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Hinweis für den Leser

Diese Veröffentlichung enthält Anfragen der Mitglieder des Europäischen Parlaments zur schriftlichen Beantwortung und die entsprechenden Antworten eines Organs der Europäischen Union.

Jede Anfrage und ihre Antwort werden zunächst in der Originalsprache und anschließend in den eventuellen Übersetzungen angegeben.

In einigen Fällen kann es vorkommen, dass die Antwort in einer anderen Sprache verfasst ist als die Anfrage. Dies hängt von der Arbeitssprache des Gremiums ab, das mit der Beantwortung beauftragt wurde.

Die vorliegenden Anfragen und Antworten werden gemäß den Artikeln 117 und 118 der Geschäftsordnung des Europäischen Parlaments veröffentlicht.

Alle Anfragen und Antworten sind auf der Internetseite des Europäischen Parlaments (Europarl) unter der Rubrik „parlamentarische Anfragen" verfügbar:

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ABKÜRZUNGEN DER FRAKTIONEN

PPE	Fraktion der Europäischen Volkspartei (Christdemokraten)
S&D	Fraktion der Progressiven Allianz der Sozialisten und Demokraten im Europäischen Parlament
ALDE	Fraktion der Allianz der Liberalen und Demokraten für Europa
Verts/ALE	Fraktion der Grünen/Freie Europäische Allianz
ECR	Europäische Konservative und Reformisten
GUE/NGL	Konföderale Fraktion der Vereinigten Europäischen Linken/Nordische Grüne Linke
EFD	Fraktion „Europa der Freiheit und der Demokratie"
NI	Fraktionslos

IV

(Informationen)

INFORMATIONEN DER ORGANE, EINRICHTUNGEN UND SONSTIGEN STELLEN DER EUROPÄISCHEN UNION

EUROPÄISCHES PARLAMENT

ANFRAGEN ZUR SCHRIFTLICHEN BEANTWORTUNG MIT ANTWORT

Anfragen der Mitglieder des Europäischen Parlaments zur schriftlichen Beantwortung und die entsprechenden Antworten eines Organs der Europäischen Union

(2014/C 216/01)

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(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-008207/13
à la Commission (Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante)
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(9 juillet 2013)

Objet: VP/HR — Retour à la peine de mort au Nigeria

Il est fait état de la pendaison de quatre hommes dans la prison de la ville de Benin, dans le sud du Nigeria, par les autorités de l'État d'Edo. Ce sont les premières exécutions dont on ait connaissance dans ce pays depuis 2006.

Un cinquième homme risque d'être exécuté d'un moment à l'autre.

Ces exécutions marquent un retour soudain et brutal à l'application de la peine de mort au Nigeria et font de cette date un jour sombre pour les droits humains dans ce pays.

La Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante compte-t-elle exhorter les autorités nigérianes à cesser immédiatement les exécutions et à rétablir le moratoire sur celles-ci?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Ashton, Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante au nom de la Commission
(15 octobre 2013)

L'UE entretient un dialogue constant avec les autorités nigérianes afin de promouvoir l'abolition de la peine de mort. Ce fut notamment le cas lors de la dernière réunion organisée dans le cadre du dialogue UE-Nigeria en matière de Droits de l'homme, qui s'est tenue à Abuja en mars 2013, et lors de la réunion ministérielle, qui s'est déroulée à Bruxelles en mai 2013.

En octobre 2012, lorsque le gouverneur de l'État d'Edo a signé deux mandats d'exécution, la délégation de l'UE et certains États membres ont déployé des efforts considérables pour instaurer un dialogue avec les autorités fédérales et étatiques. Dans une déclaration locale, l'UE a engagé les autorités nigérianes, et en particulier le gouverneur de l'État d'Edo, à revenir sur leur décision et à respecter le moratoire de fait sur la peine de mort.

À la suite des exécutions du 24 juin dernier, la haute représentante/vice-présidente a publié une déclaration invitant les autorités nigérianes à cesser les exécutions et à rejoindre le courant abolitionniste, qui prévaut sur le continent africain.

Les efforts engagés auprès du ministre des affaires étrangères et de la présidence seront poursuivis afin de réaffirmer la position de l'UE, qui est conforme à ses orientations concernant la peine de mort, et d'empêcher de nouvelles exécutions.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-008207/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(9 July 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Return to the death penalty in Nigeria

It has been reported that four men were hanged in Benin City Prison, in the south of Nigeria, by the Edo State authorities. These are the first reported executions in the country since 2006.

A fifth man risks being executed at any time.

These executions mark a sudden, brutal return to the use of the death penalty in Nigeria, a truly dark day for human rights in the country.

Does the Vice-President intend to urge the Nigerian authorities to end all executions immediately and return to the moratorium on the death penalty?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(15 October 2013)

The EU has constantly engaged with the Nigerian authorities to promote the abolition of the death penalty, including during its last session of the EU-Nigeria Human Rights Dialogue held in Abuja in March 2013 and the Ministerial meeting in Brussels in May 2013.

In October 2012, when the Governor of Edo signed two execution warrants, the EU Delegation and some of the EU Member States conducted extensive reach out efforts to the Federal and State authorities. A local EU statement was published calling on the Nigerian authorities, and in particular on the Governor of Edo state, to review their decision and to respect the de facto moratorium.

Following the executions on 24 June the HR/VP issued a statement calling on the Nigerian authorities to refrain from further executions and to join the abolitionist trend prevailing on the African continent.

Efforts towards the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Presidency will be maintained in order to continuously convey the EU's position, in line with the EU Guidelines on death penalty, in order to prevent further executions.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-008791/13
a la Comisión
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(17 de julio de 2013)

Asunto: Foro social por la paz

El pasado 27 de mayo, el Foro Social por la Paz en el País Vasco presentó públicamente un documento donde se recogen doce recomendaciones para avanzar en el proceso de paz del País Vasco. El Foro ha estado animado y coordinado por las asociaciones sociales Lokarri y Bake Bidea.

Las doce recomendaciones se pueden consultar en el siguiente sitio web: http://www.forosocialpaz.org/recomendaciones/recomendaciones-2/. Las recomendaciones abordan los diferentes aspectos relativos al proceso de paz y pueden considerarse como una importante aportación.

1. ¿Tiene la Comisión noticia de dichas recomendaciones?

2. ¿Apoya financieramente la Comisión iniciativas de este tipo, como lo hace en Irlanda del Norte a través del Programa PEACE III?

Respuesta del Sr. Hahn en nombre de la Comisión
(16 de diciembre de 2013)

La Comisión remite a Su Señoría a la respuesta dada a la pregunta escrita E-006720/2013 de la Sra. Grèze.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-008791/13
to the Commission
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(17 July 2013)

Subject: Social Forum for Peace

On 27 May 2013, the Social Forum for Peace in the Basque Country presented a document containing 12 recommendations to advance the peace process in the Basque Country. The forum has been led and coordinated by the social associations Lokarri and Bake Bidea.

The 12 recommendations can be viewed at the following website:
http://www.forosocialpaz.org/recomendaciones/recomendaciones-2/ .The recommendations address the different aspects of the peace process and can be seen as making a valuable contribution.

1. Is the Commission aware of these recommendations?

2. Does the Commission provide financial support for initiatives of this type, as it has done in Northern Ireland through the PEACE III programme?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(16 December 2013)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-006720/2013 by Ms Grèze.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009989/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(9 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Κατάσταση στη Μέση Ανατολή

Δύο και πλέον χρόνια έχουν περάσει από την Αραβική Άνοιξη και τις μεγαλειώδεις εξεγέρσεις των λαών των χωρών της Βόρειας Αφρικής και της Μέσης Ανατολής. Οι αγώνες όμως για ανατροπή, των επί δεκαετίες δυναστών, δεν φαίνεται να έχουν φέρει τα επιθυμητά αποτελέσματα.

Στην Αίγυπτο η πτώση του καθεστώτος Μουμπάρακ και η άνοδος στην εξουσία της Μουσουλμανικής Αδελφότητας προκάλεσε ένα «θρησκευτικό πόλεμο» που είχε ως αποτέλεσμα πραξικόπημα. Ενώ στη Συρία η εμπλοκή της χώρας σε εμφύλιο έχει προκαλέσει μια χαοτική κατάσταση.

Ως αποτέλεσμα των πιο πάνω, ολόκληρη η περιοχή της Μέσης Ανατολής αποτελεί ανοικτό πολεμικό μέτωπο με πιθανές ανεξέλεγκτες συνέπειες ευρύτερα.

Εν όψει του σοβαρού ενδεχόμενου επικείμενης ανάληψης στρατιωτικής δράσης από δυνάμεις των ΗΠΑ, σε συνεργασία ενδεχομένως και με ευρωπαϊκές χώρες, ζητείται όπως η Επιτροπή τοποθετηθεί στα ακόλουθα ερωτήματα:

— Πώς επηρεάζεται η ίδια η ΕΕ από την κατάσταση στη Μέση Ανατολή και ειδικά οι γειτνιάζουσες με την περιοχή χώρες μέλη, Ελλάδα και Κύπρος;

— Ποια μέτρα λαμβάνονται σε επίπεδο ΕΕ, στα πλαίσια της Κοινής Εξωτερικής Πολιτικής και Πολιτικής Ασφάλειας, για σταδιακή εξομάλυνση της κατάστασης;

— Ποια στάση θα ακολουθήσει η ΕΕ σε περίπτωση «ταχείας στρατιωτικής επέμβασης» των ΗΠΑ;

Απάντηση της Ύπατης Εκπροσώπου/Αντιπροέδρου Ashton εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(20 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Οι συγκρούσεις και η πολιτική αστάθεια στη Μέση Ανατολή έχουν επιπτώσεις στην ΕΕ, αν και, μέχρι στιγμής, είναι κατά κύριο λόγο έμμεσου χαρακτήρα. Έχει σημειωθεί αύξηση της παράνομης μετανάστευσης, μεταξύ άλλων σε σχέση με τη συνεχιζόμενη σύγκρουση στη Συρία, και συναφείς μαζικές εκροές προσφύγων, οι περισσότεροι από τους οποίους φιλοξενούνται επί του παρόντος σε γειτονικά κράτη. Η συνεχιζόμενη αστάθεια στην Λιβύη έχει ως αποτέλεσμα την αύξηση των ροών παράνομων μεταναστών που διέρχονται από την εν λόγω χώρα (αλλά προέρχονται από το Κέρας της Αφρικής) με σκοπό να μεταβούν δια θαλάσσης στην ΕΕ.

Η ΕΕ δρομολόγησε το καλοκαίρι του 2013 αποστολή συνοριακής συνδρομής με στόχο την παροχή συμβουλών και τη συμβολή στην οικοδόμηση ικανοτήτων των λίβυων συνοριοφυλάκων. Εν τω μεταξύ, η ΕΕ είναι με μεγάλη διαφορά ο σημαντικότερος χορηγός στο πλαίσιο των προσπαθειών που καταβάλλονται για να βοηθηθούν οι γειτονικές χώρες της Συρίας στην αντιμετώπιση της μαζικής εισροής προσφύγων. Η ΕΕ υποστηρίζει ενεργά μια διπλωματική λύση στη σύγκρουση στη Συρία. Ύστερα από την τραγική βύθιση ενός σκάφους με μετανάστες κοντά στην Λαμπεντούσα, στις 3 Οκτωβρίου 2013, δρομολογήθηκε Ειδική ομάδα «Μεσόγειος», υπό την προεδρία της Επιτροπής και με τη συμμετοχή της Ευρωπαϊκής Υπηρεσίας Εξωτερικής Δράσης, των κρατών μελών και των σχετικών οργανισμών της ΕΕ, για την υποβολή έκθεσης σχετικά με τις ενέργειες που θα μπορούσε να αναλάβει η ΕΕ για την αποτροπή παρόμοιων τραγικών περιστατικών στο μέλλον. Η έκθεση συζητήθηκε στο Συμβούλιο Δικαιοσύνης και Εσωτερικών Υποθέσεων στις 5 και 6 Δεκεμβρίου 2013 και θα υποβληθεί στο Ευρωπαϊκό Συμβούλιο στις 19-20 Δεκεμβρίου 2013.

Δεν υπάρχει προς το παρόν καμία ένδειξη για τυχόν σχεδιαζόμενη «ταχεία στρατιωτική επέμβαση» των ΗΠΑ στην περιοχή.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009989/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(9 September 2013)

Subject: Situation in the Middle East

Over two years have elapsed since the Arab Spring, which unleashed a wave of insurrection in the countries of Northern Africa and the Middle East. However, the struggle to overturn decades of tyranny does not appear to have secured the hoped-for results.

In Egypt, the fall of the Mubarak regime and the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood has led to sectarian violence and a coup d'état, while Syria is becoming more deeply mired in chaos and civil war.

As a result, the entire Middle East is turning into a battle zone, something which is likely to have incalculable consequences on a wider scale.

Given the serious possibility of imminent US military intervention, possibly together with European countries, can the Commission give its views on the following:

— How is the situation in the Middle East affecting the EU, especially Greece and Cyprus, which are situated in close proximity?

— What measures are being taken by the EU under the common foreign and security policy in a bid to tackle the problem?

— What stance will be adopted by the EU in response to any 'rapid military intervention' by the USA?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(20 December 2013)

Conflict and political instability in the Middle East are having an impact on the EU, even if so far, it is mostly of an indirect nature. Increases in illegal migration have been noted including in relation to the ongoing conflict in Syria and associated massive outflows of refugees, most of whom are presently accommodated in neighbouring states. Continued instability in Libya has resulted in increased flows of illegal migrants transiting that country (but originating from the Horn of Africa) to travel by sea to the EU.

The EU launched a Border Assistance Mission in summer 2013 to advise and help build capacity of the Libyan Border Guards. Meanwhile, the EU is by far the largest donor in efforts to assist neighbouring countries accommodate the massive influxes of Syrian refugees. The EU is actively supporting a diplomatic solution to the conflict in Syria. After the tragic sinking of a migrant vessel off Lampedusa on 3 October 2013, a Task Force Mediterranean was launched, chaired by the Commission and with the participation of the European External Action Service, Member States and relevant EU agencies, and will report on what EU actions could be taken to prevent such tragic incidents in future. The report was discussed at the Justice and Home Affairs Council on 5-6 December 2013 and will be presented to the European Council on 19-20 December 2013.

There is no indication at the moment of any planned 'rapid military intervention' by the USA in the region.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010162/13
alla Commissione
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(11 settembre 2013)

Oggetto: Spose bambine in Yemen

Un rapporto di Human Rights Watch del 2011 spiega in cifre i dati del fenomeno delle spose bambine in Yemen:

— il 14 % viene dato in matrimonio prima dei 15 anni;

— il 52 % viene dato in matrimonio prima dei 18 anni.

La maggior parte di esse è costretta dalla famiglia a sposare uomini adulti, spesso per motivi economici, oppure è venduta per saldare un debito.

Le tradizioni e la mancata applicazione delle leggi per la tutela dei minori (o addirittura l'assenza di tali leggi), portano questo paese ad avere un'elevata percentuale di abusi sui minori, che, spesso per la troppo giovane età, muoiono in seguito alle violenze subite.

Considerando gli ultimi avvenimenti e le denunce che ci arrivano da questo paese, compreso l'episodio più recente del 6 settembre scorso, riguardante la morte di Rawan, la bimba yemenita di otto anni morta di un'emorragia letale causata da un rapporto avuto la prima notte di nozze con il marito quarantenne;

considerando il ruolo che l'UE intende assumere quale attore globale che prefissa, tra i suoi obiettivi, quello della tutela dei diritti umani;

intende la Commissione, alla luce degli ultimi avvenimenti, adottare azioni a sostegno delle varie campagne di sensibilizzazione o porre in essere un dialogo con le autorità yemenite, al fine di contrastare il fenomeno evidenziato?

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011676/13
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Barbara Matera (PPE)
(14 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Matrimoni infantili nello Yemen

Nella prima settimana del mese di settembre 2013 si è diffusa rapidamente la notizia della morte di una ragazza yemenita di otto anni, deceduta per un'emorragia interna dopo aver sposato un uomo con un'età cinque volte superiore alla sua. La bambina è stata portata in ospedale, ma i medici non hanno potuto fare nulla per salvarle la vita.

Nel Medio Oriente i matrimoni infantili sono molto comuni e stando alle stime di Human Rights Watch il numero complessivo sarebbe superiore ai 67 milioni. Oltre il 50 % delle ragazze che vivono nella regione si sposano prima dei 18 anni, nelle zone rurali invece sono obbligate a sposarsi anche all'età di otto anni. A quest'età le bambine non sono ancora fisicamente o mentalmente pronte per il matrimonio, i rapporti sessuali o la gravidanza e hanno più probabilità di soffrire sotto il profilo fisico, mentale e sociale. Secondo Human Rights Watch la ragazza yemenita non sarebbe il primo caso di morte di una bambina sposa. Nel 2010 una bambina sposa di 12 anni è morta per un'emorragia interna a seguito di un rapporto sessuale con un uomo più adulto, e prima di tale episodio era morta un'altra bambina sposa dopo diversi giorni di travaglio nel tentativo di partorire.

1. In quale misura il Servizio europeo per l'azione esterna sta sottolineando l'importanza degli impegni internazionali dello Yemen, come ad esempio nell'ambito della Convenzione sull'eliminazione di tutte le forme di discriminazione contro le donne (CEDAW) e della Convenzione sui diritti dell'infanzia (UNCRC), per quanto concerne la messa al bando del matrimonio infantile?

2. È comprensibile che la baronessa Ashton abbia esortato il governo yemenita a bandire imatrimoni infantili, ma quali passi si stanno compiendo per dare attuazione concreta a talepolitica, non soltanto nello Yemen, ma anche in tutte le aree del mondo in cui imatrimoni infantili sono usuali?

Risposta congiunta dell'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente Catherine Ashton a nome della Commissione
(7 gennaio 2014)

Il 14 settembre l'AR/VP ha rilasciato una dichiarazione in cui si esprimeva con la massima fermezza in merito alla notizia del decesso di una bambina di otto anni dovuto alle lesioni riportate durante la prima notte di nozze. Visto che il fenomeno delle spose bambine è molto diffuso nello Yemen, la dichiarazione ha permesso all'AR/VP di sollevare globalmente la questione e di ricordare allo Yemen i suoi obblighi in quanto firmatario della convenzione ONU sulla tutela dei diritti dei minori.

La dichiarazione dell'AR/VP e gli intensi contatti della delegazione UE di Sana'a con tutte le parti interessate hanno contribuito a rilanciare il dibattito sul ripristino di un'età minima per il matrimonio. La delegazione dell'UE accoglie quindi con favore la proposta del ministro yemenita dei Diritti umani di fissare l'età minima per il matrimonio a 18 anni. A quanto pare, il gruppo di lavoro della conferenza del dialogo nazionale sui diritti e sulle libertà nello Yemen sarebbe largamente orientato a fissare l'età minima per il matrimonio a 18 anni. Ci auguriamo che questo sia uno dei risultati del dialogo nazionale e che tutte le parti interessate si adoperino in modo costruttivo per garantirne l'applicazione effettiva in tutte le regioni del paese. L'UE è pronta a sostenere il governo yemenita in tal senso.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010162/13
to the Commission
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(11 September 2013)

Subject: Child brides in Yemen

A report published by Human Rights Watch in 2011 provided data, supported by statistics, to describe the practice of allowing child brides in Yemen:

— 14% of girls are married before the age of 15;

— 52% of them are married before the age of 18.

Most of them are forced by their families to marry adult men, often for financial reasons, or else they are sold to settle a debt.

Tradition and failure to apply the laws on child protection (or even the lack of such laws) mean that this country has a high rate of abuse against its children who, often because they are too young, die as a result of the violence they have been subjected to.

In view of the latest events and the reports we are hearing from this country, including the most recent incident on 6 September, involving the death of Rawan, the eight-year-old girl who bled to death on her wedding night as a result of intercourse with her husband in his 40s, and in view of the role which the EU is meant to play as a global player whose objectives include the protection of human rights:

Does the Commission intend, in light of the latest events, to take any action to support the various campaigns for raising awareness or to establish a dialogue with the Yemeni authorities with the aim of tackling the highlighted practice?

Question for written answer E-011676/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Barbara Matera (PPE)
(14 October 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Child marriage in Yemen

News that an eight-year-old Yemeni girl died from internal bleeding after marrying a man five times her age spread like wildfire in the first week of September 2013. The child was taken to hospital but doctors were unable to save her life.

Child marriage is very common in the Middle East, with Human Rights Watch estimating that the total number of child marriages exceeds 67 million. Over 50% of girls in the region are married before the age of 18, and in rural areas girls are forced into marriage as young as eight. Girls of this age are not physically or mentally ready for marriage, sex or pregnancy and are more likely to suffer physically, mentally and socially. According to Human Rights Watch, the Yemeni girl was not the first child bride to die. In 2010, a 12-year-old Yemeni bride died from internal bleeding following intercourse with an older man and, prior to that, another child bride had died after spending several days in labour struggling to give birth.

1. To what extent is the European External Action Service stressing the importance of Yemen's international obligations, such as the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), as regards the ban on child marriage?

2. It is understandable that Baroness Ashton has urged the Yemeni Government to ban child marriage but what is being done to ensure that this policy is actually implemented, not just in Yemen but in all areas of the world where child marriage is commonplace?

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

On 14 September HR/VP issued a very firm statement in reaction to the reports of the death of an 8 year old girl from injuries sustained on her wedding night. Since child marriage is a spread practice in Yemen, the statement was the occasion to address the general issue of child marriage in Yemen and to remind the obligations that Yemen has as a signatory to the UN Convention on the protection of the rights of the child.

The HR/VP's statement and the intensive engagement of the EU Delegation in Saana with all stakeholders have contributed to revive the debate on reinstating a minimum age at marriage. Thus, the EU Delegation welcomes the proposal of the Yemeni Minister for Human Rights of defining the age of 18 as a minimum age for marriage. There seems to be general agreement within the Yemen National Dialogue Conference's Working Group for Rights and Freedom to set the minimum age at marriage at 18. We are hopeful that the setting of a minimum age at marriage will be one of the outcomes of the National Dialogue and we hope that all the stakeholders work constructively towards an effective implementation in all regions of the country. The EU is ready to support the Yemeni government in this regard.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010603/13
a la Comisión
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(17 de septiembre de 2013)

Asunto: Intento de censura en televisión en el País Vasco

El delegado del Gobierno español en el País Vasco, Carlos Urquijo, ha enviado una carta a la directora de la televisión transfronteriza EITB (Radiotelevisión pública vasca), Maite Iturbe, pidiéndole que no incluya en la programación de ETB (Televisión pública vasca) un programa de los payasos Pirritx eta Porrotx. Además, ha enviado copia de la misma al Ararteko (Defensor del Pueblo del País Vasco) para que actúe, si lo ve oportuno, en virtud de su función de protección de los derechos de los menores.

En primer lugar, en el marco de la política audiovisual de la Unión, se toman en cuenta las indicaciones del Convenio Europeo de Derechos Humanos y, especialmente, el artículo 10 sobre la libertad de expresión, ya que son recordados tanto por el juez de la Unión como por el artículo 6, apartado 2, del TFUE.

En segundo lugar, hay que precisar que si, en principio, la cultura forma parte de las competencias de los Estados miembros, la Unión puede también tener alguna competencia en materia de política cultural. En efecto, el artículo 167, apartado 1, del Tratado de Funcionamiento de la Unión Europea (TFUE) afirma que la Unión contribuye al desarrollo cultural de los Estados miembros, respetando las diversidades regionales y promoviendo el patrimonio cultural común.

Por último, la Directiva 89/552/CEE del Consejo tiene por objetivo la promoción de la libre circulación en materia cultural en el marco del mercado común. Así, afirma que «las emisiones a través de las fronteras realizadas gracias a las diferentes tecnologías son uno de los medios que permiten perseguir los objetivos de la Comunidad». El capítulo V de esta Directiva se dedica a la protección de los menores. Precisa que los Estados miembros pueden intervenir y adoptar medidas cuando una emisión incluya «programas que puedan perjudicar seriamente el desarrollo físico, mental o moral de los menores y, en particular, programas que incluyan escenas de pornografía o violencia gratuita» o si notan una «incitación al odio por motivos de raza, sexo, religión o nacionalidad». Sin embargo, las emisiones de los payasos no han mostrado en ningún caso ese tipo de perjuicios y el Estado español jamás ha aportado una justificación argumentada de su actuación apoyándose en el capítulo V de la dicha Directiva.

Vista la Directiva 89/552/CEE, ¿considera la Comisión que la actuación del Gobierno español es conforme con dicha Directiva y, en particular, con el principio de libre circulación de los servicios en materia audiovisual?

¿Considera la Comisión que el Estado español cumple las condiciones descritas en el capítulo V de dicha Directiva?

Respuesta de la Sra. Kroes en nombre de la Comisión
(18 de diciembre de 2013)

La Directiva de servicios de comunicación audiovisual ([1]), que modifica la también Directiva 89/552/CEE, establece un marco reglamentario para la prestación de dichos servicios en la EU. Según sus disposiciones, los Estados miembros tienen jurisdicción sobre los proveedores de esos servicios que estén establecidos en su territorio y son, por lo tanto, responsables de garantizar con medidas de seguimiento y ejecución que tales proveedores cumplan lo dispuesto en la Directiva. Esta, por lo demás, garantiza la protección de los intereses generales y, entre ellos, la necesaria protección de los menores.

Según afirma Su Señoría, el delegado del Gobierno español ha pedido a la televisión pública vasca que suspenda la emisión de un programa que supuestamente infringe las disposiciones en materia de protección de menores transpuestas al Derecho nacional. Sin embargo, dado que en la pregunta parlamentaria que formula Su Señoría no se facilita la información necesaria para poder evaluar si el programa en cuestión infringe o no las disposiciones de la Directiva en la materia, los servicios de la Comisión no pueden en esta fase determinar si ha habido o no infracción de dichas disposiciones.

([1]) Directiva 2010/13/UE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 10 de marzo de 2010, sobre la coordinación de determinadas disposiciones legales, reglamentarias y administrativas de los Estados miembros relativas a la prestación de servicios de comunicación audiovisual (Directiva de servicios de comunicación audiovisual).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010603/13
to the Commission
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(17 September 2013)

Subject: Attempt to censor television in the Basque Country

The Spanish Government's representative in the Basque Country, Carlos Urquijo, has sent a letter to the director of cross-border broadcaster EITB (Basque Public Radio and Television), Maite Iturbe, asking her not to include the clown show, Pirritx eta Porrotx, in the programming schedule of ETB (Basque Public Television). He has also sent a copy of the letter to the Ararteko asking him, in his capacity as the Basque Country Ombudsman, to take any appropriate action to safeguard the rights of minors.

The Union's audiovisual policy takes account of the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights, in particular Article 10 on freedom of expression, as recognised by the European Court of Justice and enshrined in Article 6(2) of the Treaty on European Union.

Although culture is in principle a Member State competence, the Union does have some powers in the area of cultural policy. Article 167(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union states that the EU should contribute to the cultural development of the Member States, while respecting regional diversity and promoting common cultural heritage.

Council Directive 89/552/EEC seeks to promote the free movement of cultural goods in the common market. It states that 'broadcasts transmitted across frontiers by means of various technologies are one of the ways of pursuing the objectives of the Community.' Chapter V of the directive concerns the protection of minors. It states that the Member States can intervene and take measures when a broadcast includes 'programmes which might seriously impair the physical, mental or moral development of minors, in particular those that involve pornography or gratuitous violence'. The clown programmes, however, have never included potentially damaging scenes of this kind and the Spanish Government has not provided a reasoned justification for its actions with reference to Chapter V of the directive.

Does the Commission think that the Spanish Government's actions are consistent with Directive 89/552/EEC and, in particular, the principle of the free movement of audiovisual services?

Does it think that Spain is acting in compliance with the conditions laid down in Chapter V of the aforementioned directive?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(18 December 2013)

The Audiovisual Media Services Directive ([1]) (AVMS Directive), amending the directive 89/552/EEC sets a regulatory framework for the provision of the audiovisual media services in the EU. Accoridng to its rules a Member Sates has jurisdiction over a media service provider established on its territory and consequently is responsible to ensure, through monitoring and enforcement activities that media service providers under its jurisdiction comply with the provisions of the directive. At the same time the directive gurantees the protection of general interests, such as protection of minors.

The Honourable Member of the European Parliament refers to the situation where Basque Public Television was requetsed by the Spanish Government's representative to stop broadcasting a programme that allegedly infringed provisions on protetcion of minors as trasposed in the national law. The parliamentary question by the Honourable Member does not provide sufficient information to assess whether the programme in question indeed had infringed the above mentioend provisions of the Diretcive. Therefore, the Commission services are not able at this stage to state whether indeed the provisions of the AVMS Directive were infringed.

([1]) Directive 2010/13/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 March 2010 on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media Services (Audiovisual Media Services Directive).

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010699/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(19 de septiembre de 2013)

Asunto: Expediente de regulación de empleo (ERE) de Catalunya Banc

Como parte de la gran reestructuración que está viviendo el sector bancario español, aquellos bancos que han recibido ayudas públicas están reduciendo su número de oficinas y empleados con el objetivo de reducir las pérdidas.

En este contexto se enmarcan el ERE de Bankia ([1]) y el de Catalunya Banc (en curso), que significan el despido de miles de personas. Entidades sindicales representantes de trabajadores de esta última reivindican que el trato recibido no está siendo el mismo que en otras entidades reestructuradas ([2]).

Según el ERE de Bankia, los trabajadores menores de 54 años reciben una indemnización equivalente al salario de 30 días por año trabajado, con un límite de 22 mensualidades. En cambio, los trabajadores de Catalunya Banc recibirían 20 días por año trabajado, con un máximo de 12 mensualidades ([3]).

¿Está monitoreando la Comisión los programas de despidos en el contexto de la reestructuración bancaria en España?

¿Cumple el plan de reestructuración de Catalunya Banc con el Derecho comunitario, en particular con la Directiva 98/59/CE del Consejo relativa a la aproximación de las legislaciones de los Estados miembros relativas a los despidos colectivos?

¿Considera la Comisión que todos los trabajadores afectados por los diferentes programas de despidos en España relacionados con las condiciones del memorando de entendimiento son tratados de igual manera?

Respuesta del Sr. Andor en nombre de la Comisión
(10 de diciembre de 2013)

La Comisión no monitorea específicamente los programas de despidos en el contexto de la reestructuración bancaria en España. La Comisión monitorea la aplicación de los planes de reestructuración de los bancos españoles que han recibido ayudas públicas. Dichos planes incluyen, entre otras cosas, objetivos relativos a sucursales, niveles de empleo y estructura de costes. Dichos objetivos están estrechamente vinculados con los planes de despido que llevan a cabo los bancos. Sin embargo, corresponde a los bancos alcanzar esos objetivos de la manera más efectiva y respetando plenamente la legislación vigente.

La Comisión no está en condiciones de evaluar los hechos ni de juzgar si una empresa privada ha cumplido o no las disposiciones nacionales destinadas a aplicar las Directivas de la UE, y más en concreto la Directiva 98/59/CE ([4]). Corresponde a las autoridades competentes nacionales, incluidos los tribunales, garantizar que el empresario en cuestión aplica correcta y eficazmente la legislación nacional que transpone la Directiva, teniendo en cuenta las circunstancias específicas del caso.

No existe ninguna legislación de la UE relativa a la igualdad de trato para todos los trabajadores afectados por los distintos programas de despidos en los bancos españoles. Con arreglo a la Directiva anteriormente mencionada, el empresario tiene que informar y consultar a los representantes de los trabajadores antes de tomar la decisión de llevar a cabo despidos colectivos. En dicha consulta deben tratarse los medios para evitar o reducir los despidos colectivos y atenuar sus consecuencias mediante medidas sociales de acompañamiento. Esto último puede variar en función de las diferentes empresas.

([1]) http://www.ccoocx.com/EROs/Bankia.pdf
([2]) http://www.eldiario.es/catalunyaplural/eldiarideltreball/LERO-Catalunya-Caixa-preveu-acomiadaments_6_166643345.html
http://www.ugt.cat/index.php/40-serveis/4522-els-treballadors-de-catalunya-banc-es-manifestaran-dema-contra-l-ero-plantejat
([3]) http://www.naciodigital.cat/noticia/58158/catalunya/banc/presenta/ero/2453/acomiadaments
([4]) Directiva 98/59/CE del Consejo, de 20 de julio de 1998, relativa a la aproximación de las legislaciones de los Estados miembros que se refieren a los despidos colectivos, DO L 225 de 12.8.1998.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010699/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(19 September 2013)

Subject: Redundancy programme at Catalunya Banc

As part of the major restructuring under way in the Spanish banking sector, banks which have received state aid are closing branches and cutting back staff in an effort to stem their losses.

The redundancy programmes at Bankia ([1]) and Catalunya Banc (ongoing), which are part of this process, will see thousands of people lose their jobs. Trade unions representing staff at Catalunya Banc claim that the employees there are not being treated the same as employees in other companies undergoing restructuring ([2]).

Under the redundancy programme at Bankia, staff below the age of 54 are receiving compensation equivalent to 30 days pay per year worked, up to a maximum of 22 monthly payments. In contrast, staff at Catalunya Banc are to receive 20 days pay per year worked, up to a maximum of 12 monthly payments ([3]).

Is the Commission monitoring redundancy programmes related to the restructuring of Spanish banks?

Does it consider the restructuring of Catalunya Banc to comply with EC law, in particular Council Directive 98/59/EC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to collective redundancies?

Does it think that equal treatment is being provided for all the workers affected by the various redundancy programmes in Spain linked to the terms of the memorandum of understanding?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(10 December 2013)

The Commission does not specifically monitor redundancy programmes related to the restructuring of Spanish banks. The Commission monitors the implementation of the restructuring plans of the Spanish banks which received state aid. The plans include *inter alia* targets in terms of branches, employment levels and cost structure. These targets are clearly linked to the redundancy measures put in place by the banks. It is however up to the banks to achieve these targets in the most efficient way and in full respect of existing legislation

The Commission is not in a position to assess the facts or state whether a private company has or has not complied with any national provisions which serve to implement EU Directives, in particular Directive 98/59/EC ([4]). It is for the competent national authorities, including the courts, to ensure that the national legislation transposing the Directive is correctly and effectively applied by the employer concerned, having regard to the specific circumstances of the case.

There is no EC law providing for equality of treatment for all workers affected by the various redundancy programmes in Spanish banks. Under the aforementioned Directive, the employer has to inform and consult employees' representatives before he/she decides to carry out collective redundancies. Such consultation covers ways of avoiding or reducing the number of collective redundancies and of mitigating their consequences through accompanying social measures. The latter may vary from one company to another.

([1]) http://www.ccoocx.com/EROs/Bankia.pdf
([2]) http://www.eldiario.es/catalunyaplural/eldiarideltreball/LERO-Catalunya-Caixa-preveu-acomiadaments_6_166643345.html
http://www.ugt.cat/index.php/40-serveis/4522-els-treballadors-de-catalunya-banc-es-manifestaran-dema-contra-l-ero-plantejat
([3]) http://www.naciodigital.cat/noticia/58158/catalunya/banc/presenta/ero/2453/acomiadaments
([4]) Council Directive 98/59/EC of 20 July 1998 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to collective redundancies, OJ L 225, 12.8.1998.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010842/13
au Conseil
Philippe de Villiers (EFD)
(24 septembre 2013)

Objet: Position du Conseil concernant la situation en Syrie

Aux origines de la construction européenne a été inscrite la volonté de favoriser la paix et d'éviter les conflits armés au sein de l'Union et à l'extérieur de celle-ci.

La majorité des pays européens et de leurs opinions publiques ne souhaitent pas participer à une intervention contre le régime syrien, préférant une solution diplomatique et de destruction des armes chimiques, telle que préconisée avec succès par la Russie. Le dialogue entre le gouvernement syrien et les opposants de l'intérieur est toujours préférable à la prise de pouvoir par les mouvements islamistes, qu'il s'agisse des Frères musulmans ou des Salafistes.

Quelle proposition le Conseil serait-il disposé à faire pour poursuivre dans cette voie diplomatique plutôt qu'encourager une «réponse forte» — selon les termes du Président de la Commission — ou des «mesures de dissuasion» impliquant le recours à la violence, selon les termes de la résolution adoptée par le Parlement, mesures qui pourraient aggraver la situation en Syrie?

Réponse
(23 décembre 2013)

L'UE ne cesse de soutenir une solution pacifique au conflit syrien. Dans les conclusions du Conseil du 21 octobre 2013, «l'UE se félicite de l'appel lancé par le secrétaire général des Nations unies, Ban Ki-Moon, en faveur de l'organisation d'une conférence de paix à Genève avant la fin novembre. Elle appelle instamment toutes les parties au conflit à répondre positivement à cet appel et à se déclarer publiquement favorables à une transition politique crédible fondée sur la pleine mise en œuvre du communiqué de Genève. L'UE répète que l'objectif de la conférence doit être l'établissement rapide, sur la base du consentement mutuel, d'un organe de gouvernement transitoire doté des pleins pouvoirs exécutifs et contrôlant toutes les institutions de l'État et de sécurité. L'UE considère en outre que, conformément au communiqué de Genève, les parties devront se mettre d'accord, au cours de la conférence, sur des mesures claires et irréversibles ainsi que sur un calendrier serré pour la transition politique. Les participants internationaux à la conférence de Genève 2 devraient se conformer aux principes énoncés dans le communiqué de Genève».

Dans les dernières conclusions du Conseil, datées du 18 novembre 2013, «[r]appelant les conclusions du Conseil d'octobre 2013 sur la Syrie, l'UE se félicite de l'attitude positive adoptée récemment par la coalition nationale des forces de la révolution et de l'opposition syrienne quant à la participation à la conférence, qui constitue un progrès encourageant. Seule une solution politique débouchant sur une Syrie unie, démocratique et sans exclusive pourra mettre fin à la terrible effusion de sang et à la menace sans précédent qui pèse sur la stabilité régionale».

L'UE a maintenu des contacts de haut niveau avec toutes les parties concernées afin de mobiliser la communauté internationale et l'opposition en faveur de la conférence de Genève 2.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010842/13
to the Council
Philippe de Villiers (EFD)
(24 September 2013)

Subject: Council position on the Syria situation

The desire to promote peace and to prevent armed conflicts, both within Europe and beyond, is one of the cornerstones of the European project.

Most European countries and their peoples want no part in a military intervention against the Syrian regime. Rather, they would prefer to see a diplomatic solution found and chemical weapons destroyed, as advocated successfully by Russia. Dialogue between the Syrian Government and its domestic opponents is still preferable to Islamist movements seizing power, be they members of the Muslim Brotherhood or Salafists.

What proposal would the Council be willing to make to keep diplomatic avenues open, rather than encouraging the 'strong response' referred to by the President of the Commission or the 'deterrent measures' cited in the resolution adopted by Parliament, which would involve the use of force and which might exacerbate the situation in Syria?

Reply
(23 December 2013)

The EU has consistently supported a peaceful solution to the Syrian conflict. In the conclusions of the Council dated 21 October 2013, 'the EU welcomes the call of UNSG Ban Ki-Moon for a peace conference in Geneva […] before the end of November. It urges all sides of the conflict to respond positively to this call and to adhere publicly to a credible political transition based on the full implementation of the Geneva Communiqué. The EU reiterates that the objective of the Conference must be the swift establishment, by mutual consent, of a transitional governing body (TGB) with full executive powers and control of all governmental and all security institutions. The EU also considers that, in full conformity with the Geneva Communiqué, the parties will have to agree during the Conference on clear and irreversible steps and a short timeframe for the political transition. International participants of Geneva II should adhere to the principles included in the Geneva Communiqué.'

In the latest conclusions of the Council dated 18 November 2013, 'recalling the October 2013 Council conclusions on Syria, the EU welcomes the recent positive stance of the National Coalition of the Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces (SOC) towards participation in the Conference as an encouraging step. Only a political solution that results in a united, inclusive and democratic Syria can end both the terrible bloodshed and the unprecedented threat to the regional stability'.

The EU has maintained high-level contacts with all relevant stakeholders to gather international and opposition support for the Geneva II Conference.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-010879/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(25 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Παροχή βοήθειας σε παιδιά προσφύγων από τη Συρία μέσω της εκπαίδευσης

Ο πρώην Βρετανός Πρωθυπουργός Gordon Brown και η Rania Al Abdullah, Βασίλισσα της Ιορδανίας, ζήτησαν τη συνολική αύξηση των δαπανών στον τομέα της εκπαίδευσης, ειδικότερα για παιδιά σε καταστάσεις κρίσεως. Η Βασίλισσα Rania πιστεύει ότι η εκπαίδευση είναι ουσιώδης για τα εν λόγω παιδιά, δεδομένου ότι η μάθηση μπορεί να τους παράσχει το αίσθημα της φυσιολογικής ζωής, επιτρέποντας σε αυτούς να αντιμετωπίσουν τις δύσκολες καταστάσεις τις οποίες πρέπει να υπομείνουν. Περαιτέρω, ο κ. Brown υπογραμμίζει το δικαίωμα των παιδιών στην εκπαίδευση, ένα δικαίωμα το οποίο θα πρέπει να είναι διασυνοριακά εγγυημένο και να τίθεται ως προτεραιότητα, έτσι ώστε να φέρει ελπίδα και να προσφέρει ευκαιρίες στα παιδιά των προσφύγων από τη Συρία, πρόσφυγες των οποίων ο αριθμός ανέρχεται περίπου σε ένα εκατομμύριο.

Σύμφωνα με την ανθρωπιστική οργάνωση Save the Children, μόνο 1,4% της συνολικής ανθρωπιστικής βοήθειας χρησιμοποιήθηκε για εκπαιδευτικούς σκοπούς το 2012, μειωμένο σε σχέση με το 2,14% του προηγούμενου έτους.

Ενόψει των ανωτέρω, θα μπορούσε η Επιτροπή να απαντήσει στις ακόλουθες ερωτήσεις:

1. Γνωρίζει την έκκληση που έχει απευθύνει ο κ. Brown και η Βασίλισσα Rania; Έχει αναληφθεί οιαδήποτε δράση εκ μέρους της ΕΕ προκειμένου να βελτιωθεί αυτή η κατάσταση;

2. Ποιές επιπλέον ενέργειες απαιτούνται προκειμένου να υπάρξει εγγύηση ότι τα παιδιά των προσφύγων από τη Συρία θα είναι σε θέση να ασκούν το δικαίωμα σε εκπαίδευση και μάθηση;

Απάντηση της Ύπατης Εκπροσώπου/Αντιπροέδρου Ashton εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(19 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Η ΕΕ γνωρίζει την έκκληση και συμφωνεί απόλυτα ως προς τη σημασία ενίσχυσης της εκπαίδευσης για τα παιδιά, ιδίως σε καταστάσεις κρίσης.

Η ΕΕ αποτελεί έναν από τους βασικούς υποστηρικτές της εκπαίδευσης ως ανταπόκριση στην κρίση στη Συρία και έχει διαθέσει από την αρχή της κρίσης 167 εκατομμύρια ευρώ για τη στήριξη της εκπαίδευσης τόσο στη Συρία όσο και σε γειτονικές χώρες που πλήττονται από την κρίση.

Στην περίπτωση της Ιορδανίας, η ΕΕ διέθεσε 65 εκατομμύρια ευρώ για να στηρίξει την παροχή εκπαιδευτικών υπηρεσιών σε Σύριους πρόσφυγες και σε κοινότητες υποδοχής. Από το ποσό αυτό, 30 εκατομμύρια ευρώ χορηγήθηκαν μέσω του προϋπολογισμού για την εκπαίδευση με στόχο την ενίσχυση του συνολικού εκπαιδευτικού συστήματος για την αντιμετώπιση της εισροής προσφύγων. Επίσης, 35 εκατομμύρια ευρώ διατίθενται για τη στήριξη της εκπαίδευσης μέσω της Unicef και της Unesco.

Στην Τουρκία, η Unicef συνεργάζεται στενά με τις αρμόδιες τουρκικές κρατικές αρχές (4,75 εκατομμύρια ευρώ) και προσφέρει ευκαιρίες για εκπαίδευση σε παιδιά προσφύγων από τη Συρία σε καταυλισμούς.

Στην περίπτωση του Λιβάνου, 70 εκατομμύρια ευρώ διατίθενται σε δράσεις σχετικά με την εκπαίδευση για την αντιμετώπιση της κρίσης στη Συρία μέσω υπηρεσιών του ΟΗΕ και ΜΚΟ ([1]), με κύριο στόχο τη βελτίωση της πρόσβασης στην εκπαίδευση και σε υπηρεσίες βρεφονηπιακών σταθμών για τους πρόσφυγες και τις κοινότητες υποδοχής σε περιοχές που πλήττονται περισσότερο από την εισροή Σύριων προσφύγων.

Περίπου 27 εκατομμύρια ευρώ διατέθηκαν επίσης στο εσωτερικό της Συρίας, προκειμένου να αποκτήσουν πρόσβαση στην εκπαίδευση παιδιά εσωτερικών προσφύγων και Παλαιστίνιων προσφύγων.

Η ΕΕ αναμένει να διαθέσει πρόσθετα κεφάλαια το 2014 ειδικά για την αντιμετώπιση των επιπτώσεων της εισροής Σύριων προσφύγων.

Σήμερα, πολλές διεθνείς πρωτοβουλίες θέτουν στο προσκήνιο την εκπαίδευση των παιδιών (π.χ. πρωτοβουλία «καμία χαμένη γενιά»). Η ΕΕ δεσμεύεται να συνεχίσει τη στήριξη στον τομέα της εκπαίδευσης στη Συρία και στις χώρες που φιλοξενούν επί του παρόντος μεγάλο αριθμό Σύριων προσφύγων.

([1]) Μη κυβερνητικές οργανώσεις.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010879/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(25 September 2013)

Subject: Helping Syrian child refugees through education

Former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and Rania Al Abdullah, Queen of Jordan, have called for a global increase in spending on education, particularly for children in crisis situations. Queen Rania believes that education is essential for these children, given that learning can provide them with a sense of normality, enabling them to cope with the difficult situations which they have had to endure. Furthermore, Mr Brown stresses the right of children to an education — a right which should be guaranteed across borders and prioritised so as to bring hope and opportunities to Syrian child refugees, whose numbers have reached almost one million.

According to the humanitarian organisation Save the Children, just 1.4% of global humanitarian aid was spent on education in 2012, down from 2.14% in the previous year.

In light of the above, could the Commission answer the following:

1. Is it aware of the appeal made by Mr Brown and Queen Rania? Has any action been taken by the EU to aid this situation?

2. What more can be done to guarantee that Syrian child refugees will be able to exercise their right to learning and an education?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(19 December 2013)

The EU is aware of the appeal and shares the importance of supporting education for children, particularly in crisis situations.

The EU is one of the main supporters of the education response to the Syrian crisis and has provided, since the crisis began, EUR 167 million to support education in Syria and in neighbouring countries affected by the crisis.

In the case of Jordan, the EU has made available EUR 65 million to support the provision of education services to Syrian refugees and host communities. Out of this amount, EUR 30 million are allocated through budget support on education aimed at assisting the overall education system to cope with the refugee influx. EUR 35 million are also supporting education through Unicef and Unesco.

In Turkey, education opportunities for Syrian refugee children in camps are developed through Unicef working closely with relevant Turkish governmental authorities (EUR 4.75 million).

In the case of Lebanon, the amount allocated to education-related actions in response to the Syria crisis is EUR 70 million through UN agencies and NGOs ([1]), focused on improving access to education and childcare services for refugees and host communities in areas most affected by the influx of Syrian refugees.

Around EUR 27 million were also allocated inside Syria to allow internally displaced and Palestine refugee children to access education.

The EU expects to allocate additional funds in 2014 specifically targeting the impact of Syrian refugees.

There are currently various international initiatives which put the spotlight on child education (e.g. 'no lost generation initiative').The EU is committed to continue support in the field of education in Syria and in the countries which are currently hosting large numbers of Syrian refugees.

([1]) Non-governmental organisations.

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande E-010926/13
till kommissionen
Carl Schlyter (Verts/ALE)
(26 september 2013)

Angående: Felaktig användning av biståndsmedel

Enligt uppgifter presenterade av Sveriges Radio Ekot ([1]) har den svenska biståndsministern samt statssekreteraren fått sin lön betald från de pengar som räknas in under ODA. Det rör sig om över 20 miljoner kronor som utbetalats under fyra års tid. Anser kommissionen att det här förfarandet är förenligt med EU:s åtagande att öka sitt stöd till utvecklingsländerna till 0,7 % av sitt BNI till 2015?

Svar från Andris Piebalgs på kommissionens vägnar
(16 december 2013)

Enligt rapporteringdirektiven ([2]) (avsnitt II.1) från OECD:s biståndskommitté DAC utgör vissa administrativa kostnader offentligt utvecklingsbistånd. Dessa kostnader beaktas därför vid bedömningen av framstegen mot att nå åtagandena avseende BNI för det offentliga utvecklingsbiståndet.

Varje medlem i OECD:s biståndskommitté ansvarar för sin egen rapportering av det offentliga utvecklingsbiståndet (inklusive administrativa kostnader).

Kommissionen hänvisar till biståndskommitténs onlinedatabas *"Credit Reporting System"* ([3]). Detaljerad information om biståndskommitténs alla givarländers administrativa kostnader finns under sektorkod 910 *(Administrative Costs of Donors)*.

([1]) http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=83&artikel=5654325
([2]) http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/documentupload/DCD-DAC(2013)15-FINAL-ENG.pdf
([3]) http://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?DataSetCode=CRS1

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010926/13
to the Commission
Carl Schlyter (Verts/ALE)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Misuse of aid funds

According to information presented by Radio Sweden's programme *Ekot* ([1]), the Swedish Minister for International Development Cooperation and the State Secretary had their salaries paid from funds classed as official development assistance (ODA). This relates to more than SEK 20 million paid out over a four-year period. Does the Commission consider this to be compatible with the EU's commitment to increase its aid to developing countries to 0.7% of its GNI by 2015?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(16 December 2013)

According to the current OECD/DAC (Development Assistance Committee) Reporting Directives ([2]) (section II.1), some administrative costs do constitute Official Development Assistance (ODA). These costs are therefore taken into account when assessing progress towards reaching ODA/GNI commitments.

Every OECD/DAC Member is responsible for its own ODA reporting (including on administrative costs).

The Commission would like to refer the Honourable Member to the online OECD/DAC Creditor Reporting System database. ([3]) Detailed information on the administrative costs of all OECD/DAC donors is available under Sector Code 910 (Administrative Costs of Donors).

([1]) http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=83&artikel=5654325
([2]) http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/documentupload/DCD-DAC(2013)15-FINAL-ENG.pdf
([3]) http://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?DataSetCode=CRS1

(Magyar változat)

Írásbeli választ igénylő kérdés E-010955/13
a Bizottság számára
Kósa Ádám (PPE) és Romana Jordan (PPE)
(2013. szeptember 26.)

Tárgy: A fogyatékossággal élő személyek jogai

Adatok igazolják, hogy az Európai Unióban a fogyatékossággal élő személyeket aránytalan mértékben sújtják a számos tagállamban végrehajtott költségvetési szigorítások, melyek hosszú távú hatásai országonként eltérőek. Ez súlyosan sérti a fogyatékossággal élő személyek jogait, melyeket a fogyatékossággal élő személyek jogairól szóló ENSZ-egyezmény, az Európai Unió Alapjogi Chartája, az Európai Szociális Charta, valamint egyéb olyan elfogadott jogi normák és egyezmények is garantálnak, amelyeknek az EU részes fele.

Milyen konkrét intézkedéseket tesz a Bizottság a trojka tagjaként, illetve az európai szemeszter folyamata keretében és országspecifikus ajánlások szintjén annak biztosítására, hogy az EU eleget tegyen az említett normák keretében tett kötelezettségvállalásainak, és teljesüljenek a 2010–2020 közötti időszakra vonatkozó európai fogyatékosságügyi stratégia célkitűzései? Hogyan tervezi a Bizottság felmérni azokat a közkiadások átszervezéséből eredő kockázatokat, melyek a fogyatékossággal élőket hátrányosan érinthetik?

Viviane Reding válasza a Bizottság nevében
(2013. december 18.)

A Bizottság kellő figyelmet fordít a fogyatékos személyek helyzetére és általánosabb értelemben az uniós országokban végrehajtott költségvetési konszolidációs intézkedések szociális hatására.

A szociális szolgáltatások és politikák elsősorban a tagállamok hatáskörébe tartoznak, a Bizottság azonban arra ösztönzi a tagállamokat, hogy megfelelő reformok végrehajtásával védjék a legkiszolgáltatottabbakat a válság következményeitől a fogyatékos személyek társadalmi befogadása, foglalkoztathatósága és képzésének előmozdítása révén az európai fogyatékosságügyi stratégia 2010–2020 ([1]), az Európa 2020 stratégia, az európai szemeszter és a szociális beruházási csomag ([2]) keretében. A fentiekben említett politikai kereteken belül meghozott intézkedések nem lehetnek ellentétesek a fogyatékossággal élő személyek jogairól szóló egyezménnyel, amelynek az EU részes fele.

Az európai szemeszter keretében a Bizottság nagy hangsúlyt fektet a munkaerőpiacról leginkább kiszorulók felzárkóztatására. Ezzel összefüggésben 2012–2013-ban számos országspecifikus ajánlás kiemelten foglalkozik a fogyatékos személyekkel.

A szociális beruházási csomag kiemeli annak szükségességét, hogy a tagállamok humántőkét növelő szolgáltatásokba ruházzanak be, növeljék az emberek lehetőségeit a társadalmi és gazdasági életben való részvételre, valamint megerősítsék az emberek képességét a kockázatok hatékony kezelésére. Az Európai Szociális Alapról szóló bizottsági rendeletjavaslat ([3]) ezzel a politikai hozzáállással összhangban a megfizethető, fenntartható és minőségi szolgáltatásokhoz, köztük az egészségügyi szolgáltatásokhoz és a közérdekű szociális szolgáltatásokhoz való hozzáférés biztosítását a társadalmi befogadással és a szegénység elleni küzdelemmel kapcsolatos célkitűzés teljesítésére szolgáló hat beruházási prioritás egyikeként azonosította.

([1]) COM(2010) 636 végleges.
([2]) COM(2013) 83 végleges.
([3]) COM(2011) 607.

(Slovenska različica)

Vprašanje za pisni odgovor E-010955/13
za Komisijo
Ádám Kósa (PPE) in Romana Jordan (PPE)
(26. september 2013)

Zadeva: Pravice invalidov

Obstajajo dokazi, da invalidi v Evropski uniji trpijo nesorazmerne posledice zmanjševanja javne porabe v številnih državah članicah, čeprav se dolgoročne posledice po državah razlikujejo. To močno vpliva na pravice, ki so jim zagotovljene s Konvencijo OZN o pravicah invalidov, Listino EU o temeljnih pravicah, Evropsko socialno listino ter uveljavljeno zakonodajo in konvencijami, ki zavezujejo EU.

Kako konkretno Komisija ukrepa v vlogah, ki jih ima v trojki in evropskem semestru ter pri priporočilih za posamezne države, da bi zagotovila izpolnjevanje obveznosti EU po teh instrumentih in uresničevanje ciljev evropske strategije za invalide 2010–2020? Kako namerava oceniti tveganja, ki jim utegnejo biti invalidi izpostavljeni med prerazporejanjem proračunske porabe?

Odgovor Viviane Reding v imenu Komisije
(18. december 2013)

Komisija namenja ustrezno pozornost položaju invalidov in bolj na splošno socialnim posledicam ukrepov za proračunsko konsolidacijo v državah EU.

Socialne storitve in politike so predvsem v pristojnosti držav članic EU, vendar Komisija z Evropsko strategijo o invalidnosti 2010–2020 ([1]), strategijo Evropa 2020, evropskim semestrom in svežnjem o socialnih naložbah ([2]) poudarja pomembnost socialne vključenosti, zaposljivosti in izobraževanja invalidov ter tako države članice spodbuja, da sprejmejo ustrezne reforme za zaščito najranljivejših pred posledicami krize. Ukrepi, ki se sprejmejo v teh političnih okvirih, ne smejo biti v nasprotju z namenom in ciljem Konvencije Združenih narodov o pravicah invalidov, h kateri je pristopila tudi EU.

V okviru evropskega semestra Komisija posebno pozornost namenja vključevanju oseb, ki so najbolj oddaljene od trga dela. Tako so bila v letih 2012 in 2013 številna priporočila za posamezne države povezana z invalidi.

Sveženj o socialnih naložbah poudarja, da morajo države članice vlagati v storitve, ki krepijo človeški kapital ter izboljšujejo zmožnost ljudi za sodelovanje v družbi in gospodarstvu, pa tudi njihovo sposobnost obvladovanja tveganj. V skladu s tem pristopom predlog Komisije za uredbo o Evropskem socialnem skladu ([3]) opredeljuje „dostop do cenovno sprejemljivih, trajnostnih in visoko kakovostnih storitev, vključno z zdravstvenimi in socialnimi storitvami splošnega interesa“ kot eno od šestih prednostnih naložb za doseganje cilja socialne vključenosti in boja proti revščini.

([1]) COM(2010)0636 final.
([2]) COM(2013)0083 final.
([3]) COM(2011)0607.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010955/13
to the Commission
Ádám Kósa (PPE) and Romana Jordan (PPE)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Rights of persons with disabilities

Evidence shows that persons with disabilities in the European Union are being disproportionately affected by public spending cuts in many Member States, the long-term effects of which differ from one country to another. This is having a serious impact on the rights of persons with disabilities guaranteed under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the European Social Charter, and other established laws and conventions to which the EU is bound.

What concrete measures is the Commission taking in its role both as part of the troika and in the European Semester process and country-specific recommendations to ensure that the EU`s commitments under these instruments and the goals of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 are being met? How does the Commission plan to assess the risks that people with disabilities may face during the reallocation of public spending?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(18 December 2013)

The Commission pays due attention to the situation of people with disabilities and more generally to the social impact of budgetary consolidation measures in EU countries.

While social services and policies are primarily the competence of EU Member States, the Commission encourages Member States to undertake adequate reforms to protect the most vulnerable from the consequences of the crisis by promoting social inclusion, employability and education of people with disabilities through the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 ([1]), the Europe 2020 strategy, the European Semester and the Social Investment Package ([2]). The actions undertaken within these policy frameworks cannot go against the purpose and object of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to which the EU is a Party.

In the context of the European Semester, the Commission puts considerable emphasis on inclusion of those furthest from the labour market. In this context, a number of Country Specific Recommendations in 2012-2013 focus on persons with disabilities.

The Social Investment Package underlines the need for Member States to invest in services that enhance human capital, raise people's capacity to participate in society and the economy and strengthen people's capability to cope with risks. In line with this policy approach, the Commission's proposal for the European Social Fund Regulation ([3]) identifies 'access to affordable, sustainable and high quality services including healthcare and social services of general interest' as one of the six investment priorities for achieving the objective of social inclusion and combating poverty.

([1]) COM(2010) 636 final.
([2]) COM(2013) 83 final.
([3]) COM(2011) 607.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010987/13
a la Comisión
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(26 de septiembre de 2013)

Asunto: Redes sociales y perfiles de fallecidos

El fenómeno de las redes sociales está planteando nuevos problemas que requieren soluciones adecuadas.

Uno de esos problemas es la eliminación de los perfiles de las personas fallecidas de las redes. En la situación actual, todo el material textual o audiovisual subido por la persona fallecida a la red queda ahí al alcance de cualquiera, situación que puede ser desagradable y penosa para sus familiares.

Los familiares de las personas fallecidas pueden intentar borrar el rastro de su pariente en las redes sociales, pero es un proceso largo y complicado que muchas veces no llega a buen fin.

¿Es consciente la Comisión del problema?

¿Piensa impulsar la Comisión alguna normativa que facilite el borrado de los perfiles de las personas fallecidas de las redes sociales?

Respuesta conjunta de la Sra. Reding en nombre de la Comisión
(4 de diciembre de 2013)

La Comisión remite a Sus Señorías a su respuesta a la pregunta parlamentaria E-007232/2012.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-011003/13
til Kommissionen
Christel Schaldemose (S&D)
(26. september 2013)

Om: Sikring af vores digitale arv

Borgerne har i stigende grad taget digitaliseringen til sig. Det er positivt, men det giver også udfordringer. Borgerne gemmer i stigende grad fotos, personlige papirer og dokumenter digitalt. Det er en god og sikker opbevaring, men det er næsten for sikkert.

En dansk afhandling af Astrid Waagestein fra IT Universitetet beskriver, hvordan fotos, breve, dagbøger med mere går tabt, når mennesker dør uden at have givet adgangskoder videre.

Vi er i disse år i gang med at opbygge en kæmpe digital arv, som vi ikke kan sikre de pårørende, fordi vi ikke har en lovgivning på området.

Er det noget Kommissionen er bevidst om, og er der lovgivningsinitiativer på vej for at sikre vores digital arv?

Er det noget Kommissionen mener, den kommende databeskyttelsesforordning tager hånd om?

Samlet svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Viviane Reding
(4. december 2013)

Kommissionen henviser de ærede medlemmer til sit svar på forespørgsel E-007232/2012 fra Europa-Parlamentet.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010987/13
to the Commission
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Social networks and profiles of deceased persons

The social networking phenomenon is posing new problems that require solutions.

One of these problems is the removal of the profiles of deceased persons from the networks. Currently, all textual and audiovisual material that deceased persons have uploaded to the network remains available to everyone, which may be unpleasant and painful for their families.

Members of the deceased person's family can try to erase traces of their relative in social networks, but this is a long, complicated process, often ending in failure.

Is the Commission aware of this problem?

Does the Commission intend to instigate legislation of some kind to facilitate the deletion of deceased persons' profiles from social networks?

Question for written answer E-011003/13
to the Commission
Christel Schaldemose (S&D)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Safeguarding our digital heritage

People have increasingly embraced digitisation. This is a positive thing, but it also presents challenges. People increasingly store photographs, personal papers and documents in digital format. This is a sound and secure form of storage, but it is almost too secure.

A Danish thesis by Astrid Waagestein from the IT University of Copenhagen describes how photographs, letters, diaries, etc. are lost when people die without passing on the access codes.

We are currently in the process of building up an enormous digital heritage, which we cannot safeguard for family members because we have no legislation in this area.

Is this something that the Commission is aware of, and are there any legislative initiatives on the horizon to safeguard our digital heritage?

Does it think this something that the forthcoming Data Protection Regulation will address?

Joint answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(4 December 2013)

The Commission would like to refer the Honourable Members to its reply to EP Question E-007232/2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011012/13
to the Commission
Liam Aylward (ALDE)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Prioritising farm safety

There are over 550 fatal accidents in farming across the EU each year and when these figures are examined further it becomes apparent that 6% of the workforce is suffering more than 30% of the tragedy in terms of fatalities.

The farm is not a typical work place and, as such, standard health and safety regulations are not always suitable or relevant. Factoring in the long hours in all weathers, the wide variety of hazards facing farmers — mechanical, electrical, chemical, biological, as well as respiratory disease and zoonosis, coupled with the isolated nature of the work — it is apparent that health and safety concerns in agriculture are not the same as in other sectors. The risk factors are higher and more frequent, and when it is considered that farms are often not just a place of work but also a family homestead the risks are multiplied.

It is disappointing that efforts to undertake an own-initiative report in the Parliament on improving farm safety have been halted, despite the joint commitment of the Agriculture and Employment committees. Given the importance of this issue for the farming sector and the need to constantly reform health and safety guidelines to reflect best practice in farming, what measures will the Commission take to improve the health and safety situation for Europe's farmers?

Does the Commission consider it beneficial to create a list of indicators to determine how farm safety can be improved and to facilitate a review of risk assessment measures regarding best farm practices?

In practical terms, could the Commission ensure that agricultural machinery operators increase safety features on all farm machinery, and particularly the PTO shaft?

What is the Commission's position on the establishment of a fund under the common agricultural policy to assist families affected by farm accidents, and to provide aid to farmers disabled as a result of farm accidents in terms of the adaption of farm equipment and machinery?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(18 November 2013)

The Commission notes with concern the high risk nature of farming across the EU and agrees it is a key sector of concern. A substantial quantity of good practice can be found on the DG EMPL and EU-OSHA websites ([1]) ([2]). It should be noted that the Commission has launched a comprehensive review of the 24 EU health and safety Directives. The Commission will inform the other EU institutions and bodies of the results (available by the end of 2015) and of any suggestions on how to improve the operation of the regulatory framework.

Investment under Rural development would allow farmer to have access to modern and safe mechanical equipment. Training activities to reduce work related accidents as well as advice to individual farmers covering occupational safety standards could also be funded. The uptake of these funding opportunities is only possible when Member States or regions include these measures in their Rural Development Programmes.

Concerning the safety features of mechanical equipment, the Commission is currently developing the implementing measures for the approval and market surveillance of agricultural and forestry vehicles, that will be adopted by 31 December 2014, according to the provisions of the regulation (EU) 167/2013 on the approval and market surveillance of agricultural and forestry vehicles ([3]). Those implementing measures include the safety requirements for the risks related to tractors (T and C category vehicles) at their workplace; in particular the ones corresponding to PTO shaft are covered through standards. Most of the workplace risks related to other agricultural machinery (R and S category vehicles) are covered by the directive 2006/42/EC ([4]).

([1]) https://osha.europa.eu/en/sector/agriculture
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=6785&type=2&furtherPubs=yes
([3]) OJ L 60, 2.3.2013.
([4]) OJ L 157, 9.6.2006.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011014/13
à la Commission
Jean-Luc Mélenchon (GUE/NGL)
(26 septembre 2013)

Objet: Négociations secrètes autour du grand marché transatlantique (GMT)

Les négociations sur l'accord transatlantique, entamées dans le plus grand secret par la Commission européenne, font l'objet de comptes rendus, tout aussi secrets. En effet, seuls les députés membres de la commission du commerce international (INTA) peuvent avoir accès aux comptes rendus des négociations, au cours d'une réunion se tenant à huis clos, sans ordre du jour et en anglais uniquement, sans interprétation dans les langues officielles de l'Union, ni même dans les autres langues de travail de la Commission (français, allemand).

Pourquoi la Commission se soumet-elle aux exigences de «confidentialité» du gouvernement états-unien, qui nous espionne par ailleurs?

La Commission attend-elle la signature des accords pour informer les représentants des citoyens de leur contenu?

Pourquoi ces comptes rendus secrets ne sont-ils rédigés que dans la langue des États-Unis? Devons-nous nous attendre à ce que l'anglais devienne prochainement la langue unique de l'Union européenne?

Réponse donnée par M. De Gucht au nom de la Commission
(14 novembre 2013)

La manière dont les négociations en vue d'un partenariat transatlantique sur le commerce et l'investissement (PTCI) se déroulent ne diffère pas d'autres négociations commerciales. Toute négociation internationale, en particulier en présence d'intérêts économiques importants, requiert un certain niveau de confidentialité. Mais confidentialité ne signifie pas secret et rien n'empêche la Commission d'informer le public sur les principaux éléments des négociations. C'est le cas pour le PTCI: pour répondre à l'intérêt suscité dans le public, la Commission a fait des efforts tout particuliers, par exemple en créant un site web consacré au PTCI ([1]), contenant des informations en plusieurs langues de l'Union. Pour la toute première fois, la Commission a publié des documents présentant la position initiale de l'Union européenne ([2]). Tout au long des négociations, la Commission est en contact avec les entreprises, les groupements de consommateurs, les syndicats, les organisations non gouvernementales et la société civile au sens large, y compris dans le cadre de ses dialogues avec la société civile. C'est dans ce contexte que la Commission a organisé une réunion à l'issue du premier cycle de négociations afin d'informer la société civile et de lui donner la possibilité d'interagir avec les négociateurs ([3]). La Commission tient les États membres, au sein du Conseil, et le Parlement européen soigneusement informés de l'évolution de la situation.

En communiquant ces informations au Parlement européen, la Commission respecte strictement l'accord-cadre conclu avec le Parlement européen en 2009 (articles 23 et 24, annexes 2 et 3) et tient la commission compétente (INTA) dûment informée ([4]). Le Parlement reçoit par ailleurs tous les documents qui sont communiqués au Conseil. La Commission informe la commission INTA avant et après chaque cycle de négociation. Les négociations en vue d'un PTCI représentent un élément de l'exercice de la démocratie: à l'issue des négociations, il reviendra au Conseil, c'est-à-dire aux représentants des gouvernements élus des États membres, et au Parlement européen d'adopter ou non l'accord.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/in-focus/ttip/

([2]) Ces documents sont des documents techniques présentés par la Commission à ses homologues américains au cours de la première série de négociations (à Washington, du 8 au 12 juillet 2013). Ils peuvent être consultés à l'adresse suivante: http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/press/index.cfm?id=943

([3]) http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2013/july/tradoc_151656.pdf

([4]) «Les informations sont, en règle générale, fournies via la commission parlementaire compétente et, le cas échéant, en séance plénière. Dans des cas dûment justifiés, ces informations sont fournies à plusieurs commissions parlementaires».

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011014/13
to the Commission
Jean-Luc Mélenchon (GUE/NGL)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Secret negotiations on the Transatlantic Free Trade Area (TFTA)

Records are being kept of the TFTA agreement negotiations, which have been embarked on by the Commission in the utmost secrecy. Those records are equally secret. Indeed, only MEPs on the Committee on International Trade may see those records — at meetings held in camera with no agenda, in English only, and with no interpretation into the EU's official languages or even into the Commission's other working languages (French and German).

Why is the Commission submitting to the demands of the United States' Government for 'confidentiality' — a government which, I might add, is spying on us?

Is the Commission waiting for the agreement to be signed before informing the public's representatives what is in it?

Why are the secret records being drawn up only in the language of the United States? Is English soon to become the EU's sole language?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(14 November 2013)

The way in which the negotiations for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) are conducted does not differ from any other trade negotiations. International negotiations, especially where they concern important economic interests, imply a certain degree of confidentiality. But confidentiality does not mean secrecy and does not prevent the Commission from informing the public of the main elements in the negotiations. This is the case for TTIP, where given the level of public interest, the Commission has made specific efforts, such as a dedicated TTIP website ([1]) with information in various EU languages. In an unprecedented step, the Commission has published the EU's initial position papers. ([2]).Throughout the negotiations, the Commission communicates with industry, consumer groups, trade unions, NGOs and civil society at large, including via its civil society dialogues. As such, the Commission organised a meeting after the first round of negotiations to inform civil society and enable them to interact with the negotiators. ([3]) The Commission keeps Member States, in the Council, and the European Parliament (EP) thoroughly informed of developments.

In sharing information with the EP, the Commission is strictly abiding by its 2009 Framework Agreement with the EP (art. 23-24, annexes 2 and 3) by providing all relevant information to the responsible Committee (INTA). ([4]) The EP also receives all the documents that are shared with the Council. The Commission briefs INTA before and after each negotiating round. The TTIP negotiations are part of a democratic process: at the end of the negotiations, it is the Council, i.e. representatives of elected Member States' governments, and the EP, that will approve or reject the agreement.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/in-focus/ttip/

([2]) These papers are technical documents that the Commission has presented to its US counterparts during the first negotiating round (Washington, 8-12 July 2013). They are available at http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/press/index.cfm?id=943

([3]) http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2013/july/tradoc_151656.pdf

([4]) 'Information shall, as a general rule, be provided through the responsible parliamentary committee and, where appropriate, at a plenary sitting. In duly justified cases, it shall be provided to more than one parliamentary committee'.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-011015/13
aan de Commissie
Philip Claeys (NI)
(26 september 2013)

Betreft: Steun aan FEMYSO

Verleent de Commissie enige financiële of andere steun aan het „Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations" (FEMYSO)? Zo ja, hoeveel bedroeg deze steun in 2011 en 2012?

Antwoord van mevrouw Vassiliou namens de Commissie
(22 november 2013)

FEMYSO heeft in het kader van het programma „Jeugd in actie" (2007-2013) drie subsidies ontvangen: twee exploitatiesubsidies (26 932 EUR in 2007 en 35 000 EUR in 2010) en één subsidie voor een actie in het kader van het Europees Vrijwilligerswerk (4 522 EUR in 2007).

In 2011 en 2012 heeft het programma geen subsidie aan deze organisatie verleend.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011015/13
to the Commission
Philip Claeys (NI)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Support for the Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations (FEMYSO)

Does the Commission provide any financial or support for FEMYSO? If so, what amount of support was provided in 2011 and 2012?

(Version française)

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Vassiliou au nom de la Commission
(22 novembre 2013)

Dans le cadre du programme Jeunesse en Action (2007-2013), Femyso a reçu trois subventions: deux subventions de fonctionnement (26 932 euros en 2007 et 35 000 euros en 2010) et une subvention à l'action dans le cadre du Service volontaire européen (4 522 eros en 2007).

Le programme n'a pas financé de subvention à cet organisme en 2011 ni en 2012.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-011016/13
do Komisji
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD) oraz Tadeusz Cymański (EFD)
(26 września 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Problem Natury2000 w Polsce na przykładzie Doliny Bobrzy

Natura2000 poprzez, co podnoszą znawcy problemu, rozbieżności w stanie faktycznym ostoi obszarów chronionych i braku właściwej pielęgnacji stanowi ogromny problem dla wielu mieszkańców Polski. Doskonałym tego przykładem jest obszar Natury2000 „Dolina Bobrzy" w województwie świętokrzyskim. Z ekspertyzy (w której jesteśmy posiadaniu), przeprowadzonej przez specjalistę świadczącego usługi ekologiczne wynika, że ekspresowe, w tym przypadku w okresie pół roku, wyznaczanie cennych przyrodniczo obszarów obejmowało zaledwie jeden, niepełny sezon wegetacyjny, natomiast niezwykle urozmaicony, cenny przyrodniczo obszar województwa świętokrzyskiego, jak i wspomniany krótki czas, „musiał odbić się na jakości merytorycznej wyznaczonych ostoi". W miejscu tym należy też wskazać na fakt, gdzie specjaliści twierdzą, że w „Dolinie Bobrzy" swoje walory bezpowrotnie utraciła niepielęgnowana w ramach programu Natura2000 przyroda. Dodatkowo należy także podnieść, że Natura2000 często burzy układ przestrzenny w części z gmin, na terenie których występuje oraz wprowadza chaos inwestycyjny.

1. Czy Komisja ma wiedzę na temat problemów związanych z rozbieżnościami w stanie faktycznym ostoi obszarów Natury2000 w Polsce?

2. Czy Komisja jest świadoma, że obszary Natury2000 w Polsce często nie są pielęgnowane, przez co bezpowrotnie utraciły swoje walory przyrodnicze, tak jak w przypadku Natury2000 „Dolina Bobrzy"?

3. Czy Komisja widzi możliwość ingerencji w pewną część obszarów Natury2000 „Dolina Bobrzy", w sytuacji gdy de facto Natura2000 może na wspomnianym obszarze nie występować w dokładnie pierwotnie naniesionych obszarach, dodatkowo bezpowrotnie utraciła swoje walory przyrodnicze, a w sposób jednoznaczny szkodzi ona ważnemu interesowi społecznemu mieszkańców, w związku z zakładanymi inwestycjami infrastrukturalnymi?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Janeza Potočnika w imieniu Komisji
(21 listopada 2013 r.)

Komisja nie ma informacji na temat żadnych poważnych błędów w sposobie wyznaczania obszarów Natura2000 w Polsce. Komisja jest świadoma, że w niektórych przypadkach, w wyniku wyznaczenia takich obszarów w stosunkowo krótkim czasie, ich granice nie w pełni odpowiadają miejscu występowania danego typu siedlisk lub siedlisk gatunków będących przedmiotem zainteresowania Wspólnoty. Polskie władze naprawiają jednak takie błędy – granice obszarów są często korygowane w trakcie opracowywania planów zarządzania obszarami Natura2000 (tzw. planów zadań ochronnych). Zgodnie z informacjami dostępnymi Komisji taki plan jest obecnie przygotowywany dla obszaru „Dolina Bobrzy". Jeżeli władze lokalne uznają, że granice należy poprawić, mogą się w tej sprawie skontaktować z Regionalną Dyrekcją Ochrony Środowiska w Kielcach. Należy jednak zauważyć, że wszelkie takie korekty muszą się opierać wyłącznie na przesłankach naukowych.

Komisji nie są znane żadne szczególne problemy dotyczące zarządzania obszarem „Dolina Bobrzy". Wiadomo jednak, że wiele obszarów Natura2000 rzeczywiście wymaga aktywnego zarządzania. Finansowe wsparcie takich działań można otrzymać z funduszy europejskich, przede wszystkim z EFRROW, funduszy strukturalnych i spójności oraz funduszy LIFE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011016/13
to the Commission
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD) and Tadeusz Cymański (EFD)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Trouble with Natura 2000 in Poland, for example in Dolina Bobrzy

Experts assert that the Natura 2000 programme is resulting in inconsistencies on the ground in protected areas, that it is neglecting such areas, and that this represents a major problem for many Poles. A good example of this is the 'Dolina Bobrzy' Natura 2000 site in Świętokrzyskie province. We have obtained an analysis from an ecological services expert which shows that the swift designation of that valuable wildlife area, which in this case was carried out within six months, only took account of a single, incomplete growing season. Yet the designation of that exceptionally diverse and ecologically valuable region of Świętokrzyskie province, as well as the time frame within which it was carried out, ought to have reflected the specific characteristics of the sites. Furthermore, experts point out that the natural characteristics of Dolina Bobrzy have been irreversibly damaged due to neglect under the Natura 2000 programme. It should also be added that Natura 2000 often has an adverse effect on the layout of host communities and on investments.

1. Is the Commission aware of the problems caused by inconsistencies at Natura 2000 sites in Poland?

2. Is it aware that Natura 2000 sites in Poland are often neglected, resulting in their natural characteristics being irreversibly damaged, as has happened in Dolina Bobrzy?

3. The programme has damaged the natural characteristics of the site and it is harming theresidents' community interests by impacting on planned infrastructure investments. Willthe Commission, therefore, consider intervening with respect to certain parts of theDolina Bobrzy site, given that this Natura 2000 site is *de facto* able to extend beyond theoriginally designated area?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(21 November 2013)

The Commission is not aware of any serious inconsistencies regarding designation of Natura 2000 sites in Poland. The Commission is aware of the fact that the designation process, carried out over a relatively short time, resulted in some cases in designation of the sites for which the boundaries do not necessarily precisely correspond to location of the habitat types or habitats of the species of Community interest. The Polish authorities, however, are rectifying this problem and boundaries are often corrected in the process of preparing Natura 2000 management plans (plany zadań ochronnych). According to information available to the Commission such a plan is being prepared for the site 'Dolina Bobrzy'. If the local authorities consider that the boundaries should be corrected they may contact the Regional Directorate for Environmental Protection in Kielce. It has to be noted, however, that any such correction must be based solely on scientific considerations.

The Commission is not aware of any particular problems related to a lack of management on the 'Dolina Bobrzy' site. It is recognised, however, that many Natura 2000 sites indeed require active management measures. European funds, particularly EAFRD, structural and cohesion as well as LIFE funds can contribute to financially supporting such measures.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011086/13
an die Kommission
Ulrike Lunacek (Verts/ALE)
(30. September 2013)

Betrifft: Gutachtertätigkeit von Europol-Direktoren

Laut Nachrichtensendung Zeit im Bild 2 des Österreichischen Rundfunks (ORF) vom 26. September 2013 hat der vormalige Direktor von Europol Gutachten für die Regierung von Kasachstan verfasst. Laut ORF-Bericht werden in diesen Gutachten auch für die Europäische Union sicherheitspolitisch relevante Sachverhalte erörtert. Für einen bedeutenden österreichischen Staatsrechtler könnte diese Gutachtertätigkeit durchaus eine Verletzung der Pflicht zur Amtsverschwiegenheit sowie die Unterstützung eines „fremdennachrichtlichen Dienstes zu Lasten Österreichs" darstellen.

Daraus ergeben sich folgenden Fragen:

Lässt sich diese Gutachtertätigkeit des ehemaligen Europol-Direktors mit seinem früheren Amt vereinbaren?

Wie sehen die Cooling off- bzw. Amtsverschwiegenheits-Regeln für Europol-Direktoren aus?

Welche Stelle ist bei derartigen Vorwürfen für die Klärung der Frage zuständig, ob hier eine Unvereinbarkeit vorliegt?

Antwort von Herrn Šefčovič im Namen der Kommission
(9. Januar 2014)

Der ehemalige Direktor war 2005 vom Rat für einen Zeitraum von vier Jahren als Direktor von Europol ernannt worden. Er schied aus dem Amt aus, nachdem er in dieser Position nicht wiederernannt wurde. Nach seinem Weggang von Europol arbeitete er als deutscher Regierungsbeamter weiter. Im Jahr 2010 trat er in den Ruhestand. Die von ihm nach seiner Pensionierung ausgeübten beratenden Tätigkeiten, insbesondere seine Aufgaben und Pflichten als pensionierter Polizeibeamter, unterliegen in erster Linie dem deutschen Verwaltungsrecht und müssten insbesondere vor diesem Hintergrund bewertet werden.

Jeder Europol-Beamte ist in Bezug auf bedeutende Informationen, die der Geheimhaltung unterliegen, zu Verschwiegenheit und Geheimhaltung verpflichtet. Dies gilt auch nach seinem Ausscheiden aus dem Dienst, es sei denn, diese Informationen sind bereits veröffentlicht oder der Öffentlichkeit zugänglich. Gemäß Artikel 16 des Statuts ist der Beamte nach dem Ausscheiden aus dem Dienst verpflichtet, bei der Annahme bestimmter Tätigkeiten oder Vorteile ehrenhaft und zurückhaltend zu sein ([1]).

Für den Fall eines Verstoßes gegen die genannten Pflichten durch einen ehemaligen Bediensteten von Europol enthält Anhang IX des Statuts Bestimmungen über Disziplinarverfahren. Gemäß dem Beschluss des Verwaltungsrates von Europol (dem die Kommission als Mitglied angehört) können gegen Mitglieder des Europol-Direktoriums ([2]) zusätzliche Verfahren angestrengt werden.

Da es sich bei dem betreffenden Beamten um einen deutschen Beamten handelt, ist darauf hinzuweisen, dass im Falle eines Verstoßes gegen die genannten Aufgaben und Pflichten die deutschen Rechtsvorschriften über die während des Ruhestands ausgeübten Tätigkeiten Anwendung fänden. Zudem ist die Kommission nicht zuständig für Interessenkonflikte in Agenturen, auch wenn sie in ihrer Eigenschaft als Mitglied des Verwaltungsrats von Europol für die Anwendung der genannten Vorschriften mitverantwortlich ist.

([1]) Artikel 16.
Der Beamte ist nach dem Ausscheiden aus dem Dienst verpflichtet, bei der Annahme bestimmter Tätigkeiten oder Vorteile ehrenhaft und zurückhaltend zu sein.
Ein Beamter, der beabsichtigt, vor Ablauf von zwei Jahren nach seinem Ausscheiden aus dem Dienst gegen Entgelt oder unentgeltlich eine berufliche Tätigkeit aufzunehmen, muss sein Organ hiervon in Kenntnis setzen. Steht die Tätigkeit in Zusammenhang mit der Tätigkeit, die der Beamte in den letzten drei Jahren seiner Dienstzeit ausgeführt hat
und könnte sie zu einem Konflikt mit den legitimen Interessen des Organs führen, so kann die Anstellungsbehörde unter Berücksichtigung des dienstlichen Interesses beschließen, dem Beamten die Aufnahme dieser Tätigkeit zu untersagen, oder vorbehaltlich von ihr als angemessen angesehener Auflagen ihre Zustimmung erteilen. Das Organ teilt dem Betreffenden nach Anhörung des Paritätischen Ausschusses seine Entscheidung binnen 30 Arbeitstagen nach seiner Benachrichtigung mit. Wird eine Entscheidung nicht binnen 30 Arbeitstagen mitgeteilt, so gilt dies als Zustimmung.

([2]) Beschluss vom 4. Juni 2009 (ABl. L 348 vom 29.12.2009, S. 3).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011086/13
to the Commission
Ulrike Lunacek (Verts/ALE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Advisory work of Europol directors

According to the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation's (ORF's) news programme *Zeit im Bild 2* broadcast on 26 September 2013, the former director of Europol has drawn up advisory reports for the Government of Kazakhstan. According to the ORF report, these advisory reports also discussed matters of relevance to European Union security policy. A renowned Austrian public law expert is of the opinion that this advisory work could well constitute a violation of the duty of secrecy and the supporting of a 'foreign information service to the detriment of Austria'.

This raises the following questions:

Is this advisory work by the former Europol director compatible with his previous office?

What are the cooling off or secrecy rules for Europol directors?

In the event of allegations of this nature, which agency is responsible for investigating whether there has been a violation in this case?

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(9 January 2014)

The Director was appointed by the Council in 2005 for a four-year period as Director of Europol. He left office after not being reappointed in this position. Following his departure from Europol, he continued to work as a German Government official. He retired in 2010. Any of his advisory activities undertaken after his retirement, in particular his duties and obligations as a retired police officer, are primarily governed by German administrative law and would have to be assessed notably against this background.

Every Europol official has a duty of discretion and confidentiality relating to information significant enough to require confidentiality, even after termination of office, unless this information has been made public or accessible to the public. According to Article 16 of the EU Staff Regulations an official, after leaving the service, continues to be bound by the duty to behave with integrity and discretion as regards the acceptance of certain appointments or benefits ([1]).

In case of breach of these duties by a former Europol employee, Annex IX of the EU Staff Regulations provides for rules on disciplinary proceedings. Additional procedures can be brought against members of the Europol Directorate according to the decision of the Management Board of Europol ([2]).

It is important to note as the official in question was a German civil servant, it is German law on activities carried out during retirement that would apply in the case of any breach of those duties and obligations. Furthermore, the Commission is not responsible for issues of conflict of interest arising in agencies, although it does share responsibility for applying the aforementioned rules in its capacity as a member of the Europol Management Board.

([1]) Article 16.
An official shall, after leaving the service, continue to be bound by the duty to behave with integrity and discretion as regards the acceptance of certain appointments or benefits.
Officials intending to engage in an occupational activity, whether gainful or not, within two years of leaving the service shall inform their institution thereof. If that activity is related to the work carried out by the official during the last three years of service and could lead to a conflict with the legitimate interests of the institution, the Appointing Authority may, having regard to the interests of the service, either forbid him from undertaking it or give its approval subject to any conditions it thinks fit. The institution shall, after consulting the Joint Committee, notify its decision within 30 working days of being so informed. If no such notification has been made by the end of that period, this shall be deemed to constitute implicit acceptance.

([2]) (Of which the Commission is a member) decision of 4 June 2009 (OJ L 348/3 of 29.12.2009).

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011089/13
alla Commissione
Aldo Patriciello (PPE)
(30 settembre 2013)

Oggetto: Misure sanitarie adottate da regioni italiane in contrasto con la direttiva sull'assistenza sanitaria transfrontaliera

La Regione Campania, mediante decreto n. 156 del 31 dicembre 2012, pubblicato sul Bollettino ufficiale regionale n. 19 dell'8 aprile 2013, ha subordinato la possibilità per i cittadini campani di accedere a determinate prestazioni sanitarie presso strutture o professionisti operanti in regioni confinanti con la Campania alla previa acquisizione di un'autorizzazione dell'azienda sanitaria locale di appartenenza.

Altre regioni italiane, tra cui la Regione Molise, per uscire dal deficit sanitario in cui versano, contemplano, tra le soluzioni ipotizzate dal tavolo tecnico governativo, di varare all'interno dei propri discutibili piani sanitari di rientro misure protezionistiche tese a contingentare il flusso di mobilità transfrontaliera regionale dei pazienti.

In Italia ben otto regioni sono al momento sottoposte a piani di rientro finalizzati a verificare la qualità delle prestazioni e a raggiungere il riequilibrio dei conti dei servizi sanitari regionali, e pertanto altre regioni potrebbero utilizzare azioni tese alla chiusura delle proprie «frontiere sanitarie regionali» come pseudo-soluzioni ai disavanzi esistenti.

Simili misure protezionistiche potrebbero creare pericolosissimi precedenti normativi, ai quali altre regioni o paesi europei potrebbero far riferimento in futuro, in contrasto con l'articolo 114 TFUE, il cui scopo è di migliorare il funzionamento del mercato interno e la libera circolazione di merci, persone e servizi.

Non ritiene la Commissione doveroso monitorare se tale fenomeno sia conforme con la libertà di scelta e di spostamento dei pazienti, conformemente alle normative comunitaria in tema di tutela della salute?

Non ritiene la Commissione doveroso impedire che la crisi economica possa determinare scelte protezionistiche di tale tipo da parte di amministrazioni pubbliche?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(3 gennaio 2014)

La Commissione rinvia l'Onorevole deputato alla propria risposta all'interrogazione scritta E-007562/2013 ([1]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011089/13
to the Commission
Aldo Patriciello (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Healthcare measures adopted by Italian regional authorities in violation of the directive on cross-border healthcare

Under Decree No 156 of 31 December 2012, published in the Official Journal of the Region of Campania No 19 of 8 April 2013, the people of Campania must obtain permission from their local health unit before accessing certain health services provided in facilities or by practitioners located in neighbouring regions.

To find a way out of the health budget deficit in which they find themselves, other Italian regional authorities, including that of Molise, are considering, from the solutions put forward by the governmental technical panel, introducing protectionist measures in their questionable financial recovery plans for healthcare, in order to impose a quota on the flow of patients across regional borders.

In Italy, as many as eight regions are currently subject to financial recovery plans intended to ascertain the quality of services and to rebalance regional health service budgets, and therefore other regions could use measures to close their 'regional healthcare borders' as a pseudo solution to existing imbalances.

Such protectionist measures could set very dangerous legal precedents to which other EU regions or countries could refer in the future in violation of Article 114 TFEU, which aims to improve the functioning of the internal market and the free movement of goods, persons and services.

Does the Commission not believe that it must monitor whether such a practice is in line with patients' freedom of choice and movement, in accordance with EU health protection legislation?

Does the Commission not believe that it must prevent the economic crisis from giving rise to protectionist choices of this kind by governments?

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

The Commission would like to refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-007562/2013 ([1]).

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

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011103/13
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(30 settembre 2013)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Sanzioni verso i paesi che non tutelano le minoranze religiose

Dopo la crisi a Nairobi, col commando di fondamentalisti islamici che hanno preso d'assalto il centro commerciale Westgate di Nairobi, in Kenya, lo scorso 21 settembre, provocando 52 vittime, e l'attacco kamikaze in una chiesa storica di Peshawar, in Pakistan, lo scorso 22 settembre, che ha provocato oltre 100 feriti, si fa sempre più pressante la problematica della vulnerabilità delle minoranze cristiane ai vili attacchi terroristici a cui sono esposte anche per via della scarsa protezione di cui godono nei rispettivi paesi.

Chiedo quindi all'Alto Rappresentante:

1. se le istituzioni europee possono condannare con fermezza queste stragi di cui, ancora una volta, sono vittime persone di religione cristiana e altre minoranze religiose;

2. che l'UE prenda urgentemente dei provvedimenti nei confronti di quei paesi che non tutelano le minoranze religiose e si dimostrano deboli e tolleranti nei confronti delle organizzazioni criminali terroristiche.

Risposta dell'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente Catherine Ashton a nome della Commissione
(18 dicembre 2013)

L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente rammenta le sue dichiarazioni del 22 ([1]) e del 23 settembre 2013 ([2]), nelle quali condannava fermamente entrambi gli attentati, nonché la lettera che i presidenti della Commissione e del Consiglio europeo hanno inviato al presidente kenyota il 23 settembre 2013 ([3]) per esprimere la solidarietà dell'Unione europea e ribadirne l'impegno costante.

Come ricordato nei recenti orientamenti dell'UE in materia di libertà di religione e di credo ([4]), gli Stati svolgono un ruolo di primo piano nel garantire tale libertà, ponendo in essere misure efficaci volte a prevenire o sanzionare le violazioni e a garantire la responsabilità. L'UE sostiene le iniziative avviate da tali paesi per contrastare la radicalizzazione e prevenire gli atti di terrorismo.

Il Consiglio Affari esteri del giugno 2013 ha ribadito l'impegno dell'UE a collaborare con il Pakistan per combattere il terrorismo, anche assicurando i colpevoli alla giustizia. L'Unione europea, partner di lunga data del Corno d'Africa nella lotta al terrorismo, collabora altresì con tutti i paesi della regione. Essa mantiene stretti rapporti con i partner internazionali per potenziare il sostegno e le azioni di follow-up contro la radicalizzazione e il finanziamento del terrorismo, sia in Kenya che nella regione.

Nell'ambito del programma a lungo termine dello strumento per la stabilità 2013 l'UE sta già sostenendo le iniziative del Pakistan (5 milioni di euro) e del Corno d'Africa (2 milioni di euro) contro l'estremismo violento, in collaborazione con autorità locali, comunità, università, ONG ([5]) e i media.

In un più ampio contesto, l'UE è membro del Forum internazionale per la lotta contro il terrorismo, che ha istituito un centro specifico per la lotta contro l'estremismo violento ad Abu Dhabi e un gruppo di lavoro ad hoc sulla questione. Il suo obiettivo principale consiste nel sensibilizzare al problema della radicalizzazione, intensificare la ricerca e promuovere il dialogo a tutti i livelli. L'UE coopera inoltre con le Nazioni Unite e, in particolare, con l'Alleanza delle civiltà, che si occupa del dialogo interreligioso.

([1]) http://eeas.europa.eu/statements/docs/2013/130922_01_en.pdf
([2]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/138792.pdf
([3]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-811_en.htm
([4]) Libertà di religione o di credo.
([5]) Organizzazioni non governative.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011103/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Sanctions for countries that do not protect religious minorities

After the crisis in Nairobi on 21 September 2013, in which a group of Islamic fundamentalists stormed the Westgate shopping centre in Nairobi, Kenya, killing 52, and the suicide attack on a historic church in Peshawar, Pakistan, on 22 September 2013, which left over 100 inured, the vulnerability of Christian minorities to the vile terrorist attacks to which they are exposed, including as a result of the little protection offered to them in those countries, is an increasingly pressing issue.

1. Can the European institutions firmly condemn these attacks which once again victimised Christians and members of other religious minorities?

2. Will the EU take urgent action against those countries that do not protect religious minorities and are powerless and tolerant of criminal terrorist organisations?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(18 December 2013)

The HR/VP points to her statements of 22 ([1]) and 23 September 2013 ([2]), strongly condemning both attacks, as well as the letter sent by the President of the Commission and the President of the European Council to the Kenyan President on 23 September 2013 ([3]), expressing the EU's solidarity and continued commitment.

As recalled in the recent EU guidelines on FoRB ([4]), States have a primary role in ensuring FoRB. They must put in place effective measures to prevent or sanction violations of FoRB and ensure accountability. The EU support these countries' efforts to tackle radicalisation and to prevent acts of terrorism.

The June 2013 Foreign Affairs Council reiterated the EU's commitment to working with Pakistan to address terrorism, including bringing perpetrators to justice. A longstanding partner of the Horn of Africa in facing terrorism, the EU also cooperates with all countries of that region. The EU is liaising with international partners to increase support and follow-up action to combat radicalisation and financing of terrorism, both in Kenya and in the region.

Under the Instrument for Stability long-term programme in 2013, the EU is already supporting efforts in Pakistan (EUR 5 million) and Horn of Africa (EUR 2 million) to counter violent extremism, working with local authorities, communities, universities, NGOs ([5]) and media.

On a broader scale, the EU partners with the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum, which has a specific centre on countering violent extremism in Abu Dhabi and a dedicated working group on this issue. Its key focus is to promote awareness on radicalisation, increase research and promote dialogue at all levels. The EU also cooperates with the UN, and notably the Alliance of Civilisations, that addresses inter-religious dialogue.

([1]) http://eeas.europa.eu/statements/docs/2013/130922_01_en.pdf
([2]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/138792.pdf
([3]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-811_en.htm
([4]) Freedom of Religion or Belief.
([5]) Non-governmental organisations.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011104/13
alla Commissione
Sergio Berlato (PPE)
(30 settembre 2013)

Oggetto: Utilizzo indebito dei dati del sistema Swift e violazione delle libertà fondamentali dei cittadini europei

La stampa internazionale ha dato notizia dell'apertura, da parte delle autorità competenti di Bruxelles, di un'inchiesta volta a verificare la natura di alcune intrusioni illegali nel sistema della Belgacom, il più grande gestore di telecomunicazioni telefoniche e via Internet attivo nella capitale d'Europa. Dai primi resoconti sembrerebbe che si sia trattato di un'attività di spionaggio in cui sarebbe stata coinvolta anche la *National security agency* (NSA) statunitense. Se la ricostruzione fosse confermata dagli inquirenti, ci troveremmo di fronte all'ennesimo caso di violazione della sovranità europea nonché delle libertà fondamentali dei suoi cittadini e delle sue imprese. Inoltre, sono emerse serie preoccupazioni in merito al possibile utilizzo indebito da parte degli Stati Uniti d'America dei dati di carattere finanziario trasferiti dal sistema Swift in seguito all'accordo UE-USA. Dopo il caso *Echelon* e il più recente scandalo relativo al sistema PRISM, la vicenda Belgacom dovrebbe dimostrare l'esistenza di un grave pericolo per la riservatezza delle comunicazioni telematiche e telefoniche in Europa. Tutte le vicende ricordate, compreso l'allarme relativo all'utilizzo del sistema Swift, hanno come copertura legale la lotta al terrorismo internazionale.

Premesso ciò, si chiede alla Commissione:

1. se intende rivedere gli accordi UE-USA sul trasferimento dei dati finanziari del sistema Swift;

2. quali provvedimenti ha intenzione di attuare per garantire una maggiore tutela della riservatezza delle telecomunicazioni in Europa;

3. se ritiene opportuno proporre la costituzione di una commissione d'inchiesta speciale per fare piena luce sul caso PRISM e le vicende affini.

Risposta di Cecilia Malmström a nome della Commissione
(7 gennaio 2014)

Per quanto riguarda l'accordo sul trattamento e il trasferimento di dati finanziari nell'ambito della lotta al terrorismo (TFTP) tra Unione europea e Stati Uniti, la Commissione ha svolto consultazioni in virtù dell'articolo 19 dell'accordo per valutare se la sua attuazione risultasse compromessa; poiché da tali consultazioni non sono emersi elementi che indicassero una violazione dell'accordo da parte degli Stati Uniti, la Commissione non intende proporre la sospensione dell'accordo.

Sulla questione della protezione dei dati personali, in particolare nel contesto del trasferimento di tali dati tramite telecomunicazioni, la Commissione si rallegra della votazione nella commissione LIBE sul pacchetto di riforma in materia di protezione dei dati, considerandolo un importante segnale di progresso nella procedura legislativa, ed è determinata a far sì che tale riforma sia rapidamente adottata prima della fine della legislatura.

La Commissione rinvia inoltre l'onorevole parlamentare alla sua precedente risposta all'interrogazione scritta E-009773/13.

In seguito all'adozione della riforma sulla protezione dei dati, la Commissione valuterà se occorra ancora rafforzare le disposizioni specifiche riguardo alla riservatezza delle comunicazioni, quali attualmente previste dalla direttiva 2002/58/CE relativa alla tutela della vita privata nel settore delle comunicazioni elettroniche. La Commissione ha altresì proposto una direttiva recante misure volte a garantire un livello comune elevato di sicurezza delle reti e dell'informazione nell'Unione ([1]), che è attualmente oggetto di prima lettura in seno al Parlamento europeo e al Consiglio.

([1]) COM(2013)48 def., 2013/0027 (COD), 7.2.2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011104/13
to the Commission
Sergio Berlato (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Misuse of Swift system data and violation of the fundamental freedoms of European citizens

According to international press reports, the competent authorities in Brussels have launched an investigation to determine the nature of a number of illegal intrusions into the system of Belgacom, the largest telephone and Internet telecommunications operator in the capital of Europe. Initial findings seem to suggest it is espionage involving the US National Security Agency (NSA). If the reconstruction were to be confirmed by the investigators, we would be facing yet another case of EU sovereignty being violated, not to mention the fundamental freedoms of its citizens and businesses. In addition, a number of concerns have been raised over the possible misuse by the US of financial data transferred from the Swift system under the EU-US agreement. After the Echelon case and the latest scandal over the PRISM system, the Belgacom affair is set to prove that the confidentiality of online and telephone communications in Europe is seriously at risk. All the events referred to, including the alert over the use of the Swift system, are covered by international anti-terrorist legislation.

1. Does the Commission intend to review EU-US agreements on the transfer of financial data from the Swift system?

2. What steps will it take to ensure greater protection of the confidentiality of telecommunications in Europe?

3. Does it think it should propose setting up a special investigation committee to get to the bottom of the PRISM case and similar incidents?

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

With regard to the EU-US TFTP Agreement, the Commission conducted consultations under Article 19 of the Agreement in order to assess whether the implementation of the Agreement might have been affected. These consultations have not revealed any elements indicating a breach of the Agreement by the US side. The Commission is therefore not going to propose suspending this Agreement.

On the issue of protection of personal data, including when transferred through telecommunications, the Commission welcomes the vote in the LIBE Committee on the data protection reform package. The Commission considers that the vote is an important signal of progress in the legislative procedure and is committed to ensuring a swift adoption of the data protection reform before the end of this parliamentary term.

The Commission further refers the Honourable Member to its previous reply to Written Question E-009773/13.

Following the adoption of the Data Protection Reform, the Commission will consider whether there remains a need to strengthen the specific provisions regarding confidentiality of communications as currently set out in Directive 2002/58/EC on privacy and electronic communications. To enhance the security of network and information systems across Europe, the Commission has proposed a directive concerning measures to ensure a high common level of network and information security across the Union ([1]). The proposal is undergoing first reading before Parliament and Council.

([1]) COM(2013) 48 final, 2013/0027 (COD), 7.2.2013.

(České znění)

Otázka k písemnému zodpovězení E-011111/13
Komisi
Jan Březina (PPE)
(30. září 2013)

Předmět: Prohlášení pana Tajaniho ohledně politiky EU v oblasti změny klimatu

Komisař pro průmysl Antonio Tajani ve svém nedávném projevu řekl, že „potřebujeme novou energetickou politiku. Musíme přestat předstírat, protože nemůžeme obětovat evropský průmysl cílům v oblasti boje proti změně klimatu, které nejsou realistické a nejsou uplatňovány po celém světě."

1. Jak hodlá pan Tajani tato slova uplatnit v praxi? Jaká konkrétní opatření přijme na pomoc evropskému průmyslu?

2. Je pan Tajani připraven bojovat proti snahám o stanovení nových cílů pro boj proti změně klimatu na rok 2030?

3. Jaké má pan Tajani v Komisi pro své prohlášení spojence? Sdílí jeho názor většina členů Komise, nebo se jedná spíše o prohlášení jednotlivce bez širší podpory v daném orgánu?

Odpověď Antonia Tajaniho jménem Komise
(17. prosince 2013)

Zvyšování konkurenceschopnosti evropského průmyslu je požadavkem nezbytným pro vyřešení mnohých společenských otázek, mezi něž patří úspěšný boj proti změně klimatu.

Strategie Komise „Evropa 2020" zejména zmiňuje – jako dvě vzájemně se posilující priority – udržitelný růst založený na účinném využívání zdrojů a nízkouhlíkové a konkurenceschopné hospodářství. Mezi konkurenceschopností, snižováním emisí uhlíku a účinným využíváním zdrojů není totiž žádný vnitřní rozpor. Nákladově efektivní zvyšování energetické účinnosti může být například tzv. opatřením „no regret" v balíčku opatření, která jsou nutná k tomu, abychom pokročili na cestě ke konkurenceschopnému nízkouhlíkovému hospodářství. Adekvátní politiky v oblasti klimatu a energetiky mohou přispět k zatraktivnění investic a mohou podnítit vznik pracovních míst i růst v odvětví nízkouhlíkových a energetických technologií.

V loňském sdělení o průmyslové politice Komise vyjmenovala šest prioritních aktivit na trzích, které by mohly významně přispět ke splnění cílů v oblasti klimatu a energetiky.

Zelená kniha Komise z března 2013 o rámci politiky v oblasti klimatu a energetiky do roku 2030 nastínila řadu klíčových otázek, mezi jinými také to, jak politiky v oblasti klimatu a energetiky definovat tak, aby podpořily konkurenceschopnost hospodářství EU. Nadcházející rámec do roku 2030 se také bude zabývat konkurenceschopností a zejména tím, jak může EU podpořit vlastní konkurenceschopnost v rámci politik v oblasti klimatu a energetiky a s přihlédnutím k mezinárodní účasti v boji proti změně klimatu.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011111/13
to the Commission
Jan Březina (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Antonio Tajani's statement on the EU climate change policy

In a speech recently given by the Commissioner for Industry, Antonio Tajani, it was stated that 'we need a new energy policy. We have to stop pretending, because we can't sacrifice Europe's industry for climate goals that are not realistic, and are not being enforced worldwide.'

1. How is Antonio Tajani going to put these words in practice? What concrete steps will he take to help European industry?

2. Is Antonio Tajani ready to fight against the efforts to set new climate change goals for 2030?

3. Who supports Antonio Tajani's statement in the Commission? Is his approach shared by the majority of Commission members or does it represent an isolated activity without the broader support of that Institution?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(17 December 2013)

Improving Europe's industrial competitiveness is an important requirement for the solution of many societal challenges, including successfully tackling climate change.

The Commission's 'Europe 2020' strategy has in particular put forward, as mutually reinforcing priorities, sustainable growth based on resource efficiency and a low carbon and competitive economy. Indeed, there is no intrinsic contradiction between competitiveness, decarbonisation and resource efficiency. For instance, cost-efficient improvements of energy efficiency can be 'no regret' measures in the package of measures necessary to make progress on our path towards a competitive low carbon economy. Adequate climate and energy policies can help to incentivise investment and can create jobs and growth in low-carbon and energy technologies.

In last year's industrial policy Communication the Commission identified six priority action lines on markets which could make substantial contributions to climate and energy objectives.

The Commission's Green Paper on a 2030 framework for climate and energy policies of March 2013 outlined a number of key issues, including how climate and energy policies can be defined to foster the competitiveness of the EU economy. The upcoming 2030 framework will also include competitiveness considerations, notably how the EU can foster its competitiveness as part of its climate and energy policy framework, and taking into account international participation in the fight against climate change.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011113/13
à la Commission
Véronique De Keyser (S&D)
(30 septembre 2013)

Objet: Moyens d'action dont dispose la Commission à l'égard d'Israël

En réponse à ma question P-002683/2013, la Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante déclarait: «L'UE n'encourage pas le recours aux sanctions commerciales dans ses relations bilatérales avec Israël. (…) Il convient de n'envisager d'adopter des sanctions commerciales que si tout autre instrument fait défaut, ce qui n'est pas le cas dans le cadre des relations bilatérales de l'UE avec Israël».

Pouvez-vous décrire chacun des moyens d'action autres que des sanctions commerciales dont l'Union dispose et dont elle a fait usage au cours des vingt dernières années pour amener Israël à modifier sa politique en vue de la mettre en accord avec le droit international suite aux nombreuses demandes formelles, écrites ou orales, que lui a faites l'UE, et décrire les effets concrets que l'utilisation de ces moyens d'action a eus sur la politique d'Israël?

Pouvez-vous expliquer pourquoi, malgré l'utilisation par l'UE de chacun de ces instruments, Israël n'a en rien modifié sa politique en matière de Droits de l'homme, de droit international humanitaire, et ne s'est pas conformé aux demandes de l'UE quant aux fait suivants: la poursuite de la construction de colonies; la poursuite de la construction du mur de séparation dans le territoire palestinien occupé ainsi que le refus d'indemniser les Palestiniens pour les dommages résultant de la construction du mur; la poursuite du blocus de Gaza et des restrictions imposées aux pêcheurs palestiniens; la poursuite de la démolition d'habitations palestiniennes et de la politique consistant à ne pas délivrer suffisamment de permis de bâtir aux Palestiniens, la destruction des citernes et puits palestiniens, l'accaparement des ressources aquifères de Cisjordanie au bénéfice de quelque 350 000 colons, l'expulsion de Palestiniens résidant légalement à Jérusalem-Est; la poursuite de la détention administrative d'un grand nombre de prisonniers palestiniens, parmi lesquels des mineurs d'âge, sans possibilité de contrôle judiciaire.

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Ashton, Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante au nom de la Commission
(17 décembre 2013)

L'UE a déclaré, de manière ferme et constante, que les colonies sont illégales au regard du droit international, constituent un obstacle à la paix et risquent de ne pas permettre d'aboutir à une solution fondée sur la coexistence de deux États. Cette ligne politique, qui fait l'unanimité parmi les États membres, est servie de façon optimale par un engagement constant auprès des autorités israéliennes à tous les niveaux, qui permet de répercuter systématiquement les inquiétudes de l'UE face à la question des colonies et au respect des Droits de l'homme, tant en Israël que dans les territoires occupés. Ces discussions se tiennent, au niveau politique, au sein du conseil d'association UE-Israël et, au niveau des groupes de travail, au sein du sous-comité «Dialogue et coopération politiques» et du groupe de travail informel sur les Droits de l'homme. Ce dialogue politique à tous les niveaux ainsi que les démarches diplomatiques et les décisions et déclarations officielles de l'UE ont suscité un vif intérêt en Israël, débouchant sur des débats politiques importants, comme ce fut le cas dernièrement au sujet des lignes directrices de l'UE visant à empêcher les entités établies dans les colonies et les activités qu'elles y déploient de bénéficier des programmes de l'UE. La réponse à la question écrite E-007961/2013 ([1]) précédemment posée expose en détail les résultats tangibles obtenus grâce à ces instruments de politique étrangère, qu'il conviendrait de continuer à utiliser à l'avenir. L'UE a clairement fait savoir à Israël qu'un approfondissement des relations bilatérales sera fondé sur des valeurs communes et s'inscrira dans le contexte de la résolution du conflit israélo-palestinien par la mise en œuvre de la solution fondée sur la coexistence de deux États.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html?tabType=wq#sidesForm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011113/13
to the Commission
Véronique De Keyser (S&D)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Remedies at the Commission's disposal with regard to Israel

In response to my Question P-002683/2013, the VP/HR stated, 'The EU does not promote the use of trade sanctions in the context of bilateral EU-Israel relations. (…) trade bans could only be considered when there is no other instrument at reach, which is not the case on bilateral EU-Israeli relations.'

Can you please describe each of the remedies, aside from trade sanctions, which the European Union has at its disposal and has made use of over the last twenty years to make Israel alter its policies with regard to complying with international law following the numerous formal requests, written and oral, made to it by the EU, and describe the concrete effects that the use of these remedies has had on Israel's policies?

Can you explain why, despite the EU's use of each of these instruments, Israel has not altered its policies in any respect as regards human rights and humanitarian international law, and why it does not comply with any EU requests on the following matters: the pursuit of the construction of settlements; the pursuit of the construction of the separation wall in occupied Palestinian territory as well as the refusal to compensate Palestinians for the damage resulting from the wall's construction; the pursuit of the Gaza blockade and the restrictions imposed on Palestinian fishermen; the pursuit of the demolition of Palestinian homes and the policy of not issuing sufficient building permits to the Palestinians, destroying Palestinian tanks and wells, monopolising water resources in the West Bank in aid of some 350 000 settlers and expelling Palestinians legally residing in East Jerusalem; the pursuit of the administrative detention of a large number of Palestinian prisoners, including minors, with no possibility of judicial supervision.

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(17 December 2013)

The EU has consistently and firmly stated its position that settlements are illegal under international law, constitute an obstacle to peace and threaten to make a two-state solution impossible. This policy, unanimously agreed by Member States, is best served by a constant engagement at all levels with Israeli authorities, enabling to systematically convey EU concerns on the settlement issue and on the respect for human rights both within Israel and in the occupied territories. These discussions take place at political level, within the EU-Israel Association Council and, at working level, within the Sub-Committee on Political Dialogue and Cooperation and the Informal Working Group on Human Rights. This political dialogue at all levels, together with diplomatic demarches, EU public statements and decisions, have generated considerable attention in Israel where they provoked important political debates, as recently illustrated by the EU Guidelines to prevent Settlement-based entities and activities to benefit from EU programmes. The answer to previous Written Question E-007961/2013 ([1]) details concrete results brought by such foreign policy instruments which should be used continuously in the future. The EU has clearly indicated to Israel that an upgrade in bilateral relations will be based on shared values and seen in the context of the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict through the implementation of the two-State solution.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html?tabType=wq#sidesForm

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011115/13
alla Commissione
Lara Comi (PPE)
(30 settembre 2013)

Oggetto: Abilitazione dei docenti di scuola media inferiore e superiore

Il decreto legislativo 206/07 emanato in Italia per recepire la direttiva 2005/36/CE prevede che un laureato abilitato all'insegnamento in Europa possa essere reclutato per l'insegnamento. Tuttavia, i decreti ministeriali attuativi prevedono una discriminazione fra coloro che hanno frequentato la Scuola di specializzazione per l'insegnamento secondario (SSIS) e coloro che hanno conseguito l'abilitazione in altri Stati europei. La Commissione ha già avviato una procedura di infrazione il 29/10/2010 (procedura n. 4038 del 2010).

Nel 2009, il Ministero per l'istruzione, l'università e la ricerca ha deciso di sospendere le SSIS e con il decreto ministeriale 249/10 le ha sostituite con il Tirocinio formativo attivo (TFA).

Il decreto ministeriale 572/2013 prende atto delle richieste della Commissione ma ignora completamente quest'ultima categoria di abilitati, lasciando gli organi preposti sprovvisti di strumenti giuridici per inserire tali risorse, formate e abilitate, nelle graduatorie ad esaurimento (unica alternativa al concorso).

Ritiene la Commissione che la mancata previsione di uno sbocco professionale per gli abilitati TFA, discriminati rispetto agli abilitati SSIS e agli abilitati in altri Stati membri dell'UE, sia conforme a quanto richiesto in chiusura della citata procedura di infrazione?

Risposta di Laszlo Andor a nome della Commissione
(7 gennaio 2014)

Il fatto di prevedere uno sbocco professionale in Italia per gli insegnanti che hanno seguito un tirocinio formativo attivo (TFA) non rientra nelle competenze della Commissione. Essa rinvia l'Onorevole deputata alla propria risposta all'interrogazione E-10278/2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011115/13
to the Commission
Lara Comi (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Qualifying as secondary school teachers

Legislative Decree No 206/07, issued in Italy to transpose Directive 2005/36/EC, specifies that a graduate who qualified to teach in Europe may be recruited as a teacher in Italy. However, the implementing ministerial decrees discriminate between those who attended a teacher-training college for secondary education (Scuola di specializzazione per l'insegnamento secondario (SSIS)) and those who gained their qualification in other European countries. The Commission has already launched an infringement procedure (No 4038 of 29 October 2010).

In 2009, the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research decided to close SSISs and replaced them with Active Teaching Traineeships (Tirocinio Formativo Attivo (TFA)) under Ministerial Decree No 249/10.

Ministerial Decree No 572/2013 takes into account the Commission's requests, but completely ignores this latter category of qualified teachers, leaving the responsible bodies with no legal instruments to include these trained and qualified resources on teacher reserve lists (the only alternative to a competition).

Does the Commission believe that failure to provide a career route for TFA-qualified teachers, which is discriminatory with respect to teachers who qualified at SSISs and in other EU Member States, is in accordance with what was called for at the conclusion of the infringement procedure?

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

The issue of providing a career route in Italy for teachers who have undergone a *tirocinio formativo attivo* (TFA or active teaching traineeship) does not fall within the competence of the Commission. It would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Question E-10278/2013.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011121/13
προς το Συμβούλιο
Takis Hadjigeorgiou (GUE/NGL)
(30 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Τα μέτρα οικονομικής λιτότητας υποβοηθούν την άνοδο ακροδεξιών φασιστικών οργανώσεων στην Ευρώπη

Η άνοδος ακραίων σωβινιστικών κινημάτων στην Ευρώπη δεν είναι καινούργιο φαινόμενο. Ωστόσο η συνολική μεγάλη αύξηση των ποσοστών τους είναι συνυφασμένη με την οικονομική ύφεση και τα σκληρά μνημονιακά μέτρα.

Ο φόβος και η απελπισία σπρώχνει τους Ευρωπαίους πολίτες προς ακραίες ακροδεξιές/νεοναζιστικές λύσεις, ενώ τα περιστατικά ακροδεξιάς βίας αυξάνονται συνεχώς. Τελευταίο παράδειγμα η δολοφονία του αριστερού ακτιβιστή Παύλου Φύσσα που έγινε στην Αθήνα στις 18.9.2013. Ο δράστης της δολοφονίας φέρεται να ανήκει στην ακροδεξιά οργάνωση Χρυσή Αυγή.

Ερωτάται το Συμβούλιο:

Πώς το απασχολεί η άνοδος της ακροδεξιάς στην ΕΕ την ίδια στιγμή που έρευνες ([1]) και δημοσκοπήσεις δείχνουν πως τα σκληρά μέτρα λιτότητας που προωθούνται από την τρόικα οδηγούν τους πολίτες στην απαξίωση του ευρωπαϊκού οικοδομήματος καθώς και στην συσπείρωση των ακροδεξιών και εθνικιστικών τάσεων απ' άκρη σ' άκρη στην Ευρώπη;

Απάντηση
(23 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Το Συμβούλιο δεν έχει συζητήσει τα συγκεκριμένα θέματα που θίγει ο αξιότιμος κ. βουλευτής.

Γενικότερα, η ΕΕ και αρκετά κράτη μέλη έχουν λάβει τα τελευταία χρόνια μέτρα άνευ προηγουμένου για να αντιμετωπίσουν τις επιπτώσεις της οικονομικής κρίσης και να προλειάνουν το έδαφος για την επάνοδο στη βιώσιμη ανάπτυξη που θα δημιουργήσει θέσεις απασχόλησης. Το 2010, επιτεύχθηκε συμφωνία σχετικά με πρόγραμμα προσαρμογής για την Ελλάδα, προκειμένου να αντιμετωπισθούν οι προκλήσεις της κρίσης, λαμβανομένων υπόψη των επίμονων μακροοικονομικών ανισορροπιών και της επιδεινούμενης κατάστασης της ανταγωνιστικότητας της ελληνικής οικονομίας. Το πρόγραμμα αποτέλεσε αντικείμενο διαπραγματεύσεων μεταξύ της Επιτροπής, της ΕΚΤ και του ΔΝΤ αφενός και της ελληνικής κυβέρνησης αφετέρου. Η ιδιοποίηση του προγράμματος είναι ελληνική και η εφαρμογή του ευθύνη των ελληνικών αρχών. Σημειωτέον ότι η πολιτική για την απασχόληση και η κοινωνική πολιτική εμπίπτουν σε μεγάλο βαθμό στην εθνική αρμοδιότητα των κρατών μελών.

Όλα τα συμμετέχοντα όργανα έχουν αναγνωρίσει ότι το πρόγραμμα απαιτεί μεγάλες θυσίες από τον ελληνικό λαό και, δεδομένης της σοβαρής κατάστασης στην οποία βρίσκεται η χώρα, οι θυσίες αυτές είναι απαραίτητες για την οικονομική ανάκαμψη και θα συμβάλουν στη μελλοντική σταθερότητα και ευημερία της χώρας.

([1]) Standard Eurobarometer 79, http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb79/eb79_first_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011121/13
to the Council
Takis Hadjigeorgiou (GUE/NGL)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Economic austerity measures are fostering the rise of far-right fascist organisations in Europe

The rise of extreme chauvinistic movements in Europe is not a new problem. However, the overall jump in their ratings has been triggered by the recession and the harsh measures imposed under the memoranda.

Fear and desperation are pushing European citizens into the arms of extreme far-right/neo-Nazi parties and the number of incidents of violence by far-right groups is increasing constantly. The most recent example was the murder of the left-wing activist Pavlos Fyssas in Athens on 18 September 2013. He appears to have been murdered by a member of the far-right organisation Golden Dawn.

In view of the above, will the Council say:

How does it view the rise of the far right in the EU, given that surveys ([1]) and opinion polls report that the harsh austerity measures being imposed by the Troika are pushing citizens to turn their back on the European project and uniting far-right and nationalistic movements from one end of Europe to the other?

Reply
(23 December 2013)

The Council has not discussed the specific issues raised by the Honourable Member.

More generally the EU and many Member States have taken unprecedented steps over recent years to tackle the effects of the financial crisis with the aim of paving the way for a return to sustainable, job-creating growth. An agreement on the adjustment programme for Greece was reached in 2010 in order to address the challenges revealed by the crisis and considering the persistent macroeconomic imbalances and deteriorating competitiveness of the Greek economy. The programme was negotiated by the Commission, the ECB and the IMF with the Greek Government. The ownership of the programme is Greek and its implementation is the responsibility of the Greek authorities. It should be noted that employment and social policies fall very largely under the national competence of the Member States.

All the institutions involved have recognised that the programme demands great sacrifices from the Greek people and, given the serious situation facing their country, these sacrifices are indispensable for economic recovery and will contribute to the future stability and welfare of the country.

([1]) Standard Eurobarometer 79, http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb79/eb79_first_en.pdf

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011207/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(2 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Nulidad del Plan Territorial Parcial de la Plataforma Logística del Sur de Tenerife

El Tribunal Supremo de España emitió el pasado 25 de septiembre una sentencia mediante la cual anula el Plan Territorial Parcial de la Plataforma Logística del Sur de Tenerife, plan que incluye el desarrollo del polémico Puerto de Granadilla.

El Gobierno de España y el Gobierno Autonómico de las Islas Canarias han impulsado la construcción de este puerto y sus infraestructuras anejas, pese al importantísimo impacto ambiental que conllevan, argumentando que era una infraestructura de especial interés. Sin embargo la Asociación Tinerfeña de Amigos de la Naturaleza (ATAN) interpuso una demanda contra el acuerdo de la Comisión de Ordenación del Territorio y Medio Ambiente de Canarias, del 12 de mayo de 2008, al considerar que dicho Plan Territorial Parcial era contrario a derecho.

La sentencia emitida por el Tribunal Supremo confirma que las autoridades canarias han estado operando en la construcción del puerto de Granadilla en completa ilegalidad. A partir de ahora, se tendrá que solicitar la nulidad de todas las actuaciones derivadas del Plan Territorial Parcial y detener el desarrollo del puerto y de todas las infraestructuras adjuntas.

Sin embargo, el inicio de las operaciones de construcción ya ha provocado en la zona importantes daños ambientales, que posiblemente sean de carácter irreversible, sin que ninguna administración haya asumido responsabilidad alguna. En su respuesta a mi pasada pregunta E-007041/2013 la Comisión afirmaba haber revisado el expediente y haber emitido observaciones en diferentes ámbitos, pero no parecía haber contemplado este recurso que ha supuesto la nulidad e ilegalidad del proyecto.

¿Conoce la Comisión la citada sentencia del Tribunal Supremo de España?

¿No considera la Comisión que el Gobierno de España debe detener inmediatamente las obras del Puerto de Granadilla ante la citada sentencia?

¿Piensa la Comisión instar a las autoridades españolas a que detengan dichos trabajos?

¿Se ha financiado con fondos europeos alguna parte de este proyecto ilegal?

Respuesta del Sr. Hahn en nombre de la Comisión
(11 de diciembre de 2013)

La Comisión ha examinado la sentencia pronunciada por el Tribunal Supremo de España el 25 de septiembre de 2013, que anula el Plan Territorial Parcial de la Plataforma Logística del Sur de Tenerife.

De acuerdo con el principio de gestión compartida, corresponde al Estado miembro de que se trate asegurar el respeto de la legislación tanto de la UE como nacional y declarar exclusivamente como legales y regulares con respecto a los proyectos los gastos contraídos y pagados.

La Comisión considera que no es competencia suya interpretar la sentencia pronunciada por el Tribunal Supremo ni extraer conclusiones. Corresponde a las autoridades nacionales evaluar si deben pararse las obras del puerto de Granadilla e informar de ello a la Comisión.

Mientras tanto, la Comisión confirma que hasta la fecha no se han abonado fondos de la UE para el proyecto principal del Puerto de Granadilla.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011207/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Annulment of the Specific Local Development Plan for the South Tenerife Logistics Platform

On 25 September 2013 the Spanish Supreme Court handed down a judgment annulling the Specific Local Development Plan for the South Tenerife Logistics Platform, which included an expansion of the controversial port of Granadilla.

The Spanish Government and the Autonomous Government of the Canary Islands have consistently backed the construction of the port and its ancillary infrastructure, arguing that, despite its major environmental impact, the project had special interest status. On 12 May 2008, however, ATAN (the Tenerife Friends of Nature Association) challenged the decision by the Regional Planning and Environment Committee of the Canary Islands to authorise the project, claiming that the aforementioned Specific Local Development Plan was unlawful.

The judgment issued by the Supreme Court confirms that the building work being carried out on the port of Granadilla, as approved by the Canary Island authorities, is completely unlawful. From now on, all measures taken under the Specific Local Development Plan must be regarded as null and void and work on the expansion of the port and its ancillary infrastructure will have to be halted.

The initial construction work has already had a serious environmental impact which may be irreversible, however. No public authority has taken responsibility for this damage. In its answer to my previous Question E-007041/2013 the Commission stated that it had looked into the matter and commented on various issues, but it did not seem to have taken account of the appeal which led to the project being declared unlawful and annulled.

Is the Commission familiar with the judgment handed down by the Spanish Supreme Court?

Does the Commission not believe that, in the light of that judgment, the Spanish Government must halt work on the port of Granadilla immediately?

Does the Commission plan to put pressure on the Spanish authorities to halt the construction work?

Has any part of this illegal project received European funding?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(11 December 2013)

The Commission has examined the judgment issued by the Spanish Supreme Court on 25 September 2013, which declares the annulment of the Plan for the South Tenerife Logistics Platform.

In line with the shared management principle, it is the responsibility of the Member State to ensure the respect of EU and national law and to declare only legal and regular expenditure incurred and paid with respect to projects.

The Commission considers that it is not for the Commission to interpret the judgment of the Supreme Court and draw conclusions. It is up to the national authorities to assess whether the works on the port of Granadilla should stop and inform the Commission accordingly.

In the meantime, the Commission confirms that to date no EU funds have been disbursed to the major project Port of Granadilla.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-011216/13
aan de Commissie
Kartika Tamara Liotard (GUE/NGL)
(2 oktober 2013)

Betreft: Gebrek aan handhaving EU-regels betreffende welzijn van varkens

Uit recente onderzoeken van de ngo „Compassion in World Farming" (CiWF) blijkt dat vrijwel geen enkele van de 45 onderzochte varkensboerderijen in Italië, Spanje, Polen, Tsjechië, Ierland en Cyprus voldoet aan de geldende dierenwelzijnsregels uit Richtlijn 2008/120/EG van de Raad. Uit eerder onderzoek van CiWF blijkt dat ook in 74 boerderijen in Duitsland, Denemarken, Hongarije, Spanje, het Verenigd Koninkrijk en Nederland regels uit dezelfde richtlijn worden overtreden. Varkens hebben hierdoor zwaar te lijden onder ruimtegebrek, vieze stallen, gebrek aan stalverrijking en de daaruit voortvloeiende ziektes en verwondingen.

1. Is de Commissie bereid om kennis te nemen van de zes recente onderzoeken van CiWF in Italië, Spanje, Polen, Tsjechië, Ierland en Cyprus?

2. Vindt de Commissie dat de situatie in de bezochte stallen in lijn is met Richtlijn 2008/120/EG?

3. Hoe beoordeelt de Commissie de implementatie van Richtlijn 2008/120/EG in de bezochte landen?

4. Hoe beoordeelt de Commissie het feit dat EU-regels, die hun oorsprong vinden in 2003, tien jaar later nog steeds niet fatsoenlijk zijn geïmplementeerd?

5. Zijn er al inbreukprocedures gestart tegen lidstaten naar aanleiding van gebrek aan handhaving van Richtlijn 2008/120/EG? Zo nee, waarom niet? Zo ja, welke concrete stappen nemen lidstaten waartegen een procedure is gestart, momenteel om het welzijn van varkens zo snel mogelijk te garanderen?

6. Geven de bijgevoegde onderzoeken de Commissie aanleiding om verdere acties te ondernemen en daarmee te bewerkstelligen dat bestaande regelgeving wordt nageleefd? Zo ja, welke nieuwe acties zal de Commissie nu ondernemen?

Antwoord van de heer Borg namens de Commissie
(26 november 2013)

Wanneer gevallen van niet-naleving worden geconstateerd, zijn de lidstaten zelf in de eerste plaats verantwoordelijk voor de handhaving van het recht van de Unie binnen hun rechtsgebied. Hoewel de Commissie de handhaving van de bestaande wetgeving inzake dierenwelzijn van groot belang acht, kan zij alleen optreden wanneer duidelijk is dat een lidstaat stelselmatig nalaat die wetgeving te handhaven.

Eerder dit jaar zijn inbreukprocedures in verband met de groepshuisvesting van zeugen ingeleid. Wat de verstrekking van los materiaal en het vermijden van het couperen van staarten betreft, is voor een andere aanpak gekozen. De Commissie weet dat de situatie in sommige lidstaten onbevredigend is, maar de lidstaten moet actief bijstand worden geboden bij de toepassing van deze voorschriften door middel van capaciteitsopbouw.

Om die reden heeft de Commissie toegezegd om in nauwe samenwerking met de lidstaten richtsnoeren inzake afleidingsmateriaal voor varkens en staartbijten te ontwikkelen. Daarnaast biedt de Commissie nationale ambtenaren opleidingsprogramma's ([1]) aan om een gemeenschappelijk begrip van de wettelijke voorschriften te ontwikkelen. De meest recente opleiding over het welzijn van varkens vond plaats van 12 tot 15 november 2013. De Commissie zal dit beleid voortzetten en alleen in laatste instantie inbreukprocedures tegen de lidstaten inleiden.

([1]) Better Training for Safer Food; http://www.sancotraining.izs.it/joomla/index.php/training-activities-2013-2014/training-calendar.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011216/13
to the Commission
Kartika Tamara Liotard (GUE/NGL)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Failure to enforce EU pig welfare rules

Recent investigations carried out by the NGO Compassion in World Farming (CiWF) have highlighted that virtually not a single one of the 45 pig farms investigated in Italy, Spain, Poland, the Czech Republic, Ireland and Cyprus complies with the current animal welfare rules stipulated by Council Directive 2008/120/EC. A previous CiWF investigation highlighted that rules stipulated by the same directive have also been breached by 74 farms in Germany, Denmark, Hungary, Spain, the UK and the Netherlands. This causes pigs to suffer from a lack of space, filthy stalls, a lack of stall enrichment and the illnesses and injuries resulting from this.

1. Is the Commission prepared to examine the six recent investigations carried out by CiWF in Italy, Spain, Poland, the Czech Republic, Ireland and Cyprus?

2. Does the Commission think that the situation in the stalls visited complies with Directive 2008/120/EC?

3. How does the Commission view the implementation of Directive 2008/120/EC in the countries visited?

4. How does the Commission view the fact that EU rules which came about in 2003 are still not being implemented properly 10 years on?

5. Have infringement proceedings already been initiated against Member States due to their failure to enforce Directive 2008/120/EC? If not, why not? If so, what practical steps are Member States which have had proceedings initiated against them currently taking to guarantee the welfare of pigs as soon as possible?

6. Do the enclosed investigations provide the Commission with the opportunity to take further action to ensure compliance with existing regulations? If so, what new action will the Commission now take?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(26 November 2013)

Member States' have the primary responsibility to enforce Union law within their jurisdiction when instances of non-compliance are discovered. Although enforcement of existing animal welfare legislation is important for the Commission, the latter can only intervene when it is clear that a Member State systematically fails to enforce such legislation.

Infringement proceedings were launched earlier this year as regards group housing of sows. A different approach has been chosen regarding the provision of manipulable material and avoidance of tail-docking. While the Commission is aware that in some Member States the situation is unsatisfactory, it is necessary to actively assist Member States in the application of these requirements through capacity building.

It is for this reason that the Commission has undertaken to develop guidelines on enrichment material for pigs and tail-biting in close collaboration with the Member States. Additionally, the Commission provides national officials with training programmes ([1]) to build a common understanding of the legislative requirements. The most recent training on welfare of pigs took place on 12-15 November 2013. The Commission will continue to proceed along these lines and will only use infringement proceedings as a last resort against Member States.

([1]) Better Training for Safer Food; http://www.sancotraining.izs.it/joomla/index.php/training-activities-2013-2014/training-calendar

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011242/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(3 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Independencia y objetividad de la autoridad competente

La resolución elaborada por el Secretario de Estado de Energía, Alberto Nadal, la cual se publicó en mayo de 2013 en el BOE, introduce «la posibilidad de que un tercero pueda subrogarse en las obligaciones y derechos del titular del almacenamiento en lo que se refiere a la adquisición de gas colchón». Este cambio jurídico permitirá que un tercero pueda adquirir para la empresa ACS dicho gas que, hasta ahora, sólo podía comprar la empresa Escal.

El proyecto Castor, el cual está terminado hace tiempo, pese a que no se había puesto en marcha hasta hace poco, se ha hecho en un contexto de sobrecapacidad en el sistema gasista, como consecuencia de la crisis y la burbuja de instalaciones. Se concibió para suministrar hasta un tercio de la demanda diaria del sistema durante 50 días. ([1])

Está la Comisión convencida de que se ha garantizado la independencia y objetividad de la autoridad competente con respecto a este cambio repentino de la ley?

Respuesta del Sr. Oettinger en nombre de la Comisión
(13 de diciembre de 2013)

A la luz de la información facilitada por Su Señoría, la pregunta planteada no parece guardar relación con la legislación europea y deberían responderla los organismos nacionales competentes sobre la base de la ley administrativa española pertinente.

([1]) http://boe.es/boe/dias/2013/05/13/pdfs/BOE-A-2013-4997.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011242/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Independence and objectivity of the competent authority

The resolution prepared by the Secretary of State for Energy, Alberto Nadal, which was published in May 2013 in the Spanish Official Gazette, introduces the possibility that a third party may be subrogated to the obligations and rights of the owner of the storage facility in respect of the acquisition of cushion gas. This legal change will allow a third party to acquire the aforementioned gas for the ACS company. Until now, only the Escal company could buy the gas.

The Castor project, which was completed some time ago but was not implemented until recently, has been carried out in the context of overcapacity in the gas system due to the crisis and a bubble in the number of facilities. It was designed to provide up to one third of the daily demand in the system for 50 days. ([1])

Is the Commission convinced that the competent authority's independence and objectivity have been guaranteed with respect to this sudden change in the law?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(13 December 2013)

On the basis of the information provided by the Honourable Member, the question raised does not seem to relate to European law and should be answered by the national competent bodies in the light of the relevant Spanish administrative law.

([1]) http://boe.es/boe/dias/2013/05/13/pdfs/BOE-A-2013-4997.pdf

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande E-011256/13
till kommissionen
Amelia Andersdotter (Verts/ALE)
(3 oktober 2013)

Angående: Enhetlig patentdomstol

Den 26 juli 2013 lade kommissionen fram ett förslag ([1]) till förordning om ändring av förordning (EU) nr 1215/2012 om domstols behörighet och om erkännande och verkställighet av domar på privaträttens område (Bryssel I-förordningen (omarbetning)).

Enligt kommissionens motivering syftar förslaget främst till att avtalet om en enhetlig patentdomstol ska kunna träda i kraft. Avtalet om en enhetlig patentdomstol är ett internationellt avtal som undertecknades av några medlemsstater den 19 februari 2013. Europeiska unionen är inte part till avtalet.

I artikel 89.1 i avtalet om en enhetlig patentdomstol fastställs att avtalet inte kan träda i kraft före ikraftträdandet av ändringarna av Bryssel I-förordningen (omarbetning) vad gäller förhållandet mellan de två instrumenten. Dessa ändringar har två syften. Det första är att se till att avtalet om en enhetlig patentdomstol och Bryssel I-förordningen (omarbetning) är förenliga med varandra. Det andra är att ta itu med den särskilda frågan om domstols behörighet gentemot svarande som har hemvist i tredjeland.

Mot bakgrund av detta förslag till ändring av Bryssel I-förordningen (omarbetning) ombes kommissionen besvara följande frågor.

1. Håller kommissionen med om att avtalet om en enhetlig patentdomstol påverkar gemensamma regler eller ändrar räckvidden för dessa, särskilt Bryssel I-förordningen (omarbetning)?

Enligt artikel 3.2 i EUF-fördraget och domstolens rättspraxis ([2]) har EU exklusiv befogenhet att ingå internationella avtal som kan komma att påverka gemensamma regler eller ändra räckvidden för dessa.

2. Anser kommissionen därmed inte att det faktum att endast några medlemsstater har ingått avtalet om en enhetlig patentdomstol, utan att EU är part till avtalet, bryter mot EU:s exklusiva befogenhet att ingå ett sådant avtal?

Svar från Michel Barnier på kommissionens vägnar
(2 december 2013)

1. Ur rättslig synpunkt har EU:s lagstiftning företräde framför avtalet om en enhetlig patentdomstol, som är ett avtal mellan medlemsstaterna (utan medverkan av EU eller tredjeland).

För att säkerställa en kombinerad och konsekvent tillämpning av det ovannämnda avtalet och förordning (EU) nr 1215/2012 om domstols behörighet och om erkännande och verkställighet av domar på privaträttens område (den s.k. Bryssel I-förordningen) har det beslutats att Bryssel I-förordningen ska ändras så att förhållandet mellan dessa två rättsliga instrument klargörs. Dessutom har ikraftträdandet av avtalet om en enhetlig patentdomstol gjorts avhängigt av ändringen av Bryssel I-förordningen.

2. På de områden där EU har exklusiv befogenhet får medlemsstaterna endast anta rättsligt bindande akter efter tillstånd från unionen.

([1]) COM(2013)0554 – 2013/0268(COD).
([2]) Mål C-370/12, Thomas Pringle mot Irlands regering (27 november 2012), s. 101.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011256/13
to the Commission
Amelia Andersdotter (Verts/ALE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Unified Patent Court

On 26 July 2013 the Commission proposed ([1]) a regulation amending Regulation (EU) No 1215/2012 on jurisdiction and the recognition and enforcement of judgments in civil and commercial matters (Brussels I Regulation (recast)).

According to the Commission's explanatory memorandum, this proposal aims in the first place to enable the entry into force of the Unified Patent Court (UPC) Agreement. The latter is an international agreement which was signed by some Member States on 19 February 2013. The European Union is not a party to this agreement.

Article 89(1) of the UPC Agreement provides that the Agreement cannot enter into force prior to the entry into force of the amendments to the Brussels I Regulation (recast) regulating the relationship between the two instruments. The aim of these amendments is twofold: firstly, to ensure compliance between the UPC Agreement and the Brussels I Regulation (recast); and secondly, to address the particular issue of jurisdiction rules vis-à-vis defendants in non-EU countries.

Given this proposal to amend the Brussels I Regulation (recast):

1. Does the Commission agree that the UPC Agreement affects or alters the scope of existing common rules, and specifically the Brussels I Regulation (recast)?

According to Article 3.2 TFEU and Court of Justice case-law ([2]), the Union has exclusive competence for the conclusion of an international agreement which might affect common rules or alter their scope.

2. Does the Commission not therefore consider the conclusion of the UPC Agreement by some Member States only, without the EU being a party, to be in breach of the EU's exclusive competence to conclude such an agreement?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(2 December 2013)

1. From a legal point of view, EC law prevails over the Agreement on the Unified Patent Court (UPC agreement) which is an agreement between the Member States only (without participation of the EU or third states).

Yet in order to ensure the combined and coherent application of the UPC agreement and Regulation 1215/2012 on jurisdiction and the recognition and enforcement of judgments in civil and commercial matters (Brussels I Regulation), it has been decided to amend the Brussels I Regulation clarifying the interrelationship between those two legal instruments. In addition, the entry into force of the UPC agreement has been made dependant on the amendment of the Brussels I Regulation.

2. In areas of exclusive competence, Member States may adopt legally binding acts if authorised by the Union.

([1]) COM(2013) 0554 — 2013/0268 (COD).
([2]) Case C-370/12, Thomas Pringle v Government of Ireland (27 November 2012), 101.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011277/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 octobre 2013)

Objet: Guérir du cancer du sein en un jour

Une étude menée en France laisse espérer un traitement du cancer du sein en un jour: «Les avantages du traitement en un jour du cancer du sein sont nombreux. Il permet par sa simplicité de dédramatiser la maladie, d'obtenir une meilleure observance et d'augmenter l'offre de soins», explique l'oncologue radiothérapeute responsable à l'Institut du cancer de Montpellier (ICM). Cette technique s'appuie sur les derniers progrès médicaux réalisés. Chaque année, en Belgique, environ 9 400 cas de cancer du sein sont diagnostiqués. L'étude actuellement menée en France — dont l'ICM, très expérimenté dans ce domaine — pourrait apporter un nouvel espoir à 10 % des patientes atteintes.

La technique, explique-t-il, «consiste à délivrer pendant l'intervention chirurgicale, après l'exérèse (ablation) de la tumeur, une irradiation très ciblée permettant d'épargner les tissus sains environnants». Elle ne correspond pas à un traitement classique et n'est destinée qu'à certains types de cancers.

D'où la limite de 10 % des patientes. En l'occurrence, les cancers sensibles à l'hormonothérapie chez des femmes ménopausées, à condition d'un bon pronostic précoce, car chez les femmes jeunes, le risque de rechute locale est plus important.

Outre la «dédramatisation» de la maladie, ce traitement innovant vise à limiter l'emploi de la radiothérapie (plusieurs dizaines de séances) grâce aux progrès enregistrés dans ce domaine ces dernières années. Jusqu'à présent, c'est en chirurgie que les avancées les plus sensibles ont été réalisées, afin de limiter l'ablation (mastectomie) au profit de la chirurgie conservatrice.

D'autres pays européens, tels que la Grande-Bretagne ou l'Italie, ont déjà soigné des milliers de patientes par le biais de cette technique.

Quelle est la position de la Commission? Corrobore-t-elle les analyses et conclusions de cette étude?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Geoghegan-Quinn au nom de la Commission
(15 novembre 2013)

La Commission a connaissance de l'étude clinique menée par l'Institut du cancer de Montpellier (ICM) concernant un traitement du cancer du sein en un jour, à laquelle fait référence l'Honorable Parlementaire ([1]).

Le traitement consiste à combiner l'ablation de la tumeur, l'irradiation du sein et la chirurgie esthétique en une seule opération. Les auteurs de cette publication sont parvenus à la conclusion que cette approche thérapeutique était réalisable dans le cas de cancers du sein détectés à un stade précoce chez des patientes présentant un excellent pronostic et un très faible risque de rechute.

Par principe, la Commission ne porte pas de jugement sur des publications individuelles de recherche qui ne sont pas directement liées à ses activités de financement.

Le programme-cadre pour la recherche et l'innovation «Horizon 2020» (2014-2020) ([2]) offrira la possibilité de mener des recherches sur les approches thérapeutiques du cancer, notamment dans le cadre du défi de société que représente «La santé, l'évolution démographique et le bien-être».

([1]) Lemanski et al. (2013) Radiation Oncology 8:191.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index_en.cfm?pg=h2020-documents

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011277/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Curing breast cancer in a day

A study conducted in France is raising hopes for a one-day breast cancer treatment. There are many advantages to one-day breast cancer treatment. Its simplicity makes it possible to make the disease less alarming, to obtain better compliance and to increase treatment options, explains the radiation oncologist responsible from the Montpellier Cancer Institute (ICM). This technique is based on the latest medical advances. Around 9 400 cases of breast cancer are diagnosed every year in Belgium. The study currently under way in France — including ICM, which has a great deal of experience in this field — could give fresh hope to 10% of affected patients.

The technique involves delivering highly targeted radiation during surgery, after ablation of the tumour, making it possible to spare the surrounding healthy tissue. It is not a conventional treatment and is only intended for certain types of cancer; hence it is limited to 10% of patients. Specifically, it is intended for cancers sensitive to hormone therapy in menopausal women, provided there is a good early prognosis, as the risk of local recurrence is higher in young women.

As well as making the disease 'less alarming', this innovative treatment aims to limit the use of radiotherapy (several dozen sessions), as a result of advances made in this field in recent years. Until now, the most appreciable advances have been made in surgery, in order to limit ablation (mastectomy) in favour of conservative surgery.

Other European countries, such as the UK and Italy, have already used this technique to treat thousands of patients.

What is the Commission's view? Can it substantiate the analyses and conclusions of this study?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(15 November 2013)

The Commission is aware of the clinical study conducted by the Montpellier Cancer Institute (ICM) on a one-day breast cancer treatment referred to by the Honourable Member. ([1])

The treatment consists of combining the excision of the tumour, intraoperative breast irradiation and cosmetic surgery into one operation. The authors of this publication conclude that this is a feasible therapeutic approach for early breast cancer in selected patients with an excellent prognosis and a very low recurrence risk.

As a matter of policy, the Commission does not judge individual research publications that do not directly relate to its funding activities.

Through *inter alia* the 'Health, demographic change and well-being' societal challenge, Horizon 2020 — The framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020) ([2]) will offer opportunities to address research on therapeutic approaches to cancer.

([1]) Lemanski et al. (2013) Radiation Oncology 8:191.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index_en.cfm?pg=h2020-documents

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011278/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 octobre 2013)

Objet: Reconnaissance de l'électrosensibilité

Sur les conseils de leurs ostéopathes, des citoyens européens viennent de troquer leur iPhone contre un autre type d'appareil, doté d'un rayonnement électromagnétique plus faible.

De nombreux Européens souffrent d'électrosensibilité.

1. Quelle est la réaction de la Commission face, d'une part, à cette anecdote et, d'autre part, à ce phénomène moins anecdotique?

2. Reconnaît-elle le chiffre de 5 % de la population qui serait hypersensible au rayonnement électromagnétique?

3. La Commission reconnaît-elle le syndrome d'hypersensibilité? Il se traduirait à peu près toujours par les mêmes symptômes: énervement, perte de sommeil, douleur lorsqu'on se trouve exposé à un niveau de micro-ondes même relativement faible, irritabilité, troubles de la sexualité, problèmes de peau (sensation de picotements, de tiraillements) parce que c'est dans les couches extérieures de l'épiderme que le rayonnement est le plus important.

Réponse donnée par M. Borg au nom de la Commission
(21 novembre 2013)

L'électrosensibilité ([1]) est un problème de santé courant examiné sur le plan des champs électromagnétiques et, en particulier, de la radiofréquence. De nombreuses recherches ont été effectuées pour déterminer si l'exposition à ces champs peut causer des symptômes à court terme tels que maux de tête, fatigue et vertiges.

Le comité scientifique des risques sanitaires émergents et nouveaux, organisme indépendant, a un mandat permanent pour évaluer les risques des champs électromagnétiques, fondé sur de nouvelles preuves scientifiques. Lors de son dernier examen (2009) ([2]), le comité a constaté que plusieurs études ont examiné l'association entre l'exposition à la radiofréquence et l'apparition de symptômes, parmi lesquelles des études portant sur la population générale et sur les personnes ayant une hypersensibilité électromagnétique ou «électrosensitivité». Alors que certaines études montrent une association entre symptômes individuels et exposition à la radiofréquence, ces résultats ne présentent pas de cohérence. Le comité constate donc que «la conclusion que les études scientifiques n'ont pas établi la preuve d'une relation entre la radiofréquence et les symptômes est toujours valide».

Une actualisation de l'avis des comités est en cours et devrait être achevée avant la fin de 2013. Cet avis examinera toutes les études scientifiques publiées après 2009, y compris celles sur l'association entre radiofréquence et symptômes.

La Commission ne dispose pas de données sur le nombre de citoyens de l'UE qui affirment être hypersensibles au rayonnement électromagnétique. Elle n'intervient pas dans la reconnaissance de maladies ou syndromes spécifiques. Il s'agit d'une responsabilité nationale, qui relève de l'OMS au niveau international ([3]).

([1]) Aussi connue sous le nom « d'hypersensibilité électromagnétique» ou « d'intolérance environnementale attribuée aux champs électromagnétiques».
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/archive/ph_risk/committees/04_scenihr/docs/scenihr_o_022.pdf
([3]) Organisation mondiale de la santé.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011278/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Recognition of electrosensitivity

Some Europeans, acting on the advice of their osteopaths, have recently exchanged their iPhones for a different type of device producing less electromagnetic radiation.

Many Europeans suffer from electrosensitivity.

1. What is the Commission's response, firstly, to that anecdote and, secondly, to this less anecdotal phenomenon?

2. Does it recognise the figure of 5%, which is the percentage of the population said to be hypersensitive to electromagnetic radiation?

3. Does it recognise hypersensitivity syndrome? The symptoms seem to be almost always the same: restlessness, sleep loss, pain caused by exposure even to relatively low-level microwaves, irritability, sexual dysfunction, and skin problems (tingling sensation and tightness) due to the fact that the skin's outer layers are exposed to the highest radiation levels.

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(21 November 2013)

Electrosensitivity ([1]) is a common health concern discussed with regard to electromagnetic fields and in particular with Radio Frequency. Identifying whether exposure can cause short-term symptoms such as headaches, fatigue and dizziness has attracted a substantial amount of research.

The independent Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks has a standing mandate to evaluate the risks arising from exposure to electromagnetic fields based on new scientific evidence. In its latest review (2009) ([2]), the Committee noted that several studies had tested the association between Radio Frequency exposure and the onset of symptoms. These included studies relating to both the general public and to people with Electromagnetic Hyper-Sensitivity or 'Electrosensitivity'. While some studies reported an association between individual symptoms and Radio Frequency exposure, there was no consistency in these findings. The opinion therefore noted that 'the conclusion that scientific studies have failed to provide support for an effect of Radio Frequency on symptoms still holds.'

An update of the Committees opinion is ongoing and it is expected to be finalised by end 2013. This opinion will review all scientific studies published after 2009, including those on the association between Radio Frequency and symptoms.

The Commission has no data on the number of people who claim to be electro-hypersensitive in the EU. The Commission has no role in the recognition of specific diseases or syndromes. This is a national responsibility, and on the international level, through the WHO ([3]).

([1]) Also known as 'Electromagnetic Hyper-Sensitivity' or 'idiopathic environmental intolerance attributed to electromagnetic fields'.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/archive/ph_risk/committees/04_scenihr/docs/scenihr_o_022.pdf
([3]) World Health Organisation.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011279/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 octobre 2013)

Objet: Ikea vend du photovoltaïque chinois

Ikea, géant suédois spécialisé dans le secteur de l'ameublement et de la décoration, a annoncé lundi 30 septembre que ses magasins implantés en Grande-Bretagne avaient débuté la vente de panneaux solaires. Lancée dans le magasin de Southampton, cette «initiative nationale (…) va être déployée dans les 17 magasins de Grande-Bretagne lors des dix prochains mois», selon les dires du directeur du développement durable du groupe.

Pour lui, cette offre est un «prolongement logique: vous pouvez acheter tout ce qui consomme de l'énergie, alors pourquoi ne pas acheter quelque chose qui produit de l'énergie?». Fabriqués par une société chinoise, les panneaux photovoltaïques sont vendus au prix de 6 800 euros.

La Grande-Bretagne joue le rôle de marché-test. L'expérience pourrait être étendue à d'autres pays dans les 12 mois à venir. «Nous ne l'avons pas choisie pour une raison particulière (…), ce n'est pas le pays le plus ensoleillé du monde mais on peut absolument obtenir de l'électricité» grâce aux installations photovoltaïques, a-t-il précisé.

«Beaucoup de nos clients veulent vivre de manière durable, mais cela doit être facile, abordable et attrayant», a-t-il conclu; selon lui, les clients du groupe souhaiteraient s'équiper à condition de trouver des panneaux pour «un bon prix auprès d'une entreprise reconnue».

1. Quelle est la position de la Commission?

2. N'y a-t-il pas distorsion de concurrence avec les panneaux photovoltaïques européens?

Réponse donnée par M. Oettinger au nom de la Commission
(29 novembre 2013)

Tout détaillant est libre de vendre des produits et services dans l'Union, à condition de se conformer à la législation applicable. La Commission se félicite de l'amélioration de l'accès des consommateurs européens aux technologies liées aux énergies renouvelables, qui les aide à devenir des acteurs sur les marchés de l'énergie. Des stratégies novatrices de vente au détail peuvent y contribuer.

La Commission a procédé à une enquête antidumping sur les importations de panneaux solaires en provenance de Chine et a récemment conclu à l'existence d'un dumping et constaté que ces importations ont porté préjudice aux producteurs européens. Il n'en reste pas moins que les producteurs chinois ont fourni 80 % des panneaux solaires vendus dans l'Union européenne au cours des dernières années; une réduction draconienne des importations de panneaux solaires en provenance de Chine ne serait donc pas dans l'intérêt général de l'Union européenne.

Pour cette raison, la Commission a demandé et obtenu une solution à l'amiable (sous la forme d'un engagement de prix) avec les exportateurs chinois qui leur permet de continuer à exporter des panneaux solaires, mais à des prix ne faisant pas l'objet d'un dumping.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011279/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Ikea sells Chinese solar panels

Swedish furniture and decorating giant Ikea announced on Monday 30 September 2013 that it had started selling solar panels in its UK stores. Launched in the Southampton store, this nationwide initiative will be rolled out in all 17 stores across the UK within the next 10 months, according to the group's chief sustainability officer.

He claims that this offering is a 'logical extension': we can buy everything that consumes energy, so we should be able to buy something that generates energy, too. The solar panels, made by a Chinese company, retail at EUR 6 800.

The UK is being used as a test market, and the pilot scheme could be extended to other countries within the next 12 months. The chief sustainability officer said that there was no special reason why the UK was chosen, and that while 'it is not the sunniest country in the world, […] you can absolutely get a good amount of electricity' from solar panels.

He concluded that many of Ikea's customers want to live more sustainably, but that it has to be easy, affordable and attractive to do so. According to him, the group's customers would like to invest in solar panels, provided that they can buy them at a good price from a recognised company.

1. What is the Commission's position?

2. Is there not a distortion of competition with European solar panels?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(29 November 2013)

Any retailer is free to sell products and services in the EU provided it complies with the relevant legislation. The Commission welcomes enhanced access of consumers in Europe to renewable energy technologies, which helps them becoming active participants in the energy markets. Innovative retail strategies may contribute thereto.

The Commission has carried out an anti-dumping investigation into imports of solar panels from China and recently concluded that they were dumped and have caused injury to the European producers. At the same time, Chinese producers have supplied some 80% of solar panels sold in the European Union in recent years years; a drastic reduction of solar panel supplies from China would not be in the overall interest of the Union.

For that reason, the Commission has sought and reached an amicable solution (in the form of a price undertaking) with the Chinese exporters that enables them to continue exporting solar panels but at non-dumped prices.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011281/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 octobre 2013)

Objet: Berlusconi ravive la crise de l'euro

La dernière frasque de Berlusconi n'est guère appréciée par les marchés.

1. Comment la Commission réagit-elle à ces frasques?

2. La crise italienne peut-elle, selon vous, faire replonger la zone euro dans la crise?

3. La Commission partage-t-elle l'avis selon lequel il faudrait diminuer la valeur de l'euro pour que l'Europe puisse sortir la tête de l'eau?

4. Le rachat de bons du Trésor comme aux États Unis, même s'il s'agit d'une arme non conventionnelle, pourrait-il être une solution? Dans la négative, pourquoi?

Réponse donnée par M. Rehn au nom de la Commission
(16 décembre 2013)

1. La Commission ne souhaite faire aucun commentaire sur les actions de tel ou tel décideur politique dans les États membres dans un contexte de politique intérieure.

2. Des épisodes récents d'incertitude politique dans certains États membres n'ont pas eu d'effets de contagion importants pour les marchés financiers d'autres pays, ce qui témoigne du renforcement de la résilience de la zone euro dans son ensemble. C'est là le résultat de plusieurs facteurs, dont les progrès enregistrés par les États membres dans leurs efforts de réforme, l'action de la BCE pour supprimer les risques de relibellement et le renforcement en cours du cadre de gouvernance de l'UEM.

3. Le taux de change de l'euro flottant librement sur les marchés des changes étrangers, il devrait, à terme, refléter les fondamentaux économiques de la zone euro dans son ensemble. La Commission n'émet aucun avis sur l'estimation de l'euro et ne prend aucune mesure pour intervenir sur les marchés des changes, pas plus qu'elle n'intervient dans les décisions de politique monétaire de la BCE, qui agit en toute indépendance.

4. Les décisions de politique monétaire dans la zone euro, concernant notamment les systèmes potentiels d'achat d'obligations par la Banque centrale, sont de la compétence exclusive de la BCE. La Commission n'est pas en mesure d'émettre des commentaires sur la gestion, par la BCE, de ses portefeuilles obligataires, l'indépendance de la BCE étant inscrite dans le traité.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011281/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Berlusoni reignites the euro crisis

Silvio Berlusconi's latest escapade has left the markets deeply unimpressed.

1. What is the Commission's response to these antics?

2. Could the Italian crisis precipitate a new eurozone crisis?

3. Does the Commission share the view that the euro should be devalued so that the European economy can get back on its feet?

4. Could a bond buyback scheme like that employed in the United States be a solution, even if it is an unconventional measure? If not, why not?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(16 December 2013)

1. The Commission does not wish to comment on the actions of individual policymakers in Member States within a domestic policy context.

2. Recent episodes of political uncertainty in some Member States have not led to significant cross-country spillovers on financial markets, testifying to the increased resilience of the euro area as a whole. This reflects several factors, including progress with reform efforts by Member States, action by the ECB to remove redenomination risks and the ongoing strengthening of the EMU governance framework.

3. The euro exchange rate floats freely in foreign exchange markets and, over time, it should reflect the economic fundamentals of the euro area as a whole. The Commission does not issue opinions on the valuation of the euro and does not take actions to intervene in currency markets nor does it intervene in the monetary policy decisions of the independent ECB.

4. Monetary policy decisions in the euro area, including potential bond-purchase schemes by the central bank, are the exclusive competence of the ECB. The Commission is not in a position to comment on the ECB's management of its bond portfolios, in respect of the ECB's independence as enshrined in the Treaty.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011282/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 octobre 2013)

Objet: Shutdown américain

Faute d'accord politique trouvé au Congrès sur le relèvement du budget, certains services fédéraux américains ont été contraints de fermer leurs portes ce mardi. Il semblerait que chaque jour de blocage conduise à une perte financière importante pour le pays et ait donc des conséquences sur ses partenaires.

Selon certains économistes, la paralysie des services non essentiels de l'État fédéral américain pourrait, en effet, coûter jusqu'à 1,4 point de croissance au PIB américain au quatrième trimestre, si elle durait 3 à 4 semaines. Jusqu'ici, les analystes tablaient sur une hausse du PIB de l'ordre de 2,5 % sur les trois derniers mois de l'année.

1. Le *shutdown* américain est inquiétant pour l'Europe… Si cette situation devait durer, ne pourrait-elle pas freiner la reprise en cours?

2. L'Europe, dont les États-Unis sont un partenaire commercial important, pourrait être plus directement touchée par ce *shutdown*. À combien la Commission estime-t-elle cette perte journalière potentielle?

Réponse donnée par M. Rehn au nom de la Commission
(19 novembre 2013)

Le Congrès des États-Unis n'ayant pas été en mesure de prolonger les pouvoirs du gouvernement en matière de dépenses jusqu'à l'exercice budgétaire 2014, le fonctionnement de composantes «non essentielles» du gouvernement fédéral des États-Unis a été suspendu le 1er octobre 2013. L'accord qui a été dégagé au sein du Congrès le 16 octobre 2013 a mis un terme à cette suspension, en assurant le financement du gouvernement fédéral jusqu'au 15 janvier 2014 inclus, et relevé le plafond de la dette jusqu'au 7 février 2014.

1. Un consensus s'est dégagé sur le fait que les effets macroéconomiques directs de la suspension, qui a duré 16 jours, devraient être assez limités, en l'occurrence une contribution négative de l'ordre de 0,1 à 0,2 point de pourcentage à la croissance trimestrielle du PIB au quatrième trimestre. En conséquence, cette suspension pourrait faire reculer la croissance trimestrielle du PIB de 0,6-0,7 % (consensus avant la suspension) à 0,4-0,5 % au quatrième trimestre. En tant que telle, elle n'aura donc pas un grand impact sur la croissance du PIB en 2013.

2. La suspension n'a pas touché les canaux du commerce extérieur des États-Unis (ports et infrastructures aéroportuaires). La seule conséquence sur le commerce pourrait consister en un affaiblissement de la demande d'importations, y compris de biens de l'UE, aux États-Unis. Cependant, en raison de l'incertitude qui existe sur le type de conséquence, il est impossible d'identifier ex ante la diminution, en général, de la demande d'importations et, en particulier, de la demande de biens importés de l'UE, aux États-Unis. Néanmoins, étant donné que cette suspension a eu une très faible incidence sur le PIB des États-Unis, on peut raisonnablement affirmer que la demande d'importations n'a guère été touchée et, par conséquent, que les entreprises exportant vers les États-Unis, y compris les entreprises de l'UE, ne seront vraisemblablement pas affectées notablement.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011282/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: US shutdown

As no political agreement could be found in Congress on the budget increase, some federal services in the United States were forced to close on Tuesday 1 October 2013. Each day of the shutdown would appear to incur a major financial loss for the country and therefore has consequences for its partners.

According to some economists, the paralysis of non-essential federal services could cost the US as much as 1.4 points in GDP growth in the fourth quarter, were the shutdown to last three to four weeks. Up to now, analysts have been forecasting a GDP increase of 2.5% over the last three months of the year.

1. The US shutdown is a cause for concern for Europe. Should this situation persist, could it not slow down the recovery that is under way?

2. Europe is a major trading partner of the United States and could be more directly affected by the shutdown. What figure would the Commission put on the potential daily losses?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(19 November 2013)

Following the failure of the US Congress to extend the government's spending authority into the fiscal year 2014, 'nonessential' parts of the US Federal Government were shut down on 1 October 2013. The agreement reached in Congress on 16 October 2013 put an end to the shut-down by providing funding for the federal government through 15 January 2014 and raised the debt limit until 7 February 2014.

1. The consensus view is that direct macroeconomic effects of the 16-day shutdown will be modest, in the range of -0.1 to -0.2pp. taken off fourth-quarter quarter-on-quarter GDP growth. Therefore it may lower Q4 GDP growth from 0.6-0.7% q-o-q (the pre-shutdown consensus) to 0.4%-0.5%. As such it will not have a big impact on GDP growth in 2013.

2. The shutdown did not affect the US foreign trade channels (ports, airport infrastructure). The only impact on trade would occur through a weaker US demand for imports including EU goods. However, due to the uncertainty of the nature of the impact, it is impossible to identify *ex ante* losses to the US import demand in general and import demand for EU goods, in particular. Nevertheless, given a very limited impact of the shutdown on US GDP, it can be safely said that import demand was not affected to a big extent and therefore, companies exporting to the US, including EU companies, are not likely to be significantly concerned.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011283/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 octobre 2013)

Objet: Fraude à la TVA via le Net

En principe, un site internet basé à l'étranger qui vend des produits, par exemple en Belgique, doit appliquer le taux de TVA belge, mais il n'y a pas de contrôles. Or un belge sur deux effectue ses achats sur internet.

Quelle parade prévoit la Commission pour entraver la démarche des entreprises qui profitent d'internet pour transgresser les lois fiscales?

Réponse donnée par M. Šemeta au nom de la Commission
(15 novembre 2013)

L'organisation et la gestion de la fiscalité sont principalement de la compétence des États membres, ce qui signifie que le calcul, la collecte, le contrôle et le recouvrement de la TVA relèvent de leur responsabilité. C'est notamment le cas du contrôle des ventes sur internet (ventes à distance) qui incombe aux administrations fiscales nationales, même lorsque le vendeur opère dans plusieurs États membres.

Au niveau européen, nous n'avons connaissance d'aucune information qui montrerait que des États membres négligent le risque de fraude à la TVA lié aux ventes en ligne, qu'elles soient purement intérieures ou transfrontières.

Afin d'aider les États membres à lutter plus efficacement contre la fraude fiscale, la Commission fournit un cadre juridique leur permettant de coopérer sans heurts dans ce domaine et met à leur disposition des outils pour lutter contre la fraude transfrontière. Par exemple, le groupe chargé du projet d'audit informatisé, mis en place dans le cadre du programme Fiscalis, permet aux États membres de partager les bonnes pratiques dans les domaines du contrôle du commerce électronique ainsi que des outils de surveillance et de recherche sur internet.

En outre, afin de promouvoir et de faciliter la coopération multilatérale, en particulier dans la lutte contre la fraude à la TVA, le règlement (UE) n° 904/2010 ([1]) du Conseil a institué, en ses articles 33 à 37, à un réseau dénommé «Eurofisc» en vue de l'échange rapide d'informations ciblées entre les États membres. Ce réseau opère depuis le 1er novembre 2010.

([1]) Règlement (UE) n° 904/2010 du Conseil du 7 octobre 2010 concernant la coopération administrative et la lutte contre la fraude dans le domaine de la taxe sur la valeur ajoutée (refonte), JO L 268 du 12.10.2010.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011283/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: VAT fraud via the Internet

In principle, a website based abroad that sells products, for example, in Belgium, has to apply the Belgian VAT rate, but there are no checks. However, one in every two Belgians buys online.

How does the Commission plan to respond to thwart companies that take advantage of the Internet to flout tax laws?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(15 November 2013)

The organisation and the management of tax systems is primarily the responsibility of the Member States; this means that the assessment, collection, auditing and the recovery of VAT fall under the responsibility of Member States. In particular, the control of sales over the Internet (distance selling) is the responsibility of national tax administrations, including situations where the seller operates across borders.

There exists no information at the European level that Member States neglect the risk of VAT fraud linked to the sales over the Internet, neither as regards pure domestic nor as regards cross-border sales.

In order to assist the Member States in their efforts to fight fraud more efficiently, the Commission provides the legal framework allowing Member States to smoothly cooperate in this field and it offers them the tools for combating cross border fraud cases. For example the E-audit project group set up under the Fiscalis programme enables Member States to share best practice on auditing e-commerce and on Internet monitoring and search tools.

Also, in order to promote and facilitate multilateral cooperation especially in the fight against VAT fraud, Council Regulation (EU) No 904/2010 ([1]) created (in Articles 33-37) a network entitled 'Eurofisc' to permit the swift exchange of targeted information between Member States. This network entered into force on 1 November 2010.

([1]) Council Regulation 904/2010 of 7 October 2010 on administrative cooperation and combating fraud in the field of value added tax (recast), OJ L 268, 12.10.2010.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011284/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 octobre 2013)

Objet: Amélioration de l'aide accordée à la République démocratique du Congo (RDC)

Mardi, la Cour des comptes de l'Union européenne a demandé que l'Union européenne se montre plus exigeante envers les autorités de Kinshasa pour éviter l'évaporation des aides financières. En l'état, «l'efficacité du soutien de l'Union européenne à la gouvernance en République démocratique du Congo est limitée», a-t-elle encore affirmé.

1. Quelle est la réaction de la Commission?

2. Que compte faire la Commission pour que ces fonds soient injectés de manière plus efficace en RDC pour le bien du peuple congolais?

Réponse donnée par M. Piebalgs au nom de la Commission
(6 décembre 2013)

1. La Commission renvoie l'Honorable Parlementaire à la déclaration du commissaire chargé du développement sur le rapport de la Cour des comptes européenne relatif à l'aide de l'UE à la gouvernance en RDC, accessible sur le site web suivant:
http://blogs.ec.europa.eu/piebalgs/statement-by-eu-development-commissioner-andris-piebalgs-on-eca-report-on-eu-support-for-governance-in-drc/

2. Les projets de développement menés par l'UE en RDC visent à améliorer la situation de la population congolaise, principalement des Congolais les plus vulnérables et les plus nécessiteux. Le meilleur moyen de veiller à ce que nos fonds profitent à la population est de suivre et de contrôler étroitement la mise en œuvre des projets pour faire en sorte que les résultats escomptés soient atteints, même à un rythme lent.

La Commission, par l'intermédiaire de la délégation de l'UE en RDC, met déjà en place des mesures destinées à renforcer le contrôle des projets de l'UE afin d'assurer le suivi de la concrétisation des résultats escomptés et de mieux mesurer l'impact de notre coopération.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011284/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Improving aid granted to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

On Tuesday, the European Court of Auditors called on the EU to be more demanding of the authorities in Kinshasa to prevent financial aid vanishing into thin air. It was also claimed that, as things stand, 'the effectiveness of EU assistance for governance in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is limited'.

1. What is the Commission's response?

2. What does the Commission plan to do so that these funds are injected more effectively into the DRC for the good of the Congolese people?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(6 December 2013)

1. The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to the Statement by the Commissioner responsible for Development on the report from the European Court of Auditors on EU support for governance in DRC which can be found in the following website: http://blogs.ec.europa.eu/piebalgs/statement-by-eu-development-commissioner-andris-piebalgs-on-eca-report-on-eu-support-for-governance-in-drc/

2. The EU's development projects in DRC are designed to improve the situation of the Congolese people mainly those most vulnerable and in need. The best way to ensure that our funds benefit the population is to closely follow and monitor the implementation of the projects to ensure the achievement, even at a slow pace, of the expected results.

The Commission, through the EU Delegation in the DRC, is already putting in place measures to further reinforce the monitoring of EU projects to follow up the achievement of the expected results and better measure the impact of our cooperation.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011285/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 octobre 2013)

Objet: Prothèses PIP: Agence du médicament mis en cause

Mediapart a fait état, mardi 1er octobre, d'un rapport interne très critique de l'Agence nationale de sécurité du médicament et des produits de santé (ANSM, ex-Agence française de sécurité sanitaire des produits de santé — Afssaps) sur l'absence d'alerte concernant les prothèses PIP, qui aurait été dissimulé à l'époque par le ministre de la santé. Le document date du premier trimestre 2012, et a été saisi lors d'une perquisition au siège de l'ANSM.

«La direction de l'agence n'a pas divulgué ce document interne dont elle avait connaissance, mais a diffusé un rapport officiel, remis à Xavier Bertrand en février 2012, expurgé des informations les plus gênantes pour l'Afssaps», écrit Mediapart, qui estime que «l'augmentation des ruptures pour les prothèses PIP est amorcée dès 2006» et que «l'Afssaps aurait dû réagir dès 2007 et au plus tard en 2008», alors que la recommandation d'un retrait préventif pour toutes les femmes a été annoncé par les autorités sanitaires françaises à la fin de 2011.

Plus de 16 000 femmes se sont fait retirer leurs prothèses mammaires PIP contenant un gel de silicone frauduleux, selon le dernier bilan arrêté à la fin du mois de mai par l'ANSM. Le taux de «défaillance» constaté sur les implants retirés est «à ce jour de 25,4 %», avec 7 186 implants défectueux sur les 28 276 retirés chez 16 426 femmes.

1. Comment réagit la Commission?

2. Compte-t-elle demander officiellement aux autorités françaises ou aux anciennes autorités de s'expliquer?

Réponse donnée par M. Mimica au nom de la Commission
(22 novembre 2013)

Au début de 2012, à la suite du scandale des prothèses mammaires PIP et afin d'éviter que de tels cas se produisent de nouveau, la Commission européenne a proposé aux États membres de l'UE un plan d'action commun visant à renforcer rapidement les contrôles des dispositifs médicaux dans le cadre du système réglementaire actuel, en particulier en ce qui concerne le fonctionnement des organismes notifiés, la vigilance et la surveillance du marché.

Parallèlement à ce plan d'action, le 26 septembre 2012, la Commission a adopté deux propositions visant à réviser le cadre réglementaire européen sur les dispositifs médicaux ([1]) et les dispositifs médicaux de diagnostic in vitro ([2]). Ces propositions renforceront nettement les règles régissant les dispositifs médicaux et les dispositifs médicaux de diagnostic in vitro dans l'Union européenne.

Dès que les autorités françaises ont communiqué les mesures prises pour faire face au scandale des prothèses mammaires PIP, la Commission a organisé des réunions avec les autorités nationales dans le but de faciliter l'échange d'informations entre la France, les autres États membres et nos principaux partenaires internationaux. En outre, afin de fournir aux États membres et aux autres parties intéressées des preuves scientifiques fiables, la Commission a demandé au comité scientifique des risques sanitaires émergents et nouveaux d'émettre un avis sur la sécurité des prothèses mammaires PIP en silicone ([3]). Un premier avis a été adopté le 1er février 2012 et un avis préliminaire actualisé peut actuellement être consulté par tous (disponible uniquement en anglais) ([4]). À la lumière des données récemment communiquées par les États membres et des forums internationaux, l'avis scientifique actualisé sera finalisé et adopté au début de l'année 2014.

([1]) COM(2012) 542 final.
([2]) COM(2012) 541 final.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/emerging/docs/scenihr_o_034.pdf
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/consultations/public_consultations/scenihr_cons_14_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011285/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: PIP implants: Medicines Agency called into question

On Tuesday 1 October 2013, Mediapart revealed an internal report that is highly critical of the French National Agency for the Safety of Medicines and Health Products (ANSM, formerly the French Agency for the Health Safety of Health Products — Afssaps) over its failure to issue an alert regarding PIP implants, which was concealed at the time by the Minister for Health. The document dates back to the first quarter of 2012, and was seized during a search of the ANSM's headquarters.

According to Mediapart, the agency's management did not disclose this internal document, which they were aware of, but circulated an official report, sent to Xavier Bertrand in February 2012, with the most embarrassing information for Afssaps redacted. Moreover, the increase in the number of ruptured PIP implants started as early as 2006 and Afssaps should have reacted in 2007, or 2008 at the latest, whereas the French health authorities announced their recommendation that all women should have their implants removed as a precaution in late 2011.

Over 16 000 women have had their PIP breast implants, which contained illegal silicone gel, removed, according to the latest count by the ANSM at the end of May. The 'failure' rate for implants taken out now stands at 25.4%, 7 186 defective implants of the 28 276 removed from 16 426 women.

1. What is the Commission's response?

2. Does it plan officially to call on the French authorities or the former authorities to explain themselves?

Answer given by Mr Mimica on behalf of the Commission
(22 November 2013)

At the beginning of 2012, following the PIP breast implants scandal and in order to prevent such cases from happening in the future, the European Commission proposed to the EU Member States a joint action plan aimed at rapidly tightening controls on medical devices under the current regulatory system, especially with regard to the functioning of notified bodies, vigilance and market surveillance.

In parallel to this action plan, on 26 September 2012, the Commission adopted two proposals to revise the European Regulatory framework on medical devices ([1]) and *in vitro* diagnostic medical devices ([2]). These proposals will considerably reinforce the rules governing medical devices and *in vitro* diagnostic medical devices in the European Union.

As soon as the French authorities communicated the measures taken to address the PIP breast implants scandal, the Commission organised meetings with national authorities in order to facilitate the exchange of information between France, the other Member States and our main international partners. Furthermore, in order to provide Member States and other interested parties with sound scientific evidence, the Commission asked the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks to provide its opinion on the safety of PIP silicone breast implants ([3]). A first opinion was adopted on 1 February 2012 and a preliminary updated opinion is curently available for public consultation. ([4]) In the light of data recently made available from the Member States and international fora, the updated scientific opinion will be finalised and adopted in early 2014.

([1]) COM(2012) 542 final.
([2]) COM(2012) 541 final.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/emerging/docs/scenihr_o_034.pdf
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/consultations/public_consultations/scenihr_cons_14_en.htm

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011286/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 octobre 2013)

Objet: Concessions de Google insuffisantes

La Commission a indiqué que les nouvelles concessions proposées par Google pourraient mettre fin à son enquête contre le géant de la recherche.

1. La Commission peut-elle donner plus de détails sur les concessions proposées et censées inclure des mesures pour rendre plus facile pour les internautes de voir les résultats des rivaux de Google? Si elle ne peut pas, quel intérêt y a-t-il à avoir déjà communiqué sur ce sujet?

2. Ces concessions signifient-elles la fin de toutes les poursuites? Sans aucune amende? Même symbolique pour le temps passé par les institutions sur cette affaire, mais aussi et surtout pour la manipulation dont ont été victimes des millions d'internautes?

Réponse donnée par M. Almunia au nom de la Commission
(25 novembre 2013)

La proposition révisée d'engagements de Google recouvre les quatre problèmes évoqués par la Commission dans son appréciation préliminaire du 13 mars 2013.

Les principales modifications apportées aux engagements proposés par Google peuvent être résumées comme suit:

— la proposition révisée concerne tous les points d'entrée des recherches effectuées sur Google, telles que les recherches vocales ou les recherches saisies dans les barres d'outils;

— l'espace réservé à l'affichage des liens concurrents est augmenté et s'inscrit dans un cadre visible. Ces liens concurrents seront accompagnés d'un icone et d'un texte dynamique. Ils peuvent également être ombrés pour mieux ressortir et s'afficher dans une autre couleur que celle utilisée pour les annonces;

— Google a modifié la granularité de l'enchère lors de la sélection de liens concurrents. Dans la proposition révisée de Google, la granularité sera la même que celle utilisée dans les enchères AdWords de Google;

— Google propose d'améliorer la granularité de l'option de refus (*opt-out*) dans le cas d'un contenu tiers en la portant à un niveau «sous-domaine par sous-domaine», ainsi que de renforcer la clause de non-rétorsion pour faire en sorte que le recours à l'option de refus n'ait aucune incidence sur le classement AdWords en plus du référencement naturel;

— Google propose de mettre en œuvre un principe général visant à ne pas empêcher le portage ou la gestion de données campagne des utilisateurs sur AdWords de Google ou le service d'annonces autre que Google.

Il est prématuré de préjuger de la décision qui sera adoptée en l'espèce. La Commission souhaite connaitre l'avis des opérateurs du marché sur la proposition révisée de Google. Les prochaines mesures à prendre seront arrêtées sur la base de l'appréciation de ces réactions. La Commission tient toutefois à attirer l'attention de l'Honorable Parlementaire sur le fait que dans le cas des décisions relatives aux engagements prises en vertu de l'article 9 du règlement (CE) n° 1/2003, aucune amende n'est infligée.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011286/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Inadequate concessions from Google

The Commission has stated that the new concessions proposed by Google could bring an end to its investigation into the search giant.

1. Can the Commission provide more details about the proposed concessions, which supposedly include measures making it easier for Internet users to see the results of Google's rivals? If not, what is the point of already having made a statement on this issue?

2. Do these concessions spell the end for all prosecutions, with no fine? Not even a symbolic fine for the time the institutions have spent on this case, but especially for the manipulation to which millions of Internet users have fallen prey?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(25 November 2013)

The revised proposal of Google's commitments cover the four concerns outlined in the Commission's Preliminary Assessment of 13 March 2013.

The main changes to Google's commitments proposal can be summarised as follows:

— The revised proposal covers all entry points for searches on Google such as voice searches and searches entered in toolbars.

— Rival links are displayed in a larger space, with a visible frame. They will be accompanied with an icon, and dynamic text. Rival links may also be shaded to be better highlighted, with a different colour than the one used for ads.

— Google has changed the granularity of the auction for the selection of rival links. In Google's revised proposal, the granularity will be the same as the one of Google's AdWords auctions.

— Google proposes to improve the granularity of the opt out option for third party content to a subdomain by subdomain level, as well as to tighten the non-retaliation clause to ensure that the use of the opt out has no impact on AdWords ranking in addition to natural search ranking.

— Google proposes to implement a general principle not to prevent porting or managing of user campaign data across Google AdWords and non-Google advertising service.

It is too early to prejudge the decision that wil be taken in this case. The Commission is seeking feedback from the market on Google's revised proposal. The next steps to be taken will be decided based on the basis of the assessment of that feedback. The Commission would however draw the Honourable Member's attention to the fact that in commitments decisions pursuant to Article 9 of Regulation 1/2003 no fines are imposed.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011287/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 octobre 2013)

Objet: La lutte contre la pauvreté n'est pas prise au sérieux

La crise de la zone euro a conduit les Européens à réfléchir et à œuvrer au renforcement et à l'approfondissement de l'Union économique et monétaire. Jusqu'ici, les travaux se sont concentrés sur les volets budgétaire, financier et économique, la dimension sociale étant reléguée au second plan. En décembre 2012, les chefs d'État et de gouvernement de l'Union ont demandé à la Commission européenne de travailler sur ce chantier.

L'impact social de la crise s'est fait ressentir en 2013, déplore l'EAPN. Le réseau européen contre la pauvreté dénonce le fait que l'Union et ses États membres échouent à tenir les objectifs fixés par la stratégie EU 2020 en matière d'emploi, d'éducation et de réduction de la pauvreté. En cause: des politiques macroéconomiques qui continuent à donner la priorité à l'austérité, aux coupes dans les dépenses sociales, aux baisses salariales et aux privatisations. La consolidation budgétaire est la ligne directrice de toutes les politiques, alors même que ses effets vont tout à fait à l'encontre de la lutte contre la réduction de la pauvreté. Et les systèmes fiscaux sont tels que le fardeau est très inéquitablement partagé: ce sont les plus fragiles qui en supportent la plus lourde part.

Il faut défendre l'idée que les dépenses sociales sont un investissement, pas un fardeau.

1. Comment la Commission réagit-elle et que propose-t-elle face à ce terrible constat, selon lequel la pauvreté n'est pas prise au sérieux?

2. Il est aussi reproché à la Commission de prêter trop peu d'attention à l'impact social des recommandations qu'elle adresse à chaque État membre. Comment cette perception est-elle née?

3. Selon la Commission, la lutte contre la pauvreté ne devrait-elle pas faire partie d'une stratégie intégrée? Ne faudrait-il pas mettre en place une stratégie multidimensionnelle, au niveau européen, pour lutter contre la pauvreté? La crédibilité de l'Union passe, elle aussi, par la réalisation des objectifs que l'Union s'est elle-même fixés en matière de lutte contre la pauvreté!

Réponse donnée par M. Andor au nom de la Commission
(22 novembre 2013)

La lutte contre la pauvreté est l'un des cinq grands objectifs de la stratégie Europe 2020. La plateforme contre la pauvreté et l'exclusion est l'élément phare conçu pour aider à atteindre l'objectif de réduction de la pauvreté et elle contribue à mettre en place de solides partenariats avec la société civile pour la conception et la mise en œuvre de réformes politiques. Le paquet Investissement social, qui a été adopté par la Commission en février, invite les États membres à améliorer l'adéquation et la durabilité des systèmes de protection sociale, et inclut une recommandation d'investir dans l'enfance pour briser le cercle vicieux intergénérationnel de l'inégalité. Le Semestre européen permet également des recommandations par pays (RPP) et 19 États membres ont reçu des recommandations spécifiques en 2013 pour lutter contre la pauvreté ou l'exclusion des personnes vulnérables. Enfin, les fonds de l'UE, comme le FSE, le FEDER, Progress et le nouveau Fonds européen d'aide aux plus démunis (FEAD) contribuent à promouvoir l'accès au marché du travail et soutenir les stratégies d'inclusion (actives) et aident à faire reculer la pauvreté.

La Commission est pleinement consciente de l'obligation, au titre de la clause sociale horizontale, de prévoir et d'évaluer soigneusement l'impact social, lors de la conception et de la mise en œuvre de ses politiques et de ses activités. Le système d'analyse d'impact prend en compte ces exigences, tandis que l'inclusion sociale et la protection sociale constituent l'un des domaines définis dans les lignes directrices de la Commission concernant l'analyse d'impact.

Ces lignes directrices clarifient les initiatives stratégiques pour lesquelles une analyse d'impact doit être effectuée. Les lignes directrices sont actuellement en cours de révision et le public sera consulté sur le projet de version révisée.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011287/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Fight against poverty not being taken seriously

The euro area crisis has led Europeans to consider and work on strengthening and deepening economic and monetary union. Until now, work has focused on budgetary, financial and economic aspects, with the social dimension put on the back burner. In December 2012, the EU Heads of State or Government called on the Commission to work on this issue.

The social impact of the crisis was felt in 2013, according to the European Anti Poverty Network (EAPD). The EAPD points out that the EU and its Member Stats are failing to keep to the objectives set by the EU 2020 strategy on employment, education and reducing poverty. At stake are macroeconomic policies that continue to prioritise austerity, social spending cuts, wage cuts and privatisations. Budgetary consolidation lies at the heart of all policies, even though its effects are totally incompatible with the fight to reduce poverty. Moreover, tax systems are such that the burden is shared very unevenly: it is the weakest who bear the brunt.

The idea should be championed that social spending is an investment, not a burden.

1. What is the Commission's response and what does it propose in view of the appalling conclusion that poverty is not taken seriously?

2. The Commission also stands accused of paying too little attention to the social impact of the recommendations it makes to each Member State. How did this perception come about?

3. In the Commission's view, should the fight against poverty not be part of an integrated strategy? Should an EU-level multidimensional strategy not be put in place, to fight poverty? The EU's credibility depends on achievement of the objectives that the EU set itself on fighting poverty!

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(22 November 2013)

Tackling poverty is one of the five EU headline targets of the Europe 2020 strategy. The Platform against Poverty and Exclusion is the flagship designed to help achieve the poverty target and works to develop strong partnerships with civil society for the design and implementation of policy reforms. The Social Investment Package, adopted by the Commission in February, calls on Member States to improve the adequacy and sustainability of social protection systems, and includes a recommendation on Investing in Children to break intergenerational cycles of disadvantage. The European Semester also allows for country-specific recommendations (CSRs) and 19 Member States received CSRs in 2013 to address poverty or the exclusion of vulnerable people. Finally, EU Funds, such as the ESF, ERDF, PROGRESS and the new Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) help promote access to labour markets, support (active) inclusion strategies, and help to reduce poverty.

The Commission is fully aware of the obligation under the horizontal social clause to carefully anticipate and assess social impacts in the design and implementation of its policies and activities. The Impact Assessment (IA) system takes these requirements into account, while social inclusion and social protection is one of the domains defined in the Commission's impact assessment guidelines.

The Commission's IA Guidelines clarify for which policy initiatives an impact assessment has to be carried out. The Guidelines are currently under revision and the public will be consulted on the draft revision.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011288/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 octobre 2013)

Objet: Réglementation sur les dispositifs médicaux

1. Les changements apportés récemment par la Commission à la réglementation sur les dispositifs médicaux sont-ils suffisants et protègeront-ils les patients diabétiques?

2. L'EASD a lancé un appel à la Commission pour créer une Agence centrale européenne des dispositifs, tout comme il en existe déjà pour les médicaments. Qu'en dit la Commission?

3. D'après l'EASD, les propositions révisées de la Commission portent principalement sur les dispositifs de classe III (surtout implantables), dans laquelle n'entrent pas ceux destinés au diabète. Les changements proposés semblent aller dans la bonne direction, mais ne laisseraient-ils pas des patients dans une position où ils ne seraient pas protégés contre d'éventuels dommages?

Réponse donnée par M. Mimica au nom de la Commission
(22 novembre 2013)

Les propositions législatives de la Commission ([1]) adoptées le 26 septembre 2012 ont considérablement renforcé la réglementation sur les dispositifs médicaux et les dispositifs de diagnostic in vitro en Europe. Elles renforcent le système d'approbation, notamment pour les dispositifs à haut risque, introduisent des règles plus strictes pour les organismes notifiés, prévoient des exigences supplémentaires pour les preuves cliniques et radicalisent les règles sur la vigilance et la surveillance du marché. Ces améliorations du cadre réglementaire permettront de fournir aux patients des dispositifs plus sûrs et plus performants, y compris pour le diabète, tels que des appareils de mesure du glucose et des pompes à insuline.

L'option de créer une nouvelle agence réglementaire européenne pour les dispositifs médicaux a été rejetée dans l'analyse d'impact ([2]) accompagnant les propositions susmentionnées. La principale raison en était l'absence de preuves claires de sa valeur ajoutée pour la sécurité des patients. Il est aussi apparu contestable qu'une agence individuelle ait la masse critique en termes de gains d'efficacité.

Même si les dispositifs destinés aux diabétiques ne sont pas considérés comme des dispositifs à haut risque (classe III) et ne doivent pas, en tant que tels, être soumis à la nouvelle procédure d'approbation, la Commission ne doute pas que les améliorations globales du cadre législatif assureront pour tous les dispositifs un haut niveau de sécurité aux patients de l'Union.

([1]) COM(2012) 541 final et COM(2012) 542 final.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/medical-devices/files/revision_docs/revision_ia_part1_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011288/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Legislation on medical devices

1. Do the changes recently made by the Commission to the legislation on medical devices go far enough and will they protect diabetic patients?

2. The European Association for the Study of Diabetes (EASD) has called on the Commission to create a European central agency for medical devices, as already exists for medicinal products. What does the Commission have to say about that?

3. According to the EASD, the Commission's revised proposals mainly concern class III devices (particularly implantable devices), a category that does not include devices intended for diabetics. The proposed changes appear to be a step in the right direction, but would they not leave patients in a position where they would not be protected against any harm?

Answer given by Mr Mimica on behalf of the Commission
(22 November 2013)

The Commission legislative proposals ([1]) adopted on 26 September 2012 considerably strengthen the rules governing medical devices and *in vitro* diagnostic medical devices in Europe. They reinforce the approval system in particular for high-risk devices, introduce stricter rules for notified bodies, reinforce the requirements for clinical evidence and strengthen the rules on vigilance and market surveillance. These improvements to the regulatory framework will allow for safer and better performing devices to reach patients, including devices intended for diabetes, such as glucose meters and insulin pumps.

The option to create a new European regulatory agency for medical devices was discarded in the impact assessment ([2]) accompanying the abovementioned proposals. The main reasons were a lack of clear evidence of the added value for patient safety of such agency. It also appeared questionable whether a separate agency would have the critical mass in terms of cost efficiencies.

Even though devices intended for diabetics are not considered as high risk devices (class III) and as such are not envisaged to undergo the new approval procedure, the Commission is confident that the overall improvements of the legislative framework will ensure a high level of patient safety in the Union for all devices.

([1]) COM(2012) 541 final and COM(2012) 542 final.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/medical-devices/files/revision_docs/revision_ia_part1_en.pdf

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011289/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 octobre 2013)

Objet: Droits des robots

Des avocats planchent sur la création d'une «personnalité robot» et l'attribution d'un numéro de sécurité sociale; le ministère du redressement productif travaille sur un projet de charte éthique non contraignante, la Commission européenne envisage de leur conférer la personnalité morale… de manière protéiforme, le droit des robots semble émerger.

Des robots remplaçant des hommes, c'est ce que commence à faire la Commission européenne avec son projet Petrobot. Associée à un consortium de dix entreprises européennes dirigé par le pétrolier Shell, la Commission souhaite élaborer des robots pouvant se substituer aux êtres humains pour «l'inspection des cuves à pression et des réservoirs de stockage largement utilisés dans l'industrie du pétrole, du gaz et de la pétrochimie».

La Commission précise que le fait de «conférer un statut légal aux robots et aux systèmes intelligents est une option, mais c'est seulement une option».

1. Qu'en est-il vraiment?

2. Quel est le but?

3. Quel est le budget autour de cette thématique?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Kroes au nom de la Commission
(15 novembre 2013)

La technologie n'est pas encore prête à doter les robots d'une autonomie suffisante pour leur accorder une personnalité ou un statut juridique. Toutefois, la communauté des systèmes cognitifs artificiels et de la robotique se préoccupe bel et bien des questions éthiques, juridiques et sociétales liées aux futurs systèmes dotés d'une intelligence et d'une autonomie accrues.

La question de l'octroi de la personnalité juridique aux robots fait actuellement l'objet d'un débat académique, et la Commission finance des activités portant sur les aspects juridiques liés à la robotique, comme RoboLaw, par exemple (voir le rapport à l'adresse suivante: http://www.unipv-lawtech.eu/files/euRobotics-legal-issues-in-robotics-DRAFT_6j6ryjyp.pdf).

Il n'existe pas de systèmes entièrement autonomes à l'heure actuelle. Des tendances mondiales claires indiquent que de tels systèmes pourraient voir le jour à l'avenir. Il est donc important de se préparer à l'arrivée de ce type de systèmes pleinement autonomes, en réfléchissant aux conséquences juridiques et en envisageant les politiques à mener à cet égard.

Dans le cadre du 7^e^ programme-cadre de recherche, des projets de robotique ont été menés pour plus de 500 millions d'euros, ce qui en fait le plus gros programme de R&D en robotique civile. Plusieurs de ces projets ont consacré des ressources à l'analyse juridique et éthique.

Le projet Petrobot, financé par l'Union européenne, vise à éviter la présence d'opérateurs humains dans des environnements hostiles, en les remplaçant par des robots télécommandés. Cependant, un être humain serait encore responsable du contrôle au niveau supérieur, dans des conditions de travail meilleures et plus sûres. Les robots ne seront pas totalement autonomes. Même si certaines tâches de bas niveau peuvent être exécutées de manière autonome, l'objectif n'est pas de remplacer l'être humain, mais de l'assister. De nombreux travaux sont ennuyeux, dangereux et sales, et les robots, comme d'autres machines, peuvent faciliter la vie des travailleurs.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011289/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Robots' rights

Robot law seems to be materialising in various ways, since lawyers are working on the creation of a 'robot personality' and on the allocation of robot social security numbers, France's Ministry of Productive Recovery is drawing up a non-binding draft charter of ethics, and the Commission is considering granting robots a legal personality.

Human-replacing robots are something that the Commission is starting to introduce with its Petrobot project. Together with a consortium of 10 European companies led by the oil company Shell, it is seeking to develop robots which can replace humans in 'inspections of pressure vessels and storage tanks widely used in the oil, gas and petrochemical industry'.

It says that granting legal status to robots and intelligent systems is an option and nothing more.

1. What is the reality of the situation?

2. What is the goal?

3. What is the budget for this policy area?

Answer given by Ms. Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(15 November 2013)

The technology is not yet ready to deliver the degree of autonomy to grant personality or legal status to robots. However the relevant ethical, legal and societal issues linked to future systems, endowed with more intelligence and autonomy, are seriously taken into account by the robotics and artificial cognitive systems community.

Granting robots a legal personality is an academic discussion at the moment, and the Commission is funding activities adressing legal issues related to robotics (e.g. RoboLaw; see report: http://www.unipv-lawtech.eu/files/euRobotics-legal-issues-in-robotics-DRAFT_6j6ryjyp.pdf).

Fully autonomous systems are not a reality now. There are clear worldwide trends indicating that we could see such systems in the future. Developing policy options and understanding the legal consequences of fully autonomous systems is thus important preparation for the future.

In the 7th Framework Programme for Research, there have been robotics projects for more than EUR 500 million, which makes it the biggest civilian robotics R&D programme. Several projects dedicate resources to legal and ethical analysis.

The EU-funded PETROBOT project aims to avoid the need for human operators to be present in harsh environments by sending a remotely operated robot. A human would however still perform the higher level control with better and safer working conditions. The robot will not be fully autonomous. Even if some low-level tasks can be executed autonomously, the goal is not to replace humans, but to assist them. Many tasks are dull, dangerous and dirty, and robots, like other machines, can make the job of humans easier.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011290/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 octobre 2013)

Objet: Véhicules hybrides

La Commission a approuvé mercredi une aide de 20,5 millions d'euros accordée par la France à Renault pour un projet de recherche et développement dans le domaine des véhicules hybrides.

Ce projet, baptisé «Hydivu» et qui concerne le développement d'une technologie hybride diesel pour des véhicules utilitaires de type fourgon «est conforme aux règles de l'UE relatives aux aides d'État», indique la Commission dans un communiqué.

1. Quels sont les autres projets avancés ou aboutis subventionnés par la Commission en la matière?

2. Quelles sont les avancées réalisées?

3. La Commission possède-t-elle des objectifs chiffrés en la matière?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Geoghegan-Quinn au nom de la Commission
(20 novembre 2013)

1. Le secteur des camionnettes et fourgonnettes à moteur diesel hybride a bénéficié d'une aide au titre du 6^e^ PC ([1]) avec le projet Hiceps ([2]), et du 7^e^ PC ([3]) avec le projet HCV. ([4]) Les deux projets étaient de grande envergure (financement total de plus de 20 millions d'euros) et impliquaient plusieurs fabricants. Dans le projet Hiceps, la technologie diesel pour les fourgonnettes a seulement été testée en laboratoire. Dans le projet HCV, des véhicules de livraison complets ont fait l'objet d'essais et de démonstrations dans plusieurs villes européennes, et d'autres activités de démonstration confirmeront à la fin du projet les améliorations obtenues (les objectifs étaient: 5 % de réduction des émissions de CO_2 et 40 % de réduction du coût du groupe motopropulseur par rapport aux moteurs diesel hybrides de la génération précédente). Les projets concernant les véhicules électriques au titre du 7^e^ PC, tels que l'OpenER ([5]), contribuent à améliorer la performance des moteurs hybrides et à en abaisser le coût.

2. Bien que le projet HCV ne soit pas encore terminé, la Commission est en mesure de confirmer que, dans le domaine des groupes motopropulseurs hybrides de pointe, des progrès ont été accomplis dans la réduction du poids et du volume des moteurs et des transmissions connexes, de l'électronique de puissance, des batteries, des commandes et architectures des groupes motopropulseurs de pointe, en vue d'améliorer leur rendement énergétique et de réduire les émissions de CO_2 et les émissions polluantes. Plus de 30 % d'économies d'énergie peuvent être réalisées grâce à la propulsion électrique optimisée, à la valorisation énergétique et à la conduite en fonction du contexte («context-awareness»), comme l'a démontré le projet OpenER.

3. Toutefois, pour améliorer la pénétration sur le marché de ces technologies, la recherche doit encore se poursuivre. À cet égard, la recherche sur les groupes motopropulseurs hybrides électriques pour tous les types de véhicules, y compris les fourgonnettes, bénéficiera d'un soutien dans le cadre de la recherche sur les transports routiers au titre du programme «Horizon 2020». La recherche visera à améliorer encore de 20 % le rendement des groupes motopropulseurs, à diminuer de 20 % leur poids et leur volume et à réduire de 70 % la pollution atmosphérique par rapport aux limites de la norme Euro 6 qui entrera prochainement en vigueur.

([1]) Sixième programme-cadre pour des activités de recherche, de développement technologique et de démonstration (6^e^ PC, 2002-2006).
([2]) Système hautement intégré à propulsion électrique et combustion. http://ec.europa.eu/research/transport/projects/items/hi_ceps_en.htm
([3]) Septième programme-cadre pour des activités de recherche, de développement technologique et de démonstration (7^e^ PC, 2007-2013).
([4]) Véhicules commerciaux hybrides http://www.hcv-project.eu/overview.shtml
([5]) http://www.fp7-opener.eu

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011290/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Hybrid vehicles

On Wednesday the Commission approved the allocation of EUR 20.5 million of French aid to Renault for a research and development project in the field of hybrid vehicles.

In a press release, the Commission said that the 'HYDIVU' project, which involves the development of a diesel hybrid technology for vans, 'complies with the EU rules on state aid'.

1. What other advanced or completed projects on this subject have been granted aid by the Commission?

2. What progress has been achieved?

3. Does the Commission have performance targets in this regard?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(20 November 2013)

1. The area of hybrid diesel light trucks and vans has been supported in FP6, ([1]) through the project HICEPS ([2]), and in FP7 ([3]) through the project HCV. ([4]) Both projects were large (total funding of more than EUR 20 million) and included several manufacturers. In HICEPS, the diesel van technology was only tested in the laboratory. In HCV, complete freight delivery vehicles have been tested and demonstrated in several European cities, while further improved demonstrators will confirm at the end of the project what improvements have been achieved (the targets were a 5% CO_2 reduction and a 40% powertrain cost reduction with respect to previous generation hybrid diesels). FP7 Electric Vehicle projects like OpenER ([5]) contribute to hybrid efficiency and cost reduction.

2. Although HCV is not yet completed, the Commission can confirm that in the field of advanced hybrid powertrains, progress was achieved in the reduction of the weight and the volume of motors and associated transmissions, power electronics, batteries, advanced powertrain controls and architectures in order to improve the energy efficiency and reduce CO_2 and polluting emissions. More than 30% energy saving can be gained thanks to optimised electric powertrain, energy recovery, and context-aware driving, as demonstrated by OpenER.

3. However, to improve market penetration of these technologies, further research is needed. In that regard, research for electric hybrid powertrains for all types of vehicles including vans will be supported in the area of road transport research in Horizon 2020. The aim of the research will be to achieve a further 20% powertrain efficiency improvement, a 20% powertrain weight and volume reduction, and a 70% reduction of air pollution below the upcoming Euro 6 limits.

([1]) Sixth Framework Programme for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration Activities (FP6, 2002-2006).
([2]) Highly Integrated Combustion electric Propulsion System. http://ec.europa.eu/research/transport/projects/items/hi_ceps_en.htm
([3]) Seventh Framework Programme for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration Activities (FP7, 2007-2013).
([4]) Hybrid Commercial Vehicles http://www.hcv-project.eu/overview.shtml
([5]) http://www.fp7-opener.eu

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011291/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 octobre 2013)

Objet: Quotas laitiers

La Commission a annoncé mardi que six États membres de l'Union européenne devront récupérer un total de 46 millions d'euros auprès de leurs producteurs laitiers pour dépassements des quotas entre 2011 et 2013.

Pour la campagne 2012/2013, les producteurs autrichiens sont les plus lourdement sanctionnés pour surproduction, avec des restitutions de 28,733 millions d'euros, suivis de leurs collègues allemands, avec 7,225 millions d'euros. Le Danemark devra récupérer 5,142 millions d'euros, la Pologne 4,112 millions et Chypre 343 000 euros.

Les Pays-Bas ont pour leur part dépassé leur quota de vente directe sur la campagne 2011/2012. Ils devront récupérer 301 000 euros auprès de la filière.

1. N'est-ce pas la preuve que, sans quotas laitiers, le marché sera impossible à réguler?

2. Ne serait-il pas sain et symbolique de reverser les amendes imposées par la Commission à la suite des dépassements des quotas à ceux qui ont respecté ces quotas plutôt que de les noyer dans le budget européen?

Réponse donnée par M. Cioloş au nom de la Commission
(18 novembre 2013)

1. Le nombre d'États membres dépassant leur quota laitier reste limité et la production excédentaire en cause représente 0,1 % de l'ensemble du lait livré ou concerné par les ventes directes. Au cours de l'année contingentaire 2012/2013, les livraisons totales de l'Union sont restées de 6 % inférieures aux volumes contingentaires totaux. Environ 22 États membres sont restés en dessous de leur quota de livraison, dont 13 dans une proportion supérieure à 10 %. De plus, on ne peut déduire des faits mentionnés que les quotas sont le seul moyen de réglementer le marché du lait.

2. En ce qui concerne le versement des prélèvements collectés aux producteurs qui sont restés en dessous de leur quota, il y a lieu de noter que le budget de l'Union finance avant toute chose les instruments disponibles dans le cadre de la politique agricole commune visant à atteindre les objectifs établis à l'article 39 du traité, et qu'il n'y a aucune base juridique qui permettrait de s'écarter du système. En outre, dans le cadre de la réforme de la PAC, aucune adaptation n'a été proposée dans ce sens, ni par le Conseil, ni par le Parlement européen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011291/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Milk quotas

The Commission announced on Tuesday that six EU Member States will have to recover a total of EUR 46 million from their milk producers because they exceeded their quotas between 2011 and 2013.

Austrian producers have been penalised the most for their surplus production during the quota year 2012/2013 and will have to pay back EUR 28.733 million. They are followed by their German colleagues, who owe EUR 7.225 million. Denmark will have to recover EUR 5.142 million, Poland EUR 4.112 million and Cyprus EUR 343 000.

The Netherlands, for its part, exceeded its direct sales quota for the quota year 2011/2012 and will have to recover EUR 301 000 from the sector.

1. Does this not prove that, without milk quotas, the market will be impossible to regulate?

2. Would it not be right and symbolic to pay the levies imposed by the Commission for quota overruns to those who adhered to the quotas, rather than allow them to be swallowed up by the EU budget?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(18 November 2013)

1. The number of Member States exceeding their milk quotas remains limited and the concerned surplus production accounts for 0.1% of all milk delivered or covered by direct sales. In quota year 2012/13 the total EU deliveries remained 6% below the total quota volumes. Some 22 Member States remained under delivery quota, of which 13 at more than 10%. Moreover it cannot be derived from the facts mentioned that quotas are the only way to regulate the milk market.

2. As regards paying the collected levy to producers that have remained under quota, the EU budget pre-eminently finances the instruments, available in the framework of the common agricultural policy, aimed to attain the objectives set out in Article 39 of the Treaty and there is no legal basis to deviate. Moreover in the framework of the reform of the CAP no adaptations were proposed in this sense, nor by the Council, nor by the EP.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011292/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 octobre 2013)

Objet: Méthylate de sodium

La Commission compte-t-elle interdire purement et simplement l'utilisation du mercure dans la fabrication du méthylate de sodium? L'Europe est la seule région du monde où on a encore le droit d'utiliser le mercure tel quel.

La Commission corrobore-t-elle l'information suivante: l'Allemagne est 20 % moins chère dans ce domaine, mais son activité a libéré 56 kg de mercure dans l'atmosphère en 2011?

Réponse donnée par M. Potočnik au nom de la Commission
(21 novembre 2013)

Dans l'UE, le mercure est utilisé dans la production de méthylate de sodium dans deux usines seulement, situées l'une et l'autre en Allemagne. En 2011, les émissions de mercure dans l'air notifiées par ces deux usines dans le cadre du registre européen des rejets et des transferts de polluants ([1]) étaient de l'ordre de 200 kg, soit environ 0,01 % du total des émissions anthropiques dans l'air. La Commission a connaissance de la mise en service récente, en France, d'une installation de production de méthylate de sodium selon un procédé de remplacement sans mercure, avec un surcoût de 20 %.

Toutes les installations de production de méthylate de sodium sont assujetties à la législation de l'UE sur les émissions industrielles ([2]), qui leur impose de fonctionner en conformité avec un permis fondé sur les meilleures techniques disponibles visant à prévenir et, lorsque cela n'est pas possible, à réduire les émissions de tous les polluants en cause.

L'UE est fermement déterminée à réduire les émissions de mercure de tous les secteurs industriels concernés et joue un rôle primordial en la matière au plan international depuis l'adoption, en 2005, de la stratégie communautaire sur le mercure ([3]), révisée en 2010 ([4]).

Le 10 octobre 2013, l'UE a signé la convention de Minamata sur le mercure ([5]). Cette convention internationale comprend des mesures visant à réduire l'incidence environnementale du secteur en imposant une réduction de 50 % des émissions de mercure entre 2010 et 2020. La convention prévoit également l'élimination progressive du mercure dans un délai de dix ans à compter de son entrée en vigueur. La Commission examine actuellement les actions nécessaires pour que l'UE ratifie rapidement cette convention.

([1]) http://prtr.ec.europa.eu/
([2]) Directive 2010/75/UE du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 24 novembre 2010 relative aux émissions industrielles.
([3]) COM(2005) 20 final.
([4]) COM(2010) 723 final.
([5]) http://www.mercuryconvention.org/

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011292/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Sodium methylate

Does the Commission intend to impose an outright ban on the use of mercury in sodium methylate production? Europe is the only region in the world which still permits the use of raw mercury.

Can the Commission confirm the following information: Germany is 20% cheaper in this area, but 56 kg of mercury were released into the atmosphere in 2011 as a result of its activities?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(21 November 2013)

In the EU, mercury is used in the production of sodium methylate in only two production plants, both in Germany. In 2011, mercury emissions to air from these two plants, as reported under the European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register ([1]), were in the order of 200 kg, representing about 0.01% of global anthropogenic emissions to air. The Commission is aware that a facility has recently been inaugurated in France producing sodium methylate by an alternative mercury-free process, which is about 20% more costly.

All facilities producing sodium methylate are subject to EU legislation on industrial emissions ([2]), which requires them to operate in accordance with a permit based on the best available techniques aimed to prevent and, where that is not possible, reduce emissions of all relevant pollutants.

The EU is fully committed to reducing mercury emissions from all relevant industrial sectors and has been at the forefront internationally in this respect thanks to the Community Strategy Concerning Mercury adopted in 2005 ([3]) and revised in 2010 ([4]).

On 10 October 2013, the EU signed the Minamata Convention on Mercury ([5]). This International Convention includes measures aimed at reducing the environmental impact of the sector, by requiring a 50% reduction in mercury emissions between 2010 and 2020. The Convention also includes a target date for the phase-out of mercury use within 10 years of entry into force of the Convention. The Commission is examining the actions needed so that the EU can rapidly ratify the Convention.

([1]) http://prtr.ec.europa.eu/
([2]) Directive 2010/75/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 November 2010 on industrial emissions.
([3]) COM(2005) 20 final.
([4]) COM(2010) 723 final.
([5]) http://www.mercuryconvention.org/

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011293/13
à la Commission
Robert Goebbels (S&D)
(3 octobre 2013)

Objet: Critères

Dans son rapport sur la compétitivité de l'industrie dans les États membres de l'Union, la Commission européenne publie, entre autres, un tableau sur l'environnement des entreprises qui donne des résultats bizarres.

Ainsi, la République fédérale d'Allemagne, pourtant championne du monde à l'exportation de produits industriels, n'arriverait qu'en huitième position, alors que le Royaume-Uni, pays produisant et exportant de moins en moins d'articles industriels, serait le plus attrayant.

La Commission indique que le classement résulte de ses calculs, basés sur les données du rapport «Doing Business» de la Banque mondiale.

La Commission peut-elle détailler les critères utilisés pour aboutir au résultat présenté, ainsi que leur pondération?

Réponse donnée par M. Tajani au nom de la Commission
(29 novembre 2013)

L'environnement opérationnel des entreprises est multidimensionnel dans tous les pays et tous les indicateurs ne sont, par définition, que des estimations de la réalité. Néanmoins, la méthodologie bien établie de la Banque mondiale est largement utilisée et considérée comme l'un des indicateurs les plus fiables et les plus éclairants.

Il convient de souligner que, parce que les petites entreprises ont moins de ressources et d'expérience, l'environnement des entreprises a un effet plus important sur leurs activités. Par conséquent, l'indicateur est orienté sur les problèmes des petites entreprises.

L'indicateur composite sur l'environnement des entreprises utilisé dans le rapport comporte les sept sous-indicateurs suivants: création d'entreprise, octroi de permis de construire, transfert de propriété, obtention de prêts, protection des investisseurs, exécution des contrats et règlement de l'insolvabilité. Trois des indicateurs élaborés par la Banque mondiale n'ont pas été considérés comme pertinents dans le contexte des économies de l'UE intégrées dans le marché intérieur (raccordement à l'électricité, paiement des impôts et commerce transfrontalier). Ces sept sous-indicateurs ont un poids égal dans l'indicateur composite final (ils sont normalisés à un chiffre entre 0 et 1, 0 étant le plus mauvais résultat pour un État membre et 1 le meilleur). La note d'un pays pour une année donnée correspond à la moyenne des sept sous-indicateurs.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011293/13
to the Commission
Robert Goebbels (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Criteria

The Commission's report on industrial competitiveness in the EU Member States includes a table on business environments, which gives some strange results.

For example, although Germany is the world's leading exporter of industrial products, it ranks only eighth, while the United Kingdom, which is producing and exporting fewer and fewer industrial products, is considered the most attractive country.

The Commission points out that the scoring was done using calculations based on World Bank Doing Business data.

Can the Commission explain which criteria were used to arrive at this result and how they were weighted?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(29 November 2013)

The operating environment of businesses is multi-dimensional in all countries and all indicators are by definition only estimates of reality. Despite this, the long-established methodology of the World Bank is widely used and is considered to be one of the most reliable and illuminating indicator.

It should be emphasised that because small businesses have fewer resources and less experience, the business environment has a larger effect on their operations. Consequently, the indicator is geared towards the problems of smaller businesses.

The composite indicator on business environment used in the report includes the following seven sub-indicators: starting a business; dealing with construction permits; registering property; getting credit; protecting investors; enforcing contracts; and resolving insolvency. Three indicators compiled by the World Bank were not deemed relevant in the context of EU economies integrated in the internal market (getting electricity, paying tax and trading across borders). These seven sub-indicators have an equal weight in the final composite indicator (they are normalised to a figure between 0 and 1, where 0 is the worst possible Member State performance and 1 the best one). The country score for a given year is the average of the seven sub-indicators.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011294/13
alla Commissione
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(3 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Possibili finanziamenti a favore del Centro Culturale Gruppo Jobel

Il Gruppo Jobel di Roma è un centro di cultura, formazione e spettacoli dal vivo, che da oltre 10 anni opera su tutto il territorio nazionale ed internazionale. Tale centro è stato ideato come strumento operativo capace di rispondere a tutte le esigenze culturali, nazionali ed internazionali, ed oggi comprende diverse attività, tra le quali: spettacoli ed eventi; scambi culturali internazionali; formazione e avviamento professionale.

Il Gruppo Jobel rappresenta una solida realtà che si occupa dello studio tecnico e interpretativo della cultura scenica e letteraria. Tra le opere prodotte, una particolare attenzione è stata riservata alla scelta di tematiche dall'alto valore umano e sociale.

Il centro è dotato, inoltre, di un laboratorio di ricerca scenografica, di cinema e danza, che ha permesso fino ad oggi una fondamentale collaborazione con scuole, Enti culturali ed associazioni.

Grazie e queste attività, il Gruppo Jobel ha conseguito anche un prestigioso riconoscimento istituzionale da parte del Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali.

Tutto ciò premesso, può la Commissione:

1. fa sapere se vi sono programmi o finanziamenti per le attività svolte in generale dai centri culturali nella nuova programmazione 2014-2020?

2. fornire un quadro generale della situazione?

Risposta di Androulla Vassiliou a nome della Commissione
(14 novembre 2013)

La Commissione informa l'onorevole parlamentare che il nuovo programma «Europa creativa» (2014-2020) ([1]) — che sostituirà gli attuali programmi Media e Cultura — sosterrà le organizzazioni culturali e creative a partire dal 2014.

In linea di massima, il centro culturale Gruppo Jobel dovrebbe poter presentare domande di finanziamento nell'ambito del nuovo programma, purché sussistano le condizioni per la partecipazione definite negli specifici inviti a presentare proposte, tra cui, in particolare, la partecipazione di partner provenienti da un certo numero di altri paesi. Va osservato che il processo di selezione — condotto con l'assistenza di esperti esterni indipendenti — è estremamente competitivo, e solo le migliori candidature riceveranno una sovvenzione.

Gli operatori culturali che intendono chiedere un finanziamento sono invitati a mettersi in contatto con il punto di contatto nazionale Cultura ([2]). Tali punti di contatto, presenti in tutti i paesi partecipanti al programma Cultura, sono incaricati di fornire assistenza gratuita ai potenziali beneficiari. È in corso la sostituzione graduale dei punti di contatto Cultura con i desk «Europa creativa», che forniranno supporto ai candidati nel quadro del nuovo programma Europa creativa.

([1]) Informazioni sul futuro programma Europa creativa sono disponibili al seguente indirizzo: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/index_en.htm
([2]) I recapiti dei punti di contatto Cultura sono forniti al seguente indirizzo: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/annexes-culture/your-contact-in-your-country_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011294/13
to the Commission
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Possible funding for the Gruppo Jobel Cultural Centre

Gruppo Jobel in Rome is a centre for culture, training and performances, operating in Italy and other countries for over 10 years. This centre was conceived as an operational instrument capable of meeting all national and international cultural needs, and today undertakes various activities, such as: shows and events; international cultural exchanges; training including basic vocational training.

Gruppo Jobel is a credible entity involved in the technical study and interpretation of theatrical and literary culture. Among the works it has produced, particular importance was given to choosing topics of high human and social value.

Furthermore, the centre has a research workshop for theatre, cinema and dance, which has enabled vital collaboration with schools, cultural bodies and associations.

Thanks to these activities, Gruppo Jobel has also received a prestigious institutional award from the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities.

1. Can the Commission state whether there are any programmes or funding under the 2014-2020 programming period for activities carried out in general by cultural centres?

2. Can it provide an overview of the situation?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(14 November 2013)

The Commission informs the Honourable Member that the new Creative Europe Programme (2014-2020) ([1]) — which is replacing the current Media and Culture Programmes — will provide support for cultural and creative organisations as of 2014.

It should in principle be possible for Gruppo Jobel Cultural Centre to apply for funding under the new programme, as long as the conditions for participation set out in the relevant calls for proposals are respected, including in particular the involvement of partners from a number of other countries. It should be noted that the selection process — carried out with the help of independent external experts — is highly competitive and only the very best applications will eventually receive a grant.

Cultural operators wishing to apply for funding are advised to get in touch with their national Culture contact point ([2]). These contact points exist in all countries taking part in the Culture Programme and are responsible for providing free assistance to potential beneficiaries. The Culture contact points are gradually being replaced by the Creative Europe Desks, which will assist applicants under the new Creative Europe Programme.

([1]) Information on the future Creative Europe programme can be found at: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/index_en.htm
([2]) Contact details of the Culture Contact Points are provided at: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/annexes-culture/your-contact-in-your-country_en.htm

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande E-011302/13
till kommissionen
Amelia Andersdotter (Verts/ALE)
(3 oktober 2013)

Angående: Cert-EU och hackningen av Belgacom

Det har framkommit att Cert-EU (incidenthanteringsorganisationen för EU:s institutioner, organ och kontor) kan ha intressant information om de hackningar som den brittiska säkerhetstjänsten påstås ha genomfört mot Belgacoms nätverk ([1]). Kan kommissionen bestrida denna information? Kan information som bestyrker eller bestrider dessa påståenden göras tillgängliga för allmänheten? Om inte, vad är orsaken till det?

Svar från Maroš Šefčovič på kommissionens vägnar
(13 november 2013)

CERT-EU har av de belgiska behöriga myndigheterna informerats om de tekniska indikatorer för det påstådda sekretessbrottet i det fall som parlamentsledamoten hänvisar till. Kommissionen fick denna information för att kunna kontrollera om samma sabotageprogram

fanns i EU-institutionernas datanätverk. Dessa indikatorer gör det emellertid inte möjligt att härleda incidenten till en specifik grupp eller organisation.

CERT-EU har inte tillgång till någon information som gör det möjligt att härleda incidenten.

([1]) http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/british-spy-agency-gchq-hacked-belgian-telecoms-firm-a-923406.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011302/13
to the Commission
Amelia Andersdotter (Verts/ALE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: CERT-EU and the Belgacom hack

It has come to my attention that CERT-EU (the computer emergency response team for the EU institutions, bodies and agencies) might be in possession of relevant information pertaining to the alleged hacks by British security agencies of the Belgacom networks ([1]). Is the Commission in a position to deny this information? Could information that verifies or falsifies these allegations be made available to the public? If not, why not?

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(13 November 2013)

CERT-EU has received from the Belgian competent authorities information on the technical indicators of the alleged compromise in relation to the incident to which the Honourable Member refers. This information was provided in order to check whether the same malware exists in the internal data networks of the EU institutions. However, these indicators do not allow one to attribute the incident to a specific group or organisation.

CERT-EU is not in possession of any information related to the attribution of the incident.

([1]) http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/british-spy-agency-gchq-hacked-belgian-telecoms-firm-a-923406.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011303/13
to the Commission
James Nicholson (ECR)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Simplifying acceptance of public documents in the EU

The Commission has recently proposed to simplify the acceptance of certain public documents in the EU.

What steps is the Commission taking to ensure, firstly, that its proposals fully take into account the administrative and financial cost to Member States if issuing agencies must provide national and EU documents in parallel, and secondly, that the risks of document fraud are minimised by clarifying the text around Member States' ability to insist on the provision of the originals of documents?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(4 December 2013)

The Honourable Member refers to the establishment of Union multilingual standards forms under the proposal for a regulation on promoting the free movement of citizens and businesses by simplifying the acceptance of certain public documents in the European Union and amending Regulation (EU) No 1024/2012, of 24 April 2013 (COM(2013) 228), and to the costs that these provisions may bring about for Member State administrations. The Commission considered this issue in the impact assessment accompanying the proposal (SWD(2013) 144 final) and concluded that limited costs would be imposed on Member States as a result of the introduction of Union standard forms. These costs are expected to be circumscribed to the printing of forms, the creation of templates for computer usage and to minor training and promotion activities. These limited costs would be outweighed by the positive impact that the forms would have on the lives of EU citizens and businesses as well as on public administrations in terms of costs and time saved in understanding and translating public documents in cross-border scenarios.

Concerning the risk of document fraud, the Commission would inform the Honourable Member that the proposal aims not only at simplifying the lives of citizens and businesses but also at establishing more effective measures to prevent fraud through a system of administrative cooperation between Member States. Citizens and businesses should therefore have the choice to produce either the original of a public document or its certified copy, or a non-certified copy if presented together with the original. Under the proposal, this choice must be applied in a uniform manner and may not be constrained by Member States requiring original documents exclusively.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011304/13
to the Commission
James Nicholson (ECR)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Definition of 'temporary' within the context of cabotage legislation

Concerns have been raised by constituents of mine with regard to the outworking of EU cabotage legislation. With regard to Regulation (EC) No 1073/2009, which states that cabotage operations should be carried out on a temporary basis, could the Commission state if and when guidance will be provided to define what constitutes 'temporary', and outline what engagements it has undertaken with Member States on this issue.

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(22 November 2013)

According to Article 2 (7) of Regulation (EC) No 1073/2009 ([1]), cabotage operations are defined as 'either national road passenger services for hire and reward carried out on a temporary basis by a carrier in a host Member State, or the picking up and setting down of passengers within the same Member State, in the course of a regular international service, in compliance with the provisions of this regulation, provided that it is not the principal purpose of the service.'

The above definition should be read together with Article 15 of the same Regulation, which contains the following list of authorised cabotage operations :

'(a) special regular services provided that they are covered by a contract concluded between the organiser and the carrier;

(b) occasional services;

(c) regular services, performed by a carrier not resident in the host Member State in the course of a regular international service in accordance with this regulation (…)'

The expression 'on a temporary basis' contained in Article 2(7) of Regulation (EC) No 1073/2009 is not relevant for the authorised cabotage operations mentioned under (a) and (c). In practice, it concerns only occasional services mentioned under (b) to be performed 'on a temporary basis', which is necessarily the case, given the nature of the latter services. In this limited part of the market (occasional services), the legislator decided to leave to the Member States the definition of what they consider to be 'services carried out on a temporary basis'.

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 1073/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 on common rules for access to the international market for coach and bus services, and amending Regulation (EC) No 561/2006, OJ L 300, 14.11.2009.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011306/13
to the Commission
James Nicholson (ECR)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Drug precursors

In light of recent proposals by the Commission to clamp down on the provision of drug precursors, can the Commission detail the steps it will take to ensure that Member States are not constantly one step behind the criminals producing these substances? What awareness campaigns or strategies has the Commission put in place to ensure that users of these substances are aware of the dangers they entail?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(29 November 2013)

The European legislation on drug precursors places control measures on economic operators and national authorities, in order to avoid diversion of drug precursors from legal uses to the production of illegal drugs. On 23 October 2013, the European Parliament gave a positive vote on the revised legislation, which introduces a more flexible and rapid approach to new emerging trends in precursors diversion. In particular, the new proposals allow the Commission to add new substances to the list of scheduled substances by delegated acts (see new Article 15 of Regulation (EC) No 273/2004).

Furthermore, the legislative proposals have clarified that Member States may adopt national measures to enable their competent authorities to control and monitor suspicious transactions (see new Article 10(2) of Regulation (EC) No 273/2004).

In addition, the legislation provides for voluntary control measures for substances on the European voluntary monitoring list (see the unchanged Article 9(2)(b) of Regulation (EC) No 273/2004).

The Commission and the Members States' competent authorities regularly discuss strategies to communicate information to companies legally using drug precursors. The focus of awareness campaigns towards the general public should be on drugs rather than drug precursors, also to avoid spreading of information on how to manufacture those drugs.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011307/13
to the Commission
James Nicholson (ECR)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Plucking of feather and down from live geese

The plucking of feathers from live geese is forbidden by EU legislation on animal welfare. As Member States are primarily responsible for the implementation of EU welfare legislation, a number of concerns have been raised by constituents of mine who fear that this legislation is not being properly implemented. With this in mind, can the Commission clarify:

a. the nature and level of engagement with each Member State to monitor implementation of this legislation over the last five years;

b. the extent to which it is satisfied with the enforcement of the legislation regarding the plucking of feathers and down from live geese;

c. the number of breaches identified in each Member State over the last five years; and

d. the action taken once breaches of EU legislation on animal welfare with regard to the plucking of feathers from live geese have been identified.

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(21 November 2013)

Following the opinion ([1]) published by the European Food Safety Authority in 2010 on the practice of harvesting feathers from live geese, some monitoring and discussions occurred in 2011. According to the European Down and Feather Association 98% of the down and feathers processed by their industry are collected after the slaughter of birds. Very few Member States harvest feathers, i.e. remove feathers that are ripe due to the natural phenomenon of moulting. This practice is not illegal.

With regard to the number of breaches identified and possible action taken the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-9501/2013 ([2]).

([1]) http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/1886.htm
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011309/13
to the Commission
Ashley Fox (ECR)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Enforcement powers of the European Medicines Agency

I have been contacted by a constituent of mine regarding the lack of enforcement powers held by the European Medicines Agency (EMA) in relation to the labelling of medicines and medical leaflets for visually impaired people.

My constituent requires large-print patient advisory leaflets. If the medicine required is licensed in the UK he can contact the manufacturer to request large print, in accordance with Article 56(a) of Directive 2004/27/EC. If the manufacturer fails to provide these leaflets, then the UK Medicines and Healthcare Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has the power to enforce compliance with the relevant rules.

However, when my constituent used a medicine that was licensed through another European route, the manufacturer in question refused to provide large-print leaflets. He was advised that the EMA was responsible for the enforcement of that particular manufacturer's obligations, but upon contacting the Agency he was told that the EMA has no powers to pursue European drug manufacturers through the courts.

Could the Commission please clarify the enforcement powers held by the EMA as compared to the MHRA? How can my constituent ensure that he has access to an appropriate print-format relative to his needs, in accordance with Article 56(a) of Directive 2004/27/EC, if he is using medicines licensed through a European route?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(21 November 2013)

The European Medicines Agency does not have enforcement power regarding the requirements provided by EU legislation ([1]) concerning the labelling and package information leaflet of medicinal products. The enforcement of such provisions is of the competence of National Competent Authorities regarding medicinal products placed on their market.

It must be emphasised that Article 56a to which the Honorable Member refers to in his question provides that the request to have formats appropriate for the blind and partially-sighted should come from patients' organisations and not individuals.

([1]) Directive 2001/83/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 November 2001 on the Community code relating to medicinal products for human use, OJ L 311, of 28.11.2001, p. 67.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-011310/13
adresată Comisiei
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(3 octombrie 2013)

Subiect: Sinergia Mării Negre

În ianuarie 2011, Parlamentul a adoptat o rezoluție în care invita Comisia și Serviciul European de Acțiune Externă să elaboreze o strategie a UE pentru regiunea Mării Negre. Aceasta a urmat lansării de către Comisie a Sinergiei Mării Negre în 2007.

Scopul strategiei era atât de a intensifica coordonarea dintre UE și programele sale din regiunea Mării Negre, cât și de a stimula relațiile dintre guvernele și sectoarele economice din această regiune și UE. Cu toate acestea, de la adoptarea sa în 2007, Sinergia Mării Negre a fost afectată de numeroase probleme și de lipsa unor rezultate consistente.

Au trecut doi ani de la adoptarea de către Parlament a rezoluției menționate și mai bine de șase ani de la adoptarea de către Comisie a Sinergiei Mării Negre.

1. Lucrează Comisia la elaborarea unei strategii a UE pentru regiunea Mării Negre?

2. Cum a evoluat situația din 2011 și ce măsuri au fost adoptate pentru a se asigura elaborarea și punerea în aplicare a Sinergiei Mării Negre?

Răspuns dat de Înaltul Reprezentant /doamna vicepreședinte Ashton în numele Comisiei
(3 decembrie 2013)

Sinergia Mării Negre este o inițiativă de la bază la vârf care vizează consolidarea cooperării regionale prin intermediul unor inițiative concrete. Obiectivul este de a crea valoare adăugată pentru cetățenii din regiune, asigurând în același timp sustenabilitatea mediului. Așa cum se arată în Comunicarea din 2007 a Comisiei Europene, Sinergia Mării Negre cuprinde o serie de domenii de cooperare, printre care se numără mediul, politica maritimă integrată, rețelele de cercetare și inovare, cooperarea transfrontalieră, educația, energia și transporturile.

S-au înregistrat succese remarcabile în domenii precum mediul, cercetarea și inovarea și cooperarea transfrontalieră, însă Sinergia Mării Negre poate face mai mult; a venit momentul să reflectăm din nou asupra modului în care să ducem mai departe această inițiativă. UE ar trebui să își revigoreze abordarea luând în considerare diversitatea relațiilor sale în regiune și participând și la alte cadre de cooperare, inclusiv la Organizația Cooperării Economice a Mării Negre. De asemenea, aceasta ar trebui să valorifice mai bine avantajul de a dispune de o întreagă gamă de politici și instrumente interne și externe ale UE. În cadrul ședinței plenare a Parlamentului European din 17 aprilie 2012, comisarul pentru extindere și politica europeană de vecinătate și-a exprimat angajamentul de a prezenta o strategie UE pentru regiunea Mării Negre la momentul potrivit. În acest context, Comisia va verifica dacă s-a atins o masă critică în ceea ce privește cooperarea în mai multe sectoare prioritare și va colabora în continuare cu partenerii de la Marea Neagră pentru a pune bazele unei implicări mai intense în viitor.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011310/13
to the Commission
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Black Sea Synergy

In January 2011, Parliament adopted a resolution calling on the Commission and the European External Action Service to prepare an EU strategy for the Black Sea region. This followed the launch of the Black Sea Synergy (BSS) in 2007 by the Commission.

The strategy was intended both to increase coordination between the EU and its programmes in the Black Sea region and to promote relationships between the region's governments, economic sectors, and the EU itself. However, the Black Sea Synergy has been marred by multiple setbacks and a lack of sufficient results since its adoption in 2007.

Two years have passed since Parliament's resolution , and more than six years since its adoption by the Commission.

1. Is the Commission drawing up an EU strategy for the Black Sea?

2. What progress has been made since 2011, and what measures have been adopted in order to ensure the drafting and implementing of the Black Sea Synergy?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(3 December 2013)

The Black Sea Synergy is a bottom-up initiative geared towards strengthening regional cooperation via concrete initiatives. The goal is to bring added value to the citizens of the region while ensuring environmental sustainability. As envisaged in the European Commission's 2007 Communication, the Black Sea Synergy encompasses a range of cooperation areas, including environment, integrated maritime policy, research and innovation networks, cross-border cooperation, education, energy, transport and others.

Despite notable successes in the areas of environment, research and innovation and cross-border cooperation, the Black Sea Synergy can do more, and the time has come to reflect anew on how to take the initiative forward. The EU should reinvigorate its approach by taking into account the diversity of its relationships in the region, and engaging with other cooperative frameworks including the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organisation. It should also take better advantage of the full range of EU internal and external policies and instruments. Speaking to the European Parliament's Plenary on 17 April 2012, the Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy expressed the commitment to draft an EU Strategy for the Black Sea region at an appropriate time. With this in mind, the Commission will verify that a critical mass of cooperation in several priority sectors has been achieved, while working with Black Sea partners to lay the groundwork for more intense engagement in the future.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-011311/13
adresată Comisiei (Vicepreședintelui/Înaltului Reprezentant)
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(3 octombrie 2013)

Subiect: VP/HR — Ostatecii din tabăra de refugiați de la Ashraf deținuți de guvernul Irakului

La 1 septembrie 2013, forțele de securitate irakiene au atacat dizidenți iranieni aflați în tabăra de la Ashraf, din Irak, ucigând 52 de persoane și arestând șapte. La 13 septembrie 2013, Înaltul Comisariat al Națiunilor Unite pentru Refugiați (ICNUR) a informat că printre cei arestați se află și șase femei, care sunt deținute într-un loc neidentificat din Irak, riscând să fie retrimise în Iran. În conformitate cu Convenția de la Geneva, refugiaților li se recunoaște statutul de persoane protejate, iar trimiterea forțată a acestor persoane în Iran, unde pot fi persecutate datorită opoziției față de regimul iranian, constituie o încălcare gravă a dreptului internațional.

Tabăra Hurriya — unde au fost transferați în mod forțat ultimii 42 de refugiați din tabăra Ashraf și unde sunt deținuți în prezent peste 3 400 de dizidenți iranieni — nu este suficient de sigură și a fost ținta unor atacuri, cel mai recent înregistrându-se la 9 februarie 2013, în care au fost ucise cel puțin opt persoane, iar alte 100 au fost rănite.

1. Va vizita Înaltul Reprezentant tabăra de la Hurriya pentru a demonstra îngrijorarea Uniunii față de situația refugiaților de acolo?

2. Va solicita Înaltul Reprezentant Misiunii de Asistență a Națiunilor Unite în Irak (UNAMI) să securizeze tabăra Hurriya pentru a o proteja de atacuri din partea forțelor irakiene și a susținătorilor regimului iranian?

Răspuns dat de Înaltul Reprezentant /doamna vicepreședinte Ashton în numele Comisiei
(5 decembrie 2013)

1. ÎR/VP a efectuat o vizită în Irak în iunie 2013. Cu această ocazie, s-a întâlnit cu reprezentanți de înalt nivel ai guvernului irakian și a subliniat importanța de a garanta că drepturile minorităților și ale refugiaților sunt protejate în Irak.

2. Misiunea de asistență a ONU în Irak nu are un mandat pentru protecția taberei Hurriya. ÎR/VP va continua să solicite guvernului irakian să își îndeplinească îndatoririle și responsabilitățile prin garantarea siguranței locuitorilor taberei, în conformitate cu Memorandumul de înțelegere din 25 decembrie 2011 dintre Guvernul Republicii Irak și Organizația Națiunilor Unite. Recent, ÎR/VP a constatat cu satisfacție că au fost realizate anumite progrese în ceea ce privește protecția locuitorilor din tabăra Hurriya și că au fost luate măsuri de securitate suplimentare, inclusiv instalarea unor bunkere și ziduri de securitate (*T-walls*) sub supravegherea ONU.

ÎR/VP a subliniat în repetate rânduri sprijinul său deplin pentru procesul actual de relocare a locuitorilor taberei în țări terțe, pe care îl consideră singura soluție pașnică și durabilă. UE a avut cea mai importantă contribuție în cadrul acestui efort, cofinanțând operațiunea printr-un pachet financiar de 14 milioane EUR, alături de agențiile ONU implicate — în special ICNUR și UNOPS. Atacurile asupra taberei Ashraf și atacurile anterioare asupra taberei Hurriya ne reamintesc necesitatea urgentă de a accelera acest proces, cu cooperarea locuitorilor taberelor și a țărilor terțe care sunt dispuse să îi primească.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011311/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Camp Ashraf hostages held by Iraqi Government

On 1 September 2013, Iraqi security forces attacked Iranian dissidents in Camp Ashraf in Iraq, killing 52 people and detaining seven. On 13 September 2013 The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that among those detained are six women, and that they are being held at an unidentified location in Iraq and risk being returned to Iran. Under the Geneva Convention, hostages are recognised as protected persons, and so the forcible return of these people to Iran, where they might face persecution because of their resistance to the Iranian regime, constitutes a serious breach of international law.

Camp Hurriya — where the last 42 refugees from Camp Ashraf were forcibly transferred and where more than 3 400 Iranian dissidents are now held — is not sufficiently secure and it has been the target of attacks, the most recent of which occurred on 9 February 2013, killing at least eight and wounding a further 100.

1. Will the High Representative visit Camp Hurriya to show the Union's concern about the situation of the residents there?

2. Will the High Representative ask the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) to secure Camp Hurriya so as to protect it from attacks by Iraqi forces and supporters of the Iranian regime?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(5 December 2013)

1. The HR/VP visited Iraq in June 2013. On that occasion she met with senior representatives of the Government of Iraq and highlighted to them the importance of ensuring that the rights of minorities and refugees in Iraq were protected.

2. The UN Assistance Mission for Iraq does not have a mandate for the protection of Camp Hurriya. The HR/VP will continue to call on the Government of Iraq to fulfill its duties and responsibilities by ensuring the safety of the camp residents, in accordance with the memorandum of understanding of 25 December 2011 between the Government of Iraq and the United Nations. She was pleased to learn recently that some progress is being made in the protection of the residents of Camp Hurriya and that additional security measures have been taken, including the installation of bunkers and T-walls under the United Nations' supervision.

The HR/VP has repeatedly stressed her full support to the ongoing process of resettlement of the camp residents to third countries as the only peaceful and durable solution. The EU has been the largest contributor to this effort, co-financing the operation with an envelope of 14 million euros together with the UN agencies involved — notably the UNHCR and UNOPS. The attacks on Camp Ashraf and the previous on Camp Hurriya, remind us of the urgency to accelerate this process, with the cooperation of both the residents and third countries that are ready to receive them.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-011312/13
adresată Comisiei
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(3 octombrie 2013)

Subiect: Strategia Uniunii Europene pentru regiunea Dunării

Strategia Uniunii Europene pentru regiunea Dunării a fost adoptată în aprilie 2011, obiectivul ei fiind acela de a îmbunătăți eficacitatea, efectul de pârghie și impactul politicilor prin gestionarea acestora la nivel regional transnațional și crearea de sinergii între ele.

Dintre cele 14 țări care fac parte din regiunea Dunării, opt sunt state membre, în timp ce celelalte șase sunt țări candidate sau partenere ale Uniunii Europene. Acțiunile și proiectele desfășurate sub egida Strategiei Uniunii Europene pentru regiunea Dunării ar putea aduce beneficii țărilor din afara UE din regiune și ar putea sprijini procesele de integrare și cooperare dintre țările din regiune. Cele șase țări din afara UE participă deja la coordonarea zonelor prioritare și la grupurile de coordonare.

1. Ce măsuri are de gând Comisia să adopte pentru a facilita participarea acestor țări la Strategia UE pentru regiunea Dunării?

2. Ce tip de finanțare, disponibil pentru activitățile din cadrul strategiei pentru Dunăre, poate fi accesat și de țările din regiunea Dunării care nu fac parte din UE?

Răspuns dat de dl Hahn în numele Comisiei
(28 noiembrie 2013)

În cadrul strategiei UE pentru regiunea Dunării, statele membre ale UE și țările terțe cooperează la același nivel. Acestea împart sarcinile de coordonare a domeniilor prioritare, iar punctele naționale de contact din toate țările sunt implicate în aceeași măsură în totalitatea aspectelor și discuțiilor, ca de exemplu în cadrul Grupului la nivel înalt, o platformă de coordonare a tuturor celor 28 de state membre ale UE.

Principala diferență rămâne la nivelul finanțării. Această situație poate fi soluționată parțial apelând la fonduri private (a se vedea cazul ridicării epavelor în Serbia), implicând bănci și instituții de finanțare (așa cum se procedează în cadrul platformei pentru finanțare în regiunea Dunării) sau utilizând Instrumentul de asistență pentru preaderare. De exemplu, Serbia a alocat suma de 19 milioane EUR pentru proiecte specifice Strategiei în cadrul componentei de cooperare transfrontalieră a IPA 2011.

Propunerile de regulamente care vizează perioada 2014-2020 le solicită statelor membre să facă trimitere la prioritățile pentru cooperare și la strategiile macro-regionale în cadrul acordurilor de parteneriat și al programelor relevante. Urmând aceeași logică, beneficiarilor IPA li se solicită să elaboreze strategii naționale și regionale pentru Instrumentul de asistență pentru preaderare (IPA II), pe o perioadă de 7 ani, odată cu documentele indicative de strategie la nivel național sau la nivel multinațional. Pentru prima dată, țările participante vor putea negocia cu țările învecinate în ceea ce privește înglobarea unor elemente pe care le consideră esențiale, utilizând platforma Strategiei. În plus, viitorul program de cooperare transnațională pentru regiunea Dunării va acoperi aceeași arie ca și Strategia UE pentru regiunea Dunării. Țările din afara UE sunt parteneri cu drepturi depline, iar proiectele din aceste țări pot fi finanțate în cadrul programului.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011312/13
to the Commission
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: The European Union Strategy for the Danube Region

The European Union Strategy for the Danube Region was adopted in April 2011 and its objective is to improve the effectiveness, leverage and impact of policies by handling them at a regional level transnationally and creating synergies between them.

Of the 14 Danube Region countries, eight are EU Member States, while the other six are candidate countries or partners of the European Union. Actions and projects carried out under the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region could benefit the non-EU countries in the region and they would support integration processes and cooperation between countries in the area. The six non-EU Member States already take part in Priority Area coordination and in Steering Groups.

1. What actions is the Commission taking to facilitate the participation of these countries in the EU Strategy for the Danube Region?

2. What kind of funding is available for Danube strategy activities, accessible to non-EU countries in the Danube region?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(28 November 2013)

In the framework of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, EU Member States and non-EU countries cooperate at the same level. They share coordination tasks of priority areas, and national contact points of all countries are equally involved in all settings and discussions, such as in the High Level Group, a steering platform of all 28 EU Member States.

The main difference remains in the level of funding. This can be partly addressed through private funds, as for example in the lifting of shipwrecks in Serbia, by involving financing institutions and banks, as done via the Danube Financing Platform, and through the use of the Instrument for Pre-Accession. For example, Serbia earmarked EUR 19 million for Strategy-specific projects in the 2011 IPA cross-border cooperation component.

In the 2014-2020 period, the proposed regulations require from Member States a reference to the priorities for cooperation and macro-regional strategies in their Partnership Agreements and relevant programmes. Following the same logic, IPA beneficiaries are requested to establish 7-year national and regional strategies for the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA II) with their country or multi-country indicative strategy papers. For the first time, the participating countries will be able to negotiate with their neighbours to take on board elements they consider vital, using the platform of the strategy. In addition, the future transnational cooperation programme for the Danube Region will cover the same geography as the EU Strategy for the Danube Region. Non-EU countries are full partners and projects from these countries can be funded within the programme.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-011313/13
adresată Comisiei (Vicepreședintelui/Înaltului Reprezentant)
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(3 octombrie 2013)

Subiect: VP/HR — Grupurile tactice de luptă ale UE

Grupurile tactice de luptă ale UE sunt singurele unități militare ale UE gata oricând pentru posibile operațiuni de reacție rapidă din partea Uniunii, însă au fost utilizate foarte rar. Există întrebări cu privire la fiabilitatea acestora, precum și cu privire la modul în care ar putea fi utilizate în mod flexibil împreună cu alte instrumente ale Uniunii.

În urma unei reuniuni informale a miniștrilor apărării din UE, din septembrie 2013, s-a hotărât ca viitorul summit european pe teme de apărare să abordeze și viitorul Grupurilor tactice de luptă ale UE.

Ce propuneri va prezenta Înaltul Reprezentant la summitul pe teme de apărare din decembrie 2013?

Cum poate fi îmbunătățită actuala Strategie de securitate a UE astfel încât Grupurile tactice de luptă ale UE să fie utilizate într-un mod mai flexibil?

Răspuns dat de Înaltul Reprezentant /doamna vicepreședinte Ashton în numele Comisiei
(5 decembrie 2013)

Viitorul răspunsului militar rapid al UE, inclusiv al grupurilor tactice de luptă ale UE, reprezintă un subiect important în cadrul pregătirilor pentru Consiliul European privind securitatea și apărarea din decembrie 2013.

Argumentele în favoarea unor forțe extrem de bine instruite și interoperabile, disponibile în timp foarte scurt pentru operațiuni UE, sunt mai puternice ca niciodată. Grupurile tactice de luptă ale UE continuă să fie singurul instrument militar în stand-by pentru eventuale acțiuni de reacție rapidă în cadrul politicii de securitate și apărare comune (PSAC). Deși grupurile tactice de luptă ale UE au un rol esențial în sprijinirea consolidării eficacității și interoperabilității forțelor militare ale statelor membre, acestea nu au fost încă solicitate să intervină. După apelul de anul trecut al Consiliului European de a consolida capacitatea UE de utilizare a capabilităților corespunzătoare în mod eficient și rapid, s-au efectuat întreprins acțiuni ample menite să sporească solicitările de intervenție a tactice pe teren cu același nivel de ambiție (două grupuri tactice în stand-by).

În raportul final privind PSAC adresat președintelui Consiliului European, ÎR/VP a făcut o serie de propuneri concrete pentru a mări eficacitatea, vizibilitatea și impactul PSAC, inclusiv prin consolidarea capacității de desfășurare a forțelor existente la nivelul UE. Aceasta include dezvoltarea în continuare a răspunsului rapid al UE, în special folosind grupurile tactice de luptă într-un mod mai flexibil, dezvoltându-le modularitatea și consolidându-le nivelul de formare (exerciții/certificare) și capacitatea de reacție în contextul forței de reacție rapidă a UE. În paralel continuă eforturile de atenuare a decalajelor care persistă între statele membre în ceea ce privește lista de disponibilități pentru grupurile tactice ale UE, pe baza abordării de tip națiune-cadru convenite de statele membre în 2012, menită să conducă la completarea mai frecventă a listei de disponibilități. Condițiile financiare ale unor eventuale acțiuni ale grupurilor tactice de luptă ale UE au fost îmbunătățite. Se preconizează o discuție mai detaliată asupra aspectelor financiare și în contextul revizuirii periodice a respectivei decizii a Consiliului.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011313/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — EU Battlegroups

The EU Battlegroups are the only EU military units that are on standby for possible rapid response operations on the part of the Union, but they have been used very rarely. There are questions over their viability and over how they can be flexibly employed in conjunction with other Union instruments.

Following an informal meeting of EU defence ministers in September 2013, it was decided that the upcoming European Summit on defence matters should also address the future of the EU Battlegroups.

What proposals will the High Representative present at the December 2013 defence summit?

How can the current EU Security Strategy be improved so that the EU Battlegroups can be used in a more flexible way?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(5 December 2013)

Within the preparations for the December 2013 European Council on security and defence, the future of the EU military rapid response, including the EU Battlegroups (BGs), features prominently.

The case for highly capable and interoperable forces, available at very short notice for EU operations, is stronger than ever. EU BGs remain the single military tool on stand-by for possible Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) rapid response actions. Whilst EU BGs are instrumental in helping strengthen the effectiveness and interoperability of Member States' (MS) military forces, they have yet to be deployed. Following last year's call from the European Council to strengthen the EU's ability to deploy the right capabilities efficiently and rapidly, extensive work has been carried out to increase the BGs' usability in the field — with the same level of ambition (two BGs in stand-by).

In her recent final Report on CSDP to the President of the European Council, the HR/VP has made a number of concrete proposals for increasing the effectiveness, visibility and impact of CSDP including through strengthening the EU's deployability. This encompasses further developing the EU Rapid Response, notably using the BGs in a more flexible way through developing their modularity and strengthening their training (exercises/certification) and responsiveness to the overall EU rapid reaction. Efforts continue in parallel to mitigate the persistent gaps in the EU BG roster, using the framework Nation approach agreed in 2012 by Member States and aimed at triggering more frequent offers to the roster.

Financial conditions for possible deployment of EU BG**s** have been improved. It is intended to further discuss financial aspects, also in the context of the regular revision of the respective Council Decision.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-011314/13
adresată Comisiei
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(3 octombrie 2013)

Subiect: Legături între spălarea banilor și fotbal

Industria sportului este unul dintre numeroasele sectoare care atrag infractorii ca urmare a multiplelor tranzacții financiare și a numărului mare de persoane implicate în acestea. Fotbalul este de departe cel mai important sport din lume. Potrivit raportului anual privind finanțele în fotbal realizat de Deloitte, în 2012, piața europeană a fotbalului a generat o cifră de afaceri de 19,4 miliarde EUR și nu a fost afectată de recesiunea globală.

La 5 februarie 2013, Comisia a adoptat o propunere de revizuire a Directivei UE privind combaterea spălării banilor. În urma scandalurilor legate de meciuri aranjate în fotbalul european, Comisia a propus extinderea domeniului de aplicare a directivei pentru a acoperi și pariurile din domeniul fotbalului, nu numai cazinourile.

Totuși sistemele de spălare a banilor în fotbal nu se limitează la pariuri. Cele mai mari sume de bani sunt tranzacționate în contextul transferurilor de jucători, iar operațiunile financiare realizate între cluburi de fotbal camuflează uneori fraude fiscale sau spălarea banilor obținuți din activități infracționale.

Ce măsuri ia Comisia pentru combaterea sistemelor transnaționale de spălare a banilor care afectează în prezent fotbalul din Europa?

Răspuns dat de dl Barnier în numele Comisiei
(29 noiembrie 2013)

Comisia este conștientă de existența riscurilor de spălare de bani asociate sectorului fotbalului. Un raport publicat în iulie 2009 de Grupul de Acțiune Financiară Internațională analizează în mod specific spălarea de bani prin intermediul fotbalului și cuprinde exemple de astfel de cazuri. Scopul acestui raport și al altor rapoarte similare este să informeze autoritățile competente și entitățile obligate cu privire la riscurile de spălare de bani, astfel încât acestea să poată fi atenuate cu mai multă eficacitate. În conformitate cu standardele internaționale, în cadrul juridic pe care l-a propus, Comisia nu a sugerat ca sectorul fotbalului să facă obiectul unui tratament special: corupția este deja o infracțiune principală și toate veniturile ilicite rezultate din aceasta ar trebui să fie identificate prin sistemul de control existent (sectorul financiar, avocați, contabili, sectorul jocurilor de noroc etc.). Consolidarea abordării bazate pe riscuri din propunerea Comisiei ar trebui să ducă la tratarea mai atentă la riscuri a domeniilor cu risc mai ridicat, acestea fiind identificate ca urmare a noii obligații impuse statelor membre de a realiza evaluări ale riscurilor la nivel național.

În ceea ce privește riscurile de spălare de bani generate de transferurile de jucători, Comisia salută transparența sporită conferită tranzacțiilor legate de transferurile internaționale de adoptarea, de către FIFA, a sistemului de reglementare a transferurilor [*Transfer Matching System* (TMS)]; Comisia încurajează, la rândul său, autoritățile din sectorul fotbalului să instituie sisteme similare pentru transferurile naționale.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011314/13
to the Commission
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Links between money laundering and football

The sporting industry is one of the many sectors that are attractive to criminals because of the numerous monetary transactions and the large number of individuals involved. Football is by far the biggest sport in the world. According to the Deloitte Annual Review of Football Finance, in 2012 the European football market was worth EUR 19.4 billion and was not affected by the global recession.

On 5 February 2013, the Commission adopted a proposal to review the EU's Anti-Money Laundering Directive. In the aftermath of the scandals involving match-fixing in European football, the Commission proposed broadening the scope of the directive beyond casinos, so as also to cover gambling on football.

However, money-laundering schemes in football are not limited to gambling. The biggest sums in football are exchanged in the context of transfers of players, and financial operations conducted between football clubs sometimes hide tax fraud or laundering of profits from criminal operations.

What action is the Commission taking against transnational money laundering schemes currently affecting football in Europe?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(29 November 2013)

The Commission is conscious of the existence of money laundering risks associated with the football sector. A report published by the Financial Action Task Force in July 2009 looks specificially into money laundering through the football sector, and includes money laundering case examples. The purpose of this and similar reports is to inform competent authorities and obliged entities about money laundering risks, so that those risks can be more effectively mitigated. In line with international standards, the Commission has not singled out the football sector for particular treatment under its proposed legal framework: corruption is already a predicate offence, and any illicit proceeds deriving therefrom should be identified via the existing system of gatekeepers (the financial sector, lawyers, accountants, the gambling sector, etc.). The reinforcement of the risk-based approach in the Commission's proposal should result in more risk-sensitive handling of higher risk areas, with such areas being identified as a result of the new obligation on Member States to produce national risk assessments.

With regard to the risks of money laundering provoked by the transfers of players, the Commission welcomes the greater transparency brought into the transactions linked to international transfers by the adoption of FIFA's Transfer Matching System (TMS); the Commission also encourages football authorities to establish similar schemes for national transfers.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-011315/13
adresată Comisiei
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(3 octombrie 2013)

Subiect: Noaptea Cercetătorilor

Noaptea Cercetătorilor din acest an, care, desfășurată la 27 septembrie 2013, a avut o acoperire scăzută în mass-media din Uniunea Europeană și nu a atras un număr mare de vizitatori. În unele state membre ale UE, cum ar fi România, Noaptea Cercetătorilor este un eveniment care atrage iubitorii de științe în muzee și se bucură de o largă acoperire în presă; însă, în alte state membre, foarte puțini oameni participă la activități.

Noaptea Cercetătorilor are loc anual în Europa, în a patra vineri a lunii septembrie. Conform DG Cercetare din cadrul Comisiei, au loc evenimente în 25 de state membre ale UE, precum și în Bosnia și Herțegovina, Insulele Feroe, Fosta Republică Iugoslavă a Macedoniei, Islanda, Israel, Muntenegru, Serbia și Turcia.

Evenimentul (al cărui cost total este de 7,5 milioane de euro) primește anual 4 milioane de euro din partea programului „Acțiunile Marie Curie" al UE, care promovează cariere în cercetare la nivel internațional. Instituțiile care doresc să participe la activități trebuie să completeze finanțarea din partea UE și au adesea dificultăți în găsirea de fonduri proprii.

1. Are Comisia în vedere o evaluare acțiunii Noaptea Cercetătorilor, pentru a identifica modalitățile de îmbunătățire a comunicării cu privire la acțiune și a participării publicului din UE?

2. Ce eforturi depune Comisia pentru a sprijini instituțiile participante în găsirea fondurilor suplimentare necesare pentru a beneficia de finanțările UE pentru Noaptea Cercetătorilor?

Răspuns dat de dna Vassiliou în numele Comisiei
(28 noiembrie 2013)

În martie 2013, Comisia a publicat evaluarea intermediară a acțiunilor Marie Curie ([1]) din cadrul celui de-al Șaptelea program-cadru al Comunității Europene pentru activități de cercetare, de dezvoltare tehnologică și demonstrative (2007-2013) ([2]). Concluziile privind activitățile organizate cu ocazia „Nopții cercetătorilor" au fost pozitive: „Dimensiunea europeană a evenimentului i-a sporit vizibilitatea și credibilitatea, asigurând astfel dinamismul necesar" ([3]). Cu toate acestea, evaluarea a propus măsuri suplimentare pentru a consolida potențialul de comunicare al „Nopții cercetătorilor", inclusiv cerința ca dimensiunea europeană să fie clar vizibilă la fiecare eveniment.

În urma acestor recomandări, Comisia propune ca activitatea să fie redenumită „Noaptea europeană a cercetătorilor" în cadrul acțiunilor Marie Skłodowska-Curie din Programul-cadru pentru cercetare și inovare Orizont 2020 (2014-2020) ([4]). Se va acorda mai multă atenție dimensiunii europene a acestui eveniment. De exemplu, organizatorii vor fi încurajați să facă apel la cercetătorii implicați în proiecte finanțate prin Orizont 2020.

„Noaptea europeană a cercetătorilor" din cadrul acțiunilor Marie Skłodowska-Curie din programul-cadru Orizont 2020 va permite organizatorilor să solicite, pentru prima dată, finanțare din partea UE pentru o perioadă de doi ani, astfel încât să poată sprijini două evenimente anuale. Această viziune pe termen mai lung ar trebui să permită organizatorilor „Nopții cercetătorilor" să obțină mai ușor finanțări suplimentare din alte surse.

În plus, este evident că „Noaptea cercetătorilor" se bucură deja de o acoperire mediatică semnificativă și de un nivel ridicat de participare peste tot în Europa. Ediția din septembrie 2013 a fost prezentată în 24 de reportaje TV și în 350 de articole de presă (maximum 45 dintr-o singură țară). La eveniment au participat 1,2 milioane de persoane, cu 20 % mai mult față de 2012.

([1]) „Evaluare intermediară a acțiunilor Marie Curie din cadrul PC7": http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/evalreports/mariecurie/fp7report_en.pdf
([2]) DECIZIA NR. 1982/2006/CE A PARLAMENTULUI EUROPEAN ȘI A CONSILIULUI din 18 decembrie 2006.
([3]) „Evaluare intermediară a acțiunilor Marie Curie din cadrul PC7", pagina 143.
([4]) COM(2011) 808 final, 30.11.2011.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011315/13
to the Commission
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Researchers' Night

This year's Researchers' Night, which was held on 27 September 2013, had little coverage in the media in the European Union and did not attract large numbers of visitors. In some EU Member States, such as Romania, the Researchers' Night is an event which attracts science lovers to museums and enjoys press coverage; however, in other Member States very few people attend the activities.

The Researchers' Night takes place every year across Europe on the fourth Friday of September. According to the Commission's DG Research, there are events in 25 EU Member States, as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Faroe Islands, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Israel, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey.

The event (whose total cost is EUR 7.5 million) receives EUR 4 million each year in support from the EU's Marie Curie Actions, which promote international research careers. Institutions wishing to participate in the activities must match the EU funding and often have difficulties in finding their own funding.

1. Is the Commission planning an evaluation of the Researchers' Night action, in order to identify ways of improving communication concerning the action and participation of the public in the EU?

2. What efforts is the Commission making to help participating institutions find the additional funding needed to receive European funding for the Researchers' Night?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(28 November 2013)

In March 2013 the Commission published the Interim Evaluation of the Marie Curie Actions ([1]) under the Seventh Framework Programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities (2007-2013) ([2]). The findings regarding the Researchers' Night activity were positive, stating that 'The European nature of the event helped it gain visibility and credibility, thus ensuring the necessary dynamism' ([3]). However, the evaluation proposed additional measures to strengthen the communication potential of the Researchers' Night, including a requirement for the European aspect to be clearly visible at each event.

Following these recommendations, the Commission proposes to re-name the activity 'European Researchers' Night' under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions of Horizon 2020 — The framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020) ([4]). More focus will be given to the European dimension of the Night. For example, organisers will be encouraged to involve researchers from Horizon 2020-funded projects.

The 'European Researchers' Night' under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions of Horizon 2020 will for the first time enable organisers to apply for two years of EU funding to support two annual events. This longer-term perspective should facilitate the task of Researchers' Night organisers in obtaining additional funding from other sources.

Furthermore, it is clear that Researchers' Night already has significant press coverage and high attendance throughout Europe. The September 2013 edition produced 24 TV reports and 350 press articles (no more than 45 from one country). 1.2 million people attended, a 20% increase from 2012.

([1]) 'FP7 Marie Curie Actions Interim Evaluation' http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/evalreports/mariecurie/fp7report_en.pdf
([2]) Decision No 1982/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006.
([3]) 'FP7 Marie Curie Actions Interim Evaluation', Page 143.
([4]) COM(2011) 808 final, 30.11.2011.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-011316/13
adresată Comisiei
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(3 octombrie 2013)

Subiect: Risipa de alimente

Se estimează că în Europa, în fiecare an, se risipesc până la 89 de milioane de tone de alimente. Această cifră echivalează cu 180 de kg de alimente aruncate de fiecare persoană care locuiește în UE.

Parlamentul European a adoptat la 19 ianuarie 2012 o rezoluție referitoare la evitarea risipei de alimente. În acest raport, Parlamentul a invitat Comisia să coopereze cu Organizația pentru Alimentație și Agricultură (FAO) la stabilirea de obiective comune pentru reducerea risipei de alimente la nivel mondial. Parlamentul a invitat Comisia să stabilească obiective specifice de prevenire a risipei de alimente pentru statele membre, în cadrul obiectivelor de prevenire a generării deșeurilor, care trebuie îndeplinite de statele membre până în 2014, conform recomandărilor Directivei-cadru privind deșeurile.

În ce fel a cooperat Comisia cu FAO în stabilirea de obiective comune de reducere a risipei de alimente la nivel mondial?

A stabilit deja Comisia obiectivele pe care statele membre trebuie să le îndeplinească până în 2014?

Răspuns dat de dl Potočnik în numele Comisiei
(5 decembrie 2013)

Comisia colaborează cu FAO pentru a găsi metode de combatere a risipei de alimente, însă până în prezent nu s-au stabilit relații oficiale de cooperare.

Resursele de hrană au fost incluse printre domeniile prioritare de acțiune ale inițiativei emblematice „O Europă eficientă din punctul de vedere al utilizării resurselor” din cadrul Strategiei Europa 2020, iar Foaia de parcurs către o Europă eficientă din punct de vedere al utilizării resurselor ([1]) stabilește ca obiective pentru 2020 reducerea cu 20 % a cantităților de resurse utilizate în lanțul alimentar și cu 50 % a deșeurilor alimentare comestibile.

Comisia a realizat recent o consultare publică privind o alimentație sustenabilă, care a analizat în detaliu modalitățile de reducere a risipei de alimente. S-au primit peste 630 de răspunsuri din partea unor asociații, inclusiv a unor asociații reprezentate la nivel mondial, a unor ONG-uri și din partea cetățenilor. În prezent, Comisia analizează cu atenție aceste contribuții și va examina problema stabilirii de obiective în contextul revizuirii legislației privind deșeurile, planificate pentru 2014.

([1]) COM(2011) 571 final, 20.9.2011.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011316/13
to the Commission
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Waste of food

It is estimated that up to 89 million tons of food are wasted in Europe every year. This figure amounts to 180 kg of food thrown away by every man, woman and child across the EU.

Parliament adopted a resolution on 19 January 2012 on how to avoid food wastage. In this report, Parliament urged the Commission to cooperate with the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in setting common targets to reduce global food waste. Parliament called on the Commission to create specific food waste prevention targets for Member States, as part of the waste prevention targets to be reached by Member States by 2014 as recommended by the Waste Framework Directive.

How has the Commission cooperated with the FAO to set common targets for reducing global food waste?

Has the Commission already established the targets to be reached by the Member States by 2014?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(5 December 2013)

The Commission is in contact with the FAO on how to tackle food waste, but as yet no formal cooperation has been established.

Food was identified as a priority area for action in the Resource Efficiency Flagship of the Europe 2020 strategy, and the Roadmap for Resource Efficiency ([1]) sets the milestones of achieving a 20% reduction of food chain resource inputs and a 50% reduction of edible food waste by 2020.

The Commission has recently run a public consultation on food sustainablity which looked in detail at how to reduce food waste. Over 630 responses were received from associations, including globally representative associations, NGOs and citizens. The Commission is now analysing these contributions in detail and will examine the issue of targets in the context of its waste review planned for 2014.

([1]) COM(2011) 571 final of 20.9.2011.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011319/13
alla Commissione
Gianni Vattimo (ALDE)
(3 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Compatibilità, con le norme europee in materia di diritti fondamentali, degli elementi probatori segreti, dei processi e delle procedure con elementi secretati

L'ordinamento giuridico del Regno Unito riconosce le cosiddette «procedure con elementi secretati» (closed material procedures, CMP), ossia l'utilizzo di elementi probatori segreti forniti dalle autorità ai tribunali, non accessibili all'imputato o al suo legale. A seguito dell'udienza, il tribunale può formulare una sentenza «secretata», unitamente a quella non secretata, e tale sentenza non è mai rivelata all'individuo o al suo legale, rimanendo completamente nascosta al pubblico.

Tale procedura è utilizzata presso la commissione speciale per i ricorsi in materia di immigrazione (Special Immigration Appeals Commission), che si occupa di espulsioni e cittadinanza. Può essere utilizzata anche per procedimenti relativi a individui sospettati di essere coinvolti in attività legate al terrorismo.

La legge sulla giustizia e la sicurezza del 2013 (Justice and Security Act 2013) di recente adozione, ha esteso ulteriormente l'utilizzo delle procedure con elementi secretati nel sistema giudiziario civile, nei casi che generano timori per la sicurezza nazionale. Il governo ha presentato degli emendamenti alle norme di procedura civile, allo scopo di attuare tali modifiche, lasciando poco spazio a discussioni e analisi, e senza pubblicare un progetto di modifica preliminare.

Il governo ha indicato 20 cause attualmente pendenti per le quali in futuro si potrebbe applicare una procedura con elementi secretati, tra le quali figura la causa civile intentata da Abdel Hakim Belhaj, che accusa il Regno Unito di coinvolgimento nella sua consegna e conseguente tortura in Libia. Nelle udienze preliminari, i legali del governo hanno chiarito che, qualora la causa dovesse proseguire, chiederanno che essa sia giudicata secondo una procedura con elementi secretati.

Gli organismi dell'ONU e le ONG hanno più volte manifestato le loro preoccupazioni in merito all'utilizzo, nel Regno Unito, di procedure con elementi secretati e di elementi probatori segreti.

È a conoscenza la Commissione del fatto che nel Regno Unito si utilizzano elementi probatori, processi e sentenze segreti? È la Commissione a conoscenza dell'utilizzo di tali procedure da parte di altri Stati membri? In caso affermativo, quali misure intende adottare? Non ritiene la Commissione che tali procedure costituiscano un grave scostamento dai requisiti fondamentali di equità nei procedimenti giudiziari, e quindi una violazione della direttiva 2012/13/UE sul diritto all'informazione nei procedimenti penali?

Risposta di Viviane Reding a nome della Commissione
(19 dicembre 2013)

Il diritto a un ricorso effettivo e a un giudice imparziale è sancito dall'articolo 47 della Carta dei diritti fondamentali dell'Unione europea. Tuttavia, ai sensi dell'articolo 51, paragrafo 1, della Carta, le sue disposizioni si rivolgono agli Stati membri esclusivamente nell'attuazione del diritto dell'Unione.

La Corte di giustizia si è già pronunciata ([1]) in un procedimento conclusosi dinanzi alla commissione speciale per i ricorsi in materia di immigrazione ([2]) stabilendo che il giudice nazionale deve assicurarsi che la mancata comunicazione all'interessato della motivazione sulla quale è fondata una decisione restrittiva nonché degli elementi di prova pertinenti sia limitata allo stretto necessario ([3]).

([1]) Sentenza della Corte del 4 giugno 2013 nella causa C-300/11, ZZ (non ancora pubblicata).
([2]) La causa riguardava il diritto di un cittadino francese di entrare nel territorio del Regno Unito e soggiornarvi.
([3]) La Corte ha inoltre stabilito che, in ogni caso, al cittadino dell'UE sia comunicata la sostanza di detti motivi in una maniera che tenga debito conto della necessaria segretezza degli elementi di prova.

La direttiva 2012/13/UE ([4]) dispone che le persone in stato di arresto o di detenzione hanno diritto di accesso alla documentazione sostanziale del caso ([5]). Un'eccezione di portata limitata a questo diritto è prevista solo se il rifiuto dell'accesso è strettamente necessario per salvaguardare un interesse pubblico rilevante, ad esempio nei casi in cui l'accesso potrebbe nuocere gravemente alla sicurezza nazionale degli Stati membri interessati. La Commissione europea seguirà da vicino l'attuazione della direttiva 2012/13/UE da parte degli Stati membri.

La procedura esperita dinnanzi alla commissione speciale per i ricorsi in materia di immigrazione e il ricorso a tali norme nel sistema giudiziario civile non rientrano nell'ambito di applicazione della direttiva 2012/13/UE ([6])

In ogni caso, spetta agli Stati membri e alle loro autorità giudiziarie garantire che i diritti fondamentali siano effettivamente rispettati e tutelati conformemente alle rispettive legislazioni nazionali e agli obblighi internazionali in materia di diritti dell'uomo.

([4]) Direttiva 2012/13/UE, del 22 maggio 2012, sul diritto all'informazione nei procedimenti penali (GU L 142 dell'1.6.2012, pag. 1). La direttiva dovrà essere recepita dagli Stati membri entro il 2 giugno 2014.

([5]) Articolo 7.

([6]) La direttiva si applica infatti esclusivamente ai procedimenti penali.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011319/13
to the Commission
Gianni Vattimo (ALDE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Compatibility of secret evidence, trials and closed material procedures with European fundamental rights standards

The UK legal system allows for so-called 'closed material procedures' (CMP), i.e., essentially, the use of secret evidence provided by the authorities in courts and tribunals which is not accessible to the defendant or to his/her lawyer. Following the hearing the court may issue a 'closed' judgment together with an open one, and the secret judgment is never given to the individual or her/his lawyer, remaining completely hidden from public view.

This procedure is used in the Special Immigration Appeals Commission, which deals with deportations and citizenship. It can also be used in proceedings related to individuals allegedly involved in terrorism-related activity.

The recently adopted Justice and Security Act 2013 further extended the use of CMP across the civil justice system for use in cases that give rise to national security concerns. Amendments were tabled by the government to the Civil Procedure Rules in order to implement such modifications, with little time for debate and scrutiny and with no previously published draft.

The government has indicated that there are currently 20 cases pending to which a CMP may apply in the future, including the civil case brought by Abdel Hakim Belhaj, who alleges UK involvement in his rendition and subsequent torture in Libya. In preliminary hearings lawyers for the government have made it clear that if the case proceeds they will apply for it to be heard under CMP.

UN bodies and NGOs have repeatedly expressed concern at the growing use of CMPs in the UK and the use of secret evidence.

Is the Commission aware of the use of secret evidence, secret trials and secret judgments in the UK? Is the Commission aware of any other Member States with similar provisions and, if so, what measures will it take? Does the Commission not believe that such procedures mark a serious departure from the basic requirements of fairness in judicial procedures, thereby violating Directive 2012/13/EU on the right to information in criminal proceedings?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(19 December 2013)

The right to an effective remedy and to a fair trial is enshrined in Article 47 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU. However, and according to Article 51(1), the provisions of the Charter are addressed to the Member States only when they implement Union law.

The Court of Justice already ruled ([1]) on a closed procedure before the Special Immigration Appeals Commission ([2]) that the national court has to ensure that the refusal to disclose to the EU citizen concerned the grounds on which a restrictive decision is based and to disclose the related evidence is limited to that which is strictly necessary ([3]).

Directive 2012/13/EU ([4]), provides that an arrested and detained person has the right of access to the materials of the case ([5]). A limited exception from this right is foreseen only if the refusal is strictly necessary to safeguard an important public interest, such as in cases where access could seriously harm the national security of the Member Stat concerned. The European Commission will closely monitor the implementation of the directive 2012/13/EU by Member States.

The procedure used before the Special Immigration Appeals Commission and the use of such rules in the civil justice system do not fall within the scope of Directive 2012/13/EU ([6]).

([1]) Judgment of the Court of 4 June 2013 in Case C-300/11 ZZ (not yet published).
([2]) The case concerned a right of a French national to enter the UK and reside there.
([3]) The Court also ruled that the EU citizen must be informed, in any event, of the essence of those grounds in a manner which takes due account of the necessary confidentiality of the evidence.
([4]) Directive 2012/13/EU of 22. May 2012 on the right to information in criminal proceedings, OJ. L 142 of 1.6.2012, p. 1-10. The directive has to be transposed by Member States by 2 June 2014.
([5]) Article 7.
([6]) It applies to criminal proceedings only.

In any event, Member States, including their judicial authorities, have to ensure that fundamental rights are effectively respected and protected in accordance with their national legislation and international human rights obligations.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011320/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Directiva de retorno y necesidad de garantizar el derecho a la vida de los migrantes

En respuesta a mis pasadas preguntas E-005391/2013 y E-005506/2013, Cecilia Malmström, Comisaria de Asuntos de Interior, sostenía que la Directiva de retorno (2008/115/CE) tan solo obliga a los Estados miembros a proporcionar atención sanitaria a los inmigrantes «que estén sujetos a procedimientos de retorno».

Esta exclusión implica que los Estados miembros no se ven obligados a velar por la salud de las personas migrantes que se encuentren dentro de sus fronteras. Este vacío legal permite que países como España estén negando de manera sistemática la atención sanitaria básica a inmigrantes «que no hayan sido interceptados y no estén sujetos a una decisión de retorno». Esto implica que determinados Estados miembros están negando de manera indirecta el derecho fundamental a la vida de las personas migrantes y violando el Convenio Europeo de Derechos Humanos.

Resulta significativo que esta Directiva de retorno, que suscitó tantos titulares y tan intenso proceso de negociación en las instituciones de la Unión Europea, haya pasado por alto la necesidad de proteger la vida de estas personas, que, pese a carecer de documentos, continúan teniendo los derechos universales entre los que se encuentra el derecho a la vida. Esta Directiva de retorno se muestra como el marco inhumano que permite ignorar los derechos humanos fundamentales de los migrantes para proteger los muros de la «Europa fortaleza».

Considerando los gravísimos casos citados, ¿estima la Comisión necesario emplear su iniciativa legislativa para que los Estados miembros sean obligados por el Derecho europeo a proteger el derecho a la vida de las personas migrantes?

¿Piensa la Comisión condenar públicamente la actitud de los países que, como España, estén violando sistemáticamente los derechos de la población inmigrante irregular recogidos en dicho Convenio?

¿De qué forma piensa la Comisión exigir que los Estados miembros que sean parte del Convenio Europeo de Derechos Humanos cumplan las obligaciones impuestas por el mismo?

Respuesta de la Sra. Malmström en nombre de la Comisión
(2 de diciembre de 2013)

El artículo 168 del Tratado de Funcionamiento de la Unión Europea dispone que «se garantizará un alto nivel de protección de la salud humana». Del mismo modo, el artículo 35 de la Carta de los Derechos Fundamentales de la Unión Europea dispone que «toda persona tiene derecho a acceder a la prevención sanitaria y a beneficiarse de la atención sanitaria». De conformidad con el artículo 51, la Carta está dirigida a los Estados miembros cuando apliquen el Derecho de la Unión.

La Directiva de retorno obliga a los Estados miembros a expedir una decisión de retorno contra un nacional de un tercer país que se encuentre ilegalmente en su territorio. Los Estados miembros podrán, en cualquier momento, decidir conceder un permiso o autorización que otorgue un derecho de estancia por razones humanitarias o de otro tipo. Tal y como se recoge en la respuesta a la Pregunta E-5391/2013, el acceso a la atención sanitaria por parte de nacionales de terceros países que se encuentren ilegalmente y que no estén cubiertos por las disposiciones de la Directiva sobre el retorno ([1]), es decir, los inmigrantes en situación irregular que no han sido detenidos y que tampoco han sido objeto todavía de una decisión de retorno, no ha sido armonizado a nivel de la Unión.

Cabe concluir por tanto que, en el asunto que nos ocupa, los Estados miembros no intervienen durante la ejecución de la legislación de la UE en el sentido del artículo 51 de la Carta. Por lo tanto, corresponde únicamente a los Estados miembros velar por el cumplimiento de las obligaciones relativas a los derechos fundamentales derivadas, en particular, del Convenio Europeo sobre los Derechos Humanos, cuyo artículo 2 garantiza el derecho a la vida, y de su normativa interna.

([1]) 2008/115/EC.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011320/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: The Return Directive and the need to guarantee migrants' right to life

In answer to my previous Questions E-005391/2013 and E-005506/2013, Cecilia Malmström, the Commissioner for Home Affairs, argued that the Return Directive (2008/115/EC) only requires Member States to provide healthcare to immigrants 'who are subject to return procedures'.

This exclusion means that Member States are not obliged to safeguard the health of migrants who are on their territory. This legal vacuum allows countries like Spain to systematically deny basic healthcare to immigrants 'who have not been apprehended and not made the subject of a return decision yet'. That means that some Member States are indirectly denying migrants' fundamental right to life and are in breach of the European Convention on Human Rights.

It is significant that this Return Directive, which gave rise to so many headlines and such intense negotiations in the European Union institutions, has overlooked the need to protect the lives of these people, who, despite lacking documentation, still have their universal rights, including the right to life. This Return Directive shows itself to be the inhumane framework for ignoring migrants' fundamental human rights in order to protect the walls of 'fortress Europe'.

In view of the serious cases referred to, does the Commission think it should use its legislative initiative to ensure that Member States are bound by European law to protect migrants' right to life?

Does it intend to condemn publicly the attitude of countries like Spain, which systematically violate illegal immigrants' rights, as enshrined in the Convention?

How does the Commission intend to require Member States that are party to the European Convention on Human Rights to fulfil the obligations laid down therein?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(2 December 2013)

Article 168 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union states that a 'high level of human health protection shall be ensured'. Likewise, Article 35 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union stipulates that 'everyone has the right of access to preventive healthcare and the right to benefit from medical treatment'. According to its Article 51, the Charter is addressed to the Member States when they are implementing Union Law.

The Return Directive obliges Member States to issue a return decision to a third-country national staying illegally on their territory. Member States may at any moment decide to grant a permit or authorisations offering a right to stay for compassionate, humanitarian or other reasons. As set out in the reply to Question E-5391/2013, the access to healthcare of illegally staying third-country nationals who are not covered by the provisions of the Return Directive ([1]) — i.e. those irregular migrants staying on Member State territory who have not been apprehended and not yet made subject of a return decision — is not harmonised at Union level.

It appears that in the matter referred to, the Member States do not act in the course of implementation of EC law within the meaning of Art. 51 of the Charter. It is thus for Member States alone to ensure that their obligations regarding fundamental rights as resulting notably from the European Convention on Human Rights — whose Article 2 guarantees the right to life — and from their internal legislation are respected.

([1]) 2008/115/EC.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011321/13
a la Comisión
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(3 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Infracciones medioambientales reiteradas por parte de Gibraltar

En reiteradas ocasiones he preguntado a la Comisión Europea por diversas prácticas medioambientales contrarias a la normativa europea llevadas a cabo por parte de las autoridades de Gibraltar ([1]). En la mayoría de las ocasiones la respuesta obtenida consistía en informar de la apertura de un proceso de información con las autoridades del Reino Unido, incluyéndose en algún caso la solicitud al Reino Unido de información de las medidas correctoras de dichas prácticas contaminantes ([2]). La respuesta obtenida a la pregunta E-007028/2013, sobre la posible utilización del puerto seco de Gibraltar para capturar varias toneladas de melva así como los rellenos de tierras no hace sino aumentar la preocupación de este eurodiputado. Las aguas jurisdiccionales españolas que rodean al peñón de Gibraltar cuentan con una doble protección medioambiental por parte de la UE, ya que tanto España (ES6120032 Estrecho Oriental) como el Reino Unido (UKGIB0002 Southern Waters of Gibraltar) han sido autorizadas por parte de la Comisión Europea para declarar dichas aguas como lugar de importancia comunitaria (LIC) dentro de la Red Natura 2000 e implementar las correspondientes medidas de protección medioambiental. Resulta sorprendente que los hechos denunciados en la referida pregunta sean calificados por la Comisión como un simple acto de pesca, fuera del alcance competencial de la Comisión en virtud del Acta de Adhesión de 1972.

La Asociación Verdemar-Ecologistas en Acción presentó el 14 de junio de 2013 una denuncia ante la Dirección General de Medio Ambiente de la Comisión Europea que detallaba los daños ecológicos que la práctica de los rellenos está provocando, las consecuencias en la fauna y flora marinas protegidas, la presencia de gasolineras flotantes y la utilización del puerto seco de Gibraltar para capturar melva.

1. ¿Considera la Comisión que el puerto seco de Gibraltar se habría utilizado como arte de pesca? ¿Considera compatible dicha actuación con la normativa europea?

2. ¿En qué estado se encuentra la tramitación de la citada denuncia presentada por organizaciones ecologistas? ¿Qué medidas piensa adoptar la Comisión Europea para garantizar la efectiva protección medioambiental de unas aguas declaradas LIC?

Respuesta de la Sra. Damanaki en nombre de la Comisión
(28 de noviembre de 2013)

Como se indica en la respuesta de la Comisión a la pregunta E-007028/2013, en virtud del Acta por la que se regula la adhesión del Reino Unido a las Comunidades Europeas, la normativa en el ámbito de la política pesquera común no es aplicable a Gibraltar. En este contexto, la Comisión no ha evaluado si en este caso se ha utilizado un puerto seco como arte de pesca y si, en caso afirmativo, esta utilización sería compatible con la normativa antes citada.

Efectivamente, la Comisión ha recibido la denuncia a que se refiere Su Señoría, la cual está siendo también estudiada en relación con otras alegaciones en materia de medio ambiente que una serie de agentes han presentado recientemente contra Gibraltar. Una vez se haya entablado contacto con las autoridades del Reino Unido, los denunciantes recibirán una respuesta meditada por parte de la Comisión.

([1]) E-4560/2011, E-12441/2011, E-007803/2012, E-007190/2013 y E-007437/2013.
([2]) Respuesta a la pregunta E-007437/2013 referida a los rellenos de tierras que realiza Gibraltar en aguas de la Bahía de Algeciras protegidas por la normativa de la UE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011321/13
to the Commission
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Repeated environmental infringements by Gibraltar

I have asked the Commission many times about various environmental practices carried out by the Gibraltarian authorities in contravention of European legislation ([1]). In most cases, the answer has been to announce the opening of an information process with the United Kingdom authorities, including, in some cases, requesting the United Kingdom for information on the corrective measures for such polluting practices ([2]). The answer to Question E-007028/2013, on possible use of the Gibraltar dry dock to catch many tonnes of bullet tuna — as well as the issue of landfills — only adds to my concern. The Spanish waters surrounding the Rock of Gibraltar are under dual environmental protection from the EU, the Commission having authorised both Spain (ES6120032 'Estrecho Oriental') and the United Kingdom (UKGIB0002 Southern Waters of Gibraltar) to declare these waters a site of Community importance (SCI) within the Natura 2000 network, and to implement environmental protection measures accordingly. It is surprising that the Commission classifies the facts reported in the abovementioned question as a simple act of fishing, outside the Commission's scope of competence under the 1972 Act of Accession.

On 14 June 2013, the Verdemar Ecologists in Action Association submitted a complaint to the Commission's Environment Directorate-General detailing the ecological damage caused by landfill practices, the consequences for protected marine fauna and flora, the presence of floating petrol stations and the use of the Gibraltar dry dock to catch bullet tuna.

1. Does the Commission consider the Gibraltar dry dock to have been used as fishing gear? Does it consider such action to be in line with European legislation?

2. What is the current status of the processing of the complaint lodged by environmental organisations? What measures does the Commission intend to take to ensure effective environmental protection for waters declared an SCI?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(28 November 2013)

As noted in the Commission's reply to Question E-007028/2013, according to the Treaties regulating the accession of the United Kingdom to the European Communities the rules of the Common Fisheries Policy do not apply in Gibraltar. In this context, the Commission has not assessed whether a dry dock in this case has been used as a fishery gear and if so whether that use would be compatible with such rules.

The Commission has indeed received a complaint as referred to by the Honourable Member. This is being assess also with regard to the wider environmental allegations recently made against Gibraltar by a number of other actors. Once contact has been taken with the UK authorities, the complainants will receive the Commission's considered response.

([1]) E-4560/2011, E-12441/2011, E-007803/2012, E-007190/2013 and E-007437/2013.
([2]) Answer to Question E-007437/2013 on landfilling by Gibraltar in waters of the Bay of Gibraltar protected under EU legislation.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011322/13
a la Comisión
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(3 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Inobservancia de la Carta de los Derechos Fundamentales de la Unión Europea por parte de Hungría en lo relativo a ayudas sociales y las personas sin hogar

El Parlamento húngaro acaba de aprobar una ley que castiga a quienes viven en la calle con multas, trabajos para la comunidad y penas de prisión. El Gobierno de Orbán pretende con esta ley asegurar el orden en los espacios públicos, incrementar la seguridad y al mismo tiempo proteger la salud de las personas sin techo ante la llegada del invierno.

El Ejecutivo húngaro se atreve a ofrecer este tipo de explicación contraviniendo el criterio de su Tribunal Constitucional, que considera este tipo de medidas incompatibles con la protección de la dignidad humana, e ignorando el artículo 34 de la Carta de los Derechos Fundamentales de la Unión Europea, que reconoce en su apartado 3 el derecho a la ayuda social como medio para combatir la exclusión social y la pobreza.

El Gobierno húngaro considera las medidas adoptadas muy acertadas y en modo alguno se plantea que la ayuda social sea insuficiente para las personas sin hogar; de hecho, ha insistido en que la ocupación mensual de los refugios en Budapest nunca es completa. Las ONG del país presentan una realidad bien distinta, insistiendo en la falta de plazas en esos refugios.

Es oportuno recordar que la trayectoria de Hungría durante los últimos meses no ha sido ejemplar, y que en el año 2012 puso en peligro el Estado de Derecho con la aprobación de una serie de leyes antidemocráticas que desencadenó la apertura de varios procedimientos de infracción a instancias del Ejecutivo europeo.

1. ¿Ha tenido la Comisión noticia de la aprobación de la mencionada ley?

2. ¿Vulnera una ley como ésta la Carta de los Derechos Fundamentales de la Unión Europea en lo relativo al derecho a ayuda social de los ciudadanos?

3. ¿Recibe Hungría fondos procedentes de la Unión Europea destinados a ayudas sociales? ¿En qué cuantía?

Respuesta de la Sra. Reding en nombre de la Comisión
(9 de diciembre de 2013)

La Comisión remite a Su Señoría a la respuesta dada a la pregunta escrita E-007293/2013.

En el marco del período de programación 2007-2013, a través del Programa Operativo de Renovación Social financiado por el FSE, se han publicado cuatro convocatorias de propuestas, con un presupuesto total de 17,733 millones de euros. Estos proyectos están destinados 1) al establecimiento de una sólida base metodológica para los profesionales que trabajan en ese ámbito, 2) al desarrollo ulterior de los centros de acogida (incluida la prestación de servicios innovadores) y 3) al fomento de la vida independiente y la empleabilidad de las personas sin hogar, así como a la mejora de su situación en el mercado laboral.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011322/13
to the Commission
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Hungary's failure to respect the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union with regard to social assistance for homeless people

The Hungarian Parliament has just passed a law punishing people who live on the streets with fines, community work and imprisonment. With this law, Mr Orbán's government intends to ensure order in public spaces, improve security and, at the same time, protect homeless people's health ahead of the approaching winter.

The Hungarian Government dares to offer such explanations, contravening the judgment of its Constitutional Court, which considers such measures incompatible with the protection of human dignity, and ignoring Article 34(3) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which recognises the right to social assistance as a means of combating social exclusion and poverty.

The Hungarian Government considers the measures adopted to be very fitting and does not consider the social assistance given to homeless people to be lacking in any way; in fact, it has insisted that shelters in Budapest are never at full occupancy from month to month. Non-governmental organisations in the country paint a very different picture, pointing out that there are not enough places in these shelters.

It should be pointed out that Hungary's track record in recent months has not been exemplary, and that in 2012 it threatened the rule of law by approving a series of anti-democratic laws that led the Commission to open several infringement proceedings.

1. Has the Commission been informed of the adoption of the abovementioned law?

2. Does such a law infringe the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union with regard to the right of citizens to social assistance?

3. Does Hungary receive funds from the European Union intended for social assistance? How much?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(9 December 2013)

The Commission refers the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-007293/2013.

In the framework of the 2007-2013 programming period, through the ESF-funded Social Renewal OP, 4 calls for proposals have been launched, with a total budget of EUR 17,733 million. The schemes aimed at 1) the establishment of a solid methodological background for the professionals working in this field, 2) the further development of the shelters (including the provision of innovative services) and 3) the promotion of the independent living and employability of the homeless people, as well as the improvement of their labour-market situation.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011323/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Softwareentwicklungs-Kosten der Europäischen Agentur für Grundrechte

Die „Europäische Agentur für Grundrechte" ist in Österreich angesiedelt und hat den Angaben auf ihrer Webseite zufolge 90 Mitarbeiter. Im Einnahmen- und Ausgabenplan der Agentur sind für das Jahr 2013 „Datenverarbeitungskosten" von 811 000 EUR vorgesehen. Davon sollen 437 000 EUR für Datenverarbeitungsgeräte (data processing equipment), 359 000 EUR für Softwareentwicklungskosten und 15 000 EUR für andere externe Dienste für Datenverarbeitung genutzt werden. Dies entspricht IT-Kosten von 9 011 EUR pro Mitarbeiter, davon 4 855 EUR für Datenverarbeitungsgeräte und 3 988 EUR für Softwareentwicklung.

1. Welche Software wurde beziehungsweise wird für die Agentur im Jahr 2013 entwickelt?

2. Welche Software wurde in den Jahren 2011 (251 720 EUR tatsächlich genutzt) und 2012 (275 000 EUR vorgesehen) für die Agentur entwickelt und warum kann diese Software nicht weiter genutzt werden?

3. Warum ist diese Software nötig? Warum kann diese Software nicht in-house entwickelt werden? Warum können keine auf dem freien Markt oder unter kostenfreien Lizenzen verfügbare Softwarelösungen genutzt werden?

4. Wie genau schlüsseln sich die Kostenpunkte auf? Für welche Software-Entwicklungsleistungen enthält welcher Dienstleister welche Summe?

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011324/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Räumlichkeiten der Europäischen Agentur für Grundrechte

Die „Europäische Agentur für Grundrechte" ist in Österreich angesiedelt und hat den Angaben auf ihrer Webseite zufolge 90 Mitarbeiter. Im Einnahmen- und Ausgabenplan der Agentur sind für das Jahr 2013 Mietkosten von 528 000 EUR, Nebenkosten von 119 000 EUR und „Reinigungs- und Unterhaltskosten" von 290 000 EUR vorgesehen. In der Erklärung des Mietkostenpostens vermerkt der Plan, dass auch Ausstellungsflächen („storefronts"), Garagen, Lagerräume und Parkplätze angemietet werden.

1. Wie viele Büros mit welchen Grundflächen wurden von der Agentur in Österreich im Jahr 2013 angemietet? In welchen Städten beziehungsweise Stadtvierteln liegen diese Büros?

2. Nach welchen Kriterien wurden diese Immobilien ausgewählt?

3. Liegen die Mietkosten über oder unter dem durchschnittlichen Marktwert des entsprechenden Stadtviertels?

4. Verfügt die Agentur auch über Büros und Mitarbeiter außerhalb Österreichs?

5. Wie genau gliedern sich die Reinigungs- und Unterhaltskosten auf?

6. Wie viele Quadratmeter Ausstellungsflächen und Lagerräume mietet die Agentur an? Wofür werden die Ausstellungsflächen genutzt?

7. Wie viele Garagen und wie viele Parkplätze mietet die Agentur jeweils an und was kostet die Miete einer einzelnen Garage beziehungsweise eines einzelnen Parkplatzes durchschnittlich?

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011325/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Kommunikations-Ausgaben der Europäischen Agentur für Grundrechte

Die „Europäische Agentur für Grundrechte" ist in Österreich angesiedelt und hat den Angaben auf ihrer Webseite zufolge 90 Mitarbeiter. Im Einnahmen- und Ausgabenplan der Agentur sind für das Jahr 2013 Postgebühr- und Zustellkosten von 29 000 EUR sowie „verschiedene Ausgaben für Sitzungen" von 26 000 EUR vorgesehen. Für 2013 wurden Telekommunikations-Kosten von 124 000 EUR, demnach also pro Mitarbeiter monatliche Telekommunikations-Kosten von circa 115 EUR, vorgesehen.

1. Wofür fallen bei der Agentur Postgebühr- und Zustellkosten an? Wurde überprüft, ob die entsprechenden Kosten durch digitale Übermittlung der Informationen reduziert oder eingespart werden können?

2. Welche „verschiedenen Ausgaben" fallen für Sitzungen der Agentur an? Insbesondere für welche Sitzungen fielen diese Ausgaben an?

3. Wie genau schlüsseln sich die Telekommunikations-Kosten auf?

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011326/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Kosten der Europäischen Agentur für Grundrechte Datenverarbeitungsgeräte

Die „Europäische Agentur für Grundrechte" ist in Österreich angesiedelt und hat den Angaben auf ihrer Webseite zufolge 90 Mitarbeiter. Im Einnahmen- und Ausgabenplan der Agentur sind für das Jahr 2013 „Datenverarbeitungskosten" in Höhe von 811 000 EUR vorgesehen. Davon sollen 437 000 EUR für Datenverarbeitungsgeräte (data processing equipment), 359 000 EUR für Softwareentwicklungskosten und 15 000 EUR für andere externe Dienste für Datenverarbeitung genutzt werden. Dies entspricht IT-Kosten von 9 011 EUR pro Mitarbeiter, davon 4 855 EUR für Datenverarbeitungsgeräte und 3 988 EUR für Softwareentwicklung.

1. Wie schlüsseln sich die Kosten für Datenverarbeitungsgeräte im Detail auf? Welche Kosten werden für Geräte pro Mitarbeiter und welche Kosten für gemeinsam genutzte Geräte ausgegeben?

2. Warum stiegen die vorgesehenen Kosten von 2012 (378 000 EUR) auf 2013 um 59 000 EUR?

3. Warum lagen die tatsächlich angefallenen Kosten von 459 398 EUR im Jahr 2011 weit über dem im Einnahmen- und Ausgabenplan 2011 vorgesehenen Betrag von 255 000 EUR?

4. Warum wurde für 2012 und 2013 ein Betrag vorgesehen, der unter den tatsächlichen Kosten des Jahres 2011 lag? Rechnet die Kommission beziehungsweise die Agentur damit, dass die Agentur die für 2012 und 2013 vorgesehenen Kosten für Datenverarbeitungsgeräte übersteigt?

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011327/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Verwendung von Posten A 2 0 5 des Einnahmen- und Ausgabenplans der Europäischen Agentur für Grundrechte

Die Europäische Agentur für Grundrechte ist in Österreich angesiedelt und hat den Angaben auf ihrer Webseite zufolge 90 Mitarbeiter. Im Einnahmen- und Ausgabenplan der Agentur sind für das Jahr 2013 für die Haushaltslinie A 2 0 5 — Sicherheit und Bewachung von Gebäuden — Kosten von 95 000 EUR vorgesehen.

Laut der beigefügten Erklärung werden diese Gelder unter anderem für „Verträge zur Gebäudeüberwachung, Miete und Wiederauffüllung von Feuerlöschern, Kauf und Unterhalt von Feuerlöscheinrichtung, Erneuerung von Ausrüstung von Beamten und Bediensteten, die als freiwillige Feuerwehrleute arbeiten, sowie die Kosten gesetzlich vorgeschriebener Kontrollen" aufgewendet.

Für welche dieser Kategorien wurde welcher Anteil des Postens A 2 0 5 in den Jahren 2011 (90 417 EUR tatsächlich genutzt) und 2012 (75 000 EUR vorgesehen) ausgegeben?

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011816/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(16. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Andere Sozialausgaben der Agentur für Grundrechte im Jahr 2014

Im Entwurf der Schätzung der Einnahmen und Ausgaben der Europäischen Agentur für Grundrechte für das Jahr 2014 ([1]) sind für den Haushaltsposten A 1 6 „Social Welfare" (Sozialleistungen) 489 000 EUR vorgesehen. Für das Jahr 2013 waren noch 455 000 EUR vorgesehen und im Jahr 2012 gab es tatsächliche Zahlungsverpflichtungen von 356 839,91 EUR. Dabei sollen die Gelder vor allem für die Unterposten A 1 6 1 0 „Social contacts between staff" (2014: 55 000 EUR, 2013: 55 000 EUR, 2012 genutzt: 2 193,91 EUR) und A 1 6 2 0 „Other welfare expenditure" (2014: 420 000 EUR, 2013: 386 000 EUR, 2012 genutzt: 340 646 EUR) verwendet werden.

Der Posten A 1 6 2 0 wird in der Kostenschätzung wie folgt definiert: „This appropriation is intended to cover assistance for families, new arrivals, legal aid, grants for children's associations, the grant to the secretariat of the parents' association, multilingual tuition for staff children".

1. Wie genau gliederten sich die Kosten im Jahr 2012 auf die genannten Kostenpunkte (Hilfe für Familien, neue Ankünfte, etc.) des Postens A 1 6 2 auf?

2. Wie genau gliedern sich die Kosten für die Jahre 2013 und 2014 schätzungsweise auf diese Kostenpunkte auf?

3. Welche Kinder- und Jugendorganisationen wurden in welcher Form gefördert?

4. Warum wird das Sekretariat einer Elternorganisation gefördert? Welche Elternorganisation ist dies, und welches sind ihre Funktionen und Tätigkeitsbereiche?

Gemeinsame Antwort von Frau Reding im Namen der Kommission
(22. November 2013)

Die Kommission hat die Europäische Agentur für Grundrechte um die Beantwortung der Fragen des Herrn Abgeordneten gebeten. Die Antwort der Agentur wird dem Herrn Abgeordneten so bald wie möglich von der Kommission zugesandt.

([1]) http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/mb_decision_2012_09_draft_budget_2014.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011323/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights' software development costs

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights is based in Austria and, according to its website, has 90 members of staff. The Agency's statement of revenue and expenditure for 2013 includes an appropriation of EUR 811 000 for 'data processing' costs. Of this, EUR 437 000 is to be used for data processing equipment, EUR 359 000 for software development costs and EUR 15 000 for other external services for data processing. This corresponds to IT costs of EUR 9 011 per member of staff, with EUR 4 855 of this being spent on data processing equipment and EUR 3 988 on software development.

1. What software has been or is being developed for the Agency in 2013?

2. What software was developed in 2011 (EUR 251 720 actually spent) and 2012 (EUR 275 000 allocated) for the Agency and why can this software not continue to be used?

3. Why is this software necessary? Why can this software not be developed in-house? Why is it not possible for software solutions available on the free market or with a free software licence to be used?

4. What is the exact breakdown of these costs? Which service provider receives what amount for what software development services?

Question for written answer E-011324/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Premises of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights is based in Austria and, according to its website, has 90 members of staff. The Agency's statement of revenue and expenditure for 2013 includes appropriations of EUR 528 000 for rental costs, EUR 119 000 for amenity costs and EUR 290 000 for 'cleaning and maintenance' costs. In the remarks relating to the rental costs item it is stated that storefronts [sic], garages, off-site storage and parking facilities are also rented.

1. How many offices were rented by the Agency in Austria in 2013 and what is the base area of these offices? In which towns, cities or neighbourhoods are these offices located?

2. What criteria are used to select these properties?

3. Are the rental costs above or below the average market value for the neighbourhood in question?

4. Does the Agency also have offices and staff outside Austria?

5. How exactly are the cleaning and maintenance costs broken down?

6. How many square metres of storefront and off-site storage space does the Agency rent? What is the storefront space used for?

7. How many garages and how many parking spaces does the Agency rent and what is the average rental cost for a single garage or a single parking space?

Question for written answer E-011325/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Communications expenditure of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights is based in Austria and, according to its website, has 90 members of staff. The Agency's statement of revenue and expenditure for 2013 includes appropriations of EUR 29 000 for postal and delivery charges and EUR 26 000 for 'miscellaneous expenditure for meetings'. For 2013, EUR 124 000 was allocated for telecommunications charges, corresponding to around EUR 115 in monthly telecommunications charges per member of staff.

1. What does Agency incur postal and delivery costs for? Has it been examined whether these costs could be reduced or saved by transmitting the information digitally?

2. What 'miscellaneous expenditure' is incurred for the Agency's meetings? In particular, for which meetings was this expenditure incurred?

3. What is the exact breakdown of these telecommunications costs?

Question for written answer E-011326/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: The data processing equipment costs of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights is based in Austria and, according to its website, has 90 members of staff. The Agency's statement of revenue and expenditure for 2013 includes an appropriation of EUR 811 000 for 'data processing' costs. Of this, EUR 437 000 is to be used for data processing equipment, EUR 359 000 for software development costs and EUR 15 000 for other external services for data processing. This corresponds to IT costs of EUR 9 011 per member of staff, with EUR 4 855 of this being spent on data processing equipment and EUR 3 988 on software development.

1.Could the Commission provide a detailed breakdown of the costs for data processing equipment? How much is spent on equipment for each member of staff and how much on shared equipment?

2.Why did the appropriations rise by EUR 59 000 between 2012 (EUR 378 000) and 2013?

3.Why were the actual costs of EUR 459 398 incurred in 2011 far higher than the amount of EUR 255 000 allocated in the 2011 statement of revenue and expenditure?

4.Why were amounts allocated in 2012 and 2013 that were less than the actual costs for 2011? Does the Commission or the Agency expect the Agency to exceed the appropriations for data processing equipment for 2012 and 2013?

Question for written answer E-011327/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Use of item A-205 in the statement of revenue and expenditure of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights is based in Austria and, according to its website, has 90 members of staff. In the Agency's statement of revenue and expenditure for 2013 costs of EUR 95 000 have been appropriated for budget line A-205 — Security and surveillance of buildings.

According to the explanation provided, these funds are intended to cover, among other things, 'contracts governing building surveillance, hire and replenishment of extinguishers, purchase and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment, replacement of equipment for officials and agents acting as voluntary firemen, as well as costs of carrying out statutory inspections'.

What proportion of item A-205 was spent on each of these categories in 2011 (EUR 90 417 actually spent) and 2012 (EUR 75 000 appropriated)?

Question for written answer E-011816/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(16 October 2013)

Subject: Other welfare expenditure of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights in 2014

The draft estimate of revenue and expenditure of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights for the financial year 2014 ([1]) contains an appropriation of EUR 489 000 for the budget item A 1 6 'Social Welfare'. For 2013, an appropriation of EUR 455 000 was provided for and in 2012 there was an actual committed expenditure of EUR 356 839.91. These funds are intended primarily to be used for the sub-items A 1 6 1 0 'Social contacts between staff' (2014: EUR 55 000, 2013: EUR 55 000, 2012 spent: EUR 2 193.91) and A 1 6 2 0 'Other welfare expenditure' (2014: EUR 420 000, 2013: EUR 386 000, 2012 spent: EUR 340 646).

Item A 1 6 2 0 is defined as follows in the estimate of expenditure: 'This appropriation is intended to cover assistance for families, new arrivals, legal aid, grants for children's associations, the grant to the secretariat of the parents' association, multilingual tuition for staff children.'

1. What is the exact breakdown of the costs for 2012 by the specified cost items (assistance for families, new arrivals, etc.) under item A 1 6 2?

2. How exactly are the costs for 2013 and 2014 estimated to be split between these cost items?

3. Which children's and youth associations were supported and in what form was this support provided?

4. Why is a grant given to the secretariat of a parents' association? Which parents' association is this and what are its roles and areas of activity?

Joint answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(22 November 2013)

The Commission has asked the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency to provide a response to the question raised by the Honourable Member. The Agency's reply will be sent by the Commission to the Honourable Member as soon as possible.

([1]) http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/mb_decision_2012_09_draft_budget_2014.pdf

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011328/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Förderung archäologischer Projekte

Archäologische Ausgrabungen und Forschungsprojekte enthüllen immer wieder neue Facetten der europäischen Geschichte und Kultur.

1. Wie viele archäologische Ausgrabungs- und Forschungsprojekte werden durch Kultur-, Forschungs- oder andere Fördermaßnahmen der Kommission in den einzelnen Mitgliedsländern gefördert?

2. Auf welche Summe beläuft sich die Förderung archäologischer Projekte durch die Kommission insgesamt?

3. Welche konkreten archäologischen Ausgrabungs- und Forschungsprojekte werden von der Kommission in Österreich gefördert? Wie hoch ist jeweils die Fördersumme?

Antwort von Frau Vassiliou im Namen der Kommission
(3. Dezember 2013)

Laut Vertrag ([1]) obliegen Erhaltung und Schutz des kulturellen Erbes in erster Linie den Mitgliedstaaten. Der Kommission ist die Wahrung des europäischen kulturellen Erbes jedoch ein wichtiges Anliegen, weswegen sie gezielte Fördermöglichkeiten anbietet.

Aus dem Kulturprogramm 2007-2013 flossen 6,4 Mio. EUR in zehn archäologische Projekte. Keines dieser Projekte befand sich in Österreich.

Auch von den drei mit dem EU-Preis für das kulturelle Erbe ausgezeichneten archäologischen Stätten lag keine in Österreich.

Im Zuge des Siebten Forschungsrahmenprogramms (2007-2013) erhielten vier archäologische Projekte EU-Mittel in Höhe von 8,7 Mio. EUR: ARROWS, SASMAP, WreckProtect und FIRESENSE. Die ersten drei Projekte sind dem Unterwasserkulturerbe gewidmet; bei FIRESENSE geht es um die Brandmeldung und den Brandschutz mithilfeeines Multisensorsystems. Keiner der Projektpartner kommt aus Österreich.

Im Rahmen bestimmter operationeller Programme in Österreich (2007-2013) können Kulturerbeprojekte durch den Europäischen Fonds für regionale Entwicklung (EFRE) zwecks Tourismusförderung im Rahmen von Regionalentwicklungsstrategien unterstützt werden. In dieser Kategorie gibt es jedoch nur wenige Aktivitäten. So finanzierte beispielsweise Tirol zwei Projekte des *Ötztaler Vereins für prähistorische Bauten und Heimatkunde* im Bereich Schutz und Aufwertung des natürlichen Erbes, für die der EFRE einen Beitrag von 525 300 EUR bewilligte. Der Herr Abgeordnete wird auf die Website der ÖROK ([2]), der öffentlichen Koordinierungsstelle für EFRE-Finanzierungen in Österreich, verwiesen, wo die einzelnen Projekte und Begünstigten getrennt nach Programmen aufgeführt sind.

([1]) Artikel 167 des Vertrags über die Arbeitsweise der Europäischen Union.
([2]) http://www.oerok.gv.at/eu-regionalpolitik/eu-strukturfonds-in-oesterreich-2007-2013.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011328/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Support for archaeological projects

Archaeological digs and research projects are continually revealing new facets of European history and culture.

1. How many archaeological digs and research projects are subsidised by cultural, research or other Commission support measures in the individual Member States?

2. What is the total amount of subsidies granted to archaeological projects by the Commission?

3. Which specific archaeological digs and research projects are subsidised by the Commission in Austria? What is the amount of the subsidy in each case?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(3 December 2013)

According to the Treaty, ([1]) the protection and renovation of cultural heritage are primarily a national responsibility. However, the Commission regards the safeguarding of European cultural heritage as an important issue and provides related funding opportunities.

The Culture programme 2007-2013 provided EUR 6.4 million in funding to ten archaeology-related projects. However, none of these projects were in Austria.

The EU Prize for Cultural Heritage awarded three medals to archaeology sites, of which none were in Austria.

Under the Seventh Research Framework Programme 2007-2013, four archaeology-related projects received EUR 8.7 million in EU funding-ARROWS, SASMAP, WreckProtect and FIRESENSE. The first three projects concern underwater cultural heritage, while FIRESENSE is about fire detection and management through a multi-sensor network. No partner from Austria is involved.

Under certain operational programmes 2007-2013 in Austria, projects of cultural heritage may be supported by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in the framework of regional development strategies, in order to promote tourism. However, the number of operations in this category is small. For example, Tyrol funded two projects of the 'Ötztaler Verein für prähistorische Bauten und Heimatkunde Investition — Schutz und Aufwertung des natürlichen Erbes', with approved contributions from the ERDF of EUR 525 300. The Commission refers the Honourable Member to the website of 'ÖROK', ([2]) the coordinating public body for ERDF funding in Austria, where individual projects and beneficiaries are listed under the different programmes.

([1]) Art. 167 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.
([2]) http://www.oerok.gv.at/eu-regionalpolitik/eu-strukturfonds-in-oesterreich-2007-2013.html

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011329/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Durchführungsmaßnahmen im Rahmen der Ökodesign-Richtlinie

Im Rahmen der Ökodesign-Richtlinie (2009/125/EG) werden für zahlreiche Produktgruppen einzelne Durchführungsmaßnahmen erlassen. Die Prozesse, die zu diesen Maßnahmen führen, ziehen sich oft über mehrere Jahre hin und umfassen verschiedene Schritte wie Studien und Konsultationen ([1]).

1. Welche Kosten fielen bisher insgesamt für die Durchführungsmaßnahmen und die dazugehörigen Prozesse im Rahmen der Ökodesign-Richtlinie an?

2. Welche Kosten fielen durchschnittlich je Produktgruppe an? Was waren die jeweils höchsten und niedrigsten Kosten, die für eine Produktgruppe anfielen?

Antwort von Herrn Tajani im Namen der Kommission
(26. November 2013)

Die mit der Vorbereitung einer Ökodesign-Verordung verbundenen durchschnittlichen Kosten belaufen sich auf rund 400 000 EUR. Diese durchschnittlichen Kosten umfassen die Kosten der vorbereitenden Studie, der Folgenabschätzung und der Erstattung von Reisekosten für Vertreter der Mitgliedstaaten an die beratenden und abstimmenden Ausschüsse. Abhängig vom Zeitaufwand und der technischen Komplexität der Verordnung können die Kosten für eine bestimmte Verordnung im Rahmen der obengenannten Durchschnittskosten schwanken. Die Kostenunterschiede zwischen den verschiedenen Ökodesign-Verordnungen sind jedoch relativ gering.

Die obengenannten Durchschnittskosten werden durch einen Vergleich mit den geschätzten Energie- und den entsprechenden CO_2-Einsparungen aus den bisher angenommenen Ökodesign-Verordnungen relativiert. Der finanzielle Wert dieser Energie- und CO_2-Einsparungen ist häufig drei Größenordnungen höher als die obengenannten Kosten.

Beispielsweise dürfte die im Jahr 2011 angenommene Ökodesign-Verordnung über Industriegebläse in der EU bis 2020 für Einsparungen von rund 34 TWh pro Jahr oder von 16 Mio. Tonnen CO_2-Emissionen sorgen. Daraus ergibt sich für die Gesellschaft (bei 15 EUR pro Tonne CO_2) ein Wert von 240 Mio. EUR pro Jahr, wie es in der Folgenabschätzung dargelegt wird.

([1]) http://www.eceee.org/ecodesign/products

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011329/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Implementing measures within the framework of the Ecodesign Directive

Within the framework of the Ecodesign Directive (2009/125/EC) separate implementing measures are adopted for numerous product groups. The processes that lead to these measures often extend over several years and include various steps, such as studies and consultations ([1]).

1. What are the total costs incurred to date for the implementing measures and the associated processes within the framework of the Ecodesign Directive?

2. What are the average costs incurred per product group? What are the highest and lowest costs, respectively, incurred for a product group?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(26 November 2013)

The average cost incurred in the preparation of an Ecodesign Regulation can be estimated at around EUR 400,000. This average cost includes the cost of the preparatory study, impact assessment study and reimbursements of travel expenses for Member States' representatives to the consultative and voting Committees. Depending on the time span and technical complexity of the regulation, the cost figure for a particular regulation can fluctuate around the abovementioned average, but the variance across different Ecodesign Regulations is relatively small.

The above average cost figure needs to be put in perspective by comparing it with the energy and corresponding CO_2 savings estimated in the Ecodesign Regulations adopted so far. The monetised value of these energy and CO_2 savings are often three orders of magnitude higher than the costs referred to above.

For instance, the Ecodesign Regulation for industrial fans adopted in 2011 should provide estimated savings of 34 TWh per year across the EU by 2020. This corresponds to 16 Mt of avoided CO_2 emissions, whose monetised value for society (at EUR 15 per tonne of CO_2) amounts to EUR 240 million per year, as indicated in the impact assessment.

([1]) http://www.eceee.org/ecodesign/products

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011330/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Projektstudie zu Toiletten und Urinalen

Das Institut für technologische Zukunftsforschung der gemeinsamen Forschungsstelle der Kommission betreibt in Kooperation mit der Beratungsfirma AEA Consulting eine Projektstudie zu Toiletten und Urinalen ([1]). Die Arbeiten dafür begannen bereits im Januar 2011 ([2]), seitdem wurden mehrere Analysen und Studien durchgeführt und verschiedene Entwürfe für ein EU-Ecolabel für Toiletten und Urinale veröffentlicht ([2]).

1. Welche Kosten fielen insgesamt für die Projektstudie an?

2. Welche Kosten fielen dafür jeweils in den Jahren 2011, 2012 und 2013 an?

3. Wer trägt die Kosten für die Projektstudie?

Antwort von Herrn Potočnik im Namen der Kommission
(18. November 2013)

Seit 2009 untersucht die Kommission, inwieweit Bedarf an einer Verringerung des Wasserverbrauchs bei wasserführenden Haushaltsgeräten besteht und welche Möglichkeiten es hierfür gibt. Die Gemeinsame Forschungsstelle (JRC) hat ermittelt, welche Haushaltsgeräte das größte Wassereinsparpotenzial bieten und für ein EU-Umweltzeichen oder die Erarbeitung von Kriterien für umweltorientierte öffentliche Beschaffung (GPP) infrage kommen.

Da Wasser in der Industrie bereits weitgehend effizient eingesetzt wird, befasste sich die Analyse insbesondere mit dem Wasserverbrauch in öffentlichen Gebäuden und in Privathaushalten. Auf die Wasserspülung in Toiletten und Urinalen entfallen 25 % des (Trink-)Wasserbrauchs in den Haushalten in der EU. Das sind 12 889 Mio. m^3 jährlich; das diesbezügliche Wassereinsparpotenzial wird auf etwa 20 % geschätzt. Dies ist nicht nur ein riesiges Potenzial zur Einsparung der Wasserkosten von Privathaushalten, sondern bringt auch erhebliche Vorteile für die Umwelt. Die Verbraucher haben jedoch keine zuverlässige Grundlage für die Auswahl der Produkte, die diese Einsparungen und Umweltvorteile bewirken.

Deshalb bat der Ausschuss für das Umweltzeichen der Europäischen Union (AUEU) die Kommission, ihm detaillierte Fakten als Entscheidungsgrundlage für die Erarbeitung von GPP-Kriterien für solche Produkte bereitzustellen.

Daraufhin wurde bei der Beratungsfirma AEA (Vereinigtes Königreich) eine Studie in Auftrag gegeben, um die Kommission bei der Prüfung von Toiletten und Urinalen zu unterstützen. Der Vertrag über einen Gesamtwert von 89 300 EUR wurde am 16. Dezember 2010 unterzeichnet.

Auf der Grundlage dieser Ergebnisse hat die Gemeinsame Forschungsstelle dem AUEU eine Reihe von Kriterien für ein Umweltzeichen einerseits und für umweltorientierte öffentliche Beschaffung andererseits vorgeschlagen.

Die Umweltzeichenkriterien für Toiletten und Urinale wurden im Juni 2013 vom Regelungsausschuss für das Umweltzeichen gebilligt und werden noch vor Ende 2013 im Amtsblatt veröffentlicht.

Es sind folgende Kosten angefallen:

2011: 53 580 EUR

2012: 35 720 EUR

2013: 0 EUR

Die Studie wurde aus Haushaltsmitteln der Europäischen Kommission finanziert.

([1]) http://susproc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/toilets/index.html
([2]) http://susproc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/toilets/docs/Ecolabel_criteria_decision_draft2_dec12.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011330/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Pilot study on toilets and urinals

The Commission Joint Research Centre's Institute for Prospective Technological Studies (JRC-IPTS), in cooperation with the AEA consultancy, is carrying out a pilot study on toilets and urinals ([1]). Work on this began back in January 2011 ([2]) and since then several analyses and studies have been carried out and various drafts concerning an EU ecolabel for toilets and urinals have been published ([2]).

1. What were the total costs incurred for the pilot study?

2. What were the costs incurred for this in each of the years 2011, 2012 and 2013?

3. Who bears the cost of the pilot study?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(18 November 2013)

Starting in 2009 the Commission explored the demand and possibilities to reduce water consumption of water using products. The Joint Research Centre (JRC) identified products with the highest water saving potential which could be addressed through the EU Ecolabel or by means of developing Green Public Procurement (GPP) criteria.

Given the already relatively efficient use of water in industry, the analysis focused on the public/domestic water consumption. Toilets and urinal flushing represent 25% of domestic (drinking standard) water consumption in the EU, 12 889 Mm^3 per year; the water saving potential is estimated at about 20%. This represents not only a huge potential saving on household water bills, but significant environmental benefits. However when buying these products consumers have no reliable basis for choosing products which will deliver such savings and benefits.

The EU Ecolabelling Board (EUEB) therefore asked the Commission to provide detailed evidence base for water using products which should form the information basis to decide on the implementation of Ecolabel and GPP criteria for these products.

A study was commissioned to the consultancy AEA (UK) to support the Commission in analysing toilets and urinals. The respective contract was signed in December 16^{th,} 2010 with an overall volume of EUR 89,300.

On the basis of these results, JRC proposed a set of Ecolabel criteria and a set of GPP criteria to the EUEB.

The Ecolabel criteria for toilets and urinals received a positive vote in the Ecolabel Regulatory Committee in June 2013 and will be published in the official journal before the end of 2013.

The costs incurred were:

2011: EUR 53,580

2012: EUR 35,720

2013: EUR 0

The study was financed from the budget of the European Commission.

([1]) http://susproc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/toilets/index.html
([2]) http://susproc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/toilets/docs/Ecolabel_criteria_decision_draft2_dec12.pdf

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011331/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Durchführungsmaßnahmen für Staubsauger im Rahmen der Ökodesign-Richtlinie

Am 13. Juli 2013 wurde die im Rahmen der Ökodesign Richtlinie (2009/125/EG) erlassene Verordnung (EU) Nr. 666/2013 zur „Festlegung von Anforderungen an die umweltgerechte Gestaltung von Staubsaugern" im Amtsblatt der EU veröffentlicht. Sie ergänzt die Verordnung (EU) Nr. 665/2013 zur „Energieverbrauchskennzeichnung von Staubsaugern". Der Prozess, der zu diesen Rechtsakten führte, begann bereits im Januar 2009 und umfasste zahlreiche Schritte wie Studien und Konsultationen .

1. Welche Kosten fielen insgesamt für den Prozess an, der zu den Verordnungen geführt hat?

2. Welche Kosten fielen dafür jeweils in den Jahren 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 und 2013 an?

3. Wie viele Beamte und Bedienstete der Kommission waren mit diesem Prozess befasst?

Antwort von Herrn Oettinger im Namen der Kommission
(21. November 2013)

Zu den Fragen 1 und 2: Die Kommission hat die folgenden Arbeiten bezahlt:

— Eine vorbereitende Studie in Höhe von 199 596,90 EUR (59 879,10 EUR wurden im Jahr 2007, 79 838,80 EUR im Jahr 2008 und 59 879 EUR im Jahr 2009 gezahlt);

— Folgenabschätzungsstudien in Höhe von 52 765 EUR (11 104,50 EUR wurden im Jahr 2008, 25 910,50 EUR im Jahr 2010 und 15 750 EUR im Jahr 2012 gezahlt);

— Entwicklung von Mess-Normen: Bislang wurden 91 323,39 EUR gezahlt; es ist ein Höchstbeitrag der Kommission von 140 497,53 EUR vorgesehen.

Die Kommission erstattete die Auslagen für die folgende Anzahl von Vertretern der Mitgliedstaaten:

— 9 für das Ökodesign-Konsultationsforum vom 25. Juni 2010 (Sitzung in Verbindung mit einer Sitzung zu Haushaltswäschetrocknern);

— 16 für das Ökodesign-Konsultationsforum vom 8. September 2011;

— 24 für die Expertengruppe der Mitgliedstaaten für die Energieverbrauchskennzeichnung und für den Ökodesign-Regelungsausschuss vom 27. Februar 2013.

Die geschätzte Erstattung je Vertreter und Sitzung beträgt 510 EUR.

Zu der Frage 3: Ein Beamter der Kommission war für die Ausarbeitung der Ökodesign- und Energieverbrauchskennzeichnungsverordnungen für eine Reihe von Produktgruppen auf jeder Stufe des Verfahrens zuständig. Gelegentlich waren weitere Beamte der Kommission beteiligt.

Die Verordnungen für das Ökodesign und die Energieverbrauchskennzeichnung von Staubsaugern werden voraussichtlich zu einer Verringerung des Stromverbrauchs um 19 TWh pro Jahr bis 2020 führen, was für die Verbraucher in der EU Einsparungen in Höhe von rund 3,8 Mrd. EUR pro Jahr bedeutet.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011331/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Implementing measures for vacuum cleaners within the framework of the Ecodesign Directive

On 13 July 2013, Regulation (EU) No 666/2013 laying down 'ecodesign requirements for vacuum cleaners', adopted within the framework of the Ecodesign Directive (2009/125/EC), was published in the Official Journal of the EU. It complements Regulation (EU) No 665/2013 on the 'energy labelling of vacuum cleaners'. The process that led to these legal instruments began back in January 2009 and involved numerous stages, including studies and consultations.

1. What costs were incurred for the process that led to these Regulations?

2. What costs were incurred in this regard in each of the years 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013?

3. How many Commission officials and members of staff were involved in this process?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(21 November 2013)

1. and 2. The Commission paid for the following work:

— A preparatory study of EUR 199 596.90 (EUR 59 879.10 paid in 2007, EUR 79 838.80 in 2008 and EUR 59 879 in 2009)

— Impact assessment studies of EUR 52 765 (EUR 11 104.50 paid in 2008, EUR 25 910.50 in 2010, EUR 15 750 in 2012)

— Development of measurement standards, so far EUR 91 323.39 has been paid; a maximum Commission contribution of EUR 140 497.53 is foreseen.

The Commission reimbursed the following numbers of Member State representatives:

— 9 for the Ecodesign Consultation Forum of 25 June 2010 (meeting combined with meeting on household tumble driers)

— 16 for the Ecodesign Consultation Forum of 8 September 2011

— 24 for the Energy labelling Member State expert group plus Ecodesign Regulatory Committee of 27 February 2013

The estimated amount of reimbursement per representative per meeting is EUR 510.

3. A single Commission official was charged with dealing with the ecodesign/energy labelling policy process for a number of other product groups at every stage of the process. Further Commission officials were occasionally involved.

The ecodesign and energy labelling regulations for vacuum cleaners are expected to lead to a reduction in electricity consumption of 19 TWh per year by 2020, saving consumers in the EU approximately EUR 3.8 billion per year.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011332/13
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(3 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Paralización del proyecto Castor debido a los seísmos

Desde 2009 se han formulado varias preguntas escritas a la Comisión sobre el proyecto Castor, la planta de almacenamiento submarino de gas en un antiguo pozo petrolero: E-007642/2013, E-007566/2013, E-004004/2013, E-004005/2013, E-005051/2012, E-005052/2012 y E-4299/2009.

La zona norte de la costa de Castellón ha registrado un total de 10 seísmos entre las 22.00 horas del martes 1 de octubre y las 7.00 horas del siguiente miércoles. El mayor alcanzó una magnitud de 4,2 grados en la escala de Richter y el menor, de 1,4 grados, según ha informado el Instituto Geográfico Nacional. Los seísmos afectaron a las costas valenciana y catalana.

La Generalitat de Catalunya ha exigido la paralización total de la actividad del proyecto Castor y ha puesto en duda que la empresa Escal UGS haya detenido efectivamente el proyecto, como le había ordenado el Ministerio de Industria el 26 de septiembre.

Por ese motivo, el Ministerio de Industria de España ha enviado a técnicos a Vinaròs (Castellón) para que examinen las instalaciones del proyecto Castor y estudien los persistentes episodios de pequeños movimientos sísmicos, a fin de determinar si los seísmos son producidos por el proyecto Castor.

¿Intervendrá la Comisión al respecto? ¿Garantizará el derecho a la información sobre el riesgo real para la población? ¿Abrirá un proceso de infracción a España por permitir el proyecto Castor a pesar de su impacto medioambiental?

¿Pedirá la Comisión al Banco Europeo de Inversiones que considere desinvertir el capital por tratarse de un proyecto insostenible dentro del marco comunitario?

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011824/13
a la Comisión
Andrés Perelló Rodríguez (S&D)
(16 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Proyecto Castor e inyección y extracción de hidrocarburos y gas

Desde mediados del pasado mes de septiembre se han registrado en el Delta del Ebro (Castellón y Tarragona) centenares de seísmos que llegaron a alcanzar los 4,2 grados en la escala de Ritcher y que están estrechamente asociados al llamado «Proyecto Castor».

El «Proyecto Castor», situado a aproximadamente 20 kilómetros de la costa de Vinarós junto a varias fallas activas, trata de aprovechar un antiguo pozo petrolífero para almacenar gas inyectándolo en estado líquido a una presión de trabajo de 421 atmósferas. Los seísmos se han producido después de que la empresa Escal UGS comenzara con las prácticas inyectivas de «gas colchón» (volumen mínimo de gas natural que debe haber en un almacén subterráneo para que se pueda extraer gas útil a la presión adecuada e introducirlo en la red) en el «Proyecto Castor».

Hay que recordar que próximos al «Proyecto Castor» se sitúan Zonas de Especial Protección Para las Aves (ZEPA) (Directiva 79/409/CEE del Consejo, de 2 de abril de 1979, relativa a la conservación de las aves silvestres), Lugares de Importancia Comunitaria (LIC) y Zonas Especiales de Conservación (ZEC) incluidas en la Red Natura 2000 (Directiva 92/43/CEE del Consejo, de 21 de mayo de 1992, relativa a la conservación de los hábitats naturales y de la fauna y flora silvestres): el Parque Natural de la Tinença de Benifassà, Serres de Cardó-El Boix, el Desert de les Palmes y el Parque Natural del Delta de l'Ebre.

Por otro lado, en la misma zona, se ha planteado la posibilidad de iniciar proyectos de prospección de hidrocarburos por perforación hidráulica (*fracking*), hecho que, unido a los acontecimientos de «Castor», está despertando la inquietud de las poblaciones colindantes. Teniendo en cuenta los hechos descritos:

¿Cree la Comisión que las prácticas inyectivas y extractivas de hidrocarburos y gas, como las del «Proyecto Castor», son compatibles con la preservación de Red Natura 2000 existente en la zona?

Habida cuenta de la peligrosidad de las prácticas inyectivas y extractivas de hidrocarburos y gas para el medio ambiente y vidas humanas, ¿contempla la legislación de la UE alguna prescripción al respecto o alguna obligación de evaluación sísmica de los proyectos? En caso negativo, ¿considera la Comisión que deberían llevarse a cabo evaluaciones previas y periódicas más exhaustivas que incluyan evaluaciones de riesgo sísmico?

Finalmente, por lo que respecta a los posibles proyectos de *fracking*, ¿puede la Comisión garantizar que no existe peligro alguno teniendo en cuenta que, si la inyección de gas del Proyecto Castor se ha realizado a 421 atmósferas y ha provocado seísmos, la incidencia sobre el subsuelo podría ser mucho mayor si se llegara a las 700 atmósferas como sucede con el *fracking*?

Respuesta conjunta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(13 de diciembre de 2013)

Por lo que se refiere a la conformidad del proyecto Castor con las Directivas sobre hábitats y sobre evaluación de impacto ambiental ([1]), la Comisión remite a Su Señoría a las respuestas que dio a las preguntas escritas E-3789/2010 y E-11478/11. La Comisión recuerda que, tras la investigación realizada, no detectó ninguna infracción de la legislación ambiental de la UE.

En cuanto al seguimiento dado por el Banco Europeo de Inversiones a la inversión concedida a ese proyecto, la Comisión remite a Su Señoría a la respuesta dada a la pregunta escrita E-011407/2013.

En relación con los supuestos riesgos de ese tipo de proyecto, la Comisión se remite a la respuesta conjunta que dio a las preguntas escritas E-011199/2013, E-011239/2013, E-011240/2013 y E-011243/2013.

Por último, con respecto al impacto potencial de los proyectos de fracturación hidráulica en el subsuelo, la Comisión remite a Su Señoría a la respuesta a la pregunta escrita E-009201/2013.

([1]) Directiva 2011/92/UE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 13 de diciembre de 2011, relativa a la evaluación de las repercusiones de determinados proyectos públicos y privados sobre el medio ambiente (texto codificado). DO L 26 de 28.1.2012.
Directiva 92/43/CEE del Consejo, de 21 de mayo de 1992, relativa a la conservación de los hábitats naturales y de la fauna y flora silvestres. DO L 206 de 22.7.1992.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011332/13
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Suspension of the Castor project because of earthquakes

Several written questions have been submitted to the Commission since 2009 about the Castor project, an underwater gas storage plant in a former oil well: E-007642/2013, E-007566/2013, E-004004/2013, E-004005/2013, E-005051/2012, E-005052/2012 and E-4299/2009.

Ten earthquakes were recorded in the northern half of the Castellón coast between the hours of 10 p.m. on 1 October 2013 and 7 a.m. the next day. The strongest of these measured 4.2 on the Richter scale and the weakest 1.4, according to reports by the Spanish National Geographic Institute. The earthquakes were felt along the Valencian and Catalonian coast.

The Autonomous Government of Catalonia has demanded that all work on the Castor project be suspended and has cast doubts on whether Escal UGS, the company involved, actually halted the project as ordered by Spain's Ministry of Industry on 26 September 2013.

Spain's Ministry of Industry has therefore sent technical experts to Vinaròs (Castellón) to examine the Castor project's systems and to study the persistent minor seismic movement, in order to determine whether the earthquakes are caused by the Castor project.

Will the Commission intervene? Will it guarantee the right to information about the real risk to the population? Will it open infringement proceedings against Spain for allowing the Castor project to go ahead despite its environmental impact?

Will the Commission ask the European Investment Bank to consider disinvesting its capital, as this is an unsustainable project within the Community framework?

Question for written answer E-011824/13
to the Commission
Andrés Perelló Rodríguez (S&D)
(16 October 2013)

Subject: The Castor Project and injection and extraction of hydrocarbons and gas

Since mid-September, hundreds of earthquakes have been recorded in the Ebro Delta (provinces of Castellón and Tarragona), reaching a force of 4.2 on the Richter scale and closely linked to the so-called 'Castor Project'.

The 'Castor Project', located some 20 kilometres off the coast of Vinarós, next to various active faults, aims to use an old oil well to store gas, injecting it in a liquid state at a working pressure of 421 atmospheres. The earthquakes occurred after the Escal UGS company began to use injection methods involving 'cushion gas' (the minimum volume of natural gas that an underground store must contain in order to be able to extract usable gas at the right pressure and put it into the grid) in the 'Castor Project'.

It should be recalled that near the 'Castor Project' there are Special Protection Areas for Birds (SPAs) (Council Directive 79/409/EEC of 2 April 1979 on the conservation of wild birds), Sites of Community Importance (SCIs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) included in the Natura 2000 network (Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora):Tinença de Benifassà Natural Park, Serres de Cardó-El Boix, Desert de les Palmes and the Ebro Delta Natural Park.

The possibility of initiating hydrocarbon exploration projects by hydraulic drilling (fracking), in the same area, has also been proposed. This fact, coupled with the 'Castor' events, is arousing concern in surrounding towns. Given the facts described:

Does the Commission believe that practices of injecting and extracting hydrocarbons and gas, such as those used in the 'Castor Project', are compatible with the preservation of the existing Natura 2000 network in the area?

Given that practices of injecting and extracting hydrocarbons and gas are dangerous for the environment and human life, does EU legislation include any requirements in this regard or any obligation for the seismic assessment of projects? If not, does the Commission consider that more exhaustive prior and periodic assessments, to include seismic risk, should be carried out?

Finally, with regard to potential fracking projects, can the Commission guarantee that no danger whatsoever exists, taking into account that, if the gas injection in the Castor Project, carried out at 421 atmospheres, caused earthquakes, the impact on the subsoil could be much higher if this were to reach 700 atmospheres, as occurs in fracking?

Joint answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(13 December 2013)

Regarding compliance by the Castor project with the obligations under the Environmental Impact Assessment and Habitats Directives ([1]), the Commission refers the Honourable Member to the replies given to Written Questions E-3789/2010 and E-11478/11. The Commission recalls that, after having carried out an investigation, it could not identify any breach of EU environmental law.

As regards the follow-up given by the European Investment Bank to its investment in this project, the Commission refers the Honourable Member to the reply given to Written Question E-011407/2013.

With regard to the alleged risks of this type of project, Commission refers to the joint answer given to Written Questions E-011199/2013; E-011239/2013; E-011240/2013 and E-011243/2013.

Finally, as regards the potential impact on the subsoil of fracking projects, the Commission refers the Honourable Member to the reply given to Written Question E-009201/2013.

([1]) Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (codification). OJ 28.1.2012.
Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora. OJ 22.7.1992.

(българска версия)

Въпрос с искане за писмен отговор P-011333/13
до Комисията
Iliana Malinova Iotova (S&D)
(3 октомври 2013 г.)

Относно: Финансова подкрепа за справяне с бежанската криза

До края на 2013 г. се очаква общият брой на бежанците от Сирия да нарасне до 3,45 милиона души. Външните граници на Съюза са изправени пред сериозно предизвикателство да поемат този приток на хора. До момента ЕС и държавите членки са отделили 1 милиард евро за хуманитарна и нехуманитарна помощ във и извън Сирия.

Може ли ЕК да разясни с каква цел са изразходвани тези средства и кои са бенефициентите, възползвали се от тази сума?

Новият фонд „Миграция и убежище“ предвижда общо 3,869 милиарда евро за периода 2014—2020 г., от които повече от 80 % ще бъдат използвани от държавите членки за националните им програми.

По какъв начин държавите членки могат да използват тези средства? На какъв принцип ще бъдат разпределяни? За тази година ЕК е отпуснала на България над 10 милиона евро за защита на границите и около 2,5 милиона евро за посрещане на бежанци. Оказа се, че не са достатъчни. Ще получат ли допълнителни средства държавите членки, чиито граници се явяват външни за ЕС и които са подложени на най-силен бежански натиск и риск от хуманитарна криза?

Отговор, даден от г-жа Малмстрьом от името на Комисията
(22 ноември 2013 г.)

Досега за облекчаване на положението и за подпомагане на възстановяването ЕС и държавите членки са мобилизирали близо 2 милиарда евро. Хуманитарната помощ, предоставяна чрез партньорите на ЕС, т.е. организациите от ООН, движението на Червения кръст/Червения полумесец и международните неправителствени организации, е в подкрепа главно на животоспасяващи мерки за спешна медицинска помощ, осигуряването на основни лекарства, храни и продоволствие, питейна вода, канализация и хигиена, подслон, предоставяне на основни нехранителни продукти, както и минимално равнище на защита, за да се помогне на най-уязвимите семейства (вътрешно разселени лица, бежанци, приемащи общности).

В рамките на новия фонд „Убежище и миграция“ (ФУМ), по който все още текат преговори, средствата за национални програми ще се състоят от основни и различни по размер суми. Основните суми са определени в Регламента за ФУМ и се отпускат за целия период. Те ще бъдат използвани в подкрепа на действия, целящи засилването на Общата европейска система за убежище, интеграцията на граждани/легални мигранти от трети държави и ефективното управление на връщането. Различните по размер суми са допълнителни средства за конкретни дейности, за които държавите членки трябва да се ангажират (презаселване, преместване, специфични действия). Комисията не е предлагала стриктно обособяване на сумите, предназначени за различни области.

Комисията, заедно с Frontex и Европейската служба за подкрепа в областта на убежището, следи отблизо положението на място в България и в други държави членки, засегнати от пристигането на голям брой потенциални бежанци. Обсъждат се планове за действие при извънредни ситуации, в случай че ситуацията се влоши още повече. Бяха осъществени мисии за оценка на потребностите в България и в други държави членки. Комисията е готова да разгледа незабавно исканията за допълнителна финансова подкрепа от тези (и други) държави членки. За тази цел е мобилизирано допълнително финансиране в размер на 60 милиона евро.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011333/13
to the Commission
Iliana Malinova Iotova (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Financial support for coping with the refugee crisis

The total number of refugees from Syria is expected to reach 3.45 million by the end of 2013. Dealing with this influx of people poses a serious challenge at the European Union's external borders. To date, the EU and the Member States have directed EUR 1 billion to humanitarian and other aid within and outside Syria.

Can the Commission explain what this money has been spent on and who has benefited from it?

In the new Migration and Asylum Fund, a total of EUR 3.869 billion is earmarked for the period 2014-2020, of which more than 80% will be spent by Member States on their national programmes.

How can the Member States use this money? On what basis will it be apportioned? The Commission allocated more than EUR 10 million to Bulgaria this year for border protection and approximately EUR 2.5 million for the reception of refugees. That proved to be insufficient. Will additional funding be granted to those Member States whose borders are the external borders of the Union, where the pressure from incoming refugees is greatest, as is the risk of a humanitarian crisis?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(22 November 2013)

The EU and the Member States have so far mobilised nearly EUR 2 billion in relief and recovery aid. The humanitarian assistance, channelled through EU partners, i.e. the UN family, the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement and INGOs, primarily supports life-saving medical emergency responses, the provision of essential drugs, food and nutritional items, safe water, sanitation and hygiene, shelter, distribution of basic non-food items and protection to help the most vulnerable families (Internally displaced persons, refugees, host communities).

Under the new Asylum and Migration Fund (AMF), for which negotiations are still ongoing, resources for national programmes consist of basic and variable amounts. Basic amounts are established in the AMF Regulation and allocated for the whole period; they will be used to support action aiming at strengthening the Common European Asylum System, integration of third-country nationals / legal migration and effective return management. Variable amounts are top-up money for specific activities for which Member States have to pledge (resettlement, relocation, specific actions). The Commission did not propose to ring fence amounts for different areas.

The Commission, with Frontex and EASO, is closely following the situation on the ground in Bulgaria and other Member States affected by the arrival of large numbers of potential refugees. Contingency plans are discussed should the situation further deteriorate. Needs assessment missions to Bulgaria and other Member States took place. The Commission stands ready to examine without delay requests for additional financial support from those (and other) Member States. EUR 60 million of extra funding has been mobilised for that purpose.

(Hrvatska verzija)

Pitanje za pisani odgovor P-011334/13
upućeno Komisiji
Dubravka Šuica (PPE)
(3. listopada 2013.)

Predmet: Televizijski kanal u Bosni i Hercegovini na hrvatskom jeziku

Sukladno Ustavu Bosne i Hercegovine, Hrvati su jedan od tri sastavna naroda, međutim jedino oni nemaju TV kanal na svom jeziku.

Ako se jednakost za Hrvate ne osigura u okviru tri sastavna naroda te im se ne jamče temeljna prava, uključujući i televizijskim kanalom na hrvatskom jeziku, daljnja stabilnost i razvoj ove države, koja je na putu prema Europskoj uniji, neće biti mogući jer u EU-u čak i manjine imaju pravo na televizijski kanal na vlastitome jeziku.

Televizijski kanal na hrvatskom jeziku potreban je kako bi Hrvati postojali kao treći narod u Bosni i Hercegovini. Koji je smisao naroda ako on nema pravo koristiti svoj jezik, tradiciju i običaje?

S obzirom na pregovore pod pokroviteljstvom povjerenika Fülea te u očekivanju provedbe odluke u predmetu „Sejdić"–Finci, koje je mjere Komisija spremna poduzeti, i kada, kako bi pomogla Hrvatima u Bosni i Hercegovini očuvati njihov jezik i kulturnu jednakost te im osigurati televizijski kanal na hrvatskom jeziku?

Odgovor g. Fülea u ime Komisije
(15. studenog 2013.)

Komisija je na provedbu presude u predmetu Sejdić-Finci stavila poseban naglasak u svojem dijalogu s Bosnom i Hercegovinom. Tim se pitanjem pobliže bavila s državnim tijelima i političkim čelnicima te ga uključila u dijalog na visokoj razini u kontekstu pristupnog procesa. Provedbom te presude državljanima ove zemlje koji se ne izjašnjavaju kao Srbi, Hrvati ili Bošnjaci omogućilo bi se da budu odabrani za članove Predsjedništva i Doma naroda.

Pitanje pokretanja televizijskog programa na hrvatskom jeziku nije povezano sa slučajem Sejdić-Finci. U siječnju 2013. u Vijeću ministara Bosne i Hercegovine podnesen je nacrt zakona radi pokretanja program na hrvatskom jeziku, ali nije postignut dogovor te nacrt nije predan Parlamentu. Nadležna tijela u Bosni i Hercegovini trebaju postići konsenzus po tom pitanju. Komisija smatra da je poboljšanje javnog emitiranja radiotelevizijskih usluga neophodno i u interesu svih državljana Bosne i Hercegovine te svih etničkih skupina.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011334/13
to the Commission
Dubravka Šuica (PPE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: TV channel in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Croatian language

According to the constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croats are one of three constituent nationalities, yet they are the only ones who do not have a TV channel in their own language.

Unless equality for Croats is ensured between the three constituent nationalities and there is a guarantee of fundamental rights, including provision of a TV channel in the Croatian language, there will be no further prosperity and development for this country on its way to the European Union where even minorities have the right to a TV channel in their language.

A TV channel in Croatian is necessary in order for Croats to exist as a third nationality in Bosnia and Herzegovina. What is the purpose of a nation if they do not have the right to practise their language, tradition and customs?

With regard to the negotiations under the auspices of Commissioner Füle and in expectation of implementation of the decision in the 'Sejdić'–Finci case, what action is the Commission willing to take, and when, in order to help Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina secure language and cultural equality and be guaranteed a TV channel in the Croatian language?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(15 November 2013)

The Commission has placed the implementation of the Sejdić-Finci ruling at the heart of its dialogue with Bosnia and Herzegovina. It has closely engaged on this with the country's authorities and political leaders including in the High Level Dialogue on the Accession Process. The implementation of this ruling would enable citizens of the country who do not define themselves as Serb, Croat or Bosniak to be elected to the Presidency and the House of Peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The question of creating a TV channel in the Croatian language is not linked to the Sejdić-Finci case. A draft law has been tabled in the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina in January 2013 in order to create a channel in Croat language, but no agreement was reached and the draft therefore not submitted to Parliament. It is for the competent authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina to reach consensus on this issue. The Commission considers it essential to strengthen the public broadcasting in the interest of all citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina and all ethnicities.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite P-011335/13
à la Commission
Bernadette Vergnaud (S&D)
(3 octobre 2013)

Objet: Conséquences de l'entrée en vigueur du règlement (UE) n° 305/2011 sur l'agrément de certains dispositifs d'assainissement

Je souhaiterais avoir des précisions sur les conséquences de l'entrée en vigueur du règlement (UE) n° 305/2011 sur l'agrément pour la commercialisation et l'utilisation sur le marché français de certains dispositifs d'assainissement individuels.

Le texte de référence français est l'arrêté du 7 mars 2012, modifiant l'arrêté du 7 septembre 2009 afin notamment de prendre en compte l'entrée en vigueur au 1er juillet 2013 du règlement (UE) n° 305/2011 comme suit:

«Les installations d'assainissement non collectif qui peuvent être composées de dispositifs de prétraitement et de traitement réalisés in situ ou préfabriqués doivent satisfaire:

— le cas échéant, aux exigences essentielles de la directive 89/106/CEE susvisée relatives à l'assainissement non collectif, notamment en termes de résistance mécanique, de stabilité, d'hygiène, de santé et d'environnement. À compter du 1er juillet 2013, les dispositifs de prétraitement et de traitement précités dans cet article devront satisfaire aux exigences fondamentales du règlement n° 305/2011 du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 9 mars 2011 établissant les conditions harmonisées de commercialisation pour les produits de construction et abrogeant la directive 89/106/CEE du Conseil»;

À priori, les «exigences fondamentales» du règlement correspondent à la norme CEN 12566-3 (en France: FR EN 12566-3), qui est déjà la norme de référence en France (anciennes «exigences essentielles» de la directive). Cependant, l'exigence de conformité des dispositifs à la norme CE ne les dispense pas de recevoir un agrément des autorités françaises en vertu de l'arrêté du 7 mars 2012.

La Commission peut-elle indiquer si l'entrée en vigueur du règlement va dispenser ces dispositifs d'un agrément des autorités françaises pour être utilisés et/ou commercialisés en France, à la condition qu'ils portent le marquage CE? Et si ce n'est pas le cas, l'arrêté du 7 mars 2012 est-il conforme?

Réponse donnée par M. Tajani au nom de la Commission
(12 novembre 2013)

Le règlement (UE) n° 305/2011 concernant les produits de construction a précisé le principe de l'acceptation des produits munis du marquage CE dans les États membres. Il leur demande d'accepter la mise sur le marché des produits de construction, sur leur territoire national, à condition que les performances déclarées de ces produits correspondent aux exigences régissant leur utilisation prévue dans ces États membres.

En apposant le marquage CE, les fabricants indiquent qu'ils assument la responsabilité de la conformité du produit de construction aux performances déclarées ainsi que du respect de toutes les exigences applicables, fixées dans le règlement (UE) n° 305/2011 et dans d'autres législations d'harmonisation de l'Union pertinentes pour le produit concerné.

Pour les installations de traitement des eaux usées préfabriquées qui relèvent de la norme européenne harmonisée EN 12566-3 et qui sont mises sur le marché avec le marquage «CE», le fabricant indique, de ce fait, que l'efficacité déclarée du traitement des eaux usées de son produit a été déterminée à partir des méthodes d'évaluation définies dans la norme harmonisée.

Pour des raisons spécifiques (par exemple la protection d'un lac), les autorités d'un État membre peuvent demander un niveau minimum d'efficacité du traitement des eaux usées. Dans ce cas, il est prévu que le respect de cette exigence particulière de rendement soit vérifié à l'échelon local.

Toutefois, cette vérification ne confère pas à l'État membre le droit d'introduire des procédures supplémentaires de vérification des performances, en dehors des procédures de la norme harmonisée EN, ou d'autres exigences supplémentaires en matière d'agrément ou de certification.

Le règlement (UE) n° 305/2011 précise que ces agréments ou certifications nationaux ne sont plus exigés.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011335/13
to the Commission
Bernadette Vergnaud (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Implications of the entry into force of Regulation (EU) No 305/2011 for the approval of certain wastewater engineering devices

It is unclear what implications the entry into force of Regulation (EU) No 305/2011 has for the approval of certain wastewater engineering devices for marketing and use in France.

The French reference text in this area is the decree of 7 March 2012 amending the decree of 7 September 2009 as follows in order to take account of the entry into force of Regulation (EU) No 305/2011 on 1 July 2013:

'Individual wastewater installations comprising pre-treatment and treatment devices which are pre-fabricated or made in situ shall meet the following criteria:

— Where relevant, the essential requirements laid down in Directive 89/106/EEC for individual wastewater treatment systems, in particular as regards mechanical strength, stability, hygiene, health and the environment. From 1 July 2013, the pre-treatment and treatment devices referred to above in this article shall comply with the basic requirements of Regulation (EC) No 305/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2011 laying down harmonised conditions for the marketing of construction products and repealing Council Directive 89/106/EEC;'

The 'basic requirements' of the regulation match those of CEN Standard 12566-3 (in France: FR EN 12566-3), which is already the reference standard in France (the old directive's 'essential requirements'). Even if devices comply with the EC standard, they still need to be approved by the French authorities under the decree of 7 March 2012.

Could the Commission say whether the entry into force of the regulation means that these devices no longer need to be approved by the French authorities in order to be used and/or marketed in France, provided that they carry the CE marking? And if it does not, can it say whether the decree of 7 March 2012 is compatible with the regulation?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(12 November 2013)

Regulation (EU) No 305/2011 on construction products has clarified the principle for the acceptance of CE marked products in Member States. It requires them to accept construction products to be placed on the market, within their national territory, provided that the declared performances of such products correspond to the requirements for the intended use in these Member States.

By affixing the CE marking, manufacturers indicate that they take responsibility for the conformity of the construction product with the declared performance as well as for the compliance with all applicable requirements laid down in Regulation (EU) No 305/2011 and in other European Union harmonisation legislation relevant to the product.

For prefabricated sewage treatment plants under the harmonised European standard EN 12566-3, placed on the market with the CE marking, the manufacturer thereby declares that the stated wastewater treatment efficiency of his product has been determined via the assessment methods laid down in the harmonised standard.

For specific reasons (e.g. protection of a lake) the authorities of a Member State can request a minimum level of wastewater treatment efficiency. In this case, it is expected that a verification of the satisfaction of this particular localised efficiency requirement takes place.

However, this verification does not entitle a Member State to introduce additional performance verification procedures outside the harmonised EN, or any additional approval or certification requirements.

Regulation (EU) No 305/2011 clarifies that such national approvals or certifications shall no longer be required.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011336/13
an die Kommission
Michael Theurer (ALDE)
(3. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Borreliose — Risiken und Forschungsstand in der EU

Ein Bürger und Arzt hat sich aufgrund seiner besorgten Patienten mit Fragen zur Krankheit Borreliose an mich gewandt.

Zu diesem Thema wird die Europäische Kommission um folgende Auskünfte ersucht:

1. Welche Dimension hat die Verbreitung der Borreliose in der EU? Wie viele Erkrankungen gab es in der EU in den letzten zehn Jahren in jedem Jahr?

2. Wie hoch ist das Ansteckungsrisiko in der EU?

3. Sieht die Kommission einen Bedarf, Maßnahmen zum Schutz vor Borreliose zu ergreifen? Wenn ja, welche wären das?

4. Wie hoch ist die Summe der Forschungsgelder, die die EU für die medizinische Forschung zur Verfügung stellt? Wie hoch ist die Summe der Forschungsgelder, die die EU in der jetzigen Finanzperiode für die Borreliose-Forschung zur Verfügung gestellt hat? Wie viel Fördermittel plant die EU in Zukunft für die Erforschung der Borreliose zur Verfügung zu stellen?

Antwort von Herrn Borg im Namen der Kommission
(21. November 2013)

Schätzungsweise werden mehr als 65 000 Fälle von Lyme-Borreliose alljährlich europaweit durch die verschiedenen Überwachungssysteme gemeldet ([1]). Diese Zahlen sind jedoch möglicherweise aufgrund spezieller Schwierigkeiten bei der klinischen und labortechnischen Diagnose und einer fehlenden gemeinsamen Falldefinition von Lyme-Borreliose in Europa nicht ganz genau.

Das Infektionsrisiko hängt mit der Zeckenabundanz und der Zeckenexposition zusammen. Typische Lebensräume von Zecken in Europa sind Laub- und Nadelwälder, Heide- und Moorgebiete, Wiesen, Wälder und Stadtparks. Bei der Beurteilung des Infektionsrisikos spielen Faktoren wie Wohnort, Beruf (z. B. Waldarbeiter) oder Freizeitaktivitäten eine Rolle.

Derzeit gibt es keinen zugelassenen Impfstoff gegen Lyme-Borreliose; persönliche Schutzmaßnahmen, wie die Vermeidung von Zeckenstichen und die rasche Entfernung von Zecken nach einem Stich, gelten als wichtige Vorbeugungsmaßnahmen und sollten Bestandteil der Aufklärungs- und Sensibilisierungsmaßnahmen für die Öffentlichkeit sein.

Die Kommission hat 4,8 Mrd. EUR für Forschungsprojekte des 7. Forschungsrahmenprogramms zum Thema Gesundheit bereitgestellt.

Sie hat neun Projekte zum Thema „Lyme-Borreliose“ mit 15,6 Mio. EUR innerhalb verschiedener Programme des 7. Forschungsrahmenprogramms unterstützt: Gesundheit (2 999 785 EUR) ([2]), Umwelt (3 499 401 EUR) ([3]), Lebensmittel (2 999 994 EUR) ([4]), Marie Curie (3 126 642 EUR) ([5]), KMU (2 375 109 EUR) ([6]) und Europäischer Forschungsrat (684 000 EUR) ([7]). Das neue Forschungsrahmenprogramm Horizont 2020 (2014-2020) soll eine Reihe von Finanzierungsmöglichkeiten für Forschung über Infektionskrankheiten umfassen.

([1]) Rizzoli A., Hauffe H., Carpi G., Vourc H. G., Neteler M., Rosa R., Lyme borreliosis in Europe. Eurosurveillance. 2011 :16, 19906.
([2]) ANTIDOTE.
([3]) QWECI.
([4]) PIROVAC.
([5]) RICYSTVACANT2010, POSTICK, COSEATIBO.
([6]) HILYSENS — HILYSENS II.
([7]) EPIFOR.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011336/13
to the Commission
Michael Theurer (ALDE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Lyme disease — risks and state of research in the EU

A citizen and doctor has approached me with questions concerning Lyme disease on account of some patients he is caring for.

In relation to this issue, could the Commission provide the following information:

1. How widespread is Lyme disease in the EU? How many cases per year have there been in the EU over the last 10 years?

2. How high is the risk of infection in the EU?

3. Does the Commission consider there to be a need for measures to be taken to provide protection against Lyme disease? If so, what would these measures be?

4. How much in the way of research funds does the EU make available in total for medical research? How much in the way of research funds has the EU made available in the current financial period for Lyme disease research? How much in the way of aid is the EU planning to provide in future for research into Lyme disease?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(21 November 2013)

It is estimated that over 65 000 cases of Lyme borreliosis are reported annually across Europe through various surveillance systems ([1]). However, these figures may not be fully accurate due to specific difficulties in clinical and laboratory diagnosis and because of the lack of a common case definition for Lyme borreliosis in Europe.

The risk of infection is linked to tick abundance and tick exposure. Typical tick habitats in Europe include deciduous and coniferous woodland, heathland, moorland, rough pasture, forests and urban parks. In assessing the risk of infection, factors such as the geographical area of residence, occupational factors (e.g. forestry workers) or recreational activities need to be considered.

No licensed vaccine is currently available to prevent Lyme borreliosis; thus, personal protective measures, avoiding tick bites and quick removal of the tick in case of bite are considered as important preventive measures of the disease, which should be part of public awareness and communication activities.

The Commission contributed EUR 4.8 billion to resaerch projects in the FP7 'Health' theme.

The Commission supported nine projects related to 'Lyme disease' with EUR 15.6 million under different programmes of FP7 as follows: under Health (EUR 2 999 785) ([2]), Environment (EUR 3 499 401) ([3]), Food (EUR 2 999 994) ([4]), Marie-Curie (EUR 3 126 642) ([5]), SMEs (EUR 2 375 109) ([6]) and EU Research Council Actions (EUR 684 000) ([7]). The upcoming new Framework Programme Horizon 2020 (2014-2020) is planned to offer a number of funding opportunities for research on infectious diseases.

([1]) Rizzoli A, Hauffe H, Carpi G, Vourc HG, Neteler M, Rosa R. Lyme borreliosis in Europe. Eurosurveillance. 2011 :16, 19906.
([2]) ANTIDOTE.
([3]) QWECI.
([4]) PIROVAC.
([5]) RICYSTVACANT2010, POSTICK, COSEATIBO.
([6]) HILYSENS — HILYSENS II.
([7]) EPIFOR.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011337/13
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: VP/HR — Peligrosa situación de los defensores de los derechos humanos en México

En 2010, la Delegación de la Unión Europea y las Embajadas de sus Estados miembros aprobaron un plan local para implementar las directrices de la UE sobre defensores de los derechos humanos en México. Desde este mismo año, México y la Unión Europea tienen una Asociación Estratégica que contempla entre otros un Diálogo de Alto Nivel sobre Derechos Humanos. Este diálogo se mantendrá por quinta vez a finales del 2013 en Bruselas.

Respecto a casos concretos de defensores que corren riesgos, según el informe 2013 de la Oficina del Alto Comisionado en México sobre defensores de los derechos humanos, el Estado de Oaxaca es nuevamente el de mayor riesgo para personas defensoras de los derechos humanos en México. Según varias organizaciones de la sociedad civil, la situación en el Estado se ha degradado a lo largo de los últimos meses. Ha aumentado el número de casos de agresión u hostigamiento contra defensores y se caracterizan por un alto grado de impunidad y la falta de implementación cabal de medidas de protección. La situación es especialmente crítica para defensores que acompañan procesos de resistencia a megaproyectos o inversiones a gran escala, de los que algunos cuentan con participación de empresas europeas.

Considerando las decisiones del Parlamento Europeo en junio del 2010 en favor de los defensores de derechos humanos, las directrices sobre los defensores de los derechos humanos, el Marco estratégico de la UE sobre derechos humanos y democracia y su Plan de Acción:

¿Prevé el SEAE abordar este tema y la situación concreta de los defensores comunitarios en el Estado de Oaxaca en el próximo diálogo sobre derechos humanos entre la UE y México?

¿Qué medidas concretas está tomando la delegación de la UE en México para implementar las Directrices de la UE sobre defensores de derechos humanos en el caso de los defensores que acompañan procesos comunitarios de resistencia a megaproyectos o inversiones a gran escala?

Respuesta de la alta representante y vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(25 de noviembre de 2013)

La alta representante y vicepresidenta está al corriente de la situación de los defensores de los derechos humanos en México y especialmente en el estado de Oaxaca.

La alta representante y vicepresidenta se ha congratulado de la adopción de la Ley para la Protección de Personas Defensoras de Derechos Humanos y Periodistas y de la creación subsiguiente del Mecanismo de Protección para Personas Defensoras de Derechos Humanos y Periodistas, y está muy atenta a los efectos positivos de esta nueva normativa. Además, se propone supervisar y apoyar su aplicación a través de los cauces regulares de interacción con las autoridades mexicanas.

El diálogo de alto nivel entre la UE y México en materia de derechos humanos incluyó un cambio de impresiones sobre la situación de los defensores de los derechos humanos. El próximo diálogo está previsto a principios de 2014.

El plan de acción local por el que se aplican las Directrices de la UE sobre los defensores de los derechos humanos establece un marco de reuniones periódicas de la Delegación de la UE y las misiones de los Estados miembros con los defensores de los derechos humanos y de visitas sobre el terreno (incluida una visita a Oaxaca en 2011), además de plantear asuntos concretos ante el Gobierno Federal y los gobiernos locales.

La protección de los defensores de los derechos humanos es también una prioridad básica de la cooperación de la Delegación de la UE, tanto en el marco del futuro programa de cohesión social financiado por el Instrumento de Cooperación al Desarrollo (contribución global de la UE de 11 millones de euros) como en el del Instrumento Europeo para la Democracia y los Derechos Humanos (importe total de alrededor de un millón de euros).

Muchos Estados miembros han hecho referencia a la situación de los defensores de los derechos humanos en el reciente examen periódico universal de México (octubre de 2013) y han presentado propuestas concretas sobre la aplicación efectiva de los mecanismos de protección establecidos por las autoridades mexicanas. La UE está a la espera de la respuesta del Gobierno mexicano a las recomendaciones.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011337/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Dangerous situation of human rights defenders in Mexico

In 2010, the European Union Delegation and the Member States' embassies in Mexico adopted a local plan to implement EU guidelines on human rights defenders in the country. Since that year, Mexico and the European Union have had a Strategic Partnership that includes high-level dialogue on human rights. This dialogue will be held for the fifth time at the end of 2013, in Brussels.

Regarding specific cases of defenders at risk, according to the 2013 report on human rights defenders issued by the Office of the High Commissioner in Mexico, Oaxaca is once again the Mexican state where people defending human rights are most at risk. According to various civil society organisations, the situation in the state has deteriorated over recent months. The number of cases of assault and harassment against defenders has increased, and these are characterised by a high degree of impunity and inadequate implementation of protective measures. The situation is especially critical for human rights defenders involved in resistance movements against mega-projects and large-scale investments, some of which involve European companies.

In view of Parliament's decisions in June 2010 in favour of human rights defenders, the guidelines on human rights defenders, the EU's Strategic Framework for human rights and democracy and its Action Plan:

Does the European External Action Service intend to address this issue — and the specific situation of community advocates in the State of Oaxaca — in the next dialogue on human rights between the EU and Mexico?

What concrete steps is the EU delegation in Mexico taking to implement the EU guidelines on human rights defenders in the case of those involved in community resistance against mega-projects and large-scale investments?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(25 November 2013)

The HR/VP is aware of the situation of human rights defenders in Mexico and particularly in the state of Oaxaca.

The HR/VP has welcomed the adoption of the Human Rights Defenders and Journalists Protection Act and the subsequent establishment of a Human Rights Defenders and Journalists Protection Mechanism, and is following closely the positive impact this new legislative framework is expected to have. It intends to monitor and support the implementation through the regular channels of interaction with the Mexican authorities.

The EU-Mexico high-level dialogue on human rights has regularly included an exchange on the situation of Human Rights Defenders. The next dialogue is expected to take place in early 2014.

The local action plan implementing the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders provides a framework for the EU Delegation and Member States missions to meet regularly with Human Rights Defenders, carry out field visits (including a visit to Oaxaca in 2011), and raise individual cases with federal and local governments.

The protection of Human Rights Defenders is also a core priority of the EU Delegation's cooperation activities, both under the future social cohesion programme financed by the Development Cooperation Instrument (global EU contribution of EUR 11 million), and under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (total amount of circa EUR 1 million).

Many Member States referred to the situation of Human Rights Defenders in the recent Universal Periodic review of Mexico (October 2013). They made concrete proposals on the effective implementation of the protection mechanisms established by the Mexican authorities. The EU is looking forward to the response of the Mexican Government to the recommendations.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011340/13
an die Kommission
Ingeborg Gräßle (PPE)
(3. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Bahamas

Presseberichten zufolge hat das ehemalige Kommissionsmitglied John Dalli vom 7. bis 8. Juli 2012 und im August 2012 die Bahamas besucht.

1. Wann hat die Kommission Kenntnis von diesen Reisen erhalten?

2. Wie hat die Kommission davon erfahren?

3. Hat die Kommission Kenntnis darüber, wer an dem Treffen teilgenommen hat?

4. Wurde die Kommission über den Zweck der Reise unterrichtet?

5. Hat das Kommissionsmitglied versucht, die Reisekosten über EU-Haushaltsmittelabzurechnen?

6. Wann?

7. Wie lautete die damalige Reaktion der Kommission?

8. Hat die Kommission OLAF eingeschaltet?

9. Wann?

10. Was hat die Kommission unternommen, nachdem sie von dem Treffen erfahren hat?

11. Wann hat OLAF von der Reise erfahren?

12. Was hat OLAF unternommen, nachdem das Amt von dem Treffen erfahren hat?

13. Welche Rolle spielte die Reise auf die Bahamas bei der Bewertung der Kommission, nachdem die Beschwerde über angebliche Bestechung durch ein schwedisches Unternehmen bei ihr eingegangen ist?

Antwort von Herrn Šefčovič im Namen der Kommission
(20. Dezember 2013)

Fragen 1-2: Die Kommission wurde in einem Schreiben vom 1. Juli 2013, das Herr Dalli in Reaktion auf einen Presseartikel über diese Reise persönlich an die Mitglieder des Haushaltskontrollausschusses richtete, maßgeblich informiert.

Fragen 3-4-5: Nein.

Frage 6: Siehe Antwort auf Frage 5.

Fragen 7 und 10: Die Kommission hat Herrn Dalli um weitere Angaben ersucht und behält sich das Recht auf eine eingehendere Prüfung der Vereinbarkeit mit den Pflichten eines Kommissars (Artikel 245 Unterabsatz 2 AEUV) vor.

Fragen 8-9: OLAF wurde von der Kommission unterrichtet, bevor der ehemalige Kommissar um weitere Informationen ersucht wurde.

Fragen 11 und 12: Hier hat OLAF der Kommission mitgeteilt, dass es im November 2012, d. h. nach Abschluss seiner Untersuchung der von Swedish Match geäußerten Anschuldigungen, darüber informiert wurde, dass Herrn Dallis Familie ab dem 14. Juli 2012 für die Dauer eines Jahres eine Villa auf den Bahamas gemietet hatte. Da die Informationen über die gemietete Immobilie auf den Bahamas in keinem Zusammenhang mit der oben genannten Untersuchung des OLAF zu stehen schien, leitete OLAF diese Informationen im Dezember 2012 an die maltesische Polizei weiter. OLAF war zu diesem Zeitpunkt nicht über die Reise vom 7. und 8. Juli 2012 unterrichtet, über deren Einzelheiten am 1. Juli 2013 in den Medien berichtet wurde. OLAF prüft derzeit neue Elemente, die in diesen Medienberichten aufgetaucht sind.

13: Keine. Bei seiner Untersuchung der Anschuldigungen von Swedish Match hatte das OLAF keine Kenntnis von Herrn Dallis Reisen auf die Bahamas.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011340/13
to the Commission
Ingeborg Gräßle (PPE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Bahamas

According to press reports, former Commissioner John Dalli visited the Bahamas on 7-8 July 2012 and in August 2012.

1. When did the Commissioner's trip become known to the Commission?

2. How did the Commission become aware of it?

3. Was the Commission informed as to who participated in the meeting?

4. Was the Commission informed about the purpose of the trip?

5. Did the Commissioner try to charge the European budget for the costs of the trip?

6. When?

7. What was the Commission's reaction at that time?

8. Did the Commission call on OLAF?

9. When?

10. What did the Commission do after receiving information about the meeting?

11. When did OLAF become aware of the trip?

12. What did OLAF do after receiving information about the meeting?

13. What role did the trip to the Bahamas play in the Commission's assessment after it received the complaint of alleged bribery from a Swedish company?

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(20 December 2013)

1, 2. The Commission was authoritatively informed by a letter of Mr Dalli himself to the Members of the Committee on Budget Control dated 1st July 2013 reacting to a press article about this trip.

3, 4, 5. No

6. See answer to point 5

7, 10. The Commission requested further information from Mr Dalli and reserves its right to further assess the compatibility with the obligations of a Commissioner (Art 245.2 of TFEU).

8, 9. OLAF was informed by the Commission before requesting further information from the former Commissioner.

11, 12. For the purpose of answering this question, OLAF informed the Commission that, in November 2012, i.e. after the closure of the OLAF investigation into allegations from Swedish Match, it received information that Mr Dalli's family had rented a villa in Bahamas for a year from 14 July 2012 onwards. As the information about the Bahamas rental did not appear to be related to the aforementioned OLAF investigation, OLAF passed this information to the Maltese police in December 2012. At the time, OLAF was not aware of the trip of 7-8 July 2012, the details of which emerged in media on 1 July 2013. OLAF is currently looking into new elements that have surfaced in these media reports.

13. None. When carrying out its investigation into allegations from Swedish Match, OLAF did not know about Mr Dalli's trips to the Bahamas.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011342/13
to the Commission
Marina Yannakoudakis (ECR)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Rape and gender-based violence in Asia

It has come to my attention through recent UN research available via *The Lancet*'s global health blog that more than one in ten men surveyed in six Asian countries admit to having raped a woman who was not their partner.

Having a responsibility for gender equality and the protection of victims of gender-based violence, could the Commission please outline the steps that are being taken at EU level to change attitudes towards women in Asia and to end all forms of gender-based violence?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(19 November 2013)

Protection against gender-based violence/GBV is one of the priorities under the EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy adopted in 2012 and in the EU Guidelines on violence against women and girls. The EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development 2010-2015 contains commitments for all EU actors in terms of supporting developing countries' efforts to improve the situation of women. The EU and UN work closely on the implementation of the conclusions of the 57th UN Commission on the Status of Women on prevention and ending violence against women and girls.

EU projects have been developed in order to prevent violence; protect and support victims; prosecute perpetrators. Humanitarian aid projects often include assistance to survivors of GBV. Violence against women is raised in the framework of the Human Rights Dialogues or other political dialogues conducted by the EU with most of the countries mentioned in the question. Women's issues are also mainstreamed into the EU's development cooperation activities, e.g. education, health.

Amongst many concrete actions, in Bangladesh, Aceh and Cambodia, EU efforts have been also focused on access to justice so as to ensure that violence against women is punishable by law and that measures are taken to facilitate victims' access to justice. In the case of Papua New Guinea, combatting violence against women is at the top of EU Delegation actions. The recent Human Rights Dialogue with China offered the opportunity to raise the impact of the one-child policy, domestic violence and violence against sex workers. In Sri Lanka, the EU has been promoting mainstreaming gender across all programmes and offering support to specific actions aimed at combating GBV.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011343/13
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Drop in EU transport infrastructure investment

Public investment in transport infrastructure has, on average, been falling since the late 1970s across the EU. In 1975 investments in inland transport stood at 1.5% of GDP across the EU. By 2008, the level of such investments had fallen below 0.8% — a record low. Is the Commission concerned about this situation?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(19 November 2013)

The Commission shares the Honourable Member's concerns on the decrease of public investment in transport infrastructure in the EU.

In its proposals for the new TEN-T guidelines ([1]) and on the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) ([2]) the Commission noted that in the past decade infrastructure spending in the EU has been, on average, on a declining path. The Commission also felt that while this situation was partly due to the global economic downturn, the crisis has brought renewed interest in targeted infrastructure investments as an important part of stimulus recovery plans.

It is estimated that the completion of the TEN-T would require about EUR 500 billion by 2020, of which EUR 250 billion would be needed to complete missing links and remove bottlenecks in the core network.

While the national budgets are expected to play a major role in the financing of the required transport infrastructures, the EU budget will provide a significant contribution to ensure that EU infrastructure priorities are actually delivered. Under the upcoming 2014-2020 MFF, the transport component of the CEF will make available EUR 26.2 billion for projects of common interest, including EUR 11.3 billion transferred from the Cohesion Fund.

In order to optimise the impact of CEF funding the Commission will increase the recourse to financial instruments, building on the experience of e.g. the Europe 2020 Project Bond Initiative. Such instruments produce a multiplier effect in so far as they attract other public and private financing which leverage the EU and national contributions.

([1]) Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network, COM(2011)0650 final/3.
([2]) Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Connecting Europe Facility, COM(2011)0665 final/2.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011344/13
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Encouraging small businesses to use the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

The European Union finances projects through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), such as the Rural Tourism Business Support project in Scotland that aims to support creative marketing initiatives and enhance rural tourism business. Does the European Union monitor programmes linked to the ERDF? What does the EU do to encourage small businesses to take advantage of such initiatives?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(28 November 2013)

European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) programmes are implemented under the 'shared management' principle. All programmes are subject to monitoring by both the EU and the relevant Member State authorities in terms of financial performance and achievements of results. The participation of businesses, including small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), is part of this monitoring.

Encouraging businesses, including SMEs, to make use of available EU funding is done on many different levels by both the Commission and the managing authorities including publishing calls for proposals, dissemination of information, annual publicity events, sharing best practices, open day events etc.

The latest data reported by the Member States to the Commission indicate that, between 2007 and 2012, 198 000 direct investment projects to SMEs have been supported by the ERDF across the EU, 73 500 start-ups have been supported and 263 000 jobs have been created in SMEs.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011345/13
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: EU support to educate the public about domestic fire risks

On average over 5 000 people die in fires in the EU every year, with 80% of these fatalities occurring in the home. What initiatives does the EU support to educate the public about domestic fire risks?

Answer given by Mr Mimica on behalf of the Commission
(21 November 2013)

The Commission would like to inform the Honourable Member that domestic fire safety issues, including awareness campaigns about the usage of consumer products used at home for preventive or extinguishing purposes (e.g. smoke or carbon monoxide alarms, fire extinguishers, etc.), remain the competence of Member States.

At the same time, as part of the EU standardisation work, in early 2013 the Commission discussed with the Standing Committee under the Construction Products Regulation ([1]) a possible future harmonised European standard for self-standing battery operated carbon monoxide (CO) detectors. The Committee agreed that CO detectors should undergo third-party product certification, in order to ensure their good functioning. The revised standard EN 50291 containing this requirement as well as a requirement for an end-of-life indicator is expected to be delivered by CEN (European Committee for Standardisation) in 2015 at the latest.

([1]) Regulation (EU) No 305/2011. OJ L 88, 4.4.2011, p. 5.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011346/13
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: EU efforts to raise awareness of carbon monoxide poisoning

As winter approaches and heating systems are almost permanently switched on, the number of accidents caused by carbon monoxide poisoning increases. What is the EU doing to increase public awareness of this problem? Does the EU support the idea of every household owning a carbon monoxide alarm?

Answer given by Mr Mimica on behalf of the Commission
(20 November 2013)

There is no legislation at the EU level that would regulate the installation of carbon monoxide (CO) detectors. The competence to regulate the installation of such devices rests with the Member States, whose authorities are also responsible for informing the citizens of the dangers of CO leaks e.g. from household appliances. Information campaigns already exist in several Member States.

As regards EU standardisation work regarding CO detectors, in early 2013, the Commission discussed with the Standing Committee under the Construction Products Regulation ([1]) a possible future harmonised European standard for self-standing battery operated CO detectors. The Committee agreed that CO detectors should undergo third-party product certification, in order to ensure their good functioning. The revised standard EN 50291 containing this requirement as well as a requirement for an end-of-life indicator is expected to be delivered by CEN (European Committee for Standardisation) in 2015 at the latest.

The Commission would also like to refer the Honourable Member to its answers to written questions P-000023/2013 and E-10563/2012 ([2]).

([1]) Regulation (EU) No 305/2011, OJ L 88, 4.4.2011, p. 5.
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011347/13
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Introducing 4G capabilities in Scotland

What steps is the Commission taking to ensure the introduction of 4G capabilities in Scotland and across the EU in general?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(19 November 2013)

While mobile networks are rolled-out on a commercial basis, and in general mobile network coverage is at a good level in the Member States, the EU regulatory framework for electronic communications provides the necessary tools for actively supporting 4G roll-out. For example, the Radio Spectrum Policy Programme mandated the assignement of the 800 Mhz band so that it could be used across Europe for high speed mobile networks, particularly in rural areas.

Furthermore, the EU regulatory framework foresees the need to ensure sufficient network coverage, for instance by obligations with regard to network coverage and roll-out when granting rights of use for radio frequencies. This has happened in Germany, Sweden and France, when 4G frequencies were assigned.

There is no specific EU funding to ensure the introduction of 4G capabilities. However, Scotland (or at least certain areas in Scotland) may benefit from EU funding that is available for broadband roll-out through programmes co-financed by the EU structural funds. Funding can also be provided at national level, in line with EU state aid rules. For example, in December 2012 the Commission cleared the UK Government's Mobile Infrastructure Project (MIP). Under the MIP, the UK is providing up to GBP 150 million to improve mobile coverage in areas where coverage is poor or non-existent. The implementing authority in the UK for the MIP is the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

(Suomenkielinen versio)

Kirjallisesti vastattava kysymys E-011348/13
komissiolle
Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE)
(3. lokakuuta 2013)

Aihe: Eläinten hyvinvointi transatlanttista kauppa- ja investointikumppanuutta koskevissa neuvotteluissa

1. Komission kauppapolitiikan pääosasto isännöi 16. heinäkuuta 2013 kansalaisyhteiskunnan kanssa käytyä vuoropuhelua, johon osallistui yli 150 kansalaisyhteiskunnan edustajaa. Vastauksessaan esitettyyn kysymykseen varapääjohtaja sanoi, että neuvotteluissa keskusteltaisiin eläinten hyvinvoinnista. Onko komissiolla konkreettisia suunnitelmia sisällyttää eläinten hyvinvointi vapaakauppasopimusten ([1]) terveys- ja kasvinsuojelutoimia koskevaan lukuun vai pitääkö se parempana yhteisymmärryspöytäkirjan allekirjoittamista kuten äskettäin Brasilian kanssa?

2. Työllisyys-, sosiaali- ja osallisuusasioiden pääosasto ei ollut edustettuna edellä mainitussa kokouksessa. Kuuluuko kyseinen pääosasto EU:n neuvotteluryhmään?

3. Eläimiin sovellettava bioteknologia ja kasvua edistävien aineiden kaltaiset välineet ovat kiellettyjä EU:ssa mutta sallittuja Yhdysvalloissa. Niillä on huomattava merkitys eläinten terveydelle ja hyvinvoinnille, sydän- ja verisuonitaudit sekä tuki- ja liikuntaelimistön sairaudet mukaan luettuina. Kuinka EU:n neuvottelijat varmistavat, että transatlanttisen kauppa- ja investointikumppanuuden avulla ei helpoteta sellaisten tuotteiden pääsyä Yhdysvalloista EU:n markkinoille, jotka ovat peräisin kloonattua aineistoa ja kasvunedistäjiä käyttävistä tuotantojärjestelmistä?

4. Aikovatko EU:n neuvottelijat laatia sääntelyn lähentämisen vuoksi Yhdysvaltojen kanssa yhteisen strategian, jolla pyritään vähentämään mikrobilääkeresistenssiä (esimerkiksi lihassa) sekä minimoimaan eläinten terveyteen ja hyvinvointiin kohdistuvat haitalliset vaikutukset?

5. Työpaikkoja ja kasvua käsittelevä korkean tason työryhmä on suositellut transatlanttisille kumppaneille, että ne käsittelisivät kaupan ja kestävän kehityksen ympäristö- ja työnäkökohtia. Kuinka paljon tässä kysymyksessä on tapahtunut lähentymistä? Ovatko EU ja Yhdysvallat halukkaita sopimaan yhteisistä ympäristö- ja sosiaalialan vähimmäisvaatimuksista kaikkia tulevia kolmansien maiden kanssa tehtäviä kauppasopimuksia varten?

Karel De Guchtin komission puolesta antama vastaus
(22. marraskuuta 2013)

EU pyrkii käynnistämään eläinten hyvinvointia koskevan yhteistyön osapuolten välillä transatlanttisesta kauppa- ja investointikumppanuudesta (TTIP) käytävissä neuvotteluissa, kuten muissakin kolmansien maiden kanssa käytävissä kauppaneuvotteluissa. Komissio aikoo tutkia mahdollisuutta päästä asiasta sopimukseen Yhdysvaltojen kanssa. Neuvotteluosapuolet voivat päättää mahdollisen yhteistyön ehdoista myöhemmin.

Terveys- ja kuluttaja-asioista vastaava pääosasto on osa EU:n neuvotteluryhmää ja johtaa yhdessä kauppapolitiikasta vastaavan pääosaston kanssa TTIP-neuvotteluja terveys- ja kasvinsuojelutoimiin sekä eläinten hyvinvointiin liittyvistä kysymyksistä.

Komissio pyytää arvoisaa parlamentin jäsentä tutustumaan kysymykseen E-002504/2013 ([2]).

Sääntelyn lähentämisen yhteydessä EU:n neuvottelijat aikovat tutkia mahdollisuutta laatia yhteinen strategia kaikille terveys- ja kasvinsuojelutoimien alaan kuuluville kysymyksille. Yhdysvallat ja EU vaihtavat jo parhaita käytäntöjä ja kokemuksia näistä kysymyksistä mikrobilääkeresistenssiä käsittelevässä transatlanttisessa työryhmässä (TATFAR).

EU noudattaa johdonmukaista käytäntöä sisällyttäessään kauppaa ja kestävää kehitystä koskevia lukuja vapaakauppasopimuksiin. Näin se pyrkii varmistamaan, että kaupan kasvu tukee ympäristönsuojelua ja yhteiskunnallista kehitystä ja päinvastoin eikä kasvu tapahdu ympäristön tai työntekijöiden oikeuksien kustannuksella. EU aikoo ottaa tämän kysymyksen esiin meneillään olevissa neuvotteluissa Yhdysvaltojen kanssa, kuten komission alustavassa kannanotossa esitetään ([3]).

([1]) Esimerkiksi EU:n ja Chilen sekä EU:n ja Korean välinen vapaakauppasopimus.
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html?tabType=wq#sidesForm
([3]) http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2013/july/tradoc_151626.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011348/13
to the Commission
Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Animal welfare in TTIP negotiations

1. On 16 July 2013, DG Trade hosted a civil society dialogue which was attended by more than 150 participants representing civil society. In answer to a question posed, the EU Deputy Chief said that animal welfare would be discussed in the negotiations. Does the Commission have concrete plans to include animal welfare in the sanitary and physiosanitary measures (SPS) chapter of the Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) ([1]), or would it prefer to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU), such as the one recently signed with Brazil?

2. DG SANCO was not represented at the above meeting. Is DG SANCO part of the EU negotiators team?

3. Banned in the EU but authorised in the US, biotechnology applied to animals and tools such as growth promoters have a significant impact on the health and welfare of animals, including cardiovascular and musculoskeletal problems. How are EU negotiators ensuring that the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) will not facilitate access to the EU market for US products that have come from production systems using cloned material and growth promoters?

4. On the topic of regulatory convergence, are EU negotiators planning to develop a joint-strategy with the US to reduce levels of antimicrobial resistance (such as in the case of meat), while minimising any adverse impact on animal health and welfare?

5. The High Level Working Group on Jobs and Growth has recommended to transatlantic partners that they address 'environment and labour aspects' of trade and sustainable development. What is the level of convergence in this regard? Are the EU and the US willing to agree on a common minimum set of environmental and social requirements for all future trade deals with third countries?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(22 November 2013)

In the *Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership* (TTIP) negotiations, as in other trade negotations 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 USA on this issue and the Parties may decide at a later stage on the modalities of the possible cooperation.

Directorate General for Health and Consumer Affairs is part of the EU negotiatiors team and co-leads, with the Directorate General for Trade, TTIP negotiations on sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) matters including animal welfare issues.

The Commission would like to refer the Honourable member to Question E-002504/2013 ([2]).

In the framework of regulatory convergence EU negotiators will study possible ways of developing a joint strategy for all the matters falling under the SPS field. Under the transatlantic taskforce on antimicrobial resistance (TATFAR) initiative, US and EU are already exchanging best practices and experiences on the issue.

The EU has developed a consistent practice of including chapters on Trade and Sustainable Development in its Free Trade Agreements, aiming at ensuring that increased trade is mutually supporting environmental protection and social development, and does not come at the expense of the environment or of labour rights. The EU plans to address this issue under the current negotiations with the USA, as described by the initial position paper of the Commission ([3]).

([1]) Such as the EU-Chile FTA or EU-Korea FTA, for example.
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html?tabType=wq#sidesForm
([3]) http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2013/july/tradoc_151626.pdf

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011349/13
à la Commission
Christine De Veyrac (PPE)
(3 octobre 2013)

Objet: Menace de boycott sur la coupe d'Europe de rugby (H-Cup)

Le rugby est un sport qui devient de plus en plus populaire en Europe et qui est désormais suivi par un nombre considérable de nos concitoyens. À titre d'exemple, la dernière finale de la coupe d'Europe de rugby à quinze (*H-Cup*) a réuni 4 millions de téléspectateurs. Le suivi de la coupe d'Europe de rugby participe sans conteste au renforcement de l'identité européenne et à la création d'une culture sportive commune en Europe.

Néanmoins, cette compétition est actuellement menacée. En effet, les clubs anglais se disent prêts à ne pas participer à la coupe d'Europe 2014-2015 si un nouvel accord n'est pas trouvé tant sur la formule de la compétition que sur les droits télévisuels. Les clubs anglais et français réclament notamment une meilleure répartition des recettes entre le Top 14, la *Premiership* et la Ligue celte, ainsi que la réduction des équipes qualifiées de 24 à 20, avec une qualification obligatoire pour tous, la formule actuelle étant considérée comme favorisant les provinces celtes.

En cas d'échec des négociations, la menace de boycott des clubs anglais serait alors très probablement suivie par les clubs français, ce qui signerait l'acte de décès de la coupe d'Europe qui a mis tant d'années à conquérir un public et une si forte audience.

Aussi, la Commission a-t-elle l'intention d'apporter son soutien au maintien de cette compétition européenne, qui suscite un engouement commun chez ses citoyens, en demandant la poursuite des négociations entre les clubs anglais et français d'un côté, et les clubs celtes de l'autre, afin de trouver un accord qui assurerait la survie de la *H-Cup*?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Vassiliou au nom de la Commission
(15 novembre 2013)

La question soulevée par l'Honorable Parlementaire ne relève pas des compétences de la Commission.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011349/13
to the Commission
Christine De Veyrac (PPE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Threat to boycott the European rugby cup (Heineken Cup)

Rugby is an increasingly popular sport in Europe and now enjoys a large following among our fellow citizens. To give an example, the last final of the European rugby union cup (Heineken Cup) attracted a TV audience of 4 million. The European rugby cup's following undoubtedly helps strengthen the European identity and helps to create a common sporting culture in Europe.

Nevertheless, this competition is currently under threat. British clubs claim that they are prepared to boycott the 2014-2015 European cup if no new agreement can be found regarding the format of the competition and television rights. Specifically, British and French clubs are calling for revenues to be shared more equally between the Top 14, the Premiership and the Celtic League, and for the number of qualified teams to be reduced from 24 to 20, with compulsory qualification for all, as the current format is felt to favour the Celtic provinces.

Were talks to break down, the French clubs would most likely follow the British clubs' lead in threatening a boycott, sounding the death knell for the European cup, which has taken so many years to win over the public and attract such a large audience.

Does the Commission plan to support the continued existence of this European competition, which arouses a shared passion among its citizens, by calling for talks to continue between British and French clubs on the one hand, and Celtic clubs on the other, in order to reach an agreement to ensure the survival of the Heineken Cup.

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(15 November 2013)

The question raised by the Honourable Member falls outside of the scope of the responsibilities of the Commission.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011350/13
a la Comisión
Teresa Riera Madurell (S&D) y Andrés Perelló Rodríguez (S&D)
(3 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Incumplimiento de la legislación de la UE sobre renovables y reforma energética en España: peajes al autoconsumo

La Comisión está siguiendo con preocupación la evolución de la ley de reforma energética en España y las posibles incoherencias entre esta ley y la legislación de la UE en materia de energías renovables. Además de haber emitido recientemente un dictamen motivado contra España por no haber comunicado la plena transposición de la Directiva 2009/28/CE (que ya lleva un retraso de más de dos años), la Comisión ha expresado sus dudas sobre el peaje al autoconsumo que pretende imponer el Gobierno español y que haría inviable la opción energética de muchos ciudadanos que habían decidido producir su propia energía con paneles solares o molinos eólicos.

Con esta nueva política energética, en la que se enmarcan el peaje al autoconsumo y los recortes en las primas a la energía solar ([1]), el Gobierno no solo está dando la espalda a todos los esfuerzos anteriores que habían llevado a España a ser líder en energías renovables, sino que está poniendo en peligro incluso el cumplimiento de los objetivos que se habían marcado el país y toda la UE para 2020. Por otro lado, el Real Decreto que impone el mencionado peaje al autoconsumo podría suponer también una discriminación a las energías renovables si entran en vigor las medidas planteadas en el Proyecto de Ley del Sector Eléctrico, que se encuentra en tramitación, y que suponen eximir de los peajes a las instalaciones de cogeneración hasta el 2020. Ello constituiría una vulneración del principio de igualdad y un trato de favor a una tecnología determinada, al fomentar su uso en detrimento de las energías renovables o la biomasa sostenible. En este sentido, cabe recordar a la Comisión que, en su respuesta a la pregunta E-0090038/2013, el Comisario Oettinger afirmaba que, aunque el Derecho de la UE no incluye disposiciones sobre el autoconsumo en la aplicación de gravámenes, sí que existe una prohibición general de discriminar la electricidad procedente de fuentes de energía renovables a la hora de establecer las tarifas de transporte y distribución.

A juicio de la Comisión, ¿qué elementos debe contener la respuesta al dictamen enviado a España para evitar que el expediente abierto se traduzca en una posible denuncia ante el Tribunal de Justicia de la Unión Europea?

Teniendo en cuenta los hechos aquí descritos, ¿considera la Comisión que la aplicación de peajes al autoconsumo podría suponer algún tipo de incumplimiento adicional de la legislación de la UE?

Respuesta del Sr. Oettinger en nombre de la Comisión
(28 de noviembre de 2013)

1. La Comisión envió un dictamen motivado a España por no haberle comunicado la plena transposición de la Directiva sobre las energías renovables (Directiva 2009/28/CE). Los Estados miembros tenían que transponer esta Directiva antes del 5 de diciembre de 2010. Sin embargo, España todavía no ha comunicado a la Comisión todas las medidas de transposición necesarias para incorporar plenamente la Directiva a su legislación nacional. Si España no cumple su obligación jurídica en un plazo de dos meses, la Comisión podría tomar la decisión de llevar el caso ante el Tribunal de Justicia. Por tanto, la respuesta de las autoridades españolas deberá analizarse en este contexto. En esta fase del procedimiento, no hay otras quejas que añadir a la infracción. La Comisión no puede facilitar ninguna información adicional sobre procedimientos de infracción contra los Estados miembros que estén todavía en curso.

2. La Comisión remite a Sus Señorías a la respuesta dada a la pregunta escrita E-009038/2013 del señor Tremosa I Balcells.

([1]) Ref.: E-002527/2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011350/13
to the Commission
Teresa Riera Madurell (S&D) and Andrés Perelló Rodríguez (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Failure to comply with EU legislation on renewable energy and energy reform in Spain: tolls on own consumption

The Commission is monitoring with concern the progress of the energy reform law in Spain and possible inconsistencies between this law and EU legislation on renewable energy. As well as recently issuing a reasoned opinion against Spain for not having reported full transposition of Directive 2009/28/EC (already delayed for more than two years), the Commission has expressed doubts about the toll the Spanish Government is seeking to impose on own consumption. This toll would make the energy option chosen by many citizens — to produce their own energy with solar panels or wind turbines — unworkable.

With this new energy policy, which includes the toll on own consumption and cuts to solar energy premiums ([1]), the Government is not only turning its back on all previous efforts made by Spain to be a leader in renewable energy, but even jeopardises fulfilment of the goals Spain and the entire EU set themselves for 2020. Meanwhile, the Royal Decree that imposes this toll on own consumption could come to discriminate against renewable energy if the proposed measures in the draft law on the electricity industry, which is currently being examined, were to come into force, since these would exempt cogeneration facilities from the tolls until 2020. This would constitute a breach of the principle of equality and preferential treatment of a particular technology, by promoting its use to the detriment of renewable energy and sustainable biomass. In this regard, the Commission should remember that, in his reply to Question E-009038/2013, Commissioner Oettinger stated that although EC law did not include any provisions on own consumption when levying charges, there was a general prohibition on discriminating against electricity from renewable energy sources when setting transmission and distribution tariffs.

In the Commission's view, what points should be included in the response to the opinion sent to Spain in order to prevent the case now open from possibly leading to a complaint being lodged before the Court of Justice of the European Union?

In view of the facts above, does the Commission believe that the application of tolls on own consumption might constitute some form of additional breach of EU legislation?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(28 November 2013)

1. The Commission sent a reasoned opinion to Spain for not informing the Commission about the full transposition of the Renewables Directive (Directive 2009/28/EC). This directive had to be transposed by Member States by 5 December 2010. However, Spain had not informed the Commission of all the necessary transposition measures for fully transposing the directive into national legislation. If Spain does not comply with their legal obligation within two months, the Commission may decide to refer them to the Court of Justice. The reply of the Spanish authorities will have to be analysed in this context. At this stage of the procedure, no additional grievances can be added to the infringment. The Commission cannot give any further information on ongoing infringment procedures against Member States.

2. The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to the answer to written question E-009038/2013 by M. Tremosa i Balcells.

([1]) Ref.: E-002527/2012.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011351/13
à la Commission
Bernadette Vergnaud (S&D)
(3 octobre 2013)

Objet: Acte sur l'accessibilité

En 2003, l'Année européenne des personnes handicapées a permis de mettre en avant les discriminations dont souffrent les personnes handicapées et d'inciter les États membres à se mobiliser. À ce titre, l'Union européenne a lancé un plan d'action intitulé «Égalité des chances pour les personnes handicapées» pour la période 2003-2010, l'objectif étant de veiller à l'intégration des questions relatives au handicap dans toutes les politiques de l'Union européenne avec un impact potentiel sur la vie des personnes handicapées.

À l'issue de cette échéance, la Commission a renouvelé son engagement à travers une stratégie sur dix ans qui encourage l'égalité des chances pour les personnes en situation de handicap, la «stratégie handicap 2010-2020», qui couvre de nombreux domaines.

En 2011, le président de la Commission José Manuel Barroso s'est engagé à garantir le suivi adéquat de la Convention des Nations unies relative aux droits des personnes handicapées (CNUDPH) au sein de la Commission européenne, convention ratifiée par l'Union européenne en 2011.

La commissaire européenne chargée de la justice et des droits fondamentaux, Viviane Reding, a déclaré à cette période qu'avant la fin de l'année 2012 des propositions en faveur des travailleurs handicapés seraient présentées, portant sur l'emploi rémunéré sur le marché du travail ordinaire, l'évolution de carrière, et apportant également le soutien de l'Union aux actions volontaires des entreprises («Acte sur l'accessibilité»).

À ce jour, la Commission n'a pas présenté de projet d'acte.

Parallèlement, et à plusieurs reprises, le Parlement européen a exprimé sa volonté d'obtenir de la Commission un texte fort, ambitieux, et contraignant (résolution adoptée fin 2011 sur la stratégie handicap 2010-2020, notamment).

La Commission envisage-t-elle de présenter une proposition d'ici la fin de la législature actuelle du Parlement?

Cet «Acte pour l'accessibilité» prendra-t-il bien la forme contraignante d'un règlement ou d'une directive?

Les personnes en situation de handicap mental seront-elles intégrées aux nouvelles propositions?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Reding au nom de la Commission
(20 novembre 2013)

La Commission veille à mettre en œuvre les obligations qu'elle a assumées. Elle a donc réalisé des travaux préparatoires pour évaluer l'impact des mesures d'amélioration de l'accessibilité des biens et services dans le marché intérieur susceptibles d'être prises.

Pour une meilleure information du processus, la Commission a programmé pour décembre 2013 une réunion de haut niveau avec un certain nombre de dirigeants d'entreprises opérant dans des domaines clés de l'accessibilité comme l'environnement urbain, les transports et les technologies de l'information et de la communication.

Les conclusions de cette réunion enrichiront les travaux complémentaires des services de la Commission, ce qui permettra l'identification des mesures les plus aptes à améliorer l'accessibilité des biens et des services dans l'Union européenne. L'objectif consiste à présenter une proposition de mesures contraignantes qui amélioreraient à la fois l'accessibilité et le potentiel de croissance pour les entreprises de l'UE.

En droite ligne de la stratégie européenne en faveur des personnes handicapées 2010-2020 et de la convention des Nations unies relative aux droits des personnes handicapées, la Commission veille à promouvoir une approche de «conception universelle», pour tous, dans ses initiatives pertinentes traitant de la conception, de la fabrication et de la fourniture de biens et de services dans le marché intérieur. Cette approche s'efforce de prendre également en compte les besoins des personnes souffrant de handicaps mentaux.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011351/13
to the Commission
Bernadette Vergnaud (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Accessibility Act

In 2003, the European Year of People with Disabilities highlighted the discrimination suffered by disabled people and encouraged the Member States to take action. In this regard, the European Union launched an action plan entitled 'Equal opportunities for people with disabilities' for the period 2003-2010, with the aim of ensuring disability issues would be taken into consideration in all EU policies with a potential impact on disabled people's lives.

When that period expired, the Commission renewed its commitment through a 10-year strategy to encourage equal opportunities for disabled people, the Disability Strategy 2010-2020, covering a range of matters.

In 2011, the President of the Commission, José Manuel Barroso, undertook to ensure that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), ratified by the European Union in 2011, would be duly followed up within the Commission.

At that time, the European Commissioner for Justice and Fundamental Rights, Viviane Reding, said that provisions in favour of disabled workers would be tabled before 2012, with regard to paid employment on the open labour market, career development, as well as EU support for voluntary action by companies (Accessibility Act).

To date, the Commission has not tabled any draft act.

At the same time, Parliament has repeatedly expressed its desire for the Commission to come forward with a robust, ambitious and binding text (including in the resolution adopted in late 2011 on the Disability Strategy 2010-2020).

Does the Commission plan to table a proposal by the end of the current parliamentary term?

Will this 'Accessibility Act' take the form of a binding regulation or directive?

Will mentally disabled people be included in the new proposals?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(20 November 2013)

The Commission is committed to implement the obligations it has assumed. Therefore it has carried out preparatory work to assess the impact of possible measures to improve the accessibility of goods and services in the internal market.

In order to further inform the process, a high level meeting is planned for December 2013 with the Commission and a number of CEOs of companies active in key areas for accessibility: the built environment, transport, and information and communication technologies.

The conclusions of this meeting will complement the complementary work of the Commission services and will allow the identification of the most appropriate measures for improving the accessibility of goods and services in the European Union. The objective is to present a proposal for binding measures that would combine both improvement of accessibility and growth potential for EU companies.

In line with the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Commission promotes a 'Design for All'/Universal Design approach in its relevant initiatives dealing with the designing, manufacturing and provision of good and services in the internal market. Such an approach is intended to take also the needs of persons with mental disabilities into account.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011352/13
alla Commissione
Silvia Costa (S&D) e Luigi Berlinguer (S&D)
(3 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Accessibilità dei libri per le persone con difficoltà di lettura

L'azione 65 del VI pilastro dell'Agenda digitale per l'Europa ha l'obiettivo di aiutare le persone disabili ad accedere a contenuti, in particolare libri e altre pubblicazioni. Diverse iniziative, tra cui la LIA (libri italiani accessibili), hanno portato alla creazione di un'infrastruttura atta a facilitare questo processo, dimostrando chiaramente i benefici di un simile approccio. Molte organizzazioni dei disabili visivi hanno dichiarato il loro interesse a replicare l'esperienza italiana. Queste iniziative necessitano però di estendere il loro ambito territoriale e affrontare tematiche irrisolte quali l'accessibilità dei libri dalla struttura complessa e i bisogni di altre categorie con difficoltà di lettura. Questo genere di esperienze ha tuttavia bisogno di essere incoraggiato e sostenuto.

Quali piani ha la Commissione per contribuire ulteriormente al raggiungimento di questi obiettivi?

Pensa di dover dare priorità agli obiettivi di cui sopra nei bandi relativi ai programmi di finanziamento che verranno aperti nell'immediato futuro?

Concorda sull'importanza di rendere prioritarie le iniziative dell'Agenda digitale volte ad accrescere l'accessibilità dei libri rispetto alle altre?

Risposta di Neelie Kroes a nome della Commissione
(21 novembre 2013)

La Commissione si compiace per l'interesse mostrato dall'onorevole parlamentare nei confronti del lavoro della Commissione in materia di accessibilità dei libri e concorda sull'importanza della questione. La Commissione è impegnata a garantire la piena partecipazione delle persone con disabilità alla società dell'informazione, in particolare facilitando l'accesso a contenuti digitali.

La normalizzazione offre soluzioni in tal senso. La Commissione europea segue le attività di normalizzazione condotte a livello internazionale sulla portabilità e l'interoperabilità dei libri digitali, ovvero la norma ISO/IEC DTS 30135-1 a 30135-7.

Un problema di fondo è rappresentato dal trasferimento transfrontaliero di libri in formato accessibile all'interno dell'UE. Per risolvere la questione, nel 2010 è stato firmato un memorandum d'intesa sulla circolazione transfrontaliera di libri accessibili per le persone con difficoltà nella lettura di testi a stampa. Il memorandum ha l'obiettivo di garantire che i contenuti pubblicati in un formato accessibile in regime d'eccezione al diritto d'autore nazionale o dietro autorizzazione in uno Stato membro siano legalmente disponibili in tutti gli Stati membri. La scorsa estate la Commissione ha inoltre accolto con favore l'adozione del trattato di Marrakech volto a facilitare l'accesso alle opere pubblicate per le persone non vedenti, ipovedenti o con altre difficoltà nella lettura di testi a stampa ([1]).

Per quanto riguarda i programmi di finanziamento, la Commissione continua a sostenere progetti di ricerca su vasta scala sull'accessibilità dei contenuti online e delle tecnologie dell'informazione e della comunicazione in generale ([2]).

([1]) http://www.wipo.int/meetings/en/doc_details.jsp?doc_id=245323

([2]) Ad esempio il progetto Cloud4all fornisce alle persone con disabilità un accesso istantaneo e personalizzato a tutte le tecnologie dell'informazione e della comunicazione, http://cloud4all.info/

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011352/13
to the Commission
Silvia Costa (S&D) and Luigi Berlinguer (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Accessibility of books for people with reading difficulties

Action 65 of the Digital Agenda for Europe's sixth action area is aimed at helping disabled people to access content, in particular books and other publications. Various initiatives, including the Accessible Italian Books (LIA — libri italiani accessibili) initiatives, have begun creating an infrastructure that facilitates this process and clearly demonstrates the benefits of such approaches. Many organisations for visually impaired people have expressed an interest in replicating what has been done in Italy. The geographical reach of these initiatives needs to be widened and they need to address unresolved issues such as accessibility of structurally complex books and the needs of other groups with reading difficulties. However, this type of project should be encouraged and supported.

What plans does the Commission have to further contribute to achieving these goals?

Does the Commission think it should give priority to the abovementioned goals in the invitations to tender that will be sent out in the near future in the context of the funding programmes?

Does the Commission agree on the importance of making Digital Agenda initiatives aimed at increasing accessibility of books a priority in relation to other initiatives?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(21 November 2013)

The Commission welcomes the Honourable Member's interest in relation with the Commission's work on the accessibility of books and agrees with the importance of the issue. The Commission is committed to ensure that persons with disabilities are able to fully participate in the information society, in particular by having access to digital material.

Standardisation is a solution offered. The European Commission is following the ongoing international standardisation activities on the portability and interoperability of eBooks, namely standard ISO/IEC DTS 30135-1 through 30135-7.

One underlying problem is the cross-border transfer of accessible format books in the EU. To tackle this, in 2010 a Memorandum of Understanding was signed on the cross-border circulation of accessible books for people with print disabilities. It aims to ensure that copyrighted and licensed material edited in accessible format under national copyright exceptions or licenses in one Member State is legally available in all Member States. Also, last summer the Commission welcomed the adoption of the Marrakech Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled ([1]).

In terms of funding programmes, the Commission has been supporting large-scale research projects addressing the accessibility of online content and ICT in general ([2]).

([1]) http://www.wipo.int/meetings/en/doc_details.jsp?doc_id=245323

([2]) E.g. Cloud4All which provides instant and personalised access to all information and communication technologies for people with any disability, http://cloud4all.info/

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011353/13
alla Commissione
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(3 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Liquidità del dollaro e riserve auree

Forse non basta creare liquidità per vincere la crisi e rilanciare l'economia. La Federal Reserve, tuttavia, ha deciso di continuare ad immettere nuova liquidità nel sistema finanziario (85 miliardi di dollari al mese per comperare nuovi titoli del Tesoro e derivati ABS asset-backed-security). Questa politica continuerà fino a quando il tasso di disoccupazione negli Usa non scenderà sotto il 6,5 %. Si spera che ciò avvenga entro la fine del 2014, ragion per cui nel frattempo i mercati internazionali saranno invasi da 1 500 miliardi di nuovi dollari. Non tutti concordano sugli eventuali effetti benefici di questa invasione di dollari, mentre la Banca dei regolamenti internazionali ha sollevato forti dubbi e denunciato le conseguenze nefaste nelle economie emergenti, criticando, tra l'altro, l'impennata degli interessi obbligazionari. In questa situazione instabile è cresciuta l'immissione di bond e di prestiti nei settori finanziari più esposti e rischiosi, come accadde alla vigilia dell'esplosione della crisi finanziaria sistemica.

Le politiche monetarie dei paesi Brics ed emergenti tendono, invece, ad aumentare le proprie riserve auree, comprando quantitativi di oro di grande rilevanza, sapendo che il dollaro diventa ogni giorno più debole e instabile proprio per la continua immissione di liquidità sui mercati

1. Ritiene, la Commissione che in tempi più o meno brevi si arrivi già al famoso paniere di monete e di oro proposto dai Brics in sostituzione del dollaro?

2. Ha un'opinione sulla diffusa liquidità e sulle sue eventuali conseguenze per l'economia europea?

3. Ritiene plausibile l'ipotesi del paniere proposto dai Brics?

4. Cosa prevede in ogni caso per la tenuta dell'euro?

Risposta di Olli Rehn a nome della Commissione
(19 novembre 2013)

1.+3. L'uso di una moneta a livello internazionale è condizionato dal mercato. La concretizzazione della proposta dei paesi BRIC dipenderà dallo sviluppo delle grandi economie negli anni a venire e, per i paesi BRIC, dallo spessore e dalla liquidità dei loro mercati finanziari.

2. In un quadro di mobilità dei capitali (conto capitale e finanziario aperto) le condizioni di liquidità nelle grandi economie possono avere effetti di ricaduta globali. A questo proposito la Commissione ricorda il rinnovato impegno dei leader del G20 a cooperare per garantire che le politiche a favore della crescita interna sostengano anche la crescita e la stabilità finanziaria globali nonché a gestirne le ricadute su altri paesi.

4. Commissione è convinta l'euro emergerà rafforzato dalla crisi, rispecchiando il consolidamento dei fondamentali nell'economia della zona euro dovuto alla correzione degli squilibri esterni e di bilancio, alle riforme strutturali degli Stati membri e alle riforme della governance a livello di zona euro (e a livello di UE).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011353/13
to the Commission
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Liquidity of the dollar and gold reserves

Creating liquidity may not be enough to overcome the economic crisis and revitalise our economies. However, the Federal Reserve has decided to continue injecting further liquidity into the financial system (USD 85 billion per month to buy new treasury bonds and asset backed securities). This policy will continue until the unemployment rate in the US falls below 6.5%. It is to be hoped that this happens before the end of 2014, as meanwhile the international markets will be flooded with 1 500 billion new US dollars. Not everyone agrees on the supposed positive impact of this invasion of dollars, while the Bank for International Settlements has raised strong doubts and warned of negative repercussions for the emerging economies, criticising among other things the sharp rise in interest rates on the bonds. In this unstable situation, bond issues and loans have increased in the most exposed and most risky financial sectors, as they did in the lead-up to the financial crisis.

Current monetary policy in the BRIC and emerging countries, on the other hand, tends to favour increasing their own gold reserves, by buying very significant quantities of gold, in the knowledge that the dollar is becoming weaker and more unstable by the day as a result of this continuous injection of liquidity into the markets.

1. Does the Commission think that sooner or later the much-discussed basket of currencies and gold proposed by the BRIC countries to replace the dollar will become a reality?

2. Does the Commission have an opinion about this excess liquidity and the impact it may have on Europe's economy?

3. Does it think that the basket of currencies proposed by the BRIC countries would be feasible?

4. Whatever eventuates, does the Commission think that the euro will hold its own?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(19 November 2013)

1+3. The international use of a currency is a market-driven process. Whether the BRIC countries' proposal will materialise depends on how major economies develop in the years to come, and, in the case of the BRIC countries, on the depth and liquidity of their financial markets.

2. In a context of open capital and financial accounts, liquidity conditions in major economies may have global spillover effects. In this regard, the Commission recalls the G20 Leaders' reaffirmation to cooperate to ensure that policies implemented to support domestic growth also support global growth and financial stability and to manage their spillovers on other countries.

4. The Commission is confident that the euro is emerging from the crisis reinforced, reflecting the improving fundamentals in the euro area economy stemming from the correction of fiscal and external imbalances and structural reforms in Member States, as well as the governance reforms at euro-area (and EU) level.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-011354/13
aan de Commissie
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(3 oktober 2013)

Betreft: Status oorlogsmisdadigers

Implementatie van Richtlijn 2011/51/EU leidt tot uitbreiding van de werkingssfeer van Richtlijn 2003/109/EG tot personen die internationale bescherming genieten. Dit houdt in dat degene die vijf jaar legaal in de EU verblijft voor de rest van zijn of haar leven de status „langdurig EU ingezetene" krijgt. Met de uitbreiding van de werkingssfeer krijgen nu ook de „personen die internationale bescherming genieten" deze status. Dit zijn erkende asielzoekers, maar ook vreemdelingen die gegronde redenen hebben om aan te nemen dat zij bij uitzetting een reële kans hebben te worden onderworpen aan executie, foltering of onmenselijke of vernederende behandeling.

Met deze uitbreiding van Richtlijn 2003/1009/EG vallen er nu ook voormalige oorlogsmisdadigers onder. Dezen genieten internationale bescherming tegen uitzetting en krijgen na een periode van vijf jaar de status van langdurige EU ingezetene. Dit houdt in dat de EU oorlogsmisdadigers, folteraars en/of beulen van verdreven regimes praktisch met open armen verwelkomt.

1. Is de uitbreiding van de werkingssfeer van Richtlijn 2003/109/EG tot voormalige oorlogsmisdadigers, moordenaars en/of beulen een bedoeld effect van richtlijn 2011/51/EU?

2. Zo ja, wat is de overweging van de Commissie geweest om deze oorlogsmisdadigers, moordenaars en/of beulen te „belonen" met de status van langdurig EU ingezetene?

3. Zo neen, welke stappen overweegt de Commissie te nemen om dit niet bedoelde effect van richtlijn 2011/51/EU teniet te doen?

Antwoord van mevrouw Malmström namens de Commissie
(19 november 2013)

Richtlijn 2011/51/EU breidde de werkingssfeer van Richtlijn 2003/109/EG uit om personen die internationale bescherming genieten onder bepaalde voorwaarden langdurig ingezetenen te laten worden, met name na langdurig en ononderbroken verblijf van 5 jaar in de lidstaat die de bescherming verleent. De wijziging is gericht op de bevordering van de integratie van personen die internationale bescherming genieten en hun mobiliteit binnen de EU.

Het is in de eerste plaats de verantwoordelijkheid van de bevoegde nationale autoriteiten om internationale bescherming te verlenen in individuele gevallen, op basis van de gemeenschappelijke criteria die zijn vastgesteld in Richtlijn 2004/83/EG inzake de erkenning van onderdanen van derde landen en staatlozen als vluchteling of persoon die anderszins internationale bescherming behoeft, omdat zij vervolging of ernstige schade in hun land van oorsprong vrezen, onder meer wegens extreem geweld bij gewapende conflicten. Richtlijn 2004/83/EG bepaalt verder dat een persoon van een internationale-beschermingsstatus wordt uitgesloten wanneer er ernstige redenen zijn om aan te nemen dat hij ernstige misdrijven heeft gepleegd, zoals terroristische daden, of zich schuldig heeft gemaakt aan handelingen die strijdig zijn met de doelstellingen en beginselen van de Verenigde Naties. De verantwoordelijkheid om te onderzoeken of een bepaalde persoon moet worden uitgesloten van internationale bescherming, berust volledig bij de lidstaten, overeenkomstig hun internationale verplichtingen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011354/13
to the Commission
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Status of war criminals

Implementation of Directive 2011/51/EU leads to the extension of the scope of Directive 2003/109/EC to beneficiaries of international protection. This means that anyone who has been living in the EU legally for five years acquires 'long-term EU resident' status for the rest of his or her life. Following extension of the scope of the directive, 'beneficiaries of international protection' also now acquire this status. They include recognised asylum-seekers, but also foreign migrants who have good reason to presume that, if deported, they run a real risk of facing execution, torture or inhuman or degrading treatment.

Following the extension of Directive 2003/109/EC, former war criminals are now also covered. They enjoy international protection from deportation and obtain EU long-term resident status after a period of five years. This means that the EU is welcoming war criminals, torturers and/or executioners from ousted regimes, practically with open arms.

1. Is the extension of the scope of Directive 2003/109/EC to former war criminals, murderers and/or executioners an intended effect of Directive 2011/51/EU?

2. If so, what was the Commission's thinking behind 'rewarding' such war criminals, murderers and/or executioners with EU long-term resident status?

3. If not, what steps does the Commission intend to take to reverse this unintended effect of Directive 2011/51/EU?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(19 November 2013)

Directive 2011/51/EU extended the scope of Directive 2003/109/EC to allow beneficiaries of international protection to become long term residents under certain conditions, in particular after 5 years of legal and continuous residence in the Member State that granted the protection. The amendment aims at facilitating the integration of beneficiaries of international protection as well as their mobility in the EU.

It is the primary responsibility of the competent national authorities to grant international protection in individual cases, on the basis of the common criteria set out in Directive 2004/83/EC on the qualification and status of third-country nationals or stateless persons as refugees or as persons who otherwise need international protection because they fear persecution or serious harm in their country of origin, including due to situations of extreme violence in cases of armed conflict. Directive 2004/83/EC further provides that a person is excluded from international protection status when there are serious reasons for considering that he has committed serious crimes such as terrorist acts or has been guilty of acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations. The responsibility for the examination of whether a specific person is excluded from international protection rests entirely with the Member States, in line with their international obligations.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-011355/13
aan de Commissie
Philippe De Backer (ALDE)
(3 oktober 2013)

Betreft: Multimodaal transport en de sluiting van een spoorterminal in de haven van Antwerpen

In de Belgische media verschenen onlangs berichten dat spoorvervoerder IFB, een dochteronderneming van NMBS Logistics, zijn Mainhub in de Antwerpse haven op 7 oktober zal sluiten. Deze hub is de grootste containerspoorterminal van de haven.

De federale regering gaf tot 30 juni een toelage voor intermodaal transport, per behandelde container, maar is daar nu mee gestopt. Die stopzetting leidt tot hogere prijzen, wat leidde tot het verplaatsen van de goederenstoom naar wegtransporteurs of andere havens zoals Rotterdam en dus de uiteindelijke sluiting van de hub. Naar schatting leidt dit tot 400 extra vrachtwagens per werkdag.

De Duitse overheid steunt de bouw van spoorterminals voor 80 %, waardoor het laden en lossen van de container er de helft goedkoper is. In Frankrijk gaat het om een derde van de kosten dat wordt terugbetaald en in Zwitserland geeft men een forfait per trein.

Vandaar volgende vragen aan de Commissie:

1. Is de Commissie van mening dat de verschillende regimes van steun in de lidstaten verenigbaar zijn met het Verdrag? Plant de Commissie een onderzoek naar die steunregimes in de verschillende lidstaten, om na te gaan of er geen verstoring van de mededinging is tussen de lidstaten?

2. Kan de Commissie een overzicht geven van de verschillende steunmaatregelen die gelden in de lidstaten?

3. Kan de Commissie een overzicht geven van het effect dat deze steunregimes hebben op het teweegbrengen van een modal shift?

4. Plant de Commissie nog initiatieven om lidstaten aan te zetten om multimodaal transport verder te ondersteunen? Multimodaliteit, en het verminderen van het aantal vrachtwagens op de weg is toch één van de absolute doelstellingen in het kader van meer duurzaam transport?

Antwoord van de heer Almunia namens de Commissie
(28 november 2013)

Overheidssteun voor intermodaal vervoer en intermodale terminals moet door de Commissie worden goedgekeurd voordat de lidstaten de steun kunnen toekennen. Om na te gaan of deze steun met de interne markt verenigbaar is, beoordeelt de Commissie de aangemelde maatregel in de licht van de desbetreffende artikelen van het Verdrag en van haar beschikkingspraktijk. Iedere steunmaatregel kan mogelijk de mededinging tussen ondernemingen die in verschillende lidstaten zijn gevestigd, verstoren. De Commissie onderzoekt echter ook of de verstoring van de mededinging strijdig is met het gemeenschappelijk belang van de ontwikkeling van intermodaal vervoer waarbij het vrachtvervoer minder over de weg en meer over het spoor en de binnenwateren verloopt. De Commissie beoordeelt ook de gevolgen van de steun, in het bijzonder de vraag of redelijkerwijs kan worden verwacht dat de verschuiving van vervoer over de weg naar vervoer over het spoor en de binnenwateren groter zal zijn dan de verschuiving van de bestaande naar de ondersteunde hubs. Ook onderzoekt de Commissie of de steun noodzakelijk en evenredig is voor het streven naar een modal shift.

Sinds 2008 heeft de Commissie 19 maatregelen goedgekeurd ten gunste van intermodaal vervoer (zie bijlage).

De Commissie beschikt niet over gegevens inzake het effect van deze maatregelen op de modal shift. In haar Witboek over transport van 2011 ([1]) heeft de Commissie voorgesteld de multimodale logistieke ketens te optimaliseren door vaker energie-efficiëntere vervoerswijzen te gebruiken. De toekomstige verordeningen over TEN-V en CEF ([2]) zullen financiële middelen bevatten voor de verbindingen met en de ontwikkeling van multimodale logistieke platforms en havens. De overschakeling van vrachtvervoer over de weg naar andere vervoerswijzen moet worden afgewogen tegen de negatieve gevolgen van de verstoring van de mededinging.

([1]) „Stappenplan voor een interne Europese vervoersruimte — werken aan een concurrerend en zuinig vervoerssysteem" COM(2011) 144 definitief.
([2]) EU-richtsnoeren voor de ontwikkeling van het trans-Europees vervoersnet en de Connecting Europe Facility, COM(2011) 650 definitief en COM(2011) 665 definitief.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011355/13
to the Commission
Philippe De Backer (ALDE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Multimodal transport and the closure of a rail terminal in the Port of Antwerp

According to recent reports in the Belgian media, rail carrier IFB, a subsidiary of SNCB Logistics [a rail freight company privatised from the freight division of SNCB — the Belgian national rail operator], is set to close its Main Hub terminal in the Port of Antwerp on 7 October. This hub is the port's largest container rail terminal.

Up until 30 June the Belgian Federal Government subsidised intermodal transport per container handled, but this practice has now stopped. Prices rose as a result, causing goods flow to switch to road haulage companies or other ports, such as Rotterdam, and leading to the eventual closure of the hub. This is estimated to have put an extra 400 lorries on the road each weekday.

The German authorities fund 80% of the construction costs for rail terminals, and as a result loading and unloading containers there costs half the price. In France a third of the costs are refunded and in Switzerland a fixed sum is provided for each train.

Consequently I have the following questions for the Commission:

1. Does the Commission feel that the various support mechanisms in the Member States are compatible with the Treaty? Is the Commission planning to look into the support mechanisms in the various Member States, to ascertain whether or not they amount to distortion of competition between the Member States?

2. Can the Commission provide an overview of the various support measures in force in the Member States?

3. Can the Commission provide an overview of the impact these support measures are having on bringing about a modal shift?

4. Is the Commission planning further initiatives to encourage the Member States to continue supporting multimodal transport? Does multimodality and the reduction of the number of lorries on the road remain one of the absolute targets in the framework of a more sustainable transport system?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(28 November 2013)

State aid to intermodal transport and intermodal terminals must be approved by the Commission before the Member States can grant the aid. In order to ascertain whether such aid is compatibile with the internal market, the Comission assesses the notified measure under the relevant Treaty articles and in the light of its decision-making practice. Every state aid measure can at least potentially distort competition between undertakings located in different Member States. The Commission, however, assesses whether the distortion of competition is contrary to the common interest of developing intermodal transport and shifting cargo from road to rail and inland waterway. Within this assessment, the Commission looks into the effect of the aid, in particular whether it can be reasonably expected that more trafic will be attracted from road to rail and inland waterway than from the existing hubs to the supported hubs. The Commission also examines whether the aid is necessary and proportionate to achieve the objective of bringing about a modal shift.

Since 2008, the Commission has approved 19 measures in favour of intermodal transport (see annex).

The Commission is not in possession of data on the impact of these measures on modal shift. In its White Paper on Tranport of 2011 ([1]), the Commission proposed optimising multimodal logistic chains by making greater use of more energy-efficient modes. The upcoming Regulations on TEN-T and CEF ([2]), will provide funding for connections to and development of multimodal logistics platforms and ports. The shift of freight from road to other transport modes needs to be weighed against the negative effects of distortion of competition.

([1]) 'Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area — Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system'; COM(2011) 144 final.
([2]) Union Guidelines for the Development of the Trans-European Transport Network and the Connecting Europe Facility COM(2011) 650 final and COM(2011) 665 final.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-011356/13
alla Commissione
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(4 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Possibili condotte fraudolente nella commercializzazione dei cosiddetti «wine kit»

Secondo quanto denunciato da un'inchiesta della trasmissione televisiva «Striscia la Notizia» ([1]), andata in onda lo scorso 30 settembre su una rete italiana, in Inghilterra continuerebbe la contraffazione di vini di qualità con storpiature dei loro nomi originali.

I cosiddetti «wine kit» sono dei preparati solubili in acqua che vengono venduti come prodotti tradizionali tra cui alcuni vini a denominazione di origine protetta e indicazione geografica protetta, come ad esempio:

il Valpolicella che diventa «Vinocella»;

il Barolo che diventa «Barolla»;

il Brunello di «Montalcino» che diventa «Montecino»;

il Chianti che diventa «Cantia».

L'Interpol ne ha bloccato la commercializzazione nel Regno Unito.

Il regolamento (CE) n.607/2009 della Commissione del 14 luglio 2009 recante modalità di applicazione del regolamento (CE) n. 479/2008 del Consiglio per quanto riguarda le denominazioni di origine protette e le indicazioni geografiche protette, le menzioni tradizionali, l'etichettatura e la presentazione di determinati prodotti vitivinicoli ha di fatto impedito la commercializzazione dei predetti prodotti.

Orbene, il regolamento di cui sopra parrebbe essere stato raggirato, in particolare l'articolo 42, in quanto sarebbero stati reimmessi sul mercato gli stessi vini, caratterizzati soltanto da una diversa denominazione, foneticamente molto simile ad altri vini più noti.

Quali misure intende prendere la Commissione per assicurare la necessaria tutela nei confronti delle produzioni di eccellenza minacciate da prodotti contraffatti?

Intende sensibilizzare gli Stati membri per affrontare al meglio la problematica evidenziata, applicando maggiori controlli per la tutela dei prodotti DOP e IGP?

Risposta di Dacian Cioloș a nome della Commissione
(28 ottobre 2013)

Come già indicato nella risposta all'interrogazione scritta E-001290/2013 ([2]), gli Stati membri sono a conoscenza dell'esistenza di pratiche illegali reltive all'etichettatura dei kit di fabbricazione di vini falsi in polvere.

Alla Commissione non risulta che gli Stati membri non adottino le misure necessarie per impedire l'utilizzo abusivo delle denominazioni di origine protette e delle indicazioni geografiche protette. La Commissione richiederà allo Stato membro in questione ulteriori informazioni sulla situazione descritta nell'interrogazione scritta, ricorderà agli Stati membri l'ambito di applicazione della protezione delle denominazioni di origine e delle denominazioni geografiche e, se necessario, richiederà agli Stati membri di adottare ulteriori misure opportune.

([1]) http://www.striscialanotizia.mediaset.it/video/videoextra.shtml?18065.
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011356/13
to the Commission
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Suspicions of fraud in the sale of wine 'kits'

According to an enquiry by the Italian television programme 'Striscia la Notizia' ([1]) broadcast on 30 September 2013, the names of quality wines are still being distorted and used in England in the production of fake wine.

These so-called wine 'kits' take the form of water-soluble preparations which are marketed as traditional products and include some wines with protected designation of origin and protected geographical indication status:

Valpolicella, which becomes 'Vinocella';

Barolo, which becomes 'Barolla';

Brunello di Montalcino, which becomes 'Montecino';

Chianti, which becomes 'Cantia'.

Interpol has blocked their sale in the United Kingdom.

Indeed, the marketing of such products is prohibited under Commission Regulation (EC) No 607/2009 of 14 July 2009 laying down certain detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 479/2008 as regards protected designations of origin and geographical indications, traditional terms, labelling and presentation of certain wine sector products (OJ L 193, 24.07.2009, p. 60).

However, that regulation — and in particular Article 42 thereof — would seem to have been bypassed, since the same wines appear to have been placed on the market once again, only with different names that sound very similar to other, better-known wines.

What steps will the Commission take to ensure that the necessary safeguards exist for fine wines which are under threat from fake products?

Will it raise Member States' awareness of this issue, so that they can address it as effectively as possible through closer monitoring aimed at safeguarding PDO and PGI products?

Answer given by M.Cioloș on behalf of the Commission
(28 October 2013)

As already mentioned in its answer to the Written Question E-001290/2013 ([2]), Member States are aware of illegal practices as regards labelling of kits for manufacturing fake wines from powder.

The Commission has no indication that Member States do not take the steps necessary to stop unlawful use of protected designations of origin and protected geographical indications. The Commission will request further information on the situation decribed in the written question to the concerned Member State, will recall the Member States the scope of the protection regarding protected designation of origins and protected geographical indications and, if necessary, will request Member States to take further appropriate actions.

([1]) http://www.striscialanotizia.mediaset.it/video/videoextra.shtml?18065
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-011358/13
alla Commissione
Matteo Salvini (EFD)
(4 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Utilizzo dei fondi per le politiche dell'immigrazione, con particolare attenzione al problema degli sbarchi degli immigrati

A largo di Lampedusa si è assistito anche oggi al recupero di oltre 94 cadaveri di migranti somali e eritrei, morti a seguito dell'ennesimo tragico naufragio. I dispersi risultano sinora 250.

A bordo del barcone affondato si trovavano 500 migranti fra cui anche una donna incinta e 30 bambini.

Non si tratta di un avvenimento isolato in quanto nei mesi scorsi sono stati numerosi gli sbarchi di immigrati clandestini sulle coste italiane e altrettante le sciagure avvenute a largo del Mediterraneo, che hanno colpito migliaia di donne, uomini e bambini provenienti soprattutto dai paesi nordafricani.

Può la Commissione far sapere come sono stati usati finora i fondi stanziati per le politiche dell'immigrazione, cosa intende fare per risolvere il problema degli sbarchi degli immigrati e quali politiche intende attuare per regolare questo fenomeno?

Risposta di Cecilia Malmström a nome della Commissione
(20 novembre 2013)

Fra il 2007 e il 2013 l'Italia ha ricevuto più di 500 milioni di EUR provenienti dai fondi stanziati nell'ambito del programma generale «Solidarietà e gestione dei flussi migratori».

Nel periodo 2008-2013 il Fondo europeo per i rifugiati ha cofinanziato con 26 milioni di EUR misure di emergenza per gestire rapidamente il crescente numero di richiedenti asilo che arrivano sulle coste italiane. Con una dotazione di 250 milioni di EUR, ricevuta a titolo del Fondo per le frontiere esterne nel periodo 2007-2013, l'Italia ha potuto finanziare investimenti in infrastrutture e attrezzature.

Nella gestione dei flussi migratori alle frontiere esterne le autorità italiane ricevono l'assistenza di Frontex e degli Stati membri. Frontex coordina e cofinanzia le operazioni congiunte Hermes e Enea, condotte dall'Italia. Il sistema EUROSUR, che dovrebbe diventare operativo in dicembre, migliorerà la capacità di individuare le piccole imbarcazioni, contribuendo sia a salvare delle vite sia a intercettare gli attraversamenti illegali delle frontiere. L'Italia è inoltre assistita dall'EASO che attua uno speciale piano di sostegno per aiutare le autorità a riformare il sistema di asilo.

La Commissione ha istituito una task force specifica per il Mediterraneo che riunisce tutti gli Stati membri e le agenzie competenti e che riferirà al Consiglio in dicembre per raccomandare nuove azioni volte a ridurre il rischio che tali tragedie si ripetano in futuro.

La Commissione ha rafforzato la collaborazione con i paesi limitrofi dell'Africa settentrionale. Dall'inizio della Primavera araba, l'UE ha avviato dialoghi su migrazione, mobilità e sicurezza con vari paesi della regione e in giugno ha concluso un partenariato per la mobilità con il Marocco. In Libia sono in corso programmi finanziati dall'UE per circa 30 milioni di EUR in settori quali la gestione di flussi misti e la gestione delle frontiere.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011358/13
to the Commission
Matteo Salvini (EFD)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Use of funds for immigration policies, with a special focus on the problem of immigrant landings

Yet again, off the coast of Lampedusa, over 94 bodies of Somali and Eritrean migrants, who died as a result of yet another tragic shipwreck, have just been recovered. So far there are still 250 people missing.

500 migrants were on board the sunken boat, including a pregnant woman and 30 children.

This is not an isolated incident, as over the past few months there have been numerous landings of illegal immigrants on the Italian coast and an equal number of disasters at sea in the Mediterranean, which have stricken thousands of women, men and children, mainly from North African countries.

Can the Commission say how the funds earmarked for immigration policies have been used so far, what it intends to do to solve the problem of the immigrant landings and what policies it intends to implement in order to regulate this problem?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(20 November 2013)

For 2007-2013, Italy received more than EUR 500 million from funds under the General Programme 'Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows'.

The European Refugee Fund has co-funded emergency measures for EUR 26 million over the period 2008-2013 to respond swiftly to the increasing number of asylum applicants arriving on Italian shores. With an allocation of EUR 250 million for 2007-2013 under the External Borders Fund, Italy was able to finance investment in infrastructure and equipment.

Frontex, with Member States (MS), assists the Italian authorities to handle migratory flows at external borders. Frontex coordinates and co-finances Joint Operations Hermes and Aeneas, hosted by Italy. Eurosur, expected to become operational in December, will increase the detection of small boats and help both to save lives and to intercept irregular border crossings. EASO is also implementing a Special Support Plan in Italy to help the authorities in reforming their asylum system.

The Commission has set up a dedicated Task Force for the Mediterranean. This Task Force brings together all Member States and relevant agencies. It will report in December to the Council, recommending new actions aimed at reducing the risk of such tragedies occurring in the future.

The Commission has strengthened cooperation with our neighbours in Northern Africa. Since the Arab Spring, the EU has opened Dialogues on Migration, Mobility and Security with a number of countries in the region and concluded a Mobility Partnership with Morocco in June. In Libya, approximately EUR 30 million of EU-funded programmes are underway on areas such as management of mixed flows and border management.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita P-011359/13
à Comissão
Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL)
(4 de outubro de 2013)

Assunto: Expulsão de 15 portugueses de uma residência social no Luxemburgo

Há poucos dias, 15 portugueses receberam por escrito uma notificação de despejo de uma residência social no Luxemburgo destinada a estrangeiros com dificuldades económicas. Entre eles encontram-se casos de invalidez e deficiência reconhecida e casos de cidadãos sem contrato de trabalho, o que os impede de conseguir um contrato de arrendamento.

As notificações de despejo surgem com um prazo de três meses, e sem nunca ter existido outro aviso prévio que lhes permitisse, tendo em conta a situação particular de cada um deles, encontrar uma alternativa adequada num prazo mais justo.

Tratando-se de uma situação delicada e aludindo ao artigo 2.° do Tratado de Lisboa, pergunta-se à Comissão se pretende continuar a fingir que estas situações não existem, ou se por sua vez instará os Estados-membros — neste caso particular o Luxemburgo — a reverem a forma como atuam perante casos como este e a encontrar um modo mais justo e solidário de atuação, que tenha em conta cada situação individual e que respeite a dignidade das pessoas.

De sublinhar que os cidadãos em causa se encontravam numa residência legalmente, que pagavam a sua renda e que nunca lhes foi dito que era uma situação provisória.

Resposta dada por Viviane Reding em nome da Comissão
(21 de novembro de 2013)

Por uma questão de princípio, os poderes da Comissão no que respeita aos atos e omissões dos Estados-Membros limitam-se ao controlo da aplicação do direito da UE, sob o controlo do Tribunal de Justiça.

Com base nas informações facultadas pela Senhora Deputada, não se afigura que, na questão referida, o Estado-Membro em causa tenha atuado no quadro da aplicação do direito da UE.

No que respeita mais particularmente às questões dos direitos fundamentais suscitadas pela Senhora Deputada, a Comissão gostaria de lembrar que, ao abrigo do artigo 51.°, n.° 1, da Carta dos Direitos Fundamentais, as disposições da Carta são dirigidas aos Estados-Membros, apenas quando apliquem o direito da União.

Em tais situações, incumbe aos Estados-Membros assegurar que as suas obrigações em matéria de direitos fundamentais, em conformidade com o direito nacional e internacional, são respeitadas.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011359/13
to the Commission
Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Eviction of 15 Portuguese citizens from a state-run hostel in Luxembourg

Some days ago, 15 Portuguese citizens received a letter notifying them of their eviction from a state-run hostel for foreigners with financial difficulties in Luxembourg. Some of them are recognised as suffering illness or disability and some have no employment contract, which means that they are unable to sign a rental agreement.

The eviction letters gave them only three months notice, and they received no prior warning that would have given them more time to find a suitable alternative, bearing in mind the specific situation of each individual resident concerned.

Given that this is a difficult situation, and bearing in mind the principles set out in Article 2 of the Treaty of Lisbon, will the Commission continue to pretend that such problems simply do not exist, or will it urge the Member States — in this case Luxembourg — to reconsider their approach in dealing with such cases and find a response that is more firmly based on the principles of justice and solidarity, takes account of each individual situation and respects human dignity?

It should be pointed out that the citizens involved were legally resident in the hostel, that they were paying rent and that they were never told that this was to be seen as temporary accommodation.

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(21 November 2013)

As a matter of principle, the Commission's powers regarding acts and omissions by Member States are limited to overseeing the application of EC law, under the control of the Court of Justice.

On the basis of the information provided by the Honourable Member, it would not appear that in the matter referred to, the Member State concerned had acted in the framework of implementing EC law.

Regarding more particularly the fundamental rights issues raised by the Honourable Member, the Commission would recall that, according to Article 51(1) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, the provisions of the Charter are addressed to the Member States only when they are implementing EC law.

In such situations, it is for Member States to ensure that their obligations regarding fundamental rights, in conformity with relevant national and international law, are respected.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011362/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(4 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Modificación en la homologación de métodos de captura en Castilla-La Mancha

El pasado 18 de junio, el Gobierno autonómico de la Junta de Castilla-La Mancha publicaba en su diario oficial una norma legal con rango de orden que aprueba y homologa lazos en diversas modalidades y otras trampas de selectividad dudosa para el control de depredadores cinegéticos, cuyo uso podría poner en peligro a determinadas especies animales protegidas por directivas comunitarias (algunas, catalogadas en peligro de extinción, como el lince ibérico, Lynx pardinus) que se encuentran en la Comunidad y para las que se destinan fondos comunitarios a través de proyectos LIFE como Priorimancha o Iberlince, comprometiendo la viabilidad de las actuaciones de conservación que se realizan en ellos.

Dicha Orden (2013/8376) reglamenta y autoriza determinados tipos de trampas y lazos para control de depredadores de especies cinegéticas, siguiendo lo estipulado en la Ley nacional (42/2007), que obliga a la homologación de dichos mecanismos en base a los criterios de selectividad y bienestar animal fijados en los acuerdos internacionales. Sin embargo, la norma legal de Castilla-La Mancha homologa y permite el empleo de determinados tipos de lazos y trampas cuya selectividad es más que dudosa y que pueden causar la muerte de ejemplares de especies protegidas, ya que no discriminan suficientemente entre especies, de forma que no existen garantías para la protección efectiva de las especies protegidas. Según informaciones aportadas por asociaciones ecologistas y otras administraciones autonómicas, como Andalucía, este tipo de métodos no selectivos de control de depredadores suponen un grave riesgo para diez especies de carnívoros que habitan en diferentes zonas de la región. Entre estas, dos especies que se encuentran en peligro de extinción en la Comunidad: el lince ibérico y el lobo (Canis lupus signatus). Las trampas y lazos están pensados para presas carnívoras como zorros, perros, gatos, etc. Sin embargo, algunos de los métodos aprobados no son inocuos para las citadas especies en peligro de extinción. Es muy grave que se autoricen estos métodos cuya selectividad no está suficientemente probada en áreas críticas de lince y en zonas potenciales de hábitats de lobo (la primera cuenta con un plan de recuperación, pero esta última especie no cuenta, a fecha de hoy, con un plan de recuperación y por lo tanto, no tiene definida sus áreas críticas).

¿Conoce la Comisión la citada orden de Castilla-La Mancha? ¿Considera que el empleo de este tipo de trampas y lazos que no discriminan con cierta seguridad el tipo de especie objetivo garantiza la defensa de especies protegidas por la Directiva 92/43/CEE? ¿Planteará al Gobierno autonómico de Castilla-La Mancha la necesidad de modificar dicha norma legal para proteger efectivamente a las citadas especies, prohibiendo su uso en zonas con presencia actual o potencial de lince y lobo?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(19 de noviembre de 2013)

La Comisión ha estudiado la Orden de 18.6.2013, publicada en el Diario Oficial de Castilla-La Mancha el 9 de julio de 2013 ([1]).

Dicha Orden homologa cuatro métodos de captura de zorros (*Vulpes vulpes*) y de perros salvajes (*Canis lupus familiaris*), especies que no se encuentran protegidas en virtud de la Directiva sobre hábitats ([2]). Según los datos que figuran en la Orden, se llevaron a cabo proyectos de investigación que evaluaron cada uno de los métodos utilizados en relación con su selectividad, eficacia e impacto en especies no objetivo, además de tener en cuenta consideraciones sobre el bienestar animal. De acuerdo con esta información, la selectividad de estos métodos ha resultado ser superior al 80 %. Asimismo, la Orden prohíbe expresamente la utilización de estos métodos de captura en zonas con presencia estable y poblaciones reproductoras de lince ibérico o lobo ibérico, a menos que se haya llegado a acuerdos específicos con las autoridades regionales.

Considerando que los métodos aprobados por la citada Orden no van dirigidos a especies protegidas en virtud de la Directiva sobre hábitats, y que, según la información de que se dispone, la selectividad y el posible impacto en especies no objetivo han sido evaluados previamente, la Comisión no tiene motivos para concluir que la utilización de estos métodos pueda poner en peligro a las especies protegidas en virtud de la Directiva sobre hábitats. Puesto que no se ha constatado infracción alguna de la legislación de la UE, la Comisión no tiene intención de adoptar medidas adicionales a este respecto.

([1]) http://docm.jccm.es/portaldocm/descargarArchivo.do?ruta=2013/07/09/pdf/2013_8376.pdf&tipo=rutaDocm

([2]) Directiva 92/43/CEE del Consejo, de 21 de mayo de 1992, relativa a la conservación de los hábitats naturales y de la fauna y flora silvestres (DO L 206 de 22.7.1992).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011362/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Change to the type-approval of trapping methods in Castilla-La Mancha

On 18 June 2013, the regional government of Castilla-La Mancha published in its official gazette a legal regulation, in the form of an Order, authorising and type-approving various types of snares and other dubiously selective traps to control predators that hunt. The use of these traps could endanger certain animal species in the region that are protected by EU directives (some, such as the Iberian lynx, Lynx pardinus, being listed as endangered) and for which EU funds have been provided through LIFE projects like PrioriMancha and Iberlince, thus compromising the viability of the conservation action carried out under these projects.

This Order (2013/8376) regulates and authorises certain types of traps and snares to control predators belonging to hunting species, in line with the provisions of Spanish National Law No 42/2007, which requires such mechanisms to be type-approved in accordance with selectivity and animal welfare criteria established in international agreements. However, Castilla-La Mancha's legal regulation type-approves and permits the use of certain types of snares and traps whose selectivity is less certain, which may kill specimens of protected species because they do not discriminate sufficiently between species, meaning there are no guarantees that protected species will be effectively protected. According to information provided by environmental associations and other regional governments, such as Andalusia, these non-selective methods of predator control pose a serious risk to 10 carnivore species with habitats in different parts of the region. These include two of the region's endangered species: the Iberian lynx and the wolf (Canis lupus signatus). Traps and snares are designed for carnivorous hunters like foxes, dogs, cats, etc. However, some of the approved methods are harmful to species in danger of extinction. It is very serious that these methods, with inadequately proven selectivity, are authorised in critical areas for lynx and in potential wolf habitat areas (the former species has a recovery plan, but the latter has no such plan to date and, therefore, does not have any critical areas defined).

Is the Commission aware of this Order in Castilla-La Mancha? Does the Commission believe that the use of such traps and snares, which do not differentiate between target species with any certainty, ensures the protection of species protected by Directive 92/43/EEC? Will the Commission raise with the regional government of Castilla-La Mancha the need to amend its legal regulation to protect these species effectively, prohibiting the use of these snares and traps in areas with a current, or a potential, lynx and wolf presence?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(19 November 2013)

The Commission has examined the Order of 18.6.2013, published in the official gazette of Castilla-La Mancha of 9 July 2013 ([1]).

The Order of 18/06/2013 type-approves four methods for capturing foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*) and feral dogs (*Canis lupus familiaris*). These species are not protected under the Habitats Directive ([2]). According to the information contained in the Order, research projects assessed each of the methods used with regard to their selectivity, efficiency, and impact on non-target species, as well as animal welfare considerations. According to this information, the selectivity of these methods has proven to be higher than 80%. Furthermore, the Order explicitly prohibits the use of these methods of capture in areas with stable presence and breeding populations of Iberian lynx or Iberian wolf, unless specific arrangements are agreed with the regional authorities.

Considering that the methods to be approved by the Order do not address species protected under the Habitats Directive, and that, according to available information, the selectivity and possible impact on non-target species has been previously assessed, the Commission has no reasons to conclude that the use of these methods would jeopardise species protected under the Habitats Directive. Since no breach of EU legislation has been identified, the Commission does not intend to take any further steps on this matter.

([1]) http://docm.jccm.es/portaldocm/descargarArchivo.do?ruta=2013/07/09/pdf/2013_8376.pdf&tipo=rutaDocm
([2]) Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (OJ L 206, 22.7.1992).

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011364/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(4 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Εξαγωγές και γραφειοκρατία

Καθώς το κόστος της γραφειοκρατίας είναι δύσκολο να εκτιμηθεί σε όρους ΑΕΠ, διαθέτει η Επιτροπή πρόσφατα στοιχεία αναφορικά με τον χρόνο που απαιτείται για την εξαγωγή ενός προϊόντος από την Ελλάδα; Ποιος ο αντίστοιχος κοινοτικός μέσος όρος; Διαπιστώνει την τελευταία περίοδο η Επιτροπή πρόοδο όσον αφορά το νομοθετικό πλαίσιο στην Ελλάδα για την ενθάρρυνση των εξαγωγών;

Απάντηση του κ. Šemeta εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(25 Νοεμβρίου 2013)

Η διευκόλυνση του εξωτερικού εμπορίου εντάσσεται στη δέσμη μέτρων του 2ου προγράμματος οικονομικής προσαρμογής για την Ελλάδα, προκειμένου να δημιουργηθούν ευνοϊκές συνθήκες για την οικονομική δραστηριότητα και να βελτιωθεί το επιχειρηματικό περιβάλλον. Το Νοέμβριο του 2012, οι ελληνικές αρχές θέσπισαν έναν οδικό χάρτη για τη διευκόλυνση του εξωτερικού εμπορίου ([1]), ο οποίος αποσκοπεί στη μείωση του χρόνου για την εξαγωγή κατά 50% σε διάστημα 3 ετών. Η δέσμη των 25 δράσεων περιλαμβάνει την απλούστευση της διαδικασίας έκδοσης αδειών και πιστοποιητικών, τη βελτιστοποίηση των τελωνειακών διαδικασιών και την εισαγωγή αυτοματοποιημένων διαδικασιών. Κατά τη διάρκεια του 2013, οι τελωνειακές διαδικασίες διενεργούνται πλέον επτά ημέρες την εβδομάδα και σε εικοσιτετράωρη βάση (24/7) ή με διπλές βάρδιες, στα επιλεγμένα τελωνεία του αεροδρομίου των Αθηνών και του Λιμένα του Πειραιά.

Η Ελλάδα εφήρμοσε επίσης σύστημα που επιτρέπει την ηλεκτρονική υποβολή διασαφήσεων για εξαγωγές και έχουν αρχίσει εργασίες για την απλούστευση των προ-τελωνειακών διαδικασιών. Η μεταρρύθμιση υποστηρίζεται από σημαντική τεχνική συνδρομή από διεθνείς οργανισμούς, την Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή και τα κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ, η οποία συντονίζεται από την ειδική ομάδα δράσης της Επιτροπής για την Ελλάδα (Task Force).

Μολονότι είναι ακόμα πολύ νωρίς για να αξιολογηθεί πλήρως ο αντίκτυπος της εν λόγω υπό εξέλιξη μεταρρύθμισης, η Επιτροπή επισημαίνει ότι οι μεταρρυθμιστικές προσπάθειες έχουν ήδη συμβάλει στη βελτίωση του εξωτερικού εμπορίου για τις εξαγωγές, σύμφωνα με την έκθεση της Παγκόσμιας Τράπεζα με τίτλο «Doing Business 2014» ([2]). Η έκθεση παρέχει μια μέτρηση ορισμένων παραμέτρων που σχετίζονται με το εξωτερικό εμπόριο, σύμφωνα με την οποία η Ελλάδα παρουσίασε βελτίωση στην παγκόσμια κατάταξη, περνώντας από την 62η στην 52η θέση μεταξύ 189 χωρών που συγκρίνονται στην έκθεση του 2013. Όσον αφορά πιο συγκεκριμένα το στοιχείο του απαιτούμενου χρόνου για την εξαγωγή, η μελέτη εκτιμά ότι χρειάζονται 16 ημέρες για την εξαγωγή ενός προϊόντος από την Ελλάδα (σε σύγκριση με 19 ημέρες στην έκθεση του 2013), ενώ ο αντίστοιχος μέσος χρόνος για την εξαγωγή αγαθών από τα κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ είναι 12 ημέρες ([3]).

([1]) http://www.mindev.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Greece_Trade_Facilitation_Strategy_Roadmap_Oct-2012.pdf
([2]) http://www.doingbusiness.org/reports/global-reports/doing-business-2014.
([3]) Η μεθοδολογία στην έκθεση «Doing Business 2014» για το εξωτερικό εμπόριο έχει εξελιχθεί σε σύγκριση με το 2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011364/13
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Red tape and exports

Although the cost of red tape is hard to estimate in terms of GDP, does the Commission have any recent data on the time required for exporting a product from Greece? What is the corresponding Community average? Has the Commission seen any progress in Greece recently in relation to legislation for encouraging exports?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(25 November 2013)

Trade facilitation is part of the comprehensive set of measures included in the 2nd adjustment programme for Greece in order to create favourable conditions for economic activity and improve the business environment. In November 2012, the Greek Authorities have adopted a trade facilitation reform roadmap ([1]), which aims to reduce this time for export by 50% within 3 years. The set of 25 actions includes simplifying the issuing of licences and certificates, optimising customs operations and introducing automated procedures. During 2013, customs operations have shifted to 24/7 or double-shifts for exports in the pilot offices of Athens airport and Piraeus Port.

Greece has also implemented a system allowing electronic submission of customs declarations for exports and work has been initiated to simplify pre-customs procedures. The reform is supported by important technical assistance from International Organisations, the European Commission and EU Member States, which is coordinated by the Commission's Task Force for Greece.

Although it is still too early to evaluate the full impact of this ongoing reform, the Commission would highlight that reform efforts have already contributed to an improvement in trading across borders for exports according to the World Bank's Doing Business 2014 report ([2]). The report provides measurement on a certain number of metrics related to trading across borders, according to which, Greece improved its ranking from 62nd to 52nd position out of 189 countries compared to the 2013 report. Regarding the specific item of time to export, the study estimates that 16 days are necessary to export a product from Greece (compared to 19 days in the 2013 report), whereas it takes 12 days on average to export goods from EU Member States ([3]).

([1]) http://www.mindev.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Greece_Trade_Facilitation_Strategy_Roadmap_Oct-2012.pdf
([2]) http://www.doingbusiness.org/reports/global-reports/doing-business-2014
([3]) The methodology in the Doing Business Report 2014 for trading across border has evolved compared to 2013.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011365/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(4 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Εξυπηρέτηση πολιτών και γραφειοκρατία

Η Ελλάδα, το τελευταίο διάστημα, εντατικοποιεί την προσπάθειά της για τη βελτίωση της καθημερινότητας των πολιτών, με τη διεκπεραίωση χωρίς καθυστερήσεις των αιτημάτων τους προς τις δημόσιες υπηρεσίες. Η μείωση της γραφειοκρατίας, του χρόνου και του κόστους διεκπεραίωσης των αιτημάτων αυτών, πέρα από την προφανή εξυπηρέτηση των πολιτών, αναμένεται να συμβάλει θετικά και στην προσπάθεια ανάκτησης βιώσιμων ανταγωνιστικών ρυθμών για την χώρα.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Διαθέτει στοιχεία αναφορικά με τον σημερινό μέσο χρόνο και το κόστος έκδοσης διοικητικών πράξεων στην Ελλάδα και διεκπεραίωσης αιτημάτων των πολιτών; Ποιες είναι οι αντίστοιχες επιδόσεις, κατά μέσο όρο, στην ΕΕ;

— Έχει στη διάθεσή της στοιχεία που να εκτιμούν το κόστος της γραφειοκρατίας για την ελληνική οικονομία; Ποιος είναι ο αντίστοιχος κοινοτικός μέσος όρος;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(4 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή (Eurostat) δεν συγκεντρώνει επίσημα στατιστικά στοιχεία σχετικά με τα θέματα αυτά. Το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου μπορεί να συμβουλευτεί τους Δείκτες Ρύθμισης της Αγοράς Προϊόντων του ΟΟΣΑ, που μετρούν τον βαθμό στον οποίο οι πολιτικές προωθούν ή εμποδίζουν τον ανταγωνισμό σε τομείς της αγοράς προϊόντων όπου ο ανταγωνισμός είναι βιώσιμος. Τα τελευταία διαθέσιμα στατιστικά στοιχεία αφορούν το 2008 ([1]), αν και αναμένεται να δημοσιευτούν σύντομα επικαιροποιημένα στοιχεία για το 2013. Το 2008, η Ελλάδα εμφανίζει ένα από τα υψηλότερα επίπεδα ρύθμισης της αγοράς προϊόντων μεταξύ των χωρών του ΟΟΣΑ, δημιουργώντας περιττούς ελέγχους και εμπόδια που παρακωλύουν την επιχειρηματικότητα, το εμπόριο και τις επενδύσεις. Όπως φαίνεται από τη μελέτη McKinsey ([2]) και άλλα διαθέσιμα αποδεικτικά στοιχεία, ο δείκτης αυτός έχει σε μεγάλο βαθμό αντιστρόφως ανάλογη σχέση με τα επίπεδα παραγωγικότητας.

Για τον λόγο αυτό, το πρόγραμμα προσαρμογής για την Ελλάδα δίνει μεγάλη έμφαση στις διαρθρωτικές μεταρρυθμίσεις για τη βελτίωση του επιχειρηματικού περιβάλλοντος και τη μείωση του διοικητικού φόρτου, βελτιώνοντας έτσι τον ανταγωνισμό και την ανταγωνιστικότητα. Μεταξύ αυτών συγκαταλέγονται τα οριζόντια μέτρα για την προώθηση της βελτίωσης της νομοθεσίας, έτσι ώστε να μειωθεί ο χρόνος και το κόστος για τη δημιουργία επιχειρήσεων, να απλουστευτούν οι διαδικασίες αδειοδότησης και οι διαδικασίες για τις εξαγωγές και τις εισαγωγές και να βελτιωθεί η λειτουργία του δικαστικού συστήματος.

Επιπλέον, ο ΟΟΣΑ εκτελεί επί του παρόντος ένα έργο για τη μέτρηση του διοικητικού φόρτου στην Ελλάδα. Στο πλαίσιο του έργου αυτού θα εξεταστούν νόμοι και κανονισμοί σε 13 τομείς της ελληνικής οικονομίας για να εντοπιστεί ο περιττός διοικητικός φόρτος και να προταθούν εναλλακτικές λύσεις. Το έργο θα βοηθήσει στην ανάπτυξη των ικανοτήτων της ελληνικής διοίκησης για τη μέτρηση του διοικητικού φόρτου, τόσο εκ των υστέρων όσο και εκ των προτέρων, στο πλαίσιο της διαδικασίας αξιολόγησης του αντίκτυπου των κανονιστικών ρυθμίσεων.

([1]) http://www.oecd.org/eco/reform/indicatorsofproductmarketregulationpmr.htm
([2]) http://www.mckinsey.com/locations/athens/GreeceExecutiveSummary_new/pdfs/Executive_summary_English_new.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011365/13
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Public service and red tape

Efforts have recently been intensified in Greece to improve citizens' everyday lives by processing the requests they make to the public services without delay. In addition to the obvious benefit to citizens of improved services, cutting red tape and the duration and cost of processing requests is expected to make a positive contribution to establishing viable and competitive practices in the country.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

— Does it have any data on current averages in terms of the time required and the cost for issuing administrative deeds and processing citizens' requests? What are the equivalent EU averages?

— Does it have the data to estimate the cost of bureaucracy to the Greek economy? What is the corresponding EU average?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(4 December 2013)

The European Commission (Eurostat) does not collect official statistics on these issues. The Honourable Member can consult the OECD Indicators of Product Market Regulation, which measure the degree to which policies promote or inhibit competition in areas of the product market where competition is viable. Last available figures correspond to 2008 ([1]), although a 2013 update is expected to be published soon. In 2008 Greece exhibited one of the highest degrees of product market regulation among OECD countries, creating unnecesary controls and barriers to entrepreneurship, trade and investment. As shown by McKinsey ([2]) and other evidence available, this index has a strong inverse correlation with productivity levels.

For this reason, the adjustment programme for Greece places strong emphasis on structural reforms to improve the business environment and reduce administrative burden, thereby enhancing competition and competitiveness. These include horizontal measures to promote better regulation in order to reduce time and costs of company creation, to simplify licensing procedures and procedures to export and import, and improve the functioning of the judicial system.

In addition, the OECD is currently undertaking a project to measure administrative burden in Greece. The project will screen laws and regulations in 13 sectors of the Greek economy to identify unnecessary administrative burdens and propose alternatives. The project will provide assistance in building up the capabilities of the Greek administration to measure administrative burdens both *ex post* and *ex ante* as part of the Regulatory Impact Assessment process.

([1]) http://www.oecd.org/eco/reform/indicatorsofproductmarketregulationpmr.htm
([2]) http://www.mckinsey.com/locations/athens/GreeceExecutiveSummary_new/pdfs/Executive_summary_English_new.pdf

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011366/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(4 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Γλωσσομάθεια στην ΕΕ

Η 26η Σεπτεμβρίου είναι αφιερωμένη στις ευρωπαϊκές γλώσσες, με στόχο, μεταξύ άλλων, την προώθηση της γλωσσομάθειας των ευρωπαίων πολιτών, η οποία, εκτός από πολιτιστική σημασία, έχει και προφανή οικονομικά και επαγγελματικά πλεονεκτήματα.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Είναι σε θέση να μου παραθέσει συγκριτικά στοιχεία αναφορικά με το ποσοστό των Ελλήνων πολιτών που ομιλούν τουλάχιστον μία ξένη γλώσσα, σε σχέση με τον κοινοτικό μέσο όρο;

— Καθώς η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή, σε κοινή δήλωσή της με το Συμβούλιο (20.9.2011), είχε δεσμευτεί για την ανάπτυξη του ευρωπαϊκού δείκτη γλωσσικών δεξιοτήτων, παρατηρεί πράγματι να σημειώνεται πρόοδος την τελευταία διετία;

Απάντηση της κ. Βασιλείου εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(28 Νοεμβρίου 2013)

Σύμφωνα με τα στοιχεία της Eurostat για το 2011 ([1]) σχετικά με τις δεξιότητες σε ξένες γλώσσες, βάσει ιδίας δήλωσης, των ενηλίκων, το 42% των Ελλήνων δεν ομιλούν κάποια ξένη γλώσσα, ενώ ο αντίστοιχος μέσος όρος στην ΕΕ των 28 είναι 34% ([2]). Από την άλλη, το 2011 πραγματοποιήθηκε μελέτη εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής, με σκοπό την παροχή στοιχείων σχετικά με το επίπεδο ικανότητας της ευρωπαϊκής νεολαίας σε ξένες γλώσσες. Η μελέτη αυτή έδειξε ότι το 48% των ελλήνων μαθητών στη χαμηλότερη δευτεροβάθμια εκπαίδευση είχαν επάρκεια σε μια ξένη γλώσσα. Ο μέσος όρος όλων των συμμετεχουσών χωρών ήταν 42% ([3]).

Η Επιτροπή έχει θέσει ως στόχο την προώθηση της διδασκαλίας ξένων γλωσσών. Τον Νοέμβριο του 2012 θέσπισε τη στρατηγική «Ανασχεδιασμός της εκπαίδευσης», στην οποία επισήμανε τη σπουδαιότητα που έχουν οι δεξιότητες σε ξένες γλώσσες για την απασχολησιμότητα και έδωσε οδηγίες στα κράτη μέλη σχετικά με τους παράγοντες που συμβάλλουν στην αποτελεσματική διδασκαλία γλωσσών ([4]).

Η στρατηγική «Ανασχεδιασμός της εκπαίδευσης» περιείχε επίσης την πρόταση της Επιτροπής για την καθιέρωση ενός σημείου αναφοράς της ΕΕ για την επάρκεια σε ξένες γλώσσες. Το σημείο αναφοράς βασίζεται στην πρόταση της συνόδου κορυφής της Βαρκελώνης του 2002 για την παροχή της δυνατότητας στους Ευρωπαίους να μαθαίνουν δύο ξένες γλώσσες από μικρή ηλικία. Η πρόταση θέτει ως στόχο ότι, έως το 2020, το 50% όλων των 15χρονων στην ΕΕ θα πρέπει να έχουν φτάσει στο επίπεδο ανεξάρτητου χρήστη για την πρώτη ξένη τους γλώσσα και το 75% των μαθητών στη δευτεροβάθμια εκπαίδευση θα πρέπει να μαθαίνουν δύο ξένες γλώσσες. Αυτή τη στιγμή η Επιτροπή εξετάζει, από κοινού με τις μελλοντικές Προεδρίες του Συμβουλίου, το χρονοδιάγραμμα συζήτησης και καθιέρωσης του σημείου αναφοράς της ΕΕ.

([1]) Πρόκειται για το πλέον πρόσφατο στοιχείο που έχει στη διάθεσή της η Eurostat.
([2]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/3-26092013-AP/EN/3-26092013-AP-EN.PDF
([3]) Περαιτέρω πληροφορίες σχετικά με την έρευνα είναι διαθέσιμες στον δικτυακό τόπο: http://ec.europa.ey/languages/escl/docs/en/finbal-report-escl_en.pdf
([4]) Περαιτέρω πληροφορίες σχετικά με την εν λόγω στρατηγική είναι διαθέσιμες στον δικτυακό τόπο: http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/rethinking/swd372_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011366/13
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Language learning in the EU

26 September has been declared European Day of Languages, with a view, among other things, to promoting language learning among European citizens, something which, apart from cultural importance, also has obvious economic and professional advantages.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

— Can it provide comparative data on the percentage of Greek citizens speaking at least one foreign language, compared to the Community average?

— As the Commission, in a joint declaration with the Council (20 September 2011), made a commitment to improving European language skills, has it seen any progress over the past two years?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(28 November 2013)

According to Eurostat figures from 2011 ([1]) on self-reported knowledge of foreign language skills by adults, 42% of Greeks do not speak any foreign language, whereas this figure is 34% for the EU 28 average ([2]). On the other hand, a survey was conducted in 2011 on behalf of the Commission to provide information about the level of foreign language competence of European youth. This survey showed that 48% of Greek pupils in lower secondary education were able to use a foreign language independently. The average of all participating countries was 42% ([3]).

The Commission has set itself the objective of promoting the teaching of foreign languages. In November 2012, it adopted the 'Rethinking Education' strategy where it highlighted the importance of foreign language skills for employability and presented guidance to Member States about the factors contributing to effective language teaching ([4]).

Rethinking Education also included the Commission proposal for an EU benchmark on foreign languages proficiency. The benchmark is based on the 2002 Barcelona Summit proposal of providing Europeans with the opportunity of learning two foreign languages from an early age. The proposal sets as a goal that by 2020 at least 50% of 15-year-olds in the EU should attain the level of independent user in a first foreign language, and that at least 75% of pupils in lower secondary education should study two foreign languages. The Commission is currently discussing with the future Council Presidencies on the schedule for the discussion and adoption of the EU benchmark.

([1]) This is the latest figure that was available to Eurostat.
([2]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/3-26092013-AP/EN/3-26092013-AP-EN.PDF
([3]) You can find further information about this survey on this website: http://ec.europa.ey/languages/escl/docs/en/finbal-report-escl_en.pdf
([4]) You can find further information about this strategy at http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/rethinking/swd372_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011367/13
to the Commission
Pat the Cope Gallagher (ALDE)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: European Health Insurance Card holders in Ireland

At present, only two out of five Europeans carry a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). For a country such as Ireland, it is very important that citizens obtain an EHIC in order to facilitate medical treatment when going on holiday, working or studying abroad. For example, in the 2011-2012 period a total of 1 963 students from Irish universities participated in the Erasmus programme, studying in other universities throughout Europe. In addition, over 50 000 Irish people emigrated during 2012, with many of these immigrants travelling to other places within the EU.

— Can the Commission confirm, both in percentage and numerical terms, how many Irish citizens carried an EHIC in 2012?

— How does this figure compare to the number of EHIC holders in other Member States?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(21 November 2013)

In 2012, 380 864 new European Health Insurance Cards (EHIC) were issued in Ireland to persons insured under the Irish statutory health insurance scheme, which made the total number of cards circulating in Ireland up to 1.254.160. The figures which are at the disposal of the Commission do however not distinguish according to nationality.

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to the recent press release IP/13/683 concerning the use of the EHICs. The annex of this document provides the number of EHICs and Provisional Replacement Certificates (PRCs) in circulation in 2012, as well as the percentages of EHICs in circulation for insured population, where such data is available: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-683_en.htm

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-011368/13
adresată Comisiei (Vicepreședintelui/Înaltului Reprezentant)
Adrian Severin (NI)
(4 octombrie 2013)

Subiect: VP/HR — Alternative la semnarea unui acord de asociere cu Azerbaidjanul

Azerbaidjanul joacă un rol regional important în domeniile securității energetice, geoeconomiei, geostrategiei şi culturii şi, spre deosebire de Armenia sau Belarus, este încă deschis unui parteneriat strategic cu un aliat politic gata să-l ajute să-şi refacă integritatea teritorială şi să-şi consolideze securitatea geopolitică, având în vedere că actuala sa neutralitate nu poate continua la nesfârşit.

De asemenea, regiunile în care Azerbaidjanul joacă un rol strategic sunt de o importanță strategică nu numai pentru UE, ci şi pentru alte puteri regionale.

În acest context, faptul că UE nu a finalizat negocierea unui acord de asociere cu Azerbaidjan, declarând că promovarea intereselor strategice ale UE ar trebui să aştepte până ce „valorile europene" au fost adoptate şi implementate, nu va ajuta UE să câştige în jocul geostrategic şi nici nu va promova valorile sale.

În consecință, VP/ÎR este rugat să răspundă la următoarele întrebări:

1. În lipsa unui acord de asociere UE-Azerbaidjan finalizat, este UE pregătită să propună şi să semneze, în timpul summitului Parteneriatului estic de la Vilnius, un protocol sau un acord-cadru care să stabilească temeiul unui parteneriat strategic cu Azerbaidjanul, inclusiv o declarație de sprijin clar din partea UE pentru integritatea teritorială a Azerbaidjanului?

2. Este UE pregătită să semneze un acord de facilitare a obținerii vizelor şi de readmisie cu Azerbaidjanul şi îşi ia angajamentul să facă acest lucru?

Răspuns dat de dl Füle în numele Comisiei
(20 noiembrie 2013)

Negocierile dintre UE şi Azerbaidjan privind încheirea unui acord de asociere sunt în curs din iulie 2010. Având în vedere că Azerbaidjanul nu este încă membru al OMC, condiție prealabilă pentru negocierile privind înființarea unei zone de liber schimb aprofundat şi cuprinzător, o revizuire a dispozițiilor comerciale ale actualului acord de parteneriat şi cooperare este în prezent în curs de negociere, în cadrul negocierilor privind încheierea unui acord de asociere, în vederea asigurării aplicării şi respectării normelor şi principiilor fundamentale ale OMC în cadrul schimburilor comerciale bilaterale.

De asemenea, au loc negocieri privind elaborarea unui document intitulat „Un parteneriat strategic pentru modernizare" (SMP). Acesta va completa procesul de negociere privind încheierea unui acord de asociere. Este prea devreme să se estimeze dacă negocierile privind SMP pot fi încheiate până la summitul Parteneriatului estic de la Vilnius. În orice caz, progresele privind SMP sunt legate de progresele din cadrul negocierilor privind încheierea unui acord de asociere.

Negocierile referitoare la acordul de facilitare a eliberării vizelor şi la acordul de readmisie au fost încheiate, acordurile menționate urmând să fie semnate în timp util de către ambele părți.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011368/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Adrian Severin (NI)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Alternatives to signing an association agreement with Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan has an important regional role in the energy security, geoeconomic, geostrategic and cultural fields and, unlike Armenia or Belarus, is still open to a strategic partnership with a political ally prepared to help rehabilitate its territorial integrity and consolidate its geopolitical security, as its present neutrality cannot continue forever.

Moreover, the regions in which Azerbaijan plays a strategic role are of strategic importance not only for the EU, but also for other regional powers.

In this context, the EU's failure to finalise the negotiation of an association agreement with Azerbaijan, claiming that the promotion of the EU's strategic interests should wait until 'European values' have been adopted and implemented, will neither help the EU win the geostrategic game nor promote its values.

Accordingly, the VP/HR is kindly requested to answer the following:

1. In the absence of a finalised EU-Azerbaijan association agreement, is the EU prepared to propose and sign a protocol or framework agreement defining the basis of a strategic partnership with Azerbaijan, including a declaration of the EU's unequivocal support for Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, during the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius?

2. Is the EU prepared to sign a visa facilitation and readmission agreement with Azerbaijan, and is it committed to doing so?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(20 November 2013)

The negotiations between the EU and Azerbaijan on an Association Agreement are ongoing since July 2010. Due to the fact that Azerbaijan is not a member of the WTO, which is a pre-condition to negotiate Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA), an upgrade of the existing PCA trade-related provisions is currently being negotiated in the framework of the Association Agreement negotiations, with the view to ensure that fundamental WTO rules and principles are applicable and enforceable in the bilateral trade.

Negotiations are also taking place on a document with the working title 'Strategic Modernisation Partnership (SMP)'. This complements the Association Agreement negotiation process. It is difficult to judge whether the negotiations on the SMP can be finalised by the time of the Vilnius Summit. In any event, progress on the SMP is linked to progress in the negotiations on the Association Agreement.

The negotiations on the Visa Facilitation Agreement and the Readmission Agreement have been concluded and will be signed in due course by both sides.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-011369/13
adresată Comisiei (Vicepreședintelui/Înaltului Reprezentant)
Adrian Severin (NI)
(4 octombrie 2013)

Subiect: VP/HR — Aderarea Armeniei la Uniunea Eurasiatică

UE a fost luată prin surprindere de decizia Armeniei de a se alătura unei uniuni politice și comerciale cu Rusia în detrimentul alternativei reprezentate de UE.

Decizia de la Erevan de aderare la Uniunea Eurasiatică este mai importantă din punct de vedere politic decât economic. Aceasta reprezintă o lovitură la adresa intereselor UE în regiune și ilustrează incapacitatea UE de a sprijini aceste interese prin acțiuni concrete.

Acest rezultat este încă un exemplu de fiasco al politicii estice a UE după punerea în aplicare a principiului eronat de „mai mult pentru mai mult". Acest principiu determină țările vecine care se confruntă cu amenințări și oportunități alternative să ofere mai mult celor care exercită în prezent o presiune mai mare asupra lor, mai degrabă decât celor care le promit mai mult într-un viitor nedefinit.

În lumina acestor evoluții și a presiunii din ce în ce mai mari pe care o exercită Rusia asupra țărilor din Parteneriatul estic, VP/ÎR este rugat să răspundă la următoarele întrebări:

1. Este VP/ÎR de acord cu faptul că decizia Armeniei de a adera la Uniunea Eurasiatică se datorează eșecului UE de a-și promova interesele vitale în vecinătatea estică prin intermediul unor acțiuni specifice, bazate pe considerații geopolitice?

2. Ce intenționează VP/ÎR să facă pentru a remedia situația actuală și a stopa destrămarea Parteneriatului estic?

Răspuns dat de Füle în numele Comisiei
(25 noiembrie 2013)

1. UE a oferit Armeniei un Acord de asociere ambițios, care include o zonă de liber schimb complex și cuprinzător (AA/ZLSCC), ale cărui negocieri au fost finalizate în iulie 2013. În septembrie, UE a luat notă de decizia suverană a Armeniei de a se alătura Uniunii Vamale conduse de Rusia, din care fac parte Belarus, Kazahstan și Rusia. Această decizie a Armeniei face imposibilă parafarea AA/ZLSCC, așa cum se preconizase, la Reuniunea la nivel înalt a Parteneriatului estic, care va avea loc la Vilnius. Instituțiile UE au fost informate de partenerii armeni că decizia Erevanului a avut la bază o serie de considerații, printre care legăturile profunde cu Rusia și contextul regional specific.

Cu toate acestea, autoritățile armene și-au anunțat în mod clar angajamentul de a continua pe acest drum, de a promova și de a consolida cooperarea cu UE, precum și de a avansa parteneriatul cu aceasta în toate domeniile în care este posibil acest lucru, ținând seama de opțiunile lor strategice recente. Acest angajament este împărtășit de UE. Întrucât, în prezent, AA/ZLSCC nu mai reprezintă o opțiune, ambele părți au convenit să lanseze un proces de reflecție cu privire la domeniul și temeiul juridic al relațiilor viitoare.

2. Situația Armeniei este unică în rândul țărilor Parteneriatului estic. Ucraina, Georgia și Republica Moldova continuă să-și demonstreze angajamentul pentru parafarea și semnarea AA/ZLSCC la Reuniunea la nivel înalt a Parteneriatului estic care urmează a avea loc la Vilnius, în pofida unor presiuni externe recente nejustificate, pe care UE le consideră inacceptabile. Prin urmare, UE nu se așteaptă la niciun „efect de domino" al recentei opțiuni strategice a Armeniei asupra relațiilor cu alte state membre ale Parteneriatului estic.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011369/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Adrian Severin (NI)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Armenia joining the Eurasian Union

The EU has been taken by surprise by Armenia's decision to join a trade and political union with Russia, rather than opting for the EU alternative.

Yerevan's decision to join the Eurasian Union is more important from a political point of view than an economic one. It represents a blow to EU interests in the region and illustrates the EU's incapacity to support those interests with concrete actions.

This outcome represents yet another example of EU eastern policy fiascos following the implementation of the misguided principle of 'more for more'. For neighbouring countries faced with threats and alternative opportunities, this principle is pushing them to give more to those who pressure them more in the present rather than to those who promise them more in an indefinite future.

In the light of these developments and the increasing pressure placed by Russia on the Eastern Partnership countries, the VP/HR is kindly requested to answer the following questions:

1. Does the VP/HR agree that it is the EU's failure to promote its vital interests in the Eastern Neighbourhood by means of specific action based on geopolitical considerations that has prompted Armenia to join the Eurasian Union?

2. What does the VP/HR intend to do in order to remedy the current situation and stop the unravelling of the Eastern Partnership?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(25 November 2013)

1. The EU offered Armenia an ambitious Association Agreement, including a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (AA/DCFTA), the negotiations of which were finalised in July 2013. In September, the EU took note of the sovereign decision of Armenia to join the Russia-led Customs Union of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia. This decision by Armenia has made it impossible to initial the AA/DCFTA as had been envisaged for the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius. The EU institutions have been informed by the Armenian partners that Yerevan's decision was based on a number of considerations, including Armenia's deep ties with Russia and its specific regional circumstances.

Nevertheless, the Armenian authorities have clearly signalled their commitment to continue, promote and enhance their cooperation with the EU and to move forward the partnership in all possible areas, taking into consideration their recent policy choice. This commitment is shared by the EU side. Now that the AA/DCFTA is no longer an option, both sides agreed to launch reflections on the scope and legal basis for their future relations.

2. Armenia's situation is unique among Eastern Partnership countries. Ukraine, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova continue to demonstrate their commitment for initialling and signing the AA/DCFTA at the upcoming Eastern Partnership summit in Vilnius, despite recent undue external pressure which the EU finds unacceptable. Thus, the EU does not expect any 'domino effect' of Armenia's recent policy choice as concerns the relations with other members of the Eastern Partnership.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011370/13
alla Commissione
Gianni Vattimo (ALDE)
(4 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Regno Unito — eventuale uscita dalla Convenzione europea dei diritti dell'uomo

Il primo ministro del Regno Unito ha annunciato che presto il paese potrebbe uscire dalla Convenzione europea dei diritti dell'uomo (CEDU). Se tale ipotesi si realizza, può la Commissione precisare quanto segue:

1. il Regno Unito dovrà cessare di essere membro del Consiglio d'Europa?

2. il Regno Unito dovrà cessare di essere membro dell'UE?

3. l'UE si troverà in una situazione di inosservanza della CEDU, qualora il RegnoUnito, dopo aver agito in tal senso, restasse membro dell'UE?

Risposta di Viviane Reding a nome della Commissione
(21 novembre 2013)

La Commissione non ritiene opportuno esprimersi su eventuali dibattiti nazionali riguardanti un'ipotetica uscita di uno Stato membro dalla Convenzione europea dei diritti dell'uomo.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011370/13
to the Commission
Gianni Vattimo (ALDE)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Possible exit of the United Kingdom from the European Convention on Human Rights

The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom has announced that the UK may soon leave the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). If this were to happen, can the Commission confirm whether:

1. the UK would have to leave the Council of Europe?

2. the UK would have to leave the EU?

3. the EU would find itself in a state of non-compliance with the ECHR, if the UK remained in the EU after taking such action?

Answer given by Ms Reding on behalf of the Commission
(21 November 2013)

The Commission does not consider it appropriate to comment on any national discussions concerning a hypothetical situation concerning withdrawal from the European Convention on Human Rights by a Member State.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011371/13
alla Commissione
Elisabetta Gardini (PPE)
(4 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Immigrazione

Il 3 ottobre 2013 verrà ricordato come una delle giornate più tragiche sul fronte dell'immigrazione. Al largo dell'isola di Lampedusa, un barcone con a bordo 500 migranti ha preso fuoco e si è rovesciato in mezzo al mare. L'incidente ha provocato la morte di decine di persone (in questo momento il bilancio provvisorio parla di 90 morti e 250 dispersi), tra cui donne e bambini. I migranti hanno perso la vita nel disperato tentativo di salvarsi.

Gli sbarchi sulle coste italiane sono proseguiti senza soluzione di continuità, con centinaia di arrivi quotidiani, per tutta l'estate.

Le autorità italiane non si sono mai sottratte alle proprie responsabilità, accogliendo e prestando soccorso a chi, spesso, fugge da situazioni disperate.

In questo momento, con la particolare situazione politica di alcuni Stati arabi, il problema ha assunto dimensioni tali che risulta impossibile pensare che un singolo Stato membro possa garantire un'assistenza adeguata a tutti i migranti in arrivo.

Il Commissario Johannes Hahn ha detto che «L'UE deve vedere cosa fare per aiutare», confermando che quella delle tragedie del mare è una questione comunitaria.

Considerando il problema e le dichiarazioni di Hahn, si chiede:

1. Cosa intende fare la Commissione per rispondere efficacemente all'emergenza migranti?

2. Che provvedimenti intende adottare la Commissione per regolamentare e controllare il fenomeno dell'immigrazione?

Risposta di Cecilia Malmström a nome della Commissione
(9 dicembre 2013)

La Commissione nutre profonda preoccupazione per la situazione di Lampedusa e ne è prova la visita sull'isola del 9 ottobre 2013 da parte del presidente Barroso e della commissaria Malmström, in seguito al tragico incidente che ha causato la morte di oltre trecento persone. In tale circostanza la Commissione ha ribadito il suo pieno sostegno agli Stati membri che devono sostenere complesse operazioni di ricerca e salvataggio e accogliere un elevato numero di migranti. Questo sostegno si tradurrà, tra l'altro, in uno stanziamento complessivo di 30 milioni di euro per rafforzare il pattugliamento e migliorare il sistema di asilo in Italia. Detto stanziamento verrà messo a disposizione per potenziare la presenza di Frontex nella zona. I fondi supplementari andranno ad aggiungersi alle attività già esistenti dell'UE di supporto all'Italia, come il piano di sostegno speciale attivato dall'Ufficio europeo di sostegno per l'asilo.

In linea con le conclusioni del Consiglio «Giustizia e affari interni», la Commissione ha inoltre istituito una Task Force per il Mediterraneo che riunisce tutti gli Stati membri e le agenzie competenti dell'UE. A dicembre saranno presentati al Consiglio i risultati del suo lavoro, comprese le iniziative volte a evitare che simili tragedie si ripetano in futuro.

La Commissione intensificherà il proprio impegno per punire i trafficanti di esseri umani e fornirà assistenza agli Stati membri. La Commissione e Frontex cercheranno inoltre di coordinare al meglio i rispettivi sforzi per pattugliare le frontiere e salvare vite umane. Gli Stati membri sono inoltre incoraggiati a partecipare più attivamente alle attività di reinsediamento. Infine, l'Unione europea intende rafforzare le relazioni con i paesi limitrofi. A seguito della primavera araba, l'UE ha intrapreso dialoghi con numerosi paesi in materia di migrazione, mobilità e sicurezza. La firma del partenariato per la mobilità con il Marocco è un importante risultato di questo impegno e apre la strada a un rafforzamento della cooperazione.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011371/13
to the Commission
Elisabetta Gardini (PPE)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Immigration

3 October 2013 will be remembered as one of the most tragic days in immigration history. A boat with 500 migrants on board caught fire off the island of Lampedusa and capsized in the middle of the sea. Dozens of people died in the accident, some of them women and children (the provisional death toll stands at 90 at present, with a further 250 missing). The migrants died while trying desperately to save themselves.

Boats have been landing along the Italian coast without interruption throughout the summer, with hundreds of people arriving every day.

The Italian authorities have never tried to shirk their responsibilities and have taken in and provided assistance for people who are often fleeing from desperate situations.

With the political situation in some Arab states, the problem has now reached such a point that a single Member State cannot possibly be expected to provide adequate help for all of the immigrants who are arriving.

Commissioner Johannes Hahn has said that 'the EU must look at what can be done to help,' confirming that the problem of these tragedies at sea is an EU problem.

1. What does the Commission intend to do to deal effectively with the immigration crisis?

2. What provisions does the Commission intend to make to regulate and control the problem of immigration?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(9 December 2013)

The Commission is highly concerned with the situation of Lampedusa as shown by the visit President Barroso and Commissioner Malmström to the island on 9 October 2013 in the aftermath of the tragic event that led to the death of over 300 people. The Commission reiterated its full support to Member States having to undertake complex Search and Rescue operations and receiving large numbers of migrants, including by pledging a total of up to EUR 30 million for reinforcing patrols and strengthening the Italian asylum system. Funds will be made available to upgrade Frontex presence in the area. This will come on top of existing EU support for Italy, such as the Special Support Plan activated by the European Asylum Support Office.

In line with the conclusions of the Justice and Home Affairs Council, the Commission has also set up a Task Force for the Mediterranean bringing together all Member States and relevant EU agencies. The results of its work will be presented to the December Council, including actions to prevent similar tragedies in future.

The Commission will reinforce its efforts to target human smugglers and will provide assistance to Member States. The Commission and Frontex will also seek to a better coordination of efforts to patrol borders and save lives. Members States are also encouraged to take part in resettlement activities to a greater extent. Finally, the EU aims to strengthen the relationship with our neighbours. Since the Arab Spring, Dialogues on Migration, Mobility and Security have begun with a number of countries. The signing of the Mobility Partnership with Morocco is an important result of this effort and pave the way for increased cooperation.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-011372/13
adresată Comisiei (Vicepreședintelui/Înaltului Reprezentant)
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(4 octombrie 2013)

Subiect: VP/HR — Asistența acordată de UE pentru Somalia

La 24 septembrie 2013, primul ministru al Somaliei, în discursul său la Consiliul ONU pentru Drepturile Omului, a solicitat ajutor suplimentar în sprijinul combaterii amenințărilor grupului militant Al Shabaab, în urma raidului din țara vecină, Kenya. UE desfășoară în prezent trei inițiative ale Politicii comune de securitate și de apărare (PSAC) în zona Somaliei, și anume Operațiunea navală UE Atalanta, Misiunea de instruire a Uniunii Europene în Somalia (EUTM) și EUCAP NESTOR. UE oferă, de asemenea, asistență Somaliei în domenii precum dezvoltarea societății civile, ajutorul umanitar și educația.

1. Care este poziția UE cu privire la menținerea și/sau extinderea acestor programe?

2. Ce măsuri aplică în prezent UE pentru a preveni escaladarea amenințării teroriste reprezentată de gruparea Al Shabaab?

Răspuns dat de Înaltul Reprezentant /doamna vicepreședinte Ashton în numele Comisiei
(20 noiembrie 2013)

UE monitorizează și analizează în mod regulat misiunile PSAC. Menținerea și/sau extinderea acestora se decide în funcție de impactul fiecărei misiuni. Mandatul EUTM se prelungește până în martie 2015. Mandatul EUNAVFOR Atalanta se încheie la sfârșitul anului 2014. EUCAP Nestor a fost lansată în iulie 2012, având un mandat inițial de doi ani; iar în prezent se realizează o evaluare strategică bazată pe criterii de referință și obiective cuantificabile.

Abordarea globală a UE cu privire la Somalia are ca scop, printre altele, să prevină agravarea amenințării pe care o reprezintă Al Shabaab. Aceasta se concentrează pe sprijinul acordat guvernanței și consolidării instituțiilor și își propune să contribuie la rezolvarea conflictelor în curs și la evitarea posibilelor conflicte din viitor; aceasta se concentrează, de asemenea, asupra minimizării efectelor insecurității, cum ar fi pirateria, asupra susținerii creșterii economice și a cooperării regionale. Abordarea reunește într-un cadru unic eforturile noastre politice legate de dezvoltare și de misiunea PSAC, în vederea obținerii unui impact maxim.

Astfel cum demonstrează atacul de la Nairobi, eforturile pentru stabilizarea regiunii, în special în Somalia, sunt importante. Eforturile depuse în prezent includ sprijinul acordat AMISOM de către UE, misiunea UE de formare pentru forțele de securitate somaleze, precum și activități politice și de dezvoltare. Conferința de la Bruxelles din 16 septembrie privind un nou acord pentru Somalia a reprezentat o etapă importantă în abordarea celor mai importante priorități politice, socio-economice și în materie de securitate din Somalia. În plus, vom continua să promovăm punerea în aplicare a Planului de acțiune al UE de combatere a terorismului în Cornul Africii/ Yemen. Proiectele de combatere a finanțării terorismului și a extremismului violent sunt la fel de importante.

La un nivel mai larg, Forumul mondial privind combaterea terorismului (FGCT) reprezintă un cadru potrivit pentru coordonarea măsurilor de combatere a terorismului luate în urma atacului Westgate. UE este hotărâtă să își continue activitatea desfășurată în calitate de copreședinte al grupului de lucru al FGCT pentru Cornul Africii.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011372/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — EU assistance to Somalia

On 24 September 2013, the Prime Minister of Somalia addressed the UN Human Rights Council, calling for further aid to help fight the threat of action by the militant group al Shabaab, in the wake of the raid in neighbouring Kenya. The EU currently has three Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) initiatives active in the Somalia region, namely the EU naval operation Atalanta, the European Union Training Mission (EUTM) in Somalia, and EUCAP NESTOR. The EU also provides assistance to Somalia in the form of civil society development, humanitarian aid, and education.

1. What is the EU's stance on the maintenance and/or expansion of these programmes?

2. What measures is the EU implementing in order to prevent the escalation of the terror threat posed by al Shabaab?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(20 November 2013)

The EU regularly monitors and reviews CSDP missions. Their maintenance and / or expansion is decided in view of the impact of each mission. EUTM's mandate extends to March 2015. EUNAVFOR Atalanta is mandated until the end of 2014. EUCAP Nestor was launched in July 2012 for an initial mandate of two years; a strategic assessment based on benchmarks and measurable achievements is ongoing.

The EU's comprehensive approach to Somalia aims, *inter alia*, to prevent the escalation of the threat posed by Al Shabaab. It focuses on support to governance and institution building, and aims to help resolve ongoing conflicts and avoid potential future conflict; minimise effects of insecurity e.g. piracy; support economic growth; and support regional cooperation. It bundles our political, development and CSDP efforts in a single frame for maximum impact.

As the attack in Nairobi demonstrates, efforts to stabilise the region, especially Somalia, are important. Ongoing efforts includes EU support to Amisom, the EU training mission for the Somalian security forces, and political and development work. The Brussels Conference on a New Deal for Somalia of 16 September was a milestone for addressing the most critical political, security, and socioeconomic priorities in Somalia. In addition, we will continue to promote the implementation of EU Counter Terrorism Action Plan on Horn of Africa/Yemen. Equally important are projects to counter the financing of terrorism and violent extremism.

At a wider level, the Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF) will provide a good forum to coordinate counterterrorism measures in the aftermath of the Westgate attack. The EU is committed to continue the co-chairmanship of the GCTF Horn of Africa working group.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-011373/13
adresată Comisiei (Vicepreședintelui/Înaltului Reprezentant)
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(4 octombrie 2013)

Subiect: VP/HR — Poziția cu privire la decretul menit să protejeze politicieni indieni care au comis infracțiuni

La 24 septembrie 2013, Cabinetul Guvernului indian a emis un decret pentru a proteja politicienii condamnați pentru infracțiuni care merg de la delapidare până la luare de mită sau chiar crimă. Această măsură ar permite politicienilor recunoscuți vinovați să rămână în funcție și să participe la următoarele alegeri din mai 2014.

Un studiu realizat de către Asociația pentru reforme democratice a arătat că, de la ultimele alegeri generale din 2009, aproximativ 30% din oamenii politici ai Guvernului indian, de la nivel federal și statal, au fost acuzați de infracțiuni penale. În iulie 2013, Curtea Supremă a Indiei a prezentat un aviz conform căruia o mare parte a acestora ar fi trebuit demiși din funcție. Reacția partidului majoritar în Congres a fost de a încerca să impună un act legislativ prin care să-și protejeze membrii; deoarece Parlamentul nu s-a mișcat suficient de repede în acest sens, Cabinetul a hotărât să intervină.

1. Având în vedere această reformă, cum va evalua Înaltul Reprezentant în viitor programele de ajutor și de parteneriat cu Guvernul indian?

2. Care este poziția pe care Înaltul Reprezentant o va adopta cu privire la această reformă și la faptul că ea permite practici corupte?

Răspuns dat de Înaltul Reprezentant/ dna vicepreședinte Ashton în numele Comisiei
(21 noiembrie 2013)

La 2 octombrie 2013, guvernul indian a decis să retragă atât ordonanța, cât și proiectul de lege controversate vizând să protejeze parlamentarii și legiuitorii care făcuseră obiectul unei condamnări, la care se referă distinsul membru în întrebarea sa. La nivel parlamentar, procesul de retragere a proiectului de lege va avea loc în sesiunea de iarnă a Parlamentului Indiei.

Pe măsură ce India se dezvoltă și devine o țară cu venituri medii, UE elimină treptat ajutorul pentru dezvoltare bilaterală destinat țării, canalizat prin Instrumentul de cooperare pentru dezvoltare. Pentru perioada 2014-2020 nu sunt prevăzute noi angajamente financiare.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011373/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Stance on executive order to protect criminal politicians in India

On 24 September 2013, the Cabinet of the Indian Government released an executive order to protect politicians convicted of crimes ranging from embezzlement to bribery and even murder. The measure would allow the convicted politicians to retain their positions and take part in the next election cycle in May 2014.

In a study produced by the Association for Democratic Reforms, around 30% of politicians at the federal and state levels of the Indian Government were found to have been charged of criminal offences since the most recent general election in 2009. In July 2013, the Supreme Court of India handed down an opinion that would have expelled many of these members from their seats. In response, the ruling Congress Party attempted to force through legislation protecting its members; as the parliament moved too slowly for its needs, however, the Cabinet decided to take action.

1. In light of this reform, how will the High Representative evaluate aid and partnership programmes with the Indian Government in the future?

2. What position is the High Representative going to take on this reform and the fact that it allows corrupt practices?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(21 November 2013)

The Indian Government decided on 2 October 2013 to withdraw both the controversial ordinance and the Bill that sought to protect convicted parliamentarians and legislators, to which the Honourable Member refers in her question. At the parliamentray level, the process of withdrawing the Bill will be taken up during the Winter Session of the Indian Parliament.

As India develops to become a middle-income country, the EU is phasing out bilateral development aid to the country, channelled through the Development Cooperation Instrument. No new financial commitments are foreseen for the 2014-2020 period.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011374/13
to the Commission
Phil Prendergast (S&D)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Regulation of fuel surcharge pricing

Could the Commission indicate how the pricing of airline fuel surcharges is regulated and implemented in the internal market?

Could the Commission further explain how discrepancies between fuel surcharge prices and fuel prices are monitored, whilst taking airline hedging positions into account, for the purposes of preventing abuses of this instrument to the detriment of consumers?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(26 November 2013)

Air Services Regulation ([1]) (EC) 1008/2008 in its Articles 22-23 makes clear that air carriers have pricing freedom and imposes an obligation on air carriers to include the applicable conditions and display all taxes, charges, fees and surcharges — whether on fuel, security or other matters — which are unavoidable and foreseeable at the time of publication. The regulation does not restrict air carriers in setting price structure.

Hedging of fuel is a business matter. The Commission does not intervene in the contractual relationship between airlines and fuel suppliers or airlines and passengers in this respect and does not monitor the alleged discrepancies.

If a consumer has the view that such practice of air carriers is abusive, she/he is encouraged to contact the national enforcement bodies that have power to investigate the case.

([1]) OJ L 293, 31.10.2008.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011375/13
to the Commission
Phil Prendergast (S&D)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: European Schools system

Could the Commission indicate what action has been taken further to the European Ombudsman's finding of maladministration in his decision on complaint 814/2010/JF against the Commission, and to the conclusions of the 3239th Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council meeting of 16 and 17 May 2003, at which a number of Member States expressed the view that 'there are serious underlying problems with the European School system's current model'?

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(21 November 2013)

The Commission sent its comments on the findings of the European Ombudsman in the case 814/2010/JF on 6 July 2012.

The Commission did not share the view that there was an instance of maladministration as found by the Ombudsman. The governments of the Member States (MS) of the EU govern jointly the European Schools (ES) in the Board of Governors (BoG). In the Board, the Commission has one vote and thus it cannot be held the sole responsible for the decisions concerning the ES.

The Commission informed the Ombudsman that numerous initiatives had already been taken in order to improve the management of the European Schools System (ESS). Amongst others, it was proposed to include the ES in the OECD PISA study which would present a basis for comparison with the MS' national education systems and evaluating the ESS according to the same criteria, and at the same time represent a cost efficient way of an external evaluation of the system.

Following the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council meeting of May 2013, an extraordinary meeting of the BoG took place on 23 September 2013, where the Board discussed the issue of the cost-sharing. The Secretary-General of the ES proposed a structural solution, which was widely accepted by the MS. It is planned that the EYCS Council will discuss the proposal on 25 November 2013 if a compromise cannot be found before. The Convention of the ES foresees a possibility for a financial compensation by the MS. The Commission has actively participated in the process and insists on the necessity to find a sustainable solution. In the meantime, the Commission will also address short-term issues such as the length of contracts of locally recruited teachers.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011376/13
to the Commission
Phil Prendergast (S&D)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Production and distribution of pornographic content in the EU

Could the Commission outline what provisions of the *acquis communautaire* are applicable to the production and distribution of pornographic content in the various media used?

What competence, scope and necessity does the Commission envisage for further action to be taken at EU level, in order to regulate this industry in general, as well as the production and distribution of pornographic material depicting the enactment of scenes of a violent nature?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(15 November 2013)

As to the production of pornographic content, there are no specific rules at EU level. Concerning the distribution of such material, the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) contains specific rules to protect minors. Concerning linear audiovisual media services the AVMSD provides a total ban for programmes which might seriously impair minors (i.e. pornography or gratuitous violence). Content which might simply be 'harmful' to minors can only be transmitted when it is ensured — by selecting the time of the broadcast or by any technical measure (e.g. encryption) — that minors will not normally hear or see them. When such programmes are not encrypted, they must be preceded by an acoustic warning or made clearly identifiable throughout their duration by means of a visual symbol.

As to on-demand services, programmes which 'might seriously impair' the development of minors are allowed, but they may only be made available in such a way that minors will not normally hear or see them ([1]). This could be done by the use of PIN codes or other age verification systems. The AVMS Directive does not define notions of pornography and gratuitous violence and the kind of programmes which are likely to impair the development of minors. This remains within the competence of the Member States, in line with the subsidiarity principle.

In response to the Commission's call on creating a CEO for a Better Internet for Kids coalition, 28 leading companies have committed to deliver concrete technological solutions by the end of 2013 in terms notably of parental control, privacy, content rating and effective reporting tools.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/avpolicy/reg/tvwf/protection/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011377/13
to the Commission
Phil Prendergast (S&D)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Gambling on board aircraft

Concerning the sale of lottery-type scratch cards on board aircraft, could the Commission indicate whether the national regulatory frameworks applicable to this service qualify it as gambling, and whether these frameworks are in compliance with EC law?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(2 December 2013)

The directive on electronic commerce gives a definition of gambling as those activities which involve wagering a stake with monetary value in games of chance, including lotteries and betting transactions ([1]). Scratch cards can be considered as being covered by such definition. However, it is for the Member States, in full compliance with the principles established by the Court of Justice of the EU, to determine the organisation of the gambling offer. Member States can therefore establish rules governing lottery-type scratch cards on board of aircrafts which fall under their jurisdiction, provided that these rules are in line with EC law and in particular with the requirements of non-discrimination and consistency ([2]).

As far as EU consumer law is concerned Directive 2005/29/EC ([3]) prohibits traders from providing false or otherwise deceiving information to consumers in order to induce them to enter transactions they would not have entered otherwise. Furthermore, Annex I to the directive prohibits, in all circumstances, the practice of creating the false impression that the consumer has won or will win a prize if, in fact there is no prize or taking any action in claiming the prize is subject to the consumer uncurring a cost (No 31 of Annex I). In 2012, the Court of Justice clarified that scratch cards informing the consumer that he had won a prize and needed to call a premium rate number to claim it were breaching No 31, because the consumer had to incur a cost, even *de minimis* ([4]).

([1]) Directive 2000/31/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 8 June 2000 on certain legal aspects of information society services, in particular electronic commerce, in the internal market, Article 1 (5), under d.
([2]) Judgment of 8.9.2010 Stoß & Others, C-316/07 ECR [2010] I-8069.
([3]) OJ L. 149, 11.6.2005, p. 22.
([4]) Judgment of 18 October 2012, Case C-428/11 Purely Creative.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011378/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(4 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Attentato terroristico contro la comunità cristiana in Pakistan

Il 22 settembre nella città di Peshawar in Pakistan, al termine della funzione domenicale in una chiesa anglicana, si è consumato un attacco terroristico contro i fedeli cristiani ad opera di due terroristi suicidi. Il bilancio ancora non definitivo è di 81 morti e oltre 145 feriti. L'attentato è stato rivendicato dal gruppo fondamentalista islamico Jandullah, legato al gruppo dei talebani del Pakistan e vicino all'organizzazione di Al Qaida.

Rivendicazioni successive all'attentato, provenienti dallo stesso gruppo, hanno reso noto che attacchi di questo tipo continueranno e avranno come obiettivi tutti i non musulmani in Pakistan.

Può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

— è al corrente dei fatti sopra descritti?

— Come intende agire per tutelare la comunità cristiana in Pakistan?

— Considerando l'attacco al centro commerciale Westgate a Nairobi perpetrato nello stesso giorno, ritiene che sia in atto una strategia congiunta mirata ad innescare una escalation negli attacchi contro le comunità cristiane nel mondo?

Risposta dell'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente Catherine Ashton a nome della Commissione
(19 novembre 2013)

L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente è al corrente del tremendo attentato terroristico contro la comunità cristiana a Peshawar. L'AR/VP ha immediatamente rilasciato una dichiarazione di condanna, ha chiesto che i responsabili fossero perseguiti e ha espresso le sue condoglianze alle famiglie delle vittime.

La difficile situazione di tutte le minoranze in Pakistan è al centro del dialogo sui diritti umani tra l'UE e il governo pakistano. L'Unione continuerà a supportare gli sforzi del Pakistan per far fronte alla minaccia terroristica. Il Consiglio «Affari esteri» del giugno 2013 ha preso atto con preoccupazione del perpetuarsi di attentati terroristici in Pakistan e ha ribadito l'impegno deciso dell'Unione europea a cooperare con il Pakistan per affrontare la minaccia comune del terrorismo sia all'interno che all'esterno delle sue frontiere e perseguire i responsabili. L'Unione continuerà ad affrontare queste problematiche con le autorità pakistane.

L'AR/VP non ritiene che sia in atto una strategia congiunta mirata ad innescare un'escalation di attentati terroristici contro le comunità cristiane nel mondo e non è al corrente di alcun legame operativo tra gli eventi in Pakistan e in Kenya. Tuttavia molti gruppi terroristici continuano a prendere di mira le comunità cristiane, e altre comunità percepite come minoritarie, per cercare di provocare tensioni e violenze intercomunitarie.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011378/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Terrorist attack against the Christian community in Pakistan

On 22 September 2013, two suicide bombers carried out a terrorist attack against Christian worshippers after a Sunday service in an Anglican church in the city of Peshawar, Pakistan. The as yet unconfirmed death toll was 81 people killed and more than 145 injured. The fundamentalist Islamist group Jandullah, which has links with the Pakistani Taliban and is close to Al-Qa'ida, claimed responsibility for the attack.

Claims made after the attack by the same group also stated that attacks of this kind would continue and would be targeted at all non-Muslims in Pakistan.

1. Is the Commission aware of these facts?

2. What action will it take to protect the Christian community in Pakistan?

3. In view of the attack on the Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi, carried out on the same day, does the Commission believe that a coordinated strategy is under way to escalate attacks against Christian communities in the world?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(19 November 2013)

The HR/VP is aware of the appalling attack on Christians in Peshawar. She immediately issued a statement condemning it, called for the perpetrators to be brought to justice, and offered condolences to the bereaved families.

The vulnerable situation of all minorities in Pakistan is at the forefront of human rights concerns raised by the EU in dialogue with the Government of Pakistan. We are continuing to support Pakistan in its efforts to tackle the threat from terrorism. The June 2013 Foreign Affairs Council noted with concern the continuing terrorist attacks in Pakistan, and reiterated the EU's unequivocal commitment to working with Pakistan to address the shared threat from terrorism both inside and outside its borders, including bringing perpetrators to justice. We will continue to raise these issues with the Pakistani authorities.

We do not believe that there is a coordinated strategy to escalate terrorist attacks against Christian communities worldwide, and are not aware of any operational link between events in Pakistan and Kenya. However, many terrorist groups continue to target Christian communities, and other perceived minority communities, in order to try to provoke inter-communal discord and violence.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011379/13
al Consiglio
Lara Comi (PPE)
(4 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Principio di solidarietà nelle politiche di immigrazione

Gli operatori del settore che gestiscono il fenomeno dell'immigrazione, i cittadini italiani e l'intero Paese si trovano per l'ennesima volta inermi di fronte all'ennesima tragedia che colpisce profughi al largo di Lampedusa.

Lo Stato Italiano, per bocca di tutti i suoi rappresentanti a tutti i livelli, ha più volte sottoposto la grave situazione all'attenzione dell'UE.

L'Italia è impossibilitata a evitare che ulteriori incidenti possano ripetersi in futuro.

Si tratta di gravi violazioni dei diritti umani, in particolare il diritto alla vita, che non attiene soltanto ai cittadini europei ma ad ogni essere umano, qualunque sia la sua nazionalità.

L'UE ha tra i suoi obiettivi il rispetto dei diritti umani.

Come ribadito in più occasioni, Lampedusa e l'intera area circostante non rappresentano solo il confine sud di un singolo Paese ma dell'intera Unione europea.

Non è più tollerabile l'insufficienza o l'inidoneità della risposta europea nella gestione di questi fenomeni e nel porre in essere le condizioni affinché ciò venga evitato, pena la credibilità stessa del progetto di integrazione europea.

La solidarietà non deve più restare un principio scritto e acclamato ma una risposta concreta ed efficace per la soluzione delle problematiche.

Lo scenario attuale ci mostra come il principio di solidarietà sia il punto debole dell'UE, non solo nelle politiche sull'immigrazione, ma anche nelle politiche di austerity.

Tutto ciò premesso, può il Consiglio far sapere:

1. se ritiene opportuno un atto di responsabilità da parte di tutte le Istituzioni competenti per individuare le soluzioni volte a risolvere i problemi contingenti e l'immediata messa a punto di una strategia a lungo termine davvero efficace che sia in grado di prevenire il fenomeno;

2. cosa ne pensa della proposta di avviare un immediato dibattito per stabilire come declinare il principio di solidarietà in termini pratici ed efficaci?

Risposta
(23 dicembre 2013)

Il Consiglio europeo ed il Consiglio hanno affrontato la questione del sostegno agli Stati membri che si trovano in prima fila alle frontiere esterne e sono confrontati ad una forte pressione migratoria, prestando particolare attenzione alla regione mediterranea.

Nel patto europeo sull'immigrazione e l'asilo ([1])il Consiglio europeo ha dichiarato che: «*Gli Stati membri esposti, per la loro situazione geografica, a un afflusso di immigranti o che dispongono di mezzi limitati devono poter contare sulla solidarietà effettiva dell'Unione europea*.»

Nel programma di Stoccolma ([2])il Consiglio europeo ha chiesto «*di elaborare un quadro politico dell'Unione esauriente e sostenibile in materia di migrazione e asilo che, in uno spirito di solidarietà, consenta di gestire in modo adeguato e intraprendente l'oscillazione dei flussi migratori e di affrontare situazioni analoghe a quella attuale alle frontiere esterne meridionali*.»

([1]) 13440/08 ASIM 72.
([2]) 5731/10 CO EUR-PREP 2 JAI 81 POLGEN 8.

Il 25 e 26 febbraio 2010 il Consiglio ha adottato conclusioni su 29 misure volte a rafforzare la protezione delle frontiere esterne e a combattere l'immigrazione clandestina ([3]) in cui il Consiglio ha sottolineato «*la necessità di condividere e valutare le analisi dei continui arrivi clandestini di migranti alle frontiere marittime meridionali, e alle frontiere terrestri orientali, come dimostrano gli ultimi avvenimenti nella regione del Mediterraneo, e del traffico di migranti, nonché della tratta di persone, con le tragiche conseguenze che spesso ne derivano; e di adottare immediatamente una serie di misure, nel breve e nel medio termine, per fronteggiare tali problematiche*». Il Consiglio ha sorvegliato l'attuazione delle 29 misure da parte dei vari interessati.

Nel 2011, all'epoca della primavera araba, il Consiglio ha adottato conclusioni relative alla gestione della migrazione dai paesi del vicinato meridionale ([4]). In particolare, per quanto riguarda la solidarietà, il Consiglio «*ribadisce la necessità di dimostrare solidarietà concreta e autentica agli Stati membri esposti più direttamente ai flussi migratori e chiede all'UE e agli Stati membri di continuare a fornire il necessario sostegno a seconda dell'evolversi della situazione, tra l'altro assistendo le autorità locali degli Stati membri più colpiti nell'affrontare le ripercussioni immediate dei flussi migratori sull'economia e sulle infrastrutture locali*».

Nel marzo 2012 il Consiglio GAI ha adottato conclusioni che istituiscono un quadro comune per una reale e concreta solidarietà nei confronti degli Stati membri i cui sistemi di asilo subiscono particolari pressioni, anche a causa di flussi migratori misti ([5]). In tali conclusioni si è concordato di istituire un quadro comune per una reale e concreta solidarietà basato sui seguenti principi applicabili tra gli Stati membri dell'UE: solidarietà attraverso responsabilità e fiducia reciproca; solidarietà attraverso un meccanismo di allarme rapido, di preparazione e di gestione delle crisi nell'ambito del sistema di Dublino; solidarietà attraverso la cooperazione preventiva; solidarietà in situazioni di emergenza; solidarietà attraverso la cooperazione rafforzata tra l'UESA e FRONTEX; solidarietà finanziaria; solidarietà attraverso la ricollocazione; solidarietà attraverso la direttiva sulla protezione temporanea; trattamento comune delle domande di asilo al livello UE come possibile strumento di solidarietà; solidarietà nel settore dei rimpatri e solidarietà attraverso il rafforzamento della cooperazione con i principali paesi di transito, di origine e di primo asilo.

Il quadro legislativo che il Consiglio e il Parlamento europeo stanno mettendo in atto, in particolare il sistema europeo comune di asilo e le misure adottate nel settore della gestione delle frontiere, contribuisce a sua volta all'attuazione del principio di solidarietà.

Il 2 dicembre 2013 il sistema europeo di sorveglianza delle frontiere (EUROSUR) ([6]) diventerà operativo alle frontiere esterne meridionali ed orientali dell'UE. EUROSUR fornirà l'infrastruttura e gli strumenti necessari per migliorare la conoscenza situazionale e la capacità di reazione degli Stati membri nell'individuazione e nella prevenzione dell'immigrazione clandestina e della criminalità transfrontaliera e contribuirà a garantire protezione e a salvare le vite dei migranti alle frontiere esterne.

Per quanto riguarda i fatti più recenti, nella sessione del 7 e 8 ottobre 2013, il Consiglio si è detto essere favorevole all'istituzione di una task force per il Mediterraneo il cui obiettivo è quello di valutare la situazione nella regione mediterranea e le necessità degli Stati membri alle frontiere esterne. La task force dovrà suggerire a breve termine misure concrete e operative per impedire il ripetersi di tali tragici eventi e, a medio termine, considerare i futuri sviluppi delle politiche.

Nella riunione del 24 e 25 ottobre 2013 il Consiglio europeo ha affrontato il caso di Lampedusa ed ha sottolineato che, sulla base dell'imperativo della prevenzione e della protezione e ispirandosi al principio di solidarietà e di equa ripartizione della responsabilità, occorre intraprendere un'azione decisa per prevenire la perdita di vite in mare e per evitare che tali tragedie umane si verifichino nuovamente. In tale contesto il Consiglio europeo ha chiesto di rafforzare le attività di Frontex nel Mediterraneo e lungo le frontiere sudorientali dell'UE. Ha altresì invitato la task force per il Mediterraneo, di recente istituzione, guidata dalla Commissione europea e comprendente Stati membri, agenzie dell'UE e il SEAE, a individuare — sulla base dei principi di prevenzione, protezione e solidarietà — le azioni prioritarie per un utilizzo a breve termine più efficiente delle politiche e degli strumenti europei. La Commissione riferirà al Consiglio nella sessione del 5 e 6 dicembre 2013 in merito ai lavori della task force al fine di prendere decisioni operative. La presidenza riferirà al Consiglio europeo a dicembre.

([3]) 6975/10 ASIM 33 FRONT 24 COMIX 158.
([4]) 8710/1/11 ASIM 33 COMIX 213.
([5]) 7115/12 ASIM 20 FRONT 30.
([6]) PE-CONS 56/13.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011379/13
to the Council
Lara Comi (PPE)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Principle of solidarity in immigration policy

Once again, the professionals responsible for handling immigration, the Italian public and the whole country find themselves helpless in the face of the latest tragedy to hit refugees off the coast of Lampedusa.

The Italian Government has brought this serious situation to the EU's attention several times, via all of its representatives at every level.

Italy cannot prevent more incidents like this from occurring in the future.

These are serious violations of human rights, in particular the right to life, which belongs not only to European citizens but to all human beings, whatever their nationality.

Respect for human rights is one of the EU's objectives.

As has been stressed on many occasions, Lampedusa and the whole surrounding area constitute the southern border of the European Union as a whole, not just of one country.

The inadequacy and inappropriateness of the EU's response to managing these problems and taking steps to prevent their occurrence can no longer be tolerated and jeopardise the credibility of the European project itself.

Solidarity must not remain a principle in words and on paper only, but must be put into practice effectively to solve problems.

The current state of affairs demonstrates that the principle of solidarity is the EU's weak point, both in the area of immigration policy and in that of austerity policy.

1. Does the Council believe it would be appropriate for all of the relevant institutions to show some responsibility by finding solutions to the immediate problems and devising a long-term strategy immediately that would be genuinely effective and capable of preventing this problem?

2. Does the Council think that discussions should be started immediately to decide how the principle of solidarity should be expressed in real, practical terms?

Reply
(23 December 2013)

The European Council and the Council have addressed the issue of supporting those Member States in the front line at the external borders who face strong migratory pressure, devoting particular attention to the Mediterranean region.

In the European Pact on Asylum and Immigration ([1]) the European Council stated that 'Those Member States whose geographical location exposes them to influxes of immigrants, or whose resources are limited, should be able to count on the effective solidarity of the European Union.'.

In the Stockholm Programme ([2]), the European Council called 'for the development of a comprehensive and sustainable Union migration and asylum policy framework, which in a spirit of solidarity can adequately and proactively manage fluctuations in migration flows and address situations such as the present one at the Southern external borders.'.

([1]) 13440/08 ASIM 72.
([2]) 5731/10 CO EUR-PREP 2 JAI 81 POLGEN 8.

On 25 and 26 February 2010, the Council adopted Conclusions on 29 measures for reinforcing the protection of the external borders and combating illegal immigration ([3]) in which the Council stressed 'the need to share and assess analysis of the continuing illegal arrivals of migrants at the southern maritime borders, as well as the eastern land borders, as shown in particular by recent events in the Mediterranean area, and of the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings, which often have tragic consequences; and to take a series of measures immediately, in the short term and medium term, in order to address the challenges'. The Council has monitored the implementation of the 29 measures by the different actors involved.

At the time of the Arab Spring in 2011, the Council adopted a set of conclusions on the management of migration from the Southern Neighbourhood ([4]). In particular as regards solidarity, the Council 'reaffirms the need for genuine and concrete solidarity towards Member States most directly concerned by migratory movements and calls on the EU and its Member States to continue providing the necessary support as the situation evolves, such as by assisting the local authorities of the most affected Member States in addressing the immediate repercussions of migratory flows on the local economy and infrastructure'.

In March 2012, the JHA Council adopted Conclusions establishing a Common Framework for genuine and practical solidarity towards Member States facing particular pressures on their asylum systems including through mixed migration flows ([5]). In these Conclusions it was agreed to establish a common framework for genuine and practical solidarity consisting of the following principles applicable among EU Member States: solidarity through responsibility and mutual trust; solidarity through a mechanism for early warning, preparedness and crisis management within the Dublin system; solidarity through preventive cooperation; solidarity in emergency situations; solidarity through strengthened cooperation between EASO and Frontex; financial solidarity; solidarity through relocation; solidarity through the Temporary Protection Directive; joint EU processing of asylum claims as a possible tool of solidarity; solidarity in the area of returns; and solidarity through strengthened cooperation with key countries of transit, origin and first countries of asylum.

The legislative framework that the Council and the European Parliament are putting in place, in particular the Common European Asylum System and the measures taken in the area of border management, also contributes to the implementation of the principle of solidarity.

On 2 December 2013, the European Border Surveillance System (Eurosur) ([6]) will become operational at the EU southern and eastern external borders. Eurosur will provide the infrastructure and tools needed to improve Member States' situational awareness and reaction capability when detecting and preventing irregular migration and cross-border crime and will contribute to ensuring the protection and saving the lives of migrants at the external borders.

With reference to the most recent events, at its meeting on 7 and 8 October 2013 the Council expressed its support for the establishment of a Task Force for the Mediterranean which has the objective of assessing the situation in the Mediterranean region and the needs of the Member States at the external borders. The aim is for the Task Force to suggest concrete and operational measures in the short term to prevent such tragic occurrences from happening again and to consider future policy developments in the medium term.

At its meeting on 24 and 25 October 2013 the European Council addressed the Lampedusa case and stressed that, based on the imperative of prevention and protection and guided by the principle of solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility, determined action should be taken in order to prevent the loss of lives at sea and to avoid such human tragedies happening again. In this framework, the European Council called for the reinforcement of Frontex activities in the Mediterranean and along the south-eastern borders of the EU. It also invited the newly established Task Force for the Mediterranean, led by the European Commission and involving Member States, EU agencies and the EEAS, to identify — based on the principles of prevention, protection and solidarity — priority actions for a more efficient short-term use of European policies and tools. The Commission will report to the Council at its meeting of 5 and 6 December 2013 on the work of the Task Force with a view to taking operational decisions. The Presidency will report to the European Council in December.

([3]) 6975/10 ASIM 33 FRONT 24 COMIX 158.
([4]) 8710/2/11 ASIM 33 COMIX 213.
([5]) 7115/12 ASIM 20 FRONT 30.
([6]) PE-CONS 56/13.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011380/13
alla Commissione
Lara Comi (PPE)
(4 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Principio di solidarietà nell politiche di immigrazione

Gli operatori del settore che gestiscono il fenomeno dell'immigrazione, i cittadini italiani e l'intero Paese si trovano per l'ennesima volta inermi di fronte all'ennesima tragedia che colpisce profughi al largo di Lampedusa.

Lo Stato Italiano, per bocca di tutti i suoi rappresentanti a tutti i livelli, ha più volte sottoposto la grave situazione all'attenzione dell'UE.

L'Italia è impossibilitata a evitare che ulteriori incidenti possano ripetersi in futuro.

Si tratta di gravi violazioni dei diritti umani, in particolare il diritto alla vita, che non attiene soltanto ai cittadini europei ma ad ogni essere umano, qualunque sia la sua nazionalità.

L'UE ha tra i suoi obiettivi il rispetto dei diritti umani.

Come ribadito in più occasioni, Lampedusa e l'intera area circostante non rappresentano solo il confine sud di un singolo Paese ma dell'intera Unione europea.

Non è più tollerabile l'insufficienza o l'inidoneità della risposta europea nella gestione di questi fenomeni e nel porre in essere le condizioni affinché ciò venga evitato, pena la credibilità stessa del progetto di integrazione europea.

La solidarietà non deve più restare un principio scritto e acclamato ma una risposta concreta ed efficace per la soluzione delle problematiche.

Lo scenario attuale ci mostra come il principio di solidarietà sia il punto debole dell'UE, non solo nelle politiche sull'immigrazione, ma anche nelle politiche di austerity.

Tutto ciò premesso, può la Commissione far sapere:

1. se ritiene che la strategia a lungo termine vada rivista, alla luce dei continui sbarchi e delle difficoltà che essi comportano per gli Stati membri interessati;

2. cosa ne pensa del fatto di stimolare un immediato dibattito nelle sedi competenti per stabilire come declinare il principio di solidarietà in termini pratici ed efficaci?

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011381/13
alla Commissione
Lara Comi (PPE)
(4 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Principio di solidarietà nelle politiche di immigrazione

Gli operatori del settore che gestiscono il fenomeno dell'immigrazione, i cittadini italiani e l'intero Paese si trovano per l'ennesima volta inermi di fronte all'ennesima tragedia che colpisce profughi al largo di Lampedusa.

Lo Stato Italiano, per bocca di tutti i suoi rappresentanti a tutti i livelli, ha più volte sottoposto la grave situazione all'attenzione dell'UE.

L'Italia è impossibilitata a evitare che ulteriori incidenti possano ripetersi in futuro.

Si tratta di gravi violazioni dei diritti umani, in particolare il diritto alla vita, che non attiene soltanto ai cittadini europei ma ad ogni essere umano, qualunque sia la sua nazionalità.

L'UE ha tra i suoi obiettivi il rispetto dei diritti umani.

Come ribadito in più occasioni, Lampedusa e l'intera area circostante non rappresentano solo il confine sud di un singolo Paese ma dell'intera Unione europea.

Non è più tollerabile l'insufficienza o l'inidoneità della risposta europea nella gestione di questi fenomeni e nel porre in essere le condizioni affinché ciò venga evitato, pena la credibilità stessa del progetto di integrazione europea.

La solidarietà non deve più restare un principio scritto e acclamato ma una risposta concreta ed efficace per la soluzione delle problematiche.

Lo scenario attuale ci mostra come il principio di solidarietà sia il punto debole dell'UE, non solo nelle politiche sull'immigrazione, ma anche nelle politiche di austerity.

Tutto ciò premesso, può la Commissione far sapere:

1. se ritiene opportuno un atto di responsabilità da parte di tutte le Istituzioni competenti per individuare le soluzioni volte a risolvere i problemi contingenti e l'immediata messa a punto di una strategia a lungo termine davvero efficace che sia in grado di prevenire il fenomeno;

2. cosa ne pensa della proposta di avviare un immediato dibattito in seno al Consiglio per stabilire come declinare il principio di solidarietà in termini pratici ed efficaci?

Risposta congiunta di Cecilia Malmström a nome della Commissione
(5 dicembre 2013)

La Commissione è profondamente preoccupata dai recenti avvenimenti a largo di Lampedusa, come hanno testimoniato il Presidente Barroso e la Commissaria Malmström recandosi sull'isola il 9 ottobre 2013, all'indomani della tragica morte di più di trecento migranti. In tale occasione la Commissione ha ribadito il suo pieno sostegno agli Stati membri che devono intraprendere difficili operazioni di ricerca e salvataggio, offrendo fra l'altro un importo totale di 30 milioni di EUR per rafforzare il pattugliamento e il sistema di asilo in Italia. Parte di questi fondi sarà impiegata per potenziare la presenza di Frontex nella zona. Questo aiuto si aggiungerà alle attività di sostegno dell'Unione europea già in corso specificamente destinate all'Italia, come il piano di sostegno speciale attuato dall'Ufficio europeo di sostegno per l'asilo.

In seguito alle discussioni svoltesi nell'ultimo Consiglio «Giustizia e affari interni», una Task Force specifica per il Mediterraneo ha iniziato a operare sotto la presidenza della Commissione, riunendo tutti gli Stati membri, le agenzie competenti dell'UE e altri responsabili. Tale Task Force affronterà la questione sollevata dall'onorevole parlamentare. La Commissione presenterà i risultati dei suoi lavori al Consiglio GAI di dicembre.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011380/13
to the Commission
Lara Comi (PPE)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Principle of solidarity in immigration policy

Once again, the professionals responsible for handling immigration, the Italian public and the whole country find themselves helpless in the face of the latest tragedy to hit refugees off the coast of Lampedusa.

The Italian Government has brought this serious situation to the EU's attention several times, via all of its representatives at every level.

Italy cannot prevent more incidents like this from occurring in the future.

These are serious violations of human rights, in particular the right to life, which belongs not only to European citizens but to all human beings, whatever their nationality.

Respect for human rights is one of the EU's objectives.

As has been stressed on many occasions, Lampedusa and the whole surrounding area constitute the southern border of the European Union as a whole, not just of one country.

The inadequacy and inappropriateness of the EU's response to managing these problems and taking steps to prevent their occurrence can no longer be tolerated and jeopardise the credibility of the European project itself.

Solidarity must not remain a principle in words and on paper only, but must be put into practice effectively to solve problems.

The current state of affairs demonstrates that the principle of solidarity is the EU's weak point, both in the area of immigration policy and in that of austerity policy.

1. Does the Commission think that its long-term strategy should be reviewed, in the light of the continuous boat arrivals and the problems that these entail for the Member States concerned?

2. Does the Commission think that discussions should be started immediately at the appropriate levels to establish how the principle of solidarity should be expressed in real, practical terms?

Question for written answer E-011381/13
to the Commission
Lara Comi (PPE)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Principle of solidarity in immigration policy

Once again, the professionals responsible for handling immigration, the Italian public and the whole country find themselves helpless in the face of the latest tragedy to hit refugees off the coast of Lampedusa.

The Italian Government has brought this serious situation to the EU's attention several times, via all of its representatives at every level.

Italy cannot prevent more incidents like this from occurring in the future.

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As has been stressed on many occasions, Lampedusa and the whole surrounding area constitute the southern border of the European Union as a whole, not just of one country.

The inadequacy and inappropriateness of the EU's response to managing these problems and taking steps to prevent their occurrence can no longer be tolerated and jeopardise the credibility of the European project itself.

Solidarity must not remain a principle in words and on paper only, but must be put into practice effectively to solve problems.

The current state of affairs demonstrates that the principle of solidarity is the EU's weak point, both in the area of immigration policy and in that of austerity policy.

1. Does the Commission believe it would be appropriate for all of the relevant institutions to show some responsibility by finding solutions to the immediate problems and devising a long-term strategy immediately that would be genuinely effective and capable of preventing this problem?

2. Does the Commission think that the Council should start discussions immediately, to decide how the principle of solidarity should be expressed in real, practical terms?

Joint answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(5 December 2013)

The Commission is deeply concerned by the recent events off the coast of Lampedusa, as demonstrated by the visit President Barroso and Commissioner Malmström paid to the island on the 9 October 2013 in the aftermath of the tragic death of over 300 migrants. On that occasion the Commission reiterated its full support to Member States having to undertake complex Search and Rescue operations including by pledging a total of EUR 30 million for the reinforcement of patrolling and the strengthening of the asylum system in Italy. Part of these funds will be used in order to upgrade the Frontex presence in the area. This will come on top of already existing EU support activities targeted at Italy such as the Special Support Plan being implemented by the European Asylum Support Office.

In line with the discussions in the last Justice and Home Affairs Council a dedicated Task Force for the Mediterranean has started its work under the chairmanship of the Commission. This Task Force brings together all Member States, relevant EU agencies and other stakeholders. It will address the issue raised by the Honourable Member. The Commission will present the results of the work in December to the JHA Council.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011384/13
an die Kommission
Norbert Neuser (S&D)
(4. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Bahnlärm — Geschwindigkeitsbegrenzung/Nachtfahrverbot von lauten Güterzügen

Welchen offiziellen Standpunkt vertritt die Kommission zu örtlich begrenzten Geschwindigkeitsbegrenzungen und Nachtfahrverboten für laute Güterzüge als Lärmschutzmaßnahmen?

Wären solche Maßnahmen grundsätzlich mit EU Recht vereinbar und wenn ja, unter welchen Umständen?

Was ist das Ergebnis der jüngsten Stellungnahme des Juristischen Dienstes der Kommission zu diesen Fragen?

Antwort von Herrn Kallas im Namen der Kommission
(18. November 2013)

Unter Berücksichtigung der geltenden Rechtsvorschriften der EU ist die Kommission der Auffassung, dass die nationalen Maßnahmen zur Bekämpfung der Geräuschemissionen von Güterzügen wie Geschwindigkeitsbegrenzungen oder Fahrbeschränkungen zu bestimmten Tages- oder Nachtzeiten nicht gegen den Grundsatz des freien Verkehrs von Waren und Dienstleistungen verstoßen, wenn sie gleichermaßen für alle Betreiber von Güterzügen für Fahrten durch das nationale Hoheitsgebiet — unabhängig von der Herkunft dieser Betreiber — gelten und wenn sie keine erheblichen Auswirkungen haben, die den Grundsatz des freien Verkehrs infrage stellen.

Vor diesem Hintergrund müssen alle nationalen Regelungen im Einzelnen im Hinblick auf ihre Vereinbarkeit mit dem Unionsrecht geprüft werden.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011384/13
to the Commission
Norbert Neuser (S&D)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Rail traffic noise — speed limit/ban on loud freight trains running during the night

What is the official position of the Commission on local speed limits and a ban on loud freight trains running during the night as noise abatement measures?

Would such measures be compatible in principle with EC law, and, if so, under what circumstances?

What are the findings of the most recent opinion from the legal services of the Commission on this matter?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(18 November 2013)

Taking the applicable EC law into account, the Commission is of the opinion that national measures to fight against the noise of freight trains, such as speed limits or restrictions to circulate at certain times of the day or night, do not violate the principle of free movement of services and goods if they apply equally to all operators of freight trains traveling through the national territory, regardless of the origin of these operators and if they do not have a substantial effect which puts the principle of free circulation in question.

In this regard, any national scheme must be analysed individually as to its compatibility with Union law.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011385/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(4 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Σχετικά με την ερώτησή μου αριθ. E-006740/13

Στην απάντηση του Επιτρόπου Andor στην πιο πάνω ερώτησή μου αναφέρονται, για την περίπτωση της Γερμανίας, μεταξύ άλλων και τα εξής: «ενώ οι πραγματικοί μισθοί παραμένουν μεν κάτω από το επίπεδο του 2000 (…), οι μισθολογικές ανισότητες έχουν αυξηθεί» και επίσης ότι η Επιτροπή παροτρύνει τη Γερμανία να «διατηρήσει τις συνθήκες αυτές που θα επιτρέψουν την αύξηση των μισθών ώστε να υποστηριχθεί η εγχώρια ζήτηση».

Εκ των γεγονότων δεν φαίνεται ότι η Γερμανία έχει λάβει υπόψη τις παροτρύνσεις της Επιτροπής. Επειδή η κατάσταση που επικρατεί στη Γερμανία επηρεάζει έμμεσα αλλά καθοριστικά και πολλές άλλες χώρες της Ένωσης, δημιουργώντας σοβαρές οικονομικές και κοινωνικές ανισότητες, ιδιαίτερα στις χώρες της περιφέρειας και του Ευρωπαϊκού Νότου, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Σε ποιο βαθμό έχει ανταποκριθεί η Γερμανία στις παροτρύνσεις της Επιτροπής αναφορικά με τις πολιτικές μισθών που ακολουθεί;

— Τι μπορεί και τι προτίθεται να πράξει ώστε να βελτιωθεί η κατάσταση στον τομέα των εισοδημάτων στη Γερμανία, γεγονός που θα έχει ευρύτερες ευεργετικές συνέπειες στις χώρες του Ευρωπαϊκού Νότου αλλά και σε ολόκληρη την ευρωπαϊκή οικονομία;

Απάντηση του κ. Andor εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(25 Νοεμβρίου 2013)

Το άρθρο 153 της Συνθήκης για τη λειτουργία της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης θεσπίζει ρητά ότι οι «αμοιβές» εξαιρούνται από το σύνολο των τομέων στους οποίους η ΕΕ έχει αρμοδιότητα παρέμβασης. Ωστόσο, η Επιτροπή παρακολουθεί προσεκτικά τις μισθολογικές εξελίξεις στη Γερμανία καθώς και στα άλλα κράτη μέλη.

Στο πλαίσιο του Ευρωπαϊκού Εξαμήνου, η Επιτροπή πραγματοποιεί την άνοιξη κάθε έτους εκτενή ανάλυση των εθνικών προγραμμάτων μεταρρυθμίσεων που υποβλήθηκαν από τα κράτη μέλη και η λεπτομερής αιτιολόγηση των συστάσεων ανά χώρα του 2013 για τη Γερμανία διατίθεται στον ακόλουθο δικτυακό τόπο:
http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/europe-2020-in-your-country/deutschland/index_en.htm

Η Επιτροπή θα εξακολουθήσει να αναλύει θέματα των μισθών στη Γερμανία στο πλαίσιο του Ευρωπαϊκού Εξαμήνου.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011385/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Concerning Question E-006740/13

Commissioner Andor's answer to the above question mentions the following, among other things, in relation to Germany: 'As real incomes, on the one hand, remain below the level seen in 2000 (…), pay inequalities have increased' and also that the Commission is urging Germany to 'maintain conditions that will allow pay to rise, in order to boost domestic demand'.

The facts show that Germany has ignored the urgings. As the situation in Germany has an indirect and decisive influence on many other EU countries, causing serious economic and social inequalities in the countries of the periphery and the European South in particular, will the Commission say:

— To what extent has Germany responded to the Commission's urgings in relation to the pay policies it is pursuing?

— What can the Commission do and what does it intend to do to improve the situation in the area of incomes in Germany, a factor that will have wider beneficial consequences in the southern European countries and also across the entire European economy?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(25 November 2013)

Article 153 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union explicitly establishes that 'pay' is excluded from the set of fields in which the EU has competences to intervene upon. However, the Commission monitors carefully wage and income developments in Germany as well as the other Member States.

During the European Semester, the Commission carries out in spring of every year a comprehensive analysis of the National Reform Programmes presented by the Member States and the detailed justification of the country specific recommendations 2013 for Germany can be found under the following link:
http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/europe-2020-in-your-country/deutschland/index_en.htm

The Commission will continue to analyse wage issues in Germany within the framework of the European Semester.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011386/13
προς το Συμβούλιο
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(4 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Σχετικά με την ερώτησή μου αριθ. E-006740/13

Στην απάντηση του Επιτρόπου Andor στην πιο πάνω ερώτησή μου αναφέρονται, για την περίπτωση της Γερμανίας, μεταξύ άλλων και τα εξής: «ενώ οι πραγματικοί μισθοί παραμένουν μεν κάτω από το επίπεδο του 2000 (…), οι μισθολογικές ανισότητες έχουν αυξηθεί» και επίσης ότι η Επιτροπή παροτρύνει τη Γερμανία να «διατηρήσει τις συνθήκες αυτές που θα επιτρέψουν την αύξηση των μισθών ώστε να υποστηριχθεί η εγχώρια ζήτηση».

Εκ των γεγονότων δεν φαίνεται ότι η Γερμανία έχει λάβει υπόψη τις πιο πάνω παροτρύνσεις. Επειδή η κατάσταση που επικρατεί στη Γερμανία επηρεάζει έμμεσα και καθοριστικά πολλές άλλες χώρες της Ένωσης, δημιουργώντας σοβαρές οικονομικές και κοινωνικές ανισότητες, ιδιαίτερα στις χώρες της περιφέρειας και του Ευρωπαϊκού Νότου, ερωτάται το Συμβούλιο:

— Είναι ενήμερο για την κατάσταση που επικρατεί στη Γερμανία στην αγορά εργασίας, ειδικά όσον αφορά την εξέλιξη των μισθών; Συμφωνεί με τις εκτιμήσεις της Επιτροπής όπως περιγράφονται από τον Επίτροπο Andor στην απάντησή του στην πιο πάνω ερώτησή μου;

— Σε ποιο βαθμό έχει ανταποκριθεί η Γερμανία στις παροτρύνσεις της ΕΕ αναφορικά με τις πολιτικές μισθών που ακολουθεί;

— Τι μπορεί και τι προτίθεται να πράξει το Συμβούλιο ώστε να βελτιωθεί η κατάσταση στον τομέα των εισοδημάτων στη Γερμανία, γεγονός που θα έχει ευρύτερες ευεργετικές συνέπειες στις χώρες του Ευρωπαϊκού Νότου αλλά και σε ολόκληρη την ευρωπαϊκή οικονομία;

Απάντηση
(2 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Στις συστάσεις ανά χώρα (ΣΑΧ) του 2013 προς τη Γερμανία, και πιο συγκεκριμένα στο πλαίσιο στη ΣΑΧ 2, το Συμβούλιο συνιστά στη Γερμανία να αναλάβει δράση κατά την περίοδο 2013-2014 προκειμένου: «*Να διατηρήσει τις συνθήκες που επιτρέπουν την αύξηση των μισθών προς στήριξη της εγχώριας ζήτησης. Προς το σκοπό αυτό, να μειώσει την υψηλή φορολογική επιβάρυνση και τις εισφορές κοινωνικής ασφάλισης, ιδίως των χαμηλόμισθων, και να αυξήσει τις εκπαιδευτικές επιδόσεις των μειονεκτούντων ατόμων. Να διατηρήσει τα κατάλληλα μέτρα ενεργοποίησης και ενσωμάτωσης, ιδίως υπέρ των μακροχρόνια ανέργων. Να διευκολύνει τη μετάβαση από άτυπες σχέσεις εργασίας, όπως οι "Minijobs", προς περισσότερο βιώσιμες μορφές απασχόλησης. Να λάβει μέτρα για τη βελτίωση των κινήτρων προς εργασία και για την αύξηση της απασχολησιμότητας των εργαζομένων, ιδίως όσον αφορά τα δεύτερα εργαζόμενα μέλη της οικογένειας και τους εργαζομένους χαμηλής ειδίκευσης, με σκοπό επίσης τη βελτίωση του εισοδήματός τους. Προς τον σκοπό αυτόν, να καταργήσει τα αντικίνητρα για τα δεύτερα εργαζόμενα μέλη της οικογένειας και να αυξήσει περαιτέρω τους διαθέσιμους παιδικούς σταθμούς πλήρους ωραρίου και τα ολοήμερα σχολεία*» ([1]).

Η σύσταση αυτή βασίζεται στην αιτιολογική σκέψη 14 των συστάσεων ανά χώρα του 2013 προς τη Γερμανία, στην οποία επισημαίνεται, *μεταξύ άλλων*, ότι «*Οι πραγματικοί μισθοί παραμένουν μεν κάτω από το επίπεδο του 2000, το οποίο συνέβαλε στη διαρθρωτική μείωση του ποσοστού ανεργίας από 8% σε 5,5%, όμως έκτοτε άρχισαν να αυξάνουν δυναμικά, χωρίς να θίγουν την ανταγωνιστικότητα. Συγχρόνως, οι μισθολογικές διαφορές έχουν αυξηθεί*» ([2]).

([1]) ΕΕ C 217 της 30.7.2013, σ. 35.
([2]) ΕΕ C 217 της 30.7.2013, σ. 34.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011386/13
to the Council
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Concerning Question E-006740/13

Commissioner Andor's answer to the above question mentions the following, among other things, in relation to Germany: 'As real incomes, on the one hand, remain below the level seen in 2000 (…), pay inequalities have increased' and also that the Commission is urging Germany to 'maintain conditions that will allow pay to rise, in order to boost domestic demand'.

The facts show that Germany has ignored the urgings. As the situation in Germany has an indirect and decisive influence on many other EU countries, causing serious economic and social inequalities in the countries of the periphery and the European South in particular, will the Council say:

— Is it aware of the prevailing situation on the German job market, especially in relation to pay developments? Does it agree with the Commission's estimates as described by Commissioner Andor in his written answer to the above question?

— To what extent has Germany responded to the EU's urgings in relation to the pay policies it is pursuing?

— What can the Council do and what does it intend to do to improve the situation in the area of incomes in Germany, a factor that will have wider beneficial consequences in southern European countries and also across the entire European economy?

Reply
(2 December 2013)

In the 2013 Country-Specific Recommendations (CSRs) addressed to Germany, and more specifically in CSR 2, the Council recommends that Germany take action within the period 2013-2014 to 'Sustain conditions that enable wage growth to support domestic demand. To this end, reduce high taxes and social security contributions, especially for low-wage earners and raise the educational achievement of disadvantaged people. Maintain appropriate activation and integration measures, especially for the long-term unemployed. Facilitate the transition from non-standard employment such as mini-jobs into more sustainable forms of employment. Take measures to improve incentives to work and the employability of workers, in particular for second earners and low-skilled workers, also with a view to improving their income. To this end, remove disincentives for second earners and further increase the availability of full time childcare facilities and all-day schools.' ([1])

That recommendation is based on Recital 14 of the 2013 Country-Specific Recommendations to Germany, which notes, *inter alia*, that 'While real wages are still below their level in the year 2000, which contributed to the structural reduction in the unemployment rate from 8% to 5,5%, they have started to grow dynamically since then, without adversely affecting competitiveness. At the same time, wage disparities have increased.' ([2])

([1]) OJ C 217, of 30.7.2013, page 35.
([2]) OJ C 217, of 30.7.2013, page 34.