described might create a moral hazard for other companies which manage to win contracts outside the EU and submit bids knowing that, if they run into difficulties, the EU will help them financially?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(26 March 2014)

The extension of the Panama Canal is a unique project of immense importance for the global economy. The works are carried out on behalf of ACP ([2]) by a consortium ([3]) involving three European companies. The award procedure and management of the contract is the responsibility of ACP.

Following a dispute between the parties related mainly to cost overruns, GUPC announced on 30 December 2013 that it would suspend the works after 21 days due to the impossibility to pre-finance the finalisation of the works.

In view of the unique importance of the project and at the request of the companies, the Vice-President of the Commission responsible for Industry issued a public declaration on 19 January 2014, in which he called upon the parties to continue the works and to make every effort to find a compromise solution. Following this announcement, the works continued and negotiations resumed.

On 23 January 2014, a meeting was organised by the Commission in Brussels with the participation of the three European companies, representatives of the Spanish, Italian and Belgian governments, as well as the EIB. The participation of the EIB was related to a loan of USD 500 million provided in 2008 to ACP for the extension project ([4]). Contacts with the authorities of Panama were also taken.

Despite a temporary breakdown in the negotiations early February, the parties appear to have made good progress towards a solution of their dispute, as indicated by recent press articles. This would allow, if confirmed, the completion of the project on time.

The completion of the canal extension will give a boost to international trade, which will benefit the EU at the level of companies and citizens alike.

No financial assistance to the companies in the form of EU funds has been considered in this matter.

([1]) http://www.eleconomista.es/empresas-finanzas/noticias/5470811/01/14/La-CE-ha-aceptado-ser-mediador-en-el-conflicto-de-Sacyr-en-el-Canal-de-Panama.html?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter
([2]) Autoridad del Canal de Panamá (ACP).
([3]) Grupo Unidos por el Canal (GUPC).
([4]) The EIB loan was part of a financing package of USD 2.3 billion in total, provided by five major international financial institutions.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000511/14
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(21 de enero de 2014)

Asunto: Directiva 2010/31/UE

En respuesta a la pregunta E-003482/2013, el Sr. Barnier declaró, en nombre de la Comisión: «A 1 de abril de 2013, son once los procedimientos de infracción incoados contra el Reino de España por no haber comunicado las medidas de transposición de varias directivas. Uno de estos procedimientos se refiere a una directiva (la Directiva 2010/31/UE) que en la Comunicación "Mejorar la gobernanza del mercado único", de 8 de junio de 2012, figura entre los "actos legislativos esenciales que requieren especial atención", y "en los que ha de realizarse un esfuerzo especial para garantizar su oportuna transposición"».

Pasados nueve meses, ¿puede decir la Comisión si el Estado español ha comunicado las medidas de transposición de la Directiva 2010/31/UE?

En caso negativo ¿qué medidas tiene previsto tomar la Comisión para que este Estado miembro cumpla las leyes europeas?

Respuesta del Sr. Oettinger en nombre de la Comisión
(11 de marzo de 2014)

En mayo, septiembre y noviembre de 2013, España notificó oficialmente a la Comisión nuevas medidas de transposición de la Directiva 2010/31/UE, relativa a la eficiencia energética de los edificios. España considera que ya ha transpuesto plenamente la Directiva. La Comisión está comprobando los actos notificados para asegurarse de que así es. El próximo paso en este proceso es verificar, también respecto a todos los demás Estados miembros, si la legislación nacional transpone correctamente todas las obligaciones que impone la Directiva.

El 9 de febrero de 2012, la Comisión presentó un recurso contra España por no transposición de partes de la Directiva 2002/91/CE, relativa a la eficiencia energética de los edificios. La Directiva 2010/31/UE derogó la Directiva 2002/91/CE con efectos a partir del 1 de febrero de 2012, sin perjuicio, no obstante, de las obligaciones de los Estados miembros en cuanto al cumplimiento del plazo para la aplicación y la transposición de la Directiva 2002/91/CE al Derecho nacional. El Tribunal dictó sentencia en este asunto el 16 de enero de 2014 (asunto C-67/12 ([1])) y consideró que España no había transpuesto completamente los artículos 3, 7 y 8 de esa Directiva. En la actualidad, la Comisión está tratando el asunto con España para garantizar que respete las conclusiones del Tribunal.

([1]) http://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?doclang=ES&text=&pageIndex=0&part=1&mode=DOC&docid=146442&occ=first&dir=&cid=115070

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000511/14
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(21 January 2014)

Subject: Directive 2010/31/EU

In reply to Written Question E-003482/2013, Mr Barnier, on behalf of the Commission, stated: 'As of 1 April 2013, there are eleven infringement cases open against the Kingdom of Spain for non-communication of transposition measures of directives'. One of these cases refers to a directive (Directive 2010/31/EU) which, in the communication on Better Governance for the Single Market of 8 June 2012, is included among the 'legislative acts requiring special attention' and is considered an area in which 'special efforts are needed to ensure that rules are properly implemented.'

After nine months, can the Commission say whether the Spanish Government has notified its measures transposing Directive 2010/31/EU?

If not, what measures does the Commission intend to take to ensure that this Member State complies with EU legislation?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(11 March 2014)

Spain officially notified the Commission of further measures transposing Directive 2010/31/EU on the energy performance of buildings in May, September and November 2013. Spain now considers that it has fully transposed the directive. The Commission is checking the various acts notified to ensure that this is the case. The next step in the process, as with all the other Member States, is to check whether the national legislation correctly transposes all the obligations under the directive.

On 9 February 2012, the Commission brought a case against Spain for the non-transposition of parts of the directive 2002/91/EC on the energy performance of Buildings. Directive 2010/31 repealed Directive 2002/91 with effect from 1 February 2012, without prejudice, however, to the obligations of the Member States relating to the time-limit for transposition into national law and application of Directive 2002/91. The Court rendered its judgment in this case on 16 January 2014 (C-67/12 ([1])). The Court found that Spain had not fully transposed Articles 3, 7 and 8 of Directive 2002/91/EC. The Commission is currently in dialog with Spain in order to ensure its compliance with the findings of the Court.

([1]) http://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?text=&docid=146442&pageIndex=0&doclang=en&mode=lst&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=383509

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000518/14
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(21 de enero de 2014)

Asunto: Directiva 2010/63/UE

En referencia a la pregunta E-003482/2013, el Sr. Barnier respondió, en nombre de la Comisión, lo siguiente: «A 1 de abril de 2013, son once los procedimientos de infracción incoados contra el Reino de España por no haber comunicado las medidas de transposición de varias directivas».

Pasados nueve meses, ¿puede decir la Comisión si el Estado español ha comunicado las medidas de transposición de la Directiva 2010/63/UE relativa a la protección de los animales utilizados para fines científicos?

En caso negativo, ¿qué medidas tiene previsto tomar la Comisión para que este Estado miembro cumpla la legislación europea?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(13 de marzo de 2014)

En febrero de 2013 el Gobierno español notificó las medidas nacionales de transposición de la Directiva 2010/63/UE, relativa a la protección de los animales utilizados para fines científicos ([1]). En abril y junio de ese mismo año comunicó dos modificaciones ulteriores.

([1]) DO L 276 de 20.10.2010.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000518/14
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(21 January 2014)

Subject: Directive 2010/63/EU

With reference to Written Question E-003482/2013, Mr Barnier replied, on behalf of the Commission: 'As of 1 April 2013, there are eleven infringement cases open against the Kingdom of Spain for non-communication of transposition measures of directives'.

After nine months, can the Commission say whether the Spanish Government has notified its measures transposing Directive 2010/63/EU on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes?

If not, what measures will the Commission take to ensure that this Member State complies with EU legislation?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(13 March 2014)

The Spanish Government has notified their national measures transposing Directive 2010/63/EU on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes ([1]) in February 2013. Two further amendments were notified in April and June 2013.

([1]) OJ L 276, 20.10.2010.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000519/14
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(21 de enero de 2014)

Asunto: Directiva 2009/119/CE

En referencia a la pregunta E-003482/2013, el Sr. Barnier respondió en nombre de la Comisión: «A 1 de abril de 2013, son once los procedimientos de infracción incoados contra el Reino de España por no haber comunicado las medidas de transposición de varias directivas».

Pasados nueve meses, ¿puede indicar la Comisión si el Estado español ha comunicado las medidas de transposición de la Directiva 2009/119/CE, por la que se obliga a los Estados miembros a mantener un nivel mínimo de reservas de petróleo crudo o productos petrolíferos?

En caso negativo, ¿qué medidas tiene previsto tomar la Comisión para que este Estado miembro cumpla la legislación europea?

Respuesta del Sr. Oettinger en nombre de la Comisión
(11 de marzo de 2014)

El 31 de enero de 2013, la Comisión incoó un procedimiento de infracción a España mediante el envío de una carta de emplazamiento. En el transcurso del procedimiento, España notificó varias medidas nacionales de transposición. Los servicios de la Comisión están ahora analizando si, con esas medidas, España ha incorporado totalmente la Directiva 2009/119/CE del Consejo a su ordenamiento jurídico. En función del resultado de ese análisis, la Comisión decidirá si archiva el procedimiento de infracción o si sigue adelante con él.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000519/14
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(21 January 2014)

Subject: Directive 2009/119/EC

With reference to Written Question E-003482/2013, Mr Barnier replied, on behalf of the Commission: 'As of 1 April 2013, there are eleven infringement cases open against the Kingdom of Spain for non-communication of transposition measures of directives'.

After nine months, can the Commission say whether the Spanish Government has notified its measures transposing Directive 2009/119/EC imposing an obligation on Member States to maintain minimum stocks of crude oil and/or petroleum products?

If not, what measures will the Commission take to ensure that this Member State complies with EU legislation?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(11 March 2014)

On 31 January 2013, the Commission opened an infringement procedure by sending a letter of formal notice to Spain. In the course of the proceedings, Spain notified several national transposition measures. Commission services are currently verifying whether with these measures Spain has fully transposed Council Directive 2009/119/EC. Depending on the outcome of the examination, the Commission may decide to close the infringement procedure or take the next procedural steps.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-000531/14
lill-Kummissjoni
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(21 ta' Jannar 2014)

Suġġett: Anzjani li qed jgħixu f'akkomodazzjoni mhux xierqa

Għalkemm id-dar għandha tkun post sigur, għal ħafna mhijiex, speċjalment għal bosta nies vulnerabbli, bħall-anzjani, li m'għandhomx ir-riżorsi finanzjarji meħtieġa biex jirranġaw djarhom. Kundizzjonijiet inadegwati ta' akkomodazzjoni jirrappreżentaw theddida serja għas-saħħa ambjentali li tista' tiġi evitata. Ir-realtà hi li numru konsiderevoli ta' anzjani fit-28 pajjiż tal-UE qed jgħixu f'kundizzjonijiet diffiċili, uħud minnhom jikkostitwixxu perikli għas-saħħa, inkluż esponiment eċċessiv għall-istorbju, l-umdità, l-iffullar, il-problemi biex iżommu d-dar sħuna fix-xitwa, u n-nuqqas ta' faċilitajiet ta' iġjene bħal toilet ġewwa li jifflaxxja jew banju jew doċċa.

Xi strateġiji qed jiġu adottati sabiex ngħinu lill-anzjani li qed jgħixu f'kundizzjonijiet bħal dawn biex huma jtejbu djarhom jew biex isibu akkomodazzjoni alternattiva li tkun iktar sigura u diċenti?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Andor f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(18 ta' Marzu 2014)

L-Artikolu 34 tal-Karta tad-Drittijiet Fundamentali tal-Unjoni Ewropea jirrikonoxxi d-dritt ta' aċċess għall-akkomodazzjoni u għall-għajnuna għall-akkomodazzjoni.

Fl-Istati Membri, it-tixjiħ f'saħħtu u l-għajxien indipendenti ġew promossi fl-2012 bħala parti mis-Sena Ewropea għat-Tixjiħ Attiv u s-Solidarjetà bejn il-Ġenerazzjonijiet. Fuq suġġeriment konġunt tal-Kumitat tal-Protezzjoni Soċjali u tal-Kumitat tal-Impjiegi, fis-6 ta' Diċembru 2012 il-Kunsill adotta l-prinċipji ta' gwida għat-tixjiħ attiv, li jenfasizzaw il-kwistjoni ta' "djar u servizzi adattati" bħala waħda mill-politiki ewlenin biex ikun żgurat l-għajxien adegwat u indipendenti fix-xjuħija.

L-Istati Membri huma responsabbli, l-ewwel u qabel kollox, għat-tfassil u l-implimentazzjoni tal-politika tal-akkomodazzjoni, inkluż l-akkomodazzjoni għall-anzjani ([1]). Madankollu, il-Kummissjoni tipprovdilhom gwida u appoġġ għall-politika permezz ta' diversi politiki u fondi tal-UE. Il-Pakkett ta' Investiment Soċjali u b'mod partikulari d-Dokument ta' Ħidma tal-Persunal tal-Kummissjoni msejjaħ "Kura fit-tul f'soċjetajiet li qed jixjieħu — Sfidi u għażliet tal-politika" ([2]), iqisu l-azzjonijiet tal-politika u l-appoġġ finanzjarju sabiex jitwettqu investimenti soċjali f'sistemi ta' kura fid-djar u ta' kura fil-komunità li jkunu tajbin għall-anzjani, bħall-adattament tad-djar tal-anzjani privati u f'apparat ġdid li jgħin lill-anzjani.– Fil-Pakkett ta' Investiment Soċjali, il-Kummissjoni tipproponi wkoll lill-Istati Membri biex jimplimentaw strateġiji integrati li jibdew mill-akkomodazzjoni sabiex tiġi evitata l-problema tal-persuni mingħajr saqaf fuq rashom u tal-esklużjoni mill-akkomodazzjoni u sabiex il-persuni l-aktar żvantaġġati jingħataw akkomodazzjoni soċjali.

Barra minn hekk, l-imsieħba qed jaħdmu flimkien fuq proġetti konkreti fuq il-post, fi ħdan is-Sħubija Ewropea għal Innovazzjoni dwar it-tixjiħ attiv u b'saħħtu ([3]), biex jiżviluppaw ambjenti li fihom jgħixu n-nies li jkunu ta' appoġġ u li jkunu jqisu l-ħtiġijiet speċifiċi tal-anzjani.

([1]) Ir-Riżoluzzjoni tal-Parlament Ewropew dwar l-akkomodazzjoni soċjali fl-Unjoni Ewropea, bir-referenza A7-0155/2013/P7_TA-PROV(2013)0246.
([2]) SWD(2013) 41 finali tal-20 ta' Frar 2013, li jinsab fis-sit tal-internet li ġej: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=89&langId=mt&newsId=1807&moreDocuments=yes&tableName=news
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/index_en.cfm?section=active-healthy-ageing&pg=home

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000531/14
to the Commission
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(21 January 2014)

Subject: Elderly people living in unsuitable accommodation

Although home should be a safe place, for many it is not, especially numerous vulnerable people, such as the elderly, who lack the financial resources needed to maintain their homes. Inadequate housing conditions represent a serious environmental health threat that could be prevented. The reality is that a considerable number of elderly people in the EU-28 are living in difficult conditions, some of which constitute health hazards, including excessive exposure to noise, dampness, overcrowding, problems with keeping a dwelling warm in winter, and a lack of hygiene facilities such as an indoor flush toilet or a bath or shower.

What strategies are being adopted to assist elderly people who are living in such conditions to improve their homes or to find alternative accommodation which is safer and more decent?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(18 March 2014)

The right of access to housing and to housing assistance is recognised in Article 34 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

Healthy ageing and independent living have been promoted in Member States as part of the European Year 2012 for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations. Upon joint suggestion from the Social Protection Committee and the Employment Committee the Council on 6 December 2012 adopted Guiding Principles for Active Ageing that highlight the issue of 'Adapted housing and services' among key policies to ensure adequate and independent living in old age.

The Member States are primarily responsible for the design and implementation of housing policy, including housing for the elderly ([1]). However, the Commission provides them with policy guidance and support through various EU policies and Funds. The Social Investment Package (SIP), and in particular the Commission Staff Working Document 'Long-term care in ageing societies — Challenges and policy options' ([2]), takes stock of policy actions and financial support to carry out social investments in age friendly systems of home care and community-based care, such as adaptations of older people's private homes and in new assistive devices. In the SIP the Commission also proposes the Member States to implement integrated housing-led strategies to prevent homelessness and housing exclusion and to provide social housing for the most disadvantaged people.

Moreover, within the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing ([3]), partners are working together on concrete projects on the ground to develop supportive living environments that take into consideration specific older persons' needs.

([1]) Parliament's Resolution on social housing in the European Union, Ref: A7-0155/2013/P7_TA-PROV(2013)0246.
([2]) SWD(2013) 41 final of 20 February 2013, at: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=89&langId=en&newsId=1807&moreDocuments=yes&tableName=news
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/index_en.cfm?section=active-healthy-ageing&pg=home

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000532/14
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Pino Arlacchi (S&D)
(21 gennaio 2014)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Fondi europei e condizioni di salute in Afghanistan

Stando ai recenti dati diffusi dalle Nazioni Unite, il numero di casi di malnutrizione grave tra i bambini in Afghanistan è aumentato del 50 % o più rispetto al 2012. Di fatto, nonostante l'impegno profuso dall'Unione europea e dagli Stati Uniti nel corso degli anni e i miliardi di dollari in aiuti umanitari concessi all'Afghanistan, la situazione relativa alle condizioni di salute dei bambini non è mai stata così grave.

Nelle sue valutazioni concernenti gli aiuti dell'UE all'Afghanistan, il Parlamento ha più volte sottolineato come tali aiuti non abbiano prodotto alcuno dei risultati attesi, malgrado i notevoli importi stanziati per lo sviluppo e la questione umanitaria.

Ha inoltre ribadito l'invito a che il Servizio europeo per l'azione esterna (SEAE) fornisca una valutazione d'impatto chiara e trasparente degli aiuti unionali all'Afghanistan e ha presentato varie proposte riguardanti le modalità attraverso le quali è possibile migliorare la struttura e l'efficacia di detti aiuti.

Alla luce di quanto precede,

1. può il Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante fornire una descrizione dettagliata delle cause che hanno portato al peggioramento delle condizioni di salute in Afghanistan?

2. può indicare se il SEAE si sta occupando di redigere una valutazione d'impatto chiara e trasparente degli aiuti dell'UE all'Afghanistan, come richiesto dal Parlamento?

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

L'Afghanistan ha compiuto progressi straordinari in campo sanitario rispetto al 2001, quando l'UE e altri donatori hanno iniziato a fornire aiuti. L'accesso ai servizi sanitari è passato dal 9 % nel 2000 al 66 % nel 2010. Il tasso di mortalità infantile è sceso da 1086/100 000 nati vivi nel 2001 a 327/100 000 nel 2012. I progressi sono stati analoghi per quanto riguarda la salute dei bambini: il tasso di mortalità al di sotto dei cinque anni è sceso da 257/1000 a 102/1000.

Nel 2004 il 60,5 % dei bambini di età inferiore ai cinque anni soffriva di un arresto della crescita (indagine nazionale sullo stato di nutrizione). Da allora non sono più disponibili dati nazionali affidabili sullo stato di nutrizione. L'UNICEF non ha confermato la validità dei dati riportati di recente dalla stampa. La malnutrizione è un problema cronico in Afghanistan, legato alla salute e alle infezioni, all'insicurezza alimentare, alla dinamica di genere (matrimoni precoci), alle condizioni igienico-sanitarie carenti, alla povertà ecc. Alcuni dei dati allarmanti raccolti in loco potrebbero derivare più da una maggiore informazione che da un peggioramento della situazione.

Gli aiuti allo sviluppo a favore dell'Afghanistan sono attualmente forniti nell'ambito di un quadro di responsabilità reciproca sottoscritto nel 2012 a Tokyo fra i donatori e il governo. Gli aiuti vengono sempre più allineati con il «programma di priorità nazionale» dell'Afghanistan e iscritti in bilancio. Gli stanziamenti di bilancio dell'UE destinati agli aiuti umanitari finanziano anche siti sentinella di controllo nutrizionale dell'OMS. L'UE fornisce inoltre assistenza sanitaria di emergenza alle popolazioni vittime di conflitti e di catastrofi.

L'Unione intende procedere nel 2015 a una valutazione congiunta del paese su cui si baseranno un riesame del programma indicativo pluriennale 2014-2020 e una programmazione congiunta nel 2016. Diversi donatori si sono detti interessati a parteciparvi.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000532/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Pino Arlacchi (S&D)
(21 January 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — European funds and health situation in Afghanistan

According to recent UN figures, the number of cases of severe malnutrition among children in Afghanistan has increased by 50% or more compared with 2012. In fact, despite years of EU and US involvement and billions of dollars in humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, the situation as regards children's health is worse than ever.

Parliament has pointed out on several occasions in its assessments of EU aid to Afghanistan that the aid has not produced any of the anticipated results, in spite of the huge amounts of money allocated to development and humanitarian issues.

Parliament has also reiterated its request that the European External Action Service (EEAS) provide a clear and transparent impact assessment of the Union's aid to Afghanistan, and has made several proposals on how to improve aid structure and effectiveness.

Given the above:

1. can the Vice-President/High Representative give a breakdown of the causes of the worsening health situation in Afghanistan?

2. can the Vice-President/High Representative indicate whether the EEAS is working on a clear and transparent impact assessment of the Union's aid to Afghanistan, as requested by Parliament?

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

Afghanistan has made extraordinary advancements in health since the EU and others started to deliver aid in 2001. Access to health services increased from 9% in 2000 to 66% in 2010. The maternal mortality rate reduced from 1 086/100 000 live births in 2001 to 327/100 000 in 2012. Similar progress can be seen with regard to child health: under-five child mortality decreased from 257/1 000 to 102/1 000.

The prevalence of stunting in under-five children was 60.5% in 2004 (National Nutrition Survey). Nation-wide and reliable nutrition data are not available since then. Unicef has not confirmed the validity of the data contained in recent press articles. Malnutrition is a chronic problem in Afghanistan, linked to health and infections, food insecurity, gender dynamics (i.e. early marriages), poor sanitation and hygiene, poverty, etc. Some of the alarming field data may be the result of increased outreach rather than a worsening of the situation.

Development aid to Afghanistan is currently delivered within the context of a mutual accountability framework agreed between donors and the Government in Tokyo in 2012. Aid is increasingly aligned with Afghanistan's 'National Priority Programmes' and is increasingly delivered 'on-budget'. Through its humanitarian aid budget, the EU also funds WHO nutrition sentinel sites. Emergency health assistance to conflict and disaster affected populations is also supported by the EU.

The EU currently intends to carry out a joint country evaluation in 2015, which is intended to inform a review of the multi-annual indicative programme 2014-2020 and a joint programming exercise in 2016. A number of donors have shown interest in participating.

(České znění)

Otázka k písemnému zodpovězení E-000534/14
Komisi
Jan Zahradil (ECR)
(21. ledna 2014)

Předmět: Účinnost provádění pomoci EU: případ PFP PEGASE

Navzdory krizi zůstávají EU a její členské státy největším dárcem pomoci třetím zemím. To je chvályhodné, nicméně je rovněž nezbytné zajistit co nejvyšší míru odpovědnosti při hospodaření s těmito veřejnými prostředky EU. Proto by mimo jiné v případech, kdy Evropský účetní dvůr zpochybní udržitelnost určitého programu finanční podpory EU, jak to učinil například ve své tiskové zprávě ze dne 11. prosince 2013 ([1]) ve věci přímé finanční podpory (PFP) PEGASE palestinské samosprávě, měla Komise bezodkladně jednat a zajistit nápravu zjištěných problémů. Žádáme proto Komisi o objasnění těchto bodů:

1. Kolik činí celková výše finančních prostředků poskytnutých palestinské samosprávě ze strany EU v rámci PFP PEGASE nebo jiného programu pomoci ke dni 31. prosince 2013 a jaká částka bude celkem přidělena palestinské samosprávě ve víceletém finančním rámci na období 2014-2020?

2. Na základě jakých ukazatelů výkonnosti, jsou-li takové ukazatele stanoveny, je hodnocena účinnost pomoci ze strany EU? Na základě jakých z těchto ukazatelů je posuzována účinnost PFP PEGASE a s jakým výsledkem?

3. Přibližně jaký podíl celkových nákladů programů pomoci třetím zemím ze strany EU tvoří administrativní náklady a jaký je podíl administrativních nákladů na celkovém rozpočtu PFP PEGASE?

4. Jaké praktické kroky jsou plánovány za účelem zvýšení efektivity pomoci EU do budoucna?

Odpověď vysoké představitelky/místopředsedkyně Komise Ashtonové jménem Komise
(20. března 2014)

V roce 2013 bylo v rámci podpory EU palestinské samosprávě poskytnuto prostřednictvím mechanismu PEGASE formou přímé finanční pomoci více než 168 milionů EUR. Policejní mise Evropské unie pro palestinská území vyslaná v rámci SZBP EU rovněž poskytuje poradenství v oblasti reformy a rozvoje palestinského bezpečnostního a soudního sektoru.

Mechanismus PEGASE neobsahuje žádné přísné ukazatele výkonnosti. Vysoká představitelka a Komise v tomto ohledu vycházejí z ukazatelů obsažených v palestinském plánu reforem a rozvoje a palestinském národním rozvojovém plánu, na jehož prioritách PEGASE byl a i nadále bude založen. Jedná se také o opatření na bázi podmíněnosti.

Všechny finanční prostředky v PFP PEGASE směřují ke konečným příjemcům. V tomto ohledu nebyly členským státům a/nebo jiným přispěvatelům mechanismu PEGASE účtovány žádné administrativní ani jiné poplatky. Pro oblast auditu a kontroly existují oddělené smlouvy.

Pokud jde o jednotlivá doporučení Účetního dvora, Komise a vysoká představitelka souhlasily s provedením některých změn a s přezkoumáním mechanismu PEGASE. Všemi body, které předložil pan poslanec, se zabývá odpověď Komise a vysoké představitelky na zmíněnou zprávu (EÚD SP 14/2013). Komise si dovoluje pana poslance odkázat také na své odpovědi na otázky k písemnému zodpovězení E-13394/13, P-14034/13, E-14195/13; E-14347/13 a E-14320/13 ([2]) týkající se stejné problematiky.

([1]) ECA/13/44.
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/cs/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000534/14
to the Commission
Jan Zahradil (ECR)
(21 January 2014)

Subject: Efficiency of EU aid implementation: the case of PEGASE DFS

In spite of the crisis, the EU and its Member States remain the biggest donor of aid to third countries. While this is commendable, it is also essential to ensure the highest level of accountability in the management of this EU public money. Accordingly, when the European Court of Auditors questions the sustainability of a given EU financial support programme, for instance in its press release of 11 December 2013 ([1]) concerning the PEGASE Direct Financial Support (DFS) to the Palestinian Authority (PA), among other instances, the Commission should act immediately to remedy the problems identified. The Commission is therefore asked to clarify the following points:

1. What is the total amount of funding provided to the PA by the EU under the PEGASE DFS or any other assistance programme as at 31 December 2013, and how much funding in total will be allocated to the PA under the 2014-2020 multiannual financial framework?

2. What, if any, performance indicators are used to evaluate the effectiveness of EU aid? Which of these indicators are used to assess the effectiveness of PEGASE DFS, and what has been the outcome?

3. Approximately what percentage of the costs of EU aid programmes for third countries are administrative, and what percentage of the total budget of PEGASE DFS is used for administration?

4. What practical steps are planned with a view to making EU aid more effective in the future?

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

In 2013, EU support included more than EUR 168 million direct financial support to the Palestinian Authority through the PEGASE Mechanism. The EU CFSP mission EUPOL COPPS also provides advice on reform and development of the Palestinian security and justice sectors.

No strict performance indicators are included in PEGASE. The HR/VP and the Commission are guided in this respect by the indicators contained in the Palestinian reform and development plan and the Palestinian national development plan, on whose priorities PEGASE was and remains based. This is also a measure of conditionality.

All funds from PEGASE DFS are directed towards the end beneficiaries. In this respect there are no administrative fees and no fees have been charged to Member States and/or other contributors to PEGASE. Separate contracts exist for audit and control.

Concerning individual recommendations by the Court, the Commission and the HR/VP have agreed to introduce some changes and to review the PEGASE mechanism. All the points raised by the Honourable Member are covered in the reply by the Commission and HR/VP to the report (ECA SP 14/2013). The Commission also refers the Honourable Member to its replies to written questions E-13394/13, P-14034/13, E-14195/13; E-14347/13 and E-14320/13 ([2]) on the same subject.

([1]) ECA/13/44.
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000535/14
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Fiorello Provera (EFD)
(21 gennaio 2014)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Progetto degli Emirati arabi uniti di introdurre il servizio militare obbligatorio

Gli Emirati arabi uniti hanno recentemente annunciato di voler introdurre il servizio militare obbligatorio. Il governo ha appoggiato una legge che renderà obbligatorio l'addestramento militare per gli uomini che hanno più di 18 anni (o coloro che hanno terminato la scuola superiore) e meno di 30. Il primo ministro degli Emirati arabi uniti, lo sceicco Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, ha annunciato che gli uomini che hanno conseguito un diploma di scuola superiore dovranno prestare servizio per nove mesi, mentre coloro che non sono in possesso di tale diploma dovranno prestare servizio per due anni. Alle donne sarà consentito di arruolarsi su base volontaria.

Secondo numerosi osservatori militari nella regione, gli Emirati arabi uniti hanno scelto di introdurre la coscrizione obbligatoria al fine di mantenere la stabilità. Nel corso degli anni, gli Emirati arabi uniti si sono avvalsi di un numero considerevole di sistemi militari. Attualmente le forze degli Emirati arabi uniti contano 51 000 unità: 44 000 nell'esercito, 2 500 nella marina militare e 4 500 nell'aeronautica militare.

Anche se gli Emirati arabi uniti non devono far fronte a pericoli immediati per la sicurezza, vi sono tensioni con l'Iran a causa di tre isole contese nello stretto di Hormuz. Inoltre, alla luce dei problemi nella regione emersi fin dal 2011, è probabile che le autorità degli Emirati arabi uniti abbiano ritenuto saggio attuare un sistema di coscrizione militare obbligatoria.

1. Qual è la posizione del Vicepresidente/Alto rappresentate sulla decisione degli Emirati arabi uniti di introdurre il servizio militare obbligatorio?

2. Teme il Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante che tale decisione potrebbe contribuire ad aumentare le tensioni con l'Iran e in particolare con il corpo delle Guardie della rivoluzione nello stretto di Hormuz?

3. Intende l'UE sostenere l'addestramento della nuova forza di coscrizione degli Emirati arabi uniti? In altre parole, intende inviare addestratori e consulenti militari?

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

L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente non intende commentare la decisione degli Emirati arabi uniti di introdurre il servizio militare obbligatorio, giacché si tratta di una loro decisione sovrana.

L'UE non sta attualmente valutando l'ipotesi di sostenere l'addestramento della nuova forza di coscrizione degli Emirati arabi uniti.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000535/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Fiorello Provera (EFD)
(21 January 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — UAE plans for compulsory military service

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) recently announced that it plans to introduce compulsory military service. A law was endorsed by the government which will require men over the age of 18 (or those who have finished high school) and under the age of 30 to complete military training. The UAE's Prime Minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, announced that men who have finished high school will serve for nine months, while those without a high school diploma will serve for two years. Women may be allowed to join on a voluntary basis.

According to a number of military observers in the region, the UAE has chosen to introduce conscription in order to maintain stability. Over the years, the UAE has procured a considerable amount of military systems. At present, the UAE forces have 51 000 personnel, comprising an army of 44 000, a navy of 2 500 and an air force of 4 500.

While the UAE does not face any immediate security threats, it has experienced tension with Iran over three disputed islands in the Strait of Hormuz. What is more, in light of regional problems that have emerged since 2011, it is likely that the UAE authorities thought it wise to implement a system of military conscription.

1. What is the Vice-President/High Representative's position on the UAE's decision to introduce conscription?

2. Is the VP/HR concerned that the UAE's decision could serve to increase tension with Iran and in particular with Iran's Revolutionary Guards in the Strait of Hormuz?

3. Does the EU intend to support the training of the UAE's new conscription force? In other words, does it intend to send military trainers and advisers?

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

The decision to introduce conscription is a sovereign decision of the United Arab Emirates, on which the HR/VP does not wish to comment.

No EU support in the form of training is currently considered for the United Arab Emirates' new conscription force.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000538/14
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(21 gennaio 2014)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Autobombe a Baghdad

Una nuova strage in Iraq ha provocato la morte di 24 persone e il ferimento di altre 58 in seguito all'esplosione di sei diverse autobombe. Tra le vittime un giornalista al servizio di una rete televisiva di Falluja.

Alla luce di ciò, può l'Alto Rappresentante chiarire:

1. se tra le vittime e i feriti siano presenti cittadini europei;

2. se i risultati conseguiti dalla missione EUJUST LEX-Iraq in termini di rafforzamento dello Stato di diritto e di promozione del rispetto dei diritti umani in Iraq possano considerarsi soddisfacenti;

3. se siano già stati stabiliti programmi di cooperazione o missioni in ambito PSDC per favorire la democratizzazione del paese e normalizzare le relazioni con il governo iracheno.

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

All'AR/VP non sono stati segnalati casi di cittadini europei rimasti uccisi o feriti durante i recenti attentati perpetrati a Baghdad o in altre parti dell'Iraq.

EUJUST LEX-Iraq ha risposto alle necessità del paese con attività di formazione, tutoraggio, monitoraggio e consulenza destinate a tutti i rami del sistema giudiziario penale iracheno. Il lavoro di EUJUST LEX-Iraq è stato sostenuto dalle autorità nazionali e ha promosso una cultura di rispetto dei diritti umani nel paese.

L'UE sta preparando, insieme ad altri attori internazionali, il seguito da dare alle attività di EUJUST LEX-Iraq. Nell'ambito della sua assistenza, che dal 2003 ad oggi è stata pari a più di 1 miliardo di EUR, l'UE attuerà un programma denominato «Sostegno alla buona governance in Iraq» per contribuire allo sviluppo del sistema giudiziario penale del paese. A medio termine, la promozione dello Stato di diritto e del rispetto dei diritti umani è annoverata fra i settori di intervento dell'assistenza fornita dall'UE nel periodo 2014-2017. L'accordo di partenariato e cooperazione costituisce inoltre un valido quadro per intensificare la nostra cooperazione in questo ambito.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000538/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(21 January 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Car bombs in Baghdad

A further atrocity in Iraq has resulted in the death of 24 people, with another 58 suffering injuries following the detonation of six separate car bombs. Among the victims was a journalist working for a television network in Fallujah.

In the light of the above, can the High Representative clarify:

1. whether any European citizens were among those killed and wounded;

2. whether the results of the EUJUST LEX-Iraq mission can be considered to be satisfactory in terms of strengthening the constitutional state and promoting respect for human rights in Iraq;

3. whether any cooperation programmes or CSDP missions have already been put in place with the aim of encouraging the democratisation of the country and stabilising relations with the Iraqi Government?

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

The HR/VP has not received any reports of European citizens having been killed or injured in recent attacks in Baghdad or in the rest of Iraq.

EUJUST LEX-Iraq responded to Iraqi needs with training, mentoring, monitoring and advising activities involving all branches of the Iraqi criminal justice system. EUJUST LEX-Iraq work was supported by the Iraqi authorities and promoted a culture of respect for human rights in Iraq.

Work is currently underway for the follow-up to EUJUST LEX-lraq's activities by other EU and international actors. The EU, building on its assistance which has amounted to over 1 billion euro since 2003 is going to implement a programme titled 'Support to Good Governance in Iraq', assisting the development of the Iraq criminal justice system. In the medium term, the promotion of the Rule of Law and the respect for Human Rights is considered as one of the intervention areas of EU assistance in the period 2014-2017. The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement provides also a valuable framework for enhancing our cooperation in this area.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000539/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(21 gennaio 2014)

Oggetto: Concorso «Auto dell'anno» truccato

Uno scandalo in Germania ha investito un'importante istituzione del settore automobilistico che conta quasi 20 milioni di iscritti, circa un quarto della popolazione tedesca totale.

Secondo un noto quotidiano tedesco, l'istituzione in questione avrebbe «truccato» i risultati relativi al concorso che elegge in Germania «l'auto dell'anno», ovvero l'auto più «amata» dalla popolazione, favorendo un modello prodotto da una casa tedesca. Il club ha dapprima smentito l'intera vicenda, salvo poi confermare che i dati sono stati manipolati.

Il dato assume un carattere più grave se si considera che il club in questione fa anche affari con noleggi, assicurazioni e organizzazioni di viaggi.

Alla luce di questo evento, può la Commissione chiarire se:

1. è al corrente della situazione;

2. è a conoscenza di scandali simili in altri paesi europei;

3. ritiene che tale manipolazione di dati possa avere conseguenze sul mercato europeo dell'auto, svantaggiando taluni produttori automobilistici e falsando la concorrenza in settori collegati, come quello degli autonoleggi o delle assicurazioni?

Risposta di Antonio Tajani a nome della Commissione
(11 marzo 2014)

La Commissione non era al corrente della manipolazione dei risultati del concorso tedesco «Auto dell'anno».

Neanche in occasione di concorsi del passato sono stati notificati alla Commissione casi analoghi.

Sulla base delle informazioni fornite la Commissione non è in condizione di valutare in quale misura la manipolazione dei risultati di tale concorso possa configurare una distorsione della concorrenza nel mercato automobilistico europeo o nei mercati associati, come quelli dell'autonoleggio e dell'assicurazione. Le regole unionali in tema di concorrenza, segnatamente gli articoli 101 e 102 del trattato sul funzionamento dell'Unione europea (TFUE), sono difficilmente applicabili in questo caso poiché la prassi menzionata non sembra risultare da un cartello tra aziende per escludere la concorrenza né dal comportamento sleale di un fabbricante di automobili dominante su un determinato mercato.

Inoltre, poiché i fatti si sono svolti in Germania spetta alle autorità tedesche affrontare le eventuali problematiche legate a questo caso, comprese quelle in materia di frode o di applicazione delle regole sulla concorrenza.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000539/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(21 January 2014)

Subject: 'Car of the year' competition rigged

An important establishment in the automobile sector boasting a membership of almost 20 million, approximately a quarter of the total population of Germany, has been the subject of a national scandal.

According to a well-known German newspaper, the establishment in question 'rigged' the results of the competition which elects Germany's 'car of the year', i.e. the population's most 'loved' car, favouring a model produced by a German company. The club initially denied the entire affair, but then went on to confirm that the data had been doctored.

This matter is extremely serious when one considers that the club in question also conducts business with rental companies, insurance companies and travel agencies.

In the light of this event, can the Commission clarify whether:

1. it is aware of the situation;

2. it knows of any similar scandals in other European countries;

3. it believes that manipulation of data of this kind could affect the European car market, placing some car manufacturers at a disadvantage and distorting competition in associated sectors, such as the car rental and insurance sectors?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(11 March 2014)

The Commission was not aware of this case of results manipulation in the German 'car of the year' competition.

Neither were any similar cases notified to the Commission in past competitions.

Based on the information provided, the Commission is not in a position to evaluate to what extent the results manipulation in this competition would distort the competition in the European automotive markets or in associated markets, such as the car rental and insurance markets. The EU competition rules, namely Articles 101 and 102 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), are unlikely to be applicable in this case, because the practice referred to does not seem to result from an anti-competitive agreement between firms or from the abusive conduct of a dominant car manufacturer on a given market.

Morever, since the facts take place in Germany, the German authorities would appear well placed to deal with any possible issues, including those that may involve fraud or the application of competition rules.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000540/14
alla Commissione
Matteo Salvini (EFD)
(21 gennaio 2014)

Oggetto: Valutazione del rapporto costi/benefici dei programmi europei di integrazione dei rom

Nel 2011, attraverso il quadro dell'Unione europea per le strategie nazionali di integrazione dei rom fino al 2020, la Commissione ha invitato gli Stati membri a intraprendere una serie di iniziative volte a ottenere una maggiore inclusione sociale delle popolazioni di etnia rom stanziate sul territorio dell'Unione europea.

Alcune di queste iniziative andranno a pesare unicamente sul bilancio dei singoli paesi, mentre altre, come il programma ROMACT (attualmente attivo in Italia, Romania, Bulgaria, Ungheria e Slovenia), prevedono un cofinanziamento europeo. Secondo fonti di stampa, il già citato programma ROMACT prevede un bilancio di 700 000 euro per la sola fase iniziale.

Considerata la necessità di razionalizzare la spesa pubblica per far fronte al periodo di grave crisi che l'intera Europa sta attraversando, si chiede alla Commissione come sono stati spesi finora questi fondi e quali risultati sono stati raggiunti; si chiede inoltre alla Commissione di quantificare i fondi che verranno stanziati nell'ambito del programma ROMACT e di altre iniziative volte all'integrazione dei rom da oggi al 2020; si chiede infine quali elementi inducono la Commissione a ritenere che tale programma riuscirà a ottenere risultati positivi laddove tutte le politiche di integrazione degli ultimi decenni non hanno sortito alcun effetto nonostante le ingenti somme investite.

Risposta di Laszlo Andor a nome della Commissione
(18 marzo 2014)

Il programma ROMACT ha preso il via nell'ottobre 2013. Si tratta di un'iniziativa portata avanti dal Consiglio d'Europa e cofinanziata dalla Commissione e dal Consiglio d'Europa per un importo complessivo di 1 050 000 euro. Tra l'ottobre 2013 e il gennaio 2014 il programma è stato avviato in Ungheria, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovacchia e Italia. Cifre dettagliate per quanto concerne gli stanziamenti finanziari per paese e comune saranno disponibili soltanto al momento della valutazione intermedia del programma poiché l'importo che la Commissione ha stanziato per il programma non è pre-ripartito per paese.

Alla luce della valutazione della prima fase di attuazione del programma ROMACT la Commissione intende estendere il programma ad altri paesi e comuni. A partire da oggi tuttavia i finanziamenti che verranno stanziati per il programma ROMACT e per le altre iniziative indirizzate all'integrazione dei rom da adesso fino al 2020 saranno decisi nel corso delle successive procedure di bilancio annuali. Tuttavia, va ribadito che i fondi dell'UE ([1]) sono disponibili a livello nazionale per sostenere l'inserimento dei rom, ma gli Stati membri sono responsabili dell'assegnazione ed esecuzione dei finanziamenti per progetti specifici finalizzati all'integrazione.

La Commissione prevede che affrontando alcuni degli ostacoli che si frappongono a un'efficace integrazione dei rom a livello locale, il programma ROMACT consentirà ai comuni di prendere misure efficaci per l'inclusione dei rom. Il programma ROMACT dovrebbe contribuire a mobilitare a tal fine fondi nazionali e dell'UE.

([1]) Segnatamente il Fondo sociale europeo (FSE), il Fondo europeo di sviluppo regionale (FESR) e il Fondo europeo agricolo per lo sviluppo rurale (FEASR).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000540/14
to the Commission
Matteo Salvini (EFD)
(21 January 2014)

Subject: Cost-benefit analysis of the European Roma integration programmes

In 2011, by way of the EU framework for national Roma integration strategies up to 2020, the Commission invited the Member States to undertake a number of initiatives aimed at improving social inclusion of the Roma populations living in the EU.

Some of these initiatives will be funded solely out of the budget of the individual countries, while others, such as the ROMACT programme (which is currently being implemented in Italy, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Slovenia), qualify for part-financing from Europe. According to press sources, just the initial phase of the ROMACT programme referred to above is expected to cost EUR 700 000.

Bearing in mind the need to justify public expenditure in the face of the severe crisis which is affecting Europe as a whole, I would ask the Commission how these funds have been spent so far and what results have been achieved; I would also ask the Commission to put a figure on the funds which are set to be granted within the scope of the ROMACT programme and other initiatives aimed at Roma integration from now until 2020; finally, I would ask what leads the Commission to believe that this programme will be successful in achieving positive results, given that all of the integration policies in recent decades have been completely ineffective despite the considerable sums invested.

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(18 March 2014)

The ROMACT programme started in October 2013. It is an initiative implemented by the Council of Europe which is co-funded by the Commission and the Council of Europe for a total amount of EUR 1 050 000. Between October 2013 and January 2014 the programme was launched in Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia and Italy. Detailed figures in terms of financial allocations per country and municipality will be available only at the time of the midterm evaluation of the programme, as the amount which the Commission allocated to the programme is not pre-distributed per country.

Taking into account the evaluation of the first phase of implementation of the ROMACT programme the Commission aims at extending the programme in other countries and municipalities. As of today however funding which will be allocated to the ROMACT programme and other initiatives aimed at Roma integration from now until 2020 will be decided in the course of the successive annual budget procedures. However, it should be stressed that EU funds ([1]) are available at national level to support Roma inclusion, but Member States are responsible for allocating and implementing funding for specific integration projects.

The Commission expects that through addressing some of the obstacles to successful Roma integration at the local level the ROMACT programme will enable municipalities to take effective measures for Roma inclusion. The ROMACT programme is also expected to help mobilise national and EU funds for that purpose.

([1]) namely the European Social Fund (ESF), European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-000541/14
do Komisji
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD)
(21 stycznia 2014 r.)

Przedmiot: Brak inwestycji drogowych w niektórych polskich samorządach

W ostatnim czasie polskie samorządy podejmowały uchwały budżetowe na 2014 rok. Jednym z takich samorządów w Polsce jest powiat konecki w województwie świętokrzyskim. Duże zaniepokojenie budzi brak inwestycji drogowych w sytuacji, gdy zasadne jest postawienie pytania, czy stan techniczny już istniejących inwestycji drogowych nie zagraża życiu i zdrowiu uczestników ruchu drogowego?

Brak funduszy na inwestycje drogowe – w budżecie powiatu koneckiego na rok 2014 ma się ich znaleźć około 800 tys. zł., przy całkowitej kwocie budżetu 74 mln – może budzić uzasadniony niepokój. Należy przy tym podnieść, że siatka dróg powiatowych w powiecie koneckim to kilkaset kilometrów. Bez wątpienia brak programu naprawy zniszczonych dróg będzie w przyszłości skutkował rosnącym zagrożeniem dla bezpieczeństwa uczestników ruchu drogowego zarówno pieszych, jak i zmotoryzowanych.

Czy Komisja dysponuje wiedzą na temat braku decyzji niektórych polskich samorządów dotyczących inwestycji drogowych, mając na uwadze fatalny stan istniejących dróg?

Czy Komisja zamierza podjąć jakiekolwiek działania w związku z bardzo złym stanem technicznym wielu kilometrów polskich dróg, brakiem wewnętrznych funduszy na ich naprawę i brakiem samego programu ich naprawy, czego najlepszym przykładem jest choćby przywołany powyżej powiat konecki?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Johannesa Hahna w imieniu Komisji
(11 marca 2014 r.)

Komisja nie posiada informacji na temat decyzji inwestycyjnych w polskich regionach przedstawionych przez Szanownego Pana Posła, ani nie jest organem uprawnionym do interwencji w tej sprawie.

Inwestycje w infrastrukturę drogową są jednym z priorytetów unijnego współfinansowania w ramach polityki spójności. Europejski Fundusz Rozwoju Regionalnego i Fundusz Spójności zainwestowały znaczne kwoty w modernizację, odbudowę i budowę dróg w Polsce w latach 2007-2013. Inwestycje te obejmowały także drogi lokalne. W celu zapewnienia adekwatności i stabilności finansowej współfinansowanych przez UE inwestycji w infrastrukturę, za naprawę dróg i budżet na takie naprawy odpowiedzialne są wyłącznie władze krajowe i regionalne. Władze polskie powinny zobowiązać się do przydziału odpowiednich środków budżetowych i odpowiedniej strategii w zakresie utrzymania infrastruktury drogowej współfinansowanej przez UE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000541/14
to the Commission
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD)
(21 January 2014)

Subject: Lack of investment in roads by some Polish local authorities

Local authorities in Poland recently adopted their budgets for 2014. Such authorities include Końskie County in Świętokrzyskie Province, where the lack of investment in roads is a cause for concern given that there is good reason to believe that the current state of the county's roads may well constitute a danger to the lives and health of their users.

The lack of funds for investment in roads — in the Końskie County budget for 2014 the funds earmarked for investment in roads are said to stand at around PLN 800 000 out of an overall budget of PLN 74 million — could give grounds for concern. There are several hundred kilometres of local roads in Końskie County and there can be no doubt that the lack of a proper road repair programme will put all road users — both drivers and pedestrians — increasingly at risk in the future.

Does the Commission have any information on the failure by some Polish local authorities to take road investment decisions despite the disastrous condition of some roads?

Does it intend to take any action in connection with the extremely poor condition of large stretches of road in Poland, the lack of domestic funding for road repairs and the fact that there are not even any plans to make such repairs, as is clearly apparent from the example of Końskie County given above?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(11 March 2014)

The Commission does not have information on, nor does it have the competence to intervene in, the investment decisions of Polish regions as described by the Honourable Member.

Investment in road infrastructure is one of the priorities of EU co-financing through cohesion policy. The European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund have invested significant amounts in the modernisation, reconstruction and construction of roads in Poland in the 2007-2013 period. These investments have included local roads. In order to assure adequacy and financial sustainability of EU co-financed infrastructure investments, road repairs fall exclusively under the responsibility and budget of national or regional authorities. The Polish authorities should commit to appropriate budget allocations and an appropriate strategy for maintaining EU co-financed road infrastructure.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-000543/14
do Komisji
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD)
(21 stycznia 2014 r.)

Przedmiot: Techniki operacyjne stosowane w Polsce przez uprawnione do tego służby

W lipcu 2012 r. skierowałem do Komisji Europejskiej pytanie dotyczące niepokojących informacji medialnych w zakresie stopnia inwigilowania polskich obywateli przez uprawnione do tego służby ([1]).

Komentarze związane były z raportem fundacji Panoptykon, zajmującej się kontrolą państwa nad społeczeństwem. Prawnicy Panoptykonu wskazywali, powołując się na dane Urzędu Komunikacji Elektronicznej, że uprawnione do tego polskie służby w 2011 r. ponad 1 mln 850 tys. razy sięgały po informacje polskich obywateli wynikające z ich połączeń telefonicznych. Media podkreślały w tamtym czasie, że Polska bije własne niechlubne rekordy w inwigilowaniu swoich obywateli ([2]).

Czy Komisja posiada statystyki dotyczące ilości stosowanych technik operacyjnych przez uprawnione do tego w Polsce służby w zestawieniu z innymi krajami, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem lat 2011, 2012, 2013?

Czy Komisja monitoruje tego typu działania poszczególnych państw członkowskich UE?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarz Cecilię Malmström w imieniu Komisji
(18 marca 2014 r.)

Jak Komisja stwierdziła w odpowiedzi na wcześniejsze pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi na piśmie, E-006521/2012 ([3]), dyrektywa w sprawie zatrzymywania danych ([4]) przewiduje zatrzymywanie przez usługodawców niektórych danych, nieobejmujących danych o treści przekazywanych informacji. Dane te mogą zostać udostępnione z uzasadnionych powodów właściwym organom na warunkach i przy zachowaniu procedur prawnych określonych w prawie krajowym zgodnie z Kartą praw podstawowych.

W art. 10 dyrektywy zobowiązuje się państwa członkowskie do przedstawiania Komisji, w ujęciu rocznym, statystyk na temat zatrzymywania danych. Przekazane na mocy dyrektywy statystyki za lata 2008-2012 dotyczące wniosków o dane znajdują się na stronie internetowej DG do Spraw Wewnętrznych ([5]). Komisja pragnie jednak zwrócić uwagę, że statystyki przekazane przez państwa członkowskie różnią się pod względem zakresu i szczegółowości. W kilku państwach członkowskich, także w Polsce, właściwe organy składają zazwyczaj ten sam wniosek o dane dotyczące telefonii komórkowej do wielu usługodawców, co może zafałszowywać statystyki.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+WQ+E-2012-006521+0+DOC+XML+V0//PL&language=pl
([2]) http://www.tvn24.pl/wiadomosci-z-kraju,3/polska-znow-bije-wlasny-rekord-inwigilacji,205579.html, http://www.wprost.pl/ar/314264/Permanentna-inwigilacja-Polska-rekordzista-Europy-w-szpiegowaniu-obywateli/, http://wiadomosci.wp.pl/kat,1342,title,Polska-bije-rekordy-w-inwigilowaniu-swoich-obywateli,wid,14337055,wiadomosc.html?ticaid=1eb4a
([3]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2012-006521&language=PL
([4]) Dyrektywa 2006/24/WE Parlamentu Europejskiego i Rady z dnia 15 marca 2006 r. w sprawie zatrzymywania generowanych lub przetwarzanych danych w związku ze świadczeniem ogólnie dostępnych usług łączności elektronicznej lub udostępnianiem publicznych sieci łączności oraz zmieniająca dyrektywę 2002/58/WE, Dz.U. L 105 z 13.4.2006, s. 54-63.
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/police-cooperation/data-retention/docs/statistics_on_requests_for_data_under_the_data_retention_directive_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000543/14
to the Commission
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD)
(21 January 2014)

Subject: Snooping by government agencies in Poland

In July 2012 I tabled a question to the Commission regarding disturbing information in the media about the extent of surveillance of the Polish public by government agencies ([1]).

That question referred to a report produced by the Panoptykon Foundation, an NGO looking into the issue of state surveillance. The lawyers at Panoptykon stated, citing as their source data from the Polish Office of Electronic Communications, that in 2011 there were more than 1 850 000 instances of government agencies collecting information on members of the Polish public from their telephone calls. At the time, the media pointed out that Poland had beaten its own already shameful record for surveillance of members of the public ([2]).

Does the Commission have statistics showing the number of instances of snooping by government agencies in Poland as against the numbers for other countries, in particular for the years 2011, 2012 and 2013?

Does the Commission monitor activities of this kind in the individual EU Member States?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(18 March 2014)

As stated by the Commission in response to Written Question E-006521/2012 ([3]), the Data Retention Directive ([4]) provides for the retention of certain data, not including data on the content of communications, by service providers. That data may be accessed for legitimate reasons by competent authorities, on conditions and in compliance with legal procedures set out in national law, in compliance with the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Article 10 of the directive requires Member States to provide the Commission, on a yearly basis, with statistics on data retention. Statistics on requests for data under the directive for 2008-2012 can be found on the DG Home Affairs website ([5]). The Commission would like to note however that the statistics provided by Member States differ in scope and detail. In a number of Member States, including Poland, competent authorities usually submit the same request for mobile telephony data to multiple service providers, which might distort the statistics.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+WQ+E-2012-006521+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=en
([2]) http://www.tvn24.pl/wiadomosci-z-kraju,3/polska-znow-bije-wlasny-rekord-inwigilacji,205579.html
http://www.wprost.pl/ar/314264/Permanentna-inwigilacja-Polska-rekordzista-Europy-w-szpiegowaniu-obywateli/,
http://wiadomosci.wp.pl/kat,1342,title,Polska-bije-rekordy-w-inwigilowaniu-swoich-obywateli,wid,14337055,wiadomosc.html?ticaid=1eb4a
([3]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2012-006521&language=EN
([4]) Directive 2006/24/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2006 on the retention of data generated or processed in connection with the provision of publicly available electronic communications services or of public communications networks and amending Directive 2002/58/EC; OJ L 105, 13.4.2006, p. 54-63.
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/police-cooperation/data-retention/docs/statistics_on_requests_for_data_under_the_data_retention_directive_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000545/14
to the Commission
Sir Graham Watson (ALDE)
(21 January 2014)

Subject: Legal recognition in documents for those who do not associate with a particular gender

The prohibition of discrimination based on sexual orientation constitutes an important principle enshrined in Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, and discrimination based on sexual orientation in the area of employment is explicitly prohibited through Council Directive 2000/78/EC.

The resolution of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States of the European Communities meeting within the Council of 23 June 1981 on the design of Community passports ([1]) includes the requirement to specify the sex of the document holder. In addition, I note that the International Civil Aviation Organisation's Document 9303 contains X (unspecified) as one of three permitted characters under the mandatory sex element for machine-readable travel documents. I also note that citizens of Australia and New Zealand are already able to obtain a non-gender-specific ('X') passport.

In light of this, what guidance, if any, has the Commission given to encourage Member States to allow their citizens to use a non-gender specific identifier on passports?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(14 March 2014)

The scope of Regulation (EC) 2252/ 2004 ([2]) on standards for security features and biometrics in passports and travel documents issued by Member States as last amended by Regulation (EC) 444/2009 ([3]) does not harmonise the format of the passport but is strictly limited to the harmonisation of the minimum security features of the format, including biometrics.

National law applies to the issuing procedures for passports as well as to which entry to use to determine the sex of the document holder. In accordance with the annex to Regulation 2252/2004, the personal data page of the passport has to satisfy all the compulsory specifications of ICAO Doc 9303 Part 1, which includes the field 'sex'. However, the ICAO specifications leave to individual countries the choice among the three possibilities mentioned by the Honourable Member for the indication of the gender. Accordingly EU Member States are free to take up the possibility to which the Honourable Member refers. The Commission will, in the appropriate fora, encourage Member States to consider doing so.

([1]) OJ C 241, 19.9.1981, p. 1.
([2]) Council Regulation (EC) No 2252/2004 of 13 December 2004 on standards for security features and biometrics in passports and travel documents issued by Member States; OJ L 385, 29.12.2004, p. 1-6.
([3]) Regulation (EC) No 444/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 May 2009 amending Council Regulation (EC) No 2252/2004 on standards for security features and biometrics in passports and travel documents issued by Member States; OJ L 142, 6.6.2009, p. 1-4.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000547/14
to the Commission
Jill Evans (Verts/ALE)
(21 January 2014)

Subject: Whaling by Japanese fleets

One of my constituents has recently contacted me concerning whaling. Despite a worldwide moratorium on commercial whaling, as decided by the International Whaling Commission, the Fisheries Agency of Japan's whaling fleet sails thousands of miles every year to the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary to hunt for a self-determined, ever-increasing quota of hundreds of whales. The Japanese are taking advantage of a loophole in the law that permits the killing of whales for scientific research. In January 2014, a Japanese whale poaching fleet was sighted in Antarctic waters; one of the vessels was filmed carrying four dead minke whales on deck. Australian anti-whaling activists say that the whales were killed within an internationally recognised whale sanctuary but the Japanese argue that it is for scientific research.

The moratorium on commercial whaling was put in place to allow whale stocks to recover. It is vital that the moratorium is respected to protect whales and to ensure that past mistakes are not repeated.

1. Does the Commission agree that the moratorium on commercial whaling is necessary in order to protect whale stocks?

2. Does the Commission condemn the whaling that is being carried out by the Japanese?

3. Does the Commission intend to publicly comment on the fact that Japanese fleets are whaling in an internationally recognised whale sanctuary?

4. What steps will the Commission take in order to protect healthy whale stocks and to prevent countries from whaling?

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

The Commission supports the moratorium on commercial whaling as a necessary means to protect whale stocks. Maintaining this measure is one of the pillars of the EU position in the context of the International Whaling Commission (IWC), in line with the relevant Council decision on this subject.

Japan conducts scientific whaling under special permits. While the IWC does not ban this activity, the European Union has expressed strong reservations on such scientific whaling and will continue to do so.

At this stage, the Commission does not intend to make a public statement on Japan's whaling activities in the Southern Ocean Sanctuary, since this issue is currently being examined by the International Court of Justice following a complaint by Australia. The Commission monitors this court case very closely and looks forward to seeing the findings of the Court that are expected to be published in a few months.

EU policy and legislation provides strict protection of all cetaceans (whales, dolphins and porpoise) and bans the trade in whale products. The EU will continue to press for decisions on whaling within the IWC that lead to better conservation of whales worldwide. In addition, the European Union has a regular dialogue with Japan covering environment-related issues, including whaling.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-000548/14
à la Commission
Jean-Luc Mélenchon (GUE/NGL)
(21 janvier 2014)

Objet: Gaz de schiste

Le projet de recommandation de la Commission européenne sur l'exploration et l'exploitation des gaz non conventionnels dans l'Union européenne doit être rendu public le 22 janvier prochain. Ce document prend certes en compte les dangers écologiques et sanitaires, mais il ouvre la voie à une régulation qui revient à accepter que certains États utilisent cette source d'énergie. On y apprend également que le gaz de schiste est «un remplaçant possible des combustibles fossiles» en vue de la «diversification énergétique». La Commission sait-elle que les gaz de schiste sont également des combustibles fossiles?

Comment la Commission entend-elle assurer la transition énergétique et la diminution des gaz à effet de serre en ouvrant la voie à l'exploitation des gaz de schiste?

Dans le cadre des négociations sur le grand marché transatlantique, la Commission avait affirmé respecter la décision des États membres ayant refusé l'exploitation des gaz de schiste. Peut-elle confirmer que cette recommandation ne la fera pas revenir sur la position qu'elle a tenue en novembre dernier devant le Parlement européen?

Réponse donnée par M. Oettinger au nom de la Commission
(18 mars 2014)

La Commission est consciente que le gaz naturel extrait de formations schisteuses est un combustible fossile. Par ailleurs, elle estime que le gaz de schiste pourrait contribuer à la sécurité d'approvisionnement et à la compétitivité de l'UE. Ce gaz pourrait également avoir des effets bénéfiques sur le climat dans la mesure où il remplacerait des combustibles fossiles qui produisent davantage de carbone, sans pour autant supplanter les sources d'énergie renouvelables et à condition que les émissions de gaz à effet de serre soient convenablement atténuées pendant le processus d'extraction.

En ce sens, l'exploration du gaz de schiste ne compromet pas les engagements de la Commission en matière de décarbonisation, d'énergies renouvelables et d'efficacité énergétique. Le 22 janvier 2014, la Commission a proposé un cadre pour les politiques en matière de climat et d'énergie de 2020 à 2030 qui fixe un objectif de réduction de 40 % des émissions de gaz à effet de serre par rapport aux niveaux de 1990. Ce cadre définit également un objectif principal au niveau européen qui vise à faire passer la part des énergies renouvelables à au moins 27 % de la consommation d'énergie de l'UE d'ici à 2030 ([1]). La Commission est également tout à fait consciente du rôle fondamental que revêt l'efficacité énergétique au sein du cadre pour le climat et l'énergie à l'horizon 2030, c'est pourquoi elle entend le préciser davantage lors de la révision de la directive sur l'efficacité énergétique, prévue pour le milieu de l'année 2014.

En ce qui concerne le gaz de schiste en provenance des États-Unis, la position de l'UE dans les négociations sur le partenariat transatlantique de commerce et d'investissement est que les exportations vers l'UE devraient également être autorisées sans discrimination. La recommandation ([2]) n'a pas d'incidence sur cette position ni sur la compétence des États membres à décider de l'exploration et de la production de gaz de schiste, dans le respect de la législation environnementale en vigueur au sein de l'UE.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/2030/index_en.htm
([2]) 2014/70/UE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000548/14
to the Commission
Jean-Luc Mélenchon (GUE/NGL)
(21 January 2014)

Subject: Shale Gas

The Commission's proposal for a recommendation on the exploration and production of unconventional gas in the European Union is due to be published on 22 January 2014. While this document takes into account the environmental and health hazards, it also prepares the ground for a regulation, which is tantamount to accepting that some states should use this energy source. We also learn that shale gas is a possible substitute for fossil fuels with a view to energy diversification. Is the Commission aware that shale gas is also a fossil fuel?

How does the Commission intend to ensure the energy transition and a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions while at the same time paving the way for the production of shale gas?

In the negotiations on the Transatlantic Free Trade Area, the Commission had asserted that it would respect the decision of those Member States that had refused to produce shale gas. Can confirm that the recommendation in question will not make it go back on the position it held last November before the European Parliament?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(18 March 2014)

The Commission is aware that natural gas from shale formations is a fossil fuel. At the same time, it is of the opinion that it could contribute to the EU's security of supply and competitiveness. It could also offer climate benefits provided it replaces more carbon-intensive fossil fuels like coal without displacing renewable energy sources and provided greenhouse gas emissions are properly mitigated during the extraction process.

In this sense, the exploration of shale gas does not undermine the Commission's commitments towards decarbonisation, renewable energies and energy efficiency. On 22 January 2014, the Commission proposed a climate and energy policy framework from 2020 to 2030, which contains a target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40% below 1990 levels and a headline target at European level to increase the share of renewable energy to at least 27% of the EU's energy consumption by 2030 ([1]). The Commission also fully acknowledges the fundamental role of energy efficiency in the 2030 Framework and will further determine its role in the context of the review of the Energy Efficiency Directive planned for mid-2014.

The EU position in the negotiations on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) as regards US shale gas is that exports to the EU should also be allowed on a non-discriminatory basis. The recommendation ([2]) has no impact on this position nor on the Member States' competence to decide about the exploration and production of shale gas with due regard to existing EU environmental law.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/2030/index_en.htm
([2]) 2014/70/EU.

(Hrvatska verzija)

Pitanje za pisani odgovor E-000549/14
upućeno Komisiji
Dubravka Šuica (PPE)
(21. siječnja 2014.)

Predmet: Problem cementne industrije u Republici Hrvatskoj

Interes Republike Hrvatske jest da industrija cementa ostane na popisu sektora izloženih riziku od istjecanja ugljika uz primjenu trgovanja emisijama stakleničkih plinova prema pravilima Direktive o sustavu trgovanja emisijama (ETS), primjenjujući točno iste kriterije kao i one primijenjene 2009. godine. Posljedice promjene za hrvatsku industriju cementa bile bi katastrofalne: značajno smanjenje izvoza, značajan pad proizvodnje cementa, zatvaranje proizvodnih kapaciteta i rast cijena cementa na hrvatskom tržištu. Argumenti za navedeno su sljedeći:

trgovinski intenzitet, a što je jedan od glavnih kriterija EU-a za istjecanje ugljika, glavni je argument s obzirom na to da hrvatska industrija cementa izvozi oko 40% svoje proizvodnje i to izvan EU-a.

Zbog geografskog položaja Hrvatske u odnosu na Bosnu i Hercegovinu, Srbiju, i Albaniju, naše glavne konkurente koji nemaju nikakvih obveza po pitanju smanjenja emisija, dugoročna konkurentnost hrvatske industrije u podređenom je položaju na dnevnoj razini. Bez besplatne alokacije, dugoročna održivost proizvodnje u Hrvatskoj nije moguća.

Hrvatska industrija cementa nije imala financijsku korist od tzv. prevelikih alokacija CO_2 u ETS Fazi II., kako se često navodi za cementnu industriju, ali i druge sektore unutar EU-a jer Hrvatska u tom razdoblju nije bila članica EU-a.

S obzirom na težak položaj cementne industrije zbog pada proizvodnje od početka globalne krize te pada investicija na globalnom tržištu, cementna industrija više ne ispunjava mjerila za uvrštenje na listu sektora izloženih značajnom riziku od istjecanja ugljika.

Planira li Komisija nešto poduzeti da cementna industrija u EU-u ostane na popisu sektora izloženih riziku od istjecanja ugljika uz primjenu trgovanja emisijama stakleničkih plinova prema pravilima Direktive o sustavu trgovanja emisijama (ETS), primjenjujući točno iste kriterije kao i one primijenjene 2009. godine?

Odgovor gđe Hedegaard u ime Komisije
(11. ožujka 2014.)

Europska komisija ima pravnu obvezu utvrditi novi popis za premještaj emisija ugljikova dioksida za razdoblje 2015. — 2019.

U Komunikaciji Komisije o okviru za klimatsku i energetsku politiku u razdoblju do 2030. ([1]) jasno se ističe namjera Komisije da nadležnom regulatornom odboru predstavi nacrt odluke o preispitivanju popisa za premještaj emisija ugljikova dioksida kojom bi se zadržali trenutačni kriteriji i postojeće pretpostavke. Tako bi se osigurao kontinuitet u sastavljanju popisa.

([1]) COM(2014) 15, od 22. siječnja 2014.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000549/14
to the Commission
Dubravka Šuica (PPE)
(21 January 2014)

Subject: Problem regarding the cement industry in Croatia

It is in Croatia's interest that the cement industry should remain on the list of sectors exposed to the risk of carbon leakage when greenhouse gas emissions trading is implemented in accordance with the rules of the directive on the emissions trading scheme (ETS), the criteria to apply being exactly the same as those applied in 2009. Any change would lead to disastrous consequences for the Croatian cement industry: a substantial reduction in exports, a sharp fall in cement production, the closure of production capacity, and higher cement prices on the Croatian market. The reasons are as follows: trade intensity, one of the main criteria used by the EU to define carbon leakage, is the primary consideration where the Croatian cement industry is concerned, given that it exports approximately 40% of its output to countries outside the EU.

In view of Croatia's geographical position in relation to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and Albania, its principal competitors, which are not under any obligation to lower their emissions, the long-term competitiveness of the Croatian industry is currently at a low ebb. Without a free allowance, production in Croatia cannot be maintained on a long-term sustainable basis.

Contrary to what is often said to have been the case with the cement industry and other sectors within the EU, the Croatian cement industry did not profit financially from the surplus of CO_2 allowances during phase two of the ETS, as Croatia did not belong to the EU at that time.

Because of the difficult situation resulting from the fall in production since the onset of the global crisis and the decline in investment on the global market, the cement industry no longer matches the scale required for inclusion on the list of sectors exposed to a significant risk of carbon leakage.

Will the Commission take any steps to ensure that the cement industry will remain on the list of sectors exposed to the risk of carbon leakage when greenhouse gas emissions trading is implemented in accordance with the rules of the ETS Directive, applying exactly the same criteria as those applied in 2009?

Answer given by Ms Hedegaard on behalf of the Commission
(11 March 2014)

The European Commission has a legal obligation to determine a new carbon leakage list to be valid from 2015 to 2019.

The Commission has made it clear in its communication on a 2030 policy framework for climate and energy ([1]) that the Commission intends to present a draft decision on the review of the carbon leakage list to the appropriate Regulatory Committee (the Climate Change Committee) which would maintain the current criteria and existing assumptions. This would guarantee continuity in the composition of the list.

([1]) COM(2014) 15 of 22 January 2014.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-000552/14
aan de Commissie
Corien Wortmann-Kool (PPE)
(21 januari 2014)

Betreft: Publicatie uitkomsten questionnaire over financiering haveninfrastructuur en vennootschapsbelasting Europese zeehavens

De Europese Commissie wil de generieke vrijstelling van vennootschapsbelasting voor Nederlandse overheidsbedrijven, waaronder de havenbedrijven, afschaffen. Gezien de gevolgen voor de concurrentiepositie van de Nederlandse zeehavens ten opzichte van de Europese zeehavens heb ik de Europese Commissie vorig jaar op 6 mei gevraagd een onderzoek te starten naar de concurrentiepositie van Europese havenbedrijven op basis van financieel-fiscale beleidsmaatregelen. In een reactie van 16 juni 2013 heeft de Europese Commissie aangekondigd nog voor augustus van hetzelfde jaar een questionnaire naar de lidstaten te sturen om informatie te krijgen over financiering van de haveninfrastructuur en de vennootschapsbelasting voor havens. Tot nu toe zijn de antwoorden op de questionnaire en de conclusies die de Europese Commissie hieraan verbindt nog niet naar buiten gebracht.

De Europese Commissie heeft aangekondigd om pas in 2015 met criteria voor staatsteun voor havens en luchthavens te komen. Dit terwijl de plannen voor afschaffing van de generieke vrijstelling voor de Nederlandse havenbedrijven gewoon worden doorgezet. Als er niet snel meer duidelijkheid komt over de verschillen tussen de Europese zeehavens bestaat de kans dat de Nederlandse zeehavens onnodig worden benadeeld.

1. Zijn de uitkomsten en bevindingen van de questionnaire aan de lidstaten inmiddels bekend? Zo ja, kunnen deze uitkomsten openbaar worden gemaakt?

2. Wanneer is de Commissie van plan om over de uitkomsten van de questionnaire te rapporteren?

3. Bevestigen de uitkomsten van de questionnaire aan de lidstaten een (grote) differentiatie tussen de EU-havens t.a.v. de financiering van haveninfrastructuur, vooral wat betreft de financiële betrokkenheid en steun van lidstaten aan hun havens?

4. Bevestigen de uitkomsten van de questionnaire aan de lidstaten een (grote) differentiatie tussen de EU-havens voor wat betreft het moeten afdragen van vennootschapsbelasting?

Antwoord van de heer Almunia namens de Commissie
(11 maart 2014)

De Commissie heeft van alle lidstaten antwoorden ontvangen op de vragenlijst. Twee lidstaten hebben echter niet geantwoord op het gedeelte over het functioneren van havens. De vragenlijst kwam er op eigen initiatief van de Commissie en was bedoeld om informatie te verzamelen over de ontwikkeling en handhaving van staatssteunregels in de havensector. De uitkomsten van de vragenlijst geven aanzienlijke verschillen tussen lidstaten te zien wat betreft eigendom van havens, organisatiestructuur, maar ook wat betreft financiering. Aangezien deze exercitie geen publieke consultatie was, is de Commissie niet voornemens om de uitkomsten te publiceren.

Uit de antwoorden op de vragenlijst is voorts gebleken dat EU-havens over een uiteenlopende reeks inkomstenbronnen beschikken, die fiscaal verschillend worden behandeld, naargelang de lidstaat. Deze antwoorden leverden een aantal mogelijke probleempunten op, die nader moeten worden onderzocht om te bepalen of daarmee staatssteun gemoeid is. Aan de betrokken lidstaten zijn vervolgverzoeken om informatie gezonden, om een en ander verder op te helderen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000552/14
to the Commission
Corien Wortmann-Kool (PPE)
(21 January 2014)

Subject: Publication of the results of the questionnaire on financing port infrastructure and corporation tax for European seaports

The European Commission wishes to abolish the general exemption from corporation tax for Dutch public sector companies, including the port authorities. In view of the effect this will have on the competitive position of the Dutch seaports in comparison with the European seaports, on 6 May last year I asked the European Commission to initiate a study into the competitive position of European seaports on the basis of financial tax policy measures. In a response of 16 June 2013, the European Commission announced that it would be sending a questionnaire to the Member States before August of that year to collect information on the financing of port infrastructure and the corporation tax for ports. So far, the answers to the questionnaire and the conclusions that the European Commission has drawn from these answers have not yet been published.

The European Commission announced that it will not issue criteria for ports and airports to receive state support until 2015, while the plans for abolishing the general exemption for Dutch port authorities are simply going ahead. If there is not more clarity soon about the differences between the European seaports, there is a risk that the Dutch seaports will be placed at an unnecessary disadvantage.

1. Are the results and findings of the questionnaire sent to the Member States now known? If so, can these results be published?

2. When does the Commission plan to issue a report on the results of the questionnaire?

3. Do the results of the questionnaire sent to the Member States confirm a (substantial) difference between the EU ports in terms of financing port infrastructure, especially in terms of the financial involvement and support provided by the Member States to their ports?

4. Do the results of the questionnaire sent to the Member States confirm a (substantial) difference between the EU ports in terms of the obligation to pay corporation tax?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(11 March 2014)

The Commission has received replies to the questionnaire from all Member States; however, two Member States have not replied to the part on the functioning of ports. The questionnaire was prepared at the Commission's own initiative and was intended to be a fact-finding exercise to seek information for the development and enforcement of state aid rules to the ports sector. The results of the questionnaire show that there are substantial differences among EU countries in relation to ownership of ports, organisational structures and also in terms of financing. Since the exercise did not take the form of a public consultation, the Commission does not intend to publish the results.

The replies to the questionnaire also show that EU ports have a variety of revenue sources, which are subject to diverse tax treatments depending on the Member State. Certain possible issues have been identified that require further examination in order to find out whether state aid is involved or not. Follow-up requests for information have been sent to the Member States concerned in order to seek further clarification.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000556/14
a la Comisión
María Irigoyen Pérez (S&D)
(21 de enero de 2014)

Asunto: Utilización en España de la dotación de 1 800 millones de euros para luchar contra el desempleo juvenil

Con el objetivo de reducir las dramáticas cifras de desempleo juvenil, el Consejo Europeo del pasado mes de junio aprobó un plan global para luchar contra el desempleo juvenil que pretende acelerar la aplicación de la Iniciativa sobre Empleo Juvenil y la Garantía Juvenil, así como aumentar la movilidad de la juventud y la implicación de los interlocutores sociales. Este plan, dotado con 6 000 millones de euros, destinará a España, con la segunda tasa de desempleo juvenil más elevada de Europa (57,7 %) tras Grecia, 1 800 millones entre 2014 y 2015.

No obstante, este dinero tendrá que ser adelantado prácticamente en su totalidad por los Estados miembros, lo que obligará a los Estados más perjudicados por la crisis económica, como España, a encontrar una solución para que el dinero que adelante para sufragar el plan no compute como déficit. De lo contrario podría desembocar, en el peor de los casos, en un desajuste que provocara la suspensión de los fondos regionales en cumplimiento de la nueva condicionalidad macroeconómica.

La pasada semana el Gobierno español, que presentó en diciembre su plan de ejecución para los 1 800 millones, anunció que el dinero se destinará a los jóvenes menores de 25 años que se den de alta en una plataforma (todavía por diseñar) y que cumplan con algunos requisitos (todavía sin concretar), pese a que muchos jóvenes españoles entre 25 y 30 años también sufren elevados niveles de desempleo.

Además, el Gobierno anunció que fomentará la bonificación a empresas que contraten jóvenes, la reducción de cuotas para los jóvenes que se hagan autónomos y la mejora de la colaboración con las agencias privadas de colocación, entre otras medidas.

— ¿Cuándo dará la Comisión el visto bueno final al plan español que fue remitido en diciembre?

— ¿Cuándo empezarán a llegar los fondos a España?

— ¿Cómo controlará la Comisión que el uso de los 1 800 millones no se limitará a compensar el gasto que conllevan para las arcas de la Seguridad Social algunas de las medidas que se pretenden impulsar?

— ¿Qué tipo de ayudas prevé la Comisión para aquellos jóvenes entre 25 y 30 años que no pueden beneficiarse de la Garantía Juvenil?

Respuesta del Sr. Andor en nombre de la Comisión
(18 de marzo de 2014)

1. La Comisión ha presentado la primera valoración técnica del Plan español de aplicación de la garantía juvenil durante una reunión bilateral celebrada en febrero de 2014. La evaluación final de todos los planes recibidos se presentará junto con las recomendaciones de 2014 para cada país.

2. La dotación específica con cargo a la IEJ ([1]) se integra en la programación del FSE ([2]). Con arreglo a las normas de los Fondos Estructurales y de Inversión europeos (ESIF), España recibirá la correspondiente prefinanciación previa aprobación de cada uno de los programas operativos (PO). Una vez adoptados estos últimos tras la aprobación del Acuerdo de Asociación, el Estado miembro podrá presentar las solicitudes de pago a efectos del reembolso, con cargo a la dotación específica para la Iniciativa sobre Empleo Juvenil, de los gastos realizados después del 1 de septiembre de 2013 que cumplan los criterios de elegibilidad. Otra opción es que el Estado miembro establezca un PO específico solo con la dotación correspondiente a la Iniciativa que no requiere la aprobación previa del Acuerdo de Asociación.

3. La Comisión evaluará la coherencia de los programas operativos con las normas específicas ([3]) del FSE y de la Iniciativa sobre Empleo Juvenil y su contribución efectiva a los objetivos temáticos seleccionados, teniendo en cuenta las recomendaciones específicas de cada país y la evaluación *ex-ante*.

([1]) Iniciativa sobre Empleo Juvenil.
([2]) Fondo Social Europeo, artículo 18 del Reglamento (UE) n° 1304/2013 del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 17 de diciembre de 2013, relativo al Fondo Social Europeo y por el que se deroga el Reglamento (CE) n° 1081/2006 del Consejo (DO L 347 de 20.12.2013) y artículo 96 del Reglamento (UE) n° 1303/2013 del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 17 de diciembre de 2013, por el que se establecen disposiciones comunes relativas al Fondo Europeo de Desarrollo Regional, al Fondo Social Europeo, al Fondo de Cohesión, al Fondo Europeo Agrícola de Desarrollo Rural y al Fondo Europeo Marítimo y de la Pesca, y por el que se establecen disposiciones generales relativas al Fondo Europeo de Desarrollo Regional, al Fondo Social Europeo, al Fondo de Cohesión y al Fondo Europeo Marítimo y de la Pesca, y se deroga el Reglamento (CE) n° 1083/2006 del Consejo (DO L 347 de 20.12.2013).
([3]) Artículo 29 del Reglamento (UE) n° 1303/2013.

4. Los Estados miembros pueden utilizar los recursos que les han sido asignados con cargo al FSE y a la Iniciativa también para apoyar el empleo de las personas de entre 25 y 29 años, y por lo que al FSE se refiere, de cualquier otro grupo de edad. Por otra parte, los programas Erasmus+ y Horizon 2020 también contribuyen a la creación de empleo y la mejora de las competencias de los jóvenes.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000556/14
to the Commission
María Irigoyen Pérez (S&D)
(21 January 2014)

Subject: Use in Spain of the endowment of EUR 1 800 million for combating youth unemployment

Last June, with the aim of reducing the dramatic youth unemployment figures, the European Council approved a global plan for combating youth unemployment, which is intended to speed up the application of the Youth Employment Initiative and the Youth Guarantee and to increase the mobility of young people and the involvement of social partners. This plan, which was endowed with EUR 6 000 million, has earmarked EUR 1 800 million in the 2014-2015 period for Spain, which has the second-highest youth unemployment rate in Europe (57.7%) after Greece.

However, virtually all of this money has to be paid in advance by Member States, which means that the States which have been hardest hit by the economic crisis, such as Spain, have to find a solution to prevent the money that is paid in advance to fund the plan from being recorded as a deficit. Otherwise, in the worst case scenario, this could lead to an imbalance that could cause the suspension of regional funds in compliance with the new macroeconomic conditionality provisions.

The Spanish Government, which submitted its implementation plan for the EUR 1 800 million in December, announced last week that the money is intended for young people under the age of 25 who register on a platform (which has not yet been designed) and who meet certain requirements (which have not yet been defined), despite the fact that unemployment levels are also high among many young Spaniards aged between 25 and 30.

In addition, the government announced that it will boost the bonus for businesses which take on young people, reduce quotas for self-employed young people and improve cooperation with private employment agencies, among other measures.

— When will the Commission give the final approval to the Spanish plan that was submitted in December?

— When will the funds start to reach Spain?

— How will the Commission verify that the EUR 1 800 million is not simply used to offset the cost that some of the measures to be implemented will entail for the social security funds?

— What kind of aid is the Commission providing for those young people aged between 25 and 30 who cannot benefit from the Youth Guarantee?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(18 March 2014)

1. The Commission has provided first technical feedback on the Spanish Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan (YGIP) during a bilateral meeting in February 2014. Final assessment of all the YGIP received will be presented together with the 2014 country-specific recommendations.

2. The specific allocation under the YEI ([1]) is incorporated into the programming of the ESF ([2]). In accordance with the rules of European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), Spain will receive the corresponding pre-financing on the approval of each operational programme (OP). Once the operational programmes are adopted following the approval of the Partnership Agreement, the Member State can present payment claims for the reimbursement from the YEI specific allocation of expenditure incurred after 1 September 2013 and which meet all the criteria for eligibility. Alternatively a Member State can opt to set up a dedicated OP only with the YEI allocation that does not require the prior approval of the Partnership Agreement.

3. The Commission will assess the consistency of operational programmes with the specific rules ([3]) for the ESF and the YEI and their effective contribution to the selected thematic objectives, taking account of the relevant country-specific recommendations and the *ex-ante* evaluation.

([1]) Youth Employment Initiative.
([2]) European Social Fund, Article 18 of Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Social Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006 (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013) and Article 96 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013).
([3]) Article 29 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013.

4. Member States are free to use resources allocated to them from the ESF and YEI also to support employment of people aged between 25 and 29, and in the case of the ESF of any other age group as well. In addition, the Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020 programmes also contribute to job creation and upskilling of young people.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000558/14
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(21. Januar 2014)

Betrifft: Sri Lanka und die EU — Exporte und Menschenrechte

Die EU ist Sri Lankas größter Exportmarkt (26,8 % der Exporte des Landes von 2012 gingen in die EU).

Wie möchte die Kommission rechtfertigen, dass sie die damit einhergehende Möglichkeit der Einflussnahme nicht nutzt, um die schwerwiegenden Menschenrechtsverletzungen zu bekämpfen, wie z. B. den strukturellen Genozid und die Landaneignung im tamilischen Norden und Osten von Sri Lanka?

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000559/14
an die Kommission (Vizepräsidentin/Hohe Vertreterin)
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(21. Januar 2014)

Betrifft: VP/HR — Sri Lanka und „Landgrabbing" im Tamilengebiet

Laut den gewählten Parlamentariern aus dem Norden und Osten Sri Lankas, wo vorwiegend die tamilische Bevölkerung lebt, hat sich der Staat für militärische Zwecke und für den Bau singhalesischer Siedlungen mehr als 7 000 km^2 angeeignet. Das entspricht ungefähr einem Drittel des traditionellen Tamilenlands.

1. Ist sich die Vizepräsidentin/Hohe Vertreterin dieser Entwicklung bewusst? Wenn ja, welche internationalem Maßnahmen gedenkt sie einzuleiten, um die Landaneignung zu stoppen?

2. Ist sie bereit, für diesen Fall eine unabhängige internationale Untersuchung zu fordern? Wäre sie ebenfalls bereit, dies auf internationaler Grundlage bis zur Fertigstellung durchzuführen?

3. Gibt es auf internationaler Ebene Pläne, das betreffende Land an die rechtmäßigen Besitzer zurück zu geben?

Gemeinsame Antwort von Frau Ashton — Hohe Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin im Namen der Kommission
(25. März 2014)

Die EU verfolgt die Menschenrechtslage und die Beziehungen zwischen den ethnischen Gemeinschaften in Sri Lanka genau und ist bereit, Maßnahmen der Regierung, die die Aussöhnung und die Rechenschaftspflicht fördern, zu unterstützen. Die EU ist der Auffassung, dass die internationale Zusammenarbeit und der Dialog im derzeitigen Stadium ein wirksamerer Hebel als handelsbezogene Maßnahmen sind.

Mehreren Medienberichten und Studien sowie schriftlichen Eingaben von NRO an den Menschenrechtsrat der Vereinten Nationen zufolge besteht im Norden und Osten Sri Lankas eine Tendenz zur Landaneigung.

Die Regierung macht geltend, dass der Erwerb auf der Grundlage des „Land Acquisition Act" erfolgt, dem zufolge Landflächen für öffentliche Zwecke erworben werden können; laut einem im Januar 2012 veröffentlichten Verwaltungsrundschreiben kann Landbesitz, der während des Konfliktes verloren ging, für Sicherheitszwecke und Entwicklungsaktivitäten genutzt werden. Zahlreiche geltend gemachte Ansprüche und vor Gerichten anhängige Fälle zeigen jedoch, dass es sich dabei um Privatgrundstücke handelt und dass der Nutzen für die öffentlichen Ziele und die Entwicklungsziele nicht klar erkennbar ist.

Die internationale Gemeinschaft, einschließlich der EU, hat die Regierung Sri Lankas im Rahmen mehrerer Sitzungen des UNHCR nachdrücklich dazu aufgefordert, die Umsetzung der konstruktiven Empfehlungen der von Sri Lanka eingerichteten Kommission für Vergangenheitsbewältigung und Versöhnung voranzubringen, die unter anderem die Nutzung unparteiischer Mechanismen zur Beilegung von Streitigkeiten im Zusammenhang mit Landeigentum angeregt hatte. Das UNHRC wird die Lage in Sri Lanka auf seiner 25. Sitzung im März prüfen.

Die EU beobachtet die Lage weiterhin gemeinsam mit anderen internationalen Organisationen und beabsichtigt, diese Themen auch in Zukunft bei ihren Kontakten mit den Behörden Sri Lankas zur Sprache zu bringen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000558/14
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(21 January 2014)

Subject: Sri Lanka and the EU — exports and human rights

The EU is Sri Lanka's biggest export market (26.8% of the country's exports in 2012 were to the Union).

How can the Commission justify not taking advantage of such leverage in order to combat the serious human rights violations such as structural genocide and land-grabbing being perpetrated in the Tamil North and East of Sri Lanka?

Question for written answer E-000559/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(21 January 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Sri Lanka and land-grabbing in the Tamil area

According to the elected parliamentarians from the north and east of Sri Lanka, where the Tamil population predominantly lives, over 7 000 km^2 of land is being grabbed by the state for military purposes and to build Sinhala settlements. This amounts to approximately one third of traditional Tamil land.

1. Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware of these developments? If so, what international action does she intend to take to stop the land-grabbing?

2. Will the VP/HR be ready to call for an independent international investigation into this matter? Will the VP/HR also be prepared to carry it through to completion on an international basis?

3. Are there any plans at international level to give the land in question back to its lawful owners?

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

The EU is following closely the human rights situation and relations between the ethnic communities in Sri Lanka and stands ready to support actions by the Government to advance the agenda for reconciliation and accountability. The EU considers that international cooperation and dialogue provide, at this stage, a more effective leverage than trade-related actions.

There have been several media reports, studies and written statements to the UN Human Rights Council by NGOs that indicate there is a trend of land grabbing in the North and East of Sri Lanka.

The Government claims that the acquisition is being done under the Land Acquisition Act, which states that lands can be acquired for public purposes and a circular released in January 2013 declares that land lost during conflict will be used for security purposes and development activities. There are however many claims and cases filed in courts that indicate that these are private lands and that the benefit to the public and development objectives are not clear.

The international community, including the EU, has urged the Government of Sri Lanka at successive meetings of the UNHRC to make progress in implementing the constructive recommendations of Sri Lanka's own Lessons Learned and Reconciliation Commission report which amongst many others, recommends implementing impartial land dispute resolution mechanisms. The UNHRC will scrutinise the situation in Sri Lanka in its 25th session in March.

The EU is monitoring the situation together with other international organisations and intends to continue raising these matters in our contacts with the Sri Lankan authorities.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000560/14
an die Kommission (Vizepräsidentin/Hohe Vertreterin)
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(21. Januar 2014)

Betrifft: VP/HR — Sri Lanka und die Lage der tamilischen Frauen

Gemäß einem Bericht über die Rechte der Frauen findet in Sri Lanka alle 90 Minuten eine Vergewaltigung statt, vor allem im Nordosten des Landes, wo die tamilische Bevölkerung lebt.

Es ist offensichtlich, dass das tamilische Volk systematisch vernichtet werden soll — nicht nur durch Vergewaltigung und sexuellen Missbrauch, sondern beispielsweise auch durch erzwungene Geburtenkontrolle (subkutane Nur-Progestin-Implantate als Mittel erzwungenen Bevölkerungskontrolle).

1. Ist sich die Vizepräsidentin/Hohe Vertreterin dieser schon seit langem bestehenden Situation bewusst? Wenn ja, was hat sie bisher unternommen, um dieses Problem anzugehen? Was gedenkt sie zu unternehmen, um dieser Situation endgültig ein Ende zu setzen?

2. Die Militarisierung im Nordosten von Sri Lanka scheint den systematischen Genozid zu begünstigen und umgekehrt (d. h. das Militär wird als Instrument einer systematischen Strategie eingesetzt). Ist die VP/HV über diese Entwicklung informiert? Wenn ja, was gedenkt sie zu unternehmen, um die tamilischen Frauen und Familien erfolgreich zu schützen?

Antwort von Frau Ashton — Hohe Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin im Namen der Kommission
(25. März 2014)

Zahlreiche Organisationen berichten über die Lage im Norden und Osten Sri Lankas und auch über die geschlechtsspezifische Gewalt. Einige der Probleme, über die berichtet wird, wie der Zwang zur Geburtenkontrolle im Norden, sind in der Tat äußerst besorgniserregend.

Die EU verfolgt einen durchweg konsequenten Ansatz, indem sie eine Vielzahl von Wegen nutzt, um die Rechte von Frauen zu stärken und vor allem Diskriminierungen, einschließlich geschlechtsspezifischer Gewalt, zu bekämpfen. Neben dem Einsatz sämtlicher ihr zur Verfügung stehenden politischen Mittel stellt die EU auch sicher, dass alle ihre Programme die Verwirklichung der Rechte des Einzelnen, wie sie in der Allgemeinen Erklärung der Menschenrechte niedergelegt sind, fördern. Sie arbeitet ferner auf eine größere Komplementarität mit den Maßnahmen der EU-Mitgliedstaaten und anderer internationaler Geber hin. Außerdem ist die EU-Delegation in Colombo damit beauftragt, die lokale EU-Strategie für die Wahrung der Rechte der Frauen („EU Local Implementation Strategy on Women's Rights") umzusetzen.

Derzeit wird der überwiegende Teil der Entwicklungsmaßnahmen der EU vor allem in den vom Konflikt betroffenen Gebieten im Norden und Osten, einschließlich der Grenzbezirke, durchgeführt. Im Rahmen der Stärkung der Stellung der Frau, der Beteiligung am öffentlichen und privaten Leben und der Bekämpfung von Gewalt werden zahlreiche Maßnahmen in Zusammenarbeit mit den Vereinten Nationen und anderen wichtigen Akteuren umgesetzt, darunter der Aufbau von Kapazitäten, vor allem in Strafverfolgungsbehörden und zivilgesellschaftlichen Organisationen. Da die Situation von Frauen in den meisten Fällen direkt mit der wirtschaftlichen Notlage zusammenhängt, verfolgt die EU einen ganzheitlichen Ansatz: Einerseits tritt sie direkt für die Sache der Frauen ein, andererseits bemüht sie sich um die Verbesserung der Wirtschaftslage, da sie sowohl Ursache des Problems als auch eine Folge der Diskriminierung und der geschlechtsspezifischen Gewalt sein kann.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000560/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(21 January 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Sri Lanka and the situation of Tamil women

According to a Women for Rights report, every 90 minutes a rape occurs in Sri Lanka, predominantly in the north-east of the country where the Tamil population lives.

It is obvious that the Tamil population is being controlled by structural genocide, not only by means of rape and sexual abuse but also, for example, through the forced use of birth control (progestogen-only subdermal implants as a form of coercive population control).

1. Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware of this long-standing situation? If so, what has the VP/HR done so far to combat it? What does the VP/HR intend to do in order to successfully stop it?

2. The militarisation in the north-east of Sri Lanka seems to facilitate structural genocide and vice-versa (with the military being used as a tool in a systematic strategy). Is the VP/HR aware of this development? If so, what does the VP/HR intend to do to successfully protect Tamil women and families?

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

Numerous organisations have reported on the prevailing situation in the North and East of Sri Lanka, including information on gender based violence. Some of what has been reported, such as the forced use of birth control in the North, is indeed very worrying.

EU's approach has been consistent throughout by using multitude of methods both to uplift women's rights and in particular to combat discrimination, including gender-based violence. Besides using the political means at our disposal, we also ensure that all our programmes further the realisation of the right of individuals as laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We also work towards attaining a greater degree of complementarity with EU Member States and other international donors. The EU Delegation in Colombo is also tasked with the execution of the 'EU Local Implementation Strategy on Women's Rights'.

Currently, a vast majority of EU development activities are implemented predominantly in the conflict affected areas of the North and East including the bordering districts. In the context of women empowerment, participation in public and private life, and elimination of violence, numerous activities are undertaken in collaboration with the UN and other key stakeholders such as capacity building particularly aimed at the law enforcement agencies and civil society. As in most cases the situation of women has a direct correlation to the economic plight being faced, the EU has adopted a holistic approach: while on the one hand we work directly for the cause of women, on the other hand we address the prevailing economic situation which can be both the root cause of the problem and a consequence of discrimination and gender based violence.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000571/14
to the Commission
Marina Yannakoudakis (ECR)
(22 January 2014)

Subject: Animal welfare, including equine health and welfare

In May 2013 the Commission announced that it was bringing forward a proposal for animal welfare, including equine health and welfare. Could the Commission inform me when it expects its proposals to come into force, and whether it will monitor their implementation to ensure that an effective and accurate equine database is established in each Member State?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(17 March 2014)

Following the outcome of a Commission inquiry in 2013, 23 Member States have established a central database; two Member States have a single database for registered equidae and equidae for breeding and production respectively, and three Member States have no centralised database.

During the preparation of a review of Union legislation on the identification of equidae, Member States shared the Commission's view that an effective management of identification documents for equidae cannot be ensured without a central database, in particular where those documents are issued, in accordance with current animal health and zootechnical legislation, by multiple issuing bodies.

An operational central database for domestic equidae would assist competent authorities in Member States to enforce the animal health and welfare and the public health conditions pertaining to the keeping and movement of equidae in the Union more effectively.

The Commission is therefore finalising an appropriate legal text in view of its possible presentation to Member States in the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-000572/14
aan de Commissie
Sophia in 't Veld (ALDE)
(22 januari 2014)

Betreft: Spoofing en bewaring van gegevens

De controversiële richtlijn betreffende de bewaring van gegevens (2006/24/EG) is in mei 2006 in werking getreden. Op basis van deze richtlijn dienen de lidstaten telecommunicatieaanbieders ertoe te verplichten de metagegevens inzake de telefoon- en internetcommunicatie van hun gebruikers gedurende 6 tot 24 maanden te bewaren, opdat wetshandhavingsinstanties er toegang toe hebben.

Is de Commissie op de hoogte van de berichtgeving in de Nederlandse media over „spoofing", een techniek om uit naam van iemand anders te telefoneren?

Is de Commissie op de hoogte van deze techniek?

Kan de Commissie aangeven in hoeverre IP-spoofing, waarbij een pc of apparaat wordt gehackt en het bijbehorende IP-adres wordt gebruikt om elektronische berichten te versturen, binnen de EU plaatsvindt?

Is de Commissie het ermee eens dat door dergelijke technieken alle metagegevens inzake telecommunicatie onbetrouwbaar worden voor politieonderzoek en als bewijs in rechtszaken?

Is de Commissie het ermee eens dat het nut van gegevensbewaring hierdoor nog verder afneemt?

Is de Commissie het ermee eens dat, wanneer metagegevens niet betrouwbaar zijn, alle programma's die zijn ontworpen voor het op grote schaal verzamelen en bewaren van metagegevens per definitie niet noodzakelijk en evenredig zijn, zoals vereist krachtens de wet?

Is de Commissie het ermee eens dat dit betekent dat dergelijke programma's niet in overeenstemming met de wet zijn?

Zo niet, kan de Commissie uitleggen op welke manier de massale verwerking van onbetrouwbare gegevens een bijdrage levert aan onze veiligheid?

Antwoord van mevrouw Malmström namens de Commissie
(13 maart 2014)

De Commissie is op de hoogte van berichten in de Nederlandse media over „spoofing".

Spoofing is een techniek die bekend is bij wetshandhavingsinstanties, die over verschillende methodes beschikken om te verifiëren of er al dan niet sprake is van spoofing. De Nederlandse minister van Veiligheid en Justitie bevestigde dit op 11 februari 2014 in een brief aan het Nederlandse parlement. ([1]) Naar aanleiding van vragen door verschillende Nederlandse parlementsleden verklaarde de minister dat het verifiëren van telefoonnummers een belangrijk onderdeel vormt van strafrechtelijke onderzoeken, waaronder dus ook naar spoofing.

De Commissie zal deze kwestie op EU-niveau blijven volgen. Op dit moment heeft de Commissie echter nog geen berichten over specifieke gevallen van „spoofing" ontvangen van andere lidstaten.

([1]) http://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/detail.jsp?id=2014D05004&did=2014D05004.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000572/14
to the Commission
Sophia in 't Veld (ALDE)
(22 January 2014)

Subject: Spoofing and data retention

The controversial Data Retention Directive (2006/24/EC) entered into force in May 2006. On the basis of this directive, the Member States have to require telecommunications providers to store their users' telephone and Internet communication metadata for between 6 and 24 months in order to facilitate law enforcement access to it.

Is the Commission aware of reports in the Dutch media about 'spoofing', a technique for using another person's account to make phone calls?

Is the Commission familiar with this technique?

Can the Commission indicate the extent to which IP-spoofing, by which a person's PC or device is hacked and the respective IP address used to send out electronic messages, occurs within the EU?

Does the Commission agree that such techniques render all telecom metadata unreliable, both for police investigations and as evidence in court?

Would the Commission agree that this reduces even further the usefulness of data retention?

Would the Commission agree that if metadata are not reliable, all programmes designed for the bulk collection and storage of metadata are by definition not necessary and proportionate, as required by law?

Would the Commission agree that this means such programmes are not in conformity with the law?

If not, can the Commission explain how the mass processing of unreliable data contributes to our security?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(13 March 2014)

The Commission is aware of reports in the Dutch media concerning 'spoofing'.

Spoofing is a technique known to law enforcement authorities, which have various means to verify whether spoofing has been used. This was confirmed by the Dutch Minister of Security and Justice in a letter to the Dutch Parliament of 11 February 2014 ([1]). In response to questions by several Dutch Members of Parliament, the Minister stated that verification of telephone numbers forms an important part of criminal investigations, including whether spoofing took place .

The Commission will keep monitoring this issue, at EU-wide level. At present, however, the Commission has not been alerted by other Member States of specific cases of 'spoofing'.

([1]) http://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/detail.jsp?id=2014D05004&did=2014D05004

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-000573/14
aan de Commissie
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(22 januari 2014)

Betreft: De bankenunie: een reus op lemen voeten

Volgens een artikel dat op 14 januari 2014 op de website van *Bloomberg* is verschenen ([1]), vreest de Europese Centrale Bank dat nationale verschillen bij de evaluatie van zwakke bankkredieten een belemmering zullen vormen voor een geloofwaardig bankenonderzoek, aangezien niet alle landen dezelfde criteria hanteren bij het bepalen van de aanvaardbaarheid van risico's.

Gezien het bovenstaande:

1. Is de Commissie niet met mij van mening dat deze situatie de bankenunie als geheel ondermijnt?

2. Heeft de Commissie de nationale verschillen bij de evaluatie van oninbare schulden niet opgemerkt vóór de inwerkingtreding van het gemeenschappelijk toezichtsmechanisme?

3. Is de Commissie van mening dat de ECB nog steeds in staat is zijn evaluatie van de activakwaliteit tegen november 2014 te voltooien?

Antwoord van de heer Barnier namens de Commissie
(14 maart 2014)

De ECB voert momenteel een uitgebreide beoordeling van de banksystemen uit (voornamelijk bestaande uit een activakwaliteitstoets en een stresstest in samenwerking met de EBA), voorafgaande aan de start van haar taak als toezichthouder in november 2014. Het gebruik van geharmoniseerde definities (bijvoorbeeld gebaseerd op de definities van niet-renderende blootstellingen die zijn ontwikkeld door de EBA) zal een consistente aanpak verzekeren ([2]). De Commissie is van mening dat deze aanpak zal bijdragen tot het herstel van het vertrouwen in het bankwezen en het creëren van een solide reputatie van de ECB als toezichthouder voor de banksector. De activakwaliteitstoets is goed op schema en de Commissie is ervan overtuigd dat de uitgebreide beoordeling op tijd zal worden voltooid.

De financiële crisis heeft uiteenlopende nationale interpretaties van het regelgevend kader blootgelegd evenals verschillen in nationale toezichtpraktijken, met inbegrip van de boekhoudkundige behandeling van niet-renderende blootstellingen. Bijgevolg werd onder het RKV IV-pakket een grote. meerderheid van de prudentiële voorschriften overgeheveld naar een verordening, meer bepaald de verordening kapitaalvereisten (VKV) ([3]). Deze verordening heeft tot doel om bepaalde bronnen van nationale verschillen weg te werken en zo bij te dragen tot een efficiëntere werking van de interne markt. De oprichting van de Europese Bankautoriteit (EBA) en van één enkele toezichthouder leveren een verdere bijdrage aan de ontwikkeling van het „rulebook", aan de zorg voor een consistent toezicht en aan de gepaste samenwerking tussen de bevoegde autoriteiten.

([1]) http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-01-13/ecb-sees-bad-debt-rules-as-threat-to-credible-bank-review.html
([2]) Op 3 februari heeft de ECB een verdere toelichting gepubliceerd inzake deze uitgebreide beoordeling, zie http://www.ecb.europa.eu/pub/pdf/other/ notecomprehensiveassessment201402en.pdf? 120cf5522a79fe53cd30a54aaf34f55d.
([3]) Verordening (EU) nr. 575/2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000573/14
to the Commission
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(22 January 2014)

Subject: Banking union: a giant with feet of clay

According to an article published on the *Bloomberg News* website on 14 January 2014 ([1]), the European Central Bank fears that national differences in the evaluation of weak bank loans will form an obstacle to a credible bank review, since what is an acceptable risk in one country is considered unacceptable in another.

In the light of this:

1. does the Commission not agree that this situation undermines the whole banking union?

2. did the Commission not notice national differences in bad-debt evaluation before the single supervisory mechanism legislation entered into force?

3. Does the Commission think the ECB will still be able to complete its asset quality review by November 2014?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(14 March 2014)

The ECB is carrying out a comprehensive assessment (mainly consisting of an asset quality review (AQR) and a stress test in liaison with the EBA) of the banking systems prior to assuming its supervisory tasks in November 2014. The use of harmonised definitions (e.g. based on the definitions for non-performing exposures developed by the EBA) will ensure a consistent approach ([2]). The Commission believes that this approach will contribute to restoring the confidence in our banking system and establish a sound reputation of the ECB as a banking supervisor. The asset quality review is well on track and the Commission is confident that the comprehensive assessment will be completed on time.

The financial crisis revealed diverging national interpretations of the regulatory framework as well as different national supervisory practices, including on the accounting treatment of non-performing exposures. Therefore, within the CRD IV package, a large majority of prudential requirements were transferred to a regulation, the Capital Requirement Regulation (CRR) ([3]). The regulation serves to remove some sources of national divergences and thus contribute to a more effective functioning of the internal market. The establishment of the European Banking Authority (EBA) and of a single supervisor further contribute to develop the single rule book and to ensure supervisory consistency as well as appropriate cooperation among competent authorities.

([1]) http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-01-13/ecb-sees-bad-debt-rules-as-threat-to-credible-bank-review.html
([2]) The ECB published further guidance on the comprehensive assessment on 3 February, see http://www.ecb.europa.eu/pub/pdf/other/notecomprehensiveassessment201402en.pdf?120cf5522a79fe53cd30a54aaf34f55d
([3]) Regulation EU No 575/2013.

(Hrvatska verzija)

Pitanje za pisani odgovor E-000574/14
upućeno Komisiji
Davor Ivo Stier (PPE)
(22. siječnja 2014.)

Predmet: Pristupni pregovori sa Srbijom

Danas se održava prva međuvladina konferencija između EU-a i Srbije i time se otvaraju pristupni pregovori. U svojem prošlotjednom obraćanju Europskom parlamentu istaknuli ste važnost sporazuma o normalizaciji odnosa između Srbije i Kosova i njegove daljnje primjene.

U tom kontekstu je važno da se također poštuju i drugi sporazumi koji potiču dobrosusjedsku suradnju.

U kojoj mjeri će Komisija naglasiti važnost poštovanja Sporazuma o normalizaciji odnosa koji je Srbija potpisala s Hrvatskom 1996., s posebnim naglaskom na primjenu članka 7.?

Odgovor g. Füleа u ime Komisije
(11. ožujka 2014.)

Dobrosusjedski odnosi važna su sastavnica uvjeta procesa stabilizacije i pridruživanja (PSP) te Komisija pomno prati napredak u tom području. Kao što je bio slučaj s Hrvatskom, uvjeti procesa stabilizacije i pridruživanja sadržani su u načelima kojima se uređuju pristupni pregovori te su uključeni u okvir pristupnih pregovora sa Srbijom koje je Vijeće donijelo 17. prosinca 2013.

U posljednjem dokumentu strategije proširenja ([1]) od 16. listopada 2013. Komisija potiče obnovljene napore kako bi se prebrodili dvostrani sporovi. U duhu dobrosusjedskih odnosa, dotične strane trebaju riješiti otvorena dvostrana pitanja što je prije moguće i ne bi smjele usporavati pristupni proces.

Komisija je također naglasila da pitanja u vezi s prošlim sukobima, uključujući ratne zločine i povratak izbjeglica, kao i postupanje s manjinama i osiguravanje jednakih prava za sve građane, ostaju ključni izazovi za stabilnost na Zapadnom Balkanu i trebaju se riješiti u potpunosti. Uzela je u obzir obnovljenu uzajamnu želju Srbije i Hrvatske da zajedno rade na rješavanju takvih pitanja te se nada da će dvostrane radne skupine osnovane 2013. postići napredak u bliskoj budućnosti.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2013/package/strategy_paper_2013_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000574/14
to the Commission
Davor Ivo Stier (PPE)
(22 January 2014)

Subject: Accession negotiations with Serbia

An intergovernmental conference is being held today between the EU and Serbia at which Serbia's accession negotiations will be launched. In your speech to Parliament last week, you stressed the importance of the agreement on the normalisation of relations between Serbia and Kosovo and of its continued application.

In this context, it is important that other agreements encouraging good neighbourly cooperation are also respected.

To what extent will the Commission stress the importance of respecting the agreement on the normalisation of relations with Croatia that Serbia signed in 1996, with particular reference to the application of article 7?

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

Good neighbourly relations are an important element of the conditions of the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP) and the Commission closely monitors progress in this field. As was the case with Croatia, the conditions of the SAP are enshrined among the principles governing accession negotiations and are enshrined in the framework for accession negotiations with Serbia, adopted by Council on 17 December 2013.

In its last Enlargement Strategy Paper ([1]) of 16 October 2013, the Commission encouraged a renewed effort to overcome bilateral disputes. In the spirit of good neighbourly relations, open bilateral issues need to be addressed by the parties concerned as early as possible and should not hold up the accession process.

The Commission also emphasised that issues related to past conflicts, including war crimes and refugee return, as well as the treatment of minorities and ensuring equal rights for all citizens remain key challenges to stability in the western Balkans and need to be fully addressed. It took good note of the renewed mutual desire of Serbia and Croatia to work together to address such issues and is hopeful that the bilateral working groups set up in 2013 will bring about progress in the near future.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2013/package/strategy_paper_2013_en.pdf

(Hrvatska verzija)

Pitanje za pisani odgovor E-000575/14
upućeno Komisiji
Dubravka Šuica (PPE)
(22. siječnja 2014.)

Predmet: Program „Fundamental rights and citizenship" i „Programme for social change and Innovation"

Poznato je da su najranjivije skupine kad se radi o zapošljavanju mladi i žene. Prema podacima 59 % diplomanata u EU-u su žene, a one su još uvijek lošije plaćene od muškaraca za isti posao.

Iako već postoji program „Fundamental rights and citizenship" ali i „Programme for social change and Innovation", ne može se točno razabrati kako se odrednice programa odnose prema pitanju ravnopravnosti spolova.

Budući da žene polažu pravo da njihov rad bude jednako vrednovan, nejednaka plaća za muškarce za isti posao spada u kršenje ljudskih prava pa takva diskriminacija stvara teret i europskoj ekonomiji.

Može li Komisija obrazložiti kako ova dva programa konkretno pomažu u rješavanju problema podčinjenosti žena kada su plaće i zapošljavanje u pitanju?

Odgovor gđe Reding u ime Komisije
(17. ožujka 2014.)

Program o pravima, jednakosti i građanstvu (REC) temelji se na pomno odabranim posebnim ciljevima i „ravnopravnost žena i muškaraca" jedan je od njih.

U okviru sastavnice „ravnopravnost žena i muškaraca" Programa o pravima, jednakosti i građanstvu 2014. — 2020. financirat će se, između ostalog, sljedeće vrste aktivnosti:

— analitičke aktivnosti, kao što su prikupljanje raspršenih podataka i statistika o zaposlenosti te studije i analize zaposlenosti žena;

— aktivnosti izobrazbe, poput radionica i seminara s izravnim naglaskom na pitanja zapošljavanja i jednakosti plaća;

— uzajamno učenje, suradnja i aktivnosti jačanja svijesti, poput razmjena dobre prakse u brojnim pitanjima ravnopravnosti spolova. Aktivnosti koje se odnose na organizaciju nacionalnih i europskih dana jednakih plaća provodit će se tijekom nadolazećih godina;

— podupiranje država članica u provedbi politika EU-a i podrška glavnim europskim mrežama i nevladinim organizacijama. Objavljivat će se različiti pozivi za dostavu prijedloga.

Program EU-a za zapošljavanje i socijalne inovacije poticat će, prema potrebi, uključivanje ravnopravnosti žena i muškaraca u aktivnosti u području zapošljavanja, socijalne zaštite, socijalne isključenosti, siromaštva i radnih uvjeta.

Općenito, Strategija za ravnopravnost žena i muškaraca ([1]) i dalje je koordinirani okvir Komisije za promicanje ravnopravnosti spolova. Jednaka ekonomska neovisnost i jednaka plaća za jednak rad prva su dva prioritetna područja Strategije.

([1]) COM(2010) 491 završna verzija.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000575/14
to the Commission
Dubravka Šuica (PPE)
(22 January 2014)

Subject: The Fundamental Rights and Citizenship Programme and the Programme for Social Change and Innovation

It is well known that the most vulnerable groups as far as employment is concerned are women and young people. Statistics show that 59% of graduates in the EU are women, yet they are still paid less than men for doing the same job.

Although the Fundamental Rights and Citizenship Programme and the Programme for Social Change and Innovation already exist, it is impossible to tell how the programmes' guidelines relate to the issue of gender equality.

Since women claim that their work should be valued equally, unequal pay for men for the same work constitutes a violation of human rights, and such discrimination is placing a burden on the European economy.

Can the Commission explain how these two programmes are specifically helping to resolve the issue of women's inferior position where pay and employment are concerned?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(17 March 2014)

The Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) programme is built around well-targeted specific objectives and 'equality between women and men' is one of them.

The 'equality between women and men' strand of the 2014-2020 REC programme will finance inter alia the following types of actions:

— Analytical activities, such as the collection of disaggregated employment data and statistics and female employment related studies and analyses;

— Training activities, such as workshops and seminars directly focusing on employment and equal pay issues;

— Mutual learning, cooperation and awareness-raising activities, such as exchanges on good practices on a vast array of gender equality issues. Activities related to the organisation of National and European Equal Pay Days will be pursued during the coming years;

— Support for Member States on implementing EU policies and support for key European level networks and NGOs. Different calls for proposals will be launched.

The EU programme for Employment and Social Innovation will support when relevant the mainstreaming of equality between women and men in the activities launched in the fields of employment, social protection, social exclusion, poverty and working conditions.

More generally, the strategy for equality between women and men ([1]) remains the Commission's coordinated framework for promoting gender equality. Equal economic independence and equal pay for equal work are the first two priority areas of the strategy.

([1]) COM(2010) 491 final.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000577/14
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(22 gennaio 2014)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Sommosse in Ucraina

I moti di piazza in Ucraina, scatenati dalla decisione del governo di abbandonare la prospettiva dell'associazione con l'UE in favore dell'unione doganale con la Federazione Russa, continuano a inasprirsi. La notte tra il 20 e il 21 gennaio nuovi scontri si sono verificati tra manifestanti e forze di polizia, con lanci di sassi e molotov. In totale, i feriti fino a ora sono 200, di cui oltre la metà ricoverati in ospedale.

Esponenti del governo russo hanno accusato i manifestanti di aver violato ogni norma europea di comportamento, mentre la Casa Bianca si dice profondamente preoccupata dalle violenze ed esorta tutte le parti chiamate in causa a evitare che la situazione degeneri, pur schierandosi dalla parte dei manifestanti e accusando il governo ucraino di minare le fondamenta della democrazia nel paese tramite una serie di leggi che aumentano le pene per le proteste pacifiche e tolgono alla società civile e all'opposizione politica le protezioni giuridiche di base.

Alla luce dell'evolvere della situazione in Ucraina, può il Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante chiarire:

1. se l'UE stia attivamente partecipando alla mediazione tra forze governative e manifestanti, al fine di evitare il crescere della spirale di violenza in Ucraina;

2. quale sia la sua posizione rispetto alle riforme approvate dal parlamento ucraino in data 16 gennaio 2014 in materia di libertà di associazione e di manifestazione;

3. se intende adottare provvedimenti al fine di incoraggiare il governo ucraino ad abrogare o rimodulare le riforme in questione in modo tale che non violino le libertà fondamentali dei cittadini ucraini?

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

L'UE si è adoperata attivamente per agevolare una soluzione pacifica e duratura della crisi politica in Ucraina, cercando anche di arginare l'escalation della violenza. A tal fine, a gennaio e febbraio 2014 l'AR/VP Ashton e il commissario Füle si sono incontrati più volte, a turno, a Kiev con le autorità ucraine, l'opposizione e il Consiglio civico di piazza Maidan, rilasciando diverse dichiarazioni in risposta agli eventi e in seguito a questi incontri. Il 10 febbraio il Consiglio dell'Unione europea ha deciso che l'UE avrebbe continuato ad impegnarsi attivamente nei confronti dell'Ucraina.

Il 16 gennaio sono stati adottati in tutta fretta, in palese inosservanza delle procedure parlamentari e dei principi democratici, diversi atti legislativi che limitano i diritti fondamentali dei cittadini ucraini. Questi deplorevoli sviluppi, verificatisi in un contesto di crisi politica, non hanno contribuito né a far regnare la fiducia né a trovare una soluzione politica, per la quale è indispensabile un dialogo inclusivo con tutte le parti interessate. L'Alta rappresentante ha invitato il presidente dell'Ucraina a far sì che queste decisioni siano rivedute e rese conformi agli impegni internazionali del paese. L'UE ha accolto con favore la decisione del Verkhovna Rada del 28 gennaio 2014 di revocare le leggi del 16 gennaio che limitano le libertà fondamentali.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000577/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(22 January 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Uprisings in Ukraine

The violent street protests taking place in Ukraine, which were sparked by the government's decision to reject a proposed partnership with the EU in favour of closer customs ties with Russia, are showing no signs of abating. The night of 20 January witnessed further clashes between protesters and the police, with rocks and Molotov cocktails being thrown. Some 200 people have so far been injured in the clashes, with over half being hospitalised.

Representatives of the Russian Government have condemned the protesters' actions as a complete violation of all European standards of behaviour, while the White House has expressed its deep concern over the violence and urged all sides to immediately de-escalate the situation, but at the same time has sided with the protesters and accused the Ukrainian Government of weakening the foundations of the country's democracy by criminalising peaceful protest and stripping civil society and political opponents of key democratic protections under the law.

In light of the crisis that is currently unfolding in Ukraine, can the Vice-President/High Representative clarify:

1. whether the EU is actively involved in talks between the ruling powers and the protesters, in order to halt the spiral of violence in Ukraine;

2. where it stands regarding the reforms approved by the Ukrainian parliament on 16 January 2014 on citizens' rights to assemble and protest;

3. whether it intends to adopt any measures that would encourage the Ukrainian Government to revoke or amend the reforms in question so that they do not breach the fundamental rights of Ukrainian citizens?

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

The EU has been actively engaged in facilitating a peaceful and sustainable solution to the political crisis in Ukraine, including in deescalating violence. To this end, HRVP Ashton and Commissioner Füle met in turn with Ukrainian authorities, opposition and civic Maidan sector in Kyiv several times in January and February 2014. They issued several statements in reaction to events and following their meetings in Kyiv. The Council of the European Union decided on 10 February that the EU will remain actively engaged with Ukraine.

Several pieces of legislation restricting the Ukrainian citizens' fundamental rights were hurriedly passed on 16 January in an apparent disrespect of parliamentary procedures and democratic principles. These regrettable developments came at a time of political crisis and did not contribute to building confidence and finding a political solution which can only happen through an inclusive dialogue with all stakeholders. High Representative called on the President of Ukraine to ensure that these decisions are revised and brought in line with Ukraine's international commitments. The EU welcomed the decision of the Verkhovna Rada on 28 January to revoke these laws.

Verkhovna Rada revoked laws restricting the exercise of fundamental freedoms of 16 January on 28 January 2014.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-000579/14
do Komisji
Krzysztof Lisek (PPE)
(22 stycznia 2014 r.)

Przedmiot: Zmiana dopuszczalnych limitów substancji smolistych w wędzonych produktach i jej wpływ na przedsiębiorców Polski północnej

W związku z faktem, że 19 września ma wejść w życie rozporządzenie Komisji Europejskiej o obniżeniu dopuszczalnych limitów benzo(a)pirenu z 5 do 2 mikrogramów na kilogram, istnieją obawy, że może to spowodować spadek bądź wstrzymanie produkcji produktów wędzonych tradycyjnymi metodami.

To natomiast może skutkować zamknięciem niektórych przedsiębiorstw. Warmia i Mazury, Podlasie oraz Pomorze to polskie obszary zdrowej żywności wytwarzanej od stuleci tradycyjnymi metodami. To one przyciągają turystów kulturą i tradycją, której częścią bez wątpienia są produkty żywnościowe, takie jak wędzone wyroby mięsne czy ryby. Ponadto regiony Polski północnej wykorzystują unijne środki na promowanie tego dziedzictwa. Biorąc pod uwagę powyższe, poseł do Parlamentu Europejskiego Krzysztof Lisek zwraca się z pytaniami do Komisji Europejskiej:

1. Jak Komisja zamierza rozwiązać problem producentów certyfikowanych wędlin wędzonych według dawnych receptur, którzy nie mogą zmienić technologii produkcji, gdyż to na jej podstawie produkt został uznany za tradycyjny?

2. Czy istnieje możliwość pozostawienia lub mniejszego zaostrzenia dopuszczalnych limitów substancji smolistych w produktach wędzonych tradycyjnymi metodami, sprzedawanych na rynek lokalny?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Tonia Borga w imieniu Komisji
(13 marca 2014 r.)

Wielopierścieniowe węglowodory aromatyczne (WWA) są substancjami rakotwórczymi działającymi genotoksycznie, a ich obecność w żywności może stanowić zagrożenie dla zdrowia. Konieczne jest zatem ustanowienie najwyższych dopuszczalnych poziomów na najniższym, racjonalnie możliwym do osiągnięcia poziomie.

W dniu 8 kwietnia 2011 r. zwrócono się do Stałego Komitetu ds. Łańcucha Żywnościowego i Zdrowia Zwierząt o wydanie opinii w sprawie projektu rozporządzenia zmieniającego – w odniesieniu do WWA – rozporządzenie (WE) nr 1881/2006 ustalające najwyższe dopuszczalne poziomy niektórych zanieczyszczeń w środkach spożywczych. Projekt rozporządzenia otrzymał pozytywną opinię Komitetu – za jego przyjęciem głosowały wszystkie państwa członkowskie (w tym Polska), z wyjątkiem Łotwy i Estonii, które wstrzymały się od głosu. Nie podniesiono żadnych kwestii dotyczących wędzenia mięsa i produktów mięsnych.

Przy zastosowaniu dobrych praktyk wędzarniczych osiągnięcie obniżonych dopuszczalnych poziomów WWA w mięsie wędzonym i produktach mięsnych wędzonych możliwe jest również w przypadku tradycyjnego wędzenia drewnem. Na wniosek właściwych organów Komisja mogłaby służyć pomocą w zakresie stosowania dobrych praktyk wędzarniczych.

Władze polskie rozpoczęły szeroko zakrojone badanie mięsa i produktów mięsnych wędzonych w sposób tradycyjny, w którym zidentyfikowana zostanie metoda wędzenia w przypadku każdej badanej próbki. Wyniki tego badania będą dostępne na początku kwietnia 2014 r. Także inne państwa członkowskie zobowiązały się do wykonania analiz i przekazania danych Komisji.

Wyniki analizy procesów wędzenia mięsa i produktów mięsnych zarejestrowanych jako gwarantowana tradycyjna specjalność oraz wyniki badania przeprowadzonego przez polskie władze wraz z innymi danymi otrzymanymi od Polski i innych państw członkowskich oraz organizacji będą omawiane szczegółowo z państwami członkowskimi w drugiej połowie kwietnia i na początku maja 2014 r.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000579/14
to the Commission
Krzysztof Lisek (PPE)
(22 January 2014)

Subject: Change to the maximum permitted levels of tarry substances in smoked products and the impact of that change on businesses in northern Poland

There are concerns that the entry into force on 19 September 2014 of a Commission regulation lowering the maximum permitted levels of benzo(a)pyrene from 5 to 2 micrograms per kilogram could lead to a fall in production of smoked meat products using traditional methods, or even to the stopping of such production.

This, in turn, could result in some businesses closing down. Warmia i Mazury, Podlasie and Pomorze are areas of Poland which for centuries have produced healthy food using traditional methods. It is these areas that attract tourists with their culture and tradition, of which food products, such as smoked meat and fish, are undoubtedly a part. Furthermore, the regions of northern Poland make use of EU funds to promote this heritage.

In view of the above:

1. How does the Commission intend to solve the problem of producers of certified smoked meats made according to old recipes who cannot change the production technology because this is the basis on which the product has been classed as a traditional product?

2. Would it be possible to leave in place, or apply a smaller reduction in, the maximum permitted levels of tarry substances in products which are smoked using traditional methods and sold on the local market?

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

Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) are genotoxic carcinogens and their presence in food is of health concern. Maximum levels have therefore to be established at a level as low as reasonably achievable.

The draft Regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 1881/2006 setting maximum levels for certain contaminants in food as regards PAH was submitted for opinion to the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health on 8 April 2011. The draft Regulation received a favourable opinion from the Committee, all Member States, including Poland, voting in favour, with only Latvia and Estonia abstaining. No concerns as regards the smoking of meat and meat products were raised.

By applying good smoking practices, also with traditional wood-smoking, the lower maximum levels for PAH in smoked meat and smoked meat products are achievable. The Commission is considering providing assistance, if requested by the competent authority, for the application of the good smoking practices.

The Polish authorities have undertaken a large survey of traditionally smoked meat and meat products whereby for each sample a tracing to the smoking method will be carried out. The results of this survey will be available in the beginning of April 2014. Also other Member States have committed to perform analysis and to provide data to the Commission.

The outcome of the examination of the smoking processes of the smoked meat and meat products registered as Traditional specialities guaranteed (TSG), and of the survey undertaken by the Polish authorities, together with other data from Poland and other Member States and organisations, will be discussed in detail in the second half of April — beginning of May 2014 with the Member States.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000583/14
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) e Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(22 de janeiro de 2014)

Assunto: Cortes nas bolsas de doutoramento e pós-doutoramento em Portugal

Realiza-se hoje em Portugal uma concentração nacional de membros da comunidade científica, em protesto contra os cortes recentes nas bolsas de investigação e, em geral, no orçamento da ciência e da investigação.

O mais recente concurso para atribuição de bolsas individuais, da Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, determinou uma redução das bolsas de doutoramento em 50 % (dos 3 416 candidatos para bolsas de doutoramento, só 298 receberam a bolsa) e das bolsas de pós-doutoramento em 70 % (só 233 de 2 305 cientistas candidatos receberam bolsa). Está assim em causa a vida de milhares de candidatos e o desenvolvimento e continuidade de milhares de projetos de investigação, agora seriamente comprometidos. Muitos centros de investigação ficarão esvaziados do enorme potencial de massa crítica e de trabalhadores que, em muitos casos, garantem o funcionamento destes centros, sendo peças essenciais do sistema científico nacional. Para muitos destes investigadores, a emigração será a única hipótese. Outros mudarão de área. Em qualquer dos casos, estamos perante um desperdício de todo o investimento que o país fez na sua formação. É muito provável que o país acabe por perder uma grande percentagem dos investigadores que formou e financiou durante vários anos.

Esta situação contraria frontalmente todos os discursos sobre uma alegada aposta na ciência e na inovação no período 2014-2020. Como sabemos, Portugal ainda não atingiu as metas há muito estabelecidas relativamente ao nível do investimento em ciência e naqueles que trabalham em ciência. Agora, corre o risco de se afastar mais ainda dessas metas.

Perguntamos à Comissão:

1. Que informações tem sobre esta evolução negativa ao nível da atribuição de bolsas de investigação?

2. Conhece situações de outros países em que a evolução da atribuição de bolsas tenha paralelo com o que sucedeu em Portugal?

3. Em relação ao anterior Quadro Financeiro Plurianual, qual a evolução das verbas destinadas à formação avançada de recursos humanos no atual QFP (2014-2020)?

Resposta dada por Máire Geoghegan-Quinn em nome da Comissão
(14 de março de 2014)

1. Na sua Análise Anual do Crescimento para 2014, a Comissão sublinha que a situação orçamental e financeira permite aos Estados-Membros conceberem melhor os programas de consolidação orçamental, centrando-se no crescimento. A Análise insiste que os Estados-Membros têm de procurar vias de proteção ou promoção da despesa pública que reforcem o seu potencial de crescimento, como é o caso dos investimentos em I&D. A Análise apela também a que os Estados-Membros acelerem a modernização dos sistemas nacionais de investigação, em consonância com os objetivos do Espaço Europeu da Investigação.

2. A Estratégia Europa 2020 coloca a ciência, a investigação e a inovação na linha da frente da política da UE para o crescimento, o emprego e a competitividade. Contudo, todas as decisões relativas à consolidação orçamental e à consecução dos objetivos da Europa 2020 são da responsabilidade do Governo Português.

No contexto do Semestre Europeu, a Comissão vai continuar a acompanhar os esforços dos Estados-Membros no tocante a investimentos e reformas de investigação e inovação.

3. As Ações Marie Skłodowska-Curie (MSCA), no QFP em curso, fizeram diminuir ligeiramente as bolsas para investigadores, a comparar com o anterior QFP, conforme justificam avaliações e estudos pertinentes. Para investigadores experientes, a bolsa anual baixou para 55 800 EUR (redução de 2 700 EUR). Para investigadores em início de carreira, baixou para 37 320 EUR (redução de 680 EUR). Ainda assim, a Comissão considera que as MSCA continuarão a constituir um regime de financiamento altamente atrativo, porquanto têm deparado com um interesse incessante, a despeito de as taxas das bolsas permanecerem inalteradas desde 2011.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000583/14
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) and Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(22 January 2014)

Subject: Cuts in the funding for doctorate and post-doctorate degrees in Portugal

There is today, in Portugal, a national rallying of members of the scientific community protesting against the recent cuts in research funding and, in general, in the budget for science and research.

The most recent competition for the awarding of individual funding, from the Foundation for Science and Technology, showed a reduction of 50% in funding for doctorates (of the 3416 candidates for doctorate funding, only 298 received funding) and of 70% in post-doctorate funding (only 233 out of 2 305 candidate scientists received funding). The lives of thousands of candidates and the development and continuation of thousands of research projects are thus now seriously compromised. Many research centres will be stripped of the enormous critical mass and workforce potential which, in many cases, guarantee the functioning of these centres, constituting essential elements in the national scientific system. For many of these research workers, emigration will be the only option. Others will move to a different area. In either of these events we would be wasting all the investment which the country made in training them. It is very probable that the country will end up losing a large percentage of the research workers which it trained and funded over several years.

This situation would be in direct conflict with all the talk of a supposed backing of science and innovation in the period 2014-2020. As we are already aware, Portugal has not yet reached the targets established long ago in respect of the level of investment in science and in those who work in the scientific field. It now runs the risk of being even further away from achieving these targets.

We would ask the Commission:

1. What information does the Commission have on this negative development in respect of the awarding of research funding?

2. Is the Commission aware of other countries in which the progress in awarding funding has followed a path similar to that in Portugal?

3. In relation to the previous Multiannual Financial Framework, what has been the evolution of the allowances designated for the higher level training of human resources in the current MFF (2014-2020)?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(14 March 2014)

1. In its Annual Growth Survey 2014, the Commission stresses that the fiscal and financial situation enables Member States to better design fiscal consolidation programmes, focusing on growth. It emphasises that Member States need to find ways to protect or promote public spending that reinforces their growth potential, as it is the case for R&I investments. Furthermore, the Survey calls on Member States to accelerate the modernisation of national research systems in line with the objectives of the European Research Area.

2. The Europe 2020 strategy places science, research and innovation at the forefront of the EU policy for growth, jobs and competitiveness. However, all decisions regarding fiscal consolidation and achieving the Europe 2020 targets are the responsibility of the Portuguese Government.

In the context of the European Semester, the Commission will continue to monitor the efforts of Member States as regards research and innovation investments and reforms.

3. The Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) in the current MFF have slightly decreased the living allowances for researchers compared to the previous MFF, as justified by relevant evaluations and studies. For experienced researchers, the living allowance per annum has been reduced by EUR 2 700 to EUR 55 800. For early-stage researchers, the living allowance per annum has been reduced by EUR 680 to EUR 37 320. However, the Commission considers that the MSCA will remain a highly attractive funding scheme, as the Marie Curie Actions have been confronted with continuously increasing interest despite the living allowance rates remaining unchanged since 2011.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000586/14
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) e Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(22 de janeiro de 2014)

Assunto: Apoio à construção de uma nova fábrica da Sinaga na Região Autónoma dos Açores

A Sinaga — uma empresa açoreana emblemática e centenária de produção de açúcar, que emprega mais de uma centena de trabalhadores e da qual dependem cerca de 200 produtores de beterraba — encontra-se numa grave situação económica e financeira.

A falta de investimento, desde há vários anos — em equipamentos, infraestruturas, maquinaria e formação profissional — tem levado à decadência de uma empresa que teria todas as condições para se afirmar como um importante polo produtivo, dinamizador da economia regional. Recorde-se que esta é a única agro-indústria não leiteira da Região.

Apesar de ter chegado a estar prevista a construção de uma nova fábrica, financiada pelo POSEI em 2010, o projeto nunca avançou.

Solicitamos à Comissão que nos informe sobre o seguinte:

1. Tem conhecimento do projeto de construção de uma nova fábrica, financiado pelo POSEI, em 2010, com um custo estimado em 30 milhões de euros? Tem conhecimento das razões pelas quais este projeto não avançou?

2. Considera possível a inclusão deste projeto no Quadro Financeiro Plurianual 2014-2020? Que programas e medidas poderiam apoiar o projeto? Quais as condições de cofinanciamento?

Resposta dada por Dacian Cioloş em nome da Comissão
(18 de março de 2014)

A Comissão informa o Senhor Deputado que o referido projeto Sinaga não poderia ter sido financiado pelo POSEI, dado que este último não financia planos de investimento. O POSEI faz parte do 1.° pilar da Política Agrícola Comum e prevê para as regiões ultraperiféricas pagamentos diretos aos agricultores assim como medidas de mercado. Pode confirmar-se que a Sinaga recebe apoio para o setor do açúcar no âmbito do POSEI (apoio à transformação de beterraba sacarina produzida localmente e isenção dos direitos de importação de açúcar em bruto proveniente de países terceiros).

O Quadro Financeiro Plurianual 2014-2020 inclui a política de Desenvolvimento Rural, com base no Regulamento (CE) n.° 1305/2013 do Conselho e do Parlamento Europeu ([1]). Este regulamento prevê o apoio da UE para o investimento em transformação e comercialização, bem como para a formação. Para efeitos de implementação deste regulamento, os Estados-Membros estão a preparar os Programas de Desenvolvimento Rural para 2014-2020, os quais devem ser submetidos à Comissão para aprovação nos próximos meses.

A gestão, incluindo a seleção, adjudicação e pagamento dos projetos, é da competência da Autoridade responsável pela Gestão do Programa. Por conseguinte, convida-se o Senhor Deputado a contactar a Autoridade responsável pela Gestão do Programa de Desenvolvimento Rural dos Açores (Prorural), para mais informações, através do seguinte endereço:

Eng.ª Fátima Amorim
Diretora Regional DRACA
Vinha Brava
9701-861 Angra do Heroísmo
Portugal
Telefone: (351-2) 95 40 42 80
Endereço eletrónico: fatima.cl.amorim@azores.gov.pt
Sítio Web: http://prorural.azores.gov.pt/

([1]) JO L 347 de 20.12.2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000586/14
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) and Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(22 January 2014)

Subject: Support for the construction of a new SINAGA Plant in the Azores

SINAGA — an iconic Azores company which has been producing sugar for more than a hundred years, employs more than a hundred people and on which some 200 beet producers depend — finds itself in a grave economic and financial position.

The lack of investment, over a number of years — in equipment, infrastructure, machinery and professional training — has led to the decline of a company which had the potential to become an important centre of production, a company invigorating the regional economy. It must be borne in mind that this is the only non-dairy agricultural industry in the Region.

Despite the planning of the construction of a new plant, financed by POSEI in 2010, the project never progressed.

We would ask the Commission to advise us on the following:

1. Was the Commission aware of the project for the construction of a new plant, financed by POSEI, in 2010, at an estimated cost of 30 million euros? Is the Commission aware of the reasons why this project did not go ahead?

2. Does the Commission think it is possible to include this project within the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020? Which programmes and measures could support the project? What are the conditions for co-financing?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(18 March 2014)

The Commission informs the Honourable Member that the mentioned SINAGA project could not have been financed by POSEI, as the latter does not finance investment plans. POSEI is part of the 1st Pillar of the common agricultural policy and provides in the outermost regions for direct payments to farmers and market measures. It can be confirmed that SINAGA receives support for the sugar sector under POSEI (aid for processing locally produced sugar beet and exemption from duties for importing raw sugar from third countries).

The 2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework includes the Rural Development policy, based on the European Parliament and Council Regulation (EC) No 1305/2013 ([1]). This regulation foresees EU support for investment in processing and marketing as well as for training. For the implementation of this regulation, Member States are preparing the Rural Development Programmes for 2014-2020 which should be submitted to the Commission for approval in the following months.

The management, including the selection, contracting and payment of projects, is a competence of the Programme Managing Authority. The Honourable Member is therefore invited to contact the Managing Authority of the Rural Development Programme Azores (PRORURAL) for detailed information, at the following address:

Eng[a]. Fátima Amorim
Directora Regional DRACA
Vinha Brava
9701-861 Angra do Heroísmo
PORTUGAL
Tel: 00 351 295 404 280
Mail: fatima.cl.amorim@azores.gov.pt
Web: http://prorural.azores.gov.pt/

([1]) OJ L 347, 20.12.2013.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000587/14
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) e Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(22 de janeiro de 2014)

Assunto: Atraso na execução do programa de recuperação ambiental em S. Pedro da Cova

Em resposta às perguntas E-005204/2013 e E-005203/2013, sobre resíduos perigosos nas escombreiras das antigas minas de S. Pedro da Cova e sobre a reabilitação do passivo ambiental de S. Pedro da Cova, respetivamente, a Comissão Europeia refere que deu início a um processo de infração com base em várias disposições, nomeadamente relativas ao tratamento dos resíduos e proteção das águas subterrâneas (processo 2011/2003).

Portugal informou a Comissão, no quadro do processo por infração, de que foi adotado um programa de recuperação (em 29 de outubro de 2012) que envolve a limpeza dos sítios, a remoção de resíduos, o seu tratamento adequado em instalações especializadas e a monitorização das águas subterrâneas da zona. O programa será cofinanciado pela UE, ao abrigo do programa operacional «Valorização do Território (POVT)». O concurso público para a realização dos trabalhos foi publicado no Jornal Oficial (Diário da República, de 19 de dezembro de 2012). Entretanto, o início da execução do programa foi suspenso devido a procedimentos legais, que se prendem com recursos e contrarrecursos relativos ao resultado do concurso público e com a interposição de uma providência cautelar por parte de um dos concorrentes.

Em face do exposto, perguntamos à Comissão:

1. Foi informada pelo governo português do ponto de situação deste processo? Que medidas tomou ou vai tomar a Comissão?

2. Esteve em algum momento em causa o financiamento da UE destinado à concretização do programa de recuperação supramencionado? Até quando poderá a verba em causa ser executada?

Resposta dada por Janez Potočnik em nome da Comissão
(24 de março de 2014)

1. De acordo com as informações fornecidas pelas autoridades portuguesas no processo por infração (2011/2003), o concurso público, com vista à aplicação do programa de reabilitação das antigas minas de S. Pedro da Cova, foi objeto de contestação. Um tribunal português aceitou as medidas provisórias solicitadas por um dos concorrentes. Consequentemente, o concurso público foi suspenso até à prolação da decisão final do Tribunal.

2. No âmbito do programa operacional «Valorização do Território» (POVT), a atribuição de 11 145 370 EUR do Fundo de Coesão foi aprovada a 14 de agosto de 2012, destinando-se ao financiamento do programa de reabilitação das antigas minas de S. Pedro da Cova. A autoridade responsável pela gestão do programa informou recentemente a Comissão de que, em termos jurídicos, não serão interpostos mais obstáculos, atualmente, que impeçam o início da execução dos trabalhos. Por conseguinte a Comissão de Coordenação e Desenvolvimento Regional do Norte (CCDR-Norte), organismo responsável pela execução do projeto, deverá estar agora apta a formalizar o contrato com a entidade prestadora de serviços, de forma a viabilizar a plena execução das obras antes de 31 de dezembro de 2015, isto é, dentro do prazo de elegibilidade das despesas.

A Comissão continuará a acompanhar de perto a situação.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000587/14
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) and Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(22 January 2014)

Subject: Delay in the implementation of the environmental recovery programme in S. Pedro da Cova

In response to questions E-005204/2013 and E-005203/2013, concerning hazardous residues in the spoil heaps of the old mines in S. Pedro da Cova and concerning the rehabilitation of the environmental liabilities of S. Pedro da Cova, respectively, the European Commission reports that an action for breach has been brought on the basis of various provisions, specifically related to the treatment of the residues and the protection of the groundwater (proceeding 2011/2003).

Portugal informed the Commission, within the framework of the action for breach, that a recovery programme had been adopted (on 29 October 2012) which includes the cleaning of the sites, the removal of residues, their appropriate treatment in specialist installations and the monitoring of the groundwater in the area. The programme will be co-funded by the EU, under the Operational Programme 'Territorial Enhancement (POVT)'. The public call for tenders for undertaking the work was published in the State Gazette (Diário da República, of 19 December 2012). Initiation of the implementation of the programme was, however, suspended due to legal proceedings relating to appeals and counter-appeals concerning the result of the public call for tenders and the filing of a provisional injunction by one of the tenderers.

In light of the above, we ask the Commission:

1. Has it been informed by the Portuguese Government of the current position of this action? What measures has the Commission taken or will it take?

2. Was the EU funding designated for the implementation of the recovery programme specified above in question at any time ? Within what period can the allocation in question be implemented?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(24 March 2014)

1. According to the information provided by the Portuguese Authorities in the infringement procedure (2011/2003), the public tender aimed at the implementation of the rehabilitation programme of the old mines of S. Pedro da Cova has been challenged. A Portuguese Court has accepted the interim measures requested by one of the competitors. Consequently, the public tender has been suspended until a final decision by the Court.

2. In the framework of the Operational Programme 'Valorização do Território' (POVT), the allocation of 11 145 370 EUR of the Cohesion Fund was approved on 14 August 2012 for the financing of the rehabilitation programme of the former mines of S. Pedro da Cova. The managing authority of the programme recently informed the Commission that in legal terms there would be no further obstacles, currently, preventing the start of works. Therefore, the CCDR-Norte, body responsible for the execution of the project, should now be able to sign the contract with the service provider and it should be possible to fully execute the works before 31 December 2015, within the deadline for eligibility of expenditure.

The Commission will continue to closely monitor the situation.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000588/14
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) e Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(22 de janeiro de 2014)

Assunto: Catástrofe natural no concelho de Paredes, no norte de Portugal

Nos primeiros dias do ano, a passagem de um tornado pelo território do concelho de Paredes, no norte de Portugal, deixou um rasto de destruição e mais de meia centena de pessoas desalojadas, afetando nomeadamente famílias que já viviam com dificuldades económicas. O tornado fez estragos em cerca de centena e meia de edifícios e em dezenas de viaturas, estimando-se um prejuízo total superior a 5,5 milhões de euros, segundo dados da avaliação levada a cabo pela proteção civil no terreno.

Este episódio já levou a Câmara Municipal de Paredes a pedir ao Governo português que decrete o estado de calamidade pública para o concelho, dadas as dimensões dos estragos.

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

1. Que medidas de apoio podem ser mobilizadas para a reabilitação dos edifícios danificados, assim como para a reabilitação das infraestruturas públicas destruídas e para obras de consolidação das zonas envolventes, indispensáveis à segurança das populações?

2. Qual o ponto da situação relativamente à revisão do Regulamento do Fundo de Solidariedade da UE? Quais as principais propostas da Comissão para a revisão deste Fundo?

Resposta dada por Johannes Hahn em nome da Comissão
(28 de março de 2014)

1. Embora o Fundo Europeu de Desenvolvimento Regional não possa intervir em operações de emergência imediata, pode, todavia, ser pertinente, ao abrigo das regras aplicáveis, para a reconstrução e investimentos a mais longo prazo para as empresas afetadas pela tempestade. O programa «Valorização do Território» (2007-2013) pode igualmente financiar as medidas de prevenção e gestão de riscos.

O Fundo de Solidariedade da UE pode intervir apenas se o Governo português apresentar um pedido no prazo de 10 semanas a contar da ocorrência da catástrofe e se estiverem reunidas as condições específicas do regulamento do Fundo de Solidariedade. O limiar normal de ativação do Fundo de Solidariedade no caso de Portugal corresponde a um montante de danos superior a 1 002 milhões de euros. Em catástrofes de menor dimensão, o Fundo só pode ser mobilizado em circunstâncias muito excecionais, nos casos em que a maioria da população da região é afetada e se houver repercussões graves e prolongadas nas condições de vida e na estabilidade económica da região.

2. A proposta de alteração do regulamento do Fundo de Solidariedade está atualmente em fase de negociação com o Parlamento e o Conselho. O objetivo da Comissão é fazer com que o Fundo se torne mais rápido a reagir, mais fácil de utilizar e mais visível, mantendo, ao mesmo tempo, as suas principais características e a neutralidade em termos orçamentais. Os elementos principais são a introdução da possibilidade de efetuar pagamentos antecipados rapidamente e de substituir os atuais critérios de catástrofe regional por uma única condição, simples e objetiva, isto é, prejuízos superiores a 1,5 % do PIB regional.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000588/14
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) and Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(22 January 2014)

Subject: Natural disaster in the town of Paredes, in northern Portugal

At the beginning of January, a tornado that passed through the town of Paredes, in northern Portugal, left a trail of destruction and dozens of people homeless, many of them families who were already in financial difficulty. The tornado damaged about a hundred and fifty buildings and dozens of vehicles, with the local civil defence services estimating total damage in excess of 5.5 million euros.

The event has already led the local authorities in Paredes to ask the Portuguese Government to declare a state of emergency in the area, given the extent of the damage.

Please could the Commission tell us:

1. What aid can be provided for repairing the damaged buildings and public infrastructures and for consolidation work in the areas involved, which is vital to people's safety?

2. What is the situation as regards revision of the EU's Solidarity Fund Regulation? What are the Commission's main proposals concerning revision of the Fund?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(28 March 2014)

1. While the European Regional Development Fund may not intervene for immediate emergency operations, it may however be relevant, under applicable rules, for the reconstruction and investments on a longer term for businesses affected by the storm. The programme 'Valorização do Território' (2007-2013) could also finance risk prevention and management measures.

The EU Solidarity Fund could only intervene if the Portuguese Government submits an application within 10 weeks of the occurrence of the disaster and if the specific conditions of the Solidarity Fund Regulation are met. The normal threshold to activate the Solidarity Fund for Portugal is damage exceeding EUR 1.002 billion. For a smaller disaster, the Fund could only be mobilised very exceptionally if the majority of the population in the region is affected and if there are serious and lasting repercussions on living conditions and the economic stability of the region.

2. The proposal amending the Solidarity Fund Regulation is currently in the negotiation phase with Parliament and the Council. The Commission's objective is to make the Fund quicker to react, simpler to use and more visible while maintaining its main features and being neutral in budget terms. Key elements are the introduction of the possibility to make rapid advance payments and to replace the current criteria for regional disaster with a single, simple and objective condition, i.e. damage in excess of 1.5% of regional GDP.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000589/14
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) e Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(22 de janeiro de 2014)

Assunto: Custos de Manutenção do Equilíbrio Contratual no sistema eletroprodutor português

Pela autorização do «Auxílio estatal N 161/2004 — Portugal / Custos ociosos em Portugal — Bruxelas 22.XI.2004 / C(2004)3468 fin», a Comissão Europeia «decidiu não levantar objeções» à medida de «cessação antecipada de contratos de longo prazo no setor da eletricidade e de atribuição de compensação relativamente a essa cessação» — os Contratos de Aquisição de Eletricidade (CAE) versus Custos de Manutenção do Equilíbrio Contratual (CMEC).

Solicitamos à Comissão que nos informe sobre o seguinte:

1. Nos termos da referida Autorização (ponto 3.2, página 8), «as autoridades portuguesas fornecerão à Comissão um relatório anual sobre a aplicação da medida». Qual o teor dos relatórios reportados pelas autoridades portuguesas desde essa data até ao presente? Que avaliação faz a Comissão da aplicação da medida relativamente à existência de «rendas excessivas» no sistema eletroprodutor português?

2. Que avaliação faz a Comissão da revisão da fórmula de cálculo dos CMEC em 2007, que fez subir a rendibilidade dos ativos sujeitos aos CMEC? Considera a Comissão que houve aumento de riscos para a contrapartida de mais rendibilidade?

3. Considera a Comissão que se justifica a manutenção desses auxílios do Estado? Até quando?

4. Por que razão não deu a Comissão seguimento à queixa apresentada por cidadãos portugueses sobre a ilegitimidade (e mesmo ilegalidade) do regime dos CMEC?

5. Como justifica a Comissão a sua autorização deste auxílio (CMEC), que agrava a fatura elétrica das famílias e as condições de competitividade das empresas portuguesas?

Resposta dada por Joaquín Almunia em nome da Comissão
(24 de março de 2014)

No seguimento da aprovação da medida pela decisão de 22 de setembro de 2004 relativa ao processo N 161(2004), Portugal apresentou relatórios anuais detalhados acerca da sua implementação, incluindo os montantes de auxílio pagos. A Comissão não encontrou qualquer indício de uma utilização abusiva dos auxílios, nem de lucros excessivos resultantes da implementação da medida.

O ajustamento periódico na compensação pedido na decisão tem em conta a diferença entre o preço da eletricidade previsto, utilizado para calcular o montante máximo de compensação, e o preço real da eletricidade.

A Comissão aprovou a medida de auxílio até 2027, data em que termina o Contrato de Aquisição de Eletricidade mais longo. Em particular, a Comissão concluiu, na sua decisão, que as compensações não ultrapassarão o necessário para reembolsar o montante em falta do reembolso dos custos de investimento ao longo da vida do ativo, incluindo, se for caso disso, uma margem de lucro razoável. Além disso, Portugal é obrigado a aplicar a medida em conformidade com a autorização da Comissão, nomeadamente mediante a adaptação do montante da compensação em conformidade com a evolução dos preços da eletricidade a fim de evitar qualquer sobrecompensação. Por conseguinte, a Comissão não vê qualquer motivo para não seguir a sua anterior apreciação.

A denúncia recebida pela Comissão em 2012, registada no processo SA.35429, levou a uma reavaliação do sistema CMEC. A Comissão analisou cuidadosamente a informação fornecida quer pelos denunciantes, quer por Portugal, em particular nos relatórios anuais. De seguida, foi adotada uma decisão, em setembro de 2013, acerca das questões levantadas pelos denunciantes ([1]).

([1]) A Comissão deu início a um inquérito aprofundado para verificar se o preço pago em 2007 pelo operador português encarregado da distribuição de eletricidade, a EDP, pela extensão do seu direito de usar os recursos hídricos públicos para a produção de eletricidade se encontrava em conformidade com as normas em matéria de auxílios estatais da UE. Na mesma decisão, com base nas informações disponíveis nessa fase, a Comissão concluiu que nada prova que os auxílios aprovados para a compensação dos custos ociosos tenham sido mal utilizados ou deixado de ser compatíveis com o mercado interno. A versão não confidencial da decisão no caso SA35429 está disponível em (http://ec.europa.eu/competition/elojade/isef/case_details.cfm?proc_code=3_SA_35429).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000589/14
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) and Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(22 January 2014)

Subject: Costs for the Maintenance of Contractual Equilibrium in the Portuguese electricity industry

In authorising 'State aid N 161/2004 — Portugal / Stranded costs in Portugal — Brussels 22.XI.2004 / C(2004)3468 final', the European Commission 'decided not to raise objections' to the measure of 'early termination of long-term contracts in the electricity industry and the granting of compensation for such termination' — Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) versus Costs for the Maintenance of Contractual Equilibrium (CMECs).

Please could the Commission tell us:

1. Under the terms of the aforementioned Authorisation (point 3.2, page 8), 'the Portuguese authorities shall provide the Commission with an annual report on implementation of the measure'. What has been the content of the reports submitted by the Portuguese authorities from then to now? How does the Commission assess implementation of the measure given the existence of 'excessive profits' in the Portuguese electricity industry?

2. How does the Commission assess the 2007 revision of the formula for calculating CMECs, which boosted the profitability of assets subject to CMECs? Does the Commission consider that greater profitability has led to higher risks?

3. Does the Commission consider it appropriate to maintain this state aid? And if so, for how long?

4. Why did the Commission not pursue the complaint made by Portuguese citizens about the illegitimacy (and even illegality) of the CMEC system?

5. How does the Commission justify authorising this aid (CMEC), which increases families' electricity bills and detrimentally affects the competitiveness of Portuguese companies?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(24 March 2014)

Following approval of the measure by decision of 22 September 2004 in case N 161(2004), Portugal submitted detailed annual reports on its implementation, including the aid amounts paid out. The Commission has not found any indication of misuse of aid, and no indication of excessive profits being generated as a result of implementation of the approved measure.

The periodical adjustment in compensation requested in the decision takes account of the difference between the estimated electricity price used for the purpose of computing the maximum amount of compensation and the actual electricity price.

The Commission approved the aid measure until 2027, when the longest Power Purchase Agreement will end. In particular, the Commission concluded in its decision that the compensation would not exceed what is necessary to repay the shortfall in investment cost repayment over the asset's lifetime, including where necessary a reasonable profit margin. Furthermore, Portugal is obliged to implement the measure in line with the authorisation by the Commission, including by adapting the amount of compensation in line with electricity price evolutions, so as to avoid any overcompensation. Therefore, the Commission does not see any reason to deviate from its previous assessment.

The complaint received by the Commission in 2012, registered under case SA.35429, led to a re-assessment of CMECs system. The Commission has looked carefully at the information provided both by the complainants and by Portugal, in particular in the annual reports. Subsequently, it adopted a decision in September 2013 on the matters brought forward by the complainants ([1]).

([1]) The Commission opened an in-depth investigation to verify whether the price paid by the Portuguese electricity incumbent EDP in 2007 for the extension of its right to use public water resources for electricity generation was in line with EU state aid rules. In the same decision, based on the information available to it at that stage, the Commission concluded that there was no evidence that the aid approved for the compensation of stranded costs has been misused or otherwise ceased to be compatible with the internal market. The non-confidential version of the decision in the case SA.35429 is available on http://ec.europa.eu/competition/elojade/isef/case_details.cfm?proc_code=3_SA_35429

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000590/14
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) e Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(22 de janeiro de 2014)

Assunto: Situação de emigrantes ameaçados de expulsão na Suíça

Tendo tido conhecimento da situação gerada pelas medidas adotadas pelo governo da Suíça, de condicionamento da permanência de estrangeiros, cortando apoios sociais, retirando autorizações de residência aos desempregados há mais de 12 meses e obrigando ao regresso aos países de origem;

Tendo em conta que estas medidas passam ainda pela limitação das autorizações de permanência de longa duração, através da ativação da cláusula de salvaguarda sobre a livre circulação de pessoas, prevista no acordo assinado com a UE, medida que afeta principalmente portugueses, espanhóis e italianos;

Solicitamos à Comissão que nos informe sobre o seguinte:

1. Que conhecimento tem deste problema e das suas consequências?

2. Qual o número e nacionalidade dos trabalhadores oriundos de países da UE afetados?

3. Foi, até à data, efetuada alguma diligência junto do governo suíço? Que medidas tomou ou vai tomar a Comissão?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(18 de março de 2014)

A Comissão está ciente de que o Conselho Federal suíço anunciou, em 15 de janeiro, a sua intenção de dar início a consultas sobre uma série de propostas legislativas que preveem, nomeadamente, restrições aplicáveis às prestações sociais concedidas aos candidatos a emprego e seus familiares, aos pensionistas e aos desempregados. Para mais informações, consultar: http://www.ejpd.admin.ch/content/ejpd/de/home/dokumentation/mi/2014/2014-01-151.html

A situação terá de ser avaliada quando as medidas previstas forem adotadas, tendo em conta as disposições concretas dos atos legislativos.

A Comissão mantém contactos regulares com as autoridades suíças sobre a questão da livre circulação das pessoas e das chamadas medidas de acompanhamento, no âmbito das reuniões do Comité Misto de gestão do Acordo UE-Suíça sobre a livre circulação das pessoas e através da sua delegação em Berna. A Comissão acompanhará de perto a evolução da situação e examinará o projeto legislativo quando este for apresentado.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000590/14
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) and Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(22 January 2014)

Subject: Situation of emigrants threatened with expulsion from Switzerland

Given the situation caused by the measures being taken by the Swiss Government to restrict foreigners' stays by cutting welfare benefits, cancelling the residence permit of anyone unemployed for more than twelve months, and forcing them to return to their country of origin;

Given that these measures also include putting a cap on long-term residence permits, by enacting the 'safeguard clause' on the free movement of people, as set out in the agreement signed with the EU — a measure that will hit Portuguese, Spanish and Italian residents hardest;

Can the Commission state:

1. What it knows about this issue and its impact?

2. The number and nationality of workers from EU countries affected?

3. Have there, to date, been any discussions with the Swiss government? What measures is the Commission taking or intending to take?

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

The Commission is aware that on 15 January the Swiss Federal Council announced its intention to start consultations on a number of planned legislative proposals, which include limits to social allowances for job seekers and their families, pensioners, and unemployed persons. Details can be found at:
http://www.ejpd.admin.ch/content/ejpd/de/home/dokumentation/mi/2014/2014-01-151.html

This will have to be assessed at the time of adoption of the planned mesures and in view of the detailed provisions of the legislative acts.

The Commission is in regular contact on the issue of the free movement of persons and the so-called flanking measures with the Swiss authorities in the context of meetings of the Joint Committee for the management of the EU-Swiss agreement on the free movement of persons and through its Delegation in Bern. It will monitor the developments closely and examine the draft legislation once proposed.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000591/14
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(22 de janeiro de 2014)

Assunto: Produtos importados da zona afetada pela catástrofe de Fukushima

Em resposta à pergunta E-011907/2013, sobre a situação em Fukushima e as notícias de novas contaminações e fugas de radioatividade, a Comissão Europeia afirma considerar «que não deverá haver qualquer impacto para os consumidores europeus, mas que é necessária a monitorização contínua dos produtos importados pela Europa da zona afetada».

Em aditamento à pergunta E-011907/2013, e tendo em conta esta resposta da Comissão, solicito que me informe sobre o seguinte:

1. Que produtos estão a ser importados pela Europa da zona afetada?

2. Que monitorização está a ser efetuada a estes produtos? Quais os procedimentos e metodologias seguidas?

Resposta dada por Tonio Borg em nome da Comissão
(19 de março de 2014)

O Regulamento de Execução (UE) n.° 996/2012, de 26 de outubro de 2012, que impõe condições especiais à importação de géneros alimentícios e alimentos para animais originários ou expedidos do Japão após o acidente na central nuclear de Fukushima e que revoga o Regulamento de Execução (UE) n.° 284/2012 ([1]), prevê as seguintes medidas:

— Todos os géneros alimentícios e alimentos para animais (exceto bebidas alcoólicas) originários da prefeitura de Fukushima têm de ser testados antes da sua exportação para a UE e têm de ser acompanhados por uma declaração e por um relatório analítico.

— No respeitante a 9 outras prefeituras (Gunma, Ibaraki, Tochigi, Miyagi, Saitama, Tóquio, Iwate, Chiba e Kanagawa — prefeituras que rodeiam Fukushima), são necessários testes, antes da exportação para a UE, a cogumelos, chá, produtos da pesca (exceto vieiras), determinadas plantas silvestres comestíveis, determinados produtos hortícolas, determinados frutos, arroz, trigo mourisco, soja, feijão-adjuki e carne de bovino, bem como produtos transformados e derivados dos mesmos.

— Chá proveniente de Shizuoka, chá e cogumelos provenientes de Yamanashi e cogumelos provenientes de Aomori, Niigata e Nagano devem ser testados antes da sua exportação para a UE.

— Na importação para a UE, 5 % das remessas de géneros alimentícios e alimentos para animais provenientes do Japão devem ser submetidas a amostragem e análise pela autoridade competente do Estado-Membro importador.

Estas medidas são aplicáveis até 31 de março de 2014, mas serão atualizadas e alargadas.

([1]) JO L 299 de 27.10.2012, p. 31.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000591/14
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(22 January 2014)

Subject: Products imported from the area affected by the Fukushima disaster

In answer to Question E-011907/2013, on the situation in Fukushima and reports of fresh contamination and radioactive leaks, the European Commission stated that its assessment was 'that there should be no impact on European consumers, but there is a continuing need to monitor products imported to Europe from the affected area'.

In addition to Question E-011907/2013, and taking account of the Commission's answer, please could the Commission tell me:

1. Which products are to be imported to Europe from the affected area?

2. How are these products going to be monitored? What procedures and methods are going to be used?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(19 March 2014)

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 996/2012 of 26 October 2012 imposing special conditions governing the import of feed and food originating in or consigned from Japan following the accident at the Fukushima nuclear power station and repealing Implementing Regulation (EU) No 284/2012 ([1]) provides for the following measures:

— All feed and food (except alcoholic beverages) originating from the prefecture Fukushima have to be tested before export to the EU and have to be accompanied by a declaration and analytical report.

— For 9 other prefectures (Gunma, Ibaraki, Tochigi, Miyagi, Saitama, Tokyo, Iwate, Chiba and Kanagawa — prefectures around Fukushima), testing before export to the EU is required for mushrooms, tea, fishery products (except scallops), listed edible wild plants, a limited number of vegetables, certain fruits, rice, buckwheat, soybeans, Azuki beans, beef and processed and derived products thereof.

— Tea from Shizuoka, tea and mushrooms from Yamanashi and mushrooms from Aomori, Niigata and Nagano have to be tested before export to the EU.

— At import in the EU, 5% of the consignments with feed and food from Japan have to be sampled and analysed by the competent authority of the importing Member State.

These measures apply until 31 March 2014, but will be updated and extended.

([1]) OJ L 299, 27.10.2012, p. 31.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000593/14
a la Comisión
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(22 de enero de 2014)

Asunto: Construcción de una estación depuradora de aguas residuales (EDAR) en la playa de Gandarío (Bergondo, Galicia)

El Gobierno gallego ha aprobado la construcción de una estación depuradora de aguas residuales (EDAR) en la playa de Gandarío en Bergondo, A Coruña, cuya construcción implica la destrucción de una zona húmeda de hábitat de interés comunitario. Varios informes de diferentes consellerías de la Xunta informaron desfavorablemente de la construcción de la EDAR en esa ubicación, así como del impacto en el medio marino dada la proximidad del mar, en una zona extremadamente sensible por existir un banco de arena paralelo a la costa en el que no hay renovación de aguas, con incidencia en la pesca y en el marisqueo. Sin lugar a dudas, la Consellería de Pesca del Gobierno gallego emitió un informe notoriamente desfavorable en el que afirmaba que la ubicación de la depuradora tiene un alto riesgo de empeorar la calidad microbiológica de las aguas con incidencia negativa en las zonas de baño y de producción de moluscos, ya que el vertido de aguas residuales urbanas a la Ría de Betanzos tendrá un impacto negativo permanente, con alteración de la calidad de las aguas por el aumento de la contaminación fecal y el aumento de vertidos directos por el mal funcionamiento de la depuradora.

La ubicación de la depuradora está en el límite del Lugar de Importancia Comunitaria Betanzos-Mandeo, y la distancia estimada a las zonas de los bancos de moluscos es inferior a 1 500 metros, con lo que la afectación por aguas fecales va a ser irreversible.

Considerando que España tiene un procedimiento de infracción abierto por falta de cumplimiento de varias directivas relacionadas con el saneamiento de las aguas y la depuración, y considerando la necesidad de depuración de las aguas, es hora de que la Comisión se replantee que los fondos de cohesión destinados a este fin deben servir para realizar proyectos útiles, con ubicaciones adecuadas y con todas las garantías medioambientales, garantías que no se dan en el caso de la ubicación de la depuradora de Gandarío, que es un capricho gubernamental, en lugar de atender a las demandas ciudadanas que reclaman una o varias EDAR en la ubicación correcta y que no tengan tanto impacto, medioambiental sobre los recursos marinos y sobre el turismo, ya que estas aguas de baño son muy apreciadas.

¿Tiene conocimiento la Comisión de este proyecto? ¿Va a apercibir la Comisión al Gobierno gallego de la alternativa a esta peligrosa ubicación que contradiría las recomendaciones europeas en materia de saneamiento y depuración de aguas?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(13 de marzo de 2014)

La Comisión toma nota de la aprobación por el Gobierno gallego de una estación depuradora de aguas residuales en Gandarío, que estará situada en el límite del Lugar de Importancia Comunitaria ES1110007 Betanzos-Mandeo.

La Comisión pedirá aclaraciones a las autoridades españolas y decidirá en consecuencia los pasos que haya que dar.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000593/14
to the Commission
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(22 January 2014)

Subject: Construction of a waste water treatment plant on Gandarío beach (Bergondo, Galicia)

The Galician Government has given the go-ahead to the construction of a waste water treatment plant on Gandarío beach in Bergondo, A Coruña, but this proposal means that a wetland habitat of Community interest will be destroyed. A number of reports prepared by a variety of departments within the regional government have given an unfavourable opinion on the construction of the waste water treatment plant at this location and on the impact it will have on the marine environment, given the proximity to the sea. This is an extremely sensitive area, as there is a sandbank which runs parallel to the coast, where there is no water renewal, and fishing and shellfish-gathering activities will be considerably affected. In case there was any room for doubt, the Department of Fishing of the Galician Government issued a notoriously unfavourable report in which it stated that the location of the treatment plant poses a high risk of worsening the microbiological quality of the water, which will have a negative impact on bathing areas and mollusc production areas, since the discharging of municipal waste water into the Betanzos river will have a permanent negative effect, altering the water quality by increasing faecal contamination and increasing direct discharges due to malfunctioning of the treatment plant.

The planned location of the treatment plant is within the boundaries of the Betanzos-Mandeo site of community importance, and it is estimated that the areas with shoals of molluscs are less than 1 500 metres away, and therefore the area will be irreversibly affected by water containing faecal matter.

In view of the fact that Spain has an open infringement procedure for failure to comply with a number of directives relating to waste water sanitation and treatment, and in view of the need for water treatment, it is time for the Commission to remember that the cohesion funds intended for this purpose must be used for worthwhile projects, in appropriate locations and with all the proper environmental safeguards. This is not the case for the location of the treatment plant in Gandarío, which is simply a whim of the government, instead of heeding the demands of citizens, who are calling for one or more waste water treatment plants in suitable locations, which will not have such an environmental impact on marine resources and on tourism, given that these bathing areas are very popular.

Is the Commission aware of this project? Will the Commission advise the Galician Government to seek an alternative to this dangerous location, which would be counter to European recommendations with regard to water sanitation and treatment?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(13 March 2014)

The Commission takes note of the approval by the Galician government of a waste water plant on Gandarío, to be located within the boundaries of the site of Community importance ES1110007 Betanzos-Mandeo.

The Commission will seek clarifications from the Spanish authorities and decide accordingly on the appropriate course of action.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000598/14
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(22 de enero de 2014)

Asunto: Informe de Oxfam Intermón sobre la desigualdad en el mundo

El pasado 20 de enero la ONG Oxfam Intermón internacional publicaba su informe titulado «Gobernar para las élites. Secuestro democrático y desigualdad económica». Dicho informe expone numerosos datos e información sobre el incremento de la desigualdad en el mundo.

Oxfam sostiene en el citado documento que el 1 % más rico de la población del planeta ha acaparado el 95 % del crecimiento desde la crisis financiera internacional, en concreto, desde 2009. Dicha información arroja datos espeluznantes sobre cómo la crisis está resultando la excusa para que determinadas élites económicas vean multiplicados sus beneficios. La mayoría de la población en algunos de los países considerados en este informe está sufriendo graves recortes en su sector público, lo que se plasma en un incremento automático de los índices de desigualdad. Dispone de un epígrafe específico que expone el ya de sobra conocido impacto de las políticas de austeridad que se están actualmente implementando en la Unión Europea.

El informe recoge la numerosa información económica disponible sobre el impacto que la crisis está teniendo en la desigualdad, así como entrevistas realizadas en diferentes países, entre ellos España y el Reino Unido, alcanzando un considerable impacto mediático. A modo de conclusión, dicho informe arroja esperanza sobre la realidad de la desigualdad en América Latina, donde se invierte la tendencia general mundial y se está avanzando hacia sociedades más equitativas.

¿Conoce la Comisión el citado informe de Oxfam Intermón?

¿Cómo valora la información expuesta sobre Estados miembros de la Unión Europea?

¿Comparte la visión de que las élites económicas están acaparando el crecimiento de la renta desde el inicio de la crisis económica?

¿Qué acciones está desarrollando la Comisión para que el crecimiento de los países europeos se reparta de una forma más equitativa para evitar la exclusión social?

¿Piensa buscar inspiración en las políticas desarrolladas en América Latina, en países como Venezuela o Bolivia, para aplicar políticas que contengan el dramático incremento de la desigualdad en Europa?

Respuesta del Sr. Andor en nombre de la Comisión
(18 de marzo de 2014)

La Comisión ha leído con atención el informe de Oxfam. El riesgo de divergencias de crecimiento entre los distintos países de la UE también lo aborda un reciente informe de la Comisión ([1]). Aunque las políticas que luchan contra la desigualdad son competencia en su mayor parte de los Estados miembros, la UE se ha comprometido a favor del crecimiento integrador en el marco de Europa 2020 y ha fijado objetivos para reducir la pobreza. Diversas investigaciones, como el proyecto Impact sobre las crecientes desigualdades, muestran una tendencia al alza general a largo plazo en las desigualdades de renta, aunque también se observan variaciones e inversiones ocasionales de tendencia según los países ([2]).

Por tercer año consecutivo, la Comisión ha emitido recomendaciones específicas por país relativas a la adecuación y sostenibilidad de los sistemas de protección social y la necesidad de luchar contra la pobreza y la exclusión social en consonancia con el enfoque de inversión social. La aplicación de esas recomendaciones puede apoyarse a través de la financiación específica de la UE ([3]), en particular mediante la asignación de un 20 % del total de los recursos del FSE destinados a cada Estado miembro, para apoyar la lucha contra la exclusión social y la pobreza. La Comisión ha adoptado asimismo medidas destinadas a reducir la desigualdad en la parte superior, proponiendo, entre otras cosas, que se limiten las primas en el sector financiero.

La Comisión tiene en cuenta las iniciativas pertinentes procedentes de todos los países a la hora de desarrollar orientaciones políticas. No obstante, parece que la situación en los dos países mencionados por Su Señoría no es directamente comparable con la de los Estados miembros de la UE que, en su conjunto, lo están haciendo mejor en lo que toca a la desigualdad ([4]) según los datos del Banco Mundial.

([1]) Véase la publicación «Evolución Social y del Empleo en Europa» de 2013 y 2011 para análisis específicos.
([2]) El análisis de la Comisión en la revista 2013 Economic and Social Developments in Europe Review afirma que la distribución de la renta solo proporciona una instantánea limitada de la situación real de la desigualdad. Sin embargo, la relación entre la renta y la riqueza no es tan automática, lo cual significa que un hogar pobre en términos de renta no es necesariamente un hogar pobre en términos de riqueza. Ya se ha comenzado a estudiar la distribución de la riqueza (Encuesta de financiación y consumo de los hogares del Banco Central Europeo), pero debería analizarse más en profundidad.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/information/legislation/index_es.cfm
([4]) http://wdi.worldbank.org/table/2.9

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000598/14
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(22 January 2014)

Subject: Oxfam Intermón report on world inequality

On 20 January this year the NGO Oxfam Intermón Internacional published a report entitled 'Governing for the few. Democratic capture and economic inequality', which sets out a great deal of information and data on the increase of inequality in the world.

In this paper Oxfam states that the richest 1% of the world's population has captured 95% of the growth since the onset of the international financial crisis, specifically since 2009. The report contains shocking data showing how the crisis is being used as an excuse by certain economic elites to multiply their wealth. In some of the countries covered by the report the majority of the population is suffering serious cuts in their public sectors, leading automatically to a rise in inequality. The paper also contains a specific section dealing with the notorious effects of the austerity policies currently being implemented in the European Union.

The report sets out the considerable amount of economic data now available in relation to the impact of the crisis on inequality levels, as well as interviews carried out in various countries, including Spain and the United Kingdom, resulting in significant coverage in the media. It ends by offering some hope on the situation of inequality in Latin America, where the general worldwide trend is being reversed and progress is being made towards more equitable societies.

Is the Commission aware of the Oxfam Intermón report referred to above?

What is its opinion on the information contained in the report concerning Member States of the European Union?

Does it share the view that the economic elites have been accumulating the world's economic growth since the financial crisis began?

What measures is the Commission preparing to adopt to ensure that economic growth in European countries is distributed more fairly, so as to prevent social exclusion?

Is the Commission considering seeking inspiration from the initiatives developed in Latin America, in countries such as Venezuela or Bolivia, with a view to applying policies here to stop the dramatic rise of inequality in Europe?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(18 March 2014)

The Commission has carefully looked at the Oxfam report The risk of growing divergences between EU countries also has been addressed in a recent Commission report ([1]). Although policies to affect inequality are mostly a competence of Member States, the EU has taken commitments to favour inclusive growth within the Europe 2020 framework and has set targets for reducing poverty. Researches, such as Growing Inequalities' Impact project, show a general long-term rising trend in income inequalities, whilst country variations and occasional trend reversals are also seen ([2]).

For the third year running, the Commission has issued country specific recommendations related to the adequacy and sustainability of social protection systems and the need to combat poverty and social exclusion in line with the social investment approach. The implementation of these recommendations can be supported through dedicated EU funding ([3]) in particular using the allocation of 20% of the total ESF resources of each Member State, earmarked to support the fight against social exclusion and poverty. The Commission has also taken steps aiming to reduce inequality from the top, such as by proposing to limit bonuses in the financial sector.

The Commission takes into account relevant initiatives from all countries when developing policy orientations. However, it seems that the situation in the two countries referred to by the Honourable Member is not directly comparable to that of EU Member States which are all doing better in terms of inequality ([4]) according to World Bank data.

([1]) See 'Employment and Social Developments in Europe' 2013 and 2011 for specific analysis.
([2]) Analysis in the Commission's 2013 Economic and Social Developments in Europe Review states that distribution of income only provides a limited snapshot of the real inequality situation. However, the relationship between income and wealth is not straightforward, meaning income-poor households are not necessarily wealth-poor. Examination of the distribution of wealth has been already started (European Central Bank's Household Finance and Consumption Survey), but it should be further explored.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/information/legislation/index_en.cfm
([4]) http://wdi.worldbank.org/table/2.9

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000600/14
an die Kommission
Franz Obermayr (NI)
(22. Januar 2014)

Betrifft: Unfaire Wettbewerbsvorteile der Fluglinien aus den Vereinigten Arabischen Emiraten gegenüber europäischen Fluglinien

Obwohl die Vereinigten Arabischen Emirate weniger Einwohner als ganz Österreich haben, sind deren Fluggesellschaften mit einer für ihre Bevölkerungszahl überproportional großen Flugzeugflotte ausgestattet. Aufgrund von speziellen Standortfaktoren ist es diesen Fluglinien außerdem möglich, ihre Flüge weitaus günstiger anzubieten als die europäischen Konkurrenten. Dabei spielt aber nicht nur das reichhaltige Erdölvorkommen eine tragende Rolle, sondern auch zahlreiche andere, soziale und umweltpolitische Faktoren: Unterschiede bei den Luftverkehrssteuern, Ertragssteuern, Einkommenssteuern und Luftsicherheitsgebühren sowie bei Gesetzen wie Lärmschutz und Nachtflugverbot und obendrein Abkommen wie der gemeinsame EU-Emissionshandel — Kriterien, die von den europäischen Fluggesellschaften nicht beeinflusst werden können und den Emiraten zum Teil unfaire Wettbewerbsvorteile verschaffen.

1. Sieht die Kommission Handlungsbedarf, um diese unfairen Wettbewerbsbedingungen für die europäischen Fluggesellschaften wieder fairer zu gestalten? Wenn ja, wie gedenkt die Kommission vorzugehen? Wenn nein, warum nicht?

2. Wie bewertet die Kommission die sozial- und umweltpolitischen Rahmenbedingungen in den Emiraten? Gedenkt die Kommission, Druck auf die Emirate auszuüben, damit diese ihre Standards den europäischen annähern? Wenn ja, wie? Würde die Kommission es etwa in Betracht ziehen, Zölle oder ähnliche Auflagen für Fluggesellschaften aus den Emiraten bei der Einreise in das Unionsgebiet zu erheben?

Antwort von Herrn Kallas im Namen der Kommission
(11. März 2014)

1. Eines der Hauptziele der EU-Luftfahrtaußenpolitik besteht darin, einen fairen Wettbewerb im internationalen Luftverkehr sicherzustellen. Die Kommission hat bereits angekündigt, den Rechtsrahmen zum Schutz der Luftfahrtunternehmen in der EU vor Subventionierung und unfairer Preisbildung bei Flugverkehrsdiensten aus Drittstaaten ([1]) zu überprüfen [KOM(2012)556]. Derzeit wird dazu eine Folgenabschätzung erstellt. Die Kommission und die Mitgliedstaaten haben gemeinsam ein Muster für eine Klausel über einen fairen Wettbewerb entwickelt, die in künftige Luftverkehrsabkommen der EU oder einzelner Mitgliedstaaten mit Drittstaaten aufgenommen werden soll. Gemeinsam mit den Mitgliedstaaten wird die Kommission zudem Möglichkeiten nutzen, die Frage im Rahmen der Internationalen Zivilluftfahrt-Organisation (ICAO) anzusprechen, wenn ICAO-Maßnahmen im Zusammenhang mit der wirtschaftlichen Regulierung des internationalen Luftverkehrs, einschließlich eines fairen Wettbewerbs, erörtert werden.

2. Im Einklang mit den Schlussfolgerungen des Rates ([2]) hat die Kommission einen Luftfahrtdialog mit den Golfstaaten einschließlich der Vereinigten Arabischen Emirate eingeleitet, um die Transparenz zu erhöhen und für einen fairen Wettbewerb zu sorgen. Die erste Sitzung fand vom 11. bis zum 13. November 2013 statt, und für 2014 sind weitere Gespräche geplant. Nach Ansicht der Kommission bietet dieser Dialog einen umfassenden Rahmen für Gespräche über alle Fragen und Anliegen im Zusammenhang mit einem fairen Wettbewerb, und sie ist zuversichtlich, dass er zu konkreten Ergebnissen führen wird.

([1]) Verordnung (EG) Nr. 868/2004 über den Schutz vor Schädigung der Luftfahrtunternehmen der Gemeinschaft durch Subventionierung und unlautere Preisbildungspraktiken bei der Erbringung von Flugverkehrsdiensten von Ländern, die nicht Mitglied der Europäischen Gemeinschaft sind.

([2]) Schlussfolgerungen des Rates vom 20. Dezember 2012 zur Luftfahrtaußenpolitik der EU — Bewältigung der künftigen Herausforderungen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000600/14
to the Commission
Franz Obermayr (NI)
(22 January 2014)

Subject: Unfair competitive advantages for airlines from the United Arab Emirates compared to European airlines

Although the United Arab Emirates has fewer citizens than all of Austria, its airlines have an aircraft fleet that is disproportionately large for the country's population. Due to specific location factors these airlines are also able to offer their flights far cheaper than their European competitors. Not only do abundant petroleum resources play a major role, but also numerous other social and environmental factors: Differences in aviation taxes, taxes on earnings, income taxes and aviation security fees as well as in laws such as noise protection and banning night flights, and moreover agreements such as the common EU Emissions Trading System — criteria that cannot be influenced by the European airlines and in part create unfair competitive advantages for the Emirates.

1. Does the Commission see a need for action to make these unfair conditions of competition fairer again for the European airlines? If so, how does the Commission intend to proceed? If not, why not?

2. How does the Commission view the social and environmental framework conditions in the Emirates? Does the Commission intend to exert pressure on the Emirates so that their standards move closer to the European ones? If so, how? Would the Commission consider, for example, tariffs or similar conditions for airlines from the Emirates when entering the territory of the Union?

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

1. A key objective of EU external aviation policy is to ensure fair competition in international air transport. The Commission had already announced it intends to review the framework ([1]) protecting EU airlines from subsidisation and unfair pricing practices in the supply of air services from non-EU countries [COM(2012)556]. Work on an impact assessment is currently ongoing. The Commission and Member States have jointly developed a template fair competition clause to be included in air transport agreements with third countries that will be negotiated by the EU or individual Member States. Together with Member States, the Commission also will take the opportunity to raise the issue at the level of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) when it will discuss ICAO actions in the area of economic regulation of international air transport, including fair competition.

2. In line with the Council conclusions ([2]), the Commission launched an Aviation Dialogue with the Gulf States, including the United Arab Emirates, with a view to enhancing transparency and safeguarding fair competition. The first meeting took place on 11-13 November 2013 and discussions are schduled to continue in 2014. The Commisison considers this Dialogue as a comprehensive framework for discussing all issues and concerns in relation to fair competition and is hopeful that it will bring tangible results.

([1]) Regulation 868/2004 concerning protection against subsidisation and unfair pricing practices causing injury to EU air carriers in the supply of air services from third countries.

([2]) Council conclusions of 20 December 2012 on The EU's External Aviation Policy — Addressing Future Challanges.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000601/14
an die Kommission
Franz Obermayr (NI)
(22. Januar 2014)

Betrifft: EU-Förderung von Agrarexporten nach Afrika

Angesichts des Vorschlags von EU-Landwirtschaftskommissar Dacian Cioloş, die EU-Subventionen für Agrarexporte nach Afrika einzustellen, um somit dessen dadurch gefährdete Eigenproduktion wieder anzukurbeln, ergeben sich folgende Fragen an die Kommission:

1. Wie werden diese geplanten Maßnahmen mit der gemeinsamen Agrarpolitik der EU abgestimmt?

2. Inwieweit und für welche Bereiche sieht die Kommission vor, die Subventionen für Agrarexporte zu reduzieren oder ganz zu streichen?

3. Im Speziellen zur afrikanischen Geflügelindustrie: Inwiefern denkt die Kommission darüber nach, auch die Subventionen für Exporte der Geflügelindustrie einzuschränken beziehungsweise ganz zu beenden, um dadurch dieser schwachen Industrie Afrikas die Chance auf Regenerierung und Wachstum zu geben?

4. Stimmt die Kommission der Idee zu, die eingesparten Exporthilfen für nachhaltige Landwirtschaftsreformen innerhalb der EU zu nutzen?

Antwort von Herrn Cioloş im Namen der Kommission
(11. März 2014)

Zu den Fragen 1., 2. und 3.: Die Ausfuhrerstattungen für Agrarerzeugnisse wurden alle auf Null festgesetzt; die letzte diesbezügliche Senkung, die Geflügel betraf, wurde am 18. Juli 2013 beschlossen. Die Ausfuhrerstattungsmaßnahme wurde in der reformierten gemeinsamen Agrarpolitik beibehalten, deren Anwendung aber auf Krisenzeiten und auf die Obergrenzen beschränkt, die sich aus den internationalen Abkommen der EU ergeben. Die Kommission ist bereit, Bestimmungsorte in der Subsahara-Region im Rahmen der Vertiefung der agrarpolitischen Zusammenarbeit nach den derzeit in Verhandlung befindlichen Europäischen Partnerschaftsabkommen (EPA) von Ausfuhrerstattungen auszunehmen, und hat in den kürzlich abgeschlossenen Verhandlungen mit Westafrika für eine entsprechende Bestimmung gesorgt.

4. Angesichts des geringfügigen Anteils, den die Ausfuhrerstattungen in den vergangenen Jahren am Gesamthaushalt der GAP einnahmen, können die Einsparungen, die durch die Festsetzung der Ausfuhrerstattungen auf Null erzielt werden, keinen nennenswerten Beitrag zu alternativen Stützungsmaßnahmen im Rahmen der GAP leisten. Es sei aber darauf hingewiesen, dass der historische Rückgang der Ausfuhrerstattungen mit einer zunehmenden Berücksichtigung von Entwicklungsmaßnahmen für den ländlichen Raum, einschließlich Maßnahmen zur Verbesserung der Nachhaltigkeit der Landwirtschaft in der EU, einherging. Außerdem müssen die Mitgliedstaaten seit der letzten GAP-Reform 30 % der Zahlungen im Rahmen der Säule II für Agrarumweltmaßnahmen vorsehen und 30 % der Direktzahlungen im Rahmen der Säule I von der Einhaltung bestimmter Umweltkriterien abhängig machen. Diese Maßnahmen gehen weit über die geschätzten Haushaltseinsparungen von 0,5 % hinaus, die sich durch das Einstellen von Ausfuhrerstattungen für alle Bestimmungsorte erreichen lassen, ganz zu schweigen von den geringfügigen Einsparungen, die durch den Ausschluss der afrikanischen EPA-Partnerstaaten erzielt werden.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000601/14
to the Commission
Franz Obermayr (NI)
(22 January 2014)

Subject: EU support of agricultural exports to Africa

In view of the suggestion by EU Commissioner of Agriculture Dacian Cioloş to stop EU subsidies for agricultural exports to Africa, in order to stimulate Africa's own production, which is endangered by these subsidies, the following questions arise for the Commission:

1. How will these planned measures be harmonised with the common agricultural policy of the EU?

2. To what extent and for which areas does the Commission envisage reducing subsidies for agricultural exports or even eliminating them?

3. Specifically with regard to the African poultry industry: To what extent is the Commission also considering limiting or completely ending subsidies for exports by the poultry industry in order to give this weak African industry the chance to regenerate and grow?

4. Does the Commission agree with the idea of using the saved export aid for sustainable agricultural reform within the EU?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(11 March 2014)

1-3. Export refunds for agricultural products have all been set at zero; the last such reduction being for poultry, adopted on 18 July 2013. The export refund measure is retained under the reformed common agriculture policy, but restricted to use in times of crisis and within limits resulting from the Union's international agreements. The Commission is prepared to exclude sub-Saharan African destinations for export refunds in the framework of deepening agricultural policy cooperation under the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) currently under negotiation, and has secured such a provision in the negotiations recently concluded with West Africa.

4. Given the marginal share of export refunds within the overall CAP budget over the recent years, the savings made from setting refunds to zero cannot make any significant contribution to alternative support measures under the CAP. However, it may be noted that the historical decline of export refunds has coincided with an increasing emphasis on rural development measures, including those linked to improving the sustainability of EU agriculture. Furthermore, the latest reform of the CAP requires that Member States allocate 30% of pillar 2 payments to agri-environmental measures and 30% of pillar 1 direct payments are distributed subject to fulfilling certain environmental criteria. These measures go far beyond the estimated 0.5% budget savings of putting on hold export refunds for all destinations, let alone the fractional saving incurred by excluding the African EPA partner states.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000602/14
an die Kommission
Jörg Leichtfried (S&D) und Evelyn Regner (S&D)
(22. Januar 2014)

Betrifft: Einheitliche Tages- und Nächtigungsgelder (Diäten) für EU-weit tätige Arbeitnehmerinnen und Arbeitnehmer im internationalen Güterverkehr

Der Druck auf LKW-FahrerInnen und FrächterInnen, insbesondere in den EU-Staaten mit höherem Lohnniveau, steigt zunehmend. FrächterInnen aus den jüngeren EU-Staaten können ihre Transportleistungen aufgrund des immer noch deutlich geringeren Lohnniveaus wesentlich günstiger anbieten, was sich zu Lasten der Löhne der ArbeitnehmerInnen auswirkt.

Die von den FrächterInnen zu zahlenden Mindestlöhne sind aber nur national geregelt und auf die Lebenshaltungskosten des jeweiligen Heimatlandes abgestimmt. Da die FahrerInnen im internationalen Güterverkehr ihren tatsächlichen Aufenthalt den Großteil ihrer Zeit in anderen EU-Staaten mit höherem Preisniveau verbringen, entstehen den FahrerInnen aus Niedriglohnländern unzumutbare Mehrkosten, die sie oft mit überlangen Arbeitszeiten/Überstunden auszugleichen versuchen, was wiederum zu Lasten der Straßenverkehrssicherheit geht. Zur Abgeltung dieser Mehrkosten aufgrund des Aufenthaltes in einem anderen Staat sind in den meisten Rechtsordnungen Taggelder als pauschalierter Aufwandersatz vorgesehen. Hier existieren große Unterschiede zwischen den Mitgliedstaaten.

Um die unterschiedlichen Lebenshaltungskosten innerhalb der EU-Mitgliedstaaten für FahrerInnen im internationalen Güterverkehr auszugleichen und den Druck auf die Löhne im Transportsektor zu vermindern, bietet sich an, Diäten EU-weit zu vereinheitlichen.

1. Welche Schritte wird die Kommission unternehmen, um das vorherrschende Problem des Lohn- und Sozialdumpings auf den Straßen Europas in den Griff zu bekommen?

2. Inwieweit erwägt die Kommission eine EU-weite Vereinheitlichung von Tages- und Nächtigungsgeldern (Diäten)?

Antwort von Herrn Andor im Namen der Kommission
(13. März 2014)

1. Der Rat und das Europäische Parlament haben auf Vorschlag der Kommission EU-Sozialvorschriften für den Straßenverkehrssektor angenommen, um Sicherheit und Gesundheit der Arbeitnehmer zu gewährleisten und gleichzeitig einen unverzerrten Wettbewerb unter den Unternehmen und eine höhere Straßenverkehrssicherheit sicherzustellen. Zusätzlich gelten sektorübergreifende EU-Rechtsvorschriften zum Schutz von Arbeitnehmern, die außerhalb des Beschäftigungsmitgliedstaats tätig sind.

Die Kommission weist darauf hin, dass die Überwachung und die Durchsetzung der Arbeits- und Beschäftigungsbedingungen sowie die Regelung des tatsächlichen Arbeitsentgelts in die Zuständigkeit der Mitgliedstaaten fallen. Im Hinblick auf eine bessere Durchsetzung und Einhaltung der Rechtsvorschriften für den Straßenverkehr arbeitet die Kommission einen Entwurf einer Initiative im Rahmen der REFIT-Agenda aus, um die Durchsetzung der Bestimmungen für die Zulassung zum Beruf des Kraftverkehrsunternehmers und für den Zugang zum Markt des grenzüberschreitenden Güterkraftverkehrs, einschließlich der Kabotage, zu vereinfachen und zu verbessern.

2. Nach Artikel 153 Absatz 5 AEUV ist es Aufgabe der Mitgliedstaaten, den Begriff des Arbeitsentgelts, dessen Höhe sowie dessen verschiedene Komponenten, einschließlich Tagegeldern, festzulegen. Es ist der Kommission daher nicht möglich, einen Vorschlag zur Harmonisierung von Tage- und Übernachtungsgeldern vorzulegen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000602/14
to the Commission
Jörg Leichtfried (S&D) and Evelyn Regner (S&D)
(22 January 2014)

Subject: Uniform per diem and overnight allowances for male and female employees who are active throughout the European Union in international freight transport

The pressure on lorry drivers and hauliers, particularly in EU countries with high wage levels, is increasing all the time. Hauliers from the more recent EU countries can offer their transport services significantly cheaper owing to the considerable lower wage level, which negatively affects the wages of their employees.

However, the minimum wages to be paid by the hauliers are only regulated nationally and are attuned to the cost of living in the respective home country. Because drivers in international freight transport actually spend the majority of their time staying in other EU countries with higher price levels, drivers from low-wage countries are subject to unacceptable additional costs, which they often try to compensate for with overlong working hours/overtime, which in turn adversely affects road safety. To pay for these additional costs arising from staying in another country, in most legal systems per diem allowances are designated as consolidated reimbursement of expenses. Here there are great differences between the Member States.

To compensate for the different costs of living within the EU Member States for drivers in international freight transport and to reduce the pressure on wages in the transport sector, the possibility exists of unifying allowances throughout the European Union.

1. What steps will the Commission undertake to get a grip on the predominant problem of wage and social dumping on the streets of Europe?

2. To what extent is the Commission considering a unification of per diem and overnight allowances throughout the European Union?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(13 March 2014)

1. On the proposal of the Commission, the Council and European Parliament adopted EU social legislation for the road transport sector in order to protect the health and safety of workers, while guaranteeing undistorted competition between companies and improving road safety. In addition, EU cross-sector legislation exists to protect workers operating outside the Member State of employment.

The Commission would point out that the monitoring and enforcement of working and employment conditions and the actual remuneration of workers are the competence of the Member States. To improve enforcement and compliance in the road transport sector, the Commission is drafting an initiative under the REFIT agenda to simplify and improve the enforcement of the provisions on access to the occupation of road transport operator and international road haulage market, including cabotage.

2. In accordance with Article 153(5) TFEU, it is for the Member States to determine the amount, the definition and the various components of pay, including daily allowances. The Commission therefore cannot put forward a proposal to harmonise per diem or overnight allowances.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-000603/14
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(22 Ιανουαρίου 2014)

Θέμα: Παραλία Πέντε Μίλι

Σύμφωνα με δημοσίευμα της τουρκικής εφημερίδας «Χουριέτ», η παραλία Πέντε Μίλι στα κατεχόμενα, όπου το 1974 έγινε η απόβαση των τουρκικών στρατευμάτων και ξεκίνησε η τουρκική εισβολή στην Κύπρο, ενοικιάστηκε για 49 χρόνια στον τουρκικό όμιλο εταιρειών Αλτίνμπας (Altınbaş). Η πράξη αυτή έγινε πριν δύο εβδομάδες και, όπως μεταδίδεται από τα κατεχόμενα, η εταιρεία, κατά πάσα πιθανότητα, θα κτίσει εκεί ξενοδοχείο.

Η εξέλιξη αυτή καταδεικνύει τις αμετάβλητες επιδρομικές-επεκτατικές επιδιώξεις της Τουρκίας, τη στιγμή μάλιστα που η Τουρκία και η τουρκοκυπριακή ηγεσία παρουσιάζονται υποκριτικά να επείγονται για έναρξη διαπραγματεύσεων.

Ερωτάται λοιπόν η Επιτροπή:

1. Είναι ενήμερη γι' αυτήν την αρνητική εξέλιξη, ανάμεσα σε τόσες άλλες, στην κατεχόμενη Κύπρο;

2. Πώς αντιμετωπίζει αυτές τις νέες προκλητικές ενέργειες του κατοχικού καθεστώτος;

3. Με ποια συγκεκριμένα μέτρα προτίθεται να τις αποτρέψει;

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

Η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή είναι ενήμερη για τις εξελίξεις στις οποίες αναφέρεται το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου, από δημοσιεύματα των μέσων μαζικής ενημέρωσης.

Η Επιτροπή υπενθυμίζει ότι το κεκτημένο παραμένει υπό αναστολή στις περιοχές του νησιού που δεν τελούν υπό τον αποτελεσματικό έλεγχο της Κυβέρνησης της Κυπριακής Δημοκρατίας, σύμφωνα με το πρωτόκολλο αριθ. 10 της Συνθήκης προσχώρησης του 2003.

Εναπόκειται στους αρχηγούς των δύο κοινοτήτων να καταλήξουν σε συμφωνία για μία δίκαιη, συνολική και βιώσιμη διευθέτηση του κυπριακού ζητήματος, υπό την αιγίδα των Ηνωμένων Εθνών.

Προσδοκάται από την Τουρκία να συνεχίσει να στηρίζει ενεργά τις εν λόγω διαπραγματεύσεις, σύμφωνα με τις σχετικές αποφάσεις του Συμβουλίου Ασφαλείας των Ηνωμένων Εθνών και τις αρχές στις οποίες θεμελιώνεται η ΕΕ. Η συγκεκριμένη δέσμευση που ανέλαβε η Τουρκία για συνολική διευθέτηση είναι καθοριστικής σημασίας.

Το ζήτημα που θέτει το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου καταδεικνύει για μία ακόμη φορά την ανάγκη ταχείας και συνολικής διευθέτησης του κυπριακού προβλήματος.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000603/14
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(22 January 2014)

Subject: Five Mile Beach

According to an article in the Turkish newspaper *Hurriyet*, the Five Mile Beach in occupied Cyprus, where Turkish troops landed and started the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974, has been leased for 49 years to a Turkish group of companies (Altinbaş). The deed was signed two weeks ago and, according to reports from the occupied area, the company will most likely build a hotel.

This development illustrates that Turkey's aggressive/expansionist aims remain unchanged, even though Turkey and the Turkish leadership hypocritically profess to be keen to start negotiations.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Is it aware of this, among many other, negative developments in occupied Cyprus?

2. How does it respond to this new provocative action by the occupying regime?

3. What specific measures does it intend to take to avert it?

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

The European Commission is aware of the developments raised by the Honourable Member from media reports.

The Commission recalls that the *acquis* remains suspended in those areas of the island which are not under the effective control of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus in line with Protocol 10 of the 2003 accession treaty.

It is for the leaders of the two communities to find an agreement on a fair, comprehensive and viable settlement of the Cyprus issue under the auspices of the United Nations.

Turkey is expected to continue to actively support these negotiations, in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and in line with the principles on which the EU is founded. Turkey's commitment in concrete terms to such a comprehensive settlement is crucial.

The issue raised by the Honourable Member emphasises once again the urgency of reaching a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000609/14
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(22 gennaio 2014)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Repressioni contro i fedeli cristiani in Corea del Nord

Secondo quanto riportato recentemente da diverse fonti giornalistiche, in Corea del Nord continuerebbero le repressioni a danno dei cristiani. Le ultime indiscrezioni proverrebbero dalla testimonianza di un esule che sarebbe riuscito a fuggire dal paese, il quale avrebbe confermato le persecuzioni a danno dei cristiani.

Sarebbero almeno 200.000 i cristiani rinchiusi nei campi di concentramento e molti di loro sarebbero sottoposti alla pena capitale. Inoltre, ci sarebbero 400.000 cristiani costretti a riunirsi nelle chiese sotterranee per poter professare il loro culto.

Secondo quanto riportato dal rapporto annuale sulla persecuzione dei cristiani stilato dall'organizzazione internazionale Open Doors, la Corea del Nord sarebbe il paese più repressivo del mondo a tale riguardo. Inoltre, il paese negherebbe la libertà religiosa a tutti i culti diversi da quello della persona di Kim Il-sung.

Ciò premesso, può la Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante far sapere se è al corrente della situazione del paese?

Quali azioni intende intraprendere nei confronti delle autorità locali al fine di giungere a un miglioramento delle condizioni della minoranza cristiana?

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

L'UE è seriamente preoccupata per le violazioni persistenti e sistematiche dei diritti umani nella Repubblica popolare democratica di Corea (RPDC). L'Unione ha condannato esplicitamente questa drammatica situazione ed esprime la sua profonda preoccupazione in modo costante e coerente sia ai rappresentanti della RPDC che ai suoi partner all'interno e all'esterno della regione.

L'UE attira regolarmente l'attenzione del Consiglio per i diritti umani e dell'Assemblea generale delle Nazioni Unite su questo tema. Per contribuire ad affrontare questa grave situazione, nel marzo 2013 l'UE ha promosso, insieme al Giappone, presso il Consiglio per i diritti umani dell'ONU una risoluzione che istituiva una commissione incaricata di indagare sulle violazioni dei diritti umani nella RPDC. La relazione definitiva della commissione, contenente le sue conclusioni e raccomandazioni, è stata pubblicata il 17 febbraio 2014 e sarà discussa a marzo in sede di Consiglio dei diritti umani. L'UE collaborerà con l'ONU per garantirle un seguito adeguato.

In linea con la sua politica di impegno cruciale nei confronti della RPDC, l'UE fornisce inoltre un'assistenza umanitaria limitata ai gruppi vulnerabili della società di questo paese. L'UE segue un approccio globale nel tentativo di agevolare le riforme e i cambiamenti nella RPDC in termini di diritti umani, denuclearizzazione, allentamento delle tensioni nella penisola e sviluppo economico. L'Unione continuerà a monitorare la situazione e a riflettere sui possibili modi di contribuire in modo efficace a migliorare la situazione dei diritti umani nella RPDC.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000609/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(22 January 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Repression of Christians in North Korea

According to recent reports from a variety of news sources, Christians are still being repressed in North Korea, with the latest revelations made by a refugee who was able to flee the country appearing to confirm the levels of persecution faced by those Christians who remain.

The number of Christians reportedly imprisoned in labour camps, with rumours abound that many are being executed, is upwards of 200 000, while a further 400 000 believers are reportedly unable to worship openly and must instead turn to underground church movements.

North Korea is the most oppressive country in the world if you are a Christian, according to the annual report on the persecution of Christians worldwide that has been published by the international organisation Open Doors. The report also claims that faiths other than the cult of personality of Kim Il-sung are denied any religious freedom in the country.

Taking the above into consideration, can the Vice-President/High Representative state whether she is aware of the current situation in North Korea?

What actions does she intend to take against the North Korean authorities in order to improve living conditions for the Christian minority?

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

The EU is deeply worried about the continuing and systematic violations of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). The EU has been clear in its condemnation of this appalling situation and expresses its deep concerns constantly and consistently with DPRK representatives as well as its partners in the region and beyond.

The EU regularly draws the attention of the United Nations Human Rights Council and the United Nations General Assembly to this state of affairs. To help address this grave situation, the EU, together with Japan, initiated in March 2013 a resolution in the United Nations Human Rights Council that established a Commission of Inquiry with the mandate to investigate violations of human rights in the DPRK. Its final report, with findings and recommendations, was published on 17 February 2014 and will be discussed in the Human Rights Council in March 2014. The EU will work with the UN to ensure the appropriate follow-up to this report.

As part of its policy of critical engagement with the DPRK, the EU also provides limited humanitarian assistance to vulnerable groups in DPRK's society. The EU takes a comprehensive approach to its efforts to facilitate reform and change in the DPRK in terms of human rights as well as denuclearisation, reduction of tensions in the peninsula and economic development. It will keep monitoring the situation and exploring ways to make an effective contribution to the improvement of human rights in the DPRK.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000611/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(22 gennaio 2014)

Oggetto: Effetti del Wi-Fi sulla salute umana

Uno studio della Commissione europea ha evidenziato la vasta diffusione di dispositivi e reti Wi-Fi. Secondo lo studio, il 71 % del traffico dati senza fili nel 2012 è avvenuto utilizzando reti Wi-Fi e il trend pare in crescita.

Esponenti della Commissione sostengono che questa sosterrà la diffusione del Wi-Fi tramite una regolamentazione più snella e uno spettro più ampio.

Tuttavia, già nel 2002, con l'Appello di Friburgo, diversi medici di varia specializzazione hanno denunciato gli effetti negativi delle fonti elettromagnetiche, dei dispositivi portatili e delle reti Wi-Fi sulla salute umana, elencando, tra gli altri, tumori al cervello, leucemia, difficoltà di concentrazione, alterazioni della pressione arteriosa. Altri studi dimostrano come tali radiazioni possano provocare aborti spontanei o deformazioni fetali, ma il dibattito è ancora molto incerto.

Alla luce di questi dati, può la Commissione chiarire se:

1. ha effettuato studi o indagini sui potenziali effetti negativi dell'eccessiva esposizione a reti Wi-Fi sulla salute umana;

2. ha tenuto conto di tali effetti nel valutare e promuovere la diffusione di questo strumento;

3. intende effettuare ulteriori studi e/o interagire con altri enti, come l'OMS, per raggiungere dati certi riguardo gli effetti legati all'eccessiva e prolungata esposizione alle reti Wi-Fi.

Risposta di Máire Geoghegan-Quinn a nome della Commissione
(14 marzo 2014)

1.-2. Nell'ambito del Settimo programma quadro di ricerca, sviluppo tecnologico e dimostrazione (PQ7, 2007-2103), la Commissione ha finanziato cinque progetti che studiano l'esposizione ai campi elettromagnetici e le possibili conseguenze sulla salute ([1]). Le relative conclusioni sono consultabili su CORDIS ([2]) e sono a disposizione del comitato scientifico dei rischi sanitari emergenti e recentemente identificati (*Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks*, SCENIHR), un comitato indipendente della Commissione ([3]). È in corso una consultazione pubblica sull'ultimo parere preliminare espresso dal suddetto comitato scientifico in merito ai potenziali effetti sulla salute dell'esposizione ai campi elettromagnetici ([4]).

3. La Commissione sta inoltre seguendo il progetto dell'Organizzazione mondiale della sanità (OMS) ([5]) relativo alle onde elettromagnetiche e fa parte del comitato consultivo internazionale dell'OMS. La Commissione valuta costantemente la necessità di ulteriori ricerche in funzione degli esiti dei progetti in corso e di altri elementi.

([1]) ARIMMORA — Ricerca avanzata sui meccanismi di interazione delle esposizioni elettromagnetiche con gli organismi per la valutazione dei rischi (http://arimmora-fp7.eu); MOBI-KIDS — Rischio di sviluppo del cancro al cervello a seguito dell'esposizione a campi a radiofrequenza da parte di bambini e adolescenti (www.mbkds.com); SEAWIND — Esposizione al suono e valutazione dei rischi delle tecnologie senza fili (http://seawind-fp7.eu); GERONIMO — Ricerca generalizzata sui campi elettromagnetici basata su metodi innovativi un approccio integrato: dalla ricerca alla valutazione dei rischi e sostegno alla gestione dei rischi (sito web in costruzione); LEXNET — Reti future a bassa esposizione ai campi elettromagnetici (www.lexnet-project.eu).

([2]) Ad esempio, http://cordis.europa.eu/projects/rcn/94505_it.html

([3]) http:/ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/emerging/index_en.htm

([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/consultations/public_consultations/scenihr_consultation_19_en.html

([5]) http://www.who.int/peh-emf/project/en/index.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000611/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(22 January 2014)

Subject: Effects of Wi-Fi on people's health

A European Commission study has revealed the huge proliferation of Wi-Fi devices and networks. According to the study, 71% of wireless data traffic in 2012 used Wi-Fi networks, and the trend seems to be on the up.

Commission representatives maintain that the Commission will be supporting the spread of Wi-Fi with faster regulation and a broader spectrum.

However, back in 2002, the Freiburg Appeal was signed by physicians in various disciplines, warning of the harmful effects of electromagnetic sources, mobile devices and Wi-Fi networks on people's health, and listing, among other things, brain tumours, leukaemia, problems with concentration and changes in blood pressure. Other studies show that radiation from these sources can cause spontaneous abortion and foetal abnormalities, though the debate is still far from closed.

In the light of these data, please could the Commission clarify whether:

1. it has undertaken any studies or surveys of the potential harmful effects of excessive exposure to Wi-Fi networks on people's health;

2. it has taken account of these effects when assessing and promoting the spread of Wi-Fi;

3. it is planning to conduct any further studies and/or collaborate with other bodies, such as the WHO, to secure irrefutable data on the effects linked to excessive and prolonged exposure to Wi-Fi networks?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(14 March 2014)

1-2. The Commission has supported five projects investigating exposure to, and the potential health effects of, electromagnetic fields (EMFs) under the Seventh Framework Programme for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration Activities (FP7, 2007-2013) ([1]). The results of these projects can be found on CORDIS ([2]), and are available to the Commission's independent Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (SCENIHR) ([3]). A public consultation on SCENIHR's latest preliminary opinion 'Potential health effects of exposure to electromagnetic fields (EMF)' is on-going ([4]).

3. The Commission is also following the work of the World Health Organisation's EMF Project ([5]) and is a member of its International Advisory Committee. The Commission continually evaluates the need for further research taking into account the results from on-going projects and other sources.

([1]) ARIMMORA — Advanced research on interaction mechanisms of electromagnetic exposures with organisms for risk assessments (http://arimmora-fp7.eu); MOBI-KIDS — Risk of brain cancer from exposure to radio frequency fields in childhood and adolescence (www.mbkds.com); SEAWIND — Sound exposure and risk assessment of wireless network devices (http://seawind-fp7.eu); GERONIMO — Generalised EMF research using novel methods — an integrated approach: from research to risk assessment and support to risk management (website under development); LEXNET — Low EMF exposure future networks (www.lexnet-project.eu).

([2]) For instance, http://cordis.europa.eu/projects/rcn/94505_en.html

([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/emerging/index_en.htm

([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/consultations/public_consultations/scenihr_consultation_19_en.html

([5]) http://www.who.int/peh-emf/project/en/index.html

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000612/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(22 gennaio 2014)

Oggetto: Iniezioni di polimeri contro attacchi cardiaci

Un team di scienziati dell'Illinois ha studiato un nuovo metodo di riduzione delle reiterazioni di attacchi cardiaci dopo il primo evento. Si tratta di iniezioni contenenti polimeri plastici biodegradabili, il cui ruolo è quello di frenare i danni ai tessuti in seguito a un attacco di cuore. L'esperimento, effettuato per ora solo su alcuni topi, sembra promettere risultati eccezionali e gli scienziati si augurano che presto possa essere sperimentato e utilizzato anche negli esseri umani.

I polimeri, che vengono sfruttati per etichettare alcuni monociti nei topi, sono stati utilizzati per guidare i monociti lontano dai siti infiammati, verso la milza, per essere distrutti. Dai risultati si è potuto confermare che le cellule immunitarie sono rimaste illese. L'esperimento, sorto in realtà da un errore di laboratorio, ha registrato la sopravvivenza del 60 % dei topi. I topi a cui erano state iniettate le microparticelle dopo un attacco di cuore, circa dodici ore dopo mostravano la metà delle lesioni cardiache rispetto a chi non aveva seguito la terapia e anche il pompaggio del cuore sembrava funzionare molto meglio. Le microparticelle hanno aiutato inoltre a ridurre l'infiammazione del midollo spinale in seguito a una malattia simile alla sclerosi multipla umana, rendendo la paralisi molto meno grave. Infine, l'infiammazione è stata dimezzata anche nei topi sofferenti di sindrome dell'intestino irritabile.

Alla luce di questi dati, può la Commissione chiarire se:

1. è a conoscenza dello studio in questione;

2. è a conoscenza di studi simili portati avanti da studiosi e strutture europee;

3. intende promuovere il proseguimento di questo studio anche nei poli scientifici europei, al fine di affinare e sviluppare questa tecnica innovativa.

Risposta di Máire Geoghegan-Quinn a nome della Commissione
(14 marzo 2014)

La Commissione è a conoscenza dello studio citato dall'onorevole deputato, in cui si descrivono gli effetti delle microparticelle che condizionano il sistema immunitario sui monociti nei modelli sperimentali di diverse patologie, tra cui l'infarto del miocardio ([1]). La prassi non prevede che la Commissione valuti i risultati di ricerche non direttamente correlate alle attività che finanzia.

Sebbene nel Settimo programma quadro di ricerca e sviluppo tecnologico (PQ7, 2007-2013) non siano state finanziate ricerche specifiche sulle microparticelle che influiscono sulla risposta immunologica dei monociti, l'Unione ha sostenuto alcuni progetti in ambiti correlati, ad esempio sistemi di somministrazione di farmaci ispirati alle microvescicole ([2]).

Orizzonte 2020, il programma quadro di ricerca e innovazione (2014-2020) ([3]), tramite la priorità «sfide per la società» denominata «salute, cambiamento demografico e benessere» offrirà ulteriori opportunità di sostegno alla ricerca in questo settore. Per ulteriori informazioni sulle attuali possibilità di finanziamento, rimandiamo al portale dedicato alla ricerca e all'innovazione ([4]).

([1]) D. R. Getts, et al, Therapeutic Inflammatory Monocyte Modulation Using Immune-Modifying Microparticles. Sci Transl Med, 15 gennaio 2014, vol. 6, n. 219, pag. 219ra7. DOI: 10.1126/scitranslmed.3007563.

([2]) ERC-2010-StG_20091118 MINDS –"Microvesicle-inspired drug delivery systems", finanziamento dell'UE pari a 1 338 000 EUR. (http://www.healthcompetence.eu/converis/publicweb/project/3001;jsessionid=1131482d402565ad5a62206c11dd?show=Person).

([3]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0809:FIN:IT:PDF.

([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/index.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000612/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(22 January 2014)

Subject: Polymer injections to combat heart attacks

A team of scientists in Illinois has developed a new method for reducing subsequent heart attacks following the first event, which involves injecting biodegradable plastic polymers into the blood stream so as to limit tissue damage after a heart attack. The experiment, which has so far only been carried out on mice, has yielded exceptionally encouraging results, and the team hopes to begin clinical trials on humans in the very near future.

The polymers were used to tag several specific monocytes in the mice and then guide these monocytes away from inflamed sites and towards the spleen, where they were destroyed. According to the results obtained, the immune cells did not sustain any damage. The survival rate of the mice used in the experiment (which in truth was the result of a laboratory error) was 60%. After suffering a heart attack, the mice that were injected with the microparticles had, approximately 12 hours later, heart lesions half the size of those that were not injected, and their hearts also appeared to pump much better. The microparticles also helped to reduce spinal inflammation arising from a disease similar to human multiple sclerosis, thereby making paralysis much less severe. Lastly, inflammation was also reduced in mice suffering from irritable bowel syndrome.

In light of the above information, can the Commission clarify:

1. whether it is aware of the study in question;

2. whether it is aware of any similar studies conducted by European research institutions and bodies;

3. whether it intends to encourage European scientific centres to develop this study further in a bid to hone and perfect this innovative technique?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(14 March 2014)

The Commission is aware of the study referred to by the Honourable Member, which describes the effects of immune-modifying microparticles on monocytes in experimental models of several diseases, including myocardial infarction ([1]). It is not Commission policy to assess research results that do not directly relate to its funding activities.

Although no specific research targeting microparticles that affects immune response of monocytes is being supported by the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7, 2007- 2013), some projects targeting related areas, such as microvesicle-inspired drug delivery systems ([2]) have been supported.

Horizon 2020, the framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020) ([3]), 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 EC Research and Innovation Participant Portal ([4]).

([1]) D. R. Getts, et all, Therapeutic Inflammatory Monocyte Modulation Using Immune-Modifying Microparticles. Sci Transl Med. 2014 Jan 15;6(219):219ra7. doi: 10.1126/scitranslmed.3007563.

([2]) ERC-2010-StG_20091118 MINDS –"Microvesicle-inspired drug delivery systems", EU support EUR 1 338. 000 (http://www.healthcompetence.eu/converis/publicweb/project/3001;jsessionid=1131482d402565ad5a62206c11dd?show=Person).

([3]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0809:FIN:EN:PDF

([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/index.html

(Slovenské znenie)

Otázka na písomné zodpovedanie E-000615/14
Komisii
Sergej Kozlík (ALDE)
(22. januára 2014)

Vec: Diskriminácia v cestovnom ruchu

Slovenské cestovné kancelárie spolu so svojimi klientmi sú pri objednávaní služieb diskriminované silnejšími európskymi cestovnými kanceláriami na trhu.

V posledných rokoch, a v nadchádzajúcej sezóne 2014 je to ešte vypuklejšie, majú slovenské cestovné kancelárie problémy s objednávaním hotelov v Turecku.

Viaceré hotely, najmä vyššej a luxusnej kategórie, podpísali zmluvy s rakúskymi a nemeckými cestovnými kanceláriami, v ktorých je zakotvené, že občania tzv. „východného bloku“ nemôžu objednávať pobyty v týchto hoteloch. Žiaľ, zaradili sem aj slovenských občanov, a to aj napriek tomu, že Slovensko je členom Európskej únie aj eurozóny.

Ide teda o diskrimináciu občanov Slovenskej republiky. Už pri objednávaní ubytovania sa kladie otázka o pôvode objednávateľov. Ak by aj pobyt predali slovenským občanom, po príchode a predložení cestovných pasov budú turecké hotely od nich požadovať inú cenu, ako platia rakúski a nemeckí občania.

Peniaze rakúskych a nemeckých turistov sú rovnaké ako tie naše, preto by slovenskí občania mali mať právo na rovnaké služby za rovnaké ceny a nemali by byť diskriminovaní.

Odpoveď pána Barniera v mene Komisie
(14. marca 2014)

Komisia nemá vedomosť o takýchto postupoch v cestovnom ruchu.

Ak má pán poslanec presnejšie informácie o rakúskych a nemeckých cestovných kanceláriách, ktoré podpísali s tureckými hotelmi zmluvy zabraňujúce spotrebiteľom z niektorých členských štátov EÚ objednávať si ubytovanie v týchto hoteloch, Komisia by sa rada záležitosťou ďalej zaoberala.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000615/14
to the Commission
Sergej Kozlík (ALDE)
(22 January 2014)

Subject: Discrimination in the tourism sector

Slovak travel agencies and their customers are facing discrimination from more powerful European travel agencies when ordering services.

In recent years — and in the upcoming 2014 season this is even more pronounced — Slovak travel agencies are having difficulties booking hotels in Turkey.

A number of hotels — particularly high-end and luxury hotels — have signed agreements with Austrian and German travel agencies which stipulate that the citizens of so-called 'Eastern Bloc' countries may not book stays in those hotels. It is unfortunate that Slovak citizens have been lumped into this group, regardless of the fact that Slovakia is an EU Member State and part of the eurozone.

This is a clear case of discrimination against Slovak nationals. Customers trying to book accommodation are asked where they come from at the point of booking. Even if accommodation were sold to Slovak nationals, the Turkish hotels would demand, as they show their passports upon arrival, that they pay a different price to that paid by Germans and Austrians.

The money that German and Austrian tourists have is the same money that we have, so why should Slovak nationals be denied the right to equal services for equal prices and face discrimination?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(14 March 2014)

The Commission is not aware of such practices in the tourism sector.

Should the Honourable Member have more precise information about the Austrian and German travel agencies which have signed agreements with Turkish hotels, excluding consumers from some EU Member States from booking accommodation in these hotels, the Commission would be pleased to look further into the matter.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-000618/14
προς την Επιτροπή
Kriton Arsenis (S&D)
(22 Ιανουαρίου 2014)

Θέμα: Το φαινόμενο της αιθαλομίχλης συνιστά διαρκή παραβίαση της οδηγίας 2008/50/ΕΚ για την ατμοσφαιρική ρύπανση

Για να αντιμετωπίσει την αυξημένη συγκέντρωση αερίων ρύπων και μικροσωματιδίων στην ατμόσφαιρα των μεγάλων αστικών κέντρων, που συχνότατα πλέον ξεπερνά τις οριακές τιμές, η ελληνική κυβέρνηση υιοθέτησε πρόσφατα, με κοινή υπουργική απόφαση, σειρά ανεφάρμοστων και αναποτελεσματικών μέτρων. Και ενώ ο Παγκόσμιος Οργανισμός Υγείας (ΠΟΕ) και η ΕΕ έχουν θεσπίσει για τα αιωρούμενα σωματίδια PM_{10} ανώτατο όριο τα 50 $\mu g/m^3$, το υπουργείο Περιβάλλοντος όρισε τα 101 $\mu g/\mu^3$ όριο για τη λήψη βραχυπρόθεσμων μέτρων. Επιπλέον η Οδηγία 2008/50/ΕΚ για την ποιότητα του ατμοσφαιρικού αέρα, επιβάλλει στα κράτη μέλη να παρακολουθούν και να δημοσιοποιούν στοιχεία για τις συγκεντρώσεις συγκεκριμένων ρύπων, συμπεριλαμβανομένων και των πολύ μικρών σε διάμετρο, αλλά ιδιαιτέρως επικίνδυνων $PM_{2,5}$. Εντούτοις το ΥΠΕΚΑ δε δημοσιεύει στο Ημερήσιο Δελτίο Τιμών Ατμοσφαιρικής Ρύπανσης μετρήσεις για τα $PM_{2,5}$.

Με βάση τα ανωτέρω, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

Είναι σε γνώση της η έξαρση της ατμοσφαιρικής ρύπανσης στην Ελλάδα, αποτέλεσμα της εξίσωσης του φόρου στο πετρέλαιο θέρμανσης και κίνησης;

Γνωρίζει ότι οφείλεται στην οικονομική εξουθένωση των ελληνικών νοικοκυριών από το πρόγραμμα σταθεροποίησης και στην εξίσωση του φόρου στο πετρέλαιο θέρμανσης και κίνησης;

Ισχύουν οι πληροφορίες που κατέκλυσαν τον ελληνικό τύπο ότι η εξίσωση αυτή ήταν πολιτική της τρόικας;

Αν ισχύουν οι πληροφορίες αυτές, με ποιο τρόπο προτίθεται η Επιτροπή να συμβάλει ενεργά στην αντιμετώπιση του φαινομένου;

Συνιστά παραβίαση της Οδηγίας 2008/50/ΕΚ η μη δημοσιοποίηση μετρήσεων για τα αιωρούμενα σωματίδια $PM_{2,5}$;

Προτίθεται να ενισχύσει τη συμμετοχή της στο πρόγραμμα ενεργειακής εξοικονόμησης κτηρίων, προκειμένου να διευκολύνει παρεμβάσεις ενεργειακής αναβάθμισης κτηρίων του οικιακού τομέα, μειώνοντας έτσι ουσιαστικά τις ανάγκες τους για θέρμανση;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(13 Μαρτίου 2014)

1. Η αυξημένη συγκέντρωση σωματιδίων στην Ελλάδα αποτελεί αντικείμενο διαδικασίας παράβασης για την παραβίαση των διατάξεων της οδηγίας 2008/50/ΕΚ ([1]). Ως προς αυτό, θα πρέπει να σημειωθεί ότι, παρότι τα επίπεδα PM_{10} υπόκεινται σε νομικά δεσμευτική οριακή τιμή, για τα $PM_{2,5}$ αυτό θα ισχύσει μόνον από την 1η Ιανουαρίου 2015. Όσον αφορά τα σωματίδια PM_{10}, η ετήσια οριακή τιμή έχει τηρηθεί στην Αθήνα, ενώ σημειώνεται υπέρβαση της ημερήσιας οριακής τιμής στις ψυχρότερες ημέρες του χειμώνα, για την οποία η θέρμανση είναι πιθανό να διαδραματίζει κάποιο ρόλο. Πρέπει επίσης να σημειωθεί ότι, σύμφωνα με το άρθρο 24 της οδηγίας, η υποχρέωση να ληφθούν βραχυπρόθεσμα μέτρα ισχύει μόνον για ορισμένους ρύπους, αλλά όχι για τα σωματίδια PM_{10}. Συνεπώς, τα κράτη μέλη διαθέτουν κάποια διακριτική ευχέρεια ως προς αυτό, ενώ πράγματι θα πρέπει να λαμβάνουν τα διαρθρωτικά μέτρα που απαιτούνται από το άρθρο 23.

2. Η Επιτροπή δεν είναι ενήμερη για κάθε μελέτη που θεσπίζει αιτιώδη συνάφεια μεταξύ της εμφάνισης της ρύπανσης και της φορολογίας του πετρελαίου θέρμανσης ή τις επιπτώσεις του προγράμματος προσαρμογής.

3 και 4. Κάθε φορολογικό μέτρο που θεσπίστηκε στο πλαίσιο του προγράμματος προσαρμογής έχει συμφωνηθεί με την ελληνική κυβέρνηση και έχει εγκριθεί από το Ελληνικό Κοινοβούλιο.

5. Η υποχρεωτική ενημέρωση του κοινού διέπεται από το άρθρο 26 της οδηγίας 2008/50/ΕΚ. Η Επιτροπή δεν γνωρίζει την ύπαρξη σχετικής παράβασης, αλλά είναι πρόθυμη να εξετάσει το ζήτημα αυτό, εφόσον είναι αναγκαίο.

6. Οι βελτιώσεις στην ενεργειακή απόδοση είναι βασικής σημασίας για την ευζωία των ελληνικών νοικοκυριών και για την ελληνική ανταγωνιστικότητα. Κυβερνητικές πρωτοβουλίες με στόχο τη βέλτιστη χρήση ενέργειας για θέρμανση θα ήταν ευπρόσδεκτες. Στην Ελλάδα, το Ευρωπαϊκό Ταμείο Περιφερειακής Ανάπτυξης (ΕΤΠΑ) στηρίζει ένα ειδικό ταμείο ενεργειακής απόδοσης για τη βελτίωση της ενεργειακής απόδοσης στις κατοικίες.

([1]) ΕΕ L 152 της 11.6.2008.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000618/14
to the Commission
Kriton Arsenis (S&D)
(22 January 2014)

Subject: Smog problem constitutes persistent infringement of Directive 2008/50/EC on ambient air quality

The Greek Government recently issued a joint ministerial decision adopting a series of impractical and ineffective measures to deal with increased concentrations of gaseous pollutants and small particulate matter in the ambient air in large towns and cities, which frequently exceed limit values. Although the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the EU have set the limit value at 50μg/m^3 for particulate matter PM_{10}, the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change has set the threshold at 101μg/m^3 for the purpose of taking short-term measures. Furthermore, Directive 2008/50/EC on ambient air quality requires Member States to monitor and publish data on concentrations of specific pollutants, including $PM_{2.5}$ which, although very small in diameter, is extremely dangerous. However, the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change does not publish measurements for $PM_{2.5}$ in the Daily Report of Air Pollution Levels.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

Is it aware of this surge in air pollution in Greece, which is due to the equalisation of tax on heating and diesel oil?

Does it know that the reason for this surge is attributed to the fact that the stability programme has brought Greek households to their knees and to the equalisation of tax on heating and diesel oil?

According to the Greek press, this tax equalisation was a Troika policy. Is that true?

If it is true, what active steps does the Commission intend to take in order to address this problem?

By failing to publish measurements of $PM_{2.5}$ particulate matter, is Greece in breach of Directive 2008/50/EC?

Does the Commission intend to enhance its participation in the buildings energy efficiency programme, in order to facilitate energy-efficient retrofitting of residential buildings, thus substantially reducing their heating needs?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(13 March 2014)

1. Particulate matter concentrations in Greece are the subject of an infringement procedure for the breach of Directive 2008/50/EC [1]. In this respect it should be noted that while PM10 levels are subject to a legally binding limit value, for PM2.5 this will only be the case as from 1 January 2015. As regards PM10, the fact that the annual limit value in Athens is complied with while the daily limit value is exceeded points to winter peaks for which heating is likely to play a role. It should also be noted that, in accordance with Article 24 of the directive, the obligation to take short term measures applies only to certain pollutants but not to PM10; Member States therefore have some discretion in this respect, while they should indeed take the structural measures required by Article 23.

2. The Commission is not aware of any study which establishes causality between the surge in pollution and the taxation of heating oil or the impact of the adjustment programme.

3 and 4. Any fiscal measure adopted within the adjustment programme has been agreed with the Greek Government and adopted by the Greek Parliament.

5. The obligation to inform the public is regulated by Article 26 of Directive 2008/50/EC; the Commission is not aware of any breach in this respect but is prepared to investigate this issue where necessary.

6. Energy efficiency improvements are key for the welfare of the Greek households and for Greek competitiveness. Government initiatives aiming at making the best use of energy for heating would be welcome. In Greece, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) supports a dedicated energy efficiency fund for energy performance improvements in housing.

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[1] OJ L152, 11.6.2008.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-000621/14
à la Commission
Philippe de Villiers (EFD)
(22 janvier 2014)

Objet: Corruption et aide au développement dans les républiques d'Asie centrale — Rapport de la Cour des comptes européenne

L'aide au développement en faveur des républiques d'Asie centrale (Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan, Ouzbékistan, Tadjikistan et Turkménistan) pendant la période 2007-2012, gérée et planifiée par la Commission européenne et le Service européen pour l'action extérieure (SEAE), a été critiquée par la Cour des comptes européenne.

La Cour des comptes doute de l'efficacité de cette aide au développement, tout d'abord parce que la «Commission s'est écartée des meilleures pratiques en allouant une aide à un trop grand nombre de secteurs» et de programmes, «ce qui a alourdi la charge administrative pour les délégations».

Dans l'indice de perception de la corruption, publié par l'organisation Transparency International, toutes ces républiques ont obtenu des notes inférieures à 28 sur 100 en 2013, le Kirghizstan, l'Ouzbékistan et le Turkménistan étant, sur les 177 pays examinés, parmi les 10 % les plus mal classés. Ainsi, parce que les difficultés liées à la corruption dans ces anciennes républiques soviétiques sont importantes, la Commission «aurait dû se montrer plus rigoureuse dans la gestion de ses programmes d'appui budgétaire, notamment en subordonnant son aide à l'adoption de mesures de lutte contre la corruption».

Pour la période 2007-2013, 750 millions ont été alloués pour cette zone. De 2007 à 2012, période de l'audit, la Commission aurait versé 435 millions d'euros dans le cadre de cette aide. Or, «le large éventail d'instruments financiers utilisés et les multiples circuits de décision, facteurs qui compliquent le calcul des montants dépensés par l'UE en Asie centrale par secteur et par pays, ont également rendu la gestion du programme plus ardue. La Commission n'a pas essayé d'évaluer le coût administratif global de son programme d'aide au développement en Asie centrale».

1. Quel est le budget prévu pour l'aide au développement pour les républiques d'Asie centrale pour la période 2014-2020? Quel sera le coût administratif global de ce programme?

2. Quelles mesures seront prises à l'avenir afin d'éviter une telle appréciation négative de la part de la Cour des comptes?

Réponse donnée par M. Piebalgs au nom de la Commission
(13 mars 2014)

1. Le budget prévu pour l'aide au développement en faveur de l'Asie centrale pour la période 2014-2020 s'élève à 1 028 millions d'euros. Le coût administratif global de ce programme sera budgétisé annuellement via le système d'établissement du budget sur la base des activités (EBA) et déterminé par la nature des programmes à mettre en œuvre et les ressources humaines que nécessitent les délégations et le siège. La Commission suit attentivement ces coûts et s'efforce de les réduire dans la mesure du possible.

2. La Commission et le SEAE ont déjà fourni des réponses détaillées aux recommandations adressées par la Cour des comptes. Celles-ci figurent dans la section «Réponses de la Commission et du SEAE» du rapport spécial de la Cour des comptes n° 13/2013 sur «l'aide au développement de l'Union européenne en faveur de l'Asie centrale» ([1]). La Commission note que l'appréciation globale de la Cour est positive.

([1]) http://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR13_13/QJAB13014FRN.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000621/14
to the Commission
Philippe de Villiers (EFD)
(22 January 2014)

Subject: Corruption and development assistance in republics in Central Asia — Report by the European Court of Auditors

The development assistance provided to republics in Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan) in the period 2007-2012, which was managed and planned by the European Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS), has been criticised by the European Court of Auditors.

The Court of Auditors has doubts about how effective this development assistance is, above all because 'the Commission provided assistance to a larger number of sectors than is consistent with best practice', through an equally excessive number of programmes, 'which placed a greater administrative burden on delegations'.

In the Corruption Perceptions Index, published by the organisation Transparency International, all of these republics scored less than 28 out of 100 in 2013, with Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan featuring in the lowest 10% of the 177 countries evaluated. With this in mind, given that problems relating to corruption in these former Soviet Republics are rife, the Commission 'should have been more rigorous in managing its budget support programmes and tied these to specific anti-corruption measures'.

750 million euros were set aside for this region in the period 2007-2013. From 2007 to 2012 (the period audited) the Commission invested some 435 million euros in assistance. However, 'managing the programme was also made more difficult by the wide range of financial instruments involved and multiple lines of reporting, which makes it difficult to establish how much the EU has spent per sector and per country in Central Asia. The Commission has not attempted to assess the overall administrative costs of its development assistance programme in Central Asia'.

1. What is the proposed budget for development assistance for republics in Central Asia for the period 2014-2020? What will be the overall administrative cost of this programme?

2. What measures will be taken in future in order to prevent another negative assessment from the Court of Auditors?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(13 March 2014)

1. The proposed budget for development assistance for Central Asia for the period 2014-2020 amounts to EUR 1 028 million. The overall administrative cost of this programme will be budgeted yearly within the Activity-Based Budgeting (ABB) system and determined by the nature of the programmes to be implemented and human resources needed in Delegations and Headquarters. The Commission closely monitors these costs and makes efforts to reduce them whenever possible.

2. The Commission and the EEAS have already provided detailed responses to the Court of Auditors' recommendations, which can be found in the 'Reply of the Commission and the EEAS' forming part of the Court of Auditors Special Report no. 13 of 2013 on 'EU Development Assistance to Central Asia'. ([1]) The Commission notes that the overall assessment by the Court is positive.

([1]) http://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR13_13/QJAB13014ENN.pdf

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000624/14
alla Commissione
Guido Milana (S&D)
(22 gennaio 2014)

Oggetto: Raccolta dati — Regolamento (CE) n. 199/2008

Il regolamento (CE) n. 199/2008 stabilisce modalità e tempi di esecuzione per ciascuna annualità di raccolta dati, nella quale lavorano moltissimi Istituti di ricerca sia pubblici che privati. In particolare, il regolamento non prevede la copertura di spese generali ma la sola retribuzione della mano d'opera impiegata (ricercatori e rilevatori). Ogni beneficiario dovrebbe incassare all'inizio dell'anno il 50 % dell'intero programma annuale di raccolta dati e provvedere al pagamento del 100 % entro il 31 marzo dell'anno successivo, anticipando quindi il 50 %. In mancanza di contestazioni sulle rendicontazioni, il pagamento (saldo) dovrebbe avvenire al massimo entro ottobre dell'anno successivo alla singola annualità.

Rispetto a questo schema si rileva che in molte circostanze gli Istituti di ricerca hanno ricevuto anticipi che non hanno sempre coperto il 50 % e che, anche in mancanza di contestazioni sulle rendicontazioni presentate, non sono ancora pervenuti i saldi delle annualità 2011 e 2012.

In un recente seminario su possibili modifiche tecniche del sistema di raccolta dati, tenuto a Bruxelles il 16 gennaio, il rappresentante della Commissione europea avrebbe affermato che, per quanto riguarda i ritardi di pagamento dei saldi delle ultime annualità, questi sarebbero dovuti alle incertezze sui tempi di approvazione dell'FEAMP, e che ciò può riguardare l'annualità 2014 e non le precedenti.

Ciò premesso, può la Commissione spiegare quali possono essere le ragioni che portano a tali ritardi sui pagamenti?

Risposta di Maria Damanaki a nome della Commissione
(18 marzo 2014)

La raccolta, la gestione e l'uso di dati relativi alla pesca da parte degli Stati membri sono stati cofinanziati dall'UE nell'ambito della gestione diretta fino all'anno 2013 incluso ([1]).

I pagamenti sono erogati dalla Commissione agli Stati membri in due rate. Dopo l'approvazione del programma nazionale di raccolta di dati degli Stati membri, seguita dall'adozione della decisione di finanziamento della Commissione, quest'ultima versa un anticipo del 50 %. L'adozione del programma nazionale può avvenire solo dopo una valutazione tecnica da parte del comitato scientifico, tecnico ed economico per la pesca (CSTEP) dell'UE, cui in genere fanno seguito modifiche al programma nazionale in conseguenza di eventuali osservazioni del CSTEP. L'adozione della decisione di finanziamento per ogni Stato membro può essere effettuata solo dopo che la Commissione ha verificato l'ammissibilità delle attività iscritte a bilancio. In entrambi i casi, la data di presentazione per le richieste degli Stati membri è il 31 ottobre e tale processo comporta discussioni tra questi ultimi e la Commissione.

I pagamenti del saldo vengono effettuati dopo che è stata approvata la relazione annuale degli Stati membri, prevista per il 31 maggio, ed è stata effettuata l'analisi dei costi corrispondenti. L'approvazione della relazione annuale richiede inoltre una valutazione da parte del CSTEP. Anche in questo caso entrambi i processi comportano discussioni approfondite con ciascuno Stato membro.

La Commissione è consapevole del fatto che il sistema di gestione diretta costituisce una procedura lenta e complessa. Per questo motivo, a decorrere dal 1º gennaio 2014, tali attività saranno cofinanziate dall'UE, in gestione concorrente, nell'ambito del Fondo europeo per gli affari marittimi e la pesca. Le procedure per la gestione finanziaria, compresi gli anticipi, cambieranno sostanzialmente, dando luogo ad una maggiore flessibilità e ad un processo più rapido.

([1]) REGOLAMENTO (CE) n. 861/2006 DEL CONSIGLIO, del 22 maggio 2006, che istituisce un'azione finanziaria dell'Unione per l'attuazione della politica comune della pesca e in materia di diritto del mare (GU L 160 del 14.6.2006) e REGOLAMENTO (CE) n. 1078/2008 DELLA COMMISSIONE, del 3 novembre 2008, recante modalità di applicazione del regolamento (CE) n. 861/2006 del Consiglio per quanto riguarda le spese sostenute dagli Stati membri per la raccolta e la gestione dei dati di base relativi alla pesca (GU L 295 del 4.11.2008).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000624/14
to the Commission
Guido Milana (S&D)
(22 January 2014)

Subject: Data collection — Regulation (EC) No 199/2008

Regulation (EC) No 199/2008 establishes the methods and deadlines for annual data collection — work that involves a large number of public and private research bodies. In particular, the regulation does not include cover for general expenses, but only for the salaries of employees (researchers and data-collectors). Each recipient should receive an advance payment equivalent to 50% of the amount for the entire annual data-collection programme at the beginning of the year, and submit a claim for payment of the full 100% (i.e. the remaining 50%) by 31 March of the following year. Provided no objections are raised to this claim, the (balance) payment should be made at the latest by October of the year following the data-collection year in question.

It appears that, in many cases, research bodies have received advance payments that have not always covered 50% of costs and that, even when no objections have been raised to their claim, they have still not received balance payments for the data-collection years 2011 and 2012.

At a recent seminar on potential technical changes to the data-collection system, held in Brussels on 16 January, the European Commission's representative said that delays in balance payments for recent data-collection years were due to confusion over EMFF approval periods, and that only the 2014 data-collection year, not previous years, could be taken into consideration.

In the light of this, please could the Commission explain the reasons for these delays in payment?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(18 March 2014)

Member States' collection, use and management of fisheries data was co-financed by the EU under direct management until and including the year 2013 ([1]).

Payments are made by the Commission to Member States in two instalments. An advance of 50% is paid by the Commission after approval of the Member States' National Data Collection Programme, followed by adoption of the Commission's financing decision. Adoption of the National Programme can only take place after a technical evaluation by the EU's Scientific Technical Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF), which is generally followed by modifications to the National Programme to address any comments by the STECF. Adoption of the financing decision for each Member State can only be made after the Commission has checked eligibility of budgeted activities. In both cases, the date of submission for Member States requests is 31 October and the process entails discussions between the Commission and Member States.

Balance payments are made once the Member States' annual report, due for 31 May, has been approved and the analysis of corresponding costs has taken place. Approval of the annual report also requires evaluation by the STECF. Again, both processes entail detailed discussions with each Member State.

The Commission is aware that the system of direct management has been a lengthy and heavy procedure. This is why as of 1 January 2014 these activities will be co-financed by the EU under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund in shared management. The procedures for financial management, including advance payments, will change substantially with resulting flexibility and a speedier process.

([1]) COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 861/2006 of 22 May 2006 establishing Community financial measures for the implementation of the common fisheries policy and in the area of the Law of the Sea, OJ L 160, 14.6.2006 and COMMISSION REGULATION (EC) No 1078/2008 of 3 November 2008 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 861/2006 as regards the expenditure incurred by Member States for the collection and management of the basic fisheries data, OJ 295, 4.11.2008.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-000628/14
adresată Comisiei
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(22 ianuarie 2014)

Subiect: Legea terenurilor agricole din Ungaria

Intrată în vigoare la 15 decembrie 2013, noua lege a Ungariei care interzice vânzarea de terenuri agricole către străini își va vedea efectele începând din mai 2014.

Achiziția terenurilor agricole de pe teritoriul statului maghiar se va face, conform noii reglementări, cu un document cu regim special, înseriat de autoritățile statului. Legea reglementează și cercul persoanelor fizice și juridice care pot intra în posesia terenurilor agricole și silvicole din Ungaria: pot deține terenuri agricole ce depășesc un hectar doar agricultorii (persoane fizice sau juridice înregistrate în țară), statul, consiliile locale, bisericile și — în anumite condiții — băncile, care vor fi obligate să valorifice terenurile agricole dobândite prin activitatea lor în termen de cel mult trei ani.

Persoanele fizice din țară fără activitate agricolă sau cetățenii altor state membre UE vor putea deține terenuri în Ungaria până la plafonul de un hectar, incluzând suprafețele scoase din circuitul agricol. Singura excepție acceptată de lege este cazul în care persoana fizică străină are grad de rudenie apropiată persoanei care înstrăinează terenul în cauză.

Comisia este rugată să precizeze dacă acest act normativ corespunde exigențelor legislației europene în vigoare.

Răspuns dat de dl Barnier în numele Comisiei
(18 martie 2014)

Comisia analizează modificările legislative recente din Ungaria referitoare la achiziția de terenuri agricole, inclusiv noua lege CXXII din 2013 privind comerțul cu terenuri agricole și silvicole și legislația conexă, ținând seama că, la 30 aprilie 2014, expiră perioada de tranziție prevăzută de Tratatul de aderare.

Legislația UE permite statelor membre să stabilească norme specifice în cazul tranzacțiilor referitoare la terenurile agricole, atât timp cât normele fundamentale ale legislației UE, în special libera circulație a capitalurilor, sunt respectate pe deplin. În baza unei evaluări prelimnare, s-ar părea că anumite părți ale legislației maghiare ar ridica unele întrebări legate de normele privind libera circulație a capitalurilor. În conformitate cu jurisprudența constantă a Curții de Justiție a Uniunii Europene, astfel de restricții sunt acceptabile doar în cazul în care acestea sunt justificate pe motivele prezentate la articolul 65 alineatul (1) din TFUE și în cazul în care acestea nu constituie un mijloc de discriminare arbitrară, conform articolului 65 alineatul (3) din TFUE. În plus, măsurile naționale justificate prin motive imperative de interes general pot, de asemenea, să restrângă libera circulație a capitalurilor, cu condiția ca acestea să nu fie discriminatorii. Indiferent de justificarea subiacentă, restricțiile ar trebui să fie întotdeauna conforme cu principiul proporționalității, respectiv trebuie să fie adecvate pentru garantarea obiectivului urmărit și nu trebuie să depășească ceea ce este necesar pentru atingerea acelui obiectiv.

În cazul în care Comisia concluzionează că legislația maghiară în acest domeniu nu respectă legislația aplicabilă a UE, Comisia va lua măsurile corespunzătoare, după cum este necesar.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000628/14
to the Commission
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(22 January 2014)

Subject: The Hungarian Farmland Act

A new Hungarian law banning the sale of farmland to foreigners, which entered into force on 15 December 2013, will, to all intents and purposes, become effective in May 2014.

Under the new provisions, a special state-registered document will be required for the purchase of farmland throughout Hungary. The Act also specifies the natural and legal persons entitled to own farmland and forestland in Hungary: Only farmers (natural or legal persons registered in Hungary), the State, local councils, churches and — under certain conditions — banks, may own more than one hectare of farmland and must put it to use within a maximum of three years.

Natural persons in Hungary other farmers or nationals of other EU Member States may own up to one hectare of land in Hungary, including land no longer used for farming. The only exception admitted under this Act is where a foreign national is closely related to the person transferring ownership of the land.

Can the Commission to clarify whether these provisions are in line with the relevant EC law?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(18 March 2014)

The Commission is looking at the recent legislative changes in Hungary concerning the acquisition of agricultural land, including the new Act CXXII of 2013 on the Trade in Agricultural and Forestry Lands and related legislation, taking into account the expiry of the transitional period provided by the Accession Treaty on 30 April 2014.

EC law allows Member States to lay down rules specific to transactions relating to agricultural land as long as the fundamental rules of EC law, in particular the free movement of capital, are fully respected. Based on a preliminary assessment, certain parts of the Hungarian legislation would appear to raise certain questions as regards the rules on free movement of capital. According to settled case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union, such restrictions are acceptable only if they are justified on grounds referred to in Article 65(1) of the TFEU and if they do not constitute a means of arbitrary discrimination as referred to in Article 65(3) of the TFEU. In addition, national measures justified by overriding reasons in the public interest may also restrict the free movement of capital, provided that they are not discriminatory. Irrespective of the underlying justification, restrictions should always comply with the principle of proportionality, i.e. they must be suitable for securing the objective which they pursue and must not go beyond what is necessary in order to attain that objective.

Should the Commission conclude that Hungarian legislation in this field does not comply with applicable EC law, it will take appropriate action, as necessary.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-000629/14
adresată Comisiei
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(22 ianuarie 2014)

Subiect: Liberalizarea pieței funciare din Polonia

În Polonia, liberalizarea pieței funciare va avea loc în 2016. Până atunci, străinii pot cumpăra teren doar dacă sunt căsătoriți cu un cetățean polonez și dacă au domiciliat în acest stat cel puțin doi ani înainte de semnarea actelor. Totodată, cetățeanul polonez va fi din start coproprietar al terenului. De asemenea, statul poate interveni, în baza dreptului de preempțiune, în cazul tranzacțiilor cu suprafețe mai mari de 500 de hectare.

Comisia este rugată să precizeze dacă aceste măsuri corespund exigențelor legislației europene în vigoare.

Răspuns dat de dl Barnier în numele Comisiei
(13 martie 2014)

Restricțiile la care se referă onoratul membru rezultă din legea poloneză din 24 martie 1920 privind achiziționarea de bunuri imobile de către străini (Dz.U. 1996 nr. 54, poz. 245 cu modificările ulterioare). În conformitate cu Tratatul de aderare, Polonia poate menține în vigoare normele prevăzute în legea respectivă timp de doisprezece ani de la data aderării. În consecință, măsurile în cauză nu contravin dreptului UE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000629/14
to the Commission
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(22 January 2014)

Subject: The liberalisation of the Polish land market

In Poland, the land market will be liberalised in 2016. Until then, foreigners may only buy land if they are married to a Polish citizen and if they have resided in the country for at least two years before the deeds are signed. Furthermore, the Polish citizen will be, by default, co-owner of the land. In addition, the State may intervene, based on the pre-emption right, in case of transactions with land of more than 500 hectares in surface area.

I would like to ask the Commission to clarify whether these measures are in line with the requirements of applicable EC law.

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(13 March 2014)

The restrictions referred to by the Honourable Member result from the Polish Act of 24 March 1920 on the Acquisition of Real Estate by Foreigners (Dz.U. 1996, Nr 54, poz. 245 with amendments). According to the Accession Treaty, Poland may maintain in force for twelve years from the date of accession the rules laid down in this Act. Consequently, the measures in question are not contrary to EC law.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000630/14
a la Comisión
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(22 de enero de 2014)

Asunto: Delito medioambiental por vertederos ilegales en la Vega Baja

Entre los límites geográficos de los términos municipales de Abanilla (Murcia) y La Murada (Orihuela, Alicante), en su sierra, se encuentra ubicada una planta de tratamiento de residuos sólidos urbanos. Según consta en informes de Instituto Geográfico Nacional (Ministerio de Fomento), una parte importante de las instalaciones se sitúan en el término municipal de Orihuela. A día de hoy el Ayuntamiento de Orihuela y la Generalitat Valenciana no han tramitado ni otorgado ninguna licencia o autorización para el tratamiento, gestión o depósito de residuos en las instalaciones de Proambiente S.L. El vertedero (compuesto por cinco vasos, algunos de los cuales han sido además construidos sin autorización) corresponde con una zona de interés ambiental: la Sierra de Abanilla está catalogada como Lugar de Importancia Comunitaria (LIC), y la Sierra de Crevillente, además de encontrarse catalogada como LIC, también lo está como Zona de Especial Protección para las Aves (ZEPA), ambas integradas en la Red Natura 2000 europea. Por otra parte, debe resaltarse la presencia de los acuíferos subterráneos de la Vega Baja y Media del Segura muy próximos a la zona donde se encuentra ubicado el vertedero. A pesar de no contar con autorizaciones y estar «formalmente» cerrado, lejos de cesar, la actividad en el vertedero ha seguido y desde 2011 se pueden observar con claridad los atentados medioambientales, daños que yo mismo he visto «in situ»: enterramientos ilegales de residuos urbanos y peligrosos, aparición de lixiviados, riesgo de combustión, contaminación atmosférica, acciones contrarias tanto a la normativa europea medioambiental sobre zonas y recursos protegibles como a las Directivas en materia de residuos.

¿Es consciente la Comisión de esta vulneración de la normativa europea medioambiental y el grave daño que se está produciendo a la zona y a sus habitantes, tanto en su salud como en su economía?

¿Qué medidas piensa tomar ante este delito ambiental que supone un claro incumplimiento del Derecho de la UE?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(28 de marzo de 2014)

La Comisión, que es consciente de la situación descrita, remite a Su Señoría a las respuestas que diera a las preguntas escritas P-005309/2013 y P-005736/2012 ([1]).

La Comisión ha pedido a las autoridades competentes que tomen las medidas necesarias para proceder con urgencia al cierre, sellado y regeneración de todos los vertederos ilegales existentes en el país, incluido el contemplado en la pregunta de Su Señoría.

La Comisión está evaluando la información complementaria que le han presentado recientemente las autoridades y, sobre la base de esa evaluación, decidirá los pasos que deban darse.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000630/14
to the Commission
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(22 January 2014)

Subject: Environmental crime due to illegal landfill sites in Vega Baja

Within the geographical limits of the administrative districts of Abanilla (Murcia) and La Murada (Orihuela, Alicante), in the mountains, there is a treatment plant for municipal solid waste. According to reports by the National Geographic Institute (Ministry of Public Works), a significant portion of the facilities are located within the administrative district of Orihuela. As of today, the city council of Orihuela and the regional government of Valencia have not processed or granted any licences or permits for the treatment, management or storage of waste at the facilities belonging to Proambiente S.L. The landfill site (which is made up of five bodies, some of which have also been constructed without authorisation) is in an area of environmental interest: the Sierra de Abanilla is classified as a site of Community importance (SCI) and the Sierra de Crevillente, as well as being an SCI, is also a special protection area (SPA) for birds. Both areas are included in the Natura 2000 European network. Moreover, it should be pointed out that there are subterranean aquifers in Vega Baja del Segura and Vega Media del Segura which are very close to the area in which the landfill site is located. Despite the fact that this landfill site has no permit and is 'formally' closed, activity here, far from ceasing, has continued and since 2011 it has been possible to clearly see the damage that has been done to the environment, damage that I have witnessed myself on site: illegal burial of dangerous and municipal waste, the appearance of leachates, the risk of combustion, atmospheric pollution, actions that are in breach not only of European environmental rules on areas and resources that are to be protected, but also of directives relating to waste.

Is the Commission aware of this violation of European environmental rules and the serious damage that is being caused to the region and its residents, both with regard to their health and their economy?

What action does the Commission intend to take in view of this environmental crime, which represents a clear breach of EC law?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(28 March 2014)

The Commission is aware of this situation and would refer the Honourable Member to the replies to written questions P-005309/2013 and P-005736/2012 ([1]).

The Commission has asked the competent authorities to take the necessary steps to urgently proceed with the closure, sealing and regeneration of all the existing illegal landfills across the country, including the one to which this question refers.

The Commission is assessing additional information recently submitted by the authorities and will subsequently decide on the appropriate course of action.

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

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000631/14
a la Comisión
Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE) y Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(22 de enero de 2014)

Asunto: Discriminación en programa europeo por desarrollar iniciativas en euskera

La agencia francesa del programa europeo La Juventud en Acción (Acción 1 — La Juventud con Europa; Subacción 1.2. Iniciativas de jóvenes), enmarcada en el Instituto Francés de la Juventud y la Educación Popular, ha retirado el apoyo que concedía a la iniciativa La Voz de las Mujeres, desarrollada por la emisora de radio Antxeta Irratia de Hendaya. Las autoridades francesas justifican su decisión por considerar que su segunda edición, idéntica a la que se estaba financiando, carece de dimensión europea y solo se desarrolla en lengua vasca.

Esta decisión parece desconocer que el euskera es, en sí mismo, un elemento que fomenta la relación transfronteriza, como acaba de reconocer el Parlamento Europeo, por lo que ha concedido el premio Ciudadano Europeo a la Real Academia de la Lengua Vasca, Euskaltzaindia. El proyecto, además, involucra a mujeres de ambos lados de la frontera y engloba a municipios ubicados a ambas orillas del Bidasoa como Hendaya, Biriatou y Urrugne (Francia) y Hondarribia e Irún (España). La Voz de las Mujeres se centra en capacitar a jóvenes mujeres de la zona para crear y gestionar un programa de radio dedicado a difundir y fomentar valores netamente europeístas como son la igualdad de género y la solidaridad. La zona en que se desarrolla esta actuación es un verdadero cruce de caminos europeo, receptora neta de inmigración procedente de África, América Latina y el Este de Europa, y es un verdadero laboratorio de programas de cooperación transfronteriza.

Teniendo en cuenta lo anterior:

1. ¿Considera la Comisión que el proyecto La Voz de las Mujeres carece de dimensión europea, teniendo en cuenta que se centra implicar a mujeres jóvenes en la difusión de valores europeístas a ambos lados de la frontera entre España y Francia?

2. ¿Considera la Comisión razonable penalizar el acceso al programa La Juventud en Acción solo porque la acción propuesta se desarrolla en una lengua minoritaria y transfronteriza como el euskera, común a personas y territorios ubicados a lo largo de la frontera entre España y Francia, en los que se desarrolla una intensa actividad transfronteriza?

3. ¿Tiene intención la Comisión de solicitar información para revisar la decisión adoptada por las autoridades francesas en relación con este programa?

Respuesta de la Sra. Vassiliou en nombre de la Comisión
(13 de marzo de 2014)

Cada solicitud presentada en el marco del programa «La Juventud en Acción» se evalúa por sus propios méritos con arreglo a los criterios de calidad establecidos en la Guía del programa. La propuesta «La Voz de las Mujeres II» no obtuvo la puntuación mínima necesaria para obtener financiación por los motivos siguientes:

— No había ningún elemento innovador en la solicitud con respecto al proyecto anterior.

— La transnacionalidad mencionada en la solicitud no estaba apoyada por el establecimiento de una asociación transnacional que mejorara la calidad global de la propuesta.

— Puesto que el programa «La Juventud en Acción» fomenta el multilingüismo, el uso de la lengua vasca significaba una limitación de facto del impacto del proyecto.

La evaluación de la calidad de cada solicitud la realizan expertos externos independientes seleccionados a través de un procedimiento estándar y que deben declarar cualquier posible conflicto de intereses.

Habida cuenta de que se han cumplido debidamente todos los procedimientos y se han respetado los criterios publicados, la Comisión considera justificada la decisión de la Agencia Nacional de rechazar la solicitud por motivos de calidad.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000631/14
to the Commission
Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE) and Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(22 January 2014)

Subject: Discrimination in an EU programme due to the use of the Basque language

The French agency responsible for the EU Youth in Action programme (Action 1 — Youth for Europe; Sub-Action 1.2 — Youth Initiatives), which forms part of the French Institute for Youth and Popular Education, has withdrawn its support for 'Women's Voices', an initiative promoted by the Hendaye-based radio station 'Antxeta Irratia'. The French authorities claim to have taken that decision because this project, the second of its kind and identical to the one that they funded before, is broadcast in Basque only and has no European dimension.

The decision appears to ignore the fact that *Euskara* is in itself a factor that fosters cross-border relations, as the European Parliament recently recognised when it awarded the European Citizens' Prize to Euskaltzaindia, the Royal Academy of the Basque Language. Furthermore, the project involves women from both sides of the border and includes towns situated on the two banks of the Bidasoa river, such as Hendaye, Biriatou, and Urrugne (in France) and Hondarribia and Irun (in Spain). 'Women's Voices' focuses on enabling young women in the region to make and run a radio programme dedicated to fostering and disseminating genuinely pro-European values, such as solidarity and gender equality. The area covered by this initiative is a true European crossroads and also a net receiver of immigration from Africa, Latin America, and Eastern Europe, making it a real laboratory for cross-border cooperation programmes.

In the light of the foregoing:

1. Does the Commission consider the 'Women's Voices' project to have no European dimension, even though it aims to involve young women in disseminating pro-European values on both sides of the border between France and Spain?

2. Does the Commission consider it reasonable to obstruct access to the Youth in Action programme merely because the vehicle of the proposed initiative is a cross-border minority language, namely Basque, which, however, is common to people along the border between Spain and France and to the border areas, where intense cross-border activity takes place?

3. Will the Commission seek information with a view to revising the decision taken by the French authorities concerning this programme?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(13 March 2014)

Each application submitted under the Youth in Action Programme is evaluated on its merit in the light of quality criteria defined in the Programme guide. The proposal 'Women's voices II' did not obtain the minimum score required to be selected for funding for the following reasons:

— There was no innovative element in the application compared to the previous project;

— Transnationality was stated in the application, but was not supported by the establishment of a transnational partnership which would have increased the overall quality of the proposal;

— As multilingualism is encouraged in the Youth in Action Programme, the use of the Basque language only meant a *de facto* limitation of the impact of the project.

The quality assessment of each application is carried out by external independent experts who are selected via a standard procedure and who must declare any potential conflict of interest.

As all procedures have been duly followed and all published criteria respected, the Commission considers that the decision of the National Agency to reject the application on grounds of quality has been justified.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000633/14
an die Kommission
Michael Theurer (ALDE)
(22. Januar 2014)

Betrifft: Euro-6-Abgasnorm

Seit dem 1. Januar 2014 müssen neu angeschaffte Rettungswagen der Feuerwehren in Deutschland der Euro-6-Abgasnorm entsprechen. Dies bedeutet, dass die Rettungswagen ein Reinigungssystem im Motorraum haben müssen. An den Fragesteller wurde ein Bedenken herangetragen, dass diese Regelung für Rettungswagen nicht zielführend sei. Angeblich funktioniere das System erst, wenn der Motor warm gelaufen sei; dies sei bei Rettungswagen, da sie kurzfristig und für kurze Strecken eingesetzt werden, selten der Fall, und daher laufe das System nicht.

1. Hält die Kommission diesen Einwand für berechtigt?

2. Hat sie ihn bei der Regelung zur Euro-6-Abgasnorm bedacht?

3. Falls die Kommission diesen Einwand für berechtigt hält, ist es dann aus Sicht der Kommission denkbar, hier für die Feuerwehren aufgrund ökologischer Sinnhaftigkeit einen Ausnahmetatbestand zu schaffen?

Antwort von Herrn Tajani im Namen der Kommission
(21. März 2014)

1. Die Kommission ist nicht der Ansicht, dass Fahrzeuge, die nur kurzfristig eingesetzt werden, von der Erfüllung der Abgasnormen ausgenommen werden sollten. Die Rechtsvorschriften enthalten diesbezügliche technische Anforderungen und Emissionsgrenzwerte, die für den städtischen, ländlichen und außerstädtischen Verkehr gelten und die auch von Fahrzeugen eingehalten werden müssen, die in städtischen Gebieten überwiegend für kurze Fahrstrecken eingesetzt werden.

2. Zum Zeitpunkt der Erstellung der Abgasnormen wurde in der Tat berücksichtigt, dass manche Fahrzeugtypen vorwiegend im Stadtverkehr eingesetzt werden. Aus diesem Grund betreffen die technischen Anforderungen in den Rechtsvorschriften den städtischen, ländlichen und außerstädtischen Verkehr.

3. Die Typgenehmigung für Feuerwehrfahrzeuge ist nach Artikel 2 Absatz 3 Buchstabe b der Richtlinie 2007/46/EG ([1]) fakultativ. Der Hersteller kann sich daher dafür entscheiden, sein Fahrzeug nach der Richtlinie 2007/46/EG und den getrennten Rechtsakten (einschließlich Euro 6) genehmigen zu lassen. Entscheidet sich der Hersteller für einen Antrag auf Typgenehmigung nach dieser Richtlinie, so sind aus den unter 1 und 2 genannten Gründen keine Ausnahmen möglich. Gemäß Artikel 2 Absatz 3 Buchstabe b kann der Hersteller jedoch auch entscheiden, sein Fahrzeug nicht nach der Richtlinie 200746/EG genehmigen zu lassen; in diesem Fall muss es Euro 6 nicht entsprechen.

([1]) Richtlinie 2007/46/EG des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 5. September 2007 zur Schaffung eines Rahmens für die Genehmigung von Kraftfahrzeugen und Kraftfahrzeuganhängern sowie von Systemen, Bauteilen und selbstständigen technischen Einheiten für diese Fahrzeuge.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000633/14
to the Commission
Michael Theurer (ALDE)
(22 January 2014)

Subject: Euro 6 exhaust emissions standard

Since 1 January 2014 newly acquired ambulances belonging to fire brigades in Germany must comply with the Euro 6 emissions standard. This means that ambulances must have a cleaning system fitted in the engine compartment. I have been informed there are concerns that this rule may not be appropriate for ambulances. Apparently the system only works once the engine has warmed up. This is rarely the case for ambulances, which are used at short notice for short journeys, meaning the system does not come into operation.

1. Does the Commission consider this objection to be justified?

2. Was this considered when establishing the Euro 6 exhaust emissions standard?

3. If the Commission does consider this objection to be justified, does it believe an exception may be made for fire brigades on the grounds that this makes more sense in environmental terms?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(21 March 2014)

1. The Commission does not consider that vehicles working in short periods of time should be exempted from fulfilling the emissions legislation. In this regard, the legislation sets out technical requirements and emission limits which are valid for urban, rural and highway driving, conditions that have to be fulfilled also by vehicles used in urban areas, where there is a predominance of short journeys.

2. At the time when the emissions standards were being elaborated, it was indeed considered that some types of vehicles would be used predominantly for urban driving; that is the reason why the technical requirements set out in the legislation address urban, rural and highway driving.

3. Type-approval for vehicles of fire brigades is optional according to Article 2.3(b) of Directive 2007/46/EC ([1]). Therefore the manufacturer may choose to have its vehicle approved under Directive 2007/46/EC and the separate acts (including Euro 6). If the manufacturer decides to apply for type-approval under this directive, no exception applies for the reasons explained under 1. and 2. However, in accordance with Article 2.3(b), the manufacturer may also choose not to have its vehicle approved under Directive 2007/46/EC, in which case it does not have to comply with Euro 6.

([1]) Directive 2007/46/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 September 2007 establishing a framework for the approval of motor vehicles and their trailers, and of systems, components and separate technical units intended for such vehicles.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000636/14
to the Commission
Roger Helmer (EFD)
(22 January 2014)

Subject: Single market in energy

We are talking about the importance of creating a genuine single market in energy in the EU.

At the same time, some Member States (like the UK) are pressing ahead with shale gas exploration, while others (like France) have firmly decided against it.

It is consistent to have a single market where all Member States have similar access to an energy resource like gas, but only a few of them actually exploit it? Does this not give an unfair advantage to those who expect to buy the gas but decline to produce it?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(18 March 2014)

Each Member State has the prerogative to decide whether it will allow prospecting, exploration and/or production of unconventional gas resources within its jurisdiction. However, such decision should be taken with due regard to existing EC law including the EU environmental *acquis*. A single market for energy in the EU allows producers of natural gas, from shale formations, as well as conventional sources, to sell it under commercial terms to a customer in the same or another country on the basis of harmonised rules ensuring a level playing field.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000637/14
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(22 gennaio 2014)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Violenze a Beirut

Lo scorso 21 gennaio, a Beirut, nel quartiere di Haret hreik, almeno quattro persone sono rimaste uccise, mentre altre ventisette sono rimaste ferite in seguito all'esplosione di un'autobomba.

L'attentatore suicida apparteneva al gruppo Jabhat al-Nusra, un assembramento di matrice qaedista, e l'attentato è stato rivendicato come un attacco contro Hezbollah, colpevole, a detta degli attentatori, di aver dato appoggio alle forze lealiste governative durante il conflitto civile in Siria.

È ormai il quinto attacco diretto contro l'organizzazione sciita negli ultimi sei mesi, il secondo nel solo gennaio 2014. In precedenza, due attacchi nel mese di agosto e un'autobomba esplosa lo scorso dicembre, e che ha provocato la morte di un ex ministro libanese, avevano già preannunciato l'escalation di violenza nel paese.

1. Alla luce di questi avvenimenti, può la Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante chiarire se è a conoscenza delle ultime escalation di violenza in Libano?

2. Ritiene che una «guerra» tra Hezbollah e Al-Qaeda possa rappresentare una seria minaccia per la sicurezza europea?

3. Intende intraprendere azioni volte a ridurre il rischio di escalation violente nel paese?

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

L'AR/VP è seriamente preoccupata per la spirale di violenza in Libano e ha condannato più volte con fermezza questi attentati, caldeggiando una risposta politica decisa e sottolineando quanto sia importante lottare contro l'impunità. L'AR/VP ha ribadito in più occasioni che l'UE continuerà a sostenere il potenziamento delle istituzioni libanesi e ha riaffermato l'impegno dell'Unione a favore dell'unità, della stabilità e della sicurezza del paese.

L'AR/VP ha seguito con la massima attenzione le ripercussioni del conflitto siriano in Libano e ha espresso seria preoccupazione per il fatto che alcuni degli ultimi attentati suicidi perpetrati in Libano siano stati rivendicati dal Fronte Al-Nusra.

Finora l'UE ha stanziato più di 333 milioni di EUR per rispondere alla situazione di crisi in Libano, in particolare sostenendo i rifugiati e le comunità che li accolgono, fornendo assistenza umanitaria ai più vulnerabili e rafforzando la capacità del governo libanese di far fronte a questa crisi senza precedenti. Nel solo 2013 sono stati impegnati a favore del Libano più di 150 milioni di EUR, cioè il triplo dell'assegnazione bilaterale annuale programmata inizialmente per questo paese.

Ritenendo inoltre che l'allentamento delle tensioni sia una priorità, l'UE appoggia pienamente il ruolo delle forze armate libanesi, che danno un contributo fondamentale al mantenimento dell'ordine e della stabilità. A dicembre i ministri degli Esteri dell'UE si sono impegnati a sostenere le istituzioni e le forze di sicurezza libanesi e a vagliare le possibilità di fornire ulteriore sostegno alle forze armate libanesi. L'UE ha pertanto individuato settori specifici a cui destinare questo supporto potenziato, a livello dell'Unione e degli Stati membri, ai fini di un seguito concreto.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000637/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(22 January 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Violence in Beirut

On 21 January, a suicide bomb attack in the Haret Hreik neighbourhood of Beirut left at least four people dead and twenty-seven injured.

The suicide bomber was a member of the Nusra Front, a group affiliated to Al-Qaeda, and the attack was claimed to be targeting Hezbollah, which the group accuses of supporting loyalist government forces in the Syrian civil war.

This is the fifth attack targeting the Shiite organisation in the past six months, the second in January 2014 alone. Two earlier attacks in August 2013 and a suicide bomb in December, which killed a former Lebanese minister, had already signalled an escalation of violence in the country.

1. In the light of these events, could the Vice-President/High Representative clarify whether she is aware of the latest escalation of violence in Lebanon?

2. Does she think a 'war' between Hezbollah and Al-Qaeda could pose a serious threat to European security?

3. Is she intending to take any action to reduce the risk of escalating violence in the country?

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

The HR/VP is well aware and deeply concerned regarding the spiral of violence in Lebanon. The HR/VP has repeatedly and strongly condemned such attacks, calling for a determined political response, and underlining the importance of combating impunity. The HR/VP has often reiterated that the EU will continue to support the strengthening of Lebanon's institutions and has reaffirmed its commitment to the unity, stability and security of the country.

The HR/VP has been closely following repercussions of the Syrian conflict in Lebanon and also noted with serious concern the claims of responsibility issued by the Al-Nusra Front in Lebanon after some of the last suicide attacks.

So far the EU has allocated more than EUR 333 million to address the crisis situation in Lebanon, notably by assisting the refugees and their host communities, delivering humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable as well as building the capacities of the Lebanese Government to deal with this unprecedented crisis. In 2013 only, more than EUR 150 million were committed in Lebanon, hence multiplying by three the initial bilateral yearly allocation programmed for the country.

The EU also believes that de-escalating tensions is a priority and thus fully supports the role of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), a key actor in maintaining order and stability. In December, EU foreign ministers expressed their commitment to support Lebanon's institutions and security forces, and to explore possibilities for increased support to the LAF. The EU has thus identified specific areas for such enhanced support, at both EU and Member States' level, with a view to concrete follow-up.

(Magyar változat)

Írásbeli választ igénylő kérdés E-000638/14
a Bizottság számára
Szegedi Csanád (NI)
(2014. január 22.)

Tárgy: A szélsőségesség elleni küzdelem Európában

Az elmúlt években erőteljes növekedés figyelhető meg Európában a szélsőséges csoportok és pártok erősödése terén, amely tendencia sajnálatosan egyre több tagállamban figyelhető meg. A magyarországi Jobbik és a görög Arany Hajnal megnyilvánulásai magukban hordozzák az erőszakot, mások kirekesztését és az antiszemitizmust is, amelyekre az Európai Unióban számos példát látunk nap mint nap. Az antiszemitizmus és a rasszizmus romba dönti mindazt a pozitív álmot, amelyet a békés, fejlődő Európa képes nyújtani az európai embereknek, és amely az európai kultúrán keresztül példát mutathat az emberiségnek.

A szélsőjobboldali szervezetek térnyerése hatalmas veszélyt jelent egész Európa számára, és csak bátor politikai lépésekkel lehet egységesen fellépni a gyűlölet ellen és az emberi jogok feltétlen tisztelete mellett.

A Bizottságnak milyen intézkedési tervei vannak 2014-ben az antiszemitizmus és a rasszizmus visszaszorítása érdekében?

Viviane Reding válasza a Bizottság nevében
(2014. március 27.)

Miután 2014. január 27-én, a holokauszt emléknapján, közzétették a rasszizmusról és az idegengyűlöletről szóló 2008/913/IB kerethatározat tagállami végrehajtását tárgyaló első bizottsági jelentést, a Bizottság bejelentette, hogy 2014 során kétoldalú párbeszédet kezdeményez a tagállamokkal azzal a céllal, hogy elősegítse a kerethatározat nemzeti jogba történő teljes és megfelelő átültetését.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000638/14
to the Commission
Csanád Szegedi (NI)
(22 January 2014)

Subject: Combating extremism in Europe

In recent years, extremist groups and parties have been growing rapidly in Europe, and regrettably this trend is observable in more and more Member States. Statements by the Jobbik in Hungary and Golden Dawn in Greece are imbued with violence, exclusion of others and anti-Semitism, and we see numerous example of these day after day in the European Union. Anti-Semitism and racism destroy the whole positive dream which a peaceful, developing Europe is capable of offering to the people of Europe and which can set an example to humanity through European culture.

The fact that right-wing extremist organisations are gaining ground represents an enormous threat to the whole of Europe, and only by means of bold political measures will it be possible to take united action to tackle hatred and secure unconditional respect for human rights.

What action plans does the Commission have to combat anti-Semitism and racism in 2014?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(27 March 2014)

Following the publication on 27 January 2014, Holocaust Remembrance Day, of the first Commission report on the implementation of Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA on racism and xenophobia by the Member States, the Commission announced that it will enter into bilateral dialogues with Member States, in the course of 2014, with a view to ensuring full and correct transposition of the framework Decision into national law.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000642/14
an die Kommission
Hiltrud Breyer (Verts/ALE)
(23. Januar 2014)

Betrifft: PCB-Belastung in öffentlichen Gebäuden — Müssen Verursacher/innen zahlen?

In jüngster Zeit häufen sich Berichte über mit polychlorierten Biphenylen (PCB) belastete Schulen, Universitäten und Behörden. PCB sind persistente, sehr mobile Verbindungen, die sich aufgrund ihrer hohen Fettlöslichkeit entlang der Nahrungskette anreichern. Sie können das menschliche Hormonsystem, das Nervensystem und das Immunsystem schädigen, die Schilddrüse, Leber und Nieren angreifen und zu Unfruchtbarkeit führen. Weltweit wurden bis zum Jahr 1989 rund 1,3 Mio. Tonnen PCB hergestellt. Rund die Hälfte stammt aus den Fabriken des US-Konzerns Monsanto. Die deutsche Bayer AG liegt mit 160 000 Tonnen auf dem zweiten Platz.

1. Wie schätzt die Kommission das Problem der PCB-Belastung in öffentlichen Gebäuden und die daraus resultierende gesundheitliche Beeinträchtigung der sich dort aufhaltenden Menschen ein?

2. Welche Untersuchungen — mit welchen Ergebnissen — sind der Kommission zur PCB-Belastung von öffentlichen Gebäuden bekannt?

3. Welche Konsequenzen zieht die Kommission aus der Empfehlung der WHO, die tägliche Aufnahme von dioxinähnlichen Substanzen wie koplanaren PCB auf 1 bis 4 Pikogramm pro Tag und kg Körpergewicht zu begrenzen, und welche Maßnahmen hat die Kommission bisher ergriffen, damit die genannten Empfehlungen der WHO in den jeweiligen MS umgesetzt werden?

4. Welche Konsequenzen zieht die Kommission aus der Entscheidung der WHO, PCB in die Liste krebserzeugender Stoffe der Kategorie 1 einzustufen?

5. Welche Quellen sieht die Kommission für die heutige PCB-Belastung von Menschen, Tieren und Pflanzen, Boden, Wasser und die Atmosphäre (bitte nach Bedeutung gewichten)?

6. Ist die Kommission der Ansicht, dass bei der Sanierung von PCB-kontaminierten Gebäuden das im Umweltrecht verankerte Verursacherprinzip angewandt werden kann und somit auch die Hersteller von PCB mit zur Finanzierung herangezogen werden können? Wenn ja, zu welchem Anteil sollten die Hersteller nach Ansicht der Kommission an den Sanierungskosten beteiligt werden?

Antwort von Tonio Borg im Namen der Kommission
(14. März 2014)

Der Kommission liegen keine besonderen Informationen zu diesem Thema vor und ihr sind keine Studien über mit polychlorierten Biphenylen (PCB) belastete öffentliche Gebäude und eine daraus resultierende gesundheitliche Beeinträchtigung der sich dort aufhaltenden Menschen bekannt.

Die Kommission möchte die Frau Abgeordnete auf ihre Antwort auf die schriftliche Anfrage E-0014167/2013 ([1]) verweisen, die Informationen zu den Maßnahmen enthält, die auf Unionsebene zur Begrenzung der täglichen Aufnahme von Dioxinen und PCB bei Menschen getroffen wurden. Die Karzinogenität von Dioxinen und PCB wurde dabei bereits berücksichtigt.

Obwohl die Herstellung, die Verwendung und der Vertrieb von PCB in der EU bereits seit den 1980er Jahren untersagt sind, gelangten diese auch nach dem Verbot weiterhin in die Umwelt, insbesondere aufgrund nicht ordnungsgemäßer Entsorgungspraktiken oder bei Lecks in elektrischen Ausrüstungen oder Hydrauliksystemen, die bis vor Kurzem noch genutzt wurden. PCB sind sehr persistent; sie verbreiten sich weltweit über die Luft, kommen somit in allen Umweltmedien vor und kontaminieren sowohl Pflanzen als auch Boden, Wasser und die Atmosphäre. Der Kommission liegen keine Informationen zur jeweiligen Bedeutung der unterschiedlichen Quellen vor.

Gemäß Artikel 14 der Richtlinie 2008/98/EG ([2]) über Abfälle können die Mitgliedstaaten beschließen, dass die Kosten der Abfallbewirtschaftung teilweise oder vollständig von den Herstellern oder den Vertreibern des Erzeugnisses, dem der Abfall entstammt, zu tragen sind. Es obliegt daher den Mitgliedstaaten zu bestimmen, welcher Teil der Sanierungskosten von den Herstellern zu tragen ist.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/de/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) Richtlinie 2008/98/EG des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 19. November 2008 über Abfälle und zur Aufhebung bestimmter Richtlinien (ABl. L 312 vom 22.11.1998, S. 3).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000642/14
to the Commission
Hiltrud Breyer (Verts/ALE)
(23 January 2014)

Subject: PCB pollution in public buildings — Do the polluters have to pay?

Recently there have been an increasing number of reports about schools, universities and public offices polluted with polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). PCBs are persistent, highly mobile compounds which become concentrated along the food chain due to their high liposolubility. They can damage the human hormone system, the nervous system and the immune system, affect the thyroid gland, liver and kidneys and lead to infertility. Worldwide, approximately 1.3 million tonnes of PCBs were manufactured by 1989. About half originated from the factories of the American company Monsanto. The German company Bayer AG is in second place with 160 000 tonnes.

1. How does the Commission view the problem of PCB pollution in public buildings and the resulting health damage to the people who stay there?

2. Which studies — with which results — is the Commission aware of on the PCB pollution of public buildings?

3. What consequences does the Commission draw from the WHO recommendation to limit the daily intake of dioxin-like substances such as coplanar PCBs to 1 to 4 picograms per kg body weight per day, and what measures has the Commission taken to date so that the stated WHO recommendations are implemented in the respective Member States?

4. What consequences does the Commission draw from the WHO decision to classify PCBs in the list of Category C carcinogens?

5. What does the Commission consider to be the sources of the current PCB pollution of people, animals and plants, soil, water and the atmosphere (please weight according to significance)?

6. Does the Commission believe that in the cleaning up of PCB-contaminated buildings the 'polluter pays' principle enshrined in environmental law can be applied and that therefore the manufacturers of PCBs can be called on for financing? If yes, according to the Commission, what share of the clean-up costs should the manufacturers pay?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(14 March 2014)

The Commission has no specific information and is not aware of studies as regards the polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) pollution in public buildings and the resulting health damage to the people who stay there.

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-0014167/2013 ([1]), providing information on the measures taken at Union level to limit the human daily intake of dioxins and PCBs. These measures take already into account the fact that PCBs are carcinogenic.

Although the production, use and distribution of PCBs has been prohibited in the EU since the 1980s, their entry into the environment occurred still thereafter, especially due to improper disposal practices or leaks in electrical equipment and hydraulic systems which were in use until recently. PCBs are highly persistent and are globally circulated by atmospheric transport and thus are present in all environmental media, contaminating plants, soil, water and atmosphere. No precise information is available to the Commission as regards the significance of the different sources.

In accordance with Article 14 of Directive 2008/98/EC ([2]) on waste, Member States may decide that the costs of waste management are to be borne partly or wholly by the producers and distributors of the product from which the waste came. It is therefore for Member States to determine the share of the clean-up costs that manufacturers should pay.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/QP-WEB/application/home.do?language=EN
([2]) Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on waste and repealing certain Directives (OJ L 312, 22.11.1998, p. 3).

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000644/14
an die Kommission
Hiltrud Breyer (Verts/ALE)
(23. Januar 2014)

Betrifft: Regulierungslücke: Radioaktivität in Wasserflaschen

Ist das Wasser, welches wir aus Flaschen trinken oder zur Zubereitung von Nahrung verwenden, frei von radioaktiver Strahlung bzw. strahlungsarm? Uranbelastung im Mineralwasser ist ein geogenes Problem. Er wird bestimmt durch die Beschaffenheit der Gesteinsschichten, aus denen das Wasser gefördert wird. Einen Grenzwert für die zulässige Uranbelastung in Mineralwasser(flaschen) gibt es bisher nicht.

1. Wie beurteilt die Kommission die Tatsache, dass es für Trinkwasser Grenzwerte für radioaktive Strahlung gibt, nicht jedoch für in Flaschen abgefülltes Wasser?

2. Welche Maßnahmen plant die Kommission, um VerbraucherInnen zukünftig besser vor radioaktivem Mineralwasser zu schützen?

3. Ist die Kommission der Meinung, dass unter anderem eine Veröffentlichung der fraglichen Aktivitätskonzentrationen auf dem Etikett bei in Flaschen abgefülltem Wasser Klarheit schaffen würde?

Antwort von Herrn Oettinger im Namen der Kommission
(18. März 2014)

1. Wasser für den menschlichen Gebrauch, das in Flaschen abgefüllt und zum Verkauf bestimmt ist, ist — mit Ausnahme von natürlichen Mineralwässern — Gegenstand der Richtlinie 2013/51/EU des Rates ([1]); somit gelten für dieses Wasser die Parameterwerte der Richtlinie. Die Bestimmungen dieser Richtlinie in Bezug auf radioaktive Stoffe gehen denen der Trinkwasser-Richtlinie ([2]) vor. Natürliche Mineralwässer sind vom Geltungsbereich der Richtlinie 2013/51/Euratom ausgenommen, da in der Richtlinie 2009/54/EG besondere Regeln hierfür festgelegt wurden ([3]). In dieser Richtlinie werden geologische und hydrologische Untersuchungen vorgeschrieben, um die Radioaktivität des Wassers beim Quellaustritt und gegebenenfalls die Verhältniszahlen der Bestandteile des Wassers nach Isotopen (Sauerstoff und Wasserstoff) zu bestimmen. So soll sichergestellt werden, dass keine Gefahr der Verunreinigung besteht. Verunreinigtes natürliches Mineralwasser darf nicht als natürliches Mineralwasser gehandelt werden ([4]).

2./3. Die Europäische Behörde für Lebensmittelsicherheit (EFSA) hat am 25. März 2009 eine Stellungnahme zum Thema „Uran in Lebensmitteln, insbesondere in Mineralwasser“ ([5]) verabschiedet. Sie gelangte zu dem Schluss, dass bei der oralen Aufnahme von natürlichem Uran zwar radiotoxische Folgen möglich sind, das Hauptrisiko jedoch in der chemischen Toxizität besteht. Daher liegt der Schwerpunkt der Stellungnahme der EFSA auf der chemischen Toxizität von Uran bei der Ingestion von Wasser und Nahrungsmitteln, mit dem Fazit, dass die veranschlagte ernährungsbedingte Uranexposition der Bevölkerung generell sowie von Großverbrauchern in allen europäischen Ländern unterhalb der tolerierbaren täglichen Aufnahmemenge (TDI) von 0,6µg/kg Körpergewicht liegt.

Auf der Grundlage der vorstehenden Ausführungen und des geringen Risikos, das durch das Vorhandensein von natürlichem Uran in natürlichen Mineralwässern gegeben ist, hält es die Kommission nicht für erforderlich, harmonisierte Etikettierungsanforderungen für den Urangehalt von in Flaschen abgefülltem Wasser festzulegen.

([1]) Richtlinie 2013/51/Euratom des Rates vom 22. Oktober 2013 zur Festlegung von Anforderungen an den Schutz der Gesundheit der Bevölkerung hinsichtlich radioaktiver Stoffe in Wasser für den menschlichen Gebrauch (ABl. L 296 vom 7.11.2013). Die Richtlinie muss bis zum 28. November 2015 von den Mitgliedstaaten umgesetzt werden.

([2]) Richtlinie 98/83/EG des Rates vom 3. November 1998 über die Qualität von Wasser für den menschlichen Gebrauch (ABl. L 330 vom 5.12.1998).

([3]) Richtlinie 2009/54/EG des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 18. Juni 2009 über die Gewinnung von und den Handel mit natürlichen Mineralwässern (ABl. L 164 vom 26.6.2009).

([4]) Die Überwachung beider Arten von Wasser erfolgt auf der Grundlage der Grundsätze der Gefahrenanalyse und der kritischen Kontrollpunkte (HACCP) gemäß der Verordnung 2004/852/EG des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 29. April 2004 über Lebensmittelhygiene (ABl. L 139 vom 30.4.2004) sowie unbeschadet der Grundsätze der amtlichen Kontrollen gemäß der Verordnung 2004/882/EG des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 29. April 2004 über amtliche Kontrollen zur Überprüfung der Einhaltung des Lebensmittel- und Futtermittelrechts sowie der Bestimmungen über Tiergesundheit und Tierschutz (ABl. L 165 vom 30.4.2004).

([5]) Abrufbar über:
http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/1018.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000644/14
to the Commission
Hiltrud Breyer (Verts/ALE)
(23 January 2014)

Subject: Regulatory gap: Radioactivity in water bottles

Is the water we drink from bottles or use to prepare food free of radioactive radiation or low in radiation? Uranium pollution in mineral water is a geogenic problem. It is determined by the character of the rock layers through which the water is extracted. To date there is no limit value for the allowable uranium pollution in mineral water (bottles).

1. How does the Commission regard the fact that there are limit values for radioactive radiation for drinking water but not for bottled water?

2. What measures does the Commission intend to take to protect consumers from radioactive mineral water better in the future?

3. Does the Commission think that, among other measures, publishing the questionable activity concentrations on the label of bottled water would provide clarification?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(18 March 2014)

1. Water intended for human consumption and put into bottles intended for sale, other than natural mineral water, is included within the scope of Council Directive 2013/51/Euratom ([1]), and the parametric values laid down in this directive apply. The provisions of this directive with regard to radioactive substances supersede those of the Drinking Water Directive ([2]). On the other hand, natural mineral water is excluded from the scope of Directive 2013/51/Euratom since special rules have been established for it in Directive 2009/54/EC ([3]). This directive lays down that geological and hydrological surveys are to be carried out to establish the radioactinological properties of the water at source and, where appropriate, the relative isotope levels of the constituent elements of water, oxygen and hydrogen, so as to verify that there is no risk of pollution. Polluted natural mineral water cannot be marketed as a natural mineral water ([4]).

2 and 3. The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) adopted an opinion on 'Uranium in foodstuffs, in particular mineral water' on 25 March 2009 ([5]). It concluded that although there is a risk of radiological toxicity from orally ingested natural uranium, the main risk is chemical toxicity. Therefore, in its opinion, EFSA focused on the chemical toxicity of uranium through the ingestion of water and food, and concluded that 'the uranium dietary exposure estimates for the general population and high consumers across European countries is below the Tolerable Daily Intake (TDI) of 0.6ug/kg b.w per day.'

In the light of the above and the low risk posed by the presence of natural uranium in natural mineral water, the Commission does not consider it necessary to lay down harmonised labelling requirements for levels of uranium in bottled water.

([1]) Council Directive 2013/51/Euratom of 22 October 2013 laying down requirements for the protection of the health of the general public with regard to radioactive substances in water intended for human consumption (OJ L 296, 7.11.2013). This directive is to be transposed by Member States by 28 November 2015.

([2]) Council Directive 98/83/EC of 3 November 1998 on the quality of water intended for human consumption (OJ L 330, 5.12.1998).

([3]) Directive 2009/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the exploitation and marketing of natural mineral waters (OJ L 164, 26.6.2009).

([4]) The monitoring of both types of water is carried out in accordance with the principles of hazard analysis and critical control points (HACCP) as required by Regulation 2004/852/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of the 29 April 2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs (OJ L 139, 30.4.2004), and without prejudice to the principles of official controls laid down in Regulation 2004/882/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules (OJ L 165, 30.4.2004).

([5]) Available at http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/1018.htm

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000645/14
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Mayer (PPE)
(23. Januar 2014)

Betrifft: DOA-Genehmigung durch die EASA

Die Instandhaltung von Flugzeuganschnallgurten (Komponenten) muss (seit September 2003) in Europa nach der Verordnung (EU) Nr. 748/2012 Abschnitt — Reparaturen durchgeführt werden. Dazu wird nach Verordnung (EG) Nr. 2042/2003 ein Instandhaltungsbetrieb benötigt. Zur Instandhaltung von Flugzeuganschnallgurten werden nach der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 2042/2003 Part.145.A.45 die behördlich zugelassenen Instandhaltungsunterlagen von den Inhabern der Musterzulassung benötigt. Die Herausgabe der Instandhaltungsunterlagen wird von den Inhabern der Musterzulassung aber oftmals verweigert.

Sind keine solchen Instandhaltungsunterlagen vorhanden, wird, da es sich bei den Gurten gemäß Verordnung (EU) Nr. 748/2012, Artikel 6 um ETSO-Artikel handelt, gemäß Verordnung (EU) Nr. 748/2012 Abschnitt — Reparaturen, ein Entwicklungsbetrieb benötigt (DOA). Eine solche Genehmigung erteilt die EASA gemäß der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 593/2007. Selbst für einen Betrieb mit nur 4 Mitarbeitern würde eine solche DOA-Genehmigung ca. 100 000 EUR kosten, und das Verfahren bis zur Erlangung der Genehmigung würde ca. 1 bis 1 ½ Jahre dauern.

1. Wer hat diese Sätze bestimmt? Womit ist gerechtfertigt, dass ein solcher Betrag für eine Genehmigung verlangt wird?

2. Schätzt die Kommission es als verhältnismäßig ein, dass danach ein Gurt bis zu 4 000 EUR kosten würde?

3. Woraus ergibt sich die Notwendigkeit für eine solche DOA, wenn in der Realität die Instandsetzung mit einer DOA identisch durchgeführt wird wie ohne eine DOA?

4. Werden von der FAA genehmigte Instandhaltungsunterlagen eines US-Betriebes, der nicht Inhaber der Musterzulassung ist, verwendet, sog. Eigenentwicklungen, wird auch ein DOA-Betrieb verlangt. Ein US-Betrieb, der nicht Inhaber der Musterzulassung ist, kann für seine Eigenentwicklung eine FAA-Genehmigung erhalten und dann über das bilaterale Abkommen eine EASA-Anerkennung erhalten. Dieser Betrieb kann dann ein „Dual Release“ ausstellen. Mit diesem „Dual Release“ dürfen die so in den USA instand gesetzten Gurte in Europa in den Flugzeugen eingebaut werden. Eine DOA benötigt dieser Betrieb nicht, kann aber für Europa alle Gurte nach Muster instandsetzen, auch die, für die europäische Betriebe eine DOA-Genehmigung brauchen. Wie ist dies gerechtfertigt, insbesondere in Hinblick auf die enormen Kosten, die einseitig europäischen Unternehmen entstehen?

5. Ist der Kommission bewusst, dass hier europäische Unternehmen zugunsten von US-Unternehmen erheblich benachteiligt bzw. sogar vom Markt ausgeschlossen werden?

Antwort von Herrn Kallas im Namen der Kommission
(18. März 2014)

Das Recht zur Durchführung von Instandhaltungsarbeiten an Sicherheitsgurten in Luftfahrzeugen ist nicht nur dem Inhaber einer Konstruktionsgenehmigung vorbehalten. Eine Möglichkeit für Drittunternehmen, Instandhaltungsarbeiten an Sicherheitsgurten durchzuführen, besteht darin, durch eine vertragliche Vereinbarung mit dem Inhaber der Konstruktionsgenehmigung in den Besitz der entsprechenden Instandhaltungsdaten zu gelangen und diese dann zu verwenden. Eine zweite Möglichkeit besteht darin, im Einklang mit den einschlägigen Vorschriften der geltenden EU-Rechtsvorschriften im Wege der Genehmigung als Entwicklungsbetrieb (DOA — design organisation approval) eine Änderung oder Reparatur auf Produktebene durchzuführen. Ein Drittunternehmen kann daher selbst Änderungen oder Reparaturen durchführen und anschließend die genehmigten Instandhaltungsdaten erwerben.

Mit der Verordnung des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates zur Festlegung gemeinsamer Vorschriften für die Zivilluftfahrt soll vor allem die Flugsicherheit gewährleistet, aber auch das Ziel berücksichtigt werden, gleiche Bedingungen in der gesamten EU zu schaffen. Die von der Europäischen Agentur für Flugsicherheit (EASA) erhobenen Gebühren und Entgelte sind in der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 593/2007 der Kommission, wie zuletzt geändert, festgelegt und werden auf transparente, gerechte und einheitliche Weise festgesetzt.

Instandhaltungsbetriebe in den Vereinigten Staaten (USA) müssen ebenfalls im Besitz der entsprechenden anzuwendenden Instandhaltungsdaten sein, um die reparierten/überholten Sicherheitsgurte freigeben zu können. Diese Instandhaltungsdaten bedürfen der Zustimmung des Inhabers der Konstruktionsgenehmigung oder einer von der Federal Aviation Administration benannten Person, die ihre Dienstleistung in Rechnung stellt. Die Instandhaltungsbetriebe sind nur befugt, ein Produkt nach Europa zu liefern, wenn sie ein von der EASA gemäß den Bestimmungen des Abkommens über die Zusammenarbeit bei der Regelung der Sicherheit der Zivilluftfahrt zwischen der EU und den USA genehmigter Instandhaltungsbetrieb sind. Für die von der EASA erteilten Zulassungen sind eine anfängliche und jährliche Gebühren zu entrichten.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000645/14
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Mayer (PPE)
(23 January 2014)

Subject: DOA approval by the EASA

The maintenance of aircraft safety belts (components) in Europe must (since September 2003) be performed in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 748/2012 Section — Repairs. Additionally, in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 2042/2003, a maintenance operation is required. In accordance with Regulation (EC) No. 2042/2003 Part-145.A.45, for the maintenance of aircraft safety belts the officially certified maintenance data are required from the type certificate holders. However, the type certificate holders often refuse to release the maintenance data.

If no such maintenance data are available, because the belts are ETSO articles in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 748/2012, Article 6, a Design Organisation Approval (DOA) is required in accordance with Regulation (EU) No. 748/2012 Section — Repairs. The EASA grants such an approval in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 593/2007. Even for an organisation with only 4 employees, such a DOA approval would cost approx. EUR 100,000, and the procedure before such an approval was obtained would last approx. 1 year to 18 months.

1. Who determined these rates? What is the justification for requiring such a high amount for an approval?

2. Does the Commission consider it proportionate that a safety belt would accordingly cost up to EUR 4000?

3. From where does the necessity for such a DOA arise, if in reality maintenance with a DOA is performed in exactly the same way as without a DOA?

4. If FAA-approved maintenance data of an American organisation that is not the type certificate holder are used, referred to as independent developments, a DOA organisation is also required. An American organisation that is not the type certificate holder can obtain an FAA approval for its independent development and then obtain an EASA recognition via the bilateral agreement. This company can then issue a 'dual release'. With this 'dual release', the safety belts maintained in this way in the United States can be installed in aircraft in Europe. This company does not require a DOA, but can maintain all safety belts for Europe according to the model, even those that require a DOA approval for the European organisations. How is this justified, particularly considering the enormous costs that arise unilaterally for European organisations?

5. Is the Commission aware that in this case European companies are put at a significant disadvantage in favour of American companies and even excluded from the market?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(18 March 2014)

The privilege to perform maintenance activities on aircraft safety belts is not limited to the design approval holder (DAH). One of the possibilities for a third party maintenance organisation to carry out maintenance on safety belts is to hold and use relevant maintenance data, which can be obtained through a contractual arrangement with the DAH. A second possibility is to introduce, through the privilege of the design organisation approval (DOA), a change or repair on product level in accordance with relevant provisions of applicable EU legislation. A third party organisation can therefore design its own changes or repairs and become then the owner of the approved maintenance data.

The primary objective of the European Union (EU) Regulation on common rules in the field of civil aviation is to ensure aviation safety but it also takes into consideration the objective to achieve a level-playing field throughout the EU. The fees and charges for the certificates which are issued by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) are established by Commission Regulation (EC) No 593/2007, as amended, and are set in a transparent, fair and uniform manner.

Repair stations located in the United States (US) must also be in possession of an appropriate set of applicable maintenance data to be able to release the repaired/overhauled safety belts. These maintenance data have to be approved by the DAH or by designees of the Federal Aviation Administration who charge for their involvement. The repair stations are only authorised to deliver a product to Europe if they are approved by EASA under the provisions of the EU/US agreement on cooperation in the regulation of civil aviation safety. The approvals granted by EASA are also subject to initial and annual renewal fees.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000647/14
an die Kommission
Michael Theurer (ALDE)
(23. Januar 2014)

Betrifft: EU-Förderprogramme zur Modernisierung der polnischen Möbelindustrie

Ein Mitbürger äußerte sich besorgt über Förderprogramme zur Modernisierung und Absatzsteigerung der Möbelindustrie in Polen.

Hierbei bezieht sich der Bürger auf einen Bericht auf einer einschlägigen Internetseite ([1]). Darin steht, dass die Förderprogramme aus den Strukturfonds der EU mitfinanziert würden. In dem Artikel wird kritisiert, dass vor allem Polen mit niedrigen Preisen in der Holzindustrie den negativen Trend des Umsatzes in Deutschland begünstige. Die Kofinanzierungsraten bei den Programmen betragen bis zu 70 % und würden zum Teil als finanzielle Hilfen an Unternehmen, aber auch im Rahmen der Kampagne „Made in Poland" eingesetzt. Regionale Hersteller seien aufgrund der Niedrigpreise polnischer Hersteller im Wettbewerb benachteiligt.

1. Welche Förderprogramme der Holzindustrie in Polen gibt es?

2. Wie hoch ist die Kofinanzierungsrate?

3. Wie beurteilt die Kommission die Vorwürfe der Wettbewerbsverzerrung?

Antwort von Herrn Hahn im Namen der Kommission
(27. März 2014)

1. Die Unterstützung im Rahmen der Kohäsionspolitik im Zeitraum 2007-2013 ist nicht an einen bestimmten Wirtschaftszweig gebunden. Die kohäsionspolitischen Fördermittel können für direkte Investitionsbeihilfen an Unternehmen, einschließlich Unternehmen der Holz- und Möbelindustrie, verwendet werden. In Polen sind direkte Investitionsbeihilfen im Rahmen von 18 aus dem Europäischen Fonds für regionale Entwicklung (EFRE) kofinanzierten Programmen und einem aus dem Europäischen Sozialfonds kofinanzierten Programm (ESF) verfügbar. Ein weiteres Programm wird aus dem Europäischen Landwirtschaftsfonds für die Entwicklung des ländlichen Raums (ELER) kofinanziert.

2. Die Höhe der Kofinanzierungsraten richtet sich nach den geltenden Vorschriften für staatliche Beihilfen und den für die Programme vorgesehenen Kofinanzierungsraten. Bei den aus dem EFRE und dem ESF kofinanzierten polnischen Programmen beläuft sich der EU-Beitrag auf bis zu 85 % der förderfähigen Ausgaben.

3. Die Beihilfevorschriften verhindern, dass staatliche Beihilfen den Wettbewerb und den Handel auf dem Binnenmarkt in einem Maß verzerren, das dem gemeinsamen Interesse zuwiderläuft. Allerdings können staatlichen Beihilfen genehmigt werden, die dazu beitragen, Ziele von gemeinsamem Interesse zu erreichen. In den Vorschriften über staatliche Beihilfen, insbesondere in der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 800/2008 der Kommission vom 6. August 2008 (Allgemeine Gruppenfreistellungsverordnung) ([2]), sind die Maßnahmen festgelegt, die als zulässig angesehen werden.

Die meisten im Rahmen der Kohäsionspolitik in Polen kofinanzierten Maßnahmen fallen unter die Allgemeine Gruppenfreistellungsverordnung. Gemäß der Bekanntmachung der Kommission über die Durchsetzung des Beihilfenrechts durch die einzelstaatlichen Gerichte ([3]) fällt die Umsetzung dieser Maßnahmen demnach in die unmittelbare Zuständigkeit der Mitgliedstaaten und unterliegt der Kontrolle der nationalen Gerichte, an die Beschwerden gegen Maßnahmen gerichtet werden können, die der Allgemeinen Gruppenfreistellungsverordnung zuwiderlaufen.

([1]) www.moebelfertigung.com./news/18123
([2]) ABl. L 214 vom 9.8.2008.
([3]) ABl. C 85 vom 9.4.2009, S. 3.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000647/14
to the Commission
Michael Theurer (ALDE)
(23 January 2014)

Subject: EU support programmes for modernising the Polish furniture industry

A fellow citizen expressed concern about support programmes for modernising and increasing the sales of the furniture industry in Poland.

The citizen is referring to a report on a relevant website ([1]). The website states that the support programmes are co-financed from the EU's structural fund. In the article, the criticism is made that Poland in particular is abetting the negative sales trend in Germany with low prices in the lumber industry. According to the article, the co-financing rates in the programmes are up to 70% and are used in part as financial assistance to companies, but also in the 'Made in Poland' campaign. According to the article, regional manufacturers are at a competitive disadvantage due to the low prices of Polish manufacturers.

1. Which support programmes exist for the lumber industry in Poland?

2. How high is the co-financing rate?

3. What are the Commission's views on the allegations of distortion of competition?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(27 March 2014)

1. Support under cohesion policy in the 2007-2013 period is not specifically linked to any particular sector of the economy. Cohesion policy funding can be used for direct investment support for enterprises, including those operating in lumber and furniture sector. Direct investment support in Poland is available under 18 programmes co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and 1 programme co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF). A further programme is also co-financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

2. There are various levels of co-financing, which depend on the applicable state aid rules and co-financing levels envisaged for the programmes. In the case of Polish programmes co-financed from the ERDF and ESF, the contribution from the EU funds can amount to a maximum 85% of the eligible expenditure.

3. State aid rules ensure that aid does not distort competition and trade within the internal market to an extent contrary to the common interest. However, they allow granting of state aid that contributes to the achievement of objectives of common interest. As such, state aid rules, and in particular Commission Regulation (EC) No 800/2008 of 6 August 2008 (the General Block Exemption Regulation or GBER) ([2]), define measures that are considered compatible.

Most measures co-financed by cohesion policy in Poland are covered by the GBER. They are thus implemented under the direct responsibility of the Member State and under the review of a national judge, to whom complaints that measures are implemented contrary to the GBER can be submitted, in line with Commission Notice on the enforcement of state aid law by national courts ([3]).

([1]) www.moebelfertigung.com./news/18123
([2]) OJ L 214, 9.8.2008.
([3]) OJ C 85, 9.4.2009.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-000648/14
προς την Επιτροπή
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(23 Ιανουαρίου 2014)

Θέμα: Εισοδηματικό χάσμα μεταξύ πλούσιων και φτωχών

Όπως προκύπτει από τα πορίσματα του συνόλου των διεθνών μελετών, η εισοδηματική ανισότητα στην παγκόσμια οικονομία αυξάνεται λαμβάνοντας ανησυχητικές διαστάσεις. Μάλιστα, το γεγονός της διεύρυνσης του «χάσματος» μεταξύ πλούσιων και φτωχών αναμένεται να αποτελέσει βασικό ζήτημα στο πλαίσιο των εργασιών του World Economic Forum. Ταυτόχρονα και χωρίς αμφιβολία, η περιορισμένη διάχυση των ωφελειών της ανάπτυξης σε ένα μικρό αριθμό πολιτών υπονομεύει την κοινωνική σταθερότητα και βιωσιμότητα. Σε αυτήν την κατεύθυνση, και με δεδομένη τη σημαντική επίδραση της μείωσης των αμοιβών της εργασίας στην αύξηση των εισοδηματικών ανισοτήτων ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Διαθέτει στατιστικά στοιχεία για τη διακύμανση της εισοδηματικής ανισότητας στα κράτη μέλη;

2. Εντοπίζεται άμεση συσχέτιση ανάμεσα στις πολιτικές δημοσιονομικής εξυγίανσης και τη διεύρυνση του χάσματος μεταξύ πλούσιων και φτωχών;

Απάντηση του κ. Andor εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(13 Μαρτίου 2014)

Η Επιτροπή δημοσιεύει στατιστικές σχετικά με την εξέλιξη και την κατανομή του εισοδήματος των νοικοκυριών στον ιστότοπο της Eurostat ([1]) και σε περιοδικές εκθέσεις, όπως οι ετήσιες εκθέσεις «*Employment and Social Developments in Europe*» («Εξελίξεις της απασχόλησης και κοινωνικές εξελίξεις στην Ευρώπη») και οι τριμηνιαίες «Επισκοπήσεις της εργασιακής και κοινωνικής κατάστασης στην ΕΕ» («*EU Employment and Social Situation*») ([2]). Οι εν λόγω στατιστικές βασίζονται σε μια εναρμονισμένη ευρωπαϊκή έρευνα, τις ενωσιακές στατιστικές για το εισόδημα και τις συνθήκες διαβίωσης (EU-SILC), και οι τελευταίες εκτιμήσεις για τις στατιστικές αυτές αφορούν το έτος 2012.

Η Επιτροπή έχει επίσης παρουσιάσει στοιχεία με βάση το Euromod ([3]), το υπόδειγμα μικροπροσομοίωσης φορολογίας-παροχών για την Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση, όσον αφορά τον αντίκτυπο των μέτρων δημοσιονομικής εξυγίανσης μέχρι τα μέσα του 2012. Δείχνει ότι ο σχεδιασμός των μέτρων αυτών έχει καθοριστική σημασία για την πρόληψη των μεγαλύτερων επιπτώσεων στα νοικοκυριά χαμηλού εισοδήματος, ενώ επισημαίνει τις ενδείξεις μεγαλύτερου εισοδηματικού χάσματος σε λίγες μόνο χώρες ([4]). Μια πιο πρόσφατη ανάλυση των ευρωπαϊκών υποδειγμάτων φορολογίας-παροχών είναι διαθέσιμη στον ιστότοπο του Euromod ([5]).

([1]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/income_social_inclusion_living_conditions/introduction
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=113&langId=en
([3]) https://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/euromod
([4]) Βλέπε ιδίως EU Employment and Social Situation Quarterly Review — Μάρτιος 2013 στη διεύθυνση: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=1852&furtherNews=yes
([5]) https://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/euromod

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000648/14
to the Commission
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(23 January 2014)

Subject: Income divide between rich and poor

According to all international studies, the income divide in the global economy has widened to an alarming degree. In fact, the widening 'divide' between rich and poor is expected to be one of the main items on the World Economic Forum agenda. At the same time, social stability and sustainability are clearly being undermined by the fact that the benefits of growth only reach a small number of citizens. In view of this and given the significant impact that pay cuts have had in exacerbating the income divide, will the Commission say:

1. Does it have statistics on fluctuations in the income divide in the Member States?

2. Is there a direct correlation between fiscal consolidation policies and the widening income divide between rich and poor?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(13 March 2014)

The Commission publishes statistics on the development of household income and its distribution in Europe on the Eurostat website ([1]) in particular and in such periodicals as the 'Employment and Social Developments in Europe' annual reports (and the EU 'Employment and Social Situation' quarterly reviews) ([2]). Those statistics are based on a harmonised European survey, the EU-Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC), and the latest estimates for them relate to the 2012 wave.

The Commission has also presented evidence based on Euromod ([3]), the tax-benefit microsimulation model for the European Union, regarding the impact of fiscal consolidation measures until mid-2012. It shows that the design of such measures is crucial to preventing the impact on low-income households from being greater and points to signs of a wider income divide in only a few countries ([4]). More recent analysis of European tax-benefit models is available on the Euromod website ([5]).

([1]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/income_social_inclusion_living_conditions/introduction
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=113&langId=en
([3]) https://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/euromod
([4]) In particular see the EU Employment and Social Situation Quarterly Review — March 2013 at: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=1852&furtherNews=yes
([5]) https://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/euromod

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-000649/14
προς την Επιτροπή
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(23 Ιανουαρίου 2014)

Θέμα: Αύξηση επισιτιστικής ανασφάλειας και υποσιτισμού των παιδιών στην Ελλάδα

Σύμφωνα με σχετικές έρευνες ή μελέτες αξιολόγησης που διενεργούν Ινστιτούτα και Μη Κυβερνητικές Οργανώσεις εμπλεκόμενες στην υλοποίηση των Προγραμμάτων Σίτισης και Υγιεινής Διατροφής στην Ελλάδα, το φαινόμενο του υποσιτισμού των παιδιών στη χώρα μας αυξάνει σημαντικά μαζί με την αδυναμία χιλιάδων νοικοκυριών να εξασφαλίζουν επαρκή, ποσοτικά και ποιοτικά, διατροφή στα προστατευόμενα ανήλικα μέλη τους. Ταυτόχρονα, και όπως συγκλίνει το σύνολο της επιστημονικής κοινότητας, η ανεπαρκής και κακής ποιότητας τροφή, μεταξύ άλλων, επηρεάζει δυσμενώς την σωματική και την πνευματική ανάπτυξη των παιδιών, υπονομεύοντας τη μορφωτική και εκπαιδευτική τους πορεία, εντείνοντας τον κίνδυνο παράτασης ή ακόμα και αναπαραγωγής της ακραίας φτώχειας στις επόμενες γενιές. Με δεδομένο ότι, αφενός, ο περιορισμός της φτώχειας και τους κοινωνικού αποκλεισμού, και, αφετέρου, η καταπολέμηση της παιδικής ένδειας και του υποσιτισμού των ανηλίκων αποτελούν διακηρυγμένους στόχους της ΕΕ, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Πώς σχολιάζει την συγκεκριμένη κατάσταση στην Ελλάδα;

2. Πού εντοπίζει τις αιτίες εξάπλωσης του εν λόγω φαινομένου;

3. Προτίθεται είτε να εκδώσει σχετικές συστάσεις για την αντιμετώπιση του φαινομένου στην Ελλάδα, είτε, ως μέλος της τρόικας, να προτείνει ή να αποδεχθεί μέτρα στήριξης των ευάλωτων κοινωνικών ομάδων προκειμένου να ανασχεθεί η εξάπλωση του υποσιτισμού τόσο στον παιδικό, όσο και στον γενικό πληθυσμό;

4. Υπάρχουν διαθέσιμα κονδύλια από τα Ευρωπαϊκά Διαρθρωτικά Ταμεία ώστε να αυξηθούν τα αντίστοιχα Προγράμματα Σίτισης και Υγιεινής Διατροφής, καθώς και οι οφελούμενοι-δικαιούχοι τους;

Απάντηση του κ. Borg εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(19 Μαρτίου 2014)

Η Επιτροπή γνωρίζει τη δυσχερή κατάσταση στην Ελλάδα, το γεγονός ότι τα διατροφικά προβλήματα μπορούν να επηρεάσουν τη σωματική και πνευματική ανάπτυξη των παιδιών και την έρευνα όσον αφορά τη σχέση μεταξύ της υγιεινής διατροφής και της προσιτής τιμής των τροφίμων ([1]).

Η ευρωπαϊκή στρατηγική του 2007 για θέματα υγείας που έχουν σχέση με τη διατροφή, το υπερβολικό βάρος και την παχυσαρκία ([2]) προωθεί μια ισορροπημένη διατροφή και έναν δραστήριο τρόπο ζωής για όλους ([3]).

Τα ευρωπαϊκά προγράμματα διανομής φρούτων και γάλακτος στα σχολεία ([4]) ([5]), προωθούν την πρόσβαση των μαθητών σε υγιεινά τρόφιμα. Επιπλέον, το πρόγραμμα «δωρεάν διανομής τροφίμων στους απόρους» ωφέλησε 18,6 εκατ. ανθρώπους το 2012 (εκ των οποίων οι 414 000 αποδέκτες ενίσχυσης αντιστοιχούν μόνο στην Ελλάδα). Δύο πιλοτικά σχέδια ([6]) τέθηκαν σε εφαρμογή για να αυξηθεί η κατανάλωση φρούτων και λαχανικών σε κοινότητες όπου το οικογενειακό εισόδημα είναι κατώτερο του 50% του μέσου όρου της ΕΕ.

Το νέο ταμείο Ευρωπαϊκής Βοήθειας προς τους Απόρους (FEAD) προβλέπει επίσης την παροχή τροφίμων και βασικής υλικής συνδρομής στους απόρους, συμπεριλαμβανομένων και των παιδιών. Το FEAD θα παράσχει βοήθεια ύψους 280 εκατ. ευρώ στην Ελλάδα κατά την περίοδο 2014-2020. Ωστόσο, όσον αφορά το Ευρωπαϊκό Ταμείο Περιφερειακής Ανάπτυξης, αυτό δεν μπορεί να συγχρηματοδοτήσει την απόκτηση και τη διανομή των γευμάτων.

Το πρόγραμμα οικονομικής προσαρμογής για την Ελλάδα περιλαμβάνει στο πλαίσιο των στόχων του τη στήριξη των ευάλωτων κοινωνικών ομάδων. Οι όροι του προγράμματος έχουν ως στόχο την επίτευξη της δικαιοσύνης, οι μεταρρυθμίσεις εφαρμόζονται σταδιακά και το πρόγραμμα καταπολεμά τη φοροδιαφυγή και τη διαφθορά. Επιπλέον, δίνει έντονη και αυξανόμενη έμφαση στην απασχόληση και τις κοινωνικές πολιτικές. Η προστασία των ευάλωτων ομάδων βελτιώνεται μέσω κοινωνικών προγραμμάτων, κρατικών επιδοτήσεων και δημοσίων υπηρεσιών και δημιουργείται ένα σύστημα ελάχιστου εγγυημένου εισοδήματος.

([1]) «Τα πιο υγιεινά τρόφιμα και διατροφικές πρακτικές κοστίζουν περισσότερο από τις λιγότερο υγιεινές επιλογές; Μία συστηματική επανεξέταση και μετα-ανάλυση» http://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/3/12/e004277.full.pdf+html?sid=a6d56515-bb30-4ed5-9aec-306652914400

([2]) COM(2007)279.

([3]) Ενθαρρύνει τις προσανατολισμένες στη δράση συμπράξεις με τη συμμετοχή των κρατών μελών (Ομάδα υψηλού επιπέδου για τη διατροφή και τη σωματική άσκηση http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/high_level_group/index_el.htm) και της κοινωνίας των πολιτών (Ευρωπαϊκή πλατφόρμα δράσης για τη διατροφή, τη σωματική άσκηση και την υγεία http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/platform/index_el.htm).

([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sfs/index_el.htm

([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/milk/school-milk-scheme/index_el.htm

([6]) SANCO/2011/C4/01 και SANCO/2013/C4/02.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000649/14
to the Commission
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(23 January 2014)

Subject: Increase in food supply insecurity and child undernutrition in Greece

According to surveys and evaluations conducted by institutes and non-governmental organisations involved in the implementation of food aid and healthy nutrition programmes in Greece, the number of undernourished children in Greece has increased considerably, as thousands of households are unable to provide food of adequate quality and in sufficient quantities to their underage dependent family members. At the same time, the entire scientific community concurs that insufficient and inadequate food affects children's physical and mental development, thus undermining their educational progress. This exacerbates the risk of extreme poverty extending to or being transmitted across generations. In view of the fact that reducing poverty and social exclusion, on the one hand, and combating child poverty and undernutrition among the underage population, on the other, are included in the EU's declared objectives, will the Commission say:

1. What are its comments on this particular situation in Greece?

2. What are the reasons for this worsening problem?

3. Does it intend either to recommend action to address the problem in Greece or, as a member of the Troika, to propose or agree to measures to support vulnerable social groups in order to prevent undernutrition from spreading both among children and in the general population?

4. Do the European Union Structural Funds have available resources which could be used to increase food aid and healthy nutrition programmes and the number of beneficiaries of those programmes?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(19 March 2014)

The Commission is aware of the difficult situation in Greece, of the fact that nutritional problems can affect children's physical and mental development and of research on the link between healthy eating and affordability of food ([1]).

The 2007 Strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity-related Health Issues ([2]) promotes a balanced diet and active lifestyles for all ([3]).

The EU School Fruit and Milk Schemes ([4]) ([5]) promote the access to healthy food of school children. In addition, the 'Free food for the most deprived persons' programme benefited 18.6 million people in 2012 (from which 414 000 aid recipients in Greece alone). Two pilot projects ([6]) were launched to increase consumption of fruits and vegetables in communities where the household income is below 50% of the EU average.

The new Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) further provides food and basic material assistance to the most deprived, children included. FEAD will be providing aid to Greece worth EUR 280 million in 2014-2020. As regards the European Regional Development Fund, however, it cannot co-finance the acquisition and distribution of meals.

The Economic Adjustment Programme for Greece includes supporting vulnerable social groups under its objectives. The conditionality of the programme aims at fairness, reforms are being applied progressively and the programme fights tax evasion and corruption. In addition, it has a strong and growing focus on employment and social policies. The protection of the vulnerable by social programmes, government transfers and government services is being improved and a minimum income scheme is being created.

([1]) 'Do healthier foods and diet patterns cost more than less healthy options? A systematic review and meta-analysis': http://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/3/12/e004277.full.pdf+html?sid=a6d56515-bb30-4ed5-9aec-306652914400
([2]) COM(2007) 279.
([3]) It encourages action-oriented partnerships involving the Member States (High Level Group for Nutrition and Physical Activity http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/high_level_group/index_en.htm) and civil society (EU Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health: http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/platform/index_en.htm).
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sfs/index_en.htm
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/milk/school-milk-scheme/index_en.htm
([6]) SANCO/2011/C4/01 and SANCO/2013/C4/02.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-000651/14
lill-Kummissjoni
Roberta Metsola (PPE)
(23 ta' Jannar 2014)

Suġġett: Projbizzjoni fuq is-sewqan tar-roti

F'Malta ttieħdet deċiżjoni li tipprojbixxi s-sewqan tar-roti fuq bankina ma' xatt partikolari fejn jippassiġġaw in-nies; dan jesponi liċ-ċiklisti għall-perikli tat-toroq.

Teżisti leġiżlazzjoni Ewropea li tipproteġi liċ-ċiklisti huma u jsuqu f'toroq ewlenin b'ħafna traffiku u, jekk iva, liema hi?

Beħsiebha l-Kummissjoni taħdem biex ittejjeb il-kundizzjonijiet għaċ-ċiklisti fl-UE kollha?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Kallas f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(3 ta' Marzu 2014)

Il-Kummissjoni tiġbed l-attenzjoni tal-Onorevoli Membru li bir-rispett dovut għall-prinċipju tas-sussidjarjetà, id-deċiżjoni dwar jekk iċ-ċiklisti jistgħux jidħlu f'passaġġ pedonali f'żona urbana tista' tittieħed biss mill-awtoritajiet ta' dak l-Istat Membru partikulari. Ma hemm l-ebda kodiċi Ewropea tat-triq li tirregola l-użu tar-roti f'toroq pubbliċi.

It-titjib tas-sikurezza tal-utenti vulnerabbli tat-toroq, bħaċ-ċiklisti, huwa wieħed mill-għanijiet prijoritarji stabbiliti mill-Kummissjoni fl-Orjentazzjonijiet tal-Politika dwar is-Sikurezza fit-Triq 2011-2020. Għaldaqstant il-Kummissjoni qed tippjana li tirrevedi d-Direttiva dwar il-ġestjoni tal-infrastruttura tas-sikurezza ([1]) bil-ħsieb li tittejjeb aktar is-sigurtà għall-utenti vulnerabbli tat-toroq. L-inċidenti relatati maċ-ċikliżmu fit-toroq ħafna drabi jseħħu f'żoni urbani u għalhekk l-isfidi speċifiċi tal-mobbiltà urbana huma wkoll ta' interess f'dan ir-rigward. Dan l-aħħar ġie ppreżentat pakkett ([2]) b'rakkomandazzjonijiet lill-ibliet fejn wieħed mis-suġġetti ewlenin kien is-sigurtà fit-toroq.

([1]) Id-Direttiva 2008/96/KE tal-Parlament Ewropew u tal-Kunsill tad-19 ta' Novemrbru 2008 dwar il-ġestjoni tas-sikurezza fl-infrastruttura tat-toroq, ĠU L 319, 29.11.2008.

([2]) L-Urban Mobility Package, Diċembru 2013, http://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/urban/ump_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000651/14
to the Commission
Roberta Metsola (PPE)
(23 January 2014)

Subject: Cycling ban

A decision has been taken to ban cycling on a Malta promenade, exposing cyclists to the dangers of the roads.

What European legislation, if any, exists to protect cyclists when cycling on major roads with heavy traffic?

Does the Commission intend to work on improving conditions for cyclists across the EU?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(3 March 2014)

The Commission draws the attention of the Honourable Member that with due respect to the principle of subsidiarity the decision whether cyclists may mount a pedestrian walk in an urban area can only be taken by the authorities in the given Member State. There is no European highway code regulating the use of bicycles on public roads or streets.

Improving the safety of vulnerable road users, such as cyclists, is one of the priority objectives set by the Commission in its Policy Orientations for Road Safety 2011-2020. Therefore the Commission plans to review the infrastructure safety management Directive ([1]) with a view to further improve safety for vulnerable road users. Cycling road accidents most often happen in urban areas and therefore the specific challenges of urban mobility are also of interest in this regard. A package ([2]) with recommendations to cities was recently presented, with road safety as one of the main topics.

([1]) Directive 2008/96/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on road infrastructure safety management, OJ L 319, 29.11.2008.
([2]) The Urban Mobility Package, December 2013, http://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/urban/ump_en.htm

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-000652/14
lill-Kummissjoni
Roberta Metsola (PPE)
(23 ta' Jannar 2014)

Suġġett: Protezzjoni transkonfinali tal-konsumatur

Il-Kummissjoni għandha l-għan li ttejjeb il-protezzjoni transkonfinali tal-konsumatur permezz tar-Regolament (KE) Nru 2006/2004 dwar il-kooperazzjoni bejn l-awtoritajiet nazzjonali responsabbli għall-infurzar tal-liġijiet tal-protezzjoni tal-konsumaturi.

Beħsiebha l-Kummissjoni tkompli tibni fuq dan billi tipproponi regolamenti dwar oqsma speċifiċi tal-protezzjoni transkonfinali tal-konsumatur bħall-ksur tad-drittijiet tal-konsumatur fil-qasam tas-servizzi bankarji transkonfinali?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Mimica f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(17 ta' Marzu 2014)

Ir-Regolament dwar kooperazzjoni ([1]) fil-protezzjoni tal-konsumatur tkopri leġiżlazzjoni ewlenija tal-Unjoni li tipproteġi l-interessi ekonomiċi tal-konsumatur. Taħt il-qafas stabbilit mir-Regolament, l-awtoritajiet tal-Istati Membri jikkooperaw sabiex jindirizzaw ksur transkonfinali tar-regoli tal-protezzjoni tal-konsumatur stabbiliti fil-leġiżlazzjoni msemmija (kif elenkat fl-Anness tar-Regolament).

Ksur transkonfinali li jkun ta' ħsara għall-interessi kollettivi tal-konsumaturi fil-qasam tas-servizzi finanzjarji, inklużi s-servizzi bankarji transkonfinali, jista' jiġi indirizzat permezz tal-mekkaniżmi ta' kooperazzjoni tar-Regolament fejn jidħlu r-regoli ta' protezzjoni tal-konsumatur li jaqgħu fil-kamp tal-applikazzjoni tar-Regolament. Pereżempju, ir-regoli fil-qasam ta' prattiċi kummerċjali żleali fin-negozju mal-konsumatur u l-klawżoli kuntrattwali inġusti fil-kuntratti mal-konsumatur ([2]), jew ir-regoli dwar reklamar komparattiv fin-negozju mal-konsumatur ([3]), japplikaw ukoll għas-servizzji finanzjarji. Barra minn hekk, ir-Regolament ikopri leġiżlazzjoni settorjali tal-konsumatur dwar il-kummerċjalizzazzjoni mill-bogħod tas-servizzji finanzjarji tal-konsumatur u l-ftehimiet ta' kreditu għall-konsumatur ([4]).

([1]) Ir-Regolament 2006/2004/KE dwar il-kooperazzjoni bejn l-awtoritajiet nazzjonali responsabbli għall-infurzar tal-liġijiet tal-protezzjoni tal-konsumaturi, ĠU L 364, 9.12.2004, p. 1.

([2]) Id-Direttiva 2005/29/KE dwar prattiċi kummerċjali żleali fin-negozju mal-konsumatur fis-suq intern, ĠU L 149, 11.6.2005, p. 22 u d— Direttiva 93/13/KEE dwar klawżoli inġusti f'kuntratti mal-konsumatur, ĠU L 95, 21.4.1993, p. 29.

([3]) Id-Direttiva 2006/114/KE dwar reklamar qarrieqi u komparattiv (ĠU L 376, 27.12.2006).

([4]) Id-Direttiva 2002/65/KE li tikkonċerna t-tqegħid fis-suq b'distanza ta' servizzi finanzjarji ta' konsumaturi, ĠU L 271, 9.10.2002, p. 16 u d-Direttiva 2008/48/KE dwar ftehim ta' kreditu għall-konsumatur, ĠU 133, 22.5.2008, p. 66.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000652/14
to the Commission
Roberta Metsola (PPE)
(23 January 2014)

Subject: Cross-border consumer protection

The Commission aims to improve the cross-border protection of consumers through Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 on cooperation between national authorities responsible for the enforcement of consumer protection laws.

Does the Commission intend to build on this by proposing regulations on specific areas of cross-border consumer protection such as the infringement of consumer rights in the field of cross-border banking services?

Answer given by Mr Mimica on behalf of the Commission
(17 March 2014)

The regulation on consumer protection cooperation ([1]) covers key Union legislation protecting consumer economic interests. Under the framework established by the regulation, Member States' authorities cooperate to tackle cross-border infringements to the consumer protection rules set out in the mentioned legislation (as listed in the annex to the regulation).

Cross-border infringements harming consumers' collective interests in the area of financial services, including cross-border banking services, can be addressed through the regulation cooperation mechanisms to the extent that they concern the consumer protection rules falling within the scope of the regulation. For example, rules in the area of unfair business-to-consumer commercial practices and unfair contract terms in consumer contracts ([2]), or rules on business to consumer comparative advertising ([3]), apply also to financial services. Furthermore, the regulation covers sectoral consumer legislation concerning distance marketing of consumer financial services and credit agreements for consumers ([4]).

([1]) Regulation 2006/2004/EC on cooperation between national authorities responsible for the enforcement of consumer protection laws, OJ L 364, 9.12.2004, p.1.
([2]) Directive 2005/29/EC concerning unfair business-to-consumer commercial practices in the internal market, OJ L 149, 11.6.2005, p. 22 and Directive 93/13/EEC on unfair terms in consumer contracts, OJ L 95, 21.4.1993, p. 29.
([3]) Directive 2006/114/EC concerning misleading and comparative advertising, OJ L 376, 27.12.2006, p. 21.
([4]) Directive 2002/65/EC concerning the distance marketing of consumer financial services, OJ L 271, 9.10.2002, p. 16 and Directive 2008/48/EC on credit agreements for consumers, OJ 133, 22.5.2008, p. 66.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-000654/14
lill-Kummissjoni
Roberta Metsola (PPE)
(23 ta' Jannar 2014)

Suġġett: Erasmus+

Il-programm Erasmus+ il-ġdid s'issa ġie ppubblikat bl-Ingliż biss, filwaqt li l-verżjonijiet tradotti tal-programm bil-lingwi l-oħra kollha tal-UE mhumiex se jiġu ppubblikati qabel April 2014. Madankollu, l-ewwel skadenza għat-tressiq ta' proġetti Erasmus+ hija Marzu 2014.

Tista' l-Kummissjoni tgħid jekk in-nuqqas ta' pubblikazzjoni tal-programm Erasmus+ bl-24 lingwa kollha tal-UE jikkostitwixxix diskriminazzjoni?

Tista' l-Kummissjoni tgħid jekk dan jikkostitwixxix ksur tat-Trattati jew ta' xi liġi tal-UE?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sinjura Vassiliou f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(21 ta' Marzu 2014)

Il-Parlament Ewropew u l-Kunsill fil-11 ta' Diċembru 2013 adottaw ir-Regolament (UE) Nru 1288/2013 li jistabbilixxi "Erasmus+": il-programm tal-Unjoni għall-edukazzjoni, taħriġ, żgħażagħ u sport ([1]). L-għada l-Kummissjoni ppubblikat is-sejħa għall-proposti għall-Erasmus+ fi 23 lingwa uffiċjali tal-UE ([2]). Tat struzzjonijiet lill-Aġenziji Nazzjonali kollha li jimplimentaw l-Erasmus+ f'isem il-Kummissjoni fuq livell nazzjonali, biex jipprovdu lill-applikanti potenzjali b'kull tagħrif relevanti meħtieġ dwar is-sejħa fil-lingwa tagħhom. L-applikazzjonijiet jistgħu jitressqu f'kull lingwa uffiċjali tal-UE.

Il-Gwida tal-Programm Erasmus+, li tipprovdi informazzjoni dettaljata dwar l-azzjonijiet kollha tal-Programm, s'issa għadha disponibbli bl-Ingliż biss. Il-gwida bħalissa qiegħda tiġi tradotta mis-servizzi ta' traduzzjoni tal-Kummissjoni.

Kieku s-sejħa nżammet sakemm titlesta t-traduzzjoni tal-Gwida tal-Programm, kien ikun hemm impatt negattiv sostanzjali fuq iċ-ċittadini u l-organizzazzjonijiet tal-UE li xtaqu jipparteċipaw fil-programm. Billi is-sejħa hija disponibbli fil-lingwi uffiċjali tal-UE u meta jitqies l-appoġġ provdut mill-Aġenziji Nazzjonali, il-Kummissjoni ma tqisx li ebda grupp ta' applikanti potenzjali ma tqiegħed fi żvantaġġ.

Il-Kummissjoni tqis li l-għażla tagħha f'dan il-każ kienet xierqa u proporzjonata u ma tikkostitwixxix ksur tat-Trattati jew ta' ebda liġi oħra tal-UE.

([1]) ĠU L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 50.
([2]) ĠU C 362, 12.12.2013, p. 62.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000654/14
to the Commission
Roberta Metsola (PPE)
(23 January 2014)

Subject: Erasmus+

The new Erasmus+ programme has so far been published only in English, while the translated versions of the programme in all the other EU languages will not be published until April 2014. However, the first deadline for submitting Erasmus+ projects is March 2014.

Can the Commission say whether the failure to publish the Erasmus+ programme in all the 24 EU languages constitutes discrimination?

Can the Commission say whether this constitutes a violation of the Treaties or of any EC law?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(21 March 2014)

The European Parliament and the Council adopted on 11 December 2013 Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 establishing 'Erasmus+': the Union programme for education, training, youth and sport ([1]). The Commission published the next day the call for proposals for Erasmus+ in 23 official EU languages ([2]). It has instructed all National Agencies, which implement Erasmus+ on behalf of the Commission at national level, to provide potential applicants with all necessary supporting information on the call in their own language. Applications can be submitted in any official EU language.

The Erasmus+ Programme Guide, which provides detailed information about all actions under the Programme, is as yet only available in English. The guide is currently being translated by the Commission's translation services.

Delaying the first call while awaiting the translation of the Programme Guide would have had a substantial negative impact on EU citizens and organisations wishing to participate in the programme. Since the call is available in the official EU languages and given the support available from National Agencies, the Commission does not consider that any group of potential applicants has been put at a disadvantage.

The Commission considers that its choice in this case was appropriate and proportionate and does not constitute a violation of the Treaties or of any other EC law.

([1]) OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 50.
([2]) OJ C 362, 12.12.2013, p. 62.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000656/14
to the Commission
Charles Tannock (ECR)
(23 January 2014)

Subject: European Public Prosecutor's Office

The recent case of former Commissioner Dalli has once again highlighted the inconsistencies present in the arrangements for the transfer of fraud cases to national courts. According to the UK satirical publication Private Eye, a mere 471 out of over 1 000 cases transferred to national authorities by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) actually reached the courts and, of this figure, over half were dismissed. This amounts to only approximately 20% of cases resulting in convictions.

This low figure may indicate possible failings in the Commission's transferal system but also potentially flaws in national legal orders. The European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) was created in part to respond to this institutional gap and will tackle these major judicial loopholes. However, when outlining the EPPO's programme, the Commission has made two opposing statements.

Firstly the Commission states that: 'when acting for the EPPO, they (European Delegated Prosecutors) will be fully independent from the national prosecution bodies'. However, the Commission also states that 'the EPPO will mainly rely on national rules of investigation and procedure, which will apply if the regulation does not provide for more specific provisions', which seems somewhat contradictory.

1. Can the Commission clarify how this new judicial body will be fully independent from national prosecution authorities given that it will mainly rely on national rules?

2. What guidelines has the Commission put in place to determine which cases are to be processed by OLAF and, if they are subsequently transferred to national courts, the criteria according to which this will take place?

3. Now that such a framework exists for transferred cases to be subject to greater scrutiny, does this also mean that older cases will be reviewed?

4. The EPPO has been put in place as a mechanism to deal with these judicial inconsistencies. Has the Commission put in place any other such other mechanisms to supervise the EPPO itself?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(27 March 2014)

The independence of the Office is unrelated to the law governing the Office's investigations. The Commission's proposal contains provisions to ensure the European Public Prosecutor's Office's independence. The Office, its members and staff must not seek or take instructions from anybody outside the Office and the Office's independence will furthermore be safeguarded by the appointment and dismissal procedure, set out in Art. 8 to 10.

OLAF's mandate is defined in Regulation 883/2013. OLAF does not have the competence to indict cases before national courts. It can only transfer its investigation reports and recommendations to the competent national authorities. The delineation of competences is clear once the likelihood of a criminal offence is established. Once the European Public Prosecutor's Office will be established, OLAF will be competent to conduct administrative investigation with regard to irregularities not constituting criminal offences affecting the Union's financial interests.

According to Art. 71 (3) of the proposal, the Office exercises its competence with regard to any offence within its competence committed after the date on which the European Public Prosecutor's Office assumes its tasks. The Office may also exercise its competence with regard to any offence within its competence committed before that date if no competent national authority is already investigating or prosecuting it.

The European Public Prosecutor shall be accountable to the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission. Some of his investigative acts need prior authorisation from the competent national courts and the legality of his actions is reviewable by national courts.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000657/14
to the Commission
Charles Tannock (ECR)
(23 January 2014)

Subject: Imports of angora fur

Standards of animal welfare in many parts of the world are still far from acceptable and fall short of the humane standards we take for granted in the EU. The plight of the Angora rabbit is one of such cases. Prized for its long and silky wool, the Angora rabbit has become victim to cruelties imposed by the demands of the growing angora industry in China.

The animal rights group PETA recently exposed some of these cruelties on film, revealing distressing images of terrified and screaming rabbits being held by the neck without anaesthesia on wooden boards while the soft fur is plucked by hand or metal scissors until only the raw skin remains. As one can imagine, the living conditions of these rabbits are also appalling, with the rabbits being kept in tiny, filthy cages surrounded by their own excrement. This plucking process is repeated every two or three months until the rabbits die, unsurprisingly, two to three years later.

This cruel and inhumane practice is illegal within the EU, yet many of our biggest high street chains have yet to put an end to purchasing angora wool from these factories in China.

With over 90% of the angora fur industry originating in China, does the Commission not feel that the overall issue of animal rights in China should be a firm component of EU-China trade and raised as a condition of trade?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(25 March 2014)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-013393/2013 ([1]).

Despite the limited applicability of EU animal welfare rules to third countries the Commission wishes to stress that it strongly advocates the further development of international animal welfare standards in the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) to which China is also a member. For the time being the OIE is not working on a specific standard for the keeping of rabbits however, the general rules in Chapter 7.1 of the terrestrial code ([2]) are applicable.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) http://www.oie.int/index.php?id=169&L=0&htmfile=chapitre_1.7.1.htm

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-000658/14
lill-Kummissjoni
Joseph Cuschieri (S&D)
(23 ta' Jannar 2014)

Suġġett: It-Taxxa tar-Reġistrazzjoni tal-Vetturi

Minkejja l-proċess kontinwu ta' integrazzjoni tas-suq uniku, problemi ta' reġistrazzjoni tal-vetturi bil-mutur għadhom ostaklu frekwenti għal negozji u ċittadini fis-suq intern.

Fir-Rapport tal-2010 dwar iċ-Ċittadinanza tal-UE "Inżarmaw l-ostakoli għad-drittijiet taċ-ċittadini tal-UE", il-Kummissjoni identifikat il-problemi ta' reġistrazzjoni tal-vetturi bħala wieħed mill-ostakoli ewlenin li qed jiffaċċjaw iċ-ċittadini meta jeżerċitaw id-drittijiet tagħhom skont il-liġi tal-UE fil-ħajja ta' kuljum tagħhom u ħabbret, fost l-azzjonijiet previsti biex jitneħħew tali ostakoli, is-simplifikazzjoni tal-formalitajiet u l-kundizzjonijiet għar-reġistrazzjoni tal-vetturi li huma rreġistrati fi Stat Membru ieħor

Minħabba li hi tikkunsidra t-taxxa fuq ir-reġistrazzjoni tal-vetturi bħala wieħed mill-ostakoli prinċipali, liema inizjattivi ulterjuri qed tippjana li tieħu l-Kummissjoni sabiex telimina dan l-ostakolu, u meta?

X'se tagħmel il-Kummissjoni sabiex tassigura li b'mod effettiv jitneħħa dan l-ostaklu fl-iqsar żmien possibbli?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Tajani f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(11 ta' Marzu 2014)

Il-Kummissjoni adottat proposta għal Regolament li jissimplifika t-trasferiment tal-vetturi bil-mutur reġistrati fi Stat Membru ieħor fi ħdan is-suq uniku fl-4 ta' April 2012 ([1]).

Din il-proposta tistipula li Stat Membru jista' jeħtieġ ir-reġistrazzjoni fit-territorju tiegħu ta' vettura reġistrata fi Stat Membru ieħor biss jekk id-detentur taċ-ċertifikat ta' reġistrazzjoni jkollu r-residenza normali tiegħu f'dan it-territorju. Il-proposta tinkludi wkoll dispożizzjoni fejn meta d-detentur taċ-ċertifikat ta' reġistrazzjoni jittrasferrixxi r-residenza normali tiegħu lejn Stat Membru ieħor, għandu jitlob reġistrazzjoni fi żmien perjodu ta' sitt xhur minn meta jasal.

Dan ta' hawn fuq huwa kkumplimentat minn dispożizzjonijiet li jissimplifikaw il-proċeduri għar-reġistrazzjoni mill-ġdid ta' vetturi u li jnaqqsu l-formalitajiet amministrattivi u burokratiċi minn fuq iċ-ċittadini permezz ta' sistema elettronika għall-iskambju tal-informazzjoni bejn l-Istati Membri.

Għandu jiġi enfasizzat li l-proposta ma tittrattax it-tassazzjoni tal-vettura. L-Istati Membri jżommu l-prerogattivi tagħhom li jintaxxaw l-vetturi skont il-liġi tal-UE.

Filwaqt li l-proposta għadha suġġett għall-proċedura leġiżlattiva fil-Parlament Ewropew u l-Kunsill, il-Kunsill talab minghand il-Kummissjoni valutazzjoni tal-impatti possibbli fuq id-dħul mit-taxxi, liema valutazzjoni l-Kummissjoni se tipprepara.

Addizzjonalment, wara diversi ilmenti li jippuntaw lejn diversi ostakli fir-reġistrazzjoni mill-ġdid tal-vetturi bil-mutur, fl-aħħar snin il-Kummissjoni feħet diversi każijiet li jikkonkludu dwar ksur tad-dispożizzjonijiet tat-Trattat dwar il-moviment liberu tal-oġġetti (l-Artikoli 34 sa 36 TFUE).

([1]) COM(2012) 164 finali.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000658/14
to the Commission
Joseph Cuschieri (S&D)
(23 January 2014)

Subject: Vehicle registration tax

Despite the ongoing single market integration process, motor vehicle registration problems remain a frequent barrier for businesses and citizens within the internal market.

In the 2010 EU Citizenship Report 'Dismantling the obstacles to EU citizens' rights', the Commission identified vehicle registration problems as one of the main obstacles faced by citizens when exercising their rights under EC law in their day-to-day lives and announced, among the actions envisaged to remove such obstacles, a simplification of the formalities and conditions for registration of vehicles registered in another Member State.

Given that it regards vehicle registration tax as one of the main obstacles, what further initiatives is the Commission planning to take in order to eliminate this barrier, and when?

What will the Commission do ensure it is effective in eliminating this obstacle within the shortest possible time?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(11 March 2014)

The Commission adopted a proposal for a regulation simplifying the transfer of motor vehicles registered in another Member State within the single market on 4 April 2012 ([1]).

This proposal provides that a Member State may only require registration on its territory of a vehicle registered in another Member State if the holder of the registration certificate has his normal residence on its territory. The proposal also contains a provision that where the holder of the registration certificate moves his normal residence to another Member State, he shall request registration within a period of six months following his arrival.

The above is complemented by provisions simplifying the procedures for the re-registration of vehicles and reducing administrative and bureaucratic formalities on citizens through an electronic system for the exchange of information between Member States.

It should be emphasised that the proposal does not deal with vehicle taxation. Member States retain their prerogatives to tax vehicles in accordance with EC law.

Whereas the proposal is still subject to the legislative procedure in the European Parliament and the Council, the Council requested from the Commission an assessment of possible impacts on tax revenues, which the Commission is going to prepare.

In addition, following numerous complaints pointing at various obstacles in the re-registration of motor vehicles, the Commission opened in the past years several cases concluding on infringement of Treaty provisions on free movement of goods (Art. 34 to 36 TFEU).

([1]) COM(2012) 164 final.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-000660/14
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(23 janvier 2014)

Objet: Produits génériques à base de fumarate de diméthyle (DMF) en danger

Plusieurs associations s'émeuvent du fait qu'une exclusivité de dix ans pourrait être accordée à Tecfidera, suite à une exclusivité de 10 ans déjà accordée à Fumaderm, soit une double exclusivité de vingt ans au total pour la même société.

1. La Commission partage-t-elle notre avis sur le fait que si les faits sont avérés, cette exclusivité bloquerait le développement de produits génériques à base de DMF pour traiter à la fois la sclérose en plaques et le psoriasis?

2. En ce qui concerne l'exclusivité, la Commission peut-elle confirmer son interprétation consistant à dire que des produits génériques futurs peuvent utiliser des produits combinés existants comme produits de référence dans l'autorisation de leurs propres produits? La Commission semble avoir pris un point de vue opposé dans un litige en cours (affaire T-547/12).

3. La Commission est-elle consciente des répercussions que cette décision peut avoir sur le marché des produits pharmaceutiques génériques? Il y a actuellement au moins trois sociétés qui sont en cours de développement de produits génériques à base de DMF et qui seront donc potentiellement touchées.

4. La Commission partage-t-elle l'idée qu'une exclusivité de données pour Tecfidera risque de créer un retard et un blocage de l'accès des patients souffrant de sclérose en plaques et de psoriasis aux médicaments génériques à faible coût et qu'elle continuera à générer des coûts élevés pour les systèmes de sécurité sociale?

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-000661/14
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(23 janvier 2014)

Objet: Autorisation du Tecfidera

L'Agence européenne des médicaments et la Commission souhaitent accorder une autorisation en tant que «nouvelle substance active» pour le Tecfidera.

1. Sur quels arguments la Commission se base-t-elle pour fonder cette position?

2. La Commission nous rejoint-elle dans l'idée que cela pourrait avoir des conséquences majeures en termes d'exclusivité et donc au niveau de l'accès des médicaments génériques à ce marché?

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-000662/14
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(23 janvier 2014)

Objet: Tecfidera: évaluation erronée

En novembre 2013, le Comité des médicaments à usage humain (CMUH) de l'Agence Européenne des Médicaments à Londres délivre une opinion en faveur de l'autorisation de mise sur le marché (AMM) de Tecfidera, un médicament qui traite la sclérose en plaques.

Le 20 décembre 2013, la Commission publie un projet de décision en faveur de l'AMM pour Tecfidera qu'elle soumet au Comité permanent des médicaments à usage humain (comité de comitologie) pour opinion via une procédure écrite prévoyant le délai pour observations des États membres au 10 janvier 2014. Suite aux observations de certains États membres, la procédure écrite est arrêtée sans suite et une réunion du Comité permanent est convoquée afin d'avoir une discussion plus approfondie sur ce dossier et ses répercussions éventuelles.

1. L'évaluation technique du CMUH ignore des preuves scientifiques qui indiquent que Diméthyle Fumarate (DMF), la composante active dans Tecfidera n'est pas une nouvelle substance active, car cette composante est également la seule composante active dans Fumaderm, un produit autorisé en Allemagne depuis 1994 et commercialisé par la même entreprise. Pourquoi?

2. La Commission pourrait-elle accéder à notre demande d'effectuer une évaluation technique de la part de l'AEM?

Réponse commune donnée par M. Borg au nom de la Commission
(11 mars 2014)

Le Tecfidera est un médicament composé de fumarate de diméthyle (DMF) destiné au traitement de la sclérose en plaques. Le Fumaderm est un médicament composé de DMF et de sels de monoéthyl fumarate (MEF) ([1]) qui est autorisé depuis 1994 en Allemagne pour le traitement du psoriasis. En application de la législation de l'UE sur les médicaments ([2]), le Tecfidera et le Fumaderm, puisqu'ils appartiennent au même titulaire de l'autorisation de mise sur le marché, devraient contenir des substances actives différentes pour profiter de périodes d'exclusivité des données indépendantes.

Le comité des médicaments à usage humain (CHMP) a conclu que le MEF et le DMF sont tous deux actifs mais ne correspondent pas à la même substance active, car leur fraction thérapeutique n'est pas la même. Sur la base de cette conclusion, il est considéré que le Tecfidera est différent du Fumaderm et ne fait donc pas partie de la même autorisation globale de mise sur le marché. Cela se reflète dans la décision de la Commission accordant l'autorisation de mise sur le marché au Tecfidera ([3]) adoptée conformément à l'avis favorable du comité permanent.

La Commission considère que l'exclusivité des données prévues par la législation de l'UE sur les médicaments n'est pas liée à la substance active. Le Tecfidera ne peut pas être un médicament de référence pendant huit ans alors que le Fumaderm peut l'être. La conclusion du CHMP que le DMF et le MEF correspondent à des substances actives différentes peut avoir un effet sur certaines demandes d'autorisation de mise sur le marché qui utilisent le Fumaderm comme médicament de référence. Cependant, cela est indépendant de l'exclusivité de données du Tecfidera. Le fait que des produits génériques puissent utiliser des produits combinés existants comme produits de référence dépend des éléments particuliers de chaque demande.

La législation de l'UE détermine les exigences pour l'exclusivité des données mais elle n'affecte pas la compétence des États membres en matière de fixation des prix ou de remboursement.

([1]) Sel de calcium d'éthyl fumarate, sel de magnésium d'éthylhydrogenfumarate et sel de zinc d'éthylhydrogen-fumarate.
([2]) Directive 2001/83/CE du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 6 novembre 2001 instituant un code communautaire relatif aux médicaments à usage humain, JO L 311 du 28.11.2001, p. 67.
([3]) Décision d'exécution COM,(2014)601 de la Commission du 30 janvier 2014 portant autorisation de mise sur le marché du Tecfidera: http://ec.europa.eu/health/documents/community-register/2014/20140130125880/dec_127880_fr.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000660/14
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(23 January 2014)

Subject: Dimethyl fumarate (DMF)-based generic products under threat

Several organisations are concerned by the fact that a 10-year exclusivity may be granted to Tecfidera, following a 10-year exclusivity already granted to Fumaderm, amounting to a double exclusivity of 20 years in total for the same company.

1. Does the Commission share our opinion that, if these facts are confirmed, this exclusivity would block the development of DMF-based generic products to treat both multiple sclerosis and psoriasis?

2. Concerning exclusivity, can the Commission confirm its interpretation, which consists in stating that future generic products can use existing combined products as reference products in the authorisation of their own products? The Commission seems to have taken an opposing view in an ongoing legal dispute (case T-547/12).

3. Is the Commission aware of the implications this decision could have on the market of generic pharmaceutical products? There are currently at least three companies that are in the process of developing DMF-based generic products, which may potentially be affected by this.

4. Does the Commission share the view that data exclusivity for Tecfidera risks creating a delay, and blocking access of patients suffering from multiple sclerosis and psoriasis to low-cost generic medicinal products, and that it will continue to generate high costs for social security systems?

Question for written answer E-000661/14
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(23 January 2014)

Subject: Tecfidera authorisation

The European Medicines Agency and the Commission wish to grant a licence to Tecfidera as a 'new active substance'.

1. What is the reasoning behind the Commission's position in this regard?

2. Does the Commission agree that this could have major consequences in terms of exclusivity and thus in terms of generic medicines accessing this market?

Question for written answer E-000662/14
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(23 January 2014)

Subject: Tecfidera: incorrect evaluation

In November 2013, the Committee for Medicinal Products for Human Use (CHMP) of the European Medicines Agency in London issued an opinion in favour of issuing marketing authorisation (MA) for Tecfidera, a medicinal product for treating multiple sclerosis.

On 20 December 2013, the Commission published a draft decision in favour of granting the MA for Tecfidera. This was submitted to the Standing Committee on Medicinal Products for Human Use (comitology committee) for an opinion via a written procedure, with a deadline of 10 January 2014 for observations by Member States. Following observations from certain Member States, the written procedure came to a halt with no further action and a meeting of the Standing Committee was called in order to discuss this file and its possible consequences in further depth.

1. The CHMP's technical evaluation ignores scientific evidence indicating that dimethyl fumarate (DMF), the active component of Tecfidera, is not a new active substance given that this component is also the only active component of Fumaderm, a product licensed in Germany since 1994 and marketed by the same company. Why?

2. Could the Commission agree to our request for a technical evaluation by the EMA?

Joint answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(11 March 2014)

Tecfidera is a medicinal product composed of dimethyl fumarate (DMF) for the treatment of multiple sclerosis. Fumaderm, composed of DMF and MEF salts ([1]) is a medicinal product authorised since 1994 in Germany for the treatment of psoriasis. In application of the EU legislation on pharmaceuticals ([2]), since Tecfidera and Fumaderm belong to the same marketing authorisation holder, they would need to contain different active substances to benefit from independent data exclusivity periods.

The Committee on Human Medicinal Products (CHMP) concluded that MEF and DMF are both active and are not the same active substance since they do not share the same therapeutic moiety. On the basis of this conclusion it is considered that Tecfidera is different from Fumaderm therefore belonging to different global marketing authorisation. This is reflected in the Commission decision granting the marketing authorisation to Tecfidera ([3]) adopted in accordance with the favourable opinion of the Standing Committee.

The Commission considers that the data exclusivity provided by EU legislation on pharmaceuticals is not attached to the active substance. Tecfidera cannot be a reference medicinal product for 8 years whilst Fumaderm can be. The CHMP conclusion that DMF and MEF are different active substances may impact certain marketing authorisation applications using Fumaderm as reference product. However, this is independent from the data exclusivity of Tecfidera. Whether 'generic' products can use combined products as reference products would depend on the particular elements of each application.

EU legislation determines the requirements for data exclusivity, but it does not affect the powers of the Member States for setting prices or reimbursement.

([1]) Calcium salt of ethyl fumarate, magnesium salt of ethyl hydrogen fumarate and zinc salt of ethyl hydrogen fumarate.
([2]) Directive 2001/83/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 November 2001 on the Community code relating to medicinal products for human use, OJ L 311, of 28.11.2001, p. 67.
([3]) Commission implementing Decision granting the marketing authorisation to Tecfidera COM(2014) 601 of 30.1.2014: http://ec.europa.eu/health/documents/community-register/html/h837.htm

(Hrvatska verzija)

Pitanje za pisani odgovor E-000663/14
upućeno Komisiji (potpredsjednici/Visokoj predstavnici)
Davor Ivo Stier (PPE)
(23. siječnja 2014.)

Predmet: VP/HR — Rezolucija o pravednom suđenju u Boliviji

Europski parlament je 21. studenoga 2013. donio Rezoluciju o pravednom suđenju u Boliviji kojom se od vanjske službe traži poduzimanje potrebnih mjera s ciljem zaštite ljudskih prava građana EU-a, Marija Tadića i Eloda Toasa (P7_TA(2013)0518).

U tom smislu molim da me izvijestite o mjerama koje je vanjska služba dosad poduzela i njezinim rezultatima.

Odgovor visoke predstavnice/potpredsjednice Ashton u ime Komisije
(18. ožujka 2014.)

Visoka predstavnica/potpredsjednica je u potpunosti svjesna zabrinutosti koju je izrazio Europski parlament u vezi s potrebom za poštenim i transparentnim suđenjem u slučaju građana EU-a g. Toasa (Mađarska) i g. Tadića (Hrvatska).

Kao što znate, slučaj g. Toasa i g. Tadića usko je povezan sa suđenjem drugim osobama uhićenima tijekom policijske akcije navodno s ciljem razbijanja terorističke ćelije u kojoj su ubijena još tri građanina EU-a (Árpád Magyarósi, Michael Martin Dwyer i Eduardo Rózsa-Flores), a koje je još u tijeku.

Delegacija EU-a u Boliviji pozorno prati suđenje u koordinaciji s drugim voditeljima misija EU-a prisutnima u La Pazu i uz potporu Ureda visokoga povjerenika UN-a za ljudska prava (OHCHR). OHCHR-u i medijima omogućen je neograničen pristup postupku. Instrumentom za stabilnost EU-a osigurava se financijska potpora OHCHR-u kako bi prisustvovao sudskim raspravama, što podrazumijeva brojne misije u Tariji i Santa Cruzu.

Europska služba za vanjsko djelovanje i dalje na visokoj razini izražava zabrinutost EU-a u vezi s tim slučajem i inzistira na brzom, poštenom i transparentnom suđenju (također i tijekom dijaloga na visokoj razini u studenome 2013.). To će i dalje činiti te istovremeno ustrajati na pozivu Europskog parlamenta na neovisnu istragu ubojstava.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000663/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Davor Ivo Stier (PPE)
(23 January 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Resolution on fair justice in Bolivia

On 21 November 2013, Parliament adopted a resolution on fair justice in Bolivia which urges the External Action Service to take the necessary steps to protect the human rights of EU citizens Mario Tadić and Előd Tóásó (P7_TA-PROV(2013)0518).

In this connection, could the Vice-President/High Representative please state what steps the External Action Service has taken thus far and what results they have achieved?

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

The HR/VP is fully aware of the concerns expressed by the EP regarding the need for a fair and transparent trial in the case of EU citizens Mr Toaso (HU) and Mr Tadjic (HR).

As you are aware, the case of Mr Toaso and Mr Tadic is closely linked to the (on-going) trial of other people arrested during a police operation allegedly aimed at dismantling a terrorist cell in which three other EU citizen (Árpád Magyarósi, Michael Martin Dwyer and Eduardo Rózsa-Flores) were killed.

The trial has been closely followed by the EU Delegation in Bolivia, in coordination with the other EU HoM present in La Paz and with the support of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Unrestricted access to the proceedings was granted to UN OHCHR and media. The EU Instrument for stability (IfS) provides financial support to UN OHCHR to attend court hearings involving numerous missions to Tarija and Santa Cruz.

EEAS continues to raise the EU concern about this case at high level and to press for a speedy, fair and transparent trial (including during the High level dialogue in November 2013). It will continue to do so, while insisting on the EP call for an independent investigation on the killings.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000669/14
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(23 de enero de 2014)

Asunto: Muerte de un inmigrante armenio en el CIE de Barcelona

El pasado 3 de diciembre apareció ahorcado en su celda un inmigrante que se encontraba internado en el Centro de Internamiento de Extranjeros de la Zona Franca de Barcelona. Se trataba de una persona de origen armenio que llevaba recluida doce días.

En numerosas preguntas parlamentarias hemos mostrado nuestra preocupación por las escasas garantías que el Estado español da a la vida de las personas migrantes irregulares en territorio nacional, tanto antes como después de iniciar sus procedimientos de expulsión. La Directiva de Retorno (2008/115/CE) incluye de manera expresa la obligación de los Estados miembros de la Unión Europea de garantizar el derecho a la vida y la integridad física de los migrantes sometidos a un proceso de expulsión.

Se trata de un nuevo caso en este mismo CIE de la Zona Franca, donde ya se han producido cuatro muertes de inmigrantes, entre ellas la de Idrissa Diallo, a principios de 2012, por un supuesto ataque al corazón. Numerosas organizaciones de todo tipo están denunciando que dicho centro, así como otros muchos a lo largo de la geografía española, no cumplen las condiciones mínimas para garantizar la seguridad y el derecho a la vida y a un correcto estado de salud de las personas migrantes. Además de los graves hechos, se viola la seguridad jurídica, puesto que la propia Delegación del Gobierno ha expulsado del país a dos testigos claves para el caso entre el 7 y el 8 de diciembre, impidiendo la adecuada investigación de los hechos.

¿Conoce la Comisión la muerte del citado inmigrante?

¿Considera la Comisión que las autoridades españolas están actuando de una manera acorde con el contenido de la Directiva 2008/115/CE en el ámbito de la protección de la vida y la protección física de las personas migrantes sometidas a un procedimiento de expulsión?

¿Está la Comisión solicitando información o investigando el número exacto de violaciones que las personas migrantes denuncian en los CIE españoles?

Tras cuatro muertes y numerosas denuncias, ¿piensa la Comisión realizar una investigación específica sobre el trato que se da a los inmigrantes en el CIE de la Zona Franca de Barcelona?

¿Cómo valora la Comisión la expulsión de dos testigos fundamentales ordenada por la Delegación del Gobierno en Cataluña?

Respuesta de la Sra. Malmström en nombre de la Comisión
(18 de marzo de 2014)

Tal como se indicó ya en la respuesta de la Comisión a las preguntas escritas E-004349/2013 ([1]) y P-000090/2014 ([2]), la evaluación de deficiencias e incidentes concretos que se produzcan en centros de internamiento de cada país es, ante todo, competencia de las autoridades y los órganos jurisdiccionales nacionales relevantes.

En el proceso de comprobar la incorporación correcta jurídica y práctica de las disposiciones de la Directiva sobre el retorno ([3]) por los Estados miembros, la Comisión ha podido comprobar que España ha incorporado adecuadamente la mayor parte —pero no todas— las disposiciones relativas a la detención. La Comisión está intentando aclarar y resolver las deficiencias en los contactos bilaterales con las autoridades españolas. Si es necesario, la Comisión no dudará en incoar procedimientos de infracción relativos a aquellas cuestiones que posteriormente sigan pendientes.

La Comisión está decidida a hacer mucho hincapié en el cumplimiento del acervo de la UE en materia de retorno de la UE a la hora de aplicar el sistema de inspecciones establecido en virtud de lo dispuesto en el nuevo mecanismo de evaluación de Schengen ([4]), que será operativo en 2014. En ese contexto, la Comisión se propone examinar y evaluar la situación en los centros nacionales de internamiento previo a la expulsión. Este mecanismo no contempla la participación de ONG. Sin embargo, las ONG tienen derecho a visitar directamente los centros de internamiento, de conformidad con el artículo 16, apartado 4, de la Directiva sobre el retorno.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2013-004349&language=ES
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fTEXT%2bWQ%2bP-2014-000090%2b0%2bDOC%2bXML%2bV0%2f%2fEN&language=ES
([3]) Directiva 2008/115/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 16 de diciembre de 2008, relativa a normas y procedimientos comunes en los Estados miembros para el retorno de los nacionales de terceros países en situación irregular, DO L 348 de 24.12.2008, pp. 98-107.
([4]) Reglamento (UE) nº 1053/2013 del Consejo, de 7 de octubre de 2013, por el que se establece un mecanismo de evaluación y seguimiento para verificar la aplicación del acervo de Schengen, y se deroga la Decisión del Comité Ejecutivo de 16 de septiembre de 1998 relativa a la creación de una Comisión permanente de evaluación y aplicación de Schengen, DO L 295 de 6.11.2013, pp. 27-37.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000669/14
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(23 January 2014)

Subject: Death of an Armenian immigrant in the Barcelona Immigration Detention Centre (CIE)

On 3 December 2013, an immigrant who was being held in the Immigration Detention Centre in the Zona Franca area of Barcelona was found hanged in his cell. The intern was of Armenian nationality and had been kept in isolation for the previous twelve days.

A whole range of parliamentary questions have demonstrated our concerns regarding the meagre guarantees provided by Spain on the lives of non-standard migrants in Spanish territory, both before and after removal proceedings have been initiated. The Return Directive (2008/115/EC) expressly includes the obligation for EU Member States to guarantee the right to life and physical integrity of migrants who are subject to removal proceedings.

This is one more case to add to a growing list for the CIE in Zona Franca, where four immigrants have died since the beginning of 2012, including Idrissa Diallo — allegedly because of a heart attack. A large number of organisations of all kinds are denouncing the fact that the centre, in addition to many others across Spain, does not meet the minimum requirements for guaranteeing the safety and the right to life and to good health of migrants. In addition to the serious incidents themselves, legal security has also been violated as the government's own Delegation removed two witnesses who were crucial to the case from the country between 7 and 8 December, thus preventing a proper investigation of the facts.

Is the Commission aware of the death of the abovementioned immigrant?

Does the Commission believe that the Spanish authorities are acting in accordance with Directive 2008/115/EC in terms of protecting the lives and physical wellbeing of migrants who are subject to removal proceedings?

Is the Commission requesting information on or investigating the exact number of violations denounced by migrants in Spanish CIEs?

In the wake of four deaths and a large number of denouncements, is the Commission thinking of carrying out a specific investigation into how immigrants are treated in the CIE in the Zona Franca area of Barcelona?

What is the Commission's view of the removal of two key witnesses by the government's Delegation in Catalonia?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(18 March 2014)

As already highlighted in the Commission's answer to Questions E-004349/2013 ([1]) and P-000090/2014 ([2]), the assessment of individual incidents and shortcomings which take place in national detention centres is a matter primarily for the relevant national authorities and courts.

In the process of checking the correct legal and practical transposition of the provisions of the Return Directive ([3]) by Member States, the Commission was able to verify that Spain has properly transposed most — but not all — detention-related provisions. The Commission is currently seeking to clarify and resolve the shortcomings in bilateral contacts with Spanish authorities. If necessary, the Commission will not hesitate to begin infringement procedures related to those issues which subsequently remain unresolved.

The Commission is determined to put a strong emphasis on compliance with the EU return *acquis* in the system of inspections established under the new Schengen Evaluation Mechanism ([4]) which will become operational in 2014. In this context the Commission will aim at examining and assessing the situation in national pre-removal detention centres. This mechanism does not provide for NGO involvement. NGOs enjoy, however, a direct right to visit detention facilities under Article 16(4) of the Return Directive.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2013-004349&language=EN
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fTEXT%2bWQ%2bP-2014-000090%2b0%2bDOC%2bXML%2bV0%2f%2fEN&language=EN
([3]) Directive 2008/115/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on common standards and procedures in Member States for returning illegally staying third-country nationals; OJ L 348, 24.12.2008, p. 98-107.
([4]) Council Regulation (EU) No 1053/2013 of 7 October 2013 establishing an evaluation and monitoring mechanism to verify the application of the Schengen *acquis* and repealing the decision of the Executive Committee of 16 September 1998 setting up a Standing Committee on the evaluation and implementation of Schengen; OJ L 295, 6.11.2013, p. 27-37.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-000670/14
adresată Comisiei (Vicepreședintelui/Înaltului Reprezentant)
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(23 ianuarie 2014)

Subiect: VP/HR — Rolul UE la convorbirile Geneva II și procesul de negocieri pentru pace în Siria

Conflictul din Siria face ravagii de peste doi ani. Amploarea violenței este aproape de necrezut — peste 100 000 de persoane au fost ucise, iar 9,5 milioane de persoane au fost strămutate.

Într-un efort de a pune capăt crizei, Organizația Națiunilor Unite a organizat o conferință ce se va desfășura în Elveția și va începe la 22 ianuarie. Conferința constituie o încercare de a înlesni negocierile dintre regimul Assad și reprezentanții opoziției siriene. Convorbirile vor include, de asemenea, țări din toată lumea, precum și mai multe organizații internaționale pertinente.

Consiliul național sirian a declarat că nu va participa la convorbiri ca parte a coaliției naționale generale siriene deoarece s-a angajat să nu negocieze atâta timp cât președintele Assad se află încă la putere.

Printre statele membre care participă la convorbirile Geneva II se numără Danemarca, Franța, Germania, Italia, Spania, Suedia și Regatul Unit. UE este, de asemenea, reprezentată.

UE a emis o declarație prin care își afirmă „sprijinul deplin" pentru convorbirile Geneva II.

1. Ce strategie diplomatică va urma Vicepreședintele/Înaltul Reprezentant după ce se vor încheia convorbirile Geneva II pentru a ajuta la punerea în aplicare a strategiei convenite în cadrul acestor convorbiri?

2. Ce sprijin va acorda Comisia statelor membre ale UE care sunt implicate în convorbirile Geneva II și în procesul de negocieri pentru pace în Siria?

3. Ce acțiuni întreprinde Vicepreședintele/Înaltul Reprezentant pentru a încuraja coerența obiectivelor diverselor elemente ale opoziției siriene?

Răspuns dat de Înaltul Reprezentant/doamna vicepreședinte Ashton în numele Comisiei
(13 martie 2014)

Cu ocazia reuniunii din 22 ianuarie, Înaltul Reprezentant/Vicepreședintele a subliniat dorința UE de a contribui, în orice mod posibil, la procesul politic care a fost inițiat la Geneva.

De asemenea, UE, alături de statele membre ale UE, va continua să sprijine grupurile societății civile cu scopul de a ajunge la o soluție politică, precum și de a consolida capacitatea acestora. Una dintre inițiativele avute în vedere ar fi un program de formare pentru sirienii care ar putea asuma în viitor un rol util pentru țara lor. UE va evalua, totodată, modul în care poate ajuta femeile din tabere diferite, din diferite colțuri ale țării și de credințe diferite să se reunească pentru a sprijini obiectivul de a obține pacea în Siria.

UE va continua sprijinul transfrontalier neumanitar pentru serviciile de bază în zonele contestate și va atrage atenția asupra posibilității de a recurge la regimul de sancțiuni revizuit recent care ar trebui să faciliteze comerțul cu anumite categorii de mărfuri, de maximă importanță pentru bunăstarea umanitară a populației siriene.

Înaltul Reprezentant/Vicepreședintele continuă să fie în contact cu diferitele mișcări ale opoziției siriene și le încurajează să coopereze în vederea obținerii unei soluții politice durabile la conflict.

UE a condus răspunsul internațional umanitar și în materie de dezvoltare la criză și, până în prezent, a mobilizat, la nivel colectiv, peste 2,6 miliarde EUR reprezentând sprijin total. Suma de 2,6 miliarde EUR cuprinde 615 milioane EUR de la bugetul Comisiei în domeniul umanitar și 526 de milioane EUR de la alte instrumente ale UE care nu au caracter umanitar.

UE îndeamnă la punerea în aplicare rapidă a RCSONU 2139 privind situația umanitară din Siria și invită toate părțile să permită accesul rapid, sigur și neîngrădit, inclusiv dincolo de liniile de conflict și la nivel transfrontalier.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000670/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(23 January 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — EU Role in the Geneva II talks and Syrian peace negotiation process

The conflict in Syria has now been raging for over two years. The scale of the violence is almost unfathomable — more than 100 000 people have been killed, and 9.5 million people have been displaced.

In an effort to end the crisis, an international conference organised by the United Nations has been convened in Switzerland and will begin on 22 January. The conference is an attempt to facilitate negotiation between the Assad regime and representatives of the Syrian opposition. The talks will also include countries from across the world, as well as several relevant international organisations.

The Syrian National Council has stated that it will not participate in the talks as part of the overarching Syrian National Coalition because the Council had committed not to negotiate until President Assad is no longer in power.

Member States participating in the Geneva II talks include Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. The EU is also represented.

The EU has issued a statement affirming its 'full support' for the Geneva II talks.

1. What diplomatic strategy will the Vice-President/High Representative pursue following the outcome of the Geneva II talks in order to aid the implementation of the strategy agreed upon at these talks?

2. What support will the Commission provide to EU Member States who are involved in the Geneva II talks and the peace negotiation process in Syria?

3. What is the Vice-President/High Representative doing to encourage unity of purpose among the various elements of the Syrian opposition?

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

In her remarks at the 22 January meeting, the HR/VP pointed EU's ambition to help the political process started in Geneva in all possible ways.

The EU together with the EU member states will also continue to support civil society groups with the view to achieving a political solution, and building their capacity. One of the envisioned initiatives would be a training programme for Syrians that could play a useful role in the future of their country. The EU will also assess how it can assist women from across the divide, different parts of the country and of different faiths in coming together in support of the objective of finding peace in Syria.

The EU will continue cross border non-humanitarian support to basic services to contested areas and will draw attention to the possible use of the recently revised sanctions regime that should facilitate trade in certain categories of goods most important for the humanitarian wellbeing of the Syrian population.

The HR/VP continues to be in touch with various currents of the Syrian opposition and encourages them to cooperate towards achieving a lasting political solution to the conflict.

The EU has spearheaded the international humanitarian and development response to the crisis and, so far, has collectively mobilised over EUR 2.6 billion in total support. The EUR 2.6 billion comprises EUR 615 million from the Commission's humanitarian budget and EUR 526 million from other non-humanitarian EU instruments.

The EU urges swift implementation of UNSCR 2 139 on the humanitarian situation in Syria and calls on all parties to allow rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access, including across conflict lines and across borders.

(Magyar változat)

Írásbeli választ igénylő kérdés E-000672/14
a Bizottság számára
Gál Kinga (PPE) és Schöpflin György (PPE)
(2014. január 23.)

Tárgy: Szerbia csatlakozása és a nemzeti kisebbségek jogainak védelme

2014. január 16-án, öt nappal azelőtt, hogy az Európai Unió megkezdte a csatlakozási tárgyalásokat Szerbiával, a szerb alkotmánybíróság érvénytelennek nyilvánította a kisebbségi nemzeti tanácsokról szóló törvény számos rendelkezését. Ezek az intézkedések a kollektív kisebbségi jogok részei voltak, amelyek előnyeit a vajdasági nemzeti kisebbségi tanácsok több évig élvezték.

Mit tervez tenni a Bizottság annak biztosítása érdekében, hogy a szerb alkotmánybíróság január 16-i döntését követően a kisebbségi jogok jelenlegi szintje ne változzon?

Mi az álláspontja a Bizottságnak azokkal a jogszabályi rendelkezésekkel kapcsolatban, amelyek a vajdasági Magyar Nemzeti Tanács és más nemzeti kisebbségi tanácsok éveken át megillető kollektív kisebbségi jogok részét képezték, és amelyeket most a szerb alkotmánybíróság érvénytelennek nyilvánított?

Szorosan figyelemmel fogja-e kísérni a Bizottság a szerbiai eseményeket a csatlakozási tárgyalások során? Továbbá milyen eszközök állnak a Bizottság rendelkezésére annak biztosítására, hogy a csatlakozási tárgyalások befejeztéig figyelemmel kísérje a kisebbségi jogokat, és hogy a jogilag megalapozott szerbiai kisebbségi jogokat a gyakorlatban is tiszteletben tartsák?

Štefan Füle válasza a Bizottság nevében
(2014. március 11.)

Az Európai Bizottság szorosan nyomon követi a Szerbiában élő kisebbségek védelmét, így a Vajdaságban élő magyar kisebbség helyzetét is. A Szerbiáról szóló 2013. évi eredményjelentésben ([1]) a Bizottság úgy értékelte, hogy a kisebbségek védelmét biztosító jogi keret kialakításra került, és azt általában tiszteletben tartják, de a szabályozás Szerbia-szerte történő egységes végrehajtását teljes mértékben biztosítani kell, különösen az oktatás, a nyelvhasználat, a médiához való hozzáférés és a kisebbségi nyelveken biztosított vallási szolgáltatások terén. A Bizottság rendszeres kapcsolatot ápol a Szerbiában élő magyar kisebbség, köztük a Magyar Nemzeti Tanács képviselőivel, akikkel nemrégiben a jogállamiság szakértői értékelése kapcsán jött létre találkozó.

A Bizottság nem foglal állást egyedi bírósági döntésekkel kapcsolatban. A Bizottság elvárja a szerb hatóságoktól, hogy a nemzeti jogszabályokban biztosítsák a megfelelő nyomon követést, emellett folytassanak szoros együttműködést valamennyi érdekelt féllel, köztük a nemzeti kisebbségi tanácsokkal az új jogi szabályozásnak a döntés kihirdetését követő előkészítése során.

A Tanács által 2013 decemberében elfogadott tárgyalási kerettel összhangban a Bizottság továbbra is szorosan nyomon követi a Szerbiában élő kisebbségek helyzetét, és arra ösztönzi Szerbiát, hogy a csatlakozási folyamat során mindvégig törekedjen a kisebbségek helyzetének javítására, például célzott pénzügyi támogatás biztosítása által. A Bizottság az üggyel kapcsolatban az elért eredményekről szóló következő jelentésében számol be, amely 2014 októberében jelenik majd meg.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2013/package/sr_rapport_2013.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000672/14
to the Commission
Kinga Gál (PPE) and György Schöpflin (PPE)
(23 January 2014)

Subject: Serbia's accession and the protection of the rights of national minorities

On 16 January 2014, five days before the European Union began accession negotiations with Serbia, the Serbian Constitutional Court declared a number of the provisions of the Law on National Minority Councils invalid. These provisions had been a part of collective minority rights, which the National Minority Councils in Vojvodina had enjoyed for several years.

What does the Commission intend to do to ensure that the existing level of minority rights will not be prejudiced following the decision of the Serbian Constitutional Court of 16 January?

How does the Commission view those legal provisions, which were part of a set of collective minority rights that the Hungarian National Council and the other National Minority Councils in Vojvodina had enjoyed for years, and which have now been declared invalid by the Serbian Constitutional Court?

Will the Commission monitor closely all these developments in Serbia during the accession negotiations? Furthermore, what instruments does the Commission have at its disposal to ensure that minority rights are monitored until the conclusion of the accession negotiations and that legally established minority rights in Serbia are upheld in practice?

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

The European Commission closely monitors the protection of minorities in Serbia, including the situation of the Hungarian minority in Vojvodina. The Commission assessed in the 2013 Progress report on Serbia ([1]) that the legal framework providing for the protection of minorities is in place and generally respected but that its consistent implementation throughout Serbia needs to be fully ensured, notably in the areas of education, use of language, and access to the media and religious services in minority languages. The Commission is in regular contact with the Hungarian minority representatives in Serbia, including the National Council of the Hungarian minority whom it has recently met in the framework of a rule of law peer review in Serbia.

The Commission does not comment on individual Court rulings. The Commission expects the Serbian authorities to ensure an adequate follow up in the Serbian legislation and work in close cooperation with all relevant stakeholders, including the National Minority Councils, to prepare the new legislation once the ruling is issued.

In line with the negotiating framework adopted by the Council in December 2013, the Commission will continue to closely monitor the situation of minorities in Serbia and to encourage Serbia to improve the situation of minorities throughout the accession process, including through dedicated financial support. The Commission will report again on the matter in its next progress report next October 2014.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2013/package/sr_rapport_2013.pdf

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000675/14
alla Commissione
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(23 gennaio 2014)

Oggetto: Concentrato di pomodoro e laogai cinesi

Da un rapporto stilato nel 2012 da *Laogai research foundation Italia onlus* i laogai, ovvero campi di lavoro cinesi, sarebbero più di 1000 con un numero di detenuti che oscilla dai 3 ai 5 milioni costretti a lavorare 16-18 ore al giorni per produrre di tutto a beneficio di multinazionali di varia natura, comprese quelle alimentari. Secondo alcune inchieste fatte dalla fondazione suddetta, che ha lanciato l'allarme in diverse sedi istituzionali e umanitarie, sulle nostre tavole arriverebbero, oltre ai pomodori cinesi, grandi quantità di triplo concentrato di pomodoro dai laogai dello Xinjiang che verrebbero trasformate da alcune aziende del settore agroalimentare italiano, anche note, facendo passare il prodotto finito come «made in Italy».

Può la Commissione, che in più occasioni e con motivazioni diverse è stata interrogata sulle questioni legate ai laogai, rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

1. è a conoscenza di denunce simili arrivate dagli altri Stati membri? Se sì quali sono state le misure adottate dai governi per tutelare consumatori e filiera alimentare?

2. Non crede di dover vietare definitivamente, come Sati Uniti e Canada, l'ingresso in Europa di ogni prodotto proveniente dai laogai in quanto «lavorato» in veri e propri campi di concentramento?

3. Un alimento spesso è acquistato anche perché evoca le immagini del luogo di provenienza. Non ritiene che il regolamento sul marchio d'origine diventi una necessità per garantire al consumatore anche la possibilità di scegliere in sicurezza la zona di origine di un prodotto?

4. Non ritiene necessario un maggiore controllo nei confronti di aziende che importano dalla Cina materiali vari, compreso quello alimentare, per proibire quelli che vengono prodotti nei laogai?

Risposta di Karel De Gucht a nome della Commissione
(18 marzo 2014)

1. La Commissione non è a conoscenza delle denunce menzionate.

2. e 4. Per quanto concerne il divieto di prodotti a motivo delle condizioni lavorative in cui vengono fabbricati, la Commissione rinvia l'Onorevole deputata alla propria risposta all'interrogazione scritta 2019/2013. Inoltre, la Commissione rammenta le difficoltà in tema di tracciabilità delle condizioni di lavoro come nel caso del lavoro forzato. Per quanto concerne il ruolo svolto dalle imprese, la Commissione promuove attivamente pratiche commerciali responsabili tra cui il rispetto dei principi e degli orientamenti riconosciuti sul piano internazionale in tema di responsabilità sociale delle imprese, in cui rientrano anche le condizioni di lavoro.

3. Norme specifiche in tema di etichettatura d'origine esistono già per le carni bovine, suine, ovine e caprine, per il pollame, la frutta e la verdura, l'olio d'oliva, il vino, il miele e le uova. Per quanto concerne le regole generali, la Commissione rinvia l'Onorevole deputata al regolamento 1169/2011 ([1]), il quale stabilisce anche che, entro il 13 dicembre 2014, la Commissione deve presentare relazioni al Parlamento europeo e al Consiglio sull'indicazione obbligatoria del paese d'origine o sul luogo di provenienza per altri tipi di carni, il latte e il latte usato quale ingrediente nei prodotti lattiero caseari, gli alimenti non trattati, i prodotti monoingrediente, gli ingredienti che rappresentano più del 50 % di un alimento, in cui rientrano pertanto i pomodori trasformati.

([1]) Diverrà applicativo dal 13 dicembre 2014.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000675/14
to the Commission
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(23 January 2014)

Subject: Tomato concentrate and Chinese laogai

According to a report drawn up in 2012 by the *Laogai research foundation Italia onlus*, there are more than 1 000 laogai, i.e. Chinese labour camps, with between 3 and 5 million detainees obliged to work for 16-18 hours a day to produce all sorts of things for the benefit of multinationals of various kinds, including in the food industry. Some surveys conducted by that foundation, which has raised the alarm in various institutional and humanitarian forums, suggest that arriving on our tables along with Chinese tomatoes are huge quantities of triple tomato concentrate from the laogai in Xinjiang which have been processed by some firms in the Italian food processing sector, including well-known firms, with the finished product being passed off as 'made in Italy'.

Can the Commission, which on several occasions and for various reasons has been questioned about matters relating to the laogai, answer the following questions:

1. Is it aware of similar reports arriving from other Member States? If so, what measures have been taken by governments to protect consumers and the food supply chain?

2. Does it not think it should completely ban, like the United States and Canada, the entry into Europe of any products coming from the laogai because they have been 'processed' in what can only be described as concentration camps?

3. A foodstuff is often purchased partly because it calls up images of its place of origin. Does the Commission not think that regulations concerning origin marking are becoming a necessity so that consumers can also safely choose the area of origin of a product?

4. Does it not think that greater control is needed on companies which import various materials from China, including foodstuffs, so as to ban any that have been produced in the laogai?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(18 March 2014)

1. The Commission is not aware of such reports.

2 and 4. With regard to the issue of banning on grounds of labour conditions, the Commission refers the Honourable Member to the reply to written question 2019/2013. Further, the Commission recalls the challenges occurring with traceability of working conditions such as forced labour. With regard to the role played by companies, the Commission actively promotes responsible business practices including adherence to internationally recognised principles and guidelines on Corporate Social Responsibility including working conditions.

3. Specific rules on origin labelling already exist for beef, pig, sheep and goat, poultry, fruit and vegetables, olive oil, wine, honey and eggs. For general rules Commission refers the Honourable Member to Regulation 1169/2011 ([1]) which also provides that by 13 December 2014, the Commission shall submit reports to the European Parliament and the Council regarding the mandatory indication of the country of origin or place of provenance for other types of meat, milk and milk used as an ingredient in dairy products, unprocessed foods, single ingredient products, ingredients that represent more than 50% of a food, therefore including processed tomatoes.

([1]) Will apply from 13 December 2014.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000678/14
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) e Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(23 de janeiro de 2014)

Assunto: Recapitalização do Millennium/BCP com fundos públicos e plano de reestruturação (II)

Em resposta à pergunta E-013043/2013, sobre a recapitalização do Millennium/BCP com fundos públicos, a Comissão Europeia refere que «os bancos que receberam auxílios estatais foram obrigados a apresentar planos de reestruturação à Comissão em que se estabeleciam as medidas destinadas a restabelecer a viabilidade a longo prazo sem o apoio de auxílios estatais». Todavia, a Comissão não esclarece se impôs ou não como condições o despedimento de trabalhadores e o corte de direitos laborais, bem como o encerramento de balcões do Millennium/BCP.

Assim, em aditamento à pergunta E-013043/2013, solicitamos à Comissão que nos comunique, de forma clara e objetiva, se impôs ou não como condições à recapitalização do Millennium/BCP com fundos públicos:

a. o despedimento de trabalhadores;

b. o corte de direitos laborais;

c. o encerramento de balcões do Millennium/BCP.

Resultam estas medidas de opções do próprio banco (posteriormente aceites pela Comissão), do Governo português ou de imposições à partida da Comissão?

Admitiria a Comissão aceitar um plano de reestruturação que não implicasse despedimentos ou cortes de direitos laborais?

Resposta dada por Joaquín Almunia em nome da Comissão
(13 de março de 2014)

Para além da resposta à pergunta E-013043/2013, convém recordar que são os próprios bancos que elaboram os seus planos de reestruturação e os apresentam aos serviços da Comissão para apreciação. O papel da Comissão consiste em avaliar as condições dos auxílios estatais e os requisitos necessários para decidir se os auxílios são compatíveis com o mercado interno. O BCP apresentou uma proposta no sentido de melhorar a sua rendibilidade, nomeadamente através de uma redução dos custos relacionados com o pessoal e a rede de balcões. A decisão da Comissão sobre o BCP é uma decisão de autorização, com base nos compromissos assumidos pelo banco e posteriormente discutidos e aprovados pela Comissão. Não se trata de uma decisão condicional, em que a Comissão impõe condições ao banco.

Os bancos escolhem a forma de apresentar opções para uma avaliação positiva por parte da Comissão. A Comissão avalia se os planos de reestruturação apresentados incluem medidas adequadas e suficientes para garantir a viabilidade do banco no futuro, sem recorrerem a auxílios estatais. Além disso, a Comissão assegura a compatibilidade global da medida de auxílio. A forma como o plano de reestruturação é alcançado na prática é uma questão que compete à gestão do banco, que decide sobre a boa execução do plano de reestruturação.

A Comissão só toma em consideração as medidas contidas nos planos de reestruturação apresentados aos seus serviços, pelo que não está em posição de avaliar outros planos eventuais que não incluam a redução de postos de trabalho.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000678/14
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) and Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(23 January 2014)

Subject: Recapitalisation of Millennium/BCP with public funds and reorganisation plan (II)

In response to Question E-013043/2013, on the recapitalisation of Millennium/BCP with public funds, the European Commission states that 'banks in receipt of state aid were required to submit reorganisation plans to the Commission establishing the measures intended to return them to long-term viability without the support of state aid'. However, the Commission has not clarified whether or not it imposed the conditions of employee redundancies and the reduction of employment rights, as well as the closure of branches of Millennium/BCP.

Therefore, further to Question E-013043/2013, we request that the Commission inform us, clearly and objectively, whether or not it imposed the following conditions on the recapitalisation of Millennium/BCP with public funds:

(a) employee redundancies;

(b) reduction of employment rights;

(c) closure of branches of Millennium/BCP.

Do these measures arise from the choices of the bank itself (subsequently accepted by the Commission), the Portuguese Government or impositions initiated by the Commission?

Would the Commission consider accepting a reorganisation plan which did not involve redundancies or reductions in employment rights?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(13 March 2014)

Further to the response to Question E-013043/2013, it is the banks themselves that draft their own restructuring plans and send them to the Commission services for consideration. The Commission's role consists of assessing the conditions for state aid and the requirements needed to find the aid compatible with the internal market. BCP proposed to improve its profitability in particular by reducing costs related to staff and branch networks. The Commission's decision on BCP is a Commitment Decision, based on commitments submitted by the Bank and subsequently discussed and approved by the Commission. This is not a Conditional Decision, where the Commission imposes the conditions on the Bank.

The banks choose how to present options for a positive assessment by the Commission. The Commission assesses whether the submitted restructuring plans include adequate and sufficient measures to guarantee the bank's viability in the future without continuing recourse to state aid. In addition, the Commission ensures overall compatibility of the aid measure. How the restructuring plan is to be achieved practically is a matter for the bank's management, which decides on the proper implementation of the restructuring plan.

The Commission only takes into consideration the measures contained in those restructuring plans submitted to its services, and it is therefore not in a position to assess other hypothetical plans that would not include reduction of employment.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-000680/14
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)
(23 Ιανουαρίου 2014)

Θέμα: Τρόικα και κατάσταση δημόσιας υγειας στην Ελλάδα

Τα δημοσιονομικά προγράμματα προσαρμογής της τρόικα στην Ελλάδα, Ιρλανδία και Πορτογαλία περιλαμβάνουν αναλυτικές υποδείξεις για μεταρρυθμίσεις και περικοπές στον τομέα της υγείας και της υγειονομικής περίθαλψης.

Σύμφωνα με το άρθρο 168 (7) της Συνθήκης για την λειτουργία της ΕΕ, ρητά ορίζεται ότι «Στις ευθύνες των κρατών μελών εμπίπτει η διαχείριση των υγειονομικών υπηρεσιών και της ιατρικής περίθαλψης, καθώς και η κατανομή των πόρων που διατίθενται για τις υπηρεσίες αυτές.»

Στα πλαίσια της δράσης της, ως μέλος της τρόικα, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Θεωρεί ότι τα αποτελέσματα του μνημονίου στον χώρο της υγείας στην Ελλάδα είναι ικανοποιητικά με βάση το σχέδιο που είχαν εκπονήσει;

2. Με ποια δικαιοδοσία λαμβάνει η Επιτροπή, ως μέλος της τρόικα, τέτοιες αποφάσεις που είναι αντίθετες προς το πνεύμα, τον ιστορικό ρόλο και τις Συνθήκες της ΕΕ;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(13 Μαρτίου 2014)

Οι μεταρρυθμίσεις στον τομέα της υγείας βάσει του δημοσιονομικού προγράμματος δεν αποφασίσθηκαν από την Επιτροπή αλλά συμφωνήθηκαν μεταξύ των ελληνικών αρχών και των δανειστών τους και στοχεύουν να βελτιώσουν την αποδοτικότητα, εξασφαλίζοντας ταυτόχρονα καθολική πρόσβαση σε ιατροφαρμακευτική περίθαλψη ποιότητας, όπως δηλώνεται στο Μνημόνιο ([1]). Οι μεταρρυθμίσεις αντιμετωπίζουν τις αδυναμίες που χαρακτήριζαν το σύστημα για δεκαετίες ([2]): κατακερματισμένη διακυβέρνηση· περιορισμένη διοικητική ικανότητα· ασθενή πληροφοριακά συστήματα, απουσία σχεδιασμού και καθορισμού προτεραιοτήτων· κακή κατανομή πόρων· κατακερματισμένη και άνιση κάλυψη· αναποτελεσματικός έλεγχος ή συντονισμός στον τομέα της περίθαλψης, απαρχαιωμένοι μηχανισμοί χρηματοδότησης. Όλα τα προαναφερόμενα οδήγησαν σε αναποτελεσματικότητες και ανισότητες καθώς και σε εκτεταμένη σπατάλη και διαφθορά.

Οι μεταρρυθμίσεις που έχουν δρομολογηθεί από την Ελλάδα στοχεύουν να βελτιώσουν την πρόσβαση στην περίθαλψη και την ασφάλεια των ασθενών βελτιώνοντας ταυτόχρονα την αποτελεσματικότητα. Η συγχώνευση όλων των συστημάτων ασφάλισης ασθένειας σε έναν οργανισμό (ΕΟΠΥΥ) αποσκοπεί να συμβάλει στην ισότιμη πρόσβαση και αυξάνει την αλληλεγγύη στη χρηματοδότηση, συγκεντρώνοντας τους κινδύνους για την υγεία και τα επίπεδα εισοδήματος. Οι μειώσεις των τιμών φαρμάκων, η αναγκαστική ηλεκτρονική συνταγογράφηση, η υποχρεωτική συνταγογράφηση με διεθνή κοινή ονομασία και η χρησιμοποίηση μιας κεντρικής μονάδας αγοράς έχουν οδηγήσει σε σημαντική εξοικονόμηση πόρων χωρίς να ζημιώνουν τους ασθενείς. Όσον αφορά το άρθρο 168 παράγραφος 7, η Επιτροπή υποστηρίζει τις ελληνικές αρχές σε αυτές τις μεταρρυθμίσεις.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2013/pdf/ocp159_en.pdf
([2]) Economou C. (2010). Greece: Health system review. Health Systems in Transition, 12(7): 1-180; Economou C., Giorno C. (2009). «Improving the performance of the public health care system in Greece». OECD Economic Department Working Papers, No 722. Paris.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000680/14
to the Commission
Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)
(23 January 2014)

Subject: Troika and public health in Greece

The Troika's economic adjustment programmes for Greece, Ireland and Portugal contain detailed recommendations for reforms and cuts in the health and healthcare sectors.

Article 168(7) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union states: 'The responsibilities of the Member States shall include the management of health services and medical care and the allocation of the resources assigned to them.'

In view of the above, and as a member of the Troika, will the Commission say:

1. Does it consider that the impact of the Memorandum on the health sector in Greece is satisfactory, based on the draft which has been prepared?

2. By what authority does the Commission, as a member of the Troika, adopt such decisions, which conflict with the spirit, the historic role and the Treaties of the European Union?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(13 March 2014)

The health reforms under the Programme have not been decided by the Commission but have been agreed between the Greek authorities and its Lenders and aim to improve efficiency, while ensuring universal access to quality healthcare, as stated in the memorandum of understanding ([1]). The reforms address the weaknesses that characterised the system for decades ([2]): fragmented governance; limited administrative capacity; weak information systems, lack of planning and priority-setting; inadequate allocation of resources; fragmented and unequal coverage; ineffective gatekeeping or care coordination, outdated funding mechanisms. These resulted in inefficiencies and inequalities and widespread waste and corruption.

The reforms undertaken by Greece aim to enhance access to care and patients' safety, while improving efficiency. The merging of all health insurance schemes into one organisation (EOPYY) aims to contribute to equal access and increases the solidarity of financing by pooling health risks and income levels. Pharmaceutical price reductions, compulsory e-prescription; compulsory prescription by international non-proprietary name and centralised purchasing have induced important savings without harming patients. In respect of Article 168(7), the Commission supports the Greek authorities in these reforms.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2013/pdf/ocp159_en.pdf
([2]) Economou C. (2010). Greece: Health system review. Health Systems in Transition, 12(7): 1-180; Economou C., Giorno C. (2009). 'Improving the performance of the public healthcare system in Greece'. OECD Economic Department Working Papers, No 722. Paris;.

(České znění)

Otázka k písemnému zodpovězení E-000683/14
Komisi
Olga Sehnalová (S&D)
(23. ledna 2014)

Předmět: Sjednocení podmínek pro osoby se zdravotním postižením na zpoplatněných pozemních komunikacích v EU

V České republice jsou dle zákona o pozemních komunikacích 13/1997 Sb. osoby se zdravotním postižením, které jsou držiteli průkazu ZTP nebo průkazu ZTP/P, v případech, že držitelem silničního motorového vozidla je postižená osoba sama nebo osoba jí blízká, osvobozeny od poplatků za využívání zpoplatněných pozemních komunikací.

Průkaz ZTP však není členskými státy vzájemně uznáván a podmínky pro využívání zpoplatněných pozemních komunikací silničními motorovými vozidly u osob se zdravotním postižením se v členských státech EU výrazně liší.

Na rozdíl od evropské legislativy, která poskytuje cestujícím se zdravotním postižením základní práva v autobusové/autokarové, železniční a letecké dopravě na území EU, neexistence jednotných pravidel v této oblasti způsobuje osobám se zdravotním postižením komplikace při osobní přeshraniční přepravě.

V současnosti již podle sdělení Komise COM(2000)0284 – Towards a Barrier Free Europe for People with Disabilities – v členských státech EU dochází k vzájemnému uznávání pravidel v oblasti parkovacích poplatků pro osoby se zdravotním postižením. V tomto sdělení přislíbila Komise zvážit rozšíření tohoto přístupu na další oblasti podobného typu.

Jaké kroky Komise doposud podnikla pro vzájemné uznávání pravidel v oblasti využívání zpoplatněných pozemních komunikací v EU osobami se zdravotním postižením?

Jaké kroky Komise v současnosti v této oblasti připravuje?

Odpověď Viviane Redingové jménem Komise
(17. března 2014)

Doporučení Rady 98/376/ES ([1]) o vzorové parkovací kartě EU pro osoby se zdravotním postižením vychází ze zásady vzájemného uznávání. Tato karta svým držitelům umožňuje využívat některá parkoviště za zvýhodněných podmínek také v jiných zemích EU. Platí vždy podmínky závazné v cílové zemi, a to bez harmonizace vnitrostátních zvýhodněných podmínek na úrovni EU.

Právní předpisy EU upravující práva cestujících pro osoby s omezenou schopností pohybu a orientace, které se přepravují leteckou, železniční, autobusovou, autokarovou nebo lodní dopravou, harmonizovaly práva na pomoc.

V rámci Evropské strategie pro pomoc osobám se zdravotním postižením 2010-2020 ([2]) zvažuje Komise jako součást opatření na období 2010-2015 ([3]) možnosti vzájemného uznávání průkazů pro osoby se zdravotním postižením a souvisejících nároků. To se týká výhod jiných než zvýhodněné parkovací podmínky; může sem patřit například využívání zpoplatněných pozemních komunikací osobami se zdravotním postižením.

Komise se uvedenou problematikou zabývala v rámci skupiny na vysoké úrovni pro otázky zdravotního postižení, přičemž vycházela ze studií Akademické sítě evropských odborníků v oblasti zdravotních postižení (ANED) ([4]) a Evropského fóra pro zdravotní postižení (EDF). Vzhledem k zájmu Komise zřídila pracovní projektovou skupinu, v rámci které se zástupci zainteresovaných členských států a občanské společnosti zabývají praktickými aspekty vydávání a správy mezinárodního průkazu.

Vývoj průkazu EU pro osoby se zdravotním postižením patří mezi opatření, která Komise navrhla v rámci své zprávy o občanství EU za rok 2013 ([5]). Tento systém vzorového průkazu EU pro osoby se zdravotním postižením není zamýšlen jako harmonizační opatření. Tento průkaz bude pravděpodobně platit v oblasti kultury, volného času, sportu, dopravy a cestovního ruchu, v nichž mohou být na základě jeho předložení poskytovány výhody.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:31998H0376:en:HTML
([2]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52010DC0636:cs:NOT
([3]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52010SC1324:EN:NOT
([4]) http://www.disability-europe.net/content/aned/media/ANED%202010%20Task%207%20-%20Disability%20Benefits%20and%20Entitlements%20-%20Report%20-%20FINAL%20%282%29.pdf
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/citizen/files/2013eucitizenshipreport_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000683/14
to the Commission
Olga Sehnalová (S&D)
(23 January 2014)

Subject: Harmonising rules for disabled persons on EU toll roads

In the Czech Republic, pursuant to Act No 13/1997 Coll. on road traffic, disabled persons who hold ZTP or ZTP/P driving licences are exempted from having to pay to use toll roads if the owner of the vehicle is the disabled person or a person close to them.

However, ZTP licences are not recognised reciprocally by the Member States and the rules on disabled persons' use of motor vehicles on toll roads differ greatly across the EU Member States.

While EC law provides disabled travellers with basic rights in the area of bus/coach, rail and air travel within the EU, there is a lack of uniform rules concerning road transport, which is causing complications for disabled persons when they drive across borders.

According to Commission Communication (COM(2000) 0284) 'Towards a Barrier Free Europe for People with Disabilities', the EU Member States are already providing for the reciprocal recognition of parking concessions for disabled persons. In this communication, the Commission pledges to consider extending this approach to other similar areas.

What measures has the Commission taken so far to ensure reciprocal recognition with regard to disabled persons' use of toll roads in the EU?

What measures is the Commission currently preparing?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(17 March 2014)

The Council Recommendation 98/376/EC ([1]) on the EU model disability parking card is based on the principle of mutual recognition. It allows its holders to use certain parking facilities under preferential conditions also in other EU countries. Applicable conditions are always those of the country of destination, without harmonisation at EU level of the national preferential conditions.

The EU legislation on passenger rights for persons with reduced mobility when travelling by air, rail, bus, coach or ship harmonised the rights for assistance.

As part of the actions for 2010-2015 ([2]) of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 ([3]) the Commission is examining possibilities of mutual recognition of disability cards and related entitlements. This concerns benefits other than the preferential parking conditions; disabled persons' use of toll roads could be among them.

Based on studies from the European Network of European Experts in Disability (ANED) ([4]) of and the European Disability Forum (EDF), the Commission has explored the issue within the High-Level Group on Disability. Given the interest, the Commission has initiated a project working group (PWG) where representatives of interested Member States and civil society are dealing with practical details of issuing and managing a multinational card.

The development of an EU disability card is among the actions put forward by the Commission in its EU Citizenship report 2013 ([5]). This EU-model disability card scheme is not intended to be a harmonising measure. The scope of the card is likely to be in the areas of culture, leisure, sport, transport and tourism, where benefits can be granted upon the presentation of the card.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:31998H0376:en:HTML
([2]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52010SC1324:EN:NOT
([3]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52010DC0636:en:NOT
([4]) http://www.disability-europe.net/content/aned/media/ANED%202010%20Task%207%20-%20Disability%20Benefits%20and%20Entitlements%20-%20Report%20-%20FINAL%20%282%29.pdf
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/citizen/files/2013eucitizenshipreport_en.pdf

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000684/14
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(23 de enero de 2014)

Asunto: Mejora y rehabilitación del Paseo de San Telmo en el Puerto de la Cruz (Islas Canarias)

En el Puerto de la Cruz (isla de Tenerife) se está realizando la intervención para el Proyecto de Mejora y Acondicionamiento del Paseo de San Telmo y su zona de baño, a través del Programa de Zonas Comerciales Abiertas. Al parecer, dicho proyecto está siendo cofinanciado por la Unión Europea a través del fondo FEDER. El proyecto implicará una serie de impactos negativos en el municipio que están siendo denunciados por la población local, como la eliminación de una de las obras del artista lanzaroteño César Manrique, afectando de esta manera al patrimonio cultural y arquitectónico, como denuncia la propia Fundación César Manrique.

La obra sustituiría el muro del citado paseo por unas barandas metálicas, con un elevado coste ya denunciado por los vecinos, y generaría un fuerte impacto visual al eliminar un muro que tiene un importante valor histórico y, además, protege el paseo de las fuertes mareas. El nuevo paseo no solucionará los problemas de accesibilidad, puesto que para acceder a la playa continúan existiendo unas escaleras que pueden impedir el acceso a personas de movilidad reducida.

Se trata de un proyecto de mejora y acondicionamiento que se está realizando en el municipio sin contar con la participación de los ciudadanos, que han mostrado públicamente su rechazo al proyecto, por lo que no debería disponer de la cofinanciación de la Unión Europea. Asimismo, estas obras se han iniciado pese a que el Plan de Zonas Comerciales Abiertas solo ha sido aprobado en su fase inicial y no se refiere a ninguna zona de baño y, además, carecen de la autorización de los órganos políticos municipales.

Habida cuenta de lo que antecede, ¿considera la Comisión financiar a través del FEDER el proyecto a pesar de que elimina parte del patrimonio histórico y artístico del municipio? ¿Dispone de información sobre los daños que generará en el mismo? ¿Considera que dicho proyecto respeta la normativa europea, en particular la Directiva 2003/4/CE relativa al acceso del público a la información medioambiental, a pesar de la falta de consulta a los vecinos y de no haber sido aprobado por ningún órgano de representación municipal?

Asimismo, ¿considera que la remodelación cumple los requisitos de accesibilidad para personas de movilidad reducida?

Finalmente, ¿podría detallar la Comisión qué financiación recibiría dicho proyecto a través del FEDER? ¿No considera que no debería financiar el Proyecto de Mejora y Rehabilitación del Paseo de San Telmo a través del FEDER dado el rechazo social que genera?

Respuesta del Sr. Hahn en nombre de la Comisión
(25 de marzo de 2014)

La Comisión ha confirmado con las autoridades de gestión españolas que el proyecto relativo a la mejora y renovación del Paseo de San Telmo en el Puerto de la Cruz (Tenerife) va a ser cofinanciado por el programa del Fondo Europeo de Desarrollo Regional relativo a Canarias para 2007-2013. Sin embargo, hasta la fecha no se ha hecho pago alguno, dado que no se ha certificado ningún gasto en lo referente a dicho proyecto.

De conformidad con un informe preparado por el Cabildo de Tenerife en respuesta a la pregunta de Su Señoría, se han respetado los requisitos de accesibilidad de las personas con movilidad reducida y se han tenido en cuenta todas las peticiones, ya fueran individuales o colectivas.

Con arreglo al principio de gestión compartida, los programas de la política de cohesión son cofinanciados por los Estados miembros y la Comisión. A escala de la UE, la Comisión establece las principales prioridades y áreas temáticas para la inversión. En consonancia con dichas prioridades, cada país o región elabora su propio programa. La Comisión no participa en la selección de proyectos que recibirán financiación de la UE, sino que esto es algo que hacen las autoridades nacionales y regionales. Por consiguiente, la Comisión sugiere que Su Señoría se ponga en contacto directamente con la autoridad de gestión:

Dirección General de Fondos Comunitarios
Ministerio de Hacienda y Administraciones Públicas
P.º de la Castellana, 162
28071 Madrid

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000684/14
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(23 January 2014)

Subject: Improvement and renovation of Paseo de San Telmo in Puerto de la Cruz (Canary Islands)

Work is being carried out in Puerto de la Cruz on the island of Tenerife as part of a project for the improvement and repair of the Paseo de San Telmo avenue and the associated bathing area under the programme for open commercial areas. Apparently, this project is being co-financed by the European Union by means of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Local residents have complained about the numerous negative effects this project will have on the town, such as the removal of a work by the Lanzarote-born artist César Manrique, which will have an impact on the town's cultural and architectural heritage, a move condemned by the César Manrique Foundation.

The work intends, at a high cost that has already been criticised by residents, to replace the wall of the avenue with metal railings, a change that will have a strong visual impact. The wall also has significant historical value and, in addition, protects the avenue from powerful tides. The new avenue will not solve the existing accessibility problems, as the beach will continue to be accessed by means of steps, which may impede the access of persons with reduced mobility.

This improvement and repair project is being carried out in the town without the involvement of the local citizens, who have publicly demonstrated their opposition to the plans. As a result, this project should not be making use of co-financing from the European Union. Furthermore, work has begun even though only the first phase of the plan for open commercial areas has been approved. The project does not make any reference to the bathing area and, moreover, has not received any kind of authorisation from the municipal policy-making bodies.

Bearing in mind the above, does the Commission intend to finance the project by means of the ERDF despite the fact that it will destroy part of the artistic and historic heritage of the town? Does the Commission have any information regarding the damage that the work will cause? Does the Commission believe that this project is compliant with European rules, in particular Directive 2003/4/EC on public access to environmental information, despite the lack of consultation with residents and despite the fact that it has not been approved by any municipal representative bodies?

In addition, does the Commission consider that the redesign meets the accessibility requirements of persons with reduced mobility?

Lastly, could the Commission provide details of what financing this project would receive by means of the ERDF? Does it not think that, in view of the social opposition it has provoked, the improvement and renovation project for Paseo de San Telmo ought not to be financed by the ERDF?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(25 March 2014)

The Commission has confirmed with the Spanish managing authorities that the project concerning the improvement and renovation of 'Paseo de San Telmo in Puerto de la Cruz. Tenerife' is to be co-financed by the 2007-2013 European Regional Development Fund programme for the Canary Islands. Nevertheless up to now, no payments have been done since no expenses have been certified regarding this project.

According to a report prepared by the 'Cabildo de Tenerife' answering the Honourable Member's question, the accessibility requirements of persons with reduced mobility have been fulfilled and all individual and collective claims have been taken into consideration.

Under the shared management principle, cohesion policy programmes are co-financed by Member States and the Commission. At the EU level, the Commission sets the main priorities and thematic areas for investment. In line with these priorities, each country or region draws up its own programme. The Commission is not involved in selecting projects which will receive EU funding. This is done by national and regional authorities. Therefore, the Commission suggests that the Honourable Member contact the managing authority directly:

Dirección General de Fondos Comunitarios
Ministerio de Hacienda y Administraciones Publicas
Pº de la Castellana, 162
28071 Madrid

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000686/14
a la Comisión
Salvador Sedó i Alabart (PPE)
(23 de enero de 2014)

Asunto: Venta de la ciudadanía europea

A raíz de la reciente noticia que pone en el punto de mira a Malta, el pasado 15 de febrero el Parlamento Europeo debatió en sesión plenaria sobre la facultad de los Estados miembros para vender su nacionalidad y, como consecuencia de ello, la ciudadanía de la Unión Europea.

Bien es cierto que otros Estados miembros (España, Portugal, Irlanda o Reino Unido entre otros) contemplan la posibilidad de otorgar permisos de residencia a condición de que, además de realizar una inversión mínima o de adquirir un bien inmueble en el país, se resida en él durante un cierto periodo de tiempo.

El hecho de que Malta no imponga más que un requisito económico para otorgar la nacionalidad supone en sí mismo una venta que desvirtúa los fundamentos de confianza y cooperación sobre los que se ha basado la Unión Europa, siendo además discriminatorio al valorar únicamente el poder adquisitivo de las personas y no las circunstancias que pueden dar lugar a la obtención de la nacionalidad.

Igualmente, el hecho de considerar como justificación que esa inyección de capital beneficiará al estado de bienestar de los malteses inducirá a error sobre cuáles son los mecanismos adecuados para impulsar una economía según el modelo económico europeo actual.

¿Qué medidas tiene previsto tomar la Comisión para evitar que este caso pueda sentar precedente? En caso de que Malta no tenga en consideración las recomendaciones dadas, ¿cuál será la posición de la Comisión en materia de nacionalidad al ser una competencia de los estados?

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

La Comisión remite a Su Señoría a su respuesta a la pregunta escrita E-013318/2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000686/14
to the Commission
Salvador Sedó i Alabart (PPE)
(23 January 2014)

Subject: Sale of European citizenship

Following news reports that put Malta in the spotlight, the European Parliament conducted a debate during its plenary session on 15 February last year on Member States' ability to sell their nationality and, therefore, citizenship of the European Union.

It is clear that other Member States (including Spain, Portugal, Ireland and the UK) are considering the possibility of granting residence permits on the condition that, in addition to making a minimum investment or purchasing a property in the country, the person concerned lives there for a certain period.

The fact that Malta grants nationality on the basis of nothing more than a financial requirement implies that nationality is for sale, which goes against the fundamental principles of trust and cooperation on which the European Union is based. It is also discriminatory, since it attaches value only to people's purchasing power and not to other circumstances that might give rise to the granting of nationality.

Also, the argument that these injections of capital will benefit the Maltese people's welfare state gives a misleading picture of appropriate ways of boosting an economy under the current European economic model.

What measures is the Commission planning to take to prevent this case from establishing a precedent? If Malta fails to take account of the recommendations, what will the Commission's position be as regards individual Member States' jurisdiction over nationality?

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

The Commission refers the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-013318/2013.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000688/14
an die Kommission
Hiltrud Breyer (Verts/ALE)
(23. Januar 2014)

Betrifft: Kanada-Abkommen (CETA): Welche Verbesserungen soll es geben

Die Kommission begründet die Aufnahme eines Investitionsschutzkapitels im TTIP auch damit, dass dieses die Rechtslage gegenüber den bestehenden bilateralen Investitionsschutzabkommen der USA mit einzelnen Mitgliedstaaten verbessern würde.

1. Gilt diese Begründung auch für das Investitionsschutzkapitel im Wirtschafts- und Handelsabkommen zwischen Kanada und der Europäischen Union (Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement — CETA)?

2. Wenn ja, welche solcher Verbesserungen würde ein Investitionsschutzkapitel im CETA inhaltlich bringen?

3. Kommissionsmitglied de Gucht hat in einem Interview mit der Süddeutschen Zeitung am 17. Januar erklärt, das geplante Investitionsschutzkapitel im TTIP werde deswegen eine Verbesserung der Rechtslage bedeuten: „Wir werden die Rechtslage verfeinern und Schlupflöcher für Missbrauch schließen". Gilt dies auch für das Investitionsschutzkapitel im CETA?

4. Wenn ja, welche Schlupflöcher für Missbrauch sollen mit dem Investitionsschutzkapitel im CETA geschlossen werden?

Antwort von Herrn De Gucht im Namen der Kommission
(24. März 2014)

Eine Reihe von Mitgliedstaaten hat bilaterale Investitionsschutzabkommen mit Kanada geschlossen, die den mit den USA geschlossenen Abkommen gleichen. Die Kommission ist der Auffassung, dass diese Abkommen von einer größeren Rechtsklarheit profitieren würden. Durch ein EU-weites Investitionsschutzübereinkommen mit Kanada wird sichergestellt, dass für alle EU-Investoren dasselbe einheitliche Schutzniveau gilt.

Wesentliche Verbesserungen sind insbesondere die Klarstellung und Abgrenzung der „gerechten und billigen Behandlung" und der Normen für die „indirekte Enteignung". Damit wird sichergestellt, dass geeignete Maßnahmen zur Umsetzung berechtigter Gemeinwohlziele keine indirekte Enteignung darstellen und somit das Recht auf Regulierung im öffentlichen Interesse gewährleistet ist.

Darüber hinaus werden einige verfahrensbezogene Änderungen am ISDS-System vorgenommen, etwa ein Verhaltenskodex für Schiedsrichter und größere Transparenz (öffentlich zugängliche Unterlagen, offene Anhörungen, Beiträge Dritter) sowie gesetzliche Fristen für die Einreichung von Anträgen und verfahrensrechtliche Mechanismen, mit deren Hilfe unbegründete Forderungen schnell abgelehnt werden können.

Im Rahmen des CETA strebt die EU auch Klarstellungen im Zusammenhang mit der gerechten und billigen Behandlung sowie der indirekten Enteignung an. Was Schlupflöcher angeht, so wird gegen das „Vertragsshopping" dadurch vorgegangen, dass nur legitime Investoren mit erheblicher Geschäftstätigkeit in der EU oder in Kanada das Übereinkommen nutzen können. Ähnliche verfahrensbezogene Verbesserungen sind für den ISDS-Mechanismus geplant.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000688/14
to the Commission
Hiltrud Breyer (Verts/ALE)
(23 January 2014)

Subject: EU-Canada Agreement (CETA): What improvements are expected?

One of the Commission's justifications for including an investment protection chapter in the TTIP is that this would improve the legal position in comparison with the existing bilateral investment protection agreements between the USA and individual Member States.

1. Does this justification also apply for the investment protection chapter in the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between Canada and the European Union?

2. If so, which substantive improvements would an investment protection chapter in the CETA produce?

3. In an interview with the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* on 17 January, Commissioner de Gucht stated that the planned investment protection chapter in the TTIP would thus mean an improvement of the legal position: 'We will refine the legal position and close loopholes allowing abuse'. Does this also apply for the investment protection chapter in the CETA?

4. If so, which loopholes allowing abuse are intended to be closed by means of the investment protection chapter in the CETA?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(24 March 2014)

A number of Member States have bilateral investment protection agreements with Canada similar to those with the US. The Commission believes that these agreements would benefit from greater legal clarity. The existence of an EU-wide agreement protecting investments in Canada ensures that all EU investors receive the same consistent level of protection.

The substantive improvements are notably a clarification and a delimitation of the 'fair and equitable treatment' and the 'indirect expropriation' standards. This will ensure that appropriate measures implementing legitimate public policy objectives do not constitute indirect expropriation, thus securing the right to regulate in the public interest.

Also, a number of procedural changes are made to the ISDS system, e.g. a code of conduct for arbitrators, and enhanced transparency (publicly available documents, open hearings, submissions by third parties), plus statutory limits for introducing claims and procedural mechanisms to allow frivolous claims to be dismissed quickly.

In CETA the EU is also aiming at having clarifications related to the fair and equitable treatment standard as well as indirect expropriation. On loopholes, the 'treaty shopping' will be addressed by requiring that only legitimate investors with substantive business operations in the EU or in Canada will be able to use the agreement. Similar procedural improvements are intended for the ISDS mechanism.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000690/14
an die Kommission
Hiltrud Breyer (Verts/ALE)
(23. Januar 2014)

Betrifft: Legehennen, Tierschutz und TTIP

Seit 1. Januar 2012 sind in der EU herkömmliche Käfige verboten. Mit der Umstellung auf „ausgestaltete Käfige" ist nun eine Besatzdichte je Henne von 750 cm^2 vorgeschrieben.

In den USA werden Hennen jedoch vorwiegend in Batterie-Käfigen gehalten. Diese in der EU verbotene Käfighaltung zwängt Hennen auf 350-400 cm^2. Auch beim Schnabelstutzen gibt es unterschiedliche Standards.

1. Wir wird die Kommission der Gefahr des Aushebelns der Legehennenverordnung durch das geplante TTIP-Abkommen entgegentreten?

2. Welche Maßnahmen plant die Kommission, um weiteren Rückschritten im Tierschutz durch das TTIP zu begegnen?

Antwort von Herrn Borg im Namen der Kommission
(14. März 2014)

Mit den Verhandlungen über eine transatlantische Handels- und Investitionspartnerschaft (TTIP) strebt die EU — ebenso wie bei anderen Verhandlungen über Handelsabkommen mit Drittländern — die Einführung von Kooperationsmechanismen zwischen den Vertragsparteien im Bereich des Tierschutzes an. Die Kommission wird prüfen, inwiefern eine Vereinbarung mit den USA getroffen werden kann, und die Vertragsparteien können zu einem späteren Zeitpunkt über deren Inhalt entscheiden.

Die Verhandlungen werden die EU-Standards in den Bereichen der Tiergesundheit und des Tierschutzes nicht beeinträchtigen. Die bestehenden EU-Rechtsvorschriften sind nicht Gegenstand der Verhandlungen und die Richtlinie 1999/74/EG des Rates zur Festlegung von Mindestanforderungen zum Schutz von Legehennen wird nicht aufgehoben.

Da die EU-Tierschutzvorschriften nicht Gegenstand der Verhandlungen sein werden, hat die Kommission nicht die Absicht, diesbezüglich Maßnahmen zu ergreifen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000690/14
to the Commission
Hiltrud Breyer (Verts/ALE)
(23 January 2014)

Subject: Laying hens, animal protection and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)

Conventional battery cages have been prohibited in the EU since 1 January 2012. With the transition to 'furnished cages', a stocking density of 750 cm2 per hen is now prescribed.

In the USA, however, hens are predominantly housed in battery cages. This caged housing system, which is forbidden in the EU, confines hens to a space of 350-400 cm^2. There are also different standards with regard to beak trimming.

1. How will the Commission counter the risk of the directive on laying hens being repealed as a result of the planned TTIP agreement?

2. What measures is the Commission planning to take in order to oppose further setbacks in the protection of animals as a result of the TTIP?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(14 March 2014)

In the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) negotiations, as in other trade negotiations with third countries, the EU aims at establishing cooperation mechanisms on animal welfare between the Parties. The Commission will explore the possibilities to reach an agreement with the USA and the Parties may decide at a later stage on its content.

The negotiations will not compromise the EU standards on animal health and welfare. Existing EU legislation is not subject to negotiation and Council Directive 1999/74/EC laying down minimum standards for the protection of laying hens will not be repealed.

The Commission does not plan to take any measure in this regard given that the EU animal welfare requirements will not be under negotiation.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-000692/14
adresată Comisiei (Vicepreședintelui/Înaltului Reprezentant)
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(23 ianuarie 2014)

Subiect: VP/HR — Situația dnei Victoire Ingabire din Rwanda (întrebare ulterioară)

Situația dnei Victoire Ingabire, lidera opoziției din Rwanda aflată în închisoare, continuă să fie sumbră. În mai 2013, Parlamentul European a adoptat o rezoluție referitoare la situația ei, condamnând posibila „motivație politică" a procesului, cerând ca sistemul judiciar din Rwanda să desfășoare un „recurs prompt și corect" și amintind guvernului rwandez obligațiile sale de a respecta drepturile omului și dreptul internațional. În septembrie 2013, Vicepreședintele/Înaltul Reprezentant Ashton a răspuns la întrebarea scrisă E-008457/2013 cu privire la Victoire Ingabire. Doamna Ashton a declarat că „UE urmărește evoluția cazului și va lua în considerare măsuri suplimentare, dacă este necesar".

Din păcate, situația dnei Ingabire s-a înrăutățit după judecarea recursului. În decembrie 2013 a fost menținută condamnarea inițială, iar sentința s-a mărit de la 8 ani la 15 ani. După ce a fost anunțat verdictul, doamna Ingabire și-a asigurat suporterii că „lupta continuă".

1. Cum intenționează Vicepreședintele/Înaltul Reprezentant să abordeze această încălcare continuă a drepturilor doamnei Ingabire? Ce cale de atac mai este disponibilă ca urmare a deciziei adoptate la apel?

2. Cum intenționează Vicepreședintele/Înaltul Reprezentant să acționeze în sprijinul unui sistem judiciar cu adevărat independent, corect și transparent în Rwanda?

Răspuns dat de Înaltul Reprezentant/doamna vicepreședinte Ashton în numele Comisiei
(20 martie 2014)

UE este conștientă de decizia Curții Supreme din 13 decembrie 2013 în cazul doamnei Ingabire. Rolul de a stabili pașii următori îi revine apărării doamnei Victoire Ingabire. Până în momentul în care este disponibil verdictul publicat oficial, nu este posibilă efectuarea unei analize mai cuprinzătoare.

Un dialog politic periodic între UE și Rwanda permite UE să aducă în discuție, după caz, preocupări cu privire la respectarea unor aspecte sensibile privind drepturile omului, inclusiv importanța unui sistem judiciar independent.

Un dialog politic periodic între UE și Rwanda permite UE să aducă în discuție, după caz, preocupări cu privire la respectarea unor aspecte sensibile privind drepturile omului, inclusiv importanța unui sistem judiciar independent.

UE și comunitatea internațională se așteaptă ca autoritățile ruandeze să nu precupețească niciun efort pentru a permite înfăptuirea în mod independent a actelor de justiție, în baza unui proces transparent și a unor fapte necontestate.

UE va continua să își concentreze acțiunile pe sprijinirea și monitorizarea angajamentelor pe care Rwanda și le-a asumat pentru a pune în aplicare recomandările Evaluării periodice universale cu privire la drepturilor omului. UE acordă o atenție deosebită angajamentelor care vizează promovarea unui sistem politic mai deschis, inclusiv o dezbatere politică reală, libertatea de exprimare și apariția unor organizații politice active și responsabile. De asemenea, UE joacă un rol de frunte în revitalizarea grupului de lucru pentru sectorul justiției, care monitorizează reformele juridice și judiciare, și poartă un dialog privind aceste chestiuni cu autoritățile.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000692/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(23 January 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Situation of Victoire Ingabire in Rwanda (follow-up question)

The situation of Victoire Ingabire, the jailed Rwandan opposition leader, remains dire. In May 2013, the European Parliament adopted a resolution to address her situation, condemning the 'politically motivated' nature of her trial, demanding that the Rwandan judiciary conduct a 'prompt and fair appeal,' and reminding the Rwandan Government of its obligations to uphold human rights and international law. In September 2013, Vice-President/High Representative Ashton responded to Written Question E-008457/2013 regarding Victoire Ingabire. Ms Ashton stated that 'the EU is following the developments of the case and will consider further action if necessary.'

Regrettably, Ms Ingabire's situation has grown worse following her appeal trial. In December 2013 her original conviction was upheld, and her sentence was increased from 8 years to 15 years. After the verdict was announced, Ms Ingabire assured her supporters that 'the fight continues.'

1. How does the Vice-President/High Representative plan to address this continued violation of Ms Ingabire's rights? What further recourse is available following the decision in her appeal trial?

2. How does the Vice-President/High Representative plan to work for a consistently independent, fair and transparent judiciary in Rwanda?

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

The EU is aware of the Supreme Court decision of 13 December 2013 in the Ingabire case. It is for the defence team of Victoire Ingabire to determine the next steps to be taken. Until the officially published verdict is available, a more comprehensive analysis of the verdict is not possible.

A regular political dialogue between the EU and Rwanda allows the EU to raise, as needed, concerns for the respect of human rights sensitive issues, including the importance of an independent judiciary.

A regular political dialogue between the EU and Rwanda allows the EU to raise, as needed, concerns for the respect of human rights sensitive issues, including the need for an independent judiciary.

The EU and the international community expect that every effort will be taken by the Rwandan authorities to allow the independent provision of Justice on the basis of a transparent trial and uncontested facts.

The EU will continue to focus its action on the support and monitoring of the commitments that Rwanda has made to implement the Universal Periodic Review recommendations on Human Rights. Particular emphasis is placed by the EU on those commitments that aim at promoting a more open political system, including genuine political debate, freedom of expression and the emergence of active and responsible political organisations. Furthermore, the EU plays a leading role in the revitalization of the justice sector working group which monitor legal and judicial reforms and conducts dialogue on these issues with the authorities.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000694/14
alla Commissione
Franco Frigo (S&D)
(23 gennaio 2014)

Oggetto: Limite per il trasferimento di denaro contante ostacolo alla libertà di movimento dei capitali

L'art. 12 comma 1 del D.L. 201/2011, convertito in Legge 214/2011 ha introdotto in Italia una soglia limite per il trasferimento tra soggetti diversi di denaro contante o libretti di deposito bancari o postali al portatore o di titoli al portatore pari a 1 000 euro.

Tale disposizione appare distonica rispetto alla normativa comunitaria in cui, sulla base di quanto disposto dall'articolo 3, comma 1 del regolamento (CE) n. 1889/2005, la soglia entro cui è possibile importare ed esportare denaro contante risulta pari a 10 000 euro.

Considerato che la norma in oggetto è un limite per le operazioni commerciali, può la Commissione precisare se sia rinvenibile una violazione dell'articolo 63 del Trattato sul funzionamento dell'Unione europea?

Risposta di Michel Barnier a nome della Commissione
(13 marzo 2014)

L'obiettivo del regolamento (CE) n. 1889/2005 relativo ai controlli sul denaro contante in entrata nell'UE o in uscita dalla stessa, è contribuire a prevenire il riciclaggio di denaro. Il regolamento stabilisce un obbligo di dichiarazione valido per tutte le persone fisiche che trasportano denaro contante per un valore pari o superiore a 10 000 EUR in entrata o in uscita dal territorio dell'UE. Così facendo il regolamento integra le disposizioni della direttiva 2055/60/CE, che definisce un meccanismo UE volto a monitorare le operazioni effettuate attraverso enti creditizi e finanziari e taluni tipi di professioni. Tuttavia, come indicato chiaramente all'articolo 1 del regolamento (CE) n. 1889/2005, esso non pregiudica le misure nazionali volte a controllare i movimenti di denaro contante all'interno dell'Unione. Inoltre, il regolamento non vieta misure nazionali intese a limitare i pagamenti in contanti finalizzati all'evasione fiscale.

In conformità delle norme del trattato in materia di libera circolazione dei capitali, come interpretato dalla Corte di giustizia sulla base di una giurisprudenza consolidata, le restrizioni alla libera circolazione dei capitali devono essere proporzionate e giustificate da motivi di ordine pubblico o di pubblica sicurezza o da un altro motivo imperativo di interesse generale. La lotta contro l'evasione fiscale è un motivo imperativo di interesse generale che può, in linea di principio, giustificare tali restrizioni, a condizione che la norma in questione sia proporzionata. Dalle informazioni fornite, la legge italiana in questione non sembra sproporzionata.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000694/14
to the Commission
Franco Frigo (S&D)
(23 January 2014)

Subject: Limit on cash transfers an impediment to the free movement of capital

Article 12(1) of Decree Law 201/2011, converted to Law 214/2011, imposes a maximum limit on all money transfers carried out in Italy, prohibiting the transfer of cash, bank or post office bearer passbook accounts or bearer securities between different parties in any amount equal to or greater than EUR 1 000.

This regulation appears to be at odds with Community legislation, according to which, as detailed in Article 3(1) of Regulation (EC) No 1889/2005, the maximum limit imposed on cash entering and leaving the Community is EUR 10 000.

Given that the law in question represents a limit on commercial transactions, can the Commission clarify whether this constitutes a breach of Article 63 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(13 March 2014)

The purpose of Regulation No 1889/2005 on controls of cash entering or leaving the EU is to help prevent money laundering. By laying down a declaration obligation on any natural person carrying cash of a value of EUR 10 000 or more when entering or leaving the EU, this regulation complements Directive 2005/60/EC, which sets up an EU mechanism to monitor transactions through credit and financial institutions and certain types of professions. However, as stated clearly in Article 1 of Regulation No 1889/2005, it is without prejudice to national measures for the control of cash movements within the EU. It also does not prevent national measures limiting cash payments for tax evasion reasons.

According to the Treaty rules on free movement of capital, as interpreted by the European Court of Justice in accordance with settled case law, any restriction to the free movement of capital needs to be proportionate and justified by reasons of public policy or public security or another overriding reason of general interest. The fight against tax evasion is an overriding reason of general interest which may in principle justify such restrictions, provided that the rule in question is proportionate. From the information provided, the Italian law at issue would not appear disproportionate.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000697/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(23 gennaio 2014)

Oggetto: Sperimentazione eco-biciclette

In Tailandia è in fase di sperimentazione un'innovativa bici ecologica in grado di purificare l'aria. Tramite un mini-depuratore e un impianto di fotosintesi artificiale, è in grado di avviare una reazione tra l'acqua contenuta in un piccolo serbatoio e l'elettricità fornita da una batteria al litio, assorbendo CO_2 dall'atmosfera ed emettendo ossigeno.

La diffusione di tale mezzo può avere vantaggi significativi sulla riduzione dell'inquinamento, in special modo nei centri urbani, dove le biciclette vengono maggiormente utilizzate e il livello di inquinamento raggiunge i picchi più alti.

Alla luce di quanto esposto, può la Commissione chiarire se:

1. esistono nell'UE sperimentazioni simili;

2. ha a disposizione dati che dimostrino come tale dispositivo possa avere un ruolo significativo per la riduzione della quantità di CO_2 nell'atmosfera;

3. intende promuovere la sperimentazione e la diffusione di tale veicolo?

Risposta di Antonio Tajani a nome della Commissione
(12 marzo 2014)

1. Questa particolare tecnologia di riduzione delle emissioni non è stata sottoposta all'attenzione della Commissione.

2. La Commissione non dispone di dati sull'impatto di queste biciclette sulla riduzione delle emissioni di CO_2.

3. La Commissione ritiene che lo sviluppo e l'immissione sul mercato di veicoli ecologici sia importante per raggiungere gli obiettivi unionali in tema di aria pulita e di trasporti energo-efficienti. Per quanto concerne le biciclette a motore prodotte in grande serie, il regolamento (UE) n. 168/2013 ([1]) stabilisce, tra l'altro, i requisiti minimi di prestazione ambientale e le procedure armonizzate di prova. Si ritiene importante che la legislazione in materia di omologazione non ostacoli gli sviluppi tecnici. Per tale motivo, i requisiti in tema di resa ambientale sono formulati in modo tecnologicamente neutro e consentono di installare i sistemi di riduzione delle emissioni più efficaci sul piano dei costi quali progettati e specificati dai fabbricanti dei veicoli.

La Commissione riconosce inoltre l'importanza fondamentale dei veicoli puliti nel suo Piano d'azione CARS 2020 ([2]) e ribadisce che gli Stati membri dovrebbero incoraggiarne attivamente la diffusione attraverso strumenti finanziari e non finanziari. I principi che sottendono l'introduzione di incentivi finanziari sono esposti in un documento di lavoro dei servizi della Commissione del febbraio 2013 ([3]).

([1]) GU L 60 del 2.3.2013, pag. 1.
([2]) COM(2012) 636 final.
([3]) SWD(2013) 27 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000697/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(23 January 2014)

Subject: Development of eco-friendly bicycles

An innovative, eco-friendly bicycle capable of purifying the air during use is currently being developed in Thailand. The bicycle absorbs CO_2 from the atmosphere and replaces it with oxygen through a reaction that takes place between water contained in a small tank and electricity supplied by a lithium-ion battery. This reaction is made possible by a small-scale air filter and a system that mimics photosynthesis.

Were these bicycles to be distributed on a large scale, they could play a decisive role in reducing pollution, especially in urban areas where more people cycle and pollution levels are at their highest.

1. In light of the above, can the Commission clarify whether similar bicycles are being developed in the EU?

2. Does it have any data that it could provide demonstrating how these bicycles could be integral to reducing the amount of CO_2 in the atmosphere?

3. Does it intend to promote the development and distribution of these bicycles?

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

1. This particular emission abatement technology has not been brought to the attention of the Commission.

2. The Commission does not have data on the impact of these bicycles in reducing CO_2 emissions.

3. The Commission considers the development and placing on the market of eco-friendly vehicles as important to reach the EU's objectives of clean air and energy efficient transportation. With respect to mass-produced powered cycles, Regulation (EU) No 168/2013 ([1]) sets out among others the minimum environmental performance requirements and harmonised test procedures. It is deemed important that type-approval legislation does not obstruct technical development. For that reason the environmental performance requirements are formulated in a technological neutral way and allow fitting of the most cost effective emission abatement systems as designed and specified by the vehicle manufacturers.

Furthermore, the Commission recognised the key importance of clean vehicles in the CARS 2020 Action Plan ([2]) and underlined that their uptake should also be actively supported by Member States by means of financial and non-financial instruments. The principles underlying the introduction of financial incentives were laid down in a Commission staff working document of February 2013 ([3]).

([1]) OJ L60, 2.3.2013, p.1.
([2]) COM(2012) 636 final.
([3]) SWD(2013) 27 final.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000699/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(23 gennaio 2014)

Oggetto: Inquinamento luminoso

L'inquinamento luminoso è un problema che spesso passa inosservato, ma che negli ultimi decenni ha conosciuto un forte incremento in Europa e nel resto del mondo. Già agli inizi del nuovo millennio, circa due terzi della popolazione mondiale, tra cui il 99 % della popolazione statunitense e europea, viveva in aree considerate inquinate sotto questo punto di vista. Uno studio dell'epoca calcolava che circa un quinto della popolazione mondiale viveva in aree dove era impossibile vedere la Via Lattea a occhio nudo.

Più recentemente, taluni ricercatori hanno scoperto in Germania che l'inquinamento luminoso urbano non solo limita la visibilità delle stelle, ma sconvolge anche gli animali notturni che dipendono da uno schema di luce polarizzata simile a una bussola per svolgere le proprie attività. In questo modo, le capacità evolutive di molte creature notturne come ragni, falene, coleotteri e grilli potrebbero essere seriamente compromesse, così come la loro sopravvivenza, con conseguenze sulla catena alimentare e su interi ecosistemi.

Alla luce di quanto riportato, può la Commissione chiarire se:

1. ha preso o intende prendere visione degli studi in materia di inquinamento luminoso;

2. abbia già preso in considerazione l'adozione di misure volte a ridurre questo tipo di inquinamento;

3. intende adottare una strategia chiara in materia attraverso atti legislativi o raccomandazioni in virtù della competenza concorrente assegnatale dai Trattati in materia ambientale?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(1º aprile 2014)

Diversi studi hanno esaminato gli effetti localizzati dell'inquinamento luminoso ma finora non è stato accertato alcun impatto negativo generalizzato a livello unionale in grado di incidere significativamente sulle catene alimentari e sugli ecosistemi.

Analogamente, non si dispone di prove in merito a ripercussioni negative significative sulla fauna dovute all'illuminazione stradale locale che richiedano il ricorso a un'azione strategica a livello unionale.

In linea con il principio di sussidiarietà, le infrastrutture per illuminazione locale restano sotto il controllo e la responsabilità delle autorità competenti degli Stati membri. Per il momento non si prevede di conferire priorità allo sviluppo di una strategia unionale sugli effetti ambientali dell'inquinamento luminoso.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000699/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(23 January 2014)

Subject: Light pollution

Light pollution is an issue that often goes unnoticed but has got considerably worse over the last few decades in Europe and the rest of the world. At the start of the new millennium, around two-thirds of the global population, including 99% of people in the US and Europe, were already living in areas considered polluted from this point of view. A study at the time calculated that around one fifth of the global population lived in areas where the Milky Way could not be seen with the naked eye.

More recently, some researchers in Germany have discovered that urban light pollution not only restricts the visibility of stars but also upsets nocturnal animals which rely on a system of polarised light similar to a compass to go about their business. In this way, the evolutionary capacities of many nocturnal creatures such as spiders, moths, beetles and crickets could be seriously compromised, as could their survival, with repercussions on the food chain and entire ecosystems.

In the light of the above, can the Commission clarify whether:

1. it has had or intends to have sight of the studies concerning light pollution;

2. it has already considered adopting measures designed to reduce this kind of pollution;

3. it intends to adopt a clear strategy in this respect through legislation or recommendations by virtue of the shared competence in environmental matters accorded to it by the Treaties?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(1 April 2014)

Various studies have been reported as to the localised effects of light pollution, but no evidence has so far come to light as to any generalised EU-wide negative impact that would significantly influence food chains and ecosystems.

Similarly, evidence has not been presented regarding any significant detriment to wildlife caused by local street-lighting that would warrant policy action at the EU level.

In line with the principle of subsidiarity, local lighting infrastructure remains under the control and responsibility of individual authorities within Member States. Therefore, there are no plans to prioritise development of an EU strategy on the environmental effects of light pollution at this time.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-000705/14
do Komisji
Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)
(24 stycznia 2014 r.)

Przedmiot: Zamieszki w Kijowie

W mediach pojawiają się kolejne, niezwykle niepokojące, informacje na temat trwających od ponad miesiąca zamieszek w Kijowie. Dzisiaj w pobliżu barykad dwoje demonstrantów zginęło od ran postrzałowych. Trzecią ofiarą jest mężczyzna, który uciekając przed milicją, spadł z kolumnady przy stadionie Dynama Kijów.

Według danych organizatorów Majdanu w nocy z 21 na 22 stycznia, podczas starć protestantów z oddziałami Berkutu, rannych zostało niemal półtora tysiąca osób. W Kijowie dochodzi również do pobić, porwań i aresztowań dziennikarzy oraz aktywistów.

Przypomnę, że zarzewiem zdecydowanych protestów opozycji stało się przyjęcie przez Radę Najwyższą Ukrainy i podpisanie przez prezydenta Wiktora Janukowycza ustaw, w drastyczny sposób, ograniczających swobody obywatelskie.

Sytuacja dramatycznie się zaostrza. W związku z tym zwracam się do Komisji z zapytaniami:

— jakie działania zamierza podjąć w tym zakresie delegacja UE w Kijowie;

— jak Komisja ocenia dotychczasowe działania władz i sytuację na Majdanie;

— czy Komisja nie uważa, że dotychczasowe działania nie przyniosły oczekiwanego rezultatu i być może polityka UE względem Ukrainy wymaga rewizji?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Štefana Fülego w imieniu Komisji
(20 marca 2014 r.)

Rada Najwyższa podjęła w dniu 28 stycznia decyzję o uchyleniu przepisów z dnia 16 stycznia, które ograniczały podstawowe wolności na Ukrainie. UE była aktywnie zaangażowana w wypracowanie pokojowego i trwałego rozwiązania kryzysu politycznego na Ukrainie, w tym w przeciwdziałanie eskalacji przemocy. W tym celu Wysoka Przedstawiciel i wiceprzewodnicząca Komisji Catherine Ashton i komisarz Štefan Füle kilkakrotnie spotkali się po kolei ze wszystkimi głównymi podmiotami w Kijowie w styczniu i lutym 2014 r. W konkluzjach Rady przyjętych w dniach 10 i 20 lutego UE ponowiła swój apel o natychmiastowe zaprzestanie przemocy oraz o pełne przestrzeganie praw człowieka i podstawowych wolności.

Odnośnie dalszego rozwoju wydarzeń na Ukrainie na nadzwyczajnym posiedzeniu Rady do Spraw Zagranicznych w dniu 3 marca potępiono jawne naruszenie suwerenności i integralności terytorialnej Ukrainy przez akty agresji rosyjskich sił zbrojnych. W dniu 5 marca Rada przyjęła – zgodnie z konkluzjami Rady z dnia 3 marca – sankcje UE, polegające głównie na zamrażaniu i odzyskiwaniu sprzeniewierzonych funduszy państwa ukraińskiego. Decyzja dotyczy18 osób wskazanych jako odpowiedzialne sprzeniewierzenia; aktywa tych osób na obszarze Unii Europejskiej zostaną zamrożone.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000705/14
to the Commission
Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)
(24 January 2014)

Subject: Riots in Kiev

More highly disturbing reports about the riots in Kiev, which have been continuing for over a month, are being carried in the media. Today, in the vicinity of the barricades, two demonstrators died from bullet wounds. A third victim was a man who fell from a colonnade next to the Dynamo Kiev stadium while fleeing the police.

According to the organisers of the Maidan protests, on the night of 21-22 January almost one and a half thousand people were injured during clashes between protestors and police from the Berkut divisions. In Kiev people are also being beaten and kidnapped, and journalists and activists are being arrested.

The strong opposition protests were triggered by legislation severely reducing civil rights which was adopted by Ukraine's Supreme Council and signed into law by President Viktor Yanukovych.

The situation is deteriorating dramatically.

— What action is the EU delegation in Kiev planning to take in this respect?

— What is the Commission's assessment of the authorities' conduct and of the situation in Maidan square?

— Would the Commission agree that the action taken so far has failed to achieve its objective and that EU policy towards Ukraine perhaps needs to be reviewed?

Answer given by Commissioner Füle on behalf of the Commission
(20 March 2014)

The Verkhovna Rada decided on 28 January to revoke legislation of 16 January which had restricted fundamental freedoms in Ukraine. The EU was actively engaged in facilitating a peaceful and sustainable solution to the political crisis in Ukraine, including in deescalating violence. To this end, HR/VP Ashton and Commissioner Füle met in turn with all main actors in Kyiv several times in January and February 2014. The EU reiterated its call for an immediate end to the violence, full respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Council Conclusions adopted on 10 and 20 February.

Regarding further developments in Ukraine, an extraordinary Foreign Affairs Council condemned on 3 March the clear violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity by acts of aggression by the Russian armed forces. On 5 March, the Council adopted — in line with the Council Conclusions of 3 March — EU sanctions which focus on the freezing and recovery of misappropriated Ukrainian state funds. The decision targets 18 persons identified as responsible for such misappropriation whose assets within the European Union will be frozen.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000706/14
an die Kommission (Vizepräsidentin/Hohe Vertreterin)
Josef Weidenholzer (S&D)
(24. Januar 2014)

Betrifft: VP/HR — Kambodscha-Entschließung des Europäischen Parlaments

Laut Zeitungsberichten hat sich der Botschafter der Europäischen Union in Kambodscha, Jean-François Cautain, am 20. Januar von dem am 16. Januar 2014 angenommenen gemeinsamen Entschließungsantrag des Europäischen Parlaments zur Situation von Menschenrechtsaktivisten und Oppositionellen in Kambodscha und Laos distanziert.

Wie kommentiert die Hohe Vertreterin die Aussagen des EU-Botschafters?

Ist die Hohe Vertreterin der Meinung, dass es Aufgabe des EU-Botschafters in Kambodscha ist, sich von einer mehrheitlich angenommenen Position des Europäischen Parlaments zu distanzieren?

Antwort von Frau Ashton — Hohe Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin im Namen der Kommission
(25. März 2014)

Die Hohe Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin hat nicht den Eindruck, dass sich der EU-Botschafter in Kambodscha, Jean-François Cautain, von der Entschließung des EP distanziert hat. Der Titel des vom Herrn Abgeordneten genannten Zeitungsartikels scheint eher irreführend und gibt nicht unbedingt den Inhalt des Artikels wider.

Der Botschafter erklärt in diesem Artikel den lokalen Medien, wie die EU-Institutionen arbeiten, und weist insbesondere darauf hin, dass es nicht Aufgabe einer EU-Delegation ist, auf das Europäische Parlament, das ein unabhängiges Organ ist, Einfluss auszuüben, damit es eine Entschließung annimmt.

Dies steht nicht im Widerspruch zu den stetigen Bemühungen des EU-Boschafters, bei unterschiedlichen Anlässen und auf verschiedenen Ebenen auf die Bedenken der Europäischen Union und des Europäischen Parlaments in Bezug auf die in der Entschließung des EP genannten Themen hinzuweisen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000706/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Josef Weidenholzer (S&D)
(24 January 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — European Parliament Resolution on Cambodia

According to newspaper reports, on 20 January the European Union's ambassador to Cambodia, Jean-François Cautain, distanced himself from the European Parliament's joint motion for a resolution adopted on 16 January 2014 on the situation of human rights activists and opposition activists in Cambodia and Laos.

What comment does the High Representative have to make about the statements made by the EU ambassador?

Does the High Representative consider that it is the job of the EU ambassador in Cambodia to distance himself from a position of the European Parliament that has been adopted by a majority vote?

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

The High Representative/Vice-President does not believe that the EU Ambassador to Cambodia, Jean-François Cautain, has distanced himself from the EP resolution. The title of the article the Honourable MEP refers to seems rather misleading and may not reflect the contents of the article.

In this article, the Ambassador explains to the local media how the EU institutions work, namely that it is not up to an EU Delegation to lobby the European Parliament, which is an independent body, to pass a resolution.

This does not undermine the constant efforts done by the EU Ambassador to convey, at various occasions and at different levels, the concerns of the European Union and the European Parliament related to the topics mentioned in the EP resolution.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000708/14
to the Commission
Emma McClarkin (ECR)
(24 January 2014)

Subject: City taxes

I have been contacted by a number of my constituents regarding city taxes being charged to people staying in hotels across Europe.

As more and more of Europe's citizens book their hotels online, with a large proportion of them paying for their hotel at the time of booking, city taxes are becoming more of an inconvenience. They vary from Member State to Member State, and a lot of the time are not included in the prices quoted at the time of booking. To the frustration of many consumers, this extra charge comes as a surprise.

Can the Commission tell me whether this is a concern it shares? Does the Commission have any competence to change this and, if so, what measures has it taken to make this system friendlier to the consumer?

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

The level of taxes charged by cities to tourists because of hotel accommodation is not regulated by EC law.

There is however EU legislation which protects consumers against hidden charges.

Directive 2005/29/EC ([1]) prevents traders from engaging in misleading practices. In the case of an invitation to purchase, traders are required to operate in accordance with professional diligence and provide in a clear, intelligible and timely manner material information that consumers need in order to take an informed purchase decision, such as the price inclusive of taxes and other non-optional charges. As regards hotel accomodations, this includes the city tax.

Directive 97/7/EC ([2]) requires traders to inform consumers about the price before the conclusion of online contracts. This directive will be replaced by the new Directive 2011/83/EC on Consumer Rights (CRD), which will apply across the EU from 13 June 2014. The CRD expressly requires traders to inform consumers, before the conclusion of an online contract, about any additional charges that may be payable. Complete information about the price must be prominently displayed directly before the consumer places his order.

The communication on the application of Directive 2005/29/EC ([3]) and its accompanying Report ([4]) adopted on 14 March 2013 identify key areas for actions, including the online and travel sectors such as hotel booking websites, where enforcement should be stepped up. In this connection, the Commission is reviewing the current Guidance on the application of Directive 2005/29/EC to address ongoing challenges.

The Commission would welcome receiving additional factual elements available to the Honourable Member, which it could use to assess the dimension of the problem.

([1]) Directive 2005/29/EC on unfair business-to-consumer commercial practices in the internal market, OJ L 149, 11.06.2005, p.22-39.
([2]) Directive 97/7/EC on the protection of consumers in respect of distance contracts, OJ L 144, 4.6.1997, p. 19.
([3]) 'Achieving a high level of consumer protection — Building trust in the internal market' COM(2013) 138 final.
([4]) COM(2013) 139 final.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000714/14
à Comissão
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(24 de janeiro de 2014)

Assunto: Apoios à indústria naval

A empresa Estaleiros Navais do Mondego, situada na Figueira da Foz e criada em 1944, emprega cerca de 170 trabalhadores, alguns deles especializados em trabalhos que não são feitos em mais nenhum sítio do país. Esta empresa tem uma importância estratégica para o setor da construção e reparação naval no nosso país, ou seja, para o seu desenvolvimento económico. A Comissão tem afirmado em vários documentos que o investimento na produção é essencial para o crescimento dos países.

Perguntamos, assim, à Comissão:

— Quais os fundos disponíveis para apoiar empresas de sectores estratégicos, nomeadamente no que se refere à manutenção e ao reforço dos equipamentos existentes?

Resposta dada por Johannes Hahn em nome da Comissão
(11 de março de 2014)

Em 2007-2013, o investimento produtivo foi uma das prioridades temáticas para o financiamento do Fundo Europeu de Desenvolvimento Regional (FEDER) através de ajudas diretas ao investimento, sobretudo nas PME. Além disso, a Comissão aumentou a possibilidade de investimento em empresas, através de instrumentos financeiros, em qualquer fase da sua atividade económica normal, com exceção das empresas em dificuldade.

Para o período de 2014-2020, a Comissão continua a sublinhar o papel das PME, enquanto agentes fundamentais da economia europeia. Por isso, um dos objetivos temáticos para os investimentos dos Fundos Estruturais e de Investimento europeus é «*reforçar a competitividade das PME, do setor agrícola e do setor da pesca e da aquicultura*». Contudo, a competitividade deve ser entendida como a vantagem que as empresas obtêm com a redução dos custos, o aumento da produtividade, a diferenciação dos produtos e serviços e a melhoria da comercialização; este conceito vai além da mera expansão da capacidade de produção, que, por si só, não aumenta a competitividade, pelo que não deve ser uma prioridade de investimento.

Para ambos os períodos, o financiamento é aplicado em regime de gestão partilhada com os Estados-Membros. Isso significa que as autoridades nacionais são responsáveis pela implementação dos programas, incluindo os critérios e processos de seleção de projetos. Por conseguinte, no que respeita a medidas específicas em Portugal, a Comissão sugere que a Senhora Deputada contacte diretamente as entidades nacionais responsáveis pela gestão dos programas do FEDER, cuja lista está disponível no seguinte endereço:
http://www.ifdr.pt/content.aspx?menuid=329&eid=7943

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000714/14
to the Commission
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(24 January 2014)

Subject: Aid for the ship-building industry

Set up in 1944 and based in Figueira da Foz, the company Estaleiros Navais do Mondego employs about 170 workers, some of whom specialise in work that is no longer done anywhere else in the country. The company is of strategic importance to the shipbuilding and naval repairs industry in Portugal, and therefore to the country's economic development. The Commission has stated in various documents that investment in production is essential to national growth.

We therefore ask the Commission:

— What funding is available to support companies in strategic industries, particularly as regards the maintenance and expansion of existing stock?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(11 March 2014)

In 2007-2013, productive investment has been one of the thematic priorities for European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) financing, namely through direct aid to investment, primarily in SMEs. Furthermore, the Commission expanded the possibility to invest in enterprises through financial instruments at any stage of their normal business activity, with the exception of firms in difficulty.

For 2014-2020, the Commission continues to stress the role of SMEs as key actors of the European economy. Hence, one of the thematic objectives for investments by the European Structural and Investment Funds is 'enhancing the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises, the agricultural sector and the fisheries and aquaculture sector'. However, competitiveness should be understood as the advantage that firms gain by lowering costs, increasing productivity, differentiating products and services and improving marketing; this concept goes beyond the mere expansion of production capacity that per se does not increase competitiveness and therefore, should not be a priority for investment.

For both periods, funding is implemented in shared management with the Member States. This means that the national authorities are responsible for implementing the programmes, including project selection criteria and procedures. Therefore, as regards specific measures in Portugal, the Commission would suggest that the Honourable Member contact directly the national authorities in charge of managing the ERDF programmes the list of which is available at the following address:
http://www.ifdr.pt/content.aspx?menuid=329&eid=7943.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000717/14
à Comissão
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(24 de janeiro de 2014)

Assunto: Aumento de doenças relacionadas com o stresse causado ou agravado pelo trabalho

O stresse é o segundo problema de saúde relacionado com o trabalho mais notificado, afetando 22 % dos trabalhadores da UE 27 (em 2005). Devido a pressões causadas pelo aumento do desemprego, dos contratos precários, do aumento do número de horas de trabalho, da sobrecarga de trabalho, da diminuição dos salários e direitos sociais, do assédio a trabalhadores, o número de pessoas que sofrem de doenças relacionadas com o stresse causado ou agravado pelo trabalho tende a aumentar.

O stresse afeta a saúde mental e física dos trabalhadores e constitui um risco para a segurança no local de trabalho. As entidades patronais e os Estados têm o dever legal de garantir a saúde e segurança no trabalho.

Pergunto à Comissão:

— Existem estudos recentes que avaliem a prevalência dos riscos psicossociais no trabalho e respetivas causas, nos países da UE? Em caso afirmativo, quais os principais resultados?

— Qual a avaliação que faz dos resultados desses estudos?

— Tem informação sobre iniciativas na UE que promovam medidas como o estabelecimento legal e obrigatório da existência de técnicos especializados da confiança dos trabalhadores a quem estes possam recorrer em caso de stresse, assédio ou violência no trabalho?

Resposta dada por László Andor em nome da Comissão
(13 de março de 2014)

Têm sido efetuados vários estudos ([1]) a nível da UE sobre a prevalência e as causas dos riscos psicossociais no local de trabalho. O inquérito às forças de trabalho de 2007 revelou que 14 % das pessoas com um problema de saúde relacionado com o trabalho tinham tido problemas de stresse, depressão ou ansiedade como principal problema de saúde. O quinto inquérito sobre as condições de trabalho na Europa (2012) ([2]) da Fundação Europeia para a Melhoria das Condições de Vida e de Trabalho (Eurofound) revelou que, em comparação com 2005, alguns indicadores, tais como a elevada carga de trabalho, tinham piorado em comparação com 2010, enquanto outros, como a má qualidade das relações sociais, tinha melhorado. O Inquérito europeu às empresas sobre riscos novos e emergentes (ESENER) destacou a baixa proporção da gestão de riscos psicossociais nas empresas em toda a UE ([3]). A Agência Europeia para a Segurança e a Saúde no Trabalho (EU-OSHA) e a Eurofound realizaram vários estudos a este respeito ([4]), estando atualmente a elaborar um relatório conjunto para a campanha da EU-OSHA sobre riscos psicossociais ([5]), a ser lançada em abril de 2014.

A avaliação da estratégia europeia em matéria de segurança e saúde no local de trabalho (2007-2012) ([6]) mostra que o stresse no trabalho e os riscos psicossociais continuam a ser um desafio.

Tendo em conta essas conclusões, a Comissão lançou um estudo sobre saúde mental para avaliar a situação da saúde e da segurança no trabalho de um ponto de vista jurídico, definir cenários de ação e elaborar um documento de orientação para os trabalhadores e os empregadores.

([1]) Ver:
http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/product_details/publication?p_product_code=KS-31-09-290
([2]) Ver:
http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/pubdocs/2011/82/en/1/EF1182EN.pdf
([3]) Ver:
https://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/reports/management-psychosocial-risks-esener
([4]) Por exemplo, ver:
http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/working/studies/tn1004059s/tn1004059s.htm e
https://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/reports/violence-harassment-TERO09010ENC
([5]) Ver:
http://www.healthy-workplaces.eu/
([6]) Ver:
http://portal.empl.cec/Units/B3/Documents/OSH%20strategy%20evaluation%20report_en.pdf

No que se refere às iniciativas da UE, a Comissão gostaria de chamar a atenção da Senhora Deputada para as suas respostas às perguntas escritas E-004077/2013, E-001739/2013 e E-002970/2013 ([7]), que se referem ao apoio aos parceiros sociais europeus, bem como a projetos de investigação e estudos neste domínio. A Comissão também tem apoiado os parceiros sociais no estabelecimento de um acordo-quadro sobre o stresse no trabalho ([8]), além de ter avaliado a sua aplicação ([9]).

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

([8]) Ver: https://osha.europa.eu/data/links/framework-agreement-on-work-related-stress

([9]) Ver «Relatório sobre a aplicação do acordo-quadro dos parceiros sociais europeus sobre o stresse no trabalho» (SEC(2011) 241 final, de 24 de fevereiro de 2011); em: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=89&langId=en&newsId=995&furtherNews=yes

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000717/14
to the Commission
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(24 January 2014)

Subject: Rise in illnesses linked to stress caused or aggravated by work

Stress is the second most commonly declared work-related health problem, affecting 22% of workers in the EU-27 (in 2005). The pressures being caused by rising unemployment, precarious employment contracts, increased working hours, excessive workloads, falling wages and welfare entitlements, and harassment at work, are leading to an upward trend in the number of people suffering from illnesses linked to stress caused or aggravated by work.

Stress affects people's mental and physical health and jeopardises safety in the workplace. Both employers' bodies and the State have a legal duty to guarantee health and safety at work.

I ask the Commission:

— Are there any recent studies assessing the prevalence and respective causes of psychosocial risks at work in the EU countries? If so, what are the main findings?

— How does the Commission assess the findings of these studies?

— Does the Commission have information on initiatives in the EU to promote measures such as the establishment of a legal obligation that workplaces have an experienced welfare officer to whom workers can turn if they are experiencing stress, harassment or violence at work?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(13 March 2014)

Several surveys ([1]) have been conducted at EU level on the prevalence and causes of psychosocial risks (PSR) at work. The 2007 Labour Force Survey showed that 14% of persons with a work-related health problem experienced stress, depression or anxiety as their main health problem. The Fifth European Working Conditions Survey (2012) ([2]) of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) showed that, compared to 2005, some indicators, such as high work intensity, had worsened compared to 2010, while others, such as poor social relationships, had improved. The European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks (ESENER) has highlighted the low frequency of PSR management in enterprises across the EU ([3]). The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) and Eurofound have carried out several studies in this respect ([4]), and are now working on a joint report for the EU-OSHA campaign on PSR ([5]), to be launched in April 2014.

The evaluation of the European Strategy on Safety and Health at Work (2007-2012) ([6]) shows that work-related stress (WRS) and PSR remain a challenge.

Given those findings, the Commission has set in motion a study on mental health to evaluate the situation from a health and safety at work legal standpoint, outline scenarios for action, and draft a guidance document for workers and employers.

As regards EU initiatives, the Commission would draw the Honourable Member's attention to its answers to questions E-004077/2013, E-001739/2013 and E-002970/2013 ([7]), which refer to support for the European social partners, research projects and studies in this area. It has also supported the social partners in establishing a Framework Agreement on WRS ([8]) and has assessed its implementation ([9]).

([1]) See http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/product_details/publication?p_product_code=KS-31-09-290
([2]) See http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/pubdocs/2011/82/en/1/EF1182EN.pdf
([3]) See https://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/reports/management-psychosocial-risks-esener
([4]) For example, see http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/working/studies/tn1004059s/tn1004059s.htm and https://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/reports/violence-harassment-TERO09010ENC
([5]) See http://www.healthy-workplaces.eu/
([6]) See http://portal.empl.cec/Units/B3/Documents/OSH%20strategy%20evaluation%20report_en.pdf
([7]) See http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([8]) See https://osha.europa.eu/data/links/framework-agreement-on-work-related-stress
([9]) See 'Report on the implementation of the European social partners' Framework Agreement on Work-related Stress' (SEC(2011) 241 final of 24 February 2011); at: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=89&langId=en&newsId=995&furtherNews=yes

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000718/14
à Comissão
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(24 de janeiro de 2014)

Assunto: Processo de construção de uma unidade hoteleira de luxo na Praia da Tocha

Em 2006 foi anunciada a construção na Praia da Tocha, em Cantanhede, de uma unidade hoteleira de 5 estrelas. Em junho desse ano, foi aprovado pela Câmara Municipal de Cantanhede a venda em hasta pública de um terreno na zona de dunas, em área da Reserva Ecológica Nacional (REN). A empresa compradora — Empresa Clássicos Portuguese com sede em Mira — comprometeu-se a concluir esta obra até fevereiro de 2009. Os trabalhos nunca se iniciaram e a Câmara Municipal, em 15 de dezembro de 2009, concedeu a autorização de transmissão do terreno para outra empresa — a World Hotel Investimentos Hoteleira, Lda (empresa detida pelos mesmos sócios gerentes da primeira compradora). Esta «nova» empresa hoteleira apresentou uma candidatura ao QREN a 30 de janeiro de 2010, diferida em Junho desse mesmo ano, com um apoio de 3,7 milhões de euros. A primeira pedra da nova unidade hoteleira foi lançada no dia 22 de setembro de 2011, com a presença dos governantes portugueses, embora já tivessem passado vários meses do prazo estipulado para a conclusão da obra. As obras pararam em maio de 2012. A empresa teria já recebido 1,2 milhões do QREN. Ao que consta, a empresa declarou insolvência.

Na visita que fiz este mês ao local, pude verificar que a obra está totalmente paralisada, os caboucos encontram-se a céu aberto, e a estrutura construída tem fácil acesso. Para além dos danos ao nível da paisagem e da qualidade de vida dos moradores da Praia da Tocha, esta situação constitui um perigo iminente, sobretudo para as crianças. Os moradores da Praia da Tocha interpuseram uma Acão popular contra a Câmara Municipal de Cantanhede e contra a empresa promotora.

Pergunto à Comissão:

— Que informações tem sobre esta situação?

— Tem informações sobre o paradeiro dos 1,2 milhões de euros atribuídos no âmbito do QREN?

— Que apoios poderá a UE disponibilizar para devolver àquela população a sua qualidade de vida, nomeadamente através de uma possível ação de demolição da estrutura, remoção dos inertes e requalificação do espaço?

Resposta dada por Johannes Hahn em nome da Comissão
(24 de março de 2014)

De acordo com a informação recebida das autoridades portuguesas, a empresa World Hotel —Investimentos Hoteleiros Lda. apresentou um pedido de financiamento, a 30 de janeiro de 2010, que foi aprovado no âmbito do programa Centro a 25 de junho de 2010. O contrato estabeleceu o montante de 5 772 304 euros de despesas elegíveis e uma ajuda reembolsável de 3 751 997 euros. Entre novembro de 2010 e setembro de 2011, foram efetuados dois pagamentos à empresa num total de 1 191 711 euros, com base em adiantamentos comprovados por faturas.

O Turismo de Portugal realizou três estudos de terreno entre outubro de 2011 e junho de 2012, que detetaram que o projeto tinha vindo a avançar lentamente e que de seguida parou por completo. Nesse momento, as autoridades portuguesas decidiram cessar os pagamentos.

O Turismo de Portugal cancelou então o contrato, a 13 de fevereiro de 2013, visto não terem sido encontradas soluções para o avanço do projeto. A empresa deu início às negociações com os seus credores no quadro do PER (Processo Especial de Revitalização) e o Turismo de Portugal solicitou o reembolso do seu crédito a 9 de julho de 2013.

A empresa foi declarada insolvente a 12 de agosto de 2013 e o Turismo de Portugal voltou a solicitar o reembolso do seu crédito. A 10 de outubro de 2013, foi realizada uma audição de falência em que foram confirmados os credores, assim como o encerramento da empresa e a liquidação dos seus ativos.

Nos casos de falência, o apoio do Fundo Europeu de Desenvolvimento Regional não pode ser utilizado para que o terreno seja restituído ao seu estado primitivo. Trata-se de um assunto da competência das autoridades nacionais.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000718/14
to the Commission
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(24 January 2014)

Subject: Process of construction of luxury hotel at Praia da Tocha

In 2006 it was announced that a 5-star hotel would be built at Praia da Tocha, Cantanhede. In June of that year, the Municipal Council of Cantanhede approved the sale at public auction of a plot in the dunes area, within a National Ecological Reserve (NER). The purchasing company — Empresa Clássicos Portuguese with registered office at Mira — undertook to complete the work by February 2009. Work was never begun and on 15 December 2009, the Municipal Council authorised the transfer of the land to another company — World Hotel Investimentos Hoteleira, Lda (a company owned by the same managing partners as the first purchaser). This 'new' hotel company submitted an application to QREN [National Strategic Reference Framework] on 30 January 2010, granted in June of the same year, with a grant of EUR 3.7 million. The first stone of the new hotel was laid on 22 September 2011, in the presence of the Portuguese authorities, although by then the deadline laid down for completion of the work had passed several months previously. Work was stopped in May 2012. The company would have received EUR 1.2 million from QREN by then. The company is reported to have gone into liquidation.

During a site visit I made this month, I was able to see that the works are completely paralysed, the foundations are open to the elements, and the structure constructed is easy to access. Apart from the damage to the landscape and the quality of life of the residents of Praia da Tocha, this situation constitutes an imminent danger, especially for children. The residents of Praia da Tocha have brought a popular action against the Municipal Council of Cantanhede and against the developer.

I ask the Commission:

— What information does it have regarding this situation?

— Does it have any information as to the whereabouts of the EUR 1.2 million allocated under QREN?

— What support can the EU make available to return to that population its quality of life, in particular by means of a possible action involving demolition of the structure, removal of inert waste and redevelopment of the area?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(24 March 2014)

According to information received from the Portuguese authorities, the company World Hotel — Investimentos Hoteleiros Lda submitted an application for financing on 30 January 2010 which was approved under the Centro programme on 25 June 2010. The contract set out the eligible expenditure of EUR 5 772 304 and the repayable aid of EUR 3 751 997. Between November 2010 and September 2011, two disbursements were made to the company totalling EUR 1 191 711 based on advances certified by invoices.

Turismo de Portugal carried out three on-the-spot surveys between October 2011 and June 2012 which detected that the project had been advancing slowly and then that it stopped completely. At this time, the Portuguese authorities decided not to make any further payments.

Turismo de Portugal then cancelled the contract on 13 February 2013 when no solutions to advance with the project were found. The company started negotiations with its creditors in the framework of 'PER' (Processo Especial de Revitalização) and subsequently Turismo de Portugal asked for its credit to be reimbursed on 9 July 2013.

The company was declared bankrupt on 12 August 2013 and Turismo de Portugal again asked for its credit to be reimbursed. On 10 October 2013, the bankruptcy hearing was held where the creditors were confirmed, together with the closure of the company and liquidation of its assets.

In cases of bankrupcy, the European Regional Development Fund support cannot be used to revert the land back to its original state. This is a matter for the national authorities to solve.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-000719/14
à Comissão
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(24 de janeiro de 2014)

Assunto: Manutenção na posse pública de espólio das obras de Miró

O estado português prepara-se para vender, através da leiloeira Christie's, em Londres, 85 importantes obras de Joan Miró, esperando auferir cerca de 35 milhões de euros (quando estas já foram avaliadas em 150 milhões de euros). Estas obras de Joan Miró foram adquiridas pelo Estado através do processo de nacionalização do Banco Português de Negócios, uma operação que, apesar da enorme despesa que significou para os portugueses, nunca se reverteu em nenhum benefício para o desenvolvimento de Portugal.

É agora do interesse público que bessas obras sejam expostas publicamente e que se estudem as melhores soluções para a sua valorização artística e económica, o que só pode acontecer com a manutenção na posse pública deste importante espólio. Foi já enviada para o Parlamento Europeu uma petição contra a venda destes 85 quadros de Miró, subscrita por mais de 8 000 pessoas.

Entre os vários programas da UE, o novo Programa Europa Criativa tem como um dos objetivos expressos promover a diversidade cultural da Europa.

Perguntamos, assim, à Comissão:

— Existem alguns apoios da UE destinados à divulgação e preservação deste tipo de espólios de obras de arte?

Resposta dada por AndroullaVassiliou em nome da Comissão
(28 de março de 2014)

A Comissão Europeia atribui uma enorme importância à salvaguarda do património cultural e de coleções de arte. No entanto, em conformidade com o artigo 167.° do Tratado sobre o Funcionamento da União Europeia, a ação da União Europeia está limitada ao incentivo da cooperação entre os Estados-Membros e ao apoio e complemento da sua ação, nomeadamente com vista à conservação e salvaguarda do património cultural de importância europeia.

Nesse sentido, a conservação, preservação e promoção do património cultural é, antes de mais, uma responsabilidade nacional. Por conseguinte, a Comissão não pode intervir na questão suscitada pela Senhora Deputada.

O programa Europa Criativa proporciona financiamento para projetos de conservação do património cultural transnacionais e transfronteiriços e de âmbito europeu que envolvem a participação de vários operadores culturais de diferentes países europeus. Promove igualmente a Marca do Património Europeu, as Jornadas Europeias do Património e o prémio da União Europeia para o Património Cultural/Europa Nostra. Contudo, uma ação para preservar ou manter como património público uma coleção de obras de arte não seria elegível para financiamento ao abrigo desse programa.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000719/14
to the Commission
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(24 January 2014)

Subject: Keeping a collection of works by Miró in public ownership

The Portuguese Government is preparing to sell 85 important works by Joan Miró at Christie's in London and is expecting to get a price of about 35 million euros (when the works have already been valued at 150 million euros). These works by Joan Miró were acquired by the State as a result of the nationalisation of Banco Português de Negócios, a process that, despite the enormous cost it implied for the Portuguese people, has not in any way benefited the country's development.

It is therefore of public interest that these works be publicly exhibited and that every effort is made to find the best possible way of using them to the best advantage, both culturally and economically, which can happen only if this important collection remains in public ownership. A petition against the sale of these 85 Miró paintings, signed by more than 8 000 people, has already been sent to the European Parliament.

Of the various EU programmes, the new Creative Europe programme includes an explicit aim of promoting cultural diversity in Europe.

We therefore ask the Commission:

— Is there any EU aid available for exhibiting and preserving this type of art collection?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(28 March 2014)

The European Commission regards the safeguarding of cultural heritage and art collections as being of high importance. However, in accordance with Article 167 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, action by the European Union is limited to encouraging cooperation between Member States and supporting and supplementing their action, *inter alia*, with a view to conserving and safeguarding cultural heritage of European significance.

Accordingly, the conservation, preservation and promotion of cultural heritage is primarily a national responsibility. The Commission cannot therefore intervene in the matter raised by the Honourable Member.

Concerning the Creative Europe programme, it provides funding for transnational and cross-border cultural and heritage projects with a European scope which involve several cultural operators from different European countries. It also promotes the European Heritage Label, the annual European Heritage Days and the EU Prize for cultural heritage/Europa Nostra. However, an action to preserve or to keep a collection of works in public ownership would not be eligible for funding under this programme.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-000724/14
adresată Comisiei
Elena Băsescu (PPE)
(24 ianuarie 2014)

Subiect: Substanțele sau amestecurile chimice folosite în industria textilă

În ultimii ani, organizația Greenpeace a publicat mai multe studii care arată prezența în textilele comercializate pe teritoriul UE, și nu numai, a unor substanțe chimice susceptibile să provoace cancer și probleme hormonale. Ultimul astfel de studiu a relevat prezența unor substanțe chimice periculoase în hainele pentru copii, aducând în atenția opiniei publice o serie de fapte și date cel puțin îngrijorătoare privind industria textilă. Astfel de substanțe au un potențial alergen sau chiar toxic, în special în rândul copiilor, al căror sistem imunitar nu este la fel de puternic ca cel al unui adult.

Mai mulți producători de articole vestimentare și sportive s-au angajat, în mod voluntar, să reducă la zero folosirea unor astfel de substanțe sau produse până la 1 ianuarie 2020. Cu toate că există o serie de acte legislative care au rolul de a reglementa substanțele chimice, precum directiva REACH, IPPC sau GPSD, prevederile referitoare la utilizarea acestora în industria textilă sunt destul de limitate, ele nefiind cuprinse într-un cadru unitar.

Articolul 25 și considerentul 27 din Regulamentul (UE) nr. 1007/2011 solicită Comisiei să evalueze substanțele periculoase utilizate în produsele textile.

În lumina acestor evaluări, corelate cu studiile efectuate de către alți actori independenți, a constatat Comisia necesitatea îmbunătățirii actualului cadru legislativ, pentru a reglementa expres prezența substanțelor chimice, sau chiar a reziduurilor acestora, în produsele textile?

Mai mult, în baza articolului invocat mai sus, are în vedere Comisia efectuarea unui astfel de studiu pe termen lung, pentru a evalua dacă există o legătură de cauzalitate între reacțiile alergice și substanțele sau amestecurile chimice folosite în produsele textile, în scopul de a pregăti, dacă este cazul, propuneri legislative în acest sens?

Răspuns dat de dl Tajani în numele Comisiei
(25 martie 2014)

În ceea ce privește studiul referitor la legătura de cauzalitate între reacțiile alergice și substanțele sau amestecurile chimice folosite în produsele textile ([1]), vă invităm să consultați raportul Comisiei prezentat Parlamentului European și Consiliului la data de 25 septembrie 2013 ([2]). Studiul ([3]), care s-a concentrat asupra substanțelor chimice prezente în produsele textile finite și a ținut cont de rezultatele studiilor desfășurate de către statele membre, a concluzionat că nu este posibil să se stabilească o legătură de cauzalitate între reacțiile alergice și substanțele sau amestecurile chimice folosite și care rămân în produsele textile finite. Există incertitudini în legătură cu eliberarea efectivă de substanțe și pragul de siguranță privind concentrația substanțelor chimice sensibilizante și iritante care rămân în produsele textile finite și care pot genera reacții alergice la persoanele cu sensibilități.

Legislația UE vizează limitarea prezenței substanțelor periculoase în articolele de îmbrăcăminte pentru toate categoriile de consumatori, inclusiv pentru copii. În ceea ce privește cadrul legislativ, Comisia o invită pe distinsa membră a Parlamentului European să consulte răspunsurile la întrebările E-000931/2013, E-011060/2012 și E-010799/2012 ([4]). Regulamentul REACH ([5]) impune restricții cu privire la utilizarea substanțelor periculoase în produsele textile fabricate sau comercializate în UE, de exemplu utilizarea NP ([6]) și NPE ([7]) în anumite procese de prelucrare a produselor textile și din piele. Suedia a înaintat o propunere de limitare a prezenței NP și NPE în articolele textile. Aceasta este în prezent examinată de către comitetele Agenției Europene pentru Produse Chimice. Acest lucru ar putea duce la o modificare, probabil în 2015, a restricțiilor existente privind NP și NPE prevăzute în anexa XVII la REACH. De asemenea, statele membre iau măsuri împotriva produselor nesigure disponibile pe piața sau la frontierele UE și trimit Comisiei notificări prin intermediul Sistemului de alertă rapidă al UE pentru produsele nealimentare ([8]).

([1]) prevăzut la articolul 25 din Regulamentul (UE) nr. 1007/2011.
([2]) COM(2013) 656 final din 25.9.2013 (http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2013:0656:FIN:RO:PDF).
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/textiles/files/studies/study-allergic-reactions-textile_en.pdf
([4]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/ro/parliamentary-questions.html
([5]) Regulamentul (CE) nr. 1907/2006 al Parlamentului European și al Consiliului din 18 decembrie 2006 privind înregistrarea, evaluarea, autorizarea și restricționarea substanțelor chimice; JO L 396, 30.12.2006, p. 1 (http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=DD:13:60:32006R1907:RO:PDF).
([6]) Nonilfenol.
([7]) Nonilfenoli etoxilați.
([8]) RAPEX: http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/safety/rapex/

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000724/14
to the Commission
Elena Băsescu (PPE)
(24 January 2014)

Subject: Use of chemical substances or mixtures in textiles

In recent years, Greenpeace has published a number of studies showing that textiles marketed in EU territory and elsewhere contain chemicals possibly causing cancer or hormonal problems. The most recent study revealed the presence of dangerous chemical substances in children's clothing, bringing to public attention a number of facts and indications regarding the textile industry, which, to say the least, give cause for concern, to the effect that the substances concerned are potentially allergenic or even toxic, particularly for children, whose immune systems are weaker than those of adults.

A number of clothing and sports manufacturers have undertaken, on a voluntary basis, to eliminate entirely use of such substances or products by 1 January 2020. Despite the existence of legislation seeking to regulate chemical substances, such as the REACH, IPPC or GPSD directives, the provisions regarding the use thereof in the textile industry are somewhat limited, not being set out in a uniform context.

Article 25 and Recital 27 of Regulation (EC) No 1007/2011 call on the Commission to assess the use of dangerous substances in the textile sector.

In view of these assessments, together with studies by independent experts, does the Commission consider it necessary to improve the current legislative framework so as to regulate the levels of chemical substances or residues in textiles?

In the light of the above article, does the Commission intend to carry out a long-term study of this kind to verify the existence of a causal link between allergic reactions and chemical substances or mixtures used in textiles with a view to drawing up appropriate legislation should this prove to be the case?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(25 March 2014)

As to the study on the causal link between allergic reactions and chemical substances or mixtures used in textiles ([1]), there is a Commission report to the European Parliament and the Council of 25 September 2013 ([2]). The study ([3]), which focused on chemical substances in finished textile products and took into account studies carried out by Member States, concluded that it is not possible to establish a causal link between allergic reactions and chemical substances or mixtures used and remaining on finished textile products. There is uncertainty about the actual release and the safe concentration levels of substances classified as skin sensitizers or irritants which remain in finished textile products and may generate allergic reactions in sensitised individuals.

Limiting the presence of hazardous substances in clothing is addressed by EU legislation through approaches covering all consumers including children. On the legislative framework, the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to the answers to questions E-000931/2013, E-011060/2012 and E-010799/2012 ([4]). The REACH ([5]) Regulation imposes restrictions on the use of dangerous substances in textile products produced or marketed in the EU, such as NP ([6]) and NPE ([7]) for their use in some of the textile and leather processing. A proposal limiting the presence of NP and NPE in textile articles was made by Sweden and is currently under consideration by the European Chemicals Agency Committees. This could lead to an amendment of the existing restrictions concerning NP and NPE in Annex XVII of REACH, probably in 2015. Also, Member States take measures against unsafe products found on the market or at EU borders and notify them to the Commission through the EU's Rapid Alert System for non-food products ([8]).

([1]) foreseen under Article 25 of Regulation (EU) No 1007/2011.
([2]) COM(2013) 656 final of 25.9.2013 (http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2013:0656:FIN:EN:PDF).
([3]) (http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/textiles/files/studies/study-allergic-reactions-textile_en.pdf).
([4]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([5]) Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals; OJ L 396, 30.12.2006, (http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:396:0001:0849:EN:PDF).
([6]) nonylphenol.
([7]) nonylphenol ethoxylates.
([8]) RAPEX: http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/safety/rapex/

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000727/14
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(24 de enero de 2014)

Asunto: Posibilidad de establecer una reserva de contratación pública para las PYME

Las pequeñas y medianas empresas tienen un enorme potencial de creación de empleo, crecimiento e innovación en Europa, en la que representan, aproximadamente, el 99 % de las empresas existentes. No obstante, sólo el 42 % de los contratos públicos se adjudica a las PYME, según datos de la propia Comisión Europea. La Unión Europea, consciente de esta realidad, ha recomendado reiteradamente la necesidad de facilitar la participación de las PYME en la contratación pública de los Estados miembros. Hasta ahora, sin embargo, no han sido articuladas medidas realmente efectivas.

La Directiva relativa a la contratación pública, aprobada por el Parlamento Europeo el pasado 15 de enero de 2014, introduce nuevas medidas que los Estados miembros podrán articular para eliminar obstáculos en el acceso a la contratación pública de las PYME. Si bien estas disposiciones son sin duda acertadas, sería conveniente establecer, como ha hecho la Unión Europa respecto a las entidades de carácter social, la posibilidad de que los Estados miembros puedan aprobar una reserva limitada de contratación pública en favor de las PYME, como ya existe en algunos países. Ello repercutiría muy eficazmente en la importante función económica y social que realizan las PYME en el territorio europeo y se adecuaría perfectamente a determinados objetivos de la Estrategia Europea 2020.

¿Considera posible la Comisión que los Estados miembros puedan realmente establecer una reserva de contratación pública, en determinados ámbitos o por determinados importes, en favor de las PYME?

En caso de respuesta negativa, ¿tiene la Comisión intención de aprobar en un futuro próximo las medidas normativas que lo posibiliten?

Respuesta del Sr. Barnier en nombre de la Comisión
(19 de marzo de 2014)

Las nuevas directivas sobre contratación pública incluyen una serie de medidas encaminadas a favorecer el acceso de las PYME a esta contratación. Las PYME se beneficiarán de una simplificación general de los procedimientos, cabiendo destacar la reducción de las exigencias de presentación de documentos (por ejemplo, se aceptarán las autodeclaraciones y únicamente el licitador seleccionado tendrá que presentar los justificantes pertinentes) y, a medio plazo, la generalización de la comunicación electrónica en la contratación pública (contratación electrónica). Por otra parte, las PYME se beneficiarán de la subdivisión en lotes (por ejemplo, aplicación del principio de «cumplir o explicar») y del establecimiento de un volumen de negocios máximo, no superior al doble del valor estimado del contrato, para poder participar en un procedimiento de licitación.

Sin embargo, reservar cuotas para las PYME en la legislación de la UE sobre contratación pública o en la legislación de los Estados miembros podría ser contrario al principio de igualdad de trato y no discriminación de los operadores económicos. Además, reservar cuotas para las PYME en la contratación pública podría plantear problemas en relación con la obligación internacional de la UE contraída en el Acuerdo sobre Contratación Pública (ACP) de no introducir medidas discriminatorias que distorsionen la contratación abierta (artículo XXII:6 del ACP revisado).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000727/14
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(24 January 2014)

Subject: The possibility of setting up a public procurement reserve for SMEs

Small and medium-sized enterprises have huge potential for generating jobs, growth and innovation in Europe, as approximately 99% of existing companies fall under this category. However, according to data from the European Commission, only 42% of public contracts are awarded to SMEs. Mindful of this situation, the European Union has repeatedly insisted on the need to make it easier for SMEs to participate in public procurement in the Member States. However, no genuinely effective measures have yet been adopted.

The directive on Public Procurement, which was approved by the European Parliament on 15 January 2014, introduces new measures that the Member States will be able to adopt in order to improve access to public procurement for SMEs. Although these provisions are undoubtedly a step in the right direction, it would be helpful to set up a way for the Member States to approve a limited public procurement reserve for SMEs — like the EU has done for social institutions — which already exists in some countries. That would be a very efficient way of enhancing the important economic and social function of SMEs in Europe and would perfectly meet specific targets of the Europe 2020 strategy.

Does the Commission think it is possible that the Member States could actually set up a public procurement reserve — in specific sectors or for specific amounts — for SMEs?

If not, does the Commission intend to approve regulatory measures to make this possible in the near future?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(19 March 2014)

New directives on public procurement include a number of targeted measures to favour SMEs access to public procurement. SMEs will benefit from general simplification of the procedures, among them, the reduction of documentation requirements (e.g. the self-declarations will be accepted and only the winning bidder will have to submit former evidence) and, in the medium term, the generalization of the electronic communication in public procurement (e-procurement). Moreover, SMEs will benefit from the subdivision into lots (e.g. application of the principle 'apply or explain') and a maximum turnover cap required to participate in a procurement procedure which cannot exceed two times the estimated value of the contract.

However, reservation of quotas for SMEs in the EU legislation on public procurement or in the laws of Member States would potentially run counter the principle of equal treatment and non-discrimination of economic operators. In addition a reservation of quotas for SMEs in public procurement could be problematic as for EU's international obligation in the Government procurement Agreement (GPA), not to introduce discriminatory measures that distort open procurement (Article XXII:6 of the revised GPA)

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000729/14
a la Comisión
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(27 de enero de 2014)

Asunto: Urbanización de la playa de L'Ahuir en Gandía

Según informaciones periodísticas, el pasado 21 de enero, el alcalde de Gandía, Arturo Torró, mostró en la Feria Internacional de Turismo (Fitur) los once proyectos presentados a un concurso de ideas para urbanizar la playa de L'Ahuir en Gandía (Valencia), último tramo de playa virgen que queda en el municipio.

La playa de L'Ahuir se encuentra protegida por la Red Natura 2000 y está catalogada dentro del LIC ES5233038 Dunes de la Safor. Los restos de cordones dunares incluyen hábitats de interés comunitario tales como las dunas fijas de Crucianellion maritimae, dunas embrionarias, dunas con céspedes de Malcomietalia, dunas móviles con Ammophila o dunas con vegetación de Cisto-Lavanduletea. De igual modo podemos encontrar especies de animales exclusivas de este tipo de ecosistema: tal es el caso del chorlitejo patinegro, catalogado como especie vulnerable dentro del Libro Rojo de las Aves de España.

Teniendo en cuenta el estatus de protección de la playa de L'Ahuir, ¿sabe la Comisión algo de estas actuaciones que producirán un daño irreparable en una zona única por su alto valor natural y ecológico?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(13 de marzo de 2014)

La Comisión no tenía conocimiento de las iniciativas a que se refiere Su Señoría. Según la información divulgada en los medios de comunicación, se ha convocado un concurso de ideas sobre la posible urbanización de la playa de L'Ahuir. Por el momento, pues, las autoridades españolas no han autorizado ningún plan o proyecto al respecto.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000729/14
to the Commission
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(27 January 2014)

Subject: Development of the L'Ahuir beach in Gandía

According to news reports, on 21 January this year at the International Tourism Fair (Fitur) the mayor of Gandía, Arturo Torró, exhibited the eleven projects submitted to a competition of ideas for developing the L'Ahuir beach in Gandía, Valencia. This is the last stretch of virgin beach that remains in the area.

The L'Ahuir beach is protected under the Natura 2000 network and is catalogued under SCI ES5233038 Dunes de la Safor. The remains of dune cordons include habitats of Community interest such as *Crucianellion maritimae* fixed dunes, embryonic dunes, dunes with *Malcomietalia* grasses, shifting dunes with Ammophila and dunes with Cisto-Lavanduletea vegetation. Likewise, species of fauna that are exclusive to this type of ecosystem may be found there: for instance, the Kentish plover (*chorlitejo patinegro*), which is classified as an endangered species in the Red Book of Birds in Spain.

Bearing in mind the protected status of the L'Ahuir beach, does the Commission know anything about these initiatives, which will cause irreparable harm to a zone that is unique for its high natural and ecological value?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(13 March 2014)

The Commission was not aware of the initiatives referred to by the Honourable Member. According to the information available on news reports, a competition for ideas on the possible development of L'Ahuir beach has been launched. It appears that for the time being the Spanish authorities have not authorised any plan or project for the development of this beach.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000730/14
a la Comisión
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(27 de enero de 2014)

Asunto: Las Islas Vírgenes Británicas, paraíso fiscal para el dinero de los mandatarios chinos

Diversos medios de comunicación se han hecho eco estos días del escándalo al que se enfrenta China al saberse que familiares directos de mandatarios chinos están utilizando de manera masiva paraísos fiscales para ocultar fortunas obtenidas a la sombra del régimen. Uno de los lugares elegidos para enviar esas grandes sumas de dinero ha sido las Islas Vírgenes Británicas —territorio de ultramar del Reino Unido—, un centro financiero importante considerado uno de los paraísos fiscales más activos.

En varias ocasiones me he dirigido a esta Comisión pidiendo un mayor esfuerzo de la Unión Europea en la lucha contra el fraude y la evasión fiscal. Me consta que se está avanzando en esta cuestión; prueba de ello es lo cerca que nos encontramos de la aprobación de la modificación de la Directiva 2011/16/UE relativa a la obligatoriedad del intercambio automático de información en el ámbito de la fiscalidad.

En otros ámbitos, en cambio, ese avance no se está produciendo. La modificación de la Directiva 2003/48/CE sobre la fiscalidad del ahorro en lo relativo al intercambio automático de información fiscal sobre el ahorro bancario en la Unión Europea está bloqueada desde hace tiempo. Algunos Estados miembros se niegan a asumir obligaciones a nivel comunitario mientras no se asuman a nivel internacional, por miedo a resultar perjudicados.

¿Considera adecuado la Comisión para la imagen de la Unión que las Islas Vírgenes Británicas, territorio dependiente de un Estado miembro de la Unión, se presenten al mundo como uno de los paraísos fiscales más activos y demandados por la élite corrupta china?

¿Qué tipo de actuación puede llevar a cabo la Comisión para desbloquear las negociaciones relativas a la modificación de la Directiva 2003/48/CE sobre la fiscalidad del ahorro?

Respuesta del Sr. Šemeta en nombre de la Comisión
(20 de marzo de 2014)

Para garantizar que se descubren los ingresos ocultos en paraísos fiscales, la Comisión promueve desde hace muchos años el intercambio automático de información financiera entre Administraciones tributarias. Sin embargo, los sistemas de intercambio automático solo son eficaces si el Estado de residencia del titular de la cuenta oculta y el del banco aceptan formar parte del sistema.

En el caso de las Islas Vírgenes Británicas (IVB), sus acuerdos en materia de ahorro con Estados miembros de la UE dan lugar a informes automáticos sobre los intereses devengados en bancos de las IVB y los rendimientos asimilados de los residentes de la UE. Hasta 2012, las IVB aplicaban una retención sobre dichos ingresos.

Más recientemente, los beneficios de los informes automáticos reciben reconocimiento mundial. A instancias del G20, los miembros de la OCDE, apoyados por la UE, han acordado el uso de una norma mundial para el intercambio automático de información entre Administraciones tributarias. Las IVB se han comprometido a ser pioneras en la adaptación de esta norma, una vez se apruebe oficialmente.

Las IVB, como territorio de ultramar de la UE, forman parte también de la Decisión de Asociación Ultramar de 2013 del Consejo ([1]), que incluye su compromiso de cooperación y buena gobernanza en el ámbito fiscal en cuanto a transparencia y a intercambio de información entre otros. Incluye también su compromiso de reconocer las normas internacionales de regulación y supervisión de los servicios financieros y las de lucha contra el blanqueo de capitales y la financiación del terrorismo.

En cuanto a la Directiva sobre el ahorro, la Comisión avanza en sus negociaciones con Suiza y con los otros cuatro países europeos no pertenecientes a la UE. Está previsto que la revisada Directiva sobre el ahorro se adopte esta primavera.

([1]) Decisión 2013/755/UE del Consejo, de 25 de noviembre de 2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000730/14
to the Commission
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(27 January 2014)

Subject: The British Virgin Islands, a tax haven for the fortunes of Chinese leaders

A number of news outlets have reported recently on the scandal facing China following the disclosure that close family members of Chinese leaders are using tax havens on a massive scale to conceal the fortunes that they have amassed under the shadow of the regime. One of the most popular places for sending these huge sums of money to is the British Virgin Islands (an overseas territory of the United Kingdom), which are a significant financial centre and considered to be one of the most active tax havens in the world.

I have written to the Commission on a number of occasions, asking Commission for greater efforts by the European Union to combat fraud and tax avoidance. I have seen that progress is being made on this matter, as demonstrated by how close we are to approving the amendment of Directive 2011/16/EU on the mandatory automatic exchange of information in the field of taxation.

In other areas, however, no such progress is being made. The amendment of Directive 2003/48/EC on the taxation of savings with regard to the automatic exchange of tax information on bank savings in the European Union has been blocked for some time. Some Member States are refusing to take on obligations at Community level, and they are not being taken on at an international level for fear of being put at a disadvantage.

Does the Commission think it befits the image of the Union for the British Virgin Islands, a dependent territory of an EU Member State, to present itself to the world as one of the most active tax havens, which is extremely popular with the corrupt Chinese elite?

What kind of action can the Commission take in order to break the deadlock on negotiations concerning the amendment of Directive 2003/48/EC on the taxation of savings?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(20 March 2014)

To ensure the disclosure of income hidden offshore, the Commission has for many years promoted automatic exchange of financial information between tax administrations. However, systems of automatic exchange can only be effective if the state of residence of the owner of the hidden account, as well as the state of the bank, agrees to partake in the system.

In the case of the British Virgin Islands (BVI), their Savings Agreements with EU Member States now give rise to automatic reporting of interest earned in BVI banks and of similar income owned by all EU residents. Up until 2012, BVI applied a withholding tax on that income.

In recent times, the benefits of automatic reporting have become recognised globally. At the behest of the G20, OECD members, assisted by the EU, have agreed a global standard to be used for automatic information exchange between tax administrations. BVI has signed up to being one of the early adopters of this standard, once it is formally adopted.

As an overseas territory of the EU, BVI is also part of the 2013 Overseas Association Decision of the Council ([1]). This decision contains a commitment by BVI to cooperation and good governance in the tax area, including transparency and exchange of information. It also contains a commitment to recognise international standards on regulation and supervision in financial services and on the combatting of money laundering and the financing of terrorism.

As regards the Savings Directive, good progress is being made by the Commission in its negotiations with Switzerland and the four other non-EU European third countries. The revised Savings Directive is expected to be adopted this spring.

([1]) Council Decision 2013/755/EU of 25 November 2013.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-000732/14
adresată Comisiei
Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă (S&D)
(27 ianuarie 2014)

Subiect: Invățământul agricol

Conform unui studiu recent, în mai multe state membre ale Uniunii Europene s-a constatat că statutul de fermier sau cel de agricultor sunt considerate de tineri ca fiind inferioare și indezirabile. Din păcate, interesul pentru învățământul agricol a fost și este scăzut în rândul generațiilor tinere din foarte multe motive.

În aceste condiții, este nevoie de o linie strategică care să vină de la nivel european, menită să promoveze agricultura prin meseria de agricultor în rândul elevilor încă din învățământul primar, ca apoi să îmbunătățească calitatea învățământului agricol tehnic și superior. De asemenea, trebuie promovată o strânsă colaborare între învățământul agricol superior și cercetarea agricolă și, în acest context, trebuie găsite pârghii prin care să se aloce mai mulți bani pentru mobilitățile universitare internaționale destinate studenților din învățământul agricol.

Are în vedere Comisia Europeană măsuri pentru stimularea și reformarea învățământului agricol în toate componentele sale: de la reforma curriculară, la dotările din cabinete și laboratoare până la baza de practică și dincolo de ea, care să țină cont de noua reformă a politicii agricole comune (PAC) a Uniunii Europene și să promoveze performanța economică a agriculturii simultan cu protejarea mediului înconjurător?

Răspuns dat de dna Vassiliou în numele Comisiei
(21 martie 2014)

În temeiul articolul 165 alineatul (1) din Tratatul privind funcționarea Uniunii Europene, statele membre sunt responsabile față de conținutul învățământului și organizarea sistemelor lor educaționale. Prin urmare, Comisia nu își propune să intervină în elaborarea programelor din învățământul agricol.

Profesorii și studenții au făcut parte din grupurile țintă ale unei campanii de comunicare în domeniul agricol care a fost lansată de Comisie în 2013. Această campanie își propune să promoveze în rândul cetățenilor UE importanța unei agriculturi durabile pentru furnizarea de alimente sănătoase, pentru mediu, pentru spațiul rural și pentru economie. Sunt în curs de elaborare instrumente de informare specifice și bine orientate, destinate profesorilor din toate statele membre care doresc să includă acest subiect în programele lor. De asemenea, Comisia a elaborat publicații pentru copii care vizează stimularea interesului pentru agricultură în rândul tinerilor.

Programul Erasmus+, care a intrat în vigoare la 1 ianuarie, prevede posibilitatea de sprijinire a unor proiecte ale instituțiilor de învățământ care ar putea, printre altele, include cooperarea în domeniul învățământului agricol, inclusiv elaborarea de materiale didactice. Programul nu poate interveni în ceea ce privește costurile echipamentelor sau ale materialelor de laborator, pentru care o sursă adecvată de susținere la nivel european ar putea fi fondurile structurale și de investiții europene.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000732/14
to the Commission
Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă (S&D)
(27 January 2014)

Subject: Agricultural education

A recent study has found that in several EU Member States, young people think of the status of farmer as being inferior and undesirable. Unfortunately, interest in agricultural education has been and continues to be low among the young generations, for a variety of reasons.

Under these circumstances, there is need for a strategic direction given at EU level and aiming at promoting agriculture and the profession of farmer among pupils, starting from the primary school and leading to the improvement of higher and technical agricultural education. Also, close collaboration must be fostered between higher agricultural education and agricultural research and, to this end, leverage should be found in order to allocate more money for international mobility programmes dedicated to agricultural education students.

Does the European Commission envisage any measures for stimulating and reforming agricultural education as regards all its components — from reforming the curricula through the provision of materials and equipment for the classrooms and laboratories and up to the practice materials and beyond — which would take into account the new reform of the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and promote agricultural economic performance, along with protection of the environment?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(21 March 2014)

Under Article 165(1) of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union, the Member States are responsible for the content of teaching and the organisation of their education systems. The Commission therefore has no plans to intervene in the design of curricula for agricultural education.

Teachers and students were part of the target groups of a communication campaign in the field of agriculture which was launched by the Commission in 2013. This campaign aims at promoting among EU citizens the importance of sustainable farming for the supply of healthy food, environment, countryside and economy. Specific and targeted information tools are being developed for teachers willing to include this topic in their programmes in all Member States. The Commission has also developed publications for children aiming at fostering interest for agriculture among youngsters.

The Erasmus+ programme which entered into force on 1 January provides for possible support to projects by educational establishments which could, *inter alia*, include cooperation on agricultural education, including the design of teaching materials. The programme is not able to intervene in the costs of equipment or laboratory materials, for which an appropriate source of support at European level could be the European Structural and Investment Funds.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000733/14
to the Commission
Nessa Childers (NI)
(27 January 2014)

Subject: Cost of alcohol to European healthcare systems

The social cost of alcohol for the EU is estimated at around EUR 155.8 billion per year ([1]). However, this figure is likely to be an underestimate. In Ireland alone, treating alcohol-related injuries and diseases costs the healthcare system an estimated EUR 1.2 billion per year — around 8.5% of the total annual healthcare budget. Every night 2 000 hospital beds are occupied for alcohol-related reasons. Alcohol-related admissions to acute hospitals doubled between 1995 and 2008. Similarly, alcoholic liver disease deaths almost trebled (with an 188% increase) between 1995 and 2009 ([2]).

Given the current financial crisis and the need to examine areas which place heavy burden on healthcare systems, proper monitoring of the costs associated with alcohol is essential.

Could the Commission provide the cost which alcohol places on the healthcare systems of the EU as a whole?

Does the Commission possess data for the cost of alcohol to healthcare systems in the individual countries?

Does the Commission envisage carrying out work in the area of the costs placed by alcohol on healthcare systems in order to assist Member States in their efforts to reduce their public health budgets?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(21 March 2014)

Based on the results of 21 European studies, a report ([3]) prepared for the European Commission in 2006 estimated the cost of alcohol in the EU to be EUR 125 billion in 2003, equivalent to 1.3% of gross domestic product. EUR 17 billion of these costs were attributed to healthcare. The Commission does not however have systematic data on the costs of alcohol related harm to the healthcare sector in the Member States.

The Commission assists Member States in their efforts to reduce alcohol related harm mainly through the EU alcohol strategy, which presents a comprehensive framework for action to reduce harmful and hazardous alcohol consumption. The main tools supporting the implementation of the strategy are the Committee on National Alcohol Policy and Action, and the European Alcohol and Health Forum.

The Commission further supports the Joint Action on Reducing Alcohol Related Harm launched in January this year, which brings together 27 Member States and Norway, Iceland and Switzerland to join efforts in preventing harmful alcohol consumption.

Finally, the Commission co-funds the OECD Economics of Prevention project which analyses trends and patterns of alcohol consumption, with a view to exploring the potential impacts of policy options to address alcohol related harm. This project includes a study on the economics of alcohol consumption and on the effectiveness of alcohol policies, with a final report expected to be released by the OECD later in 2014.

([1]) 'Interventions for alcohol dependence in Europe: a missed opportunity to improve public health', May 2012.
([2]) http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/Publications/topics/alcohol/Costs%20to%20Society%20of%20Problem%20Alcohol%20Use%20in%20Ireland.pdf
([3]) Anderson, P. & Baumberg, B. (2006) Alcohol in Europe. London: Institute of Alcohol Studies: http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/life_style/alcohol/documents/alcohol_europe.pdf

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000734/14
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(27 gennaio 2014)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Situazione in Armenia

Dopo la rinuncia all'associazione con l'Unione europea, l'Armenia ha siglato, lo scorso 2 dicembre, con la Federazione Russa un accordo trentennale per la fornitura di gas scatenando tra l'altro le ire dell'opposizione interna.

Sempre lo scorso dicembre, si è tenuta invece a Mosca la riunione del Consiglio supremo economico eurasiatico per discutere della formazione dell'Unione eurasiatica, il cui trattato potrebbe essere firmato già a maggio. Alla riunione ha partecipato anche il presidente armeno. In tale occasione è stata anche sollevata la questione dei confini e della sovranità della regione del Nagorno Karabakh, appartenente de jure all'Azerbaijan, ma controllato de facto dall'Armenia. In tale occasione la Russia si è mostrata la più forte sostenitrice dell'adesione armena, sul cui ingresso è stata siglata una tabella di marcia.

A spingere l'Armenia verso l'unione doganale con la Russia è stata probabilmente la questione della sicurezza e la questione energetica, entrambe collegate con il nodo irrisolto del Nagorno Karabakh, cui a sua volta è collegato in generale lo sviluppo economico e la democratizzazione dell'Armenia. La Russia ha adottato sino a ora la strategia del «divide et impera», attraendo verso di sé l'Armenia, mentre l'azione europea è risultata poco incisiva nella regione.

Alla luce di questi eventi, può il Vice-presidente/Alto Rappresentante chiarire se intende cercare di riavviare i negoziati per l'associazione dell'Armenia all'UE e quale approccio intende adottare in merito alla promozione del principio di autodeterminazione rispetto alla questione del Nagorno Karabakh?

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

In occasione del recente vertice del partenariato orientale tenutosi il 29 novembre 2013 a Vilnius, l'UE e l'Armenia hanno ribadito in una dichiarazione congiunta il loro impegno a sviluppare e rafforzare ulteriormente la cooperazione globale in tutti i settori possibili, compatibilmente con i futuri obblighi giuridici dell'Armenia derivanti dalla sua partecipazione all'unione doganale euroasiatica.

A Vilnius le parti hanno inoltre deciso di rivedere le basi delle loro relazioni partendo dal quadro di cooperazione esistente. Il progetto di accordo di associazione comprensivo della zona di libero scambio globale e approfondito (AA/DCFTA), che è stato negoziato nel luglio 2013 ma la cui sigla formale non ha avuto luogo a causa del mutamento di politica dell'Armenia, è stato conservato come possibile futuro riferimento («ultima versione negoziata»).

Prima che l'UE avvii una riflessione interna sulla portata, sulla forma e sulla base giuridica future delle relazioni con l'Armenia, Erevan deve indicare i possibili ambiti della futura cooperazione bilaterale con l'Unione in considerazione degli impegni dell'Armenia nell'ambito dell'unione doganale e in prospettiva della sua adesione all'Unione euroasiatica.

Per quanto riguarda il Nagorno-Karabakh, l'UE continua a sostenere pienamente l'impegno del gruppo di Minsk dell'OSCE finalizzato a una soluzione politica del conflitto. L'UE ha ribadito il proprio sostegno ai principi di Madrid proposti dal gruppo di Minsk e ha invitato l'Armenia e l'Azerbaigian a moltiplicare gli sforzi per raggiungere un accordo su questi principi come base di una soluzione pacifica.

L'UE è pronta ad appoggiare maggiormente le misure volte a creare un clima di fiducia, a sostegno del gruppo di Minsk e in piena complementarità con esso.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000734/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(27 January 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Situation in Armenia

Having called off the Association Agreement with the European Union, on 2 December last year Armenia signed a thirty-year agreement with the Russian Federation for the supply of gas, sparking the anger of the Armenian opposition.

Also in December last year, the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council held a meeting in Moscow to discuss the formation of the Eurasian Union, whose treaty could be signed as early as May of this year. The Armenian president also attended this meeting, whose discussions included the issue of the borders and sovereignty of the region of Nagorno-Karabakh, which is officially part of Azerbaijan but actually under Armenian control. Russia came out as the strongest supporter of Armenian membership at the meeting, and a roadmap was signed for the country's inclusion.

Armenia has probably been pushed towards customs union with Russia by security and energy issues, both of which are linked to the unresolved problem of Nagorno-Karabakh, which is in turn linked to the economic development and democratisation of Armenia. Russia has up until now adopted a strategy of 'divide and rule', thus drawing Armenia towards it, whereas European action has had little impact in the region.

In the light of these events, could the Vice-President/High Representative clarify whether she intends to reopen negotiations for Armenia's association with the EU, and what approach she intends to take as regards promoting the principle of self-determination in connection with the Nagorno-Karabakh question?

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

At the recent Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius (29 November 2013) the EU and Armenia reconfirmed in a Joint Statement their commitment to further develop and strengthen their comprehensive cooperation in all possible areas where this is compatible with Armenia's future legal obligations under the Eurasian Customs Union.

Moreover, both sides have agreed in Vilnius to revise the basis for their relations, building upon the existing framework for cooperation. They have safeguarded for possible future reference (as 'the latest negotiated version') the draft Association Agreement, including its Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (AA/DCFTA), as negotiated by July 2013 but not formally initialled due to Armenia's policy change.

Prior to the EU launch of an internal reflection on the future scope, format and legal basis for relations with Armenia, Yerevan needs to indicate which are the possible areas for future bilateral cooperation with the EU, in view of Armenia's Customs Union commitments and its Eurasian Union perspective.

As for Nagorno-Karabakh, the EU continues to fully support the work of the OSCE Minsk Group towards a political settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The EU has reiterated its support for the Madrid principles proposed by the Minsk Group, and has called on Armenia and Azerbaijan to step up their efforts to reach agreement on those principles as a basis for peace.

The EU stands ready to provide enhanced support for confidence building measures, in support of and in full complementarity with the Minsk Group.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000735/14
a la Comisión
Salvador Sedó i Alabart (PPE)
(27 de enero de 2014)

Asunto: Alimentos transgénicos en la EU

¿Cuál es la lógica en la que se basa la Unión Europea para prohibir el cultivo de alimentos transgénicos que han sido certificados como seguros y beneficiosos para el medio ambiente a nivel internacional y por la EFSA, mientras que las importaciones de estos mismos cultivos están permitidas incluso en países de la UE que desean ser países sin transgénicos (en términos de cultivo)? Es más, se están incumpliendo los plazos establecidos para aprobar los cultivos una vez dado el visto bueno por parte de la EFSA.

¿Por qué existe un doble criterio de aceptación de los transgénicos —no al cultivo pero sí al consumo— cuando, además, diversos estudios demuestran que la UE se está perdiendo una gran oportunidad de negocio que beneficiaría a nuestros agricultores, intermediarios, vendedores y consumidores?

Asimismo, la Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Alimentación y la Agricultura estima que para 2050 será preciso aumentar la producción alimentaria mundial un 70 % para cumplir las necesidades de los 9 100 millones de habitantes que vivirán en nuestro planeta. Ya que los alimentos transgénicos no suponen ningún peligro para la salud, más bien al contrario, ¿no es la seguridad alimentaria de futuras generaciones un buen motivo para avanzar en este ámbito?

Respuesta del Sr. Borg en nombre de la Comisión
(19 de marzo de 2014)

Los organismos modificados genéticamente (OMG) se autorizan en la EU con arreglo a la Directiva 2001/18/CE ([1]) o el Reglamento (CE) n° 1829/2003 ([2]). En ambos casos, los OMG pueden comercializarse para cultivo y/o para alimentos y piensos solo después de que una evaluación exhaustiva del riesgo haya demostrado que no existe peligro para la salud humana y animal y el medio ambiente.

En julio de 2010 ([3]) se hizo una propuesta para permitir a los Estados miembros restringir o prohibir el cultivo de OMG en su territorio por motivos diferentes de la salud o el medio ambiente. Recientemente, dados los esfuerzos de la Comisión y de la Presidencia griega, esta presentó una nueva propuesta de compromiso que se consideró una buena base para reanudar las discusiones por parte de la mayoría de los ministros en el Consejo de Medio Ambiente de 3 de marzo de 2014, con la esperanza de alcanzar un acuerdo político en el marco de dicha Presidencia.

Con respecto a los plazos legales, remitimos a Su Señoría a la respuesta de la Comisión a la pregunta E-008611/2013 ([4]) relativa al retraso de las autorizaciones de OMG.

La política agrícola común considera que una de sus funciones estratégicas es el mantenimiento del potencial de producción alimentaria de manera sostenible en toda la UE, para contribuir a la seguridad alimentaria a largo plazo como consecuencia de la creciente demanda mundial de alimentos. La capacidad de la UE para lograr la seguridad alimentaria es un importante objetivo a largo plazo para Europa.

([1]) DO L 106 de 17.4.2001, p. 1.
([2]) DO L 268 de 18.10.2003, p. 1.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/gmo/legislation/docs/proposal_en.pdf
([4]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000735/14
to the Commission
Salvador Sedó i Alabart (PPE)
(27 January 2014)

Subject: Transgenic foods in the EU

What is the logic for the European Union to prohibit the cultivation of transgenic foods that have been certified as safe and beneficial for the environment both by the EFSA and at an international level, while imports of the same products are allowed even in EU countries that wish to be transgenic-free territories (in terms of crops)? Furthermore, there is also an ongoing failure to comply with the time periods laid down for approving crops once they have been passed by the EFSA.

Why are double standards employed with respect to the acceptance of transgenics — no to cultivation but yes to consumption — when, in addition, various studies show that the EU is in the process of losing a great commercial opportunity that would benefit our farmers, retailers, shopkeepers and consumers?

Moreover, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations estimates that by the year 2050 it will be necessary to increase world food production by 70% in order to meet the needs of the 9 100 million people who will be living on our planet. Since transgenic foods pose no risk to health, but rather the opposite, is the food security of future generations not a good reason to make progress on this matter?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(19 March 2014)

Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) are authorised in the EU under Directive 2001/18/EC ([1]) or Regulation (EC) 1829/2003 ([2]). In both cases, GMOs can be marketed for cultivation and/or for food and feed only after a through risk assessment demonstrating no risk for human and animal health and the environment.

In July 2010 ([3]) a proposal was made to allow Member States to restrict or ban the cultivation of GMOs on their territory on other grounds than health and environment. Recently, given the efforts of the Commission and of the Greek Presidency the Greek Presidency presented a new compromise proposal which was considered as a good basis to resume the discussions by most of the Ministers in the Environmental Council on the 3 March 2014, with the hope of reaching a political agreement under the Greek Presidency.

Regarding the legal timelines, the Honourable Member is invited to refer to the Commission's reply to Question E-0008611/2013 ([4]) dealing with the backlog regarding GMOs authorisations.

The Common Agriculture Policy identifies as one of its strategic roles the preservation of the food production potential on a sustainable basis throughout the EU, to contribute to long-term food security in the wake of growing world food demand. The EU's capacity to deliver food security is an important long-term objective for Europe.

([1]) OJ L 106, 17.4.2001, p. 1.
([2]) OJ L 268, 18.10.2003, p. 1.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/gmo/legislation/docs/proposal_en.pdf
([4]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000736/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(27 gennaio 2014)

Oggetto: Banconote da 500 euro

In primavera, il Vicepresidente della Banca centrale europea aveva affermato che la BCE stava considerando l'eventuale ritiro della banconota da 500 euro dal novero dei mezzi di pagamento, dal momento che viene spesso utilizzata per movimentare e trasferire urgenti quantità di denaro da parte di evasori fiscali e criminalità organizzata.

Nel frattempo, nel biennio 2012-2013, non è andata in stampa neanche una banconota da 500 euro e la BCE ha ritirato dal mercato quasi 21 milioni di banconote da 500 EUR, per un valore complessivo pari a 10 miliardi e mezzo di euro, sostituendole con biglietti di tagli più piccoli.

Alla luce di questi fatti, può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

1. dispone di ulteriori informazioni relative al futuro della banconota da 500 euro?

2. Considera che il ritiro della banconota da 500 euro possa costituire uno strumento per lottare contro reati come il riciclaggio, l'evasione fiscale e gli affari in contanti tra organizzazioni criminali?

3. Ritiene che questa azione possa rientrare in una strategia di «lotta al contante», volta a contrastare tali crimini, già avviata in alcuni Stati membri che puntano a un'economia senza contanti?

Risposta di Olli Rehn a nome della Commissione
(14 marzo 2014)

Le banconote in euro rientrano tra le competenze della Banca centrale europea (BCE), a cui può rivolgersi per ottenere informazioni. A questo proposito rimando alla recente corrispondenza tra la BCE e i membri del Parlamento europeo sull'uso delle banconote di grosso taglio ([1]).

Circa un terzo del valore delle banconote in circolazione è usato per effettuare operazioni, mentre e il resto è utilizzato come riserva di valore nella zona euro o è detenuto in altri paesi. Una parte considerevole di tali banconote è di grosso taglio, a riprova del fatto che questo tipo di banconote svolge un ruolo importante nel fornire contanti ai cittadini, in particolare in tempi di incertezza economica ([2]).

Tutti i tagli di banconote (piccoli o grandi) si prestano ad essere utilizzati per pagamenti in denaro contante a fini di riciclaggio. La normativa antiriciclaggio UE in vigore affronta questa minaccia perlopiù stabilendo delle soglie pertinenti. Nel 2013 la Commissione ha proposto una nuova direttiva che stabilisce una soglia più bassa per i pagamenti in contanti delle persone che negoziano beni, oltre la quale si applicano misure antiriciclaggio. Nel quadro dell'attuale direttiva le persone che negoziano beni sono soggette alle misure antiriciclaggio definite nella direttiva se operano con pagamenti in contanti di importo pari o superiore a 15 000 EUR. La nuova proposta prevede che la soglia per i pagamenti in denaro contante che riguardano le persone che negoziano beni di valore elevato sia ridotta a 7 500 EUR. Inoltre, la nuova proposta obbliga tali persone a un'adeguata verifica della clientela nel caso di operazioni occasionali di almeno 7 500 EUR (anche nei casi in cui l'operazione sia eseguita con diverse transazioni che appaiono collegate), il che corrisponde a una diminuzione della precedente soglia di 15 000 EUR.

([1]) Le informazioni in merito sono pubblicamente consultabili sul sito Internet della BCE:
http://www.ecb.europa.eu/pub/pdf/other/20140113_tremosa.en.pdf
http://www.ecb.europa.eu/pub/pdf/other/20121107_fontana.en.pdf
http://www.ecb.europa.eu/pub/pdf/other/120302letter_salavrakosen.pdf

([2]) Cfr. BCE, «L'utilizzo delle banconote in euro: risultati di due indagini presso le famiglie e le imprese», Bollettino mensile BCE, aprile 2011, pagg. 79-90
http://www.bancaditalia.it/eurosistema/comest/pubBCE/mb/2011/aprile/mb201104/articoli_04_11.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000736/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(27 January 2014)

Subject: 500 euro notes

In the spring, the vice-president of the European Central Bank indicated that the ECB was considering the possibility of phasing out the 500 euro note, since it is often used by tax evaders and organised criminals as a convenient way of moving and transferring large sums of money.

In the meantime, between 2012 and 2013, not a single 500 Euro note was printed, and the ECB took almost 21 million 500 euro notes, with a total value of EUR 10.5 billion, out of circulation, replacing them with smaller domination notes.

In this context, can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Does it have further information concerning the future of the 500 euro note?

2. Does it believe that withdrawal of the 500 euro note could help prevent crimes such as money laundering, tax evasion and cash deals between organised criminals?

3. Does it believe that this action could be part of a 'war on cash' strategy designed to counter such crimes, a strategy which is already under way in a number of Member States which are heading towards a cashless economy?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(14 March 2014)

Euro banknotes fall within the competence of the European Central Bank to which you may address questions. In this regard, you may take note of the recent letter exchange between the ECB and Members of the European Parliament on the use of high denomination euro banknotes ([1]).

Around one-third of the total circulation value of euro banknotes is used for transaction purposes and the remainder is used as a store of value in the euro area or is held abroad. A considerable proportion of these banknotes are high denomination banknotes. This shows that these denominations fulfil an important role in the provision of cash to the public and in particular in times of economic uncertainty ([2]).

Cash payment transactions for the purpose of money laundering can be made in any denominations (low or high). Current EU anti-money laundering legislation tackles the threat rather through the application of appropriate thresholds. The 2013 Commission proposal for a new Directive sets a lower threshold for the use of cash payments by traders in goods, above which anti-money laundering measures apply. Under the current Directive, traders in goods are included in the scope of the anti-money-laundering measures defined in the directive if they deal with cash payments of EUR 15 000 or more. Under the new proposal, the threshold for traders in high value goods dealing with cash payments shall be reduced to EUR 7 500. In addition, the new proposal requires traders to carry out customer due diligence when they make occasional transactions of at least EUR 7 500 (including where the transaction is carried in several operations which appear to be linked), a reduction from the previous threshold of EUR 15 000.

([1]) The information is available to the general public on the ECB website:
http://www.ecb.europa.eu/pub/pdf/other/20140113_tremosa.en.pdf
http://www.ecb.europa.eu/pub/pdf/other/20121107_fontana.en.pdf
http://www.ecb.europa.eu/pub/pdf/other/120302letter_salavrakosen.pdf

([2]) see ECB, The use of euro banknotes — results of two surveys among households and firms, ECB Monthly Bulletin, April 2011, p. 79 — 90 — http://www.ecb.int/pub/pdf/mobu/mb201104en.pdf

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000738/14
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(27 gennaio 2014)

Oggetto: Gestione smaltimento pannelli solari a fine vita

L'energia solare è ormai una fonte non trascurabile nel mix energetico italiano: nel 2013 ha soddisfatto più del 7 % del fabbisogno elettrico del paese. Sono circa 550 mila gli impianti fotovoltaici in funzione in Italia, per oltre 100 milioni di moduli fotovoltaici installati. Una volta giunti a fine vita, questi moduli dovranno essere smaltiti adeguatamente come richiesto dalla direttiva europea sui Raee: sono i produttori e gli importatori dei moduli a doversi occupare della corretta gestione del fine vita dei prodotti che immettono sul mercato, aderendo a un consorzio dotato di un'adeguata struttura operativa e finanziaria. Il grosso del mercato del riciclo dei moduli prenderà avvio tra alcuni anni, visto che tipicamente il tempo di vita di un impianto è di 20-25 anni. Ma con i prezzi e le efficienze dei moduli in vendita oggi, in taluni casi risulta già vantaggioso effettuare il repowering degli impianti, cioè sostituire i vecchi moduli con quelli di ultima generazione che garantiscono efficienze maggiori. Quindi diventa necessario già adesso garantire il loro corretto smaltimento, recuperando e rimettendo nel ciclo della produzione tutti i materiali di cui sono composti. Grazie ad alcune nuove tecnologie in materia, sviluppate da un consorzio italiano, il riciclaggio dei moduli raggiunge rese altissime: si riesce a recuperare in peso quasi il 98 % di ogni modulo fotovoltaico. Da un modulo di 21 kg si possono recuperare in media: 15 kg di vetro; 2,8 kg di materiale plastico; 2 kg di alluminio; 1 kg di polvere di silicio e 0,14 kg di rame, quasi tutti riutilizzabili.

Il riutilizzo delle materie prime dei moduli fotovoltaici è di primaria importanza per i programmi pluriennali di investimenti energetici e i volumi dei moduli destinati alla rottamazione è destinato a crescere oltre le previsioni nei prossimi mesi.

Può la Commissione precisare quanto segue:

— intende acquisire e valutare tali nuove metodologie di recupero pannelli a fine vita?

— intende fornire raccomandazioni a riguardo all'interno della normativa Raee?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(26 marzo 2014)

L'articolo 11, paragrafo 5, della direttiva rifusa RAEE (rifiuti di apparecchiature elettriche ed elettroniche) ([1]) impone agli Stati membri di promuovere lo sviluppo di nuove tecnologie di recupero, riciclaggio e trattamento. Tuttavia, la direttiva non fa riferimento a tecnologie specifiche e attualmente la Commissione non intende formulare raccomandazioni in proposito.

La Commissione ha conferito alle organizzazioni europee di normazione un mandato ([2]) per lo sviluppo di norme per il trattamento dei RAEE nell'ambito del quale il CENELEC elaborerà una norma per il trattamento dei pannelli fotovoltaici.

([1]) Direttiva 2012/19/UE (GU L 197 del 24.7.2012).
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/weee/pdf/m518 %20EN.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000738/14
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(27 January 2014)

Subject: Management of disposal of solar panels at the end of their life

Solar energy is now a significant source in the Italian energy mix: in 2013 it met more than 7% of the country's electricity needs. There are around 550 thousand photovoltaic installations operating in Italy, with over 100 million photovoltaic modules installed. On reaching the end of their life, these modules need to be properly disposed of as required by the European Directive on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment ('WEEE'): it is the producers and importers of the modules who are responsible for the proper end-of-life management of the goods they place on the market, within a consortium which has a suitable operational and financial structure. The size of the recycling market for the modules will take off in a few years, since the lifetime of an installation is typically 20-25 years. But considering the prices and efficiency of the modules which are on sale today, in some cases it is already beneficial to repower the installations, that is to say, replace the old modules with latest-generation modules offering greater efficiency. It therefore becomes necessary now to ensure their proper disposal and the recovery and return to the production cycle of all their component materials. Thanks to some new technologies in this area, developed by an Italian consortium, recycling of these modules produces very high returns: it is possible to recover almost 98% by weight of each photovoltaic module. From a 21 kg module, it is possible to recover on average: 15 kg of glass; 2.8 kg of plastic; 2 kg of aluminium; 1 kg of silicone powder and 0.14 kg of copper, almost all reusable.

The reuse of the raw materials of photovoltaic modules is of primary importance for the long-term energy investment programmes and the volume of modules intended to be scrapped is destined to exceed forecasts over the next few months.

Can the Commission specify the following:

— does it intend to obtain and evaluate the new methods for recovery of panels at the end of their life?

— does it intend to make recommendations in this respect under WEEE legislation?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(26 March 2014)

Article 11 (5) of the WEEE recast Directive ([1]) requires that Member States encourage the development of new recovery, recycling and treatment technologies. The directive does not, however, refer to any specific technologies and the Commission does not currently plan to make recommendations in this respect under the directive.

The Commission has given a Mandate ([2]) to the European standardisation organisations for the development of standards for the treatment of WEEE. Under this Mandate a standard for the treatment of photovoltaic panels is going to be developed by CENELEC.

([1]) Directive 2012/19/EU (OJ L 197, 24.7.2012).
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/weee/pdf/m518%20EN.pdf

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000739/14
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(27 gennaio 2014)

Oggetto: Utilizzo di nanocellulosa nella produzione di stoviglie

Una società di ricerca svedese ha recentemente dichiarato di aver creato con successo dei prototipi di stoviglie ad uso alimentare autopulenti, che, grazie allo strato di nanocellulosa che le riveste, non necessitano di essere lavate una volta usate. Questo materiale, infatti, risulterebbe dagli studi essere duro come la ceramica, ma al tempo stesso infrangibile in caso di caduta, e può essere reso idrorepellente grazie a un rivestimento idrofobico — a base di cera sciolta ad alta temperatura e pressione — che respinge le molecole dei liquidi.

L'innovazione non faciliterebbe soltanto la vita delle persone, ma sarebbe anche di aiuto per l'ambiente poiché eviterebbe il consumo di una grande quantità d'acqua e di energia (per riscaldare la temperatura dell'acqua) e l'inquinamento da parte dei detersivi.

Il materiale in questione è attualmente in attesa dell'approvazione necessaria per essere utilizzato con il cibo, infatti, sebbene alcuni tessuti e alcune vernici già funzionino nello stesso modo, è la prima volta che un materiale di questo tipo verrebbe a contatto con alimenti e bevande.

Ciò premesso, può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

— intende acquisire e valutare i risultati di tali ricerche? Prevede di investire nello sviluppo delle innovazioni in tale campo?

— Può fornire un parere sulla liceità dell'utilizzo di tali pellicole idrorepellenti in materiali destinati al contatto con alimenti e bevande?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(14 marzo 2014)

La Commissione è consapevole delle potenzialità della nanocellulosa in quanto materiale «verde» rinnovabile utilizzabile in molte applicazioni innovative. Nell'ambito del Settimo programma quadro (FP7) sono stati sostenuti sette progetti di ricerca con un finanziamento Ue complessivo di circa 33 milioni di EUR, che interessano la produzione economicamente efficiente della nanocellulosa e le sue applicazioni potenziali, compresi gli aspetti relativi alla sicurezza. Le stoviglie autopulenti risultano essere state sviluppate nell'ambito di un progetto svedese denominato Ekoportal 2035 commissionato dalla Federazione svedese delle industrie forestali, mentre la società svedese di ricerca e sviluppo Innventia ha beneficiato di un finanziamento UE per due progetti FP7 volti allo sviluppo di materiali compositi sostenibili a base di nanocellulosa ([1]) e di concetti intelligenti e multifunzionali di confezionamento basati sulle nanotecnologie, tra cui anche la nanocellulosa ([2]).

La pellicola idrorepellente deve essere conforme alle regole generali sui materiali destinati a venire a contatto con gli alimenti di cui al regolamento (CE) n. 1935/2004 ([3]). In particolare non deve rilasciare le proprie componenti negli alimenti in concentrazioni tali da mettere in pericolo la salute umana o di cambiare la composizione degli alimenti in modo inaccettabile. A seconda della composizione della pellicola e della sua capacità di formare uno strato autoportante essa può rientrare nel campo di applicazione del regolamento (UE) No 10/2011 ([4]) sulle materie plastiche, ragion per cui le sue componenti dovrebbero essere autorizzate in forza di tale regolamento.

([1]) (SUSTAINCOMP — 214660).
([2]) (NANOBARRIER — 280759).
([3]) Regolamento (CE) n. 1935/2004 del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 27 ottobre 2004, riguardante i materiali e gli oggetti destinati a venire a contatto con i prodotti alimentari e che abroga le direttive 80/590/CEE e 89/109/CEE, GU L 338 del 13.11.2004, pag. 4.
([4]) Regolamento (UE) n. 10/2011 della Commissione, del 14 gennaio 2011, riguardante i materiali e gli oggetti di materia plastica destinati a venire a contatto con i prodotti alimentari, GU L 12 del 15.1.2011, pag. 1.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000739/14
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(27 January 2014)

Subject: Use of nanocellulose in tableware production

A Swedish research company recently announced it had successfully made prototype self-cleaning dishes for food use. The nanocellulose layer covering them means that they do not need to be washed after use. Studies have shown that this material is as hard as ceramic but at the same time it is unbreakable if dropped, and it can be made water repellent by means of a hydrophobic coating based on wax melted at high temperature and pressure, which repels the molecules of liquids.

This innovation would not only make people's lives easier, but it would also benefit the environment, as it would greatly reduce the consumption of water and energy (used to heat the water) and pollution by detergents.

The material in question is currently awaiting the necessary approval for food use. While some fabrics and coatings already work in the same way, it is the first time a material of this kind will have come into contact with food and drink.

Given the above, can the Commission respond to the following questions:

Does it intend to obtain the results of this research and evaluate them? Does it intend to invest in developing innovations in this field?

Can it give an opinion on whether it is permissible to use such water-repellent films in materials intended to come into contact with food and drink?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(14 March 2014)

The Commission is well aware of the potential of nanocellulose as green, renewable material for many innovative applications. In Framework Programme 7 (FP7), seven research projects have been supported, with a total EU funding of about EUR 33 million, addressing cost efficient production of nanocellulose and its potential applications, including safety aspects. While the self-cleaning tableware application appears to have been developed within a Swedish project called Ekoportal 2035, commissioned by the Swedish Forest Industries Federation, the Swedish research and development company Innventia has benefited from EU funding in two FP7 projects aiming at the development of nanocellulose based sustainable composite materials ([1]) and smart and multifunctional packaging concepts utilising nanotechnology, including nanocellulose ([2]).

The water-repellent film has to comply with the general rules on materials intended to come into contact with food set out in Regulation (EC) No 1935/2004 ([3]). In particular, it should not release its constituents into food in concentrations that could endanger human health or change the composition of the food in an unacceptable way. Depending on the composition of the film and its ability to form a self-supporting layer it may fall under the scope of the Plastics Regulation (EU) No 10/2011 ([4]) and its constituent would then need authorisation under that regulation.

([1]) (SUSTAINCOMP — 214660).
([2]) (NANOBARRIER — 280759).
([3]) Regulation (EC) No 1935/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 October 2004 on materials and articles intended to come into contact with food and repealing Directives 80/590/EEC and 89/109/EEC, OJ L 338, 13.11.2004, p. 4.
([4]) Commission Regulation (EU) No 10/2011 of 14 January 2011 on plastic materials and articles intended to come into contact with food, OJ L 12, 15.1.2011, p.1.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000740/14
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(27 gennaio 2014)

Oggetto: Azioni UE in tema di assistenza agli anziani

L'invecchiamento della popolazione è un fenomeno di portata mondiale. A livello europeo, si calcola che nel 2060 le persone con un'età superiore ai 65 anni saranno quasi un terzo della popolazione totale, mentre nel 2011 rappresentavano circa il 17,5 % della popolazione.

In Italia le persone parzialmente o del tutto non autosufficienti sono oggi più di 2,7 milioni, mentre per il 2015 la stima è di 3 milioni. Più della metà dei cittadini tra i 75 e gli 84 anni ha una malattia o un problema di salute cronico e tale percentuale sale fino al 64 % tra quelli che hanno oltre 85 anni. Il 40 % delle persone con più di 65 anni dichiara di subire delle limitazioni nello svolgimento delle attività quotidiane. In un tale contesto, la percentuale di anziani che ha accesso all'assistenza domiciliare integrata è ferma al 4 %, mentre la diffusione del servizio di assistenza domiciliare è addirittura scesa dall'1,7 % dei potenziali utenti nel 2008 all'1,4 % nel 2010.

Anche il tasso di fruizione delle indennità di accompagnamento si è ridotto negli ultimi anni. Le scelte dei diversi governi tra il 2008 e il 2011, infatti, hanno portato a un forte taglio dei fondi per la non autosufficienza. Il fondo nazionale per le politiche sociali ha subìto riduzioni fino al 30-40 % l'anno, con una conseguente contrazione delle risorse disponibili per la spesa sociale degli enti locali. Il problema, in definitiva, si snoda tra l'esigenza di contenere i costi e la possibilità di introdurre un fondo di autosufficienza adeguato alle esigenze di cura.

L'Italia è l'unico paese tra le grandi nazioni europee a non aver realizzato una riforma complessiva dell'impianto della assistenza a lungo termine, continuando a far affidamento in larga parte sull'assistenza informale svolta dalle famiglie. In un momento di crisi i nuclei familiari messi anche alla prova dalla crescente disoccupazione hanno sempre maggiori difficoltà e il bisogno di assistenza è destinato a crescere con il progressivo invecchiamento della popolazione.

Può la Commissione riferire:

1. se ritiene opportuno definire a livello europeo delle priorità e un quadro comune in termini di assistenza agli anziani;

2. indicare quali sono state le azioni poste in essere per sostenere le associazioni e le strutture che si occupano di questa categoria di persone;

3. illustrare qual è la strategia del partenariato europeo per l'innovazione a favore dell'invecchiamento attivo e sano per affrontare l'invecchiamento della popolazione dei prossimi anni?

Risposta di László Andor a nome della Commissione
(19 marzo 2014)

Sebbene il servizio di assistenza a lungo termine sia una responsabilità degli Stati membri, questi ultimi hanno stabilito obiettivi comuni pin tema di accessibilità, qualità e sostenibilità finanziaria dell'assistenza a lungo termine all'interno del CPS ([1]). La Commissione sostiene gli Stati membri nei loro sforzi e ha recentemente cofinanziato con l'OCSE due progetti che si occupano del finanziamento e della qualità dell'assistenza a lungo termine e della situazione di coloro che prestano assistenza ([2]).

Il Pacchetto di investimenti sociali della Commissione pubblicato nel febbraio 2013 include un documento di lavoro dei servizi sull'assistenza a lungo termine ([3]). La Commissione sta attualmente sostenendo il CPS nella stesura di una relazione che si occuperà di definire un'adeguata protezione sociale per evitare il ricorso all'assistenza a lungo termine, prevenendo la perdita di autonomia e salvaguardando la capacità delle persone anziane di vivere in maniera autosufficiente.

([1]) Comitato per la protezione sociale.
([2]) http://www.oecd.org/els/health-systems/helpwantedprovidingandpayingforlong-termcare.htm Relazione pubblicata sulla qualità dell'assistenza a lungo termine nel giugno 2013.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1044&langId=en

Le associazioni di anziani hanno varie possibilità di accedere ai fondi dell'UE destinati ai progetti riguardanti l'invecchiamento ([4]). Al momento la Commissione prevede sovvenzioni alla piattaforma AGE, una rete europea di circa 167 associazioni cui partecipano persone con un'età pari o superiore ai 50 anni ([5]). Un obiettivo specifico del nuovo programma «Diritti, uguaglianza e cittadinanza» ([6]) è promuovere l'effettiva attuazione del divieto di discriminazione, inclusa quella basata sull'età.

Il partenariato europeo per l'innovazione a favore dell'invecchiamento attivo e sano ha lo scopo di migliorare la qualità di vita degli anziani e la sostenibilità del settore sanitario e dell'assistenza nonché di incentivare il lavoro e la crescita nell'UE ([7]). A questa iniziativa fanno capo interventi di gruppi multilaterali e multisettoriali. Il relativo piano strategico di attuazione identifica diversi settori d'intervento, inclusa l'integrazione del servizio sanitario e dell'assistenza, così da prevenire le cadute, diagnosticare precocemente fragilità e declino funzionale, sia fisico che cognitivo, e promuovere una vita indipendente e la disponibilità di ambienti adatti alle esigenze dell'età.

([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=it&pubId=6480&type=2&furtherPubs=no
([5]) Programma comunitario per l'occupazione e la solidarietà sociale — Progress; vedere: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=327&langId=it
([6]) 2014-2020.
([7]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/index_en.cfm?section=active-healthy-ageing

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000740/14
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(27 January 2014)

Subject: EU measures on care for the elderly

The population is ageing all over the world. It has been calculated that by 2060 the over-65s will make up almost one-third of Europe's total population, as against only 17.5% in 2011.

In Italy today there are more than 2.7 million people who are either partly or totally unable to look after themselves, and this figure is expected to reach 3 million by 2015. More than half the people aged between 75 and 84 have an illness or a chronic health problem, and that proportion rises to 64% among people over 85. Some 40% of people over 65 say they are restricted in their daily lives. Against this background, the percentage of elderly people who have access to full home care is stable at 4%, whilst uptake of the home care service actually fell from 1.7% of potential users in 2008 to 1.4% in 2010.

The number of people receiving carers allowances has also fallen in recent years. Decisions made by the governments in office from 2008 to 2011 led to severe cuts in funding for people dependent on care. The national social policy fund was slashed by up to 30-40% a year, and the money available for local authorities to spend on social care was squeezed accordingly. The problem ultimately lies in the need to keep costs down whilst introducing a home care fund that is large enough to cover care needs.

Italy is the only major European country not to have carried out a thorough overhaul of its long-term care system, and so it continues to rely to a great extent on informal care provided by family members. At a time of crisis when families are also facing the challenge of rising unemployment, it is becoming increasingly difficult for them to meet this responsibility, whilst care needs are set to grow as the population ages.

Can the Commission say:

1. whether it believes that priorities and a common framework regarding care for the elderly should be established at European level;

2. what measures have been introduced to support the associations and organisations that help the elderly;

3. what strategy the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing has drawn up to address the problem of the ageing of the population in coming years?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(19 March 2014)

Although providing Long Term Care (LTC) is a responsibility of the Member States, the latter have agreed on common objectives for accessibility, quality and financial sustainability of LTC within the SPC ([1]). The Commission supports the Member States in their efforts and recently co-financed two projects with the OECD that looked at the financing and quality of LTC and the situation of carers ([2]).

The Commission's February 2013 Social Investment Package includes a Staff Working Document on LTC ([3]). The Commission is currently supporting the SPC in drafting a report, which will look at defining adequate social protection to avoid the need for LTC, preventing the loss of autonomy and preserving older people's ability to live independently.

Various opportunities exist for senior citizens' organisations to access EU funding for projects relating to ageing ([4]). The Commission currently provides grant-funding to the AGE Platform Europe, a European network of around 167 organisations of and for people aged 50 and over ([5]). The new Rights, Equality and Citizenship ([6]) programme includes as a specific objective the promotion of the effective implementation of the principle of non-—discrimination on different grounds, including age.

The European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing aims to improve older people's quality of life and the sustainability of the health and care sectors and to boost jobs and growth in the EU ([7]). It is implementing actions in multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral groups. Its Strategic Implementation Plan identifies several areas for action, including the integration of health and care services, preventing falls, early diagnosis of frailty and functional decline, and the promotion of independent living and age-friendly environments.

([1]) Social Protection Committee.
([2]) http://www.oecd.org/els/health-systems/helpwantedprovidingandpayingforlong-termcare.htm A report will be published on quality in long-term care in June 2013.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1044&langId=en
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=6480&type=2&furtherPubs=no
([5]) Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity — Progress; see: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=327
([6]) 2014 — 2020.
([7]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/index_en.cfm?section=active-healthy-ageing

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000741/14
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(27 gennaio 2014)

Oggetto: Innovazione tecnologica per le persone non vedenti: quale risposta dall'Unione europea?

In Europa ci sono circa 30 milioni di persone che sono completamente o parzialmente non vedenti. In media 1 persona su 30 in Europa si ritrova con un problema di perdita di vista.

Un team formato da scienziati di differenti discipline sta lavorando su un dispositivo che permette al non vedente di raggiungere una maggiore autonomia. Si tratta di un'equipe costituita da ricercatori statunitensi di uno dei più importanti istituti al mondo e di diverse università italiane. Neuroscienziati e studiosi dei processi di visione, ingegneri elettronici, esperti di robotica si stanno concentrando su quest'ambizioso progetto.

Il prototipo che è stato messo a punto contiene un sistema di navigazione indoor che, attraverso telecamere portatili e sensori, permette al non vedente di muoversi in un ambiente che non conosce, individuando gli ostacoli, le salite e le discese improvvise e identificando un percorso sicuro davanti a sé. Inoltre, lo strumento consente di riconoscere i volti noti, basandosi su immagini archiviate in un database, e di leggere i testi attraverso la tecnica di mappatura e localizzazione simultanea o Slam. Si tratta di un algoritmo che permette di ricostruire le figure geometriche (parti di muri, pavimento, soffitto, mobili) all'interno di una mappa realizzata in simultanea grazie ai sensori, ma che soprattutto è in grado di individuare parole e decodificarle anche grazie alla capacità di rimuovere le distorsioni che si hanno quando i testi si presentano obliqui di fronte alla testa di chi indossa lo strumento. Tutte le informazioni raccolte dall'apparecchio portatile integrato vengono veicolate all'utente attraverso un display tattile.

Naturalmente ci sono diverse problematiche da affrontare che richiedono ulteriori studi (ad esempio dovrà essere perfezionato il display in modo tale che abbia una risoluzione ottimale che permetta il trasporto rapido di una grande mole di dati) e saranno necessari anni di ricerche prima che il sistema possa essere effettivamente utilizzato.

Può la Commissione precisare quanto segue:

— è a conoscenza di tale prototipo messo a punto dall'equipe menzionata?

— Ritiene che sia un progetto che possa ricevere il supporto, anche finanziario, dell'Unione europea?

— Considera opportuno favorire la partecipazione a questa ricerca di studiosi provenienti da istituti di diversi paesi europei?

Risposta di Neelie Kroes a nome della Commissione
(18 marzo 2014)

Nell'ambito dei programmi quadro per la ricerca, lo sviluppo tecnologico e l'innovazione, la Commissione europea fornisce sostegno finanziario a una serie di progetti per lo sviluppo di soluzioni all'avanguardia per disabili basate sulle TIC, comprese tecnologie di assistenza destinate a persone completamente o parzialmente non vedenti. Insieme ad altre iniziative internazionali, come quelle menzionate dall'onorevole deputato, le azioni della Commissione contribuiscono allo sviluppo di dispositivi indossabili che aiuteranno i non vedenti e gli ipovedenti a raggiungere una maggiore autonomia e una migliore qualità della vita.

La Commissione europea, nell'ambito del nuovo programma di ricerca e innovazione Orizzonte 2020, continua a sostenere le attività di ricerca che mirano a sviluppare nuove tecnologie di assistenza o interfacce multimodali. Un invito a presentare proposte (ICT-22-2014 ([1]) — parte 22, b)), con scadenza il 23 aprile 2014, ha l'obiettivo precipuo di potenziare le capacità delle tecnologie di interazione uomo-macchina per permettere ai disabili di partecipare pienamente alla vita sociale. Gli eventuali partecipanti (ricercatori, innovatori, imprenditori) devono conoscere l'obiettivo della ricerca, nonché le condizioni e le regole per la partecipazione di Orizzonte 2020.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/topics/91-ict-22-2014.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000741/14
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(27 January 2014)

Subject: Technological innovation for blind people: what is the response of the European Union?

In Europe there are approximately 30 million blind and partially-sighted people. On average 1 person in 30 in Europe suffers from sight loss.

A team composed of scientists from various disciplines is working on a device which enables the blind person to achieve greater autonomy. The team comprises American researchers from one of the most important institutes in the world and from various Italian universities. Neuroscientists and researchers into the sight processes, electronic engineers and robotics experts are joining together on this ambitious project.

The prototype which has been developed contains an indoor navigation system which, by means of portable cameras and sensors, enables the blind person to move around in an unfamiliar environment, identifying the obstacles, unexpected gradients and drops and selecting a safe route forward. In addition, the instrument enables recognition of known faces, based on images stored in a database, and the reading of text by means of the technique of simultaneous localization and mapping ('SLAM'). This is an algorithm which allows geometrical shapes (parts of walls, floor, ceiling, furniture) to be reconstructed in a map created simultaneously by the sensors, but above all is able to identify words and decode them thanks to its capacity for removing the distortions which arise when text is presented obliquely in front of the head of the person wearing the instrument. All the information gathered by the integrated portable apparatus is channelled to the user by means of a tactile display.

Naturally there are various problems to be resolved which require further study (for example, the display needs to be improved in order to have an optimal resolution so as to allow the rapid transfer of a large mass of data) and years of research will be required before the system can be used effectively.

Can the Commission specify the following:

— Is it aware of the prototype developed by the team referred to?

— Does it consider that this is a project which would be eligible for support from the European Union, including financial support?

— Does it consider it appropriate to encourage participation in this research by scholars from institutes in various European countries?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(18 March 2014)

Under the framework Programmes for research, technological development and innovation, the European Commission provides financial support to a number of projects developing state-of-the-art ICT-based solutions for people with disabilities, including assistive technologies for blind and partially-sighted people. Together with other international initiatives like those pointed out by the Honourable Member, they are contributing to developing wearable devices that will help visually impaired people to gain further independence and improve their quality of life.

The European Commission continues to provide support to research targeting new technology development in multimodal interfaces and assistive technologies within the new research and innovation programme Horizon 2020. A call for proposals (ICT-22-2014 [1] — Part 22.(b)) with deadline of 23 April 2014 addresses the specific challenge of advancing the capacity of human-machine interaction technologies to enable disabled people to fully participate in society. Any possible contributors (researchers, innovators, entrepreneurs) should get acquainted with the scope of this research as well as with the conditions and rules for participation of Horizon 2020.

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[1] http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/topics/91-ict-22-2014.html

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000742/14
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(27 gennaio 2014)

Oggetto: Trattamenti di radioterapia con fasci a intensità modulata

Un recente studio appena pubblicato sulla rivista scientifica Cancer dai ricercatori dell'MD Anderson Cancer Center (Università del Texas) riporta come la radioterapia con fasci a intensità modulata è una strategia migliore di quella tradizionale per i pazienti con un tumore della testa e del collo. Non solo, infatti, con il trattamento IMRT (Intensity Modulated Radiation Therapy) si riducono gli effetti collaterali, ma si ottengono anche risultati superiori in termini di sopravvivenza.

La radioterapia IMRT permette di erogare dosi elevate di radiazioni in modo molto preciso e accurato risparmiando al massimo i tessuti sani circostanti al tumore, ma è la prima volta che uno studio dimostra la sua utilità in termini di migliore prognosi per i malati con un carcinoma dell'area testa e collo.

Questo tipo di trattamento offre particolari vantaggi a chi soffre di una forma di cancro che colpisce la zona del viso: spesso, infatti, la massa tumorale è in prossimità di strutture critiche (come, ad esempio, le ghiandole salivari, il midollo spinale, la mandibola, le ghiandole lacrimali e l'apparato visivo) e è quanto mai utile poter «mirare» al meglio le radiazioni, salvando i delicati tessuti vicini.

Sebbene rappresentino il quinto tipo di cancro più diffuso al mondo (dopo quelli di colon retto, polmone, seno e prostata), i tumori che colpiscono bocca, lingua, gengive, faringe, laringe, naso, seni paranasali e ghiandole salivari sono ancora poco conosciuti e sottostimati. Ogni anno in Italia si registrano circa 12.000 nuovi casi, che sono in aumento (colpa di fumo, alcol e virus Hpv quali principali fattori di rischio) e ancora troppo spesso diagnosticati in ritardo.

Lo studio ha analizzato i dati di oltre mille pazienti trattati con IMRT nel periodo tra il 1999 e il 2007, confrontandoli con quelli di più di 2.100 malati trattati invece in quegli anni con la radioterapia tradizionale. Oltre al beneficio relativo alla minore secchezza cronica delle fauci e ai minori danni ai denti e alle aree circostanti, è emerso, con un riesame a 40 mesi, un significativo miglioramento della sopravvivenza fra quanti erano stati curati con la radioterapia con fasci a intensità modulata rispetto a quelli sottoposti a tecnica convenzionale (38,9 per cento contro il 18,9).

Può la Commissione riferire se intende acquisire e valutare i risultati di tale studio e fornire raccomandazioni su possibili revisioni delle linee guida relative?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(11 marzo 2014)

La Commissione è a conoscenza dello studio citato dall'Onorevole deputato: detto studio è stato presentato alla 55ª riunione annuale dell'American Society for Radiation Oncology.

Per prassi la Commissione europea non giudica e non commenta i progetti di ricerca che non siano direttamente correlati alla sue attività a sostegno della ricerca.

Non vi sono linee guida europee per il trattamento dei pazienti affetti da un carcinoma dell'area testa e collo. Per standardizzare l'assistenza e promuovere un accesso paritetico alle cure la Società europea di oncologia medica (ESMO) ha sviluppato e pubblicato nel 2009 raccomandazioni cliniche per la diagnosi, la terapia e il follow-up dei pazienti con carcinoma dell'area testa e collo. Queste linee guida sono sottoposte regolarmente a revisione alla luce degli ultimi sviluppi della scienza e della medicina.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000742/14
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(27 January 2014)

Subject: Intensity Modulated Radiation Therapy

A recent study just published in the scientific journal, Cancer, by researchers at the MD Anderson Cancer Center (University of Texas) indicates that Intensity Modulated Radiation Therapy (IMRT) is better than traditional treatment for patients with tumours in the head or neck. In fact, as well as causing fewer side-effects, IMRT gives better results in terms of survival.

With IMRT, high doses of radiation can be delivered very accurately, thus saving as much of the healthy tissue around the tumour as possible; but this is the first time a study has demonstrated its effectiveness in terms of better prognoses for patients with a carcinoma in the head or neck.

This type of treatment offers particular benefits for those suffering from forms of cancer that affect the facial area, in which tumours are often close to critical structures (including the salivary glands, spinal cord, jawbone, tear glands and eyes), when it is especially important to be able to 'aim' radiation as accurately as possible to save the delicate tissue close to the tumour.

Although tumours affecting the mouth, tongue, gums, pharynx, larynx, nose, paranasal sinuses and salivary glands are the fifth most common type of cancer in the world (after colorectal, lung, breast and prostate cancers), people are still relatively unaware of them and underestimate their severity. Some 12 000 new cases are being recorded every year in Italy, and we are seeing a rising number of cases (because of smoking, alcohol and the human papilloma virus, which are the main risk factors), which are still too often being diagnosed late.

The study analysed the data of more than a thousand patients treated with IMRT between 1999 and 2007, and compared them with the data for more than 2 100 patients treated during the same period with traditional radiotherapy. In addition to the benefits of reduced chronic dryness of the mouth and less damage to the teeth and surrounding areas, a re-examination after 40 months showed a significant improvement in the survival rate among those who had been treated with IMRT, compared with those treated using conventional methods (38.9% as against 18.9%).

Is the Commission intending to obtain and assess the results of this study and issue recommendations for possible changes to the relevant guidelines?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(11 March 2014)

The Commission is aware of the study referred to by the Honourable Member that was presented at the 55th Annual Meeting of the American Society for Radiation Oncology.

As a matter of policy, the European Commission does not judge nor comment on research projects that do not directly relate to its activities in supporting research.

There are no European Guidelines for treatment of patients with a carcinoma in the head or neck. In an effort to standardise care and to encourage equal access to treatment, the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) developed and published clinical recommendations for diagnosis, treatment and follow-up for patients with head and neck cancer in 2009. These guidelines are regularly revised in the light of latest scientific and medical developments.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-000744/14
adresată Comisiei
Silvia-Adriana Ţicău (S&D)
(27 ianuarie 2014)

Subiect: Monitorizarea unităților siderurgice din UE

Prin Rezoluția din 13 decembrie 2012 referitoare la industria siderurgică din UE, Parlamentul European invită Comisia să monitorizeze îndeaproape evoluțiile viitoare din cadrul unităților situate la Florange, Liège, Terni, Galați, Schifflange, Piombino, Câmpia Turzii, Rodange, Oțelu Roșu, Trieste, Silesia, Reșița, Târgoviște, Călărași, Hunedoara, Buzău, Brăila, Borlänge, Luleå, Oxelösund și în alte părți, a căror integritate este în pericol, pentru a se asigura că nu sunt amenințate competitivitatea sectorului siderurgic european și importanța sa ca sector al ocupării forței de muncă.

Aș dori să întreb Comisia dacă a monitorizat evoluțiile din unitățile menționate în rezoluție și care sunt concluziile acestei monitorizări.

Răspuns dat de dl Tajani în numele Comisiei
(18 martie 2014)

Comisia împărtășește opiniile distinsului membru cu privire la importanța industriei siderurgice pentru UE, precum și cu privire la importanța asigurării competitivității și a locurilor de muncă. Din acest motiv, Comisia a înaintat un plan de acțiune ([1]) destinat industriei siderurgice europene pentru a ajuta acest sector să facă față provocărilor actuale și să pună bazele unei viitoare competitivități prin stimularea inovării, crearea de creștere economică și de locuri de muncă.

Comisia convoacă în mod regulat Grupul la nivel înalt privind oțelul (HLG) ([2]), a cărui ultimă reuniune a avut loc în decembrie 2013, pentru a discuta despre provocările acestei industrii la nivel mondial, regional, cât și la nivel local și de uzină. Statele membre, industria și sindicatele participa la reuniunile Grupului la nivel înalt.

Printre acțiunile propuse în planul de acțiune, în caz de reducere semnificativă sau de închidere a capacităților de producție, Comisia va raționaliza utilizarea fondurilor UE relevante, prin utilizarea unor grupuri operative speciale care urmează a fi alcătuite la cererea statelor membre sau a sindicatelor. Ar trebui remarcat faptul că, pentru moment, o astfel de cerere nu a fost efectuată.

([1]) COM (2013) 407.
([2]) Amănuntele cu privire la acesta sunt disponibile la următoarea adresă :
http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=2972&NewSearch=1&NewSearch=1
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/metals-minerals/steel/high-level-roundtable/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000744/14
to the Commission
Silvia-Adriana Ţicău (S&D)
(27 January 2014)

Subject: The monitoring of EU steel industry establishments

In its Resolution of 13 December 2012 on the EU steel industry, the European Parliament calls on the Commission to closely monitor future developments in the establishments located in Florange, Liège, Terni, Galaţi, Schifflange, Piombino, Câmpia Turzii, Rodange, Oţelu Roşu, Trieste, Silesia, Reşiţa, Târgovişte, Călăraşi, Hunedoara, Buzău, Brăila, Borlänge, Luleå, Oxelösund and elsewhere, whose integrity is at risk, in order to be sure that the competitiveness of the European steel sector and its importance as a sector of employment are not threatened.

I would like to ask the Commission whether it has monitored the developments in the establishments referred to in the resolution, and what the conclusions of this monitoring are.

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(18 March 2014)

The Commission shares the views of the Honourable Member with regards to the importance of the steel industry for the EU as well as with regards to the importance of ensuring competitiveness and jobs. This is why the Commission put forward an action plan ([1]) for the European Steel Industry to help this sector confront today's challenges and lay the foundations for future competitiveness by fostering innovation, creating growth and jobs.

The Commission is regularly convening the High Level Group on steel (HLG) ([2]), the last meeting took place in December 2013, to discuss the challenges of this industry at global, regional scale but also on a local, plant scale. Member States, industry and trade unions participate in the HLG meetings.

Among the actions proposed in the action plan, in the case of significant downsizing or closures, the Commission will streamline the use of the relevant EU funds, by using dedicated task forces, to be established at the request of Member States or trades unions. It should be noted that for the time being such a request has not been made.

([1]) COM(2013) 407.
([2]) Details can be found here: http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=2972&NewSearch=1&NewSearch=1 http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/metals-minerals/steel/high-level-roundtable/index_en.htm

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000747/14
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(27 de enero de 2014)

Asunto: VP/HR — Aprobación de la intervención militar de la UE en la República Centroafricana

El pasado 20 de enero los ministros de Exteriores de los veintiocho Estados miembros acordaron dar luz verde a los primeros pasos en el desarrollo de una intervención militar de la Unión Europea en la República Centroafricana.

Esta decisión se produce en un contexto en el que el país se encuentra actualmente invadido por las fuerzas militares de Francia, que decidió intervenir el 5 de diciembre del pasado año tras recibir la aprobación del Consejo de Seguridad de la Naciones Unidas. Dicha intervención se produce para que las multinacionales de origen francés puedan mantener la situación de dominio neocolonial en el citado país africano, rico en diversos recursos naturales como oro, diamantes o uranio. Sin esta intervención dicho país habría «caído» ante la influencia económica de otra de las grandes potencias comerciales que operan en el continente, China.

Son muchas las grandes compañías francesas que operan en la República Centroafricana, empresas que operan en toda su economía, desde sectores vinculados a las materias primas hasta la logística o las telecomunicaciones. Esta serie de compañías multinacionales, en su penetración en los sectores estratégicos del país centroafricano, ha generado la desastrosa situación económica en la que se encuentra el país y que ha desencadenado la insurrección que actualmente está azotando la República Centroafricana. El empleo de categorías como «conflictos étnicos» en las Resoluciones sobre este país solo sirve para hacer invisible la responsabilidad de las compañías multinacionales implicadas en las raíces del conflicto. Se trata de la continuación de la estrategia neocolonial de Francia en el continente africano.

¿De qué mecanismos dispone la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante para vigilar el papel de los efectivos militares europeos desplegados en los distintos países africanos, en la defensa de la democracia y los derechos humanos en África?

¿Piensa emplear la categoría de «conflicto étnico» en la justificación de sus intervenciones militares en África pese a ser un término rechazado por la comunidad académica que solo sirve para hacer invisibles las causas reales de los conflictos en África?

¿Considera que esta intervención conllevará la pacificación de la región o que, por el contrario, como ya pasara en Irak, Afganistán o Libia, traerá más inestabilidad?

Respuesta de la Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(28 de marzo de 2014)

La Unión Europea rechaza la consideración de la operación Sangaris en la RCA como una «invasión». Los principales motivos para las intervenciones de la UE en la RCA son la restauración de la seguridad y el orden público y la protección de la vida humana, pero no intereses comerciales. Si bien es importante abordar las causas subyacentes de los conflictos, se debe proteger a los ciudadanos con arreglo al Derecho internacional e independientemente de su etnia o religión.

La propuesta de intervención en la RCA de la UE, junto a otras acciones a nivel regional e internacional, pretende proteger la vida y contribuir a la estabilidad.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000747/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(27 January 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Approval of military intervention by the EU in the Central African Republic

On 20 January this year the Foreign Ministers of the twenty-eight Member States agreed to give the green light to the first steps of a military intervention by the European Union in the Central African Republic.

This decision has been taken in a context in which the country is currently subject to an invasion by military forces from France, which decided to intervene on 5 December last year after receiving the approval of the United Nations Security Council. This intervention is taking place so that multinational corporations of French origin can maintain the situation of neo-colonial domination in that African country, which is rich in various natural resources such as gold, diamonds and uranium. Without the aforementioned intervention the country would have 'fallen' to the economic influence of another of the great commercial powers operating on the continent, namely China.

There are many large French companies with business in the Central African Republic, and they operate throughout its economy, from sectors linked to raw materials to logistics and telecommunications. It is these multinational corporations, with their involvement in the strategic sectors of the country, that have created the disastrous financial situation affecting the Central African Republic, which has given rise to the insurrection that the country is now suffering. The use of expressions such as 'ethnic conflict' in resolutions concerning this country serve only to hide the responsibility of the multinational companies implicated in the roots of the conflict. What is happening here is the continuation of France's neo-colonial strategy in Africa.

What mechanisms does the Vice-President/High Representative have available to monitor the role of the European military forces deployed in various African countries to protect democracy and human rights in Africa?

Does she intend to employ the expression 'ethnic conflict' to justify their military interventions in Africa, even though this term has been rejected by the academic community and serves only to render invisible the real causes of the conflicts in Africa?

Does she consider that this intervention will lead to the pacification of the region or, on the other hand, will it give rise to more instability, as happened in Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya?

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

The EU rejects the characterisation of Sangaris in CAR as an 'invasion'. The restoration of security and public order, and the protection of human life, and not commercial considerations, are the prime motivations for EU interventions in CAR. While it is important to address the root causes of all conflicts, citizens must be protected according to international law and without prejudice based on ethnicity or religious affiliation.

The proposed EU intervention in CAR, accompanied by actions at regional and international level, is intended to protect life and contribute to stability.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000749/14
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(27 gennaio 2014)

Oggetto: Bomba inesplosa della seconda guerra mondiale rinvenuta a Vicenza

Nell'area dell'ex aeroporto Dal Molin a Vicenza è stata rinvenuta una bomba, risalente all'epoca del secondo conflitto mondiale, ancora inesplosa e contenente 1.800 kg di esplosivo. La messa in sicurezza dell'ordigno costerà circa 1,5 milioni di euro e richiederà mesi di preparazione oltre all'evacuazione di circa 50.000 persone.

La Commissione:

è al corrente dei fatti sopra descritti?

Può riferire se esistono fondi europei destinati a finanziare operazioni di bonifica come quella che si sta per mettere in atto a Vicenza?

Risposta di Johannes Hahn a nome della Commissione
(13 marzo 2014)

La Commissione non era al corrente dei fatti descritti dall'Onorevole deputata.

Per quanto concerne il Fondo europeo di sviluppo regionale esso non fornisce un sostegno per questo tipo di operazioni.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000749/14
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(27 January 2014)

Subject: Unexploded WW2 bomb discovered in Vicenza

A bomb has been discovered in the grounds of the former Dal Molin Airport in Vicenza; it is from the Second World War, still unexploded, and contains 1 800 kg of explosives. To make this ordnance safe will cost around EUR 1.5 million and will require months of preparation as well as the evacuation of around 50 000 persons.

Is the Commission aware of the facts described above?

Can the Commission say whether any European funds exist for financing clean-up operations such as the one being put in place in Vicenza?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(13 March 2014)

The Commission has not been informed of the facts mentioned by the Honourable Member.

As far as the European Regional Development Fund is concerned, it does not provide support for this type of operation.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000750/14
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(27 gennaio 2014)

Oggetto: Diffusione del morbillo in Italia ed Europa

Fra gli obiettivi dell'Organizzazione mondiale della sanità vi è l'eliminazione, entro il 2015, del morbillo in Europa.

Dall'ultimo rapporto del Centro europeo per la prevenzione e il controllo delle malattie (ECDC) sulla diffusione di questa malattia, risulta che nel 2013 sono stati censiti ancora oltre 12.000 casi di contagio, 3.400 solo in Italia. Fra i paesi in cui l'incidenza del morbillo è ancora elevata figurano Gran Bretagna, Olanda, Romania e Germania.

La Commissione è a conoscenza dei fatti sopra descritti?

Ritiene che i servizi sanitari dei paesi sopra citati abbiano approntato piani d'azione sufficientemente efficaci per l'eliminazione della malattia?

Come intende intervenire per salvaguardare la salute dei cittadini?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(18 marzo 2014)

La Commissione è a conoscenza della situazione epidemiologica del morbillo nell'UE in cui diversi Stati membri hanno segnalato casi di tale patologia. La Commissione opera di concerto con il Centro europeo per la prevenzione e il controllo delle malattie (ECDC) e con l'Organizzazione mondiale della sanità (OMS) per monitorarne gli sviluppi al fine di raggiungere l'obiettivo dell'OMS di eliminare in Europa il morbillo entro il 2015.

Mentre la responsabilità per la vaccinazione rientra nelle competenze nazionali, la Commissione sostiene diverse iniziative unionali per estendere la copertura vaccinica contro il morbillo. Nel giugno 2011 sono state adottate le conclusioni del Consiglio sulla vaccinazione infantile ([1]) per migliorare la copertura vaccinica contro le malattie vaccinoprevenibili, tra cui il morbillo, e nell'ottobre 2012 la Commissione ha organizzato una conferenza internazionale sulla vaccinazione infantile con un'attenzione particolare alla prevenzione del morbillo.

L'ECDC ha prodotto strumenti su base esperienziale volti a fornire sostegno agli Stati membri in materia di comunicazione per rafforzare e promuovere la copertura vaccinica. Il più recente di tali strumenti era volto a migliorare la copertura vaccinica tra le popolazioni più difficili da raggiungere nei paesi europei come ad esempio i migranti e i rom.

([1]) 2011/C 202/02.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000750/14
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(27 January 2014)

Subject: Spread of measles in Italy and Europe

One of the objectives of the World Health Organisation is to eliminate measles in Europe by 2015.

The latest report on the spread of this disease from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) states that in 2013 more than 12 000 cases of the disease were reported, 3 400 in Italy alone. Countries where the incidence of measles is still high include Great Britain, the Netherlands, Romania and Germany.

Is the Commission aware of these facts?

Does it consider that the health services of the countries mentioned above have prepared sufficiently effective action plans to eliminate the disease?

How does the Commission intend to act to safeguard the health of citizens?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(18 March 2014)

The Commission is aware of the epidemiological situation of measles in the EU where a number of Member States report measles cases. The Commission works with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) in monitoring developments in view of meeting the WHO target to eliminate measles in Europe by 2015.

While the responsibility for vaccination is a national competence, the Commission supports a number of EU initiatives to strengthen vaccination coverage of measles. The Council conclusions on childhood immunisation ([1]) were adopted in June 2011 to improve immunisation coverage for vaccine preventable diseases, including measles, and in October 2012 the Commission organised an international conference on childhood immunisation with a special focus on measles prevention.

The ECDC has produced evidence-based tools aimed at providing support to Member States in the area of communication for strengthening and promoting vaccination coverage. The most recent such tool was targeted at improving vaccination coverage among hard-to-reach population groups in European countries, such as migrants and Roma.

([1]) 2011/C 202/02.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000751/14
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(27 gennaio 2014)

Oggetto: Diffusione dell'AIDS in Europa e lotta contro questa malattia

Un nuovo vaccino contro l'AIDS, denominato AT20, è stato messo a punto in Italia e ha appena superato, con risultati positivi e incoraggianti, i primi test condotti sull'uomo in quattro centri clinici italiani.

La Commissione è al corrente di quanto sopra esposto?

Può fornire dati rispetto all'attuale diffusione della malattia in Europa?

Può riferire se in Europa siano stati finanziati dall'UE studi per la creazione di vaccini contro l'AIDS e con quali risultati?

Risposta di Máire Geoghegan-Quinn a nome della Commissione
(12 marzo 2014)

La Commissione segue da vicino gli sviluppi scientifici nel campo dell'HIV/AIDS, fra cui anche le pubblicazioni scientifiche sui risultati dello studio clinico di fase I del vaccino terapeutico sperimentale AT20-KLH, che ne hanno dimostrato la sicurezza e l'immunogenicità. Nonostante questi primi risultati siano promettenti, occorrerà effettuare ulteriori studi clinici, il cui esito è impossibile da prevedere allo stato attuale. La Commissione continuerà a seguire i risultati degli studi sul vaccino sperimentale AT20-KLH.

Per quanto riguarda la diffusione della patologia in Europa, secondo le migliori stime disponibili sono portatrici del virus HIV 860 000 persone in Europa Occidentale e Centrale e 1 300 000 persone in Europa Orientale e Asia Centrale.

La Commissione ha finanziato progetti di ricerca sui vaccini contro l'HIV nell'ambito del Settimo programma quadro di ricerca, sviluppo tecnologico e dimostrazione (7° PQ, 2007-2013), per complessivi 50 milioni di euro. Ricercatori finanziati dall'UE hanno messo a punto diversi vaccini sperimentali promettenti contro l'HIV, di cui alcuni hanno raggiunto le fasi I/IIa degli studi clinici, contribuendo così ad incrementare il numero di vaccini sperimentali disponibili a livello mondiale. Con il programma Orizzonte 2020 (2014-2020) la Commissione continuerà a sostenere questo settore della ricerca. Il programma di lavoro 2014-2015 dell'attività «Salute, evoluzione demografica e benessere» contiene una voce relativa allo sviluppo di un vaccino contro l'HIV. Le informazioni sulle attuali possibilità di finanziamento sono reperibili sul portale unionale della ricerca e dell'innovazione ([1]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/index.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000751/14
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(27 January 2014)

Subject: The prevalence of AIDS in Europe and the fight against the disease

A new AIDS vaccine called AT20, developed in Italy, has just been tested on humans for the first time in four Italian clinics, with positive and encouraging results.

Is the Commission aware of these developments?

Can it provide data relating to the current prevalence of the disease in Europe?

Has the EU financed any European research projects to develop AIDS vaccines, and if so, what results have been achieved?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(12 March 2014)

The Commission is following closely the scientific developments in HIV/AIDS. This includes the scientific publications on the results of the phase I clinical study with AT20-KLH therapeutic vaccine candidate which showed its safety and immunogenicity. Although these are promising results, it should be mentioned that additional clinical studies are still required. The success of this vaccine is impossible to predict at this stage. The Commission will continue to follow the outcome of further studies regarding the AT20-KLH vaccine candidate.

Concerning the prevalence of the disease in Europe, according to the best available estimates, 860 000 people are infected with HIV in Western and Central Europe, and 1 300 000 in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Through the Seventh Framework Programme for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration Activities (FP7, 2007-2013), the Commission has funded projects on HIV vaccine research for a total budget of about EUR 50 million. EU-funded research teams have developed several promising HIV vaccine candidates of which some have progressed into phase I/IIa clinical trials, thus contributing to the global pipeline of vaccine candidates. In Horizon 2020 (2014-2020), the Commission will continue to support research in this area. The work-programme 2014-2015 for the societal challenge "Health, Demographic Change and Wellbeing' includes a topic on HIV vaccine development. Information on current funding opportunities can be obtained at the EC Research and Innovation Participant Portal ([1]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/index.html

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000753/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(27 gennaio 2014)

Oggetto: Nuove modalità di calcolo del PIL

L'Unione europea è intervenuta recentemente sulle modalità con cui gli Stati membri calcoleranno il prodotto interno lordo e trasmetteranno i dati a Eurostat. Il nuovo metodo è chiamato Accounts 2010.

La revisione considererà nuove voci come fonti di reddito e non solo più come costi, aumentando così il valore complessivo del PIL. Ad esempio, le spese per ricerca e sviluppo non saranno più conteggiate nella voce «spesa corrente», ma nella voce «investimento», contribuendo ad aumentare il calcolo finale, così come le spese in armamenti. Un'ulteriore novità riguarda il conteggio delle merci inviate all'estero per essere lavorate in altre fasi del ciclo produttivo, che non saranno più incluse sotto la voce «import-export», e il fatto che verranno introdotti anche nuovi metodi per il computo delle spese previdenziali e il peso del settore delle assicurazioni.

Alla luce del nuovo metodo Accounts 2010, può la Commissione chiarire:

1. se l'aumento virtuale del PIL che ne deriverebbe possa avere effetti significativi sugli obiettivi di finanza pubblica degli Stati membri;

2. in quale misura gli effetti del nuovo metodo varieranno da paese e paese e se queste eventuali differenze possano creare ineguaglianze o difficoltà per alcuni Stati membri?

Risposta di Olli Rehn a nome della Commissione
(19 marzo 2014)

Il sistema europeo dei conti nazionali e regionali (SEC) è stato riveduto mediante una decisione unanime degli Stati membri dell'UE a seguito di ampie discussioni con e tra gli esperti nazionali e si basa sul sistema internazionale dei conti nazionali (SCN 2008) che gli USA applicano già dall'agosto 2013.

I nuovi principi di contabilità statistica (SEC 2010) entreranno in vigore nel settembre 2014 e determineranno un aumento del livello del prodotto interno lordo (PIL) per tutti gli Stati membri. Le nuove cifre relative al PIL sono una migliore misura dell'attività economica e, di conseguenza, l'impatto per un dato paese dipende esclusivamente dalla struttura della sua economia. In questo senso il passaggio a statistiche migliori non genera diseguaglianze o difficoltà.

(Cfr. anche: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/esa_2010/documents/technical_press_briefing_ESA_2010.pdf)

Per quanto riguarda la vigilanza di bilancio, l'aumento delle cifre relative al PIL ridurrà automaticamente il rapporto disavanzo pubblico/PIL. Tuttavia, tale impatto sarà probabilmente molto contenuto, nella maggior parte dei casi inferiore allo 0,1 % del PIL. Inoltre, l'impatto sullo sforzo di bilancio calcolato (elemento fondamentale per valutare l'aggiustamento di bilancio richiesto nell'ambito del patto di stabilità e crescita) sarà fondamentalmente nullo.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000753/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(27 January 2014)

Subject: New methodologies for calculating GDP

The European Union has recently intervened in the methods by which Member States are to calculate their gross domestic product and transmit the data to Eurostat. The new method is called Accounts 2010.

The revision will consider certain new entries as sources of revenue and no longer only as expenditure, thereby increasing the total value of GDP. By way of example, expenditure on research and development will no longer be recorded under 'current expenditure', but under 'investment', giving rise to an increase in the final calculation, as with expenditure on weapon systems. Another change relates to the accounting for goods sent abroad for processing in other stages of the production cycle, which will no longer be recorded under 'import-export', and the fact that new methods will also be introduced to calculate the cost of pension schemes and the weighting of the insurance sector.

In view of the new Accounts 2010 method, can the Commission clarify:

1. whether the virtual increase in GDP which this would give rise to may have significant effects on the public finance objectives of Member States;

2. to what extent the effects of the new method will vary from country to country and whether any differences may create inequalities or difficulties for some Member States?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(19 March 2014)

The European system of national and regional accounts (ESA) has been revised through an unanimous decision of EU Member States following extensive discussions with and between national experts and is based on the international system of national accounts (SNA 2008) which the US applies already since August 2013.

The new statistical accounting rules (ESA 2010) will come into force as of September 2014 and will lead to an increase in the level of gross domestic product (GDP) for all Member States. The new GDP figures are an improved measure of economic activity and hence the impact for any given country depends solely on the structure of its economy. In this sense no inequality or difficulty is generated by the move to improved statistics. See also:
http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/esa_2010/documents/technical_press_briefing_ESA_2010.pdf

In terms of fiscal surveillance increased GDP figures will automatically reduce government deficit ratios. However, such an impact is likely to be very small, in most cases less than 0.1 percentage point of GDP. Moreover, the impact on the calculated fiscal effort (the key element of assessing fiscal adjustment in the Stability and Growth Pact) will basically be nil.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000754/14
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(27 gennaio 2014)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Missione cristiana attaccata nella Repubblica centrafricana (RCA)

Lo scorso 21 gennaio a Bocaranga, nella Repubblica centrafricana, una missione cristiana è stata assaltata da un commando del gruppo armato Seleka, attualmente al potere dopo un colpo di Stato. Il gruppo, oltre ad avere rubato moto, auto, computer, telefonini, macchine fotografiche e denaro, ha anche ucciso a sangue freddo alcuni civili.

Alla luce di questi fatti, può il Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante chiarire se:

1. è a conoscenza dei fatti avvenuti a Bocaranga;

2. erano presenti missionari o volontari europei nella missione e tra le vittime o i feriti dell'attacco?

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

L'AR/VP è a conoscenza degli eventi tragici avvenuti a Bocaranga e condanna fermamente tutti gli attacchi commessi contro la popolazione civile nella Repubblica centrafricana. Secondo le informazioni disponibili, non sembra che al momento dell'attacco fossero presenti europei nella missione.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000754/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(27 January 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Christian mission attacked in the Central African Republic (CAR)

On 21 January in Bocaranga, in the Central African Republic, a Christian mission was attacked by Seleka rebels, who are currently in power following a coup. As well as stealing motorbikes, a car, computers, telephones, cameras and cash, the group also killed several civilians in cold blood.

In this context, can the Vice-President/High Representative clarify whether:

1. she is aware of what happened in Bocaranga;

2. European missionaries or volunteers were present in the mission and among the victims or casualties of the attack?

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

The HR/VP is aware of the tragic events of Bocaranga and strongly condemns all attacks against the civilian population committed in CAR. There are no reports of any Europeans being present at the mission at the time of the attack.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000755/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE), Amalia Sartori (PPE), Mario Borghezio (NI), Clemente Mastella (PPE), Antonio Cancian (PPE), Fabrizio Bertot (PPE), Susy De Martini (ECR), Andrea Cozzolino (S&D), Oreste Rossi (PPE), Alfredo Pallone (PPE), Salvatore Tatarella (PPE), Roberta Angelilli (PPE), Mara Bizzotto (EFD), Carlo Fidanza (PPE), Lara Comi (PPE) e Raffaele Baldassarre (PPE)
(27 gennaio 2014)

Oggetto: Armi chimiche siriane nel porto di Gioia Tauro

I sindaci della Piana di Gioia Tauro e altri amministratori locali hanno manifestato la propria contrarietà alla decisione del governo italiano di autorizzare l'arrivo nel porto Gioia Tauro di armi chimiche provenienti dalla Siria. Sessanta container, per un totale di 350 tonnellate di armi, arriveranno in Italia entro poche settimane e attraccheranno nel porto calabrese, dove avverranno le operazioni di trasbordo del materiale dai cargo norvegese e danese alla nave statunitense incaricata di smantellarlo. Il governo italiano non ha preventivamente avvisato né la popolazione né gli amministratori locali.

I cargo con a bordo le armi siriane hanno già ricevuto il no di Francia e Albania, mentre l'Italia non ha posto alcun ostacolo alla ricezione dei due vettori per le operazioni di trasbordo. Sulle effettive sostanze tossiche da smantellare il governo italiano non ha fornito nessun particolare, circostanza che ha ulteriormente allarmato le associazioni di cittadini. In particolare, gli enti locali denunciano l'assenza di qualsiasi coinvolgimento preventivo da parte del governo centrale. A detta di Roma, tali timori sono infondati e frutto di scarsa informazione, motivo per cui si provvederà nei prossimi giorni alla realizzazione e distribuzione gratuita alla cittadinanza di un opuscolo informativo sulle operazioni e le misure di sicurezza. Nemmeno questa tardiva rassicurazione ha convinto il territorio.

Alla luce di questi fatti:

in considerazione della contrarietà delle popolazioni e delle amministrazioni locali allo stoccaggio delle armi a Gioia Tauro, può la Commissione europea verificare la correttezza della procedura autorizzativa fin qui seguita e chiarire i motivi per cui altri Stati membri avrebbero rifiutato di smantellare le armi chimiche?

Può la Commissione europea acquisire e comunicare agli interroganti tutte le informazioni, finora tenute nascoste dal governo italiano, relative alle modalità e alla tempistica delle operazioni di stoccaggio e, soprattutto, può fornire dettagliate notizie sulle effettive sostanze chimiche trasportate e sul loro relativo livello di pericolosità?

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

La distruzione dell'arsenale siriano di armi chimiche è stata approvata e viene monitorata dal consiglio esecutivo dell'Organizzazione per la proibizione delle armi chimiche (OPCW) e dal Consiglio di sicurezza dell'ONU, che hanno preso tutte le misure necessarie per garantire che la distruzione di tutti i tipi di armi chimiche siriane avvenga in condizioni sicure e rispettose dell'ambiente. Il piano figura in una serie di documenti pubblici dell'OPCW che contengono le decisioni pertinenti del consiglio esecutivo dell'Organizzazione. Il Programma delle Nazioni Unite per l'ambiente (UNEP) e l'Organizzazione mondiale della sanità (OMS) hanno partecipato attivamente alla programmazione dell'operazione. Il metodo di idrolisi utilizzato per i precursori chimici di priorità 1 è stato scelto per l'efficacia dimostrata in passato ai fini della distruzione di armi chimiche negli Stati Uniti e in altri paesi. Le sostanze chimiche e i loro effluenti non saranno scaricati in mare dopo l'idrolisi. Gli effluenti saranno stoccati a bordo della nave statunitense e trasferiti, insieme al resto delle sostanze chimiche siriane oggetto del piano, verso impianti commerciali selezionati per le distruzione definitiva tramite incenerimento. La missione comune ha recentemente organizzato una riunione con le principali ONG ambientali per spiegare che la distruzione avverrà secondo le disposizioni legislative internazionali e nazionali. Il governo italiano ha collaborato strettamente con l'OPCW per quanto riguarda il trasbordo nel porto di Gioia Tauro. Va infine sottolineato che l'UE e gli Stati membri hanno contribuito, dal punto di vista finanziario e pratico, a questa operazione, con l'obiettivo di evitare che le armi vengano riutilizzate contro il popolo siriano.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000755/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE), Amalia Sartori (PPE), Mario Borghezio (NI), Clemente Mastella (PPE), Antonio Cancian (PPE), Fabrizio Bertot (PPE), Susy De Martini (ECR), Andrea Cozzolino (S&D), Oreste Rossi (PPE), Alfredo Pallone (PPE), Salvatore Tatarella (PPE), Roberta Angelilli (PPE), Mara Bizzotto (EFD), Carlo Fidanza (PPE), Lara Comi (PPE) and Raffaele Baldassarre (PPE)
(27 January 2014)

Subject: Syrian chemical weapons in the port of Gioia Tauro

The mayors and other local councillors on the Plain of Gioia Tauro have manifested their opposition to the Italian Government's decision to authorise the arrival of chemical weapons, of Syrian origin, at the port of Gioia Tauro. Sixty containers, Italy-bound with a total of 350 tons of arms, will arrive in the next few weeks and dock at this port in Calabria. There the material will be trans-shipped from the Danish and Norwegian carrier vessels to the US ship commissioned for the dismantling. The Italian Government gave no advance notice, either to residents or local councillors.

The cargo boats carrying the Syrian arms have already been turned away by France and Albania. Italy, by contrast, made no objection to receiving the two carrier vessels for the trans-shipment operations. The Italian Government has supplied no details about which toxic substances are actually present for dismantling. This has further alarmed public interest groups. In particular, the local authorities are complaining that central government did not involve them beforehand in any way. According to Rome, their fears are unfounded and derive from a lack of information. For this reason, an information brochure is to be published and distributed free to the public in the coming days, on the operations and related safety measures. But this step has come too late to reassure the district.

In the light of these facts:

Considering the hostility of residents and local government to the storage of the arms in Gioia Tauro, can the European Commission check that the proper authorisation procedure has been followed to date, and explain the reasons why other Member States have apparently refused to dismantle the chemical weapons?

Can the European Commission obtain and release to the questioners all the information, hitherto suppressed by the Italian Government, on the methods and timing of the storage operations? Above all, can it supply detailed news on the actual chemical substances being carried and their relative hazardousness?

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

The destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons arsenal has been agreed and is supervised by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Executive Council and the UN Security Council, who have taken all relevant measures in securing a safe and environmentally sound destruction of all the categories of the Syrian chemical weapons. This plan is contained in a series of public OPCW documents containing relevant decisions by the OPCW Executive Council. In the planning of the operation both United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and World Health Organisation (WHO) were actively involved. The method of hydrolysis for the Priority 1 chemical precursors has been chosen on the basis of its successful application in the context of destroying the chemical weapons of the US and other states. There is no intention to discharge any chemicals or their effluent after hydrolysis into the sea. Instead, the effluents will be stored on the US vessel and transferred, together with the rest of the Syrian chemicals covered by the plan to selected commercial facilities for final destruction by incineration. The Joint Mission has recently organised a meeting with leading environmental NGOs to explain that the destruction will take place in accordance with international and national legislation. The Italian Government has been closely cooperating with the OPCW regarding the transhipment at the port of Gioia Tauro. It should also be underlined that the EU and other MS have been contributing financially and in kind to this operation, aimed preventing a repetition of their use against the Syrian people.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000758/14
a la Comisión
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(27 de enero de 2014)

Asunto: Privación de la nacionalidad en la República Dominicana

El fallo 168-13 del Tribunal Constitucional de la República Dominicana, de 23 de septiembre de 2013, privó de la nacionalidad dominicana a todas las personas de ascendencia extranjera nacidas en suelo dominicano desde 1929 hasta 2010. Despoja a miles de personas de su derecho a la nacionalidad de una manera arbitraria y discriminatoria, convirtiéndolas en apátridas. Hay que decir también que personas de ascendencia extranjera real o percibida, defensores de derechos humanos, periodistas y otras personas que están expresando su rechazo al fallo judicial sufren muchas amenazas.

En diciembre de 2013, la Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos (CIDH) subrayó el carácter discriminatorio y arbitrario de aquella decisión, así como diversas agencias de las Naciones Unidas, la Comunidad Caribeña (Caricom) y el Gobierno de los Estados Unidos.

Nos preocupa que este fallo pueda exacerbar la violación de derechos humanos contra los dominicanos de ascendencia haitiana y de otras ascendencias extranjeras. Aquellos que no tengan papeles identificativos están en riesgo de detención arbitraria y expulsiones en masa sin acceso a una revisión judicial; aún es más, no tienen capacidad de registrar como dominicanos a sus propios hijos, quienes, en la práctica, nacerán como apátridas.

En cuanto al Derecho de la Unión, el Reglamento (CEE) n° 443/92 del Consejo establece una cooperación económica entre la Unión y los países de América Latina. Pero el Reglamento impone una condición, el respeto de los derechos humanos y principios democráticos (Reglamento (CEE) n° 443/92 del Consejo, artículo 2, apartado 3).

¿Considera la Comisión que el comportamiento de la República Dominicana cumple el Reglamento (CEE) n° 443/92?

¿Piensa la Comisión tomar medidas concretas e inmediatas para influir en las autoridades dominicanas, de manera que implementen las recomendaciones de la CIDH, en colaboración con las agencias de las Naciones Unidas y el sistema interamericano, para encontrar una solución oportuna basada en las leyes internacionales de derechos humanos?

Respuesta de la Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(26 de marzo de 2014)

La UE sitúa el respeto de los derechos humanos en el centro de sus relaciones con los países socios.

A pesar del respeto del derecho soberano de la República Dominicana a decidir sobre sus propias políticas migratorias y en materia de nacionalidad, la UE ha expresado a las autoridades dominicanas al más alto nivel su preocupación por las posibles secuelas del fallo del Tribunal Constitucional. La UE ha recibido garantías de que se buscará una solución humana a este problema.

La UE celebra que las autoridades de la República Dominicana y Haití hayan puesto en marcha en enero un diálogo binacional de alto nivel para abordar las preocupaciones comunes, incluidas las cuestiones migratorias y la sentencia del Tribunal Constitucional. Es importante promover un diálogo eficaz y orientado a los resultados entre las dos Partes con el fin de encontrar soluciones duraderas para los tradicionales problemas migratorios entre los dos países vecinos. Por este motivo, el portavoz de la AR/VP emitió el 4 de febrero un comunicado en el que se congratulaba por el diálogo entre los dos países, manifestaba su esperanza de que la República Dominicana pondrá rápidamente en práctica su compromiso de «adoptar medidas concretas para salvaguardar los derechos fundamentales de las personas de ascendencia haitiana» y expresaba su deseo de una rápida aplicación de las medidas necesarias en consonancia con las normas universales en materia de derechos humanos.

La Delegación de la UE en Santo Domingo está colaborando estrechamente con todas las partes implicadas, teniendo en cuenta los informes elaborados por las diferentes organizaciones, incluidos el ACNUR y la Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos (CIDH).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000758/14
to the Commission
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(27 January 2014)

Subject: Loss of nationality in the Dominican Republic

In its decision No 168-13 of 23 September 2013 the Constitutional Court of the Dominican Republic removed Dominican nationality from all those people of foreign ancestry born in the country between 1929 and 2010. This ruling arbitrarily and in a discriminatory manner deprives thousands of people of their right to nationality and converts them into stateless persons. It must also be pointed out that a considerable number of threats have been made against people of apparent or real foreign backgrounds, human rights supporters, journalists and others who have expressed their repudiation of the court's decision.

In December 2013 the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) highlighted the arbitrary and discriminatory nature of that decision, as did various UN agencies, the Caribbean Community (Caricom) and the Government of the United States.

We are concerned that this ruling may exacerbate breaches of human rights against Dominicans of Haitian ancestry and of other foreign backgrounds. Those that lack ID papers are at risk of arbitrary arrest and mass expulsions without any recourse to judicial review. Even worse, they are unable to register their own children as Dominicans, and these children will, in practice, be born stateless.

As far as EC law is concerned, Council Regulation (EEC) No 443/92 established ties of economic cooperation between the EU and countries in Latin America. But this legislation also imposed a condition, namely respect for human rights and democratic principles (Article 2, paragraph 3 of Council Regulation (EEC) No 443/92).

Does the Commission consider that the conduct of the Dominican Republic complies with Regulation (EEC) No 443/92?

Is the Commission considering adopting immediate, concrete measures to persuade the Dominican authorities to implement the recommendations of the IACHR, in collaboration with UN agencies and the inter-American system, with a view to finding an appropriate solution based on international human rights laws?

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

The EU puts the respect for human rights at the core of its relations with partner countries.

Notwithstanding the respect for the sovereignty right of the Dominican Republic to decide about its own nationality and migratory policies, the EU has expressed to the Dominican authorities at the highest level its concern over the possible fall out of the Constitutional Court decision. The EU has received assurances that a human solution will be found.

The EU is encouraged that the authorities of the Dominican Republic and Haiti have launched, in January, a High Level Bi-national dialogue to address shared concerns, including migratory matters and the Constitutional Court ruling. It is important to promote an effective and result oriented dialogue between the two parties with the aim to find sustainable solutions for the long standing migratory questions between the two neighbouring countries. For this reason, a statement was issued by the HR/VP's Spokesperson on 4 February welcoming the dialogue between the two countries, expressing hope that the Dominican Republic will implement quickly its commitment 'to take concrete measures to safeguard basic rights of persons of Haitian descent' and looking forward to a rapid implementation of the necessary measures in line with universal human rights standards.

The EU Delegation in Santo Domingo is working closely with all actors involved, taking into consideration the reports prepared by the different organisations, including the UNHCR and the IACHR.

(Hrvatska verzija)

Pitanje za pisani odgovor E-000760/14
upućeno Komisiji
Ruža Tomašić (ECR)
(27. siječnja 2014.)

Predmet: Uporaba tradicionalnih alata u negospodarskom ribolovu u Hrvatskoj

U Hrvatskoj će u 2014. nestati kategorija malog ribara zbog usklađivanja hrvatskog zakonodavstva s europskom pravnom stečevinom. Članak 17. Uredbe Vijeća (EZ) br. 1967/2006 o mjerama upravljanja za održivo iskorištavanje ribolovnih resursa u Sredozemnom moru zabranjuje uporabu određenih alata dosad korištenih u tzv. malom ribolovu koji spada u hrvatsku tradiciju.

Regulativa je donesena s namjerom sprečavanja prekomjernog izlova, zaboravljajući pritom da sredozemne države s razvedenom obalom poput Hrvatske ili Grčke imaju stoljećima star oblik ribolova s mrežama malog kapaciteta za vlastite potrebe stanovnika priobalnih područja.

Duh nove ribarstvene politike, potvrđen rezolucijama Parlamenta, također promiče održivost, ostavljajući pritom mogućnost da se rok za zaustavljanje prekomjernog izlova pomakne s 2015. na 2020. godinu ukoliko se prvi rok pokaže ugrozom za ekonomsku i socijalnu održivost velikih flota.

Smatra li Komisija da je socijalna održivost velikih flota, koje su glavni krivac za prekomjerni izlov ribe, važnija od održivosti 13 000 malih ribara u Hrvatskoj koji koriste mreže kao alat u ribolovu za vlastite potrebe? Hoće li Komisija raditi na tome da se tradicionalni ribarski alati malih sredozemnih ribara ipak dozvole za negospodarsku uporabu jer, za razliku od velikih komercijalnih flota, oni zbog svojih ograničenih kapaciteta ne ugrožavaju riblji fond?

Odgovor gđe Damanaki u ime Komisije
(27. ožujka 2014.)

Kategorija malog ribolova uspostavljena u Hrvatskoj zapravo je hibridni model između gospodarskog i rekreacijsko-sportskog ribolova koji kao takav ne postoji u zakonodavstvu EU-a.

Prema članku 17. Uredbe o Sredozemlju ([1]) države članice dužne su osigurati da se rekreacijsko-sportski ribolov obavlja na način koji je sukladan s održivim iskorištavanjem živih vodenih resursa i koji ne zadire znatno u gospodarski ribolov. Posebno, države članice trebaju osigurati da se ulov iz rekreacijsko-sportskog ribolova ne stavlja na tržište uz ograničena odstupanja. Uz to, zabranjena je uporaba određenih ribolovnih alata kao što su mreže. Rekreacijsko-sportski ribolov po definiciji podrazumijeva sve ribolovne aktivnosti namijenjene rekreaciji i sportu. Budući da je rekreacijsko-sportski ribolov na Sredozemlju široko rasprostranjen, može imati znatan utjecaj na riblje resurse. Zbog očuvanja, a i zbog provedbe aktivnosti kontrole i izvješćivanja, zabranjena je uporaba mreža u rekreacijsko-sportskom ribolovu.

Tijekom pristupnih pregovora za članstvo u EU-u, Hrvatskoj je odobreno prijelazno razdoblje u kojem 2 000 ribara može nastaviti s ribolovom u ovoj kategoriji i koristiti mreže do 31. prosinca 2014. Istodobno, mali ribari imaju priliku prijaviti se u kategoriju gospodarskog ribolova u kojem je dopuštena uporaba mreža.

Komisija u potpunosti priznaje važnost malog gospodarskog ribolova za lokalne zajednice te se odredbama Uredbe o Sredozemlju i novog Europskog fonda za pomorstvo i ribarstvo (EFPR) posebna pozornost pridaje njihovim potrebama kroz posebne akcijske planove koji će se uključiti u operativne programe (članak 20. stavak 1. Uredbe o EFPR-u).

([1]) Uredba Vijeća (EZ) br. 1967/2006 od 21. prosinca 2006.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000760/14
to the Commission
Ruža Tomašić (ECR)
(27 January 2014)

Subject: Use of traditional gear in non-economic fishing in Croatia

The category of small-scale fisherman is set to disappear in Croatia in 2014 as the country brings its laws into line with the EU *acquis*. Article 17 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1967/2006 concerning management measures for the sustainable exploitation of fishery resources in the Mediterranean Sea prohibits the use of specific gear which has traditionally been used in small-scale fishing in Croatia.

The regulation was adopted with a view to preventing excessive catches, but it neglects the fact that Mediterranean countries with jagged coastlines, such as Croatia or Greece, have centuries-old traditions of fishing using low-capacity nets for the personal needs of coastal residents.

The spirit of the new fisheries policy, reaffirmed by EP resolutions, also promotes sustainability while providing for the possibility of moving the deadline for ending excessive catches from 2015 to 2020, if the initial deadline appears to jeopardise the economic and social sustainability of large fleets.

Does the Commission feel that the social sustainability of large fleets — the main culprits for excessive fish catches — is more important than the sustainability of 13 000 small-scale fishermen in Croatia who use nets as gear as they fish for their own needs? Will the Commission take steps to enable traditional fishing gear to be used by Mediterranean fishermen for non-economic fishing, since they — unlike large commercial fleets — do not constitute a threat to fish stocks?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(27 March 2014)

The category of subsistence fisheries that was created in Croatia was in effect a hybrid model between leisure and commercial fisheries which as such does not exist in the EU legislation.

Article 17 of the Mediterranean Regulation ([1]) requests Member States to ensure that leisure fisheries are conducted in a manner compatible with the sustainable exploitation of living aquatic resources and not significantly interfering with commercial fishing. In particular, Member States need to ensure that catches taken in leisure fisheries are not marketed, with limited exceptions. In addition, the use of certain fishing gears such as nets is prohibited. Leisure fisheries by definition imply all fishing activities intended for recreation and sport. Since leisure fisheries are widespread in the Mediterranean they can have a significant impact on fish resources. Both for reason of conservation and implementation of control and reporting activities the use of nets in leisure fisheries is prohibited.

During the accession negotiations for the EU membership, Croatia has been granted a transitional period where 2000 fishermen may continue to operate in this category and to use nets until 31 December 2014. In parallel, subsistence fishermen have the opportunity to register under the category of commercial fisheries, where the use of nets is allowed

The Commission fully acknowledges the importance of small scale fisheries for local communities, and the provisions of the Mediterranean Regulation and the new European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) pay special attention to their needs through specific action plans to be included in the operational programmes (Article 20.1 of the EMFF Regulation).

([1]) Council Regulation (EC) No 1967/2006 of 21 December 2006.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000761/14
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(27 January 2014)

Subject: Tackling bowel cancer

Earlier this month in my constituency, Northern Ireland, it emerged that Queen's University Belfast was to lead a EUR 6 million Commission-funded research study into treatments of bowel cancer. The project will involve a total of eight countries.

In this context, can the Commission please respond to the following queries:

Can the Commission please provide an overview of the aims and objectives of the aforementioned research project, which will be led by Queen's University Belfast?

What EU funding will be allocated within the new programming period (2014-2020) to projects or initiatives that promote research into the causes of bowel cancer, as well as those that effectively support citizens diagnosed with the disease?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(12 March 2014)

The MERCURIC ([1]) project, supported as part of the 7th Framework Programme for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration Activities (FP7, 2007-2013), involves 13 partners in eight different European countries and is coordinated by Queen's University Belfast. It will conduct a clinical trial to prevent and combat metastases in patients with bowel cancer. It will also employ biomarkers to select patients that are expected to respond to the novel treatment being tested. ([2]) ([3])

Horizon 2020 — The framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020), ([4]) will offer further opportunities to address research on bowel cancer, including research on prevention, early diagnosis and new therapies, through the 'Health, demographic change and wellbeing' societal challenge.

EU research funding is granted on the basis of competitive calls for proposals, following an external independent peer-review evaluation. Information on current funding opportunities can be obtained through the Research and Innovation Participant Portal. ([5])

([1]) http://mercuric.eu/project/
MERCURIC: A Phase Ib/II study of MEK1/2 inhibitor PD-0325901 with cMET inhibitor PF-02341066 in KRASMT and KRASWT (with aberrant c-MET) Colorectal Cancer Patients.
([2]) http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/mdbs/News/Title,426541,en.html
([3]) http://www.u.tv/News/Queens-announces-major-cancer-study/7ccf6333-ea82-432f-ad13-6fb84aa0931f
([4]) COM(2011) 809, 30.11.2011.
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/index.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000762/14
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(27 January 2014)

Subject: EU funding for Smart Region pilot projects

Recently in my constituency, Northern Ireland, the Enterprise Minister launched an innovative pilot project aimed at identifying economic opportunities in Omagh and Fermanagh. The project seeks to create a Smart Region by using technology to capture, analyse and manage data in a manner that identifies potential for growth. It also represents a practical application of the EU's focus on Smart Specialisation.

In this context, can the Commission please respond to the following queries:

What steps have been — and will be — taken at an EU level to support the creation of Smart Regions through investment in research and innovation to spearhead economic development?

Can the Commission please detail what EU funding will be allocated in the new programming period, 2014-2020, to projects that promote research and development among SMEs across the EU, with particular emphasis on groups that bring together local enterprises on a cross-sectoral basis for this purpose?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(20 March 2014)

Under the new European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), Managing Authorities (in most cases regional governments) are required to develop Smart Specialisation Strategies. Consequently, the use of ESIF by Managing Authorities will be required to be in line with those strategies. The Commission has set up a Smart Specialisation platform to provide guidance to Managing Authorities in developing regional strategies and facilitate the exchange of best practices ([1]).

Under the Horizon2020 programme, more than EUR 70 billion will be allocated to research and innovation over the 2014-2020 period. The programme proposes a strong challenge-based, interdisciplinary approach, allowing applicants considerable freedom to come up with innovative solutions, and as such create new value chains or improve existing ones.

20% of the budget of the Horizon 2020 priority on 'Societal Challenges' and of the specific objective on 'Leadership in Enabling and Industrial Technologies' — some EUR 9 billion ([2]) total — should go directly to SMEs. About two thirds of that money will be used to support SMEs that wish to engage in collaborative R&D activities. In addition, R&D performing SMEs are to be targeted by the Eurostars Joint Programme Initiative, which promotes market-oriented transnational research activities, with a total EU contribution of maximum EUR 287 million.

Last but not least, a new dedicated SME Instrument — with a budget of EUR 3 billion — addresses itself specifically to highly innovative SMEs from a wide range of sectors and proposes seamless business innovation support from innovative concept validation to go-to-market for projects with clear value-added at the EU level.

([1]) http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/home;jsessionid=cYBQTMjXmPtF4TYVx8XXbZySV1THnzN2KfgbTysfT QyzC9YknYg6!1464196434!1393320823586
([2]) All amounts are in current prices.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000763/14
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(27 January 2014)

Subject: Update on progression of roadworthiness package

In July 2012, the Commission published proposals for amending EU policy on roadworthiness tests for motor vehicles and trailers, roadside inspections of commercial vehicles and registration documents for vehicles. The proposals would increase the number of agricultural and company-owned vehicles that are subject to roadworthiness testing and roadside inspections, which could have a financial impact on owners in terms of compliance costs.

Can the Commission please provide an update regarding the progression of these proposals, including a status update, and a prospective timeline for their implementation?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(20 March 2014)

The Commission would like to inform the Honourable Member that, the TRAN Committee of the Parliament endorsed the agreed compromise texts of the roadworthiness package during its meeting on 21 January 2014. The proposal has been widely supported at the final vote during the plenary session of 11 March 2014.

The legislative package will enter into force twenty days after publication in the Official Journal. Member States will then have to transpose the three directives into national legislation within 36 month and apply them 48 month following the entry into force.

Based on the agreed compromise, vehicles used for agricultural, horticultural, forestry, farming or fishery purposes only on the territory of the Member State and mainly on the terrain of such activity, including agricultural roads, forestry roads or agricultural fields will not become subject to roadworthiness testing or roadside inspections.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000766/14
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(27 January 2014)

Subject: UK's first social supermarket

This week, in the United Kingdom, the first social supermarket of its kind opened, providing shoppers on the verge of poverty with the opportunity to buy food and drink products for up to 70% less than standard prices. The Community Shop engages with retailers to promote the better use of goods surpluses.

In this context, can the Commission please respond to the following queries:

What steps have been — and will be — taken by the Commission to encourage EU retailers and manufacturers to direct goods surpluses in a manner that is sustainable and which benefits those living in poverty and disadvantage?

What actions has the Commission taken more generally to tackle poverty across the Member States, and especially among children, of whom 40 000 live in severe disadvantage in my own constituency, Northern Ireland?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(19 March 2014)

In its Recommendation of 20 February 2013 'Investing in Children — Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage' ([1]), the Commission urged the Member States to step up the fight against child poverty and encouraged them to provide adequate income support in cash and in kind. It is mobilising a range of EU instruments to support the Member States in their efforts. Under the 2013 European Semester, 14 Member States received country-specific recommendations on the subject. The Commission is also calling on the Member States to use both national and EU funding, such as the European Social Fund (the main instrument for combating poverty and social exclusion) and the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) to support policies to that end.

The FEAD will support national schemes providing material or non-material assistance for the social inclusion of European citizens who are too far from the labour market to benefit from the European Social Fund's activation measures. Under the FEAD, Member States can provide material assistance to the most deprived and cover costs relating to the collection, transport and storage of food donations.

([1]) OJ L 59, 2.3.2013; at: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1044&langId=en

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000768/14
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(27 January 2014)

Subject: Human trafficking in Eritrea

It has been estimated that 30 000 Eritreans have been abducted and held for ransom since 2007. The findings of a new report entitled 'The Human Trafficking Cycle: Sinai and Beyond' found that many thousands were being kidnapped, tortured, and held captive under threat of death and organ harvesting. It has also been estimated in some quarters that Christians have been disproportionately impacted.

In this context, can the Commission please respond to the following queries:

What steps have and will be taken at EU level to tackle the prevalence of human trafficking in Eritrea and the Sinai Region?

What efforts are being made at EU level to tackle Christian persecution and the violation of fundamental freedoms in the Horn of Africa?

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

The EU is very concerned about the human rights situation in Eritrea and by the human trafficking of people originating from the Horn of Africa and the Sinai.

As regards Eritrea, the EU supports the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur, and consistently raises human rights concerns, including human trafficking, within the framework of the political dialogue with the Eritrean government.

The EU follows the situation of abduction of refugees in Sudan, Egypt and the Sinai. The EU keeps regular contacts with the authorities and the regional offices of UNHCR and the International Organisation for Migration. The EU is working with governments of the Horn of Africa and with partners, such as the African Union and the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development, to address the issues of migration, human trafficking and other related issues such as human smuggling, kidnap, torture as well as torture-for-ransom. After the Lampedusa tragedy, the Commission launched a Task Force for the Mediterranean to improve EU action for better management of migration at national and regional level in Eastern and Western Africa to effectively tackle human trafficking and smuggling. This is now being further developed.

The EU is opposed to the prosecution on religious and moral grounds. Christian persecution is raised in the political dialogue between the EU and the governments of the Horn of Africa countries. Under governance projects of the National Indicative Programmes of the European Development Fund, the Instrument for Stability, the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights and the Non- State Actors/Local Authorities Programmes the EU supports the promotion of human rights and the democratisation process in the countries of the Horn of Africa.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-000770/14
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(27. Januar 2014)

Betrifft: Enthüllungen über Offshore-Aktivitäten in Asien und ihre Auswirkungen auf Europa

Jüngsten Medienmeldungen zufolge gerät im Kontext der Aufdeckungen von Offshore-Konten und sogenannten Briefkastenfirmen die chinesische Ölindustrie ins Wanken. Die Folgen einer Krise auf dem chinesischen Ölmarkt könnten unerwartet groß sein.

1. Wie bewertet die Kommission die Chancen, dass die Aufdeckung von Skandalen im Zusammenhang mit der chinesischen Ölbranche zu weltweiten Reaktionen führt?

2. Welche Auswirkungen erwartet die Kommission gegebenenfalls hinsichtlich der Preise auf dem Weltmarkt?

3. Muss Europa nach Ansicht der Kommission aufgrund dieser Entwicklungen mit Konsequenzen auf dem Ölmarkt rechnen? Wenn ja, mit welchen?

4. Wie gedenkt die Kommission, mögliche negative Auswirkungen auf den europäischen Binnenmarkt zu relativieren oder abzufedern?

Antwort von Herrn Oettinger im Namen der Kommission
(28. März 2014)

1. Die EU kann den Wahrheitsgehalt der jüngsten Medienberichte, nach denen ein Zusammenhang zwischen den mutmaßlichen Problemen der chinesischen Erdölindustrie und illegalen Praktiken besteht, nicht beurteilen. Die Vermutungen hinsichtlich der Nutzung von Offshore-Unternehmen und -Konten sind in keiner Weise auf die Erdölindustrie beschränkt. Wenngleich die von der Frau Abgeordneten beschriebenen Entwicklungen zu Untersuchungen und zum Austausch von Führungspersonal in der Erdölindustrie führen können, dürften sich die Auswirkungen auf andere Bereiche in Grenzen halten.

2. Erdöl wird auf einem globalen Markt gehandelt, auf dem die Preise in erster Linie von Angebot und Nachfrage bestimmt werden. Solche Ereignisse haben normalerweise keinen Einfluss auf die grundlegenden Marktgegebenheiten. Die Kommission rechnet daher nicht mit signifikanten Auswirkungen auf den Ölpreis.

3. Es sollten sich keine Auswirkungen auf den Weltmarkt ergeben. Die weltweite Zunahme der Ölnachfrage wird auch in den kommenden Jahrzehnten in erster Linie durch China und andere asiatische Länder vorangetrieben werden.

4. Die Kommission rechnet nicht mit negativen Auswirkungen auf den europäischen Markt. In jedem Fall stehen jedoch Erdöl-Notvorräte zur Verfügung, die die Mitgliedstaaten gemäß EU-Vorschriften angelegt haben, um bei Unterbrechungen eine kontinuierliche Versorgung sicherzustellen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000770/14
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(27 January 2014)

Subject: Revelations about offshore activities in Asia and their impact on Europe

According to recent media reports, against the background of the discoveries of offshore accounts and so-called letterbox companies, the Chinese oil industry is faltering. The consequences of a crisis on the Chinese oil market could be of an unexpected magnitude.

1. How does the Commission assess the possibility of the exposure of scandals in connection with the Chinese oil industry leading to reactions worldwide?

2. What impact does the Commission expect with regard to prices on the world market?

3. In the Commission's view, should Europe expect that these developments will have consequences on the oil market? If so, what consequences?

4. How does the Commission propose to mitigate and alleviate any possible negative impact on the European internal market?

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

1. The EU is not in position to assess the accuracy of the recent media reports which apparently link the alleged troubles of the Chinese oil industry to illegal practices. The allegations about the use of offshore companies and accounts are by no means restricted to the oil industry. While the developments reported by the Honourable Member can lead to probes and the replacement of oil industry executives, the wider effects are likely to be limited.

2. Oil is traded in a global market with prices primarily influenced by supply and demand. Such an event is unlikely to have an impact on market fundamentals. As a consequence, the Commission is not expecting it to affect oil prices in a major way.

3. The global market should not be influenced. Worldwide growth in oil demand will continue to be led by China and other Asian countries in the coming decades.

4. The Commission foresees no negative impact on the European market. In any case, emergency oil stocks held by Member States pursuant to EU legislation are available in order to ensure the continuity of supplies in case of possible disruptions.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-000771/14
à la Commission
Constance Le Grip (PPE)
(27 janvier 2014)

Objet: Accès pour les artistes au projet «Europe Créative»

Le projet «Europe Créative» lancé par la Commission entre en vigueur en janvier 2014. Ce projet visant à promouvoir la diversité culturelle et linguistique de l'Europe est notamment destiné à 250 000 artistes européens qui «bénéficieront d'une aide pour collaborer par-delà les frontières».

La Commission peut-elle préciser quelle sera la nature de l'aide accordée à ces artistes, si elle sera simplement financière ou, par exemple, également logistique?

La Commission peut-elle préciser comment, et sur quels critères, seront choisis les 250 000 artistes qui bénéficieront de l'aide dans le cadre du programme?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Vassiliou au nom de la Commission
(11 mars 2014)

Le programme «Europe Créative» fournit un soutien financier à des projets gérés par des organismes culturels et audiovisuels de différents pays européens et auxquels peuvent participer des artistes venant de tous horizons. L'aide accordée est de nature financière.

Les possibilités de financement pour les projets culturels et audiovisuels dans le cadre du programme «Europe Créative» feront l'objet d'appels à propositions ([1]), à l'issue desquels les meilleures candidatures seront sélectionnées en vue d'une aide financière. Les organismes culturels et audiovisuels admissibles peuvent soumettre une demande de financement. Les demandes seront soigneusement évaluées avec l'aide d'experts externes indépendants.

Les critères de sélection des projets sont spécifiques à la catégorie pour laquelle les demandes de financement sont introduites. Le sous-programme «Culture» prévoit une aide pour les projets de coopération européenne, les traductions d'œuvres littéraires, les réseaux européens et les plateformes européennes; le sous-programme «MEDIA» finance la formation des professionnels de l'audiovisuel, le développement, la distribution et la promotion d'œuvres audiovisuelles, ainsi que les festivals et les activités de développement du public. Les organismes concernés sont libres de choisir les artistes avec lesquels ils souhaitent s'associer ou coopérer pour chacun des projets.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/culture/creative-europe/calls/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000771/14
to the Commission
Constance Le Grip (PPE)
(27 January 2014)

Subject: Access for artists to the 'Creative Europe' project

The 'Creative Europe' project, which was launched by the Commission, enters into force in January 2014. This project, which seeks to promote Europe's cultural and linguistic diversity, is aimed in particular at 250 000 European artists, who 'will be helped to share their work across borders'.

Can the Commission specify what the nature of the support given to these artists will be, and whether it will be simply financial or, for example, also logistical?

Can the Commission specify how, and under what criteria, the 250 000 artists who will benefit from support under the programme will be selected?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(11 March 2014)

Creative Europe provides funding to projects which are run by cultural and audiovisual organisations from different European countries and which can involve artists of any kind. Support is of a financial nature.

Funding opportunities for cultural and audiovisual projects in the framework of Creative Europe are available on the basis of calls for proposals ([1]), further to which the best applications will be selected for funding. Eligible cultural and audiovisual organisations can apply for a grant. Applications will be carefully assessed with the help of external independent experts.

The selection criteria for the projects are specific to the category under which grant applications are submitted. Under the Culture Sub-programme grants are available for European cooperation projects, literary translations, European networks and European platforms; the MEDIA Sub-programme funds training of audiovisual professionals, development, distribution and promotion of audiovisual works as well as festivals and audiences building activities. Individual projects are free to select the artists they wish to involve or to cooperate with.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/culture/creative-europe/calls/index_en.htm

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000775/14
a la Comisión
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(27 de enero de 2014)

Asunto: Gasoducto en el Parque Nacional de Doñana

Trasladé ya hace un año a esa Comisión mi preocupación por el proyecto de realizar sondeos e instalar un gasoducto en las marismas orientales del entorno del parque natural de Doñana (pregunta n° E-988/2013). Esas labores afectarían a un espacio natural privilegiado que cuenta con varias declaraciones de protección singular. Entre otras, su condición de lugar de importancia comunitaria y zona especial de protección para las aves (LIC ES6150009 Doñana Norte y Oeste y ZEPA ES0000024).

En su respuesta, la Comisión me anunció que «solicitaría a las autoridades españolas información sobre estos proyectos, con el fin de evaluar su pleno cumplimiento de la normativa de la UE y, en particular, de las disposiciones de la Directiva sobre hábitats y la Directiva sobre aves».

Habiendo reconocido esa Comisión hace meses que ya ha recibido la información del Gobierno español, vuelvo a preguntar:

¿Qué valoración le merece el proyecto? ¿Realmente lo considera compatible con el Derecho de la Unión Europea, en especial con las Directivas de conservación de los hábitats naturales y la flora y fauna silvestre (n° 92/43, de 21 de mayo de 1992) y de conservación de las aves silvestres (n° 2009/147, de 30 de noviembre de 1992?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(14 de marzo de 2014)

Tras una evaluación inicial de la información facilitada por las autoridades españolas, la Comisión tuvo que solicitar nuevas aclaraciones. En la actualidad, está examinando esa información suplementaria para determinar si se cumplen plenamente las disposiciones pertinentes de la legislación ambiental de la UE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000775/14
to the Commission
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(27 January 2014)

Subject: Gas pipeline in Doñana National Park

Last year I wrote to the Commission to express my concerns regarding the project to drill and install a gas pipeline in the eastern marshes of the Doñana Natural Park (question No E-988/2013). This work would damage an exceptional natural space which has been designated for several different categories of special protection, including its status as a site of Community importance and a special protection area for birds (SCI ES6150009 Doñana Norte y Oeste and SPA ES0000024).

In its answer, the Commission told me that it would 'request information from the Spanish authorities concerning these projects in order to assess full compliance with EU legislation, and in particular with the provisions of the Habitats and Birds Directives'.

Since the Commission acknowledged a few months ago that it had received the information from the Spanish Government, may I ask:

What is its assessment of the project? Does it genuinely think that it is compatible with European Union Law, in particular with the directives on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (No 92/43 of 21 May 1992) and on the conservation of wild birds (No 2009/147 of 30 November 1992)?

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

Following its initial assessment of the information provided by the Spanish authorities, the Commission has had to request further clarifications. The Commission is currently assessing this additional information to ascertain full compliance with the relevant provisions under EU environmental law.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-000777/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(27 gennaio 2014)

Oggetto: Giornata europea della memoria

Il 27 gennaio è stato dichiarato dalle Nazioni Unite come giornata della commemorazione delle vittime dell'olocausto, in ricordo dei sei milioni di ebrei trucidati durante la II guerra mondiale. La scelta della data ricorda il 27 gennaio 1945, giorno in cui l'esercito russo giunse nei pressi della cittadina polacca di Auschwitz, scoprendo il famoso campo di concentramento e liberandone i pochi superstiti.

Stante l'importanza della ricorrenza, può la Commissione chiarire se intende istituire una giornata europea della memoria finanziata dalle istituzioni europee e creare un circuito di eventi, mostre e manifestazioni paneuropeo in memoria dell'olocausto che illustri l'importanza dello stretto legame tra il II conflitto mondiale e l'avvio del processo di integrazione europea?

Risposta di Viviane Reding a nome della Commissione
(18 marzo 2014)

La Commissione presta grande attenzione al ricordo dell'Olocausto in generale e alla ricorrenza del 27 gennaio in particolare in cui si celebra la Giornata europea della memoria. La Commissione dimostra il proprio impegno in tale contesto finanziando diversi progetti, eventi, mostre, conferenze e materiale educativo nell'ambito del programma «L'Europa per i cittadini» (2007-2013) ([1]), che hanno coinvolto la maggior parte dei paesi dell'Unione europea.

Dal 2011 la Commissione celebra inoltre annualmente una cerimonia presso la sua sede centrale di Bruxelles per commemorare la Giornata europea della memoria. Nel 2014 la Commissione ha organizzato per la prima volta una commemorazione congiunta con le Nazioni Unite nella loro sede di Ginevra.

La Commissione continuerà a sostenere le attività atte a tener vivo il ricordo dell'Olocausto in tutta l'Unione europea per far rivivere la memoria delle vittime e trasmetterla in particolare ai giovani europei.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index_it.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000777/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(27 January 2014)

Subject: European remembrance day

The UN has declared 27 January as Holocaust Memorial Day, in memory of the six million Jews massacred during the Second World War. This commemorates 27 January 1945, when the Red Army entered the Polish city of Auschwitz, exposing its infamous concentration camp and liberating its few survivors.

Given the importance of this event, can the Commission clarify whether it intends to introduce a European day of remembrance financed by the European institutions, and to create a range of events, exhibitions and displays throughout Europe to commemorate the Holocaust, illustrating the importance of the close link between the Second World War and the start of the European integration process?

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

The Commission pays close attention to the remembrance of the Holocaust in general and to the International Holocaust Remembrance Day of 27 January in particular. The Commission demonstrated its commitment in this area by funding a large number of projects, events, exhibitions, conferences and educational material under the Europe for Citizens (2007-2013) programme ([1]), which involved the majority of European Union countries.

Since 2011 the Commission has also held an annual ceremony in its Brussels headquarters to commemorate the International Holocaust Remembrance Day. In 2014 the Commission organised a joint commemoration with the UN in Geneva for the first time.

The Commission will continue supporting activities on Holocaust remembrance throughout the European Union in order to keep the memory of the victims alive and to pass it on to young Europeans in particular.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index_en.htm